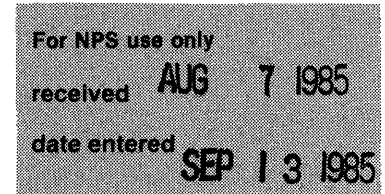


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Property Name: Rosedale (Mary Del Farm)

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

Rosedale stands in a rural area 1.3 miles to the west of Middletown in the northwest corner of the junction of Rt. 435 and Rt. 437. The nominated parcel includes approximately five acres containing the house, grounds, and outbuildings. Of the numerous structures standing in the complex only the dwelling, hay barn, barn #1 (see attached map), and mash furnace are eligible for listing. All other structures are noncontributing elements.

The nominated parcel begins on the northside of Rt. 437 550 feet north of its junction with Rt. 435. It runs north for 650 feet, where the line turns 90° to the west and continues for 400 feet. Here a 90° angle is formed and the line runs for 650 feet south back toward Rt. 437, and the boundary is formed by joining the two points along the north side of Rt. 432.

The nominated parcel includes sufficient acreage to protect the house, outbuildings, grounds and immediate setting.

UTM 18.35860.67820 Tax parcel 13-021.00-007

Owner: Mary Odom

P. O. Box 108

Middletown, Delaware

Description:

The main house, rectangular in plan, measures approximately 45 feet by 25 feet, with five bays forming a symmetrical facade. A wing attached to the east gable end forms an ell and is contemporary to the main house. Construction material is brick laid in common bond. All the brick has been painted white. A belt course four bricks wide runs around the north (main) facade of the house just above the first floor. Also on this facade is a water table, formed of seven courses of brick from the ground up to a molded quarter-round brick on the seventh course. The water table ends at the corners and runs to approximately 1.5 feet of either side of the main central door, where it drops to two courses with a molded brick until it reaches the door trim.

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The house has a gable roof, covered with slate and trimmed with a wooden box cornice with a bed molding. There are two interior gable end brick chimneys. The house has two dormers on the facade; each is gabled with return and windows are semi-elliptical on top and have six-over-six light sash. The wooden gable ends on the dormers overhang slightly and the windows are trimmed with wood molding. The sides of the dormers are covered with weatherboard.

The main facade has five windows on the top and four on the bottom. They are double-hung, six-over-six sash type. Windows have molded wood sills, framed with molded wood surrounds. Shutters on the bottom have three recessed and beveled panels; the first two are identical in size and the top one is smaller. All shutters are painted red, and most have decorative iron shutter dogs. The top shutters are louvered. Underneath each ground floor window is a small basement window.

The house has a single central door on the main facade. The door has six panels which are recessed and beveled. The door has a wood architrave with ogee moldings. A wide lintel underlies a recessed semi-circular fanlight. The fan light consists of six radiating muntins that are scalloped at the top edges, producing a spider-web effect. The inside or recessed section of the fanlight is about 10 inches deep with four square, carved panels with a section of molded beaded wood in the center. Brick steps with a simple iron railing lead up to the door.

The northeast two-story wing that forms the ell is also brick, with a gable roof, and lies on an uncoursed rubble foundation, and there is no water table or belt course. There are two evenly spaced doors on this facade, each with a small veranda type porch approached by brick steps. Each veranda has a wood bargeboard cut with a zig-zag design. Windows are double hung sash type, with six-over-six lights, and wood trim. Between each door are two windows that are flush with two windows on the second floor. The second floor has a third window over the northernmost door, creating a non-symmetrical facade. Wooden shutters on the second floor windows are louvered while those on the ground floor are made of horizontal wooden slats. Shutters are painted red, like the main house. This wing has a single, small interior brick chimney near the northwest wall of the house.

Between the two porches is a battened door that leads to a full basement. The basement material is brick pointed with mortar; floors are earthen.

