The Pilot Plant Complex located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground currently consists of nine buildings, seven of which were constructed in the 1942 for impregnite production. Impregnite was a chemical used to coat soldiers' uniforms to protect them from dangerous chemical weapons. Impregnite plants were constructed in Michigan, Illinois, New York and at Edgewood utilizing the same construction design. By 1941, all plants were operational except Edgewood which began production in 1942. The Pilot Plant only operated as an impregnite production facility for approximately a year. The complex sat idle through much of World War II. While the Army established new arsenals during and after WWII, the Edgewood facility was used for chemical research and development. However, the activities at the Pilot Plant did not result in any significant discovery or process. The buildings have been altered throughout their history to accommodate the production of new compounds for warfare purposes. The integrity of the original plant function and design has been lost. At least three of the original buildings have been demolished. Two of the existing buildings were demolished and rebuilt in the 1960s. Vacant since 1986, a lack of maintenance has resulted in building deterioration.

As a result of international treaty negotiations to ban chemical warfare, the Pilot Plant is slated for demolition. Additional justification for demolition focuses on the chemical contamination of the site. I concurred with the Army's determination that the complex was not eligible for the National Register.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Building E5625 Complex Pilot Plant Historical Survey report

Prepared by: Roger W. Anderson, Jr. & Theresa C. Kvitek, Argonne National Laboratory

Lauren L. Bowlin
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

10/95

R program concurrence: yes no not applicable

Reviewer, NR program

11-20-95
MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

___ Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
___ Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George’s and St. Mary’s)
___ Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
___ Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

___ Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.
___ Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.
___ Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.
___ Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.
___ Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.
___ Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900
___ Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600
___ Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750
___ Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
___ Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
___ Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
___ Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
___ Unknown Period (___ prehistoric ___ historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

___ Agriculture
___ Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
___ Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
___ Government/Law
___ Military
___ Religion
___ Social/Educational/Cultural
___ Transportation

IV. Historic Period Themes:

___ Agriculture
___ Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
___ Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
___ Government/Law
___ Military
___ Religion
___ Social/Educational/Cultural
___ Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: building complex

Historic Environment: village (military installation)

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): industrial/chemical plant

Known Design Source: Standardized plans but no source Corps of Engineers?
May 19, 1995

Commander, United States Army
Aberdeen Proving Ground Support Activity
Attention: Mr. Douglas R. MacMillan
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21005

Dear Mr. MacMillan:

Recently as part of the Pilot Plant (Building E5625 complex) project in the Edgewood area of Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) being conducted by Argonne National Laboratory (ANL), I completed a report entitled *Building E5625 Complex, Pilot Plant, Aberdeen Proving Ground — Edgewood Area, Maryland. Interim Report: Historical Survey* (February 1995) which was given to Mr. John Wrobel. This document details the history of the E5625 complex. The report focuses on the historical setting, history of usage of the buildings, and architectural history, that is, architectural changes to the buildings. The report is designed to provide information for determining the historical status of the structures and the likelihood of the presence of archaeological material at the site. Enclosed is a copy of the report for your records.

The purposes of this letter are to convey a brief summary of the findings concerning the buildings and site and to request your comments concerning the preliminary negative findings regarding consideration of structures in the E5625 complex for the National Historic Register. Both purposes are intertwined in the following discussion and will be addressed throughout this letter.

The evaluation criteria for determining eligibility of structures for consideration for inclusion in the National Historic Register is outlined in 36 CFR 60. For the sake of completeness, the criteria will be reiterated here from the *National Register Bulletin* (15) page 2.

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and

- That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

- That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

- That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

- That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
These criteria are addressed in the following discussion.

The E5625 complex at Edgewood area of Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) today consists of nine buildings (see attached diagram of complex). The structures are E5616, E5617, E5618, E5621, E5625, E5626, E5627, E5632, and E5633. A photograph of each building from four different angles is enclosed. Pictures for each building are on a separate labeled sheet. (Two sets of the pictures are enclosed for your use.)

With the exception of E5626 and E5632, the structures were built in the 1940s. Each building over the course of more than 50 years has been used for several different operations, except for the two earlier named buildings. Building E5625 was the central laboratory structure in the complex where research and development activities were conducted. While E5625 and related support buildings were used to conduct innovative research on the application of new compounds for warfare purposes, there was probably no one significant discovery or new process or procedure which had a significant impact on the research and development community or chemical warfare community. Likewise, no outstanding or significant scientist, such as a noble laureate, has been mentioned as conducting research in the laboratories which led to such an award.

The structures in the E5625 complex are not uniquely designed or built solely for one specific purpose. Most of the buildings are identical to structures built in the late 1930s and early 1940s at other military research facilities such as Niagara Falls, New York, and Midland, Michigan. In fact, several of the available original blueprints and drawings for the structures built in the E5625 complex (original 87 complex) indicate that they are the same plans used at these other sites. The difference between sites is that at APG a different numbering system was employed.

The integrity of style and purpose of the E5625 complex has not been retained. Even though the buildings have not been moved from their original location, at least two buildings have been rebuilt or replaced. Also, not all of the structures built for the original purpose of producing CC2 for the World War II war effort are standing. In addition, since 1986, the buildings have not been maintained and are rather dilapidated. Architectural changes have been made over the years to the inside of buildings, altering the original style, and, in some cases, function. Thus, the buildings in the compound have not retained their original look and design.

The land on which the E5625 complex is built is a fill area adjacent to a wetland or swampy basin in the Bush River peninsula. Consequently, the land has been disturbed and the possibility of finding any archeological remains in situ is quite remote.

According to the summary information outlined above, the current structures in the E5625 complex, therefore, should not be considered for examination and evaluation for the National Historic Register. Similarly, the site itself should not be considered a possible location for discovering archeological material culture in situ. Therefore, it is unlikely that any significant person or event, distinctive architectural style nor special integrity of location or design, nor strong possibility of discovering any in situ archeological remains.
As a result of the previous mentioned information, ANL is requesting on behalf of Mr. John Wrobel and Aberdeen Proving Ground, preliminary determination of the historical and archeological significance of the structures and site be made so that the project can proceed to plan for demolition of the structures in accordance with provisions under the current chemical weapons treaty.

Thank you for addressing these issues.

Sincerely,

Roger W. Anderson, Jr., Ph.D.
Center for Environmental Restoration Systems
Energy Systems Division

RWA/amf
Enclosures

cc: D.E. Edgar/ANL
HA- 2012
Pilot Plant Complex E5625
Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground
Harford County
Edgewood Quad