AL-V-B-342

Lewis J. Ort House

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

All material is property of the Maryland Historical Trust.

Last Updated: 09-08-2011

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes X
no ___

Property Name: Lewis J. Ort House Inventory Number: AL-V-B-342

Address: 543 National Highway (ALT US 40) Historic district: ___ yes X no

City: LaVale Zip Code: 21502 County: Allegany

USGS Quadrangle(s): Cumberland

Property Owner: Kenneth and Tana Alkire Tax Account ID Number: 025487

Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 17 Tax Map Number: 11V

Project: ALT US 40: Streetscape Improvements, LaVale Agency: Maryland State Highway Administration

Agency Prepared By: A.D. Marble & Company

Preparer's Name: Catherine Dluzak/Barbara Frederick/Emma Young Date Prepared: 3/27/2006

Documentation is presented in: Allegany County Courthouse

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: X Eligibility recommended ___ Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: ___A X B X C ___D Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G

Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:

Name of the District/Property: ___

Inventory Number: ___ Eligible: ___ yes Listed: ___ yes

Site visit by MHT Staff ___ yes X no Name: ___ Date: ___

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

The Lewis J. Ort House, located at 543 National Highway (ALT US 40) in LaVale, Allegany County, Maryland is a one-story, 1953, frame, Contemporary-style dwelling situated on the north side of the National Highway (ALT US 40). The rectangular footprint remains intact, and the dwelling is oriented on an east-west axis. The lot that the dwelling occupies comprises approximately 29,763.00 square feet and is situated on a hill overlooking the road. The dwelling contains minor alterations and stands in relatively good condition.

In 1953, Lewis and Pearl Ort contracted architect James H. Kring, from Kring and Ross Architect Firm in Johnstown, PA, to design a one-story Contemporary-style dwelling. The residence includes an indoor pool area to the rear that is enclosed by colored acrylic glass blocks. Not only did it serve as a residence for the Orts, but the dwelling also housed the offices for the Ort Bakery Co., established by Lewis J. Ort's father and uncles. The house served as Orts primary residence until Lewis's death in 2001. After Ort's death, the western block of the dwelling was renovated to accommodate additional office space. The corporate offices of the company, now known as the Fibred Group, operate out of the Lewis J. Ort House today. (For a detailed architectural description, history, and list of references, see the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties form, AL-V-B-342, on file at the Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, Maryland).

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended X **Eligibility not recommended** ___

Criteria: ___A X B X C ___D **Considerations:** ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G

MHT Comments:

[signature] — 5/26/06
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services — **Date**

[signature] — 5/29/06
Reviewer, National Register Program — **Date**

20060124 7

Significance Evaluation

The Lewis J. Ort House, located at 543 National Highway (ALT US 40), continues to convey its use as a circa-1950 Contemporary-style dwelling located in LaVale, Allegany County, Maryland. The dwelling houses the corporate offices of the Fibred Group, the descendant of the "Ort Brothers" bakery business, whose offices were also located in the Lewis J. Ort House during his lifetime. The dwelling's association with the entrepreneur and philanthropist, Lewis J. Ort, and its architectural essence as a Contemporary-style dwelling culminate to make the Lewis J. Ort House eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of design, location, setting, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling, and:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution the broad patterns of our history; or
B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

The Lewis J. Ort House, located at 543 National Highway (ALT US 40) is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The property is not associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history.

The Lewis J. Ort House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with Lewis J. Ort, the entrepreneur and philanthropist. As an entrepreneur, Lewis J. Ort created America's first commercially viable, high-fiber, low-calorie, baking products in 1981. As a philanthropist, Mr. Ort epitomized exemplary humanitarian service by donating his time and money for raising millions of dollars for hospitals, burn center, churches, orphanages, and new technologies throughout not only Allegany County, but the world. The property located at 543 National Highway (ALT US 40) best represents Lewis J. Ort's productive life. The dwelling, which served as his home and office from 1950 until his death in 2001, remains as a testament to his life and the countless contributions he made as a businessman and altruist.

The Lewis J. Ort House is eligible for listing under Criterion C as a locally significant example of a residential resource. The Lewis J. Ort House embodies the characteristics of the Contemporary architectural style (1940-1980), including a flat roof, large expanse of windows, and the mixed-use of materials for the exterior, including brick and wood. The dwelling's placement on top of a hill illustrates its integration into the landscape. The dwelling remains virtually unaltered and therefore, emanates the feel of a mid-twentieth-century Contemporary-style dwelling. A notable feature of the dwelling is the rear pool block, which is clad in colored acrylic glass blocks.

The property was not evaluated for eligibility under Criterion D as part of the current investigation.

The Lewis J. Ort House retains integrity from the period of significance with no alterations and modifications that detract from the integrity of the dwelling. The dwelling retains integrity of design, location, setting, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended _____ **Eligibility not recommended** _____

Criteria: __A __B __C __D **Considerations:** __A __B __C __D __E __F __G

MHT Comments:

_____ _____

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services **Date**

_____ _____

Reviewer, National Register Program **Date**

AL-V-B-342
Lewis J. Ort House
543 National Highway (ALT US 40), LaVale
Ca. 1953
Private

The Lewis J. Ort House is a one-story, *circa*-1950, Contemporary-style dwelling located in LaVale, Allegany County, Maryland. The dwelling includes an interior pool area attached to the north (rear) elevation, enclosed in walls of multi-colored strips of acrylic glass block.

The dwelling is significant for its association with the entrepreneur and philanthropist, Lewis J. Ort (1918-2001). The dwelling is also the only mid-twentieth-century Contemporary-style building in the LaVale area. The dwelling houses the corporate offices of the Fibred Group, the descendant of the "Ort Brothers" bakery business, whose offices were also located in the Lewis J. Ort House during his lifetime.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. AL-V-B-342

1. Name of Property Lewis J. Ort House

historic Lewis J. Ort House

other

2. Location

street and number 543 National Highway (ALT US 40) __ not for publication

city, town LaVale __ vicinity

county Allegany

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Kenneth and Tana Alkire

street and number P.O. Box 3349 telephone (301) 724-6050

city, town LaVale state MD zip code 21504

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Allegany County Courthouse liber 707 folio 250

city, town Cumberland tax map 11V tax parcel 17 tax ID number 025487

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

_____ Contributing Resource in National Register District
_____ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
_____ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Recorded by HABS/HAER
_____ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
_____ Other:_____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
				Contributing	Noncontributing
____district	____public	____agriculture	____landscape	_____	_____ buildings
X building(s)	____private	X commerce/trade	____recreation/culture	_____	_____ sites
____structure	____both	____defense	____religion	_____	_____ structures
____site		____domestic	____social	_____	_____ objects
____object		____education	____transportation	_____	_____ Total
		____funerary	____work in progress		
		____government	____unknown		
		____health care	____vacant/not in use		
		____industry	____other:		

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

_____

7. Description

Inventory No. AL-V-B-342

Condition

___ excellent ___ deteriorated
X_ good ___ ruins
___ fair ___ altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Lewis J. Ort House, located at 543 National Highway (ALT US 40) in LaVale, Allegany County, Maryland is a one-story, 1953, frame, Contemporary-style dwelling situated on the north side of the National Highway (ALT US 40). The Contemporary style was the favorite for architect-designed houses built during the period from about 1950-1970.[1] The lot that the dwelling occupies comprises approximately 29,763.00 square feet and is situated on a hill overlooking the road. The dwelling contains minor alterations and stands in relatively good condition.

Exterior Description

The dwelling faces south and is situated on the north side of the National Highway (ALT US 40). The original rectangular footprint remains intact, and the building is oriented on an east-west axis. A one-story, brick-enclosed end wing projects southward from both the east and west ends of the dwelling. The exterior of the building is clad in a combination of enameled brick, constructed in a raking stretcher bond, wood and acrylic glass block. Asphalt shingles cover the asymmetrical flat roof, which contains exposed rafters on the south (front) elevation.

The central corridor of the south elevation contains a large expanse of single-light windows encased in a painted-aluminum surround. The fixed-sash windows are situated approximately one foot above the ground and one foot from the roof in a single pane, which creates the impression of a large curtain-like wall of glass. The main entry into the dwelling is situated in the westernmost bay of the central block. The entry consists of a single-leaf, wood-panel door concealed by an aluminum storm door. The south elevation of the western addition contains a one-bay attached garage, complete with a wood-panel collapsing garage door.

The east elevation of the main block is concealed by the addition of the eastern wing. An expansive copse of cedar trees obscures the details of the east elevation of the east wing.

The east elevation of the west wing contains a one-light, fixed-sash, vertical tripartite window.

The rear elevation of the dwelling is concealed by an attached indoor swimming pool area, completely enclosed by multi-colored acrylic glass blocks. Each block measures approximately 6"x6" and are situated in a striped-ribbon fashion in a repeated color pattern of white, multi-colored, yellow, green, orange, blue, yellow, and red.

The west elevation contains eight bays in an irregular fenestration pattern. The elevation contains a wide variety of window types, including paired, single-light, fixed openings and a square 8x8 opening comprised of multi-colored, acrylic glass blocks, similar to those found on the north elevation. The southern end of the west elevation contains two secondary entries. Each entry is comprised of a single-leaf, wood-panel door concealed by an aluminum storm door.

A secondary entry is also situated in the west elevation of the east wing. This entry is identical to the main entry, which consists of a single-leaf, wood-panel door concealed by an aluminum storm door.

Interior

The interior has largely been remodeled to accommodate the corporate offices of the Fibred Group. The indoor swimming pool area is maintained and remains in current use.

Surrounding Landscape

A paved asphalt driveway occupies the western end of the south elevation and leads to the one-bay garage situated in the west wing. A large picket fence lines the north side of the property, while a stone wall lines the west side. A large embankment, dotted with evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, steeply slopes downward from the east wing of the dwelling. A large expanse of grassy

[1] Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 482.

lawn stretches downhill (southward) from the façade of the dwelling and leads to the National Highway (ALT US 40), which borders the property on the south side.

8. Significance

Inventory No. AL-V-B-342

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
__ 1600-1699	__ agriculture	__ economics	__ health/medicine	__ performing arts
__ 1700-1799	__ archeology	__ education	__ industry	__ philosophy
__ 1800-1899	X architecture	__ engineering	__ invention	__ politics/government
X 1900-1999	__ art	__ entertainment/ recreation	__ landscape architecture	__ religion
__ 2000-	X commerce	__ ethnic heritage	__ law	__ science
	__ communications	__ exploration/ settlement	__ literature	__ social history
	__ community planning		__ maritime history	__ transportation
	__ conservation		__ military	__ other: ____

Specific dates Unknown **Architect/Builder** James H. Kring

Construction dates Ca. 1953

Evaluation for:

__X__National Register _____Maryland Register _____not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Lewis J. Ort House

The Lewis J. Ort House located at 543 National Highway (ALT US 40) in LaVale, Allegany County, Maryland, was constructed ca. 1953 for local businessman Lewis J. Ort and his wife, Pearl. By a deed dated November 6, 1952, Charles and Anna Weingold conveyed a portion of their land situated along the north side of the National Highway (ALT US 40) to Lewis J. and Pearl Ort. A year later, in 1953, the Orts contracted architect James H. Kring, from Kring and Ross Architect Firm in Johnstown, PA, to design a one-story Contemporary-style dwelling.[2] The residence includes an indoor pool area to the rear that is enclosed by colored acrylic glass blocks.

The house was built for dual purposes. Not only did it serve as a residence for the Orts, but the dwelling also housed the offices for the Ort Bakery Co., established by Lewis J. Ort's father and uncles. The house served as Orts primary residence until Lewis's death in 2001. After Ort's death, the western block of the dwelling was renovated to accommodate additional office space.[3]

A review of deed books at the Allegany County Courthouse in Cumberland, Maryland finds numerous transactions conveying the property to various members of the Ort family, and the property still remains vested in the family. Lewis and Pearl Ort's youngest daughter, Tana Kim and her husband, Kenneth Edward Alkire, currently retain the title to the property.

Lewis J. Ort and the Manufacture of FI-1 Soy Fiber

Lewis J. Ort was born on July 6, 1918 in Midland, Maryland, to Clarence C. and Margaret McFarland Ort. Early in life, Lewis Ort began working with his uncles at their "Ort Brothers" bakery in Midland. It appears that Lewis eventually took over the bakery, and moved operations to Cumberland, likely following his service in World War II.[4]

In the latter half of the twentieth century, Lewis Ort worked to develop commercially viable, high fiber, low calorie baking products.[5] Collaborating with his brother, Harry, the Ort brothers developed the first loaf of white diet bread in the United States. Other innovations included "Less Bread," a nationally licensed brand of low-calorie, high-fiber bread, which was a ground-breaking pioneer product in healthful commercial baking.[6]

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[2] Personal communication with Marlee Ort, 22 March 2006.
[3] Personal communication with Chris Idol, 7 March 2006.
[4] "Lewis J. Ort," *Cumberland (Maryland) Times-News,* 26 September 2001.
[5] "About Us," The Fibred Group [internet], available from: www.fibred.com/Pages/About.html; accessed 22 March 2006.
[6] Ibid.

Lewis J. Ort continued to focus on research and the development of new products. Ort's work with soybean hulls led to the discovery of FI-1 Soy Fiber and the founding of Fibred, Inc. in 1981. By the late 1980s, the company shifted its focus from producing baking mixes to ingredient manufacture, specifically the volume production of FI-1 Soy Fiber.[7] The corporate offices of the company, now known as the Fibred Group, operate out of the Lewis J. Ort House today.

The Philanthropy of Lewis J. Ort

In addition to his entrepreneurial work, Lewis J. Ort, frequently referred to as "Mr. Western Maryland," was and remains lauded for his exemplary humanitarian service.[8] Mr. Ort served on numerous fund drives which led to the erection of the Sacred Heart Hospital and the Salvation Army Center, both in Cumberland, the Lewis J. Ort Library at Frostburg State University in Frostburg, and the establishment of the Wilmer Institute at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.[9] Ort's philanthropy was not limited to the United States and his work with the Shriners of North America extended to building projects in India, Thailand, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic.[10]

A native of Allegany County, Lewis J. Ort exemplified entrepreneurship and altruism. His legacies include not only the Fibred Group, but hospitals, burn centers, churches, orphanages, and new technologies throughout the world.

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[7] "Lewis J. Ort," Frostburg State University, Lewis J. Ort Library [Internet]; available from http://www.frostburg.edu/dept/library/ort.htm; accessed 22 March 2006.
[8] Ibid.
[9] "Lewis J. Ort," *Cumberland (Maryland) Times-News,* 26 September 2001.
[10] Ibid.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. AL-V-B-342

"About Us." The Fibred Group [internet]. Available from: www.fibred.com/Pages/About.html. Accessed 22 March 2006.

"Lewis J. Ort." Frostburg State University, Lewis J. Ort Library [Internet]. Available from http://www.frostburg.edu/dept/library/ort.htm. Accessed 22 March 2006.

Dluzak, Catherine. Personal email communication with Marlee Ort, 22 March 2006; Notes on file in Camp Hill, PA.

Young, Emma. Personal communication with Chris Idol, 7 March 2006; Notes on file in Camp Hill, PA.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property	29,763.00 square feet		
Acreage of historical setting	29, 763.00 square feet		
Quadrangle name	Cumberland	Quadrangle scale:	1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The National Register boundary for the Lewis J. Ort House (ALT US 40) includes the existing tax parcel (025487). This boundary provides sufficient setting for the resource and encompasses all the historic features of the property that directly contribute to its period of significance (1953-1956) as is required by *Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties* (National Park Service 1997).

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Catherine Dluzak, Barbara Frederick, Emma Young		
organization	A.D. Marble & Company	date	March 27, 2006
street & number	10989 Red Run Blvd., Suite 209	telephone	(410) 902-1421
city or town	Owings Mills	state	MD

