

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Rockville Park Historic District

other names \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Bounded by Baltimore Road, Joseph St, Grandin Ave, Reading Ave. and S. Stonestreet Ave.  not for publication

city or town Rockville  vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Montgomery code 031 zip code 20850

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby, certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register. July 18, 2001  
 See continuation sheet.
  - Determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Name of Property

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private      | <input type="checkbox"/> building(s)         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State            | <input type="checkbox"/> site                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal          | <input type="checkbox"/> structure           |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> object              |

Contributing	Noncontributing	
57	31	buildings
2		sites
	1	structures
		objects
59	32	Total

Name of related multiple property listing **N/A**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register **0**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling / House  
 DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling / Garage  
 INDUSTRY/waterworks/water tower  
 TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian bridge

DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling / House  
 DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling / Garage  
 INDUSTRY/waterworks/water tower site  
 TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian bridge

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN  
 LATE 19<sup>TH</sup>/20<sup>TH</sup> C. REVIVALS  
 LATE 19<sup>TH</sup>/20<sup>TH</sup> C. AMERICAN MOVEMENTS  
 MODERN MOVEMENT

foundation STONE, BRICK, CONCRETE BLOCK  
 walls WOOD/weatherboard, BRICK, STUCCO  
 roof STONE/Slate, METAL/Steel, SYNTHETICS/fiberglass  
 other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Name of Property

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

County and State

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## Description Summary

Rockville Park retains the essential physical features that characterized the platting of this residential subdivision in 1884, including streets and alleys associated with the original design. Surrounded by post-World War II turnkey subdivisions, Rockville Park’s setting is notable for its open landscape, angled streets, and range of spatial associations that arose from its slow development over time. Lining the streets of the neighborhood are houses in a variety of forms and architectural styles, including Victorian-era residences, American Foursquares, bungalows, and Minimal Traditional houses from the 1950s. The district is adjacent to the Rockville station of the B & O Railroad Metropolitan Branch (1873), the primary impetus for the subdivision’s development. The northern boundary of Rockville Park, Baltimore Road, is one of Montgomery County’s historic roads; the district’s western boundary is the railroad line.

## Narrative

The City of Rockville is centrally located in Montgomery County, Maryland and encompasses 13 square miles. The Piedmont topography is reflected with gentle hills and slopes. Rockville sits at the intersection of major north-south (Rockville Pike) and east-west (Montgomery Avenue, Falls Road) routes. The city’s earliest identity is related to its function as the center of government for Montgomery County. Today, government offices are clustered in the vicinity of the original town center, but Rockville is also a commercial hub for the wider metropolitan area, concentrated along Rockville Pike. Overall, 74 percent of the city is zoned residential, which includes 950 acres of open space.<sup>1</sup>

Rockville Park is one of several subdivisions located in a residential portion of the East Rockville Planning Area, bounded by the railroad tracks and Hungerford Road (MD 355) to the west, Gude Drive to the north, First Street (MD 28) to the east, and Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) to the south. Within the bounds of these major traffic arteries, East Rockville reflects the suburban expansion of Rockville, with a variety of houses and mature gardens on narrow streets.

Rockville Park lies on the south side of Baltimore Road, a pre-existing thoroughfare that connected Rockville to two early nineteenth-century towns, Brookeville and Sandy Spring, and then to the City of Baltimore. The topography varies from 400-460 feet above sea level, with water draining from a high point on Grandin Avenue. Rockville Park pre-dates the city’s first municipal water system (1896-1897), but includes the site of the city’s first municipal water tower. This pipestem tower was an element of the 1897 pumping station known as the “Rockville Electric Lights and Water Works,” located in the adjacent Croydon Park subdivision to the north.

<sup>1</sup> City of Rockville *Comprehensive Master Plan 2002*, p. 2-1. C-3

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Name of Property

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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The proposed Rockville Park Historic District retains all those essential physical features that characterize the Rockville Park subdivision, including the original configuration as established with the plat of 1884 and modified in 1890. Surrounded by post-World War II turnkey subdivisions, the Rockville Park Historic District is notable for its circulation system of roads, sidewalks, and alleys; variety of property types; and range of spatial associations that arose from its slow development over time. In addition to varying property sizes, there is a unifying element that arises from the sense of space created by the triangular-shaped layout, with its resulting variety of views, focal points, and meandering routes.

Rockville Park contains large and small single-family dwellings, built in a wide-range of architectural styles. Property sizes vary. The houses front the streets and have landscaped front yards. There are a moderate number of mature trees scattered throughout the neighborhood. Behind most properties are alleys, and some properties include associated outbuildings that can be accessed from the alley. Many of the houses have private driveways off of the main street that lead to detached garages. In addition, many houses have generous side yards. The pedestrian environment includes tree-bordered sidewalks and rich garden edges that frame the front yards.

Separated by railroad tracks from the city center, Rockville Park has been connected to downtown Rockville in various ways, including a pedestrian bridge shown on the 1890 plat. The present steel truss bridge, however, was installed in 1974 and is therefore a non-contributing structure in the proposed National Register District. The former B&O tracks are now owned and operated by CSX, and additional tracks were added after the Washington Metro extended to Rockville in 1975.

Excepting the CSX/Metro tracks and a narrow commercial strip at its western edge, Rockville Park is bordered on three sides by residential subdivisions: Croydon Park to the north, Janeta to the east, and Rockdale to the south. These adjacent neighborhoods have many similarities to Rockville Park, and their development includes involvement by some of the same individuals, most notably, the Reading family. Croydon Park (1924) and Janeta (1914) both include a network of streets and alleys that connect to Rockville Park. However, discordant intrusions such as widening or re-routing of historic roads have adversely impacted the three adjacent subdivisions. They do, however, serve as a buffer for the Rockville Park subdivision and protect its historic character.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *SHA Congestion Relief Study: MD28 Rockville Town Center Intersection improvement Study* (initiated 1998); *SHA Determination of Eligibility for Rockville Park* (2/2/2001); *MHT concurrence* (3/22/2001); *Keeper of the NRHP Determination of Eligibility* (7/18/2001).

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Name of Property

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## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT

### Urban Design

Layout: Rockville Park’s picturesque layout is a modified grid within the asymmetrical form of the original 28-5/8-acre parcel platted by William Reading in 1884 and recorded in 1888. A hierarchy of avenues, streets, and alleys were used in the original platting of 53 lots of generous size. Several of these original lots are still apparent along Baltimore Road and Reading Avenue. In 1890, however, Reading divested himself of the unsold lots, with a mortgage agreement to a new developer. The new owner, Washington Danenhower, redesigned the subdivision to offer 210 lots, within the same basic street layout.

Streets: Rockville Park still displays a hierarchy of roads with distinctions apparent in street width, paving, and presence or absence of sidewalks. As a prerogative of the developer, street names reflect personal associations for William Reading.<sup>3</sup> Baltimore Road continues to function as a major route eastward from the center of the City of Rockville, and the earliest houses in the subdivision front this road. Stonestreet Avenue parallels the railroad line and provides a transition/buffer for the residential properties, none of which faces Stonestreet. The small-scale residential streets - Reading Avenue, Grandin Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Joseph Street - are quiet neighborhoods with a diversity of house styles and sizes. Joseph and Maple have sidewalks only on one side of the street.

Connectivity: The railroad tracks continue to be both an important border and link for the residents. The original at-grade crossing at Baltimore Road was closed in 1935.<sup>4</sup> The roadway connection across the railroad tracks was shifted to Park Road, three blocks to the north. At Baltimore Road, the neighborhood connection is retained with a pedestrian bridge over the tracks.

Parks: The subdivision is moderately dense. The original picturesque layout created odd corners along Reading Avenue; these areas were dedicated as public parks. The small island-park at Stonestreet has been paved, but public green space is a feature at the corners of Grandin and Reading, and Maple and Reading. The ground for the city’s first and second water towers on Grandin Avenue is preserved as city parkland. Additional green space is provided with a segment of Joseph Street between Reading and Grandin, reserved as a public right-of-way, but never paved.

<sup>3</sup> See below, note 127. Not all his street names were retained over time. Baltimore Road was re-named “John Street” but reverted back to the old name in time. Present-day Joseph Street was named “Jefferson.” Alleys were given names: Lynn Alley (Block 2); Bergen Alley (Block 4); and Amity Alley (Block 6). Maple Avenue and Jefferson Street were discontinuous, and other street names used were “Olive” and “Bancroft” streets. Stonestreet Avenue ran only the length of Block 2.

<sup>4</sup> A school bus accident in 1935 resulted in new safety rules for the B&O Railroad, and the elimination of at-grade crossings along the line. [Eileen S. McGuckian, *Rockville, Portrait of a City* (Franklin & Johnson Press, 2001), p. 117.]

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Alleys: The alleys are narrow public right-of-ways, some of which are still gravel while others have been paved. They provide an alternate route for pedestrians, being mostly devoid of traffic. Garages face the alleys, and gates in fences lead into rear yards.

Notable trees: With its late-nineteenth century beginnings, Rockville Park now retains some notable trees that have reached great maturity. The advertisements for Rockville Park included the developer’s promise to plant a shade tree in front of every lot.<sup>5</sup> Today, the mature canopy of trees on public and private property provides a sense of age and enclosure, enhancing the garden-like setting for the subdivision.

## II. Architecture

Rockville Park exhibits a range of architectural styles consistent with the long development history of the subdivision. Developers of late nineteenth century subdivisions were responsible not for construction of houses but only for the infrastructure, which often included paved streets, brick or plank sidewalks, and street trees.<sup>6</sup> Single lots were then sold to individuals. The land was held for investment and resale, or the person proceeded to build a house in a style of his or her choosing. Houses were constructed in the subdivision over time, with clusters of development illustrating various architectural styles of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. Eleven properties in Rockville Park have previously been documented individually with Maryland Historical Trust inventory forms. Their site numbers are included with their descriptions in the following narrative.

### Vernacular Victorian Homes (1870 – 1910)

The Folk Victorian styles illustrated in Rockville Park are, for the most part, modest in detailing. Their footprints range in size from under 700 square feet to over 1200 square feet. The side-hall/parlor plan is the most common. Principal subtypes include the centered-gable Gothic Revival<sup>7</sup>, simple two-story side gable, and gable front and wing.<sup>8</sup> Houses were built with a variety of materials, including the use of decorative wood shingles in the gable ends, and horizontal wood siding. Several houses feature polygonal bays on the front or side elevations. One house has an asymmetrical primary front-gable roof. Several houses incorporate features of different styles and are characterized as “Transitional.” The Shingle Style is represented with one house, featuring a coved cornice and cross-gable roof.

<sup>5</sup>The Washington Post, 13 April 1890, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup>The Washington Post, 26 October 1890, p. 11. Newspaper advertisements for two of Rockville Park’s contemporaries, Kensington Park and College Park, touted similar features for their new communities. (See “College Park.” *The Washington Post*, 26 October 1890, p. 11; and “Kensington Park.” *The Washington Post*, 27 April 1890, p. 18.)

<sup>7</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guild to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), p. 197. The period of popularity for each style is included and is taken from the McAlesters’ book.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.308.

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ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

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## Victorian: Reading's 1<sup>st</sup> Addition/Readington

- 205 Baltimore Road (1886) Two-story side gable  
213 Baltimore Road (1886) Two-story side gable; with intricate one-story wrap-around porch with polygonal corner bay and pierced-work railing, with turned columns.  
206 Reading Avenue (1889) Gable front and wing; with lower front gable with corner brackets and polygonal massing. (M:26-13-3)  
729 Grandin Avenue (1889) *Non-contributing due to incompatible alterations.*

## Victorian/Transitional: Danenhower's Rockville Park

- 212 Reading Road (c.1890) Centered-gable Gothic Revival (M:26-13-4)  
701 Grandin Avenue (c.1893) Centered-gable Gothic Revival (M:26-13-13)  
709 Grandin Avenue (c.1893) Centered-gable Gothic Revival (M:26-13-14)  
300 Reading Avenue (c.1893) Cross-gable Shingle style (M:26-13-15)  
315 Baltimore Road (c.1895) Gable front and wing (M:26-13-12)  
207 Baltimore Road (c.1896) Centered-gable Gothic Revival  
702 Maple Avenue (c.1900) Victorian/Colonial Revival transitional (M:26-13-18)  
419 Reading Avenue (c.1900) Victorian/Colonial Revival transitional (M:26-13-16)  
720 Maple Avenue (c.1900) Gable front and wing  
411 Baltimore Road (c.1906) Two-story side gable  
401 Baltimore Road (c.1905) Centered-gable Gothic Revival (M:26-13-2)  
301 Baltimore Road (c.1906) Victorian/Colonial Revival transitional; American Foursquare massing with a Victorian cross-gable polygonal bay on the front elevation.

### American Foursquare (1900 – 1920)

The American Foursquare is a subtype of the "Prairie Style."<sup>9</sup> These houses were popular with builders, with their simple, square or rectangular plan. Hipped roofs are the most common. The deep roof overhang may result in a slight "kick" in the eaves. Building materials may include slate for roofing, and horizontal wood siding. Full-width porches are typical.

- 305 Baltimore Road (c.1899) American Foursquare, with Colonial Revival style detailing, slate roof.  
503 Baltimore Road (1912) American Foursquare, with Colonial Revival style detailing, slate roof. (M:26-48)  
700 Grandin Avenue (c.1919) American Foursquare, with Colonial Revival style detailing.  
713 Maple Avenue (c.1930) American Foursquare, late.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.p. 439, 443.

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## Bungalow (1905 – 1930)

The Bungalow style is a vernacular subset of the Craftsman house. Side-gabled or hipped roofs with dormers are most typical in Rockville. Rusticated block foundations, open eaves with exposed rafter tails, and full-width front porches are all typical.

307 Baltimore Road	(1911)	1-1/2 story with front gable dormer; fieldstone foundation, and patterned metal shingle roof. (M: 26-13-7)
403 Baltimore Road	(1929)	1-1/2 story side-gable, with front gable dormer; battered columns
405 Baltimore Road	(1926)	1-1/2 story side-gable, with front gable dormer; paired windows
501 Baltimore Road	(1925)	1-1/2 story side-gable, with front gable dormer; battered columns
703 Maple Avenue	(1918)	1-1/2 story side-gable, with front gable dormer
719 Maple Avenue	(1923)	1-1/2 story side-gable, with front gable dormer
717 Maple Avenue	(1923)	1 story hipped roof, with front gable dormer
724 Grandin Avenue	(1918)	1 story hipped roof, with front gable dormer
722 Grandin Avenue	(1923)	1 story hipped roof, with front gable dormer
712 Maple Avenue	(1923)	1 story hipped roof, with front gable dormer
410 Reading Avenue	(1953)	1-story side-gable
420 Reading Avenue	(1922)	1-1/2 story side-gable with front-gable porch
715 Grandin Avenue	(1932)	1-1/2 story front-gable [w/additions]
726 Grandin Avenue	(1923)	1-story front-gable
728 Grandin Avenue	(1936)	1-1/2 story front-gable
205 Reading Ave	(1942)	1-1/2 story front gable

## Colonial Revival (1880 – 1955)

Seen as a reaction to the detail and ornamentation of the Victorian styles, Colonial Revival style houses vary from academically correct examples to stripped down houses with simple massing. The style was applied to 1-, 1-1/2-, and 2-story homes. Architects and builders also used regional variants.

505 Baltimore Road	(1925)	1-1/2 story side-gable with front-gable porch
406 Reading Avenue	(1928)	2 story side-gable
707 Maple Avenue	(1939)	1-1/2 story side-gable
310 Reading Avenue	(1941)	1-1/2 story side-gable
400 Reading Avenue	(1939)	1-1/2 story side-gable
304 Reading Avenue	(1948)	1-1/2 story side-gable

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ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

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## Colonial Revival – Tidewater

This variant of Colonial Revival is noted by the change in roof pitch at the full-width porch, and is loosely based on the Tidewater Plantation.

408 Reading	(1948)	1-1/2 story side-gable
306 Reading	(1940)	1-1/2 story side-gable

## Tudor Revival (1890 – 1940)

This Revival style, inspired by the early popularity of the Colonial Revival style, drew on Tudor England for ideas. With its asymmetrical massing, the style was seen as more “romantic” than the simple Colonial Revival box.

305 Reading Avenue	(1932)	1-1/2 story side-gable with two front-gable features
--------------------	--------	--

## Levittown/Twinbrook Cape Cod (1940-1960)

These homes are very similar to the design of houses in Levittown, New York, and illustrate the post-World War II mass housing made available to returning veterans. Three of these houses were developed by Roland E. Simmons, one of the partners in the large Twinbrook development in Rockville, on the east side of First Street.

713 Grandin Avenue	(1950)	Cape Cod (with split roof of Levittown Ranch type A at rear)
711 Grandin Avenue	(1950)	Cape Cod (with split roof of Levittown Ranch type A at rear)
707 Grandin Avenue	(1950)	Levittown Ranch Type A (Cape Cod turned 180 degrees)
407 Baltimore Road	(1959)	1-1/2 story, with large window feature
719 Grandin Avenue	(1960)	1-1/2 story with brick base and large window feature
717 Grandin Avenue	(1959)	1-1/2 story, with full 2-story rear

## Minimal Traditional (1935 – 1950)

This is a post-war variant of the Revival styles, with a lack of traditional detailing. Often, there is a front gable feature, and the roofs have a shallow pitch.

404 Reading Avenue	(1949)	1-story side-gable with front-gable “el”
732 Grandin Avenue	(1954)	1-story side-gable with front-gable porch
705 Grandin Avenue	(1963)	1 story side-gable with front-gable “el”*

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ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

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## American Ranch (c. 1935-1975)

The American Ranch style is also known as the California Ranch. It is one-story, with a low-pitched gable roof, and a horizontal, rambling layout. Typically, there is an informal entrance and a lack of decorative detailing, along with the use of a variety of siding materials.

721 Maple Avenue	(1951)	1 story side-gable
723 Maple Avenue	(1951)	1 story side-gable
718 Maple Avenue	(1953)	1-story side-gable
513 Baltimore Road	(1960)	1-story side-gable
511 Baltimore Road	(1960)	1-story side-gable
413 Reading Avenue	(1960)	1-story side-gable
725 Grandin Avenue	(1963)	1-story side-gable, with front gable entrance*
727 Grandin Avenue	(1963)	1-story side-gable, with front gable entrance*
723 Grandin Avenue	(1963)	1-story side-gable*
405 Reading Avenue	(1963)	1-story side-gable*
426 Reading Avenue	(1964)	1-story side-gable*
428 Reading Avenue	(1964)	1-story side-gable*
402 Joseph Street	(1966)	1-story side-gable*
409 Baltimore Road	(1970)	1-story side-gable*
409-1/2 Baltimore Road	(1970)	1-story side-gable*

\*Noncontributing

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ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

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## Split Level (1955 – 1975)

This style was developed as a multi-level modification of the one-story Ranch style. The Split Level extended the living area to three different levels, with the characteristic low-pitched roof and the use of a variety of siding materials.

312 Reading Avenue (1956) 2-story front gable with 1-story side-gable; stone foundation and brick and wood siding

## Sites

Block 5, Lots 20-21: Site of Rockville's first water tower (pipestem: 1897 – 1946). This is currently a landscaped park.

