

Report on Testing at AP34 - Patrick Creagh Site

Two days of minimal field testing (on a budget of \$500) were carried out at the Patrick Creagh Site located at Prince George Street, Annapolis, Maryland on June 28-29, 1983 (see figures 1 and 2). Funding was provided by Historic Annapolis, Inc. under a grant from the City of Annapolis. Four test units were excavated to establish whether soil layers dating to the 18th century occupation of the house existed. The results of testing in each of these units is presented below together with a brief discussion of the site's eighteenth century occupants and its neighborhood.

Archaeological testing in the backyard of the Patrick Creagh site indicated that there were undisturbed layers dating from the third quarter of the 18th century into the first quarter of the nineteenth. Included among these was at least one layer of probable sheet refuse, something that has not appeared frequently at urban Annapolis sites. These layers span the years when the site first became the residence of free blacks and hence the site holds a high potential for recovering of data relevant to this segment of Annapolis society. This data would have more than local significance for the majority of sites linked to black occupants that have been excavated to date are slave quarters. The historical data suggests that the free black community in Annapolis consisted of small businessmen who were modestly prosperous. Almost nothing is known about the lifestyles of such families during the colonial era when they formed a very small minority of the black population.

1780s & 1790s

interesting individual in his time, however a man of great activity.

At the same time, the site also appears to contain layers associated with the mid-eighteenth century Creagh occupation and is thus linked to Patrick Creagh, one of the most active entrepreneurs in the early 18th century. ~~Creagh is someone whose~~ life has not been fully documented or studied, although much more is known about him (see Joy Gary's article attached as Appendix 1) than other Annapolis entrepreneurs.

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The location of these layers close to the surface (i.e. less than a foot deep) means that they easily could be damaged by landscaping of the backyard at the Creagh house. The small size of the backyard, in turn, suggests that excavation of this site could be undertaken in a minimal amount of time, probably within 6-8 weeks if no well was located. As part of the excavation, the fill in the northeast sector of the yard, created when the church was built in the 19th century, should be removed.

Archaeological Testing: Front Yard

The house almost abuts the present sidewalk and has virtually no front yard. However, one unit (Test pit No. #3, 2.5 x 3 feet) was placed between the front steps and a basement window on the northwest side of the house (see slides 25 & 26 and Fig. 3). The size of this unit was dictated by the available yard space.

The topsoil (Level 001) consisted of a loose, dark brown soil containing a few pieces of broken window glass. The base of the window well lay 2-3" below the surface and contained no fill. Outside the window well area, and immediately below the topsoil lay an orange/red sandy clay layer becoming

orange/red clay at 4" below the surface. An additional 3" was taken off to verify that this was sterile sub-soil and not a layer of fill. No profiles were drawn of Test Pit #3.

Historical data and excavation of Paca House (Stanley South, 1967) indicate that the street level was lowered during the 19th century. The archaeological evidence from the Creagh site also points toward a major alteration of Prince George street-level. The original street-level sloped gradually towards the harbor, following the contours of the land (note, for example, the higher yard surface at both Brice House and the John Brice house). One assumes that the levelling occurred in the early 19th century when East Street was fully opened and other, major roadwork was done in the City.

No 18th century artifacts were recovered in the archaeological testing of the front yard.

Archaeological Testing: Back Yard

Three excavation units (Test pits 1, 2, and 4) were placed in the back yard. Undisturbed 18th century soil layers were located together with 18th century strata disturbed by 20th century construction activity at the site. Seven features and five soil layers were recorded. There were very few 19th century materials recovered; The bulk of these date to the first quarter of the century, although given the ceramic lag that characterizes some black sites (reported by Deetz for Parting Ways) and that has been noted on sites of low income families in Delaware (Cara Wise, personal communication), the 19th century occupation may be more heavily represented than appears initially.

The present backyard surface slopes upward towards the northeastern lot boundary. This slope, however, is not an original land surface, but is related to the nineteenth century construction of the church at the corner of East Street and Prince George Street (now housing the Chesapeake Bay Foundation). Twentieth century construction activity in the yard included the burial of a fuel storage tank (and deposits disturbed at the time may now be interspersed among the modern materials in the topsoil). During this work, (as reported by Mr. Carroll) a brick addition wing was located adjacent to the northwest corner of the building. No archaeological testing was done in the vicinity of the building reported by Mr. Carroll.

