

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Rockdale (preferred)

and/or common The Robinson/Stirling Place

## 2. Location

street & number 1724 Carrs Mill Road N/A not for publication

city, town Fallston  vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland code 24 county Harford code 025

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. F. Prescott Ward (Carol W.)

street & number 1724 Carrs Mill Road

city, town Fallston \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Maryland 21047

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harford County Courthouse

street & number 40 South Main Street

city, town Bel Air \_\_\_\_\_ state Maryland 21014

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Maryland Historic Trust  
title Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis \_\_\_\_\_ state Maryland 21401

# 7. Description

HA-1229

<u>    </u> excellent	<u>    </u> deteriorated	<u>    </u> unaltered	<u>    </u> original site
<u>  X  </u> good	<u>    </u> ruins	<u>  X  </u> altered	<u>    </u> moved
<u>    </u> fair	<u>    </u> unexposed		date _____

## DESCRIPTION SUMMARY ON CONTINUATION SHEET #6

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Rockdale is a farm developed from the late 18th century through the early 20th century. The dwelling is surrounded by several outbuildings, trees and other plantings, and the remains of formal gardens and garden structures developed in the early 20th century.

The dwelling is in three parts with its principal facade to the south overlooking a small valley and the property's entrance. The east room of the east wing is the earliest section dating from the 18th century. The largest or main portion of the dwelling dates from ca. 1815-1830. The north wing, a bay centered in the south facade of the second story, and a small conservatory added to the south side of the east wing, date from the very early 20th century.

The main house is five bays in length, two and one-half stories in height, of stone construction, stuccoed and scored. A brick chimney rises flush with each end gable. The principal entrance centered in the south front is a six paneled door with glazed transom. Typical windows are 6/6 with narrow beaded frames and louvred blinds. Three dormers are in the southerly slope of the roof, each with 6/6 windows. A one-story porch extends across the south front, its fluted wooden columns of the Greek Doric order. Originally three bays in width, it was extended the full length of the house early in the 20th century. The bay window, added early in the 20th century to the central bay of the second story, has a 6/6 window in its south side with 4/4 windows in the flanking sides.

The west end of the main house is void of openings except at the attic level where a 2/2 window is on either side of the chimney. The main house was built forward of the earlier east wing and an original door opens through the east wall to the south porch of the east wing.

The north facade is similar to the south but its central bay is covered by the north wing, an early 20th century addition of frame construction stuccoed over wood lath over weatherboarding. Two stories in height with a gabled roof, it has a two-story bay window projecting from its east side and a small porch sheltering the entrance in the north end.

The east wing is three bays in length, two stories in height, of stone construction stuccoed and scored in imitation of ashlar. A brick chimney rises flush with its east gable. Its entrance is approximately centered in the south front and windows are 6/6 with narrow frames and louvred blinds. A one-story shed-roofed porch extends across the south front. Immediately west of the door is a vertical joint corresponding to the west side of the stone wall which divides the wing into two rooms, indicating the limits of the original section of this dwelling, measuring approximately 17 by 19 feet externally. Brick infill is noted at the original window openings behind the deteriorating stucco reducing the openings to compensate for their later narrow frames, probably installed when the main house was built.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1.

# 8. Significance

HA-1229

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1887-1935      **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Applicable Criteria: B and C

**SIGNIFICANCE**

The significance of Rockdale in the Fallston vicinity of Harford County derives from two sources. First as the residence of William E. Robinson (1860-1935), an entrepreneur in the canning industry, Rockdale is associated with the life of a person who figures prominently in an industry that was a major factor in Harford County's economy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From 1880 through the beginning of World War I, canning of fruits and vegetables was the third most important industry in Maryland (Walsh and Fox, p. 403). Harford was one of the counties which lead the State in the industry and Robinson is believed to have had the largest of such operations in the county. Second, Rockdale is significant for the Neoclassical influenced interior decorative detailing. Although the house was enlarged and remodeled to meet the changing tastes and life styles of the various owners, the interior of the main portion of the structure, erected circa 1815-1830, still retains a high percentage of its original woodwork and is one of a few houses of this period in this section of Harford County which still have much of the original interior decorative detailing. With its symmetrical moldings with corner blocks and paneled reveals, and mantelpieces, Rockdale is probably the best of these houses and as such could be used as a text for a broader understanding of the architectural development of Harford County.

**HISTORY AND SUPPORT**

Rockdale was purchased by Robinson in 1887. He added to the house in size and decoration, i.e., the bay window projecting from the second floor of the facade and the facade porch, and developed extensive gardens of which remnants still remain. The house stands today essentially as it was in Robinson's last years and gives a clear view of his lifestyle. Although Robinson was highly successful in business and acquired a great fortune, he preferred a provincial way of life apparently never making an attempt to extensively remodel Rockdale into an architectural showplace or to replace it with a structure in one of the various revival styles that were fashionable in the early decades of this century. He also preferred the buccolic setting of Rockdale to a house in Bel Air where his office was located or moving to a city such as Baltimore where he would have had a close social relationship with other wealthy business people.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

HA-1229

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

# 10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 6.49 acres

Quadrangle name Jarrettsville Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>1</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
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D	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
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E			
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F			
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G			
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H			
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

For verbal boundary description see CONTINUATION SHEET #6

For justification, see CONTINUATION SHEET #2

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. and Mrs. F. Prescott Ward and James T. Wollon, Jr., AIA

organization

date April 1980

street & number 1724 Carrs Mill Road

telephone (301) 877-3151

city or town Fallston

state Maryland 21047

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

11-5-80

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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RECEIVED NOV 19 1980

DATE ENTERED

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Rockdale  
Harford County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

In plan the main house contains a wide center hall with a single large room on either side. At the north end of the center hall the staircase rises open, with an intermediate landing in each story, to the third story. Virtually all original detailing remains including the staircase with its round rail, rectangular balusters and colonette newels, six-paneled doors, paneled window jambs; corner-block trim, chair railing, baseboard and mantels of the Greek Doric order. An early 20th century alteration in the second story associated with the addition of the south bay window slightly reduced the size of the two principal chambers to create a large central south chamber.

Details of the second story are similar to but simpler than their counterparts below and third story details are simple. The deep cellar is unfinished.

In the east room of the east wing is a large fireplace fitted with a crane. An oven is deeply recessed in the masonry in the south corner of the fireplace. A winding stairway ascends to the second story in the northwest corner of this room its door having fully-raised panels, its enclosing board partition attached with hand-wrought nails.

An unfinished cellar is beneath the east room, accessible from the exterior. The west room of the east wing probably is contemporary with the main house, originally serving as a butler's pantry, and a second enclosed and winding stairway ascends in its northeast corner. Built-in cupboards fill its southeast corner. Interior details and finishes in the second story are simple, dating from the 19th century.

A single room is in each story of the north wing and interior finishes and details are quite simple.

### OUTBUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Numerous outbuildings and other supporting structures remain, all in deteriorating condition. The largest of them is the barn, due north of the dwelling. The stone walls of the ground story are above grade at the south side and they contain several doors and windows to the stalls within. The tall upper story is of braced-frame construction, its major elements hewn. Access to the upper story is on grade at the north side. The entire upper story has collapsed. The barn is probably contemporary with the main house, possibly somewhat later but not earlier.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Rockdale  
Harford County  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET      ITEM NUMBER 7      PAGE 2

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

South of the barn, between it and the dwelling, is a corn house consisting of a corn crib on either side of an open drive. Vertical straight-sawn sheathing covers exterior walls and spaced oak slatting encloses the inner walls of the crib. The structural frame is of hewn timber joined with mortise-and-tenon. Log joists span the driveway to form a second floor. The corn house is probably contemporary with the barn.

East of the corn house is a very large brick ice pit with a one-story frame structure over it, its exterior walls sheathed in board-and-batten. Adjacent on the east is a dairy shed, its first floor several feet in grade, its entrance in its north side. Within the dairy room is a door to the ice pit. Interior walls and the ceiling of the dairy room were plastered. The ice house and dairy shed probably date from the late 19th century.

Northeast of the east wing is a one-story stuccoed stone and brick smokehouse its gabled roof parallel to those of the nearby dwelling. The small box cornice has a beaded fascia. An outer and inner door are in the doorway opening of the south wall, the inner one being an original door from the main house. The rafters are joined at the ridge with a pinned half-lap joint. This structure is probably contemporary with the main house.

Extensive terraced gardens once extended south and southeast of the dwelling with stone walls at some changes in levels. Most of the plant materials have disappeared, and the walls, associated steps and terminal posts are in a state of disrepair. At the east end of the east garden is a summer house having massive stone piers supporting a pyramidal roof. Centered to the south of the dwelling, on a lower level of the garden, was a cast-iron fountain set in a circular base edged with a rubble stone wall. A stone grotto is located near the frame gazebo. Nearby is a frame-hexagonal-shaped summer house, its six-sided conical roof supported by Doric columns with arched spandrels and a turned balustrade. The garden development dates from the early 20th century.

### ACREAGE JUSTIFICATION

The boundary for the Rockdale nomination is a circle with a radius of 300 feet drawn from the extreme southeast corner of the house. The boundary was drawn to include the minimum area necessary to provide a setting for the house and outbuildings to incorporate the landscaped areas

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Rockdale  
Harford County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

as opposed to the surrounding wooded areas which are in fairly natural state, and utilize the natural and visual barrier formed by these surrounding wooded sections. A circular configuration best accomplishes these goals and creates an easily defined and logical boundary.

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Rockdale  
Harford County  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET      ITEM NUMBER    8      PAGE      4

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

Robinson was born, raised, and educated near Bel Air, the seat of Harford County. By his early twenties he was working in the canning industry and at age thirty he incorporated the William E. Robinson Can Company. At the height of his business, Robinson had operations in Pennsylvania and Virginia as well as various Maryland counties. He failed in an attempt to enter state politics when he lost a bid for the State Senate in 1921.

It is not known for whom Rockdale was erected, either the earliest section or the circa 1815-1830 portion, or much more than that it was a farmhouse until Robinson acquired it.



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Rockdale  
Harford County  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

9

PAGE

5

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Harford County Land Records, Courthouse, Bel Air, Maryland.

Wollon, James Thomas, Jr. AIA, Architectural description prepared for owner and on file with owner and at Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, Maryland.

Bristow, Mary R. Research on file at Maryland Historical Trust (Survey File HA-1229).

Walsh, Richard and William Lloyd Fox. Maryland: A History 1632-1974. Baltimore, Md: Maryland Historical Society, 1974.

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Rockdale  
Harford County  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 7 & 10 PAGE 6

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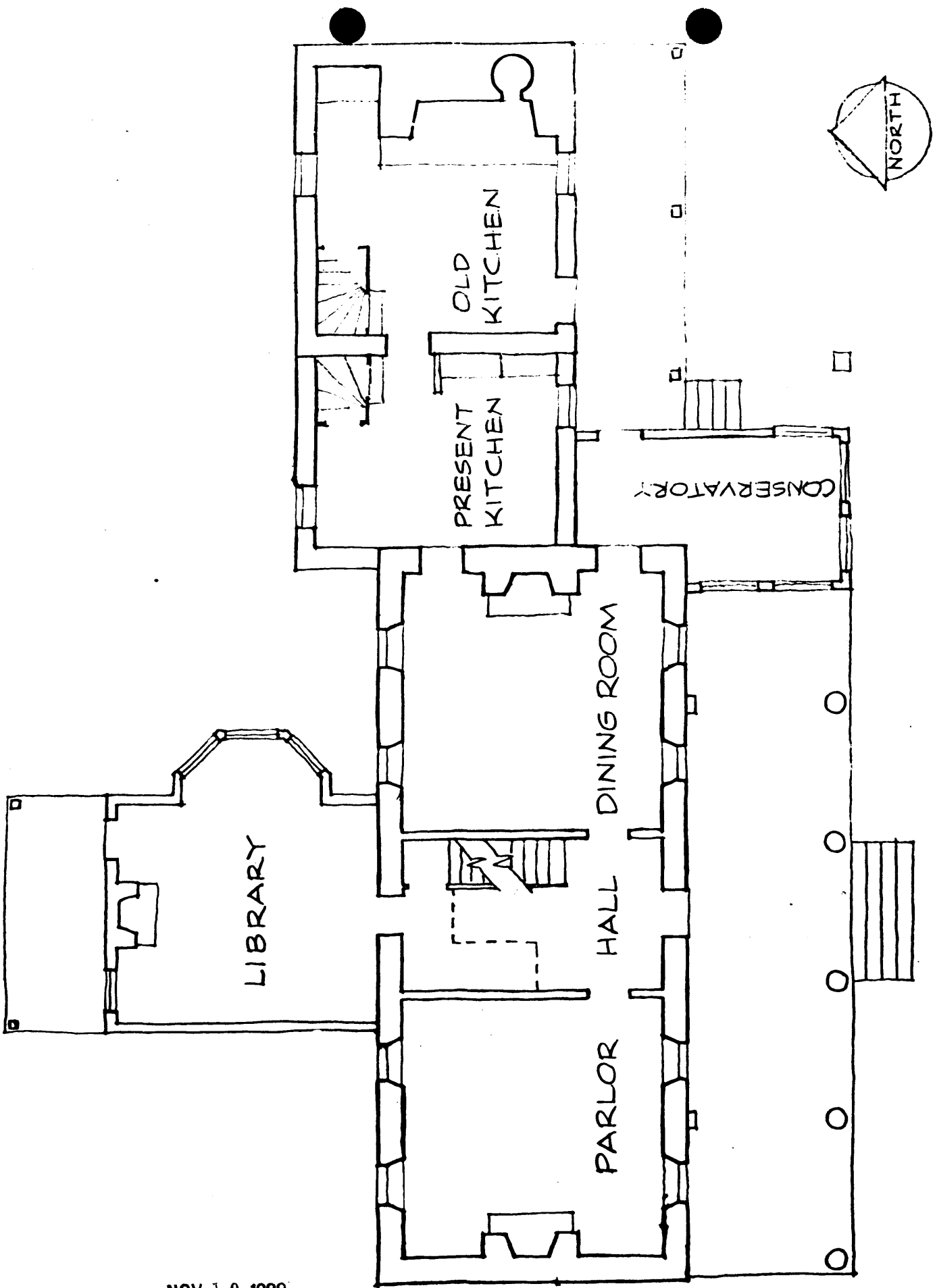
## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the nominated area is delineated by a broken line on the attached drawn to a scale of 1"=200' and consists of a circle with a radius of 300 feet drawn from the extreme southeast corner of the house.

## DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Rockdale is a farm developed from the late 18th century through the early 20th century. The dwelling is surrounded by several outbuildings, trees and other plantings, and the remains of formal gardens and garden structures developed in the early 20th century. The dwelling is in three parts with its principal facade to the south overlooking a small valley and the property's entrance. The east room of the east wing is the earliest section dating from the 18th century. The largest or main portion of the dwelling dates from ca. 1815-1830. The north wing, a bay centered in the south facade of the second story, and a small conservatory added to the south side of the east wing, date from the very early 20th century.

NOV 19 1980



**ROCKDALE**  
FALLSTON, HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND

**FIRST FLOOR PLAN NOT TO SCALE**  
SKETCH BY JAMES T. WOLLON, JR., ARCHITECT  
29 JANUARY 1980

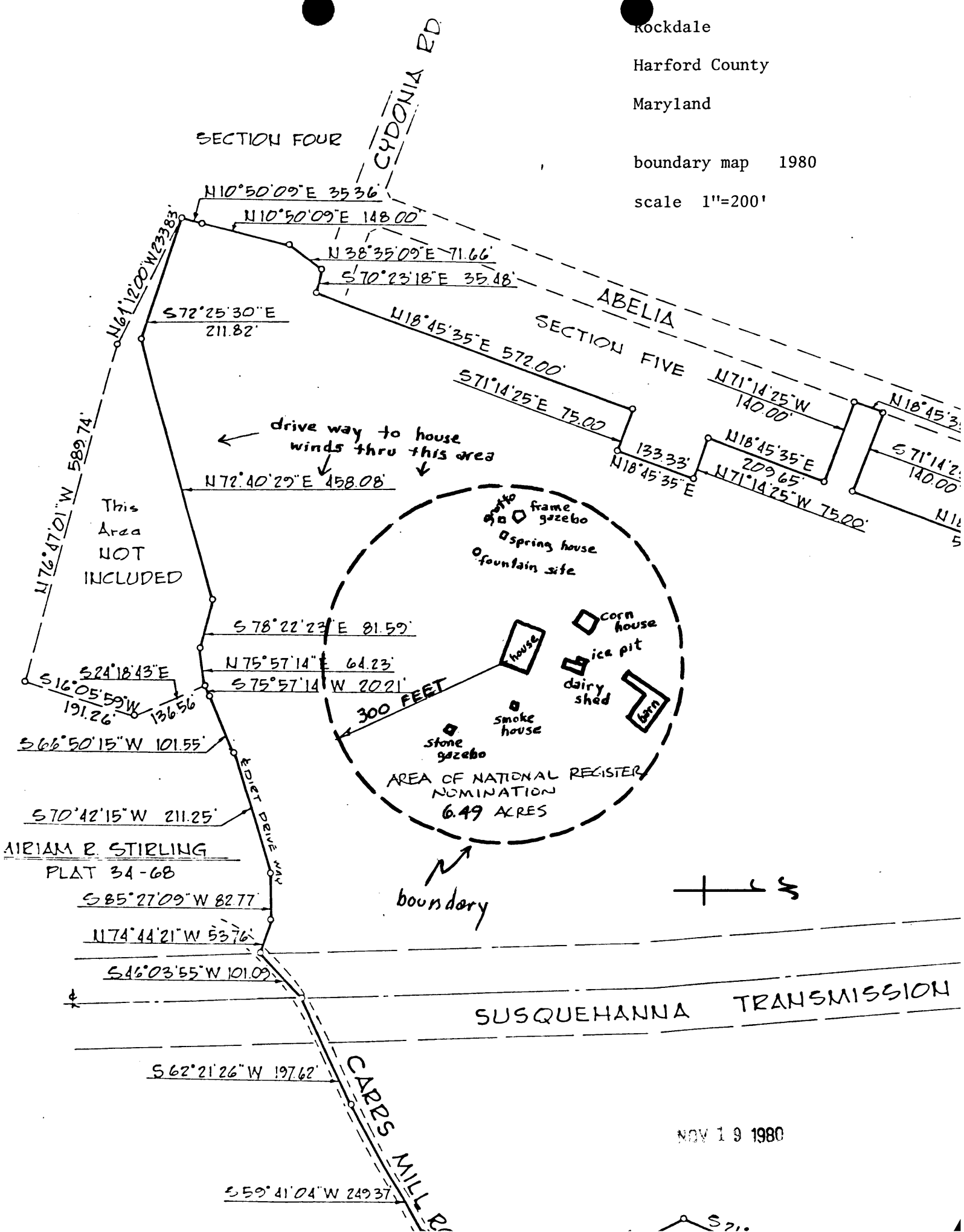
Rockdale

Harford County

Maryland

boundary map 1980

scale 1"=200'



NOV 19 1980

S 71.

