WI-270 1923
Wicomico Hotel
Salisbury
Private

The old Wicomico Hotel, erected in 1923, is the largest structure defining the center business district of Salisbury. Rising seven stories on an excavated basement, the stretcher and common bond brick commercial block stands out on Salisbury's skyline as the tallest building and one of the city's most distinctive structures. Following in a repeated architectural format for early twentieth century high rise hotels, the red brick walls are accented with stone trimmings that divide the building in three parts, which correspond to the three main components of the classical column. The first floor, although altered, retains a heavy stone entablature that serves to highlight the base of the building and at the same time it symbolizes the column's plinth. The five stories above the first floor are the plainest, and they correspond to the column's shaft. The top floor, the most elaborately finished portion, represents the column capital with its heavy console block cornice. This architectural formula was repeated countless times in the design and construction of early high rises in small and large cities across the United States during the early twentieth century. Centrally located on the southwest corner of the main intersection in the city, the Wicomico Hotel was thought of as a progressive addition for city residents that signaled to the outside world that its move to an urban commercial center was secure and ever-improving.

The construction of a modern hotel in the center of Salisbury was discussed

periodically during the early years of the twentieth century. It was felt by many city leaders that the future economic prosperity of Salisbury was dependent on the building of a modern hotel facility. The idea gained momentum during the early 1920s with the formation of the Wicomico Hotel Company. The executive and building committee included E. D. Mitchell, C. R. Disharoon, M. C. Evans, Ralph H. Grier, Henry H. Hanna, T. L. Ruark, and F. L. Wailes.

The executive and building committee reported to the public through an article in the Wicomico News that a study had been made to determine the acceptance of such an undertaking:

> .....the time has arrived when Salisbury can not hold her town against the prosperity of other cities without this new modern hotel. As a result of this report thirty leading citizens of Salisbury have formed a corporation, with the kind of hotel best adapted to meet the growing needs of this favored community.

A proposed plan of the hotel was published in the paper as well, and the initial design, executed by architect B. K. Gibson of Chicago, called for a four-story, eight-bay by ten-bay structure of neoclassical style. Presumably the building committee decided that a big city architect from Chicago could supply Salisbury with a design better than any local talent. Public concerns soon surfaced in the paper that the building was not large enough to suit the needs of city. The land for the hotel had not been acquired so that a specific lot size had not been exactly determined. The land for the hotel was partitioned from the old Wailes homestead known as "Lakeside," which remained

standing in the center of Salisbury until the mid 1950s. The Wailes sisters, Laura L. and Victoria, resided in the house at the time when they sold their front yard acreage to the hotel company. The construction plans for the hotel were ultimately changed to erect a seven-story structure, which allowed for parking on the east side of the building.

MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RESOURCE NAME: Wicomico Hotel

MHT INVENTORY NUMBER: WI-270

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

1. Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture
Commerce

2. Geographic Orientation: Eastern Shore

3. Chronological/Development Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance
1870-1930

4. Resource Type(s): Office Tower

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. WI-270

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic: Wicomico Hotel

and/or common: One Plaza East

2. Location

street & number: SE corner of East Main and South Division Sts. __ not for publication

city, town: Salisbury ___ vicinity of congressional district: First

state: Maryland county: Wicomico

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
_x_ district	___ public	_x_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ 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
	_x_ not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

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

name: One Plaza Condo Association, Inc.

street & number: P. O. Box 228 telephone no.:

city, town: Salisbury state and zip code: Maryland

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Wicomico County Clerk of Court Map 107, P. 848 liber 1004

street & number: Wicomico County Courthouse folio 799

city, town: Salisbury state: Maryland 21801

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. WI-270

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.

The old Wicomico Hotel, now known as One Plaza East, is a seven-story, ell-shaped brick office tower that stands on the southwest corner of the intersection of South Division and East Main Streets in the center of Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland. The building is currently oriented to face west with the principal gable roof oriented on a north/south axis.

Built in 1923, the seven-story, six-bay by ten-bay brick hotel was erected in a combination of pressed brick stretcher bond along the principal street elevations and seven-to-ten course common bond on the rear, side, walls away from the streets. The top of the building is defined by a heavy classical cornice that disguises a medium pitched gable roof. The building is flanked by alleys on the south and east sides.

