



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

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



CASE NO. CR 20-03

NOMINATION TO COUNTY REGISTER

STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY

Property: Fountain Rock Lime Kiln and Quarry
8511 Nature Center Place, Walkersville

Applicant: Frederick County Government

Public Hearing for consideration of placing the property located at 8511 Nature Center Place, Fountain Rock Lime Kiln and Quarry, on the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. Submitted by the Frederick County Government, 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 May 3, 2023.



Figure 1: Subject Property

DESIGNATION STATUS

The property is part of the Fountain Rock Co. Quarry & Housing Survey District, listed in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places as F-8-126. The property contains the historic lime kiln and quarry. The nominated property encompasses 15.66 acres of land.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

A completed County Register nomination form, written historical and architectural narratives, a summary of property ownership, historic and modern maps, and digital photographs are provided as supporting materials.

SITE VISITS

The property is within a public County Park and can be visited by Commissioners at any time. Commissioners were notified of the pending nomination and encouraged to visit the site.

REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1) Analysis

The documentation regarding the history and significance of the property clearly establishes the historical and architectural significance of the Fountain Rock Lime Kiln and Quarry, indicating that the property is eligible for listing under Criteria 6B(1A) and 6B(1D). The period of significance for the property is circa 1870s to 1950s, the time the lime kiln and quarry were operating.

2) History Summary

The lime kilns and quarry operated from 1872 to 1955 and produced powdered burnt lime, used for field fertilizer, and crushed stone, for road surfacing. Six of the original eight kilns are still present at Fountain Rock Park. Workmen quarried limestone from the quarry site, heated it in the kilns to produce chunks of white powdery lime and hauled it in one-horse carts to the grinder/slaking warehouse, immediately behind (west of) the kilns, where it was further processed into hydrated, or slaked, lime. Lime was primarily used by farmers to balance the pH of the soil in their fields and was crucial to growing healthy crops. Limestone that did not go through the process of burning was ground and sent through a sieve to be sorted into different sizes of gravel. This gravel was sold as road materials. A railway south of the kiln, along the southern edge of the modern Fountain Rock Park, supported the industrial site by distributing the gravel and agricultural lime to the county and surrounding areas.

In 1857, Adam Diehl purchased from George and Cornelia Potts, the 395-acre mansion-house farm developed by Edward Owings at the end of the 18th century. The land was among the most fertile in Frederick County, underlain with limestone and including an artesian spring called "Fountain Rock." Within the next ten years, Adam Diehl transformed the pastoral landscape of

his farm to include an industrial limestone quarry and kiln complex. By 1872, the Frederick branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad passed through the farm on its way into Frederick.

In July 1907, John Stimmel sold the quarry and kiln property to Leonard E. Barrick for \$20,000.¹ Then in September 1907, Barrick sold the parcel for \$28,000 to Fountain Rock Lime Company, described as "Containing twenty-one Acres and thirty-five square perches of land...including horses, mules, carts, harness, steam-drill, boiler, quarry tools and private telephone line from Fountain Rock to Railroad Station at Walkersville, Md."

During the National Register of Historic Places Determination of Eligibility process, the researchers interviewed Teddy and Bob Handley, who grew up in the tenement housing on the Fountain Rock Lime Company property. During World War II, the Fountain Rock Lime Company lost most of its employees as the men went off to war. The Handleys remembered German and Italian prisoners of war were bused to the quarry to provide labor for the lime industry. One German prisoner of war, Otto Keihling, gave young Bob Handley a bow and arrow for his 9th birthday. Many of the German prisoners of war stayed in contact with the residents of Fountain Rock when they returned to Germany. However, this connection ended soon after it began because of fears that their letters were being read by East German authorities, specifically the Stasi.

McKendree Fulks, who took over the Fountain Rock Corporation in 1975, and individual ownership of the property after 1982 capped the spring and added the surrounding infill, completely changing the appearance of spring and its associated pond. It was also Fulks who moved The Cottage to its new location beside the Handley House on the south side of the lane and added the Meeting House (now Nature Center). In 1983, Fulks sold the Fountain Rock Spring, quarry and kiln property to the Frederick County Board of County Commissioners.

