FHA-8-300 (11-78)

Easement

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

HO-141

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic The Lawn

and or common The Lawn

2. Location

street & number ~~5388~~ 6036 Old Lawyers Hill Road n/a not for publication

city, town Elkridge n/a vicinity of congressional district Sixth

state Maryland code 24 county Howard code 027

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Joseph A. Cobb

street & number ~~5388~~ 6036 Old Lawyers Hill Road

city, town Elkridge n/a vicinity of state Maryland 21227

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Howard County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Ellicott City state Maryland 21043

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes X no

date 1978 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	X unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	___ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The Lawn is a 19th century frame house with five outbuildings, three of which date from the 19th century (two cottages and a barn) and contribute to the significance, and two of which do not (20th century garage and greenhouse). The Lawn was constructed in three phases (c. 1842, c. 1845, c. 1860). This complicated building embodies both the eclecticism of the 19th century and the changing and varied interests of the owner/builder, George Washington Dobbin. The Phase I house was a simple rectangular building built as a summer retreat. In the mid-1840's when Dobbin retired for health reasons, he doubled the size of the building. He converted the original house to a library and stair hall and constructed a two story addition to the west containing a double parlor, dining room, back hall and porch on the first floor and bedrooms above. A one story porch surrounded the Phase I building on the north, east and south. Fifteen years later, Dobbin made the final additions: (1) extending the southern double parlor to the south which became the base of the three story observatory tower, (2) added a two story kitchen wing to the west and (3) enclosed part of the Phase II western porch. The asbestos siding was added in the 1970's. The outbuildings are located to the west and south. A mid-20th century garage exists to the west adjacent to a mid-20th century greenhouse. These two buildings do not contribute to the significance of The Lawn. The 19th century barn is located south and west of the house. The two 19th century cottages were moved to avoid demolition by the Harbor Tunnel Thruway to the south side of The Lawn just east of the house.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

I. The Lawn

The Lawn is a rambling, complex structure built over a period of two decades in the middle of the 19th century as the private residence of a man of manifold interests. It reflects the romantic and eclectic architectural tastes of the time as well as the diverse intellectual interests of the builder, George Washington Dobbin (1809-1894). A lawyer, and at one time a member of the Supreme Bench of the City of Baltimore, Judge Dobbin began the The Lawn as a summer country retreat but soon turned it into a year-round residence by adding to it in several stages. Although modifications have been made to the complex throughout its existence (most obviously the addition of asbestos siding in 1979), its development can be attributed to three basic building periods or phases. For convenience, these phases can be addressed as Phase I: The Cottage, Phase II: The Cottage Enlarged, and Phase III: The "Super" Cottage.

A. Phase I: The Cottage

In 1842 Judge Dobbin purchased 9 acres of land on the prominence south and west of the Patapsco River now known as Lawyers Hill. Here he proceeded to build a cottage to be used as a summer retreat from the heat of Baltimore City. Although the interior was subsequently modified, the exterior has persisted largely unchanged from its original appearance and shows that the cottage was intended to be the quintessence of the small, romantic and rustic retreat then at the height of fashion and championed by A. J. Downing.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

This is a one and one-half story, rectangular frame structure (see floor plan and roof plan) with a shingled, gable roof running east-west intersected by a subordinate north-south gable roof. It rests on a fieldstone foundation (unexcavated), and is sheathed with wide weatherboarding, now covered with asbestos shingle as mentioned above. Beside panelled double doors at the west end of both the north and south facades, the first floor apertures are large-paned casement windows and a pair of large-paned French doors. Second floor windows, in the existing three gables, are small-paned casements, with the east gable featuring a projecting polygonal bay window, or oriel, supported by scrolled brackets. Scalloped bargeboards outline all the gables and rustic stick-like modillions project from the cornice line. Although no longer extant, a large wooden finial of fleur-de-lys shape originally surmounted the peak of each of the four gables.

Although the interior was subsequently altered during Phase II, it is said to have consisted of five rooms (parlor, dining room, two bedrooms, and "spare" room) on the first floor. There is no indication of the existence of chimneys, fireplaces or cooking facilities; a detached kitchen and servants quarters, located some distance westward, are no longer extant.

B. Phase II: The Cottage Enlarged

Not long after construction of Phase I, Judge Dobbin was advised, for reasons of health, to give up city living and reside in the country. Thus, in order to provide for the amenities required for winter comfort and to provide space for his growing family, modification and enlargement of the cottage was undertaken c.1845. The result was the addition of a large block along the west wall of the cottage.

The "enlargement" also of frame construction with brick nogging and clapboard, consisted basically of two wings, each two stories high and covered with a moderately steep jerkin-head gable roof. The roof ridges of the wings are at right angles to each other (see roof plan), and the western-most wing is subordinate to the other in height, width and ornamentation; only the north and south gables, for instance, are trimmed in scalloped bargeboards. Two massive brick chimneys pierce the standing-seam tin (originally, wood shingle) roofs of the block, and each is ornamented with tapered caps and two belt course-like projecting bands. The principal, central chimney divides into three separate flues, a pseudo-Tudor innovation.

A one-story pent-roofed open veranda was constructed around all three exposed sides of the original cottage, during Phase II, thus tying the two sections together. A similar open veranda (later enclosed and enlarged) runs along the extreme west side of the new block. Both verandas utilize unfinished sapling logs as columnar supports for the roofs, adding a further touch of sophisticated rusticity to the composition.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

As if to underscore the bucolic setting of this idealized "country cottage," a farm bell is housed in a pyramidial-roofed belfry astride the main roof ridge of the original cottage.

The fenestration of the Phase II block was characterized by an assortment of large-paned and small-paned double-hung sash windows. In some cases, the windows are grouped two and four together giving a "mullioned" effect reminiscent of Elizabethan-style window treatments. (The fenestration of the north elevation was repeated in the south elevation prior to the latter's subsequent extension.) All the windows are flanked by louvered external shutters; the shutter dogs are of scallop shell design. The principal, multiple-window groupings are surmounted by a bracketed projecting cornice-like motif which tends to introduce an Italianesque element into what is predominantly an "English cottage" style with its steep roofs, clipped gables, scalloped bargeboards, multiple-flue chimneys, and grouped "mullioned" windows.

With the construction of the west block, the interior of the original cottage wing to its east was altered to its present configuration and function: to provide a central entrance and stair hall as well as a large and elegant library. The stair is open string and ascends in a single flight, winding through a right-angle turn midway to the second-floor. A rounded handrail with ramps and easements is supported by straight-sided rectangular balusters and terminates at a slim, tapered colonnette newel. (A stairway of identical style, but rising in a single straight run, is located along the extreme west wall of the west block.) At either end of the hall are glazed and panelled double entrance doors.

The library, however, dominates the wing, not only in size, but in decor as well showing Gothic influence. Glass-doored bookcases with heavy overhanging lancet-arched cornices line all four walls of the room. The flat plaster ceiling is ornamented with heavily moulded ribbing forming an intricate pattern of interlocking geometric shapes suggestive of vaulting and evocative of the elaborate moulded ceilings of the Tudor era. A four-light transom over the central doorway bears colorful heraldic devices in mock "stained glass" and adds to the Gothic effect. The floor of this room is laid in narrow hardwood strips of alternating light and dark hues. (Downing urges this treatment of floors in entrances and parlors.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

C. Phase III: The "Super" Cottage

After the 1845 enlargement, further modifications and additions were made to the complex, probably in the period c. 1855-1865, yielding not only the rambling effect present today, but also certain stylistic alterations.

