This small brick church was erected in 1766 with later brick additions to each end completed in 1767. The confessional was added in 1816.

Also see archeological listing.

This property has been included on the National Register of Historic Places, U.S. Department of the Interior.
1. NAME

COMMON: St. Francis Xavier Church and
Newtown Manor House Historic District
AND OR HISTORIC: St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church & Newtown Manor House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Newtown Neck, east side of Md. Rt. 243, 1.5 mi. south of Compton
CITY OR TOWN: Compton
STATE: Maryland
CODE: 24
COUNTY: St. Mary's
CODE: 037

3. CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
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<td>[ ] District [ ] Building [ ] Site [ ] Structure [ ] Object</td>
<td>[ ] Public [ ] Private [ ] Both</td>
<td>[ ] Public Acquisition: [ ] In Process [ ] Being Considered</td>
<td>[ ] Occupied [ ] Unoccupied [ ] Preservation work in progress [ ] Yes: [ ] Restricted [ ] Unrestricted [ ] No</td>
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PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):
[ ] Agricultural [ ] Government [ ] Park [ ] Transportation [ ] Comments
[ ] Commercial [ ] Industrial [ ] Private Residence [ ] Other (Specify)
[ ] Educational [ ] Military [ ] Religious [ ] [ ] Entertainment [ ] Museum [ ] Scientific

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Archdiocese of Washington
Contact: Patrick Cardinal A. O'Boyle
STREET AND NUMBER: 1721 Rhode Island Avenue, N. W.
CITY OR TOWN: Washington
STATE: Dist. of Columbia
CODE: 11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Hall of Records
STREET AND NUMBER: St. John's College Campus, College Avenue
CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis
STATE: Maryland
CODE: 24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Maryland Register of historic sites and landmarks:
DATE OF SURVEY: 1971
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Maryland Historical Trust
STREET AND NUMBER: 94 College Avenue
CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis
STATE: Maryland
CODE: 24
St. Francis Xavier Church and Newtown Manor House Historic District, supported by 700 acres of farmland one hundred yards to the southeast, is located on Newtown Neck on the east side of Maryland Route 243, 1.5 mile south of Compton, Maryland.

St. Francis Xavier Church is a frame, rectangular building with two octagonally-shaped brick additions: one on the northwest (entrance); a second addition on the southeast (altar). The southeast addition is broader than the main body of the church and protrudes several inches beyond the exterior walls of the main block of the church. This southeast addition has three rectangular windows--each one in a separate plane of the octagon. The end plane is a blank brick wall with a brick chimney rising above the roof. On each side of this chimney is a dormer window. There is a door in the southeast octagon, the plane which is parallel to the southwest wall of the main body of the church.

The roof over the altar is several inches higher than the A-shaped nave roof which continues at the same level and terminates at a cupola marking the apex of the roof of the northwest octagon. This entrance is narrower than the breadth of the church so that the nave protrudes several feet from the place where the addition joins the main body. This end is two stories and has rectangular windows on each story on each visible exterior plane with the exception of the door on the first story at the end plane. A sacristy and confessional are located inside.

The main body of the church has an interior barrel vault ceiling supported by two sets of piers which create the nave and side aisles. There is a dome over the chancel and altar which is located in the southeast octagonal end. The church has simple Federal woodwork and a mid-eighteenth-century reredos.

Newtown Manor House, one hundred yards to the southeast of the church, is a two-and-one-half story brick, five-bay house with a pair of enclosed chimneys on each gable end. The structure has an A roof with a jerkinhead at each end. There is a centrally placed porch on both the northeast and southwest elevations. The house sits on a high brick basement. There is a long one-story, shed-like structure along the northwest gable end.

Newtown Manor House originally had a gambrel roof which was raised and changed to its present shape in 1816.
ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The St. Francis Xavier Church building has a barrel vault ceiling, unusual in a wood church. Architectural evidence indicates this vaulting is original (1767). The two octagonally-shaped brick ends are unusual, if not unique, features in Maryland ecclesiastical architecture.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

St. Francis Xavier Church and Newtown Manor House Historic District marks a location and site important in the seventeenth-century ecclesiastical history of Maryland. From this area of Newtown Neck and from other locations in Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore, English Jesuit priests conducted missionary activities among the Indians and ministered to the needs of the settlers beginning in the 1630's and 1640's. In Maryland, as all over North America, the Jesuits were the vanguard of western civilization in the wilderness.

The combination of St. Francis Xavier Church and Newtown Manor House properties is an example of a self-contained Jesuit community made self-supporting by the surrounding 700 acre farm. This type of community was prevalent in the eighteenth century. In 1668 the Jesuits purchased the Manor of Little Bretton, covering all of Newtown Neck. The income from the farm supported the Jesuits and their activities. The actual farm work was usually done by tenants and overseers. This tradition has continued to the present day.

