United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form  

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>historic name</th>
<th>Sternberger, Sigmund, House</th>
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2. Location

<table>
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<tr>
<th>street &amp; number</th>
<th>712 Summit Avenue</th>
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<tr>
<td>city or town</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
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<td>code</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>county</td>
<td>Guilford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>code</td>
<td>081</td>
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<td>27405</td>
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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature of certifying official/Title]  
2-15-93  
[Date]  

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature of certifying official/Title]  
[Date]  

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

<table>
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<tr>
<th>I hereby certify that the property is:</th>
<th>Signature of the Keeper</th>
<th>Date of Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.</td>
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<td>☐ removed from the National Register.</td>
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<td>☐ other, (explain)</td>
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### 5. Classification

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### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter “N/A” if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic and Architectural Resources of Greensboro, North Carolina, 1880-1941

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: artist studios

### 6. Function or Use

<table>
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<td>OTHER: artist studios</td>
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### 7. Description

<table>
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<th>Materials</th>
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<tr>
<td>Italian Renaissance</td>
<td>foundation brick</td>
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<td>walls brick</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>roof ceramic tile</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>other limestone</td>
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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture

**Period of Significance**
1926

**Significant Dates**
1926

**Significant Person**
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

- [ ] N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

- N/A

**Architect/Builder**

- Barton, Harry

**Narrative Statement of Significance**
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
  - Record #
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- [ ] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

**Name of repository:**
Sigmund Sternberger House

Guilford County, North Carolina

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1 7 6 0 9 9 4 0 3 9 9 3 4 4 0
Zone Easting Northing
2

3 4
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Marvin A. Brown

organization  Greensboro Preservation Society  date  November 11, 1992

street & number  447 West Washington Street  telephone  919-272-5003

city or town  Greensboro  state  NC  zip code  27401

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name  United Arts Council of Greensboro

street & number  200 North Davie Street  telephone  919-333-7440

city or town  Greensboro  state  NC  zip code  27402

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
The elegant Italian Renaissance Revival style design of the Sigmund Sternberger House is unmatched in Greensboro, its arcades and Venetian-arched porches carefully rendered, its rich palette of materials including deep red bricks, green ceramic tiles, and sculpted gray limestone. Other than the enclosing of its side porches and an interior upstairs alcove, the two-story villa looks little different than it did when Sternberger and his sister, Rosa, moved into it in 1926.

The villa extends the width of a well-landscaped, block-deep lot. A deep, terraced front lawn conforming to the original landscape plan separates its principal facade from Summit Avenue at its fore. Evergreens and ornamental shade trees stand at the sides of the lawn, allowing a clear view of the house from the avenue. A wide, herringbone-patterned, brick walkway runs straight from the avenue up the center of the lawn to an open terrace of brick-colored, square and rectangular tiles. Where it steps up the banked lawn (or "formal terrace" according to the original plans) the walkway is flanked by two lanterns raised on iron posts [1]. The tiled terrace opens into a matching tiled loggia recessed behind the entry arcade. Boxwoods line the steps and, with shrubs, edge the terrace.

Wide overhanging roofs and unusual brickwork abet the long, low-to-the-ground profile of the house. The bricks are laid in stretcher courses in which the vertical joints alternate between extremely narrow unmortared gaps and wide mortared joints identical to the continuous horizontal joints. This near joining of pairs of bricks creates the illusion of a bond of exceptionally long, narrow stretchers. Fired almost to a glaze, the bricks are deep red, some with green and gold highlights. Red tinges the mortar as well. Hipped roofs over the main block and two-story wings extend well over the house, their undersides adorned with shaped, exposed rafter ends and their tops formed of waves of thick, curved, green, ceramic tiles. Two interior chimney stacks set where the main block and wings meet, and three rear dormers, extend above the roofline. Subsidiary tents of curved green tiles adorn the lower steps of the stacks; flat green tiles face the walls, and curved tiles the hipped roofs of the dormers.

The centered, limestone-trimmed, entry arcade captures the eye at the front elevation, its round arches and carved Composite columns delineating three of the seven principal bays (Figure 1). On the back
wall of the loggia, enframed by the arches, two long four-over-four sash windows underpinned by limestone panels flank the eight-panel door. Lunettes with round lights at their centers top all three bays. At the second story directly above the arcade, five narrow, casement windows provide access to a cast-iron flower box. Tuscan colonnettes, an entablature, and oval medallions, all of limestone, divide and enframe the windows.

The remaining four bays of the front facade, two to either side of the arcade, are more simply finished. Fixed two-light transoms and soldier arches top, and limestone lintels underpin, the four-over-four sash windows of the first story. Shutters, soldier arches, and a limestone beltcourse enframe the four-over-four sash windows of the story above. Twisted limestone colonnettes punctuate its corners.

