



# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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 Old Charlotte Hall Classroom Building stands on the campus of Charlotte Hall School on Old Route 5 in Charlotte Hall, Maryland.

The building consists of a main block constructed on a T plan in 1896 and a wing constructed in 1931. The former is a two story, seven bay wide and two bay deep brick building: laid in common bond with two intersecting hipped roofs. There is a three bay, two and one half story gable roofed portico supported by four plain metal columns without capitals or bases set in antis on the east facade. An oval window is placed length wise in the center of the portico gable and there is a corbelled cornice with brick metopes. The ceiling of the portico is composed of six shallow barrel vaults.

The double-door entrance on the front facade has a segmental arched transom and is flanked by 1/1 double hung segmental arched windows with jack arches. Above the door on the second floor is a modified Palladian window arrangement. There is evidence that there was once a balcony above the door which extended out to the columns. Two doors with segmental arched transoms are set within the portico at right angles to the entrance. Two segmental arched windows with jack arches flank the portico on each story. All of the windows of the classroom building have been boarded up.

Atop the center of the gable roof is an octagonal bell tower with an open belfrey consisting of a balustrade topped by plain Doric columns. The bell predates the building by a few years.

The stem of the T plan is four bays deep with a gable roof slightly lower than that of the east facade. The windows are also segmental arched with jack arches.

The 1931 addition is four bays deep with the cornice and brick work identical to the older section. There are entrances on both the north-west and southwest corners; between these are three large paired 6/6 windows, the cornices of which breach over the eaves.

The interior of the old section consists of a small vestibule with two narrow metal stairways on either side.

(Continued on White Page)

# 8. Significance

<b>Period</b>	<b>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" 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** 1897 **Builder/Architect** Elias Milburn - Contractor

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 Old Classroom Building and Charlotte Hall Academy are significant in the history of education in Maryland. More specifically, the school founded in 1774 consolidated the secondary educational systems of three counties and was one of the first publicly funded educational institutions in the state. It became a military academy in 1852 and, until its closing in 1976, was the oldest military school in the state, and one of the oldest in the nation. Among its distinguished alumni were U. S. Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney; the Right Reverend Thomas J. Claggett, the first Episcopal bishop consecrated in this country; three Maryland governors; Edward Bates, Attorney General in Lincoln's Cabinet; and nearly forty members of Congress.

The Old Classroom Building, constructed in 1897 and expanded in 1931, is one of the oldest buildings on the school grounds, the majority of the other school buildings dating from the twentieth century. It replaced two buildings dating from 1796 and 1801, the foundations of which possibly lie beneath the present structure. Until the closing of the school in 1976, the Old Classroom Building functioned as the principal academic building on the campus, and contained an auditorium, class rooms, science labs, and office.

HISTORY:

The origins of Charlotte Hall School began on December 3, 1773 when the Maryland Gazette proposed a plan for the consolidation into one institution of the free schools of Southern Maryland.<sup>(1)</sup> Enabling legislation was passed in the Maryland Legislature in 1774 and soon thereafter the lands and houses

(Continued on White Pages)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM - 367

See attached footnotes.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Charlotte Hall

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A            
 Zone Easting Northing

B            
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Geoffrey Henry

organization Maryland Historical Trust date September, 1984

street & number Shaw House, 21 State Circle telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

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

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7. DESCRIPTION

The ceiling of the vestibule is made up of six shallow barrel vaults running east to west, above which is a narrow balcony. Flanking the vestibule are two classrooms. Beyond the vestibule is an auditorium, still containing fixed school-desks, which has a coffered pressed tin ceiling of a fairly elaborate design. Running around the perimeter of the ceiling is a row of fleur-de-lis with intertwined flowers. At the west end of the auditorium is a recessed stage set within an arched opening with a triple barrel vault ceiling. A staircase with a large newel post and balustraded stair rail rises from a small stair bell on either side of the stage. Both floors of the 1931 addition contain classrooms.

One of the more unusual features of the classroom building is the curved metal truss system of the ceiling, which is especially visible looking up from the second floor to the bell tower. This truss system is used in both the old and newer section of the building and is expressed in the barrel vaulted ceilings of the portico, stage and vestibule.

## CONTINUATION SHEET #1

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORY:

of the free schools in St. Mary's, Charles and Prince George's counties were sold and the money realized from their sale, along with "sums of money which sundry persons have subscribed (for this) commendable purpose", were used to erect a new school. The site chosen, known as "Ye Coole Springs", was both geographically central and well known in colonial times for its natural springs. The springs, which were the basis of a purported colonial hospital, supplied water to the school and surrounding town until the school closed in 1976.

The act of 1774 provided for a Board of Trustees drawn from the three counties (3) to establish a school for the "liberal and pious education of the youth of the province, the better to fit them for the discharge of their duties".(4) In so doing, the colonial government took an important step towards public, secular education at a time when education, particularly in Catholic St. Mary's County, was still often under the control of the Church. The Trustees of Charlotte Hall School, named in honor of Queen Charlotte, the wife of King George III, met at Coole Springs on July 1, 1774 and again on July 7, 1782, indicating that the intervening Revolution had not dampened the enthusiasm for the school.

Preparations for a building for the school began at the September, 1782 meeting of the Trustees, when it was "authorized to agree and contract with some person or persons to make and burn two hundred and fifty thousand bricks... and to procure and have burnt and made into lime with the said bricks, as many oyster shells as can be burnt in the brick kiln" (5) In addition, an advertisement for plans, proposals and contract offers for the building of a "school sufficient to receive and accommodate sixty scholars, masters and servants" was ordered placed in the Baltimore and Annapolis newspapers.

To date, the archeological report prepared in March, 1982 by Dr. Donald R. Sutherland, staff archeologist for the Veterans Administration, provides the most complete history of the initial building phase of the school.

According to the report:

A contract for the bricks and lime was secured in May, 1783 to be completed by the first of August, 1784. Apparently, delays in securing a contractor to construct a building led to a postponement in the completion of the brickmaking... It should be noted that the brickmaking contract called for the making and burning of bricks and the burning of lime in the kiln, not the delivery of ready made bricks. This suggests that the bricks were made at the site of Charlotte Hall School. The suggestion is supported by a Board of Trustees order in May, 1797 that a person be employed to "fill up the clay holes about the school house". (6)

Financial difficulties prevented the Trustees from contracting for the construction of the building until July 1793, when an agreement was signed by three of the Trustees with the builder, Aquila King of Charles County (a copy of the contract follows this historical description). The contract contains one of the most

## CONTINUATION SHEET #2

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORY:

detailed sets of architectural specifications from this period and indicates that a precise plan had already been devised by the Trustees: unfortunately no plans for the school exist. For the sum of £ 745, King was to build a three story school house, forty four feet long and twenty seven feet wide, laid in Flemish bond with a cedar shingle roof and decorated with "a handsome Cornish consisting of Medillions and Fritt, etc." (7) There were three rooms on both floors and an unfinished seven foot high garret as well as a basement kitchen. The contract detailed the exact specifications for the widths of the rooms, stair halls and floor boards, as well as the number and sizes of windows, style of shutters and architraves, and even the kind of door locks to be used.

The school opened in January 1797 with two teachers and an anticipated enrollment of twenty boys. In 1803, the Trustees reported an enrollment of 124 with four teachers to the General Assembly. By then the school had completed two more buildings, one in 1801 and the other in 1803.

The plans for the building erected in 1803 are as elaborately detailed as those for the School Hall and can be found in the Record Book. (8) Now known as the White House (SM-86) the building is the oldest one still standing at Charlotte Hall School. The building, still in excellent condition, was used as the Principal's residence, as classrooms, and by 1837, as dormitory space for fourteen students. (9) For many years it served as the headquarters for the Washington and Stonewall Literacy Society, a debating society founded in 1797. The minutes of this group, the oldest such society in the country, still survive.

The location and design of the 1801 "School Room" are less certain. The specifications for the building call for it to be fifty feet long and twenty four feet wide, but it is not known whether the School Room was built as an addition to the School Hall or apart from it. The plans called for a brick building, two stories tall with two end chimneys and hip roof, with the upper story "intended for the lodging of the boys". (10)

The Charlotte Hall Campus has been the site of several recent archeological investigations. Despite these, the location of the School Hall and School Room, both destroyed by fire in 1896, has never been definitely determined. Most probably their remains lie beneath the present Classroom Building which was constructed to replace the two older buildings in 1897. (11) The fact that only the northeast corner of the present building contains a basement suggests that the foundations of the original building may not have been seriously disturbed.

The archeological excavations carried out by Dr. Sutherland were the first to suggest that both buildings were connected and that their remains were beneath the present Classroom Building. Archeological fieldwork, in addition to extensive archival research also revealed the existence of other nearby architectural features, including an outdoor kitchen, several tenant houses, and a brick-kiln which operated in the 1850's.

## CONTINUATION SHEET #3

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORY:

In July 1984 "A Preliminary Reconnaissance of the Old Classroom Building Demolition Area" was prepared by L. Daniel Myers and Deborah J. Gangloff for the Maryland Veterans Home Commission. This investigation, conducted prior to the building's demolition, revealed an approximately 80' by 80' deposit of brick rubble six feet from the south wall of the Old Classroom Building. (12) While probably not the remains of an in situ building foundation, the deposit may represent the rubble from the 1896 fire which destroyed the two earlier buildings.

On August 23, 1984, the same team supervised the removal of the slab foundation of the Classroom Building which had been put on top of the wood floor in the 1940's. (13) Beneath this floor is a layer of gravel fill approximately 1/2" deep which was probably deposited before the construction of the Classroom Building. The report of Myers and Gangloff concluded: "There is a possibility that the remains of one or both foundations for the School Hall and School Room lie beneath the gravel fill." (14)

Charlotte Hall School continued to expand during the nineteenth century. Although best known as a military academy, the school did not add its military department until 1852. For much of its history, the school's curriculum stressed the "classical" subjects of languages and history in addition to math and science. Between 1798 and 1817, Calvert County added its financial support to the school. In 1836, however, Prince George's County withdrew its trustees, leaving the board with its membership drawn from Charles and St. Mary's County only.

The fire which destroyed the School Hall and School Room in 1896 was quickly followed by a state appropriation of five thousand dollars for rebuilding. An additional three thousand dollar appropriation was passed in 1899 with the stipulation that the school grant a scholarship to each county in Maryland and the city of Baltimore. (15) Additional funds were raised from the leasing of school land for farming.

Because the school records were not accessible, it is unclear whether an architect was commissioned to design the Classroom Building and if the trustees prepared as complete a set of specifications as had been done for the two earlier buildings. The contract to rebuild Charlotte Hall School was awarded to Elias Milburn of Leonardtown and the building completed in January 1897 at a cost of \$11,000. Among the more unusual features of the building was the arched truss construction used, readily apparent on the second story and above the auditorium. The addition to the west of the Classroom Building was designed by a Washington, D.C. architect, Howard F. Cutler, in 1931. Again, the fact that records from this period were not accessible leaves many questions about the initial planning and design process as well as the proposed costs.

Numerous other buildings were constructed on the school grounds during the twentieth century, including the porticoed Administration Building (1927, and since demolished), Keach Hall, Alumni Hall, several dormitories and a new classroom building and library.

## CONTINUATION SHEET #4

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORY:

Some of the most dramatic changes in the school's history occurred during the last few years of its existence. In 1972 the school was made co-educational and two years later the military program was made optional. Even more important was the effect of Senate Bill #34, which passed the State Legislature in 1968 and which called for the gradual phasing out of state supported scholarship funds for the school. (16) Beset with financial difficulties and facing rapidly declining enrollment, school officials announced the closing of Charlotte Hall School in 1976.

The property and buildings of Charlotte Hall School were acquired by the Maryland Veteran's Home Commission in 1978. Because both heat and water were turned off after the school's closing, the building deteriorated rapidly. The Classroom Building, after initial plans for rehabilitation failed, was demolished in August 1984. The bell was saved, however, and plans call for it to be placed on the school grounds with an appropriate commemorative plaque.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Thomas, James Walter Chronicles of Colonial Maryland, quoted in the National Register form prepared on Charlotte Hall School in 1971 by Robert Woodside III and Robert E. T. Pogue.

(2) Hammett, Regina Combs History of St. Mary's County, Maryland (Ridge, MD) 1977, p. 299.

(3) The following were chosen as first Trustees for the School:

St. Mary's County

Honorable George Plater, Esq.

Rev. George Goundrill

Mr. John Reeder

Mr. Thomas Bond

Mr. Richard Barnes

Mr. Philip Key

Mr. Henry G. Sothoron

Charles County

Rev. Isaac Campbell

Mr. Francis Ware

Mr. Josias Hawkins

Dr. James Craik

Prince George's County

Rev. Henry Addison

Mr. Josias Beall

Mr. Robert Tyler

Mr. Thomas Contee

Dr. Richard Brooke

from Hammett, History of St. Mary's County, p. 299.

(4) Hammett, p. 299.

(5) ibid, p. 299.

(6) Sutherland, Donald Archeological Reconnaissance and Testing on the Site of the Proposed State Veterans Home at Charlotte Hall, St. Mary's County (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Veterans Administration), March, 1982, p. 9.

(7) ibid, p. 10.

(8) Record Book of Charlotte Hall School Trustees (1774-1805) pps. 228-30.

(9) Hammett, p. 299.

(10) See attached contract between Trustees and Aquila King.

(11) See the "Conclusions and Recommendations" contained in the Sutherland Report.

(12) A Gangloff, Deborah J. and Myers L. Daniel A Preliminary Reconnaissance of the Old Classroom Building Demolition Area-Charlotte Hall, St. Mary's County, July 1984, p. 12.

(13) Letter to Mr. Richard Hughes, State Administrator of Archeology, Maryland Historical Trust, from L. Daniel Myers, August 22, 1984.

(14) Gangloff and Myers, p. 7.

(15) Hammett, p. 301.

(16) ibid, p. 301.

New Veterans Home (1982)

aka Alumni Hall

Gymnasium Keech Hall  
(1922) (c.1935)

site of old  
Administration Bldg.  
(1927-1982)

New Academic  
Bldg. (1971)

Thomas House

12 ✓

c.1950  
brick  
house

11

10

4-gable  
house  
(private)

Chelsey House (c. 1800, private)

(c. 1800)

Dormitory  
(1960)

18

16 ✓

Academic  
Bldg. (1897)  
aka Old Classroom  
Bldg. SM-367

(c. 1800)  
White  
House (1803)

15

Dent Memorial  
Chapel (1884)

13

← OLD ROUTE 5 →

? 1 SM-207  
PRINCIPAL'S HOUSE  
(Headmaster's house)

4  
2-story  
frame house  
(c. 1880)

6  
19th C.  
frame house  
(semi-private)

7 ✓  
8 ✓  
Mattingly  
House

9 ✓  
Davis  
House

10  
Briscoe  
House  
(c. 1825,  
private)

5  
late 19th C.  
frame house  
(semi-private)

I.R.S.  
Bldg.

Youth Services  
(private ?)

2

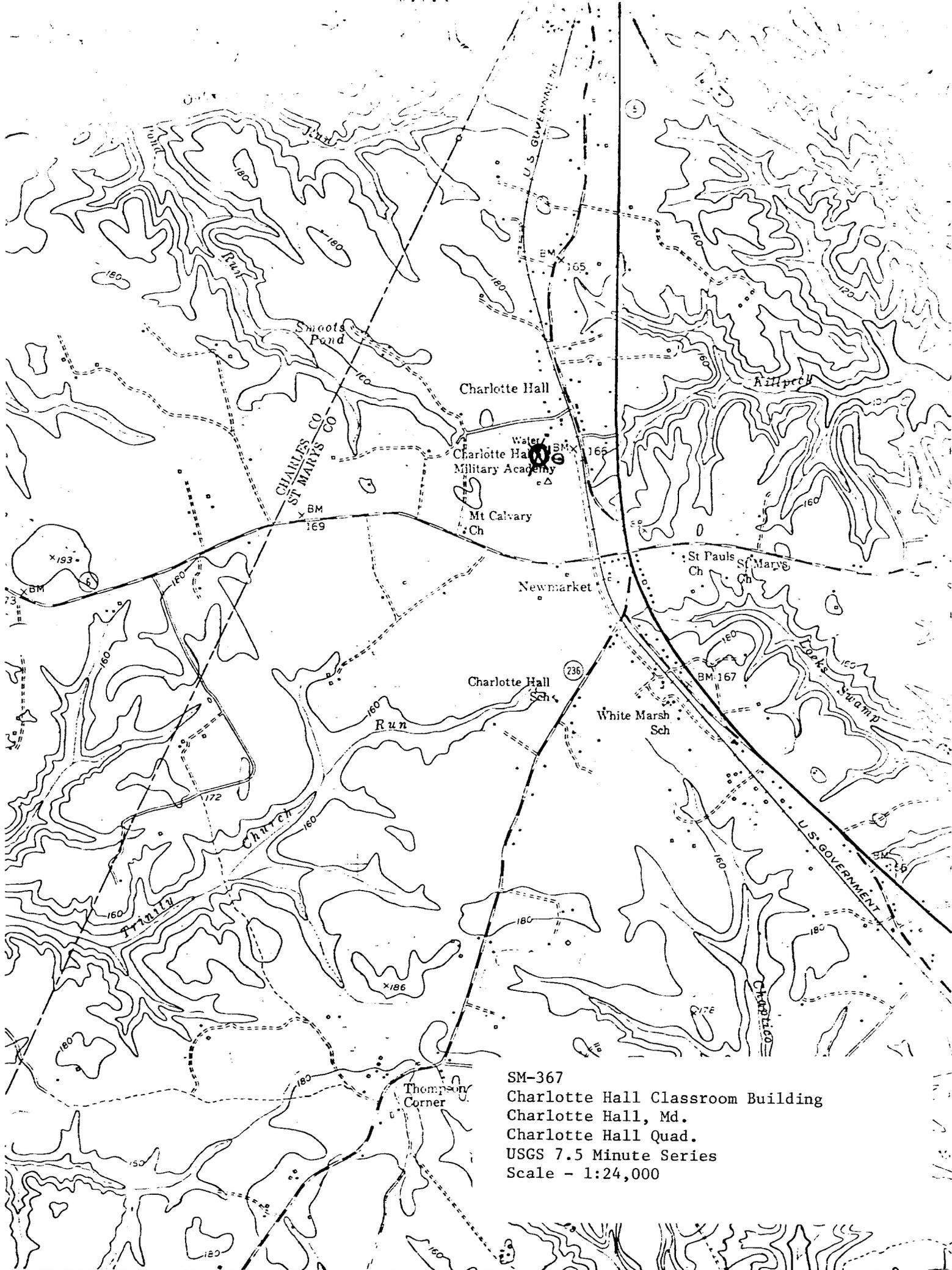
TO NEW RTE 5

3  
c.1960  
brick house

CHARLOTTE HALL

3/6/84 KEK

SM-367  
Briscoe  
tenant house



SM-367  
Charlotte Hall Classroom Building  
Charlotte Hall, Md.  
Charlotte Hall Quad.  
USGS 7.5 Minute Series  
Scale - 1:24,000



SM-367

Old Charlotte Hall Classroom Building

Charlotte Hall, MD

Principal (east) Facade and south Facades,  
showing additions

Photographer: Geoffrey B. Henry, 7/1984

Negatives at Maryland Historical Trust



SM-367

Old Charlotte Hall Classroom Building

Charlotte Hall, MD

Principal (east) Facade

Photographer: Geoffrey B. Henry, 7/1984

Negatives at Maryland Historical Trust



SM-367

Old Charlotte Hall Classroom Building

Charlotte Hall, MD

Principal (east) Facade, and north Facades,  
showing additions

Photographer: Geoffrey B. Henry, 7/1984

Negatives at Maryland Historical Trust



SM-367

Old Charlotte Hall Classroom Building

Charlotte Hall, MD

Rear (west) Facade, showing later additions

Photographer: Geoffrey B. Henry, 7/1984



7

11/26/20