Prince George's County Historic Site Summary Sheet

Survey No.: PG76A31

Name: **John and Marie Darcey Houses**

Date: 1921-1930

Location: 4129 Armand Avenue and 5112 Barto Avenue

Description: The John and Marie Darcey Houses are highly altered examples of the vernacular cottage house type. They are simple, frame, rectangular, one-story cottages which have been extended to the rear, side, or front with a variety of additions and porches, now enclosed. Both have replacement fenestration and were re-oriented to accommodate side or rear entrances as a result of new construction in their environs: the construction of I-495 and subdivision housing in the 1950's and 1960's. Constructed for relatives of one of the early farming families in the area, the Darceys, the acreage of these originally contiguous parcels has been reduced to less than 1 acre between them.

Significance: These are two of the roughly dozen structures which are fifty years in age in the project limits and are and are illustrative of the largely agrarian nature of the area, called Wood's Corner, which lasted well into the 1950's before intense development occurred, resulting in mammoth educational, commercial and office complexes in addition to dozens of housing developments. The buildings have been altered and have no architectural or historical interest.

The John and Marie Darcey Houses are undistinguished examples of modest simple house types popular in the decades prior to the construction of standardized housing developments by merchant builders for the tradition-bound civil servants and workers streaming into the area in search of cheap housing after World War II. Although among twelve structures identified in the project area which are fifty years old, these structures are undistinguished examples of a widespread cottages house form.

PG76A31
John and Marie Darcey Houses
Suitland, Maryland

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period: Industrial-Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Modern Period, 1930-Present

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme: Architecture

Resource Type:

Category: Buildings

Historic Environment: Suburban

Historic Function (s) and Use (s): Residential/Dwellings/Garage

Known Design Source: None

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. PG76A31

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic JOhn and Marie Darcey Houses

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 5129 Armand Avenue and 5112 Barto Ave. N/A ___ not for publication

city, town Suitland ___ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Prince George's

3. Classification

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

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

name Willie Fitzpatrick (Armand Ave.) Joh Howard (Barto Ave.)

street & number 5129 Armand AVe; 5112 Barto Ave. telephone no.:

city, town Suitland state and zip code Maryland 20746

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Courthouse liber 2439/412

street & number folio 9728/335

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title N/A

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. PG76A31

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	✓ original site
✓ good	___ ruins	✓ altered	___ moved date of move _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

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

See Continuation sheet 7.1

8. Significance

Survey No. PG76A31

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion	
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science	
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture	
___ 1600–1699	✓ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian	
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater	
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation	
✓ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)	
		___ invention			

Specific dates 1921 1930 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

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.

See Continuation Sheet 8.1

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No.PG76A31

Personal communication with Shirely Eppard, Mac McCamman

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ca. 1 acre

Quadrangle name Anacostia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
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
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rita Suffness, Leader, Cultural Resources Group

organization State Highway Administration date July 6, 1997

street & number 707 N. Calvert Street telephone

city or town Baltimore 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
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

DHCP/DHCD
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

PS-2746

PG76A31
John and Marie Darcey Houses
Suitland, Maryland

Description
Continuation Sheet 7.1

Description Summary

The John and Marie Darcey Houses, built for the descendents of an early twentieth century farming family in the Wood's Corner area, are mediocre and highly altered vernacular frame cottages. Originally oriented to the south, Auth Road, their principal entrances were re-oriented as a result of road and subdivision construction in the environs. They are characterized as simple, one-story rectangular frame cottages, three bays in width, extended by additions to the north elevation (Marie Darcey House) or to the west, north and south (John Darcey House). Both have much replacement fenestration and convey little association with the agrarian history of the area.

Description:

The John and Marie Darcey Houses are small vernacular cottages built in 1930 and 1921 respectively for two Darcey descendents on previously contiguous parcels of land just north of Auth Road. Constructed in an area largely agrarian and undeveloped until the 1950's, each was originally accessed by dirt entrances from Auth Road on the south. With the gradual subdivision of the land by Robert Warren Amman (John's nephew and Marie's cousin) in the 1950's, they came to be surrounded by split level ranch, rambler and other typical contemporary house types.

The land associated with the Marie Darcey House was reduced to less than an acre on a parcel designated 5112 Barto Avenue. The John Darcey property was greatly reduced by land acquisition for the Washington Beltway (I-495). Its tiny parcel (less than one-half acre) was designated 5129 Armand Avenue when the land was subdivided for Auth Village.

