

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Adams, John H., House

other names/site number Davis Funeral Home

2. Location

street & number 1108 N. Main Street not for publication

city or town High Point vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Guilford code 081 zip code 27262

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Crow 11/29/00
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- 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): _____

John H. Adams House
Name of Property

Guilford County, NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

- 0 -

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress (to be hotel)

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY

REVIVALS: Italian Renaissance

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stucco

walls Stucco

roof Terra Cotta

other Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

John H. Adams House
Name of Property

Guilford County, NC
County and State

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.
- 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

ca. 1918 to 1931

Significant Dates

ca. 1918

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Adams, John Hampton

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

John H. Adams House
Name of Property

Guilford County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	7
---	---

 Zone

5	8	8	7	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

 Easting

3	9	8	0	8	1	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Northing

3

--	--

 Zone

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Easting

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Langdon E. Oppermann

organization Preservation Planning (free-lance) date March 2000 draft, July 2000 final

street & number 1500 Overbrook Avenue telephone 336/721-1949

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27104

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name J.H. Adams Historical Group, LLC

street & number P.O. Box 5645 telephone 336/

city or town High Point state NC zip code 27262

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetJohn H. Adams House
Guilford County, NCSection number 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

The John H. Adams House at 1108 North Main Street is among High Point's most prominent dwellings, located on what was once a prestigious residential street. Built in 1918, the house faces west and occupies a large square corner lot measuring 170 feet on each side. At the sidewalk, two square stuccoed posts with decorative brackets and cornice mark the entrance up steps to a concrete walk leading to the house, which is set back about fifty feet. To the right (south) of the house is a paved parking lot which extends behind the building. A fifteen-foot alley behind connects the two side streets, Farris and Parkway avenues.

The house is a combination of styles popular at the time of its construction. It was designed primarily in the Italian Renaissance Revival style but with elements of the Mission and Prairie School styles shown in its heavy square piers and its rough stucco surface. The house has the terra-cotta tile roof common to the Mission style, but with widely overhanging boxed eaves and cornice-line brackets. The design even shows the influence of the Beaux Arts style in the paired columns and the elaborated shields ornamenting the piers¹. Overall, the house has a strong Mediterranean flavor.

Measuring roughly eighty-five feet wide, the Adams House is a two-story stuccoed structure, five bays wide with a symmetrical facade. The low pitched, deck-hipped roof has broadly overhanging eaves with large decorative brackets beneath. An interior stuccoed chimney projects from the south side of the roof. The emphasis of the facade is on the central entrance bays, which project to create a three-part massing of the front facade that is repeated in the raised tile terraces in front of the house. The front door with transom has a heavily ornamented surround and is flanked by narrow fixed-sash windows admitting light into the small vestibule within. A large one-bay entrance porch is formed by square stuccoed piers at the corners and paired fluted Ionic columns at the entrance, all supporting a classical entablature with heavy brackets and parapeted roof. At each side of the house is a one-story wing. On the north side facing Farris Avenue the wing is open and columned, whereas the south wing is an enclosed sunroom. Both have the parapeted roof of the front porch. On the second-floor level of the center projection is a three-bay recessed upper porch or loggia with semi-circular arches. Beneath the cornice brackets in the central section are elaborate oval windows and moulding. Windows and their surrounds are set into the stuccoed walls; most are large one-over-one, although impressive three-part windows are found in the large bays on each side of the house and near the front door. Second-floor windows on the front outer bays have small bracketed balconies and are pedimented with ornamental shields in the pediments.

¹ McAlester, pp. 370-400.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetJohn H. Adams House
Guilford County, NCSection number 7 Page 2

In contrast to the formal, ornamented front elevation, the sides of the large house are strikingly plain. First-floor windows have little or no ornamentation, and second-floor windows have a flat bracketed lintel. The southern facade takes advantage of its exposure with a glass-enclosed sunroom on the first floor and large windows in the second floor bedrooms. The northern elevation is less developed, which is somewhat surprising because it is a streetfront facade facing onto Farris Avenue.

Attached to the house at the rear of the north elevation is a deck-hipped two-story wing, lower than the front part of the house. At ground level there are two garage entrances on Farris Avenue. The upper level contains the former servants' quarters. Throughout this wing the fenestration is simple and irregular.

Interior

The interior of the John Adams House follows an irregular plan. The front door opens into a shallow but elegant oval vestibule. Double doors at both east and west sides have decorative surrounds beneath a cove ceiling with arched niches in each end of the oval. The vestibule's floor is a mosaic of multi-colored marble forming a Greek key pattern. The baseboards are white marble. The vestibule opens into a grand hall with an imposing stairway commanding the eastern side of the room. From this hall, wide doorways lead to rooms to the north and south. To the north is the Adams' music room with overdoor panelling and a coved crown mold adorned with plaster shells and flowers. Behind and east of the music room is the original dining room with panelled walls, now painted. A "secret door" in the dining room once concealed a full-height vault with John Adams's name on it. The door remains, though the vault was removed in 1961. On the south side of the large front hall, panelled pocket doors lead to a spacious room with fireplace. Beyond is a sunroom with Tudor-style fireplace and three walls of multi-paned windows. Behind the front hall to the right of the stairs is a small library. Left of the stairs in an enclosed back hall is the servants' stair. In the hall, fluted posts with Ionic capitals frame the wide staircase. The stair rises to a landing with a half-turn flight at each side leading to the second floor hall. Upstairs are six bedrooms and several bathrooms arranged around the center hall. Bathrooms retain original fixtures. The central front bedroom opens to the loggia. A door to the back hall leads to the servants' stair and to a simple but nicely detailed stair to two finished rooms in the attic.

The spaces described above were for the family and their guests, while the servants' living area was separate. From the first floor kitchen, enclosed steps lead down to the two-bay garage and other enclosed steps lead up to the servants' quarters, a maze of four rooms with hallways and few windows. The kitchen also gives access to the basement, three large rooms beneath the northern part of the house. (See floorplans attached.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

Section number 7 Page 3

Alterations

Few changes have been made to the Adams House. In the 1960s a large rear addition and a front pipe-and-canvas entrance canopy were added when the house was used as a funeral home. These were removed in February, 2000, as part of a rehabilitation and reuse project. Remarkably, the front and side elevations and the interior of the house have been little changed throughout the building's interesting history. The house retains to a remarkable degree its floorplan, mantels, wood and plasterwork, hardwood floors and plaster walls on both levels. The only interior changes known to have been made to the house are the alteration of a doorway in the library, minor updating to the kitchen, interior finishes (such as wallpaper and paint on panelling), the creation of openings to the funeral home addition, and expansion of one automobile entrance to the garage. The present owners plan to rehabilitate the building for use as an inn.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

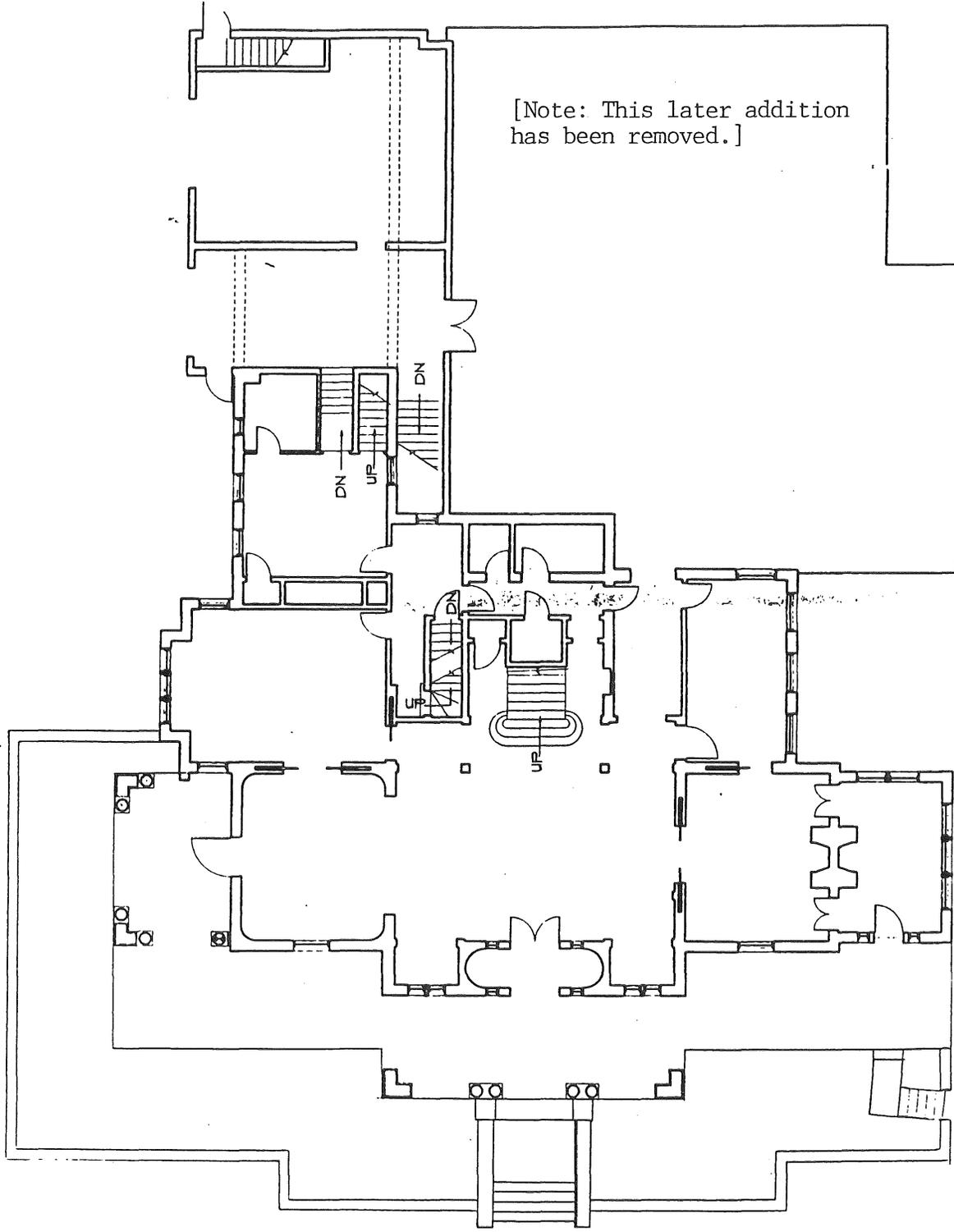
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

