

K-268

Belle View
Near Rock Hall
c. 1852

Belle View is a closely dated, mid-19th century, frame, vernacular farmhouse. Its 20th century remodeling, however, has greatly diminished what architectural significance it may have had. Perhaps of greater interest is the history of the land on which it stands.

The farm occupies a small section of the 1658 grant of 1500 acres to John Langford, one of the closest allies of Cecilius Calvert. Having immigrated originally to Kent Island from Kent, England in 1637, Langford was most likely granted this tract as a reward for his support of the Calverts evidenced in a pamphlet he authored (1655) in their defense against their Puritan critics. Earlier he had served in the Assembly in the year of his immigration, as well as in 1641-42. Appointed Surveyor General in the latter year, Langford served in that capacity until 1648.

Langford's Neck, as the tract was called, is one of the earliest grants in Kent County.¹ Greys Inn Creek, on its south side bears the name of Langford's alma mater in England, while the large creek to the north shares his surname. Langford probably died in England after 1666, the year in which the land was sold.²

In the early 18th century, the majority of Langford's Neck was acquired by John Smithers. Smithers had his acquisition resurveyed in 1735 under the same name but by this time the total acreage had decreased by almost 500 acres to 1040.³ Smithers appears to have lived on the southern

part of the property which was sold later in the century to the Greshams. The northern section on which Belle View is situated was called "Cooks," a name which appears to be the name of an owner or occupant of the land.

Belle View's origins begin with the purchase of 68 acres at the head of Spring Cove by Augusta Browne, wife of James Browne.⁴ By 1852, the Browns had built the present house, for in the Tax Assessment of that year the buildings were referred to as "new Frame House & other Buildings in good repair, formerly to John Hynson and E. Curry."⁵

When new, the house was a very late example of Federal architecture. At a time when other dwellings were being decorated with corner pilasters, brackets and other Greek Revival and Italianate details, Belle View was devoid of ornamentation. Its plan was similar to Melfield or Plaindealing in the 2nd District, with side hall and double parlors in the tall, two-story section and two rooms adjoining the hall in a one-and-a-half-story wing.

The farm remained in the possession of Augusta Browne until her death in 1876. She left it to her niece, Charlotte Augusta Strong (nee Wickes).⁶ The following year it was shown in the Atlas as the property of Strong's husband, T. R. Strong.

In 1918, the Strong heirs sold Belle View to Herman Copeland of Alleghany County.⁷ During the long ownership of the Brownes and Strong's the property grew in acreage from 68 to 176 1/2. From 1918 to 1995 there have been six owners.

1. Patents, Lib. Q, fol. 328, 1658.
2. Pappenfuss, p. 516.
3. Patented Certificates, No. 125, Debt Books, 1733-1769.
4. Land Records, Lib. JFG 11, fol. 753.
5. Kent County Tax Assessment, 1st District, 1852.
6. Wills, Lib. EC 1, fol. 214.
7. Land Records, Lib. APR 3, fol. 492.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. K-268

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Langford's Neck; Cook's

and/or common Belle View

2. Location

street & number 4545 Piney Neck Road not for publication

city, town Rock Hall vicinity of congressional district 1st

state Maryland county Kent

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input 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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: hunting Lodge

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

name P. & P. Mg., Inc., c/o Francis J. Hickman

street & number 10057 Perkins Hill Rd. telephone no.: 410-778-0217

city, town Chestertown state and zip code Maryland 21620

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber LHP 143

street & number Cross Street folio 227

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Kent County Windshield Survey

date 1968 federal state county local

pository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville state Maryland

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

At the southern end of Piney Neck east of Rock Hall, are four farms of various sizes. "Belle View" is the northernmost of the four and contains two houses, one, a Twentieth Century structure of no architectural merit and the other a mid 19th Century frame structure which was altered and allowed to deteriorate in the 20th Century.

"Belle View" is a two-part frame dwelling composed of a two-bay, 1½ story service wing, measuring 27'-0" x 29'-9" and a three bay two story section measuring 29'-0" x 32'-3". Both sections appear to have been constructed at the same time. It's present appearance is un-distinguished, the walls being covered with asbestos siding and the roof with asphalt shingle. The 6/6 sash windows are devoid of shutters. A two-part leanto porch protects the entrance to each section on the west side. A full length hip roof porch stretches across the east facade of the taller section. There is a single chimney built on the exterior of the south gable and an interior chimney within the north gable kitchen wing.