Block 5, Lots 15-19: Site of Rockville's second water tower (ellipsoid: 1946 - 2001). This is currently a landscaped park.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rockville Park Historic District

Montgomery County, Maryland

Section 8 Page 1

ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Name of Property

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our History.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

### Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

*Criterion A:*

Community Planning and Development

Economics

Transportation

*Criterion C:*

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1884 – 1960

### Significant Dates

1884, 1888, 1890, 1896 (annexation)

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

William Reading, Joseph Reading, Washington Danenhower

### Cultural Affiliation

**Architect/Builder** - Local residents qua builders

Charles Sage, T.C. Groomes, Joseph Reading, Walter S. Thompson, George F. Ray, Robert and Sylvia Mills

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rockville Park Historic District

Montgomery County, Maryland

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

#### Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency (State Highway Administration)
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

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Rockville Park Historic District

Montgomery County, Maryland

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## Summary Statement of Significance

The Rockville Park Historic District is being nominated under Criteria A, B, and C. The district is significant under Criterion A for its association with the suburbanization of Rockville precipitated by the extension of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's Metropolitan Line in Montgomery County in 1873. The district derives additional significance under Criterion A for its association with the trend toward greater middle class home ownership in the late nineteenth century. Rockville Park is significant under Criterion B for its association with three individuals --William Reading, Washington Danenhower, and Joseph Reading -- early developers of the subdivision whose business models differed in style and substance. Finally, Rockville Park is significant under Criterion C as a distinctive neighborhood whose development over time resulted in dwellings of diverse architectural styles representative of their eras. The period of significance, 1884 to 1960, was selected to reflect the earliest development of Reading's "Readington" in 1884 and the replatting of the subdivision by Danenhower in 1890, and to encompass Rockville Park's continuous pattern of development through the mid-twentieth century.

## Resource History and Historic Context

Selected as the county seat for Montgomery County in 1776, and the largest town in Montgomery County, Rockville changed from an autonomous small town to a modern suburb of Washington, D.C., with the advent of the commuter railroad. The platting of Rockville Park was directly related to the establishment of the Metropolitan Line of the B&O Railroad through Rockville in 1873. The railroad opened the way for Washington area developers to extend their interests in Montgomery County, and coincided with the national trend of expansion of urban populations into surrounding rural areas due to improvements in transportation.

### I. Transportation and Development: Poised to profit from the railroads

Rockville was settled in the early eighteenth century, and selected as the county seat in 1776 when Montgomery County was divided out from Frederick County. Buildings were constructed on property allocated by deed, but the first formal subdivision was surveyed in 1784 under the name of "Williamsburgh." Because this plat was never recorded, the property was re-surveyed and recorded in 1803 with the heading, "Plan of Rockville, Montgomery County."<sup>10</sup> Not all existing buildings in Rockville were actually in the incorporated limits, and the first application to expand the town borders was made in 1805 by Mrs. Elizabeth Crabb, for eight acres on the north side of Montgomery Avenue just east of the city limits. This was formally recorded as "The First Addition to Rockville" in 1826, and the "Second Addition to Rockville" was platted two years later across the street on the south side of

<sup>10</sup> McGuckian, p. 18 – 23.

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Montgomery Avenue.<sup>11</sup> Both of these additions expanded the town to the east, toward the intersection of the Baltimore Road, the Washington Turnpike, and the Georgetown Road. Farms surrounded the town of Rockville, which had a population of fewer than 300 people.

These early Rockville subdivisions coincided with an era of tremendous growth and change, particularly as associated with transportation. A new era was introduced when sections of the Erie Canal in New York opened in 1819. The local C&O Canal Company was incorporated in 1824, but had to compete with the railroad when the B&O Railroad Company (B&O) opened its tracks from Baltimore to Ellicott's Mills in 1829. The B&O raced the C&O Canal Company to become the premier trade route to the west, and won that race when it reached Cumberland in 1842, eight years ahead of the canal.<sup>12</sup>

Locally, the canal was of more immediate interest to Montgomery County farmers as an inexpensive method of transportation for heavy materials (coal, timber, stone, grain, flour and guano). However, in 1853, Georgetown businessmen and Montgomery County citizens attempted to organize the Metropolitan Railroad Company, to extend through Montgomery County and link up with the main B&O line.<sup>13</sup> At least four alignments were surveyed from Georgetown to Hagerstown; the construction cost for the preferred route was estimated at \$3,465,000.<sup>14</sup> The company failed to build the line due to a combination of the business depression of 1857 and the Civil War.<sup>15</sup>

## II. Early Suburban Ideal

Suburban development in Rockville -- and throughout Montgomery County -- was part of a broader movement that had its foundation in the mid-nineteenth century publications of Alexander Jackson Davis, A.J. Downing, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Calvert Vaux.<sup>16</sup> Suburban cottages were thought to embody usefulness and beauty in the architecture of the individual house. They were envisioned as a lesson in American culture, and were, to some extent, a reaction to the influx of immigrants from Europe who crowded into American cities, and who were perceived as a threat to American cultural norms. Downing urged people toward single houses in rural settings because "a good house... is a

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 41; referencing Honore Martin's Estate, 12 October 1828, Montgomery County Equity Records

<sup>12</sup> Richard K. MacMaster & Ray Eldon Hiebert, *A Grateful Remembrance* (Montgomery County: Montgomery County Government and the Montgomery County Historical Society, 1976), p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.105: Montgomery County citizens included David English and Francis C. Clopper. This reference is from J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Maryland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day*, (Hatboro, Pa., Tradition Press, 1967), 3 vol. Reprint of 1879 edition, 324.

<sup>14</sup> J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, Vol. I, Reprint of 1882 edition (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1968), p.p. 699-700.

<sup>15</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, Vol I, p. 700.

<sup>16</sup> Kimberly P. Williams, Elizabeth Jo Lampl, William B. Bushong, *Chevy Chase Historic District*, NR nomination form, unpublished, 1998.

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powerful means of civilization...When smiling lawns and tasteful cottages begin to embellish a country, we know that order and culture are established...It is the solitude and freedom of the family home in the country which constantly preserves the purity of the nation, and invigorates its intellectual powers.”<sup>17</sup> These mid-nineteenth-century ideals linked the American character to home ownership in a rural setting, and have guided the home-building industry well into the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup>

The suburban vision of the mid-nineteenth century was first enjoyed by the wealthier classes with sufficient money to afford transportation costs from their rural houses to offices in the cities.<sup>19</sup> Later, the expansion of the railroads and the development of streetcars provided opportunities for the middle class to share this vision.<sup>20</sup> The nomination for the Chevy Chase National Register Historic District notes that, “These two factors – distance from the city and embodiment of a rural ideal – are what characterized all successful suburbs dating to the second half of the nineteenth century.”<sup>21</sup> Financing was a third factor, as real estate was recognized as a good deal for both large and small investors.<sup>22</sup> Washington banker and Montgomery County developer B.F. Warner was unequivocal on the prospects for local real estate investors in 1889: “I consider real estate very cheap and that large fortunes will surely be made out of suburban property...There is a more promising field of investment here than in any other city in America.”<sup>23</sup>

Nationally, suburbanization was advertised as a cure for the city woes, such as disagreeable heat in the summers, disease, crowding, crime, and poor family atmosphere.<sup>24</sup> Washington, D.C., was unusual in that it had little industry, and fewer immigrants than other eastern cities,<sup>25</sup> but it had long been known as an unhealthy place in the summer, having been built on low ground at the mouth of the Potomac. For those who could afford to leave Washington in the warmer months, Montgomery County offered the beauty and relaxation of the countryside ideal at a convenient distance. Boarding houses, hotels and

<sup>17</sup> A. J. Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, 1850 (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), Preface.

<sup>18</sup> Barbara M. Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream, Building and Rebuilding Levittown*, (Albany, SUNY Press, 1993). Kelly discusses the widespread adoption of the rural ideal in post-war subdivisions in the Introduction, p.p. 12, 14-15.

<sup>19</sup> See the early and influential developments of Llewellyn Park, New Jersey (1857), and Riverside, Illinois (1869).

<sup>20</sup> See Smeins, Linda E., *Building an American Identity; Pattern Book Homes & Communities 1870–1900*; Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1999. Rockville Park developed because of the proximity of the railroad line. A trolley line that paralleled the Rockville Pike was extended to the Rockville depot by 1900, and provided additional transportation options for town residents. See McGuckian, p. 73.

<sup>21</sup> Williams, Lampl, Bushong, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Building and Loan Associations, or Mutual Loan Associations, were incorporated in Maryland as early as 1846 (see *A Treatise on Co-Operative Savings and Loan Associations* by Seymour Dexter, D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1889, p. 65-66. As of Dexter’s publication, there were 191 in the state, 158 of which were in Baltimore. In 1889, Washington, D.C., real estate broker Thomas E. Waggaman offered a return of 6 percent on sums of \$100 to \$1000 invested in real estate. The investment was as “Safe as U.S. bonds.” (*The Washington Post*, 2 January 1889, p.3).

<sup>23</sup> “The Future of Washington.” *The Washington Post*, 13 January 1889, p.9.

<sup>24</sup> MacMaster, p. 231.

<sup>25</sup> Williams, Lampl, Bushong; p. 52, note 58.

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resorts of the nineteenth century drew the city population into the county for recreation, and helped to acquaint urbanites with the area and with the town of Rockville.<sup>26</sup>

### III. Development and Growth of Rockville

Historic maps of Montgomery County help chart the population growth in and around Rockville in the second half of the nineteenth century. Martenet & Bond's map shows the post-Civil War town, prior to the advent of the railroad. [Figure 1] The G.M. Hopkins atlas of 1879 shows a larger town, with the Baltimore & Ohio railroad line running along its eastern edge. And, the Fava Naeff map of 1890 shows the platting of multiple subdivisions along the railroad line between Washington, D.C., and Rockville.<sup>27</sup>

The Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (B&O) was chartered in 1865, and the company proceeded to purchase property along the route for its right-of-way.<sup>28</sup> On 4 March 1873, the Rockville town commissioners extended the town's boundaries to include an 8 1/2-acre tract belonging to William Brewer, a young attorney and publisher.<sup>29</sup> Brewer had earlier subdivided some of his family's farmland lying along the right-of-way into 21 building lots.<sup>30</sup> Three months after the commissioners' actions, the B&O purchased two of Brewer's lots (#19 and #20) for their station building. The B&O's regular passenger service to Rockville began May 25, 1873.<sup>31</sup>

William Brewer quickly sold many of the lots in his subdivision to people from Rockville and Montgomery County.<sup>32</sup> Financing was managed through Brewer's Rockville Mutual Building Association, the first of its kind in the county.<sup>33</sup> Similar financial associations, variously called

<sup>26</sup> Department of Planning, *Historic Resources Management Plan* (Rockville: Department of Planning, 1986), p. 91. See also Andrea Price Stevens, *Suburban Summer Resorts 1879 – 1910* (Rockville: Montgomery County Historical Society, Part I, August 1981; Part II, November 1981).

<sup>27</sup> Martenet & Bond's *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland 1865*; *Atlas of Fifteen Miles around Washington including the County of Montgomery Maryland* by G.M. Hopkins 1879; and *the Real Estate Map of the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway Company Between Washington, D.C. and Rockville, Maryland* by Fava Naeff & Co. 1890.

<sup>28</sup> See EBP31/121 (10 Feb 1868) Edward E. Stonestreet condemnation for \$150; and EBP31/125 (10 Feb 1868) Samuel T. Stonestreet condemnation for \$.01.

<sup>29</sup> Minutes of the March 4, 1873 meeting of the Town Commissioners. *Minutes Book, Rockville Town Commissioners, 1865-1876*. (Archives of the Town of Rockville).

<sup>30</sup> The plat appears to have been drawn in 1872, but not recorded until 4 March 1873 at the expense of the town commissioners (see EBP12/297).

<sup>31</sup> McGuckian. *Peerless Rockville*, p. 66.

<sup>32</sup> Henry Viett (Lot 1), John Viett (Lot 8), Samuel Haney (Lot 3), Joseph Haney (Lots 10 and 11), William Rabbitt ( Lot 13), Reuben Bogley (Lot 21), Salathiel Mullican (Lot 9), Stephen Lyddane (Lot 8), and William Reading (Lots 15, 16, and 17). Later, many of these people also purchased property in Rockville Park.

<sup>33</sup> McGuckian. *Ibid.*, p.p. 66-67; EBP 12/297, 4 March 1873. William Brewer (1847-1885) chartered the "Rockville Mutual Building Association" in 1873 and incorporated it in 1879. It provided funding through 1877, with releases through 1880. Another loan association, the Mutual Building Association of Montgomery County, was also incorporated in 1879. As of 1882, its officers included Cole with familiar Rockville names: E.E. Stonestreet, J.J.

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Building Associations, Homestead Aid Associations, or Co-operative Savings and Loan Associations, were chartered by the state, and provided the necessary capital for large-scale development through the sale of memberships. William Brewer built a new house for his family in his subdivision, across the railroad tracks from his brother John's house.<sup>34</sup>

The 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* illustrates the rapid growth of suburbs along the Metropolitan Branch.<sup>35</sup> Owners who lived within the town limits held most of the rural property on the east side of the tracks for investment. [Figure 2] For example, William Brewer lived at #8 Baltimore Road in his new subdivision, but is also listed as the owner of two properties east of the railroad. Spencer C. Jones, William Brewer's brother-in-law, lived on Jefferson Street in Rockville but also had property through his wife (née Ellen Brewer) east of the railroad. Dr. E.E. Stonestreet lived on Montgomery Avenue in Rockville, but owned the property east of the tracks. [Figure 3] For these wealthy Rockville citizens, the farmland that became the subdivisions of Rockville Park, Croydon Park, and Janeta was more of an investment than the family home.<sup>36</sup>

## IV. The Railroad Attracts New Developers

While the suburban ideal had been promoted since the 1830s, suburban development in Montgomery County took off following the opening of the Metropolitan Branch in 1873. Suburban growth in the last quarter of the nineteenth century also marked a transition in the local housing market, from a focus on building suburban homes for the upper class to broadening sales to the middle class. The Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act in 1883 helped fuel this transition: The act converted federal jobs from the patronage system to career positions. With new job stability, many government workers decided to settle in the Washington area, looking to the new suburbs for their own houses.

This new market was recognized in real estate with a reduction in both lot size and price. Further, private mortgage financing now made sales more attractive and within reach of more people.

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Higgins, H.W. Talbott, C.W. Prettyman, B.G. Owens, Hezekiah Trail, W.H. Carr, W.R. Pumphrey, W.H. Rabbitt, S.B. Haney [Scharf, p. 754].

<sup>34</sup> John B. Brewer built his house on family property at the time of his marriage in 1874. It was demolished in the 1960s. For photograph, see Peerless Rockville Collection, Photo CB #196. The William Brewer House was demolished in 1996.

<sup>35</sup> G.M. Hopkins, C.E. *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington including the County of Montgomery MD*, Philadelphia, 1879. It should be noted that while Brewer's subdivision was annexed by the Town Commissioners in 1873, the 1879 Hopkins atlas shows the land outside of the incorporated area of Rockville on the west side of the railroad tracks. While this discrepancy bears mention, it does not diminish the value of the Hopkins work for historical research.

<sup>36</sup> The Hopkins Atlas of 1879 shows a dwelling labeled "Mrs. Horner" near the lane that would later bear her family name in the Croydon Park subdivision. The 1880 census confirms that the Horner family, headed by Mary Horner, farmed the land. (1880 census, *Schedule I: Inhabitants in the Fourth Election District, Montgomery County, Maryland*, p. 326.

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Investment potential, as well as homeownership, became a feature in advertisements for suburban lots.<sup>37</sup> In Rockville, the development focus changed from the modest expansion of the town by local property owners such as William Brewer, to the rapid growth of Rockville as a suburb of Washington by developers from Washington, D.C.<sup>38</sup>

Real estate was booming in the 1880s. Many northerners who had come to the District of Columbia to work as government clerks began to invest in and develop real estate in the metropolitan area, including Rockville, with the backing of trust companies and financial syndicates.<sup>39</sup> The railroad stops were critical for suburban development, and much sought after by developers. [Figure 4] Suburban development followed the railroad line north and, in 1882, there were two Rockville stations: Halpine and Rockville.<sup>40</sup> The Rockville depot on Baltimore Road was one of four major stations along the Metropolitan Branch, with buildings designed by B&O architect, E. Francis Baldwin, to accommodate passengers and freight.<sup>41</sup> But large or small, the railroad stops supported the development of subdivisions and were featured in newspaper advertising for suburban lot sales.<sup>42</sup> By 1890, the Autrey Park stop was added between Halpine and Rockville, with an additional station further south at Randolph Road.<sup>43</sup>

Developers marketed property along the Metropolitan Branch to both wealthy and middle class buyers. In Montgomery County, the early development of Takoma Park (1883) was followed by other subdivisions: Bethesda Park, Somerset Heights, Havellen Park, Richmond Park, Tuulaw Heights, Glen Echo (1888), Garrett Park (1888), Capitol View Park, Woodside (1889), Woodley Park, Linden, Holbrook Terrace, Kensington Park (1890), Rockville Park (1890), Spring Lake Park (1890), and Chevy Chase (1892).<sup>44</sup> Much of the development was accomplished through syndicates, such as the California syndicate that developed Chevy Chase, or the Washington, D.C., syndicate that developed Kensington. While close-in subdivisions such as Takoma Park were designed for year-round

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, *The Washington Post*, 23 October 1890, p.6: "Grand Sale of Lots at Buchanan, VA. ...Quick profits on small investments."

<sup>38</sup> Williams, Lampl, Bushong, p. 56, noting that the new suburbanites were really city people living in the country. In contrast, the early subdivisions of Rockville were focused on the town of Rockville.

<sup>39</sup> Maryland State Highway Administration, *Suburbs context*, B-30; citing MacMaster, p. 215 – 218. See also *The Washington Post*, 19 April 1891, p.14.

<sup>40</sup> Scharff, p. 701. Spring Lake Park was located at Halpine Station; and Rockville Park was located at Rockville Station.

<sup>41</sup> McGuckian, p. 66. The station building and freight building are both designated historic resources in Rockville.

<sup>42</sup> "Rockville Park is in Rockville, right at the depot, yet considerably above the grade of the railroad." *The Washington Post*, 13 April 1890, p.14.

<sup>43</sup> See the Fava Naeff map, 1890. Autrey Park was subsumed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Twinbrook development.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth J. Lampl and Kimberly Prothro Williams, *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation's Capital*; Crownsville: The Maryland Historical Trust Press, 1998, p. 25. Francis Newlands began purchasing property for this development in 1887.

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occupation and marketed directly to federal workers,<sup>45</sup> other subdivisions were designed for the wealthier class, including Kensington, Garrett Park, Somerset, and, in Rockville, “Readington” (1884).<sup>46</sup>

The men who were active in platting new subdivisions in Rockville and throughout the metropolitan area include William Reading, from New Jersey; Brainard H. Warner, from Pennsylvania; Henry Norris Copp, from New York; Washington Danenhower, from Pennsylvania; and Dr. Reuben B. Detrick, from Pennsylvania. These prominent men had far-ranging backgrounds from medicine to banking. In the 1880s, they championed suburbanization and contributed to the growth and development of Rockville, and of Montgomery County. The clearest picture of this suburban “explosion” is presented in an article published by *The Washington Post* in 1891, entitled “A comprehensive Review of the marvelous Development which is in Progress around the Nation’s Capital.” This lengthy article detailed the capital investment of over \$10,000,000 on roads, water and gas, in addition to state and federal investment for railroads and road extensions.<sup>47</sup> Reading and Danenhower were the key players in the development of Rockville Park; however, until now, Warner, Copp, and Detrick are perhaps better known.

**Brainard H. Warner (1847 – 1916)** was a prominent Washington, D.C., businessman, who counted U.S. senators and members of the president’s cabinet in his social circle. His grandfather moved the family to Washington from Pennsylvania in 1862.<sup>48</sup> Brainard Warner’s was active in Washington real estate as a broker, developer, auctioneer, and financier. Warner was president of the Washington Loan and Trust company, with “paid up capital” of one million dollars.<sup>49</sup> He expanded his activities into the town of Rockville, but is primarily associated with the Montgomery County developments of Kensington and Kensington Heights. He filed the subdivision of the Spencer Jones<sup>50</sup> farm at Knowles Station as “Kensington Park.”<sup>51</sup> The new suburban community lay just south of the B&O train depot, where a station was constructed in 1891. B.H. Warner built his own summer house on 18 lots in the middle of the new subdivision.<sup>52</sup> His development of Kensington was enhanced with the

<sup>45</sup> Williams, Lampl, Bushong, p. 55.

<sup>46</sup> Platted by William Reading in 1884, but recorded by him in 1888 as *Reading’s First Addition to Rockville*.

<sup>47</sup> *The Washington Post*, 19 April 1891, p.14. This article details acreage, land and building costs, from Florida Avenue north, and in and around Washington, in all directions. The 1891 amount of \$10,000,000 translates to \$221,490,000 in today’s dollar.

<sup>48</sup> Warner was born in Great Bend, Susquehanna, PA. He was married in 1873, and died in 1916.

<sup>49</sup> *The Washington Post*, 5 March 1892, p 2. The offices were located in the Granite Building at 9<sup>th</sup> and F Street NW.

<sup>50</sup> Spencer Jones was a prominent citizen and attorney in Rockville, serving as Mayor in 1898-1902.

<sup>51</sup> So-named after a visit to Kensington Gardens in England (see Kensington Town web site). Kensington plat recorded in November 1890; JA23/2.

<sup>52</sup> Thirteenth Census of the US: 1910, Washington, Roll 150 Book 2, page 12: Warner was counted as living in Washington with his wife and six children. The home in Kensington was their summer house. See *The Washington Post*, 12/15/1907, p. E8, which notes that Warner closed up the home and moved to Washington for the summer.

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complementary development of adjacent properties by developers who were also active in Rockville: Henry Norris Copp and Reuben Detrick.<sup>53</sup> In Rockville, Warner's development activity included recording the plat for Burgundy Park at the north end of Horners Lane in East Rockville.<sup>54</sup> He also purchased the popular Corcoran Hotel in downtown Rockville and quickly filed a subdivision of that downtown acreage to create six new lots along Madison Street, Fayette Street, and Montgomery Avenue.<sup>55</sup>

**Henry Norris Copp (1843 – 1912)** was born in upstate New York. He moved to Washington, D.C., where he worked as an attorney, specializing in “obtaining Patents for Inventors, and ... Land and Mining Claims and contests.”<sup>56</sup> He was well known for the numerous books and articles he published from 1875 to 1892 on American mining law, mineral lands, and public lands.<sup>57</sup> During this time, Copp began to work directly in various business ventures and in real estate. In 1886, he was elected secretary of the Metropolitan Investment and Building Company, stating that “three-fifths of the stock had been subscribed.”<sup>58</sup> Copp developed two parcels along the B&O line that tied into Warner's 1890 subdivision of Kensington Park.<sup>59</sup> Subsequently, he developed the community of Ken-Gar, which he platted as an Addition to Kensington.<sup>60</sup> From 1887 – 1891, while Copp was secretary, the Metropolitan Investment and Building Company purchased 500 acres north of Kensington and laid out Garrett Park in several sections.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>53</sup> See Copp's Subdivision in Kensington (JA2/423); Detrick's Subdivision in Kensington (JA 2/371). A third individual active in the development of Kensington was William H. Mannakee. Mannakee was a farmer and merchant who was one of the heirs-at-law of George and Luaner Knowles. He subdivided the Knowles Farm and sold lots to Reuben Detrick, Spencer Jones, and others. Mannakee helped develop the plan of incorporation of Kensington (*The Washington Post*, 2 December 1893, p. 2); and was elected to its first town council in 1894. (*The Washington Post*, 8 May 1894, p. 1).

<sup>54</sup> The Burgundy Park subdivision (JA23/25; 3/5/1898) is now reflected in the layout of the commercial development on Southlawn Lane.

<sup>55</sup> The plat for the Corcoran Hotel property was recorded by Warner (Plat 27; 1/27/1909) soon after he purchased the property (L202/159; 1/5/1909). The 1915 Sanborn map shows the hotel as an annex for the Montgomery County High School.

<sup>56</sup> Copp, Henry N., *The Prospector's Manual*, 1897; Washington, D.C., self-published.

<sup>57</sup> Copp's books included *The American Settler's Guide*, published by the Government Printing Office in 1880. By 1895 it was in its twentieth edition and published by Copp.

<sup>58</sup> *The Washington Post*, 30 October 1886, p. 2. He served on the Board with Dr. Reuben Detrick.

<sup>59</sup> Henry N. Copp's Subdivision; and Copp and Huch's Subdivision.

<sup>60</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court, Land Records, Plat Book A, p. 1 [JA 2/371]. A note on the plat says, “the name was suggested by George H. Krouse.”

<sup>61</sup> Francis R. Fava Jr. worked for this company as a civil engineer, preparing a subdivision plat. Montgomery County Circuit Court, Land Records, Plat Book A, p. 28. Fava was listed as superintendent and officer to the board in Copp's advertising brochure, “Peerless Rockville.” He was also well known in the development community. Fava published a map in 1890 entitled *Real Estate Map of the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company between Washington, D.C. and Rockville Md., and adjacent land holdings*; Fava Naeff & Co., Washington, D.C.; According to Act of Congress in the year 1890.

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In 1890, Copp began a new building association called “The West End Park Loan and Trust Company.”<sup>62</sup> The plat for West End Park was filed in two sections in 1890.<sup>63</sup> Copp reported the sale of 148 lots by March first.<sup>64</sup> In October, he moved ahead with the purchase of 247 acres of additional land at the price of \$50,000.<sup>65</sup> This was immediately followed by the purchase of 35 additional acres for \$9,500.<sup>66</sup> With access to the railroad line, Copp filed a third section for West End Park in 1891, just north of the incorporated town of Rockville.<sup>67</sup> An additional railroad station, annotated as West End Station, was planned to the north of the Rockville Station.<sup>68</sup> This development did not prosper according to Copp’s plans, and by 1891, lots that were originally sold at \$400 each were offered at \$200, with financing available at \$5/month and no taxes due until the deed was issued.<sup>69</sup> Despite these favorable terms, between March 1890 and 1900, only an additional 72 were sold. Through a combination of legal challenges, overextension, and the Financial Panic of 1893, Copp went bankrupt.<sup>70</sup>

**Dr. Reuben B. Detrick (1827-1904)** was born in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, and attended Dickinson College. He came to Washington in the 1850s to serve as chief of the Internal Revenue Division of the Treasury Department. During the Civil War, he served with the Union army as a volunteer surgeon.<sup>71</sup> In 1884, Detrick purchased 39 acres of the former Knowles farm along the B&O line.<sup>72</sup> He worked with Henry N. Copp and B.F. Warner on several land development projects. In Kensington, Detrick coordinated the development of his parcel adjacent to Copp’s two parcels to tie into Warner’s development plat for the town.<sup>73</sup> Promoting suburban growth in Rockville, Detrick served on the Board of Directors for the Metropolitan Investment and Building Company, developers of West End Park and Garrett Park.<sup>74</sup> He was one of a group of men who promoted the incorporation

<sup>62</sup> *The Montgomery County Sentinel*, 5 September 1890, p.3. W. W. Dudley also served on this board.

<sup>63</sup> Plat Book A, p. 42, 43.

<sup>64</sup> *The Washington Post*, 1 March 1890, p.4.

<sup>65</sup> JA 21/322. This would be over \$8 million in today’s terms.

<sup>66</sup> JA 21/229. This would be over \$1.5 million in today’s terms.

<sup>67</sup> Plat Book B, p.9. All sections of the West End Park were re-filed in 1892, with more detailed drawings (Plat Book B, p. 5-8).

<sup>68</sup> Copp’s development of West End Park was met with enthusiasm, with 148 lots selling immediately (*The Washington Post*, 1 March 1890, p.4).

<sup>69</sup> *The Washington Post*, 3 October 1891, p. 1; lots typically measured 50’ x 175’ (see Mary Deegan Dunham, *Rockville: Its History and Its People*, Rockville, 1976, p. 25.).

<sup>70</sup> He won legal challenges to his land title after three years in court (*The Washington Post*, 1 February 1895, p.2); eventually, all of the lots except for 220 total were auctioned by court decree in 1900 (TD17/306; McGuckian, p. 70).

<sup>71</sup> “The funeral of Dr. Detrick.” *The Washington Post*, 9 November 1904;

<sup>72</sup> EBP 331/54.

<sup>73</sup> Plat Book B, Page 30; 1891.

<sup>74</sup> *The Washington Post*, 30 October 1886, p.2.

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of Kensington in 1893, and also ran unsuccessfully to serve as the town's first mayor.<sup>75</sup> In 1894, Detrick was elected president of the Kensington and Chevy Chase Electric Railroad.

## The Developers of Rockville Park

Two individuals are responsible for the initial development of Rockville Park: William Reading and Washington Danenhower. Joseph Reading, William Reading's son, contributed to the further development of the subdivision in the twentieth century and was a prominent member of the Rockville community.

### William Reading

William Reading (1822-1897) came from a prominent family in New Jersey.<sup>76</sup> He was a successful businessman who dealt in lumber and coal, and made a fortune as the inventor of the first successful steam-powered corn-sheller, and the "Reading Draining and Aerating Tile" for agricultural properties.<sup>77</sup> Reading moved south to Washington in 1853 at the age of 30 with his wife and three children. Once settled in Washington, he bought 1500 acres along the Potomac River and C&O Canal, from Dam 1 (Cabin John area) to Dam 2 (near Pennyfield Lock) and as far as Seneca.<sup>78</sup> Reading built at least two stone houses on his Cabin John property,<sup>79</sup> but by 1865, he had moved his family to the Seneca area to a "very old house with a beautiful view of the Potomac..." that was named "Fairview."<sup>80</sup>

In 1884, with his children grown, William Reading bought several parcels of land in the vicinity of the Rockville depot and moved to Rockville. His land purchases included: 49-1/2 acres on the north side of Baltimore Road, which contained a relatively new house that had been built for John B. Brewer and

<sup>75</sup> Detrick served on a committee with William H. Mannakee and others to prepare a plan of incorporation (*The Washington Post*, 2 December 1893, p. 2), and on the committee charged with presenting the town's case to the state legislature (*The Washington Post*, 2 January 1894, p. 6). Detrick finished second to Thomas R. Martin in the mayoral race (*The Washington Post*, 8 May 1894, p. 1).

<sup>76</sup> The name is also spelled "Redding" on the Hopkins 1879 map. Reading's family established the town of Flemington, New Jersey, in the seventeenth century. His relatives were large landholders and public servants. As a young man, William Reading worked as a farmer and fruit raiser, and drew on this experience to become a successful inventor. When he moved to Washington in 1853, he was already prominent in the wood and coal industries. [Reading family file, Montgomery County Historical Society.]

<sup>77</sup> See his obituary published in *The Washington Post*, 30 December 1897. The drain tile was patented 9/29/1891; US Patent office, Patent #460,352.

<sup>78</sup> See May 1863 deed, JGH 9/204. Reading purchased land abutting the C&O Canal previously owned by the Trail family, and sold by trustees George Peter and William V. Bouic. The deed cites Reading's purchase of abutting land from the estate of Joseph Forrest. All of these people were also well known in Rockville.

<sup>79</sup> The Cabin John homes survive as 44 and 42 Wellesley Circle, Glen Echo. The house and kitchen building are now on different lots. Two additional stone buildings by Pennyfield lock are shown on the Hopkins map.

<sup>80</sup> Sarah Matilda Capner and William Reading had three children: Hugh Capner, Joseph, and Matilda. There is a Reading family plot in Rockville Cemetery. See: Reading Family Summary, Montgomery County Historical Society family files.

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his family;<sup>81</sup> the neighboring 28-1/2 acres on the south side of Baltimore Road from Dr. Stonestreet;<sup>82</sup> and three lots from William Brewer in the *Third Addition to Rockville* by the depot, on the west side of the railroad tracks.<sup>83</sup> William's elder son, Hugh, remained on the farm near where the Seneca Creek flows into the Potomac,<sup>84</sup> and William moved into the John B. Brewer House on the east side of the railroad tracks with his wife, Sarah, and his daughter, Matilda. This 1874 house was a modern building in the "free classic" or "Queen Anne" style.<sup>85</sup> The two-story house featured paired columns with fretwork brackets, decorative fretwork in the porch pediment, a patterned slate roof, and ornate finials/arterial at the gable peaks. His 1897 obituary described his property as "his estate in Rockville."<sup>86</sup> William Reading worked closely with his younger son, Joseph, on his real estate investments, while his son, Hugh, managed the farm property in Seneca. In 1888, William Reading's large property in Cabin John was sold to the Baltzley Brothers for their Glen Echo development.<sup>87</sup>

## Joseph Reading (1850-1948)

While not involved in the initial development of Rockville Park, William's son, Joseph Reading, was engaged in the early twentieth century development of the subdivision and made significant contributions to the growth of Rockville. As a young man, he and his first wife, Elizabeth Marshall Reading, lived in the stone house on his father's Cabin John property.<sup>88</sup> After her death in 1890, Reading and his three young children moved to Rockville. He bought the pharmacy business built by Dr. Daniel F. Owens, and ran this for many years as he rapidly established himself as a public figure in the town.<sup>89</sup> Joseph Reading's first land purchase in Rockville was in 1892, for two lots in Rockville Park that were subsequently sold to the town of Rockville for construction of the Water Tower on Grandin Avenue.<sup>90</sup> When Reading was elected mayor of Rockville in 1896, he ran on the "water works

<sup>81</sup> EBP 30/387 (3/19/1884); For a photo of the 1874 house, see Peerless Rockville, CB#196 (Charles Brewer Collection).

<sup>82</sup> EBP 32/225 (5/24/1884)

<sup>83</sup> EBP 36/278 (4/16/1884)

<sup>84</sup> Montgomery Historical Society: notes on the Reading family, including a quote of "a contemporary account of Mrs. [H.C.] Reading and her home."

<sup>85</sup> See discussion in Smeins, chapter 6, p. 210 ff.

<sup>86</sup> Obituary, *The Washington Post*, 30 December 1897, p.3. The 1924 subdivision map for Croydon Park shows three existing buildings. Only one of the three is extant, at 308 Baltimore Road (the "Typhoid House").

<sup>87</sup> See *Washington Post* notice 8/1/1888: "William Brewer sold his Cabin John Farm, of 534 acres, to Mr. Edward Baltzley, of Washington, for \$20,000, reserving the dwelling and forty-three acres of the tract." Edward Baltzley and his brother used this land for their development of the Glen Echo Chautauqua.

<sup>88</sup> She was the great-granddaughter of chief Justice John Marshall, and was from Fauquier County, Virginia. They were married in 1878. (*The Washington Post*, 21 June 1948, p.B2, obituary of Joseph Reading).

<sup>89</sup> Owens bought the land in 1884, and built the brick commercial building in 1886. (McGuckian p.109) Joseph Reading still owned it in 1898, when *The Washington Post* 6 May 1898 reported the capture of two people charged with robbing "the drug store of Joseph Reading..." This property is now best known for Doc Vinson, who bought the business in 1901 [McGuckian, p.110], and the property from the Owens estate in 1911 [EBP 30/471].

<sup>90</sup> JA 34/23, in Rockville Park, from Washington Danenhower. The town's pipe-stem Water Tower was built on this property a few years later. The Water Works were built on two unrecorded lots (#40,41) that William Reading sold to the M&C in 1897 (JA 58/168). When Croydon Park was platted in 024, the Water Works site was incorporated into the plat.

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ticket.”<sup>91</sup> He served for only one term, but in those two years, Mayor Reading and the Council sold municipal bonds for \$30,000 to pay for the water and electric plant.<sup>92</sup> During his term as mayor, Reading married Mary Farrow Gassaway, a woman whose family owned the property adjacent to his brother’s home in Seneca.<sup>93</sup>

Joseph Reading’s most important contribution to Rockville was the support for modernization represented by the construction of facilities to provide public water and electricity. As Mayor, he secured the funding to build the Pumping Station and Electric Plant. This was built in 1897, on property Joseph Reading sold to the Town. Part of the facility was located on the low ground, just to the north of Rockville Park,<sup>94</sup> and part of the facility was built on the high ground on Grandin Avenue in Rockville Park.

Although Joseph Reading lost the mayoral election in 1898, he continued to serve in many other public positions: as judge and justice of the peace (1902-1912);<sup>95</sup> as coroner (1911), during which time he reinstated the use of the “ancient whipping post” to punish wife beaters;<sup>96</sup> and, as Rockville’s postmaster (1915 – 1920). Even while Reading held various public offices, however, he identified himself as a “Real Estate Dealer.”<sup>97</sup> He inherited much of his property after his father’s death in 1897, and sold off lots, developed houses, and used his property to raise funds for other real estate projects. After he moved to Chevy Chase to live with his son following the death of his second wife, Joseph Reading filed a subdivision of his father’s 49 ½-acre estate on the north side of Baltimore Road, across from Rockville Park as “Croydon Park” [Figure 8]. Following all the principles seen in Rockville Park, Croydon Park consisted of 483 lots averaging 25 feet in width. His family home was retained on a large parcel that ran the full block between Highland and Croydon Avenue, and faced south to

<sup>91</sup> See *The Washington Post*, 5 May 1896, concerning two tickets in the election of mayor and Council: “the water works ticket won...” See MHT form for the Pump House (2005). Joseph Reading sold the land for the town’s first water and electric pumping station, a project that had been initiated by the previous mayor, William Veirs Bouic, Jr. [McGuckian, p. 91].

<sup>92</sup> *The Washington Post*, 30 April 1898.

<sup>93</sup> See Martenet and Bond map 1865. Mary Gassaway’s sister, Eliza Lavinia Gassaway, was married to George Peter Jr. They lived on North Adams Street. See the Montgomery County Story, Vol. 51, No. 4, Nov. 2008, p.45. [Montgomery County Historical Society]

<sup>94</sup> 401 S. Horners Lane.

<sup>95</sup> *The Washington Post*, 15 September 1940: “former judge of the Montgomery County Police Court.” Among the interesting cases was the fining of more than half the town of Glen Echo for working on Sunday at the amusement park.

<sup>96</sup> *The Washington Post*, 26 November 1911, p. E22.

<sup>97</sup> *The Washington Post*, 4 May 1907, p.13.

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Croydon Avenue (Block D, Lot 8).<sup>98</sup> Joseph Reading actively marketed and sold lots in Croydon Park until his death in 1948.<sup>99</sup>

## Washington Danenhower

Washington Danenhower (1855 -1942) was a prominent businessman in Washington, described in *The Washington Post* as a real estate and insurance broker.<sup>100</sup> His business interests were wide-ranging, as one of his advertisements indicates: “Conducts a general business in Real Estate, Loans, and Insurance; Builds for investment, manages estates, collects rents.”<sup>101</sup> Danenhower developed many properties in the Washington metropolitan area.

Washington Danenhower’s family came from Philadelphia. His father, William, took the family to Chicago in 1848 and then to Washington, D.C., in 1861, where he worked as an auditor for the Treasury Department.<sup>102</sup> William Danenhower died in 1864. The family was prominent in the District, particularly Washington’s brother, Lieut. John Wilson Danenhower, who was a Naval officer on the famous 1879-1881 arctic expedition of the steamer *Jeannette*.<sup>103</sup> Washington Danenhower married Miss Fannie M. Smoot, from a prominent Alexandria, Virginia, family, in 1883, and they moved into a house at 1908 G Street, NW.<sup>104</sup> Her father, James R. Smoot, was active in the lumber business for over 40 years.<sup>105</sup>

Working from an office at 115 F Street, NW, Washington Danenhower filled columns in the *Post* with advertisements for buildings and property for sale.<sup>106</sup> He built new houses,<sup>107</sup> was active in developing

<sup>98</sup> Joseph Reading moved to Chevy Chase in 1924, and filed his subdivision plan for Croydon Park [Plat 272] that same year. His former house is shown fronting Croydon Avenue, at Block D, Lot 8. Its lot measured 125’ x 290’ (the equivalent of 10 subdivision lots).

<sup>99</sup> Obituary. *The Washington Post*, 21 June 1948. By 1929, all of Joseph Reading’s children had moved out of Rockville: Joseph G. Reading to Greenville, N.C.; Mary Reading Martin to D.C.; and Hugh D. Reading to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (see L488/256).

<sup>100</sup> *The Washington Post*, 26 March 1888, p.3

<sup>101</sup> *The Washington Post*, 29 September 1889, p. 13.

<sup>102</sup> *The Washington Post*, 8 November 1916, p.12.

<sup>103</sup> The obituary for Danenhower’s mother (*The Washington Post*, 8 November 1916, p. 12) notes that “Lieut. John W. Danenhower, U.S.N., was the navigating officer of the steamer *Jeannette* on its famous polar expedition.” This expedition was newsworthy, in part, because of its disastrous end: the ship was frozen in ice from 1879 – 1881, at which point the ice broke up the hull and the ship sank. Of the 33 crew members, only 13 survived.

<sup>104</sup> *The Washington Post*, 18 October 1883; p.2. The social activities of the family were often reported in the *Washington Post*; see for example, 4 March 1888, p. 3; 9 April 1888, p. 3. On 26 June 1887, *The Washington Post* published: “Mrs. Washington Danenhower and family, of Washington, are in the city [Alexandria] on a visit to her father, J.R. Smoot, on King Street.”

<sup>105</sup> *The Washington Post*, 4 November 1902, p. 10. The Smoot lumber company is still in operation (2010).

<sup>106</sup> *The Washington Post*, 29 September 1889, p. 13. An earlier ad states that Washington Danenhower is successor to Danenhower & Son (*The Washington Critic*, 5 March 1888.).

<sup>107</sup> *The Washington Post*, 12 February 1887, p. 4; “five  houses, ...to cost \$10,000.

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Capitol Hill,<sup>108</sup> and converted the 110-room Chain Building on H Street into The Fredonia “a first-class family hotel.”<sup>109</sup> Danenhower also helped organize the Washington Recinato Fireproofing Company, which “controlled patents for a fireproofing compound claimed to be of great value.”<sup>110</sup>

Danenhower’s suburban projects were tied to the expansion of the railroad in the Washington metropolitan area, beginning with the Washington and Mount Vernon Railway (later the Washington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon Railway) between northern Virginia and the District.<sup>111</sup> In 1890, he developed at least three suburban subdivisions in Maryland: two along the route of the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad – Rockville Park, Spring Lake Park; and Riversdale Park in Prince George’s county. All of these were advertised with large ads in the *Washington Post* where he announced available financing.<sup>112</sup> Danenhower’s last land purchase in Montgomery County was in 1896; his last sale was in 1900.<sup>113</sup> In Virginia, he was also involved in residential and industrial development in Buchanan, “The Second Roanoke.”<sup>114</sup>

In 1898, Danenhower announced that he was moving his real estate and insurance office to 1416 New York Ave, NW, to give proper attention to a new real estate client, the Chesapeake Beach Railway Company, which had offices in the same building.<sup>115</sup> The Chesapeake Beach Railway ran from Washington, D.C., through Prince George’s, Anne Arundel, and Calvert counties to the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay.<sup>116</sup> The railway company developed a resort that appears to have flourished until the mid-1930s. By 1904, Danenhower had left the Washington, D.C., area, and settled in Knoxville, Tennessee.<sup>117</sup> In Knoxville, the former real estate magnate operated a printing company for over 40 years. Danenhower died in 1942.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>108</sup> *The Washington Post*, 20 January 1889, p.6.

<sup>109</sup> *The Washington Post*, 14 April 1889, p.3; Display ad. *The Washington Bee*, 21 December 1895, and other dates.

<sup>110</sup> *The Washington Post*, 1 February 1891; p.3.

<sup>111</sup> *The Washington Post*, 14 March 1891, p.2

<sup>112</sup> For Riversdale Park, Danenhower hired special trains to run excursions to the property twice a day. This was evidently a popular form of recreation, as Danenhower restricted distribution of the complementary tickets to those actually showing up at the train station. *The Washington Post*, 5/22/1890, p.1.

<sup>113</sup> JA 52/426; TD 14/79.

<sup>114</sup> *The Washington Post*, 21 October 1890, p. 6; *The (Baltimore) Sun*, 28 October 1890, p. 1.

<sup>115</sup> *The Washington Times*, 11 December 1898, p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> Chesapeake Beach Railway Station, CT-100. Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form, 1979.

<sup>117</sup> *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*. 20 October 1904. This summons to appear in divorce proceedings brought by his wife Mary Frances (Fannie) Smoot Danenhower states that Danenhower is no longer living in the area.

<sup>118</sup> “Printer Here for 40 Years Dies at 87.” *Knoxville Journal*, 2 February 1942, p. 18. .

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## V. Rockville Park Development History

The development of Rockville Park occurred within the context of suburban development around Washington, D.C., brought about by the expansion of the railroad. Up until 1884, the 28-1/2 acre property that became the Rockville Park subdivision was a farm that Dr. E. E. Stonestreet had inherited from his father.<sup>119</sup> When the property was sold to William Reading in May, he was the new owner of 49-1/2 acres across the street on the north side of Baltimore Road, the former Brewer estate, as well as of two new lots (#15, #16) in William Brewer's new subdivision by the Rockville depot.<sup>120</sup> William Reading moved into the Brewer house on the estate, and platted the former Stonestreet farm for a residential subdivision, "Readington."<sup>121</sup>

The plat created 52 lots, with a hierarchy of roads and alleys [Figure 5].<sup>122</sup> Reading named several of the roads for family members, even renaming Baltimore Road for his grandfather, John.<sup>123</sup> Reading sold several lots before the plat was formally recorded in 1888 as "Reading's 1<sup>st</sup> Addition to Rockville." In keeping with the mid-nineteenth century suburban model intended for well-to-do buyers, Reading created large lots with sizes varying from 10,000-20,000 square feet. Reading offered the entire tract for sale at auction in May 1886.<sup>124</sup> It appears that he was unsuccessful in selling the property, for one month later, *The Sentinel* reported that Albert S. Dalby had purchased two lots from William R. Reading in "Readington" and Dalby was planning to erect "a fine residence" on one of the lots.<sup>125</sup> Although the plat was recorded as *Reading's 1<sup>st</sup> Addition to Rockville*, a note in the *Sentinel* said that William and Joseph Reading renamed the subdivision *Rockville Park*.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>119</sup> On the Hopkins 1879 Map, this property is shown with one house and identified with the label "Dr. E. E. Stonestreet & Spencer C. Jones."

<sup>120</sup> EBP 30/387 [3/19/1884, from John B. Brewer]; EBP 32/279 [4/16/1884, from William Brewer] and EBP 32/225 [5/24/1884, from Edward E. Stonestreet].

<sup>121</sup> *The Montgomery County Sentinel*, 16 May 1884.

<sup>122</sup> JA13/124. It was drawn up between 1884 and 1887, but recorded in 1888, with three houses already built. The 1887 plat for the adjacent subdivision to the east, Janeta [JA 6/483], which was laid out by Charles J. Maddox, shows the street layout for Rockville Park, but the area is labeled "Readington."

<sup>123</sup> Joseph Street was named for his father, and Grandin (Avenue) was his mother's maiden name. Reading also named the alleys: Amity Alley, Bergen Alley, Lynn Alley.

<sup>124</sup> *The Montgomery County Sentinel*, 21 May 1886. Reading also offered for sale the lots near the depot.

<sup>125</sup> *The Montgomery County Sentinel*, 25 June 1886.

<sup>126</sup> *The Montgomery County Sentinel*, 1889 [sometime after Feb 22] "Park" was a favorite appellation for suburban subdivisions: In Montgomery County see Takoma Park, Garrett Park, Kensington Park, West End Park, Burgundy Park, Spring Lake Park, for example.

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Although this could generally be considered a good time for suburban sales, William Reading sold only six lots by 1890.<sup>127</sup> In that year, he sold the remaining lots to Washington Danenhower for \$10,000.<sup>128</sup> Reading held a mortgage on the property for \$9,000 with interest, and lots were released in increments as Danenhower paid off the mortgage. For example, once Danenhower paid \$2,500, Reading would release "the several lots as laid down on the plat of the subdivision of the mortgage premises" which were sold for \$200 each.<sup>129</sup>

While William Reading was a local businessman with interests in coal and lumber as well as real estate, Washington Danenhower was a professional real estate developer from outside the area. Danenhower's business plan involved minimizing his personal financial outlay, advertising repeatedly with full-page ads in *The Washington Post*, hiring special trains to bring prospective buyers to the sites, and providing easy financing. His target population for Rockville Park was "the department clerk" who "may own his own cottage, have his own garden, raise fowls or flowers, or any of his pet hobbies. ... His wife and children are far away from the dangerous and disagreeable heat of the city, breathing pure air, and enjoying the lovely country."<sup>130</sup>

With \$1,000 invested in the purchase of Rockville Park, Danenhower immediately resubdivided the property to create 225 lots, instead of the previously-platted 52 [Figure 6].<sup>131</sup> His advertisements for Rockville Park emphasized the ease of financing and the land's investment potential [Figure 7]: All of the lots were available, "at the uniform price of \$150.00 per lot, and require a cash payment of only \$5, and \$5 on or before the 5<sup>th</sup> day of each month, following the date of purchase, thus giving the purchaser two and one-half years to make all his payments. ... Every lot is available for immediate improvement, and will make a pretty home. Several tasty houses have already been built on part of this tract. ... Remember the terms, \$5 cash and \$5 per month; no interest. The price is absurdly low, and on such favorable terms that any one can buy. They are sure to bring more money in a very short time, and will probably double in value within a year or two."<sup>132</sup>

Danenhower reconfigured Reading's subdivision by shifting streets and modifying blocks and alleys. Some of the street names were changed, and Bancroft Street was removed. Block 7 was enlarged; and Block 5 was divided down the middle with a central alley. Lot widths were reduced to a typical 25 feet. Danenhower's obligation for the infrastructure is noted in his ad, saying "...the corporation will eventually put down brick sidewalks, but at present have not funds to do so; as a substitute the owner of

<sup>127</sup> To Albert S. Dalby, Charles W. Sage, Wallace E. Ricketts, Margaretta A.C. Welsh, John Kingdon, and Helena Morton.

<sup>128</sup> JA17/268; 26 March 1890. The deed of sale from William Reading to Danenhower exempts the six properties previously sold.

<sup>129</sup> JA 18/3, 26 March 1890, Montgomery County Land Records.

<sup>130</sup> *The Washington Post*, 13 April 1890, p. 14.

<sup>131</sup> Danenhower owed \$200 per lot to William Reading, but sold the re-subdivided, smaller lots for \$150 each. His eventual sales could have yielded a maximum of \$33,750 (for 225 lots).

<sup>132</sup> *The Washington Post*, 13 April 1890, p. 14.

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this tract will put down, at his own expense, a plank walk from the depot, extending in front of every lot in the subdivision. He also enters into a contract with the purchasers to set out a shade tree in front of each lot.”<sup>133</sup>

Danenhower’s strategy was to sell the lots cheaply and quickly. His ad notes that “Within six to eight squares of Rockville Park lots have recently sold for over one thousand dollars apiece ...” but his “...price of \$150 per lot is within the reach of all, and offers a splendid opportunity for persons of small means to acquire property that is sure to grow more valuable each year...”<sup>134</sup> In April 1890, *The Washington Post* published a notice that, “of the 225 lots in Rockville Park which Mr. Danenhower advertised so extensively in *The Post* on Sunday, all were sold yesterday afternoon except ten or fifteen...”<sup>135</sup> Lots that weren’t sold were offered for sale in the subsequent editions of the newspaper’s real estate section.<sup>136</sup>

While the small lots were smartly offered for sale singly, buyers who intended to build houses bought at least two lots, and sometimes more. Purchases, therefore, typically ran \$300 or \$450 for the land, making it comparable to the first asking price for land on the west side of Rockville.<sup>137</sup> There were five subsequent deeds of release conveying individual lots to Danenhower as the mortgage was repaid to Reading.<sup>138</sup> The town of Rockville annexed Rockville Park in 1896, with a large annexation that included new subdivisions on the east and west sides of town.<sup>139</sup>

Five years earlier, Danenhower’s development of Rockville Park had received special notice in the *Washington Post*:

“In and around Rockville, however, there has been, and still is, a development that augurs well for the future of the pretty town. Rockville Park is situated on the east side of the railroad, directly opposite the depot, and contains 200 lots, all of which were sold by Mr. Danenhower with unexampled rapidity in twelve hours. Since that famous sale the park has been improved by wide streets, board pavements, and \$25,000 worth of houses.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. Plank sidewalks had earlier been laid in the Rockville Park subdivision: On July 2, 1888, the Town Commissioners’ minutes include: “It is further ordered that plank walks similar to above be laid commencing on Baltimore Street immediately beyond the Railroad and running along the east side of the Street to the large gate just beyond the residence of Mr. Dalbey [also: Dalby].”

<sup>134</sup> *The Washington Post*, 13 April 1890, p. 14.

<sup>135</sup> *The Washington Post*, 15 April 1890, p.6.

<sup>136</sup> *The Washington Post*, 23 April 1890, p.3.

<sup>137</sup> West End Park lots were first offered at \$400/lot, and then were lowered to \$200.

<sup>138</sup> These deeds of release are listed in the margin of Liber 106, J.A. 18, Folio 4.

<sup>139</sup> The expanded corporate limits of Rockville were read before the town commissioners at their 18 March 1896 meeting, and sent to Montgomery County’s state senator, H.W. Talbott, for presentation to the General Assembly. Talbott served as Rockville’s mayor before being elected to the state senate. The new town limits were approved 2 April 1896.

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Among the residents of the park are William H. Valiant, who has built a pretty \$3,000 house; S.B. Hegge [sic], of the local passenger department of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, whose attractive home cost him \$3,000; Harrison Morton, who has a \$2,000 house, and James T. Powell, of the *Montgomery Press*. Mr. Henry Gillis intends to build a house, and Mr. Danenhower proposes to erect three or more houses to be sold on monthly instalments [sic].<sup>140</sup>

Danenhower quickly went on to other land deals, including Spring Lake Park, south of Rockville Park along the Metropolitan Branch. He used the same format of full-page ads in *The Washington Post*, which included the following:

“My success in handling Rockville Park Subdivision demonstrates the fact my representations as to properties and prospective improvements are sufficient guarantees. Two hundred and seventeen lots were sold in my office in twelve hours, the purchasers not even seeing the property. All improvements have been made except tree planting. Several new houses have been built and several lots have changed hands at 40% advance. Rockville Park is a success. Spring Lake Park is just as good, and we have put prices low enough to allow investors a splendid margin to buy and hold.”<sup>141</sup>

In May 1890, Danenhower ran trains to Riversdale Park in Prince George’s County to carry potential purchasers to the property, and in October, he was involved in the sale of lots in Buchanan, Virginia. That community was much farther from Washington, D.C., but was still on a railroad line. His advertisements heralded, “Quick profits on small investments.”<sup>142</sup>

Danenhower’s approach supported land speculation. This is illustrated by the fact that only six houses were built while Danenhower was involved in the subdivision of Rockville Park, from 1890 – 1897 [Figure 10]. Certainly, the market crash in 1893 had a dampening effect on building in Rockville Park, as it did on suburban development nationwide. In 1893, William Reading came back into the project with the purchase of 36 lots in Blocks 1,2,5,6,7 from Danenhower.<sup>143</sup> Additional lots that had not been sold by Danenhower when William Reading died in 1897 were included in Reading’s estate and

140 *The Washington Post*, 19 April 1891, p.14. This article provides an indication of the economic scale of Rockville Park, by including the homebuilding costs for a wide range of individuals. For example, developers like Mr. Edward Baltzley of Glen Echo spent \$25,000 on his home; the developer of Takoma Park, B. F. Gilbert spent \$20,000 on his home; and in Kensington, Brainard H. Warner spent \$12,000 on his summer home. Building costs ranged lower for Mr. R.A. Charles, of the Treasury Department (in Glen Echo, \$7,000); or for M.F. Halleck, the patent attorney (in Takoma Park, \$6,000). In Woodside, homes were built for about \$3,000, and Col. Gaines of Rockville spent \$4,000 on his Kensington home. When Chevy Chase was developed, deeds included covenants that stipulated that homes on side streets would cost not less than \$3,000 (Lampf, Williams; p. 56).

141 *The Washington Post*, 7 September 1890, p.7.

142 *The Washington Post*, 23 October 1890, p.6.

143 JA 40/359; JA 40/360; JA 40/362.

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inherited by his son, Joseph.<sup>144</sup> The Readings continued to influence the development of Rockville Park for two more decades. Most importantly for the town of Rockville, they participated in the development of Rockville's first public water system. All of the land associated with the Rockville Electric and Water Works was located in Rockville Park and the future Croydon Park and was sold to the Mayor and Council by William and Joseph Reading.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> William Reading died intestate. His son, Hugh, received the Seneca property (510 acres; valued at \$6,000) [T.D. 2/293; 3/4/1898].

<sup>145</sup> JA 58/168 (4/17/1897) William and Sarah Reading sell Lots 41 & 42 for \$600; JA 58/169 (4/17/1897) Joseph Reading sells Lots 20-21, Block 5 Rockville Park for \$369.60 [Grandin Avenue]. Lots 41 & 42 were subsequently recorded within the Croydon Park Subdivision in Block E, as P203 [20,000 ~~cf. 32~~ S. Horners Lane].

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## VI. The Growth of Rockville Park

### Early Lot Purchasers

The U.S. economy in the last half of the nineteenth century was marked by instability and wild swings between prosperity and bankruptcy. At the same time, new financing mechanisms were under development. The Financial Panic of 1873 followed rapid business expansion --especially within the railroad industry. It took five years for the national economy to stabilize; but, there was another slowdown in 1884-85. Things picked up, but within the decade, there was the 1893 national panic.<sup>146</sup> The development of Rockville Park occurred within this economic environment. Whereas lots in Brewer's Third Addition to Rockville were sold by purchasing shares in a stock company, the lots in Rockville Park were sold through the vehicle of a mortgage to Danenhower, payable in about two years at \$5/month.<sup>147</sup> With little invested, rapid sales for speculative purposes often resulted in tax sales at a later date.

As previously noted, when William Reading sold his subdivision to Washington Danenhower in 1890, few lots had been sold and even fewer houses had been constructed.<sup>148</sup> Professor and Mrs. Dalbey bought two large lots and built their house at 213 Baltimore Road.<sup>149</sup> Charles Sage, a carpenter from Rockville, built a house at 205 Baltimore Road, and also bought an extra lot in 1888 that he sold two years later to David H. Warfield (207 Baltimore Road).<sup>150</sup> Wallace Ricketts, a blacksmith and wheelwright, purchased a single large lot from William Reading (201 Baltimore Road), and then bought adjacent lots 16 & 17 in 1891.<sup>151</sup> John and Alverda Kingdon purchased a "one third acre lot" and built a house (206 Reading Avenue).<sup>152</sup> Helena T. Morton, of Rockville, had purchased a large lot from William Reading through The Home Mutual Building Association of Montgomery County (729 Grandin Avenue).<sup>153</sup> She then proceeded to buy four additional adjacent lots from Danenhower.<sup>154</sup> Margaret A.C. Welch purchased the lot (#1) closest to the railway depot along Stonestreet (601 Stonestreet), and then purchased the adjacent lot (#2) from Danenhower. Samuel B. & Violetta M.

<sup>146</sup> Smeins, p 135.

<sup>147</sup> At the same time, *The Washington Post* [for example, 26 October 1890, p. 11] carried ads on the availability of money for real estate purchases at 5-6% interest. Mortgage rates seem to have generally paid 6% return.

<sup>148</sup> Addresses, owners, and construction dates: 201 Baltimore Road – Ricketts, 1899; 205 Baltimore Road – Sage, 1887; 207 Baltimore Road – Warfield, 1896; 213 Baltimore Road – Dalby, 1886; 206 Reading Avenue – Kingdon, 1889; 729 Grandin Avenue – Morton, 1891.

<sup>149</sup> In 1907, Mrs. Dalbey sold a lot to Josephine Higgins. She built a house at 209 Baltimore Road. It was demolished in 1972.

<sup>150</sup> Charles Sage. 1900 Census, Fourth District of Montgomery County, p. 74A.

<sup>151</sup> Wallace Ricketts. 1880 Census, Fourth District of Montgomery County, p. 331A.

<sup>152</sup> *The Montgomery County Sentinel*, 22 February 1889; see Anne Cissel MHT research form, May 1986, p. 3.

<sup>153</sup> JA 14/325 (9/13/1889). Not surprisingly, the 1879 incorporation of the Mutual Building Association of Montgomery County counted local Rockville landowners among its officers and members, including Spencer D. Jones, John J. Higgins, Hezekiah Trail, William H. Rabbitt, D.F. Owens, R.A. Bogley, J.B. Edmonston, and Edward E. Stonestreet [Scharf, p.754].

<sup>154</sup> JA21/17 (8/16/1890).

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Hege, from the District of Columbia, purchased one lot (#8) and then two more as Rockville residents (#9,10). They hired T.C. Groomes of Rockville to prepare plans for their new house.<sup>155</sup>

While all of the sales made by William Reading had been to local Rockville and Montgomery County residents, most of Danenhower's sales in 1890 were to residents of the District of Columbia. Lots apparently served as investment, as few houses were built.<sup>156</sup> Then in 1893, many lots were re-sold when the economy shattered, and many of these sales were to William Reading, living on the north side of Baltimore Road across the street from Rockville Park. Both William, until his death in 1897, and his son Joseph continued to purchase lots in Rockville Park, often at tax sales. Joseph Reading had no need to sell Rockville Park lots and could hold on to them for investment. Often, he used these lots as collateral for loans, which were paid off on schedule.<sup>157</sup> Ultimately, fully 30 percent of the lots came back into Reading ownership though 1924, and these lots were sold again to investors and people interested in building houses in the succeeding years.

## Rockville Park's Development Shown in Sanborn Maps

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company produced maps of Rockville in 1892, 1897, 1903, 1908, 1915, 1924, 1949, and 1960.<sup>158</sup> Rockville Park streets are shown on the cover pages of the 1897 and 1903 maps, with some street names that don't match up to the 1890 plat.<sup>159</sup> The Rockville Electric Light and Water Works is included in both years, along with the pipe-stem water tower on Grandin Avenue. By 1908, several houses along Baltimore Road in Rockville Park were included in the survey, as well as the Hickerson Brothers Flour Mill, in Block 1 along the railroad tracks.<sup>160</sup>

Sanborn's 1915 maps include street names from both William Reading's initial plat and Danenhower's Rockville Park plat, with an Olive Street and Maple Avenue shown concurrently with Stonestreet Avenue. "Elm" is noted for the eastern boundary street instead of either "Jefferson" (used in both

<sup>155</sup> *The Montgomery County Sentinel* 25 November 1898; with note in *Sentinel* 7/11/1890 that the house was nearly completed. Their home is shown on Reading's plat *Reading's 1<sup>st</sup> Addition to Rockville*. Groomes was a local architect, with an office near the courthouse (McGuckian, p.72).

<sup>156</sup> 160 lots were sold to DC residents; 24 lots were sold to Rockville residents; 3 to Montgomery county residents; one lot to someone from Maine, and two lots were sold to someone from Pennsylvania. In 1893, William Reading purchased 39 lots in Rockville Park; 33 of these from William Danenhower, indicating the level of speculation that occurred with the 1890 offering.

<sup>157</sup> One or two year terms (L201/129 – 1908 from Savings Institution of Sandy Spring; L189/61 – 1906 from Mary D. Garrett].

<sup>158</sup> The Sanborn maps were started by Daniel Alfred Sanborn, from Massachusetts, in 1867.

<sup>159</sup> Stonestreet Avenue is listed as "Maple" while Maple Avenue is listed as "Linden." Maple Avenue is shown with right angles rather than oblique angles at Baltimore Road.

<sup>160</sup> #201, 205, 207 Baltimore Road in Block 2 are shown. The Hickersons purchased 307 Baltimore Avenue in 1912; expanded that property with a side lot in 1918, and then expanded their back yard all the way to Reading Avenue in 1922-1924 with the purchase of five additional lots. All these lots remained as open yard for the next 20 years, until Mrs. Hickerson remarried and moved away.

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plats) or “Joseph” (used today). Block 2 is drawn as “built out,” with six houses, two stables and an auto house as well.<sup>161</sup> To the east in Block 3, four more houses are shown, as well as a large two-story stable on “Olive Street” (now Maple Avenue), and a one-story auto house along the alley.

In the 1924 Sanborn map, Block 1 has seven houses, and Block 3 has five houses and a large stable on an unassociated lot. The Riggs family owned this property and built the large house catty-corner to this lot, at 401 Baltimore Road. There are no houses actually fronting Olive Street and perhaps it took on the character of an alley, suitable for stables. Here too, the Sanborn map may be showing incorrect lot areas, as the large property shown with the stables actually comprised ten lots with three different owners: the Kingdons in the neighboring house to the west at 300 Reading Avenue (#9 - 13); the Hickersons at 307 Baltimore Road (#4 - 8); and the Riggs family at 401 Baltimore Road (#1-3).

Corner houses are indicated in Blocks 7 and 4, but there were other existing houses on each of these blocks which were not surveyed for the Sanborn map. In fact, only half of the house at 702 Grandin is shown. As all of Rockville Park had been annexed into the Rockville town limits in 1896, it's not clear what guided the Sanborn map delineators with their boundaries. Only part of Block 5 is shown, with three houses, and the town's pipe-stem water tower on the north side of Grandin Avenue. All of Block 6 is shown, with its dogleg connection to the Janeta subdivision to the east.

The large open area extending between 709 and 729 Grandin Avenue consisted of 13 undeveloped lots. The lots numbered 22 to 13 (with the exception of #20) were owned by Joseph Reading until 1935, at which time they were purchased by Clara V. Hickerson. Hickerson lived at 715 Grandin Avenue for many years, and held on to the adjacent open lots for about twenty years.<sup>162</sup> Her husband died in 1943, and she sold some lots in 1951 and in 1960. The remaining open lots were owned by Ira S. Pope, who resided at 729 Grandin 1923 – 1946. He sold all of his property to Robert E. Ward in 1946, and the open lots were only developed after Ward sold the properties in 1962.<sup>163</sup> The open northeast corner lots at Stonestreet and Reading Avenues were owned by Ward's parents, Porter G. and Margaret S. Ward. The couple lived at 201 Baltimore Road, and by 1929, they owned all of the lots at the northeast corner of Stonestreet and Reading. As this was in their backyard, they held it as open ground until after Porter Ward's death. His widow sold the land in 1969 and it was immediately re-subdivided as a single lot. The polygonal commercial structure that still stands on the site was built in 1970.

<sup>161</sup> This auto house, or garage, is still standing at 603 Grandin Avenue, but is associated with 213 Baltimore Road. The house and property at 207 Baltimore Road has been left out of the 1915 drawing, and Stonestreet (Maple) is still shown with right angles to Baltimore Road. See Baxandall, p. 15 for a discussion on the impact of the automobile on the development of “suburbia” in the 1920s.

<sup>162</sup> Clara Hickerson worked as a teller at the Mechanics Bank. She told Joseph Kavanagh (at 717 Grandin) that her father built the home at 715 Grandin. [Telephone conversation with Joseph Kavanagh, 9 January 2009]

<sup>163</sup> Robert E. Ward's parents, Porter G. and Margaret S. Ward lived at 201 Baltimore Road, and by 1929, they owned all of the lots at the northeast corner of Stonestreet and Reading. C-35

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As illustrated in this 1924 Sanborn map, the property delineation does not always reflect unity of ownership. Another example on this same sheet is the large corner property shown on Linden (today 703 Maple Avenue). In fact, the property was divided between two owners - the resident of 703 Maple and the resident of 702 Maple.

In 1924, access across the railroad tracks for this part of Rockville was provided by an at-grade crossing at Baltimore Road, and a wooden bridge (24 feet wide) leading from Reading and Stonestreet directly to the Rockville and Georgetown Turnpike (today's Veirs Mill Road).

After 1924, there is a large gap in the sequence of Sanborn maps, and the next survey was published in 1949. This was the year of a mass annexation in Rockville, and the land area jumped from under 500 acres to almost 7,000 acres as the town moved closer to becoming a city.<sup>164</sup> Open land area is shown as distinct lots in this map, perhaps reflecting the anticipated development of more houses on smaller properties. Individual houses with associated side yard lots, such as 700 and 709 Grandin Avenue, are depicted as large coherent properties rather than a conglomeration of several small lots. The new spherical water tower on Grandin Avenue is depicted alongside the older pipe stem tower. Along Reading Avenue, the association of the multiple lots fronting Stonestreet Avenue with the older house at 206 Reading has been removed.<sup>165</sup> The old Riggs stable fronting Maple Avenue has been removed and the large open area has been developed with several new houses (#s 406, 408, 410).

The 1949 Sanborn map shows how access across the railroad tracks at Baltimore Road was blocked off after the bus accident in 1935, while the wooden bridge over the tracks off of Reading Avenue was retained. Park features are depicted at Grandin and Reading, and at Reading and Stonestreet Avenue.<sup>166</sup>

A Sanborn map for the City of Rockville was produced in 1960, a date that coincides with the end of the period of significance for Rockville Park. The map shows that only three areas in Rockville Park retained multiple open lots for development: The three areas are along Stonestreet Avenue at Reading; at the far end of Reading Avenue, adjacent to the Homewood property; and on the south side of Grandin Avenue adjacent to the Victorian house at 729 Grandin. Along Grandin Avenue, building contractors purchased lots from Clara V. Hickerson (1960, to build #719) and from Robert E. Ward (1962, to build #723, 725, 727). Along Reading Avenue, three different families owned the open land. The Showalters lived at 420 Reading Avenue for almost forty years (from 1947 – 1983). Their children sold the house at 420 Reading and also sold adjacent lots for the construction of a new house at 422 Reading in 1983. The adjacent lots had come on the market via a tax sale in 1948 and soon after, Albert G. Fraley bought them, while living at 421 Reading across the street. These lots for #426 Reading were sold to a builder in 1964. The lots associated with #428 Reading were sold at a default

<sup>164</sup> McGuckian, p. 220.

<sup>165</sup> It was owned by the residents at 201 Baltimore Road.

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sale in 1953, and purchased by a builder in 1959. The corner lots at Stonestreet and Reading avenues remained in the hands of Porter G. and Margaret S. Ward until after his death, with the property sale in 1969. The first building on this property, the existing polygonal commercial structure, dates to 1970.

## Development of Rockville Park as a Family Neighborhood

A key feature of the history of Rockville Park is the fact that it developed over time. Only Block 2 is really representative of the proposed character of the 1884 "Readington" subdivision platted by William Reading as a well-to-do enclave. The remaining blocks represent an important aspect of the history of suburban development as middle class buyers were invited into the market. The amount of land that was held open in Rockville Park through the decades may indicate the relatively low value of this land for quick investment returns, but may also indicate a spatial value that residents placed on an open suburban environment. In some instances, owners held lots for years, passing them on to heirs at their deaths. In other instances, owners built houses on one lot and purchased adjacent lots to provide large rear and side yards.

Sociologically, Rockville Park was viewed as a desirable longterm home. People may have moved to different houses, but stayed within this neighborhood. Examples of this include Russell Bogley, who lived at 712 Maple and then moved to the newer 728 Grandin Avenue; or Carey Kingdon, who lived at 305 Baltimore Road and then moved to 300 Reading Avenue. In the same vein, different family members lived in the neighborhood, but were not necessarily at contiguous properties. For example, Carey Kingdon's parents and sisters lived at 206 Reading while he lived at 305 Baltimore Road. He eventually moved closer to them, in his second Rockville Park home at 300 Reading. Robert Ward lived at 729 Grandin for many years, while Joseph Ward lived at 703 Maple.

In addition, generations remained in Rockville Park. The Edmonds family illustrates this, when they bought the house at 702 Maple with lots 9 – 14 in 1903, and then additionally lot 27 at the far end of this same block and lots 26-28 in Block 5. When their daughter Olive married in 1934, her parents built a new house for her at 305 Reading, in Block 5 across the street from them.

Other families who lived in this neighborhood included Oscar and Mary Fraley at 307 Baltimore Road (in 1944), and Albert and Virginia Fraley at 421 Reading Avenue (also owning land in Blocks 5 and 7); with a new generation at 405 Baltimore Road, with Mae Belt Fraley. The Hickersons, who owned the large flour mill in Block 1 along the railroad tracks, lived in Rockville Park. Clara V. and Lindsey Hickerson lived at 205 Baltimore Road until 1935, when they moved to 715 Grandin Avenue. Down the street, Florence Hickerson lived at 307 Baltimore Road for over thirty years, and her son continued to live in the neighborhood at 310 Reading Avenue.

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Mapping the construction dates of homes in Rockville Park through the decades illustrates its slow rate of growth [Figure 9]: five houses in the 1880s; nine homes in the 1890s; five more in the 1900s; five in the 1910s; 13 in the 1920s; six in the 1920s; six in the 1940s; 12 in the 1950s. This slow but consistent development has led to the mix of building styles that characterizes this neighborhood (See also Figures 10 and 11).

The properties at 701 - 711 Grandin Avenue illustrate this development pattern over time. With the Danenhower offering, lots 23 – 34 (12 lots) were sold to eight different people, with three of them purchasing one lot apiece. By 1894, the Victorian houses at 701 and 709 Grandin had been built, and ownership of these 12 lots was consolidated into three owners: Mr. Wilcox (Lots 30 –34), Mr. Corrick (25-29), and Mr. Gillis (Lots 23 –24). By 1910, William C. Bean owned both 701 Grandin (lots 30 – 34), and 709 Grandin (lots 23 – 29).<sup>167</sup> Until 1951, the property associated with 709 Grandin included seven lots (#23 – 29). Cooke Robertson, a local real estate businessman lived here for twelve years (1927 – 1939), and George and Elizabeth Rice lived here also for twelve years (1939 – 1951). At that point, the Victorian house with its large side yards was sold to Roland E. Simons, one of the major developers involved with Twinbrook in Rockville.<sup>168</sup> He quickly built a Twinbrook-style house on either side of the Victorian house, and then sold all three properties.

## Resident-Developers

An important aspect of the growth of Rockville Park, and East Rockville in general, was the involvement of local residents as small-scale builders, constructing in-fill houses as open lots came on the market. An 1891 *Washington Post* article noted that Washington Danenhower is building houses on speculation.<sup>169</sup> Joseph Reading also built houses here on speculation, while living on the north side of Baltimore Road. He financed his projects with a series of mortgages on his property in East Rockville.<sup>170</sup>

Another local builder was Walter S. Thompson, who served as a postal clerk from 1903 – 1933. In addition, Thompson built houses in East Rockville, including in Rockville Park.<sup>171</sup> He built the three

<sup>167</sup> William C. Bean was listed as a barber on the 1910 census, and, on the 1920 census, operates a garage in Rockville.

<sup>168</sup> Twinbrook is a significant local development in Rockville, which illustrates the influence of Levittown in New York on builders of the day. See the *2009 Twinbrook Master Plan*, Appendix 1, Cynthia Kebba, for similarities between the Twinbrook houses and those built in Levittown.

<sup>169</sup> *The Washington Post*, 19 April 1891, p. 14.

<sup>170</sup> See 1904 mortgage (177/390) for \$1200 from Martha J. Kemp, with the 49-1/2 acres on the north side of Baltimore Road and 35 lots in Rockville Park as collateral. See 1906 mortgage (189/61) for \$1200 from Alexander Garrett, with the 49-1/2 acres of the family estate on the north side of Baltimore Road, as well as 34 in Rockville Park as collateral. See also 1908 mortgage (201/129) for \$7500 from The Savings Institution of Sandy Spring, with the same 49-1/2 acre property as collateral.

<sup>171</sup> In the 1910 census, Thompson and his family lived on Horners Lane. They also lived in Homewood at 550 Reading, the Maddox Victorian home adjacent to Rockville Park, but sold this in 1923.

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American Foursquares at 503, 300, and 304 Baltimore Road, and the bungalow at 421 Reading Avenue.<sup>172</sup> Willis P. Thompson carried on the tradition as the next generation in this family, building a Craftsman house at 205 Reading in 1942. A third generation in this family continued this building tradition when W. Eldon Thompson built a Minimal Traditional house at 705 Grandin Avenue in 1963.

The Ray family also lived and built houses in East Rockville. George F. Ray moved into Rockville after retiring from farming in the county.<sup>173</sup> He built 501 and 505 Baltimore Road while living at 503 Baltimore Road, which he purchased from Walter S. Thompson. His son, George F. Ray Jr. built the split-level house at 312 Reading Avenue (1956), across an alley from 315 Baltimore Road, where his grandmother and aunts lived.

After World War II, John Russell and Sylvia Mills lived in Croydon Park and were very active in construction in Rockville, building many houses from ca. 1940 through 1951.<sup>174</sup> They lived at 300 Park Road, and built houses in Rockville Park at 304, 408 and 404 Reading Avenue; 721 and 723 Maple Avenue; and 730 Grandin Avenue.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Rockville Park illustrates a change of strategy for Washington developers as the potential for suburbanization took hold of the American population. Initially planned for the upper class, Rockville Park was redesigned to attract middle class buyers either for homes or speculative investment. While considered an important town in Montgomery County with a long history, Rockville now became part of the development taking place along the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad. In the late nineteenth century, developers from Washington platted new subdivisions along the railroad lines, such as Rockville Park. Where many of these new subdivisions were envisioned as new communities, Rockville Park was understood as a new neighborhood in Rockville.

A key feature of the history of Rockville Park is the fact that it developed over time. Block 2 is representative of the proposed character of the 1884 "Readington" subdivision platted by William Reading. The remaining blocks represent an important aspect of the history of suburban development as middle class buyers were invited into the market. The amount of land that was held open in Rockville Park through the decades may indicate the relatively low value of this land for quick

<sup>172</sup> Addresses 300 and 304 Baltimore Road are in the Croydon Park subdivision, platted by Joseph Reading in 1924. The bungalow at 421 Reading Avenue was recently demolished.

<sup>173</sup> See MHT form on 503 Baltimore Road, Robin D. Ziek, City of Rockville, 2007.

<sup>174</sup> The Mills built homes in Croydon Park (including 304 and 306 Horners Lane; 301, 302 Park Road; 421 MacArthur Drive, amongst others), Kensington View, and Rockwood. Another link to Rockville Park and local business is the mortgages the Mills obtained from Martin F. Heim, owner of 213 Baltimore Road).

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investment returns, but may also indicate a spatial value that residents placed on an open suburban environment. In some instances, owners held lots for many years, passing them on to the next generation. In other instances, they built a house on one lot and purchased adjacent lots to provide large rear and side yards.

The initial era of speculation was slowed by the purchase of multiple lots by a few homeowners, including William Reading, the initial developer. Many of the houses that were built here were by local people who were already involved in industry, real estate and business in the town of Rockville. Rockville Park provided an opportunity for a new house in their home town, and they bought multiple lots to provide extensive garden space around their houses. Because of this pattern of slow infill construction that occurred many years, Rockville Park presents a fine collection of houses of varying styles. The houses that were built in the first two decades included large and small Victorian and Transitional Colonial Revival style houses, which were built on three or more lots that provided large side yards. The one-story bungalows of the 1920s were more likely built on two lots, which provided the standard 50' wide lot.

Since the late nineteenth century, Rockville has functioned as a Washington suburb, while at the same time, it has grown from a small town into a large city with suburban subdivisions that relate to its own urban core. The suburban ideal that affected the nation in the late nineteenth century brought Rockville to the attention of developers from both Washington and from the town of Rockville itself. The suburban development of Rockville as seen in the Rockville Park subdivision illustrates this duality.

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- Figure 4 Detail from *the Real Estate Map of the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway Company Between Washington, D.C. and Rockville, Maryland* by Fava Naeff & Co. 1890
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- Figure 6 Subdivision plat for Rockville Park, 1890
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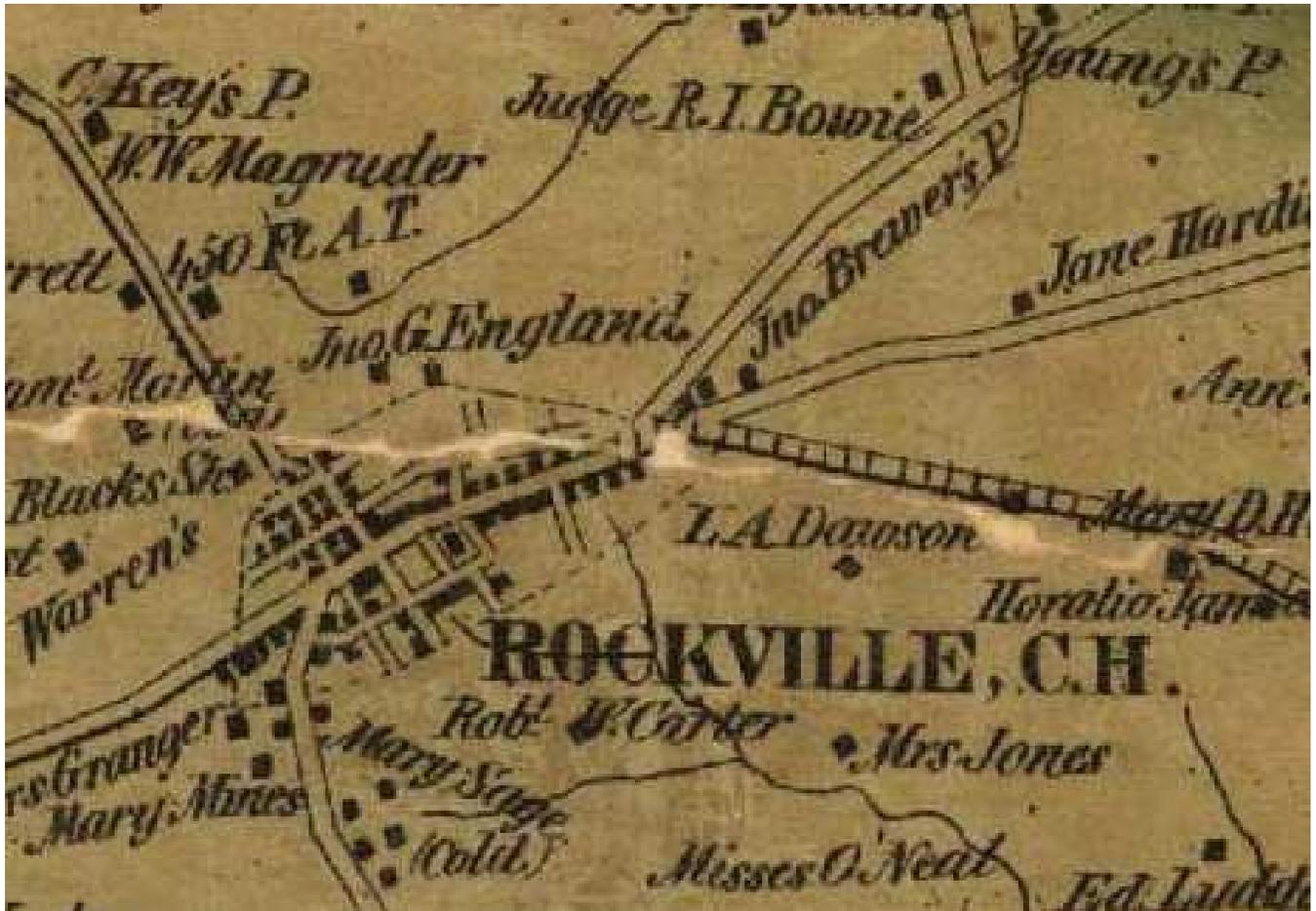


Figure 1. Rockville, c. 1865.  
Martenet & Bond's Map of Montgomery County Maryland, 1865.

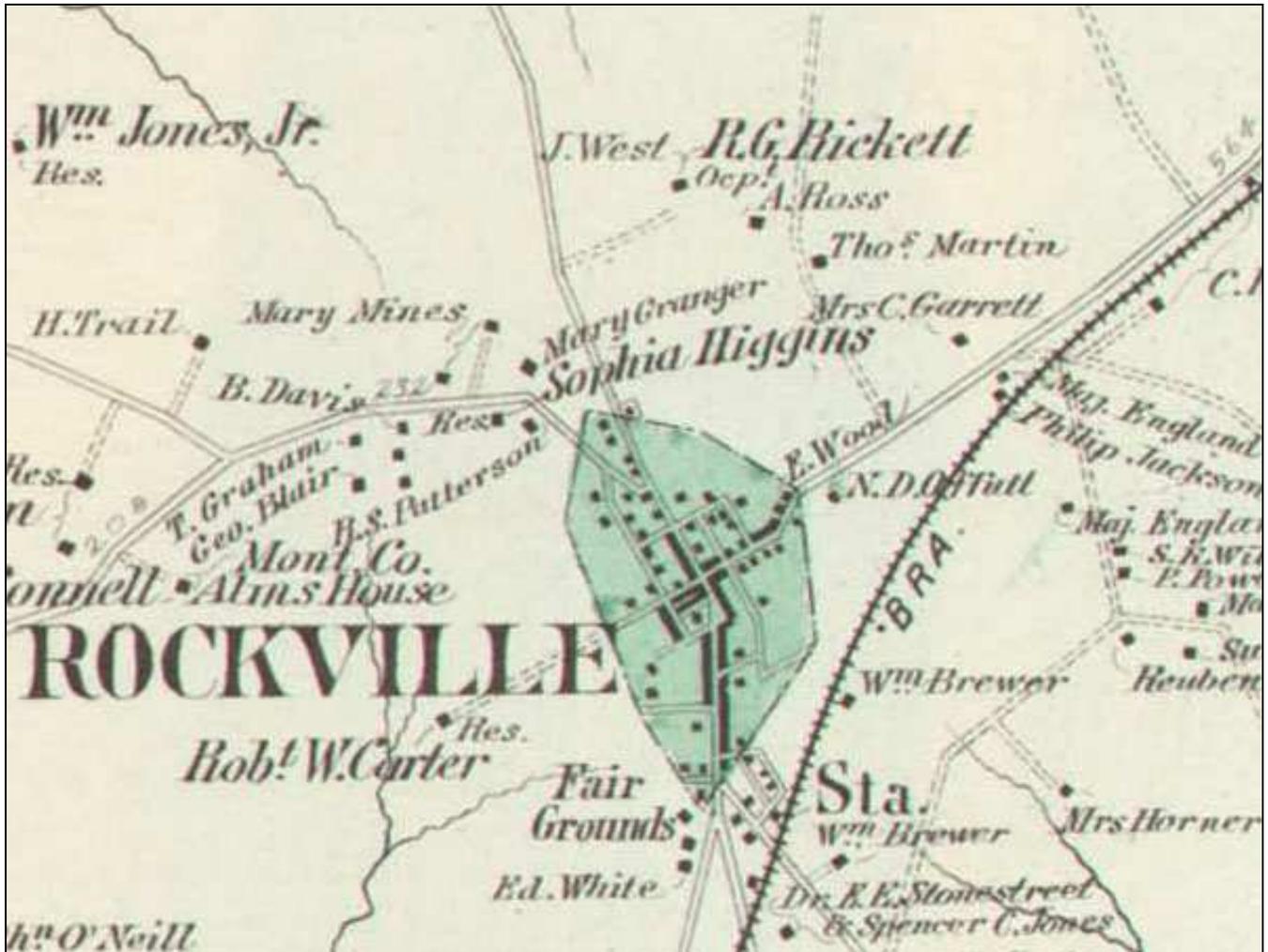
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**Figure 2. Rockville, 1879.** Wealthy residents like Stonestreet, Brewer, and Jones held land east of the railroad tracks for investment. [G.M. Hopkins. *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including the County of Montgomery, Maryland.* Philadelphia: C.M. Hopkins, 1879.]

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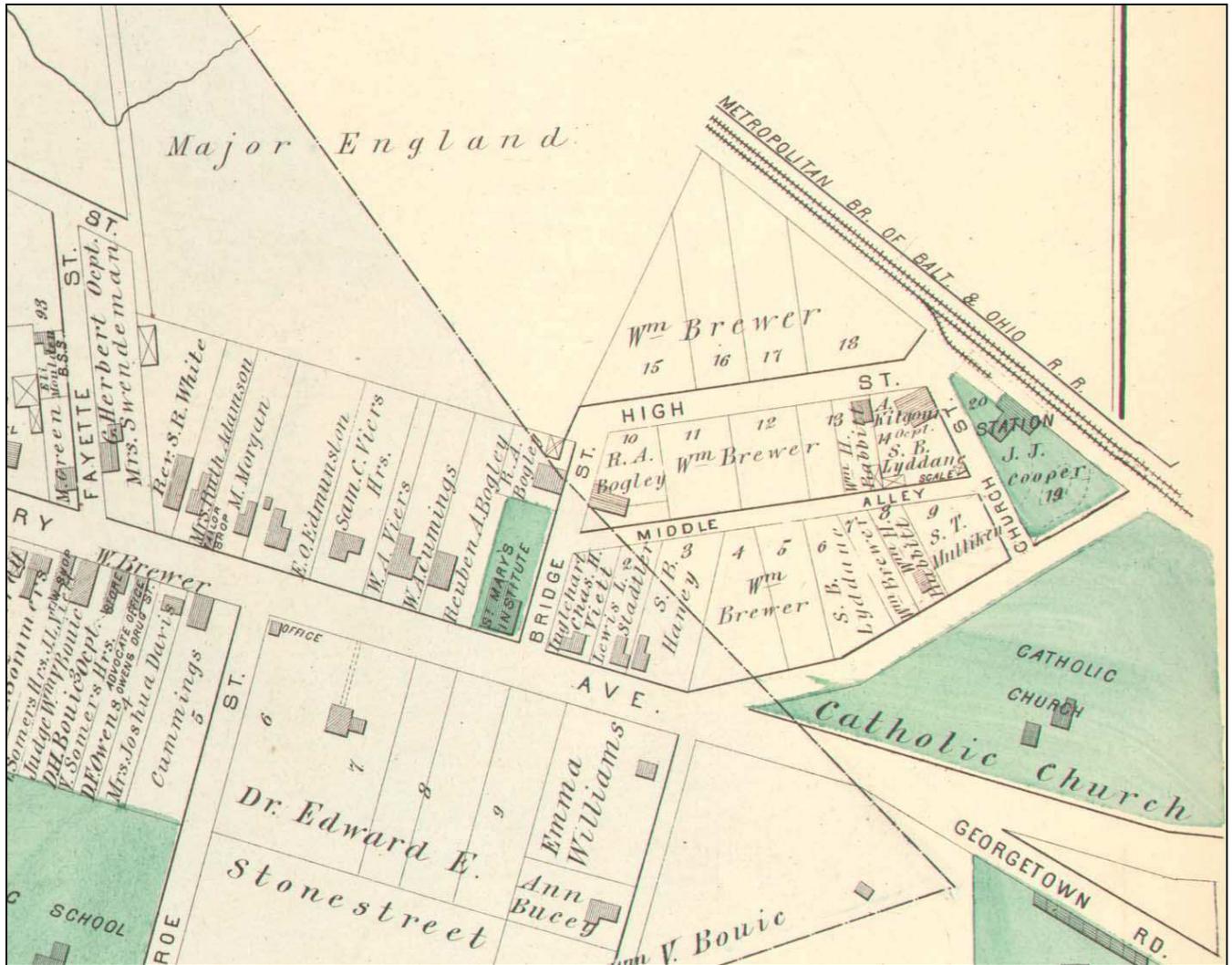


Figure 3. Rockville, west of the railroad, 1879. Dr. Edward E. Stonestreet lived in town, and both he and William Brewer held land for investment on both side of the railroad tracks. [Hopkins Atlas]

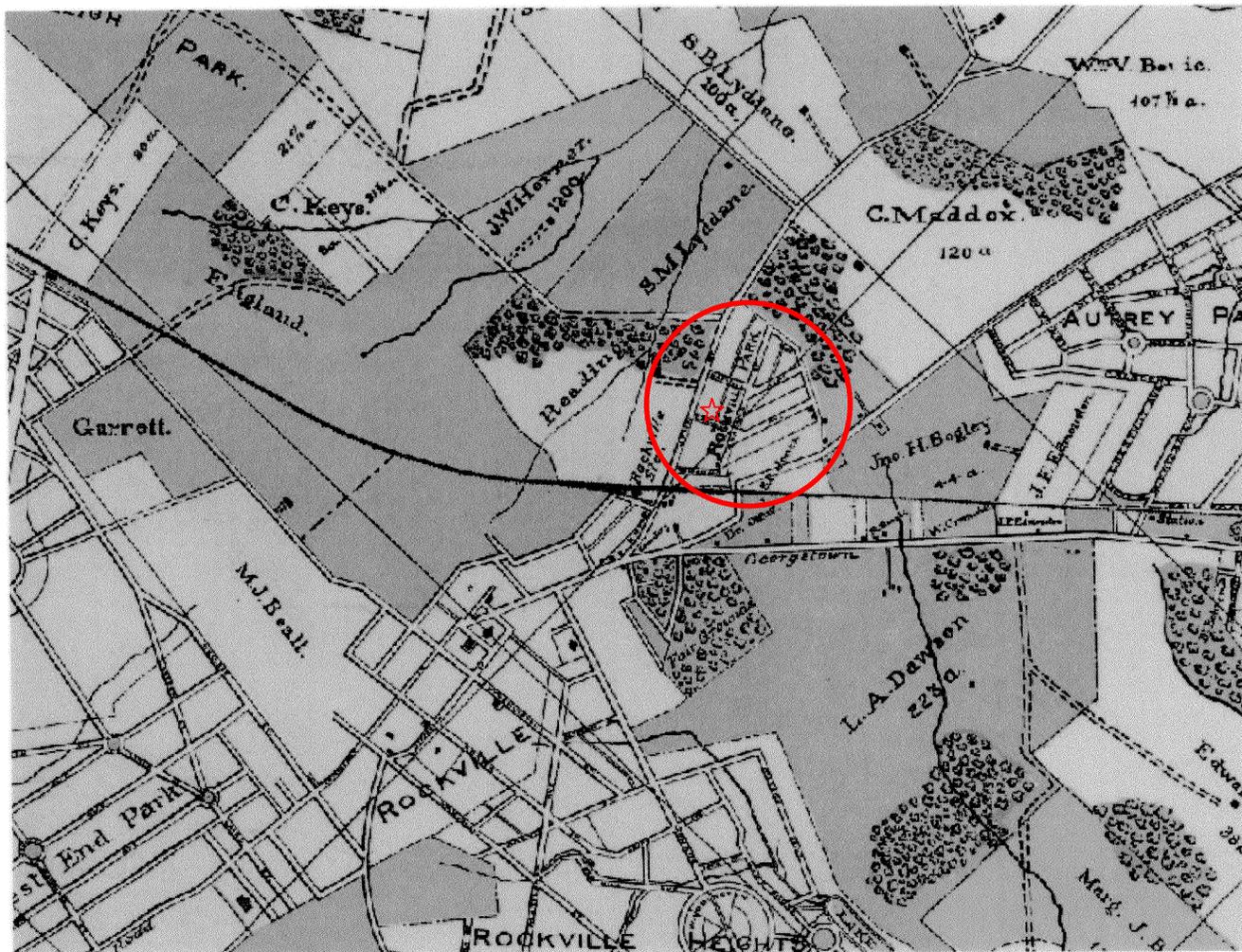
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**Figure 4. Suburban development along the Metropolitan Branch in Rockville, 1890**

Danenhower's Rockville Park (★ near center of map) and land retained by the Reading family are shown adjacent to Rockville Station. Autrey Park (center, right) is adjacent to Autrey Station. Rockville Heights and West End Park (at south and southwest borders of map) are south of the station. Detail from Francis R. Fava Jr. *Real Estate Map of the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company Between Washington, D.C., and Rockville, Maryland* (Washington, D.C.: Fava-Naeff & Co., 1890). [Source: Library of Congress]

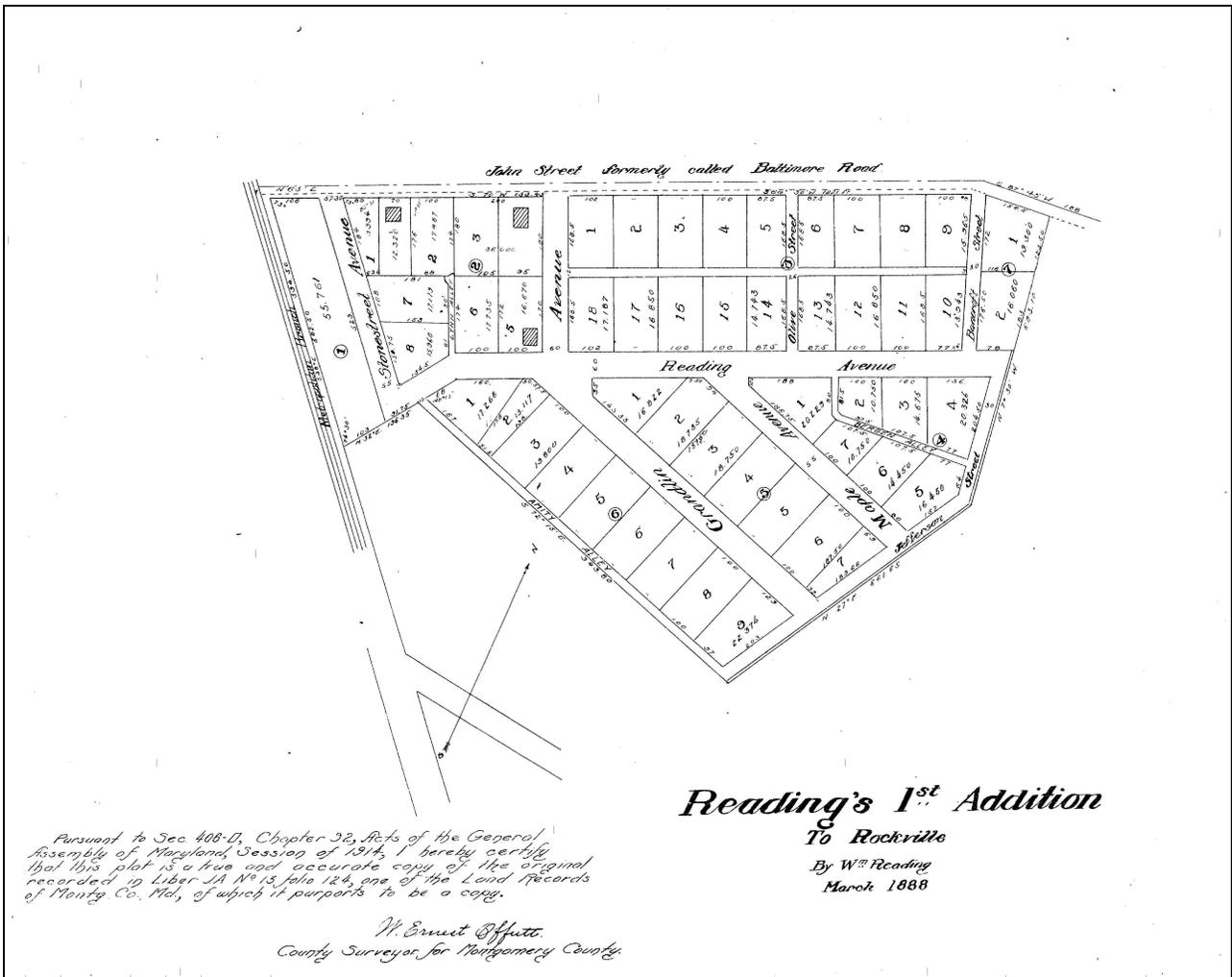
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**Figure 5. Reading's First Addition to Rockville** [JA 13/124, Land records of Montgomery County, Maryland]. While the plat was drawn up between 1884 and 1887, it was recorded in 1888. By 1890, Reading had sold only six of the 52 lots.

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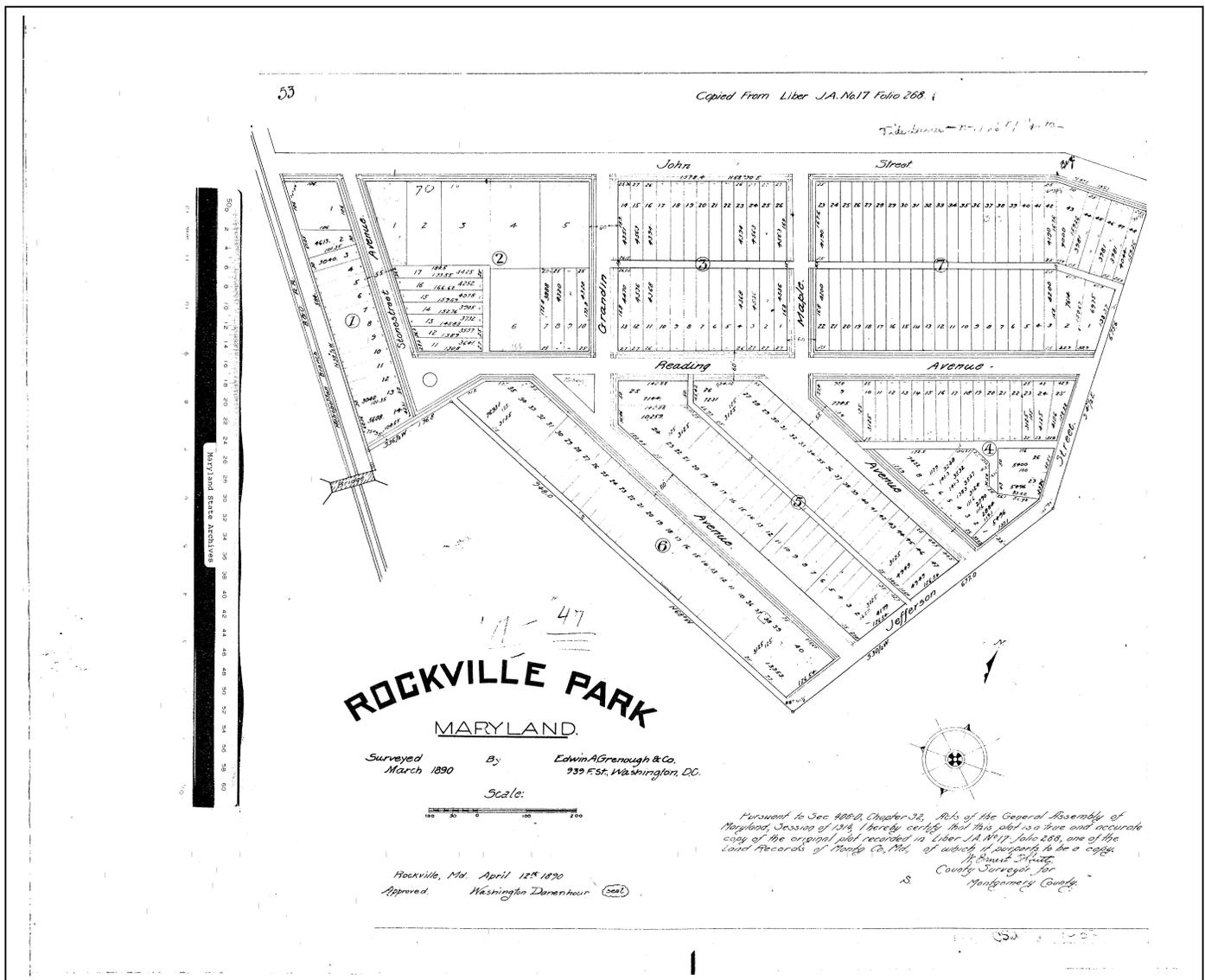


Figure 6. Rockville Park, 1890. [JA17/268. Land records of Montgomery County, Maryland].



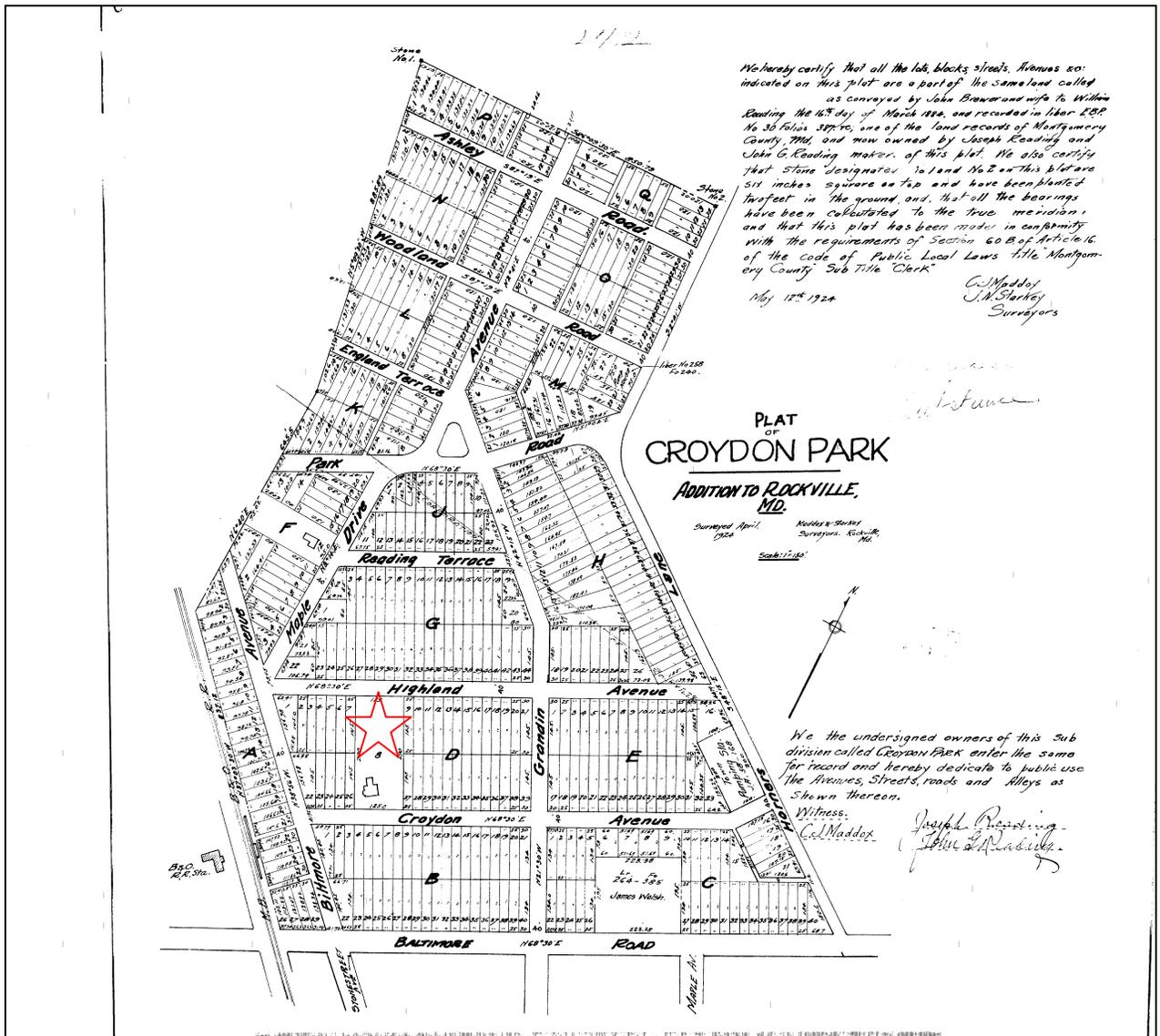
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**Figure 8. Joseph Reading and Croydon Park**  
Reading moved to Chevy Chase in 1924 and filed this plat the same year (Plat 272). His former house is shown in Block D, Lot 8. (Land records of Montgomery County, Maryland)

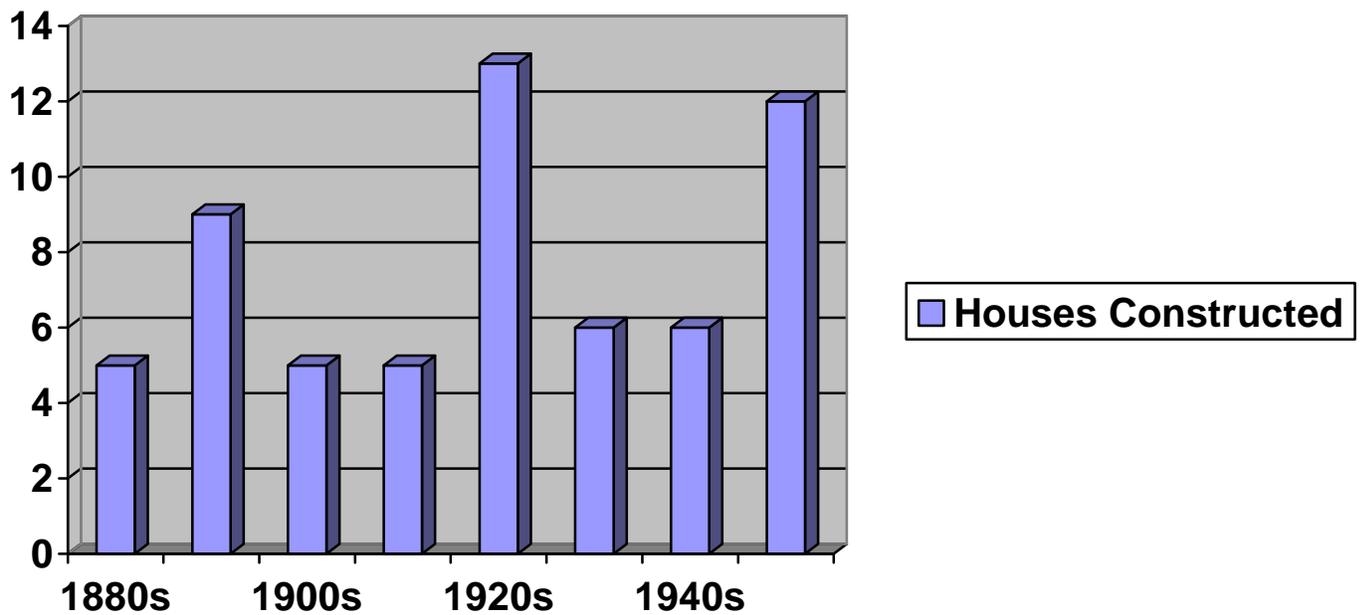
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**Figure 9. House construction in Rockville Park**

Rockville Park developed slowly over time with construction spikes in the 1920s and 1950s.

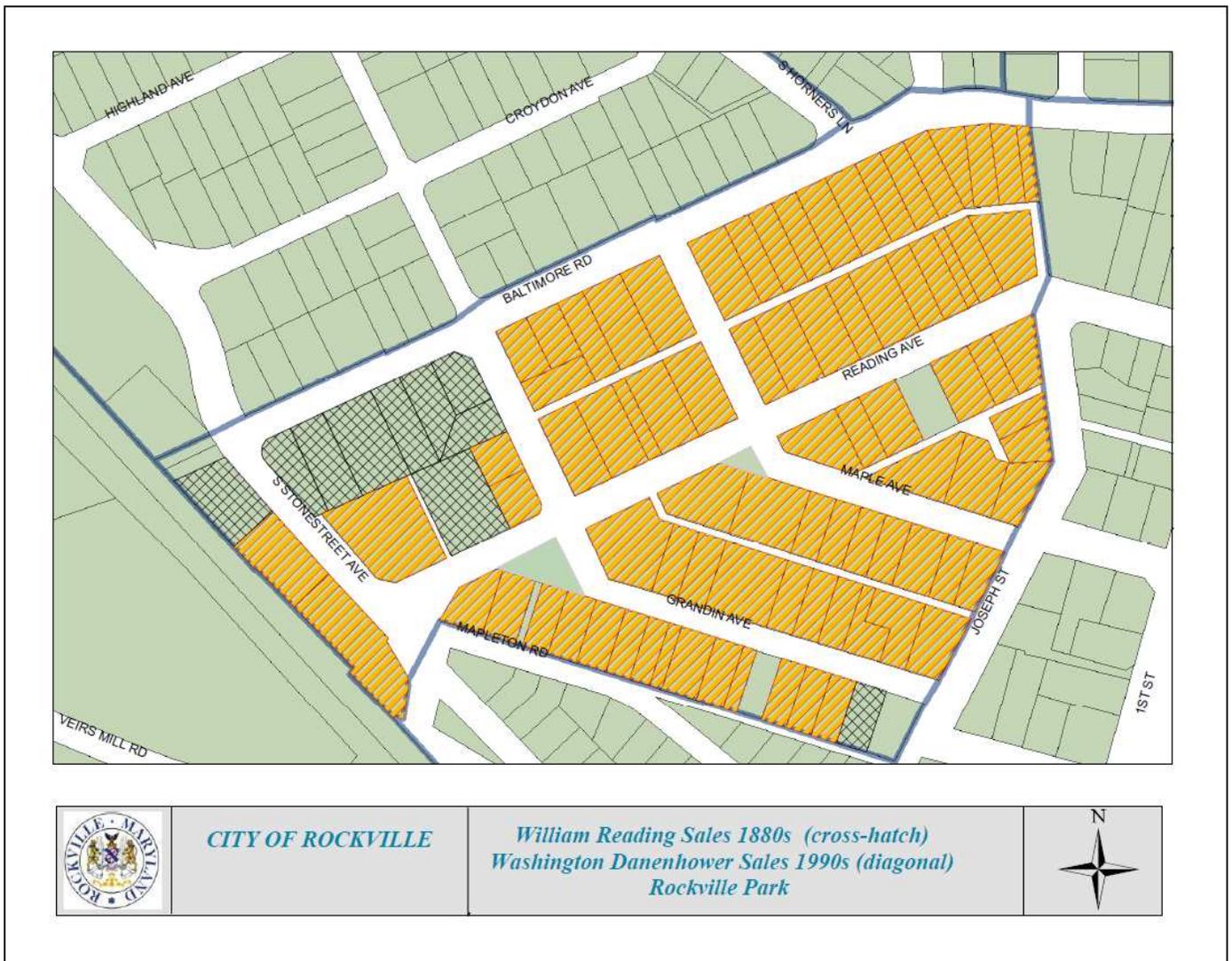
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**Figure 10. Lot sales by William Reading (1880s) and Washington Danenhower (1990s).**  
William Reading sold only a few lots in six years; Washington Danenhower sold all the rest in one day.

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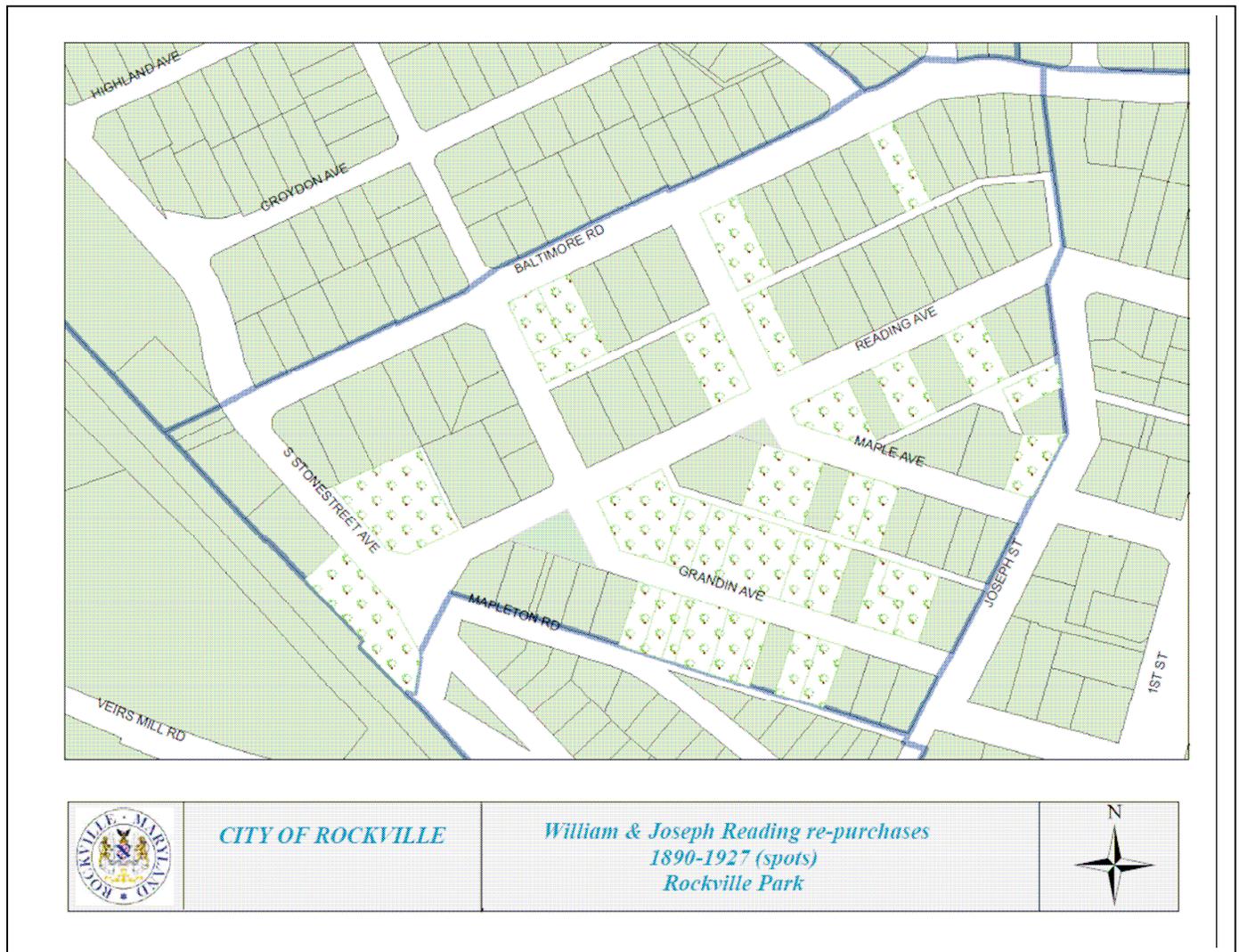


Figure 11. Following the economic crash of 1893, William and Joseph Reading purchased lots in Rockville Park for future development.

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Figure 12: Construction in Rockville Park through the decades



Figure 12.A: 1885-1889

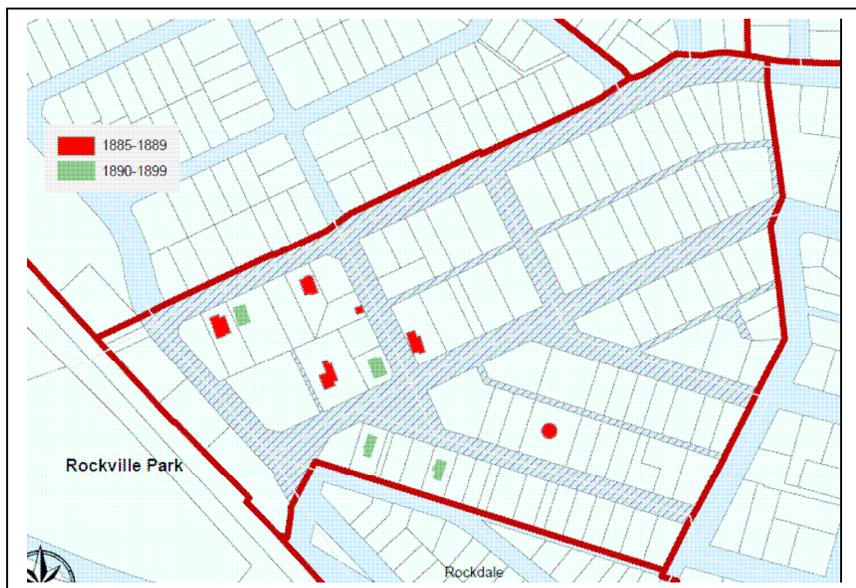


Figure 12.B: Additional construction to 1899

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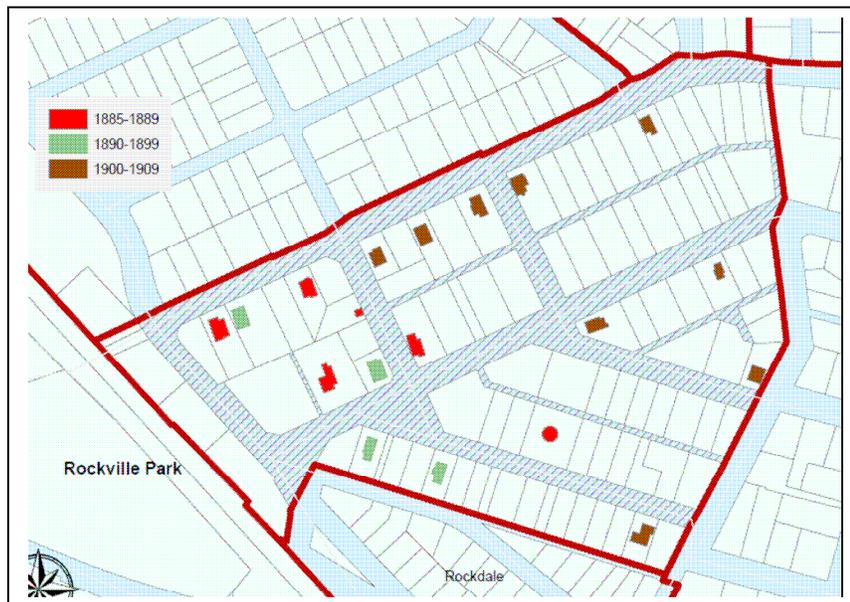


Figure 12.C: Additional construction to 1909

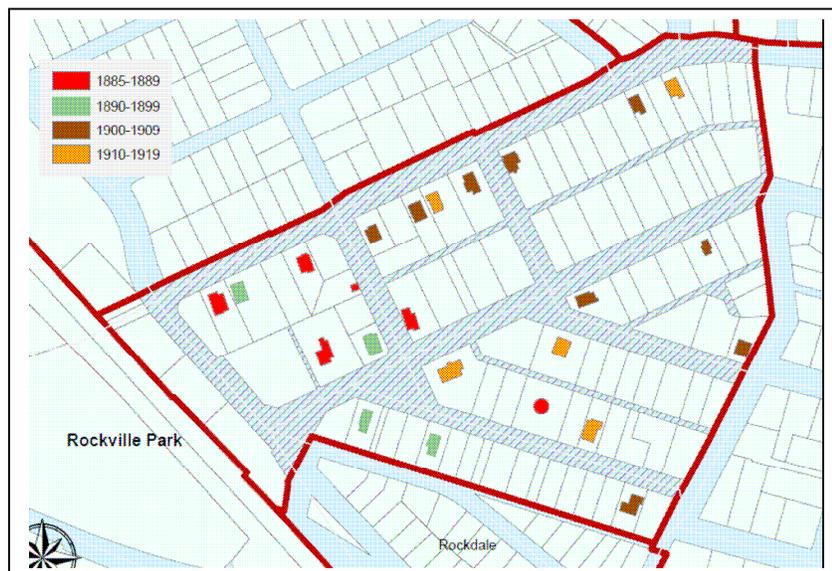


Figure 12.D: Additional construction to 1919

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Figure 12.E: Additional construction to 1929

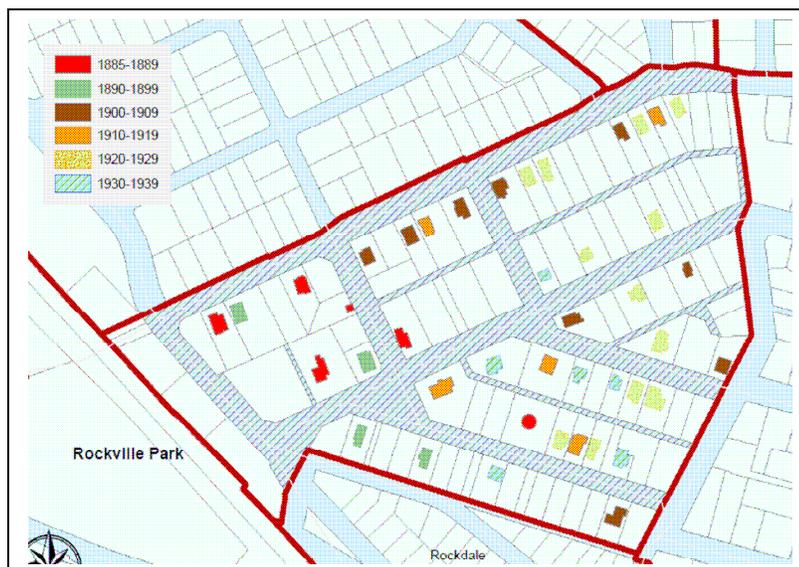


Figure 12.F: Additional construction to 1939

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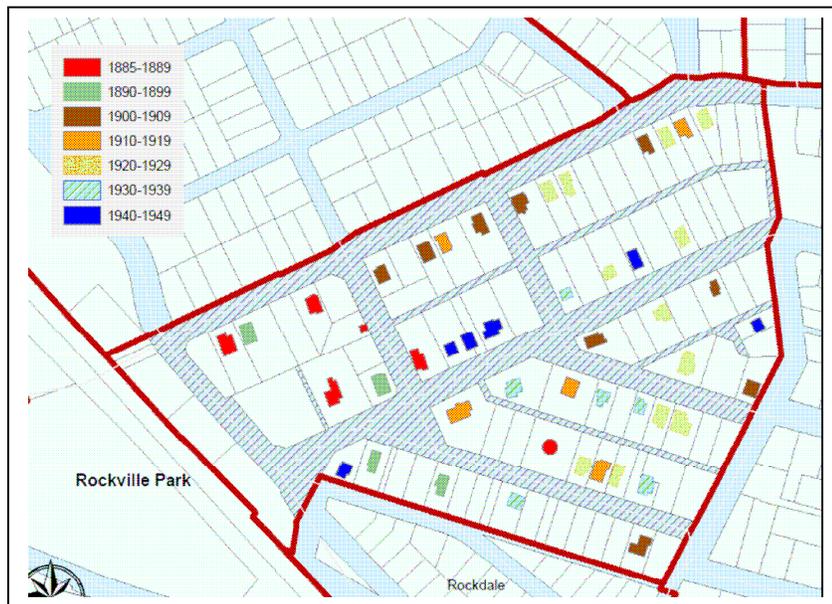


Figure 12.G: Additional construction to 1949

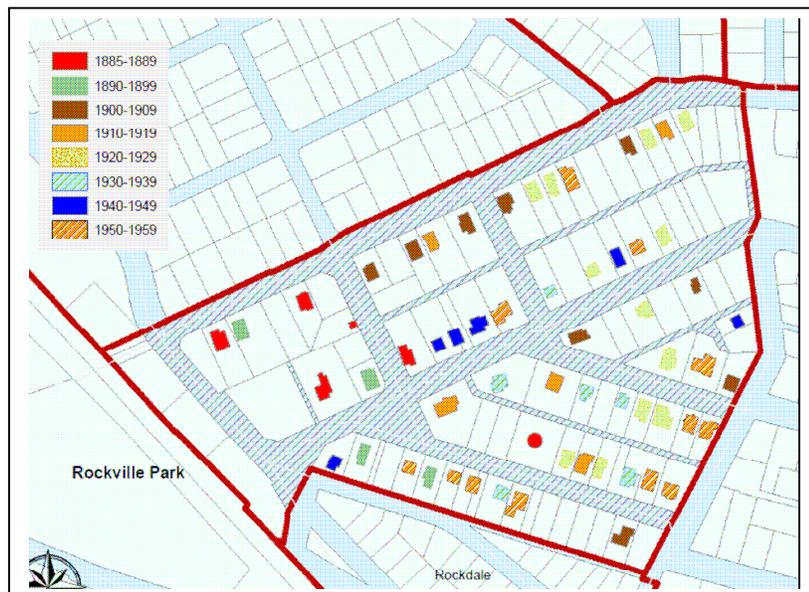


Figure 12.H: Additional construction to 1959

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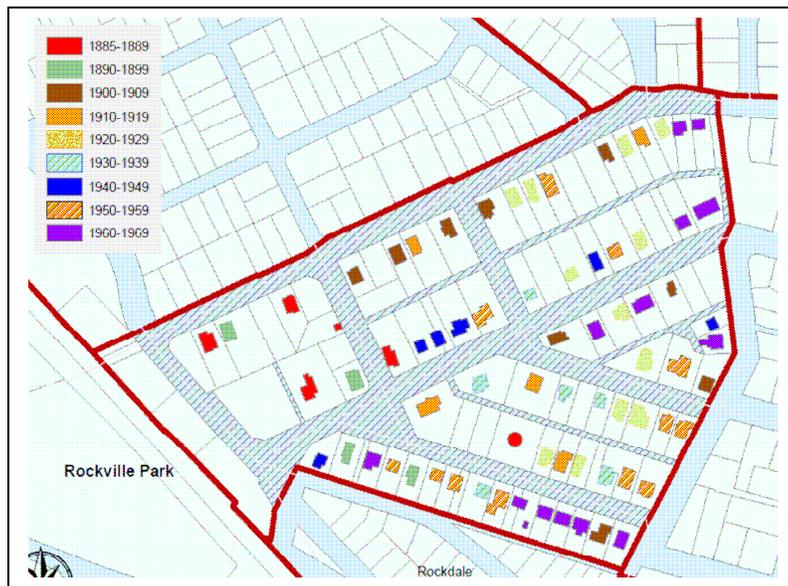


Figure 12.I: Additional construction to 1969

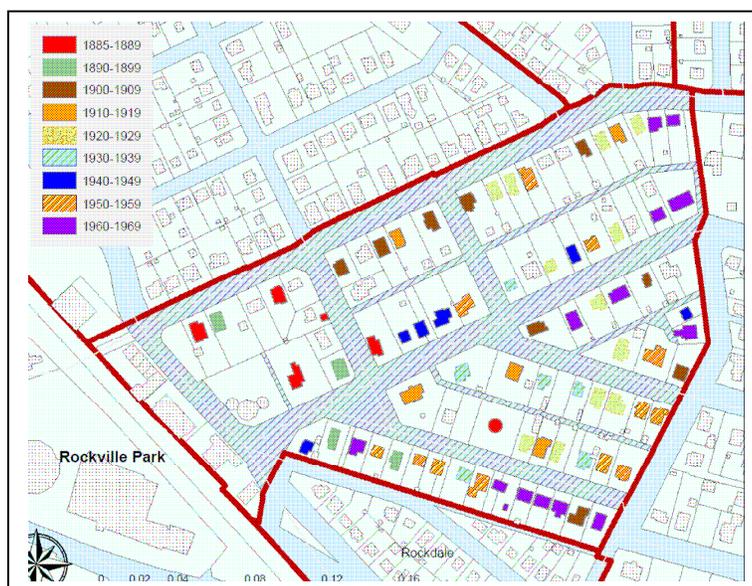


Figure 12.J: Additional construction 1970-date

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Rockville Park Historic District

Name of Property

Montgomery County, Maryland

County and State

**10. Geographical Data****Acreage of Property** \_\_\_\_\_**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1									
	Zone	Easting			Northing				
2									

3									
	Zone	Easting			Northing				
4									

 See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**name/title Robin D. Ziek, Historic Preservation PlannerOrganization City of Rockvilledate June 28, 2010street & number 111 Maryland Avenuetelephone 240-314-8230city or town Rockvillestate Marylandzip code 20850**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

street &amp; number \_\_\_\_\_

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_

zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Name of Property

Montgomery County, Maryland

County and State

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## Verbal Boundary Description

The Rockville Park subdivision is bounded by Baltimore Road (N); Joseph Street (E), Reading Avenue (S), and S. Stonestreet Avenue (W).

More precisely, it runs on the south side of Baltimore Road (with Croydon Park on the north side); runs on the west side of Joseph Street (with Janeta on the East side); includes both sides of Reading Avenue; and both sides of S. Stonestreet, extending to the CSX railroad tracks.

## Boundary Justification

The proposed National Register boundary coincides with the subdivision plat for Reading's First Addition to Rockville (Readington) drawn in 1884. This also coincides with the redesigned plat for Rockville Park in 1890. While the general area of East Rockville was devised for subdivision with the three earliest subdivisions (Rockville Park, Croydon Park, Janeta) at the same general time and were referenced in each others' plats (see Janeta reference to "Readington"), Rockville Park was the earliest to be recorded and then advertised for development. As such, it illustrates the development history of this east side of Rockville without later intrusions, such as we see in Janeta (with road widening).

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROCKVILLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Name of Property

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## ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION:

Rockville, MD Quadrangle, 1984: Project Area

List of Negatives