

AA-997
William Downs House
Glen Burnie
Private

1850s

The Williams Downs House is important architecturally as a good example of a mid-19th century vernacular, center-hall-plan, I-house. This widely popular folk form achieved popularity in post-railroad America and is frequently associated with farm families of relative affluence.

This house was constructed for William H. Downs in the late 1850s by a local builder named John Giles Cromwell. Downs was a successful truck farmer, who expanded his original 100 acre farm to 450 acres. In 1906, William Downs rented the farm to his son Luther C. Downs, who became the owner following his father's death in 1911. The farm remained in the possession of the Downs family until 1968.

AA-997

William Downs House

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Development Period(s): Agricultural-Industrial Transition (1815-1870)
Industrial/Urban Dominance (1870-1930)

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture

Resource Type:

Category Type: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Dwelling

Known Design Source: Built by John Giles Cromwell, a local builder.

7. Description

Survey No. AA-997

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date of move relocation pending

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

Located on the west side of Hollins Ferry Road, the William Downs House stands on a large lot shaded by numerous mature oak and walnut trees. A very large metal warehouse of the J.J. Haines Corp. is situated directly behind the house. Viewsheds between the historic building and new construction are partially blocked by a tall, wooden fence.

This frame dwelling is a two-and-a-half story, three-bay, single-pile, center-hall plan, cross-gable, I-house, with a two-story rear ell. Both sections are sheathed with wooden shingles that are painted blue. The gable-roof has overhanging eaves and a boxed cornice. The two interior chimneys, one on either side of the cross-gable, are topped with decorative terra cotta chimney pots.

Fenestration on the principal facade is evenly spaced and arranged in pairs. Windows are two-over-two, double-hung sash types. Second-story, center-bay windows are accented with segmental casings. This motif is reiterated in the cross-gable window that illuminates the attic level. The centrally located front door displays six panels, and is surrounded by a multi-paned transom and sidelights. The entrance is protected by an open, hipped-roof porch. The porch, which spans the full width of the front facade, is supported by six, Doric-stye columns that rise up to engage a wide cornice board.

A one-story bay window projects from the south wall of the front block. Also present on this side, placed adjacent to the rear ell, is a modern cedar deck. An entrance in the ell's south wall is original, but the door is not historic.

The building's interior is renovated but historic fabric survives including the newel and balustrade, door and window surrounds, two marble mantels, and a built-in wall safe. The building's floorplan, which on each floor features one large room on either side of a center hall and two rooms on each level of the ell, is original.

The building is in good condition and maintains a high level of historic integrity.

8. Significance

Survey No. AA-997

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below							
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)				

Specific dates	Builder/Architect	John Giles Cromwell						
Check: Applicable Criteria:	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D				
and/or Applicable Exception:	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> national	<input type="checkbox"/> state	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local					

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The William Downs House is a fine and highly intact example of a mid-19th century I-house. This widely popular folk form achieved popularity in post-railroad America, and in this region was particularly favored by farm families of moderate to relatively high economic means (1).

This dwelling was constructed for William H. Downs in the late 1850s, by a local builder named John Giles Cromwell (2). It is situated on a parcel of land previously owned by John and Rachel Wellham, the parents of William's wife, Elizabeth. William Downs was a farmer who during the Civil War also served as a Union Army enrolling officer. During that conflict, the Downs farm apparently became the site of war-related unrest. In 1863, when the farm's barns and outbuildings burned under mysterious circumstances, known Confederate sympathizers in the area, including two of Downs' neighbors, were required to pay the \$1050 in damages sustained in the fire (2).

Following the war, Downs remained in public service, working as a Judge of the Orphans Court for Anne Arundel County. Agricultural Census data shows William Downs was also a successful truck farmer. His 100 acre property (later 450 acres) produced a variety and comparatively high level of fruits and vegetables, crops typically grown in this area of Anne Arundel County (3). In 1906 William rented the farm to his son Luther C. Downs. Luther became the owner following William's 1911 death. The farm remained in the possession of the Downs family until 1968 when it was sold to Parkway Industries. It is now owned by J.J. Haines Corp. The house, which was renovated for use as office space, is now unoccupied. Present owners are seeking to deaccession the house and have it relocated.



