

**CAPSULE SUMMARY**  
**CT-1282**  
**Old St. Leonard Polling House**  
**6310 St. Leonard Road**  
**St. Leonard, Calvert County**  
**Ca. 1910**  
**Private**

The Old St. Leonard Polling House, constructed circa 1910 to serve as the voting place for the town of St. Leonard, is an excellent and intact example of the polling house building type in Calvert County. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the polling house was a significant building type in Calvert County, serving both an essential democratic function for providing residents with a place to vote, and a significant social function in providing the opportunity for social interaction between widely dispersed county residents. Replaced in 1926 by a slightly larger facility, the Old St. Leonard Polling House was subsequently moved to the Parran property at 6310 St. Leonard Road in St. Leonard, Calvert County. Since being moved, the building has been primarily used as a storage shed and for a short time in the 1990s as a workshop.

Set directly on a wood sill with no foundation, the vernacular wood-frame building stands one story in height and is one bay square. It is clad in German siding and the side-gable roof is clad in square-butt wood shingles. The roof features wide eaves and exposed rafter tails. The interior of the modest one-room building measures eleven feet, four inches in width by nine feet, four inches in depth. The floor is covered with three-and-a-half-inch-wide wood boards and the walls and ceiling feature wallboard cladding. In addition to the polling house, the 104-acre property is enhanced by a circa 1900 Queen Anne-style house, a circa 1930 windmill, and several non-historic outbuildings. The non-historic outbuildings, all constructed in the last quarter of the 20th century, include a gazebo, a shed, a carport, a garage, and an in-ground swimming pool.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CT-1282

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic St. Leonard Polling House  
 other Old St. Leonard Polling House (preferred)

### 2. Location

street and number 6310 St. Leonard Road not for publication  
 city, town St. Leonard vicinity  
 county Calvert

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

name Madline T. Parran and Thomas Parran, Jr.  
 street and number 6310 St. Leonard Road telephone 410/586-0633  
 city, town St. Leonard state MD zip code 20685

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Calvert County Courthouse tax map and parcel: M35, P1  
 city, town Prince Frederic liber JLB folio 244

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report
- Other

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
			Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	2	4
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense		
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education		
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	3	5
		<input type="checkbox"/> government		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry		
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape		
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture		
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
		<input type="checkbox"/> social		
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
			<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>	
			0	

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## 7. Description

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Inventory No. CT-1282

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Old St. Leonard Polling House is located at 6310 St. Leonard Road in St. Leonard, Calvert County, Maryland. Constructed circa 1910, it was moved to its current location in 1927. Previously, it was located approximately one-and-a-half miles further north, southwest of the intersection of St. Leonard Road and Calvert Beach Road. It is now located on a large rural property, with sloping fields and mature trees. Set directly on a wood sill with no foundation, the vernacular wood-frame building stands one story in height and is one bay square. It is clad in German siding and the side-gable roof is clad in square-butt wood shingles. The roof features wide eaves and exposed rafter tails. The interior of the modest one-room building measures eleven feet, four inches in width by nine feet, four inches in depth. The floor is covered with three-and-a-half-inch-wide wood boards and the walls and ceiling feature wallboard cladding. In addition to the polling house, the 104-acre property is enhanced by a circa 1900 Queen Anne-style house, a circa 1930 windmill, and several non-historic outbuildings. The non-historic outbuildings, all constructed in the last quarter of the 20th century, include a gazebo, a shed, a carport, a garage, and an in-ground swimming pool.

### EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The façade or northwest elevation of the polling house is one bay in width and features a central entry. The entry is comprised of a single-leaf, five-panel wood door set within a square-edged wood surround. The southwest elevation is pierced by a 6/6 window with a square-edged surround and a narrow wood sill. Identical to the façade is the southeast elevation, which also features a single-leaf, five-panel wood door set within a square-edged wood surround. Likewise, the northeast elevation is identical to the southwest elevation, with a 6/6 window with a square-edged surround and a narrow wood sill.

### INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Old St. Leonard Polling House is a modest one-room building, measuring nine feet, four inches in depth by eleven feet, four inches in length. The floor is covered with three-and-a-half-inch-wide wood boards and the walls and ceiling feature wallboard cladding. Lining the walls of the polling house are built-in wood shelves. The two windows and two doors are framed by square-edged wood surrounds. Electricity was introduced to the building in the early 1990s.

### SECONDARY BUILDINGS

The property is further enhanced by two historic resources and five non-historic resources. Most notable is the circa 1900 Queen Anne-style dwelling, the Tom Parran House (CT-50, that rises two-and-a-half stories in height. Set on a five-course American bond brick foundation, the dwelling is clad in German siding and features a projecting tower on the southeast elevation. The asphalt-shingled front-gable roof covers the house and three interior-end brick chimneys rise above the roofline. The dwelling features Queen Anne-style windows with some stained glass panes, a wrap-around front porch with turned posts, and decorative wood shingles and panels in the gable end. There is also a metal-frame windmill to the north of the dwelling that was erected circa 1930.

The non-contributing resources consist of a gazebo, a shed, a carport, a garage, and an in-ground swimming pool, all of which were constructed in the last quarter of the 20th century. The wood-frame gazebo features an octagonal footprint and lattice work on the side elevations. The prefabricated wood-frame shed is clad in vertically grooved plywood sheeting and features a single-leaf door and a side-gable roof of asphalt shingles. The wood-frame carport has a shed roof and two open elevations. The remaining two walls are clad in vertically grooved plywood sheets. Standing one story in height and one bay in width, it is set on a wood post foundation. The garage sits to the east of the polling house and main dwelling. Oversized to provide storage for

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CT-1282

Name St. Leonard Polling House  
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limousines, the garage features a concrete-block foundation, a flat roof, and vertical aluminum siding. The in-ground swimming pool is surrounded by a concrete deck.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. CT-1282

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

<b>Specific dates</b>	c1910; 1926	<b>Architect/Builder</b>	Unknown
<b>Construction dates</b>	c1910		

Evaluation for:

National Register       Maryland Register       not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The Old St. Leonard Polling House, constructed circa 1910 to serve as the voting place for the town of St. Leonard, is an excellent and intact example of the polling house building type in Calvert County. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the polling house was a significant building type in Calvert County, serving both an essential democratic function for providing residents with a place to vote, and a significant social function in providing the opportunity for social interaction between widely dispersed county residents. Replaced in 1926 by a slightly larger facility, the Old St. Leonard Polling House was subsequently moved to the Parran property at 6310 St. Leonard Road in St. Leonard, Calvert County. Since being moved, the building has been primarily used as a storage shed and for a short time in the 1990s as a workshop.

### THE POLLING HOUSE IN CALVERT COUNTY

The polling house is a distinctive rural building type in Calvert County, of which there are few extant examples. Purchased and operated by the Calvert County Board of Commissioners, these unique buildings appear to have originated in the late 19th century and were used until World War II (1941-1945), after which voting began to be held in larger public buildings such as schoolhouses.(1) However, the St. Leonard Polling House (CT-158) was used until circa 1972. Often built by private individuals for the benefit of the county, polling houses were generally one-room, single-story frame structures with a gable roof and a small chimney for a heating stove. They had two doors so that voters could move efficiently through the building, with one door for entering and one door for exiting. Paper ballots were cast in wooden ballot boxes, and voting was presided over by Judges of the Election. A representative from both the Republican and Democratic party were frequently present to observe the election process and to protect the interest of their respective parties.(2) In Because of the utilitarian nature of the buildings, they were almost entirely without ornament on either the interior or the exterior.

Polling houses were built in villages and towns centrally located for voter convenience, although traveling to a polling house on voting day was often still an arduous trip for many who did not live close by. Polling houses located in smaller towns, such as Mutual, had no more than a trickle of voters throughout the day, while the polling houses for more populated areas like Prince Frederick would have lines, particularly after work.(3) Election day was often accompanied by a variety of social and commercial activity. According to one long-time Calvert County resident, oysters were sold to voters.(4) Agnes Jefferson, daughter of Hannah Johnson Gross and Lusby native, tells of her mother making fried chicken and crab cake sandwiches to sell at the polling houses to hungry voters on election day for a little extra cash.(5) Polling houses are known to have recently existed at St. Leonard, Mutual, and Owings, although at one time polling houses were located all over the county.

### HISTORY OF THE OLD ST. LEONARD POLLING HOUSE

The Old St. Leonard Polling House was erected to serve the small crossroads community of St. Leonard in southern Calvert

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County. Constructed during the early years of the 20th century, the one-room polling house is typical of polling houses found throughout the county. Typically, Calvert County polling houses are one-room wood-frame buildings with two entries. The purpose of the two separate entries was so that the voters could enter through one door, cast their ballot, and leave through the other door, thus relieving congestion within the building. During the early years of the 20th century, paper ballots were cast and placed in a ballot box, which was located within the building. Interestingly, the Old St. Leonard Polling House differs somewhat from other polling houses in the county, with the two separate doors on opposite sides of the building. Both the 1926 St. Leonard Polling House, the Sunderland Polling House, and the Mutual Polling House feature the two entries on the same elevation.

