

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #71B-12 Building Date: 1880's

Building Name: Bernard Luers House

Location: 8301 Chestnut Avenue, Bowie, Maryland

Private/Residence/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description:

The Bernard Luers House is a two-and-one-half story frame dwelling with late Victorian decorative elements; it is roughly square, having been expanded from an earlier frame farmhouse of I-house plan. The main block of the house is three bays by one bay, with entrance in the central bay of the main west facade, through a Victorian style door with four molded panels under a single pane transom. The central entrance is flanked by two projecting two-story semi-octagonal towers, each topped by a steeply-pitched pyramidal roof of patterned tin. The cornice is boxed with double crown molding, and is returned at the gable ends. The roof is covered with patterned tin. The foundations are of local iron-bearing stone. Behind the main block, a two-and-one-half-story kitchen wing extends to the east, flush with the north gable end of the main block. The kitchen ell is two bays by two, with gable roof; the cornice is returned at its east gable end. In the corner formed by the main block and the kitchen wing, a two-story addition was later constructed which converted the original L-shaped dwelling into a full square.

Significance:

The Bernard Luers House is one of only two late Victorian dwellings surviving within the City of Bowie. Although it has been altered over the years, it retains the lines of a Victorian vernacular dwelling with some Queen Anne style features. It is one of the earliest surviving dwellings built in the railroad junction, Huntington, now known as Bowie. The house was built by Bernard Luers, who had immigrated from Germany in 1857, and in the 1870's had settled in the new town of Huntington on the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad. Two lots amounting to 20 acres were sold to Bernard Luers in 1876 and 1877; in the 1880's he began construction of the present house. It followed the plan of a standard I-house, but was enlarged and distinguished by projecting two-story corner towers. Bernard Luers worked as a shoemaker in the town of Huntington; two of his sons built houses for their families within a few blocks of the subject house. The Bernard Luers house is the oldest surviving late Victorian frame dwelling in Bowie. It stands today at the southern edge of the town of Bowie, protected and secluded by screen plantings, an important architectural reminder of the heyday of the railroad town of Huntington/Bowie.

Acreage: 5.1 acres

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Bernard Luers House

and/or common Brown House

2. Location

street & number 8301 Chestnut Avenue not for publicationcity, town Bowie vicinity of congressional district 5

state Md. county Prince George's

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Nancy Brown

street & number 8301 Chestnut Avenue telephone no.:

city, town Bowie state and zip code Md. 20715

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 4182

street & number Main Street folio 813

city, town Upper Marlboro state Md.

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Bernard Luers House is a two-and-one-half story frame dwelling with late Victorian decorative elements; it is roughly square, having been expanded from an earlier frame farmhouse of I-house plan. It stands on a five acre lot, heavily treed on the west and north, with pasture on the east.

The main block of the house is to the west, three bays by one bay, with entrance in the central bay of the main west facade. Entrance is through a Victorian style door with four molded panels under a single pane transom; a small enclosure with peaked roof of patterned tin shelters the door itself.

The central entrance is flanked by two projecting two-story semi-octagonal towers, each topped by a steeply-pitched pyramidal roof of patterned tin. The building is covered with white horizontal asbestos siding. Windows are generally 2/2 double hung sash, with plain board surrounds painted light green. There are no shutters. The cornice is boxed with double crown molding, and is returned at the gable ends. The roof is covered with patterned tin. The foundations are of local iron-bearing stone, parged in some places with concrete.

Behind the basic I-house plan of the main block, a two-and-one-half-story kitchen wing extends to the east, flush with the north gable end of the main block. The kitchen ell is two bays by two bays, and has a gable roof; the cornice is returned at its east gable end.

In the (southeast) corner formed by the main block and the kitchen wing, a two-story addition was later constructed which converted the original L-shaped dwelling into a full square. This one-bay-by-two-bay addition has a pyramidal roof of patterned tin. Siding, window treatment and cornices of the wing and the corner addition are the same as those of the main block.

Interior plan of the main block consists of central stairhall with a parlor in each side; a fire place in the east wall of each parlor was originally served by a tall corbelled brick chimney. The staircase has a heavy turned newel with mitred cap. The window and door surrounds have molded multi-band trim and bulls-eye corner blocks.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca 1880 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
 and/or
 Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G
 Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Bernard Luers House is one of only two late Victorian dwellings surviving within the City of Bowie. Although it has had some additions and alterations over the years, it retains the lines of a Victorian vernacular dwelling with some Queen Anne style features. It is one of the earliest surviving dwellings built in the railroad junction, Huntington, now known as Bowie.

