

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Boulter House

## 2. Location

street & number West side Sharptown-Skinners Neck Rd., 1-5/8 mile south  
of Rt. 20, east of Rock Hall.  not for publicationcity, town Rock Hall  vicinity of first congressional districtstate Maryland county Kent

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Mr. and Mrs. John H. Boulterstreet & number R.D. 1, Box 50 telephone no.: 639-7221city, town Rock Hall state and zip code Maryland 21661

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Court House liber EHP 98street & number  folio 224city, town Chestertown state Maryland 21620

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys NONE

title date   federal  state  county  localdepository for survey records city, town  state

# 7. Description

Survey No. K-519

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input 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.

Its 2-bay jerkin-head east gable end with main entry reached through a porch facing the public road, this 2-story frame house with alternately dropped wood shingle walls and bold trim was built in 1928-29 from plans drawn by its owner. The 2-story main section, with two rooms on the first story, one behind the other, measures 18 feet wide by 28 feet deep. The hipped 1-story rear wing for kitchen and porch (now enclosed) is slightly narrower and 10 feet deep.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input 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** 1928-1929 **Builder/Architect**

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

Individualistic and idiosyncratic, this on-of-a-kind late 1920's house is truly an example of vernacular architecture. Designed by its still-owner, a Skinners Neck waterman, about the time of his marriage, the house was a product of his likes and dislikes, observations, and concern for efficient use of space, ease of heating, and high-quality building materials and methods. Because of his good eye and attention to detail the house not only functions as he intended but is pleasing in appearance as well. Although the owner sought to build a "modern" house, the method of roof framing is a relic going back to the 18th century and illustrates the persistence of building methods in Kent County, particularly in the Rock Hall area.



BUILDING FORM AND MATERIAL

## 1. Size

Main section: 2 stories; 2/3 bay wide, 2 bays deep. Gable end containing main entry, faces road. Main section measures ca. 18 x 28 feet.

Wing: (kitchen and now enclosed porch), 1 story, 2 bays wide, 1/2 bays (10 feet) deep.

## 2. Plan type (see sketch)

Two rooms on first story--living room the full width of house at the approach end; dining room to rear of living room is somewhat deeper and full width except for enclosed stair along north wall.

## 3. Roof type

Main section: gable with both ends jerkin - head

Wing: low hip

4. Chimney: Location - through roof peak near center of main section. Material - brick. Decorative elements --corbelled cap, out and in, with later elevated metal hood added above brick corner supports.

## 5. Material/Walls

Main section: Frame. Painted rectangular cedar shingles in alternate drop pattern; gable end from eave line to roof uses coursed shingles with corners sawn off, to give 7-sided effect.

Wing: Frame. Cedar shingles with same alternate drop pattern.

6. Material/Roofs: asphalt shingles over wood shingles throughout.

## 7. Material/Foundation

Main section: crawl space; poured concrete with rebar

Wing: poured concrete under kitchen (crawl space); piers with infill under formerly open porch

## 8. Age

Entire house (though open rear porch later enclosed) built in 1928-1929. Cost was \$1,496.00, including the lumber for the garage and shed. Carpenters were Walter Reihl, Fred Reihl, and Thomas Hill, assisted by John H. Boulter, owner/designer.

9. Style: 1920's Rock Hall - area vernacular (see history section), designed by John H. Boulter, waterman (among other pursuits), owner 1928-. Perhaps best described as individualistic, idiosyncratic.

BUILDING ELEMENTS AND DETAILS

## 1. Doors

Main entry: Southeast bay, east gable end, through now-screened porch. Trim is plain. Door-one large light over two horizontal panels.

Secondary entries: Other entry is into wing (utility room, formerly porch) on south side. Door is aluminum with jalousie-louvered glass, a replacement for the original wood door.

## 7.2 DESCRIPTION (continued)

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## 2. Windows

Main section: Type: double-hung; Lights: 6/1 (east and south 1st story windows are paired 6/1's); 1/1, small (in pantry closet, stair, and bath, the last window added later). Details: plain wood trim ca. 4-3/8" wide at jambs and head, giving bold, wide-band effect.

Front gable end attic window is small 6/1; no window in rear gable.

Shutters: none

Wing: Type: double-hung; hopper (which replace a 6/1 double-hung); awning; 2/2 paired casements

Lights: all 6/1 originally Shutters: none

## 3. Dormers: None

## 4. Roof details:

Main section: deep box cornice with cyma recta crown molding and bevel molding on deep frieze board with ogee and bevel at lower edge (separate piece). Both gable ends are jerkin-headed with low-slope pent eave continuous with eaves of long sides and with the same cornice details. Roof framing is same as that used in the 18th century in Kent County. See history section and sketch.

