TABLE OF CONTENTS

• PRESERVATION ISSUE ADDRESSED
• RESEARCH QUESTIONS
• METHODOLOGY
• PROJECT DETAILS
• CONCLUSIONS
PRESERVATION PROBLEM

• How can the Compton Bassett Chapel, a unique structure of historical, cultural, and religious significance, be preserved in a manner that respects the structure’s multiple values and changes over time?
Research Questions

- Is the current building history correct?
- How did this chapel evolve over time?
- What are the values associated with this building?
- What is the best course of treatment for the Compton Basset Chapel?
METHODOLOGY

• CONDUCTED DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH
• CONDUCTED PHYSICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE BUILDING
• CONSULTED OUTSIDE EXPERTS
PROJECT DETAILS
HABS Photograph - 1980s
HISTORICAL CONTEXT
CATHOLICISM IN COLONIAL MARYLAND

St. Mary’s City
George H. Page Navy 1841
PHYSICAL INVESTIGATION OF BUILDING
Spring of 1779!
To Roasting pig.
To butcher Corn.
To 7 bushels corn.
To 1/2 Cord wood. 1/4 14th. To 2 Cord wood.

1779

To 15 Cord wood.
For 2 loads of shingles.
To wood.

1780

To wood.
EVOLUTION OF BUILDING

• Started as a smaller building
• Likely converted into chapel in early-19th century
• Unclear when building went out of use as a chapel
EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS
Structural Problems

Close-Up View
Unfinished Modern Repairs

Missing Building Components

Deteriorated Plaster

Rotten Flooring

Unfinished Modern Repairs

Missing Building Components

Deteriorated Plaster

Rotten Flooring
Deteriorating Interior Masonry Walls

Improper Repairs

Floor Collapse
TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Preservation-based treatment approach
- Set stabilization efforts apart
- Provided detailed treatment recommendations
- Archaeology
REEVALUATION OF BUILDING HISTORY
CONFLICTING HISTORIES

Believed to have been built ca. 1740

- Timbers in first period date to ca. spring 1779
- Earliest mention of religious services at Compton Bassett were in 1773
- No direct mention of building in documentary historical record
PRESERVATION TAKEAWAYS

• Should regularly reevaluate historic resources
• Should not always accept the “known” history
• Values associated with resource should be explored
• Must tailor treatment recommendations for the uniqueness of each historic resource
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THANK YOU
QUESTIONS?