

# Easement

P. G. #68-5a

Riversdale Slave Quarters  
4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale, Md.  
Pub/Occ/Office/Good

ca. 1801

The Riversdale slave quarters is a two-story brick gable-roofed building covered with yellow stucco. The east and west facades are three bays in length, with entrance through the north bay on both facades. There is a second story window in both north and south gable ends; an original entrance in the south gable end, once sheltered by a shed-roof porch, has been reduced to a small first-story window. There is a central chimney at the ridge of the roof. A one-story one-room addition has been attached to the west facade, and a brick breezeway now connects the outbuilding to the west wing of the Riversdale mansion.

This was perhaps the most substantial slaves quarters in Prince George's County. It is contemporary with the Riversdale mansion, constructed ca. 1801 by Baron H. J. Stier of Belgium, and was probably the original kitchen building. After the kitchen wing of the mansion was constructed in 1807, the subject building came to be used exclusively as a slaves quarters.

This building is significant, being the only known surviving substantial structure of its kind in Prince George's. For the last 30 years, it has been used as office space, perhaps a unique example of adoptive reuse for this type of structure.

Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

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

historic Riversdale Slave Quarters

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 4811 Riverdale Road \_\_\_ not for publication

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

state Maryland county Prince George

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Office

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

name M-NCPPC

street & number 6600 Kenilworth Avenue telephone no.: 779-2011

city, town Riverdale state and zip code Maryland 20737

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. P. G. County Courthouse liber 1125

street & number Main Street folio 473

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title Historic American Building Survey

date  federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington, D. C., state

# 7. Description

Survey No. P.G.#68-5a

<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 slave quarters at Riversdale is a two-story brick gable-roofed building covered with yellow stucco. The east and west facades are three bays in length, with entrance through the north bay on both facades. There is a second story window in both north and south gable ends; there was an entrance centered in the south gable end, which has been reduced to a small window. A horizontal line across the south gable end at the second-story level (visible in old photographs) suggests that there was once a shed-roof porch. There is a central chimney at the ridge of the roof.

A modern brick one-room addition has been attached to the west facade, and a brick breezeway now connects the outbuilding with the east wing of the Riversdale mansion (about 20 yards to the west).

# 8. Significance

Survey No. P.G. #68-5a

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1801-1803      **Builder/Architect**

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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 is the most substantial slave quarters, certainly of those few which remain standing in Prince George's County, and possibly of all that were ever erected here. It is approximately contemporary with the Riversdale Mansion, constructed between 1801 and 1803 by Baron Henri Joseph Stier of Belgium. It was almost certainly constructed originally as a kitchen (cf. the large chimney and fireplaces in the center of the building) with rooms for house slaves on the second level. Sometime after the completion of the kitchen and pantry in the east wing of the mansion (1807), the outbuilding came to be used exclusively as a slave quarters.<sup>1</sup> It is described as "servants house of brick" in a fire insurance policy of 1849, taken out by Charles Benedict Calvert, grandson of the Baron and third proprietor of Riversdale.<sup>2</sup> This building was apparently the quarters of the Calvert's house slaves from ca. 1807 until Emancipation in 1864.

At some time (probably after 1849) an unusual frame addition was built on to the north gable end of the quarters. This consisted of a four-story bell tower adjoining the brick quarters, and a one-story one-bay gable-roofed addition attached to the north of the tower. This frame addition was standing in the 1880's and 1890's but was demolished before 1910, leaving no trace.<sup>3</sup>

his building is significant because it is a very substantial structure, constructed very close to the plantation mansion, and has survived with the mansion for more than 180 years. For the last 30 years, it has been used as an office building, perhaps a unique example of adaptive reuse for this type of structure.

