

Wortendyke Barn
13 Pascack Road, Park Ridge
Open April – October, Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday, 1 – 5 pm
Barn: 201-930-0124 (only when barn is open)

Architectural Description: The barn is 45' 5" across the front and 37' deep. Four massive H-frames comprise the main structure. Six sills lie on flat stones. Posts measuring 11" square support 10" x 16" beams. These are mortised and tenoned together and fastened with trunnels. The beams are finely finished, possibly with an adz (as only Dutch barns had adzed beams). Very long roof rafters are balanced near the midpoint on purlins running from front to back. This arrangement leaves the sidewalls relatively weight-free. The barn is constructed largely of oak and tulipwood. Closely spaced long poles lie on beams marking a rude hayloft floor. The central portion of the barn has wood threshing floor. Side aisles for stalls have dirt floors. There are two large wagon doors located front and rear, and one front access door. This may have been changed as normally, rafters and original studs are placed about three feet on centers. There is no ridge pole. Shingle nailers are old oak and probably not original as the roof was most likely thatched. Old shingles remain but are now covered by asphalt shingles. Some original clapboards may remain, but they have been covered over on two sidewalls by novelty siding. The exterior is stained red. Within the past twenty years (c. 2000) a small section inside was enclosed as an office and two windows were added.

This building is unique as it is a true Dutch barn, and as far as is known, is the last one extant in New Jersey. The Lower Rhenish style barn evolved in the Netherlands and was brought over to the Hudson River Valley. This type was the most European of American barns and may be the earliest example of barn buildings in the United States.

History: The Wortendyke Barn was built in the latter half of the 18th Century by Frederick Wortendyke, Jr., on land where he settled around 1750. He built his barn in a style familiar to areas of the New World settled by those who had come from the Netherlands – and by their descendants. Although these early settlers included other nationalities, it was the Dutch culture, customs, agricultural practices and husbandry that exerted the greatest influence and that prevailed on generations to come. Their barns were simple, commodious, and functional.

Bergen County's early agricultural economy was sustained by the Jersey Dutch farmer and his barn was as important to him as his homestead. Pascack Road separates Frederick's barn from his home – both structures still stand to this day. The barn has been on its original site for over two centuries.

Restoration: The site underwent restoration in 1976, and included rehabilitation of the structure, site cleanup and installation of fire prevention and security measures. Subsequently, an exhibit on agriculture in Bergen County was installed.