Further ornament was saved for the flanking wings. At the southwest wing a porch runs the full depth of the house. A Venetian or Palladian arch outlined in limestone and bracketed by limestone Composite columns and heavy brick piers marks the front and rear of the porch. A limestone arcade of five Composite columns extends down its side. Above, a blind arcade of small brick arches topped by a limestone beltcourse identical to that of the principal facade runs along all three sides of the wing. Twisted limestone colonnettes with Composite capitals, rising from the entablature atop the brick corner piers, separate the blind arcades. Now used as a studio, the porch has been enclosed with slightly recessed stuccoed walls pierced by windows and a rear door. The second story of the wing, which contains a bathroom and enclosed sleeping porch, steps back considerably from the principal first-floor elevation. Four-over-four, double-hung windows with shutters at the front and side elevations light the bathroom; triple four-over-four, double-hung windows at the side and rear elevations air the sleeping porch.

At the house's northeast side elevation is a second porch, only one bay deep, with the same adornment of Venetian opening, blind brick arcade, and twisted colonnette. It too now holds a stucco-walled studio. At the first story of its side elevation, the wing is marked by two four-over-four, double-hung windows. A frame, one-story, cubical porch with tiled roof projects from the wing's rear. A door and stuccoed walls have been inserted between the porch's original full-height paneled piers. The wing's second floor is almost identical to that of the southwest wing, containing a setback bathroom at its front and an enclosed sleeping porch at its rear. The
fenestration varies only at the narrower side bathroom window, the
sash of which is two-over-two with but a single shutter.

The rear elevation of the main block is less formally organized
and elaborately finished than the front elevation and the wing
porches. Its single and double windows, double hung with four-over-
four or two-over-two sash, are placed asymmetrically to best light the
rooms they serve. Much of this elevation, marked by the three off-
center dormers, projects as a shallow pavilion. A loggia within the
pavilion, recessed behind a segmental brick arch, contains the back
door and a window which lights the downstairs bathroom. Lanterns
affixed to the wall at either side of the arch illuminate the rear
entry and the raised "S," for Sternberger, of the limestone cartouche
above. A one-story, frame solarium wing with tiled hip roof marks the
southern third of the main block’s rear elevation. Paneled piers
define the three bays of each of the intact solarium’s three walls.
Each bay consists of a pair of casement windows with a transom above
and a recessed flat panel below.

Restrained classical ornament finishes the villa’s interior. Six
principal rooms, along with a rear passage, bathroom, and the three
enclosed porches, occupy its first floor (Figure 2); seven principal
rooms, as well as an alcove, rear passage, and three full bathrooms,
fill the second (Figure 3). Classical motifs primarily dress the
three downstairs front rooms—the living room, dining room, and main
hall. A plainer finish adorns the remainder of the interior.

The front hall presents a grand aspect to the visitor. It is
paneled in wood floor to ceiling, from the round-headed door that
leads to the rear passage, to the stairs and scrolled stair ends that
climb its rear wall, to the two Tuscan columns with carved capitals in
front of the staircase. Brass sconces spring from its walls; slender,
alternating straight and twisted cast-iron balusters, two per tread,
support the handrails of its stairs; and urns and rinceau ornament set
in panels edged in leaf and dart ornament undulate across its plaster
ceiling.

Double French doors lead from the hall southwest into the living
room. Flat wood panels form the room’s wainscoting and crown its
doors, and brass sconces extend from its walls. Vases, urns,
anthemions, egg and dart bands, and dentils finish the cast-stone,
post and lintel mantel, which frames a veined, marble firebox
surround. A plaster medallion emerges from the hood rising above the
mantel, and wave-molded bands, also in plaster, edge the ceiling cornice.

A simply finished den, the hall, the side porch (now enclosed), and the solarium open from the living room. The solarium retains its gray- and green-tiled floor and matching green-tiled, waist-high flower boxes. Original hardware still cranks open its casement windows.

Double French doors at the hall's northeast lead into the dining room, which is more quietly finished than the other two front rooms. Raised moldings divide its walls into large panels and a plaster cornice of Greek frets and leaf and dart ornament edges its ceiling. A small chandelier matches its brass wall sconces and its fireplace is marked by a veined, marble firebox surround and a paneled post and lintel mantel. The enclosed northeast side porch is reached from the dining room, but a sealed door cuts off its access to the rear breakfast room.

A passage to the rear of the hall leads to the back entry, a service stair, the downstairs bathroom, and the breakfast room. Plainly finished, the passage retains a phone with push buttons, set in the wall, that served as part of an intercom system. A few of these units survive elsewhere in the house. Built-in cupboards, lacking their doors, are in place in the breakfast room. The bathroom retains its original tile floors and walls and porcelain fixtures.

