

NORRIS-HIGGINS HOUSE
(Eppa R. Norris House)
10806 Keswick Street
Garrett Park
Montgomery County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1103

HABS
MD
16-GARPK,
4-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

NORRIS-HIGGINS HOUSE
(Eppa R. Norris House)

HABS No. MD-1103

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MD
10-GARPP
4-

Location: 10806 Keswick Street, Garrett Park, Montgomery County, Maryland, located on Lot 15, Section 55, on the west side of Keswick Street, facing east. Keswick, a north-south street, intersects with Strathmore Avenue to the north.

Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
18.319010.4322290.

Present Owner
and Occupant:

Marthe B. Nichols Higgins

Present Use:

The house is in use as a single-family dwelling.

Significance:

Built ca. 1892, the house is one of the original homes in the railroad suburb of Garrett Park. More modest than some of the other original houses, it is representative of the range of sizes and styles that made up the town in its earliest years. The Queen Anne/Shingle Style design is evident in the asymmetry of the roof line and such elements as the hooded gable dormer and "Queen Anne sash" at the front facade; the turret with "bell-cast" roof; and the decorative trim of the full-width front porch. These features have been well preserved. The original owner, Eppa R. Norris, served on the Town Council from 1901-1905, and the second owner, David Bissett (also spelled "Bisset")¹, served from 1906-1912, and from 1919-1921.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Ca. 1892. Although the deed dated September 28, 1892, between the grantor, Metropolitan Investment and Building Co., and the grantee, Eppa R. Norris, the original owner, refers only to "22,000 square feet of land . . . designated as lots numbered 14 and 15 in Section numbered 55 . . . part of a tract of land called 'Dan,'" the price of \$2,500.00 strongly suggests that a house was included in the purchase. An advertisement in the April 19, 1891, issue of the Washington Post with the headline, "Have You Seen It? Garrett Park," lists "large lots at \$250, \$300, and \$400," with "a few" at \$500 and \$600. As further evidence of land costs, in 1894 Eppa Norris purchased a third lot of 11,000 square feet (lot 16, Section 55, adjoining lot 15) from Metropolitan Investment and Building Co. for \$250.

Other advertisements and brochures published by Metropolitan Investment show that the company promised to build houses to its plans and specifications for sale or rent. While some of the larger three-story "cottages" reportedly cost \$4000 to \$5000 to construct, they were sometimes sold at a loss (Garrett Park: A History of the Town, p. 4); and the house that Eppa Norris purchased was a considerably more modest two-story, five-room structure.

An additional source of information as to the date of construction is a map of Montgomery County published in 1894 by Griffith M. Hopkins, C.E., Philadelphia, showing a house symbol at two locations on Keswick Street, one of which corresponds to the location of lot 15 within Section 55.

2. Architect: Not known.

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:
Source: Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland, under the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court of Montgomery County, located in Rockville, Maryland.

The property now known as 10806 Keswick Street was one of two lots purchased by Eppa R. Norris from the Metropolitan Investment and Building Co. in 1892. The house was situated on lot 15; lot 14 remained undeveloped. In 1894 Eppa Norris purchased adjoining lot 16 from the company, and these three lots were owned together by a series of owners until 1948, when lot 15 (10806 Kes-

wick) was sold separately. In 1950 when the property was purchased by the present owner/occupant, adjoining lots 14 and 16 were still undeveloped.

1892

A. Deed September 28, 1892, recorded in Liber JA34, folios 342, 343. Metropolitan Investment and Building Co., Montgomery County, Maryland
To
Eppa R. Norris, Montgomery County, Maryland, lots 14 and 15, Section 55, 22,000 square feet more or less, Garrett Park, Maryland, part of a tract called "Dan," for \$2500.00. Plat of subdivision recorded in JA11, folio 167.

1894

B. Deed August 29, 1894, recorded in Liber JA44, folios 460, 461. Metropolitan Investment and Building Co., Montgomery County, Maryland
To
Eppa R. Norris, Washington, D.C., lot 16, Section 55, Garrett Park, Maryland, 11,000 square feet more or less, part of a tract called "Dan," \$250.00. Plat recorded in JA11, folio 167.