Atlas of Anne Arundel County, Maryland
by G.M. Hopkins, 1878

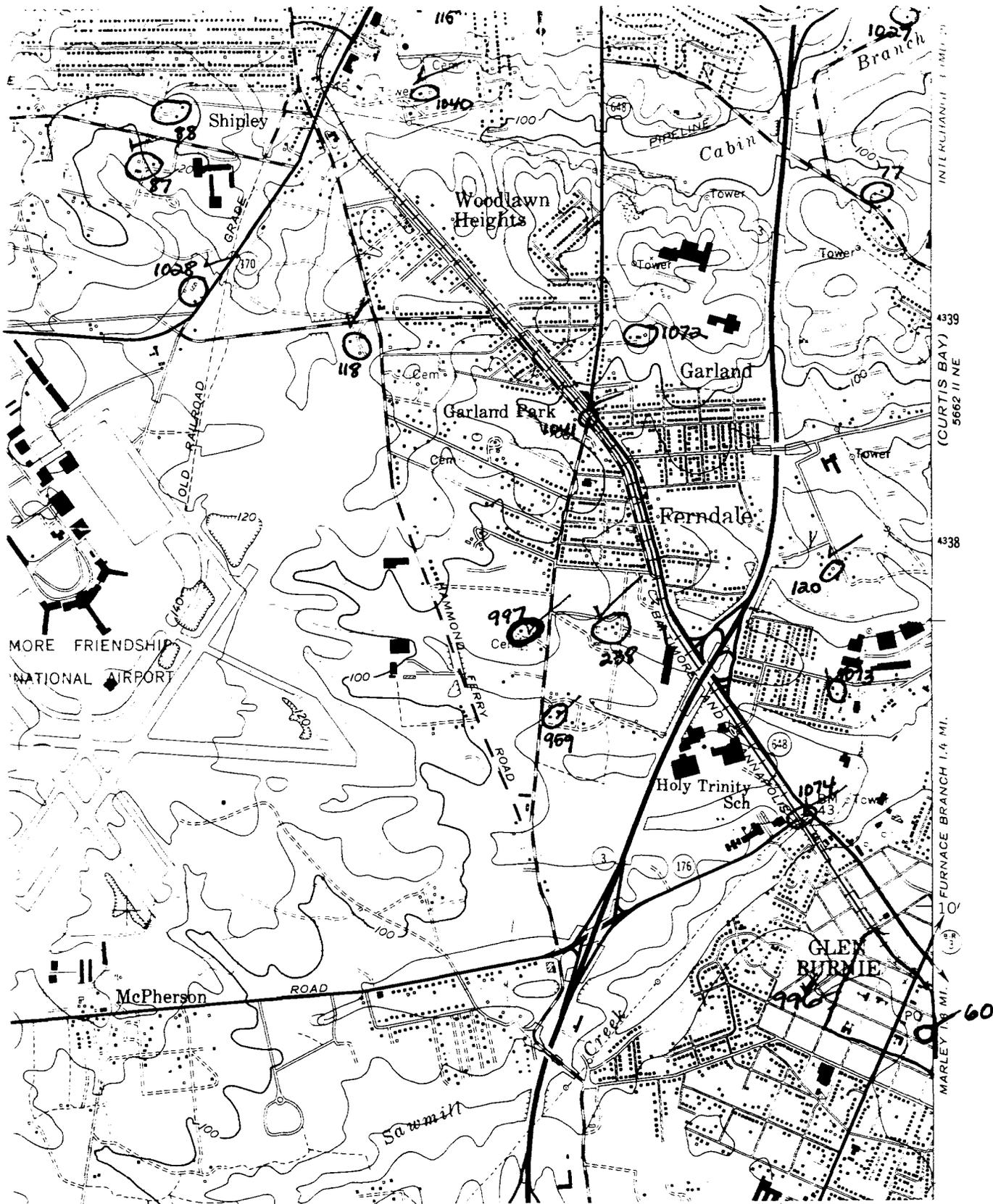
FIFTH DISTRICT

ANNE ARUNDEL CO.