The kitchen also retains a number of original or early features. Its intact floor of square, brick-red tiles matches that of the rear porch, now enclosed. Cabinets extend from the walls and grooved, wooden countertops still drain into the long, double, porcelain sink. The kitchen's two pantries are set behind the northeast wall, one of the few variations of the original plans, which called for their placement at the opposite end of the room.

The upstairs is largely plainly finished. Its most ornate features are the two Corinthian columns and paneled pilasters that set off the front alcove. No longer open, the alcove now contains a small studio. Original brass sconces extend from the walls of the hall.

Sigmund Sternberger's bedroom opens to the southwest of the hall. But for its molded cornice and surrounds, its finish is plain. A master bathroom with original tile floors and walls and porcelain
fixtures serves the bedroom. In addition to a heavy tub, it retains a stall shower which sprays water from a half-ring of horizontal rods as well as from an overhead shower head. A shorter, smaller sink used for brushing teeth stands next to the main basin, a porcelain toothbrush holder set in the wall above it. Recessed low in the wall next to the small sink are three long, opaque, glass, electric lamps or bulbs which served as space heaters, radiating warmth into the bathroom on cold days. Opening to the bathroom’s rear is an enclosed sleeping porch, which in turn opens into the former sewing room.

The guest bedroom to the hall’s southeast now holds a studio, as do all of the upstairs rooms. It and the bedroom of Rosa Sternberger to its rear are finished in the same simple fashion as the larger chamber of Sigmund Sternberger. Like her brother’s room, Rosa’s chamber opens to an enclosed sleeping porch. The bathroom shared by her bedroom and the guest bedroom matches the master bath but for the absence of a shower stall.

Behind the main stairs and hall stand a plainly finished servant’s bedroom, the service stairs, two closets (one cedar lined), and a bathroom matching Rosa Sternberger’s. A stair from the sewing room leads to the attic, the concrete walls and floor of which attest to the house’s fire-proof construction. The brick-walled, concrete-ceilinged basement rooms are also fire-proof.

The deep rear yard, which extends all the way back to Park Avenue, contains two contributing outbuildings and a contributing brick retaining wall (Figure 4). A deep asphalt parking area or court runs the full width of the lot immediately behind the house, reached by a drive from Summit Avenue at the property’s northeast edge. Its southwestern half displaced a formal rose and flower garden and a concrete pad within it marks the site of a once grassy circle. The rectangular form, brickwork, and hipped, green-tiled roof of the two-story, three-bay garage at the rear of the paved court reflects the design of the main structure. Differently cut bricks and an asphalt-shingled hipped roof finish a small one-room utility building in the garage’s northeastern shadow. Not included on the original landscape plans, it was probably added not long after the house was erected. Both of the buildings contribute to the property’s integrity.

The yard behind the outbuildings and asphalt court retains some of its early or original plantings, including a row of three pecan trees at its southwest side [2]. Raised above the level of Park
Avenue at its rear and the lots to either side, its earth is confined by a contributing brick retaining wall of the same brick and brickwork as the house and garage. Only the wall of the northeast side rises above the level of the lot; the others are only visible from off of the lot. From the back yard, one can look across Park Avenue to the Herman Sternberger house which originally stood on the property. The setting, including the front and rear yards, contributes to the integrity of the property.

[1] "Plans of Residence for Mr. Sig. Sternberger," circa 1926. Information on the original appearance of the house's grounds, and the initial names and functions of its rooms, comes from architect Harry Barton's drawings.

[2] Rosa Sternberger Williams, who lived in the house with her brother Sigmund for thirty years, recalled in 1972 the lush appearance of the property:

I really enjoyed keeping house and looking after the lovely grounds and the orchard with its apples, grapes, figs, berries, peaches and pears....At Brother's house there was the most beautiful rose garden on the southwest side, perfect for roses as it got the sun all day. In the back, there was a formal planting with a sun dial in the center with four beds of tulips--so beautiful!--and two lower beds planted in different colored flowers. On the right hand side of the driveway were two of the loveliest flowering peach trees, one a delicate shade, the other deeper.

FIGURE 1: Original rendering of front elevation (ca. 1926)
FIGURE 2: Original rendering of first floor plan (ca. 1926)
FIGURE 3: Original rendering of second floor plan (ca. 1926)
FIGURE 4: Original rendering of landscape plan (ca.1926) (outbuilding added adjacent to garage)
Summary

The Sigmund Sternberger House at 712 Summit Avenue is the finest Italian Renaissance Revival style residence in Greensboro. It was built for Sternberger (1887-1964), treasurer of the massive Revolution Cotton Mill, in 1926. Harry Barton, one of the city’s most prominent early twentieth-century architects, deftly handled its design, combining deep red bricks, green tiles, and limestone Venetian openings and arcades into an elegant villa that stands out even among the grand Queen Anne/Colonial Revival and Neoclassical Revival style dwellings of the locally-designated Charles B. Aycock historic district. Both its design and the masterful hand of its architect, coupled with its little-altered condition, make it eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria C.

