



## FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

### DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

Livable Frederick Planning &amp; Design Office

Deborah A. Carpenter, AICP, Division Director

Kimberly Gaines, Director

**TO:** Frederick County Council

 DS  
 JF

**THROUGH:** Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive

**FROM:** Deborah Carpenter, Division Director, AICP, Director, Division of Planning & Permitting

**FROM:** Kimberly Gaines, Director, Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

 DS  
 KG

**DATE:** October 8, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Council Public Hearing - Proposed Listing on County Register of Historic Places –  
 Henry Smeltzer Farmstead (CR #24-05)

**ISSUE:**

Should the County Council add the property known as the “Henry Smeltzer Farmstead,” located at 3231 Bidle Road, Middletown, to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places?

**BACKGROUND:**

The Applicant, owner of the subject property, has made application ([Attachment 1](#)) to list the property known as the *Henry Smeltzer Farmstead* on the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. The farmstead, built between circa 1832 and 1960, is located on approximately 20.03 acres at 3231 Bidle Road as shown on the locator map ([Attachment 2](#)). The designated property consists of the farmhouse, pumphouse, garage, slaughterhouse, weigh shed, and barn and silos. The area included in the nomination totals approximately 2.53 acres and is immediately around the farmstead complex.

The property was once part of a larger part of a tract of land called “Watsons Welfare,” first surveyed in 1744 as 100 acres for Daniel Dulaney. However, in 1751, Joseph Chapline had the tract resurveyed as 260 acres. In 1770, Van Swearingen purchased the tract and improved it with a grist mill and sawmill. He left this property to his sons, John and Thomas, in his Last Will and Testament. The property was divided, and parcels were sold over the intervening years. George Bowlus purchased a few of the parcels. In 1828, Bowlus sold 30 acres on the east side of Catoctin Creek to Rebecca Phillips. In 1832, the property is sold to Henry Smeltzer for \$1,813. Smeltzer also purchased two adjoining tracts, one 10 ½ acre tract called “Little Left” and the other a 7 ¼ acre piece of “Watsons Welfare” from David Bowlus in 1833. The farmstead had several owners following Henry’s death in 1850. In 1924, local “meat store” owner Charles Main purchased several parcels including the 49-acre Smeltzer farmstead. Main operated a meat market in Middletown and appears to have purchased the Smeltzer farm to serve as a finishing farm and slaughterhouse. The Main family retained the property until 1972 when the current twenty-acre farm parcel was divided and sold to Donald and Lucille Smith. The current property owners have retained it since 2009. The period of significance for this property is circa 1832, the presumed construction date of the house, through 1960, the time the farm remained in continuous use and achieved its current and historic form and appearance.

The property has significant character and interest as part of development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of the County. As mid-Maryland became more settled and was moving from initial interests of fur trading and subsistence farming, more substantial farming was established. Grain farming was prominent requiring gristmills to convert the grain into flour or meal. These commodities were sent to markets in Baltimore or Philadelphia on newly developed turnpikes. With these early transportation issues solved during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Frederick County prospered. Farming and agricultural processing industries dominated the County. Many farms grew and in the scale of their operations, with the addition of buildings. Substantially built houses of brick or stone and large bank barns reflect the agricultural prosperity of the region.

As agriculture evolved and the United States expanded westward, Frederick County's agriculture also changed. With grain farming becoming more prosperous in the mid-west, Frederick County began diversifying and moving towards dairy farming in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Also, during this period, "truck farms" from which fresh produce, meats, and dairy products were delivered directly to local markets and homes, were developed in mid-Maryland.

The Henry Smeltzer Farmstead reflects this prosperous agricultural period in Frederick County as well as its transition into "truck farms." Once part of a larger milling operation, the land was divided allowing Henry Smeltzer to establish his own grain farming operation in the 1830s and 1840s. The farm also reflects its transition from a grain and livestock farm into an early 20<sup>th</sup> century "truck farm" providing pork and other meats to Main's Meat Market in nearby Middletown.

Additionally, the Henry Smeltzer Farmstead is significant for its architectural characteristics. German settlers in Frederick County, influenced the types of houses and barns that were built on their property. Houses were often enlarged into more substantial buildings and bank barns replaced smaller log-crib stables. Materials found or made on the farm or nearby were often used to construct the buildings, such as stones for foundations or even whole buildings, bricks made on-site, and utilizing timber for floor joists and roof rafters. Nineteenth century Germanic farmhouses spanned four to six bays, often sat on a hillside with raised cellar, and had side gables. By the second quarter of the 19th century, porches began to appear either across the entire front or recessed in an inset containing two or three bays along the front elevation at the kitchen wall, such as with this house. Typical floor plans consisted of center passages with one or two rooms on either side, or a two or four room plan where the main entrance opened directly into a room, as with the Smeltzer house.

The house retains many regional Germanic architectural traditions and although there have been alterations over time, the floor plan, hillside layout, woodwork, and façade arrangement remain intact and important definers of 1830s farmhouse architecture as evolved by German-descended populations. The property maintains a high level of integrity of setting, location, feeling, workmanship, materials, and design.

#### **Historic Preservation Commission Review & Recommendation**

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) voted to recommend that the historic property known as the Henry Smeltzer Farmstead be listed on the County Register of Historic Places at their October 2, 2024 meeting (Attachments 3 and 4).

