MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Address: 11650 Snowden Pkwy., Germantown Meeting Date: 6/22/2022

Formerly 22022 Ridge Rd.

Resource: Individually Listed Master Plan Site **Report Date:** 6/15/2022

Howes Farm (13/19)

Applicant: NECC **Public Notice:** 6/8/2022

Review: HAWP **Tax Credit:** n/a

Permit No.: 994889 **Staff:** Dan Bruechert

PROPOSAL: Demolition of three (3) accessory structures

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the HPC deny the demolition of the three outbuildings.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Individually Listed Master Plan (Howes Farm #13/19)

STYLE: Vernacular

DATE: c.1884 and 1920-30s



Figure 1: Designated Master Plan Site - Howes Farm.

From Places from the Past:

"The Howes House retains its late 19th-early 20th century appearance and setting, and the farm includes many of its original outbuildings. Between 1884-1892, Eliza and James Robert Howes built the ell-shaped, frame house. The traditional main block is one-room deep with a center cross gable and center-hall plan. Dominating the hallway is a striking curved wooden staircase, which Howes ordered from Philadelphia. Rough timbers for the house were sawn from trees on the farm. One of nine children of Eliza and James, Joseph G. Howes acquired the farm in 1917 and made several improvements over the next decade. In the early 1920s, Joseph enlarged the house with a wraparound porch. He installed indoor plumbing in 1919 and electricity in 1928 and covered the house in pebble-dash stucco. The farmstead has several notable outbuildings: a double corncrib with attached machine shed, concrete block milk house, pump house, combined smokehouse/workers house, 2 silos and feed room, and water tank house. A bank barn (late 1800s) and dairy barn (1930s) were destroyed by fire. The property remained in the Howes family until the early 1970s."

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Places (MIHP) form¹ includes the additional information:

"There are a number of outbuildings to the north and west of the house. They date from the 1920s and 1930s and include a shed-roof hen house with vertical plank siding; a double corn crib and a machine storage shed with a cat-slide roof and vertical plank siding; a rusticated concrete-block and gable-roof dairy building used for storing milking equipment; a gable-roof one-bay pump house, a shed-roof, clapboard-sided structure with two entrances and a center window which was used partly as a meat house and partly for housing handymen; a silo and adjacent clapboard-and-concrete-block, gable-roof feed room; and two adjacent, frame shed-roof buildings (one three-bay, with vertical plank siding and the other one-bay and clapboarded) which were put to various uses over the years. The one-bay structure originally had a 1500 gallon water tank on its roof, for providing water to the house.

A dairy barn built in the 1930s was destroyed by lightning and a bank barn built about the same time as the house burned in the late 1970s; the stone foundation of the bank barn remains next to a second silo."

Master Plan for Historic Preservation Amendment – 13/19 Howes Farm – July 1994

The Howes Farm meets the following criteria for Master Plan Designation: 1A, as an excellent example of a late 19th-early 20th-century family farm in the Clarksburg area; 1D, exemplifying the cultural, economic, and social heritage of agriculture and dairy farming in Montgomery County; 2A, embodying the distinct characteristics of a high-style Gothic Revival farmhouse with metal roof, narrow 2-over-2 shuttered windows, second-story bay window, and 20th-century rear wing, stuccoed siding, and wrap-around porch; and 2E, as an established and familiar feature in the community once dominated by family farms.

The Howes Farm was built in 1884 by James Robert Howes, who purchased the land from Sara D. Sellman. In the 1920s, the house was enlarged and stuccoed by their son, Joseph G. Howes, adding the wrap-around porch, modern utilities, and changing the drive from Brink Road to Ridge Road. The house retains its late 19th century integrity and many fine details, including the curved mahogany staircase ordered from Philadelphia.

The Howes Farm was formerly referred to in the Locational Atlas as the Elizabeth Waters Farm. However, research has not shown any connection of this property to the Waters family who lived nearby. The Howes family, long-time Clarksburg residents, were active members of the County Dairy Association, farming the 124-acre farm for over 90 years over three generations.

Several outbuildings remain from the period, including a hen house, a double corn crib and machine storage shed, a rusticated concrete block dairy building, pump house, meat house/handyman shelter, silo, and feed room. A dairy barn (1930) and bank barn (1880s) burned in the late 1970s. The

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¹ The MIHP form is available here: https://mcatlas.org/hp2/hpdocs/M %2013-19.pdf.

environmental setting is the entire 16.75 -acre parcel, including the outbuildings and long drive from Ridge Road.