- 1.) Riversdale Historic Structures Report, M-NCPPC 1979
- 2.) Policy #121, Mutual Fire Insurance Co. of Montgomery County, 1849
- 3.) Washington Evening Star, 2 August 1890, p.8 ff.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. P.G. #68-5a

P.G. Co. Deeds #1125:473  
Lockwood, M.S. Historic Homes in Washington, 1889  
Mutual Fire Insurance Co. of Montgomery Co., Policy #121 on  
Riversdale, 1849  
Pearl, Susan G., History of Riversdale, Historic Structures Report,  
M-NCPPC 1979

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Washington East

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

## 1 .. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan G. Pearl

organization History Division date April 1, 1983

street & number 4811 Riverdale Road telephone 779-2011

city or town Riverdale state Maryland

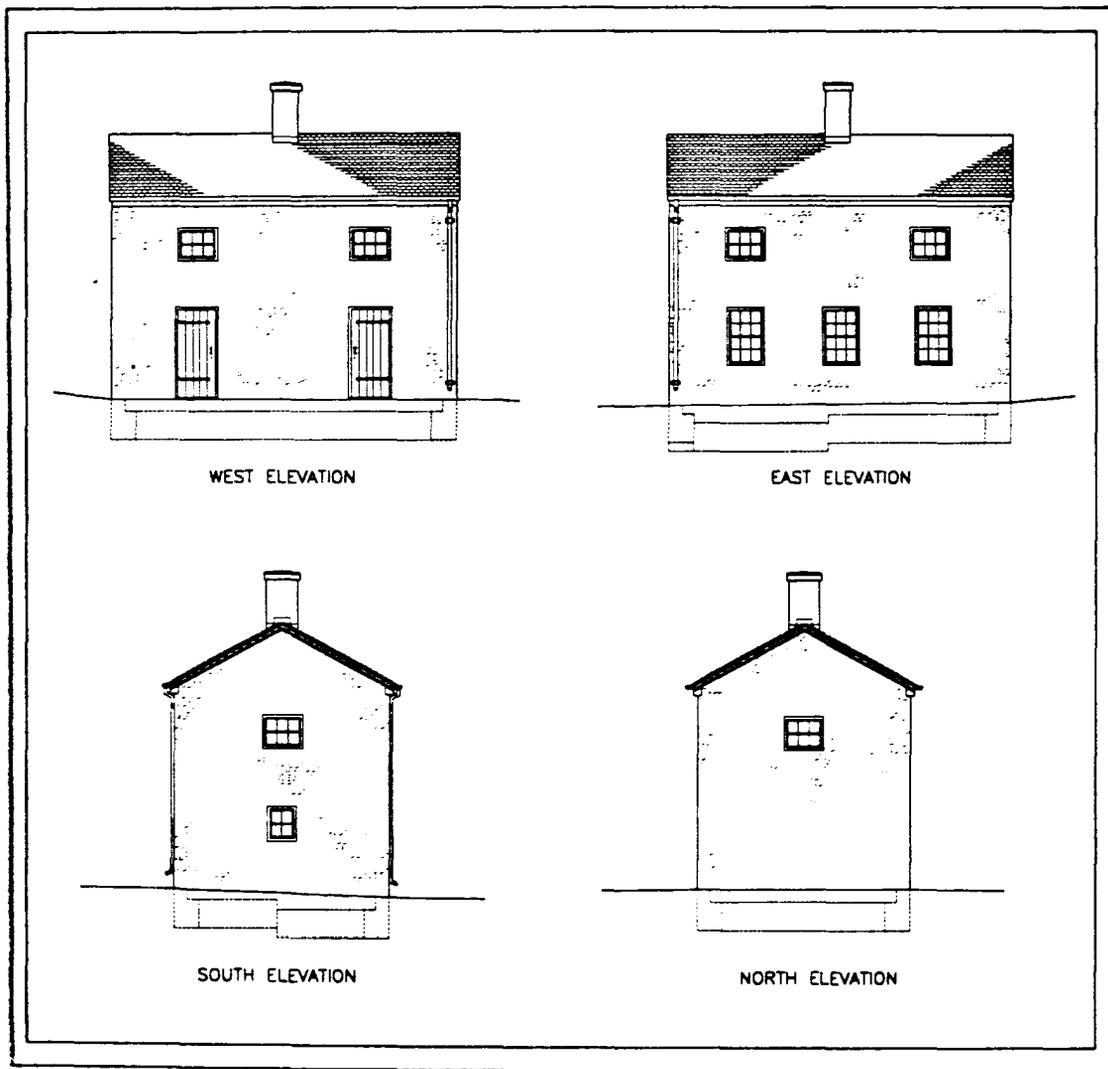
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

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  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

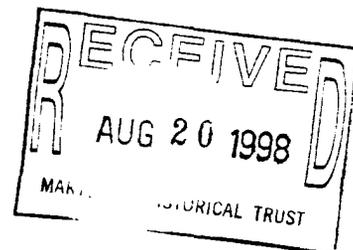
# RIVERSDALE DEPENDENCY

RIVERDALE, MARYLAND



**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**  
**35% SUBMISSION**

17 AUGUST, 1998



for Governor Eden's lovely wife, Caroline Calvert Eden, George Calvert's paternal aunt, who had been a frequent visitor at Mount Airy during George's childhood.

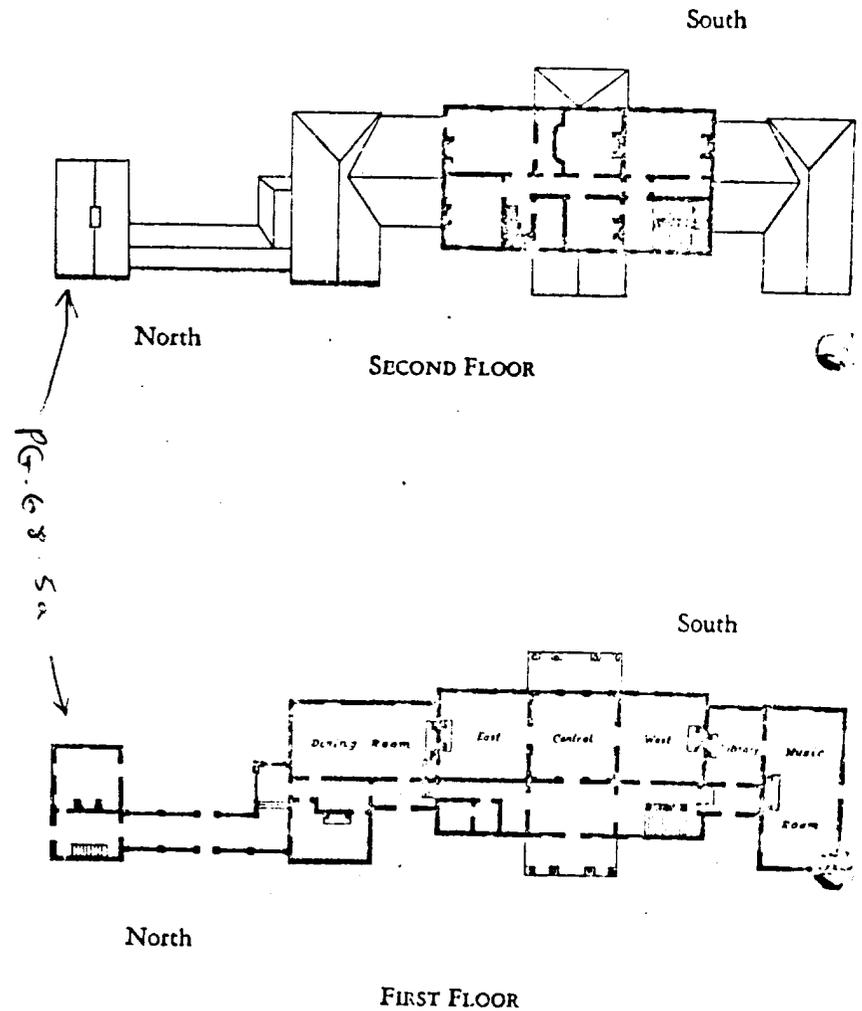
In the fall of this year, the public buildings in the District of Columbia being ready, Congress held its first session in the new Capital.

