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 Glen Hurst
   other names

2. Location
   street & number 4933 MacArthur Boulevard
   city or town Washington
   state DC
   code 01
   county
   district of Columbia code 001
   zip code 20007

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 the property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

   Signature of certifying official/Title
   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
   State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification
   I hereby certify that this property is:
   entered in the National Register.
   determined eligible for the National Register.
   removed from the National Register.
   other (explain):

   Signature of the Keeper
   Date of Action
### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>public-State</td>
<td>structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public-Federal</td>
<td>object</td>
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**Category of Property**

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

**Number of Resources within Property**

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**Name of related multiple property listing**

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

- DOMESTIC/ Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**

- DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

- Queen Anne

**Materials**

- foundation: Sandstone
- walls: Sandstone, wood shingle
- roof: Slate
- other

**Narrative Description**

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

- [x] 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.

- [x] 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)

- Architecture
- Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance
1892-97

Significant Dates
1892

Significant Person
(Check if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Ough, Richard

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
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Name of repository:
District of Columbia Public Library, Washingtoniana Division
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  One-half acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1  1 8  3 1 8  0 5 0  4 3 0  9 8 9 0  3  
Zone  Easting  Northing  Zone  Easting  Northing

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  Judith H. Robinson, Carrie K. Schomig, Architectural Historians  
Organization  Robinson & Associates, Inc.  
date  August 30, 2004

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  P.L. Skip Singleton, Jr., and Debbie Singleton  
street & number  4933 MacArthur Boulevard  
city or town  Washington  state  DC  
 telephone  202.337.0501  
zip code  20007

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.
Description Summary:

Built ca.1892, the handsome Queen Anne-style house at 4933 MacArthur Boulevard, also known as Glen Hurst, is sited within the Palisades residential neighborhood of northwest Washington, D.C., but stands distinctly apart from the majority of its surroundings due to its much earlier architectural character. Most of the houses in the Palisades were constructed during the area’s long period of development from the 1920s through the 1960s, and display a wide variety of sizes and styles. Within this setting, Glen Hurst is clearly identified as a remnant of an earlier period, due to the architectural style of the house—one of the five original houses in the Palisades, and its distinctive setting above MacArthur Boulevard (formerly Conduit Road).

General Description:

Landscape

The picturesque appearance of the house is accentuated by its landscape setting at the top of a hill overlooking MacArthur Boulevard, surrounded by mature trees of a variety of species and shapes. The house occupies a large rectangular lot with individual residences to the north, east, and south. Along the sidewalk parallel to MacArthur Boulevard at the west side of the property, an uncoursed granite wall with grapevine pointing abuts the base of the hill on which the house rests, and turns northward at the driveway, following it along its east side. In light of the presence of similar style and shape of the granite walls along the street-front of at least one other contemporary house within the original Palisades development, the wall was possibly original to the construction of the house. Access to the property appears to have been on the north side of the lot to the rear yard, where the driveway is currently located. A 1937 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows an automobile garage located at the northeast portion of the rear yard and it is likely that the original drive connected this outbuilding with Conduit Road. The pedestrian access to the property is from the driveway, ascending up a series of artfully composed stairs and landings of stone paving (not original) to the entrance from the south piazza that is set back within the principal, west façade. While tall trees shade the west and north portions of the yard, the large rear (east) yard, in contrast, is an open, expansive grassy lawn. East of a small parking pad at the terminus of the driveway, a decorative wrought-iron fence (not original) encloses the rear yard, and separates it from densely wooded outlying properties to the north and east.

1 The name “Palisades” was not officially used until the 1950s. See Donald E. Gerrety, “Palisades: An Early Suburb of Washington,” unpublished, April 24, 1979, footnote #1.

2 The neighboring house to the west, at 4937 MacArthur, was constructed sometime in the early twentieth century. Its location near the base of the westward slope shields it visually from Glen Hurst. The neighboring house to the south, at 4933 ½ MacArthur Boulevard, was constructed within the past three years on an empty lot that had never been built on. Neither of these residences were originally associated with the house at 4933 MacArthur Boulevard and will not be evaluated as part of this nomination.


4 The 1937 Sanborn map confirms that an automobile garage once stood in this space, which remains open today.
Glen Hurst is a skillful adaptation of the Queen Anne style that was common in domestic architecture during the 1880s and 1890s. Like many houses of the style, the house is asymmetrically composed of complex cross gables, and features a variety of materials, in this case, fish-scale wood shingles and rough-cut stone. Glen Hurst’s two-and-one-half-story sandstone walls represent a rare example of full-height stone masonry in the Queen Anne style. The plan is irregular, with a strong east-west axis formed by its prominent westward projecting cross gable at the main (west) façade that faces MacArthur Boulevard and the Potomac River beyond. The open recesses of the house’s footprint allowed for three two-story, and one single-story piazza at each of the plan’s corners. The roof is a complex combination of a cross-gable with a central, hipped unit. Blue-gray Buckingham slate shingles cover the roof, with arced finials springing outward at each of the house’s five peaks. The interior of the house, which retains an outstanding degree of integrity, reflects its Queen Anne style with its tall ceilings, plaster crown moldings, and fireplace surrounds. The original floor plan of the first floor is intact, while the second floor interior walls have been altered slightly.

