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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Elmwood, a handsome Federal dwelling with numerous mid-nineteenth century additions, is situated on a heavily wooded lot. Now greatly truncated, the Elmwood estate originally included five acres of land bounded by Hillsborough Street on the south, the Devereux lands on the north, St. Mary's Street on the west, and Glenwood Avenue on the east.

Elmwood was originally a side-hall plan dwelling, two rooms deep. The earliest (eastern) section of the house is two-and-one-half stories high, three bays wide and four deep, and is covered by a gable roof pierced by dormers. The house is sheathed with molded weatherboarding and rests on a full basement built of uncoursed random fieldstone. Along the east elevation are two exterior end double-shouldered chimneys of brick laid in Flemish bond with corbeled caps and tumbling at the shoulders.

Skirting the main (south) facade of Elmwood's oldest section is a full-length one-story porch, protected by a hip roof. The facade wall here is flush-sheathed. Supporting the roof are four irregularly placed square-in-section posts, braced at the tops by diagonal pierced and molded brackets; they rest on paneled plinths connected by a sawn balustrade composed of stylized two-dimensional urn-shaped balusters, beneath a molded handrail. A photograph predating 1870 shows a porch with a Federal balustrade and slender columns supporting a shingled shed roof.

The main entrance, located in the western bay of the front elevation, is a Victorian four-panel double door with raised panels on the interior side and flat, heavily beaded octagonal panels on the exterior. The entrance features sidelights and a transom.

Fenestration in the earliest section of the house consists of nine-over-nine sash at both the first and second levels. The windows have three-part molded surrounds, and heavy molded sills. Two-panel louvered blinds occur on the main facade only. There are five gabled dormer windows, three on the front and two on the rear, each with six-over-six sash elegantly surmounted by a fanlight. Fluted pilasters flank the sash and a plain rakeboard frames the fanlight. Small six-over-six sash windows appear on the eastern elevation of the attic level while four-over-four sash windows appear on the western one. Both gables are pierced by lunette vent; the gables are outlined by rake-boards and a molded cornice which returns slightly at either end.

The many additions to the western and northern elevations create rear and side massings that are as complex as they are asymmetrical. (See below for possible chronology of additions.) West of the main block is a one-story hip roof addition, one bay wide and three deep, with two interior end brick chimneys and a small hip roof shed at the northern end. A two-story shed extension, two bays wide and one deep, is framed into the gable roof along the western end of the rear elevation of the original block. Slightly northwest of the center bay dormer, a single interior brick chimney pierces the slope of the shed roof. A single-shoulder exterior end chimney built of brick laid in one-to-five common bond stands at the western elevation of the shed. A demi-hexagonal one-story bay projects from the northern end of the shed. Directly east of this is a single-leaf rear door protected by a shed hood underlined by a box cornice.

A large two-story wing, two bays deep and one wide, is connected to the eastern end of the rear elevation of the main block so as to form an over-sized ell. Its gable

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE one

roof runs perpendicular to the main gable. Along the two eastern bays of the ell runs a one-story shed porch. An interior end brick chimney with an exposed brick face punctuates the northern end of the ridge line. (The exposed chimney face is a feature practically unique in the area, although it is frequently found in contemporary side-hall plan dwellings in New Bern--including the Brison, Jerkins-Duffy, and Stevenson houses. It is interesting to note that it appears to have been built about 1830, probably during the 1829-1837 ownership of the house by William Gaston, a New Bern native.) A one-story hip roof attachment is connected to the northern bay of the northern wing, presumably a former out-kitchen, recently joined to the house and raised on a brick basement. It measures one bay square, and, like the other attachments, is covered with weatherboarding.

The interior of the original section, which follows a side-hall plan, two rooms deep, features very handsome Federal finish. The stair hall has a beaded flat-paneled wainscot bordered by a simply molded baseboard and a molded chair rail topped with a narrow shelf. The eastern rooms on both floors are similarly finished. A handsome transverse elliptical arch spans the center of the hall, framing the open-string stair which rises from the northwest corner of the hall. Engaged posts, featuring flat panels inset with vertical strips of guilloche molding, support the arch. The archivolt is delicately molded and incised with bands of fluting. A keystone, raised and adorned with reeding, beading, and guilloche molding, crowns the arch. A shallow boss is centered on the soffit of the keystone.

The impressive mahogany stairway rises two flights with an intervening half-turn landing. The string is ornamented with wave-pattern brackets, and the hall wainscot continues to the top of the second run. The balustrade consists of a molded handrail, supported by rectangular-in-section balusters, which eases and ramps as it ascends to the transverse landing and again to the second floor post. The handrail terminates in a simple turned newel with a rounded cap. The stair leading from the second story to the attic is similarly treated.

Each of the two doors on the first floor east side consist of six molded panels, raised on the hall side and flat on the room side. Each door is framed on the hall side by a three-part molded surround.

The first-floor southeastern (front) room is handsomely finished with light, elegant Federal trim of exceptional quality. There is a richly decorated cornice featuring guilloche molding, an H-fret band, and a band of lightly incised swags. The mantel is particularly striking and is reminiscent of the style of mantels frequently found in Federal dwellings in the Warren County vicinity. The Elmwood mantel consists of a molded board surround incised with bands of diagonal reeding. Molded flat-paneled pilasters support slender raised end blocks. Each pilaster cap is decorated with a band of fluting which continues across the breadth of the mantel, underlining the diagonally reeded frieze above. Across this fluting runs a lightly applied shell motif in very low relief. (The same pattern appears on the ledge of the chair rail.) Over

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE two

the frieze stretches a band of fret, above which is a broad torus molding surmounted by a fillet decorated with segments of fluting like that on archivolt of the hall arch. The mantel cornice bows outward slightly, thus contributing to the pervasive sense of delicacy and sophistication. (Unfortunately the mantel is somewhat truncated as a result of changes made in the middle of the nineteenth century. Both height and breadth were reduced, as is obvious from breaks in the frieze and in the pilasters.)

The architraves of both the door leading to the hall and of the flat-paneled double doors leading to the adjacent eastern rear room are treated like the mantel cornice. The first-floor eastern rear room has been slightly remodeled and contains a simple mantel. A transverse arch frames a china closet set in its western wall which is three feet deep.

The second-floor rooms continue the Federal trim of the first floor although in a simplified fashion. The southeastern (front) room contains a tripartite mantel with fluted pilasters and a heavily molded entablature, including a pierced wall-of-troy cornice underlining the rounded mantel shelf. A flat-paneled wainscot with molded baseboard and chair rail runs around the room. The northeastern (rear) room features nearly identical trim and has a tripartite mantel with heavily molded end blocks, a raised center block, flat-paneled pilasters, and a simple rounded mantel shelf.

Currently installed in the first floor western front room is a rather baroque marble mantel said to have been brought from Spain around 1850 by Ambassador Romulus Saunders who then made his home at Elmwood. It has a round arched fire opening, large pointed trefoils carved in each spandrel, and a boldly curvilinear cartouche in the center. An ornate cast—iron summer grate cover stands in the fire opening. Adjoining this room in the rear of the western block is a bedroom with a typical late nineteenth century machine—made mantel.

Possible building chronology, Elmwood, Raleigh, Wake County.

- 1. Side-hall plan, two rooms deep, two-and-one-half stories high c. 1810-1815.
- 2. Eastern rear two story wing, two bays deep, one wide, with exposed face chimney ca. 1830.
- 3. Mantel presently in first-floor front west room--installed in house (in front first-floor east room) ca. 1850s.
- 4. Front porch and western one-story, two room deep addition ca. 1870.
- 5. Rear addition, one bay wide, three deep, with demi-hexagonal one-story bay-ca. 1890-1910

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE three

- 6. Out-kitchen with hipped roof on raised brick basement--probably dates from first building period (c. 1813-1815) and joined to house in early twentieth century.
- 7. Reported. Spanish mantel installed in first-floor west front room and original mantel returned to first-floor east front room--although truncated mid-twentieth century.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Elmwood, among the few antebellum dwellings remaining in the capital city of Raleigh, is a handsome side-hall plan Federal town house with fine Adamesque interiors. Elmwood has a remarkable history as the home of a series of distinguished men who played vital roles in the history of the state: built for John Louis Taylor, the first chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, it was later owned by William Gaston, also a justice of the supreme court, advocate of constitutional freedom, and author of the state song; it was rented to Thomas Ruffin, chief justice of the court; in 1837 Elmwood was sold to Romulus Saunders, minister to Spain and judge; after the Civil War it was the home of Samuel A. Ashe, noted newspaper editor and editor of the Biographical History of North Carolina.

On February 22, 1813, John Haywood of Wake County, North Carolina, deeded 100 acres of land "within about Two miles and one half of the City of Raleigh and on the South side of Rocky Branch" to John Louis Taylor. The land was "the north part of a tract of Land granted by the State of North Carolina to the late Joel Lane on the 9th day of August, 1779." The price for the 100 acres was \$300.

John Louis Taylor was born of Irish parentage in London on March 1, 1769. After his parents' deaths, he emigrated about 1781 at the age of twelve to Virginia with his brother James, studied at the College of William and Mary, and then came to North Carolina where he studied law without instruction. He was admitted to the bar in Guilford County in 1788, took up residence in Fayetteville, and married Julia, daughter of the rich and politically powerful Colonel Robert Rowan, which connection aided him in gaining a seat in the state House of Commons from 1792 to 1794. After the birth of their only child (Julia, who became the mother of Justice John Louis Taylor Sneed of the Tennessee Supreme Court), and death of his wife, Taylor removed to New Bern where he eventually married Jane Gaston; she was the only daughter of Dr. Alexander Gaston, a fiery revolutionary killed in 1781 by Tories, and the sister of William Gaston, a future justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court.

In 1798 Taylor was elevated to the bench of the Superior Court, then the state's highest tribunal, and in 1810 he became chairman of the state Court of Appeals. In 1818 when the state Supreme Court was created, Taylor became the first chief justice of that court. Taylor became a citizen of Wake County about 1811 and is thought to have built Elmwood soon after he purchased the property in 1813. He was a mason, and was grand master of the state lodge from 1802-1805 and again from 1814-1817. He also was a prolific legal editor. John Louis Taylor died at his Raleigh home on January 29, 1829, and was buried behind the house in the grove. His grave and his wife Jane's were removed to a plot in Oakwood Cemetery in Raleigh after the Civil War.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE one

On July 7, 1828, Thomas P. Devereux and Weston R. Gales were deeded the Taylor homestead for the purpose of selling it to the highest bidder. On May 15, 1829, after Taylor's death, Devereux and Gales, trustees, deeded the property to William Gaston, brother of Jane Gaston Taylor. The property was located "near the City of Raleigh," and contained only 63 5/8 acres of the original 100, and brought \$3,000.

William Gaston was born in New Bern, on September 19, 1778, a son of Dr. Alexander Gaston. He attended Georgetown University in the District of Columbia, the New Bern Academy, and was graduated from Princeton University with highest honors. He was admitted to the bar in 1798. In 1800 he was elected to the state Senate, and in 1808 to the state House of Commons and named Speaker.

In 1813 Gaston was elected to Congress and remained until 1817 when he retired. In 1833 he was named one of the three justices of the state Supreme Court, and in 1835 he sat in the state's constitutional convention. A Catholic, he was an eloquent proponent of freedom of religion under the constitution. Gaston was a poet, and his poem, "The Old North State" was set to music as the official anthem of the state of North Carolina. He died on January 23, 1844, and was buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery in New Bern.

During his ownership of the Elmwood property he was an infrequent resident, probably using the house, if at all, only when in Raleigh on legal or judicial business. In 1832, when a committee was establishing the Episcopal School of North Carolina, at Raleigh (today St. Mary's Junior College), they "took final action to lease the mansion property of Judge William Gaston to house the school temporarily . . ."

Later during Gaston's ownership, the house was also rented to Thomas Ruffin, who moved to Raleigh in 1829 to assume the presidency of the discredited State Bank of North Carolina. In 1829, upon the death of Judge Taylor, Ruffin was elected to a seat on the Supreme Court, and in 1833 he became chief justice, and held the post until 1852, when he retired to his home in Alamance County, North Carolina. The exact period when he lived in Judge Gaston's Raleigh house is not known.

On July 3, 1837, William Gaston "of the Town of Newbern" sold to Romulus M. Saunders, "of Wake County," for \$5,120, 63 5/8 acres on Hillsborough Road near Raleigh. The sale excepted 1/16 acre containing the grave of Judge Taylor.

Romulus Mitchell Saunders was born in 1791, in Caswell County, North Carolina. He received his early education at the Hyco and Caswell academies, attended the University of North Carolina from 1809-1811, studied law under Justice Hugh Lawson White of the Tennessee Supreme Court, and was admitted to the Tennessee bar in 1812.

On December 22, 1812, Saunders married and settled in Caswell County, where he began to practice law, and soon entered politics, representing Caswell in the state House of Commons in 1815, and in the state Senate in 1816. He was speaker of the

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE two

House in 1819 and 1820, the year he was elected to Congress. He remained in Congress for three terms and was strongly Democratic. In 1828 he became attorney-general of North Carolina and remained in that post until 1833. In 1835 he was elected judge of the Superior Court and remained in that position until 1840, when he was an unsuccessful candidate for governor. After his gubanatorial defeat, he returned to Congress in 1840 but was unsuccessful for a Senate seat in 1842.

After playing a vital role in the election of James Knox Polk to the presidency, he received Polk's appointment as minister to Spain from 1846-1850. In 1850 he returned to Raleigh and was active in state house politics. In 1852 he was elevated to the Superior Court bench and held the post until he retired in 1865. Saunders died at Elmwood (a name that first appears during his occupancy) on April 21, 1867.

For a number of years the Elmwood house was rented to a series of people, among them Dr. T. D. Martin, a Perquimans County native and Confederate surgeon, who moved to Elmwood from his Hillsborough, North Carolina, home with his wife, Henrietta Perkins Martin, and their ward, Hannah Emerson Willard, daughter of William H. Willard, a Massachusetts manufacturer who had settled in North Carolina before the Civil War. The widowed Willard had placed his daughter in the Martin household.

On a visit to Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1871, Hannah Willard met Samuel A. Ashe, and they were married at Elmwood the same year. The Ashes' first child was born at Elmwood in 1872, and the house was being remodeled that year, so the Martins and Ashes moved out while repairs were made. The Martins never returned to the house. Instead William Willard purchased the property on November 8, 1873, from Bradley Johnson, a trustee for the Saunders heirs. It included almost five acres of land "Situate in the Western Part of said City (Raleigh) fronting on Hillsborough Street known as 'Elmwood,' late the residence of R. M. Saunders." The price was \$12,000.

William H. Willard, his daughter Hannah, her husband Samuel Ashe, and their growing family settled at Elmwood. After having nine children Hannah died, and Ashe and their children remained at Elmwood with the aging Willard, who died in 1898, leaving Elmwood to Samuel Ashe.

Samuel A'Court Ashe was born at Wrightsville Sound in New Hanover County, North Carolina, on September 13, 1840. His parents were William Shepperd Ashe and Sarah Ann Green. He received his early education in old field schools, Abbott's and Rugby academies in the District of Columbia, and Oxford Academy in Maryland. In 1855 he entered the United States Naval Academy, but resigned in 1858 to return to his home and study law under William Kirkland Ruffin. In 1861 he entered Confederate service, and was paroled in 1865 with the rank of captain. He was for a time a railroad conductor, but in January, 1867, he was admitted to the bar in Wilmington. In 1870 he was a successful candidate for the North Carolina House, and after his marriage in 1871 was a permanent resident of Raleigh, where he practiced law. In 1874 he began to edit a daily newspaper, the Evening Crescent. In 1879 he purchased the Raleigh Observer,

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE three

and in 1881 the <u>Daily News</u>, joining both papers as the <u>News and Observer</u> —which is still a leading newspaper in the state. About 1893 he sold the paper and tried to return to law. Unsuccessful in the establishment of another practice, he joined the congressional staff of Senator F. M. Simmons, and was an outspoken opponent of the Populist movement. Always a prolific writer, he is best known for his principal editorship of the voluminous <u>Biographical History of North Carolina</u>, which first appeared in 1905 and is still a valuable source. Ashe died in 1938 and was buried in Raleigh.

After the death of Ashe, his sister, Sarah William Ashe, who had lived at Elmwood since an adult, continued to make her home there. During the four years of the Second World War the house was closed up while Miss Ashe lived with a niece nearby. In 1950, on the death of Miss Ashe, two of the Ashe daughters, Hannah (Mrs. William H. Bason), and Josophine (Mrs. Joseph Graef), purchased the remaining shares of the Samuel Ashe estate, and they live at Elmwood today.

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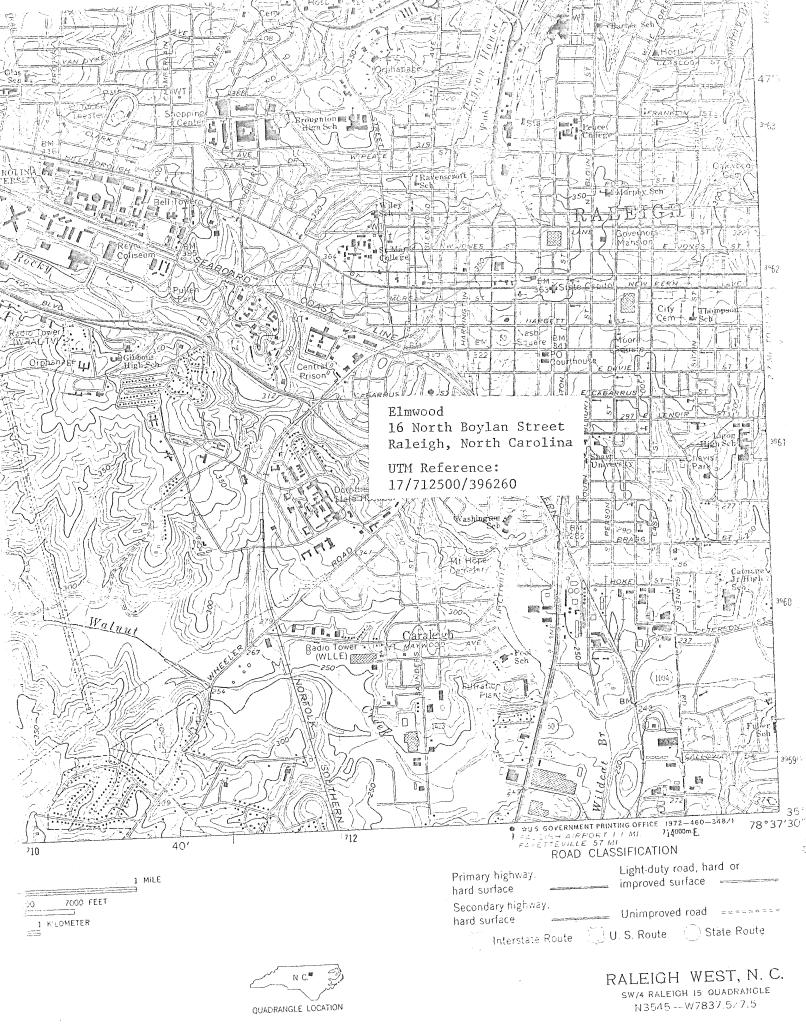
ITEM NUMBER

PAGE one

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Wake County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Wills, Deeds, Tax Lists, Estate Papers).

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