

Preston's Cliffs (CT-59)

Route. 2/4

Lusby Vicinity, Calvert County

Recommendations: NRHP Eligible, Criteria A and C

CT-59, known variously as Preston's Cliffs, Charles's Gift, and the Wilson Farm, is situated north of the existing power plant and within the viewshed of the proposed project (see Figure 1-2; Figures 25-3 and 25-4). The property presently consists of three large former tobacco barns, some of which date from the first half of the nineteenth century, a modern frame building, and the ruins of a seventeenth-century house (Photographs 25-6 through 25-11). (Previous investigations have determined that the barns

illustrate the development of tobacco house architecture in Maryland.) CCNPP buildings and a parking lot are situated immediately south of the house ruins. The nuclear power plant's security gate stands near CT-59. One former tobacco barn and the modern frame building serve as the Visitor's Center; a second barn has been used for public display purposes.



Photograph 25-6. Preston's Cliffs Residence, 1936, Façade and Southeast Elevation (CT-59), Facing Northwest (Photo: Library of Congress)

Photograph 25-7. Preston's Cliffs, Ruins of Residence (CT-59), Facing Northwest



Photograph 25-8. Preston's Cliffs Visitor's Center, Modern Frame Building (CT-59), Facing Northwest



Photograph 25-9. Preston's Cliffs Tobacco Barn A, South and East Elevations (CT-59 A), Facing Northwest



Photograph 25-10. Preston's Cliffs Visitor's Center, Formerly Tobacco Barn B (CT-59 B), Facing East



Photograph 25-11. Preston's Cliffs Tobacco Barn C, Southwest and Northwest Elevations (CT-59 C), Facing East

land to Richard Preston. It then became known as Preston's Cliffs, but development of the estate languished. The name changed when Charles Calvert, third Lord Baltimore, turned the land over to Captain Richard Ladd in 1676. It was renamed Charles's Gift. In his 1691 will, Capt. Ladd bequeathed his land and house to nearby Christ Church Parish. At this point, the property became glebe land. The property's third name, Wilson Farm, dates from after this time, the period following disestablishment of the Anglican Church after the American Revolution.

Throughout history, CT-59 has changed ownership many times, thus contributing to its many different names. In 1658, Cecilius Calvert, second Lord Baltimore, granted the

According to the CT-59 site form (MHT library), the house, which was first mentioned in Capt. Ladd's will, underwent multiple phases of construction. It appears that the original building was a one-story, two-bay, house containing one ground floor room and a small attic chamber. A single chimney stood at one end (which was later removed). Sometime circa 1720, the house was enlarged with a one room addition to the west elevation. Two chimneys were then built at the south end. Then, circa 1830, the house was extended by a center hall and two rooms on the north end, also with two exterior chimneys.

In its final state, the house stood on a continuous brick foundation, and, due to the multiple additions, featured an asymmetrical façade (see Photograph 25-6). It was five-bays wide with a central door that was topped with a transom light. The fenestration consisted of nine-over-six, double-hung, wood sash windows. In 1972, this building was in an advanced state of deterioration. After it was structurally examined and fully recorded, the building was razed. Today, the ruins consist of two pairs of shouldered, brick chimney stacks with corbelled caps and brick outlines of the foundation (see Photograph 25-7). A wood rail fence surrounds the ruins, and text panels have been installed near the site, which has been preserved for public interpretation.

According to the CT-59A MHT site form (which maps this building in the wrong location), CT-59A (see Photograph 25-9) is the first barn built at the site. It was constructed in 1820 from material salvaged from older, moveable tobacco houses. It is a single pen log barn measuring sixty feet long and thirty-three feet wide. The barn underwent multiple alterations and additions. The original building was constructed with chestnut poles locked at the corners with diamond notches. The thickest logs were laid on the bottom and appeared thinner at the top. The sill logs were supported above the ground by large rocks. The shed on the south side was original. It was framed around hole-set cedar wall posts mortised, tenoned, and pinned to the wall plate. Both the shed and gables were closed in with vertical planks. During the economic downturn following the Civil War, the barn was neglected and its roof failed. Late in the century, before it could be put back into use, the barn and its shed had to be completely re-roofed. During reconstruction, as many as possible of the old members were reused, so that original and replacement timbers alternated in the roof frame. Then, in the mid-twentieth century, the barn was enlarged with a six room, box-framed extension. The extension probably dates from after 1936. Presently, CT-59A stands as a heavy timber framed building with a shed roof extension. It stands on concrete block piers. Two full elevations and part of a third are clad in vertical wood planks, while the remainder is constructed with unhewn logs that feature dovetailed corner notching. An uninterrupted sill is present on the log core. It has a metal cover on its gable roof. CT-59A has recently been used for public outreach and display purposes, in conjunction with the visitor's center (CT-59B), but is currently closed to the public.