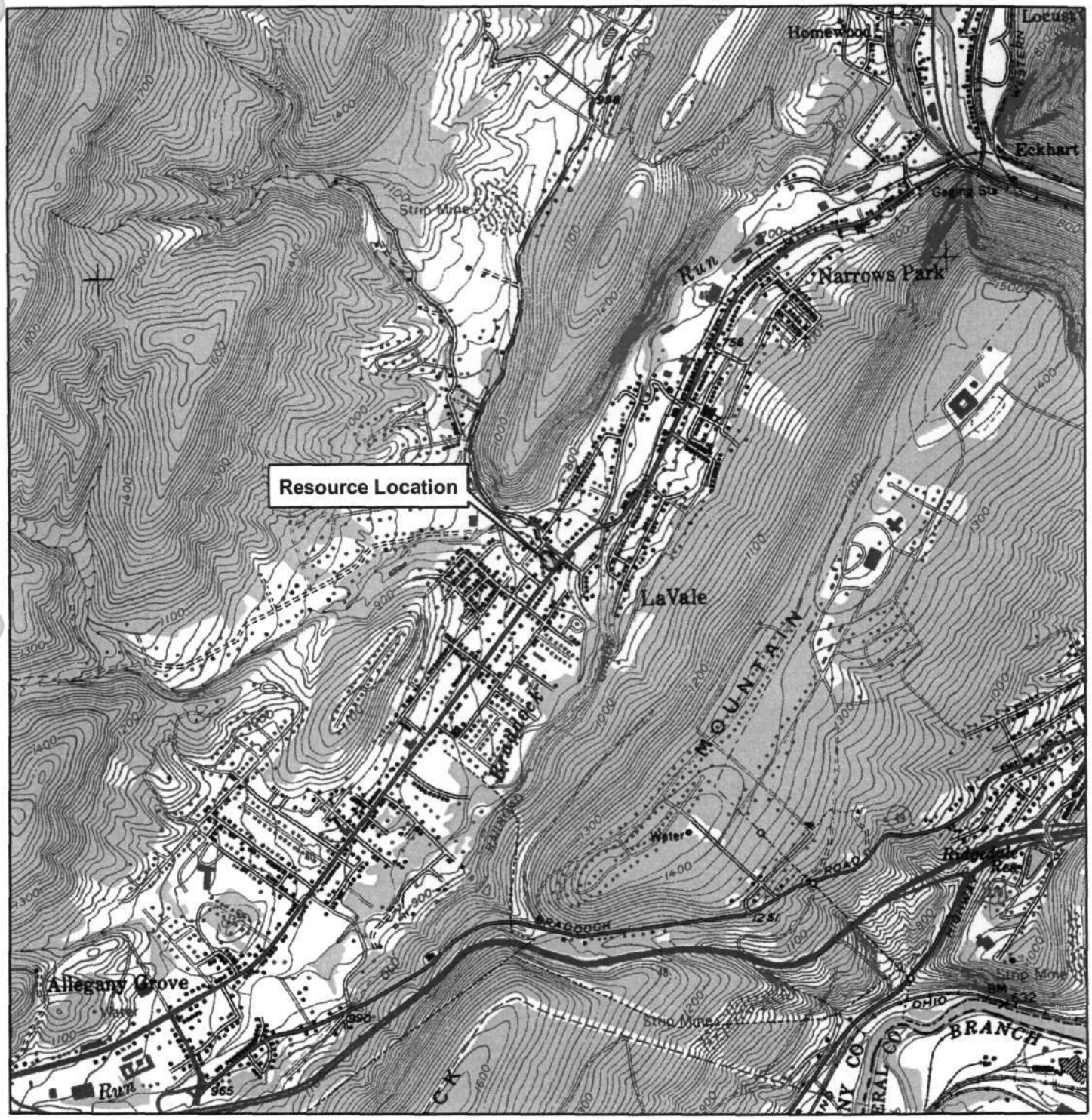
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

Lewis J. Ort House (AL-V-B-342)

ALT US 40 Streetscape Improvements
LaVale, Allegany County, Maryland



Feet
2,000 0 2,000

Sources: USGS 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle,
National Elevation Dataset, ESRI

P:\GIS\Projects\mapping\shortformmaps.mxd 3/23/2006 5:57:00 PM

ADM ID: 21

AL-V-B-342

Lewis J. Ort House

Allegany County, MD

B. Frederick

03.2006

MD SHPO

South elevation; view to NW

1/8

AL-V-B-342
Lewis J. Ort House
Allegany County, MD
B. Frederick
03.2006
MD SHPO
south elevation, view to NW
2/8

AL-V-B-342

Lewis J. Ort House

Allegany County, MD

B. Frederick

03.2006

MD SHPO

South elevation, view to North

3/8

AL-V-B-342

Lewis J. Ort House

Allegany County, MD

B. Frederick

03.2006

MD SHPO

South & east elevation of attached garage; view to NW

4/8

AL-V-B-3A2

Lewis J. Ort House

Allegany County, MD

B. Frederick

03.2006

MD SHPO

west elevation; view to SE

5/8

AL-V-B-342

Lewis J. Ort House

Allegany County, MD

B. Frederick

03.2006

MD SHPO

Rear; enclosed pool addition; north + east elevations

6/8

AL-V-B-342
Lewis J. Orr House
Allegany County, MD
B. Frederick
03.2006
west entry; view to east
7/8

AL-V-B-342

Lewis J. Ort House

Allegany County, MD

B. Frederick

03.2006

MD SHPO

South entry, view to north

8/8