

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Mercy Chapel at Mill Run

and/or common Mill Run Mercy Chapel Church

2. Location

street & number Mill Run Road

 n/a not for publication

city, town Selbysport vicinity of congressional district Sixth

state Maryland code county Garrett code 023

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mill Run Mercy Chapel Church, c/o Leslie Guard et al.

street & number Rt. 2, Box 109

city, town Friendsville n/a vicinity of state Maryland 21531

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Garrett County Courthouse

street & number Third and Alder Streets

city, town Oakland state Maryland 21550

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

 title Coal Basin Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

 date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair	deteriorated	Check one <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	Check one <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	date	n/a
	ruins	altered	moved		
	unexposed				

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of previously listed
National Register properties
included in this nomination: 0

Original and historic functions
and uses: religious

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

The Mill Run Mercy Chapel and its adjoining cemetery are located on a slight rise of ground in a wooded clearing on the south side of Mill Run Road, approximately six tenths of a mile west from its intersection with the Friendsville-Addison Road (MD Route 53) near Selbysport in Garrett County, Maryland. It is a one story, one room frame structure built on an octagonal plan above a coursed stone foundation. The modified pyramidal roof, now covered with metal, is truncated on four of the facades, forming four small pediments. Possibly unique in the state, it is an unusual solution to the problem of roofing an octagonal building. Also unusual are the four 6/6 sash windows, the lower sashes of which pivot on their central muntins. Built in 1874 by a local carpenter, the chapel has been altered only slightly since then and is in a good state of preservation, both in the interior and on the exterior.

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National Park Service

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Continuation sheet Mercy Chapel at Mill Run
Garrett County, Maryland Item number 7 Page 1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Mill Run Mercy Chapel and its adjoining cemetery are located on a slight rise of ground adjacent to Mill Run on the south side of Mill Run Road approximately six tenths of a mile from its intersection with Friendsville-Addison Road (MD Route 53). It is set in a woodland clearing in a heavily forested and rural area of Garrett County in Western Maryland.

The Chapel is a one story, one room building constructed of vertical planks on an octagonal plan. It is built on a random coursed, squared stone foundation with a cellar and is covered on the exterior with German siding painted white.

An entrance with two stone steps is located at the southeast end of the chapel. The four-panelled door is topped by a pointed-arched transom with two lights. A small cellar door is located above ground on the northeast elevation. On each of the other six elevations is a narrow 6/6 sash window; the top sash of each is fixed while the bottom are pivots on the central muntin.

The roof of the chapel is a modified pyramid which is truncated at the southeast, southwest, northwest and northeast elevations, forming four small pediments. These are recessed and covered with vertical German siding. On the front of the southeast pediment is a small shield with the words "M. R. Mercy Chapel 1874" in black Gothic print. The roof was previously covered with wood shingles, but is now covered with standing seam metal.

There is a brick stove flue with corbel chimney cap at the exterior of the southwest elevation, serving a cellar furnace. This replaces a metal stove pipe installed in the 1920s.

The interior of the chapel is a fine example of local craftsmanship and is virtually unchanged since the 1870s. A chair rail runs around the walls, above the level of the windowsills. The wainscotting below the chair rail consists of vertical German siding painted green. The ceiling, which follows the form of the roof exterior rather than being flat, is covered with narrow width German siding painted white. A podium with carved altar rail is at the northeast end of the chapel. There are eight pews on the left of the center aisle, and six on the right; the pew ends are topped by a modified Fleur-de-lis decoration

Two small graveyard plots lie northwest and southwest of the chapel. The oldest grave is dated 1867, before the construction of the chapel; the most recent is dated 1974. The graveyard to the northwest of the chapel contains graves reinterred from the Methodist cemetery at Selbysport.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1874 Builder ~~Architect~~ John Miller, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: C
 Applicable Exceptions: A religious exception
 Level of Significance for Evaluation: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Mercy Chapel is significant as one of the most architecturally sophisticated and well preserved Octagonal buildings in Maryland. Approximately a dozen mid-19th century octagonal buildings survive in Maryland, reflecting the influence of Orson Fowler's The Octagon House - A Home for All published in 1854. Most of these structures are outbuildings, such as dairies or smokehouses. Mercy Chapel is one of only three octagonal church buildings in the state and is the only known octagonal building in the four counties in Western Maryland. The chapel is also notable for its several unusual architectural features not found on other octagonal buildings in the state. Among these are the use of vertical plank construction, a roofing system probably unique in the state and windows with pivoting window sashes.

