

1.

K-78

Wilmer's Mill House  
High Street, Chestertown  
c. 1733

Simon Wilmer (d. 1699) acquired Stepney and established a mill on the upper reaches of Radcliffe Creek in the late 17th Century. Rebecca Tilghman Wilmer (d. 1725), Simon's widow, stipulated in her will that the "negro man James" was to keep the mill for two years for the use of her son Simon and brother Tilghman (Richard), after which he was to be free.<sup>1</sup> Simon Wilmer, II (d.1737) bequeathed in his will "part of my lands on which the grist and saw mills stand . . . with mills and Miller's House" to his sons Lambert and Charles.<sup>2</sup>

In its original configuration the mill house was a three bay long, gambrel roof dwelling with its Flemish bond facade facing "the road leading from my mill to Chestertown."<sup>3</sup> Its first kitchen was located on the east gable and was probably a single room, 1-1/2 story brick structure. The plan of the house was unique in the area. Double doors opened into the hall which had a large fireplace with flanking closets, paneling stretching across the entire composition. On the opposite side of the room there were two doors, one close to the back door which opened onto a stair that ascended against the north wall with winder at the top, the other door opening into an unheated room lighted by the south window. On the west gable a date had been laid in glazed headers. The numerals

173

were still discernible before the house fell into ruin in the 1970's.

Lambert Wilmer died in 1750, leaving the majority of Stepney,

including the mill, to his son Simon. In the 1783 Tax Assessment, Wilmer's lands are described as having "two brick dwelling Houses and Kitchens, one Grist Mill, 7 out Houses, two Orchards joining Chestertown."<sup>4</sup>

To his son, Simon (V), Simon Wilmer left that part of Stepney which was "located on the southwest side of the road leading from my Mill to Chestertown up along the same as to the northwest corner of a lot of ground sold by me to the Trustees for the Poor of Kent County, just below the hill called Stoney Hill - then to the Creek and up the Creek . . . and the Mill and Mill Seat . . ." <sup>5</sup>. From 1798 to 1809 Simon (V) retained ownership of the mill and miller's house.

It was probably during this period, or perhaps in the last years of his father's (Simon IV) life that the millhouse underwent a major remodeling. A new frame wing was built on the west gable; two rooms deep, covered by an asymmetrical roof. The principal room had its fireplace built back-to-back to the old fireplace. The front room was finished with paneled wainscoting and a corner cupboard. A built-in bench adjacent the second floor fireplace served as a balustrade for the stair. A window seat was built into the single dormer on the south. Access between this and the main part of the second floor was achieved via a break in the brick wall. This change resulted in the obliteration of the decade numeral in the gable. The "3" remained behind the plaster and slightly above the roof. The "17" was concealed by the chimney.

On the first floor, the back room of the addition had chair rail and other period trim, but the most curious feature was the location of an exterior batten door next to the back corner post on the west wall with a 3/6

window immediately adjacent. Also interesting, the room had been constructed on brick piers with clapboard infill whereas the front room and the main house were constructed on a stone and brick basement respectively.

At the same time as the construction of this addition, a third part was built to house a kitchen. Most likely the brick kitchen mentioned in 1783 was removed at the same time that the new west extensions were made.

The year before Simon (V) sold his patented inheritance, including the mill, mill house and land, he purchased his boyhood home, the White House Farm or Stepney.<sup>6</sup> By the time he sold the old farm to his younger brother, Lemuel, in 1818, he was no longer residing in Kent County, but in New Jersey.<sup>7</sup>

John Whaland purchased the mill in 1809<sup>8</sup> and the mill and mill house remained in the Whaland family until 1880 when it was sold to Hiram and Mary Elizabeth Brown.<sup>9</sup> The Whalands in the meantime had built a house on the opposite side of the road which remained until the 1940's.

The Chestertown Strawboard and Manufacturing Company purchased Whaland's Mill in 1882<sup>10</sup> which it held until 1898 when it was sold to Thomas Topping.<sup>11</sup> The Toppings built another house between the old miller's house and the mill. They sold the Mill Farm in 1924. In 1927, the interior of the old brick house was sold to Henry Francis duPont, who transported it to Long Island and incorporated it into his summer house called "Chestertown House".

From that point to the early 1970's, the house remained vacant and deteriorated until it was finally torn down. Some of the bricks from the old house were used in a new wing at Hodges Bar Farm.

1. Wills, Lib. 1, fol. 275.
2. Wills, Lib. 2, fol. 58.
3. Wills, Lib. 3, fol. 137.
4. Kent Co. Tax Assessment, 1783.
5. Wills, Lib. 7, fol. 608.
6. Land Records, Lib. BC 5, fol. 293.
7. Land Records, Lib. WS 2, fol. 268.
8. Land Records, Lib. BC 5, fol. 523.
9. Land Records, Lib. SB 1, fol. 298.
10. Land Records, Lib. SB 2, fol. 635.
11. Land Records, Lib. JTD 1, fol. 327.

1. STATE Maryland COUNTY Kent County TOWN VICINITY STREET NO. High Street extended  ORIGINAL OWNER ORIGINAL USE Dwelling PRESENT OWNER T.A. Stradley PRESENT USE Vacant WALL CONSTRUCTION Brick & Frame NO. OF STORIES 1 1/2	HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY  2. NAME Mill House K-78  DATE OR PERIOD C. 1730's STYLE Colonial ARCHITECT BUILDER  3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION <span style="float: right;">OPEN TO PUBLIC NO</span>  <p style="text-align: center;">Set back from the road and close to Brooks' Mill (K-287) is a small colonial house consisting of a three bay brick gambrel roof section and a three bay frame catslide section. The brick portion is laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers. It has an unusual molded brick water table, segmental arches over the windows, and a chimney on the west end. The brickwork is covered with stucco which is falling off. The original frames are still intact as well as the cornice, the double doors and the louvered shutters. There are two flat headed dormers on the gambrel roof and some of the sash are remaining. The rear wall has been removed and the roof is collapsing. It was originally panelled on all sides to the ceiling. The</p>	
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE <span style="float: right;">Endangered RUINS Interior Exterior</span>	
6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)	7. PHOTOGRAPH
8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.	9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER Michael Bourne Maryland Historical Trust  DATE OF RECORD Feb. 15, 1968

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE



wing was built as a single room, with a fireplace backed up to the one in the brick section and a winding stair next to it. There is brick nogging in the wall and exposed corner members and plates covered with beaded boards. Originally there was paneled wainscot and corner cupboard. A cell room was added behind this room in the eighteenth century. There is chair rail still intact. The shutters, some hardware and scraps of sash and door remain as well as beaded clapboard on the facade and beaded shiplap on the east side. The ruin poses a wealth of building details, especially the exterior.

K-78



March 16, 1970

Mr. Michael Bourne  
Great Hopes  
Sudlersville, Maryland 21668

Dear Michael:

It was very good to see you today, and I hope that I was able to give you some information that was helpful to you. I am listing below what information we have about the woodwork bought in Maryland for Mr. du Pont's house at Southampton. You may recognize the names of the houses. Most of this woodwork was bought through Mr. H. L. Lindsey, who lives somewhere near you in Maryland. It might be worth while talking with him.

K-78 → 1/21/24--Paneling and woodwork from old Wilmer house, Chestertown, Maryland. Bought through H. L. Lindsey (Pine Room). *Courtesy of Mr. Wilbur Hubbard*

--Woodwork, old house at Georgetown, Maryland, 1766. Also bought through Mr. Lindsey.

9/3/24 --Paneling, Chapman house, 1762.

7/20/24--Paneling from Brown house, Chesterown, Maryland. Bought through Mr. Lindsey. This house is further described as "Violet Grove on the road from Chestertown to St. Paul's Church." It was owned by a Mr. Hynson Rodgers, and the tenant was Charles M. Brown. (Thus there are references to two Brown houses in the files.)

12/4/24--Paneling from Fairlee Creek house. Bought through Mr. Lindsey.

6/18/25--Woodwork in house at Quaker Neck, Kent County, near Chestertown. Bought from Mrs. Harold Baker.

There is a further reference to correspondence with a Mrs. Lea Tomlinson Stine re Serena Smith property. Apparently this is a house near Georgetown, and a further note says that the woodwork was used in the reception room at Southampton.

Please let me know if you have any further questions about the graduate work, and I shall be glad to talk with you at any time.

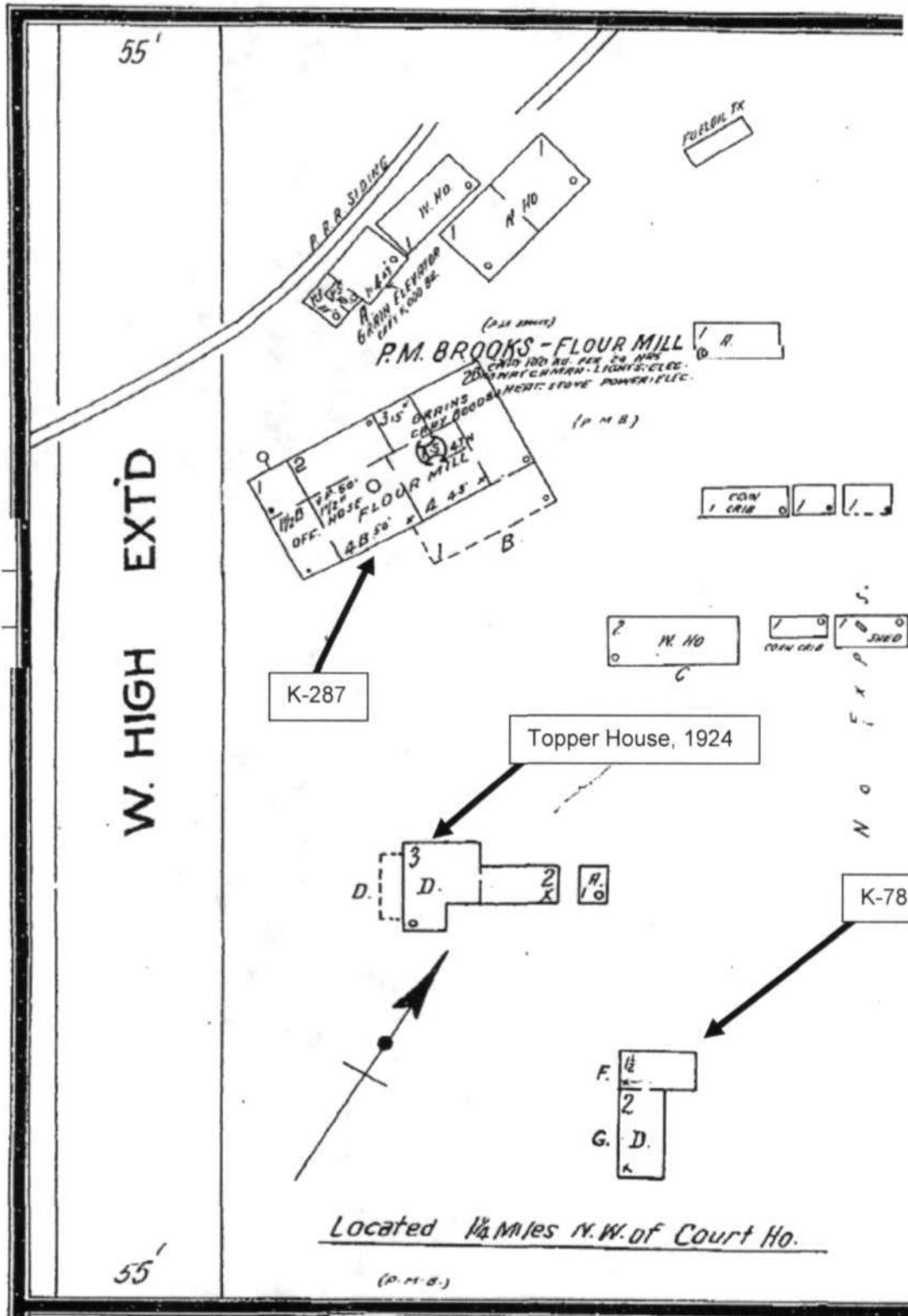
Sincerely,  
*John A. H. Sweeney*  
John A. H. Sweeney  
Deputy Director  
Collections and Interpretation

JAHS:mew  
The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware 19735 Tel. 302 656-8591

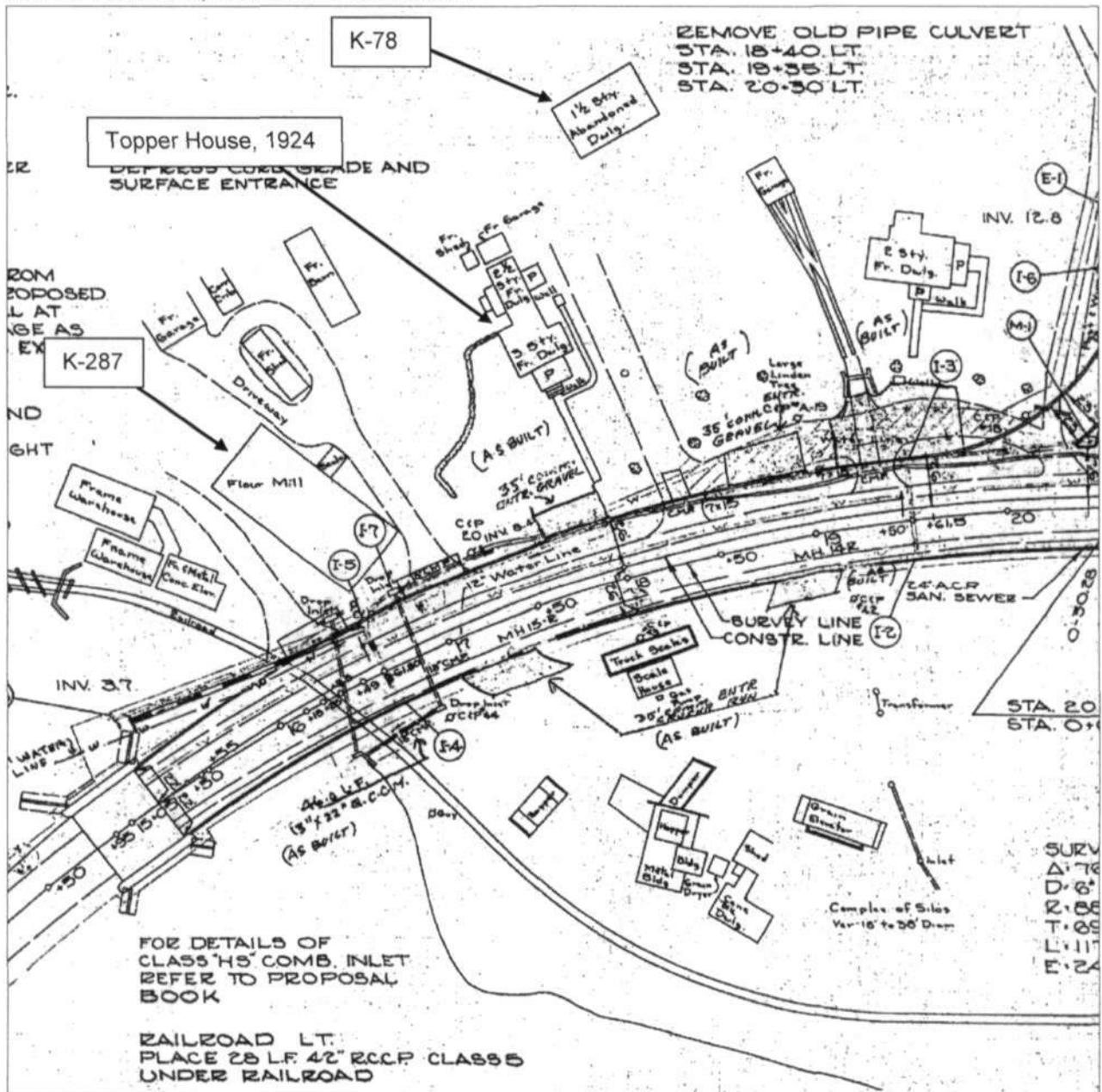




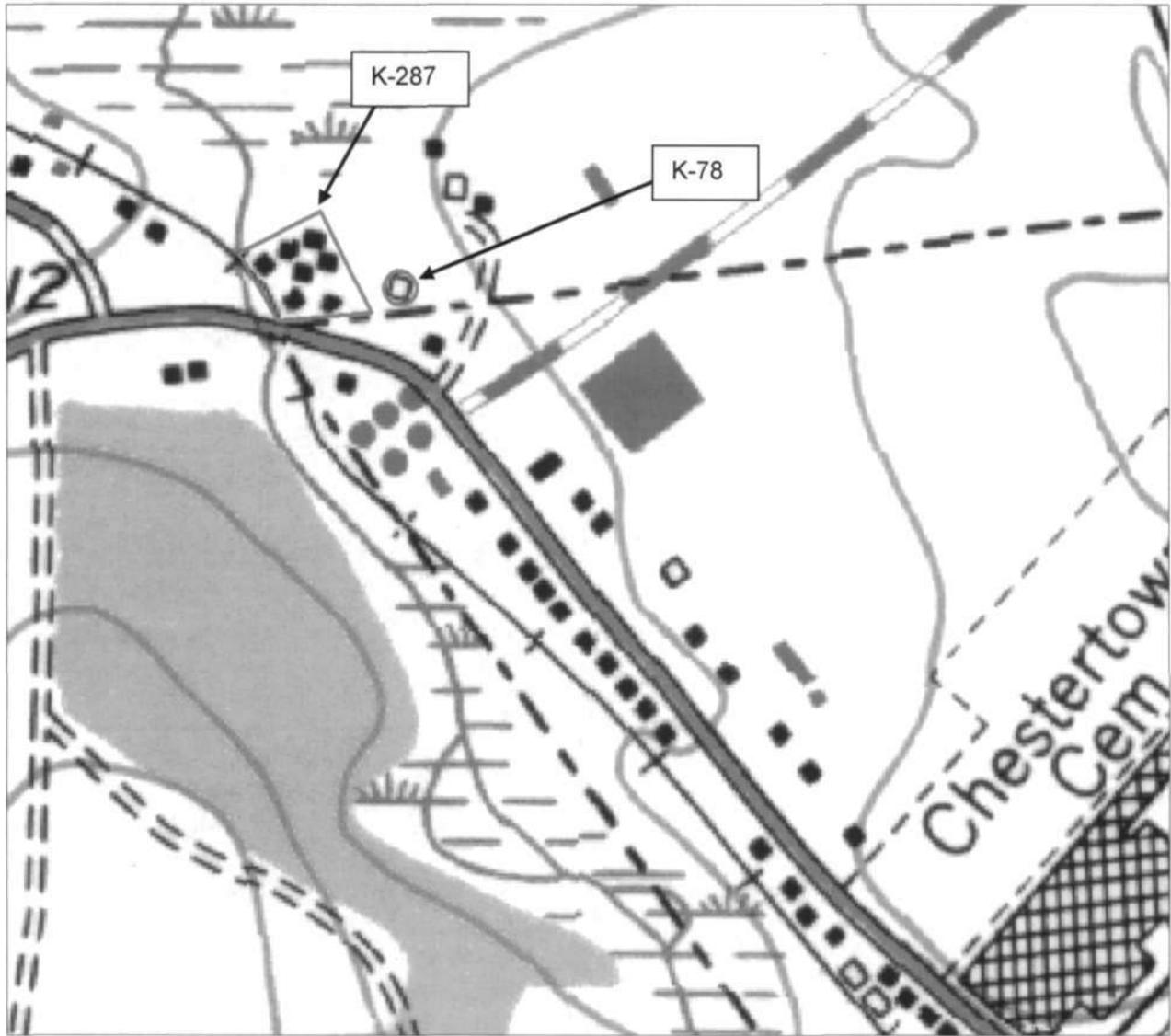
K-78  
 Wilmer's Mill House, site (Old Wilmer House)  
 High Street (MD 20), Chestertown  
 Sanborn Map 1923, Reprinted 1960



K-78  
 Wilmer's Mill House, site (Old Wilmer House)  
 High Street (MD 20), Chestertown  
 1968 As-Built Plans, State Roads Commission



K-78  
Wilmer's Mill House, site (Old Wilmer House)  
High Street (MD 20), Chestertown  
Chestertown Quad 1953, Photorevised 1973



FEB 1963



Chestertown  
✓ next to mill  
Kent County

M. Bourne, Mo3

K-78

183A

K H 78 - A



Mill House - K 78

603-26

140B 68



Mill House - K-78

602-13

1403 68



89 E1041

603-509

HOUSE OUTSIDE CHESTER TOWN - KENT CO.

1750-80 ARCHITECTURALLY IMPORTANT

BECAUSE OF COMBINED STYLES AND.

USE OF DIVERSE MATERIALS

PRIVATELY OWNED :

cutside portion - K-78



Corvica, gambrel, stucco detail - k-78

603-19

MB 68



cornice detail - K-78

603-14

14873 68



doorway detail - K. 78

Wilmer's Mill House, ruin  
(old Wilmer House)  
Chesetown Fairlee Rd

663-9

1403 68



cutslide portion, brick piers - clapboard etc - detail - K-78

603-22

MOB 68



Mill House

K-78

653-25

14073 68



Shutter & trim detail - k-78

603-8

MOB 68



Doorframe - Detail - K-78

603-15

14073 68



Dormer detail - k-78

17013 68

603-12



Detail ShuHar - K-78

603 - 13

NOB 68



headed clapboard between brick piers - K-78

603-21

140B 68



stone foundation detail k-78

603-23

140B 68



brickwork + molded birch detail - K-78

603-12

NOTB 68



basement window detail - K-78

603-24

M03 68



beaded clipboard - detail - K-78

603-22-

14013 68



door + frame detail - K-78

603 - 11

14073 68



vertical bar grill detail - k.78

603-7

14073 68



mortar joint detail - k-78

603-5

MOB 68



Brick nogging - K-78

603-6

Ms B 68



fireplace detail - K-78

603-18

MOB 68



door catch - k.78

603-17

1400368



bar catch - detail - K-78

603-16

MDB 68