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**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT FOR BRIGHTSIDE FARM**  
**Charlestown Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania**  
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**INTRODUCTION**

“Each farm is a segment of the earth’s surface which has been organized in a manner by which its former owners believed they could, and present owners believe they can, maximize their capabilities of earning a living from its operation. Any farm is a culturally organized, economically functional microregion. The farmstead contains the most concentrated array of activities of the entire farm and thereby represents the greatest level of intensity of a farm’s spatial organization. It may be composed of separate structures, but not of independent ones. All farmstead buildings are interdependent, interacting parts of a working unit, spatially arranged to maximize their functional effectiveness and that of the farm itself.” (*The Pennsylvania Culture Region A View from the Barn*, Joseph W. Glass, p. 171)

The farmhouse and the barn are the core of the farmstead, and cultural patterns can be established regarding their relationship to each other and their orientation in the landscape. On many farmsteads, the supporting outbuildings have disappeared because they have ceased to function and have fallen into disrepair. “All farms have lanes and some kinds of lawn and fencing, most have vegetable and flower gardens, and a large number have grape arbors and fruit trees.” (*The Pennsylvania Culture Region A View from the Barn*, Joseph W. Glass, p. 170).

Brightside, while not possessing the best individual example of each farm building type in the region, possesses one of the best collections of supporting outbuildings, spatially arranged to reflect their interdependence. Surviving also are remnants of the flower gardens near the farmhouse and the fencing that separated the farmyard from the fields and pastures.

**ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS OF BRIGHTSIDE FARM**

Pyle Farmhouse: Clearly built as a working farmhouse; the surviving attached wash house and chamber above are significant (probably dating from c.1840).

Pennsylvania Bank Barn: Good example of 18<sup>th</sup> century style bank barn (probably c.1840)

Spring House: Good example of stone springhouse (probably c.1840).

Wagon Barn: Preserved work shop at loft level.

**GENERAL PERIODS OF DEVELOPMENT**  
**(Based on physical survey of extant buildings only)**

Early 19th Century:      Original Farm House and Wash House  
                                 Spring House  
                                 Bank Barn

Late -19 <sup>th</sup> Century	East Addition to Bank Barn Wagon Barn Outbuilding #4
Early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	Farm House Addition Chicken Houses (?) Pig Pen (?) Corn Crib #16 and #5 Creamery addition to Bank Barn Silo addition to Bank Barn
Mid 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	Small Cow Barn Small silo
Late 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	Dairy Barn Equipment Storage Building Corn Crib #19

## GENERAL BUILDING CONSERVATION ISSUES

1. Standards for Rehabilitation: Based on the property's eligibility for National Register listing, all work should comply with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standard for Rehabilitation*.
2. Preservation of minor outbuildings: Rarely do minor outbuildings such as multiple chicken coops, pig pen, and sheds survive farm modernization programs. When Brightside was modernized in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the new dairy facilities were built adjacent to (north of) the historic farm complex, without disturbing the minor outbuildings. In order for future generations to understand farm life in Charlestown Township, it is important that all the minor farm outbuildings be preserved.
3. Painting of farm outbuildings: While most of the wood frame buildings at Brightside once had painted red wood siding and weathered wood shingle roofs; the order is now reversed: most buildings have painted red roofs and weathered wood siding. While the metal roofing has no doubt protected the timber framing from water damage, over time the roofs of the old buildings should be replaced with either wood shingle roofing or substitute wood shingle roofing. To preserve the wood siding, the wood should be painted or stained earth red.
4. Re-installation of fences, gates, and gardens: Surviving remnants of farmyard and garden fences and gates should be preserved. Where photographic evidence is clear, fencing of the entire farmyard is desirable.
5. Carpenter bees and wasps: Many buildings are infested with carpenter bees and wasps. The gap between the replacement metal roofing and the previous shingle roofing provides an ideal habitat for wasps and other insects. When the site is more open to public visitation, wasp infestation is a more serious issue, because some people are highly allergic to bee/wasp stings. The unpainted, softwood siding and fascia boards provide an

ideal habitat for carpenter bees. A secondary infestation are the woodpeckers that feed on the carpenter bees, further enlarging the carpenter bee holes.

## **ADAPTIVE REUSE POTENTIAL OF BUILDINGS**

**“...it is rare to find a farm without a dog, and multiple cats are even more common. As is so widely the case, remaining functional is the key to the persistence of a cultural feature.”** *The Pennsylvania Culture Region, A View from the Barn*, Joseph W. Glass (p 170)

### **BUILDING NO. 1 - PYLE FARMHOUSE**

(Mid 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

Main House and addition best suited for continued residential use with the exception of the wash house addition. A presence on the site is important for security, and this building is best suited for residential occupancy. Because of ADA and exit requirements, this building is not well-suited to public use.

Existing area on three floors = 8,416 square feet with well defined circulation and (2) sets of interior stairs. Adequate for (2-3) 2-bedroom apartments. The unique 2-story wash house addition (256 square feet) Should be preserved for public interpretation. Alternately, the oldest portion of the first floor, combined with the wash house could be interpreted for the public (Grade level entrance at original front (south porch) and north door of wash house.).

### **BUILDING NO. 2 - BANK BARN**

(Mid 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

To keep the character of the Bank Barn and additions consider using it for animals. The lower part of the bank barn could have a public use, but the threshing floor is not ADA accessible without an elevator. Also, because the threshing floor structural framing is so irregular, extensive reframing will be required for legal human occupancy. It may be possible to get ADA access to the Creamery addition first floor with a ramp. If Brightside is maintained as a farm, this is an ideal place to house large farm animals.

### **BUILDING NO. 14 - SMALL COW BARN**

(Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

In addition to returning to its previous cow barn function, this 360 square foot building would be good for public use as it is accessible and one story. Adequate exits would not be difficult to provide and windows provide light and ventilation on the west side. This could be a classroom, meeting room, a CSA storage/sorting space, office.

### **BUILDING NO. 18 - EQUIPMENT STORAGE BUILDING**

(late 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

This building is easily ADA accessible, and egress could be added if a public function was identified. It could easily remain an equipment storage building, or be converted to public meeting spaces. The 2,560 square feet could be used for Boy/Girl Scout Troop meeting rooms, classrooms, or CSA use. Windows and additional exits would need to be added.

**BUILDING NO. 20 - MODERN DAIRY BARN**

(late 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

In addition to returning to its previous use as a modern dairy barn (or stables), this building could be adapted for public use. The first floor is accessible and access to the 2<sup>nd</sup> level could be through an elevator. (The exterior ramped entrance to the second floor is too steep for ADA standards.)

The Creamery addition could become a reception area or management office for the site. The upper level has about 4,480 square feet of minimum 8 foot high ceiling area available with the possibility of a loft or mezzanine over 1/3 of the area. This could be useful office space (possible Township office space) or public meeting space with the addition of windows. (1997

Architectural Program for Township offices required 3,392 square feet + core spaces (elevators, restrooms, egress stairs).

The lower level has 6,400 square feet available for public use if the milking units are removed. At the east end of the first floor the pit area could be used for vehicle or other large equipment storage.