

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name KIRKMAN, O. ARTHUR, HOUSE & OUTBUILDINGS  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 501 W. High Street n/a not for publication  
city, town High Point n/a vicinity  
state North Carolina code NC county Guilford code 081 zip code 27260

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>5</u>	_____ objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

William S. Price, Jr. 4 Nov 87  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. 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 the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE: Professional

LANDSCAPE: Garden

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

LANDSCAPE: Garden

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Tudor

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

Stone

roof Fiber Glass

other Glass(stained)

Stucco

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH: Located on the North Carolina Railroad tracks, just three short blocks west of the central business district in downtown High Point, North Carolina, the O. ARTHUR KIRKMAN HOUSE(1913) and OUTBUILDINGS, on approximately one and a half acres, exemplifies a handsome, well preserved, early 20th-century urban estate. The grand house displays fine balance and imaginative detail. Along with the arrangement of its formal gardens and two historic outbuildings (once professional and commerical buildings for O. Arthur Kirkman), this handsome complex captures even today a living, working urban estate. The exterior of the house is sturdy flemish bond brick and stone. The interior of the house contains exquisite, quarter-sawn oak millwork, some of the finest dating from this period in North Carolina. Throughout the house, stained glass is prominent, and includes an exceptionally large amount for a private home. All of the stained glass is in its original condition, as is the millwork, and both are preserved beautifully. The workmanship is excellent. The house is well crafted and extremely sound. In its original setting, the house, outbuildings, and grounds possess historic character with integrity in all categories: design, setting, workmanship, materials, and feeling/association.

\* \* \* \* \*

The O. ARTHUR KIRKMAN HOUSE at 501 W. High Street in High Point, North Carolina, built in 1913,\* is a fine, two-story, approximately 4,000 square foot, brick house. Architectural Resources describes it

\* Guilford County Tax Records, Guilford County Courthouse, High Point, North Carolina. This date was confirmed by the house's owner from 1930 to 1985, O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr. in conversation with Roy J. Shipman in 1982, and by A. Larkin Kirkman, son of O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr., in discussion with Dorothy Gay Darr in August of 1986. (Conversation with Roy J. Shipman and Dorothy Gay Darr took place in December of 1986.) See also, Roy J. Shipman, Compiler, High Point, A Pictorial History, 1859-1983 (High Point: Hall Printing Company, 1983), p. 198.

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as containing

some elements of the then fashionable Colonial Revival, such as the Flemish bond brickwork, combined with voguish bungalow details.<sup>1</sup>

The exterior and interior of the house remain virtually unchanged since its construction.

The overall form of the structure represents a massed ground plan except for a small two-story rectangular wing to the left of the house, a small one-story rectangular wing at the rear of the house, and a large covered front entry porch.

### Important exterior details include:

- 1). Flemish bond brickwork
- 2). Supportive and decorative brick quoins
- 3). Full-width gables on the front, back, left-side wing, and cover to the front entry porch. Each gable encloses a decorative rock and cement surface within which is located a semi-circular window with fan detail, except for the gable over the front entry porch which has no window.
- 4). Wide eaves with decorative brackets
- 5). A steep pitched roof with sky light at top surrounded by a protective and decorative wrought iron balustrade
- 6). Three interior chimneys
- 7). Prominent stone sills and lintels on windows, as well as decorative stone detailing on front entry porch and left front, first-floor terrace
- 8). Brick arches on windows and wrought iron vents at ground level, repeated in brick wall of first-floor terrace.
- 9). Stone steps on both sides of the large front entry porch. Decorative black and white tile floor on front porch.
- 10). Decorative red, white, and blue tile floor on first-floor terrace; door to this first-floor terrace has large light, two large side lights, and a rectangular transom.
- 11) An accentuated, symmetrical, centered front entry, with:
  - a. solid oak, highly ornate, hand-carved front door with large light of bevelled glass, underneath is which an entablature
  - b. two large side lights with bevelled glass and entablatures
  - c. large arched transom with bevelled glass

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- d. original doorbell and hardware in pattern repeated throughout the house
- e. two large, original, outside wall light fixtures flanking front entry

12). Original windows are one pane with double hung sashes

13). Side entry has brick steps with wrought iron banisters leading to a small landing covered by a large canopy hung by chains attached to the outside wall of the house. Original side door is solid oak with small light and original doorbell. Two original outside wall light fixtures, matching those at the front entrance, flank this side door.

14). Above the side door is a story and a half, triple pane arched window of stained glass. At its center is an oval, hand-painted nature scene featuring a handsome elk.

15). To the left of the side entry are two more stained glass windows (square) featuring garlands and bows, books and a lamp.

16). To the rear of the house, above the one-story wing, is a second-floor terrace surrounded by a wrought iron balustrade.

Exterior changes to the original structure are few:

1). The terra cotta tile roof was removed approximately seven years ago and replaced with conventional, contemporary, fiberglass roofing materia

2). The exterior of the small, one-story, rear wing was originally decorative rock and cement matching that of the gables, but it is now stucco (The stucco is thick, stout, and sturdy, placed over heavy metal mesh backing, and dates prior to 1960.) The small entry porch of this wing has been modified several times over the last three decades.

3). Seven upstairs windows to the sides and back of the house were replaced with three-tier, solid pane windows in the 1950s.

4). Also, in the 1950s, the second-floor terrace door at the back of the house was replaced with a two-tier, single pane window.

