

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #67-20 Building Date: ca. 1891

Building Name: Bonnet-Duck House

Location: 5617 Seminole Street, Berwyn Heights, Maryland

Private/Residence/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description

The Bonnet-Duck House is a two-and-one-half-story square pyramidal-roof house of the "classic-box" design. It stands on one of the original lots of the 1888 town of Charlton Heights, now known as Berwyn Heights. The main block is sided with white aluminum; it is three irregular bays by two bays, with entrance in the third bay of the three-bay main north facade. The door has twelve border lights of clear glass, around a large central pane of glass; all are bevelled. Across the north facade is a one-story flat-roof porch supported by square aluminum posts. The first bay of the west facade is a two-story semi-octagonal bay. The hip roof is covered with gray asbestos shingle; a corbelled brick chimney rises from its center. The roof slopes to deeply overhanging eaves with a narrow aluminum soffit. Piercing each plane of the roof is a two-bay gable dormer. Extending to the rear (south) is a slightly lower ell shaped addition, with shallow hip roof. Filling the southeast corner of this ell-shaped addition is a one-story hip-roof enclosed porch.

Significance

The Bonnet-Duck House is a prominent example of the Four-Square, "Classic Box" type of domestic architecture which was popular, particularly in suburban areas, at the turn of this century. Although significantly altered, this large house is a conspicuous landmark in the community of Berwyn Heights. It is one of the early houses constructed in the 1888 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 subject house was built ca. 1891 for John Conrad Bonnet, on unimproved lots which the Bonnet family had purchased from the Charlton Heights Improvement Company earlier in that year. The house was acquired in 1956 by members of the Duck family, who retain it today. The Bonnet-Duck House is one of the earliest homes built in Charlton Heights. Although considerably altered, the house is (by its size and location) a conspicuous landmark in Berwyn Heights.

Acreage: 10,243 square feet

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Bonnet House

and/or common Duck House

## 2. Location

street & number 5617 Seminole Street  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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 Sheila Duck

street &amp; number 5617 Seminole Street 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 #4660

street &amp; number Main Street folio 73

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

Survey No. PG#67-20

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Bonnet-Duck House is a two-and-one-half-story square pyramidal-roof house of the "classic-box" design. It stands on one of the original lots of the 1888 town of Charlton Heights, now known as Berwyn Heights.

The main block is sided with white aluminum; it is three irregular bays by two bays, with entrance in the third bay of the three-bay main north facade. The door has twelve border lights of clear glass, around a large central pane of glass; all are bevelled. Across the north facade is a one-story flat-roof porch supported by square aluminum posts; it rests on concrete piers with lattice infill. Opening onto this porch in the third bay is a narrow double door; each leaf of the door consists of three lights over one molded panel. Windows are generally 8/1 or 1/1 double hung sash, and have plain aluminum surrounds and no shutters. The first bay of the west facade is a two-story semi-octagonal bay, with two 6/1 windows in each level of its west face.

The hip roof is covered with gray asbestos shingle; a corbelled brick chimney rises from its center. The roof slopes to deeply overhanging eaves with a narrow aluminum soffit. Piercing each plane of the roof is a two-bay gable dormer with 6/1 double hung sash windows. The foundation is of brick, painted white, and encloses a basement.

Extending to the rear (south) is a slightly lower ell shaped addition, with shallow hip roof. It rests on concrete piers infilled with brick. Filling the southeast corner of this ell-shaped addition is a one-story hip-roof enclosed porch on a concrete-block foundation.

# 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates**      ca, 1891      **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 Bonnet-Duck House is a prominent example of the Four-Square, "Classic Box" type of domestic architecture which was popular, particularly in suburban areas, at the turn of this century. Although significantly altered, this large house is a conspicuous landmark in the community of Berwyn Heights. It is one of the early houses constructed 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> 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 subject house was built ca. 1891 for John Conrad Bonnet, on unimproved lots which the Bonnet family had purchased from the Charlton Heights Improvement Company earlier in that year.<sup>5</sup> Conrad Bonnet had immigrated from Germany, and engaged in real estate in the Washington area.<sup>6</sup> The house and lots passed in 1915 to John C. Bonneford, a carpenter, and then through a series of short-term owners. It was acquired in 1956 by members of the Duck family who retain it today.<sup>7</sup>

The Bonnet-Duck House is one of the earliest homes built in Charlton Heights. Although considerably altered (by rear additions, aluminum siding and moldings, etc.), the house is by its size and location a conspicuous landmark in Berwyn Heights 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 #25:515.

6 Census for Prince George's County, 1900.

7 Prince George's County Deeds #109:435; #163:141; #250:598; #324:50; #271:520; #470:219; #483:320; #572:221; #687:311; #794:128; #965:449; #1418:343; #1976:265; #4660:73.

GREENBELT RD.

82/448 P. 64 4.37A



TECUMSEH ST. R-R

CHARLTON HTS. 2307

OSAGE ST. R-R

OSAGE ST. R-R

OSAGE ST. R-R

OSAGE ST. R-R

OSAGE ST. R-R

MUNN AVE.

TECUMSEH ST. 2500

TECUMSEH ST. 2500

TECUMSEH ST. 2500

TECUMSEH ST. 2500

TECUMSEH ST. 2500

TECUMSEH ST. 2500

TECUMSEH ST. 2500

TECUMSEH ST. 2500

TECUMSEH ST. 2500

BERWYN HTS. 2599

BERWYN HTS. 2341

BERWYN HTS. 2255

BERWYN HTS. 2235

BERWYN HTS. 2234

BERWYN HTS. 2384

BERWYN HTS. 4404

BERWYN HTS. 4404

BERWYN HTS. 4404

BERWYN HTS. 2749

BERWYN HTS. 3188

BERWYN HTS. 2782

BERWYN HTS. 2051

BERWYN HTS. 2340

BERWYN HTS. 4312

BERWYN HTS. 4387

BERWYN HTS. 4387

BERWYN HTS. 4387

BERWYN HTS. 9150

BERWYN HTS. 4682

BERWYN HTS. 4278

BERWYN HTS. 5240

BERWYN HTS. 0649

BERWYN HTS. 2638

BERWYN HTS. 4387

BERWYN HTS. 4387

BERWYN HTS. 4387

COLLEGE KNOLLS

COLLEGE KNOLLS





P.G. #67-20

Bonnet-Duck House  
Prince George's County, MD.  
Susan G. Pearl  
April 1986  
Northeast 3/4 elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G. #67-20

Bonnet-Duck House  
Prince George's County, MD.  
Susan G. Pearl  
April 1986  
East elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G. #67-20

Bonnet-Duck House  
Prince George's County, MD.  
Susan G. Pearl  
April 1986  
South elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G. #67-20

Bonnet-Duck House  
Prince George's County, MD.  
Susan G. Pearl  
April 1986  
Northwest 3/4 elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.