

PRESERVATION
ESTD SOCIETY 1920
of CHARLESTON

March 10, 2021

Dr. Edward Simmer
S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201

**Re: Burial Grounds at Oak Bluff Subdivision (Permit 10-14-12-06B)
City of Charleston, Berkeley County**

Dear Dr. Simmer:

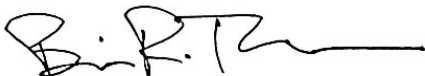
On behalf of the Preservation Society of Charleston, the Gullah Society, the Cainhoy Methodist Church and Cemetery Corporation, and the Daniel Island Historical Society, we are deeply concerned by an outstanding permit request for Phase 1C of the Oak Bluff Cluster Development located at 1229 Clements Ferry Road in the City of Charleston. This development poses a direct threat to an unmarked African American burial ground in the vicinity of the McDowell Cemetery.

The presence of these burials was disclosed to a previous owner of the land who commissioned an archaeological data recovery investigation on a 16-acre portion of the project in 2016. The scope of that study concerned cultural resources within and to the south of the McDowell Cemetery. Yet researchers noted the presence of unmarked graves outside of the portion of the cemetery defined by the chain link fencing. Attached is page 6 of the Management Summary of that report showing an "Area with Unmarked Graves." We have corroborated this information with living descendants who confirm that relatives are buried in the location noted on the map.

We believe there to be a strong likelihood that the current owner will encounter this burial ground should it receive permits for excavation and grading of Phase 1C as that plan was presented in 2017, also attached. Further, based on recent observation of the construction fencing erected at this location, it appears that grading work is imminent.

We urge DHEC to carefully consider this information and exercise caution in the permit review process to ensure that human remains are protected. Please contact me at bturner@preservationsociety.org or (843) 722-4630 x24 in the event we can provide further information regarding these concerns.

Sincerely,



Brian Turner
Director of Advocacy

Enclosures

- Aerial View of Site 38BK267/1785 Excavation Efforts and Major Site Attributes, S&ME, Inc., 2016, p. 6
- Oak Bluff Development Phasing Plan, Seamon Whiteside, 2017

Cc:

Mayor John J. Tecklenburg, City of Charleston
Councilwoman Marie Delcioppo, City of Charleston
Mr. Christopher Morgan, City of Charleston Planning Department
Ms. Elizabeth Johnson, South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office
Mrs. MaeRe Skinner, Cainhoy Methodist Church and Cemetery Corporation
Mrs. Lee Ann Bain, Daniel Island Historical Society
Mr. Grant Mishoe, Gullah Society