

HO-340

Old Howard County Courthouse

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) for details about how to make an appointment.

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Last Updated: 02-07-2013

Old Howard County Courthouse
Main Street and Ellicott Mills Drive
Ellicott City
Private

Standing on the northeast corner of Main Street and Ellicott Mills Drive, the Old Howard County Courthouse was moved to this location between 1969 and 1971. It formerly stood on Mercer Street, which was to the northwest of its current site.

Now facing north on the north side of Main Street at the corner of Main Street and Ellicott Mills Drive, this narrow 2-bay 2-story stone building has a 6-paneled door in the east (left) first story bay, and 6/6 sash windows with paneled shutters in the first floor west bay and the two upper bays. All openings have large granite lintels. Windows have wooden sills.

The west facade has one small door with granite lintel on the first story right (south) side. The north half of this facade is covered with stucco, all the way around and including the northwest corner.

The south facade has two 6/6 sash windows on either floor, all with paneled shutters and granite lintels.

The only apertures on the east gable end are two small 6/6 sash windows with paneled wooden shutters in the attic gable.

An article entitled "Dinner Dance Provides Funds For Court House Re-Vamping," in the April 1, 1971 issue of The Times, Ellicott City, Maryland, reported the following about the house:

"The old Court House, built in 1840, stands today on Main Street and Ellicott Mills Drive after narrowly missing demolition in the fall of 1969.

From 1840 to 1843 the building served as the Court House when the county was still termed the 'Howard District of Anne Arundel County.' In 1843, the new granite building on Mount Misery was completed and all court records and proceedings were transferred there. That building with its additions, still served as the Howard County Court House.

The District of Howard became Howard County in 1851."

The building was inhabited by the Robert Jackson family until the occupants of Mercer Street and Fels Lane were relocated to new dwellings in the Hilltop Housing area, and the Mercer Street - Fels Lane complex of buildings was demolished.

The building has been restored and is used as an historical display.

Howard County
Old Courthouse

Howard County

The County Courthouses and Records of
Maryland -

Part One, the Courthouses, p. 101

Morris L. Radoff, 1960

Hall of Records-

"The stone building which served as the
first meeting place of the county government
of Howard County still stands. It is located
on what was then known as County
Street. It runs from Fels Avenue and
is parallel to Main Street in Ellicott
City. (Ellicott City Times, Century Edition,
March 17, 1941, Section J., page 5)"

Thursday, April 1, 1971

THE TIMES, Ellicott City, Maryland

Dinner Dance Provides Funds For Court House Re-Vamping

A champagne reception and dinner dance Saturday at Glenelg Country School on Folly Quarter Road netted the Howard County Historical Society funds towards restoration of the county's first Court House.

The old Court House, built in 1840, stands today on Main Street and Ellicott Mills Drive after narrowly missing demolition in the fall of 1969.

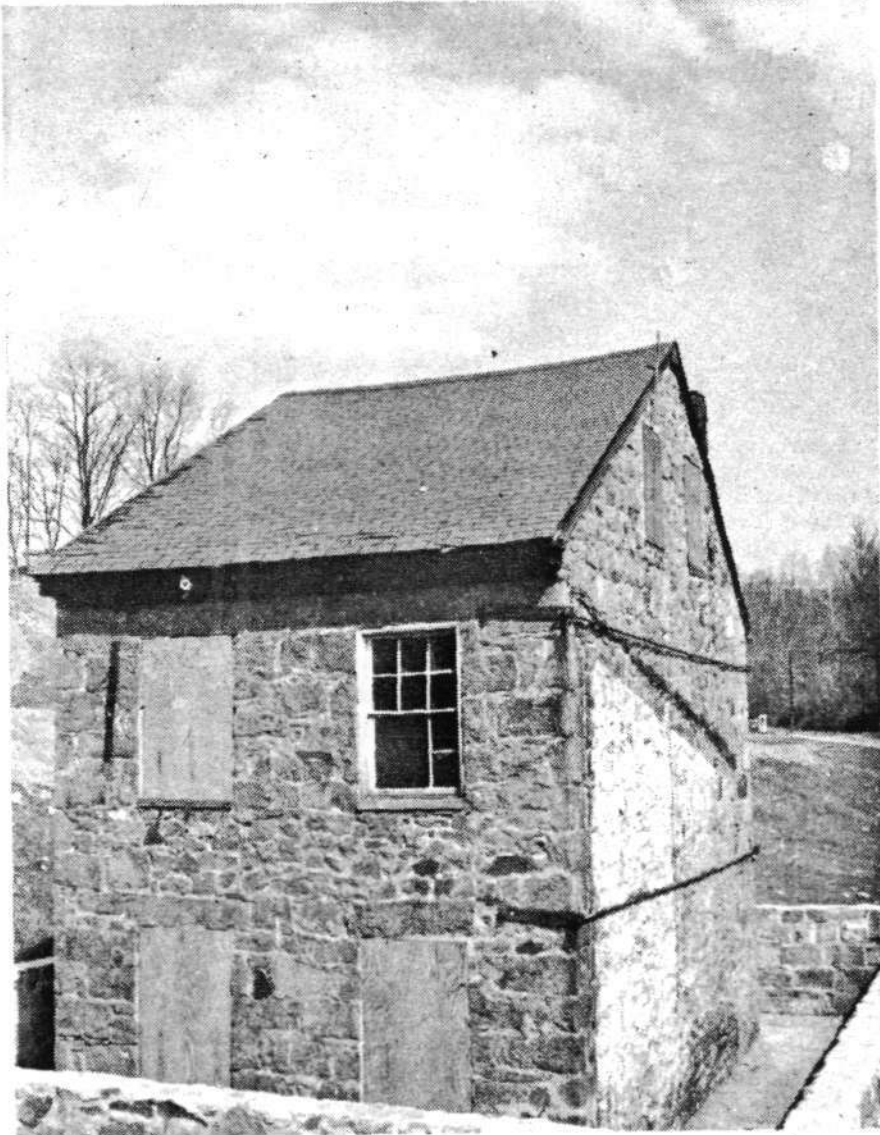
Residents of Mercer Street, including the Robert Jackson family who lived in the "Court House" which was then located on Mercer Street, were ready to move into the new low income Hilltop Housing project in 1969. At the same time plans were being made for a storm drain to cut through the "Court House" property.