The ten-bay west (main) elevation has been altered on the first floor with large glass display windows and a central entrance to an inner lobby. The East Main Street facade retains a few classical pilasters that flank large glass storefront windows. The pilasters rise to a stone entablature that stretches around the west side as well. Above the store entablature are five stories marked by replacement windows of stretcher bond walls and no ornamentation above the windows. The top floor, however, is embellished with a wide stone beltcourse that stretches around the East Main and South Division Street elevations under the seventh story windows. The beltcourse serves as a heavy sill to the windows, which are framed by stone surrounds with an arched header. Within each arch above the windows is relief carving. On the South Main Street side a cluster of three windows have a bulbous turned balustrade that marks the bottom of each window opening. The top of the wall surface on both street elevations is capped by a heavy stone cornice defined by a series of bold console brackets. The fronts of each console are embellished with acanthus leaf carving. The cornice turns the corner on the southwest and northeast sides but is terminated within several feet of the wall.

The south end of the building is a common bond wall with replacement windows on each floor. A metal fire escape rises against the exterior. A tripartite set of arched windows pierces the seventh floor. The top of the wall surface is finished with a stepped parapet capped with a terra cotta coping.

A 1950s single-story garage has been added to east side, and an elevator tower rises in the center of the building. The south and east inner walls are defined by rows of replacement windows. The windows on the seventh floor have round arched assembled in double rowlock rows. The top of the parapet wall is capped with a terra cotta coping.

The interior has been reworked to suit modern offices on the first floor. The upper floors were not seen.

8. Significance

Survey No. WI-270

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	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: __A __B X C __D
and/or
Applicable Exception: __A __B __C __D __E __F __G

Level of Significance: __national __state X local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The old Wicomico Hotel, erected in 1923, is the largest structure defining the center business district of Salisbury. Rising seven stories on an excavated basement, the stretcher and common bond brick commercial block stands out on Salisbury's skyline as the tallest building and one of the city's most distinctive structures. Following in a repeated architectural format for early twentieth century high rise hotels, the red brick walls are accented with stone trimmings that divide the building in three parts, which correspond to the three main components of the classical column. The first floor, although altered, retains a heavy stone entablature that serves to highlight the base of the building and at the same time it symbolizes the column's plinth. The five stories above the first floor are the plainest, and they correspond to the column's shaft. The top floor, the most elaborately finished portion, represents the column capital with its heavy console block cornice. This architectural formula was repeated countless times in the design and construction of early high rises in small and large cities across the United States during the early twentieth century. Centrally located on the southwest corner of the main intersection in the city, the Wicomico Hotel was thought of as a progressive addition for city residents that signaled to the outside world that its move to an urban commercial center was secure and ever-improving.

The building deserves listing in *Category A*, which identifies a building that must be retained since it exhibits many good architectural features and contributes strongly to the historic nature of the district. The Wicomico Hotel is historically significant as a prominent fixture in the center of Salisbury since 1923.

The construction of a modern hotel in the center of Salisbury was discussed periodically during the early years of the twentieth century. It was felt by many city leaders that the future economic prosperity of the city was dependent on the building of a modern hotel facility. The idea gained momentum during the early 1920s with the formation of the Wicomico Hotel Company. The executive and building committee included E. D. Mitchell, C. R. Disharoon, M. C. Evans, Ralph H. Grier, Henry H. Hanna, T. L. Ruark, and F. L. Wailes.(1)

(Continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. WI-270

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	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Private Consultant	**date**	4/24/96
street & number	P. O. Box 5	**telephone**	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	**state**	Maryland 21871

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

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD

PS-2746

8.1 SIGNIFICANCE
Wicomico Hotel
Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland

The executive and building committee reported to the public through an article in the *Wicomico News* that a study had been made to determine the acceptance of such an undertaking:

> ....the time has arrived when Salisbury can not hold her own against the prosperity of the other cities without this new modern hotel. As a result of this report thirty leading citizens of Salisbury have formed a corporation, with the kind of a hotel best adapted to meet the growing needs of this favored community.(2)

A proposed plan of the hotel was published in the paper as well, and the initial design, executed by architect B. K. Gibson of Chicago, called for a four-story, eight-bay by ten-bay structure of neoclassical style.(3) Public concerns soon surfaced in the paper that the building was not large enough to suit the needs of the city. The land for the hotel had not been acquired so that a specific lot size had not been determined. The land for the hotel was partitioned from the old Wailes homestead, which stood until the mid 1950s. The Wailes sisters, Laura L. and Victoria, resided in the house at the time the land was sold for the hotel. The construction plans of the hotel were ultimately changed to seven stories instead of four, which allowed for a parking lot on the east side of the building.

