United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation 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 "Breezemont"  
and or common Watts, General Cornelius C., House  

2. Location  

street & number 915 Breezemont Drive  
city, town Charleston  
city, town vicinity of congressional district Third  
state West Virginia  
state code 54  
state county Kanawha  
state code 039  

3. Classification  

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Ownership</th>
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<td>being considered</td>
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<td>industrial</td>
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4. Owner of Property  

name Eleanor Kawsek  
street & number 915 Breezemont Drive  
city, town Charleston  
city, town vicinity of state West Virginia  

5. Location of Legal Description  

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kanawha County Courthouse  
street & number Virginia & Court Streets  
city, town Charleston  
city, town state West Virginia  

6. Representation in Existing Surveys  

title has this property been determined eligible? yes X no  
date federal state county local  
depository for survey records  
city, town state
7. Description

Condition
- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

Check one
- unaltered
- altered

Check one
- original site
- moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

"Breezemont" or the "General" Cornelius C. Watts House, sits majestically atop Watts Hill commanding a panoramic view of the Elk and Kanawha Rivers and much of Charleston proper, the county seat of Kanawha County and capital of West Virginia.

When constructed c.1905, "Breezemont" was the focal point of a large estate owned and operated by Cornelius C. Watts. "Breezemont" is a stone building, of rock face ashlar designed in the Neo-Classic Revival mode on a generally rectangular plan. "Breezemont" has a striking red-tile roof. The front elevation of "Breezemont" is dominated by a two story portico, set left of center. The portico is supported by 3-group Ionic columns with plain shafts. The portico of the veranda is surmounted by a triangular pediment that is plastered and centered with a Palladian window. The roof of the portico, sheathed in red tiles that match the tiles on the roof of the house, intersects with the ridge of the main roof to form a T. Twin story Ionic pilasters flank the doorway beneath the portico. The remaining space to the right of the entry is arranged in a complex design centered upon a single two story Ionic column that supports a recessed two story porch at the southeast corner of the house. The single column acts as both a structural and ornamental unit to tie together the one story porte cochere (located on the north elevation of the house) and one story veranda.

The massive portico and two story porch are separated by a three-sided bay. This clever vertical division is emphasized by a gable dormer that pierces the roof over the bay. A second gable dormer is situated in the east roof elevation to balance the height of the structure above the porte cochere. In essence, the two dormers form the corner unit of the house and help to balance and complement the structure's major architectural feature, the portico.

The entrance of "Breezemont" is flanked by expansive leaded glass side-lights and surmounted by a rectangular transom. An interior, glass lined vestibule occupies the space immediately beyond the doorway.

Major details of the building include the embellishment of the cornice with modillions, the use of the ashlar base for all columns, and the presence of nine pane upper sashes, balanced by lower sash single panes, in the double hung windows. A glass conservatory originally attached to the rear of the house was converted to a frame utility room early in the century.

In 1926 the greater part of the Watts Estate was partitioned into the subdivision of Breezemont, primarily for financial considerations and because General Watts, by that time 78 years old, had become too frail to manage the rigorous affairs of a large estate.

In 1941 the interior of "Breezemont" was subdivided into apartments, a use it continues to serve in 1981.

"Breezemont" has, since its construction, been a prominent local landmark and, having changed but little on the exterior over the years, continues to be seen as such by the citizens of Charleston and Kanawha County, West Virginia.
8. Significance

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Period</th>
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Specific dates

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"Breezmont", located atop Watts Hill overlooking much of West Virginia’s capital city of Charleston, is significant as the home of Cornelius C. Watts, an individual prominent in the affairs of Kanawha County and West Virginia. It is also significant as a surviving example of vernacular Neo-Classical architecture in the city of Charleston.

Explanatory Notes

1. "Breezmont" was built c.1905 for Cornelius Clarkson Watts (1848-1930) an individual who contributed quite significantly to the history of both Kanawha County and the state of West Virginia.

Cornelius C. Watts was born in Amherst County, Virginia in 1848. Watts served in the Confederate army during the American Civil War in Colonel John S. Mosby’s famed "Mosby's Raiders". After the close of the war in 1865 Watts studied law at the University of Virginia and then, in 1870, moved to Wyoming County, West Virginia where he began the practice of law. In 1872 he was elected prosecuting attorney of Wyoming County, serving in that office 1873-1875. In 1875 Cornelius Watts moved to Charleston, Kanawha County, West Virginia where he became associated in law practice with John E. Kenna (U.S. Representative 1877-83, U.S. Senator 1883-93).

In 1880 Cornelius C. Watts was elected, on the Democratic ticket, Attorney General of West Virginia. He served as West Virginia’s Attorney General from March 4, 1881 to March 3, 1885, turning out nine volumes of Supreme Court reports with the assistance of Major O.D. Cook.

On March 22, 1885, shortly after the expiration of his term as Attorney General, Watts represented the state of West Virginia before the United States Supreme Court in the landmark case of Miller, Auditor vs. the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company. The railway company was represented by such noted lawyers as Judge George F. Edmunds of Vermont, Judge William J. Robertson of Virginia and Judge James H. Ferguson. Cornelius C. Watts won the case for the State of West Virginia, including the recovery of $200,000., and established, in the words of historian George W. Atkinson, "the right to forever tax, not only this railway, but all railroads now and hereafter to be built in this State".

In 1886 Watts was appointed United States Attorney for the District of West Virginia by President Grover Cleveland. Forced to resign that office by President Benjamin Harrison in 1889, Watts was elected to the West Virginia Senate in 1890 to represent Kanawha County. He served in the state Senate from 1891 until mid-1893 when he was re-appointed United State Attorney for West Virginia by President Cleveland. He resigned as U.S. Attorney in 1896 in order to accept the nomination of the Democratic Party for Governor of West Virginia. Cornelius C. Watts put on a spirited gubernatorial campaign, aided...
by incumbent Governor William A. MacCorkle, but lost in the general election to Republican nominee George W. Atkinson, also of Kanawha County. Atkinson’s plurality over Watts was a modest 12,070 votes.

After retiring from active political life, "General" Watts (as he was known from his term as Attorney General) resumed his legal and business activities. He was also a prominent sportsman, breeding and racing horses. He maintained a stock of approximately 50 brood mares, stallions, and colts. In 1907 his horse, "General Watts III", won the world's trotting record and held it for three years.

Among Cornelius Watt's many legal and business affairs one of the most significant was his organization of the Coal River and Western Railway Company which opened up rich timber and coal lands in the first decade of the twentieth century.

In 1926 the Charleston Bar Association honored Cornelius C. Watts, along with four other prominent attorneys, as the leaders in the Charleston legal profession for more than fifty years. Cornelius Watts died at "Breezemont" on May 28, 1930 at the age of 82, four months before his old friend and associate William A. MacCorkle.

Of the six children of Cornelius C. Watts and his wife Ella Shumate Watts, the youngest, J. Blackburn Watts, raised at "Breezemont", was also an individual of some prominence. J. Blackburn Watts was elected Prosecuting Attorney of Kanawha County in 1936 and re-elected in 1940, serving 1937 to 1945. In 1944 he was a Democratic candidate for Governor of West Virginia, receiving 8% of the vote and running third in a field of four strong candidates.

2. "Breezemont" was constructed c.1905 for Cornelius C. Watts, atop Watts Hill, on land purchased by Watts in 1883. Watts had formerly maintained a dwelling, or summer residence, on his large estate here until the construction of the stone residence he named "Breezemont" (a name the residence shares with the city street facing the property). Local tradition has it that Watts was prompted to build this imposing edifice by his friendly rivalry with former Governor William A. MacCorkle, whose elegant mansion "Sunrise" (entered on the National Register of Historic Places July 24, 1974) had been finished, overlooking downtown Charleston, in 1905. The house was constructed by prominent local builders Robert M. and Edward S. Conker.

"Breezemont" is a fine example of vernacular Neo-Classical Revival architecture, a style popular among Charleston's prominent families of that era. (For a
detailed description, see Section 7). At the time of its completion, "Breezmont" was one of Charleston's most elegant and, indeed, most prominent residences, commanding as it did (and continues to) a panoramic view of both Charleston's downtown area and "west side", and being visible to much of Charleston. Since that time, many of the elegant Neo-Classical Revival homes that once graced Charleston have been destroyed. Thus, "Breezmont" stands as one of the few remaining examples of vernacular Neo-Classicism in West Virginia's capital city, and as one of Charleston's most enduring landmarks.
9. Major Bibliographical References
Charleston Gazette, Charleston, W.Va., May 29, 1930.

10. Geographical Data
Acreage of nominated property: one (1) acre.
Quadrangle name: Charleston, West Virginia

<table>
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Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification: The nominated property includes lot #142, Charleston West, Map 15, revised 1979, Office of the Kanawha County Assessor, West Virginia.

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>state</th>
<th>code</th>
<th>county</th>
<th>code</th>
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Michael J. Pauley, Historian and Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian
organization: W.Va. Dept. of Culture and History
street & number: Capitol Complex

city or town: Charleston, state: West Virginia

date: January 15, 1981

telephone: 304/ 348-0244

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature: [Signature]

date: December 7, 1981

For HCRS use only:
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register: [Signature]
date:

Keeper of the National Register:

Attest: [Signature]
date:

Chief of Registration:

[Signature]
date:

GPO 93F 835
Kanawha County Deedbooks, Charleston, W.Va.
Foss, William R., Political Almanac of West Virginia, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W.Va., 1958.