

## SCHIFFERSTADT MUSEUM

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Schifferstadt Architectural Museum, located on the edge of Baker Park and a few blocks from Hood College, is often overlooked by the many visitors that drive by on Rosemont Ave. After all, the museum is hidden by several large trees and is set back from the road, only identified by a small sign. However, Schifferstadt is actually a unique part of Frederick's early history and is a rare example of German colonial architecture.

Schifferstadt, which was built in 1758, is the oldest documented house in Frederick, according to G. Bernard Callan, who is the Schifferstadt coordinator for the Frederick County Landmarks Foundation. He believes that both visitors and those who live in the area should visit the museum. Callan said, "It's important to understand our history. Schifferstadt is a good starting point for people in Frederick. There are a lot of things that surprise people."

The large stone building is still in remarkable condition, and has not endured a lot of changes, which means visitors can really see what the house originally looked like. Pat Ogden, who has volunteered at the museum since last November, said, "It's known as 'preservation by neglect.' When they [the Frederick County Landmarks Foundation] acquired it in 1974, there wasn't a lot to rip out and change."

Schifferstadt's numerous features that are representative of traditional German architecture are what makes it unique from other historical houses. Master Docent Pat Miller said, "It is a thoroughly German house in its style and the way it's built."

For example, the sandstone walls are extremely thick – they are two feet on the first floor and 18 inches on the second. Also, a large “wishbone” chimney at the center of the house connects the two smaller chimneys from the first floor. There are three original doors inside Schifferstadt that are five-paneled, which is distinctly German. Finally, a narrow enclosed winder staircase leads to the second floor – meant to be practical as opposed to decorative.

The second floor contains the museum’s most prized possession – a five-plate stove (also a German design) that is still in its original position. Odgen said, “It is the crown jewel of the house. I believe it is the oldest stove still in its original spot in the country.”

Schifferstadt was built by Joseph Brunner and his family, who immigrated to Philadelphia from Germany in 1729, and then moved to Maryland in 1746. While Brunner died before the house was completed, his son Elias spent a significant part of his life in the house.

“I like how Schifferstadt represents the immigrant experience,” Odgen said. “It amazes me that the Brunners left their homeland not knowing what was out there. I really respect that.”

Currently, the museum is open for tours from 12 - 4 p.m. on Saturdays, and it also offers special tours by arrangement. Despite its limited hours, the museum still gets a wide variety of visitors including school groups, college students, people from Germany or with German backgrounds, present owners of colonial and 19th century homes, builders and architects. Schifferstadt is also hosting an Oktoberfest celebration Oct. 15 and 16, a major event for the museum.