

- The following National Register of Historic Places form was prepared for inventory documentation purposes only; the property has not been nominated to the National Register.
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Maryland Historical Trust/ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

MHT Inventory No. _____

MHT Computer No. _____

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. For instructions, see the Trust publication National Register Application Guidelines. Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Helen L. Smith Property

other names _____

2. Location

street & number 5526 Old National Pike

 not for publication

city, town Frederick

 vicinity

state Maryland

code _____

county Frederick

code _____

zip 21703

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
2	_____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. Ownership

Helen L. Smith

5526 Old National Pike

Frederick, MD 21703

 See Continuation Sheet.

5. Reserved (leave this space blank)

Submit completed applications to:

National Register Administration
 Maryland Historical Trust
 100 Community Place
 Crownsville, Maryland 21032-2023

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Domestic/single dwelling

Commerce/Trade/professional

Commerce/Trade/professional

7. Description

Architectural Classifications (enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Other/Vernacular

foundations stone

walls weatherboard (German siding)

roof asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

The Helen L. Smith Property complex is located on the north side of U.S. Route 40A on the east side of Braddock Mountain. The buildings face south. The complex consists of a two story, three bay balloon frame L-shaped house, covered with German siding, an adjacent frame summer kitchen converted to artist's studio, and a gable roofed frame shed. The buildings appear to date from the 1870s. The summer kitchen and the rear kitchen wing of the main house each have an exterior stone chimney base with a brick flue above. The summer kitchen has been used since approximately 1940 by Helen Smith as her studio.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The main house has a central entrance, with windows on either side. The door is surrounded by a mid-20th century Colonial Revival style pediment and trim. Windows have six over six light sash. Upper story windows at the front have four light side-sliding sash. Front windows have paneled shutters with single panels. Other windows with shutters have louvers.

The rear wing has a two story recessed porch along its east side. The porch is treated like interior space with a double hung sash window in its north wall. It is supported at the upper level with square posts and four horizontal rails.

The interior of the house was re-designed by Helen Smith in 1940 after she purchased the property. The front portion of the house is now a sitting area, although it appears to have had at one time at least a partial central hallway. The sitting room has a fireplace in the west wall with a mantelpiece with a molded architrave surrounding the fireplace opening. The mantelpiece dates from the 1830s and is not original to this house. A staircase ascends along the north wall of the front section. The staircase has a turned newel, rounded hand rail and turned balusters. It appears to have been relocated.

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Also in the front section of the house is the kitchen, located in the northwest corner. The kitchen consists of an intact enamel and stainless steel "Geneva" kitchen dating from the 1940s. It includes the sink and drainboard, base units and suspended cupboard units, one a corner cupboard with side whatnot shelves with stainless steel trim.

The rear wing contains the dining room, which was probably originally the kitchen. There is a fireplace in the north wall with segmentally arched brick firebox. It is surrounded by a mantel with a shelf supported by curved brackets. The fireplace is large enough to have accommodated cooking activities. This room has an entrance onto the recessed double porch along the east side of the wing. There is a built-in cupboard in the southeast corner to which Helen Smith has applied decorative painting.

The second floor is divided into three bedrooms and a bath. One bedroom is in the rear wing, two are at the front of the house and the bath is above the kitchen.

Just east of the house is a frame summer kitchen which was converted to an artist's studio. Inside, it has a fireplace with a brick-lined firebox, apparently modified, and knotty-pine paneled walls. A projecting bay window was added in the east gable end. The chimney placement in the summer kitchen is unusual, in the north long wall, instead of in the gable end wall as was typical. The exterior stone firebox is topped with a brick flue. On the interior the stone firebox has been reduced in size by the use of brick infill to reduce the size of the fireplace from its cooking function, to a room heating fireplace. To the east of the fireplace are built in bookshelves. The rest of the space is devoted to work space and storage area, filled with Helen Smith's paintings, works of art and memorabilia from her long career. The studio is functional year around, warmed by a radiator extending from the main house's oil heating system.

The house and studio are in good condition. Nearly all of the alterations and modifications were made by the artist and owner, Helen Smith shortly after she purchased the property in 1940. Very few alterations have been made since.

8. Statement of Significance

the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Art

1940 - C. 1990

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Significant Person

Helen L. Smith

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

This property consisting of a house, summer kitchen-turned-studio, and shed in a landscaped yard is significant under criterion B for its association with Helen L. Smith, 102-year-old Frederick artist. Ms. Smith purchased the property in 1940, converted the summer kitchen to her studio and remodeled the interior of the house. Smith's work is well known throughout Frederick County and central Maryland. A graduate of the Maryland Institute of Art in 1916 she taught art at Hood College before opening her own shop in Frederick in 1925. She was a leader in developing the commercial potential of her talent. She has been awarded honorary degrees from Mount Saint Mary's College and Hood College as well as having received recognition from numerous state and local organizations. The house and studio which have been home and workplace to Helen Smith since 1940 are the best representations of her long and productive career. The property is an example of a vernacular dwelling complex from the 1870s. Retaining most original exterior features, and remodeled on the interior in 1940 with a remarkably intact Geneva kitchen, it reflects the personal style and taste of Helen Smith.

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Born in 1894, Helen Smith pioneered the business of art in Frederick. After teaching art at Hood College for 8 years she decided to open her own shop in 1925. Through her "Pallettette" shop, the first gift shop to open in Frederick, she exposed the farming community of Frederick to all kinds of arts and crafts. Her products included paintings in water color, oil, pencil and ink as well as eglomise and china. She became an expert in the painting of coat of arms, of which she has produced more than 10,000. She produced the same amount of miniatures and silhouettes sometimes creating three generations in one family throughout her long career.

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She also produced thousands of paintings as well as lamp shades and trays, decorated furniture, tin work and jewelry. Some of her large paintings include the eight by ten foot "Justice" commissioned in 1924 to hang behind the judge's chair in the old court house. She restored this painting in 1985, when she was 91 years old. It now hangs between the first and second floor of city hall. This is perhaps her most famous work, and was commissioned by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Several of her large religious paintings are visible in the Masonic Temple, and several churches in Frederick County. The Masonic Temple painting was completed in 1923. A church painting in Burkettsville was done in 1943, a project for which she had to go before the Rationing Board to acquire 12 gallons of gas to drive to Burkettsville to do the painting. Church paintings in Mt. Pleasant and Unionville were also done in the 1940s.

By producing thousands of portraits, landscapes and representations of buildings in Frederick and the four states surrounding Maryland, Helen has brought a sense of pride and recognition to people and places in this location. Her work has been a significant part of the art history of Frederick County. Her work has also helped to record the history of Frederick County through the illustration of landmarks and family history. Helen Smith's art included many forms from paintings to decorated furniture and jewelry. She is regarded as the first woman to make a living as an artist in Frederick.

Helen Smith attended the Maryland Institute of Art from 1912 to 1916, receiving a degree in "Commercial Art." In August, 1996, two representatives from the school came to Frederick to present Ms. Smith with a degree in Fine Arts. She is the oldest living graduate of the Maryland Institute, and their most famous alumnae in central and western Maryland. The school, therefore, made this special effort to honor her.

She has been given honorary degrees by Mount St. Mary's College, Hood College, recognized by the Maryland Institute of Art as an outstanding alumnae. Mount St. Mary's College in Emmittsburg conferred an honorary degree on May 6, 1989. At this time they organized a retrospective show of Helen Smith's art work as part of the celebration. Hood College conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Fine Arts in June, 1989. Others who have honored her include the Frederick Business and Professional Women, the Frederick Civic Club, the Frederick J.C.s, the Frederick Art Club, the Zonta Club, the Tasker's Chance Garden Club, the D.A.R., the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Frederick Commission for Women, and the Delaplaine Center for the Arts. The Delaplaine Center for the Arts named Helen Smith Honorary Chairman of their fund-raising campaign in 1993. The Center's galleries were devoted to Helen Smith's works in January, 1994. This was part of a community celebration of her 100th birthday. Also in 1994, the Historical Society of Frederick County, City Hall and the Hodgson Beneficial Library of Hood College mounted shows of Helen Smith's work. An endowment has been set up with the Frederick Community Foundations, Inc. in honor of Helen Smith to provide scholarships for tuition for children to take art classes at the Delaplaine Center. One of her paintings and her bibliography were submitted to the National Museum of Women in the Arts by the Frederick Women's Civil Club when they were asked to respond to a request for an outstanding woman artist in Frederick County. In her 101st year she was the Grand Marshall for Frederick's 250th birthday parade. One of the most significant events of Helen Smith's career was in January, 1994 when the community came together to

