

Capsule Summary

Survey # HA-1717

Approximate date 1920

Street Address 501 Churchville Road

Town, State Bel Air, Maryland 21014

private , public

The McComas-Hoza House built in 1920 stands on a knoll shaded by large trees and surrounded by grassy park land and cultivated gardens. The main house, constructed of dark igneous rock, removed from the hill during construction of the basement, presents a low profile with only 1½ stories apparent from the front, north elevation. The slate belcast hipped roof helps to blend the house as a whole with the surrounding environment, in the style of Frank Lloyd Wright. The tenant house, sheds, and barn are hidden behind the hill, allowing an unobstructed view from the main house, as well as maintaining the overall low profile.

The property is significant under criterion C for its association with the architect Alfred Cookman Leach who worked in central Maryland during the early 20th century. Leach's innovative design (apparently inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright) created for the McComas-Hoza House, "Stoneleigh," was unusual in this time period for residential buildings in Bel Air's new suburban neighborhoods. Traditional residential designs were being built in the rapidly growing subdivisions being developed in Bel Air in the 1920s. The original 45 acres surrounding the building complex of the McComas-Hoza House also set it apart from local, contemporary dwellings.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. HA-1717

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic McComas-Hoza House (preferred), "Stoneleigh"

and/or common Rockfield Manor

2. Location

street & number 501 Churchville Rd., State Route 22 not for publicationcity, town Bel Air vicinity of _____ congressional district

state Maryland 21014 county Harford

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Town of Bel Air

street & number 39 Hickory Avenue telephone no.: 410-638-4540

city, town Bel Air state and zip code Maryland 21014

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harford County Courthouse Liber 02445

street & number Folio 0513

city, town Bel Air state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Survey No. HA-1717

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date of move _____

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

The McComas-Hoza House built in 1920 stands on a knoll shaded by large trees and surrounded by grassy park land and cultivated gardens. The main house, constructed of dark igneous rock, removed from the hill during construction of the basement, presents a low profile with only 1½ stories apparent from the front, north elevation. The slate belcast hipped roof helps to blend the house as a whole with the surrounding environment, in the style of Frank Lloyd Wright. The tenant house, sheds, and barn are hidden behind the hill, allowing an unobstructed view from the main house, as well as maintaining the overall low profile.

The main house is a 6 bay, 1½ story building of uncoursed rubble-stone construction. A large, slate and grass terrace leads to the originally open entranceway, now enclosed with a central, modern, beveled and leaded glass door, with beveled side lights, and identical beveled, leaded glass panels on either side with side lights. Five heavy brackets project above the entranceway. The windows on the 1st story are 8/1 sash in the central section of the house, 8 light casement windows on the east end, and louvered on the west end enclosed porch. The slate, hipped roof is belcast, with a wide overhang, creating a strong horizontal line. The wide cornice band further enhances the horizontal line. A jerkinhead cross-gable extends directly above the entranceway and continues back to the south elevation. The gable is finished with rough stucco and a set of triple windows. A single dormer, with 6 light casement windows, extends from the main roof on either side of the central gable. A single stone interior chimney is present at the west peak of the hipped roof. The porch on the west end has stone pillar supports and is enclosed with brick and glass.

The south (rear) elevation of the main house has an original 5 bay T-extension of stone with a flat metal roof. A modern one room kitchen addition has been attached, extending the south elevation. It is covered with wood-grained aluminum siding and a continuation of the flat metal roof. Above the original stone extension is the south extension of the jerkinhead cross-gable. The gable has been covered with aluminum siding, the roof is slate. A glass double door and pressure-treated lumber deck and stairs to the ground have been recently added to the south gable. Dormers matching those on the north elevation extend also from the roof on the south elevation.

The east elevation of the main house extends outward from the hill allowing access to the basement level, on the north side a wood garage door entrance, on the south side a modern door, surrounded by siding(it appears to have been formerly also a garage entrance). Both entrances are accessed by the macadam driveway.

The interior of the main house begins with the recessed entrance beyond the central beveled glass doors. The interior entrance doors are 8 light french doors opening into a central reception hall. Straight ahead is a dining room within the south extension of the house. The east interior wall has been recently removed opening the room to a smaller, former bedroom in the southeast corner of the extension. A hallway running east from the central reception area leads to the master bedroom on the north side and a bathroom at the east end. Access to the former bedroom (now opened to the dining room) is from the south side of the hall.

