



THORNTON BROOKS HOUSE

415 Sunset Drive

Greensboro, North Carolina 27408

Application for Guilford County Local Historic Landmark Designation

Prepared by Rebecca Barefoot, Century Preservation, LLC and
Samantha Smith, Gate City Preservation, LLC

October 4, 2019



Guilford County Planning & Development Department
**Guilford County
Historic Preservation Commission**

HISTORIC NAME OF PROPERTY

Thornton Brooks House

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY

415 Sunset Drive, Greensboro, North Carolina 27408

PIN # 7865444632

DEED BOOK & PAGE # 008049-00471

PLAT BOOK AND PAGE # 180-111

ZONING RES

Amount of land/acreage to be designated

1.57 acres

Interior to be designated

Yes No

Property Owner's Address & Phone:

Sam and Ashley Simpson

415 Sunset Drive

Greensboro, North Carolina 27408

E-mail

sam@simpsoncre.com

ashleysimpson777@gmail.com

Applicant's Address & Phone:

Century Preservation Services, LLC

4030 Wake Forest Road, STE 349

Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

E-mail

rebecca@centurypreservation.com

samantha@gatecitypreservation.com

The application is due no later than twelve noon (12 noon) on the **last** Tuesday of the month, 21 days before the regularly scheduled meeting held on every third (3rd) Tuesday of the month. Please address to:

**Guilford County Planning Department
ATTN: Historic Preservation Commission
PO Box 3427
Greensboro, NC 27402**

READ CAREFULLY AND SUPPLY ALL INFORMATION

The following information must be supplied in a *report format* before the application can be reviewed, deemed complete and placed on the agenda. Please attach additional sheets or a research report. (A minimum of eleven (11) reports are required)

1. **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:** In order to recommend designation of a landmark, the property must be deemed historically, architecturally or archaeologically significant. Please provide a brief statement explaining why this property should be a designated landmark. See examples on page 3. *Copies from JW Jones and Sumners*
2. **MAPS:** Provide a scaled plot plan of the property showing lot lines and location of all buildings. Indicate the area and building(s) to be designated as a landmark.
3. **ARCHITECTURAL:** Describe the original and current appearance of the significant structures such as houses, barns, well houses, and other buildings to be designated, includes photos or illustrations. The description should include the following: date of construction; date(s) of alterations, description of overall form, and exterior and interior details. Include a drawing of the existing and original (if different) floor plan with rooms labeled. *Example from Sumners House.*
4. **HISTORICAL:** Tell the history of the property. The details should include the following: uses of the property, photos (or copies); list of owners (from Grantor-Grantee index), a detailed description of builders or architects if known. Also, attach and *describe* newspaper articles, excerpts from books, cemetery records, deeds, oral histories etc. Any additional information, literature, illustrations, newspaper articles or other media that you feel will contribute to the application can be submitted but become property of the Commission. List research sources as a bibliography.
5. **PHOTOGRAPHS:** *Please submit a complete photographic record of the property in each report. In addition to prints, all photographs shall be submitted on a CD-R in TIF or JPG format*
6. *Bibliographies, footnotes and chain of title are necessary to be considered a complete report.*

I. Abstract

Statement of Significance

The Thornton Brooks House is being proposed for designation because of its local **architectural** significance as an excellent example of French Eclectic residential architecture in Guilford County. The house retains its well-preserved French Eclectic details, original interior spaces, and unique landscape features, namely a cut-stone creek that was designed to resemble a moat in front of the main house. The house was designed by William C. Holleyman, Jr., a Greensboro architect best known for his residential work in the 1930s after the Great Depression. The house is a contributing resource in the Irving Park National Historic District, “a planned picturequest suburb” in northwest Greensboro.¹ Holleyman’s design of the landscaping to include a cut-stone moat in front of the house is exemplary in the neighborhood.

Archaeological Comments

No known archaeological features are present at this time.

Integrity Statement

- **Location:** The Thornton Brooks House remains in its original location and is surrounded by other historic buildings and features from its period of significance (1936-1961).
- **Design:** The French Eclectic architectural elements exemplify the design trends and styles of twentieth-century, high-style, period revival, residential architecture in Greensboro. The exterior of the Thornton Brooks House has remained largely unchanged since the 1961 guest room and dressing room addition designed by Greensboro interior architect, Otto Zenke. In 1984, a bay window was installed to accommodate a kitchen “nook” addition designed by The Zenkes, Inc. The 1961 addition has become part of the building’s rich architectural history and the 1984 addition does not detract from Holleyman’s original intent.
- **Setting:** The house’s stately setting on top of a hill surrounded by a wooded lot has remained unchanged. There have been no later intrusions by new construction. The significant historic features of its larger, Irving Park neighborhood setting are retained.
- **Workmanship:** Both the interior and exterior architectural details of the Thornton Brooks House show a high level of craftsmanship and design, specifically the complex moldings and trims, windows, curvilinear walls, and decorative brickwork.
- **Materials:** Many of the materials from the Thornton Brooks House’s original construction are still present in the house. The current property owners began rehabilitation to the interior and exterior of the residence in October 2018 to leverage historic tax credits. In all cases, they carefully followed the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and successfully achieved the state’s rehabilitation tax credit. Great care was taken to repair and preserve all historic, contributing features to the home including the slate and copper roofs, exterior masonry and mortar, casement windows, doors, floors, interior woodwork, and plaster. Although the property owners do not currently have the wooden shutters installed, the shutters were retained and have been stored on site. To see a detailed timeline of all known building alterations, see Section III, Architectural Assessment.
- **Feeling:** Because the house’s rehabilitation was completed as a tax credit project, care was taken to preserve the feeling of the building through the preservation of its important architectural elements.
- **Association:** The Thornton Brooks House is associated with the twentieth century residential development of Irving Park in northwest Greensboro. It is still used as a single family dwelling.

¹ Laura A.W. Phillips, “Irving Park Historic District,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994), Continuation Sheet, Section 7, Page 5.

Proposed Boundary Justification

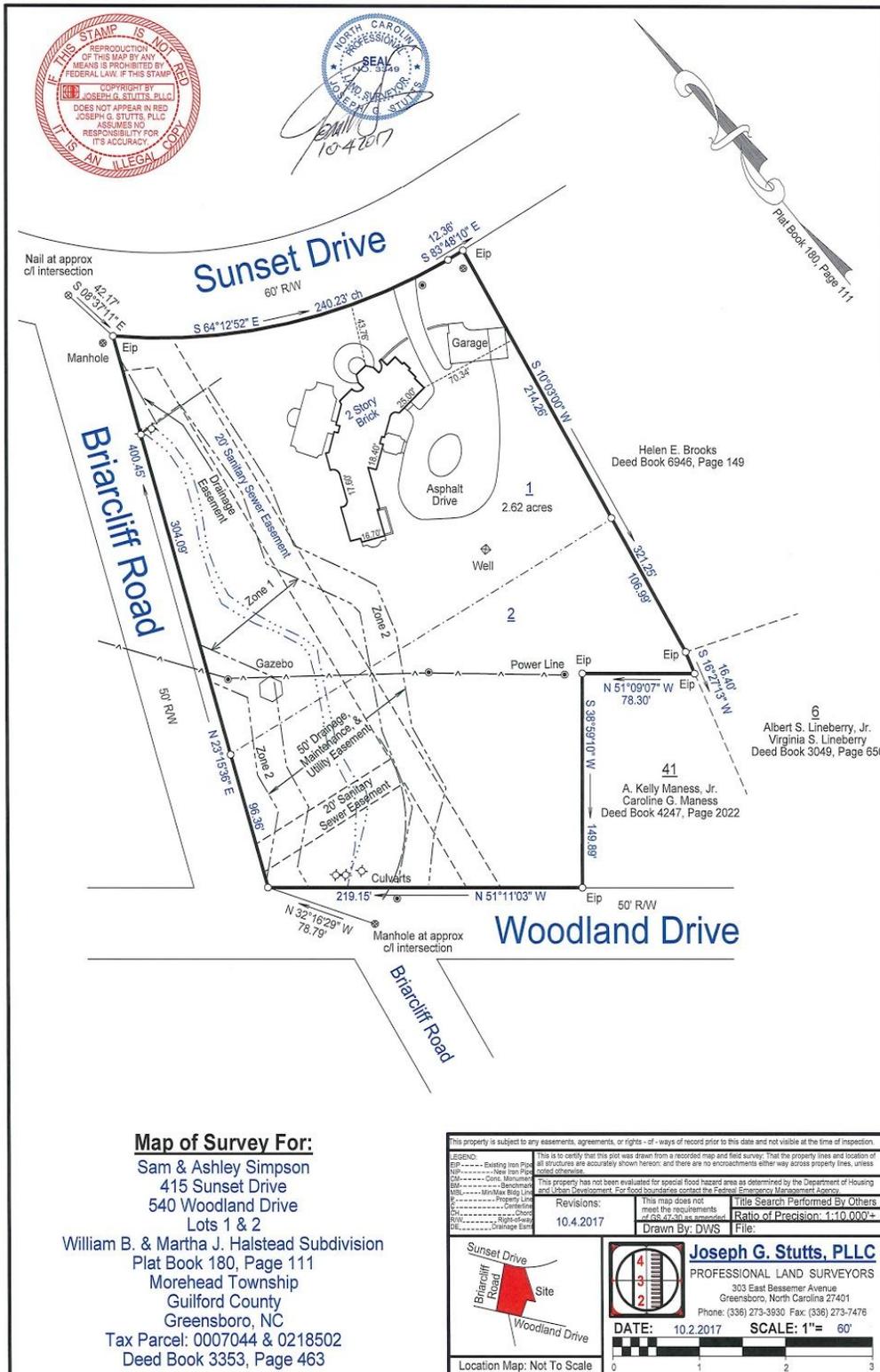
The proposed boundary for Local Landmark Designation is the property's current 1.57 acre parcel (PIN: 7865444632) and the contiguous 1.05 acre parcel to the south (PIN: 7865443473) to form the Thornton Brooks House's historic parcel.