BACKGROUND

The applicant presented a Preliminary Consultation at the July 28, 2021, HPC meeting.² The discussion at that meeting included the overall redevelopment concept plan for the historic site including demolishing and modifying existing buildings, location and scale of new construction, and the placement of other site features.

On February 2, 2022, the applicant submitted a HAWP to demolish a silo and the three outbuildings that are subject to the present HAWP.³ The HPC approved the silo demolition, but deferred consideration of the three outbuildings until more information on the three outbuildings could be considered. The motion specifically required the applicant to demonstrate that the three buildings were "beyond reasonable repair."

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to demolish three structures:

- 1. Handyman house;
- 2. Pump Room; and,
- 3. Hen House

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

Proposed alterations to individual Master Plan Sites are reviewed under Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A) and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Rehabilitation is defined 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.

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8

- (a) The commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is sought would be inappropriate, inconsistent with or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement or ultimate protection of the historic site or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.
- (b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to ensure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:

² The Staff Report for the July 28, 2021 Preliminary Consultation is available here: https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/II.A-22022-Ridge-Road-Germantown.pdf. The audio of the hearing is available here: https://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=d792670e-f08f-11eb-81b1-0050569183fa.

³ The Staff Report for the February 2, 2022 HAWP is available here: https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/I.F-11650-Snowden-Farm-Parkway-Germantown-979811.pdf and the recording of the hearing is available here: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=fde307e0-8521-11ec-972b-0050569183fa.

- (1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or
- (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or
- (3) The proposal would enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district in a manner compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which an historic resource is located; or
- (4) The proposal is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied; or
- (5) The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship; or
- (6) In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- 3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
- 4. Changes to a property that has acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- 5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- 6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- 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 DISCUSSION

Improvement of the subject property and construction of the main house and associated outbuildings began in the 1880s, but most of the farm buildings were constructed until the 1920s and 30s.

As part of the initial redevelopment of the site, the applicant proposes to demolish an assemblage of three structures. Demolishing these structures was discussed at the July 28, 2021, Preliminary Consultation and was considered as part of the February 2, 2022 HAWP. The HPC determined that there was insufficient evidence to find the buildings had degraded beyond repair. The applicants have presented additional

photo and video evidence of the building condition for consideration.

Demolition of Contributing Accessory Structures

Between the historic farmhouse and the principal barn, there are three buildings, identified in the historic documentation as "dairy equipment/hen house, handyman room, and pump house." All three buildings have wood siding (German shiplap for the hen house, clapboards for the pump house, and vertical siding for the pump room) and were constructed on poured concrete foundations. These buildings have suffered from deferred maintenance to varying degrees. The applicant proposes to demolish these buildings.



Figure 2: Detail showing the house and farm structures. Outbuildings proposed for demolition circled.

All three of these buildings were integral to the operation of the farm, serving both the family and milk to the Dairy Association. They are vernacular buildings utilizing a variety of wood siding and roof forms. Based on Staff's observations, the buildings are in poor condition largely due to deferred maintenance and not larger design flaws that would render repair unsuitable.

The applicant consulted with a structural engineer regarding the condition of several buildings on the site (letter attached). The letter states, "these three small buildings are falling apart and are of no use, therefore shall be demolished." The letter, however, fails to identify what is the cause of the buildings falling apart and what work could be undertaken to stabilize and retain them. The current site plan calls for relocating the drive along the right side of the house to provide direct access to the existing barn. Because of the narrow space between the house and these buildings, the drive as designed would likely necessitate removing the three buildings; however, construction on a Master Plan site should focus on maintaining contributing resources and altering new site designs and buildings around those features that contribute to the overall significance of the site. The HPC determined that this level of information was not sufficient to conclude the buildings had deteriorated beyond repair and requested additional documentation. The applicant submitted additional photos and videos better detailing the building condition.

As in the previous Staff Report, Staff finds that these three buildings are rare examples of outbuildings

that were integral to the operation of the family farm and their location between the house and barn demonstrates the significant utility they served.