The most extensive addition was an attached kitchen. This wing was butted against the open veranda of the westernmost wing of the Phase II addition. The two-story frame wing has a gable roof (running east-west and shingled, see roof plan) and sits on an unexcavated fieldstone foundation. A single, wide gable is centered on the north roof face and two narrow gables are situated at either extreme of the south face. Windows are all double-hung sash of varying sizes (both 4/4 light and 6/6 light) and are flanked by external louvered shutters. An external square brick chimney is centered on the west wall and rises from a fireplace structure featuring a sloped weathering on one side and an unusual wide, horizontal pent-roofed brick wood shed on the other. The first floor of the wing is a single kitchen room with a brick hearth and tall, arched fireplace opening. Several servants' rooms occupy the second floor.

The formerly open veranda between the kitchen and the house was partially enclosed during Phase III to provide a larder and pantry.

The other modifications of Phase III came about as a result of the varied interests in science and technology of Judge Dobbin. An inveterate thinker and admirer of gadgetry, Dobbin created work areas in which to pursue his several hobbies. One of these was photography, and the west veranda, now partially enclosed and joining the kitchen to the main house, was raised to its present two-story height, with the north end being used as a darkroom. (Its window is the only one of the house to have light-tight panelled shutters.) The south end of this enlargement was utilized as a workshop and a farther square projection westward served as a metal-working shop (complete with anvil). An un-roofed gallery outside this work area provided a drying porch for photographic plates.

The final refinement to the cottage complex also came about as a result of the owner's pursuit of science and, stylistically, profoundly altered its composition and feeling. A 12-foot extension southward of the parlor wing was topped by a rectangular pavilion-like structure emerging from the gabled roof and evoking a tower-like effect. A basically flat roof is outlined with scalloped bargeboard-like appendages. Casement windows on the long sides of the pavilion and a projecting gallery or balcony at its south end, bracketed on the underside and canopied by an overhanging roof, interject an Italianate feeling, which effect is heightened by the inclusion of elongated sash windows, surmounted by bracketed projecting cornices in the lower stories of the extension. Stylistically, this eclectic intrusion of Italianesque detailing into what might otherwise be taken for Steamboat Gothic makes for a hybrid, and curious blend of Mediterranean and Mississippi.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Irrespective of the style, however, the roof top pavilion is not solely decorative; it once functioned as an astronomical observatory, complete with an 8-foot diameter circular opening in its ceiling (under a shallow gabled-roof square covering) for the mounting of a telescope. Bookshelves for works on astronomy line the walls. A large wooden weather vane atop the roof serves not only as a decorative element but also gives evidence of the owner's Jeffersonian fascination with gadgetry as well; its shaft descends to the first floor parlor window where it pierces the frame at right angles and terminates in an indoor readout on a compass rose.

Apart from the Gothic treatment of the library, the south parlor contains perhaps the most significant surviving interior decor and would appear to date from the above-described extension of the wing in the early 1860's. A notable, deep plaster cornice, picture moulding and ceiling moulding enhance the elegant, large proportions of the 18' x 30' room as well as emphasize the broad and deep chimney breast. The mantelpiece, of possibly unique design, consists of a deep shelf topped by a tall, panelled backrail and supported by a pair of wooden, voluted consoles, each of which is richly carved in deep relief and capped by a fox's head. Over the arched marble fireplace opening a similarly carved boss featuring an owl's head is located as if a keystone. The hearth is of glazed tile laid in a geometric pattern and incorporating an arabesque motif. The doors of this room, as are virtually all the doors of the house, are four-panelled with broad lock rail fitted with rectangular rim locks, brass knobs, and brass keyhole escutcheons. Architraves are mitered and moulded.

II. The Outbuildings

In its heyday, The Lawn embraced an area in excess of 240 acres which afforded not only an adequate "lawn" for the principal house but also permitted the estate to be practically self-sustaining. It boasted not only fields, pastures and woods, but also barns, stables, an ice house, smoke house, tenant houses and other ancillary buildings necessary for comfortable country living in the mid-nineteenth century. Time, of course, has taken its toll of both acreage and structures, and only three of the early outbuildings survive; (and only because they were snatched from their original sites in the path of the present interstate highway system and relocated on the remaining acres of the Lawn in 1970). They consist of a barn and two tenant cottages.

A. The Barn

Resting on a modern cinder block foundation in its new location just southwest of the main house, the late 19th century barn is a rectangular frame structure covered with a gabled roof (running east-west) and intersected by a subordinate gabled roof on the northeast corner, the gable of which is dominated by a large loft door. A wide, deep shed projection (probably not original) occupies the remainder of the north elevation. Siding on the north side is a very narrow shiplap; siding on the other three sides is the vertical board and batten commonly found on 19th century barns in Howard County. A large rectangluar, gable-roofed, louvered ventilator is centered on the ridge line of the main roof.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

B. Tenant Cottage #1 (Rose Cottage)

This cottage which, stylistically, would appear to date from circa 1850, is located southeast of the main house and is one and one-half story "L"-shaped frame structure featuring five roof gables, each outlined by broad scalloped bargeboards cut in distinctive Gothic, or lancet, arch pattern. Typical mid-19th century six over six double-hung sash windows predominate. Because of the necessity to relocate the cottage, it now rests on a modern concrete foundation and is sheathed in asbestos siding. The original framing has not been disturbed. The south wing is of recent construction.

A particularly noteworthy feature is a small porch containing its own scalloped bargeboarded gable, echoing the slightly larger bargeboard gable from which the porch projects.

Considering the rather large size and extensive ornamentation of this structure, speculation concerning its original function becomes intriguing.

C. Tenant Cottage #2 (Lilac Cottage)

This is a small, mid-19th century, two story frame cottage of basically rectangular floor plan and consists of two intersecting gabled roof wings and a one-story shed roof extension. (The intermediate wing is of recent construction.) Fenestration is irregular, but typical 19th century six over six double-hung sash. Gable ends overhang generously and originally were ornamented with Gothic-arched bargeboards. Because of the necessity to relocate the structure, it also rests on a modern concrete foundation and is sheathed in asbestos siding. But the original framing is intact.

D. Other outbuildings

Also included on the property are a mid-20th century pre-fabricated greenhouse, and a garage of similar date, which do not contribute to the significance of the resource.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Lawn is situated on the top of a high ridgeline, on the west side of the Patapsco River. The land is gently undulating and features a heavy growth of trees and shrubs. The boundaries are delineated sharply on the northeast by a hill sloping north to the Patapsco, on the northwest by the Harbor Tunnel Thruway and on the east and west by a dense, old growth of trees and shrubs which create a natural boundary between The Lawn and its neighbors.