County executive Omar J. Jones and other government officials, sympathetic to "Court House" renovation but without the County funds for the project, turned the building over to the Howard County Historical Society.

Since then, the building has been moved from Mercer Street, now gone, and is now on Main Street at Ellicott Mills Drive to await renovations. The Saturday evening affair at Glenelg provided funds earmarked for the renovation.

From 1840 to 1843, the building served as the Court House when the county was still termed the "Howard District of Anne Arundel County." In 1843, the new granite building on Mount Misery was completed and all court records and proceedings were transferred there. That building with its additions, still served as the Howard County Court House.

The District of Howard became Howard County in 1851.



**Closer To
Restoration**

The first Howard County Court House on Main Street at Ellicott Mills Road awaits restoration. Funds collected Saturday night from a champagne dinner and dance sponsored by the Howard County Historical Society will go towards the restoration, in the planning since 1969, when the old Court House narrowly missed demolition.

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ANOTHER

drug fair

Ed

THE TIMES

Md. Historical Trust
Box 1704 (COMP)
Annapolis, Md.
21404

AND (21043)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1969

Per Copy 10c

Court House Underway Concerted Effort May Rescue Old Building From Demolition

BY MARY LYNCH

The Howard County Historical Society -- "convinced of the importance of saving this building" will conduct a fund raising effort to preserve the first seat of local government here.

In a letter to Omar J. Jones, county chief, Charles E. Wehland last week urged that destruction of the building be avoided because "it is of such local significance." Mr. Wehland is president of the Historical Society.

The building was originally scheduled for demolition as part of the county's urban renewal program in Ellicott City. The project will see slum housing in the Fels Lane - Mercer Street complex destroyed when the tenants are moved into new dwellings in Hilltop Housing.

The old stone structure is located on Mercer Street and is inhabited by the Robert Jackson family. It, along with all the property fated to come down, is owned by the county.

The small three-story building was the center of government from about 1840 to 1843 when what is now Howard county was the Howard District of Anne Arundel county.

The governmental building was pinpointed in a story in the July 21 issue of THE TIMES. Its existence came to light as a result of research by Mrs. Paul Iribe, assisted by Clerk to the Court C. Merritt Pumphrey.

Consequently, Mr. Jones last month invited groups interested in saving the first county seat to come forward with suggestions, ideas and especially -- money. He cited the fact that no county funds could be spent in the effort since none were

budgeted this year, but that county-owned land might be set aside for its relocation if that becomes necessary.

The 30-by-18 building sits astride the path of a planned storm drain and last month there seemed no hope for its survival unless it could be removed to another location.

However, last week Mr. Wehland reported to Mr. Jones that Ellicott City engineer Claude Skinner feels it might be

feasible to reroute the storm sewer in order to leave the building on its original site. Mr. Skinner currently is attempting to work out an alternate plan for submission to county officials.