The exterior walls are clad in a distinctive 4-inch-thick, rough-cut, buff-colored sandstone, set upon a sandstone masonry foundation. The stone veneer is composed of random-coursed ashlar masonry of blocks ranging from 10” to 13” high and 15” to 30” wide, with grapevine-jointed mortar. The interior composition of the walls is unknown, but during repairs, an exposed section of the wall revealed stone rubble, which may be consistent throughout, thereby being set upon a timber frame behind the sandstone veneer. The foundation widens slightly with a chamfered edge at the water table, blending nearly seamlessly with the sandstone cladding. Walls display a variety of architectural forms consisting of intersecting gables, two-story piazzas, projecting bays, an oriel, and dormers. The fenestration is comprised of rectangular openings in a variety of sizes, which, in several places, are juxtaposed with elliptical and semicircular arched windows.

There have been few alterations to the house over its one hundred-year history. Building and repair permits, maps, and an undated historic photograph reveal that architectural changes primarily occurred to the piazzas. In 1902, a building permit and the historic photograph show that the first stories of the two rear piazzas were enclosed. These two piazzas have since been restored to their original open-air form (date unknown). A 1936 Sanborn map also shows that a first-story porch (most likely original) was attached across the front (west façade) of the house from the northeast and northwest piazzas. At an unknown point (post 1936), this front porch was removed, retaining the two side piazzas, and resulting in a slight redirection of the circulation to the house’s main entrance, changing it from the former steps at the south end of the piazza to the present steps at the front (west) side. At an unknown point, the original two-story southwest piazza was reduced to a single-story piazza and covered by a shed roof. It is possible that a second-story access to the second floor has been patched. Finally, the historic photograph reveals that the northeast and southeast piazzas, as seen on the south façade, each featured a decorative wood arch between the two inner piers, capped with either a frame or lattice-enclosed spandrel. These two arches are no longer extant. Aside from the piazzas, there are no enclosed additions attached to the exterior walls of the building and the walls retain their original form.

West (Principal) Façade

The principal façade is defined by three primary elements: a dominant front-facing projecting gable, a two-story piazza, and, at the opposite side, a single-story piazza at the house’s main entrance. Additionally, the house’s buff-colored sandstone veneer continues from the second-story façade up to the peak of the projecting gable.
The façade’s central projecting gable is set on a raised foundation, pierced by one central bay at each story. The central section of this façade projects slightly forward 2 feet, 30 inches from the sides, giving the central facade a layered, vertical emphasis. The first-floor fenestration features a large tripartite window divided by a large plate-glass window flanked by narrow, 1/1 double-hung windows that are delineated by bracketed wood mullions. This ensemble is topped by a wide, elliptical transom light featuring a dentiled mutonion along its base. The second-story bay holds two 1/1 double-hung windows, separated by bracketed decorative mullions, and capped by rectangular transom lights. At the top of the second story, a thin wood cornice supported by decorative brackets delineates the two-story sandstone veneer wall from the fish-scale wood shingles covering the exterior of the gabled attic story. The attic walls consists of two small double-hung windows capped by a triangular projection at the gable’s peak with an overhang ornamented by thin wood brackets running between the gable’s eaves.

To the north and south of the central cross gable, the west façade is set back to allow for two open-air frame piazzas. Both piazzas run along the north and south walls at a length of approximately twice their depth, filling the voids created by the west-facing gabled projection from the central block of the house. Low, spindled balustrades divided by three separate Tuscan columns sit upon paneled pedestals that rise to the height of the railing enclosing the piazzas. The two-story northwest piazza is set upon concrete formstone piers, and is capped by a shed roof attached to the central cross gable. At the end of the piazza, a beam bridging the columns encloses vertical latticework beneath the roof’s pitch. The southwest piazza is one story (not original), leading to the main entrance of the house. While the west end of the piazza is open to allow for a low series of wood-plank steps at its entrance, the south end of the piazza is enclosed by a similarly spindled balustrade and three, evenly spaced supporting columns raised on paneled pedestals. The ceiling consists of bead-boarding (not original) capped by a shed roof attached to the south facade. Vertical latticework identical to that of the northwest piazza encloses the space above the supporting beam at the west end of the roof.

North Façade

The north façade is asymmetrically composed, framed by its two two-story piazzas at each end flanking a large sandstone-veneered exterior at the center. The first- and second-story piazzas at the west end of the façade are each accessed by a tall “Jefferson door.”5 Above the piazza’s shed roof, a tall, tapered chimney of sandstone masonry rises from the slope of the gabled roof beyond.

Toward the center of the north façade, a five-sided tower rises from the foundation to the attic story, clad in sandstone up to a flared dentilated cornice, with a shingled attic story. Three of the tower’s outer walls are pierced by large, 1/1 double-hung windows measuring 8’ x 4’. The tower is capped by a geometrically patterned frieze and a pentagonal roof crowned with a tall, knobbed finial at its apex. A shed dormer projects from the hipped roof, attached to the east wall of the tower. The dormer’s east wall is clad in slate shingles to match the roof, and carries a double-window of 1/1 double-hung windows below an open eave.

5 The “Jefferson door” is a full-height glass jib door (approximately 6 feet tall) with a transom light above. The door opens by sliding vertically above the transom and into a pocket set within the ceiling.
East of the tower, one bay pierces the sandstone wall with rectangular, 1/1 double-hung fenestration at the first and second stories. Farther eastward, a cross-gable projects from the house’s central block, extending the north façade eastward by one, recessed bay. This section is enclosed by a two-story piazza that projects flush with the adjacent walls of the north façade. The second story is pierced by a tall, rectangular window opening, while the first-story bay houses a doorway to the piazza and a low, wood deck attached to the rear of the house (not original). Thin square piers support the piazza’s hipped roof, which is set lower than the house’s main hipped or cross-gable roofs. Low, geometrically patterned balustrades enclose the piazzas at both stories.

