

909 MIRROR LAKE ROAD, YARDLEY
LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP
BUCKS COUNTY



The Patterson Farm includes two large historic farmhouses, each with a main barn and other outbuildings.

The Quaker Satterthwaite House was built in the 1730s, with later additions in the mid-19th century. The Greek Revival frame building sits behind stone walls on Mirror Lake Road. The Satterthwaite farmstead includes an early 19th-century Pennsylvania bank barn, a corncrib, potato barn, a frame workshop/well house, and garage. The house's interior features fine decorative elements such as mantelpieces and stained glass. Satterthwaite's additions were constructed in the 1800s to accommodate two families, each with separate stairways, two floors and high-ceiling attics, kitchens and front parlors off a center entry hall. Many of the original window panes remain, mounted in a six-over-six configuration.

The Janney-Brown House dates to the 1750s, with a later 1830s Federal-style fieldstone addition. Its interior features a walk-in fireplace with a beehive oven and fine woodwork, including two staircases and wide plank pine flooring.

Near the Janney-Brown House is a small tenant house that may date back to the 1680s and a cucumber magnolia tree that's considered the largest in Pennsylvania.

To date, the Patterson Farm Preservation group has served as a conscience for the Township and a guardian for the Patterson Farm. At Township meetings, they have addressed a variety of mismanagement issues, from the misguided effort to sell off the Satterthwaite House (and only driveway access to the farmland) to the accidental demolition of a recently restored garage/apple cellar. The group also exposed illegal discharge of industrial wastewater by former farm tenant Brightfarms, leading the PA DEP to issue a fine for violation of the Clean Streams Law.

THREAT

The Satterthwaite House and other historic buildings are suffering from 23 years of deferred maintenance by Lower Makefield Township, amounting to demolition by neglect. The Township has already attempted to sell off a 5-acre parcel containing Satterthwaite House. The buyer sought variances to build a commercial venture on the site, which were denied, resulting in years of litigation and, ultimately, an end to the sale.

For almost a decade, the Patterson Farm Preservation group has called for proper management and attention to the farm and its historic buildings. Lower Makefield Township is a Certified Local Government, a designation that includes an expectation to adequately maintain municipally owned historic resources. Jointly administered by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Offices, each local community works through a certification process to become recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). Once certified, CLGs become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program. Each community gains access to benefits of the program and agrees to follow required federal and state requirements.

Although the Township accepted grant funding from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission years ago, they have not met their responsibility to make the historic house available for public access.

CHANGE

Preservation Pennsylvania will work with the nonprofit group Patterson Farm Preservation to find solutions. Their Petition for Preservation has garnered over 4,000 signatures to date. Their social media campaign encourages people to support restoration of Patterson Farm's historic homes, barns and buildings: #saveoursatterthwaite. They seek approval from the Township to allow their volunteers to begin restoration work as soon as possible.