

Blendon Estate, Barn  
11747 Park Heights Avenue  
Owings Mills Vicinity  
Baltimore County  
Maryland

HABS No. MD-994-B

HABS  
MD,  
3-DWMI.1  
3-B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS  
MD.  
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3-8-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BLENDON ESTATE, BARN

HABS No. MD- 994-B

Location: 11747 Park Heights Avenue, vicinity of Owings Mills,  
Baltimore County, Maryland

USGS Cockeysville Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 18.351000.4365860

Present Owner: Caves Valley Golf Club, Inc.  
c/o Whiting-Turner Contracting Company, Inc.  
Hampton Plaza, 300 East Joppa Road, Towson  
Baltimore, Maryland 21204-3048

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Blendon estate barn contributes to the significance  
of the Caves Valley National Register Historic District.  
The Register district nomination cites the barn as "a  
contributing resource with a high level of integrity and  
historic and architectural significance to the  
nomination."<sup>1</sup> Built as an outlying hay barn on the  
large "Caves" estate by the Carroll family, the  
structure recalls the system of satellite fields and  
outbuildings created by the farming gentry of Baltimore  
County during the 19th century. The barn  
architecturally is significant in Baltimore County as a  
largely unaltered bank barn with Tuscan Villa cupola and  
arched Italianate louvered vents.

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<sup>1</sup>Janet L. Davis, National Register of Historic Places Registration  
Form for "The Caves Valley Historic District," April, 1988 (copy in files  
of Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD), Item 7, p. 26.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The barn appears from the Italian Villa cupola and the paired arches forming the louvered vents to date from the middle to late 19th century. Such cupolas and arches became common on large frame houses during the 1840's and 1850's in the Eastern United States as part of the Italian, or "Tuscan" Villa fashion, and continued well into the 1870's in some sections of the nation. Decorative elements on the main house, such as a cupola, were often copied for treatment on outbuildings, such as barns. The Blendon barn was therefore probably built some time between the early 1850's and the end of the 1870's, although on rural outbuildings such designs may have continued to appear even later.
2. Architect: There is no information available on the architect or builder of the Blendon barn. It is unlikely that an architect was involved in the design. More likely, the Carrolls, the owners, or a builder selected a pattern book design then in fashion for the new hay barn.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following are selected conveyances in the chain of title involving the Blendon barn. The information on ownership is derived from the Land Records of Baltimore County, Towson, Maryland.

1852 Will of John Henry Carroll, September 20, 1852, recorded in Will Book 1, pp. 286-87, Register of Wills office, Baltimore County.

1900 Deed, July 25, 1900, recorded in Liber NBM 245, pp. 142-45. Ferdinand C. Latrobe, Attorney, to Celeste M. W. Hutton.

1900 Deed, summer, 1900, unrecorded. Celeste M. W. Hutton to James H. Preston.

1900 Deed, September 22, 1900, recorded in Liber NBM 247, pp. 535-36. James H. Preston and wife to the Caves Valley Farms Company.

1903 Deed, October 20, 1903, recorded in Liber WPC 273, pp. 29-32. Caves Valley Farms Company and Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland to George J. Garrett.

1919 Deed, December 31, 1919, recorded in Liber APC 522, pp. 60-62. George J. Garrett and wife to Charles Vincenti.

1925 Deed, July 25, 1925, recorded in Liber WPC 617, pp. 586-89. Charles Vincenti to Katherine LeMoyné Fisher.

- 1935 Deed, December 21, 1935, recorded in Liber 966, pp. 560-62. Janon Fisher and wife to Richard E. Breed, 3rd and Mary Moore R. Breed, his wife.
- 1946 Deed, January 7, 1946, recorded in Liber RJS 1411, p. 452. Richard E. Breed, 3rd, unmarried, and Mary Moore R. Breed to Jerome Hill and Adelaide McAlpin Hill.
- 1949 Deed, September 2, 1949, recorded in Liber TBS 1771, p. 501. Adelaide McAlpin Hill, widow, to Richard C. Riggs.
- 1969 Deed, March 31, 1969, recorded in Liber 4977, p. 113. Richard C. Riggs and Eleanor R. Riggs to Alvin B. Krongard and Patricia L. Krongard.
4. Builders, suppliers: The builder of the Blendon barn is not known. The lumber used in the construction, dimensioned lumber cut with a circular saw and hand-hewn posts and beams, probably was obtained nearby.
5. Original plans and construction: No original architectural drawings or plans have been found. No historical views or photographs have been located of the barn. Few changes appear to have been made on the main level, which appears to have been devoted to hay and corn storage from the time of construction. The lower level probably was originally devoted totally to livestock stalls.
6. Alterations and additions: The main level of the barn retains its original plan of three hay storage sections and a small corn crib in the southwest corner (see Figure 2). On the lower level, a post-World War II concrete block wall has been erected to create a garage at the west end, and drywall partitions were put up next to the garage to create a small storage room. In the eastern section of the lower level, new posts and stalls have replaced the original livestock pens or stalls. The tongue and groove wooden wall and doors, which are recessed approximately five feet from the face of the south elevation of the main level (see Photograph MD- -B-9), are also 20th century replacements. Originally, the south wall of the lower level may have been flush with that of the upper story.

B. Historical Context:

The Blendon Estate Barn was constructed by either John Henry Carroll (c. 1803-63) or his son John Nicholas Carroll (1847-1926), owners of a 2600-acre estate in the Greenspring Valley known as "The Caves." The

"Caves" was a grain and livestock farm, consisting of multiple fields extending on both sides of what is now Park Heights Avenue and Caves Road.<sup>2</sup> On sloping land such as is found surrounding the site of the barn and nearby tenant house, livestock production seems to have been paramount. The present bank barn was erected with the lower level devoted to livestock pens and the main level to hay storage for feeding the animals. The barn was a satellite structure for convenient storage of grain and animals raised on nearby fields. The Caves mansion house and main cluster of outbuildings stood over a mile to the southwest, across what is now Park Heights Avenue.

After John N. Carroll defaulted on a mortgage he had taken on the Caves estate in 1897, the tract was sold at auction. The portion containing the barn passed in 1925 to Janon Fisher, a retired engineer who resided in the Caves mansion to the south of the parcel containing the barn. In 1935, Fisher and his wife sold the 110 acres surrounding the barn and tenant house immediately to the south to Richard E. Breed, 3rd, President of the General Penn Refining Co. of Baltimore. It was probably Breed who erected the large, Neo-Georgian residence that now stands on the top of the hill above the barn. Breed, who lived on the property until selling it in 1946, apparently also remodeled the lower level of the barn to serve as a garage and horse stable. Since 1946 the estate has been known as "Blendon," a name that Breed may have given it. Three other families have owned Blendon and resided there during the period since World War II.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Blendon Estate Barn is significant to the Baltimore County locale as a largely unaltered example of a vernacular bank barn from the middle to late 19th century. The structure exemplifies several vernacular construction techniques, such as the use of timber frame, hand-hewn posts and beams, and wooden peg joinery. The design, with its Italian Villa cupola and paired arched vents, illustrates the common practice in the 19th century of borrowing architectural details from pattern books for either houses or farm buildings.
2. Condition of the fabric: The barn is generally in fair to good condition. No assessment of its structural condition was undertaken. Some vertical boards and vent details are missing from the east elevation.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Section 8, p. 3.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The barn is a rectangular building measuring approximately 60 feet by 41 feet (see Figure 2). Within the barn is a 1 1/2-story main level and a one-story lower level. Along the south elevation, the upper story projects beyond the south wall of the lower level. Along the main level of the south elevation, six louvered vents form evenly spaced and symmetrically arranged bays. There are three vents across the east and west elevations of the main level, and two vents flanking the principal entrance to the main level in the north elevation. There are four bays of varying widths and types in the south elevation of the lower level, and three rectangular openings along the lower level of the east elevation. There are also three louvered vents in the east and west gables.
2. Foundations: The foundations are composed of field stone laid in random courses. A mud-based mortar was used originally and has been patched in the 20th century with Portland cement. The foundation walls are approximately 1 1/2 feet thick and stand about eight feet above grade at the south ends of the east and west elevations (see Photograph MD-994-B-1) and at grade at the center of the north elevation (Photograph MD-994-B-4).
3. Walls: The field stone foundation of the barn is exposed as nearly a full story on the east, south, and west elevations. The north elevation is the banked side. The gray volcanic stones are laid in random courses and covered with a stucco composed of the same mud-based material as the mortar. The stucco has been whitewashed in the 20th century.

The exterior walls of the main level are composed of boards and battens. The boards are approximately one foot wide and nailed on the timber frame within. The joints between the boards are covered with two-inch battens. The exterior walls are white-washed. The arched vents on all elevations are painted a faded green color.