Jesuit activity at Newtown dates back to the 1640's. In 1649 the mission in this locale became formally established. The first church was erected in 1662 after a relaxation of the discrimination against Catholics which accompanied the Restoration. The site of the 1662 church is believed to be in St. Francis Xavier Cemetery, about one-third mile to the north.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Recorders: Michael Bourne, Maryland Historical Trust, 94 College Avenue, Annapolis, Maryland 21401; Nancy Miller, Historian, Maryland Historical Trust.


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

<table>
<thead>
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<th>CITY OR TOWN:</th>
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<tr>
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<td>ORGANIZATION:</td>
<td>Maryland Historical Trust</td>
<td>Jan. 12, 1972</td>
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11. FORM PREPARED BY

Mrs. Preston Parish, Keeper of the Maryland Register

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-655), 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

<table>
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</table>

Name: Orlando Ridout IV
State Liaison Officer for Maryland
Date: January 13, 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register
#7. DESCRIPTION continued

A fragment of a brick wall, located near the house, is under archaeological investigation by the St. Mary's County Archaeological Society.

#8. SIGNIFICANCE continued

Newtown flourished in the last decades of the seventeenth century while it was the county seat as well as a religious center. After 1695, when the county seat moved, the area played a diminishing roll in the life of overall St. Mary's County. The decline was culminated in 1868 when Leonardtown became the residence of the Jesuit priests.

St. Francis Xavier Church, as a parish church, has continued since its origin in the mid-seventeenth century to minister to the needs of local Roman Catholics.

Local tradition maintains that St. Francis Xavier Church is the oldest Roman Catholic church building in the English colonies.

In 1956 the church received the Haddock Chalice which had belonged to James Haddock, a resident of Newtown from 1690 to about 1704. Haddock had taken the small vessel with him when he left; one of his descendants returned it to the church.
For NPS Use Only

St. Francis Xavier Church & Newtown Manor House Historic District

#9. REFERENCES continued


St. Mary's County Land Records. Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

UPPER LEVEL PLAN

SCALE: 1/4 = 1.0

NORTH

UPPER PART OF NAVE

1-02

STAIR
2-02

SM-58
St. Francis Xavier Church
Floor Plans by Michael Trostel
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH
NEWTOWN - ST. MARY'S COUNTY - MARYLAND

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH IS THOUGHT TO BE THE OLDEST CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CONTINUOUS USE IN ENGLISH AMERICA. THE NAVE AND SANCTUARY ARE HOUSED IN A RECTANGULAR, SINGLE STORY, WOOD-FRAME STRUCTURE BUILT IN 1776. THE NAVE CEILING IS FORMED BY A CENTRAL BARREL VAULT FLANKED BY TWO SMALLER VAULTS AND INTERSECTED BY A HALF DOME OVER THE ALTAR. SEMI-OCTAGONAL, TWO STORY BRICK APSES WERE ADDED AT EACH END OF THE NAVE IN 1787. THE NORTHERN APSE HOUSES THE VESTIBULE, WITH A CHOIR LOFT AND BELL TOWER ABOVE. THE SOUTHERN APSE CONTAINS THE SACRISTY, WITH A FINISHED ATTIC ABOVE. IN 1974, DUE TO FOUNDATION SETTLEMENT AND DETERIORATION OF THE PLASTER VAULTS, SERVICES WERE MOVED TO THE ADJACENT PARISH HALL UNTIL FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR REPAIR. THE CONGREGATION HOPES TO COMPLETELY RESTORE THE CHURCH.

LEONARDTOWN QUADRANGLE
USGS 7.5 minute map (contoured)
scale: 1:24,000
1963

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH and NEPTUNE MANOR HOUSE

lat. 38° 15' 23"  lat. 38° 15' 23"
long. 76° 42' 05"  long. 76° 41' 55"

lat. 38° 15' 15"  lat. 38° 15' 15"
long. 76° 42' 05"

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
St. Francis Xavier Church
SM-58
SM-58
St. Francis Xavier Church + Cemetery
St. Mary's County, Md
Kirk Rancette
Md SHPO
Nov/99
Welevation
1 of 3
SM-58
St. Francis Xavier Church & Cemetery
St. Mary's County, Md
Kirk Ranzetta
Md SHPO
Nov/99
W + E elevations
283
SM-58

St. Francis Xavier Church & Cemetery
St. Mary’s Cemetery, Md
Kirk Runzetta
Old SHPO

Cowo 1999
Looking E

1 of 3
St. Francis Xavier Church
St. Mary's County, Maryland

Date: 1970  SM-58
Photographer: Michael Bourne
SM-58
St. Francis Xavier Church
Richard Weeks, 1969