**East (Rear) Façade**

The east (rear) façade is symmetrically composed of a central two-and-one-half story cross gable, balanced by identical two-story piazzas at its north and south ends. The gabled projection dominates the composition, composed of two separate tall rectangular, plate-glass windows (not original) at the first story, one central long window at the second story, and a smaller arched window piercing the third story. The gabled roof is simply treated, adorned by arced finials matching those of the other gable peaks. The north and south piazzas feature the same low, geometric balustrades and separate hipped roofs, set lower than the main roof. Between the two stories of each piazza, a wood beam ornamented by a paneled frieze meets the central gabled wall, supported by an ornate scrolled bracket and pendant. Behind the northeast and southeast piazzas, the recessed walls of the north end of the east façade remain solid, while the first story of the south end is pierced with a single door accessing the southeast piazza and the low, wood deck (not original) attached unobtrusively to the rear of the house.

**South Façade**

The south façade is asymmetrically organized, displaying an active variety of architectural features commonly used in the Queen Anne style. The east end of the façade continues the two-story southeast piazza, whose depth is roughly flush with the cross-gable façade. Behind the piazza enclosure, the stone façade is solid at the first floor, and is pierced by one 1/1 double-hung long window at the second story. Near the center of the south façade, a cross gable is flanked by a slightly recessed wall to the west, displaying asymmetrical fenestration, including a decorative oriel bay. The gabled, one-bay projection is clad in sandstone veneer from the foundation to the gable peak. It features graduated fenestration characterized by the largest, rectangular 1/1 double-hung window at the first story, followed by a smaller similar windows at the second story, and the smallest window at the attic story with a semicircular arch top. Wide fenestration at the raised basement pierces the foundation walls. The narrow, west-facing wall created by the slightly projecting gable holds one diminutive rectangular window at the second floor.

The west half of the south façade is divided into a three bays, in addition to a dormer and an oriel capped by a shingled pediment. Two rectangular 1/1 double-hung windows pierce the wall at the first and second stories, while the center of the wall exhibits large, arched 1/1 double-hung windows crowned by sandstone voussoirs matching the exterior cladding. A gabled dormer with two double-hung windows and a wood-shingled gable end extends from the roof with slate-shingled cladding on its projecting walls. Near the west end of the south façade, a three-sided oriel bay clad in fish-scale wood shingles projects from the second story, featuring a dentilated molding at its base and a geometric frieze at its cornice. One rectangular, 1/1 double-hung window pierces the south façade of the oriel. A triangular pediment overhangs the oriel, framed by moldings cornice supported by scrolled brackets; it is clad in fish-scale wood shingles that curve into a recessed window at the center of the gable.
The west end of the south façade is composed of the one-story entrance piazza with the two-and-one-half-story westward-projecting cross-gable behind it. The wall’s stone veneer is uninterrupted. The piazza and its shed roof extend flush with the principal wall of the south facade.
Summary Statement of Significance:

The stone residence at 4933 MacArthur Boulevard, known as Glen Hurst, was one of the first houses built in the present-day Palisades neighborhood; it was built by John C. Hurst, one of the original promoters of the early Palisades subdivision in the 1890s. Glen Hurst is an intact vestige of a late nineteenth-century transitional period of the development between 1890 and 1897 in western outreaches of Washington, D.C., along the north bank of the Potomac River. Most likely designed around 1892 by architect Richard Ough, Glen Hurst represents the leading edge of speculative residential development of the Palisades neighborhood—when the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company sought to transform the rural farmland into a bucolic and elegant exurban neighborhood for prominent city residents. Working alongside the Palisades company, Hurst and his associates built their own grand homes within their new subdivision in an effort to generate interest in the area. Glen Hurst meets National Register Criterion A, as an unusual survivor of this brief period of early suburban development in the District of Columbia, and Criterion C, as a building exhibiting a high degree of the distinctive architectural characteristics of the Queen Anne style. The house and its landscape provides formidable insight into the development of the city of Washington and the late nineteenth century’s evolving real estate trends, and is an example of Hurst’s vision for the residential neighborhood he sought to develop.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Suburban Context

The area known as the Palisades forms a triangular contour within the western quadrant of Washington, D.C., covering seven miles of land bounded by Little Falls Parkway, Foxhall Road, and the C & O Canal. In the early to mid-nineteenth century, the land was primarily divided into small dairy farms. By the outbreak of the Civil War, the area had become an established truck-farming community clustered along a network of roads: Canal, Loughboro, and Ridge (now Foxhall), leading south and east toward Reservoir Road and the Georgetown market. The roads created a roughly triangular area, with the Chain Bridge Road serving as a major interior route with connections to Virginia via Chain Bridge.

The Civil War caused important physical and social changes in the Palisades. By 1863, military engineers had built a new chain bridge across the Potomac, improved county roads, opened the aqueduct, and constructed Conduit Road (renamed MacArthur Boulevard after World War II). Conduit Road is part of the original road that opened in 1863 following the U.S. government’s construction of the Washington Aqueduct. The troops at Battery Kemble provided protection to escaped slaves and freedmen, permitting them to occupy lands on the Murdock property near the artillery placement. By 1878, Hopkins’ real estate map illustrated a changed landscape that included a cluster of new small farms west of Chain Bridge Road (Figure 1).

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6 The name “Palisades” was not officially used until the 1950s. See Donald E. Gerrety, “Palisades: An Early Suburb of Washington,” unpublished, April 24, 1979, footnote #1.