8. Significance

HO-141

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	X law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	X education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1842-early 1900's **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Applicable Criteria: B, C

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The significance of The Lawn derives primarily from association with George Washington Dobbin, 1809-1894, a lawyer for whom the house was erected as a residence. Admitted to the bar at the age of 21, Dobbin rose to the position of judge on the Supreme Bench of Baltimore in 1867. A graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law, Dobbin became Dean of the law faculty of that institution. He was also a founder of the Maryland Historical Society and member at various times of the board of directors or trustees of the University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins University, the Peabody Institute, Baltimore Library Company, Maryland Hospital for the Insane, and Johns Hopkins Hospital. The house has further significance from the architectural character. The Lawn underwent three major changes for Dobbin in adapting the building to meet his tastes, and needs, and interests. Although several architectural influences are visible in the decorative detailing, the architectural significance comes from the personal quality that is reflected in the assemblage to accommodate the owner's use rather than fashion.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

George Washington Dobbin, 1809-1894, was admitted to the bar at the age of 21 and, as a lawyer, made his mark in the practice of that profession, ultimately becoming a judge on the Supreme Bench of Baltimore and, for 14 years, Dean of the University of Maryland School of Law. In addition, he was a founder of the Maryland Historical Society and served as a Director of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, a Trustee of the Johns Hopkins University and a Trustee of the Peabody Institute. A philanthropist in his own community, he donated land near his home in Lawyer's Hill for the construction of a neighborhood community center.

As an example of the esteem in which he was held, the Mayor of Baltimore chose him as one of the delegation of three to make representations to President Lincoln to order a cessation of Union troop movements through Baltimore subsequent to the bloodshed of April 19, 1861, when the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment was attacked by Baltimore mobs.

His intellectual nature apparently caused him to take an interest in science and technology as well as the arts. His fascination with gadgetry (e.g., his remote-reading weathervane), his tinkering in his workshop, his pursuit of photography, and his serious study of astronomy, as well as his accomplishments in the fields of law, history and education mark him as a "Renaissance Man."

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Dobbin built the first section of the house (1842) on a hill west of the town of Elkridge, accessibility from Baltimore having been made possible by the 1835 construction of the Thomas Viaduct and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (Metropolitan Branch). Within a few years several other Baltimore lawyers built their summer houses nearby causing the area to be named "Lawyer's Hill."

The resident families of Lawyers Hill became a homogenous and relatively isolated group. Diversions consisted mainly of mutual visiting, much of it at The Lawn. According to the 1914 reminiscences of one of Dobbin's daughters, Rebecca Pue Penniman, the house was the scene of perpetual activity. Mrs. Penniman's reflections add to the significance of The Lawn by creating an animated picture of its use. She wrote, "We had a very gay house and constant company - plenty of horses and carriages and everything that could add to our pleasure." Choir practice was held every Friday night at The Lawn followed by a generous supper ". . .which insured the attendance not only of the choir, but of some neighbors who came for the social end."

Plentiful though the luxuries may have been, life at The Lawn was not one of indolence. Judge Dobbin was a man of precision and punctuality, and he expected similar virtues in his children. Their education was conducted at home by tutors ". . . till they were old enough to need school training and discipline." Music lessons began as early as 5:00 a.m. Breakfast was at 6:30 a.m. year round, by candlelight if necessary. No child was ever late for this family gathering. "We were so used to it that we never felt it a hardship, but I cannot say as much for our guests."

The Civil War years saw the otherwise unified community equally divided in its sympathies. Although feelings ran high, the families were sagacious enough never to let the subject of sympathy be discussed among them - a most wise decision, which left us at the end of the war as good friends as ever." The Dobbins were apparently sympathetic to the Southern cause. A Union Regiment always encamped near The Lawn, apparently in connection with General Butler's control of the Thomas Viaduct (c. 1,000 yards away, National Register) and the railroad between Baltimore and Washington. According to Mrs. Penniman, "The (Union) soldiers from the North were rude and insolent to all suspected of Southern sympathies. They took our horses, stole our fruit and vegetables. The Western regiments were composed of much more decent men." She further describes the family's actually welcoming the possible arrival of Confederate troops.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #7

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

> When General Lee entered Pennsylvania a rumor reached us that a part of the army was in Maryland not far from us. Father went to meet them and Mother looked into the resources of the store room and meat house to feed the hungry men. General Ben Butler threatened to cut down all our trees to clear the way for guns, which were . . . across the (Patapsco) River, and it was proposed to move me and my two day old baby to the cellar for comparative safety. But our hopes were in vain; Gettysburg had made Maryland impossible, and our only cheer was that our trees were spared.

The re-uniting of the neighborhood in the post-war years was furthered by Judge Dobbin who, in 1869, provided land upon which to build "The Assembly Room," a community center for dances, plays, readings, etc., "a kind of neighborhood parlor," as he expressed it.

The close-knitness of the Dobbin family was not diminished as the children grew up and married. They did not move away: land was made available to them from The Lawn acreage for the building of their own cottages. (Four of these survive today.) Thus, parents, children and grandchildren were in close proximity to one another and The Lawn continued as a scene of bustling activity, remaining the focus for one large, extended family.

A. J. Downing in his The Architecture of Country Houses (1850) offers his concept of what the American "true home" of the time should be.

> The beautiful, rural unostentatious, moderate home of the country gentleman, large enough to minister to all the wants, necessities and luxuries of a republican, and not too large or too luxurious to warp the life or manners of his children.

The Lawn measures up to this description.

Architecturally, The Lawn is a well-preserved example of a private residence constructed in several phases during the middle of the 19th century (c.1840-c. 1865) and reflecting the range of prevailing tastes and styles of that era. It exhibits the early Victorian fascination with the romantic and the rustic, as evidenced in Phase I (see Description). A one and one-half story frame cottage (with a detached kitchen) nestled on a wooded nine-acre site and adorned with roof finials, scalloped bargeboards and oriel window bespeaks an attempt to present a picturesque and rustic country cottage with simple ornamentation, in the highly romantic Gothic Revival style. In this, the cottage is Downing-esque, if not actually inspired by his published works, and gives evidence of the far-reaching influence of fashion on the domestic architecture of the time. This is an indication of the change from localized vernacular traditions toward a uniform, national architecture - from published sources.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #8

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

The additions of Phase II (see Description) further attest to the near-universal prevailing tastes of the period. By this time, however, pretense to a diminutive cottage has been dropped; a large mass of blocks, topped by steep roofs and chimneys bespeaks the conversion from summer cottage to year-round residence, and a country house of near-villa proportions results. English rural style ornamentation, in the form of scalloped bargeboards, truncated gables, and grouped mullioned windows, continues to prevail, but with restraint. The theme continues to be Gothic, as evidenced by the interior treatment of the library. The open verandas, however, with their sapling-log posts, contribute a feeling of rural rusticity. The additions and modifications of the Phase III era (see Description) further add to the mass and decoratively contribute elements of the Italianate style (particularly in the observatory pavillion), thus adding to the eclectic nature of the total composition.

Of further architectural significance is the reflection of the owner's interests and hobbies in the building. The solid external shutters disclosing the location of the darkroom, the several protrusions forming the workshop areas, and, most strikingly of all, the astronomical observatory dominating the south elevation all make a strong statement of the owner's personality and demonstrate that form does indeed follow function. Furthermore, The Lawn possesses a very rare example of an astronomical observatory in a private residence. (No other Maryland example is known.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

HO-141

See Continuation Sheet # 9

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 7.935 acres

Quadrangle name Relay, Maryland **Quadrangle scale** 1:24000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	351680	413420
B	18	351740	413420
C	18	351540	413420
D	18	351340	413620
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries are delineated on the attached map; for Boundary Justification see Continuation Sheet #5.

