HO-817, House
6909 Linden Avenue, Elkridge
Howard County
Ca. 1890
Private

CAPSULE SUMMARY

This two-story, frame, tri-gable is one of the older homes in the Lennox Park neighborhood and still features some nice original details. The house rests on a stone foundation facing north on the south side of Linden Avenue very close to the railroad tracks. The side gabled roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles and the exterior walls of the house are clad in vinyl siding. The front section of the house is one room deep and a cross-gabled, two-story rear wing, one room deep and one room wide, extends the house one more room to the rear giving the house a T-plan. All of the windows in the house are the original 2/2 wood windows. One brick interior end chimney is found on the back wall of the rear wing.

This house is significant under criteria A and C in the areas of community planning and architecture. The house is located in the old community of Dorsey, a town dating back to the mid 19th century, and in the Lennox Park neighborhood, one of the early 20th century suburbs in Howard County. The tri-gable house at 6909 Linden Avenue is one of the earliest houses standing in the neighborhood and a good example of the simple, traditional form of turn of the century suburban architecture. Its location alongside the railroad tracks also speaks to the importance that railroad transportation held in the early development of the subdivision.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-817

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic	House
other	

2. Location

street and number	6909 Linden Avenue	___ not for publication
city, town	Elkridge	___ vicinity
county	Howard	

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

name	Ruby Lee George				
street and number	6909 Linden Avenue			telephone	
city, town	Elkridge	state	MD	zip code	21075

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Howard County Courthouse	tax map and parcel:	Map 43, P 311		
city, town	Ellicott City	liber	542	folio	569

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

___ Contributing Resource in National Register District
___ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
___ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
___ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
___ Recorded by HABS/HAER
___ Historic Structure Report or Research Report
___ Other _____

6. Classification

Category
___ district
X building(s)
___ structure
___ site
___ object

Ownership
___ public
X private
___ both

Current Function
___ agriculture
___ commerce/trade
___ defense
X domestic
___ education
___ funerary
___ government
___ health care
___ industry
___ landscape
___ recreation/culture
___ religion
___ social
___ transportation
___ work in progress
___ unknown
___ vacant/not in use
___ other: _____

Resource Count

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	___	buildings
___	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
1	___	Total

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
0

7. Description

Inventory No. HO-817

Condition

X	excellent	___	deteriorated
___	good	___	ruins
___	fair	___	altered

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

This two-story, frame, tri-gable is one of the older homes in the Lennox Park neighborhood and still features some nice original detals. The house rests on a stone foundation facing north on the south side of Linden Avenue very close to the railroad tracks. The side gabled roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles and the exterior walls of the house are clad in vinyl siding. The front section of the house is one room deep and a cross-gabled, two-story rear wing, one room deep and one room wide, extends the house one more room to the rear giving the house a T-plan. All of the windows in the house are the original 2/2 wood windows. One brick interior end chimney is found on the back wall of the rear wing.

The front (north) façade is three bays wide with a central entry on the first floor. The door is flanked on either side by one window and three more windows are vertically aligned above on the second story. The glazed and paneled door looks to date to the early 20th century. Fixed vinyl shutters frame all the windows and the door on the front façade. A square vent is located in the centered gable. A full-width, shed roofed front porch spans the front façade. The porch supports are turned, the balusters are square, and Victorian-style brackets decorate the tops of the supports.

The west side façade of the front section of the house features cornice returns and one window on each story, vertically aligned. The west side of the rear wing has two windows on each story, also vertically aligned.

The east side facade of the front section matches the west side façade with cornice returns and one window on each floor, vertically aligned. The east side of the rear wing has one window on the second story and a single story shed roofed addition (probably an enclosed porch) across the first story.

The rear (south) façade of the rear wing is blank. The rear of the front section of the house is mostly concealed behind the wing, but east of the wing on the rear façade of the front section there is one window on the second story.

This house is in excellent condition and the fact that it retains all of its original 2/2 double hung wood windows is notable. It probably dates to ca. 1890.