The following spring, Stier's son, Charles, "lent his name in the purchase" for his father of six lots in Bladensburg and five tracts of land adjoining in Prince George's County, conveyed by William and Helen Steuart to Charles Jean Stier. This low lying meadow land, something over 800 acres, in a rich agricultural section of Maryland, between the upper reaches of the Paint Branch and the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River, were the nucleus of the plantation of Riversdale.<sup>18</sup>

The topography of the land was similar to the Belgian holdings of Baron de Stier, just north of Antwerp. The family decided that the house to be erected here should follow the classic lines of the Chateau du Mick, built ca. 1775. Accordingly, Charles drew the plans for the house prior to his return to Belgium in November, 1801. That same year ground was broken for the mansion. Bricks, for the house, of a bright salmon color, were made from the local clay.

Rosalie Calvert wrote to her brother in December 1801: "... the labour of building seems to agree with him [Papa] ... the house is progressing well." Residing conveniently near, Henri Stier carefully watched the construction. The deep vaulted cellars were the first indication of the solid building technique so pronounced in the central structure. The massive brick arches were bridged by hand-hewn 12 x 12-inch oak beams, which still bear the adz marks. The central beams are supported by trunks of cedar.

While the house has been greatly enlarged and altered since its original owner's departure, the central part retains its essential features and style. As the plan shows, the entrance hall leads into a square drawing room overlooking the grounds to the south. On either side are rooms of almost identical size, with similar, if less elaborate, decoration. The central salon has three shallow arched panels on each side. The semi-circular arches are supported by paired, decorated Corinthian pilasters. On the outside or south



FLOOR PLAN OF RIVERSDALE, 1950  
Showing the "Breezeway" which now connects the old kitchen with the east wing.

<sup>18</sup> Prince George's County Deeds, Liber J. R. M. # 8, f. 584-5.

