

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. 19-13-8

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Presbyterian Chapel

other Neelsville Presbyterian Church Germantown Chapel

2. Location

street and number 19431 Walter Johnson Rd (formerly 19411 Germantown Rd) not for publication

city, town Germantown vicinity

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name DLSS Venture LLC

street and number 21032 Cog Wheel Way telephone

city, town Germantown state MD zip code 20876-4271

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Circuit Court liber 27061 folio 448

city, town Germantown tax map EU41 tax parcel P065 tax ID number 00776242

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

Contributing Resource in National Register District
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
 Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
 Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
 Recorded by HABS/HAER
 Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
 Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	_____	_____ objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	_____	_____ Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:		

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

7. Description

Inventory No.

Condition

excellent	deteriorated
good	<u> </u> ruins
fair	<u> x </u> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The building is about 30' x 20' with a steep gable roof . The gable end is facing the street. The bell tower has been removed and it is clad in vinyl siding. A street-level porch has been added to the front and part of the west side. Dormers have been constructed on both sides of the roof. An adjunct building, connected to the original only at the SW corner has been constructed next to the original structure. This is not an addition as it does not actually connect with the original building structurally. There is a small shed-roofed addition of unknown date on the rear. It is not known whether the stained glass windows or window frames of the original building still exist under the modern siding.

8. Significance

Inventory No.

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>community</u>

Specific dates 1896-1936

Architect/Builder

Construction dates 1900

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The historic resource has historical and cultural significance satisfying criteria 1a and 1d. It has character, interest and value as a part of the heritage of Montgomery County, demonstrating that the first agriculturally based railroad town on the railroad line, Germantown, was a complete town with religious institutions as well as a school and many businesses related to agriculture. The other church in the town burned down in the 1980s. It exemplifies the cultural, social and historic heritage of the County because it shows the strength of Presbyterianism in the area, demonstrates that the church building also served as a community building with its church bell being used as a general town alarm, and shows that the history of the town and the county was integrally intertwined with the religious community. It also has architectural and design significance satisfying criteria 2a because, even with the changes that have been made to the structure, it is still identifiable as a church building with its distinctive steeply pitched roof, dimensions, height of eaves and gable-end facing the street. It also satisfies criteria 2d because it is recognized by the community as the Presbyterian Chapel, built to service the town residents – an integral part of the community. It supports the Pumphrey/Mateny House (an individual Master Plan historic resource) to represent the part of the railroad town that existed on the east side of the railroad tracks. Without these two historic buildings, there would be no evidence of the town left on the east side of the railroad tracks, when originally the town spanned the tracks. This would give a false impression that the town grew up only on one side of the tracks.

This resource was previously considered for historic designation as a part of the Germantown Historic District. This District, including the Chapel, was approved unanimously by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission on August 16, 1984. It was approved unanimously by the Montgomery County Planning Board on June 9, 1988. This Historic District was then whittled down from 26 buildings to 4 buildings by the Montgomery County Council in the fall of 1988, saying that these 4 buildings were all that was needed to "represent the town." The Presbyterian Chapel was one of the buildings not considered necessary by the County Council in the representation of the town and so was eliminated from the Historic District.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

History of the Neelsville Presbyterian Chapel in Germantown

A Presbyterian Church was built in Neelsville in 1845 by local residents. They had to share a minister with the Presbyterian church in the town of Darnestown, about ten miles away as the crow flies, but twice that distance by road. A road was built by local residents to connect the two towns so that the minister could serve both. This was the Neelsville/Darnestown Road (or the Darnestown/Neelsville Road if you were from Darnestown) and later became state Rt. 118. Where this road crossed the long-established Clopper Road, German immigrants set up stores and services, so this crossroads became known as "Germantown." In 1873, when the railroad was completed one mile to the east of this crossroads, the stores and services, along with a steam-powered grist mill, moved to the railroad tracks, forming "Germantown Station." Many houses and businesses sprang up around the station. This new town soon took the place of the "Old Germantown" and had 100 residents by 1879 [Boyd].