Test Unit #2. This unit, measuring 5 ft wide x 2.5 ft deep, was placed adjacent to the back wall of the dwelling beneath the northeast window (see slide #8 and Figure 4). A layer of recent topsoil (Layer 001) was removed to a depth of 4". Immediately below, Feature No. 2 (a brick window well) appeared (slides 18 and 21). The window well was laid into a layer of orange/red sandy clay. The fill within the well contained a mixture of scratch blue stoneware and creamware as well as a coin dating to c. 1714. The orange/red sandy clay beneath the window well contained no datable artifacts (i.e., 1 piece of metal, 1 bone, and 1 fragment of clear glass). At the northern edge of the test unit two copper pipes running into the basement were located in a modern trench (see slides 23 & 23). Presumably these connect the fuel storage tank with the house.

Test Unit #1. This unit, measuring 5 x 5, was placed adjacent to the original backdoor of the dwelling, running between it and an earlier basement window to the north (see slides 16 & 17 and Figure 4). The topsoil consisted of a two to three inch layer of loose, brown sandy soil (Layer 002). A segment of a mortared brick window well (Feature No. 3) was located two inches below the surface laid into orange/red sandy clay. The base of the window well lay 3-4" below its sidewall; its fill contained more artifacts dating to the third quarter of the 18th century. No disturbance was observed in the fill. However, there was a large amount of disturbance in the eastern sector of this unit.

A layer of mortar, 3-4 inches in depth, sloped toward the eastern edge of the unit. This did not appear to be related to the mortared brick construction of the window wells. No datable artifacts were recovered from this layer. A layer of dark brown and red mottled soil, appearing at 3" below surface towards the north and 8" to the south, extended to a depth of 16" at the center of the unit. The surface of the layer is visible in slides 16 & 17. It was cut through by a trench for a drainage pipe, and was a layer disturbed by the installation of the pipe. Extending from 16" to a depth of 4.5 feet, was a layer of mottled dark brown sandy soil containing distinctive orange/red sandy lenses. At its base was a thin layer of mortar. The artifacts within this strata were primarily 18th and early 19th century materials, together with a large quantity of red clay tile that may be more modern origin. Boundaries of this feature were not defined by the testing and its purpose is unknown; it could represent destruction activity associated with a well, but the small amount of ceramics and glassware within it suggests it had some other function.

Test Unit #4. This was a 5 foot square unit placed adjacent to the backwall of the southern addition on the north side of its doorway. Feature No. 5, the builder's trench for this backwall, extended the length of the unit and was 10" wide. This trench contained a large quantity artifacts dating to the fourth quarter of the 18th century and possibly as late as c. 1810. The ceramics included high quality wares such as Rosso Antico. There were also one cut nail and two modern ones.

The artifacts from the builder's trench were similar in quantity and quality to those recovered from a layer of dark brown humic soil adjacent to the builder's trench which appears to be a layer of sheet refuse, possibly redeposited. The layer of sheet refuse lies beneath Feature 7, a thin layer of mortar lying approximately 2 inches below the original topsoil layer, and is deeper towards the east (i.e. 8" deep). The sheet refuse varies in depth from .5 inches to 3". Some of the glasswares in it appear to be of more recent origin than the ceramics. Mean ceramic dates for the pottery within this layer also suggest it may be redeposited (i.e., they occur in reverse order with the earlier ceramics appearing higher in the layer than the later ones), but the small sample size may also be affecting the ceramic dates. Note that Larry McKee's brief summary of the faunal material from this site suggests further work be done.

Feature and level forms concerning the archaeological data described above are contained in the report copy (as Appendix 3) on file at the Victualling Warehouse Laboratory.

The Lot (Stoddart No. 95) and Its Occupants:

The history of land use at this site is not fully documented nor well understood. Initially the land was part of Lot 95 and abutted Lot 94 containing Brice House. To the east lay Lot 102 sloping down to the waterfront and a stream that no longer exists (see the 1781 Capitaine map). Thus, to situate the house and its yard, one must consider what is known about it and each of the adjacent lots.

The original boundaries of Lot 95 extended close to the present waterfront and it abutted Prince George and Randall streets. The land was re-surveyed in 1718 for Amos Garrett whose heirs sold it to Patrick Creagh with two other lots (97 and 98) for 190 pounds sterling. Creagh presumably built a dwelling on Lot 95 in the 1730s. By the early 1740s real estate conveyances note Creagh's ownership of Lot 95 and adjacent portions of Lot 96, but the earliest documentation of his dwelling appears in his will dated 1747 (probated 1761).

In 1754 he mortgaged his house and property to William Fower, Bartholomew Pomey and Joseph Janson of London for 1800 pounds sterling. At his death in 1761, they foreclosed on the mortgage and auctioned the property which Thomas Rutland, Sr., purchased for 350 pounds sterling. Creagh left a widow, Frances, and one daughter, Elizabeth, who had married Richard McKubbin by 1776 when she gave full title of her interest in the property to another Thomas Rutland (grandson of the senior Rutland). It is unclear precisely where the McKubbin's lived as they owned a large quantity of land in Annapolis and one assumes that Frances Creagh lived with her daughter and son-in-law during her widowhood. No effort to recover the Creagh family dwelling by the McKubbins after 1761 can be documented until 1786. The assumption that Papenfuse and Williams draw is that the house was leased between 1761 and 1786 to unknown tenants.

By 1786, Thomas Rutland the younger was indebted to John Creagh McKubbin, grandson of Patrick Creagh, and to clear the debt sold the property to Creagh's grandson for 2,000 pounds sterling including the Creagh family home. He did not, however, have clear title to the land and it was attached shortly thereafter to cover debts that Rutland incurred prior to its sale and, in 1788, resold by the sheriff of Anne Arundel County to Absalom Ridgely.

Ridgely owned a large number of rental properties in Annapolis and in 1798 is shown as possessing two on Lot 95. The first is a frame building, in bad repair, rented to his son Charles and the second is a one story brick dwelling and a brick kitchen, both in bad repair, leased to John Smith. The dimensions given in the tax list are not those of the present building which consists of a core building, 30 x 16 with a southern extension measuring 12 x 16 (see sketch of front facade as shown in Figure 3) instead of the 50 x 16 house noted on the tax list. Slides 9, 11, 13, and 14 also show evidence of alterations to the core house.

Note that slides 9-14 also show evidence of alterations to the house.

Lot 95 and Its Eighteenth Century Neighborhood.

To the north of the Creagh lot was Brice house, standing on the southeastern slope of the State House hill along the 25 foot contour line and built during the 1760s on a high knoll of land facing southeast towards the mouth of the Severn River and Chesapeake Bay. At that time East Street did not run through from the Circle to Prince George Street and so Brice House had a considerably larger front yard that presumably extended to the northern boundary of Lot 95. In 1781, when the French mapped Annapolis, they show both East Street and extensive terraced gardens to the south of the roadway behind the Creagh house. This map is not fully accurate, but archaeology on the Martin Street Lot in the early 1970s also indicated the presence of garden terracing south of the area occupied by Paca Garden. There is thus the suggestion that the Creagh house was situated adjacent to a stylish cultural landscape consisting of several different sets of garden terraces descending towards the Governor's Pond and created by the elite of Annapolis society.

Yet just as its long history as a rental property and the notation of buildings in 'bad repair' suggests a less elegant landscape, so too does the known history of the land use of other nearby lots (101 and 102). A 1787 mortgage from Thomas Rutland to George Mason describes some of the land as "made land" with wharves. The 1798 tax list shows a series of small houses (including a frame house 26 x 14 worth \$200, one 24 x 16, another 28 x 24 in bad repair, as well as a long, narrow house 40 x 14) in the vicinity. There was also a tavern, brewhouse and malt kiln nearby.

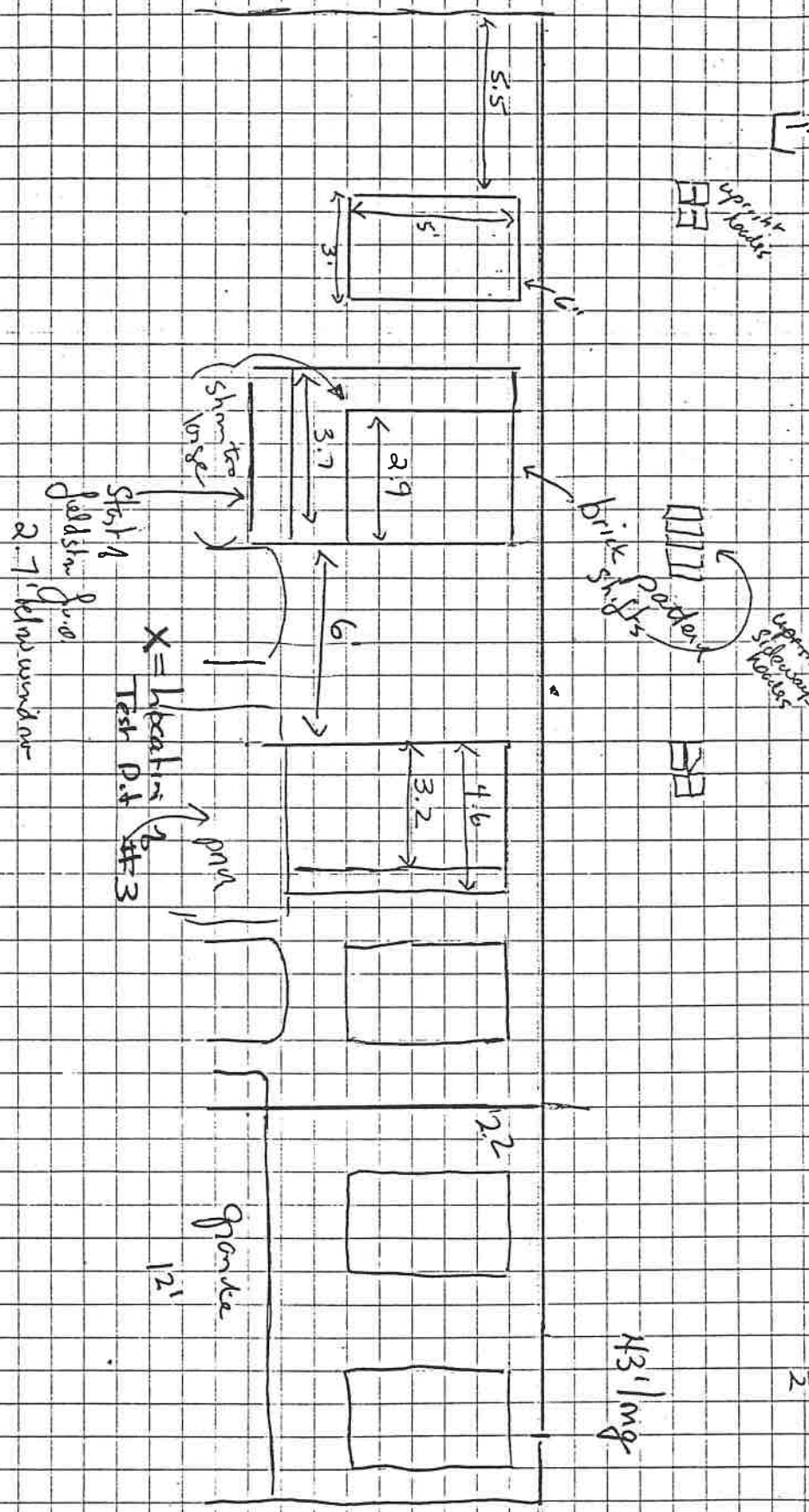
The house at 160 Prince George Street is locally known as "Aunt Lucy's Bakeshop" and oral tradition relates that it was the home of "Aunt Lucy" Smith in the late 1700s as does the local history written by Elihu Riley. There was a free black named John Smith who lived in Annapolis during the early 1800s according to various documents. Joy Gary also cites a receipted bill to Mrs. Lucy Smith for 13 days hire of a cart from Daniel Fowler dated 1812. Although no detailed research has been done on this family (and presumably a thorough search of the records would provide more information than is now known), a limited search of the 18th century deeds for the area immediately surrounding 160 Prince George Street suggests that there may have been other black families living in the immediate vicinity. In 1801, William Yieldhall left land to "Negroe Lucky" in his will and later, in 1809, devised the same property to Matilda (a mulatto) and daughter of Lucky. This land lay to the east of 160 Prince George Street on the sloping land that comprised Lot 102 extending towards the Governor's Pond (now filled and lying on the Naval Academy grounds).



Figure 1. Portion of city map of Annapolis showing location of AP34. Contour lines are at 5' intervals

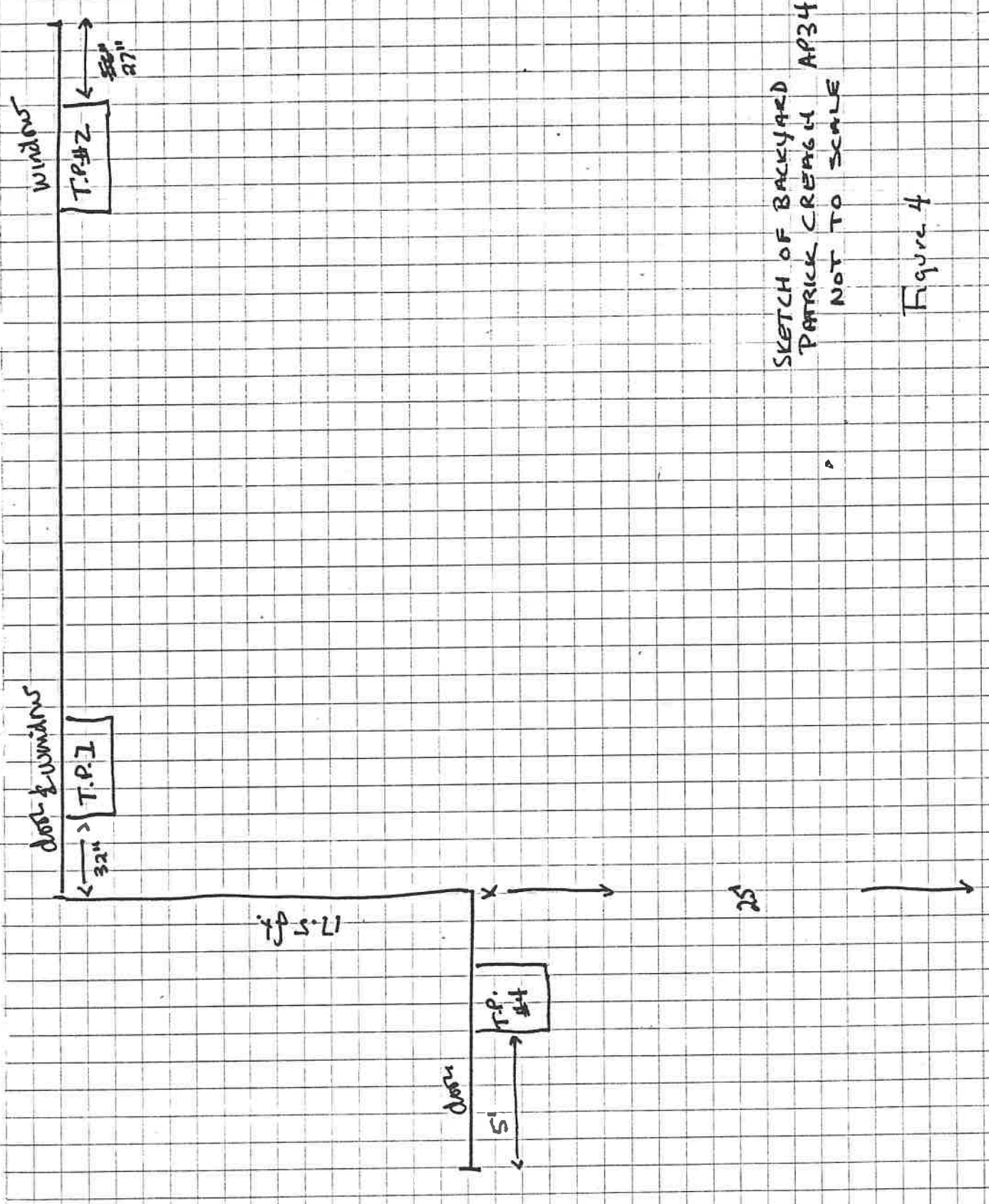
Figure 2. Photograph of the Patrick Creagh house taken from Prince George Street. (photo on file at Historic Annapolis, Inc.)