Wing: same on rear end and north side, but altered on south side when porch wall moved outward 8 inches.

## 5. Porches:

Approach gable end, almost the width of house, 1 bay wide but screened ca. 1962 and light wood uprights added at that time. Edge-grain tongue-and-groove fir floor. Brick steps (wooden steps originally). Built-up corner posts with simple cap including a cyma reversa. Garden-type lattice on south end of porch. Low hip roof. Porch formerly on south side of wing has been enclosed and serves as utility room; south wall extended ca. 8 inches.

## 6. Color:

Current: deep gold with white trim.

Historic: originally no finish on shingles for 15 years, then dark brown shingle stain applied, with white trim.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

1. Plan type: see sketch and "Building Form and Material," No. 2.

2. Major stair: enclosed straight run with 1st story (dining room) access door. Stair is along north wall. A pantry is under the stair. There is a ladder stair from the second story to the unfinished attic.

3. Major mantels: none; originally used stove in the dining room, venting into present, original, small chimney. Chimney access now closed in living space. Floor furnace now used for heat.

## 4. Major trim:

Windows/doors: plain #1 pine

Baseboards: plain baseboards, clear yellow pine.

Cornices: none

Chair rails: none

5. Major doors: 2/2 lights over 2 horizontal panels (dining room to kitchen); other doors have 5 horizontal panels.

## 7.3 DESCRIPTION (continued)

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6. Floors: tongue-and-groove #1 clear, narrow strip pine on first story; second story has #2 grade strip pine.

OUTBUILDINGS/SITE DESCRIPTION

## 1. Outbuildings

A. Long rectangular garage with rear section for shop and storage. Originally built for Model T, had to be extended as car lengths increased. Garage doors are in the front gable end. Clad in vertical beaded board; gable roof. Chimney for stove to heat shop.

B. Storage shed with shed roof.

## 2. Site description

The site is essentially flat, sloping only slightly toward the rear; the house is sited 35-40 feet from the public road, with gable end facing the road. The road has been raised over the years, necessitating fill around the house. Driveway on north side of house leads to long garage, located about 15 feet to northwest of the house. Large cedars flank drive near porch. Southern part of property is large lawn, with garden to southwest; appears as a vacant building lot. Tree and shrub plantings are on other three sides with lawns.

## 3. Views to/from site

Woods to west. Next house to south on same side of road is a 4-square; two more houses beyond visible to south from position near road. One house to north, same side of road beyond vacant lot. This is a small residential community; most built 1900-1935. Woods directly across road with 2 rooms-over-one-house with additions (late 19th-early 20th) to southeast across road. Raum Chapel (K-518) is nearby to north on same side of road, but not visible.

USE OF BUILDING

1. Current: residence

2. Historic: residence

HISTORY OF BUILDING/PAST OWNERSHIP

John H. Boulter, 82 years old in 1982 and still owner and occupant of the house he had built in 1928-29 as a newly-wed, remembers with pride and remarkable detail why and how the house was built as it was. His reasoning, inventiveness, observativeness, attention to detail, and good eye resulted in a house well planned for his needs, well built, and pleasing in appearance. The Boulter house appears to be one-of-a-kind, truly an example of vernacular architecture, derived from no particular style but from an untrained person's likes and dislikes and working with stock materials of the time.

The jerkin-head roof resulted from his wanting a house with the narrow, gable end facing the road but disliking a "sharp" presenting end, which to him looked like a barn and unrefined. Since his carpenters did not know how to construct such a roof, Mr. Boulter himself worked out the angles for the framing. Six or seven years later, a person having a small bungalow built nearby wanted a similar roof and sent a carpenter to see how this one was done.

The stair is located where it is (enclosed straight-run, with door to

adjacent dining room, of no importance as a design element because Mr. Boulter remembered with distaste the cold, draughty central-hall-with stair houses (probably the most common 18th and 19th century Kent County house plan) he visited and lived in earlier. He viewed a stair as strictly utilitarian and also wanted it to consume as little space as possible.

Besides a stair that makes the house easy to heat, the interior walls are only seven feet high for the same reason. Intending to make the walls as solid as possible, Mr. Boulter installed 16 inch x 48 inch sheets of rock lath with two coats of plaster and a white coat; he claims his was the first use of rock lath in the Rock Hall area. The exterior walls were built with board sheathing, tar paper, and then wooden shingles, unusual for a country house. The floors are also two-layer, with a subfloor, a construction not often seen in rural Kent County until after after World War II.

He was also concerned about appearance, making sure all the windows were the same height (bath window was added later; some kitchen windows were later replaced) and carefully spaced and aligned. The shingle design (alternate drop) he thought "looked nice," was "different," and required no cutting. For the gable shingles he had the lower corners cut off to produce a design better suited to a small space. Such coursed shingles with clipped corners is seen elsewhere in the Rock Hall area, but the alternate drop pattern is not. Exterior trim is No. 1 cypress.