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Most nineteenth century octagonal buildings in the United States can be attributed to the influence of Orson Fowler's The Octagonal House - A Home for All published in 1854. In it Fowler provided a number of plans for houses, churches and schools as well as recommendations for building materials and landscaping. Fowler, who was a phrenologist and social reformer rather than an architect, used mathematical ratios to argue that octagonal buildings were healthier, more efficient to maintain and provided greater usable space. He was one of a number of mid-nineteenth century social critics, among them Catharine Beecher, who believed that the redesigning of houses to increase efficiency would provide more leisure time for servant-less middle class households. Partly because of the radical opinions of Fowler and his followers however, octagonal buildings were often thought of merely as follies or eccentricities and the style never gained wide acceptance.

Many of the octagonal buildings in Maryland were as much a product of the builder's own personal fancy as they were a direct result of Fowler's writings. Sometimes octagonal plans were used for small outbuildings, such as dairies, smokehouses or bath houses. Good examples of these remain at BA-41 in Baltimore County, HA-2 in Harford County, and CE-41 and CE-97 both in Cecil County. Several lighthouses on the Chesapeake Bay were also built on an octagonal plan, three of which are still standing.

Of the two other octagonal churches in Maryland, the Russian Orthodox Chapel in Calvert County was built in the 1940s and is a copy of a church in Russia. The Peach Blossom Meeting House in Talbot County was built in the third quarter of the nineteenth century for a Quaker congregation; it is an austere plain building, reflecting its Quaker affiliation.

Several architectural features differentiate Mercy Chapel from other octagonal buildings in Maryland and indicate the inventiveness of its builder, John Miller. Vertical-plank construction is often found in 19th century workers' housing elsewhere in Western Maryland, but Mercy Chapel is the only known instance of its use for a church. Even more unusual is the roofing system, probably unique in the state. Whereas eight-sided roofs were commonly used for octagonal buildings, the roof of Mercy Chapel is a four-sided pyramid with truncated corners. Also notable are the windows, the lower sashes of which pivot on the central muntins. Because the original records of the congregation of Mercy Chapel are lost, it is not known whether these features were specifically suggested or approved by the members or whether the octagonal form was conceived of by the builder John Miller.

The congregation of Mercy Church was first organized in 1874 by the Reverend L. W. Haslip, a circuit-riding Methodist minister who also initiated support for the construction of a small church on land donated by Elizabeth Fike near Mill Run.¹ John Miller, a builder of Alsatian descent, sawed all lumber on his water-powered reciprocating sawmill and made the lectern, pews and altar rail for a cost of 300 dollars.²

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Improvements to the church over the next seventy years were usually undertaken by the approximately twenty families who belonged to the congregation. In 1896 a pump organ was installed, and in the early 1920s the cellar was excavated and a furnace installed. The congregation began to dwindle in the 1930s and when the Youghiogheny Hydro-Electric Corporation began buying area farmland to construct the Youghiogheny River reservoir in the 1940s this caused a further dislocation. The church closed in 1941.

In 1970 the church was restored by a reborn congregation who also installed a new organ and heating system. It was bought by them from the West Virginia conference of the United Methodist Church in 1977.

Footnotes

¹ Garrett County Land Records, Liber 2, Folio 365.

² McCullough, Dr. Raymond O. "A Brief History of Mercy Chapel" The Glades Star, vol. 4, no 23, (December 1974), p. 530.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.83 acre
Quadrangle name Accident, Maryland

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
n/a			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Geoffrey B. Henry		
organization	Maryland Historical Trust	date	4 February 1984
street & number	21 State Circle	telephone	(301) 269-2438
city or town	Annapolis	state	Maryland 21401

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

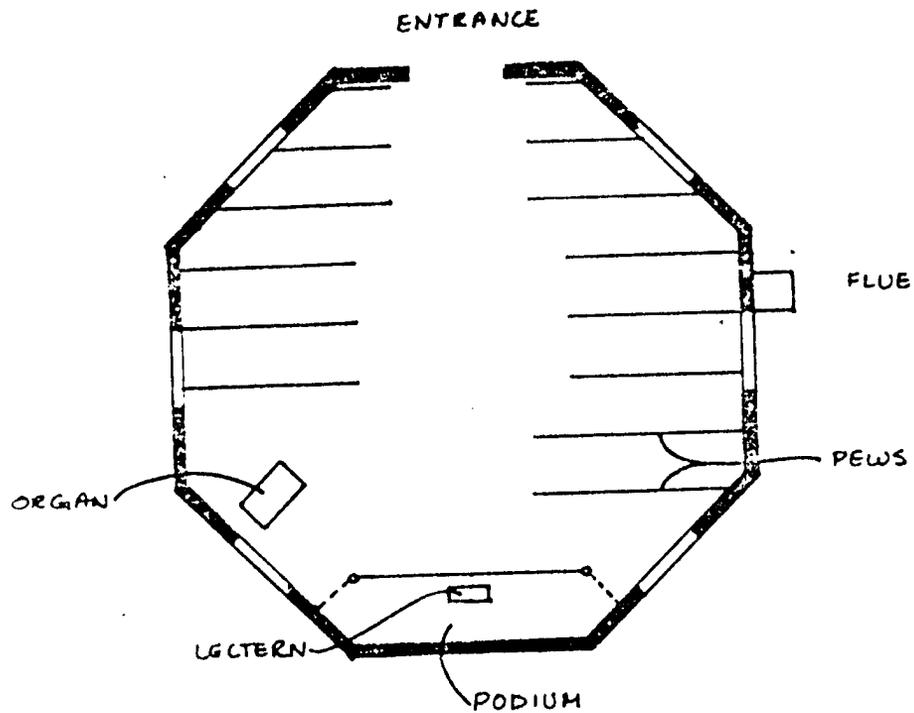
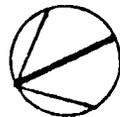
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

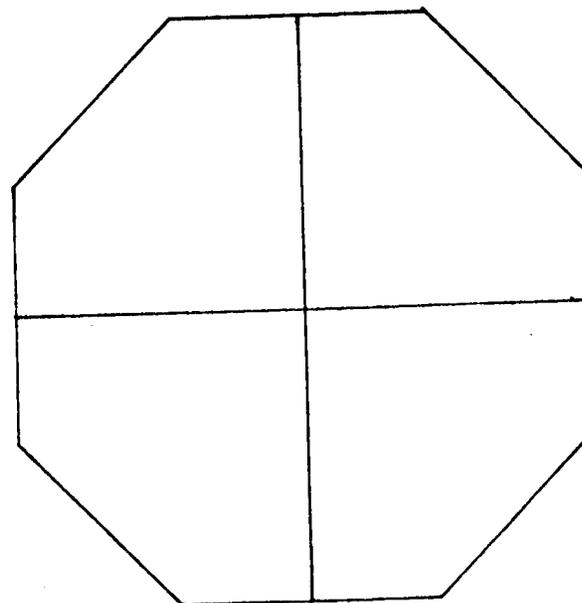
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title	STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER	date
For HCRS use only		
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register		
		date
Keeper of the National Register		
		date
Attest:		
Chief of Registration		



