

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. 1/3000

Magi No. PG#68-4-79

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic The Risdon Property James Gossett house.

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 4908 Ravenswood Avenue not for publicationcity, town Riverdale vicinity of congressional district #19state Maryland county Prince George's County

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Elizabeth Gossettstreet & number 4908 Ravenswood Avenue telephone no.: (301) 927-9334city, town Riverdale state and zip code Maryland 20737

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber A138street & number 14735 Main Street folio 71city, town Upper Marlboro, state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title N/Adate federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. 1/WOOD

PG: 68-4-49

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved

date of move _____

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

This two-story mail order house, built in 1935, is made of brick with a red asphalt roof. The house was built by hand by the owners, who flipped the original orientation of the plan of the house so that the kitchen could receive more sunlight during the morning.

The Gossett house is a mail order house from the 1930s. It is two stories high with a full basement and working chimney that originally included a wood-burning stove in the basement, but now serves as a living room fireplace only. The chimney is adorned with an S-shaped design, marking it as a mail order house from this period. The chimney is large, and is situated directly next to the front door.

The house is constructed of a concrete block foundation and brick frame. The dark red brick of the siding of the house, and the lighter red brick of the entry way and steps are all in excellent condition. The hip and gable roof consists of red asphalt shingles, also in excellent condition. The kitchen is on the east side of the house (the original plans had in on the west side) and contains an alcove area with windows on three sides. The front entrance has an exterior and an interior door and a gable above.

The house does not have a porch but rather, has a few brick steps leading to the front door and a stone walkway leading from the sidewalk to the front door. A black, wrought iron fence surrounds the property.

The windows in the house are all original except for one on the second floor, which was replaced with vinyl trim. The first floor windows have black trim and panes. There are five windows on the west facade of the house and five on the front facade. The other sides of the house are also adorned with several windows and all are of a uniform shapes and sizes. The kitchen windows are quite large, while several of the upstairs windows are smaller.

A two-car garage, built at the same time, is in the back of the house and is somewhat hidden from view from the street. It is now visible from the front of the house. The top of the garage contains windows on two sides, both with black trim and panes.

A nearby house, located at 4713 Luckerman Street, is very similar to the Gossett House.

8. Significance

Survey No. 1/Wood PG# 68-4-49

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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1930-40		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

local history

Specific dates 1935-built Builder/Architect mail order plan - owners constructed

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 Risdon Property now consists of Lot 12 in Block 23 of the original Riverdale Park Subdivision. The property was originally owned by John and Ella Risdon of Riverdale and included several adjacent lots. Later, the property was owned by T. Howard Duckett, a landowner and civic leader in both Riverdale and Hyattsville. Mr. Duckett was a very influential citizen and was devoted to developing utilities in the area. He was the founder of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), which was officially founded in 1920. The WSSC was based in Hyattsville, where it still is today. Riverdale was the Commission's first project and was designated as an "emergency project" because of severe flooding and hazardous conditions. The nearby Northeast Branch, or "the Branch," as it was known to locals, was a major cause of the flooding and local pollution. The Branch is located in Riverdale. The WSSC later became a model for other regions for sanitary control and now serves much of Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.

The Graefe family purchased the property (three lots, including lot 12) in 1918. Their daughter, Elizabeth and her husband, Joseph P. Gossett, purchased Lot 12 in 1935 and built the existing house by themselves from a mail order plan. Mr. Gossett was a carpenter and Mrs. Gossett made the concrete blocks for the foundation by herself using a machine in the backyard (which is still there). The plan did not come from a Sears Mail Order catalog, but from a popular magazine of the time (exact name not known). The Gossetts purchased the concrete block machine and it is now in the basement of the house. The foundation was laid in 1935 and the Gossett's moved into the house in April, 1936.

The only change the Gossett's made to the mail order plan was to flip the orientation of the house so that the kitchen could receive more sunlight in the morning (it was moved to the east side). A vinyl window was installed to replace a deteriorating window on the second floor.

The house looks new, especially the front facade and the roof, but all materials are original, except for that specified above. The Gossett house is an exceptional example of a hand-built mail order house of the 1930s.

CHAIN OF TITLE

- 407:417 Charles L. and Daisty Graefe to Elizabeth A. Gossett and Joseph P. Gossett. Deed August 15, 1935 for lot 12, Block 23
- 129:365 First National Bank of Southern Maryland to Charles L. and Daisy Graefe. Deed January 7, 1918 for lots 12, 13, 14 of Block 23.
- 6:142 Theodore G. Stoner to T. Howard Duckett. For lots 12, 13, 14 of Block 23 Deed 1901