In the Twentieth Century, a leanto was added to the north gable of the taller section in front of the service wing. Its current floor plan consists of two rooms in the service wing, the northernmost room having an enclosed stair adjacent the fireplace. Access to the taller section is gained through the 20th Century leanto, which houses half of the kitchen. The other half is within the main block of the house, but there is no separation. The wall was removed to the second story. The rest of the main block is one large room with fireplace centered on the gable. A stair ascends from the center of the block in a westerly direction.

A basement is located beneath the main block, but it is an after-thought and is about three or four feet within the foundation perimeter.

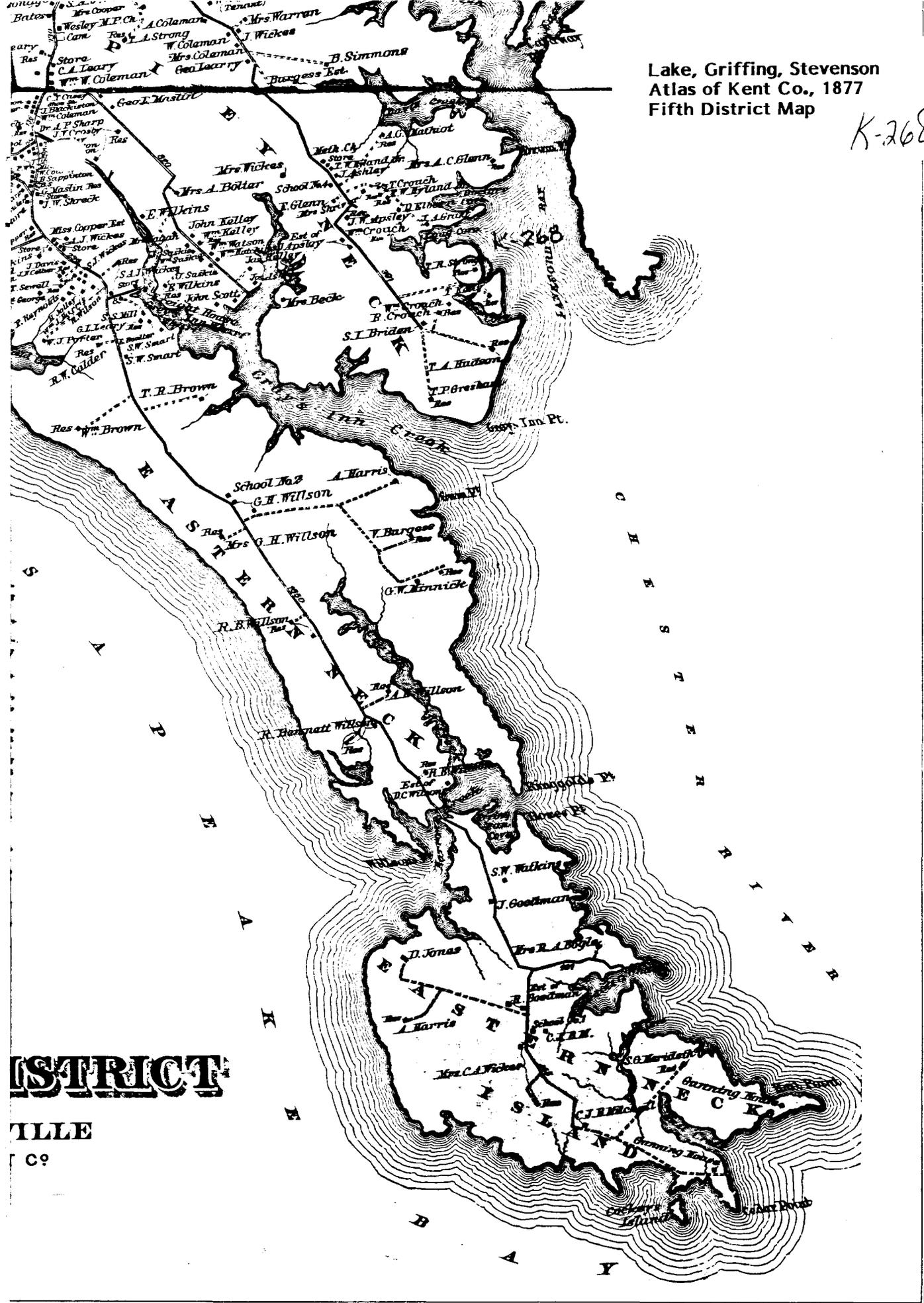
Originally, the house had a standard plan with side stair hall and two parlors to south. The stair probably ascended in the opposite direction from its current configuration. There would have been a door between the stairhall and kitchen wing, much the same as Melfield, east of Chestertown. The foundations remaining in the cellar/crawl space exist for two interior chimneys centered on the gable wall of the two south parlors. Evidence of their existence remains on the second floor.

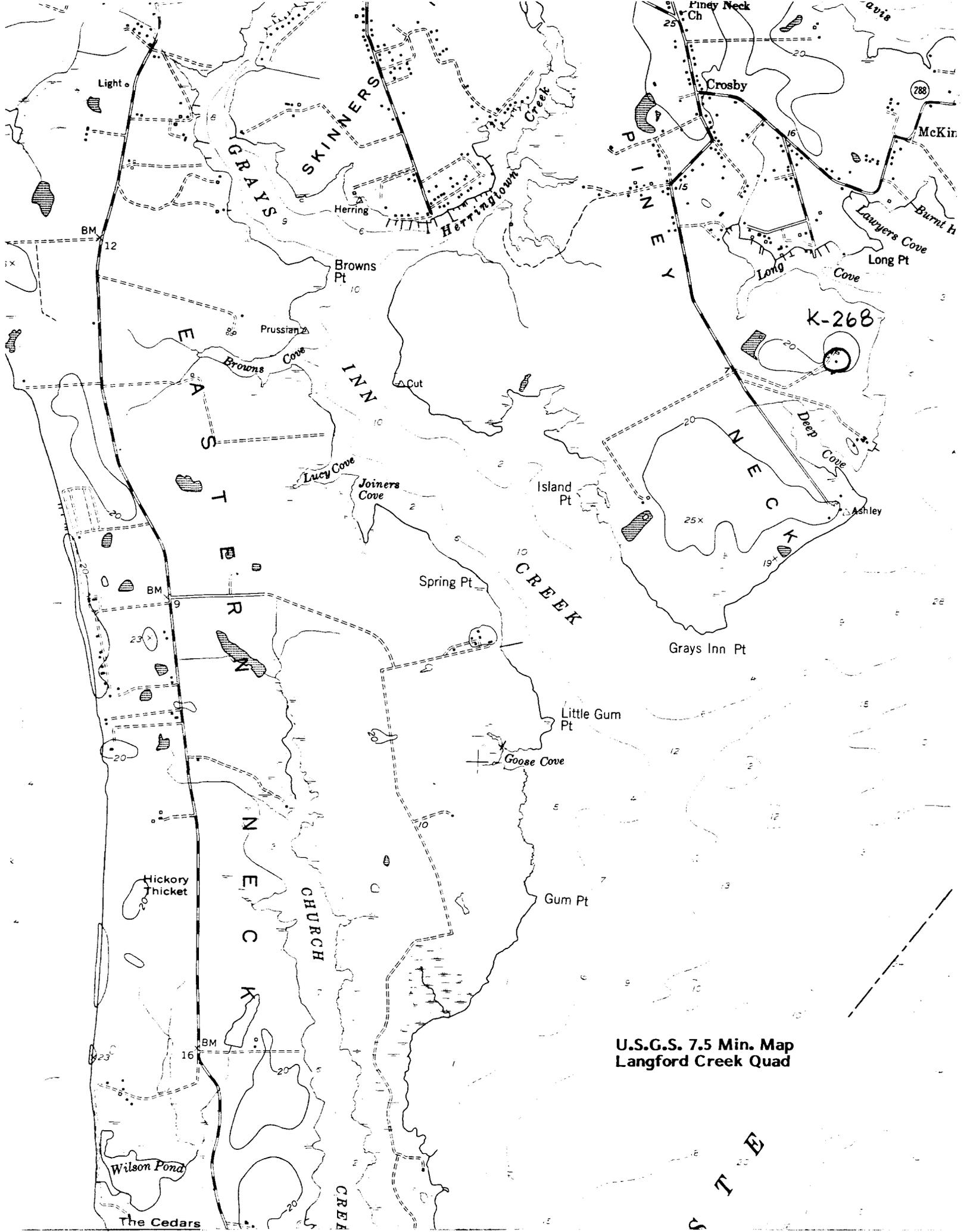
The kitchen or service wing is relatively un-altered, although all the window trim and most of the door trim was replaced in the 20th Century remodeling.

The house is significant only because it is a good 'study' building as it has been dated by the 1852 Tax Assessment as a "New Frame House...".

Lake, Griffing, Stevenson
Atlas of Kent Co., 1877
Fifth District Map

K-268





U.S.G.S. 7.5 Min. Map
Langford Creek Quad

S
T
E



Belle View K-268

East

M. Bourne

Winter 1996

1/2



Belle View K-263

N.W.

M. Bourne

Winter 1996

2/2