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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property
   historic name  Edwards Hotel
   other names/site number  Central House; Norton House; Old Edwards Inn

2. Location
   street & number  southeast corner Main and Fourth Streets
   city, town  Highlands
   state  North Carolina  code  NC  county  Macon  code  113  zip code  28741

3. Classification
   Ownership of Property
   ✓ private
   □ public-local
   □ public-State
   □ public-Federal
   Category of Property
   ✓ building(s)
   □ district
   □ site
   □ structure
   □ object
   Number of Resources within Property
   Contributing  Noncontributing
   1  2 buildings
   1  2 sites
   1  2 structures
   1  2 objects
   Total  3
   Name of related multiple property listing:  N/A
   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. □ See continuation sheet.
   Signature of certifying official  [Signature]
   Date  10-03-97
   State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property □ meets ✓ does not meet the National Register criteria. □ See continuation sheet.
   Signature of commenting or other official
   Date
   State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification
   I, hereby, certify that this property is:
   □ entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
   □ determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
   □ determined not eligible for the National Register.
   □ removed from the National Register.
   □ other, (explain:)
   □ See continuation sheet.
   Signature of the Keeper
   Date of Action
Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Edwards Hotel, located on the southeast corner of Main Street and Fourth Street in Highlands, was built in two phases. The older portion is the frame, two and one-half story east wing, constructed as a house about 1880. In 1935 a brick, three-story hotel wing was built at a right angle to the west gable end of the frame house, facing Fourth Street, on a portion of the original lot. The more massive brick section, now the main block of the building, is bounded on the west by the sidewalk of Fourth Street and on the north by the sidewalk of Main Street. The frame building, which now serves as an ell to the brick addition, faces a small grassy yard between its porch and Main Street, and its Main Street boundary is edged with a tall hemlock hedge. The brick and frame buildings and two new service buildings to the south occupy most of the lot, with the exception of a small lawn stretching along the Main Street boundary containing several large deciduous trees and a recently constructed wood gazebo.

Directly opposite the Edwards Hotel, on the northeast corner of Main Street and Fourth Street, is the Highlands Inn, constructed in 1880 and listed in the National Register in 1990. It is a long, three-story frame hotel which fronts directly on the street. Modern buildings occupy the two remaining corners of the intersection.

The main block of the Edwards Hotel is a three-story, rectangular brick building with a tri-gable, asphalt-covered roof and brick foundation. In the brick work on all four sides of the wing, every sixth course is very slightly recessed, giving the facades a very subtle horizontally striped or banded effect. The main entrance, in the center of the elevation fronting on Fourth Street, is flanked on the north by three six-over-six triple-hung sash windows and on the south by five six-over-six double-hung windows over a slightly projecting, rectilinear, frame display bay fronted by two runs of three multi-paned fixed sash windows. The entrance bay is faced in
random-coursed ashlar salvaged from a stone building formerly on the site and the door is recessed slightly in a segmental arch. On the second and third stories of the Fourth Street elevation are four multi-paned doors flanked by six-over-six and small four-over-four windows. The two central doors of the second story are original; the remainder were installed in place of windows in 1982 and open from individual guest rooms to a narrow wood-decked balcony with iron railing and decorative iron support brackets. The broad facade attic gable and the gable feature heavy curved knee braces and a central pair of round-headed louvers and vents.

The north gable end of the brick wing, facing Main Street, is highlighted by a first-story recessed porch with tall central segmental arch and four heavy piers creating three openings in a Palladian motif. The piers and arch voussours and oversized keystone are all executed in the same stone that faces the main entrance bay on Fourth Street. A concrete floor and front steps and an entrance door in the central bay of the three-bay facade lead to the main lobby area. On the second and third stories are four six-over-six windows each, surmounted by a rondel window in the gable and knee braces in the eaves.

The south gable end of the brick building, narrower than the north end, contains two narrow rectangular louvered vents in the gable and two six-over-six windows on the third story. The first and second stories of this gable end are covered by a frame shop building which adjoins the hotel building to the south on a separate parcel not included in this nomination. One of two remaining brick, corbelled interior end chimneys is visible at the south gable end. The other rises from the east elevation of the brick block, which features multi-paned doors and deck-floored balconies on the second and third stories, added during renovations in 1982.

The frame section of the Edwards Hotel is a two and one-half story, frame dwelling with steep gable roof, two-tier porch, and extended shed dormer on the south facade, and a one and one-half story gable-roofed wing to the east which was added in 1982. The double porch, which extends across three-fourths of the facade, has replacement turned balustrades and turned posts similar to balustrade and posts seen in documentary photographs of the building. Early photographs also indicate that the porch may have been a single tier when the structure was built, with plain posts and decorative sawnwork balustrade. Later, according to photographs, a second tier was added, posts on both tiers were chamfered, and the second tier balustrade was turned. Porch rooms appear in a 1980 photograph. The entrance door, located in the center of the four-bay facade, has sidelights and is flanked on the right by a triple six-over-six window and on the left
by two six-over-six windows. Door and window surrounds are plain with simple molding across the top edge. The house has cornerboards and plain weatherboarding. The wing, added in the renovations of 1982, contains on the facade a multi-paned door with balcony on each story and a single six-over-six window.

On the second story of the frame wing's facade, the central bay is occupied by a double six-over-six window, flanked on each side by a modern glass door and a pair of six-over-six windows. The wide dormer in the attic, constructed about 1925, contains three pairs of six-over-six windows. The west gable end of the building is covered by the brick addition but the gable end on the east wing contains double and single six-over-six windows and a plain cornice. The foundation of the frame structure is stone with concrete block infill and the roof surface is asphalt. No chimneys remain on this section.

The interior of the brick wing retains the original detailing characteristic of the Victorian era. The entrance on Fourth Street opens to a small stair hall from which the yellow pine staircase with large newel rises to the second and third floors. From this stair hall a small parlor opens and a double leaf door with etched glass panels leads to the Central House restaurant in the frame section. This doorway has heavy, ornamented brackets at the upper corners. All other doors opening from the stair hall are four-paneled with fluted surrounds and bull's eye corner blocks. Portions of the hallway contain wainscoting of vertical planks, matching the planking of the hotel desk which sits against the staircase. To the north of the entrance hall a short flight of steps leads down to the lobby, which opens from the Main Street entrance. This room features a massive stone fireplace with stone shelf, an entrance door with twelve small panes of glass, and nine six-over-six windows.

The entire first floor of the frame, ca. 1880, section of the Edwards Hotel is occupied by the Central House restaurant. Interior partitions were removed in 1982 and replaced by waist-high wood dividers or open railing with wood balusters. The mantelpiece of the main fireplace has been removed, as has the chimney stack on the exterior.

The second and third floors of the Edwards Hotel are reached by stairways in both the brick section and the frame section. Rooms in the frame portion of the hotel have been altered to allow room for baths, but retain the original doors, baseboards, and door and window surrounds. Some interior projecting corners have wood protective molding. All flooring is random width poplar planking. In the brick section, several bedrooms feature sawnwork brackets which are original to the building, adding to its faintly Victorian ambience. Chair
rails and multi-paned exterior doors have been added to some rooms, but most second and third floor windows and doors retain their original surrounds, some with crested corner blocks.

When the Edwards Hotel was closed in 1970, its condition was poor. Several frame additions to the rear were deteriorating and unsafe and unsanitary, and no improvements had been made to the building since 1935. The present owners removed the frame additions and constructed two frame and concrete service buildings in their place, one with two stories and one with one story. Bathrooms were added to bedrooms in the frame section and multi-paned french style doors and shallow balconies were added to rooms facing Main Street. A photograph of ca 1980 shows a two-story glassed-in porch on the east elevation of the frame section of the hotel. In 1982 this double porch was replaced by a one and one/half story frame wing with french doors and balconies on the first and second stories of the the Main Street facade. At the same time, end rooms on the double porch facing Main Street were removed. On the first floor of the frame section, interior walls were removed to allow for a large open restaurant space, but the connecting door between this frame section and the brick section was retained, as were its frosted glass and bracketed surround. In the brick section constructed in 1935, a deck on the second floor of the Fourth Street elevation was extended to each end of the elevation and a new deck was added at the third floor. Multi-paned French style doors replaced six windows. On the east elevation, multi-paned doors and balconies replaced windows on the second and third floors. The entire building has been adapted to modern tourist requirements, but nevertheless appears much as it did in 1936, when it was pictured on a postcard.
8. Statement of Significance
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

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Applicable National Register Criteria

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Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)

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Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

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Cultural Affiliation

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Significant Person

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Architect/Builder

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<td>Cobb, Wilton H., contractor</td>
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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**SUMMARY**

The Edwards Hotel in Highlands is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its contribution to the entertainment and recreation industry upon which the major part of the economy of Highlands and the rest of western North Carolina is based, and under Criterion C for its architectural design. The older section of the hotel was constructed about 1880 as a typical frame, two-story, gable-roofed dwelling of the period. It was operated as a hostelry for almost fifty years, first as the Norton House, a boarding house, and later as the Central House, an inn, catering to the growing number of tourists who frequented the Highlands area. A large number of inns and boarding houses were operated in Highlands between 1880 and 1930, but only four remain today. After 1930, when the Highlands Country Club was opened, Highlands became a summer mecca for visitors from Atlanta and other sections of the South. In 1935 Atlanta architect Linton H. Young designed a brick, three-story hotel addition to the frame building in a variation of the Alpine style of resort architecture popular across the mountain areas of North Carolina. Young added Italianate details to the brick building giving it an Italian Alps or Tyrolean flavor which is unique in the region. The Edwards family operated the hotel and restaurant from 1914 until 1970 when the buildings, which had become very dilapidated, were closed. Changes have been made to the frame section of the hotel to accommodate modern tourists and restaurant guests. During renovation in 1982, a frame wing replaced a double porch on the east elevation of the frame section, an original balcony was extended on the brick section, new balconies were added, and two service buildings were constructed behind the frame section for kitchen and storage use. However, the hotel retains much of its historic appearance and appears substantially as it did in 1935 at the construction of the brick hotel wing.

☑ See continuation sheet
Resort architecture in western North Carolina can be roughly characterized by three architectural styles: first, the style based on the typical vernacular dwelling of the late nineteenth century; second, the Adirondack style of resort architecture popular in the Northeast; and three, the Alpine-derived style deemed suitable for the region known as "a Switzerland in America." (1) Two of these, the typical late nineteenth century vernacular dwelling and Alpine-derived architecture, are evident in the Edwards Hotel.

Nineteenth century inns and boarding houses were frame, gable-roofed two- and three-story buildings similar in design to the typical dwelling of the region. Many inns featured double porches across the facade, stone chimneys, and a variety of outbuildings. This style is seen today in the Highlands Inn (NR, 1990), the Jarrett House in Dillsboro, Jackson County (NR 1984), and the Woodfield Inn in the Flat Rock Historic District, Henderson County (NR 1973). The original portion of the Edwards Hotel, known also as the Norton House and later the Central House, was a typical dwelling converted to a boarding house and retains its double porches on the facade, similar to larger inns.

"Hillmont," the Armstrong-Moltz House on Lake Toxaway in Transylvania County, (NR 1986) now known as the Greystone Inn, was constructed in 1915 in the Alpine style of resort architecture and remains the epitome of that style in western North Carolina. Lucy Camp Armstrong Moltz, of Savannah, spent numerous winters in Europe and designed her summer home as a chalet, with front-facing gable, massive stepped brackets, casement windows and French doors, balconies and window boxes.

Linton Young, architect for the Edwards Hotel constructed in 1935, brought to Highlands a touch of Italian or Tyrolean Alpine-style architecture. His brick building featured a bracketed gable on the north elevation, round-headed louvers and rondels in the attic, heavy rock surrounds at the entrance doors, and a balcony at the second story.

Linton Hopkins Young was born in 1909 in Clinton, Tennessee, and graduated from the School of Architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1932. As a child, he had spent many summers in Highlands and knew the group of Atlantans who summered there. His first architectural client after his graduation from Georgia Tech was Mrs. Margaret Cannon Howell, for whom he designed a two-story frame Swiss Chalet style house in Highlands in 1932. Young, who lives today in Roswell, Georgia, relates that he took a trip to Italy on his fee from the Howell House, and there studied Italian Alpine architecture. He designed a number of residences in Highlands between 1932 and 1965,
including the Black House on Satulah Road and the Robert Tyre Jones, Jr., House at the Highlands Country Club. (Jones is remembered as the renowned amateur golfer of the 1920s and 1930s and one of the founders of the Highlands Country Club.) Young, a member of the American Institute of Architects, worked in Atlanta with the nationally-known architects of the era, Philip Shutze and Neel Reid. (Reid designed the original Highlands Country Club main building in 1930 in Adirondack resort style. It was razed in 1983.) (2)

The Edward Hotel in Highlands is composed of two resort styles, the vernacular double-porched style of the late nineteenth century, and the Alpine style popularized in the early years of the twentieth century. The brick portion of the Edwards Hotel, constructed in the Italian Alpine style, is unique in Highlands and possibly in western North Carolina.

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION CONTEXT
Health and pleasure drew outsiders to the mountains of western North Carolina after the Civil War. Although a post-war surge in tuberculosis and other lung disorders first led physicians and their patients to Asheville and the west where high altitude, pure air and pure water were considered ideal for recovery, western North Carolina soon became a mecca drawing visitors interested in recreation and leisure. A national "gospel of relaxation" encouraged Americans to look upon rest and recreation as social and physical values, entirely fitting in a world devoted to work. (3) After the railroad arrived in Asheville and western North Carolina in the 1880s, a number of inns and boarding houses were constructed to provide summer quarters for convalescents and tourists alike, who sought the cool and healthful climate of the mountains. According to Margaret Owens, who worked on a reconnaissance survey of historic resources in western North Carolina in 1980, "These picturesque inns catered to a clientele who sought the cool mountain air summer after summer, and indeed generation after generation of the same families returned to their favorite inn in the mountains." (4)

The Highlands Inn, built in 1880 (NR 1990), remains today the oldest operating inn in North Carolina west of Flat Rock in Henderson County. Although Highlands has never been served by the railroad, the large and centrally located Highlands Inn set the stage for the tourist economy which has defined Highlands since its founding in 1875. Around the Highlands Inn sprang up additional inns and boarding houses, including the Central House, constructed on Main Street opposite the Highlands Inn about 1880 and originally operated as the Norton House. Of a large number of late nineteenth-century inns constructed in Highlands, only four remain: the Central House (now the Edwards Hotel), the Highlands Inn, the Phelps House, and the Kings Inn.
By the 1920s, the automobile and paved roads were responsible for major growth in the mountain region's tourist industry, especially in those areas which, like Highlands, had no direct railroad service. The Highlands Country Club complex opened in 1929, serving a large number of summer visitors from Atlanta, and in 1935 the Edwards Hotel was expanded with the construction of a large brick wing to cater to a growing influx of summer visitors from all parts of the United States.

BACKGROUND:
Highlands was established in 1875 by Samuel Truman Kelsey (1832-1921) and Clinton Carter Hutchinson (1833-1909) who purchased 839 acres of unbroken mountain land and laid out a town one and one-half square miles in size. They set up a nationwide advertising campaign for Highlands, utilizing pamphlets and newspaper and magazine advertisements which praised the land for its agricultural possibilities, the magnificent scenery, good building materials, inexpensive labor costs, and good water power for mills and machinery. Although they intended that the town would become a major commercial center, the pure water, pure air and equable climate made Highlands attractive for health and recreational reasons, and it soon became known as a major tourist center. (5)

On July 17, 1878, Clinton Hutchinson sold to John Norton for $60.00 four lots in the town of Highlands (numbers 302, 305, 306 and 308) located on the southeast corner of Main Street and Fourth Street, where Fourth Street rises up a hill to the road to South Carolina. (6) In 1880 John Norton sold the same four lots to Joseph Halleck, brother of General Henry W. Halleck, general-in-chief of the Army of the Potomac in the early years of the Civil War. (7)

Halleck had just completed construction of the Highlands Inn on the opposite corner, a three-story weatherboard building approximately thirty feet by sixty feet. It is likely that Halleck built the dwelling that is now the east wing of the Edwards Inn, for he sold the four lots "with appurtenances" to James and Margaret Rideout for $800.00 in 1888. (8) The house was a large, two-story-with-attic, gable-end, weatherboarded structure, with two tiers of porches running across the facade, a small gablet over the center of the upper tier, and a large stone chimney on the west gable end. James Rideout sold the property almost immediately to David Norton for $800.00 and Norton opened a boarding house in the dwelling, calling it the Norton House and later the Central House. (9) Norton also owned property in other areas of Highlands, including a two-story frame dwelling on the corner of Main Street and Third Street, now known as the "Phelps House." (10)

By the turn of the century, Highlands had at least five hotels or boarding houses, four churches, a library, a school and many businesses and homes. A rough stone store building was constructed on the David Norton property at the corner of Main Street and Fourth
Street for W. T. Potts. Potts, born in Franklin, North Carolina, came to Highlands in 1896. He was a businessman and Baptist minister, owning a livery stable which accommodated about one hundred horses and hauling goods from Highlands to Franklin, Dillard, Georgia, and Walhalla, South Carolina. He had a second livery stable in Walhalla, sold real estate in the area, and ran the "rock store." Potts also served as an associational missionary among area Baptists from 1914 to 1915 and again from 1929 to 1932, preaching and baptizing across the mountain region, and served twice as pastor for the First Baptist Church in Highlands. (11) In 1905 Potts purchased the Central House property, including the old boarding house, from David Norton for $2,000.00 (12)

The Potts family lived in the Central House, which contained in 1905 eleven bedrooms. There was no plumbing or electricity in the inn but the piping of water down Fourth Street from Lamb's Spring created enough pressure from gravity to supply a bathtub on the second floor. Outbuildings around the Central House provided space for a laundry, ice house, wood storage and the necessary outhouse. (13)

In 1914 W. T. Potts sold the Central House and its property with the exception of the rock store corner to J. Grover Edwards of Highlands and his wife, Minnie Zoellner Edwards. (14) Edwards, the chief law enforcement officer of Highlands, and his wife were to run the Central House establishment for the next thirty-eight years, calling it the Edwards Hotel. Mrs. Edwards was an outstanding cook and meals consisted of fresh garden vegetables, chicken, beef, and lamb. Mrs. Edwards and her sisters had learned the art of inn-keeping as they worked at the Hall House, an early Highlands inn. (15)

Grover Edwards died in 1925 and Minnie Zoellner Edwards married her former husband's uncle, William Watt Edwards, in 1929. Together they purchased the "rock store" property and planned an enlargement of the Central House. In 1935 they engaged architect Linton Hopkins Young, of Atlanta and Highlands, to design the addition. Young brought his knowledge of Italianate and Alpine architecture to the design of the brick wing of the Edwards Hotel, re-using rock from the W. T. Potts "rock store" for facings and pillars. Wilton H. Cobb, local builder and hardware store owner, was the general contractor. Louis Edwards, young son of the owner of the hotel, built the furniture for the addition. Says Young today, "We received all sorts of accolades" for the building, which cost $12,000. (16)

Louis Edwards, son of Minnie Z. and J. Grover Edwards, inherited the hotel property and with his wife, Elizabeth, operated the building for several years in the 1960s. The building was closed in 1970 in a very dilapidated condition. (17) In 1981 the property was sold to Edward and Patricia Benton, the present owners, who have restored the building for renewed use as a hotel and restaurant. (10) The Bentons called the building the Old Edwards Inn and Central House Restaurant.


5. Cobb, Carol Perrin, Highlands Historic Inventory, NC Division of Archives and History, manuscript, 1982, pp. 6 and 7.


7. Macon County Register of Deeds, Book Q, page 357.


17. Cobb, op. cit., index of properties, p. 2

Cobb, Carol Perrin, Highlands Historic Inventory, NC division of Archives and History, manuscript, 1982.
Macon County Register of Deeds, Macon County Courthouse, Franklin.
Owens, Margaret, Ten County Reconnaissance Survey of Historic Resources, NC Division of Archives and History, 1980.
Parris, John, "Old Toxaway - Just a Memory", The Asheville Citizen-Times, January 12, 1958.
Young, Linton Hopkins, correspondence, April 28, 1992; telephone interview, April 22, 1992.

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 #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:
- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Specify repository:

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property     three-tenths acre

UTM References

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property known as the Edwards Hotel is designated as parcel # 05-02073 by the Office of Tax Assessor of Macon County, NC, and shown on the tax map of Highlands, NC, as lot # 2473.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass the entire parcel historically associated with the Edwards Hotel.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title     Carolyn A. Humphries
organization   Consultant
street & number 7-5 Crowfields Drive
city or town   Asheville
date       June 1, 1992
state       NC
zip code   28803
telephone  704-277-3736