

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey # 68-70

Building Date 1907

Building Name Clark-Owsley House

Location 6311 49th Street, Riverdale, MD

Private / Residence / Occupied / Good / Inaccessible

DESCRIPTION

The Clark-Owsley House at 6311 49th Street (Lots 1 and 2, Block 23, Riverdale Park), is a two-story and attic, detached frame dwelling on a concrete foundation with a rectangular plan and a side-gable roof. The house is sited on a large, parcel at the southeast corner of 49th and Sheridan streets in the Town of Riverdale. The house has a Foursquare plan and shallow projecting bays along with a facade-wide front porch. The exterior of the house is simply decorated with late Queen Anne details and is currently sheathed with aluminum siding. The interior plan remains intact, and original woodwork, particularly first floor mantels and stair details are in excellent condition.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Clark-Owsley House is significant as an example of the modest frame houses built in Riverdale and other Washington area suburbs around the turn of the century. The house, which is a prominent landmark in the community, is located on a large, partially treed lot at the southeast corner of 49th and Sheridan Streets. The northern portion of the house's parcel, originally planned as one of the subdivisions traffic circles, was never built. The interior of the house is significant for its Queen Anne style decorative woodwork. The house was built in 1907 by Alfred Clark, a plate printer at the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, whose family occupied in until 1920.

Acreage: 16,600 square feet

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Clark-Owsley House

2. Location

street & number 6311 49th Street not for publication

city, 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 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Terrence and Elizabeth Owsley

street & number 6311 49th Street telephone no.:

city, town Riverdale state and zip code Maryland 20737

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. PG County Courthouse liber 6930

street & number 14735 Main Street folio 720

city, town upper Marlboro state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title NONE

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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 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 Clark-Owsley at 6311 49th Street is a two-story and attic, detached frame dwelling on a concrete foundation with a rectangular plan and a side-gable roof. The house is sited on large, partially wooded lot at the southeast corner of 49th and Sheridan streets in the Town of Riverdale. The house is simply decorated with late Queen Anne details and is currently sheathed with aluminum siding.

The house's main (west) facade is two-bays wide. A facade-wide porch, with a wooden deck and a shallow hip roof, shelters the first story. The porch roof is supported by four round wooden columns. The house's main entry is located in the north bay and is composed of a single, wood and glass, paneled door with a single-pane transom. The door's lower panel is decorated with a carved Adamesque garland. Above the entry, at the second story is a large 1/1 double-hung wood frame window. The southern bay of the main facade consists of a two-story projecting semi-hexagonal bay with three large 1/1 double-hung windows at each story. The bay is surmounted by a pedimented front-gable roof with a small 1/1 double-hung attic window.

The south facade is also two bays wide. The western bay is unfenestrated at the first story and has a large 1/1 double-hung window at the second story. The eastern bay has a two-story projecting semi-hexagonal bay identical to that of the main facade, although here it is surmounted only by a shallow hip roof united with the side-gable cornice returns. The attic is fenestrated with a 1/1 aluminum frame sliding-sash window that is not original.

The east (rear) facade is three bays wide. The southernmost bay of this facade is unfenestrated and an unpainted aluminum chimney flue exits the house at the first story. Across the center and the northernmost bays at the first story, is a rectangular-plan projection with a shallow hip roof that encloses the original kitchen porch. The wood and glass entry door and 1/1 double-hung window of the projection are not original. Access to the entry is provided by a redwood stair and stoop encircled by a railing and sheltered by a shed roof. At the center bay of the second story is a small 1/1 double-hung window. At the northernmost bay of the second story is a large 1/2 double-hung window.

The north facade of the house is two bays wide. The north wall of the rear facade projection (with a non-original 1/1 double-hung window) is flush with the eastern end of the main block. The eastern bay of this facade contains a double, 1/1 double-hung window at the first story that is not original. At the second story this bay contains a large 1/2 double-hung window. The only fenestration of the western bay are the two small, widely-spaced, diamond-pane casement windows at the first story. The attic gable contains a small aluminum-frame sliding sash window similar to the one found on the south facade.

The house's interior has a Four-square plan. The first floor has four rooms of roughly equal size. The second has four rooms and a bath in a less regular arrangement around a narrow hall running east-west. Throughout the house, floor boards, low-relief floor moldings, door surrounds and doors retain their original stained finishes. In most rooms, original plaster walls have been covered with synthetic paneling that has been decoratively painted and stenciled. Ceilings have been covered with acoustical tiles.

The entry/stair hall is located in the house's northwest corner. In the northwest corner of the hall is a small coat closet not original to the house. The room's most important decorative features are two, widely-spaced, diamond-pane casement windows on the north wall and the L-shaped stair with its carved newel post, square spindles and banister in the northeast corner.

South of the entry hall and lighted by the main facade's hexagonal projecting bay, is the parlor. Access to the parlor is provided by a pair of wide wood and glass French doors, each with 15 lights. The room's most distinctive decorative features are the tall Queen Anne false mantel in the northeast corner and the single, wide pocket door in the east wall, leading to the dining room. The tiger oak mantel is framed by Doric columns. The overmantel contains a large, rectangular beveled-glass mirror. The firebox is concealed by narrow, rectangular, mottled-green glazed tiles that appear to be original.

To the east of the parlor, accessed by the paneled pocket door, is the dining room. The room is lighted from the south by the house's other semi-hexagonal bay. The room's most prominent decorative feature is a tiger oak Queen Anne false mantel in the northeast corner. This mantel is shorter than the parlor mantel and lacks columns. Instead of a tiled firebox, this mantel has a three-shelf cupboard with leaded-glass casement doors and its overmantel contains an oval beveled-glass mirror.

The northeast corner of the first floor is occupied by the kitchen, which does not retain and historic details and has been expanded by the enclosure of the kitchen porch at the northeast corner of the house.

The second story contains three bedrooms, each a different size, and a bath organized around a narrow hall running east-west. Approximately centered on the north half of the floor is the stair from the first floor and the enclosed stair to the attic, adjacent to the west. All rooms and the hall retain their original, modestly-detailed moldings and surrounds. A large, walk-in closet has been added to the largest bedroom which occupies the entire west (49th Street) side of the floor. The largest bedroom is composed of a sleeping area to the south lighted by the semi-hexagonal bay of the west facade and an alcove/sitting area to the north separated by a wide flat-arched opening. At the southeast corner of the second floor is a smaller bedroom, lighted by the semi-hexagonal bay of the south facade. North of this bedroom, at the east end of the hall is the bath, which does not retain any original features. At the northeast corner of the floor is the smallest bedroom.

8. Significance

Survey No. 68-70

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 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 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: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D and/or Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local	

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

The Clark-Owsley House at 6311 49th Street is an example of the modest frame houses built in the Riverdale and other Washington area suburbs around the turn of the century. The house has a Foursquare plan and shallow projecting bays along with a facade-wide front porch. The house, located on a large, partially treed lot at the southeast corner of 49th and Sheridan streets in the subdivision of Riverdale Park and is a prominent landmark in the community.

The land on which 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, including the mansion and the family burial ground to the northwest, was laid off for Calvert's widow.² This 300-acre dower lot (as well as the 175-acre lot adjoining it on 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.³

The land was platted in 1889 by surveyor 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 historic memories."⁴ Streets were named for the Presidents of the United States, Washington through McKinley, as well as for other distinguished statesmen such as Clay, Lafayette and Beale.⁵

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

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Construction of dwellings began in the early 1890s. All were of frame construction, and reflected the popular taste of the period, as illustrated in house plan 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 public buildings were built by the Riverdale Park Company. There were two general stores, and telephone and telegraph communications were available. Concrete sidewalks were constructed, and sewers were provided for the principal streets.⁶ 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.

The Clark-Owsley House was built by Alfred E. and Clara M. Clark who purchased Lots 1 and 2 in Block 23 of Riverdale Park, in April of 1906. Assessment records indicate that construction on the Clark home was completed by summer of 1907.⁸ The lots chosen by the Clarks were prominently sited at the southeast corner of Clay Circle, a public green at the intersection of what were then known as Columbia and Jackson avenues. Although the traffic circle was never built, its sweep was to have occupied a portion of Lot 1 and this may account for the location of the Clark house on the southern portion of their lots.

Alfred Clark, was one of many early residents of Riverdale who chose to raise their families in the suburbs and commute to jobs in downtown Washington via the streetcar or railroad. In 1910, according to census records, the Clark family was composed of Alfred, a plate printer at the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, his wife Clara who was at home, and eleven year old Earl and seven year old Evelyn.⁹ The Clarks occupied the house until 1920 when they sold it to Charles H. and Grace S. Storms.

Although the house's exterior has been altered with the addition of aluminum siding, overall the house has retained most of its original details. Charles and Grace Storms sold the house in 1927 to Sophia Grodzicka, who with her family occupied it for 45 years until 1972, when it was sold to David and Lila Jean Devnew. The house was purchased from the Deynews in March of 1988 by its current owners, Terrence and Elizabeth Owsley.¹⁰

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

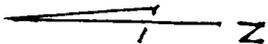
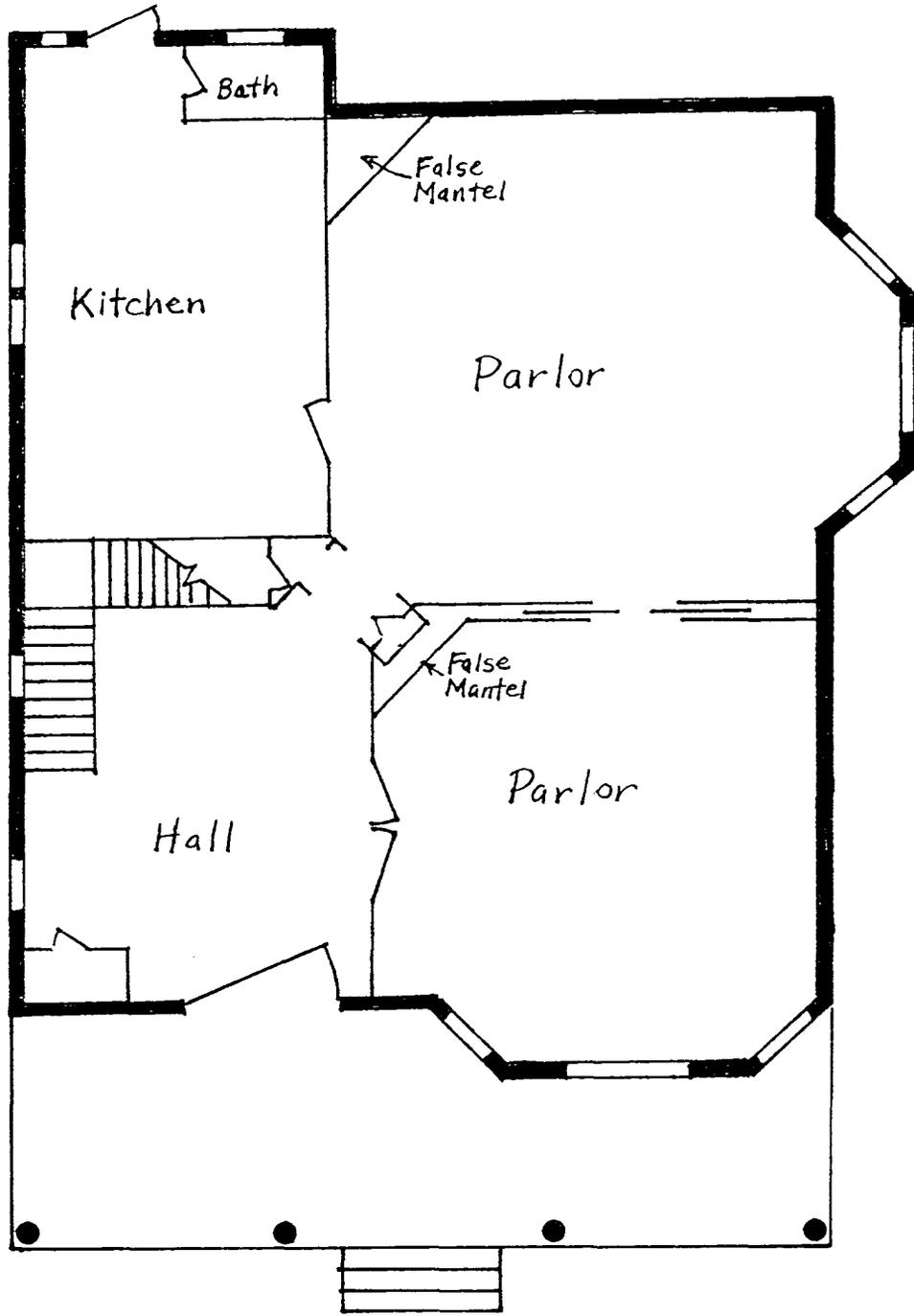
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Notes

- ¹See Riversdale, Historic Structures Report, 1979, Part II, History - (S.G. Pearl).
- ²Prince George's County Equity Records #475.
- ³Prince George's County Land Records, JWB 8:426, JWB 12:484, JWB 13:614.
- ⁴Riverdale Park Real Estate Brochure (undated), circa 1904.
- ⁵Prince George's County Plat JWB 5:747, 688; Riverdale Park Real Estate Brochure (undated), circa 1904.
- ⁶Riverdale Park Real Estate Brochure, "Riverdale Park" article, source unknown. circa 1899.
- ⁷Prince George's County Land Records, 34:286.
- ⁸Prince George's County Assessment Records, E.D. #2, 1907, p.38.
- ⁹Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Population, Maryland, vol 53. Prince George's County.
- ¹⁰See Prince George's County Land Records, 153:169, 294:429, 4142:321 and 6930:720

Clark - Owsley House
6311 - 49th Avenue, Riverdale
December 1989 Not to Scale
PG# 68-70



Chain of Title

6311 49th Avenue

6930:720
25 March 1988
Deed

David Rice Devnew, Jr. and Lila Jean Devnew to Terrence D. and Elizabeth S. Owsley. Grantors convey Lots 1 and 2 in Block 23, Riverdale Park. Plat recorded A:42. Same obtained from Sophia Grodzicka, 26 October 1972, 4142:321.

4142:321
26 October 1972
Deed

Sophia Grodzicka to David Rice Devnew, Jr. and Lila Jean Devnew. Grantor conveys Lots 1 and 2 in Block 23. Same obtained from Charles Harrison and Grace S. Storms, 24 October 1927, 294:429.

294:429
24 October 1927
Deed

Charles Harrison and Grace S. Storms to Sophia Grodzicka. Grantors convey Lots 1 and 2 in Block 23. Same obtained from Alfred E. and Clara M. Clark, 29 April 1920, 153:169.

153:169
29 April 1920
Deed

Alfred E. and Clara M. Clark to Charles H. and Grace S. Storms. Grantors convey Lots 1 and 2 in Block 23. Same obtained from Riverdale Park Company, 2 April 1906, 34:286.

34:286
2 April 1906
Deed

Riverdale Park Company to Alfred E. and Clara M. Clark. Grantor conveys Lots 1 and 2 in Block 23 of Grantor's subdivision to clear title, this deed is made.

A.C.F. INDU
1794
154.
P.

CALVIN CAFRITZ, ETAL
5036/988
48.00A.
P. 81

P/O P. 81

I-2

I-1

R-55

RIVERDALE
POST OFFICE

6968

PARCEL "A"
6.387A

U.S. DEPT. OF ARMY
652446
G.63A
P. 83

RAILROAD

TRANSIT

CAPITAL

1

GO

RIVERDALE PARK

0744

0551

052-A

0548

0547

R-55

SOMERSET

0546

0554

0555

W.P. MAGRUDER'S

AVENUE

LUCKERMAN

AVE

I-1

OHIO

SHERIDAN

RIVERDALE PARK

68-70

RAVENSWOOD

WEST

BEALE

CIRCLE

HIGHWAY

R-18

410

CSC

CSC

C-0

CO

CO

R-18

RIVERDALE

0743

M.N.C.P.&F.
1125-473
7.25 A.
P. 109

CSC

R-18

RT

R-55

RIVERDALE PARK

1261

WATERS RE
RIVERDAL
0560

NICHOLSON

RIVERDALE PARK



"B"

PG# 68-70

College Heights Estates

University Park

COLLEGE PARK

East

West Riverdale

Calvert Hills

Riverdale Gardens

Hyattsville Hills

Riverdale Heights

HYATTSVILLE

Green Manor

Springbrook Terrace

Castle Manor

Edmonston

Ducat Town

North Brentwood

Rogers Heights

Brentwood

Bladensburg

Whiteley

Cottage City

Colmar Manor

Villa Heights

Defense Heights



CLARK-OWSLEY HOUSE
6311 49TH STREET, RIVERDALE
PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY, MARYLAND

HOWARD S. BERGER

NOVEMBER 1969

FROM SOUTHWEST

NEG: MHT, ANNAPOLIS

10FS



CLARK-OWSLEY HOUSE
6311 44TH STREET, KILVERDALE
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
HOWARD S. BERGER

NOVEMBER 1959

FR. M. SOUTHEAST

NEG: MHT, ANINAPOLIS

2 OF 5



PG #68-70

CLARK-OWSLEY HOUSE
6311 49TH STREET, KIVERDALE
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
HOWARD S. BEEBE

JANUARY 1990

ENTRY/STAIR HALL

FROM S

NEG: MHT, ANNAPOLIS

3 OF 5



PG#68-70

CLARK-OWSLEY HOUSE
6311 4TH STREET, RIVERDALE
PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY, MARYLAND

HOWARD S. BEILGER

JANUARY 1990

PALLOR MANTEL + POCKET DOOR

FROM WEST

NEG: MHT, ANNAPOLIS

4 OF 5



PS#68-70

CLARK-OWSLEY HOUSE
6311 49th STREET, RIVERDALE
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
HOWARD S. BERGER

JANUARY 1990

DINING ROOM MANTEL

FROM SW

NEG: MHT, ANNAPOLIS

50F5