For his well-built house Mr. Boulter wanted a poured concrete foundation, well reinforced. Careful with his expenditures, he hauled 7/8" hard steel rebars from the new Chester River Bridge project. They had been found too hard for welding and hence declared surplus and sold cheaply. The reason for his rear porch (now enclosed) was to store firewood; now the space is used for washer and dryer, water heater, and sink.

Although electric service was not yet available in Skinners Neck, he felt it was coming and so had wiring built into the house. However, no indoor plumbing was installed (a pump was necessary for operation, just not considered standard in a country house) so that piping and a bathroom had to be installed later.

Despite all the "modern" innovations, it is interesting to note that the roof framing was the type persistent in the area from the 18th century and unlike that common during much of the 20th century in Kent County. The attic floor joists were extended out over the wall plates to form the eaves. The rafters were cut to rest on top of the attic floor joists, in contrast to later rafters with birds' mouth cuts which rested on wall plates. Such construction usually involves placement of a thin false plate, continuous with attic floor, between rafter and joist. When questioned, Mr. Boulter said this construction method was selected to provide more attic space and height than would have resulted from the more modern method. However, his choice probably also reflects familiarity with an old method, both on his part and that of local carpenters.

P. 2B  
Boulter  
House  
K-519

front  
porch  
18'

main  
entry

K-519

← N

Living Room

28'

