

## **CAPSULE SUMMARY**

**PG: 76A-53**

**McCallister House**

**5819 Black Hawk Drive**

**Forest Heights, Prince George's County, Maryland**

**c. 1949**

**Private**

The Lustron house at 5819 Black Hawk Drive is significant for its architectural and engineering contributions. Closely associated with federally subsidized efforts to alleviate the post World War II housing shortage, the Lustron is integral to the history of housing in the United States. Although not widely implemented, Lustrons contribute to the post war development of the residential landscape funded primarily through government programs. As such, they are part of a long history of federally subsidized housing efforts, although characterized by innovations that seem remarkably daring in the context of federal housing programs—particularly given the strength of the forestry and conventional homebuilding industry. Further, the Lustron is significant for its contributions to prefabricated metal housing technology of the era as the manufacturing techniques utilized assembly line production directly influenced by the automobile industry. Porcelain-enameled steel panels were an innovative advancement for prefabricated housing construction, particularly as utilized in the single-floor modern ranch house plan that provides the Lustron with their unusual appearance. Their failure to capture a viable market is attributable perhaps to a nation that was truly ill-prepared to embrace modernity within the dearly-held institution of the house. The McCallister House retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a Lustron house constructed in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. in the post World War II era.

The McCallister House is composed of two Lustron homes joined at a right angle. The original block, erected in 1949, is the side-gabled northern section of the dwelling. The front-gabled southern block was added circa 1956 and projects slightly from the main block. Both Lustrons are the Deluxe Westchester model. Designed to emulate the ranch form, the steel frame dwelling rests on a solid parged foundation. Porcelain-enameled steel panels measuring two feet by two feet are bolted to the steel frame. The gable roof is covered in enameled steel shingles and finished with overhanging eaves. The roofline is finished by a chimney, added to the dwelling circa 1956. A defining feature of the Westchester Model is the six-foot by twelve-foot cutout that creates an integral entryway. As part of the configuration of the dwelling, the main entry is part of the circa 1956 Lustron. The 1949 Lustron (main block) has its integral porch in the southeast corner. All of the window openings now hold vinyl sash but retain their original enameled steel surrounds, sills, and lintels with modern interpretations of the quirked cyma reversa.

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### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic McCallister House

other \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street and number 5819 Black Hawk Drive \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Oxon Hill \_\_\_ vicinity

county Prince George's

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

name Joyce A. and Howard R. Schmidt

street and number 5819 Black Hawk Drive telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city, town Oxon Hill state MD zip code 20745-1210

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 30577 folio 336

city, town Upper Marlboro tax map 95 tax parcel 21 tax ID number 12-1288745

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District  
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
 Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
 Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
 Recorded by HABS/HAER  
 Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	_____ sites
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	_____ structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	_____ objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<u>1</u> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>
			<u>0</u>

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## 7. Description

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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

This Lustron is located at 5819 Blackhawk Drive in the Forest Heights neighborhood of Oxon Hill, Maryland. Situated less than one mile from the southeastern border of the District of Columbia and within the Capitol Beltway, this Lustron is one of two extant Lustrons within the community of Forest Heights. Constructed in 1949, this building has a setback of approximately sixty feet from the roadway. The grassy lawn slopes to the east and features a manicured lawn, foundation plantings, and mature trees and shrubs. A concrete walkway extends off the street to access the main entry, skirting a large oak tree. A chain-link metal fence encloses the backyard. An asphalt driveway extends down the northern end of the lot to provide access to the side of the dwelling as well as Black Hawk Lane. A steep embankment aside an alley forms the eastern boundary of the property. There are no secondary resources associated with this property.

### DWELLING

The McCallister House is composed of two Lustron units joined at a right angle. The main block, erected in 1949, is the side-gabled section of the dwelling. The front-gabled northern block was added circa 1956 and projects slightly from the main block. Both Lustrons are the Deluxe Westchester model.

Designed to emulate the ranch form, the steel frame dwelling rests on a solid parged foundation. Porcelain-enameled steel panels measuring two feet by two feet are bolted to the steel frame. The gable roof is covered in enameled steel shingles and finished with overhanging eaves. The roofline is finished by a chimney, added to the dwelling circa 1956. Vertical enameled steel panels are located within the upper gable ends. A defining feature of the Westchester Model is the six-foot by twelve-foot cutout that creates an integral entryway. As part of the configuration of the dwelling, the main entry is part of the circa 1956 Lustron. The 1949 Lustron (main block) has its integral porch in the southeast corner. A simple square post has replaced the original curved steel pipe and artistically angled gutters that are characteristics of the Deluxe Westchester Model.

As the dwelling is composed of two identical Lustron models, the dwelling will be presented as a whole. Sheltered by the integral porch, the single-leaf main entry holds a paneled wood door. All of the window openings now hold vinyl sash but retain their original enameled steel surrounds, sills, and lintels with modern interpretations of the quirked cyma reversa. Flanking the main entry to the south is a tripartite window with fixed central sash and casement ends, two single-light casements, and a two-light sliding window. North of the main entry, set beneath the front-gabled projecting bay, is a single bay and a ribbon of two-light casements.

Fenestration of the north (side) elevation consists of a tripartite window with fixed central sash and casement ends. The integral porch dominates the southeast corner of the dwelling.

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The south (side) elevation has a single-leaf, paneled wood door located in the western bay. The central and eastern bays contain two-light casements. Due to the sloped lot, the basement is partially exposed on the north elevation. Here, a single-leaf, flush metal door pierces the parged foundation to provide access to the lower level. Additional fenestration consists of a tripartite window.