From the central hall turning west is the living room with the only fireplace in the house on the west interior wall. On either side of the fireplace are French doors, with three large panes of glass

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. HA-1717

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Section Number 7 Page 2

per door, leading to the now enclosed porch, or Florida room. From the south wall of the living room an opening leads to a small room in the southwest corner of the extension. This is the only room in the house with a chair rail (see photo detail) and may have originally been the kitchen. A door in the interior east wall of the small room leads to the stair hall. Directly across (facing east) is a door leading to the dining room, to the north is the stair case leading to the second level and the entrance hall, south is the one room addition, a modern kitchen and breakfast nook.

The living room, dining room, and central hall have a cavetto molding along the ceiling line. All baseboard and trim is uniform throughout the first story. Doors are single recessed panel, or french doors .

The stairs run southward, up a half-story from the southwest corner of the entrance/reception hall to a landing with a south-facing window and a window seat. The stairs then turn north another half-story to the second level within the hipped roof and cross-gable. The stairs enter into the southwest corner of an upper level central hall. To the west is a single room with dormers in the north and south walls and a closet and separate storage room in the west wall. North from the upper central hall is a room within the north gable. To the east is a bathroom, and to the south a room within the south gable, from which modern glass doors lead to the outside upper deck with stairs leading to the patio and gardens below. The door from the interior stairs has a four panels and all others on the upper level have five horizontal recessed panels. Trim and baseboard is uniform with that on the first story.

The basement of the main house is finished as a housekeeper's apartment, with an enclosed furnace room. The exposed bedrock on which (and from which) the house is built, is apparent on the floor of the furnace and storage rooms in the basement. Several support posts in the basement are also set directly on exposed bedrock.

To the southeast of the main house is the tenant house, a 1½ story frame building, side gabled with a full length porch overhang. The front (north) elevation has 3 bays, 6/6 sash windows and a four light, half-glass door. The east and south elevations expose the basement story with an entrance from the south. A 2 story, shed roof, enclosed porch addition is located on the east elevation. The house is covered with vinyl siding, the roof is asphalt. The central chimney is stuccoed, as is the foundation.

Directly south of the tenant house and further down the hill are a frame chicken coop with beaded board siding, and a garage shed, also with beaded board siding and a poured concrete foundation. The bank barn, in the southeast corner of the property, is sawn timber framed with board siding and a metal roof. The foundation is poured concrete. The lower level of the barn has several animal stalls and equipment space, accessed from the east elevation. The upper, storage level is accessed from the west, bank elevation where a central entrance is located in a projecting gable. The southwest corner includes a corn crib, the northwest corner has a 6 fixed-light window. The gambrel roof is sheathed with sheet metal, the north end has a 6/6 sash window, the south end window is boarded over. A central round metal ventilator extends from the roof.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. HA-1717

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Section Number 7 Page 3

The entire 5 acre property is surrounded by a city-owned park of approximately 40 acres which includes cultivated gardens, walking paths, and grassy areas. The immediate grounds of the main house are landscaped with large old trees, gardens, stone walls, slate paths and terraces, and a fountain.

8. Significance

Survey No. HA-1717

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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 1920

Builder/Architect Alfred Cookman Leach

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or

Applicable Exceptions: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

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

The McComas-Hoza House and property is significant under criterion C for its association with the architect Alfred Cookman Leach who worked in the central Maryland region during the early 20th century. Leach's innovative design (apparently inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright) created for the McComas-Hoza House, "Stoneleigh," was unusual in this time period for residential buildings in Bel Air's new suburban neighborhoods. Traditional residential designs were being built in the rapidly growing subdivisions being developed in Bel Air in the 1920s. The original 45 acres surrounding the building complex of the McComas-Hoza House also set it apart from local, contemporary dwellings. The research done by Christopher Weeks in 1997, entitled "Stoneleigh: A Historical and Architectural Report," fully addresses the architectural significance of the McComas-Hoza House and property, and will form a large part of the following statement of significance.

In 1920, following the death of Frances Fulford, a large land-holder in and around the town of Bel Air, Charles H. McComas, a native of Bel Air living in Baltimore, purchased 45½ acres on which to build a house. The first quarter of the 20th century was a time of fast growth in Bel Air. While the town center became more established with a movie theater and and A&P, three subdivisions were developed; first Fulford Park in 1922 (also a part of the Frances Fulford holdings), Ingleside in 1923, and Kenmore in 1924. The building boom of these simple, traditional subdivision dwellings made the construction of the McComas-Hoza House, called "Stoneleigh" by Charles McComas, "quite unlike anything built in Bel Air up to that time" or apparently since.¹

McComas was employed as an attorney in Baltimore, where he lived with his wife and children. It was in Baltimore, while singing in the Mount Vernon Place Church choir, that McComas met Alfred Cookman Leach, a local architect and noted tenor soloist. When McComas bought the 45 acres in Bel Air, he chose as architect his acquaintance "Cook" Leach to design his home. Weeks' report describes the development of Leach's architectural career:

Leach gained his training in the fine arts at the Maryland Institute, College of Art. He began his architectural career in 1901, in partnership with William Hanson Hodges.

¹Christopher Weeks, "Stoneleigh: A Historical and Architectural Report," Town of Bel Air: Bel Air, Maryland, 1997, p. 2.

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. HA-1717

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Section Number 8 Page 2

One of their first projects was the Maryland Line Monument at Mount Royal Avenue near Cathedral Street (just west of the Lyric); Hodges & Leach designed the neoclassical column for the monument (purportedly reviewed and approved by Stanford White) and sculptors A.L. vanderBergen and William Boyd provided the symbolic female figure which crowns it, laurel wreath in hand. In 1903 Leach dissolved his relationship with Hodges and entered into partnership with Francis F. Tormey, Sr. That firm designed a Sunday School for the highly important Orchard Street Church, a Baltimore Landmark...When the Hodges-Leach partnership dissolved in 1908, Leach began a solo practice, which continued until his death in 1933.²

On his own, Leach designed several bank buildings in the neoclassical style, and large commercial buildings in and around Baltimore(see Appendix from Weeks report). Weeks describes these designs as "good, solid, workmanlike structures."³ The traditional design of Leach's work previous to the McComas project makes the innovative design of Stoneleigh all the more significant.

The beautiful and somewhat radical design for Stoneleigh grew out of the landscape on which it was constructed. Originally designed by Leach as a frame house, excavation of the hill revealed "solid igneous rock about 100 feet in diameter" which had to be blasted out for the basement.⁴ Apparently the native stone inspired Leach to experiment with the "prairie style" of architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, the first of its kind in Harford County. Weeks describes Wright's philosophy:

"Wright believed in an organic architecture that united form and function and reflected the interdependence between man and nature. 'A building should appear to grow easily from its site,' he wrote, 'and be shaped to harmonize with its surroundings.' Wright's prairie houses (so called because he loved the 'great simplicity' of the American prairie and noted that 'the horizontal brings us serenity and peace') display broad, sloping roofs usually with prominent but low chimneys. Balconies and terraces extend in as many directions as possibly, tangible reminders of Wright's desire to freely interweave exterior and interior space, to bring nature into the design of the building."⁵

All of these elements are present in the McComas-Hoza House design. Weeks goes on:

"This thinking permeates every inch of Stoneleigh. The local stone literally ties the house to its site...The architect designed an open, recessed entrance so as to

²Weeks, p. 3.

³Ibid, p. 3.

⁴Ibid, p. 4.

⁵Weeks, p.4-5.

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. HA-1717

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Section Number 8 Page 3

give the feeling that even after one had entered the dwelling, that is, gotten within the building's shell, one was still outside. The large, open porch to the west [now enclosed], which takes up about one-fourth of the square footage of the ground story, certainly reinforces this....That Leach gave the house so many breeze-catching casement windows also seems significant.

The house's low massing-it seems to have risen directly from the stone knoll-makes it hug the earth. The broad, sheltering roof sweeps down to minimize the effect of height-the building doesn't read like a three-story house-emphasizing the horizontality Wright so loved."⁶

Other elements Weeks notes that are in the style of Wright include the "intersecting axes" of the east/west bedroom hall to the living room fireplace and porch, intercepted by the north/south gables; and the flow of the rooms:

"Moving from room to room in the house, one becomes aware not of a series of discrete rooms but of a series of interpenetrating spaces. The front "porch" flows into the entrance hall, which flows into the living area which (via large glass doors) flows (or flowed) out onto the cavernous porch; the living space also flows into the telephone room; the service area flows into the dining room. The only truly private spaces were the bedrooms and bathrooms..."⁷

Wright's plan, according to H. Allen Brooks, was that "except where privacy was required in the bedrooms and bath, the walls and doors were eliminated. The remaining space, far from being left open as vast area, was subtly and ingeniously defined in such a way as to establish specific uses for various parts.... It is precisely this concept of interior space which was Wright's major contribution in the cause of architecture."⁸

The landscape architecture surrounding the McComas-Hoza House is also an example of the use of the ideas of Frank Lloyd Wright by Leach and McComas:

"The low stone walls behind the house create spaces which are physically and visually linked to the interior of the house (the repeated use of stone accentuates this interconnection). Significantly, the walls are high enough to define spaces, but low enough to allow views out to the fields (which originally had steers and sheep grazing in them) and, ultimately, to the surrounding woods. Thus one is led effortlessly from

⁶Ibid., p. 5.

⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁸In Weeks, p. 6, from H. Allen Brooks, "Frank Lloyd Wright" His Concepts and Career," in Terry Morton, ed., The Pope-Leighey House (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1969), pp. 35-40.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. HA-1717

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Section Number 8 Page 4

the interior, to the outdoor spaces close to the house, to tamed (farmed) open space, and then out to untamed nature. The simple landscape in front furthers this. Important, too, was the retention of existing trees and the addition of a few native trees such as pin oaks. Everything possible was done to tie the house and its grounds to the community."⁹

The McComas-Hoza House is beautifully tied to the landscape, and therefore the community, using the innovative Prairie Style of Frank Lloyd Wright. Skillfully designed by local architect, Alfred Cookman Leach, using local material, and retaining the natural surrounding landscape, Stoneleigh represents a significant architectural example from Bel Air in the 1920s.

Leach had numerous commissions in the Baltimore area in the early 20th century. He was active in the period from 1901-1930. The majority of his work seems to have been banks, schools and churches. Stoneleigh, dating from 1920 was created in the latter part of his career.

⁹Weeks, p. 6.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. HA-1717

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Section Number 8 Page 5

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Suburban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Residence/Single Dwelling
Agriculture/Family Farm

Known Design Source: Alfred Cookman Leach

Continuation Sheet, HA-1717

#9 Bibliography

Weeks, Christopher, "Stoneleigh: A Historical and Architectural Report," Town of Bel Air, Bel Air, Maryland, 1997.

Bibliography from Christopher Weeks report:

Brooks, H. Allen, "Frank Lloyd Wright: His Concepts and Career," in Terry Morton, ed., The Pope-Leighy House. National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C., 1969.

Dorsey, John, and James D. Dilts, A Guide to Baltimore Architecture. Tidewater Publishers, Centreville, 1997.

Larew, Marilyn M., Bel Air: A Cultural and Architectural History. Town of Bel Air, Bel Air, Maryland, 1996.

