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 Artz, Welsford Parker, House
erother names/site number Catawba Hill; Artz House

2. Location
   street & number 205 Maple Street
   city, town Old Fort
   state North Carolina code NC
   county McDowell code
   state/local NC
   code zip 8762

3. Classification
   Ownership of Property
   [ ] private
   [ ] public-local
   [ ] public-State
   [ ] public-Federal
   Category of Property
   [X] building(s)
   [ ] district
   [ ] site
   [ ] structure
   [ ] object
   Number of Resources within Property
   Contributing
   1
   Noncontributing
   1 buildings
   1 site
   1 structures
   2 objects
   Total
   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

4. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [X] See continuation sheet.
   Signature of certifying official
   [Signature]
   State or Federal agency and bureau

   In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [X] See continuation sheet.
   Signature of commenting or other official
   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:)
   [Signature of the Keeper]
   Date of Action
The Welsford Parker Artz House, also called "Catawba Hill" or the Artz House, is an imposing frame residence on Maple Street, one block from Main Street, the principal road through the Old Fort commercial district. To the northeast is undeveloped land and the dead end of Thompson Street; Sloan Street is to the northwest, along the rear of the lot. Three small frame houses occupy the southwest end of the city block on which the house stands. The southeast-facing house sits high on a large elevated lot and is surrounded by evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs and perennial plantings. The front of the property features a series of turfed terraces flanking an aggregate concrete walk broken by short flights of steps. Rock retaining walls define the front lot line. Behind the house a blacktopped driveway bisects the property, and is separated from terraced flowerbeds, lawns, and woods by a concrete and brick wall with brick and stone steps. An original cistern is on the topmost, rear, terrace.

Designed for the U.S. Leather Company by the architectural firm of F.J. Lindsey and Son, of Middletown, New York, the Artz House was constructed between 1904 and 1906, probably by Merrimon Keeter of Old Fort, for Welsford Parker Artz and his family. Artz served as superintendent of U.S. Leather's tannery in Old Fort and he could overlook the factory from his house. Description and analysis of this building are facilitated by the survival of the architectural firm's written specifications and by documentary photographs.

The Artz House is a two-and-one-half story, five-bay, frame dwelling. As an early example of the Colonial Revival style, it displays neoclassical detailing and the asymmetrical massing of the Queen Anne style. It has weatherboard siding, one-over-one windows, a moderately pitched, asphalt shingled roof with a dominant front gable, and a lower gabled ell on the southwest side. There is a major gabled bay, cutaway at the first story, on the northeast elevation. All the gables are windowed, with pent roof pediments. A one-story porch follows the contour of the main elevation. A small, one-story gable end room projects from the
first floor rear of the house, its northeast side elevation on the same plane as the main block wall. There is a rear interior brick chimney stack and another chimney protruding from the roof of a link dormer on the southwest elevation. Both chimneys are corbelled. Sides and rear have a projecting wooden stringcourse drip line. Door and window screens are original.

A dentilled entablature with wide plain frieze encircles the building immediately above the second story windows. Centered on the main front gable is a Palladian-influenced triple window arrangement with a dentilled entablature separating the small double hung sash windows from an ornamental round molded arch and keystone, with a fan motif inside the arch. A similar arrangement, with tripartite windows, is found in the gable ends of the southwest elevation ell and the bay on the northeast elevation. The large rear pedimented gable is plain with undecorated coupled sashes. In the link dormer and a smaller, single windowed dormer, both on the southwest elevation, the dentilled pediments are filled by a triangular fan motif.

The hip-roofed front porch with beaded ceiling features a dentilled entablature and is supported by slender attenuated Tuscan columns, with pilasters at each end. The plain sawn balusters are closely ranked. At the top of the wide wooden steps leading to the porch, the left end of the railing ends with a newel post and the right railing ends with a column, creating a balanced facade on a building that is asymmetrical due to the projecting ell and an off-center double-leaf front door. The front doors have beveled plate glass set in their tops and three cross panels between wide rails. The original hardware includes a manually operated bell in the left door. First and second floor facade fenestration is of one over one single or coupled windows.

Two changes appear on the rear of the structure. At one corner, clad in German siding, is a small, one-story, gabled ell containing a storage room. A photocopy of a 1912 documentary photograph does not show this addition, but it does appear in a 1928 photograph. A six-over-six sash window is set off-center in the ell's end wall. On the other rear corner of the main block, between 1912 and 1928, a recessed porch was enclosed and clad in German siding. The original porch cornice is visible. The enclosure has two four-light pocket windows on the rear.
The interior, largely unaltered, has molded window and door casings, flush sash lifts, wooden door stops, recessed panel doors, yellow pine floors, picture rails throughout and plain corner moldings. Its specifications call for studs 12 inches on center and scratch coat, brown coat and white finishing coat of plaster over spruce lathe. The plaster is notable for its current condition, with minimal cracking and other indications of age.

The unadorned airlock front entry has a drop light fixture with a satin glass pendant shade with closed and pointed bottom. A recessed cross panel door opens to the front reception hall, now the living room. The living room features a recessed window seat on the front wall, separated from the room by a colonnade with paneled pedestals, fluted columns and a pair of pendant light fixtures similar to the entry fixture. A fireplace with brick chimney breast and tile hearth, and flanked by narrow sashes, is on the side wall. At the back of this room, opposite the main entrance, is a short center hallway containing an open stringer stairway which rises directly from the living room. It has a panelled ball and cap starting newel, turned balusters, long and short drops and a vertical paneled stairwall. At the rear of the staircase is the door to an understair closet. The balustrade continues around the stairwell opening on the second floor with turned balusters and ball and cap newels.

To the right of the main entrance is a simple parlor separated from the living room by another colonnade, this with paneled pedestals, round columns and pendant light fixtures in a wide cased opening. The living room, parlor and dining room each have a 3-light electrolier ceiling fixture. The parlor is connected to the dining room by double pocket doors with 6 recessed cross panels. The dining room has a windowed canted bay
and doors opening to the hall and to the original butler's pantry. In the former pantry, there is a refrigerator, the original sink has been replaced by a range, and the original glass-doored wall cabinets supported by robust sawn brackets with drawers and doors under the counters remain intact. The original kitchen, now a breakfast room, contains a sink in an enamel cabinet. The room has beaded wainscoting and a storage closet. One outside wall are three doors. One opens to a passage between the kitchen and basement by way of a dogleg stairway with turned balusters. A door to the outside opens from the landing. A second door opens to a stairway to the second floor. This has a plain board wall rail, a later addition. The telephone was originally located on the landing of this dogleg stairway. A third door opens to the enclosed rear porch with its single bead wood paneled walls and ceiling and a short set of closed stringer steps to the outside door.

Behind the living room front stairs is a bedroom with a connecting bathroom, which was not indicated in the original specifications, but its fixtures appear contemporary with the rest of the structure, including the siphon jet water closet set in a recessed metal pan, footed tub, and wall hung lavatory with cast iron enameled brackets.

On the second story, above the enclosed rear porch, is another full bathroom outfitted similarly to the one on the first floor. The upstairs hall runs from front to rear with access to five bedrooms, one of which, on the southwest corner, has its entry door set in an angled wall. All rooms have original light fixtures, radiators and picture rail, but are otherwise unadorned. There are closets in all the rooms. The top half-story is reached through a door off this hall. The dogleg attic stairway, lit by a small dormer window, has turned balusters and ball and cap newel posts. The attic contains two rooms, one a small entry, and the other, a larger room, called the ballroom by the family. Each has hardwood floors and undecorated plaster walls, and is lighted by gable and dormer windows.

The tall basement, with stone and concrete foundation and concrete floors, is divided into rooms with permanent masonry walls. There were laundry facilities installed in one room; these have been removed. An original, porcelain, siphon jet water closet survives.
A frame, two-bay, ca. 1979 garage is non-contributing. It replaced an original barn/carriage house and stands toward the rear of the southwest lot line.

A contributing concrete cistern is located near the rear lot line and with an access cap outside the back door of the house. The cistern and its related piping was probably installed at the time the house was built, according to the present owner, as a backup water supply for the occasions when the city pumping station was inoperative. The condition of the underground pipes from the cistern to the house is unknown. Water now comes from the city supply.
8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:  

[ ] nationally  [ ] statewide  [X] locally


Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  [ ] A  [ ] B  [ ] C  [ ] D  [ ] E  [ ] F  [ ] G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architecture</th>
<th>Industry</th>
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Period of Significance  

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<th>1904-1925</th>
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Significant Dates  

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<th>1904-06</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Cultural Affiliation  

N/A

Significant Person  

N/A

Architect/Builder  

Lindsey, Frank J., architect
Keeter, Merrimon, builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

The Welsford Parker Artz House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its association with the tannery and extract works established in Old Fort in 1904, the major industry in the town for most of the first thirty years of the 20th century, and under Criterion C for architecture as the work of a master architect, Frank J. Lindsey. The Artz House is an example of early 20th century middle class residential design from Lindsey's firm, which specialized in planning elaborate commercial and residential structures for the mercantile princes of Middletown and Orange County, New York, one of whom was associated with the tanning industry. The house was built between 1904 and 1906 for Welsford Parker Artz, the first superintendent of the Catawba Tannery, which was established by The United States Leather Company, the world's largest leather trust. The trust, formed in 1893, was, in 1902, the largest registered corporation in the State of North Carolina. The tannery and its extract works provided employment for over 250 town residents in 1910. It continued in operation until ca. 1930. A major portion of the plant facilities were destroyed by fire on July 3, 1933; the remaining buildings were sold in the 1940s. Old Fort continues as a manufacturing center for textile and furniture products.

Specifications for The Artz House, which demanded the highest caliber materials and workmanship, came from the architectural firm of F. J. Lindsey & Son and construction is attributed to Merrimon Keeter, of Old Fort. The two-and-one-half story early Colonial Revival style house is a well-built structure on a hillside, overlooking the place where the tannery

See continuation sheet
stood, and it serves as a virtually unaltered monument to the importance of the position of the tannery superintendent in the town and to the importance of the leather industry in the town's history.

Industrial Context and Historical Background

In the early 1900s, U. S. Leather was America's largest leather trust, with operations in many cities, including, but not limited to, Chicago and Waukegan, Illinois, and Ridgeway and Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. In 1902, the company selected a site at Old Fort, along the Catawba River near its juncture with Mill Creek, for a tannery which was to become the largest in the world. The industry was attracted to this area by the forests of chestnut trees, the abundant supply of water for steam power in the Catawba River and Mill Creek, and the town's location as a commercial center for southwest McDowell County, situated between Asheville and Marion and with scheduled railroad service. The extract works processed great quantities of chestnut wood and bark from surrounding forest lands into the liquid used in the tanning vats for processing hides shipped in from South America.

In 1900, before the tannery was installed, census records show farming, the railroad, and small businesses as the leading occupational fields in the town. In 1910, the census records indicate that 259 Old Fort residents listed the tannery as their employer, more than in any field except farming. Many other residents from the surrounding area would also have been employed in the tannery or in the lumbering industry that supplied the raw materials for the tanning process. Later, textile plants were installed in Old Fort and textile products remain important in the town's industrial life.

The tanning company provided houses for its supervisory staff and smaller "mill houses" in the town for some other employees. Two of these are said to survive. Tannery Superintendent Welsford Parker, Artz, and his wife, Callie, had selected and purchased in 1904 the two lots on which their home, said to be the first in Old Fort with running water, would be built. They sold the property to U. S. Leather in December of
that year. The Artz house is the only well preserved and stylish early Colonial Revival house in Old Fort, and the only documented house from the Lindsey firm in the town.

Artz served as superintendent from the plant's opening in 1904 until his retirement in 1926, but the Leather Trust had been broken up in 1909, and at the time transferred all of its properties to Central Leather Company. In December, 1909, the properties were deeded to Union Tanning Company. It was from Union that Mrs. Artz purchased in her own name the house and the land on which it stands in 1925. Mrs. Artz died in 1940. On Mrs. Artz's death the property passed to their children, Claire, John and Frances. Claire resided in the house until her death in 1976, when possession passed to Frances, who lived there the remainder of her life. In 1989, it passed to the present owner, the son of John Artz.

Architectural Context

The large frame house was constructed, according to tradition, by Merrimon Keeter of Old Fort, using specifications set out by the Middletown, New York, firm of F.J. Lindsey and Son. In 1938, Lindsey was recalled as a meticulous craftsman who paid attention to every detail of a project, a trait that shows up in the Artz House specifications and construction. He learned his trade in the contracting firm of Giles and Giles, and when he was only 19 years old he designed a 3-story circular staircase for the home of New York Congressman Moses D. Stivers. He later employed 100 people in his own firm and was a leader in designing built-in furniture. His skill in this area is demonstrated in the noteworthy colonnaded window seat in the Artz living room.

The Lindsey trademark of fine workmanship is evident in the specifications for the Artz house, which repeatedly stress that the best of materials and craftsmanship were to be used. These instructions were diligently followed under the constant supervision of the superintendent and his wife, according to family members. This resulted in a substantial, well-built house, one which has been maintained and preserved in near-mint condition. Its location and appearance reinforce the important place of the plant superintendent and his family in Old Fort's commercial and social life. At this time, architectural drawings for the house have not been recovered.
The Lindsey firm evolved from ca. 1878, when Frank J. Lindsey (1854-1930) was first listed in the Middletown directory as a carpenter. The first directory advertisement for the firm of Lindsey Brothers, manufacturers, contractors, builders and artistic wood workers, appeared in 1886. They worked by the day or on contract, and specialized in, among other items, fine residences and interior finish. The directories show Lindsey Brothers as Lindsey and Co., in 1892. The following year, Frank Lindsey was listing himself in directories as an architect, and, in 1896, he had his own full-page city directory advertisement for his architectural services. This ad shows one of his houses, built at Chester, New York, which bears a resemblance to the Artz House in its massing, pent roof, front gabling, dormer and ell locations. In 1898, the directory shows a drawing of Lindsey's Stivers Building, which housed the "Middletown Times" newspaper and which, as late as 1981 still housed the city's newspaper offices. Although Lindsey designed commercial buildings, he appears to have been most prolific in the residential field. He designed the Horton Mansion/Morrison Hall at the Orange (NY) County Community College for Webb Horton, "whose fortunes were built by tanneries in Pennsylvania and New York." This 40 room house, "inspired by the great French chateaux," was built between 1902 and 1908, approximately the same time as the Artz House, and the Horton connection goes far in explaining why Lindsey was chosen to work for the leather trust.

By 1904, architect Harry H. Lindsey (probably the son in Lindsey & Son) is listed in the city directory. Frank Lindsey last appears in 1918. In the 1920s he moved to California for some years, returning to Middletown shortly before his death in 1930.

The Artz House reflects the prevailing domestic architectural fashions of its era of construction. The neoclassical details of dentilled cornice, wide frieze band, and arches over tripartite windows reveal the house to be an early rendition of the Colonial Revival style, which grew in popularity from the late 19th century.
NOTES

1 County tax maps call it Thompson St.; Thomason is name given on street sign. The road ends at the Artz driveway.


3 Documentary photos from 1920s provided by present owner. Photocopy of 1912 photo made during 1985 Archives and History survey and included in survey file. Original unavailable.


7 Alexander, op. cit.


9 "Our News and Views." Ca. 1921. Central Leather Co. NY. From an undated portion of this employee publication in the possession of Welsford E. Artz.

10 Gibbs, Mrs. Christina McDaniel, "United States Leather Company, The Catawba Tannery." The Dispatch, Old Fort, NC Vol 12, No. 21. April 17, 1985. Mrs. Gibbs's father, Olice McDaniel, was the superintendent of the extract works and Mrs. Gibbs served as companion to Mrs. Frances Artz Eissing, daughter of Welsford Parker Artz. According to Mrs. Gibbs, a sign on the plant proclaimed its status as the world's largest tannery.

11 Gibbs, ibid.

12 Gibbs, ibid.
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Old Fort, McDowell Co., North Carolina

13 McDowell County Register of Deeds, Book 34, Page 538.
14 McDowell County Register of Deeds, Book 34, Page 588.
15 McDowell County Register of Deeds, Book 45, Page 230.
16 McDowell County Register of Deeds, Book 45, Page 234.
17 McDowell County Register of Deeds, Book 68, Page 83.

18 Rosenblum, Beatrice G. "Frank J. Lindsey: Boy wonder built 'em to last, and some did." Middletown, NY. The Times Herald Record, 30 July 1981. pp. 63a-66a. Rosenblum was preparing a book on Middletown architects at the time she wrote this article, which states that the Middletown Historical Society has original photographs, real estate records, and city directories relating to Lindsey's work and life.

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.


23 Rosenblum, op. cit.

24 Rosenblum, ibid. Other Lindsey houses in Middletown include the Lewis Stivers-William Clark House; the Southwell-Klingman House (1882); the Irving Bull-Hodges House (ca. 1905); the Merritt-Corn House (1897); the Edson Davidge-McPhillips House; the Russell Wiggins-Kassel House; and the J. R. Van Duzer House, now the home of the Middletown Historical Society. None appear to be on the National Register.


26 Rosenblum, op. cit.
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 # _________________________________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.9 acres (+-)

UTM References
A [1, 7] [3, 9, 3, 2, 2, 0] [3, 9, 4, 3, 5, 3, 0]  
   Zone Easting Northing
B Zone Easting Northing
C Zone Easting Northing
D Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Mary Jean Hooper, Preservation Consultant

organization
street & number 102 Shady Oak Drive
city or town Asheville
city or town

date May 15, 1990
telephone 704/274-3988
state NC zip code 28803
9.1 References


Asheville Citizen. September 1902-November 1924

City Directories of Middletown, New York.


U.S. Census Records of McDowell County, NC. 1900, 1910.

10.1 Verbal Boundary Description:

The property is located on the western corner of the junction of Maple and Thompson Street, with a frontage of 276 feet along Maple Street, and a depth of 305 feet to Sloan Street, according to the accompanying McDowell County tax map for Township 10, Map 11C, Block 7, Lot 4.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary line encompasses Lots 2 and 3, Block C, Sheet 123B of the original Old Fort plat maps, and is described in the deed between Union Tanning Company and Callie H. Artz, registered January 30, 1926, in Deed Book 68 at Page 83 of McDowell County Register of Deeds. The boundaries encompass all the land historically associated with the Artz home.
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Section number PHOTOS Page ______ Artz, Welsford Parker, House
Old Fort, McDowell Co., North Carolina

Documentary Photographs:

Originals of the following 4 photographs are in the possession of Welsford E. Artz. Photographer unknown. 1990 negatives of these photographs in Archives and History Western Office, Asheville, NC. Letters A-D keyed to tax map.

A. View looking from the northeast to southwest across the back of the house. July 22, 1928.

B. View showing rear entrances on rear corner, taken from the northwest. Behind car, left to right, pocket window, projecting shed roofed entry and door, window, door to kitchen and basement. Date unknown.

C. View from east showing Welsford P. Artz sitting on retaining wall in terraced rear yard, original barn/carriage house, center rear, and cistern to the right at the top of the picture. Date unknown.

D. View of rear yard from southeast showing houses along southwest end of the city lot, original barn/carriage house, cistern at rear of lot, terraced yard and concrete wall. Path of driveway has been altered. Date unknown.

Current Photographs:

The only available modern photographs of the interior were taken in 1985, but the property owners give assurance that the property is unchanged from this depiction. Numbers 1-7 keyed to tax map.

Photographer: Mary Hooper
Date taken: April, 1990

1. Overall front view from the south
2. Facade detail showing Palladian influenced windows, dentilled rake and cornice, and porch column and post arrangement.
3. Northeast and rear elevation from the east
4. Rear and southwest elevations from the west
5. Garage taken from the south
6. Porch detail on southwest elevation showing entablature
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Photographer: Ted Alexander
Date taken: May, 1985

7. Cistern taken from the south
8. Detail, living room bay window with colonnade
9. Paneled staircase and rear closet
10. Upstairs hallway
11. Upstairs bathroom

Photographer: Mary Hooper
Date taken: April, 1990

12. Facade showing terraces
Sketch of Welsford Parker Artz House and Lot. Not to scale
By Welsford E. Artz, 1989
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EXHIBIT
Section number _____ Page _____
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Unknown date. Photocopy only available.
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Mcdowell County, North Carolina

U.S. Leather Co.  Old Fort, N.C.

(Pub. for S. H. Green & Co.)

Postcard, ca. 1910
Original not available.
EXHIBIT

Artz, Welsford Parker, House, Old Fort
McDowell County, North Carolina

Floor Plans
Not to scale
Artz, Welsford Parker, House, Old Fort
McDowell County, North Carolina

Township 10
Tax Map 11C
Block 7
Lot 4
Not to scale