Mr. Wehland said no estimate is available yet of the cost of preservation of the structure or of moving it. A contractor is preparing estimates, he said.

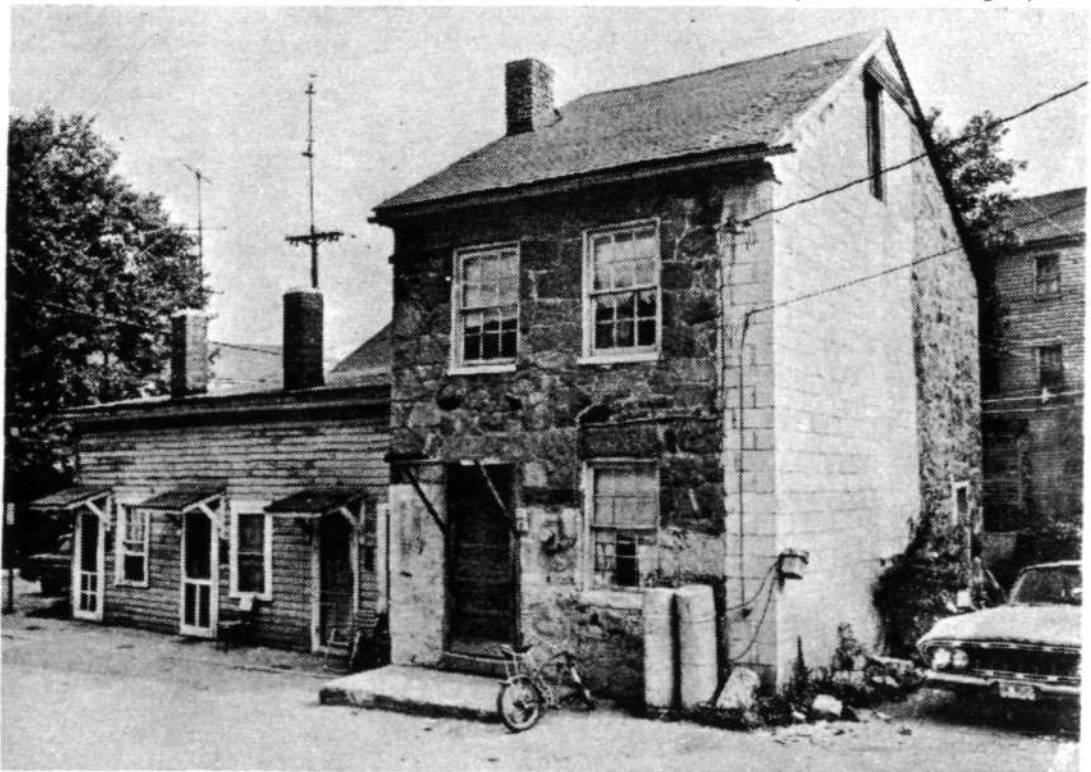
He received a \$250 contribution toward the

building's preservation even before the board of directors agreed to kick-off a fund raising drive in its behalf, the Ellicott City attorney stated.

He added a number of representatives of the county's garden clubs have stated they would "assist in the efforts to preserve and restore this building."

A fund has been set up by the historical society dubbed

(Continued on Page 2)



FATE MAY CHANGE -- A fund raising drive has been launched by the Howard County Historical Society to save the first local government building from demolition. The structure is located on Mercer Street in Ellicott City's urban renewal area. It was used as a courthouse from about 1840 to 1843 when what is now Howard county was the Howard District of Anne Arundel county.

firetruck went out of control and slammed into a tree.

Tickets for the 3-hour show, are available at fire stations throughout the county, or if enough are left over, will be available at the door. Also,

Courthouse

(Continued from page 1)

"Howard District Original Courthouse Fund." The society's treasurer, Dr. Benjamin Mellor, will receive contributions.

Another group concerned with the preservation of the county's past -- Historic Ellicott Mills -- will discuss making a contribution to the Courthouse effort, Mr. Wehland reported.

Those working to save the old building got a breather last week when it was announced that Mercer Street residents will not be moved until at least the end of October and that storm drain construction will start at the upper end of Fels Lane in mid-September, instead of at the Mercer Street end, as was planned originally.

Mr. Wehland also suggested that the Howard District jail, located very close to the old Courthouse on the corner of Mercer Street and Fels Lane, might also be preserved in the interests of history. It is reported that bake ovens and cells once inhabited by prisoners are still in existence in the basement.

There are two ways of getting through the world - one is to stop thinking, and the other is to stop and think. - Megiddo Message, 3-68.

Hastings

(Continued from page 1)

Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Hastings was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and received his bachelors degree from Bethany College in West Virginia, his masters from Loyola College in Baltimore, and is currently working toward his doctorate at American University in Washington, D.C.

