

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 any 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

historic name: Montrose

other names/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 320 St. Mary's Road

not for publication: N/A

city or town: Hillsborough

vicinity: N/A

state: North Carolina

code: NC

county: Orange

code: 135

zip code: 27278

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Jeffrey A. Crow SHPO 8/30/01
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or 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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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): _____

Montrose
Name of Property

Orange County, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
9	4	buildings
1	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
10	5	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
10

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling
 COMMERCE/TRADE professional
 DOMESTIC secondary structure
 AGRICULTURE storage
 AGRICULTURE horticulture facility
 LANDSCAPE garden

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling
 COMMERCE/TRADE professional
 DOMESTIC secondary structure
 AGRICULTURE storage
 AGRICULTURE horticulture facility
 LANDSCAPE garden

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival
 Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
 stone
 roof slate
 asphalt shingles
 walls weatherboard
 terra cotta
 stucco
 other shakes

Narrative Description

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

Montrose
Name of Property

Orange County, North Carolina
County and State

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.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a 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.

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1842-1951

Significant Dates

1842

1852

1948

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Graham, William Alexander

Graham, John Washington

Graham, Alexander Hawkins

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder Paxton, Thomas (landscape gardener, 1852-1853)

Carr, George Watts (architect, 1948 remodeling)

Areas of Significance

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 # _____

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: North Carolina State Archives; Wilson Library, University of North Carolina

Montrose
Name of Property

Orange County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 61 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing
1 17 667168 3994075
2 17 667220 3994330

Zone Easting Northing
3 17 667224 3993900
4 17 667178 3993645
___ See continuation sheet.

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 Patricia S. Dickinson, Consultant; Michael T. Southern, Research Historian

organization Consultant; N.C. State Historic Preservation Office date August 28, 2001

street & number 4606 Hunt Road; 4617 Mail Service Center telephone 919-732-5439; 919-733-7342

city or town Hillsborough; Raleigh state NC zip code 27278; 27699-4617

12. 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Nancy and Craufurd Goodwin

street & number P.O. Box 957 telephone 919-732-7787

city or town Hillsborough state NC zip code 27278

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Montrose

Orange County, North Carolina

DESCRIPTION

Montrose is a sixty-one acre estate on the eastern edge of the old town of Hillsborough, bounded on the north by St. Mary's Road, on the south by the Eno River, on the east by the Ayr Mount estate, (NR, 1971), and on the west by the Burnside estate and a twentieth century school. Ayr Mount, Burnside, and Montrose together comprise a remarkable assemblage of historic properties along the Eno reflecting the importance of Hillsborough to North Carolina society and politics throughout the nineteenth century. Though Montrose is included within the boundaries of the Hillsborough Historic District (NR 1973), this individual nomination clarifies and expands the significance of the property and its component parts.

Standing on a slight rise above Hillsborough, which was established in 1754, Montrose has been closely entwined with the long history of the town. The riverside property lies close to the site of the seventeenth century Occoneechee Indian village, excavated in recent years by archaeologists from the University of North Carolina; the palisaded Indian settlement has been reconstructed. Two important colonial roads passed through the Montrose property, and portions of the old roadbeds are still clearly visible. [Claude J. Sauthier's *Plan of the Town of Hillsborough* (1768)]. The Old Halifax Road ran parallel to the river just above the flood plan, running up to Few's Tavern (destroyed) near what is now Ayr Mount to the east. The old road to Oxford, also known locally as the Old Indian Trading Path, formed the northern boundary of Montrose. St. Mary's Road follows much of the route of the old road, though an eroded remnant of the earlier route remains in the northeast corner of the property.

Montrose retains buildings and landscape features dating from its occupancy by the Reverend William Mercer Green in the 1820s through its ownership by three generations of the prominent Graham family from 1842 into the mid-twentieth century. The present main house was constructed about 1900 by the second generation of Grahams and remodeled in 1948 by the third. Behind it lies an array of outbuildings that include an early smokehouse and barn that are possibly from Green's occupancy, the law office of Governor William Alexander Graham, and others added by Graham's son and grandson.

Since the 1850s the property has been intensively landscaped. Governor Graham's wife, Susan, was familiar with the writings of Alexander Jackson Downing and consulted Thomas Paxton, landscape gardener for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Paxton is believed to have laid out the large geometric kitchen garden behind the house that remains in place, and probably planted some of the older trees on the property. The two subsequent generations of Grahams added serpentine boxwood gardens, terracing, a pond, and other plantings and features. The current owners have continued the tradition of gardening while maintaining the older features and restoring the historic buildings.

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Montrose

Orange County, North Carolina

The total ensemble of buildings and landscaping presents a continuity of occupancy, design, and stewardship of an undivided property spanning almost two centuries. Three structures associated with the modern gardening operation are of sensitive design but are non-contributing because of their age, and a small mid-nineteenth century office moved to the estate is non-contributing because of its relocation.

INVENTORY LIST:

I. C. **Main House** c. 1900; remodeled 1948. The house, constructed during the second generation of Graham family ownership, retains its basic ca. 1900 form: frame, two-stories, three-bays wide, and double-pile. However, the high-hip, slate-covered roof, flanking one-story wings, and Georgian style pedimented entrance pavilion and swan's neck pediment marking the main entrance are 1948 alterations by Durham architect George Watts Carr. The house rests on a brick foundation and is covered with plain clapboard siding, with flush clapboards sheathing the main entrance pavilion. There are six-over-two, two-over-two, one-over-one, and modern fixed windows, with molded hoods over the first story windows. A greenhouse was added to the west side of the house adjoining the screened porch in 1984.