1904

Deed April 18, 1904, recorded in Liber TD176, folio 498. Eppa R. Norris and Lula Norris, his wife, Montgomery County, Maryland
To
David Bissett, Montgomery County, Maryland, Lots 14, 15, and 16, Section 55.

This deed and the following related deed were both recorded April 25, 1904:

Deed April 4, 1904, recorded in Liber TD176, folios 498, 499. Paleman H. Dorsett and Mary V. Dorsett, his wife, Orange County, California
To
David Bissett, Montgomery County, Maryland, lots 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, Section 55.

1930

Deed October 29, 1930, recorded in Liber 512,
folio 232, David Bissett and Euphemia I. Bissett,
his wife

To

Julian J. Chisolm, Inc., a Delaware corporation,
all pieces or parcels obtained by two deeds, the
first from Eppa R. Norris and wife, dated April
18, 1904, and the second from Paleman H. Dorsett
and wife, dated April 4, 1904, i.e., lots 14, 15,
16, Section 55, and lots 3 to 11 both inclusive.

1936

Deed February 3, 1936, recorded in Liber 618,
folio 158. Julian J. Chisolm, Inc., a Delaware
corporation, and Julian J. Chisolm and Isabel C.
Chisolm, his wife, Montgomery County, Maryland,
being a majority of the stockholders in said cor-
poration

To

R. L. Houston Jones, Montgomery County, Maryland,
and Hyla Smith, Washington, D.C., joint tenants,
lots 3 to 11 both inclusive and 14, 15, 16, Sec-
tion 55.

1943

Deed June 11, 1943, recorded in Liber 910, folios
435, 436. Northwestern Federal Savings and Loan
Association, Washington, D.C. (R. L. Houston
Jones, Secretary)

To

Richard C. Higdon, Montgomery County, Maryland,
lots 3 to 11 both inclusive and 14, 15, 16, Sec-
tion 55.

1948

Deed September 22, 1948, recorded in Liber 1193,
folio 209. Richard C. Higdon and Sydney A. Hig-
don, his wife, Montgomery County, Maryland

To

Allard W. Sanders and Elizabeth D. Sanders, his
wife, Montgomery County, Maryland, lot 15, Section
55, plat of subdivision re-recorded in Book A,
plat 35.

1950

Deed August 23, 1950, recorded in Liber 1421,
folios 525, 526. Allard W. Sanders and Elizabeth
D. Sanders, his wife, Montgomery County, Maryland

To
John J. Higgins and Marthe B. Higgins, his wife,
Montgomery County, Maryland, lot 15, Section 55.

4. Original plans and construction: Based on physical evidence the footprint of the original house was generally square in shape (approximately 23' wide and 24' deep) laid out in a side hall, double-pile configuration on a brick foundation over a brick-walled cellar with a dirt floor. The cellar dimensions correspond to this footprint. The front slope of the gable roof projected beyond the facade plane, forming an integral full-width porch. A turret with a single-pane casement window and a double-window hooded gable dormer projected from the second story roof line at the front facade. These two projections were positioned asymmetrically in relation to the first floor door and window openings.

These basic elements exist in 1993, with the alterations and additions noted below, which over time changed the footprint from a square to a rectangle.

5. Alterations and additions: The minutes of the Town Council meeting of April 7, 1902, state that a permit to enclose a back porch and build a new porch was issued to Eppa R. Norris. The Higgins family recalls that in 1950 there was evidence that the room at the rear (northwest corner) of the house, which was an extension of the second of the first-floor rooms of the original house and is currently a family room, had at one time been used as a kitchen. The hole for a stove-pipe connection through the wall was visible in 1950, and a brick chimney stack is still intact under the hooded gable dormer at the rear (west) facade. It seems probable that the porch enclosure of 1902 created the space that is now the family room, the pantry, and possibly another small room west of the pantry. The new rear porch, for which Eppa Norris also received a permit in 1902, presumably was at the southwest corner of the house. At some point this porch also was enclosed and extended and became the kitchen, as it was in 1950 and is at the present time. The kitchen was renovated after 1950 and a window was added on the west wall. The family room was also renovated.

Some time prior to 1950 a deep gable hood was added over the two dormer windows at the second story of the

rear facade, and two supporting posts were also added.

The original dirt floor of the cellar was covered with concrete after 1950. In addition, non-functional louvered shutters have been attached to the front facade at the first- and second-story double windows.

B. Historical Context:

1. General background: The tract of land known as "Dan," on a portion of which the Town of Garrett Park now sits, was created in 1694 when the second Lord Baltimore, Sir Cecil Calvert, granted several hundred acres in what would become Montgomery County to a person of influence in exchange for a "quitrent," or land tax, payable to the Lord Proprietor of Maryland for his personal use.²

In 1886, a 500-acre portion of "Dan" was purchased by the Metropolitan Investment and Building Company for speculative development along the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The B & O had completed its first line, from Baltimore to Ellicott's Mills, in 1830 (MacMaster and Hiebert, p. 104). In 1853 the Metropolitan Railroad Company was organized with the intent of building a line from Georgetown to Frederick, Maryland, to intersect the B & O main line, but this goal was never realized. Instead, the B & O ultimately took over the Metropolitan charter and in 1873 the Metropolitan Branch, a new line running across Montgomery County from Point of Rocks, Maryland, to Washington, D.C., was opened (p. 210). Its completion provided a corridor for future suburban growth in Montgomery County, a pattern that was reflected elsewhere in the nation in the late 1800s. John Stilgoe states in his book, Metropolitan Corridor, that, "[r]ailroad suburbs sprouted along the high iron leading away from most major American cities, and commuters firmly believed them to offer the best advantages of rural and urban living."³

While development in Montgomery County along the B & O line during the 1870s was generally limited to summer colonies, by the 1880s suburban subdivisions began to appear, including Garrett Park, which was promoted by its developers as "the suburban town of the National Capital."

2. Development of Garrett Park: In 1886, Henry Copp, a Washington, D.C. attorney, formed the Metropolitan Investment and Building Company of Montgomery County, Maryland, to develop a new commuter suburb. To cement its relationship with the railroad, the town was named "Garrett Park" in honor of Robert W. Garrett, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

In addition to rail access from the Garrett Park station, the Park could be "easily reached by carriage on the west by the Rockville pike, and on the east by the Seventh street road," according to a promotional booklet issued by Metropolitan Investment in 1887. The company also promised a beautiful setting; a 30-minute commute to Washington, D.C. (\$6.60 for a monthly ticket); surveyed and platted lots "from one-quarter of an acre to five acres" to be sold "for the present on monthly instalments of two per cent of the price thereof"; and macadamized streets "of city dimensions." Plans for the grounds were made "from the suggestion of Prof. William Saunders . . . of the Agricultural Department."

The booklet also states that Garrett Park is "the one place around Washington which is entirely free from malaria." In promoting the healthfulness of suburban living, Metropolitan Investment echoed other developers during the late 1800s who focused on this issue. As Gwendolyn Wright notes, "[t]hose who moved to the new suburbs were assured of an escape from the problems of poor health, social unrest, and vice associated with urban life."⁴ A belief in the efficacy, and even the morality, of a house in the "country" was reinforced by advertisements that proclaimed: "Every child has the RIGHT to a home of its own. The child raised in a rental house or apartment is CHEATED"; and "Your Own Garden--The back yard of your home is the most profitable Food Factory on earth" (in Stilgoe, pp. 265-66).

The B & O Railroad also promoted suburban development along its "picturesque" tracks where "health, comfort and happiness can be found by all classes and conditions of people." On a more practical level, in a brochure issued ca. 1888 the railroad offered inducements to corporations and individuals who located near its line in the form of reduced freight and passenger rates.

Of the 500 acres of "Dan" acquired by the developer for the new suburb of Garrett Park, approximately 154 acres were ultimately subdivided into lots. The first plat of subdivision was filed on August 10, 1887, and by 1891 all of the original lots had been sold and half-a-dozen "cottages" had been built.

In May, 1898, Garrett Park was incorporated as a town by the Maryland General Assembly, and a mayor and four councilmen were elected. Based on minutes of Town Council meetings from 1898 to 1905,⁵ much effort in the early years was spent on sanitation problems (sewer and water service was not available until the 1930s); tax assessment rates; and attempts to prevent fowl (geese, ducks, turkeys, or chickens) and dogs from roaming at large.

By 1900, 37 houses had been constructed and the population of Garrett Park stood at 175.