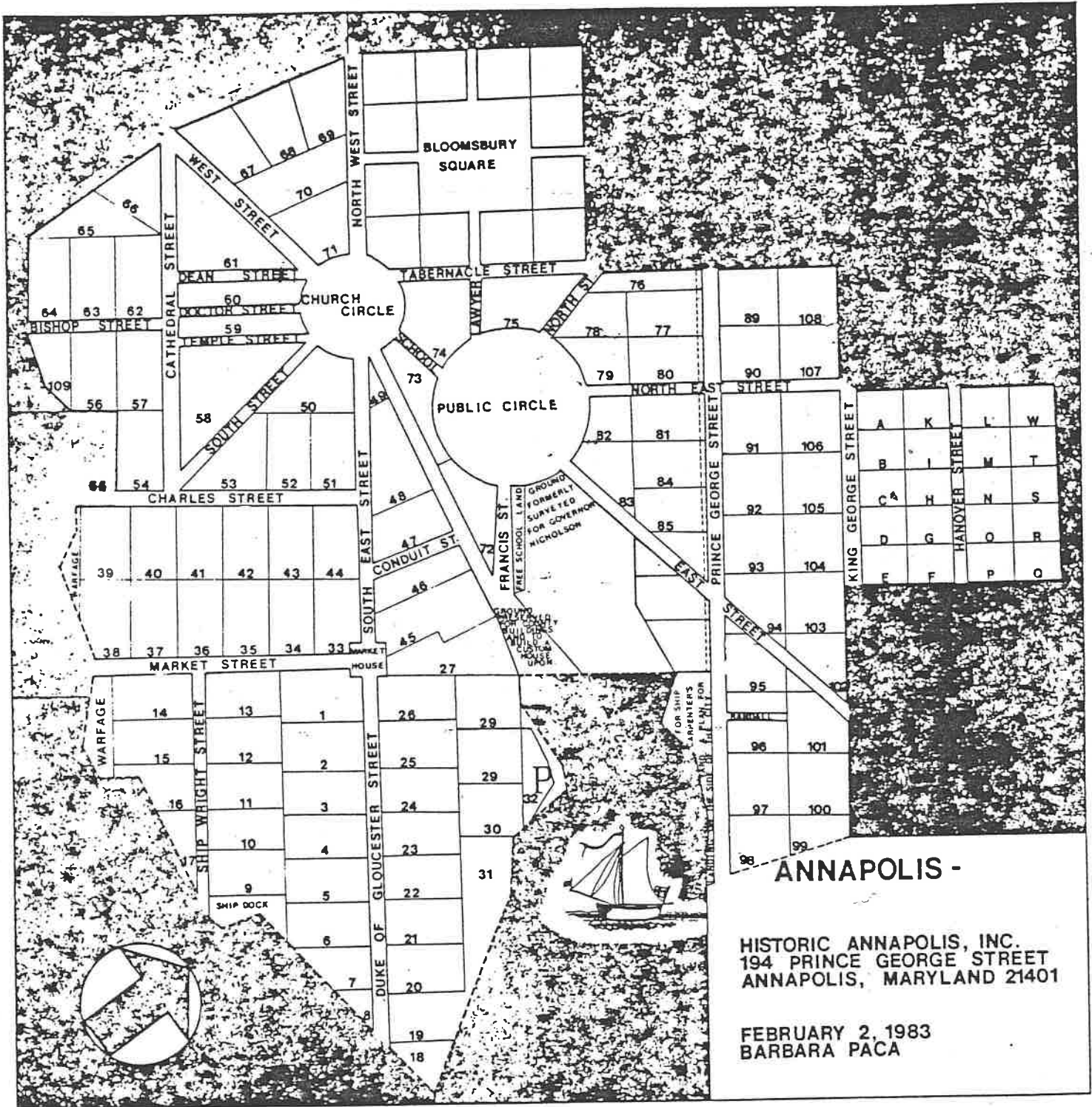
SKETCH of Bldg. Front Facade
 PATRICK CENNETT

Figure 3



SKETCH OF BACKYARD
 PATRICK CREAIGH AP34
 NOT TO SCALE

Figure 4

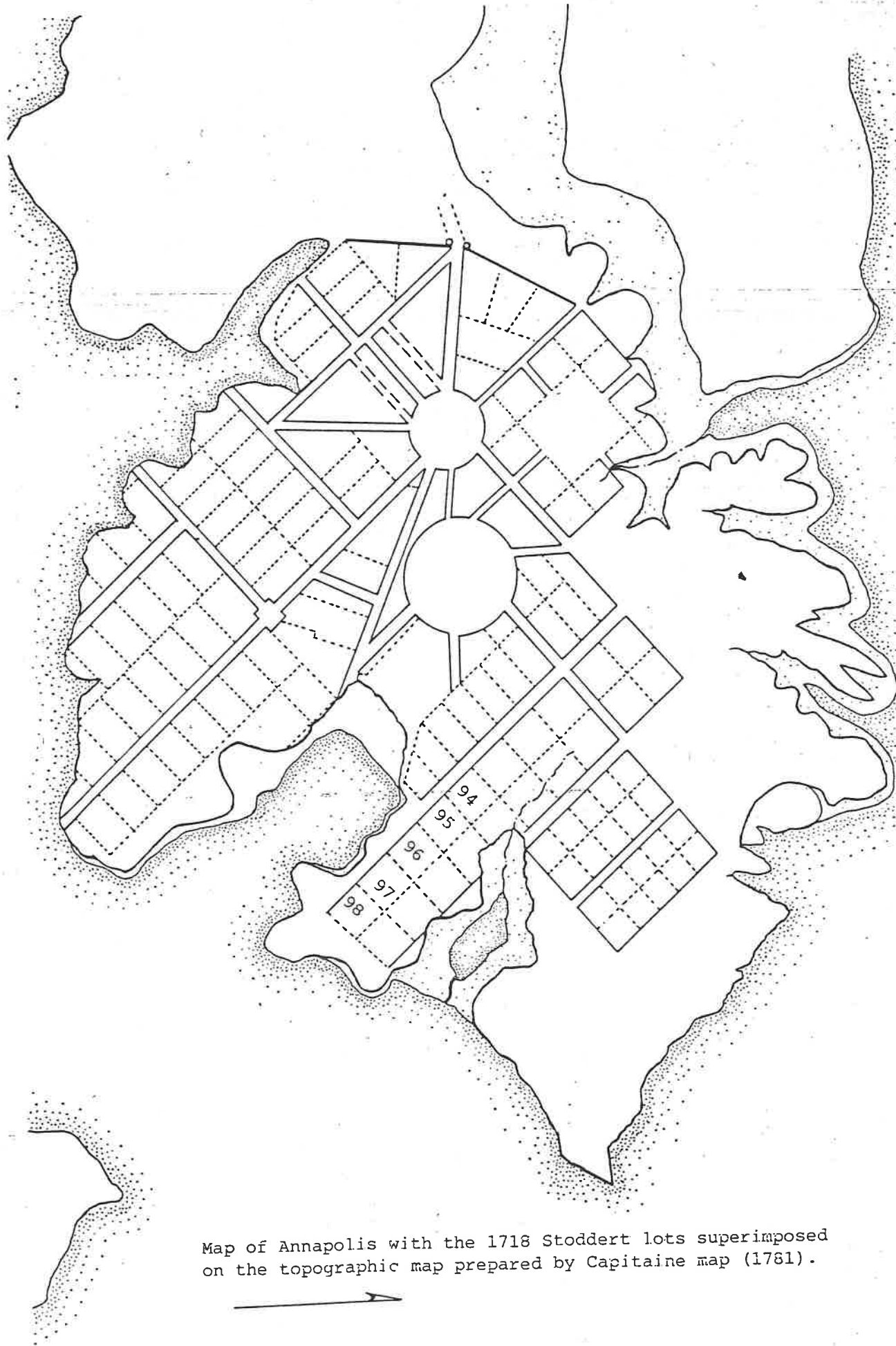


ANNAPOLIS -

HISTORIC ANNAPOLIS, INC.
194 PRINCE GEORGE STREET
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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BARBARA PACA

MAP I: Plan of City Based on 1718 Stoddert Survey.



Map of Annapolis with the 1718 Stoddert lots superimposed on the topographic map prepared by Capitaine map (1781).