

Wathan Farmhouse
CH-717
Dentsville vic.
Private

C. 1905

Erected around 1905, the Wathan Farmhouse is a typical example of a 2-story frame I-house with a decorative cross gable. Like many similar examples, a 2-story service wing is attached to the rear elevation creating an overall L-plan. Originally associated with a 100 acre farm, The Wathan Farmhouse is representative of the simple vernacular farmhouses constructed throughout Charles County from the close of the Civil War until the early 20th century. The property, known at various times as "Part of Assington" and "Calf Stick", was owned by members of the Wathan family since the late 19th century. In 1897-98 Thomas A. Wathan acquired the land from John R. Wathan and Frances Edelen and likely constructed the current dwelling soon after. The land descended to John A. Edelen in 1924 before passing out of the family in the 1980's.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-717

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Wathan Farmhouse

other

2. Location

street and number 9610 Penns Hill Road not for publication

city, town Dentsville vicinity

county Charles

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

name Clarence R. and Shirley B. Etheridge

street and number 9610 Penns Hill Road telephone 301-817-0310

city, town LaPlata state MD zip code 20646-4540

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse tax map and parcel: 65 p. 125

city, town LaPlata liber 1662 folio 282

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
 Other

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
			Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory 0	

7. Description

Inventory No. CH-717

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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

Erected around 1905, the Wathan Farmhouse is a typical example of a 2-story frame I-house with a decorative cross gable. Like many similar examples, a 2-story service wing is attached to the rear elevation creating an overall L-plan. The dwelling faces west and stands slightly back from Penns Hill Road on an open lot which includes a number of scattered mature trees. The farm associated with this dwelling once consisted of over 100 acres has been subdivided into three acres lots largely located to the rear of the dwelling. While the interior finishes have been slightly altered siding, the floorplan and windows remain intact and the original novelty siding remains under the contemporary treatment. A chicken house and garage also share the site.

The foundation was not visible at the time of the survey but according to the owners, the frame rests on wooden piers. A skimmed concrete curtain obscures the foundation material. Aluminum siding covers the original beveled siding. Octagonal asphalt shingles now protect the roof which is pierced by two asymmetrically placed interior brick chimney flues. The cornice is boxed. A one story, full width hipped roof porch is found on the façade. Later additions include an enclosed hipped roof porch on the gable end of the service wing and a bathroom/utility room in the interior of the L. All windows include the original 2/2 wood sash with the exception of the kitchen window in the first floor service wing. The front door has also been replaced.

The front elevation is three bays in length and includes paired 2/2 windows on either side of the centered entrance. The second story includes three symmetrical windows below a single centered square 4/light window in the cross gable. The porch shelters the ground floor and is supported by four simple square wooden posts on a reworked concrete and brick curtain pad. The south elevation simply includes a single first floor and single second story window. Two second story rear elevation of the main block has two 2/2 windows while the first floor has a single 2/2 window. In addition, a single window stands in the addition. Opposite this, the eave wall of the service wing includes a pair of 2/2 windows above a single first floor window. The rear gable end has a single centered second story 2/2 above an enclosed porch. This porch includes a grouping of four narrow 2/2 windows next to a rear doorway near the driveway. These windows extend to the other elevations of the addition. The north elevation includes two second story 2/2 windows above a two first floor windows. The original 2/2 window found in the kitchen has been replaced with a modern 6/6 plate glass window.

The interior is largely typical of other examples in the area and includes a center hall with stairway adorned with a newel. Rooms flank either side. The kitchen includes several nice historic features such as a tin ceiling, original exterior door with transom and an enclosed corner stair.

8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-717

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

Specific dates	1905	Architect/Builder	Unknown
Construction dates	c. 1905		

Evaluation for:

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 reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

Originally associated with a 100 acre farm, The Wathan Farmhouse is representative of the simple vernacular farmhouses constructed throughout Charles County from the close of the Civil War until the early 20th century. The property known at various times as "Part of Assington" and "Calf Stick" was owned by members of the Wathan family since the late 19th century. In 1897-98 Thomas A. Wathan acquired the land from John R. Wathan and Frances Edelen and likely constructed the current dwelling soon after. The land descended to John A. Edelen in 1924 before passing out of the family in the 1980's. After this time the farm was subdivided and the dwelling sold to the current owners.

Following the Civil War, Charles County suffered the same fate as most of the southern states. The basis of the economy, slave labor, was gone. While planters continued to rely heavily on tobacco cultivation, slave labor was replaced with various systems of tenancy or wage labor. Due to dwindling profits, credit collapsed and many planters fell deep into debt. In addition, Federal taxes levied by the "carpet-bag" government threatened landowners with the loss of their land. This lack of capital made it difficult for farmers to branch out into other agricultural and commercial pursuits.

Adding to the economic stagnation following the war, was the unpredictability of tobacco prices. Through the latter part of the 19th century, tobacco values remained depressed, insuring that the small tenant farmers and share-croppers struggled. Tobacco production fell precipitously following the Civil War. In 1870, Charles County's crop fell in volume to less than half of what it was ten years earlier, and in price from 8 cents per pound in 1869 to just five cents per pound in 1889. By 1909 prices had still not recovered, rising only to 7 cents.