In 1987, Alice Nemitsas, a Park Naturalist, presented the idea for a park at the Fountain Rock property to the Frederick County Commissioners. The lime kilns at this time were unrecognizable, covered with vines and trees. From 1987 to 1991, Nemitsas would research the land's history and develop free educational environmental programs. The County Commissioners approved the final master plan for Fountain Rock Park, making it the County's first park dedicated to the environment. While Nemitsas primarily focused on creating an environmental park with a nature center, one of the first park improvements, in 1995, was stabilizing the lime kiln. A second lime kiln stabilization project was completed in 2002.

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:

¹ FRLR, Liber 281, folio 134.

- 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.*

Fountain Rock Park is significant for its association with limestone quarrying and lime production, which were important industries in Frederick County in the 19th and 20th centuries. In active operation from the 1870s until ca. 1950s, the complex reveals the basic technologies involved in the agricultural lime industry as well as the cultural landscape that developed around this primarily rural industry. Once a noisy industrial area with its row of workers' tenement housing lining the land, it is now part of the Fountain Rock Park, a quiet nature preserve that incorporated the memory of Frederick County's agricultural lime industry. Although the two seem opposed, the park retains a significant sense of the once active industrial and residential complex through the remaining buildings and structures and their association within the historic landscape.

4) Architectural and Design Significance Criteria

Fountain Rock Park is a 22.5-acre park southwest of Walkersville, located at 8511 Nature Center Place. The Limestone Quarry is in the northeast corner of the park and is now water-filled, a natural process associated with abandoned limestone quarries. The north and east rims of the quarry pond are cliff lined. The brick, shed-roofed dynamite shed still stands on the northeast rim of the quarry.

Built into a hillside immediately south of the quarry is the remaining six-pot Lime Kiln structure. Initially stabilized in 1995, the stone walled structure is approximately 25 feet high and fronts on the west and south sides of the hill. The south wall has three remaining kilns and faces the nearby railroad right-of-way. The west wall, also with three kilns, fronts toward the residential complex. The kilns have arched tunnels for the fire and removal of burned lime at the bottom; the open pots (or silos) can be observed at the top of the hill. They are brick-lined, round structures.

Immediately off the northwest corner of the kiln structure are three parallel stone walls in an east-west direction. These are the raised foundation remains of the Crusher/Sorting Shed. The frame superstructure sat on top of these three walls and housed the sorting sieve. The sorting cylinder is now displayed within the remaining walls and is considered a contributing object. The sorter was fed through a hopper from the east gable end of the building. The concrete hopper foundation remains on the hillside east of the Sorting Shed remains. The two open areas between the three raised stone foundation walls were passageways used by horse-carts and trucks where they were filled with sorted stone for transport, to be sold primarily for road beds.

On top of the kiln hill is the stone base, the only remains of the brick boiler chimney. Nearby, to the southeast, is the only remaining section of the large complex of sheds that housed the grinder, toolshed, and packing and shipping equipment. The remaining shed, here called the

Blacksmith's Shed because it contains what appears to be a blacksmith's forge, consists of stone foundation walls enclosing a below-grade space with the forge. These walls support a low, partially collapsed shed roof structure. The collapsed section of the roof, on the south end, appears to have covered a large ground-level room of unknown use. Remains of the large shed complex, that appears in the historic photograph on the east side of the Blacksmith Shed, are in the wooded area to the east. They consist of massive stone walls against the east side of the kiln hill, as much as 20 feet high, with concrete floors. An iron sheet-lined shoot runs from the rear of the Blacksmith Shed into the Grinder Shed area where the remains of the grinder equipment are still in place. There appears to be a small, vaulted oven in the southeast corner of the collapsed part of the Blacksmith Shed with a drain possibly for slaking lime.

The kilns have undergone two stabilization projects and retain their integrity.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Fountain Rock Lime Kilns and Quarry for designation to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criteria 6B(1A) and 6B(1D) 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.