The west (rear) elevation features tripartite windows in the first and second bays; the first bay projects slightly to the eave. Wide picture windows are located in the third, fourth, and sixth bays. The fifth bay holds a single-leaf, paneled wood door accessed via concrete steps.

## INTEGRITY

The Lustron at 5819 Black Hawk Drive maintains integrity of design, feeling, and materials. The addition of the second Lustron to the original Lustron circa 1956 has not diminished the building's integrity of form and does not preclude the building from being identified as a Lustron. Although the original windows have been removed, the fenestration pattern, sills, lintels, and surrounds remain intact. Alteration of the original floor plan has diminished, but not compromised, its integrity. The dwelling retains integrity of location, setting, and feeling within the residential neighborhood of Forest Heights. All of these aspects contribute to this Lustron's integrity of association.

Overall, the McCallister House at 5819 Black Hawk Drive maintains a high level of integrity.

## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Local History</u>

**Specific dates** 1949 **Architect/Builder** Lustron

**Construction dates** 1949, c. 1956

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lustron at 5819 Black Hawk Drive in Forest Heights, Maryland, is significant for its architectural and engineering contributions. Federally subsidized, Lustrons are integral to the history of housing in the United States following World War II. Lustrons contributed to the post war development of the residential landscape which was funded primarily through government programs. As such, they are part of a long history of federally subsidized housing efforts, although characterized by innovations that seem remarkably daring in the context of federal housing programs—particularly given the strength of the forestry and conventional homebuilding industry.<sup>1</sup> Constructed of prefabricated metal, Lustrons mark an unparalleled era of design and assembly line production in the house building industry. Utilizing the latest in sciences, Lustrons were clad in porcelain-enameled steel panels yet retained a familiar modern ranch house plan. Albeit ultimately unsuccessful, as practical, affordable housing for the average family, Lustrons represent one of the most ambitious campaigns in private residential construction to infuse modernity throughout everyday life.<sup>2</sup>

As noted by Cynthia Liccese-Torres and Kim A. O'Connell, the few remaining Lustrons are "significant not just as an American housing experiment and architectural icon, but as an unprecedented preservation challenge."<sup>3</sup> As such, the 5819 Black Hawk Drive retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a Lustron house constructed in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. in the post World War II era.

<sup>1</sup> Patricia Garbe Morillo, "Lustrons in New Jersey," National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Multiple Property Listing (New Jersey: 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Patricia Garbe Morillo, "Lustrons in New Jersey," National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Multiple Property Listing (New Jersey: 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Cynthia Liccese-Torres and Kim A. O'Connell, "The Illustrious Lustron: A Guide for the Disassembly and Preservation of America's Modern Metal Marvel" (Arlington, Virginia: Arlington County, 2007), 3.

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### HISTORIC CONTEXT

#### LUSTRON CONTEXT

Between 1948 and 1950, the Lustron Corporation of Columbus, Ohio produced pre-fabricated houses of porcelain-enameled steel that were shipped across the United States. The Lustron Corporation was led by Carl Strandlund, who had first entered the porcelain-enameled steel industry as an employee of Chicago Vitreous Enamel Products Company in April 1942. Initially focused on producing steel enamelware for household appliances, Chicago Vitreous later developed high-grade steel enameled panels used for storefronts, interior walls, and other architectural uses under the name Porcelain Products Company, which was the first to trademark the "Lustron" product name.<sup>4</sup>

In the late 1930s, the Porcelain Products Company contracted with the Standard Oil Company of Indiana to produce gas stations constructed of enameled steel. By the mid-1940s, steel had come under regulation of the federal government due to shortages caused by World War II efforts. In 1946, Strandlund (by this time named vice-president and general manager of Chicago Vitreous) traveled to Washington, D.C., in order to secure steel from the Civil Production Administration (CPA) for gas station production.<sup>5</sup> The CPA, concerned with a growing post-War housing shortage, instead encouraged Strandlund to consider using the porcelain enameled steel components for pre-fabricated housing.<sup>6</sup>

Strandlund hired architects Ray Blass and Morris Beckman to draw up concept plans for a prefabricated steel home to present to officials.<sup>7</sup> The resulting prototype, called the "Esquire," was a two-bedroom house featuring built-in shelves and cabinets, radiant heating, and large picture windows.<sup>8</sup> The house was decidedly modern in construction, with every surface made of porcelain-enameled steel, with the exception of its asphalt tile flooring and aluminum casement windows. In order to appeal to buyers, the architects designed the prototype in the ranch form, which was becoming increasingly popular in modern house construction.

Strandlund returned to Washington with the Lustron prototype and secured funding, which included a substantial Reconstruction Finance Corporation loan. Chicago Vitreous came to view the loans for the project as too risky, and as a result Strandlund formally set up the new "Lustron Corporation" on October 31, 1947. That same day, Strandlund resigned from Chicago Vitreous and purchased the Lustron trademark

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas T. Fetters, *The Lustron Home* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 11.

<sup>5</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Lustron Houses in Alabama, MPD, National Register # 64500008.

<sup>6</sup> H. Ward Jandl, *Yesterday's Houses of Tomorrow* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1991), 184.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas T. Fetters, *The Lustron Home* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 18.

<sup>8</sup> Lustron Houses in Alabama, MPD.

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and the machinery necessary to produce the dwellings.<sup>9</sup> The new venture required a large manufacturing plant ideally located in the heart of the county. Strandlund choose a former Curtiss-Wright airplane plant in Columbus, Ohio, ranging six football fields in length, as the new home for the Lustron Corporation.<sup>10</sup> Lustron houses were marketed across the country, and the first units to be produced at the plant were exhibit models to be showcased in major cities. The Lustron Corporation established a nationwide dealer network, recruiting well-financed men to act as sales representatives.<sup>11</sup> By the spring of 1949, 143 dealers were established across the country.

The Lustron Corporation developed and implemented cutting-edge production techniques. The production process included large presses that stamped out steel to make everything from exterior panels to the bath tub, modern welding techniques to effectively assemble the various wall sections, and mechanized porcelain-enameling procedures to provide a glass-like finish to both sides panels. Lustrons were built and assembled on an assembly line in a fashion similar to automobiles and then loaded strategically onto one tractor trailer truck for delivery to the dealer. The truck would then arrive at the prepared house site (all that was needed was a concrete slab) and would be unloaded as assembly progressed. The truck was packed in reverse order so that parts needed first were readily available. The houses came with a manual for the local builders to follow. The wall and roof trusses were assembled first, followed by the interior and exterior panels, and then the built-in amenities. Mechanical equipment was installed last.

According to advertising literature published by the Lustron Corporation, the houses were designed to resemble the "modified ranch style,"<sup>12</sup> and while several models existed, each was one-story, had a rectangular form, a gable-roof, and an exterior and interior skin of enameled-steel panels supported by a structural-steel frame. Houses could be purchased in one of four exterior colors: surf blue, dove gray, maize yellow, and desert tan. Designed similarly to the Esquire prototype, the "Westchester" became the first model available for public sale. The Westchester two-bedroom and the Westchester two-bedroom Deluxe became the most popular Lustron house models. The two-bedroom Westchester is easily identified by its integral front porch.<sup>13</sup>

The plant was designed to produce large quantities of houses, with Strandlund projecting that the plant could produce 100 houses every 23 hours. Unfortunately, production did not begin until November 1948, and the first Lustron house for public sale did not leave the manufacturing plant until January 1949.<sup>14</sup> At

<sup>9</sup> Thomas T. Fetters, *The Lustron Home* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 37

<sup>10</sup> Thomas T. Fetters, *The Lustron Home* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 32-36.

<sup>11</sup> Jandl, 190.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas T. Fetters, *The Lustron Home* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 69.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas T. Fetters, *The Lustron Home* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 67, 69, 71.

<sup>14</sup> National Register of Historic Places, A New Standard for Living: Lustron Houses in Indiana, MPD.

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the peak of manufacturing in August 1949, only 26 houses were manufactured per day.<sup>15</sup> Strandlund's plans to manufacture approximately 30,000 houses per year were never realized, and the Corporation fell far short of its goal. Between 1946 and 1950, when the Corporation folded, final production numbered less than 2,500 houses.

In 1950, due to non-payment of loans, the U.S. Government called-in its loans to the Lustron Corporation. Several major problems plagued the corporation, including the reluctance of lending institutions to finance mortgages for what was considered a non-traditional dwelling. Furthermore, a number of cities' building codes did not permit steel structures. While the initial cost of the homes were competitive, poorly trained assemblers and rising steel prices escalated the cost of a Lustron to more than traditional houses.

During the Lustron Corporation's brief period of production, its houses were built primarily in the eastern two-thirds of the country.<sup>16</sup> A number of those houses were constructed in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. The Lustron Corporation first advertised in the region with the opening of an exhibition of a prototype house in May 1948 at New Hampshire Avenue and E Street, N.W. Upon its opening, the *Washington Post*, the *Times-Herald* and the *Star* carried picture stories in their Sunday editions.<sup>17</sup> A July 1948 article in the *Washington Post* reported that prospective buyers could list their names for consideration at the exhibit house, although the manufacturer "reserves the right to give priorities to veterans and other qualified purchasers."<sup>18</sup> The article noted that over 40,000 people had come to inspect the model and hundreds of calls for information about the houses had been received.

Hints of the Lustron Corporation's future problems were revealed in a 1948 article in *The Washington Post* that noted, "Naming of the local distributor had been held up for several weeks, pending completion of financing arrangements and other details. Name of the dealer was scheduled to be announced last Sunday, was later postponed to this weekend and has now been postponed indefinitely, it was learned."<sup>19</sup> At the end of July 1948, Carlton Construction Corporation, led by president Charles Prins, was finally named area dealer and erector of Lustrons.<sup>20</sup> The area covered by Carlton Construction included Washington, D.C., Fairfax and Arlington Counties and the City of Alexandria in Virginia, and Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties in Maryland.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Lustron Houses in Alabama, MPD.

<sup>16</sup> A New Standard for Living: Lustron Houses in Indiana, MPD.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas T. Fetters, *The Lustron Home* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 49-50.

<sup>18</sup> "Firm Taking Orders for Steel Home," *Washington Post*, July 18, 1948, pg. R2; ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>19</sup> "Firm Taking Orders for Steel Home," *Washington Post*, July 18, 1948, pg. R2; ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>20</sup> Cynthia Liccesse-Torres and Kim A. O'Connell, "The Illustrious Lustron: A Guide for the Disassembly and Preservation of America's Modern Metal Marvel," 9.

<sup>21</sup> "Lustron Names Dealer; 30 Units Per Year Allocated to D.C. Area," *Washington Post*, July 25, 1948, pg. R1; ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

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Located at 1013 15<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., the Washington, D.C., area sales office opened on August 3, 1948. By the end of the summer more than 75,000 visitors had toured the model home and 1,500 prospective buyers were on the waiting list. While early projections stated that the first shipments to the area would occur by September 1948, it appears that the first permits in Virginia and Maryland were approved only by the end of that year. By August 1949, the Carlton Construction Company was no longer in business and MacFarlane Enterprises, located at 728 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., had replaced them as the area dealer. Construction costs within the region rose rapidly, following a nationwide trend, and soon area Lustrons cost buyers \$9,188, not including the lot and amenities within the house.<sup>22</sup>

While the Washington dealer initially had upwards of 1,200 buyers registered, only thirty houses were actually delivered.<sup>23</sup> Seven of those houses were delivered to Maryland, five of which were constructed in Prince George's County and are currently extant. Manufactured for less than four years, the failure of the Lustron was a result of "poor timing, rising costs, inflexible codes and regulations, poor distribution network, and a lack of control over local housing markets."<sup>24</sup> In 1950, the Lustron Corporation declared bankruptcy, ending a postwar, prefabricated housing experiment.

### PROPERTY CONTEXT

The Lustron at 5819 Black Hawk Drive is located in the Forest Heights neighborhood of Prince George's County, Maryland. Forest Heights was established in 1940 as a suburban residential community in western Prince George's County, adjacent to the southeastern boundary of Washington, D.C. Located on the south side of Southern Avenue, the community is divided by Indian Head Highway. The highway, six-lanes wide with a landscaped median, runs through the center of the community, dividing it into two separate neighborhoods.

In 1940, the Washington Heights Realty Corporation platted Forest Heights on a 136-acre tract of undeveloped, wooded land. Lots were relatively large, approximately 60 feet wide and 125 feet deep on curvilinear blocks. The streets were named after Native American tribes, such as Iroquois Way and Mohican Drive. Houses had a consistent setback of 25 feet.<sup>25</sup> In June 1941, real estate firm McKeever & Whiteford advertised a "Special for Builders." They invited "reliable" builders to see their "beautiful new

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<sup>22</sup> Torres and O'Connell, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Eric N. Dobson, "Architecture in Virginia: Lustron Homes in Arlington County, Virginia" (unpublished paper, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, 1992), 11.

<sup>24</sup> Tom Wolfe and Leonard Garfield, "'A New Standard for Living': the Lustron House, 1946-1950," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture III*, edited by Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1989), 51.

<sup>25</sup> Prince George's County Land Records, Circuit Court, BB 8:43.

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subdivision. 400 wooded lots, approved for FHA low-cost housing loans.<sup>26</sup> By October of that year, Southern Maryland Homes, Inc. was pre-showing their model house in the Forest Heights subdivision. The "Homes of Five and Six Rooms" in the "Defense Area" sold for \$5,250 to \$5,990 and were advertised for their convenient location near the Navy Yard and Naval Research Laboratory.<sup>27</sup> An article from *The Washington Post* that same month also noted the subdivision's convenient location to "Bolling Field, Anacostia Naval Air Base, the Navy Yard, and Indianhead powder plant [*sic*]." The article noted that homebuyers would "find standards of architecture and construction unusual in homes in the moderate priced bracket! Featured are two large bedrooms, bath with shower, living room over 22 feet long with fire place, large kitchen, full basement, air-conditioned heat and large lots."<sup>28</sup> As the name Forest Heights implies, the new suburb was located outside the low-lying city.

Initial development in Forest Heights was slow, in large part due to the onset of World War II (1941-1945). Yet the need for housing, prior to and during the war, resulted in the mass production of residential buildings throughout the Washington metropolitan area. This need was prompted by government expansion, with new residents traveling daily to the nation's capital from the suburbs by car, train, streetcar, and bus. The older, existing suburbs attracted high-status employees and professionals, while new suburbs like Forest Heights catered to young people just starting families and careers. Important to the development of Forest Heights was the opening of Indian Head Highway (MD 210). Constructed in 1942 as the Indian Head Naval Reservation Access Road, the highway provided quicker and easier transportation for local residents in Prince George's County and Charles County. It also physically and visually divided the community into two sections, which allowed for a more intimate neighborhood.

By July 1942, the first group of 25 houses in Forest Heights was sold. The growing need for housing prompted Southern Maryland Homes to immediately begin construction of 46 additional houses, of which 37 were already sold.<sup>29</sup> The demand for housing was great, with at least 25 applicants per house. Yet, the building boom in the Washington metropolitan area during and after the war created a shortage of building materials that included lumber, nails, pipes, and flooring. New construction throughout the area, at the urging of the government, was targeted to federal and military installations, and the facilities to service them such as roads, schools, and housing. Thus, Southern Maryland Homes, faced with 66 contracts on houses not yet completed, was unable to build while they waited for building materials. Sales were temporarily suspended until materials became available.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Classified Ad, *The Washington Post*, 23 June 1941, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Display Ad, *The Washington Post*, 5 October 1941, p. R6.

<sup>28</sup> "Forest Heights Community Shows First Homes Today," *The Washington Post*, 12 October 1941, p. R7.

<sup>29</sup> Display Ad, *The Washington Post*, 12 July 1942, p. R7.

<sup>30</sup> Don O'Reilly, "Builder Hold Mixed Views on Prospects," *The Washington Post*, 1 June 1946, p. 9.

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By 1947, the economy in Maryland was stable enough to support private construction once again. This had a tremendous effect on growing suburbs like Forest Heights, which by 1949 contained approximately 300 houses with new construction continuing at a rapid pace. These new houses were marketed directly to veterans returning from the war and employees of the out-lying government and military installations. Advertisements for the neighborhood touted Federal Housing Administration (FHA) financing for potential buyers.

The growing community of Forest Heights proved to be an attractive, affordable, well-planned subdivision conveniently located near both Washington, D.C. and military installations in Prince George's County. To better serve the growing number of commuters in the area, the Washington, Marlboro and Annapolis (WM&A) Motor Lines extended bus service to Forest Heights and the nearby commercial businesses in Oxon Hill in May 1948.<sup>31</sup> In an effort to improve roads and services, Forest Heights incorporated as a town in April 1949.<sup>32</sup> The opening of the South Capitol Street Bridge (now called the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge) in 1950 provided an easier commute between the District of Columbia and Prince George's County, thus attracting new residents to Forest Heights.

The improving methods and routes of transportation offered to the residents of Forest Heights encouraged development more rapidly than previously experienced. Further, McKeever & Whiteford's exclusive sales agreement with the Washington Heights Realty Corporation had ended by 1947, opening the neighborhood to a greater number of developers and builders. This prompted a change not only in the materials and size of the housing being constructed, but the forms and designs used as well. For example, in 1954, Ralph and Jean Rocks resubdivided a portion of Forest Heights and platted three sections on which they constructed large, two-story twin dwellings. These twin dwellings, constructed by Allen & Rocks, Inc., were chosen as one of *The Washington Post's* "Homes of '54." The "semidetached" house was offered for sale at \$13,950 with no down payment. The houses featured "three bedrooms, 1 ½ baths, copper plumbing, full basement and equipped kitchen."<sup>33</sup> The houses were "preengineered and prefabricated" by American Houses, Inc.<sup>34</sup> The twin houses proved to be overwhelmingly popular and by 1955, Allen & Rocks, Inc. had sold 180 houses and were opening their third section for development.<sup>35</sup> Also active in the mid-1950s was William P. Martin, who built concrete-block ranch houses veneered in brick. One of his designs was also chosen as a "Home of '54."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> "Buses Authorized for Oxon Hill and Forest Heights," *The Washington Post*, 20 May 1948, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Phillip J. Austensen, "There'll Be Hot Time Tonight in New Town of Forest Heights," *The Washington Post*, 20 June 1949, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> "Variety to Keynote Homes of '54," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, 18 July 1954, p. R1.

<sup>34</sup> "A 'Home of '54' Overlooking the Potomac," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, 12 September 1954, p. H14.

<sup>35</sup> Display Ad, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, 26 June 1955, p. G5.

<sup>36</sup> Display Ad, *The Washington Post*, 3 October 1954, p. R15.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. PG: 76A-53

McCallister House  
Continuation Sheet

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Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the Town of Forest Heights annexed several parcels of land on both sides of Indian Head Highway, gradually increasing the municipal boundaries of the town.<sup>37</sup> Forest Heights was fully developed as a residential suburb by 1965. The Eastover Shopping Center, located just north of Forest Heights, was completed in 1955 and provided a shopping destination for residents. The community is also served by a community center (the former municipal building) and two schools: Forest Heights Elementary School and Flintstone Elementary School.

This Lustron house is located in an area platted as "Section 7 of Forest Heights". The plat map states, "We Anna Marie Tydings, married, Gatewood S. Bennett, and George M. Quirk, and Lorene Griser, and owners of the property show and described hereon hereby adopt this plan of subdivision, establish the minimum building lines and dedicate the streets and alley to public use." All of these individuals were well financed and active in the development of the Washington suburbs during the mid-twentieth century.

Anna Marie Tydings, born in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1915, was the daughter of Eleanor Quirk and George Marcus Quirk. George M. Quirk was her brother. Anna Marie graduated from the University of Maryland and attended the University of Munich in Germany. A member of the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority, Mrs. Tydings involved herself in many social organizations, including: Manor County Club in Rockville, Down to Early Garden Club, Crippled Children Society of Potomac, Stitch and Chatter Club, the Redland Hunt Pony Club in Brookeville, Laytonsville Women's Club, and the Goshen Hunt Club in Gaithersburg, the Antiques Club and Gaithersburg Women's Club. She also was a forerunner for the first pilot summer program for public school children with cerebral palsy, which led to special education classes in public schools starting in the 1940s. Her husband, Warren E. Tydings, was born in Baltimore and also attended the University of Maryland where he was student government president. After Maryland, Warren earned his law degree from George Washington University. Tydings worked for the Hecht Company for twenty years, achieving the post of comptroller. His tenure at Hecht Co. was interrupted by World War II, when he served in the United States Army. Following his retirement from Hecht Co. in 1959, Tydings ventured into real estate development with the construction of the Montgomery Country Club in Laytonsville.<sup>38</sup>

George M. Quirk, brother of Anna Marie Tydings [nee Quirk], was also employed by the Hecht Co. Quirk, born in Erie, Pennsylvania, attended Georgetown University and joined the Hecht Co. in 1913 as an office clerk and within a year had become office manager. He was named controller in 1919 and store manager in 1933. In 1936, he became a vice president and four years later was named to the board of

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<sup>37</sup> George D. Denny, Jr., *Proud Past, Promising Future: Cities and Towns in Prince George's County, Maryland* (Brentwood, MD: Tuxedo Press, 1997), 181.

<sup>38</sup> "Warren E. Tydings, Sr.: Real Estate Investor." *The Washington Post* (1974-Current file), May 24, 1993, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed March 2, 2011).

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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directors for the department store. He is credited with guiding the Hecht Co.'s expansion, particularly the construction of the large, expensive warehouse on New York Avenue in northwest Washington, D.C. Like his sister Anna Marie, George participated in many social organizations, including: Board of Trade, Lions Club, and Manor Club. He also served as the director of the Bank of Commerce and Savings.<sup>39</sup> Although he never served in the military, he was on the advisory board of the Defense Department's surplus property disposal section. George Quirk lived with his wife, Ella Miller Quirk, on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. in Washington, D.C., with their three daughters.

Information related to Gatewood S. Bennett and Lorene Griser could not be located.

On May 17, 1946 Anna Marie Tydings, acting as Trustee, conveyed Lots 21 and 22 to William H. Gibson, Jr. and Margaret S. Gibson, his mother.<sup>40</sup> The Lustron house was not yet built on the property when it was sold to the Gibsons as the deed stipulated "that when a residence is erected on said land, it shall cost not less than \$6,000." Information pertaining to the Gibson family could not be located in local newspaper, census records, or online depositories.

In March of 1948, ownership of the property transferred to Kenneth John McCallister and his wife Holly.<sup>41</sup> In 1949, McCallister purchased the Lustron and had it assembled on his property in Forest Heights. Upon learning of the eminent bankruptcy of Lustron Corporation, McCallister purchased another Lustron as a package (unassembled) in 1950. The first house was remodeled as bedroom quarters when the second Lustron was constructed circa 1956.

McCallister, recently retired from a stint with the United States Army Signal Corps (1944-1946) during World War II, valued the Lustron design. The couple raised their three daughters in the Lustron, Joyce, Irene, and Beverly. Holly McCallister (nee Klige) was born on January 18, 1917 in Topeka, Kansas. McCallister was born on August 10, 1913 in Washougal, Washington to Wesley Baird McCallister and Kate Mabel Wood. He gained a degree, with honors, from Washington State University in 1936 followed by a Masters degree in economics from Cornell University in 1938. Following his formal education, McCallister gained employment with the Department of Agriculture as an economic statistician. Following two years military service at the close of World War II, McCallister went back to his job with the Department of Agriculture until 1969. Returning to academia, he joined the faculty at the University of the District of Columbia as professor of computer sciences. McCallister retired in 1979 as Emeritus,

<sup>39</sup> "Quirk Promoted By Hecht Company." *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), November 28, 1936, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 11, 2011).

<sup>40</sup> Anna Marie Tydings, Trustee to William H. Gibson, Jr. and Margaret S. Gibson, Prince George's County Land Records, 831:411.

<sup>41</sup> William H. Gibson, Jr. and Margaret S. Gibson, as Joint Tenants, to Kenneth J. McCallister and Holly McCallister, Prince George's County Land Records, 1018:382.

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**Maryland Inventory of**  
**Historic Properties Form**

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McCallister House  
**Continuation Sheet**

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after ten years of teaching at the university. Holly McCallister died on June 3, 1992 at the age of 75. Kenneth John McCallister died on October 31, 2003, leaving the Lustron at 5819 Black Hawk Drive to his daughter Irene Adele McCallister.<sup>42</sup> Although the second Lustron was erected, McCallister's plans for the dwelling were not finalized until 2007 when his daughters finished the house as he had planned.<sup>43</sup>

In January of 2009, Irene conveyed the property to her sister Joyce Amenta and her husband Howard R. Schmidt.<sup>44</sup> The Schmidts reside in Alexandria, Virginia and rent the house to tenants.

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<sup>42</sup> Irene Adele McCallister, as Personal Representative of the Estate of Kenneth John McCallister, to Irene Adele McCallister, Prince George's County Land Records, REP 20386:629.

<sup>43</sup> Joyce Amenta, "My Father's Double Lustron Home," Lustron Connection, [http://www.lustronconnection.org/html/lus\\_stor/lstory5.htm](http://www.lustronconnection.org/html/lus_stor/lstory5.htm) (accessed July 1, 2011).

<sup>44</sup> Irene Adele McCallister to Joyce Amenta Schmidt and Howard R. Schmidt, Prince George's County Land Records, PM 30577:336.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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U.S. Federal Census (Population Schedule). Online: The Generations Network, Inc., 2007. Subscription database. Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, DC. <http://www.ancestry.com>.  
Fetters, Thomas T. *The Lustron Home*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2002.  
Prince George's County Land Records.  
*The Washington Post*.

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 0.3537  
Acreage of historical setting 0.3537  
Quadrangle name Anacostia Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The McCallister House is located in Forest Heights, Maryland, on a 0.3537-acre parcel. Black Hawk Drive forms the eastern boundary of the property. Black Hawk Lane forms the western boundary. A line of mature trees forms the northern boundary. An asphalt driveway extends along the southern boundary of this suburban lot. The McCallister House has been associated with Lots 21 and 22 in Block 105 as noted on Tax Map 95 since its construction c. 1949.

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## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Lauren Trice/Architectural Historian		
organization	EHT Traceries, Inc. for M-NCPPC	date	September 2011
street & number	1121 Fifth Street, N.W.	telephone	(202) 393-1199
city or town	Washington	state	D.C.

