

WO-135  
Robert Pitts House  
Berlin  
Private

c. 1830

The Robert Pitts house is the best preserved of the stepped or telescope dwellings in the town of Berlin. The four-part frame house, located on Vine Street, was erected in one building period around 1830. Several construction features, the consistent late Federal style woodwork, and the floor plan indicate a single building program. Distinctive to this house is a narrow transverse hall in the middle section that joins the main house with the colonnade thereby provides privacy to the two small rooms behind the hall. This plan formula solved the often encountered problem with stepped houses where rooms were arranged in a linear fashion without private passages. This house is one of the most significant of the stepped dwellings in northern Worcester County.

Credit for its construction is awarded to Robert Pitts, who bought a 13-acre parcel in January 1830 from John R. Pitts for \$40. Robert Pitts was evidently in a business partnership with a John Hudson, trading as Pitts and Hudson, for the pair are recorded on a mortgage of this property in May 1844. A default on the mortgage forced the auction of the house and lot of Robert Pitts, which was sold the next year to John Fassitt, Sr. In an effort to clear any title to the property Robert Pitts and Eliza J. Pitts, after having moved to Richmond, Virginia, sold Eliza's dower rights to the land to Anna Fassitt, widow of John Fassitt. Although Albert J. Fassitt acquired title to the property in 1850 he lived on the Fassitt farm on Sinepuxent Neck and evidently rented this house. The town property was bequeathed to John T. Carey by Albert J. Fassitt in his will of 1878, and the property remained in Carey family hands through balance of the

twentieth century. In April of 1906 John Franklin Hammond bought the house and about 8 acres from the Carey heirs for \$1700. Hammond family interest in the Vine Street house was not sold until 1978.

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: ROBERT PITTS HOUSE

MHT Inventory Number: WO-135

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA:

- 1) Historic Period Theme(s): ARCHITECTURE
- 2) Geographic Orientation: EASTERN SHORE
- 3) Chronological/Developmental Period(s):  
AGRICULTURAL/INDUSTRIAL  
TRANSITION 1815-1870
- 4) Resource Type(s):  
SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. WO-135

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic ROBERT PITTS HOUSE

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 7 Vine Street  not for publicationcity, town Berlin  vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Worcester

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

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

name Daniel Jones

street &amp; number 7 Vine Street telephone no.:

city, town Berlin state and zip code MD 21811

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Clerk of Court liber 1389

street &amp; number Worcester County Clerk of Court folio 497

city, town Snow Hill state MD 21863

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title  
date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. WO-135

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<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 Robert Pitts house, also known as the Albert J. Fassitt house, stands at 7 Vine Street in the center of Berlin, Worcester County, Maryland. The two-story, four-part stepped frame house faces south with the gable roof oriented on an east/west axis.

Built around 1830, this two-story, four-part dwelling is supported on a low brick foundation, and the house is sheathed with a layer of asbestos shingles. Covering each section is a steeply pitched asphalt shingle roof. The four-section dwelling follows the regional stepped format with a large two-story side hall/parlor main house, a story-and-a-half wing, a single story colonnade and a single-story kitchen. Upon inspection it is clear the four sections were built in one building program.

The south (main) elevation of the main house is an asymmetrical two-bay elevation with a side entrance squeezed in the east end of the structure between the corner and an adjacent nine-over-six sash window. The entrance has been reworked with a new door and rebuilt transom. The two adjacent nine-over-six sash windows, however are original. Lighting the second floor are two six-over-six sash windows. Stretching across the base of the roof is a boxed cornice with bed and crown moldings.

The west gable end of the main house is symmetrically arranged with pairs of windows flanking the interior end brick stack. The chimney is finished with a corbelled cap. Lighting the first floor are nine-over-six sash while the second floor is illuminated by six-over-six sash windows. The attic is pierced by small four-pane windows, and a molded bargeboard finishes the flush gable end.

The east end of the main house is partially covered by the story-and-a-half, three-bay middle section. A small window pierces the upper gable end of the main house. The west (main) facade of the middle section is marked by a center board door and flanking six-over-six sash windows. Marking the roof is a pair of six-over-six sash gabled dormers trimmed with paneled pilasters. An interior end brick stack rises through the east gable end of this section.