FLOOR PLAN



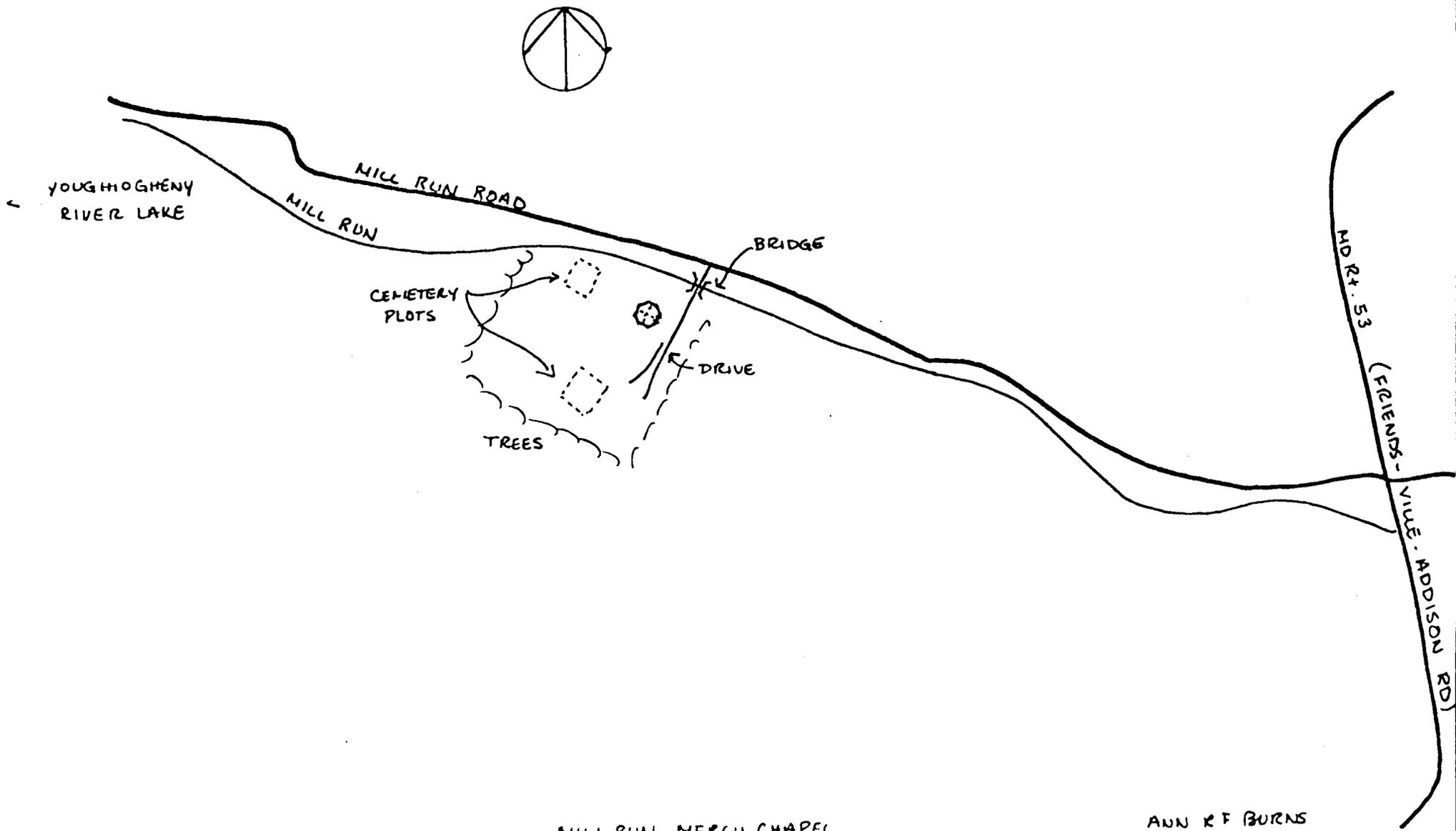
ROOF PLAN

NOT TO SCALE

G-II-B-050

MILL RUN MERCY CHAPEL
MILL RUN RD,
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND

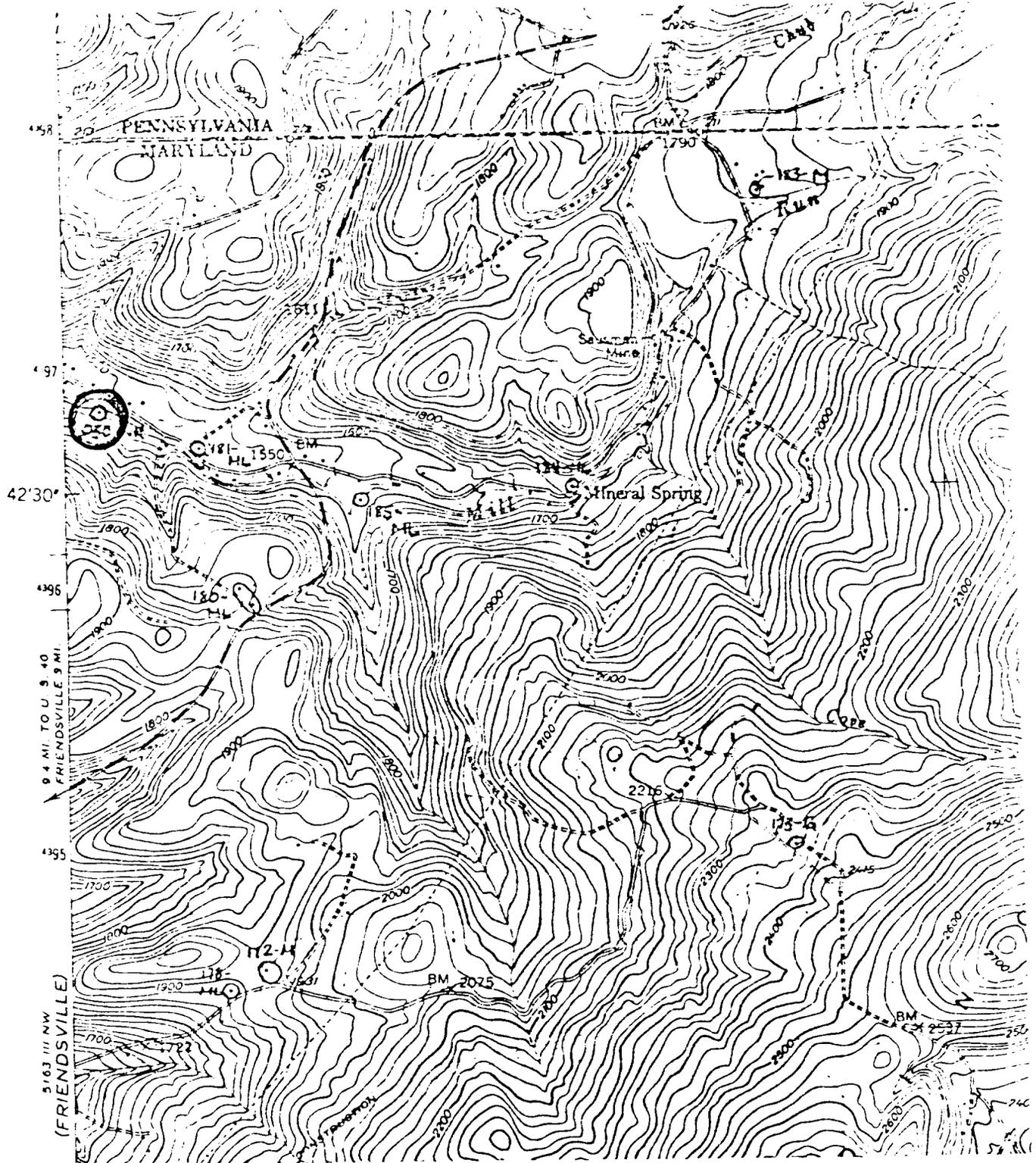
ANN R.F. BURNS
SURVEY DATE 8-6-80
PLAN DATE 5-12-81



G-II-B-050
 SITE PLAN
 NOT TO SCALE

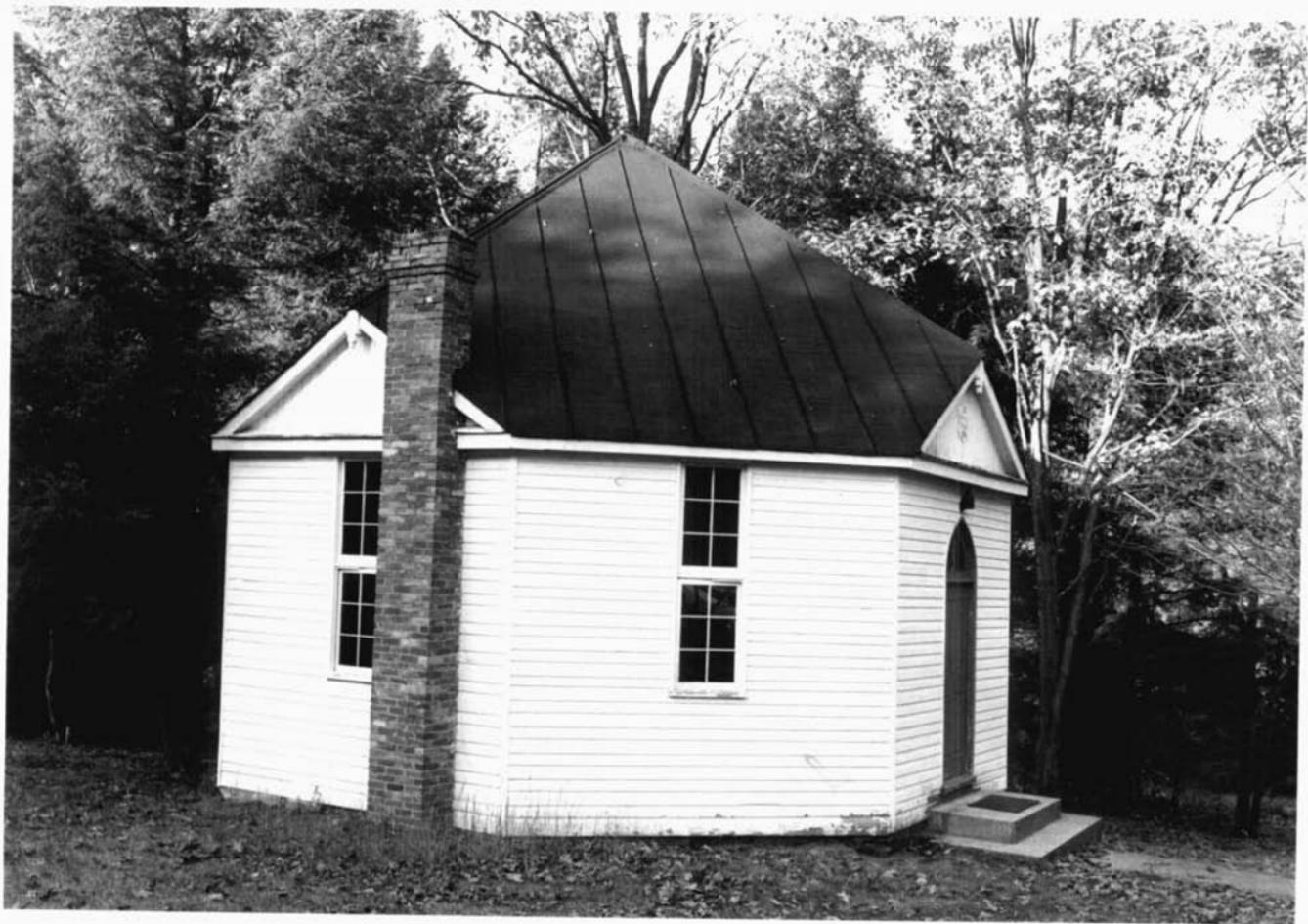
MILL RUN MERCY CHAPEL
 MILL RUN R.
 GARRETT COUNTY MARYLAND

ANN R F BURNS
 SURVEY DATE 8-6-80
 MAP DRAWN 5-12-81



Accident, MD.-PA.
 USGS 7.5 minute series
 Scale - 1:24000
 1948; photorevised 1974

Site #: G-II-B-050
 Mill Run Mercy Chapel
 South side, Mill Run Road, approximately
 6/10 mile from its intersection with
 MD Rt. 53



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Mill Run Mercy Chapel

Garrett Co., MD

Photo: V. Cesna 6 Aug 1980

SW & S elev; Facade-SE elev.



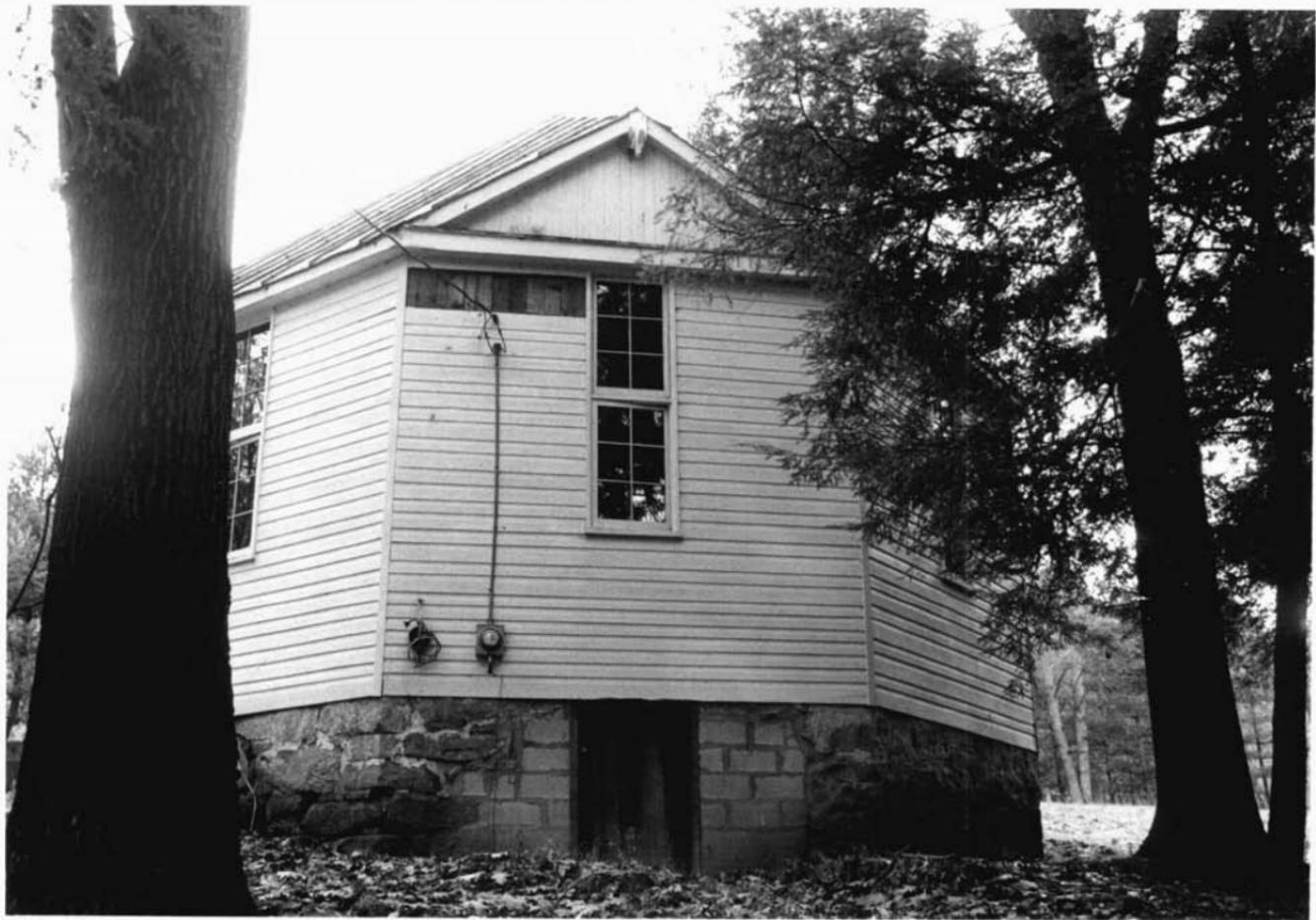
G-II-B-050

Mill Run Mercy Chapel

Garrett County, MD

Facade: SE elev.

Winter 1979



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Mill Run Mercy Chapel

Garrett Co., MD

Photo: V. Cesna 6 Aug 1980

E, NE, N elevs.