NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Abell House (preferred)

other names SM-346, Jager House

2. Location

street & number 22530 Washington Street (Md. Route 326) ☐ not for publication

city or town Leonardtown ☐ vicinity

state Maryland code MD county St. Mary's code 037 zip code 20650

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date 11-13-03

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:
- ☐ entered in the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

Abell House (SM-346)
Name of Property

St. Mary's County, Maryland
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Wood
roof Asphalt
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Description Summary:

The Abell House, constructed c. 1910, is a two-story, three bay frame dwelling situated on the east side of Washington Street in Leonardtown, Maryland. Positioned near the former location of the Leonardtown wharf, the house commands sweeping views of Breton Bay, a sheltered harbor of the Potomac River. The house demonstrates the eclecticism characteristic of Victorian era architecture in St. Mary's County, exhibiting a vernacular interpretation of the Queen Anne style in its asymmetrical massing, bracketed eaves, multiple cross gables, and pendants. Side and rear porches were enclosed in the late twentieth century and all of the interior plaster and mantels have been removed pending a rehabilitation effort that commenced in 2003. The property also includes a non-contributing concrete-lined pool.

General Description:

Oriented on a west/east axis, the principal elevation of the dwelling faces west towards Washington Street. Situated on a 0.533 acre, rectangular-shaped lot, the Abell House is located near the southern terminus of Washington Street near the site of the former Leonardtown wharf. The property is bounded on the north by a right-of-way that extends eastward to the Sparks/Holley House (c. 1890, SM-539). On the east side, the property's perimeter is ringed by a metal picket fence. A large parking lot and metal picket fence lie to the south of the house. To the west, the property is bounded by a metal picket fence, sidewalk, and Washington Street. In addition to the house, the lot contains a non-contributing, oval-shaped concrete-lined pool. The pool is entirely encircled by metal and wood fencing.

The Abell House is a two story frame dwelling with a one-story kitchen wing, constructed ca. 1910. The dwelling features an asymmetrical massing that roughly forms an L-shape. The house's braced, circular sawn frame originally rested on a brick pier foundation. The spaces between the piers along the exterior perimeter of the building have since been filled in with brick. The exterior of the building was originally sheathed with weatherboard fastened with wire nails. This material, however, is currently covered with aluminum siding. The roof, which is pierced by a single, centrally located chimney flue, is covered with asphalt shingles.

The fenestration of the principal (west) elevation of the main block consists of a door and two windows. The windows each contain two-over-two, double-hung sash (all of the louvered shutters have been removed). The door consists of three rectangular panels topped by a large glass pane. This entrance is flanked by sidelights and topped by a three-pane transom. All of these openings are shaded by a wrap-around porch with a concrete floor. The porch is embellished with turned posts and scroll-sawn brackets. As the porch wraps around the north

side of the house, it leads to a second entry into the rear room of the original dwelling. This is a six panel-over-one pane door. Immediately to the north of the door is a two-over-two window. The west side of the kitchen wing is pierced by a two-over-two window. The second floor of the main block is pierced by three two-over-two windows. Another two-over-two window lies just above the north porch, as well. The wide overhanging eaves are decorated with scroll-sawn brackets that are found on every elevation of the house. A single cross gable projects from the roof and is adorned by a four-sided, pyramidal shaped pendent. The cross gable is fenestrated by a single pane window with a triangular crown.

The south elevation of the Abell house consists of three different sections. The first or westernmost section is two stories with two-over-two windows on the first and second stories. This is topped by a cross gable adorned with a single pane window with a triangular crown and a pendant. The second section of the elevation, slightly set back from the front block, also exhibits a cross gable, pendant, and two windows on the second floor, but the first floor is pierced by two sets of paired six-over-six windows. Historic maps and architectural evidence reveal that this was once a porch that was actually recessed below living space on the second floor. This porch was later enclosed. The third section of the elevation originally served as the rear porch, but it too was enclosed within the past two decades.