The Howard Board of Education is expected to name his successor at its next regular meeting Wednesday, September 10.

Testimonial

A testimonial dinner in honor of Donald A. Hastings will be held on Friday, September 19, at 7:30 p.m. at the Ellicott City Lions Club, it was announced this week.

A spokesman said all friends of Mr. Hastings' are invited and welcome to attend. The Lions Club is located on Votta Road just off Waterloo Road.

For ticket information call Mrs. Margaret Sossau, Northfield elementary school, 465-8770.

Thursday, March 5, 1970



FIRST COUNTY SEAT--The stone building is the original County Court House, which served as the first County seat from at least 1840 to 1843. A resolution concerning its preservation together with the Howard District Jail was introduced at Monday's night session of the County Council.

Council Considers Motion To Sell Old Courthouse

The County Council moved Monday evening in a resolution introduced by the Council chairman to sell the County's "Old Courthouse" and the "Old Jail" to the Howard County Historical Society for the price of \$1.

The resolution states that the two existing structures are "no longer needed for the public use and it is in the public interest to transfer the properties to an organization which will preserve the historic sites." They were originally purchased by the County as part of the Fels Lane Renewal project.

The two structures were among the first to be built in the County. The three-story stone building was the first County Courthouse and was used for that purpose from at least 1840 until 1843. It is located one block from Main

Street on the corner of Mercer Street and Fels Lane.

The wooden structure which adjoins the "Old Courthouse" on the left was used as a stable at one time. According to reports, this structure would not be preserved by the Historical Society, but would be razed at some future time.

The "Old Jail" is a two and a half story frame structure and is located behind the "Old Courthouse" but faces on Fels Lane.

The resolution virtually assures that efforts by the County Historical Society to save the two structures from destruction will not be in vain. Both buildings were originally scheduled for demolition as part of the County's urban renewal plan in Ellicott City.

A fund has been set up by the Historical Society and has been

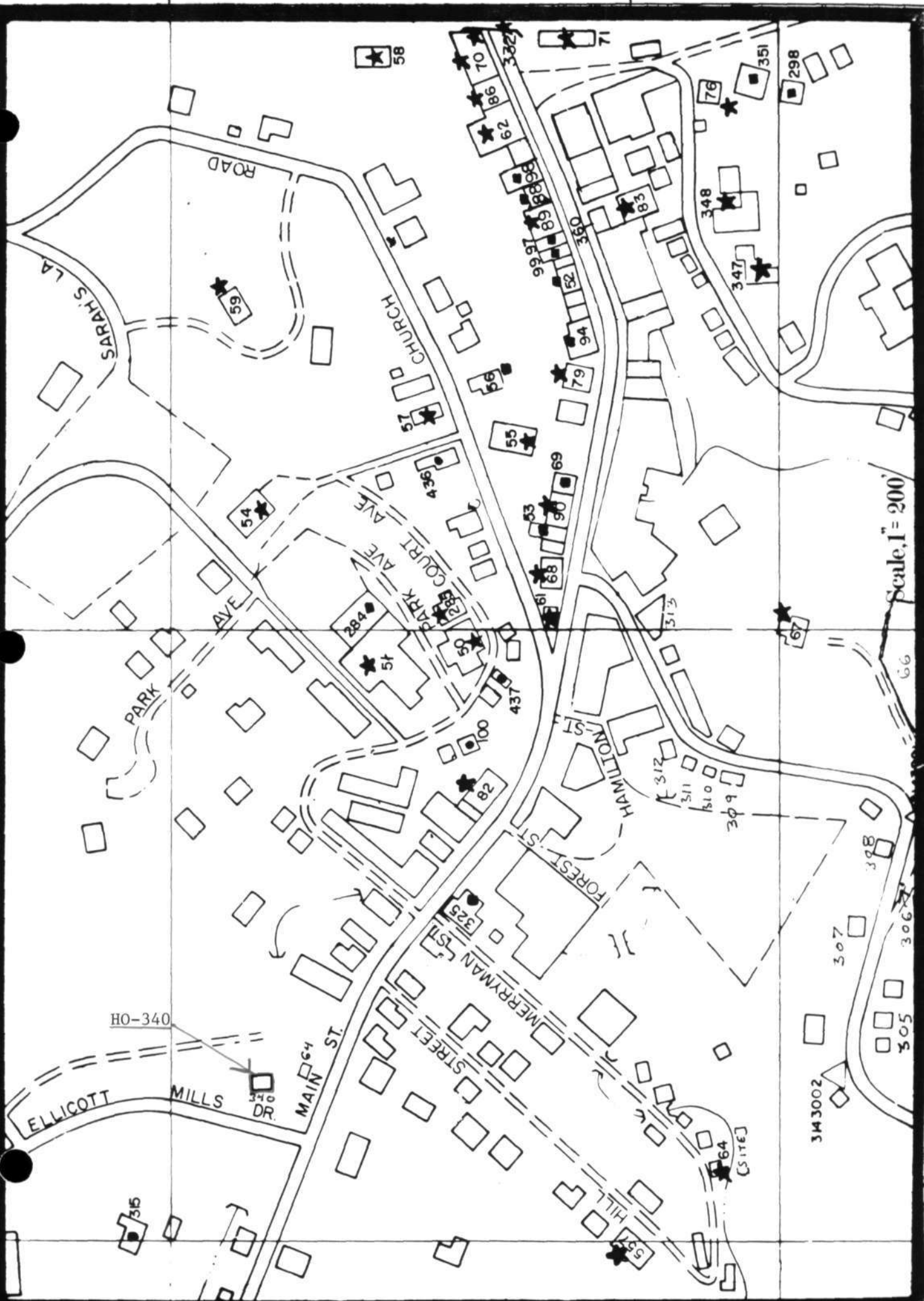
appropriately named the "Howard District Courthouse Fund."