Chimney

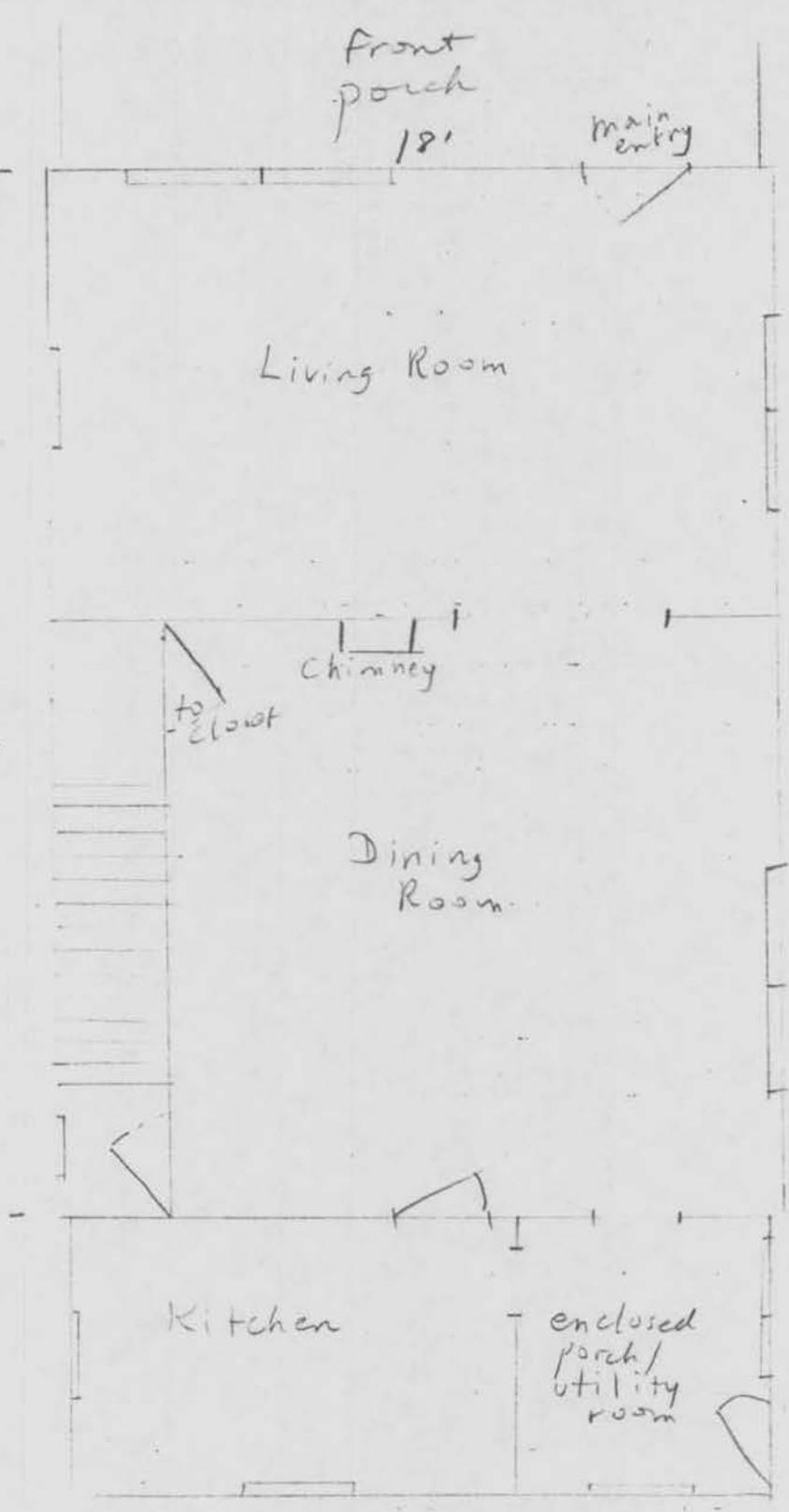
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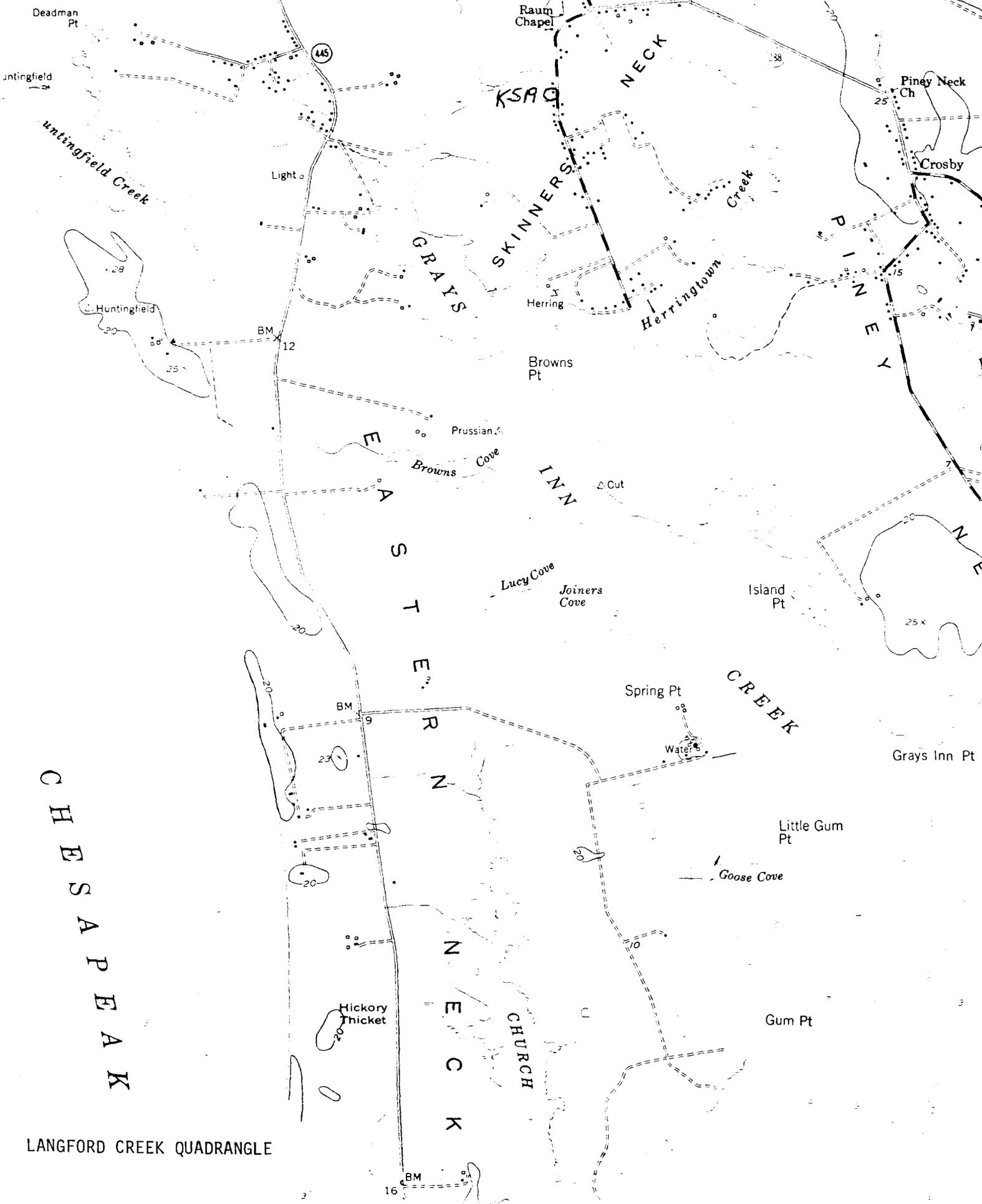
Dining  
Room

Kitchen

enclosed  
porch/  
utility  
room

Plan - 1st floor - not to scale





LANGFORD CREEK QUADRANGLE