In the early years of the 20th century, voting was often a full-day affair, with people traveling considerable distances to cast their votes. According to a member of the community who recalls voting at the St. Leonard Polling House, voters would "enter the little building, after being checked in as being registered, he then entered a frame stall like affair with a curtain to hide the voter, so his or her voting was more or less private. After voting he placed his ballot in a large box and departed with very little conversation as this was not supposed to go on inside."<sup>(6)</sup> A limited time within the polling house was apparently a court-ordered mandate, according to a sign that once hung in the Sunderland Polling House, which read "Notice: The Judges of Election are empowered by law to enforce the limit of four [4] minutes allowed each person."<sup>(7)</sup>

Little is known about the origins of the Old St. Leonard Polling House, other than that it was replaced in 1926 by the St. Leonard Polling House. According to current owner Thomas Parran, Jr., the 1926 polling house was erected under his ancestor Thomas Parran's proposal and donated to the St. Leonard community. Thomas Parran was a member of the Maryland State Congress from 1911 to 1913. Upon the completion of the new polling house, the Old St. Leonard Polling House was donated to the Parran family and moved to their property, south of St. Leonard at 6310 St. Leonard Road.<sup>(8)</sup> The Parran family is one of the older families in the community, having settled in Calvert County in 1706 at the head of St. Leonard's Creek.<sup>(9)</sup>

### CHAIN OF TITLE

June 4, 1952: , Thomas Parran and Madeline T. Parran to Silas W. Bowen  
Land Records of Calvert County  
Liber AWR 31, Folio 169

June 4, 1952: , Silas W. Bowen to Thomas Parran and Madeline T. Parran  
Land Records of Calvert County  
Liber AWR 31, Folio 170

January 6, 1971: , Madeline T. Parran to Elizabeth Portner  
Land Records of Calvert County  
Liber JLB 126, Folio 339

January 6, 1971: , Elizabeth Portner to Madeline T. Parran and Thomas Parran, Jr.  
Land Records of Calvert County  
Liber JLB 126, Folio 341

January 28, 1976: , Madeline T. Parran and Thomas Parran, Jr. to Elizabeth Portner  
Land Records of Calvert County  
Liber JLB 191, Folio 242

January 28, 1976: , Elizabeth Portner to Madeline T. Parran and Thomas Parran, Jr.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Continuation Sheet

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Land Records of Calvert County  
Liber JLB 191, Folio 244

### ENDNOTES

1. Oliver Foote, Agnes Jefferson and Eugene Ward, interview by Robin J. Weidlich, Lusby, MD, June 11, 2002.
2. Waters Ross, interview by Carrie E. Albee, Mutual, MD, June 13, 2002.
3. Ross.
4. Memorandum from Jenny Plummer-Welker to the Calvert County Board of Commissioners, August 1, 2001, Mutual Polling House Vertical File, Calvert County Planning and Zoning Department, Prince Frederick, MD.
5. Foote, Jefferson and Ward.
6. Betty Briscoe, "Know Your County: Voting Time, Polling House at St. Leonard," September 12, 1974, St. Leonard Polling House, CT-158, Vertical Files, Calvert County Planning and Zoning Department, Prince Frederick, MD.
7. Anna Brittain and Cheryl Hooper, "Polling Houses of Calvert County Past and Present," Report for High School Division Group Project, n.d., "Polling Houses" Vertical File, Calvert County Historical Society, Prince Frederick, MD.
8. Thomas Parran, Jr., telephone interview by Robin J. Weidlich, April 23, 2002.
9. Charles Francis Stein, A History of Calvert County, Maryland, (Baltimore, MD: Charles F. Stein, 1976), pp. 300-302.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. CT-1282

See continuation sheet.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 104.63 acres  
Acreage of historical setting unknown  
Quadrangle name Cove Point Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Old St. Leonard Polling House has been associated with Parcel 1, as denoted on Tax Map 35, since it was moved to the site in 1926.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title	R. Weidlich and C. Albee, Architectural Historian		
organization	E.H.T. Tracerics, Inc.	dat	8/27/02
street and number	1121 Fifth Street, N.W.	telephone	202/393-1199
city or town	Washington	stat DC	zip code 20001

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

**Maryland Historical Trust**  
**Maryland Inventory of**  
**Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. CT-1282

