

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Gunther Farm

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

North side Back Starr Road

CITY, TOWN

Starr

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Gunther General Partnership  
& V.M. Crowe, et al

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER c/o Jane C. Milliken  
Box 87

CITY, TOWN

Church Hill

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21623

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #: CWC 20/225

Folio #: CWC 116/393

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-423

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gunther House is located on the north side of Back Starr Road approximately one mile northwest of Starr, Maryland.

The house is a text book example of a cruciform plan, story-and-a-half Gothic cottage of the type popularized by A.J. Downing, George Woodward and other mid-19th century publishers of builders' guides.

The house is of frame construction. The cruciform plan is oriented to the road, with the principal part of the house oriented parallel to the road, and cross wings projecting to the front and rear. The main section of the house and both cross-wings have steeply pitched gable roofs, but the ridge of the main house is slightly higher than the cross wings. The entire house is sheathed with vertical board and batten siding and the eaves oversail approximately two feet. The Gothic appearance of the house is enhanced by handsome corbeled Victorian chimneys and elaborate dormer windows. A pair of original shed roof porches flanked the front cross wing. The southeast porch

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.1 DESCRIPTION

has been converted to an enclosed sun room for plants.

There is no formal front entrance in the normal sense. Doors opened on either side of the front cross wing onto the flanking porches. The door to the southwest porch remains, the southeast door has been blocked up.

The front projecting wing rests on a continuous brick foundation. A pair of original 18-light wood casement windows is centered on the first floor, protected by a projecting window hood or pent supported by three scrolled and chamfered brackets. Paired original 15-light casement windows are centered in the upper gable. The board-and-batten siding consists of machine sawn vertical sheathing with wide, beveled battens. The roof oversails at the gable eaves and is left exposed underneath, with a simple molded three-piece verge board. As previously noted, the door on the west wall of the front wing survives, the door on the east wall has been blocked.

The center portion of the main house is covered by the original projecting wing. To the left of the wing, there is a 6/6 window on the first floor and a 6/6 dormer on the second floor. The dormer has a steeply pitched gable roof with scrolled brackets supporting overshot eaves. The dormer eaves are treated the same

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.2 DESCRIPTION

as the eaves of the house. To the east of the projecting wing, the first floor window has been replaced with sliding glass doors opening onto the enclosed porch. The original dormer survives on the second floor. The large front chimney rises from the center of the house. It corbels in about one foot above the ridge and then corbels out again above a straight shaft.

On the east and west gables of the main section of the house, there are single 6/6 windows in the center of the first story and the upper gable. From here it is clear that the main house and the rear wing rest on brick piers infilled later with concrete block. The siding and eaves match the front facade.

The rear wing projects from the center of the rear facade. To the east of this wing, there is one 6/6 window on the first floor and a 6/6 pitched roof dormer on the second floor. The same treatment is repeated on the rear facade to the west of the rear wing, but the first floor window now opens into an enclosed porch across the west wall of the wing.

The rear wing is three bays long and one room deep, with an original porch across the west wall that was enclosed approximately 30 years ago. At one time there were doors in the center and south bays of the west wall and a 6/6 window in the north bay, but the

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.3 DESCRIPTION

south door was closed in about 15 or 18 years ago. There are two dormer windows on the second floor. The south dormer has original 12-light casement sash, the north dormer has replaced 6/6 sash.

A flush brick chimney is centered on the north gable wall of the rear wing. This chimney is similar to the front chimney but is smaller in scale. The north wall has been covered with asbestos shingle siding; there are no windows.

The east wall of the wing has also been covered with shingles and a modern 6/6 window has been added to the south of center. An original 6/6 window survives to north of center. There are two 6/6 dormer windows on the second floor. The eaves and the dormer windows are identical to the front part of the house.

