

1. Name: Keiser House (Alta Vista)

2. Planning Area/Site Number: 35/3

3. M-NCPPC Atlas Reference: Map 21  
A-6

4. Address: 5506 Beech Avenue, Bethesda

## 5. Classification Summary

Category building  
 Ownership private  
 Public Acquisition N/A  
 Status occupied  
 Accessible no  
 Present use private residence

Previous Survey Recording M-NCPPC  
 Title and Date: 1976 Inventory of  
 Historical Sites  
 Federal      State   x   County   x   Local     

6. Date: 1852/1865/1880

7. Original Owner: 1852-1865 - Theodore Boucher  
or Thomas Homiller

8. Apparent Condition

1880 - Louis Keiser (remodel-  
led earlier house)a. good b. altered c. original site

9. Description: This 3 bay by 4 bay, L-shaped house faces northwest. Its gable roofs are covered with slate shingles, and it is sheathed in dark green novelty siding. There is a shed-roofed dormer on the south facade. The house sits high off the ground, with a full fieldstone basement and lattice-work under portions of the wrap-around porch. The porch extends around three facades of the house and features turned columns and knob-shaped pendills; some porch piers are stone while the rest are of brick. The northwest (front) door is wooden paneled and has a one-light transom above. There is another door on the south facade and a basement entrance on the east. The 2-story mitred bay window on the north facade adds elegance to the house. There are 3 windows on the first level (2/2 double-hung), 3 on the second (6/6), and a small window in the gable. Knob-shaped pendills match those on the porch. Most of the windows in the house are 2/2 double-hung and are flanked by black wooden louvered shutters. There is a small 1-story addition on the NE corner.

10. Significance: Situated on land that was a prosperous farm from the 18th C., this house may be a Victorian adaptation of a house built between 1852 and 1865. Owned in the mid-18th C. by Georgetown merchant Andrew Heugh who served as representative from Frederick County to the Maryland House of Delegates between 1768 and 1770, the land was sold by his heirs c. 1810. Between 1811 and 1848, a tenant maintained the farm, then it was sold to Theodore Boucher who in 1857 sold 145 acres to Thomas Homiller. Probably either Boucher or Homiller built a new house to replace an older structure occupied by various tenants. The present house is either a completely new house constructed c. 1880 by Louis Keiser who owned the property from 1875 to 1896 or his extensive remodeling of a mid-Victorian house. During the 1895-1905 period, the electric railroad and improvement of the Rockville Turnpike made this "Alta Vista" area prime for development. This property changed hands several times, being subdivided into smaller "villa and cottage estates". The acreage fronting the house was bought for construction of the Bethesda Y.W.C.A. and the airy Victorian verandah that once looked out on 19th C. Old Georgetown Rd. now faces the 20th C. tennis courts. The trolley right-of-way immediately west of the house, abandoned in 1935, is now a bike path.

11. Researcher and date researched: Anne Cissel-6/79

Eileen McGuckian  
Arch. Description

12. Compiler: Gail Rothrock

13. Date Compiled: 10/79

14. Designation  
Approval     

15. Acreage: 22,008 square ft.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 35/3  
Alta Vista  
MAGI #

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC **Keiser House**

AND/OR COMMON  
**Perry House (Alta Vista)**

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER **5506 Beech Avenue**

CITY, TOWN **Bethesda** VICINITY OF **8** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE **Maryland** COUNTY **Montgomery**

**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"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME **Robert and L.C. Dumaine** Telephone #: **530-8798**

STREET & NUMBER **5506 Beech Avenue**

CITY, TOWN **Bethesda** VICINITY OF **Maryland 20014** STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Montgomery County Courthouse** Liber #: **3984**  
Folio #: **503**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN **Rockville** STATE **Maryland 20850**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE **M-NCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites**

DATE **1976**  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS **Park Historian's Office**

CITY, TOWN **Rockville** STATE **Maryland 20855**

**7 DESCRIPTION**

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

This three bay by four bay, L-shaped house faces northwest. Its gable roofs are covered with slate shingles, and it is sheathed in dark green novelty siding. There is a shed-roofed dormer on the south facade.

The house sits high off the ground, with a full fieldstone basement and latticework under portions of the wrap-around porch. The porch extends around three facades of the house and features turned columns and knob-shaped pendills; some porch piers are stone while the rest are of brick.

The northwest (front) door is wooden paneled and has a one-light transom above. There is another door on the south facade and a basement entrance on the east.

The two-story mitred bay window on the north facade adds elegance to the house. There are three windows on the first level (two-over-two double-hung), three on the second (six-over-six), and a small window in the gable. Knob-shaped pendills match those on the porch.

Most of the windows in the house are two-over-two double-hung and are flanked by black wooden louvered shutters. There is a small one-story addition on the northeast corner of the house.

The attractive yard has many and varied plantings, and is enclosed with a natural split-rail fence.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	Local History	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES **1852/1865/1880**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the mid-18th century Georgetown merchant Andrew Heugh purchased several hundred acres of land for speculation, part of the original land grant called "Leeke Forest" (surveyed in 1688). After serving as representative from Frederick County to the Maryland House of Delegates between 1768 and 1770, Heugh retired to his land located near the road from Georgetown to Frederick.

After his death in 1788, and that of his widow Sarah twenty years later, their heirs sold this tract to Thomas Cramphin.<sup>1</sup>

By 1811 Martha and Zachariah McCubbin owned the land, which now was "...supposed to contain 250 acres. ...with improvements...occupied by tenant, Edward Jones,...lying on the old post road from Georgetown to Rockville above Carey's Tavern...on each side of the road."<sup>2</sup>

The McCubbins sold the land in 1848 for \$2,711.90 to Theodore Boucher.<sup>3</sup> Boucher divided the farm, selling 145 acres for \$7,250 to Thomas Homiller in 1857.<sup>4</sup> This large increase in value was indicative of Montgomery County's renewed prosperity after the lean 1830's and 1840's. In his History of Western Maryland, Scharf noted: "The saddest condition of the county was reached in the 1840's, with decaying farms...The lands bordering the Georgetown-Rockville turnpike were, with few exceptions, a succession of unenclosed fields."<sup>5</sup> The 1850's and 1860's saw renewed prosperity caused by the intensive use of the newer fertilizers and the greater diversity into cereal crops.

It is probable that the second house on this property was built to replace the older structure that had been occupied by the various tenants of the McCubbin years. The McCubbins had never lived at "The Forest", preferring their home at "Huntington". The house shown on the 1865 Martenet and Bond Map was most likely built by Boucher or Homiller between 1852 and 1865.

The present house at 5506 Beech Avenue is either a completely new house constructed in the later Victorian years, circa 1880, or an extensive remodeling and alteration of the mid-Victorian house, using only a few elements such as the foundations and double fireplaces from the earlier house. There is no way to specifically date the erection of the house, but the main architectural features and decorations are of the later Victorian period. These details include the large two-over-two windows, the "Eastlake" type bracketing and spindles on the wrap-around verandah, and the knob-shaped pendills decorating the two story bay.

Louis Keiser and his heirs owned the property from 1875 to 1896,<sup>6</sup> and it seems likely that it was Keiser who was responsible for the reconstruction undertaken at this time. In 1896 the house and land were sold to

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(Continued on Attachment Sheet A)

## Keiser House

Joseph Breen who defaulted on the mortgage, and the house and land were sold at public auction. The property was advertised as "A 145 acre farm...in a good neighborhood...with a comfortable, two-story frame house," fertile, well-watered fields and necessary outbuildings.<sup>7</sup> The Keigers repurchased the property, but soon sold it to Thomas Ramsey.<sup>8</sup>

During these years, 1895-1905, the coming of the electric railroad and the improvement of the Rockville Turnpike had made this "Alta Vista" area prime for speculation and development. The trolley line, under various names and owners, had at first gone only as far as the Bethesda Park Amusement Park (owned by the line), but that had been destroyed by a hurricane. By 1900 the line extended all the way to Rockville. Between 1896 and 1907 this property and the surrounding lands changed hands several times, owned variously by the Creston Land Improvement Co., Bethesda Land Co., Capitol Cemetery Co., and Thomas Ramsey and Cyrus Keiser. Each time the land was platted, smaller and smaller "villa and cottage sites" were sold. By the time of the final plat of the Bethesda Land Company the streets were named after trees, and this property was shown as Lot 26 on Beech Avenue, containing three acres.<sup>9</sup>

Between 1907 and 1937 the house and parts of Lots 26 & 27 were owned by Mary Perry or her heirs, but the property was gradually partitioned into smaller lots.

The acreage fronting the house was bought for construction of the Bethesda Y.W.C.A. and the airy Victorian verandah that once looked out on 19th century Old Georgetown Road now faces the 20th century tennis courts. Extensive interior remodeling has taken place, also. The trolley right-of-way immediately west of the house, abandoned in 1935, is now a bike path.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Land Records of Montgomery County, Md., K/141.
2. Ibid., P/391 (1811).
3. Ibid., STS 3/591 (1848).
4. Ibid., JGH 6/47 (1857).
5. Scharf, Thomas J., History of Western Maryland, Vol. I, Philadelphia: Lewis H. Everts, 1882, p. 653.
6. Land Records, op. cit., EBP 13/139 (1875).
7. Montgomery County Equity Records, Equity 1356, Judgment JA 55/95-120 (1896).
8. Land Records, op. cit., TD 14/237 (1900); TD 17/34 (1901).
9. Ibid., Plat 2/107 (1907).

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Montgomery County Land, Plat and Judgment Records.

Maps: Martenet & Bond 1865; Hopkins Atlas, 1879; Map of Bethesda Park by Bethesda Land Company, undated (in files of Montgomery County Historical Society).

General histories of County and Bethesda, including development of trolley lines.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 22,008 square feet

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Bounded on the west by Beech Avenue. Bounded on the north by abandoned right-of-way of trolley company.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Anne W. Cissel

Eileen McGuckian - Arch. Description

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

DATE

June 1979

STREET & NUMBER

Box 87

TELEPHONE

926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

STATE

Maryland 20753

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  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

1608505704

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM  
for the  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>				
COMMON:				
AND/OR HISTORIC: Alta Vista				
<b>2. LOCATION</b>				
STREET AND NUMBER: East side of Old Georgetown Road, north of Cedar Lane				
CITY OR TOWN: Bethesda				
STATE: Maryland			COUNTY: Montgomery	
<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>				
CATEGORY <i>(Check One)</i>	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE <i>(Check One or More as Appropriate)</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Specify)</i> _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____
<b>4. OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>				
OWNER'S NAME: Various private owners				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	
<b>5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b>				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Montgomery County Courthouse				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Rockville			STATE: Maryland	
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):				
<b>6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS</b>				
TITLE OF SURVEY: None				
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Uncltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is an early twentieth century neighborhood that developed near a trolley line. The houses are frame and are of squarish proportions, everal with hipped-roofs. The detailing is colonial revival, with turned posts, moulded lintels, friezes and boxed cornices. There are also some bungalow-style houses with dormered roofs and oblisque-like porch posts.

One house is a Victorian building that predates the subdivision. It is frame, with a three bay facade covered by a one story porch.

The trolly right-of-way can still be identified; it is now a hiking trail.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**B. SIGNIFICANCE**

**PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- Pre-Columbian
- 15th Century
- 16th Century
- 17th Century
- 18th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century

**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)**

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal<br><input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric<br><input type="checkbox"/> Historic<br><input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture<br><input type="checkbox"/> Architecture<br><input type="checkbox"/> Art<br><input type="checkbox"/> Commerce<br><input type="checkbox"/> Communications<br><input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Education<br><input type="checkbox"/> Engineering<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industry<br><input type="checkbox"/> Invention<br><input type="checkbox"/> Landscape<br><input type="checkbox"/> Architecture<br><input type="checkbox"/> Literature<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Political<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-<br>losophy<br><input type="checkbox"/> Science<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture<br><input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-<br>itarian<br><input type="checkbox"/> Theater<br><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)<br><hr/><br><hr/><br><hr/><br><hr/><br><hr/><br><hr/> |
|--|--|---|---|

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Christopher Owens, Park Historian

ORGANIZATION: M-NCPPC

DATE: 10 Sept 74

STREET AND NUMBER:  
8787 Georgia Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring

STATE: Maryland

**12 State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)**

Significance of this property is:  
 National  State  Local

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



(ALTA VISTA NEIGHBORHOOD)

NAME

LOCATION 5511

LOCUST AVE., BETHESDA, MD

M: #35-3

FACADE 5

PHOTO TAKEN 9/10/74

M. Dwyer



NAME

(ALTA VISTA NEIGHBORHOOD)

LOCATION

5506 BEECH AVE., BETHESDA, MD.

M.I. # 35-3

FACADE

N

PHOTO TAKEN

9/10/74

M. RWEYER