NAME

HISTORIC Graylyn

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER see continuation sheet

CITY. TOWN Winston-Salem

STATE North Carolina

CITY. TOWN Winston-Salem

CITY. TOWN Winston-Salem

CITY TOWN Winston-Salem

STATE North Carolina

STATE North Carolina

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

MUSEUM

COMMERCIAL

PARK

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

MILITARY

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Wake Forest University (Dr. James Ralph Scales, President)

STREET & NUMBER P. O. Box 7226

CITY. TOWN Winston-Salem

CITY. TOWN Winston-Salem

CITY TOWN Winston-Salem

CITY. TOWN Winston-Salem

CITY TOWN Winston-Salem

STATE North Carolina

STATE North Carolina

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE Forsyth County Courthouse

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY. TOWN Winston-Salem

CITY TOWN Winston-Salem

STATE North Carolina

STATE North Carolina

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY. TOWN

STATE
Begin at a point on the southwest side of Reynolda Road approximately 240 feet north of the Graylyn entrance driveway. Then approximately southeast to the west to the west corner of the junction of Reynolda Road and Coliseum Drive. Then approximately southwest along the northwest side of Coliseum Drive to the junction with Robinhood Road. Then west along the north side of Robinhood Road approximately 720 feet. Then north approximately 1900 feet. Then approximately northeast approximately 1400 feet to the point of origin, describing a tract surveyed by John G. Bane, Civil Engineer, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 3-16-73 as revised.
Graylyn is a large and rambling Norman Revival style mansion located in the prosperous suburban area of Winston-Salem opposite the elegant estate of R. J. Reynolds. The main house, Norman in flavor, occupies an informally landscaped park in the English style of about seventy gently rolling acres embellished with an impressive array of outbuildings and at one time a small ornamental lake, now drained. Thomas W. Sears, the landscape architect, placed the house near the western boundary of the property, permitting relatively long approaches to the house from the south and north. The entrance front of the house faces east and looks across a spacious lawn planted informally with clumps and borders of evergreens and deciduous trees.

The main living spaces of the house face west toward the woods. In the rear, or west side of the house, Sears' landscaping is more formal, and features slate and grass terraces, regular plantings of small trees and flowering shrubs, small ornamental pools, fountains, and statuary, and originally, beds of iris, gardenias, and various annuals and perennials, since greatly simplified.

South of the house are the tennis court, bath house, irregularly shaped pool, and garden shelter approached through a cedar allee. Originally the planting pattern was elaborate, with beds of flowers, borders of ivy and daffodils, and exotic flowering trees and shrubs. Though it has been simplified, the basic feel of the landscaping is still evident. Beyond the tennis court and pool a bridge spans a stream that once fed the small lake. Across the lake is a vista to the "farm" complex.

The house itself is a long, low-lying, two-and-one-half story structure faced with yellow Randolph County stone laid in an irregular rubble pattern. The length of the house bends in an obtuse angle toward the east with a polygonal stair tower at the joint. The irregular hipped roof is of thick, richly textured slate pierced round-headed dormers and handsome, ornamented brick chimneys with multiple flues.

The entrance block of the house, a five bay section, is symmetrical and features a large entrance emphasized by a stone Gibbsian surround and elegant but awkward scrolled pediment, the latter meant to reflect the vernacular, country tradition intended by the architect. To either side the fenestration and arcading is highly irregular and disappears at each end into screens of closely planted evergreens.

The west elevation is slightly more regular, with a central block flanked by hipped roof "pavilions" which separate the center section from the highly asymmetrical extensions of the house to north and south. (The architect designed the southernmost part of the house, which contained the indoor swimming pool, as a one-story extension. Later, when the house became a hospital, a second floor was added.)

The plan of the house is as irregular as the exterior suggests, but the rooms are logically arranged. In the central and south section of the house are the principal public spaces - vestibule (flanked by powder rooms), entrance hall, living room, dining room, sun room, "Persian room" (a card room), library, and indoor pool. Below are dressing rooms for both sexes, a "guard room" that served as a card room, and the "tent room." The north section of the house contains restaurant sized kitchen and pantries, miscellaneous service and storage rooms; flower room, silver vault, and
breakfast room, all of which open onto a lengthy corridor. Beyond, and attached to the	house, is a garage and open service court. In the basement are larger storage rooms
and spaces for mechanical equipment and a switchboard for Graylyn's extensive internal
telephone system.

The upper floor contains individual bedrooms, suites, and sitting rooms, and rooms
for servants, all arranged on long corridors. The effect is that of a small but
luxurious hotel. The attic area is reserved for storage.

Though the irregular exterior anticipates the irregular arrangement of rooms,
Graylyn's Norman exterior gives no hint of the stylistic variety found inside. The
vestibule and hall have a definite late medieval flavor. Separating these areas is an
opening flanked by fifteenth century Gothic-style colonettes supporting a polychromed,
vernacular entablature, the latter of which is a reproduction. Benson's elaborate iron
gates, which contain spikey, foliage-like vertical elements, are prologue to a program
of rich ornamental iron work that decorates much of the lower floor. The hall is low
and warm, not grand and intimidating as one might expect of a house of this scale, and
has a vaulted ceiling and handsome fireplace with sloping stone breast.

The only true Norman style interior is the stair tower, with its focal point, a
"bee hive" cap laid in concentric rings of brick. The walls are stuccoed and are
pierced by windows with stone trim. The cantilevered limestone steps spiral two floors
and contain delicate railings with ornamental panels at the landings by Benson. An
iron chandelier hangs from the apex of the cone.

Down a short corridor from the entrance hall is the eighteenth century English
style living room, a well detailed, elegant room of nearly twelve hundred square feet,
the largest room in the house. It features the standard program of classical detail—
fully paneled walls of oak veneer, regularly spaced fluted Doric pilasters on molded
bases, molded cornices, and foliated window surrounds repeating the patterns of the
cornice. At the west end is a marble fireplace with a heavy bolection molding and
elaborate shelf. Double doors leading to adjacent rooms have segmental arched pediments
with molded keystones. The molded plaster ceiling is ornamented with classical detail
and foliated rocaillle decoration. Two brass chandeliers hang from medallions.

The dining room, like the living room a reproduction interior in the eighteenth
century English tradition, is vaguely Adamesque in flavor. The paneled and stuccoed
walls and white marble fireplace give it a lighter feeling and the classical ornament
is slightly abstracted.

The library, which also served as the family sitting room, contains fragments
of French seventeenth century oak paneling. The design contains raised panels, in
molded frames with intermediate strips ornamented by isolated raised detail, mostly
medallions or other small focal points with foliated borders. Recessed bookcases flank
the marble fireplace on the east wall. The ceiling, a white plaster composition by Grafflin, the decorator, repeats the detail of the paneling.

Among the most interesting rooms of the house is the sun room, which adjoins the living room to the north, and overlooks the indoor pool to the south. Unlike the living room, dining room, and library, the octagonal sun room has an exotic, colorful Mediterranean flavor, full of patterns, earthy textures, sunlight, and the sound of water splashing in a corner fountain. The room features tall leaded glass windows with some stained glass detail, tile floors, handpainted polychromed tile, exposed beam ceiling, a variety of stone detail, and a stone fireplace with brick laid in a herringbone pattern. Colored glass doors designed in an art nouveau mode by G. Owen Bonavit, New York, are particularly fine. Above them are clerestory windows, closed by the addition of the second story over the pool.