II. Maps and Floor Plans

Guilford County Tax Map

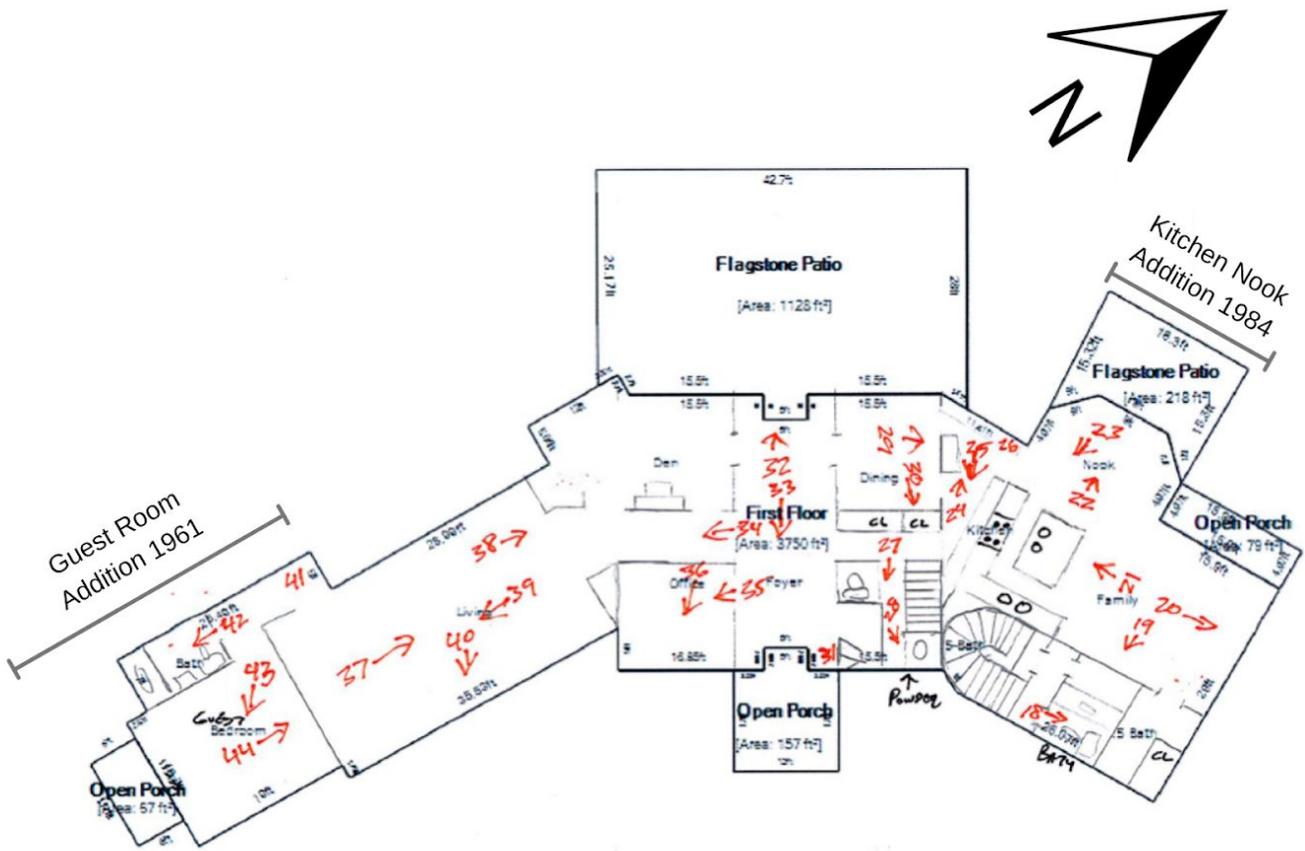


Survey Map

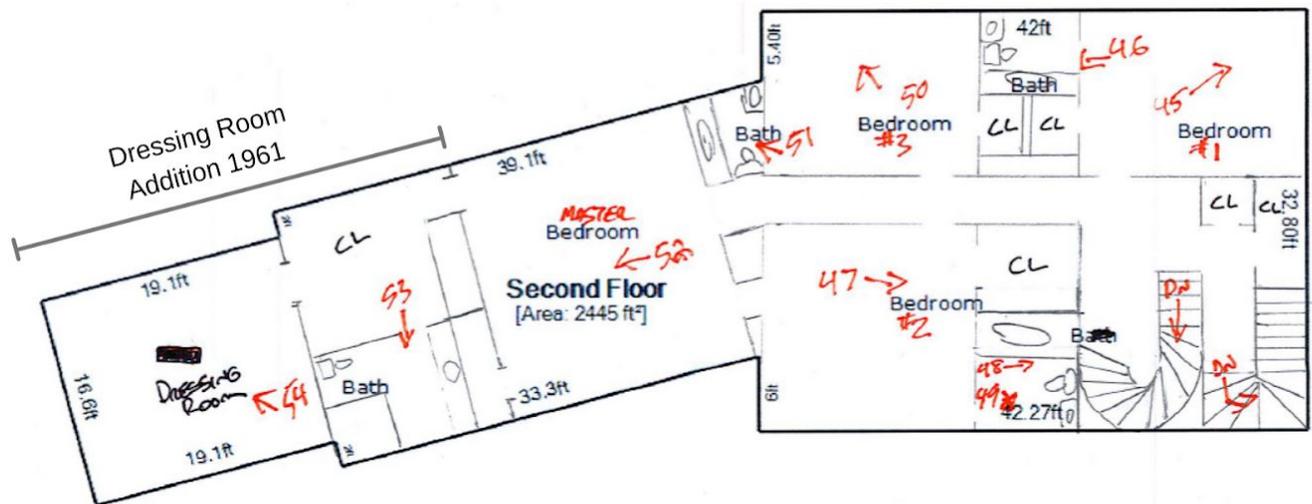


Architectural Drawings

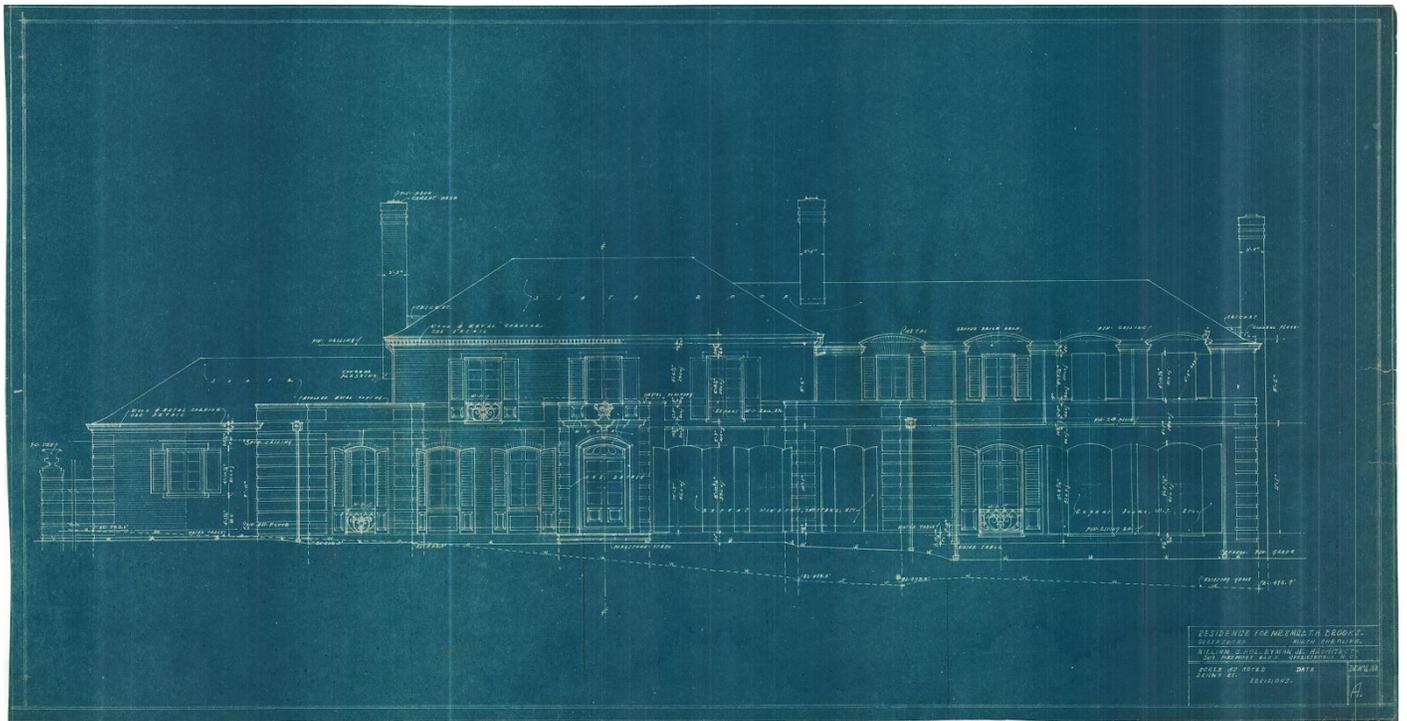
First Level Plan



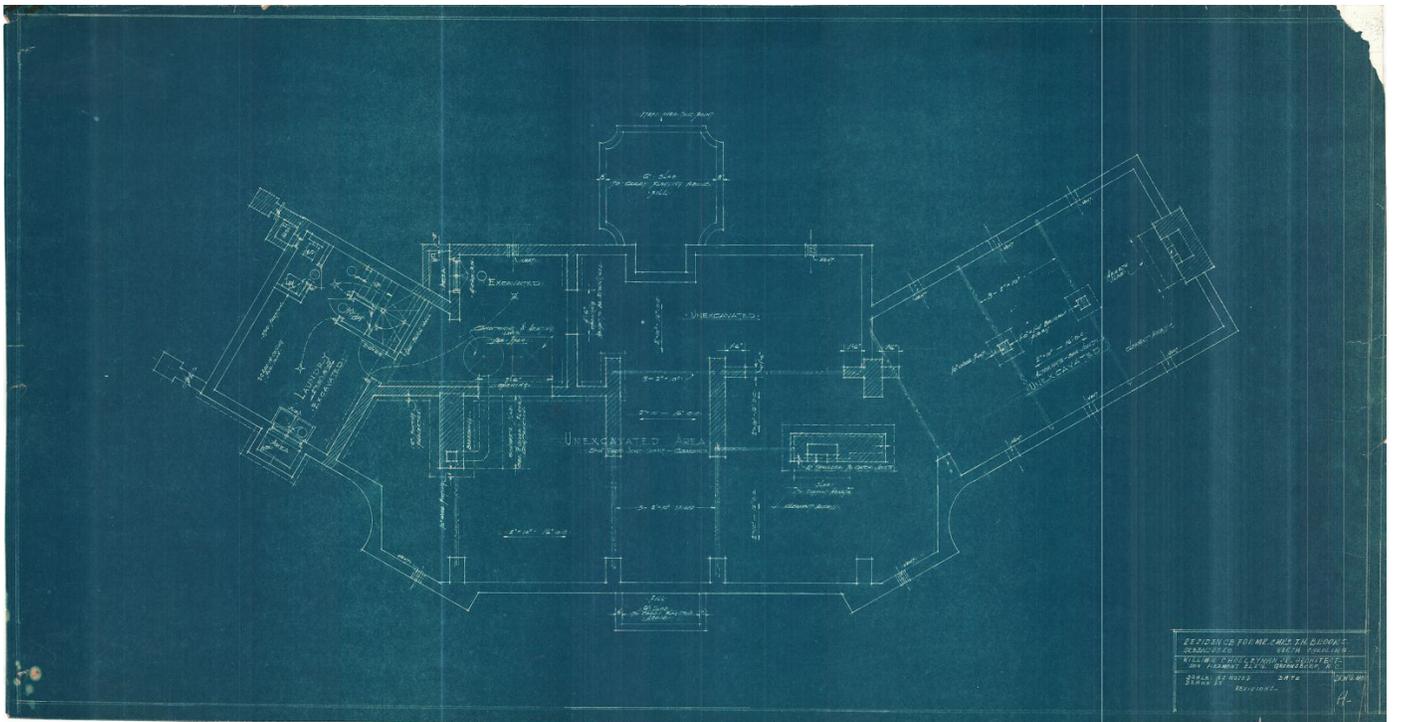
Second Level Plan



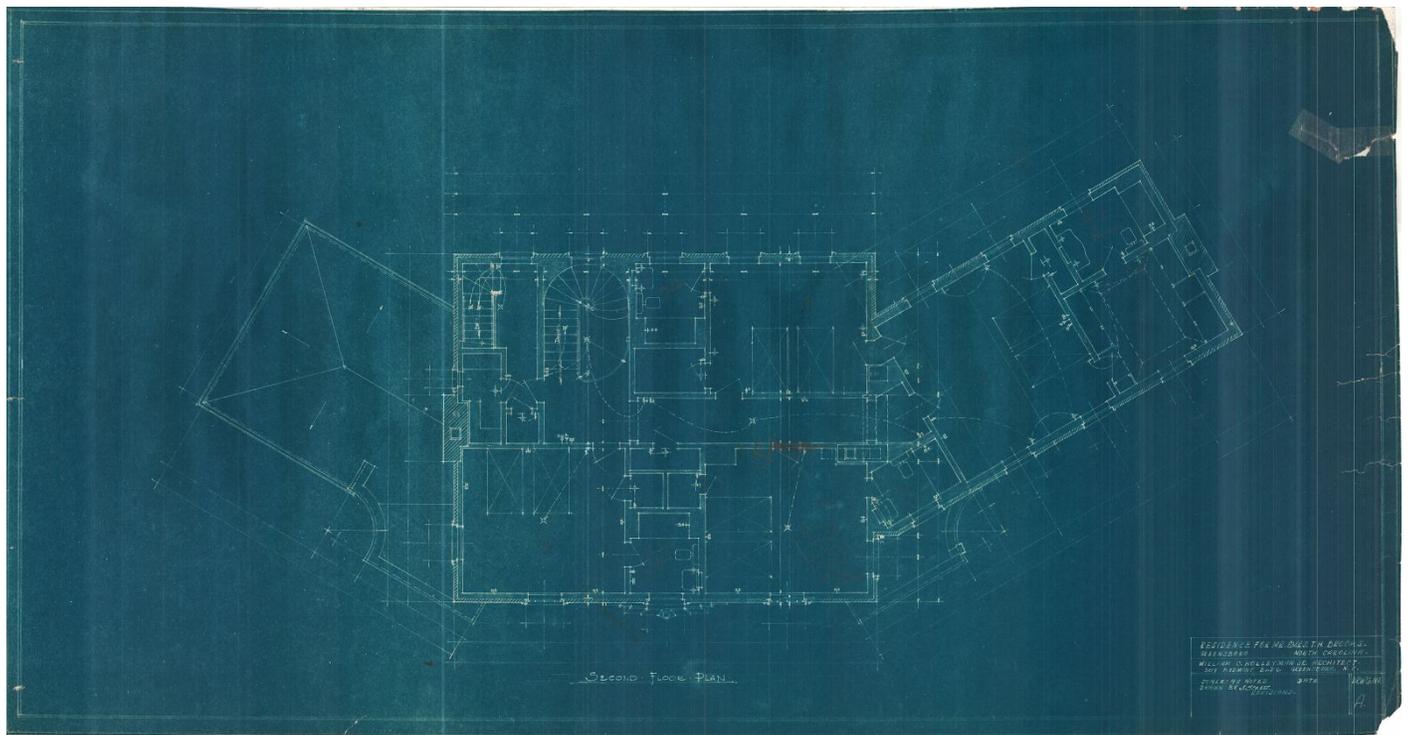
1936 Facade



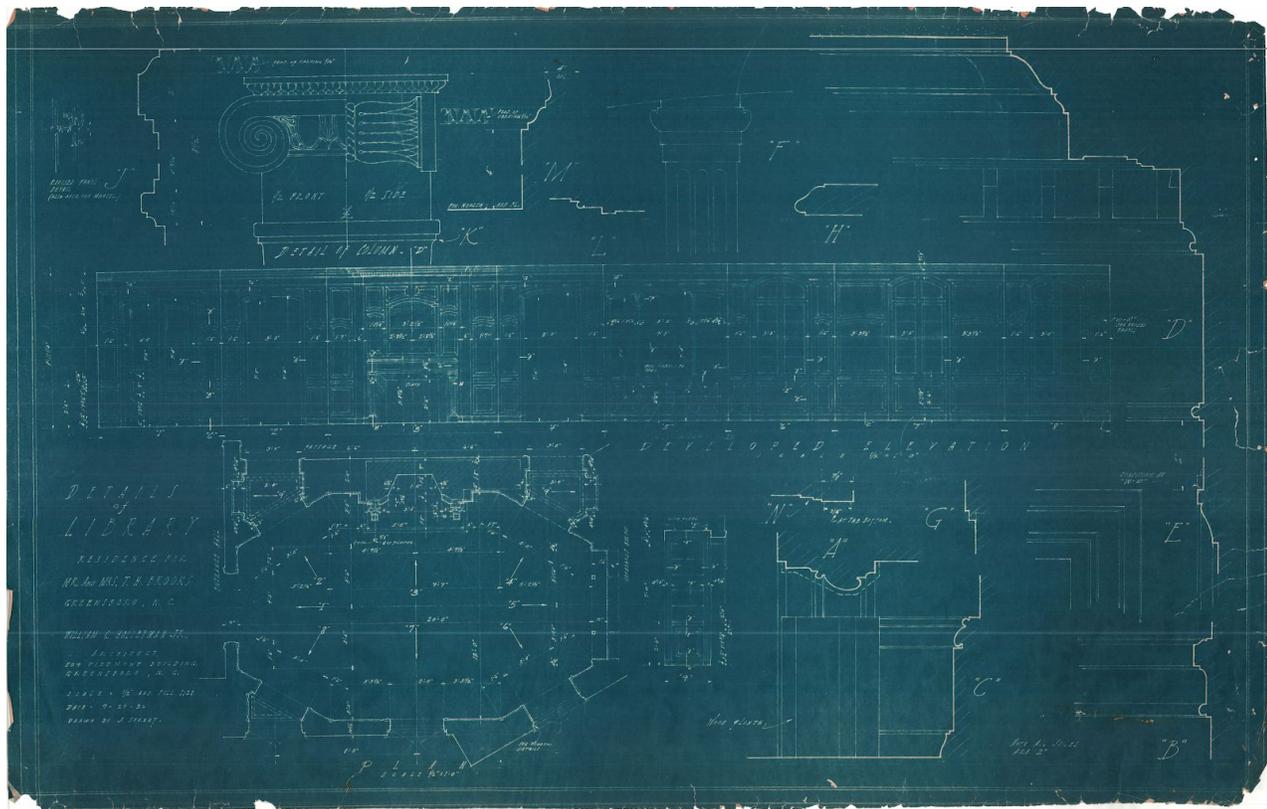
1936 Basement and First Level



1936 Second Level



1936 Library Wood Paneling Details



III. Architectural Assessment

Architectural Importance

The Thornton Brooks House is locally significant because it is a fine example of French Eclectic residential architecture in Guilford County. The construction of complex curvilinear walls, decorative moldings, porticos, and brickwork exhibits a high level of local craftsmanship. Furthermore, the property has retained a high level of integrity, which was maintained during its 2017-2018 tax credit rehabilitation. Located in its original setting with contributing landscape features, the home exudes a sense of place. An addition to the south wing, designed by Greensboro interior architect, Otto Zenke, in 1961, contributes to the home's architectural significance.

Architectural Context

French Eclectic houses are identified by a tall, steeply pitched hipped roof, which commonly includes eaves that are flared upward at the roof-wall junction, segmental arches on doors, windows, or dormers, and exterior construction of brick, stone, or stucco wall cladding.² Common French Eclectic details found in the The Thornton Brooks House are arched, through-the-cornice dormers, arched casement windows, decorative quoins, arched door openings, and “roof dormers...that form a high second tier of dormers on a steep roof.”³ The Thornton Brooks House follows the symmetrical subtype, where “the massive hipped roof, normally with the ridge paralleling the front of the house, dominates a symmetrical facade with centered entry. Facade detailing is usually rather formal, inspired by smaller French manor houses rather than grand chateaus or modest farmhouses. Wings are frequently added to the sides of the main block.”⁴ The French Eclectic style presents itself with a large variety of forms and details, but the characteristic roof is always present.

Common period revival styles in Guilford County and surrounding counties include Tudor, Georgian, Spanish, and Classical Revival. Many of these period revival styles are found in the Irving Park National Historic District and throughout Guilford County, but the Thornton Brooks House is one of only two recorded French Eclectic residences in Guilford County. The other is the J. Norman McCrary House in High Point, which is a contributing building in the Uptown Suburbs National Historic District.

Architectural Description

Setting

The Thornton Brooks House is located in Guilford County, North Carolina in northwest Greensboro. The house is a contributing building in the Irving Park National Register Historic District, a picturesque, planned suburb that was developed in the early twentieth century as “Greensboro's ultimate park community.”⁵ The neighborhood entrance is marked by “ceremonial stone portals” at the intersection of Sunset Drive and North Elm Street, with a tree-lined boulevard, the first block of Sunset Drive, leading into the neighborhood.⁶ Curvilinear streets and natural features play an important role in Irving Park's forested setting, including “rolling hills, woodlands, and a collection of small streams which feed into Buffalo Creek.”⁷ Many of these important landscape features are found on the Thornton Brooks House property. Situated on a large, wooded, corner lot, south of Sunset Drive, east of Briarcliff Road, and north of Woodland Drive, stands the Thornton Brooks House and three other contributing resources; a garage with upstairs residence (Fig. 14), an ironwork gazebo (Fig. 15), and a cut-stone moat (Fig. 16).

² Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture*, (New York: Random House, 2017), 485.

³ *Ibid*, 486.

⁴ *Ibid*, 485.

⁵ Laura A.W. Phillips, “Irving Park Historic District,” section 7, page 1.

⁶ Phillips, “Irving Park Historic District,” section 7, page 1.

⁷ *Ibid*.

Landscape

Landscape features include dense, old-growth trees, creeping ivy, landscaped brush, decorative trees, an ironwork gazebo, and a winding stream that was channeled with cut stone to create a unique moat effect on the property (Fig. 1). To the rear of the main house is a circular driveway with a roundabout. South of the Thornton Brooks House parcel is another acre parcel owned by the current property owners, which is a natural, wooded area bounded by Briarcliff Road and Woodland Drive. Both parcels make up the historic parcel for the property and are included in the proposed boundary.

Front (Northwest) Elevation

The exterior architectural description of the main house starts with the front (northwest) elevation of the main block, then moves to the north wing, south wing, side (north) elevation, side (south) elevation, and finally the rear (southeast) elevation.

The main block, constructed in 1936, was designed by Greensboro architect William C. Holleyman, Jr. in the French Eclectic style. A guest room addition on the first level and a dressing room addition to the second level bedroom on the south wing were designed by Greensboro interior architect, Otto Zenke, in 1961. A kitchen “nook” addition, accommodated by a bay window expansion on the north wing, and a basement wine cellar were added in 1984 by Henry and Virginia Zenke’s company, The Zenkes, Inc.

The house has three levels, including a basement, and is constructed with a main block plan with five bays and two asymmetrical wings with multiple bays connected at complex angles by curvilinear walls. The house features French Eclectic stylistic details throughout, including a steeply-pitched, hipped, flared slate roof (Fig. 8) with copper gutters (Fig. 9), white painted common bond brick with decorative quoins (Fig. 10), arched through-the-cornice dormers, and arched casement windows (Fig. 11b).

The front (northwest) elevation is part of the main block, which is five bays wide and symmetrical (Fig. 2). There are two, common bond brick corbeled chimneys, painted white to match the rest of the house. Beneath the steeply-pitched, hipped, flared slate roof is a row of dental molding (Fig. 9). On the first level, to the left of the front doors, are two, matching, paneled double doors with eight lights and an arched, transom window with two lights (Fig. 12b). To the right of the front doors are two identical casement windows with eight lights and a two-light arched transom. The doors and windows are identical in massing and style and have matching keystone arches which connect to decorative, symmetrical brickwork on the facade. Under the windows are decorative brick squares to mirror the matching paneled doors.

The front, paneled, double doors have four, rectangular lights each, with a decorative transom window (Fig. 11a). The wooden door surround extends to the height of the flanking wings. It is arched and highly decorative, featuring a scrollwork keystone and a cornucopia, surrounded by paneled wood detailing (Fig. 12a). The cornucopia matches the other cornucopias on the driveway entrance walls (described in the *Contributing Garage* section) (Fig. 17). The door surround is flanked by brick quoins and two iron lanterns, which may be original. A third iron lantern hangs above the double front doors under the deep arch of the wooden door surround.

The second level has three, eight-light windows. Due to the height of the front door surround, the bottom of the central window connects to the paneled wood detailing and cornucopia. The other windows, to achieve symmetry with the central window, have square, wood paneling under the sills, which connect to the decorative, geometrical brickwork on the facade.

Another feature to note is a large, multi-colored slate front porch with a built-in koi pond, constructed of matching slate.

North Wing

The north wing is seven bays wide, one level, and composed of a square bay, curvilinear walls, and a polygonal bay (Fig. 3). The projecting, square bay with decorative quoins and a casement window, identical

to those described on the front elevation with a matching keystone, connects the north wing to the main block. A curvilinear wall with brick quoins running across its curve and a decorative, copper gutter pipe running vertically through its center, connects the square bay to the three-sided polygonal bay, which was added on to the house in 1984 by Zenke, Inc. as part of the “kitchen nook” addition (Fig. 3). The polygonal bay has three, ten-light, arched casement windows with matching keystones and a four-course, common bond, brick runner, which matches the height and thickness of the decorative quoins running across the curved walls. A second curvilinear wall with identical detailing as the first connects the polygonal bay to the rear-most wall, which has an eight-light casement window with a two-light arched transom, matching keystone, and brick details. The exterior wall comes down in a cat-slide to meet the decorative brick wall that flanks the driveway entrance (described in the *Contributing Garage* section.)

South Wing

The south wing is seven bays wide, two levels, and composed of a square bay, identical to the connector of the north wing, a long row of casement windows with four arched through-the-cornice dormers, and one curvilinear wall on the first level, connecting the square bay to the rest of the south wing (Fig. 4). Copper gutters run vertically down between each bay. Like other elevations, there are brick quoins and running brick course details and matching casement windows. On the first level, the windows are either eight-light with two arched transom or six-light with two arched transom. On the second level, they are eight-light casement windows with no transom or arch of any kind, however they are set under arched through-the-cornice dormers, which carry over the French inspired rounded details. This wing has a common-bond brick chimney with corbeling, which matches the other three. The last two bays of the south wing’s first level are composed of a one-level, square bay with two six-light over two arched transom casement windows and decorated with brick quoins, these bays are part of the 1961 Otto Zenke additions to the first floor guest room and second floor dressing room.

Side (North) Elevation

The side (north) elevation of the main house reveals the complex array of hipped slate roofs and corbeled chimneys, four in total (Fig. 5). This elevation, as part of the north wing, is one level. It is connected to the decorative brick wall that flanks the driveway entrance (described in the *Contributing Garage* section.) This elevation is three bays wide with brick quoins and a central brick chimney, surrounded by two, eight-light casement windows with two-light arched transoms, which match the casement windows on other elevations. There is also a covered porch with a decorative lattice that screens a built-in grill and multi-colored, slate floor which matches the slate patios in the front and rear of the residence.

Side (South) Elevation

The side (south) elevation of the main house was re-constructed in 1961 when a first floor guest room and second floor dressing room were added by Greensboro interior architect, Otto Zenke (Fig. 6). This elevation has a lower-pitched, arched through-the-cornice dormer, decorative brick quoins and running courses, an eight-light square window on the second level, and a decorative portico on the first level which matches the two porticos on the rear elevation. The portico has a copper, mansard roof with decorative pineapples and skinny Tuscan columns connected by an iron railing. There are three steps with iron handrails on either side of the porch for access from the yard. The portico is covering a double door with ten lights.

Rear (Southeast) Elevation

The rear (southeast) elevation of the house is eleven bays wide (Fig. 7). The architectural details and features on the rear elevation match that of the rest of the house, including the dental molding found on the front elevation of the main block. Starting from the south wing and moving to the north, beginning on the

first level, the rear elevation consists of a rectangular, two-over-eight light window, a skinny bay with decorative quoins, three, matching ten-light casement windows with two-light, arched transoms, each of these are separated by a vertical, copper gutter.

On the back of the main block are two, matching eight-light over two-light arched transom windows and a large, polygonal portico with five thin Tuscan columns, and a copper mansard roof decorated with pineapples (Fig. 13). The portico has a decorative, multi-colored slate floor and is covering the large, arched, eight-light, paneled, double door in the back. Surrounding the door are two lanterns, which match the lanterns at the entrance of the house, and a hanging iron lantern, all of which may be original to the home.

A curvilinear wall connects the main block to the one-level family room, which has two oxeye (*oeil-de-boeuf*) windows surrounding a smaller portico with a deeper pitched copper mansard roof and two Tuscan columns, covering a six-light, paneled single door (Fig. 11d and 12c). To the right of the oxeye (*oeil-de-boeuf*) window is a square, eight-light window. On the rear elevation, copper roofing is visible on the one-story bay. The rest of the roof is slate.

Moving east to west on the second level is a rectangular, eight-light window, three arched through-the-cornice dormers with three matching, rectangular eight-light windows. On the second level of the main block, there are four, matching, eight-light windows and an oversized, rectangular casement window with 20 lights, which extends down into the first level (Fig. 11c). The staircase is located just inside the large window.

There is also a large attic vent with a low-pitched, hipped dormer that is visible from the rear elevation.

Contributing Garage and Servant's Quarters

A period two-car garage and servants quarters sits to the rear (northeast) of the main house, and is designed with a matching slate, hipped, flared roof, copper gutters, and painted brick masonry with decorative quoins (Fig. 14). The front (south) elevation of the garage has two garage doors, and a central paneled door with a three-over-three light window. Above the door is an eight-light, oxeye (*oeil-de-boeuf*) window, similar to those on the main house.

The side (west) elevation has a second-level, arched through-the-cornice dormer with a six-light, square window with a two-course, brick lintel and sill. On the first level is another eight-light, oxeye (*oeil-de-boeuf*) window. This elevation is connected to the decorative, sloped, brick wall to the rear of the structure by a brick wall with double doors to access a storage room. The other side (east) elevation has a matching second-level, six-light square window on an arched through-the-cornice dormer.

The first level of the rear (north) elevation is attached to one side of a decorative brick wall, which flanks the driveway and is attached to both the garage and the Zenke kitchen addition of the main house. Due to the wall, the first level of this elevation is blind. The wall curves in towards the garage. Brick quoins run the course of curve, highlighting its dramatic effect. Matching, decorative cornucopias sit atop the brick pillars of each of the entrance walls. The second level of the garage's rear (north) elevation has an arched through-the-cornice dormer with six-light, square window, matching the others in material and design.

The front door to the garage opens to a period staircase with original, double wooden rails, which are also found in the servant's staircase inside the main house. The wood floors were installed by the current property owners to replace non-original carpet. Upstairs is a bathroom, redesigned by the current owners, and two small bedrooms, one with a small closet, which was utilized as a servant's quarters.

Basement

When the house was originally constructed in 1936, the basement was a laundry area and bathroom used by household servants. The original railing, which is a double railing like the one found in the residence

above the garage, and winding staircase leading to the basement are intact. In 1984, the basement was redesigned by the Zenke's Inc. to be a wine cellar, with a hidden wall leading to the systems room.

Interior Features to be Designated

The property owners of the Thornton Brooks House wish to include several interior resources in this designation. First, they would like to include the library, which is the first room to the south when entering the home through the front doors (Fig. 18). The library walls are made of original walnut paneling and were constructed with a high level of craftsmanship. The dental crown molding and built-in shelves and cabinets are included in this designation, as is the period light fixture.

The other interior resources that the property owners would like to include in the designation are the arched, keystone moldings and paneled wainscoting in the entrance hall, along with the grand staircase (Figs. 19 and 20). They would also like to designate the marble fireplace surround in the living room (Fig. 21). The property owners think that these features are important to the house's integrity and would like for them to be protected under this designation.

Construction Timeline

- 1936 Original Construction⁸
- 1961 Guest room and dressing room addition designed by Otto Zenke⁹
- 1984-1985 Kitchen “nook” addition built, the basement laundry room converted to a wine cellar by Henry and Virginia Zenke, known professionally as The Zenkes, Inc.¹⁰
- 2017 Tax Credit Rehabilitation Project¹¹
 - **Roof:** repaired the standing seam copper roof where it met the slate roof, re-sealed a copper gutter joint, replaced broken or missing slate where needed, repaired vent pipe flashings on upper roof, re-sealed the ridge and hip slate using an asphalt based sealant
 - **Masonry:** Repointed mortar to match existing
 - **Exterior Woodwork:** Gutters were removed and fascia patched where possible or replaced to match existing as needed, painted to match original color
 - **Porches:** Repointed mortar and anchored existing railings
 - **Windows:** All original windows were kept, painted, and adjusted for proper orientation
 - **Interior Woodwork/Doors:** The structure was gradually dehumidified to restore proper moisture content and paint
 - **Floors:** Replaced carpeted areas, gradual dehumidification, sanding to remove compromised finish, refinished and sealed, marble floors cleaned
 - **Walls and Ceilings:** Gradual dehumidification, patching, painting, removed 1980s wallpaper, restored 1936 wallpaper panels in dining room
 - **Kitchen:** Installed wood cabinetry, replaced appliances, installed quartz countertops
 - **Bathrooms:** Repaired existing original fixtures (toilets, sinks, tubs, showers)
 - **Garage:** Repaired the fascia, painted the interior and exterior, replaced the gutters, HVAC, removed carpet, installed wood flooring

⁸ “Building Takes Sudden Upturn,” *Greensboro Record*, November 5, 1936, page 14.

⁹ “Thornton Brooks House,” North Carolina State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program, Historic Preservation Certification Application Part Two, Description of Rehabilitation (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service).

¹⁰ “Residence of Mr. & Mrs. William Halstead,” 415 Sunset, Greensboro, N.C. The Zenke's, Inc. Floor plans, 1984.

¹¹ “Thornton Brooks House,” North Carolina State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program, Historic Preservation Certification Application Part Two, Description of Rehabilitation (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service).

IV. Historical

Thornton Brooks House History

William C. Holleyman, Jr., a local Greensboro architect most famous for his residential work in the 1930s, is the architect of the Thornton Brooks House. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1893, and graduated in the class of 1917 from the Georgia Institute of Technology. He began his architectural career in New York City for two years, but was attracted to Greensboro most likely by Charles C. Hartmann. Holleyman first worked for Hartmann, who was a prolific architect for businesses, residences, and college campuses. Holleyman may have assisted Hartmann with his design of the Jefferson Standard Building.¹² Starting in 1929, Holleyman started his own practice, working out of 100 N. Elm Street next door to Hartmann. By 1932, he moved to 114 N. Elm Street for his own firm.¹³

The Great Depression hit Greensboro in a similar fashion to every other city in the United States, with multiple banks failing from 1932-1933.¹⁴ During the Great Depression, only three houses were built in Irving Park. Most houses built throughout Greensboro during the Depression were typically smaller homes, and \$7,000 was considered the “higher bracket” cost of building. In 1936, improving business conditions in Greensboro were reflected in residential work.¹⁵ The period of 1936 through 1941 “became the second busiest for building in the neighborhood.”¹⁶ Despite the Great Depression, Holleyman gained commissions in Greensboro and other North Carolina communities “when many architects experienced difficulty in finding work.”¹⁷ He made connections with prosperous clients in Irving Park, beyond the Brooks. He designed the Herman Cone House and the J. Spencer Love House, as well as other period revival residences in Fayetteville, Asheboro, and the resort village of Pinehurst.¹⁸

While a newspaper article cannot be uncovered linking Holleyman to the house, his name is on the blueprint.¹⁹ On June 30, 1936, the *Greensboro Record* reported the permit request and listed Charles W. Angle as the builder for the Thornton Brooks House. The paper predicted the house would cost \$20,000 to build.²⁰ Holleyman and Angle collaborated on several structures beyond the Thornton Brooks House, including additions to the First Presbyterian Church that would become the Greensboro Historical Museum (now Greensboro History Museum).²¹ The house was only rivaled in cost by the J. Spencer Love House, which cost \$30,000 to build.²² These homes are part of the “sudden upturn” trend for home building in

¹² Catherine Bishir, “Holleyman, William C. (1893-1939),” North Carolina Architects & Builders, accessed 9/18/2019, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000548>

¹³ Bishir, “Holleyman,” North Carolina Architects & Builders, accessed 9/18/2019.

¹⁴ Howard E. Covington Jr., *Once Upon a City, Greensboro, North Carolina's Second Century*, (Greensboro, N.C.: Greensboro Historical Museum, Inc., c2008), 15.

¹⁵ “Costly Homes More Common,” *Greensboro Record*, July 17, 1936, page 3.

¹⁶ Phillips, “Irving Park Historic District,” section 7, page 6.

¹⁷ Bishir, “Holleyman.”

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “Residence of Mr. & Mrs. T. H. Brooks,” 415 Sunset, Greensboro, N.C., William C. Holleyman, Jr. Architect, floor plans, 1936.

²⁰ “Monday Heavy Day,” *Greensboro Record*, June 30, 1936, page 12.

²¹ Karen C. Carroll, “First Presbyterian Church, Smith Memorial Building, and First Presbyterian Church Cemetery,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1984), Continuation sheet, Item 8, Page 3.

²² “Costly Homes More Common,” *Greensboro Record*.

Greensboro which led to an aggregate of \$64,978 in one month of construction permits.²³ French Eclectic style was the “second most popular Eclectic style during the 1930s,” second only to Colonial Revival, which are common in Irving Park. High-style French Eclectic houses received many architectural awards, which influenced local architects and builders to construct these homes.²⁴

Thornton and Margaret Brooks were the original owners of the home from 1936-1984. Thornton Higbie Brooks (December 13, 1912 - October 31, 1988) was the son of Aubrey L. Brooks and Helen T. Brooks, who also lived in Irving Park.²⁵ Margaret Williams Brooks was a Winston-Salem native (June 2, 1914 - October 30, 2017), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. Clay Williams.²⁶ The couple married on January 12, 1935.²⁷ On the same day, most likely as a wedding gift, Aubrey L. and Helen Brooks gave land ownership directly to “Margaret Williams Brooks...and her heirs, a lot of land” that would become 415 Sunset Drive.²⁸ The Aubrey L. Brooks house property, which is located next door at 409 Sunset Drive, was divided to allow for the construction of the Thornton Brooks House.²⁹ More land from the Aubrey Brooks estate was given to Thornton and Margaret in 1977 in a will.³⁰ In 1941, the *Greensboro Daily News* profiled the house: “At 415 Sunset Drive, Irving Park, is a real dream castle. From its circular driveway which lies behind an impressive, yet simple, entranceway, to the pond and formal garden on the opposite side, there’s more than one point of interest.”³¹ Other family members who lived in the house were Margaret and Thornton’s daughters Phyllis (January 23, 1938 -),³² and Jane (September 15, 1939 -).³³

The house has a servants quarters, built over the detached garage. From 1940 through 1943 an African American woman named Juliette Miller was listed as “(c) nurse 415 Sunset dr” as well as a “maid” in Greensboro City Directories.³⁴ She was listed as a maid in 1939 in Irving Park before working for the Brooks.³⁵ During the Jim Crow era, many African Americans worked as domestic servants, yet they were legally barred from owning a home in a neighborhood due to racial deed restrictions. The only way a person of color could live in one of these neighborhoods was if they were employed as live-in servants. Even after Jim Crow segregation laws were struck from the books, wealthier neighborhoods of Greensboro implemented racial deed restrictions.³⁶ The Irving Park Deed made on May 29, 1912 between A.M. Scales and Aubrey Brooks stated the following: “That the premises shall not be occupied by negroes or persons

²³ “Building takes sudden upturn” *Greensboro Record*.

²⁴ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 494.

²⁵ “North Carolina Death Indexes 1908-2004,” s.v. “Thornton Higbie Brooks” (1912-1988), Ancestry.com.

²⁶ “Brooks, Margaret Williams,” Obituary, *News & Record*, November 2, 2017, accessed September 30, 2019, https://www.greensboro.com/obituaries/brooks-margaret-williams/article_448c9f5e-7333-5a69-8082-0d031f63c0b4.html.

²⁷ “Williams-Brooks Wedding Tonight Ends Constant Round of Parties,” *Greensboro Record*, January 12, 1935, page 3.

²⁸ Guilford County, North Carolina Deeds Book, book 765, page 497.

²⁹ Guilford County, North Carolina Deeds Book, book 377, page 417.

³⁰ Guilford County, North Carolina Deeds Book, book 2858, page 291

³¹ Marvin Sykes, “Goin’ Home,” *Greensboro Daily News*, September 28, 1941, page 10A.

³² “North Carolina, Birth Indexes, Guilford, 1932-1941,” s.v. “Phyllis Brooks,” book 64, page 6, Ancestry.com.

³³ “North Carolina, Birth Indexes, Guilford, 1932-1941,” s.v. “Jane Brooks,” book 67, page 922, Ancestry.com.

³⁴ Hill Directory Company, *Greensboro, North Carolina City Directory*, (Richmond, VA: Hill Director Co.), 1941, page 301, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/greensboroguill1941unse/page/300>.

³⁵ Hill Directory Co., *Greensboro, North Carolina City Directory*, (Richmond, VA: Hill Director Co.), 1939, page 277, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/greensboroguill1939unse/page/276>.

³⁶ Marvin Brown, “Historic and Architectural Resources of Greensboro, North Carolina, 1880-1941,” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1991), Section E, page 28.

with negro blood; provided, that this shall not be construed to prevent the living upon the premises of any negro servant, whose time is employed for domestic purposes by the occupants of the dwelling house together with the family of such servant.”³⁷ The Brooks may have had other African American servants, and this history can be explored using the Greensboro City Directories, available at the Greensboro History Museum and the Central Greensboro Public Library.

Thornton Brooks was a prominent labor and employment attorney. He joined his father’s law firm Brooks, McLendon, and Holderness after passing the bar and taking his oath as an attorney in September 1934.³⁸ Years later, Brooks was elected to serve as the chairman of the Greensboro School Board in 1958. At that point, he was on the Board of Trustees at Queens College and Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. One issue Brooks worked on as the Chairman of the Greensboro School Board was the issue of the integration of African Americans into white schools.³⁹ Margaret Williams Brooks was an Irving Park socialite. The *Greensboro Record* often reported on her many social events. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church and belonged to multiple civic and cultural organizations.⁴⁰

Otto Zenke was a Greensboro-based, but nationally and internationally known interior designer. He designed the 1961 south wing additions to the Thornton Brooks House, commissioned by Thornton Brooks. Brooks had a building permit for \$16,650 to add the first floor guestroom and the second floor master bath edition. Zenke gained his education at the Pratt Institute and Parsons School of Design in New York City, then in 1937 relocated to Greensboro, North Carolina. He was attracted to Greensboro by an opportunity to institute a design service for a local furniture store. As his career developed, he specialized in “residential work, and the charm and dignity and quality of the homes he has planned for people in and around Greensboro have undoubtedly enhanced life in that city for an enormous number of people.”⁴¹ In an article lauding the designer posthumously, Zenke’s 34-year legacy in Greensboro is clearly important: “‘Zenke’ was the name people loved to drop. It stood for class and the very best in furnishings. In Irving Park homes, the name of the interior designer almost went without saying. Zenke, of course.”⁴² Zenke’s additions followed Holleyman’s original design intent.

In 1984, the house transferred ownership from Margeret and Thornton Brooks to William B. and Martha J. Halstead. During the Halsteads’ ownership of 415 Sunset Drive, the land given to Margaret in the original wedding gift in 1935 (Deed Book 0765, page 497), the correction in 1936 (Deed Book 2858, Page 291), and Thornton’s inheritance from his parents (Deed Book 2858, Page 291) was sold in different stages to the Halsteads. The property was divided in 2006 and 2008 from the Brooks to the Hallsteads, and in 2008 property was sold to Helen Brooks, relative of Margaret (see Chain of Title below).⁴³ In 1984, the Hallsteads commissioned a kitchen “nook” addition designed by Henry and Virginia Zenke, “The Zenkes, Inc.”

³⁷ Guilford County, North Carolina Deeds Book, book 236, page 312.

³⁸ “Thornton Brooks Takes Legal Oath,” *Greensboro Record*, September 17, 1934, page 10.

³⁹ “Brooks Gets Greensboro School Post, Attorney Named Board Chairman,” *Greensboro Record*, July 31, 1958, page 16.

⁴⁰ “Brooks, Margaret Williams,” Obituary, *News & Record*, November 2, 2017, accessed September 30, 2019, https://www.greensboro.com/obituaries/brooks-margaret-williams/article_448c9f5e-7333-5a69-8082-0d031f63c0b4.html.

⁴¹ William Pahlmann, “A Matter of Taste, The Young Man Came South for a Career,” *Greensboro Daily News*, July 11, 1965, page B11.

⁴² Jim Schlosser, “Otto Zenke, Interior designer’s business to become an elegant memory,” *Greensboro News and Record*, December 9, 1984, page 1.

⁴³ Guilford County, North Carolina Deeds Book, book 6946, page 0149.

In 2008, the Thornton Brooks House was listed for sale, eight separate times, without attracting a buyer.⁴⁴ Between 2016-2017 the house was abandoned, an official notice placed on the door from Wells-Fargo bank on July 18, 2017. The house was occupied by squatters and was falling into a state of disrepair, which grew public notice in a Fox 8 WGHP news interview.⁴⁵ The current owners are Sam and Ashley Simpson, who saved the home from demolition in 2017.⁴⁶ The Simpsons rehabilitated the house using historic tax credits from 2017-2018, maintaining the integrity of the house.

Grantor-Grantee Index

Grantors	Grantees
Irving Park Company (March 11, 1922)	A.L. Brooks and Wife (March 11, 1922)
Aubrey L. Brooks and Helen T. Brooks (January 12, 1935).	Margaret Williams Brooks (January 12, 1935).
Margaret W. Brooks and Thornton H. Brooks (March 1, 1984)	William B. Halstead and Martha J. Halstead (March 1, 1984)
William B Halstead and Martha J. Halstead (December 4, 1997)	TRSTE, Inc. (December 4, 1997)
William B. Halstead and Martha J. Halstead (October 23, 2008) General Warranty Deed of land listed in Book 3353, page 463	Helen E. Brooks (October 23, 2008)
Trustee Services of Carolina, LLC (October 6, 2017)	Sam Simpson (October 6, 2017)

Chain of Title

1. BK 0377, Page 0417

- a. Recorded on March 11, 1922
- b. Grantor: Irving Park Company, and the Southern Life & Trust Company, released the land from a Deed of Trust, “dated April 16th, 1915, and recorded in Book 269, page 80” to A.L. Brooks and wife Helen T. Brooks of Guilford County.
- c. Grantee: A.L. Brooks and Helen T. Brooks
- d. “Beginning at an iron state on the south side of Sunset Drive, Brooks present northwest corner, and thence south 8 degrees 15 minutes west with Brooks’ line 303.4 feet to an iron

⁴⁴ “415 Sunset drive: A 1930s ‘Dream Castle’ is Rescued in Irving Park,” Greensboro Historic Homes, last modified November 2, 2017, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://gsohistorichomes.com/tag/irving-park/>.

⁴⁵ Susanna Black, “Neighbors say ‘squatters’ are staying in abandoned former multimillion-dollar Greensboro home,” last modified July 25, 2017, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://myfox8.com/2017/07/25/neighbors-say-squatters-are-staying-in-abandoned-former-multimillion-dollar-greensboro-home/>.

⁴⁶ Rebecca Toryer, “Once-majestic mansion in Irving Park sold for \$1.5M to Triad couple who plan renovation,” *Triad Business Journal*, last updated November 2, 2017, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://www.bizjournals.com/triad/news/2017/11/02/once-majestic-mansion-in-old-irving-park-sold-for.html>.

pipe in what is known as the Steel & Iron stake in the east margin of the new street to be extended southward from Sunset Drive; thence north 28 degrees 35 minutes.”

2. BK 0765, Page 0497

- a. Recorded on January 12, 1935, Deed
- b. Grantor: A.L. Brooks and his wife Helen T. Brooks
- c. Grantee: Margaret Williams Brooks
- d. “Beginning at the point of intersection of Briarcliff Road and Sunset Drive, running thence East along said Sunset Drive 250 feet to a stone; thence in a Northerly direction 300 feet more or less to the line of Latham Park; thence West along this property line 250 feet to Briarcliff Road, and thence along this street North 300 feet more or less to the point of Beginning.” Designated for her and her heirs and assigns forever.

3. BK 0798, Page 0090

- a. Recorded on November 17, 1936, Deed of Correction
- b. Grantor: A.L. Brooks and his wife Helen T. Brooks
- c. Margaret Williams Brooks
- d. “The parties of the first part desire to correct the errors in the description of the property appearing in the deed ... in Book 765, Page 497....sell and convey unto the said party of the second part, and her heirs, a tract or parcel of land...adjoining the lands of the grantors and bounded as follows: “BEGINNING at the southeast intersection of Briarcliff Road and Sunset Drive, running thence South 55 deg. 17 min. East 124.19 feet to appoint; thence South 73 deg. 58 min. East 56.7 feet to a point; thence South 17 deg. 59 min. West 343.44 feet to a point; thence North 51 deg. 07 min. West 337 feet more or less to a point in the East side of Briarcliff Road; thence along Briarcliff Road North 23 deg. 18 min. East 240 feet more or less to the point of the Beginning.”

4. BK 2858, Page 0291

- a. Recorded April 29, 1977, Division Deed
- b. Grantors: Last Will and Testament and Estate of Helen T. Brooks, and James Taylor Brooks and his wife, Jean B. Brooks
- c. Grantee: Thornton H. Brooks
- d. This adjoined land “Beginning at the iron pipe in the southern margin of Sunset Drive...measured in an easterly direction along and with the southern margin of Sunset Drive from the southeastern intersection of Sunset Drive and Briarcliff Road (which iron pipe also marks the northeastern corner of a tract or parcel described in a Deed to Margaret W. Brooks record in Book 798, Page 90...)... along and with the eastern line of the Margaret W. Brooks tract to the POINT AND PLACE OF BEGINNING...”

5. BK 3353, Page 0463-0464

- a. Recorded March 1, 1984, Deed 72490
- b. Grantor: Margaret W. Brooks and her husband, Thornton H. Brooks
- c. Grantee: William B. Halstead and his wife, Martha J. Halstead

6. BK 3553, Page 2031-2033

- a. Recorded December 23, 1986, Deed of Trust
- b. Grantor/borrower: William B. and Martha J. Halstead, his wife

- c. Trustee: Larry W. Shepherd
- d. Beneficiary, First Union National Bank, 122 N. Elm Street, Greensboro, N.C.
- e. Halstead's borrowed \$325,000 to purchase land: "Beginning at a point marking the intersection of the southern margin of Sunset Drive and the eastern margin of Briarcliff Road and running...along and with the southern margin of Sunset Drive.

7. BK 6540, Page 1278-1280

- a. Recorded May 29, 2006
- b. Grantor: Margaret W. Brooks (widow), 4100 Well Spring Drive, Apt #1217, Greensboro, NC 27410
- c. Grantee: William B. Halstead and his wife, Martha J. Halstead, 415 Sunset Drive, Greensboro, NC 27408
- d. Margaret Brooks sold land to the Halsteads .88 acres.

8. BK 6946, Page 149

- a. Recorded October 23, 2008
- b. Grantor: William B. Halstead and his wife, Martha J. Halstead, 415 Sunset Drive, Greensboro, NC 27408
- c. Grantee: Helen E. Brooks, 409 Sunset Drive, Greensboro, N.C. 24708 [27408]
- d. Land purchased by the Halsteads from Margaret Brooks, purchased by family member Helen Brooks who lived in the Aubrey Brooks house with adjoining property.

9. BK 7656, Page 870-871

- a. Recorded December 3, 2014, Appointment of Substitute Trustee
- b. Discussion of foreclosure sale.

10. BK 7983, Page 232-234

- a. Recorded October 6, 2017, Substitute Trustee's Deed
- b. Grantor: Trustee Services of Carolina, LLC
- c. Grantee: Sam Simpson
- d. "Grantee receiving title because they were the successful bidder at a foreclosure sale" of 415 Sunset Drive.

V. Finding Aid for Photographs

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VII. Appendix

Supporting Photographs and Documents

1. "Monday Heavy Day," *Greensboro Record*, June 30, 1936. This newspaper article stated the construction cost for the Thornton Brooks house would cost \$20,000. Charles W. Angle was listed as the building contractor.

Monday Heavy Day.

Issuance of permits by J. A. Tucker, city building permit clerk, today followed a big day Monday when permits were issued for construction jobs aggregating \$69,595.

Monday's permits included one for the new plant of the Carolina Webbing company, which will be located at the corner of Arlington and Andrew streets, estimated to cost \$36,000.

Another large permit issued Monday was for the construction of a residence at 415 Sunset drive, Irving park, for Thornton Brooks, estimated to cost \$20,000. Charles W. Angle, incorporated, local contractor, was named as contractor for both the webbing mill and the Brooks residence.

2. "Costly Homes More Common," *Greensboro Record*, July 17, 1936. Describes changes in Greensboro's construction post-Great Depression, lists property as a prime example of an "upward trend" in costly homes.

COSTLY HOMES MORE COMMON

Larger Percentage of New Buildings Are of \$7,000 Or More In Cost

Better business conditions locally have been reflected in residential construction work here so far for the year, according to comparative statistics announced today by J. A. Tucker, city building permit clerk.

During the depression years residential construction was limited to smaller homes, those of less expensive type except for a few cases each year.

In dividing the two classes of homes, contractors generally regard homes costing \$7,000 or more as being in the higher bracket. During recent years only a limited number of such higher division homes have been erected here annually since the beginning of the "depression" period, but construction of such residences so far this season has shown a great improvement.

Already this season permits have been issued for 12 residences costing \$7,000 or more. These range from \$7,000 to \$30,000.

Upward Trend.

Within recent months alone permits have been issued for three residences in Irving park costing \$20,000, \$27,000 and \$30,000, while another was issued for a \$16,000 residence in the same community.

Three residences costing above the \$7,000 figure were started by the Guilford Securities, these being located as follows: 703 Woodlawn avenue, cost \$7,875; 803 Dover road, cost \$8,000, and 802 Dover road, cost \$13,000.

Other residences started at a cost of more than the \$7,000 figure this year were as follows:

John K. Voehringer, 803 Hood place, \$27,000; Mrs. Christine Schlosser, 708 Twyckenham drive, \$8,000; R. W. Weaver, 106 South Chapman street, \$9,624; J. Spencer Love, 710 Country Club place, \$30,000; L. A. Scott, 2205 Madison avenue, \$9,000; Dr. H. E. Casstevens, 721 Woodlawn, \$7,000; George E. Perrin, 801 Hood place, \$16,000; J. A. Doubles, 1009 Courtland, \$7,755; Thornton Brooks, 415 **Sunset** drive, \$20,000.

3. "Building Takes Sudden Upturn." *Greensboro Record*, November 5, 1936.

BUILDING TAKES SUDDEN UPTURN

Number of More Expensive Residences Are Being Constructed Here

Due to the large increase in residential construction in Greensboro, building permits for the first five days of the month aggregated \$64,978, or more than for the entire month of November last year.

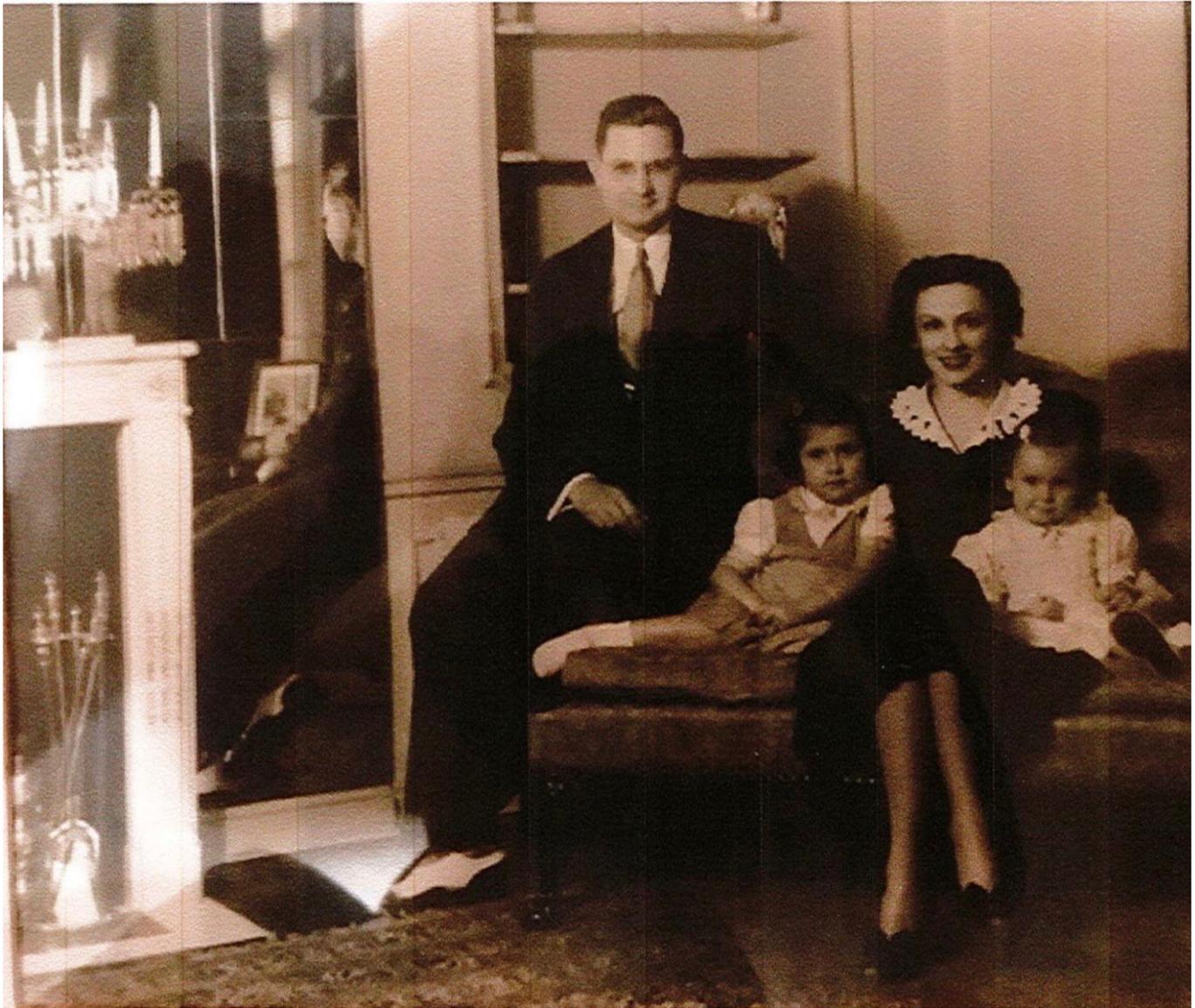
Residential construction led the list for the week, several permits being issued for large residences in the city, while work is already under way on a large number of other local

4. homes ranging in cost from \$5,000 to \$30,000.

With the issuance of permits Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning, the city's construction program for the month aggregated \$64,978 as compared with \$62,776 for the entire month of November, 1935.

Among the other outstanding residences under construction in the city now are Spencer Love's handsome home on Country Club drive, estimated to cost \$30,000; Thornton Brooks' new residence at 415 Sunset drive, estimated to cost \$20,000; McDaniel Lewis' new home

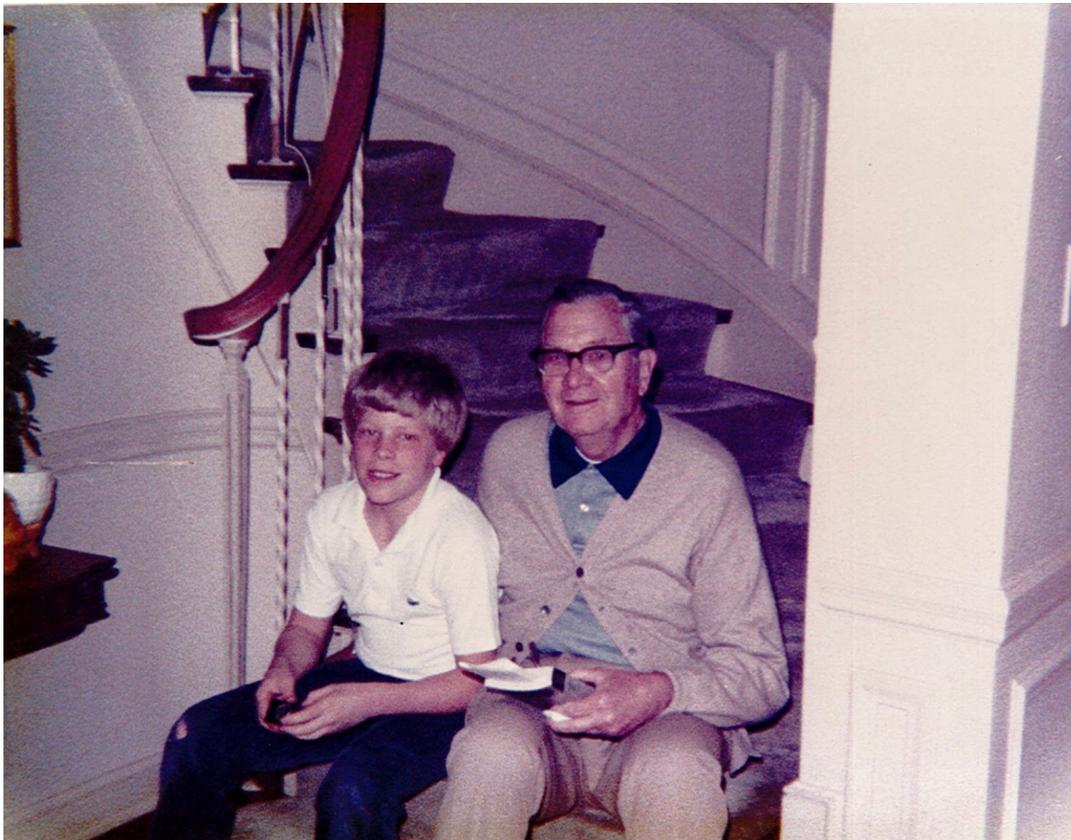
5. Thornton Brooks family photo showcasing living room with marble mantel and bookshelf (date unknown).



6. Thornton Brooks family photo showcasing dining room murals (date unknown).



7. Thornton Brooks family photo showing Brooks on staircase, featuring wainscoting and rail (date unknown).



8. News article featuring marble mantel and staircase (date unknown)



(Daily News staff photos by Matherly.)

IT'S FUN—Miss Josephine Ward, right, club publicity chairman, is pictured entertaining three of the honorees. Beside her is Miss Elizabeth Antrim. On the love seat are Miss Gail Kirkman, left, and Miss Sue Simmons.



STAIRSTEPS—Miss Holliday Deifell, vice president, is pictured

VIII. Supporting Photographs

Fig. 1: Setting (landscape features, lot)



Fig. 2: Front (Northwest) Elevation



Fig. 3: North Wing



Fig. 4: South Wing



Fig. 5: Side (North) Elevation



Fig. 6: Side (South) Elevation



Fig. 7: Rear (Southeast) Elevation



Fig. 8-16: Exterior Features
Fig. 8: Roof



Fig. 9: Dental molding and copper gutters



Fig. 10: Brick quoins



Fig. 11: Windows

11a. Front door transom window



11b. Casement windows



11c. Oversized casement window on second level



11d. Oxeye (*oeil-de-boeuf*) window



Fig. 12: Doors

12a. Front doors



12b. Side doors



12c. North wing back door and portico



Fig. 13: Portico



Fig. 14: Garage



Fig. 15: Gazebo



Fig. 16: Moat



Fig. 17: Cornucopia



Figs. 18-21: Interior features

Fig. 18: Library



Fig. 19: Entrance Hall



Fig. 20: Staircase



Fig. 21: Living room fireplace surround



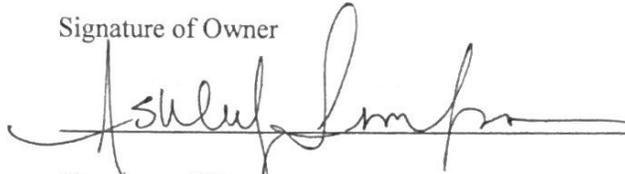
I, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF; AND SUPPORT LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF THE PROPERTY DEFINED HEREIN.

I also acknowledge that the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission may require additional information.

 10/4/19

Signature of Owner

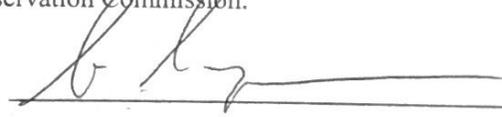
Date

 10/4/19

Signature of Owner

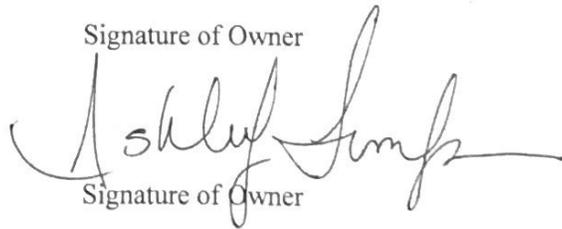
Date

I also acknowledge that the designation includes the interior, interior features and details; exterior, exterior features and details of all structures; and land, unless otherwise noted in the application. Any alterations of the property and/or features designated, requires an approved *Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)* issued by the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission.

 10/4/19

Signature of Owner

Date

 10/4/19

Signature of Owner

Date