At site visits to the Master Plan Site, Staff observed that all three buildings suffer structural deficiencies and have walls that lean and/or have rotten wood siding and framing. Staff would expect the type of deterioration these buildings show from years of deferred maintenance. The failing paint has exposed the clapboards to the elements so they are failing due to UV and moisture exposure. The previous owner allowed the grass to grow around the buildings trapping moisture around the foundations and causing clapboards and flooring structures to rot. Because of the simple construction methods and traditional materials, Staff finds these buildings could be repaired using wood, matching the historic construction.

Staff finds the applicant has still not met the burden of persuasion to demolish these three buildings. Staff finds these buildings contribute to the historical significance of the site and to the operation of the historic family farm. Staff does not support the demolition of these three structures. Staff finds demolishing these buildings would contravene 24A-8(b)(1) Standards 2 and 6. Rehabilitation and preservation of the outbuildings in their existing location are most consistent with the provisions of the Ordinance.

If the HPC concurs with Staff's finding that the applicant has still not met the burden of persuasion regarding the condition of the outbuildings, the HPC could consider deferring a ruling on the demolition of the three outbuildings.

Staff finds the HPC could support relocating and stabilizing these three structures on new foundations directly behind the historic farmhouse under the requisite guidance. Relocating the outbuildings behind the house would retain the historic relationship between these three buildings, the farmhouse, and the barn. Additionally, Staff finds that relocating the buildings would allow the applicant to construct the drive in their preferred location, providing direct access to the historic barn; which will be utilized as a community and sanctuary space. Preserving the relationship of the buildings on site is consistent with 24A-8(b)(1), and repairing these buildings on new foundations would protect the outbuildings while allowing utilization of the site under 24A-8(b)(3).

The HPC could also identify other forms of mitigation sufficient to justify demolishing the three accessory buildings. The HPC could approve demolishing the three identified outbuildings and adding a condition that the applicant adds interpretive signage along Snowden Farm Parkway. The condition could require one interpretive sign for each building demolished. Staff believes that two of these signs could focus on the history and development of the site and a third could focus on the history of dairy farming in the county. These signs should conform to the National Park Service low-profile sign guidelines (https://www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/upload/Wayside-Guide-First-Edition.pdf). This will likely require the applicant to hire an architectural historian/preservation consultant to complete the site history and sign design. Final designs should be submitted to the HPC as a Staff item for HPC review and approval. The HPC could support the building demolitions with the added condition under 24A-8(b)(6). To ensure the signage is completed, the HPC could require sign installation before approving a HAWP(s) for any additional paving on the site.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission <u>deny</u> the demolition of the three outbuildings under the criteria identified in 24A-8(a); and as being inconsistent with Standards 2, 5, and 6.



APPLICATION FOR

FOR STAFF ONLY:
HAWP# 994889
DATE ASSIGNED

HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION 301.563.3400

APPLICANT:

Name:	Nepal Education an	d Cultural C	enter_(NECC) _	E-mail:	necc.engteam@gm	ail.com
Address	s: _11650 Snowden Fa	arm Pkwy	City: Germanto	wn	Zip:	20876
Daytim	e Phone: _240-751-63	359	Ta:	x Account	No.: 160202898373	& 160202975153
AGENT	CONTACT (if applica	ble):				
Name:			E-r	nail:		
Address	s:		Cit	y:	Zip:_	
Daytim	e Phone:		Co	Contractor Registration No.:		
20876_	TION OF BUILDING/P New Address: 11650	Snowden Fa	rm Parkway, Germ	antown, MI	D	
Is the P	Property Located within	an Historic	District? <u>X</u> Yes, _No/I	/District Na ndividual S	ame_ Northern Col Site Name	unty
	an Historic Preservati the easement, and do					
(Condit	er Planning and/or He ional Use, Variance, Re nental information.	_			•	
Building	g Number:		Street:			
Town/C	City:		Nearest Cross Str	eet:		
Lot:	Block:		Subdivision:	Parcel	:	
for pro	OF WORK PROPOSED Oposed work are sub epted for review. Cho	mitted witl	n this application			will not
	New Construction	_	k/Porch		Solar	•
	Addition Demolition	∐ Fen Har	ce dscape/Landscap	e \square	Tree removal/plan Window/Door	ung
	Grading/Excavation	Roo		_ H	Other:	

