



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

Jan H. Gardner
County Executive

Steven C. Horn, Division Director
Kimberly Golden Brandt, Director

FREDERICK COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

September 7, 2022

Address: 11309 Rocky Ridge Road

Meeting Date: September 7, 2022

Applicant: Deborah Donohue

Report Date: August 29, 2022

Case No.: COA 22-10

Staff: Amanda Whitmore

Proposal: Review site plan to establish event venue

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Prosperity Mansion Farm is listed on the County Register of Historic Properties (CR # 16-02). The property consists of the entire parcel, which includes the main house and two outbuildings. The period of significance for this property is 1800 to 1890. The property can be accessed from Detour Road or Rocky Ridge Road.



Fig. 1: Subject property.

Frederick County: Rich History, Bright Future

30 North Market Street, Frederick, MD 21701 • 301-600-1138 • Fax 301-600-1645
www.FrederickCountyMD.gov

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to establish an event venue on 1.6 acres of land using an existing macadam tent pad site located to the rear of the historic building complex. A 83 feet long by 43 feet wide by 20 feet tall tent will cover the tent pad. A brick patio area is located west of the tent. Two handicap parking spaces are proposed to abut the tent area to the south, with a brick walk buffering between the tent and parking. An additional 53 grass parking spaces are proposed further south of the tent area. The area is accessed by an existing 10-foot-wide dirt and stone driveway off Detour Road. A restroom trailer is also proposed for the event area.