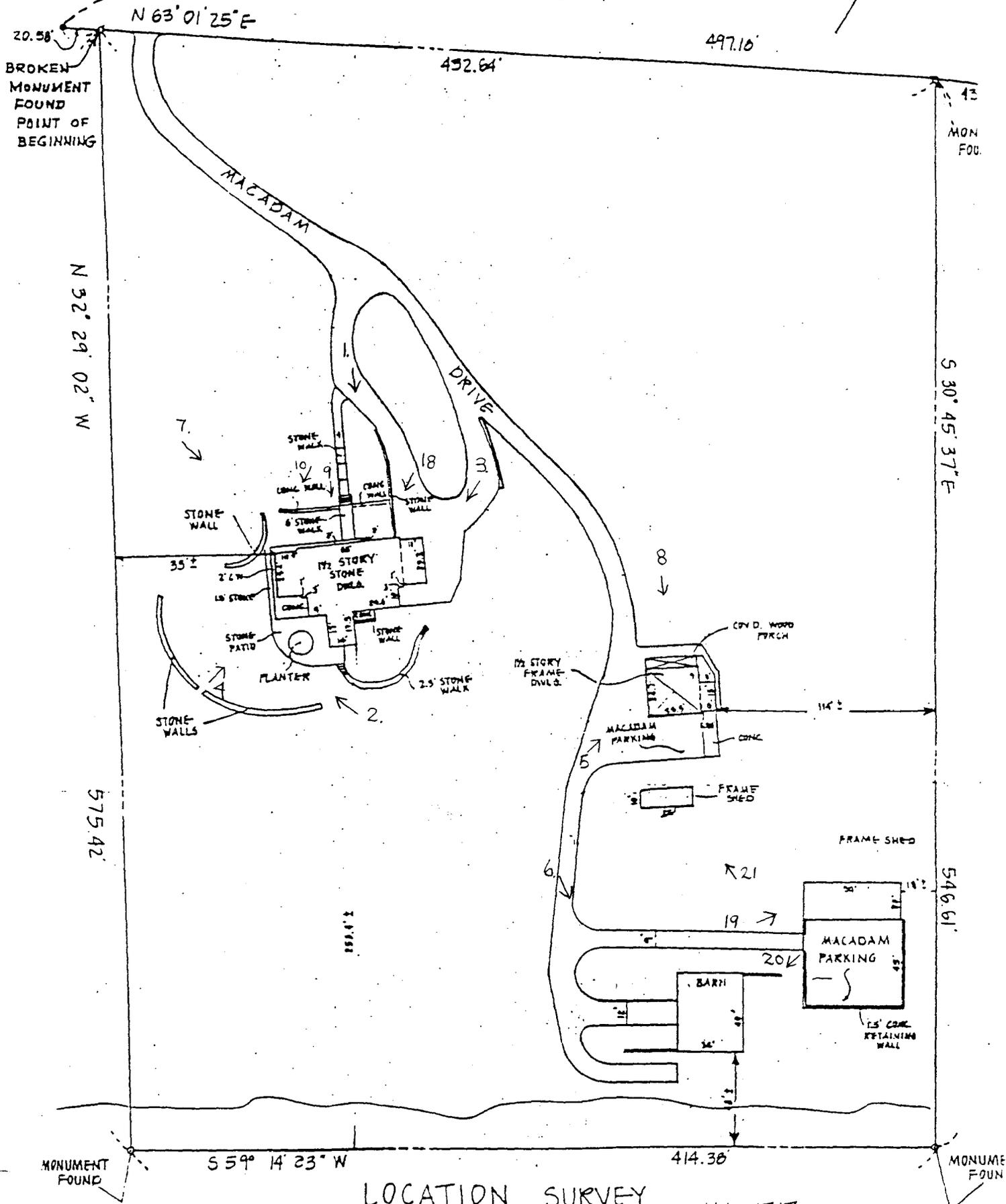
Conversation: C John Sullivan and Christopher Weeks, September 19, 1997.

Interview: Mary Louise Preis and Charles H. McComas, Jr., June 18, 1997.

#10 Continued--Verbal Boundary Description:

The property is bounded on the north by Maryland Route 22 running approximately 432 feet east to a monument, then south 546 feet to a monument, then west 414 feet to a monument, then north 575 feet to the beginning, enclosing a roughly rectangular tract of 5 acres. The main house is located approximately 35 feet east of the western property line, centered between the north and south lines and facing Route 22, along a macadam driveway which leads SE beyond the main house to the tenant house, then south to the sheds and barn at the SE corner of the whole tract. Harford County tax map #0301, parcel #0005, plat #73100.

MD. RTE 22



MCCOMAS-HOZA HOUSE
 501 CHURCHVILLE RD
 BEL AIR, MD
 HARFORD CO.

