

# HO-243

## The Oaks

### **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: 02-07-2013***

HO-243  
THE OAKS  
Ellicott City, Maryland  
Private

eighteenth and nineteenth century

The Oaks is an adaption in the Howard County vernacular of the Italianate style of architecture with its four story ashlar grey granite tower attached to a three bay wide, two bay deep, two story high, flat roofed, ashlar grey granite flat roofed cottage standing on the foundation of and incorporating within its walls an earlier eighteenth century structure. An outstanding second floor oriele window is located on the north wall of the tower.

Built in 1857 by Mr. Robert Hale who also built Linwood, HO-344 in Ellicott City, it passed eventually to Captain Dennis, an old ship's Captain who found a lovely bride in Georgia and retired to Howard County, Maryland at The Oaks. Presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Carl Myers, it is one of Howard County's most outstanding homes.

1402435504

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District 2

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

The Oaks

AND/OR COMMON

The Oaks

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

3251 Oaks Rd.

CITY, TOWN

Ellicott City

VICINITY OF

6th  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

Howard  
COUNTY**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Meyer

Telephone #: 465-2221

STREET &amp; NUMBER

3251 Oaks Road

CITY, TOWN

Ellicott City

VICINITY OF

Maryland 21043  
STATE, zip code**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hall of Records

Liber #: 189

Folio #: 169

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Howard County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Ellicott City

Maryland 21043  
STATE**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Howard County Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

May, 1977

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Maryland Historical Trust

CITY, TOWN

21 State Circle, Annapolis

Maryland 21401  
STATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uncolored		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Oaks consists of two ashlar gray granite sections: a three bay wide, two bay deep cottage home resting on a stone foundation facing south west with a four story high east tower, one bay wide and three bays deep, situated on a knoll at the southern end of Oaks Road off Route 40 just west of the Patapsco River in Howard County. Originally oriented east toward the Patapsco, it is now oriented north.

The manor house at The Oaks is oriented corner wise. For the purpose of simplification, the southeast elevation will be referred to as the south elevation, the northeast as east, the northwest as north and the southwest as west.

Its granite exterior is accented by flat stone lintels and projecting stone sills while a lovely oriele window is centered into the north wall of the tower.

The west elevation of the cottage home holds three first floor three-three lite french doors surmounted by two lite transoms and flat stone lintels which open on to a one story high, flat roofed porch supported by nine square columns decorated with scrolled brackets. Three rectangular, double-hung second floor windows are proportionally scaled and vertically alligned to the french doors. A line of mature boxwood are planted along the west elevation of the porch which is approached by steps from the north and south elevations. On the west side of the latter five granite steps rest on a stone foundation, leading to the open porch which has been screened in on the east side of the south elevation from the west corner of the house.

The south elevation holds two similar french doors which open on to the screen-in porch. Similar second floor windows rest above.

The east elevation of this section of the house holds no apertures. From the greater length of this wall rests the west wall of the four story east tower which projects northward from the north wall of the cottage.

The north elevation of the "cottage home" holds a french door in the west bay and a paneled rectangular entrance in the east bay originally surmounted by a four lite transom whose horizontal rectangular space now encloses a five lite fan lite, which was introduced during the tenure of the Reisingers (1934-40) matched by a similar one over the entrance to the stairway which leads from the east side of the entrance hall which runs more than half way down the east wall of the "cottage home".

During the tenure of the Reisingers (1940-1946) three arches were introduced to this hallway:

- (1) The blocked in recessed archway which replaced the original staircase on the south side of the east wall.
- (2) The newly cut arched entrance with five lite fan lite transome located on the north side of the east wall which enters into the staircase leading into the upstairs library on the second floor of the east tower and
- (3) The barrel vault hallway created between the previous staircase and the entrance to the present staricase.

The entrance hall enters directly into the large dining room whose south french doors lead onto the screened-in porch. The more formal living room lies off the west side of the hall.

Originally the building orientation was eastward toward the Patapsco River. An avenue of cedars led to the house, only one of which remains. A boring by the Forest revealed a date of 1789. During the tenure of the Edels (1940-1946) a porte-cochere extended northward from the large north entrance.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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The east tower extends northward from the east wall of the "cottage home". Its west elevation holds a second floor window similar to the others described. Its south wall holds second, third and fourth floor three-three lite casement windows, proportionally scaled and vertically alligned in the east bay and a second floor rectangular two-two lite casement window in the west bay. Above the latter may once have been a third floor window.

