KENT COUNTY JAIL
Chestertown, Maryland
(19th)

The old Kent County Jail is a large two-and-one-half story brick structure located directly north of the original Kent Courthouse. In conjunction with Emanuel Episcopal Church it forms a kind of side courtyard to the Courthouse. Northeast of the Jail partially obscured by later additions, is the stable built to serve the county complex.

The old Jail building is significant because it is a dated example of a public building of the late 19th century. In addition, its siting shows a deliberate effort on the part of the County Government and the designer to create a well defined and attractive governmental square. The selection of building form, material and detailing by the architect, J.C. Neilson, shows a careful and thoughtfull attempt to relate this building to its neighbor, the County Courthouse, while at the same time expressing architectural ideas derived from the Queen Anne Style which was popular at that time.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST K - 440
MAGI # 1504403601

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC: KENT COUNTY JAIL

AND/OR COMMON:

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: *Court House Square*

CITY, TOWN: *Chestertown* ___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: *1st*

STATE: *Maryland 21620*

COUNTY: *Kent*

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	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	X OTHER: *Jail*

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: *Commissioners of Kent County* Telephone #: *778-4600, ext. 34*

STREET & NUMBER: *Court House*

CITY, TOWN: *Chestertown* ___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code: *Maryland 21620*

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Liber #:
Folio #: *None*

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN:

STATE:

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE:

DATE:

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN:

STATE:

7 DESCRIPTION

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CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The old Kent County Jail is a large two-and-one-half story brick structure located directly north of the original Kent Courthouse. In conjunction with Emanuel Episcopal Church it forms a kind of side courtyard to the Courthouse. Northeast of the Jail partially obscured by later additions, is the stable built to serve the county complex.

The Jail building is an assymetrical T in plan with the "tail" of the T running parallel to Cross Street. The "head" of the T is three bays long and three bays deep. The "tail" of the T is two bays long and one bay deep. Two and a half stories in height overall, the portion of the building which makes up the "tail" of the T-plan is slightly taller. The slate roof of the building is a steep hip with a built-in gutter which breaks the slope of the roof just above the eave-line.

The architect of the Jail selected bricks which closely resemble the bricks of the 1860 Courthouse. Dark orange in color and regular in shape, they are laid in common bond with well-defined white mortar joints. The cornice of the Jail exactly duplicates the cornice of the Courthouse with the use of one-stretcher wide, three-step corbels with alternate corbels recessed along the entire cornice. Although the Courthouse cornice is enriched with wooden brackets, the cornice of the Jail is left plain. Another brick feature which resembles the older building is the water table; that of the Jail is molded while the Courthouse water table is plain.

The building is entered via wooden porches located in the interior corners. The porches have shallow hipped or shed roofs covered with raised-seam roofing, bold turned wooden posts, pierced work balustrades and exposed roof joists. The main entrance has a pair of flush beaded double doors with a transom light.

Windows are evenly spaced throughout the building although several of the window bays on the first floor are left blank. The central windows of the projecting

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	X 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
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES *1884 (on datestone)* BUILDER/ARCHITECT *J.C. Neilson; H.M.Stuart, Builder*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The old Jail building is significant because it is a dated example of a public building of the late 19th century. In addition, its siting shows a deliberate effort on the part of the County Government and the designer to create a well defined and attractive governmental square. The selection of building form, material and detailing by the architect, J.C. Neilson, shows a careful and thoughtful attempt to relate this building to its neighbor, the County Courthouse, while at the same time expressing architectural ideas derived from the Queen Anne Style which was popular at that time.

The future of the old Jail and its companion carriage house is uncertain. In 1969 when preservation of historic buildings was less popular and less feasible -- economically -- than today, an extension of the old Kent Court House was constructed with an enormous Georgian Revival portico a few feet behind the rear wall of the Jail. The idea was to replace the Jail with a new, more liveable structure, and destroy the old building. Since that time, however, the fate of the Jail building has become a matter of public debate, and recently the possibility of moving the structure to a site nearby has been suggested.

Because its style, scale, and materials make it compatible with the public buildings of Chestertown and because of its sound structural condition, the building appears to be an excellent candidate for adaptive reuse, possibly for public or private offices. By careful siting -- if moved -- and by equally careful redesign of the interior, it could continue to be an asset to the governmental center of Kent County

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE *Marsha L. Fritz, Survey Consultant*

ORGANIZATION *Kent County Planning Commission* DATE *778-4600 ext 67*

STREET & NUMBER *Court House* TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN *Chestertown, Maryland 21620* STATE

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
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

PS-1108

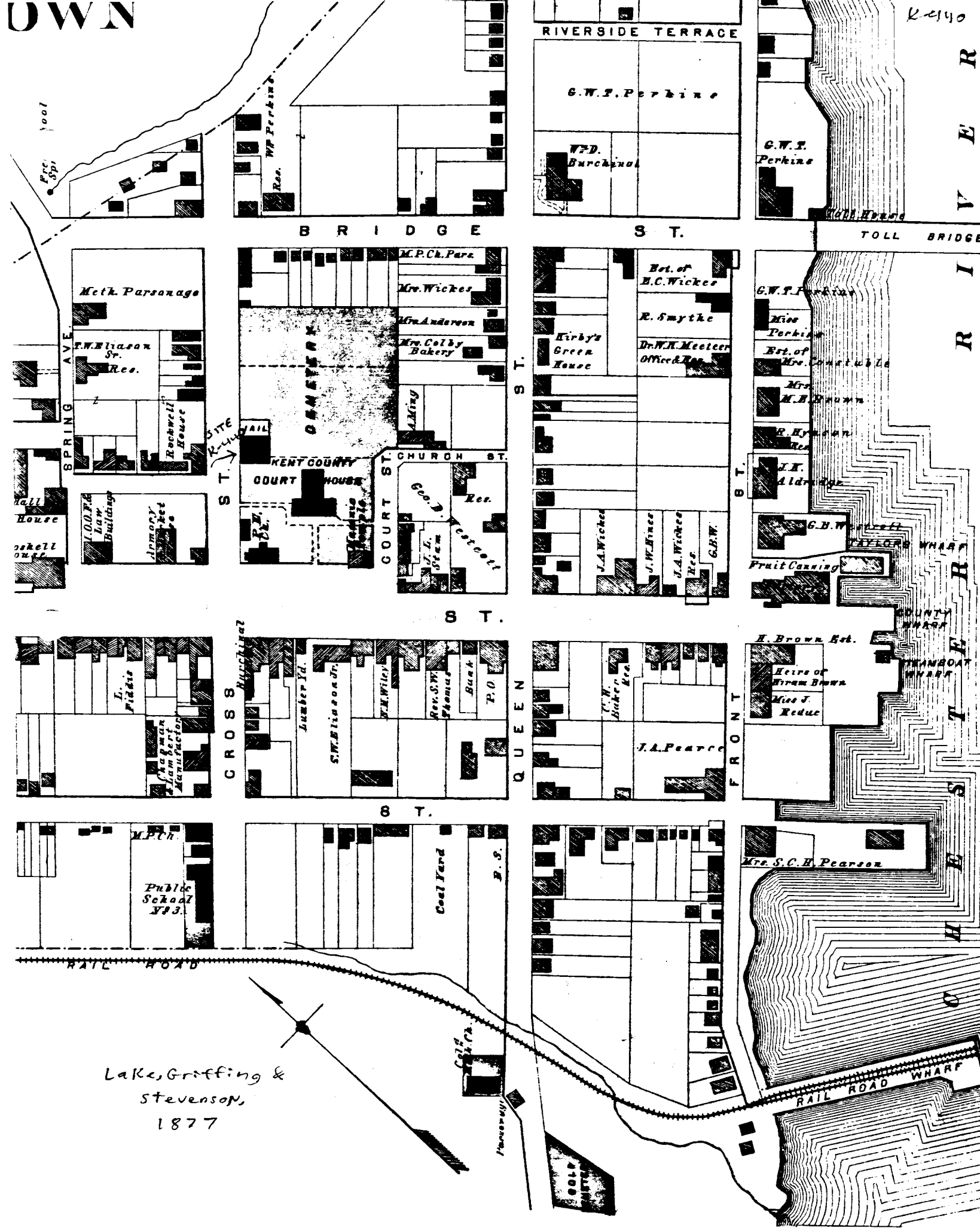
pavillions are emphasized by a corbelled projection. Six over six and nine over nine sash, 1" bead-frames, and projecting stone sills are used throughout. It is interesting to note the close correspondence between the windows of the Courthouse; both buildings have segmentally arched heads and windows of similiar proportions.

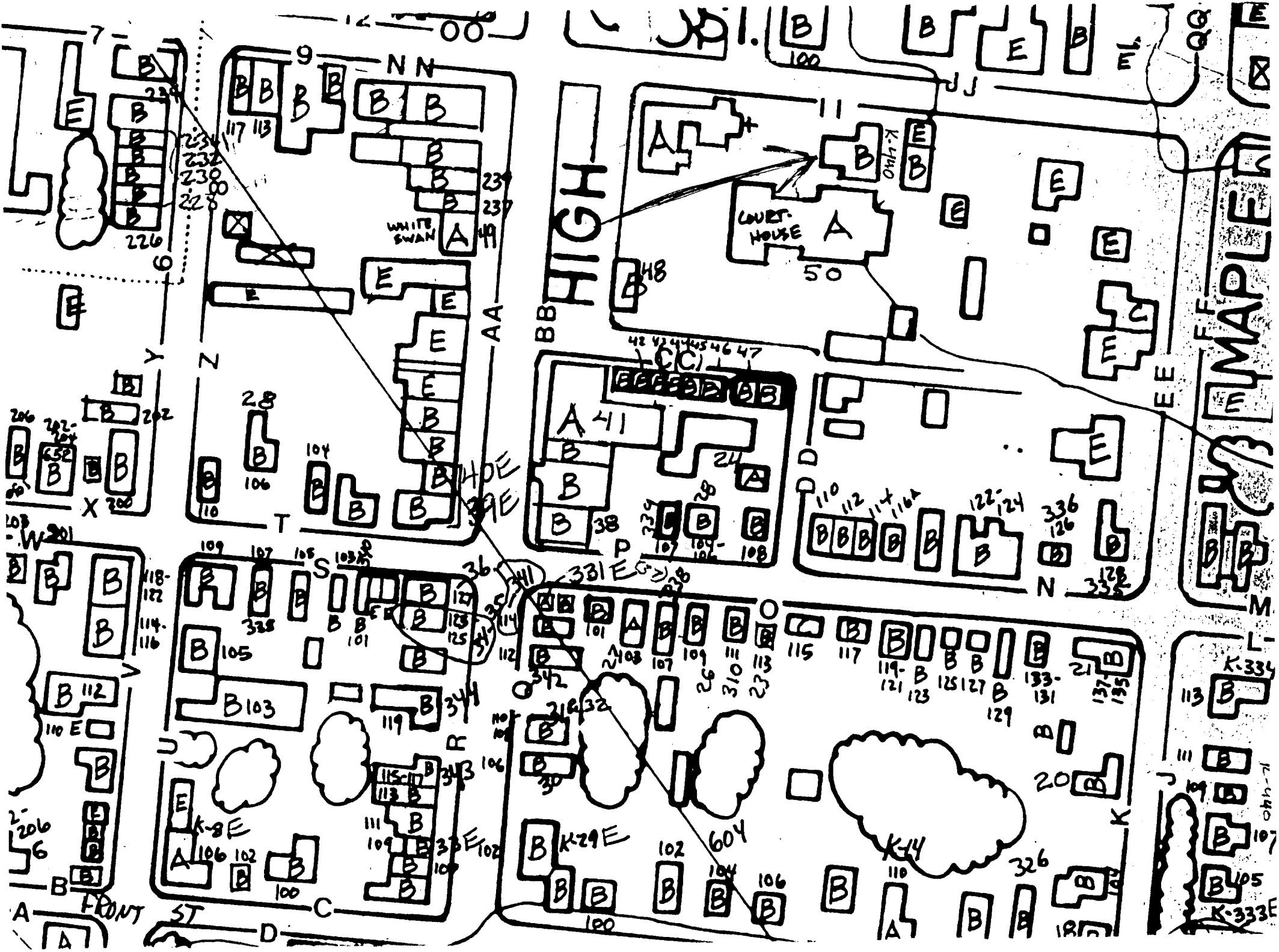
Two kinds of dormers light the upper story. In the narrow tail of the "T" the 12 over 12 sash windows of the dormers are set so that they cut into the cornice line, and, as a result, the eaves of the dormer roofs rest on the building roof. The space above the windows is covered with imbricated slate shingles. The dormers in the rest of the building have 8 over 8 sash windows and shallow pitched roofs; they are set between the window bays but above the cornice lines.

As reflected in the plan, the interior spaces are zoned into two parts; the head of the T contains cells for prisoners while public rooms, offices, and the Sheriff's quarters are located in the tail.

Interior doors in public areas have beaded surrounds with an ogee backband. The doors themselves either have 6 flush, beaded panels or are thick board doors. The mantles that remain are simple boards supported by cast iron bracketts. In the major rooms are reeded chair rails, about 5" wide. The cells on the first fllor are located in a row of brick barrel vaults that provide security and structural support for the steel-plated cells on the second floor. Still in place on the first fllor are the cast iron rings, imbedded into the walls of the cells, that were used to restrain unruly inmates; and the slots in the kitchen walls for passing food into the cell block also remain. In contrast to the dungeon-like first floor cells, the quarters on the second floor are larger and have large (though barred) windows.

Behind the Jail is the stable building, a 1½ story brick structure erected about 1880 to serve the county government. This small building which now houses the State Police has lost most of its interior detail, but retains a pair of wooden loft doors in a front gable on its south east facade. The southern side of the building has been extended by a catslide addition. This structure is one of the last stables remaining in downtown Chestertown.


OWN
K-440
RIVERSIDE TERRACE
G.W.T. Perkins
Wm D. Burchinal
G.W.T. Perkins
Toll House
TOLL BRIDGE
BRIDGE ST.
Meth. Parsonage
T.W. Eliason Sr. Res.
Rockwell House
SPRING AVE.
M.P.Ch. Pars.
Mrs. Wickes
Mrs. Anderson
Mrs. Colby Bakery
CEMETERY
SITE K-440
KENT COUNTY COURT HOUSE
CHURCH ST.
COURT ST.
Geo. D. Westcott
Res.
J.L. Stam
Est. of E.C. Wickes
R. Smythe
Kirby's Green House
Dr. W.H. Meeteer Office & Res.
J.A. Wickes
J.W. Hines
J.A. Wickes Res.
G.B.W.
G.W.T. Perkins
Miss Perkins
Est. of Mrs. Constable
Mrs. M.E. Brown
R. Hynson Res.
J.K. Aldridge
G.B. Westcott
TAYLORS WHARF
Fruit Canning
COUNTY WHARF
STEAMBOAT WHARF
H. Brown Est.
Heirs of Hiram Brown
Miss J. Redue
J.A. Pearce
FRONT ST.
QUEEN ST.
CROSS ST.
Burchinal
Lumber Yd.
S.W. Eliason Jr.
N.H. Wiley
Rev. S.W. Thomas
Bank
P.O.
L. Fiddis
Chapman & Lambert Manufactory
M.P.Ch.
Public School No 3.
Coal Yard
R.S.
Mrs. S.C.H. Pearson
RAIL ROAD
RAIL ROAD WHARF
CHESTER RIVER
Lake, Griffing & Stevenson, 1877


HIGH
MAPLE
COURT-HOUSE
WHITE SWAN
FRONT ST
K-440
K-8E
K-29E
K-14
K-334
K-333E
40E
39E
331E
604

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS

K-440

K-440

Kent Co. Jail

View to NE

C'town

Sept 1980

M.L. Fritz (ital)

PRINTED BY
J. Tyler Campbell
CHESTERTOWN, MARYLAND
SEP 25 1980

K-440
Kent County Jail and Sherriff's House
Chestertown
Photo courtesy of James Wollon
no additional information available

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Kent County Jail and Sherriff's House

Chestertown

Photo courtesy of James Wollon
no additional information available