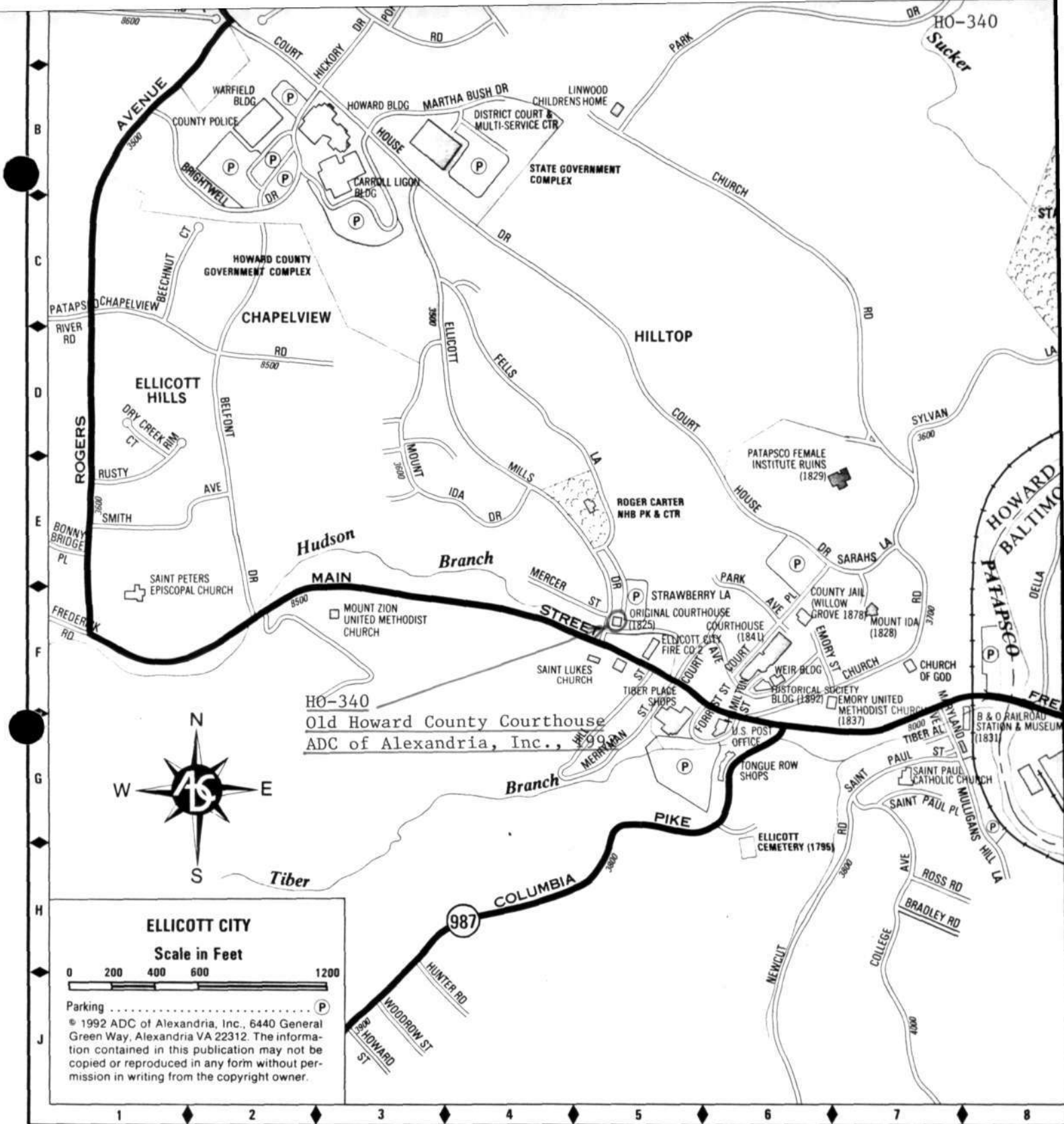
The pending resolution dictates that "the Howard County Historical Society shall agree in writing to provide certain earth works and revetments to the satisfaction of the Director of Public Works so as to not adversely affect the use of the surrounding property by the County."

