

CE-1296-1

## Providence Paper Mill, (Kenmore Paper Mill, Spectron Site)

### **Architectural Survey File**

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site ([mht.maryland.gov](http://mht.maryland.gov)) for details about how to make an appointment.

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***Last Updated: 09-12-2018***

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes   
no

Property Name: Spectron Inc Superfund Site Inventory Number: CE-1296-1 Contrib. Res.

Address: 111 Providence Road City: Elkton, MD Zip Code: 21921

County: Cecil County USGS Topographic Map: TMD0069 (1:25,000)

Owner: Mraz, Paul J. Is the property being evaluated a district?  yes

Tax Parcel Number: 13 Tax Map Number: 349 Tax Account ID Number: 006410

Project: Spectron Inc Superfund Site Agency: U.S EPA, Region III

Site visit by MHT Staff: NO no  yes  Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the property located within a historic district?  yes  no

<p><i>If the property is within a district</i></p> <p>NR-listed district <input type="checkbox"/> yes Eligible district <input type="checkbox"/> yes District Name: <u>Little Elk Creek #CE-1296</u></p> <p>Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no Non-contributing but eligible in another context <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>District Inventory Number: <b>CE1296</b></p>
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<p><i>If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)</i></p> <p>Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
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Criteria:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)

<b>MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW</b>	
Eligibility recommended <input type="checkbox"/>	Eligibility not recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	Considerations: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> None
Comments: _____	
<u>Andrew Lewis</u> Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	<u>3/24/06</u> Date
<u>[Signature]</u> Reviewer, NR Program	<u>3/23/06</u> Date

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Maryland Historical Trust  
Determination of Eligibility

CE-1296-1

History of the property:

William and Samuel Meeter began the Providence Paper Mill in the early 1800s. There is not much information on the operations of the mill during this period of ownership.

William Miskey Singerly, born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 27 December, 1832 publisher of the Philadelphia Record, bought the Mill in 1881 and founded the Kenmore Mills. At that time the mill was also called Conowingo Paper Mill. It was partly destroyed by a fire 1887. In the years 1890, 1891 and 1895 new equipment such as paper making machines; a boiler; and a large iron warehouse were installed in the mill.

Mr. Singerly died in 1899, at that time the Jessup & Moore Paper Company of Wilmington Delaware, purchased the mill. They operated the plant for about twelve years with 200 people working six days a week at a production rate of 70,000 – 85,000 lbs of paper per day. The mill transportation efficiency was increased during this time with a connection with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad through a four mile rail. A New York newspaper took over the Mill in 1948 and re-named it the Conowingo Mill, however, in that same year the Mill was closed.

The Mill was purchased by the Elk Paper Manufacturing Company on May 11, 1953. However, it was destroyed by fire in August 4, 1954. The only building left standing after this fire was the original power house.

In 1961, Paul Mraz started his business at this site as Galaxy Chemicals, Inc. To accommodate his new business Mr. Mraz razed the burned out remains of many of the buildings. However, he did keep the damaged power house structure and modified it by installing a new corrugated steel roof, and various access openings. His new business was a solvent recovery operation that distilled used solvents and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Galaxy Chemicals went bankrupt in 1975 and the facility was re-opened as Solvent Distillers, Inc., with primarily the same ownership. Solvent Distillers,

Inc., which changed its name to Spectron, Inc. in 1978, closed the facility in 1988 and filed for bankruptcy in April 1989.

On October 14, 1992, the Spectron Site was proposed to the National Priorities List, and it was formally added to the National Priority Listing ("NPL") on May 31, 1994. Listing the Site in the NPL makes it eligible for Federal cleanup funds. The Site is located five (5) miles north of Elkton, Maryland, in a primarily rural area. The main portion of the Site (the "Plant Area") consists of seven acres on the Southern bank of Little Elk Creek; another portion of the Site is an approximately one-acre parcel of the Site (the "Office Area") located on the Northern bank of Little Elk Creek. The Plant Area was the primary solvent recycling area and included processing buildings, power plant building, storage tanks, drum storage areas, and a waste lagoon disposal area. The one-acre portion of the Site across Little Elk Creek, on which a small brick building currently exists, once housed Spectron's main office and a staging area for tanker trucks and drums.