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1 *Wicomico News*, March 23, 1923, Wicomico County Free Library.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

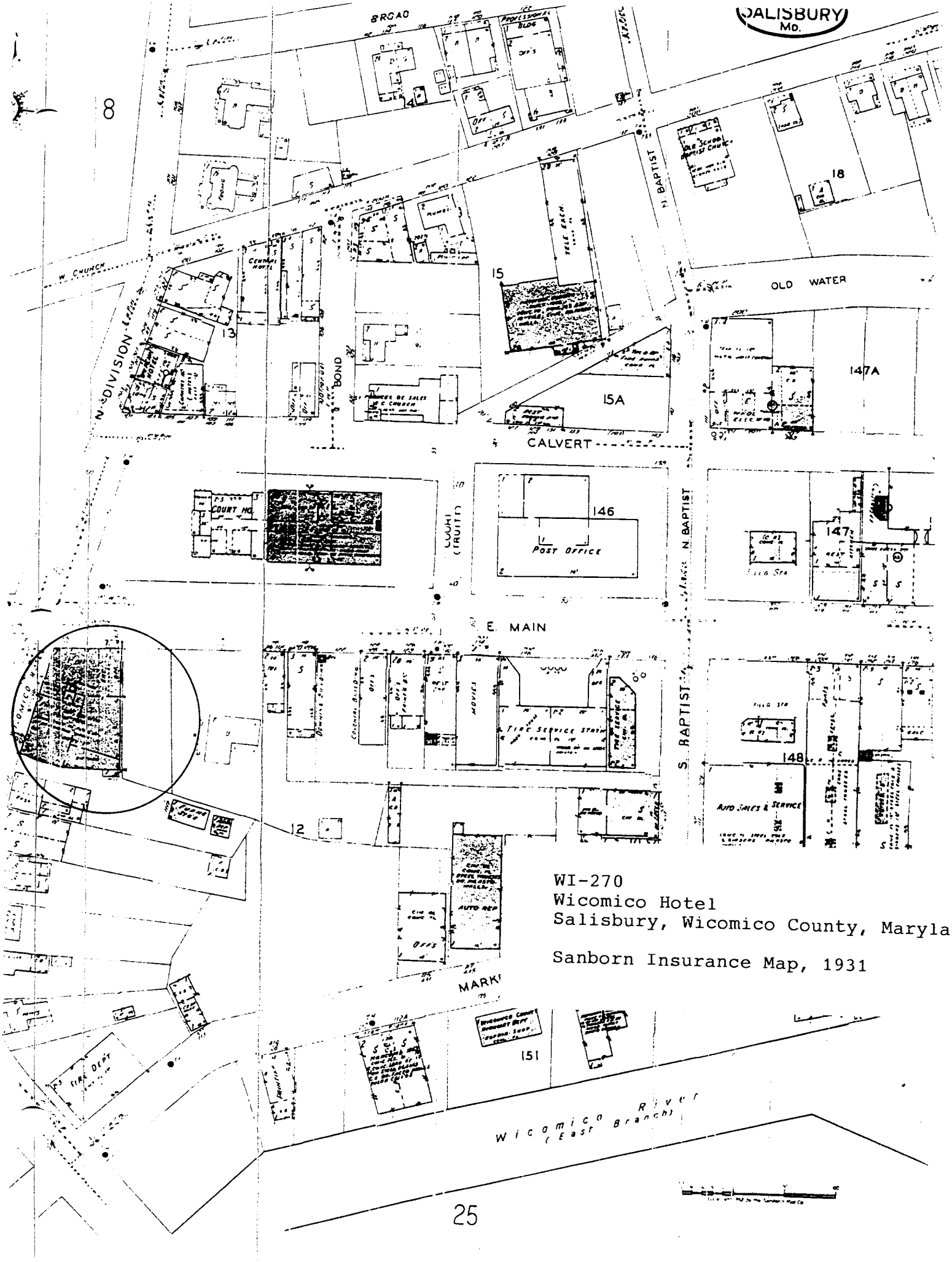
WI-270
Wicomico Hotel
One Plaza East
Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland

Map 107, Parcel 848

1004/799	Peninsula Properties, Inc.
	to
1/18/1984	One Plaza East Condominium Association
JWTS 626/353	Wicomico Hotel Company
	to
1/3/1966	Wicomico Enterprises, Inc.

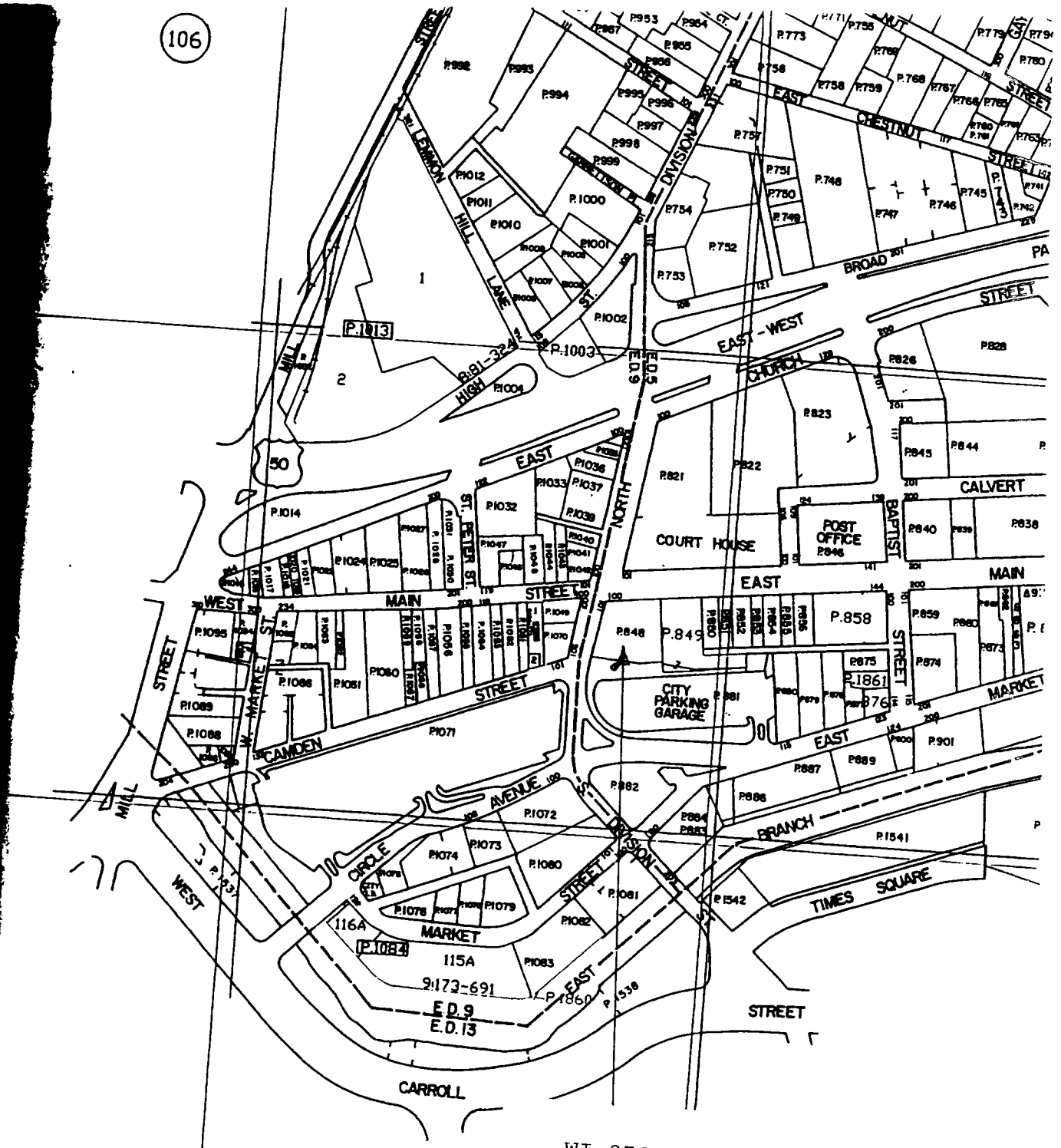
The property hereby conveyed being all of the property acquired by the Wicomico Hotel Company

1. From Nannie T. Wailes, et al. 1/22/1945, JWS 265/560
2. From M. Victoria Wailes, admin., dated 5/20/1924, JCK 134/251
3. From F. Leonard Wailes, et ux., dated 5/5/1924, JCK 134/249
4. From People's Bank of Salisbury, 5/5/1924, JCK 134/217
5. From Henry S. Taylor, et al., 6/20/1923, JCK 130/233
6. From M. Victoria Wailes, admin., 1/22/1945, JWS 265/576
7. From J. C. Penny, 12/30/1954, JWTS 374/221



