CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
for
November 19, 2009
MEETING NO. 10-09

APPLICATION:	HDC2010-00481
ADDRESS:	Bessie Hill House
	602 Great Falls Road
ACCEPTED:	10/8/09
OWNER:	John B. Stevens and Jonathan D. Stevens
REQUEST:	Evaluate significance for demolition request
STAFF:	Elizabeth Hannold, Robin D. Ziek

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The applicant requests Evaluation of Significance review by HDC, as part of the Demolition Permit application process. The house has been vacant for three years, but has been secured and maintained during this period.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on an assessment of the history and architecture of the site, the staff finds that this property meets the Criteria 1C, 1D, and IIA for Historic Designation in the City of Rockville.

[DRAFT MOTION OF EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE WITH FINDINGS:]

Finding that HDC2010-00481, for Evaluation of Historic Significance of the property at 602 Great Falls Avenue meets Criteria I-C, I-D, and II-A for historic designation for the City of Rockville, I move to recommend historic designation of the property.

November 19, 2009
HDC Evaluation of Significance

BACKGROUND: A demolition permit was received at the City of Rockville on October 8, 2009. The house at 602 Great Falls Road was occupied until the death of its former owner, Macie Theresa Stevens, in 2006. Ownership of the property transferred to her son, John P. Stevens and her grandson, Jonathan D. Stevens by Deed 34293/660 on May 14, 2007. John Stevens has maintained the property, but believes that it would not be cost effective to renovate the house, particularly due to its small size. He intends to sell the property. The property is located on an unnamed, dead-end alley located off the east side of Great Falls Road just to the south of Monument Street. The property is located behind 600 Great Falls Road and has no street frontage. Another property, 604 Great Falls Road, is located to the east of the subject property at the end of the alley. The two-story frame house was constructed circa 1902. The house is located within an African-American community founded in the mid-19th century on Great Falls Road outside the town of Rockville.

The Great Falls Road settlement is identified as a resource within the 1986 *Historic Resources Management Plan* (*HRMP*) under Historic Context 5: Development as Montgomery County Seat: 1825-1873.[1] The *HRMP* was prepared in 1986 as an operational and management plan for historic/cultural resources within the City of Rockville. The plan was formally adopted by the Historic District Commission and, subsequently, by the City Council. It has guided the work of the Commission and staff since its adoption. In 1987, the subject property was included in the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) inventory as the Bessie Hill House (M:26/24/2). The Bessie Hill House and the neighboring house at 600 Falls Road, known as the Johnson-Clarke House (M:26/24/1), were also included in the 1989 *Rockville Historic Building Catalog* as site #s 104 and 103.

Photograph of the Bessie Hill House from MHT form M:26/24/1

[1] HRMP, p. 89.

Property Area: 4,800 sf. **Structure Area:** 820 sf.

Zone: R-90 and West End and Woodley Gardens East West (4)

Development Standards: The property is substandard for the zone, which requires 9,000 sf lot. In addition, this property has no public road frontage. The property is technically landlocked, but does have access via a public alley. As such, it would be grandfathered in as a permissible building lot, as new pipestem lots are no longer permitted in the City. It would be impossible for new construction at this site to comply with setbacks of the R-90 zone, due to its small size, and staff is reviewing different options to meet the particular challenges of the property.

City of Rockville Permits Required: Demolition Permit included in Residential Building Permit Application

Deed Research

Liber/Folio	Date	Grantor	Grantee
34293/660	4/16/2007	John B. Stevens (personal representative of Estate of Macie Theresa Stevens)	John B. Stevens and Jonathan D. Stevens
4797/442	6/11/1976	Dexter M. Bullard, Jr.	Warren B. Stevens and Macie Theresa Stevens
3966/140	5/29/1970	Anne W. Bullard and Dexter M. Bullard	Dexter M. Bullard, Jr.
967/26	4/20/1945	Lillian Dove, et. al.	Anne W. Bullard
TD 24/16	9/30/1902	Eliza Ann Johnson and William Johnson	Elizabeth Hill
TD/17/406	8/14/1901	John Thomas Davis and Ada E. Davis	Eliza Ann Johnson
Will Book RWC 15/87	6/29/1886	William Davis	John Thomas Davis
Will Book RWC 6/220	5/28/1878	Ann Willson	William Davis
JGH 2/151	8/28/1845 recorded 1853	Jesse Leach	Ann Willson

Property Description

The house is one of three houses (600, 602 and 604 Great Falls Road) accessed from Great Falls Road by a paved alley along the north property lines. The property consists of a single lot measuring 60' by 80'. Visible from Falls Road, but buffered by the property to the west, the house is centered in the 4,800 square foot lot and set back from the alley approximately 15 feet. The land is flat. There are several trees on the property, including hardwoods and a Catalpa tree on the west property line and a Western Red Cedar tree in the north yard. Mixed vegetation demarcates the property lines on the west, south and east sides where there had formerly been fencing. A flagstone walk in the northeast yard leads to the door in the dining room addition. The location of the former well is marked by a low circular cement structure in the southwest section of the lot. The shed, picket and wire fencing, garden and most of the plantings described in the 1987 MHT form are no longer extant.

The house is currently oriented toward the east side of the lot, adjacent to a formerly gravel-paved parking space. According to the 1987 MHT form, the house was originally oriented to the west, toward Great Falls Road. This supposition was based on an examination of an area of infilled siding under one of the two first-story windows on the west façade of the main block, presumed to mark the location of an earlier front door.[2] This arrangement would mean that the house was a side gable house form. On the other hand, the original orientation may have been to the north, toward the alley. According to those familiar with the house in the mid-20th century, the current north side addition was constructed on the footprint of a porch.[3] This would suggest that the main entrance was on the north side and that the house had a front gable form.

The frame house has an L-shaped footprint consisting of a gable-roofed two-story, two-bay by one-bay main block and a gable roofed one-and-a-half story wing extending toward the east. The gable roofs of these two components intersect at a right angle. A narrow one-story shed- roofed addition is located on the south side of the rear wing, infilling the "L". Another small gable-roofed one-story addition projects from the north side of the main block. The main block is believed to date to 1902. It is possible that the one-and-a-half story wing behind the main block was an earlier free-standing dwelling that was incorporated as a wing when the 1902 main block was constructed. At some point, probably in the mid-20th century, the small one story addition was added on the south side of the rear wing.[4] This addition, located off the kitchen, houses an entrance vestibule to the only bathroom in the house. The north side addition was added for a dining room circa 1960. A one-story porch had been located where this addition now stands

The cross-gable roof is clad in asphalt shingles and is in poor condition. The low foundation is cement (perhaps parged fieldstone) under the front and rear wings and concrete block under the north addition. There is no cellar and there are metal grilles inserted into the foundation wall for

[2] Although the original windows had already been replaced when the 1987 form was prepared, the vinyl siding had not been installed and the original wood siding remained intact.
[3] From discussions with John Stevens, owner, and Nina Clarke, longtime owner and resident of 600 Great Falls Road.
[4] According to the MHT form, this addition was created by infilling a side porch.

ventilation. The walls are clad in vinyl siding and the window trim is panned in aluminum.[5] All the windows are modern one-over-one vinyl replacement windows except for the windows in the north addition. These are multi-paned double-hung wood windows. There is a corbelled interior brick chimney near the center of the main block roof on the rear slope. The gutters and downspouts are modern aluminum replacements.

West and south facades

South and east facades

The two-bay west (original front) façade of the main block has evenly spaced, 1/1 modern replacement windows in the north and south bays in both the first and second stories. The north addition has a pair of small double-hung wood six-over-six windows centered in the east façade.

The south façade is composed of the gable end of the main block and the one-story shed-roofed addition infilling the L and covering most of the south wall of the one-and-one half story rear wing. The main block has a 1/1 modern window located slightly to the east of center in the first story and another centered in the second story. The addition has a 1/1 modern window offset to the west.

[5] The 1987 MHT form describes the 6” wide rough-sawn siding on the north, east and south sides and 5” beveled siding on the west side. It is assumed that the wood siding remains under the vinyl siding.

East and north facades

North facade

The east façade consists of the gable end of the rear wing with the one-story shed-roofed addition to the south and the dining room addition set well back on the north. The rear wing has a 1/1 modern window centered in the first and second stories. The one story addition has a modern replacement door with nine lights above and panels below with a metal storm door with a single glazing panel above and cross buck panel below. The west façade of the north or dining room addition also has a nearly identical entrance composed of a modern replacement door and storm door, except that this storm door has two vertical panels rather than a cross buck pattern. To the side of this entrance is a small black metal exterior light fixture and the house address composed of press on-numerals, suggesting that this entrance served as the main or formal entry to the house in recent years.

The north façade is composed of the gable end of the main block, the gable end of the north addition and the long side of the rear wing. The main block has a 1/1 modern replacement window in the second story. The north addition projects from this façade on the first story. The north addition has a pair of six-over-six double-hung wood windows centered in its north façade. The rear wing has one 1/1 modern window located at the west end of the first story.

The interior of the house consists of a parlor, dining room, kitchen and bathroom on the first level and two bedrooms on the second level. On the first floor, the main block contains a single parlor with large chimney breast centered on the east wall.[6] The dining room addition is connected to the parlor by an open archway. The rear wing contains the kitchen and winder stair leading to the second floor. The kitchen retains the original beaded wainscoting and wood cupboards. A wainscoted door leads to the winder stairs located on the north side of the kitchen. A small vestibule and bathroom are contained in the one-story addition located on the south side of the kitchen. The wainscoting extends up the stairway and forms a low knee wall around the stair

[6] According to the 1987 MHT form, this room was originally divided into two rooms. Staff did not see evidence of this in their recent tour of the interior. Furthermore, the location of the chimney breast in the middle of the north wall would seem to contradict this claim.

opening on the second floor, serving in place of a railing. The bedroom in the one-and-one-half story rear wing is characterized by sloping ceilings. The second bedroom, located in the higher main block, is accessed directly from the first bedroom by a simple step and doorway.

Modestly built, this vernacular house has no ornamentation. Its verticality and small scale distinguish it from the larger, circa 1913 house at 600 Great Falls Road and from the modern Colonial style split-level house at 604 Great Falls Road. Despite its post-1900 date, vinyl siding and modern windows, the house is distinctively *19th century* in form and character. Modifications made throughout the second half of the 20th Century, have only slightly diminished the capacity of the house to convey a sense of the time, place and circumstances in which it was built.

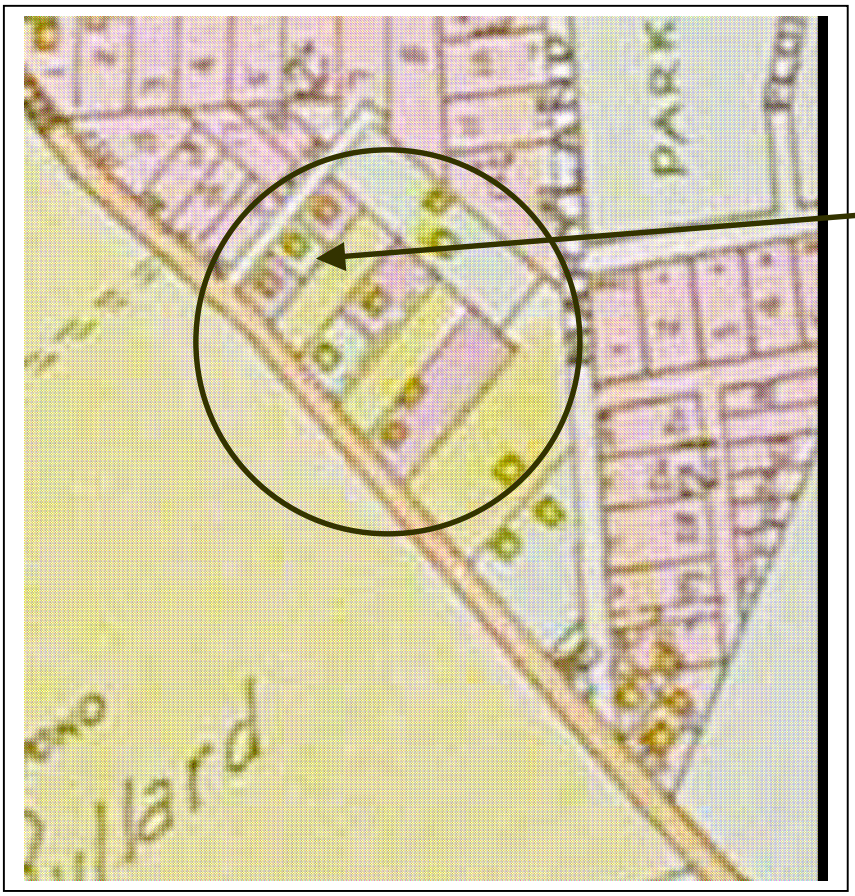
History and Significance Summary

The house at 602 Great Falls Road can only be understood within the context of the small community within which it is located. The area still represents the generational development of an African-American family enclave in its physical layout.[7] A study of the deeds and wills shows the careful conservation of the original one acre acquired by Ann Willson, a free black woman, in 1845. The precious acre of land that she acquired was passed down through multiple generations, divided and re-divided to ensure that family members were provided for and that family remained close by. Family members and friends purchased additional adjacent parcels and built homes. Properties were sold within the family to ensure continuity of ownership. The property on which 602 Great Falls Road is located remained in family hands for one hundred years, until 1945, when it was sold to Ann Bullard. The house was constructed for Ann Willson's great granddaughter, Bessie Hill, in 1902. Ultimately the community consisted of seven lots with seven houses. Descendants of Ann Willson continued to reside in the community until circa 1977.[8]

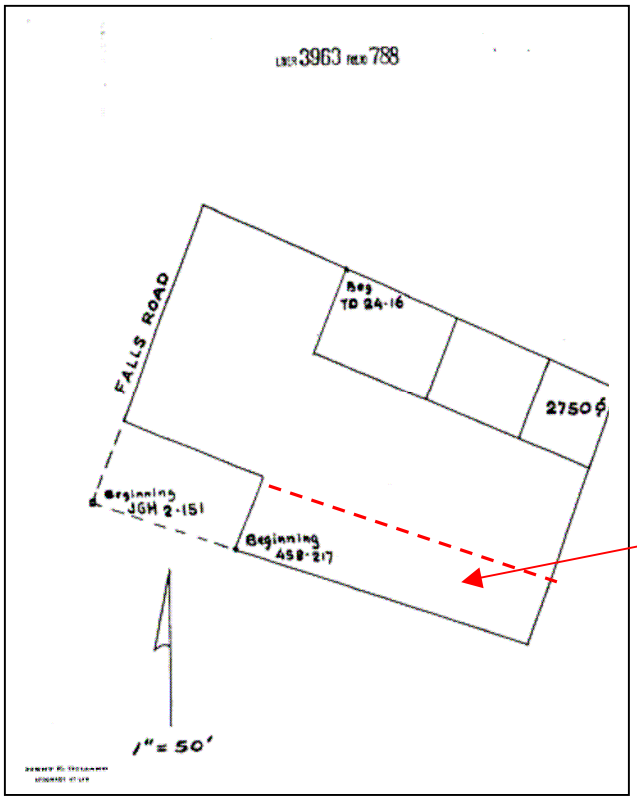
The African American community on Falls Road was noted as a resource in the Historic Resources Management Plan.[9] The plan notes that this community, originally located outside the southwestern limits of town and consisting of a few frame houses scattered over a small acreage accessed by a narrow alley, has characteristics in common with the larger and better known, Martin's Lane community. Both areas provided a safe enclave for free blacks and their descendants. The plan also speaks of the importance of these communities and of their vulnerability to redevelopment.

[7] The history of this property and the Great Falls Road community was previously developed by Eileen McGuckian, Ann Cissel and Judy Christensen and is found in the Maryland Historical Trust forms for 600 and 602 Great Falls Road (M:26/24/1 and M:26/24/2). Additional genealogical information for Ann Willson Davis and the Hill family is found in the vertical files at Peerless Rockville. Further genealogical information was provided by Sharyn Duffin, great granddaughter of Bessie Hill, in a telephone interview with Elizabeth Hannold (11/9/09). Information on the history of the house and community was provided by John Stevens in a conversation with Robin Ziek and Elizabeth Hannold (10/28/09) and a telephone interview of Nina Clarke, resident and owner of 600 Great Falls Road, by Elizabeth Hannold (11/3/09).
[8] According to Sharyn Duffin, Mrs Emma Nugent of 608 Great Falls Road resided in the community until her death.
[9] *HRMP*, Resource #15, p. 89.

The house is significant as an example of a common, but now rare, house type. The construction of this small vernacular frame dwelling marked the third generation of family building in this African American kinship community. Historic mapping from 1865 and 1879 shows small clusters of houses in the area. Undoubtedly, these first generation houses were extremely modest. One to four room houses were still common in the black settlements. These were typically folk buildings, built with older traditional building techniques, often reusing materials from earlier structures. Not surprisingly, these houses were replaced as finances allowed. Thus, the original Ann Willson house at 600 Great Falls Road was replaced circa 1913 with the existing house. As a result, the house at 602 Great Falls Road is the oldest house remaining in this community. It is possible that the rear wing is even older, pre-dating the 1902 main block by several decades.



The 1949 F.H.M. Klinge Atlas of Property in Montgomery County Maryland shows the subject project area and the associated kinship community as a distinct element surrounded by the Rockville Heights subdivision. The current alley led to the large parcel with Mr. Asbury's home, which property has been joined with other parcels and resubdivided and redeveloped as Prospect Hill Place (1996).



Deed dated 5/25/1970

Recording division of original acre

Mr. Green's property at 610 Great Falls Road is not shown on the deed.

The house at 602 Great Falls Road was constructed for and possibly by descendants of Ann Willson, a free African American, on part of the one acre she purchased from Jesse Leach in 1845 for $25.00.[10] The price reflects the existence of a house originally located on this site. Ann Willson was listed as age 40 in the 1850 Census, one of 1,311 free blacks in Montgomery County at that time. At some unknown date she married a Mr. Davis and acquired the several Davis stepchildren whose names appeared in her Will and land transactions.[11] Additional acreage was purchased by the family: parts of "Exchange and New Exchange" and "Sweepstakes" which abutted the east side of the small African American settlement. The 1865 Martinet & Bond Map shows five structures at this site, identified as "cold", a contraction of "colored". The 1879 Hopkins Atlas shows three structures adjacent to the name "B. Davis", assumed to refer to Benomi Davis, one of Ann Willson's stepchildren. In 1866, Eliza Ann Davis, daughter of Benomi, married William H. Johnson. In 1868, Ann Willson Davis deeded approximately ¼ acre to Benomi Davis and shortly thereafter, in 1871, she also deeded approximately ¼ acre lot to Eliza and William (these parcels are thought to be on the western side of the original acre). Ann Willson Davis died in 1879. Her will left approximately ½ acre of land from the original acre together with improvements including her house to her stepson, William Davis, who in turn left this property to

[10] Montgomery County Land Records, JGH 2/151, made 1845, recorded 1853. Jesse Leach was a merchant, newspaper publisher and Deacon in the Baptist Church of Rockville.

[11] The name Davis is assumed through the stepchildren, who were ex-slaves according to the 1867-68 Census of ex-slaves and former owners. If her husband were a slave at the time of their marriage, the union would not have been recognized in legal or civil records. This may account for her continued use of the Willson name.

his son, John Thomas Davis. In 1901 Ann's granddaughter Eliza Ann Davis Johnson purchased this property located at 600 Great Falls Road from John Thomas Davis and his wife, who were then living in Pittsburgh. Just a year later, on September 29, 1902, Eliza Ann Davis Johnson and her husband, William Johnson deeded the rear portion of this lot, consisting of 10,275 square feet (approximately ¼ acre) to their daughter Elizabeth "Bessie" Hill. The Johnson's continued to live on the portion of the lot fronting Great Falls Road. Around 1913, they replaced the pre-1845 Ann Willson house with the substantial two-and-a-half story house that still stands at 600 Great Falls Road, in front of the subject property.

Eight years prior to the gift from her parents, on August 14, 1894, Elizabeth "Bessie" Ann Johnson had married Vernon Hill. Vernon Hill was the son of Reuben Hill Sr., a slave of the Stonestreet family and a prominent member of Rockville's 19th Century African American community. By 1902, the couple had two children, Vernon and Eustice. Bessie Hill worked as a laundress and was the church organist for Jerusalem M.E. Church. Vernon Hill was a laborer, gardening and maintaining the yards of local families. On the same day they acquired the lot from Bessie's parents, the Hills obtained a mortgage for $250 from Frank Higgins, a Rockville realtor. The mortgage apparently financed the construction of the house. 1903 tax records record the value of the house as $250. Lillian, the Hill's third child, was born in 1904. Census records and family history indicate that at times family members other than the five members of the immediate Hill family resided in the small house at 602 Great Falls Road. For example, William Johnson is said to have moved here after his wife's death in 1917 until his own death in 1945. Bessie Hill died in 1918 or 1919 and Vernon Hill in 1937. Census records indicate that the grown children also continued to reside with their father and grandfather at 602 Great Falls Road. Likely spurred by the death of their grandfather, Vernon, Eustice, Lillian and their spouses, heirs of Elizabeth ("Bessie') Hill, sold a portion of the property to Anne W. Bullard in 1945. The parcel they sold consisted of the 1902 house and a small border of yard surrounding it, encompassing only 4,800 square feet. The remainder of the original 10,275 square foot lot that Bessie Hill received from her parents in 1902 was retained by her children. That property, now known as 604 Great Falls Road, was divided into two separate lots and held two houses occupied by Lillian Hill Dove and Eustice Hill. Lillian Dove resided here until her death in 1966.[12]

Anne W. Bullard, who with her husband Dexter, lived across Great Falls Road at Rose Hill Farm and owned and operated Chestnut Lodge, may have purchased the small house at 602 Great Falls Road in the established African American community with the intent that it would serve as housing for domestic help or for laborers at the hospital. Nina Clarke, who with her husband, purchased the property at 600 Great Falls Road in 1946, recalls a number of tenants, including members of her husband's family, but does not recall that they worked for the Bullards. In 1961, Warren Stevens and Macie Teresa Stevens moved into the house at 602 Great Falls Road with their two sons. Mrs. Stevens was a beautician and worked at Rose Hill Farm as a housekeeper and cook. Prior to moving to the house, she requested that the Bullards add the dining room. By the time the Stevens family occupied the house, it had a bathroom. According to the MHT form, the bathroom addition and running water were improvements made by the Bullards after they purchased the house in 1945. Mr. And Mrs. Stevens purchased the house from the Bullard's heir

[12] According to Sharyn Hill.

in 1976. In the late 1980s, they carried out a series of exterior renovations including window replacement and the installation of vinyl siding.

Significance

Criterion 1C - Pattern of Events: Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities.

The property at 602 Great Falls Road is significant under Criterion 1C as it represents a pattern of African American settlement common to Rockville and the region in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The house represents the strong desire of African American families to provide for their families in a concrete and permanent way. In a segregated society with limited economic opportunities, it was difficult for African Americans to acquire land and to ensure that one's family had adequate housing. The desire to provide for family often resulted in the serial division of property acquired by a particularly industrious or fortunate relative. The same societal pressures relegated African American land ownership to the fringes of towns where land was cheap and less desirable. At the same time, African Americans may have welcomed the physical separation from the less-than-friendly White society. Thus, scattered African American settlements grew up outside established towns. According to the Historic Resources Management Plan:

> Within the two decades after the Civil War, five black communities had developed around Rockville: on Great Falls Road, in Lincoln Park, along Dover Road or in Avery, along Martin's Lane or Haiti, and near the center of town in an area called "Monkey Run." Many of the black residents owned their houses in these areas, but some of the property and houses still were owned by local white families that were leased to blacks.[13]

Of these five communities, only three remain – Monkey Run has been redeveloped as Town Center, and Avery can be identified archaeologically in the woods adjacent to the City's Nature Center. The Great Falls Road community is unique in that has its origins *before* the Civil War, it developed from land purchased by a free black woman and it is strongly connected to a single family, that of Ann Willson, Perhaps because it is so strongly associated with a single family, its history can be clearly traced through six successive generations of ownership and residence from 1845 to 1966.[14] This history is supported by deeds, wills, recorded oral history and by the memories of descendants who still reside here in Rockville.

At its most developed, the African American community on Great Falls Road consisted of seven lots with as many houses arrayed on approximately 2 acres. The successive subdivisions resulted in lots as small as 2,750 square feet and informal arrangements including pipestem lots and houses accessed by private lanes and perhaps even paths. The informality of the development is a characteristic shared by African American settlements of this type. The small lots, arranged one behind the other are still visible on the tax parcel map and on the ground.

[13] HRMP, p. 126.
[14] According to Sharyn Duffin, Lillian Hill Dove, daughter of Bessie Hill, was the last member of the family to reside in the community. She continued living at 604 Great Falls Road until her death in 1966.

The Bessie Hill house at 602 Great Falls Road and the houses at 600, 604 and 608 Great Falls Road are the only remaining buildings associated with the Hill family in this kinship community. The latter three were built for and occupied by Eliza Ann Johnson, Eustice Hill and Ferdinand Nugent respectively.[15] The house at 602 Great Falls Road represents the successful efforts of an African American family to house its members in a decent manner and to maintain family ties in a hostile environment.

In the opinion of Staff, the Great Falls Road community overall merits further investigation to determine whether it is eligible for nomination as an historic district. This recommendation is also stated in the *HRMP* (p.90), and such a review could be considered for the FY11 historic preservation work plan. The current review of 602 Great Falls is, however, a consideration of a single site historic district, and this is recommended by staff.

#600

#608

#604

[15] The split level colonial style house at 604 Great Falls Road was constructed by James and Katherine Twyman. According to Sharyn Duffin, they are not Hill family members. However, the partially demolished frame structure to the east of the house was the home of Eustice Hill, according to Ms. Duffin. Ferdinand Nugent was the nephew of Eliza Ann Johnson and was raised by her following her sister's death.

Criterion 1D – Has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, County, State, or Nation.

The property is significant under Criterion 1D in that it illustrates a typical, but now rare, example of small-scale vernacular housing associated with Rockville's African American community and as such helps to present a more complete and accurate picture of the history and development of the city. According to the *Historic Resources Management Plan*, it is all too easy to undervalue this type of resource:

> Undesignated resources in the black communities, such as Martin's Lane, are particularly vulnerable since these modest structures are not perceived as significant resources. Vernacular houses, structures and outbuildings which lack a specific architectural style are often evaluated as "blight," not as historic structures deserving financial incentives and protection.[16]

This modest house embodies a rich, but previously overlooked, story about a community that struggled and thrived at the edge of the city.

Criterion 2A – Architecture: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

The house at 602 Great Falls Road is also significant under Criterion 2A as an intact example of vernacular or folk housing characteristic of working class residents of Rockville at the turn of the 20th century. Although this particular house was constructed for African Americans, it is representative of the sort of housing that would have been built for both white and black families of modest means. These houses followed traditional housing forms, similar to those constructed by middle-class white families, except on an even smaller scale and with little decorative detailing. The form of the Bessie Hill house is similar to the more substantial "L" plan Victorian houses of the day. This house form was first introduced in the 1840s and remained popular with folk builders well into the 20th century. Although it is diminutive in size, the Bessie Hill house retains the verticality of its models. In its present state it has no ornamentation. It is not known whether the house originally had architectural embellishments that deteriorated or were removed in later renovations. However, this is unlikely, given the simplicity of the interior. Its original beveled and rough sawn wood siding, side porch and original wood windows would have added interest and texture now missing; these features could be restored. The interior retains its original wainscoting in the kitchen as well as an interesting wainscoted winder stair that is more typical of the early 19th century than the first decades of the 20th century. This and other aspects of the rear wing suggest that it could possibly pre-date the main block. Additional evidence may be offered by historic mapping which may show a building in this location prior to 1902. The reuse of materials and even whole buildings is a common characteristic of the vernacular building tradition. Further investigation would be required to determine if the rear wing is of earlier construction.

[16] HRMP, p. 90.

The house at 602 Great Falls Road is of particular interest as an example of vernacular housing when viewed alongside the houses at 600 and 604 Great Falls Road in the same African American kinship community. The circa 1913 house at 600 Great Falls Road, constructed by Eliza Ann Johnson, mother of Bessie Hill, is of the same vernacular form, but is considerably larger and undoubtedly exhibited more architectural ornamentation. This house reflects the same architectural traditions as the Bessie Hill house, despite having been constructed a decade later. It reflects no attempt to draw from the Colonial Revival or Craftsmen styles that were gaining popularity at the time, but is similar in quality and size to the middle-class housing constructed elsewhere in Rockville in the same period. The substantial house at 600 Great Falls Road provided a public face for the enclave. At the other end of the spectrum is the Eustice Hill house tucked well off the main road at 604 Great Falls Road. It is little more than a shack and easily mistaken for a shed. Although probably constructed in the mid-20th century, this dwelling harkens back to the "colored shanties" and "tenements" indicated on historic maps and prevalent in the historic "Monkey Run" community that existed near the town center in Rockville. These buildings were typically one story, frame, sitting on partial foundations just inches from the ground and consisting of one or two rooms. Such houses demonstrated the inability of Rockville's less fortunate residents to procure adequate housing well into the 20th Century. Viewed in this context, the modest house at 602 Great Falls Road is a fine example of working class housing of the early 20th Century.

CITY OF ROCKVILLE
HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Standing structures and sites, including archeological sites, must be determined to be significant in one or more of the following criteria to be found eligible for designation:

I. Historical and cultural significance:

A. EVENT: Is the site of a significant historic event.

No, this is not the site of a significant event.

B. PERSON: Is the site identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society.

No, this is not identified with a person or group who influenced society.

C. PATTERN OF EVENTS: Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities. (See Rockville Context in Management Plan)

Yes, *the property exemplifies the patterns of African-American settlement in the 19th century and early 20th century.*

D. Has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, County, State, or Nation.

Yes, the property illustrates a typical, but now rare, example of small scale vernacular housing associated with African Americans in Rockville.

II. Architectural and design significance:

A. ARCHITECTURE: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. *Yes, the Bessie Hill House is an intact example of vernacular housing characteristic of working-class residents of Rockville at the turn of the 20th century.*

B. ARCHITECT: Represents the work of a master. *No.*

C. ARCHITECTURE: Possesses high artistic values. *No.*

D. Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. *No, this criterion applies to multi-site historic districts only. However, the Great Falls Road African American Community could potentially be designated as a district and the subject resource would be a contributing element.*

E. Represents an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

No, the property is largely hidden from view.

III. Structural Integrity:

Original site and setting largely preserved. (Lot size, environmental character, trees, setbacks, streetscape): *The alley has been paved, and the lot size dates to 1945, when Anne Bullard purchased the subject property. The original 10,275 sf lot associated with 602 Great Falls had been subdivided by deed by the family, for the construction of two additional homes along this alley (now known as 604 Great Falls Road).*

Substantially Altered (basic shape, original façade plan, windows and doors have been obscured or changed) – Not Applicable

Minor alterations (porch removal or enclosure, roof material replacement, siding added over old siding, basic mass and fenestration intact): *A small addition was added or porch enclosed on the south side of the house to accommodate a bathroom in the mid-20th Century. The porch on the north side was enclosed for a dining room circa 1961. There is still a question about the location of the original front door, which probably would have been on the west or north side of the main block. All original windows except those in the dining room addition were been replace with modern one-over-one windows, probably in the mid- to late 1980s. Vinyl siding was added circa 1987. Further investigation is required to determine if the original wood siding remains beneath the vinyl siding.*

Original or near original condition (all changes reversible): *Double hung wood windows in an appropriate configuration could be installed. The vinyl siding could be removed and the original wood siding could be repaired (if extant) or appropriate wood siding could be re-installed.*

Outbuildings present and recognizable: *The small shed described in the MHT form is no longer extant. It was constructed after 1966. It is not known if there were other structures associated with the House.*

IV. Level of site significance: (Check those that apply)

Local: **X**
State
National:

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: *The Bessie Hill House is an intact example of vernacular housing characteristic of working-class residents of Rockville at the turn of the 20th century.*

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE: *The property exemplifies the patterns of African-American settlement in the 19th century and early20th century.*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES: *There is moderate potential for archeological resources associated with the residential occupation of the Bessie Hill house.*

M: 26/24/2

HDC2010-00481

RECEIVED
OCT 08 2009
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Historic Significance Evaluation of Property for Demolition

Property Address: 602 Great Falls Road Rockville, Md. 20850

Your Name: John B. Stevens

Are you the property owner? Yes ✓ No _____ (the current owner must authorize this action.)

If you are not the owner, please list the name and mailing address of the owner(s): *
7123 Carriage Drive Severn, Md. 21144

Your mailing address if different from above:

Daytime telephone number: 443-569-9328 Home telephone: 410-551-2713

Property Type: Single-family residence ✓ Commercial Building _____
Other _____

Year Built (if known): 1900

Architect/Builder (if known): N/A

Do you have information on the history of the property that you would be willing to share with the City's Historic Preservation staff for research purposes?

Yes ✓ No _____

If you are the property owner, do you authorize City staff to inspect and photograph the exterior of the property? Yes ✓ No _____

I hereby request that the property at 602 Great Falls Road Rockville, Md. be evaluated for local significance based on the City of Rockville's criteria of historical, cultural, architectural and/or design significance.

Signature John B. Stevens Date Oct. 8, 2009

Please return this completed form to: Historic Preservation Office, Department of Community Planning and Development Services, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20850-2364, or Fax to: 240-314-8210. Questions? Call 240-314-8230.

Office use only: Date received 10/8/09 ***Assigned to*** RDZELC

View looking North

View looking East