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celebrate her life and her contributions on the occasion of her 100th birthday. About 400 people gathered at Hood College despite cold and snowy weather to honor Helen Smith.

RESOURCE EVALUATION:

As the place where Helen Smith lived and worked for more than half a century of her career, this property is the most appropriate representation of her career. It was here that her work reached its maturity and where much of it was produced. As a woman artist who achieved financial success, she developed her art into a commercial enterprise that reached its peak while she was in residence here. Although Helen Smith still paints at age 102, her time of major production has ended with an impressively large body of work spanning more than three quarters of a century.

The house, studio and landscaped grounds reflect the hand and mind of Helen Smith. While leaving the vernacular buildings intact at the exteriors, she rearranged the interiors to her liking. Among the most notable features is the ca. 1940 Moderne kitchen which remains in place. Otherwise, the buildings reflect regional vernacular patterns of the late 19th century. They are part of a community called Fairview on the eastern slope of Braddock Mountain. Unimposing modest frame dwellings like this one are often not recorded and yet form an important part of the vernacular scene. Although the buildings in the complex appear to date from the 1870s, the ownership history of the property dates back to the mid 18th century. Interestingly, from 1821 to 1832 the land on which these buildings stand was owned by John C. and Barbara Fritchie. Barbara Fritchie was later made famous by John Greenleaf Whittler's poem inspired by the Confederate occupation of Frederick in 1862.

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Maryland

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance 1870-1930 A.D.

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Social/Educational/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

