Form 10-300
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(TYPE all entries – complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
Gull Harbor
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
5th Front Street
CITY OR TOWN:
New Bern (First Congressional District, The Hon. Walter B. Jones)

STATE: North Carolina
COUNTY: Craven
CODE: 37

3. CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Yes: Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Public Acquisition: In Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being Considered</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural
Commercial
Educational
Entertainment
Government
Industrial
Military
Private Residence
Religious
Other (Specify)
Transportation
Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Caroline Dunn Ashford

STREET AND NUMBER:
512 East Front Street
CITY OR TOWN:
New Bern

STATE: North Carolina
CODE: 37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Craven County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
302 Broad Street
CITY OR TOWN:
New Bern

STATE: North Carolina
CODE: 37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE: North Carolina
CODE: 37

FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER DATE
### Table 7: Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>(Check One)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorated</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruins</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexposed</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Check One)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ Altered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Unaltered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Set on a small finger of land between East Front Street and the Neuse River, Gull Harbor commands a magnificent panorama over the water. It abuts the sidewalk and rises to a height of two-and-one-half stories over a paled brick foundation behind which is a full basement. The stark frame side-hall plan house is three bays wide, but because of its plan has varied fenestration on the sides, with the hall side (that toward the water) marked by three bays and the opposite by four bays. The gable roof, covered with shakes, is pierced by a central chimney and three pedimented dormers, two on the front (southwest) elevation and one on the rear. Although the dwelling once had an entrance in the south bay of the street facade, this long ago was converted into a window, leaving only the doorway on the water side which is sheltered by a twentieth century pedimented porch. This entrance, located in the middle bay, is composed of a six-panel door with four-light transom above. On the outside all six panels are flat-paneled with the obverse being flush-paneled. Nine-over-six sash was installed in the windows during a restoration carried out in the mid-1960s on the first and second floors. The six-over-six sash in the gable end windows and dormers at the attic level survived. All the windows are contained within narrow molded architraves and are flanked by louvered shutters. Semicircular louvered vents were installed in each gable and near the ridge. Plain pilaster strips delineate the corners of Gull Harbor and a simple molded cornice occurs at the eaves. A shed addition was constructed across the first level of the entire rear facade.

The house follows a side-hall plan, two rooms deep, with the only entrance halfway down the side hall. The overall impression of the interior corresponds to the exterior appearance—roomy, well ventilated and uncluttered. The finish is of the Federal style and quite simple. Only minimal changes were made during the restoration—most in the form of closets or book cases. Throughout the first floor, the walls are plastered and have molded chair rails and baseboards, the front parlor being the only room with a flat-paneled dado. A molded plaster cornice outlines the perimeter of the hall and a stair rises toward the rear in two flights with a transverse landing between the southeast wall. The stair is of traditional Federal design with balusters square in section and tapered posts and newel supporting a rounded, ramped handrail. Repeating the profile of the handrail, the hall chair rail continues along the opposite wall. Each step is adorned with a wave-pattern bracket.

In the parlors a wooden cornice is used. The front parlor mantel has a rectangular fire opening flanked by paneled pilasters the fields of which are fluted. These support a three-part frieze with paneled end blocks and a raised center tablet featuring a sunburst. A molded shelf with pierced dentils breaks above the end blocks. A book case, added during the restoration, is set in an arched opening to the southeast of the mantel. In the rear parlor the mantel is composed of paneled pilasters with pierced gouge work in the caps, a three-part frieze with sunbursts in the center tablet and end blocks, and a molded shelf enriched with a course of pierced dentils. Pierced gouge work is found in the architrave above the fire opening; the shelf breaks above the end blocks and bows over the central tablet. On the southeast side of the mantel, a small cupboard, the door of which has six flat panels, occurs above the chair rail. Six-panel doors occur throughout the first and second floors.
On the second floor, the plan is identical except that the front part of the hall was converted into a bathroom. The finish of this floor is plainer than the one below and consistent throughout, using molded chair rails, beaded baseboards, and plaster walls. In the front bedchamber the mantel has plain pilasters flanking the fire opening and carrying an unadorned frieze above which a molded shelf enriched with dentils breaks above the end blocks. On the northwest side of the chimney breast is a closet. A mantel similar to that in the front room, but lacking the dentil course, is used in the rear bedchamber; it is flanked by closets.

The third-floor rooms continue the pattern of progressive simplicity and employs beaded chair rails and baseboards and board and batten doors. Each of the two mantels, which stylistically recall the Georgian period, has a simple architrave around the fire opening, a plain frieze, and a broken molded shelf. Closets also flank the chimney breasts in these rooms.

The basement quite obviously was used as a kitchen at some time. The rear section of the basement contains a fireplace with a wooden lintel above the opening and a brick flat arch over that. Evidence of whitewash remains on the ceiling.
When in 1742, Josiah Jones secured the land on which Gull Harbor was built, a ferry already operated from the site across the Neuse River. Throughout the history of the house, its proximity to the water has been an important feature of the site, with ferries and bridges leading from the area. Even today the U.S. 17 highway bridge crosses the Neuse River within a block of the house.

Jones evidently allowed his grant to lapse by not building on the property, and Edward Griffith acquired it from the Town Commissioners in 1753. After several owners, William Blackledge acquired the property and in 1815 sold it to Eli Smallwood and Increase Bradley. Smallwood was an important New Bern merchant and ship owner, who had already constructed an elegant brick house in the same block and had extensive wharfs, warehouses, and other structures within the block. Increase Bradley was a Beaufort merchant and ship owner, and the two may have had common business interests.

The exterior and interior configuration and finish of Gull Harbor are consistent and quite similar to the many circa 1810 side-hall plan dwellings nearby. According to persistent local tradition, however, the Gull Harbor house was remodeled from a warehouse. There is no specific documentation for that tradition, but the deed of April, 1818, by which Joseph and Dyer Brainard of New York acquired the property, at least acknowledged the commercial development of the property and no dwelling was specified.

Evidently the Brainards of New York were business associates of Smallwood, for the house was once more in his possession by 1834 when he sold it to Thomas Singleton. That transfer specifically mentions "wharf buildings and other appurtenances." This same language appears in the 1836 transfer of Singleton to Wiley M. Nelson, and the 1837 transfer by Nelson to Sarah Tillman.
Sarah's grandfather, Henry Tillman, had established himself in the area in the eighteenth century, and before his death in 1818 was one of the richest men there, holding vast estates and owning several mills. Local tradition credits Sarah with giving the house the name Gull Harbor or Gull House—an apt name, for the high roofline of the house as well as its site still attract the river gulls. It was traditionally also she who converted the house from commercial into residential use; the finish of the house, however, does not appear to bear this out.

By 1849, when the house was insured by her daughter and son-in-law, Alexander and Mary B. Justice, the site is listed as having a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling House</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barn &amp; Stables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smokehouse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The residence is listed as

- of wood and in fine repair - has a scuttle and steps to it - 28 x 50 - 2 stories high - kitchen is 22 x 24 - 1 story - and has two chimneys and four fireplaces.

Evidently half stories were not counted as stories for insurance purposes, and the house was, as it now is, two-and-one-half stories, and the kitchen one-and-one-half stories. This would readily account for the two chimneys and four fireplaces in the kitchen, since the kitchen probably also served as quarters. When Sarah Tillman died in 1869 she willed the house to her Justice grandchildren, and the property remained in the family ownership until 1952 when it was purchased by the present owner, Caroline Dunn Ashford.

The Sanborn insurance maps indicate that by 1896 a one-and-one-half story addition already stood to the rear of the structure. By 1904 this had been replaced with a porch and a detached outbuilding is shown. Caroline Ashford, after her purchase in 1952, built the present one-bay wing across the rear of the structure and returned the side porch to an earlier character. Except for these changes, the house remains substantially as built and finished.
As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National
- State
- Local

Name: H. G. Jones
Title: Director, State Department of Archives and History
Date: 19 September 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: ________________
Gull Harbor
51½ Front Street
New Bern, North Carolina

Map of Craven County
New Bern Chamber of Commerce
Scale: 3/8" : 1 mile
No date

Latitude
(degrees  minutes  seconds)
35   06   39

Longitude
(degrees  minutes  seconds)
77   02   12