



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

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



CASE NO. DOE 24-02

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY TO COUNTY REGISTER

STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY

Property: John Herring Bank Barn
3223 Old National Pike, Middletown

Applicant: Alexis and Daniel Sassi

Public Hearing for consideration of determining the eligibility of a structure on the property located at 3223 Old National Pike, the John Herring Bank Barn, for the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. The application was submitted by Alexis and Daniel Sassi, property owner 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 December 4, 2024.



Figure 1: Subject Property, Review Area.

DESIGNATION STATUS

The John Herring Bank Barn is listed as a contributing outbuilding to the John Herring House on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties under inventory number F-4-150. The nominated area of the property contains the historic bank barn and a non-contributing concrete block building and encompasses approximately half an acres of land.

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 November 23rd and 30th.

REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1) Analysis

The architectural and historical significance of the John Herring Bank Barn is documented in the supporting materials. The property is locally significant for its vernacular architecture of an early 19th century bank barn. Based on the information provided, Staff finds the property is eligible for listing under Criteria 6B(2A), but the applicant additionally believes that it qualifies under Criteria 6B(1D) for its association with local history related to the agricultural community of the Middletown and Spoolsville areas. Additional criteria could be determined through more research in the potential subsequent County Register Nomination process.

2) History Summary

The John Herring Bank Barn was originally associated with the John Herring House, located at 3221 Old National Pike. The bank barn stands approximately 275 feet south of the Herring House. The property was subdivided, separating the barn from the John Herring farmhouse, in the late 20th century. The bank barn is now on the same property lot as a ca. 1992 Cape Cod home.

The small community of Middletown grew linearly along the early National Pike, which connected Baltimore and Frederick with Elizabethtown in the western part of the state. An extension of this Baltimore and Fredericktown Turnpike was authorized through Middletown in 1805 and completed by 1810. As late as 1910, a topographic map of the area shows that the John Herring farmhouse and outbuildings were the only structures of note on the turnpike between Spoolsville and Middletown.

In 1836, David and Sophia Bowlus conveyed a large (at least 127-acre) property to John Herring of Casper. David Bowlus was a member of one of the early families to settle in the area. From the early 1800s, there was a Bowlus grist mill and a cotton mill operated in nearby Spoolsville

The agricultural census records from 1860 clearly list John Herring but appear to have consolidated this farm with other properties he owned because the farm size is recorded as 219 acres with 172 improved acres. This is much larger than the 157-acre property then associated with the John Herring House and larger than the 160-acre average farm size of his closest neighbors. Herring owned more horses (11), sheep (12), and swine (22) than his average neighbor but fewer dairy cows (3) and no other cattle. His crop production was less diversified than his neighbors with 330 bushels of wheat, 1,000 bushels of corn, ten bushels of potatoes, and 25 tons of hay but no rye or oats production on the farm. The farm also produced 200 pounds of butter and 36 pounds of wool.

In 1867, he conveyed the farm to Lewis C. Cookerly, who is believed to be one of his nephews. The house, barn, and approximately 160 acres of land were purchased by John C. Stone from Cookerly. In 1901, the property was sold by the Stones' attorney to Daniel W. Sanner, and in 1906 Sanner's widow Elmira V. Sanner conveyed the property to M.H. Oliver Beachley and his wife Helen F. Beachley. In 1931, the Beachleys sold the property to Lawrence F. Rudy and his wife, Emma C. Rudy, and it remained in the Rudy Family for the next 41 years.

During the Rudys' ownership of the farm, four structures were built immediately to the northwest of the farmhouse along Old National Pike: the ca. 1940 Rudy's Welding & Cold Beer building (3217 Old National Pike), a 1937 Tudor Revival house (3213 Old National Pike), a 1940 Tudor Revival house (3211 Old National Pike), and a 1952 masonry two-unit apartment building (3209 Old National Pike).

The farm was sold to Valley Land Investors in 1972 and then to Charles Alan Bridge and Patricia L. Bridge in 1975. In 1987 the lot with the bank barn and outbuildings was separated from the lot with the farmhouse, summer kitchen, and log shed. In 1987, Donald C. Noble and Linda B. Noble bought the whole farm and then in 1991 sold just the subdivided parcel with the farmhouse to Marjorie B. Lerner, while the Nobles added the Cape Cod house to the parcel with the barn in ca. 1992.

3) Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Significance Criteria

The applicant is requesting that the bank barn be determined eligible for listing for meeting criteria 6B(1D) as outlined in Chapter 1-23-6B(1) of the Frederick County Code:

- 6B(1D): *The property exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities*

As the turnpike was used by both Union and Confederate soldiers' troop movements during the Battles of Antietam and South Mountain, it is possible that the bank barn may have been used as

a field hospital, or other wartime support building, as many large buildings in the Middletown area were pressed into service by both sides.

The John Herring Farm also exemplifies the historical development of many farms in the Middletown Valley, from single family farm in the mid-19th century, through dairy operation in the early 20th century, to residential subdivision in the late 20th century. However, this is not enough to make the barn individually significant without the associated farmhouse and outbuildings.

Staff recommends further research into the possible Civil War era use of the building as that would make the bank barn individually historically and culturally significant without needing the associated farmhouse.

4) Architectural and Design Significance Criteria

Staff agrees with the applicant that 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 John Herring Bank Barn is an early 19th century stone and heavy timber bank barn formerly associated with a farm containing approximately 160 acres of land. The barn is located to the southeast of the Herring House with which it was originally associated.

It is a heavy timber structure with a side gable roof and a stone foundation. The side gable roof is covered with corrugated metal sheeting with lightning rods at the ridge and snow guards near the eaves. The barn walls are clad with vertical board siding, and the partially exposed foundation is composed of random laid, undressed field stone with heavier dressed blocks at the corners.

A small non-contributing, one-story, one-room, concrete block outbuilding is located immediately to the southeast of the barn.

The John Herring Bank Barn is one of the few extant bank barns with architectural integrity in the immediate Middletown area. This is largely due to residential neighborhood growth in Middletown and active farms in the region updating and modernizing their agricultural outbuildings throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

RECOMMENDATION

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