United States Department of the Interior National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Smith, Elven C. House
other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 210 Little Oak Street not for publication: N/A
city/town: Williamson vicinity: N/A
state: WV county: Mingo code: 059 zip code: 25661

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination _request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _X_ meets _does not meet_ the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _nationally_ _statewide_ _locally_.

[Signature]
Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau Date

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets _does not meet_ the National Register criteria. (_X_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of Certifying Official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau Date
4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:  

- entered in the National Register  
- See continuation sheet.  
- determined eligible for the National Register  
- See continuation sheet.  
- determined not eligible for the National Register  
- removed from the National Register  
- other (explain):  

Signature of Keeper  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- X building  
- district  
- site  
- structure  
- object

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Non-contributing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
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TOTAL 2 0

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0
Smith, Elven C. House
Name of Property

Mingo, WV
County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Functions
Domestic: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification: LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: NeoClassical

Materials
Foundation: Concrete
Walls: Brick
Roof: Asphalt Shingle
Other: Wood

Narrative Description
(See continuation on sheets.)

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.

____ X 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.)

Property is:
   _____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
   _____ B removed from its original location.
   _____ C a birthplace or 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.

Areas of Significance
Architecture

Period of Significance
1938

Significant Dates
1938

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Hicks, Hassel Thomas, Sr., architect

Narrative Statement of Significance
(See continuation sheets.)
Smith, Elven C. House
Name of Property

Mingo, WV
County and State

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:

X State Historic Preservation Office
_____ Other State agency
_____ Federal agency
_____ Local government
_____ University
_____ Other

Name of Repository: ________________________________________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 2.25

UTM References

Quad Map: Williamson, W.VA.-KY.

Zone 17 E 387349 / N 4170533

Verbal Boundary Description
(See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(See continuation sheet.)
Smith, Elven C. House
Name of Property

Mingo, WV
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: John R. Carlin, owner, with assistance from Alan R. Rowe, Historian, WV SHPO
Organization: WV Division of Culture and History Date: May 11, 2002
Street & Number: 1900 Kanawha Blvd., East Telephone: 304-558-0240
City or Town: Charleston State: WV ZIP: 25305-0300

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Mary E. & John R. Carlin
Street & Number: 210 Little Oak Street Telephone: 304-235-2823
City or Town: Williamson State: WV Zip: 25661
Architectural Description:

General Setting
Located in the northern, residential area of Williamson, the Elven C. Smith house is situated on a steep hillside overlooking the downtown. Deciduous trees crown the hill above the house, and smaller, close set houses are clustered immediately below the house and to the west. Immediately to the east, there is a brick Queen Anne style house of a similar scale, but obviously older construction. Large holly trees and juniper shrubs planted in the front yard nearly hide the Smith house from view when observed from below.

Architectural Overview
Typologically, the house is a classic double-pile configuration with a hip roof and dormers. Stylistically, the house mixes elements of the Neo-Classical Revival style and the Georgian Revival style, with the Neo-Classical elements being the dominant theme due to the full-height, two story portico. Both the Neo-Classical Revival and the Georgian Revival were popular domestic styles in the late-1930s when the house was built. Construction materials include common bond red brick walls, wooden trim and architectural details, and an asphalt shingle roof.

Landscape Overview
The naturalistic setting of the house, and its dramatic placement above a massive stone retaining wall system deserves special notice. The general appearance of the surrounding neighborhood is one of high urban density. Streets tend to be narrow, and most buildings are positioned quite close together. The Smith house stands visibly apart from the surrounding land use patterns by occupying the center of a rather large, wooded and landscaped lot.

