

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey: PG # 68-4-94 Building Date: c.1904

Building Name: 5003 Riverdale Road

Location: 5003 Riverdale Road  
Riverdale, Maryland

Private/Residences/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description Summary

5003 Riverdale Road (Block 49, Lot 2, 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. Of the four houses in the group, 5003 Riverdale Road retains the highest degree of integrity. Although the house is sheathed with asbestos shingles, the original wraparound porch with its turned supports, brackets and simple geometric balustrade remains. The house also retains its original windows and entry door. There is a small shed roof addition to the rear (south).

Significance Summary

5003 Riverdale Road 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 Riverdale Road retain their residential uses. Wilson acquired Lots 1 and 2 in Block 49 from the Riverdale Park Company in February 1900. Assessment records indicate that Lot 2 was improved by 1904 and the house depicted in a real estate promotional brochure soon thereafter. Wilson retained ownership of the property until May 1911.

Acreage: 7,200 sq.ft.

Magi No.

DOE \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common 5003 Riverdale Road

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 5003 Riverdale Road \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Riverdale \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 5th

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

## 3. Classification

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

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

name Frank S. &amp; Sarah S. Glover

street &amp; number 5003 Riverdale Road 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 6093

street &amp; number 14735 Main Street folio 001

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

Survey No. <sup>PF:</sup> 68-4-94

<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.

5003 Riverdale Road (Block 49, Lot 2, 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.

Of the four houses in the group, the exterior of 5003 Riverdale Road retains the highest degree of integrity. Although the house is sheathed with asbestos shingles, the original wraparound porch, with its turned supports and brackets and simple geometric balustrade, remains. The house also retains its original windows and entry door. There is small shed roof addition to the rear (south).

### 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

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.1904 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 5003 Riverdale Road 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM  
Statement of Significance (continued)

Survey No. PG:68-4-94

Section 8 Page 2

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."<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM  
Statement of Significance (continued)

PG:  
Survey No. 68-4-94  
Section 8 Page 3

Wilson acquired Lots 1 and 2 in Block 49 from the Riverdale Park Company in February 1900.<sup>9</sup> Assessment records indicate that Lots 1 and 2 were improved (with the house depicted in the promotional brochure) by 1904.<sup>10</sup> Wilson retained ownership of 5003 Riverdale Road (Lot 2) until May 1919. Since then the property has changed hands several times. The current owners, Frank and Sarah Grover, purchased the house in April 1985 (see attached Chain of Title).<sup>11</sup>

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, 1:468.

10. Prince George's County Assessment Records, E.D. # 2, 1904.

11. Prince George's County Land Records, 143:144 and 6093:001.



Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

survey no. PG 68-4-94  
Magi No.  
DOE  yes  no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Riverdale Park (name of property)  
and/or common Riverdale

2. Location

street & number 5003 Riverdale Road  not for publication  
city, town Riverdale  vicinity of 5 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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

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

name Frank and Sarah Glover  
street & number 5003 Riverdale Road telephone no.: (301) 277-6048  
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 JWB5  
street & number 14735 Main Street folio 474  
city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Prince George's County Inventory of Historic Sites  
date 1990  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Maryland Historic Trust  
city, town Annapolis state MD 21401

# 7. Description

Survey No. PG: 68-4-94

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" 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
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

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

This house is a four square frame building covered by a hip roof, which has one hipped dormer each on its four sides. It is a wood framed structure supported by poured concrete retaining walls and interior columns. The building comprises the main floors a basement, and a useable attic. The exterior cladding and the roof covering are asphalt shingles. The house still has the original wrap around porch. The living room has a three sided projecting bay. The existing windows are simple double hung.

The kitchen has been completely remodelled. Large french doors (detail provided) exist between living and dining rooms, and also between the dining room and a small family room at the back of the house. This room is a recent addition. There was possibly a back porch originally.

The wood flooring boards have been nailed directly on to the joists. There is no sub floor. This building has a brick chimney and a fireplace in the Living room.

The porch roof is supported by several columns of the Eastlake style. The brackets at the top are fan shaped. (Detail provided). The porch rails are a simple rectangular design, made from 1 inch square wood pieces.

The owner was informed that the floor of the basement was lowered after the building was occupied. The basement walls do bear evidence of this fact. The poured concrete footings in a rough mass are now several feet above the finish floor. The top part of the steps which represent the

5003 Riverdale Road  
Description continued

original stair is made of stone. The lowest portion of the stairs and the base of the basement wall are made of brick.

The bedroom level has angled walls (diagonal).

# 8. Significance

Survey No. PG: 68-4-94

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local History
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** \_\_\_\_\_ **Builder/Architect** \_\_\_\_\_

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.

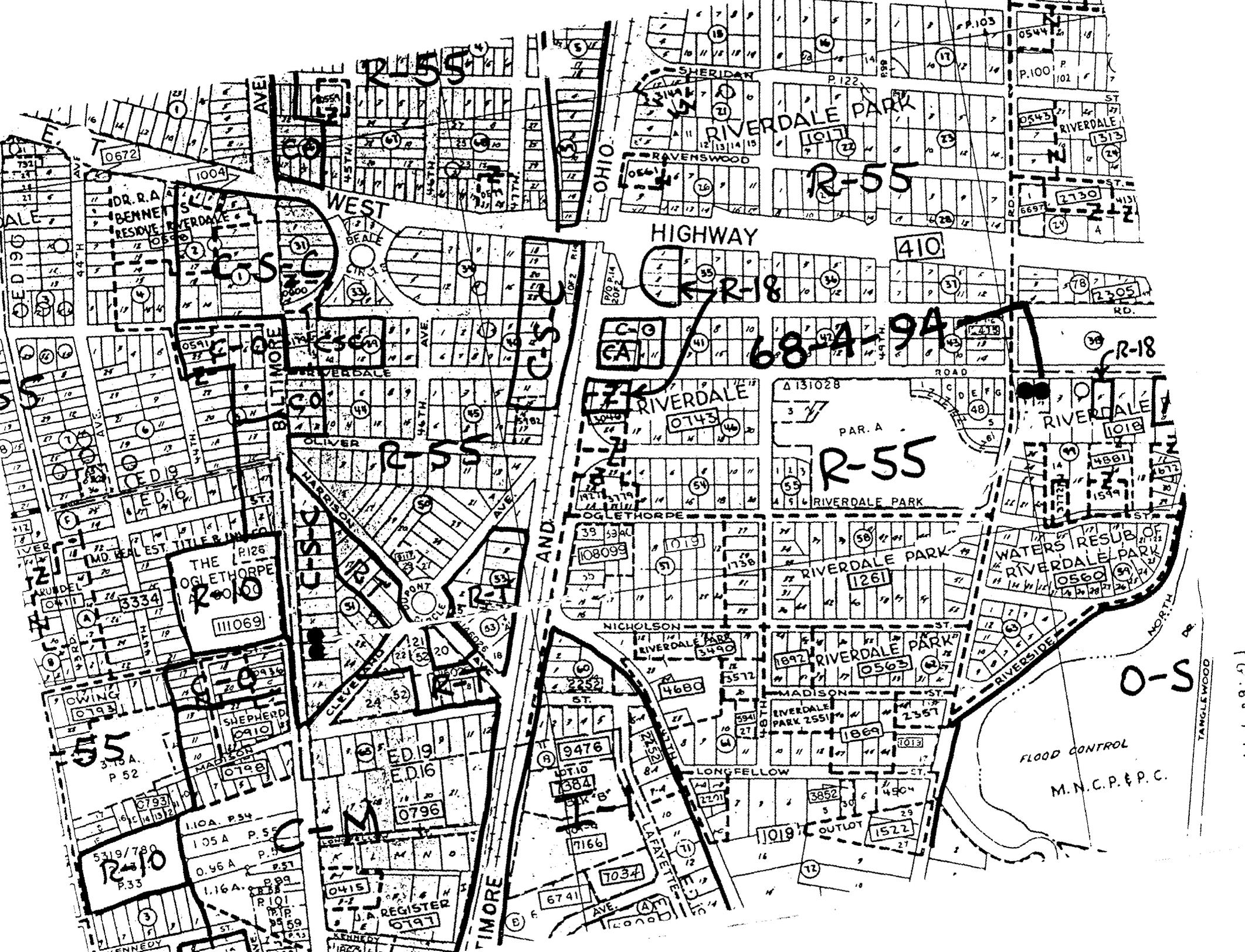
This building is a good example of the Queen Anne houses with the delicate turned posts with spindlework detailing. Here the door and window surrounds tend to be simple.

The original basement would have been more for use as a cellar to store foodstuff etc..The lowering of the basement might have been done in 1949, when the tax assessment show improvements. By that time living standards demonstrated a need to increase the ceiling height.

This building has a fireplace, and the neighboring houses built by the same builder and in the same period do not have fireplaces. This might have been put in when the basement was renovated. This building was built in 1903 by one of Riverdale's most active real estate businessmen, Mr Walter E. Wilson. He was one of the first <sup>Riverdale</sup> residents. He was featured in the Riverdale Farm Company's brochure. But this house was not sold until 1909.

The design of this building represented a trend. The builder might have varied one of the mail order houses here, since Mr Wilson built a great deal of houses during this period. This house is evidence of inventiveness and enterprise of those years.





DR. R.A. BENNETT RESERVE RIVERDALE

WEST BELMONT AVE

THE OGLETHORPE R-10 111069

ED 9 ED 16 0796

R-55 RIVERDALE PARK RAVENSWOOD R-55

68-A-94 R-55 RIVERDALE PARK

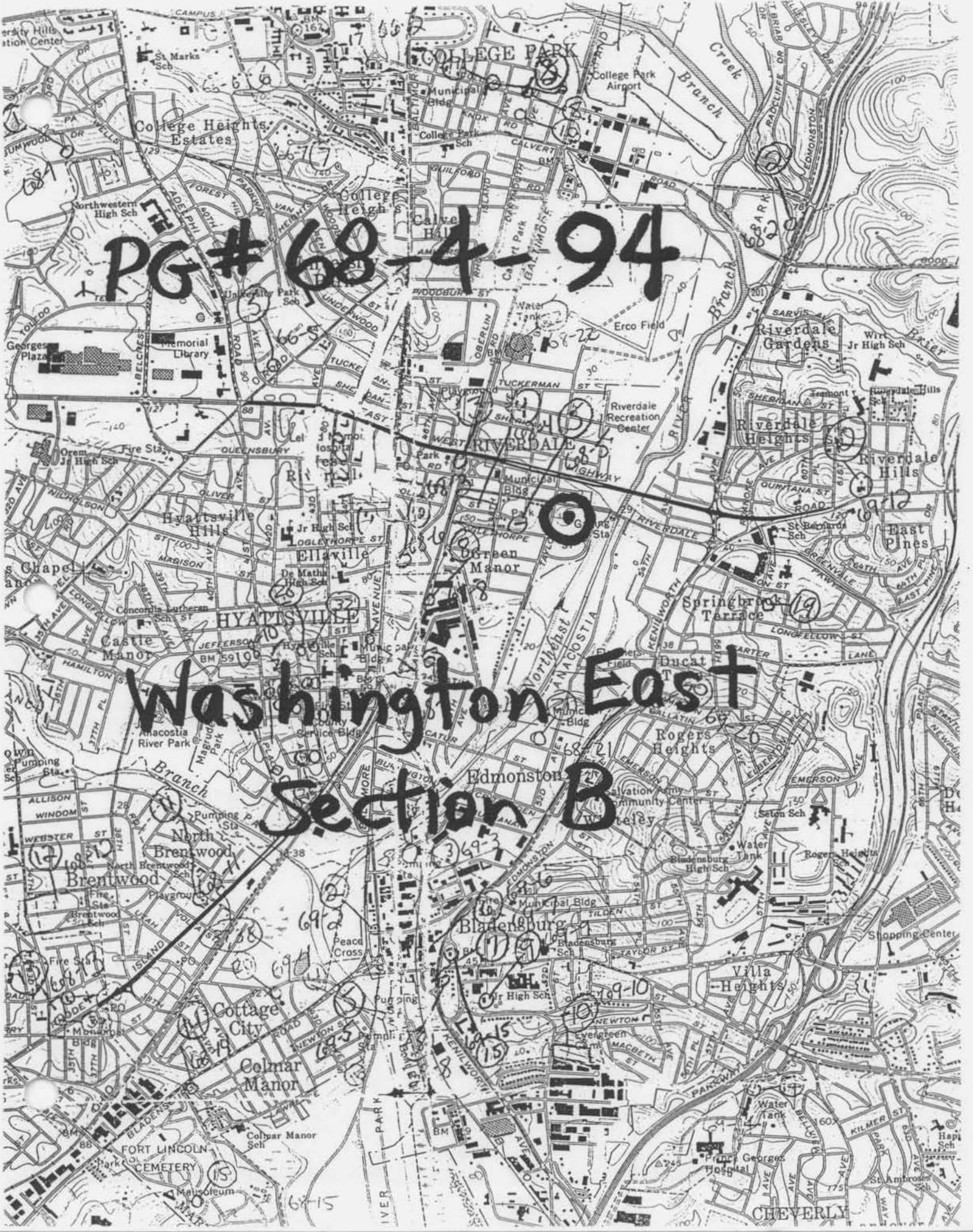
R-18 RIVERDALE PARK WATERS RESUB OF RIVERDALE PARK

FLOOD CONTROL M.N.C.P. & P.C. RIVERSIDE NORTH

TANGLEWOOD

PG # 68-4-94

# Washington East Section B





PG# 68-04-9A

5003 Riverdale Rd (at left)

Riverdale

Prince Georges County, MD

Howard S. Berger

February 1991

FROM NW

MEB: M+T, CROWNSVILLE, MD

10FZ



PG#68-04-94

Wilson Four Squares (c. 1904)

Riverdale

Prince George's County, MD

Howard S. Berger

February 1991

Detail: Wilson Houses from c. 1904 Real Estate  
Promotional brochure

ZOF 2