

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #67-23 Building Date: 1890's

Building Name: Graves-Keleher House

Location: 8707 62nd Avenue, Berwyn Heights, Maryland

Private/Residence/Occupied/Excellent/Inaccessible

Description

The Graves-Keleher House is a two-and-one-half-story frame house which stands on one of the highest spots in the Town of Berwyn Heights. It consists of a cross-gable main block, with a one-story modern addition to the rear. The main block is roughly two bays by three bays; entrance is in the second bay of the principal west gable front. Sheltering the west entrance is a one-story entry porch, which wraps around one bay of the south facade. The original German siding has been covered with white aluminum siding. Windows are generally 2/1 or 1/1 double hung sash, with black louvered aluminum shutters. The cornice is boxed with crown molding, pedimented on the west front and on the two secondary gable ends. Projecting bays and cross gables vary the north and south sides of the house. On the north facade, a one-story semioctagonal bay is surmounted at second level by a projecting gable-roof veranda, with turned posts and jigsaw balustrade.

Significance

The Graves-Keleher House is a prominent example of a folk Victorian dwelling; it fronts on one of the original streets platted in 1888 in Charlton Heights. It was built circa 1891 by the Charlton Heights Improvement Company, and may have been constructed from a pattern book design as were many of the other early houses in Charlton Heights. It is one of the houses which developer Edward Graves purchased as investment/rental property in 1892. The property was leased and occupied by Joseph Keleher, one of the members of the Charlton Heights Improvement Company. In 1897, the house was assessed at a value of \$2,300, a substantial sum; it is comparable, with the nearby O'Dea house, a particularly fine example of a Shoppell pattern book house. In the 1930's and 40's, this was the home of the Attick family, who have photographs of the building at it appeared with all of its Victorian ornament intact. Since that time, the ornamentation has been removed from the north and west pediments, the Victorian porch has been replaced by a modern entry porch, and aluminum siding has been installed. It still retains the lines of a Victorian vernacular dwelling and because of its prominent setting on one of the highest points in Berwyn Heights, it is still a visible landmark, and a reminder of the early days of the Charlton Heights suburb.

Acreage: 21,372 square feet

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Graves-Keleher House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 8707 62nd Avenue 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
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Thomas Ruggeri and Mary Thackeray

street & number 8707 62nd Avenue telephone no.:

city, town Berwyn Heights state and zip code Maryland 20740

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 5807

street & number Main Street, Upper Marlboro folio 322

city, town Maryland state

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. P.G. #67-23

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input 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 Graves-Keleher House is a two-and-one-half-story hip-and-gable-roof frame house which stands on one of the highest spots in the Town of Berwyn Heights. Although much of its Victorian trim has been removed, it is still a prominent example of the folk Victorian dwellings which were built in the early suburb.

The house consists of a cross-gable main block, with a one-story modern addition to the rear. The main block is roughly two bays by three bays. Entrance is in the second bay of the principal west gable front. This modern door has a modern surround, incorporating dentilled and fluted pilasters. The west gable end is pedimented at third level; inside the tympanum are three 3/1 double hung sash windows, side by side. There is similar fenestration in the rear (east) gable end at third level, but the cornice is returned at the east gable end, not forming a pediment. Sheltering the west entrance is a one-story entry porch, which shelters the west door and wraps around one bay of the south facade, as far as the south cross gable. The porch rests on plain square posts, it has a hip roof and is pedimented at the west entry, and has a concrete block foundation.

The original German siding has been covered with white aluminum siding. Windows are generally 2/1 or 1/1 double hung sash, with plain aluminum surrounds, wood sills, and black louvered aluminum shutters. The cornice is boxed with crown molding, pedimented on the west front and on the two secondary (side) gable ends, and returned on the east (rear). The hip and gable roof is covered with pink-gray asbestos shingle. There is a brick chimney nearly centered at the ridge. The brick foundation encloses a full basement.

Projecting bays and cross gables vary the north and south sides of the house. There is a one-story rectangular projecting bay in the first bay of the north facade, which lights the rear parlor. In the third bay of the north facade, a one-story semi-octagonal bay lights the front parlor. It is surmounted at second level by a projecting gable-roof veranda, with turned posts and jigsaw balustrade. The posts support a pedimented gable end with full molded cornice. The cantilevered corners of this small second-story veranda are ornamented by turned pendants.

A second-story rectangular bay projects from the second bay of the south facade, and encloses the main staircase. This projecting bay is cantilevered and supported by two wide scroll brackets; its cross-gable roof is highlighted by a molded pediment.

Interior plan of the house consists of two parlors on the north, and a side hall on the south, which leads back to a kitchen in the southeast. A transverse two-run staircase rises from the hall into the south projecting bay; it is closed string with turned balusters, and a square panelled newel with tile insets. Door and window surrounds are of two types of multi-band molding, with two types of bullseye corner blocks. Baseboards are high and molded. The one-story rear addition has a nearly flat roof, and forms a family room; it is adjoined on the south by a one-story shed-roof screen-enclosed porch.

A photograph from the 1940's shows the house before any of the neighboring houses were built. In this photo, the German siding is clearly visible, and there is a Victorian porch across the entire west facade; it had scallop spindle frieze (cf. #66-18) and a plain baluster railing. The photograph shows a transom (now structurally closed) over the west door. The west pediment was originally sided with fish-scale shingles, and there was a decorative fan molding flanking the three third-level windows. The cornices of the two north projecting bays were embellished with jigsaw brackets, and the pediment over the north veranda had a molded fan decoration. Two sets of gate posts, each topped by ornamental concrete urns, show in the photograph; the northerly entrance led to a coach house, no longer standing. One pair of urns survives, and decorates the present west porch.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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/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)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		Local History

Specific dates 1890's **Builder/Architect** Charlton Heights Improvement Company

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 Graves-Keleher House is a prominent example of a folk Victorian dwelling; it fronts on one of the original streets platted in 1888 in Charlton Heights. Although much of its original Victorian trim has been removed, it is still a noticeable example of the earliest houses built in that Victorian suburb.

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 in 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.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM
Statement of Significance (continued)

Survey No. P.G. #67-23

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The subject house was probably built circa 1891 by the Charlton Heights Improvement Company, and may have been constructed from a pattern book design as were many of the other early houses in Charlton Heights (the specific design has not been identified). It is one of the houses which Edward Graves purchased as investment/rental property in 1892 (cf. also #67-10, #67-11 and #67-19).⁵ During the next few years, the property (Block 42, Lots 1-3 and 8-12) was leased and occupied by Joseph Keleher, one of the members of the Charlton Heights Improvement Company; the principal east-west street in the new community, on which all of the first model houses were built, was named Keleher Avenue in his honor (changed to Ruatan Street in 1941).⁶

In 1895, Graves sold this property to Zeno Babbitt of Washington, D.C., and for the next few years, the property changed hands repeatedly. In 1897, when it was owned by Carl Johnson, the house was assessed at a value of \$2,300, a substantial sum; it is comparable, for example, with the O'Dea house #67-11, a particularly fine example of a Shoppell pattern book house (National Register) purchased by Graves as a rental property.⁷

The property continued to change hands often; in the 1930's and 40's, it was the home of the Attick family, who still have photographs of the building as it appeared during their ownership. At that time, the house was still highly ornamented with scallop spindle frieze on the principal west porch, cornice brackets on the bays, and fan and fishscale shingle decoration in the pediments. It was at that time the only dwelling in the block of Gibson and Avis Avenues (now 62nd and Quebec), and had three small outbuildings including a coach house still standing in the rear east yard.⁸

Since that time, the ornamentation has been removed from the north and west pediments, the handsome Victorian porch has been replaced by a modern entry porch, aluminum siding has been installed, and a one-story family room addition has been constructed on the rear. Although the house has, consequently, lost most of its exuberant detail, it still retains the characteristic lines of a Victorian vernacular dwelling; because of its prominent setting on one of the highest points in Berwyn Heights, it is still a visible landmark, and reminder of the early days of the Charlton Heights suburb.

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.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM
Statement of Significance (continued)

Survey No. P.G. #67-23

Section 8 Page 3

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

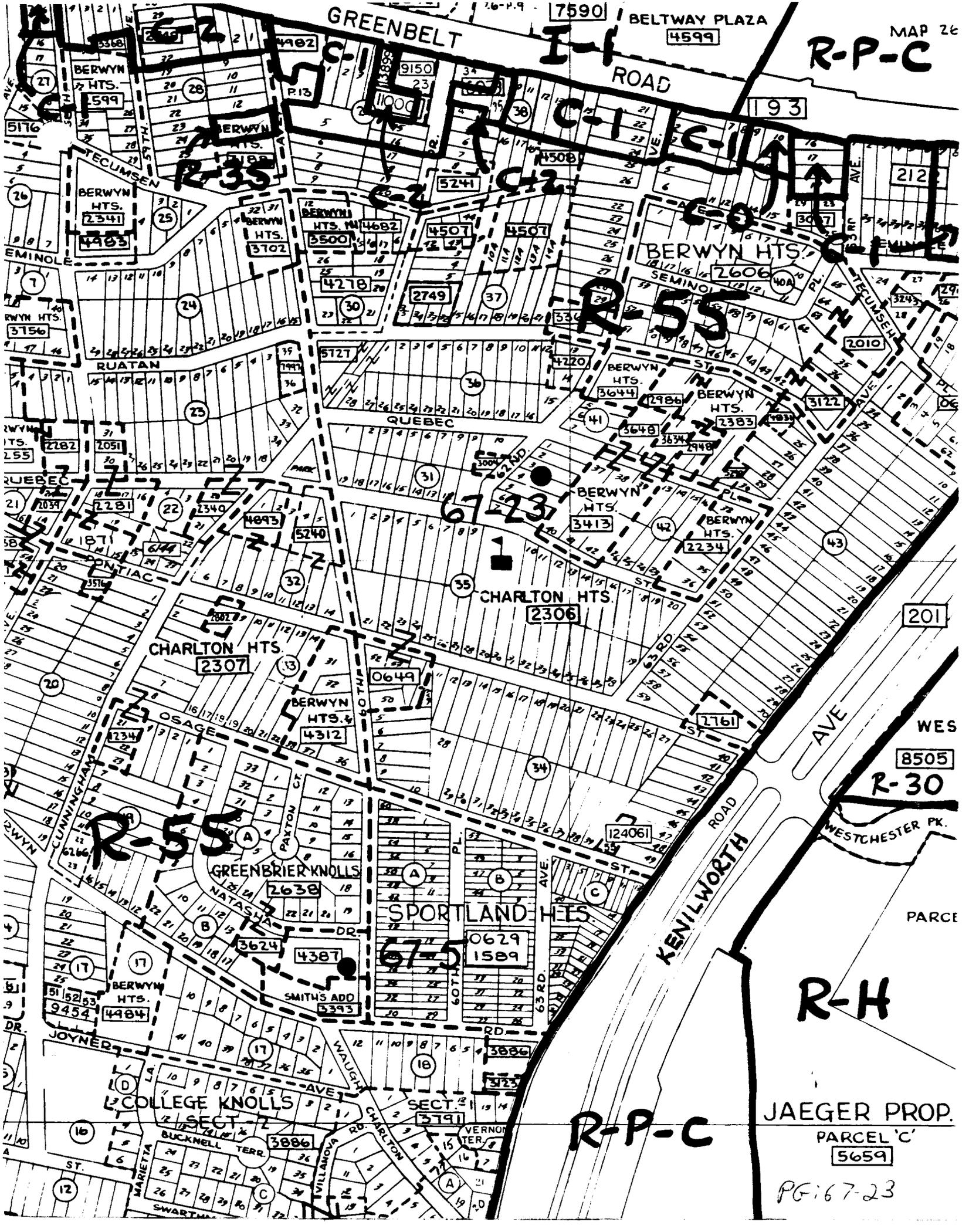
4 JWB #20:496; JWB #21:225; JWB #22:53; G. M. Hopkins Map of the Vicinity of Washington, 1894; Census for Prince George's County, E.D. #1, 1900, 1910; Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1890-1910; Skarda, D. D., Berwyn Heights - History of a Small Maryland Town.

5 Prince George's County Deed JWB #21:225; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1888-1897.

6 G. M. Hopkins Map of the Vicinity of Washington, D.C., 1894.

7 Prince George's County Deed JWB #33:349; JWB #38:292; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1897; cf. also National Register nomination for P.G. #67-11, O'Dea House.

8 Prince George's County Deed #431:382; conversation with De Gourse family, April 1987.



GREENBELT

7590

BELTWAY PLAZA
4599

R-P-C

ROAD

BERWYN HTS.
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EMINOLE

BERWYN HTS.
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BERWYN HTS.
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RUATAN

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BERWYN HTS.
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QUEBEC

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BERWYN HTS.
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PONTIAC

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CHARLTON HTS.
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OSAGE

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BERWYN HTS.
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GREENBRIER-KNOLLS
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SPORTLAND HTS.
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SMITHS ADD
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BERWYN HTS.
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JOYNER

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COLLEGE KNOLLS
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BUCKNELL TERR.
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VERNON TER.
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SWARTWOOD

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PARCE
R-30

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WASHINGTON EAST





P.G. #67-23

Graves-Keleher House
Prince George's County, Maryland
Susan G. Pearl
April 1987
West elevation
Neg: Maryland Historical Trust
Annapolis, MD



P.G. #67-23

Graves-Keleher House
Prince George's County, Maryland
Susan G. Pearl
April 1987
Southeast 3/4 elevation
Neg: Maryland Historical Trust
Annapolis, MD



P.G. #67-23

Graves-Keleher House
Prince George's County, Maryland
Susan G. Pearl
April 1987
North detail, view from northwest
Nwg: Maryland Historical Trust
Annapolis, MD



P.G. # 67-23

Graves-Keleher House
Prince George's County, Maryland
Susan G. Pearl
April 1987
North elevation
Neg: Maryland Historical Trust
Annapolis, MD