

## Calvert Hills (66-037)

Calvert Hills, a cohesive neighborhood in northwestern Prince George's County, is an excellent illustration of the residential development on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., in the early twentieth century. The once rural property, historically part of the Calvert family's Rossborough Farm and Riversdale Plantation, was subdivided in response to the expanding suburban population, the development of the nearby Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland at College Park), and the College Park Airport. The middle- and upper-middle class suburban community, which is framed by major transportation corridors, developed further with the advent of the streetcar and the automobile. The neighborhood was conceived as additions to the growing subdivision of College Park, which was located to the immediate north of Calvert Hills. The first of the eleven additions, "Fanny A. Calvert's Addition to College Park," was undertaken by the Calvert family in response to many speculative development opportunities. In 1945, the many additions to College Park were joined as the neighborhood of Calvert Hills in recognition of the prominent Calvert family and incorporated as part of the Town of College Park.<sup>1</sup>

Calvert Hills is located north of what is now known as the Town of Riverdale Park, south of the area of Old Town College Park, east of Baltimore Avenue (U.S. Route 1), and west of the WMATA metrorail/B&O Railroad right-of-way. These major thoroughfares provide access to commercial and employment centers in the surrounding county and nearby Washington, D.C. Baltimore Avenue, in particular, ties the neighborhood to the commercial, aviation, and educational center of College Park. The first portion of the neighborhood, platted in 1907 and re-platted in 1921, featured a grid-like plan of rectangular blocks and straight, intersecting streets. From 1928 through the 1940s, Calvert Hills was enlarged further through the platting of adjacent parcels with a more curvilinear street pattern.<sup>2</sup> Both the 1861 Martenet Map and the 1878 Hopkins Map documents that the homes of Ella Calvert Campbell and Charles B. Calvert were the only improvements in the College Park area.<sup>3</sup>

Calvert Hills is defined by a variety of architectural styles and building types ranging from high-style designs to vernacular interpretations of these elaborate styles. Primarily, the domestic buildings in Calvert Hills were constructed from the 1890s to infill housing of the late 1990s. Building forms vary from large two-and-a-half-story brick and wood-frame dwellings to smaller bungalow and Cape Cods. Architectural styles employed in Calvert Hills were often diluted, modest examples of Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Tudor Revival styles.<sup>4</sup> Also included in Calvert Hills is an example of the stylistically and technologically unique Lustron house at 4811 Harvard Road, which was constructed between 1946 and 1950.<sup>5</sup> The community is primarily made up of single-family dwellings, but the community also includes apartment buildings, a school, and post office. Many of the properties include freestanding or attached garages and sheds. The buildings, particularly the single-family dwellings, are buffered from the tree-lined public streets by sidewalks and grassy medians. Many of the blocks are divided by alleys that provide access to garages and reduced on-street parking.

Currently there are no identified landmark structures in Calvert Hills. Public buildings in Calvert Hills include the 1938 Calvert Hill Elementary School (4601 Calvert Road) and the 1970 United States Post

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<sup>1</sup> E.H.T. Traceries, Inc., "Calvert Hills Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination form (October 2001), 8:60.

<sup>2</sup> E.H.T. Traceries, Inc., "Calvert Hills," 7:1.

<sup>3</sup> Simon J. Martenet, "Atlas of Prince George's County, Maryland, 1861, Adapted from Martenet's Map of Prince George's County, Maryland" (Baltimore: Simon J. Martenet C.E., 1861) and G.M. Hopkins, "Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including the County of Prince George Maryland" (Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, C.E., 1878).

<sup>4</sup> E.H.T. Traceries, Inc., "Calvert Hills," 7:1.

<sup>5</sup> E.H.T. Traceries, Inc., "Calvert Hills," 7:10.

Office (4815 Calvert Road), which is located on the site of the original post office for College Park. A one-story volunteer firehouse at 4813 Calvert Road, opened on August 1926 to serve the growing community of Calvert Hills and Old Town College Park.<sup>6</sup> Even with two subsequent alterations, the building proved too small for the activities of the fire department, and was rehabilitated in 2005 to serve as a single-family dwelling. Despite the commercial growth of neighboring Old Town College Park and Riverdale Park, Calvert Hills remains a purely residential neighborhood composed primarily of single-family and multiple-family dwellings that face tree-lined streets.

