FHR-8-300 (11-78)

CT-788

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic: J. C. Lore and Sons, Inc. seafood packing plant

and/or common: J. C. Lore Oyster House (preferred)

2. Location

street & number: Solomon's Island Road (MD Route 2) — n/a ___ not for publication

city, town: Solomons — n/a ___ vicinity of — congressional district: First

state: Maryland — code: 24 — county: Calvert — code: 009

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	X public	X occupied	___ agriculture	X museum
X building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	X not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name: Board of County Commissioners, Calvert County

street & number: Calvert County Courthouse

city, town: Prince Frederick — n/a ___ vicinity of — state: Maryland 20678

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Calvert County Courthouse

street & number: Main Street (MD 765)

city, town: Prince Frederick — state: Maryland 20678

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title: Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory — has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes X no

date: 1979 — ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records: 21 State Circle

city, town: Annapolis — state: Maryland 21401

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date n/a
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	Buildings
0	0	Sites
0	0	Structures
0	0	Objects
1	0	Total

Number of previously listed National Register properties included in this nomination: 0

Original and historic functions and uses: commercial/industrial

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

The J. C. Lore Oyster House is a large rectangular frame industrial building that faces west at the north end of Solomon's Island in Calvert County, Maryland. A seafood packing plant constructed in 1934 to replace a circa 1920 structure destroyed in a hurricane, the building is two stories high, six bays wide by three bays deep, sheathed in novelty siding and covered by a metal-clad gable roof. A one-story shed-roofed wing, apparently contemporaneous with the main block, extends from the south gable end a distance of two bays. A cinderblock addition of 1965 spans two-thirds of the rear elevation. Fenestration of the main block is irregular, and reflects the functional divisions of the interior into areas for oyster shucking, packing, storage and loading, and office space. The interior retains most of its original processing equipment. The facility is currently being adapted for reuse as a museum to house exhibits on the commercial fisheries of Maryland's Patuxent River region.

For General Description, see Continuation Sheet #1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The J. C. Lore Oyster House is a large rectangular frame building located at the north end of Solomons Island in Calvert County, Maryland. The principal facade fronts directly on Solomons Island Road, the main street through the village of Solomons, and faces west to the Patuxent River beyond the road. The rear (east) elevation faces The Narrows, a tributary of Back Creek.

The building stands two stories high, six irregular bays wide by three deep, and is sheathed in novelty siding. Below the window sills, the walls are constructed of concrete (to reduce the possibility of flood damage). The low-pitched gable roof is metal clad. A one-story, shed-roofed extension, apparently contemporaneous with the main block, projects from the south gable end. A one-story cinderblock addition, constructed in 1965, spans approximately two-thirds of the rear elevation. Behind the building, at the edge of Back Creek, is a wharf formerly used to off-load seafood from boats.

The fenestration of the west front is irregular and reflects the functional divisions of the building's interior. Windows are 6/6 sash, often grouped in pairs or triples, framed by flat boards. Reading from the left (north) end, the second bay has a pair of large sliding doors which allowed trucks to back into the building for loading; above them, double doors afford access to the second-story storage area. A single door in the southernmost bay on the ground floor opens into the oyster shucking area.

The interior is divided into four major areas (see plan). At the southern end, the oyster shucking room runs the full depth of the building. The long side walls of this narrow rectangular room are lined with concrete tables for shucking oysters, accommodating about fifty workers. The one-story south extension doubles the space for shucking. The floor throughout the building is of poured concrete; interior walls are framed with horizontal planks, and the low ceilings are finished with beaded tongue-and-groove boards. The shucking area retains a collection of original shucker's stands: tall narrow wooden boxes, open on one side, in which oyster shuckers stood while working. The plank bottom of the box raised the shucker's feet a few inches above the concrete floor, and a false bottom could be added to increase the height for shorter workers. As shuckers worked, piles of oyster shells would accumulate on the floor around them; the boxes held the shells away from the shucker's legs.

At the northwest corner of the shucking room, an interior window opens into the adjacent processing room. Shuckers would pass their buckets of shucked oyster meats through this window for weighing and tallying. In the processing room, oysters were washed and canned. This room retains two original blow tanks (large circular stainless-steel vats for washing oysters by mechanical aeration), a skimmer (table for draining and packing oysters), and a

General Description continues on Continuation Sheet #2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

collection of large metal bulk containers in which oysters are packed. A canning machine for putting up oysters in consumer-size containers is also located in this room, as well as a stainless-steel-topped work table.

Next to the processing room is the loading area, a broad space with sliding doors which allowed trucks to back in. North of this area, two large walk-in cold boxes provided for storage of seafood products before shipment. At the rear of the building, across the shipping and processing rooms, a cinderblock addition was constructed in 1965 as a receiving room to store oysters before shucking.

A narrow stair rises from the loading area to the second story; here are located the offices and bathroom for management, and a large, open storage area. The offices are finished in knotty pine paneling, while the framing remains exposed in the storage area.

The building is currently being adapted by the Calvert Marine Museum to house exhibits on the commercial fisheries of the Patuxent River region. The exterior has been repainted in its original color scheme. A frame shed has been built at the rear of the building to house a Victorian steam-powered oyster shell crushing mill (oyster shells were crushed for fertilizer, chicken feed, and road material until conservation measures outlawed this practice in the 20th century), and a board walkway has been constructed connecting the oyster house with the shed. On the interior, the original spaces of the oyster house have not been altered, but rather have been preserved in order to interpret their original functions. Original equipment and artifacts have been retained in place. In the 1965 cinderblock addition, several small frame structures have been built to provide the setting for interpretive text and exhibits describing aspects of the local seafood industries; these structures are freestanding and do not intrude on historic building fabric.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	X commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	X industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1934 **Builder/Architect** J. B. Lusby

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: A, C

Criteria Exceptions: n/a

Level of Significance for evaluation: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The J. C. Lore Oyster House is significant for its historical association with the commercial fisheries of Maryland's Patuxent River region, and architecturally as a substantially unaltered example of an early 20th century seafood packing plant. The commercial seafood industry has been vital to the economy of the Chesapeake Bay region and the state of Maryland since the mid-19th century. From its establishment in 1920 until it ceased operations in 1978, the J. C. Lore company was an important element in this industry in the Patuxent River region. J. C. Lore, Sr., moved to Solomons in 1888 to buy and ship locally caught oysters for his uncle's packing house in Philadelphia. He established his own oyster packing plant in Solomons in 1920; the present building was constructed in 1934 to replace the original facility which had been destroyed in a hurricane. As one of the most extensive and successful seafood packing operations in the area, and the longest continually-operating plant on the Patuxent River, it provided local watermen with a market for their catch and employed numerous workers in the processing plant. The company's oyster-processing operation was among the most modern and efficient in the Chesapeake region, and was featured repeatedly in seafood industry journals. To augment the supply purchased from local watermen working natural oyster bars, the company maintained extensive private bars in the Patuxent River and in Virginia waters where seed oysters were planted and grown to maturity. The company's careful records of water conditions and oyster growth on its private bars were often used by researchers from academic and scientific institutions. In addition to oysters, the company packed and marketed large quantities of crabs and fish. The J. C. Lore Oyster House is also significant as one of the oldest oyster packing houses in the Chesapeake region which has remained substantially unaltered. Most other successful oyster houses were subjected to a series of expansions over time or completely rebuilt; the Lore Oyster House reflects its original construction, with alteration limited to a recent cinder-block addition at the rear of the building. The plant also retains most of its original processing equipment and records covering the entire period of the company's operation from 1922 to 1978. The building is being adapted by the Calvert Marine Museum to house exhibits on the commercial fisheries of the Patuxent River region. Adaptation as a museum facility has not compromised the building's architectural integrity, and many of its original spaces, artifacts, and records have been incorporated into the exhibits.

For History and Supporting Documentation, see Continuation Sheet No. 3

HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

Since prehistoric times, the seafood resources of the Chesapeake Bay have contributed to the subsistence of the inhabitants of both shores. By the mid-nineteenth century these resources had acquired great commercial importance, as improvements in refrigeration and transportation made possible their export to distant markets. In particular, the rich oyster bars of the Chesapeake Bay and its estuaries increasingly attracted seafood processors from New England and the Delaware Bay, whose local sources were becoming depleted.

J. C. Lore, Sr. (1863-1945) came to Solomons in 1888 from Newport, Cumberland County, New Jersey (then a center of the Delaware Bay oyster industry) to buy and ship local oysters for the Philadelphia packing firm of his uncle, R. T. Lore. In 1920, he established his own oyster packing plant in Solomons; the original structure was destroyed by a hurricane in 1933, and the present J. C. Lore Oyster House was constructed in 1934 to replace it.

From its establishment until declining seafood harvests forced it to cease operations in 1978, the company was an important focal point of the commercial seafood industry in the Patuxent River region. Holding several large commercial and military contracts, it provided a ready market for the catch of local watermen, and employed numerous workers from the local community in its processing plant. Its oyster-processing operation was featured repeatedly by seafood industry journals as among the most modern and efficient in the Chesapeake Bay region (see item 9). (The efficient design of the plant enabled it to accommodate increasing production over time, without the necessity of repeated alterations or rebuilding that characterize the architecture of other successful packing houses in the region, so that the building retains a remarkable degree of architectural integrity.) To augment the supply of oysters purchased from local watermen working natural bars in the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay, the company maintained extensive private grounds in the Patuxent and in Virginia waters where immature oysters were "planted" and allowed to grow to maturity. The company maintained a fleet of three boats for use in its oyster planting operations. Two of these boats survive in the collection of the Calvert Marine Museum and thus retain their association with the oyster house, which is being adapted by CMM to house exhibits on the commercial fisheries of the Patuxent River region: The William B. Tennison, a 60' sailing bugeye constructed in 1899 and converted for powered use for dredging oysters on the company's private beds, is the oldest vessel licensed to carry passengers on the Chesapeake Bay and is listed in the National Register. The Penguin, a 47' Hooper Island draketail, was used by the Lore company in its inspections of water quality and oyster production on its private grounds. The information recorded in these inspections was often used by researchers from academic and scientific institutions, and J. C. Lore, Jr., who managed the company in partnership with his brother G.I. Rupert Lore from 1945 to 1978, was associated with the Department of Geology, Mines, and Water Resources for the state of Maryland. To reduce

For History and Supporting Documentation continued, see Continuation Sheet No. 4

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

its dependency on outside sources for increasingly scarce seed oysters, the company ran its own experimental propagation program. In addition to oysters, the company packed and marketed large quantities of locally-caught crabs and fish.

Declining seafood harvests in recent decades have taken their toll on packing plants throughout the Chesapeake Bay Region. The Lore operation was among the longest-lived oyster houses on the Western Shore of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay. Of eight shucking houses on the Patuxent River operating in 1961, only one, the Warren Denton Company of Broomes Island, outlasted J. C. Lore and Sons; the Denton company closed after the 1982 oyster season. The Lore company was the longest continually-operating packing house on the Patuxent River.

After the company ceased operations in 1978, the J. C. Lore Oyster House was acquired by the Calvert Marine Museum for adaptive reuse as an exhibit facility to interpret the commercial fisheries of the Patuxent River region. Exhibits will incorporate and be informed by the extensive collection of original equipment and company records which were intact in the building upon its acquisition.

Adaptation will not significantly affect the original fabric and spaces of the building; rather, these will be carefully incorporated into the interpretive scheme.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

LeVecque, George, "Planned Production Provides Adequate Supplies of Oysters for These Maryland Planters." Southern Fisherman, December, 1951, p. 32.

"76 Years of Oyster Lore," Southern Fisherman, October, 1964.

Obituary of J. C. Lore, Sr., Southern Fisherman, October 1945.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See Continuation Sheet #4.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.266 acre

Quadrangle name Solomons Island, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	372280	4242570
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes the single town lot upon which the resource stands; boundaries utilize existing property lines. Boundaries are depicted on the attached plat.

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

state n/a	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Peter E. Kurtze, Assistant National Register Administrator		
organization	Maryland Historical Trust	date	November 1983
street & number	21 State Circle	telephone	(301) 269-2438
city or town	Annapolis	state	Maryland 21401

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 2-15-84

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

Survey No. CT-788

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic J. C. Lore and Sons Oyster House

and/or common Calvert Marine Museum

2. Location

street & number Solomons Island Road South (MD 2) ___ not for publication

city, town Solomons ___ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Calvert

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	_X_ public	_X_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
_X_ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	_X_ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	_X_ not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

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

name Calvert County Commissioners

street & number Courthouse telephone no.:

city, town Prince Frederick state and zip code MD 20678

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Main Street(MD 765) folio

city, town Prince Frederick state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. CT-788

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date of move _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

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

This two-story framed and weatherboarded gable-roofed building faces west onto Solomons Island Road. There are first-story commercial bays protected by sliding doors, and a wide loading bay set above the main entrance on the second story. Other windows are glazed with six-over-six double-hung sash. The gable roof is covered with standing-seam sheet metal. There is a one-story addition to the south. Part of the main structure has a thick concrete foundation that kept the rooms cool and damp for various phases of the oyster shucking and processing. There are numerous rear additions.

8. Significance

Survey No. CT-788

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1934 **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.

Joseph C. Lore, Sr. came to Solomons from New Jersey in 1888 as an oyster buyer for his brother's Delaware Bay Oyster Packing House. In 1922, Lore built his own packing house in Solomons. It was destroyed in a 1933 hurricane. This building dates from 1934, though it has been enlarged several times. Lore's seafood packing house bought and sold finfish, crabs, and oysters. Goods were shipped by mail and truck. The Lore company did some of the first oyster farming and sold caviar from sturgeon caught in the Potomac.

In 1979, the Calvert Marine Museum acquired the oyster house which now houses an exhibit of commercial fishing.

from Solomons by Foot, Bicycle, or Boat.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CT-788

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Solomons Island, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
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

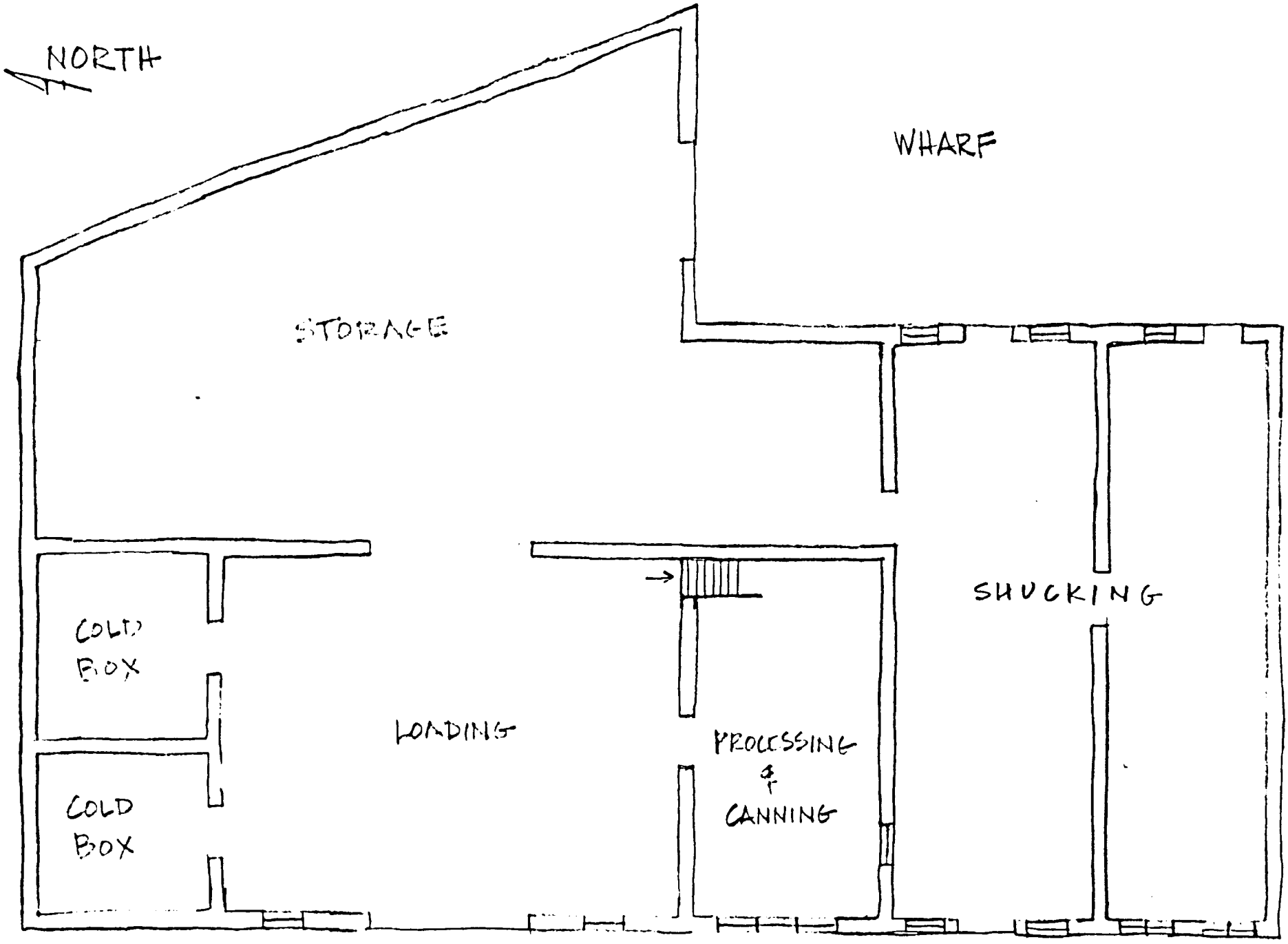
name/title	Camille Wells		
organization	MHT/Calvert Dept. of Planning	date	9/30/86
street & number	Courthouse Annex, Main Street	telephone	(301) 535-2348
city or town	Prince Frederick	state	Maryland 20678

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.

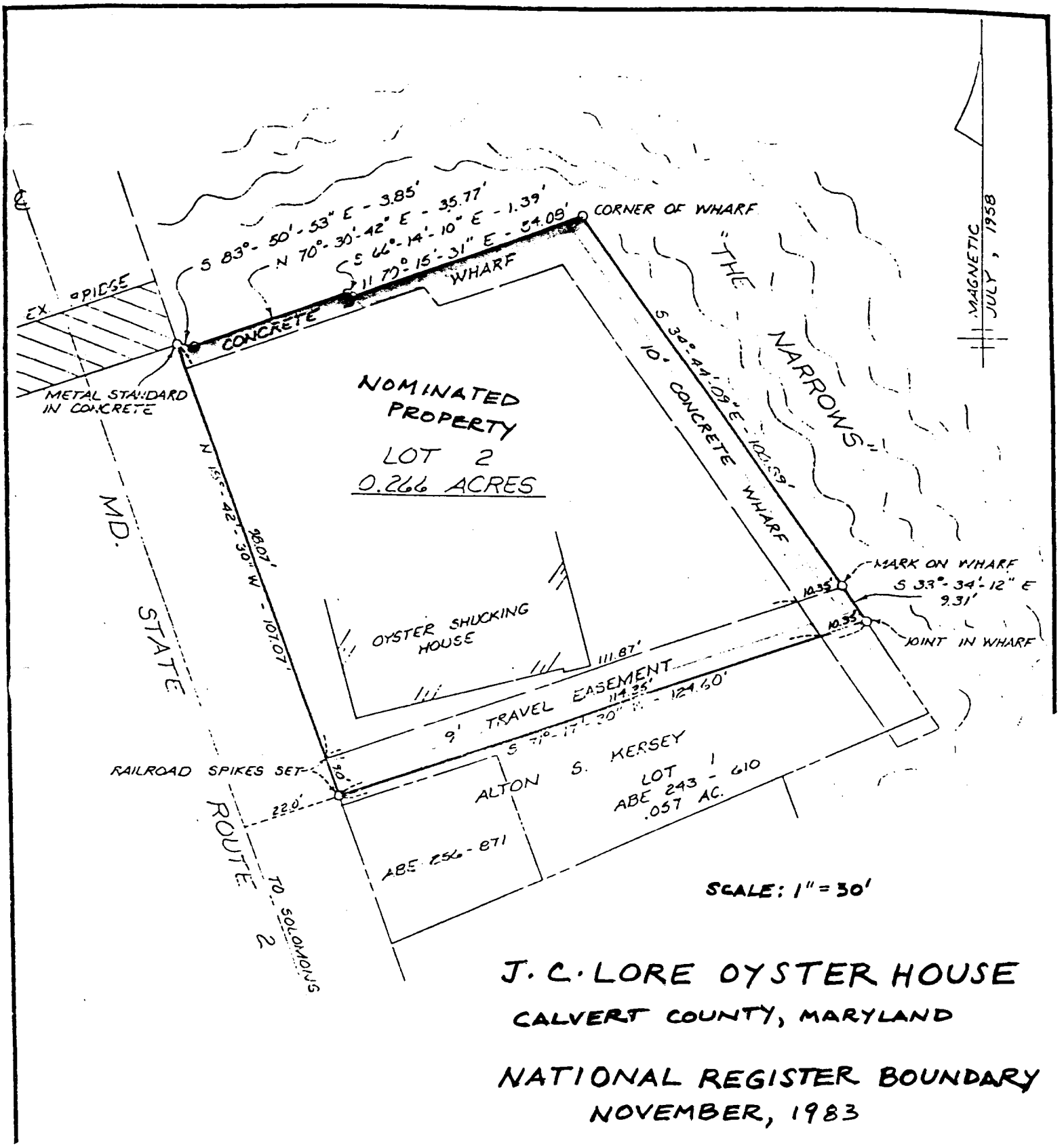
return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

PS-2746



J. C. LORE OYSTER HOUSE, CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND CT-788

SKETCH PLAN – NOT TO SCALE 11/83



J. C. LORE OYSTER HOUSE

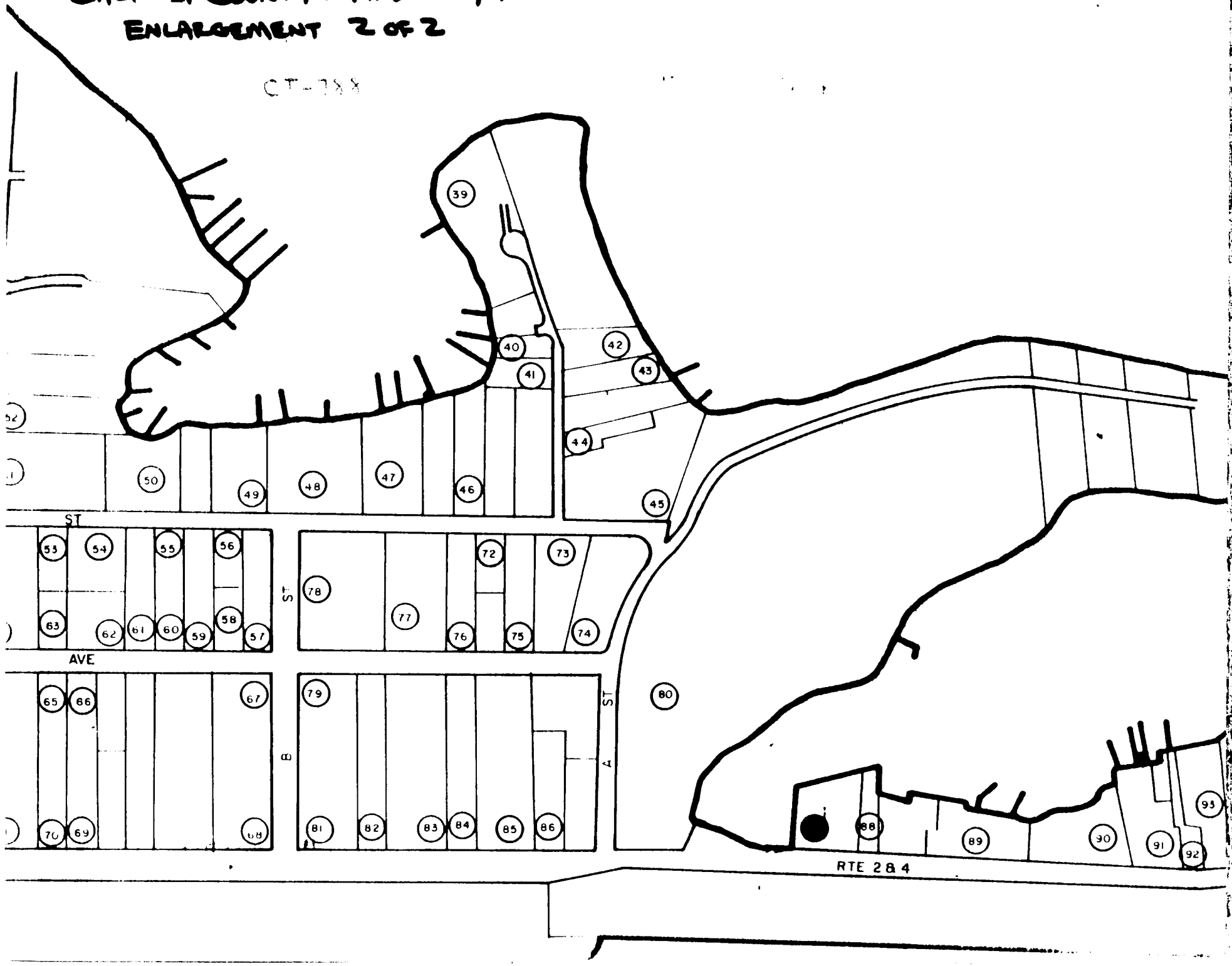
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND

NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY
NOVEMBER, 1983

CT-788

SOLOMONS
CALV CT COUNTY MAPS # 44, 46
ENLARGEMENT 2 OF 2

CT-788

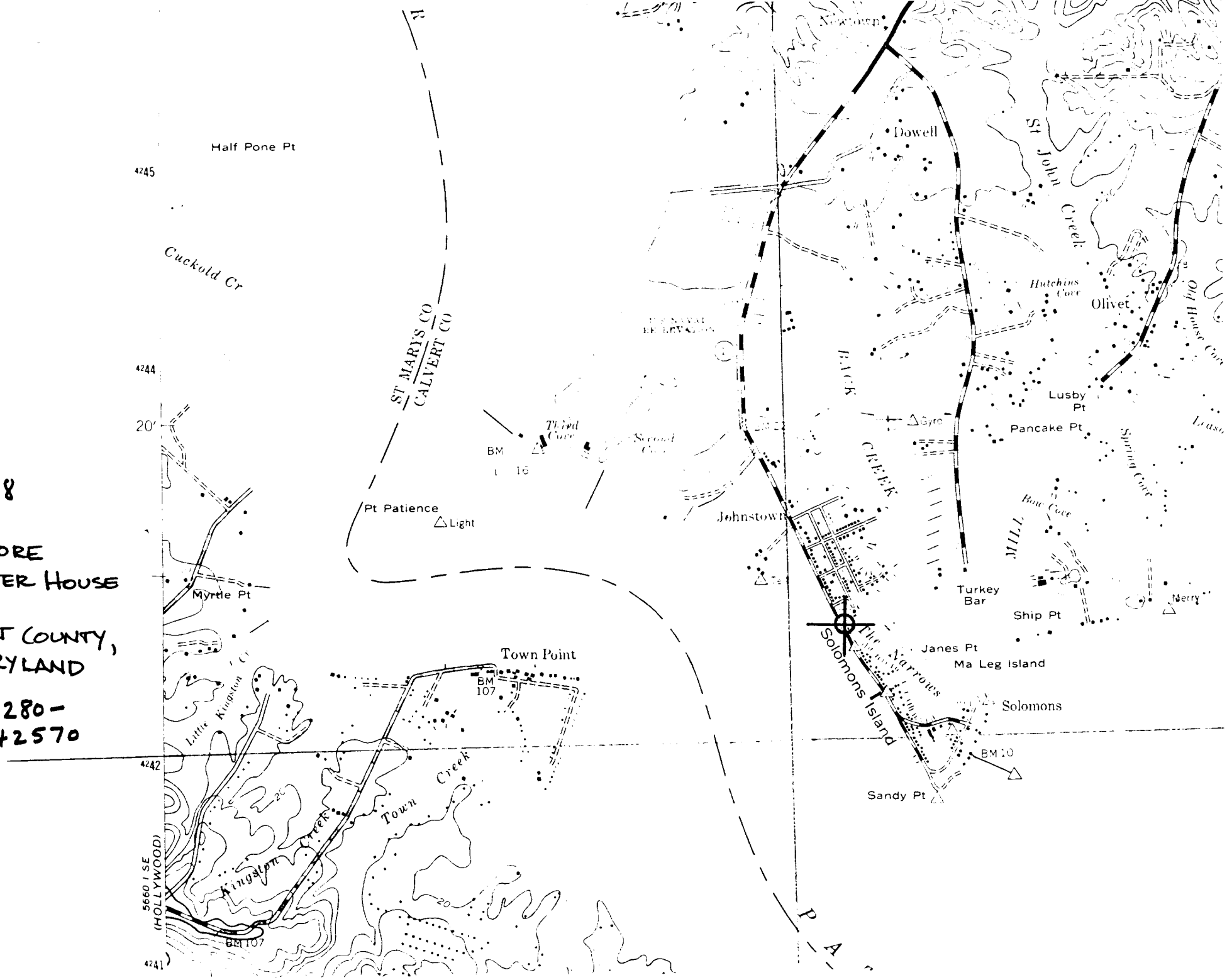


CT-788

J.C. LORE
OYSTER HOUSE

CALVERT COUNTY,
MARYLAND

18-372280-
4242570



Ct-788 Lore Oyster House
Solomons Island Road
Solomons

CT-788

Camille Wells 9/86
view from the southwest