Domestic/single dwelling
Domestic/secondary structure

Known Design Source: Vernacular

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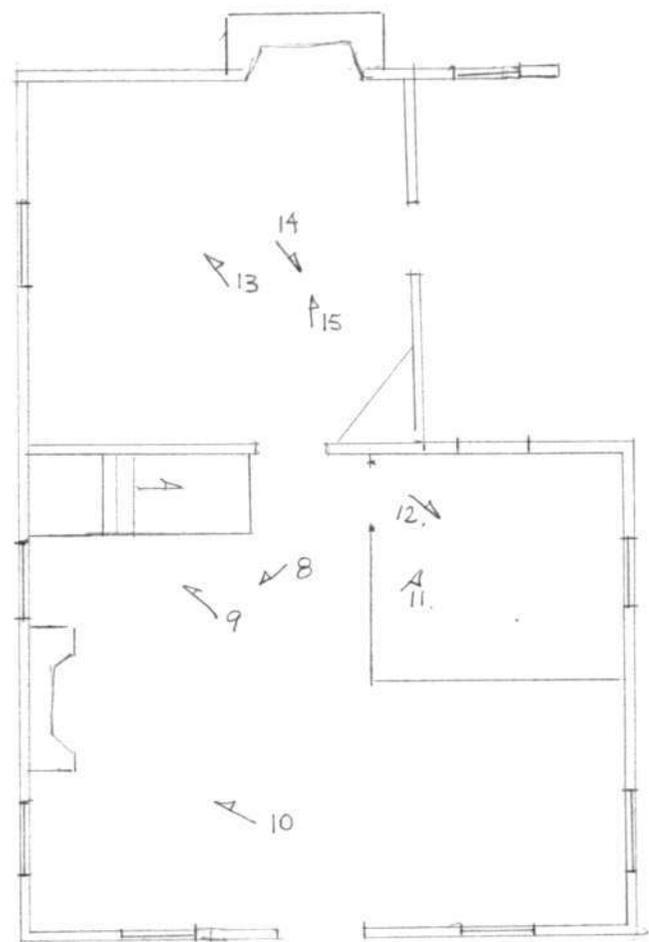
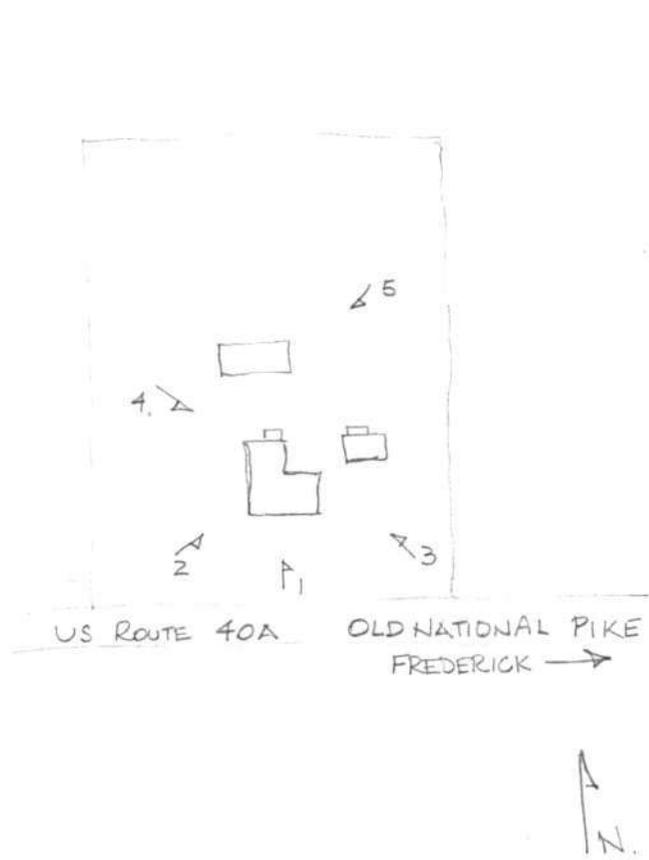
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated area consists of approximately one acre of the 15-acre property. This acreage contains the house, studio, shed and their immediate landscaped grounds. The property is defined within a 200' square of land bordered by route 40-A on the south and the property line for the adjoining property to the south, a grange hall.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The property contains the land that has been immediately associated with the buildings, throughout the property's association with Helen Smith.



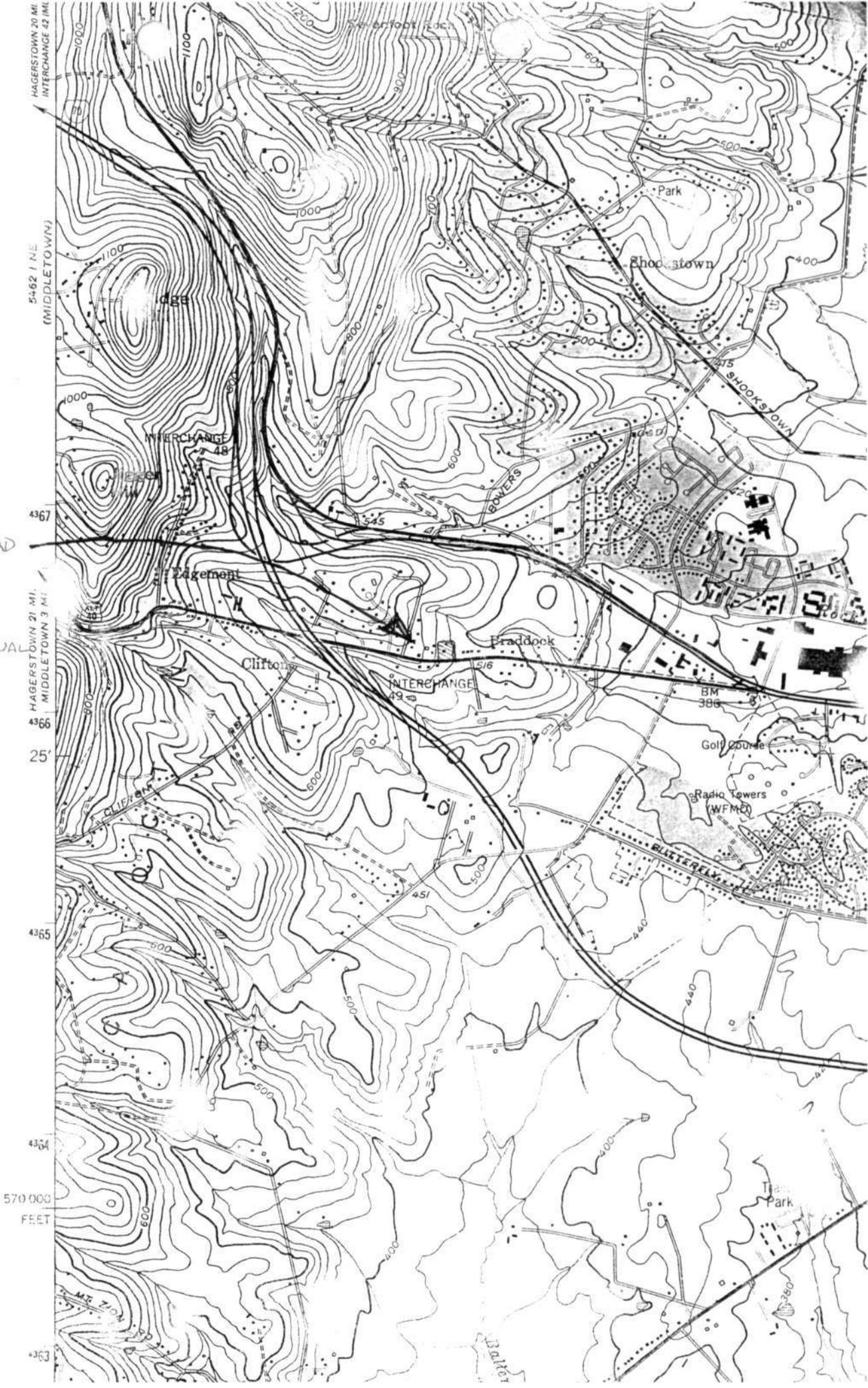
HELEN SMITH PROPERTY
 5526 OLD NATIONAL PIKE
 FREDERICK, MD

SKETCHED FLOOR PLAN AND SITE PLAN. NOT TO SCALE
 P₁ PHOTO VIEW AND NUMBER.

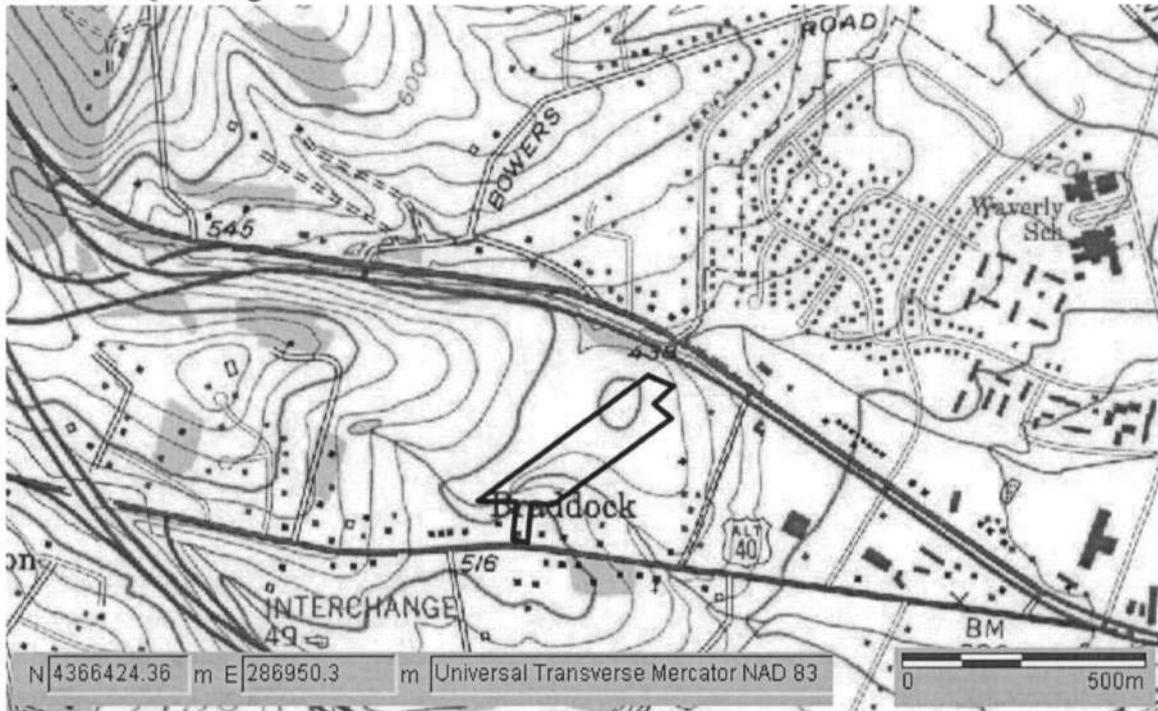
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PSR 9/96

