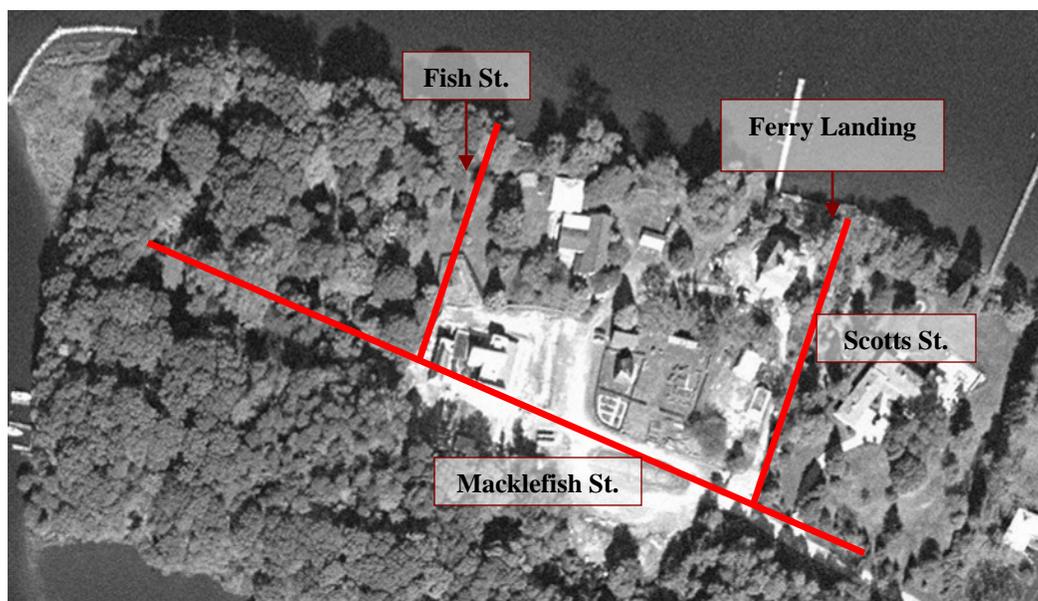


Histories for London Town Lots 74, 86, 87, and Small Parcel

Throughout the years various attempts have been made to reconstruct colonial London Town's lot layout.¹ In some instances, these attempts agree; in others, they disagree. This particular report is not concerned with the entire town, just some of the lots that are currently owned by Anne Arundel County and managed by the London Town Foundation. The particular lots of interest for this report are lots 74, 86, 87, and a small parcel as they were owned, used, and/or transferred during the colonial era. This report's scope is limited to these particular town lots because the current archaeological and historical investigations, as well as the modern reconstructions, are focused on these lots.²

As will hopefully become clear during this narrative, these lots are situated between Macklefish Street, Fish Street, Scotts Street, and the South River. It is with high confidence that all of the above-mentioned reports, as well as the various individuals associated with London Town and the Lost Towns Project believe that the ravine between the William Brown House and the Shah property (Spanish-American southwest architecture) was once called Scotts Street. And it almost goes without saying that another boundary for the above-mentioned lots, South River, is another fairly obvious geographic feature. The concern with the river though is erosion and how much exactly the riverbank has altered during the past 300 years. The other two boundaries for these lots, Macklefish and Fish Streets are a bit harder to specifically nail down. A rough approximation of their respective courses and locations can be done and is useful for determining how lots 74, 86, 87, and the small parcel are related to each other. This geographic approximation will occur after ownerships of the different lots are discussed in turn.



Street layout to approximate scale.

¹ Gladys Nelker of the London Town Public House Commission, 1970s; Donald Shomette, *London Town: A Brief History*, 1978; Various Lost Towns Project staff, 1990s-2000s; Charles Moylan, Jr., *Reconstructing London Town*, 1998; Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito, *The History of London Town, Maryland*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 2003; Donna V. Russell, *Historic London Town, Maryland*, 2006; Tony Lindauer, various reports, 1990s-present. This particular report is dependent on a lot of the raw data research conducted by Tony and Mechelle.

² It should be noted that though this report is focused, a true understanding that gets at the interpretation of the development of these lots is dependent on an understanding of all of London Town's development.

Lot 74

In some respects lot 74 is easy to trace historically to determine its size, contextual location, and owners or renters. This ease though is only applicable after 1722 when Stephen West, Sr. purchases the land from John Burgess.³ Before this 1722 transaction, lot 74 does not seem to specifically appear in any known land records. However, after 1722 the title of ownership is easy to follow throughout the rest of the 18th century.

The 1722 transaction is between only John Burgess and Stephen West, Sr. It is dated 28 July 1722 and is recorded on 9 September 1723. The lot is described as being “on the East Side of Fish Street in London Town,” and containing one acre of land with the bounds being sixteen by ten by sixteen by ten perches.⁴ This particular transaction gives no hint as to who was inhabiting the lot prior to July 1722. John Burgess apparently owned it, but who was living there is another question. Before reaching conclusions or making assumptions concerning lot 74 before 1722, another land transaction has to be brought into play.

The 1722 transaction is referred to in a 10 March 1723/4 transaction wherein John Burgess and his wife Jane Macklefish are selling land to Stephen West, Sr.⁵ Though lot 74 is again mentioned as being on the east side of Fish Street, the particular measurements are not mentioned in this 1723/4 record. The inclusion of lot 74 in this 1723/4 land transaction is interesting because Jane Macklefish, John’s wife, is explicitly added to the 1722 land sale between John Burgess and Stephen West, Sr. concerning lot 74 that did not mention Jane. The 1723/4 record states that this omission opens up the possibility that West’s ownership of lot 74 could be later contested. This is interesting because at the end of the 1722 document the clerk records that Jane, out of her husband’s presence, assented to the transaction. The fact that Jane is added to the main part of the contract in 1723/4 suggests some previous legal right to the lot that goes beyond the regular wifely portion. What this previous right might have been is unclear. This complicates lot 86’s history and will be further explored during that section.

The lot 74 land sale is further clouded by what is most likely a clerical error in the recording of the 1722 transaction. The sentence that describes lot 74’s bounds reads in part, “all that lott of ground lying on the East side of Fish Street in London Town in the County and Province aforesaid and lying and being adjacent to a lotts now ~~being~~ in y^e possession of Stephen West and Jane Maklefish....”

Extract of 28 July 1722 land sale between John Burgess and Stephen West, Sr.

³ Maryland State Archives (MSA), *Anne Arundel County Land Records (AACLR)*, Liber RCW2, Folio 186-8, 9 September 1723. The date mentioned in this report’s main text may not always match the date mentioned in the footnotes. The main text dates are the dates mentioned in the document and the footnote dates are the dates the original document was recorded by the clerk.

⁴ One perch is 16½ feet. One acre is 43,560 square feet. $(16.5 \times 16) + (16.5 \times 10) = 43,560$.

⁵ MSA, AACLR, RCW2, 243-5, 6 June 1724.

The problem with this sentence is that the phrase “to a lotts” does not make sense. The only excuse for this problem is a clerical error. A perusal of any set of colonial records will indicate that clerical errors did happen. This sentence actually includes two more: the crossed-out word “being” and the inserted phrase “possession of.” The most comprehensible way to read this sentence is to ignore the word “a” and believe that lot 74 is contiguous to at least two lots, one possessed by Jane Macklefish and one possessed by Stephen West, Sr. The West property mentioned here will be explored during lot 87’s discussion. The Macklefish reference will be explored during lot 86’s discussion.

It is possible that Stephen West, Sr. was renting the land before purchasing it (as will be discussed later in relation to lot 87). This is only an assumption though; it is implied by some of West’s other actions. This assumption is not contradicted by the historical evidence, but it is not directly supported either. The archaeological evidence so far shows that at least one structure (the currently reconstructed Lord Mayor’s Tenement) was built either directly on lot 74, or very close to it, sometime between c1700 and c1730.⁶ The date range for this building does indicate lot development during the first third of the 1700s, but by whom exactly it is unclear. As more archaeology is completed and, as more historical documentation hopefully comes to light, the pre-1722 owners and possessors of lot 74 might become more clearly known.

The next time lot 74 is mentioned is in a 6 March 1734/5 land transaction between “Margaret Moore, Samuel Preston Moore, & Mordecai Moore of Ann Arundel County... and William Wootton, Innholder...”⁷ Wootton is not purchasing lot 74, but he is purchasing a “small parcel or slip of land” lying on the South River which is bounded on the south by lot 87 and on the west by lot 74 which are both mentioned as being in the possession of Stephen West, Sr.

On 11 November 1747, William Wootton’s widow Elizabeth sells some land to Stephen West, Sr.⁸ The above-mentioned “small parcel or slip of land” is one of the lots sold to West. It is again described as lying on the river, being bounded on the south by lot 87, and on the west by lot 74 which are both still in the possession of Stephen West, Sr.

After the November 1747 transaction, lot 74 does not appear to be specifically referenced again until 1758 when William Brown purchases land from Stephen West, Jr.⁹ This transaction, dated 10 October 1758, involves much measuring because of a division between Elizabeth Robertson’s house and Brown’s workshop. This division starts at “Scotts Street on the North East corner of [Elizabeth Robertson’s] house” and runs for nine perches to a “live parsimmon stump” that stands on the side of lot 74. From the stump, the transaction describes the boundary of lot 74 being an additional 78 feet to the southwest corner of the lot (74) and then running 16 perches west north west to Fish Street. The rest of the description does not mention lot 74 and eventually ends at the starting point.

Though lot 74 is not specifically referenced between 1747 and 1758, three *Maryland Gazette* items infer what may be happening on lot 74 during a portion of that time. The 9 January 1752 *Gazette* mentions the death of Stephen West, Sr.¹⁰ This is important because a 28 September 1752 *Gazette* advertisement by Stephen West, Jr. mentions that the “houses, lots, and

⁶ Luckenbach, Al, *The Excavation and Reconstruction of the “Lord Mayor’s Tenement,” London Town, Maryland*, report submitted to the Vernacular Architectural Forum, 2006.

⁷ MSA, AACLR, RD2, 218-9, 10 May 1735.

⁸ MSA, AACLR, RB2, 547-9, 27 January 1748.

⁹ MSA, AACLR, BB2, 215-6, 8 March 1759.

¹⁰ *Maryland Gazette*, Thursday, 9 January 1752, 3.

improvements in London Town” previously owned by his father were available for rent.¹¹ When these two newspaper items are analyzed after reading a 18 October 1753 newspaper item wherein William Brown says that he “now [lives] in the House at London Town, where Mr. West, deceased, formerly dwelt,” it appears that William Brown has begun to lease a portion of the land once owned by Stephen West, Sr.¹² Whether or not lot 74 is one of the leased (rented) lots is unclear, but the fact that Brown eventually purchases lot 74 in 1758 is a strong bit of evidence that allows one to argue that Brown was renting lot 74 since at least October 1753.

After 1758, the next reference to lot 74 occurs in a 23 March 1765 indenture between William Brown and James Dick.¹³ In this transaction, Brown is confirming a previous obligation between him and Dick and is mortgaging some land to Dick. Lot 74 is one of the lots included in the mortgage and is described as being contiguous to lot 87.

The same relational description is essentially repeated in the 1 June 1787 Chancery Court as well as the 8 June 1793 Anne Arundel Count Land records between the executors of James Dick’s estate and William Brown.¹⁴ These records reference the mortgage mentioned above. Lot 74 is one of three lots (74, 87, small parcel) being sold to John Hoskins Stone.

The records between 1765 and 1793 need to be more fully explored and analyzed to indicate what specifically happens to lot 74’s ownership. Because of William Brown’s financial trouble, he appears to lose lot 74 since it is part of his land that is put up for sale at a public auction during the late 1780s.¹⁵ Brown reacquires the land at the auction, but as the 1793 document makes clear, loses it again. Determining the exact chronology of these events will shed light both on the twilight of Brown’s life and the ownership of lot 74 during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century.

Lot 86

The first known time lot 86 is mentioned by number is in the 10 March 1723/4 land transaction between John and Jane Burgess and Stephen West, Sr. It is described as lying on both Scotts Street and Macklefish Street. Lot 86 is next to lot 87 and has two sides measured in the document. The side along Macklefish Street and its opposite side are both described as being nine perches long (148.5 feet). The lengths for the other two sides, the one along Scotts St. and its opposite, are not given and neither is the area. Though it becomes relatively easy to trace this lot forward in time from this 1723/4 record, the line that reads “the other lot numbered 86 originally entered for and in the name of the said Jane by her said father David...” helps us narrow down the ownership of this lot before Stephen West, Sr. purchases it.

To understand how this phrase lets us better determine lot 86’s history before the 1723/4 transaction, David Macklefish, Sr’s. 1709 will needs to be examined. One line of it reads: “Item, I give unto my youngest daughter Jane Macklefish 1 lot lying in London Town formerly taken up by Ann Lambeth.”¹⁶ This coincides nicely with Ann Lambeth’s will in which she instructs her estate’s executors to sell all of her land.¹⁷ The lot mentioned in David’s will is the only lot in

¹¹ *Maryland Gazette*, Thursday, 28 September 1752, 4.

¹² *Maryland Gazette*, Thursday, 18 October 1753, 2.

¹³ MSA, *Provincial Court Land Records (PCLR)*, DD3, 527-9, 28 March 1765. Also in *Archives of Maryland*, Volume 703, 527-9, 2005.

¹⁴ MSA, *Chancery Court, Chancery Record*, Liber 16, folio 333, 1 June 1787. MSA, *AACLR*, NH6, 667-71, 15 June 1793.

¹⁵ MSA, *AACLR*, NH6, 667-71, 15 June 1793.

¹⁶ MSA, *Prerogative Court Wills, Original Record*, Liber 13, folio 310, 15 August 1711.

¹⁷ MSA, *Prerogative Court Wills, Original Record*, 11, 401, 10 March 1703/4.

London Town that Jane received from her father in the will. David's will provides strong evidence that Jane Burgess (Macklefish) owned at least one London Town lot after 1711.

That interesting passage in the July 1722 transaction about lot 74 being bounded by lots currently in the possession of Stephen West, Sr. and Jane Macklefish (Burgess) also makes sense with the information gathered from Ann Lambeth's and David Macklefish's wills. The historical evidence is strong enough to show that one lot of land passed from Ann Lambeth, to David Macklefish, Sr., and then to Jane Burgess (Macklefish).

The commonly held assumption has been that lot 86 is the Ann Lambeth lot. This is easily defensible if one believes that Jane Macklefish (Burgess) only ever acquires one lot in London Town. The 1722 land transaction involving lot 74 mentions a lot that is not 74 being in the possession of Jane Burgess. So if lot 74 is not owned or possessed by Jane, then by elimination, lot 86 is the Ann Lambeth lot.

This conclusion has to be doubted though if lot 74 is jointly owned by Jane and John Burgess because Jane brought both lots 74 and 86 to their marriage. The potential for this is mentioned above during the lot 74 discussion that examines the 1723/4 addition of Jane to the 1722 land transaction. If lot 74 is a second lot that Jane has come to possess, the question has to be how that occurred. Did she purchase it on her own? Or through deaths in her family did the remainder of David's town lands go to her? Specific lots were given to David's children and any non-specified London Town lots, which may have included lot 74, went to Richard Macklefish. If Richard died before 1722, could he have given lot 74 to Jane? Answers to these questions could help nail down lot 74's ownership before 1722.

Additionally, depending on how one parses the David Macklefish Sr. will and the 1723/4 land transaction one's ideas about lot 74 and lot 86 might change. Macklefish's will only says that Jane receives one lot of land "*formerly* taken up by Ann Lambeth." The land transaction says "the other lot numbered 86 *originally* entered for and in the name of the said Jane by her said father David..." The words "*formerly*" and "*originally*" are italicized to draw attention to them and make one think about what they mean. The word choice could mean nothing and both sentences refer to lot 86. But if the word "*originally*" means that lot 86 was first taken up by David for Jane, meaning no one else had ever taken it up before him, then Jane, through David's will, has received a town lot that is not lot 86 from her father. Based on the slightly scanty historical evidence, that lot referenced in the will is most likely lot 74. Again this focus on two words in two separate sentences might be nothing, but it should be noted.

To go back to what the records can firmly tell us, Stephen West, Sr. acquired lot 86 on 10 March 1723/4. There are no documents that indicate West was occupying lot 86 as a renter before he acquired it on 10 March 1723/4. After his acquisition and until his death in 1752 lot 86 does not seem to be referenced in any land record during that time span. To further complicate matters, it does not appear to be referenced specifically by number throughout the rest of the 18th century.

The last time lot 86 seems to appear is in the 1758 land transaction between Stephen West, Jr. and William Brown. This transaction describes a line starting at Scotts Street and going nine perches in toward a stump lying at the edge of lot 74. This nine perches matches exactly with one of the lot's boundary lengths described in the March 1723/4 record. From the stump to the corner of lot 74 the length is mentioned as being 78 feet. A measurement for the boundary line of lot 86 that that length is on is never given in any known land record. However, 78 feet is almost exactly 4½ perches. That amount is one-half of nine perches. If one assumes lot 86 is nine perches square, then the boundary line essentially splits lot 86 in two. Since lot 86

has already been described during the 1723/4 record as being bounded by both Scotts Street and Macklefish Street, it is hard to claim that the Robertson house is not on lot 86. That claim would mean the dividing line mentioned in the record is Macklefish Street which would then end at lot 74; that seems unlikely. A more specific discussion of this measurement and its implications for lot layout will be brought up later. The point here is to mention that the common assumption is that lot 86 was divided in 1758. And if one follows the land records relating to William Brown, this part of lot 86 appears to become an extension of lot 87 because, as stated above, lot 86 is not known to be referred to by number again during the eighteenth century.

The question that remains for lot 86 then involves its division. The 1758 record indicates that a house near this dividing line is occupied by an Elizabeth Robertson. The language seems to indicate that she is renting it. The most likely person she is renting it from is Stephen West, Jr. If lot 86 is divided, what happens to the segment Robertson's house is on? The information concerning that parcel would be nice to have.

Lot 87

Lot 87, like lot 86, is first mentioned by number in the 10 March 1723/4 transaction between John and Jane Burgess and Stephen West, Sr. In that document no measurements are given, but the lot is described as being “originally taken up and purchased by Edward Rumney and now belonging to the said Stephen...” At first glance, this may not mean much, but it allows us to go back at least a decade in time and relatively confidently trace lot 87's ownership.

Stepping back only about six months one finds a 6 September 1723 sale between Charles Carroll and Stephen West, Sr.¹⁸ Though this land transaction does not mention the lot by number, or give lot measurements, it does give a good deal of background information about the lot. The transaction says that the particular lot being sold once belonged to Edward Rumney, was the lot where Rumney had his “dwelling and place of abode in [London] town,” and is the lot that Rumney “conveyed [mortgaged] unto Charles Carroll Esq. father of Charles party [to this transaction] on or about 6 July 1711.” This information allows us to go back twelve years and to the 1711 document and see what it says.

The 1711 document, like so many others concerning lot 87, does not give lot measurements. However, it is the one that is referenced in the 1723 transaction and allows us to know who owned this lot between 1711 and 1723. The 1711 document is full of information about Rumney's life at that time because it mentions some of his household goods as well as a boat of his. That information is not directly related to this study, but the fact that the 1711 document does mention a house on that lot as the one where “Rumney now dwells” is another tie between the 1711 and 1723 documents. The technical aspect of this 1711 mortgage is that Rumney does retain ownership of it until 6 July 1712 when it, and the other items mentioned in the record, become signed over to Carroll unless Rumney has paid Carroll the £80 (the amount of the mortgage) by that date.¹⁹ Unfortunately for Rumney the 1723 document indicates that he was not able to repay the mortgage amount and lost ownership of the lot to Carroll in 1712.

So, based on the 1711 mortgage and the 1723 land transaction it appears that Rumney acquired the lot sometime before 1711 and was most likely the first one to take it up. Rumney then mortgaged the lot to Charles Carroll, could not repay the mortgage, and lost ownership of it

¹⁸ MSA, AACLR, RCW2, 219-21, 21 January 1723/4.

¹⁹ MSA, AACLR, PK, 375-7, 14 July 1711. It should be noted that this is the second such arrangement between Rumney and Carroll. The first one occurs on 26 April 1709 when Rumney and his wife Elinor mortgage land on the north side of the South River to Carroll. MSA, AACLR, PK, 44-7, 27 June 1709.

on 6 July 1712. And finally, Charles Carroll's son, Charles, sells the lot to Stephen West, Sr. on 6 September 1723. If only things were so simple.

Lot 87's history from 1711 through 1723 has to be examined through the lens of Edward Rumney's life to better understand what is happening on that lot during that time. During the November 1714 Anne Arundel County Court, Charles Carroll brings two cases against Edward Rumney.²⁰ Both cases involve unexplained debts Rumney owes Carroll. One is from 10 May 1713 and the other is from 10 June 1714. The amount, "Twelve pounds, four Shillings, and three pence sterling" is the same for both cases. So is the extra 373 pounds of tobacco awarded in each case to Carroll as damages. Though the cause of debt is not explained, the fact that it is the same amount, and appears on the tenth of these two months, might be an indication that it is a payment for the mortgage or mortgages that Rumney and Carroll are involved in. Even if these are not debts involving mortgages, this is an indication that Rumney is having financial trouble.

The fact that this court case occurs in 1714 is interesting when one takes into account two land transactions involving Edward's wife Elinor. Both transactions are recorded one right after the other on 24 February 1714/5. The first appears to occur on 2? February 1713/4.²¹ This transaction is between Edward and Elinor. Edward is giving lot 33 "in the Towne of Marlborough" and all of its improvements to Elinor. The second occurs on 24 November 1714 when Elinor receives lot 62 in London Town from her brother William Macubbin. In this transaction Elinor, not Edward and Elinor, receive the land.²² These transactions are discussed here because one could read the above-mentioned court cases and these land transactions together to reach an assumption that Edward knows he is having financial trouble, so to retain as much property as possible he is divulging some to his wife and that she should be the only one to receive lot 62 in case Carroll actually forecloses on the mortgage. Later in the century, as discussed above, this is what happens to William Brown. The foreclosure option and the implication of the Elinor land deals are assumptions that are not corroborated by the historical documents; but neither are they assumptions that are directly contradicted.

Something that is firmly grounded in the historical record is Edward Rumney's death; or more accurately, his burial. The All Hallows Parish Register records Edward Rumney's burial as occurring on 22 October 1718.²³ Currently, a will or inventory is not known for Edward Rumney. So what property and land he actually had at his death is a mystery. Even if he was renting lot 87 from Carroll, that arrangement would have to go to either his wife or his son (assuming his son is at least 21) after October 1718. At the time of Edward's death though Elinor does own lot 62 across Scotts Street. Though the burial date is helpful, it still does not give any solid evidence as to who was renting lot 87 at that time.

Once 1720 rolls around though, there is a reference that allows us to know who specifically was occupying (renting) lot 87. This reference is found in a 28 October 1720 land transaction between John Baldwin and William Black.²⁴ The land being transferred is actually three lots downriver of lot 87, but for some reason the description of bounding lots goes all the

²⁰ MSA, *Anne Arundel County Court, Judgment Record*, TB3, 421-3, November Court 1714.

²¹ The date is sometime between 20 and 28 February. There is actually no year given in the record except that it says the 12th year of Queen Anne's reign. 1714 is her twelfth, and last year.

²² MSA, *AACLR*, IB2, 194-7, 24 February 1714/5. Lot 62 is not in this narrative, and that particular transaction is complicated. The important thing to know is that it occurs in 1714 and lot 62 is somewhere opposite lot 87 across Scotts Street.

²³ MSA, *All Hallows Parish Register*, Special Collections 2458, manuscript 221, page 16. One assumes death generally precedes burial. Otherwise, death comes quickly after burial.

²⁴ MSA, *AACLR*, CW1, 267-9, 23 November 1720.

way to up to lot 87. This transaction does not mention lot 87 by number, but it does say, “a lott once belonging to Edward Rumney, now belonging to the executors of Charles Carroll, Esq. deceased, and is now in the possession of Stephen West.” This appears to fairly conclusively connect lot 87 to Stephen West, Sr. by October 1720.

This reference is important to remember when examining the 1722 land transaction between John Burgess and Stephen West, Sr. involving lot 74. That odd sentence that indicates lot 74 is contiguous to at least two lots of land, one possessed by Jane Burgess (Macklefish) and one possessed by Stephen West, Sr. now makes more sense. Jane’s possession of lot 86 is discussed above and West’s possession of lot 87 is clear because of the October 1720 land record. West’s possession, or renting, of lot 87 before he purchases it is also mentioned in the actual land sale of 6 September 1723 between him and Charles Carroll. The phrase that confirms this says, “the lot of land [87] now in the possession of the s^d Stephen...”

After the March 1723/4, lot 87 does not appear to be referenced again until the March 1734/5 land transaction between the Moores and Wootton. That transaction describes lot 87 as being the southern boundary of the small parcel or slip of land that Wootton purchases along with a few other town lots. Stephen West, Sr. is described as lot 87’s possessor. As mentioned above, on 11 November 1747, William Wootton’s widow Elizabeth sells some land to Stephen West, Sr. The small parcel is one of the lots sold to West. Lot 87 is again described as being the southern boundary of the small parcel.

It is assumed that lot 87 is one of the lots that William Brown first rents around 1753 and then purchases in 1758. The frustrating omission concerning the 1758 land purchase is the fact that only lot 74 is mentioned by number. Everything else is described as measurements. The land sold to Brown goes nine perches in from Scotts Street to lot 74 then follows the bounds of lot 74 around two sides until lot 74 meets Fish Street. From there the measurements go to the South River, then downriver to Scotts Street, and back up the street to the starting point.²⁵ This assumption is better confirmed in the next historical reference.

Lot 87 is specifically mentioned in the 23 March 1765 mortgage agreement between William Brown and James Dick when the “large brick house” that “William Brown hath built” is described as being on lot 87.²⁶ This lot is described as being contiguous to lot 74 and to the bank lot (which is most likely the small parcel; see next section). This description is essentially repeated in the 1 June 1787 Chancery Court as well as the 8 June 1793 Anne Arundel Count Land records between the executors of James Dick’s estate and William Brown.²⁷

As mentioned during the lot 74 discussion, the records between 1765 and 1793 need to be more fully explored and analyzed to indicate what specifically happens during the time period to lot 87. William Brown’s financial troubles play a part in that. Brown’s acquisition of various land tracts, and his relatively quick loss of them, need to also be more fully examined to see what is occurring on lot 87 (and the other bits of town land owned by Brown). That research is more important for determining the activities occurring on the lots at that time; but it is useful for narrowing down the exact periods of Brown’s ownership of lot 87 during that time.

²⁵ MSA, *AACLR*, BB2, 215-6, 8 March 1759.

²⁶ MSA, *PCLR*, DD3, 527-9.

²⁷ MSA, *Chancery Court, Chancery Record*, Liber 16, folio 333, 1 June 1787. MSA, *AACLR*, NH6, 667-71, 15 June 1793.

Small Parcel (a.k.a. Bank Lot)

Though the small parcel that is referenced a few times in the various land records is relatively impossible to measure from an area or total size perspective, its placement somewhere within the streets named above and its chain of title are easier to arrive at. From the perspective of ownership, it appears to first be specifically referenced in the 6 March 1734/5 transaction between William Wootton and the various Moores.²⁸ It is described as being bounded by the South River, Fish Street, lot 74, and lot 87. This same description is generally repeated in the land sale on 11 November 1747 between Elizabeth Wootton and Stephen West, Sr.²⁹ A similar contextual description appears in the 23 March 1765 mortgage agreement between William Brown and James Dick when this piece of land is now being described as “an angle of land or bank lot (without number).”³⁰ This description is essentially repeated on 8 June 1793 when John Hoskins Stone acquires the property described in the 1765 mortgage.³¹ It is unfortunate, and frustrating, that though these documents allow us to follow the plot’s owners from 1734/5 throughout the rest of the eighteenth century, none of the documents allow us to actually measure the plot to determine its size and area or a good chain of title pre-1734/5.

To recap, the references to and owners of lots 74, 86, 87, and the small parcel are generally easy to follow throughout the majority of the eighteenth century. Placing them on the land is a bit more challenging and is the focus of the next section. The following table though traces the owners and possessors of these lots throughout the eighteenth century in a, hopefully, easily understandable format.

	74	86	87	Small Parcel
10 March 1703/4	Ann Lambeth’s will dictates the sale of her London Town land	Ann Lambeth’s will dictates the sale of her London Town land		
15 May 1709	Macklefish wills one lot, originally belonging to Lambeth, to daughter Jane [74 or 86?]	Macklefish wills one lot, originally belonging to Lambeth, to daughter Jane [74 or 86?]		
6 July 1711			Edward Rumney mortgages lot 87 to Charles Carroll	
6 July 1712			Charles Carroll becomes legal owner of lot 87	
28 October 1720			Lot 87 is referred to as being in the possession of Stephen West, Sr.	

²⁸ MSA, *AACLR*, RD2, 218-9, 10 May 1735.

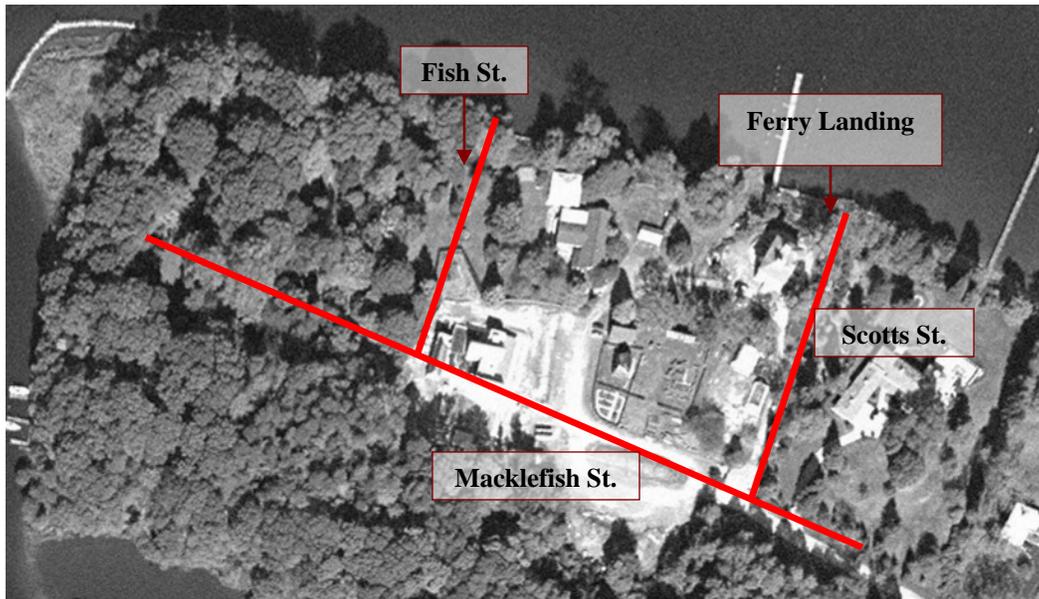
²⁹ MSA, *AACLR*, RB2, 547-9, 27 January 1748.

³⁰ MSA, *PCLR*, DD3, 527-9.

³¹ MSA, *AACLR*, NH6, 667-71, 15 June 1793.

28 July 1722	Stephen West, Sr. purchases lot 74 from John Burgess	A lot [86] contiguous to 74 is possessed by Jane Burgess	A lot [87] contiguous to 74 is possessed by Stephen West, Sr.	
6 September 1723			Stephen West, Sr. purchases lot 87 from Charles Carroll	
10 March 1723/4	West's purchase is confirmed and Jane Burgess is added to the transaction	Stephen West, Sr. acquires lot 86 from John and Jane Burgess	Lot 87 is referred to as being owned by West.	
6 March 1734/5	Lot 74 is described as being owned by West		Lot 87 is referred to as being owned by West.	William Wootton acquires the small parcel from a passel of Moores
18 October 1753	<i>Maryland Gazette</i> advertisement infers Brown's rental of lot 74		<i>Maryland Gazette</i> advertisement infers Brown's rental of lot 87	<i>Maryland Gazette</i> advertisement infers Brown's rental of the small parcel
10 October 1758	William Brown purchases lot 74 from Stephen West, Jr.	Lot 86 appears to be subdivided in the land sale between Brown and West, Jr. and Brown's portion becomes considered part of lot 87.	William Brown appears to purchase lot 87 from Stephen West, Jr.	William Brown appears to purchase the small parcel from Stephen West, Jr.
23 March 1765	Brown's mortgage to Dick mentions lot 74 and it being contiguous to lot 87		Brown's mortgage to Dick mentions a new brick house being on lot 87 and it being contiguous to lot 74	The mortgage mentions a bank lot without number
8 June 1793	Lot 74 is one of three lots being sold to John Hoskins Stone		Lot 87 is one of three lots being sold to John Hoskins Stone	The bank lot is one of three lots being sold to John Hoskins Stone

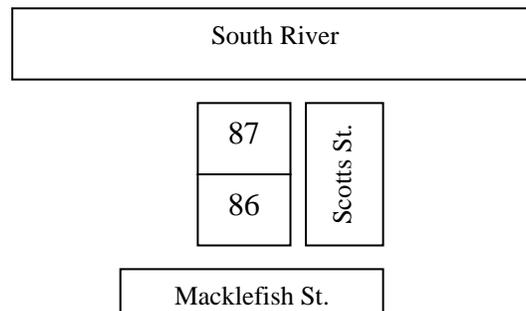
Placing the lots on the ground



Street layout is approximate.

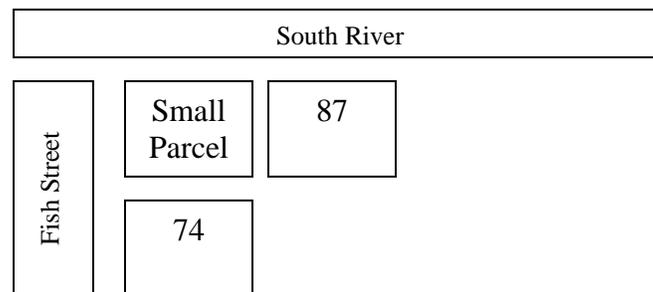
A frustrating aspect of the various land records is that though there are a number of measurements contained within them, the measurements are rarely complete enough to say how large each specific lot is and the area contained within each lot. There are also only scattered references to contextual relationships between the lots and the streets. To actually place the lots on the ground, specifics need to be adhered to whilst their implications are explored. This exploration is the best that can be done at this point. But as long as the exploration is based on the specifics, and logically tight, the following layout reveals itself.

The easiest lot to place contextually is lot 86. When West purchases the lot in March 1723/4, the lot's description reads in part, "thence southwest to Macklefish Street, thence with the said street south east nine perches to Scotts Street and wth the said street to the beginning."³² From this we can firmly state that lot 86 is at the intersection of Macklefish and Scotts Streets. The additional information we get from this document is that the Macklefish Street side and the side opposite Macklefish Street are both nine perches (148.5 feet) long. Because the record mentions a substantial locust post standing on Scotts Street that divides lot 86 from lot 87 we can place lot 87 on Scotts Street and the river side of lot 86. Unfortunately the document does not state how long the Scotts Street side and its opposite are for lot 86. Using this information though, a contextual layout should look like the following figure.

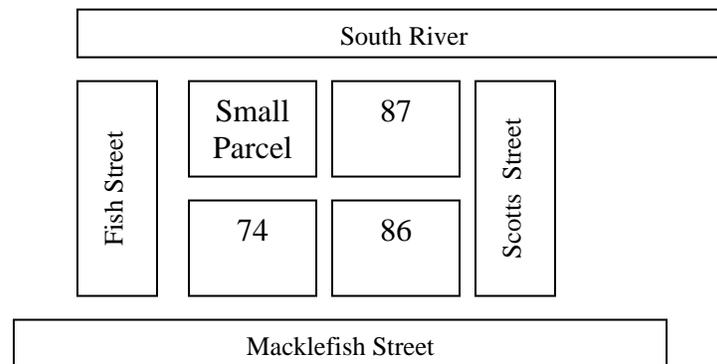


³² MSA, AACLR, RCW2, 244.

Another relatively easy lot to place contextually is the small parcel. When this lot is one of many being purchased by William Wootton in March 1734/5, its description reads, “lying on the said [South] River and bounded on the South by a lott numbered 87, on the West by a Lott numbered 74, both in the possession of Stephen West, and and on the North by the said Fish Street.”³³ This description is repeated verbatim in the November 1747 purchase by Stephen West, Sr.³⁴ Once the land records start dealing with William Brown the small parcel starts being called “an angle of land or bank lot (without number)” and is consistently described as “adjoining both these lotts [87 and 74], being contiguous and adjoining to Lott Number eighty seven.”³⁵ Though no measurements are ever given for the small parcel, its contextual relationship should look like the following layout.



It is quite tempting to take the above layout, combine it with the previous one to get the following, and call it a day. The problem with stopping here is that the various lot measurements have not been fully explored, contextual omissions have not been mentioned, and documentary differences discussed.



The most complete measurement of all these lots concerns lot 74. That measurement is found within the 28 July 1722 transaction between Burgess and West. Lot 74’s measurements are described as “beginning at a Locust post and running thence Northwest sixteen perches, thence Northeast tenn perches to South River, thence Southeast sixteen perches, thence Southwest to the first post, containing one acre of ground more or less.”³⁶ The last side’s length is not given, but for the area to equal one acre (and to complete the rectangle) the last side’s measurement must be ten perches. A measurement that augments the 1722 one is found in the

³³ MSA, AACLR, RD2, 218. Notice the clerical error of “and and.”

³⁴ MSA, AACLR, RB2, 548. Not exactly verbatim, the extra “and” is missing.

³⁵ MSA, PCLR, DD3, 528.

³⁶ MSA, AACLR, RCW2, 186. In feet the lengths are 264 x 165 x 264 x 165.

October 1758 land sale between West, Jr. and Brown. This record says, “from the said stump up the side of the said Lott number seventy-four a course about South Southwest Seventy Eight feet to the Southwest corner of the same Lott, then with the said Lott about West Northwest Sixteen perches to Fish Street, then with Fish Street northeastward...”³⁷ Because the stump does not lay on the side that is sixteen perches, it must lay on the side that is ten perches and opposite Fish Street. Also, since the 78-foot distance is not nine perches in length, the stump cannot be at one of lot 74’s corners. What these two records give us then is a fairly consistent lot that has an area of one acre and is a rectangle with two opposite sides being ten perches and the other sides sixteen perches long.

As mentioned during lot 86’s discussion earlier, this 78-foot distance is helpful when examining lot 86’s actual size. Lot 86 has already been described as having its Macklefish Street side and that side’s opposite as being nine perches long. The 1758 land record also mentions a line nine perches long that runs from Scotts Street to the stump. The problem with the 1758 record is that if this nine perch line is the boundary between lots 86 and 87, then lot 86’s size would only be 4.7 x 9 x 4.7 x 9 perches or just over ¼ (.26) of an acre. However, if one realizes that seventy-eight feet is longer than 4½ perches by just 3¾ feet, then a different picture emerges.

Because 4½ is one-half of nine, a strong assumption can be made that the 78-foot line was the best attempt to subdivide lot 86 into two equal parts given the buildings and improvements already on the lot. By using this assumption lot 86 becomes a nine perch square whose area is just barely over one-half of an acre (.50625). Though this size is perfect when considering lot 74’s contextual layout as described in the 1722 document, an underlying assumption about lot 74’s connection to Macklefish Street needs to be addressed before taking up that strand of the narrative.

Though not explicitly mentioned, the ideas discussed above rely on the assumption that one of lot 74’s sixteen perch sides fronts Macklefish Street. If one reads all of the documents concerning lots 74, 86, 87, and the small parcel, this particular detail is nowhere stated. Fortunately, it is inferred when reading at least one of the records and it makes sense logically when trying to fit all of the lots together. The inference is found in the 1722 document at the beginning of the section describing lot 74’s measurements. The key phrase is “beginning at a locust post and running thence Northwest sixteen perches...”³⁸ Within this phrase the key detail is the locust post. As seen during the discussion about the boundary between lots 86 and 87 a substantial locust post sits on Scotts Street. It seems that these posts or stakes that delineate the lots sit on streets. This is confirmed by looking at a variety of land records from both London Town and other towns such as Annapolis.³⁹ So, if we take this evidence and apply it to lot 74, a strong case can be made that lot 74 is situated at the intersection of Macklefish and Fish Streets. The alternative is to suggest that an unnamed lot that has to be relatively small because of lot 74’s area, and appears nowhere in these records, is squeezed between lot 74, Macklefish Street, lot 86, and Fish Street. This might be possible, since there are a few London Town lots that are never mentioned in the records, but it seems highly unlikely given the above evidence and the fact that the “lost” lots seem to be in parts of the town that were never developed.

³⁷ MSA, AACLR, BB2, 215.

³⁸ MSA, AACLR, RCW2, 186.

³⁹ Richard Hill purchases lot 8 in London Town with a stake sitting “cut of Market Street and the cut of Cross Street.” MSA, AACLR, SY1, 161. Alexander Ferguson purchases lot 70 in Annapolis with a cedar post sitting on North-West Street. MSA, AACLR, BB2, 547.

To go back to why the idea that lot 86 is nine perches square is perfect for the 1722 land record, remember that that document mentions lot 74 as being next to at least two lots. One lot (87) is possessed by Stephen West, Sr. and one lot (86) is possessed by Jane Burgess (Macklefish). If the side fronting Macklefish Street is sixteen perches, then the side bounding lots 87 and 86 is ten perches. If one assumes that these lots are usually some form of straight, four-sided figure (except where a geographical feature such as a river bank occurs) then the only way lot 74 can adjoin both lots 86 and 87 is for lot 86's Scotts Street side and its opposite (the side bounding lot 74) to be less than ten perches. As mentioned above a nine-perch square is the best candidate. This allows lot 74 to also adjoin lot 87 because the side of lot 74 that is ten perches long has one perch (16½ feet) of overlap with lot 87.

This arrangement also allows us to potentially measure lot 87's size and area. Once the intersection of Scotts Street and Macklefish Street is determined, one has to only measure up nine perches to mark out lot 86. From there, the measurement continues to the river to determine the side of lot 87 that fronts Scotts Street. By continuing to use the idea that the sides of lot 87 that parallel the river and Macklefish Street are nine perches long, lot 87's size and area can be determined.

This claim is based on the idea that lot 87 goes to the river. First, this makes sense from Rumney's standpoint. If he was the first to claim lot 87 in the hopes of operating a ferry and an inn at that site, he would most likely want a lot that was right on the river. Additionally, William Brown says multiple times that his brick house is on lot 87. And finally, the mortgage to James Dick specifically states that the small parcel is "contiguous to and adjoining" lot 87. The word "contiguous" implies that it does not wrap around lot 87 so as to interpose itself between 87 and the river.

An alternative to the above arrangement is to say that lot 86 is nine perches by ten perches (.5625 acre). This means that lot 74 adjoins both lots 86 and 87 because the side of lot 87 that is closest to, and parallels, Macklefish Street, is some indeterminate length that is greater than nine perches. A second alternative is that the side of lot 86 that fronts Scotts Street and its opposite are some indeterminate length greater than ten which would mean that lot 87 would have to be drawn with more than four sides for it to adjoin lot 74. Out of these two alternatives, the first one has the most merit because of implications that concern the small parcel (more on that next). But from a standpoint that looks at a lot's area or configuration, neither alternative is as good as the first idea that describes lot 86 as a half-acre lot.

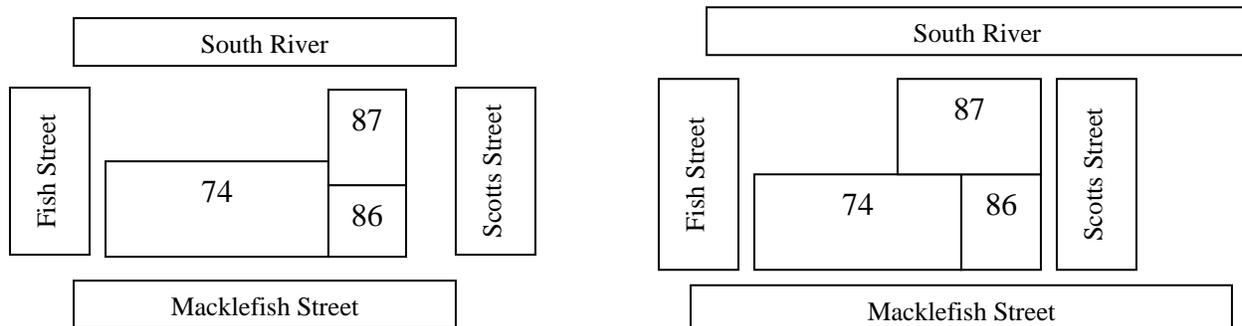


Figure A: Lot 86 as 9 perches²

Figure B: Lot 86 as 9 by 10 perches

To return to the small parcel, it confuses the issue because of the lack of detail (read none) in its measurements. As discussed earlier, the small parcel (or bank lot) is only mentioned in its relationship to Fish Street, the South River, lot 87, and lot 74. The fact that it is not given a

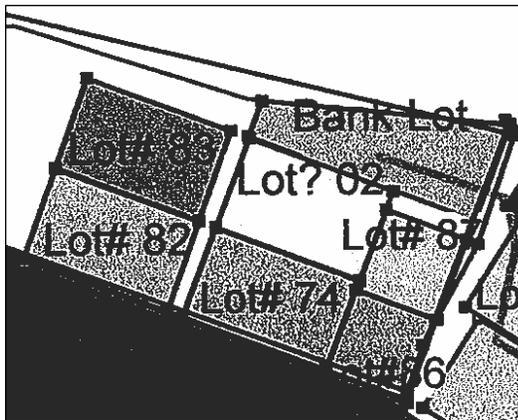
number, nor a set of measurements, makes one hesitant to reach even a strong assumption about this lot. As figure A above indicates, there is a useable amount of land remaining between lot 74, lot 87, the South River, and Fish Street. Figure B lessens that amount of space at the expense of making lot 86 even more unequal to a half-acre and lot 87 an indeterminate size. Without more measurements or the original land plat, both figures at this point have a good claim that is based on the surviving evidence. However, figure A does appear to be the stronger one.

One last item that needs to be discussed is the compass headings mentioned within these various records. If one were to be absolutely strict with these headings, then this investigation into the lots' layout could not occur. For example, in 1722, when lot 74 is sold to West, the sixteen perch side is described as running northwest. When this side is described in 1758 it is apparently running west northwest. The best explanation for this apparent incongruity is to say that when one operates with GPS then one's measurements and compass headings may not be as accurate as today. To become convinced that cartographical errors occurred all one has to do is read a bit of history to learn about the border dispute between Maryland and Pennsylvania or the 1830s Aroostook War that occurred on the Maine-Canadian border. The point here is that when reviewing these land records, the compass readings should be adhered to as much as possible, but at the same time realizing that a minor error in the headings could cause one lot's description to alter over time.

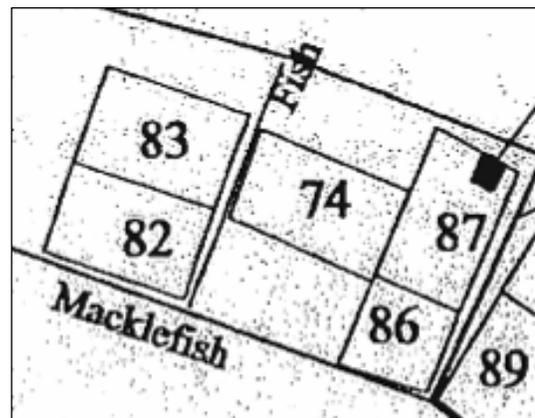
Though there are a number of holes in the hard evidence, and since we do not know with exactness at this time where Macklefish Street met Scotts Street or how much the South River's bank has changed since the 1700s, the above discussion should allow one to reach a fairly high confidence level as to how the different lots were arranged. As more archaeological and historical evidence comes to light the conclusions reached above should be reviewed. Future archaeological research should provide more fence lines, building sites, and other evidence that could help determine where the roads ran and how buildings were situated. The historical research should continue to focus on the land records; both the ones that have been perused in the past to catch any errors, and the ones that become available later. Additionally, wills and probate records should also be reviewed (as some already have) in the hope that they will help nail down some of the more obscure land transactions that occurred in London Town. But for now, the various records discussed above are the best available. And based on those records the following image is the compilation of both the hard evidence found within as well as the generally solid interpretive leaps needed to actually arrive at a lot layout. The lots are generally to scale, but not exact. The streets are also generally to scale, but not exact. The second and third images are alternative lot layouts that have been previously proposed.



Street layout and boundary lines for 74, 86, 87, and small parcel to approximate scale. Satellite image from [Uwww.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com); 22 December 2007.



Land plat conjecture by Anthony Lindaeur, April 2006.



Land plat conjecture as found in Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito, *The History of London Town, Maryland*, PH.D. Dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 2003, 68.