1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **SOTTERLEY**

Other Name/Site Number: Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties SM-7

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 44300 Sotterley Lane; P. O. Box 67 Not for publication: n/a

City/Town: Hollywood Vicinity: x

State: MD County: St. Mary's Code: 037 Zip Code: 20636

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	x	Building(s):	
Public-Local:		District:	x
Public-State:		Site:	
Public-Federal:		Structure:	
		Object:	

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
15	11	buildings
4		sites
4		structures
		objects
23	11	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 20

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: n/a

Designated a
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

FEB 16 2000

by the Secratary of the Interior

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	DOMESTIC	Sub:	single dwelling
	DOMESTIC		secondary structure
	LANDSCAPE		garden
	AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE		agricultural
Current:	RECREATION AND CULTURE	Sub:	museum

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: COLONIAL/Postmedieval English

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	BRICK, CONCRETE
Walls:	BRICK, WOOD
Roof:	WOOD
Other:	WOOD

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Description Summary

Sotterley Plantation is located off Sotterley Road near Hollywood, St. Mary's County, Maryland. Situated on the edge of a river terrace, the main house commands panoramic vistas of nearby pastures, the Patuxent River, and Calvert County. The plantation is approached from Sotterley Road via a formal, tree-lined drive that lies directly on axis with the main house. Initially constructed c. 1717, the main house is surrounded by a highly significant assemblage of landscape elements, outbuildings and a slave quarter that range in date from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. These buildings and landscape components delineate the various formal, domestic, and agricultural functions of Sotterley's historically layered landscapes and represent rare property types.

Oriented on an east/west axis with the primary elevation facing the river, the one-and-a-half story, single-pile, main house measures approximately 100 by 20 feet and features a west wing and an attached kitchen. The dwelling's T-shape configuration is not the result of a single construction period, but is actually the composite of at least seven distinct building periods; c. 1717, c. 1727, 1750s, 1760s, 1780s, 1840s, and 1910s. While these building campaigns modified the house's historic fabric, each set of alterations embodies highly significant architectural features and construction methods. They include early eighteenth century, hole-set, "Virginia" framing, exceptionally rare false plate and joist treatment in the c. 1727 west wing, a finely crafted and detailed c. 1780s Chippendale-style staircase and a fully-paneled parlor decorated with two shell-topped alcoves that flank a crosseted overmantel replete with reticulated or interlocking frets.

Originally at the center of a large 3500+/- acre plantation, Sotterley is presently situated on a comparably diminutive 90.257 acre tract that is owned by the Sotterley Foundation. An adjoining 105 +/- acre tract not owned by the Foundation is included within the boundaries of this nomination. Combined, these properties offer an abundance of contributing landscape components including the so called "jib piece," "entry court," "garden," "rollway valley," and "farm cluster" which not only recall Sotterley's layered landscape, but also offer significant natural buffers that preserve a rural ennvironment.

Setting and Outbuildings

The landscape and setting around the main house at Sotterley plantation can be described or divided into at least three distinct functional categories; formal, domestic, and agricultural. Sotterley's formal landscape is characterized by two different entrances or avenues of trees that lead to the plantation, a formal garden and yard, and a series of carefully placed outbuildings that attempt to create a sense of balance on the west side of the main house. The two different entrances or avenues of trees frame a large triangular field sometimes referred to as the "**jib piece**."[1] One avenue consists of catalpas interspersed by red cedars. Installed in the 1910s and

[1] A 1926 hand-drawn map of the property, drawn by Philip Kappel, describes the jib piece and several other landscape components. Many of these components are more specifically explained in LANDSCAPES LA Planning HP,"Landscape Evolution" in "Preservation Plan, Sotterley Plantation, Hollywood, Maryland, Draft, 2 June 1999." All names given in "" are referenced in the 1926 map by Kappel.

utilized as an extension of Vista Road, this avenue is no longer used but is clearly discernable running southeast from the presently used road. The current access road, first opened in the 1960s, lies directly on axis with the dining room door of the main house and is framed at its entrance by a pair of c. 1910s urn-topped, brick piers and a hinged wood gate. This "avenue," majestically lined by symmetrically spaced sugar maples planted in the late 1920s, actually follows a pre-1828 road alignment.[2] Originally, this avenue may have consisted of oaks, as several large oaks stand just to the west. The avenue terminates at a pair of identical gate houses where it forms a T-intersection, leading south to a modern parking lot and north to the turkey shed and gardener's house.

On axis with the avenue is an area referred to as "**entry court**." A part of the plantation's processional-like organization, the entry court served as a formal entry point for visitors. The north and south gatehouses aided in this process. The **north gatehouse** is a one story, one room frame building with a pyramidal roof, most likely constructed in the nineteenth century. The identical **south gatehouse** was erected in the early twentieth century, reconstructing a previous building that had burned. Both buildings feature beaded and beveled plank siding, a large, exterior end, brick chimney, and nearly identical fenestration. Their porches and primary entries oppose one another north to south. Identical, one story additions to each of the gatehouses were completed in the mid-twentieth century. An early twentieth century wrought iron gate is situated between the two gatehouses and permits entry to a gravel walk that leads to the main house. Between the gate and the main house, the well shaded gravel walk diverges and then converges again creating a formal circle or teardrop shape. A large red oak graces the center of this circle. The gravel walk eventually terminates at the dining room door.

To the north of the gravel walk is a c. 1920-1930 Colonial Revival floral and herb **garden** divided into quadrant planting beds by wide grass paths and low American boxwood hedges that generally run north to south and east to west. The garden's east side, however, is characterized by three linear planting beds separated by mown lawn panels. Much of the planting beds are dedicated to a wide array of herbaceous plant species including dogwood, magnolia, oak, crape myrtle as well as lilacs, roses, and pussy willow. Several objects within the garden provide focal points for the circulation pattern. The most prominent is a stone well-head positioned at the intersection of four lawn panels. A four column pergola entangled by vines lies near the west side of the formal garden. A late-eighteenth to early-nineteenth century sundial that surmounts a masonry pedestal lies on axis with the north door of the house's west wing. Laden with nineteenth century graffiti, the sundial is given particular emphasis by a pair of sculpted hedges that lie just to its east. Together, the hedges frame a spectacular prospect of the Patuxent River, "riverview lawn," and "east fields."

This formal garden is bounded to the north by a c. 1910 **brick garden wall** constructed in Flemish bond. This wall connects an early nineteenth century necessary [privy] situated on the

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[2] The 1828 plat generated by the division of property between Thomas Barber's two daughters, Lydia Barber and Emeline Dallum, called one of the boundaries the "avenue." See St. Mary's County Decree Records, St. Mary's County Courthouse Liber JH 1, Folio 614. Overlayed over modern plats, this boundary roughly follows the alignment of the plantation's current access.

northeast corner and a 1930 garden tool shed located at the northwest corner. The one room **necessary** is constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond with a molded watertable, and exhibits a pyramidal roof. Fenestration consists of a segmental-arched doorway on the south elevation and a window on the east side. The interior is plastered and contains three commodes for two adults and one child. Waste could be removed on the building's north side via two large segmental-arched openings at ground level. The **tool shed**, built in the mid-twentieth century, is constructed in the Flemish bond and features a pyramidal roof. The exterior is pierced by a single door. A **picket fence** extends the length of the garden's west side, connecting the tool shed to the north gatehouse. Another **picket fence** forms the south boundary of Sotterley's formal yard and garden. It extends from the south gatehouse, stops near the west elevation of the house, and then turns abruptly to the south. An ornate arbor pierces the fence and connects to the circular walkway of the entry court. Just below the south fence rests a retaining wall consisting of dry-laid marl. The formal garden and yard's east side is bounded by the main house but is otherwise unenclosed between the necessary and dwelling. Instead, this area is distinguished by a series of grassy terraces. The most prominent of the terraces was installed in 1989.[3] The otherwise gentle slope to the east of the house terminates at a split rail and post fence.

The level fields to the east and north of the fence extend to the shoreline of Sotterley Creek and the Patuxent River. Large trees and underbrush ring the water's edge and help to define the well drained nature of Sotterley's lower fields. Historic photographs from the 1910s, suggest these fields were cultivated by a tenant farmer living in a frame dwelling situated near the middle of the north field. Two tobacco barns in close proximity to the dwelling confirm tobacco was grown in this portion of the landscape.[4] Approached via a dirt track that extended to the north of the garden, both the tenant house and barns were demolished by the Satterlees in the 1910s.

The large trees that ring the Patuxent Shoreline hide an otherwise steep and eroding riverbank. The bottom edges of the shoreline contain exposed marl. While ringed by marl, Sotterley Creek also contains some sandy edges and marsh. The creek also affords sheltered anchorages. A number of fingers or necks form a series of protected coves. One cove opening has silted up creating a tidal pond. According to the 1828 plat of Sotterley, this area was historically used as a "sloop landing."[5]

Aside from the former tenant house and accompanying tobacco barns in the north field, domestic activities at Sotterley were focused on the south side of the main house near the attached c. 1914 brick kitchen as well as just west of the formal garden. Outbuildings near the kitchen include a c. 1840s brick smokehouse, a 1930s "spinning cottage," and a relocated "customs" house. An 1830-1850s slave quarter is situated about 40 yards downhill from the kitchen on the edge of a small ravine.

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[3] Sotterley Foundation Archives, Maintenance Records, 4.13.8.

[4] Sotterley Foundation Archives, Photographic Collection, 1.5.10, 2.5.13, and 2.5.14.

[5] St. Mary's County Decree Records, St. Mary's County Courthouse, Liber JH 1, Folio 614.

The **brick smokehouse** lies just to the south of the kitchen. It is constructed of brick laid in five-to-one common bond and features a gable roof. The brick is partially covered with portland cement. A single door is located on its north elevation and a twentieth century frame storage shed was attached to its south side. A mid-twentieth century reconstruction of a one story, **frame spinning cottage** is located a few yards east of the smokehouse. This building is sheathed with beaded and beveled boards and topped by a gable roof. Its primary entrance is on the east elevation. The "customs house," situated to the west of the smokehouse, is a heavily renovated one story frame building sheathed with beaded and beveled boards.[6] The roof consists of two connected pyramidal roofs. The primary entrance is on the north elevation. The front portion of the building was built in the 1910s, but that original building was moved to its present location in 1973 and received an addition that doubled its size in order to accommodate a gift shop.[7] The building rests on a brick foundation and is situated on a steep slope. The building is non-contributing.

Just to the south of the gift shop is the "roll way valley." This gently sloping ravine is traversed by a path leading from the farm cluster and main house to the slave quarter. Traditional interpretations and historic photographs mark this ravine as an important route for horse-drawn carts and field hands as they transported agricultural supplies such as tobacco, wheat, and hay to and from the east fields and agricultural buildings. It was also the location for a well, now removed.[8] Gently sloping ravines such as this were often used to roll tobacco hogsheads from barns and packing houses down to awaiting ships.

The **slave quarter** is located approximately 40 yards east from the spinning house on a "narrow strip of flattened ground between a deep ravine and an old road stretching from the plantation's agricultural buildings south of the house down to the Patuxent River."[9] Much of the quarter's original environmental context remains as it retains "visual relationships with contemporary fields, work buildings, and owner's houses."[10] The quarter, itself, is a c. 1830-1850 one story, one room, hewn-log building that has a common rafter, gable roof and an exterior end brick and stone chimney. Oriented on an east/west axis, the building's east and west elevations are pierced by a single door and a fixed, six-pane window. The north gable end is pierced on the ground

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[6] Many buildings around Sotterley Plantation have garnered names that do not necessarily reflect their true historic purpose. The "customs house" for instance was actually a c. 1910s reconstruction, that currently serves as the foundation's gift shop. This is not to be confused with the "customs warehouse" which is a heavily reconstructed building situated to the west of the gift shop.

[7] Sotterley Foundation Archives, Maintenance Records, 1.15.21.

[8] See "Landscape Evolution" 7-9.

[9] See Jeffrey Bostetter, et al., "The Slave House at Sotterley near Hollywood, St. Mary's County, Maryland: Architectural Investigations and Recommendations," report completed by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for the Sotterley Mansion Foundation, September 27, 1995. The report supplies a more thorough investigation of the building and site surrounding the slave quarter. Many of the stated interpretations of this building are derived from their findings.

[10] Bostetter, 13.

floor by a six pane window and in the attic by another six pane window. A four- and five-course common bond chimney with an ironstone base dominates the south gable end. Recent investigations by Colonial Williamsburg have suggested that the entire first floor may not have had any original windows and that the current openings probably were inserted in the twentieth century.[11] Other twentieth century changes included covering the north gable end with faux hewn boards and sheathing the east elevation with vertical, circular sawn boards and battens. The hewn, attic story floor joists extend beyond the wall surface. They support a flat false plate that, in turn, holds the feet of the common rafters. The individual rafters are pit sawn and joined with lapped common ties that are fastened with fully-formed cut nails. The rafters are half-lapped at the roof peak.

The most significant architectural element of the quarter is its building technology. The walls are constructed of horizontal logs joined at the corners with simple square notches. Clay and mortar fill the spaces between the logs. Three of the walls feature original, hole-set, skinned, cedar posts that are pegged into the individual logs and serve to buttress the walls and prevent them from sagging.[12] The continued use of hole-set construction through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, either as reinforcement or to provide a principal means of structural support, has been well documented in St. Mary's County and elsewhere in the Chesapeake.[13] It is nonetheless rare for these elements to survive intact, making the Sotterley slave quarter one of the few remaining examples of this method of construction.[14]

Sotterley's agricultural landscape is characterized by the retention of cultivated fields, pastures, a mid-nineteenth century corn crib, a 1757 stable, an early-twentieth century sheep barn and ice house, and a mid-twentieth century farm manager's house with accompanying outbuildings. While open fields ring the main house and its outbuildings, the agricultural buildings are clustered around an informal courtyard approximately 60 yards southwest of the main house.

The **brick stable or warehouse** is situated closest to the main house and forms the north boundary of the courtyard.[15] The one story building is constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond

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[11] Bostetter, 5.

[12] Recent stabilization efforts have uncovered evidence that the fourth wall also exhibited similar buttresses. Due to advanced deterioration, however, they were removed and the logs were sheathed with planks.

[13] Bostetter, 7.

[14] While the Colonial Williamsburg report cites that "the Sotterley quarter is now the only known example," of buttressed log construction, there are actually several buildings identified in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties for St. Mary's County that feature similar construction methods. They include the slave quarters at Riverview (SM-121) (now demolished) and Blair's Purchase (SM-126), the Samuel Spalding Barn (SM-170), the Bond Farm Tobacco Barn (SM-245), and the tobacco barn and corn crib at Old Patuxent Farm (SM-527).

[15] This one story brick building has often been called the "customs warehouse." Photographs of the building prior to its extensive twentieth century reconstruction and historical research, however, suggest the building was more likely a stable. First, photographs in the Sotterley Foundation's archives reveal the building featured several large sets of paired doors and only one door entry. The building's asymmetrical fenestration and overall appearance invokes parallels to carriage houses and stables such as the Upton Scott carriage house in Annapolis. The date on the west gable end, "1757," postdates George Plater II's appointment as Naval Officer of

and features a gable roof. It has been considerably reconstructed; part of the west gable end and south elevation still retain original brick. The west elevation remains largely intact, preserving a series of glazed headers intentionally arranged to read "1757." The fenestration of the building consists of two doors and three six-over-six double-hung sash windows on the north elevation. A large pair of doors and a single-door entry pierces the south elevation. The south bays are sheltered by a frame shed addition clad with beaded and beveled boards on the east and west sides and an entirely open south face for the storage and easy extraction of farm equipment. The improvements to the building appear to have occurred between the 1910s and 1930s.

The **corn crib**, situated to the southwest of the stable, was constructed in the mid-nineteenth century. This frame building features open sheds on the south, east, and north elevations. These sheds are all supported by originally-earthfast posts that now rest on round concrete bases to prevent rotting. The foundation consists of wood piles driven into the ground. These pilings support modern sawn and hewn sills. The west elevation is entirely enclosed and covered with cedar shingles that currently exhibit significant curling. The gable roof is also covered with cedar shingles. The crib is constructed of reused timbers presumably from a dwelling or barn. One door is situated on each of the building's south and east sides. Only the east door utilizes wrought strap hinges. Above the east door is an opening for the attic story. Slats are visible on three sides of the crib. They are fastened with mature cut and wire nails to studs that exhibit nail marks from previous sheathing. Several pieces of reused, beaded fascia boards have been applied vertically over the slats. The interior is currently used for exhibit space and has been sheathed entirely with circular sawn boards applied horizontally.

The roof represents the most significant component of the crib's construction. The joists for the attic story consist of a series of hewn and pit-sawn members that extend over three sides of the crib's exterior face, supporting the three open sheds. Several of these framing members feature robbed mortises as well as evidence of whitewash suggesting their reuse from another building. A tilted false plate is embedded into the joists near their end; the common rafters are secured with a birdsmouth joint and extend over the plate.

An early twentieth century **sheep barn** and associated fenced-in pen is situated to the east of the crib. Exhibiting a cross-axial plan, this frame building is sheathed with beveled and beaded siding and covered by a dual-pitch, asphalt shingle roof. Just to the north of the barn is a frame **ice house** that is covered with beveled and beaded siding and features an entrance on its south and west sides. Other buildings located in this cluster of agricultural buildings include a cinder block storage building, large tractor shed, and small tool shed.

