



Frederick County Register Newsletter

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HELP!

We need a better name for this newsletter. If you have a catchy suggestion, call the Staff at 301-600-2958, or email us at:
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Defining Historic Districts (Last of three installments)

People Protecting Community Resources: Strengths of Local Listing. Does listing in the National Register of Historic Places mean that your house and neighborhood will be protected from time and change – forever preserved? Many people think so, and this is a common misunderstanding. While National Register listing is a tremendous honor and carries some financial opportunities as well, *“Under Federal law, owners of private property listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose, provided that there is no Federal government involvement.”* (Quote from the National Register of Historic Places website www.nps.gov/nr/results.htm)

In contrast, local designation can be a first step toward legally preserving historic landmarks, neighborhoods, and downtown areas in your community, as opposed to the more honorary National Register listing and Federal and state law. So, although private property owners do have rights under any type of listing or designation, it’s important to be aware of what those rights really are – and how effectively administered local laws, in particular, may work to protect the character of your neighborhood.

Note the basic differences in protection and requirements between Frederick County Register local designation and National Register listing:

Local Designation (as part of Frederick County’s historic preservation ordinance)

- ◆ Designates historic properties on the basis of **local criteria and local procedures.**
- ◆ Sets boundaries based on the distribution pattern of **historic properties, and other community considerations.**

- ◆ Provides recognition of a **community’s significant properties.**
- ◆ Coupled with the design review process under the County Historic Preservation Commission, **provides protection of character-defining exterior features** of a property, but not the interiors.
- ◆ **Qualifies a property for financial assistance,** such as the Maryland State Heritage Preservation Tax Credit and the Frederick County Property Tax Credit for Historic Properties.
- ◆ **Provides for review of proposed demolitions within the district,** and can provide legal delays to allow for preservation alternatives to be considered.
- ◆ **Requires County Historic Preservation Commission review and approval** for all changes to the exterior appearance, setting, and environment of historic properties, and review approval for all **new construction, such as in-fill (adjacent new buildings on a site or on vacant parcels).**

National Register Listing

- ◆ Designates historic properties based on **uniform national criteria and procedures.**
- ◆ **Sets boundaries for historic districts based on the actual distribution pattern** of intact historic properties in the area.
- ◆ **Provides recognition by the Federal government** that an area has historical or archeological significance.
- ◆ Requires the effects of Federally assisted work projects (actions) on historic properties be considered prior to the commencement of work. Makes available **Federal tax incentives** for qualified



Elisha Beall House
(Boxwood Lodge)

“If you’re a realtor watch this newsletter and the local media for information about the next offering of the Realtors Course in Historic Maryland Properties at Frederick Community College!”



Elisha Beall House
(Boxwood Lodge)

rehabilitation projects. Requires conformance to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

- ◆ **Makes a property eligible for certain types of grants and loans, if selected by the State Historic Preservation Office (Maryland Historical Trust) for assistance.** Selected projects require conformance to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (could involve other standards than Rehabilitation).

So, let’s sum up some of the benefits of local historic districts. Local districts protect the investments of owners and residents. Buyers will know through property disclosure forms that the aspects that make a particular area attractive will be protected over time. Real estate agents in many areas use historic district status as a marketing tool to sell properties. **(If you’re a realtor watch this newsletter and the local media for information about the next offering of the Realtors Course in Historic Maryland Properties at Frederick Community College!)**

Local districts encourage better design. Comparative studies have shown that there is a greater sense of relatedness, more innovative use of materials, and greater public appeal within historic districts than in areas without historic designation. Think of the effect of “McMansions”! There is little chance in a historic district of this type of flagrant disconnect in design.

Local districts help the environment. Far better to reuse, recycle, and repair buildings and materials than stuffing our landfills with the work of craftsmen of previous generations.

Local districts help explain the development of a place, the source of inspiration, and technological advances. They are a record of our communities and ourselves. They are a living history lesson that children can easily relate to because it’s often their home neighborhood.

Local districts can result in positive impacts on tourism. Where it’s appropriate to encourage tourism in the County, a local district that is aesthetically cohesive and tells a story of the past can be an important attraction. Even if the district is not a tourism destination, its appearance and flavor impress anyone who sees it as a local asset.

Local districts indicate stability. Businesses look for communities that offer their employees a higher quality of life, which is enhanced by successful local preservation programs. The businesses do not have to be physically located in a local district to gain the benefits of local historic districts, which have a positive effect on the whole County.

Local districts provide a sense of empowerment and confidence. When a community comes together to create a historic district, the process and results impart a “strength in numbers” effect, creating social cohesion and that strong sense of place that so many people look for in their home areas.