The front yard of the Smith house features a bluestone walkway that encompasses the yard, one end leading to the porch on the east elevation of the house, the other leading to two massive cut stone retaining walls that span the width of the property, and stand eight feet and ten feet high, respectively. A more detailed description of the walls and stairs on the south side of the house will follow below. The east end of the lower, ten foot retaining wall terminates in a two bay, cut stone and concrete automobile garage with a dirt floor and a brick central dividing wall. Originally, wooden doors closed the garage openings, but decayed wood forced their removal. From the east elevation porch, the side yard slopes downward and terminates in a four foot retaining wall. A forty year old southern magnolia tree, and an eighty year old sycamore tree grow at this point, providing a significant amount of shade for the east side of the house. Also visible at this point is the brick, two story servant’s quarters originally owned by the Smith family. The Floyd family, subsequent owners of the house, sold the servant’s quarters and a sliver of land to the owners of the adjacent house. A stone barbeque grill built by the Floyd family is present near the rear corner of the servant’s quarters, but still located within the present owner’s property.
The back yard of the house slopes steeply up the flank of Sycamore Mountain, and requires two stone retaining walls, one five feet tall, and one four feet tall, to maintain its stability. The rear property line is marked at the western end by a stream course that cascades during periods of heavy rain. This part of the property is graced by a grove of forty year old Cypress trees, which stand above a three foot tall retaining wall that parallels the concrete and stone driveway that leads to the car port. The driveway was constructed by the Floyd family in 1964 to connect the house to the upper end of Little Oak Street. The upper 1/3 of the property was once known locally as “the Sermon on the Mount” garden, although no photograph or record of the garden’s layout remains. This corner of the lot is bordered by a system of retaining walls ranging from three feet to six feet high. At one time, this area was planted in flowers and vegetables and was one of the largest ornamental gardens in Williamson. The Carlin family, present owners, plan to return this area to its original ornamental function. The present owners have returned the grounds to an orderly appearance by performing routine weeding, trimming, and brush clearance, and have carried on the showcase heritage of the property by planting four American heritage saplings strategically around the property.

**Elven C. Smith House**  
1938  
**Contributing Building**

**Exterior Description**

The main facade of the Smith house faces south, and displays classical symmetry with three bays and a centered entrance. Two dependencies, or wings, are present to each side of the main house, with the left-hand wing being a car port, and the right-hand wing being a porch. On the first story, the centered entrance is composed of a paneled wooden door flanked by six-pane sidelights and topped by a segmental fanlight. To the left and right of the entrance are large rectangular picture windows composed of twenty-six panes each. Directly above the entrance on the second story is a 6/6 double-hung sash window, which is flanked by paired 6/6 double-hung sash windows aligned with the picture windows below. All windows on the main facade feature wooden louvered shutters. Dominating the main facade is the two story portico, which does not span the width of the facade, but is limited to the center bay. Paired cylindrical, fluted columns support the outer corners of the flat portico roof, and two flat engaged pilasters are present to each side of the entrance. The column capitals are square with ogee moldings. An iron frame and glass prism porch light hangs on a chain from the soffit of the porch roof. A Roman balustrade crests the portico roof. Located above the portico, and barely visible on the front slope of the hip roof, is a gabled dormer window sheathed in wide wooden clapboards.

Moving clockwise around the house, the west elevation reveals the car port as the dominant architectural feature. Originally, an in-ground pool was located here, but it was removed in 1978 and replaced with the present car port. The square section brick support posts, balustrade, and general scale and appearance matches the original porch on the east elevation. Three bays cross the west elevation, with all three bays grouped closely together on the right half of the elevation. Each window is a 6/6 double-hung sash with wooden louvered shutters.
second story windows, a gabled dormer window is visible on the side slope of the hip roof. The rear elevation faces north toward a steep slope behind the house. There are five evenly spaced bays on the rear elevation. All windows on the rear elevation are 6/6 double-hung sash. At ground level, a five foot tall random ashlar sandstone wall retains the hillside and provides for a narrow flat space behind the house. A steep grassy verge leads from the top of the wall to the edge of a wooded area at the top of the mountain. The two right-hand bays on the first story are sheltered beneath a corrugated porch roof supported by thin steel columns. A door that leads into the kitchen is present beneath this porch. On the far left side of the rear elevation, there is a basement door opening that has been enclosed in a slanting wooden housing sheathed with asphalt shingles. A wooden lattice-work trellis with a wooden gate encloses the end of the back yard area and provides privacy and security. An unusual feature in the brickwork is present on the middle bay of the second story; the feature is a raised panel of brick with a corbeled bottom edge. The feature is quite subtle, and only extends out from the wall plane for the thickness of one brick. A window is centered in the panel. Directly below the raised brick panel on the first story are two small 4/4 double-hung sash windows that provide light to two interior closets. Above the second floor windows, a shed roofed dormer sheathed in wide wooden clapboards is visible on the rear facing slope of the roof.

Completing the clockwise movement around the house is the east elevation, which is dominated by a one story porch. There are three bays present across the east elevation, with two bays biased toward to the right side of the elevation, and one offset to the left. The exterior brick chimney divides the left-hand bay from the two on the right. There are four doors present on the east elevation, two on the first story gaining access to the living room and study, and two on the second story that gain access to upstairs bedrooms. The windows of the east elevation are 6/6 double-hung sash with wooden louvered shutters. The porch is raised above grade and is accessed via four brick steps on the east side. A closed brick wall encloses the porch floor, with an opening provided for the steps. Ten free-standing, square section wooden columns, and two engaged pilasters support the porch roof, which serves as a balcony for the upstairs bedrooms, and is ringed with a Roman balustrade identical to the balustrades above the front portico and the car port.