The third and shortest section is a two-bay colonnade with a pair of six-over-six sash windows lighting the single room. A simple cornice trims the base of the colonnade roof.

The fourth and final section is a single-story two-bay kitchen with a board door and flanking six-over-six sash window defining the south (main) facade. A boxed cornice with bed and crown moldings as well as decorative end boards highlights the base of the roof. A single-flue chimney rises through the east gable end.

(continued)

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<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 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D and/or	
Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	

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

The Robert Pitts house is the best preserved of the stepped or telescope dwellings in the town of Berlin. The four-part frame house, located on Vine Street, was erected in one building period around 1830. Several construction features, the consistent late Federal style woodwork, and the floor plan indicate a single building program. Distinctive to this house is a narrow transverse hall in the middle section that joins the main house with the colonnade thereby provides privacy to the two small rooms behind the hall. This plan formula solved the often encountered problem with stepped houses where rooms were arranged in a linear fashion without private passages. This house is one of the most significant of the stepped dwellings in northern Worcester County.

Credit for its construction is awarded to Robert Pitts, who bought a 13-acre parcel in January 1830 from John R. Pitts for \$40.(AV/531) Robert Pitts was evidently in a business partnership with a John Hudson, trading as Pitts and Hudson, for the pair are recorded on a mortgage of this property in May 1844.(GMH 7/369) A default on the mortgage forced the auction of the house and lot of Robert Pitts, which was sold the next year to John Fassitt, Sr.(GMH 8/42) In an effort to clear any title to the property Robert Pitts and Eliza J. Pitts, after having moved to Richmond, Virginia, sold Eliza's dower rights to the land to Anna Fassitt, widow of John Fassitt.(GMH 9/469) Although Albert J. Fassitt acquired title to the property in 1850 he lived on the Fassitt farm on Sinepuxent Neck and evidently rented this house. The town property was bequeathed to John T. Carey by Albert J. Fassitt in his will of 1878 (GTB 3/101), and the property remained in Carey family hands through balance of the twentieth century. In April of 1906 John Franklin Hammond bought the house and about 8 acres from the Carey heirs for \$1700.(FHP 24/522) Hammond family interest in the Vine Street house was not sold until 1978.



## Robert R. Pitts house description (continued)

The interiors of the house have been recently remodeled during the last three years but much of the original early nineteenth century woodwork remains in place. The first floor parlor retains a finely crafted period mantel with paired colonettes supporting a fluted block frieze and a stepped and broken shelf. On the opposite wall a small five-panel door with an early latch opens into the space under the stair. The adjacent stair hall, on the other hand, has been remodeled with the reworking of the walls and floor. The stair, which fills the most of the space, has not been altered.

The second floor of the two-story section has early nineteenth century finishes as well. A period mantel survives in the bedroom, and an enclosed stair rises to the finished attic.

Original woodwork survives in the story-and-a-half middle section as well. A revealing aspect of the middle section is its plan which contains a transverse hall that fronts two small rooms. This hall provides access from the main house to the colonnade and service wing while providing private access to the two rooms behind. The presence of this hall solves a problem often inherent in stepped house plans where each room opens into the next without the privacy of a separate connecting hall. Another indication of the one-period construction is that the chimney to the middle section serves a small first floor bedroom as well as a fireplace in the adjacent colonnade. The second floor of the middle section is divided by a beaded board partition, and beaded board doors provide access between rooms. Riven lath is exposed in the eastern room which has not been remodeled.

The colonnade or dining room is fitted with a plain 1830s post and lintel mantel with a built-in cupboard to the north.

Finishing the kitchen are mostly modern materials, however an early nineteenth century winder stair remains in the southwest corner. Beaded board doors provide access to the stair as well as the small storage space below. The walls are partially covered with narrow beaded board wainscoting. Above the kitchen, the second floor is an unfinished space.

WO-135  
ROBERT PITTS HOUSE  
Chain of title

1389/497

John W. Liimaa  
Greta Lisa Liimaa

to

11/16/1987

Henry Berne & Leah Berne et. ux.

1. 5.85 acres \$105,000.

North side of Vine Street, "Plat of Survey--lands formerly owned by John Harner" Delmarva Surveys, Inc. Except 3788 square feet conveyed to Charles E. Parker, et. ux. 11/22/1985, W.C.L. 1137/351

2. Small three cornered parcel North side BC & A Railroad right-of-way conveyed John A. Harner and Jean Y. Matthews 8/14/1978 from Mary Boston Hammond, Laura Ruth Hammond Young, and Mary Catherine Hammond Harner F.W.H. 640/22, see confirmatory deed 1389/494, 10/26/1987

W.C.L. 1042/310

John A. Harner & Jean Y. Matthews

to

11/16/1984

John W. Liimaa & Greta Lisa Liimaa et. ux.  
Plat book W.C.L. 95/38 5.85 acres

F.W.H. 640/221

Mary Boston Hammond, Laura Ruth Hammond Young, and Mary Catherine Hammond Harner

to

8/14/1978

John Albert Harner & Jean Y. Matthews  
Part of a tract called Mt. Pleasant

WO-135  
ROBERT PITTS HOUSE  
Chain of title

Page 2

F.H.P. 24/522

John T. Carey, Sallie E. Carey et. ux.  
and Joshua E. Carey and Elizabeth M.  
Carey et. ux. (Joshua E. Carey and wife  
joins in this deed to convey any dower  
Joshua may have in said land)

to

4/3/1906

John Franklin Hammond  
\$1700 Part of Tract called Mt. Pleasant

F.H.P. 10/197

Edward James Carey, Albert Charles  
Carey, Ethan Allen Carey (any claim  
of Mother Julia A. Carey)

to

12/10/1896

John Thomas Carey  
(John T. Carey sold off small part of lot  
left him by Albert J. Fassitt to William  
J. Massey) Estimated 8 acres at present  
occupied by Thomas Hudson

Will Book  
G.T.B. 3/101

Last will and testament of Albert J. Fassitt

to

11/23/1878

John T. Carey

G.H.R. 1/54

Albert J. Fassitt

to

12/5/1863

Julia A. Fassitt  
(Julia afterwards intermarried with  
Joshua E. Carey)  
\$1800. House and lot where James  
Brittingham lives formerly owned by  
Robert Pitts

WO-135  
ROBERT PITTS HOUSE  
Chain of title

Page 3

E.D.M. 3/301

William & Catherine Elizabeth Fassitt,  
Quit claim any interest of Captain John  
Fassitt property

to

7/27/1850

Albert J. Fassitt

\$275 House and lot called Mount Pleasant  
situate lying and being in the town  
of Berlin

G.M.H. 9/469

Robert Pitts & Eliza J. Pitts his wife  
of the City of Richmond

to

2/25/1847

Anna Fassitt (widow of John Fassitt)  
\$100 Dower Interest not conveyed  
House & lot called Mount Pleasant  
12 or 13 acres of land

G.M.H. 8/42

John C. Derickson & Cyrus L. Williams  
Trustees

to

1/1/1845

John Fassitt, Sr.

G.M.H. 7/369

Robert Pitts & John Hudson, trading  
as Pitts and Hudson

to

5/29/1844

John C. Derickson & Cyrus L. Williams  
In trust for sale to apply to creditors  
House and lot where Robert Pitts resides  
(Sale Saturday 7/6/1844 Public auction  
to John Fassitt for \$1002

WO-135  
ROBERT PITTS HOUSE  
Chain of title

Page 4

AV/531-534

John R. Pitts

to

1/26/1830

Robert Pitts  
\$40, 13 acres

AV/284

John C. Derrickson

to

10/31/1829

John R. Pitts  
\$225 Lot 4 except 1 acre sold to John  
J. Williams, part of MT. Pleasant