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

state	code	county	code
n/a			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Philip Reitzel and Cleora Thompson and Nancy Miller Schamu
organization	date 1983
street & number	8814 Guilford Road telephone 301-730-2927
city or town	Columbia state Maryland 21046

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X 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 8-27-84

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER **date**

[redacted]

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Andrews, Matthew Page. Tercentenary History of Maryland. 1925

Downing, A. J. The Architecture of Country Houses. Reprint of 1850 ed. New York: Dover, 1969.

Howard County Land Records, Howard County Courthouse, Ellicott City, Maryland.

Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Cobb, July and August 1982.

Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory: Howard County (HO-141), Cleora Thompson, surveyor.

Penniman, Rebecca Pue. "The Lawn" manuscript, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Cobb, April 1914, owners.

Photograph of The Lawn, c. 1850, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cobb, owners.

Easement

1401414404
HO-141
District #1

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM
for the
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: The Lawn

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 5388 Old Lawyers Hill Road

CITY OR TOWN: Elkridge

STATE: Maryland

COUNTY: Howard

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
[X] District [ ] Building [ ] Site [ ] Structure [ ] Object	[ ] Public [X] Private [ ] Both	Public Acquisition: [ ] In Process [ ] Being Considered	[X] Occupied [ ] Unoccupied [ ] Preservation work in progress	Yes: [X] Restricted [ ] Unrestricted [ ] No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

[ ] Agricultural	[ ] Government	[ ] Park	[ ] Transportation	[ ] Comments
[ ] Commercial	[ ] Industrial	[X] Private Residence	[ ] Other (Specify)	
[ ] Educational	[ ] Military	[ ] Religious		
[ ] Entertainment	[ ] Museum	[ ] Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mr. & Mrs. Joseph A. Cobb

STREET AND NUMBER: 5388 Old Lawyers Hill Road

CITY OR TOWN: Elkridge STATE: Maryland 21227

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Hall of Records

STREET AND NUMBER: Howard County Court House

CITY OR TOWN: Ellicott City STATE: Maryland 21043

Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #): Tax Map 32, Blk 21, /p.6 228/69

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Howard County Historic Sites Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1976 [ ] Federal [X] State [ ] County [ ] Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Maryland Historical Trust

STREET AND NUMBER: 21 State Circle

CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis, STATE: Maryland 21401

PS – 709

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)		(Check One)			
	☐ Altered	☒ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Lawn, home of Judge George Washington Dobbin is located at the end of Old Lawyer's Hill Road whose west elevation lies not far from the easement for I-95.

Built in 1835, it is a wooden Victorian compilation originally a summer cottage two bays long and one bay wide which has been added on to and extended several times westward and southward. The original cottage had a one-story porch constructed of fan-like boards with roof supported by log posts running all the way around the building. The gable roof of the original structure runs east-west. An intersecting A shaped dormer window with gingerbread barge board is centered into the north and south roof elevation. The dormer holds a casement window with ten-ten lites encased in a wooden frame.

A square wood bell tower with tent roof is located at the apex of the west wall. The north and south elevations of this original structure are identical holding central first floor casement windows with three-three lites. The original porch runs around the entire north, east and south elevations supported by some twenty log posts. A casement bay window is located on the east wall with 8-8-8 lites and wooden cornice. The first floor casement windows have three-three panes.

From this point on the relatively simple one and a half story Victorian summer cottage becomes a jumble of intersecting gables, jagged extensions and filled in spaces created to meet the needs and numerous activities of the Judge forced into early retirement due to ill health. His pursuits into the fields of photography and astronomy dictated extensions to the house which originally was extended west to create permanent year round living quarters for the Judge upon his retirement. This two story addition is presently a four bay wide, one bay deep wooden structure with shortened hip roof running north-south which creates a gambrel roof effect on the north elevation. This elevation is decorated with scrolled barge boards.

It hold a second floor double-hung window with four-over-four lites decorated by shutters and a projecting flat wooden lintel held by brackets.

A quatre partite first floor window is centered into the wall composed of two vertical wooden panels in the center and a double-hung rectangular window on each side holding four-over-four lites. This is encased in a wooden frame and surmounted by a projecting flat lintel. A brick chimney is set into the center of the roof of this addition which was built about 1843. In 1843 when Judge Dobbin moved to The Lawn year round, the parlor and two bedrooms were thrown together, making the present library, and the dining room staircase and spare room made into a hall with a deep porch on the west. At this time the kitchen and servants rooms were still in the detached building which is now attached and located at the extreme west end of this building mass.

This structure is four bays wide and two bays deep with gable roof running east-west. An intersecting gable has been inset into the center of the north elevation over two double-hung rectangular windows which sit side by side holding four-over-four lites and shutters. A square window with shutters lies east of these. Two first floor double-hung retangular windows holding four-over-four lites and shutters, lie under the A gabled dormer.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

HO-141

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [x] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1835

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- Aboriginal
  - [ ] Prehistoric
  - [x] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [x] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other *(Specify)*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lawn is significant historically and architecturally.

Historically it is tied to Judge George Washington Dobbin, prominent Baltimore lawyer whose many activities in the fields of education, music and law make him a figure of state significance. Dean of the University of Maryland Law School, Judge Dobbin bought nine acres on the hill across the Patapsco from Relay when the new B&O Railroad made commuting possible. The Donaldsons and Latrobes, attorneys and friends of Judge Dobbin, followed. The area thus acquired the name "Lawyer's Hill".

In 1843 the Judge, following a severe illness, was advised to move to the country. He moved to his summer home and began the many additions to his home in acreage and building.

His residence remains much as it was in his day. A Judge of the Supreme Bench, he was also founder of the Maryland Historical Society, a director of the B&O Railroad, an original trustee of the Johns Hopkins University, and a trustee of the Peabody Institute. There seems to be no field of interest in which he did not touch base. His interest in astronomy led him to build a third story observatory on top of the first west wing addition to his house. A porch was added on the west to dry his prints after developing them in his dark room.

During inclement weather, the Judge took a walk around his porch and back twenty-three times which he had estimated to be a mile. Twenty-three wooden beads were located on the south wall of the porch which he moved from one side to another as he finished a turn.

Rebecca Pue Penniman daughter of Judge Dobbin writes: "We had a very gay house and constant company -- plenty of horses and carriages and everything that could add to our pleasure. Mother and Father having married so early, were young with their six children". She writes further of the 1860's: "The early days of the sixties were shadowed by the war. I vividly recall the day when we sat on the porch of The Lawn listening to the guns of the first battle of Masasses. . . . .As our neighborhood was almost equally divided in sentiment, and feeling ran high, we all determined never to let the question of the North and South be discussed among us -- a most wise decision, which left us at the end of the war as good friends as ever. We always had a regiment near us.

In 1869, as the neighborhood had grown much larger, Father proposed that room should be built for dances, plays, tableaux, readings, etc., -- as he expressed it 'for a kind of neighborhood parlor'. This was done on

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

HO-141

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brown, George Dobbin. "The Robert D. Browns". Elkridge, 1976. (Mimeographed)

Interview with Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Cobb, present owners at the Lawn, Elkridge, July 28, 1976.

Dr. Brown's Books Go to Peabody Library. Baltimore Sun, Fall 1951.

"Thomas Viaduct Celebrates 134th Birthday". The Times-Ellicott City, Md. Thursday, July 24, 1969, p.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY									OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE						LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds				Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"				°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"									
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"									
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"									

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

7.935 Acres

Please see Tax Map 32, Blk 21 p 6

228/69

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Cleora Barnes Thompson, Archivist

ORGANIZATION: Office of Planning and Zoning-Comprehensive Planning

DATE:

STREET AND NUMBER: 3450 Court House Drive

CITY OR TOWN: Ellicott City

STATE: Maryland

21043

12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Signature

A third rectangular window, smaller in dimension holding four-over-four lites and shutters lies west of these.

A narrow one story brick addition lies on the west wall of this original kitchen and servants' quarters. From it springs a central brick chimney with a second floor rectangular double-hung window holding four-over-four lites and shutters.

A rectangular entrance door covered by an open shed roof porch supported by wooden posts rests in the south bay. Two stone steps head to the wooden landing.

The south elevation of this structure holds two first floor windows and one second floor window in the west bay similar to those described. An intersecting gabled roof A shaped dormer lies over this west window.

Since Judge Dobbin had a passion for building, he soon added the extension to the dining room of one bay on the south and later built the present kitchen (2nd west addition) and rooms above which are finally connected to the original kitchen by a shed roofed shop connector.

This mid west extension is two bays wide and three bays deep with a gambril roof running east-west, intersecting the gambril roof of the first west addition which runs north-south. Chimneys are centered into the north and south elevations of the roof. The north wall contains two second floor casement windows with four-four lites and shutters and one central first floor double window, each composed of one-over-one lites and holding shutters.

A one bay wide addition completes this west mid section of the house. It is two stones high, one bay wide and two bays deep whose north elevation contains a first floor six light square window with shutters and a second floor casement window with shutters holding three-three lites.

The west elevation of this mid west structure has a double entrance door on the south bay and a second floor porch with french doors with ten-ten panes.

A one story, one bay wide, one bay deep hipped roof addition springs from the north bay holding a west double-hung window with six-over-six lites and a south casement window with three-three lites.

The narrow connecter between the original kitchen and the mid west structure additions to the house holds a second floor casement window with two-two lites on the west and a second floor double-hung window with two-over-two lites on the east which opens on to a second floor porch running north-south.

The mid structure of the house west of the dining room is four bays long. It has lattice work at its base and is characterized by rectangular fenestration of varying dimensions with a lovely french door on the west bay holding fifteen-fifteen lites. Another french door lies each of this holding three and a half-three and a half lites and surmounted by a four lite transom.

The Lawn - Description (Continued)

The west wall of the first addition (the dining room) holds a large rectangular window with four-over-four lites decorated with a projecting flat wooden lintel.

A third story observatory, two bays long, one bay wide, was built over the dining room addition with an open wooden balcony with wooden ballustrade facing south covered by a flat roof. Its east and west elevations hold two casement windows with one-one lites.

A frame gate house is located north east of The Lawn characterized by intersecting gables decorated with gingerbread barge boards. A gabled roof two story barn with central copula and north intersecting gable is located southwest of The Lawn.

A fantastic mass of wooden buildings connected to one another, its architecture reflects the needs of the family for which it was built. The Lawn offers with its satellite buildings, a unique example of the combination of Victorian and cottage architecture in Howard County.

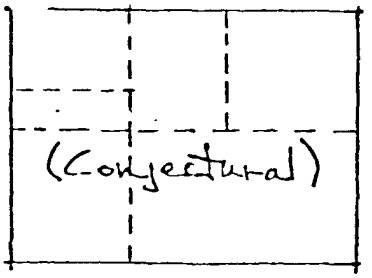
land given by Father and in the summer of 1870, the Assembly Room was opened with "The Rivals"."

Lawyer's Hill remains today a desirable residential area. The Lawn is unique to Howard County. Other houses, to be sure, have been added to through the years but none in quite the same way and so exhuberantly as The Lawn. It is indeed of state-local significance. As a prototype of a summer cottage extended to meet the needs of a prominent Baltimore family with six children, it may very well qualify as nationally significant. Many such summer homes were built throughout the United States during this period of the railroad to serve as summer retreats. The Lawn certainly qualifies as a unique example of this building activity.

The Lawn
Howard County, Maryland

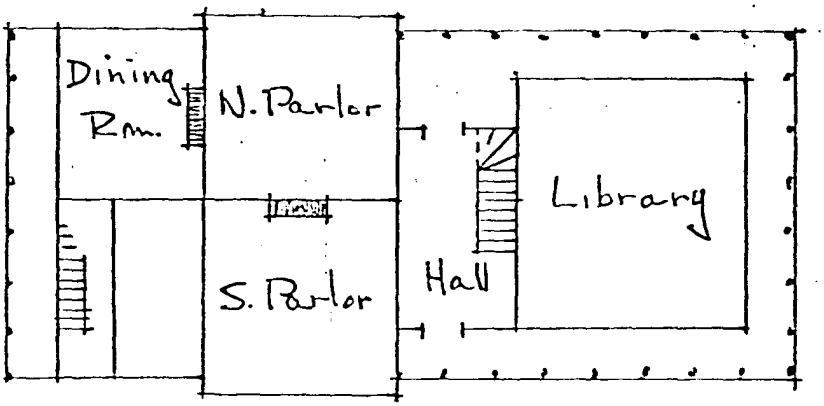
Floor Plan of House

HO-141

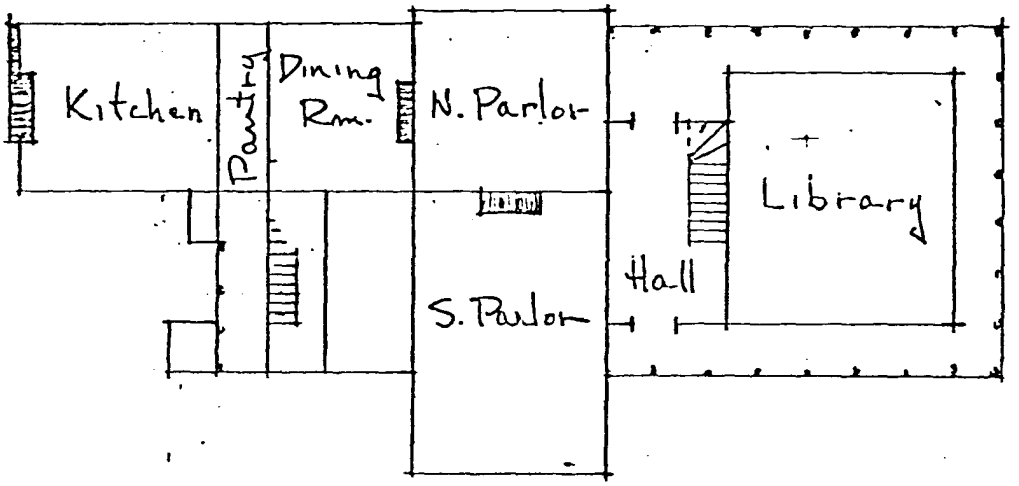


PHASE I
c. 1842

North



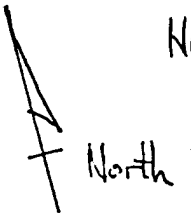
PHASE II
c. 1845

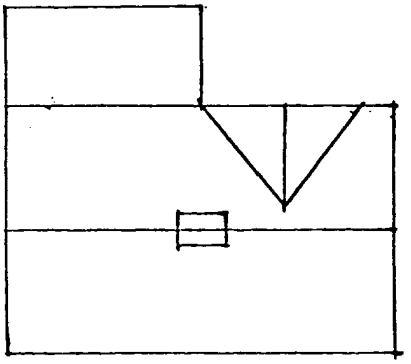


PHASE III
c. 1860

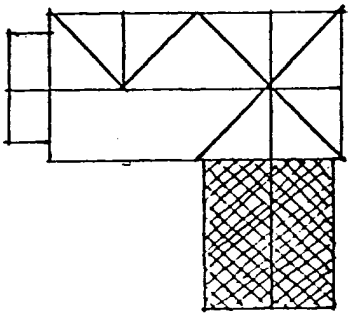
- Not to Scale -
PR

NO-141

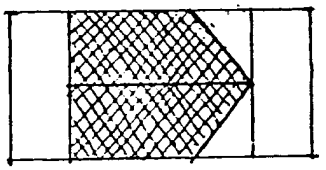




THE BARN



COTTAGE # 1
"Rose"

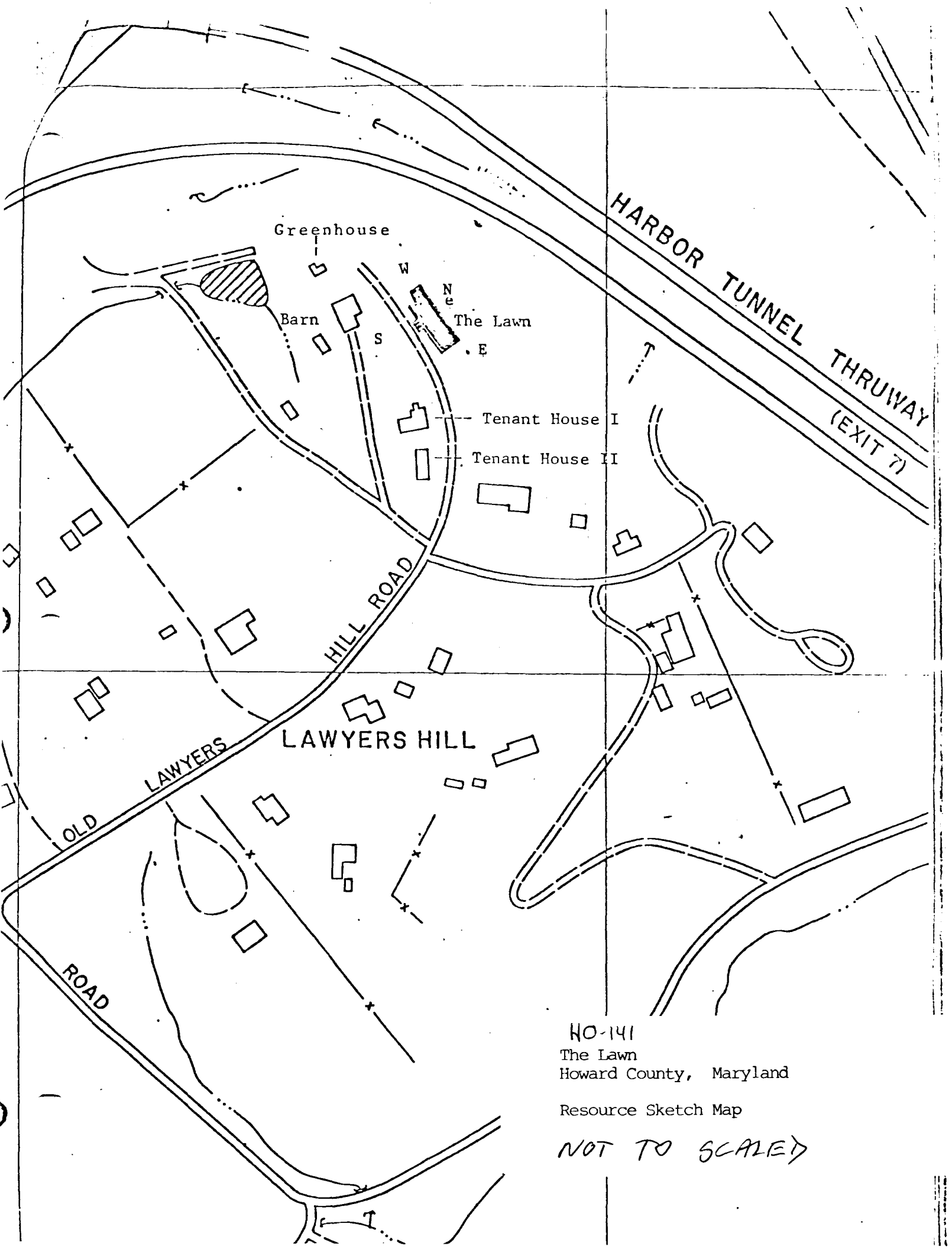


COTTAGE # 2
"Lilac"

