

**Report
of
Braemar Cottage Preliminary Condition Assessment
Cresson Township, Pennsylvania**



February 26, 2007



McMullan & Associates, Inc.

**Braemar Cottage
Preliminary Condition Assessment Report
Cresson Township, Pennsylvania**

Prepared for: **National Park Service
Historic Preservation Training Center
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The assessment team determined the existing conditions of the main block of Benjamin F. Jones Cottage to range from fair to poor condition. Despite the ruined appearance both within and without the structure the assessors believe that this historic structure can be preserved. However, the three existing porches have structurally failed and constitute hazards. The report recommends immediate action to mitigate the hazardous porches by removal and further recommends the building site be secured by the installation of a chain link fence and securing access portals into the main block. The report concludes with a presentation of stabilization and preservation "next steps" and preliminary cost estimates. The cost estimates are for construction and professional services costs only and do not reflect any future operational, maintenance or adaptive reuse costs.

INTRODUCTION

A preliminary condition assessment of the Braemar Cottage was performed by Tom McGrath, Architect from the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Training Center, Frederick Maryland and Denis McMullan, PE Consulting Structural Engineer, McMullan & Associates, Inc, Vienna, Virginia on February 20th and 21st 2007.

The purpose of the assessment was to provide recommendations and budget cost estimates on alternative stabilization/preservation treatments. The assessment consisted of a brief visual survey of accessible areas of the basement, first, second and third floor

and as such should be considered a preliminary step in the process of stabilizing and preserving this historic structure.

FINDINGS

The Cottage is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as Jones, Benjamin F., Cottage. It is also more commonly known as Braemar Cottage. The cottage was erected in 1887-1888 and is historically significant for its association with Benjamin Franklin Jones, one of the most important American Iron Masters of the nineteenth century. For additional historical information refer to the National Register application prepared by Suzanna E. Barucco, Martin Jay Rosenblam, R.A. & Associates, 13 June 1994.

The cottage is a three story building of balloon-frame wood construction supported on stone wall foundations. The structure has reportedly been vacant for 30 years and although there has been several efforts to maintain the property it is currently subjected to major water intrusion through holes in the roof, an open roof hatch and many open windows. As a result there is major structural damage to localized areas throughout the building where the water has penetrated through the floors to the basement.

The three exterior porches are all in unstable and failed condition. The rear porch has partially collapsed and may completely collapse at any time. In order to mitigate these obvious safety issues the porches should be removed. There are many areas on the roof

where there is obvious significant water damage, missing shingles and rotted wood sheathing and rafters.

The four brick chimneys, however, are in very good condition except for the top sections that need to be repaired.

The damage to the interior structure of the building, although serious is generally confined to vertical sections that have suffered water intrusion.

The remainder of the structure is generally in fair/good condition. The stone foundation walls and the first floor framing is in good condition. There are no obvious signs of significant structural movements or settlements.

The structure appears to have been built well with strong exterior diagonal sheathing and siding on the exterior walls and full size 2"x12" wood joists for the floor support.

Once the porches are removed it is our opinion that the overall structure is in fair to poor condition.

Despite the ruined appearance we believe the structure can be preserved.

Preservation estimate assumes that the work will meet Secretary of Interior Standards for residential preservation/reconstruction. Estimate excludes any commercial systems such