Included in the resolution is another provision which states that "the said deed shall contain proper and lawful covenants running with the land providing for a perpetual use of the said property for public, charitable and non-profit uses of a historical nature."

The Council has announced that there will be a second reading of the resolution on April 6 at 8 p.m.

To Represent HUD On Tour





STREETS

Beechnut Ct C-1
Belfont Dr D-2
Bradley Rd H-7
Bonny Bridge Pl E-1
Brightwell Dr B-2
Chapelview Rd C-1
Church Rd B-6, F-7
College Ave H-7
Columbia Pike H-4
Court Ave F-5
Court House Dr A-2, D-5
Court Pl F-6
Dry Creek Ct D-1
Ellicott Mills Dr D-4

Linwood Rd A-2
Main St E-2
Martha Bush Dr B-3
Maryland Ave F-7
Mercer St E-4
Merryman St G-5
Millican Hill La G-8
Mount Ida Dr D-3
Newcut Rd J-6
Newcut St J-6
Oella Ave F-8
Park Ave E-6
Park Dr A-5
Patapsco River Rd C-1
Poplar Dr A-3
Ridge Rd A-1

Tiber Al G-7
Walnut Dr A-2
Westchester Ave F-9
Woodrow St J-3

ROUTE NUMBERS

MD 144 G-9
MD 987 H-4

BUILDINGS

Carroll Ligon Bldg B-3

GOVERNMENT FEATURES

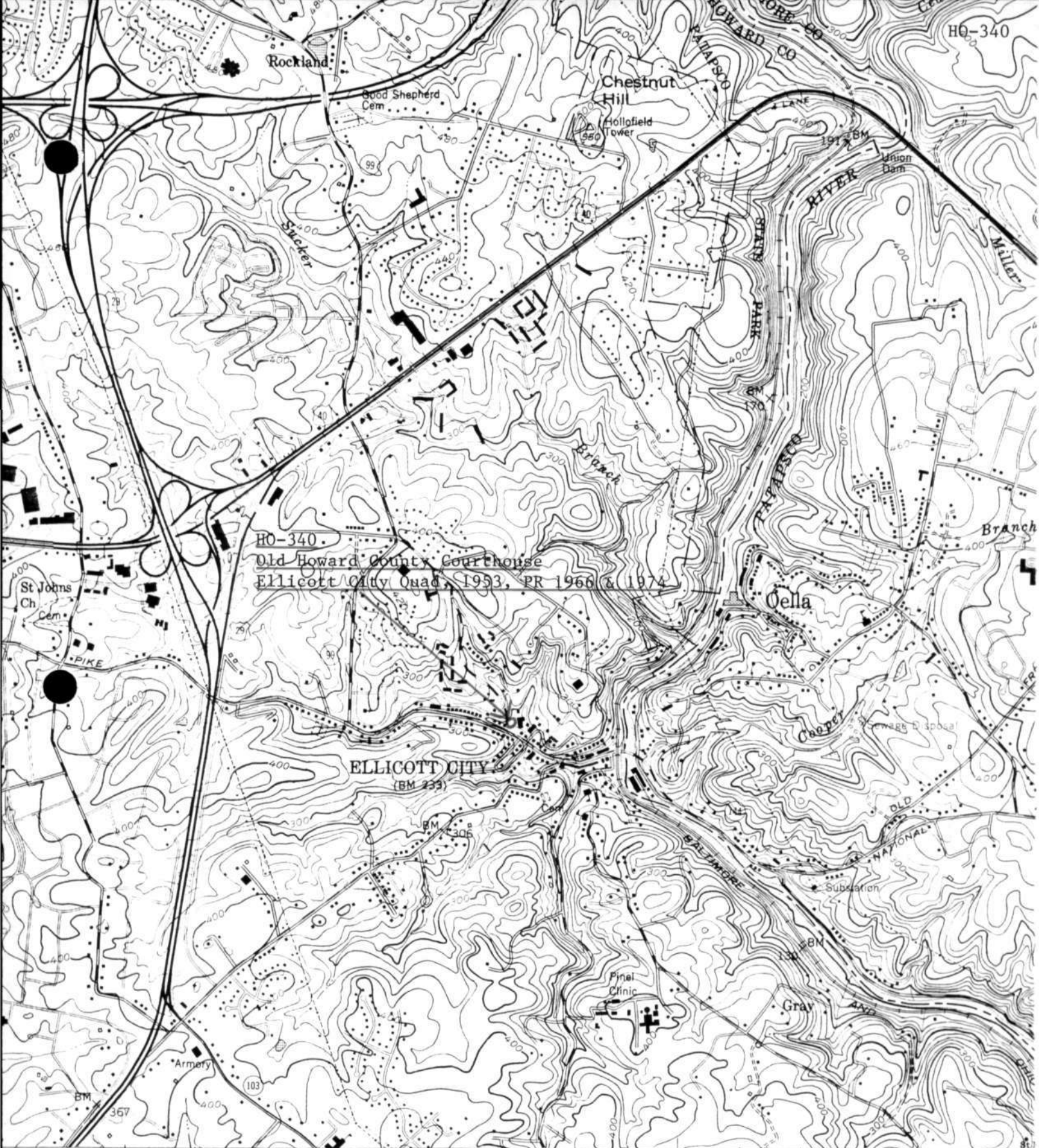
County jail F-6
County Police B-1
Courthouse F-6
District Court B-4
Ellicott City Fire Co 2 F-5
Ellicott City Post Office G-6
Howard Co Gov't Complex C-1
Multi-Service Ctr B-4
State Gov't Complex B-4

