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# **Adaptive Reuse of Historic Tobacco Barns in Prince George's County, Maryland**

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**Partnership for  
Action Learning  
in Sustainability**

**Prince George's County, MD**

 **PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
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## **ABOUT PALS**

The Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability (PALS) is administered by the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD). It is a campus-wide initiative that harnesses the expertise of UMD faculty and the energy and ingenuity of UMD students to help Maryland communities become more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable. PALS is designed to provide innovative, low-cost assistance to local governments while creating real-world problem-solving experiences for University of Maryland graduate and undergraduate students.

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## **Abstract**

This report examines the potential for adaptive reuse practices for historic tobacco barns in Prince George's County, Maryland. Adaptive reuse repurposes old or historic structures while retaining their original features and character.

The report lays the groundwork for future research and policy efforts to support preserving and transforming tobacco barns across the County. It aims to add to the historic preservation and local government planning literature, emphasizing tobacco barns' cultural and historical significance. In addition, the report evaluates the existing bureaucratic structures and financial incentives to support the adaptive reuse process. The findings are based on various data including interviews with experts, archival research, and three site visits serving as case studies.

Based on the research and findings, the report recommends that the Prince George's County government create an efficient process to promote adaptive reuse practices for historically significant agricultural buildings, including tobacco barns.

## Introduction

Why are tobacco barns in Prince George's County worth preserving? The answer is deeply rooted in the County's history. These barns represent a tangible link to the County's agricultural heritage, particularly the centuries-long dominance of tobacco farming as a cash crop that significantly shaped the region's economy, culture, and landscape (Crisafulli & Nieweg, 2023). Tobacco barn preservation is also crucial because of the ongoing loss of these historical sites following the 1999 Maryland Tobacco Buyout Program (Frisman, 2002). These underutilized and deteriorating structures are at risk of disappearing entirely (Russo, 2012).

This report explores the barns' historical, cultural, and architectural significance in Prince George's County, focusing on how adaptive reuse can offer a viable path forward for their preservation.

We incorporated research from historic preservation and community planning to highlight the importance of maintaining a barn's structural and historical integrity and we present strategies to reintegrate these structures into the contemporary landscape. The literature review examines existing scholarly work on historic barn preservation, adaptive reuse, and the legacy of tobacco farming in the region. Readers gain a better understanding of the need for tobacco barn preservation and reuse through lessons from national and international case studies. The research and analysis offer best practices that apply to the local context.

The findings section summarizes the project's data collection strategies. The research team used a mixed-methods approach, incorporating expert interviews,

archival research, and field observations from three tobacco barn site visits.

Interviews with preservation experts, including Dr. Dennis Pogue, provide insight into effective reuse models, funding strategies, and ongoing preservation efforts in Maryland. Archival research offers historical context and documentation of successful reuse projects, while the site visits provide real-world examples of barns repurposed for agritourism and community use. As case studies, they offer a rich understanding of adaptive reuse's architectural and community value.

## Literature Review

The larger body of work examining barn and historic building preservation supports Prince George's County's efforts to address its remaining tobacco barns. This review explores various barn preservation strategies and provides an in-depth analysis demonstrating the importance of maintaining a historic barn's integrity in its original state. Examining the literature and reviewing past studies illuminates the diverse aspects of barn preservation, including adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, documentation, economic integration, and the barriers that influence preservation outcomes.

Tobacco farming was a labor-intensive process that extended over a 16-month growing cycle (Pogue, 2023). It started with preparing seedlings in the winter, planting them in the spring, and harvesting them, typically, in late summer. After harvesting, the tobacco was transferred to barns for curing during the fall. In the winter, the cured leaves were stripped, packed, and prepared for sale (Pogue, 2023). The primary purpose of a tobacco barn was to air-cure the harvested tobacco leaves. This

process was crucial for developing the desired qualities and flavor of the tobacco. Tobacco barns were constructed with ventilation and airflow in mind. The internal structure of the barns featured tiers or horizontal poles that formed a scaffold for hanging the tobacco sticks covered in leaves to dry (Russo, 2012).

The preservation of these historic barns, however, presents challenges and opportunities that require strategic approaches to ensure the buildings' structural integrity and adaptability for contemporary communities. Restoration of these structures is important because they usually contain irreplaceable materials and craftsmanship. The Historic Barn Rehabilitation Standards (2025), developed by King County, WA, provide practical guidance for rehabilitation, advocating for minor alterations that preserve the original architectural integrity. Adaptive reuse, repurposing existing structures for a new use instead of demolition (Kurnaz, 2024), is a leading solution to barn preservation. The practice combines economic viability with cultural and historical conservation. According to Vardopoulos (2023), adaptive reuse supports sustainability by prolonging the life of structures while combating environmental deterioration.