In acting upon the application, the HPC determined, pursuant to Section 1-23-6 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, that the property was eligible for listing on the County Register, noting that the property should be designated based upon the following criteria listed in the Ordinance:

- The property has significant character, interest, or value as part of development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county, state, or nation.
- The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or architecture.

The HPC included the approximately 2.53 acres of the property within the proposed County Register designation. Once listed on the Register, proposed changes to the exterior of any structure or the site (including any visible site improvements such as driveways, signage, or significant alteration of the landscape) must receive a Certificate of Approval.

#### **Frederick County Register of Historic Places**

As of this date, there are fifty-one (51) properties listed on the County Register (CR). Listing on the CR is a voluntary action initiated by a property owner or other party with an interest in the property. Special tax credits and county grant funding for preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation expenditures may be available to owners of CR properties. All exterior work undertaken to a CR-listed property must first be approved by the Frederick County Historic Preservation Commission under its Certificate of Approval application process.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the application to list the Henry Smeltzer Farmstead (CR# 24-05) on the Frederick County Register of Historic Places be forwarded to the County Council for a public hearing and approval.

Approve? Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

DocuSigned by:

Jessica Fitzwater

62F74AE4DF594E6  
Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive  
Frederick County, Maryland

10/15/2024

Date

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** No

#### **ATTACHMENT(S):**

Attachment 1 – Application: County Register Nomination Form/Statement of Significance

Attachment 2 – Locator Map: Henry Smeltzer Farmstead

Attachment 3 – HPC Meeting Agenda: October 2, 2024

Attachment 4 – HPC Approval Letter to Applicant (10/03/2024)



# FREDERICK COUNTY

## HISTORIC DESIGNATION NOMINATION FORM

This nomination form is designed to provide the necessary information for staff to be able to evaluate the significance of a property for possible inclusion on the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. For more information about each section, please review *How to Complete a Frederick County Historic Designation Nomination*. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you may have regarding this form.

|   |                          |  |   |                                   |       |
|---|--------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Property Name:                                      | Henry Smeltzer Farmstead | Tax Map:                                     | 065A  | Tax Parcel:                       | 0115  |
| Street Address:                                     | 3231 Bidle Road          | City/Town:                                   | Middletown  | Zip:                              | 21769 |
| Property Owner(s) & Address: Charles & Kim Brown    |                          |  |   |                                   |       |
| see above   |                          |  |   |                                   |       |
| private home  |                          |  |   |                                   |       |
| Current Use of Property:                            |                          |  |   |                                   |       |
| Current Property Status:<br>(Select all that apply) |                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant                   | <input type="checkbox"/> For Sale |       |
|   |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Under Renovation    | <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed for Development |                                   |       |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building | e.g. house, barn, garage: House, pumphouse, garage, slaughterhouse, weigh shed, barn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structure           | e.g. bridge, kiln, wall:   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object              | e.g. fountains, markers:   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site                | e.g. archaeological (submit map or survey of area):                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District            |  |

|  |  |                               |   |                                       |                                |
|--|--|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins |
|--|--|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Has the property been surveyed in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties?<br>If yes, please provide the Inventory Number: F-4-147  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| Is the property listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places?<br>Is the property a Contributing Resource in a National Register Historic District?<br>If yes, please provide <u>property name</u> (if different than above) and/or the <u>name of the National Register District</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| Henry Smeltzer Farmstead  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

**Areas of Significance (Select all that apply):**

- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Archeology
- Art
- Commerce
- Conservation
- Economics

- Education
- Entertainment/Rec
- Ethnic Heritage
- Exploration/Settlement
- Health/Medicine
- Industry
- Invention

- Landscape
- Law
- Military
- Politics/Government
- Religion
- Science
- Social History

Transportation  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (Select all that apply):**

- Pre-1600
- 1800-1899
- 1600-1699
- 1900-1999
- 1700-1799
- 2000-Present

**Location:**

- Original site
- Moved

Year moved, if known \_\_\_\_\_

**Specific Dates:** ca. 1832 - 1960

**Architect/Builder (if known):** \_\_\_\_\_

Please choose one or more of the following criteria being used to justify the nomination.

**Criteria for Designation**

- The property has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, state or nation.
- The property is the site of an historic event.
- The property is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society.
- The property exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities.
- The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or architecture.
- The property represents the work of a master craftsman, architect, or builder.
- The property possesses significant artistic value.
- The property represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- 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 is a rare example of a particular period, style, material, or construction technique.

Office Use Only CR No.: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Significance Narrative**

Please provide a detailed narrative that addresses how the property meets the above criteria. Feel free to attach additional sheets if necessary.

This information was developed by Paula S. Reed as part of the homeowner's application for placement of this property onto the National Register of Historic Places.

The Henry Smeltzer Farmstead is locally significant under the United States Department of the Interior National Register Criterion A for its embodiment of patterns of local history, reflecting a long tenure of the land as a small farm and, in the more recent past, as a slaughter facility for Main's Meat Market in nearby Middletown. The farmstead and its surrounding agricultural landscape, dating from the early-to-mid nineteenth century, with alterations in the early twentieth and twenty-first centuries and added buildings and structures as late as the mid twentieth century, portray the use and occupation of the land over time. Originally attached to a flour mill operation, the land in the 1830s became associated with a general farm, likely focused on grain production for the nearby mill. In the early twentieth century the agricultural practice changed to meat production in association with a local meat market. Advances in transportation allowed the large-scale meat processing facility to be profitable, serving the surrounding region accessible by rail and automobile.

