WA-III-144

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

All material is property of the Maryland Historical Trust.

Last Updated: 03-12-2004
The former Saint Mark's Lutheran Church is located on the west side of Main Street in Rohrersville. The cornerstone is dated July 12, 1879. It is a three bay, gable-fronted brick building with a three story entrance and bell tower. The tower is square with a flat balustraded top. Newer brick work forming the balustrade at the top indicates that the top was altered and originally had some sort of spire. Openings have Gothic pointed arches. Windows have two over two pane sash, although the upper ones are pointed to fit the openings. The brick walls are laid in common bond on field stone foundations. Corbeled pilasters separate the window bays. The entrance is centered in the front face of the tower. This is one of three church buildings in Rohrersville. All three date from the 1870s and 1880s. All three are German derived denominations, reflecting the cultural background of the community. This church retains its original exterior finish, windows and paneled double doors. The only alteration appears to be the removal and reconstruction of the top of the tower.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

I. Geographic Organization: Western Maryland

II. Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance 1870-1930

III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning

IV. Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Church

Photo Reference: Photo # 21

Form Prepared By: Paula S. Reed, PhD, Architectural Historian
Woodward-Clyde
200 Orchard Ridge Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Date: 6/97
1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 4412 Main Street

city, town Rohrersville

state Maryland

3. Classification

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<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
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<td></td>
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4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Blue Ridge Beginnings, Inc.

street & number Box 3

city, town Rohrersville

state and zip code Maryland 21779

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

street & number 95 West Washington Street

city, town Hagerstown

state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state
7. Description

Condition

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

Resource Count = 1

Built in 1879, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is located in Rohrersville on the west side of Main Street and is a one-story symmetrical brick building designed with Gothic elements. Although the tower may have been altered by the removal of its steeple, the remainder of the church retains its original ornamental scale and massing.

The church’s parcel is very small, perhaps just taking in the building footprint, and was carved out of the parcel to its north. The building sits close to the sidewalk. Landscaping includes bushes and a tree at the front facade. A stone retaining wall is located on the southwest corner of the property.

The front gable building is rectangular in shape and constructed in a common bond brick pattern. A stone foundation is visible along the facade and the first one-third of the length of the building. The shingle covered roof is decorated with a bracketed cornice in the front gable. The wood windows are long and narrow in a lancet design of the Gothic Revival style.

The most prominent feature of the church is its central square tower in the facade. The tower contains pointed arch double doors and windows and an arced top. The plain panel doors are topped with a matching upper section. A lancet window is located directly above the front door and on each side of the tower. A row of header bricks is laid in at a projecting angle above the louvered windows in the tower. Paired louvered windows are positioned close to the top of each side of the tower. The tower is topped in an arced fashion with projecting brick posts in each corner.

The facade and side elevations are vertically divided by projecting brick pilasters into two bays in the facade and four bays on the sides. Window openings are aligned within each bay. The top of the bays feature the same projecting brickwork as contained in the tower.

Barely visible through the bushes, the rear facade has a two-foot projecting section that mimics the rear gable and contains a rounded window on its end wall and very narrow lancet windows on its north and south sides.

The interior was not accessible.

Newer brick work forming the arcade at the top of the tower indicates that the top was altered. Documentation from Williams' 1906 history states that the church contained a 45-foot spire in addition to the tower1. Long time residents of the community only remember the existing tower. Therefore, the tower most likely was altered in the early 20th century. All other features of the church are original and the building retains a high degree of integrity.

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8. Significance

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Specific dates 1879

Builder/Architect Members of the community

check: Applicable Criteria: _x_A___B___C___D_

Applicable Exceptions: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: _x_national___state___local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Built by members of the community in 1879, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is significant for its Gothic Revival style and as one of three churches in Rohrersville dating from the 1870s-1880s of German denomination. The church remains in its original rural village setting along Main Street and, along with other churches and institutions in the village, created strong social/cultural ties in a rural farm trading center in the late 19th to mid-20th centuries.

History

The St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran congregation is an outgrowth of the Mount Zion Lutheran congregation of Locust Grove, a community located northeast of Rohrersville. The congregation was permanently organized in June 1879, with 38 members. The building committee was comprised of Joseph Rohrer, Ezra D. Miller, John H. Poffenberger, Henry Clay Rohrer, and Noah Rohrback with the pastor Rev. Mr. Beckley who had been pastor of the Boonsboro charge. Samuel Keedy of Keedysville did the carpenter work. John W. Brantner and Silas W. Norris were the masons, assisted by James Dunn in the brick work. Silas Norris was also a merchant who owned a store in Rohrersville that operated for 87 years.

The church stands on the ground where the first building was erected by George Kefauver in the village of Rohrersville. The ground was purchased in 1879 by Joseph Rohrer of the building committee for $100 from Magdalena Buck, George Kefauver's daughter. Rohrer transferred the property to John Poffenberger and the trustess of the church in 1880. The building cost $3,500 and is 56 by 33 feet, with a 50-foot tower, and a seating capacity of 280. Dedicated in 1880, the church had an active Sunday School with a membership of 60 and a total of 95 church members. Of the 38 original members of the church, almost half (16) were from the Rohrer family, descendants of settlers in the Rohrersville region.

At the time the church was built in 1879, Rohrersville, had become a well established rural trading center in a fertile area known as Pleasant Valley in southern Washington County between South Mountain and Elk Ridge. The village grew as a result of a grist mill located at the north end of town in the early 19th century. Families began moving in and the town developed in a linear fashion along Main Street. Many of the early families to who moved to this section of Washington County were from Pennsylvania and were of German descent. No social, cultural, or educational institutions were located within the village prior to the beginning of the mid-19th century. Local tradition states that Rohrersville's first school was built in 1800 near the point where Trego Road meets Rt. 67, one mile south of the village and on

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2 Williams, p. 504.
4 Williams, p. 507.
Sundays the building was used as an inter-denominational church. St. Mark's was one of three churches built in Rohrersville in the late 19th century. Of these three churches, St. Mark's is the second oldest and is the only church that has not been sandblasted.

One resident of Rohrersville who moved to the village in 1941 reflected that "churches were right full then" and that the church played a prominent role in the lives of its residents. "On Sundays we went to church in the morning and back to church in the evening." The churches, combined with the Rohrersville School, local businesses, and the band hall combined to create a strong sense of community.

The advent of modern transportation brought changes to Rohrersville in the mid-twentieth century, as interstate commerce developed and altered the economic character of the community, with all of its businesses closing. St. Mark's discontinued worship on April 25, 1971. The Boonsboro Historical Society purchased the building in 1973 as a place to store and display its artifacts. Approximately one year later the society sold the property which then continued to change owners three more times before its current owner, Blue Ridge Beginnings, Inc., placed a retail business in the church called Alice's Cottage Industry. The business has since relocated and the church stands vacant.

Themes

Late 19th century architecture in Rohrersville, Maryland: The architecture in Rohrersville in the last quarter of the 19th century was a combination of traditional building styles and Victorian influence. St. Mark's exhibits this time period in its Gothic Revival elements from the Victorian period. The overall modest scale of the church reflects its location within a rural farm trading center. While all three churches in the village of the Gothic Revival style, only St. Mark's contains a three-story entrance and bell tower. Certain features of this church were also applied to the early 20th century Band Hall (WA-III-129). The only public building created in a different style was the 1919 Rohrersville School (WA-III-166) which was designed in the Colonial Revival style.

Social and cultural activities in Rohrersville, Maryland, 1870-1947: Social and cultural activity during this time revolved around the village's school, the Rohrersville Comet Band, and the churches. The churches were all German derived denominations, reflecting the cultural background of the community. These churches played an important role in communities in the 19th and early 20th centuries and in Rohrersville this is reflected in the construction of all three churches between 1871 and 1888; indicating the growth and stability in the community brought on by the industrial transition period and the railroads.

Chain of Title

04/24/1879  Magdelana Buck to Joseph Rohrer
Part of "Park Hall" and "Elk Hill"
Liber 78Folio 55

02/18/1880  Joseph Rohrer to John H. Poffenberger, et al., Trustees of St. Marks
Liber 78Folio 692

Liber 571    Folio 292

12/19/1974  Boonsboro Historical Society, Inc. to Marvin Kline Evangelism, Inc.
Liber 589    Folio 351

08/04/1975  Marvin Kline Evangelism, Inc. to Franklin E. Binkley and Raymond D. Monninger
Liber 600    Folio 550

11/26/1975  Franklin E. Binkley to Raymond D. Monninger
Liber 606    Folio 304

01/26/1977  Raymond D. Monninger to William L. & Janet K. Tritopoe
Liber 629    Folio 700

02/24/1978  William L. & Janet K. Tritopoe to Innokenty & Willadene Tolmachoff, Jr.
Liber 654    Folio 818

08/31/1984  Innokenty Tolmachoff, Jr. & his wife, Willadene to Blue Ridge Beginnings, Inc.
Liber 769    Folio 1033
HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Maryland

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
Social/Educational/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Church

Known Design Source: Unknown
9. Major Bibliographical References

Washington County Land Records.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: .08

Quadrangle name: Keedysville

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

UTM References

DO NOT COMPLETE UTM REFERENCES

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A B
C D
E F
G H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary is equivalent to the parcel historically associated with the church.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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<th>state</th>
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<th>county</th>
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Susan Cianci Salvatore
organization: Woodward-Clyde

date: June 1997

street & number: 200 Orchard Ridge Drive
telephone: 301-670-3361

city or town: Gaithersburg
state: Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory 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
People's Resource Center
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7000
ROHRERSVILLE

ROBERT M. DANIEL
G83/D1
97.10 A.
P.25

LEON R. BOWERS
835/302
141.31 A.
P.63

Survey No. WA-III-144
St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Rohrersville, Washington County
Tax Map No. 81
Survey No. WA-III-144
St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Rohrersville, Washington County
Keedysville Quadrangle
WA-III-144
4412 Main St., Rohrersville
Washington Co., MD
St. Salvatore
5/97
NYS-MD SHPD
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, NW View
# 21 of 43 (Cap)
# 1082 (Ind)
WA-III-144
4412 Main St, Rohrersville
Washington Co MD
S.E. Salvatore
5/97
Neg: MD SHO
St. Mary's Church, SW View
#2042