Regulatory constraints, structural limitations, and associated financial considerations can hinder these projects. However, local governments and property owners can successfully navigate these challenges and obstacles. For example, an Ohio community transformed a dilapidated barn into an event space that now hosts parties, weddings, receptions, family reunions, and corporate outings, generating income for the local park and recreation department (Christy and Bower, 2011). The experiences of communities throughout the

US provide a roadmap for Prince George's County's leaders and property owners. The reuse projects offer a better understanding of the process and outcomes of tobacco barn restoration and reuse.

### **Aspects of Barn Preservation**

Preserving historic barns involves a spectrum of strategies. In our research, adaptive reuse emerged as the most prominent and economically viable approach. Adaptive reuse would find new uses for barn structures (Kurnaz, 2024). Repurposing and integrating barns into the community ensures they remain in existence and provide additional community spaces (Üçler Bilmez and Mehmet Hersek, 2024). Koreman and Altes's (2023) case study from the Netherlands is an excellent example of adaptive reuse. Former farm buildings were converted into shopping centers and business hubs. This work shows how a successful adaptive reuse project aligns a building's new use with local policies while respecting and maintaining the building's original character. Vardopoulos (2023) emphasizes adaptive reuse's effectiveness and sustainability aspects. He argues that the adaptive reuse of agricultural buildings can contribute to land use sustainability by mitigating urban sprawl and can help preserve cultural identity by retaining historic structures. Adaptive reuse shows how barns that are no longer useful in their original agricultural function can be reimagined as valuable community assets (Christy and Bower, 2011).

Beyond adaptive reuse, the physical rehabilitation and restoration of the structure are crucial for maintaining the barns' structural integrity and historical presence. Christy and Bower (2011) explore old barns' inherent and intrinsic value due to their historical significance. The barns are

constructed from irreplaceable materials, and the initial craftsmanship is nearly irreplicable. They advocate for restoring timber frame barns in Ohio, noting that this can extend their lifespan and allow for sympathetic retrofitting. This approach prioritizes preserving the building's character and heritage while improving its structural integrity and allowing contemporary uses while preserving the original character.

The Historic Barn Rehabilitation Standards created by King's County, WA (2014) provide a practical guide for physical rehabilitation in reuse projects and help retain the historic fabric and charm often associated with older buildings. The standards include suggestions to repair a barn's deteriorated features instead of replacing them and ensuring that modifications necessary for modern use don't detract from the barn's historic character. These standards advocate for a balance between preservation and practicality of contemporary use in an adaptive project.

A strong foundation of comprehensive documentation and surveys is key to preservation efforts. Pogue's (2024) Southern Maryland Tobacco Barn Survey systematically identified, documented, and assessed tobacco barns' condition. Surveys provide critical data on the architectural characteristics, historical context, and overall condition of barns, which are essential for informing preservation policies and identifying structures eligible for historic registers.

Follett's 2023 paper explores the nonphysical aspects of historic sites. He shares that preserving rural historic sites such as tobacco barns is about saving the physical structures and the intangible stories

and memories associated with them. The intangible value associated with historic tobacco barns makes keeping thorough documentation that captures these narratives a necessity in adaptive reuse projects.

Ranzetta's (2006) archaeological approach to dating tobacco barns stresses the importance of knowing and comprehending these buildings' history and original construction. Having the necessary background about a structure's physical history and significance will help inform preservation efforts and maintain its cultural and historical significance during repurposing.

Integrating barn preservation and reuse efforts into broader community and economic development initiatives is another key strategy. Follett (2023) discusses the potential of agritourism in repurposing agricultural buildings. He suggests these sites can become focal points for community engagement and economic activity in rural areas.

In a 2012 paper, Rubel emphasizes that engaging private property owners in preservation efforts and integrating tobacco barns into existing community development plans is essential to an adaptive reuse project's success.

Not every building will be in public control. Thus, policymakers must use tools such as tax credits, allowing property owners to deduct the cost of barn renovations from their tax bill, as presented by McDonough et al. (1982). This can sway private property owners to participate in adaptive reuse efforts.

Koreman and Altes' (2023) Netherlands case studies show that the adaptive reuse of vacant farm buildings can spark local

entrepreneurship and attract businesses, creating rural employment opportunities and economic development. This holistic approach recognizes that the long-term survival of historic barns often depends on their ability to contribute to their communities' social and economic well-being (Slätmo, 2017).

### **Success of Adaptive Reuse**

The success of adaptive reuse projects hinges on interconnected factors, including sustainability, economic viability, heritage preservation, cultural identity, and community engagement. Sustainability is a central pillar of an adaptive reuse project. Vardopoulos, in a 2023 paper, notes that adaptive reuse can significantly contribute to sustainable development and land use by curbing urban sprawl, mitigating environmental degradation, and safeguarding cultural heritage by preserving existing structures. Adaptive reuse embodies conservation and resource efficiency principles by extending a building's life cycle. Communities with repurposed agricultural buildings can foster more sustainable urban and rural environments (Mısırlısoy and Günçe, 2016).