PARKS

Patapsco Valley Stte Pk A-9, J-9
Roger Carter NBHD Pk E-5

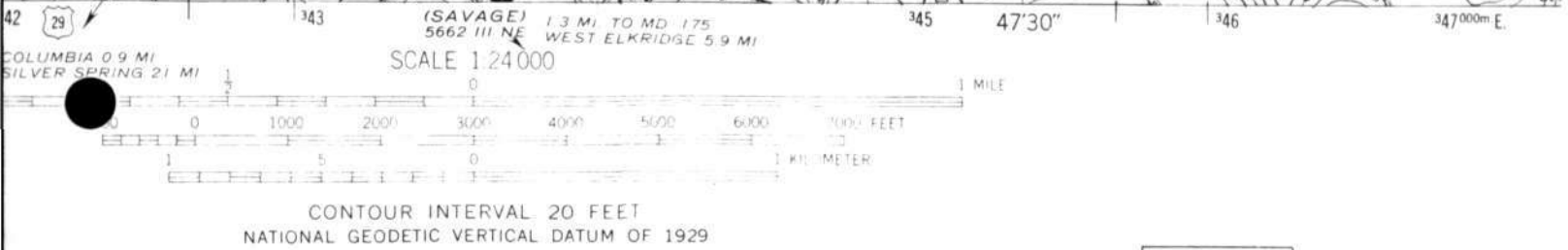
PLACE NAMES

Chapelview C-2
Ellicott Hill D-1
Hilltop D-5
Linwood A-3



HO-340.
Old Howard County Courthouse
Ellicott City Quad, 1953, PR 1966 & 1974

ELLICOTT CITY
(BM 233)