CT-59B, a frame tobacco barn (see Photograph 25-10), underwent three phases of construction. The first phase was completed in 1818 and consisted of a forty-by-twenty-foot barn. The body and roof of the barn were tier-railed and poled at four-foot intervals for hanging tobacco. The only original doors were two man doors, one on each side of the barn at the north side of the cross sill. The barn originally was covered with shingles and enclosed with plank. The second phase, completed later in the nineteenth century, consisted of the addition of a shed to the west side and gable ends of the barn. The final phase of construction included the extension of both ends and the west side of the barn with sheds. The sheds were constructed with hole-set cedar posts and pine pole rafters and shingle lath. These additions are shown in a 1936 Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) photograph. Subsequently, the south shed was removed, and the barn was extended another thirty-six-feet. CT-59B has been converted into a visitor's center for the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant (see Photograph 13). It has been completely modernized and features concrete floors, modern plumbing, electricity, and insulation. The visitor's center had been open to the public for on-site interpretation, but it has recently been closed due to increased security measures at the nuclear power plant. Adjacent to CT-59B stands a modern frame building constructed circa 1985.

One newly-surveyed tobacco barn, CT-59C (see Photograph 25-11), stands near CT-59A and CT-59B and contributes to the significance of Preston's Cliffs (CT-59). Similar in construction to CT-59B and located across the roadway from CT-59A, CT-59C is a heavy timber frame building that stands on a

concrete pier foundation. It is clad in vertical wood siding and features wire nails. The gable roof is covered with metal sheets and is trimmed with exposed rafter tails. CT-59C is used for storage.

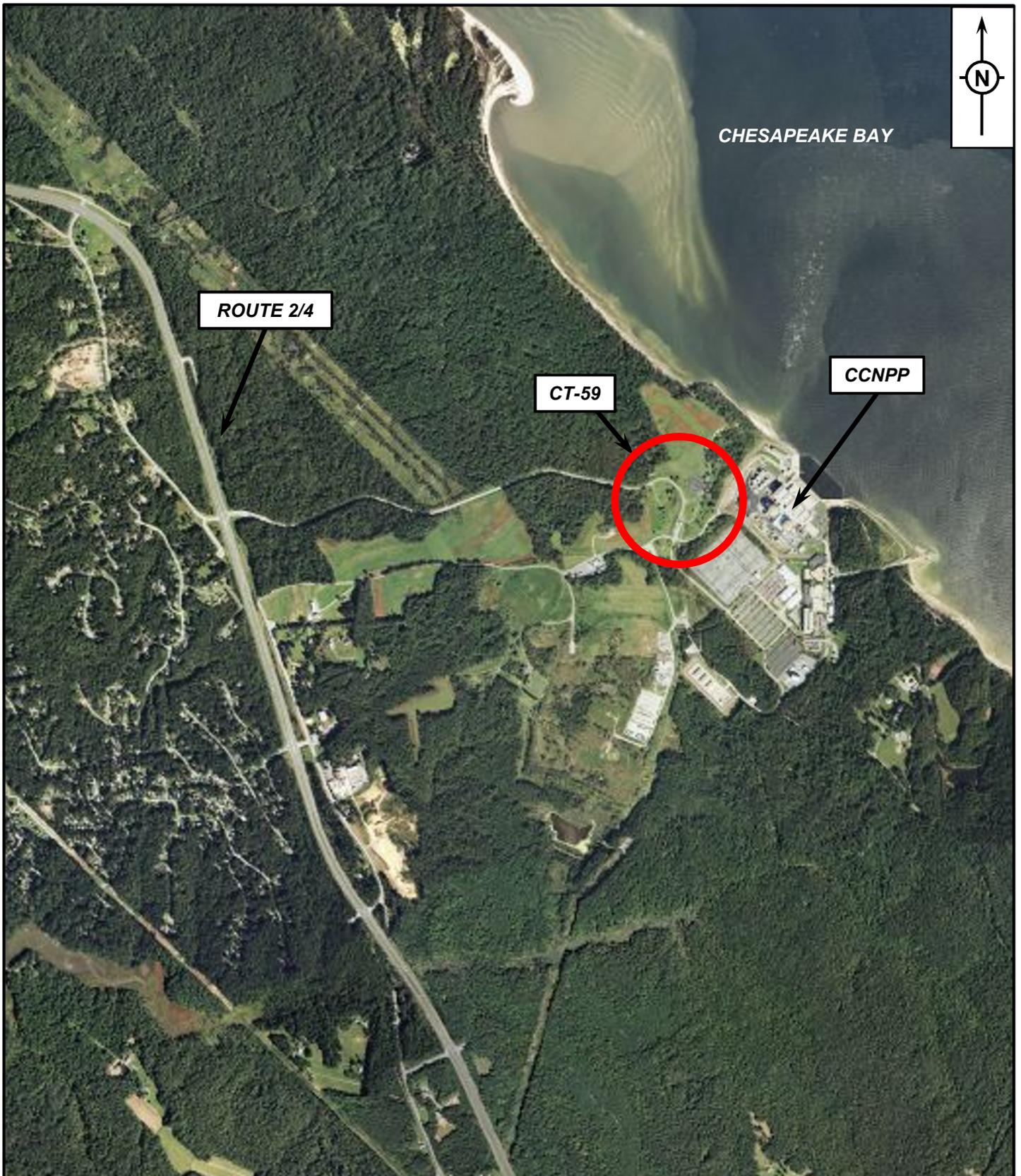
Based on previous research investigations, it is likely that the barns associated with CT-59 have been built from material salvaged from older, moveable tobacco houses on the farm. Earlier investigators identified carpenter's numbers etched into some of the logs. The numbers are not assembly numbers; rather, the wall logs were numbered when old tobacco barns were dismantled to allow for easy reassembly elsewhere. Because the present arrangement of the logs bears little relationship to their numbers, it can be assumed that some of the logs had been used and reused numerous times before being incorporated into the present structures. This illustrates the transition from cheap, impermanent tobacco barns to the well-built, permanent structures that gradually replaced them beginning in the eighteenth century.