## **National Register Historic District**

In 2002, the Calvert Hills Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

As a whole, the early-twentieth-century suburb of Calvert Hills has achieved significance as the product of this distinctive period, with individual components that combine to create a distinguishable entity with high artistic value. The district meets National Register criteria A and C, and is significant under the themes of architecture and community planning/development with the period of significance extending from 1890 to 1948. The neighborhood consists of 375 properties including 347 single dwellings, 24 multiple dwellings/apartments, one school, a former fire station, a government office, and one post office. There are 365 contributing primary resources and ten non-contributing primary resources, supported by approximately 182 secondary resources, such as garages and sheds. Of the secondary resources, 42 are non-contributing.<sup>7</sup>

## **Windshield Survey**

A windshield survey of Calvert Hills was conducted in July 2007. No discernable changes were identified since the listing of Calvert Hills as a National Register Historic District in 2002. The boundaries of the district have remained intact; both the district as a whole and the boundaries have retained their integrity.

## **Local Historic District Evaluation**

In addition to its listing as a National Register Historic District, Calvert Hills meets the following criteria for designation as a local historic district:

- (1)(A)(i) – Calvert Hills developed as a streetcar suburb that supported the expanding middle- and upper-middle-class suburban population of Washington, D.C. in the first half of the twentieth century. This community was accessed by the Washington, Berwyn, and Laurel Railroad Company (later known as the City and Suburban Railway Company and then the D.C. Transit Company), in addition to the B&O Railroad, which had been extended through the area as early as 1835. Further, the increasing acceptance of the automobile and the need for efficient transportation routes into the District of Columbia resulted in the emergence of Baltimore Avenue as the primary transportation route for the community. In addition, expansion and development in Calvert Hills was directly related to the growth of the University of Maryland, which is located to the immediate north of Old Town College Park. Thus, as the university expanded with an increasing student and professorial body, the population of Calvert Hills increased.

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<sup>6</sup> E.H.T. Tracerics, Inc., “Calvert Hills,” 8:70-72.

<sup>7</sup> E.H.T. Tracerics, Inc., “Calvert Hills.”

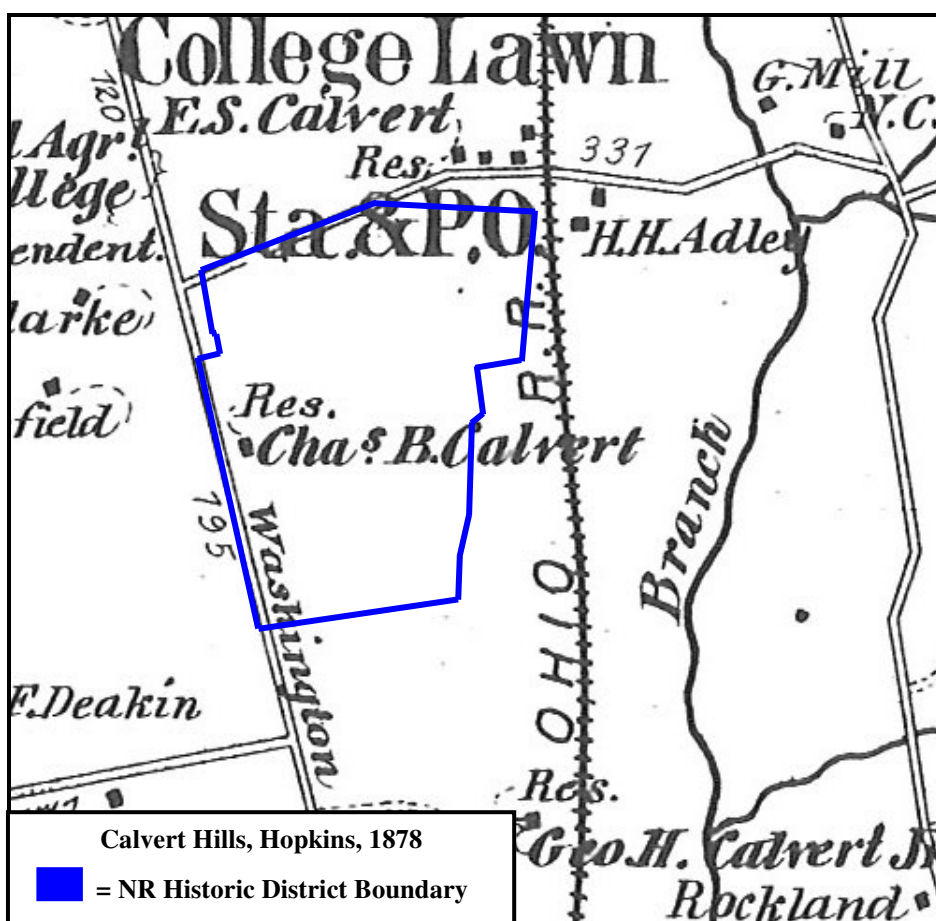
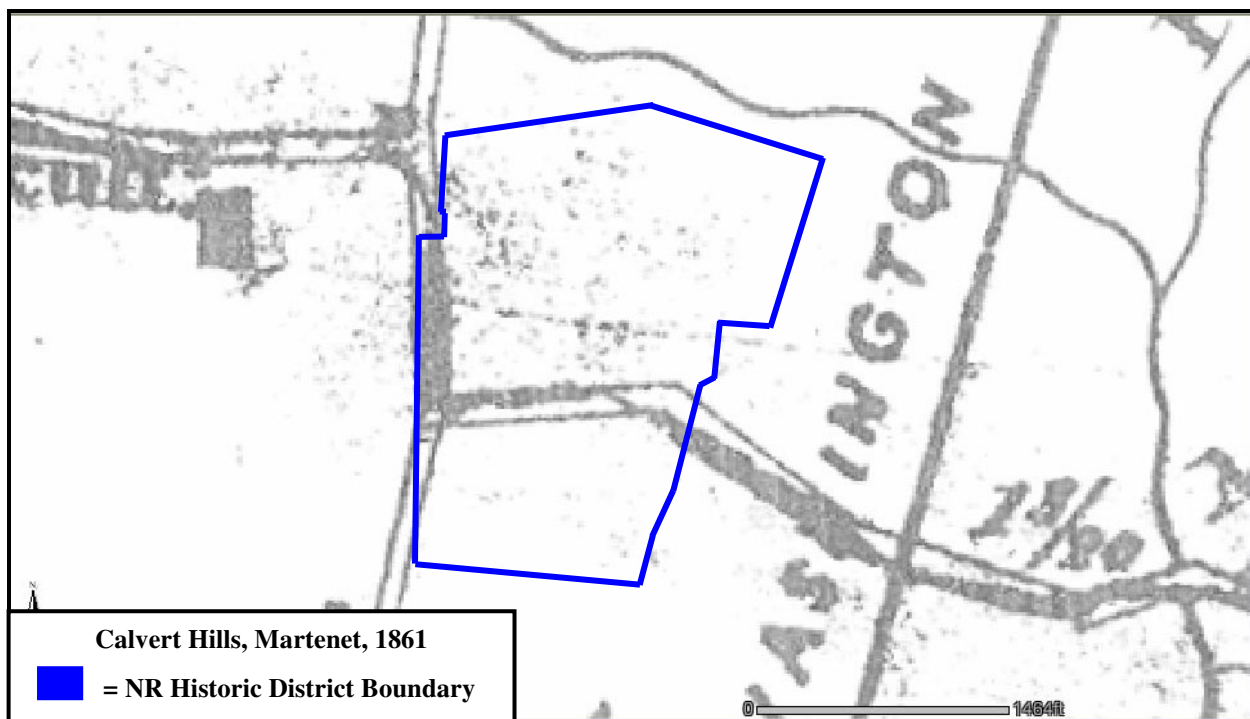
- (1)(A)(iii) – Calvert Hills was home to aviators and other employees of the College Park Airport, the oldest continuously operating airport in the world, until September 11, 2001 when it was temporarily closed. Such residents included Wilbur and Orville Wright, who are believed to have leased rooms in a boarding house on Bowdoin Street in the early 1900s.
- (1)(A)(iv) – Calvert Hills exemplifies the cultural, social, and historic heritage of Prince George’s County. Its location off of Baltimore Avenue, an important transportation route in the community, and near the University of Maryland continues to help ensure the community’s success. The neighborhood’s connection to both the Wright brothers and the College Park airport makes the community an important historic location. In addition, as a streetcar suburb that developed in the first half of the twentieth century, Calvert Hills is indicative of Prince George’s County’s cultural, social, and historic heritage.
- (2)(A)(i) – Calvert Hills contains a collection of buildings that spans a century, from the 1890s through the 1990s, and reflects the popular styles of that time period. Building forms and styles extend from the large-scale brick Colonial Revival-style dwelling to the smaller bungalow. Architectural styles presented in Calvert Hills include modest examples of Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Tudor Revival styles.
- (2)(A)(iv) – As a whole, Calvert Hills demonstrates the evolution of style and taste in domestic architecture from the 1890s to the 1990s. In addition, the neighborhood retains its continuity. Calvert Hills was established as a streetcar suburb in the early twentieth century, and still functions today as a commuter suburb.

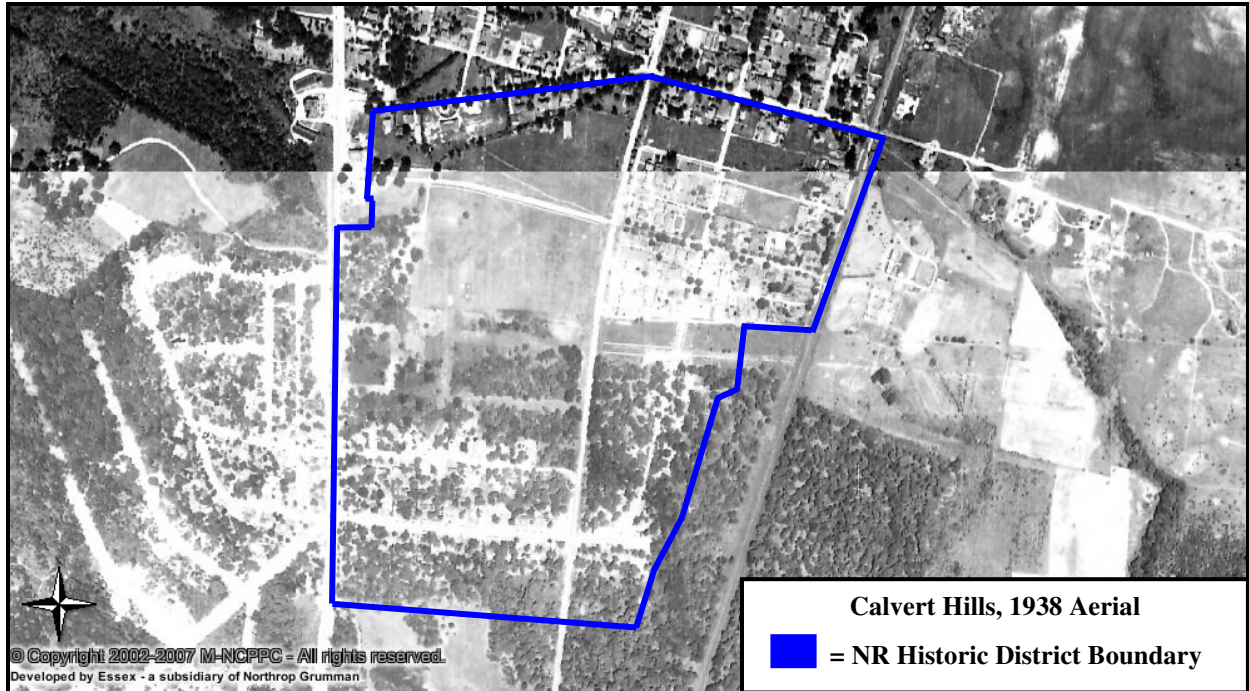
Calvert Hills has retained its integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

Prepared by EHT Tracerics, Inc.  
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Looking southwest, 4615-4613 Guilford Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)





Looking northwest, 4806- 4804- 4802 Erskine Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southeast, 6913-6911-6908 Dartmouth Avenue (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)





North elevation, 4609 Amherst Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)





Looking northwest, 4516-4514 Albion Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)





Looking southwest, 4507-4505 Amherst Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)





Looking southeast, 4509-4511 Amherst Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)





Northeast corner, 4811 Harvard Road (Lustron house) (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)





Northeast corner, 7206 Dartmouth Avenue (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, 4708-4706 Harvard Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)