AV/264

James and John Mumford  
(Heirs of William Stevenson and Tabitha  
Collins)

to

10/17/1829

John C. Derrickson  
\$600 Mount Pleasant, Little Worth &  
Pinders Neglect

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Magi No. 2401355404

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Telescope House\*

and/or common Liiamaa House

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 7 Vine Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Berlin \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 1st

state Maryland \_\_\_\_\_ county Worcester

## 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name John and Lisa Liiamaa

street &amp; number 7 Vine Street telephone no.: 641-3723

city, town Berlin state and zip code MD 21811

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Courthouse liber

street &amp; number Market Street folio

city, town Snow Hill state MD

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state

# 7. Description

Survey No. W0-135

Condition  
— excellent  
— good  
— fair

deteriorated  
— ruins  
— unexposed

Check one  
 unaltered  
 altered

Check one  
 original site  
— moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Liiamaa house is a four section wood frame "telescope" style structure, whose length lies parallel and close to Vine Street. The largest segment of the house at the West end is 2½ story, the next being 1½ story with dormers, followed by a low-roofed, 1 story section and terminated by a 1½ story section.

The largest section of the Liiamaa house is 2 x 2 bay with the entrance placed close to the junction with the next section and creating a assymmetrical 3rd bay. Windows are 6/6, with a pair of 2/2 windows in the gable end. The entrance features a 2 light transom with curved top and a 9 panel door. The interior of this section reveals a probable change in the position of the stairs so that they now rise directly in front of the entrance. The two rooms, upstairs and down, contain late Federal-style mantels and locks.

The 1½ story section adjacent to the largest just discussed is 3 bays across the front. A ~~board and batten~~<sup>shiplap</sup> door is centered between two 6/6 windows. A pair of 6/6 dormers with pilaster-like side detail are located over each of the first floor windows. A brick interior chimney is located in the east end of this section. On the interior a small room on the west end with chair rail (possibly location of stairs originally) and a five-panel door add to late Federal details.

The third section from the west end is two bays across, 6/6 windows and a low pitched gable roof with only crawl space. The interior is one large room with fireplace sharing chimney of section just mentioned. To the right is a double-doored cupboard with three panels in each door.

The final section on the east end of the house is 1½ story, two bays. The left bay is a ~~board and batten~~<sup>shiplap</sup> door and the right bay a 6/6 window. This end is two bays deep with interior brick chimney.

The two sections on the east end have a shed-roofed rear addition of modern origin. Most of the structure sits atop a very low brick foundation. The largest section was originally sheathed with weather-boarding while the remaining sections display wooden shingles beneath the ~~asphalt~~<sup>asbestos</sup> shingles that now cover the entire structure.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. W0-135

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<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 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