The house was built by Bernard Luers, who had immigrated from Germany in 1857, and in the 1870's had settled in the new town of Huntington on the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad.¹ The town of Huntington was platted and developed by Ben H. Plumb in 1870, at a point where a branch line was being constructed into Washington. At the junction of the main line and the branch, Plumb purchased ca. 250 acres and laid out a town of approximately one square mile. He began selling lots in 1870, and the town of Huntington began to take shape.²

Legal title for some of the land (purchased by Plumb from the Grafton Isaacs' estate) was subsequently disputed, and the case was taken to the Court of Equity. Trustees were appointed by the Court in 1876 to sell parcels of the Isaacs land (which had already been platted as villa sites); two lots of Isaacs' land, amounting to 20 acres, were sold, accordingly, to Bernard Luers in 1876 and 1877.¹ In the 1880's he began construction of the present house. It followed the plan of a standard I-house, but was enlarged and distinguished by projecting two-story corner towers with pyramidal roofs; it also had an L-shaped kitchen wing extending to the rear. (This kitchen wing was built on sturdy stone foundations which may have supported an earlier building on the Isaacs property, although that has not been substantiated.)

Bernard Luers worked as a shoemaker in the town of Huntington, and raised his family in this handsome L-shaped house. Two of his sons built houses for their families within a few blocks of Bernard Luers' home, both of which stand as fine examples of domestic architecture of the 1890's and of the first decade of the twentieth century. (cf. 71B-2-2 and 71B-14).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. P.G.#71B-12

Cf. Notes, Item #8

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 5.1 acre Tax Map #29, parcel 215

Quadrangle name Laurel, Section I

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

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

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

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Susan G. Pearl, Research Historian		
organization	Prince George's Historic Preservation Commission	date	August 1986
street & number	c/o Co. Plan MNCPPC	telephone	952-3521
city or town	Upper Marlboro	state	Md.

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

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

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
 Shaw House
 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 269-2438

#7 (Continued)

A cellar space has been dug out under the main block, accessible by a grade-level walkway cut into the slope south of the house. Under the kitchen wing is a cellar space enclosed with thick foundation walls of local iron bearing stone; this cellar space (which may predate the construction of the subject house) was originally accessible by a flight of stone steps outside its north wall. Another interesting feature of the basement area is the circular brick cistern beneath part of the main block and part of the southeast addition. A curving flight of steps has, in recent years, been built into the cistern, and is used as a secondary entrance to the basement space.

The house lot is well screened from Chestnut Avenue on the west by a line of evergreens, and shrubs line the driveway which comes south from 13th Street. There are several mature linden trees close to the house. Northeast of the house is a stable and beyond it to the east is a fenced in horse pasture.

#8 (Continued)

At the turn of this century, Luers filled in the inside (southeast) corner of the ell, by building a two-story addition with pyramidal roof; this addition converted the L-shaped dwelling into a full square.³

Bernard Luers died in 1910, and the house with 20 acres was sold by his family; the property changed hands many times during this century. After 1940, it was for nearly a quarter century the home of the Kline family, and since 1963 it has been the home of the Brown family.⁴

The Bernard Luers house is the oldest surviving late Victorian frame dwelling in Bowie. It has been well cared for, and the land continues to be used for the pasture and stabling of a few horses. The house stands today at the southern edge of the town of Bowie, protected and secluded by screen plantings, an important architectural reminder of the heyday of the railroad town of Huntington/Bowie.

Note

¹ Prince George's County Deeds, JWB #3:130,131; Prince George's County Equity #1041, #1100.

² Prospectus of Huntington, 1870.

³ Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1874, 1888-1910; Prince George's County Census, 1880, 1900. Interview with Luers descendants, spring 1986.

⁴ Prince George's County Deeds, #79:262; #115:127,144; #119:404; #130:140; #334:371; #591:158; #2866:88.

WILLIAM T HUBBERT
5373/083
480A. P.213

R-R

R-R

R-55

LAUREL - BONIE

71B-2-1

71B-2-6

71B-2-7

71B-2-5

C-C

71B-2-2

R-55

71B-2-4

71B-2-3

71B-13

I-1

NEW JERSEY STEEL CORP.
5545/680

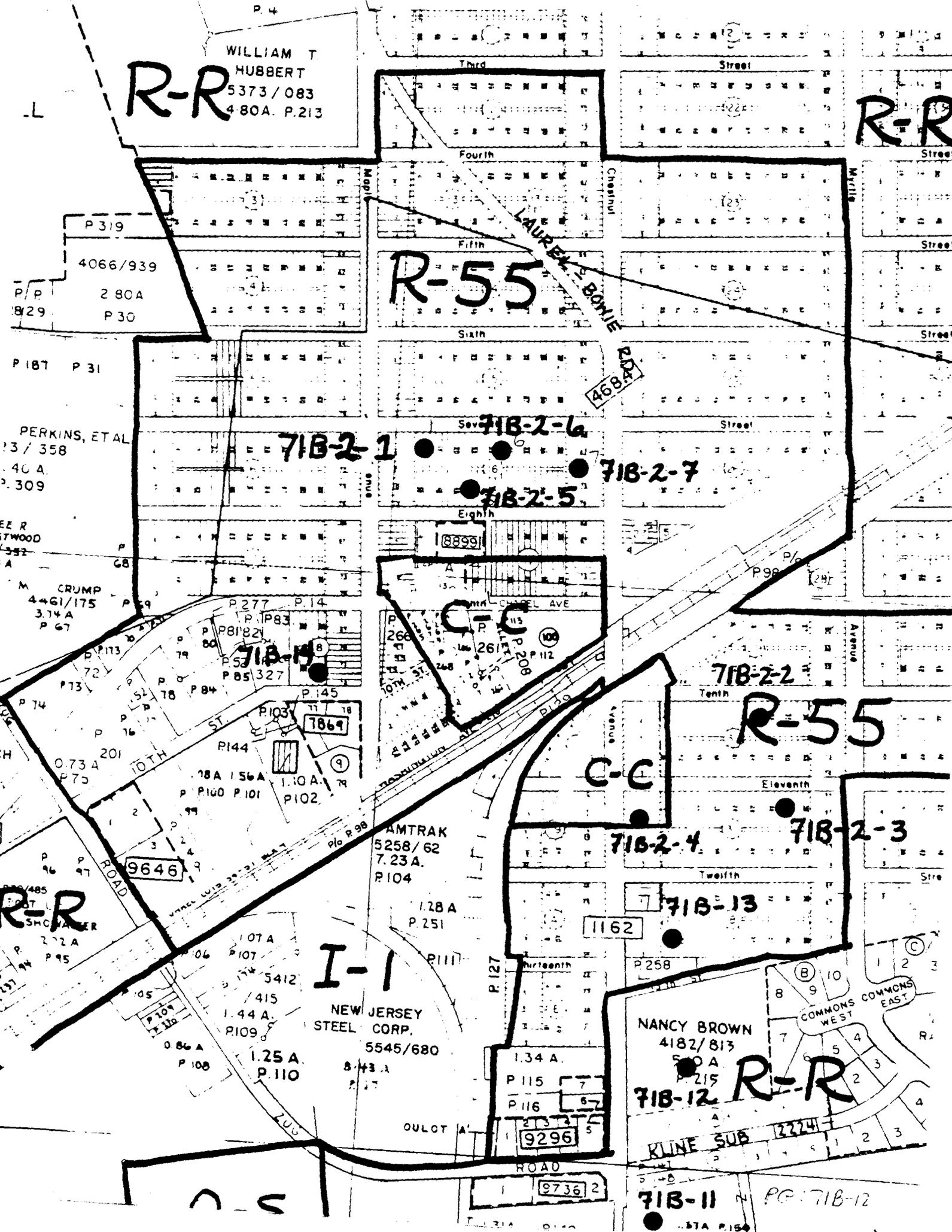
NANCY BROWN
4182/813

R-R

71B-12

71B-11

PG 71B-12





PG#71B-12

Bernard Luers House
Prince George's County, MD
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
West Elevation
Neg: MD Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



PG#71B-12

Bernard Luers House
Prince George's County, MD
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
North elevation
Neg: MD Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



PG#71B-12

Bernard Luers House
Prince George's County, MD
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
Southeast 3/4 elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



PG#72B-12

Bernard Luers House
Prince George's County, MD
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
South elevation
Neg: MD Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD