



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

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FREDERICK COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

February 4, 2026

Address: 12621 Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont **Meeting Date:** February 4, 2026

Applicant: Catoctin Furnace Historical Society **Report Date:** January 23, 2026

Case No.: COA 26-01 **Staff:** Beau Lockard

Request: Review site plan and installation of ADA ramp on east elevation

PROPERTY BACKGROUND

The F.W. Fraley General Store was designated to the County Register of Historic Properties (CR # 24-01) on May 7, 2024. The property includes the area immediately around the general store building. The property was built between circa 1906. There have been no previous applications for Certificates of Approvals (COA) filed for this property.



Subject property.

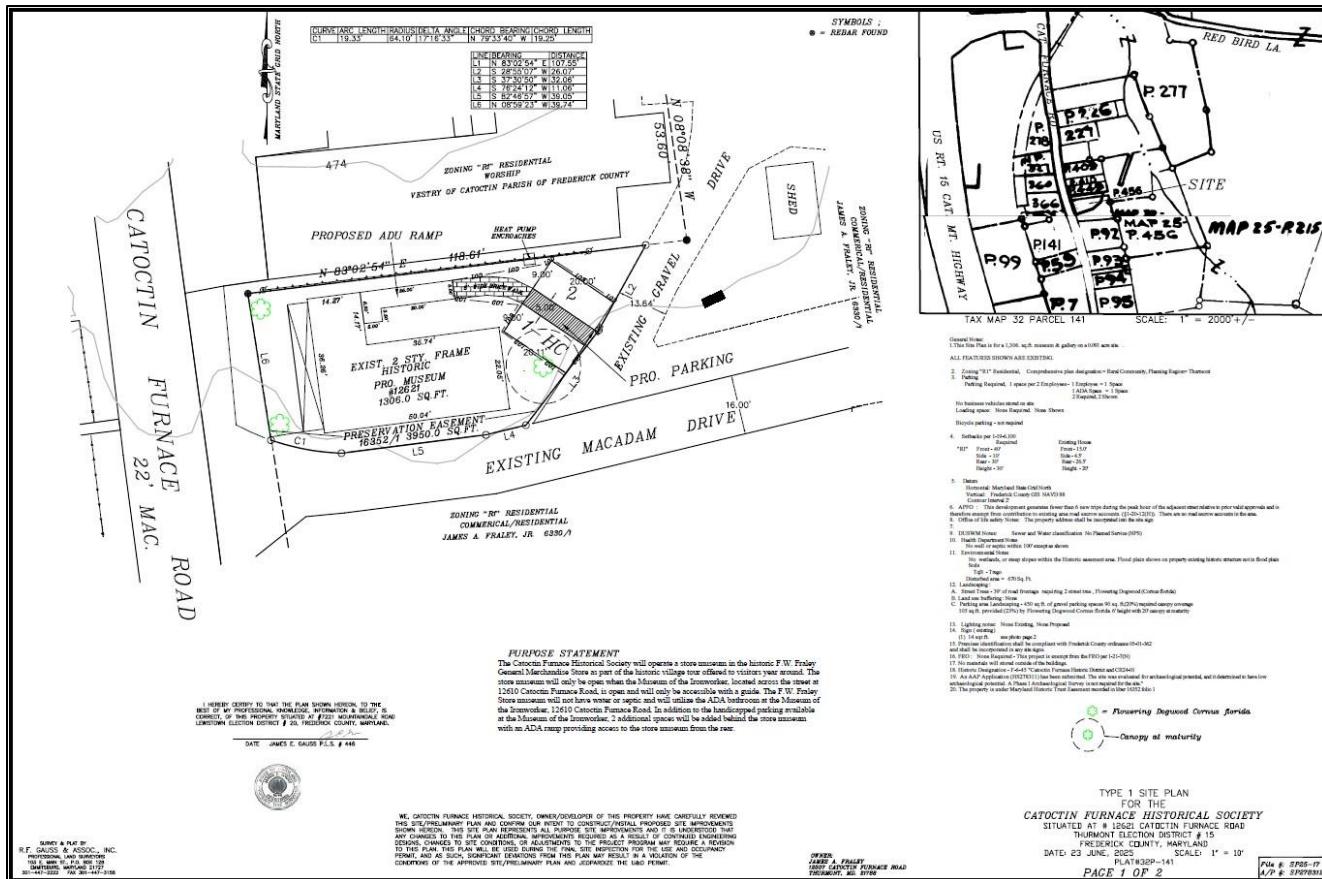
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REQUEST

A Certificate of Approval is requested to review the site plan to establish a store museum, create two rear parking spots, construct an ADA accessible ramp to the east elevation entrance, and install a small HVAC unit under the ADA ramp.



APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations to a designated County Register property several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the *Frederick County Historic Preservation Code: Chapter 1-23*, the *Frederick County Peace and Plenty Rural Historic District Design Guidelines (Guidelines)*, and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

Frederick County Code: Chapter 1-23-7B

- In reviewing applications, the Commission shall give consideration to the historic, archaeological, or architectural significance of the landmark, site, or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area; the relationship of the exterior architectural features of a landmark or structure to the remainder of the landmark or structure and to the

surrounding area; the general compatibility of proposed exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials to the landmark, site, or structure and to the surrounding area; and any other factors including aesthetic factors which the Commission deems to be pertinent.