**Interior Description**

Overall, there are four main rooms on the first story, and four rooms on the second story, both divided by a central hallway. Moving in a clockwise fashion and beginning in the northwest corner, the layout of the first story follows as: kitchen, study, living room, and dining room. There are four bedrooms on the second story, and two bathrooms. The formal entrance to the house is accessed through the centered entrance below the portico. The main hallway that divides the first floor begins with a foyer, which opens into the dining room to the left, or the living room to the right. A quarter-turn stairway ascends to the second story on the left side of the hall. At the end of
the hall, the kitchen may be accessed to the left, and the study to the right, with two doors opening into a small powder room and a mud room at the hall’s north end. Ceiling height ranges from eight to ten feet in height, with walls and ceilings retaining the original plaster work. Woodwork throughout the house includes the original gum trim and the original oak floors and stairs. All of the original wooden six panel doors and hardware remain intact. Trim details on the first story include paneled wainscot and ogee crown moldings in the hall, dining room, and living room. An original, and unique feature in the first story hallway is the wooden case clock mounted on the east wall. The clock is wired directly into the electrical system of the house. A finished attic, complete with a full bathroom, and a concrete basement with a naturally fed spring completes the description of interior spaces.

Stone Retaining Walls/Monumental Stairway 1938 Contributing Structure
Built by local Italian-American stonemasons, the sandstone walls were laid in split-faced, random ashlar masonry with raised grapevine joints. A three-tier monumental “Y” shaped stairway cuts through the middle of the retaining walls. A total of thirty-six concrete steps must be climbed to reach the house from the alley at the base of the hill. Only the combined wall/stair system on the southern side of the property, below the main facade of the house, is being counted separately. There are several other retaining walls on the property, but they will not be counted individually due to their smaller scale. The two large walls and integral stairway below the south elevation of the house, by contrast, are a major architectural feature of the property as a whole, and as such form a distinct entity worthy of contributing status.

Summary:
Built into a hillside on a spacious landscaped lot and circled by an extensive stone retaining wall system, the Elven C. Smith house marks a dramatic change from the surrounding neighborhood. Designed in a blended Neo-Classical Revival and Georgian Revival style, the house stands out from the surrounding houses, which tend to be closely spaced four squares and bungalows.
Smith, Elven C. House
Name of Property
Mingo, WV
County/State

Section number 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance:

The Elven C. Smith house is significant under Criterion C for Architecture, with a period of significance of 1938, the year of construction. The house is significant due to its excellent representation of an upper-middle class dwelling associated with the 1930 to 1940 development period in Williamson, West Virginia. Architectural significance under Criterion C is gained through the architect’s unique choice of a blended Neo-Classical Revival/Georgian Revival style that is fairly unique to the town. Few houses of similar style or scale exist in this section of town. Additionally, the architect, Hassel Thomas Hicks, was well known in Williamson and widely practiced in the southern West Virginia coalfields.

General History of Williamson

Prior to the arrival of the Norfolk and Western Railway in 1891, the future site of Williamson was an isolated Logan County cornfield situated in the rich bottom lands of the Tug Fork River. Acting on the appearance of N&W survey crews in 1888, Wallace J. Williamson, son of a pioneer family and a local landowner, formed a land company called the Williamson Manufacturing and Mining Company. Lots were laid off for a speculative town that would intersect the line of the proposed N&W Railway. Williamson sold his land in a public auction, selling lots for as little as twenty-five dollars, and others for as much as two-hundred and fifty dollars. In 1892, the tracks of the N&W finally reached the area, and continued westward. The town was incorporated in 1892, and named Williamson in honor of the land company’s founder. At the time of incorporation, twenty buildings and one-hundred people populated what would in a decade become the capital of the “billion dollar coal field.” By 1894, four trains stopped daily at the new wooden depot in the center of town.

Williamson achieved its first political break when the western half of Logan County split away to form Mingo County in 1895. A ballot item resulted in the new town of Williamson being named county seat, which boosted the young town’s status and economy. Despite this early victory, growth in the period from 1892 to 1900 was slow. By 1901, the number of mines opening in the surrounding territory reached a point that prompted the N&W to seek a suitable location for a large marshaling yard. Williamson was a logical choice due to the ample flat land adjacent to the Tug Fork. 1902 marked the construction of an impressive new courthouse, and by 1904 several streets were paved. In 1905, Williamson was chartered as a city, and the first building boom was on. In typical boom town fashion, most of the new commercial and residential construction was wood, which resulted in several large fires before 1910. Most new construction following the fires was more permanent brick, concrete, and stone.

Growth was steady through the intervening years, peaking in 1927 in what locals referred to as “the building boom of ’27.” In that year alone, one billion dollars of construction activities took place. The new construction included hospitals, public buildings, apartments, and private homes. Wholesale building supply companies, such as the Persinger Supply Company, and the
Williamson Supply Company, arose to meet the demand for both the construction trades and the mining supplies market. Many landmarks in the downtown area of Williamson remain from the rapid late-1920's residential and commercial buildup.

History of the Elven C. Smith House

Elven Conrad Smith was born in Chatham, Virginia on September 2, 1891. He was the son of Henry Wise Smith and Mary Yates Smith. Elven married Hattie Fralin, of Gladehill, Virginia in 1917 and together they raised three children, sons Elven Jr. and William, and a daughter named Jean.

Following Elven's military service in World War One, in 1921 he accepted a job with the accounting department of the Williamson Supply Company. In 1923, Mr. Smith advanced to head of the accounting department, and eventually was named vice-president and secretary treasurer of the rapidly expanding company. The Williamson Supply Company was established in 1912 as one of the first general wholesale companies in the Tug Fork Valley. Its growth corresponded with the area's rapid natural resources development, and the associated increase in building and material needs. Smith joined the company during its most prosperous years.

In 1938, Smith contracted with architect Hassel Thomas Hicks to design a new home for his family. Utilizing the help of a local contractor known only by the name of "Mr. Marcum," the house was built on the heights above Williamson with building materials purchased from the Williamson Supply Company. Mr. Wallace Farley, then a young man recently hired by the company, recalled that he "hauled only the finest of building materials to the site of the house." Due to the steep nature of the land, an extensive system of stone retaining walls were built below and above the house. Members of the Elia and Ramella families, both well known as stone masons, were responsible for the construction of the various walls and for the three tiered combination walls and monumental stairway below the main facade of the house. The Elia and Ramella families were responsible for a large share of the local stonework along the N&W Railway.

Following Smith's death on April 9, 1956, the house was sold in 1958 to Noah E. and Thelma Floyd. Floyd was well-known as a local educator, state senator, and Mingo County Democratic political leader. The Floyd family owned the house until it was purchased by John R. and Mary E. Carlin in 1999.

Architectural Significance of the Elven C. Smith House

Smith's choice of Hassel Thomas Hicks as the architect for his new home was significant. H.T. Hicks, also known as "Skeeter," was by 1938 a widely known and well-respected architect in the southern coal fields of West Virginia. Hicks was a graduate of V.M.I. in Lexington, Virginia, and a veteran of World War One. Following his discharge from the Army, he moved to Williamson to work as a Mingo County highway engineer. In 1924, he relocated to Welch in McDowell County and opened his own architectural practice. Hicks designed across a wide
architectural spectrum, leaving behind several landmark buildings with styles ranging from International to Neo-Classical Revival. One of the most famous Hicks buildings is the War Memorial Building in Kimball, McDowell County. An imposing brick and stone Neo-Classical Revival building, the War Memorial was a major accomplishment for the young architect, and a matter of personal pride. The statement: “Designer for the first World War Memorial to Colored in the U.S. erected at Kimball” is found in his biography at V.M.I. Another Hicks landmark, the Coal House in Williamson, has achieved wide regard in southern West Virginia. Completed in 1933 and built mainly as a tourist attraction, the Coal House walls contain 65 tons of locally mined coal. Another unique Hicks commission was the design of the municipal parking garage in downtown Welch. Built in 1941, the concrete multi-level garage accommodates 425 vehicles and is an early representative of its type.

In Williamson, Hicks is also remembered as the architect of several houses in the Persinger Drive part of town. Persinger Drive is located in an area known as Fairview, which attracted many of the town’s management and business elites in the 1920s and 1930s, including the Price and Persinger families. Although unconfirmed as a Hicks design, the R.T. Persinger house, on Persinger Drive, was built in 1938 and displays a mixed Georgian Revival/Neo-Classical Revival stylistic treatment that is similar to the Smith house. Few other buildings of the same time period, scale or design are present in Williamson, leaving the Smith house a unique expression of its time and style in the main residential part of town. The added presence of extensive, locally contracted stone retaining walls contributes another unique facet to the overall architectural significance of the property.

