

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes \_\_\_  
no \_\_\_

Property Name: National Capital Gun Club Inventory Number: M : 20-48  
 Address: 16700 Riffle Ford Road City: Gaithersburg vicinity \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: 20879  
 County: Montgomery USGS Topographic Map: Germantown 1:24000 USGS Quad \_\_\_\_\_  
 Owner: State of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources Is the property being evaluated a district? \_\_\_yes  
 Tax Parcel Number: P2 Tax Map Number: DT51 Tax Account ID Number: 00397868  
 Project: DNR Documentation of Razings Agency: Md's Department of Natural Resources  
 Site visit by MHT Staff: \_\_\_no \_\_\_yes Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is the property located within a historic district? \_\_\_yes Xno

*If the property is within a district* District Inventory Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 NR-listed district \_\_\_yes Eligible district \_\_\_yes District Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource \_\_\_yes Xno Non-contributing but eligible in another context \_\_\_

*If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)*  
 Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible \_\_\_yes Xno

Criteria: \_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D Considerations: \_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D \_\_\_E \_\_\_F \_\_\_G \_\_\_None  
 Documentation on the property/district is presented in:

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

The National Capital Gun Club does not appear to meet the Standards for eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Criterion A:

No evidence has been uncovered that would indicate this site has significance because it is associated with an event or broad pattern of history, as required in Criterion A. While the barn and corner do have associations with early 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural practices, the historic farmhouse, agricultural and cattle related buildings have been demolished. Usage of the property for gun club activities has altered the site. From 1954-2006, the property was associated with Washington, DC- Baltimore area gun clubs of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it was a private club specializing in skeet and trap shooting, with a large membership of 200-300. Besides the large membership is the fact that there were less than ten clubs in the Baltimore- Washington area that offered both skeet and trap, of which this was one. And this gun club was known to have hosted the premier skeet event in the United States- the North South Skeet Championship- numerous times. The caliber of entrants was outstanding, and that has not diminished even though the event has moved to another venue. While a large club for the area, the only remaining structures associated with the club are the simple concrete block skeet shooting towers (1954, 1979-82) and two bunker like

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW	
Eligibility recommended ___	Eligibility not recommended <u>X</u>
Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D	Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___None
Comments: _____	
<u>Jonathan Suggs</u> Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	<u>3/16/15</u> Date
<u>NA</u> Reviewer, NR Program	Date

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NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Continuation Sheet No. 1

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trap houses (c.1954), since the entire clubhouse, built 1954, totally burned in 2011. Architects or Engineers who may have been associated with the clubhouse are unknown. The property was associated with trap and skeet shooting- first independently 1954-2006, and then under a lease agreement with the state of Maryland 1979-2006. Usage of the site as a gun club for recreational shooting ceased in 2006. All of the buildings have experienced have significant deterioration, accelerated by water infiltration and vacancy since 2006.

Criterion B:

No known person of significance is associated with the National Capital Gun Club property. The property changed hands eight times since 1857, when it was part of a 314 acre parcel inherited by James W. Connor, son of John Connor of Loudon County, Va. and sold in 1857 to Lucinda L. Philips. The Connor family is known to have been an early settler of Loudon County and been large landowners, but the relationship of the settlers to John and James Connor of the 1850s is unknown. Additionally, no known structures from Connor's ownership exist. The Jacob and Ralph Hammann families used the property for raising cattle 1911-32. As a result of a dispute about watering holes, a Deed of Exchange was recorded, but no other impact was made upon local or regional history. The "astronomist," John E Willis, who demolished the historic residence, and built the current primary residence 1932-49, has made no significant impact. While specific names are unknown, the combined membership of the National Capital Skeet Club and the Washington Trap Club into the National Capital Gun Club in 1954 would have assembled a joint membership of well- to- do Washington, DC area businessmen. Also, as two clubs combined into one, its membership was known to have been significantly larger than most other private gun clubs of the c.1950-1990 period.

Criterion C:

The remaining historic structures on gun club property stand on their original foundation, in their original location and with setting, workmanship and feeling preserved. But there have been two different settings and usages amidst rolling terrain, about half a mile uphill from and south of the Great Seneca Creek. The agricultural complex of 1895-1911, now lacking its original primary residence, and located closest to Riffle Ford Road in a forested setting, has been vandalized and stands in a state of collapse. Standing are: a principal residence that replaced the original one in c. 1932-49, a barn, corncrib and tenant house dating 1895-1911. Window sashes and most doors are all missing, porches have collapsed, vandalism has occurred on the interiors, water has infiltrated the second floors, piping and metalwork have been removed. Additionally, the north frame wall of the barn no longer stands on its foundation, but has slipped and fallen behind it. Wall and roof are now separating and the building is in a state of collapse. Built c. 1954, north of and downslope of the principal residence are: a totally collapsed dog kennel and outdoor barbecue fireplace, within barbed wire fencing. Garbage was added to this fenced area, including abandoned vehicles of the 1950-60s, furniture, household glass and broken signage, all within barbed wire fencing. About 1,400 feet west of the principal residence, in the gently sloped open meadow of the property is the burnt gun clubhouse, the shooting range and shooting towers associated with the National Capital Gun Club. Range is nearly totally overgrown, bunker like trap houses are totally overgrown, towers have holes in their walls averaging 3' x 4' where they have been entered and vandalized, clubhouse is merely strewn brick and concrete block and a fireplace/flue. All of the structures on the property stand open, unoccupied, exposed to weathering and in a state of collapse. *None of the standing structures on the property exhibit distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction that represents the work of a master or possess high artistic value.*

In conclusion, there is insufficient evidence to consider the National Capital Gun Club eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Prepared by: Catherine Adams Masek

Date Prepared: January 31, 2015

CAPSULE SUMMARY  
National Capital Gun Club  
Riffle Ford Road  
Gaithersburg vicinity, Montgomery County  
Begun c. 1895, alterations to site through c.1979-82  
Public- within Seneca Creek State Park

MIHP # M:20-48

The National Capital Gun Club is located within the Seneca Creek State Park, approximately 8 miles west of Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, MD. There are a variety of structures and buildings dating from its agricultural usage as a farm, to its recreational usage for shooting skeet, trap and sporting clays. The property is approximately 400' above the level of the Great Seneca Creek, accessible via a narrow entrance driveway, at a curve of the Riffle Ford Road.

Agricultural structures are located in the wooded area and gun club structures are located in the open cleared area of the property. The c. 1932-49 Cape Cod styled primary residence is located about 50' from the entrance and is the first structure immediately visible to the visitor. The collapsing, c. 1895-1911 tenant house and totally collapsed dog kennel (c.1954) are located about 30' north of and downslope of the primary residence, amidst trees and dense undergrowth. The barn and corncrib (both c.1895-1911) are located about 50' south and uphill of the primary residence, and across the unpaved entrance driveway from it. The historic house, which was associated with the owner of the barn and corncrib, was most likely built c. 1895-1911; and demolished c. 1932-49, along with other farm related structures. The shooting complex (begun 1954) is located about 1,400' west of the entrance. A private gun club, known primarily for skeet and trap shooting, with a large membership of 200-300, it was active 1954-2006. The clubhouse of the gun club burnt in a forest fire of February 2011; scattered broken brick and concrete blocks and a fireplace chimney remain. Four shooting ranges and towers remain, where once nine had existed. Property surrounding the agricultural complex once used for grazing cattle is now littered with shotgun shells and "clay" targets. The gun club related structures stand representative of recreational shooting in the mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century; the farm related structures stand representative of agricultural life in Montgomery County.

The property does not appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Neither the gun club nor the historic farm buildings exhibit the qualities of architectural significance for their type, period or method of construction. While representative of their period and usage, the gun club related structures and the farm related structures stand in opposition on the property, and are not significant historically or architecturally.



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## 7. Description

Inventory No. M: 20-48

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### Condition

excellent     deteriorated  
 good         ruins  
 fair          altered

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### Summary:

The National Gun Club property is located on the west side of the narrow paved Riffle Ford Road, approximately 8 miles west of the town of Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, within the Seneca Creek State Park. At a curve in the road, as it ascends sharply in elevation from the Great Seneca Creek, the property is located approximately 400' above the level of the creek. Agricultural structures are located in the wooded area and gun club structures are located in the open cleared area of the property.

The gun club property contains a variety of structures and buildings dating from its agricultural usage as a farm, to its recreational usage for shooting skeet, trap and sporting clays. The Cape Cod styled primary residence is located about 50' from the entrance and is the first structure immediately visible to the visitor. The collapsing tenant house and totally collapsed dog kennel are located about 30' north of and downslope of the primary residence, amidst trees and dense undergrowth. The barn and corncrib are located about 60' south and uphill of the primary residence, and across the unpaved entrance driveway from it. The primary residence, barn, corncrib, tenant house, outbuilding (dog kennel), and clubhouse are mentioned in the 2003 MIHP form for Seneca Creek State Park. (MIHP form M:19-38, Number 7, page 14) The historic farm building complex that once occupied the 90+ acre gun club property was known as "Parts of Gravelly, Gap Filled In and Mitchell's Range." Gun club-related usage dating from the mid -20<sup>th</sup> century occurred in the western half of the property. Located about 1,400' west of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural complex, in a large relatively flat area of the property, are the charred ruins of the concrete block clubhouse, skeet shooting towers and gun range.

### Narrative Description:

The one and half story, three bay, gable roofed Cape Cod styled **primary residence** built c. 1932-49, facing the entry driveway, is built on concrete block foundation, with walls of German styled siding. A shed roofed porch roof sits collapsed onto the front porch over the main entrance. Remnants of a wooden porch floor rest on a concrete slab at the front porch. Supporting posts and balustrade are missing. The main entrance door, now placed inside, has a configuration of 6 panels plus upper fanlight of glass, with all glass missing. A rear wooden porch is in collapsing condition. A rear wood entrance door of three horizontal panels in the lower half, had a single pane of glass in the upper half; glass is now nonexistent. All windows have plain frames; sash is all missing, but originally sashes were wood with six-over-one paned configurations.

On the front (south) façade, first floor, there are paired double -hung sash windows on either side of a main entrance door. Centered above each of the end bays of the second story is a dormer containing a single double -hung sash window. Asphalt shingle covers the dormers and roof. Guttering is nonexistent.

The side (west) façade contains a full height brick chimney on the exterior wall, flanked by a single double -hung sash window. While they appear off center, the windows do align with those on the opposite or east façade.

On the rear (north) façade is a single door, off center, flanked by a single double -hung sash window. A dormer window on the second floor is located in each end bay, mirroring those on the front (south) façade.

On the side (east) façade is a doorway, off center, flanked by a single window, each of which is opposite a window on the side (west) façade.

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The interior of the house is accessed via the main entry door in the center bay on the front (south) façade. Inside, one is standing at the bottom of the staircase to the second floor. Missing a complete balustrade, the straight run stair consists of only wooden steps. East of the front entrance door is the dining room with a wall niche to accommodate a server or sideboard. West of the front entrance door is the living room. A thin veneer of brick surrounds the fireplace and a thin artificial wood veneer paneling covers parts of the living room walls. On the east living room wall are two doorways, in which each door has two rectangular panels. One accesses a half bath which is now damaged and partially missing, and one accesses a closet.

A kitchen is located south of the dining room, but like the rest of the house, lacks window sash, as well as kitchen cabinetry and plumbing fixtures.

Beginning in the forested area 15' north of the house is a partially broken barbed wire fence, approximately 3' in height, which encircles an area approximately 30' x 30' north of the primary residence. Within it are located:

1. a garbage area, containing three abandoned vehicles dating c. 1950-1960s, clothing, bedsprings, household glass, furniture, and metal signage;
2. a brick exterior fireplace/ barbecue built c. 1954, partially collapsed;
3. a totally collapsed 6' x 8' dog kennel, built c. 1954, which is constructed of 5' height tree trunks, with a shed roof of corrugated sheet metal;
4. A two story, gambrel roofed, two bay **tenant house**, built c.1895-1911. The standing seam metal roof of the tenant house has partially collapsed, window sashes are all missing, one exterior door remains, exterior walls are not plumb, and 3' x 3' holes exist in first and second floor and stair. Exterior walls are covered in horizontal wood clapboards, followed by artificial siding. On the south façade is a single entry with door containing glass in the upper half and three horizontal panels in the lower half. An exterior brick flue is attached to the south facade, east of the door. The two second floor windows on the south facade have been altered into one large rectangular window opening in the center of the second floor. On the side (east) façade is a single first floor window opening. The grade descends steeply to the north and a concrete block foundation with basement entry is evident at the northwest corner. A brick foundation is all that remains of a full height brick fireplace flue, attached to the exterior of the north facade. A small first floor window opening flanks each side of the fireplace foundation. A single large rectangular window opening in the center of the second floor mirrors the window on the south façade. On the side (west) façade are two openings- a doorway into the rear first floor kitchen and a window in the first floor front living room. A narrow screened one story porch existed at one time, attached to the west façade, nearly the full length of the west wall. The porch was built upon a concrete block foundation and accessed the house via the kitchen door. Both screening and block are now broken and strewn in the area west and north of the tenant house. On the interior, a narrow enclosed stair is located on the east wall of the kitchen, ascending to the second floor. Plumbing fixtures, interior doors and window sashes are missing. Two rooms exist on the first floor and one on the second.

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Beginning approximately 60' south and uphill of the entrance lane and south of the primary residence is located a two story, gambrel roofed 34.5' x 48' frame barn (c.1895-1911) and an adjacent one story shed roofed 16' x 8' frame corncrib. The barn, approximately 28' in height, has horizontal wood siding and is accessible via an 8' wide doorway in the north façade. Sliding wooden doors originally were located on the exterior of the north and south facades and were located in metal tracks still visible above each central door opening. Parts of broken doors lay on the floor beneath grain and dirt. A window opening flanks each of the central doorways on the north and south facades. All twelve of the window openings appear altered. Original configuration is unknown because metal window frames appear in the lower half, while upper window sash is missing and replaced by wood board. Both the east and west facades of the barn have windows- four on each side. Louvered wood window openings are located at second floor level. A gable jerkinhead- like roof over the uppermost door opening on the south facade with hook would have allowed access via a pulley system for hay bales to and from wagons. A 12' wide, shed roofed, open walled addition to the east was added later, providing partial protection for animals in the barnyard. The corrugated metal roofed structure constructed with rough hewn tree trunks is now totally collapsed into the barnyard. The barn's foundation, visible on the north façade of the barn, appears to be stone with a concrete -like parging covering the stone. Elsewhere, concrete appears at foundation level supporting first floor joists and framing members, and stone is not evident. While not hand hewn, the machine cut members are assembled with some timber framing techniques such as upbraces located in corners, with half lap joints, mortise and tenon joints at roofline. Lining both sides of the central wagon "driveway" on the first floor interior of the barn are wooden unchamfered posts, located in two lines, north to south, and spaced approximately 5' apart. These columnar vertical posts rest on poured concrete bases. There are no enclosed bays or boxed stalls on the interior, nor stair to the second floor. A second floor exists with random width flooring. Water infiltration has weakened the second floor, hay protrudes from large gaping holes in the flooring. An access stair had most likely existed in the northwest corner of the barn where a rectangular shaped hole exists in the second floor, and the north wall has been damaged by its removal. Most of the north wall of the barn has slipped off its foundation, and is collapsing within it. All window openings lack covering of any sort in the lower half; therefore, causing interior water damage.

Approximately 8' to the west of the barn is located the corncrib (c.1895- 1911). The one story shed roofed 16' x 8' corncrib is in poor condition, but the best preserved of all the structures on the property. A standing seam metal roof slopes from the north to the south, and the overall height at the lowest point is 7'. Entry is via the narrow door on the west façade. Narrow wood vertical slats clad the exterior walls, flooring is random width wood, a partially intact compartment is evident in the northwest corner of the structure. The windows, of which there are three, were originally covered by a narrow vertically slatted hinged shutter. One window on the north façade has that shutter configuration intact. Two windows are located on the north façade and one on the south façade. Trees and vines now grow close to the foundation and up the walls of both the barn and the corncrib and inside the east barnyard.

The gun club's clubhouse had been located at the end of the driveway and approximately 1,400' from the entrance to the property. The one story brick and concrete block clubhouse stood from April 1954 until it burnt February 2011 in an electrical fire. Remaining today are: the concrete slab, broken brick and concrete block

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jagged walls of approximately 3' height, fireplace and flue which had been located in the "Lobby" of the building, and approximately four metal exterior columns. Because of its location on a knoll above the shooting range, there was a clear view of play.

Approximately thirty feet downhill and north of the clubhouse ruin are skeet shooting towers, bunker-like trap launch structures, and semicircular ranges. While nine ranges existed at the height of the club's membership and usage in the 1980s, four remain at the time of this documentation. From each of the 8' x 9' elevated concrete pyramidal roofed **towers**, (six built 1954, three added 1979-82) approximately 16' in height, clay disks for skeet shooting (approximately 4.5" in diameter and 1 1/8" thick) were mechanically flung into the air for participants, using shotguns, to attempt to shoot and break. A staff person in the tower or station would launch targets or "clays" at different levels to intersect in front of the shooter or participant. The semicircle on which the participants stood is partially visible on the ground between each tower. In competitions, typically, each shooter began at a position on the semicircle and progressed to more difficult shooting positions with increasingly difficult launching locations. In the center of each range, approximately 15' between each tower or station, is located the bunker-like launch structure for trap shooting. "Clay" targets were launched north and away from the shooters on the semicircle, and in various directions, from the partially hidden "house." Two bunker-like launch structures for trap shooting are evident, and the concrete elevated skeet shooting towers or stations stand in fair condition.

Grasses that are a minimum of 4' in height and trees that are 10' in height have begun to cover the shooting ranges, just as trees that are 30'-50' in height grow haphazardly around the perimeter of the barn and corncrib, in the barnyard, and the undergrowth of the forested area envelopes the tenant house. Vandalism, removal of window and door glass, and removal of metal from all of the structures has opened them to water infiltration, weathering and deterioration. The 2003 MIHP form described the clubhouse as being in "good" condition and it is now a burnt ruin. Shotgun shells and "clay" targets litter the range and hillsides. The overall design and workmanship of the buildings has been compromised, and the historic farm that predated the gun club is no longer an agricultural complex.

## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

### Specific dates

### Architect/Builder

**Construction dates** c. 1895- 1911, c.1932-49, 1954, c.1979-82

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

### Summary:

The National Capital Gun Club property exhibits buildings of both agricultural usage and recreational shooting. While historic, the farm's agricultural structures stand isolated both physically and visually from those associated with the recreational shooting. Evidenced by the existence of the historic barn, corncrib, and tenant house, the property had been a working farm before it was used as a gun club. The historic house, which was associated with the owner of the barn and corncrib, was most likely built c. 1895-1911; and demolished c. 1932-49, along with other farm related structures. The standing agricultural structures represent an agricultural life in Montgomery County. Usage of the property for shooting has impacted the fields and buildings of the farm. The gun club related structures stand representative of recreational shooting in the mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century, but are not significant historically or architecturally.

### Narrative Description:

The earliest known property owner is James W Connor, who did not live on the property, but in Washington, DC and had inherited this property as part of 314 acres, from his father John Connor, deceased, of Loudon County, Va. James W Connor sold the property in 1857 to Lucinda L Phillips "for the sole and separate use of the said Lucinda L Phillips clear & discharged from all debts and liabilities now due or may hereafter become due or contracted from or by her husband Edmund Phillips." ( Deed Liber JGH 06, Folio 174, 1857) By 1860, Edmund Phillips was a "farmer" aged 50, owning 1,500 acres. He resided in the 4<sup>th</sup> election district, Montgomery County, Md, both he and his wife Lucinda having been born in Virginia. (1860 Federal Census) The agricultural structures associated with the earliest part of the farm (standing and demolished) were most likely built by the Gassaway family between 1895 and 1911. The property is identified historically as "part of a tract called Michell's Range, part of a tract called Gravally Hill, and a Gap Filled Up" , 79 acres. In 1895, those lands passed from John H. Gassaway, aged 66, to his son Alexander A Gassaway, aged 30. (1900 Federal Census, Deed Liber 46, Folio 293) Both were described as farmers, living in Darnestown District, Montgomery County. John Gassaway was listed as owning slaves in 1850 and 1860. (Maryland Compiled Census 1860, Slave Schedule, p. 345) In 1911, Alexander Gassaway sold the property to Jacob Hammann, of German background and born in Pennsylvania, then aged 50, with wife and 7 children. (1910 Federal Census, Deed Liber 244, Folio 428) Hammann was known to have raised cattle on the property. (Deed, Liber 1523, Folio 24)

In 1932, Jacob Hammann and wife Joan or Joanna sold the property to John E Willis and wife Elsie. Willis was an "astronomist" working in Washington, DC, with whom wife, son, housekeeper and grandmother resided. (1930 Federal Census, Deed Liber 540, Folio 496) Most likely, Willis demolished the historic farmhouse and built the current Cape Cod styled primary residence between 1932 and 1949. Other farm related structures would have been demolished by Willis as well.

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In 1949, Willis sold the 79 acre parcel, excepting 2.87 acres conveyed to Jacob Hammann, to Luther O. Foster. (Deed Liber 1295, Folio 278) Foster conveyed that part of the property to Buell M Gardner and wife later in 1949. (Deed Liber 1295, Folio 306) In 1950, after a resurvey, Foster and Gardner conveyed a 93.776 + acre parcel to Erven W Butt. (Deed Liber 1404, Folio 580) It was during the 1950-51 period that boundary disputes arose between Butt and Hammann concerning watering holes for their cattle and documents were recorded in the land records related to this exchange. In 1952, Erven W Butt and wife Ruth conveyed the property to William J Hines and Elsie his wife. Hines conveyed 90 acres to the National Holding Company in 1953. (Deed Liber 1751, Folio 551) Ralph Hammann, descendant of Jacob Hammann, conveyed 4.992 acres to the National Holding Company in 1960. (Deed Liber 2695, Folio 235) Beginning in 1954, the National Capital Gun Club occupied the property, in an informal agreement with the National Holding Company. The club built initially the brick and concrete block one story clubhouse and six shooting towers. (Interview- William Murphy, 29 January 2015) The Cape Cod styled primary residence was occupied by the gun club's caretaker, Earle Connolly, and his family 1954-2006. During this period, the caretaker and his family added the front porch, interior wood paneling, exterior fireplace, porch addition and window alterations at the tenant house, and now-collapsed dog kennel. A proficient stone mason, Connolly also built the ground level trap houses on the range of the gun club, centered between each shooting tower and facing north towards the creek.

It was the Hamman and the Hines parcels, called "Parcels 1 and 2," which composed the property when conveyed from the National Holding Company to the National Capital Gun Club, Inc. in 1961. (Deed Liber CKW 2850, Folio 52) During the 1970s, the gun club added two kitchens: one was a separate kitchen building west of the clubhouse, which no longer exists. The second was a large barbecue and outdoor kitchen, west of the kitchen building, which no longer exists. In 1979, the National Capital Gun Club, Inc. conveyed the property by "Inquisition" to the Department of Natural Resources, State of Maryland. (Deed Liber 5487, Folio 058) At that time it was 100.57 acres. The gun club continued to operate by a lease with the State's Department of Natural Resources until 2006.

The site was used as a gun club for 52 years, at a time when other similar clubs existed in the metropolitan Washington area. (newsletters, tournament data, from park headquarters files) Members formed this club from two earlier clubs. These were: the "National Capital Skeet Club," originally on Grub Road, Silver Spring, Md, which moved to Greentree Road, Bethesda Md in the 1930s; and the "Washington Trap Club." Informally, the new club was called the "National Capital Skeet and Trap Club." This was considered a large club for the Baltimore- Washington, DC area, with a paid membership of approximately 200-300, since it included the membership of two earlier clubs. This club offered both skeet and trap, which was unusual, and less than ten clubs existed in the Baltimore- Washington, DC area that offered both skeet and trap during the period 1950-1990. Nine shooting towers existed on the range at the club's height, speaking to the club's membership size and usage. (The only larger club is the Prince George's County Trap and Skeet Club, Glendale, Md, which is still in operation and on which fourteen skeet shooting towers stand.) Although located in an isolated and natural setting at the end of the 1,400' entrance driveway, the clubhouse was considered state of the art for the period, had a "country club-like atmosphere," included a club manager, staff and full service restaurant. The first manager of the club was William Murphy, who was also a member 1958-2006. Approximately three percent of the members were outstanding national skeet competitors. The club hosted the "North- South

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Skeet Championship," the oldest continuously operating skeet event in the United States, having begun in 1934 (the event was suspended during World War II) . This premier annual event at the gun club attracted approximately 160 competitors, and ranked in the top ten skeet events in the United States, based upon the ability levels of its competitors, all of whom were considered "AA" and "AAA." Associated with this event was a highly anticipated barbecue dinner for the competitors and their families, (approximately 300 people) which included roasted pigs, hams, chickens and turkeys. (The North-South event continues to take place, attracting highly skilled shooters, currently at the Damascus Chapter, Isaac Walton League of America.) Typical of the level of competition and participation at National Capital Gun Club was the 48<sup>th</sup> annual North-South Skeet Championship, which the club hosted in 1989. John Shima shot a perfect score of 400 x 400 targets. In skeet shooting, shooters use four gauges- 12, 20, 28 and .410 barrels, so repetition of motion and proficiency with different sizes of shotgun barrels is required during the course of a competition involving the shooter's hitting 100, 200 or 400 clays fired at different levels and from different directions. Thus, the ability to shoot a perfect 400 out of 400 fired targets would require a high level of skill. (John Shima, a highly respected teacher and author of at least twelve articles on skeet shooting by 2013, had won five world skeet championship titles by 1989.) Over 200 competitors from across the United States competed in 1989's two-day event. Following the Saturday evening barbecue dinner, playoffs took place, which continued after sunset, under artificial light. Night lighting had been installed on the range so that members could use the range on a daily basis until 9:00 pm. Members of this club were also part of a trapshooting league, playing in different locations once / week. The club also held women's competitions as well as junior competitions.

After the State of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources acquired the gun club property in 1979, as the result of condemnation proceedings, there were leases written to continue the gun club operation. Beginning in the mid-1980s, there were concerns raised by neighboring housing communities about shotgun noise. Letters were written by neighbors and by the Greater Darnestown Civic Association, newspaper articles were written and in 1991, an earthen berm was erected by the gun club in an attempt to absorb noise from the shotguns. The berm was built southeast of the property, approximately 60' in height, 1000' in length and 168' in width. Community members then had water samples from the Great Seneca Creek analyzed for lead, because of the number of shotgun shells in the wetlands. The gun club claimed that their debris field was uphill of the creek. In 2003, after several contentious analyses, it was discovered by DNR staff that lead shot from the gun club during operation hours was falling on both sides of the creek and in the creek, and lead was therefore polluting the water, in violation of the Clean Water Act. The Potomac and Shenandoah River Keepers threatened litigation if the lead hazard was not abated. A lawsuit was filed in 2005, the lease with the gun club was not renewed and DNR cleaned out thousands of lead shot from the wetlands around the creek in 2006. A forest fire occurred February 19, 2011, which consumed over 600 acres of parkland and included the clubhouse and steps of the skeet shooting towers. The cause of the fire was undetermined, but thought to involve downed electrical lines.

The property has been vacant and neglected for about nine years, resulting in vandalism, water infiltration, fire damage, deterioration and collapse. The gun club's clubhouse, when in use, and examined in 2003 for the MIHP, as part of Seneca Creek State Park, was not considered significant for listing. The clubhouse burnt in

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 20-48

Name National Capital Gun Club  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 3

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2011 and is today a charred ruin, consisting of a few broken concrete blocks and a fireplace chimney. The standing simple rectangular concrete block shooting towers have no distinctive architectural qualities. Property surrounding the agricultural complex once used for grazing cattle is now littered with shotgun shells and "clay" targets. The original farmhouse is nonexistent, and the remaining farm related structures are few, insignificant for their type, and in deteriorated condition. The collapsing north wall of the barn is causing the building to pull apart. Interior compartments of the corncrib and flooring have collapsed. Every window opening in the barn, tenant house, and primary residence lacks window sash. This has caused flooring, woodwork and walls to become saturated and weakened, allowed entry by animals and birds, and weathering related problems. Neither the gun club nor the historic farm buildings exhibit the qualities of architectural significance for their type, period or method of construction. While representative of their period and usage, the gun club related structures and the farm related structures stand in opposition on the property, and are not significant historically or architecturally.

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. M: 20-48

### Primary Sources:

Cherney, Berle. Longtime member of gun club (interview 1/15).  
Murphy, William. Member of gun club 1958-2006 (interview 1/15).  
Myers, Steven. Longtime member of gun club (interview 2/15)  
Powell, David. Manager, Seneca Creek State Park (interview 7/14).  
Weinbrecht, Joe. President, Maryland Skeet Shooting Association (interview 1/15).

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property less than .5 acre  
Acreage of historical setting less than .5 acre  
Quadrangle name Germantown

Quadrangle scale: 1" = 24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the surveyed area consisted of the space containing the agricultural structures near the entrance from Riffle Ford Road and those buildings related to the gun club in the open meadows about 1400' west of the entrance and all south of the Great Seneca Creek. The property is totally contained within the boundaries of the Seneca Creek State Park.

---

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Catherine Adams Masek		
organization	Historic Preservation Consultant	date	2/3/15
street & number	124 St. Andrews Road	telephone	410-987-8519
city or town	Severna Park	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Department of Planning  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 20-48

Name National Capital Gun Club

### Continuation Sheet

Number 9, Page 2

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No Author, "Wrap-Up" and "Skeet Review," unpublished, 1985, 1990, 1991.

MIHP form prepared for:

Seneca Creek State Park, M:19-38, by Goodwin & Associates, 2003.

Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Md:

Hopkins, George M. Atlas of 15 Miles Around Washington, DC, 1878.

Martenet, S. J., Walling, H.F. & Gray, O. W. Atlas of Maryland and DC, 1859-68.

United States Geological Survey, Maryland- Virginia: Rockville Quadrangle, 1908.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Annapolis, MD:

Seneca Creek State Park & Gun Club files.

Seneca Creek State Park offices, Gaithersburg, MD:

Correspondence, drawings, and newspaper articles related to the usage, noise levels, berm construction and water sampling, all in the gun club property file.

Websites:

Ancestry.com-United States Federal Census 1860,1880,1900, 1920, 1930.

Genealogy Trails History Group- Loudon County, Virginia Deeds.

Maryland Skeet Shooting Association.

National Skeet Shooting Association and its National Skeet Shooting Association Magazine.

Wikipedia.org- Skeet shooting, Trap shooting.

Johns Hopkins University libraries, Maryland State Sheet Maps & State Map Series.

Website- MDLandRec.net

"Deed," between James W. Connor of Washington, DC and Lucinda L. Philips (alternatively spelled Phillips), as the result of Chancery Court proceedings, 1857, Liber JGH 06, Folio 174.

"Deed," between John H. Gassaway and Alexander A. Gassaway, his son, 1895, Liber 46, Folio 293.

"Deed," between Alexander Gassaway and Jacob Hammann, 1911, Liber 244, Folio 428.

"Deed," between Jacob Hammann and Joan, his wife, and John E. Willis, and Elsie, his wife, 1932, Liber 540, Folio 496.

"Deed," between John E. Willis and Elsie, his wife, and Luther O. Foster, 1949, Liber 1295, Folio 278.

"Deed," between Luther O. Foster and Buell M. Gardner, and Margaret, his wife, 1949, Liber 1295, Folio 306.

"Deed," between Luther O. Foster, Buell M. Gardner, Margaret H. Gardner, his wife, and Erven W. Butt, 1950, Liber 1404, Folio 580.

"Deed," between Erven W. Butt and Ruth E. Butt, his wife and William J. Hines and Elsie C. Hines, his wife, parcels A, B & C described in detail, 1952, Liber 1739, Folio 229.

"Deed," between William J. Hines and Elsie, his wife, and National Holding Company, 1953, Liber 1761, Folio 551.

"Deed," between Ralph C. Hammann, unmarried, and National Holding Company, 1960, Liber 2695, Folio 235.

"Deed," between National Holding Company and National Capital Gun Club, 1961, Liber CKW 2850, Folio 52.

"Inquisition," between National Capital Gun Club and Department of Natural Resources of the State of Maryland, 1979, Liber 5487, Folio 58.

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 20-48

Name National Capital Gun Club

## Continuation Sheet

Number Photo log Page 1

The following information is the same for each photograph:

1. MIHP# M:20-48
2. National Capital Gun Club
3. Riffle Ford Road, Seneca Creek State Park, Montgomery County
4. CA Masek
5. January 2015
6. MD SHPO

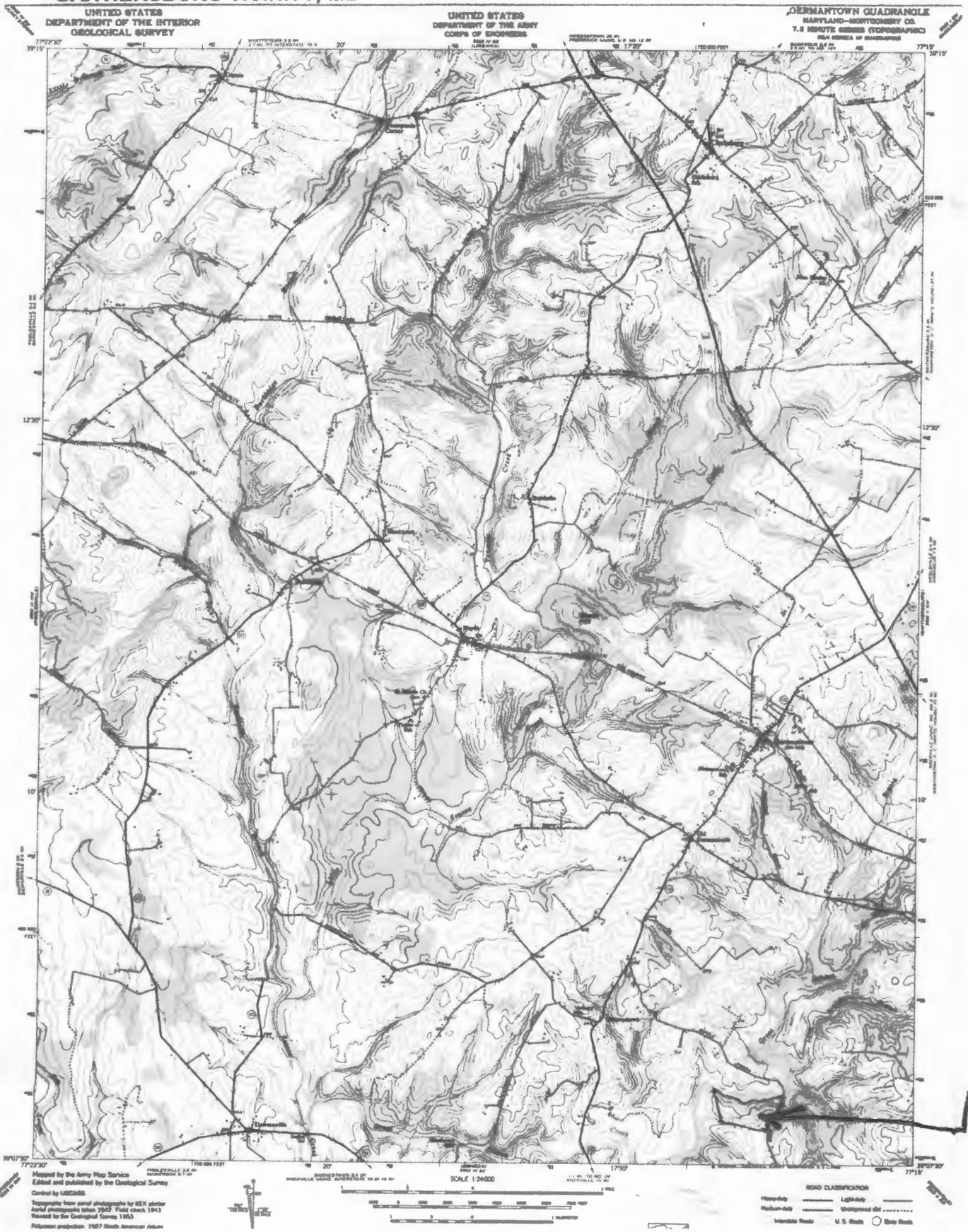
Processing: Black and white film was processed in the traditional way, by hand. Paper used for printing- Epson premium semimatte photo paper. Inks used for printing-Epson archival ultrachrome pigmented inks.

### Photo #

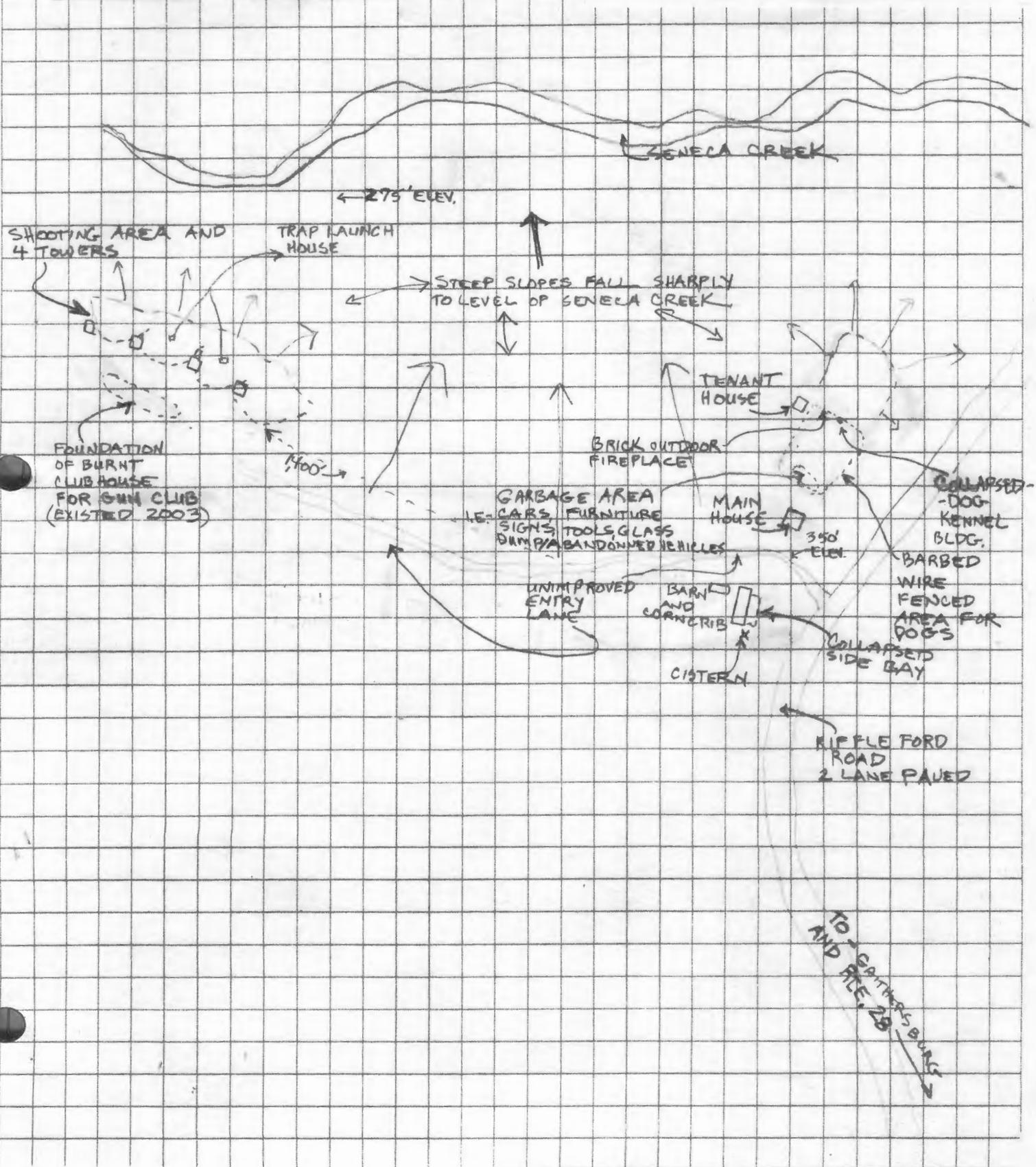
- 1 Primary residence, South facade
- 2 Primary residence, North facade
- 3 Primary residence, staircase, first floor
- 4 Tenant house, front (South) & side (West) facades
- 5 Tenant house, West facade
- 6 Tenant house, kitchen, East wall, first floor
- 7 Barn, South facade
- 8 Barn, side (East) facade
- 9 Barn, interior view North
- 10 Corncrib, rear (South) & West facades
- 11 Gun clubhouse, view southwest of charred ruins
- 12 Skeet shooting tower, typical, view west

**PHOTOCOPY OF USGS MAP GERMANTOWN, MD QUAD MAP  
 NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB  
 16700 RIFFLE FORD RD  
 GAITHERSBURG VICINITY, MD**

**MIHP #M: 20-48**



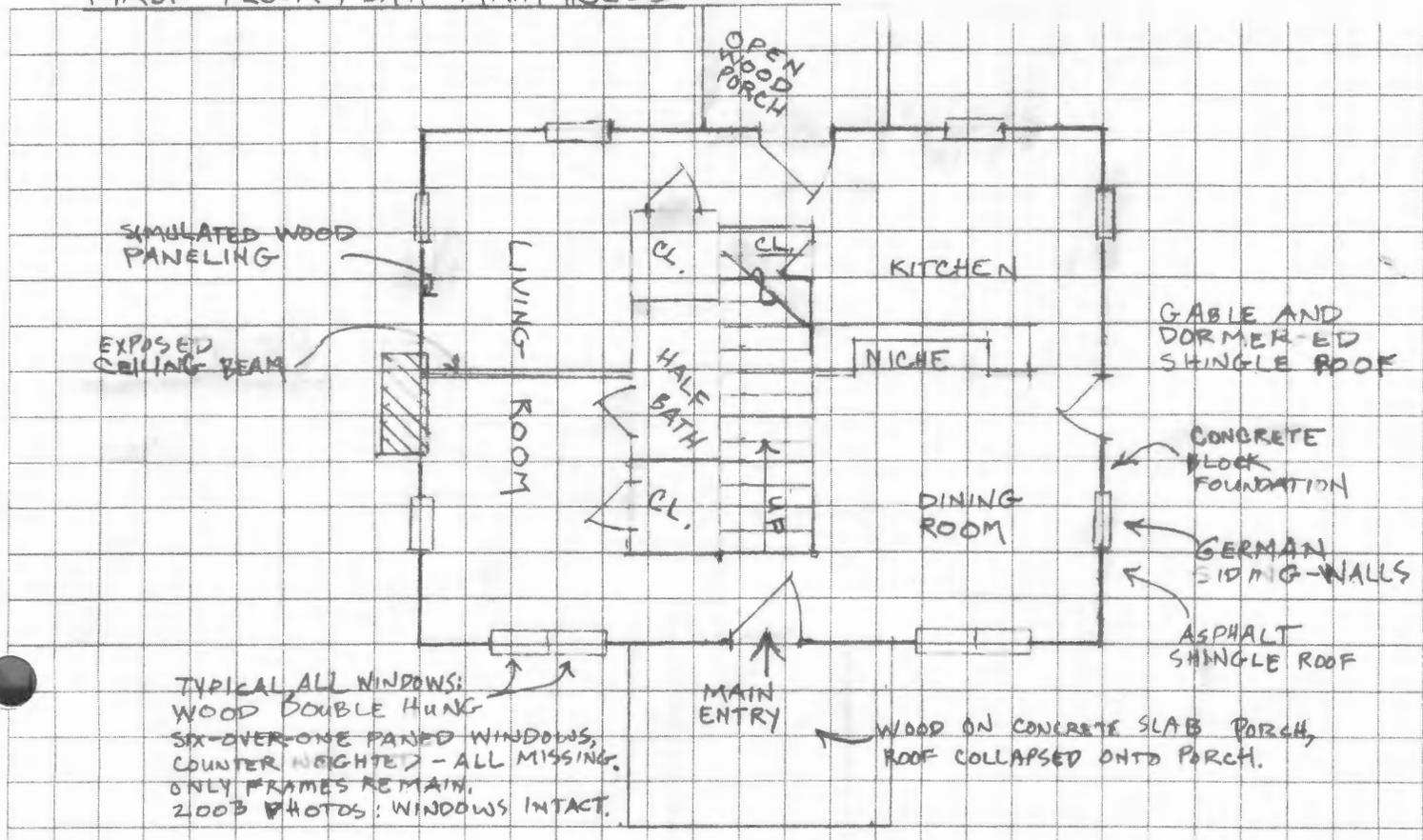
Project NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB  
SENECA CREEK STATE PARK  
Project # \_\_\_\_\_ Date 1/15 Page \_\_\_\_\_  
# M: 20-48  
RE: RIFLE FORD ROAD GAITHERSBURG VIC.  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
SITE PLAN NOT TO SCALE



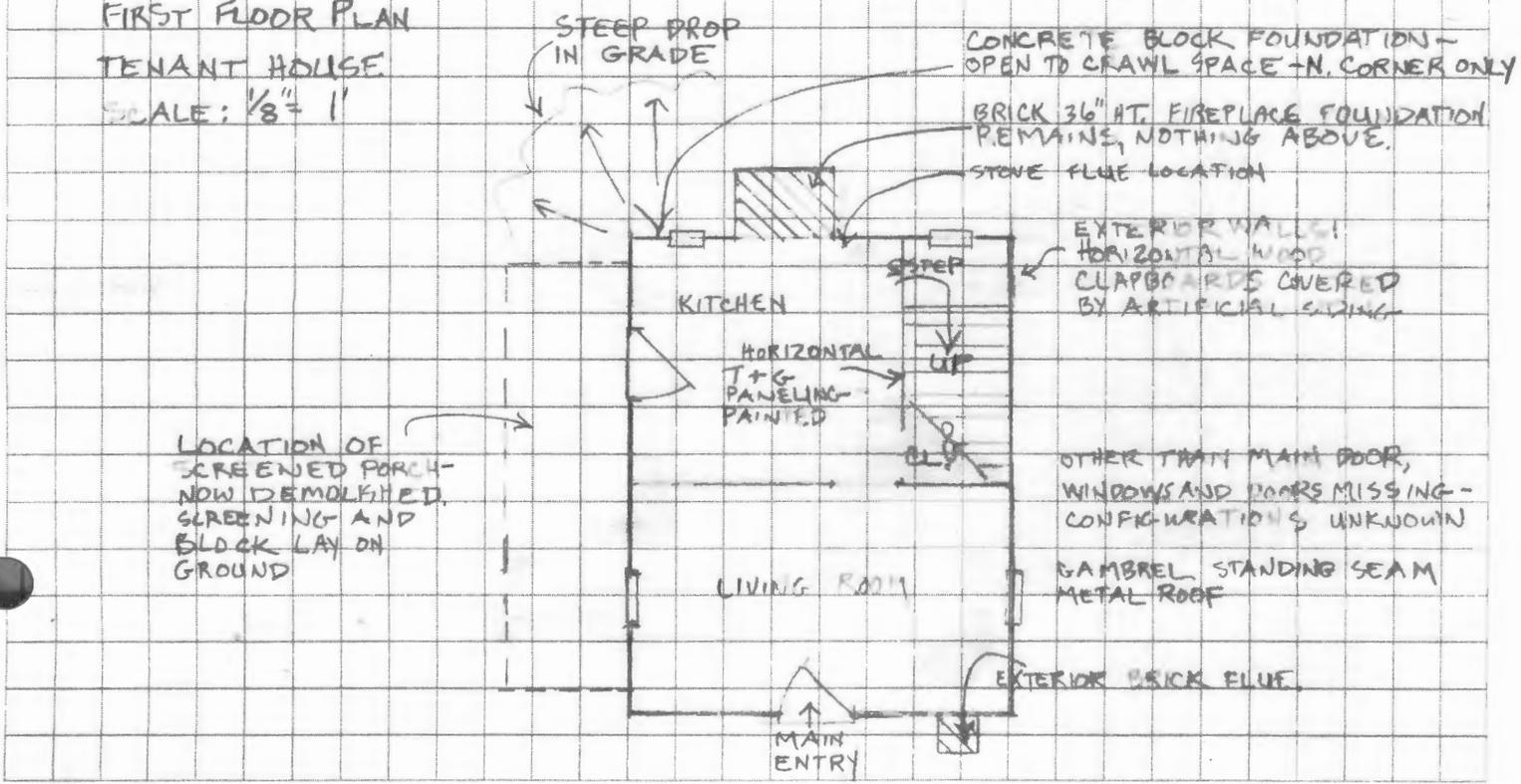
Project NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB  
SENECA CREEK STATE PARK  
 Project # M:20-48 Date 1/15 Page  
RIFLE FORD ROAD, GAITHERSBURG VIC.  
MONTGOMERY CO.  
 SCALE:  $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$  NOV. 2014



FIRST FLOOR PLAN - MAIN HOUSE



FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
 TENANT HOUSE  
 SCALE:  $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$



Project NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB  
SENECA CREEK STATE PARK  
Project # M:20-48 Date 1/15 Page  
RIFFLE FORD ROAD GAITHERSBURG VIC.  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
SCALE:  $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$  NOV. 2014  
PLAN OF BARN AND CORNCKIB



CISTERN IN GROUND  
CONCRETE 6' SQ

SIDING -  
HORIZONTAL  
WOOD

RECTANGULAR POSTS REST  
ON POURED CONCRETE  
BASES

CORNER RISER GRAIN STORAGE -  
VERTICAL WOOD SHEATHED  
STANDING SEAM METAL  
SHEATHING, 7' HT.

ENTRY SHUTTERED WINDOW  
COVERINGS

COLLAPSED  
LEAN-TO  
CORRUGATED METAL  
ROOFED OPEN  
WALLED ADDITION

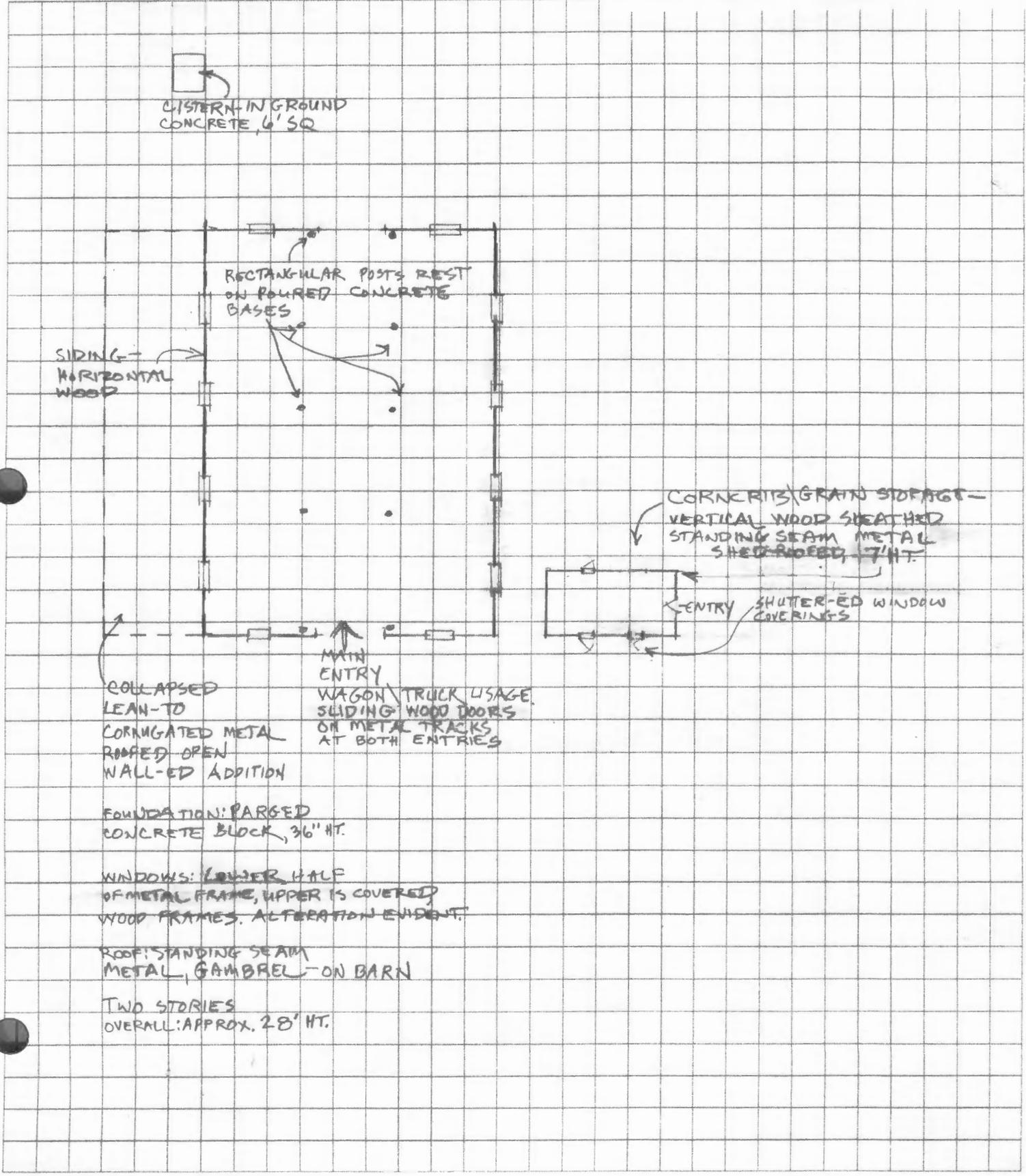
MAIN  
ENTRY  
WAGON / TRUCK USAGE.  
SLIDING WOOD DOORS  
ON METAL TRACKS  
AT BOTH ENTRIES

FOUNDATION: PAVED  
CONCRETE BLOCK, 36" HT.

WINDOWS: LOWER HALF  
OF METAL FRAME, UPPER IS COVERED  
WOOD FRAMES. ALTERATION EVIDENT.

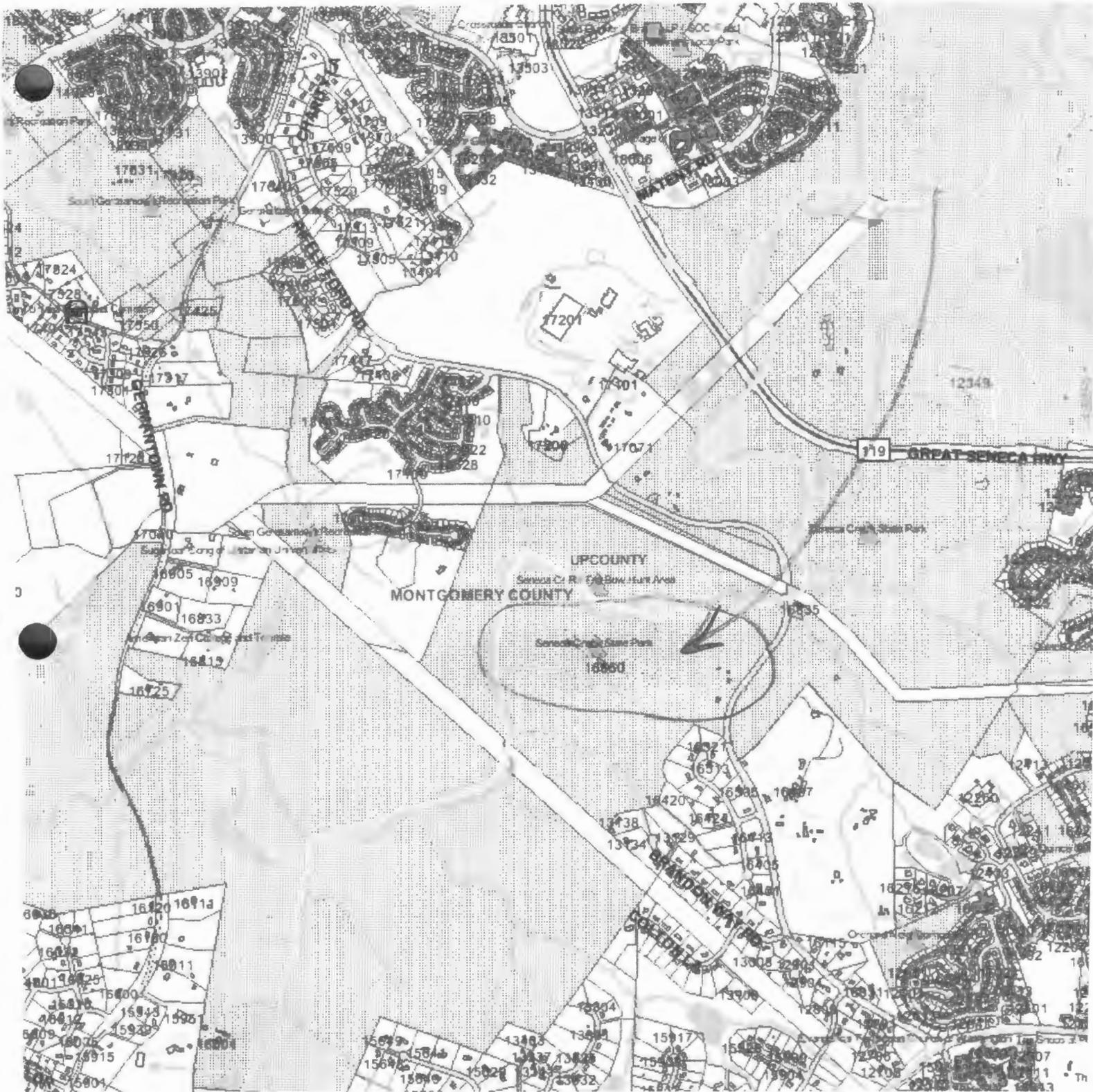
ROOF: STANDING SEAM  
METAL, GAMBREL - ON BARN

TWO STORIES  
OVERALL: APPROX. 28' HT.

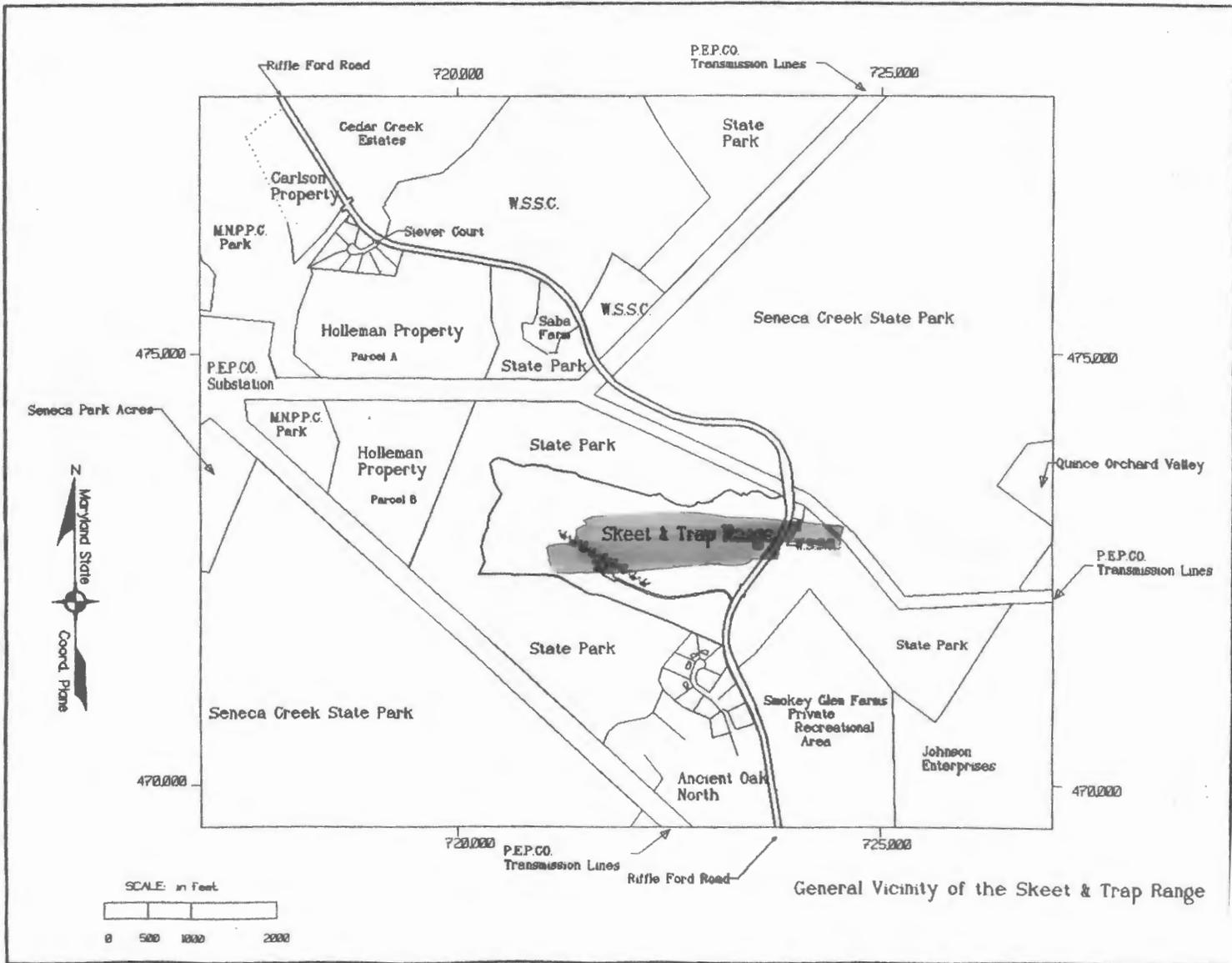




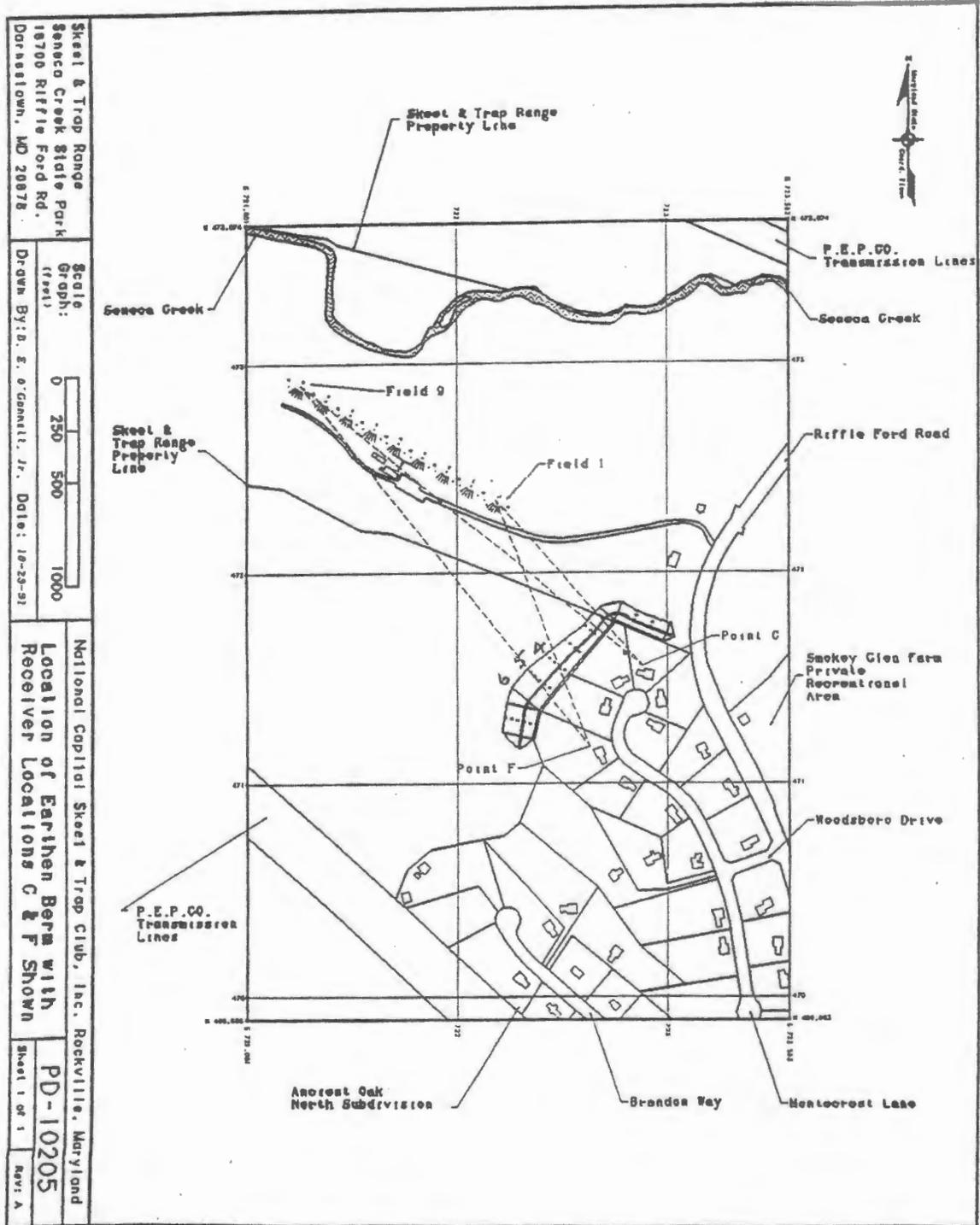
PHOTOGRAPH OF GEORGE M. HOPKINS'S ATLAS OF 15 MILES AROUND WASHINGTON, DC, DARNESTOWN DISTRICT NO. 6 MAP, 1878. GUN CLUB PROPERTY IS SHOWN AS OWNED BY "JNO H GASSAWAY" AND RESIDENCE IS IDENTIFIED ON MAP.



PHOTOGRAPH OF MARYLAND'S CURRENT STATE SHEET MAPS & STATE MAPS SERIES, ACCESSED VIA JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY WEBSITE. SITE CIRCLED; RED DOTS INDICATE STRUCTURES ON SITE.



**PHOTOGRAPH OF CURRENT PARKLANDS' BOUNDARY RELATIVE TO GUN CLUB PROPERTY, C. 2000, COURTESY OF PARK OFFICE, SENECA CREEK STATE PARK.**



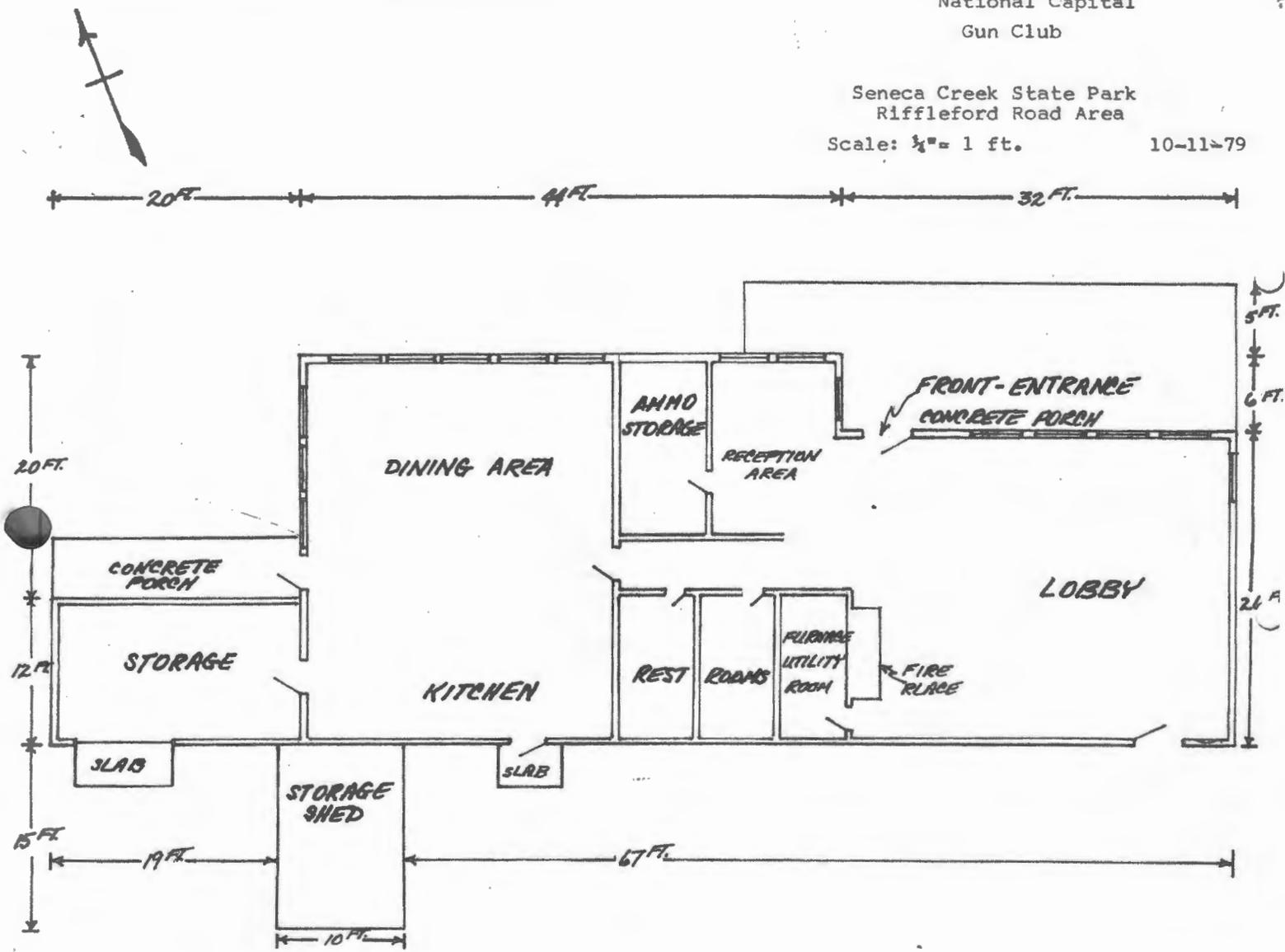
PHOTOCOPY OF DRAWING SHOWING EARTHEN BERM LOCATION,  
 CONSTRUCTED BY GUN CLUB, DRAWING DATED 10-29-1991.

National Capital  
Gun Club

Seneca Creek State Park  
Riffleford Road Area

Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1 \text{ ft.}$

10-11-79



PHOTOCOPY OF GUN CLUBHOUSE, DRAWING DATED 10-11-1979.



MHP M:20-48  
NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB  
RIFLE FORD ROAD  
CA MASEK

1/15

MID SAPO

PRIMARY RESIDENCE  
SOUTH (FRONT) FACADE  
1 OF 12



PONS  
MUBIS

HI  
☺

BAILEY

FROM

YES or

NO

MIHP #M: 20-48  
NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB  
RIFLE FORD RD  
CA MASEK  
1/15  
MDSHPD  
PRIMARY RESIDENCE  
~~X~~ NORTH (REAR) FACADE  
2 OF 12

dance  
your ♥  
out

1/20/68



MHP # M: 20-48  
NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB  
RIFLE FORD RD.  
CA MASEK

1/15

MDSAPO

PRIMARY RESIDENCE

INTERIOR 1ST FL. HALL

WEST WALL

3 OF 12



MIHP # M:20-48

NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB

RIFLE FORD RD.

CA MASEK

V15

MD SHPO

TENANT HOUSE

FRONT (SOUTH) - SIDE (WEST) FACADES

4 OF 12



MIHP # M: 20-48  
NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB  
RIFLE FORD RD.  
CA MASEK

V15

MD SHPO

TENANT HOUSE  
SIDE (WEST) FACADE  
5 OF 12



MIHP # M: 20-48

NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB

RIFLE FORD RD.

CA MASEK

1/15

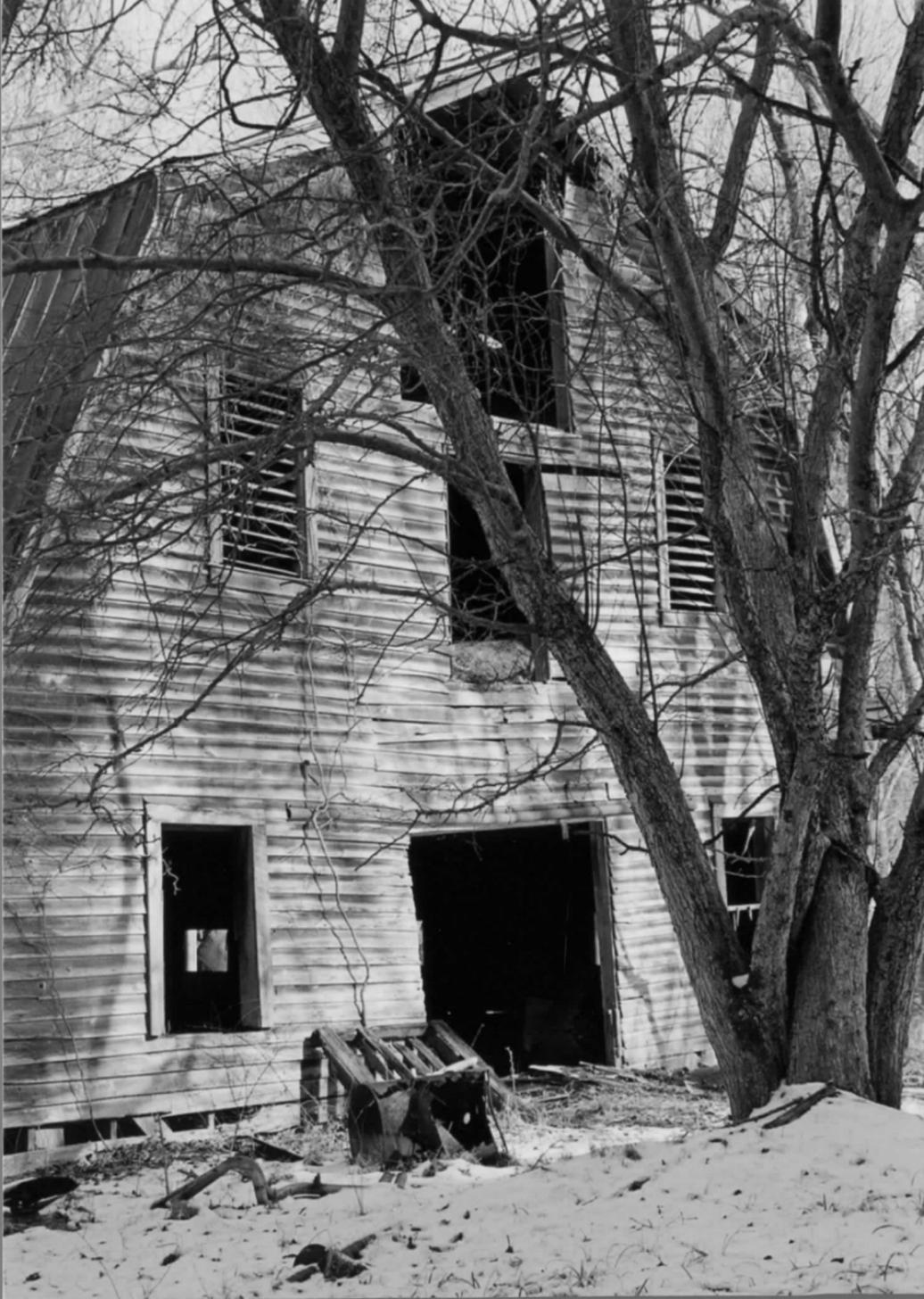
MID SH PO

TENANT HOUSE

INTERIOR 1ST FLOOR

KITCHEN EAST WALL

6 OF 12



MIHP # M:20-48

NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB

RIFLE FORD RD.

CA MASEK

1/15

MD SHPO

BARN

REAR (SOUTH) FACADE

7 OF 12

EPSON

Epson  
Professional Paper



MIHP # M:20-48  
NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB  
RIFLE FORD RD  
CA MASEK  
V15  
MD SH PO  
BARN  
SIDE (EAST) FACADE  
8 OF 12



MIHP # M: 20-48  
NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN  
CLUB  
RIFLE FORD RD  
CA MASEK  
1/15  
MD SHPO  
BARN  
INTERIOR VIEW NORTH  
9 OF 12

Epson  
Professional Paper

EPSON



MIHP # M:20-48

NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB

RIFLE FORD RD.

CA MASEK

1/15

MD SHPO

CORN CRIB

SOUTH (REAR) & WEST FACADES

10 OF 12



MHP # M:20-48

NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB

RIFLE FORD RD.

CA MASEK

1/15

MD SHPO

SKEET SHOOTING TOWERS

VIEW WEST

11 OF 12



MIHP # M: 20-48

NATIONAL CAPITAL GUN CLUB

RIFLE FORD RD.

CAMARSEK

1/15

MD SHPD

CLUBHOUSE RUIN

VIEW. SOUTHWEST

12 OF 12