The farmstead derives additional significance under National Register Criterion C as an example of an 1830s farmhouse which survives largely intact, along with its associated agricultural outbuildings. Although the original bank barn collapsed, it was rebuilt on the original site as a "Swisser" barn, and its site conveys the character of the farm. The two surviving concrete block silos from the early twentieth century are rare in the area and provide additional architectural interest. The house retains many regional Germanic architectural traditions and, although there were alterations over time, the woodwork, trim, floor plan, hillside layout and facade arrangement remain fully intact and are important definers of 1830s farmhouse architecture as evolved by the predominant German-descended population of mid Maryland.

The twenty acres of land now associated with the property are part of the original forty-nine acres that Henry Smeltzer assembled through several transactions in 1832 and 1833. The west, north and east boundaries are the same as when Smeltzer acquired the several small tracts. Agricultural activity continued on the farm into the mid twentieth century with the slaughter facility that supported Main's Meat Market in Middletown. Thus the historic character of the property and its associations with the past have been maintained to the present time. The period of significance begins ca. 1832, the presumed construction date of the house, and ends ca. 1960, through which time the farm remained in continuous use and achieved its current and historic form and appearance.

### **Historical and Agricultural Context**

The lands comprising Frederick County were in that part of Maryland which was often in colonial period records referred to as "the Barrens." The early landscape was not fully forested and contained areas of relatively open meadow and occasional rock outcrops. These rocky, open areas were perceived as infertile and described as barrens. As a result of the concept that the backcountry was not fertile, settlement was not encouraged at first. Initial contact occurred when land grants were made to leading tidewater area citizens, and when Germans and Dutch from Pennsylvania and places further north passed through Maryland's Piedmont and Great Valley sections enroute to settle lands in Virginia. These early contacts occurred in the 1720s, and involved little in the way of actual settlement.

Continued on attached sheet.

Office Use Only CR No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a description of the resources as they appear today. Include architectural style, number of stories, type and shape of roof, building materials, etc. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Please see attached sheet.

Office Use Only CR No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Please review *How to Complete a Frederick County Historic Designation Nomination* for more information.  
The nomination review period will not begin until a completed form with checklist is submitted.

- Completed Nomination Form & Signature (Required)
- Boundary Map (Required)
- Current Photographs & Photo Log (Required)
- Other Supplementary Documents

Name: Kim & Charles Brown

Organization (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 3231 Bidle Road, Middletown, MD 21769

Phone: 301.793.3623

Email: kim\_susan\_brown@hotmail.com

Relationship to Nominated Property?  Owner  Consultant  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINATION:** I/we hereby affirm that I/we have read *How to Complete a Frederick County Historic Designation Nomination* to ensure that this form was filled out correctly and that it contains all required materials to constitute a complete Nomination. I/we understand that incomplete Nominations or Nominations with insufficient information will not be accepted. In addition, I/we recognize that a Nomination does not guarantee a County Register designation. I/we understand that after Staff's additional research and evaluation, it may be found that the above property is not eligible based on the Criteria and information included in the Nomination. Furthermore, should the property become designated to the County Register, I/we acknowledge and agree that County officials will have the right to enter onto the property with adequate notice for the purpose of identifying exterior work that may require approval.

I/we hereby affirm that the information included with this Nomination is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. As the lawful owner(s) of record for the property, I/we do hereby grant consent for the submittal of this nomination form and designation of my/our property to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places, if so designated by the Frederick County Historic Preservation Commission and the Frederick County Council. I/we hereby certify that I/we am/are familiar with and understand the applicable state and local codes and ordinances, and the procedural requirements as prescribed in Chapter 1-23, Historic Preservation of the Frederick County Code.

Kim S. Brown

Signature of Nominator

9-15-24

Date

Signature of Property Owner (If different than nominator)

Date

Signature of Property Owner (If different than nominator)

Date

Office Use Only CR No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Significant exterior features to be protected (character-defining features):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

HPC Hearing Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Nomination

Council Hearing Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Determined Complete: \_\_\_\_\_

CR No.: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Significance Narrative (Continued)**

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As settlement progressed from the initial interests of fur trading and subsistence farming there developed more substantial farms. Grain farming was prominent, and as a result many gristmills were established. The mills took advantage of the ample waterpower in mid-Maryland to convert grain into more easily transportable and marketable flour or meal. The prominence of milling was a significant feature of the local economy. It reflects the influence of Pennsylvania in that Frederick and Washington County developed a general agricultural economy with emphasis on small grains, rather than the staple economy focusing on tobacco that developed in eastern Maryland.