4. Structural systems, framing: The structure of the main level of the barn consists of a traditional timber frame (see Photographs MD-994-B-13 through MD-994-B-15) joined together with mortises, tenons, and wooden pegs. The outer wooden frame rests on the field stone foundation described above. The interior structure of the main level is composed of hand-hewn posts and beams reinforced with braces (Photographs MD-994-B-13 and MD-994-B-14). The floor structure of the main level consists of hand-hewn joists running north and south and supported by two hewn beams running the length of the barn, east and west (See Photographs MD-994-B-10 through MD-994-B-12). The floor boards above rest across the joists. The boards are secured with square-headed, cut nails. On the lower level, the floor of the garage at the west end is paved with concrete; the remainder of the level and the area immediately outside are paved

with asphalt. All pavements on the lower level appear to be from the post-World War II period.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: No such features are present.
6. Chimneys: No chimneys are present.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance to the upper level, located in the center bay of the north elevation, consists of two sliding doors measuring approximately 10 feet by 8.8 feet (see Photograph MD-994-B-6). The early 20th century doors, which are of tongue and groove construction hang from a steel track. At the center of the south elevation of the main level is a smaller double entry composed of two doors, each measuring approximately 7 by 1 1/2 feet and consisting of three vertical boards. The boards are secured with cast-iron braces and open on iron hinges. The south entry, which may be original to the barn, apparently was intended as an access for hay loading from wagons parked on the south side of the building.

There are three doorways along the south elevation of the lower level (see Photograph MD-994-B-9). The westernmost doorway provides access to the lower level garage. The two tongue and groove doors slide shut from either side and hang on a steel track above. At the center of the lower level is a "Dutch door," consisting of upper and lower panels opening independently of each other. The tongue and groove boards making up the door are secured with battens on the interior side. The door leads into the small storage room within. The third door is of identical design, leading into the animal stalls. All of the lower level doors and frames appear to be early 20th century, probably part of a remodeling that took place when the Breed-Krongard House was constructed on the hill above.

- b. Windows and louvered vents: The only true windows in the barn appear along the west, south, and east elevations of the lower level. In the west and east walls of the stone foundation, there are three rectangular openings (see Photographs MD-994-B-3 and MD-994-B-7). In the west wall, what appear to be the original six-light window sashes remain in the openings, although several lack glass and muntins. The sashes in the east wall are all missing. On the south elevation of the lower level, there are four windows of differing character (see Photographs MD-994-B-1 and MD-994-B-9). Immediately to the east of the central Dutch door are two fixed-sash windows that each contain nine lights. Flanking the Dutch door leading into the livestock area to the east are one over one, double-hung sash

windows. At the east end of the elevation is a single-sash sash with four lights.

The 20 paired vents that appear on the four elevations of the main level consist of wooden louvers enframed by pairs of arched architraves. The pairs of arches suggest the arcades common in Italian Renaissance architecture and echo the vents in the cupola above. The practical reason for vents in a hay barn was to allow hot air that would build during the summer to escape.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof of the Blendon barn is gable and runs east and west. The covering is sheet metal, possibly tin, joined with standing seams. Several sections have been replaced since World War II and appear clear in contrast to the rust color of the older, perhaps original, metal.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There is no decorative cornice on the barn. The eaves are composed of rafters and fascia along the north and south elevations and of purlins and fascia along the gable ends of the other two elevations. A 20th century galvanized metal gutter is attached to the fascias of the north and south elevations; the drain pipes are broken or missing on all four corners of the building.
- c. Cupolas: There is a square cupola located at the center of the roof ridge. The four sides of the cupola each consist of an arched vent divided by tracery-like mullions into three parts and whitewashed scalloped and square shingles (see Photograph MD-994-B-5). The roof is pyramidal and covered with sheet metal. The practical reason for such a feature was to ventilate hot air that would become trapped in the main level during warm weather. Aesthetically, the Italian Villa-style cupola added a touch of architectural distinction to the barn.

D. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The lower level floor plan (Figure 2) contains a garage, storage room, and former livestock or horse stalls.

The main level floor plan (Figure 2) consists of three parts: a central farm vehicle and hay storage area and two hay storage areas on either side. A small corn crib is found in the southwest corner.

2. Stairways, vertical circulation: There are no stairways in the barn. Interior passage between the two levels is via wooden ladders. One ladder (Photograph MD-994-B-11) offers access from the livestock stalls to the upper story. Two others attached to the

interior posts in the main level (Photograph MD-994-B-13) provided access to stacked hay in the east and west hay storage sections.

3. **Flooring:** The flooring on the main level is composed of dimensioned wooden boards approximately six inches wide secured by square-headed, cut nails. The floor of the garage on the lower level is poured concrete, and an asphalt pavement covers the ground in the rest of the lower story.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** The field stone foundation walls are white-washed in the interior, like the exterior. A concrete-block wall divides the garage in the lower level from the livestock stall area. Dry wall partitions separate the storage room from the rest of the lower story. The main level is open throughout, with the exception of wooden partition walls bounding the corn crib in the southwest corner. The crib walls, which are probably original, are composed of unpainted horizontal boards each measuring 11 feet by 1 foot and fastened together with square-headed nails.
5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** There is only one doorway in the interior of the barn, a paneled door that leads from the storage room into the livestock area and probably was installed since the 1930's.
  - b. **Windows:** There are no additional interior features for the lower level windows already described.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** There are no notable decorative features or architectural details in the interior.
7. **Hardware and joinery:** The only original hardware noted in the barn are the cast-iron hinges and braces found on the paired doors in the south elevation of the main level (see Photograph MD-994-B-2).

Traditional wooden peg joinery is found throughout the timber frame in the main level of the interior (see Photograph MD-994-B-15). The pegs are thrust through the posts to secure mortise and tenon joints formed by posts and beams and posts and braces.

8. **Mechanical equipment:**
  - a. **Heating, ventilation:** There are no furnaces, fireplaces, or any other permanent means of heating in the barn. The ventilation through the cupola and arched vents has already been discussed under the exterior window treatment.
  - b. **Lighting:** There is no artificial illumination system in the main level; on the lower level, post-World War II electric incandescent lights have been installed.

c. Plumbing: No plumbing fixtures were found in the barn.

9. Original furnishings: No original furnishings were found.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The barn stands on a dramatic site, on a slope that extends more than a mile to the south (see Figure 1). The location offers a sweeping view of the Caves Valley that until the 1890's was all part of the Caves estate of the Carroll family. The building runs east and west and the main, two-story elevation faces south. The fields surrounding the barn originally were devoted to livestock grazing; in the 20th century, horses have been grazed in the field.
2. Outbuildings: There are no outbuildings near the barn. The Carroll-Breed Tenant House, where tenant farmers and caretakers of the Blendon estate lived, stands several hundred feet south of the barn.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: There are no known original architectural drawings in existence, and none were probably used for construction of the barn.
- B. Historic views: No historical photographs of the barn have been located. An 1881 single bird's eye view from the main Caves buildings to the south (see Figure 4) shows the barn and tenant house in the distance, slightly left of center in the vista. A cupola is barely visible on the barn.
- C. Interviews: No interviews were conducted.
- D. Bibliography:
  1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Baltimore City Directories, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

Bromley, George W. and Walter D. Bromley. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley and Co., 1898.

\_\_\_\_\_. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1915.

Deed books, Land Records Office, Baltimore County, Towson, Maryland.

Hopkins, G. M. Atlas of Baltimore County. Baltimore(?), 1877.

Will records, Register of Wills, Baltimore County, Towson, Maryland.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Davis, Janet L. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for "The Caves Valley Historic District." April, 1988. [Copy in files of Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD.]

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County. Baltimore(?), 1881.

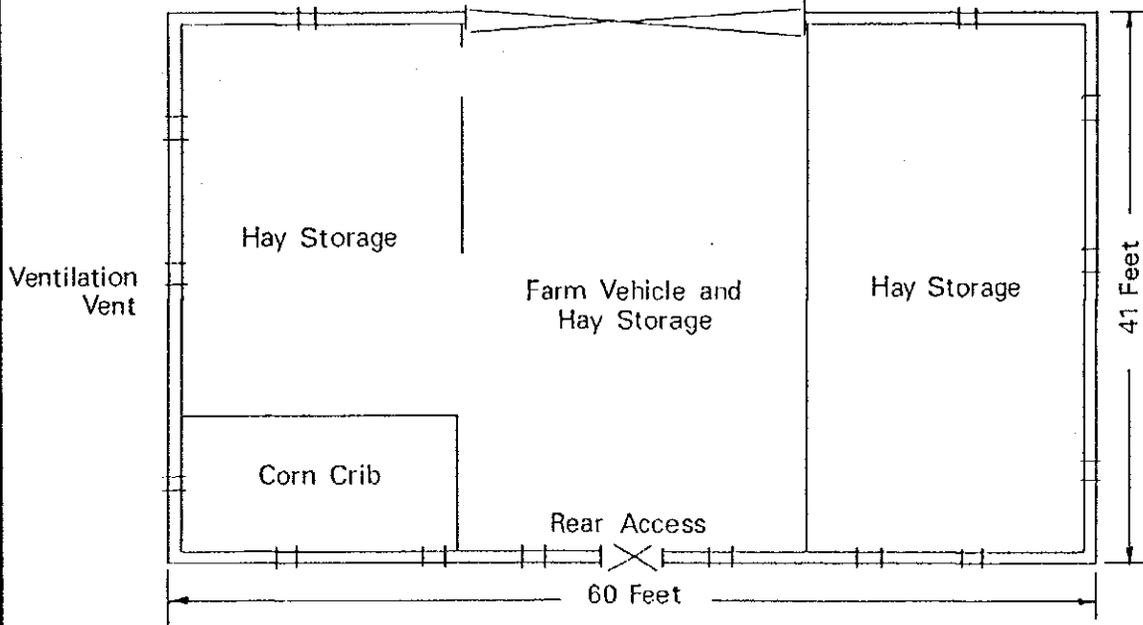
Thomas, Dawn F. The Green Spring Valley: Its History and Heritage. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1978.

E. Likely sources not yet investigated: More precise dating for the construction of the barn might be possible if the estate administration file for John Henry Carroll (d. 1863) were checked at the Register of Wills office, Baltimore County, Towson, Maryland. There also may be information in the files of the Baltimore County Historical Society Library, Cockeysville, Maryland, on the barn or on the Carrolls, owners of "The Caves" mansion and estate, the Janon Fisher family, or on Richard E. Breed, 3rd.

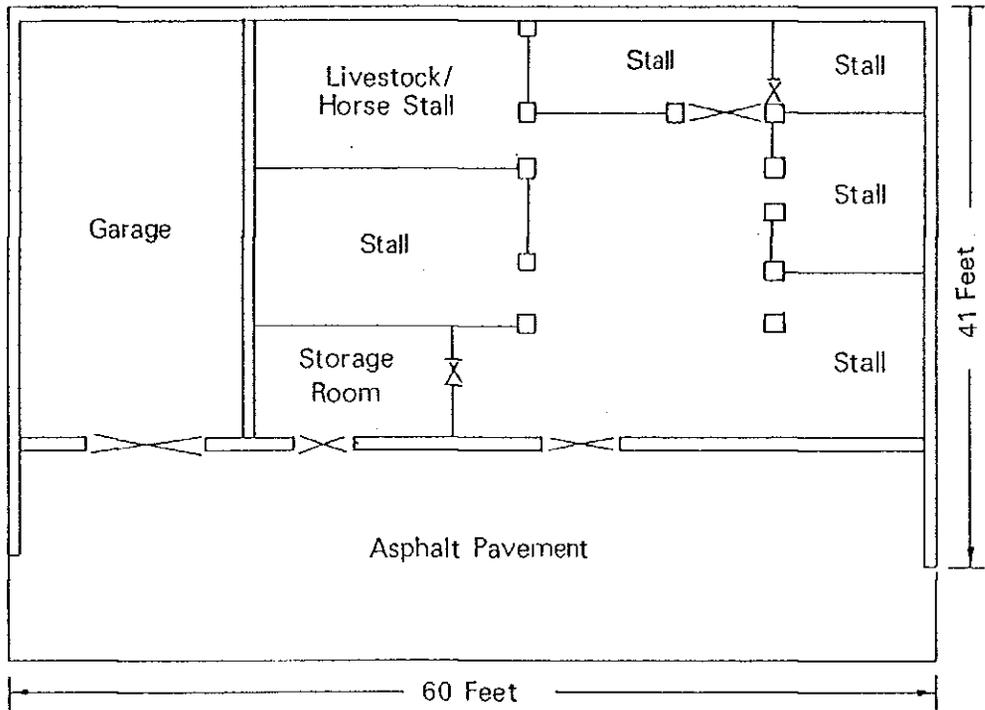
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the Blendon Estate Barn has been prepared as a mitigation measure for the possible demolition of the barn in connection with the construction of a golf course on the Blendon estate. Mitigation is necessary because a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is required for the development of the Blendon property. The documentation includes an outline format report, large format photographs of the barn according to HABS standards, sketch floor plans, and a narrative format summary of the overall Blendon property. The documentation records were prepared during December, 1989.

Prepared by: James A. Glass, Ph.D.  
Title: Project Manager,  
Historic Preservation  
Affiliation: Greenhorne & O'Mara, Inc.  
Date: December 21, 1989



Main Level Sketch Plan



Lower Level Sketch Plan

LEGEND  
|| Window  
X Doorway



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 2-BLENDON ESTATE BARN SKETCH PLANS December 1989