



# FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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## FREDERICK COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

### STAFF REPORT

**Address:** 3937 Cap Stine Road, Adamstown    **Meeting Date:** June 17, 2024  
**Applicant:** Charles Seymour    **Report Date:** May 31, 2024  
**Owner:** Lois B. Noffsinger Spurrier Trust  
**Case No.:** HPC24-0501DR    **Staff:** Amanda Whitmore  
**Proposal:** Request for Review and Recommendation: Demolition Permit for Structures on Noffsinger Farm

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#### **BACKGROUND**

On May 5, 2023, an Executive Order directing staff to temporarily discontinue accepting, considering, processing, reviewing, or issuing any application for demolition of a historic structure, as defined in the Executive Order, went into effect. The purpose of the Order was to allow for several amendments to Chapter 1-23 of the County Code, i.e., the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The Executive Order was extended twice, and terminates on June 16, 2024.

On April 16, 2024, the Frederick County Council adopted Bill No. 24-01, which amended the Historic Preservation Ordinance. These changes will take effect on June 15, 2024. In accordance with amended Section 1-23-8, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will review an application for demolition if Historic Preservation staff have determined that the property is 50 years old or older and has historical, cultural, architectural, or archaeological significance per Section 1-23-6(B).

A demolition permit application for the Noffsinger Farm was received on June 7, 2023, but was not accepted for review due to the Executive Order, which applies to the Noffsinger Farm as a result of its National Register eligibility. A new demolition permit application will be submitted shortly before or after the Executive Order expires. The applicant, Charles Seymour, President of Turning Point Real Estate, has requested an expedited review of the demolition permit. The applicant is acting on behalf of the current property owner, who is seeking to demolish all of the buildings on the property.

#### **SITE ANALYSIS**

The Noffsinger Farm property is located northwest of Adamstown, east of Cap Stine Road. It encompasses 31.22 acres and includes 20 buildings/structures. The property is identified on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) as the Noffsinger Farm under MIHP F-1-221 and was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of



***Birdseye view of farm. Aerial dated 12/7/2021.***

Historic Places under Criterion A and C in 2019. The property includes a historic farmhouse (c. 1908), a summer kitchen (c. 1908), hog house (c.1900s), chicken coop (c. 1950s), shed (c. 1980), bank barn (late 19th century), several silos, feed trough (c. 1969), milking parlor (c. 1959), milk house (c. 1959), tractor shed (c. 1930), “old” milk house (c. 1930), meat house (c. 1980), and two welding buildings (c. 2000s).

The applicant engaged R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates to update the MIHP form with additional historical information, current building conditions, and to re-evaluate the property’s eligibility for National Register listing ([Attachment 1](#)). Historic Preservation staff forwarded the updated MIHP form to the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) to review the property’s eligibility for the National Register with the new information. MHT concluded that based on the updated MIHP form the property is no longer eligible under Criterion A for association with German settlement or under Criterion C for architecture. However, MHT concluded that the property is still eligible under Criterion A in the area of agriculture and the property’s ability to represent the shift in small-scale dairying operations in Frederick County ([Attachment 2](#)).

The updated MIHP form documents the condition of the buildings with most ranging from poor to deteriorated condition, with modifications and material alterations present. The form also expands upon Frederick County’s agricultural and German heritage.





***Farmhouse, looking east. From updated MIHP Form.***



***Chicken coop, looking southwest. From updated MIHP Form.***



***Milking parlor and milk house, looking northeast. From updated MIHP Form.***

The property's history and ownership are well documented in the updated MIHP form and, therefore, are not further analyzed in this staff report.

### **STAFF ANALYSIS**

Staff has determined that the property is at least 50 years old and is not designated to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. Therefore, per Section 1-23-8 of the updated Historic Preservation Ordinance, Historic Preservation staff must determine if the property has significance based on the criteria of Section 1-23-6(B).

The following criteria are used to assist in evaluating the significance of a property. A property needs to be determined to be significant in one or more of the following criteria:

- a) The property has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county, state, or nation.

*Yes, the property represents the evolution of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century farm moving into dairy farming in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. This agricultural heritage is of significant value and interest to the County's development and heritage.*

- b) The property is the site of an historic event.

*No significant event was found to have taken place on this property.*

- c) The property is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society.

*No information was identified that shows the property is associated with a person or group of persons that influenced society.*

- d) The property exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the county and its communities.

*No, the property does not exemplify any of these developments.*

- e) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, design style, or method of construction of landscape architecture, engineering, public art, or architecture.

*No, the property does not embody any distinctive characteristics.*

- f) The property represents the work of a master craftsman, architect, landscape architect, engineer, artist, or builder.

*No, the property does not represent the work of a master architect, craftsman, landscape architect, engineer, artist, or builder.*

- g) The property possesses significant artistic value.

*No, the property does not possess artistic value.*

- h) The property represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

*Yes, the property represents a significant collection of domestic and agricultural buildings that represent agricultural heritage that on their own may lack individual distinction.*

- i) The property represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or county, due to its singular physical characteristics, landscape, or historical event.

*The property has stood in its location for over 100 years; however, the property does not stand out as an established or unique feature of the area due to singular physical characteristics, landscape, or historical event.*

- j) The property is a rare example of a particular period, style, material, or construction technique.

*No, the property is not a rare example of a period, style, material or construction technique.*

The applicant has also submitted a letter analyzing the Noffsinger Farm in accordance with the updated Historic Preservation Ordinance ([Attachment 3](#)). Staff does not agree with all of the conclusions of their letter.

Historic Preservation staff find the property meets two of the significance criteria; therefore, the Historic Preservation Commission must determine if the property is of unusual historic value to Frederick County, the State, or the nation. The updated Historic Preservation Ordinance defines unusual historic value as, *a property eligible for designation under this chapter with the added requirement that the property represents an outstanding or exceptional aspect of federal, state, or local history, culture, architecture,*

*or archaeology that is not otherwise represented within the Frederick County Register of Historic Places, the loss of which would cause irreparable harm to the public interest as stated in § 1-23-2 of this chapter.*

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Although the property meets two criteria of significance, the property does not meet the definition of a property with unusual historic value. Several farm complexes are already designated to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places that represent the agricultural heritage of the county and its transition to dairy farming. Therefore, staff recommends against recognizing Noffsinger Farm as a property with unusual historic value.

### **Attachments**

Attachment 1: R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates updated Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) form for Noffsinger Farm

Attachment 2: Maryland Historical Trust letter regarding National Register eligibility

Attachment 3: R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates Summary Letter March 21, 2024