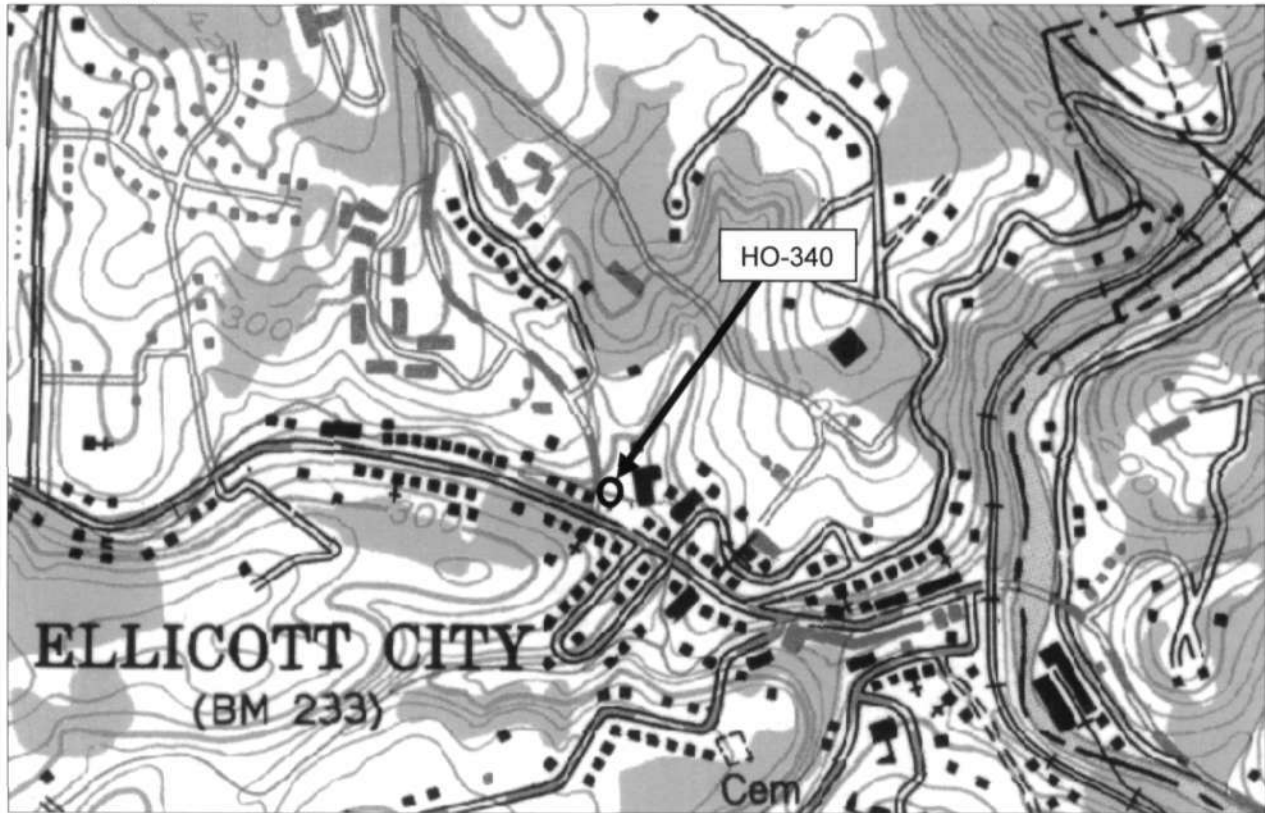


HO-340

Old Howard County Courthouse

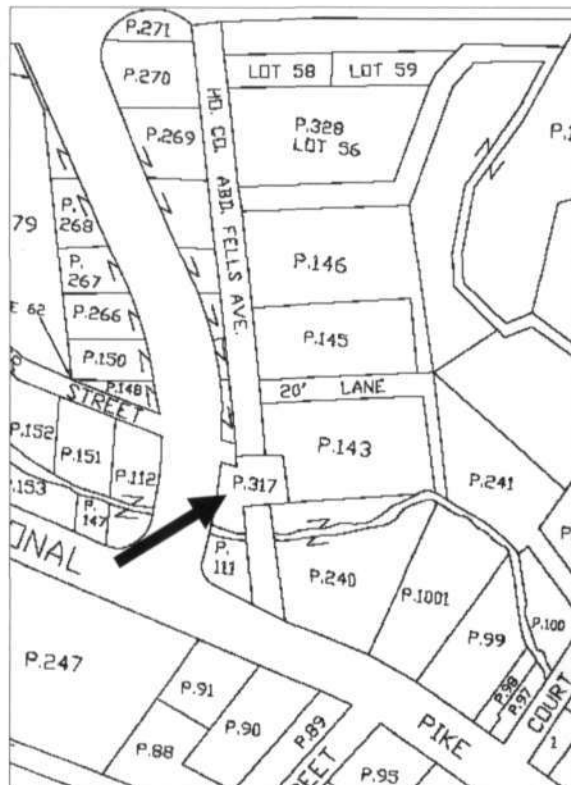
Main Street (MD 144) and Ellicott Mills Drive, Ellicott City

Ellicott City quad 1953, Photorevised 1966 and 1974



Tax Map 25A, Parcel 317

National Web Map Service 6" Orthophoto Map, c. 2010



HO-340
Old Howard County Courthouse
Main Street (MD 144) and Ellicott Mills Drive, Ellicott City
Photos by Jennifer K. Cosham, 11/28/2012
Southeast elevation



Northeast elevation





HOWARD COUNTY - ELLICOTT CITY HO-340

Old Ct. Hse -

Mercer St.

(issue of 7/21/69)

off Sels Lane.

HV

12090

300



40.340

Wright City

2534

BE 8/72

Old Howard Co. Courthouse