The east elevation of the tower holds a wide central double entrance composed of two rectangular paneled doors with four lites separated by a wide flat granite pilaster. A vestibule has been added by the Meyers, present owners, to provide greater insulation.

A ground floor rectangular three-three lite casement window rests in the north bay of the east wall while a three-three lite rectangular casement window was added in the south bay by the Reisingers. It has a concrete lintel rather than the flat stone lintels of the original windows, and was cut when the new kitchen was created by raising the floor of a dark passageway from the kitchen to the dumbwaiter on the east wall of the dining room.

A central third floor double window, each component a rectangular three-three lite casement window rests above the central ground floor entrance slightly to the south of it.

The north elevation holds the outstanding second floor oriel window crowned with a low pitched semi-conical roof. Above lies a fourth floor double-window similar to that on the east wall.

Brick chimneys covered with stucco rise from the north center of the cottage roof, alligned north-south and from the center of the cottage's south wall, alligned east-west. An additional chimney rises from the center of the tower's roof. As you enter the east door of the tower you come into what is now the laundry room, but, which was at one time a kitchen for the manor house in which was placed a refectory table with benches where the help ate their meals and a big stove on the south wall, where a washer-dryer now stand. In Mrs. Hermione Dennis Taylor's time, the kitchen passage to the dumb-waiter in the dining room had tremendously high ceilings, but during the tenure of the Reisingers (1934-40), the floor of this passageway was raised to provide space for a new kitchen and a flight of 4 steps constructed leading from the original refectory. In addition a window was cut out of the south side of the east wall to provide lite. A cement lintel indicaces a difference from the original windows.

Interior

The interior of the house features marble mantle pieces characterized by roman arch openings and cartouche-like keystones. The molded curvilinear mantle in the den has an almost art deco or Egyptian feeling. The interior has Neo-Grec trim characterized by low pointed pediments over doors and windows.

The old meat or smoke house stands on the property. On the left end of the building were outside toilet facilities, one for the help and one for the family.

The Oaks is noted as one of the first homes to have inside facilities which it is believed Mr. Hare developed. An ingenious piping system on the roof of the tower conducted water into an interior wooden storage tank. Large two story high barns lie north of the manor house, one a gabled roof stone structure of exceptionally fine proportions. A frame tenant house lies southeast of the manor,

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built in the early nineteen hundreds, long painted red but now forest green. There was at one time an older tenant house at least as old as the manor house which collapsed in the 1960's.

Part of the house was put together with hand hewn beams and wooden pegs.

A cistern, perhaps existing in conjunction with an earlier house at the time Mr. Hare bought the property, lies south of the tower near the east corner.

Two beautiful bicentennial trees on the west, an American White Beech and a White Oak have been marked by the Forest Service.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) Circa 1800 and 1857

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

From the land grant of Dr. Caleb Dorsey, several tracts of land are indicated in the vicinity of The Oaks. Carters' Rock, patented in 1733 runs diagonally across Route 40 north of present house. Next to and south of Carters' Rock is Dan Chambers Contentment, patented in 1755. A thin track of land in a U shape lying west of these two tracts and positioned north-south called Joshua's Addition was patented in 1723 by Joshua Sewall. The manor stands within this track on the border of Dan Chambers Contentment.

Mrs. Meyer's believes that Josh Sewall wanted the northerly strip because it bordered on the wagon road, initially an old Indian trail. A wagon road was of exceptional value in early days for there were very few. It is later referred to as Claggett Rd, and ran to Chestnut Hill (See Landgrant map) and down to the Patapsco.

Thomas Cockey is next discovered as owner of Joshua's Addition, selling it with twenty some great tracts to Capt. John Merriken in 1778. Between 1778 and 1840 is conjecture. In 1840 Caleb Dorsey had a land negotiation with Mr. Hare, father or son. It was Robert H. Hare, the son who built the present house as it stands in 1858.

The earliest description of the Oaks and its manor house is given in a Mechanic's Lien filed in 1857 by George R. Price, carpenter and Henry James lumber merchant of Baltimore against Caroline Hare, wife of Robert H. Hare and Thomas Donaldson and Robert Hare, Trustees of Caroline Hare for \$1,254.41 for material and \$689.03 for labor in the house built between March 17, 1856 and Jan. 1, 1857.

"Claim is against" all that two story cottage house with four story back building or tower, said house being about 44 ft. front with a depth of about 29 ft. and said back building or tower being 35 ft. by 22 ft. situated in Elkridge near Ellicotts Mills in Howard County, erected on a parcel of land(ground) lying upon a road known as Claggett's Road leading from Union Manufacturing Mill Dam Switch on Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and referred to in a deed of exchange between Mary Claggett and Robert H. Hare which is recorded among the landbooks of Howard County and was afterward conveyed by said Robert H. Hare to Thomas Donaldson and Robert Hare (Trustees of Caroline Hare)---for carpenter work and materials lumber, sand, lime and brick---And the said Robert H. Hare is the Architect, builder, agent and contractor---(This claim is against the house and curtilage) (Enclosed land about a house)

Evelyn P. Meyer. The Sleeper:  
Original History of The Oaks,  
Ellicott City, 1976. p.1

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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It is between 1723 and 1857 that the history of dwelling house of The Oaks is obscured. Examination of the basement foundation indicates that it was built around an existing structure. Two architects, Irvan O'Connell of Winchester, Virginia and Ian C. Mac Callum agree. The structure existed where the dining room now stands. (See plan)

A line around the wall of that room at ordinary ceiling height indicates that this may well be the outline of the interior wall of the original structure. Bryden Hyde, architectural consultant has another explanation: it is the height a man could reach before proceeding from a scaffold. The line, however, does not occur in the drawing room which is adjacent and of the same height as the dining room.

Uncovering more data of an earlier past Mrs. Meyer found via Ida Cromwell, that an article on the Oaks appeared in the Sunday Sun during the tenure of Dr. Edel (1940-1946) which mentioned both Tyson and Ellicott in connection with the early history of the house.

Tanner's Atlas of the World dated 1843 indicates the general area as Ellicott.

An avenue of Cedars east of the present house was laid out circa 1800, according to bearings taken by foresters of the one remaining Cedar. At that time the cistern located at the southeast corner of the manor house would also have been in use. It is safe to assume that a previous dwelling stood here circa 1800 in the place where the present dining room is situated and that it existed in 1840 when Caleb Dorsey and Mr. Hare entered into a land negotiation.

The largest beam in the first floor framing is from this older house. Mortice holes on both sides are where floor joists frame into it.

Robert H. Hare constructed the Oaks while living at Linwood in Ellicott City, which he designed circa 1852. He cut a road from the Oaks to the top of Church Road where Linwood is situated, which he later sold to Major Peter. The age old Claggett Road was used to haul building material to the site from the B & O Railroad Switch.

It was the money of Caroline, wife of Robert which built "The Oaks". In the documents dealing with her marriage settlement she is always represented by her trustees, her father-in-law Robert Hare and an outstanding Baltimore attorney, Mr. Thomas Donaldson.

On Martinet's map of Howard County, Md 1860 R. H. Hare is identified as owner of the Oaks. He and Caroline lived there for some six years.

On August 31, 1864 (www 23-444) Thomas Donaldson, Trustee, et al granted and conveyed the Oaks, then called "all that part of a tract of land called 'Mount Misery' and all that part of a tract of land called 'Oella Enlarged' to Jehanne Elvira Hopkins. The Hopkins came north with their slaves from the south. Jehanne, wife of Edward had a 99 year lease on the Oaks which unequivocally stated that it was owned in her own right "regardless of any present or future husband".

The Oaks  
Significance Statement (continued)

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It is presently believed that this family came from North Carolina. They stayed only two years. It may well be the outcome of the Civil War affected their fortunes. An Annie Hopkins appears on the roll of the Patapsco Female Institute for 1862 and 3. It may be they bought the Oaks to be nearer their daughter. This is strictly conjecture. It is also possible that either Edward or Jehanne taught there.

In 1866, right after the Civil War, Captain Edward Parmly Dennis, son of Edward Stillman Dennis, a New York shipping magnate, bought the Oaks and settled here. He had lost his ship in a great storm where only he and his first mate had survived. In those days if a Captain lost his ship, he had to leave the sea. He journeyed to Alabama where he married Hermione Blount Rose Roulhac, on March 23, 1857 at Macon, Ga., a girl of the Roulhac family and had a son. A second son was born in New York and the third at the Oaks which he bought in 1866. Here they raised Belgian Percheron work horses, dainty, high stepping coach horses, and Berkshire hogs.

A second generation took over the operation under Edward Dennis and Hermione, his wife with a Dennis brother sharing the management.

In 1920 the Dennises sold the Oaks to the Federal Land Bank. Jim Reisinger paid \$4,000 for in 1934 and sold it to Dr. Edel for \$19,000 in 1940. Six years later the Meyers bought the Oaks for \$32,000.

A small stone house stands east of the manor with bars in the window. It may well have been built during the tenure of the Hopkins family who owned slaves. It also appears that they added the veranda or open porch as well as many of the outbuildings.

The longest tenure was that of the Dennis family, spanning the years from 1866-1920, more than a half century.

Mrs. Lloyd Taylor, granddaughter of Captain Dennis was brought up at The Oaks. She and her husband for many years have chaired the St. John's Antique Show, in Ellicott City.

Mrs. Evelyn Meyer and her family have lived at the Oaks for more than thirty years. Mrs. Meyers' recent effort in publishing a brochure, The Sleeper, on the history of The Oaks has given the county a valuable historical document.

Architecturally, the building is truly eclectic, blending several elements: the heavy granite construction with four story tower suggest the Italianate while the interior trim with low pointed pediment lintels over doors and windows is Neo-Grec in style. Otherwise the building is simple and straight forward in

The Oaks  
Significance Statement (continued)

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design accented by the Victorian oriele window on the north elevation. Architecturally, it is representative of the fine stone house architecture which dots Howard County but rather unique in its adaptation of the Italianate villa decorated by a Victorian oriele window.

The east boundary of the property comes up to the Patapsco State Park, preserving the integrity of the original surroundings though many of the Oaks have long disappeared. Two large, centennial trees lie west of the Manor house. A tenant farm house lies south with original stone barns to the north.

For these reasons, The Oaks should be considered for inclusion to the National Register as well as the State Department of Planning's Program for Critical Areas and any future local landmark legislation.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

1. Meyer, Evelyn P. The Sleeper: Original History of the Oaks. Ellicott City, 1976.
2. Howard County Court House Records Land Grant Map of Howard County by Dr. Caleb Dorsey. Hopkins Atlas  
CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 173.289 acres + Imp.

Please see attachment #1  
Tax maps 18 and 25

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please see attachment 1

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	Maryland	COUNTY	Howard
STATE		COUNTY	

**FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE	Cleora Barnes Thompson, Planning Consultant	DATE	May, 1977
ORGANIZATION	Comprehensive Planning Office	TELEPHONE	465-5000, Ext. 257
STREET & NUMBER	3450 Court House Drive	STATE	Maryland
CITY OR TOWN	Ellicott City		

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



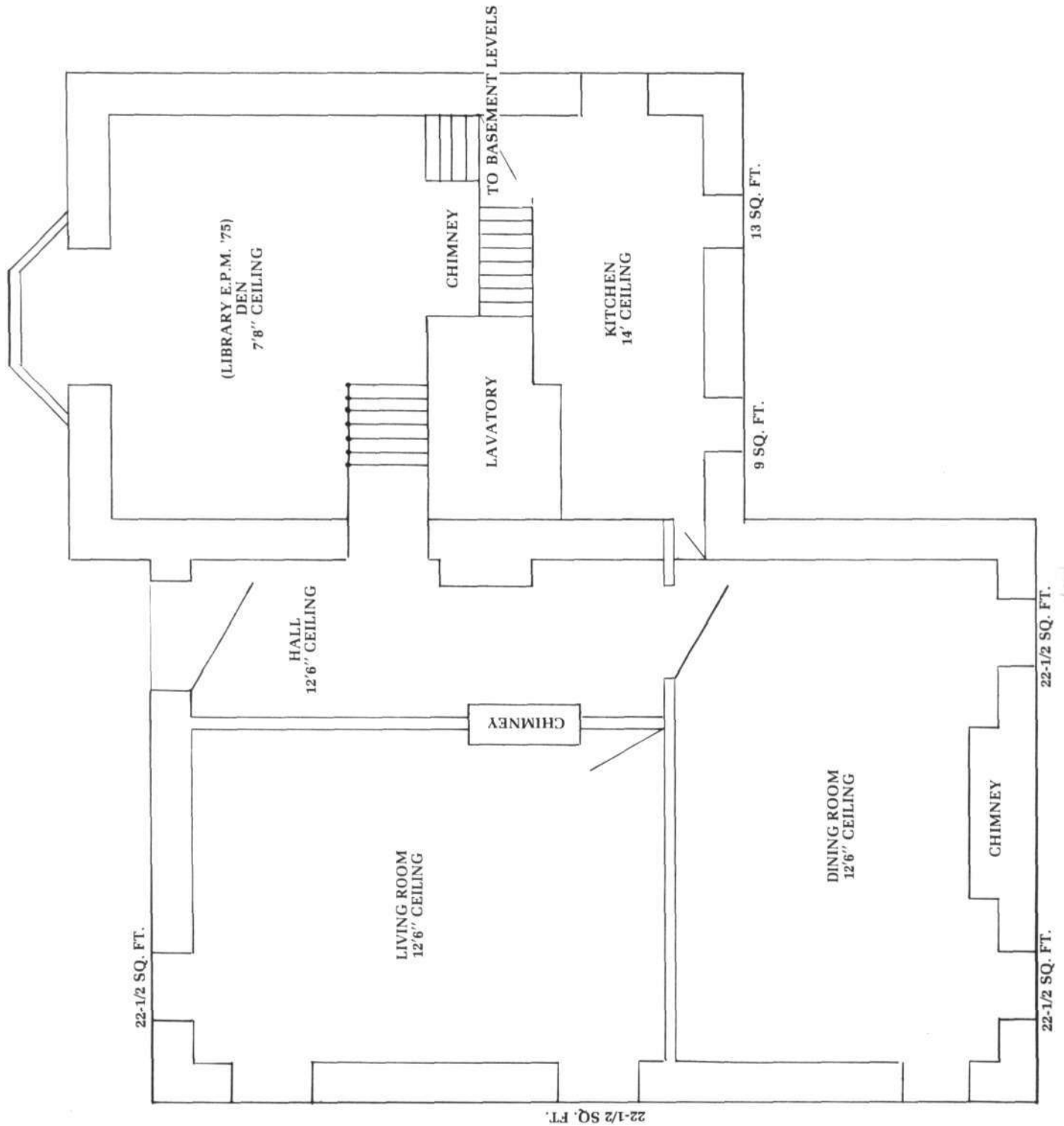
August '75. A broadside of the Manor House of The Oaks from the grassy bank opposite the entrance and bay windows. It had lost much of its ivy covering in a bad March wind. The cistern is partly visible in the rear. I sit directing the photographer, Ron Benden, who did the wedding photographs.

# THE SLEEPER

Original History of The Oaks

by  
Evelyn P. Meyer

Copy of 1st Floor Plan of The Oaks Manor House  
by James Reisinger, found in log book  
1930-5 to 40, given to C.W.M. & E.P.M.

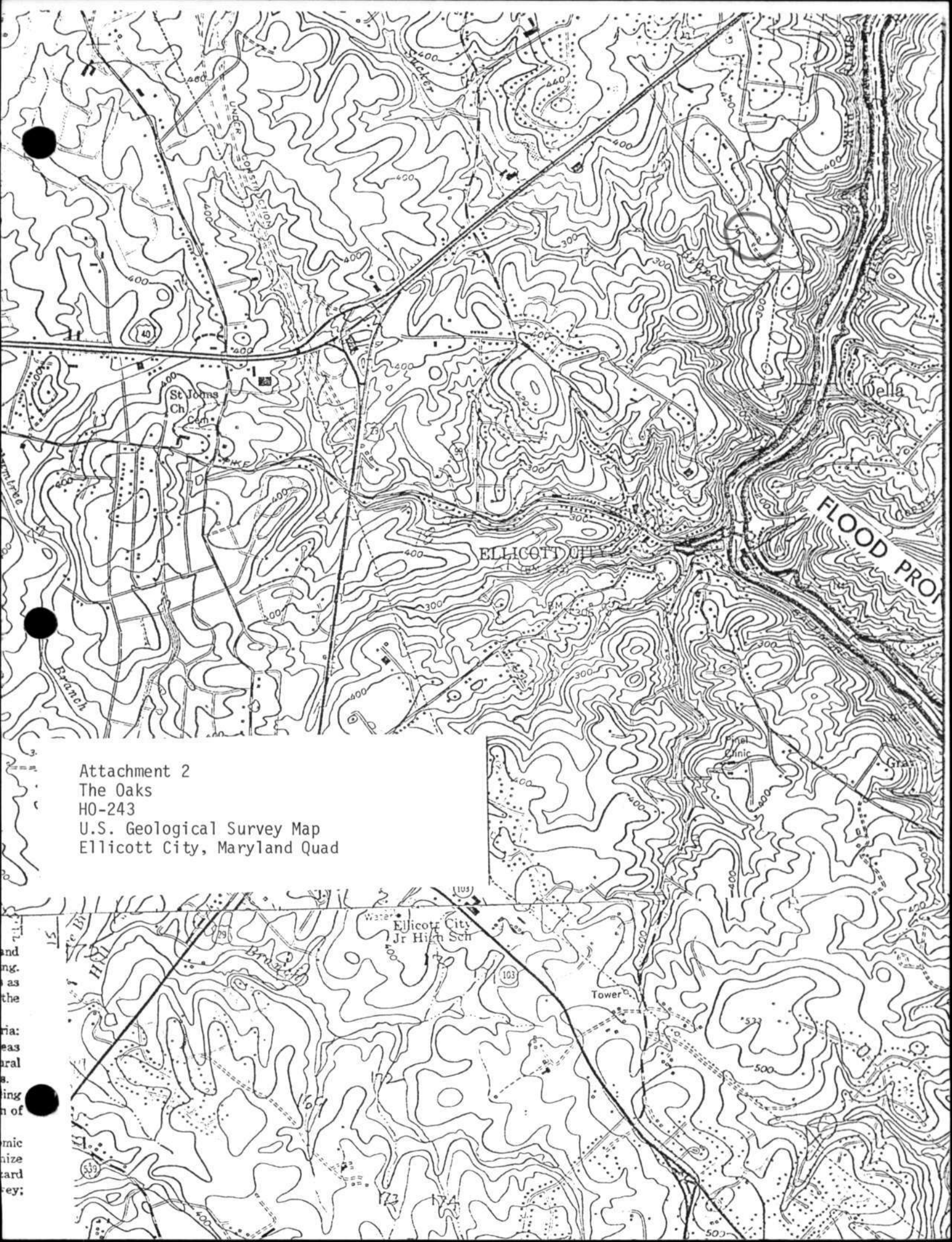


Cellar under Living Room & Dining Room.  
Basement under Den & Kitchen.  
All windows with tight storm windows  
Double floors Living Room & Dining Room









Attachment 2  
The Oaks  
HO-243  
U.S. Geological Survey Map  
Ellicott City, Maryland Quad



CLEORA BARNES THOMPSON  
PLANNING CONSULTANT  
HISTORICAL SITES SURVEY

HO-243  
THE OAKS  
(NORTHWEST)  
MAY 1977



HO 243

The Oaks

JSE 8/23



HO 243

The Oaks smokehouse

1 SF 8/73



#0243

The Oaks - cistern

JE 8/73



HO 243

The Oaks - cistern

JSE 8/73



H0243

brst bedroom fireplace

The Oaks

8/73 JSE



#0243

Music room windows

The Oaks

8/73

BS



H0243

dining room - looking south

The Oaks

8/73

JE



H0243

Parlor - looking west ~~southwest~~

The Oaks

8/73

JSE



HO 243

Parlor fire place

The Oaks

8/13

SE



HU 243

dining room fireplace

The Oaks

8/73

JSE



H0 243

dining room looking  
south west

The Oaks

8/73 JSE



H0243

outlet for saw lights

The Oaks - 8/73 JSZ



H0 243

hall - former entrance to  
Stairway

The Oaks

8/13 1952



Ho 243

hall to music room

The Oaks

8/93 JSE



H0243

WEST bedroom

The Oaks

8/73 JSZ



H0243

Music room fireplace

The Oaks-

SSC 8/73