#### **Ideational Value of the property:**

Some of the earliest and largest mills in the country were built on the banks of the Little Elk Creek. Kenmore Paper Mill, also known as Providence Paper Mill was the largest paper mill in Cecil County.

The coming of William M. Singerly added largely to the wealth of the Fourth district. The mills as employer made Providence, where the plant is located, the largest and most thrifty village in the Fourth district. "Taken altogether, there are few plants that are of greater value to the people of Cecil than the mills at Providence." (Holiday number of the Elkton appeal, Elkton, MD., Wednesday, December 17, 1902).

Some of the other paper mills in Cecil County included: the Cecil Company Paper Mill (destroyed January 11, 1853); a mill founded by John Wilson (destroyed January 14, 1911); and Carter's Mill which was the first paper mill in Cecil County built 1816 by Robert Carter (destroyed December 19, 1900). All of these mills fell victim to fire.

**Current status:**

Many of the original structures related to the paper mill have been removed with only portions of the buildings left remaining such as stone walls, foundations, an abandoned rail spur, etc. The paper mill's original power house building and the upper dam across Little Elk Creek are still in existence but are structurally unsound and pose safety problems.

Power house: There have been many alterations to the power house building such as installation of a corrugated metal roof, windows were sealed up with concrete block, new openings were made for access, and the original power house equipment was removed and scraped. In addition, the building is structurally unstable with the occurrence of some failed walls and the appearance of large cracks in the walls. A major concern is the presence of contamination below the building. This contamination poses a human health threat because contaminated vapors could gather in the structure if it was renovated for human use. In addition, in order to mitigate the contamination in the plant area it will be necessary to install a protective impervious cover or "cap" across the entire site, including the soils below the powerhouse. It would be difficult to install an effective barrier with the power house building or any of the original building structures remaining in the plant (see Appendix 3).

Upper Dam: The upper dam has not been functioning as designed for many years; it leaks above and below its structure. There have been attempted repairs and modification to the dam's structure over the years. It appears that in an attempt to repair the dam a concrete layer may have been added to the face of the original dam. The creek flow below the dam is of particular concern as it continues to undermine the structural integrity of the dam.

**References:**

ASTDR Preliminary Public Health Assessment Report, 1996

**Holiday number of the Elkton appeal**, Elkton, MD., Wednesday, December 17, 1902

**Cecil Whig**; Volume 113; No.48; August 12, 1954

**Cecil Democrat**; August 4, 1954

**Historical and Industrial edition of the Cecil Whig**; 1919

## National Register Criteria for Evaluation

### Criterion A:

The Mill, which was located on the given site, was one of a many Mills that were operated in Cecil County. Some of the earliest and largest mills in the county were built on the banks of Little Elk Creek. For this reason the Kenmore Paper Mill is not a special one and it does not contribute to the broad patterns of our history.

### Criterion B:

The Paper Mill was built by William and Samuel Meeter in the early 1800s. Then the Mill was purchased by William M. Singerly. This Mr. Singerly was the publisher of a newspaper called Philadelphia Record. For Cecil County Mr. Singerly had a great significance.

“ The coming of Mr. Singerly to Providence had the effect of adding largely to the wealth of the fourth district, and the running of Providence Mill is of untold value to that section of the county. [...] Taken altogether, there are few plants that are of greater value to the people of Cecil than the mills at Providence.” (Holiday Number of the Elkton Appeal, Elkton, MD., Wednesday, December 17, 1902).

It is possible to see that the remaining power house structure could be representative of Mr. Singerly influence on the Cecil County.

After the death of Mr. Singerly in 1899, the Jessup & Moore Company purchased the paper mill. The Jessup & Moore Company had other paper mills and was founded by Clara Sophia Jessup and her husband Bloomfield Haines Moore. Clara Jessup was also an important poet in Philadelphia. In 1855 she was well known as a writer of prose and poetry. She also wrote some books and was a secretary of the Woman's Pennsylvania Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War.

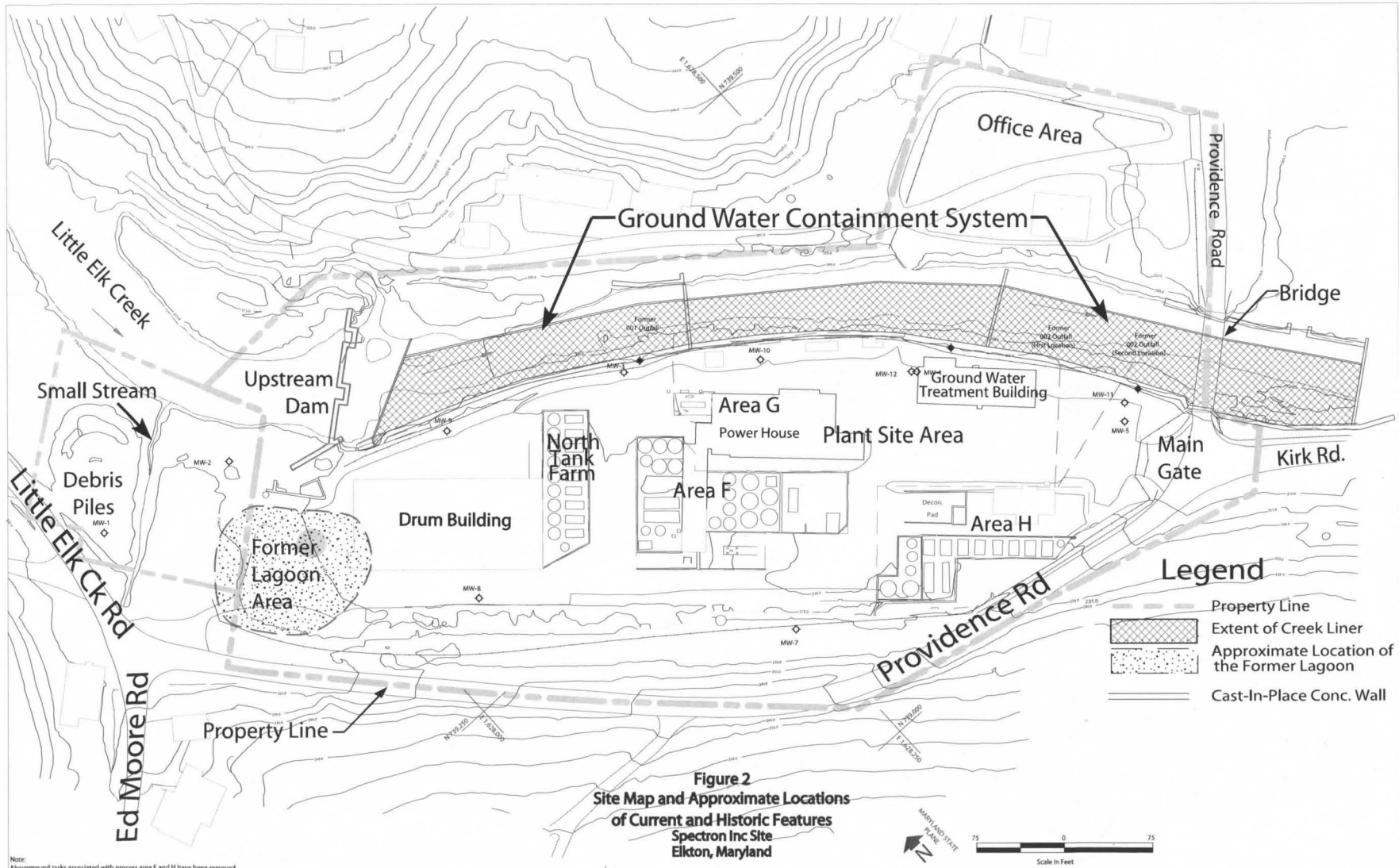
The paper mill does not represent the life of neither Jessup nor Moore described above, and therefore has less of a historical significance.

### Criterion C:

The remaining powerhouse of Kenmore Mills is an old brick and stone building. It is hard to say whether it is representative for its period because there are so many alterations and it does not show a characteristic design. There is very little equipment remaining in the interior, which could be representative of the original “power house” function of the building. Additionally it does not occur that the plant was built by a master builder. Furthermore the power house, the dam or remaining foundation structures do not show any significant signs of high artistic values.

## Criterion D:

The Kenmore Paper Mill was a typical paper mill like others in Cecil County, such as Radnor Mills, and all over the U.S. On this account the Mill cannot be judged as a site what will yield special information about the history of the procedure of paper. Therefore while this former paper mill has some historic background there does not appear to be sufficient historic significance. The destruction of most of the paper mill in the 1954, subsequent modifications to the power house building, lack of historic significance, contaminated soils below the building, and the need to install a protective cover over those soils are reasons to allowed demolition of the power house building and other structures



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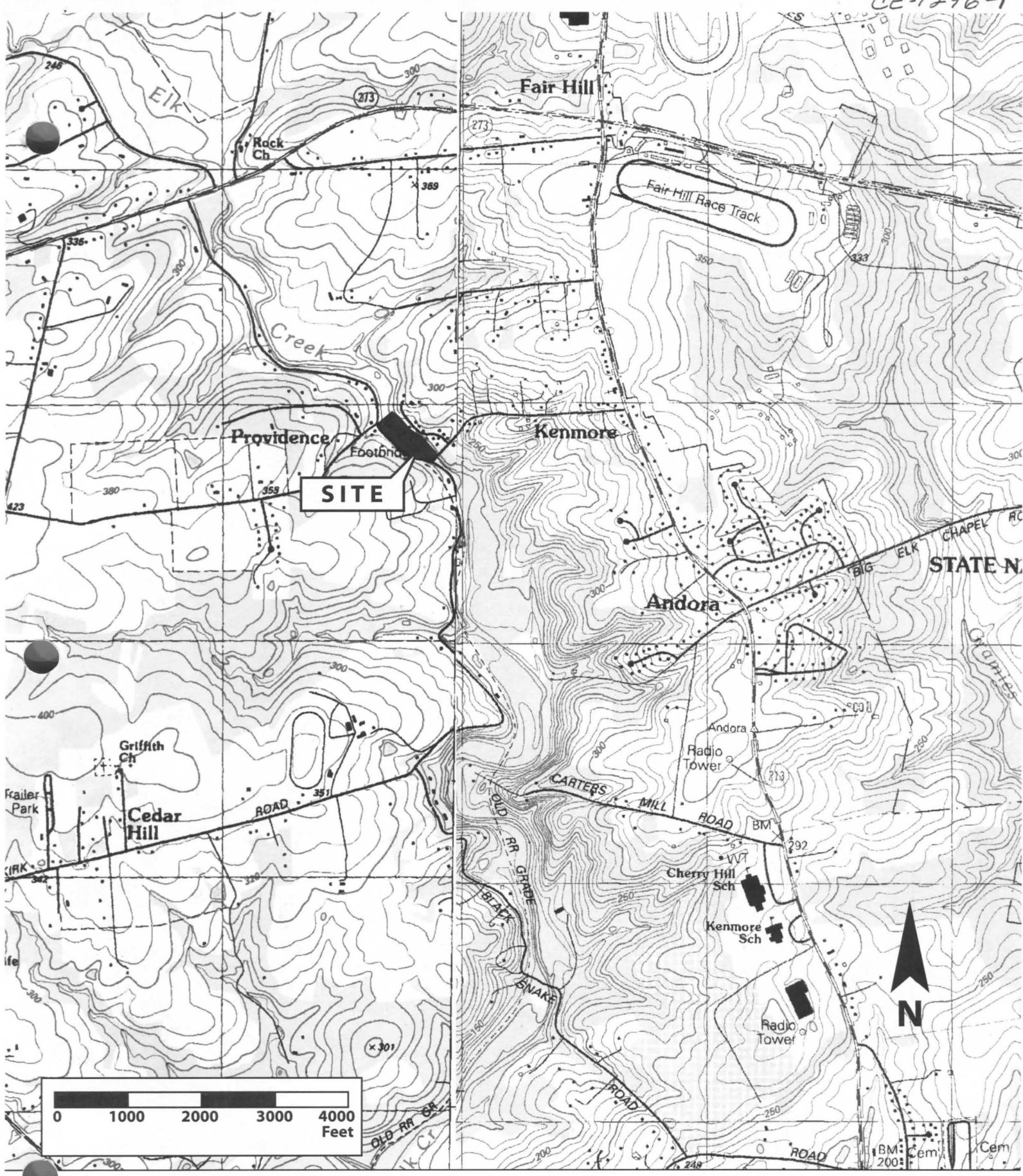


Figure 1  
Site Location Map  
Galaxy/Spectron Site  
Elkton, Maryland