7 Gerrety, 3.
For several decades both during and following the Civil War, Washington, D.C., experienced booming population growth largely built on the war effort and the rapid expansion of the federal government. The beauty of the landscape, the cool summer climate of the heights along the Potomac, the recreational advantages of the river, and the planned construction of the Washington Traction and Electric Company’s line from Georgetown to Cabin John Bridge in Maryland were all perceived as attractive inducements for a major real estate investment in the Palisades by 1890. Summer resorts and recreational facilities were already opening along the planned route including Glen Echo amusement park and the 76-acre Athletic Park and Amusement Company just inside the District line. Conduit Road became a popular riding route for wheelmen riding out to the bicycle racing track at the Athletic Park.8

Between 1887 and 1892, Washington, D.C., became part of the nationwide real estate boom. Speculative builders backed by investment companies began to plat residential subdivisions at the edges of urban areas along riverfronts and railroad lines, hoping to create bucolic outcroppings for the wealthiest city residents. During the first few years, land values increased steadily as real estate speculators sought to capitalize on the widespread interest of building large-scale suburbs.9 Along the Potomac riverfront, the first of several small subdivisions northwest from Georgetown along Conduit Road, named Harlem, was planned at the western triangular area created by the intersection of Foxhall, New Cut (Reservoir), and Conduit roads. Two smaller subdivisions were also created nearby: Senate Heights and “Clark and Hurst’s Subdivision,” situated along Conduit Road due south of the distributing reservoir.10

The most ambitious campaign to develop a planned streetcar suburb in the area was launched by the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company, which had been incorporated in 1890. The company aimed to the “purchase, holding, subdividing, improvement and sale of the land lying on either side of the Potomac River between the City of Washington, in the District of Columbia and Great Falls of the Potomac.”11 The company never owned property in Virginia as they had planned, but purchased and subdivided four large areas following Conduit Road, adjacent to the C & O canal. Most of these tracts of land were farmland, including a large tract owned by Charles Weaver and his heirs, which would become part of the site for the Palisades Subdivision No. 1.12

The company was comprised of investors, headed by Stilson Hutchins, the founder of the Washington Post in 1877, along with Jacob P. Clark, who served as Vice President during most of the company’s seven-year tenure. On October 20, 1890, the Washington Post printed the following article describing the new development.

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10 Gerrety, 8.

11 Brochure of the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Co., August 1894, 1418 New York Avenue, Washington, D.C., as quoted in Gerrety, 8.

12 G.M. Hopkins, Real Estate Plat-Book of Washington, 1878 and 1887.
The syndicate which during the last summer and spring purchased the larger portion of the lands on the Conduit Road between the distributing reservoir at Georgetown and the District line, and have since been busily employed in platting a portion of their tracts, and grading the streets, are now offering a number of lots to the public. The improvements made are already attracting a good deal of attention, and there can be no doubt that this will soon be one of the most desirable sections of suburban Washington. The announcement of the formation of a company with Mr. Stilson Hutchins at the head of it, and the plan on which the property is to be offered to the public, will be found in the present issue of The Post.\textsuperscript{13}

Accompanying this announcement, the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company’s promotion began with the printing of a handsome color advertising poster for a new suburb to be known as “Palisades of the Potomac” (Figure 2). The vivid advertisement featured a map at its center, depicting Subdivision No.1, bounded by U, V, W, Ashby, 49\textsuperscript{th} and 50\textsuperscript{th} streets (Figure 3). The poster listed the local attractions to the area, including its river view with boundaries “adjoining Washington and Extending along the Potomac River on Both Sides of the Conduit Road for Five Miles to the Little Falls.”\textsuperscript{14} Prominently located to the northeast of the new subdivision was Conduit Road School, reconstructed in 1874, which may have influenced the location of the first plat for the new suburb. Surrounding the map of Subdivision No.1 were engraved views of the region depicting the natural beauty of the Palisades from the Potomac and nearby attractions and amenities including Cabin John Bridge, Conduit Road, Glen Echo, Georgetown and National Methodist Universities (now American University), and a Queen Anne-style home, labeled as the summer residence of Palisades investor Stilson Hutchins (no longer extant).\textsuperscript{15}

The Palisades of the Potomac’s poster boasted the “salubrity and health” of the climate and that the suburb was destined to become the most desirable in Washington, D.C. Promotional literature in 1897 featured Conduit Road as a major reason for building a house in the community, citing the road as the “popular carriage and bicycle boulevard of Washington” and noting that the thoroughfare was macadamized and kept in “perfect repair” by the federal government. Winding through the Palisades, Conduit Road, the promoters assured, was “one of the most picturesque and exhilarating drives in the country.”\textsuperscript{16}

Through the promotions of the Potomac Palisades Land Company and the efforts of real estate broker John C. Hurst and architect Richard Ough, by 1895, five large Queen Anne homes (including one duplex) had been built on lots within Subdivision No. 1 (Figure 4). Two of these homes were each built for and inhabited by Hurst and Ough. It is probable that the building of these homes were Hurst and Ough’s effort to provide a catalyst for area development. The precedent


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

for these houses was likely set by Stilson Hutchins’ summer residence, a stately Queen Anne depicted on the 1890 promotional poster for the Palisades of the Potomac. Altogether, the five houses express stylistic continuity for the new upscale neighborhood, revealing the Hurst and the Palisades company’s vision of a genteel exurban community. By using Ough’s services as an in-house company architect, the houses’ refined Queen-Anne architectural style aimed to set a precedent to affluent potential buyers interested in the Palisades.17