The **farm manager's or Knott house** complex is situated just south of the sheep barn and forms the southern boundary of the property. This c. 1910, one-and-a-half story, three bay, frame dwelling with a rear kitchen ell replicates many of Sotterley's historic forms. Elements such as its steep roof, use of white clapboard, and a series of three domestic outbuildings tie the dwelling

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the Patuxent (1729-1757), the only period when a customs house would have been necessary at Sotterley. Last, the building's small size and location away from the water, closer to other agricultural activities, provide further support for the interpretation that it was a stable or storage warehouse.

into the rest of the plantation. The outbuildings include a **creamery/dairy** and a **storage building**, and a **chicken coop**. All of these outbuildings, built c. 1910s, are of frame construction, are clad in common clapboard, and have gable roofs. A whole network of post-and-board fences enclose and connect small portions of pasture between the Knott house and sheep barn.

The meandering, tree-lined Sotterley Wharf Road, once connected to the abandoned extension of Vista Road, extends northeast from the Knott house and leads to a number of fields, a boat wharf, the Brink Cottage, and another dwelling not included within the nomination boundaries. Located approximately ¼ mile from the Knott house, the c. 1940s Brink Cottage is a non-contributing, one-and-a-half story frame dwelling that overlooks Sotterley Creek. A small shed is situated just south of the dwelling.

Another grouping of frame agricultural buildings is located to the west of the formal garden. They include a 1916-1917 turkey house, two storage sheds, and 1971-1972 gardener's house. Only the turkey house is considered contributing. The **turkey house** is clad with beaded and beveled siding and exhibits an asymmetrical roof. Oriented on a north/south axis, the building features large door openings on its north and south sides. The building was moved from another location south of the main house and currently serves as a classroom for environmental education. Situated to the north of these agricultural buildings is an abandoned one-and-a-half story frame tenant house built in the early twentieth century which is non-contributing.

The Main Dwelling House --General Appearance

Oriented on an east/west axis with the primary elevation facing the river, the one-and-a-half story, single-pile, **main house** measures approximately 100 by 20 feet and features a wing on the west elevation and an attached kitchen off the south gable end. The dwelling's T-configuration is not the result of a single construction period, but is actually the composite of at least seven distinct building periods during which sections of Sotterley were dismantled, added to, and reconstructed. Initially constructed in c. 1717, the dwelling was first altered just prior to 1727, and modified again in the 1750s, 1760s, 1780s, 1840s, and 1910s. While this nomination lists only seven periods of change, recent architectural investigations by Colonial Williamsburg and Watson & Henry have discerned approximately 10 rebuilding campaigns. For the sake of brevity, these new findings have been integrated into the following description.[16]

The current foundation of the main house consists of poured concrete laid in the 1910s. The exterior is sheathed with two types of materials. Random width, beaded and beveled siding can be found on all four elevations, while Flemish bond brick dating from the 1910 is primarily found on the gable ends. The roof, pierced by four brick chimneys, is currently covered with cedar butt shingles painted a reddish color.

[16] See Watson & Henry, "Historical Summary" in *Sotterley Plantation Preservation Plan*, Draft Submission, June 2, 1999. See also Ed Chappell, et al, "Architectural Investigations at Sotterley," March 24-28, April 7-11, April 27-29, 1999.

A piazza that extends the full length of the facade dominates the primary or east elevation of Sotterley. The piazza is supported by a series of columns that rest on cement bases, and consist of a plain pedestal, paneled shafts, and plain capital. Interestingly, the shafts descend in size from bottom to top to suggest a classical profile or entasis. Rectangular flagstones cover the walkway that is sheltered by the piazza's roof. The underside of this roof is slightly coved and covered with closely fit boards. The first floor elevation, shaded by the piazza, is pierced by an asymmetrical array of eight, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows and three doorways. All windows feature two louvered shutters as well as double-fillet surrounds. The primary entrance into the dwelling is distinguished by a classically-inspired door surround and a set of French doors, each leaf consisting of four panels. The surround is composed of two engaged columns with beaded edges. These columns support a full entablature distinguished by a pulvinated frieze and a boxed cornice with a pronounced soffit. The partial removal of the porch ceiling in 1954 and again in 1999 revealed that this doorway may have featured a pediment or covered porch.[17] According to the Historic American Buildings Survey, the pediment's original surfaces clearly displayed a sanded finish that imitated stone.[18] The lack of subsequent finishes on the pediment suggests that the porch was added very soon after the pediment and clapboard was emplaced. The remaining two doors each have six panels, but the middle door is more distinctive because it features a double architrave surround, a four pane transom, and a boxed cornice with a pronounced soffit. To the south of the piazza is the c. 1914 kitchen. Constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond, the kitchen is oriented on a north/south axis and attached to the main house through a screened breezeway. The kitchen is characterized by its steeply pitched roof and large exterior end brick chimney on its east side. Shaded by a column lined porch, the kitchen's primary entrance is situated on its south elevation. According to oral tradition, the c. 1914 kitchen was constructed on the foundation of an eighteenth century kitchen that had been demolished in the 1840s when the Briscoe family built a new kitchen wing on the east side of the main dwelling. This has yet to be substantiated.

Other modern changes to this elevation are marked by a seam in the siding near the mid-point of the east elevation of the main house. Here, the contrast in clapboards reveals how much of the sheathing was replaced in the early-twentieth century. Random width beaded and beveled boards characterizes the north side of the seam, while the south side exhibits regular width boards. This replacement campaign occurred after a one-and-a-half story kitchen wing was removed in the 1910s. A few feet to the south of this seam is a corresponding change in the paving, where several concrete flagstones were installed to create a sense of continuity along the porch.
The half story of the east elevation is pierced by eight, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows, two of which are dormers. In the 1760s, two-thirds of the roof was modified: the slope was reduced and the cornice raised in order to increase space in the upper story. Six windows were then installed. All of these windows and dormers, like those throughout the house, feature double-fillet surrounds. The dormers have pediments with pronounced soffits similar to those found on the door entablatures on the first floor. The siding is composed of regular width

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[17] Historic American Buildings Survey, "Sotterley Mansion: St. Mary's County, Maryland," prepared for The Sotterley Mansion Foundation, Inc., New York, 1961, 17. See also Chappell, et al, April 7-11, 1999, 13-14.

[18] HABS, 17.

beaded and beveled boards.[19] The cornice of the roof modification exhibits a beaded fascia board as well as a crown molding or cymatium. Three (reconstructed) interior brick chimneys pierce the roof of the elevation. A cupola with a pyramidal roof and finial also projects from the roof. This square structure is embellished with the date 1729 in a crossetted surround (HABS drawings show the date as 1730).

The north elevation consists of the main block's gable end and the west wing. The north gable end is primarily constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond.[20] The raised section of the roof is covered with butt shingles and is pierced by a six pane casement window. The west wing is pierced on the first floor by a centrally located six panel door flanked by two, six-over-six windows. A small one-over-one closet window is situated near the west corner. All of these bays are shaded by a piazza supported by a series of columns. Unlike the east side, however, these columns do not feature paneled shafts. A dormer window projects from the roof, as does a clustered, cross-shaped, interior end chimney that, prior to 1910, featured plastered necking similar to that found at other early eighteenth century houses in St. Mary's County including Ocean Hall (1703, NR) and Resurrection Manor (c. 1725-1750, NHL).[21]

The west elevation is composed of the west wing's gable end and the rear elevation of the main block. The gable end is constructed in Flemish bond brick, a 1910s replacement of earlier frame construction. Two quarter-circle windows decorated with weblike traceries pierce this wall. The main block is separated into two sections by the west wing. The first floor of the north section exhibits Flemish brick bond construction and does not have any openings. The south section is covered with siding and is pierced by three large six-over-six windows, one smaller six-over-six window, and a six panel door. A narrow two panel door, which faces north, permits entry into a small pantry. All of these bays are shaded by a piazza supported by plain columns. The half story of the north section is pierced by one pedimented dormer, while the south section features three dormers.

The south elevation consists of the main block's gable end and the side of the west wing. A centrally located six panel door flanked on either side by a six-over-six window pierces the west wing. Near the southwest corner of the west wing is a six panel door that leads to a brick lined cellar. A six pane transom lies just above the door's header. The south gable end of the main block is constructed in Flemish bond brick. The first floor is pierced by two windows and a door. The door leads to a sheltered hyphen that connects the main house to the kitchen. A vertical seam and a change in brickwork indicate that a window was later covered over. The attic story is lighted by a single four-over-two window.

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[19] Historic photos taken of Sotterley in 1910 reveal the siding here was composed of regular clapboard. See HABS report located in the Sotterley Archives.

[20] Historic photos from 1910 reveal that the gable end once consisted of regular clapboard siding and a partially exposed chimney back.

[21] Resurrection Manor (SM-4) is located near Hollywood, Maryland and Ocean Hall (SM-111) is situated near Bushwood, Maryland.

The primary entrance to the main block is located on the building's east facade. As previously mentioned, this entrance is distinguished by a pair of French doors and classically inspired columns, entablature, and pediment. These doors lead into an unheated center stair passage that permits entry into the west wing, the "drawing room," "Madame Bowles' room," and the second floor bed chambers. The passage is fully paneled and the ceiling is plastered.[22] The stair is the most distinctive feature of the space. The open string, 90° winder stair exhibits a latticework underneath the molded handrail that resembles the stylistic motifs promoted by Thomas Chippendale in the mid-eighteenth century. Nearly identical staircase detailing was employed at Bushwood Manor (SM-110) near Bushwood in St. Mary's County,[23] and recent research has identified other relationships. Willie Graham recently found that the pronounced Gothic profile of the handrail bears similarities to the rails found at the James Brice House (NHL) and Ogle Hall (NR) in Annapolis, as well as Wye House (NHL) in Talbot County, Maryland.[24]

To the north of the stair passage is the largest, most lavish room of the entire house. Entered via a paneled mahogany door set on raising hinges, the drawing room immediately signals its importance through a series of richly embellished architectural elements and a lofty eleven-foot ceiling.[25] All four walls are paneled and are ringed by a baseboard, chair rail, and dentilated crown molding with a pronounced soffit. The room's focus is the north wall. Here, a pair of alcoves flank a central fireplace. The fireplace features a crossetted surround with beaded marble inset (a twentieth century replacement) and exhibits an entablature consisting of a pair of consoles that frame a pulvinated frieze, a dentilated cornice, and bold modillions. Above the fireplace is a crossetted overmantel decorated with reticulated frets. The center of the overmantel is plain, and may have been decorated with a painting or map, as at Holly Hill (NR) in Anne Arundel County.[26] On either side of the fireplace are paneled alcoves topped by large carved clamshells. These clamshells spring from a series of consoles that are interspersed by a band of reticulated ellipses and circles. A semi-circular architrave studded by a series of voussoirs frames each of the clamshells. The windows on the east side of the room have crossetted surrounds and splayed jambs. The south door of the room exhibits a double architrave surround as well as an entablature that mimics the fireplace mantel with its pulvinated frieze and modillions.

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[22] Michael Bourne has observed that some of the panelling was probably reused from a previous panelled room that was summarily dismantled in the 1760s. See Bourne, 8. See also Chappel, et al, April 27-29, 1999, 4.

[23] Bushwood burned in 1934.

[24] Willie Graham, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, telephone conversation, May, 1998. See also Marcia M. Miller and Orlando Ridout V, eds., *Architecture in Annapolis: A Field Guide* (Crownsville, Md: Maryland Historical Trust, 1998), 112-113.

[25] Raising hinges are "a hinge with a spiral thread on one part of its pivot or a beveled barrel at its pin that forces the door or shutter to lift up as it is opened to clear an obstacle, such as a carpet." See Carl Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 304.

[26] A large wrought nail is visible near the top row of frets. See Sotterley video. See the entry for Holly Hill in Donna M. Ware, *Anne Arundel's Legacy: The Historic Properties of Anne Arundel County* (Annapolis, Md: Anne Arundel County, 1990), 34-36.

The passage also leads directly into the one room of the west wing. This space is entirely paneled and trimmed with a baseboard, chair-rail, and crown molding. The fireplace on the west wall serves as the focus of the room, featuring a crossetted mantel surround, beaded marble inset, and an entablature distinguished by a pulvinated frieze. Doors to small closet spaces are situated on either side of the mantel, although the closet on the south side has been abbreviated to accommodate a new stair to the basement. Evidence found in the attic and recent paint analysis suggests this room was once partitioned in order to accommodate the passage mentioned in James Bowles' 1727 room-by-room inventory.[27] This passage would have connected the west wing with the original south room. Beneath the west wing, but entered from the exterior is a two room, brick lined basement. Curiously laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers, the walls are covered with whitewash. A large brick fireplace dominates the north room. While containing paired flues, the fireplace lacks soot or other signs of wear indicating that it was probably never used.

The final first floor room accessible from the passage is "Madam Bowles' room" or the "red room" which is situated on the south side of the passage. Like all the other rooms described thus far, this parlor is entirely paneled and fitted with baseboard, chair-rail, and crown molding. The paneling, however, is highly irregular. Several wall posts and summer beams project into the room and are boxed. These elements preclude a symmetrical arrangement of panels and result in a number of uneven alignments. The focus of the room is the south wall. Like the room in the west wing, the fireplace exhibits a crossetted surround. Unlike the wing's mantel, however, a pronounced cavetto springs from the wall surface and supports an attenuated shelf. The fireplace is flanked on either side by a door to a closet and another door that leads to the dining room. The door to the closet exhibits a foliated H-L hinge similar to that found at the c. 1739 Sands House (NR) in Annapolis.[28] Inside the closet a movable panel conceals a step ladder that leads into the closet of an upstairs chamber. This space was probably created in the early twentieth century when a smaller chimney was built to replace a larger stack.

The dining room walls exhibit period-style wallpaper (hung in 1961) inspired by the Brighton Pavilion in England, with interwoven motifs and a ceiling border. A pair of palm trees flank an interior chimney breast which is embellished with a modest crossetted surround, a frieze decorated with composition ornament comprising two human figures, and a floating mantel and shelf. A door to the west of the chimney stack leads to a 1780s "larder." Containing only one room, this space is distinguished by a fourteen foot high brick vaulted ceiling. To the east of the chimney is a hidden door for a winder stair to the half-story above. A narrow door on the west wall of the dining room leads to a "pantry" that prior to the 1910s had been a covered porch.[29] A door on the south side of the pantry provides entry to the one-and-a-half story kitchen. The first floor of the kitchen consists of one room and a narrow stair to a half-story bedroom.

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[27] St. Mary's County Registry of Wills, Inventories, Liber 13, Folio 79, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland. See also Chappell et al, April 27-29, 1999, 6.

[28] Miller and Ridout, 145.

[29] HABS, 20.

The Chippendale staircase in the central passage offers the primary access to the bed chambers in the upper story. Like the first floor, the upstairs plan radiates around the central passage. The passage permits access to a chamber over the "new roome," "drawing room," and to a series of three chambers on the south side of the house. Only one of these chambers remains unheated; the other four rooms have fireplaces with modest classically inspired mantels. The southernmost bed chamber is reached by a tight winder stair from the dining room of the first floor. Halfway down the stair, a small hatch provides a glimpse at the encompassed shingle roof of the 1780s larder.

The Main Dwelling House -- Evolution and Changes

As previously mentioned, the main house at Sotterley has undergone substantial architectural change over the past 280 years effectively obscuring the dwelling's original and subsequent appearances. The following discussion proceeds from its original c. 1717 appearance through several periods of architectural change to the present. Appended for reference are detailed depictions of the original framing by Garry Wheeler Stone and Chinh Hoang, a series of three dimensional drawings that illustrate the house's evolution, and the house's present first floor plan prepared by architectural historian J. Richard Rivoire.

Period I

The additions to Sotterley have relegated architectural evidence for the original c. 1717 dwelling to the crawlspace beneath the house, in closets, inside the walls, and in the bed chambers' cuddies. These spaces reveal original framing members, joinery, exterior siding and roofing, and interior finishes. Judging from these components, the one-and-a-half story, three bay, single pile, frame house's original dimensions measured forty-four by twenty feet. The interior consisted of a two heated rooms with the major framing members (i.e. posts, plates, and tie beams) projecting beyond plastered walls and merely whitewashed.

As noted by Garry Wheeler Stone, the original hole-set framing consists of "four major bays within which tie beams and secondary posts demarcate subdivisions and openings."[30] The primary posts are fashioned from cypress, while the secondary posts are chestnut. The walls also featured a series of small nailers that extend from sill to plate. All of the hole-set bays are mortised and tenoned into interrupted cedar sills near the base of the wall and into a long uninterrupted wall plate at the top. The frame was otherwise unbraced. Interestingly, the posts and nailers are not flush with the wall plate, but actually extend an inch beyond it. The wall plate, therefore, is shouldered on top of the wall posts and then pegged into a portion of the posts that extends up to the top of the plate. The wall plate supports a hierarchy of large summer beams and smaller ties. The locations of the summer beams delineate chimney bays and room partitions, while the ties merely connect the two wall plates together. The summers and ties are notched over, pegged into, and extended beyond the wall plates -- creating an exterior overhang.

[30] Garry Wheeler Stone, "Sotterley Manor House Construction History: Phases I and II," in "Sotterley Docent Manual" (Hollywood, Md: Sotterley Mansion Foundation, n.d.), n.p.

At the edge of the overhang, the summers carry a roughly square-shaped false or raising plate. A structural member that allowed the roof framing system to be structurally independent of the wall frame, the false plate was apparently first developed in the mid-17th century.[31] The riven common rafters are half-lapped, seated into diagonal pockets cut into the false plate, and fastened with two wrought nails each. The rafter pairs were connected with half lap joints to a series of common ties.[32] At the roof's peak, the rafters were connected once again with half-lap joints. Longitudinal rigidity to the roof and walls was originally established by the use of feather-edged, riven oak clapboard nailed to the framing members and rafters with wrought nails. During Period II, when the clapboard was removed from the roof, stability was ensured through the use of diagonally-set, riven wind braces.[33]

The original interior of Sotterley was rather spartan. Evidence found in the ceiling of the present stair passage, in the southeast closet of Madame Bowles' room, and in the crawlspace underneath the structure consistently shows whitewash on the main framing members with plaster and lath between.[34] The flooring for the two first floor rooms was structurally separate from the walls. A series of sleepers were lapped over a ground laid sill. Other than this evidence, it is difficult to determine the exact arrangement of space and the number of doors and windows. Bowles' inventory, written in 1727, reveals that each of the original two rooms featured a "Clossett" -- usually storage space located immediately next to a chimney.[35] Since each of the rooms contained only one closet, the other space next to the chimneys may have been used for a winder stair.

Period II

Just prior to the inventory of James Bowles' estate in 1727, the original two room house was expanded to include three rooms. Butted up against the west side of the original dwelling, the new addition encased earlier features such as some exterior wall siding and roof clapboard. While the wall framing of the addition is difficult to examine, the roof construction remains clearly evident. The floor joists are notched over and pegged into the wall plate. These same joists then project beyond the exterior wall surface and feature tapered ends and chamfering. A chamfered, tilted false plate extends the entire length of the wall, supporting the feet of the riven common rafters. The combination of the chamfered false plate and the tapered joist ends suggests these elements were designed to be exposed for exterior embellishment. The slender

[31] Lounsbury, 136.

[32] These ties were removed in the mid-eighteenth century when the roof pitch was altered in order to accommodate more space in the upper story.

[33] Much of the evidence for the roof and wall construction can be found in a bed chamber cuddy on the west side where the main block intersects the roof of the west wing. See also Garry Wheeler Stone, 266-272.

[34] In the stair passage, repairs to the plaster in the 1980s revealed whitewashed ties. See Stone videotape for evidence of whitewash on the earthfast posts. For a discussion on the whitewashed structural members and plaster and lath see Chappell, et al, March 24-28, 1999.

[35] James Bowles inventory.

riven rafter pairs are joined with common ties and bound to one another at the peak with half-lap joints.

The "new roome" interior was originally plastered and divided into a passage and heated space. The passage connected the hall or south room of the original house to the west wing. This relationship was described in James Bowles' 1727 inventory and substantiated through paint analysis and evidence found in the attic.[36] Another notable feature of the new addition was a brick lined cellar laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers. The basement also contained a fireplace, although it shows little evidence of ever being used. This fireplace, as well as the others above it were vented through a large clustered chimney stack with plastered necking.

The 1727 inventory suggests that a large kitchen and passage may have been attached to the main house; however, it is unclear where these spaces may have been located and how they may have related to the new three room dwelling.[37]

Period III

Shortly after Period II, presumably by the 1750s, Sotterley was once again enlarged. On the south side of the original two room dwelling a heated room with a transverse east/west passage was added. The interior of the new first floor room received modest decorative attention suggesting it may have served some kind of domestic function.[38] A winder stair and a door/closet probably flanked a centrally located stack. The addition maintained the original dwelling's roof line as the pit-sawn rafters kept the same pitch. More refined than the previous roofing systems used, the new addition's rafters commanded more consistent tooling and thicker dimensions. Surviving clapboard on the gable end indicate this addition was sheathed with planed and beaded clapboard siding.

Just before or coinciding with the addition, the Platers paneled the three first floor rooms to radically alter the house's decorative scheme. Before they could begin, however, the original framing of the dwelling was supplemented with hole-set cedar posts and some of the interrupted sills may have been replaced with fire-treated poplar sills possibly as a means of stemming infestation. By choosing to install paneling, the Platers and their carpenters had to reconcile the irregularities of the existing framing and subsequent repairs. Large projecting sistered posts and girts in the two original rooms, for instance, were negotiated by being boxed. Despite these

[36] Chappell, et al, March 24-28, 1999, 9 and April 27-29, 1999, 5-8.

[37] It remains possible that the dining room addition may be the kitchen and passage mentioned in the 1727 Bowles inventory. The hewn rafters over the dining room, however, bear little resemblance to the riven rafters of the west wing addition. See Bourne, 5.

[38] Sotterley archives, Hollywood, Maryland. Sometime in the 1910s, the partition in the dining room was removed. The plaster scars and wrought lathing nails can be seen in the closet of "Madame Bowles'" room. See Chappell, et al, March 24-28, 1999, 14-16.

anomalies, the paneling was well executed except in the west wing passage that was left plastered.[39]

Period IV

In the 1760s, the Platers took another impressive step in altering their home plantation by drastically reducing the roof pitch and raising the cornice to create the appearance of a second floor. This raising was only executed on the riverside elevation, as the west side retained its original rafters and pitch. For some unknown reason, the change in pitch was not carried the full length of the east elevation, as it terminated part way over the south addition. On a functional level, the new roof pitch increased the headroom of the second floor chambers. On a decidedly more symbolic level, however, this change perhaps revealed a growing consciousness that many of the Plater's wealthy contemporaries were probably living in two story dwellings by that time.

Whether completed for symbolic and/or functional ends, this alteration required considerably invasive structural change. The original plate on the east side was at least partially retained, but a whole series of cripple studs were placed on top of it to carry the load of the new wall plate. The original rafters from the period I dwelling were removed only on the east side and replaced by shorter rafters. A series of struts, composed of reused building parts including an old tilted false plate, were placed under the rafters and fastened with wrought nails to the joists beneath them. The new rafters then rested on a flat board false plate.

Period V

Perhaps anticipating their political rise to power or merely adjusting to post-Revolutionary architectural taste, George Plater III and his wife Elizabeth made some of the most extensive changes to their house in the 1780s. By making changes in decoration and plan, the family followed the conventions of the late-eighteenth century Chesapeake elite. On the exterior, this was accomplished by installing a large classically inspired doorway with unfluted engaged columns, a pulvinated frieze, entablature, and pediment around and over the primary entrance to the entire house. This ceremonial entry led into an extensively revamped center passage. Here, much of the 1750s paneling was removed, and the original north room was subdivided and enlarged into the center passage and north parlor. An elaborate Chippendale stair was installed and some of the removed paneling was reused in inconspicuous locations in the passage and roof.[40] To the north of the passage, a new parlor was created. This ornate space was lavishly paneled, the ceiling was raised to a height of eleven feet, and the length of the room was increased by approximately fourteen feet. The north wall of the parlor became the center of attention with the installation of two highly detailed shell-topped alcoves that flanked an elaborate mantel and overmantel. Headroom on the second floor was greatly diminished, but the extended north end created a longer space.

[39] See Chappell, et al, March 24-28, 1999, 18-21.

[40] See Bourne 8 and Chappell, et al, April 27-29, 1999, 3-5.

This period of construction is largely differentiated from period IV through evidence found in the roof. First, when the roof was raised in the 1760s, the new rafters installed were truncated due to the presence of chimneys on the south and north sides. When the north end was extended, the period IV chimney was dismantled and the truncated rafters had to be sistered. Second, the period IV false plate ends precisely where the north or period V addition began thereby suggesting subsequent construction activity.

More building activity occurred on the south side of the house. On the south gable end a low one story, frame addition was built. Probably serving as a larder, the interior of this unique extension featured a barrel vaulted ceiling fourteen feet high – a quality rarely seen in the eighteenth century Chesapeake. The location of the larder adjacent to the relatively unadorned south (dining) room adds credence to the suggestion that this end of the house served a domestic function. Interestingly, the ghost of a roofline on the gable end of the period III south addition indicates that the larder replaced a similarly sized building.[41]

Period VI

Between the 1820s and 1840s, Sotterley's overall plan and orientation was changed by the Briscoe family. During this period, the chimneys were rebuilt, a new kitchen was constructed on the house's east side, a network of porches that nearly circled the house was built, and the window surrounds were replaced. The porch was a particularly important part of these changes. Supported by a series of classically inspired columns, the porch precipitated the removal of earlier decorative details, specifically the pediment and/or porch over the house's primary doorway.[42]

Historic photos taken in 1910, prior to modern stabilization efforts, reveal that a one-and-a-half story, three bay, frame kitchen with a gable roof was evident on the main house's east side. The most diagnostic feature of this structure was its large, exterior end, brick chimney constructed in five-to-one common bond, a bond typical of the early to mid-nineteenth century. An identical bond is found in another 1910 image of the north gable end where the brick was only partially exposed. It is this, as well as the similar corbelled tops of all the fireplaces (except that on the west wing), that suggest a complete reconstruction of the fireplaces during this period.

Period VII

Another transfer of ownership in 1910 meant another series of changes to Sotterley. Motivated by the intention to preserve and rehabilitate the dwelling, and guided by the spirit of the Colonial Revival, the resulting work imposed continuity upon an otherwise irregular, historically layered

[41] Much of the information and interpretation of the larder was extracted from Chappell, et al, March 24-28, 1999, 28.

[42] Walter McComber of HABS observed that the surfaces covered by the new porch had experienced little weathering and concluded the porch was constructed only a few years after the 1760s or 1780s changes. See also Chappell, et al, April 7-11, 1999, 14-17.

house. Beginning in 1914, all of the building's gable ends were totally replaced with Flemish bond brick, and the "larder" on the south side of the building was incorporated into the rest of the house by extending the roof line. The latter modification preserved the larder's wood shingle roof.

The kitchen constructed in the 1820s-1840s was torn down and a new kitchen, attached only by a covered walkway, was erected on the main house's south side. Constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond, the one-and-a-half story building featured an exterior end brick chimney and a steep roof that imitated the pitch and dimension of the main house but was oriented perpendicular to it. Access between the kitchen and dining room was accomplished by a covered walkway. The dining space in the main house was expanded through the removal of a transverse partition in the south part of the main house.

In order to ensure the long term preservation of the house, a poured concrete foundation was laid underneath the entire dwelling. All of the floor joists and flooring were summarily replaced as well. Regular width beveled and beaded siding was installed on the south end of the house's east elevation after the kitchen was removed. Regular lap siding covering the extended second floor section of the east elevation was likewise replaced with the regular width beveled and beaded siding. Two dormer windows were installed on the house's west side in order to light the second floor bedroom above the parlor. To prevent fires, all of the chimneys were reconstructed. Electricity was not installed until the 1940s.

In the upstairs bed chambers several modern conveniences were also added. Bathrooms were installed and closet spaces were constructed. The last, most dramatic changes to the interior occurred in the 1960s with the installation of highly ornate wallpaper in the dining room.[43]

LIST OF CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Resources as listed on "1999 Site Plan".

1. Main House (c.1717) C
2. Necessary (early 19th century?) C
3. Garden tool shed (1930) C
4. Turkey House (1922, moved 1970s?) C
5. Gardener's house (1971) NC
6. Tool shed (1960s) NC
7. Storage shed (1960s) NC
8. North gatehouse (1820s?) C
9. South gatehouse (1910s) C
10. Smokehouse (1840s) C
11. Gift shop (1910s, moved 1973) NC
12. Spinning cottage (1930s) C
13. Slave quarter (1830s) C

[43] Elizabeth Harmon, August, 1990, Sotterley Archives.

14. Corn crib (mid-1800s) C (structure)
15. Brick stable (c.1757, rebuilt 1932) C
16. Ice house (1922) C
17. Sheep barn (1916) C
18. Cinder block building (1960s?) NC
19. Tractor shed (1960s) NC
20. Storage shed (1960s) NC
21. Knott house (1910s) C
22. Creamery/dairy (1910s) C
23. Storage shed (1910s) C
24. Chicken coop (1910s) C (structure)
25. Sotterley Foundation offices (1950s?) NC

The picket fence and the brick garden wall are considered as two contributing structures.

The Colonial Revival floral and herb garden is considered a contributing site.

The jib piece, entry court, and rollway valley are also contributing sites.

Resources as listed on "Area Plan of Sotterley Plantation".

1. Tenant house (c. 1910s) NC
2. Brink Cottage (c. 1920s) NC
3. Storage Shed (c. 1970s?) NC

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:_

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A__ B__ C X D__
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G_
NHL Criteria:	4
NHL Theme(s):	III. Expressing Cultural Values 5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design
Areas of Significance:	ARCHITECTURE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
Period(s) of Significance:	c. 1717-1947
Significant Dates:	c. 1717, 1720s, 1750s, 1760s, 1780s, 1840s, 1910s
Significant Person(s):	n/a
Cultural Affiliation:	n/a
Architect/Builder:	unknown
Historic Context:	XVI. Architecture A. Colonial XVII. Landscape Architecture

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Sotterley is nationally significant for the outstanding character of its historic architecture and landscape. The main house is one of two surviving examples of post-in-ground framing extant in the Chesapeake region of Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia. Due to the impermanent and ephemeral nature of post-in-ground construction, archeology has been the primary means of studying this once dominant building tradition. Indeed, the original c. 1717 plan and framing at Sotterley provide exceptionally rare material evidence of this construction method.

Beginning just prior to c. 1727 and again in the 1750s, 1760s, 1780s, 1840s, and 1910s, Sotterley underwent a series of modifications and additions which bear their own architectural significance. Most notable of these alterations are the decorative framing of the c. 1727 west wing and the installation in the 1760s of a grand Chippendale-style stair and a pair of intricately carved shell alcoves. Just after the turn of the twentieth century, the house, grounds, and associated buildings underwent a significant campaign of restoration according to the tenets of the then-current Colonial Revival movement.

In addition to its signal importance as an architectural artifact, Sotterley's physical structure also embodies valuable insights into Chesapeake society and culture. Its original core reflects the influence of the tobacco economy in the early eighteenth century; the dwelling's economical joinery combined with its specialized and segregated two-room floor plan provide ample testimony of a transitional culture marked by parsimony, social distinction, and ethnic separation. Subsequent changes to the building and landscape similarly offer reflections of larger societal and cultural movements in the region.

Commanding a panoramic vista of the Patuxent River, the main house is surrounded by a historically layered landscape characterized by numerous prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, roads, cultivated fields, gardens, pastures, historic plantings, and an assemblage of eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century outbuildings. These components vividly recall eighteenth and nineteenth century plantation life as well as twentieth century historicism. Of particular significance among the dependencies is the horizontal log slave quarter. One of only a few publicly accessible slave quarters remaining in the United States, the building exhibits a rare method of construction, and retains a high degree of architectural integrity. Its shielded proximity to the house reflects the complex functional, economic, and social relationships that characterized plantation slavery. When juxtaposed against the Sotterley mansion, the quarter provides a ready venue for examining the conflicting realities of mid-nineteenth century plantation life.

RESOURCE HISTORY AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Prior to the first English settlement of St. Mary's City in 1634, members of the Patuxent chiefdom largely inhabited the Patuxent River watershed. Usually congregating on the broad alluvial floodplains on the banks of the river, these Algonquin speaking peoples took advantage

of the surrounding geography. The floodplains supplied fertile soil for the planting of maize. The river offered an abundance of fish and oysters while nearby streams provided adequate fresh water. Evidence of their habitation on Sotterley Plantation abound in middens and lithic scatters that have been identified through preliminary archaeological investigations.[44] It was precisely this set of geographic circumstances that first attracted English settlers to the vicinity.

The land surrounding Sotterley was granted to Sir Thomas first Cornwallis in 1651. Initially called "Resurrection Manor," this 4000 acre tract was passed on to a number of different owners in the seventeenth century including John Bateman, Richard Perry, and Thomas and George Plowden. Many of these owners were some of Maryland's wealthiest individuals. Even as these individuals attempted to extract profit from the land, political disputes in the 1680s clouded the future prospects of many of the colony's residents while creating new opportunities for others.

Mirroring England's "Glorious Revolution" in 1689, the English colony of Maryland underwent a turbulent upheaval that forever transformed its political, religious, and social landscape. Within 15 years, the colony changed from a Catholic-dominated charter government centered at St. Mary's City to a Protestant-oriented regime ruled by a royal governor at Annapolis. It was in 1699, in the middle of this crisis, that James Bowles, the initial builder of Sotterley, arrived in Maryland from England. As the son of a prominent sugar and tobacco merchant Tobias Bowles and grand-nephew of Maryland Governor John Seymour, Bowles came to the colony with the wealth and the religious, familial, and trade connections necessary to firmly establish himself within the emerging Anglican hierarchy. This was confirmed by his appointment as a Justice of the Peace, Collector of the North Potomac, and election to the Lower House of the Maryland Assembly all between 1709-1710.[45] Coinciding with his propitious political career, Bowles purchased "Bowles Preservation" from George Plowden in 1710. This sprawling 890-acre tract was dominated by a broad terrace that fell away steeply and offered a spectacular panoramic vista of the Patuxent River.[46] It was on the edge of this terrace, between 1710 and 1717, that Bowles constructed a one story frame house, the core of the main building at present-day Sotterley Plantation.[47]

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[44] James Harmon, et al., "Archaeological Investigations at Sotterley Plantation, St. Mary's County, Maryland," July 1999, Draft Report for the Sotterley Foundation.

[45] Jeanette Fox Fausz and J. Frederick Fausz, "The Three Centuries of Sotterley: An Historical Overview of a Notable Southern Maryland Plantation and the People Who Lived There, 1690-1990" (Hollywood, Md.: Sotterley Plantation, n.d.), 10.

[46] Unlike many contemporary planters who built their residences closer to the water, Bowles erected his house on the prominent ridge. Several mid-eighteenth century buildings in St. Mary's County are sited similarly. See Mulberry Fields (SM-1) and Bushwood (SM-110).

[47] The date range of 1710-1717 for the initial phase of Sotterley's construction is based upon documentary and architectural evidence. Archaeologist and architectural historian Garry Wheeler Stone believes 1710 to be the approximate date of construction, while Jeannette and Frederick Fausz suggest 1717 might be more accurate. The Fauszs indicate that Bowles employed a resurvey of the property in 1717, and actually was not married until 1718. Dendrochronology could more firmly establish the date for the dwelling.

In locating his home on the terrace, Bowles broke with the locational patterns of his predecessors who tended to locate their residences on relatively flat bottomlands. The house's prominent placement not only established the plantation's domestic, agricultural, and commercial organization for centuries to come, but also reflected Bowles' attempts to claim agricultural competence, command over architectural and landscape realms, as well as riverside mercantilism. The Patuxent River, in particular, became the focal point of the entire plantation. Buildings and landscape components were situated to see, and be seen by, Southern Maryland's primary route of waterborne transportation.[48]

Although he was indisputably a member of the new order of influential Anglicans in Maryland, Bowles did not choose to visually and symbolically commemorate his place in St. Mary's County and Maryland society by erecting a capital- and labor-intensive brick building. He instead erected a modest one story, post-in-ground, frame dwelling that measured 44 feet by 20 feet with an interior consisting of two largely unfinished rooms. Despite later alterations obscuring these two original rooms, this frame building represents one of only two remaining examples of post-in-ground framing in the Chesapeake region.[49] Significant for its rarity, the framing is also important because it reveals the highly organized, deliberate, and competent economies inherent in impermanent construction. In addition, the continued use of earthfast construction at Sotterley raises significant interpretive questions about the nature of Chesapeake culture at the beginning of the eighteenth century.[50]

Earthfast construction was just one of several impermanent framing methods that Chesapeake settlers developed from a diverse repertoire of framing traditions practiced in sixteenth and seventeenth century rural England.[51] Interchangeably referred to as a "Virginia" or "clapboard" house by early settlers and now scholars, these buildings once represented the dominant form of domestic architecture in the colonial Chesapeake. Inasmuch as buildings constructed according to this method were understood by their builders to be short-lived, very few examples survive in the region, but they are increasingly well represented in the archaeological record.[52] Excavations

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[48] See Landscapes LA, Planning, HP, "Landscape Evolution" in *Sotterley Plantation Preservation Plan*, Draft Submission, As of February 29, 2000, 114-116.

[49] Here the Chesapeake refers to the Chesapeake Bay drainage in Delaware, Virginia, and Maryland. Cedar Park, located in Anne Arundel County, Maryland (AA-141, NR), represents the only other known example of post-in-ground construction. Constructed in 1702 by merchant Richard Galloway, Cedar Park remains the "most massively framed, most expertly carpentered early timber building extant in all of Maryland and Virginia." See Cary Carson, et al, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern Colonies," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 16 (1981): 187. The Matthew Jones House (NR), located near Newport News, Virginia, exhibits residual evidence of its post-in-ground origins as much of the frame was encased by a later addition of brick.

[50] Garry Wheeler Stone, "Society, Housing, and Architecture in Early Maryland: John Lewger's St. John's" (Dissertation in American Civilization, University of Pennsylvania, 1982), 266-272 . See also the addendum to Carson, et al, 196.

[51] For a discussion on the various methods of impermanent architecture see Carson, et al, 138-157.

[52] Cary Carson, "The 'Virginia House' in Maryland" in *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 69 (1974): 186. See also Carl Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 82.

at St. Mary's City (NHL) and Jamestown (NHL), for instance, determined that the large majority of dwellings at these seventeenth century capitals of Maryland and Virginia were earthfast. Archaeology has also determined that the small, seventeenth and early eighteenth century community called London Towne that once surrounded the brick London Towne Publik House (NHL) near Annapolis contained a similar concentration of earthfast dwellings and buildings. Even outside of towns and river front communities, early tobacco planters in the Chesapeake preferred this method of framing. As a result of earthfast construction's popularity and lack of durability, only a handful of seventeenth century buildings survive in the Chesapeake.[53]

Scholars have discussed at length the reasons why settlers initially opted for and maintained this method of framing, generally concluding that "this hybrid method of construction was selected in response to the demands of tobacco production, and had the benefit of being relatively inexpensive and easy to build, using materials and carpentry skills that were readily available."[54] Indeed, the time, money, and labor intensive nature of tobacco production, accompanied by fluctuating markets and occasional droughts limited the fiscal opportunities for planters to improve their domestic surroundings. Long term maintenance of earthfast construction methods even into the twentieth century, therefore, was not only a function of its economical structural logic, but also was directly related to the area's retention of tobacco as a main cash crop. St. Mary's County did not make a transition away from tobacco to grains and other crops until the beginning of the nineteenth century, thereby inhibiting the more widespread construction of durable housing.[55] The impermanent dwelling that James Bowles built at Sotterley provides testimony of tobacco's continuing grip on St. Mary's County's architectural landscape. It also documents an important transition in impermanent building practices and the manipulation of interior spaces by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Sotterley exhibits a lightweight frame with a common rafter roof that provides a glimpse into the structural logic that made impermanent buildings popular and economical. As archaeologist and architectural historian Garry Wheeler Stone has shown, Sotterley's builders displayed a deliberate choice of different wood species, used nails sparingly, and utilized simple lap joints.[56] Rot-resistant woods were used where that characteristic was desirable: the primary hole-set posts, for instance, were cypress, and the interrupted sills were cedar. Framing elements were fashioned from woods noted for their strength: the summer beams or tie beams were poplar, the

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[53] Carson, et al, 160-161.

[54] Dennis J. Pogue, "Culture Change Along the Tobacco Coast: 1670-1720" (Dissertation, American University, 1997), 211.

[55] Bayly Ellen Marks, "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System: St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1790-1840" (Dissertation, University of Maryland, 1979), 81-215. See also Carson, et al, 173-174. Contemporary references to "clapboard dwelling houses" in St. Mary's County can be found in Orphans Court Records well into the nineteenth century. See St. Mary's County, Register of Wills, Annual Valuations and Assessments, 1807-1826, Liber JF & EJM, Folio 1, Maryland Hall of Records.

[56] Stone, 1982, 294.

intermediate posts were chestnut, and the exterior clapboard and rafters were oak.[57] Large wrought nails were exclusively used to attach the clapboard to the exterior walls and roof. The extant clapboard roofing, located in the second floor cuddy on the building's west side, reveals how the carpenters frugally placed nails to fasten as many pieces of clapboard together as possible in one place.[58] Wrought nails represented the most costly aspect of building. This was evident in St. Mary's County even into the 1780s when orphan's court assessors still valued buildings in terms of the number of nails they contained.[59] These fasteners could be recovered the assessors reasoned, should the orphan's guardian choose to burn down the house or outbuilding. Lastly, the framing joints that the carpenters utilized were not exceptionally complex. Floor joists, posts, wall plates, and sills exhibit simple square-cut lap joints.[60] Mortise-and-tenon joints were reserved for connecting larger structural members such as the summers and tie beams.

These facets of impermanent construction reveal how Bowles and his carpenters placed a priority on the economical use of materials and labor. The interior of the hall-parlor plan house echoed the expediency of the framing. The floor, for instance, was actually constructed separate from the building's structure. It consisted of ground-laid sills with the sleepers lapped over them. The interior of the rooms was whitewashed and the main exposed timbers, such as the summer beams, may have been chamfered or beaded. The size and finish of the building, while decoratively modest, represented an important transition from earlier seventeenth century arrangements. As scholars have shown, the variability in floor plans seen in early "Virginia houses" gradually decreased in the early eighteenth century as hall-parlor plans became the dominant house form of the wealthier planters.[61] This conformity has been attributed to changing social and economic forces facing planters and their servants. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, plantation owners encountered "a labor force whose cultural backgrounds and resulting behavior were increasingly different from their own -- enslaved African-Americans, Irish, and lower class Englishmen."[62] This racial, class, and ethnic confrontation accompanied by changes to the nature of tobacco production led to increasingly specialized and segregated spatial arrangements that shielded planters from their indentured servants and slaves. Class consciousness, as expressed in architectural change, has revealed itself elsewhere in the Chesapeake such as at the Clifts Plantation, a tenant house that preceded Stratford Hall (NHL) in

[57] Wood identification by Bradford L. Rauschenburg, Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

[58] Garry Wheeler Stone, "Architectural Analysis of Sotterley Manor House" video in the possession of Sotterley Mansion Foundation.

[59] For references of building values expressed in the amount of nails see St. Mary's County, Registry of Wills, Orphans Court, Annual Valuations & Assessments 1780-1807, Liber i, Folio 3.

[60] Stone, 1982, 294.

[61] Fraser Duff Neiman, "Temporal Patterning in House Plans" (1993). See also Pogue, 215.

[62] Pogue, 216. Neiman, 1990, 278-279.

Virginia.[63] At the Clifts, wealthy tenant planters in the late seventeenth century saw the need to distinguish themselves from their common laborers through a variety of architectural and domestic changes. In the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century, the Clifts' planters relegated domestic activities to various outbuildings, added onto the servant quarter and enlarged portions of the main house to facilitate dining and other more formal activities, thus limiting interaction between master and servant.[64] While evidence of early eighteenth century servants' quarters has yet to be found at Sotterley, Bowles took brisk steps to differentiate himself from his workers as well as his neighbors by constructing an elaborate addition.

Presumably after his second marriage in the 1720s to Rebecca Addison, Bowles engaged in an aggressive building and repair program that dramatically transformed his modest two room house into an imposing, well appointed, decorated, and firmly constructed three room dwelling. Bowles added a one-and-a-half story frame wing with a Flemish-bond brick basement to the west of his original hall-parlor residence. This new addition was constructed of an elaborated box frame replete with a chamfered, tilted false plate that rested on decoratively rounded floor joists.[65] The interior of the addition was plastered and contained a heated chamber and passage. The passage would have allowed for free access between the original house's hall and the new wing's chamber. Before Bowles could complete all of his changes, however, he died. In 1727, a room-by-room inventory reveals that he had planned to further refine his dwelling.[66] Various materials listed "at Home Plantation" included "928 foot Inch Plank," "3 M Cyprus Shingles," and "20 doz new-Castle Flag Stones." Overall, the inventory provides an intimate glimpse into the interior organization and function of Sotterley's main dwelling as well as the surrounding plantation by naming the various rooms, a number of outbuildings, and several outlying "Quarters."

The two rooms of the original section of Sotterley were called the "Hall" and "Madam Bowles' Roome." The Hall appears to have served as a rather lavish dining room as it featured a fireplace, "1 doz leather Chairs," "1 Leather Couch," a "Clossett" filled with a variety of special service pieces including "11 Ivory hafted Case knives & forks," as well as a "Screwtore" that was filled with a variety of table cloths, napkins, as well as spices such as pepper, allspice, cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, and cloves. Madam Bowles' room was probably the nicest bedroom in the house as it featured "1 large Carpett," a "Chamber Pott, "a Feather Bedd" as well as the only "Trundle bedstead" in the dwelling. The "New Roome" and its accompanying passage, the current west wing of the house, primarily served as an entertaining space, bedroom, and work space for clothing manufacture as it included "A Tea Table and Furniture," "11 China Coffee Cupps," "3 China punch Bowles," a fireplace, a "Japand Chest of Drawers" filled with yards of

[63] Fraser Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Clifts Plantation: The Social Context of early Virginia Building" in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, eds. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 307-310.

[64] Neiman, 1986, 309-310.

[65] Willie Graham, telephone conversation, May, 1998.

[66] St. Mary's County Registry of Wills, Inventories, Liber 13, Folio 79, Maryland Hall of Records.

expensive fabrics, "Edging," and buttons. Lastly this space had "2 Feather Beds & p Blanketts 1 Callicoe Quilt and Standing Callicoe furniture." Above these three first floor rooms were three bed chambers, two of which were heated. Another named space was "the Passage & Kitchin &c" which may have been a detached building connected to the house by a small hyphen; it is not clear how or where this space may have been integrated into the rest of the house. A "Cellar" beneath the house was filled with a variety of foodstuffs including "58 Bottles mountain Wine," "50 Gall:ns molasses," and "100 Gall:ns Syder."

While filling the interior spaces of the house with objects that relate meaning and function to everyday life, the inventory also enumerates the outbuildings and provides insight into the living spaces of Bowles' servants. Outbuildings included a heated "Accompting House" that served as a library as well as office, a "Deary & Meat House," and also a "Shopp Barn &c" that served as a stable and storage area for agricultural stores. Interestingly the barn also contained a "parcell of Negroes Bedding." Besides his "Home Plantation" Bowles also owned three remote farms worked by African-American slaves. Hogg Neck Quarter was farmed by nine slaves, Half Pone Quarter nine slaves, the home plantation seventeen slaves, and the dwelling house was served by six slaves. "Mason's Quarter" was not mentioned as housing any slaves, though among the items listed there is mention of "A Parcell of Negroes Beding." Other items found in these outlying areas were strictly utilitarian and domestic, such as hoes, axes, hand mills, ploughs, carpenter's tools, pots, pans, and a barrel of corn.

As the inventory graphically illustrates, in only a short time James Bowles and his wife Rebecca Addison had markedly improved their station. Beginning with an unfinished one story dwelling without significant decorative attention, the Bowles family managed to dramatically re-make their dwelling and the surrounding landscape. By conducting a series of additions and renovations to their main house as well as developing several satellite "quarters" that ringed their home plantation, the family had established an impressive tobacco plantation of over 2000 acres.

Rebecca Bowles, described as a "gentlewoman of considerable fortune," remarried on June 16, 1729 to George Plater II.[67] A wealthy Annapolis attorney, Plater not only had considerable land holdings (1400 acres), but also garnered several important political, social, and familial associations. Early in his career, Plater served the courts of Baltimore and Prince Georges' counties, the Chancery Court, and also was a Clerk to the Maryland Council between 1724-1729.[68] His connections in Maryland as well as England were eventually confirmed by his lucrative royal appointment as Naval Officer of the Patuxent from 1729-1755. With these appointments and his marriage to Rebecca Bowles, Plater continued to extend Sotterley's connections. Indeed, prior to 1746 George and his wife had successfully arranged marriages for Rebecca's three daughters Elinor, Mary, and Jane, entrenching their kinship and political connections in Virginia. Elinor married the son of Virginia's royal governor William Gooch of Williamsburg, Mary wedded William Armistead, Esq. of Gloucester County, and Jane was espoused to Virginia Councillor Ralph Wormeley, IV of Rosegill Plantation in Middlesex

[67] *Maryland Gazette*, June 16, 1729. As it appears in Fausz, 12.

[68] See Fausz, 12-13.

County.[69] George Plater II's son George III and his daughter Rebecca would continue to expand the family's kinship as Rebecca would marry John Tayloe of Mt. Airy Plantation in Richmond County, Virginia and George III would first marry Ann Hannah Lee of Blenheim Plantation in Charles County, Maryland and later Elizabeth Rousby of Rousby Hall in Calvert County.[70] With these strategic match-ups, the immediate Plater/Bowles family extended along every peninsula from the Patuxent to the James Rivers, an affirmation of their status in Chesapeake society.

Soon after this expansion of kinship, the Plater's expanded, repaired, and updated their formidable dwelling in the 1750s. This set of changes included adding an addition to the southern end of the original dwelling, repairing the earthfast posts and interrupted sills, and installing panelling in all the rooms except in the new southern addition. Unfortunately, Rebecca Bowles Plater probably never played a part in this expansion for sometime between 1742-1749, she died, leaving much of the Sotterley estate to her three daughters. It was not until 1753 that George Plater purchased their interests to the various tracts and became the sole owner of the property. It is at this point that Plater presumably renamed his plantation after the Plater ancestral home located in Suffolk, England.[71] Plater died in May of 1755 leaving an estate of 14,000 acres of land situated in six Maryland counties as well as an extensive legacy of personal property.[72] With an impressive inheritance, his son George Plater III expanded his father's agricultural and mercantile enterprises and continued the tradition of political service. Having graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1752, Plater was well prepared for his political career. In 1757 he was elected to the Lower House of the Maryland Assembly, and over the ensuing two decades, he gradually progressed through various state offices. By 1771 he was elected to the Upper House and also served on the Governor's Council. Plater's influence extended beyond the state of Maryland, for in 1760, he traveled to England to lobby ambitiously for the position of Naval Officer of the Patuxent only to be initially denied by Lord Calvert. Maryland's Governor Horatio Sharpe wrote to Calvert about his decision noting,

> ...{I} should have been sorry had you complied with his {Plater's} request for though I have a very good opinion of his disposition and was well satisfied with his conduct during the session or two he appeared in the Lower House yet as he is not thought a person of extraordinary abilities and is very young and inexperienced being I suppose scarcely 24 years old, I am of opinion it would not be good policy so early to confer on him such extraordinary marks of favor....[73]

Despite five more years of correspondence between Governor Sharpe and Lords Calvert and Baltimore, Plater did not gain the office until 1767.[74]

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[69] Fausz, 13. For more information on the Wormeley and Armistead families see Darret B. and Anita H. Rutman, *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650-1750* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), 152-155, 160, 210-211.

[70] Fausz, 13-15.

[71] Fausz, 14.

[72] Fausz, 14.

[73] William Hand Browne, et al, *Archives of Maryland*, Vol. IX, 1890, 506.

[74] *Archives of Maryland,* Vol. XIV, 1895, 415.

Political appointments were not the only area in life that Plater sought to improve his station. In 1764 he married Elizabeth Rousby, the attractive 13 year old daughter of John and Ann Rousby of Rousby Hall Plantation located just across the Patuxent River from Sotterley.[75] While significantly adding to the Plater estate, it was Elizabeth's character, beauty, and charm that attracted the attention of the most prominent social circles in the American colonies. In order to participate in these circles, the Platers radically transformed the architectural arrangements of Sotterley to fit changing social, cultural, and stylistic conventions. While many of the wealthiest colonists in St. Mary's County and elsewhere in Maryland had begun to distinguish themselves with imposing symmetrical Georgian mansions of brick, the Platers were content merely to manipulate the exterior and interior appearances of their house. Between the 1760s and the 1780s, the Platers undertook a substantial interior remodeling, segregating and compartmentalizing the spaces of their house according to the new protocols of Georgian-American society.[76] It probably began in the 1760s, when the Platers raised much of the river side portion of the roof in order to create the appearance of a full second story. This not only increased headroom in the second floor chambers, but also was a symbol of Plater's aspirations for by the mid-eighteenth century many of Maryland's elite occupied two story houses.

Even while they were transforming their house, the Platers, Maryland and the American Colonies became increasingly drawn into disagreements over trade and governance with England -- eventually leading to hostilities and a full blown revolutionary war. George Plater played a key role in Maryland's reluctant shift towards independence. While a Maryland legislator for much of the early 1770s, Plater became a member of the Council of Safety in 1776. Like many of his colleagues, Plater understood the high stakes in this political gamble. He stood to lose his position as the Naval Officer of the Patuxent, all of his landholdings, and more significantly he could be tried for sedition and executed. Plater eventually acquiesced as he urged independence and in 1777 became a delegate to the Continental Congress.[77] Needless to say his position as Naval Officer was rescinded that same year.

While Congress was in session, Plater and his wife resided in Philadelphia. It was there that the Platers met and made lasting impressions upon other congressmen and visiting dignitaries. One French visitor, the Marquis de Chastellux, described Elizabeth Plater as "typical of Philadelphia's charming women; her taste is as delicate as her health: an enthusiast to excess for all French fashions, she is only waiting for the end of this little revolution to effect a still greater

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[75] Elizabeth Rousby and George Plater III actually were first cousins-once-removed, as Elizabeth's father John was a stepbrother of George Plater II. See Fausz, 15.

[76] For a discussion on the impact of the mid-eighteenth century phenomenon called the "Georgian" mindset, see James Deetz's *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), 28-43. Bernard L. Herman's *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 26-41, provides a useful overview of mid-eighteenth century architectural changes that revealed the tension between traditional spatial conceptions and the new formalized Georgian style and mindset.

[77] Brugger, 119.

one in the manners of her country."[78] As political and social trend setters, the Platers were able to establish lasting relationships with some of America's most significant leaders including George Washington, then commander-in-chief of American forces, and Robert Morris, the assistant minister of finance. The Platers, Morris, and Washington regularly corresponded about the status of the country, foreign policy, political theory, and more personal matters. Fortunately, many of their letters survive to illuminate their interaction during and after the American Revolution.

As a member of the Continental Congress and later in 1780 as the President of the Maryland State Senate, Plater aided in provisioning and coordinating state militia movements, securing financial support, and getting written updates from Commander-and-Chief Washington.[79] In 1781, the Maryland Assembly congratulated Washington on his victory over the British at Yorktown, Virginia. On November 23, 1781 a letter addressed to Plater and House Speaker Thomas Deye Cockey from Washington thanked the Maryland Assembly but urged "a continuance of those exertions which have already so greatly humbled the power of our inveterate enemies."[80]

Indeed, Plater's thoughts after the victory of Yorktown extended well beyond the war. For much of 1782, Plater and Robert Morris corresponded about Maryland's fiscal policies, the use of hard and paper money, the development of a national bank, and the diplomatic proceedings with England.[81] In a matter of a few months, however, Plater's concerns became much more parochial for in February of 1783, British troops sailed up the Patuxent River and sacked Sotterley. In a letter from Annapolis dated March 14, 1783 to Governeur Morris, Plater wrote

> I am not yet able to dance, tho Peace come -- of which we have heard a great Deal, and been finely amused for some time past. Pray write what you know or have Reason to expect about it. I am again driven from my home by the Enemy's Barges, being obliged to have everything moved away, when they came and hung my Overseer, and the same Fate I shou'd probably have met had I been there -- therefore I am for Peace -- adieu Yours...[82]

Besides killing his overseer, the British also "plundered...some of [Col. Plater's] Negroes."[83] Interestingly, the attack actually occurred after the Treaty of Paris had been signed. Plater

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[78] As it appears in Max M. Mintz, *Governeur Morris and the American Revolution* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 141.

[79] See John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), vol. 15, 146-147, vol. 22, 348-349, and vol. 23, 358-359. Hereinafter cited as *The Writings of George Washington.*

[80] *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 23, 358-359.

[81] James E. Ferguson, *The Papers of Robert Morris: 1781-1784* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), vol. 4, 536-537. Hereinafter cited as *The Papers of Robert Morris.*

[82] *The Papers of Robert Morris,* vol. 7, 578.

[83] *Archives of Maryland*, Vol. 48, 1931, 365-366.

would later opine about the status of his "four Slaves" who were being held in New York -- noting in a letter to Morris that the "Treaty stipulates in express Terms that no Negroes shall be carried away from the United States of America."[84] These considerations aside, Plater was elated to hear about the Treaty of Paris. Anticipating an impending visit, Plater wrote to Morris saying,

> I am not yet well, and don't know when I shall be, but look forward with no small Degree of Pleasure to that happy month of June when we expect to see your smiling Face in this our old, tho I trust hospitable Dome. Let me not be thought remiss in failing to offer my Gratulations on the late happy Change in our Affairs. I can now look on my Possessions as my own, I can view my rising Crop with Satisfaction, and can lay down on my Couch without Fear of Molistation. O happy happy Times! Let it be our first Care to endeavor to improve them -- let no misty Cloud of Discontent or Animosity intervene, in the least to obumbrate this glorious Sun-shine of Liberty and Independence --but whither am I going with this Rhapsody? I will say some thing more pleasing -- I will say that I am with unfeigned Truth and Sincerity Your Friend &c &c &c
>
> Sotterley May 4th 1783[85]

With the Revolutionary gamble won and the threat of British incursions no longer imminent, Plater's letters once again turned to current events, politics, and personal news about common friends. As this letter relates, the illness Plater referred to in his previous letter nearly killed him. At his Sotterley home on July 7, 1783, he wrote to Morris,

> I have the Pleasure of two Letters from you, the last of 24th June in which you are pleased to congratulate me upon my Resurrection. I cannot say what induced Mrs. Fame to kill me, but this I can say that the Health of my Body is perfect. I eat heartily, sleep soundly, and have ev'ry *Signum Salutis*...

Plater ended the letter by asking Morris to pass on his and Mrs. Plater's respects to a friend.

> ...Shou'd you see Judge Pend[leton] I beg you to make respects to him, and tell him I wrote lately to him at Charles Town by Lieutenant Fitzhugh, and that I shall be happy to hear from him, and happier to see him. Mrs. Plater says she will cure him by Sheepshead and Crab Sauce, which in her Opinion is better than all the milk Diets in the World...[86]

As these many letters between George Plater III and Robert Morris reveal, the two displayed an uncommon candor and camaraderie. Further research into Morris' personal papers would undoubtedly reveal the full extent of their relationship and provide insight into George and Elizabeth's character and daily concerns.

Plater also frequently wrote George Washington at Mount Vernon concerning a variety of subjects ranging from the settlement of the western territories to the opening of federal posts in

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[84] *The Papers of Robert Morris*, vol. 8, 256.

[85] *The Papers of Robert Morris*, vol. 7, 791.

[86] *The Papers of Robert Morris*, vol. 8, 256.

the new government.[87] On a more personal level Washington and Plater shared common tastes in architectural embellishment. In 1785 Washington wrote to William Fitzhugh, Elizabeth Plater's stepfather, thanking him for sending a Mr. Boulton to him, presumably the same Boulton with whom the Platers discussed the renovation of Sotterley in the 1780s. Washington noted that

> I have agreed with him to finish my large room, and to do some other work, and have no doubt from the character of him by you, that he will answer my purposes, as he has no one now to lead him into temptation, and will be far removed from improper associates unless he is at much pains to hunt them: it may therefore be expected that he will avoid the rock he has split upon lately . . . I have promised to send my waggon (a cover'd one with lock and key) to Colo. Platers, on some landing above, for Mr. Boulton's tools . . .[88]

Washington and Boulton actually drafted a formal contract on May 21, 1785 for alterations on the north end of Mt. Vernon. Boulton was to execute the work "in a plain and elegant manner; either of Stucco, Wainscot, or partly of both as the said George Washington shall direct...that he will give a Ceiling to the Piazza of plain Wainscot...and shall moreover Carve, Turn, Glaze, or Paint (inside work) if...required."[89] The carpenter's precarious financial situation kept him from honoring the agreement. Boulton never completed any work at Mt. Vernon explaining that "I have heard of several Rits being out against me, which I expect dailey to be served, the consiquence of which will be that I must Inavoidable goe to Joal."[90] Despite Boulton's failure to complete contracted work, the Platers still kept in contact and eventually visited Washington and his wife Martha from September 11-14, 1788. Washington's diary documented the visit through the following entries,

> Thursday, 11th. Mrs. Plater and her two daughters, and Mr. George Digges and his Sister came here to dinner and stayed all night. Mr. Lear returned home today.
>
> Friday, 12th. Visited all the Plantations. [Here Washington records the various activities occurring at his different farms. No specific references to the Platers are made.]
>
> Saturday, 13th. Rid with Mrs. Plater and Mrs. Washington to the Mill and New Barn. Colo. Plater, Mr. Hall and a Mr. Mathews came here (from Mr. Digges's) just after we had dined, stayed all N.
>
> Sunday, 14th. Colo. Plater, his Lady and daughter; Mr. Digges and his Sister; and Mr. Hall; and Mr. Mathews went away after breakfast.[91]

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[87] *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 23, 483-484.

[88] *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 28, 146-147.

[89] Ibid. See editorial footnote.

[90] As it appears in Robert F. Dalzell, Jr. and Lee Baldwin Dalzell, *George Washington's Mount Vernon: At Home in Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 114.

[91] John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. *The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), 419-420.

As these brief entries confirm the Plater's were familiar with the Washingtons. Undoubtedly, the American Revolution exposed George Plater to many of this nation's leading political figures and brought him moderate political success. It was perhaps his political aspirations that motivated some of the most ambitious architectural changes to his house in the 1780s. Gutting the former "Hall," the Platers installed a Chippendale-style, latticed stair in a richly paneled center passage that divided the former "Madame Bowles' Roome" from a new parlor. The latticed stair and Gothic-style handrail bear similarities to stairs in the homes of some of Maryland's wealthiest and most influential politicians, merchants, and planters of the day; similar handrails appear at the James Brice House (NHL) and Ogle House (NR) in Annapolis, and at Wye House (NHL) on the Eastern Shore.[92] The new parlor communicated a similar alignment with Maryland's elite; the room was lengthened, the ceiling height was raised to eleven feet, and a pair of shell alcoves were installed, flanking a crosseted overmantel replete with interwoven frets. Plater also modified the house's roofline, added a kitchen, and added a new dining room.[93] The renovations were not comprehensive, however, as the "New Roome" as well as "Madame Bowles' Roome" were left relatively untouched. By appropriating the latest architectural styles while remaining conservative in other spaces, the Platers successfully combined familiarity, comfort, and modern convention into their dwelling. Sources indicate that the Platers consulted Richard Boulton, a well-known master carpenter and designer, as they were contemplating these alterations, but the actual extent of Boulton's involvement, if any, is uncertain.[94]

Unfortunately, these architectural changes did not necessarily conjure up optimum results for George Plater III . On April 29, 1789, he wrote to George Washington congratulating him on his election as President, while simultaneously expressing an interest in working for the new administration. Washington's reluctance to fill these new positions with friends and associates led him to reply to Plater that "I shall, therefore, use my best endeavors to find out such persons as are most suitable, on every account, to fill the respective offices, and such only shall I nominate."[95] While perhaps a blow to George Plater's aspirations and ambition, events later in 1789 would overshadow this temporary disappointment. In December of 1789, his beloved wife Elizabeth died of unknown causes. Both the Washingtons as well as Robert Morris grieved at her passing.[96] Morris wrote in his diary "Poor Eliza! My lovely friend; thou art then at Peace and I shall behold thee no more. Never, never, never."[97]

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[92] Marcia M. Miller and Orlando Ridout V, eds., *Architecture in Annapolis: A Field Guide* (Crownsville, Md: Maryland Historical Trust Press, 1998), 112-113.

[93] Michael Bourne, *Architectural Development of Sotterley, St. Mary's County, Maryland* (Annapolis, Md: Maryland Historical Trust, 1972), 9.

[94] Boulton has also been associated with the construction of c. 1760 Bushwood (SM-110) (now demolished), 1766 All Faith Church (SM-83), and 1767 St. Andrews Church (SM-66).

[95] *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 30, 324.

[96] *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 30, 484.

[97] Mintz, 142; *The Papers of Robert Morris*, vol. 4, 260.

Despite these discouraging events, Plater continued his public life as he presided over Maryland's ratification of the United States Constitution in 1789 and was elected Governor of Maryland on November 14, 1791. His term was cut short, however, as he died on February 10, 1792.

The death of George and Elizabeth Plater in the late eighteenth century marked the end of a prosperous era at Sotterley. From the 1760s-1790s, they dramatically transformed their plantation, increased the prosperity of the farm, and became active participants in significant national political, cultural, and social movements. When George Plater III died the responsibility of managing the farm and continuing the tradition of public service devolved to his son George Plater IV and later George Plater V -- individuals who would later be blamed for gross mismanagement and the eventual loss of the family seat.[98]

George Plater IV inherited the plantation at the age of 26 after his father died. While not much is known about him, the Federal Direct Tax of 1798 illustrates how Sotterley and its landscape appeared and functioned in the late eighteenth century. "Col. George Plater" is listed as owning "A Dwelling house 22 by 80 built of wood" and lighted by a total of 24 windows.[99] The two acres immediately around the main dwelling consisted of two brick and three frame outbuildings whose uses were undifferentiated. All of these buildings were listed as being in good condition. Plater also owned at least seven tenant farms -- at least two of which were worked by his 49 slaves who were supervised by his overseers Myol Wise and William Heard.[100] In 1802, George Plater IV died leaving the estate to his two children Ann Elizabeth Plater and George Plater V, both minors. In March of 1802 two assessors appointed by the St. Mary's County Orphans Court evaluated the estate of George Plater IV. At the main plantation of "Sotterley," the main house was described as a "commodious dwelling house with a Kitchen adjoining in reasonable good repair excepting the Cellar the wall of which being bulged considerably occasions the sills of one of the rooms to sink..."[101] They also described a number of specialized outbuildings including a meathouse, milkhouse, two storehouses, schoolhouse, garden house, spinning house, poultry house, and two small brick offices. Agricultural buildings, such as a corn house and granary, a large barn, and a brick stable were also mentioned. Part of the farm's slave population, now numbered at 63, lived at a nearby double quarter and an overseer was to live in

[98] Marks, 92. Jennifer Keisman, "The Platers and Sotterley: A Study of Plantation Society in Southern Maryland, 1634-1823," *Chronicles of St. Mary's* 43 (4): 88-89. See also Jessica L. Neuwirth, *Archaeological Investigations at the Sotterley Plantation Slave Cabin, St. Mary's County, Maryland* (Hollywood, Md: Sotterley Mansion Foundation, 1997), 24-26.

[99] Federal Direct Tax of 1798, Maryland, St. Mary's County, List D. Transcribed copies of the Federal Direct Tax were recently completed by the St. Mary's County Historical Society. Microfilm copies are also available at the St. Mary's County Historical Society and the Maryland Hall of Records.

[100] Federal Direct Tax of 1798, List F. It is not clear whether William Heard served as an overseer. His name is listed as one of Plater's tenants, but on List F he is listed as the possessor of slaves for Edmund Plowden, the very next listing.

[101] Annual Valuations, Liber i, folio 156.

a building that was not yet completed at the time of the assessment.[102] The remaining slaves lived on three neighboring farms called "Hectors," "Half Pone," and "Jarboes" and may have also lived on any of Plater's twelve other tenant farms.[103] These legal descriptions and tax lists reveal that by the end of the eighteenth century the Platers relied heavily upon the labor of their slaves and a number of tenant farms for income.

The dynamics of the tobacco market, namely the depression of prices, drought, and competition from other agricultural regions, caused upheaval and depression among planters in the early nineteenth century.[104] It was this, accompanied by the disruption in trade caused by the War of 1812, the untimely death of George Plater IV, the inadequate supervision of his estate by guardian John Rousby Plater, and possibly the wanton character of George Plater V that eventually caused the sale of Sotterley in 1822.[105] George Plater V eventually sold the 3500 acre property to family friend William Somerville for $29,000 in order to avoid a Sheriff's sale to settle his debts.[106] John M. Goldsmith, a creditor, contested this sale in 1823. In the Circuit Court case, Goldsmith accused Plater of executing a deed "with a fraudulent design and intention to cheat your orator out of his just claim."[107] The court agreed and filed a judgement against Plater for $1,000 to be released upon payment to Goldsmith of $365.27 with interest. The court case against George Plater V captures the Plater family's fall from status as well as the vagaries of the tobacco economy in St. Mary's County. Despite the risks of tobacco growing, later owners of Sotterley remained committed to the crop well into the late-nineteenth century.

William Somerville did not hold onto Sotterley for long, selling it to Colonel Thomas Barber in 1823. Barber, along with his wife Emeline Dallum Barber, her daughter from a previous marriage also named Emeline, and their daughter Lydia all apparently resided at the main house. In 1826, Col. Barber died and the estate was divided between the two half-sisters. Emeline, who

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[102] For the number of slaves in 1802 see St. Mary's County Registry of Wills, Inventory, Col. George Plater, Sept. 1802, Maryland Hall of Records.

[103] See also Neuwirth, 24-25.

[104] See Marks, 1-5.

[105] Local tradition maintains that George Plater V was prone to gambling and that he lost Sotterley on a throw of dice. While no archival documentation has been found to substantiate this, gambling was certainly within the cultural lexicon of the Chesapeake elite of the eighteenth century. See Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 94-104, 118-120 and David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 340-344. For an account of war activity in and around Sotterley see Donald G. Shomette, *Tidewater Time Capsule: History Beneath the Patuxent* (Centreville, Md: Tidewater Publishers, 1995), 69.

[106] In the Circuit Court case that followed, Somerville testified in a deposition that a public sale was held on July 3, 1822 and was advertised in Baltimore, Washington, and Philadelphia. At the public sale, however, no one was interested in purchasing the property. James T. Kirk had initially displayed an interest but "was disappointed in the quality of the land." Intense private negotiations between Somerville and Enoch J. Millard then ensued from July 3-July 6. An agreement eventually was reached on July 6, 1822.

[107] St. Mary's County, Equity Papers, 1823, p. 106, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis.

was granted the main house and 425 acres, married Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe in 1826. Her half-sister Lydia, living on the neighboring 500 acres, was married to Chapman Billingsley in 1828.[108] These two locally prominent families provided long term continuity to the plantation and its surrounding neighborhood. It would be the Briscoes, though, who would reshape Sotterley's landscape to follow new ideas about house orientation and domestic service.

Dr. Walter Hanson Briscoe and his wife Emeline re-established Sotterley as a prosperous plantation. The Briscoes raised an extensive family that consisted of at least eleven children who helped to manage the farm.[109] Dr. Briscoe continued the tradition of public service established by former owners of Sotterley. He helped run a school on the property, intermittently served as a Judge in the St. Mary's County Orphans Court, presided on the Levy Court, served as a member of the St. Andrew's Parish vestry, and was also a staunch democrat and anti-abolitionist.[110] After the Civil War he served as a founding member of the Patuxent District Grange in St. Mary's County.[111] But besides participating in public offices, Dr. Briscoe oversaw an agricultural transformation at Sotterley. In the mid-nineteenth century Sotterley remained wedded to tobacco, but Briscoe increasingly diversified his interests for he grew increasing amounts of wheat, as well as corn, rye, oats, peas, beans, and potatoes along with large numbers of cattle and swine.[112]

Along with this rebirth in agriculture and status, the Briscoes modified the plantation's layout to fit changing domestic needs. This was largely manifested in the construction of a series of porches that nearly encircled the building as well as a large one-and-a-half story kitchen wing on the east or river side of the main plantation house. The new kitchen suggests a radical reorientation of the dwelling, an occurrence echoed in houses across St. Mary's County in the early nineteenth century, as many planters began aligning their houses away from waterways and toward the land approaches.[113] This type of reorientation frequently involved a combination of interventions, including changing the dwelling's decorative hierarchy, rearranging interior spaces, and/or relegating service wings to less visible locations. At Sotterley, it appears that only the last occurred, and the resulting addition reflected the conventions of the time and the

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[108] Neuwirth, 26. See also Margaret Fresco, *Marriages and Deaths in St. Mary's County 1634-1900* (Ridge, Md: n. p., 1994), 23, 32.

[109] United States Census, Manuscript Population Schedules, St. Mary's County, 1850, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis.

[110] Neuwirth, 28.

[111] *St. Mary's Beacon*, vol. 12, no. 40, p. 2, c. 2, 22 July 1875.

[112] Gleaned from the United States Census, Manuscript Schedules of Agriculture, St. Mary's County 1850, 1860, 1870. Microfilm copies at the Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis.

[113] Cross Manor (SM-3) was reoriented towards the land during a series of renovations in the 1840s and 1850s. Blair's Purchase (SM-125), erected c. 1831, was initially built to face the land approach to the main house rather than the Wicomico and Potomac Rivers. While radically changed in the 1920s, the house's interior decorative hierarchy reveals that entertaining and receiving were done on the land side rather than the river side.

mutability of the working plantation landscape.[114] Besides relocating domestic service to a less visible location, the new kitchen wing also shielded views of a nearby row of slave houses from the east porch of the main house.[115]

Symbolically located below the main house and between a gully and the old "rolling" road leading to the Patuxent, between five and seven single-cell, log slave quarters were erected between 1830-1850.[116] Only one of these quarters is extant. While significant for its location and survival, this quarter also derives its importance from its building technology and possible association with a well documented slave family and post-Civil War African-American occupation. Constructed of hewn horizontal logs joined together at the corners with square notches, the house features a series of vertical, hole-set, skinned posts that are pegged into the individual logs to keep the walls from sagging.[117] The Sotterley slave quarter is one of only a few remaining buildings in the Chesapeake region exemplifying this rare form of construction.[118]

Recent research conducted by Agnes Kane Callum, a descendant of slaves who lived at Sotterley, has revealed that members of the Kane (or Cane) family may have resided in one of the quarters at the plantation in the antebellum period.[119] In 1849, Hillery Cane, a plasterer by trade, was purchased by Chapman Billingsley at the estate sale of James J. Gough. One of the most ardent supporters of slavery in the Maryland Legislature, Billingsley once referred to the abolition of slavery as "the emanation of a sickly sentimentality, and offspring of a morbid philanthropy."[120]

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[114] While many visitors certainly would have approached Sotterley from the water via steamboat in the nineteenth century, an 1848 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map suggests that a formal avenue leading up to Sotterley was on a direct axis with the main house. Map in Julia A. King, *Recommendations for the Management of Archaeological Resources at Sotterley* (St. Leonard, Md: Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, 1991. Jessica Neuwirth determined that the old rolling road was abandoned by the Briscoes after the original river anchorage had silted up and the steamboat landing was relocated. See Neuwirth, 30. George Washington may have indicated that the landing was no longer used when he promised to send his wagon "to Colo. Platers, on some landing above for Mr. Boulton's tools . . ."

[115] Jeffrey Bostetter, et al, *The Slave House at Sotterley near Hollywood, St. Mary's County, Maryland: Architectural Investigations and Recommendations* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1995), 1-2. Here the authors reveal that partial visibility represents an important theme in locating slave quarters near large plantation dwellings.

[116] Differing accounts suggest that between five and seven slave dwellings were located along this row. See Neuwirth, 30.

[117] Bostetter, et al, 8.

[118] Bostetter, et al., 8. The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties for St. Mary's County includes several buildings in the area with similar construction details. The slave quarters at Riverview (SM-121) (now demolished) and Blair's Purchase (SM-126), the Samuel Spalding Barn (SM-170), the Bond Farm Tobacco Barn (SM-245), and the tobacco barn and corn crib at Old Patuxent Farm (SM-527). See also McDaniel 64-67.

[119] Agnes Kane Callum, *The Kanes' Sojourn at Sotterley* (n. p., 1978), 1-4.

[120] Anita Aidt Guy, *Maryland's Persistant Pursuit to End Slavery, 1850-1864* (Garland Publishing, Inc., 1997), 437-438.

Billingsley, however, did not purchase Hillery's wife and children who were later sold to Billingsley's neighbor, Dr. Walter Hanson Briscoe. Despite having another owner, it has been suggested that Billingsley allowed Hillery to live at Sotterley with his family. This arrangement raises fundamental questions about several aspects of slave life such as the informal arrangements to maintain slave families, the contracting of slave labor, and the interaction between different plantation slave communities.[121]

After the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, most of the slave quarters were maintained at Sotterley. In the 1880s, the existing slave quarter was home to James Victor Scriber, a son of slaves who had fled from Georgia to St. Mary's County in the 1880s.[122] Scriber, who lived into the 1980s, provided invaluable accounts of everyday life at Sotterley just after the Civil War. All of these written and oral histories provide vivid insight into the lives of slave and former slave families who even today still live in St. Mary's County.[123]

In 1885, Dr. Walter Hanson Briscoe died and was soon followed by his beloved wife Emeline in 1887. As per her will, the property was sold at auction to their son Rev. James Briscoe. Sotterley remained in the Briscoe family until 1904 when Elizabeth Cashner, the daughter of Rev. James Briscoe, finally sold it to Herbert Satterlee, a wealthy New York author and lawyer.

Satterlee and his wife Louisa Morgan (the daughter of financial magnate J. P. Morgan) purchased the property at the behest of cousin Reverend Henry Satterlee, the first bishop of the National Cathedral in Washington, D. C. The Satterlees recognized and appreciated the historic importance of the house, and in the spirit of the Colonial Revival movement set about "to restore the buildings as they were about 1776; so as to show the manner in which a Southern Maryland gentleman lived in those days."[124] Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, and especially after the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Celebration, Americans began to display a renewed interest in America's founders and the verities they stood for. In their purchase and plans for Sotterley, the Satterlees joined other members of the wealthy elite in acquiring a colonial-era property for the purpose of "restoration" informed in part by architectural documentation and according to commonly held beliefs about the past.[125] Architectural historians, such as Henry Chandlee Forman, fueled interest by publishing books about historic houses. In his *Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland*, Forman documented and photographed buildings "to gather and

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[121] Neuwirth, 26-28.

[122] McDaniel, 52-53.

[123] Agnes Kane Callum, a descendant of Sotterley slaves, and Judge John Hanson Briscoe, a descendant of Dr. Walter Hanson Briscoe, formerly served together on the Sotterley Foundation's Board of Trustees, vivid testimony of Sotterley's intimate connections to the local community and its heritage. See also Michael Janofsky, "Descendants of Slave and Master Work to Save a Common Heritage," *The New York Times*, August 18, 1996.

[124] Fraser Nairn, "Mr. Satterlee of Sotterley", *Country Life*, March 19, 1934, 80.

[125] Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 319-326.

preserve this ancient and priceless material before it is forever lost."[126] Like many of his colleagues in the early twentieth century, Forman's object-oriented studies focused on architectural embellishment and floor plans as worthy of modern appreciation. His attention to eighteenth century decorative arts was especially seen in his typology of housing types; he devoted an entire category to Sotterley, which he named the "Chinese Chippendale" type.[127]

The Satterlees definitely understood the Colonial Revival's architectural and social rhetoric as they sought a closer connection, not only to George Plater III, but also to George Washington, by making several modifications to the house. Beginning in 1914, they gradually attempted to stabilize the building and rationalize the exterior appearance by underpinning the entire house with a new concrete foundation, replacing the floors, removing siding and installing beaded and beveled clapboard, reconstructing three gable ends using brick laid in Flemish bond, tearing down the east kitchen which had been added by the Briscoes, and building a new kitchen on the foundation of the former one on the southern elevation. The Satterlees further planned to re-create the plantation's historic circulation pattern by reintroducing a tree-lined, land-side approach.[128] Several outbuildings were moved and reconstructed, all but one of the slave quarters were demolished, and a brick garden wall was built to provide a more balanced and organized appearance. While the garden itself was retained, the four square vegetable and fruit planting beds were augmented with boxwood and barberry hedges, fencing, and a garden shed designed to match the necessary.[129] The linear, ornamental beds to the east were apparently extended.[130] The Satterlees also retained ivy from Mount Vernon (NHL) and Kenilworth Castle in England to cover the new gable end walls and collected extensive memorabilia such as andirons decorated with standing figures of Washington, a spinning wheel, and a tall case clock.[131] The house's function also changed, as it was no longer used as a year-round residence and the center of a working farm but instead as a summer residence and historic showpiece. By imposing continuity and order upon an otherwise asymmetrical dwelling and historically layered landscape, the Satterlees affirmed their participation in the Colonial Revival.

By 1947, the property had been acquired by Herbert and Louisa Satterlee's daughter Mabel Satterlee Ingalls. In 1961 she established the non-profit Sotterley Mansion Foundation, dedicated to the plantation's maintenance, preservation, and interpretation. She served on the Board of Trustees until 1992 and died in 1993. Upon her death, the plantation fell on hard financial times until 1996, when an aggressive fundraising campaign was launched to preserve this outstanding

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[126] Henry Chandlee Forman, *Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland*, (Baltimore: Waverly Press, Inc., 1934), 21.

[127] Forman, 29.

[128] This effort was not completely realized until the 1960s. See also "Landscape Evolution," 118.

[129] "Landscape Evolution," February draft, 118.

[130] "Landscape Evolution," February draft, 118.

[131] Nairn, 80.

historical resource. The success of this campaign has resulted in the successful rehabilitation of the slave quarter with similar plans being prepared for the house and landscape.

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- Registry of Wills
- Annual Valuations and Assessments
- Equity Papers
- Decree Records
- Tax Assessments

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ Previously Listed in the National Register.
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
_X_ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #MD-181
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
_X_ Other (Specify Repository): Sotterley Foundation, Inc.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 195.257 acres

USGS Quad: Hollywood, MD; Broome's Island, MD

UTM References:

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	366040	4249300
B	18	365790	4249290
C	18	366060	4249140
D	18	365980	4248710
E	18	365760	4248340
F	18	365430	4248120
G	18	364670	4248300
H	18	364660	4248370
I	18	365080	4248570
J	18	365180	4249050
K	18	365300	4249050

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property consists of three adjoining parcels as described among the land records of St. Mary's County in the following deeds. Parcel A: Liber CBG 117, folio 314, dated May 4, 1962; Liber DBK 176, folio 055, dated February 25, 1972; Liber EWA 600, folio 216, dated May 15, 1991; Liber EWA 1351, Folio 90, dated November 16, 1998 as outlined in St. Mary's County Plat Records, Liber 46, folio 38; and among the Will Records of St. Mary's County in Liber 027, folio 126, probated January 14, 1994. Parcel B: Liber EWA 991, folio 231, dated August 3, 1995 with a legal description and plat contained in Liber EWA 930, folio 596, dated August 3, 1994. Parcel C: Liber EWA 1059, folio 402, dated April 25, 1996.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property, 195.257 acres, comprises three adjoining parcels that represent the remnant of the property historically known as Sotterley which retains integrity and encompasses all elements of the resource within an appropriate historic setting.

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK ON
February 16, 2000

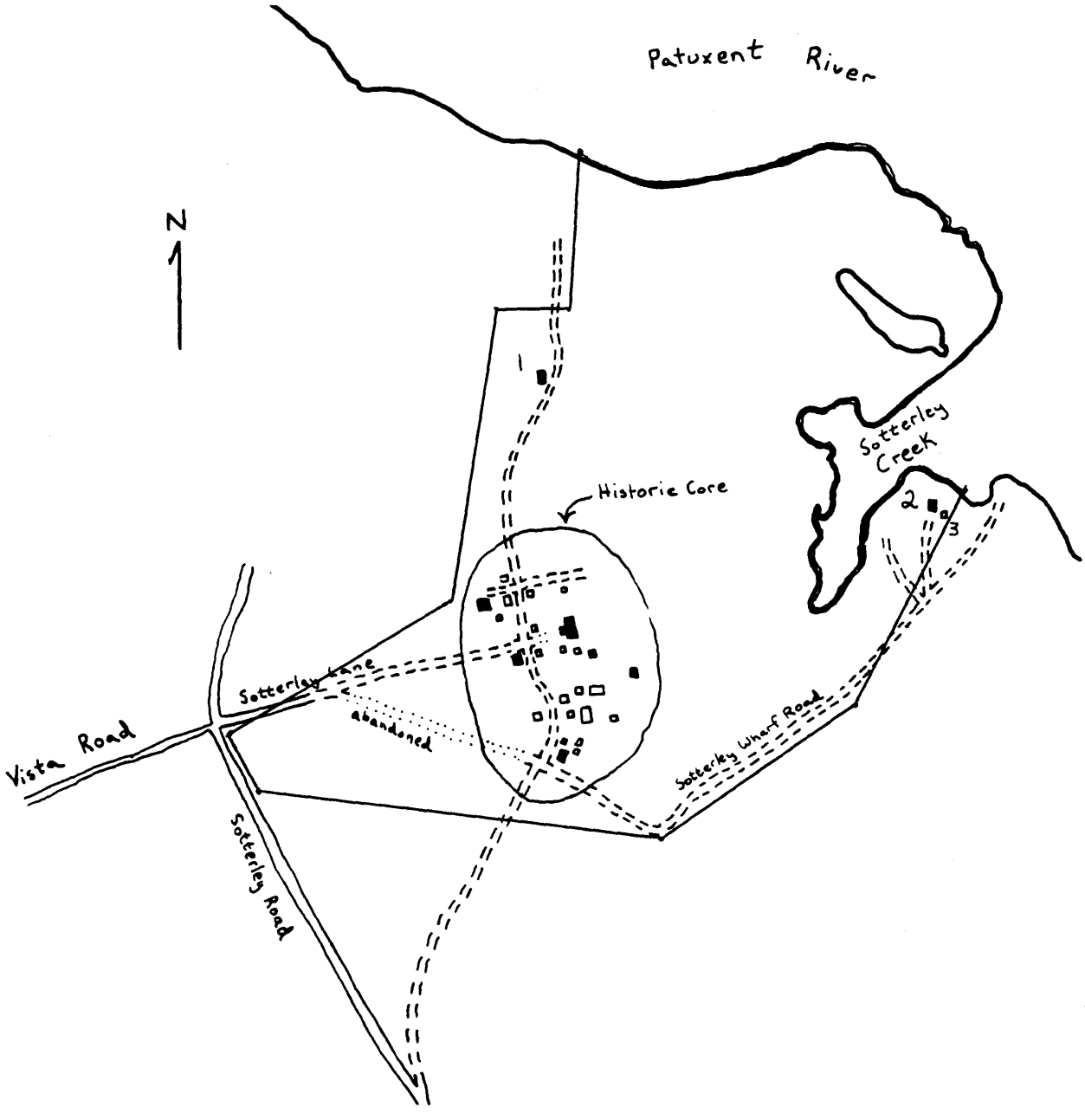
Area Plan of Sotterley Plantation

<u>Non-contributing buildings not located in the Historic Core</u>

1) Tenant House (c. 1910s), NC
2) Brink Cottage (c. 1920s), NC
3) Storage Shed (c. 1970s?), NC

——— Approximate boundaries of nomination

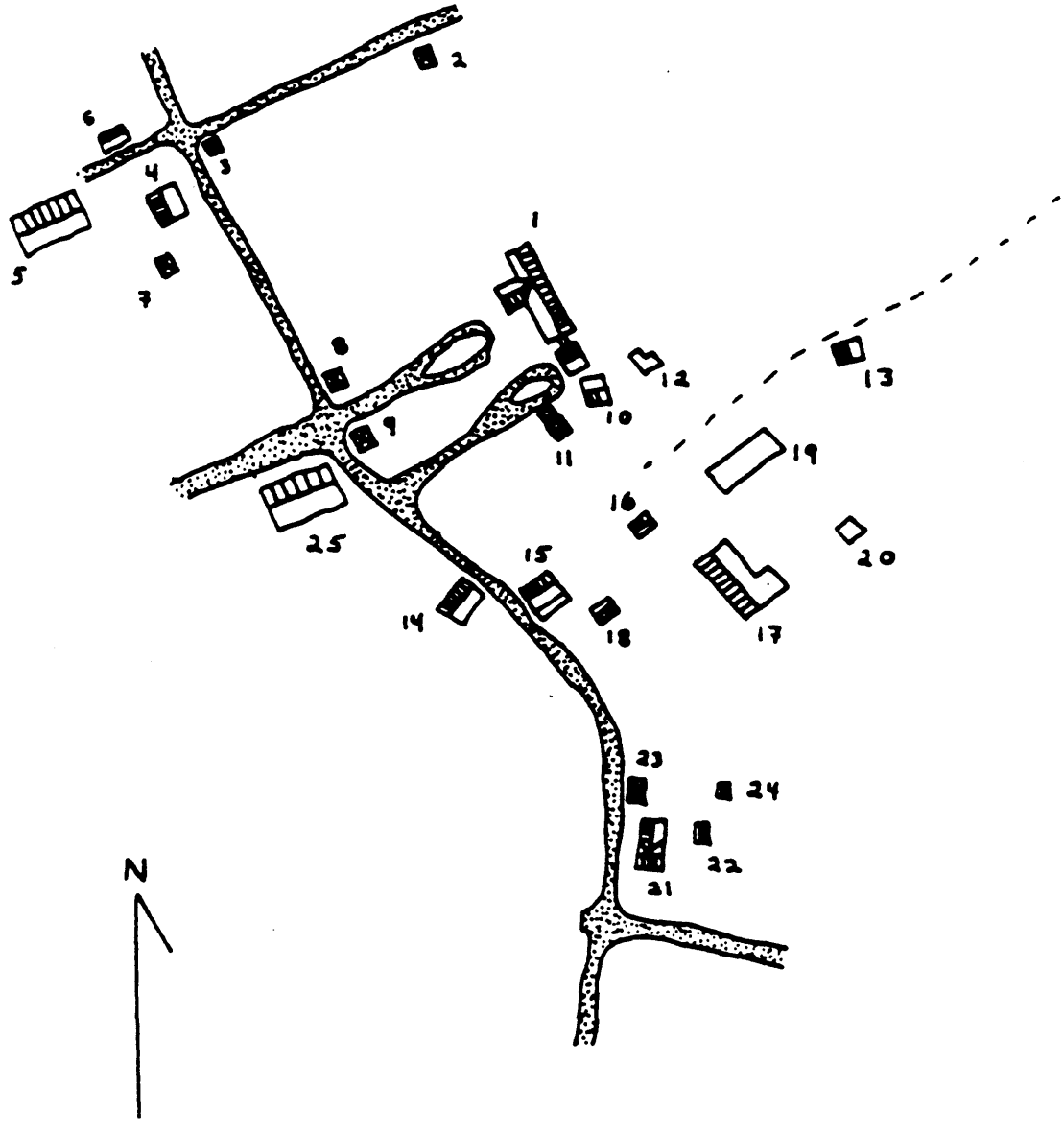
Drawing not to Scale



1999 Site Plan of Sotterley's Historic Core

(Drawing not to scale.)

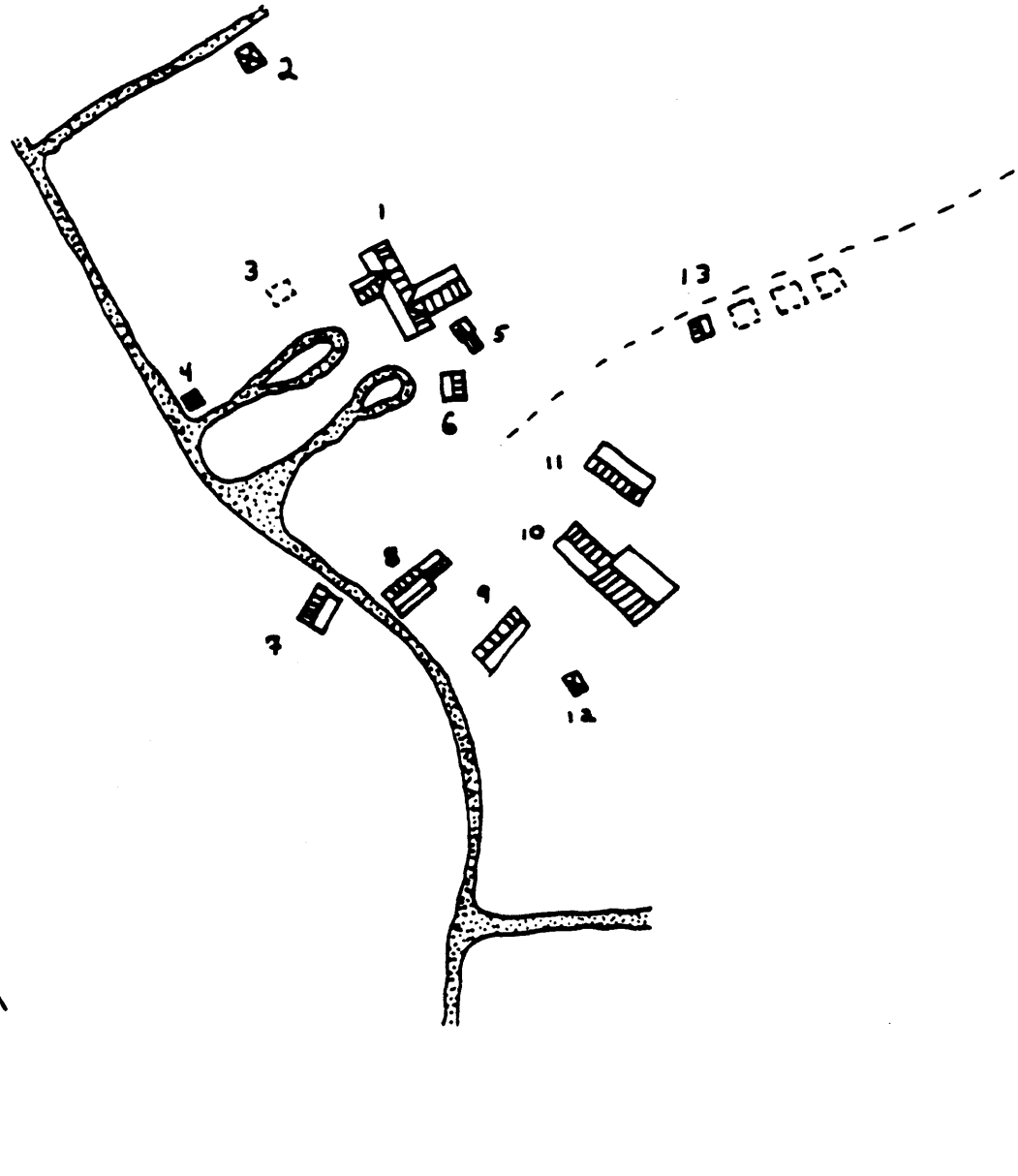
1. Main house (c. 1717), C
2. Necessary (early 19th century?), C
3. Garden tool shed (1930), C
4. Turkey house (1922, moved 1970s?), C
5. Gardener's house (1971), NC
6. Tool shed (1960s), NC
7. Storage shed (1960s), NC
8. North gatehouse (1820s?), C
9. South gatehouse (1910s), C
10. Smokehouse (1840s), C
11. Gift shop (1910s, moved 1973), NC
12. Spinning cottage (1930s), C
13. Slave quarter (1830s), C
14. Corn crib (mid-1800s), C
15. Brick stable (c. 1757, rebuilt 1932), C
16. Ice house (1922), C
17. Sheep barn (1916), C
18. Cinder block building (1960s?), NC
19. Tractor shed (1960s), NC
20. Storage shed (1960s), NC
21. Knott house (1910s), C
22. Creamery/dairy (1910s), C
23. Storage shed (1910s), C
24. Chicken coop (1910s, C
25. Sotterley Foundation Offices (1950s?), NC



Sotterley's Historic Core (1875-1900)

(Drawing not to scale.)

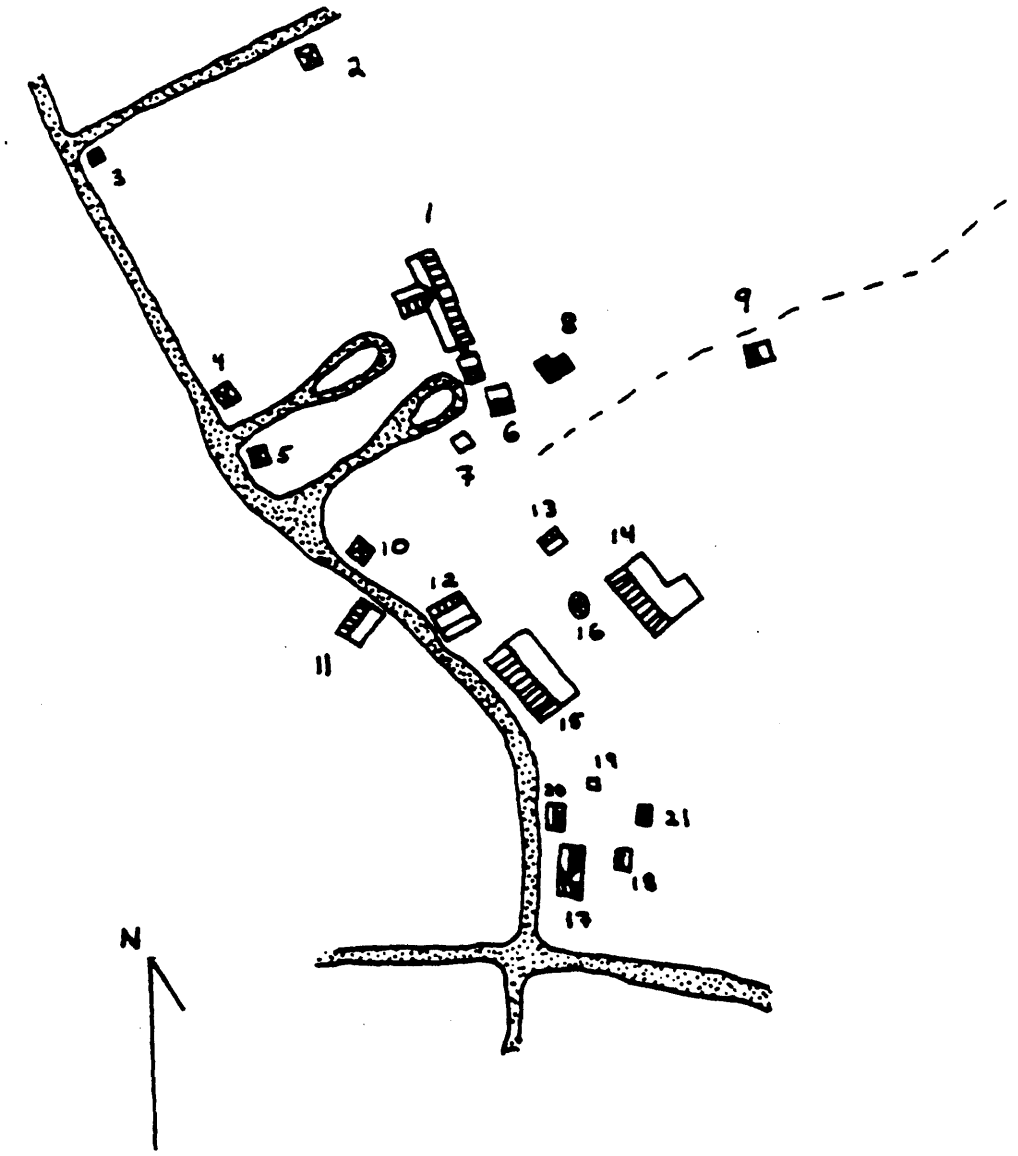
1. Main house
2. Necessary
3. Site of wine cellar
4. Gatehouse
5. Quarter ?
6. Smokehouse
7. Corn crib
8. Brick stable
9. Tobacco barn
10. Tobacco barn
11. Tobacco barn
12. Outbuilding (function?)
13. Slave quarters



Sotterley's Historic Core (1920s-1940s)

(Drawing not to scale.)

1. Main house
2. Necessary
3. Garden tool shed
4. North gatehouse
5. South gatehouse
6. Smokehouse
7. Freezer room
8. Spinning cottage
9. Slave quarter
10. Customs house
11. Corn crib
12. Brick stable
13. Ice house
14. Sheep barn
15. Horse barn
16. Water tower
17. Knott house
18. Creamery/dairy
19. Privy
20. Storage shed
21. Chicken coop?

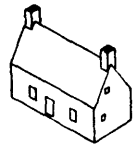


The Evolution of Sotterley
From 1717-present

Drawings not to scale (front elevation faces east)

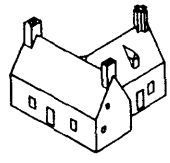
Period I (c. 1717)

- two room earthfast dwelling with east side facing Patuxent River



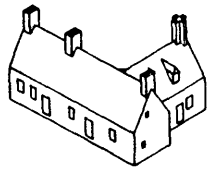
Period II (c. 1727)

- addition of wing on west side of dwelling
- consists of a passage and "new roome"
- note clustered chimney stack



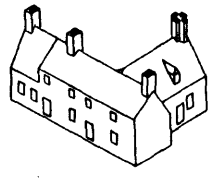
Period III (c. 1750s)

- addition on south side of dwelling
- features crude finishes (used for domestic purposes?)
- paneling installed in new room, hall, and parlor



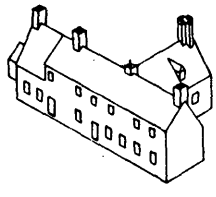
Period IV (c. 1760s)

- roof raised on east side of main block only
- gives appearance of a full second story



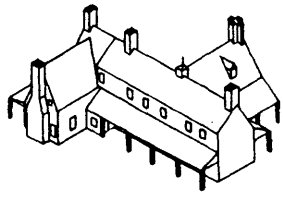
Period V (c. 1780s)

- addition on north side of building
- drawing room and stair passage created
- larder constructed on south side of building
- cupola added to hide awkward roof connection



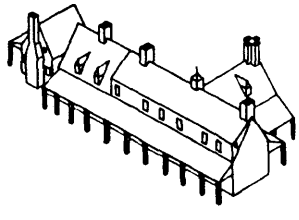
Period VI (c. 1840s)

- addition of east wing probably a kitchen
- construction of porches that nearly encircle the house
- possible reorientation of house towards the land or west side



Period VII (c. 1910s)

- demolition of east wing and construction of new kitchen on south side
- porch partially reconstructed
- gable ends all replaced with Flemish bond brick
- larder encased and one bay addition built on south end
- breezeway built to connect kitchen to main house



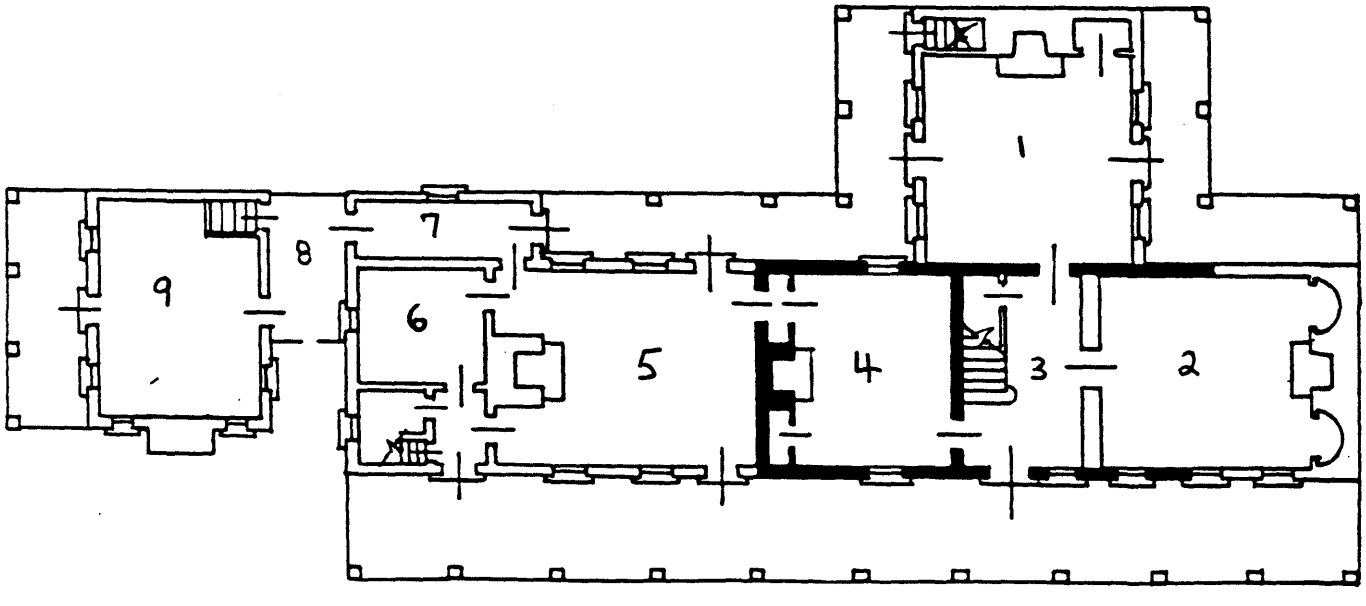
First Floor Plan of Sotterley

Drawing by J. Richard Rivoire

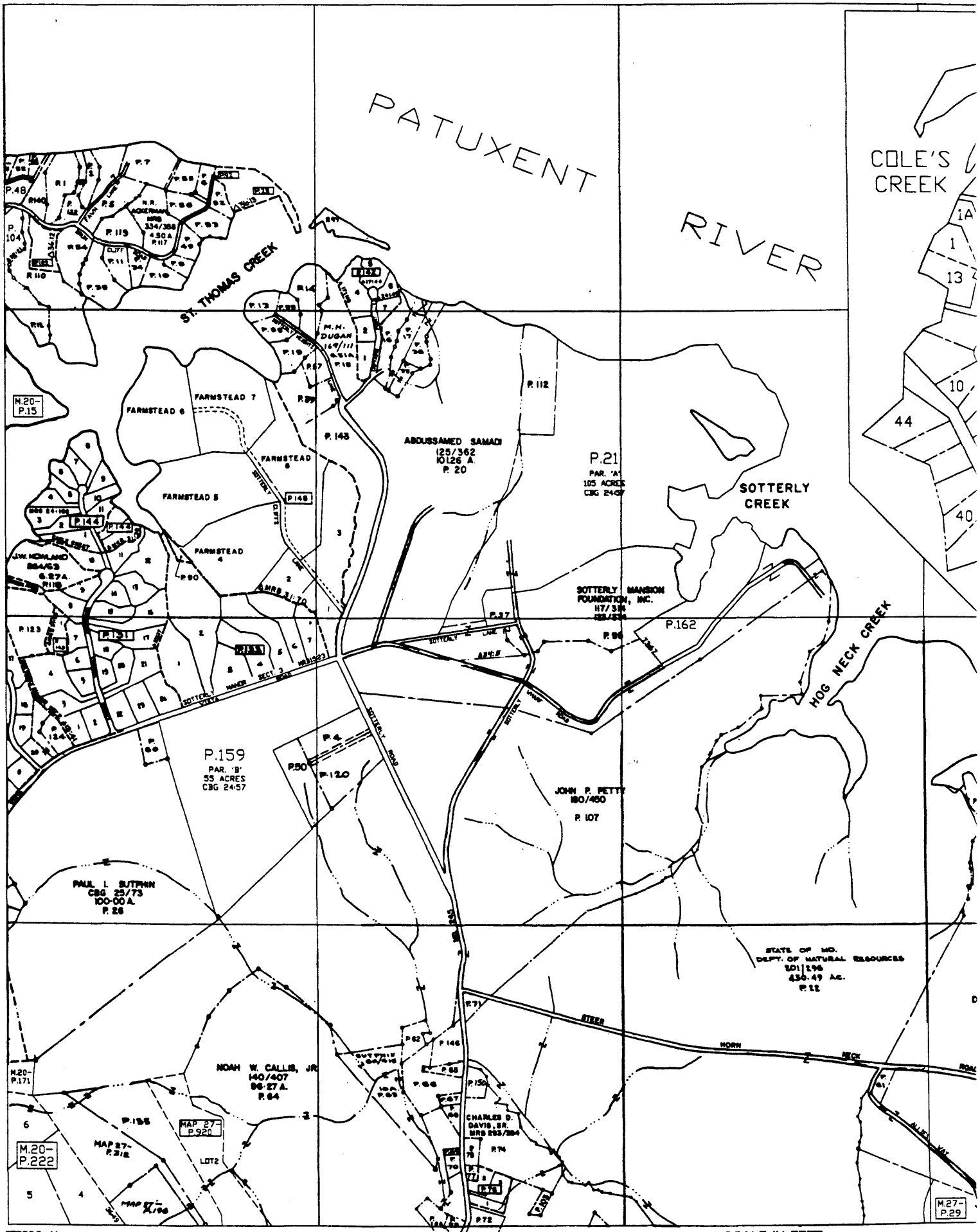
Not to scale.
Shaded portion of drawing indicates remnant of Period I building.

<u>Room names used in nomination</u>

1. West wing, "New Roome" & "Passage,"
2. Parlor, drawing room (location of shell alcoves)
3. Center passage (location of Chippendale staircase)
4. "Madame Bowles Roome," hall
5. South addition with transverse passage, dining room
6. Larder
7. Pantry
8. Breezeway, covered passage
9. Kitchen



80695.9mN
438432.0mE



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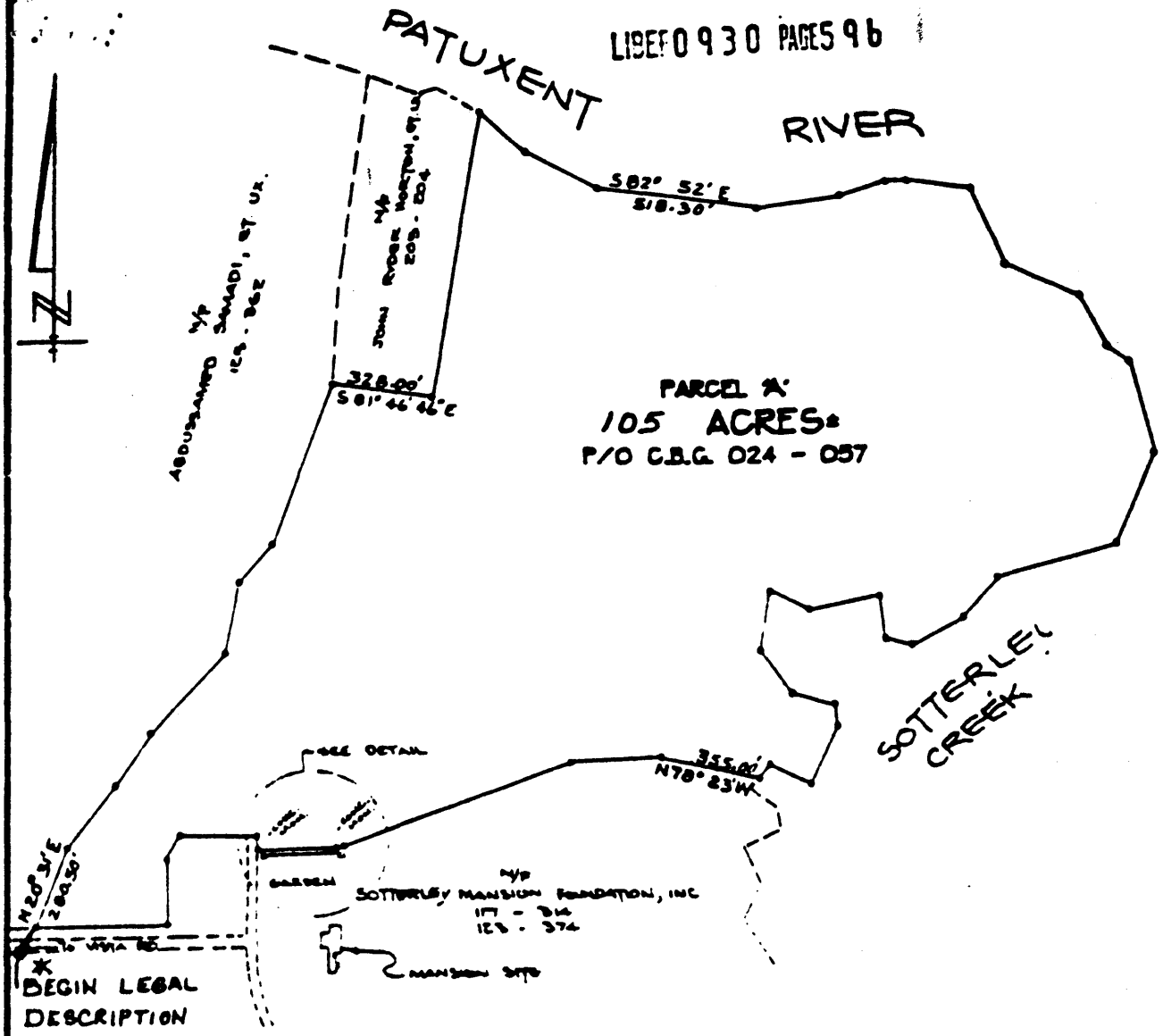


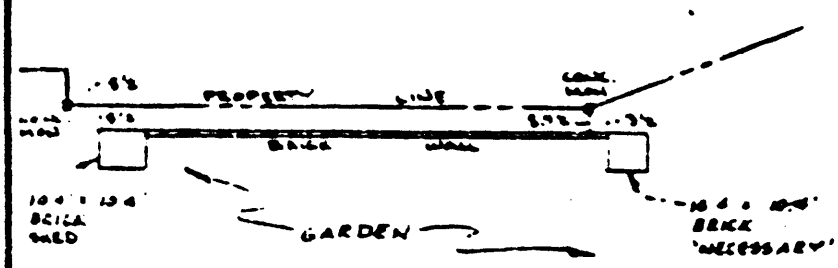
PARCEL 'A'

MABEL S. INGALLS ESTATE

6th ELECTION DISTRICT
ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

NOTE:

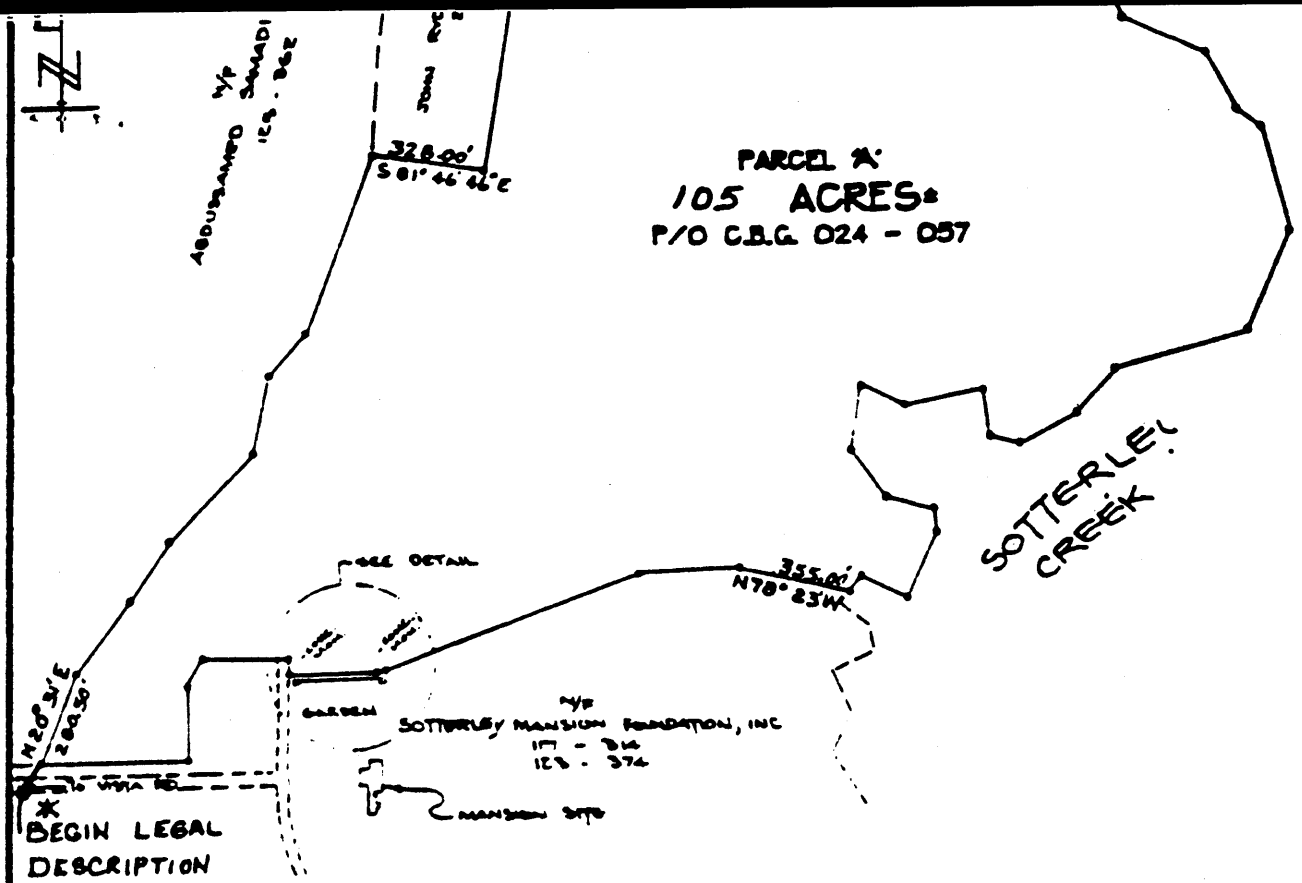
This does not represent a field survey by this Company. Boundary information was taken from deeds of record and plats.



DETAIL
NOT TO SCALE

REFERENCES
Plat Book
Plat No
Liber CBG 24
Folio 57

OWNER MABEL S. INGALLS ESTATE



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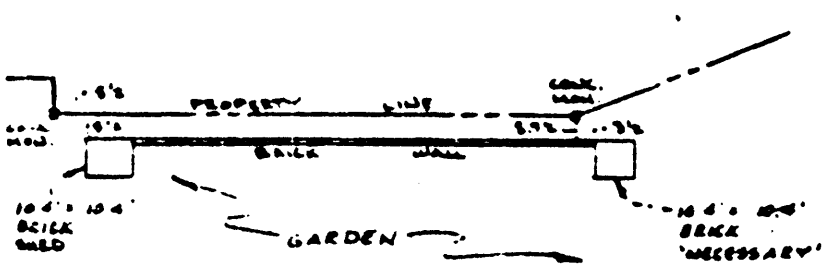

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OWNER MABEL S INGALLS ESTATE

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