Scale 2 Inches per Mile



AA-997



RELAY
 USGS 7.5 minute series
 Scale: 1:24,000
 1957, photo revised 1966 and 1974

Site Number: AA-997
 Site Name: William Downs House
 Location: 410 Hollins Ferry Road, Glen Burnie



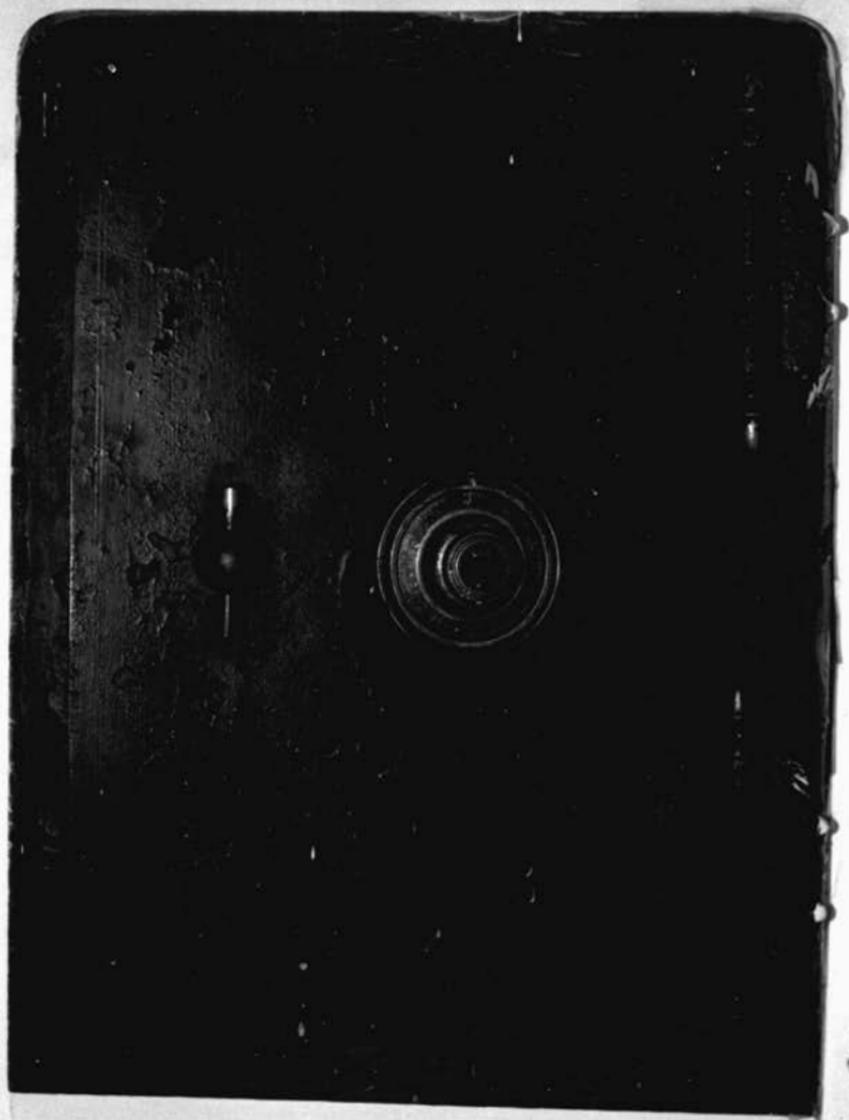
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William H. Downs House

Anne Arundel CO, Maryland

Photo By Sherri M. Marsh, September 1996
Negative at MD SHPO
EAST Elevation

Photo 1 of 4



FF-207

W. I. and Downs House

ANNE ARUNDEL CO., MARYLAND

DONNA M WARE, Photographer
1987

NEG. AT MARYLAND SHPO

WALL SAFE

Photo
2 of 4



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William Downs House

Anne Arundel Co., Maryland

Donna M. Ware, Photographer. 2/81

NEG. AT MARYLAND SHPO

WALL SAFE

Photo 3 of 11



AA-997

William Downs House

ANNE ARUNDEL CO., MARYLAND

DONNA M. WARE, photographer, 1987

NEG. AT MARYLAND SHPO

FIRE PLACE

Photo 4 of 4