People in this new town had difficulty traveling to the Neelsville Presbyterian Church in the winter snows and early spring rains that turned the roads to mud, so a chapel was built in the town [Land Records JA53/303, 1896] as well as a manse to house the minister and his family across the street from the chapel. Reverend Thomas Davis Richards was pastor of the church at the time and was also a farmer and also helped the Germantown doctor, "Doc" Simpser. When the chapel was completed in 1900, a neighbor, Mrs. Dr. William Carl, who was not a member of the church, commissioned a bell to be hung in the steeple. This bell was made by the American Bell and Foundry Company in Northville, Michigan and weighed about 500 pounds. The bell became an important part of the community as it was rung for fires, train wrecks, and other emergencies as well as for church services. When the chapel was sold in 1936 the bell was put in storage as the Neelsville Church had no bell tower. It was stolen from the shed where it was stored, but was recovered by the church in 1987 and is now displayed in the hall of the new church. Both the chapel and the manse were equipped with wiring and fixtures for electricity and were "hooked up" in 1913, becoming two of the first buildings in the area to have electricity [The Walk]. As seen in the old photographs and aerial photos, this was the road-edge of a small farm. Three outbuildings from this farm still exist behind the Chapel and have been converted into houses.

After automobiles came into use and the roads were paved, the chapel was not used much, so it was sold to a member of the church, Russell Lenhart, in 1936 for \$750. [Land Records 648/187 and The Walk]. It was sold again in 1942 to Laura Neely after Mr. Lenhart passed away [Land Records 868/392]. It stayed in the family until 1978 when Delbert Neely sold it to I.M. Duvall, Jerry P. Spring, Ben Lewis, and Robert Sellers [Land Records 5189/383]. Ben Lewis and Jerry P. Spring formed DLSS Venture LLC and bought out the other two in 1983 [Land Records 6092/0274]. The building was used from about 1985 until 2004 as a veterinarian office. It was during this time that the adjunct building was constructed.

Harold Hargett was a member of the church who drove a wagon "bus" that took people to both the Chapel and the church in Neelsville. The only living person who actually had been in the Chapel when it was being used for services is Dorsey Unglesbee, currently living in Gaithersburg.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. _____

1. The Walk: A One-Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary History of Neelsville Presbyterian Church, Germantown, Maryland, 1845-1995, published by Neelsville Presbyterian Church, 1995.
2. Land Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville.
3. Boyd, T.H.S. The History of Montgomery County, Maryland from Its Earliest Settlement in 1650 to 1879. p. 139
4. Soderberg, Susan, A History of Germantown, Maryland, 1988. Pp. 153-160.
5. Interviews with Harold Hargett on tape (1984), and video (1992)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 4
Acreage of historical setting -
Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale: _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

The original property of "Chesnut Ridge" and "Friday" belonged to the Blunt family from the late 1700s and consisting of several hundred acres. This large property was gradually divided into farms and lots and B & O Railroad right-of-way.

This 1896 boundary description continues for all five transfers of deeds:

Part of "Chestnut Ridge" and part of "Friday" beginning at a stone on the south side of Neelsville/Germantown Road [now Walter Johnson Road] at a lot of John H. Gassaway S 43° 35' E 25 ¾ prs to a stone, then N 31° E 19 1/2 ' prs to a stone, then S 52° W 8 prs, then N 31° 10' W 15 feet to a stone at the property of Mary L. Browne, S 37° 10' E 395 feet to a stone at the edge of the above road, then in a straight line to the beginning. Consisting of 4 acres. In addition there is an access for a water main to a stream 125 feet distant. The original property was reduced by the construction of a large stormwater management pond in the mid 1980s.

11. Form Prepared by

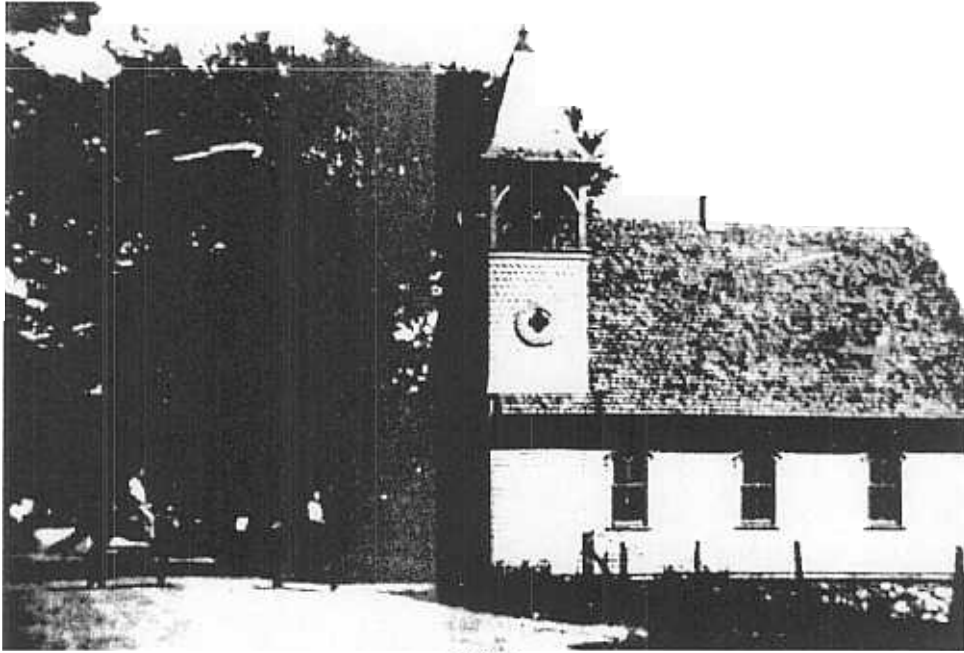
name/title	Susan Soderberg, President	date	September 5, 2007
organization	Germantown Historical Society	telephone	_____
	19313 Liberty Mill Rd.	state	MD
city or town	Germanown		

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

Presbyterian Chapel, Germantown



c1905

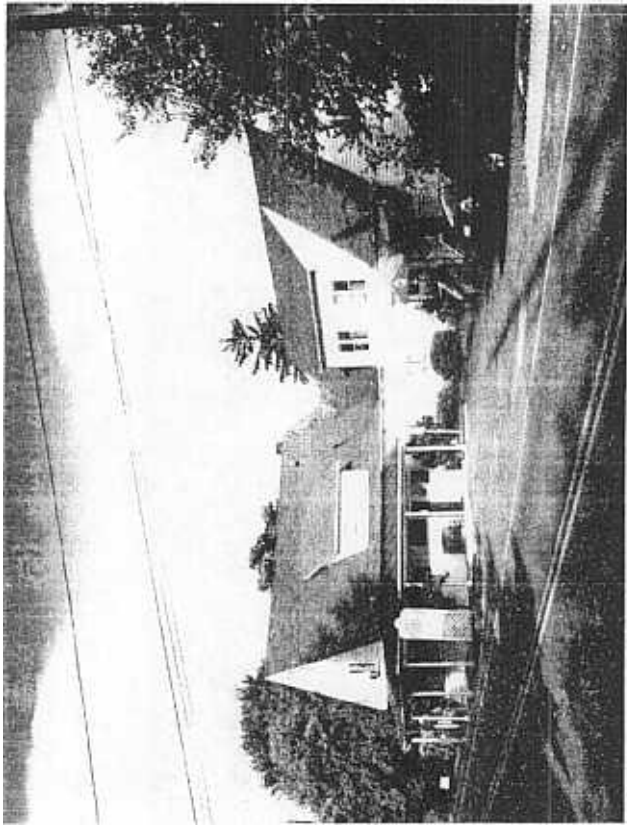


c1910

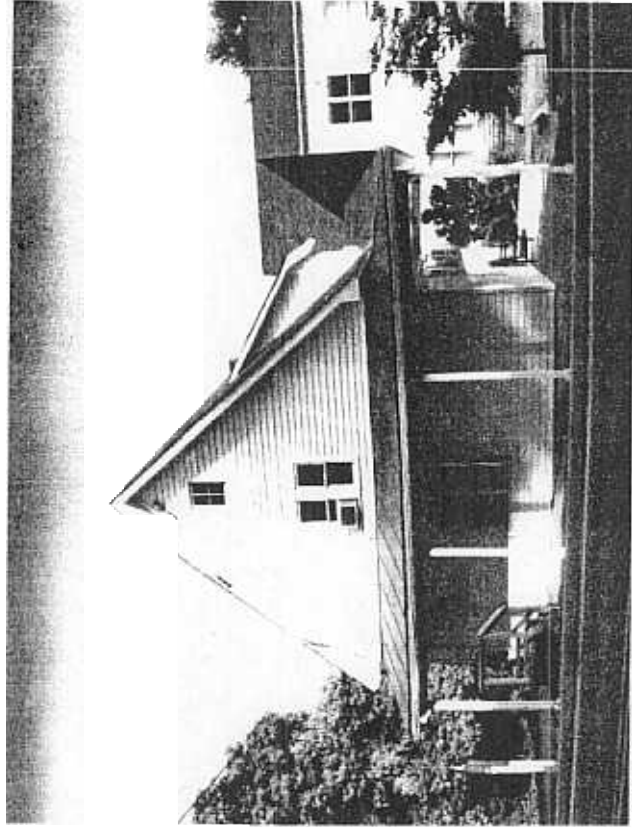


In snow c1905 showing bell in tower

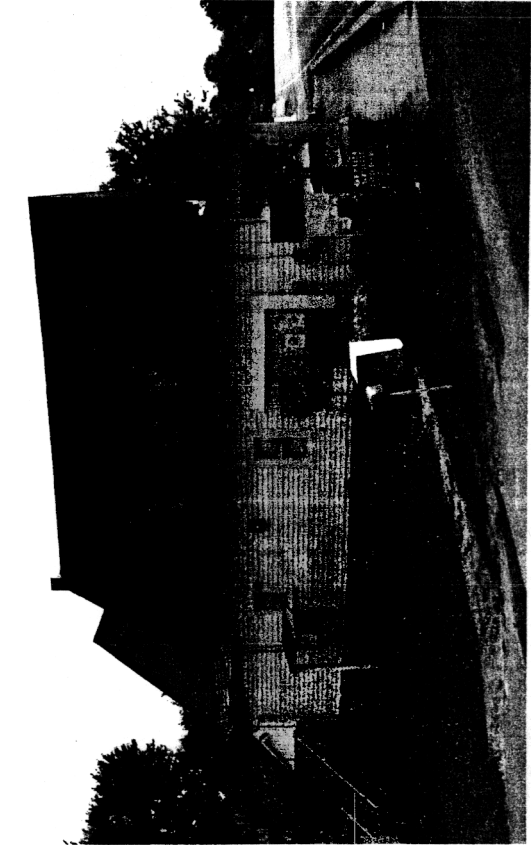
Presbyterian Chapel, Germantown
September 5, 2007



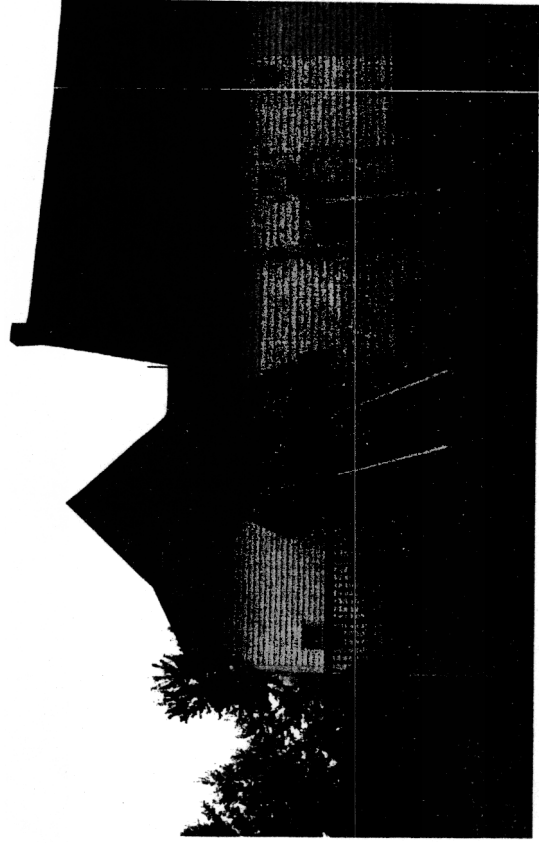
From west showing adjunct building



Front facade



East side



rear

19-13-8 PRESBYTERIAN CHAPEL



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Casual User Application



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING
 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
 8787 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

The Germantown Historical Society
P.O. Box 475
Germantown, MD 20874

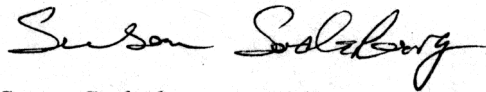
September 6, 2007

Clare Kelly
Historic Preservation section
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Kelly,

The Germantown Historical Society would like to apply to have the "Presbyterian Chapel" in Germantown placed on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation. We have enclosed an MHT application and both old and new photographs of the building. Please let us know if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Soderberg".

Susan Soderberg, President

WALTER JOHNSON ROAD

FLOOR PLAN
GERMANTOWN PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

