



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

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



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### CASE NO. DOE 23-04 DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY TO COUNTY REGISTER STAFF REPORT

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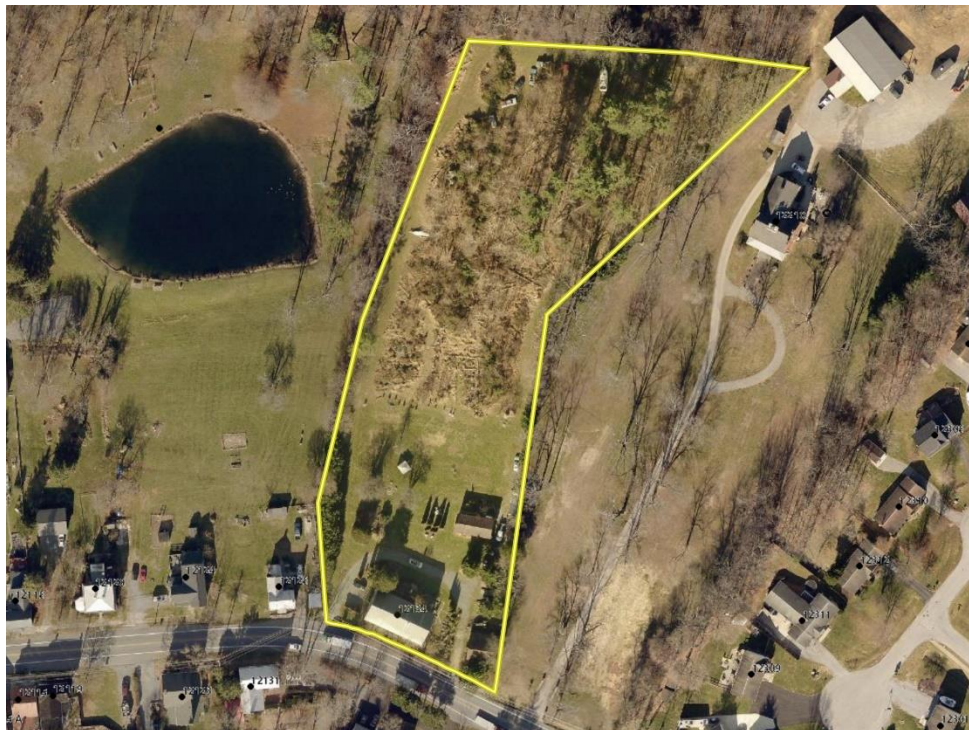
#### SUMMARY

**Property:** Liberty Female Seminary  
12134 Main Street, Libertytown

**Applicant:** Lisa and Edna Kokal

Public Hearing for consideration of determining the property located at 12134 Main Street, Liberty Female Seminary, eligible for the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. Submitted by Lisa and Edna Kokal, property owners of record.

The public hearing for the determination of eligibility to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places will be held at 6:30 p.m., or thereafter, on November 1, 2023.



**Figure 1: Subject Property outlined in blue.**

## **DESIGNATION STATUS**

The property is listed in the Libertytown Survey District F-8-63 as a contributing structure. The property contains the stone academy, now a residence, and two barns. The nominated property encompasses approximately 0.344 acres of land.

## **SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

A completed County Register nomination form, maps, a statement of significance, and photographs were submitted. Staff assisted with writing the architectural and historical description of the property.

## **SITE VISITS**

Site visits were scheduled for October 28 and 29, 2023. Commissioners were notified of the pending nomination and encouraged to visit the site on these dates. Commissioners who could not attend were encouraged to view the property from the public right-of-way.

## **REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS**

### **1) Analysis**

The architectural and historical significance of the Liberty Female Seminary is documented in the supporting materials. The property is associated with early education and women's history. Based on the information provided, Staff finds the property is eligible for listing under Criteria 6B(1A and 6B(2A).

### **2) History Summary**

The Liberty Female Seminary building was built circa 1820-1825 in Libertytown. The school opened April 1826. The Liberty Female Seminary was the first and only female seminary in Libertytown and may have been one of the first established in the county. The first headmaster was Elihu H. Rockwell, who has been accredited with starting the school; however, an advertisement in the *Frederick-Town Herald* dated May 20, 1826 suggests that the Trustees of the Liberty-Town Lancastrian and Grammer School may have been the founders. The May 20, 1826 advertisement announced the engagement of Mr. Rockwell as headmaster. In 1834, Elihu Rockwell purchased the property, but ceased teaching at the school in 1837. He sold the property in 1852 to Jonathan Browning. The seminary continued under Browning's ownership with Mr. Brockett serving as headmaster and Rev. and Mrs. L. A. Loveland serving as teachers. The school continued to operate through 1873. No records have been identified to indicate the school

continued past 1873. The Brownings maintained ownership until 1909 when it was sold to Roy Gardner. It most likely was converted in the late 1800s or early 1900s into housing. The period of significance for this property is circa 1826 through 1873 when it operated as the Liberty Female Seminary.

### **3) Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Significance Criteria**

The property is eligible for listing under this category for meeting criteria 6B(1A) 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.*

The property has significant character, interest, and value in the development, heritage, and culture of the County, State, and nation. The property is the earliest educational institution in Libertytown and is possibly the earliest Female Seminary in Frederick County and the State. Documented female seminaries on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties date between 1835 and 1876. In Frederick County, other female seminaries included the Frederick Female Seminary (opened 1845), the Burkittsville Female Seminary (opened 1866), and Barleywood Female Seminary (opened 1835). All the currently known seminaries in Frederick County opened after Liberty Female Seminary.

Women's education in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century underwent a significant change. Prior to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, women were viewed as intellectually inferior to men and access to education was limited. However, during the early decades of the 1800s, proponents of more rigorous education for women focused on the influence an educated woman could have in the home. Education of women shifted from solely ornamental and artistic pursuits to more "masculine" areas of study such as Latin, science, and mathematics. By the 1830s, wealthy parents were expected to send their daughters to educational institutions that offered these subjects that would allow their daughters to think for themselves, be a positive influence in their homes and communities, and by extension, the country.

In addition to its significance to women's education, it is also significant for early education in Libertytown. Although it was a private institution, it was the first school to be built solely for the purpose of education in Libertytown. The first public school in Libertytown was not in operation until 1850. The trustees of the Liberty Female Seminary referred to themselves as the Liberty-Town Lancastrian and Grammer School, indicating that the school may have utilized a model of education known as the Lancasterian system or also referred to as the Monitorial system. This was an instruction model laid out by Joseph Lancaster, a British-born educator. It was built to accommodate the education of many students by only one teacher. The students would be arranged into classes based on skill or knowledge, not age. Students would advance from class to class based on mastery of the subject matter and more accomplished students would help in monitoring students in lower levels. It was a system that did not last long since the teacher was

often not well qualified, and the number of students was often too many for one teacher. However, it influenced education systems across the globe from about 1798 to 1830.

#### **4) Architectural and Design Significance Criteria**

The property is eligible under this category for meeting criteria 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 Liberty Female Seminary is an excellent example of Georgian style architecture represented in an institutional building. It embodies characteristics of symmetrical form and fenestration, multi-paned windows, side gabled roof, stone walls, transom window over paneled front doors, cornice with dentils, and corner quoins. The building can convey its historic architectural character through these characteristics as well as the form and mass of the building. The property retains a high level of integrity.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Liberty Female Seminary be determined eligible for designation to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criterion 6B(1A) and 6B(2A) as described in Section 1-23-6B of the County Code.