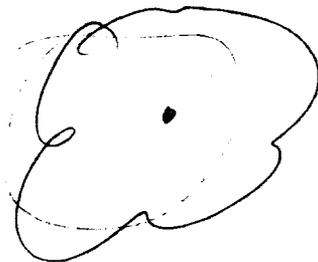
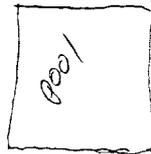
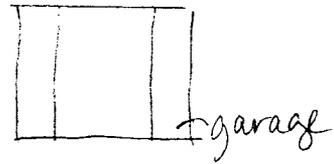
Name St. Leonard Polling House

Continuation Sheet

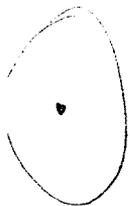
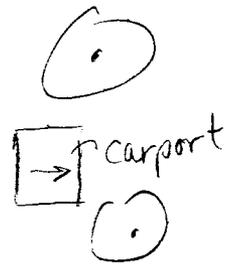
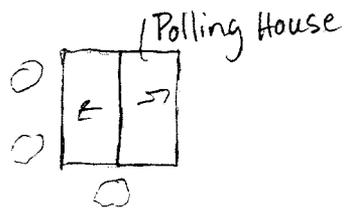
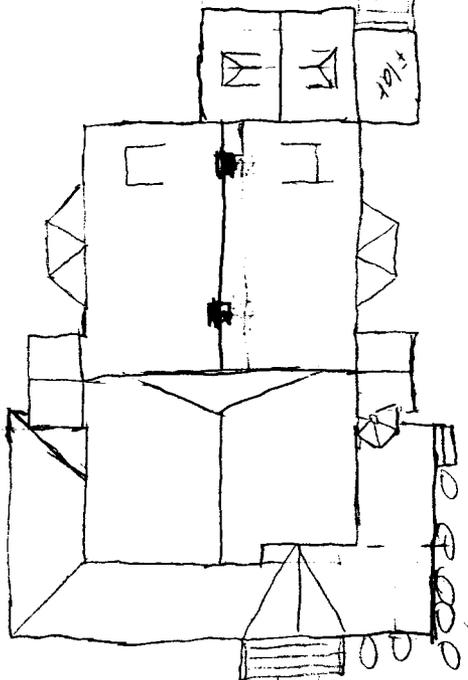
Number   9   Page   1  

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Briscoe, Betty. "Know Your County: Voting Time, Polling House at St. Leonard," September 12, 1974



