

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey: PG # 68-4-92 Building Date: c.1910

Building Name: 6001 Baltimore Avenue

Location: 6001 Baltimore Avenue
Riverdale, Maryland

Private/Commercial/Occupied/Fair/Inaccessible

Description Summary

6001 Baltimore Avenue (Block 51, Lot 10, Riverdale Park) is a two-story frame hip-roof Foursquare. The house is one of a group of four early 20th century frame Foursquares (built in pairs) within the original subdivision of Riverdale Park. All of the houses appear to have been similar or possibly identical when they were constructed and share the same scale, general fenestration patterns, steeply pitched hip roofs, attic dormers, off-center entries and projecting hexagonal bays at the first story. Both the interiors and exteriors of the four houses have been altered to varying degrees. Originally, all were sheathed with narrow horizontal board siding and had wraparound front porches with shed roofs. The exterior of 5817 Baltimore Avenue is sheathed with asbestos shingles and the wraparound porch has been removed. The exterior of 6001 Baltimore Avenue has been substantially altered. The front porch has been removed and the windows and door are modern replacements. The main (west) facade is now covered with a brick veneer and the other elevations are sheathed with aluminum siding.

Significance Summary

6001 Baltimore Avenue is significant as an example of contractor-built speculative dwellings in emerging early 20th century railroad and streetcar suburbs like Riverdale. It is one of a group of four similar, if not identical, houses built in the popular Foursquare style of the day. The houses are the work of Walter R. Wilson, a Washington, DC, contractor and builder active in Riverdale and the adjacent subdivision of West Riverdale throughout the early 20th century. Although all of the houses have been altered to varying degrees, each retains some original detail and represents the proliferation of a popular building form in the suburb of Riverdale. The houses on Baltimore Avenue have long been used commercially. Wilson acquired Lots 10 and 11 in Block 51 from the Riverdale Park Company in January 1904. Assessment records indicate that Lot 10 was improved by 1910. Wilson retained ownership of the property until November 1919.

Acreeage: 9,000 sq.ft.

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common 6001 Baltimore Avenue

2. Location

street & number 6001 Baltimore Avenue not for publicationcity, town Riverdale vicinity of congressional district 5th

state Maryland county Prince George's

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Margaret B. Bright, etal

street & number 6001 Baltimore Avenue telephone no.:

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 4505

street & number 14735 Main Street folio 759

city, town Upper Marlboro state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title N/A

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input checked="" 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.

6001 Baltimore Avenue (Block 51, Lot 10, Riverdale Park) is a two-story frame, hip-roof Foursquare. The house is one of a group of four; two of the houses are located at 5817 and 6001 Baltimore Avenue (Block 51, Lots 10 and 11) north of Madison Street; the other pair is located at 5001 and 5003 Riverdale Road (Block 49 Lots 1 and 2) at the intersection of Taylor Road. (See attached Locational Map)

All of the houses appear to have been similar or possibly identical when they were constructed and share the same scale, general fenestration patterns, steeply pitched hip roofs, attic dormers, off-center entries and projecting hexagonal bays at the first story. Both the interiors and exteriors of the four houses have been altered to varying degrees. Originally, all were sheathed with narrow horizontal board siding and had wraparound front porches with shed roofs. The assessment of current condition are based on a comparison with the c.1904 photograph (attached) and on oral interviews conducted with property owners.

The exterior of 6001 Baltimore Avenue has been substantially altered. The front porch has been removed. While many of the original window openings remain they are filled with modern replacement windows including 1/1 double-hung and 6/6 double-hung sash. The entry door is a modern replacement. The main (west) facade is now covered with a brick veneer and the north, east and south elevations are sheathed with aluminum siding.

NOTE

1. Oral Interviews conducted with Robert and Shiela Smith (5001 Riverdale Road), June 1991 and with Margaret B. Bright (6001 Baltimore Avenue) June 1991.

8. Significance

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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"/> 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1910 **Builder/Architect** Walter R. Wilson, builder

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 house at 6001 Baltimore Avenue is a significant example of an early 20th century contractor-built speculative dwelling. Part of a group of four similar, if not identical houses built in the popular Foursquare style of the day, the houses are the work of Walter R. Wilson, a Washington, DC, contractor and builder active in Riverdale throughout the early 20th century. Although all of the Wilson Foursquares have been altered to varying degrees, each retains some original detail and represents the proliferation of a popular building form in the emerging suburb of Riverdale. The houses on Riverdale Road remain in residential use, while those on Baltimore Avenue have long been used commercially.

The land on which the subdivision of Riverdale Park was built had been part of the Riversdale Plantation established in 1801 when Henri Joseph Stier, a Belgian aristocrat, purchased 800 acres north of Bladensburg, and began to develop a plantation. After Stier's return to Belgium in 1803, completion of the Riversdale mansion and management of the plantation were taken over by his daughter Rosalie and her husband George Calvert. The Riversdale Plantation became a model of its type, and remained within the Calvert family for three generations.¹ After the death in 1864 of Charles Benedict Calvert (son of Rosalie and George Calvert), a commission was appointed to divide the plantation among his heirs and a 300-acre dower lot (as well as the 175-acre lot adjoining it to the north) was sold by Calvert heirs in 1887 to John Fox, president of the Riverdale Park Company, a New York real estate syndicate which then began to develop the suburb of Riverdale Park.²

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STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM
Statement of Significance (continued)

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The land was platted in 1889 by D. J. Howell. Streets were laid out in a grid pattern, straddling the Washington line of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, which ran north and south through the new community and offered residents easy commuting into the Federal City to the southwest. Park spaces, and circles of green were provided in the plan and parkland was reserved around the Calvert mansion which was to be preserved "as a sacred relic of an era replete with memories."³ Streets were named for the Presidents of the United States, Washington through McKinley, as well as for other distinguished statesman such as Clay, Lafayette and Beale.⁴

Construction of dwellings began in the early 1890s. All were of frame construction, and reflected the popular tastes of the period, as illustrated in house catalogs of those years. Some were pyramidal-roof Foursquares, others front-gabled or cross-gabled; many were highlighted by projecting bays or corner towers, and almost all had prominent wraparound porches with jigsaw decorative details. By the turn of the century, the new suburb had approximately 60 dwellings, a Presbyterian church, a handsome Victorian schoolhouse and a railroad station; the latter two buildings were built by the Riverdale Park Company. There were two general stores, and telephone and telegraph communications were available. Concrete sidewalks were provided for the principal streets.⁵ Because of its convenient location, its efficient line of transportation into the City, its primary school, and its picturesque, tree-lined streets, Riverdale Park became one of the most desirable residential suburbs in the Washington area.

Walter R. Wilson (1867-1953) was a Washington, D.C., builder and real estate investor. An early real estate brochure promoting Riverdale Park depicts houses Wilson was constructing for himself and others as early as 1904.⁶ Two of the houses are those built by Wilson at 5001 and 5003 Riverdale Road, which were completed not long after the photograph was taken. After his purchase of over 200 lots in 1915, Wilson was largely responsible for the development of the nearby West Riverdale Subdivision.⁷ Little else is known about Wilson, although Prince George's County Land Records indicate that he owned land in Riverdale Park, West Riverdale and in the adjacent areas of Hyattsville through the 1930s.

All three houses connected to Wilson in the c.1904 promotional brochure were frame Foursquares.⁸ A popular house form throughout the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, Foursquares were built in a range of sizes and borrowed from a number of styles for decorative inspiration, most commonly the Colonial Revival, Prairie and Craftsman styles.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

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Wilson acquired Lots 10 and 11 in Block 51 from the Riverdale Park Company in January 1904.⁹ Assessment records indicate that Lots 10 and 11 were improved by 1910.¹⁰ Wilson retained ownership of 6001 Baltimore Avenue (Lot 10) until November 1919, when the house was sold to Claud C. and Edna A. Bowers. Since 1975 the house has been owned by the Bowers' daughter, Margaret Bowers Bright.¹¹

NOTES

1. See Pearl, S.G., Riversdale, Historic Structures Report, Part II, History: M-NCPPC, 1979.

2. Prince George's County Land Records, JWB8:426,620; JWB12:484; JWB13:614.

3. Riverdale Park real estate promotional brochure, c. 1904.

4. Prince George's County Subdivision Plats, JWB5:747, Riverdale Park real estate promotional brochure.

5. Riverdale Park Real estate promotional brochure; see also Pearl, S. G., Victorian Pattern Book Houses in Prince George's County, Maryland, M-NCPPC, 1988.

6. "Riverdale Park" real estate promotional brochure, c.1904. No other secondary source material about Wilson is known to exist. The dates given are derived from the Wilson family crypt at Fort Lincoln Cemetery.

7. Francis Carmody had subdivided West Riverdale in 1906. In the fall of 1915, the vast majority of lots remained unsold and Wilson purchased them from Carmody. By the 1930s Wilson had developed most of the lots himself and sold off the houses. See Prince George's Land Records, 18 June 1915, 109:36.

8. The third house has not been identified, and may no longer be extant.

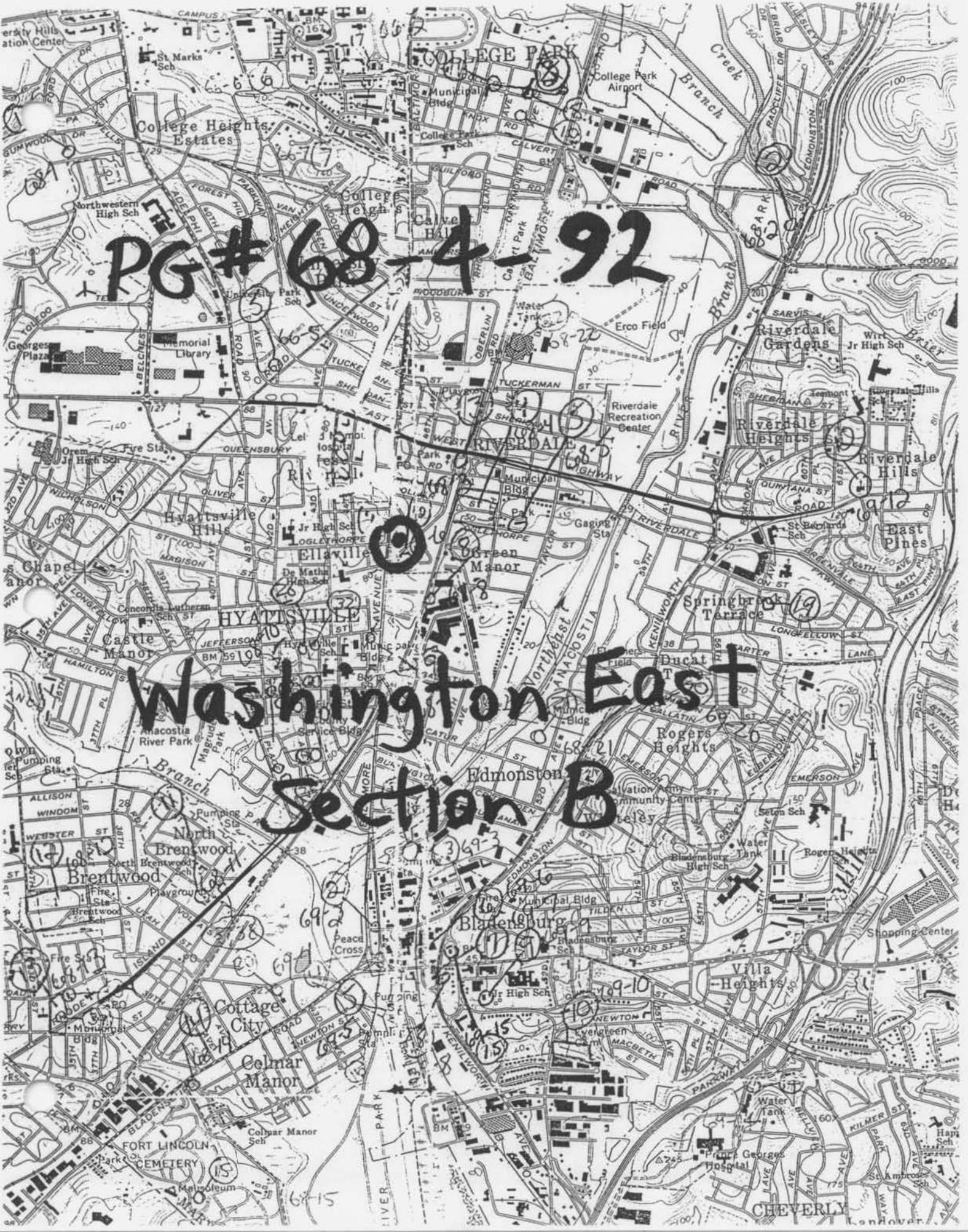
9. Prince George's County Land Records, 18:328.

10. Prince George's County Assessment Records, E.D. # 19, 1910.

11. Prince George's County Land Records, 147:428 and 4505:759.

PG # 68-4-92

Washington East Section B





6001 Baltimore Avenue (at left)

PG # 68-4-92

Riverdale

Prince George's County, Maryland

Howard S. Berger

January 1991

From NW

NEB. MHT, CROWNSVILLE, MD

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