Economic viability is another crucial determinant of successful adaptive reuse. Koreman and Altes's (2023) case studies illustrate how the commercial reuse of vacant farm buildings can generate rural employment opportunities and revitalize local economies. Similarly, Christy and Bower (2011) highlight the economic benefits of rehabilitating old barns, including potential tax incentives and the maintenance of property value.

Vardopoulos's (2023) analysis of public perceptions also reveals that balancing ecological conservation with economic

feasibility is essential for public support of adaptive reuse projects. Successful adaptive reuse projects often involve finding new uses that are compatible with the building's historical and architectural characteristics and sustainable in the local long-term economy (Mısırlısoy and Günçe, 2016).

Preserving heritage and cultural identity is another characteristic of successful adaptive reuse efforts. Mısırlısoy and Günçe (2016) emphasize that the most successful projects add a contemporary layer while respecting and retaining a building's heritage significance. This involves carefully analyzing the existing cultural importance of a structure and ensuring that the new use respects the original building's form, character, and historic integrity. As Vardopoulos (2023) notes, adaptive reuse can preserve the character and legacy of more than just one barn, contributing to communities' broader identity, history, and culture for present and future generations. Retaining cultural heritage value through adaptation is thus a key indicator of a successful project (Sugden, 2018).

Community engagement and strategic planning play integral roles in ensuring the success of adaptive reuse initiatives. Koreman and Altes's 2023 paper highlights the importance of aligning reuse projects with local policies and community needs. They suggest approaches for former agricultural buildings, including agritourism or local food production. Vardopoulos (2023) highlights the role of public perception in decision-making for adaptive reuse. Emphasizing the need for community inclusion in the implementation process. Sugden's (2018) study of industrial heritage buildings in Ontario also points to the significance of local leadership in fostering successful adaptive reuse projects. Adaptive reuse projects should take a collaborative



approach that considers the needs and values of the local community while navigating relevant planning and policy frameworks (Crisafulli and Nieweg, 2023).

### **Challenges of Adaptive Reuse**

Despite the numerous benefits of adaptive reuse, these projects often encounter significant challenges that can complicate their implementation and threaten their success. One obstacle lies in navigating regulatory constraints and policy issues. Mısırlısoy and Günçe (2016) note that changing a building's function introduces new regulatory conditions that designers must address. This can include adhering to updated building codes, meeting energy efficiency standards, and ensuring accessibility for all users while respecting the structure's historical significance. In the context of agricultural buildings like barns, Rubel (2025) points out the challenge posed by their specialized design, which can restrict adaptive reuse options. Vardopoulos's (2023) study suggests ambiguous policies and competing land use priorities can hinder preservation efforts. Therefore, a thorough understanding of and skillful navigation through complex regulatory landscapes is crucial to overcoming these initial hurdles.

Another challenge arises from an existing structure's physical limitations and inherent characteristics. Older buildings, including tobacco barns, suffer from structural deterioration, requiring extensive repairs to be safe for adaptive reuse. Older buildings also present unique spatial configurations that aren't easily adaptable to modern uses. Sugden (2018) mentions the "Frankenstein Syndrome," where introducing a new and incompatible design can clash with the existing spirit of a space. For instance, as highlighted by Christy and Bower (2011),

tobacco barns were often built with specific materials and construction techniques that may be difficult to replicate or integrate with new building systems. Additionally, adapting these structures for new functions might necessitate significant modifications that could potentially compromise their historical integrity (Mısırlısoy and Günçe, 2016). The literature suggests that a comprehensive analysis of a building's physical condition and its potential for adaptation is essential to addressing physical challenges.

Economic considerations also present obstacles to adaptive reuse projects. While adaptive reuse can be cost-effective compared to demolition and new construction, it still has associated costs. Sugden (2018) notes that banks often perceive adaptive reuse projects as riskier than new construction. The initial costs of assessing, repairing, and retrofitting an existing building can be substantial and unpredictable. Mısırlısoy and Günçe (2016) emphasize the importance of economic sustainability for the long-term success of an adaptive reuse project, noting that a lack of financial viability can lead to a building becoming disused again. Vardopoulos's (2023) research also indicates that balancing ecological conservation with economic feasibility is a key determinant of public support. Thus, developing a robust financial plan that accounts for the unique costs and potential revenue streams of the adapted building is critical.

### **Conclusion**

Salvaging and preserving historic tobacco barns and other agricultural buildings can preserve their history while, at the same time, benefiting local communities. Turning historic barns into businesses, event spaces, or community centers helps them stay useful

within the community. Additionally, repurposing barns stops unnecessary new construction and can help local economies thrive and grow. Fixing and repurposing historic barns properly ensures they stay meaningful for decades. Their past won't be forgotten or destroyed, and residents can continue to enjoy these buildings in new ways.

Although repurposing these barns has multiple benefits, it also comes with negative consequences. Deteriorating barns are hard to fix, and costs can quickly increase. For these projects to be successful, planning, teamwork, funding, and community support are crucial. If done correctly, reusing old barns can bring new beginnings without destroying the history behind it.

The literature review offers insights into the potential for Prince George's County's barns and valuable information for policymaker's and owner's decisions about the barns. Successful adaptive reuse will allow the County to retain some of its agricultural heritage while creating new opportunities for economic growth in a community undergoing population and development transformation.

## Findings

For our findings, we reviewed archival research, interviewed experts, and conducted three site visits to serve as case studies on tobacco barn adaptive reuse in the County. Archival research focused on the County's historic barn inventory and an analysis of historic building preservation projects in the area. Interviewed experts included Dr. Dennis Pogue, Professor Emeritus at the University of Maryland School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, and Amelia Chisholm, archaeological planner

with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

The findings from the barn inventory and interviews directed the approach to site visits and case studies. For a holistic understanding of the adaptive reuse of tobacco barns, the research team located locations for agritourism and business space. The final case study includes a historic barn that hasn't begun the adaptive reuse process. Conversations with tobacco barn owners during site visits highlighted the need for improved access to information and resources supporting adaptive reuse. Difficulty navigating the bureaucracy associated with adaptive reuse emerged as a consistent theme in our discussions with property owners.

## Archival Research

The research team searched and reviewed several databases and documents, including *The Illustrated Inventory of Historic Sites and Districts, Prince George's County, Maryland* (M-NCPPC, 2011). Inventory records from the Maryland Historical Trust's *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties* also provided important details on historic properties across the state. In the three site visits, we observed four barns: two with historical property designations, one whose property designation was rescinded in the 1990s, and one that never received a historic designation.

We searched for relevant properties and consulted with County officials, but finding a complete list of tobacco barns was challenging. There is neither a central comprehensive database for tobacco barns nor a list of property owners interested in assistance with their barns. This finding is consistent with past efforts to document and compile information on tobacco barns in

Southern Maryland; there's no inventory or a program to reach owners (Wilson, 2004). Although a recent collection and survey of early tobacco barns exists, it doesn't account for all the structures that are considered historic (Pogue, 2024). The three case study properties visited are post-Civil War.

### Interview with Dr. Dennis Pogue

Dr. Pogue is an expert in historic preservation, and offered significant help, discussing several ways to adapt historic barns for contemporary use. He mentioned a few options: winery, brewery, event space, Airbnb, and community center. By adapting tobacco barns, the County can preserve their historical significance and find new purposes for the structures.

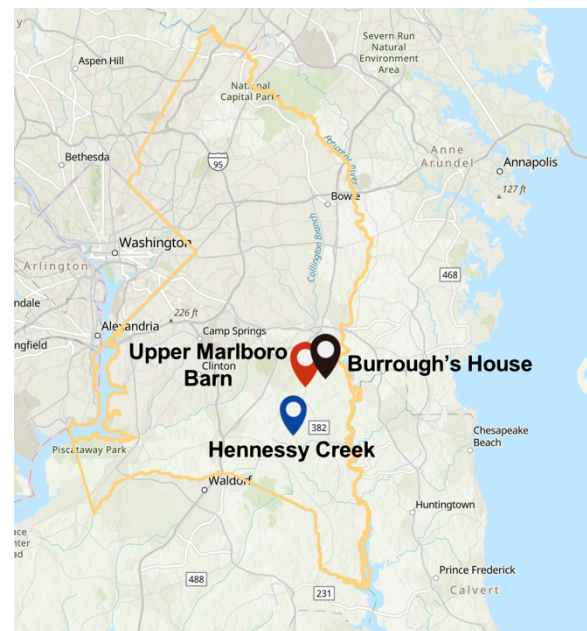
Pogue also mentioned his most recent work, the 2024 *Southern Maryland Tobacco Barn Survey*. It documents pre-Civil War tobacco barns throughout Southern Maryland and explores key details about their historical significance. The report also details the current state of tobacco barns and how to preserve them. His research was invaluable to understanding the scale of barn preservation needs in Maryland.

The interview also covered the financial challenges of repurposing historic barns. According to Pogue, limited funding is available in Maryland specifically for barn reconstruction and restoration. However, there are programs that can help in certain circumstances—the Maryland Trust's grants and tax credits, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, and the Maryland Heritage Areas program. Finally, Pogue connected us with a family in Upper Marlboro who recently bought a property that includes a tobacco barn. This became one of our site visits where we learned more

about the barn and their intentions to adapt it for reuse.

### Case Studies

In March and April, we made three site visits to historic tobacco barns in southern Prince George's County. We visually assessed the barns' conditions, observed the properties as a whole, and interviewed the owners about their vision for their properties. All three expressed a desire to reuse and adapt their barns.



**Map 1.** Case study locations (ArcGIS, 2025)

Property/ Tobacco Barn	Date Visited	Address	Year Built	Current Condition	Adaptive Reuse Concept	Request Technical Assistance
Upper Marlboro Barn	March 28, 2025	10200 Croom Rd, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772	1920s	Fair	Art Studio	Yes
Hennessy Creek	March 28, 2025	13201 Martin Rd Brandywine, Maryland	1830s	Fair	Event space	Yes
Burrough's House	April 14, 2025	15800 Croom Airport Rd, Upper Marlboro, Maryland	1890s	Somewhat Poor	Not yet determined	Yes

**Table 1.** Overview of Case Study Properties

and work would allow the barn to serve the community meaningfully.

**Case Study One: Upper Marlboro Barn**

The first case study focuses on a recently purchased tobacco barn in Upper Marlboro. The owners envision repurposing it into a community gathering space and arts center, perhaps with housing for artists, painters, poets, and musicians. Though dating back to the 1920s, the barn is in solid condition (see Photo 1). The spacious interior has exposed wood beams, making it a strong candidate for repurposing (see Photo 2). The barn is on a quiet and scenic property, promoting a peaceful environment ideal for community use.

The owner’s plan to transform the barn into a community space housing aspiring artists would include areas for living and working, and space for studios and workshops. Creating a space for artists to relax, create,



**Photo 1.** Upper Marlboro barn exterior, 2025



This case study demonstrates how historic tobacco barns can be given a new purpose through creative adaptive reuse. The Upper Marlboro barn has the potential to become a valuable social space, given the right resources and support. Even with limited resources, funding might be available through programs, such as the Maryland Historic Trust and the Maryland Heritage Areas Program (*MHT - Maryland Heritage Areas Program*, 2023).

By blending history with modern needs, this case study shows the potential for preserving important structures while, at the same time, benefiting the surrounding communities.



**Photo 2.** Upper Marlboro barn interior, 2025

## **Case Study Two: Hennessy Creek**

Hennessy Creek is a historic farm repurposed into an agritourism venue, demonstrating the intersection of cultural preservation and economic revitalization. The property is located at Rosemount, a historic plantation house and surrounding farm with multiple barns, including a 19th-century tobacco barn (see Photo 3). Rosemount was owned by the Skinner family for nearly 50 years then sold to the Martin family in 1882 (Prince George's County, 1974). The property was a residence for the Martin family, who maintained and updated it until its sale in 2018 (Redfin, 2025).

In 2018, the Wallace family bought the 84.46-acre former plantation and transformed it into Hennessy Creek, a multiuse venue encompassing a bed and breakfast, event space, and farm brewery. The Wallaces reinvented the property into a space that fosters community engagement and is a place to celebrate life's milestones. Recognizing a decline in agritourism in Southern Maryland, they sought to revitalize the property by integrating their hospitality experience with local cultural and economic development. Hennessy Creek hosts various events, including music festivals, farm-to-table brunches, and community fairs, and is a successful adaptive reuse of a historic agricultural site (Wallace & Wallace, 2018).

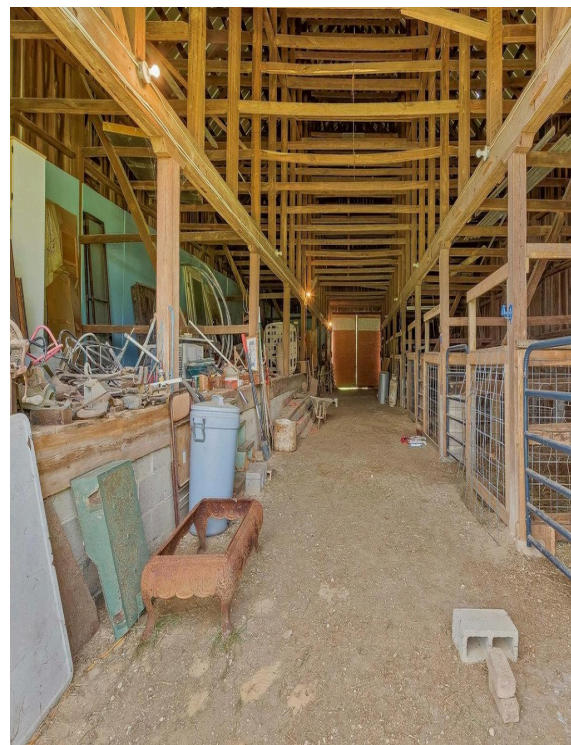


**Photo 3.** Rosemount plantation house (Redfin, 2025)

Both options would enhance the venue's appeal and use.

The Wallace's work includes adaptive reuse of the plantation house and a large barn. The 1800s unrenovated tobacco barn is used as storage space (see Photo 4). The owners want to incorporate the historic barn into their current event business and expand the property's offerings. One possibility is to transform the barn into a tasting room for the farm brewery, allowing guests to sample locally crafted beverages in an authentic historical setting. This would deepen the connection between the site's history and its current operations, creating a memorable experience tying the agricultural legacy to the art of brewing.

The barn could also be renovated into a smaller event venue, providing an alternative to the larger barn already in use. This space could host smaller weddings, private dinners, or niche gatherings, offering flexibility and diversity to Hennessy Creek's event services while preserving the barn's historical significance.



