

1. Name: Bohrer House

2. Planning Area/Site Number: 35/1 3. M-NCPPC Atlas Reference: Map 20  
L-7  
Address: 5923 Johnson Avenue, Bethesda

5. Classification Summary

Category <u>building</u>	Previous Survey Recording <u>M-NCPPC</u>
Ownership <u>private</u>	Title and Date: <u>Inventory of Historical</u>
Public Acquisition <u>NA</u>	<u>Sites - 1976</u>
Status <u>occupied</u>	
Accessible <u>no</u>	Federal <u>    </u> State <u>X</u> County <u>X</u> Local <u>    </u>
Present use <u>private residence</u>	

6. Date: 1858-59

7. Original Owner: John Bohrer

8. Apparent Condition

a. good b. altered c. moved

9. Description: This two and a half story, five bay by two bay, L-shaped farmhouse faces south. The exterior walls have white clapboarding. The south porch has a gable roof supported by three large square wooden posts. There are six-over-six double-hung windows flanked on the south elevation by black wooden louvered shutters. There is a north two story ell with a half hipped roof. The main house has a gable roof. All have asbestos covering.

10. Significance: The Bohrer house is an example of mid-19th c. architecture, a handsome reminder of the time when lower Montgomery County was rural.

In 1855, John Bohrer purchased 50 acres and in 1859 constructed this house for his family. It was the home of a successful farmer, with comfortably large dimensions, high ceilings, and good materials and workmanship. The Bohrs lived here for many years, their heirs selling the property to John C. Letts in 1929. Letts combined the Bohrer farm and that of Martha Austin to make "Ayrlawn" farm, developing the property into a model farm with spotless barns, decorated silos and prize livestock.

About 1935, the house was moved from its original location on Oak Place, and extensive remodelling took place. The present owners purchased the property in 1951.

Researcher and date researched: Betty Sutermeister - 2/79

Candy Reed  
Arch. Description

12. Compiler: Gail Rothrock

13. Date Compiled: 2/79

14. Designation  
Approval     

15. Acreage: .76 acres

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 35/1  
Mag1 #

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Bohrer House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

5923 Johnson Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Bethesda

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☒ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Oscar Sutermeister

Telephone #: 530-7963

STREET &amp; NUMBER

5923 Johnson Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Bethesda

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code  
Maryland 20034**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 1059

Folio #: 424

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

MNCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites

DATE

1976

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☒ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Park Historian's Office

CITY, TOWN

Derwood

STATE

Maryland 20855

M:35-1

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This farmhouse now sits in the middle of a suburban subdivision, but it still retains charm and grace.

Built on stone foundations, this two and a half story frame farmhouse has a white clapboarded exterior. It has an L-shape plan and is five bays across and two bays deep (the rear ell and addition increase the two bays to six). There is a small porch on the south (front) elevation. This has a gable roof which is supported by three large square posts at the two front corners. The front door is centered on the south elevation and is composed on nine-over-two wooden panels. There are six-over-six lights double hung windows throughout the house; at the east gable there is a pair of four-over-four light double hung windows. On the south elevation the windows are flanked by black wooden louvered shutters. There are two exterior brick chimneys: at the west and north. There is a gable roof over the main section of the house, a half lipped roof over the two-story ell, and a flat roof over the one story addition. All have asbestos covering.

West of the house is a large lot of land which is landscaped with lawns. There is a small barn which is now being used as a garage.

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

Local History

SPECIFIC DATES 1858-59

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bohrer house is an example of mid-19th century architecture, a vestige of the time when lower Montgomery County was rural.

In 1855, John Bohrer purchased 50 acres for \$600 from Thomas and Louisa Spates, part of a tract known as "Contention".<sup>1</sup> Four years later, Bohrer constructed this house for his family;<sup>2</sup> it was the home of a successful farmer, with comfortably large dimensions, high ceilings, with top quality materials and workmanship. The Bohrers lived here for many years, the heirs selling the property to John C. Letts in 1929.<sup>3</sup>

Letts combined the Bohrer farm and that of Martha Austin to make "Ayrlawn" farm. Letts was a grocer who had made his fortune in the years approaching the Depression of the 1930s. He developed the property into model farm with spotless barns, decorated silos and prize livestock.

About 1935, the house was moved from its original location on Oak Place, and extensive remodelling took place. The back windows were moved to the sides, and a chimney in the east room was removed; a two-story addition was built onto the rear of the house.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Collins, who worked for Ayrlawn farms, lived here and cooked for the farmhands.

After several intervening owners, including Stear Mark Corp., which subdivided the farm into homesites in 1947, the present owners purchased the property in 1951.

## FOOTNOTES:

1 Land Records of Montgomery County, Md., JGH4/309.

2 Montgomery County Assessment Records, 1858, 1859.

3 Land Records, op. cit., 488/144.

4 Interview with John Bohrer, grandson of John G. Bohrer; date 1950s.

Hopkins Atlas 1878 and 1865  
Martinet and Bond Map**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Interviews: Mr. Bohrer ( 1950s); Mrs. Kay Keating(June 1978); Frank Laughead (June 1978), worked on Ayrlawn farm.  
 Montgomery County Assessment Records  
 U.S. Census Records, 1850.  
 Land Records of Montgomery County  
 Property Atlas, Parts of Montgomery County, Md., Bd. of Tax Assessment, 1916.  
 CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .76 acres**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

300 feet along Johnson Avenue starting on the west at Lindale Drive.  
 North from Johnson about 110 feet to the rear lot line.

**LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Betty SutermeisterCandy Reed/Architectural

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Box 87

CITY OR TOWN

DickersonDATE 3/79 Description

TELEPHONE

926-4510

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: ~~Maryland Historical Trust~~  
~~The Shaw House, 21 State Circle~~  
~~Annapolis, Maryland 21401~~  
~~(301) 267-1438~~

SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS  
 Box 87, Stronghold  
 Dickerson, Md. 20753  
 (301) 926-4510

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM  
for the  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>				
COMMON: Bohrer House				
AND/OR HISTORIC:				
<b>2. LOCATION</b>				
STREET AND NUMBER: 5923 Johnson Avenue				
CITY OR TOWN: Bethesda				
STATE: Maryland		COUNTY: Montgomery		
<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>				
<b>CATEGORY</b> (Check One)		<b>OWNERSHIP</b>		<b>STATUS</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
<b>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</b> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No				
<b>PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Religious    _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> Museum <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific    _____				
<b>4. OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>				
OWNER'S NAME: Oscar Sutermeister				
STREET AND NUMBER: 5923 Johnson Avenue				
CITY OR TOWN: Bethesda		STATE: Maryland		
<b>5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b>				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Montgomery County Courthouse				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Rockville		STATE: Maryland		
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):				
<b>6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS</b>				
TITLE OF SURVEY: None				
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:		

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house is a two-story clapboard farmhouse, narrow in depth, but of five bays on its main (south) facade. There is a very short roofline of moderate pitch and the roof itself is shingled. There is a one story pedimented portico over the central (entrance) bay on the south. The door has a three-paned transom. All windows are 6/6 double-hung. Basically, the house appears to be original although the chimneys are replacements and there is a two story, 20th century addition on the rear of the house.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)\*

- |  |                                       |                                       |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |                                      |   |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | losophy                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | Architecture                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



M:35-1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Michael F. Dwyer, Park Historian	
ORGANIZATION: M-NCPPC	DATE: 4/22/75
STREET AND NUMBER: 8787 Georgia Avenue	
CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring	STATE: Maryland

12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment Sheet A

M: 35/1

Bohrer House





NAME BOHRER HOUSE M: # 35-1  
LOCATION 5923 JOHNSON AVE, BETHESDA, MD.  
EACADE 5  
PHOTO TAKEN 4/22/75  
M. DWYER