

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #67-9 Building Date: ca. 1921

Building Name: Traver-Williams House

Location: 8409 Cunningham Drive, Berwyn Heights, Maryland

Private/Residence/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description

The Traver-Williams House is a two-and-one-half-story square frame house which is distinguished by a projecting gabled bay. The building is roughly four-by-three-bays and has a hip roof. Entrance is in the third bay of the four-bay west (main) facade through a door with a plain board surround. Across this west facade, and wrapping around part of the south facade, is a one-story hip-roof porch. The porch has double square posts with molded capitals, which rest on bases of molded concrete blocks. The siding of the house is covered by white asbestos shingle. There is a large central corbelled brick chimney. The cornice is boxed, and has deeply overhanging eaves, painted dark green. In the third bay of the south facade is a two-story rectangular projecting bay surmounted by a pedimented gable. Centered in the west plane of the hip roof, between second and third bays, is a gable-roof dormer. The entrance in the second bay is sheltered by a one-story shed-roof porch which rests on brick piers; the southerly section of this rear porch has been enclosed, forming a small square addition.

Significance

The Traver-Williams House is a good example of the Four Square or "Classic Box" style of dwelling. It stands in a prominent position at one of the highest points in the town of Berwyn Heights. It is one of a later group of homes constructed in Berwyn Heights in the 1920's. The Town of Charlton Heights was platted in 1888 by Edward Graves, on 383 acres of land bounded by the Branchville Road and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Graves sold the land to the Charlton Heights Improvement Company in that year, and the company immediately began construction of dwellings ordered by pattern through the mail. The subject house was built circa 1921 by Margaret Traver, a native of New York, who had settled in Berwyn Heights and, for several years, ran a boarding house. For 25 years until the late 1970's it was the home of the Viens family, and since 1982 has been the home of the Williams family. The house has undergone significant alterations, but it retains its original lines; this together with its prominent position and wooded setting, make it a significant landmark in the town of Berwyn Heights.

Acreage: 30,000 square feet

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Traver House

and/or common Williams House

2. Location

street & number 8409 Cunningham Drive _____ not for publication

city, town Berwyn Heights _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 5

state Maryland _____ county Prince George's

3. Classification

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

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

name Donald Williams and Jean Rice

street & number 8409 Cunningham Drive _____ telephone no.:

city, town Berwyn Heights _____ state and zip code MD 20740

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse _____ liber #5821

street & number Main Street _____ folio 374

city, town Upper Marlboro _____ state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date _____ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Survey No. PG#67-9

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Traver-Williams House is a two-and-one-half-story square frame house which is distinguished by a projecting gabled bay. The building is roughly four bays by three bays, has a hip roof, and stands on one of the highest points of ground in the suburb of Charlton Heights, now known as Berwyn Heights.

The principal facade faces west towards Cunningham Avenue. Entrance is in the third bay of the four-bay west facade through a door with a plain board surround. Across this west facade, and wrapping around part of the south facade is a one-story hip-roof porch. The porch has double square posts with molded capitals, which rest on bases of molded concrete blocks. The southerly section of the porch, along the south facade, is enclosed, creating an addition which is lighted by 6/6 double-hung sash windows. The entire porch rests on a foundation of molded concrete block, and all trim is painted dark green.

The siding of the house is covered by white asbestos shingle. Windows are generally 1/1 double hung sash, and have plain board surrounds with a projecting upper bead, painted dark green. They have dark green louvered shutters. The foundation of the house is of poured concrete and encloses a basement under the south section of the house, and a crawl space under the north section. The hip roof is covered with green asphalt shingle; there is a large central corbelled brick chimney. The cornice is boxed, and has deeply overhanging eaves, painted dark green.

In the third bay of the south facade is a two-story rectangular projecting bay. This projecting bay is lighted by 1/1 windows in each of its three faces, and is surmounted by a pedimented gable.

Centered in the west plane of the hip roof, between second and third bays, is a gable-roof dormer. Its cornice forms a pediment, under which are two sliding two-pane windows.

On the rear (east) facade, a picture window replaces the original window in the first bay. The entrance in the second bay is sheltered by a one-story shed-roof porch which rests on brick piers; the southerly section of this rear porch has been enclosed, forming a small square addition.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1921 **Builder/Architect**

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.

The Traver-Williams House is a good example of the Four Square or "Classic Box" style of dwelling. It stands in a prominent position at one of the highest points in the town of Berwyn Heights. It is one of a later group of homes constructed in Berwyn Heights in the 1920's.

In 1887, Edward Graves of Washington, D.C. purchased 383 acres south of the Branchville Road and bounded on the west by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He engaged the firm of Newby and Howell to survey and plat a new residential community, and called it Charlton Heights.¹ The plat of 1888 showed 50-foot-wide streets, criss-crossing at varied angles, and lots of approximately 50 by 200 feet. Graves sold the land in 1888 to the Charlton Heights Improvement Company, which immediately began construction of dwellings ordered by pattern through the mail. Within the same year, the Company began to sell lots, some unimproved, and some with new houses already erected.² By the end of the first year, approximately 20 houses had been built, and the new town became the home principally of professionals who used the Baltimore and Ohio railroad to commute into Washington, D.C.³

For the next three years, the Charlton Heights Improvement Company continued to sell lots, but with only limited success. In 1892, Edward Graves, the developer, and James Waugh, secretary of the Company, both of whom resided in Charlton Heights, bought the remaining unsold lots; they continued to sell them, and the Charlton Heights Improvement Company ceased operations. In 1896, by an act of the Maryland General Assembly, the town was incorporated, and its name was changed to Berwyn Heights. It continued to grow slowly; by 1910, the population was slightly over 150, and there were 38 dwellings.⁴ Today most of the lots have been filled in by 1950's subdivision housing, and Berwyn Heights is a quiet residential community with curving streets and old trees, set back and somewhat secluded, between two major highways.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. PG#67-9

Cf. Notes, item #8

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 30,000 Square feet

Tax map #34, Block 17, lots 23-25

Quadrangle name Washington East, section C

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan G. Pearl , Research Historian

organization P.G. Historic Preservation Commission

date August 1986

street & number c/o County Planning, M-NCPPC

telephone 952-3521

city or town Upper Marlboro

state MD

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
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM

Survey No. PG#67-9

Description (continued)

Section 7 Page 2

Interior floor plan consists of parlor and kitchen on the north, and large open stairhall and rear parlor on the south. The open-well two-run staircase ascends along the rear (east) wall of the stairhall; it has square panelled newel and plain square balusters. The doors and windows on the first story have plain surrounds; those on the second story have multi-band-molding and bulls-eye corner blocks.

The unpaved drive comes in from Cunningham Avenue running north of the house, and curving around to the east of it. East of the driveway is a swimming pool. In the front (west) yard are several tall pine trees. Remnants of steps can be seen in the steep slope down to the street. There are no outbuildings.

The subject house was built circa 1921 by Margaret Traver, on a group of lots which she had purchased in 1907. Mrs. Traver, a native of New York, had settled in Berwyn Heights, and for several years ran a boarding house, probably in a smaller house on the same property.⁵ In 1921 she built the present house, a prominent example of the popular hip-roof "Classic Box" style, possibly from a pattern book design.⁶

Mrs. Traver sold the house in 1927, and it passed through a series of short term owners. For 25 years until the late 1970's it was the home of the Viens family, and since 1982 has been the home of the Williams family.⁷

The house has undergone significant alterations, e.g., the enclosure of the southerly porch, additions to the rear, and the application of asbestos shingle over the siding. It does, however, retain its original lines; this, together with its prominent position and wooded setting make it a significant landmark in the town of Berwyn Heights.

Notes

1 Prince George's County Deeds, JWB #9:127, 130; Prince George's County Plat, JWB #10:309.

2 Prince George's County Deeds, JWB #11:543; R. W. Shoppell Modern Houses, 1887; Artistic Modern Houses at Low Cost, 1888; Beautiful Homes, 1887; Building Plans for Modern Low Cost Houses, 1884, etc.; cf. Charlton Heights Improvement Company deeds, 1888.

3 Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1888-1890; Census for Prince George's County, E. D. #1, 1900.

4 JWB #20:496; JWB #21:225; JWB #22:53; G. M. Hopkins map, 1894; Census for Prince George's County, E.D. #1, 1900, 1910; Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1890-1910; Skarda, D.D., Berwyn Heights - History of a Small Maryland Town.

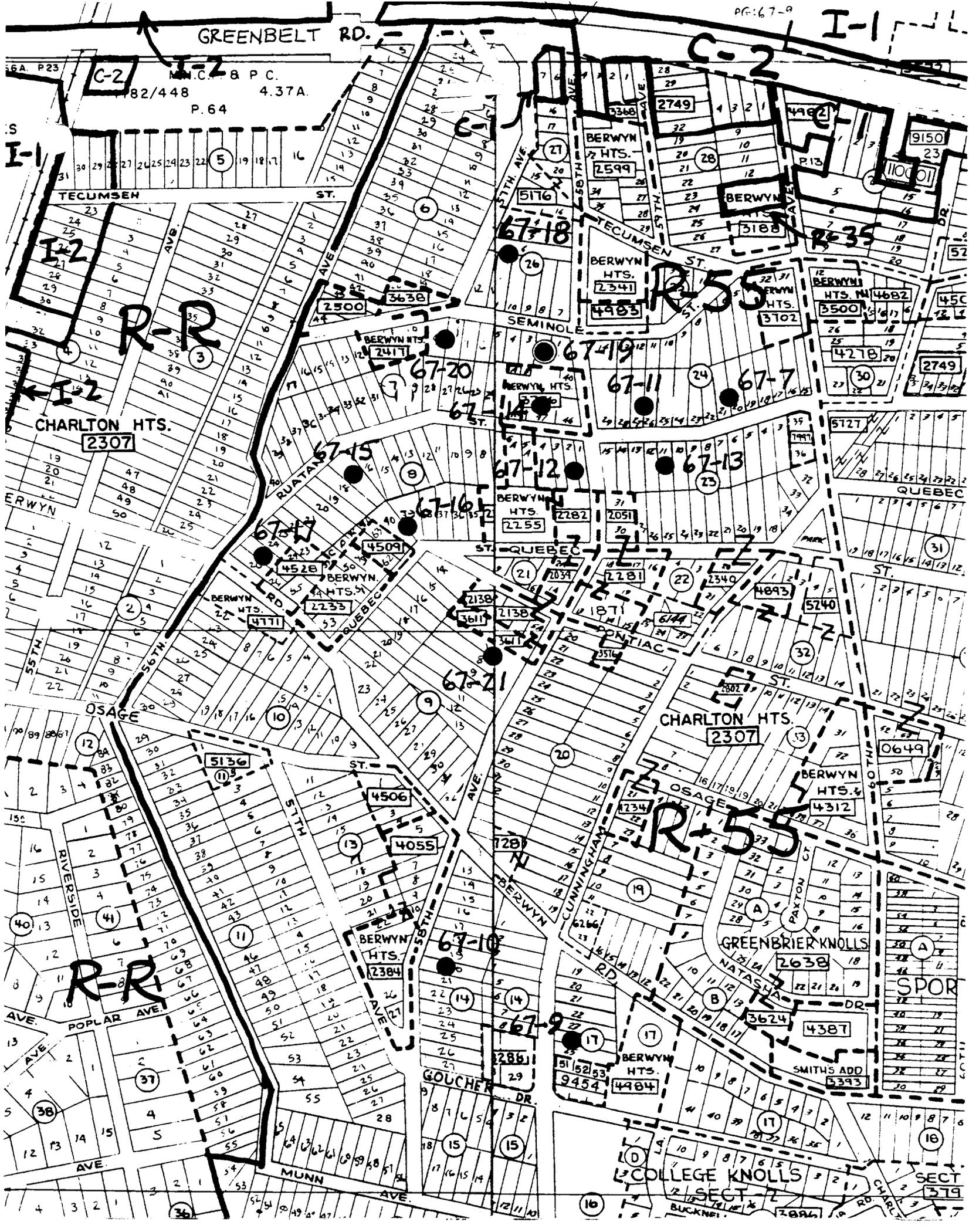
5 Prince George's County Deed, #41:61; Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1900-1923; Census for Prince George's County, 1910.

6 Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1916-19, 1920-23.

7 Prince George's County Deeds, #313:54; #326:267; #471:255; #598:215; #883:448; #1603:49; #5082:663; #5693:245; and #5821:374.

GREENBELT RD.

16A P23
M.C. & P.C.
82/448 P.64 4.37A.



R-R

R-55

R-55

R-R

CHARLTON HTS.
2307

CHARLTON HTS.
2307

BERWYN HTS.
2384

GREENBRIER KNOLLS
2638

BERWYN HTS.
4984

SMITHS ADD
5393

GOUCHER DR.

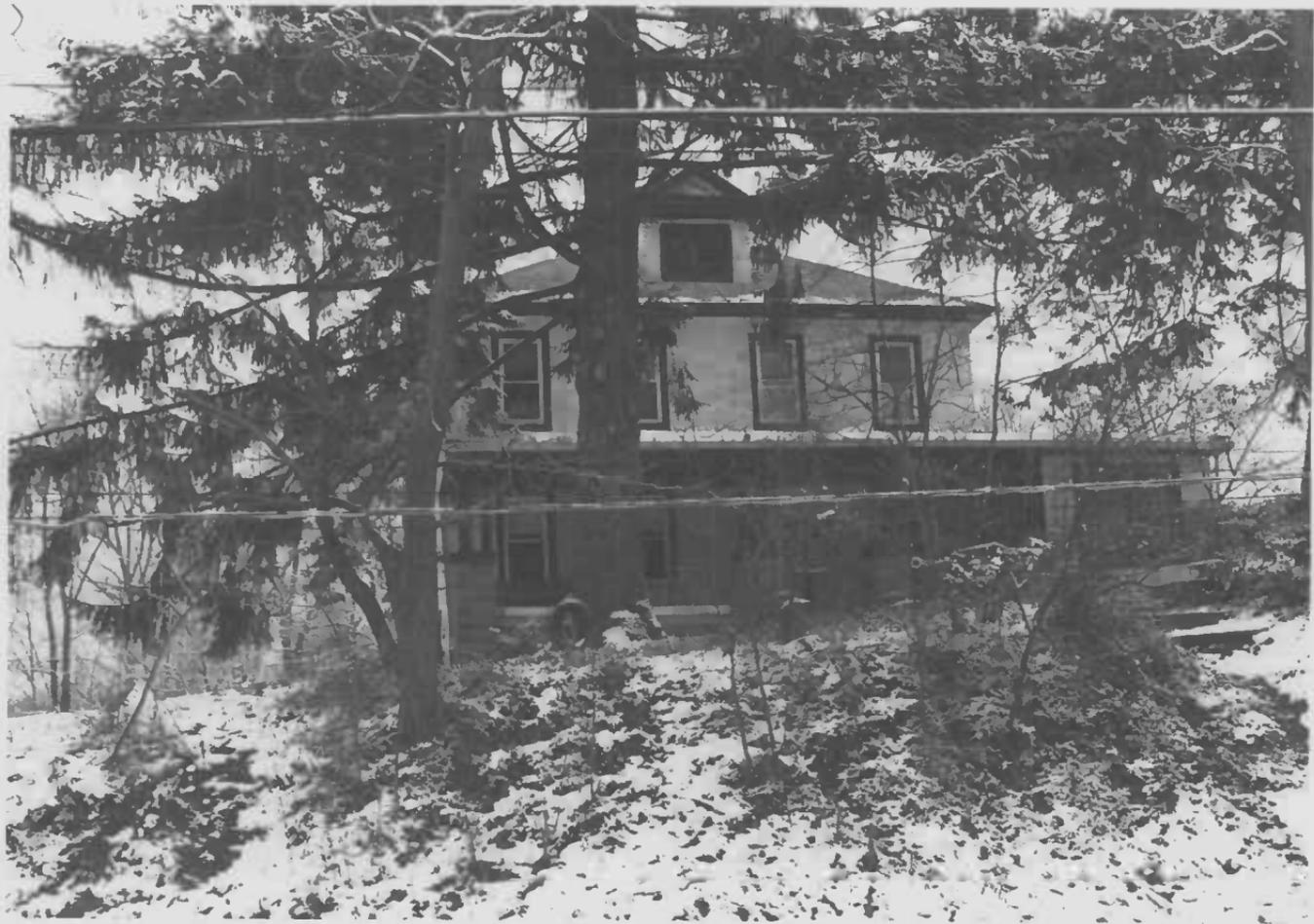
COLLEGE KNOLLS
2/1

SECT
379



PG#67-9

Traver-Williams House
Prince George's County, MD
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
West elevation, close-up
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



PG#67-9

Traver-Williams House
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
West elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



PG#67-9

Traver-Williams House
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
Southeast 3/4 elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



PG#67-9

Traver-Williams House
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
North elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.