7

4

Section number _____ Page _____



MERCER ARCHITECTURE INC
1418 LONG STREET, HIGH POINT NORTH CAROLINA 27262
TELEPHONE: 336/865-1200 FAX: 336/865-1201

1st FLOOR PLAN

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

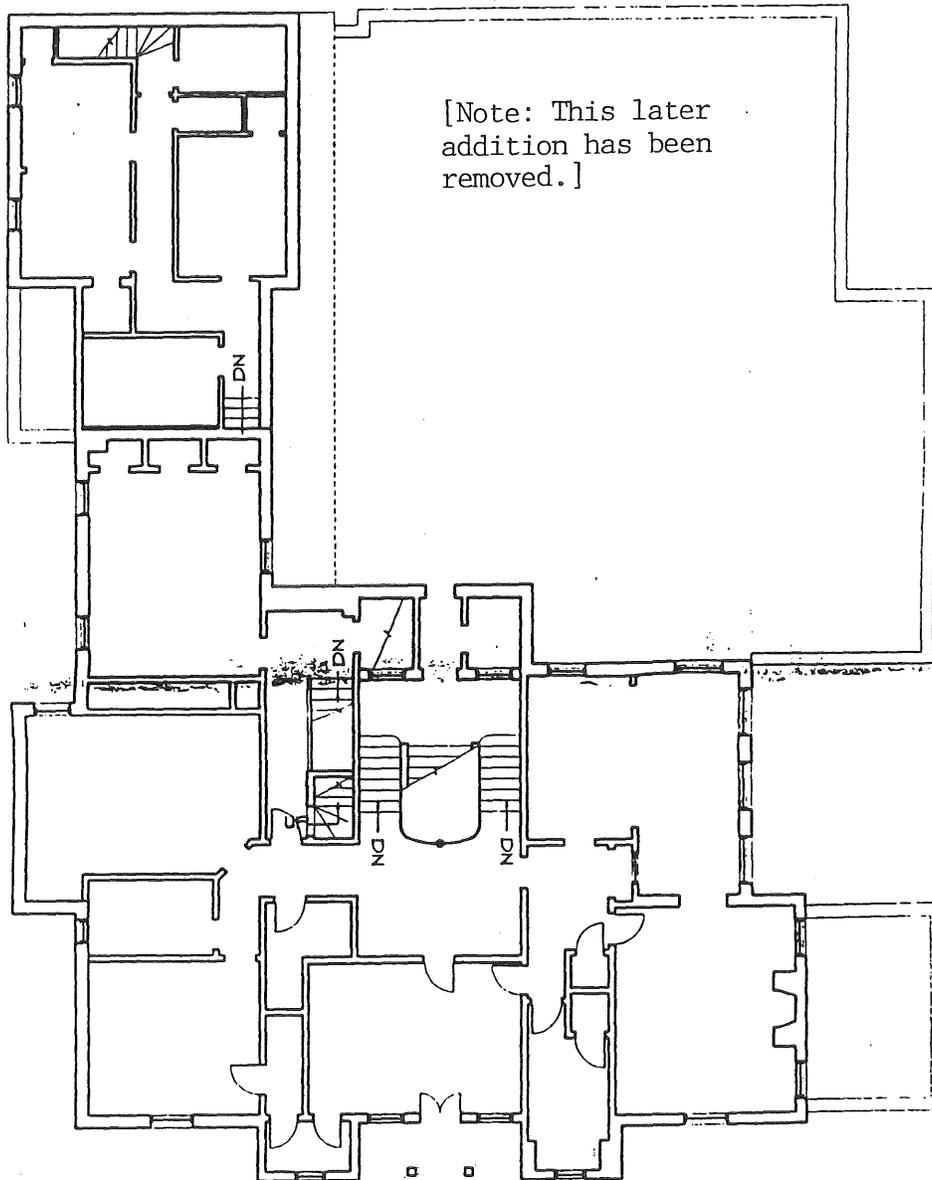
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

7

5

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

Section number _____ Page _____



MERCER ARCHITECTURE INC
141B LONG STREET - HIGH POINT NORTH CAROLINA 27262
TELEPHONE: 336/855-1300 FAX: 336/855-1201

2nd FLOOR PLAN

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

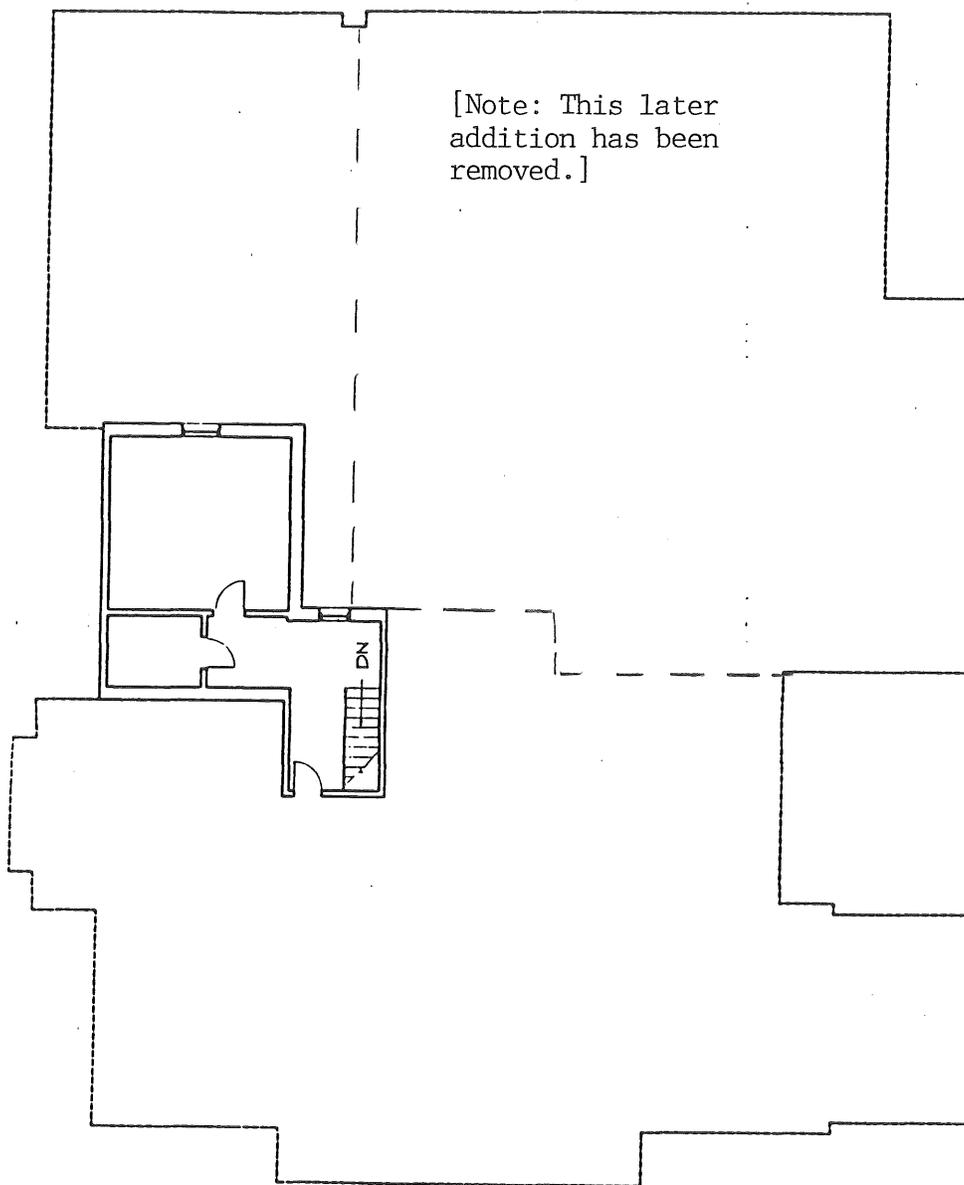
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

7

6

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

Section number _____ Page _____



ATTIC PLAN

MERCER ARCHITECTURE INC
1418 LONG STREET - HIGH POINT NORTH CAROLINA 27262
TELEPHONE: 336/855-1200 FAX: 336/855-1201

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

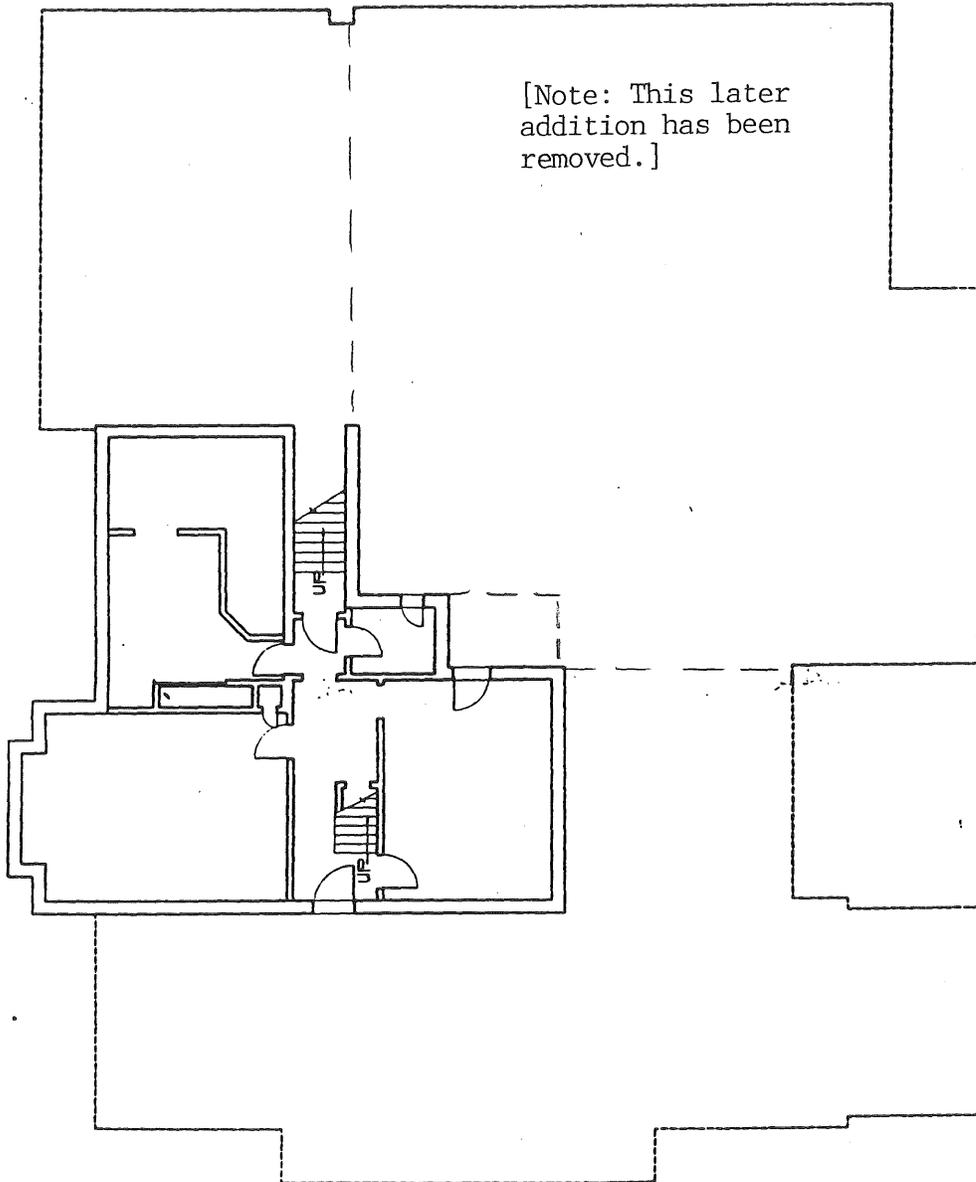
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

7

7

Section number _____ Page _____



BASEMENT PLAN

MERCER ARCHITECTURE INC
1418 LONG STREET, HIGH POINT NORTH CAROLINA 27262
TELEPHONE: 336/865-1200 FAX: 336/865-1201

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetJohn H. Adams House
Guilford County, NCSection number 8 Page 8

Summary

"John Hampton Adams created one of the most brilliant chapters in North Carolina's industrial history when he initiated, nurtured, and advanced the manufacture of hosiery in High Point." So begins Marjorie Young's *Textile Leaders of the South*, as she explains it was Adams's "...keen business judgement and ability that helped develop a small hosiery plant into a million dollar corporation."² John Adams made specific contributions to the development and success of the hosiery industry in High Point and to that city's preeminence as an industrial center of the South. He made most of these contributions during the period that he and his family built and lived in the house at 1108 North Main Street. The period of significance begins in 1918 when the house was built and ends in 1931 when John Adams and his family moved to a house in Sedgewood.

The property meets **Criterion B** for its association with Adams, who pioneered the manufacture of hosiery in High Point and helped it become a booming business and industrial town in the early twentieth century. Known as the town's top hosiery man, Adams built several major hosiery firms, then combined them to create the Adams-Millis Corporation in 1927, one of the nation's leading hosiery firms. Perhaps as significant was its listing on the New York Stock Exchange the following year; for decades it was among only a few North Carolina companies listed on the "big board."³ Many properties in High Point were associated with John Adams, and a few of these remain. His Main Street house, however, best represents him and the significant accomplishments he made for High Point. He lived there for the majority of his most productive years and the house retains high integrity from the period of Adams's residence.

Built in 1918, the nominated property also meets **Criterion C** for architectural significance at the local level. Designed primarily in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, the large stuccoed house shows influences of the Mission, Prairie, and Beaux Arts styles as well. It is a significant and uncommon example of the home of a wealthy Southern industrialist during the pre-Depression industrial boom of the early twentieth century, as well as a vestige of what was the most popular residential area among High Point's successful businessmen until the late 1920s.⁴ Both the exterior and interior of the Adams House are generally unaltered, in excellent condition, and retain high integrity. The sophistication of the design suggests that the house is almost certainly architect-designed, possibly by architect Lorenzo S. Winslow, though this has not been determined. The Adamses donated the house to the Young Women's Christian Association of High Point which used it as its headquarters for twenty-two years until it became a funeral home in the 1960s. The handsome dwelling is currently undergoing rehabilitation for use as an inn.

² Young, *Textile Leaders*, p. 3.

³ McPherson, *High Pointers*, p. 35.

⁴ Smith, Architectural Inventory.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC**Historic Context: High-style domestic architecture in High Point, 1910-1925:**

As in most cities, High Point's earliest residential areas clustered around its central commercial and industrial core. High Point was a booming industrial town in the early twentieth century, and its architecture reflected the new wealth generated primarily by the furniture and hosiery industries and by a variety of related companies providing support services. As the population grew, many of the wealthier residents moved north and south along Main Street, and the 1100 block of North Main Street became one of the most prestigious residential areas among High Point's successful businessmen until the Depression.⁵ The city was proud of its impressive houses built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most were in the popular styles of the day, particularly the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Neo-Classical Revival styles, and were photographed for a series of promotional books published by newspaper editor J.J. Farriss in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Today, however, little of this high-style residential architecture survives. A comparison of High Point's extant early houses and neighborhoods with those recorded in McKelden Smith's 1979 architectural survey gives startling evidence of the losses that have occurred in the intervening years. Most early neighborhoods have been significantly altered. High Point's recent expansion and new development have particularly affected high-style dwellings from the 1910s and early 1920s. Indeed, among the best remaining examples are the John Adams House (subject of this nomination), the J.C. Sicheloff House next door (NR 1991), and the few others that remain along North Main Street south of Farris Avenue. Even here the losses and intrusions are substantial. The more intact neighborhoods, including the Johnson Street area directly behind this part of North Main Street, are decidedly more middle class and upper-middle class in character without the high-style houses built by High Point's wealthy elite in the pre-Depression boom. Later neighborhoods such as 1910s and 1920s Roland Park (Brantley Circle) and Emerywood, started in 1922, have retained their popularity and secluded character and have thus enjoyed a higher degree of survival.⁶

In short, the 1918 John H. Adams House is representative of High Point's small surviving collection of high-style residential architecture from the 1910s and early 1920s. Its stuccoed exterior, with an eclectic display of Italian Renaissance Revival, Mission, Prairie School, and Beaux Arts style influences, further distinguishes the house. Although this eclectic type is not unusual for the period beyond the boundaries of High Point, High Point itself retains few examples. The Adams House is a prominent piece of the city's historic architectural fabric.

⁵ Smith, Architectural Inventory; Hanchett, "Johnson Street."

⁶ Phillips, Sicheloff House nomination; Smith, Architectural Inventory; Hanchett, "Johnson Street."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetJohn H. Adams House
Guilford County, NCSection number 8 Page 10**Johnson Place**

As a successful city in the first decade of the twentieth century, High Point constructed an electric streetcar system. Track was first laid in 1905, but it was not until 1910 that enough tracks were laid to place the first cars in operation. The city's pattern of growth was strongly influenced by the location of the new system's tracks, and subsequent residential development was concentrated on the north side of town. Developments of "streetcar suburbs" were spurred by the streetcar system almost immediately.⁷ The earliest of these was Johnson Place, developed in 1907 even before the first streetcar ran. The development got its name from the Johnson family farm, bought with other smaller parcels by the Home Investment and Improvement Company founded by R. Homer Wheeler and his partners, L.R. Johnson and L.E. Johnson, who conveniently owned the Johnson property. A plat of approximately eighty acres was subdivided into twelve rectangular blocks and included such present-day streets as North Main, Johnson, Hamilton, Blain, Parkway, Farris (then known as Greensboro Avenue), and Guilford. The most desirable parts of the Johnson Place subdivision were the parcels lying along North Main Street. Accordingly, those lots were the largest, generally measuring sixty feet wide and 170 feet deep. As expected, the Main Street lots were soon sold to some of the city's leading industrialists and businessmen who built a collection of impressive dwellings by the early 1920s. Deed restrictions required more expensive houses to be built on North Main Street than on the side streets.⁸

On the 1907 plat map of Johnson Place, Greensboro Avenue was made wider than the rest because the developers hoped an inter-city streetcar line to Greensboro would be built there. On the plat, the street curved to the south where it met North Main Street, making the corner lot smaller.⁹

In April 1910, Home Investment and Improvement Company sold the important Main Street lot at the corner of Greensboro Avenue (today's Farris Street) to D. H. Hall and his wife. The 1907 plat showing the wider, curving street was not followed and the side street was built without the curve. As a result, this lot was ten feet wider than even the generally large lots on North Main, measuring seventy feet by 170 feet. The Home Investment and Improvement Company later sold the adjoining lot to Miss Pattie Newlin. Neither Hall nor Newlin built on their lots, but five years later, in August 1915, Hall sold his large lot to John H. Adams for \$1,800, and Newlin sold to

⁷ Hanchett, "Johnson Street," pp. 4-6.

⁸ Phillips, Siceloff House nomination; Hanchett, "Johnson Street," pp. 6-8. Restrictions found in deed book 254/158.

⁹ Plat book 3/10. See exhibit, "Map of Johnson Place," on p. 22 of this nomination.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetJohn H. Adams House
Guilford County, NCSection number 8 Page 11

Adams the northern two-thirds of hers, an area forty feet by 170 feet, for \$1,200.¹⁰ Adams thereby created a combined lot size of 110 feet wide by 170 feet deep on which to build a house suitable to his stature in the community.

Before moving to North Main Street, John Adams and his wife Elizabeth lived at 400 English Street at the corner of Pine Street in a large, shingled, Queen Anne style house with wrap-around porch, multiple gables and a turret. The house was later demolished.¹¹ On the next block at number 315 English were his Piedmont Mills Company and High Point Hosiery Mills; at number 316 were the Consolidated Mills Company and the High Point Overall Company, and at 319 was the Highland Cotton Mills. Adams was at this time the president of the High Point Hosiery Mills, president of Highland Cotton Mills, president of Piedmont Mills, president of Consolidated Mills, and vice president of the Bank of Commerce.¹² Apparently, he and his wife decided to build a more stylish house in the new Johnson Place development.

By 1917, only one house had been built on the 1100 block of North Main. The Adams House was the second. The 1917 Sanborn Map shows Adams' house with the notation, "From Plans," indicating construction was or was soon to be underway. The house was to be two-story, stucco on tile, with an attached two-story auto garage at the back and open tile terraces wrapping around the front to meet the one-story wings at each side.¹³

The Adamses and their two daughters lived in the house from 1918 to 1931 when they moved to an even larger house, perhaps one of the largest estate houses in North Carolina, in nearby Sedgfield. The house, known as Adamsleigh, is a massive Tudor Revival mansion with many outbuildings, pool, tennis court, stable, pond and elegantly landscaped gardens. It was designed by Luther S. Lashmit of the Winston-Salem firm of Northrup and O'Brien and completed in 1931. John Adams and his family moved there in 1931, but John Adams lived there only slightly over three years before his unexpected death in January, 1935. Adamsleigh remains in ownership of John Adams' elderly son-in-law.

¹⁰ Hall deed 216/649; Newlin deed 236/183; Adams 1915 deeds 280/3 and 280/7.

¹¹ 1910 promotional booklet includes a photograph of the house.

¹² City directories.

¹³ The 1924 map shows no changes to the house. A one-story frame outbuilding of unidentified use had been built on the back lot line near the alley.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetJohn H. Adams House
Guilford County, NCSection number 8 Page 12

When Adams left the Main Street house in 1931, he did not sell it, but instead rented it to his friend and employee H. P. Hardin who ran Triangle Hosiery Company, one of the mills owned by John Adams that made men's and children's hosiery.¹⁴ In 1939, after satisfying the legal requirements of a trust, Adams' two daughters and their husbands donated the property to the YWCA of High Point upon the condition "...that said property shall be maintained and used by the [YWCA] as a home or club for young women for a period of at least ten (10) years...."¹⁵ The daughters donated the house rather than keeping it in the family because it had been John and Elizabeth Adams's wish that their daughter Elizabeth Watkins would move into the big Tudor house at Sedgefield. The other daughter, Nell Ayers, and her husband had their own large house in Sedgefield so neither sister had need for the Main Street house.¹⁶

The YWCA of High Point had been founded in 1921 and had outgrown its quarters in what was called "The Hut" on Greene Road downtown. The YWCA moved into the Adams House and remained for twenty-two years. The Y made no significant changes to the building and used the rooms as they found them. The Adams' former music room became a small club and dining room, and the Y became known for its full meal service prepared in the Adams' kitchen and pantry. The panelled dining room beyond was used regularly by the Agenda Club. Club meetings and other larger meetings were held in the grand hall with folding chairs providing seating, and on Friday nights the whole first floor was used for teenage dances. The sunroom to the south was the office of Dorothy Gueth, the YWCA's executive staff person for many years, with the main clerical office behind it next to the library. Upstairs were YWCA staff offices and space for affiliated organizations, including the Junior League office and meeting space, and meeting space for the Y-Teens Club.¹⁷

In 1948 the YWCA acquired the adjoining sixty-foot-wide property, creating the current 170-foot by 170-foot lot. By 1961 the Y had outgrown the Adams House and conveyed their large property to funeral home operator Harold C. Davis in exchange for property he owned on

¹⁴ Interview, Jean Hardin. After John Adams' death in 1935, young Jean spent Sunday and Monday nights at Sedgefield with Mrs. Adams because her maid was off those nights.

¹⁵ Deed book 907/130, 12/15/1939, and DB 907/133, 12/20/1939. In 1930 John and Elizabeth Adams had executed a Trust agreement for the benefit of their two daughters, Elizabeth and Nell Adams, giving the Trustee authority to sell real estate. The following year, the senior Adamses conveyed the Adams House to the Trust. In 1939, the two daughters, both married, "bought" the N. Main Street property from the Trust so they could donate it to the YWCA.

¹⁶ Interview, Jean Hardin.

¹⁷ Interview, Dorothy Gueth.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetJohn H. Adams House
Guilford County, NCSection number 8 Page 13

Gatewood Street, where they built a new headquarters. The Y moved John Adams' large vault from the secret closet with them to the new facility.¹⁸

Harold Davis took over the Adams House and made significant changes to the property to convert it to his Davis Funeral Home. He demolished a two-story red brick house that had been built in the YWCA's lot between the Adams House and Sicheloff House, and took down several large trees to create a parking lot for his funeral home.¹⁹ He also built a large two-story stuccoed cinder-block addition at the rear of the Adams House and installed a pipe-and-canvas canopy extending from the front porch over the front walkway. Changes to the interior of the house were minor, however, partly because the Davis family used the house as their residence; remarkably few changes were made with the exception of paint colors and wall finishes. After the Davis Funeral Home closed, the Adams House sat vacant for several years; it is currently under renovation.

Historical Background and Historic Context: John Hampton Adams (1875-1935):

High Point had its beginning in the 1850s when the main line of the North Carolina Railroad crossed the recently-completed Fayetteville and Western Plank Road. The railroad and the wagon road crossed at the highest point on the rail line and the resulting crossroads village thus acquired its name. By 1856, the new railroad connected Charlotte with Raleigh and the Plank Road linked Winston-Salem with the port at Wilmington. The crossroads trading community grew, the Plank Road became Main Street, and in 1888 the town's first furniture manufactory was organized. The town's industrial development was helped by completion of the High Point, Randleman, Asheboro and Southern Railroad in about 1889; it began in the center of town and ran south to a logging area, providing easy access to good quality timber for use in the factories. Two more furniture manufactories followed in 1893. A few years later in 1895, Southern Railway took control of High Point's railroads, making the small industrial city a part of the vital rail link through the industrial heart of the Southeast.

High Point's industrial growth was rapid. In the fifteen years from 1895 to 1910, more than three dozen new furniture plants were established in High Point. Equally important was the profusion of related industries that followed: new companies sprang up to produce sawmill machinery, steam engines, bed springs, and even mirrors to supply the furniture factories. But of equal consequence

¹⁸ The tract added in 1948 was created from parcels that neighbors John Adams and J.C. Sicheloff had bought decades earlier to increase the size of their lots. The 1961 transaction was complicated by the 1907 plat of Johnson Place which showed the once-anticipated streetcar line going through the Adams House.

¹⁹ Interview, Dorothy Gueth.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 14John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

to the future of the city was the launching of the hosiery industry through a somewhat coincidental start. In about 1900, fifty-one-year-old businessman James Henry Millis with a new young employee began a business to manufacture and sell pants and overalls, the High Point Overall Company. A small hosiery company in nearby Randleman asked if High Point's overalls salesman would also sell its socks. This seemingly minor arrangement proved to be significant when Millis's new employee, John Adams, observed that the Randleman socks outsold their own overalls. As a result, Adams persuaded Millis to get out of the overall business and in 1904 the two joined with eleven other investors to organize the High Point Hosiery Mill, generally recognized as the first successful hosiery mill venture in High Point. Adams was a prime mover in organizing this complex of plants and served as its secretary and treasurer.²⁰ There were only a half-dozen hosiery plants in all of North Carolina at the time.

John Adams

John Hampton Adams was born in 1875 on a plantation near Adamsville in Marlboro County, South Carolina. He was the only son of ten children of a prosperous planter. He first came to Guilford County as a boy to attend the Oak Ridge Institute, then returned to South Carolina to work as a bookkeeper. In 1900 when he was twenty-five, Adams settled in High Point and became associated with James Henry Millis (1849-1913), prominent industrialist and businessman, first apprenticing as Millis's bookkeeper and soon joining Millis in organizing and managing the overalls manufactory. An article in a 1930s newspaper stated that Adams, after persuading Millis to enter into the hosiery venture, "...drove his horse and buggy to Randleman and convinced C.C. Robbins, who already ran a hosiery mill there, to come to High Point to operate the new mill. [Robbins] agreed to take on the job and within a year the High Point Hosiery Mill was producing 200 pairs of black stockings daily."²¹ The business grew rapidly as did the factory.²² It was noted in a 1910 booklet on High Point that the managers "...don't let a year pass without making some improvement and increasing the plant."²³

In 1906, soon after forming the High Point Hosiery Mill, John Adams married Elizabeth Barnes of Bennettsville, South Carolina. Adams was described in a local publication as High Point's leading citizen, and "...one of those men who 'brings things to pass.' Of quiet temperament, he is

²⁰ Interview, Jim Millis; Williams, entry on Adams in Powell's *Dictionary*; *HP Enterprise* 1/25/1985, III, 14.

²¹ *High Point Enterprise*. Robbins was one of the investors.

²² Williams, entry on Adams in Powell's *Dictionary*.

²³ 1910 promotional booklet, p. 127.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 15John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

characterized by indomitable energy and perseverance with all and has business of the finest kind...."²⁴

The success of the High Point Hosiery Mill led the Adams and Millis interests to organize other manufacturing concerns, including the Piedmont Hosiery Mills in about 1912, at the time the largest mill in the city, as well as the Highland Cotton Mills and Cloverdale Dye Works, which produced yarns to supply the hosiery trade. Adams and Millis also developed the Kernersville Knitting Company, the Pioneer Hosiery Company, and the Consolidated Mills Company.²⁵ The development of hosiery manufacturing took off with several new mills established in High Point. Soon the hosiery industry became one of the state's most important and High Point became preeminent among industrial cities in the South.²⁶ James Henry Millis died in 1913, not ten years after forming the High Point Hosiery Mill with John Adams. Adams then became the president and manager of the industrial empire that specialized in lower-priced seamless hosiery and at one time was the world's leading producer.

In 1927 one of the most important developments in High Point's hosiery industry came when a number of hosiery plants and related enterprises were consolidated to form the Adams-Millis Corporation with Adams as its first president. The earlier Adams and Millis industries had specialized in seamless hosiery (not shaped), but the new Adams-Millis opened a "ladies full-fashioned" hosiery mill (shaped silks) and thereafter produced both lower-priced and higher priced hosiery. High Point became the leading producers of both. Adams-Millis became one of the largest hosiery manufacturing businesses in the nation.²⁷ In 1928 the new corporation went public with its stock carried on the New York Stock Exchange.²⁸ Adams-Millis, with John Adams as its president, continued to develop new hosiery companies and became the largest manufacturer of hosiery in the world. Adams remained president until his death in 1935, when James Henry Millis's son Edward Millis became president of Adams-Millis Corporation.

The creation of the High Point Hosiery Mill in 1904 had introduced a second major industry to High Point. The success of the furniture and hosiery industries caused High Point within two decades to become one of the fastest-growing communities in North Carolina. As example, in

²⁴ 1910 promotional booklet, p. 127.

²⁵ Williams, entry on Adams in Powell's *Dictionary*.

²⁶ Young, *Textile Leaders*, p.3.

²⁷ McPherson, *High Pointers*, pp. 34-35; Interview, Jim Millis.

²⁸ Williams and McPherson, entries on Adams and Millis in Powell's *Dictionary*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 16John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

1900 the population was just over 4,000, jumping 128 percent in the next ten years; by 1920 the population had passed 14,000, and by 1930 it had leaped beyond 36,000.²⁹ The furniture and hosiery mills had transformed the small trading community into a flourishing small city. In the 1970s High Point produced a greater amount of seamless hosiery than any other community in the United States.³⁰

Within the context of the textile industry in High Point in the early twentieth century, John Adams made specific contributions. He gave financial backing to numerous hosiery enterprises other than his own and is generally credited with being central to the exceptional success of High Point's hosiery industry and to the city's position as a leading industrial city of the Southeast.³¹ For example, he is credited with initiating the development of the city's first hosiery mill, with hiring one of the region's few experienced hosiery managers, with continually expanding and modernizing his plants, with developing additional hosiery mills as well as other related enterprises, and with creating with others the huge Adams-Millis Corporation. In 1989 when Adams-Millis was sold to Sara Lee Corporation, the company had grown to include eight additional companies and had 3,600 employees in ten cities.

As a leading citizen of High Point, John Adams held many positions of responsibility, both business and civic. He was dedicated to the hosiery industry and took an interest in programs for his employees, earning admiration for his personal concern.³² In addition to the creation of Adams-Millis Corporation, John Adams was president of the Highland Cotton Mill and Cloverdale Dye Works, Chairman of the Board of Triangle Hosiery Mills, a director of Wachovia Bank & Trust, a trustee of Oak Ridge Institute, a trustee and steward of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, a charter member of the Commercial Club in 1915, one of several purchasers of the local newspaper in 1920, a founder of the High Point Country Club in 1922, and a Mason.³³ He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery in High Point.

The John Adams House at 1108 North Main Street best represents Adams and his significant contributions to High Point. Adams lived at the Main Street property for the majority of his most productive years, and his stylish house retains high integrity from the period of Adams's

²⁹ Phillips nominations; Hanchett, "Johnson Street," pp. 2-3.

³⁰ McPherson, *High Pointers*.

³¹ Young, *Textile Leaders*, p. 3.

³² Young, *Textile Leaders*, p. 3.

³³ McPherson, p. 63; Sizemore, p. 214; and Young, p. 3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 17John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

residence. His earlier house on English Street, where he lived until 1918, has been demolished. The Sedgefield house, where he moved in 1931, still stands; however, Adams lived there only three years before his death early in 1935. Extant industrial buildings associated with Adams are the Piedmont Hosiery Mill and the Highland Cotton Mill and Village. The others have been demolished.³⁴ The Piedmont Mill became the headquarters of Adams-Millis in 1927, flanked now by another early but remodeled mill, perhaps the Consolidated, and by a ladies' hosiery mill built in 1937 after Adams's death. Unfortunately, the Piedmont Mill is soon to be demolished as part of a furniture company's conversion of the flanking building to furniture showrooms.³⁵ The Highland Cotton Mill remains standing; however, this mill remained independent from the Adams-Millis Corporation, continuing to supply cotton yarn to the Adams-Millis mills but never coming under the wing of the large corporation. Therefore, although John Adams was heavily involved with this mill from its start, it does not best represent his major contributions to the city of High Point because it was neither a hosiery mill nor a part of the celebrated corporation he created.³⁶

* * *

³⁴ According to Jim Millis and Bob Bundy, former executives of the A-M Corp., High Point Overall Co. closed in the 1940s and was demolished; High Point Hosiery Mills, Triangle Hosiery Co., and Cloverdale Dye Works were demolished; Kernersville Knitting was never in High Point. Long after Adams's death, A-M moved its headquarters from the complex on English Street into a new headquarters. After its 1989 purchase of the corporation, Sara-Lee built its own headquarters elsewhere, and the new Adams-Millis building is now home to Stickleby Furniture Company.

³⁵ Interviews, Jim Millis and Bob Bundy.

³⁶ Highland Cotton Mill's name was changed to Highland Yarn Mills around the 1970s; it was sold about 1990 and has been vacant ever since; it is now the temporary home of High Point's Shakespeare Festival.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 18

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

9. Major Bibliographical References

Hanchett, Thomas W. "Johnson Street Historic District, High Point, North Carolina: Its History and Architecture." Report prepared for City of High Point, City of High Point Historic District Commission, and High Point Department of Planning and Development, 1987.

High Point *Enterprise*, Special edition 1/25/1985, Section III.

McAlester, Virginia S.T. and A. Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.

McPherson, Holt, entry on James Henry Millis in William S. Powell's Dictionary of North Carolina Bibliography. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1979.

McPherson, Holt, High Pointers of High Point. High Point: High Point Chamber of Commerce, 1976.

Phillips, Laura A.W. National Register nominations, J.C. Sicehoff House and Hardee Apartments, High Point, 1990.

Sizemore, Frank J., ed. The Building and Builders of a City. High Point: High Point Chamber of Commerce, 1947.

Smith, H. McKelden. Architectural Resources; An Inventory of Historic Architecture, High Point, Jamestown, Gibsonville, Guilford County. Raleigh: N.C. Division of Archives & History, 1979.

Williams, Max R., entry on John Adams in William S. Powell's Dictionary of North Carolina Bibliography. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1979.

Young, Marjorie W., ed. Textile Leaders of the South. Columbia, SC: R.L. Bryan Company, 1963.

Primary sources (There are two courthouses in Guilford County, one in High Point and one in Greensboro. Earlier deeds are in the Greensboro courthouse; all other documents are located in High Point.

Guilford County Deed Books and Plat Books, Courthouses in High Point and Greensboro.

Guilford County Tax Map and Property Record, High Point.

High Point City Directories.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

Section number 9 Page 19

"High Point North Carolina 1900-1910, Historical and Descriptive Sketch of High Point with Illustrations Showing its Pretty Streets, Residences, Manufacturing Plants, Etc." 1910

Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Maps.

Interviews (conducted February and July 2000 by Langdon Oppermann)

Robert Bundy, former president, Adams-Millis Corporation.

Jean Hardin, who lived in the Adams House as a child until 1939 and knew Mrs. Adams.

Dorothy Gueth, who served as executive staff of YWCA during its years at the Adams House.

James H. Millis, executive of Adams-Millis Corporation and son of Ed Millis who was John Adams's partner.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

Section number 10 Page 20

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of lots 12 and A of Block 5, Guilford County Tax Map, sheet 223, and measures approximately 170 by 170'. The boundary is shown as the heavy black line on the accompanying tax map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lots that have been associated historically with the John H. Adams House and on which the house stands.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photos Page 21

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information applies to all nomination photographs:

- 1) John H. Adams House
- 2) High Point, North Carolina
- 3) Langdon E. Oppermann
- 4) February 2000 (except as noted below)
- 5) State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC
- 6-7) The following descriptions are listed by photo number:
 - #1 façade, photographer facing ESE (Note: The canopy has been removed.)
 - #2 south (side) and east (rear) elevations, photographer facing NE; March 2000
 - #3 north (side) elevation, photographer facing S; March 2000
 - #4 detail, front door surround
 - #5 interior, stair and grand hall, photographer facing NE
 - #6 interior, fireplace in south sunroom, photographer facing NE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

10

22

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

Section number _____ Page _____

MAP OF JOHNSON PLACE

HIGH POINT, N.C.

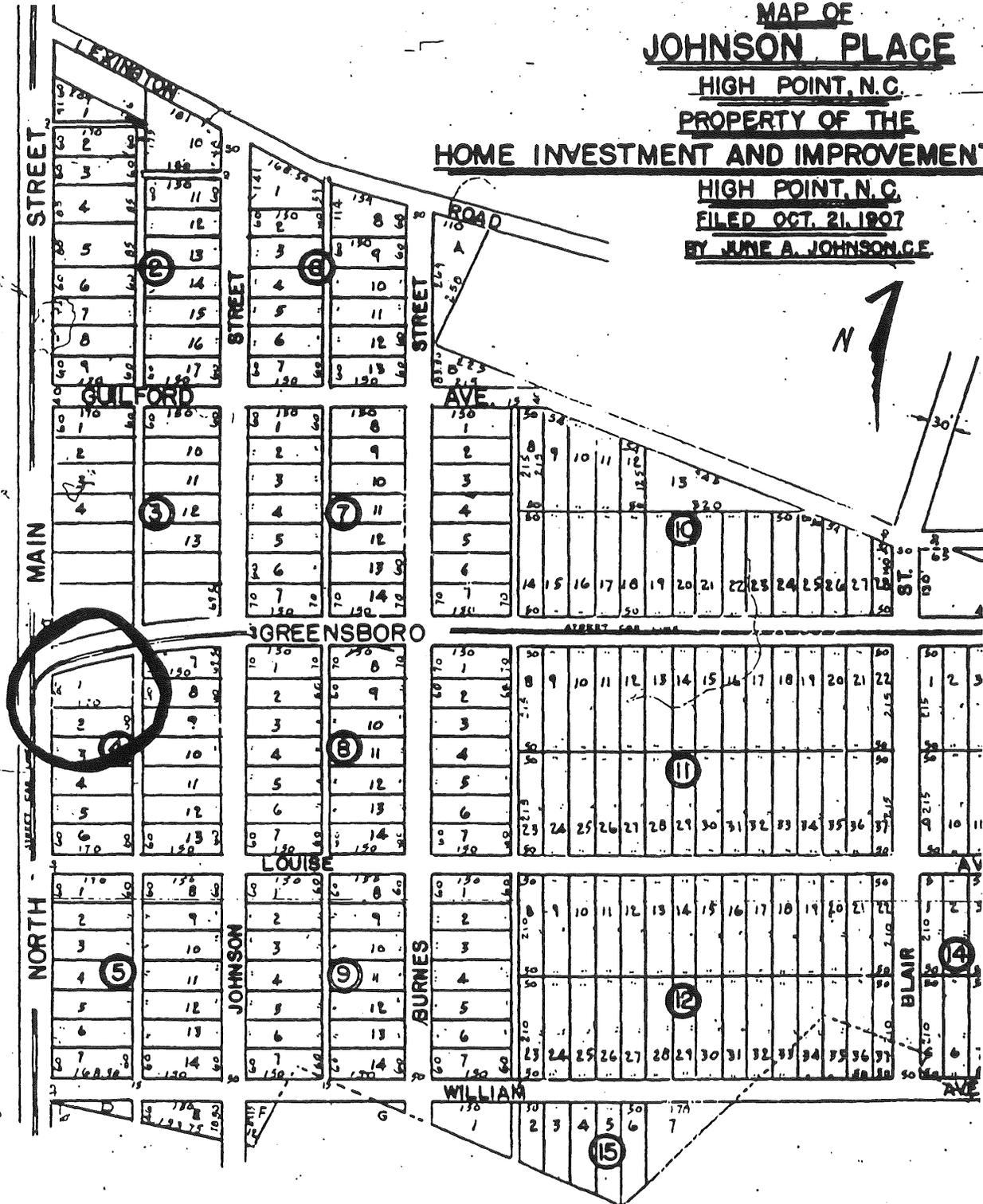
PROPERTY OF THE

HOME INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY

HIGH POINT, N.C.

FILED OCT. 21, 1907

BY JUNE A. JOHNSON, C.E.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

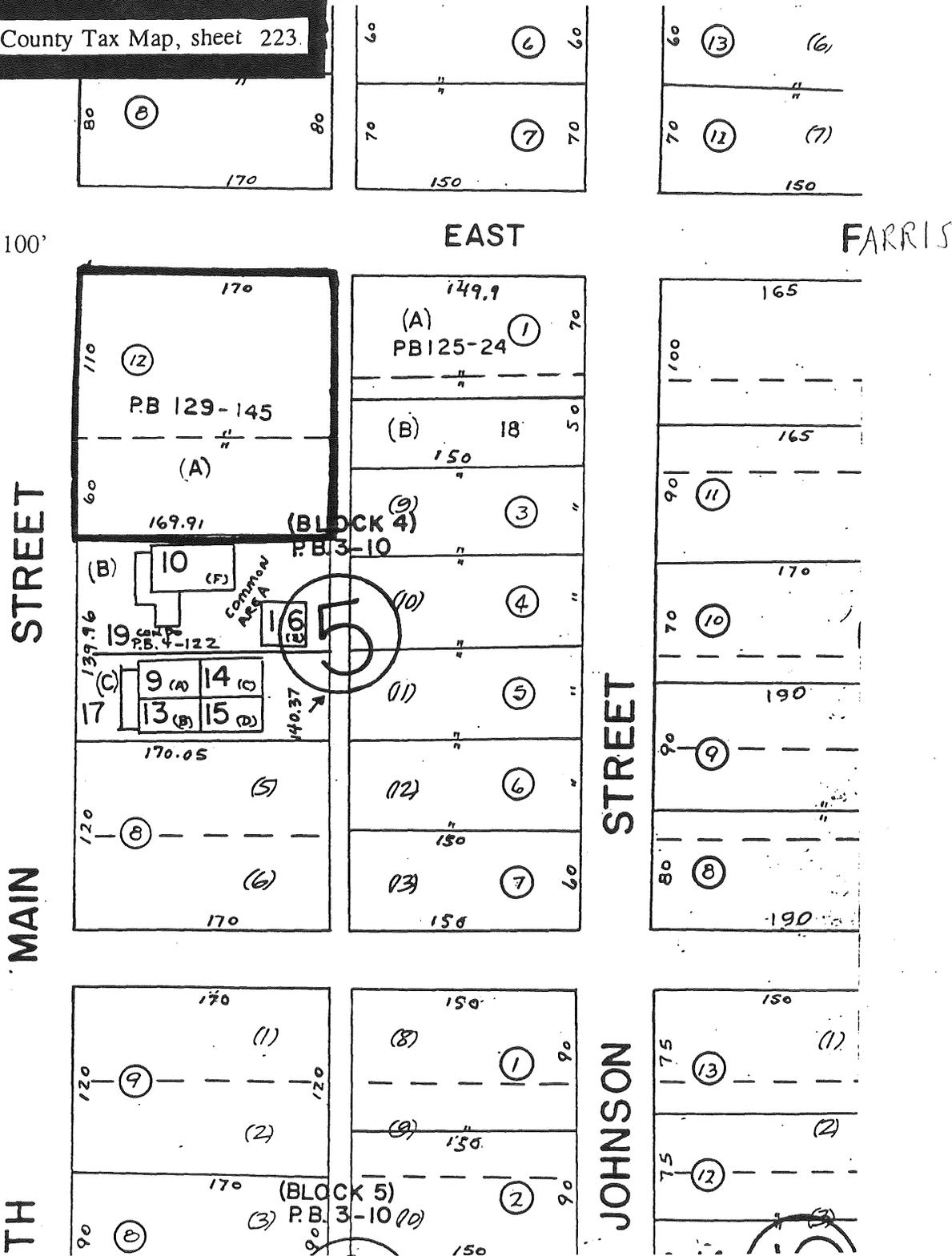
10 23

Section number _____ Page _____

Block 5, Guilford County Tax Map, sheet 223.

N
1

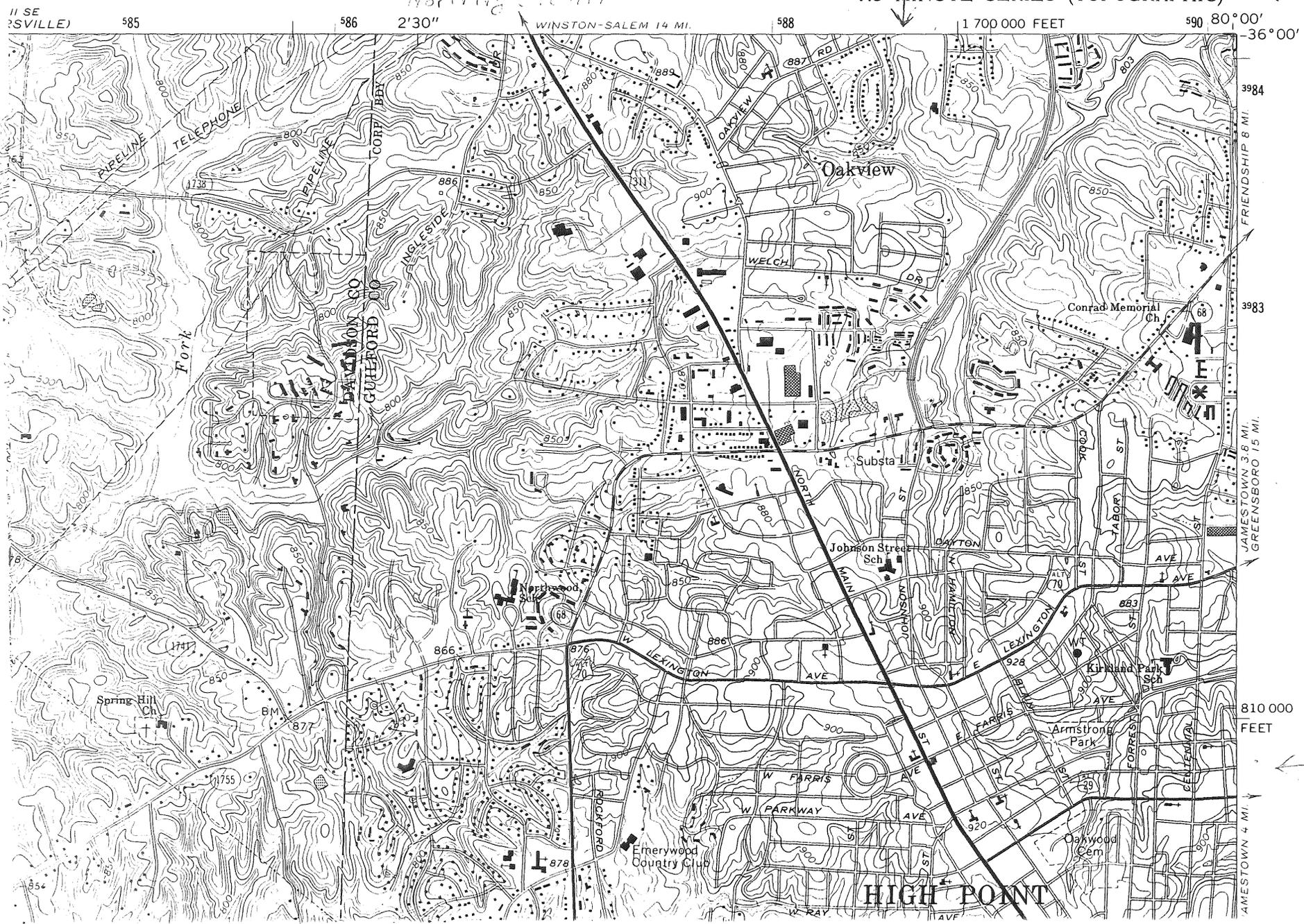
Scale 1" = 100'



John H. Adams
 1100 N. ...
 High Point, Guilford Co., N.C.
 Zone 17 Easting 50000
 Northing 310017

HIGH POINT WEST QUADRANGLE
 NORTH CAROLINA
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5056 III SW
 (GUILFORD)



11 SE
 (SVILLE)

80° 00'
 36° 00'

FRIENDSHIP 6 MI.
 JAMESTOWN 3.6 MI.
 GREENSBORO 15 MI.
 AMESTOWN 4 MI.

HIGH POINT

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

John H. Adams House
Guilford County, NC

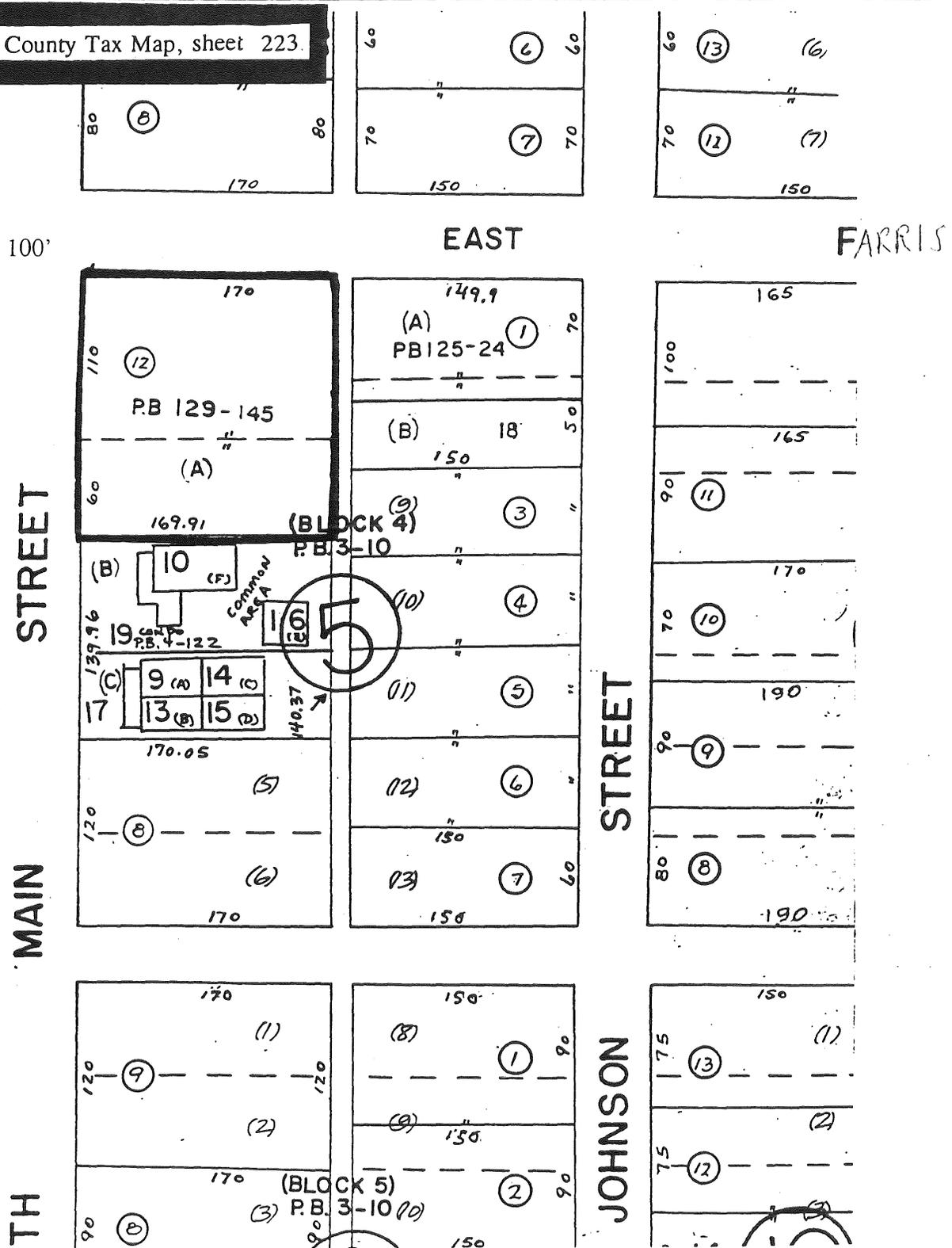
10 Page 23

Section number _____ Page _____

Block 5, Guilford County Tax Map, sheet 223

N
↑

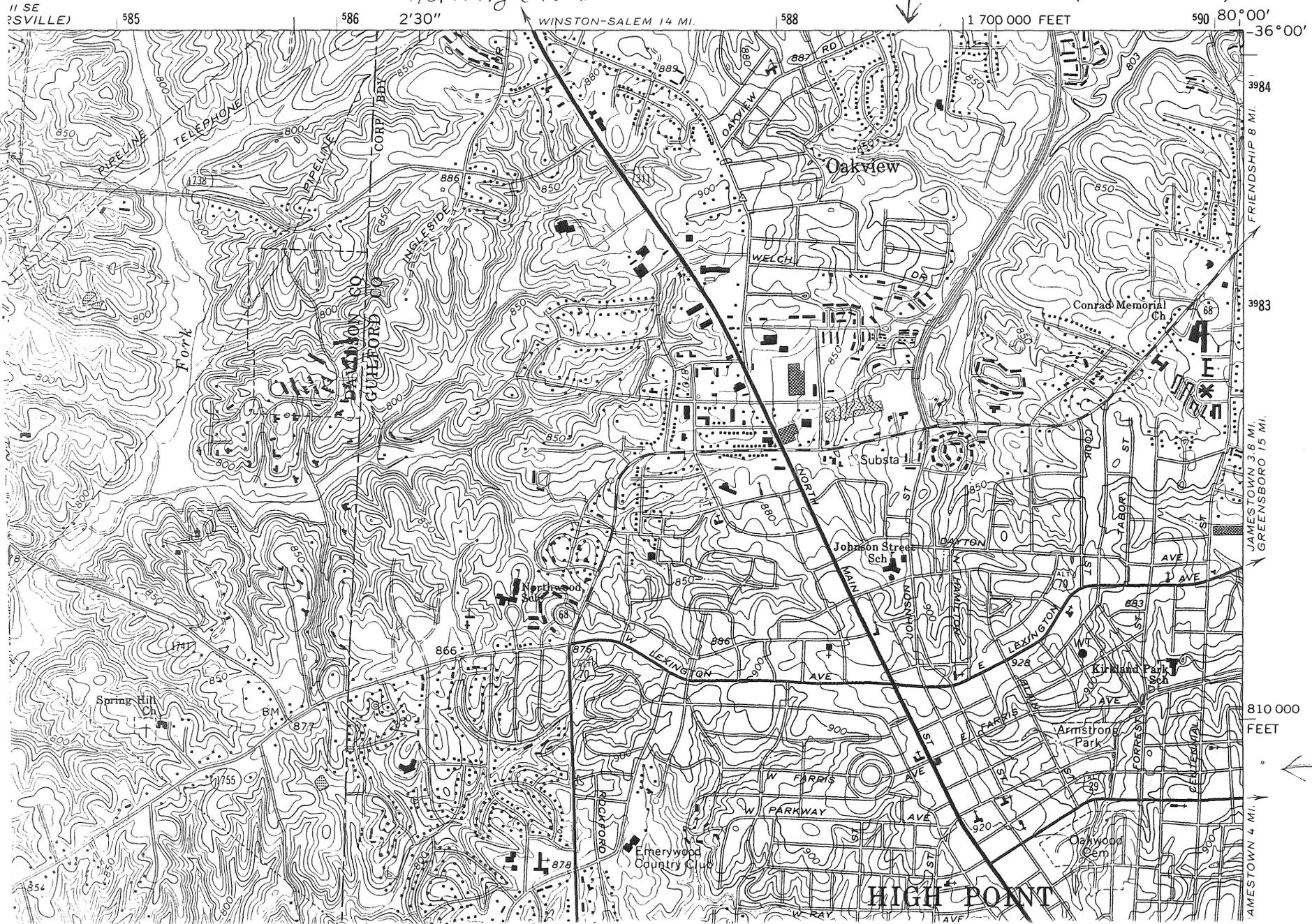
Scale 1" = 100'



John H. Adams House
 1108 W. Main Street
 High Point, Guilford Co., N.C.
 Zone 17 Easting 582750
 Northing 3980217

HIGH POINT WEST QUADRANGLE
 NORTH CAROLINA
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5056 111 SW
 (GUILFORD)



11 SE
 (SVILLE)

WINSTON-SALEM 14 MI.

1 700 000 FEET

80° 00'
 36° 00'

3984

3983

JAMESTOWN 3.8 MI.
 GREENSBORO 15 MI.

810 000
 FEET

JAMESTOWN 4 MI.

HIGH POINT