The Lawn
Howard County, Maryland
Roof Plan of Outbuildings

= of recent construction

- Not to Scale -
PR

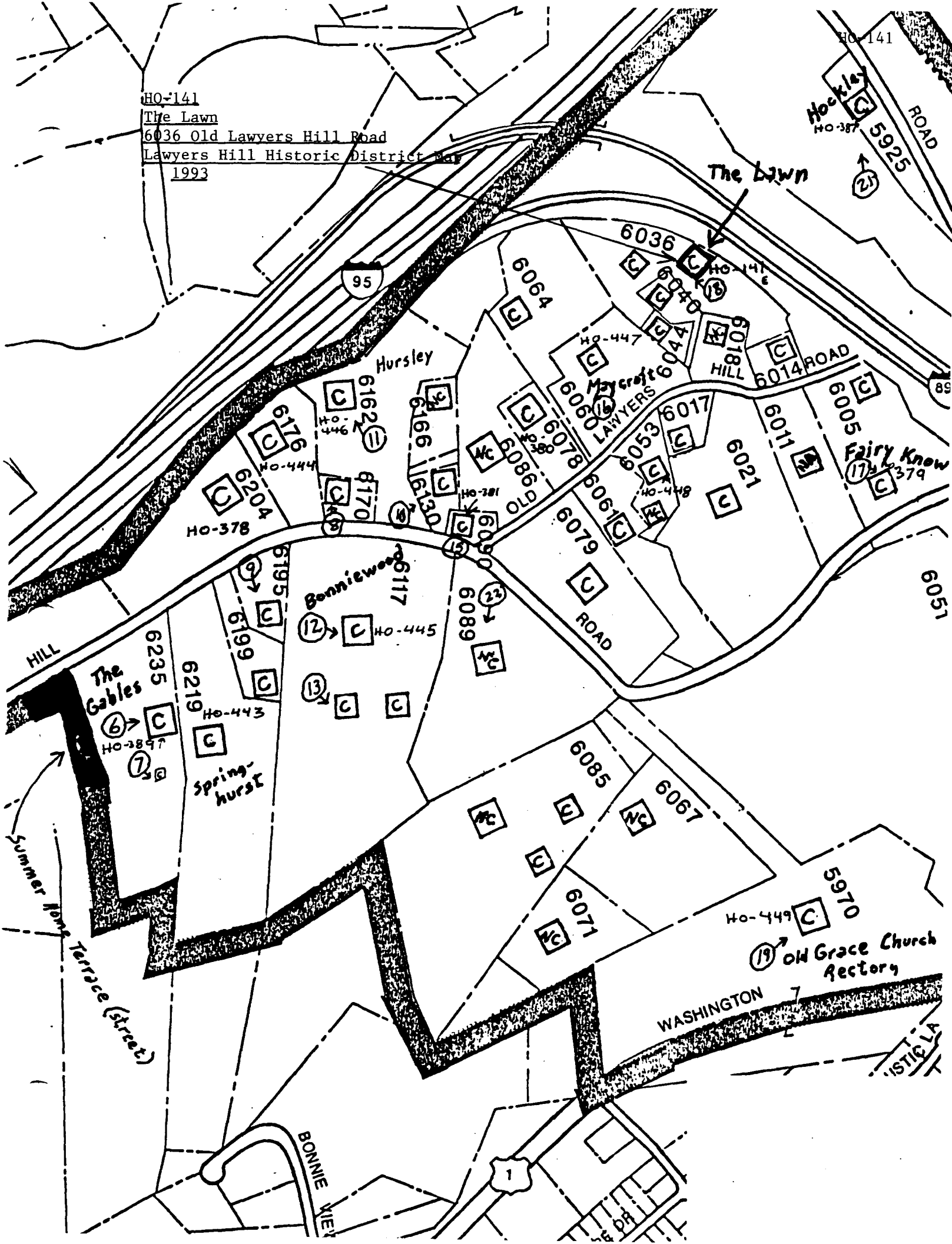


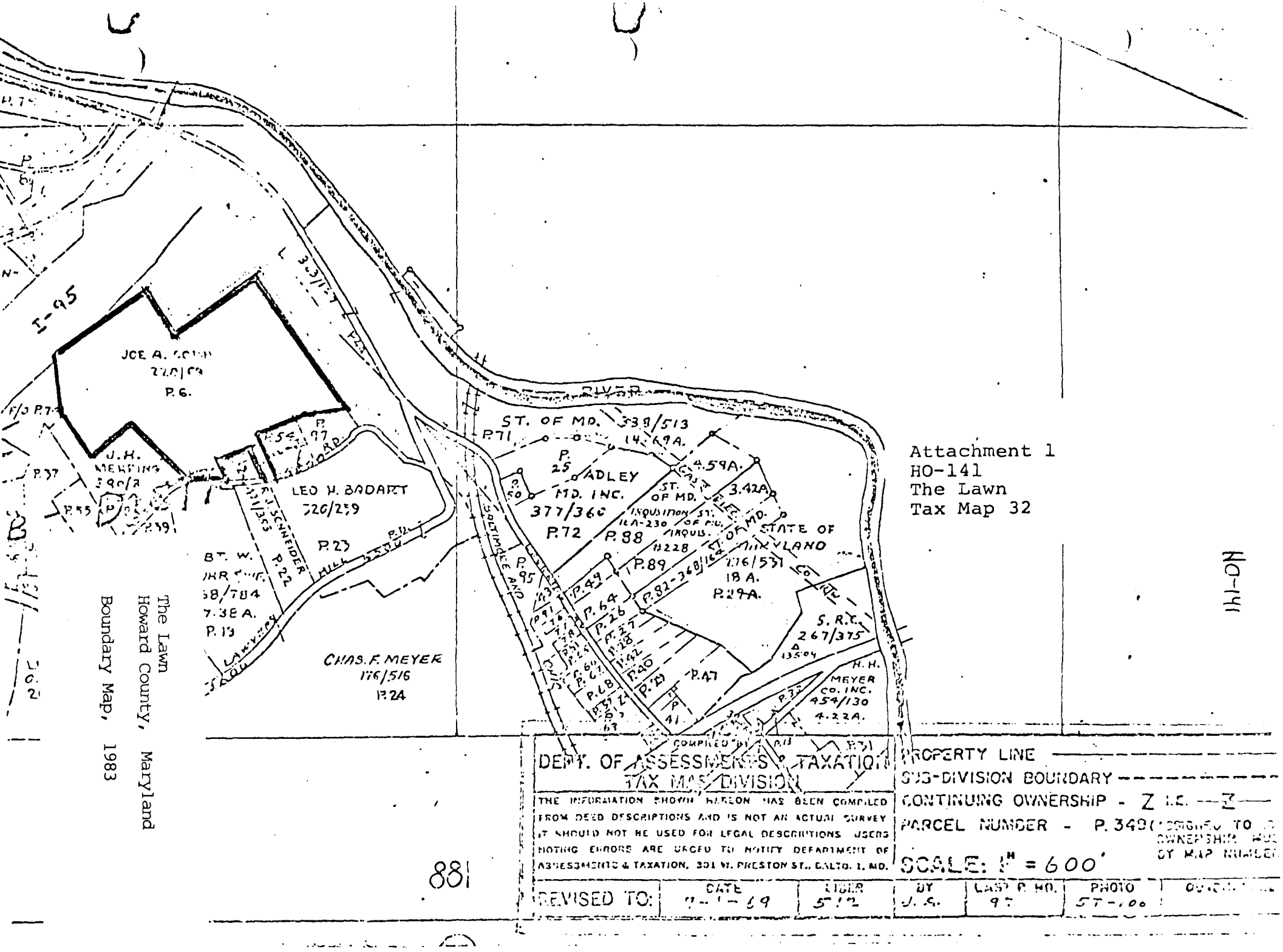
HO-141
The Lawn
Howard County, Maryland

Resource Sketch Map

NOT TO SCALE

HO-141
The Lawn
6036 Old Lawyers Hill Road
Lawyers Hill Historic District Map
1993