\* \* \* \* \*

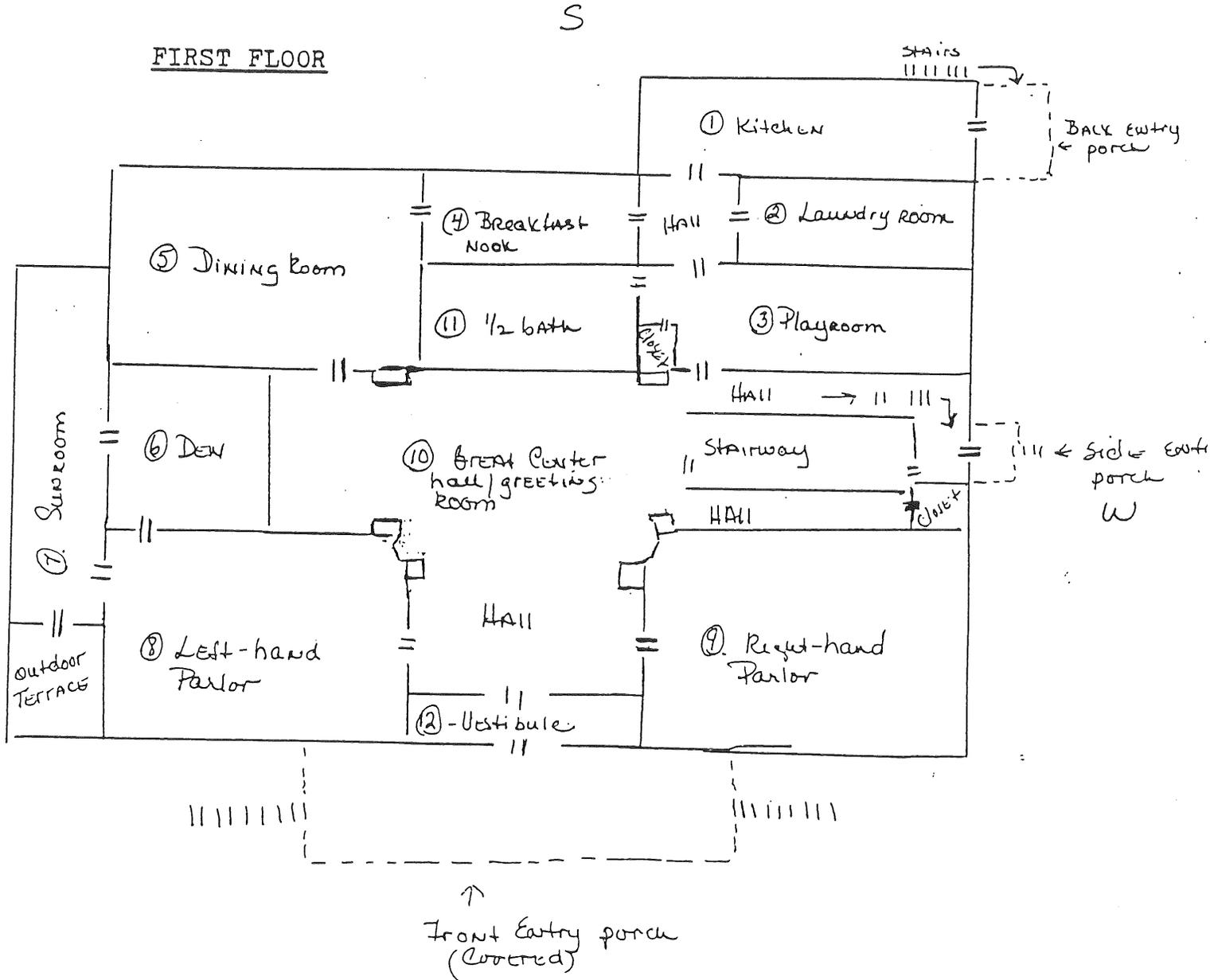
What follows is a floor plan of the house with a description of its attic, basement, cellar, and number of rooms:

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- |                   |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Kitchen        | 7. Sunroom                   |
| 2. Laundry room   | 8. Left-hand Parlor          |
| 3. Playroom       | 9. Right-hand Parlor         |
| 4. Breakfast nook | 10. Great Hall/Greeting Room |
| 5. Dining Room    | 11. 1/2 bath                 |
| 6. Den            | 12. Vestibule                |

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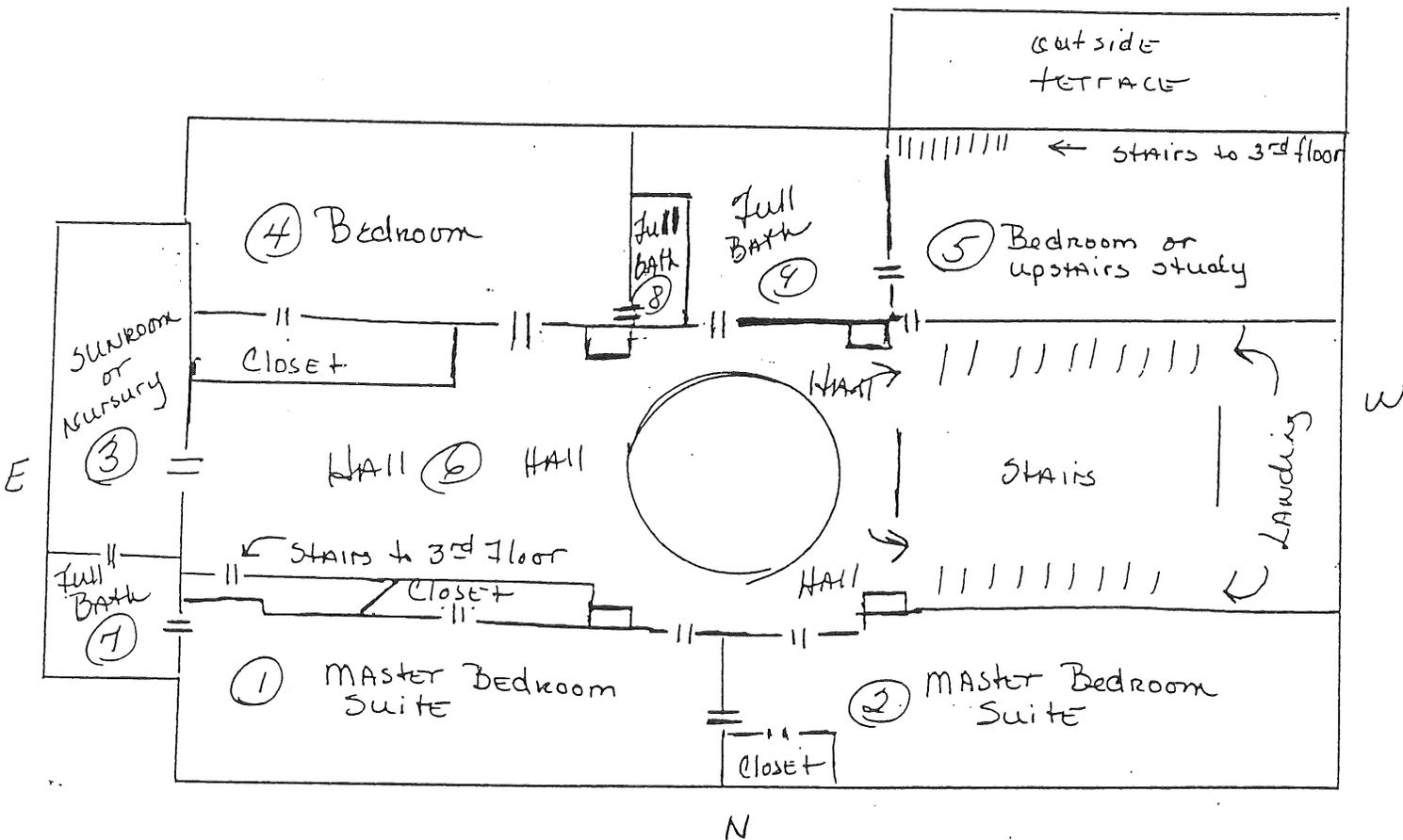
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## SECOND FLOOR

S



1. Master Bedroom
2. Master Bedroom (adjoining)
3. Sunroom or nursery
4. Back Bedroom
5. Back Bedroom or Upstairs Study
6. Large Central Hall and Stairwell with Landing
7. Full Bath
8. Full Bath
9. Full Bath (original)

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The THIRD FLOOR, once a full length and width unfinished attic, now has 3/4 of this space finished in a bedroom, full bath, and two large built-in storage closets, plus numerous smaller built-in storage spaces of various shapes and sizes. This addition was made in the 1950s.

The house also contains a finished 1/2 basement with a full bath and a separate 1/2 bath. Original bathroom fixtures are operative in these basement bathrooms, including an original tub, lavatory, and two commodes, plus two wooden, mirrored lavatory cabinets. There is an interior door to the basement under the stairway, as well as an exterior entrance to the basement at the back of the house.

Also, to the back of the house, directly under the rear wing, is a cellar (1/2 above ground, 1/2 below ground) accessible only by a door on the outside of the house.

Number of Rooms: If one includes the baths, kitchen, attic, cellar, basement, and the two large central halls (one on the first floor and one on the second floor), the total number of rooms comes to 28.

\* \* \* \* \*

### IMPORTANT INTERIOR FEATURES:

Throughout the house, the interior contains fine, quarter-sawn oak millwork and graceful ornamentation.

THEMES OF ORIGINAL MATERIALS include quarter-sawn oak doors, casings, wainscotting, and exposed milled ceiling beams, oak floors in patterns that vary with each room except for the two rooms of the master bedroom suite which match, wide, decorative hand-crafted moldings of quarter-sawn oak, bevelled glass doors and leaded glass doors including those on the bookshelves, perfectly round glass door knobs with decorative nickel-plated brass backs, stained glass windows of various shapes and sizes in various locations throughout the house, and tile baths of exceptional color and design.

THEMES OF ORNAMENTATION found throughout the house include floral and rosette designs in the original light fixtures and stained glass windows.

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dentil designs in the decorative ceiling molding and mantel decor, and original mantel designs ranging from simple and massive to highly decorative with single and double columns. Original fireplaces are large brick square and arched-shaped, wood burning on the first floor, and smaller, coal burning fireplaces on the second floor with tile surrounds and highly decorative wrought iron covers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Of outstanding quality and design are the vestibule, the first-floor decorative ceiling moldings, especially that surrounding the open balcony that connects the first and second floors in the center of the house, the parlor pocket doors, the staircase, landing, and the magnificent stained glass windows.

1). The vestibule at the front entry has a blue and white tile floor within which is printed the name of the house's original owner and principal designer: O. ARTHUR KIRKMAN. Quarter-sawn oak wainscoting and a second door of solid oak lead from the vestibule into the house. This second entry has decoratively carved egg and dart molding around a large bevelled glass light in the centered door, two large original bevelled glass side lights, and a large rectangular bevelled glass transom. The design and proportion of this second entry match those of the front door entry except for the rectangular rather than arch-shaped transom (as found in the front door entry).

2). Exemplary ceiling moldings vary from large exposed milled quarter-sawn oak ceiling beams in the left-hand parlor, den, and dining room, to wide cherry-stained ceiling molding in the formal right-hand parlor. Most imaginative are the light, dentil-decorated ceiling moldings in the central hall/greeting room. Even more exceptional in this great room is a circular balcony opening in the first floor ceiling (adorned with quarter-sawn oak paneling and dropped columns with solid oak balls) that allows the visitor to see up to the second floor oak banister with highly decorative spindles, columns topped with solid oak urns, and circular quarter-sawn oak rail surrounding the hole, on up to the second floor ceiling in which rests a large circular stained glass window with a colorful rosette design. (This circular stained glass window matches the balcony opening in size.) Above the circular stained glass window, in the roof

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of the attic, is a sky light to illuminate naturally the stained glass during the daylight hours.

3). Two large quarter-sawn oak pocket doors, each eight feet high and two and a half feet wide are in both entries of the two first-floor parlors off the front hall.

4). In the right-hand parlor are two square stained glass windows on either side of the interior chimney displaying garlands, bows, books, and a lamp. Yet another stained glass window, rectangular in shape with an abstract design of many colors, is found to the left of the house, opening out from the quarter-sawn oak paneled den into the first-floor central hall/greeting room.

5). The solid quarter-sawn oak staircase with highly decorative spindels (three to a step) is of exceptional note. The banister is wide, thick, and molded smoothly in graceful bends and turns, with decorative solid oak urns as crowns on columns at points of entry and change of direction as on the landing where the stairway splits into two stairways (one to the right and one to the left) leading up to the second floor.

On the landing begins to rise a one and a half story triple pane arched window of stained glass that stretches up to the ceiling of the second floor and sideways to almost the full width of the landing and double staircase. This stained glass window features rosettes, columns, banners, and an oval, hand-painted nature scene with a happy young elk at its center.

\* \* \* \* \*

### CHANGES TO THE INTERIOR:

1). Kitchen area: The small, one-story, rectangular, rear wing of the house was originally an enclosed porch, but is now used as a kitchen. The original kitchen, just off this enclosed porch, is now used as a laundry room and playroom or den with built-in day bed.

2). The first floor bath opened originally into the large central hall/greeting room, but now opens exclusively into the playroom/den off the kitchen.

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3). An operative, cast iron fountain once stood in the center of the house in the great hall/greeting room, directly under the rotunda. The fountain was removed approximately fifty years ago (replaced by a large, six foot high aviary with birds, now gone). The fountain now stands in the gardens to the right of the house.

4). A door from the left parlor leading into the great hall/greeting room was removed and placed in the right-hand entrance to the side door when this entrance was enclosed to make a closet off the great hall. The original matching opposite entrance to the side door (to the left of the staircase) still remains.

5). On the second floor, a dressing room off the master bedroom suite was made into a full bath.

6). A portion of the large, original second-floor bath was made into a separate, private full bath opening into the rear, left-hand bedroom.

7). The second-floor terrace door at the rear of the house was replaced with a window approximately thirty years ago and a second stairway at this point was added leading to the third floor where part of the attic was converted into a bedroom and full bath.

All of these changes have been extremely sensitive to the original structure, floor plan, and interior design of the house.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CONCLUSION: HOUSE INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR

The house shows a fine combination of masculine and feminine characteristics--the sturdy, angular brick and stone exterior is combined pleasingly with circular motifs and decorative flourishes. Heavy quarter-sawn oak millwork is juxtaposed with light floral and rosette designs.

The house is balanced and flows mostly around the two central halls. These great halls, with their connecting first- to second-floor circular opening, as well as the grand staircase with large landing, give the visitor a sweeping view of the house's beautifully designed interior space. Ten foot high ceilings on the first floor (nine on the second floor) add

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to this feeling of space and grandeur, yet smaller rooms off the great halls and in the wings offer a sense of privacy, comfort, and informality.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE GROUNDS:

Of particular historic significance and beauty are the grounds. Covering approximately one and a half acres, the grounds include three outbuildings, one of which pre-dates the main 1913 house.

## OUTBUILDINGS:

I. A detached, single car garage (1913) matches architecturally the details, materials, shape, and style of the main house with two (front and back) full width gables enclosing decorative rock and cement surfaces and semi-circular windows with fan design, wide eaves with decorative brackets, flemish bond brickwork, brick quoins, a long stone lentil above the garage door opening, and double sash windows.

To the right of the garage, extending from it, is a brick dog house (1913) also matching architecturally the details of the main house including a gable enclosing decorative rock and cement surface, wide eaves, and decorative brackets. The entrance to the dog house is a large, decorative brick arch.

II. Depot (1916-1917): The first outbuilding to the right of the main house and single car garage is an approximately 800 square foot brick building with hip roof. Mostly recently used as a three car garage, this simple, one-story, two room, rectangular building, was originally used commercially by O. Arthur Kirkman, the last recorded use in 1917 as a small depot for one of Kirkman's businesses, The Interurban Motor Line, a bus/taxi service running between High Point and Greensboro.<sup>4</sup>

III. Office (pre-1913): The second outbuilding, located to the right of the old depot, is a small brick office, whose structural form is evidence that it dates from a slightly earlier period than the 1913 house.<sup>5</sup> Also used originally as a commercial, as well as professional building, this second outbuilding--a one-story, one room, rectangular brick building

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of approximately 400 square feet with steep pitched roof--was used as Kirkman's private office for many years, and at various times was listed by the High Point Directories as the location of Kirkman's various businesses including the KK Harness, Coal & Wood Co. in 1917, real estate during the years 1922-1924, and between 1918 and 1924 as the headquarters during the organization of the High Point, Thomasville, and Denton Railroad of which O. Arthur Kirkman was the original owner, founder, and General Manager.<sup>6</sup>

Early additions to this outbuilding include a small wooden porch with turned post columns resting on a decorative brick wall surround and terra cotta tile floor, a chimney and fireplace, and a back terrace with matching decorative brick wall surround and terra cotta tile floor. Also, the arched windows were modified to a rectangular shape and one was covered over for the fireplace as well as its opposite bricked in for symmetry.<sup>7</sup>

These two outbuildings are connected by decorative brick walls, three-feet high topped with cement slabs, including four-and-a-half foot high brick columns topped with cement slabs every twelve feet (centered).

Slate walks lead from the main house to the office and on to the original depot.

\* \* \* \* \*

The grounds also include the cast iron fountain originally in the center of the house, a large cement octagonal fish pond (originally with a centered fountain), with square cement walk surround, an old well, a metal grape arbor, a large old railroad bell mounted on a high wrought iron stand so it can be rung from the kitchen porch, as well as numerous brick and stone walks, brick borders, multiple plantings of shrubs, flowers, herbs, and fruit trees (pear, peach, plum, and apple), and most spectacular a large grove of very old oak trees. Indeed, the side street that runs along the Kirkman property is named Oak Street. (More exceptional Kirkman so identified with oak trees that by 1904, at the age of 29, he switched his first two names from Arthur Oscar to Oscar Arthur so that his initials would spell "OAK."<sup>8</sup> Even today, Kirkman's descendents refer to him sometimes as "OAK, Sr.")

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Behind the main house and outbuildings, extending almost the full width of the property (270') is a three-foot high brick wall with brick columns matching that already described connecting the office and depot. This decorative, terraced, meandering brick garden wall has a gate opening leading to the back section of the property. Large hooks for hinges of the double wide gate remain to show the original position of the gates which are now gone. Through the gate opening, the back section of the property also has a large semi-circular brick wall used to support the terraced earth, and a cement foundation of what originally was a livery stable at the turn of the century.

An additional planned restoration will be to replace and restore a private railroad car to sit on a railroad spur that runs along W. High Street (The railroad spur shown on the plat has been disfunctional for at least fifty years, as the oak trees that grow on it will testify. But a spur on the opposite side of W. High Street, a spur that fed the old Tomlinson Chair Company a block away, still exists.) As stated earlier, W. High St. runs parallel to the railroad tracks that run through the center of High Point. O. Arthur Kirkman kept a private railroad car in front of his private office after founding the High Point, Thomasville, and Denton Railroad in 1924.

\* \* \* \* \*

CONCLUSION: Taken as a whole, in its original setting, and with few alterations, the house as well as the outbuildings and grounds exemplify a beautifully preserved, unique, one of a kind period piece, representing a style of urban living that no longer exists except in the historic surviving structures such as the one presented to you here.

\* \* \* \* \*

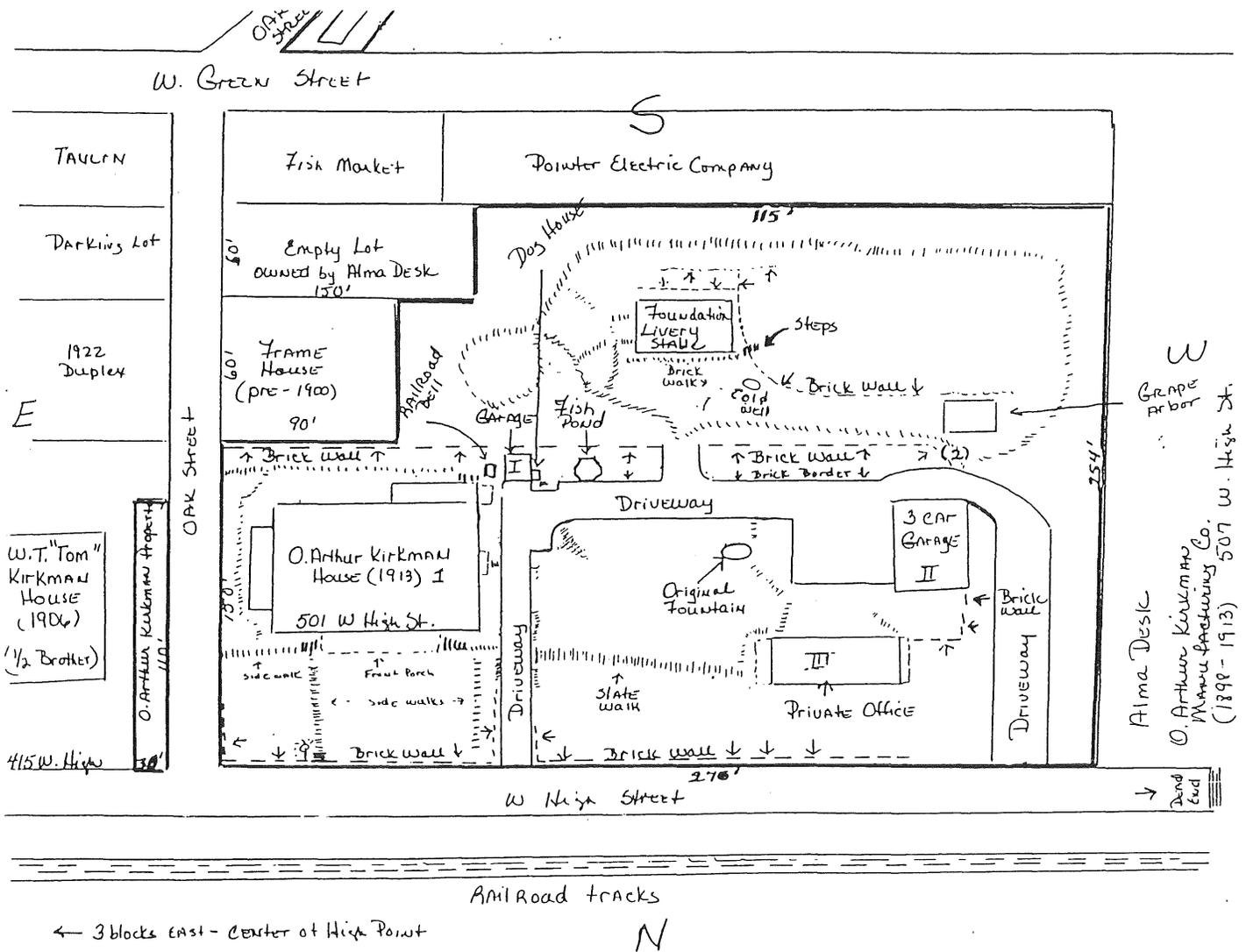
Please see site map that follows.

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W.T. "Tom" Kirkman House (1906) (1/2 Brother)  
 415 W. High  
 O. Arthur Kirkman Property  
 110'

Alma Desk  
 O. Arthur Kirkman  
 Manufacturing Co.  
 (1898-1913) 507 W. High St.

← 3 blocks east - center of High Point

N

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1913-1930

Significant Dates

1913

1924

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Kirkman, O. Arthur, Sr.

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: The O. Arthur Kirkman House and outbuildings, located in downtown High Point, are eligible for the National Register for their local significance under criterion C and criterion B. The property is one of the most intact and best-preserved early 20th century industrial estates in High Point. The two-story brick house, designed by Kirkman himself and built in 1913, combines elements of the Tudor and Colonial Revival with bungalow massing and details, and its interior has an ornate central rotunda and lavish stained glass. The early taxi depot and private office on the grounds, as well as the mattress factory which stood next door, reflect the first phase of industrial development in High Point, when industrialists lived beside their factories and businesses. O. Arthur Kirkman was one of High Point's early manufacturers and developers, founding a mattress factory in 1899 and one of the earliest furniture exposition buildings in 1912-1915. Kirkman helped establish the first Southern Furniture Exposition Building in 1922 (for which High Point is now known worldwide) and the High Point, Thomasville and Denton Railroad in 1924 before his death in 1930.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT: The O. Arthur Kirkman House built in 1913 is one of approximately 100 properties in the city limits of High Point identified as being of architectural and historical significance during the comprehensive inventory conducted by the State Historic Preservation Office in 1976-1977. The resulting publication, Architectural Resources: High Point, Jamestown, Gibsonville, Guilford County, North Carolina, by H. McKeldon Smith, published by the N.C. Dept. of Cultural Resources in 1979, documents on page 59 the local architectural significance of the Kirkman House, and provides an understanding of its architectural context. The house is one of four surviving substantial turn-of-the-century houses on High Street, a rare survival in High Point's center city area. High Point is an industrial city which began its boom in the late 1890s, and until 1920 mill executives tended to construct their homes near their factories. For those who could afford it, like O. Arthur Kirkman, large lots in the city with gardens and outbuildings were initially the favored choice bringing to the city, on a smaller scale, some of the pleasures of farm life. The produce of these new urban estates, however, was not agriculture, but business. Kirkman's outbuildings housed Kirkman's businesses.

While there are a number of large, architecturally distinctive houses in the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival, Renaissance Revival, and other revival styles of the turn-of-the-century surviving in  See continuation sheet High Point, the Kirkman House is a unique two-story brick house with an unusual combination of bungalow, Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival elements. It is further distinguished by an ornate interior with a 2-story rotunda opening to

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a stained glass skylight, with several other fine stained glass windows. Adding to its importance as an example of an early 20th-century industrialis residence is the survival of a small brick office, believed to be slightly older than the house, used by Kirkman for his various commercial ventures, and a 1916-1917 garage used by Kirkman for an early taxi service, another of his ventures.. Kirkman's first venture, the O. Arthur Kirkman Manufacturing Company, which made mattresses from 1899 to 1913, once stood beside the house at 507 W. High Street.

\* \* \* \* \*

HISTORIC CONTEXT: The original owner and principal designer of this urban estate was O. ARTHUR KIRKMAN, SR. (1875-1930).<sup>9</sup> Kirkman was one of the first manufacturers of High Point and contributed significantly to the early growth of the city as a manufacturing town and furniture market. (Located in the Piedmont of North Carolina, High Point is known for the manufacture of textiles and furniture and as the "Furniture Capitol of the World." Sixty percent of all solid wood furniture made in the United States is made within a 200-mile radius of High Point and twice a year, in April and October, High Point hosts the largest wholesale furniture market--per square feet--in the world.) High Point's first era of development as a manufacturing town and furniture center occurred between 1898 and 1930, the span of Kirkman's adult life, and Kirkman played a substantial role in this development.

The O. Arthur Kirkman Manufacturing Company, of which Kirkman was sole owner, manufactured fine hair mattresses, pillows, bedsprings, and cots between 1899 and 1913 when the company was sold. Kirkman also worked privately in real estate throughout his early years before 1924. (County courthouse deed books show Kirkman to be one of the area's leading land developers between 1900 and 1924.) Also during these early years, Kirkman helped to develop the first southern furniture exposition building between 1910 and 1922 and owned one of the earliest furniture exposition buildings himself between 1912 and 1915. Kirkman founded one of the first motorized bus/taxi services between High Point and Greensboro, North Carolina in 1917, and between 1918 and 1930, Kirkman organized, founded, and managed the High Point, Thomasville, and Denton Railroad. Kirkman was known as an excellent businessman and an exceptional wit which was proved publicly in the courtroom while serving as a municipal judge in his later years, the late 1920s.

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Most of Kirkman's businesses were adjacent to and on his estate after acquiring it in 1898.<sup>10</sup> (Originally, Kirkman lived in a 19-century frame house on the site which was moved back approximately 200 feet when the present Kirkman house was constructed in 1913). The O. Arthur Kirkman Manufacturing Company operated next door at 507 W. High Street (now Alma Desk Company). The High Point City Directory of 1910 also shows another Kirkman business, the Southern Buggy and Harness, Coal and Wood Company at 507 W. High Street.<sup>11</sup>

Besides manufacturing during these early years, Kirkman owned and operated several companies at 501 and 503 W. High Street, today termed collectively 501 W. High Street (although county tax records still separate 501 W. High Street into two parcels for tax purposes: the house and single car garage as one, and the two outbuildings and gardens--originally 503 W. High--as the second.)

In 1917, the High Point Directory lists the KK Harness Company and the Interurban Motor Line at 503 W. High Street.<sup>12</sup> A grandson who grew up at 501 W. High Street, Larkin Kirkman, now a Raleigh attorney, remembers his father O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr. saying that the three car garage was originally used by O. Arthur Kirkman, Sr. as a depot for the Interurban Motor Line and that the small brick office was at one time used as a coal weigh station, although its most constant use was as an office for O. Arthur Kirkman, Sr.'s real estate ventures and later as a private office in his acquisition and operation of the HPT & D Railroad.<sup>13</sup>

Between 1922 and 1924, the High Point Directories name Kirkman's business as "real estate" with his office at 503 W. High Street.<sup>14</sup> But Kirkman dealt in real estate throughout his early years, as stated earlier, and took a lead as a developer of High Point into a major furniture market. (Kirkman was responsible for helping establish the first Southern Furniture Exposition Building at Main, Commerce, and Wren Streets in High Point, and along with William Simmons, established one of the first furniture exposition buildings in High Point at the south-east corner of W. High and Elm Street--two blocks from his house, now the Biltmore Hotel--between 1912 and 1915.<sup>15</sup>)

In 1924, O. Arthur Kirkman, Sr. with Tom Finch, founder of Thomasville Furniture, started the High Point, Thomasville, & Denton Railroad which ran successfully under Kirkman's management and then his son's, O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr., until 1965, when the HPT & D was sold to the Norfolk-Western and Seaboard Coastline railroads.<sup>16</sup>

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As owner of a railroad, O. Arthur Kirkman, Sr. kept a private railroad car on a spur in front of his private office at 503 W. High Street, and could hook it up to any train stopping in High Point to ride the rails free of charge. Kirkman took advantage of this favored position and travelled widely by rail in his private car until his death in 1930. Kirkman's wife, Lulu Blanche Hammer Kirkman (1875-1936) was said to have kept always at least one bag packed.<sup>17</sup>

In private life, Lulu Kirkman showed exceptional talent in landscape architecture by creating the once beautiful formal gardens that surround the estate. (The gardens are now being restored.) In civic life, O. Arthur Kirkman, Sr. served on the first Parks Commission in High Point.<sup>18</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT: Within a larger community perspective, the O. ARTHUR KIRKMAN HOUSE AND OUTBUILDINGS are located within the most historic area of downtown High Point. Three blocks in total, W. High Street, a narrow, two-lane street, runs parallel to the railroad tracks that cut through the center of town. (The city's Main Street is divided between north and south at the juncture of High Street.)

Along High Street's first block to the west are located the old railroad passenger depot (1905), now used as a restaurant, and the Biltmore Hotel (early 1850s), the city's oldest downtown building and designated by the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, "the most substantial antebellum commercial building remaining in Guilford County," once owned and used by Kirkman as an early furniture exposition building, now soon to become offices.<sup>19</sup>

The second block of W. High Street is lined with a prominent complex of factories (1904-1927), originally the Tomlinson Chair Company, now Market Square(NR), High Point's first decorative arts center, and credited after restoration as, architecturally, the finest decorative arts center in the United States.

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The third and final block of W. High Street on which the Kirkman house sits, once displayed five, now four, fine turn-of-the-century houses. These four remaining pre-1920 houses are the only four fine historic houses left collectively in downtown High Point, a city which once hosted many blocks of turn-of-the-century homes before the second great economic boom of the 1950s when they were torn down. Architectural Resources describes this surviving residential block of W. High Street as "a small but significant neighborhood of substantial late 19th and early 20th century dwellings, a rare survival in the center city area."<sup>20</sup> (A handful of scattered historic houses remain across the railroad tracks along the three-lane, one-way, east-west thoroughfare, Kivett Drive, and along the two-lane, north-south Lindsay Street. Also, directly across the railroad tracks from W. High Street, on lovely old Oakwood Street (running north-south) is a fine collection of pre-suburban, early 1920s, upper-middle class homes, now run down and used as boarding houses.)

