

Maryland Historic Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
 HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. ^{PG} 66-37-43
 Magi No.
 DOE ___ yes ___ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic The Deckman House
 and/or common

2. Location

Street & number: 6704 Rhode Island Avenue x not for publication
 City, town: The City of College Park ___ vicinity of 5th Cong. District
 State: Maryland County Prince George's County

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	x occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
x building(s)	x private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	x private residence
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	x yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	x not applicable	___ no	___ military	x other: Rented Out

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

Name: James Deckman
 Street & number Telephone no: 301-261-1805
 City, town State & zip code: Maryland

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Liber
 Street & number folio
 City, town State

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys: None

Title
 Date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local
 Depository for survey records
 City, town State

7. Description

PG:
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Condition		Check One	Check One	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input 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			

According to James Deckman, the current owner of the 6704 Rhode Island Avenue house, his father, Joseph H. Deckman, basically designed the house. The F. L. Wakins Building Company built the 6704 Rhode Island Avenue house as well as other homes in the Calvert Hills area. The Rhode Island Avenue house was built in ca. 1943, and its walls were constructed with cinder blocks. However, several years after its original construction its front wall was refaced with brick. The cinder blocks were made of steel waste products from Bethlehem Steel, which were ground into small pellets and mixed with cement and sand. The product was then molded to look like clapboard in order to give the house a colonial-like style. Furthermore, James Deckman insists that the brick veneer later installed on the front of the house was again attempting to mimic the colonial style. The roof was constructed with sheeting lumber.

The front door of the house is located in the center of the house. Walking through the front door brings one into the living room, which extends off to the left of the house. The living room has one window facing the front yard and two windows facing out to the left side of the house. The living room also has a chimney, which lines the left side of the house. To the right front of the house is the dining room with one window facing the front yard and one bay window facing out the right side of the house. Though the bay window was not part of the original structure, the installation of this window and the house's new brick veneer have basically been the only changes made to the house's original structure. The kitchen is behind the dining room, and has windows facing out the right and back sides of the house.

The stairs that lead to the second floor are located in the back right-hand corner of the living room. The stairs end in the center of the second floor, and a small landing is situated at the top of the stairs. The second floor has three bedrooms, one linen closet, and one bathroom. The master bedroom and another bedroom have dormer windows which look out to the front yard.

There is a basement and an attic in the house. Finally, there is a driveway to the right of the house that leads to a small garage that is attached to the house. Like the house's original siding, the garage was constructed of cinder-blocks molded to look like colonial-style clapboard.

8. Significance

PG:
Survey No. 66-37-43

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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:

Builder/Architect:

Check:

Applicable Criteria: A B C DApplicable Exception: A B C D E F GLevel of Significance: National State Local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The 6704 Rhode Island Avenue house was built in ca. 1943, designed by its original owner, Joseph H. Deckman, and built by the F. L. Wakins Building Company. The house is now owned by Joseph Deckman's son, named James Deckman, who acquired the house in approximately 1993. James Deckman now rents the house out to students from the University of Maryland, but he anticipates that his children will inherit and live in the house someday. The F. L. Wakins Building Company constructed several other houses in the Calvert Hills area.

In regard to the integrity of the house, though a bay window was installed in the dining room and the house's front side has received a new brick veneer, the 6704 Rhode Island Avenue house basically remains in its original condition. Moreover, the original cinder-block siding of the house remains under its brick veneer. For this reason, it appears that the house maintains its overall integrity. Additionally, as many old trees surround the house, the front and back yards of the 6704 Rhode Island Avenue house maintain much of their original landscape and integrity.

The house's most significant element is its innovative building material, which was apparently invented by Joseph Deckman who received a civil engineering degree from the University of Maryland in 1933. The cinder blocks lining the sides of the house and garage were made of steel waste products from Bethlehem Steel, which were ground into small pellets and mixed with cement and sand. The product was then molded to look like clapboard in order to give the house a colonial-like style.

The 6704 Rhode Island Avenue house is also an example of middle-class suburban development immediately preceding the suburban building boom that occurred after World War Two. As Kenneth Jackson has explained, between 1929 and 1933 there was very little suburban development. Therefore, the Deckman house was built at the beginning of a new phase in American suburban development. The house is also representative of the "simpler" house design and the so-called Comfortable House design, as opposed to the Victorian house design, that were both first popularized at the beginning of the twentieth century. Moreover, the design of the house was greatly influenced by the colonial revival style, particularly the simpler form of the colonial revival home that was first popularized in the early 1920s, but became quite popular after the Great Depression from the late 1930s to the 1950s.(p. 325) Finally, like many of the other houses in the Calvert Hills area, the 6704 Rhode Island Avenue house may be categorized as a "cape" style home.

9. Major Bibliographic References

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.
 Mark, Clifford Edward. *The American Family Home: 1800-1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986.
 Jackson, Kenneth. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1985.
 Gowans, Alan. *The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986.
 Jones, Robert. *Authentic Small Houses of the Twenties*. New York: Dover Publications, 1987.
 Brooke Orr's phone interview with James Deckman, March 2, 1998.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: one quarter of an acre

Quadrangle Scale _____

Quadrangle Scale _____

UTM References: (do not complete UTM references)

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

State	Code	County	Code
State	Code	County	Code

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Brooke Orr, Graduate Student at The George Washington University	
Organization: GWU's Historic Preservation Class, History 278	Date: 3-2-98
Street & Number: 1921 Kalorama Road, N.W.	Telephone: 202-319-3156
City/Town: Washington, D.C.	State: DC

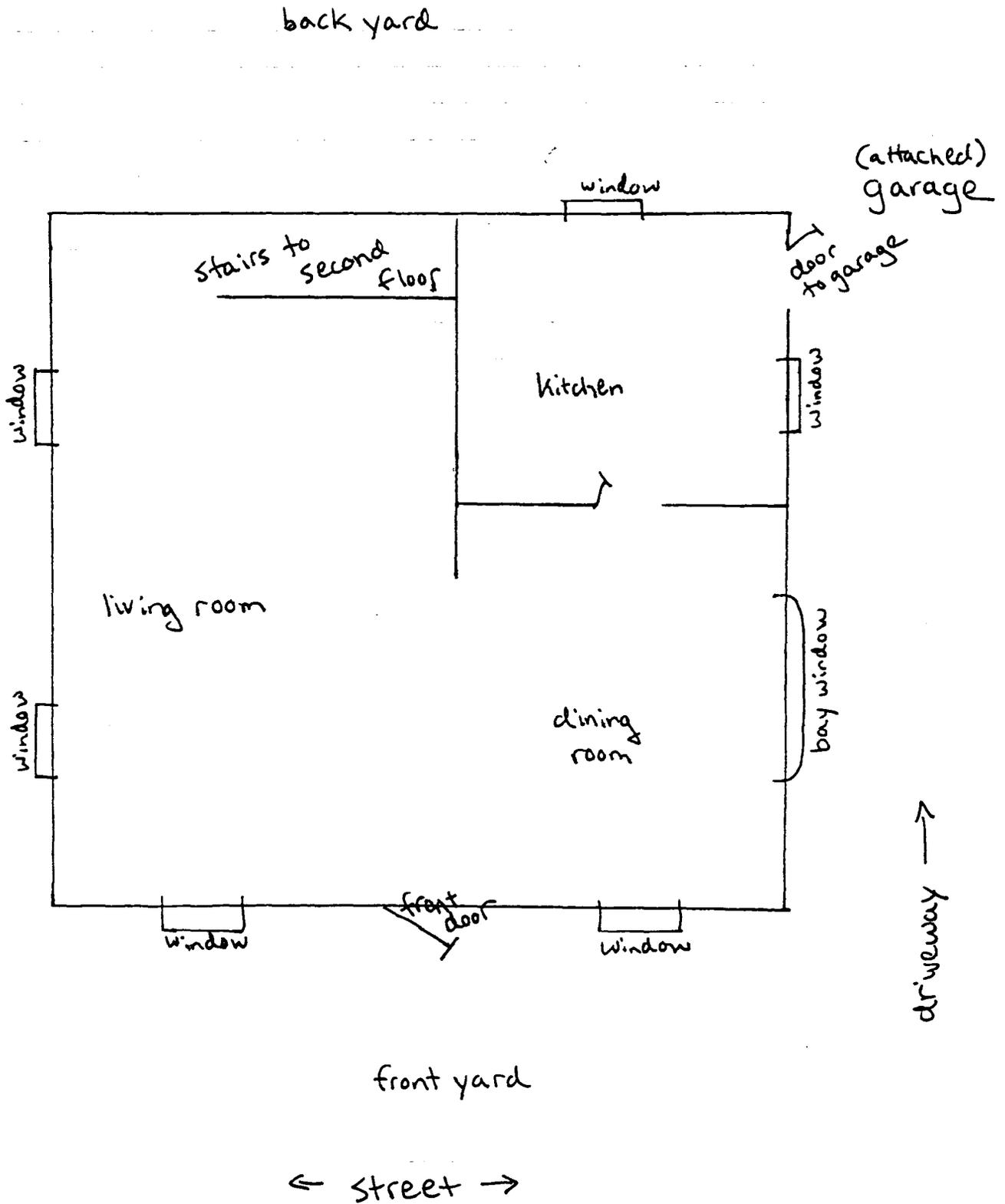
The Maryland Historical Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights

Return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, MD
21401
(301) 269-2438

6704 Rhode Island Avenue
First Floor

PG: 66-37-43



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