



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

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



CASE NO. DOE 22-02/CR 24-02 COUNTY REGISTER NOMINATION STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY

Property: **Needwood Farmhouse**
 1118 Lee's Lane, Knoxville

Applicant: **Richard Lee Pry**

Public Hearing for consideration of nominating the property located at 1118 Lee's Lane, Needwood Farmhouse, to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. Submitted by Richard Lee Pry, property owner of record.

The public hearing for the nomination to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places will be held at 6:30 p.m., or thereafter, on April 3, 2024.



Figure 1: Subject Property.

DESIGNATION STATUS

The property is listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties under inventory number F-2-63 as the Needwood-Thomas Lee Farmstead. The entire parcel is encumbered with a Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation easement. The nominated property contains the historic house and encompasses approximately 0.38 acres of land. The Historic Preservation Commission determined the property eligible for listing under Criteria 6B(1A) and 6B(2A) at their November 2, 2022 meeting.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

A completed County Register nomination form, maps, a statement of significance, and photographs were submitted.

SITE VISITS

Site visit dates were scheduled for March 23rd and 24th between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. Commissioners who could not attend on these dates were urged to familiarize themselves with the exterior on their own time from the public right-of-way.

REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1) Analysis

The architectural and historical significance of the Needwood Farmhouse is documented in the supporting materials. The property is architecturally significant for its Second Empire architectural style. Based on the information provided, Staff finds the property is eligible for listing under Criteria 6B(1A) and 6B(2A).

2) History Summary

The Needwood Farmhouse was built circa 1843 and renovated circa 1870. The property is located near the village of Burkittsville with the entire farm consisting of nearly 200 acres. Other structures on the property, but not included in the application, include a springhouse (ca. 1850), a tractor shed (c. 1950), cow barn and silos (c. 1950), a modern shed (c. 2000), a playhouse/chicken house (c. 2000), a doghouse/chicken house (c. 1900), a concrete block garage/shed (c. 1950), and a modern cow barn (c. 2019). The frame bank barn in the 2017 Maryland Historical Trust form has been demolished.

The property was originally part of a tract of more than 1,000 acres known as "Forest of Needwood." Governor Thomas Lee, the second governor of Maryland, purchased the tract from Bartholomew Booth in 1783. At least two farmsteads were already existing on the tract when Governor Lee purchased the tract, Old Needwood (F-2-64) and Needwood Forest (F-2-65). Governor Lee retired to Old Needwood in about 1816 and died in the home in 1819. His will

divided his real estate holdings among his children. His son, William Lee, inherited a 271-acre tract which included Needwood Forest. In 1843, William's son Thomas Sim Lee purchased 150 acres of his father's land and 50 acres of another portion and built the subject house. He retained the property through the Civil War and the Battle of South Mountain and in 1870 he expanded and upgraded the house. Following T.S. Lee's death in 1902, the property passed to his son Columbus Lee. In 1915, Columbus sold the property to Luther Pry and it has remained in the Pry family ever since. The period of significance for this property is circa 1870, the period when the house was renovated into Second Empire architecture style.

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 and interest as part of development and heritage characteristics of the County. The farmhouse is in the style of Second Empire architecture, an uncommon style in rural Frederick County. To date, only one other Second Empire documented example exists in rural Frederick County, the Gambrill House. Second Empire was popular in the United States from the 1860s until the mid-1880s. The style originated in France, where it was the chosen style of Napoleon III, France's Second Empire. Napoleon undertook a major building campaign during his time in office. Many of the structures built utilized a unique roof form that was originally developed in the 17th century known as the mansard roof. Exhibitions in Paris in 1855 and 1867 helped to spread the style to England and then to the United States. The style was considered modern and increased in popularity after the Civil War. For domestic architecture, Second Empire portrayed a sense of high culture and as its popularity spread it led to remodeling residences with formerly pitched-roofs. It was used in many public buildings. Common features of this style include the mansard roof, patterned shingle roof, iron roof cresting, decorative window surrounds and dormers, eaves with brackets, one-story porch, tower, quoins, and balustrades. The Needwood farmhouse exhibits several of these architectural details including the mansard roof, patterned shingle roof, decorative window surrounds, eaves with brackets, a one-story porch with balustrade, and tower.

Thomas Sim Lee was one of a few property owners in rural Frederick County who stylized his house in this manner. It is impossible to know where he saw this style. He or his wife may have traveled to Paris or England, or seen this style in pattern books. In either case, Lee decided to modernize his existing home into the latest fashion to display his wealth. It is a rare example in Frederick County of the architectural trend that took place in the United States during the 1860s to mid-1880s.

4) Architectural and Design Significance Criteria

The property is also 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 Needwood farmhouse was originally constructed circa 1843 with Greek Revival details. A 1991 Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form for the property details that the house was originally two stories with a three-bay façade facing south. It most likely had a gable roof. A rear wing extends off the north elevation under a gable roof. The current property owner believes this rear wing is the earliest part of the house dating to about 1800. Interior details of the house are Greek Revival in style with pediments and crossettes at the door and window surrounds on the first and second stories. Circa 1870 the main block of the house was altered to include a third story within a mansard roof, a central projecting tower off the south elevation, and a replacement one-story porch on the south elevation that wraps to the east.

The mansard roof is covered with slate laid in an alternating pattern of coursed and fish scale shingles. A brick square tower projects from the central bay and extends forward one bay and measures a full story more than the main block. The front entry under the tower includes a decorative hood with a dentil cornice and small curvilinear brackets. The curvilinear brackets are repeated on the roof cornice. The mansard roof includes projecting dormers on all four elevations of the main block. The third-floor windows in the tower have gabled hoods. Circular vents are centered in the mansard roof on the tower on the east, south, and west elevations. Nail head decorations dot the third-floor windows. The one-story porch is supported by tapered wood columns and is covered by a standing seam metal roof. All these features are character-defining to the house and to the Second Empire architecture style.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Needwood Farmhouse 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.