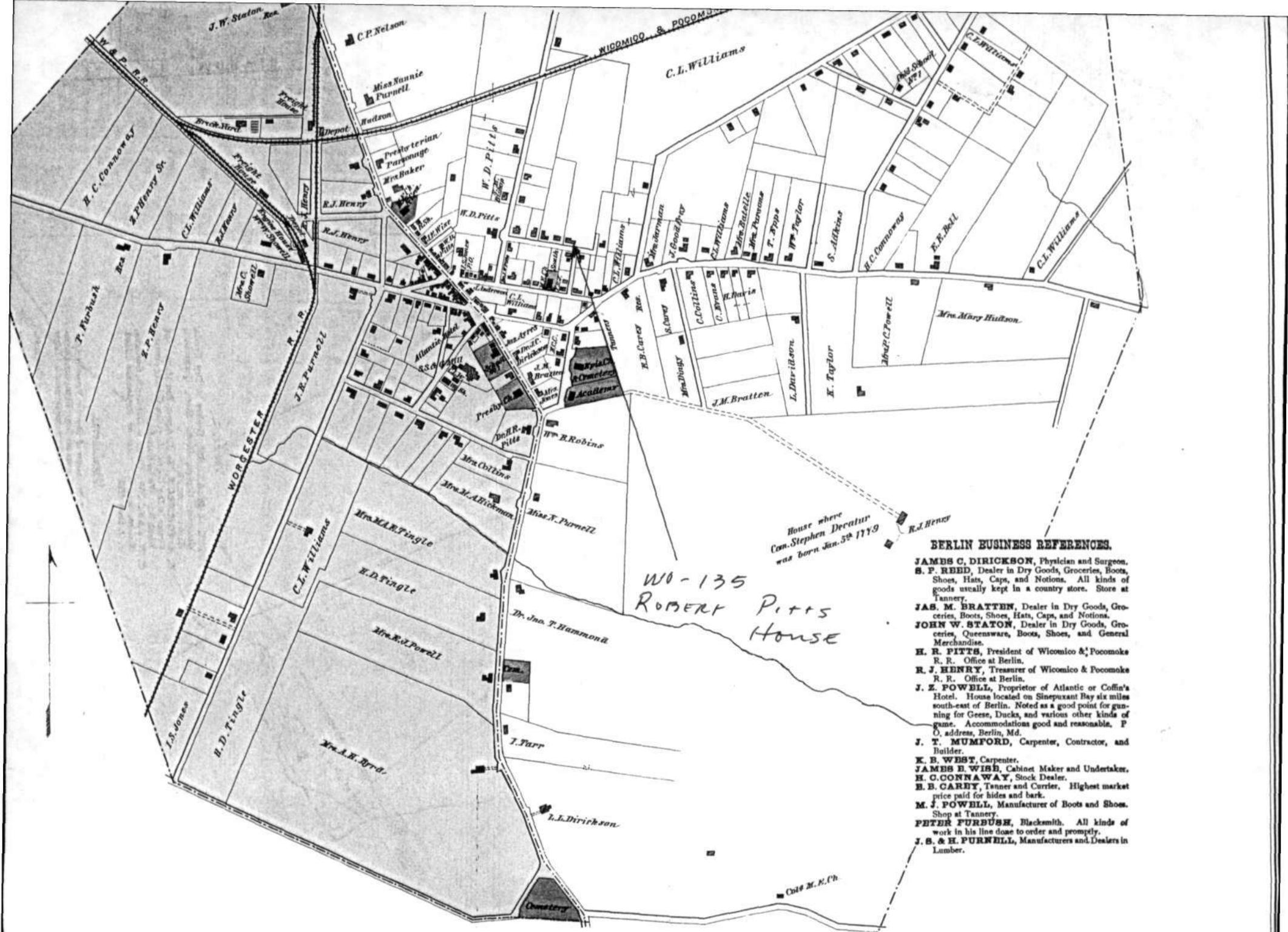
Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

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

The liiamaa house is Berlin's best example of a simple Federal-style telescoping house. It's design and details are distinctly different from the better documented Federal houses of Berlin's Main Street and add a new dimension to what can be learned about Berlin in the first half of the 19th century. It should receive more detailed study.





House where  
Gen. Stephen Decatur  
was born Jan. 30 1779

W-135  
ROBERT PITTS  
HOUSE

**BERLIN BUSINESS REFERENCES.**

- JAMES C. DIRICKSON**, Physician and Surgeon.
- S. F. REED**, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Boots, Shoes, Hats, Caps, and Notions. All kinds of goods usually kept in a country store. Store at Tannery.
- JAS. M. BRATTEN**, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Boots, Shoes, Hats, Caps, and Notions.
- JOHN W. STATON**, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Queensware, Boots, Shoes, and General Merchandise.
- H. R. PITTS**, President of Wicomico & Pocomoke R. R. Office at Berlin.
- R. J. HENRY**, Treasurer of Wicomico & Pocomoke R. R. Office at Berlin.
- J. Z. POWELL**, Proprietor of Atlantic or Coffin's Hotel. House located on Sinepuxant Bay six miles south-east of Berlin. Noted as a good point for gunning for Geese, Ducks, and various other kinds of game. Accommodations good and reasonable. P. O. address, Berlin, Md.
- J. T. MUMFORD**, Carpenter, Contractor, and Builder.
- K. B. WEST**, Carpenter.
- JAMES B. WISE**, Cabinet Maker and Undertaker.
- H. C. CONNAWAY**, Stock Dealer.
- E. B. CARRY**, Tinner and Currier. Highest market price paid for hides and bark.
- M. J. POWELL**, Manufacturer of Boots and Shoes. Shop at Tannery.
- PETER FURBUSH**, Blacksmith. All kinds of work in his line done to order and promptly.
- J. S. & H. FURNELL**, Manufacturers and Dealers in Lumber.

WO-135  
Robert Pitts House (Liamaa House)  
7 Vine Street, Berlin  
Worcester County Tax Map 300, P. 1688

