

## ***2. The Cultural Context of the Frederick Town Historic District***

### **a. Historical Overview of Frederick (by Peter Kurtze, edited by Kirsten Peeler and Terry Reimer)**

Established in 1745 as a speculative land venture, Frederick has evolved over the years from a small frontier settlement to one of the largest cities in the State of Maryland. Over two and a half centuries of growth have transformed the city into an important regional center for commerce and industry, as well as a convenient commuter location for people working in Washington, DC, and Baltimore. Remarkably, because most early growth occurred within the 340 lots platted by Daniel Dulany and his son, the Frederick Town Historic District remains relatively intact and constitutes one of the largest historic districts in the state. It contains a broad spectrum of architectural styles that reflect the region's cultural history.

In 1744 Daniel Dulany, an Annapolis lawyer and proprietary official, bought approximately 7,000 acres west of the Monocacy River from the heirs of Benjamin Tasker. The next year, Dulany subdivided a section of the estate along Carroll Creek for a new town, laying out the original 144 lots along a grid plan with streets running north-south and east-west. Eventually, more lots were added for a total of 340 lots, bounded by the current Seventh Street to the north, South Street to the south, Bentz Street to the west, and East Street to the east.

A five-lot parcel was set aside for the Court House, now City Hall, and other lots were reserved for churches. When Dulany sold the remaining parcels, he stipulated that buyers improve the properties by erecting structures within a specified period. The first settlers were mainly of English and German descent. After only three years the town had developed so successfully that Frederick Town became the county seat for the newly-created Frederick County. The designation was significant, because at the time Frederick County encompassed all of the area west of present Baltimore and Howard counties, stretching to Maryland's current western border.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the town's population had reached 2,606 and was becoming more culturally diverse. There were 449 houses, seven churches, two markets and numerous public buildings. The Frederick County School, the first established school for boys, opened in 1796 at the corner of Council Street and Record Street. The town was a center for trade, industry and politics.

Frederick Town was home to a number of citizens who played important and influential roles during the early years of the nation's development. In 1773, John Hanson established residency on West Patrick Street. He later served as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress and was elected President of Congress in 1781. Maryland's first elected governor, Thomas Johnson, was also a Frederick resident. He died in 1819 at Rose Hill Manor, the

home of his daughter located north of Frederick, now encompassed within the City boundaries. From 1801 until 1823, Roger Brooke Taney practiced law in Frederick. Taney was appointed the Maryland attorney general in 1827 and held a number of national appointments, eventually becoming Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. While serving as Chief Justice, Taney administered the oath of office to seven presidents-elect, including Abraham Lincoln.

Due to its strategic location at the crossroads of major Native American and Colonial transportation routes, Frederick developed into a regional market center. A turnpike connecting Baltimore with the National Pike in Cumberland passed through the town along Patrick Street. A north-south route linking Gettysburg to Washington, DC, intersected the turnpike at the “Square Corner” in Frederick, the intersection of Market and Patrick streets. The burgeoning rail industry established an important presence in Frederick with construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad depot in 1832 at South Carroll and East All Saints streets. A passenger station, constructed in 1854, still stands on the southeast corner of Market and All Saints streets.

Early additions to the original lots laid out by Dulany were clustered on the west side of Bentz Street. Bentztown and Battletown, added in 1817, were located along both sides of West Patrick Street and extended to the north side of West South Street. Another smaller addition was located west of Bentz Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Frederick was incorporated in 1816 and “Frederick Town” became simply, “Frederick.”

Frederick played an important role during the Civil War. Because Confederate sympathies ran high in Annapolis, Frederick was selected as the site for 1861 sessions of the Maryland Assembly. The sessions were held in Kemp Hall on the southeast corner of Market and Church streets. Several times throughout the war, both Union and Confederate troops marched through the City. Many of the churches, public buildings and private residences were converted to makeshift hospitals for Union and Confederate armies following the battles of Antietam and Monocacy. Poet John Greenleaf Whittier immortalized Frederick resident Barbara Fritchie for her purported public defiance of Confederate General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson.