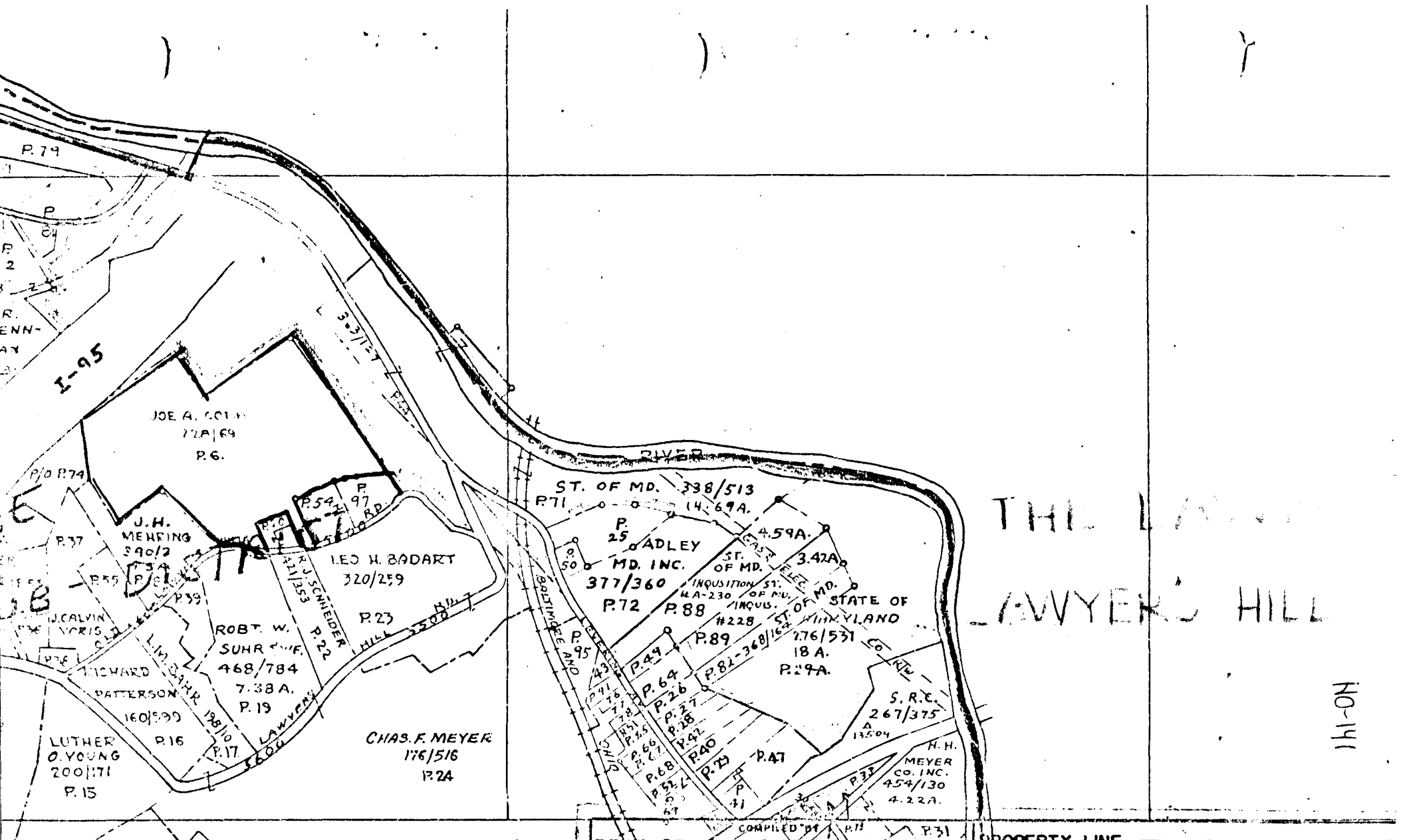




Attachment 1
HO-141
The Lawn
Tax Map 32

HO-141

The Lawn
Howard County, Maryland
Boundary Map, 1983



COMPILED BY

DEPT. OF ASSESSMENTS & TAXATION
TAX MAP DIVISION

THE INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON HAS BEEN COMPILED FROM DEED DESCRIPTIONS AND IS NOT AN ACTUAL SURVEY. IT SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS. USERS NOTING ERRORS ARE URGED TO NOTIFY DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENTS & TAXATION, 301 W. PRESTON ST., BALTO. 1, MD.

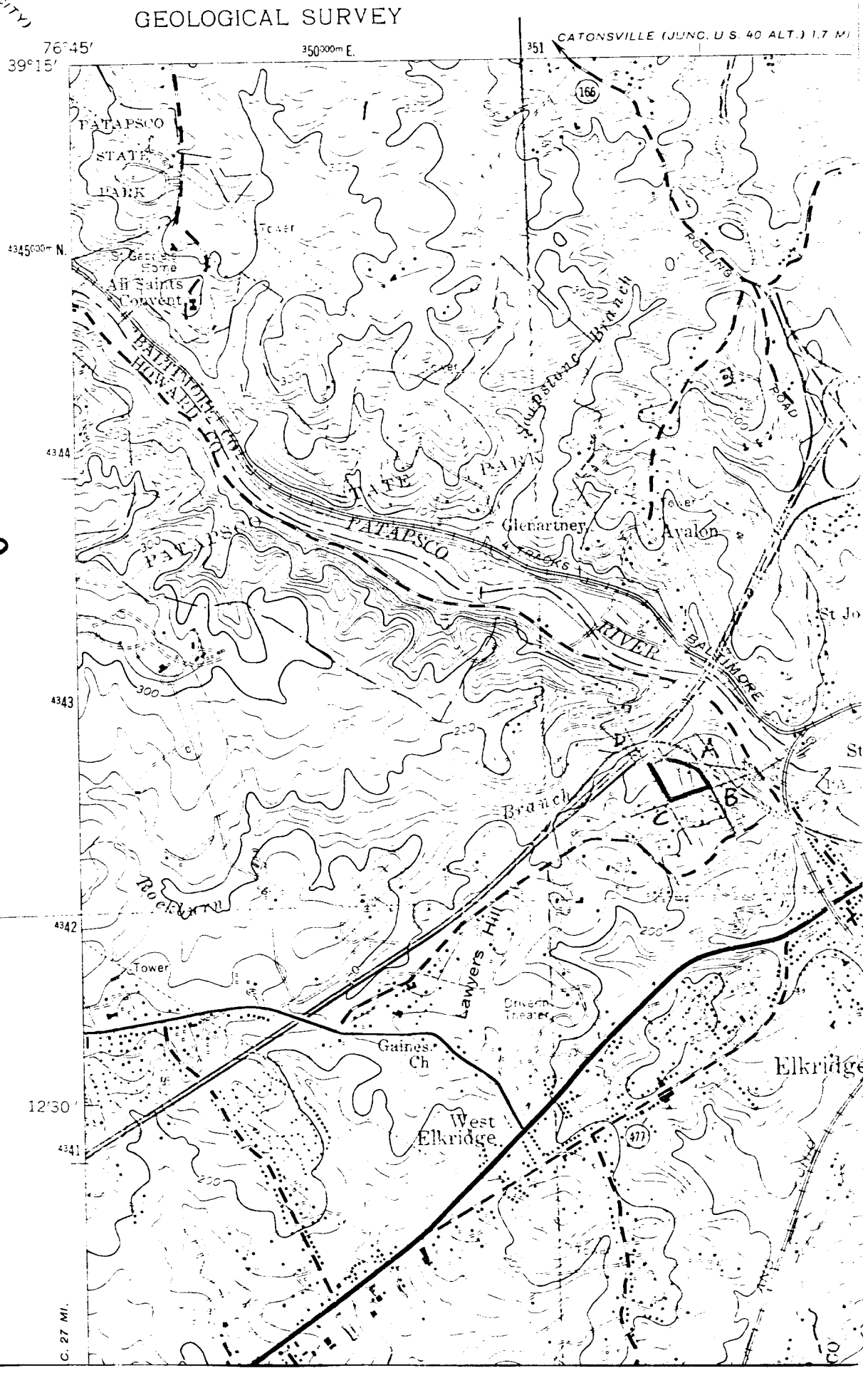
PROPERTY LINE
SUB-DIVISION BOUNDARY
CONTINUING OWNERSHIP - Z i.e. —Z—
PARCEL NUMBER - P. 3[illegible] (SIGNED TO OPEN OWNERSHIP MUST BY MAP NUMBER.)

SCALE: 1" = 600'

REVISED TO:	DATE	LIBER	BY	LAST P. NO.	PHOTO	QUADRANGLE
	7-1-69	512	J.A.	97	ST-100	

5662 IV SE
(ELLICOTT CITY)

RELAY 7.5' QUAD
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



HO-141

THE LAWN

HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND

A: 18-351680-4342580

B: 18-351740-4342480

C: 18-351540-4342420

D: 18-351430-4342620