The post-war period also marked the end of large farms. In 1870 there were 545 farms in Charles County. By 1900 that number had more than tripled at 1900 farms. Farm size continually decreased as large farms, containing over 500 acres, were divided. The most dramatic increase was seen in the number of farms under fifty acres, which more than doubled between 361 farms in 1880 and 728 farms in 1920.

The turmoil of the Reconstruction era continued in Charles County well into the 20th century. Because of these economic difficulties, population growth in the county stagnated between 1860 and 1920. The general economic decline, and later, stagnation that followed the Civil War is evident in the census figures between 1860 and 1890. By 1890, the number of county residents was nearly 1,400 less than in 1860. With little industry or profitable agriculture drawing new residents to the county during the post-Civil War era, many young Charles County residents moved away as they reached maturity.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CH-717

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 2

Acreage of historical setting 111

Quadrangle name Popes Creek

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Wathan Farmhouse is associated with Charles County Property Tax map 65, Parcel 125, Lot 20A. The dwelling was originally associated with the current Gilbert Acres Subdivision, PB 39:64.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cathy Currey/Historic Preservation Planner

organization Charles County Planning Dept

date 10/10/01

street and number 200 Baltimore Street

telephone 301-396-5815

city or town LaPlata

state MD zip code 20646

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
410-514-7600

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-717

Section 8 Page 1

Wathan Farmhouse

name of property

Charles County, MD

county and state

Chain of title:

- June 1992 Michael J. Sullivan and James C. Lorenzi to Clarence and Shirley Etheridge. Lot 20 of Gilbert Acres. Subdivision recorded in PB 39/64
1662/283
- February 1980 Eleanor W. Bowling and Mildred W. Deaton to Michael J. Sullivan and James C. Lorenzi. "Part of Assington" and "Calf Stick" containing in aggregate 111 acres.
1273/501
- June 1980** Personal Representatives of Estate of John A. Wathan to Eleanor W. Bowling and Mildred W. Deaton. Being the rest and residue of the same land acquired by John Wathan from Mary Wathan in 1924, WMA 42/626 **also rest and reside of land acquired from Ferdinand Cooksey in 1926 WMA 45/689**
725/88
- July 1974 Will of John A. Wathan
GCW 37/174
- August 1926 **Ferdinand C. Cooksey to John A. Wathan "Part of Assington" and "Calf Stick" 115 acres**
689
- October 1924 Mary F. Wathan to John A. Wathan. Land of the late Thomas A. Wathan
John R. Wathan to Thomas A. Wathan, 1897 **JST 9/366**
Frances Edelen to Thomas A. Wathan, 1898 **BGS 9/407**
Entire tract further described in deed from J. Lee Wathan to Thomas A. Wathan in 1898 **BGS 9/408**
"Part of Assington" and "Calf Stick" containing 58 acres.
42/626
- February 1910 Will of Thomas A. Wathan **CHP 19/411**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No.CH-717

Section 9 Page 1

Wathan Farmhouse
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

Major Bibliographic References:

Brown, Jack D., et al. Charles County, Maryland, A History. Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, La Plata, Maryland.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. The History of Charles County, Maryland. La Plata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

Date: 7/2001

North arrow:



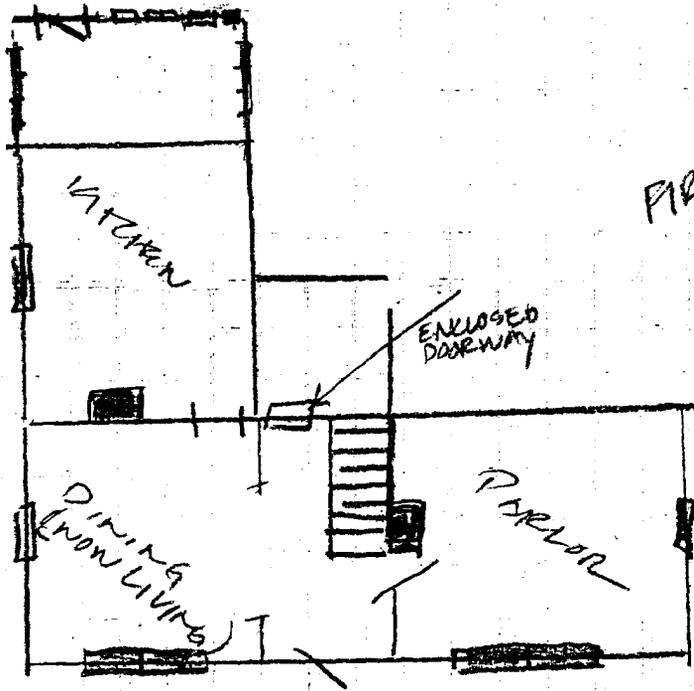
Name: WATHAN FARMHOUSE

Address: 9610 PENNS HILL ROAD

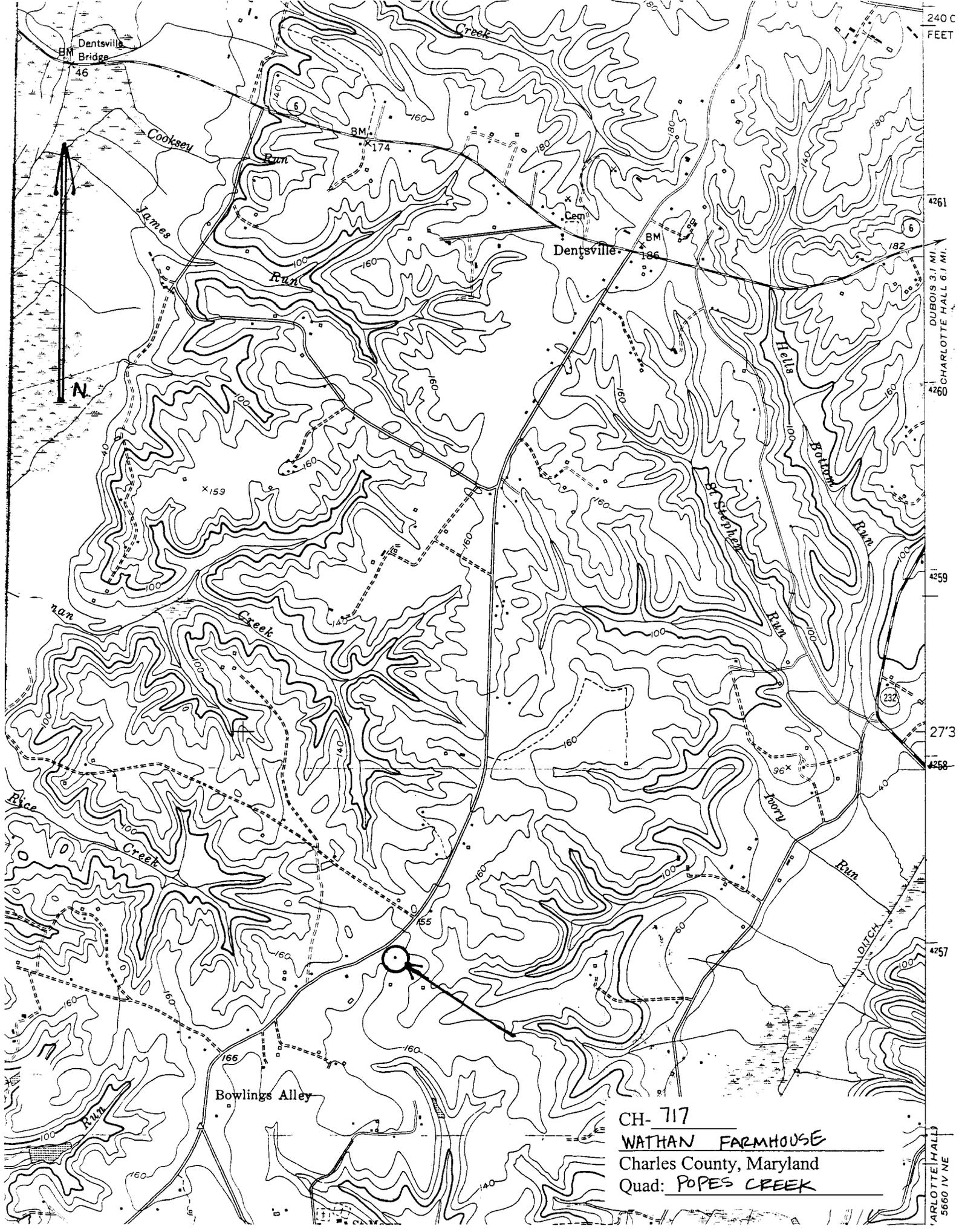
CH - 717

Charles County, Maryland

DENTSVILLE Vicinity



FIRST
FLOOR
PLAN



240 C
FEET

4261

DUBOIS 3.1 MI.

CHARLOTTE HALL 6.1 MI.

4260

4259

27'3

4258

4257

ARLOTTE HALL
5660 IV NE

CH- 717
WATHAN FARMHOUSE
Charles County, Maryland
Quad: POPES CREEK



CH-717

WATHAN FARMHOUSE
CHARLES CO, MD

C. CURREY

8/2001

MID SHPO

FRONT ELEVATION

1 of 4



CH-717

WATHAN FARMHOUSE

CHARLES CO MD

C. CURREY

8/2001

MD SHPO

PEAR ELEVATIONS 20F4



CH-717

WATHAN FARMHOUSE

CHARLES CO, MD

C. CURREY

8/2001

MD SHPO

STAIR NEWEL

30F4



CH 717

WATHAN FARMHOUSE

CHARLES CO, MD

C. CURREY

8/2001

MD SHPO

KITCHEN, LOOKING E

40F4