Survey No. K-519

Magi No. 1505195804

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Boulter House

2. Location

street & number West side Sharptown-Skinners Neck Rd., 1-5/8 mile south of Rt. 20, east of Rock Hall. ___ not for publication

city, town Rock Hall ___X vicinity of congressional district first

state Maryland county Kent

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	___ educational	X private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	X not applicable	X no	___ military	___ other:

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

name Mr. and Mrs. John H. Boulter

street & number R.D. 1, Box 50 telephone no.: 639-7221

city, town Rock Hall state and zip code Maryland 21661

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Court House liber EHP 98

street & number folio 224

city, town Chestertown state Maryland 21620

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys NONE

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
X excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
___ 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.

Its 2-bay jerkin-head east gable end with main entry reached through a porch facing the public road, this 2-story frame house with alternately dropped wood shingle walls and bold trim was built in 1928-29 from plans drawn by its owner. The 2-story main section, with two rooms on the first story, one behind the other, measures 18 feet wide by 28 feet deep. The hipped 1-story rear wing for kitchen and porch (now enclosed) is slightly narrower and 10 feet deep.

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	
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1928-1929 **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.

Individualistic and idiosyncratic, this on-of-a-kind late 1920's house is truly an example of vernacular architecture. Designed by its still-owner, a Skinners Neck waterman, about the time of his marriage, the house was a product of his likes and dislikes, observations, and concern for efficient use of space, ease of heating, and high-quality building materials and methods Because of his good eye and attention to detail the house not only functions as he intended but is pleasing in appearance as well. Although the owner sought to build a "modern" house, the method of roof framing is a relic going back to the 18th century and illustrates the persistence of building methods in Kent County, particularly in the Rock Hall area.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____ **Quadrangle scale** _____

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 Margaret Q. Fallaw, Surveyor

organization County Commissioners of Kent County
Historical Society of Kent County

date November 13, 1982

street & number The Court House
8 Church Alley

telephone 778-4600
778-3499

city or town Chestertown

state Maryland, 21620

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

BUILDING FORM AND MATERIAL

1. Size
Main section: 2 stories; 2/3 bay wide, 2 bays deep. Gable end containing main entry, faces road. Main section measures ca. 18 x 28 feet.
Wing: (kitchen and now enclosed porch), 1 story, 2 bays wide, 1/2 bays (10 feet) deep.

2. Plan type (see sketch)
Two rooms on first story--living room the full width of house at the approach end; dining room to rear of living room is somewhat deeper and full width except for enclosed stair along north wall.

3. Roof type
Main section: gable with both ends jerkin - head
Wing: low hip

4. Chimney: Location - through roof peak near center of main section. Material - brick. Decorative elements --corbelled cap, out and in, with later elevated metal hood added above brick corner supports.

5. Material/Walls
Main section: Frame. Painted rectangular cedar shingles in alternate drop pattern; gable end from eave line to roof uses coursed shingles with corners sawn off, to give 7-sided effect.
Wing: Frame. Cedar shingles with same alternate drop pattern.

6. Material/Roofs: asphalt shingles over wood shingles throughout.

7. Material/Foundation
Main section: crawl space; poured concrete with rebars
Wing: poured concrete under kitchen (crawl space); piers with infill under formerly open porch

8. Age
Entire house (though open rear porch later enclosed) built in 1928-1929. Cost was $1,496.00, including the lumber for the garage and shed. Carpenters were Walter Reihl, Fred Reihl, and Thomas Hill, assisted by John H. Boulter, owner/designer.

9. Style: 1920's Rock Hall - area vernacular (see history section), designed by John H. Boulter, waterman (among other pursuits), owner 1928-. Perhaps best described as individualistic, idiosyncratic.

BUILDING ELEMENTS AND DETAILS

1. Doors
Main entry: Southeast bay, east gable end, through now-screened porch. Trim is plain. Door-one large light over two horizontal panels.
Secondary entries: Other entry is into wing (utility room, formerly porch) on south side. Door is aluminum with jalousie-louvered glass, a replacement for the original wood door.

2. Windows
Main section: Type: double-hung; Lights: 6/1 (east and south 1st story windows are paired 6/1's); 1/1, small (in pantry closet, stair, and bath, the last window added later). Details: plain wood trim ca. 4-3/8" wide at jambs and head, giving bold, wide-band effect.
Front gable end attic window is small 6/1; no window in rear gable.
Shutters: none
Wing: Type; double-hung; hopper (which replace a 6/1 double-hung); awning; 2/2 paired casements
Lights: all 6/1 originally Shutters: none

3. Dormers: None

4. Roof details:
Main section: deep box cornice with cyma recta crown molding and bevel molding on deep frieze board with ogee and bevel at lower edge (separate piece). Both gable ends are jerkin-headed with low-slope pent eave continuous with eaves of long sides and with the same cornice details. Roof framing is same as that used in the 18th century in Kent County. See history section and sketch.
Wing: same on rear end and north side, but altered on south side when porch wall moved outward 8 inches.