In addition to establishing housing, the Palisades promoters proposed to build a summer resort in an effort to establish the neighborhood’s appeal as an airy escape for the well-off. By 1893, Ough had drawn plans for a luxurious hotel, named “Victoria,” to be located within the Palisades and become “one of the finest summer resort hotels to be found in this section.” The Palisades group’s commercial ambitions for this venture, however, never materialized.18

By 1894, the Palisades Land Improvement Company had acquired 357 acres of land divided into four subdivisions (Figures 5, 6). Shortly after Subdivision No. 1 was platted, plans came underway to establish four additional subdivisions along Conduit Road, each bearing the name “Palisades of the Potomac.” Subdivision No. 2 offered slightly smaller lots along Hutchins Place, located in a small area west of Conduit Road, north of the reservoir. Subdivision No. 3 offered properties farther north, between Sherrier Place and Conduit Road. Despite plans to market five subdivisions, Subdivision No. 4 became the last section attempted by the Palisades. Situated between Conduit Road and Little Falls Road, No. 4 was the largest subdivision undertaken. Altogether, the four regions extended the Palisades conglomerate along Conduit Road between the reservoir and the District line.

In 1892, an Act of Congress approved the Washington and Great Falls Electric Railway that passed through the Palisades, holding the promise of bringing real estate sales to the area. The line was completed in 1895, connecting 36th Street in Georgetown to Glen Echo, just across the District line, following the Washington Aqueduct along the Potomac. In order to complete the line beyond the District boundary, Jacob Clark and Lee Hutchins, Stilson Hutchins’ son, took the initiative to form the West Washington and Great Falls Electric Railway in 1895 to fully extend the route to Glen Echo. If Clark and Hutchins were hoping that their investment would attract commuters from downtown Washington to the Palisades, their anticipations probably soured when the early rail-line operations strained along the route, operating at a loss in its first three years. In spite of attempts to streamline the service to increase efficiency, the viability of the Georgetown-Glen Echo line floundered until it was overtaken by a new company around 1902.19

By the time the electric rail became a successful and efficient means of transportation to and from the Palisades, however, it was too late for John C. Hurst and the Palisades Land Improvement Company to benefit from the service. The real

17 It is supposition that Ough served in an in-house capacity, both because he shared an office with J.C. Hurst in 1892, and with the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company in 1893 and 1894, and because of the number of houses he designed for the Palisades. See William H. Boyd, Boyd’s Directory of the District of Columbia, 1888-1901.


estate excitement during the 1880s was short-lived. Just as the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company got underway, by 1891 construction in Washington was decelerating, and all but ceased with the crash of 1893. The building slump continued over the following five years. It was exceptional, for example, that the Chevy Chase Land Company, led by millionaire Senator Francis G. Newlands, survived the recession, relying on Newlands' personal fortune and banking connections to keep his vast real estate development plans afloat through the 1890s. However, few developers, including the Palisades directors, possessed Newlands' deep financial resources to allow them to weather the economic downtown. By the mid-1890s, the lack of sales, and the national economic crises dimmed the prospects of the widespread transformation that the Palisades investors hoped for. By 1897, in wake of a damaging company lawsuit and slumping sales, the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company went bankrupt and the remaining lots were sold un-built.

After the lull in construction at the close of the nineteenth century, the pace of residential development of Palisades, like Burleith, Wesley Heights, and Spring Valley, gradually accelerated in the early decades of the twentieth century. The long-awaited success of the electric car line to Glen Echo helped spur this development along Conduit Road after 1902. Additionally, by 1900, the trolley line, completed to Glen Echo, afforded spectacular views of the river and was a popular excursion into the Palisades for Washingtonians. Real estate became an attractive enterprise once again. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Pacific Heights Land Company opened to sell off the open parcels of land south of Conduit and Sherrier Roads.21

One impetus for the growing affordability of the automobile suburbs was that the federal government underwent a major expansion in the 1920s and 1930s, greatly increasing the city's middle-class population. During this period, many of the empty lots surrounding the five original Queen Anne houses of the 1890s were developed with homes in a variety of sizes and styles. In contrast with Glen Hurst and its contemporaries, many of these new homes were modest, some apparently from plans ordered from the Sears & Roebuck catalog. Post-World War II construction in the Palisades quickly filled in the remaining lots amid the "hilly, long dormant lands and created showplaces of suburban beauty."22 By the 1950s, the neighborhood began to assume its current, eclectic appearance.

Promoters of the Palisades: Clark, Hurst, and Ough

Building permits and city directories reveal three key people who played prominent roles in the early effort to develop the Palisades of the Potomac subdivisions. They were Jacob P. Clark, the Vice President (and later, President) of the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company; John C. Hurst, a real estate broker devoted to the Palisades development; and Richard Ough, an architect. Clark and Hurst had arrived in Washington, D.C., from the north—Canada—as many developers moved southward seeking wealth during the 1880-1890 speculative boom.23 Previous

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20 Chevy Chase Land Company, which created Chevy Chase, a highly planned, largely post-Victorian streetcar suburb, continues in existence today. See T.H.S. Boyd, History of Montgomery County, 209, and the Chevy Chase Historical Archives.