The interior plan on the first floor consists of a single room in the front projecting wing of the house with interior doors opening into two rooms that flank the large front chimney in the main section of the house. A door in the rear wall of the west room opens into the rear wing, which serves as the kitchen. About 15 to 18 years ago (in the early 1960's), the interior of the house was partially damaged by fire. At that time a number of changes were made. The original stair, located at the front or south end of the rear wing,

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.4 DESCRIPTION

was moved to the north wall of the east room. The door between the east and west room was shifted several feet to the south, and part of the front chimney was removed. In the rear wing, a door in the south bay of the west wall was blocked up and a pantry was constructed where the stair had been. A cooking fireplace centered on the north wall of the kitchen was blocked up and a steep servant's stair to the right of the chimney was removed. This stair led up to a segregated servants chamber over the north end of the kitchen. According to the Gunthers, the main stairway was enclosed and climbed to the second floor in a series of tight 90 degree turns. Surviving early trim on the first floor includes beaded window and door architraves, plain baseboard, and a simple, Civil War period mantel.

The second floor plan essentially repeats the first floor plan. There is a small chamber over the front (south) room and larger chambers over the east and west parlor. The rear wing has been altered to accommodate a modern bath and to eliminate the rear stair. The wing now consists of a bathroom in the southeast corner, replacing the original stair, and a sleeping chamber to the north. A narrow hall has been partitioned in to the west of the bathroom, making the north bed chamber accessible from the west chamber and from the

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.5 DESCRIPTION

bathroom. Original beaded architrave trim, baseboards, and four-panel doors survive throughout the second floor. There is no access to the roof.

Meat House

To the north of the house is a frame meat house 10 feet 9 inches long and 9 feet 5 inches wide. The pitched gable roof is oriented on an east-west axis, with the door centered on the south facade. The building rests on low brick piers and is covered with plain horizontal weatherboards, and a corrugated tin roof nailed over an earlier wood shingle roof. The facade eaves are boxed in with holes cut for birds to nest in the cornice. The cornerboards and rakeboards are all plain, and all of the exterior covering is secured with machine nails. The door in the south wall is only five feet tall and 3 feet 6 inches wide. It is constructed of horizontal beaded boards on the exterior face nailed to vertical beaded boards on the interior face with wrought nails. It is hung on wrought strap hinges. An early wood box lock was removed by the present owner for safe keeping.

From inside, it is immediately apparent that this building was constructed reusing hewn and pit-sawn log planks from an earlier building. The heavy log planks

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.6 DESCRIPTION

are set vertically and are tenoned into the top plate and the sill. The planks are quite uniform in size, 2 3/4 inches thick and 8 1/2 to 9 inches wide. Most of the planks show evidence of vertical pegs similar to the stabilizing pegs observed in most horizontal log plank buildings in this region. Two planks have empty mortises, probably identifying them as reused gable top planks, and one plank is notched out to span the top of a 3'-6" door opening. The corner posts are all hewn and average 6 x 6. Intermediate 4 1/2 x 6 inch posts frame the door opening. The corner posts and door posts support 4 1/2 x 6 inch top plates and are secured with a pegged mortise-and-tenon joint. Hewn 4 1/2 x 5 inch gable top plates and three similar joists are notched over the facade plates and support a flat false plate. The roof is constructed of five pairs of hewn and pit-sawn common rafters that are half-lapped at the ridge and nailed with machine nails. Riven collars are half-lapped and nailed to each rafter pair. The roof is set at a 7/10 (48 degree) pitch.

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gunther farmhouse is the best surviving example in the county of a Gothic cottage similar to those illustrated in mid-19th century builders' guides. The cruciform plan, board-and-batten sheathing, casement windows and picturesque details bear much in common with the works of A.J. Downing and George Woodward, authors of some of the most widely distributed architectural pattern books of the period. Although damaged by the fire in the early 1960's, the house has remained largely intact.