5. Porches:
Approach gable end, almost the width of house, 1 bay wide but screened ca. 1962 and light wood uprights added at that time. Edge-grain tongue-and-groove fir floor. Brick steps (wooden steps originally). Built-up corner posts with simple cap including a cyma reversa. Garden-type lattice on south end of porch. Low hip roof. Porch formerly on south side of wing has been enclosed and serves as utility room; south wall extended ca. 8 inches.

6. Color:
Current: deep gold with white trim.
Historic: originally no finish on shingles for 15 years, then dark brown shingle stain applied, with white trim.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

1. Plan type: see sketch and "Building Form and Material," No. 2.

2. Major stair: enclosed straight run with 1st story (dining room) access door. Stair is along north wall. A pantry is under the stair. There is a ladder stair from the second story to the unfinished attic.

3. Major mantels: none; originally used stove in the dining room, venting into present, original, small chimney. Chimney access now closed in living space. Floor furnace now used for heat.

4. Major trim:
Windows/doors: plain #1 pine
Baseboards: plain baseboards, clear yellow pine.
Cornices: none
Chair rails: none

5. Major doors: 2/2 lights over 2 horizontal panels (dining room to kitchen); other doors have 5 horizontal panels.

6. Floors: tongue-and-groove #1 clear, narrow strip pine on first story; second story has #2 grade strip pine.

OUTBUILDINGS/SITE DESCRIPTION

1. Outbuildings

A. Long rectangular garage with rear section for shop and storage. Originally built for Model T, had to be extended as car lengths increased. Garage doors are in the front gable end. Clad in vertical beaded board; gable roof. Chimney for stove to heat shop.

B. Storage shed with shed roof.

2. Site description

The site is essentially flat, sloping only slightly toward the rear; the house is sited 35-40 feet from the public road, with gable end facing the road. The road has been raised over the years, necessitating fill a around the house. Driveway on north side of house leads to long garage, located about 15 feet to northwest of the house. Large cedars flank drive near porch. Southern part of property is large lawn, with garden to southwest; appears as a vacant building lot. Tree and shrub plantings are on other three sides with lawns.

3. Views to/from site

Woods to west. Next house to south on same side of road is a 4-square; two more houses beyond visible to south from position near road. One house to north, same side of road beyond vacant lot. This is a small residential community; most built 1900-1935. Woods directly across road with 2 rooms-over-one-house with additions (late 19th-early 20th) to southeast across road. Raum Chapel (K-518) is nearby to north on same side of road, but not visible.

USE OF BUILDING

1. Current: residence 2. Historic: residence

HISTORY OF BUILDING/PAST OWNERSHIP

John H. Boulter, 82 years old in 1982 and still owner and occupant of the house he had built in 1928-29 as a newly-wed, remembers with pride and remarkable detail why and how the house was built as it was. His reasoning, inventiveness, observativeness, attention to detail, and good eye resulted in a house well planned for his needs, well built, and pleasing in appearance. The Boulter house appears to be one-of-a kind, truly an example of vernacular architecture, derived from no particular style but from an untrained person's likes and dislikes and working with stock materials of the time.

The jerkin-head roof resulted from his wanting a house with the narrow, gable end facing the road but disliking a "sharp" presenting end, which to him looked like a barn and unrefined. Since his carpenters did not know how to construct such a roof, Mr. Boulter himself worked out the angles for the framing. Six or seven years later, a person having a small bungalow built nearby wanted a similar roof and sent a carpenter to see how this one was done.

The stair is located where it is (enclosed straight-run, with door to

adjacent dining room, of no importance as a design element because Mr. Boulter remembered with distaste the cold, draughty central-hall-with stair houses (probably the most common 18th and 19th century Kent County house plan) he visited and lived in earlier. He viewed a stair as strictly utilitarian and also wanted it to consume as little space as possible.

Besides a stair that makes the house easy to heat, the interior walls are only seven feet high for the same reason. Intending to make the walls as solid as possible, Mr. Boulter installed 16 inch x 48 inch sheets of rock lath with two coats of plaster and a white coat; he claims his was the first use of rock lath in the Rock Hall area. The exterior walls were built with board sheathing, tar paper, and then wooden shingles, unusual for a country house. The floors are also two-layer, with a subfloor, a construction not often seen in rural Kent County until after after World War II.

He was also concerned about appearance, making sure all the windows were the same height (bath window was added later; some kitchen windows were later replaced) and carefully spaced and aligned. The shingle design (alternate drop) he thought "looked nice," was "different," and required no cutting. For the gable shingles he had the lower corners cut off to produce a design better suited to a small space. Such coursed shingles with clipped corners is seen elsewhere in the Rock Hall area, but the alternate drop pattern is not. Exterior trim is No. 1 cypress.

For his well-built house Mr. Boulter wanted a poured concrete foundation, well reinforced. Careful with his expenditures, he hauled 7/8" hard steel rebars from the new Chester River Bridge project. They had been found too hard for welding and hence declared surplus and sold cheaply. The reason for his rear porch (now enclosed) was to store firewood; now the space is used for washer and dryer, water heater, and sink.

Although electric service was not yet available in Skinners Neck, he felt it was coming and so had wiring built into the house. However, no indoor plumbing was installed (a pump was necessary for operation, just not considered standard in a country house) so that piping and a bathroom had to be installed later.

Despite all the "modern" innovations, it is interesting to note that the roof framing was the type persistent in the area from the 18th century and unlike that common during much of the 20th century in Kent County. The attic floor joists were extended out over the wall plates to form the eaves. The rafters were cut to rest on top of the attic floor joists, in contrast to later rafters with birds' mouth cuts which rested on wall plates. Such construction usually involves placement of a thin false plate, continuous with attic floor, between rafter and joist. When questioned, Mr. Boulter said this construction method was selected to provide more attic space and height than would have resulted from the more modern method. However, his choice probably also reflects familiarity with an old method, both on his part and that of local carpenters.

