

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #67-18

Building Date: 1888

Building Name: Cissel House

Location: 8911 57th Avenue, Berwyn Heights, Maryland

Private/Residence/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description

The Cissel House is a two-and-one-half story frame dwelling with hip-roof and cross-gables, distinguished by abundant decorative details. Roughly square in plan, it is varied by a projecting cross gable on the north, a semi-octagonal bay on the south, and a cross-gable on the main west facade. Entrance is through a panelled glazed door with single-light transom and plain board surround. Above the entrance and recessed at second story level is a small balcony with turned posts and parapet sided with scalloped shingles. Across the west facade is a one-story hip-roof porch supported by turned posts with closed jigsaw brackets. Above the entry to the porch is a pedimented cross-gable sided with scalloped shingles. The siding of the first story is covered by asbestos shingle, the second story is sided with rectangular wood shingle, and the various cross-gables or dormers at third level are sided with fishscale shingle or alternating courses of fishscale and rectangular shingles. The cornice is boxed with crown molding and is returned at the gable ends. The third and fourth bays of the main west facade form an asymmetrical cross-gable. The south facade is distinguished by a two-and-one-half-story semi-octagonal projecting bay surmounted by a pedimented gable end sided with fishscale shingles. The chimney on the south facade is finished with an ornate panel molded with dentils and brackets. A second panelled and corbelled brick chimney rises from the north plane of the roof.

Significance

The Cissel House is an excellent example of a late Victorian frame dwelling, with abundant decorative details in the Queen Anne style. It was constructed in 1888 by the Charlton Heights Improvement Company from a pattern distributed through the Cooperative Building Plan Association, and it was one of the first dwellings built in the late 19th century railroad town of Charlton Heights, now known as Berwyn Heights. The Town of Charlton Heights was platted in 1888 by Edward Graves, on 383 acres of land bounded by the Branchville Road and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Graves sold the land to the Charlton Heights Improvement Company in that year, and the company immediately began construction of dwellings ordered by pattern through the mail. The house served as a model home for potential buyers and was distinguished by many decorative features of the Queen Anne style: panelled chimneys, windows with border lights, ornamental molding, and considerable variety in rooflines and wall surfaces. In recent years, it has been the home of the Moyer, Campbell, and Cissel families. The Cissel House is a fine example of a late Victorian/Queen Anne pattern-book house and a significant landmark in the community of Berwyn Heights today.

Acreage: 15,000 square feet

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Cissel House

2. Location

street & number 8911 57th Avenue not for publicationcity, town Berwyn Heights 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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Richard and Cynthia Cissel

street & number 8911 57th Avenue telephone no.:

city, town Berwyn Heights state and zip code MD. 20740

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 5161

street & number Main Street folio 110

city, town Upper Marlboro, state MD.

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input 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 Cissel House is a two-and-one-half story frame dwelling with hip-roof and cross-gables, and is distinguished by abundant decorative details (such as eyebrow window and panelled corbelled chimneys) in the Queen Anne style. It stands on one of the original lots of the 1888 town of Charlton Heights, now known as Berwyn Heights.

The house faces west toward 57th Avenue; it is hip-roofed and roughly square in plan, but is varied by a projecting cross gable on the north, a semi-octagonal bay on the south, and a cross-gable on the main west facade. Entrance is in the second bay of the four-bay west facade through a panelled glazed door with single-light transom and plain board surround. Above the entrance and recessed at second story level is a small balcony with turned posts and parapet sided with scalloped shingles. Across the west facade is a one-story hip-roof porch supported by turned posts with closed jigsaw brackets; the porch has a dentilled frieze and a cornice with crown molding; it rests on wooden posts with lattice infill. Above the entry to the porch is a pedimented cross-gable sided with scalloped shingles.

The siding of the first story is covered by asbestos shingle, the second story is sided with rectangular wood shingle, and the various cross-gables or dormers at third level are sided with fishscale shingle or alternating courses of fishscale and rectangular shingles. All siding is painted gray-green. There is a plain board frieze with crown molding which forms a dividing line between second and third levels. The cornice is boxed with crown molding and is returned at the gable ends. Windows are generally 1/1 double hung sash, with plain board surrounds painted white, and no shutters; in many cases, the upper sashes have colorless border lights.

The house is nearly square, four bays by five, but a cross-gable extends to the north in the first two bays of the north facade, forming a shallow ell. At this north gable end, the returned cornice encloses two side-by-side square windows with flush flanking brackets, all surrounded by siding of alternating courses of fishscale and rectangular shingles. In the north plane of the hip-roof next to the north cross-gable is a curved eyebrow window, not glazed, but filled with applied jigsaw panelling.

8. Significance

Period	Areas 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 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 checked="" 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 1888 **Builder/Architect** Charlton Heights Improvement Co.

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 Cissel House is an excellent example of a late Victorian frame dwelling, with abundant decorative details in the Queen Anne style. It was constructed from a pattern distributed through the Cooperative Building Plan Association, and it was one of the first dwellings built in the 1888 town of Charlton Heights, now known as Berwyn Heights.

In 1887, Edward Graves of Washington, D.C. purchased 383 acres south of the Branchville Road and bounded on the west by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He engaged the firm of Newby and Howell to survey and plat a new residential community, and called it Charlton Heights.¹ The plat of 1888 showed 50-foot-wide streets, criss-crossing at varied angles, and lots of approximately 50 by 200 feet. Graves sold the land in 1888 to the Charlton Heights Improvement Company, which immediately began construction of dwellings ordered by pattern through the mail. Within the same year, the Company began to sell lots, some unimproved, and some with new houses already erected.² By the end of the first year, approximately 20 houses had been built, and the new town became the home principally of professionals who used the Baltimore and Ohio railroad to commute into Washington, D.C.³

For the next three years, the Charlton Heights Improvement Company continued to sell lots, but with only limited success. In 1892, Edward Graves, the developer, and James Waugh, secretary of the Company, both of whom resided in Charlton Heights, bought the remaining unsold lots; they continued to sell them, and the Charlton Heights Improvement Company ceased operations. In 1896, by an act of the Maryland General Assembly, the town was incorporated, and its name was changed to Berwyn Heights. It continued to grow slowly; by 1910, the population was slightly over 150, and there were 38 dwellings.⁴ Today most of the lots have been filled in by 1950's subdivision housing, and Berwyn Heights is a quiet residential community with curving streets and old trees, set back and somewhat secluded, between two major highways.

The third and fourth bays of the main west facade form an asymmetrical cross-gable. Fenestration in the second story of this westerly cross-gable consists of two side-by-side 1/1 double hung sash windows, of which the upper sash has border lights. Above at third level, the returned cornice encloses two side-by-side square single pane windows; as in the north gable end, the third level is sided with alternating courses of fishscale and rectangular shingles, and the windows are flanked by jigsaw brackets. This treatment is repeated in the gabled dormer in the east (rear) plane of the roof.

The south facade is distinguished by a two-and-one-half-story semi-octagonal projecting bay in its fourth and fifth bays. All windows in this projecting bay have border lights around the upper sashes, and the bay is surmounted by a pedimented gable end sided with fishscale shingles. The south facade is further embellished by an ornate salmon-colored brick chimney between first and second bays; exterior above the first story, it pierces the overhanging eaves, and is corbelled and panelled in decorative designs. Where it appears above the first story, the chimney is finished with an ornate panel molded with dentils and brackets. A second panelled and corbelled brick chimney rises from the north plane of the roof.

Recent alterations include a small shed-roof entry porch at the rear (east) entrance; a jalousied window in the fifth bay of the south facade; and a one-story enclosed porch addition on the northwest, sided with white asbestos shingle, and with three double banks of modern awning-style windows.

Northeast of the house is a separate concrete block garage painted gray-green.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM
Statement of Significance (continued)

Survey No. ^{AF} #67-18

Section 8 Page 2

The subject house was built in 1888 by the Charlton Heights Improvement Company, probably from a pattern advertised by R.W. Shoppell; it served as a model home for potential buyers. It was distinguished by many decorative features of the Queen Anne style: panelled chimneys, windows with border lights, ornamental molding, and considerable variety in roof-lines and wall surfaces. The house and the two lots on which it stood were sold in 1890 to Edgar Kennedy for \$4,000.⁵ Kennedy was unable to pay off the loans which had supported his purchase, and lost the property in 1895. Until 1905 the property was owned by speculators who leased it to tenants; in that year it was purchased by attorney Lewis Eddy, and for more than 20 years was his family home. In more recent years, it has been the home, of the Moyer, Campbell, and Cissel families.⁶

The Cissel House is a fine example of a late Victorian/Queen Anne pattern book house. One of the first buildings erected in the railroad suburb of Charlton Heights/Berwyn Heights, it is a significant landmark in that community today.

Notes

1 Prince George's County Deeds, JWB #9:127, 130; Prince George's County Plat, JWB #10:309.

2 Prince George's County Deeds, JWB #11:543; R. W. Shoppell Modern Houses, 1887; Artistic Modern Houses at Low Cost, 1888; Beautiful Homes, 1887; Building Plans for Modern Low Cost Houses, 1884, etc.; cf. Charlton Heights Improvement Company deeds, 1888.

3 Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1888-1890; Census for Prince George's County, E. D. #1, 1900.

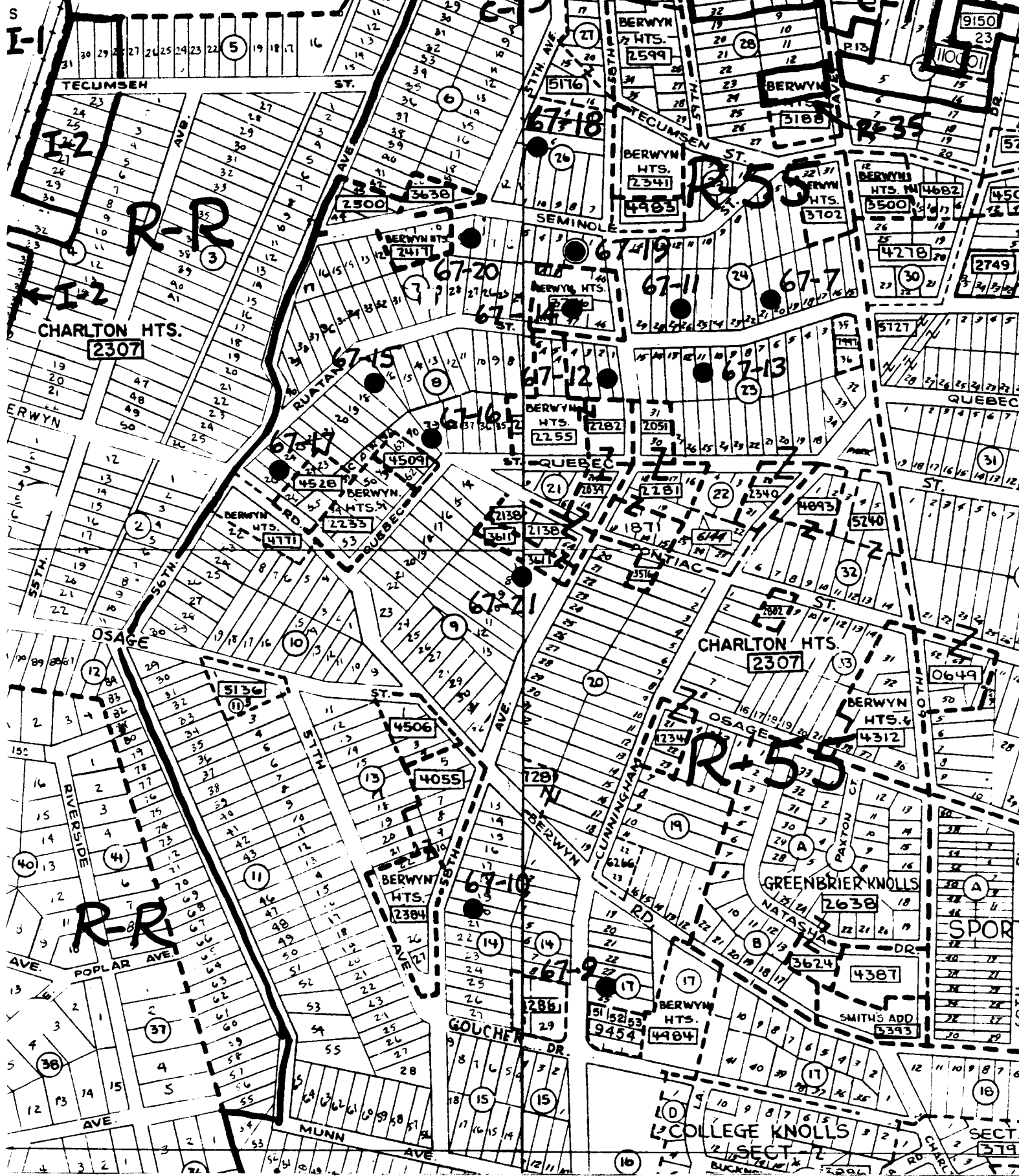
4 JWB #20:496; JWB #21:225; JWB #22:53; G. M. Hopkins map, 1894; Census for Prince George's County, E.D. #1, 1900, 1910; Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1890-1910; Skarda, D.D., Berwyn Heights - History of a Small Maryland Town.

5 Prince George's County Deed, JWB #15:782; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1889-1891.

6 Prince George's County Deed, JWB #19:20; JWB #34:260, 310, 445; #26:65, 74; #244:484; #1689:245; #2467:170, #4989:810, 816; and #5161:110.

GREENBELT RD.

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M.C. & P.C.
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P. 64



COLLEGE KNOLLS
SECT 2
BUCKINGHAM



P.G. #67-18

Cissel House
Prince George's County, MD.
Susan G. Pearl
March 1986
South detail
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G. #67-18

Cissel House
Prince George's County, MD.
Susan G. Pearl
March 1986
East elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G. #67-18

Cissel House
Prince George's County, MD.
Susan G. Pearl
March 1986
West detail
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G. #67-18

Cissel House

Prince George's County, MD.

Susan G. Pearl

March 1986

North elevation

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G. #67-18

Cissel House
Prince George's County, MD.
Susan G. Pearl
March 1986
West elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.