LOCATION SURVEY

ELECTION DISTRICT N° 3
 HARFORD CO, MD
 SCALE: 1"=50'
 SEPTEMBER 12, 1990

HA-1717

1 ↗ = PHOTO VIEW
 AND NUMBER

HOZA/TOWN PROPERTY

MAIN HOUSE - 1ST FLOOR

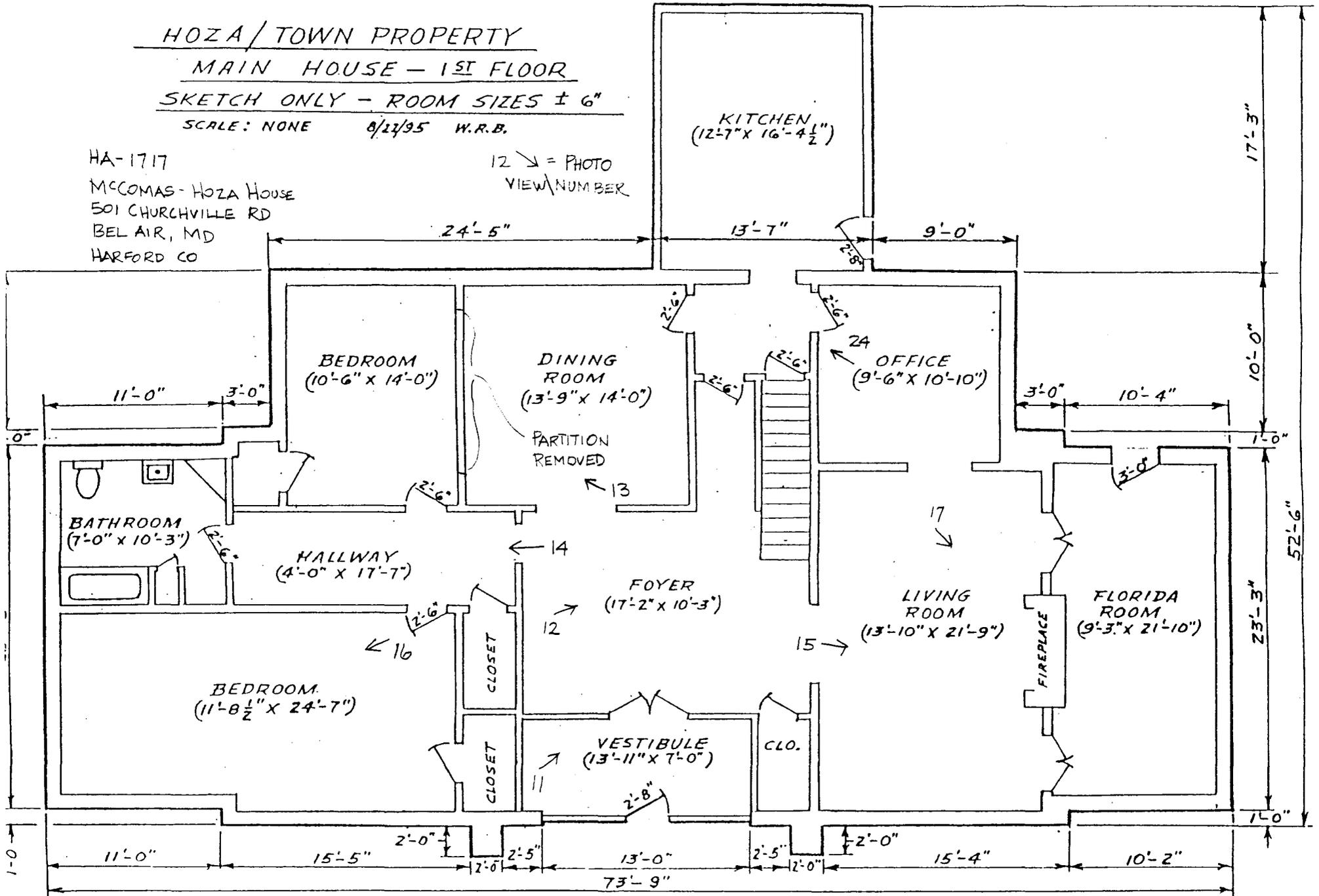
SKETCH ONLY - ROOM SIZES ± 6"