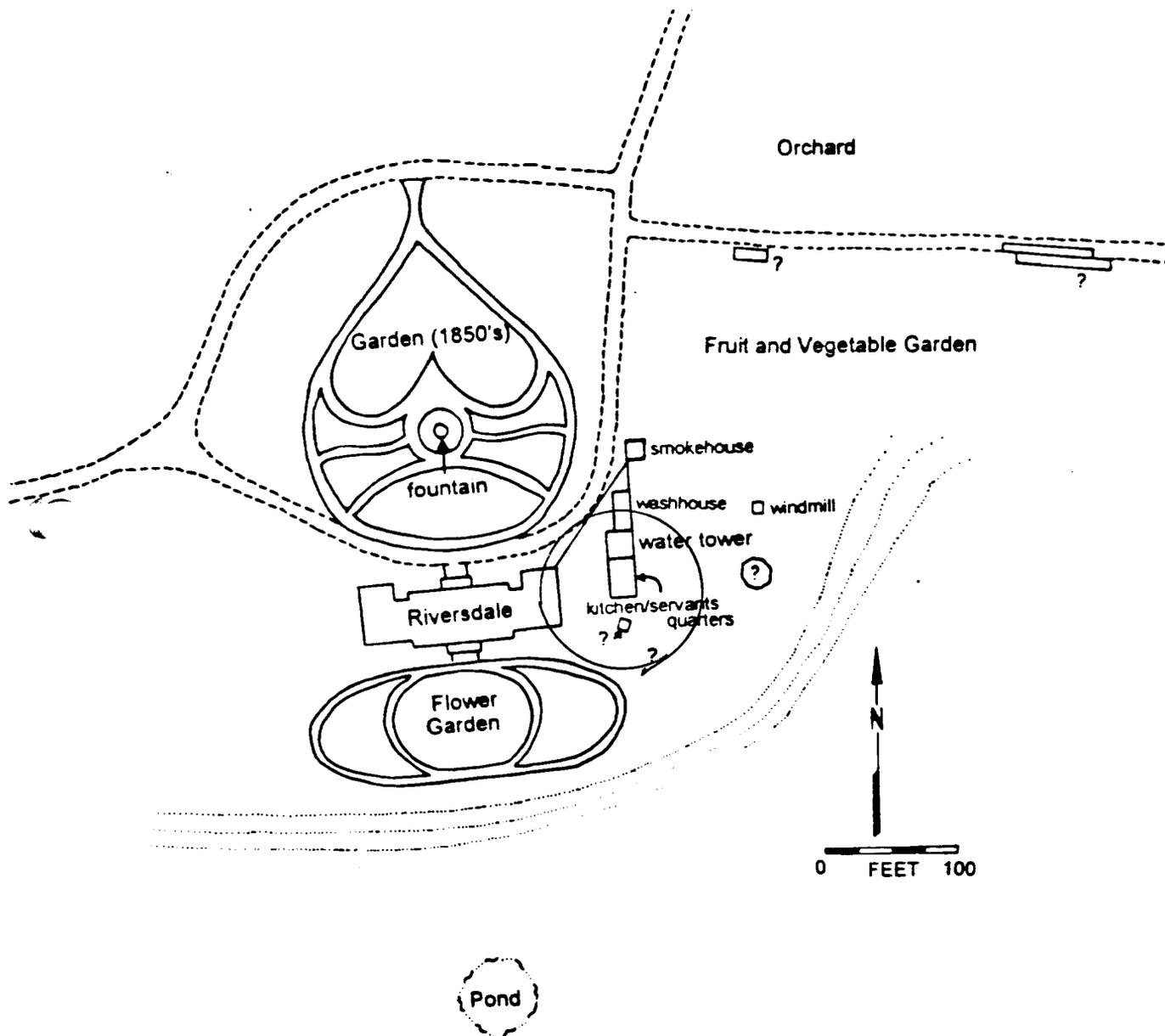


Figure 3.5. Detail of Figure 3.4 (1853).

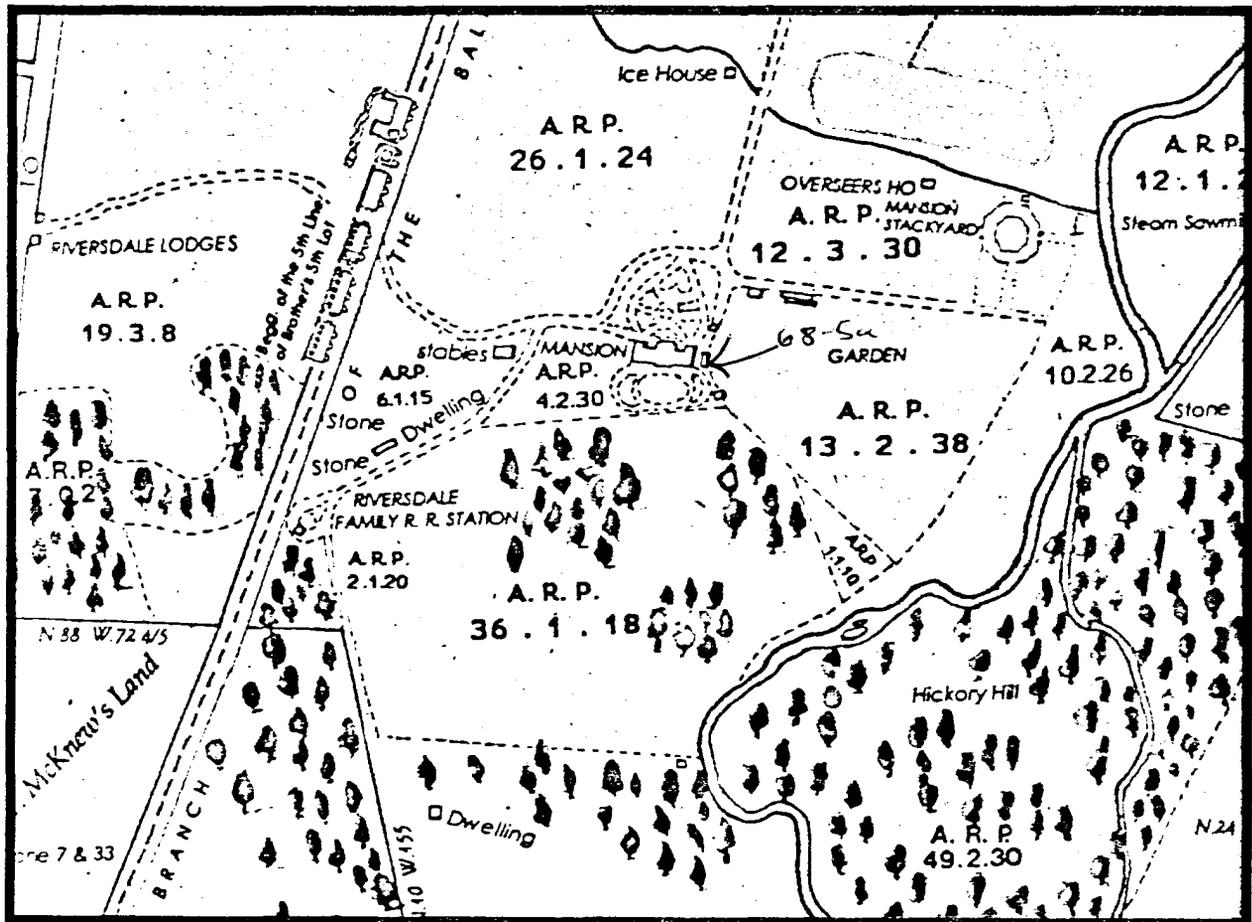


Figure 6.6 Detail of the Riversdale Mansion and Immediate Surroundings, 1853  
 (Source: Sides 1853).

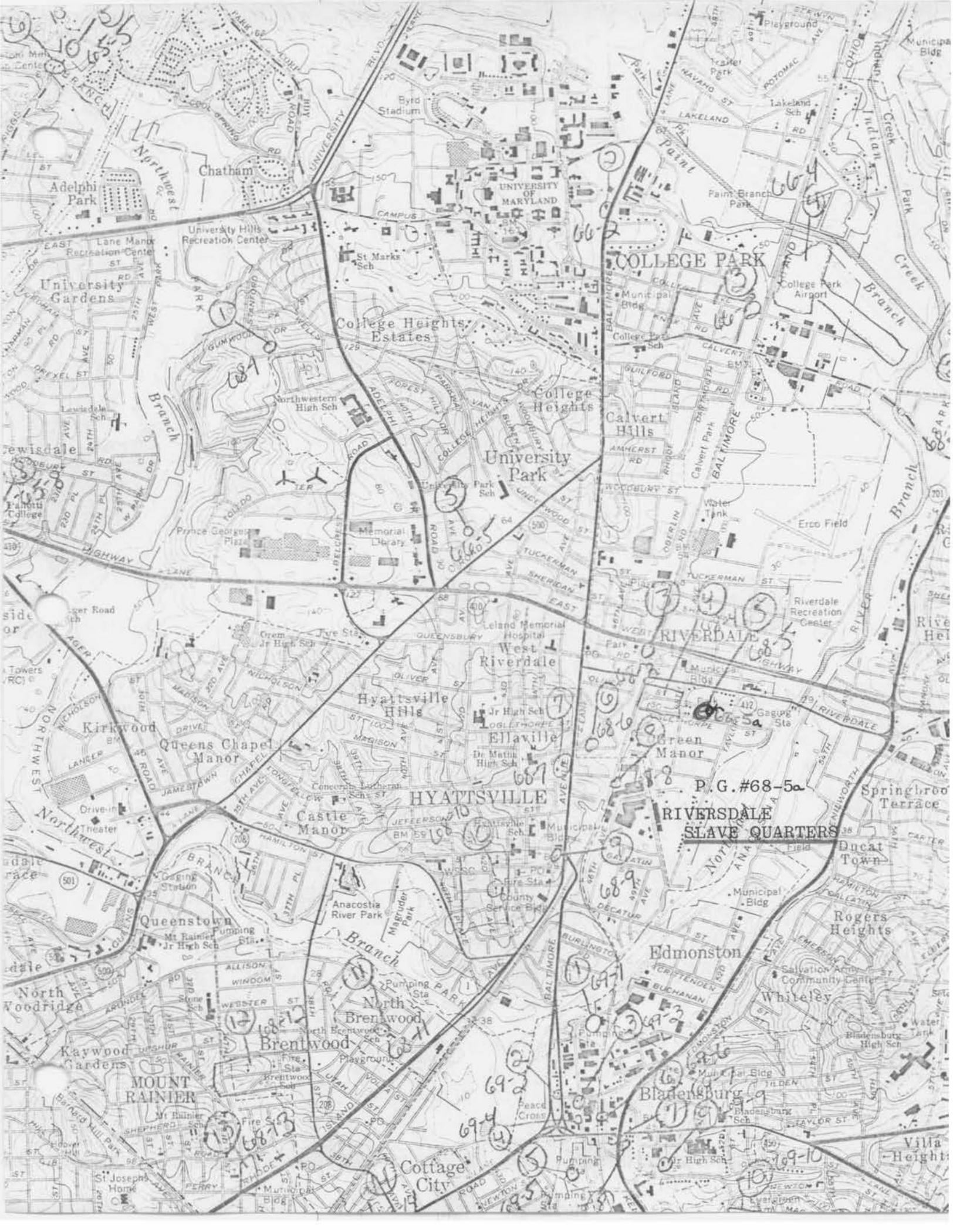
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)*

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Prince George's	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON:		Riversdale	
AND/OR HISTORIC:		Calvert Mansion	
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
South side Riverdale Road between 18th and Taylor Streets			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Riverdale			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Maryland	24	Prince George's	033
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE:			
U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute map Washington East Quadrangle			
SCALE: 1:24,000			
DATE: 1965			
<b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			



P.G.#68-5a

**SLAVE QUARTERS**

Map labels and landmarks include: Adelphi Park, University Hills Recreation Center, St Marks Sch, College Heights Estates, University Park, Calvert Hills, Riverdale, Hyattsville, Castle Manor, Queenstown, North Brentwood, Edmonston, Bladensburg, Cottage City, and Villa Heights. Major roads like University Blvd, Branch Rd, and Annapolis Ave are also labeled.

PG:68-5 & PG:68-5a  
 Riversdale (Calvert Mansion) & Riversdale Slave Quarters  
 4811 Riverdale Road  
 Washington East Quadrangle



1998 Aerial Photo

Tax Map 42, Block 55, Parcel A





P. G. #68-5

Riversdale Slaves Quarters  
Prince George's County, Md.  
Susan G. Pearl  
March 1983  
Southeast 3/4 Elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



P. G. #68-5

Riversdale Slaves Quarters  
Prince George's County, Md.  
Susan G. Pearl  
March 1983  
East Elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



P. G. #68-5

Riversdale Slaves Quarters  
Prince George's County, Md.  
Susan G. Pearl  
May 1983  
Northwest 3/4 Elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.