The last half of the nineteenth century was marked by the addition of numerous schools, churches and public buildings. In 1867, the Maryland Deaf and Dumb Institute (today, the Maryland School for the Deaf) was established on the barracks grounds on the south side of the city. New public schools were opened, including the West Seventh Street School for African Americans in 1872 and the high school for girls on East Church Street in 1889. These schools added to the already-existing educational opportunities in the city, which included Visitation Academy, a boarding school for girls that was established in 1846 on the site of a previous school at East Second Street and Chapel Alley, and the Frederick Female

Seminary, founded in 1839. Eventually, the school constructed the building now called Winchester Hall at 12 East Church Street. The female seminary later became Hood College.

Industrial and commercial development accelerated after the end of the Civil War and continued growing into the early twentieth century. Cheap labor, locally available raw materials and access to major markets made Frederick an attractive location for a variety of industries. Tanneries and flour mills were located along Carroll Creek, canning companies were opened to process the bounty of the local farms and new industries were established to produce consumer goods. Two of these industries were the Frederick Seamless Hosiery Company, opened in 1887 at the corner of East Patrick Street and Wisner Street, and the Palmetto Fibre Brush Company, later the Ox Fiber Brush Company, located on East Church Street. Several examples of industrial architecture remain along the eastern and southeastern boundaries of the Historic District.

The city continued to prosper and grow during the early part of the twentieth century. Because growth was limited within Daniel Dulany's original subdivision, new residential development took place outside the boundaries. The first planned addition to the early plat was the extension of East Third Street to the east of East Street in 1891. In 1894 Clarke Place was laid out just south of the Maryland School for the Deaf property, east of South Market Street. Other city streets were extended and subdivided west of Bentz Street, including Rockwell Terrace, which extended West Third Street in 1905 and Dill Avenue, which extended West Fourth Street.

Over time, new buildings were erected within the original Dulany plat as opportunities became available. The Catholic Novitiate located on the north side of East Second Street and the south side of East Third Street near Chapel Alley was closed in 1900. Developers acquired this eastern two-thirds of the block in 1903 and cleared the way for new residences. By 1908, the site of Lewis McMurray's canning establishment, located east of Bentz Street between West South and West All Saints streets, had been subdivided for residences. A few early twentieth century commercial buildings replaced earlier buildings along Market and Patrick streets. Otherwise, Frederick's historic core remains largely intact.

In 1952 the City of Frederick created a historic district that encompassed a few blocks downtown, becoming the second city in Maryland and the thirteenth in the nation to establish a local historic district. Over the years the boundaries of the district were expanded, and in 1977 the City Code was strengthened, the district boundaries were expanded again, and the Historic District Commission was created. In 1995 the district boundaries were expanded once more, and in 2001 the Historic District was officially named the "Frederick Town Historic District." In 2005 the Commission was renamed the Historic Preservation Commission.

### **b. Physical Development of Frederick Town**

The Frederick Town Historic District reflects significant trends and concepts of early American urban planning. Laid out in 1745, the essential pattern of development was established by the early nineteenth century and has been left essentially intact for two-and-a-half centuries. The street plan in the Historic District reflects the city's Colonial heritage. The basic grid of the original plat presented primary and secondary streets with long, narrow lots running north to south. Most of the primary streets ran east-west, with the long lots running between them. Patrick Street, which was a portion of the National Road, was destined to become the most commercial of the east-west streets, just as Market Street became the main north-south artery for commerce. At its north end, Market Street became the Liberty Turnpike and at its south end it became the Georgetown Turnpike. The city's most prominent commercial center developed where Market and Patrick streets intersected, known as the "Square Corner."

Some five lots on the original plat were reserved for a courthouse, now City Hall. Markets, shops, churches, schools, industries and housing developed in predictable patterns, with public and commercial functions on the major streets, industry on Carroll Creek and on the outskirts of town and housing elsewhere. By the mid-nineteenth century, many of the long lots were divided into two, three, or four lots. Buildings fronted directly on the streets, with door stoops straddling the sidewalks. The lateral subdivision of the narrow lots resulted in a streetscape of closely spaced buildings, including many duplexes. Thus was the genesis of Frederick's row buildings that are the hallmark of its streetscape today.

The largely unbroken lines of buildings on the main streets left outbuildings, such as carriage houses, sheds and stables, mostly concealed from view, although many outbuildings were clustered on the city's alleys. With the incorporation of automobiles into Frederick culture, garages became a common secondary building type. They were typically located on alleys and, even today; very few garages in the Historic District are accessed from a major street.

Although the early plan of Frederick included some north-south oriented alleys, the occasional east-west alley was not evident until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. A few streets in the Historic District that were developed later in the nineteenth century, such as Clarke Place, exhibit a consistent pattern of more suburban set backs from the street. The occasional house on other streets also was built contrary to the prevailing setback. Today, these buildings offer interest and enrich the texture of the street fabric, but generally they do not offer a pattern for infill development.

The first streets in Frederick were paved with cobblestones, which were later replaced with brick paving and granite curbs. The first brick paving, installed in 1902, was on East Church Street between Market Street and Chapel Alley. Frederick's earliest sidewalks were built of planks, with stepping stones at the corners. Later, brick sidewalks were standard, although

concrete walks graced the fronts of prominent buildings, like the Frederick County Courthouse. Brick was typically laid in the herringbone or running bond pattern. Historic photos of the basket weave pattern that was used later in Frederick have not been found. As the twentieth century unfolded, the brick streets were covered with asphalt and many of the brick sidewalks were replaced with concrete. Where brick walks remain today, generally the granite curbs also are evident.

The earliest photographs of Frederick show some street trees, but by the mid-nineteenth century they were probably common on most streets. Trees were planted in tree wells in sidewalks to provide essential shade in the hot Maryland summers for the fronts of buildings. Other street plantings were minimal. Tiny flower beds were carved out of sidewalks in front of some houses, and pots and urns filled with flowers were probably a common sight. Window boxes may have had periods of popularity.

Frederick's earliest street lights were gas fixtures on low poles, probably dating to the mid-nineteenth century. The first electric lights on Frederick's streets were installed in 1887. They may have been suspended from wires that were strung across key intersections. In the early years of the twentieth century, round globes on metal poles were common, either single fixtures, pairs, or clusters. Examples of the round globes remain in several places, including the wall of St. John's Cemetery and the bridge over Carroll Creek on Bentz Street. The "acorn" fixtures that still exist in many parts of Frederick were evident by 1930. These fixtures persisted through the 1950s on Patrick and Market streets and into the 1970s on some residential streets in the Historic District. In some outlying twentieth century neighborhoods, they still exist.

The next generation of streetlights on Patrick and Market streets was long, narrow fluorescent fixtures installed on the power poles. These fixtures were designed to illuminate both the sidewalks and streets. On residential streets, smaller fixtures intended only to illuminate the street were installed on power poles. These fixtures are sometimes known as "cobra" lights. The Historic District Commission objected to the appearance of the lights and extensive networks of wires on Patrick and Market streets, and in 1970 the overhead wires on Market Street were placed underground as far south as Clarke Place. In the 1980s, rectangular fixtures were replaced with those known as "shoebox" fixtures to achieve the level of lighting required by state regulations. Today, acorn light fixtures on decorative metal poles are generally the lights of choice in the Historic District when modern lighting is replaced, or in new developments, such as Carroll Creek Park and Maxwell Square.

Today, the regular pattern of historic building fabric defines Frederick's streetscapes with few interruptions. A few surface parking lots are visible, and modern structures and amenities demonstrate that Frederick's thriving downtown has adapted to its commercial growth. However, early recognition of the remarkably intact historic fabric inspired the City to

designate the first portion of the Historic District in 1952. The Historic District boundaries were expanded over the next 45 years, and the role of the Historic Preservation Commission in safeguarding its resources became ever more important.

***What is the Historic Context of the Frederick Town Historic District?***

The historic context of an area refers to a broad pattern of historical development that resulted in the construction of a collection of resources—buildings, structures, sites and objects—and their pattern on the land. For example, the historic context of Frederick was influenced by the early arrival of German and English settlers, the surrounding rich farm land and available transportation routes, which led to the development of Frederick as an agricultural market town. Major themes of Frederick’s historic context include religion, educational opportunities, trades and professions and the places of origin of the people who lived here. Some aspects of Frederick’s historic context are unique to the City, while other aspects are typical of the state or region. Some are relevant to a small window of time, while others spanned a number of years. Historic contexts allow us to evaluate a resource within a framework of history and culture that provides a meaningful explanation of its existence.

**c. Historic Landscapes in the Historic District**

The Frederick Town Historic District includes historic landscapes that are essential parts of the district’s heritage and that reflect the evolution of the Historic District over some 250 years. The Historic District has always been characterized by areas of green space, whether for gardens, cemeteries, livestock, or formal settings for prominent buildings. Historically, the major public landscaped areas were the park-like setting of the Frederick County Courthouse (now City Hall), the many cemeteries scattered around town, several churchyards and the campus of the institution now called the Maryland School for the Deaf.

Parks were not evident until the twentieth century, but today a number of parks are located in the Historic District. The number of cemeteries has dwindled, with gravesites concentrated at Mt. Olivet and St. John’s cemeteries, instead of the several smaller cemeteries that once existed in the Historic District.

Privately owned land lent a significant amount of green space to the city. Historic maps reveal that undeveloped lots were common at least until the middle of the nineteenth century, and even later on the periphery of the City, especially along East Street and between Patrick and South streets. Agricultural land stretched westward from Bentz Street, north of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, east of East Street and south of South Street.

The generous lots in historic Frederick probably were planted with vegetable gardens and orchards. Shade trees probably were planted to shade the backs of houses. Fences were common in the earliest periods of Frederick history, to keep wandering livestock out of garden spaces and to embellish the grounds of the City's important buildings, such as the Frederick County Courthouse and the City's churches. Unlike today's fences, back yard fences were not typically built for privacy or screening, but to control access. Low, picket and board fences were common in back yards. Neighborly chats across backyard fences were an aspect of the City's social life and the preservation of views across backyards allowed families to observe the comings and goings of children.

Masonry walls are evident in historic photographs. Some were used as retaining walls to control changes in grade, and others served the function of a fence. Masonry walls include fieldstone, cut stone and brick. Some were parged or finished with stucco.

The earliest street trees probably were native species, such as varieties of oak and maple. As horticulture expanded nationwide, exotic trees became available and the variety of species evident in Frederick expanded. Today, the City's parks and streets contain very old specimens of ginkgo, American chestnut and sycamore.

As principles of planning and landscape architecture developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and as the social sciences simultaneously focused on the problems of cramped, urban environments, Americans realized that green spaces are vital in urban areas and buildings are enhanced by open space. For many decades Frederick's open and green spaces remained relatively intact; however, today these spaces may be the most threatened historic resource in the Frederick Town Historic District. The continually escalating value of real estate, a desire for large-scale buildings and a quest to develop lots to their highest potential value are threats to the Historic District's historic landscapes.

**d. References for Sections a - c**

- Heidenrich, Chris. *Frederick: Local and National Crossroads*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003.
- Reed, Paula S. and Edie Wallace. *Historic Contextual Overview for the City of Frederick; Thematic Contexts for Architecture and Agriculture*. Manuscript, 2003.
- Reimer, Terry. *One Vast Hospital: The Civil War Hospital Sites in Frederick, Maryland after Antietam*. Frederick, MD: National Museum of Civil War Medicine Press, 2001.

**e. Common Frederick Architectural Styles (by Dale Dowling, PhD)**

Frederick, like other cities of the mid-Atlantic region, was designed from the start to be a town. Its earliest buildings are urban buildings— in form and sensibility. When Frederick

grew, it grew in density and townhouses abounded. Although Frederick did respond to some national trends in architectural form and style, the purest stylistic expression occurred on properties of the wealthy. Varying degrees of plainer, simpler and smaller versions of styles were more prevalent on the landscape. The city also had its own regional vernacular. Although the construction of some of Frederick's buildings was in a folk tradition, these buildings were not rural in any sense. Many buildings were not pure styles. Local builders usually mixed style elements. For example, Queen Anne decorative elements were often placed on Greek Revival forms. Buildings also changed over time. Additions and new stories were added, as was ornamentation. Many original window and door elements may have been replaced.

