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May 4, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places & National Historic Landmarks Program
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether,

With the utmost enthusiasm I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the National Historic Landmark nomination of the Keim Homestead located in Berks County, Pennsylvania. Having devoted myself to the study of Pennsylvania German art and architecture for more than twenty years, I am well-acquainted with the Keim Homestead and confident that it merits the distinct honor of National Historic Landmark status.

The Keim house, constructed c. 1753, retains many original and distinctive features of early-to-mid 1700s Germanic architecture, most notably its *Flürkuchenhaus* plan with direct exterior access into the kitchen. This asymmetrical plan, with its characteristic central chimney, reflects the transfer of Germanic architectural traditions to America. It also reflects distinctly Germanic cultural preferences in the use of stoves rather than fireplaces for heating. Eighteenth-century travelers' accounts often comment on this subject, alternately praising or complaining about the warmth of Germanic houses due to their use of heating stoves. The Keim house retains not only its original central chimney but also the kitchen hearth and well-preserved evidence of the cast iron jamb stove in the adjacent *Stube* or stove room. The house also retains much of its ornate, Germanic iron hardware.

The c. 1753 ancillary building is an equally rare and important survival. In particular, the woodturning workshop is one of the earliest and most well-preserved examples of its type in my experience. Linking the ancillary building to the main house are the continued use of Germanic architectural practices, such as the use of paled insulation beneath the main level.

In sum, the Keim Homestead is an extraordinarily well-preserved example of the Germanic architectural traditions once prevalent in colonial America. I highly recommend that it be designated as a National Historic Landmark.

Sincerely,

Lisa Minardi

Lisa Minardi, Executive Director