8. Significance

Inventory No. HO-817

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
__ 1600-1699	__ agriculture	__ economics	__ health/medicine	__ performing arts
__ 1700-1799	__ archeology	__ education	__ industry	__ philospohy
X 1800-1899	X architecture	__ engineering	__ invention	__ politics/government
__ 1900-1999	__ art	__ entertainment/ recreation	__ landscape architecture	__ religion
__ 2000-	__ commerce		__ law	__ science
	__ communications	__ ethnic heritage	__ literature	__ social history
	X community planning	__ exploration/ settlement	__ maritime industry	__ transportation
	__ conservation		__ military	__ other:

Specific dates ca. 1890 **Architect/Builder** unknown

Construction dates ca. 1890

Evaluation for:

__ National Register __ Maryland Register X not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

This house is significant under criteria A and C in the areas of community planning and architecture. The house is located in the old community of Dorsey, a town dating back to the mid 19th century, and in the Lennox Park neighborhood, one of the early 20th century suburbs in Howard County. The tri-gable house at 6909 Linden Avenue is one of the earliest houses standing in the neighborhood and a good example of the simple, traditional form of turn of the century suburban architecture. Its location alongside the railroad tracks also speaks to the importance that railroad transportation held in the early development of the subdivision.

What remains of the small town of Dorsey straddles the Howard/Anne Arundel County line and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Like many of the small communities that sprang up in the eastern part of the county in the mid to late 19th century, Dorsey's vitality was closely tied to the railroad. It has been heavily impacted in the last half century by the rapid growth and expansion of other transportation routes and related development - airport construction in Anne Arundel County and office and warehouse construction along Route 1 and Dorsey Road in Howard County.

The town of Dorsey is named, not surprisingly, for the Dorsey family who owned much of the surrounding land in both Howard and Anne Arundel Counties in the mid-19th century. In the 1840's, they supposedly discovered outcroppings of iron ore on their property and began to mine the deposits using German immigrant laborers. The mined hematite was sent to the Dorsey's furnace and forge by rail.(1) [It is unclear where this furnace and forge was. It was not in Howard County; the Dorsey family did have a large furnace and forge operation on the Baltimore county side of the Patapsco River.] But the mining operation didn't last long as the deposits were quickly depleted and the furnace ceased operations. Many of the German miners got new jobs with the B & O Railroad and settled permanently in Dorsey. In some cases, their descendents stayed on in the town well into the 20th century. The German presence was so strong in the area that the Dorsey Emmanuel Methodist Church, built in 1851 along the Baltimore-Washington Turnpike (what is now Route 1), held services in German until 1881. In the 1890's the church burned down and was rebuilt on Dorsey Road in 1897 (still standing today across the street from the Lennox Park neighborhood). (2) It seems likely that the homes of these German laborers and the heart of the town of Dorsey was across the railroad in Anne Arundel county. Neither the 1860 Martenet Map, nor the 1878 Hopkins Map of Howard County shows any sort of town around the Dorsey switch on the Howard County side of the line. Only one house is shown on the 1860 map, labeled A. Dorsey's heirs. The same house, still labeled Allen Dorsey heirs, and two other buildings located right along the railroad are shown on the 1878 map. These Howard County maps stop at the county line and nineteenth century Anne Arundel county maps were not available for review, so it was not possible to confirm how large the settlement of Dorsey was in the late 19th century.

In 1872, the Wesley Grove Camp Meeting was formally established along the Washington Turnpike northwest of Dorsey. The site had been used for religious camp meetings throughout the 19th century, but the Wesley Grove group made the site a more permanent and luxurious destination through the construction of a hotel and other service oriented buildings. Visitors could also

rent multi-room tents erected on wood platforms for weeks at a time, and the scene was more a social than a religious gathering. The destination was particularly popular in summer for city dwellers fleeing the heat of the city for the country air of Dorsey. Visitors would take the train to the Dorsey station and then they could either walk up the road or take a ride on a wagon provided by Wesley Grove up the hill to the meeting ground. (3)

