

Edward R. and Rosalind A. Melton House
HO-861
4844 Bonnie Branch Road, Ellicott City
Howard County
1953
Private

The Melton House (1953) is an International Style house located on Bonnie Branch Road, which is a Scenic Road, located southeast of the Ellicott City Historic District in Howard County, Maryland. The house is set on a 1-acre wooded lot that slopes upward from the roadway. The Bonnie Branch runs through the front yard and flows into the Patapsco River about two miles past the house. The house is set under the tree canopy, away from the roadway, on the other side of the creek, and backs into a steep slope.

The Melton House flat-roofed, single-story, box-like wood and glass structure cantilevered beyond a stone pedestal. Westinghouse engineer Edward R. Melton designed the house for himself and his wife. The design of the Melton House appears to be strongly influenced by the work of preeminent International Style architect Marcel Breuer.

The house has had two major rehabilitations. In 1959, the fieldstone pedestal, which was originally an open carport, was enclosed for a family room and an entry bay was added at the east end of the house. In 1982, a rear shed-roofed kitchen and bedroom addition was constructed. These additions, while making the house more blocky and earthbound than its original rendition, were both carefully designed and executed to retain the integrity of the original house.

The Melton House (1953) has significance as one of only a few mid-20th c. International Style houses in Howard County, Maryland. While the county has a great number of late-20th century modern buildings in the planned community of Columbia, post-WWII International Style houses are extremely rare. The house was designed and built by Westinghouse engineer Edward R. Melton for himself and his wife, Rosalind. Although the house has been altered in 1959 and 1982, the form of the original house remains clearly legible. Furthermore, the additions were carefully executed in the modern idioms of their day and provide a sympathetic frame for the original structure.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-861

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Edward R. and Rosalind A. Melton House (preferred)

other "Tree House"

2. Location

street and number 4844 Bonnie Branch Road not for publication

city, town Ellicott City vicinity

county Howard

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Donald Startzell

street and number 4844 Bonnie Branch Road telephone 410-788-1660

city, town Ellicott City state MD zip code 21043

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Land Records liber 6749 folio 346

city, town Columbia tax map 31 tax parcel 751 tax ID number 02-240378

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
 Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
 Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
 Recorded by HABS/HAER
 Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
 Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			0

7. Description

Inventory No. HO-861

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Melton House (1953) is an International Style house located on Bonnie Branch Road, which is a Scenic Road, located southeast of the Ellicott City Historic District in Howard County, Maryland. The house is set on a 1-acre wooded lot that slopes upward from the roadway. The Bonnie Branch runs through the front yard and flows into the Patapsco River about two miles past the house. The house is set under the tree canopy, away from the roadway, on the other side of the creek, and backs into a steep slope.

The Melton House flat-roofed, single-story, box-like wood and glass structure cantilevered beyond a stone pedestal. Westinghouse engineer Edward R. Melton designed the house for himself and his wife. The design of the Melton House appears to be strongly influenced by the work of preeminent International Style architect Marcel Breuer and belongs to the same typology that was dominant in Breuer's 1950s designs: "a long, low rectangle with a skin of fieldstone, cypress, and glass; fieldstone walls extending into the landscape; floor to ceiling glass walls; flat roof; and alternating closed and open volumes."¹

The house has had two major rehabilitations. In 1959, the fieldstone pedestal, which was originally an open carport, was enclosed for a family room and an entry bay was added at the east end of the house. In 1982, a rear shed-roofed kitchen and bedroom addition was constructed. These additions, while making the house more blocky and earthbound than its original rendition, were both carefully designed and executed to retain the integrity of the original house.

Original House (1953)

The primary façade of the Edward R. Melton House faces south and is almost entirely glazed at the 1st floor level. The visual character of the front, 1st floor, 5-bay elevation consists of two slightly projecting solid blocks framing 3 transparent blocks. (The eastern block was added in 1959.) A long deck fills the negative space created by the projecting end blocks. The two end bays are wood sided and enclose tripartite picture windows whose composition consists of a large rectangle topping two small side-by-side rectangles. The three center bays each have a pair of floor-to-ceiling windows. One opening holds a pair of sliding glass doors for access to the deck (this was the original entry bay). The fieldstone pedestal (which originally enclosed the carport) forms the ground floor of the original house.

The east elevation of the original house was removed when the 1959 entry bay was added.

The north elevation of the original house is altered. Originally, a band of clerestory windows ran along the top elevation. Now, the north (rear) elevation has two 1982 sliding glass doors. The 1982 kitchen/bedroom addition extends across the western section of the north elevation.

The west elevation of the original house is altered. It is now a two-story wood-sided block composed of the 1st story west facade of the original house the ground story west facade of the ground story addition. The 1st story has a large opening which holds a pair of sliding glass doors. The ground story has a door opening. A 1982 deck projects from the 1st story.

1959 Alterations

In 1959, the ground floor pedestal was enclosed to create the family room. The eastern bay was constructed and the area under the pedestal infilled to create enclosed entries and an additional bedroom and bathroom. A 1965 article in **The News American** (Baltimore) describes the alterations: "Since they bought this home, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers have made two major changes: converting the first floor carport into a clubroom and enclosing the outside entrance to make a vestibule."² A history of the house, written by the third owners, describes the changes in greater detail. Originally "the entrance was via stairs up to the front deck, and you entered the upper level through a door into what is now the dining room (then a combination kitchen and dining area). Following the original owners' retirement to Florida in 1959 [the new owners] added 12 feet to the east end of the house and enclosed the lower level below,

¹ Isabelle Hyman. **Marcel Breuer, Architect**, New York: Henry Abrams, Inc., 2001, p. 357.

² Sharon Davis, "House in the Trees," Maryland Living section of **The News American** (Baltimore), September 19, 1965, p. 11.

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creating the current front entrance area and family room, as well as the hallway and a portion of the bedroom and bath on the lower level."³

The south (front) elevation of the 1959 addition is wood sided at the ground and 1st stories. The ground story has three openings. The western opening holds a pair of sliding glass doors that open onto a deck. The central opening holds the front door, which is glazed. A window opening, which lights the vestibule, flanks the front door. The 1st story of the 1959 addition has a single large picture window with a tripartite configuration.

The east (side) elevation of the 1959 addition is a two-story wood-sided block. The 1st story has no openings. The ground story has one window opening that lights the stair. The end of a low, curving stone wall projects at the ground story and presumably is part of the original stone pedestal. A stair to the back deck runs along the east elevation.

1982 Alterations and addition

In 1980, the house's third owners took residence. In 1982, they constructed the kitchen/bedroom addition and made additional alterations to the original house, including rebuilding the flat roof at a slight angle to provide proper drainage, rebuilding porches and decks, residing the entire house, removing the original cypress interior paneling and installing drywall, removing the clerestory windows on the north facade, and constructing the sliding glass doors on the north facade.

The shed-roofed addition projects from the north elevation of the original house. Its south facade rises slightly above the original house and past the west end of the original house. The south elevation has multiple window openings that hold clerestory windows, which light the kitchen and bedrooms. The east elevation of the 1982 addition has three openings. A double sliding glass door opens onto the back deck. The door is flanked by a large window opening and a clerestory window, whose top edge follows the angle of the shed roof, caps the 1st story openings. The north elevation of the addition has four irregular window openings. From east to west, the easternmost opening holds a triple window. The second holds a small horizontal window. The third and fourth are tall narrow window openings. The west elevation of the addition has one window opening that holds a triple window.

Interior

The exterior of the 1953 section of Melton House reflects the zoned uses housed in the interior. The glass-walled section of the exterior houses the open-plan living and dining area, the wood-sided block at the western end houses the bedrooms and bathroom, and the stone pedestal functioned as a carport.

The interior of the original house consisted of a large open living/dining/kitchen room organized around a freestanding stone fireplace. The house had two small bedrooms and a tiny bathroom located off a hall in the western bay of the house. Access to the interior was originally via an exterior stair to the 1st floor balcony and in through a door into the dining room.

The 1959 alteration enclosed additional interior space. The added bay at the east end of the house encloses a vestibule and stair in a two-story block. The ground floor of the vestibule has slate floors (which were salvaged from Saint Agnes Hospital) and a stair with open risers. The original carport is accessed through the vestibule on the ground floor and is now a family room and extra bedroom and bathroom.

³ Ken and Elizabeth Lundeen, "A Brief History of the "Tree House" on Bonnie Branch Road", self-produced, p. 1.

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The 1982 addition and rehab added a kitchen/bedroom wing onto the back of the house. The addition is accessed through the north wall of the dining room. Additional interior alterations associated with the 1982 rehab include removing the cypress paneling in the living and dining rooms and replacing it with drywall, removing the kitchen, which was located in the northwest corner of the dining room, and converting the original master bedroom into an office.

8. Significance

Inventory No. HO-861

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
Specific dates	1953, 1959, 1982	Architect/Builder	Edward R. Melton, engineer	
Construction dates	1953, 1959, 1982			

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Melton House (1953) has significance as one of only a few mid-20th c. International Style houses in Howard County, Maryland. While the county has a great number of late-20th century modern buildings in the planned community of Columbia, post-WWII International Style houses are extremely rare. The house was designed and built by Westinghouse engineer Edward R. Melton for himself and his wife, Rosalind. Although the house has been altered in 1959 and 1982, the form of the original house remains clearly legible. Furthermore, the additions were carefully executed in the modern idioms of their day and provide a sympathetic frame for the original structure.

The Melton House epitomizes the post-World War II International Style as executed in Maryland. International Style houses are typically "asymmetrical, rectangular, 1-or 2-story block or assembly of blocks with a flat or shed roof."⁴ As is characteristic of the International Style, the Melton House has a horizontal emphasis. There is an absolute avoidance of applied ornamentation. The entry is featureless. Windows are in large panels, horizontal bands, and punched openings. Glazing is nearly flush with the outside wall surface. Floor-to-ceiling glass is juxtaposed with planar blocks of fieldstone and stained natural wood siding. The sharply rectilinear house stands in contrast to its picturesque setting.⁵ Melton designed the interior of the house to create zones that provided convenience, privacy, and indoor-outdoor living.

As is typical of many Modernist houses in Maryland, the design incorporates native materials -- in this case the fieldstone base (probably harvested on-site). Also common in Maryland, special care was taken with the site, so that the indoor-outdoor lifestyle inextricably linked with the Modernist philosophy, could be truly enjoyed. The picturesque setting of the Melton House with the house perched on the edge of a wooded valley with creek running through the yard is an essential element of the property.

Owners and occupants

Edward R. and Rosalind A. Melton were the original occupants of the house, in 1953. Mr. Melton was an engineer at Westinghouse and they bought the land (then over 8 acres) from fellow Westinghouse engineer Lyttleton Ballard and his wife Juliet.⁶ The Westinghouse manufactory, located near the current BWI airport, opened after WWII and a number of Westinghouse workers settled in the Ellicott City area. In 1959, the Ballards retired to Florida and sold the house to Joseph Rogers, an Ellicott City insurance broker, and his wife Irene. The Rogers's separated in 1979 and Joseph Rogers sold the house to Ken and Elizabeth Lundeen in 1980. The Lundeens remained at the house until 1999. They subdivided the property and sold the house and a 1-acre lot to Dr. Gary and Dr.

⁴ Gerald Foster, **American Houses**, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004, p. 362.

⁵ **Ibid.**

⁶ The Ballard's son, also an engineer, retired from the Naval Surface Warfare Center, White Oak, Maryland in 1994 and now is the librarian for the Historical Electronics Museum in Linthicum, Maryland. (<http://www2.arll.org/news/features/2001/01/17/1>, February 14, 2005.)

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Sian Curtis. The Curtis's remained for only five years and the current owner, Don Startzell, purchased the property in 2004. Startzell is a computer engineer employed at nearby Fort Meade.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. HO-861

- Davis, Sharon. "House in the Trees," Maryland Living section of **The News American** (Baltimore). September 19, 1965, pp. 10-11.
- Foster, Gerald. **American Houses**. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.
- Hyman, Isabelle. **Marcel Breuer, Architect**, New York: Henry Abrams, Inc., 2001.
- Lundeen, Ken and Elizabeth. "A Brief History of the "Tree House" on Bonnie Branch Road." Self-produced, 1999.
- Smith, Elizabeth A. T. **Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses**. Los Angeles: MOCA, 1989.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 1.02
Acreage of historical setting 8.088
Quadrangle name Savage Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the Melton House corresponds to Map 31, Grid 9, Parcel 751, which is the building's current legal lot.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Jennifer Goold, Historic Sites Surveyor		
organization	Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning	date	December 7, 2004
street & number	3430 Courthouse Drive	telephone	410-313-4335
city or town	Ellicott City	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

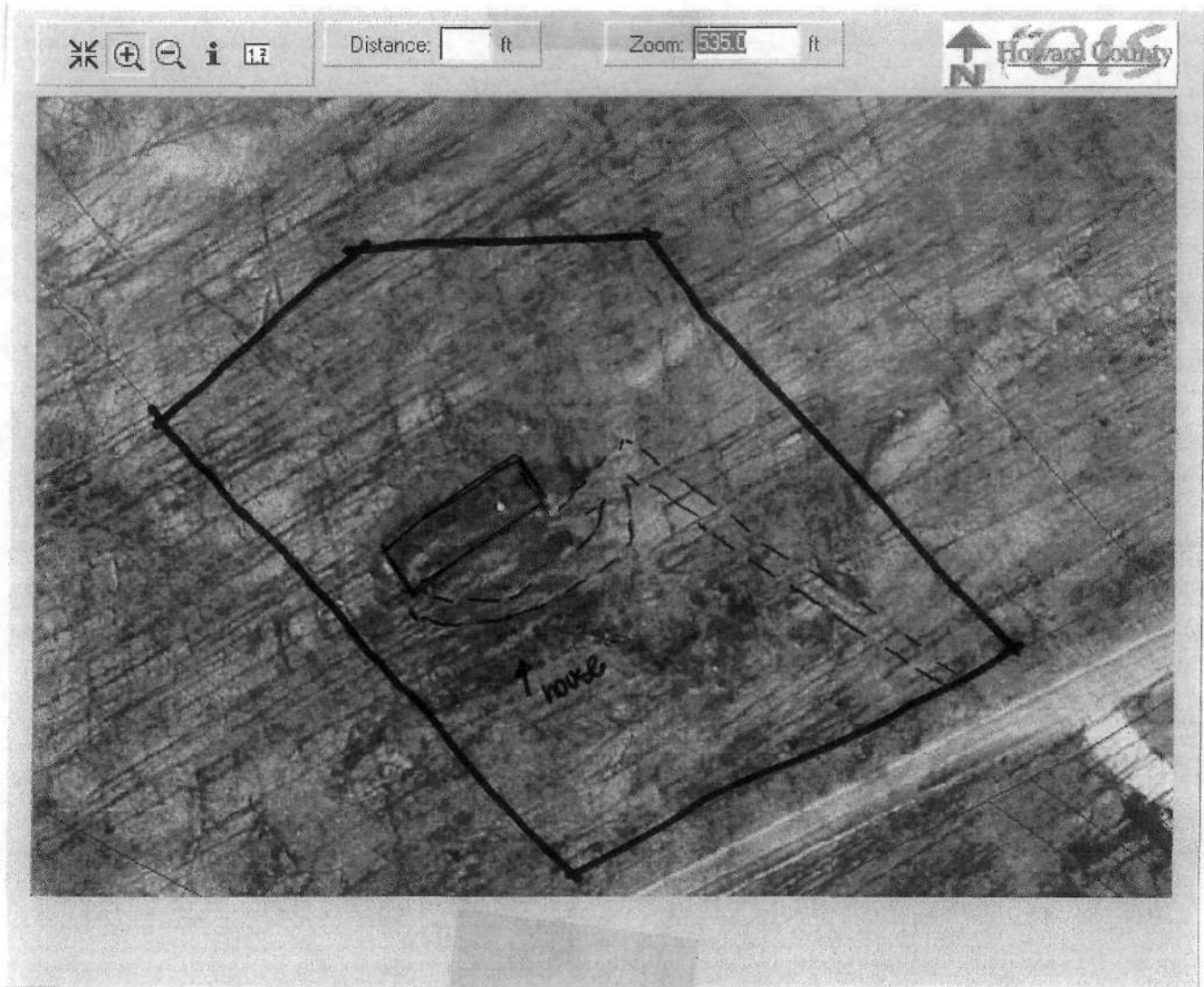
return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

HO-861

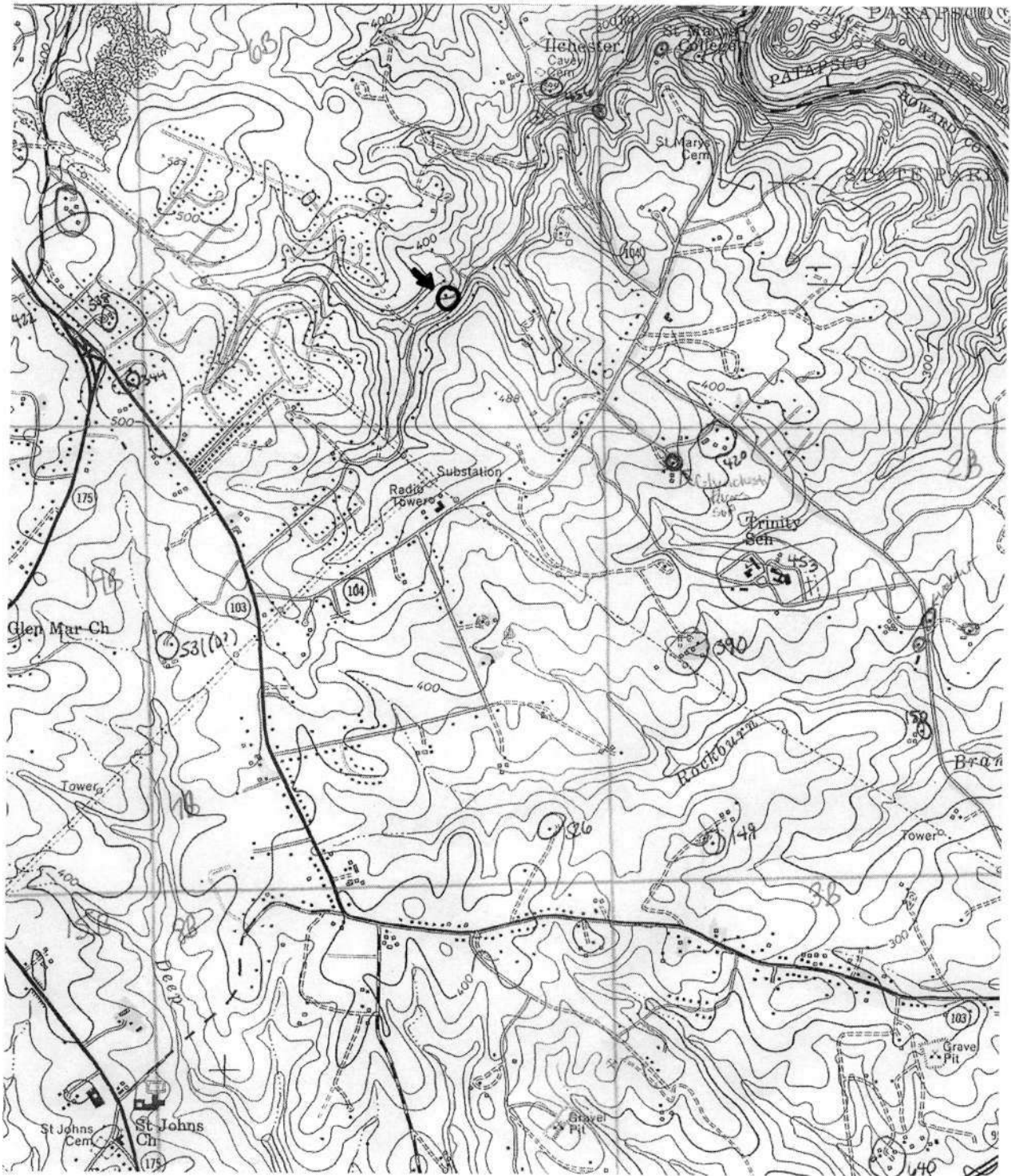
Edward R. and Rosalind Melton House
4844 Bonnie Branch Road, Ellicott City
Howard County

CHAIN OF TITLE

GRANTOR	GRANTEE	DATE	LIBER	FOLIO	TRANS.	PRICE	ACREAGE	COMMENTS
Gary J. Curtis	Donald L. Startzell	01-03-2004	6749	346	Deed	\$470,000	1.02 acres	
Kenneth Charles Lundeen and Elizabeth Mary Lundeen and Nottingham Way Acres LLC	Gary J. Curtis and Sian L. Curtis	07-16-1999	4831	361	Deed	\$375,000		
Joseph B. Rogers (Howard County)	Kenneth Charles Lundeen and Elizabeth Mary Lundeen	04-01-1980	995	194	Deed	\$140,000	8.088 acres	
Joseph B. Rogers and Irene L. Rogers (Howard County)	Joseph B. Rogers	09-18-1979	963	89	Deed	\$0.00	8.088 acres	In consideration for the promises and covenants between the parties as more fully set forth in a Separation Agreement dated May 30, 1979.
Edward R. Melton and Rosalind A. Melton	Joseph B. Rogers and Irene L. Rogers	07-28-1959	336	597	Deed	\$5.00	8.088 acres	
Lyttleton W. Ballard and Juliet L. B. Ballard (Howard County)	Edward R. Melton and Rosalind Ann Melton	10-08-1952	237	30	Deed	\$5.00	8.088 acres	



Edward R. and Rosalind Melton House (HO-861)
4844 Bonnie Branch Road, Ellicott City
Howard County
Site Plan/Aerial Photo



Edward R. and Rosalind Melton House (HO-861)
4844 Bonnie Branch Road
Ellicott City, Howard County
USGS Savage Quad



HO-861

Melton House

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

December 2004

MD SHPO

View N. Shows house in setting.

106 B

ART-2611 <No. 28A>029
-1 N-N-4 29 <044>@
298 1217



HO-861
Melton House
Howard County, MD
Jennifer Gould
December 2004
MD SHPO

View NW. Shows front facade.
2 of 8

ART-2611 <NO. 274>028
298 1212 -1 N-N-3 29 <044>@



HO- 001
Melton House
Howard County, MD
Jennifer Gould
December 2004
MD SHPO

View NW. Shows front facade.

3068

ART-2611 <NO. 32A>033
298 1212 -1 N-N-4 19 <044>@



HO-86d

Melton House

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

December 2004

MD SHPO

View NE. Shows detail of

Stone plinth.

4068

ART-2611 <NO.29A>030
298 1717 -1 N N-6 43 <044>@



H10-86d
Melton House
Howard County, MD
Jennifer Gould
December 2007
MD SHPO
View SE.

Shows addition.

5068

ART-2611 <NO.304>031
-1 N-N-5 19 <044>©
298 1717



HO-861

Melton House

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

December 2004

MD SHPO

View SW

Shows house in setting.

606 8

ART-2611 <NO. 31A>032
298 1717 -1 N-N-4 26 (044)©



HO-861
Melton House
Howard County, MD
Jennifer Gould
December 2004
MD SHPO

View SW. Show main room.

MOB 8

ART-2611 <NO.34A>035
298 1717 -1 N-N-3 41 <044>0



MD-861
Melfon House
Howard County, MD
Jennifer Boold
December 2004
MD SHPO

View NE. Shows main room
8 of 8

ART-2611 <NO.33A>034
298 1717 -1 N-N-4 55
(044)>@moo