Eventually the region became known for grain production. Grain was sold in bulk, or processed into flour and meal, or distilled into whiskey. These commodities were shipped to markets in Baltimore or Philadelphia. Shipping from central and western Maryland and the grain growing regions of Pennsylvania and the Shenandoah Valley was a problem, and hindered the growth and prosperity associated with grain production. There was no inland water route to the farming areas, although navigation of the Potomac and Susquehanna were promoted or opposed by various factions. Rail service did not develop until the 1830s, so highway transportation had to serve the freight hauling needs of the region. Maryland promoted turnpike development, although most of these toll routes were privately funded. The output and growth in population in the western areas of Maryland encouraged construction and improvement of roads, which were generally described as "miserable and worst in the union" in the late eighteenth century. Baltimore officials in 1787 laid out 20-foot-wide roads to Frederick, Reisterstown and York, Pennsylvania. However, private turnpike companies, and in some cases mill owners, actually constructed the roads.

In 1806 the Federal government began the construction of a highway that would lead to the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase lands comprising much of the central portion of the United States. The "National Road" began in Cumberland, Maryland, following the old Braddock Road, a rough wagon track established by explorers and traders, and led to Wheeling in Virginia (West Virginia) and later on to Terre Haute, Indiana. The main wagon road from Baltimore to Cumberland, a collection of privately owned and operated turnpike segments, was eventually upgraded and consolidated to become part of the National Road. The National Road became one of the most heavily traveled east-west routes in America with traffic passing all hours of the day and night. Stagecoaches, freight wagons, herds of swine, geese and cattle headed to market along the road, as individual traffic passed along the pike. Taverns, inns and hotels were an important part of the travel-generated economy. Also important were blacksmith shops, wagon shops, and leather and harness shops.

Despite the advent of the C & O Canal and B & O Railroad in the 1830s as alternate forms of transportation, the National Road continued to be a major thoroughfare between Frederick, Hagerstown and points west. The road also served as a primary route during the Civil War for the invading Confederate army of General Robert E. Lee in 1862 and 1863, as well as the Union defenders throughout the war.

The turn of the twentieth century was punctuated in Frederick and Washington Counties with the development of the Frederick to Hagerstown interurban railway, a boon not only to the farmers transporting produce to the Frederick and Hagerstown markets but also for passenger travel and summer resort businesses. However, the electric railway struggled through the 1930s' Depression and, after a brief resurgence during WWII, most lines were discontinued.

The demise of the interurban railway followed the popularization of the automobile and road surface improvements in the 1920s. Faster speeds and increased traffic led to alternate highway construction beginning in the 1930s and culminated in the 1950s and 1960s with the Interstate Highway system. Such roads generally by-passed the small towns, which had grown along the historic transportation routes, spelling an end for many hotel and commercial businesses.

With many of the early transportation issues solved during the first half of the nineteenth century, Frederick County prospered. Farming and agricultural processing industries dominated, along with the iron industry. Wheat and corn (referred to in agricultural census records as "Indian Corn" were the largest crops, with swine and sheep being the dominant livestock produced. This information comes from the 1850 agricultural census, which probably recorded conditions similar to those in 1840 and earlier. Other crops included rye, oats, potatoes, orchard fruit, and hay. Wool and butter were also frequently listed in the 1850 agricultural census. The agricultural census for 1860 is similar. The largest quantities of product were wheat and corn, with much smaller amounts of oats and rye. New listings appear for orchards and hay, although fruit trees and hay crops were grown in mid-Maryland since the eighteenth century. In 1860 large amounts of butter were still being recorded.

Both Frederick and Washington counties grew in population in the first half of the nineteenth century and many farms have building complexes dating from this 50-year period. Substantially built houses of brick or stone and large bank barns reflect the agricultural prosperity of the region. Due to the fertile soils, most settlement in Frederick County occurred on the prime valley agricultural land or was clustered in towns and villages. Smaller farms and a few subsistence farms were located on the slopes of South Mountain. There the humbler log dwellings and smaller barns reflected the less productive soils of mountain farms. Along the busy National Pike segment from Frederick through Middletown and Boonsboro to Hagerstown, the route was lined with habitations and businesses to serve the traveling public. Taverns and road houses were located almost every mile or so, with one, the South Mountain House, located at the summit of South Mountain.

By the time of the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, west central Maryland was well established and intensively farmed. Farms were characterized by fields and boundaries marked with wood or stone fences, orchards, small herds of cattle, hogs and sheep, and flocks of chickens and geese. Carefully maintained woodlots supplied firewood, building materials and fencing. Demand for wood was great in the nineteenth century with the need for construction material and fuel. Most household consumed about 10 cords of wood per year for heating. Historic photographs affirm the massive consumption of wood, revealing a landscape at the time of the Civil War with fewer trees than today.

### Architectural Context

During the century from 1763-1860, first period architecture was gradually replaced or enlarged into more substantial and permanent form. The large “Swisser” barns with cantilevered forebays and a ramp or bank at the back, hallmarks of west-central Maryland and south-central Pennsylvania, replaced small log-crib stables and shelters for livestock and crops. Small log houses were improved with siding and additions, or replaced with stone, brick or larger log or timber frame dwellings.

Due to the predominance of first and second-generation German settlers in Frederick County, there are some early buildings that exhibit distinct Germanic influence. By the early nineteenth century, the use of the traditional Germanic plan was synthesized with more formal Georgian or Neoclassical stylistic elements that were influencing contemporary architecture. The old continental type was gradually replaced by several hybrid arrangements with end chimneys and more formal facades, but with some traditional elements such as the floor plan often remaining.