22 Ibid.

23 Boyd, 209.
histories claim that Clark and Hurst arrived to Washington, D.C., sometime during the late 1880s. Although Washington, D.C., city directories first list their presence in 1891, this does not necessarily preclude their presence before this date. Shortly before investing in the Palisades venture, together Clark and Hurst began the small, aforementioned subdivision by their same name, located due south of the distributing reservoir, below Conduit Road. The success of this early subdivision is unknown, and, based on visual and map analysis, no structures dating from this period remain in the Hurst and Clark Subdivision. By 1890, the two men were involved in the larger Palisades business venture further north along Conduit Road.

In 1890, the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company was formed, led by financier Stilson Hutchins, who had retired from his founding position at the Washington Post in 1889, and likely became involved with the real estate venture because his summer house was located within the Palisades area. Including Hutchins, the company was lead by six directors: E.B. Cottrell, Secretary and Treasurer; Dr. J.O. Stanton; Jacob P. Clark, Vice President; A.S. Worthington, Solicitor; and Samuel G. Morsell. In addition to serving as vice president, Clark was also named a trustee for the company, as many of the directors provided capital investments. The first lots for sale were located in Palisades’ Subdivision No. 1, which was divided into 237 lots along streets that were graded to be 90-feet wide.

Although John C. Hurst was not included as one of the directors of the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company, property assessments, real estate transfers, and building permits definitively reveal that Hurst held an important role in serving as the real estate broker of the subdivision. Many of the properties were listed in Hurst’s name, and, additionally, he was charged with the task of selling the properties. Architect Richard Ough actively participated in the early development of the subdivision, providing architectural plans for the design of the first five houses of the Palisades. A building permit dated August 7, 1891, names Ough as the architect for a house located within the Palisades along Conduit Road. The permit describes a two-and-one-half-story frame house atop a stone foundation, with a steep roof covered in slate shingles. That same day, Ough applied for a building permit to construct his own house, also located along Conduit Road. Ough listed himself as both owner and architect, employing William A. Vaughn as the builder, who is named on both permits. Ough’s home, located at 4898 MacArthur Boulevard (Conduit Road), was constructed of brick at the first story with frame above. Both homes are still extant, and, although altered to varying degrees, continue to display Ough’s adaptive Free Classic mode of the Queen Anne style that was popular during the 1890s. While city directories confirm the residence of Ough along Conduit Road from 1892 until 1894, at the earliest, the listings indicate that the owner of the frame residence, another architect, lived elsewhere. The following year, on October 18, 1892, in an

25 Ibid.
27 Although the block and lot number are not included on the permit, the materials and location of the property place it as the current building at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard. See “Application for Permit to Build Brick and Stone,” August 7, 1891, No. 298, from the National Archives.
28 See “Application for Permit to Build Brick and Stone,” August 7, 1891, No. 297, from the National Archives.
effort to spur the slow sales, real estate broker John C. Hurst applied to the city to construct a large two-and-one-half-story duplex to be designed by Ough, located on 49th Street within Subdivision No.1, one block north of Conduit Road.  

In 1892, Hurst and Clark followed Ough’s lead and began building residences of their own within the vicinity of the Palisades in which they each had invested their financial and professional interests. Through this initiative, Hurst, Clark, and Ough promoted their development by building their homes as an example of the refined and bucolic lifestyle they espoused in their promotional poster. Located at the intersection of Conduit and New Cut Road (today called Reservoir Road), by 1893, Clark had completed a large, high-style castellated Gothic Revival edifice clad in red sandstone, replete with pinnacles, towers, and battlements. The location of Clark’s home was just outside of the boundaries of Subdivision No. 1, farther south along Conduit Road, but within close proximity to the Potomac Palisades subdivisions.

Construction of Glen Hurst

As Clark’s home was reaching completion, in 1892, John C. Hurst’s imposing stone residence, named Glen Hurst, was being erected on a hill at the northwest end of Subdivision No. 1. The construction date is suggested by the 1893 Washington, D.C., city directory that lists both Clark and Hurst’s residences along Conduit Road for the first time that year, indicating that each of the men moved to the Palisades sometime during 1892. After an extensive search for Hurst’s building permit, none was found. However, based on Richard Ough’s involvement as architect for at least three of the five early structures within Subdivision No.1, and taking into account the similar architectural character of the houses constructed during the early 1890s, it is highly probable that Ough designed Hurst’s residence as well. Hurst chose to build the house on a site atop a hill overlooking Conduit Road, next to a wooded ravine to the west of the property, running parallel to the Chain Bridge Road. Hurst named his estate “Glen Hurst,” and had this title included in the 1895 city directory.

Glen Hurst and its contemporary neighbors embody the characteristics of the rural suburban ideal and the reigning domestic style of the period. Under the direction of Richard Ough, all of the five houses constructed during the beginning of the Palisades establishment were executed in the Queen Anne style, complete with two-story porches and tall, projecting gables and bays. Additionally, there was stylistic attention given to common landscape features of four of the five houses, notably, Glen Hurst, 4827 V St., 2227 49th St., and 4925 MacArthur Boulevard. Each of these homes still possesses a fieldstone wall that frames the properties along their street-side sidewalks.

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29 This house continues to stand in the Palisades, located at 2227 49th Street.

30 Although no building permit was found for Clark’s home, a 1892 article in the Washington Post noted the completion of “Mr. Clark’s handsome residence near Glen Echo.” “Neighborhood News: Georgetown,” The Washington Post, 26 February 1892, p. 6.