Also of interest is a heavy, vertical plank meat house constructed of reused log planks from an earlier building. It bears comparison with the meat house on the Claude Anthony Farm (QA-249), which is constructed in a similar manner.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**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

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE

12/16/81

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

STATE

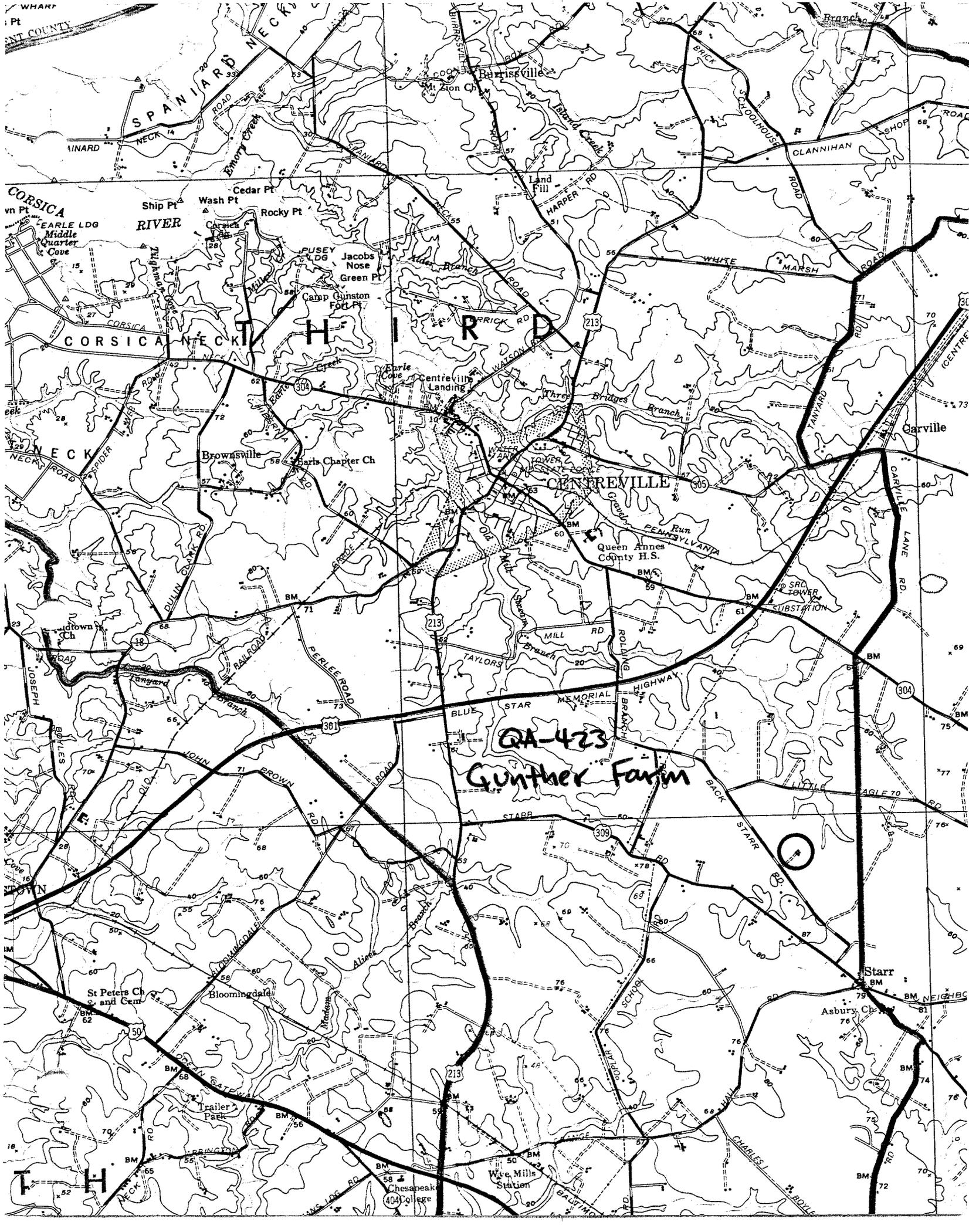
Maryland

Field Notebook QA-XXII; Recorded December 15, 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-423  
Gunther Farm

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



QA-423  
Gunther Farm

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





QA-423 Gunther Farm  
Back Starr Road  
Starr vicinity  
Orlando Ridout V Dec. 1980  
View from southwest



QA-423 Gunther Farm  
Back Starr Road  
Starr vicinity  
Orlando Ridout V Dec. 1980  
View from south