

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**



**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Castella House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 4711 Sheridan Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Riverdale \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district \_\_\_\_\_

state Maryland \_\_\_\_\_ county Prince George's

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Kenneth A. Pearson

street & number 4711 Sheridan Street telephone no.: 277-3052

city, town Riverdale state and zip code MD 20737

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 5123

street & number Main Street folio 190

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 \_\_\_\_\_

<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 of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

The Castella house is located on Sheridan Street, just east of the B & O Railroad line in the old section of Riverdale Park, Maryland. The house, built in 1907, sits on a corner lot with a free standing garage, fronting 48th Avenue, in the rear.

The house is basically square, one and one-half stories high, and three bays wide. The dominant feature of the house is the gambrel roof with a cutaway front porch and intersecting gables. It is of frame construction with a concrete foundation and partial basement. Vinyl siding covers the original clapboard and the shingle roof has been replaced. Decorative brackets, located along the overhanging roof, are original.

The north and principal facade sits with the gambrel end frontally towards Sheridan Street. The first story has two 2/2 double hung wooden sash windows and a wooden panel with triple light door, probably original. The gambrel has a 2/2 window flanked on either side by a single light pane. The porch is cut into the facade; the upper section of the gambrel creating the roof of the porch. Four round wooden columns with a base and capital support this roof; each column rests on a brick pier. An open wooden railing surrounds the sides and front, breaking between the two center piers for an entrance. A new hardwood floor has just been laid on the porch. The only decorative trim is the wooden bracketed eaves.

The east facade, fronting on 48th Avenue, is three bays wide and has a gable dormer with a projecting pediment. Three 2/2 windows are unevenly spaced on the first story. Two 2/2 windows are located in the gable. One cellar window, that may have originally been a coal chute, is found near the north end.

The west facade is similar to its opposite side; the only difference being the window configuration on the first story. Only two windows are placed here, one larger 2/2 towards the south and a smaller window close to it on the north end.

A newly reconstructed porch shelters the south facade of this house. This deck retains the original roof line and standing-seam tin roof. An entrance is located on the western side of this facade and two 2/2 windows are located on the second floor.

The interior of the house is basically divided into four separate parts. The entrance, located in the northwest section, opens into the stairhall. The stair rises from the north along the west wall and turns 90 degrees at the landing to the second floor. It is a closed string stair with oak turned balusters and

4711 Sheridan Street  
Castella House

#### 7. Description (cont.)

a mushroom shaped handrail. The newel post is also turned with a rounded cap.

The living room and dining room extend along the east wall with entrances into both rooms from the stairhall (the dining hall is reach by an angled hall off the stairhall). The kitchen is located in the rear western quadrant.

The second floor is divided into three rooms and a bathroom. The front room runs the width of the house with a closet in the east gable eave. Another bedroom is located in the center section of the east wall, with its closet using the other half of the gable's eave. The last room runs the width of the rear facade and is currently used as a den. The bathroom is tucked into the gable on the western side. Modern fixtures have replaced the original bathroom plumbing.

A partial basement extends along the front of the house with a crawl space in the rear. The stairs lead down from the kitchen.

When the present owner purchased the house, it was in need of repair both structurally and aesthetically. Until this time, little changes had been made throughout the house. Steel beams were added to prevent sagging of the first floor joists circa 1930. The coil burner was converted to oil, probably at this time. The decorative trim of the living room was different and probably not original to the rest of the house. The baseboards, door and window surrounds located in the dining room and second floor bedrooms all had original trim. The present owner retained all of the trim but added the crown molding, chair molding and modallions in the dining room. Wherever possible the original plaster was retained. The kitchen was completely remodeled as was the pantry. Other recent changes include a new heating system, new plumbing and updated electricity.

Despite the obvious changes, the addition of vinyl siding, back deck and a new porch floor on the exterior, the new kitchen, updated HVAC systems and added decorative elements in the interior, much of the original fabric still remains intact.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. PG:68-4.32

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"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
			<input type="checkbox"/> science
			<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
			<input type="checkbox"/> social/
			<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
			<input type="checkbox"/> theater
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1907 Builder/Architect Unknown

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 Castella House is a typical example of the early twentieth century "Dutch Colonial" cottage built in the suburbs of Washington; its main emphasis the intersecting gambrel and gable roof lines and cutaway front porch. The house was built during a time of major development along the B & O Railroad and especially in Riverdale Park.

The subdivision of Riverdale Park was platted on land that belonged to the Calvert family of Maryland for much of the nineteenth century. In 1887, the Riverdale Park Company, a New York real estate firm, purchased a 474 acre lot with plans to develop the subdivision of Riverdale Park.<sup>1</sup>

From its conception, Riverdale Park was promoted as one of the more desirable suburbs of Washington. Its location along B & O Railroad line from Washington afforded both the convenience of an easy commute to the city and the picturesque quality of a rural subdivision. The subdivision's grid like streets were tree-lined and included open areas and circles. Most of the principal streets included such modern amenities as concrete sidewalks and sewers.<sup>2</sup> The schoolhouse, several goods stores, a church and both telegraph and telephone communication all enticed people who worked in Washington to move there. By the early years of the twentieth century, close to eighty residences had already been erected.<sup>3</sup> Many of these houses were typical of the suburban ideal growing throughout the major cities of the United States: comfortable and affordable houses for the middle class ranging from lavish Queen Anne to simple cottage style.

Charles R. Mangum of Riverdale bought lot 10 of block 21 from the Riverdale Park Company in 1905 with the intent to build. Two years later, the property with improvements was sold at public sale to Aspacia Herrell.<sup>4</sup> At the same time Herrell purchased lot 15 (of block 21) which abutted the rear of this property. As the house on this back property is almost identical in plan to 4711 Sheridan, it is likely both houses were built at the same time. Another possibility would have had Herrell build the rear house

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## 8. Significance (cont.)

based on the model of his own. In either case, he could not hold onto the property because of mortgage defaults and only two years later deeded both lots to the Laurel Building Association. This company retained the property until 1914 during which time it was used as rental property (although a perusal of the 1910 Census shows very few renters on Sheridan Street). By 1912-1913, the suburban directory shows that a Charles F. Castella, working as a telegraph operator for Western Union, lived at Jackson near Arthur Avenue.<sup>5</sup> Charles and his wife, Jennie, purchased the property outright in 1914 and resided there for the rest of their lives.<sup>6</sup> Jennie worked as the assistant postmaster of Riverdale for several years. After Jennie's death in 1979, her son sold the property to the present owners who renovated the house.

While the Castella House has undergone some changes, the early suburban character and profile of the house, as well as much of its original fabric, remains intact. As such, the house is common to the growth and development of Riverdale Park and neighboring communities. It also signifies the typical middle-class structure of this section of the subdivision.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. PG 63-4-32

Interview with Ken Fearson, March 1990  
Chain of Title, Prince George's County Land Records  
Prince George's County Tax Assessment Books, 1905-1908  
Washington, D.C. City Directories  
Nelson's Suburban Directory of Maryland and Virginia Towns Adjacent to D.C. 1, 2-13

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_ Block 21, Lot 10  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_ Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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 Marcia M. Miller

organization George Washington University date April 1990

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

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  
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21 State Circle  
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