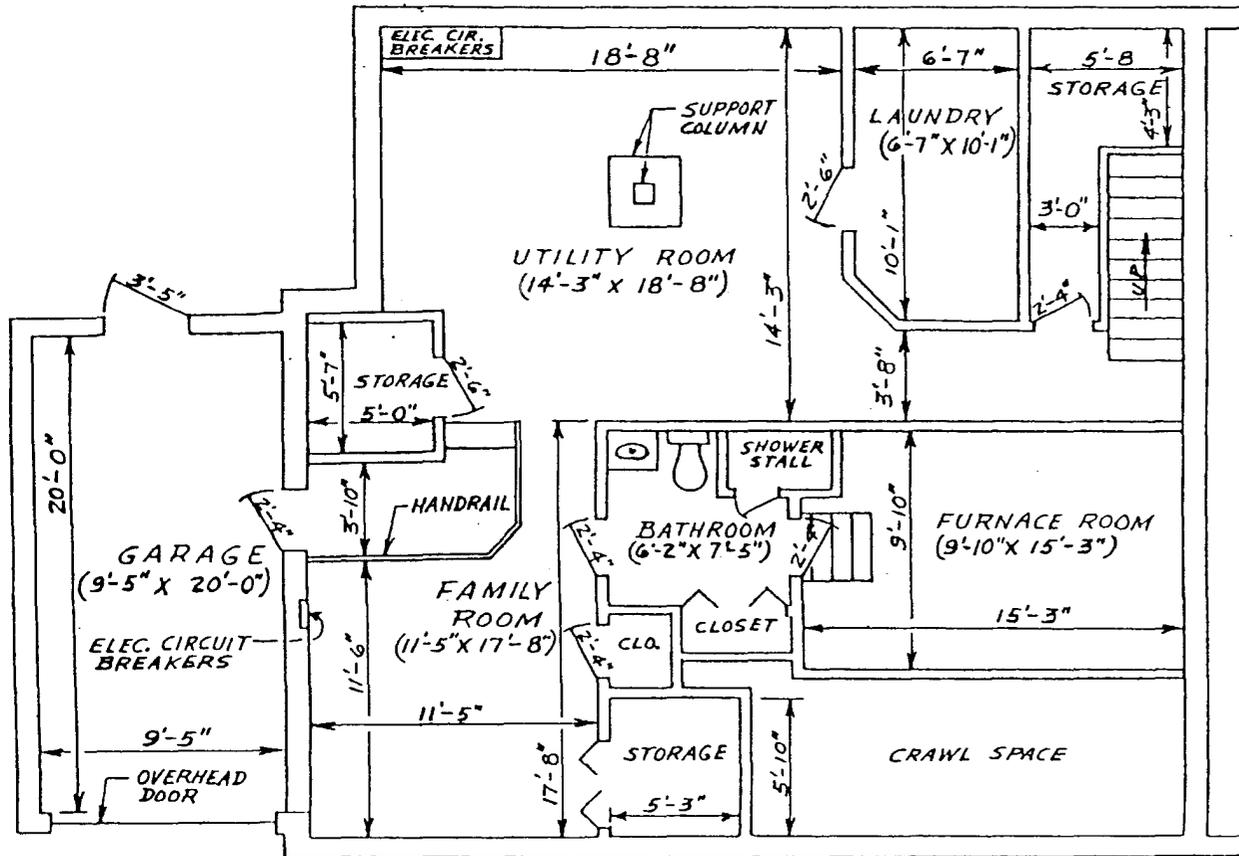
SCALE: NONE 8/24/95 W.R.B.

