

EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic McKinley, Johnson Camden, House

and/or common "Willow Glen"

2. Location

street & number 147 Bethany Pike (Route 88)

___ not for publication

city, town Wheeling

___ vicinity of

~~Congressional District~~

state West Virginia code 54

county Ohio

code 069

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	☒ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
☒ building(s)	☒ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	☒ private residence
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	☒ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	N/A being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Johnson B. McKinley

street & number 147 Bethany Pike

city, town Wheeling

___ vicinity of

state

West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ohio County Courthouse

street & number 1500 Chapline Street

city, town

Wheeling

state

West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ☒ no

date

___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☒ unaltered	☒ original site
☒ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

"Willow Glen" dominates a hillside setting above a long driveway and terraced lawns in a quiet suburban neighborhood of northeast Wheeling, Ohio County, West Virginia. The house is of the grand manner; it reflects the architectural scale and eclectic taste favored by industrial magnates who employed architects of the late 19th and early 20th century to design residences appropriate to the rising station of America's "captains of industry". In the tradition of "cottage" architecture of Newport, Rhode Island, or the romantic revival mansions of the Hudson Valley, did York, Pennsylvania, architect Fred Dempwolf design Willow Glen for Johnson Camden McKinley, a coal baron of northern West Virginia.

The McKinley residence is a local tour de force of early 20th-century eclecticism. Two, 2-story wings meet at right angle to form a layout resembling an "L". End pavilions of the wings feature pedimented gables with classical-style partial returns and modillion brackets. The wings terminate in a central, multi-sided pavilion whose shape is echoed in the interior arrangement of the upper and lower rooms that are 7-sided. The formal entrance elevation, above a piazza that is itself a terrace buttressed by a stone wall, possesses several details worthy of note. The library window is in the Jacobean or English style and contains numerous small square panes set in leaded comes. The Great Seal of West Virginia is a stained glass roundel forming part of the glazing of one of the upper sashes. Another important feature of the front elevation is a balustraded, 1-story loggia that encloses a broad veranda above the piazza. At the base of the loggia, which may be viewed as a Renaissance Revival feature of the house, is a stone niche within which a sculpted fish awaits the reactivation of its fountain jet.

Willow Glen is a two and one-half story house built of coursed sandstone ashlar quarried at Littleton, Ohio County. The rusticated masonry features both flat and voussoir arches and contrasting stone grilles, belt courses and keystones of smooth limestone. Occasional wrought iron rails and balustrades accent entranceways.

The piazza-level formal entrance is but a sham. The real entrance is an arched vestibule off the rear courtyard approached by the winding driveway. Opening upon the vestibule is a vast 2-story circular entrance hall, domed, and designed with a magnificent spiral staircase appointed with Tiffany wrought iron rails.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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The rotunda is lighted with a tall second story arched window and with a square hanging light of Tiffany design. Many interior features, including lighting and metal fixtures, were designed for the house by Nelson Tiffany studios.

The principal chamber of the house is the grand salon formally furnished with late 19th and early 20th century pieces. The marble mantel was originally in the home of Lord Salisbury in London, England. Beneath the Tiffany chandeliers a gala ball was held in 1920 and attended by 300 guests who danced to the live music of Fred Waring. A life sized portrait of Agra Bennett McKinley (Mrs. Johnson McKinley) for whom "Willow Glen" was built, hangs on the wall opposite the fireplace. Among other of the major rooms - aside from the 11 bedrooms and 8 baths - are the library with a Tiffany stained glass bay window and a mantel from Sussex, England; a 7-sided formal dining room; and a billiard room finished in wormy chestnut.

The quality of construction evident in the house, from the roof of red French shingle tiles to the basement complete with a coal mine that provided coal for the furnace, lends "Willow Glen" a special place among the great houses of West Virginia.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400-1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500-1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700-1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☐ 1800-1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900-	☐ communications	☒ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☒ other (specify) Local History

Specific dates 1914- 1920 Builder/Architect Fred Dempwolf, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"Willow Glen" is significant because it represents one of West Virginia's best surviving examples of early 20th-century baronial architecture built from the fortune of one of the region's "captains of industry"; it is equally significant as the seat of a prominent couple, Johnson Camden McKinley and Agra Bennett McKinley, who commissioned "Willow Glen" and played significant roles in the industrial history and social milieu of Wheeling and Ohio County, West Virginia.