The rear or east elevation has been extensively modified on the first floor. While enclosing an original porch, the first floor of the elevation is pierced by a series of three large, thermalpane windows and a modern thermalpane door. To the north of these openings is a modern wood door. The second floor of the east elevation is pierced by four two-over-two windows. A cross gable projects from the roof and is pierced by a window with a triangular crown. A pendant rises from the peak. A small projection from the kitchen's rear wall is fenestrated by two four-pane windows that are actually hinged and open outward.

The north elevation of the main block is unfenestrated on the first floor. The second floor of the front section has a two-over-two window, while the rear section features a distinctive stained glass window with a floral design. It remains unclear whether this window is original to the house. The kitchen wing is lit by one two-over-two window. All of the gables are decorated with pendants and small windows with triangular crowns.

The interior of the Abell House follows an asymmetrical plan. Immediately upon entering the main door of the dwelling, visitors are greeted by a stair passage that measures approximately seven feet wide. The closed string stair is embellished with a turned newel and balusters. The space also permits entry into a parlor, as well as another living space in the rear of the house. Interestingly, a trap door, now removed, was once located in the rear of the passage. The parlor

originally featured a door to a covered porch (now enclosed) as well as a door to the rear room. The parlor was heated by a stove flue. Although presently surrounded by enclosed porches, the rear room was originally fenestrated by four windows with sweeping views of Breton Bay. Interestingly this space contained doors to the north porch as well as a small service stair/bathroom. The stair and bathroom were entirely sheathed with vertical beaded board (both the stair and beaded board are to be removed). This intermediary space served as a transitional area between the main living areas of the house and the north kitchen. The kitchen consisted of a single room heated by a stove flue and a small pantry situated on this wing's east side.

The second floor of the house consists of a stair passage and hall that leads to the rear service stair. The stair itself is ringed by a rail and turned balusters. It also permits entry into all three of the house's bedrooms. The rear stair, entirely sheathed with vertical beaded board, descends to the first floor. Above the stair is a bathroom. A small attic space above the kitchen presently serves as storage.

The building exhibits a good level of integrity, particularly on the exterior, allowing it to stand as a representative example of Victorian-era domestic architecture in St. Mary's County. The interior plaster, some doors, and all mantels have been removed pending rehabilitation. The overall plan, much of the fenestration, the main staircase, and the exterior architectural details will be retained, but the rear service stair will be removed due to its lack of compliance with modern building codes.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

ca. 1910-1924

Significant Dates

ca. 1910

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Enoch B. Abell

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:
Maryland Historical Trust

Summary Statement of Significance:

The Abell House is significant under National Register Criterion C for its architectural character, exemplifying the eclecticism of Victorian-era domestic vernacular architecture in St. Mary's County, Maryland. The dwelling's asymmetrical massing, bracketed eaves, multiple cross gables, and pendants are inspired by the Queen Anne style. Overlooking Breton Bay near the southern end of Washington Street in Leonardtown, the house is reminiscent of the waterfront development that characterized the area beginning in the mid-1880s but has since vanished. The house derives additional significance under Criterion B for its association with Enoch B. Abell, a significant local political leader, attorney, and entrepreneur who was integral in developing Leonardtown's waterfront area into a terminus for steamboats plying the Potomac River.

The period of significance, ca. 1910-1924, spans the period of Enoch B. Abell's association with the house, beginning with the date of construction and ending with Abell's death in December 1924.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Just prior to the Civil War, in 1858, Leonardtown became an incorporated municipality with a degree of self-governance. Almost immediately thereafter, in 1861, the community sought to improve its overall appearance by establishing a number of nuisance laws, including banning unattended livestock from the streets. During the Civil War the community was occupied by Union troops. Despite noting that the county had been left in a position of "pitiful prostration" following the conflict, the *St. Mary's Beacon* heralded that improvements to the village, both architectural and commercial, had already surpassed those occurring elsewhere in Southern Maryland such as Prince Frederick, Upper Marlboro, and Port Tobacco.[1] Indeed, Leonardtown was rapidly becoming a regional commercial center.

Strategically located overlooking Breton Bay, a sheltered anchorage off of the Potomac River, the town had intermittently served as a tobacco inspection point and by the mid-nineteenth century, a center for steamboat commerce. An 1859 plat of the town, however, indicates that development around the water was somewhat limited as only a few houses and a wharf were clustered around the water. By 1885, however, the Leonardtown Joint Stock and Transportation

[1] Kirk E. Ranzetta, "From Rat Proof Corn Cribs to St. Peter's Chapel: The Builders and Buildings in Leonardtown," *Chronicles of St. Mary's*, 46 (3): Fall 1998.

Company (LJS & T) purchased the wharf property and immediately began a more intensive development of the town's waterfront.[2]

Enoch B. Abell, a prominent local political leader and attorney, was on the Board of Directors of the LJS & T. Born on December 13, 1855, Abell received his A.B. degree at Georgetown University in 1877 and was admitted to the Maryland Bar in 1880. While trained in the law, Abell soon distinguished himself as a private investor as well as a public servant. In 1883 Abell, along with Frank Neale Holmes, founded the *St. Mary's Enterprise*, a Republican weekly newspaper, which he also edited. After Holmes' death in June 1896 Abell continued to publish the *Enterprise* until his death on December 13, 1924. From 1897 to 1921 Abell served as the Clerk of the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Southern Maryland Telephone Company and St. Mary's Hospital.[3]

In 1906, while Abell and his wife Katherine Camalier were living in the middle of town overlooking the main square,[4] Abell purchased a house lot from Laura W. Holmes, the widow of his business partner Frank Neale Holmes, at the southern end of Washington Street overlooking Breton Bay.[5] The deed specifically prohibited Abell from building a steamboat wharf on the property unless the Leonardtown Joint Stock and Transportation Company went out of business.[6] The property was situated down a long incline from the main part of Leonardtown along Washington Street in an area called by locals "Frogtown."[7] Indeed, much of the shoreline, and even some of the lower lying areas in that vicinity were marshland as depicted in a 1936 plat.

According to the Abells' grandson Eddie Stokel, the dwelling was not erected until the 1910s.[8] Katherine Abell reportedly suffered a stroke during this time and her husband believed it would be therapeutic for her to occasionally reside in a new house by the waters of Breton Bay. Apparently, Katherine did not like the arrangement and the house was subsequently rented out until both Katherine and Enoch Abell died in 1924.

The house that the Abells built represented an excellent example of the eclecticism that characterized domestic architecture in Leonardtown, seat of St. Mary's County, during the Victorian era. The three-bay, two-story dwelling featured an asymmetrical massing, a wide

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[2] Corporations Record Liber JAC, folio 14. St. Mary's County Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland.
[3] All of the biographical material about Enoch B. Abell can be seen in Regina Combs Hammett, *History of St. Mary's County, Maryland 1634-1990* (Ridge, Md: Self-published, 1994), 234-235, 244, 421.
[4] The Abells' uptown residence has been demolished.
[5] St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber EBA 6, Folio 178. St. Mary's County Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Aleck Loker, *A Most Convenient Place: Leonardtown, Maryland 1650-1950* (Leonardtown, Md: Solitude Press, 2001), 78.
[8] Informal interview with Edward Stokel of Leonardtown, Maryland. March 2003.

eave, scroll sawn brackets, multiple cross gables topped with pendants as well as porches on each elevation. Influenced by the Queen Anne style, the house was among the most stylish in Frogtown. Enoch Abell was also behind the construction of two neighboring dwellings: the Italianate-styled St. Mary's Ice and Fuel Company (c. 1900, SM-347, demolished) as well as the Shaw House (c. 1900, SM-535, demolished).

The architectural details of the Abell House were consistent with other dwellings erected in Leonardtown during the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.[9] The Fenwick House (1898, 1910s, SM-365) in Leonardtown, for instance, was an amalgamation of Queen Anne details. The house contained a corbelled chimney, turret, wrap around porch, and cross gables replete with pendants identical to those found at the Abell House. Much closer to the Abell House was the neighboring Sparks/Holley House (c. 1890s, SM-539). Although modified, the Sparks/Holley house still retains its brackets and cross gable with fish scale siding. Closely mirroring the bracketing of the Abell House was the neighboring St. Mary's Ice and Fuel Company building. As all of these houses relate, the Queen Anne style was expressed in a number of different ways over at least two or three decades in Leonardtown. The style came to characterize the town's prosperity. The building boom in town, however, would soon slow.

