

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. M:35/96

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Harper House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 7207 Thornapple Place

not for publication

city, town Chevy Chase

vicinity of

state Maryland

county

Montgomery

3. Classification

Category

district
 building(s)
 structure
 site
 object

Ownership

public
 private
 both

Present Use

agriculture
 commercial
 educational
 entertainment
 government
 industrial
 military
 museum
 park
 private residence
 religious
 scientific
 transportation
 other:

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

name Edward P. and G. R. Clair

street & number 7207 Thornapple Place

telephone no:

city, town Chevy Chase

state and zip code

Maryland 20815

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Tax Map and Parcel

HN342; Lot P9, Bl.4

city, town Rockville state Maryland

Liber and Folio

06070/0055

6. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Individually Listed in the National Register
 Contributing Resource in National Register District
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
 Determined Eligible for the National Register
 Recorded by HABS/HAER
 HSR or Research report at MHT
 Other:

7. Description

Survey No. M: 35/96

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

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

Resource Count:

See attached.

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:35/96 Harper House (1907)
7207 Thornapple Place
Section 7:2

The Harper House, which has a Four Square building form and decorative Victorian vernacular features, demonstrates the persistence of picturesque Victorian-era detailing in domestic architecture well into the twentieth century. The residence is in excellent condition and has outstanding architectural integrity.

Located in Otterbourne at the corner of Underwood Street and Thornapple Place (formerly Douglas and Melrose Streets) facing west, the 2-1/2 story, 2-bay frame house has clapboard siding and a hipped roof with asphalt shingles.

The wrap-around porch features chamfered posts and scrolled open brackets. Other outstanding original features include grand 2/2 picture windows in the south front bays on both the first and second levels, louvered shutters, and corner pilasters.

Today, the property is known as Lot P9, Block 4, consisting of 8,250 square feet of land.

8. Significance

Survey No.

M:35/96

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
1907	
check: Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	
and/or Applicable Exceptions: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: **Piedmont**

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): **Agricultural/Industrial Transition**

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): **Architecture and Community Planning**

Resource Type: **Individual**

Category: **Residential**

Historic Environment: **Suburban**

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): **Residential**

Known Design Source:

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M:35/96 Harper House (1907)
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In September 1906, James E. Harper, who was described at that time as a resident of Montgomery County, purchased part of Lots 9 and 10 "beginning at the corner of Douglas Street and Melrose Street" from Louise H. Earll, widow of R. Edward Earll, one of the original developers of Otterbourne.¹ The house was built in the following months, since the property was assessed in 1907 with improvements valued at \$1,800.²

By 1909, Harper was living in Chevy Chase, according to the Washington Directory. A native of South Carolina, he was an auditor for the U.S. Postal Service and was married to Nelly E. Harper. The Harpers resided at this address for more than 25 years, during which time James was active in the Otterbourne community, serving as a trustee. After 1927 the property was reduced to the northern portion of Lots 9 and 10, totaling 8,250 square feet. In the 1930s, with the Harpers still in residence, the house was valued at \$6000.³

Otterbourne is a subdivision established in the Chevy Chase area by four investors: Robert E. Earll, Eugene B. Clark, Raymond Geare, and John Frank Ellis. The men purchased 14.4 acres from the Williams family in 1892, two years after the Chevy Chase Land Company purchased land to the south and west. For convenience, the plat for Otterbourne was filed under Ellis' name. The H-shaped plat was made in July 1894, oriented toward Brookville Road, an important early transportation route. The investors divided the lots among themselves, each one receiving a number equivalent to their respective interest in the original tract of land. Clark and Earll were the only two of the four to build and reside in Otterbourne.⁴

Otterbourne investors clearly saw the advantage of the property's location immediately adjacent to the Land Company's development. The name Otterbourne is a reference to the medieval Ballad of Chevy Chase, which had been the origin for the name of the Chevy Chase Land Company's real estate enterprise. It was on the plains of Otterbourne in Scotland that the armies of Lord James Douglas and Sir Henry Percy met in their fabled battle. Otterbourne benefitted from its close proximity to the Rock Creek Railway (1890), which ran along the newly

¹Deed 190:372, 9/27/1906.

²Tax assessment records, Annapolis, Maryland.

³Washington City Directories, 1896, 1908, 1909. U.S. Census, 1910. Nelson's Director, 1912. Klinge Real Estate Atlas, 1931. Village of Chevy Chase, Section 5 tax assessment records, c.1927-1945.

⁴Equity Case #2400, 8-24-1908, describes the history of Otterbourne and its investors.

CONTINUATION SHEET

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established Connecticut Avenue. Early residents had access to the trolley by way of a boardwalk from Delaware Street (formerly Dalkeith) to Connecticut Avenue. Otterbourne was absorbed into Section 5, and by the 1920s the east-west cross streets were extended out to Connecticut Avenue and Percy Street was renamed Thornapple Street.⁵

⁵Gwen Wright et al. "Chevy Chase, Maryland, Survey District: Survey Report: Phase Two," Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, June 1997. Otterbourne Plat, Plat Book 1: Page 1 [Filed July 9, 1894]. William Offutt, History of Bethesda, pp. 173-4.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See attached

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 8,250 Sq. Ft.

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

1. Form Prepared By

name/title	Clare Lise Cavicchi, Historic Preservation Planner		
organization	Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission	date	1/98
street & number	8787 Georgia Avenue	telephone	301-563-3400
city or town	Silver Spring	state	Maryland 20910-3760

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

CONTINUATION SHEET

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7207 Thornapple Place
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Census, U. S. 1910 and 1920.

Directories:

Boyd, *Washington City Directory*, 1900, 1905, 1912, 1913.
Caldwell, S. D. *Directory of Bethesda District* (Bethesda, Md), 1911 and 1915.
Nelson, Justus C. *Nelson's Suburban Directory* (Washington, D.C.), 1912-1913.
Polk, R. L. *Polk's Washington Suburban Directory* (Washington, D.C.) 1927-1928.

Equity Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, Maryland.

Fisher, Thos. J. *Chevy Chase for Homes*. Washington, D.C.: Thos. J. Fisher & C., 1916.

Land Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, Maryland. Deeds and Plats.

Maps:

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Deets and Maddox. *Real Estate Atlas*, 1917.
Fava Naeff. *Real Estate Map of the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad*, 1890.
Hopkins, G.M. *Northern Virginia and Bethesda*, 1894.
Klingé. *Real Estate Atlas*, 1931 and 1941.
Martenet and Bond. *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland*, 1865.
Maryland Geological Survey Map. Bethesda & Vicinity, 1910.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. 1916, 1927, 1927-1959.

Proctor, John Clagett. *Washington, Past and Present: A History*. Including Biographical Sketches of Prominent Citizens. New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1930.

Tax Assessment Records Series T221, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland.

Secondary Sources:

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Hiebert, Ray Eldon, and Richard K. MacMaster. *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland*. Rockville, Md: Montgomery County Government and Montgomery County Historical Society, 1976.

Offutt, William. *Bethesda: A Social History of the Area Through World War II*. Bethesda, Md: The Innovation Game, 1995.

Wright, Gwen; William B. Bushong; and Clare Lise Cavicchi; "Chevy Chase, Maryland, Survey District: Survey Report: Phase Two," Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, June 1997.

Wyatt, Barbara (Editor) "Surveying and Evaluating Vernacular Architecture." Midwest Vernacular Architecture Committee. National Register Bulletin 31, Draft. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1987.

CONTINUATION SHEET

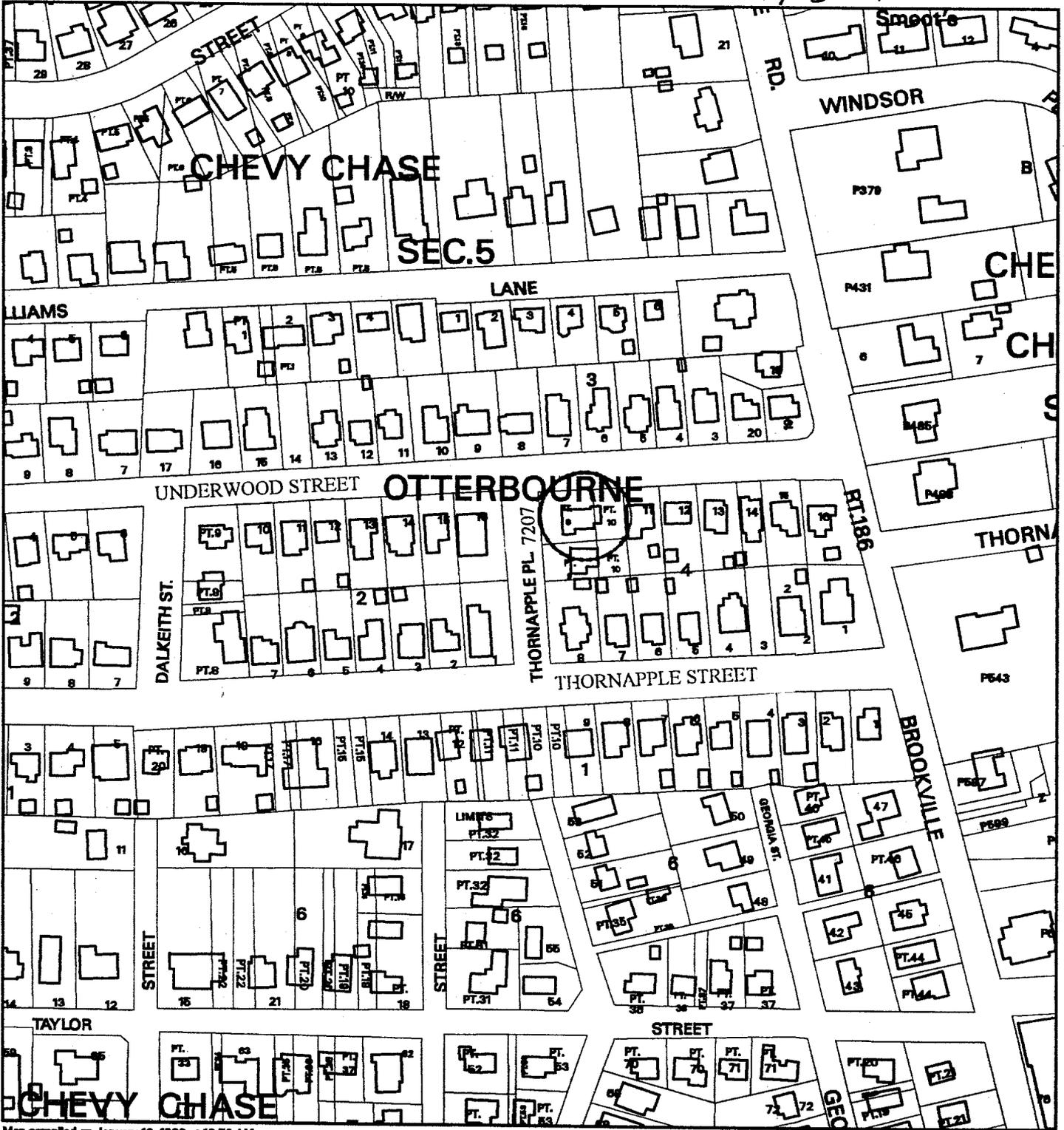
M:35/96 Harper House (1907)
7207 Thornapple Place



VICINITY MAP FOR

OTTERBOURNE

M:35-96



Map compiled on January 13, 1999 at 10:50 AM

NOTICE

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Key Map



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING
 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
 4787 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-4780

1 : 2400