United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic William Alfred Moore House

and or common

2. Location

street & number 202 Moore Avenue

city, town Mt. Airy

state North Carolina

code 037

county Surry

code 171

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property

name Mary Letitia Hollingsworth

street & number 202 Moore Avenue

city, town Mt. Airy

state North Carolina

code 27030

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Surry County Courthouse/Register of Deeds

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Dobson

state North Carolina

code 171

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title "Preliminary Report: Surry County/Inventory"

Laura A. W. Phillips

has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date 1982

federal state county local

depository for survey records Survey & Planning Branch, Archives & History

city, town 109 E. Jones Street, Raleigh

state North Carolina

code 171
7. Description

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The William Alfred Moore House is a substantial, well-detailed, largely unaltered, two-story rectangular frame house sheathed with weatherboards and resting on a common bond brick foundation. The house exhibits a combination of Victorian and Italianate stylistic features and on the interior, Greek Revival features. The three-bay wide, double-pile house with two-story rear ell was enlarged c. 1925 with the addition of a matching rear ell and a second story sleeping porch. The house was constructed between 1861 and 1863 by Mt. Airy merchant and industrialist William Alfred Moore, and is the earliest known structure remaining in the town. The Moore House, located at 202 Moore Avenue, faces west and is set near the center of a lavishly landscaped 4.1 acre tract. The oval-shaped tract, circled by Moore Avenue, Oak and Renfrow streets, lies two short blocks east of the center of Mt. Airy's commercial district (National Register, 1985).

Located in the front yard of the Moore House is an outstanding c. 1865 rustic hexagonal summer house constructed with wood poles and intertwining laurel root walls; a wood shingle roof shelters matching furniture inside. The doorways and window openings are formed in an irregular pointed Gothic arch. The furniture, which is somewhat deteriorated, includes a settee, chair, and table with a laurel root base and plank top. The summer house and its furniture are nearly identical to a design found in Andrew Jackson Downing's 1844 book, A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening; the house plans contained in one of Downing's other influential book, The Architecture of Country Houses (1851), may have served as inspiration for some of the picturesque decorative details found on the main house.

While the Moore House is largely hidden from view by massive magnolia and fir trees and enormous boxwood hedges, the summer house is clearly visible from Renfrow Street, a major city throughfare. The Moore House with its park-like grounds forms a residential island on the edge of the busy downtown commercial area. The complex is a Mount airy landmark due to the distinctive architecture of the house and summer house, the large house tract, the property's age, and its historical associations.

Granite stepping stones, bordered by tall English boxwoods, form a path to the main entrance of the Moore House. Other similar paths which originally led to the summer house, and the granite carriage stepping stone near the side (north) door, are now overgrown with grass and encroaching boxwoods. Originally a covered laurel root passageway (destroyed) marked the path from the house to the carriage step. Several outbuildings (now destroyed) originally stood at the rear of the house. These included at 16' x 20' detached kitchen located about 15' from the southeast corner of the house, and approached via another covered walkway; ice house; dairy; livestock barn; smokehouse; and a chicken house. A shallow granite poultry feeding trough and a larger granite dairy cooling trough survive, as does a large flat stone which supported the laundry boiling pots. A granite well house is located near the southeast corner of the house.
The Moore House is characterized most prominently by the application of Gothic and Italianate style details to the traditional symmetrical, two-story I-house form. Greek Revival stylistic elements are present also, most notably in the corner boards which rise to simply molded capitals, and particularly in the interior trim and mantels. The influence of the Gothic style, popularized in the mid-nineteenth century by Downing's cottage designs, is evident in the triple-A roof with a tall center gable ornamented by a small pierced bargeboard and lit by a pointed-arch four-pane window. The Italianate influence, also popularized by Downing's designs, is evident in the wide, overhanging eaves supported by paired sawn brackets. The cornices are further defined by a band of applied sawn wooden dentils. The roof's pedimented end gables are pierced by the corbelled stacks of the brick exterior end, single-shoulder, stepped chimneys. A central interior chimney rises above the rear ell. About 1930 the original shake roof was sheathed with asbestos cement shingles. The Italianate influence is also evident in the flat-roof, polygonal bay window which projects at the north on the main elevation.

