

K-683, Ashley-Dickey House
5647 Main Street
Rock Hall, Kent County, Maryland
c. 1882–1885

The primary structure on the Ashley-Dickey House site, a flat lot on the northeast corner of the intersection of Main St. and Catholic Ave. in the town of Rock Hall, is a vernacular frame dwelling whose two-storey, gable-roofed, three-bays-wide, one-room deep main section facing Main St. was built for Philip G. Ashley and his family c. 1882–1885. A one-storey rear kitchen ell, which later was enlarged to the east and north, may have been built contemporaneously, or it may be later. The central-bay main entry opens directly into the larger of two first-storey rooms; a secondary entry originally was opposite in the rear wall. Nearby, along the rear wall, almost entirely enclosed and straight-run, the stair ascends to a second-storey hall that runs along about two-thirds of the rear wall. One large but narrow bedroom, the depth of the house, is at the north end of the hall; two smaller bedrooms also are entered from the hall. Originally, the main façade porch probably was three bays wide and one-storey but was later extended around the south gable end to the rear wall. A lower service porch continues along the south side of the wing. At some point at least 60 years ago, a second-storey porch now mostly gone was added above the original porch. Only remnants of the main-section porch(es) remain. Except for the south wing wall, where the original lapped weatherboard remains uncovered, the entire house is now covered with large lapped shingle-strips appearing to be of asbestos cement. Though now considerably altered and so deteriorated, with the basic structure compromised, that it is scheduled for demolition in early 1998, the house is typical of one form of the modest frame two-storey houses built in and near Rock Hall during a period of expansion in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The site is also significant for the economic activities that were conducted there. The original owner and at least one of his sons were blacksmiths, who practiced their craft in a shop to the rear of the house. The twentieth-century gable-roofed concrete-block building now at the rear, with its ruinous frame shed-roofed addition, is a replacement shop that was used for blacksmithing until c. 1950, serving watermen and farmers especially. During the second quarter of the twentieth century, this outbuilding also was the location of a bottled-gas (propane) business and Mack Truck agency. During much of the long life of the wife of the original owner, a portion of the main section also was dedicated for enterprise. She used the smaller first-storey room for making and selling women's hats.

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. K-683

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Ashley-Dicey House

2. Location

street & number 5647 Main St. NA not for publication

city, town Rock Hall vicinity of congressional district First

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

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

name Marilyn Dicey

street & number P.O. Box 425 telephone no.: 410-639-2250

city, town Rock Hall state and zip code MD 21661

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Land Records Office (Clerk of Court) Kent County Courthouse liber EHP 140

street & number N. Cross St. folio 228

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys None

title

date federal state county local

pository for survey records

city, town state

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			

House scheduled for demolition.

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

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE COUNT: 2

The primary structure on the Ashley-Dickey House site, a flat corner lot at Main St. and Catholic Ave. in the town of Rock Hall, is a vernacular frame dwelling whose two-storey, gable-roofed, three-bays-wide (c. 32'-6"), two-bays-deep (c. 16'-0") main section, at least, was constructed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, probably c. 1882-1885. Its primary facade faces west, toward Main St. (Md. Rt. 445, the main north-south route through Rock Hall). It could not be determined whether the lower, originally two-bays-deep (c. 18'-0") and two-bays-wide (c. 12'0"), one-storey, gable-roofed, rear kitchen wing (an ell with its south side continuous with the main section's south gable-end wall) was constructed contemporaneously or later. A one-storey, seven-foot-deep, wood-floored porch, now in ruinous condition, extends across most of the main section's main facade and wraps around the south gable end to the main section's southeast rear corner. The presence of a center-bay second-storey door in the west facade, above the main entry, as well as remaining porch framing, indicates that the main-facade porch was once two-storey, though perhaps not originally. A lower, concrete-floored, one-storey service porch extends across the south facade of the rear wing.

The rear wing has been enlarged about seven feet at its north side building a new exterior wall north of the original, which was then removed and the entire north slope of the gable roof rebuilt, shallower, to cover both the original section and the addition. The wing's gable roof hence is now asymmetrical. The wing was also further extended, probably later, at part of its east gable end (north bay) by enclosing a small (c. 6'-0")wide, 7'-0" deep) concrete-floored porch and extending that enclosed area so its north wall became continuous with the main wing section's new north wall (total wall length now c. 25'-0"). This addition is covered by a shed roof, with a north-south axis.

Secondary entrances are at the east-end wing addition and in the west bay of the wing's south side. A former entry, in the north bay of the main section's rear (east) side, into the north first-storey room, has been replaced by a window. Before the wing was extended to the north, there was a secondary entry in the central bay of the main section's rear side, opposite the main entry. The door in that location now leads to the bathroom, located in the northwest corner of the wing's north addition. Main-section windows are double-hung, most with 6/6 lights.

A gable-roofed concrete-block outbuilding, now used as a garage and for storage, stands southeast of the rear wing, sited closer than the house to Catholic Ave. and with its partially open gable end facing that street. From this former blacksmith shop's east side extend the remains of a shed-roofed frame structure, also formerly used for business purposes.

(continued on p. 7.1)

8. Significance

Survey No. K-683

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1882; c.1882-¹⁹⁵⁰ **Builder/Architect** Unknown

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.

Though now considerably altered and deteriorated, the c. 1882 Ashley-Dickey House originally was typical of one form of vernacular, two-storey, gable-roofed frame dwellings with rear kitchen wing built in and near Rock Hall during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century, a period of notable community growth and expansion of the local economy. Typically rising from a low foundation over a crawl space, despite the high water table and poorly drained soils, these simple, modestly-sized structures' rectangular main sections most commonly are three bays wide and with shallow depth (one room deep). The main entry is usually, though not always, located in the central bay. The stairs in these houses are variously located. The almost entire enclosed, mostly straight stair in the Ashley-Dickey House is somewhat unusual in being located along the main section's rear wall rather than ascending near the main entry and thus dividing the first-storey interior into two rooms, or rising along one gable-end wall. Although this house, like most built in Rock Hall at the time, probably boasted from the start at least a one-storey porch across much of the main facade, it is unusual in having had a two-storey main porch for many years (since at least the 1930s, but perhaps earlier). Also unusual is the absence of the recessed-panel corner pilasters that were a popular local exterior construction detail during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Architecturally, therefore, this house is significant, though Rock Hall has numerous better examples of the type that have been less altered and have suffered less deterioration.

Such houses of the period generally were built for middlingly prosperous small-scale entrepreneurs in the Rock Hall area's mixed economy (but especially for those in commerce, the crafts, or service businesses, as well as for the more prosperous watermen, who "followed the water" mainly by fishing and oystering at that time). Almost 100% of houses, regardless of size, built in and near Rock Hall in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were of frame construction. This preference may reflect not only the cost factor and health-related beliefs about building materials (the latter also common in the U.S. generally), but also the fact that a large and regionally important logging and milling operation was located a short distance south of Rock Hall, at Grays Inn in the northern

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(continued from yellow form)

The considerably altered house is in greatly deteriorated condition from a number of factors, with its basic structure seriously compromised, and is scheduled for demolition. A new two-storey house is planned for approximately the same location.