With the proliferation of motor vehicles and the concurrent improvement of road surfaces in the early 20th century, steam travel and commerce soon became obsolete. By the 1930s, the last steamboat runs were being made on both the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers. As a result, development along Leonardtown's waterfront dramatically slowed by the 1930s. Indeed, from the death of Enoch and Katherine Abell in 1924 until 1955, the property remained in the hands of the couple's heirs. In 1955, the property was sold to Richard L. and Cecilia T. Curry.[10] In 1961, the Currys sold the property to Robert W. and Jean S. Jager.[11] The couple owned the property until 1986 when it was combined with the neighboring St. Mary's Ice and Fuel Company property to the south.[12] In 1988, the property was once again subdivided and sold to Joseph E. and Linda S. Gill who in turn sold it to Leonardtown Landing LLC in 2002.[13] On January 22, 2003, the property was sold to its present owner RAR Associates Development Company.[14]

[9] Documentary and oral-historical evidence indicates that the house was built ca. 1910, but its appearance is consistent with architectural conventions of the last quarter of the 19th century; this discrepancy may be attributable to a *retardataire* quality observed in the vernacular domestic architecture of St. Mary's County during the period.
[10] St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 55, Folio 353.
[11] St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 96, Folio 119.
[12] St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber MRB 290, Folio 82.
[13] St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber MRB 438, Folio 51 and EWA 1823, Folio 257.
[14] St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber EWA 1923, Folio 466.

Despite modifications in the mid-twentieth century through the enclosing of its south and east porches and the interior work associated with the current rehabilitation, the Abell House retains integrity to reflect its Queen Anne influence, and its setting adjacent to the site of the former steamship wharf recalls a significant era in the region's history of transportation and commerce. Most of the historic resources associated with steamship wharves, marine railways, and waterfront communities in St. Mary's County, Maryland no longer exist.[15] The dwelling's integrity of materials, setting, location, as well as feeling all contribute to its ability to recall the peak of Leonardtown's "improvement" and the development of the community's waterfront during the steamship era. It is also the only dwelling remaining in Leonardtown associated with Enoch B. and Katherine Abell, as their principal residence on the town square, the Shaw house, and the St. Mary's Ice and Fuel Company building have all been demolished.

[15] This is largely a personal observation having completed several years of survey work in St. Mary's County, Maryland between 1996-2001.

Major Bibliographical References:

Hammett, Regina Combs. *History of St. Mary's County, Maryland 1634-1990.* Ridge, Md: Self-published, 2nd edition, 1994.

Holly, David C. *Tidewater by Steamboat: A Saga of the Chesapeake.* Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Informal interview with Eddie Stokel (grandson of Enoch B. Abell) in March 2003.

Loker, Aleck. *A Most Convenient Place: Leonardtown, Maryland: 1650-1950.* Leonardtown, Maryland: Solitude Press, 2001.

Ranzetta, Kirk. "From Rat Proof Corncribs to St. Peter's Chapel: The Builders and Buildings of Leonardtown, 1830-1890." *Chronicles of St. Mary's.* 43 (3): Fall 1998.

St. Mary's County Land Records.

St. Mary's County Register of Wills. Inventories.

Abell House (SM-346)
Name of Property

St. Mary's County, Maryland
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.566 acre

UTM References Leonardtown, MD quad
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	356771	4238931	3			
2				4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk E. Ranzetta, Architectural Historian

Organization On behalf of RAR Associates Development Corporation date April 2003

street & number 7309 Hilton Avenue telephone 301-270-2568

city or town Takoma Park state Maryland zip code 20912

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name RAR Associates Development Corporation