The house is built on a center hall plan; one room deep and two rooms wide with a central stair. The ell, provides two additional rooms on the northeast corner. The dining room and the sitting room have fireplaces (on the outside wall, east and north respectively). The dining room had a six-panel door surrounded with wood molding and a wide transom bar across the top, reminiscent of the outside door. Also, the door jambs are very wide and decorated with three recessed wood panels.

The central stairway that led to the upper floors was wood with a wooden railing, and carved wood decoration on the risers.

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Near these rear steps on the second floor is a very narrow, set of stairs that lead straight up to the chimney structure on the east gable end of the house. This up-stairs area is the attic, but it may have also been used as a chamber. The east side of the attic is vacant, with two small windows on the east side. The west side has been fitted with a full cedar closet. Two small windows are infilled and can be seen in outline from the outside.

Several wings have been added to the house, some of which have already been mentioned. A three-bay, one-story wing constructed of a wood siding has been added to the west gable end of the house. It has been painted white and has windows and shutters that match the main house. Two wings were added to the rear (south) between 1960 to 1965.

The property contains a number of outbuildings that lie behind, or to the north of the house and roughly form a "U" shape. They are now used for the care and grooming of horses and related activities. It appears that at least two buildings are older than all the others. For purposes of clarity, buildings will be discussed according to physical layout, moving from the house northward. The first building that lies northwest is a one-story structure with wood siding and a small enclosed front porch. It now serves as the office for the farm. The attached barn is one of the oldest on the property. It is now used for mare stalls, and another newer barn is attached to this at a right angle. Other outbuildings on the property with the exception of the hay barn appear to be made of corrugated steel siding and roofs. Behind the office is a "bunk-house" that was supposed to have been occupied by workers for the previous owner.

To the rear of this is a rectangular building used for breeding stalls. In the front (south) of the building is a horse ramp. Moving to the north is an open pole barn used for gear, oil, equipment, etc. It is supported by four circular posts and is weather boarded. There are two feeding troughs, a water basin, and a large equipment/machinery shed to the rear of this building. To the west is a second building dating from the nineteenth century. This outbuilding is an addition to Barn #1. It is a two-story, drive-through, rectangular structure with hay mews on the second floor and has horse stalls on the bottom. This building is also constructed of wood siding.

Perhaps the most unusual and possibly the oldest structure among these outbuildings is a brick fireplace. It is approximately 5' x 5' and about 3' high, with a high stack, probably about 12', centered at the back. In the front is a double semi-elliptical iron door where wood was put in to stoke the fire. In the center of the fireplace, on top, is a circular iron vat where a mash was cooked for the horses.

Historic Background and Significance:

The earliest mention of the property is 1792 when a John Reynolds willed a tract of land that encompassed Rosedale to his grandson, Joshua E. Driver, who, in 1847, sold

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this tract (158 acres, 8 perches) to Thomas Murphey. John Reynold's original property, is also shown on an 1801 map of Maryland and Delaware. The 1804 Tax Assessment still lists the property as belonging to John Reynold's original property; is also shown on an 1801 map of Maryland and Delaware. The 1804 Tax Assessment still lists the property as belonging to John Reynolds, who possessed 350 acres, 250 of them improved, with a dwelling house, kitchen, barn, stable, granary, livestock and four slaves. The total value was assessed at \$2,100.

Until 1847, the exact owners of this property are uncertain partly because descriptions in the deed records (which were gleaned from chain of title lists in later deed records) are not always in accord with what appeared to be the correct geographical location. Previous owners were sometimes cited by name only and a search through the deed indexes indicated that five of these individuals in fact owned or sold numerous properties in the area during the early nineteenth century. Also, because the Rosedale property is so close to the Maryland border, earlier records would have been found in Cecil County, Maryland deed registers. At one time the property appears to have been a part of Bohemia Manor, one of the earliest tracts of land in the area.