The Dorsey family sold a large chunk of their land on the Howard County side of the railroad tracks to the Lennox Park Real Estate Company sometime around 1893. The Company, headed by Edwin Goldman, subdivided the land into 423 lots of varying sizes. The Plat of Lennox Park, drawn in 1900, shows the layout of the lots and streets and several proposed features that were apparently never built. As proposed, the Lennox Park development existed on both the north and south sides of what is today Dorsey Road, on the plat the road is labeled "To Wesley Grove Camp Grounds." To the north of Dorsey Road, a large lake, labeled "Lake Lennox," is located along Deep Run Creek. Other proposed features of the neighborhood include a lot labeled "Water Works Site" and a large block labeled "Lennox Park Hotel Site." The water works lot is empty but the hotel site contains the footprint of a large building. It is not certain whether this was proposed or existing but looking at a modern map of the neighborhood, the house that is rumored to be the old Dorsey home is located in about the same spot as the hotel on the plat. Furthermore, locals claim that the old Dorsey home was turned into a hotel at one point. At this time, the old Dorsey home has not been recorded and it is not possible to say for certain if it does date back to the Dorsey family or if it was ever a hotel. The fact that the foot print of the building is drawn does seem to argue that it was standing at the time the plat was made. There are several other buildings shown on the plat – the church and parsonage appear in their existing location, three buildings on the lot right by the intersection of Dorsey Road and the railroad labeled "Dorsey station," and two other buildings located on lots that border Dorsey Station. In addition, there are approximately 11 other lots labeled "sold" that do not contain the footprint of any buildings. All of these lots are located between the hotel site and Dorsey Road. Almost all of the roads shown on the 1900 plat were constructed, but Lennox Avenue is much shorter today than it is shown on the map. Today, the Lennox Park neighborhood ends just south of the Lennox Park Hotel site on the map. (4)

For the most part, Lennox Park appears to be a subdivision that existed solely on paper for the first 20 or 30 years. Only three houses currently standing in the neighborhood appear to date to the 1890's or earlier. Several houses appear to date to the 1920's, a few more date to the 1940's and 50's, and there are quite a few that date to the last 50 years.

The suburban movement in community planning in the United States traces its roots back to the mid-19th century and the Romantic landscape movement. The suburban ideal consisted of substantial single family houses located on large lots on curvilinear streets in park-like settings. The two developments widely recognized as the prototypes are Llewellyn Park (1857) in New Jersey and Riverside (1869) west of Chicago in Illinois. This ideal appealed greatly to the middle class and inspired an aspiration for semi-rural living away from the noise, crime, and filth of the fast-growing cities, but still close enough to them for commuting purposes. Ease of commuting was the key to early suburban success. As transportation became more advanced and travel became easier and faster, the suburbs moved further and further away from the cities. The earliest suburbs were served by horse-drawn cars and the railroad, then came the electric streetcar, and finally, by the 1920's, the automobile. (5)

The suburban ideal in its highest form was beyond the financial means of most of the middle class and certainly all of the working class, but savvy developers found ways to create more affordable subdivisions while still appealing to the ideal of better living. These affordable developments usually relied on a rectilinear plan in lieu of the curving streets and park-like setting touted by the idealists, and the houses were smaller, though still detached single family dwellings, and located closer together on narrow lots. (6) Advances in building technology also made single-family houses increasingly affordable. Architecturally, the balloon framing method made domestic construction faster and cheaper, and mass produced decorative details popularized by pattern books and turned out in quantity by saw mills across the nation, lent many of the late 19th century developments a similar flavor. The increasing use of the railroad to transport both raw and dimensioned lumber, as well as the finished stock of doors, window sash,

porch supports, and decorative brackets contributed to the suburban boom.

Suburban development continued at a steady pace across the nation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The proximity of various locales to booming cities and transportation routes determined the rate of suburban growth in those areas. The rise of the automobile during the 1920's made the construction of new suburbs away from the railroads a viable possibility and the population continued to settle further and further away from the city centers. The big boom in suburban development across the country came post-World War II when the massive numbers of returning soldiers created a seemingly insatiable demand for the independence and middle class status associated with home ownership. Architecturally, the trend in the affordable subdivisions was towards increasingly modest houses built on a small scale with minimal decoration. Particularly during the Depression of the 1930's, the minimal trend helped to keep home ownership affordable for a larger portion of the population. Likewise, post-war subdivisions also exhibit mostly minimal cottages and ranchers affordable for returning soldiers and their young families. (7) In Howard County, the earliest documented subdivision was called Anderson, later Hanoverville, in the Hanover area on the Howard County side of the railroad tracks. Ephraim Anderson subdivided five acres on the railroad in the early 1870's. In the 1890's several other railroad subdivisions cropped up along the eastern edge of the county; Harwood Park is located in between Elkridge and Dorsey and North Laurel is located, as the name suggests, just north of Laurel in Howard County.

Lennox Park was laid out at about the same time as North Laurel and Harwood Park and, like Harwood Park, was clearly conceived as one of the affordable suburbs mentioned above intended to make the suburban ideal available to a wider portion of the middle class. The rectilinear plan of the streets and numerous small, narrow lots are good indicators of the clientele the developers were hoping to attract. Its location on the railroad line would have been attractive to those people commuting to Baltimore for work, while its 'country' location appealed to those members of the middle class seeking to raise their children outside the city. The developers also probably hoped the community would get a boost from the popular Wesley Grove Camp Ground. The railroad faded from prominence as a mode of transportation during the early 20th century with the development of the automobile, and automobile suburbs away from the railroads became increasingly popular. It is notable that the houses constructed in Lennox Park became increasingly modest during the early 20th century. There are only two two-story Folk Victorian dwellings in all of Lennox Park dating to ca. 1890 and several four-squares dating to the 1920's. The upper middle class, those more likely to build large houses in the Victorian or Colonial Revival styles and those more likely to have cars, was obviously looking elsewhere. But Lennox Park continued to grow slowly during the 20th century, with an assortment of modest cottages and ranchers filling in the undeveloped lots.

The house at 6909 Linden Avenue is one of the earliest houses standing in the Lennox Park neighborhood. It was probably one of the first houses built after the subdivision was laid out. It is a good example of the simple detailing and traditional form common in modest turn of the century railroad subdivisions.

1. Gill Chamblin, "Dorsey," HOWARD COUNTY TIMES, February 4, 1982, p. 17-21.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Plat of Lennox Park, Howard County Land Records, Howard County Courthouse, Ellicott City, Plat Book 89, Folio 289.

5. David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, NATIONAL REGISTER BULLETIN: HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL SUBURBS (National Park Service, 2002).

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. HO-817

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property ~.20

Acreage of historical setting unknown

Quadrangle name Relay

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 237 on the plat of Lennox Park.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Kristin Hill, Historic Sites Surveyor		
organization	Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning	date	12/29/03
street and number	3430 Court House Drive	telephone	410-313-4335
city or town	Ellicott City	state MD	zip code 21043

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
410-514-7600

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-817

Name House
Continuation Sheet
Number 9 Page 1

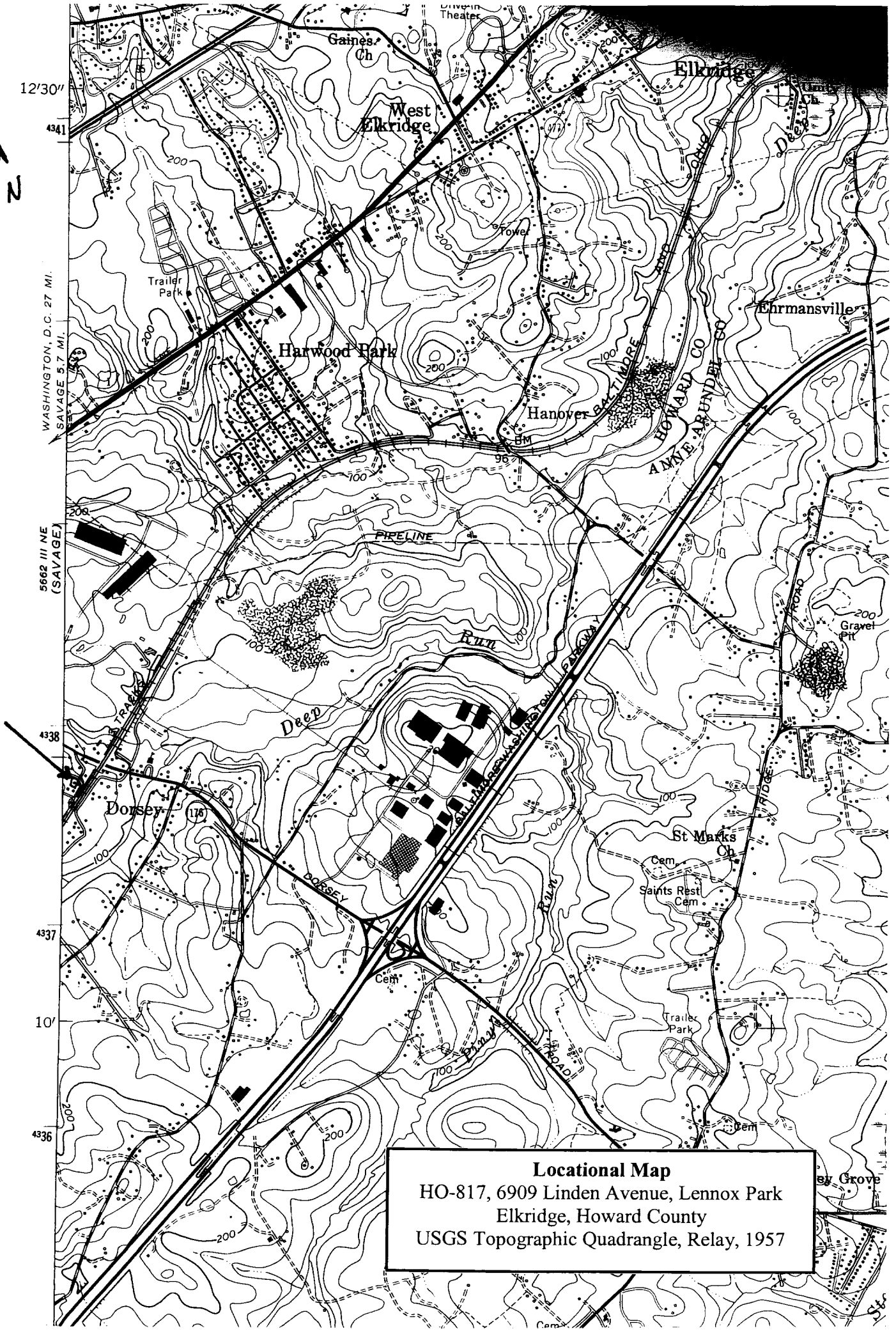
Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland, NATIONAL REGISTER BULLETIN: HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL SUBURBS (National Park Service, 2002).

Gill Chamblin, "Dorsey," HOWARD COUNTY TIMES, February 4, 1982, p. 17-21.

Hopkins, G.M. ATLAS OF HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND, 1878. (Ellicott City, Maryland: Howard County Bicentennial Commission, Inc., 1975).

Martenet, Simon J. MARTENET'S MAP OF HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND. (Baltimore, 1860).

Plat of Lennox Park, Howard County Land Records, Howard County Courthouse, Ellicott City, Plat Book 89, Folio 289.



Locational Map
HO-817, 6909 Linden Avenue, Lennox Park
Elkridge, Howard County
USGS Topographic Quadrangle, Relay, 1957

HO-817
6909 Linden Avenue, Lennox Park, Elkridge
Howard County, Maryland
Kristin Hall, 12/03
Negative at MDSHPO

Front (north) elevation

1/4

HO-817
6909 Linden Avenue, Lennox Park, Elkridge
Howard County, Maryland
Kristin Hill, 12/03
Negative at MDSHPO
West elevation
2/4

HO-817

6909 Linden Avenue, Lennox Park, Elkridge

Howard County, Maryland

Kristin Hill, 12/03

Negative at MDSHPO

NE elevation

3/4

14 21+00 NNNNN 292

HO 817
6909 Linden Avenue, Lennox Park, Elkridge
Howard County, Maryland
Kristin Hill, 12/03
Negative at MDSHPO

North (front) elevation

4/4