The villa’s period of significance is 1926, its date of construction. Its historic context is covered in the related Multiple Property Documentation Form by the second of Greensboro’s historic contexts—Modern Suburbanization and Industrialization, 1900-1941—particularly the fourth subsection on neighborhood development. Its general architectural context is discussed at Property Type 1, which covers single-family private dwellings. Further background for its stylistic elements is provided at Subsection C of the first property type, which discusses early 20th-century Period Revival styles.

Historical Background

Sigmund Sternberger was born in Darlington, South Carolina, on May 8th, 1887. In 1899 he moved to Greensboro, where his father, Herman Sternberger, and uncle, Emanuel Sternberger, built the Revolution Cotton Mill (listed in the National Register in 1984), a cornerstone of the city’s all-important textile industry. Following graduation from the Eastman Business School in Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1906 and an apprenticeship in the various departments of the mill, Sigmund Sternberger was named assistant treasurer and a director of Revolution in 1916. Three years later he succeeded his father as the mill’s treasurer. In 1948 Revolution merged with the Cone Mills Corporation, of which he became a director [1].

After his rise to treasurer of Revolution, Sternberger acquired his parents’ large, Queen Anne-Colonial Revival style Summit Avenue house. He subsequently moved that out-of-fashion dwelling to a lot
just to the rear across Park Avenue, where it still stands, and engaged Harry Barton to design his new residence. The villa was erected in 1926 at a cost of between $75,000 and $100,000. Never married, Sternberger moved to the house with his sister, Rosa, who lived with him for thirty years, even after her 1938 wedding there to R. Mack Williams. Rosa Sternberger Williams ran the household and supervised the kitchen and garden help [2].

Always active in community organizations—he was a lifelong mason and treasurer of Greensboro's Temple Emanuel for forty-seven years—Sternberger established the charitable Sternberger Foundation in 1955. Following his death on July 19th, 1964, and a seven-year settlement of his estate, the foundation gave his home to the United Arts Council of Greensboro. Initially used as offices for the Arts Council, it now serves as studio space for local writers, designers, and painters [3].

Architectural Context

Harry Barton was, with Charles C. Hartmann, Greensboro's preeminent early twentieth-century architect. Born in Philadelphia on June 19th, 1876, Barton attended Temple University, George Washington University—where he completed a course in architecture—and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. In 1912 he left the office of supervising architect of the Treasury Department in Washington, D.C., to establish a private practice in Greensboro [4].

Barton's varied buildings display his adroit handling of the many Period Revival architectural styles popular in the teens, twenties, and thirties. In addition to the Italian Renaissance Revival style Sternberger House, his surviving Greensboro designs include: the Neoclassical Revival style Guilford County Courthouse (1918), perhaps the county's grandest building; the Tudor Revival style John Marion Galloway House (1919); the Elizabethan Revival style Cone Export and Commission Company Building (circa 1924); and the classical Meyer's Department Store (1924). The first two buildings are individually listed in the National Register; the latter two are part of the National Register-listed Downtown Greensboro Historic District. In 1927 Barton designed his own Spanish Colonial Revival style residence in Hamilton Lakes, a Greensboro suburb of which he was mayor. With New York architect Hobart Upjohn he collaborated on the design and supervised the construction of the 1928 First Presbyterian Church, a massive Norman Revival style edifice that is part of Greensboro's National Register-listed Fisher Park Historic District [5].
Barton’s practice ended abruptly on May 7th, 1937, when he died of acute appendicitis. His death certificate reported that he had been at work in his office only six days earlier, drafting plans to convert the former First Presbyterian Church and Smith Memorial Building into a civic center [6].

Barton’s Italian Renaissance Revival design is noteworthy as one of the few residential examples of the style in Greensboro and, regardless of the surfeit of contemporaries, as an excellent representative of the style in its own right. The entry arcade and Venetian-arched porches, neatly carved of limestone, distinguish the house from any other residence in the city. The deep red bricks, green ceramic-tiled roof, and understated yet elegant classical interior only add to the richness of the design. A notable early twentieth-century technological feature survives in the three unaltered upstairs bathrooms—opaque glass lamps, set in recesses in the tile walls, that once radiated heat into the rooms on chilly days.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


________________________. "S. Sternberger Dies in Hospital." July 20, 1964.


"Plans of Residence for Mr. Sig. Sternberger." Elevation, floor plans, and site plan drawn by Harry Barton [circa 1926]. Located at United Arts Council Offices, Greensboro, North Carolina.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the Sigmund Sternberger House are those of Greensboro Tax Map 45, Block 7, Parcel 8.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Sigmund Sternberger House.