WI-270
Wicomico Hotel
Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland

Sanborn Insurance Map, 1931



WI-270
Wicomico Hotel

Wicomico County Tax Map 107
Parcel 848

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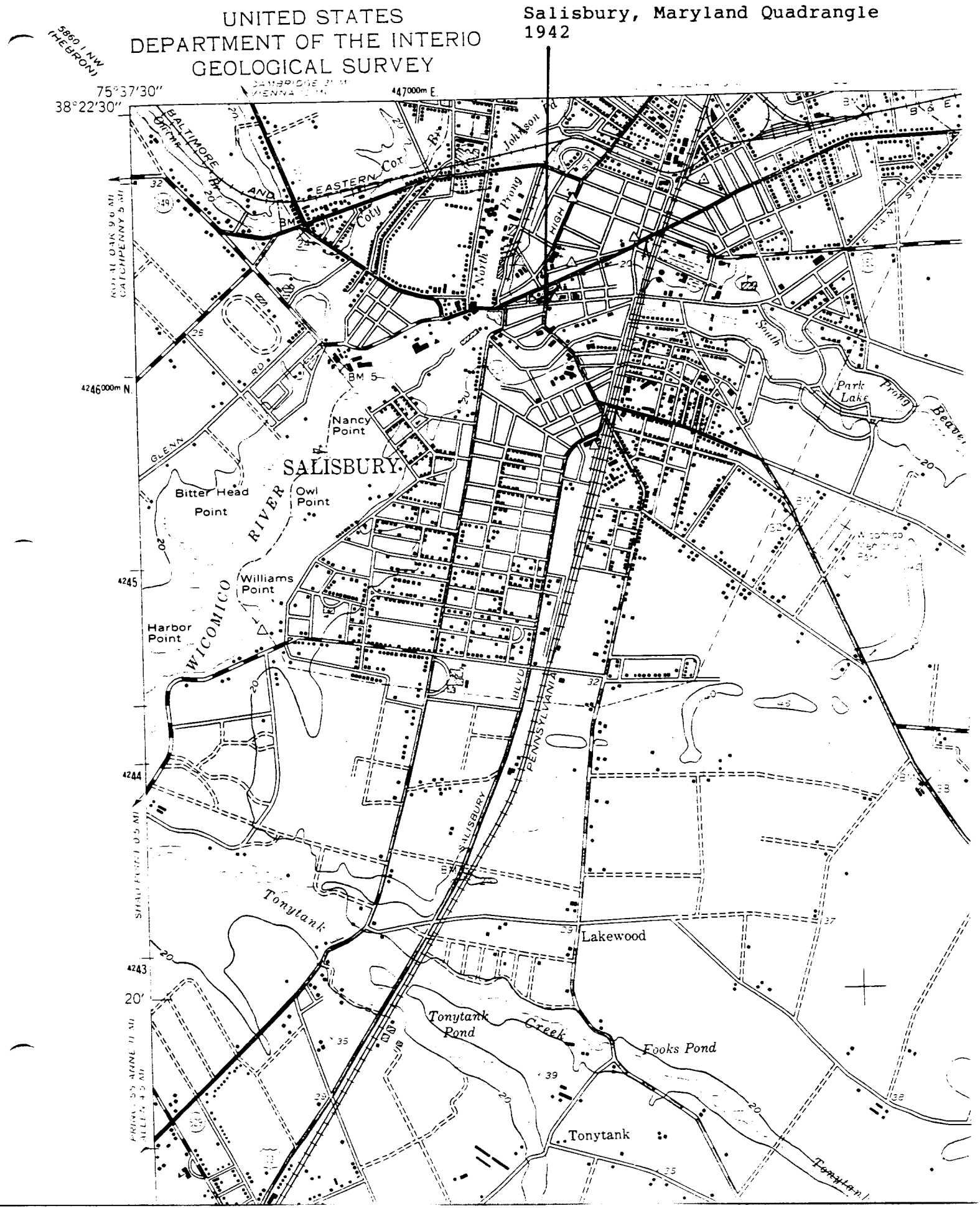
ON IN WRITING FROM THE PROPERTY MAP DIVISION.

SCALE IN FEET

200 0 200 400 600

WI-270
Wicomico Hotel

Salisbury, Maryland Quadrangle
1942



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