In 1910, Metropolitan Investment and Building Company was dissolved. The reasons cited for its demise were "inactivity in building and development where the company's property is located" and "development of suburban property around Washington in another direction from that owned by the company."⁶

3. The house and the evolution of the American Queen Anne/Shingle Style: The house on Lot 15 in Section 55 was approximately 24 feet square, not including front and rear porches, when it was built ca. 1892 and purchased by Eppa R. Norris. The first alteration, which enclosed the rear porch and added a new rear porch, was made by the original owner in 1902, and changed the shape of the house from a square to a rectangle. In its over-all dimensions and general character the house resembled some of the pattern book "cottages" that appeared in such collections as Shoppell's Modern Houses, Beautiful Homes, and Palliser's American Cottage Homes.

Original features that typify the American Queen Anne/Shingle Style include the double windows on the second story of the front facade in which the upper light in each is inset on all four sides with a border of small square lights (sometimes called a "Queen Anne sash"); the deeply overhanging eaves on the gable dormer of the front facade; the turret with "bell-cast"

roof overlooking the front facade at the southeast corner; the asymmetrical roof line and asymmetrical placement of the windows, dormers, and turret; the decorative trim of the full-width front porch, with its dowel-and-bead frieze and scroll-sawn brackets; and the wood shingle siding applied in a variety of patterns for decorative effect.

The Queen Anne style has been described as one of the "creative" revivals of the nineteenth century, that is, one that was not concerned with historical accuracy so much as with the use of traditional forms and motifs in an innovative way.⁷ While John J. Stevenson is generally credited as the originator of the "Free Classic" or Queen Anne style in its English manifestation, which relied on masonry construction, the architectural historian Vincent Scully believes that Andrew Jackson Downing, an influential mid-nineteenth century author of architectural pattern books, laid the groundwork for the evolutionary process that led to an American parallel to the Queen Anne and ultimately to the fusing of several styles into a distinctively American vernacular architecture.⁸

Downing defined the principle of symmetry as "the balance of two irregular parts," and Scully notes that in the book Cottage Residences, issued in 1842, Downing includes a design for an Italian villa built of wood, with vertical siding and overhanging eaves supported by brackets (Scully, introduction, Shingle Style and the Stick Style). Downing's growing appreciation of the positive aesthetics of verticality and of wood-frame structures, his awareness of wood as the most readily available and easily handled building material in America, and his understanding of the desirability of a lightness of style anticipate, in Scully's view, the new balloon framing method which had not yet completed its migration from West to East. Scully calls the type of wooden domestic architecture that developed between 1840 and 1872 the "stick style" and says that by 1870 it had been transformed into the so-called "shingle style" as a result of new attention to surface treatment by Norman Shaw, H. H. Richardson, and others (p. 10). As the American Centennial grew closer and the nostalgia for colonial revivalism grew stronger, these styles merged with the American Queen Anne, according to Scully, to produce a new and original domestic architecture (pp. 30-31).

This eclectic style continued to be disseminated through pattern books, and many of its characteristic features are evident in the original Garrett Park houses.

4. The early occupants of the house: Eppa R. Norris was born in April, 1862, in Virginia to parents who also were born in that state. He was 30 years old and had been married for two years when he and his wife purchased one of the original Garrett Park houses from Metropolitan Investment and Building Company in 1892. The Twelfth Census of the United States (June 1, 1900) lists his occupation as plate printer and indicates that he owned the house free of mortgage in 1900.

His wife, Lula Norris, was born in October, 1865, in the District of Columbia to parents who were natives of the District. At the time of the 1900 census, Lula Norris had given birth to four children, three of them living: a daughter, Lydia, born in August, 1894, and two sons, Eppa, born in May, 1895, and William, born in July, 1898.

The Montgomery Press of October 16, 1903, notes that Mr. and Mrs. Norris "recently welcomed twin girls." In a colorful anecdote, the Norrises' next-door neighbor (at 10800 Keswick Street), Mrs. Jason F. Defendorf, wrote in her "reminiscences" that the day the twins were born "Mr. Eppa Norris hired a carriage and a span of horses, put on his silk hat and rode around the Park."⁹

Eppa Norris was elected to the Town Council in June, 1901, and served two consecutive two-year terms.

In April, 1904, the Norrises sold the house on Lot 15 and adjacent lots 14 and 16 to David Bissett. The Montgomery Press of May 5, 1905, notes that Mr. and Mrs. Norris and children "removed from Garrett Park on Monday last to take up their residence in Kensington [Maryland] where Mr. Norris is said to have bought a farm."

The second owner of the house, David Bissett, was born in 1871 in the state of New York to parents who were natives of Vermont. At the time of the 1900 census he was 29 years old and had been married five years. He was a government clerk at the Treasury Department, and

in 1900 the house he and his wife then lived in at 10922 Montrose Street (lots 6, 7, Section 99) was owned free of mortgage.

His wife, Mary,¹⁰ was born in July, 1872, in Vermont of native Vermont parents. In 1900 the Bissetts had two living children: daughters Mary, born July, 1896, and Dorothy, born December, 1898. A double tragedy struck the Bissett family on August 2, 1903, when a fire broke out in the kitchen of their house on Montrose Street. Their house and the house next door owned by Bryan C. Tiffany burned to the ground and the Bissetts' two-year-old daughter, Florence, died in the fire. Newspaper articles at the time noted that the town had no waterworks and that a windmill and 7000-gallon water tank on the Bissett property could not be utilized because of their proximity to the fire. Several of Bissett's greenhouses were also destroyed in the fire.

David Bissett served on the Town Council from 1906 to 1912 and from 1919 to 1921. He and his family lived in the house at 10806 Keswick Street until 1930.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The house embodies elements of both the American Queen Anne and Shingle styles of architecture from the late nineteenth century.
2. Condition of fabric: The overall condition is very good. The foundation, siding, and roof materials appear to be in good condition. The exterior is freshly painted and the house and lot have a well-maintained appearance.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The house is 24'-3" wide. The length of the south exterior wall, which is set back 2'-5" at the front door, is 42'-0". The length of the north exterior wall is 38'-0". The general shape is rectangular, slightly offset at the east and west facades.

2. Foundations: The foundation under the original portion of the house is brick, approximately 6 inches thick. The cellar, which conforms to the footprint of the original house, is approximately 6 feet deep (there is some variation in depth due to the unevenness of the cellar floor), of which about two feet is above ground. The additions to the rear of the house sit on a brick foundation over a dirt crawl space. This part of the foundation ranges from 12" to approximately 17". All of the exposed foundation has been parged and painted.

3. Walls: The exterior walls are sheathed with wood siding in a variety of patterns typical of the Queen Anne/Shingle Style. The gable ends are sheathed in flush siding from the foundation to the top of the first-floor window frames, followed by a six-row band of fish-scale shingles ending at the sills of the second-story windows, topped with square shingles applied in a regular linear pattern extending to the roof line. This top section is crossed by vertical boards arranged in a decorative fan-shaped pattern. The ridge is accented with a projecting hooded pediment.

On the front and rear facades the flush siding extends to the second story level. At the front, the gable dormer and turret are sheathed in square shingles. Similarly, at the rear, the double-width dormer and gabled hood are clad with square shingles.

4. Structural system, framing: The house is presumed to be of wood-frame construction supported by a brick foundation and brick piers at the first level and a nailed-on ribbon plate at the second level, with a mitred and nailed common-rafter roof framing system.

5. Porches: A front porch, part of the original house, extends the width of the front facade. It is 6'-5" deep, stepping back to 9 feet at the recessed front door. Decorative features include a railing, turned posts with double posts at the front steps, and a dowel and bead frieze with scroll-sawn brackets at the roof line. A small covered porch at the rear kitchen entrance is 4'-10" wide and 5'-1" deep and is utilitarian in design and construction.

6. Chimneys: There is an original brick double fireplace and chimney between the living room and dining

room on the first floor. The fireplace in the dining room has been closed off; the fireplace in the living room is still usable and its original brick surround is in good condition. The bricks have been painted white and there is a wood mantel, also painted white.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: There are three exterior doors, one at the front (east facade); one on the south facade at the landing of the basement stairs; and one at the rear (west) facade, facing north, opening onto the rear porch. The front door has recessed paneling with raised molding and glazing over the lock rail.

b. Windows and shutters: The typical window is one-over-one-light, double hung, wooden sash. There are double windows at the first and second story of the front (east) facade; at the second-story level of the staircase on the south facade; and at the first and second levels of the north facade. The second-story double windows on the front facade are of particular interest because the upper light in each is inset on all four sides with a border of small square lights. There are three single, one-over-one-light, double hung, wooden sash windows on the north facade; three on the south facade (one of which is an unusual size, approximately 18 inches wide and 6'-6" tall); one at the first floor rear (west) facade; and two in the rear second-story dormers. There is a single-light casement window in the turret at the front facade and one at the first-story rear facade.

There are non-functional shutters flanking the double windows on the first and second stories of the front facade.

8. Roof: The roof is gabled and clad in asphalt shingles. The same material covers the gable dormers at the front and rear. The small turret has a "bell cast" roof and is covered with asphalt shingles.

There are gutters and downspouts at the front and rear.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. Cellar: The cellar has the same dimensions as the original footprint of the house. The walls are brick, painted white. The original dirt floor was covered with concrete in the 1950s. There is one brick support pier (17-1/2" x 13") and the massive base of the double brick chimney, which measures 5'-4" x 2'-11" x 6'-6" at the cellar level. There are two small casement windows on each of the north and south walls. Stairs along the south wall lead to a small landing with an exterior door, as well as to one additional step leading to an interior door opening onto the first floor hallway.

b. First floor: The first floor consists of a side hall and staircase, a living room opening off the hall to the right of the entrance, followed by (moving east to west) a dining room and a family room, or "second parlor." A double fireplace is centered on the common wall between the living room and dining room. These two rooms were originally connected by a door just to the south of the double fireplace. The doorway opening still exists but the door has been removed and glass shelves, visible from both rooms, have been installed for display purposes. The living room and dining room each open onto the hall through double doorways. The family room can be entered from the dining room through French doors and also from the hall. There is a pantry between the cellar stairway and the kitchen. The hall ends at the entrance to the kitchen in the southwest corner of the house. The kitchen extends about 5 feet beyond the outer wall of the family room. There is a rear entrance door in the north wall of the kitchen extension. At the east end (front entrance) of the hall, a stairway runs along the south wall beginning at a point 9 feet from the front door. A single run leads up to the second floor and down to the cellar.

c. Second floor: The second floor consists of a side hall and staircase, a master bedroom at the front (east) end of the house, and two adjoining bedrooms running east to west. The three bedrooms have interconnecting doors and each also has a door opening onto the hallway. The rear (west) bedroom has a dormer window on the west wall.

Adjacent to this bedroom at the west end of the hallway is a bathroom, which also has a dormer window.

d. Attic: The attic is reached through an opening in the ceiling of the middle bedroom. It is unfinished and was not inspected because of the owner's concerns about safety.

2. Stairways:

The staircase leading from the first floor to the second floor is original to the house. It is a heavy but handsome open string winder stair with a turned and chamfered newel and turned balusters in the Italianate style. The treads are finished with half-round nosing at the front and end edges. The stair rises 12 steps to a three-step winder ending at the second floor hallway.

The stairway from the first floor to the cellar is also original and is reached from a doorway at the end of the first-floor staircase, down one step to a small landing with an exterior door on the south facade, and continuing down along the south wall nine steps to the cellar floor.

3. Flooring:

The original flooring in the hallway, living room, dining room, and family room was replaced some time after 1950 with narrower random length pine boards, treated with a stain.

On the second floor, the original wider-width wood plank flooring is intact in the hallway and bedrooms and is laid north to south. Several layers of paint are evident, the most recent a dark reddish-brown color.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

The walls are presumed to be lath and plaster, painted or wallpapered throughout the main rooms of the house, with the exception of the family room, where the walls are covered with vertical wooden paneling. There is no chair rail or cor-

nice molding in any of the rooms. The baseboard is approximately 8" high, beaded at the top and bottom and with an ovolo-type profile.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Doorway surrounds are virtually identical throughout the house, consisting of pilaster trim with corner block molding. An additional piece of spindle and bracket trim has been attached to the head of the wide doorways between the hallway and the living room and dining room.

Interior doors have four flat panels, two above and two below the lock rail. The French doors between the dining room and family room are the exception.

b. Windows: The molding around the windows is the same pilaster trim with corner blocks used for the doorways.

6. Mechanical systems:

a. Heating: A coal stove, presumed to be original to the house, was replaced after 1950.

b. Plumbing: Indoor plumbing was not available in Garrett Park until the 1930s when the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission extended water and sewer service to the Town (Garrett Park: p. 12). Prior to that time sanitary facilities would have consisted of a privy or perhaps some type of privately installed "sewerage disposal" system, once the Town reversed its earlier position and began to permit them, ca. 1920.

c. Electric: Electricity was made available to the Town by Potomac Electric Power Co. in 1914.

D. Site:

1. Early Landscaping and Outbuildings: In the book, Garrett Park: A History of the Town, mention is made of "Mr. David Bissett, who built and operated greenhouses south of Strathmore and west of Keswick throughout the

first decade of the 1900s . . ." David Bissett and his first wife, Mary, purchased the house on lot 15 along with vacant lots 14 and 16 from Eppa and Lula Norris in April, 1904, and within the same month also purchased vacant lots 3 through 11 in the same section from Paleman and Mary Dorsett. The greenhouses apparently were scattered throughout the vacant property. While there is no specific record of landscaping on lot 15 during this time period, there was an existing greenhouse in the northwest corner of the lot in 1950 when the Higgins family purchased the property; and it seems reasonable to assume that under Bissett's ownership lot 15 was well landscaped and well cared for from the earliest years, as in fact it is at the present time.

The book also notes on p. 9 that "Bissett's greenhouses were operated after he moved to the District by Julian Chisolm," who purchased the properties in 1930. The greenhouses on the outlying lots were removed in the 1950s so that houses could be constructed, and the greenhouse on lot 15 was removed at about the same time. The current owner/occupant recalls that in 1950 the area around the house, particularly to the west and north, "looked like a farm." The Higginses enhanced the property by adding a rose arbor and garden in the rear yard. Mature trees and plantings have been preserved.

The house is sited toward the center of the lot, as are many of the original houses in Garrett Park.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early views:

* Photograph of west (rear) facade, 1950 (Higgins family collection; see index to photographs).

* Photograph of Eppa R. Norris with Mayor Brady and other Town Councilmen, ca. 1902 (from Montgomery County Historical Society files; see index to photographs).

B. Interviews:

Marthe B. Nichols Higgins and Dale Higgins Herron, March 23 and April 2, 1993, 10806 Keswick Street, Garrett Park, MD 20896.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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2. Secondary and published sources:

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Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION:

This project was undertaken in connection with the course "Documenting the Historic Environment" (HISP 619B) at the University of Maryland, College Park, during the Spring, 1993, semester under the direction of Peter E. Kurtze, architectural historian and class instructor. The documentation was prepared in accordance with the standards of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) by Constance Peterson Terry, a student in the Graduate Certificate Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Maryland. Photographs were taken by Constance Peterson Terry except for those otherwise noted in the Index.

1. In the deed documents, the spelling is "Bisset"; however, all references in the Town Clerk's records, including minutes of Town Council meetings, use "Bissett," and for consistency the latter spelling is used throughout this report.
2. Richard K. MacMaster and Ray Eldon Hiebert, A Grateful Remembrance (Rockville, Md: Montgomery County Government and the Montgomery County Historical Society, 1976) pp. 8-9.
3. John R. Stilgoe, Metropolitan Corridor (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 269.
4. Gwendolyn Wright, Building the Dream (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p. 96.
5. Town Clerk's Office, Garrett Park, Maryland; minutes book covering the period 1898-1905.
6. Evening Star, November 1, 1910, copy of clipping available in Town Clerk's office, Garrett Park, Maryland.
7. Witold Rybczynski, Home, A Short History of an Idea (New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1986) pp. 174-75.

8. Vincent J. Scully, Jr., Shingle Style and the Stick Style
(New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, rev. ed. 1971).

9. On file at the Montgomery County Historical Society library,
Rockville, Maryland.

10. Mary B. Bissett is listed as David Bissett's wife of five
years at the time of the 1900 U.S. Census. Mary Bissett appar-
ently died some time between 1903 and 1930, or the couple may
have been divorced. In any case, the deed of sale dated October
29, 1930, lists Euphemia I. Bissett as David Bissett's wife.