We hope this three-part discussion of historic districts has been helpful to those who are thinking about their area or neighborhood in Frederick County and how to keep its wonderful qualities from changing too fast or for the worse. We know that change will happen, even with the best of programs to help in preserving areas. Local designation can, however, give you the tools and knowledge to help hold a moderate pace.

Now, for the latest update on this topic! The Frederick County Historic Preservation Commission and staff are undertaking the compiling of a new tool for citizens interested in the local historic district designation process. Starting in October 2007, the Commission will be reviewing sections of a “Historic District Manual” that takes property owners through each step in the designation process. Each step explains what needs to be done, offers suggestions for how the local interest group can gather the necessary information, where to find the information, and clearly defines who

does what and why each step is needed. The Commission hopes to have the manual in draft form by January 2008 and then we will be contacting local organizations and neighborhood civic groups to show how the manual may be used. The Commission's meetings are open to the public and are televised on Cable Channel 19 four

times a year. Anyone interested in how the manual will evolve is invited to come to the meetings or tune in when we're on TV. Meetings are at 6 PM on the first Wednesday of each month. November 7th's meeting is televised.



Greetings from the Chairman

As Frederick County continues to grow, more and more pressure is being exerted on our historic small communities. People are beginning to realize that they have to do something NOW to try and protect their small town way of life. When some people suggest that they might want to look at banding together and create an historic district the first thing that comes up is that their property values will be hurt. The exact opposite of that, in fact, is what really happens.

A recent study by a well-known real estate consulting firm, which is often used by the state of Maryland, turned up some interesting facts:

- ◆ Over the long run, properties in historic districts appreciated 28.9% faster than properties in the same community outside of the local designated historic district.
- ◆ Historic districts add value to a community and the properties in the entire community.
- ◆ Private investment is typically higher in the historic district than in the rest of the area
- ◆ Historic districts set up an environment in which it is logical to invest in residential and commercial properties because of the protection offered the investment.
- ◆ Historic districts provide the quality control needed to preserve a community's identity and sense of place.

The conclusions reached in the Maryland study have been echoed in other studies across the country. Indiana found that the investment protection provided by local districts provides a catalyst for home ownership that stabilizes the community. They also found that properties in local designated districts appreciated significantly greater than similar properties located only in a National Register district. Studies in South Carolina found that local historic district designation increases house values. It rewards owners with a higher rate of return on their investment because of the protection. House prices in Columbia historic districts increased 26% per year faster than the market as a whole. House prices in the Beaufort historic district sold for 21% more than those not in the district.

Throughout the country, even in today's depressed residential real estate market, houses in the local districts tend to sell 50% faster than similar properties outside of the district.

If the idea of a local designated historic district seems to make sense to you, or your neighbors, please contact us for information. We will be happy to come out and meet with you to provide more information. There is obviously no obligation and no cost.

Bernie Callan



Smith's Store
& Residence

“As Frederick County continues to grow, more and more pressure is being exerted on our historic small communities. People are beginning to realize that they have to do something NOW to try and protect their small town way of life.”



Smith's Store &
Residence Door detail

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**

[www.co.frederick.md.us/
planning/historic
preservation](http://www.co.frederick.md.us/planning/historic/preservation)

*"We will probably
be judged not by the
monuments we
build but by those
we have destroyed."*

*- New York Times Editorial
October 30, 1963*

Frederick County
Historic Preservation Commission
(Fall 2007)

G. Bernard Callan, Jr., Chair
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Staff:
Janet L. Davis,
Historic Preservation Planner

Traci J. Ott,
Administrative Specialist

JUST WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

If you are reading this newsletter for interest or curiosity, not as a County Register owner, we hope to provide you with good information on a variety of things: how to enroll a property in the Frederick County Register and what the benefits and requirements are. Informative websites will be listed in each issue. We aim to become your best reference on historic preservation in Frederick County and provide you the information you need to understand what "the neighborhood" is all about

So, welcome home neighbors!



Frederick County Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Dates Fall 2007

Meeting Dates

October 3, 2007
at 6:00pm

November 7, 2007
at 6:00pm
(televised)

December 5, 2007
at 6:00pm

Application Deadlines

September 24, 2007

October 22, 2007

November 19, 2007

Special Events

Pioneer America Society
Annual Meeting
Oct. 10-13, 2007
Hagerstown, MD

MAHDC Workshop:
McMansions and other
Stock Plan Housing
Oct. 27, 2007
Havre De Grace, MD

Websites of Interest

Maryland Historical Trust
www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net

Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area
www.heartofthecivilwar.org

National Register of Historic Places
www.cr.nps.gov/nr

Preserve America
www.preserveamerica.gov

