MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Magi No.

DOE __yes xno

Multiple - MHT Inventory Numbers
BA-1998; BA-1999
BA-2191; BA-2192

NEW FREEDOM QUAD

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Theme Nomination of Five Houses on Hillcrest Avenue, Parkton

and/or common

2. Location

street & number See Chart ___ not for publication

city, town Parkton ___ vicinity of Councilmanic District 3rd congressional district 2nd

state Maryland county Baltimore County

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	x occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
x building(s)	x private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	x private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	x yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	x not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

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

name See chart

street & number See chart telephone no.:

city, town Parkton state and zip code MD 21120

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Courts Building liber See chart

street & number 401 Bosley Avenue folio See chart

city, town Towson state MD 21204

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust Inventory (four houses)

date 1980 Survey of village ___ federal x state x county ___ local

depository for survey records 100 Community Place

city, town Crownsville state MD 21032

Condition		Check one	Check one	
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	___ original site	BA-2192
___ good	___ ruins	___ altered	___ moved	date of move _____
___ fair	___ unexposed			

HILLCREST AVENUE HOUSES

The houses on Hillcrest Avenue, Parkton, date from approximately the same period and formed a sort of suburb to the town at river and railroad level. Hillcrest Avenue was largely the home of railroad management personnel who worked at the Parkton maintenance shops on the Northern Central Railroad. The first study of this high ground neighborhood dates from 1983 when the Landmarks Preservation Commission's intern, Ruth B. Mascari, wrote capsule descriptions of some of the houses and discovered the wealth of photographs owned by the Underwood sisters whose parents were the first owners of their large frame house. The LPC already accepted one of the shingle-style houses on this summit for the Preliminary Landmarks List: the Talbott-Fagan House at 18907 Hillcrest Avenue. The house was in turn promoted to the Final Landmarks List by action of the County Council.[1]

The term "Avenue" is somewhat puzzling because 19th century developers usually wanted to open straight avenues over flat terrain. Hillcrest Avenue is curved, twisted, and ascending.

The five proposed houses plus the Talbott-Fagan structure do not quite form a contiguous historic district, thus the multiple property nomination, all combined into one reporting form by the use of tabular listings.

MULTIPLE PROPERTY NOMINATION - PARKTON, HILLCREST AVENUE

MHT SITE NO.	NAME OF SITE	HOUSE NO.	OWNER/OWNERS
BA 2192	Underwood-Crosby House	18920	Andrew W. Crosby Page M. Crosby
BA 1998	Landis House	18909	William B. Landis Judith A. Landis
BA-NONE	Sheetz House	18918	Michael T, Sheetz Cathy R. Sheetz
BA 1999	McCeney House	18807	Caroline E. L. McCeney
BA 2191	Burke-Herschfield House	18906	A. Carl Herschfield Betty R. Herschfield

[1] Final Landmarks List, Site No. 159, enacted by County Council on July 6, 1998.

PROPERTY DETAILS

ADDRESS	TAX MAP	GRID	PARCEL	DEED	ACRES	EST. DATE OF CONSTR.
18920	17	2	P419	7519:839	1.15	1915
18909	17	2	P222	5328:90	1.147	1901
18918	17	2	P220	10,576:297	1.2147	1916
18807	17	2	P49	5745:132	3.178	1898
18906	17	2	P221	13,931:637	3.47	1906.

-- Source, Maryland State Assessment Data Bank, Baltimore County (1999).

JM:rlh

8. Significance

Survey No. Multiple

BA-2192

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	✓ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates Multiple **Builder/Architect** See List

check: Applicable Criteria: __A __B __C __D
and/or
Applicable Exception: __A __B __C __D __E __F __G

Level of Significance: __national __state __local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

For the purposes of the theme nomination of the five multiple properties at Hillcrest Avenue, Parkton, we include the capsule descriptions and histories combined from the 1980-1983 studies of Parkton and villages on the New Freedom quadratic map sheet:

BA 2192. *Underwood-Crosby House* (1913), 18920 Hillcrest Avenue. Alfred Alonzo Sparks built this dwelling for James Alexander Underwood who was the work engineer at Parkton for the Northern Central Railroad in 1913. The Underwood family had lived in this house continuously from its construction into the 1980s. This two-story, squarish structure has a jerked hip roof and a side bay window off the dining room. What was originally the pantry is now remodeled into the kitchen, and the old kitchen has lost its six-lidded coal stove and has become a breakfast room. The three bedrooms upstairs are topped off by an attic space and the stone basement remains dry and comfortable for storage. The exterior is in good condition, painted white and grey, when observed by Mrs. Mascari, with applied carving over some of the windows on the second floor. The owners at the time of surveying in 1983 were Mrs. Lida Underwood Thompson and Miss. Edna Underwood. The Underwood sisters used to commute to Sparks Agricultural High School on the NCRR trains—probably free as railroad family members This house is now covered with blue-violet composition shingles and the shutters are a deep blue (1999).

BA 1998. *Landis House* (1901-1902), 18909 Hillcrest Avenue. This is a large frame house in the late Victorian style, gable-roofed, clapboard-covered, with notable scroll brackets, probably built for Alfred A. and Anna V. Sparks, who acquired the lot in November of 1901. Mr. Sparks was a prominent lumber dealer and built a number of Parkton houses on spec at the turn of the century. In 1911, the Sparks family sold a house and a part of the lot too Joseph White. The 1918 tax ledger of District No. 7 showed Lawrence McFadden as owner, the house described as two stories, measuring 28 by 30 feet, assessed at $1357. Alfred Alonzo Sparks was also active in the Charity Lodge No. 134, A.F. & A.M., near the river in Parkton.. Equity records show that the Sparks family took a mortgage from B. Harry Almony and also carried fire insurance for $1200. The 1999 owners are the same parties interviewed by Mrs. Mascari in 1983. The Landis house began its architectural life as a twin of the peach-colored Talbott-Fagan house next-door (MHT Site BA 2190 at 18907 Hillcrest). This house in 1999 has beige composition shingles and green shutters.

BA-No Number Assigned. *Sheetz House* (1916), 18918 Hillcrest Avenue. This is the 1999 home of Michael T. and Cathy R. Sheetz. The house was probably built by Samuel C. and Ida B. Stansfield who acquired a 1.2-acre lot in 1916 and paid only $500 for it, judging from the price of the revenue stamps on the deed. Mr. Stansfield bought the lot from Lewis V. Tipton, who in partnership with James Underwood, had laid out a number of parcels on land that traces back to a purchase from Dominic J. Burke [*sic*] in 1906 (B.C. Deeds, WPC 300:64). This house is covered with beige aluminum siding in front but sections of German siding appear in the side walls. The footprint is L-shaped. This house is a mixturre of late Queen Anne, vernacular, and Colonial Revival. There is a full width front porch one step above grade. Porch posts are round in the Colonial Revival style. This house was probably built when one-over-one double-hung window sashed were standard. House is perched on a bank. Excellent condition 1999. One rustic outbuilding in the back.

BA 1999. *McCeney House.* (1877-1898), 18807 Hillcrest Avenue. This is a frame, two-story house on a hill, with light green clapboard cladding. The style is vernacular with a full width front porch. In excellent condition when added to the MHT Inventory in 1983. This house served as the residence for an employee of the Northern Central Rail Road and it adjoined the company's hilltop reservoir for filling the locomotive boilers. This house is not found in the 1877 atlas but appears as an unidentified square in Bromley's 1898 atlas. The State Assessment records give 11898 as the date of construction for this house, although it is not clear how much historical science goes into their dating. In 1957, the railroad company sold the house to Harold W. Williams. The house belonged to Caroline Davis, also known as Caroline McCeney, when visited by Mrs. Mascari. The house is large, three bays wide perched on the hilltop at the beginning of the avenue, looking down on the town of Parkton. Mrs. Mascari reported that a fire once took place in the roof and that the original dormers were not rebuilt when making repairs. The 1983 report found a two-seater outhouse plus urinal surviving in the yard, also a windmill of the "air motor" type. The 1983 report suggests that the structure existed in at least 1887 as suggested by transfer books that showed the Northern Central with $6000 in newly taxable assets. This house is shrouded in trees, difficult to photograph.

BA 2191. *Burke-Herschfield House* (1892), 18906 Hillcrest Avenue. This is a well built vernacular style house, originally clapboard covered, but already covered with aluminum siding when entered into the MHT Inventory in 11983. Maintained in excellent condition, this house helps set the tone for Hillcrest and is known as 'Sycamore Crest, reported Mrs. Mascari in her intern survey. "It is framed in back by many trees, including sycamores, and the spring house still sits on the property." The house, now on four acres was built by Dominick "Nicky" Burke and can be found on Bromley's 1898 atlas plate and is also found in the 1896 tax ledger of Election District No. 7. In fact, the news items from Parkton in the *Baltimore County Democrat* of March 12, 1892, reported that Nicholas Burke was waiting for the well-drillers, and "he, too, will soon have a home." The front porch was enclosed, even in 1983, but still had the original decorative scroll work panels around the top front of the porch roof. At one time there were

tennis courts to the rear of the house, built by James Underwood for his children and their friends. There are additions on each side of the original three-bay wide starter house. The siding is a very light shade of yellow. The land here has been purchased in 1889 from William Ensor and before that had been part of Charlotte Hill's inherited portion of the great "Castle Calder" tract of colonial times.

The Mascari follow-up article in *History Trails* noted, "Additionally, on the hill behind Hillcrest Avenue, was a park owned and mmaintained by the NCRR but evidently for the use of anyone in the town. The Parkton Fun Club had band concerts, fireworks, picnics, games, and even a small log cabin for the use of its members. The fun club still holds cherished memories for the older residents of Parkton." (1)

In 1901, the Parkton Lumber Company in which A. A. Sparks held an interest became insolvent and the court records contain the following testimony from the appointed receivers:

> [while the receivers] were on their way to take possession of said property one of the worst floods ever known in that locality overflowed the lumberyard of said company and washed away a large quantity of lumber, which your petitioners . . . are advised is scattered in a broken condition from Parkton to the mouth of Gunpowder River. (2)

NOTES:

1. Ruth B. Mascari, "A Parkton Girlhood," *History Trails*, 17 (Spring 1989): 1-4.

2. Baltimore County Judicial Records, NBM 189:73.

Ruth B. Mascari, "A Parkton Girlhood," History Trails, 17 (Spring 1983): 1-4.

Ruth B. Mascari, "Internship, January 1983, Baltimore County Landmarks Commission,: ms., Goucher College, copy at Office of Planning.

10. Geographical Data

BA-2192

Acreage of nominated property ~~See Chart~~

Quadrangle name New Freedom

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Typical Suburban Lots, see Chart for Parcel Numbers on Tax Map 17, Grid 2.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state none code county code

state none code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John McGrain, County Historian

organization Office of Planning date September 16, 1999

street & number 401 Bosley Avenue telephone 410-887-3495

city or town Towson state MD 21204