P. 2B
Boulter House
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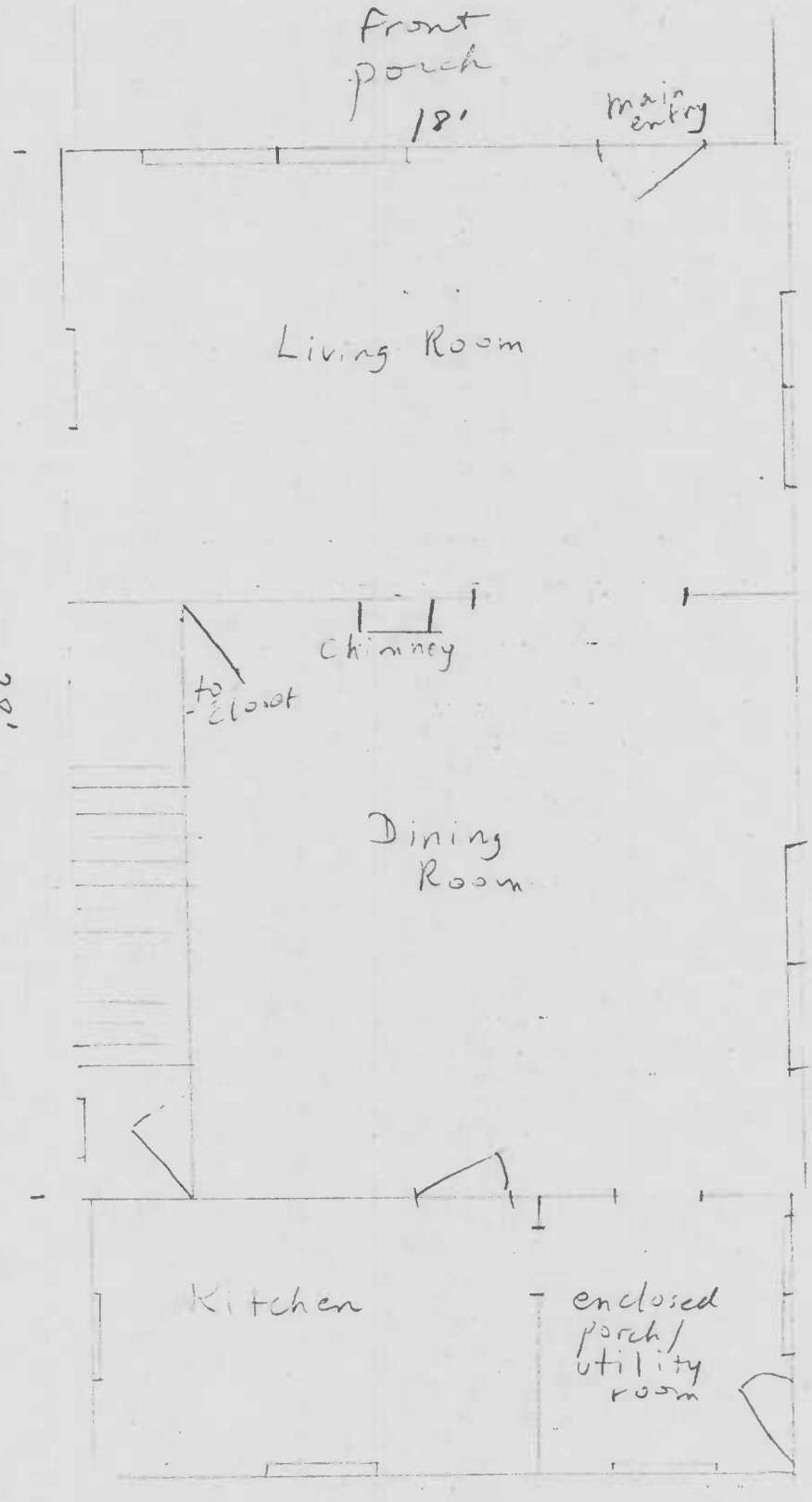

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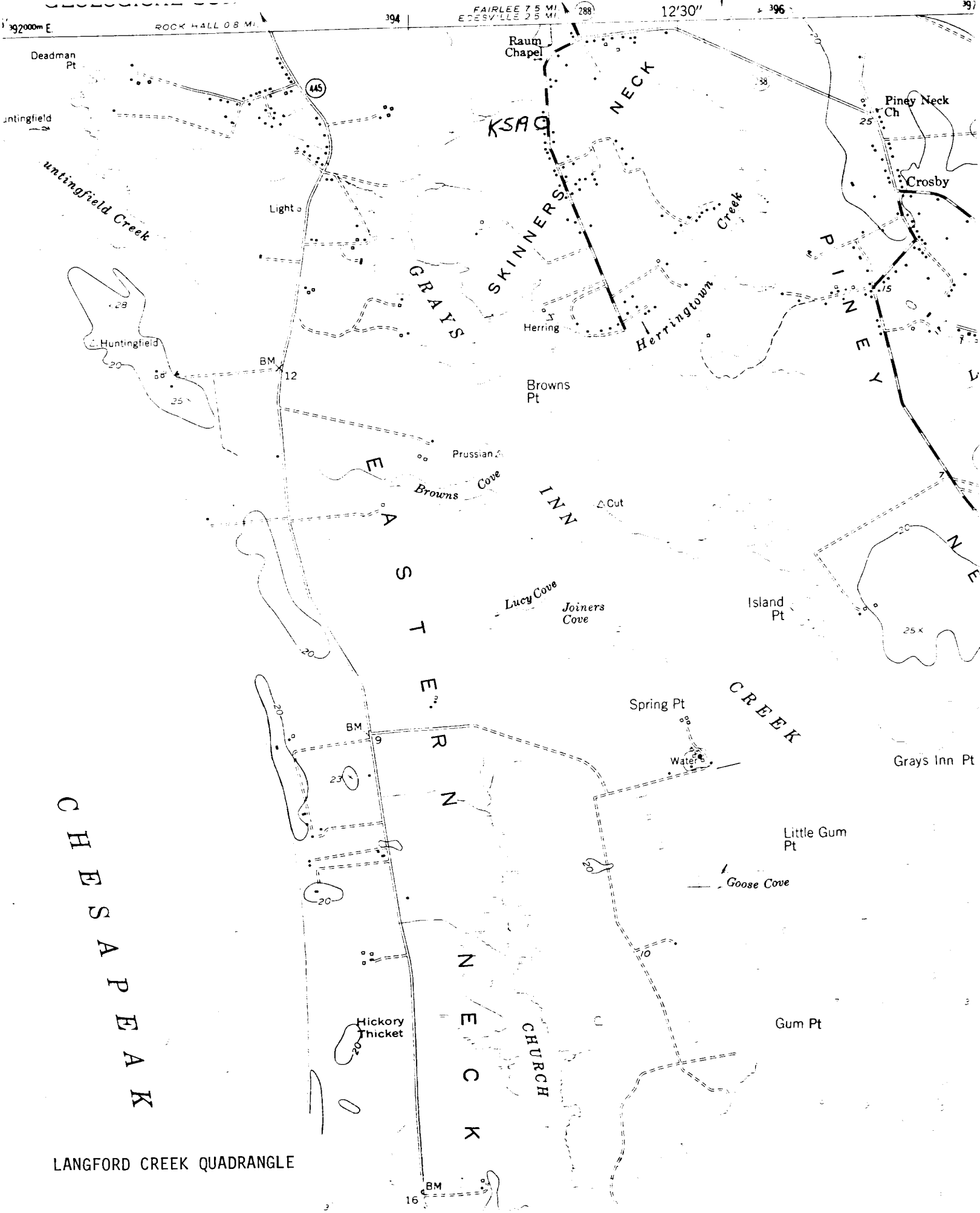
Plan - 1st Floor - not to scale



LANGFORD CREEK QUADRANGLE