QA-403
Ashley Building
Centreville
Private

circa 1790-1810

This large brick building has had a long and varied history. It was constructed in the last decade of the 18th century or the first decade of the 19th century and may incorporate the two story brick dwelling constructed on part of this lot in 1796-97 by John Thompson, a local bricklayer. Over the years, it has served as a dwelling, a hotel, a Ford automobile agency and most recently, as an office building. Extensive additions and renovations over the years have significantly altered the exterior and much of the interior of the building. The overall form and massing of the central portion of the structure remains typical of an early 19th century building, however, and some handsome Federal woodwork has survived on the second story interior.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

QA-403

MAGI # 1804034211

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Straughn Hotel, Ford Building, Ashley Building

AND/OR COMMON

Ashley Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

105-107 S. Commerce St.

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	X 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	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Hunt-Ray Farms, c/o Sidney Ashley

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

107 South Commerce Street

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

__ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21617

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #: CWC 141

Folio #: 160

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

QA-403

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ashley Building is located on the east side of South Commerce Street just south of Railroad Avenue.

This large brick and stucco building dates back to the last decade of the 18th century, but was extensively altered in the early 20th century, when it was converted from a hotel and rooming house to an automobile dealership. The main building is 2 1/2 stories high with a pitched gable roof. A two story brick wing projects from the north end of the rear facade.

The front facade faces west on Commerce Street. When it was remodeled circa 1920, the north bay was faced with new brick, a new bay was added on the south end with matching brickwork, and the five bays between were covered with stucco. Seven large arched openings pierce the first story, and five 6/6 windows on the second story are flanked by triple Venetian windows set in arched recesses. Paired doors in the center bay on the first floor now open into two adjacent offices, flanked by two large shop windows on each side with arched fanlights. The arched opening at the south end was left open as a drive-through to the rear until recently,

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION

when it was closed in for more office space. In the northernmost bay, a double French door with sidelights and a fanlight transom is recessed into the arched opening. This double door opens into a hallway with a stairway leading to the second floor. There are four pitched roof dormers on the third story, fitted with arched upper sash and pedimented gables. The roof is covered with asbestos shingles over earlier cedar shingles. The entire front facade dates to the 20th century renovation.

The north gable wall remains relatively intact. Paired chimneys project approximately nine inches from the wall, and rise to the gable eaves with small corbeled shoulders at the second floor ceiling level. The rear or east chimney has been capped at the gable eave, but the front chimney remains intact except for the cap, which has been rebuilt. Small window openings between the chimneys on the second and third floor appear to be cut in. The brickwork is laid in random common bond and has been heavily whitewashed. The bricks appear to be similar to the oversized handmade bricks found in other early Centreville houses on Commerce Street. This wall was evidently stuccoed at one time, as the mortar joints are peppered with large, 20th century nails used to bond the stucco to

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2 DESCRIPTION

the wall. The boxed eaves date to circa 1920.

The rear facade has also been heavily altered, and is partially covered by the rear wing. The brick walls remain exposed (but painted) on the north bay, the remainder of the exposed wall has been stuccoed and heavily altered. The exposed brickwork is laid in random common bond.

The south gable wall dates to circa 1920, when the building was extended to the south.

The first floor interior has been completely renovated on several occasions, and the first floor level is now at street level. The second floor has also been altered, but some Federal woodwork does survive, including at least one mantel.

The roof has also been heavily reworked, but many original rafter pairs remain. The rafters are hewn and pit sawn, with pegged mortise-and-tenon joints at the peak and half-lap collar mortises where the collars have been removed. Wrought nails are in evidence. Some early framing is also visible under the attic floor, but it has been heavily reworked, reinforced, and covered.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

QA-403

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
X 1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	X COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This large brick building has had a long and varied history. It was constructed in the last decade of the 18th century or the first decade of the 19th century and may incorporate the two story brick dwelling constructed on part of this lot in 1796-97 by John Thompson, a local bricklayer. Over the years, it has served as a dwelling, a hotel, a Ford automobile agency and most recently, as an office building. Extensive additions and renovations over the years have significantly altered the exterior and much of the interior of the building. The overall form and massing of the central portion of the structure remains typical of an early 19th century building, however, and some handsome Federal woodwork has survived on the second story interior.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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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
Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION
Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE
12/2/81

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN
Centreville

STATE
Maryland

Field Notebook QA-XX; Recorded October 27, 1980.

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

QA-403
Ashley Building

Mary McCarthy
Spring/Summer 2003
Digital color photo on file at MHT

ASHLEY BROS REAL ESTATE
upper shore aging

QA-403 Ashley Building
South Commerce Street
Centreville, Maryland
Orlando Ridout V 1981
Front facade from West

QA-403 Ashley Building
South Commerce Street
Centreville, Maryland
Orlando Ridout V 1981
Rear facade from East