HA-1717

MCCOMAS-HOZA HOUSE
501 CHURCHVILLE RD
BEL AIR, MD
HARFORD CO

12 ↘ = PHOTO
VIEW/NUMBER





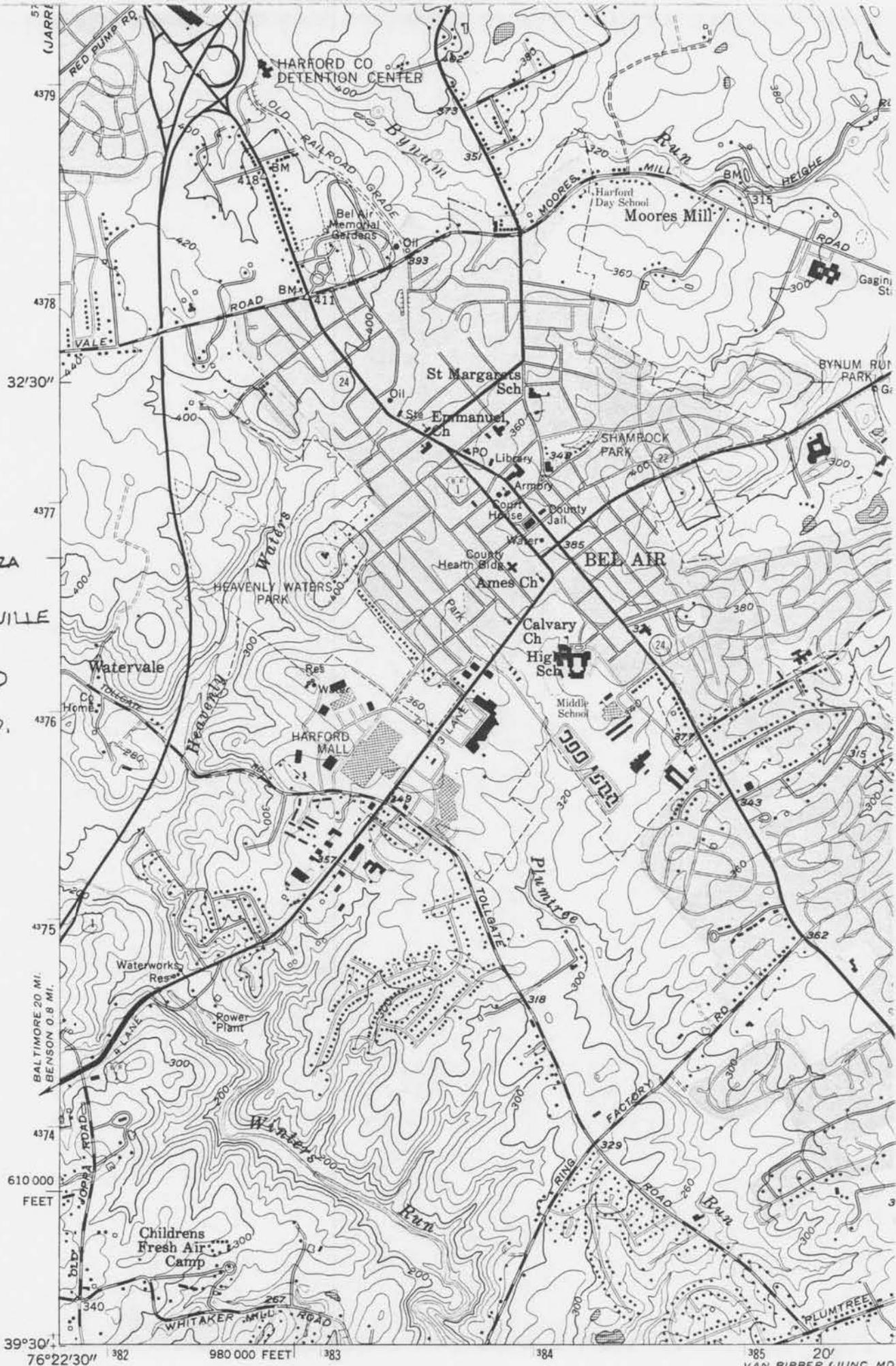
HOZA/TOWN PROPERTY
MAIN HOUSE - BASEMENT
SKETCH ONLY - ROOM SIZES ± 6

SCALE: NONE 12/20/95 W.R.B.

REVISED: 12/12/96

HA-1717
 MCCOMAS - HOZA HOUSE
 501 CHURCHVILLE RD
 BEL AIR, MD
 HARFORD CO.

HA-1717
 MCOMAS-HOZA
 HOUSE
 501 CHURCHVILLE
 ROAD
 BEL AIR, MD
 HARFORD CO.





HA-1717

McComas-Hoza House

Harford Co., Maryland

Paula S. Reed

19 June 1976

Maryland SHPO

11 elevation of main house, S. view

1/10



HA-1717

McCoy's-Hoza Hwy.

Harford Co, Maryland

Paula S. Reed

19 June 1998

Maryland SHPO

NE elev. of main house, SW view

2/10



HA-1717

McComas-Hoza House

Harford Co, Maryland

Paul S. Kent

14 June 1998

Harford SHPC

200 Elizabeth, Harford Co, NE View

3/10



HA-1717

McComas-Hoza House

Harford Co., Maryland

Paula S. Reed

19 June 1993

Maryland SAHO

New Pictorial barn, SE View

4/10



HA-1717

McComas Haza House
Hartford Co. Maryland

Paula S. K...
19 June 1948

19 June 1948

Maryland SHP

No elevation, main house SE view

5/10



— 61 00000 400 000 17. —

HA-1717

Mc Jones's Hoza House
Hoxford Co, Maryland

Paula S. Reed

19 June 1993

Maryland SHPO

Neighborhood, tenant house, S. view

6/10



ROCKFIELD MANOR

ADT

HA-1717

McComas-Hoza House

Hartford Co. Maryland

Paula S. Reed

12 June 1992

Maryland SHPO

detail of entrance, N elevation

main house

7/10



HA-1717

McComas-Hoza House
Harford Co, Maryland

Paula S. Reed

19 June 1998

Maryland SHPO

Main House first floor living room,
nest wall interior, fire place

8/10



HA-1717

McComas-Hoza House
Harford Co Maryland

Paula S Reed

19 June 1998

Maryland SHPO

main house, NE elevation tower level

9/10



HA-1717

McCombs, Hoza House

Harford Co., Maryland

Paula S. Reed

19 June 1978

100' high SHPO

SW elevation shed/garage, NE view

10/10