The pool is unquestionably the finest room in the house, and the most original. The pool itself, eighteen by forty feet, is contained in a space that resembles in feeling the heaviness of an indoor pool of an ocean liner. The art-deco type decoration of the room is splendid. The inside border of the pool features a band of Vitruvian scroll, a stylized wave pattern. The walls of the room contain colorful tile in a herringbone pattern, mural decoration, and round porthole-like windows appropriate to the nautical effect. Benson decorated the balcony opening from the sun room with brass fish, a pelican, and stainless steel detail. The men's dressing room contains decorative tile work featuring camels and pyramids reflective of the importance of Camel cigarettes to the tobacco company and Bowman Gray's fortune.

The basement card room, on the same level with the pool, is another important room. Designed to resemble a guard room of a castle or fortress, it was originally decorated with shields, armor, and other exotic military paraphernalia. Even though this has been removed, the heavy vaulting, ashlar walls, and heavy, freestanding, Romanesque style columns effectively sustain the effect. Between the corridor and the actual rooms are Benson's screens, a masterpiece of scenic ironwork. In the left (south) screen a small ship with simple square rigging and exaggerated quarterdeck sails across a wavy sea to a castle on a rocky pinnacle in the right screen. Irregularly shaped, elongated iron strips suggest wind.

The bedrooms on the second floor are much simpler, though extremely elegant. Most contain decoration of various European styles and one is "Colonial American." Almost all contain, or once contained, marble mantels. The boys' sitting room is especially notable, containing classical, eighteenth century English paneling. The most remarkable feature of the upper floor is the numerous bathrooms, filled with marble detail and tableaux of tile ornament. Heated towel racks, built-in scales, and showers each with seventeen shower heads add to the luxury of the bath.
The principal outbuildings of the estate are the garage-guest house and "farm" complex. The former is a full size domestic building containing the same exterior features as the main house at smaller scale, such as its corner turret, irregular, hipped slate roof, and walls of stone veneer. The farm complex is elaborate and extensive, featuring a tower (silo) with conical cap as a focal point with two courtyards defined by stone walls and one-and-one-half-story stone buildings. These contain garages for seven cars, tack rooms, stables, blacksmith shop, and other facilities, as well as living quarters for estate employees.
Graylyn is an eclectic style twentieth century domestic landmark in North Carolina outstanding in terms of sheer size, cost, and luxury. Built for R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company president Bowman Gray (1874-1935) between 1927 and 1932, the Norman Revival style house contains an elaborate collection of reproduction period rooms and imported European architectural detail of a variety of styles. The principal architect was the youthful Luther Snow Lashmit (1899- ) who worked in the office of the Winston-Salem firm of Northrup and O'Brien. Notable interior ironwork by Joseph Barton Benson (1903-Philadelphia; elaborate and extensive handpainted tile; and decoration by Arthur S. Grafflin of the J. G. Valiant Company of Baltimore distinguish the interior. The English style grounds are the work of landscape architect Thomas W. Sears (1880-1966), Philadelphia.

Among the most significant domestic landmarks of the early twentieth century in North Carolina is Graylyn, an impressive Norman Revival style mansion in Winston-Salem. Thought to be the largest and costliest house built in the state after Biltmore House, the Vanderbilt estate near Asheville, Graylyn is architecturally distinctive and important for its association with one of the state's most prominent businessmen, Bowman Gray (1874-1935). Though houses on this scale were erected in large numbers in the northeast, particularly Long Island and other places fashionable with the very rich, Graylyn is in North Carolina a nearly isolated example of the sprawling, opulent, and elaborately decorated suburban estates of the period.

Bowman Gray, a native of Winston-Salem and a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, found his first job at the Wachovia Bank, which had been founded by his father. Undoubtedly assured of a reasonably secure future and unencumbered by family obligations, Gray soon left the bank for a job as a traveling salesman in Georgia with the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in 1895. Two years later, when the company's northeastern division opened, Gray became sales manager in Baltimore. In 1912 he returned to Winston-Salem as vice-president and director of Reynolds; he succeeded William Neal Reynolds as president in 1924 and later, in 1931, as chairman. Under Gray's leadership, Reynolds rose from the fourth largest tobacco company to the nation's largest, due in large part to the success of Camel cigarettes. Wrote Fortune magazine of Bowman Gray in 1931:

"Second only to James B. Duke, he is the father of the modern $1,000,000,000 tobacco industry, out of which have sprung such fortunes as those of Anthony Brady, Ryan, Widener, Whitney, Payne, and Duke. With one stroke he started a cigarette landslide, which has not yet stopped sliding. . . . The R. J. Reynolds
Tobacco Company has been America's most profitable tobacco concern, doing a business unofficially estimated at $300,000,000 a year, frequently paying enough Federal taxes to build Winston-Salem's spanking new post office in the morning, and another one just like it in the afternoon.\(^3\)

Though the house was in large part constructed during the depression years, financing a dwelling roughly estimated to have cost four million dollars was no problem. The tobacco industry suffered relatively little during those years, and company profits were maintained as cigarette consumption rose.\(^4\)

Though the house was a product of Bowman Gray's and his family's success in business, it more personally reflected Mrs. Gray's tastes, aspirations, and architectural sensibilities. It was Natalie Lyons Gray (1884-1961), whom Bowman Gray married in Baltimore in 1902, who made more of the important decisions regarding the design, decoration, and furnishings of the house than her husband, who, it is said, was not greatly interested in the details of the project.\(^5\)

In 1925 the Grays purchased about eighty-seven acres from Reynolda, the R. J. Reynolds estate on the outskirts of the town of Winston-Salem, where the town had begun to develop its still stylish suburbs. Two years after the purchase of the land, construction of the house began. From her nearly semi-annual trips abroad, which began in 1922, Mrs. Gray had become enamoured of the Norman style of architecture she saw in Northern France, and, reinforced by the success of the style in other American cities and country estates, commissioned the well-established firm of Northrup and O'Brien to design the suburban estate.\(^6\) Luther Snow Lashmit (1899-\(^7\) ), in association with the firm as principal architect for the Graylyn commission, began working drawings in April, 1927.

The twenty-eight-year-old architect was born in Winston-Salem but received his typically beaux-arts education in Pittsburgh at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (degrees in 1921 and 1922). Following his graduation he taught at the Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta) for a year before returning to the Carnegie Institute, where he was assistant professor until 1927. Though he never studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, like many of his peers, his education was garnished by a summer of study in 1925 at Fontainebleau. Graylyn was the beginning rather than the climax of Lashmit's career as a practicing architect. Subsequent to his return to Winston-Salem, he received eleven other domestic commissions in the city, five of which were concurrent with Graylyn. All but one were Colonial or Georgian Revival in style, rather than Norman. Of particular interest is Lashmit's last domestic commission, in Winston-Salem, an international style house of 1940 designed for R. J. Reynolds, Jr.\(^8\)

Groundbreaking for Graylyn took place on January 15, 1928. Eighteen-year-old Gordon Gray, the younger of the Grays' two sons, declared the house in his dedication
speech "a monument to success" established on "the firmest foundation which has been made possible by our mother and father." In his eloquent overstatement, which he remembered many years later with amusement, Gordon Gray described the groundbreaking as "the actual start on our home, the crystallization of dreams and hopes which for so long now have consisted of promises, airy and uncertain." Construction, undertaken by the North-Eastern Construction Company of New York, which maintained a branch office in Winston-Salem, began immediately. The house was not completed until late in 1932, though the family moved into the estate in 1928, living in the guesthouse originally intended by the architects as a garage. Delays in construction were caused by anonymous threats made to the family, evidently from irate persons suffering the effects of the early depression years. So serious were Winston-Salem labor problems that building was halted entirely for a period in 1931.

Graylyn's sumptuous interiors were created jointly by Lashmit, the architect, and Arthur Cassell Grafflin, an interior designer representing the J. G. Valiant Company of Baltimore. Though the firm enjoyed a wide reputation, it was a natural choice for Mrs. Gray who had lived in Baltimore for many years. Grafflin assisted Mrs. Gray in selecting furniture, tapestries, draperies, and paneling for the house and in fact designed some interior detail himself, such as the ceiling for the library, and the fountains and glass chandelier in the sun room. It was such a large and important commission for the Valiant Company that when construction on the estate halted temporarily in 1931 the decorating firm was forced into bankruptcy.

Nearly as important as Grafflin's association with the house was that of Joseph Barton Benson (1903- ), a Philadelphia ironsmith whose extraordinary ironwork became a dominant element in Graylyn's design. From 1927, when he was only twenty-four, until 1935 Benson maintained a studio in Philadelphia, from which Mrs. Gray ordered an extensive quantity of decorative ironwork, in fact Benson's largest commission. Much of his work at Graylyn is eclectic; some of it contains a distinct art-deco flavor.

Even more extensive than the iron work in the house is the extraordinarily fine tile detail appearing in the indoor pool, dressing rooms, the sun room, various utility rooms, and in many of the baths. The handpainted tiles were made by the Enfield Pottery and Tile Works, Enfield, Pennsylvania, and installed by Wesley Stone of Philadelphia.

Just as Grafflin encouraged Mrs. Gray to mix antique furnishings with period reproductions, Lashmit and Grafflin combined imported architectural detail with reproduction period rooms. The library contains paneling from the Hotel d'Estrades in the Place de Vosges, Paris; the entrance hall features some French fifteenth century trim; a second floor sitting room contains eighteenth century English paneling from Gray's Court Inn, London. The only attempt at a Norman interior is the main stair hall, containing one of four staircases to the upper rooms. For this space Lashmit turned to Arthur C. Meigs' staircase in the Arthur E. Newbold House, built in 1923 and published two years later in An American Country House, the Property of Arthur E. Newbold, Jr.,
The Grays selected Thomas W. Sears (1880-1966) to design Graylyn's grounds. Sears, who received his education at Harvard College ('03) and his professional training at the Lawrence Scientific School ('06), worked principally in Philadelphia but was well known in Winston-Salem. His first major commission there was at Reynolda, the adjacent estate, which he began in 1915 and which established his reputation in Winston-Salem. Unlike Lashmit or Benson, who were relatively youthful, Sears was already firmly established by the time he undertook the Graylyn commission. Sears was responsible for the site plan of the house and grounds and the design of the stone entrance gates and bath house; the circular garden shelter and the extensive barn and stables were the work of Eccles, Dewey Everhart (1902-1964) of the firm of Northrup and O'Brien in the Norman style. One of the greenhouses was by Northrup and O'Brien; the larger was the work of the Lord and Burnham Company of Irvington-on-Hudson, New York.

Bowman Gray died in 1935. Graylyn continued to be occupied off and on by the family until 1947 when it was converted to a psychiatric hospital. The hospital moved out in 1959. At present the house is used for dormitories and other purposes by Wake Forest University.

FOOTNOTES

1National Cyclopedia of American Biography, s.v. "Gray, Bowman."


3"Camels of Winston-Salem," Fortune 3 (January, 1931), unpaged section.


5McKelden Smith, interview with Thomas A. Gray, February, 1977.


7"Graylyn," p. 33.


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### 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


National Cyclopedia of American Biography. S.V. "Gray, Bowman."


### 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY** approx. 87 acres

**UTM REFERENCES**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

### 11 FORM PREPARED BY

**NAME/TITLE** Description and Significance compiled by H. McKelden Smith, Survey Specialist

**ORGANIZATION** Division of Archives and History

**STREET & NUMBER** 109 East Jones Street

**CITY OR TOWN** Raleigh

**STATE** North Carolina

**TELEPHONE** 733-4763

**DATE** November 17, 1977

### 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- NATIONAL
- STATE X
- LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE**

**TITLE** State Historic Preservation Officer

**DATE** November 17, 1977

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

- I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**ATTEST:**

**KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**