A broad, hip-roof porch, carried by square posts with molded capitals set on wooden plinths and connected with a molded handrail and square balusters, shelters the main entrance and the south bay. The main entrance is composed of double-leaf doors set in an arched frame and surrounded by three-pane sidelights and a transom. The porch and main entrance are approached by a flight of four carved granite steps. A tall carved granite flower urn is located at the foot of the steps at the north. Fenestration on the main elevation includes large six-over-six sash windows set in plain board surrounds, as well as four-over-four sash in the bay window.

The north elevation features a side entrance stoop and small gable porch roof, supported by knee braces, which shelters a double-leaf door. Paired and single six-over-six sash windows light both the first and second stories.

At the rear (east) elevation, a one-story shed-roof porch was enclosed c. 1925; this room is amply lit by a nearly continuous band of paired two-over-two sash windows. The lot slopes enough at the rear to accommodate a small garage located under the enclosed porch. Surmounting the enclosed porch is a screened sleeping porch with weatherboard apron bridging the twin rear ells. The ells feature pedimented gables lit by six-over-six sash windows. The ell at the south is original; the north ell was created about 1925 when the original one-story shed-roof ell, which formerly served as a school room, was expanded to two stories and converted to four bedrooms.

The south elevation originally featured another polygonal bay window and a porch. These were removed when the house was remodeled in the mid-1920s; the bay window was replaced by a sun room with casement windows, and the porch was replaced by a brick
terrace. The paired sawn brackets which support the sunroom eave are a slightly different shape from those found elsewhere on the house. In general, the expansion of the house and the remodelling were very skillfully done, and trim work was carefully duplicated.

On the interior the house follows a center hall plan. Both the front and rear staircases are located along the south wall. Both feature a simple shaped hand rail and slender, square balusters. The front staircase has a rather bulbous newel post. The stairs in the front hall rise front to back to a landing, turn 90° and then climb to the second story. At the landing is a doorway giving access to the rear second story hall. The rear stairs rise in a straight flight from back to front. These stairs originally opened into an upstairs bedroom, but they were moved when the house was remodelled and now open into the second story hallway.

Features common throughout the interior include painted plaster walls; tongue-and-groove oak floors now laid over the original pine flooring; plain, square corner blocks; wide, simple base boards; restrained Greek Revival pier-and-lintel mantels; and two-panel Greek Revival style doors.

Twin parlors are located to the left (north) of the front stairs. Large, paneled bifold doors set in a heavily molded, broad arch mark the entrance to each room. Originally the two parlors functioned as one large room divided only by a broad arch; when the house was remodelled, the rooms were separated by a wall with a door. To the rear of the second parlor is a bedroom which features fine, buff-colored marbelizing on the mantelpiece and handsome mahogany wood graining on the baseboards and doors. Originally both parlors featured marbelizing and wood graining, but this decorative painting survives only in the rear bedroom.

To the right (south) of the stairs on the first floor are located the book-lined living room/library, the present dining room and, at the rear, the kitchen and bathroom. Crown molding and a chair rail were added to the dining room c. 1970.

On the second story, two bedrooms are located on both sides of the hall. They feature simple trim, wide baseboards and pier-and-lintel mantel pieces.

When the roof, attic, walls and floors were insulated in 1980, it was discovered that the house's west wall (main elevation) is framed with 2" x 6" studs and the side and rear elevations have 2" x 4" studs; the studs rest on 8" x 12" hand hewn oak sills. The attic rafters are pegged together.
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The structures, of course, are closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains which may be present can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure, and these remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structures. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable they exist given the undisturbed condition of the grounds which still exhibit the original landscape design, as well as original plant material, and carved granite objects which mark the sites of a complex of now destroyed outbuildings.
8. Significance

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The William A. Moore House, Mt. Airy's oldest surviving structure, was built between 1861 and 1863 for William Alfred Moore (1830-1909), a prominent local businessman, merchant and textile mills owner. The well-preserved house has remained in the family and is occupied today by Moore's granddaughter and great-granddaughter.

The Moores were a well-established family in the region even prior to the establishment of Surry County in 1771 and neighboring Stokes County, established in 1789. Matthew Moore, William Alfred's grandfather, was appointed to the Safety Committee in 1771 and served as a colonel in the Revolutionary War militia. He lived in the Sauratown mountain region of Stokes County. Moore family members who lived in Mt. Airy included William Alfred's father, Samuel Dalton Moore (1804-1866), and his uncle, Gallahue Moore. Both Gallahue and his brother Samuel were prominent members of their community. Gallahue, in addition to being a large land owner and planter, and Surry County representative in the North Carolina legislature in 1825 and 1826, was a noted sportsman. He operated a mile-long horse-racing track located on his property on the east side of the Ararat River. The high-stakes races attracted sportsmen and horse breeders from Stokes, Caswell, Rockingham and the adjoining Virginia counties.

Samuel Dalton Moore and his wife Matilda Caroline Franklin (1803-1835), daughter of Governor Jesse Franklin, lived near Loving's (or Lovill's) Creek in the northwest part of the present town of Mt. Airy. Samuel Moore was one of the village's pioneer merchants and the first known owner of the Flat Rock, a vast granite mound which lay just east of town. The granite was mined in a limited way in the early nineteenth century, but it was not until 1888 when the railroad came to Mt. Airy that commercial exploitation of the stone was possible. Granite quarrying remains one of the major Mt. Airy industries and the Flat Rock is now the site of the world's largest open face granite quarry (National Register, 1977).

Samuel Dalton Moore's two sons, William Alfred and Jesse Franklin, followed in their father's footsteps and became two of Mount Airy's most successful early businessmen and mill owners. In 1869 the brothers and their business partner, Samuel Gilmer, established Green Hill Mills which produced cotton and woolen goods. A few years later the same firm built the Alpine Mills which manufactured woolen blankets. A few of these blankets survive. They have a plain, flat weave with a nap produced by a teasel, a sort of cocklebur. In addition to textile manufacture, the Moore brothers and Gilmer operated a grist and saw mill purchased in 1862 from Rufus Roberts.

William Moore also operated a general merchandise store located on Main Street for many years. The Moore's were early, substantial investors in the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad line. This line, begun in 1877, linked the Blue Ridge Mountains to Wilmington. The road building began near Greensboro and it was eleven long years later before the trains rolled into Mt. Airy from Fayetteville. The rail line was completed to Wilmington in 1890.
In addition to being business partners, William and Jesse Moore were neighbors and both constructed landmark Mt. Airy residences. Jesse's brick house was located on Main Street at the intersection of the present Franklin Street. This house, which was surrounded by extensive formally landscaped gardens, was destroyed early in the twentieth century and replaced by commercial buildings. William built his house on the opposite side of the same street, setting it far back a grove with a long avenue leading to it.6

William Moore constructed his large two-story frame house with picturesque Italianate and Gothic details between 1861 and 1863 according to information found in both the family Bible and a recorded deed. On March 5, 1861 Moore married his cousin Rachel Martin (1839-1882) from Stokes County. On December 4, 1861 their first child Matthew Dalton was born. A notation in the Bible indicates that Matthew was not born in this house, but all of their succeeding children were. These children were Mary Matilda born two years later on December 23, 1863; Cora Redd on December 27, 1865; Margaret Franklin on April 10, 1868; and a daughter, William McHenry (known as Willie) on August 8, 1870.7 A November 12, 1862 deed records that Moore purchased the home tract of 6.86 acres from Robert S. Gilmer for $250.8 One of the property boundaries was the Gilmer Tanyard which lay to the south between the present Moore Avenue and Cherry Street. According to family members, Moore later enlarged his property by purchasing this tanyard and continued its operation.9

Their children's education was important to William and Rachel Moore. Their house design included a large schoolroom located in a one-story shed-roofed rear ell. An elderly cousin who lived in the mountains north of Mt. Airy came to town during the winter months and taught the younger children.10 When they were old enough, the daughters attended Salisbury Academy and were "finished" at Peace Academy in Raleigh.

William Moore was an educated and well-read man; his books now form the core of the substantial family library found in the Moore house. Several of the books deal with landscape design, and reflect a long-standing family gardening tradition. Included in his library is a copy of the influential mid-nineteenth century landscape architect, A. J. Downing's work on Fruits and Fruit Trees; a couple of large pear and apple trees survive in the rear yard of the Moore House. Rachel Moore planted the English boxwoods in the front yard which now almost obscure the house. She also tended a fine rose garden which had several varieties of old-fashioned cabbage roses.11 Her daughter Margaret later expanded the boxwood hedges by taking cuttings from the established shrubs and planting them in a semi-circle around the rear yard. Margaret also established a still extant, although overgrown, rock and wild flower garden on a steep northern slope of the lawn. According to family tradition, Rachel Moore commissioned the carved granite porch steps and carved granite flower urn at
their foot, as well as other granite objects found in the yard including the carriage stone, chicken feeding trough and dairy trough. A stonecarver named Duncan who "lived on the mountain" came into town often and got so drunk that he usually ended up in jail. Rachel would bail him out, and, in return, he carved granite to repay her.12

Several outbuildings were located at the rear of Moore's stylish and substantial house. These included a detached kitchen, smokehouse, a newly fashionable ice house, a dairy and a barn. (None of these buildings survive, however the granite cooling trough marks the dairy site.) According to family members, ice was cut from the Ararat River in the winter and stored in the ice house for summer use.13 Landscape architects George E. and F. W. Woodward wrote of the novelty of having a constant supply of ice in their 1865 book Woodward's Country Homes:

It is only within a few years that ice, in all seasons, has been classed among the necessaries of life. In large cities it is indispensable, but the cool springhouse or cellar in the country impresses many with the idea that ice, in summer months, can only be regarded as a luxury. Along with other conveniences in keeping with this progressive age, the ice house has its place and a country seat of any pretensions is not complete without it.14

Woodward illustrated this text with a plan for an 8' x 12' board-and-batten ice house with a sawn shingle roof. It is not known what Moore's ice house looked like, but it is possible that the widely-read Moore was familiar with Woodward's books, since he was clearly familiar with the contemporary A. J. Downing books.

The most significant element of the elaborate landscape surrounding the Moore House is the rare surviving example of a rustic summer house constructed of bent laurel roots which graces the front lawn. Summer houses, or gazebos, were popular garden embellishments in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rustic style summer houses which utilized bent and shaped branches or twigs, were most often found with rural residences. Included among the landscape architects of that period who designed plans for this type of garden ornament, were William Wright and A. J. Downing. Wright published a book in London c. 1790 entitled Grotesque Architecture or Rural Amusement which detailed the many possible applications of the rustic style. Wright suggested using "flints or irregular rude branches and roots of trees" in his curious designs for "huts, retreats, summer and winter hermitages, terminaries, Chinese, Gothic and rustic seats, green houses, etc."15 Andrew Jackson Downing may have been influenced by Wright's book when, in 1844, he published the definitive work on rural landscape architecture and rustic garden ornaments entitled A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America with a View to the Improvement of Country Residences. He wrote:
Open and covered seats, of various descriptions, are among the most convenient, useful decorations for the pleasure grounds of a country residence. . . . Open and covered seats are of two distinct kinds: one architectural, or formed after artist-like designs of stone or wood, in Grecian, Gothic or other forms. . . . the other, rustic, as they are called, which are formed out of trunks and branches of trees, roots, etc. in their natural forms. . . .

Downing describes one of his designs as "an example of a simple rustic seat formed of the crooked and curved branches of the oak, elm or any other of our forest trees." He goes on to describe the construction method of a covered seat or rustic arbor:

Twelve poles are set securely in the ground which make the frame of this structure, the openings between being filled in with branches (about 3" in diameter) of different trees—the more irregular the better. . . . The roof [may be] formed of an open lattice work of branches like the side, and the whole covered by a grape, bigonia or some other vine or creeper of luxuriant growth.

The Moore summer house and its matching furniture are nearly identical to the drawings which illustrate these passages in Downing's book. According to Moore family members, originally the summer house had a fragrant, pink rambling rose growing over it. Later in the same chapter, Downing wrote about rock gardens and it seems likely, given the location of Margaret Moore's wild flower rock garden, that she followed Downing's advice on their placement. He wrote:

. . . it is evident that we must not heap up little hillocks of mould and smooth stones, in the midst of an open lawn, or the center of a flower garden. But if we can make choice of a situation where a rocky bank or knoll already partially exists, or would be in keeping with the form of the ground, and the character of the scene, then we may introduce such accompaniments with the best possible hope of success.

William and Rachel Moore enjoyed sharing their gracious home and gardens with their friends. They were active in Mt. Airy society and entertained often. Their annual Christmas open house was particularly gala and this traditional gathering of family and neighbors is still observed by Moore's descendants. The summer house was often the site of warm weather parties and was a convenient resting place during dances held in the Lovill and Simmons Tobacco Warehouses located nearby on Main Street. According to family tradition the romantic summer house was also a "favorite courting spot."
The ownership of the Moore House has remained in the family to the present. After Moore's death, the house was owned by his daughter, Margaret Franklin Moore Penn. After her death in 1962, the house passed to her niece, and William Moore's granddaughter, Mary Letitia Hollingsworth. Mrs. Hollingsworth, now 97 years old, still owns and occupies the house long with her niece, Mary Margaret Mason and Mrs. Mason's husband, Walter.
FOOTNOTES

1William Franklin Carter, Jr. and Carrie Young Carter, Footprints in the "Hollows" or Surry County and Her People (Elkin: Northwestern Regional Library, 1976), p. 68. Hereinafter cited as Footprints.
2Footprints, p. 68.
3Footprints, p. 91; also see J. G. Hollingsworth, History of Surry County or Annals of Northwest North Carolina (privately printed, 1935), p. 158.
4Surry County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 25, pp. 178-179.
6Footprints, p. 68.
7Moore Family Bible. In the possession of Mary Margaret and Walter Mason and located at the Moore House, 202 Moore Avenue, Mt. Airy.
8Surry County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 25, pp. 208-209.
9Personal interview with Mary Margaret and Walter Mason, November 5, 1985.
10Mason interview.
11Telephone interview with Mary Margaret Mason, November 15, 1985.


17Downing, Landscape Gardening, p. 426.

18Downing, Landscape Gardening, p. 425. See Figures 82 and 83.

19Downing, Landscape Gardening, pp. 431-432.

9. Major Bibliographical References


Moore Family Bible.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: 4.1 acres

Quadrangle name: Mt. Airy North

UTM References

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Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Surry County Tax Map 5020.12, Block 85, Parcel 9472

The nominated property is located on city parcel 9472 and contains 4.1 acres.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Patricia S. Dickinson, Consultant

organization:

date: November 22, 1985

street & number: Rt. 2, Box 1034

telephone: (919) 732-5439

city or town: Hillsborough

state: North Carolina

27278

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- national
- state (X)
- local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature: [Signature]

date: January 9, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Chief of Registration
Surry County, North Carolina
Mt. Airy

William A. Moore House
202 Moore Ave.

Surry County Tax Map 5020.12,
Block 85, Parcel 9472
William A. Moore House
202 Moore Ave.
Mount Airy, N.C. (Surry County)

Quadrangle name: Mt. Airy, North-Va.-N.C.

Scale: 1: 24,000
UTM reference: 17/535292/4039470

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey Control by USGS and USGS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1968
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Virginia coordinate system, south zone,
and North Carolina coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17,
shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth
of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1976. This information
not field checked. Map edited 1977

UTM GRID AND 1977 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL GEODETIC STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS