

The Herald-Mail ONLINE
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12/04/2007

Site plan approved for former Fort Ritchie base

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An approved site plan for the first phase of development at the former Fort Ritchie U.S. Army base in Cascade includes 21 buildings in the base's historic district.

The Washington County Planning Commission approved the plan Monday night for existing buildings on the southeast corner of the property to be redeveloped for office and commercial use.

The redevelopment plans include a restaurant, credit union, self-storage company, maintenance building and several office buildings.

No tenants have been secured for the buildings, according to William D. Hofmann of Corporate Office Properties Trust (COPT), the company that is redeveloping the former base.

Construction on a community center at the former base began in September. COPT President and CEO Randall Griffin said the community center should be open by July 4, 2008.

PenMar Development Corp. was created in 1997 to oversee the conversion of the base. The U.S. Army closed Fort Ritchie in 1998 as part of the Base Realignment and Closure program.

COPT plans to spend \$250 million turning the former base into a mix of offices, homes and commercial properties.

The project is projected to take 10 to 15 years.

The plans for the base include:

- 673 residential units, including apartments, condominiums, town houses and single-family houses
- 1.7 million square feet of office space
- 20 acres for community use

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