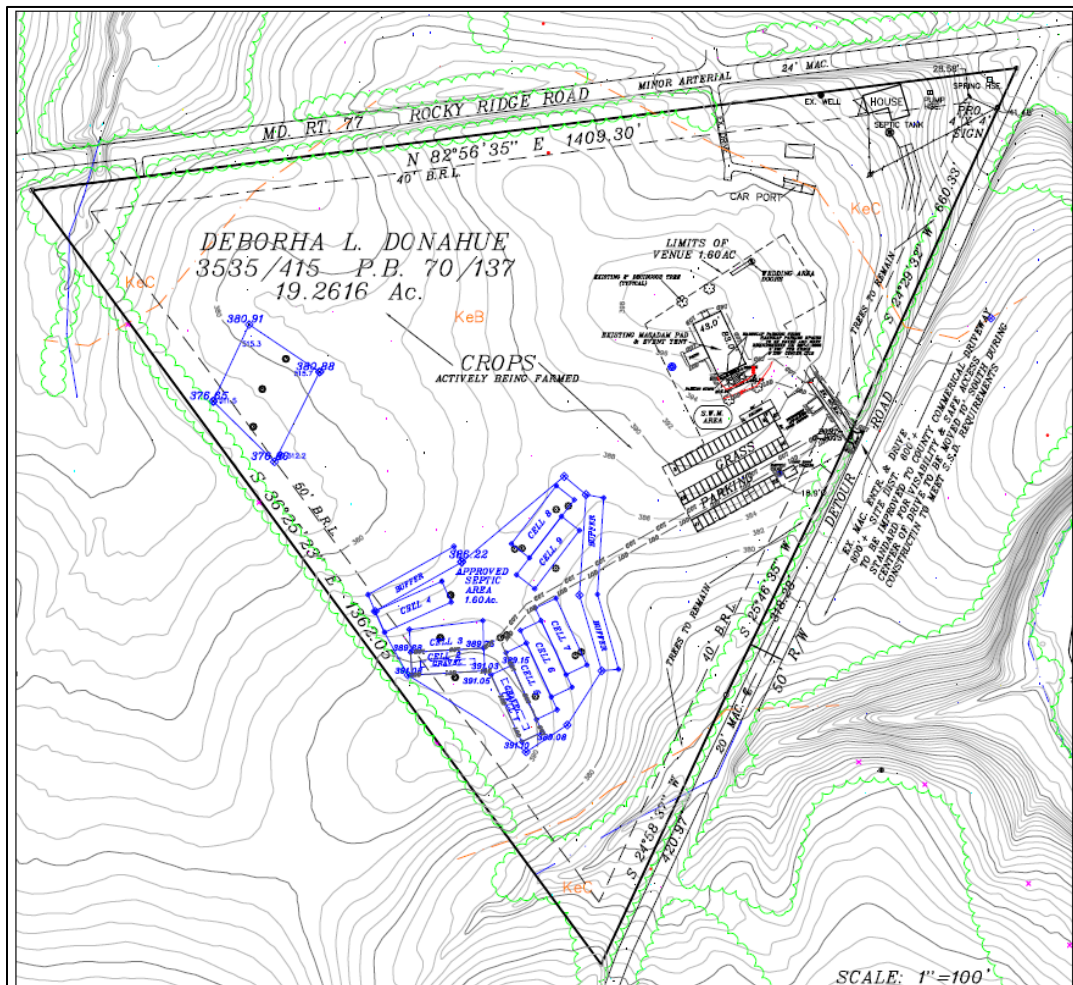


Fig. 2: Prosperity Mansion Farms Proposed Site Plan.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations within a designated County Register property several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the *Frederick County Historic Preservation Code: Chapter 1-23*, the *Frederick County Register of Historic Places Design Guidelines*

(*Guidelines*), and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

Frederick County Code: Chapter 1-23-7B

- (1) In reviewing applications, the Commission shall give consideration to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the landmark, site, or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area; the relationship of the exterior architectural features of a landmark or structure to the remainder of the landmark or structure and to the surrounding area; the general compatibility of proposed exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials to the landmark, site, or structure and to the surrounding area; and any other factors including aesthetic factors which the Commission deems to be pertinent.
- (2) The Commission shall consider only exterior features of a landmark or structure and shall not consider any interior arrangements.
- (3) The Commission shall not disapprove an application except with respect to the several factors specified in paragraph (1) above.
- (4) The Commission shall be strict in its judgment of plans for sites or structures determined by research to be of historic, archeological, or architectural significance. The Commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for sites or structures of little historic, archeological, or architectural significance, or of plans involving new construction, unless in the Commission's judgment such plans would seriously impair the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of surrounding sites or structures. The Commission is not required to limit construction, reconstruction, or alteration to the architectural style of any one (1) period.

Frederick County Register of Historic Places Design Guidelines

The *Guidelines* contain a Setting and Site Chapter (Chapter 3), Building Exteriors (Chapter 4), Landscape and Site Features Chapter (Chapter 5), Ancillary Structures (Chapter 6), and Other Cultural Resources (Chapter 9) that should be referred to when reviewing this COA application. Further analysis of how this request meets the *Guidelines* is provided in the Evaluation section below.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The *Standards* define rehabilitation as "the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values." The *Standards* that are most applicable to the application before the Commission are as follows:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

STAFF DISCUSSION

The applicant sought a special exception to establish a “Facility for Functions” at the property, which was approved by the Frederick County Board of Appeals (Case #B-18-09) on June 26, 2018. The applicant then nominated the property to the County Register, which was designated by the County Council on March 2, 2021. The applicant is now working on site plan approval and is seeking a recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission on the proposed site plan. The recommendation of the Commission will be incorporated into the site plan for the Planning Commission’s review and/or included into the staff report that accompanies the site plan for the Planning Commission. The site plan is still undergoing review by several county agencies.

Staff analysis of the *Guidelines* for this project as shown on the plan is as follows:

Guideline	Met?	Comments
IEI: Conformance with Local, State, and Federal Codes	Yes	County Code requires that the driveway be widened to provide access for both an emergency vehicle and an additional vehicle. The <i>Guidelines</i> must conform to the County Code.
3A1: Circulation Systems	Partially	Circulation systems include driveways, parking areas, walkways, and pathways and are important characteristics of a setting. The <i>Guidelines</i> recommend that the width, paving material, and other character-defining features of historic circulation systems should be retained and preserved, when possible, and that the expansion of circulation systems can negatively impact the historic character of a setting.

		<p>Additionally new work should be compatible with the size, scale, materials, and placement of historic circulation features.</p> <p>The existing 10' stone and dirt drive from Detour Road is proposed to be improved to county commercial standards for visibility and safe access per the County Code. The plan shows the driveway widened to the west and indicates the center of the driveway is to be moved 10' south to meet Seeing Site Distance (S.S.D.) requirements. Additionally, the Life Safety Plan Reviewer commented the driveway must be widened a minimum of 16 feet. A brick walkway is proposed from two accessible parking spaces to the tent. Additional proposed parking is shown as grass.</p> <p>Since the driveway is required to be widened and a turnaround needed to meet County Code requirements, Staff recommends the width is widened to the minimum permitted by County Code, 16 feet, and that the material of the driveway and turnaround remains as stone or other compatible material. Asphalt would not be an appropriate material since it is not compatible to existing materials on the property. The proposed brick walkway would meet compatibility since other existing walkways near the historic house are also brick. The material for the accessible parking spaces was not identified but Staff suggests brick as an acceptable material to match the proposed walkway or concrete. Staff has no issue with the grass parking.</p>
3A3: Preserving Historic Settings	Yes	The location of the proposed event venue meets the <i>Guidelines</i> since it is in an area that does not alter the historic character of the property, retains important viewsheds by locating the tent away from and out of view from character-defining buildings, and maintains spatial relationships between buildings and major landscape patterns.
4G: Signs	Somewhat	The <i>Guidelines</i> state that new signs should be designed so that they are appropriate in size, scale, and materiality to the building and installed so that they do not damage historic building fabric. The sign is depicted

		<p>on the site plan to be freestanding and located east of the historic house, close to where Rocky Ridge and Detour Roads intersect; therefore, it would not damage historic building fabric. However, additional details on the material and sign height with base are not on the plan. The maximum sign height permitted by Code is 15 feet. Staff recommends a wooden sign to be compatible with the site and that details of the base, design, and final size are presented to the Commission under a separate Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) prior to applying for a sign permit.</p>
5D1: Circulation	Mostly	<p>The <i>Guidelines</i> state that historic vehicular circulation patterns should be retained, whenever possible. County Code requires the driveway to be widened and a turnaround added; therefore, retaining the historic circulation pattern is not possible. Additionally, the <i>Guidelines</i> state new parking areas should be designed to be unobtrusive and located away from the historic structures. The proposed parking is located to the rear of the property away from the historic buildings.</p>
5D1: Circulation; Paving	Somewhat	<p>Historic paving materials should be maintained. The site plan shows an existing stone and dirt surface; however, a note mentions the driveway to be improved to County commercial driveway standards. Clarification from the applicant on whether the driveway surface will be maintained should be provided.</p> <p>Additionally, the <i>Guidelines</i> state that new paving should be in keeping with the character and appearance of existing historic paving on the site or in the neighborhood. A brick walk is proposed between the tent and handicap parking spaces. Brick walkways already exist at the property, so this is an appropriate material. The paving material for the two handicap parking spaces is not indicated on the plan. Staff recommends brick paving for the spaces to match the proposed walkway or concrete. If the paving material is not identified on the plan at the time it goes to the Planning Commission, the applicant will</p>

		need to return to the Commission to obtain a COA to approve the paving material later.
6C: Recommendations for Ancillary Structures	Mostly	Tents and restroom trailers are not specifically addressed in the <i>Guidelines</i> since they are temporary in nature, however, they best fit for consideration under Chapter 6 Ancillary Structures. The location of the tent and restroom trailer meets the <i>Guidelines</i> since they are in the rear and less visible from the public right-of-way. They also do not convey a false sense of history and will not be confused with the historic features of the site. Additionally, they are screened by existing vegetation along Detour Road and a tree line that runs north-south through the property.
9D3: Identifying and Protecting Archeological Resources	Yes	Archeological resources should be protected in place and adverse effects avoided. There are no known significant archeological resources in the proposed event venue or septic disturbance areas. However, the applicant should be aware that there is a possibility that archeological artifacts could be accidentally discovered during any ground-disturbing activities, including grading and excavation. Artifacts could include stone tools (arrowheads, for example), pottery, metals, brick, glass, bone, etc. By law, all artifacts belong to the property owner, unless they are human remains which cannot be disturbed without written authorization from the State's Attorney.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission **conditionally approve** COA #22-10 under the criteria for Application Review in Chapter 1-23-7(B) (1) with the conditions that the site plan show:

- the driveway width of 16 feet;
- the paving material for the driveway, turnaround, and accessible parking area be identified as maintaining existing materials for the driveway and turnaround, brick or concrete for the accessible parking, or another acceptable paving material or that a note on the plan is added that paving materials will be approved by the Commission under a separate Certificate of Appropriateness application; and

- a note that signage details will be reviewed by the HPC under a separate COA application, prior to submission of a sign permit.

With these added conditions it can be found that the proposal: will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource; is compatible in character to the landmark and the surrounding area; will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired; and is consistent with the *Guidelines* and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* #1, #2, #9, and #10.