

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. M-35-102

1. Name of Property

historic name Bowie House common/other name _____

2. Location

street & number 3905 Blackthorn St. Not for publication
city or town Chevy Chase vicinity state Maryland code MD
county Montgomery code MO zip code 20815

3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

4. National Park Service Certification N/A

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check all that apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?

Yes ___ Name of Listing _____ No ___

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Dutch Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____

roof asphalt

walls stucco; wood shingle

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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county and state

Facing south on Blackthorn Street, the two-and-a-half story, four-bay house is clad with stucco at the first level and wood shingles at the second. Windows are 6/6 sash at the first and second stories with a single diamond-paned window in the shed dormer at the third half-story. Roof forms sheltering the residence are hip, gambrel, shed, pent, and gable. The front facade features a hip on gable roof with a front gambrel projection. The pedimented front entrance is supported on either side by classical columns. Stone pillars accentuate the front walk and driveway entrances.

An enclosed one-story side wing at the west facade has a flat roof with balustrade. A full-width open porch at the east facade, which would have afforded a view of Connecticut Avenue prior to the construction of the Varnell House c1922, is supported by classical columns and sheltered by the flared eave gable roof.¹ A continuous shed-roof dormer punctuates the roof line at the half-story above the porch.

A stucco-walled garage with pyramidal roof was added between 1931 and 1941.²

The house remains at its original location, now described as Lot 2, Block 3 in Chevy Chase, Section 4, consisting of 18,000 square feet of land.

¹See MHT Form 35-104, M-NCPPC.

²Klinge Atlas, 1931, 1941.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance 1913-1915

Significant Dates 1913-1915

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-1

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With its exuberance of architectural detail and variety of roof forms, the Dutch Colonial Revival style Bowie House, built c1913-1915, is a textbook of design features popular at the turn of the twentieth century. The Bowie House also represents the beginning of a new era as the Chevy Chase Land Company sought to attract solidly middle class residents to its development, following a period of financially troubled times.

Joseph W. Bowie purchased Lot 2 and part of Lot 3 in Block 3 from the Chevy Chase Land Company in May 1914. At that time Bowie, a clerk and auditor for the U.S. Post Office Department, resided at 815 M. Street, N.W. in Washington, D.C. According to tax assessment records, the Bowie House was built by the Land Company, apparently serving as a model home for this northern part of Section 4, which had opened for sales in 1910.³ The Land Company had, in 1892, begun the practice of building model houses to entice prospective purchasers to the area and to establish standards for residential design.

Information on the date of construction of the house varies. A book published by the Town of Chevy Chase puts the date at 1913.⁴ A c1915 aerial photo shows the Bowie House with new landscaping in place, while a photo of the house, unlandscaped, was featured in a Land Company promotional brochure in 1916.⁵ Tax assessment records indicate that improvements were conveyed by the Land Company to Bowie in 1915 and were assessed to Bowie in 1917 at \$3500. In 1923 improvements were reassessed to Bowie at \$4500.⁶ This documented information indicates that the Chevy Chase Land Company continued in Section 4 the practice established in Section 2 of building model homes to set the tone for construction.

Directories list Joseph Bowie at the M Street address in 1915, by which time his occupation was clerk, treasurer at the Post Office Department. By 1927 his home address was on Blackthorn, where he continued to live until at least 1935.⁷

³Deed 242:406 (5/16/1914), Montgomery County Land Records; Polk Directory, 1910; tax assessment records, Annapolis, Maryland.

⁴*The Town of Chevy Chase, Past and Present*, p. 17

⁵*ibid.*, p. 12; *Chevy Chase For Homes*, p Thos. J. Fisher & Co., 1916;

⁶Tax assessment records, Annapolis, Maryland.

⁷Boyd's Washington Directory 1915; Polk Directory 1927; Klinge Atlas 1931; Town Directory 1935.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Development Period (s):
Industrial/Urban Dominance 1870-1930

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

RESOURCE TYPE(S)

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Suburban

Historic Function (s): Domestic/Single Dwelling

Known Design Source: Unknown

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Chain of Title:

May 1914: Chevy Chase Land Company to Joseph W. Bowie
(242:406). The house remained in Bowie's ownership
until at least 1935.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Primary Sources:

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:

- Caldwell, S.D. *Map of Bethesda District*, 1915
- 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.
- Maryland Geological Survey Map. Bethesda & Vicinity, 1910.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. 1916, 1927, 1927-1959.

Tax Assessment Records, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

Secondary Sources:

George, Mary Roselle. *Developer Influence in the Suburbanization of Washington, D.C.: Francis G. Newlands and Chevy Chase.* M.A. Thesis, University of Maryland, 1989.

Gowans, Alan. *The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1986.

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.

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- Lampl, Elizabeth Jo. and Kimberly Prothro Williams. *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation's Capital*, Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust Press, 1998.
- Linehan, John. Editor. *The Town of Chevy Chase: Past and Present*, Montgomery County, MD: The Town of Chevy Chase, 1990.
- Offutt, William. *Bethesda: A Social History of the Area Through World War II*. Bethesda, Md: The Innovation Game, 1995.
- Smith, Kathryn Schneitder. Editor. *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital*. Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1988
- 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.

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property 18,000 sq ft

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 2 and pt lot3, Block 3

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Clare Lise Cavicchi, Historic Preservation Planner
organization M-NCPPC date 10-1999
street & number 8787 Georgia Avenue telephone 301/563-3402
city or town Silver Spring state MD zip code 20910

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12. Property Owner
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name Anne K & D D Herring Tr
street & number 3905 Blackthorn Street telephone (301)
656-7970 city or town Chevy Chase state MD zip code 20815



M: 35/102 Bowie House

3905 Blackthorn

April 1999

Lateefah Bryant