Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. 87A-43

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic	
other	Shirley B and Russell G Watson Tobacco Barn No. 2

2. Location

street and number	17801 Croom Road	__ not for publication
city, town	Brandywine	__ vicinity
county	Prince George's	

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

name	Shirley B. & Russell G. Watson				
street and number	15800 Croom Road			telephone	
city, town	Brandywine	state	MD	zip code	20613-7319

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.				liber 9920	folio 686
city, town	tax map 174D1	tax parcel	70	tax ID number	

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

_____ Contributing Resource in National Register District
_____ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
_____ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Recorded by HABS/HAER
_____ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
_____ Other:_____

6. Classification

Category
_____district
_X_building(s)
_____structure
_____site
_____object

Ownership
_____public
_X_private
_____both

Current Function
_____agriculture
_____commerce/trade
_____defense
_____domestic
_____education
_____funerary
_____government
_____health care
_____industry
_____landscape
_____recreation/culture
_____religion
_____social
_____transportation
_____work in progress
_X_unknown
_____vacant/not in use
_____other:

Resource Count

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

_____

7. Description

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Condition

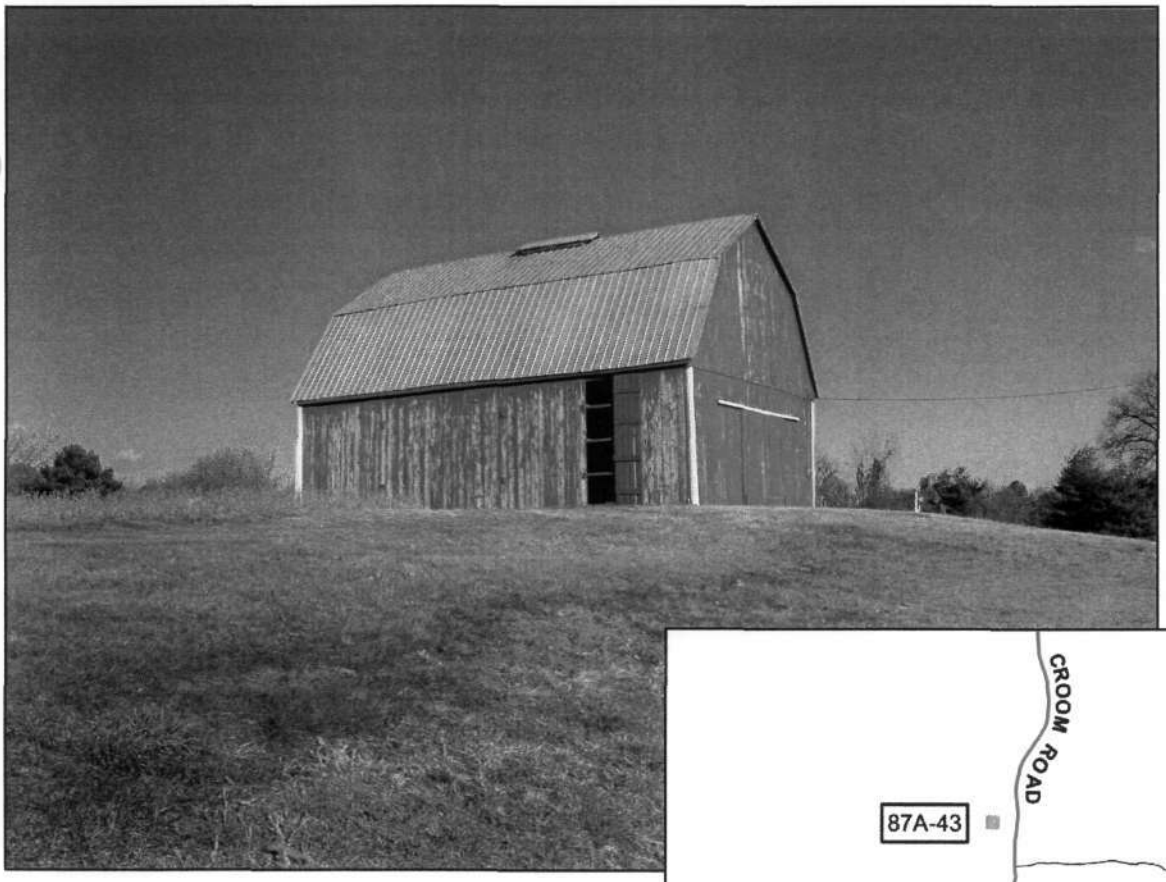
___ excellent ___ deteriorated
X good ___ ruins
___ fair ___ altered

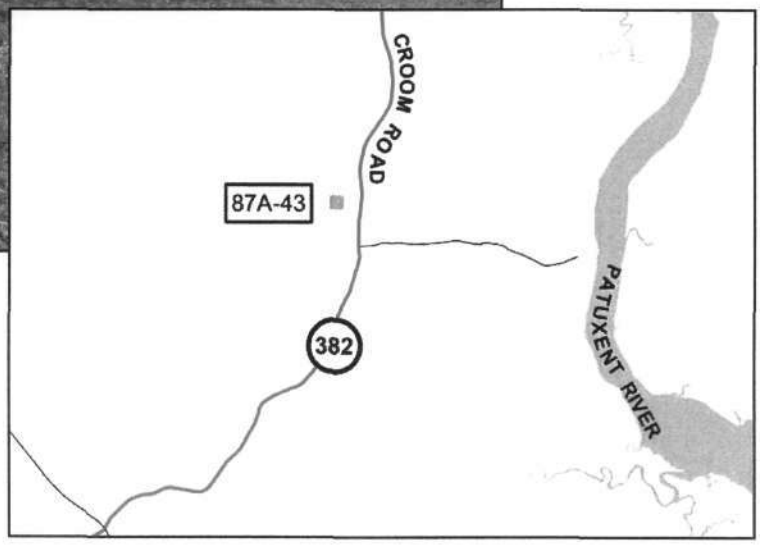
Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This tobacco barn, constructed circa 1950, is sited on a grassy hill to the east of Croom Road. The barn has a solid concrete-block and a concrete-block pier foundation supporting the wood frame structural system clad in vertical boards. The gambrel roof is covered with sheets of standing-seam metal. Large timbers line the east elevation, their purpose is unknown. Hinged vertical air doors on the east and west elevations open and close to control air circulation within the barn. Sliding vertical board doors provide access to the interior of the barn on the east and west elevation. The barn is painted red.

The interior of this barn features down-braced wood framing with sticks to hang the tobacco still in situ. These sticks appear to be made from branches, and many still retain their bark. Access was not granted to enter the barn.

Tobacco is not currently cultivated on the land associated with this barn.





8. Significance

Inventory No. 87A-43

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

Specific dates c.1950 **Architect/Builder** Unknown

Construction dates c.1950

Evaluation for:

_____ National Register _____Maryland Register _____not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. *(For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)*

During the more than two centuries in which tobacco served as the money crop in Prince George's County, planters, indentured servants, slaves, and farmers developed utilitarian structures for tobacco curing and packing that have remained essentially the same to the present day. Early barns were square in plan and constructed of notched logs with open spaces between the logs to permit the circulation of air (a log dwelling had chinking and caulking between the logs to prevent the infiltration of air). Inside, scaffolding held the tobacco sticks with the leaves suspended from them in such a way as to allow air to flow over the drying tobacco to prevent mold. Farmers employing the fire-curing method lit small fires on the barn's earthen floor to lower the relative humidity (Percy 1979:33). The Prince George's County barns differed from those constructed in Virginia and North Carolina for the flue curing of bright-leaf tobacco, which employed a stove or firebox with a flue and require a different type of barn—one that was essentially airtight to hold the heat. By the 19th century, the increasing availability of sawn lumber enabled southern Maryland's farmers to construct timber-frame tobacco barns covered with wooden siding, usually vertical board siding. Southern Maryland's air cured tobacco utilized barns constructed with air doors along the sides that could be opened to facilitate the circulation of air. These air doors were three or four vertical boards fastened together and usually hinged that could be opened.

The earliest tobacco barns identified in the survey along Croom Road are the ca. 1820 Duvall Tobacco Barn (87A-31) and the 1800-1830 Watson Tobacco Barn (87A-55) and the most recent barns date to the middle of the twentieth century such as the Stielper (87A-48), Jackson (87A-47), and Chase (87A-44) tobacco barns. Although the dates of construction for the surveyed barns range over one hundred and thirty years, the construction materials, methods of construction, and form of the tobacco barn changed very little. All of the barns surveyed are wood-frame and clad in vertical boards; all of the barns contain four-foot by four-foot rooms to hang the tobacco; and all of the barns have hinged vertical board air doors to control the circulation of air within the barns. The changes in form are very minor but provide the most insight into the date of construction. Early nineteenth century barns have steeply pitched gable roofs. From about 1830 until 1900 the barns have more standardized gable roofs, sometimes with one side of the gable extended to create a shed roof over a stripping room. Around 1900, the use of tractors increased in Prince George's County and central double-leaf doors opening onto a wide central passage began to appear in the barn. The final form change was the advent of the gambrel roof, which created more space within the barn to hang tobacco. Gambrel roofs begin to appear in the 1930s and 1940s.

This tobacco barn is significant as an example of a mid-20th century tobacco barn in Prince George's County, Maryland and fits in the last period of tobacco barn construction. The sliding wood doors on the gable ends, large enough for farm machinery to enter the barn, and the gambrel roof indicate the mid-20th century date of construction.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. 87A-43

David O. Percy, *The Production of Tobacco Along the Colonial Potomac. The National Colonial Farm Research Report No. 1, Agricultural History Series* (Accokeek, Md.: The Accokeek Foundation, 1979), 10–11.]

National Register of Historic Places, Red Fox Farm, Mecklenburg Co., Va., File 58-131, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va.

Calvert County Historic District Commission, "Tobacco Barns Calvert County Maryland," Prince Frederick, Md: Calvert County Historic District Commission, 1991), brochure.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 43.0871
Acreage of historical setting _____
Quadrangle name _____ Quadrangle scale: Lower Marboro

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	J. Shafagoj, Architectural Historian		
organization	Ashley Neville, LLC	date	March 1, 2006
street & number	11311 Cedar Lane	telephone	804.798.2124
city or town	Glen Allen	state	VA

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

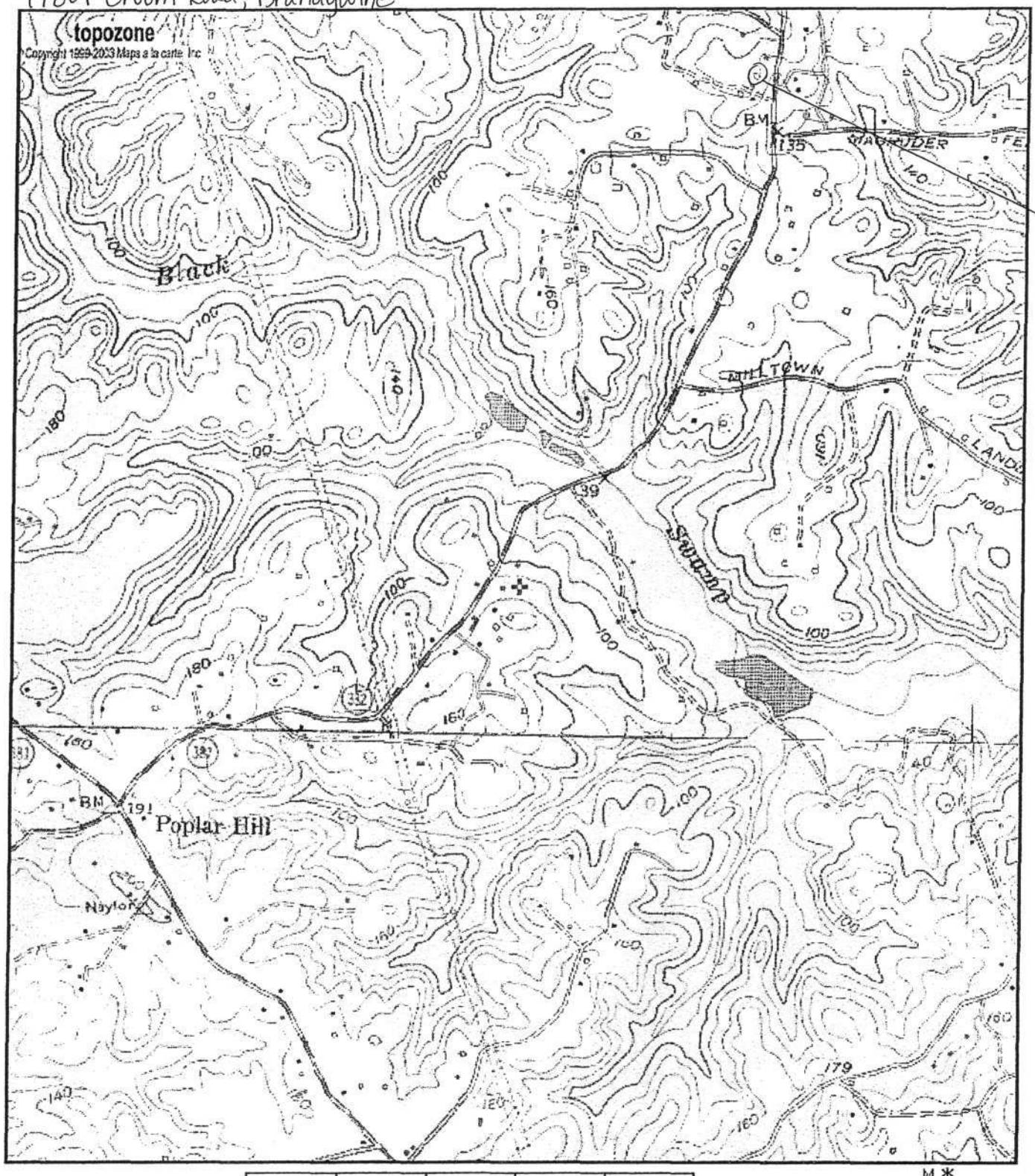
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

PG 87A-43

Shirley B and Russell G Watson Tobacco Barn No. 2

17801 Croom Road, Brandywine



0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 1.5 km

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 mi

UTM 18 349788E 4277087N (NAD83/WGS84)

USGS Lower Marlboro (MD) Quadrangle

Projection is UTM Zone 18 NAD83 Datum

M=-10.97

G=-1.078