The first house on the final block of W. High Street is the oldest, the Brown House, a two-story frame house, Queen Anne in style, preserved over the years by its long-term owner, Lee Wilson, who lived next door. In 1983, the Brown House was sold to and restored by a wholesale fabric company for use as fabric showrooms. The next two houses on the final block of W. High Street, the Henry Fraser House and the W. T. "Tom" Kirkman House (415 W. High Street, Arthur Kirkman's  $\frac{1}{2}$  brother), are roughly contemporary. Both houses are two-story, frame houses, Colonial Revival in style featuring many period motifs. Both have wrap porches, the Fraser House with Ionic columns, the Tom Kirkman House with turned post columns (8"x8"x8'). The Fraser House, the grander of the two, was restored two years ago to use as furniture showrooms, and the Tom Kirkman House is presently being restored to use as offices.<sup>21</sup> The O. Arthur Kirkman House at 501 is the last house on W. High Street and simply the finest in regards to interior detail, craftsmanship, artistic value, surviving historic outbuildings, gardens, grounds, and historic setting. It's appearance is unique on the block and in the city.

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<sup>1</sup>H. McKeldon Smith, Director and Editor, Architectural Resources: An Inventory of Historic Architecture: High Point, Jamestown, Gibsonville, Guilford County (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1979), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>Based on conversations with A. Larkin Kirkman, son of O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr., August, 1986.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Larkin Kirkman grew up at 501 W. High Street and was associated with the house until its sale in September of 1986.

<sup>4</sup>High Point City Directory, 1916-1917 (High Point, 1917), p. 306. Also based on conversations with A. Larkin Kirkman, August, 1986, and conversation with Fuller McGuinn, grandson of O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr. and a student of the house, November, 1986.

<sup>5</sup>Smith, Architectural Resources, p. 59.

<sup>6</sup>High Point City Directory, 1917, p. 188. High Point City Directory, 1921-1922 (High Point, 1922), pp. 199, 335. High Point City Directory, 1924 (High Point, 1924), pp. 222, 384. High Point City Directory, 1925-1926 (Asheville: Commercial Service Company, 1925), pp. 240, 447. See also, Holt McPherson, High Pointers of High Point (High Point: Hall Printing Company, 1976), p. 10; Roy J. Shipman, Compiler, High Point, A Pictorial History, 1859-1983 (High Point: Hall Printing Company, 1983), p. 198; and, The Building and the Builders of the City of High Point (High Point: High Point Chamber of Commerce, 1947), pp. 236-241.

<sup>7</sup>This pattern is evidenced in the variation of brick, but renovation will not begin until a more detailed study of the building is complete. For sure, the front and back porches were in place by 1924 because the Sanborn Insurance Map of that year shows them on the brick office, as well as a cover extending from the left side of the building (now gone), perhaps used to shelter scales for Kirkman's coal company. Sanborn Insurance Map, 1924, Guilford County Courthouse, High Point, North Carolina.

<sup>8</sup>Please see the Guilford County Deed Records, Book 164, p. 441, for the first appearance in 1904 of "O. A. Kirkman." For comparison, see Guilford County Deed Records of 1898, in which Kirkman signed his name "Arthur O. Kirkman," Book 113, pp. 191 and 670. Guilford County Courthouse, Greensboro, N.C. Letter, A. Larkin Kirkman to Dorothy Gay Darr, April, 1987.

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<sup>9</sup>The dates of Kirkman's life, as those of his wife's, were taken from their single tombstone in Oakwood Cemetery, High Point, N.C.

<sup>10</sup> Guilford County Deed Records, Book 113, p. 670. Greensboro, N.C.

<sup>11</sup>High Point, N.C. City Directory, 1910, pp. 163-164, 228. High Point Directory, 1916-1917, p. 188, 306. In 1910, Kirkman's home was listed at 503 W. High Street, although the frame house in which he lived before 1913 stood on the same spot of his present house; by 1916, the street address had changed from 503 W. High Street to 501 W. High Street.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 1916-1917. J. J. Farriss, editor of the High Point Enterprise, the local newspaper, and early booster of the city, states that Kirkman "conducts 2 interurban auto lines," and that in 1913 Kirkman was a strong candidate for mayor. See, J.J. Farriss, High Point, N.C. (High Point, 1916). For a picture of one of Arthur's 1917 taxis, see Shipman, High Point, A Pictorial History, p. 73.

<sup>13</sup>Conversation with A. Larkin Kirkman, August, 1986; conversation with Fuller McGuinn, November, 1986. See also, McPherson, High Pointers of High Point, p. 10, and the Sanborn Insurance Map of 1924.

<sup>14</sup>High Point City Directory, 1921-1922, pp. 199, 335; High Point City Directory, 1924, pp. 222, 384; see also, High Point City Directory, 1925-1926, pp 240, 447.

<sup>15</sup>Smith, Architectural Resources, p. 53; Dennis T. Lawson, Executive Director of the High Point Museum, "The Biltmore," 20th Anniversary Issue, High Point Historical Society Newsletter (May/June 1986).

In 1916, J.J. Farriss, editor of the High Point Enterprise, said that Kirkman was developing some of the best business property in the city and noted that Kirkman had recently "made the largest single deal recorded in real estate circles here." J.J. Farriss, High Point, North Carolina, 1916.

Holt McPherson, also a past editor of the High Point Enterprise, noted that in the early 1920s Kirkman helped put together a 50 acre tract of land that would be the future site of High Point College (founded in 1924). High Pointers of High Point, p. 6. Mrs. Edward Simmons Wertz, daughter of W.D. Simmons, Kirkman's real estate partner until the early 1920s, has a cancelled check from the sale of land for the future Southern Furniture Exposition Building, dated 1910. Mrs. Wertz was a primary aid in the gathering of research for the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources historic inventory of High Point, Architectural Resources, and cousin of O. Arthur

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Kirkman. Although a contemporary of O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr., she knew O. Arthur Kirkman, Sr. personally, and has a broad, as well as detailed knowledge of local history. Conversation with Mrs. Wertz, July, 1986. See also, Register of Deeds, Guilford County Courthouse, Greensboro, N.C. between the years 1898 and 1924. For a picture of the Biltmore between 1912 and 1915, the years Kirkman owned it, see Shipman, High Point, A Pictorial History, p. 62.

<sup>16</sup>For a detailed discussion of the organization and ownership of the High Point, Thomasville & Denton Railroad, see The Building and Builders of a City, High Point, N.C., pp. 236-241. See also, Shipman, High Point, A Pictorial History, p. 198.

O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr. lived at 501 W. High Street until his death in September of 1985. Although he managed his father's railroad until it was sold in 1965, O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr. was foremost a politician, serving for most of his adult life in the North Carolina State Senate. His life is of public record. See Who's Who In America, A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women, Vol 36 (Chicago, Illinois: A.N. Marquis & Company, 1970), p. 1246.

<sup>17</sup>Conversation with Pauline Wertz who personally knew Lulu Kirkman, October, 1986.

<sup>18</sup>Conversation with Mae Kirkman, niece of O. Arthur Kirkman, Sr., April, 1987. See, McPherson, High Pointers of High Point, pp. 72, 4.

This interest in parks and gardens--and trains--has been evident for three generations in the Kirkman family. James Larkin Kirkman(1825-1901), Arthur, Sr.'s father, founded and ran a nursery right after the Civil War, first in Guilford County and then in High Point after 1877. Before the Civil War, he had joined the construction crew of the N.C. Railroad tracks between Greensboro and Salisbury in 1855. Article, High Point Enterprise, no date, in possession of Mae Kirkman. O. Arthur Kirkman, Jr.'s wife, Katharine Morgan Kirkman was also an exceptional gardener and brought the grounds to brilliance again the the decades of the 1950s and 60s. She also served on the city's Parks and Recreation Commission. High Point Enterprise, September 11, 1985.

<sup>19</sup>For pictures and further information on the depot and the Biltmore, see Smith, Architectural Resources, pp. 53 and 69.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p.59.

<sup>21</sup> For pictures of the Tom Kirkman House, the Fraser House, and the Brown House, see Architectural Resources, p. 59.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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\_\_\_\_\_. High Point, N.C., 1906. High Point: Presses of Enterprise Print Company, 1906.

See continuation sheet

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:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:  
Guilford County Joint Historic Properties Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property approximately 1 1/2

UTM References

A 17 589130 3979060  
 Zone Easting Northing

B \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies city lots 1 and 2, Tax Map Sheet 27, Guilford County Tax Maps, High Point Township, drawn at a scale of 1" = 50'

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lots containing the house and outbuildings. This is the property that has historically been associated with these resources.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Dorothy Gay Darr date July 30, 1987  
 organization Owner telephone 919-887-5130  
 street & number 501 W. High Street state NC zip code 27260  
 city or town High Point

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\_\_\_\_\_. High Point, NC., 1909. High Point, 1909.

\_\_\_\_\_. High Point, N.C., 1912. High Point, 1912.

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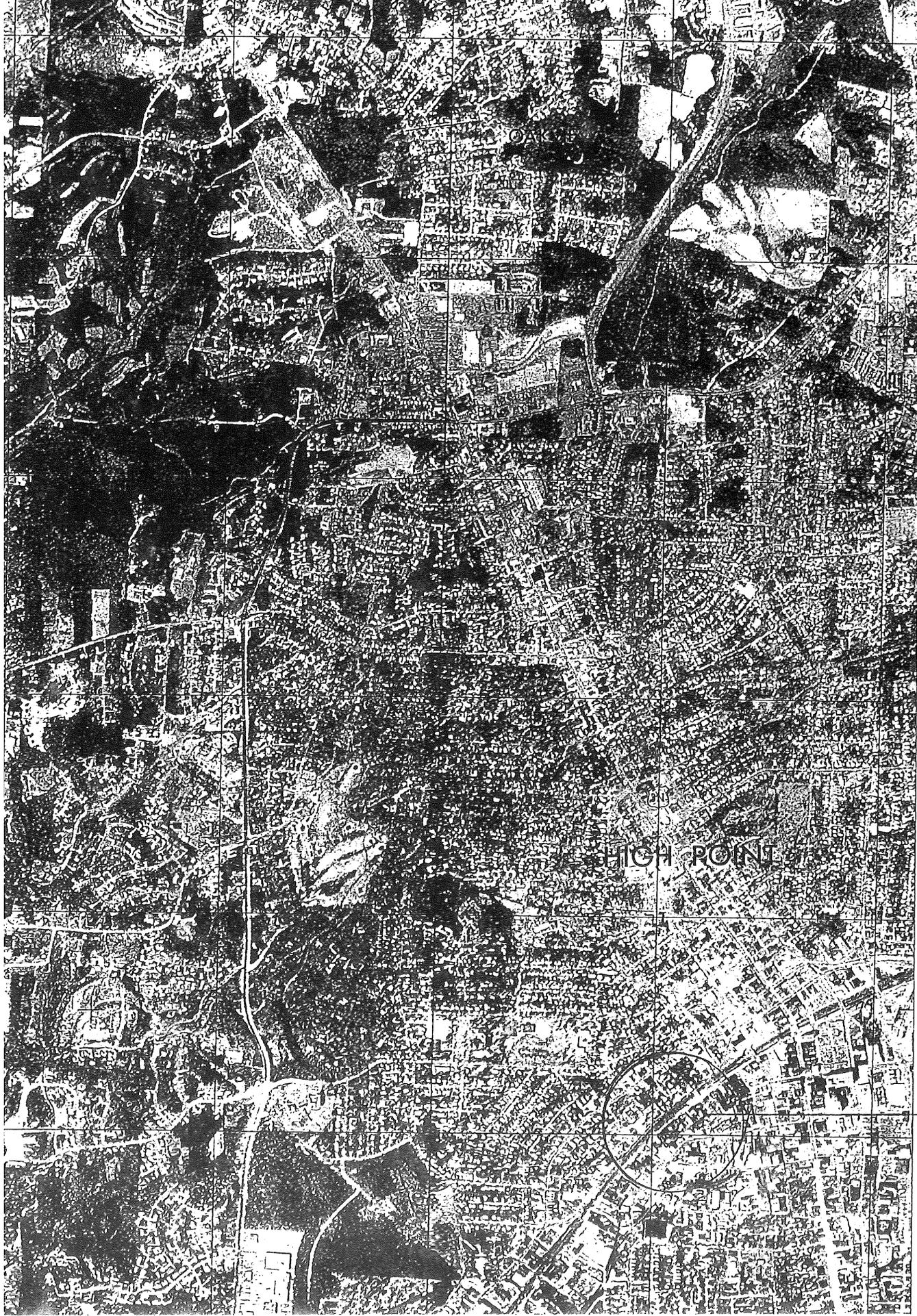
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HIGH POINT WEST QUADRANGLE  
NORTH CAROLINA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES ORTHOPHOTOQUAD

5056 III SW  
(GUILFORD)

586 2' 30" 587 588 1 700 000 FEET 80° 00'



36° 00'  
820 000  
FEET  
3984

68

3983

3982

3981

HIGH POINT

3980

57' 30"

3979

O. Arthur Kirkman House & Outbuildings  
501 W. High St.  
High Point, Guilford Co. 1:24000  
High Point West Quad 17/589130/3979060