The people of mid-Maryland built according to the materials that were available to them, sometimes drawing upon long-established traditions based upon European and British patterns and upon their own interpretations of current styles and construction techniques, adapted to local conditions. Elements of fashionable styles were incorporated into the region’s buildings along with traditional features. With the exception of exterior applications of stylistic door treatments and symmetrical fenestration, typically, the more fashionable architectural elements were found on the interior in the form of moldings, mantels, and stairs. Although there are pure stylistic examples, particularly dating from the later nineteenth century, the vast majority of the region’s buildings are vernacular structures.

Mid-Maryland’s barns originated in Pennsylvania, springing from German and English precedents. The region’s first barns were the small log structures described in inventories of Conococheague Manor and other eighteenth century documents. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the barns familiar to us as hallmarks of the region appeared. These bank barns, built of log, stone, brick or frame covered with vertical siding typically, have a ramp at the back providing access to the upper threshing floor and an overhanging forebay at the front. The gable-end profile of barns varies among subtypes. Symmetrical gables and closed-end forebays tend to be a bit later than extended forebays. Stone barns tend to be earlier than brick barns, their date range is principally 1790-1850.

Silos were first manufactured in the 1870s and are now important visual markers on the rural landscape. Older silos are wooden staved structures, although brick, tile, concrete, metal and glass were also used, particularly in more recent structures. Silos are generally part of the conversion to dairy farming, providing a system for storage of feed, mostly fermented com silage for the increased herds of cattle necessary for dairy farming.

“Truck farms,” from which fresh produce, dairy products, and meats were delivered directly to local markets, shops, or even homes, also developed in mid-Maryland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These generally smaller farms are identifiable by use-specific buildings such as for butchering, bottling, packing and cold storage.

Resource History

The Henry Smeltzer Farmstead, located on Catoctin Creek in the fertile Middletown Valley, was historically part of a larger tract of land called Watsons Welfare, first surveyed in 1744 (in Prince Georges County) as 100 acres for Daniel Dulaney (PG Co. Patented Cert. #2263). In 1751, Joseph Chapline had the tract resurveyed (in Frederick County) as 260 acres (FC Patent Record BY and GS 3, p. 374). It is not clear that Chapline ever developed the farm during his period of ownership before he sold it to Van Swearingen, Jr. in 1770 (FC DB N/232).

It was the Swearingen family that improved the 260-acre farm with a grist mill and sawmill, described in Van Swearingen's will dated 1784. Located at the southwest edge of the tract on the west bank of Catoctin (Kittotin) Creek, the mill complex was included in Swearingen's devise to his sons John and Thomas, along with approximately 30 acres on the south end of the Watsons Welfare tract (ref in FC DB 34/507). The mill appeared on the 1808 Charles Varle map of Frederick County. In 1809, John Van Swearingen (Thomas was deceased) sold off the mill and acreage he inherited to Henry and John Stemble for £1,500 (FC DB 34/507). (This mill complex is listed under MIHP #F-4-25, Kinna's Mill Farmstead.

After passing through several intervening conveyances, the Watsons Welfare mill farm came under the ownership of George Bowlus in 1818 (FC DB JS7/37). Bowlus purchased the then 33 1/4-acre property for \$7,000, indicating that it was well-improved, most of that value in the mill, however. Ten years later, in 1828, George Bowlus sold 30 acres on the east side of the creek to Rebecca Phillips for \$1,800, apparently minus the mill complex (FC DB JS30/578). Rebecca Phillips held the property for four years but made no improvements, selling it in 1832 to Henry Smeltzer for \$1,813 (FC DB JS40/466). Smeltzer quickly added to his 30-acre tract in 1833 with two adjoining purchases, one 10 1/2-acre piece of an adjoining tract called Little Left (no longer part of the subject farmstead) and the other a 7 1/4-acre piece of Watsons Welfare purchased from David Bowlus for \$326 (FC DB JS42/410). The Smeltzer farmstead remained at approximately forty-nine acres through Henry's death in 1850 and through several later owners until after 1911, when then owner John Ahalt added additional parcels.

It was likely Henry Smeltzer who built the subject house after 1832, perhaps replacing an earlier dwelling associated with the mill complex. Johann Henrich Schmeltzer (Henry Smeltzer) was the son of Johann Adam Schmeltzer, who emigrated from Rotterdam in 1750 ([www.geni.com/people/Valentine-Smeltzer/](http://www.geni.com/people/Valentine-Smeltzer/)). Henry Smeltzer's close ties to his Germanic heritage likely influenced the plan of his new home. Generally, nineteenth century Germanic farmhouses spanned four to six bays, often sat on a hillside with raised cellar, and had side gables. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century porches began to appear with frequency, either across the entire front or recessed in an inset containing two or three bays along the front elevation at the kitchen wall, such as with this house. Typical floor plans consisted of center passages with one or two rooms on either side, or a two- or four-room plan where the main entrance opened directly into a room, as with the Smeltzer House.

On the 1840 U.S. Population Census, Henry Smeltzer was listed in his 60s, with a wife and four teenaged children still living in his household. He also listed four slaves in his household and two household

members occupied in agriculture. Jacob Smeltzer, probably his oldest son, was listed immediately following Henry. Jacob was in his 20s with a young wife and no children. In July 1850 Henry Smeltzer was 77 years old and living in his son Daniel's household, likely still on the Watsons Welfare farmstead, but before the end of the year Henry Smeltzer was deceased. Daniel Smeltzer did not remain on the small farm; he and his brother Jacob, acting as executors of their father's will, sold the farm to a neighboring tenant farmer named Jacob C. Flook in 1854 (FC DB ES4/430). Flook paid over \$3,000 for the forty-nine-acre farmstead improved with the Smeltzer brick dwelling house and likely a small bank barn. He appeared as the owner on the 1858 Bond map of Frederick County, which showed the mill on the west side of the creek as a merchant saw mill ("M.S.M."; see attached) But Jacob Flook, and apparently the Flook family members who followed him, had difficulties with money. The farm became the subject of several equity cases -in 1862 and in 1870. In 1873 Lewis Flook sold the farmstead to John Crone (FC DB CM10/69) who appeared as the owner with a blacksmith shop on the property on the 1873 Titus Atlas map of Middletown District (see attached). Crone sold the farmstead back to Jacob H. Flook in 1879 (FC DB TGI 1/245) and twenty years later, in 1899, it was again in equity court and the farm was sold for just \$2,809 to Romer C. Yonkins (FC DB DHH3/359).

In 1924, again after passing through several short-term owners, local "meat store" owner Charles F. Main purchased several parcels including the forty-nine-acre Smeltzer farmstead (FC DB 350/236). Main operated a meat market in Middletown and appears to have purchased the nearby Smeltzer tract to serve as a finishing farm and slaughter house. Several buildings still in place on the farmstead include a concrete block slaughter house, frame holding pens, and a frame weighing house. Additionally, Main probably constructed the concrete block silos for storing silage for his livestock.

The Main family retained the Henry Smeltzer farmstead as part of their larger land holding until 1972 when the current twenty-acre farmstead parcel was divided out and sold to Donald and Lucille Smith (FC DB 890/36). The Smiths sold the farmstead to the current owners in July 2009 (FC DB 7424/23).

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## **Physical Description**

Page 1

This information was originally developed as part of the application of this property onto the National Register of Historic Places in 2010 and has been updated by the current owners to reflect changes that have occurred since.

The Henry Smeltzer farmstead stands on a wedge-shaped twenty-acre parcel of land bounded on the west by Catoctin Creek on the north by Bidle Road and by adjoining lands on the south and east, just south of Middletown in Frederick County, Maryland. The complex features a two-story, six-bay brick bank house, facing due south. West of the house is a frame bank barn which was rebuilt in 2022 on the original stone foundation. Behind the barn site, to its north, are two unusual rusticated concrete block silos. In addition, there is a concrete block slaughter house and attached frame holding pens and a frame weighing house. Domestic buildings include a concrete block garage and a small well house; a frame chicken coop and garden shed do not contribute to the property. A farm lane runs south from Bidle road approximately 800 feet to reach the complex of extant buildings. The driveway ends in a circle at the original back side of the house, which over time has been converted to the main, "front" facade because of the access route.

The property is hilly with the house occupying a slope just below its crest and facing south where the landscape dips toward Catoctin Creek. To the north and east is a large-lot housing subdivision and beyond that is the town of Middletown and its National Register historic district. To the south and west is agricultural landscape. The house and the associated lands and buildings retain distinct integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

### **Farmhouse**

The two-story brick bank house faces due south, away from the current entrance driveway and from Bidle Road. Originally the access was from Bidle Road at a point further to the west of the existing driveway, which left Bidle Road at the edge of Catoctin Creek and led to the south of the barn and house.

Constructed into the hillside, the house has an above-grade cellar wall along the south elevation. The brick house rests on a fieldstone foundation. Measuring 49 by 22 feet, it spans six bays; the two western bays, containing the kitchen and service area, are recessed with a two-story inset porch. The main four-bay facade displays Flemish bond brick work, while the recessed area of the front along with the side and rear walls use common bonding with a 5:1 stretcher to header row ratio. A brick corbelled cornice finishes the front and rear walls, and brick soldier courses (jack arches) top the window and door openings.

Windows have six-over-six-light sash within narrow rounded frames with mitered joints. Many windows have pairs of louvered shutters in deteriorated condition, which were removed for future restoration. The front door is in the main four-bay section of the south elevation, in the second bay from the west end. Also in the south elevation are several other doors: one opening into a new addition and two doors

leading into the cellar. There are no doors in either of the end walls, but the north wall has two doors: one opposite the main front door and one opening into the kitchen.

Only the main front and rear doors retain their transoms, each with four lights. The jambs are paneled with small moldings, but the doors have been replaced. However, original or modified six-panel doors remain at the second story.

Two of the surviving chimneys, inside the west end wall for the kitchen and inside the west wall of the main portion of the house, underwent extensive restoration: removal of parged surfaces, traditional mortar replacement and repair. The missing chimney in the east end wall was rebuilt from the attic up with traditional lime mortar and locally-sourced historic brick. The roofing material is hand-crimped metal standing seam nailed over both original and replacement skip sheathing. Traditional snow dogs are installed.

Porches extended across the front and rear elevations when the property was purchased, and both have been rebuilt due to deterioration. The front porch was rebuilt using the original square porch posts with chamfered corners and rests on the original concrete piers. It has a wooden deck encasing the original poured concrete deck with a bead board ceiling. Both the first and second-story recessed porches were in extremely poor condition and have been rebuilt using a wooden deck with bead board ceilings. The front porch has a wooden square picket railing between all posts, and the rear has a wooden square picket railing on the west side only (because the porch is at ground level).

The original interior of the house at the first floor has a kitchen in the west end and two rooms, with a rear transverse stair hall behind the central room providing access to the exterior and the two main rooms, as well as containing the stair to the second floor. The kitchen has a large service fireplace in its west end wall with a simple mantel shelf. Early twentieth century tongue-and-groove wainscoting and mid-twentieth century knotty pine paneling were removed from the south, north and part of the east walls as well as the ceiling to expose the original plaster which was repaired. In sections where the plaster could not be repaired, it was replaced using traditional three-coat plaster method onto the brick walls and lathe ceiling. A half bath (installed prior to current owners) was removed from the northwest corner of the room. A non-original window in the west wall, located in the half bath, was converted to an opening into the owner-added addition. Original trims remain around the windows and doors, and a simple mantel shelf adds to the original material in the room. The trim includes a Grecian ogee backhand. There is evidence that this room once had a staircase in its northeast corner that led to a second-story room above the kitchen. Now there is an added window (installation pre-dating current owners) in the north wall in the vicinity of the removed staircase.

The central room on the first story has in its west wall a fireplace, a door to the kitchen, and a window opening onto the recessed kitchen porch. Its south wall contains a window and the original front entrance of the south porch. The east wall has a door to the east room. The north wall has a door to the rear stair passage opposite the north entrance and a door to the cellar stairs (which were removed prior to current owner) beneath the main staircase, which is in the passageway. This area was converted into a

closet. Original wood trims remain intact, including Grecian ogee backhand and a deeply molded mantelpiece with a frieze, a cornice with multiple moldings, and symmetrically molded pilasters. Early twentieth century tongue-and-groove wainscoting was added to the room.

The room at the east end of the first story is the parlor. It has two windows in the south wall opening onto the porch, one window and a fireplace in the east end wall, and one window in the north wall. The west wall has doors to the stair passage and to the middle room. Like the other rooms of the first floor, the east room retains original wood trim, including chair rail. The mantelpiece is detailed slightly differently from the one in the middle room, but similar in character with deeply cut small moldings in multiple courses, with pilasters, a frieze panel and heavily molded shelf.

Behind the central room and along the north wall of the house the passageway leads from the east room, past the north entrance to the stairway to the second floor. The stairway is boxed into the corner of the space as a winder or ramp stair. At the second floor the floor plan is quite similar, except that a door was added between the hallway and the room above the kitchen, probably in the early twentieth century. A partition dividing the room above the kitchen into a bath and two other rooms was removed by the current owners to restore the space to its original size and where needed the floor was repaired using 15 inch plus wide boards to match the original flooring. The stairway to the kitchen was removed sometime prior to the original owners.

#### Additions/Updates

A 20-foot x 14-foot addition was added to the west side of the original house. The exterior foundation was constructed in cinder block cladded with stone found on the property supplemented with local stone. To differentiate it from the original house, the structure is sided with cement board and two over two wooden windows were used. The roof is metal standing seam with traditional snow dogs, and in height is subordinate to the original roof

The interior of the first floor has a small half bath at the northwest corner of the room. The east wall has a stairway leading to the cellar beneath a stairway leading to the second floor. An east entranceway leads to the enclosed first floor sleeping porch.

The second-floor landing has a door on the west leading to a full bath and a door to the north leading to a study. The study contains a small closet. To the east, the landing opens to the original second floor sleeping porch which retains the original doors leading to the room above the kitchen and the room above the central first floor room.

#### Other Buildings:

In addition to the main house, there are several other buildings associated with the complex.

Immediately behind the house is a small well house, a framed gable-roofed building covered with German siding.

Behind the house, along the east side of the driveway, stands a concrete block/rusticated stone garage with a gabled roof. It appears to date from the early-to-mid twentieth century.

To the west of the house are several agricultural buildings, including a concrete block slaughter house with attached frame holding pens, and a weighing house for livestock before slaughter

To the north of these buildings is the barn rebuilt on the existing stone foundation, and a pair of rusticated concrete block silos which date from the early twentieth century.

In the yard east of the house is a frame garden shed and a frame chicken coop, both with a gabled roof; dating from the late twentieth century, they do not contribute to the property.



























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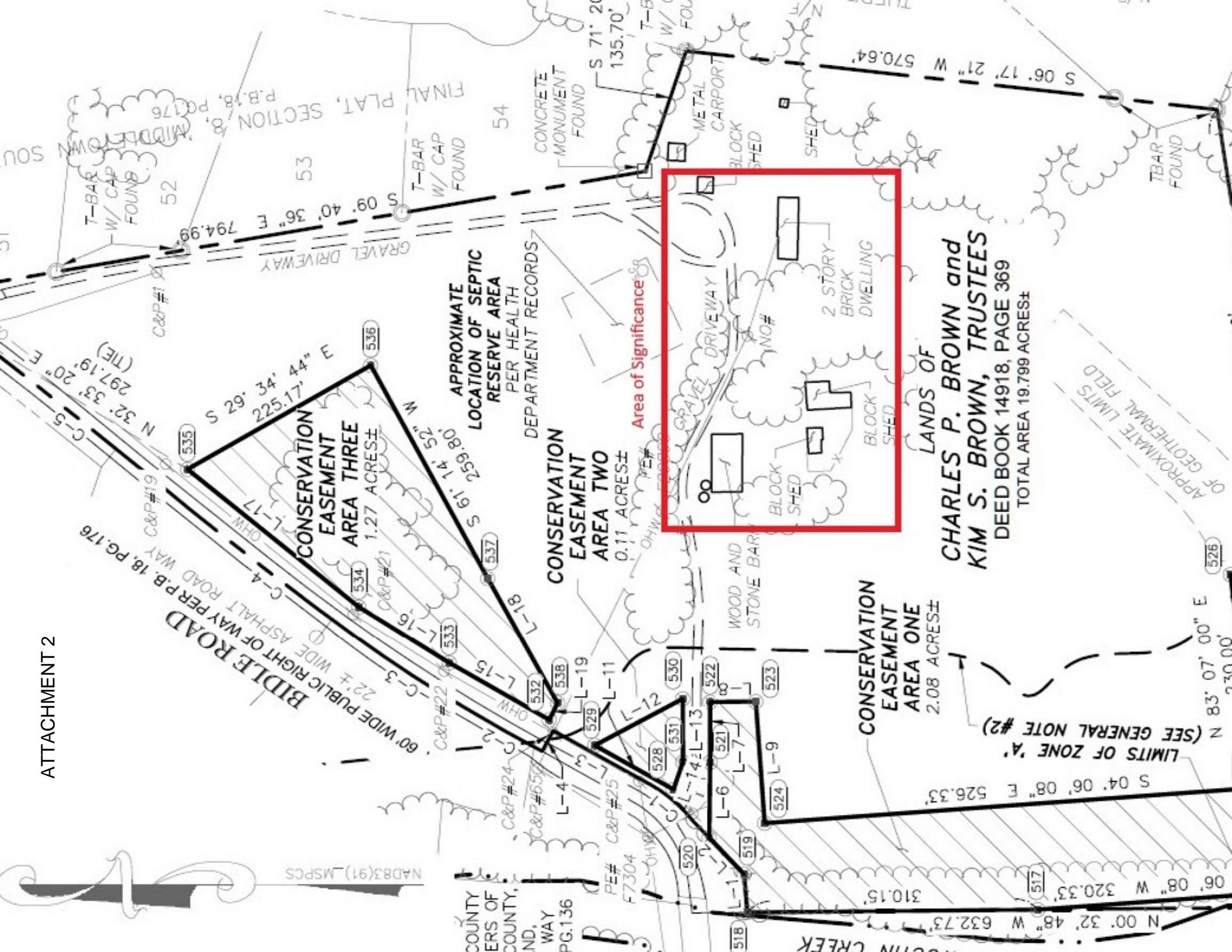








ATTACHMENT 2





# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

## **FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT**



## **FREDERICK COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

# AGENDA

October 2, 2024

6:30 PM

## Virtual

## ATTACHMENT 3

## VII) ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- a) Administrative Updates for September INFORMATION (Amanda)**
- b) 2025 HPC Meeting Calendar INFORMATION (Amanda)**

**VIII) COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) NAPC CAMP Essentials Training November 6 and 7**

**IX) PUBLIC COMMENT**

**X) ADJOURN**

**Upcoming Meetings:** Nov. 6  
Dec. 4  
*January No Meeting*

*Frederick County, Maryland does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, familial status, gender identity, sexual orientation or source of income.*

*All Frederick County Boards and Commissions are subject to:*

- 1) the Open Meetings Act requiring reasonable advance notice of meetings be provided, to make the agenda available in advance, to hold meetings openly, and to adopt and retain minutes; and*
- 2) the Public Information Act, meaning any member of the public may request any record pertaining to the work group at any time.*



## FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

### DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

Jessica Fitzwater  
County Executive

Deborah A. Carpenter, AICP, Division Director  
Kimberly Gaines, Director

### ATTACHMENT 4

October 3, 2024

Mr. and Mrs. Charles and Kim Brown  
3231 Bidle Road  
Middletown, MD 21769

Re: Nomination of the Henry Smeltzer Farmstead  
for listing on the Frederick County Register of Historic Places  
(3231 Bidle Road – Tax Map 065A, Parcel 0115)  
HPC Case # CR 24-05

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Brown:

This letter confirms the affirmative vote of the Frederick County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), at its public meeting on October 2, 2024, to recommend the Henry Smeltzer Farmstead (CR# 24-05) for listing on the County Register of Historic Places. The HPC affirmed that the property should be designated based on the following criterion listed in the Frederick County Historic Preservation Ordinance:

- The property has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, state, or nation; and
- The property embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or architecture.

The next step in the process is to schedule the nomination for consideration by the County Council. We will contact you when the date and time for the County Council's public hearing on the nomination is scheduled. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding the decision of the Historic Preservation Commission, you may contact me by phone at 301-600-1147 or via email at [AWhitmore@FrederickCountyMD.gov](mailto:AWhitmore@FrederickCountyMD.gov).

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda K. Whitmore".

Amanda K. Whitmore  
Historic Preservation Planner