

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey: PG # ~~68-4-80~~ -- 68-93-4 Building Date: c. 1929

Building Name: 6103 44th Avenue

Location: 6103 44th Avenue  
Riverdale, Maryland

Private/Residences/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description

6103 44th Avenue (Block 6, Lot 18 and north 30', Lot 17, West Riverdale) is one of a group of six, small, one-story Spanish Colonial/Mission Revival style stucco houses with rectangular plans and shallow shed roofs concealed by stucco parapets. Five of the six houses form a cohesive group on both sides of the 6100 block of 44th Avenue in the subdivision of West Riverdale (just north of the Riverdale/Hyattsville corporate boundary); the sixth house is located in the 5000 block of Riverdale Road in the Riverdale Park subdivision. Within the group of six houses, two models were built, four of one model and two of the other. Both models employ a similar scale, form and decorative treatment. The houses are simply detailed and their distinctive appearance is derived from their flat roofs and simple parapets, terra cotta tile cornices and gables set off by roughly textured stucco walls, and multi-pane windows. Each of the houses employs a similar window schedule, commonly 6/1 double-hung wood sash, either alone or in groups of two or three. The exterior of 6103 44th Avenue retains a high degree of integrity. Modern storm windows and screens have been added and the arcaded porch is enclosed with wrought iron railings. There is a single-car, below grade garage accessed from the south.

Significance

6103 44th Avenue is significant as one of a group of six modest early 20th century revival style houses. The houses are also significant as the work of Walter R. Wilson, an early 20th century contractor and builder who was largely responsible for the development of the West Riverdale subdivision within the Town of Riverdale. Completed by 1929 and executed in the Spanish Colonial/Mission Revival style, these houses represent the popular taste of the period for picturesque architectural styles with European and other non-American origins. The location of five of the cottages in a cohesive group on 44th Avenue, is representative of the development of West Riverdale as an early and mid 20th century neighborhood. Isolated from the other houses, the cottage on Riverdale Road represents the popular practice of "infill" development employed in the more developed sections of Riverdale Park in the years prior to World War II. Wilson had acquired the property for the 44th Avenue houses in 1915 from Francis S. Carmody and the property for the house on Riverdale Road from William and Madeline Thomson in 1919. According to assessment record data, Walter Wilson had completed 6103 44th Avenue and the other five houses in the group by 1929.

Acreage: 12,000 sq. ft.

68-93-4

Survey No. PG#68-4-80

Magi No.

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

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common 6103 44th Avenue

## 2. Location

street & number 6103 44th Avenue \_\_\_ not for publication

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

state Maryland county Prince George's

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
___ 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 Raymond L. & Ruth T. Lang

street & number 6103 44th 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 1314

street & number 14735 Main Street folio 464

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

<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.

6103 44th Avenue (Block 6, Lot 18 and North 30' of Lot 17, West Riverdale) is one of a group of six, small, one-story Spanish Colonial/Mission style stucco houses with rectangular plans and shallow shed roofs concealed by stucco parapets. Five of the six houses form a cohesive group on both sides of the 6100 block of 44th Avenue in subdivision of West Riverdale (just north of the Riverdale/Hyattsville corporate boundary); the sixth house is located in the 5000 block of Riverdale Road in the Riverdale Park subdivision. The three houses on the west side of the street have elevated sites that slope down to the sidewalk. On the east side of the street, the house at 6101 is at grade and the house at 6103 is elevated by a slight berm. The house at 5007 Riverdale Road is at grade.

Within the group of six houses, two models were built. Both models employ a similar scale, form and decorative treatment; four of one model and two of the other. The houses are simply detailed and their distinctive appearance is derived from their flat roofs and simple parapets, terra cotta tile cornices and gables set off by roughly textured stucco walls, and multi-pane windows. Each of the houses employs a similar window schedule, commonly 6/1 double-hung wood sash, either alone or in groups of two or three. Several of the houses retain their original vertical panel wooden entry doors with wrought iron hardware. Several houses also have free-standing, single-car stucco garages with unadorned horizontal parapets concealing shed roofs.

The house at 6103 44th Avenue (along with 6102 and 6106 and 5007 Riverdale Road) has a three-bay main facade. The largest bay and the focus of the facade is a shallow, front-gable, arcaded porch with a concrete floor placed at the southern end of the facade. The porch shelters the single door entry. The arcade is composed of three round-arched openings, the center opening is taller and wider than those that flank it. Connected to the interior slope of the porch gable is a shallow shed roof that shelters the remaining portion of the facade (that projects beyond the simple parapet that encircles the house). The remaining two bays of the main facade consist of a large, 6/6 double-hung, three-part window at the center, and a small 6/6 double-hung window at the outer edge. The secondary elevations of this model are fenestrated with either single or paired double-hung windows, widely-spaced across the wall. The house has a secondary entry in the north elevation.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM

Description (continued)

PG: 68-93-4  
Survey No. 68-4-80

Section 7 Page 2

---

The exterior of 6103 44th Avenue also retains a high degree of integrity. The house has been painted white, in stark contrast to its light green terra cotta tiles. The house has modern storm windows and screens. Rather than a free-standing garage to the rear of the property, there is a basement level single-car garage under the house that is accessed from the south. This arrangement is made possible by the change in grade from the street (west) to the rear of the site (east). The arcaded porch is enclosed with wrought iron railings.



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

PG: 68-93-4  
Survey No. 68-4-80  
Section 8 Page 2

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 community 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."<sup>4</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>5</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 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 provided for the principal streets.<sup>6</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.

The subdivision of West Riverdale was platted in 1906 by Francis S. Carmody, a Prince George's County contractor and builder who was also the founder of the Southern Maryland Trust Company in Seat Pleasant, where he resided. Carmody had acquired a 55-acre tract on the west side of the Old Baltimore and Washington Turnpike (the present U.S. Route 1), from George H. Calvert and Edward S. McCalmont, trustees of the estate of Charles Benedict Calvert. The acreage acquired by Carmody had been part of the larger tract of Ellaville, located due west of the main gate of the Riversale Plantation, that Charles Benedict Calvert had purchased from John Bowie in 1853. As subdivided in the nineteenth century, Ellaville was composed of 17 lots ranging from 3 to 8 acres. The venture met with little success.<sup>8</sup> It was not until 1906, when Carmody resubdivided a number of the northernmost lots as West Riverdale, that development in the area began.

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

PG: 68-93-4  
Survey No. ~~68-4-80~~  
Section 8 Page 3

Initially, Carmody succeeded in selling a number of lots, particularly those closest to the developing sections of Riverdale Park and along Route 1. For the first ten years of the subdivision, the development of the blocks to the west was slow. In June of 1915, Carmody sold most of the remaining lots (numbering more than 200) to Walter R. Wilson, a builder who was largely responsible for the development of West Riverdale in the two decades following his purchase.<sup>9</sup> Walter R. Wilson (1867-1953) was a Washington, D.C., builder and real estate investor. Little is known about Wilson although land records indicate that he was also active in nearby areas of Hyattsville as well as West Riverdale.<sup>10</sup> In West Riverdale, Wilson appears to have improved lots before selling them but often held on to an improved property for several years.

Wilson had acquired the property for the 44th Avenue houses in 1915 from Francis S. Carmody and the property for the house on Riverdale Road from William and Madeline Thomson in 1919.<sup>11</sup> According to assessment record data, Walter Wilson had completed 6103 and the other five similar houses in 1929. Upon their completion, the houses were valued at \$3250 or \$3450.<sup>12</sup>

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

PG: 68-93-4  
Survey No. ~~68-4-80~~  
Section 8 Page 4

NOTES

1. For a comprehensive treatment of early 20th century eclecticism, see A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia and Lee McAlester and America's Favorite Homes by Robert Schweitzer and Michael W.R. Davis.
2. Pearl, S.G., Riversdale Historic Structures Report, Part II, History: M-NCPPC, 1979.
3. Prince George's County Land Records, JWB8:426, 520; JWB12:484; JWB13:614.
4. "Riverdale Park" real estate promotional brochure, c.1904.
5. Prince George's County Subdivision Plats, JWB5:747; "Riverdale Park" real estate promotional brochure.
6. "Riverdale Park" real estate promotional brochure; see also Pearl, S.G., Victorian Pattern Book Houses in Prince George's County, Maryland, M-NCPPC, 1988.
7. "F.S. Carmody Dies: Prominent in Maryland"--The Evening Star, 16 April 1921, p.7.
8. Prince George's County Equity Records, #509; Prince George's County Land Records, JWB7:286; Prince George's County Subdivision Plat, 1:31.
9. Prince George's County Land Records, 109:36.
10. No source materials on Wilson are known to exist. The dates given are derived from the Wilson family crypt at Fort Lincoln Cemetery.
11. Prince George's County Land Records, 109:36; 138:121.
12. Prince George's County Assessment Records, E.D. # 19, 1927-1930.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. PG# ~~68-4-80~~ <sup>68-93-4</sup>

See notes, Section #8

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 12,000 sq ft., BL 6, Lot 18 & N 30', Lot 17Quadrangle name Washington East West Riverdale Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

<input type="text"/>									
Zone	Easting			Northing					

B 

<input type="text"/>									
Zone	Easting			Northing					

C 

<input type="text"/>									
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

D 

<input type="text"/>									
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

E 

<input type="text"/>									
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

F 

<input type="text"/>									
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

G 

<input type="text"/>									
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

H 

<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 Howard S. Berger, Architectural Historianorganization Historic Pres. Section, M-NCPPC date June 1991street & number 14741 Gov. Oden Bowie Dr. telephone (301) 952-3520city or town Upper Marlboro 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.

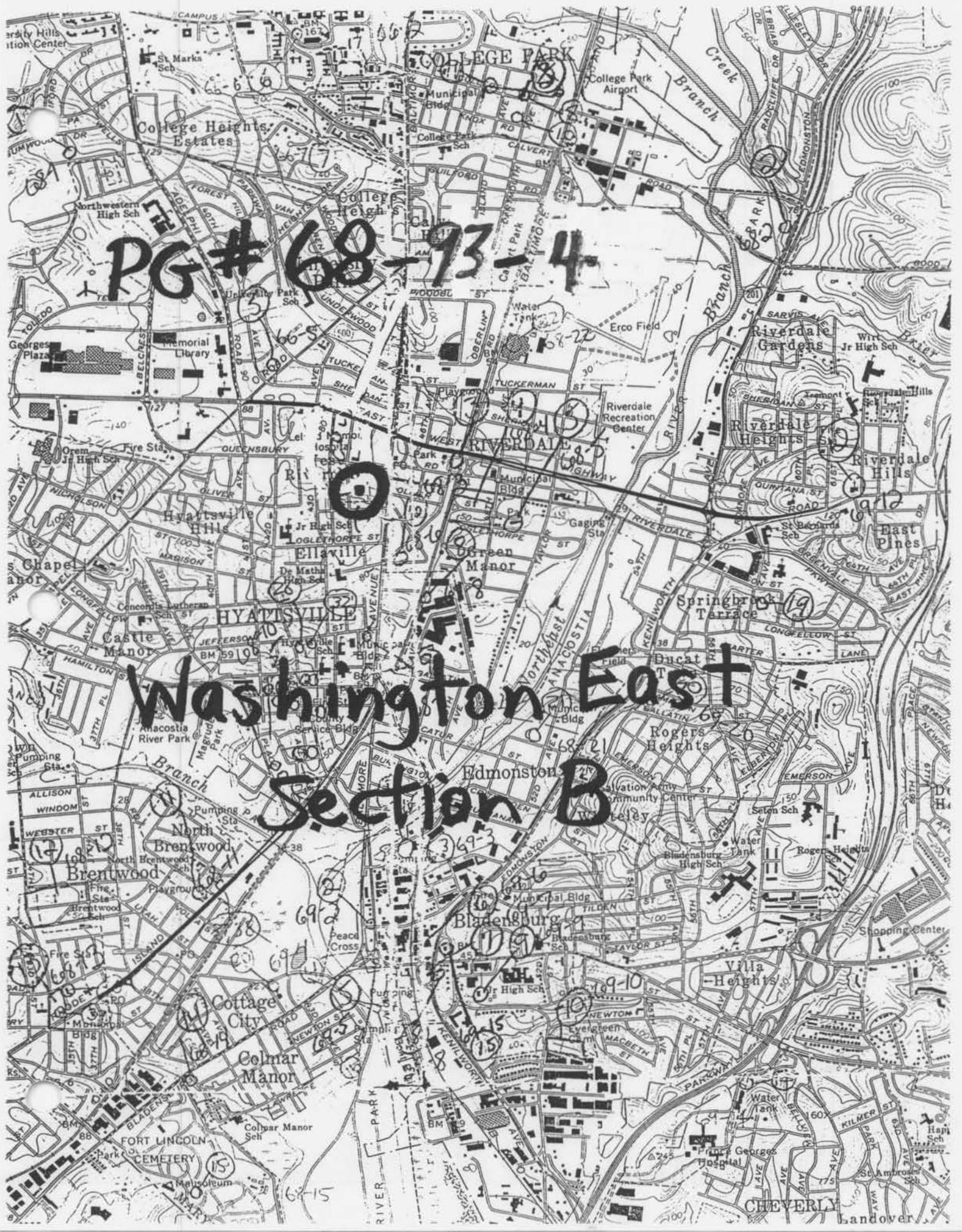
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438



PG # 68-93-4

# Washington East Section B





Wilson Spanish Cottages

PG# 68-93-4

6103 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Riverdale

Prince George's County, MD

Samuel J. Parker, Jr.

August 1992

NEG: MHT, CRANKSVILLE, MD

1 OF 1