

D-794

Vienna Ferry Tollkeeper's House

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

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Last Updated: 01-31-2013

D-794
Vienna Ferry Tollkeeper's House
Vienna
c. 1880
Private

The Vienna ferry tollkeeper's house is a single-story, one-room plan frame structure dating from the late nineteenth century, and it is the last surviving nineteenth century structure associated with the operation of a river ferry to remain standing on the lower Eastern Shore. The diminutive, three-bay by one-bay frame building is simply finished with a center, partially glazed door flanked by two-over-two sash windows on its main elevation. The interior has been reworked with the addition of an interior fireplace, but it retains a vertical tongue-and-groove board closet.

A means to cross the Nanticoke River at Vienna has been accomplished in several ways over the past three-and-a-half centuries, but for the longest periods it was by way of a ferry. The creation of a ferry at Vienna is believed by some to predate the following of the town during the third quarter of the seventeenth century, but due to inexact or missing records that tradition is difficult to verify. It was surely developed by the first years of the town's history for the crossing on the Nanticoke at Vienna had been in use for some time when an act of Maryland's General Assembly in 1756 appropriated funds for its improvement. In 1756, it was stated,

Whereas the Ferry at Vienna, upon the River Nanticoke, is a very public and convenient Passage, and, forasmuch as the Road or Causeway through the Vienna Marsh in Somerset County is of great Length, and too Burthensome upon some Inhabitants of said County adjacent thereto....and the Justices of the County Court of Somerset are hereby authorized, improved, and required, at the next November Court....to levy on the taxable Inhabitants of the same County, a Quantity not exceeding Twenty Thousand Pounds of Tobacco....for the making and compleating a good, commodious, and convenient Road and Causeway

through the said Vienna March, from the last land down to the River Nanticoke, opposite to Vienna-Town, in Dorchester County; the said Road or Causeway to have a good and sufficient Foundation of Wood, raised to a Heighth (sic) not to be overflowed by the Water from said River, and of Twelve Feet wide at least upon the Top, well sanded, with one or more turning Places thereon.

The Vienna ferry functioned through the balance of the eighteenth century and into the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the Nanticoke Bridge Company was established in 1818, although a span was not completed until ten years later in 1828. This bridge, designed with a twenty-six foot wide opening for the passage of river traffic, lasted until the 1860s when its constrictive opening in an age of larger vessels, was subject to damage from passing ships. It proved obsolete and was demolished. The ferry was re-established and it operated until the second quarter of the twentieth century, when in 1931, a new two-lane, concrete bridge was financed by the State of Maryland.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-794

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Vienna Ferry Tollkeeper's House
other Vienna Town Hall

2. Location

street and number Race Street not for publication
city, town Vienna vicinity
county Dorchester

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

name Town Commissioners of Vienna
street and number P. O. Box 86 telephone
city, town Vienna state MD zip code 21869

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber folio
city, town Cambridge tax map tax parcel tax ID number

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
☐ district	☒ public	☐ agriculture	☐ landscape
☒ building(s)	☐ private	☐ commerce/trade	☒ recreation/culture
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ defense	☐ religion
☐ site		☐ domestic	☐ social
☐ object		☐ education	☐ transportation
		☐ funerary	☐ work in progress
		☐ government	☐ unknown
		☐ health care	☐ vacant/not in use
		☐ industry	☐ other: _____
			Resource Count
			Contributing
			Noncontributing
			☐ buildings
			☐ sites
			☐ structures
			☐ objects
			☐ Total
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

7. Description

Inventory No. D-794

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.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The old Vienna ferry tollkeeper's house, built around 1880, stands on the south side of Race Street between Market and Water streets as a small town-owned historic site. Moved to this location in the third quarter of the twentieth century, this single-story, one-room plan frame structure is supported on a brick foundation, and it is sheathed with plain weatherboards. The medium pitched gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The building faces northeast with the gable roof oriented on a northwest/southeast axis.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Moved to this location on Race Street during the second quarter of the twentieth century, this single-story, one-room plan structure, built around 1880, was the ferry keeper's house in its original location by the current boat ramp at the foot of Race Street. Supported on a brick foundation, the exterior is sheathed with plain weatherboard siding, and the medium pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The edges of the roof are extended and finished with sloped soffits.

The northeast (main) elevation is a three-bay façade with a center, partially glazed door and flanking two-over-two sash windows. The door and window surrounds are plain finished.

The northwest gable end is defined by an exterior brick chimney finished with a corbelled base and a single flue stack. Otherwise the end wall is finished with plain weatherboard siding, and the edge of the roof is extended. The southeast gable end is defined by a centered two-over-two sash window, and a four-pane window marks the upper gable.

The southwest (rear) elevation is pierced by a single two-over-two sash window.

The interior is plainly finished, and the only original feature is a beaded vertical board closet located in the southwest corner. The walls and ceiling are covered with plasterboard. The northwest end wall is the location of a small hearth, although the building was never heated by an open fire. Rather, it would have been heated by a small cast iron stove.

8. Significance

Inventory No. D-794

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
☐ 1600-1699	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ health/medicine	☐ performing arts
☐ 1700-1799	☐ archeology	☐ education	☐ industry	☐ philosophy
☒ 1800-1899	☒ architecture	☐ engineering	☐ invention	☐ politics/government
☐ 1900-1999	☐ art	☐ entertainment/ recreation	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 2000-	☐ commerce	☐ ethnic heritage	☐ law	☐ science
	☐ communications	☐ exploration/ settlement	☐ literature	☐ social history
	☐ community planning		☐ maritime history	☒ transportation
	☐ conservation		☐ military	☐ other: _____

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

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.)

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Vienna ferry tollkeeper's house is a single-story, one-room plan frame structure dating from the late nineteenth century, and it is the last surviving nineteenth century structure associated with the operation of a river ferry to remain standing on the lower Eastern Shore. The diminutive, three-bay by one bay structure is simply finished with a center, partially glazed door flanked by two-over-two sash windows on its main elevation. The interior has been reworked but retains a vertical beaded board closet in one corner. With the discontinuation of the ferry after the concrete road bridge was erected in 1931, the building was used as a town hall. After its resiting on a new site on the south side of Race Street, it was enhanced with an exterior brick chimney and interior fireplace that were never part of its original construction.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

A means to cross the Nanticoke River at Vienna has been accomplished in several ways over the past three-and-a-half centuries, but for the longest periods it was by way of a ferry. The creation of a ferry at Vienna is believed by some to predate the founding of the town during the late third quarter of the seventeenth century, but due to inexact records that tradition is difficult to verify. It was surely developed by the first years of the town's history for the crossing on the Nanticoke at Vienna had been in use for some time and an act of Maryland's General Assembly in 1756 appropriated funds for its improvement. In 1756, it was stated,

Whereas the Ferry of Vienna, upon the River Nanticoke, is a very public and convenient Passage, and forasmuch as the Road or Causeway through Vienna Marsh in Somerset County is of great Length, and too Burthensome upon the Inhabitants of said County adjacent thereto...and the Justices of the County Court of Somerset are hereby authorized, improved and required, at the next November Court...to levy on the taxable Inhabitants of the same County, a Quantity not exceeding Twenty Thousand Pounds of Tobacco...for the making and compleating a good, commodious, and convenient Road and Causeway through the said Vienna Marsh, from the last Land down to the River

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-794

Name Vienna Ferry Tollkeeper's House

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

Nanticoke, opposite to Vienna-Town, in Dorchester County; the said Road or Causeway to have a good and sufficient Foundation of Wood, raised to a Heighth (sic) not to be overflowed by the Water from the said River, and of Twelve Feet wide at least upon the Top, well sanded, with one or more turning Places thereon.¹

The Vienna ferry functioned through the balance of the eighteenth century and into the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the Nanticoke Bridge Company was established in 1818, although a wooden span was not completed until ten years later in 1828.² This bridge, designed with a twenty-six foot wide opening for the passage of river traffic, lasted until the 1860s when its constrictive opening in an age of larger vessels, was subject to damage from passing ships. It proved obsolete and was demolished. The ferry was re-established and it operated until the second quarter of the twentieth century, when, in 1931, a new, two-lane, concrete bridge was financed by the State of Maryland. The architectural finishes of the ferry tollkeeper's house place its construction around 1880.

¹ *Archives of Maryland, LII, Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly, 1755-1756*, p. 656.

² Souvenir Booklet, Vienna, Maryland, 300th Anniversary Celebration, July 15-16, 2006, p. 23.



VIENNA BUSINESS REFERENCES.

HITCH & BRO'S., Practical Carriage and Harness makers. Manufacturers of all kinds of Carriage work. We have on hand a good stock of Carriages of our own manufacture. We do Trimming, Repairing, Painting, and all kinds of Carriage work. Shop on Race street.

C. B. BOSTON, Wheelwright and Undertaker. Wheelwrighting in all its Branches. I Manufacture from the Lightest Buggy to Road Wagons. Repairing done and Solicited, also Undertaking in all its Branches. Shop on Race street.

THOMAS HIGGINS & SON, Merchants and Millers. General Dealers in all kinds of Merchandise, Meal and Flour, Lumber of all kinds, Flooring, Peach and Grape Boxes.

DR. S. S. EWELL, Physician and Surgeon, will Practice in Dorchester and Wicomico counties, Md. All calls promptly attended to Day and Night. Office on Race street.

DR. EUGENE HODSON, Physician and Surgeon.

J. H. VANE, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, Hardware, Queensware, Willow and Woodenware, Toilet Soaps, Fancy Articles, Drugs, Medicines, Notions, &c. Country Produce of all kinds taken in exchange for goods. Store at Linkwood Station.

LINTHICUM & SON
Groceries, Hats, Caps,
Queensware, &c., and
kept in a first class con
OLIVER S. RICHAF
Contractor and Builder.
try done with neatnes
taken at all times.

JESSE C. RICHARDI
tractor and Builder.
done with neatness and
at all times.

T. A. WILLIS, Dealer
Hats, Caps, Boots, Sho
Country Produce taken
at Williams' Road nea
POWELL & NETTL
Mill on "Big Blackw
cut to order, Custom
done.

THOMAS KING C.
Surgeon, All calls
in Church Creek.

W. A. VANE, Ship Ca

V. H. JONES, Den
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Linkwood Station.

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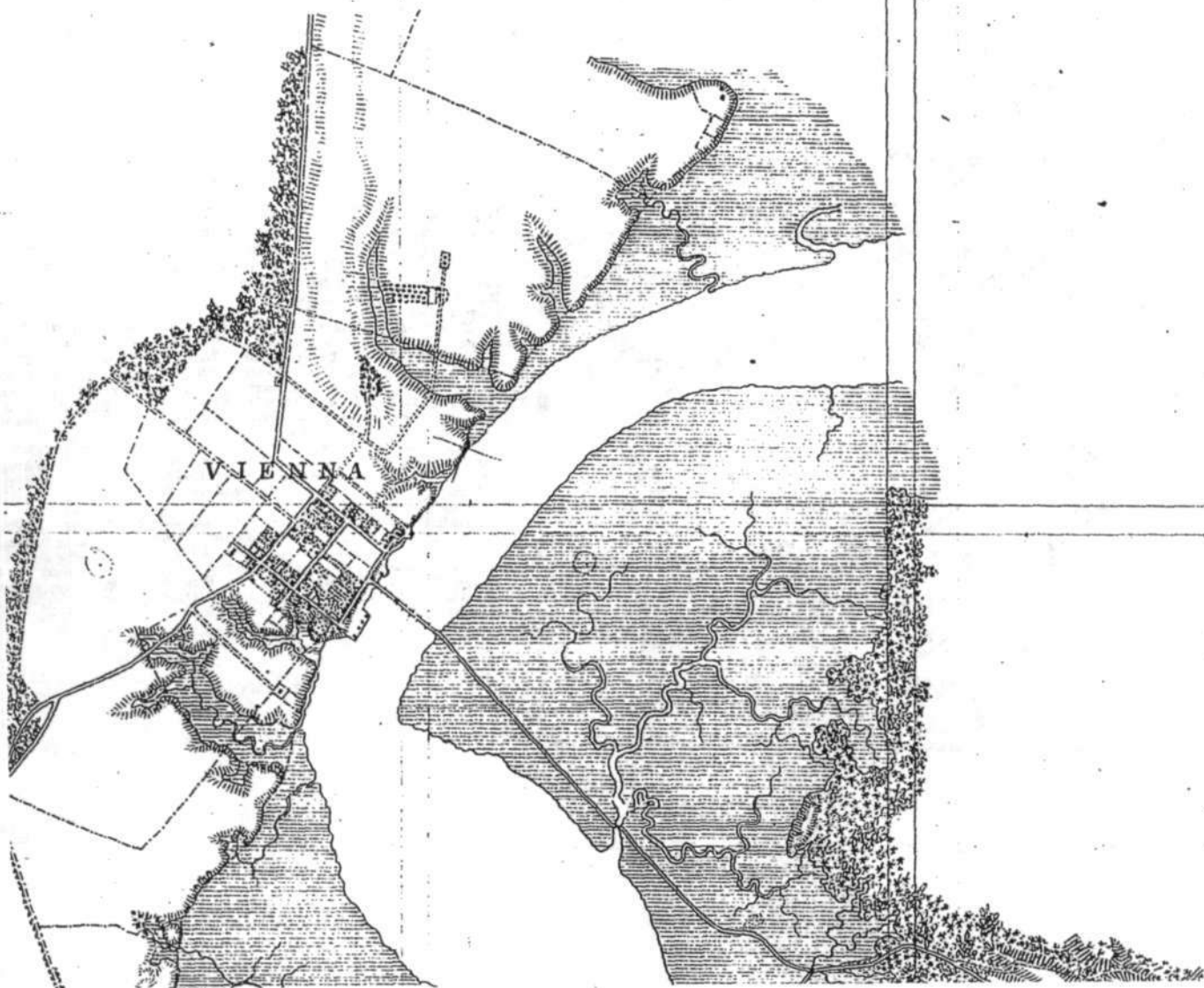
J. S. VINCENT,
and Express Agent
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will find me at all
Station.

W. H. PHILLIPS,
in all its Branche
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thing in my line
Work done reason

D-794, Vienna Ferry Tollkeeper's House

Lake, Griffing & Stevenson-1877

D-794, Vienna Ferry Tollkeeper's
House
U.S. Coastal Survey Map-1847



9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. D-794

Souvenir Booklet, "Vienna, Maryland: 300th Anniversary Celebration, July 15-16, 2006," p. 34.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 1/4 acre

Acreage of historical setting

Quadrangle name Mardela Springs, MD

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

11. Form Prepared by

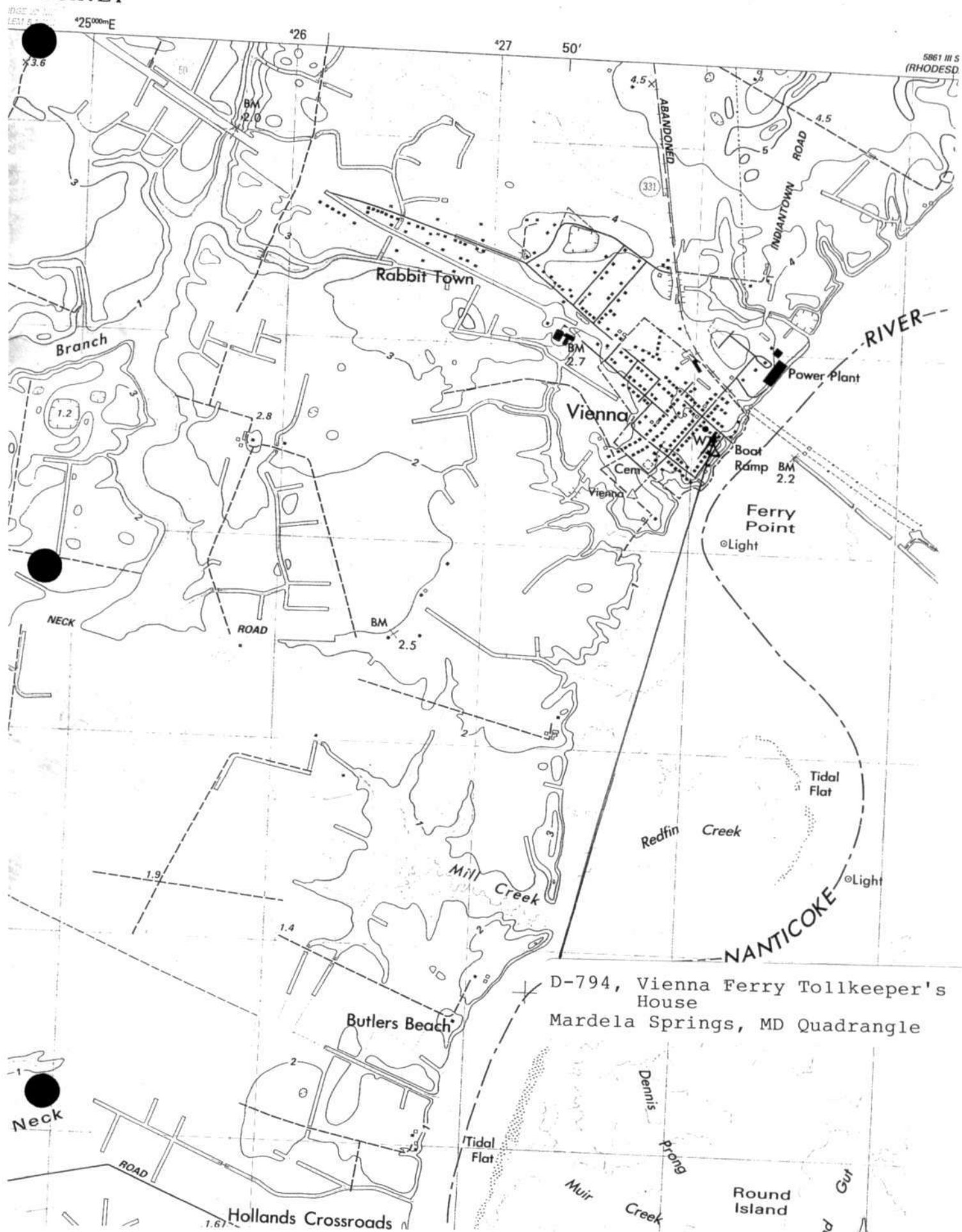
name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Chesapeake Country Heritage & Preservation	date	10.11.2010
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

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

STATES OF THE INTERIOR AL SURVEY



D-794, Vienna Ferry Tollkeeper's House
Mardela Springs, MD Quadrangle



D-794

VICTOR LEON TOLKETER'S HOUSE
VIENNA, DORCHESTER Co., MD.

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

10. 2010, PAUL B. TONANT, PITOTU.

NEP/MB. HISTORICAL TRUST

1 of 2



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VIENNA FERRY TOLLKEEPER'S HOUSE

VIENNA, DORCHESTER CO., MD

WORTHWEST ELEVATION

10.2010, PAUL B. TOWNS, PHOTO.

MD. / W.D. HISTORICAL TRUST

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