NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior**
**National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word process, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Takoma Avenue Historic District

other names M:36-51

## 2. Location

street & number 7906, 7908, 7910, 7912, 7914 Takoma Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Takoma Park/Silver Spring ☐ vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Montgomery code 031 zip code 20910

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying office/Title — Date 10-27-04

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying office/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:
- ☐ entered in the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**
(Check as many boxes as 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**
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 5 | 0 | Total |

**Name of related multiple property listing**
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Subdivisions and Architecture Planned and Designed by Charles M. Goodman Associates in Montgomery County, Maryland

**number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

## 6. Function of Use

**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Contemporary

**Materials**
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, BRICK
walls WOOD, BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other

**Narrative Description**
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**Description Summary:**

The Takoma Avenue Historic District consists of five single-family dwellings, properties number 7906, 7908, 7910, 7912, and 7914, on the northwest side of Takoma Avenue on the border of Takoma Park and Silver Spring in Montgomery County, Maryland. All five houses were constructed in 1951, are identical in their layout and construction, and were designed by Charles M. Goodman. In Goodman's parlance, the house was titled Unit House No. 1-2L (presumably, Unit No. 1 with two levels). The houses sit on the border of the railroad suburb of Takoma Park (one house is technically within the suburb while the other four are just over the line in Silver Spring), just to the north of the Takoma Park Historic District, which is both a local and National Register historic district. The area immediately surrounding the Goodman houses was primarily developed between the 1910s and 1940s with two-story Colonials, Cape Cods, and bungalows. The street pattern is a modified grid. Mature trees line the streets.

**Architectural Description**

The architect Charles M. Goodman pioneered the development of Contemporary housing for single-family residences in metropolitan Washington in the post-World War II period. When other architects were designing traditional Colonial Revival houses, Cape Cods, ranches, and basic split-levels, Goodman was inventing wood, used brick, and glass boxes that nestled into the landscape and defined Washington's version of "Contemporary" architecture. Goodman's work was well-known at the time as being progressive in its approach. His houses were featured prominently in all of the shelter magazines of his day.

Exterior

The houses on Takoma Avenue, some of Goodman's earliest work in Montgomery County, exhibit signature features of Charles M. Goodman's design credo: angled or "skew" siting on their lots, the actual placement of the houses within the lot to conform to topography, the interesting juxtaposition of a variety of materials (brick, wood, plywood, and glass), and a preponderance of glass to provide a connection between the interior and exterior environments.

Goodman's designs were noteworthy for making a small house seem quite spacious by employing an open plan and large expanses of glass that reached out to incorporate the outdoors. The Takoma Avenue houses follow Goodman's "Unit House No. 1-2L" plan, comprising a brick-veneered ground-level mass set up as a base for a framed first-floor block that cantilevered out over it on two sides. The light-filled house was set into the landscape in such a way that the ground floor had some excavated, finished space and some crawl space. Poured concrete steps led up from street level to a first-level side entry, the door of which was recessed under an overhanging roof and featured an exterior planting bed. Four of the five

houses have enclosed this porch using transparent materials (windows, sliding glass doors, etc.) in order to gain more interior space. Since these alterations do not obscure the original recessed entry area and are reversible in nature, the overall integrity of the houses is not compromised in a significant way. Windows were a combination of steel casements and wood-framed "view walls" of plate glass.

The kitchen and living/dining room zone took up the back end of the house while the bathroom and three bedrooms occupied the street end. The rear living/dining room wall featured a striking exposed-frame end wall that was almost entirely glazed except for a door. The bedroom zone's elevation – the end-gable street side – featured vertical tongue-and-groove wood siding with a center infill component of fixed glass, steel casements, and plywood panels. Goodman's sensitivity to issues of siting and privacy are evident in that the street elevation typically featured more solids and fewer voids, whereas the non-street elevations – the more private part of the house – were almost entirely glass.[1]

As with most Goodman houses of the period, the original roofing material was built-up tar and gravel. All five of the houses now employ asphalt shingle, a material Goodman used in many of his designs from the late 1950s. The roofs were vented through circular vent holes in the side overhanging eaves. The front and rear end gables featured only two small vents. The houses featured Goodman's typical 4"x 4" metal box gutters.

Interior

The Takoma Avenue houses exhibit the "open floor plan" that was characteristic of all of Goodman's work. The open floor plan was primarily used in the postwar Contemporary idiom as a means of providing more flexibility for the American family. It facilitated a more casual style of living, and responded to the changing status of women by integrating the kitchen area into the activities of the household. In addition, Goodman was well known for making the most out of small spaces. The Takoma Avenue houses exhibit his trademark tools for accomplishing this, including using ceilings that matched rooflines, having short hallways, and siting windows across from bedroom doors for more expansive sight lines.

The square-shaped living/dining room had a plastered "cathedral" ceiling that matched the roofline. The living/dining room was separated from the kitchen by a varnished tongue-and-groove knotty-pine wall that was left open near the window wall, providing an opening between the kitchen and the dining area. The kitchen featured metal cupboards with chrome pulls manufactured by Amerock. Above the cabinets were Masonite sliding cupboards mounted close to the ceiling.

The typical excavated area on the ground floor contained a narrow recreation room with floor-to-ceiling triple windows on the street side, plus laundry and heater rooms. The flooring was asphalt tile.

[1] This principle is evident elsewhere in Goodman's work, e. g. in the Wheatoncrest subdivision (see MPDF).

The large single bath featured a counter that ran the length of the room and incorporated a single sink. A window that spanned the distance from the ceiling to the countertop was located to the right of the basin. The gray ceramic-tile floor was laid in a basketweave pattern while the walls feature standard square gray ceramic tiles.

The Takoma Avenue houses generally retain a good level of integrity. Where alterations have occurred, most of the changes are reversible, or utilize compatible substitute materials. Typical changes include the enclosure of porches with windows and glass doors, and the replacement of double-casement steel windows with single-casement metal or wood-based windows. In one house, a rear addition has obscured the original exposed-frame glass wall, but this situation is reversible. These changes do not affect the properties' ability to meet the registration requirements specified in the associated Multiple Property Documentation Form.

The following table lists the properties within the Takoma Avenue Historic District:

| Address | Date of Construction | Architect | Builder Co. | Builder Name | Contributing (Y or N) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7906 Takoma Avenue | 1951 | Charles M. Goodman | Twin Construction Company | Albert Abramson | Y |
| 7908 Takoma Avenue | 1952 | Charles M. Goodman | Twin Construction Company | Albert Abramson | Y |
| 7910 Takoma Avenue | 1952 | Charles M. Goodman | Twin Construction Company | Albert Abramson | Y |
| 7912 Takoma Avenue | 1952 | Charles M. Goodman | Twin Construction Company | Albert Abramson | Y |
| 7914 Takoma Avenue | 1952 | Charles M. Goodman | Twin Construction Company | Albert Abramson | Y |

## 8. Statement of Significance

### 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 pattern of our history.
- ☐ B Property 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)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or 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.

### Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

### Area of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Community Planning and Development

### Period of Significance

1951-52

### Significant Dates

1951-52

### Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Goodman, Charles M., architect
Abramson, Albert, Twin Construction Co., builder

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

### Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

**Significance Summary**

The Takoma Avenue Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C because its component properties meet the registration requirements for Merchant Builder Houses specified in the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Subdivisions and Architecture Planned and Designed by Charles M. Goodman Associates in Montgomery County, Maryland" (Section F, pp. 125-126). The houses at 7906-7914 Takoma Avenue retain integrity of location, design, materials, setting, and association, and are good representative examples of their type.

**History and Context**

The houses at 7906-7914 Takoma Avenue represent the Contemporary idiom in architecture as practiced by Charles M. Goodman in the Washington, DC area in the post-World War II period.[1] Goodman was one of a small group of American architects whose work propelled the Contemporary vocabulary onto the national scene. In addition, he played a primary role, nationally, in incorporating the trained architect into the merchant-builder housing process.

In a metropolitan region known for its architectural nostalgia, the houses on Takoma Avenue represent an avant-garde architectural statement. With their cantilevered, glazed first stories perched above the ground-floor used-brick box, these houses are strikingly distinct from the small Cape Cods, bungalows, and Colonial Revival houses in their immediate environs. The Takoma Avenue Historic District meets National Register Criterion C for its association with the architecture of the American Contemporary movement, especially as it was developed in the mid-Atlantic region by Charles Goodman. The exteriors of the Takoma Avenue houses exhibit the features that make Goodman residences so distinctive: extensive use of glass, exposed window frames as structure, expanses of used brick, innovative positioning of the house on its lot, and lack of superfluous trim. Inside, the houses feature open and flexible floor plans, handled in a subtle way to expand the sense of space and volume. As one homeowner said, "If you can see straight through from front to the garden in back, it must be a Goodman."

Charles M. Goodman is increasingly recognized as a pioneering and innovative architect of the post-World War II period who, in addition to other accomplishments, brought affordable, Contemporary housing in naturalistic settings to middle-income people. The full extent of Goodman's legacy, particularly in Montgomery County, Maryland, is described in the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form titled "Subdivisions and Architecture Planned and Designed by Charles M. Goodman Associates in Montgomery County, Maryland. This nomination has been developed by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission,

[1] Refer to MPDF pp. 1-2 for discussion of the use of the term "Contemporary" by Goodman and his contemporaries, and its relationship to the larger Modern Movement.

**Major Bibliographical References:**

A comprehensive bibliography appears in the associated Multiple Property Documentation Form, pp.172-181.

Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning, Montgomery County Historic Preservation Section by Elizabeth Jo Lampl (October 2003).

*Early Origins of Takoma Park*

As described in the Takoma Park Amendment to the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation:

> Takoma Park is historically significant as both an early railroad suburb and a streetcar community. It was one of the earliest railroad suburbs of Washington – second after Linden was established in 1873. The community was given new lifeblood in the early-20th century with the opening of streetcar lines, which led to the development of new subdivisions in Takoma Park. . . . In 1883, Benjamin Franklin Gilbert, a Washington real estate promoter, purchased a 90-acre farm for the establishment of Takoma Park. Gilbert promoted the healthy quality of Takoma Park's natural environment – fresh water, trees, and a high elevation to escape the malaria-ridden District of Columbia. Gilbert's choice of names emphasized the natural setting. He initially called the community "Takoma," based on a Native American word meaning "exalted" or "near heaven." Later he added the "Park" appellation to draw attention to its healthy environment. He named the streets for trees which grew in the area, including Chestnut, Hickory, Holly, and Oak.
>
> The first streetcar line in Takoma Park, operated by the Baltimore and Washington Transit Company, opened in 1897. The establishment of this line, in addition to the Washington and Maryland line (1910-27) led to the creation of eight additional subdivisions extending out from the trolley lines. By 1922, the population had soared to 4,144, making Takoma Park the tenth largest incorporated town in Maryland. . . . Among the streets which developed during the 1910s and 1920s in response to the establishment of streetcar lines are Willow, Park, Philadelphia, and Carroll Avenues. Scores of bungalow- and Craftsman-style houses and catalog-order houses were built in this era.[2]

*Postwar Development*

[2] "Takoma Park, Approved and Adopted Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County, Maryland (Maryland-National capital Park and Planning Commission), 1993.

In 1951, Benjamin Abramson, his son Albert Abramson, and Albert's brother-in-law Oscar Margulies bought a parcel of land on the northwest side of Takoma Avenue between Boston and Richmond Avenues at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring line. The plat shows that the owners had purchased 13 lots in Block 67 of the T.P.L&T. Co. (Takoma Park Land and Trust Company) Subdivision of Takoma Park, Maryland. The three owners had bought the land from Friends House, Inc. in June 1951 and wanted to erect Contemporary houses on the site. One month later, Charles M. Goodman completed a set of drawings for a 3-bedroom Unit House for Albert Abramson.

In Goodman's parlance, the house was titled Unit House No. 1-2L (presumably, Unit House No. 1 with two levels). It was designed for the Twin Construction Company. The five houses were constructed on Takoma Avenue according to his design in 1951 and 1952. They are reminiscent of some of the houses Goodman built in Hollin Hills, in their use of a cantilevered upper floor.

On April 20, 1952, the *Washington Post* real estate section featured an advertisement on the houses, calling them "Terrace Homes for Modern Living." The Twin Construction Co. was identified as the builder, and Colonial Investments of Washington DC was the real estate agency. The advertisement promoted the houses as being located within a five-block walk to shopping in Silver Spring, and close to good schools.

Takoma Avenue Historic District (M:36-51)
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Maryland
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 18 | 325210 | 4317220 | 3 | | | |
| 2 | | | | 4 | | | |

☐ See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification**
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer Robbins, Leonard Roberge, and Elizabeth Jo Lampl
organization n/a. date September 29, 2003
street & number 7914 Takoma Ave. telephone 301-920-0105
city or town Silver Spring state Maryland zip code 20910

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items**
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name
street & number telephone
city or town state zip code

**Paperwork Reduction Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

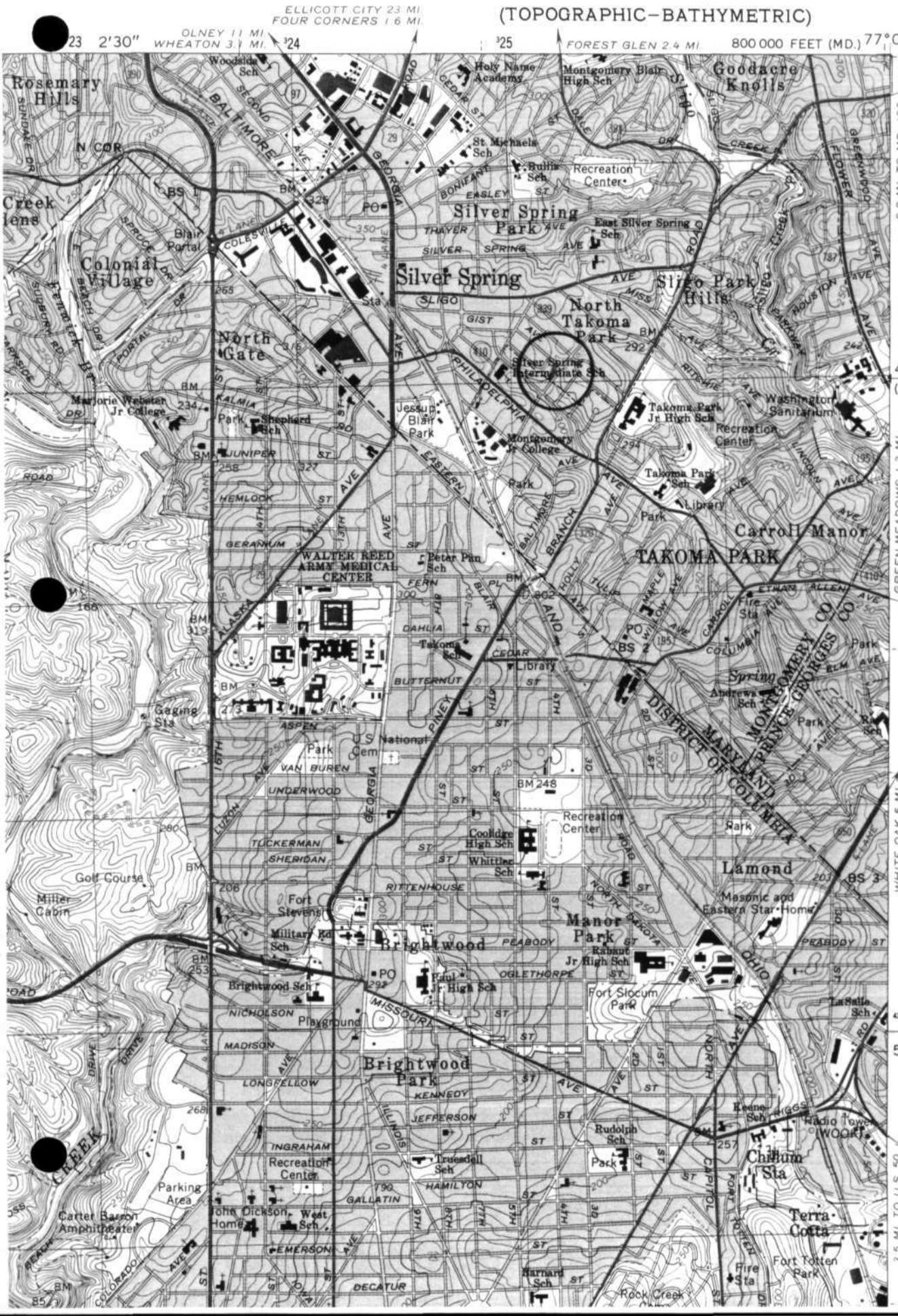
The nominated property comprises Lots 92 through 96, Block 67 of the Takoma Park Land and Trust Company subdivision, as described among the land records of Montgomery County, Maryland.

**Boundary Justification:**

The nominated property encompasses the five suburban lots historically associated with the resource, and conforms to the original property lines on the north, south, east, and west.

# WASHINGTON WEST QUADRANGLE
## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA–MARYLAND–VIRGINIA
## 7.5 MINUTE SERIES
## (TOPOGRAPHIC–BATHYMETRIC)

5662 III SW (BELTSVILLE)



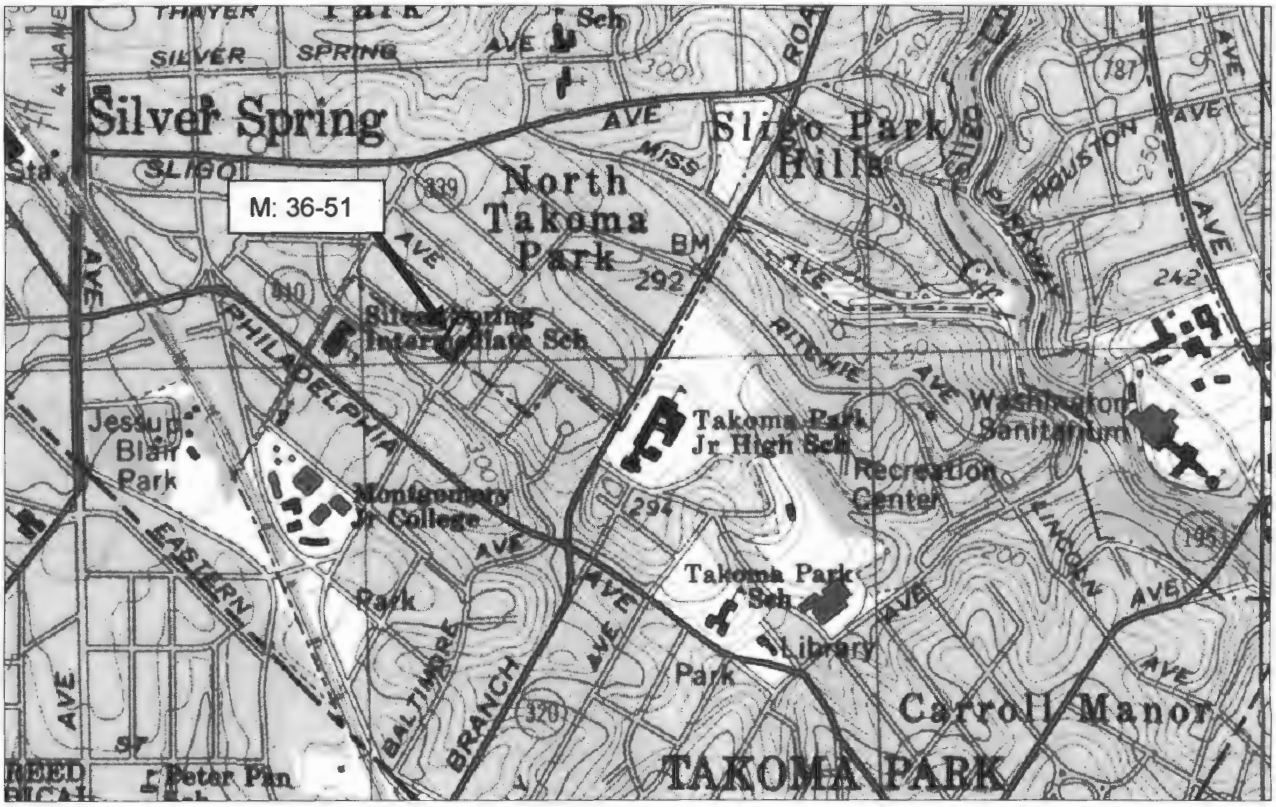

M-36-51

7906-7914 TAKOMA AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

18-325210
4317220

M: 36-51
Takoma Avenue Historic District
7906-7914 Takoma Avenue, Silver Spring
Washington West quadrangle 1965, Photorevised 1983, Bathymetry added 1982




Montgomery County Tax Map JN342, Block 67, Lots 92-96

JKC 3/23/2015

M:36-51
7914 Takoma Avenue, 7906 to 7914 Takoma Avenue Historic District
Montgomery County, Maryland
Jennifer Robbins
September 25, 2003
Maryland SHPO
Northwest Elevation
#1 of 9

M:36-51
7914 Takoma Avenue; 7906 to 7914 Takoma Avenue Historic District
Montgomery County, Maryland
Jennifer Robbins
September 26, 2003
MD SHPO
Northeast Elevation
#2 of 9

7914

M:36-51
7914 Takoma Avenue; 7906 to 7914 Takoma Avenue Historic District
Montgomery County, Maryland
Jennifer Robbins
September 26, 2003
MD SHPO
Southeast Elevation
#3 of 9

M:36-51
7914 Takoma Avenue; 7906 to 7914 Takoma Avenue Historic District
Montgomery County, Maryland
Jennifer Robbins
September 25, 2003
MD SHPO
Southwest Elevation
#4 of 9

M: 36-51
7910 Takoma Avenue; 7906 to 7914 Takoma Avenue Historic District
Montgomery County, Maryland
Jennifer Robbins
September 26, 2003
MD SHPO
South Elevation showing Enclosed Porch with window
#5 of 9

M:36-51
Takoma Avenue Streetscape; 7906 to 7914 Takoma Avenue Historic District
Montgomery County, Maryland
Jennifer Robbins
September 26, 2003
MD SHPO
View of 7908 and 7910 Takoma Avenue looking northwest from across Takoma Avenue

#6 of 9

M:36-51

Takoma Avenue Streetscape; 7906 to 7914 Takoma Avenue Historic District

Montgomery County, Maryland

Jennifer Robbins

September 26, 2003

MD SHPO

View of 7912 and 7914 Takoma Avenue looking northwest from or across Takoma Avenue

#7 of 9

M:36-51
7912 Takoma Avenue; 7906 to 7914 Takoma Avenue Historic District
Montgomery County, Maryland
Jennifer Robbins
September 25, 2003
MD SHPO
South Elevation showing Enclosed porch with sliding glass door
#8 of 9

M:36-51

7912 Takoma Avenue, 7906 to 7914 Takoma Avenue Historic District

Montgomery County, Maryland

Jennifer Robbins

September 26, 2003

MD SHPO

View from living room of yard through West Elevation glass wall

#9 of 9