**Photo 4.** Hennessy Creek tobacco barn interior (Redfin, 2025)



Renovating the historic tobacco barn at Hennessy Creek presents several challenges, reflecting broader barriers that historic property owners face in Prince George's County. The barn has been unrenovated since its original construction in the 19th century, and the Wallaces face significant bureaucratic and logistical obstacles in adapting it for modern use. Navigating the permitting process and obtaining a historic designation for the barn requires time and expertise, compounded by the lack of centralized resources for property owners.

Financial constraints also pose a challenge. Identifying and securing grants, tax credits, and other funding opportunities demands considerable effort and specialized knowledge. Finally, renovation must ensure the barn's structural integrity and adhere to contemporary building codes, adding further complexity and requiring the involvement of architects and engineers. Addressing these challenges is essential for transforming the barn into a functional space that complements Hennessy Creek's operations.

### **Case Study Three: Burrough's House**

The owners of the two properties above have a vision for adapting and reusing their historic tobacco barns and each project is in a different design and construction stage. The third owner doesn't yet have an adaptive reuse project in place.

The Percival Burroughs House is a historic farmstead dating to 1895 and includes a house, tobacco barn, and other buildings. The house was a modest yet functional residence that reflected the declining fortunes of the Burroughs family (Prince George's County, 1986). The Burroughs House highlights the economic and agricultural shifts that shaped rural Maryland. The house remained in the family until 1930 and later served as a tenant

residence and support structure for neighboring tobacco farmers. The current owner, Karen Long, plans to repurpose the tobacco barn but is unsure how.



**Photo 5.** Burroughs House tobacco barn exterior, 2025

Long has wanted to renovate the barn since buying the property in 2002. However, the costs have been a barrier. She noted that one of the biggest challenges was not knowing where to begin with the renovation process. No information on the grant programs and tax credits for historic preservation was provided when she bought the property. She postponed renovating the barn and uses it for storage and as car parking (see Photo 6).

In early 2025, Long began the effort to find ways to renovate the barn that could support the farm. She doesn't have a clear vision of what a reuse project would entail, but she may want to use the building to support her beehives and garden at the same time it can illustrate the Reconstruction Era history of eastern Prince George's County. Long expressed frustration at the complexity of navigating the process without free or affordable assistance. She emphasized that access to centralized resources could make the project easier, including information on

experts and knowledgeable contractors. Long's experience underscores the barriers many owners face when preserving and repurposing historic structures, reinforcing the need for targeted support and accessible information to make adaptive reuse more attainable.



**Photo 6.** Burroughs House tobacco barn interior, 2025



**Photo 7.** Burroughs House Tobacco Barn Interior, 2025

## Recommendations

After completing the site visits, a clear throughline emerged. Owners recognized that their tobacco barns provided historical and community value and wanted to repurpose them. But they all encountered the same difficulty in navigating the complexities of adaptive reuse.

Owners must overcome bureaucratic challenges to obtain historic designation, understand available funding options, and access technical support from engineers and architects. This situation extends beyond individual property owners, impacting the historical, cultural, and economic landscape of Prince George's County.

To address these challenges, the M-NCPPC should prioritize creating and disseminating a resource guide for current and future



tobacco barn owners (see Appendix A). This guide should be a centralized information source that lowers the barriers to initiating adaptive reuse projects for tobacco barn owners. The resource guide should include information about the *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties* (MIHP), explain its role as a repository of information on historic resources, and its significance for understanding Maryland's history. While inclusion in the MIHP doesn't come with regulatory restrictions, the guide should clarify its importance as a resource to learn about grants and tax credits.

The resource guide should detail various grant and tax credit funding options. It should include information on The Heritage Fund, a cooperative effort of Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust, which provides direct assistance for protecting historical and cultural resources. The guide should feature details about the grants offered by Preservation Maryland with direct access to application and program materials.

In addition, it should highlight the Prince George's County Historic Property Grant Program administered by the Planning Department, explaining its purpose in funding the rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, or acquisition of historic property. Contact information for the Historic Preservation Section of the Prince George's County Planning Department should be readily available.

The guide should also provide information on state-level funding through the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), including the Historic Preservation Capital Grant and the Historic Preservation Non-Capital Grant programs, and direct owners to the MHT website for specific guidelines. The resource guide must detail the Prince George's

County Tobacco Barn Tax Credit, a unique and beneficial opportunity.

The resource guide should also include contact information for contractors experienced in working on historic agricultural buildings. Additionally, the guide should provide information on adaptive reuse best practices, drawing from resources such as the *Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Barns* and the *King County Historic Barn Rehabilitation Standards*. Showcasing successful adaptive reuse examples and adaptive reuse ideas can inspire and guide barn owners.

The guide must also outline the process for permitting and navigating state and county regulations, including relevant county zoning ordinances, with contact information for Prince George's County agencies.

By consolidating this crucial information, the M-NCPPC can empower tobacco barn owners to overcome the complexities of adaptive reuse, contributing significantly to preserving these valuable historic structures and enriching the communities and economy of Prince George's County.

