

ACHS SUMMARY FORM

- 1. Name Brown/Whitmer House
- 2. Planning Area/Site Number 37/3      3. MNCPPC Atlas Reference  
(Takoma Park Historic District)
- 4. Address 7211 Holly Avenue

5. Classification Summary

Category building  
 Ownership private  
 Public Acquisition NA  
 Status occupied  
 Accessible yes: restricted  
 Present use private residence  
 Previous Survey Recording M-NCPPC Federal    State X County X Local     
 (Title and date: Inventory of Historical Sites - 1976 )

- 6. Date 1894-5      7. Original Owner Garrett M. Davis
- 8. Apparent Condition
  - a. good      c. original site
  - b. altered

Description: This L-shaped house, built in 1894 or 1895, faces east and is stick style frame. The main block is two bays by two bays with gables, a central brick chimney, and has 2½ stories. A two-bay by two bay wing has 2 stories, dormer windows, and is slightly smaller; this wing has a front porch, decorated with a fan-shaped Gothic frill.  
 The rear facade is 3½ stories with a door, uneven fenestration, and the projecting rear section of the wing.

10. Significance: Benjamin F. Gilbert, a Washington real estate broker, subdivided the first section of Takoma Park in 1883. Garrett M. Davis bought lot #7, block 6, soon after. Written into the deed were the following restrictions: "That all buildings hereafter erected on the premises herein conveyed shall be distant not less than forty feet from the street or avenue line; that no malt or spirituous liquors shall be manufactured or sold on said premises; that no business shall be carried on that could in anywise endanger the health of the community, and that no nuisance shall be committed or permitted thereon." Davis was a clerk at the General Land Office in Washington, D.C., and he moved from 205 6th St., N.E. to Takoma Park in 1889 or 1890. Davis was appointed a member of the first town council in 1890, serving with Mayor Benjamin F. Gilbert. He drafted ordinances for town improvements. In 1905, Elizabeth J. Whitmer, bought the property. Her heirs sold it to Walter B. Brown, an architect with the Navy, in 1934. The present owner bought the house in 1975.

- 11. Date researched and researcher 1/79-Donald Leffler      Alan Marsh  
Architectural Description
- 12. Compiler Peg Coleman      13. Date Compiled 2/79      14. Designation Approval
- 15. Acreage 10,000 sq. ft.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 37/3-5  
 Takoma Park H.D.  
 MAGI#

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Brown/Whitmer House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 7211 Holly Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Takoma Park

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Elsa Bruton

Telephone #: 589-0614

STREET & NUMBER

7211 Holly Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Takoma Park

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 20012

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 4614

Folio #: 482

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland 20850

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE M-NCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites

DATE

1976

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Park Historian's Office

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland 20855

**7 DESCRIPTION**

M:37-3-5

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED	DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED			
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED				

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

This L-shaped stick style frame house faces east. The main block of the house is two bays by two bays, with gables on the east and north facades of this 2½ story section. In this main block, there are a central brick chimney, twin one-over-one windows on the first and second floors of the projecting gabled east wing, and slotted fixed windows in the attic directly above.

To the southwest of the main block is a smaller two bay by two bay wing, with two stories, a twin windowed wide dormer and a porch with a front door and a double-hung one-over-one window. At the top of each of the two porch posts and at the porch corners is a fan-shaped carpenter Gothic frill. The front door has a square transom and is wood paneled.

The rear facade is three and a half stories, with a door, uneven fenestration, approximately 16 steps, lattice work, and the projecting rear section of the southwest wing of the house.

The house was originally sheathed in clapboard, but is now cedar shingled and painted. The attic and dormer gables retain their original fishscale shingles.

During Walter B. Brown's ownership, the following changes were made: the furnace was converted from coal to oil, the dining room fireplace was sealed, the dirt basement floor was cemented and bath added, and razed the chicken house.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

M:37-3-5

<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW</b>			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1894-5 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Brown-Whitmer house is representative of the development of the "railroad suburbs" in Montgomery County in the late 19th century.

Benjamin F. Gilbert, a Washington real estate broker, subdivided the first section of Takoma Park in 1883. Soon after, he sold to Garrett M. Davis a 10,000 sq. ft. piece of land for a sum of \$600, known as lot #7, block 6 of Takoma Park.<sup>1</sup> Written into the deed were the following restrictions: "That all buildings hereafter erected on the premises herein conveyed shall be distant not less than forty feet from the street or avenue line; that no malt or spirituous liquors shall be manufactured or sold on said premises; that no business shall be carried on that could in anywise endanger the health of the community, and that no nuisance shall be committed or permitted thereon."

Davis was a clerk at the General Land Office in Washington, D.C., and he moved from 205 6th St., N.E. to Takoma Park in 1889 or 1890. Davis was appointed a member of the first town council in 1890, serving with Mayor Benjamin F. Gilbert. He drafted ordinances for town improvements.<sup>2</sup>

The house on Davis' property on Holly Avenue was constructed in 1894 or 1895.<sup>3</sup> Whether he lived in the house is not known.

On May 10, 1905, Davis sold the property to Elizabeth J. Whitmer for \$1,825.<sup>4</sup> In 1934, Elizabeth Whitmer passed away, leaving her heirs to transfer the deed on June 9 to Cora L. Whitmer & Nellie A. Whitmer. Nellie died & Cora Whitmer became sole owner of the property.<sup>5</sup> Shortly afterward she sold the house to Walter B. Brown, Department of the Navy Architect.<sup>6</sup>

During the Brown ownership, the address was changed from 211 to 7211 Holly Avenue. Brown made a number of changes to the house, and lived there for almost 30 years. He sold the property to Daniel Chesivoir in 1964,<sup>7</sup> for \$34,100. The property changed hands several times before being sold to the present owner in 1975.

FOOTNOTES: (See Attachment Sheet D)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See Attachment Sheet D

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10,000 sq. ft.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 7, Block 6, "Takoma Park"

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Donald Leffler

Alan Marsh

Architectural Description

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

DATE

January 1979

STREET & NUMBER

Box 87

TELEPHONE

926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

STATE

Maryland 20753

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory 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  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

FOOTNOTES:

1. Land Records of Montgomery County, Md., Plat A3 (1883); JA9/244.
2. Boyd, William H., Directory of the District of Columbia, compiled by W. Andrew Boyd; Vol. I, 1889, p. 332; Vol. II, 1891, p. 349. (Columbia Historical Society, Baltimore).  
Takoma Park, The Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Founding of Takoma Park, Md.-D.C., 1883-1933; official program and history.
3. The Hopkins Atlas of 1894 does not show the house; however, the 1895 Tax Assessment list \$1,000 value of improvement.
4. Land Records, Op. Cit., 182/142.
5. Ibid., 584/4; 628/374.
6. Ibid., 628/378.
7. Ibid., 3316/587.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Boyd, William H., Directory of the District of Columbia, compiled by W. Andrew Boyd; Vol. I, 1889, p. 332; Vol. II, 1891, p. 349. (Columbia Historical Society, Baltimore).

Montgomery County Land, Will, and Assessment Records.

Hopkins, G.M., Atlas 1894.

The Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Founding of Takoma Park, Md.-D.C., 1883-1933, Official program and history.

Takoma Park Journal, June 30, 1950, Historic Supplement.

Takoma Park. 75 Years of Community Living, 1883-1958, Brochure created and authorized under a commission of Mayor George M. Miller and City Council Commissioners were: Dr. Clifton E. Olmstead, Chairman; John W. Coffman.

Interviews: Ruth Leffler and Thomas Brown (children of Walter Brown), fall and winter 1978-1979.



M: 37-3-5

420 000 FEET (M.D.)

GREEN MEADOWS 1.3 MI.

WHITE OAK 5 MI.

4314

57'30"

3.5 MI. TO U.S. 50

4312

Mr. 37-3-5  
Brown-Whitmer House  
7241 Holly Avenue, Takoma Park  
Washington West Quad, 1965 BR 280



Facade: southeast - 1937



East Facade



M: 37/3-5

Brown/Whitmer Hse

FACING CEDAR HILL

LOOKING EAST

VIEW FROM

BACK WINDOW

1958