Typical characteristics of Frederick building styles and forms follow.

**(1) Early Vernacular German, eighteenth century**

- A. Plan: typical early examples originally had a central chimney plan;
- B. Façade: later structures have four bays;
- C. Entrance: two side-by-side central front doors (one to kitchen and other to parlor) or one off-center front door in some four-bay houses;
- D. Materials: log construction often with siding, stone, brick;
- E. Roof: may taper or have no ridge pole;
- F. Example: 23 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

**(2) Early Vernacular English, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries**

- A. Plan: single or double pile (one unit behind the other) one or one and one-half stories;
- B. Roof: side-gabled;
- C. Door: centered;
- D. Materials: log construction often with siding, stone, brick;
- E. Examples: 101-105 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 527 North Market Street.

**(3) Georgian Style or Influenced, late eighteenth century with influences through the twentieth century**

- A. Plan: center or side passage plans;
- B. Façade: five, three or two-bay façades;
- C. Entrance: in center of five-bay façade and left or right of center in smaller buildings, often with fanlights or multi-light transoms above doors;
- D. Windows: twelve-over-eight or nine-over-six panes;
- E. Trim: eighteenth and early nineteenth-century buildings may have heavy or large trim, possibly with mortise-and-tenon joints for windows and doors;
- F. Doors: usually six raised panels;
- G. Materials: wood or masonry. Early masonry examples have water tables, jack or flat arches above openings;

- H. Roof: hipped or gabled;
- I. Embellishment: principally around door. Since basic designs were simple, variation found in the details;
- J. Key words: formal, symmetrical, heavy;
- K. Examples: 341 and 344 North Market Street, 104 North Bentz Street.

**(4) Federal Style, early nineteenth century with influence through the twentieth century**

- A. Plan: center or side passage;
- B. Façade: five-, three- or two-bay façades;
- C. Entrance: in center of five-bay façade and left or right of center in smaller buildings, often with fanlights or multi-light transoms above doors;
- D. Windows: twelve-over-eight or nine-over-six panes;
- E. Trim: lighter and more delicate than Georgian. Windows built in the second quarter of the nineteenth century have wide wood lintels with decorated corner blocks often in a bull's-eye pattern. Simpler examples have brick corbelled cornices;
- F. Doors: often have oval trim on raised panels;
- G. Roof: parapets on side gables. Dormers with stepped parapets (called “top hat dormers” by locals);
- H. Materials: wood or masonry. Wall texture becomes uniform. Water tables and belt courses are not usually seen on these masonry structures. Some buildings were given a skim coat of a stucco-like material. Early masonry structures may have flat or jack arches;
- I. Examples: 228 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 103 and 105 Council Street, 117 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 124 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

**(5) Greek Revival Style, 1820-1860 with later influences**

- A. Entrance: Dominant-columned entry porch (which does not run the full length of the façade) on high style buildings. Doorways have rectangular transoms and sidelights;
- B. Windows: six-over-six panes;
- C. Trim: wide wood lintels above windows and doors, but often with plain corner blocks;
- D. Doors: six-panel;
- E. Roof: Front gable and cornice with wide-banded trim; brick side parapets;
- F. Materials: usually brick in Flemish bond;
- G. Examples: 113 Record Street, 411-427 North Bentz Street, 115 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, 76-78 East South Street.

**(6) Italianate and Italianate-Influenced, Mid-1850s to 1890**

- A. Entrances: arched, segmentally-arched transoms, sometimes rectangular transoms with arched glazing;
- B. Windows: elongated, two-over-two or four-over-four panes, sometimes arched or with arched glazing;
- C. Trim: shouldered arches, elaborate window hoods usually over arched windows or pedimented crowns over rectangular windows. Incised window hoods and door architraves;
- D. Doors: paired or single doors with four panels, often with arched topped panels;
- E. Roof: shed, behind elaborate bracketed cornice;
- F. Material: frame, brick, stone;
- G. Keywords: Elaborate, bracketed and sometimes incised cornice, arched elements;
- H. Commercial buildings: as above. Some buildings have an additional cornice above the storefront. Paired windows above first floor;
- I. Examples: Trail Mansion at 106 East Church Street, Frederick City Hall at 101 North Court Street, 121 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 20-24 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 136-138 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 321 North Market Street, 203 South Market Street.

