

CIA's Eastern Shore 'Safe'

2/6/79
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The eight-bedroom Eastern Shore mansion once used as a "safe" house for U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers is up for sale, and if you're interested, a friendly employe of the CIA will show you around the 79-acre spread.

The sprawling seven-bathroom house won fleeting attention in 1962 when the Central Intelligence Agency stashed Powers there. The pilot had just been released by the Soviet Union, where he had been shot down in 1960 as a spy in an international incident.

The federal government's newspa-

per ads for the mansion, however, fail to mention this as a selling point. No one connected with the sale will acknowledge even hearing of the incident.

Instead, the advertisements stress the home's view of "4,000 feet of rugged shoreline along the Choptank River," and the "manor house's" location in Talbot County, "a convenient 1½ hour drive from Baltimore and Washington."

Though the government is seeking bids on the house, and federal officials refuse to estimate its worth, one Talbot County resident guessed it would bring "at least \$350,000, and probably much more."

The General Services Administration will accept bids, submitted on the handy "Invitation for Bids, Bid and Acceptance Form No. GS-03-DRP-92079," until 11 a.m. March 11, 1979.

Edith Costello, of the CIA, will show prospective buyers around by special appointment.

GSA began running advertisements, sporting a sailboat in placid waters in front of a baronial home, in newspapers from Washington to Philadelphia last weekend.

Calls for information started to pour into GSA yesterday, according to Robert Irwin, of the Real Property Division.

House' Is Up for Sale

The GSA handles the sale of all the federal government's "surplus real property," which more often falls into the category of old military installations than massive riverside estates, Irwin said.

Mary Swane, a Talbot County reporter who discovered Powers' presence at the estate in 1962 said the home "was considered very grand compared to the houses around it," but "was nothing" compared to some of the county's antebellum brick mansions.

The home was built in the 1930s by a wealthy Baltimore man, owned for a

time by a local Talbot County family and then sold to the government.

Its chained entrance path through the woods and "No Trespassing" sign after that was a tip to everyone, according to Swain, that it was being used for secret purposes. "It was very quiet, everything they did there," she said. But Swain said after she reported the Powers incident, a CIA agent told her, "I'd ruined the place. They'd never be able to use it again."

So the home's history after that remains shrouded in secrecy.

"It was used for training," the GSA's Irwin said cryptically.

"Training for what?"

"That," said Irwin, "is classified."