31 Due to the incomplete set of building permits from the 1890s housed at the National Archives, not all building permits for the early houses in the Palisades are available for research. Three of the five permits for the Queen Anne houses within Subdivision No. 1 were found, but none of these were for the Glen Hurst property.
Despite the common similarities in style and massing among the early Queen Anne Palisades houses, Glen Hurst is distinguished from them for its use of light brown sandstone cladding covering the first two stories of the two-and-one-half-story house. Across the street from Glen Hurst, Ough's own residence featured brick masonry for the first-floor exterior, and a red sandstone façade for the house's central bay. Clark also chose a deep red sandstone for the exterior of his castellated residence. 32 The beige color of the stone used at Glen Hurst made the house stand out in the neighborhood. Although it is possible that this light sandstone was quarried from another remote location such as southern Ohio, which holds some of the largest sandstone quarries in the country, the stone may have been extracted from a quarry immediately adjacent to the location of the house, as seen labeled on a real estate map in 1887 (Figure 7). 33

In the midst of the national economic depression in the mid-1890s, financial difficulties befell on John C. Hurst and the Potomac Palisades Land Improvement Company. In 1894, Hurst sought an injunction to stop the Imperial Bank of Canada, Toronto, from suing him for his lapse of payments on a loan secured in 1891—money that Hurst had used to purchase properties in the Palisades. 34 In 1897, the Palisades Land Improvement Company was sued for $10,500. 35 The year 1897 provided to be a particularly difficult year for Hurst with the folding of the Palisades development company, and, additionally, the death of his wife from illness that same year. 36 Hurst was last listed in the Washington, D.C., city directory in 1898. In light of this omission, it is likely that Hurst left Washington sometime around this year. His whereabouts thereafter are unknown.

After Hurst's departure, Clinton Smith and his wife acquired Glen Hurst by 1902, renaming the Palisades villa "Smithholm." 37 A 1902 building permit documents Smith's plans to enclose the first stories of the two rear porches. 38 In his hand-written letter to the Inspector of Buildings, Smith notes that the house does not have a street number, stating that the houses in his neighborhood are "few and far between," and that his home was built by "a Mr. Hearst [sic]," and known as "Glen Hearst [sic]." Smith notes on his application that the enclosed porches were to be used as temporary rooms until an addition could be built. Although there is no evidence that Smith's "addition" was carried out, an early photograph (undated) confirms that Smith enclosed the porches without altering the arches that are seen present in both the front and

32 It is likely that this red sandstone came from the plentiful quarry of the rock in Seneca, Maryland, in northern Montgomery County.

33 In 1881, the Smithsonian Arts and Industries Building was constructed using both red brick and beige Ohio sandstone. This poses the possibility the same sandstone could have been used for Glen Hurst.


38 "Application for Permit for Repairs, Alterations, &c.," March 20, 1902, No. 1366 ½.
rear lower porches (Figure 8). This photograph also reveals that the house originally had a one-story front porch that extended across the front projecting gable, meeting the two two-story porches at the southeast and southwestern corners of the house. The entrance to the porch, was accessed by a short stair at the south side of the porch. A 1937 Sanborn Fire Insurance map indicates that this front porch remained attached to the home at that time (Figure 9). It is not known when this front portion of the porch was removed. The 1-story porch’s subtraction relocated the entrance to porch from the west side of the southwest porch.

In 1902, Clinton Smith also submitted a building permit for repairs to the frame stable on his property. Clinton Smith died in 1905, and it is probable that shortly thereafter the house was sold to John Elliot Bryarly, who, in 1909, constructed an automobile garage on the rear yard of the property. The 1937 Sanborn map depicts this garage as a rectangular two-story structure behind the house. The building permit in 1958 by resident owner Colonel John P. Duke indicates intentions to place an addition to the house; however, this structure is no longer extant (and may have never been built).

Architect Richard Ough

Richard Ough played an important role in designing buildings for several early subdivisions in the vicinity of the District of Columbia and Maryland. Outside of the Palisades, Ough is noted for his involvement in the designs of housing in the Somerset neighborhood of Chevy Chase, Maryland, and in Friendship Heights, Bethesda, Maryland. Along with his son, William A. Ough, Richard Ough is credited with designing both commercial and residential buildings in Georgetown and Tenleytown in Washington, D.C.

When Richard Ough was employed by the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company, he resided at his home on Conduit Road in 1893 and 1894. After this, the D.C. City directory lists only one address for Ough, at 1613 Florida Avenue, without specification as to whether the address is his office or that of a new residence. From 1897 until 1900, Ough’s name is omitted from the directory, only to return appear again in 1901, with his profession stated as “builder,” located in Tenleytown. In this year, Ough is joined by his son, William, under a separate address. By 1904, the newly listed “Richard Ough Co.” is listed in the real estate section. Neither his name nor his company appear in the subsequent years. In her memoirs, Anne Garrett Ferneyhough Sheiry, a former Friendship Heights resident, recalled that, in 1903,

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39 The two arches, ostensibly of wood framing, are no longer extant.


41 “Application for Permit for Repairs, Alterations, &c.,” March 20, 1902, No. 1388.

42 “Application for Permit for Repairs, Alterations, &c.,” July 17, 1909, No. 326.


Ough was the builder of most of the homes in the Friendship Heights neighborhood. She also remembered that the Ough family lived in Friendship Heights for a short term before eventually leaving the Maryland and D.C. area to relocate to California.\(^{46}\) After an extensive search in directories and census and death records, a final destination for Ough and his son, William, could not be determined.