F-3-152
FREDERICK QUAD
HELEN SMITH
PROPERTY
5526 OLD NATIONAL
PIKE
FREDERICK, MD

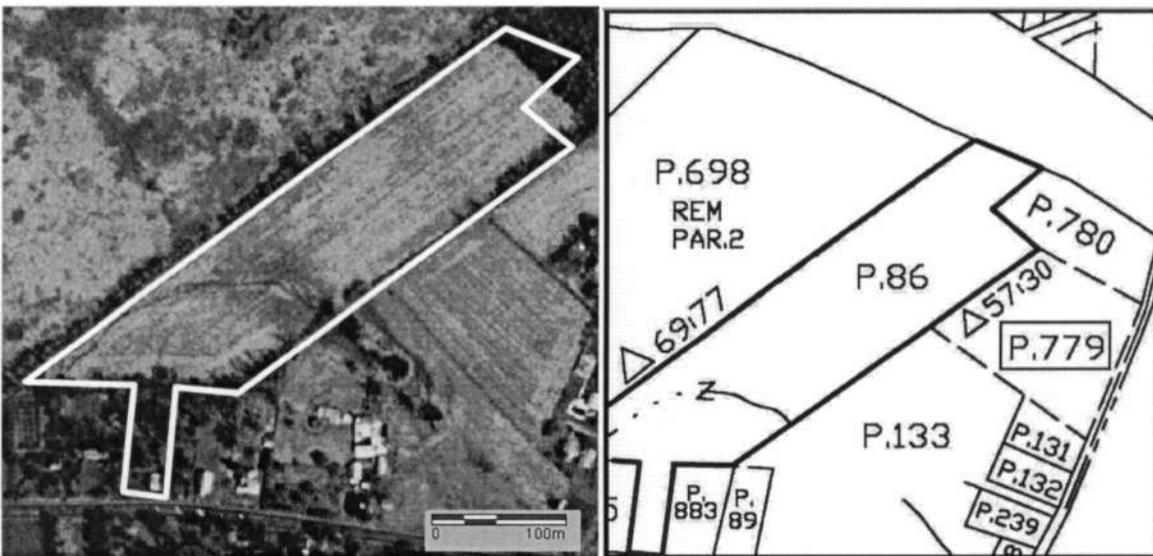


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 Helen L. Smith House and Studio
 5526 Old National Pike (Alt. 40), Frederick
 Frederick Quadrangle



1993-95 Aerial Photo

Tax Map 66, p. 86





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Helen Smith Property
5526 Old National Pike
Frederick, Frederick Co., MD
photo by P. Reed

4/96

neg loc. P. Reed + Assoc. Hagerstown MD
Front (south) Elevation

Helen Smith Property
5526 Old National Pike
Frederick, Frederick Co., MD
photo by P. Reed

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NE view

#2



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Helen Smith Property
5526 Old National Pike
Frederick, Frederick Co. MD

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NW view

#3

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Helen Smith Property
5526 Old National Pike
Frederick, Frederick Co. MD

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SE view

#4