street & number PO Box 39 (9132 Bay Avenue) telephone 301-855-6600

city or town North Beach state Maryland zip code 20714

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

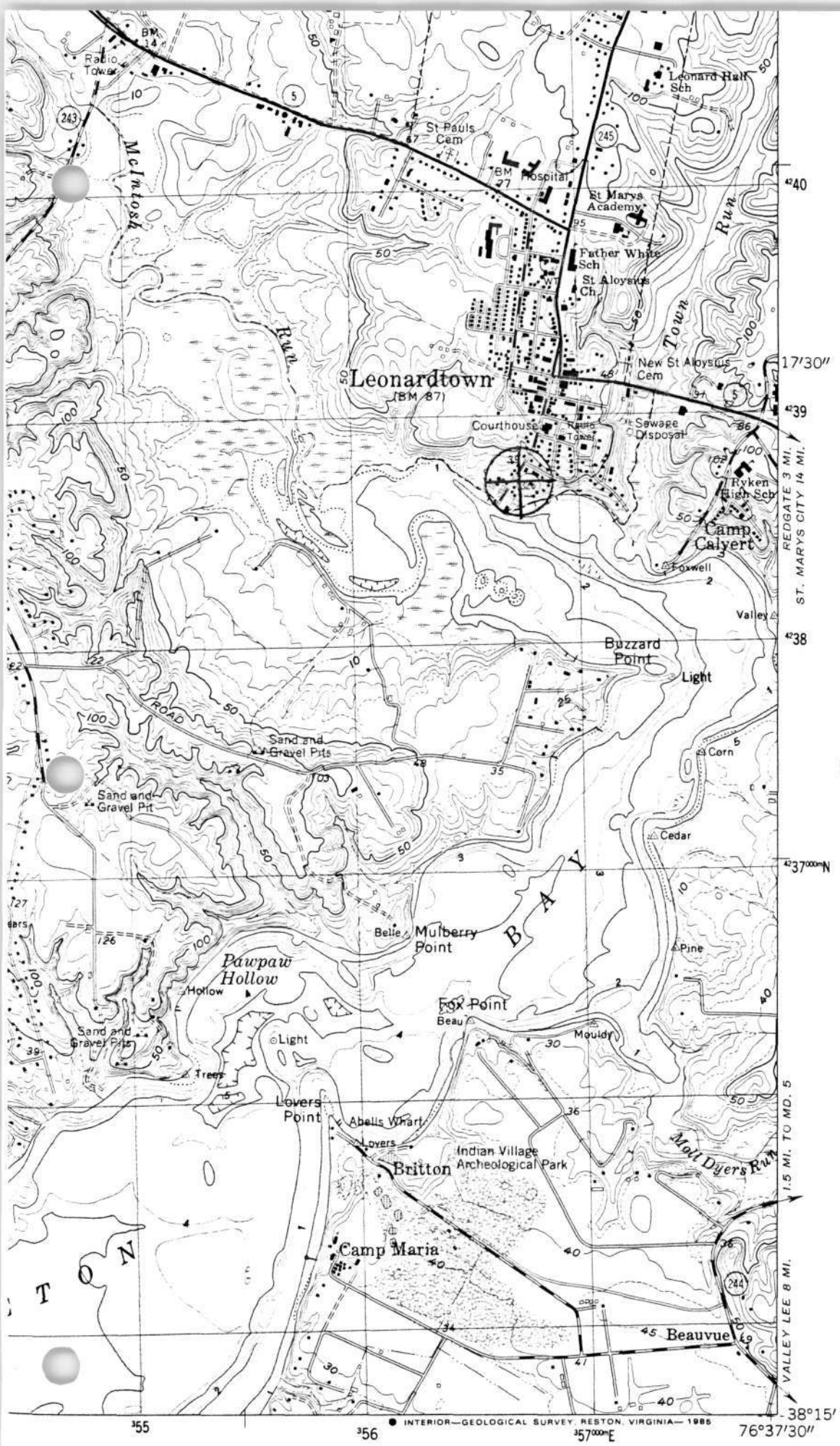
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property consists of one parcel described among the Land Records of St. Mary's County, Maryland in Liber EWA 1923, Folio 466.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property, containing 0.566 acre, comprises the remnant of the property historically associated with the Abell House that retains integrity and encompasses all elements of the resource within an appropriate historic setting.



Feet	Meters
1	.3048
2	.6096
3	.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

SM-346
Abell House
22530 Washington St.
Leonardtown
St. Mary's County
Maryland
18/356771/4238931

Exposed at low tide

Meters 0 — 0 Feet

DEPTH GRADIENT

5 — 16.4

Maximum depth

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———

(PINEY POIN
5660 II NE