Richard Ough served as the chief architect for speculative builders in the Friendship Heights and Somerset neighborhoods of Bethesda, Maryland, located just beyond the Northwest border of D.C. Ough’s designs in Friendship Heights consisted of middle class two- and three-bay houses that utilized the Colonial Revival style that was popular for domestic architecture at the time. In Somerset, Ough designed four squares as well as larger houses featuring corner towers and wrap-around porches, built by speculators Miles Fuller and Richard Halliday, among others.\(^{47}\) A historic photograph depicts a house which is believed to be the Ough family house, is built in a Free Classic mode of the Queen Anne style, replete with octagonal tower and wrap-around porch (Figure 10). The style and massing of the Ough house matches Ough’s designs for the Palisades homes, suggesting his penchant for the Queen Anne style into the 1900s. In the scope of this career in Washington, D.C., and Bethesda, Ough’s involvement with John C. Hurst and the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company constitutes the early part of Ough’s career—at a time when his designs for houses in the fashionable 1890s Queen Anne style demonstrated the high end of his stylistic output.

Conclusion

Over the course of the twentieth century, the Palisades neighborhood has undergone numerous changes as the lots surrounding the original houses of Palisades Subdivision No. 1 became developed with a wide variety of single-family dwellings. The five Queen Anne residences from the 1890s, including Glen Hurst, stand out in their environs as vestiges of their early speculative period of development. After over 100 years, the bucolic setting surrounding these structures, along with their distinctive architectural style, have been retained and serve as physical reminders of the aspirations held by John C. Hurst, Richard Ough, and the directors Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company. Visual analysis reveals that only three of the buildings, including Glen Hurst, have retained a high degree of historic integrity, making these dwellings even more of a rarity. (The nearby summer residence owned by Stilson Hutchins, financier and President of the Potomac Palisades Land Improvement Company, which appeared on the company’s promotional poster, has since been lost to demolition.\(^{48}\) Moreover, Glen Hurst stands apart from the other two contemporary, Queen Anne-style houses that have retained their integrity due to its key location within the Palisades, on a prominent site along MacArthur Boulevard—the principal thoroughfare through the neighborhood. The house’s visibility at this location, combined with its outstanding architectural integrity, represents the setting and feeling of the late-nineteenth-century history of Glen Hurst and the Palisades to an exceptional degree within the neighborhood. Through careful stewardship and meticulous restoration over the past century, John C. Hurst’s Glen Hurst remains an outstanding survivor of the Palisades earliest development.

\(^{46}\) Offutt, 219.


\(^{48}\) Harold Gray and Ruth Hall, n.p. The Defense Mapping Agency’s Brookmont Plant now occupies the site of Stilson Hutchins’ residence.
Figure 1. In 1878, the areas to the east and west of Conduit Road, shown at the center of the map, was established farmland. The circled area would later become the location of Glen Hurst. 

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12

Glen Hurst
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Figure 2. This promotional poster, published in 1890, exuberantly depicts the natural and cultural resources surrounding Palisades Subdivision No. 1, shown at the center. “Palisades of the Potomac,” (Washington: H. W. Brewer, 1890). Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress. [G3852 .P64G46]
Figure 3. This map depicts the Palisades of the Potomac Subdivision No. 1. The future site of Glen Hurst, on lots 10 and 11 of block 8, is shown circled above.
Figure 4. The five houses encircled on this 1903 map are the five original houses of Palisade of the Potomac, Subdivision No. 1. Glen Hurst is the property at the top of the page.
Baist Map, 1903. From the Washingtoniana Collection of the Washington, DC, Public Library.
Figure 5. This map (undated) of the Palisades depicts the shaded areas indicating proposed development in the 1890s.
Palisades Vertical File, Washingtoniana Division of the District of Columbia Public Library.
Figure 6. The four subdivisions of the Palisades are depicted on this ca.1890s map (undated), with Subdivision No. 1 shown at the center. Vertical Files, Robinson & Associates.
Figure 7. The local quarry is circled on the left on this 1887 map. The circle on the right shows the approximate area where Glen Hurst would be constructed about five years later. Hopkins Real Estate Plat-Book of Washington, 1887, Vol. 3, Plat 13. From the Washingtoniana Division of the District of Columbia Public Library.
Figure 8. This historic photograph (undated) shows the former front porch, rear piazza enclosure and the piazza arches. From the collection of Skip and Debbie Singleton.
Figure 9. This 1937 map shows each of the four piazzas as two-story structures, with an additional one-story porch across the front of the house.

Figure 10. The “Ough House” in Friendship Heights in Bethesda, Maryland, is believed to have been designed and occupied by architect Richard Ough, the architect of the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company. 

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet  

Glen Hurst  
Name of Property  

Washington, DC  
County and State  

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Vertical files, Washingtoniana Division, District of Columbia Public Library.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 2
Washington, DC

Newspaper Articles


“Gave a Surprise Picnic,” The Washington Post, June 20, 1902, pg. 9.


Maps


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Glen Hurst
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Section 9 Page 3


Directories


Building and Repair Permits

“Application for Permit to Build,” Aug. 7, 1891, No. 297.

“Application for Permit to Build,” Aug. 7, 1891, No. 298.

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Websites


Interviews

Phone interview with Alice Stewart of the *Palisades Citizen Association*, June 23, 2004.
Glen Hurst
4933 MacArthur Boulevard, NW

Photographer: Carrie Schomig

1 West façade, looking east
2 View to southeast
3 Detail of oriel, looking northwest
4 View to southwest
5 East elevation, looking west
6 View to northeast

1909 Q Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

August 10, 2004
Sketch Map of 4933 MacArthur Boulevard, NW, showing photographic views and property boundaries, which are shown as the boundary lines enclosing the house.