**(7) Gothic Revival, 1855 for churches, with later influences on churches and houses through the 1920s**

- A. Plan: churches asymmetrical with towers. Vernacular houses are often symmetrical with one-story porch. Row houses and duplexes may be asymmetrical, sometimes with no porches;
- B. Doors: arched for churches;
- C. Windows: churches --pointed arch. Houses usually had rectangular windows on the primary façade with a single or paired pointed-arch window in the center gable;
- D. Roof: churches, steeply pitched roof. Houses, side-gabled with short, centered gable with arched window;
- E. Materials: churches, brick or stone; houses were usually wood;
- F. Trim: May have drip mold over windows and doors. Gothic Revival influence may appear as cross-bracing in the center gable of a primarily Queen Anne vernacular house;
- G. Examples: 106 West Church Street, All Saints Episcopal Church. Gothic Revival houses are rare in the Historic District, probably because Gothic Revival was not considered an appropriate expression for urban houses. The center-gable window is often the only trace of Gothic Revival influence on a vernacular house. Examples include 213-215 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 118-120 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

**(8) Second Empire Style, late nineteenth century**

- A. Plan: Center tower on high-style building;
- B. Roof: Mansard roof. Sometimes polychromatic with decorative shingles. Segmented

- dormers. (Some mansard roofs are not original to structures and do not indicate Second Empire buildings. Sometimes a mansard roof represents an added story to an earlier structure.);
- C. Windows: rectangular;
  - D. Trim: brackets at cornice lines. Window hoods on primary façades. Cresting on towers;
  - E. Materials: brick walls, often with slate roof;
  - F. Examples: commercial examples (storefronts not original) at 401 North Market Street; 326 -330 North Market Street (earlier building rebuilt as Second Empire).
- (9) Queen Anne Style, late nineteenth century to early twentieth century**
- A. Plan: includes porches, towers, polygonal bays. Polygonal towers and wrap-around porches distinguish early twentieth-century structures;
  - B. Façade: asymmetrical;
  - C. Roof: hipped or cross gabled, also front gabled, especially for attached townhouses;
  - D. Materials and construction: frame and brick. Masonry elements can be corbelled or molded. Chimneys may be elaborate. Wood structures have decorative shingles and wood trim;
  - E. Embellishment: spindlework, lacey or beaded spandrels, gable decoration which can be incised, half-timbered, shingled or spindled;
  - F. Keywords: variety, texture, display, pattern;
  - G. Examples: 10 Clarke Place, 103-107 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, 120 West Church Street; Commercial example at 236 North Market Street.
- (10) Richardsonian Romanesque, 1890-1910**
- A. Plan: includes towers;
  - B. Windows: usually arched and often recessed into masonry wall. One-over-one sashes;
  - C. Façade: asymmetrical;
  - D. Roof: hipped or mansard; may have dormers;
  - E. Materials: always masonry and usually of both rough-faced and ashlar stonework or brick with rough-faced stone. May be in two or more colors or mixed with brick decorative patterns. May have belt course(s). May have decorative plaques;
  - F. Examples: Professional Building at 228 North Market Street, 201-203 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 44 North Market Street.
- (11) Classical Revival, twentieth century**
- A. Façade: symmetrical often with large columns (sometimes paired);
  - B. Trim: balustrades and cartouches;
  - C. Materials: marble or granite or masonry with stone trim;
  - D. Key word: monumental;

- E. Examples: 2 South Market Street (Citizens National Bank building), 1 South Market Street (Maryland National Bank building), and 1 North Market Street (Frederick County National Bank building).

**(12) Colonial Revival Expression, twentieth century**

- A. Materials: brick or frame;
- B. Roof: gable or hip;
- C. Façade: symmetrical;
- D. Other elements: may have columned front porches. Uses design elements from both Georgian and Federal periods together and may increase the scale of these elements. For example: a Georgian door with Federal trim and an oversized pediment;
- E. Examples: 116 Clarke Place, 109 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.