## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
### INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

### SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
### TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### NAME

**HISTORIC**

"Hillside" (Julian Price House)

AND/OR COMMON

### LOCATION

**STREET & NUMBER**

301 Fisher Park Circle

**CITY, TOWN**

Greensboro

**STATE**

North Carolina

**CODE**

037

**COUNTY**

Guilford

**CODE**

81

### CLASSIFICATION

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### OWNER OF PROPERTY

**NAME:**

Sandra S. Cowart and Glynn Cowart

**STREET & NUMBER:**

c/o Same Address

301 Fisher Park Circle

**CITY, TOWN:**

Greensboro, N.C.

**STATE:**

North Carolina

**CODE:**

27401

### LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**

Guilford County, Registry of Deeds, Deed Book 2763, p. 485

**STREET & NUMBER:**

201 South Eugene Street

**CITY, TOWN:**

Greensboro

**STATE:**

North Carolina

**CODE:**

27401

### REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE:**

An Inventory of Historic Architecture Greensboro, N.C.

**DATE:**

1976

**FEDERAL**

STATE

COUNTY

LOCAL

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**

Survey and Planning Branch, Archives and History

**CITY, TOWN:**

Raleigh

**STATE:**

North Carolina
Hillside, formerly the Julian Price residence, at 301 Fisher Park Circle in Greensboro, North Carolina is a brick and half-timbered Tudor style mansion. Designed by architect Charles C. Hartmann in 1928, and built in 1929, the house has the appearance of a mountain retreat, said to be the image Price wanted Hartmann to create. Hartmann's ability as a designer is vividly illustrated in his success at making a thirty room, four story, 160 foot long house resemble a picturesque assemblage of forms that merge with nature. This effect is achieved by a judicious use of elements derived from the English Tudor and Gothic Revivals and the American cottage tradition.

Placed on the highest point of Fisher Park Circle, the house stood originally in a larger setting of informal paths, plantings, and trees, accented by a gazebo (demolished) and a rustic board and batten gardener's cottage which remains. A raised terrace and rock wall conceal the entire basement level with its driveway, garage, and service entry diminishing the height of the house.

To minimize its length the house breaks near its center at a three story polygonal stair tower, the left wing turning southeast, the entrance bays parallel to Fisher Park and the right wing turning north (see enclosed plans). The front entrance is through a low, wide door; the rear entrance is under a porte cochere. Both facades are further broken into small units by bays and porches, grouped windows and dormers which reflect the house's interior arrangement. The roofline reinforces this irregularity with hip, pyramidal, and gable shapes suggesting that the house developed over a long period of time, a feeling reinforced by Hartmann's use of materials. The walls are red-brown rough fired brick with heavy, unraked joints, relieved by herringbone, diaper or basketweave panels under windows, and on the two great sculpted chimneys. The picturesque details are combined with heavy, rough-hewn dark stained beams which frame bays, define eaves, and outline gables. The use of half-timbering with tan stucco beneath windows, on balconies, in gable and dormer ends further breaks up the scale of the house. The majority of windows are dark framed steel easements whose many lights recall the multi-paned windows associated with Tudor and Gothic revival domestic architecture.

Again, to minimize size, the interior of the house is clearly divided into public and private spaces: the first floor with a large double entry hall is accessible from front and rear. The library, living room, and dining room are arranged around the multisided entry and provide gracious spaces for entertaining. The second floor pivots around the tower—south wing for master bedroom suite, north wing for children's rooms arranged along a corridor with servants quarters at the end. The third floor holds attic and more servants rooms. The huge basement houses heating, vault and storage.

The interior has been primarily altered by painting, some vaguely Georgian woodwork additions and the elimination of the second kitchen to provide a billiard room. The original decorations include the plaster work ceiling in the living room which consists of Tudor strapwork patterns centered with floral motifs, the raised paneling in the entry hall and dining room and the irregular, wide-boarded pegged and butterfly jointed oak floors. Wall niches, built-in cabinets, window seats, and low wide doors with elaborate hardware contribute to a sense of warmth, comfort, and gracious living traditionally associated with these architectural forms.
FOOTNOTES:

1. Interview with the present owner, September 25, 1979.

2. These changes were made when Ralph Price inherited Hillside. The plan as it presently exists can be compared with the original blueprints in the possession of the present owner.
### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Hillside, the Julian Price residence at 301 Fisher Park Circle, like the neighborhood itself, is a visible symbol of the financial success that evolved in Greensboro in the decades following World War I. Greensboro architect, Charles C. Hartmann, designing for a client he already knew, created this spacious elegant but intentionally unpretentious Tudor style mansion. By all accounts a complex personality, Price combined a 'just home folks' manner with brilliant financial acumen. The executive behind the expansion of the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company wielded a powerful influence in the development of Greensboro as a major commercial city. Hillside seems to reflect the private aspect of Price just as Jefferson Standard Life Building (also designed by Hartmann) reflects Price's public spirited qualities.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Hillside, and the Fisher Park neighborhood in which it remains a focus, represents the visible success of a community whose financial growth contributed to the subsequent development of both Greensboro and the Golden Triad (with Winston-Salem and High Point) which has been essential to the development of commerce and industry in 20th century North Carolina.

B. As the home of Julian Price, an energetic insurance magnate, and long time president of Jefferson Standard, Hillside represents the private aspects of this public figure prominent in the early 20th century commercial growth of Greensboro, whose enterprise and acumen had a profound effect on the development of the city and the state. It is associated as well with architect Charles Hartmann whom Price brought to Greensboro.

C. Hillside, the Tudor-style mansion designed by Charles C. Hartmann, represents another aspect of Hartmann's work which is important in the creation of the Greensboro cityscape. The house represents a high level of design and craftsmanship and is a distinctive domestic type which has limited representation of this quality in North Carolina.
Julian Price, President of Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company from 1919 to 1946 left two visible monuments to his success: the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Building and Hillside, his private home. It does not appear that he intended either to be thought of in this way, but given his personal importance to the development of a vital asset in the business community, in Greensboro, the Piedmont region and N. C. it is difficult not to associate these buildings with his personal story which is one with the American dream, based on adherence to the timeless verities of family, individual worth, and hard work.

The first son of Joseph H. and Mary Green Price, Julian was born near Richmond, Virginia in Lunenburg County on November 25, 1867. Life during reconstruction was difficult for this family with six children. Mr. Price founded a country store near Meherrin where Julian attended a one-room school. When he was eighteen Julian went to work as a telegrapher and dispatcher for the Southern Railroad at Meherrin.

Price worked for Southern Railroad in Richmond, where he was transferred at the age of twenty. In 1895 he dispatcher's office was moved to Durham, North Carolina and he went with it. He was then transferred to Greensboro where he continued to work for Southern until 1903.

While in Durham he met Miss Ethel Clay whom he subsequently married in 1897. They had two children, Ralph and Elizabeth. Mrs. Price died in 1943.

In 1903 Mr. Price left Southern to work for the American Tobacco Company as a traveling agent. At the age of 38 he left that company to become an agent for the Greensboro Life Insurance Company. Following intensive study of the field and the product, Price quickly met with success that caused him to be made general agent and in 1909, secretary and agency manager.

The growing interest in life insurance and its resulting investment capacities precipitated the merger, in 1912, of Greensboro Life, Security Life Annuity of Greensboro and the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company of Raleigh. They located their main office in Greensboro, under the name of Jefferson Standard Life. Price was agency manager. In 1914 he became vice president, and in 1919 president of the company. He remained in that capacity until 1946 when his son, Ralph, took over and he became Chairman of the Board. When Julian Price became president the company had assets of $9,703,325.00; in 1946 its assets totaled $174,600,000.

Greensboro historian Ethel Arnett, writing in 1955, quoted from the 1948 ESC Quarterly to help explain the expansion of the company: "Cold figures are impressive, but they do not complete the story of the driving, dynamic and organizing genius of Julian Price. He gathered around him able and loyal executives and officials. He entered into the full life of his city, his state, and his nation." It is this image of Price that became virtually synonymous with Jefferson Standard Life.
What is also very clear from the quote is that Price was not just a company man. He served on the Greensboro City Council for a total of eight years, six during the crucial growth years of the twenties. With other members of the council he initiated a program of street paving, grade-crossing, and a sewage and water project that put Greensboro's facilities ahead for many years. It was this same energetic boosterism that brought about the Jefferson Standard Life Building. Said one writer: "Mr. Price visualized a structure that would be not only a credit to the company, the city and even the state, but the entire south, and his perseverance is largely responsible for the magnificent seventeen story building that today stands as a beacon on the busiest corner in the Cape City of the South."

In the same decade, from 1924 to 1928, Price served as chairman of the State Salary and Wage Commission. During the war he was chairman of the Victory Bond Committee. At various times during his life he was on the boards of numerous state and national organizations and businesses, among them A. and T. College in Greensboro, the American Life Convention, the Institute of Life Insurance, Mooresville Mills and Southeastern Cottons, Incorporated and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Winston-Salem. He was also active in civic clubs and organizations, being a member of the Greensboro Rotary Club, Merchants and Manufacturers Club, Southern Society of New York and Sons of Confederate Veterans, and the Masons and the Elks. An interview in the Greensboro Record, November 24, 1945, called him a "no. 1 citizen of Greensboro" and noted that he "always wears his hat in the office." Active, enthusiastic, involved, the image that Price created was one of service linked with success. When awarding Price an Honorary Degree from the University of North Carolina Dr. Frank Graham, president of the university described him as "...an insurance executive and community builder."

To perceive Price best however, is to read the many tributes made following his death in an automobile accident in October, 1946. He is pictured as a civic leader, responsible business man and resolute individualist, as well as "the foremost pioneer insurance executive in the South." These tributes suggest a man whose life was founded on the ethic of hard work and honesty and who never lost what people call the common touch.

Lou Rogers writes: "The six windows of his northeast corner office on the fourteenth floor of the seventeen story building gave him a wonderful view of the city which is indebted to him for much of its municipal growth. His handsome office, however, did not change his personal habits, one of which was keeping on his hat." In the same essay Books quotes this remark on a lazy person: "A lazy man; A crook, now, has energy. He does things and sometimes you can get the best of him and get something good out of him. Occasionally you can reform a crook, and a reformed crook is a good worker. But a lazy man--every day you keep him, you're throwing your money away." Price was a man who respected and was respected for his energy and hard work.
The Fayetteville Observer caught the flavor of the man also, a man who was a booster for his state, city and industry: "Julian Price was a leader in the creation of an essentially Southern financial institution which not only provided insurance protection for citizens and encouraged thrift but which put North Carolina capital to work in N.C. without passing it through the medium of outside institutions. He distinctly deserves a place as one of the builders of the modern state as we know it, having left it a better place than he found it, having set an example for others to follow."10

Charles C. Hartmann, the architect for Hillside, was brought to North Carolina by Julian Price in 1922 to design the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Building. Price met Hartmann when he was in Greensboro working on the O. Henry Hotel for the New York City firm of William L. Stoddard. Following his own motto: "Spend your money at home," Mr. Price convinced the young Hartmann, trained in the best Beaux Arts tradition and an ardent admirer of the late Stanford White, to move to Greensboro. Hartmann's reward was the commission for the building which set him up in a practice that was active until the 1960s. Under Price's sponsorship Hartmann became an important figure in the building of Greensboro of the second quarter of the twentieth century, designing among others the Guilford Building, the Northwestern Bank, the Central Fire Station and a number of private residences.11

Following Price's death in 1946 his son, Ralph, inherited Hillside where he lived until 1959 when it was given to the First Presbyterian Church on Fisher Park Circle to be used as the Manse. In 1973 the church decided that a smaller house was more appropriate for the needs of its minister and his family so the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Glynn Cowart. It is now maintained in a dual role as a residence and offices for Mrs. Sandra Cowart's interior design firm, a responsible adaptive use of the large structure.

Architecturally, Hillside is among the finest examples of a Tudor-style mansion in North Carolina, a mode popular in the early twentieth century. As the residence of a self-made prince of finance it suggests comfort, graciousness, timelessness, and privacy rather than palatial splendour and power. Hartmann had achieved those images in Jefferson Standard Life, executed earlier. At Hillside Hartmann left nothing to chance, and the materials and execution reflect his care and sensibility to his client's needs. With his other work in Greensboro this house adds to our knowledge of the vitality of eclecticism which contributed so much to that cityscape.
FOOTNOTES:


MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Attachment

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approx. 2.5

UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Street frontage along Fisher Park Circle, south boundary along Victoria Street, N. E. property line from Fisher Park Circle to Parkway and West Bessemer Streets. See attached deed description.

STATE CODE COUNTY

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Architectural description and historical significance
Charlotte Vestal Brown, Architectural Consultant, based on information provided by Mrs. Sandra Cowart

ORGANIZATION: Survey and Planning Branch -- Archives and History

STREET & NUMBER: 109 East Jones Street

TELEPHONE: 733-6545

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh,

STATE: North Carolina 27611

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ 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 1, 1979

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

Brown, Charlotte, Interview with Sandra Cowart, September 25, 1979.


Stokes, Ruth Little, and Smith, H. McKelden, III. Interview with Charles C. Hartmann, Greensboro, October 23, 1975.