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The main section's foundation could not be well seen since it is so low and since the exterior wall covering extends to within 3–4" of the soil, but it appears to consist of brick piers, with partial board infill to enclose a shallow crawl space. Part of the rear wing appears to have been built similarly, and part appears to have a poured-concrete slab floor. Rotted and/or termite-eaten sills can be seen in several places. Rather surprising for an flat area with a high water table, poorly drained soils, and an endemic termite problem, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Rock Hall house builders (and presumably also owners) seemed to prefer houses set low to the ground, though cost may have been a factor. Many of the period, as this one, are but one step up to first-storey floor level.

The main section is balloon-framed, with true 2" x 4" studs. Second-storey partition-wall studs are rotated 90° from their usual position, producing thinner walls than usual, presumably to enlarge the living space.

Except for the south façade of the wing, the exterior walls are covered by long, lapped and horizontally coursed, deeply striated, painted strips (or shingles) that appear to be made of asbestos cement. Their exposure is c. 14", and their shadow-line is strong because they are thick, in contrast to the smaller, thin asbestos cement shingles more commonly applied to Kent County frame houses in the 1940s and 1950s. Metal corner strips cover the corner joints. In a few places on the main section, and on the entire wing south façade, the original horizontal, lapped weatherboard, with c. 5" exposure, can be seen. The weatherboard was butted against plain c. 4"-exposure corner boards, which appear original, rather than the bold recessed-panel corner pilasters that are more typical of late-nineteenth-century Rock Hall houses that are otherwise very similar to K-683. The three closest houses on the opposite side of Main St. all have such corner pilasters.

The main section's moderately pitched (c. 6/12 slope) gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles over wood shingles. There has been damage to the west slope's roofing material and eave from branches of the enormous oak tree in the front yard, between the house and Main St. The eave area appears to have been additionally damaged by the pulling away of the last second-storey-porch roof. Most of the kitchen wing's roof is covered by standing-seam metal sheets applied over asphalt shingles. The metal roof continues over the lower-sloped shed roof of the south façade's porch, where there are no underlying shingles. The east gable-end addition to the kitchen wing is covered by a shed roof with asphalt shingles.

The main-section roof has a boxed cornice with c. 10" front and rear overhangs that extend c. 14" beyond the gable-end walls, with bold c. 20–22" gable-end returns that were typical of Rock Hall and Kent County in the late nineteenth century. An assymmetrically curved, convex bed molding has been applied over the shingle siding. A c. 10" frieze board, with what appears be an ogee-and-bevel molding applied at its upper edge, is at the gable ends only. A similar, but smaller, molding is applied at the upper edge of the otherwise plain verge boards. Most of the roof trim/details probably date from the period when the present siding was applied, although it is possible that some materials were reused. The main-façade eave area has been severely damaged, evidently by tree branches and by the pulling away of a second-storey porch roof (probably not the original) that seems to have been attached to the fascia.

A roof-construction detail common in Kent County from the eighteenth century well into the twentieth century, but especially persistent in the Rock Hall area, can be seen at the main

section's southwest corner, where the framing is now exposed. The second-storey ceiling joists extend beyond the exterior wall and its plate(s), to form the cornice overhang. A wide board (c. 1" x 10-12") plate rests on the joists at their ends, and the rafters are affixed to the plate.

The wing's east addition was constructed with 2" x 4" rafters, with a plain fascia and no soffit covering. The overhang is c. 8". The north extension has similar details. The south roof eave of the original portion of the wing, with the porch perhaps added later, overhangs the exterior wall c. 10", with rafter ends covered by a plain fascia and soffit.

A prefabricated, rectangular, capped metal chimney, simulating the appearance of red brick with gray mortar joints, rises at the roof ridge at the south gable end of the main section, within the wall. It serves a hot-air gas furnace installed in the attic during the early 1970s. A central air conditioning system was installed at the same time, with the exterior compressor unit placed in the "L" of main section and wing. Very likely, a brick chimney to serve a first-storey stove for heating and/or cooking would have been constructed in the same location when the main section was built. However, evidence of such a previous chimney could not be seen. During the later 1970s, to serve a Franklin stove, an exterior chimney of concrete chimney block, with a clay-tile flue liner, was constructed, outside the wing's east gable-end wall, penetrating the ridge edge. Whether a previous chimney existed at this location could not be determined, though it would have been a likely location for a kitchen stove in the wing's early years.

The main entry, in the central bay of the main section's west (primary) façade, has a six-panel door that appears, with its slightly molded 2"-wide trim, to be a mid-twentieth-century lumberyard-stock replacement. There is a painted aluminum screen/storm door having a large upper light above a smaller lower light, with a metal kick-panel below. The sill is flush with the porch floor. A pair of door-height, stationary, louvered wood shutters flank the door. In the second-storey central bay a door, with one large light over two vertical panels, formerly gave access from the middle bedroom to the main façade's second-storey porch, now gone except for some floor-framing remnants. This door also appears to date from the mid-twentieth century, though perhaps is earlier. Almost all of the house's door and window trim (including sills) appears to have been altered, if not replaced, to accommodate the added thickness of the shingle-strip siding applied during the mid-twentieth century.

Secondary entries include a similar door (one large light over two vertical panels), with plain trim, in the west bay of the wing's south (Catholic Ave.) façade, giving access from the kitchen to the concrete-floored secondary porch. This entry is not currently in use. The entry now used for exterior access to/from the wing is slightly south of center in the east wall of the wing's rear addition. This addition was formerly partially a shed-roofed, concrete-floored porch. When enclosed, this space was enlarged to the north. The door, probably from the mid-twentieth century, appears to have six lights over panels, but is considerably covered by applied plastic, sheet metal, and plywood. As indicated by an absence of shingle siding immediately above and below a 6/6 double-hung window in the north bay of the main section's east (rear) side, as well as the presence of an eight-light French door/window leaning against the house nearby, there formerly was direct entry from the exterior into the first-storey north room. Since this room is known to have been used for many years, during Ashley-family occupancy, for making and selling women's hats, it is likely that this direct entry was intended for customer use, to avoid business foot-traffic through family living space. This room also may have been used later as an office for other family businesses.

Main-section windows are double-hung, most with 6/6 lights, and appear to date from various periods. Several first-storey single windows have lights measuring c. 8" x 12", with thin muntins and aluminum sash tracks, suggesting that they are replacements dating from the mid-twentieth century. Trim is c. 2" wide (molded fillet with small ogee and fillet backband), like the main-entry door probably part of a lumberyard stock prehung-unit item. These have double sills and plain aprons. Second-storey main-façade (west) windows may be original. They are slightly larger, with larger lights and slightly thicker muntins; sills are bold. Otherwise plain trim has a

bold inner bead. In the main façade's south bay, a double 6/6 window, each part narrower than other main-section windows, appears to have replaced an earlier opening, most likely a 6/6 single window. Around the corner, in the west bay of the south gable end, there is a replacement 1/1 double-hung window. In some locations milled-aluminum storm/screened windows have been installed, and in the second-storey west bay of the north gable end such a window serves as the only reasonably weather-tight window since part of the regular window is missing. Fixed louvered wooden shutters (probably replacements) are in place at first-storey west and south windows. Older, perhaps original, louvered shutters, with louvers movable in the lower sections, are at the two second-storey south gable-end windows.

The north side of the wing has small double-hung windows with 1/1 lights in each of two bays. A 6/6 window is in the south bay of the original gable-end of the wing; the frame has an interior bead. A 6/6 window, with narrow plain trim, is also in the east bay of the wing's south side. There is a double casement window, each with 2/2 lights, set high in the wing's east-end addition's east wall. This paired window fills all the available horizontal space between the southeast corner and the rear entry. Similar paired casements are located around the corner on the south end of this shed-roofed addition to the wing. The casements appear to be stock mid-twentieth-century lumberyard offerings.

The main section's Main St. façade may have been constructed with only a three-bay-wide, one-bay deep (c. 7'-0"), one-storey porch, with shed or hipped roof, set in about 40" from each gable end. At a later date such a porch seems to have been extended around the southwest house corner, with roof hipped at the turn, to the main section's rear wall, enlarging the main façade porch to the south by one bay and creating a three-bay porch on the south gable end. This porch's east end terminates at a stud wall covered with plywood (now partially gone or perhaps to allow for passage) on a concrete base. Such a wall achieved an actual and a visual separation from the adjacent, lower service porch along the kitchen wing's south side.

Either contemporaneously or at another time, a second-storey, presumably shed-roofed, porch was constructed above the original three-bay front porch, with a central-bay door instead of a window. John M. Ashley, Jr. (b. 1928), a great-grandson of Philip G. Ashley, for whom the house was built, probably c. 1882-85, reported that as far back as he can remember, to the early 1930s, the main-façade porch was two-storey, with the lower level extended around the southwest house corner; the second-storey floor surface was not of spaced boards. Two-storey porches on Rock Hall houses of this approximate period are rare, but there are several. How and where a second-storey porch's roof structure might have been tied to the house is not now clear. A pair of engaged posts, or pilasters, against which the shingle siding appears to be butted and which therefore predate the shingling, run approximately from porch-floor level to the cornice's bed molding. It could not be seen whether the original weatherboard was also butted against the pilasters. They are applied to the second-storey exterior wall in line with the outer edges of the three-bay porch section below. These pilasters, which appear to have the same details and width as the remaining early first-storey porch posts, may have had some role in roof attachment, but it is not now clear how that might have been done. To have extended a porch roof from under the eave, utilizing the pilasters, would seem to have resulted in a too-low roof, and there seems to have been scant space above door and window heads for a rafter ledger. Although the last porch roof, a replacement now gone, appears to have been attached to the cornice fascia, a more sound construction practice would have been to extend the porch roof from the lower portion of the house roof surface. There are no signs on the present roofing material to indicate that this was the case, at least not since the application of the quite old asphalt shingles. However, the roof has been so damaged by branches that the situation is hard to assess. It is even possible, though unlikely, that the second-storey porch originally had no roof. In either case, the pilasters most likely were only for appearance and for attaching a second-storey balustrade to the house.

Some of the first-storey porch's perhaps original posts survive. Those in the three-bay front section appear identical to survivors in the wraparound section. Elsewhere the ruinous roof/second-storey floor structure is supported by dimension-lumber props wedged between the

ground and structure. The 5" x 5" early posts still in place now are supported by central pipes at their base. Any wooden bases, likely at the start, are gone. The post edges are chamfered, with lambs' tongues, and the remaining parts of the original outer beam are similarly finished. An ogee perimeter molding is applied around the posts as a cap near their tops. There is no evidence that a balustrade was ever attached to the original posts, and John M. Ashley, Jr., great-grandson of the building owner, does not recall one. Most Rock Hall porches on houses of this period do not have them. They were not necessary because houses and their porches were set so low to the ground. The wrap-around porch section has a shallow shed/hip roof with asphalt shingles. The portion attached to the main façade has a beaded-board ceiling, painted blue, and rafter fascia. Thereafter rafters are exposed. The only floor material remaining—narrow, true 1" thick, tongue-and-groove board—is in the central and north bay of the main façade's three-bay porch section, and even there it is unsound and partially broken-through. Much of the porch floor structure is also gone, likewise the victim of rot and termites.

The lower, south-side wing porch's outer beam is now supported only at or near its ends, by plain 4" x 4"s and by the wall separating it from the wraparound porch. The absence of chamfering at the beam's center indicates that this was originally a two-bay porch, with a center post. The wing porch has an almost-on-grade concrete floor. Very deteriorated standing-seam metal roofing over plywood covers the shallow shed roof extending from the wing's south-slope roof surface.

The central-bay main entry leads directly into the larger of two first-storey rooms, rather than into an enclosed central hall, as sometimes is the case with three-bay-wide central-entry houses. However, the same sort of general-circulation area was achieved by the front-to-rear partition wall to the north of the main entry, with its opening to the smaller north room located fairly close to the rear wall; by placement of a secondary entry in the rear wall opposite the main entry (the door now leads to the bathroom in an enlarged wing); and by locating access to the enclosed, almost entirely straight-run stair (originally with a door at the second tread) near the rear entry. It was an efficient plan that also gave a sense of spaciousness and openness to the larger, two-bay-wide first-storey room. (See attached plan sketch.) If the house was originally built without a kitchen wing, as was often the case with modestly-sized houses of this type, the larger room would have served not only as the main family living space but also for cooking and eating. The original stove chimney at the central south end of this space has been removed. Now a bedroom, the north room long served, perhaps from the start, as a space dedicated to making and selling women's hats.

The first-storey ceilings are eight feet high; they are now covered with wallpaper and/or composition tiles. The walls originally were plaster on lath but now are covered with composition board and/or 4' x 8'-sheet wood paneling, probably c. 1970 or later. The first-storey flooring material is narrow, unfinished tongue-and-groove pine boards laid from front to rear, indicating a second flooring layer. The floor is buckled in places, related to the house's structural problems, including intrusion of large tree roots in the crawl space. The rooms are very dark due to the application of insulating materials over the windows. Original details were not seen.

Except for the first step, the stair is enclosed by the main-section rear wall and a wall to separate the stair from the larger first-storey room. A door at the second treat has been removed. The stair is open to the second-storey hall once it reaches that level's floor surface. There are 11 straight-run steps, 2'-8" wide, to a second-storey landing at the east gable-end that requires a quarter-turn and but one step further up to the second-storey hall floor. There is no evidence that any handrails were ever installed. At the turn, but fastened to the hall floor, there is a medium-sized, compoundly turned newel of the sort typically used in Kent County during the late nineteenth century. It may, or may not, be original. The original balustrade is gone, replaced in 1993 by a crudely constructed one, simply for safety, after a period with no balustrade at all.

The 22-foot long second-storey hall, c. 5'-0" wide except adjacent to the stair, where it is only 2'-4" wide, runs along a little more than two-thirds of the rear main-section wall. The upper

stair and south end of the hall are lit by a 6/6 window at the south end of the hall, in the south gable-end wall. The north end of the hall is lit by a 6/6 window in the rear wall's central bay; the original rear entry would have been located directly below. A closet c. 5'-0" wide by c. 1'-10" deep, with a single door, occupies most of the wall space between the window and the stair well. It appears to be the only closet dating from the house's original construction. A door at the north end of the hall leads to the largest bedroom, which like the room below it extends from front to rear of the main section's north gable end. However, it is almost two feet narrower than the room below. The two smaller bedrooms are entered through doors in the hall's south wall. Modern closets, one with a door and the other open with a curtain, have been built in each end bedroom.

The second storey has 7'-0" ceilings, plaster-on-lath walls with plain baseboards, medium-width pine-board flooring (once painted), and handsome 3-3/8"-wide molded door and window trim that is mitred at the upper corners (see attached profile). The notably thin doors between hall and bedrooms have 2/2 vertical panels. (Such doors not only were cheap but probably were chosen because of the thin partition walls.)

The one-step-lower rear wing is now entered through an opening in the rear main-section wall, at the southeast corner. Before the bathroom was built, the wing may have been entered through that opening, in the main section's rear-wall center bay, which originally led to the exterior. The modified wing is entirely open on the interior, except for the bathroom that occupies the northwest-corner portion. Walls are now covered with vertical knotty-pine boards, and the floor is of resilient tile. The low ceiling is covered with composition tiles, some fallen. A woodburning stove, vented into the block chimney just outside the rear wall, heats the space, which serves as a kitchen-dining room-family room.

Both sections of the house are in greatly deteriorated condition from termites, rot (including in areas now open to the weather, as well as near the soil), tree roots and branches, plumbing-system leaks, periods of disuse, and an explosion and fire.

About 20 feet southeast of the wing stands what now appears to be a rectangular concrete-block garage, with a single-vehicle-size opening in a portion of the south gable-end wall, which faces Catholic Ave. The building is indeed now used as a garage for one car, with the remaining space filled with stored items. However, earlier in the twentieth century it, perhaps with the largely collapsed, ruinous structure adjoined on the east side, it served as a blacksmith shop (replacing an earlier building) and as a subsidiary location of a Queen Anne's County bottled-gas (propane) business. The block building measures c. 20'-0" (gable ends) by c. 30'-0" (sides). A paved path from the rear of the house wing ends at a door in the west side, near the north gable end. The shed-roofed east addition, perhaps used by the gas business as a tank-loading and -storage area, extends c. 16'-0" eastward from the block building and is the same depth (30'-0"). Earlier it may have served as a stable for the blacksmithing business, though previously a separate stable may have stood on the property, as suggested by a 1914 will. The block building has a metal standing-seam roof, apparently also the covering for the addition. The addition was constructed with a minimal number of wall-framing members, which except for the exterior vertical boards covering them on the front, are covered (now only partially) by corrugated and standing-seam metal sheets.

The remaining portion of the rear of the lot is open, except for several mature trees located fairly close around the house. There is also a large deciduous tree south of the main section, and a spaced pair of junipers near the Catholic Ave. sidewalk, which ends at Main St. The Main St. frontage has no sidewalk. There are a few plantings of annuals near the Catholic Ave. walk. In the front yard, estimated as about 20 feet deep between the main-façade porch and the uncurbed Main St. pavement, almost directly in front of the main entry stands an enormous oak tree that dwarfs the house—and has caused considerable damage to it during at least the last 25 years. About five feet from the ground, the trunk appears to have a diameter of about 3-1/2 to 4 feet. A standpipe, fitted with a faucet sized to accept a hose connection, stands on the corner of the property near the intersection, with a water meter nearby.

Views from the Ashley-Dicey House property:

To the east on the same side of Catholic Ave. as the Ashley-Dicey House, other houses, most of which are similar (frame, two-storey, main sections 3 bays wide, front porches) and appearing to date from the same period, can be seen on town-size lots. One is embellished with a central roof gable. A bungalow, probably dating from the 1920s, was built on an infill lot.

Immediately south across Catholic Ave. from the K-683 property, on the east side of Main St., are the spacious grounds (c. 5 acres) of St. John's R.C. Church, with open lawns, parking lots, a few trees, and some areas with low, spreading plantings. The closest building on the property is the quite simple (1950s colonial revival style) red-brick church built in 1955 to replace an outgrown building. The main section's three-bay-wide gabled entry-end faces Main St. but is set quite far back from it. In the distance farther south, the smaller old St. John's Church (1890) can be seen, with its main-section gable end also facing Main St. Of frame construction, it was originally weatherboarded, then stuccoed, and finally covered with T-1-11 plywood siding. Behind the old church (now the parish hall) is a cemetery. Beyond the church property to the south and facing Main St., the one-storey, red-brick Rock Hall Municipal Building, formerly an elementary school (1929, with later additions) is visible. Portions of the 1950s successor elementary school can be seen behind the churches and municipal building.

To the west across the two-lane Main St. is the entrance to the drive leading to the Rock Hall Civic Center (a park, of which little can be seen). To the southwest, on the west side of Main St. south of that entry road and facing Main, stand late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century houses (mostly 2- and 2-1/2 storey frame) with a variety of styles and forms: L-shaped, four-square, central-gable, plain 3-bay, bungalow. These houses are more widely spaced, and most appear somewhat newer than the houses in the Main St. block to the north directly across from K-683, indicating that Rock Hall's late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century development radiated outward from a center at Main and Sharp streets (long known as Rock Hall Crossroads). Sharp St. is one block north of Catholic Ave.

On the west side of Main St. north of the Civic Center entry, almost opposite the Ashley-Dicey House's main façade, is a virtual duplicate of the A-D House's main section as it probably was built: two storeys, similarly sized three-bay width, gable roof with similar returns, gable-end center chimney, one-storey three-bay-wide porch (with hipped roof). However, it has recessed-panel corner pilasters. The next house to the north is two-storey with corner pilasters, but two bays wide. The third is three bays wide, with the pilasters, but narrower than K-683. The fourth is three-bay but with a low central roof gable and dormers, while the next two have a central gable but no dormers. All are built close to the ground, like the Ashley-Dicey House, and have a similar scale. Built on land subdivided by A. P. Sharp in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, they very likely were built within a few years of each other and the Ashley-Dicey House. Plantings partially obscure them from view from the K-683 site.

To the north on the east side of Main St., the adjacent frame house and its plantings obscure the houses farther north on Main St.'s east side. Very likely, this is the M.[edford] Taylor house shown on the 1877 *Atlas* map, which does not appear on the 1860 *Martenet's Map*. It is sited with its two-bay gable end facing the street; its sides are three-bay, though narrower than at the Ashley-Dicey House. There are several porches and additions. A chimney rises at the center of each gable end. The driveway from Main St. to a set-back garage is quite close to K-683's north boundary, which is marked by a post-and-wire fence.

(continued from yellow form)

part of Eastern Neck. Founded in 1870, G. E. Leary & Son was operated for 66 years, by four generations of the family, until building slowed dramatically during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Initially cutting in local woods, the business soon brought logs in large schooners to its wharf from Virginia and North Carolina. Most of the old houses in and near Rock Hall, as well as many elsewhere in Kent County, are said to have been built with lumber from the Leary mill. Much milled lumber also was shipped elsewhere, as were other items (such as peach baskets) made by the firm, which provided many jobs and generated much income. Logging and lumbering was a major industry in the Rock Hall area from the beginning to the mid-twentieth century, as was (and is) farming, though the importance of both is underestimated in the popular mind today, which seems to prefer to focus on the water-harvesting activities that are also historically important.

The site is also significant for several economic activities conducted there, during periods when it was not uncommon to mix residential and occupational uses on even quite small properties. One of the original owners of the house operated a millinery enterprise in one room of the house evidently set aside for that purpose, where she (and perhaps others) made and sold women's hats. Her husband (and, later, a son) conducted a blacksmithing business, which endured until mid-twentieth century, in one or more outbuildings not very distant from the rear of the house. A bottled-gas (propane) business and a Mack Truck agency also operated on the site during the second quarter of the twentieth century. In contrast, by the early 1970s, when a heating and air-conditioning contractor owned and lived at the property, he conducted his business operations from another location.

Chain of Title and History

DCB 5/370 - Deed dated 11/28/1879, recorded 12/6/1879

John T. Blackiston and Maria A. Blackiston (wife), of Mineral County, West Virginia, to the Rt. Rev. Thomas A. Becker, D.D., [R.C.] Bishop of Wilmington.

This tract, referred to as "Blackistons property," which Blackiston had purchased from George Copper in 1856 (JFG 3/427), consisted of 17 acres, 2 roods, and 23 perches. (All parenthetical references are to Kent County land records, unless otherwise noted.)

A J. J. Blackiston is listed as a boot and shoemaker, with a shop "near Rock Hall," under the "Rock Hall Business References," the advertisements on the Fifth District page of the Lake, Griffing and Stevenson 1877 *Atlas of Kent County*. On the map itself the "J. Blackiston Store" (which may also have been a dwelling) is shown on the east (northeast) side of the main road (now Main St., part of Rt. 445) leading southward from the Rock Hall crossroads (now Main and Sharp streets) toward the area known as Gray's Inn and Eastern Neck. Located considerably south/southeast of M. Taylor's building (the 6th building southeast from the crossroads), the Blackiston building was the last shown until the one standing, considerably farther south, at the "point" where a road from the north (now Boundary Ave.) ends at Main St. The building at the point is labeled "B.S.," probably indicating a blacksmith shop.

On the 1860 *Martenet's Map of Kent County*, the Rock Hall detail map shows the crossroads area considerably more sparsely developed than in 1877, the southeast quadrant having only the public school near the southeast corner of the crossroads, two buildings at the "point," and Blackiston property alone on the east side of the main road inbetween—but labeled "Jno. G. Blackiston." John T. Blackiston, whose will was admitted to probate in 1893 (Kent Co. Wills CSH 1/276), made numerous land transactions during the second half of the nineteenth century. No information was found in land or wills records about a Blackiston whose initials

were J. J. The variations on the maps may, or may not, be due to errors. The two buildings on the east side of Main St. at the point appear to be Step Rende's wheelwright shop and L. W. Ashley's blacksmith shop.

In 1819 a center of Roman Catholic activity was established in lower Eastern Neck, at Trumpington, the longtime holding of the Smith/Smyth(e) family. Anna Maria Smyth (1784 or 1786–1823) was one of eight children of Thomas Smyth (VI, 1730–1819), a notable Kent County landholder, merchant, shipbuilder, and Anglican who had a long career of public service, especially as a Revolutionary; Widehall was his Chestertown house c. 1770–1795. After declaring bankruptcy in 1792, he also lost Trumpington but recovered it by 1808. In 1806 Anna Maria married Dr. Thomas Bennett Willson (III, 1778–1859), of a prominent Queen Anne's County Catholic family and line of physicians. After her father's death, the Willsons acquired Trumpington and initiated decades of visits by Jesuit priests, from St. Francis Mission at Old Bohemia in Cecil County, to celebrate mass and offer the sacraments in the house chapel at Trumpington (whose furnishings still survive at Trumpington, which has descended in the family).

By the post-Civil War period, another, though lesser, center of Catholicism developed northeast of Rock Hall in the now virtually vanished old community at Reese's (Ree's) Corner, where the eastern end of the road of the same name terminates at the Rock Hall-Chestertown road (now Md. Rt. 20). An acre of land and partial funding were offered, with a committee formed to raise the rest, to erect a church there in 1866, evidently intended to serve Catholics from Chestertown to the Rock Hall area. However, the decision was reconsidered and proved wise in view of growth in and near Rock Hall (including from the arrival of Catholic Polish and German immigrants) and the decline of Ree's Corner. By 1876 Bishop Becker appointed a resident pastor for Chestertown and Rock Hall, the latter served chiefly by a visit to Trumpington once a month.

After the late-1879 purchase of the Blackiston property, described in a church history as mostly farmland, a new priest arriving to serve Chestertown and Rock Hall noted that he found about 80 Catholics in the Rock Hall area. After a buggy trip from Chestertown that often took longer than three hours, he conducted mass once a month in a two-story house (perhaps the former Blackiston store/dwelling) on the Main St. frontage of the property, using a first-story room and recording the sacraments as "in capello S. Joannis." A second two-storey frame building also seems to have stood on the property.

Circa 1882, to raise money for a new and larger church for the growing congregation at Rock Hall, the bishop decided to create about 14 lots, each c. 75 by 150 feet, at the northern edge of the property. He also had a new east-west street, named Catholic Ave., laid out from Main St. to Boundary Ave. to serve these lots' frontage. Except for the Ashley-Dacey House, on the western-most new lot, whose primary façade faces Main St., the houses built on these lots during the succeeding years were oriented toward Catholic Ave. In 1890, on retained land south of Catholic Ave., a frame St. John's Church, its gable-end with main entry facing Main St., was built for \$3,500. The "church house" was later moved across Main St. and is part of another house today. In 1955 a new, larger brick church was completed (also facing Main St.) between the 1890 building and Catholic Ave., with the old building becoming the parish hall during the 1980s. The church property today (which includes a cemetery, opened in 1894) is about five acres. In 1929 the old frame elementary school near the southeast corner of Rock Hall crossroads (fire company parking lot today) was condemned, and a new brick, one-storey elementary school was built on property south of the church, on land formerly part of the 17-acre tract the bishop purchased in 1879. With its later additions, the school today is the town's municipal building. The sale of six acres to the public school system c. 1953, for a new elementary school northeast of the first, helped finance the 1955 church. All these buildings are within view of the Ashley-Dacey House.

SB 4/217 - Deed dated 11/28/1882

Bishop Thomas A. Becker, D.D., of Wilmington, Del., to Philip G. Ashley, Kent County

For \$100 the bishop sold to Ashley "all that lot or piece of ground near the village of Rock Hall, situate on the public road leading from Said village to Greys Inn Creek Wharf, and on the North Side of the Avenue recently laid down, through the lands of said Bishop Becker, adjoining the lands of Medford Taylor." A partially specific survey was included, but no statement of total lot size or all dimensions.

Philip G. Ashley was also a party to several other land transactions. On November 20, 1890, he bought from Alpheus P. Sharp and Annie [Anna] Sharp (wife) a lot, on the west side of the road from Rock Hall village to Gray's Inn Creek, described as being No. 6 on the recorded "plot" of A. P. Sharp's second or third addition to Rock Hall village (SB 14/327, deed). On September 4, 1891, he sold this lot to John R. Ashley (SB 14/578, deed), apparently his eldest son, who (according to the 1880 census) would have been about age 27 at the time of the sale. This property appears to have been in the block across the street from K-683 and may have been where John's much-younger brother George P. lived during part of his adult life. John R. may have predeceased his father since he is not mentioned in his father's will of 1914, although a John [NMI] Ashley delivered the will to the Register of Wills.

A native Baltimorean, A. P. Sharp came to Rock Hall shortly after the Civil War, after retiring from the pharmaceutical business, having founded a company that bore his name (later Sharp & Dohme, then Merck, Sharp & Dohme). Not only building or buying an imposing frame Italianate house, dubbed the Mansion House until its demolition (c. 1980? recalled as three storeys, at least five bays wide), near "Rock Hall Wharf" (in the 1877 *Atlas*) on what came to be called Sharp St. (formerly Rock Hall Rd.), Sharp left his mark on Rock Hall as an irrepressible entrepreneur. The 1877 *Atlas of Kent County* shows that "Dr. A.P. Sharp" built one last drugstore, on the northwest corner of the Rock Hall crossroads (now Sharp and Main streets), an area where no buildings were shown in 1860; it also housed the post office in 1877. (In 1860 "Post Office J. Downey" was shown in the northwest quadrant of the crossroads, but a considerable distance west on Sharp St. toward the wharf.) Sharp later sold the store to Benjamin Durdin (and Henrietta, his wife), whose family operated it for several generations; Durdin also served as postmaster 1893–1897, though perhaps in another location. The two-storey frame building, still known as Durdin's Store, recently was restored (largely to its 1930s appearance on the interior) and returned to much of its earlier use. Sharp also bought other properties that he subdivided and sold as building lots, becoming an important figure in the late nineteenth-century expansion of Rock Hall from a small crossroads settlement into a town that was incorporated in 1908.

SB 7/122 - Mortgage dated 10/7/1885

The mortgage, between the Chester Loan Association of Kent County and Philip G. Ashley and Mary G. [or C.?] Ashley, his wife, was for \$200, perhaps indicating that the house was constructed about this time. Payments were set at 50 cents per week. The parcel was not described other than by reference to the deed from Bishop Becker to Ashley, above.

SB 15/461 - Mortgage dated May 25, 1892

This mortgage, for \$400, was also between the Chester Loan Association and Philip G. Ashley and his wife, Mary C. Ashley. Though the document offers no clue about the purpose of the loan (to be repaid by payments of \$1 per week), the security clearly was the K-683 property,

which was described as “on the north side of the avenue [Catholic Ave.] recently laid down and adjoining the lands of Medford Taylor.”

RRH 1/9 - Will of Philip G. Ashley, dated 5/4/1914, probated 4/8/1919

On 4/11/1917 the will was received by the Register of Wills, delivered by John Ashley, who attested that he had received it from Mary C. Ashley. Since no middle initial was used, it is not clear whether this John Ashley was John R., Philip’s son, or John M., a grandson (son of George). On 5/13/1918, John W. Downey, one of the witnesses, attested to the will.

Philip G. Ashley left his son George P.[hilip?] Ashley his blacksmith shop “and all its contents, and my stable and six feet of ground on the west, north and east side of said building and all land in front of said buildings and the southwest corner to the southeast corner of the above devised land.”

To his wife, Mary C. Ashley, he willed a life estate (or until she marries again) in his remaining real estate, specified as “House, Lot and Store.” Thereafter it was to pass to two sons, George and Frank[lin], and to be sold, with the proceeds divided between them. Ashley also left his two daughters, Sallie Faucett and Mary Sewell, \$150 each.

Philip Ashley’s estate was not closed until 1936, when it was reported in the administration account books that there was no personal property. The only asset was real estate (FWS 1[2?]/258; MB1/400). No will is recorded for Mary C. Ashley.

According to John M. Ashley, Jr. (b. 1928; son of John M., Sr.; grandson of George P. and Jessie; great-grandson of Philip G. and Mary C.), of Centreville, Queen Anne’s County, both his Ashley great-grandfather and grandfather were blacksmiths who practiced their craft at the Ashley-Dacey property. The concrete-block structure that in 1998 serves as a garage and for storage, southeast of the kitchen wing (about 10 paces, as Mr. Ashley recalled it), was the last location of the shop, active until about 1948 or 1950 from its construction, remembered as dating from the earlier 1940s or late 1930s. It replaced an earlier shop, in either the same location or close to it. During World War II, because of the difficulty of getting the necessary materials for smithing, George Ashley switched to farming in Queen Anne’s County. Robert C. Gibson, an owner from 1974 to 1981 reported that evidence of the forge was in the building when he acquired it.

The U.S. Census for 1880 reveals that in that year the Philip Ashley family was household #93 in Enumeration District #55, “Eastern Neck and Rock Hall Village,” with no description of their specific location. The 1890 census could not be consulted because that year’s entire census was lost to fire, except for a special veterans’ census. In 1880 Philip [NMI] Ashley was age 41 and a blacksmith. His wife, Mary [NMI; second wife?], was age 33 and “keeping house.” There were four children listed. John R., age 16, worked as a blacksmith and attended school. Sallie A., 13, was “at home” and attended school. Mary N. was 7, and the youngest, age 3, was listed as “Phillip G.,” although he was probably officially George P., who appears in later legal documents, but perhaps was called by his middle name as a child, leading to the reversal. Son Frank[lin] evidently was not yet born.

Blacksmiths were an essential part of the Rock Hall area’s mixed economy during the late nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. Even after the use of horses, wagons, and carriages for general transportation dwindled, blacksmiths still shod farm work horses and serviced wagons (especially the wheels and their rims, as John M. Ashley, Jr., recalled). Blacksmiths also repaired (and sometimes made) metal farm equipment and machinery. In later years, progressive shops were as much machine shops as traditional blacksmith shops, although many also continued to make (and repair) generally utilitarian products (such as hinges, axes,

knives). Eastern Neck farmers, especially, very likely patronized the Philip and George Ashley blacksmith shop because it was close to them, perhaps the closest. It is not known how long the blacksmith shop shown on the 1860 and 1877 maps at the "point" .2 mile south of the Ashley-Dacey House (where Boundary Ave. ends at Main St.) endured, nor whether the L. W. Ashley shown as its proprietor in 1860 was related to Philip Ashley (such as his father). Unattributed on the 1877 map, that location may well have been the site of a predecessor family shop.

In the Rock Hall area, blacksmith shops also served the watermen, making and repairing equipment for oystering especially (dredges, hand tongs/nippers/scissors tongs, patent tongs, hoists) and, more recently, clamming (clam rigs). During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth, commercial oyster harvesting became a booming business, with increasing numbers of participants, in the Rock Hall area, as elsewhere in the Chesapeake Bay, where unprecedented (and unequalled since) millions of bushels were taken each year.

Only one blacksmith/machine shop still survives in the Rock Hall area—the Martin Wagner Blacksmith Shop (K-509), northeast of Rock Hall on Md. Rt. 20 at Edesville. Four generations in the same family, the forge fire is said to have not gone out for c. 150 years. That shop continues to serve both farmers and watermen.

Several other Ashley family businesses were also conducted on the property. Mary C. Ashley, wife of Philip G., operated a millinery business (dates unknown), making and selling women's hats. Although Philip Ashley's will suggests that there might have been a separate store, that reference most likely was to his wife's hat shop, recalled by John M. Ashley, Jr., as having been in the north first-storey room of the house main section. Mr. Gibson said that when he moved in, old hats, dresses (shop also for dresses?), and account books for the shop were found in the attic. Their whereabouts since then is not known. Mrs. Audrey Johnson, of the Rock Hall Museum, stated that they have not been given to the museum. According to her great-grandson, Mary C. Ashley lived to an advanced age, dying when he was a young boy, perhaps in 1936. Such an event might account for the final accounting that year to settle Philip Ashley's estate, which had been open for many years. Mary Ashley evidently continued to live in the house, and conduct her business there, after her husband's death. In her last years, she lived for a time with her son(s), one of whom (George) lived across Main St., in the second house north of the Catholic Ave./Civic Center-entry intersection. He and his wife, Jessie, a schoolteacher, moved into the Ashley-Dacey House after Mary Ashley's death. Presumably, since Philip's death he had been operating the blacksmith shop on the property, and continued to operate it until that business ceased c. 1948–1950.

According to John M. Ashley, Jr., his father (John, Sr.) started a bottled-gas (propane) business in Centreville c. 1933. As the business prospered, a subsidiary (or branch location) was established at the K-683 site c. 1938–1940, in and adjacent to the now-ruinous shed-roofed frame addition at the east side of the concrete-block blacksmith shop. George P. and Jessie Ashley operated that part of the business. For a time before World War II, until trucks were no longer available, George P. and John M., Sr., also operated a Mack Truck agency at the K-683 site.

RAS 26/371 - Deed dated 3/29/1941

Franklin E. Ashley and Katherine I. Ashley (wife), of Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, and George P. Ashley and Jessie Ashley (wife), of Queen Anne's County, to John M. Ashley [Sr.], of Queen Anne's County.

Philip G. Ashley's two sons (with their wives) transferred to John M. Ashley, Sr., son of George, "all of the house and lot known as the Philip G. Ashley property bequeathed to them in the last will and testament of the late Philip G. Ashley," for \$5 consideration and others paid or to be paid.

EHP 14/817 - Gift deed dated 6/15/1965

John M. Ashley [Sr.] and Margaret G. Ashley (wife), of Queen Anne's County, to Mary Ashley Long (their daughter) et al., of Brooklandville, Md.

Mary Ashley Long was given a life estate in the property, with the property thereafter to pass to her three children: Paul Marshall Long, Jr.; Mary Ashley Long; and John Denwood Long.

EHP 34/28 - Confirmatory gift deed dated 1/27/1970

John M. Ashley [Sr.] and Margaret G. Ashley (wife), of Queen Anne's County, to Mary Ashley Long (their daughter) et al., of Queen Annes County.

This deed was to correct a mistake in the preceding deed, in which the granddaughter of the sellers, Margaret Ashley Long, was mistakenly called Mary Ashley Long. As in the preceding deed, a life estate was granted to Mary Ashley Long, with the remainder at her death to pass to her three children.

EHP 35/128 - Deed dated 5/19/1970

J. Thomas Clark, of Queen Anne's County, Trustee, to Jesse C. Webb and Marie Webb (wife).

Clark had been appointed to sell the property pursuant to a Kent County Circuit Court case (Equity No. 5407), Mary Ashley Long et al. v. Paul Marshall Long et al. Clark had sold the property on 3/11/1970 to the Webbs, for \$12,000.

EHP 55/800 - U. S. Marshal's deed dated 6/26/1973

John W. Spurrier, U.S. Marshal for District of Maryland and Trustee, to the United States of America (Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture).

On 10/11/1972 the court had ordered sale of the property, as a result of the Webbs' default on their mortgage (EHP 35/130, dated 5/20/1970) for the full purchase price of \$12,000. The sale to FmHA, the mortgage holder, on 1/1/73 was for \$13,090, perhaps reflecting in part the numerous alterations and improvements undertaken during the Webb ownership (as related by Robert Gibson, the succeeding owner).

EHP 59/207 - Quitclaim deed dated 7/8/1974

United States of America (FmHA) to Robert C. Gibson and Irene S. Gibson (wife).

The price was \$13,090, which was also the amount of the mortgage (EHP 59/209, dated 8/2/1974).

EHP 139/114 - U.S. Marshal's deed dated 2/18/1982

John W. Spurrier, U.S. Marshal for District of Maryland, Trustee, to United States of America (FmHA).

The Gibsons defaulted on the mortgage, which was foreclosed, with documents pertaining to the foreclosure recorded in EHP 139/92-113. The court-ordered sale was held on 5/26/81. The property sold for \$14,966 to the holder of the mortgage (FmHA), confirmed by the court on

9/21/81. The foreclosure papers also indicated that additional amounts had been advanced by FmHA to the Gibsons in 1980 for winterizing the house.

Although it could be stock terminology routinely included, the statement included in this deed that the house "shall not be occupied until structurally sound and habitable," with heating, plumbing, electricity, and sewage, suggests that the house had deteriorated by the end of the Gibson ownership. This indeed was the case, as confirmed by Mr. Gibson in a recent phone conversation. He mentioned several factors. When the house was being connected to the new Rock Hall public sewage system, the gas line from a propane tank (supplying at least the furnace that Mr. Webb, a heating and air conditioning contractor, had installed in the attic) was nicked. The resulting explosion lifted at least part of the house off the foundation, but especially in the wing section, in which the bathroom was located, as well as nearby portions of the main section. The following fire damaged mainly the bathroom and was extinguished soon after the gas supply was shut off. Mr. Gibson also spoke of damage caused by the huge oak tree (seemingly one of the oldest in the town) in the front yard (c. 3-1/2 to 4 feet in diameter at five-foot trunk height). Roots had grown under the house and raised it, and branches had damaged the main-section and second-storey porch roofs. Deterioration had accelerated during an extended absence from the house, while they were living and working in West Virginia.

EHP 140/228 - Quitclaim deed dated 11/1/1982

Farmers Home Administration, USDA, to William J. Dicey [since deceased] and Marilyn Dicey (wife).

The selling price was \$10,000. In February or March 1998 the house is to be demolished by Interfaith Housing Corporation of Denton, Md., because it cannot be rehabilitated and brought up to code at an affordable cost. Interfaith Housing plans to replace it with a new two-storey house for the Dicey family.

Atlas of Kent County. Philadelphia: Lake, Griffing & Stevenson, 1877.

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Johnson, Robert J. *Gravesend, Serene But Still Profound*. Published for the American Revolution Bicentennial Committee of Rock Hall, 1975.

[Johnson, Robert J., ed.]. *Rock Hall Historical Collection*. Rock Hall, Md.: Rock Hall Commemoration, Inc., printed by American Yearbook Co., Hannibal, Mo., 1957.

Kent County Land Records. Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Kent County Courthouse, Chestertown, Md.

Kent County Wills. Office of the Register of Wills, Kent County Courthouse, Chestertown, Md.

Martenet's Map of Kent County, Maryland. Baltimore: Simon J. Martenet, 1860.

[Peterman, Thomas J.]. *100th Anniversary St. John's Catholic Church, 1890-1990, Rock Hall, Maryland*. Published by St. John's Catholic Church, 1990.

Papenfuse, Edward C. et al. *A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635-1789*. Studies in Maryland History and Culture, 2 vols. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979-1985.

Phone conversation with Robert C. Gibson, Rock Hall, Md.

Phone conversation with John M. Ashley, Jr., Centreville, Md.

U.S. Census, 1880, Kent County, Md., p. 11 (microfilm). Except for a special veterans' census, the entire U.S. Census for 1890 was lost to fire.

Verbal boundary description and justification

The state assessment office at the Kent County Courthouse, Chestertown, shows the K-683 property as 75' x 100', which seems a considerable underestimation from visual plot inspection.

All the deeds from Philip G. Ashley's in 1882 through the Diceys' in 1982 give essentially the same property description, which is insufficient for determining the plot's size, dimensions, and the location of some boundary lines. The plot seems to be not a rectangle, though there may be one or two right angles. Also, this lot, with its axis oriented differently from that of the rest of the lots sold on Catholic Ave. by the Catholic church, seems larger than those other lots, which may well have been rectangular and 75' wide x 150' deep, as the history of St. John's Church states. As a corner property, its dimensions may well have been deliberately different. Given the only partially useful description of the K-683 property, it likely measured 75' across its Main St. frontage, then about 200' to the east (rear) along the line of the adjacent Main St. house's property—though this line may not be parallel with Catholic Ave. Rather, the K-683 property may be wider at the rear than at the front. Also, it cannot be ascertained whether the rear line, shared with the adjacent Catholic Ave. property, is parallel with Main St., though it may well be 90° from Catholic Ave.

Summary from Dicey deed (EHP 140/228:

The lot runs 75' north along Main St. from the point where the north line of Catholic Ave. intersects the center line of Main St., to the Eldridge Glenn lands, also known as the Taylor property. From there it runs with those lands N 73-1/2" E 12.3 perches to the lands of Charles G. Kerr, also known as the Kendall property [adjacent property on Catholic Ave.], and then with those lands to Catholic Ave.



K-683
Ashley-Dicey House
Rock Hall, Kent County, Md.

Profile of second-storey
door and window molding

K-683, Ashley-Dicey House
Rock Hall, Kent County, Maryland

Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Data

Geographic Organization:
Eastern Shore

Chronological Periods:
A.D. 1870-1930
A.D. 1930-Present

Developmental Periods:
Agricultural-Industrial Transition

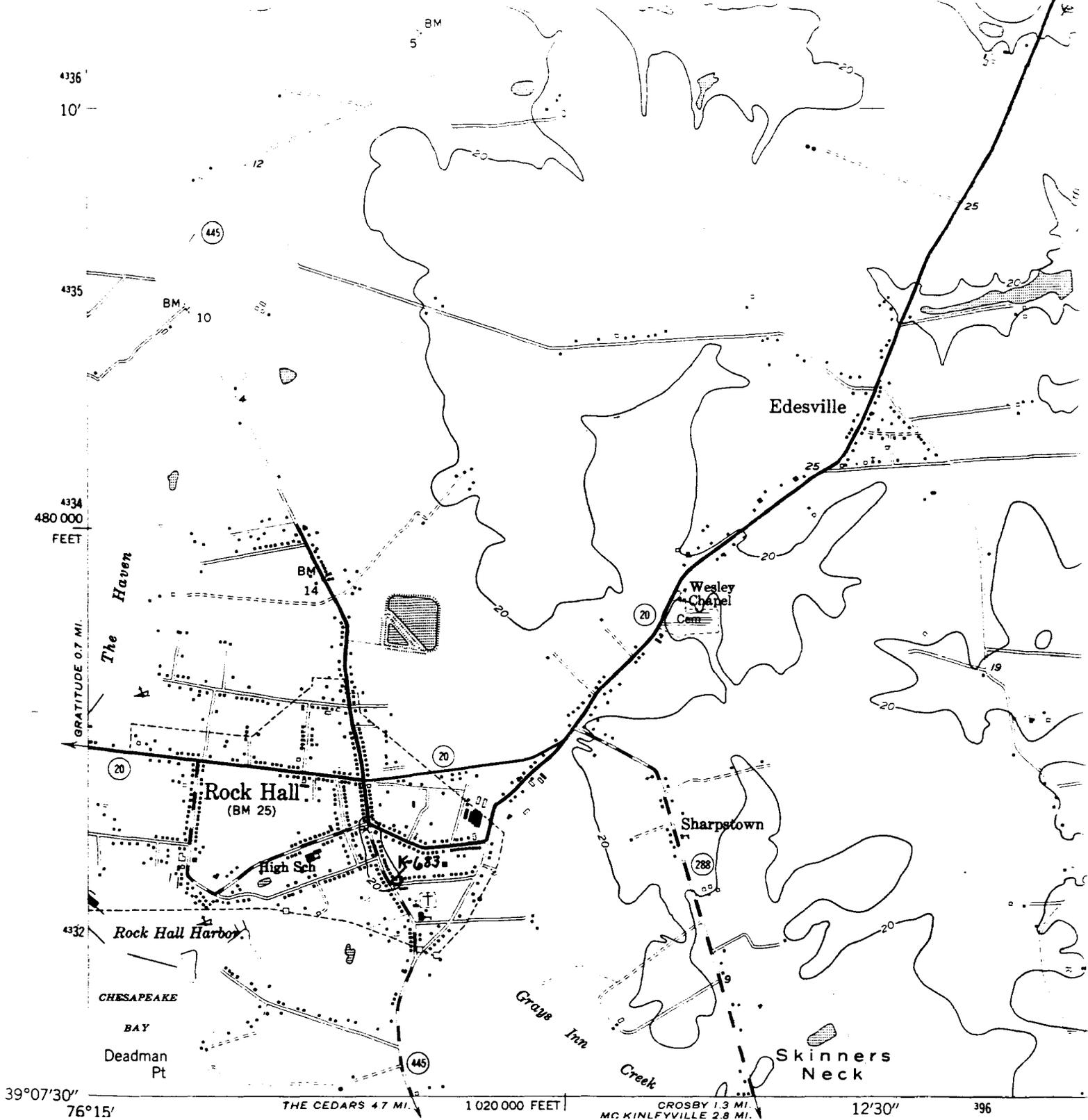
Historic Period Themes:
Architecture
Economic

Resource Type:
Category: buildings
Note: Severely deteriorated, the house is scheduled for demolition in early 1998.

Historic Environment: town/village

Historic Functions and Uses:
dwelling; millinery business (making and selling women's hats)
blacksmith shop; bottled-gas business; truck-sales agency

Known Design Source: none



K-683
 Ashley-Dickey House
 Rock Hall, Kent County, Md.

USGS quadrangle map: Rock Hall, Md.
 Scale 1:24000
 1953
 (photorevised 1973)



K-683

Ashley-Dickey House

Rock Hall, Kent County, Md.

Photo by M.G. Fallaw

2/11/95

Neg at SHPO-Maryland

View to SE (Main section west
facade & part of end)

≅ 1 of 9



K-683

Ashley Dickey House

Rock Hall, Kent County, Md.

Photo by M. Q. Fallaw

2/1/98

Neg. at Maryland SHPO

View to NE (main section west
facade & Squire end, wing A
south facade)

= 9 r 9



K-683

Ashley-Dickey House

Rock Hall, Kent County, Md.

Photo by M. G. Fallow

2/1/98

Neg. at SHPO - Maryland

View to West

#3 of 0



K- 653

Ashley-Dickey House
Rock Hall, Kent County, Md.

Photo by M.G. Fallaw

2/1/98

Neg. at Maryland SHPO

View to west

#4 of 9



K-683

Ashley-Dacey House

Rock Hall, Kent County, Md.

Photo by M. Q. Fallaw

2/1/98

Neg. at Maryland SHPO

View to NW (main section S gable
end, wing A south facade, partial
Wing B)

#5 of 9



K-683

Ashley-Dickey House

Rock Hall, Kent County, Md.

Photo by M. Q. Fallaw

2/1/98

Neg. at Maryland SHPO

View to SE (main section in facade,

W gable end, partial wings A+B)

#6 of 9



K-683

Ashley-Dickey House

Rock Hall, Kent County, Maryland

Photo by M. Q. Fullmer

2/1/98

Neg. at Maryland SHPO

View to NE (main section west facade +
south gable end, Wing A south facade,
adjacent houses to N on Main St)

#7 of 9



K-683

Ashley-Dacey House

Rock Hall, Kent County, Maryland

Photo by M. D. Fallaw

2/1/98

Neg. at Maryland SHPO

NW eave, main section

#8 of 9



K-683

Ashley-Dacey House

Rock Hall, Kent County, Md.

Photo by M.Q. Fallaw

2/1/98

Neg. at Maryland SHPO

SW eave, main section showing plate
construction

#9 of 9