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct

HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTHING [Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners] Owner's mailing address Owner's Agent's mailing address 11650 Snowden Farm Parkway Germantown, MD 20876 Property Owners mailing addresses Adjacent and confronting 20301 Mallet Hill Ct 20305 Mallet Hill Ct Germantown, MD 20876 Germantown, MD 20876 20300 Mallet Hill Ct 20309 Mallet Hill Ct Germantown, MD 20876 Germantown, MD 20876 20312 Mallet Hill Ct 11722 Morning Star Dr Germantown, MD 20876 Germantown, MD 20876 11804 Morning Star Dr 11808 Morning Star Dr Germantown, MD 20876 Germantown, MD 20876 11820 Morning Star Dr 11824 Morning Star Dr Germantown, MD 20876 Germantown, MD 20876 21725 Brink Meadow Ln 21721 Brink Meadow Ln Germantown, MD 20876 Germantown, MD 20876 21729 Brink Meadow Ln 21733 Brink Meadow Ln Germantown. MD 20876 Germantown. MD 20876 21737 Brink Meadow Ln 21741 Brink Meadow Ln Germantown, MD 20876 Germantown, MD 20876 11714 Morning Star Dr Germantown, MD 20876

and accurate, and that the construction will comply with plans reviewed and approved by all necessary							
agencies and hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.							
Pramod KC	05/26/2022						
Signature of owner or authorized agent	Date						

Description of Property: Please describe the building and surrounding environment. Include information on significant structures, landscape features, or other significant features of the property:

The property lies at 11650 Snowden Farm Parkway, Germantown, MD 20876 (formerly 22022 Ridge Road, Germantown, MD 20876), the area of the property as listed on plat is 16.75 Acres. The property falls in Historical preservation master plan designated as Howes Farm (Elizabeth Waters Farm), which was built in 1884 by James R. Howes, several other outbuildings like hen house, a double corn crib and machine storage shed, a rusticated concrete block dairy building, pump house, meat house, Silo and feed room also remain from the period.

The property is enclosed by tree lines in all three sides and frontage is connected to Snowden Farm Parkway, the property is mostly vegetated with grass, shrubs, and trees. A stream passes through the east side of the property and part of the property lies on 100-year floodplains.

Description of Work Proposed: Please give an overview of the work to be undertaken:

Nepal Education and Cultural Center (NECC) purchased the property to establish as a cultural and religious center; several new buildings, gardens, parking spaces, access roads, sanitary sewer, storm drainage and new water connection are proposed on this property without interfering with the existing historical properties. After purchase NECC has done extensive cleaning of all existing buildings and sheds, mowing of the entire property and extensive renovation of main building and stone building. Many volunteer engineers and volunteers of other expertise are working daily to uplift the beauty of this historical property. A team including structural engineers and architects were hired by NECC to assess the structural condition of the three outbuildings; upon detailed study of the said buildings the engineers indicated that the structures are not in good structural condition and does not comply with current building safety code.

Based on structure engineer's analysis NECC is requesting permit to demolish the unsafe outbuildings as indicated in attached plan; however, NECC is in rehabilitation process of the main building, concrete block dairy building, barn, and the feed room.

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Work Item 1: <u>Handyman Room, Pump House, and Hen House</u>

Description of Current Condition:

Hen House

- The external wall of hen house is falling apart, horizontal siding and vertical studs are rotting.
- The building is leaning more than 5 degrees to north side.
- The mudsill is rotten and cracks on the foundation wall are visible.
- Door and Window frames are rotting, panels are missing.
- The means of egress are not compliant to IBC 1008.1.1

Pump House:

- Outbuilding sits on perimeter foundation wall and floor beam.
- The roof is sagging, mudsill, studs and sidings are rotting.
- The hardwood floor is rotten beyond repair.
- The perimeter foundation wall has cracks.

Handyman Room:

- Perimeter foundation wall has spalls and cracks.
- Vertical sidings are rotten.
- Concrete flooring may have placed recently.

NECC is requesting demolition permit for these three small outbuildings. NECC is planning to widen the existing road between the main historical building and three outbuildings to provide fire access to existing barn, new lord Buddha statue and proposed temple. The existing access road should be widened to meet fire access standard; the widening of this access road is not possible without these removing these outbuildings.

Work Item 2:	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

Work Item 3:							
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:						

Current photographs of the Hen House:



Current photographs of the Pump House:



Current photographs of Handyman Room:







