# Maryland Historical Trust
# Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form
# Intercounty Connector Project

DOE ___yes ___no

## 1. Name: (indicate preferred name)

historic Niels F. Nicholson Property

and/or common Ira Cooper Property

## 2. Location:

street & number 6905 Van Dusen Road ___ not for publication

city, town Muirkirk _x_ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Prince George's

## 3. Classification:

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___district | ___public | _x_occupied | ___agriculture | ___museum |
| _x_building(s) | _x_private | ___unoccupied | ___commercial | ___park |
| ___structure | ___both | ___work in progress | ___education | _x_private residence |
| ___site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___entertainment | ___religious |
| ___object | ___in process | ___yes: restricted | ___government | ___scientific |
| | ___being considered | ___yes: unrestricted | ___industrial | ___other: |
| | _x_not applicable | _x_no | ___military | |
| | | | ___transportation | |

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

name Ira Cooper

street & number Route 2, Box 296 telephone no.:

city,town Penhook state and zip code VA 24137

## 5. Location of Legal Description

Land Records Office of Prince George's County liber 10684

street & number Prince George's County Judicial Center folio 299

city,town Upper Marlboro 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. PG:60-16(PACS E2.21)

| Condition | | Check one | Check one | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___excellent | _x_deteriorated | _x_unaltered | _x_original site | |
| __good | ___ruins | ___altered | ___moved | date of move _____ |
| __fair | ___unexposed | | | |

Resource Count: 5

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

The Niels F. Nicholson Property is a 1½-story, 3-bay front-gable cottage on the south side of Van Dusen Road in the Muirkirk vicinity of Prince George's County. Constructed circa 1910, the building has a full-width front porch, a screened rear entry porch, and a projecting bay window at the center of the west elevation. The upper half-story of the cottage projects slightly beyond the first story wall plane on all sides. The cottage is in a deteriorated condition.

The structure has an asphalt shingle, front-gable roof with knee braces on the gable ends. There is one interior brick chimney near the southwest corner of the cottage, and one sheet metal chimney pipe attached to the east exterior wall. The cottage is of wood-frame construction with asbestos shingle siding, and it has a parged concrete block foundation. The windows are 1/1 double-hung wood unless noted otherwise; the majority of the windows are covered with plastic.

The front, or north elevation has a centered wood entrance door with 1-light. The fenestration pattern is symmetrical, with two pairs of windows on the first story and one pair of windows in the gable end. The full-width porch has an asphalt shingle, hipped-roof supported by five round, tapered wood columns, a wood floor supported by concrete block piers, and a wood railing. The porch is deteriorating; the floor is settling, some of the railings are missing, and some of the columns are badly damaged.

The east elevation has two fixed basement windows and four windows on the first story. One of the basement windows has been removed and is the exit area for a metal chimney pipe which is secured to the exterior wall.

The south elevation has a screened entry porch in the first bay. The wood frame entry porch has an asphalt shingle, shed-roof, a wood floor supported by concrete block piers, and wood steps. The west elevation of the entry porch has one 6/1 double-hung window. There is also a concrete bulkhead with a flat-roof, plywood entry in the third bay. The entry has a wood door and concrete steps which lead down to the basement. The fenestration pattern of this elevation is symmetrical with one pair of windows on the first story and one pair of windows in the gable end.

The west elevation has a projecting bay in the center of the wall. The projecting bay, which has an asphalt shingle, hipped-roof, has one window in each wall. There is also one pair of windows in the first bay and a single window in the third bay.

There are four outbuildings associated with this property. The first outbuilding is a springhouse with an asphalt shingle, clipped-gable roof. Constructed circa 1910, it is of wood-frame construction. The structure is deteriorating; part of the roof has collapsed. The springhouse is located south of the cottage.

The second outbuilding is a 2-story shed with a corrugated metal, side-gable roof. Constructed circa 1910, it is of wood-frame construction and it is located southwest of the cottage and springhouse.

# 7. Description (Continued)

The third outbuilding is a chicken house with a flat seam metal shed-roof. Constructed circa 1910, it is of wood-frame construction. The chicken house is located south of the cottage and springhouse and west of the shed. A fenced chicken-run is located between the shed and the chicken house.

