

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. 68-4-59
PG
Magi No.
DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Knight House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 5809 Cleveland Avenue not for publication

city, town Riverdale 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 Chambers Enterprises, Inc.

street & number 5801 Cleveland Avenue telephone no.:

city, town Riverdale state and zip code Maryland

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse **liber** 2221

street & number 14735 Main Street **folio** 569

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland 20772

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input checked="" 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 Knight House is a two-story frame house which stands on one of the original lots of the 1890's subdivision of Riverdale Park. It is rectangular in shape, with a mix of characteristics from several architectural types. The house has a hip roof and had a wraparound, one-story, hip-roofed porch with Victorian decorative detailing. The detailing on the porch consisted of jig-sawn fan brackets on each side of the posts, adjoining the porch roof.

The entrance is on the shorter, western end of the house. The door was originally under the porch, flanked by three full-size windows on one side, and one small one on the other. The second story had three windows on each of the short sides, and two on each of the long sides, all surrounded by shutters. The hip roof was topped with a cupola.

The wraparound porch was taken down at least eleven years ago, leaving only the original steps in front of the door. The original wooden siding is still in place, but is now covered over by a reddish-brown brick veneer. The front doorway has had faux stonework placed around it, and the small window that had been next to it has been removed. All the shutters on the house have been removed, as has the cupola.

Although we were unable to examine the interior of the house, it is very likely that it has been substantially altered. The house has been partitioned into five apartments, which must have necessitated the rearrangement of the floor plan. Furthermore, the addition of several new kitchens and bathrooms for the apartments must have done significant damage to the original walls and floors. The structure is now a rental property owned by Chambers, inc.

8. Significance

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Period	Area 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 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	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 type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

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 Knight House is, in our estimation, not an historically significant property. Its architectural style was a mix of several types, including Victorian, but is now bereft of its original character*.

The most distinctive architectural feature, the wraparound porch, has been completely removed. In addition, the characteristic wooden sideboard has been concealed beneath a faux brick facade. The appearance of the house has been drastically changed by these modifications, rendering it practically unrecognizable. Furthermore, the restoration of the house's original features would be a prohibitively expensive project for the owners of the structure to undertake. The interior of the house has undergone even more change than the exterior, as it has been carved up into five apartments. The creation of five apartments must have required the installation of as many as four new bathrooms and the same number of kitchens, resulting in the destruction of many walls and floors.

The Knight family was apparently not active in the community, as they are not mentioned by the various accounts from long-time residents. The house itself is apparently not considered a landmark, as no one we have spoken with can recall it in its original form.

The portion of Riverdale which the house occupies, the area surrounding Dupont Circle, has deteriorated along with the Knight House. One of the original houses of Riverdale, located directly across the circle from the Knight House (block 50, lot 28), is now no more than a delapidated, burned-out shell. In addition, a house that once faced the circle on Harrison Avenue (block 53, lot 4) has been torn down, leaving only a filled-in cellar and an empty, trash-and-weed-filled lot. A restoration of this house alone, then, would do little to improve the appearance of this portion of the neighborhood.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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cf. Chain of Title
cf. Blundon House Notes

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

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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11. Form Prepared By

name title Heather Ersts and Justin Lev-Tov

organization University of Maryland, HIST 419 D

date December 1989

street & number History Dept., Francis Scott Key 2115

telephone 454-4235

city or town College Park

state Maryland

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
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