The interior follows a center hall plan, with two spacious parlors on either side of the central passage. A bedroom adjoins the east parlor at the rear, and an octagonal dining room adjoins the rear of the west parlor. A 1940s kitchen is located at the rear of the dining room and a small, enclosed rear porch is located at the rear of the wide center hall and adjacent to the kitchen. On the second story are four bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Interior finish includes elements from the ca. 1900 construction and the 1948 remodeling. An open-string stair with turned balusters dominates the center hall. Egg-and-dart hooded moldings are above six-paneled doors. Especially distinctive is the elaborate woodwork that Alexander H. Graham removed from the early nineteenth century Nash-Kollock School on Margaret Lane in Hillsborough before its destruction in 1947 and installed in architect Carr's 1948 remodeling. The woodwork is believed to be by the hand of Martin Palmer, a Hillsborough joiner who made use of William Salmon's mid-eighteenth century patternbook, *Palladio Londinensis*. The east front parlor contains a splendidly composed Federal mantel with paneled overmantel, adorned with delicate pilasters, fine reeding and fretwork, garlands, pinwheel motifs, and an unusual segmental arch panel across the molded cornice of the overmantel. Simpler reeded mantels in the west parlor and two upstairs bedrooms are also from the Nash-Kollock School, as is the flush-board wainscot in the first floor stair hall. A raised-panel Georgian mantel in an east rear room, installed in Montrose in 1990, was salvaged from an unidentified house in Vance County that was destroyed. The rectangular transom with Gothic arch mullions over the front entrance may be a remnant of one of the earlier two houses at the site which burned.

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2. **C. William Alexander Graham Law Office.** By 1842, enlarged c. 1893. One-and-one-half-story, frame, two-room, side gable building constructed in two sections, possibly two different one-room buildings predating Graham's ownership or brought from another property and joined together by Graham in 1842 to serve as his office. The one-story, two-room rear addition with central chimney was built c. 1893 by John Graham to house his family after fire destroyed the main house that year. The double entry doors have frosted glass panels and Victorian embossed hardware. The walls are sheathed with beaded horizontal siding above a robust chair rail with vertical beaded boards. Handsome Federal-style mantels are in each of the original rooms. A narrow enclosed staircase leads to a sleeping loft/attic.

3. **C. Garage.** 1935. Two-bay, one-story garage constructed of hollow ceramic block; exposed rafter ends, with four multi-paned windows and a solid wood door.

4. **C. Kitchen** c. 1845. Antebellum, one-story, frame kitchen building and separate pantry or food preparation room sharing a gable roof with an open passage in between. Massive exterior-end kitchen chimney of 1:5 common bond brick. In the 1930s the clapboards were replaced with painted clay tile walls. The pantry/food preparation room is covered with plain clapboards and German siding on the end wall.

5. **C. Smokehouse.** c. 1830. Side-gabled frame smokehouse believed to date from the occupancy by the Reverend William Mercer Green, with an early shed-roof rear addition that housed the privy.

6. **C. Pump House.** c. 1948. Small, pyramid-roofed, clapboard-covered building housing well and pump.

7. **NC. Greenhouse.** 1987. Glass and metal greenhouse with brick foundation.

8. **NC. Office.** c. 1840; moved here and restored c. 1980. This charming, small, one-room frame office building with Greek Revival style double-paneled doors has plain clapboard siding and a shake roof.

9. **C. Tractor Shed.** c. 1948. Gable-roof storage shed with smooth stuccoed walls, used to store garden equipment and tractors.

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Orange County, North Carolina

10. **C. Animal Shelter.** c. 1948. Small, gable-roof building with stuccoed walls, reportedly built to house goats, now used for garden storage.

11. **C. Barn.** c. 1830 – c. 1845. Tall, two-and-one-half story gable- roof barn of heavy timber post and beam construction with stone foundation and plain, clapboard siding.

12. **NC. Cold frame and plant nursery.** 1987

13. **NC. Lath house.** 1987. In the kitchen garden. Built by sculptor and carpenter Wayne Hall. A tall, open gable roof (designed to reflect the rooflines of smokehouse and privy) provides a support for climbing vines as well as partial shade for tender plants. (Non-contributing structure)

14. **C. Gardens and sixty-one acre tract.** The sixty-one acre tract has been in continuous association with the estate since the early nineteenth century and retains historic landscape features and plantings associated with all three generations of the Graham family who occupied the estate between 1842 and 1977.

The earliest visible man-made features are eroded portions of what are believed to be two colonial roadbeds that predate Graham ownership but that remained associated features in the early years of the Graham family's occupancy of the property. The Old Oxford Road, itself an outgrowth of a prehistoric Indian trading path, was the original northern border of the property and its route is largely followed now by St. Mary's Road. An older portion of the roadbed lies parallel to the modern road in the northeastern corner of the property. The Old Halifax Road crossed the middle of the property parallel to the river, and portions of the roadbed are visible in the woods above the flood plain and parallel to the Eno River.

Graham family tradition holds that the large kitchen garden south of the house with its geometric plan and gridwork of beds and paths dates from the early 1850s and is attributed to the service of landscape architect Thomas Paxton, gardener for the University of North Carolina, who worked for the Grahams in 1852 and 1853. Food plants are no longer grown in the garden, but it remains in use as an ornamental garden following the original layout. Several of the older and larger trees about the estate are also believed to be contributions by Paxton.

One of the oldest landscape elements is the small rock garden at the center of the oval driveway to the north of the house. Its date is uncertain, though it was surely in place in the nineteenth century and could have been developed during the occupancy of William A. and Susan Graham in the mid-1850s, or added by their son John W. Graham later in the century.

Several landscape features were added during the occupancy of Alexander Hawkins and Kathleen Graham from 1928 to 1950. Mrs. Graham began the boxwood border west of the house in 1929. The A.H. Grahams installed an earthen dam creating a three-acre pond on the eastern

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side of the property in the 1930s, and the southern slope of the land toward the Eno River was terraced for erosion control about the same time. Despite later tree growth, the terracing remains clearly evident. The curvilinear drive north of the house was part of the late 1940s improvements by architect George Watts Carr. A long alley of cedars runs north-south near the north center of the property, now surrounded by later tree growth; the date of its planting is uncertain, but it also apparently dates from the 1930s occupancy of A.H. and Kathleen Graham. Some of the land that had been cleared before 1950 such as the bottomland along the Eno is now covered in second growth woods, but a number of ancient trees remain across the property, including old growth trees by the river, and the land remains undeveloped. Plantings and gardens installed by the current owners complement and enhance the historic landscape features.

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Montrose

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

Montrose is a sixty-one acre estate located on the eastern outskirts of Hillsborough, the seat of Orange County, North Carolina. The property has experienced many changes since its development in the 1820s, and today its wide array of historic resources reflects the occupancy by three generations of the Graham family, all of whom made significant contributions to North Carolina political history: William Alexander Graham from 1842 to 1874, his son John Washington Graham from 1874 to 1928, and his grandson Alexander Hawkins Graham from 1928 to 1977. The original main house on the property burned in 1862, but a few early outbuildings remain intact, including the law office built on or brought to the property in the early 1840s for William Alexander Graham (1804-1875), North Carolina Governor (1845-49) and Secretary of the Navy (1850-1852) under President Millard Fillmore. The law office is the building most closely associated with the significant, antebellum period of Governor Graham's life. John Washington Graham (1838-1928) was a Confederate officer, attorney, and politician who had a prominent role in Reconstruction politics; the core of the present house at Montrose was built for him ca. 1900. Alexander Hawkins Graham (1890-1977) was in turn a prominent politician and public servant; during his occupancy he and his wife remodeled the house and enhanced the landscape. Thus, Montrose is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion B at a statewide level of significance in the area of politics and government for its association with three generations of the Graham family from 1842 to 1951. Montrose is eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture at a local level of significance for the late 1940s renovation by prominent Durham architect George Watts Carr. Hired by Mr. and Mrs. Alexander H. Graham, Carr designed a Colonial Revival style overbuilding of the ca. 1900 house constructed for John Washington Graham. Under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture, Montrose is also eligible at a local level of significance for the remaining, identifiable portions of landscaped grounds created in the 1850s by Thomas Paxton, one of North Carolina's first professional landscape gardeners, under the direction of Susan (Mrs. William A.) Graham. Other landscape features reveal the stewardship and continuity of landscape development by the two subsequent generations of the Graham family on a parcel that remained undivided and in continuous association with the estate since the early nineteenth century. The gardens were expanded in the 1970s and 1980s by noted horticulturist and current owner Nancy Goodwin and her husband Craufurd, who have restored the house and outbuildings and much of the historic designed landscape. The period of significance extends from 1842, the year that William Alexander Graham and his family acquired the property, through three generations of Graham family ownership to 1951. Though the significance of the property extends beyond 1951, it is not to the degree to warrant significance under Criterion Consideration G.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTS:

The early ownership of the sixty-one acre tract which comprises Montrose is somewhat obscure. Deeds record that a sixty-five acre tract on the "south side of Halifax Road" was owned by James Hogg who sold it to Jehu Whitted for \$500 in September, 1799.¹ Whitted willed the land to his brother, Levi, who sold it to William Kirkland (owner neighboring of Ayr Mount) in November, 1821.² Kirkland in turn sold it to the Reverend William Mercer Green, rector of the nearby St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, in May 1827.³ Green built an elegant two-story, frame house which resembled the central block of the Hassell-Nash House (NR 1973) on West Queen Street in the Hillsborough Historic District. It is thought that the smokehouse (#5) dates from Green's occupancy of the tract, and the barn (#11) may as well. Green later became chaplain and professor of belles lettres at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, where he founded the Chapel of the Cross (NR 1972). In 1850 Green was called to Mississippi to become the first Episcopal bishop of that state, and was a founder and later chancellor of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee.⁴

Four years after purchasing the property, Green entered a Deed of Trust to Thomas Ruffin and John R. London to cover Duncan Cameron and Walker Anderson, who had signed as guarantors to a note for \$5,000 that Green owed Robert Donaldson of New York.⁵ In surety Green posted the premises and a number of slaves he owned in New Hanover and Orange counties. Donaldson was a wealthy UNC alumnus and patron of the arts who maintained close connections with his home state, and the loan may have been for construction of Green's house. Though no deed records the transaction, by 1838 John Umstead Kirkland of Ayr Mount owned the property.⁶ In November 1842, John U. Kirkland sold William A. Graham 59 acres on the Eno River adjoining William Kirkland, deceased, on the east and Thomas Ruffin on the west. The purchase price was \$3,200 plus Graham's residence and three lots in Hillsborough.⁷

¹ Orange County Deed Book 8: 244, Hereinafter cited as OCDB

² OCDB 22: 150

³ OCDB 24: 365

⁴ William S. Powell, editor, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Vol. 2, 362-363. Article on Green by Rachel Brown deRosset. Hereinafter cited as *DNCB*.

⁵ OCDB 24: 366

⁶ Alice Ruffin to her sister, March 20, 1838, stating that "Uncle John has bought Mr. Green's house." Ruffin-Roulhac-Hamilton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Alice Ruffin was the daughter of Thomas Ruffin, whose wife was sister of John U. Kirkland.

⁷ OCDB 30: 115.

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Orange County, North Carolina

The Graham Family in North Carolina: Politics and Government Context

The Montrose estate is significant for its long-time association with William Alexander Graham and his descendants, who owned and occupied the property from 1842 to 1977. Rarely in North Carolina history have consecutive generations of a single family exerted such influence in state politics for such a long period.

Few North Carolinians ever held as many important public offices as William Alexander Graham (1804-1875). His marker in Hillsborough's Presbyterian Church graveyard lists some of his more important accomplishments: "Speaker of the House of Commons, Senator of the United States, Governor of North Carolina, Secretary of the Navy, Member of the State Convention of 1861, Senator of the Confederate States, Arbiter of the Maryland-Virginia line." He was also the Whig candidate for Vice-President in Winfield Scott's unsuccessful campaign in 1852.⁸

William Alexander Graham was born in Lincoln County, North Carolina, son of Joseph Graham, a Revolutionary patriot, and Isabella Davidson, daughter to a prominent Mecklenburg County planter family and leaders in the region's nascent iron industry. He was educated in classical schools in nearby Lincolnton and Statesville, completing his preparatory education in the Hillsborough Academy, and graduated with honors from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1824. He subsequently read law with the eminent Thomas Ruffin of Orange County, who later became an outstanding jurist and chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. In 1828 Graham established a practice as a member of the highly competitive Hillsborough legal community. Within a few years he became one of the most successful members of the North Carolina bar, maintaining a lucrative practice until his death. In time he owned three plantations worked by slave labor, although agriculture was never his primary interest; like law it was secondary to his abiding preoccupation with public affairs.

Graham began his political career with the emerging Whig party, winning several terms to the state legislature in the 1830s, and serving as speaker of the House of Commons in the 1838 and 1840 sessions. From December 1840 to March 1843 he represented North Carolina in the United States Senate. Displaced by a Democratic legislature elected in 1842, he won election for governor in 1844 and again in 1846, serving until January 1849. Graham was an able administrator, and his terms of office were characterized by concern for humanitarian causes and for internal improvements, especially railroad development. In 1850 President Millard Fillmore appointed him secretary of the navy, a position he occupied for two years. He initiated several notable endeavors, including personnel reforms, exploration of the Amazon basin, and the Perry expedition to Japan. In 1852 the Whig party nominated him as vice-presidential running mate with Winfield Scott. Their defeat to Franklin Pierce signaled the demise of the national Whig

⁸ Information on Graham's life is adapted from *DNCB*, Vol. 2, 337-339, article by Max R. Williams

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party in the fissure over slavery. In 1860 he united with other conservatives nationwide in founding the Constitutional Union Party in an effort to preserve the Republic. He remained a Unionist until the firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops to put down the rebellion. During the war he served in the Confederate Senate, often in opposition to the policies of President Davis. After the war he was again elected to the United States Senate by the state legislature, but was among those southerners denied their seats by the Republican-controlled Congress. He never held public office again after 1865, but remained influential in conservative politics and served on the arbitration commission to settle the Virginia-Maryland boundary dispute.

Graham married Susannah (Susan) Washington of New Bern in 1838, and the couple had ten children, eight of whom survived their parents. Five of their sons were Confederate officers, and all of the surviving children achieved notable careers in their own right. The county seat town of Alamance County and a western North Carolina county were named in Graham's honor.

Graham was briefly associated with other houses in Hillsborough, but he is most closely associated with Montrose, his home through the most important phase of his career. In 1842 Graham and his wife Susan purchased from John U. Kirkland the house and acreage formerly owned by William Mercer Green on the Eno River, while Graham was serving in the United States Senate. Graham eventually named the property after his ancestor James Graham, Duke, Marquis, and Earl of Montrose of Scotland.⁹ The Grahams lived in the house built for Green, and in the 1850s initiated major improvements to the house and gardens (See architecture and landscape contexts below). Soon after purchasing the property, Graham built a law office to the rear of the main house, though it is possible the building pre-existed and was brought to the property.¹⁰ This office survived intact the two fires which destroyed the main residences at Montrose in 1862 and 1893.

Following the fire of December 1862, Graham continued to own the property. A year after the fire he wrote Governor Zebulon B. Vance, "To mention nothing more, my family are almost homeless, and I am hastening to erect buildings for them," presumably at Montrose, but the Grahams eventually moved away from the estate to the William Hooper House in Hillsborough.¹¹ It is unclear whether Graham continued to use the office at Montrose, but in 1874 he gave the estate to his son, Major John Washington Graham (1838-1928).¹²

⁹ John Allcott, "Architectural developments at 'Montrose' in the 1850s," *North Carolina Historical Review*, Winter 1965, p. 87.

¹⁰ Craufurd and Nancy Goodwin interviews.

¹¹ Graham to Zebulon Baird Vance, January 6, 1864. J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton and Max R. Williams, editors. *Papers of William A. Graham*. Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1957-1973. Vol. 6.

¹² OCDB 45: 309.

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Montrose

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Major Graham was a Confederate officer, attorney, and prominent state politician after the Civil War.¹³ He was born in Hillsborough and educated at the Caldwell Institute, Abbott's Classical Academy in Georgetown, D.C., and the University of North Carolina. He read law with leading attorneys and received his law degree in 1860. He entered Confederate service in April 1861 as a junior staff officer, and in 1862 returned to Orange County to raise Company D, 56th N.C. Regiment, which he led as captain until promoted to regimental major in September 1863. He was severely wounded in March 1865 near the end of the war when shot through both legs, but he eventually recovered fully. He was noted as an officer genuinely concerned for his men and characterized as "one of the hardest fighting soldiers in the Southern army." After the war, Major Graham became a leading Conservative politician in opposition to Radical Reconstruction and Governor William W. Holden. He was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1868, served several terms in the state senate, and was a leader in state tax and fiscal policy. He was an accomplished attorney and practiced until his 84th year. Montrose was his home for all of his life from childhood. He built a house on the foundation of his parents' burned house in 1874, but it too burned in 1893. The core of the present main house was built ca. 1900 for him and his second wife, Margaret Forrester Bailey Graham.

In 1928 Major Graham's son, Alexander Hawkins Graham (1890-1977), moved in with his widowed mother and eventually inherited the property. Like his father and grandfather, A.H. "Sandy" Graham had a long and distinguished career in public service, working as a lawmaker, lieutenant governor, and highway administrator.¹⁴ He was educated at the University of North Carolina and Harvard, and served as an army officer in France during World War I with the 81st ("Wildcat") Division. Upon his return to Hillsborough he became chairman of the Orange County Democratic party in 1919, a post he held for 28 years, and was first elected to the state legislature in 1921. As a lawmaker, he fought for improved highways and education. He became speaker of the N.C. House of Representatives in 1929. From 1933 to 1937 he served as lieutenant governor, and worked during these worst years of the Great Depression to keep schools open and extend the school term to nine months; he also presided over the state's "economic war council" of the state's leading bankers. He ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1936. His legislative work in highway improvements led to his appointment as state commissioner of highways from 1945 to 1949 and again from 1953 to 1957, an era of great expansion of the state's highway and interstate systems. He campaigned for a limited access highway policy, and when he left his post in 1957, North Carolina was rated the leading state in terms of progress made on the interstate highway system. During their residency at Montrose, "Sandy" Graham and his wife Kathleen undertook a major remodeling of the house by Durham architect George Watts Carr and made additional improvements to the gardens and grounds.

¹³ Information on J.W. Graham's life is adapted from *DNCB*, Vol. 2, 334-335, article by Max R. Williams.

¹⁴ Information on A.H. Graham's life is adapted from *DNCB*, Vol. 2, 334-335, article by Catherine L. Robinson.

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Architecture and Landscape Contexts

Through the 1850s, William Alexander Graham and his wife Susan (given as "Susannah" in some accounts, but "Susan" in both the 1860 and 1870 Census and in Graham's 1871 will) were concerned with improvements of the house and gardens of Montrose.¹⁵ This period followed his governorship of North Carolina and during the time he was Secretary of the Navy under President Millard Fillmore, a service which interrupted work at Montrose. In 1851, the Grahams commissioned fashionable New York architect Alexander Jackson Davis to prepare plans for enlarging the existing house they had purchased from William Mercer Green in 1842. The architect had been active in North Carolina with the Capitol in Raleigh and improvements to the campus of the University at Chapel Hill, and he had designed an elegant Italian Villa style house in Greensboro for North Carolina Governor John M. Morehead, Blandwood (NR, 1970). In 1850 Davis was planning two other important buildings in the state, Smith Hall (Playmaker's Theatre, NHL, 1971) on the campus of the university and the State Hospital for the Insane in Raleigh. Graham, a member of the Executive Committee of the University's Board of Trustees in charge of buildings on the campus, was familiar with Davis's work. When Davis visited North Carolina in May 1850 to work on other in-state projects, he could not visit Hillsborough due to prior commitments. Meanwhile, during the summer, Graham had been "surprised" by his appointment to serve as Secretary of the United States Navy.¹⁶

In November 1850, Davis traveled to Hillsborough where he consulted with Susan Graham who gave him her ideas for an addition to the house. After returning to New York he undertook "A Study for Gov. W. A. Graham" and in February sent him "a plan, 1st floor, 2nd floor, and little view perspective" of an Italian villa style house similar to Blandwood in Greensboro. Action on these plans had to wait, since the Grahams were preoccupied with buying a house in Washington, D.C., where they lived until his service in Washington ended in 1852.

The Grahams returned to Hillsborough, where gardens around the house were their first priority. Susan Graham owned a copy of A.J. Downing's *Cottage Residences and Their Gardens and Grounds*, whose introduction and sketches had been penned by his associate A. J. Davis. Mrs. Graham's reading of A.J. Downing's work and *The Young Gardener's Assistant* by Thomas Bridgeman, purchased in Raleigh by her husband, also influenced her garden plans.

¹⁵ Information on the Grahams' improvements is adapted from John Allcott, "Architectural Developments at 'Montrose' in the 1850s," *North Carolina Historical Review*, Winter 1965. Hereinafter cited as Allcott.

¹⁶ W.A. Graham to his brother James, July 19, 1850. Collections of the papers of William Alexander Graham are located at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Graham Papers, Raleigh; and the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as Graham Papers, University. Both collections are cited in Allcott.

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Few estates in North Carolina retain landscape features, gardens plans, and ornamental plantings known to date to the mid-nineteenth century. The prominence of Hillsborough as a political and social center with several major estates made the town home to an exceptional degree of experimentation in mid-nineteenth century landscape design, though little is documented from the period. Adjacent to Montrose, the Burnside estate was once the Hillsborough town house of Orange County planter Paul Cameron, the state's wealthiest individual in the late antebellum period. Burnside was the site of "Cameron Park," one of the state's earliest arboretums, installed by Thomas A. Adams, an English landscape gardener that Cameron had imported for the project. Adams enlisted the help of Parsons & Co. of Long Island to plant the twenty-acre park with "every kind of tree there was." The park has since been subdivided and is now occupied by the portions of the St. Matthews Episcopal Churchyard, the Orange County Board of Education, and Cameron Park Elementary School, though a few trees are thought to survive.¹⁷

Next door at Montrose, in 1852 Governor and Mrs. Graham asked University of North Carolina's President David Swain for assistance from the university's gardener, Englishman Thomas Paxton. Paxton was the second professional gardener retained by the university during a period of campus improvements in the 1840s and 50s.¹⁸ The first, John Loader, also English, was hired in 1847 through the university's connections with A.J. Davis and UNC alumnus Robert Donaldson of New York, a friend and client of Davis, and retained that position until the end of 1851. Paxton was hired the following year through the same channels. He was described as "a burley Englishman of powerful frame," and was reported to be a relative of Sir Joseph Paxton, who had designed the Crystal Palace in London, though the exact relationship has not been determined. Paxton worked as university gardener until 1858, when he resigned to open a private nursery in Chapel Hill. As a result of his service, by the late 1850s the north quadrangle of the campus was described as "the theater for the display of the art of the horticulturist and the landscape architect." A complete assessment of Paxton's contributions to the campus that remain to the present has not been compiled.

Paxton worked at Montrose several times during 1852 and 1853. It is difficult to place clear attributions to the earliest landscape features at Montrose, but Graham family tradition holds that the kitchen garden dates from Paxton's service at Montrose, as do several of the older and larger trees on the estate. Paxton may also have contributed the rock garden in front of the house; though its exact date is not known, it is surely nineteenth century. As Secretary of the Navy, W. A. Graham was involved in the planning of Commodore Perry's expedition to Japan, which took place from 1852 to 1854, opening the Orient to the West. Perry returned with several plant

¹⁷ Hillsborough Historic District National Register nomination (1973), revised inventory list by M. Ruth Little.

¹⁸ Information on Paxton and his service at the university from Archibald Henderson, *The Campus of the First State University* (1949), 158; 162.

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specimens, and according to Graham family tradition, some may have found a home in the Grahams' garden in what would be one of the earliest examples of Japanese influence on American horticulture.¹⁹

When the Grahams returned their attention to the proposed house plans, they found many problems with them, as did their Raleigh builders who "seem at a loss as to the mode of joining the roof of the new to that of the old house on your plan."²⁰ Graham also was doubtful about the Italian Villa-style house proposed by the architect and wrote to him: "We do not wish the tower as part of the improvement . . . and in consideration of the exceeding plainness of the buildings in our town, we have thought of abandoning this plan . . ." and proceeding with a simpler idea, which would create a "typical North Carolina farmhouse," friendly, simple and comfortable. Because her husband was frequently out of town on business, Susan Graham oversaw the renovations which included the addition of a bay beyond the hall on the west, front and back verandahs, and a nursery. Probably because she was home coping with the disorder any renovation causes, she complained to her husband, "Clark and Jim . . . they are very slow . . . there is but poor prospect of having the house completed before next summer."²¹ All through 1854 and into the fall of 1855 work continued; it was finally completed five years after it was started. In July 1854, Graham remembered that he had never paid Davis for the drawings he had supplied in 1851 and sent him a check for fifty dollars: Davis responded somewhat dryly that "your check exceeds the amount of any claim I had against you, my having visited Hillsboro' at the suggestion of (UNC) President Swain and Governor Morehead, . . . tho' I cannot applaud those most worthy friends of mine for having selected me"²² It is interesting to note that Davis had proposed an octagonal library in his plans, a design which Graham did include in his renovations. An octagonal room, now used as a dining room, is present in the existing house, an apparent survival down through three generations of houses on the site.

The subsequent nineteenth-century history of the house is a sad one. The house burned in 1862 and the Civil War precluded rebuilding. Governor Graham was then serving in the North Carolina State Senate, and he and his wife moved into Hillsborough where they bought the William Hooper House. Governor Graham's office survived the fire and remains to the present. In 1874 the governor gave the Montrose tract to his son, Major John Washington Graham.²³ In his will drafted in 1871, William Graham left his wife Susan "all my household and kitchen furniture, paintings, prints, plate, library, other than professional law books, two wagons and two mules and horses, three milch cows and calves, all forage, provisions and family supplies with

¹⁹ Craufurd and Nancy Goodwin interviews.

²⁰ Graham Papers, University. Graham to Davis. May 11, 1853. Cited in Allcott.

²¹ Graham Papers, Raleigh. Susan Graham to her husband, July 18, 1853. Cited in Allcott.

²² Graham Papers, University. Davis to Graham, July 15, 1854. Cited in Allcott.

²³ OCDB 45: 309.

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agricultural and garden implements at home."²⁴ According to the agricultural Schedules of 1860 and 1870, Montrose was never intensively farmed, but the Grahams owned a modest number of horses and buggies, chickens, and cows to provide milk and butter, and grew oats, wheat and corn to feed the animals, and in their kitchen garden grew enough vegetables for their family's needs.²⁵

Major John Washington Graham built a larger house on the foundations of his parents' house in 1874, but in 1893 this house, too, was destroyed by fire. The John Grahams added two rooms to the 1842 law office after the fire and lived there for several years until the present house was constructed; sources vary on its completion date but the Grahams were certainly in the new house by 1902.²⁶

In 1948 Alexander Hawkins "Sandy" Graham and his wife Kathleen hired prominent Durham architect George Watts Carr, Sr., who undertook a major renovation of the house in the Colonial Revival style. Carr was one of the most prolific and influential architects in Durham and the surrounding region from the 1920s into the 1950s.²⁷ Early in his career, Carr studied architecture through a correspondence course by night while he worked by day as the manager of the Durham office of the Winston-Salem based firm of Northrup and O'Brien. During the 1920s he designed several Durham buildings and was supervising architect for Northrup and O'Brien on many others until establishing his own practice at the end of the decade. His work included both commercial and residential designs. He became principal designer of the Forest Hills residential development in Durham when the developers retained Northrup and O'Brien for the project. Carr was accomplished in all the period revival styles, including Tudor Revival, English Cottage Revival, and Colonial Revival, and he is largely responsible for creating the fashionable period revival character of Forest Hills. He also made important contributions to the Hope Valley and Duke Forest developments. His Colonial Revival designs are characterized by elaborate entrance surrounds and decorative cornices.

Carr's work at Montrose represents an important trend in regional domestic architecture in the first half of the twentieth century – the remodeling of existing houses in the Colonial Revival style, often utilizing already symmetrical facades and adding Colonial Revival style porches, flanking wings, window and door moldings and surrounds, and mantelpieces. The Colonial Revival represented both an aesthetic and ethic in domestic architecture, especially in the south, where it was considered an appropriate style for established families and the upper middle class. The idea of the Colonial in architecture – an embrace of what was popularly considered a purer,

²⁴ Orange County Will Book H, pp. 113-119.

²⁵ Orange County Agricultural Census, 1860, 1870 and 1880.

²⁶ Handwritten notes by Mary Claire Engstrom, Hillsborough historian, in "Montrose" working file, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History Raleigh, NC.

²⁷ Information on George Watts Carr taken from Claudia P. Roberts, *The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory* (1982)

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more pristine time in American history and culture -- was often promoted as an antidote to the "excesses" of the Victorian era, and was also employed to dress up existing buildings to reflect values about architecture and life. The remodeling of Oak View (NR, 1991) in Wake County, where a simple mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival house was expanded and remodeled in the 1940s, is one of several important examples. The ca. 1900 house at Montrose was apparently a rather plain house of symmetrical center-passage plan which adapted well to the Colonial Revival idiom, as Carr raised the roof, added wings and a decorative entrance pavilion, and embellished the interior.

In this spirit of antiquarianism, Colonial Revival architects and builders sometimes made use of woodwork salvaged from demolished early buildings. At Montrose, Carr installed pieces from the fine interior woodwork of the Nash-Kollock School, an early nineteenth century building in Hillsborough, from which A.H. Graham removed the woodwork before its demolition in 1947.²⁸ The woodwork is believed to be the hand of Martin Palmer, a Hillsborough joiner whose work was apparently influenced by William Salmon's mid-eighteenth century book *Palladio Londinensis*.²⁹

Sandy and Kathleen Graham also took an avid interest in the gardens, beginning propagation of the boxwood border to the west of the house in 1929. The Grahams installed a pond, terraced the back side of the property above the river, and planted a cedar allee to the east of house, which probably was a roadway between two fields. Under their direction Carr also designed an enhancement of the grounds, most notably the curvilinear drives, which still retained many of the specimen trees and plants installed by the two previous generations of Grahams.³⁰ The landscape at Montrose shows the continuity of its development across multiple generations of ownership by the same family on an estate that has remained undivided since the early nineteenth century.

In 1977 Nancy and Craufurd Goodwin purchased Montrose from the sons of Alexander Hawkins Graham and Kathleen Graham. They have continued the gardening tradition, preserving what remained of the earlier ones and expanding them. From 1984 to 1993 Mrs. Goodwin owned and managed Montrose Nursery, a mail-order nursery specializing in cyclamen and little known perennials. In 1993 the nursery received the Commercial Nursery Award from the American Horticultural Society. Articles on Mrs. Goodwin's work with cyclamen appeared first in *American Horticulturist* in 1985 and in numerous magazines thereafter. In 1993 the gardens were featured on the PBS television series, *Victory Garden*, and later on *Rebecca's Garden*. In 1994 Mrs. Goodwin received the Minnette C. Duffy Landscape Preservation Award from Preservation North Carolina for her stewardship and enhancement of the gardens and

²⁸ David L.S. Brook, *A Lasting Gift of Heritage: A History of the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, 1939-1974*. (1997), pp. 70-71

²⁹ Michael Southern interview with Barbara Church, July 2001. Church is an architectural historian and Hillsborough resident.

³⁰ Craufurd and Nancy Goodwin interviews.

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landscape at Montrose. Mrs. Goodwin has reflected on her efforts to restore and develop the gardens in her book with Allen Lacy, *A Year in Our Gardens: Letters by Nancy Goodwin and Allen Lacy*.³¹ The Goodwins have given conservation easements on fifty acres of the property to the Triangle Land Conservancy.

³¹ Nancy Goodwin and Allen Lacy, *A Year in Our Gardens: Letters by Nancy Goodwin and Allen Lacy* (2001).

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Orange County Deed and Will Books.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the nominated property includes the 61 acres recorded in Orange County, N.C. Plat Book 82, Page 92. This is Orange County parcel 4.37.C.10, as shown on the enclosed Orange County GIS map.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes all property in continuous historical association with the Montrose estate, including buildings and landscape elements and features associated with all three generations of the Graham family through the period of significance.

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Photographs

All photographs located in the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

1. North façade of Main House, camera pointed south. Photograph by Patricia S. Dickinson, February 2000.
2. Stair in Main House. Photograph by Patricia S. Dickinson, May 2000.
3. North façade of Main House from a distance, camera pointed south, viewed across Rock Garden. Photograph by Michael Southern, December 2000.
4. View from Kitchen Garden to Lath House (on left) and Barn (in distance on right), camera pointed northeast. Photograph by Michael Southern, December 2000.
5. West (front) and north elevations of William A. Graham Law Office, camera pointed southeast. Photograph by Patricia S. Dickinson, February 2000.
6. West elevation of Barn, camera pointed east. Photograph by Patricia S. Dickinson, February 2000.
7. View across Kitchen Garden to Main House (left) and William A. Graham Law Office (right) in distance, camera pointed north. Photograph by Michael Southern, December 2000.
8. West elevation of Kitchen and Pantry, camera pointed east. Photograph by Patricia S. Dickinson, February 2000.
9. West and north elevations of Smokehouse, camera pointed southeast. Photograph by Patricia S. Dickinson, February 2000.
10. Outbuilding complex, camera pointed northwest. L to R, Barn, Tractor Shed, Animal Shed, Office behind Animal Shed. Photograph by Michael Southern, December 2000.
11. Pond, camera pointed north Photograph by Michael Southern, December 2000.
12. Terracing across back of property, camera pointed southwest. Photograph by Michael Southern, December 2000.

Montrose

320 St. Mary's Road
Hillsborough
Orange County, North Carolina

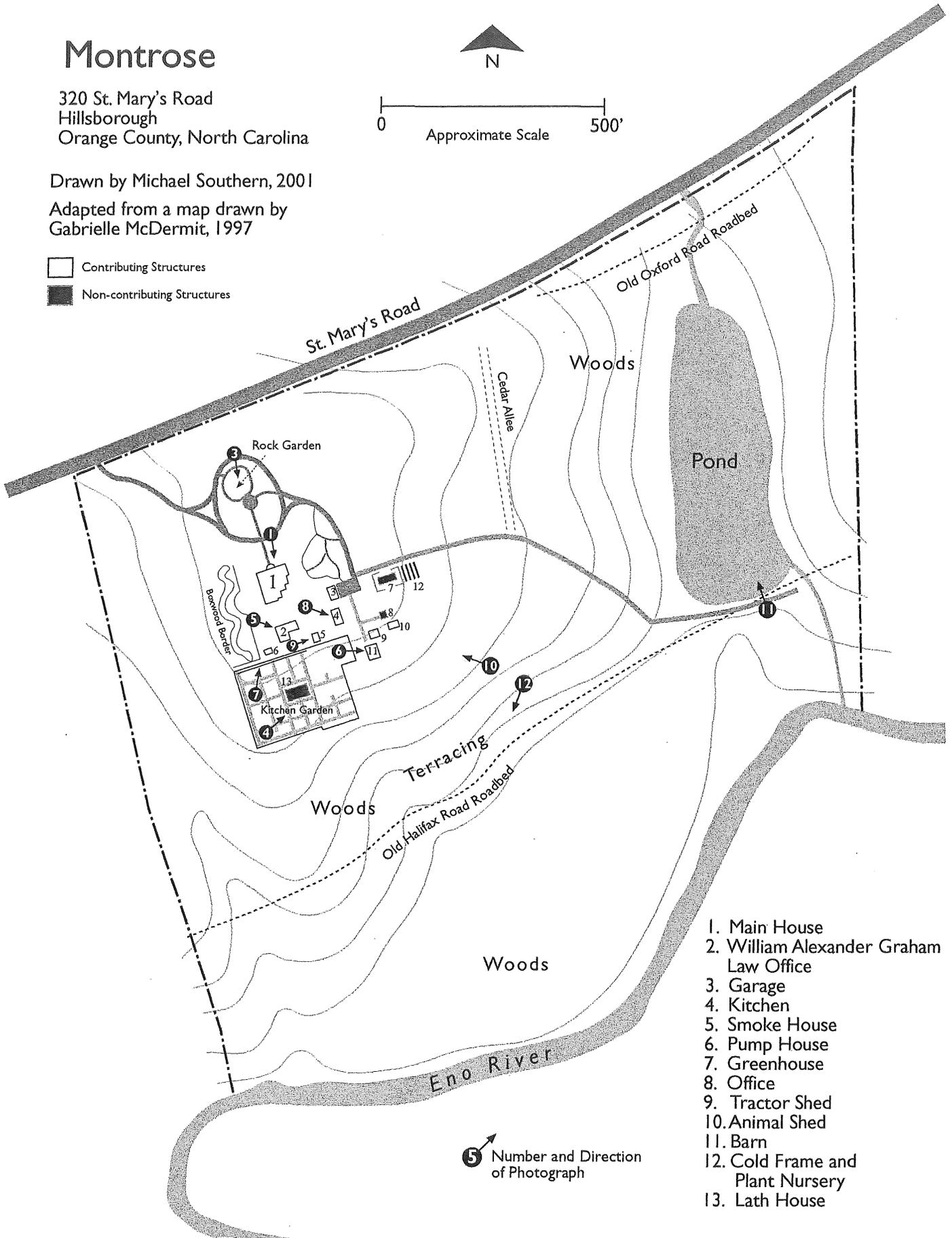


0 Approximate Scale 500'

Drawn by Michael Southern, 2001

Adapted from a map drawn by
Gabrielle McDermit, 1997

- Contributing Structures
- Non-contributing Structures



1. Main House
2. William Alexander Graham Law Office
3. Garage
4. Kitchen
5. Smoke House
6. Pump House
7. Greenhouse
8. Office
9. Tractor Shed
10. Animal Shed
11. Barn
12. Cold Frame and Plant Nursery
13. Lath House

5 Number and Direction of Photograph

Monrose
Hillsborough
Zone 17

BM 667220
3994330

D 17 667324
3994000

D 17 667178
3993645

Hillsborough
QUAD