Fred Dempwolf, the architect of York, Pennsylvania, who prepared plans for Willow Glen, so-named because a nearby ravine is shaded with willow trees, was hired to design a suitable residence for Johnson McKinley's new bride, Agra Bennett, whom McKinley married on April 14, 1914. The massive sandstone house begun in that year required six years to construct; it was not opened until 1920. The mansion's spacious room arrangements include a 2-story entrance rotunda, a grand salon, an English-style library and 30 or so additional chambers aligned within two massive wings forming an "L"-layout on a wooded hillside in the manner of a European villa. Several architectural themes stand out in the design. Classical symmetry is present in the treatment of the gabled end pavilions and Renaissance Revival elements of the front elevation loggia are appropriate to the position of the fountain and formal piazza. Mr. Dempwolf designed a similar romantic-style fountain in the Hahn House at 863 South George Street in York, Pennsylvania. Another of the architect's outstanding buildings is the St. Francis Prep School for Boys, also of York.

Johnson Camden McKinley was born in Parkersburg although one of his ancestors, Capt. John McKinley, was an early land owner in the Wheeling area. McKinley was named for the nationally prominent U.S. Senator, Johnson N. Camden, the West Virginia Democratic Party boss and "Robber Baron"-era businessman. Upon returning to Wheeling in 1893, McKinley engaged in several minor businesses until he had acquired capital to enter the coal operating industry, an occupation that made him after 1908 a wealthy coal owner and coal merchant. At least eight of northern West Virginia's major coal companies were organized or owned by him.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Agra Bennett McKinley was a member of the distinguished Bennett family of Weston, Lewis County; she grew up in priveleged surroundings. She was named Agra for the Indian city, the site of the Taj Mahal. On her 18th birthday she was presented at the court of King George V and Queen Mary. While somewhat younger than her husband, Mrs. McKinley assumed with ease her chores as a hostess to Wheeling society. She traveled extensively and filled her huge house with valuable furnishings and art objects, most of which survive in excellent states of preservation. Mrs. McKinley's mother, Sallie Maxwell Bennett, a member of another prominent West Virginia family, spent her 21st birthday in Rome in 1878. Mrs. Bennett's son, (and Agra's brother) Louis II, distinguished himself in the military service during World War I. Louis A. Bennett, a lieutenant in the Fortieth Squadron British Royal Air Force, was killed in action in 1918. Sallie Bennett, his mother, established several memorials to him as recorded in a family brochure:

In 1918, Mrs. Bennett's son, Louis II, born in 1894 was killed when he was a flyer for the Royal Air Force, voluteering his services for the English. In memory of her beloved son, she left memorials all over the world: in Wavrin, France, a chapel where he crashed...in Wheeling, a life size bronze statue "the Aviator" by Augustus Lukeman of New York dedicated in 1924...in New York City at St. Thomas Episcopal Church a beautiful tapestry near the choir left where he sang as a child and in Westminister Abbey, London, a beautiful stained glass window with the West Virginia state seal in the lower right corner, dedicated in 1922 - the only state seal in the Abbey!

Agra McKinley's father, Louis A. Bennett, a one-time Speaker of the West Virginia House of Delegates (1891), was the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for Governor in 1908.

#9 Major Bibliographical References

"Willow Glen" (Brochure narrating history of Willow Glen printed by the owner) n.d.n.p.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blizzard, William C. "Agra's Temple in Wheeling," Sunday Gazette-Mail (State Magazine Section) December 7, 1969.
Interview at "Willow Glen", Mrs. Johnson McKinley and Rodney Collins, April 27, 1983. (Filed in Historic Preservation Unit)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 4½ acres

Quadrangle name Wheeling, W.Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification Includes a triangular area bounded by a paved driveway to the south, west, and north and a straight line running in a southeasterly direction from the terminus of the driveway N.E. of the house to a point intersecting with the entrance of the driveway and Rt. 88.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian

Historic Preservation Unit

organization W.Va. Dept. of Culture & History date June 10, 1983

Capitol Complex

street & number The Cultural Center telephone 304/348-0240

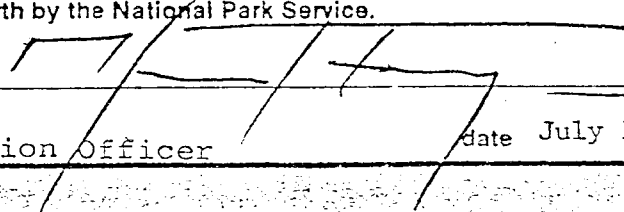
city or town Charleston state West Virginia 25305

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ 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 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 10, 1983

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

OHIO CO
MARSHALL CO

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STEUBENVILLE 20
TILTONSVILLE 25

80°45' 2490000 FEET (OHIO)
40°07'30"

R 2 W 523000m E

4441000m N

T 4 N

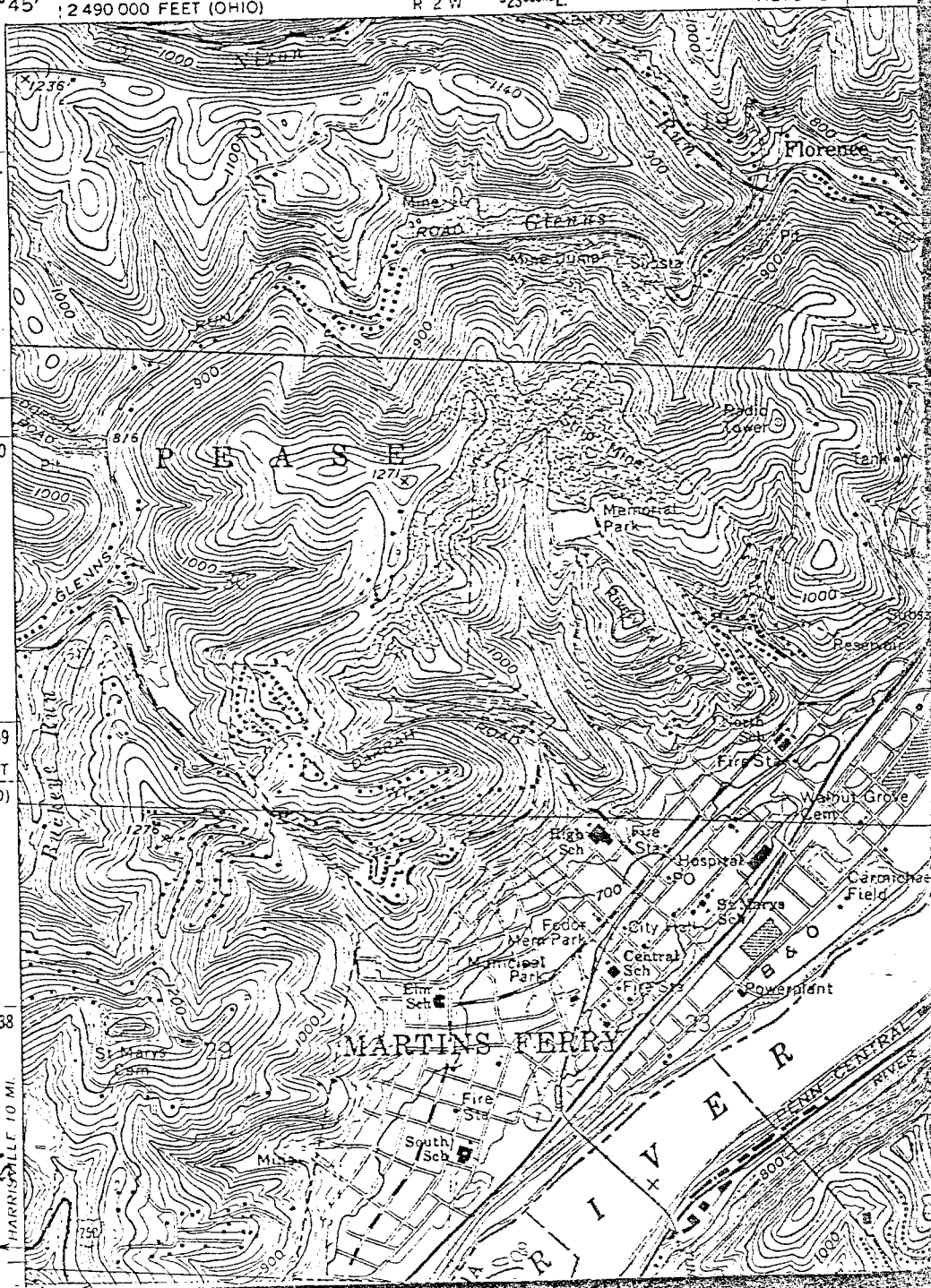
T 3 N

4440

4439
770000 FEET
(OHIO)

4438

HARRISVILLE 10 MI



"Willow Glen" UTM:
17/526160/4437260
Rt. 88, Bethany Pike
Wheeling, West Virginia
-410 COUNTY
WEST VIRGINIA