Both structures are small, rectangular frame structures which had their principal elevations oriented roughly in a south direction toward Auth Road. They are extremely modest small buildings (rectangular, one-story boxes with shallow gable roofs) which are extended with rear and/or side wings, porches, etc. The John Darcey House (#1), currently owned by Willy and Ora Fitzpatrick, probably originated in 1921 as a south facing, three-bay wide structure with a side gable roof and a gable roof dormer (with two light casement window) above the centered entrance. A brick chimney is located at the roof apex just west of center. The almost full width front porch on brick corner pylons was enclosed, and is the location of replacement vinyl doors and windows. The structure was enlarged to the west with a one-story, one-bay wide frame addition with its roofline about one foot lower than that of the main block. A three-part window composed of a fixed center picture window between two sash windows is located in the west elevation. All of the windows are vinyl replacements. The rear elevation is the location of another addition in the northwest corner connected with a carport extending northward from the west half of the rear elevation. A small garage is located immediately north of the dwelling. Because the orientation of the structure was changed when it was cut off from Auth Road by I-495, one enters the structure from the rear, centered door located under the carport shelter.

PG76A31
John and Marie Darcey Houses
Suitland, Maryland

Description
Continuation Sheet 7.2

The Marie Darcey House (#2) at 5112 Barto Avenue, owned by Jon Howard, also had its orientation altered with the construction of modern subdivision housing between it and Auth Road. It was constructed in 1930 as a very small vernacular cottage. Rectangular in shape, with a shallow side gable roof, it was originally oriented to the south. With its extension to the rear (north) in later construction periods, a modern, industrially milled doorway was installed in the center of the rear addition, re-orienting the structure from the south to its west address on Barto Avenue. The original south-facing three bay facade is characterized by two-over-two barred windows on either side of a centered doorway sheltered by an extension of the porch (with exposed rafter ends). It is clad with asbestos shingles and all fenestration is composed of replacement vinyl components. It was constructed on a poured concrete foundation.

A small, one-bay deep extension is centered on the north elevation and has a gable roof perpendicular to that of the main block. This wing was extended with block continuing the east elevation, with an enclosed porch on the west side. All of the parts feature exposed rafter ends. The main entry is through the west elevation of the enclosed porch addition. There are two, single-light, hopper, vinyl windows to the north of what constitutes the main entrance. A concrete block chimney is located just inside this west facing elevation and adjacent to one of the hopper-type windows.

Historic and Geographic Context: This property is located on the western side of Prince George's county abutting the District of Columbia. A suburb of Washington, D.C. the area is characterized by densely built-up residential neighborhoods crossed by several main arterial roadways lines with commercial strip malls. Before the 1950's this area of Prince George's County was generally rural and agricultural with few small crossroads settlements. The only crossroads within the area which developed an identity was "Wood's Corner," named for a fruit stand, no longer extant, operated in the twentieth century by the Wood family. It serviced the few farms and the very small population that existed prior to 1950 near the intersection of MD 5 (Branch Ave) and Auth Road, an area currently overwhelmed by commercial development, especially mammoth automobile dealerships. Although some suburban development had taken place on the fringes of this area in the 1940's, it was not until the cessation of World War II that widespread development and suburbanization began in this area of Prince George's County.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Suburbanization of Prince George's County

The earliest suburbs of Prince George's County date to the late nineteenth century and are located in the northern section of the County. After the Civil War, Washington took on a "boom town" atmosphere and in a tight housing market, Washington residents began to look outside the District for housing. The initial growth occurred in the previously settled towns along the B & O Railroad north of the district, there the new residents could enjoy the established local amenities (Virta 1984:190). These towns included Hyattsville, Bladensburg and Beltsville. Other developments were constructed more specifically as railroad suburbs. These places included Riverdale Park, Berwyn and Berwyn Heights, College Park and Takoma Park, all constructed in the late 1800's.

