



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

30 North Market Street, Third Floor Frederick, Maryland 21701 (301) 600-1147



CASE NO. CR 22-02

NOMINATION TO COUNTY REGISTER

STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY

Property: Steiner Smith Farmstead
9723 Steiner Smith Road, Woodsboro

Applicant: Stephen and Anna Seiss Cooper

Public Hearing to consider placing the property located at 9723 Steiner Smith Road, Steiner Smith Farmstead, on the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. Submitted by Stephen and Anna Seiss Cooper, property owner of record.

The public hearing for designation to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places will be held at 7:00 p.m., or thereafter, on December 7, 2022.

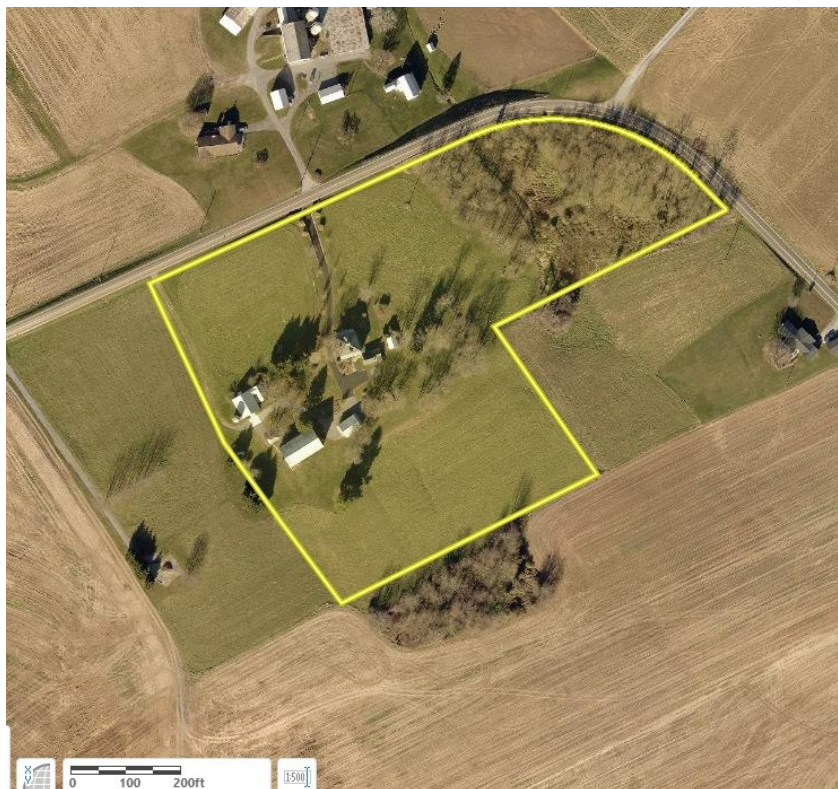


Figure 1: Subject Property

DESIGNATION STATUS

The property is not part of any nominated district and has not been surveyed by the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. The property contains the historic house and all associated farm outbuildings. The nominated property encompasses 11.23 acres of land.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The applicant submitted a completed County Register nomination form, written historical and architectural narratives for the house, a summary of property ownership, historic and modern maps, and digital photographs.

SITE VISITS

Staff worked with the owner of the property and scheduled site visits on December 3rd and 4th, 2022. Commissioners were notified of the pending nomination and encouraged to visit the site on these dates.

REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1) Analysis

The documentation submitted by the applicant regarding the history and significance of the property clearly establishes the historical and architectural significance of the Steiner Wolfe Smith Farmstead, indicating that the property is eligible for listing under Criteria 6B(1A), 6B(1D), and 6B(2A). The period of significance for the property is circa 1850 to 1973, the time the farm was first recorded in the Census through 50 years ago when the Smith family owned the property.

2) History Summary

The land was first purchase as part of an over 1000 acres survey area known as “Joseph’s Friendship” by Samuel Fleming, who was a land prospector from Lancaster, PA. His grandson, also named Samuel Fleming, was the first occupant that has records of his farming output and is known to have lived on the land. The farm was a mix of grain, corn, wheat, and oats, and dairy, primarily butter, according to the 1850’s *Production of Agriculture* survey. Following Samuel Fleming’s death, the farm was auctioned off to his nephew Charlton Otto in 1856. Otto began switching the grain farm to a dairy farm between 1870 and 1880. This transition from grain to dairy was a typical pattern for many farms in the mid-Maryland region. Otto lived with his sister Lucinda Otto and other family members, who helped with labor around the farm, as well as hired farm laborers. One of these family members was his niece, Florence Smith.

When Otto was in his seventies, he sold the property to his seven-year-old nephew, Richard Paul Smith, eldest son of Charles Edward and Florence Smith in 1897. Richard P. Smith moved to the City of Frederick to work for the Hagerstown & Frederick Railroad Co. before the family moved

to 'his' farm. Charles Edward and Florence Smith built the house as it exists today in the 1910s. This new house was built southwest of the house that Otto lived in, based on 19th and 20th century maps.

Charles and Florence Smith passed away in 1936 and 1938, respectively. The house and land were officially sold to Steiner Wolfe Smith, Richard Smith's younger brother, in 1956. Steiner Smith had worked on the farm and rented the home since his parents moved to live in Hagerstown with Richard P. Smith prior to their passing. Steiner Wolfe Smith was a large part of the Woodsboro community.

Like many farmers, he supplemented his dairy farm income in multiple ways including school bus driving, minor-league baseball umpiring, and being a longtime member of the board of the Woodsboro Savings Bank. Elizabeth Smith, Steiner Smith's wife, was an officer in the Woodsboro Homemakers Club, which was a women's philanthropic organization that organized health clinics, painted cemetery fences, collected aluminum for the World War II effort, and many other events and activities throughout the year. The Smith's owned the house until 1996 when it passed from the family line for the first time since the land was purchased in 1749.

3) Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Significance Criteria

The property is eligible for listing under this category for meeting criteria 6B(1A) and 6B(1D), as outlined in Chapter 1-23-6B(1) of the Frederick County Code:

- 6B(1A): *The property has significant character, interest, or value as part of development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county, state, or nation.*
- 6B(1D): *The property exemplifies cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of county and its communities.*

The property has significant character, interest, and value in the development and heritage of the County and exemplifies cultural, economic, social, and historic heritage of the county and its communities. The property is significant for its association with the broad pattern of agricultural history of Frederick County during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The history of the farmstead exemplifies both the agricultural and industrial transition that farming communities in mid-Maryland experienced between 1866 and 1946. The Smith family personifies this transition through their changes in agricultural practices and their participation in the growing urbanization and industrialization happening in mid-Maryland during the first half of the twentieth century.

4) Architectural and Design Significance Criteria

The property is also eligible under this category for meeting criterion 6B(2A) as outlined in Chapter 1-23-6B(2) of Frederick County Code:

- 6B(2A): *The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or architecture.*

The Steiner Wolfe Smith Farmstead is a mid-nineteenth century farm complex but the main house, and several outbuildings, were built ca. 1910s. Some of the outbuildings, particularly the bank barn, wagon shed, and corncribs, appear to have been part of the older nineteenth century farm, but the present-day main house was built just west of the no-longer-standing nineteenth century house.

The main house is an excellent example of an American foursquare and possibly based on a mail-order house design. These mail-order houses were often constructed by local contractors, sometimes using just design plans from catalogues. American foursquare houses were extremely popular in these catalogues and were part of the archetypal image of the American farmstead from 1915-1920.

The property retains its integrity and architectural significance.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Steiner Smith Farmstead for designation to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criteria 6B(1A), 6B(1D), and 6B(2A) as described in Section 1-23-6B of the County Code.

If the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recommends the property for local designation, the HPC will submit a letter of recommendation to the County Council for final action.