Technical assistance can also be offered through online and in-person workshops on the topics covered in the resource guide. Tobacco barn owners could gain knowledge and connect with experts on specific topics such as financing and rehabilitation. A conference would also provide information and allow vendors and companies to meet with tobacco barn owners interested in preservation and adaptive reuse. The technical assistance would be enhanced through a partnership with the M-NCPPC, Prince George's County, the State of Maryland, the University of Maryland, Preservation Maryland, Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition, and other agencies.

## Conclusion

This report explores ways to expand the preservation of historic tobacco barns in Prince George's County. It provides a foundational understanding of the challenges and potential of adaptive reuse for historic tobacco barns in Prince George's County, laying the groundwork for future efforts.

The report finds that following the 1999 Maryland Tobacco Buyout Program, many of these significant historical sites have become underutilized and face the risk of disappearing entirely. Adaptive reuse, repurposing old or historic structures for new uses while retaining their original features and character, emerges as a viable strategy for preserving these barns. This practice not only supports cultural and historical conservation but also offers economic viability and contributes to sustainability by prolonging the life of structures.

The research used a mixed-methods approach, incorporating archival research, expert interviews, and visits to three case study sites. Archival research examined the County's historic barn inventory and historic building preservation projects, revealing the challenge of finding a complete, centralized list of tobacco barns or interested property owners. Interviews with experts, including Dr. Dennis Pogue, provided insights into effective reuse models, funding strategies, and ongoing preservation efforts. Site visits offered real-world examples and perspectives from property owners, demonstrating diverse adaptive reuse concepts ranging from an art space to an agritourism venue.

A consistent theme was identified throughout the findings, particularly through discussions with property owners—the

difficulty of navigating the complex process of adaptive reuse. Owners struggle with bureaucratic challenges, such as obtaining historic designations, understanding available funding options, as well as with accessing technical support from professionals, including engineers and architects. The lack of centralized information and resources leaves many property owners overwhelmed and discouraged.

Based on these findings, our primary recommendation is that the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission should prioritize creating and disseminating a resource guide for current and future tobacco barn owners in the County. This guide should be a centralized information source that would lower barriers to initiating adaptive reuse projects. The guide should contain details on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, various grant and tax credit opportunities such as the Heritage Fund, Preservation Maryland grants, the Prince George's County Historic Property Grant Program, Maryland Historical Trust grants, and critically, the Prince George's County Tobacco Barn Tax Credit.

The guide should also facilitate access to technical support by providing contact information for experienced contractors and adaptive reuse best practices, such as the *King County Historic Barn Rehabilitation Standards*. Additionally, outlining the process for permitting and navigating relevant regulations is crucial.

In addition to a resource guide, technical assistance through online and in-person workshops or conferences is recommended to provide knowledge and networking opportunities for owners.

Along with a resource guide, a detailed, county-wide inventory that includes structural assessments, historical documentation, and contact information for owners interested in preservation or reuse would assist in preservation efforts.

Capturing the history and cultural heritage of the sites is also important. This project would involve extensive fieldwork, community outreach, and partnering with local historical societies or universities with barn owners.

A deeper analysis of the specific building codes, zoning ordinances, and permitting processes unique to agricultural structures undergoing adaptive reuse in Prince George's County is also warranted. Future research should identify potential policy changes to ease the burden on property owners.

A detailed analysis of the specific environmental benefits of repurposing the tobacco barns compared to new construction could further strengthen the case for preservation. Understanding the economic viability of different adaptive reuse models and alternatives, as well as innovative funding mechanisms, can also aid in selecting adaptive reuse solutions that will be successful.

Prince George's County can build on the report's findings to develop targeted policies and programs, supporting the adaptive reuse of historic tobacco barns as a significant opportunity to retain a vital piece of the County's agricultural heritage, stimulate economic growth, and create valuable community spaces. Engaging current tobacco barn owners, potential buyers, and the larger community is essential to the preservation and adaptive reuse of the tobacco barns in Prince George's County.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A: Draft Outline, Prince George's County Tobacco Barn Adaptive Reuse Guide

#### I. Introduction

- **Purpose:** Help Prince George's County barn owners find new uses and opportunities for their historic tobacco barns. Serve as a centralized information source to lower barriers to starting adaptive reuse projects. Support and encourage property owners to adapt and reuse tobacco barns.
- **Goal:** Contribute significantly to preserving valuable historic structures and enriching the communities and economy of Prince George's County. Retain the County's agricultural heritage while creating new opportunities for community and economic growth.

#### II. Why Preserve Tobacco Barns?

- **Historic and Cultural Value:** Preserving barns is crucial because they contain irreplaceable materials and craftsmanship and represent the intangible stories and memories associated with rural historic sites. Adaptive reuse helps keep the history associated with them alive.
- **Community Benefits:** Repurposing barns ensures they remain in existence and can provide active community spaces. Examples include turning them into businesses, event spaces, or religious buildings.
- **Economic Benefits:** Adaptive reuse can be a catalyst for rural community building, job creation, and heritage tourism. Repurposing stops unnecessary new construction and helps the economy thrive. Commercial reuse can generate rural employment opportunities and revitalize local economies.
- **Sustainability:** Adaptive reuse contributes to sustainable development and land use by curbing urban sprawl, mitigating environmental degradation, and safeguarding cultural heritage. It prolongs the life of structures and embodies conservation and resource efficiency.

#### III. Adaptive Reuse: Ideas and Examples

- **Adaptive Reuse Ideas:** Provide a list of potential new uses for tobacco barns, such as:
  - Agritourism enterprise
  - Art gallery
  - Event center/meeting hall
  - Horse stables
  - Farm brewery/winery/distillery
  - Commercial kitchen
  - Community gathering center
  - Space for small business operations
  - Support space for farm operations
  - Educational or interpretive centers

#### IV. Resources for Historic Designation:

- **Outline avenues for historic designation.** Provide detailed instructions on how to obtain each designation.
- **Prince George's County Historic Sites**  
<https://www.pgplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Request-a-Historic-Site-Evaluation-PDF.pdf>
- **Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties**  
<https://mht.maryland.gov/Pages/research/mihp-description.aspx>
- **National Register of Historic Places**  
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/how-to-list-a-property.htm>

#### V. Adaptive Reuse Best Practices and Standards

- **The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:**  
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/secretarys-standards-rehabilitation.htm>
- **Preservation Maryland's Preservation Primer:**  
<https://preservationmaryland.org/preservation-primer-saving-preserving-historic-barns/>
- **King County, WA Historic Barn Rehabilitation Standards:**  
<https://cdn.kingcounty.gov/-/media/king-county/depts/dnrm/building-property/historic-preservation-program/papers-and-research/to24-historicbarnrehabilitationstandards.pdf?rev=efdf74f2e9d42b6a8f793cad6c513e6&hash=62607450B999D0D48A5E07E4E1AA515E#:~:text=1>

#### VI. Navigating Regulations and Permitting

- **Prince George's County Ordinances:**
  - Zoning Ordinance (Subtitle 27): <https://pgplanning.org/development-process/zoning-applications/guide-to-zoning-categories/zoning-ordinance-use-tables>
  - Historic Preservation (Subtitle 29):  
[https://library.municode.com/md/prince\\_george's\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTITI17PULOLAPRGECOMA\\_SUBTITLE\\_29PRHIRE](https://library.municode.com/md/prince_george's_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTITI17PULOLAPRGECOMA_SUBTITLE_29PRHIRE)
- **The Permitting Process:**
  - Prince George's County: When Is a Permit Required:  
[https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/permitting-inspections-and-enforcement/permits/when-permit-required?utm\\_](https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/permitting-inspections-and-enforcement/permits/when-permit-required?utm_)
  - Historic Area Work Permit:  
[https://www.pgplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/HAWP-Permit-Process\\_NE\\_W\\_201706291124016834.pdf?](https://www.pgplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/HAWP-Permit-Process_NE_W_201706291124016834.pdf?)
- **County Contact Information:**

#### VII. Funding Opportunities

- **Grants**
  - Heritage Fund:  
<https://preservationmaryland.org/heritage-fund-application-now-open/>



- Preservation Maryland Grants:  
<https://preservationmaryland.org/our-work/hf/>
- Prince George's County Historic Property Grant Program (Capital Grants):  
<https://www.pgplanning.org/countywide-planning/historic-preservation/grants>
- Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission Non-Capital Grant Program:  
[https://www.pgplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Guidelines-and-Application-Form\\_1.pdf](https://www.pgplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Guidelines-and-Application-Form_1.pdf)
- Maryland Historical Trust Historic Preservation Capital Grant Program:  
<https://mht.maryland.gov/Pages/funding/grants-capital.aspx>
- Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) Historic Preservation Non-Capital Grant Program:  
<https://mht.maryland.gov/Pages/funding/grants-noncapital.aspx>
- **Tax Credits**
  - Prince George's County Tobacco Barn Tax Credit:  
[https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/default/files/media-document/Tobacco%20Barn%20Tax%20Credit\\_1.pdf](https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/default/files/media-document/Tobacco%20Barn%20Tax%20Credit_1.pdf)
  - Maryland Rehabilitation Tax Credits for Historic Buildings:  
<https://mht.maryland.gov/Pages/funding/tax-credits.aspx>
  - Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program (20% Tax Credit):  
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/application-process.htm>
  - 10% Income Tax Credit for Older, Non-Historic Buildings:  
<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/rehabilitation-credit>
- **Loans**
  - Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development:  
<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
  - USDA Rural Development loans:  
<https://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do>
  - Local Banks and Credit Unions

## **VIII. Accessing Technical Support**

## **IX. Directory of Experienced Tobacco Barn Contractors**