Based on its association with local tobacco culture and agricultural history, CT-59 is recommended NRHP eligible as a single property under Criterion A at the local level. Although the main residence has been demolished, the former tobacco houses have been altered, and a contemporary frame building has been constructed among them, the resource continues to convey its historic association with tobacco culture and the historic development of Calvert County through the barns and ruins. In its massing, workmanship, materials, and design, the contemporary frame building is constructed in a style sympathetic to the frame vernacular style of the extant buildings and does not diminish the integrity of CT-59's setting. CT-59 is also recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C. The barns are unique examples of tobacco house architecture reflecting their evolution from impermanent tobacco barns to permanent, structurally sound buildings.

No information was identified to associate former owners of the property with prominence or significant historic events. Accordingly, the resource is recommended not NRHP eligible under Criterion B. These recommendations were originally presented in the Draft Interim Report (Munford and Hyland 2007). MHT concurred with these recommendations in their June 7, 2007 letter (see Appendix A).

Further directed historical research and archeological investigations are warranted to determine the resource's NRHP eligibility under Criterion D. Based on reports of previous historical investigations and the likelihood of encountering undisturbed soils containing features, CT-59 has the potential for yielding historic archeological information.

The recommended NRHP boundary for Preston's Cliffs (CT-59) encompasses the aforementioned contributing barns and house ruins, as well as a former agricultural field located to the north of these buildings. It is marked on the east by a fence line near CT-59A and CT-59C, turning eastward at a rise and continuing along the edge of a wooded area south and east of CT-59B and the house ruins. It then proceeds northward, encompassing the former agricultural field along the tree line, turning southward and following the tree line to the point of beginning. The recommended NRHP boundary of Preston's Cliffs is shown on Figure 25-4.

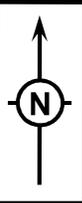


ROUTE 2/4

CT-59

CCNPP

CHESAPEAKE BAY



SOURCE: AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF CALVERT COUNTY, MD. MICROSOFT, 2008

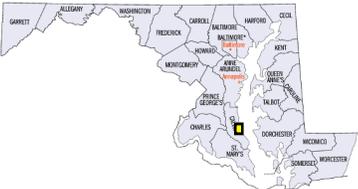


FIGURE 25-3

**LOCATION OF
PRESTON'S CLIFFS (CT-59)
CALVERT CLIFFS NUCLEAR POWER
PLANT PROJECT
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND**



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SOURCE: AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF CALVERT COUNTY, MD. MICROSOFT, 2008



FIGURE 25-4

**RECOMMENDED NRHP BOUNDARY
OF PRESTON'S CLIFFS (CT-59)
CALVERT CLIFFS NUCLEAR POWER
PLANT PROJECT
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND**



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