Thomas Murphey acquired the property in 1847. Before that, in 1831, he had also acquired a tract of land that consists of "Bohemia Brick Mill, with dwelling house, out-houses, and several lots of improved land and unimproved land for convenience of the mill". Two years later he acquired another portion of the mill property, "lying and being partly in Cecil County, and partly in New Castle..." This mill would have been located over a mile from the Rosedale house on the Little Bohemia in Cecil County. It is possible that Rosedale was the "dwelling house" for the mill, and a mill appears on the Shallus 1801 map (in Maryland).

By 1847, the land had been resurveyed, and now Thomas Murphey owned and lived on the Rosedale property (158 acres plus 8 perches). Here he stayed until his death in 1878, where upon the property remained in the hands of family members until 1891. According to the 1850 manuscript census, Murphey was born in Maryland, was married and had three children. Also living in the house was an adult relative, Thomas C., and an unrelated adult white woman. Murphey also owned three slaves at the time. Murphey's farm was not found in the agricultural census for 1850, but the population census values his real estate at \$3,800. The 1860 agricultural census values Thomas Murphey's farm, at \$12,000, which includes property, farm machinery, livestock, and crops. Crops include wheat, Indian corn, oats, potatoes, and dairy products. The census does not indicate that he owned any orchards at this time.

Murphey was active in the Middletown community. In 1851, he and his wife, Susan, belonged to the Forest Presbyterian Church, Middletown, where he and Thomas C. Murphey were also on the board of trustees.

In addition to agriculture, Murphey's family continues to be associated with milling. The 1849 Rea and Price map shows a "T. Murphey's Ct. & Wool.n Factory" located just

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over the state line in Cecil County on Bohemia Creek. The only other mention of this mill was in Scharf's sketch of the Cochran family, where he states that around 1805 James Cochran "bought" and removed to a farm on Bohemia Manor, Cecil County, Maryland, near what is now Murphey's Mill Pond". In the 1850 Rea and Price map, this mill is simply cited as "Murphey's Factory". The mill is not found on any later Delaware maps, although later maps for Maryland were not investigated. However, a mill exists in that location in a 1794 Griffith map for Maryland, and on an 1801 Shallus map of Maryland and Delaware. It is possible that this was actually the earlier Bohemia Mill.

Thomas Murphey was obviously a man of means as evidenced by his substantial dwelling house, farmlands, livestock, mill and farm produce. He was also active in bank affairs; in 1860 he was an officer at the Citizen's Bank of Delaware, and five years later was a director at the bank. By 1870 the agricultural census shows Murphey's property value had now risen from \$12,000 just a decade ago to \$20,000, and he now had hired help. Besides other crops, Murphey held orchards valued at \$2,100. By the next census, (1880) the property was also valued at \$20,000, but it was now expanded to 200 acres. Thomas C. Murphey now owned the property. Orchards covered 25 acres, with, 2,400 peach bearing trees, and one acre of 24 apple trees.

By the end of the nineteenth century the "peach boom" had collapsed. In 1887, the property sold for \$16,000. It was sold at a sheriff's sale in 1892, and sold again in 1897 for a mere \$6,000 - one-third of its peak value. In 1913 the property commanded \$11,500, but during the Depression, it sold for \$5,000 at sheriff sale.

For the last few decades, the property was used as a horse farm; a track was built and additional buildings were added for the breeding and training of race horses, and "Rosedale" flourished once again.

Although additions, (principally rear) were added, the house possessed much if not most of its integrity both outside and in. The original facade appeared to be mostly unchanged; the bricks were repointed and painted over. Window and door placements, dormers, were intact, as was the roof and roof trim. Window and door trim and panelling retained their original design and carving, both inside and out.

The significance of Rosedale lies in its prominent architecture characteristic of the farming economy during the mid-to-late nineteenth century in St. Georges Hundred. This Georgian farmhouse possesses a well-executed style and quality that was an indication of the prosperity and perhaps of a bold and optimistic outlook that pervaded the minds of builders, farmers, and merchants in nineteenth-century St. Georges Hundred.

Nomination by Lauren Archibald