The fourth outbuilding is a tractor shed with a standing seam metal, front-gable roof. Constructed circa 1925, it is of wood-frame construction. The west elevation of the tractor shed does not have a wall. The tractor shed is located south of the cottage and other outbuildings.

The property is located on the south side of Van Dusen Road; Virginia Manor Road borders the property on the west. There are residences to the east and south. The property is generally level. The areas north, east, and south of the buildings are heavily wooded, while the area west of the buildings has large clearings. The property's setting is rural.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. PG:60-16(PACS E2.21)

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| __prehistoric | __archaeology-prehistoric | __Community planning | __landscape architecture | __religion |
| _1400-1499 | __archeology-historic | __conservation | __law | __science |
| _1500-1599 | __agriculture | __economics | __literature | __sculpture |
| __1600-1699 | __architecture | __education | __military | __social/ humanitarian |
| __1700-1799 | __art | __engineering | __music | __theater |
| __1800-1899 | __commerce | __exploration/settlement | __philosophy | __transportation |
| x_1900- | __communication | __industry | __politics/government | __other (specify) |
| | | __invention | | |

**Specific dates** circa 1910 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D
and/or
Applicable Exceptions: ___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 Niels F. Nicholson Property is not shown on the 1879 Hopkins Atlas. Deed records indicate that the property was part of approximately 51 hectares (126 acres) of land bought by John Fleister from Richard Plummer in March 1862. The Fleister and Plummer families were both landowners in the area. The property remained in the Fleister family until September 1899, when the Fleister heirs sold approximately 10.5 hectares (26 acres) of land to Niels F. Nicholson. Nicholson sold the property to Ingborg M. Tilp in June 1918. Based on the architectural style of the building, a front-gable cottage with a classical-style porch, and the 1918 sales price, it has been concluded that the building was built during the ownership of Niels F. Nicholson. In October 1924, Frank M. Stephens, trustee for the infant son and daughter of Ingborg M. Tilp, conveyed the property to Early R. Halleman, who subsequently conveyed the property to Theresa Allen the following year. The next deed reference is dated December 1949 which documents that Francis and Anita Pyle sold the property to Patrick and Ethel McKenzie. It is not known when the property transfer from Theresa Allen to the Pyles occurred. The property remained in the McKenzie family until March 1996, when the McKenzie heirs conveyed the property to Ira Cooper, the current owner.

The Niels F. Nicholson Property is in the Muirkirk area, on land originally patented to Richard Snowden in 1715 as "Snowden's New Birmingham Manor" in Prince George's County. "Snowden's New Birmingham Manor" was approximately 1214 hectares (3000 acres) from Old Columbia Pike to the present city of Laurel, and from south of Greencastle and Van Dusen Roads to north of Sandy Spring Road. The 1715 patent increased the already substantial Snowden land holdings, and later additions to Snowden land eventually included 3749 hectares (9265 acres) by 1743. (Geraci, 1976: 4; Cook, 1976: 270-271).

Iron ore was noticed in the Muirkirk area about 1800, but since there is no natural source of power there and overland travel was difficult until the railroad was built, it was not until 1847 that the iron was mined (Brennan 1974: 2). The Niels F. Nicholson Property is located adjacent to Furnace Road (now Virginia Manor Road), which led to the iron furnace which had been established by the Ellicott family of Ellicott's Mills at what is now the junction of U.S. 1 and Muirkirk Road. During the nineteenth century, the Muirkirk furnace supplied pig iron for use as gun carriages and engine cylinders. The Muirkirk MARC train station and a paint pigment manufacturing plant now occupy the site of the furnace.

# 8. Significance (Continued)

The Muirkirk settlement, near the intersection of Muirkirk Road and Old Baltimore Pike, consisted of the furnace, kilns, the mansion of Charles Coffin, who owned the furnace after the Ellicotts, approximately 30 workers residences, a store and post office. Suburban development began with the formation of the Muirkirk Land Company and the construction of electric street car lines through Muirkirk to Laurel. The furnace operated until 1911, and was one of the last furnaces operating in Maryland (Brennan 1974: 3; Prince George's County 1974: 290).

The Muirkirk area is also known for its clay, sand, and gravel mining. Red and grey clays that are useful for making bricks have been mined in the area since the nineteenth century. Sand and gravel were also mined, and during the 1940s mining in the area increased significantly. Currently, much of the land between Laurel and Beltsville on either side of Interstate 95 consists of gravel pits and sand piles.

The Niels F. Nicholson Property is a front-gable, vernacular cottage with a classical style porch. Between 1870 and 1940 the vernacular cottage style was typically built for Americans of modest means. They are characterized by simple ornamentation and mass-produced components, such as door frames, moldings, sash and window units, and porch decoration. The development of post-Civil War machinery capable of producing large amounts of standardized housing elements, such as those found in cottages, contributed greatly to the development of the modern American housing industry. Designs for vernacular cottages were obtained from popular magazines, such as House Beautiful, or carpenter's and builder's journals, such as American Builder. A variety of front-gabled, side-gable, cross-gable, gable-front-and-wing, and hipped roof frame cottages were developed in the early to mid-twentieth century. Front gable and hipped roof cottages are one to two stories tall, 3 bays wide and several rooms deep. They usually include a porch supported by posts often containing machine-produced ornamentation. Cottages usually feature Victorian ornamentation, though some, like the Niels F. Nicholson Property, have details from Colonial or Classical Revival architecture (Gottfried and Jennings 1988, viii-xv).

# 8. Significance (Continued)

**NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION:**

The Niels F. Nicholson Property, constructed circa 1910, is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The property is not eligible under Criterion A, as research conducted indicates no association with any historic events or trends significant in the development of national, state or local history. In addition, the property has lost its agricultural association; the property is no longer farmed, there is no barn on the property, and the remaining outbuildings are in a deteriorated condition. Historic research indicates that the property has no association with persons who have made specific contributions to history, and therefore, it does not meet Criterion B. It is not eligible under Criterion C; the cottage is an undistinctive example of a common architectural style, and the architectural integrity of the cottage has been compromised by deterioration. Finally the property has no known potential to yield important information, and therefore, does not meet Criterion D.

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST**

Eligibility recommended _____ Eligibility Not Recommended X

**Comments:** _____

Reviewer, OPS: Andrew Lewis Date: 11/05/01

Reviewer, NR Program: [illegible] Date: 11/9/01



✓-entered

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey:PG:60-16(PACS E2.21)

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____
Quadrangle name Beltsville, MD  Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

**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 Caroline Hall/Ryan P. McKay

organization P.A.C. Spero & Company  date December 1996

street & number 40 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 412  telephone (410) 296-1635

city or town Baltimore  state Maryland

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 purposed only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

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

# 9. Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

Brennan, John C. The Muirkirk Iron Mines and the 1940 WPA Maryland Guidebook. Unpublished paper, 1974.

Cook, William G. Montpelier & the Snowden Family. Privately Printed, 1976.

Geraci, Ron, Vicki Walker, and Linda Donnary. Old Building Survey of the Burtonsville Area. Burtonsville, Maryland: Burtonsville Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings. American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1988.

Gowans, Alan. Styles and Types of North American Architecture. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

Hopkins, G.M. Atlas of 15 Miles Around Washington including the County of Prince George (sic), Maryland. Philadelphia, 1879. Reprint.

Klein, Marilyn W. and David P. Fogle. Clues to American Architecture. Washington D.C. and Philadelphia: Starrhill Press, 1986.

Land Records of Prince George's County, Maryland.

"The Laurel Factory." News and Notes from the Prince George's County Historical Society. (July 1980): 38-40. (First published in The American Farmer. Baltimore, Maryland, August 1845.)

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 1984.

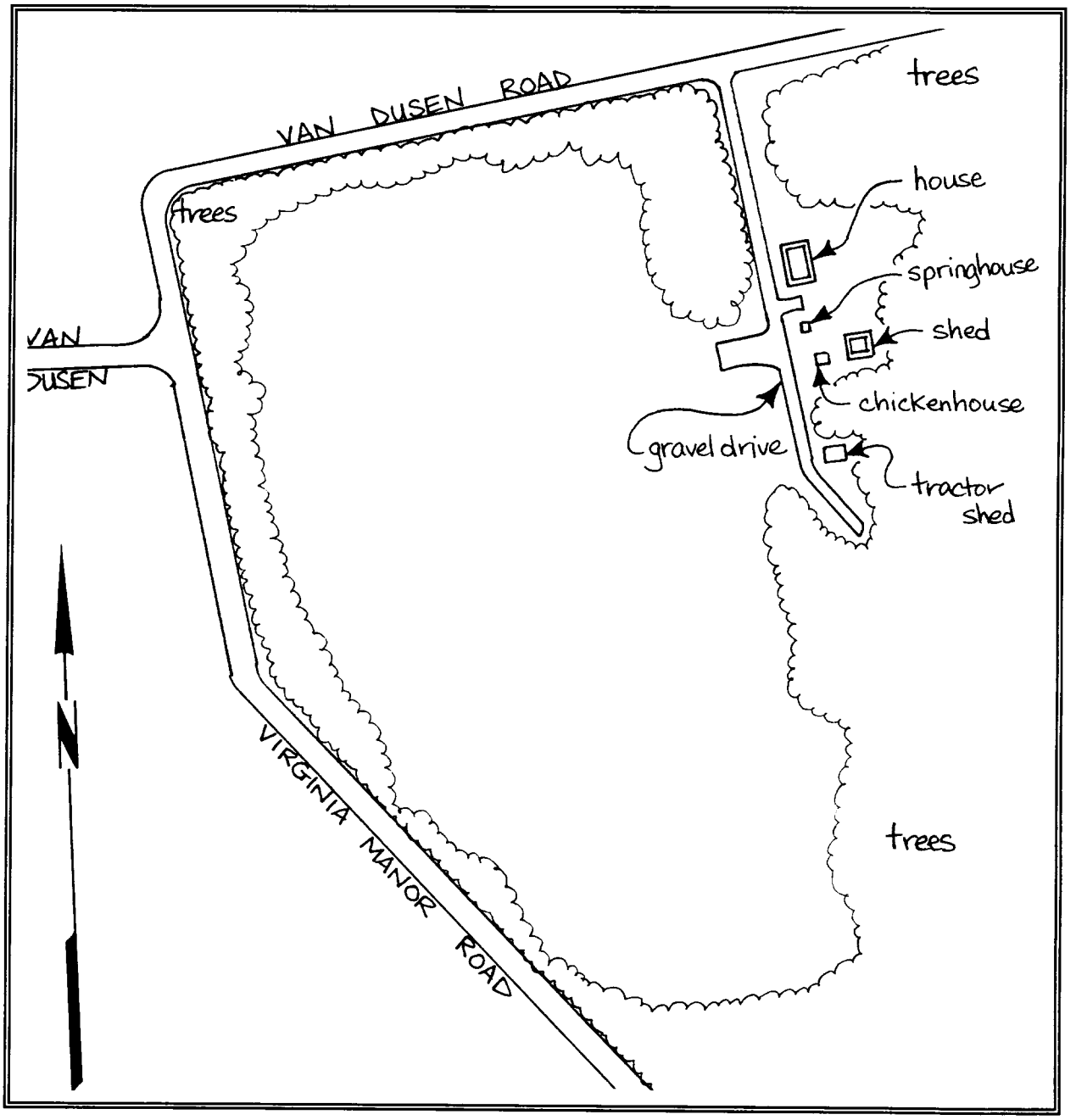
Prince George's County Community Renewal Program. The Neighborhoods of Prince George's County. Upper Marlboro, Maryland: Prince George's County Government, 1974.

Rifkind, Carole. A Field Guide to American Architecture. New York: Signet Press, 1980.

Virta, Alan. Prince George's County: A Pictorial History. Virginia Beach: The Donning Company Publishers, 1984, rev. 1991.

# 10. Geographical Data (Continued)

**Resource Sketch Map:**



**Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Data Sheet**

**Historic Context:**

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period Theme (s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture

RESOURCE TYPE:

Category (see Section 3 of survey form):

Building

Historic Environment (urban, suburban, village, or rural):

Suburban

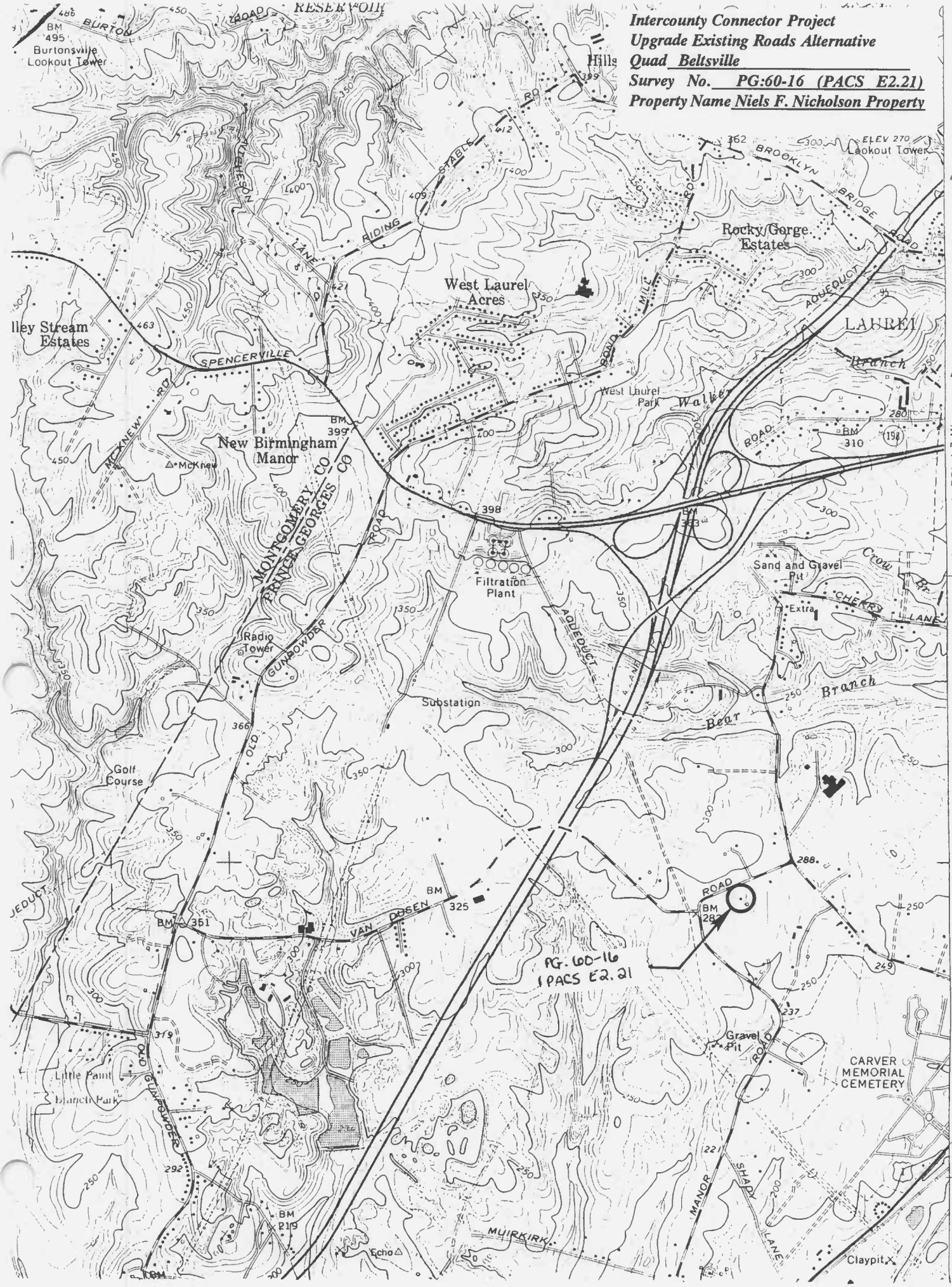
Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

Private Residence

Known Design Source (write none if unknown):

None

reparer:
P.A.C. Spero & Company
December 1996


Intercounty Connector Project
Upgrade Existing Roads Alternative
Quad Beltsville
Survey No. PG:60-16 (PACS E2.21)
Property Name Niels F. Nicholson Property
RESERVOIR
BURTON ROAD
Burtonsville Lookout Tower
Hills
STABLE RD
RIDING
LANE
BROOKLYN BRIDGE ROAD
Lookout Tower
Rocky Gorge Estates
West Laurel Acres
AQUEDUCT
LAUREL
Branch
West Laurel Park
Walker
ROAD
SPENCERVILLE
MCKNEW RD
New Birmingham Manor
McKnew
MONTGOMERY CO
PRINCE GEORGES CO
Filtration Plant
Sand and Gravel Pit
Crow Br
CHERRY LANE
Extra
Radio Tower
GUNPOWDER
Substation
Bear Branch
Golf Course
OLD
VAN DUSEN
ROAD
PG. 60-16
(PACS E2.21
Gravel Pit
CARVER MEMORIAL CEMETERY
Little Paint Branch Park
MANOR
SHADY LANE
MUIRKIRK
Echo
Claypit
LAUREL 1.7 MI
LAUREL 2.8 MI
BALTIMORE 21 MI.
5'

1. PG-60-16
2. Niels F. Nicholson Property
3. Prince George's
4. Ryan McKay
5. July 1996
6. P.A.C. Spero & Company, 40 W. Chesapeake Ave, Suite 412, Towson MD 21204
7. 6905 Van Dusen Road, North elevation
8. 1 of 8

1. PG:60-16
2. Nicls F. Nicholson Property
3. Prince George's
4. Ryan McKay
5. July 1996
6. P.A.C. Spuo & Company, 40 W. Chesapeake Ave, Suite 412, Towson MD 21204
7. 5905 Van Dusen Road, West elevation
8. 2 of 8

1. PG:60-16
2. Niels F. Nicholson Property
3. Prince George's
4. Ryan McKay
5. July 1996
6. P.A.C Spero & Company, 40 W. Chesapeake Ave, Suite 412, Towson MD 21204
7. 6905 Van Dusen Road, South elevation
8. 3 of 8

1. PG:60-16
2. Niels F. Nicholson Property
3. Prince George's
4. Ryan McKay
5. July 1996
6. P.A.C Spero & Company, 40 W. Chesapeake Ave, Suite 412, Towson MD 21204
7. 6905 Van Duser Road, east elevation
8. 4 of 8

D-K

1. PG 60-116
2. Niels F. Nicholson Property
3. Prince George's
4. Ryan McCarty
5. July 1996
6. P.A.C. Sperry Company, 40 W Chesapeake Ave, Suite 412, Towson MD 21204
7. 6905 Van Dusen Road, Springhouse
8. 5 of 8

1. PG:00-16
2. Niels F. Nicholson House
3. Prince George's
4. Ryan McCoy
5. July 1996
6. P.A.C. Spero & Company, 40 W. Chesapeake Ave, Suite 412, Towson MD 21204
7. 6905 Van Dusen Road, shed
8. 6 of 8

1. PG: 60-16
2. Niels F. Nicholson Property
3. Prince George's
4. Ryan McKay
5. July 1996
6. P.A.C. Spero & Company, 40 W. Chesapeake Ave, Suite 412, Towson MD 21204
7. 6805 Van Dusen Road, chicken house
8. 7 of 8

1. PG 60-116
2. Niels F. Nicholson Property
3. Prince George's
4. Ryan McKay
5. July 1990
6. P.A.C. Spero & Company, 40 W. Chesapeake Ave, Suite 412, Towson MD 21204
7. 6905 Van Dusen Road, tractor shed
8. 8 of 8