Summary:

Significant under Criterion C for Architecture, the Elven C. Smith house is a singular example of the work of Hassel Thomas Hicks, a regionally important architect, and a unique representative of a late 1930s Neo-Classical Revival style residence. Additional architectural significance is gained through the placement of the house within a large, dramatically landscaped hillside lot, complete with an impressive system of sandstone retaining walls and a monumental stairway.
Bibliography


Interviews:

Hatfield, William, retired educator.

Henry, Lola, Head Librarian, Williamson Public Library.

Linkous, Mary Jane, homemaker.
Interviews, cont.

Mickel, Fred, retired businessman.

Persinger, Howard, retired attorney.

Smith, Graham, retired attorney.

Staker, Patsy Floyd & Don, daughter and son-in-law of State Senator Noah Floyd.

Tincher, Johnny, stonemason.

Varney, Harrison, retired businessman, past part owner of Williamson Supply Company.
  Interview by John R. Carlin, 23 October 2001, Forest Hills, KY.

Ward, Lafe, attorney.

National Register Nominations:

Pauley, Michael J. National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the Coal House,
  Williamson, WV. WV Division of Culture and History, SHPO. 1979.

Sone, Stacy. National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the Kimball War Memorial,
  Kimball, WV. WV Division of Culture and History, SHPO. 1993.


Web Sites:

Personal web site on Williamson History. <www.angelfire.com/wv/wmson/>
Verbal Boundary Description:

Parcel No. One: Lots 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 and a portion of Lot 4, Block 49, City of Williamson, as the same are shown upon the official map or plot of said city as made and prepared by Thomas Boggess, Surveyor.

Said lots numbers 5 through 9, inclusive comprising a rectangular parcel of real estate fronting 150 feet on Oak Street in said City and running back between parallel lines for a depth of 100 feet to Poplar Street in said City; and the portion of Lot No. 4 hereby conveyed (including certain easements in connection with said portion of said lot) is a strip 44 inches in width next adjoining said Lot No. 5, and extending back from the north line of Oak Street to the south wall of a two-story brick garage building now situate on the rear of said Lot No. 4, and as well all easements in connection with said strip as in contained in that certain deed from Nell Lynch White and her husband to Elven C. Smith (now deceased), which said deed bears date April 6, 1938, and is of record in the office of the Clerk of the County Court of said Mingo County in Deed Book 79, page 40.

Parcel No. Two: Lots 10 and 11, block 49, City of Williamson, as the same are shown upon the official map or plot of said City as made and prepared by Thomas Boggess, Surveyor.

Parcel No. Three: Lots 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 in blocks 48, of the City of Williamson, Mingo County, West Virginia.

Boundary Justification:

This is the boundary historically associated with the Elven C. Smith house since its construction in 1938. Quoted as found in the Mingo County Courthouse, Office of the Clerk of the County Court, Deed Book 348, page 42.
Name of Property: Smith, Elven C. House
Address: 210 Little Oak Street
Town: Williamson
State: West Virginia
County: Mingo
Photographer: John R. Carlin
Date: November, 2001
Negatives: WV SHPO, Charleston, WV

Photo 1 of 12: Main facade and monumental stairway, camera facing northeast.
Photo 2 of 12: Main facade from alley, showing garage, camera facing north.
Photo 3 of 12: Stone and brick garage, camera facing northeast.
Photo 4 of 12: 3/4 view showing west and rear elevation and carport roof, camera facing east.
Photo 5 of 12: 3/4 view showing rear elevation and east elevation, camera facing west.
Photo 6 of 12: East elevation and porch, camera facing west.
Photo 7 of 12: Stone barbeque grill, camera facing east.
Photo 8 of 12: Former servant’s quarters, camera facing northeast.
Photo 9 of 12: “Sermon on the Mount” garden area, camera facing northeast.
Photo 10 of 12: Grove of trees, “Sermon on the Mount” area, camera facing northwest.
Photo 11 of 12: Living room, showing original mantle, camera facing east.
Photo 12 of 12: Foyer, showing woodwork and stairway balusters and handrail, camera facing southwest.
1. ELVEN C. SMITH HOUSE. CONTRIBUTING BUILDING.

2. STONE RETAINING WALLS/MONUMENTAL STAIRWAY. CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE.