

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received FEB 13 1980

date entered SEP 8 1980

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

1. Name

historic Half-Way House

and/or common The Wiseburg Inn

2. Location 1.3 mi. S of Parkton at

18200 York Road (west side of Maryland Route 45, 2.5 miles
street & number north of Hereford and 1.3 mi. south of Parkton — not for publication

city, town Parkton *mi.* vicinity of congressional district Second

state Maryland code 24 county Baltimore code 005

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input 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 Marion V. Runkles III

street & number 18200 York Road

city, town Parkton — vicinity of state Maryland 21120

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courts Building

street & number Bosley Avenue

city, town Towson state Maryland 21204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1930s federal state county local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D. C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Half-Way house is a large, 2½-story brick structure located on the west side of the York Road (Maryland Route 45) at Wiseburg Road, 1.3 miles south of Parkton. The inn is close to the road and has a service yard on the north between it and three of the original outbuildings. To the north and west are fields, but south along York Road is a small group of houses forming the village of Wiseburg.

The Wiseburg Inn is larger than other taverns on the York Road north of Cockeysville and is significant not only for its architectural quality but because its original features have been preserved or accurately restored. The main part, built as an inn about 1810, was placed in front of an earlier log structure which has since been used as a kitchen. The walls are of Flemish bond except for the rear (west) elevation and gables where they are common bond. Resting on a foundation of coursed rubble, the walls are three bricks in thickness, two in the gables. Within each gable end is a massive interior chimney having a corbeled cap. Each has four fireplaces and two separate flues. Between the first and second floors is a belt course. The roof is covered with wooden shingles, and there are three dormers with 6/6 windows and gable roofs. The dormers as well as the dentiled molding and boxed cornice are original.

Originally, two of the five front (eastern) bays of the inn were doors. The center one gave access to the hall and the two parlors on the south; the adjacent door to the north allowed patrons to enter the bar directly. The present owner has changed the bar door into a window which duplicates the others which have 12/12 double hung sash and blinds. The recessed front door has a paneled facing and a rectangular transom of clear, leaded glass in an oval design. The rear door matches the front, but there is no transom. Each floor of the south elevation has one pair of windows since fireplaces occupy the other two bays, but the north elevation has three bays. There is a small window centered between the flues in both gables.

The first floor of the Half-Way house has a 6'8" central hall extending forty feet to the rear of the building. It is flanked by two rooms on each side. The cage bar, located in the southwest corner of the northeast room is not thought to be original. It has been dismantled by present owner and is stored in the cellar. Repairs indicate that there was once a pass-through in the wall from the small back parlor, now the dining room, to the bar and a trap door in the floor of the dining room which led to a separate compartment in the cellar. To the south of the hall are double parlors of approximately equal size separated by a pair of large paneled double folding doors under an elliptical arch. This unusual opening, nearly eleven feet wide and over eight feet at the center, has a reeded molding with a keystone. The doors have the original hardware and glide and fold easily. In each room on the exterior wall is a paneled double-door closet adjacent to the partition. Throughout the inn the floors are original except for the bar room. The chair rails and baseboards have been accurately restored or repaired. The mantels, torn out by vandals, were reproduced from photographs of the originals by the present owner.

To the right rear of the hall is a dog-leg stair with a small window to light the landing. It is of open string design with a slender turned newel and square balusters. Fluted pilasters support an engaged rail. On the second floor are five rooms, and the central one on the north side has been converted into a bathroom.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION (continued)

The four bedrooms have smaller fireplaces than those on the first floor. One-third of the attic was once enclosed by a board partition.

The inn has a full basement with a dirt floor. In the east wall are small windows at ground level; smaller barred windows in the south and west walls are below ground level and have stone wells. At the northeast corner are stone steps leading upward to a bulkhead entrance to the yard. Some of the cellar beams are hewn; others are pit sawn. The plan is similar to the upper levels since the walls of the hall are structural, the south being brick to the attic, the north stone in the cellar, brick on the first floor and frame on the second. All structural members are pegged and nails used only in the trim.

The 1½-story log kitchen structure is attached to the northwest portion of the inn behind the dining room. Unlike the brick inn, it was altered during the 19th century. It's north wall was moved out flush with the north wall of the inn. The logs were removed, and a new brick wall on a stone foundation was built. The bricks did not match those of the inn. The present owner has restored the kitchen to its original size by reconstructing the north log wall on its original foundation. Thus, there is again a porch on that side as well as on the south. Only on the rear (west) elevation were the logs covered with German siding evidently because of excessive weathering. The hand-split lath and plaster covering the south wall was removed by the present owner, and the log construction exposed. Evidently it was originally exposed since there are shutter hooks and animal paw prints in the chinking. There are three bays on the north elevation which has a central entrance and four on the south which has two central windows flanked by doors. On the west is a cooking fireplace with a large exterior stone chimney. The roof line was never changed, and the wooden shingle roof has been restored by the present owner.

The interior of the log kitchen was once divided into two rooms. There was no direct access to the inn, and food was carried out a south door and into the rear door of the inn. Eventually a doorway was cut through the brick inn wall and the log wall adjacent to it so there was easy access to what is now the dining room. Because of the new door, the stairway to the loft had to be removed. The present owner has added a reversed boxed stair in the northeast corner of the kitchen. The fire opening is 6'-0" x 4'-7" and has a large 9-foot mantel. Among many carved initials and symbols on the mantel are "J.W." for John Wise and two small carved sketches of outdoor signs indicating several design trials. The owner has an old sign in storage stating "The Half-Way House, Pleasant Hunter, Prop."

Three original outbuildings remain on the property. Across York Road was a wagon shed, a two-story stone barn and a corn crib. The barn reportedly had a blacksmith shop in one corner.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

Still standing, but not part of the present Wiseburg Inn property, is a bank barn on the southeast corner of York and Wiseburg Roads. A few feet from the northeast corner of the inn and opposite the exterior cellar door is a dairy (12' x 13') of stucco over stone. Openings in the walls allow water from the adjacent well to flow into an interior trough. The floor is flagstone, and there are air vents in the upper walls. The 30-foot hand excavated well has stone walls.

North of the dairy is a two-story laundry (18' x 16') also built of stucco-covered stone. It has an interior chimney with a corbeled brick cap. The first floor, partly below grade, has a large fireplace on the west and a door facing York Road on the east. Under a small southern window is a spillway to dispose of waste water. Entrance to the second story is well above grade on the south. West of the laundry is a board and batten shed (approximately 15' x 31') built on a stone foundation. In the center of the south wall is a flight of stone steps leading down to an ice storage room beneath the west end. There was a trap door in the floor to the rear of the shed and a pully for lowering large blocks of ice.

Some outbuildings were in poor condition and were demolished during the 1960s. These include the three directly across York Road, a four-hole brick outhouse, not thought to be original, in back of the inn and a stone bake oven. The materials of the last two have been stored and accurate reconstruction from documentation is possible. On the west side of York Road to the north of the inn was a tollgate built about 1810. Though the land was held by the turnpike company at least until 1919, the tollgate had been demolished many years before.

8. Significance

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The Half Way house derives its significance from its relationship to the road construction boom in the United States in the early years of the 19th century to be followed a decade later by canal construction in the 1820s and railroad construction in the 1830s. The Half Way house was constructed in 1810 to serve travelers on the newly opened turnpike from Baltimore, Maryland, to York, Pennsylvania. The York Turnpike is contemporary with the first nationally financed highway from Cumberland, Maryland west which was chartered by Congress in 1806, (see National Register form for La Vale Toll Gate House, Allegany County) and the Baltimore bankers' road (see National Register nomination form for Old National Pike Milestones) chartered by the Maryland legislature a year earlier to connect Baltimore and Cumberland. The imposing scale and dimensions as well as the architectural pretensions of the Half Way house indicate the importance of the new transportation facilities in the minds of its builder and his contemporaries. (It is interesting to note that from circa 1810 the Turnpike Company operated a principal changing station for horses immediately adjacent to the Inn.) Its 1810 date is especially early for a Maryland building constructed as an inn. The studies of major transportation routes in Maryland have not uncovered an earlier example. Further, the rural setting of the Half Way House and the scale of the York Road have remained unchanged from the early 19th century. The collection of remaining outbuildings adds documentation to the picture of life at a 19th century inn.

HISTORY

Under innkeepers John Wise and Pleasant Hunter, the Half Way house was the center for political, governmental, and social activities for the Seventh Election District of Baltimore County.

Other inns and taverns were built along the turnpike during the 19th century, but they were not as important locally as the Half Way house and, if they have survived at all, they have been altered until they bear faint resemblance to their original appearance.

The main brick 2½-story inn was erected circa 1810, as a large extension of a 1½-story log cabin of earlier vintage, possibly built before the turn of the century.¹ By local tradition the builder of the Half Way house was John Wise, who acquired almost 100 acres of a track called Byram's Fancy between 1809 and 1818. Wise, native of Germany, came from Harford County to Baltimore County at the time that he bought the land. History credits him with founding the village of Wiseburg.² The post office (1816-1900?), the community schools (1847 and 1874), the churches (1826 and 1871), and the road from the turnpike east to White Hall all carried the name Weisburg or Wiseburg on maps of the past century. All are now gone but the United Methodist Church and the country road.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6

10. Geographical Data **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreage of nominated property 5.61 acres *See Cont. Sheet*
 Quadrangle name Hereford Quadrangle **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1 8	3 5 7 6 3 0	4 3 8 7 0 6 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Nominated acreage is Parcel 261 on Baltimore County Tax Map 17 (see enclosed tax map).

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shirley B. Clemens (Mrs. C. E.)

organization _____ date 1979

street & number 16223 Railroad Avenue telephone (301) 472-2684

city or town Monkton state Maryland 21111

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 *J. Middle* 2-6-80

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date _____

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u><i>Forney Bruce</i></u> Keeper of the National Register	date <u>9-8-80</u>
Attest: <u><i>Emma Jane Sapp</i></u> Chief of Registration Regional Coordinator	date <u>9-5-80</u>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

It seems certain that the Half Way house was built to serve the turnpike which was completed in 1810, following an 18th century route from Baltimore to York, Pennsylvania. In the minutes of the Baltimore and York Town Turnpike Company for August, 1810, there is an entry, "...that Gwynn and Wilson be a committee to agree with M [r] Wise for the passage of teams to and from his building at the 4th toll stake."³ The fourth toll stake was at Wiseburg in 1810 documenting John Wise's building on that site in 1810. The Turnpike Company operated the official stopping place for the changing of stage coach horses half-way between Cockeysville, Maryland, and Shrewsbury,⁴ Pennsylvania, (other facilities for changing teams were immediately adjacent to the inn.

The Half Way house is located roughly equal distance between Baltimore and York. The documented use of the name is on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas.

John Wise was a prominent farmer as well as innkeeper. His son, John, assisted him at the inn. In the presidential elections of 1824 and 1828 John Wise supported John Quincy Adams over Andrew Jackson.⁵ He died in 1832 a few months after he sold the inn to a Peter Symser. After Symser's death in 1834, the Half Way house was leased by his heirs for a few years to a Joseph Starr, but by 1842 the inn was in the possession of Pleasant Hunter who had married Symser's daughter, Margaret. For fifty-two years until his death in 1894, Pleasant Hunter was the proprietor of the Half Way house.

Even more than John Wise, whose political preferences were known down county, Pleasant Hunter was a politician. He served twice as Baltimore County Commissioner, was at one time sheriff and also tax collector for Seventh District. Among the community gatherings at the inn for which we have record was a mass meeting in 1860 during the difficult days before the Civil War. At the meeting support was expressed for the Union and the Constitution of the United States.⁶ Hunter was a delegate the following year to a meeting in Cockeysville at which pro-Union delegates to a state convention were selected.

Hunter was also the treasurer and collector of a fund which was raised to exempt the entire Seventh District from the draft. Donations were made at the inn by all the men according to their means and, in some fashion, the interest on the money could be assigned to the Baptist Church or the building of the new Methodist Episcopal Church at Wiseburg. The notebook with lists of these transactions was saved when the inn was being cleaned out about 20 years ago.

The Half Way house was the community center for the rural communities. It was the scene of many auctions "...the subscribers will sell at Public Sale on Saturday, the 27th day of August, 1826, at the tavern door at Wiseburg..." reads one newspaper advertisement. The first innkeeper, John Wise, was one of the trustees for the first community church and cemetery.

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SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Pleasant Hunter gave the land for the second church and the parlor of the tavern may have been the meeting place of the religious class that founded the church. When the first village school was torn down, the inn housed the pupils until the new school was completed.

In 1871 Pleasant Hunter again appeared in county politics as winner in the commissioners race in an election in which he ran on the "Potato Bug" ticket, a fusion of Democrats and Republicans in opposition to the regular Democratic Party.¹⁰ By 1860 he was also a miller, having then purchased the grist and saw mill east of White Hall and marketing its products under the name "Mine-Runs Mills." He died in 1894 and is buried in the same town cemetery as is John Wise.

Two of the owners of the Half Way house, Peter Smyser and Pleasant Hunter, died while in possession of the hostelry and inventories were taken of their possessions. Peter Smyser's personal property included such innkeeping necessities as 12 gallons of rye whiskey, 8 chairs, 4 benches and a barroom table. Sixty years later Pleasant Hunter had many whiskey barrels (but no whiskey!) as well as the items needed for overnight guests, featherbeds and pairs of white wool blankets.¹¹ Both inventories make fascinating reading as they describe the contents of the Half Way house room by room.

Rumors have always circulated locally concerning the quartering of Union soldiers at the Half Way house during the Civil War. It is quite likely that troops may have camped in the inn yard as they marched down the turnpike from Pennsylvania on their way to Baltimore and Washington and were halted temporarily by the riots which prevented them from passing through the city.

It has also been told in northern Baltimore County that there was a magnificent ball given at the inn by John Wise for the Marquis de Lafayette when he passed through Wiseburg on his way to Baltimore in 1823. Supposedly the lovely 13 year old Eleanora Turner, granddaughter of James Calder of Parkton, was deemed too young to attend the ball and was sent to bed. Her brother then wrapped her in a blanket and smuggled her down to Wiseburg where the party was in progress and her youthful charms earned her a kiss from Lafayette.¹²

When Hunter died in 1894 the inn was purchased from his estate by his daughter-in-law Mrs. Silas Hunter. It became her private home and the home of her son, Maurice, who died in 1958. At that time the property was willed to St. James Episcopal Church for use as a school for boys but the will was broken to allow sale of the property, first to a real estate firm and then, in two parts, to the Archdiocese of Baltimore and to Marion Runkles, III, who bought the Half Way house and the 5 plus acres that surrounded it on the west side of the turnpike.

¹The 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment lists a log building of approximate dimensions

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CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

²Genealogies of Leading Families of Baltimore City and County, Maryland.
New York, Chapman Publishing Company, 1897, pp. 944-47.

³Records of the Baltimore and Yorktown Turnpike Company, MS 52, p. 117,
Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

⁴The Recollections of Philip Cross, 1847-1922. Unpublished manuscript owned
by Miss Emily Stiffler, Parkton, Maryland. Copy in personal library of C.E. and S.B.
Clemens.

⁵History of Baltimore County, Neal A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel. Friends of the
Towson Library, Towson, Maryland 1979, p. 125

⁶Ibid, p. 237

⁷Seventh District Draft List, old notebook in possession of a local resident,
copy in library of C.E. and S. B. Clemens.

⁸Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser, August 24, 1836.

⁹Wiseburg United Methodist Church, Our First 100 Years, 1971. Bertha Mays and
committee, p. pp. 5, 6.

¹⁰History of Baltimore County, p. 266.

¹¹Inventories of Estates: Peter Smyser, Hall of Records, Baltimore County
Inventories DMP 43:582. Pleasant Hunter, Baltimore County Court House, BWA 27, pp.516-29

¹²As told in the family of Marion Turner Clark, great-granddaughter of Eleanor
Turner.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brooks, Neal A. and Rockel, Eric G. A History of Baltimore County. Towson, Maryland: Friends of the Towson Library, 1979.

Cross, Philip. "Recollections 1847-1923", unpublished manuscript in possession of Miss Emily Stiffler, Parkton, Maryland.

Genealogy and Biography of Leading Families of Baltimore City and County. New York: Chapman Publishing Co., 1897.

Mavs, Bertha and committee, Wiseburg United Methodist Church, Our First Hundred Years, 1871-1971. Parkton, Maryland, 1971.

Records of Baltimore and York Turnpike Company. MS 52, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, Maryland.

Baltimore County Records, Wills and Inventories, BWA 27, pp. 516-29. also Baltimore County Inventories in Hall of Records.

Abstracts, Deeds (and other source materials) as compiled by John McGrain, Baltimore County Landmarks Commission, 1975-76.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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DATE ENTERED	SEP 8 1980

Half Way House
Baltimore County
Maryland

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

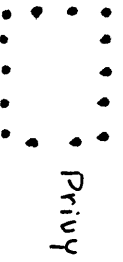
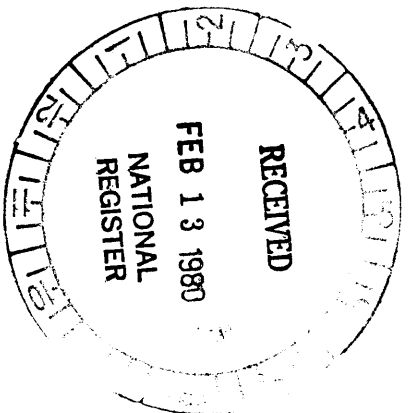
Acreege: Changed to 1.7+ acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

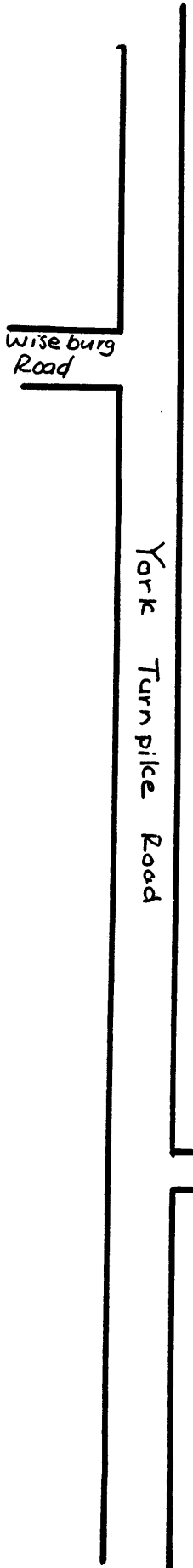
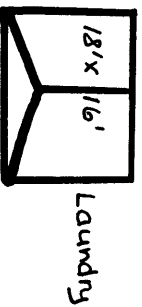
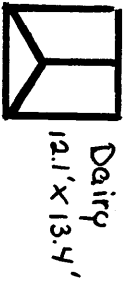
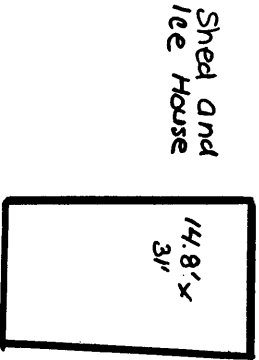
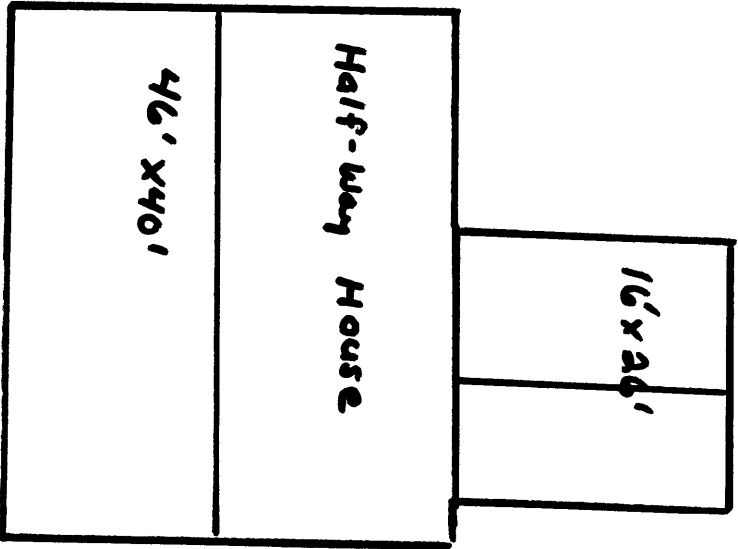
The property being nominated measures 380.01 feet along York Road and projects 200 feet to the west forming a rectangle and is approximately the eastern third of the tract labeled Parcel 261 on Baltimore County Tax Map 17.

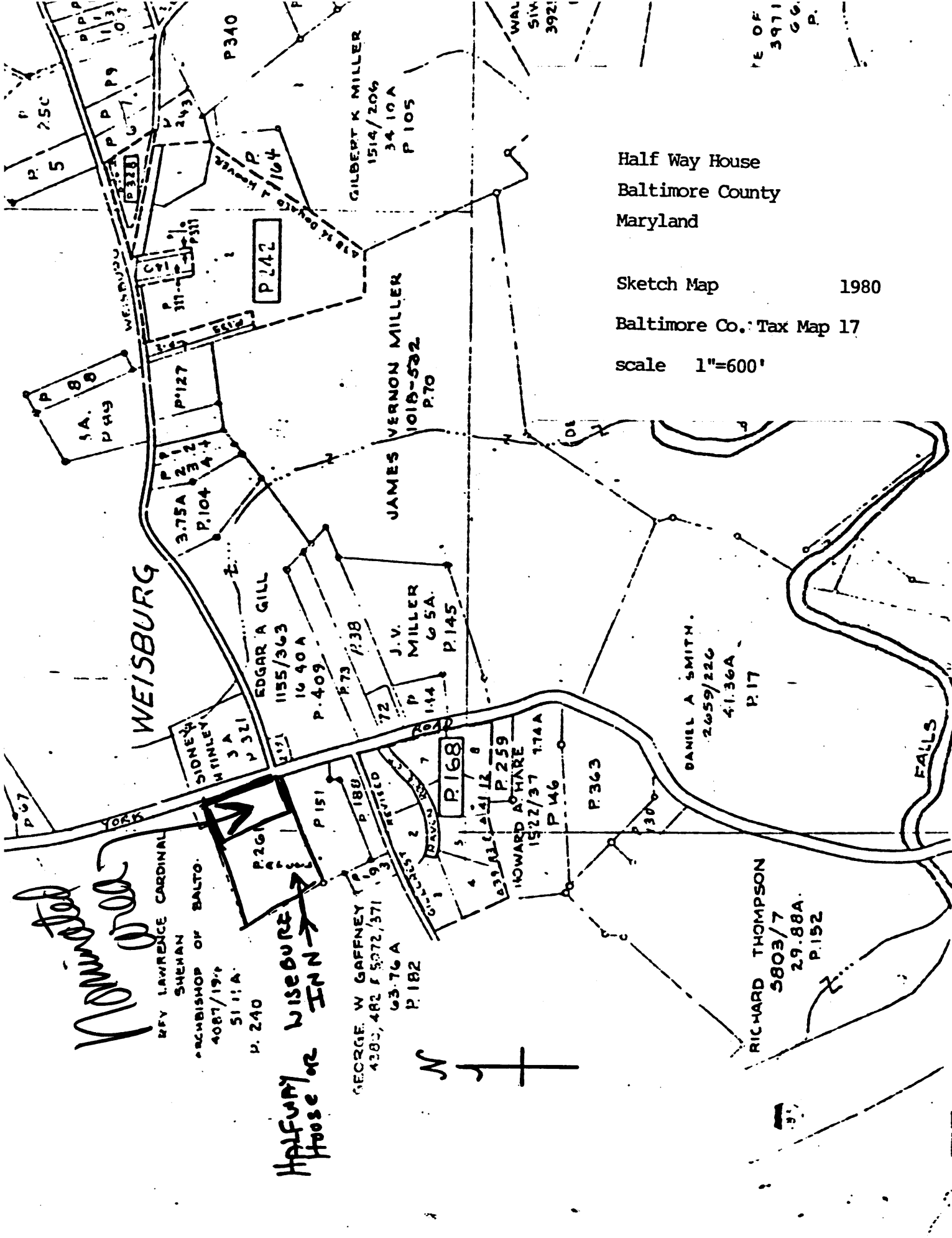
ACREAGE JUSTIFICATION

The approximate 1.7 acres includes the house and outbuildings in their landscaped setting and utilizes existing property lines on the north and south sides, York Road to the east, and a drop in the terrain behind the house and outbuildings approximately 200 feet west of York Road.



Site Plan
not to scale

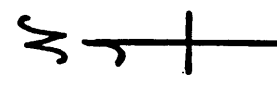




Noted
KEY LAWRENCE CARDINAL
SHEHAN
ARCHBISHOP OF BALTO.
4087/194
P. 240

*Halfway
House or
INN*

GEORGE W GAFFNEY
4380, 482 E 5072/371
63.76 A
P.182



Half Way House
Baltimore County
Maryland

Sketch Map 1980
Baltimore Co. Tax Map 17
scale 1"=600'

RE OF
3971
66
P.