- (2) The Commission shall consider only exterior features of a landmark or structure and shall not consider any interior arrangements.
- (3) The Commission shall not disapprove an application except with respect to the several factors specified in paragraph (1) above.
- (4) The Commission shall be strict in its judgment of plans for sites or structures determined by research to be of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance. The Commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for sites or structures of little historic, archaeological, or architectural significance, or of plans involving new construction, unless in the Commission's judgment such plans would seriously impair the historic, archaeological, or architectural significance of surrounding sites or structures. The Commission is not required to limit construction, reconstruction, or alteration to the architectural style of any one (1) period.

Frederick County Peace and Plenty Rural Historic District Design Guidelines

The *Guidelines* contain a Considerations for Contemporary Use Chapter (Chapter 8) that should be referred to when reviewing this COA application. Further analysis of how this request meets the *Guidelines* is provided in the Evaluation section below.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The *Standards* define rehabilitation as "the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values." The *Standards* that are most applicable to the application before the Commission are as follows:

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired

STAFF EVALUATION

The applicant proposes to establish a store museum in the historic F.W. Fraley General Store, create two rear parking spots, construct an ADA accessible ramp to the east elevation entrance, and install a small HVAC unit under the ADA ramp.

Additional information about *Making Historic Properties Accessible* can be found in Preservation Brief #32, attached as supplemental information after the staff report.

Staff analysis of this project against the *Guidelines* is as follows:

Guideline	Met?	Comments
8C: Considerations for Contemporary Use: Accessibility Improvements	Mostly	<p>The <i>Guidelines</i> states that to create barrier-free access to the historic store through constructing a new pathway, the path of travel needs to be as short and direct as possible, appropriately graded, have adequate width, and the surface material needs to be firm, stable, and slip resistant.</p> <p>The proposed ADA entrance is the closest access point to the proposed rear parking. The ramp is graded for ADA access and is 5' wide. The minimum width, per the ADA Design Standards, is 3'.</p> <p>The path of travel surface is compacted crusher gravel, brick, and wood, all meet the ADA requirements for firm, stable, and slip resistant. The gravel will need to be fine grain and compacted to meet the requirements. This will be clarified in the site plan that goes to the Planning Commission but is not stated in this version.</p>
8C: Considerations for Contemporary Use: Accessibility Improvements	Yes	<p>The <i>Guidelines</i> state that, "if the primary entrance to an historic building cannot be made accessible without damaging character-defining features, one other entrance used by the public should be made accessible" and should be "located to minimize the loss of historic building fabric."</p> <p>The applicant is proposing to construct the ADA accessible ramp on the east elevation to a secondary entrance. Because of the proximity to the neighboring Catoctin Episcopal Parish, the ramp will not be visible from any public right-of-way. The ramp is also</p>

		proposed to be freestanding to prevent historic material loss.
8B: Considerations for Contemporary Use: Equipment	Yes	<p>The <i>Guidelines</i> state that HVAC equipment should be located in the least obtrusive location and should not damage the historic building fabric.</p> <p>The applicant proposes locating the HVAC unit under the ADA ramp platform and having it be freestanding. It will not be visible from the public right-of-way.</p>
5D1: Landscape and Site Features: Landscape Features and Materials: Circulation	Yes	<p>The <i>Guidelines</i> state that when adding new parking areas to historic sites, they should be located and designed to have the least impact on the historic structure and setting.</p> <p>The proposed parking is located at the rear of the historic structure in the least obtrusive place given the limited space on site.</p>
5D1: Landscape and Site Features: Landscape Features and Materials: Circulation	Yes	<p>The <i>Guidelines</i> state that new proposed paving should be in keeping with the character of the site or neighborhood. Catoctin Furnace, particularly sites owned by the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, has multiple small gravel parking areas.</p> <p>As noted above, the gravel parking area for this site plan will need to be ADA compliant to make the other ADA additions to the site accessible.</p>

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission **approve** COA #26-01 as this project is compatible in character with the remainder of the structure and the surrounding area; does not seriously impair the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of surrounding sites or structures; and is compatible in character to the property and consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* #9 and #10.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION ACTION

Motion to approve:

Madam Chair, I have studied the application and all other relevant documents and presentations related to this case and I am familiar with the property in question. I move to approve COA # 26-01 for 12621 Catoctin Furnace Rd., the F.W. Fraley General Store.

Motion to approve with conditions modified by Commission:

Madam Chair, I have studied the application and all other relevant documents and presentations related to this case and I am familiar with the property in question. I move to approve COA # 26-01 for 12621 Catoctin Furnace Rd. with the following modifications:

1. List the conditions that are to be modified, added, or removed.

Motion to deny:

Madam Chair, based on the information presented and the input received during the public hearing, I move that the Commission deny COA #26-01, because evidence has not been presented that demonstrates the proposal complies with the following standards:

1. Identify which standards are not substantially complied with