

CAPSULE SUMMARY
Kent Avenue Survey District (CH: 550)
Charles County, Maryland

Located at the crossing of Kent Avenue and the Baltimore and Potomac rail line in the town of La Plata, the buildings in the Kent Avenue survey district illustrate patterns of commercial and residential development in Charles County at the turn of the 20th century. Architecturally, the buildings reflect traditional vernacular residential and commercial building types and forms. These buildings all date from the turn of the 20th century. Each is located close to the road on small lots with mature trees and gravel driveways. The property at 500 Kent Avenue is conspicuously located at the crossing of Kent Avenue with the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad tracks, and features a commercial building historically used as a general store. The other three buildings in the survey group are all located at 313 Kent Avenue, though two of them are commercial, and one of them is a single dwelling. These four buildings all feature wood frame construction, and are vernacular in style. The house at 313 Kent Avenue is an example of the I-house type. The store at 500 Kent Avenue reflects vernacular commercial building forms.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. CH: 550

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name _____

common/other name Survey District: Kent Avenue

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2. Location

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street & number 313, 500 Kent Avenue not for publication _____
city or town La Plata vicinity state Maryland code MD
county Charles code 17 zip code _____

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

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4. National Park Service Certification N/A

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check all that apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?

Yes _____ Name of Listing _____

No

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
Kent Avenue Survey District
Kent Avenue
Charles County, Maryland

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6. Function or Use
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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling
COMMERCE TRADE Specialty Store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling
VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Vernacular

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Not Visible
Roof Gable: Asphalt Shingle, Pressed Metal Shingle
Walls Wood Frame: Vinyl Siding, Rock-faced Sheet Metal
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance 1900-1950

Significant Dates c. 1900

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation Undefined

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-1

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1994.

Charles County Land and Will Records. Charles County Courthouse and the Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.

Rivoire, J. Richard. *Homeplaces: Traditional Domestic Architecture of Charles County, Maryland*. Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1990.

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property approximately 5 acres

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The buildings at 313 Kent Avenue are designated as Parcels 77 and 78. The building at 500 Kent Avenue is designated as Parcel 45. Both properties are on Grid 19 as indicated on Map 109.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The buildings at 313 and 500 Kent Avenue have historically been associated with Parcels 45, 77, and 78 since their construction circa 1900.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title R. Weidlich and C. Novelli, Architectural Historians
organization EHT Traceries, Inc. date July 16, 1999
street & number 5420 Western Avenue telephone 301/656-5283
city or town Chevy Chase state MD zip code 20815
=====

12. Property Owner
=====

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state MD zip code _____

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 550

Section 7 Page 1

Kent Avenue Survey District

name of property

Charles County, MD

county and state

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Located in a rural area near the town of La Plata, the four buildings at 313 and 500 Kent Avenue are scattered along Kent Avenue, near the its intersection with the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad tracks. These buildings all date from the turn of the 20th century. Each is located close to the road on small lots with mature trees and gravel driveways. The property at 500 Kent Avenue is conspicuously located at the crossing of Kent Avenue with the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad tracks, and features a commercial building which appears to have been a general store. The other three buildings in the survey group all have the same address - 313 Kent Avenue - though two of them are commercial, and one of them is a single dwelling. These four buildings all feature wood frame construction, and are vernacular in style; the house at 313 features the traditional I-house form.

Though these four buildings were built around the same time, they display a variety of cladding materials and forms, and are difficult to summarize in an umbrella description. The commercial building at 500 Kent Avenue is located on the north side of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad tracks, and is two stories in height, three bays wide, and rectangular in plan. It has rock-faced sheet-metal panels to give the false impression of concrete block construction, and a front gable roof clad with pressed metal shingles. The one story, full width front porch is covered with a half hipped roof, also clad with pressed metal shingles, and rests on square post supports. The centered entry contains a single-leaf wood door, and the second floor is marked by two 1/1 replacement windows. This building is in good condition.

The two commercial buildings at 313 Kent Avenue, also appear to have been stores, but are now vacant, with boarded windows and doors. Situated adjacent to each other on the south side of the railroad tracks, they are both one story in height, and three bays wide. Judging from the panels of plywood, they also each had a centered entry, with windows on either side. The building on the south (left) side is clad with weatherboard siding, and has a shed roof. The store on the north side has stucco siding and a pressed metal shingle side gable roof. Both of these buildings are in poor condition.

The single dwelling at 313 Kent Avenue is located just south of the two above-mentioned commercial buildings. This is a two story, three bay wide I-house, with a 2-story rear ell and a T-shaped

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footprint. The house has been clad with vinyl siding, and the original windows have been replaced by 1/1 vinyl sash. An asphalt shingle, center gable roof with a central interior chimney covers the building. There is no porch on the house, but a corrugated metal entrance hood has been installed above the door. Aside from the recladding and window replacements, the house is in good condition.

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Located at the crossing of Kent Avenue and the Baltimore and Potomac rail line in the town of La Plata, the buildings in the Kent Avenue survey district illustrate patterns of commercial and residential development in Charles County at the turn of the 20th century. Architecturally, the buildings reflect traditional vernacular residential and commercial building types and forms. The house at 313 Kent Avenue is an example of the I-house type. The store at 500 Kent Avenue reflects vernacular commercial building forms.

Following the Civil War, railroads made the greatest impact upon community development in southern Maryland, particularly the completion of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad's (B & P) main line from Bowie in Prince George's County to Pope's Creek in Charles County in 1872. Small towns in southern Maryland grew when they became regular stops on the B & P line, and developed as service centers for the surrounding rural areas. Some stations, however, like La Plata, developed into new communities. The town's first dwelling and store were erected in 1872 by local land owner Robert Chapman. Groceries, fertilizer, hardware and agricultural implements were imported and focused trade at the new town. A cannery opened in 1883 and a grist mill began operations in 1888. The town was incorporated the same year. In 1887, La Plata contained 120 residents, two churches, five stores, a blacksmith's shop, a millinery shop, a dressmaker's shop, a shoe shop, and one hotel, in addition to the grist mill. After the county courthouse in Port Tobacco burned in 1892, La Plata was made the seat of Charles County's government in 1895.

I-Houses

A prevalent 19th-century vernacular house type across the mid-Atlantic region, the I-house was one room deep, two stories in height, and three or five bays wide, with a central entry. I-houses usually had a porch on the front elevation and a kitchen wing in the rear, due to the narrowness of the main core. On the interior, a central passage separated the two rooms on the first floor, while the second floor contained either two or four bedchambers. During the late-19th century, many I-houses were designed with a center gable.

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Commercial Properties

Cross-road general stores were commonly frame structures sheathed in clapboards, and served as a place where farmers could purchase groceries, feed supplies, and hardware. Many contained a second story, where the proprietor resided. Usually simple, unadorned buildings with a front-gable orientation, these establishments were in many ways the focal point of rural communities. They served as the post office, the community social center, and a place to exchange news well into the 20th century.

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National Register Eligibility:

The Kent Avenue Survey District is eligible under National Register Criteria A and C. 500 Kent Avenue was included within the La Plata Historic District nomination that was submitted in 1998. The survey district is eligible under Criterion A because of the association with La Plata's development at the turn of the 20th century. Research does not reveal any association with the lives of persons significant in our past (Criterion B). The Kent Avenue Survey District meets National Register Criterion C for its distinguished examples of vernacular commercial and residential buildings. There is no evidence that the properties are likely to yield information important in history or prehistory (Criterion D). The La Plata Historic District boundaries should be expanded to include 313 Kent Avenue.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Eligibility recommended Not Recommended

Comments:

A contributing portion of the La Plata
Historic District

Review, OPS: Ally Smith Date: 8/3/2000

Reviewer, NR Program: B. Kuntz Date: 8/14/00

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance (1870-1930)
Modern Period (1930-present)

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

Architecture, Landscape, and
Community Planning
Economic

RESOURCE TYPE(S)

Category: District

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function (s): DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
ECONOMIC/Specialty Store

Known Design Source: Unknown



CH:550

KENT AVENUE SURVEY DISTRICT

500 KENT AVENUE

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

southwest corner

1 of 5



CH:550

KENT AVENUE SURVEY DISTRICT

313 KENT AVENUE

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

east corner

3 of 5



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KENT AVENUE SURVEY DISTRICT
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

view to the west by Kent Avenue

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CH:550

KENT AVENUE SURVEY DISTRICT
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

view to the north on Kent Avenue

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