However, as the northern sections of the County were experiencing steady development, the western section of the county remained virtually undisturbed. Both the1861 Simon Martenet Map and the 1878 Hopkins Atlas of the "Spaulding District" show a sparsely settled area with small settlements around Suitland, Silver and Camp Springs outside of the area in which this site is located. The 1955 USGS map (Anacostia Quadrangle) shows that the area was still primarily agricultural as late as the 1940's. The development of the area did not begin until the early 1950's, with the bulk of it occurring within the last two decades, when the growth was intense. There are a number

of factors that contributed to this massive development of the rural countryside in the county, including the expansion of the Federal Government in the 1940's, the overall development of roads and bridges linking the areas to Washington, and the movement of Federal government agencies and facilities to the new suburbs. The increase in the Federal work force began in the 1930's with the initiation of the New Deal and continued through World War II and on into the 1950's. This explosive expansion was attended by a rise in land values and property taxes, which again sent the Washingtonians into the suburbs in search of affordable housing. What distinguished this expansion from the late nineteenth century suburban development was it's spread into previously undeveloped area, principally into western Prince George's County. This was made possible by the automobile; the automobile allowed for development away for the railroad lines, which had limited the earlier nineteenth century developments. In addition, road improvements throughout the county as well as bridge improvement over the Potomac provided easy access to the District and made a daily commute into the district a possibility.

Plentiful land at low cost motivated the Federal government to locate offices in the suburbs as well. The Suitland Federal Center opened in 1941 on the north side of Silver Hill Road. The complex was constructed on 285 acres of land and was built to house up to three thousand employees of the Federal Bureau of the Census, Navy Hydrographic Office an a file office of the Public Roads Administration (Evening Sun, August 14, 1942).

Another major development in the area was the construction of Andrew's Air Force Base near Camp Springs. Building began in 1941 on approximately 4000 acres of farm and open land. A few years later the Suitland Parkway was constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers to provide safe and rapid access to the air base from Washington. Carrying traffic south and west of Suitland, the parkway also provided better access for Washington commuters to the growing neighborhoods on either side of the road. These factors drew commuters and developers out to this section of Prince George's County bordered by Suitland Parkway on the north, MD 5 on the west, I-495 on the south and Suitland Road on the east. The result was the rapid construction of speculative housing and new neighborhoods. Some of the housing was constructed around the core of older settlements and some represented completely new developments.

Development in the Study Area

The only village in the immediate vicinity of the historic site that pre-dates 1950 is Morningside, however, it was only extended to the west side of Suitland Road in the 1960's and 1970's with the construction of subdivisions known as Andrews Estates, Skyline, Skyline Hills and Tournament Court. The original portion of Morningside, located on the east side of Suitland Road, was built over a number of years beginning in 1938-39 by developer Morgan Wayson and his brother-in-law Randolph Hopkins. The original subdivision contained approximately 500 homes and most were two-story Cape Cod style cottages on the east side of Suitland road. It housed veterans of World War 11 and their families, plus workers in the Federal Center in Suitland, its close neighbor (Prince George's County Magazine, 1983: 55). Most of the development of Morningside took place in the 1950's after it was incorporated in 1949.

With the construction of the Andrews Air Force Base and the improvement to MD 5 (Branch Avenue) in the 1950's, the Camp Springs area, which is also outside of the study area, witnessed the construction of several suburban developments. One development was Middleton Valley, located off Old Branch Avenue, on the fringes of the western edge of the project area. This development was created after old farmland belonging to the Middleton family was subdivided and made into a residential suburb. Additional subdivisions developed in the last few

decades in the vicinity of the old Middleton property are Broadview and Stan Haven. In the project study area some of the agricultural properties owned by the Auth, Darcey, Soper, Thornton and Wood families survived until fairly recently, as the subdivision and development of the farms did not begin until the 1950's.

Of the twelve historic structures remaining in the project area, seven date to the first quarter of the twentieth century. These are: Thornton-Wood Farmstead (PG76A24) , Milstead House (PG76A27), John and Marie Darcey Houses (PGA7631), Anthony Soper House (PG76A34), Eugene Darcey House (PG76A32), John Mulloy House (PG76A29), and the Roland Darcey Houses (PG76A32. Five properties date to the second quarter of the twentieth century. These are: Ammann House (PG76A33), Holmes House (PG76A30), Knox House (PG76A26), L. and R. Lawnmower (PG76A25) and the Marescalco House (PG76A21).

The development of Auth Village by the Darcey (and the related Ammann) families in the 1950's started the rush to subdivide by other families, resulting in developments like Manchester Estates, Darcey Manor, Darcey Estates, Andrews Village, Andrews Manor and Woodlane, which were constructed since 1950 on the farmland previously owned by these families and utilized primarily for truck farming. Long time families in the area report that Auth Road was a dirt lane, called Epiphany Lane, until well into the sixth decade of the twentieth century. Its intersection with the predecessor (Old Branch Avenue) of MD 5 was known as Wood's Corner for the fruit stand and farm owned by the Woods (and Soper) families. Across from it on the west side of Old Branch Avenue was Pat's Carryout and Restaurant (PG76A25), currently housing the L and R Lawnmower, and which was discontinued in the 1960's. The history of the study area exemplifies the history of rapid suburbanization, a process that has affected both the function and appearance of the region. In less than fifty years, the area went from a rural, agricultural region of Prince George's County to a modern, bedroom suburb or Washington, D.C. This suburbanization continues at breakneck speed today.

PG76A31
John and Marie Darcey Houses
Suitland, Maryland

Statement of Significance
Continuation Sheet 8.1

Significance Summary

The John and Marie Darcey Houses are undistinguished examples of the vernacular cottage building types, much altered since their construction in the third decade of the twentieth century. Their entrances were re-oriented when they were surrounded by the first subdivision of the area, Auth Village, constructed in the 1950's. Built for the descendents of one of the early twentieth century farming families in the area, the Darceys, the houses are only minimally significant as examples of a widespread cottage form of architecture. They have no architectural interest because of their alterations despite their being among the dozen or so structures in the Wood's Corner area which are at least fifty years in age.

Statement of Significance

The John and Marie Darcey Houses are undistinguished and much altered frame cottages from the third decade of the twentieth century. Constructed for the children of a truck farming family in the area, the Darceys, at a time when the area was entirely agricultural, the orientation of the structures were altered with the construction of I-495 and the first wave of subdivision housing in the 1950's, Auth Village. Auth Village was, in part, developed by Robert Warren Ammann, a local brick builder and descendent of the original landowner Warren Darcey, who was a truck farmer.

This modest frame vernacular cottage type was typical for Americans of modest means. Cottages are characterized by simple ornamentation, and mass produced components, such as window frames, moldings and porch decoration. The development of post Civil War machinery capable of producing large amounts of standardized housing elements, such as those found in cottages, contributed greatly to the development of the modern American housing industry. Side gable cottage, like these two dwellings, are primarily one to two and one-half stories tall, two to three bays in width and vary from one to three rooms in depth, usually with a shed-roofed porch.

The John and Marie Darcey Houses are undistinguished examples of modest simple house types popular in the decades prior to the construction of standardized housing developments by merchant builders for the tradition-bound civil servants and workers streaming into the area in search of cheap housing after World War II. Although among twelve structures identified in the project area which are fifty years old, these structures are undistinguished example of widespread cottages house forms. There is no known connection with person or events significant in American history, thus they do not appear to meet the requirements of criteria A and B for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. They are not outstanding examples of a particular type or style of architecture qualifying it for Register listing under Criterion C. Having no known archeological significance, they would not likely meet the requirements of Criterion D for yielding information important in history or pre-history.

PG76A31
John and Marie Darcey Houses
Suitland, Maryland

Bibliography
Continuation Sheet 9.1

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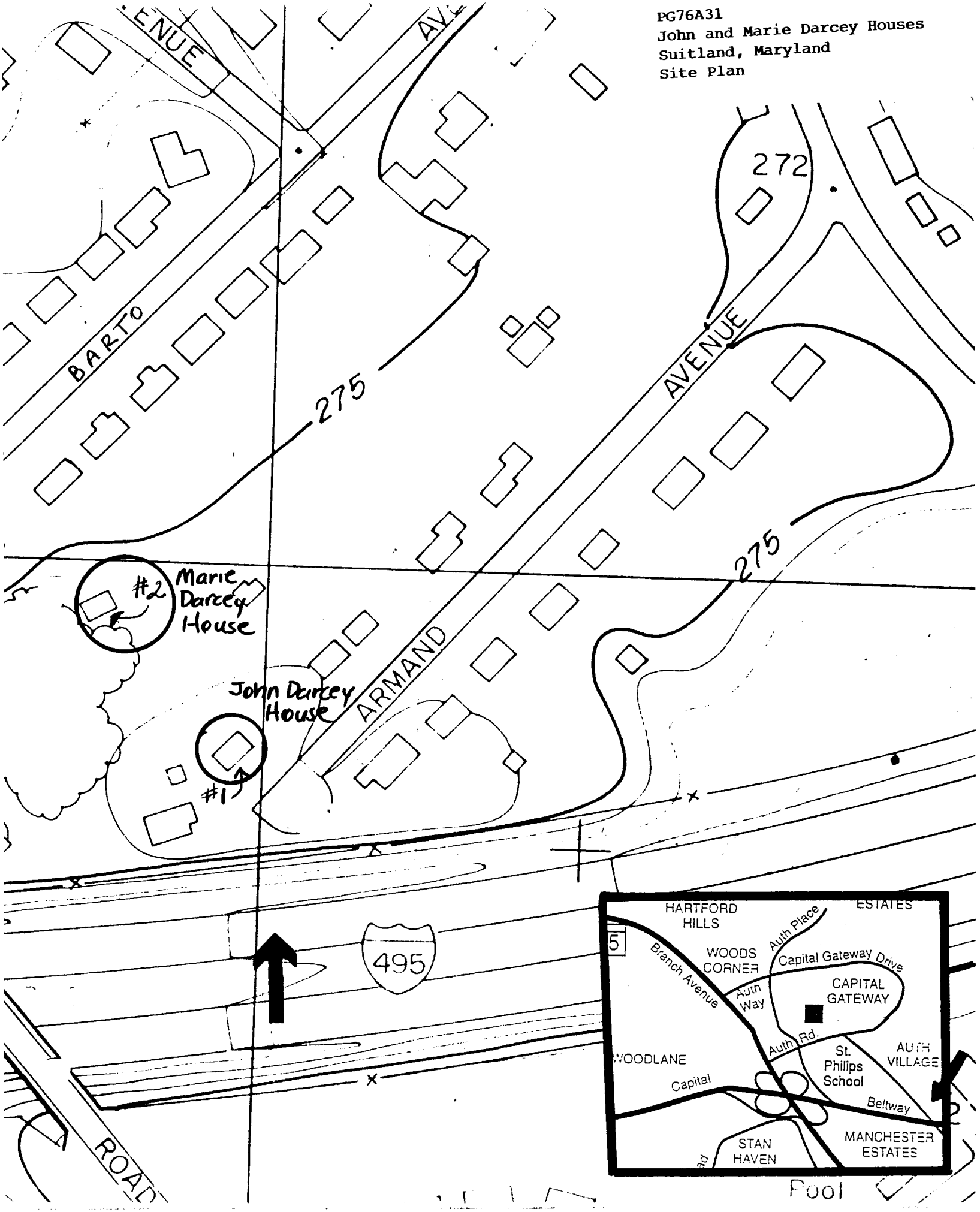
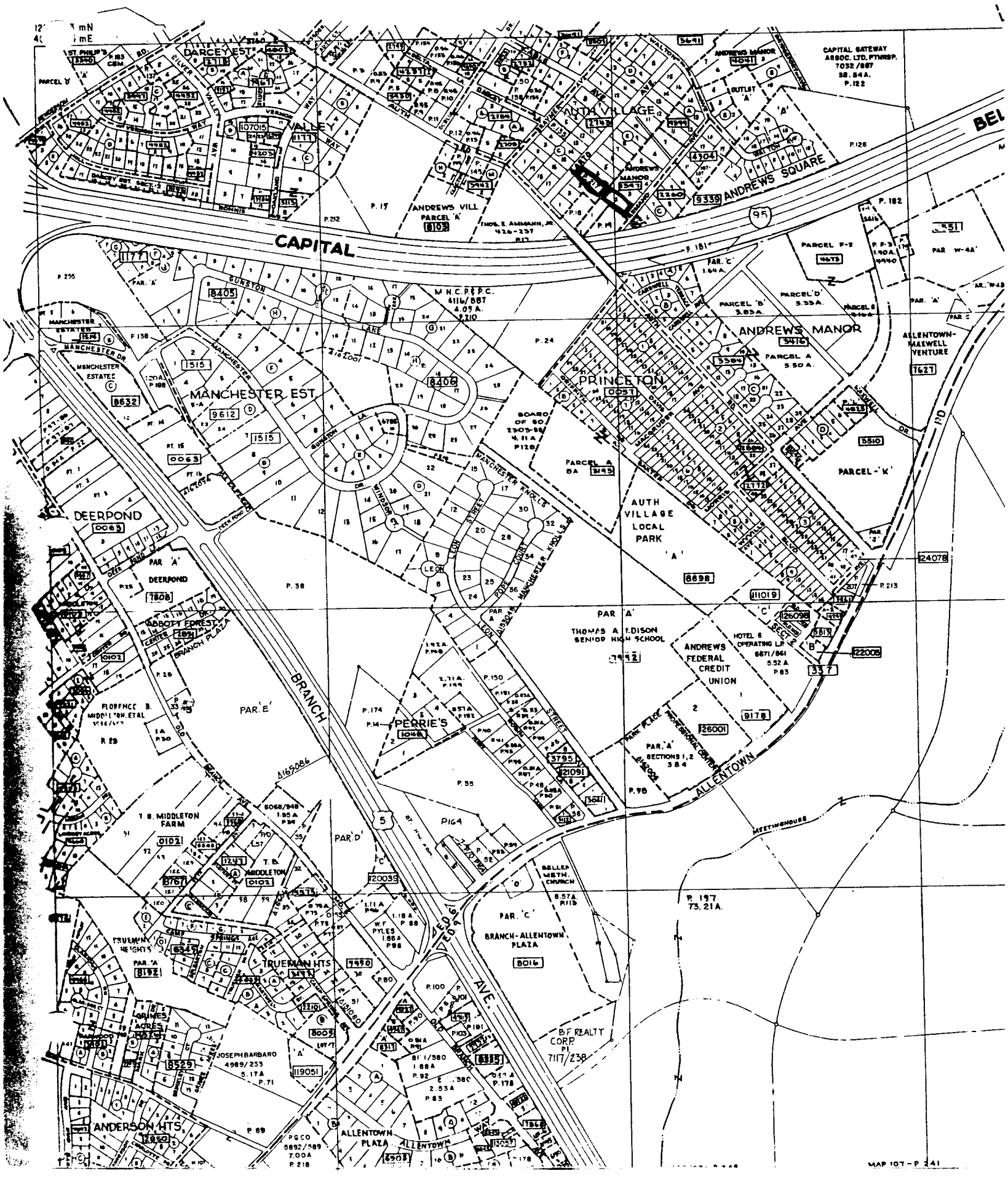
PG76A31
John and Marie Darcey Houses
Suitland, Maryland
Site Plan



PG76A31
John and Marie Darcey Houses
Suitland, Maryland
Tax Map



PG76A31
John and Marie Darcey Houses
Suitland, Maryland
Anacostia Quadrangle
Location Map

Pg 76 + 31
John [illegible] Marie [illegible] Horsey
Suitland Md.

R Suffness Md State Hwy Adm
3/97

House #1 - 5129 Armand Ave
John [illegible] Horsey House
511 Corne

P676A-31

John & Marie Darcey
Houses

Scotland Md

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Houses 1 & 5129 Armand
Job Darcey House
& Elevation

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John & Mary Darcey Houses

Suite 1-2d

Raffner MD SHA

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Hou[illegible] 5129 Annual

for Darcey House

SE Corner

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OG76A37

John & Mrs. Darcey Houses

Sutton NC

R Suffren MDSHA

House # 1 - 3129 Arms 6

John Darcey House

NE Corner

4/11

PG76A 31
John & Marie Darcey, Houses
Scotland Md
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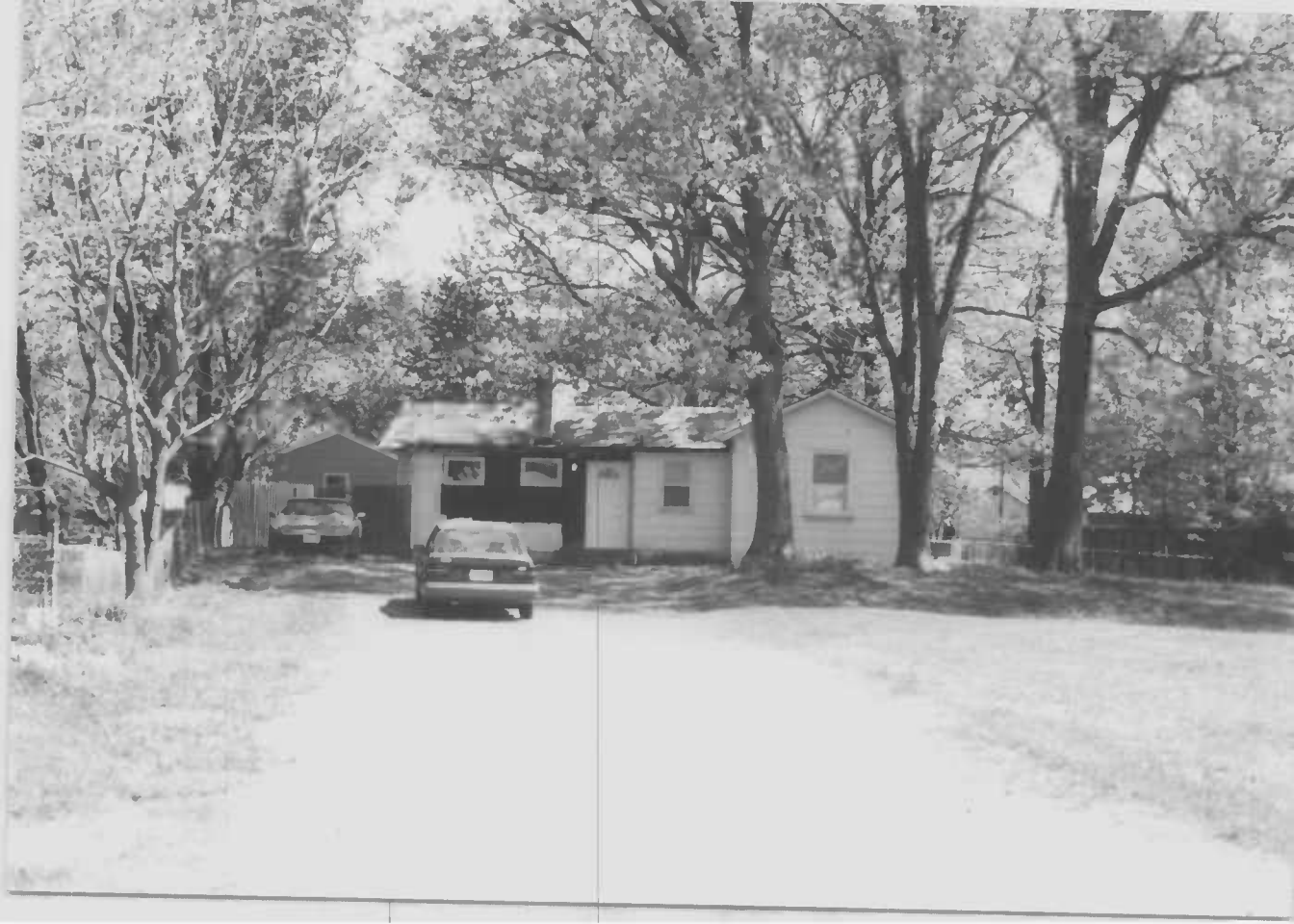

P676A 31

Johns Marie Darcey Homes

Suitland MD

R Suffren MD State Highway Admin

5/97

Marie Darcey House

(House #2, 5112 Santa Ave)

North Elevation

6/11

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PG 76A 31

John & Marie Darcey House

Sutland MD

R Suffren MD, State Highway Adm

5/97

Marie Darcey House

House #2 - 5112 Baltic Ave

North Elevation

7/11

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PG 76 A 31

Johna Marie Darcey Houses

Suitland MD

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Marie Darcey Hom

House #2 - 5112 Barto Ave

NW Corner

8/11

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PG 76A 31

John & Marie Darcey Houses
Suitland Md

R Suffness
MD State Hwy Admin

5/97

Marie Darcey Hou
(#2, 5112 Barts Avenue)

NE Corner Corr

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PG76A 31

John & Marie Darcey Houses

Switch MD

R Suffren

Md State Hwy Admin

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Marie Darcey House

(#2)

5112 Barto Avenue

North Elevation

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PG76A31

John & Marie Darcey Jones

Suitland MD

R Suffren 5/97

State Highway Admin

& Marie Darcey Hon

#2-5112 Barto Avenue

N Elevation

11/11

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CAMP SPRING