SOAK  
POOL



RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

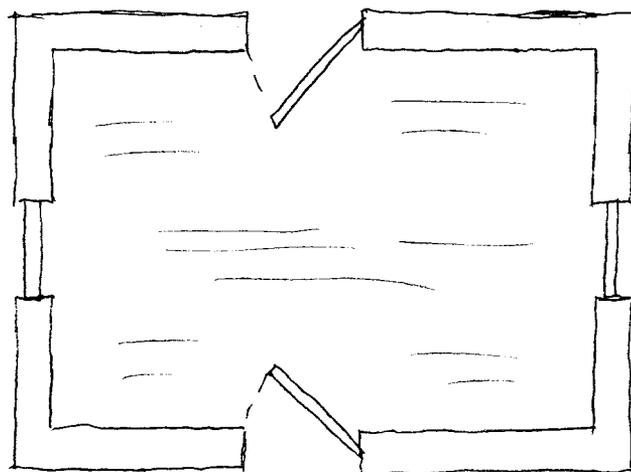
CT-1282

OLD ST. LEONARD'S POLLING HOUSE

6310 ST LEONARD'S ROAD  
ST. LEONARD, CALVERT COUNTY, MD

4-25-02

CT-1282



main  
entrance

CT-1282  
OLD ST. LEONARDS POLLING HOUSE  
6310 ST. LEONARDS ROAD  
ST. LEONARD, CALVERT COUNTY, MD

FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

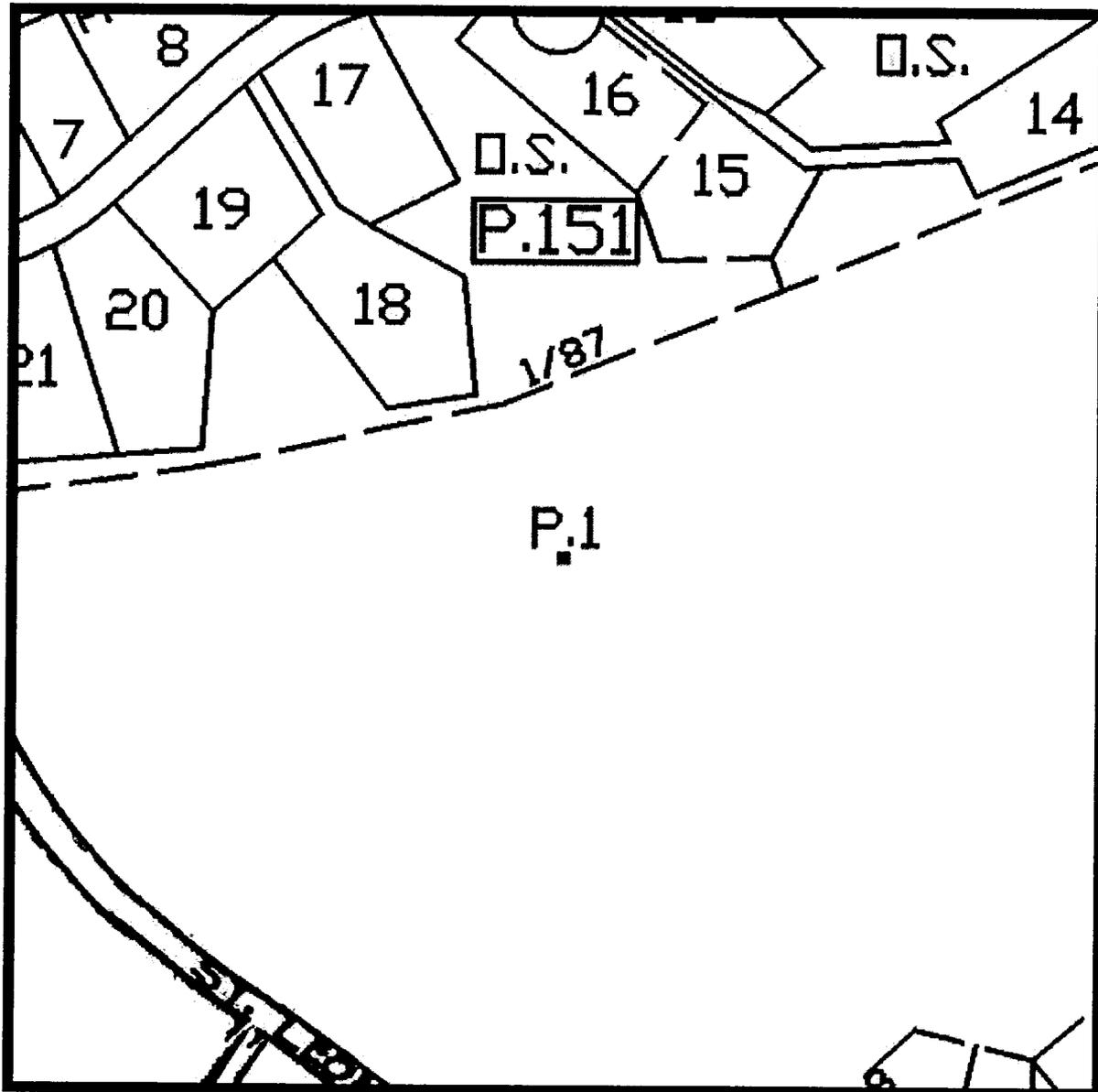


4-25-02

CT-1282

	<b>Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation</b> <b>CALVERT COUNTY</b> <b>Real Property Data Search</b>	<a href="#">Go Back</a> <a href="#">View Map</a> <a href="#">New Search</a>
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District - 01 Account Number - 020269



Property maps provided courtesy of the Maryland Department of Planning ©2001.  
For more information on electronic mapping applications, visit the Maryland Department of Planning  
web site at [www.mdp.state.md.us](http://www.mdp.state.md.us)





CT-1282

OLD ST. LEONARD POLLING HOUSE

6310 ST. LEONARD ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

SOUTH CORNER, LOOKING NORTH

1 OF 5



CT-1282

OLD ST. LEONARD POLLING HOUSE

6310 ST. LEONARD ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

EAST CORNER, LOOKING WEST

2 OF 5



CT-1282

OLD ST. LEONARD POLLING HOUSE

6310 ST. LEONARD ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

POLLING ROOM, WEST CORNER

3 OF 5



CT-1282

OLD ST. LEONARD POLLING HOUSE

6310 ST. LEONARD ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

POLLING ROOM, EAST CORNER

4 OF 5



CT-1282

OLD ST LEONARD FOLLING HOUSE

6310 ST. LEONARD ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

MAIN HOUSE, WEST CORNER, LOOKING EAST

5 OF 5