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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  
Maryland Department of Planning  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

**Maryland Historical Trust**  
**Maryland Inventory of**  
**Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. PG: 76A-53

McCallister House  
Continuation Sheet

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CHAIN OF TITLE  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY LAND RECORDS

Deed  
779:465  
September 26, 1945

Washington Heights Realty Corporation to Anna Marie Tydings (Trustee for those persons who contributed the fund employed to purchase the real estate (15.74 acres plus Lots 13, 14, and 16 in Block lettered "Y" and Lots 5, 10, and 13 in Block lettered "W" in Section 4 of "Forest Heights"  
Plat of "Section 7 of Forest Heights"

Plat  
Plat Book No. 10, Plat 51  
January 1946

Deed  
831:411  
May 17, 1946

Anna Marie Tydings, Trustee, and Gatewood S. Bennett to William H. Gibson, Jr. and Margaret S. Gibson, his mother (Lots 21 and 22)

Deed  
1018:382  
March 12, 1948

William H. Gibson, Jr. and Margaret S. Gibson, as Joint Tenants, to Kenneth J. McCallister and Holly McCallister (Lots 21 and 22)

Deed  
4410:9  
August 27, 1974

Holly McCallister to Kenneth John McCallister (Lots 21 and 22)

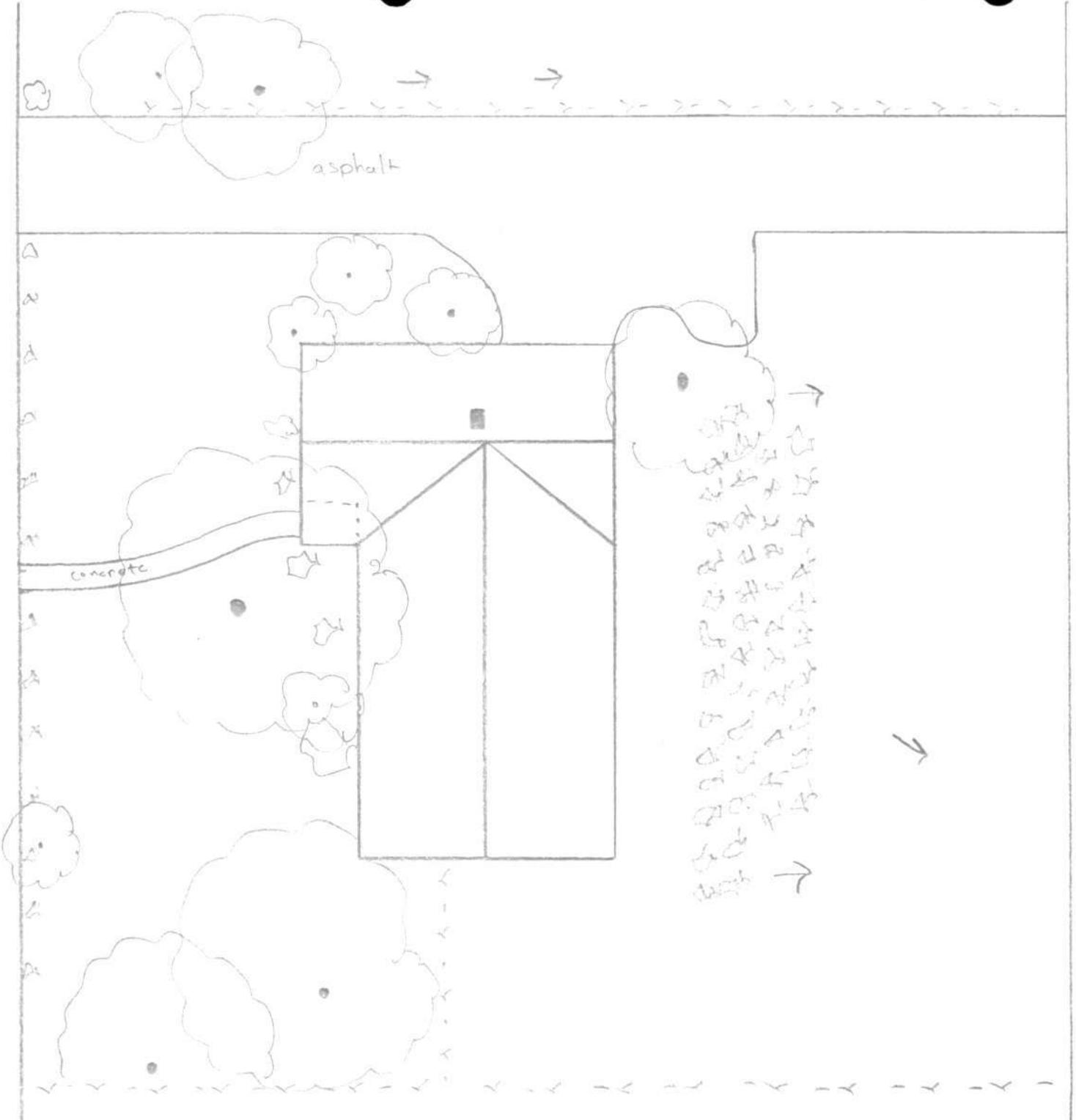
Deed  
REP 20386:629  
September 1, 2004

Irene Adele McCallister, as Personal Representative of the Estate of Kenneth John McCallister, who died October 31, 2003, Estate #62,590, Orphans Court for Prince George's County, Maryland to Irene Adele McCallister (Lots 21 and 22)

Deed  
PM 30577:336  
January 22, 2009

Irene Adele McCallister to Joyce Amenta Schmidt and Howard R. Schmidt (Lots 21 and 22)

Black Hawk Lane



Black Hawk Drive

←N

Date 4/2011

I.D. # P6176A.53

Name/Address 5819 Black Hawk Drive

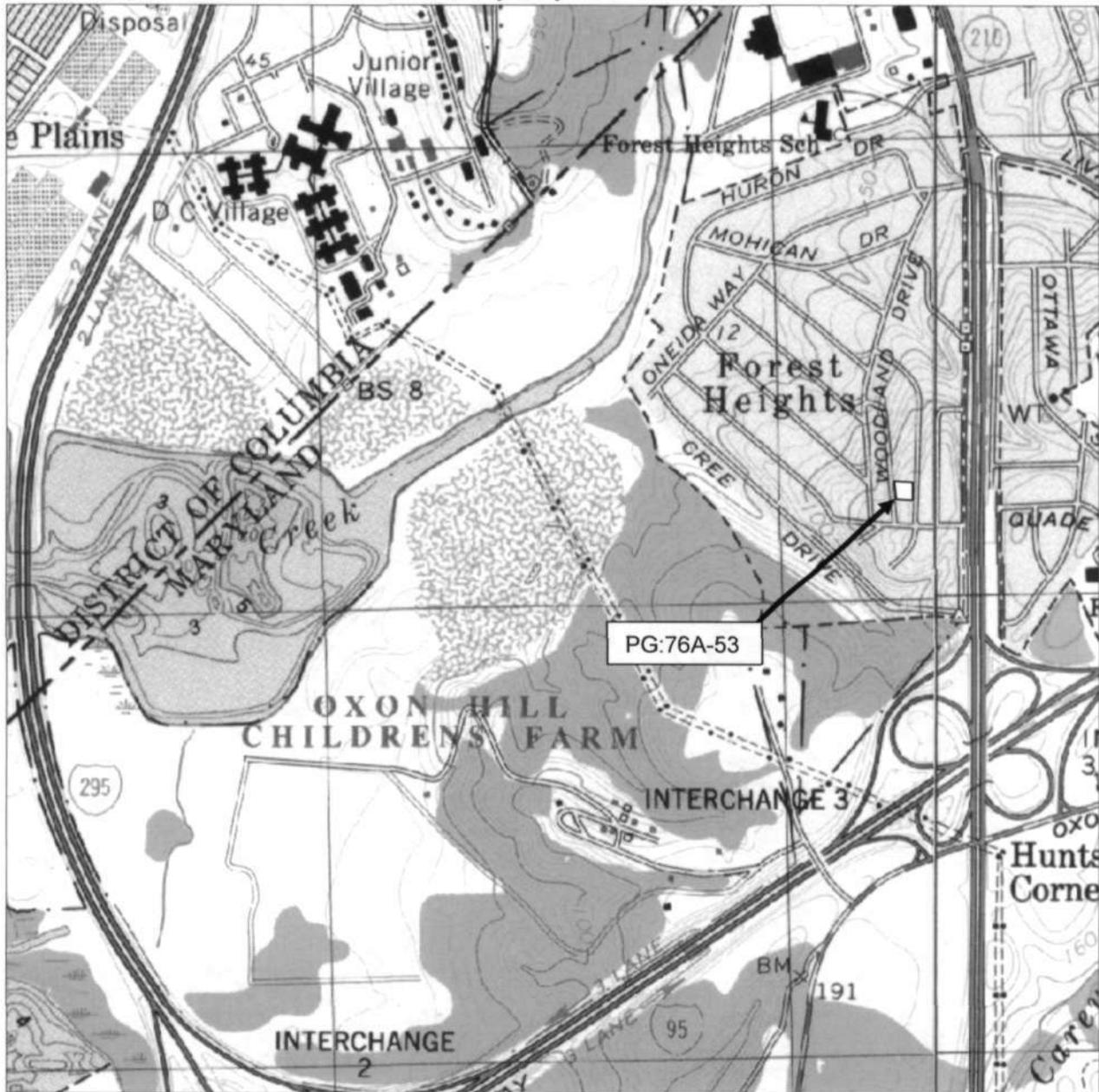
Not to Scale



PG: 76A-53  
McCallister House  
5819 Black Hawk Drive  
Oxon Hill, Prince George's County  
c. 1949  
Tax Map 95, Parcel 21



PG:76A-53  
McCallister House  
5819 Black Hawk Drive, Oxon Hill  
Alexandria quad 1965, Photorevised 1983, Bathymetry added 1982



Task Order 9/ RFP29-165  
Prince George's County, Maryland  
Digital Images Photo Log  
PG: 76A-53  
McCallister House

Photographer: EHT Traceries

Date: August 2011

1.	PG;76A-53_2011-08-01_01.tif	Façade, looking NW
2.	PG;76A-53_2011-08-01_02.tif	Façade, looking W
3.	PG;76A-53_2011-08-01_03.tif	Façade, looking SW
4.	PG;76A-53_2011-08-01_04.tif	Rear, looking NE
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PG: 76A-53

McCallister House

Prince George's County, Maryland

Traceries

August 2011

MD SHPC

Facade, View looking SW

1/2



PG: 76A-53

McCallister House

Prince George's County, Maryland

Traces

August 2011

MD SHPO

Farade, View looking NW

2/2