

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF SINGLE AND UNACCOMPANIED
PERSONNEL APARTMENTS
Fort George G. Meade, Anne Arundel County, Maryland**

1. Name of Action: Construction and Operation of Single and Unaccompanied Personnel Apartments at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland.
2. Description of Proposed Action: The Army proposes to lease land on Fort Meade to a private development entity (Picerne Military Housing [Picerne]). The Army would grant Picerne a 50-year lease of approximately 45 acres of land on which Picerne would demolish eight existing lodging facilities and construct and operate new garden-style apartments and associated facilities for single and unaccompanied personnel. The garden apartments would be constructed to meet LEED Silver standards per the U.S. Green Building Council. Picerne would operate and maintain the new facilities during the lease period. The new community would consist of approximately 40 one-bedroom and approximately 388 two-bedroom apartments, providing a total of 816 bedrooms, to be occupied by Junior Enlisted Service Members, of which there are approximately 1,200 living off-post. The proposed parcel for the project is at the northeast corner of the intersection of Cooper Avenue and Mapes Road; it is bounded on the north by Reece Road. The parcel is adjacent to the Post Exchange, commissary, and shoppette (east of the parcel), adjacent to the new Defense Information Systems Agency headquarters (west of the parcel), and south of the Potomac Place housing neighborhood. Approximately 21 acres of the parcel are wooded. An intermittent stream runs through the northern part of the parcel. Development would occur on all 45 acres of the parcel over three phases of development, beginning in August 2012 and continuing through May 2016.
3. Alternatives Evaluated: An environmental assessment (EA) was prepared to evaluate the potential environmental, cultural, transportation, and socioeconomic effects associated with the Proposed Action. A No Action Alternative was also included in the EA which reflects the status quo and serves as a benchmark against which federal actions can be evaluated. Under the No Action Alternative, no new housing for single and unaccompanied personnel would be constructed at Fort Meade. Selection of the No Action Alternative would result in many single and unaccompanied personnel continuing to live off post. The Fort Meade Garrison and Picerne also investigated the feasibility of alternative sites for development. Because of land constraints—including those imposed by the Base Realignment and Closure 2005 action at Fort Meade and other development projects on the installation, and preferred uses for other available sites—all other sites were eliminated from further consideration for the housing land use. Accordingly, other sites are not evaluated in detail in the EA.
4. Anticipated Impacts: The Proposed Action is expected to disturb approximately 21.6 acres of wooded land, approximately 19.7 acres of which is mature forest. In accordance with Maryland's Forest Conservation Act and Fort Meade's Tree Management Policy, the loss of trees would be mitigated and existing dominant trees would be preserved to the extent practicable on the parcel. A forest mitigation plan will be prepared and

submitted to DPW-ED and MDNR for approval for the clearing of the 21.6 acres of wooded area. Tree preservation measures will be incorporated in construction plans. The fair market value of the forest products removed because of the proposed action will be deposited in the Army Forestry Account to support Army forestry programs. An intermittent stream channel exists on the parcel and passes through the northern wooded area. Development of the housing would likely require disturbing the stream. If it is determined that wetlands are on the parcel, a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit would be obtained and any required mitigation measures in the permit would be complied with. If required, a permit issued under Maryland Department of the Environment's Nontidal Wetlands regulations would be obtained and complied with. Construction activities would comply with the *Maryland Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines for State and Federal Projects*; the *Maryland Stormwater Management Guidelines for State and Federal Projects*; Maryland air quality regulations; Maryland regulations for the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials; and Maryland's best management practices for construction projects. A stormwater management plan and system meeting Maryland Department of the Environment environmental site design standards would be implemented to ensure that stormwater migrating offsite is within acceptable volumes both during and after construction. Measures necessary to prevent sediment-laden water from leaving the site would be implemented. The action would be permitted in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws. The number of enlisted personnel living off-post and commuting to Fort Meade for training, work, and personal trips each day would decrease from about 1,200 to about 400, which would relieve some congestion at installation gates. Under the Proposed Action, however, the traffic associated with the new housing would be expected to impact the level of service at intersections near the new housing, including the signalized intersection of Mapes Road and Taylor Avenue as well as the intersections of Ruffner Road and Cooper Avenue, Ruffner and MacArthur Roads, and Reece Road and Cooper Avenue. Overall, the Proposed Action would be expected to have short-term minor adverse effects on air quality, noise, soils, and transportation, primarily associated with construction activities. Long-term minor adverse effects would be expected on air quality, water resources, biological resources, and utilities. The air quality effects would arise from emissions from heating and cooling systems operating at the new facilities; water resources effects would result from impacts to the stream on the parcel, biological effects would arise from the loss of forest habitat; and the utilities effects would arise from the increased demand on installation utility systems. Short-term minor beneficial effects on the local economy would be expected from expenditures and employment associated with construction. Long-term minor beneficial effects on aesthetic and visual resources and socioeconomics (quality of life) would be expected from the improved availability and quality of on-post residential facilities.

5. The EA and draft FNSI were available for review and comment for 30 days, from April 6, 2012 through May 5, 2012. A notice of availability was published in *The Baltimore Sun* (Baltimore, Maryland), the *Annapolis Capital* (Annapolis, Maryland) on April 6, and in *SoundOff!* (Fort Meade, Maryland) on April 5. Copies of the EA and draft FNSI were available for review at the Medal of Honor Memorial Library, Fort Meade; and at the West County Area Library, 1325 Annapolis Road, Odenton, MD. Comments on the EA were received from the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). MHT requested that the buildings proposed for demolition

(Buildings 4703, 4704, 4705, 4707, 4709, 4717, 4720, and 4721) be assessed for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). A review of additional records determined Buildings 4703, 4704, 4705, and 4709 have been previously found to not be eligible for the NRHP but Determination of Eligibility Forms, as requested by MHT are being prepared. The Army is preparing, as requested by MHT, Determination of Eligibility forms for Buildings 4717, 4720, and 4721 although these buildings are less than 50 years old with no apparent exceptional significance. If any of the three buildings are found to be eligible, the Army will take all necessary actions to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act before demolishing the buildings. EPA had several comments on the EA that addressed the inclusion of alternatives for analysis, impacts on biological and aquatic resources, and agency and tribal coordination. Army responses to EPA's specific comments have been provided to the EPA and included in the Environmental Assessment.

6. I have reviewed the EA and considered the comments received, and find that there will be no significant impacts to the natural environment, to cultural resources, or to the human environment resulting from this Proposed Action to lease land on Fort Meade to a private development entity and to construct and operate new garden-style apartments and associated facilities for single and unaccompanied personnel on the land. Based on the evaluation of the environmental consequences accomplished by this EA, an environmental impact statement is not necessary and a Finding of No Significant Impact shall be issued.

Date: 14 May 2012


EDWARD C. ROTHSTEIN
Colonel, Military Intelligence
Commanding