

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 Lyndon Street Townhouses

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 195-201 Lyndon Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Greensboro

N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC

county Guilford

code 081

zip code 27403

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources of Greensboro, North Carolina, 1880-1941 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. Fair, Jr.  
Signature of certifying official

2-12-92  
Date

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/multiple dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Domestic/multiple dwelling

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival  
Queen Anne

foundation brick  
walls brick

roof metal  
other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Lyndon Street Townhouses  
Greensboro, Guilford Co., NC

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The Lyndon Street Townhouses are four attached, two-story rowhouses united by matching pressed-brick front facades and a full-length porch. Their eclectic Colonial Revival and Queen Anne style adornment is concentrated at the front facade, which peers straight up East Sycamore Street into downtown Greensboro. The side elevations, which face adjacent buildings, and the rear elevation, which looks towards the tracks of the Southern Railway across an overgrown back yard, are plainly articulated. Inside, the townhouses have a simple Colonial Revival style finish.

Each of the four townhouse units is three bays wide at the first floor, with two windows set next to an off-center entry topped by a transom. All of the first-floor openings are capped by marble lintels. Shading the first-floor facade is a full-length, Colonial Revival style porch, the shed roof of which is supported by seven Doric columns raised on tall brick piers. Adorning the porch roof are sawtooth bands, dentils, a box cornice with returns, and two shallow triangular pediments. Between the porch piers are plain wooden railings and balusters, beneath which are wooden lattices that close off the porch's underside. Climbing to each pair of units is a shared flight of stairs. The northern stairs have a wooden railing down the middle. Vertical-sheathed, half-height partitions separate the porch areas of the units.

At the front facade's second floor, the Queen Anne style is dominant. The three second-floor front windows of each rowhouse are set in a wooden polygonal bay capped by a flat-paneled frieze and a fringe of sawtooth ornament. Rising above each bay, through the cornice, is a metal-clad gabled parapet decorated with an Adamesque swag and sawtooth bands. The heavy front cornice has boxed eaves, modillion blocks, and dangling brick buttresses capped by large, projecting, metal-clad brackets and underpinned by brick corbelling.

The dark, pressed, stretcher bond brick of the front facade gives way, at the side and rear elevations, to common brick laid in five-over-one bond. Corbeled parapet walls rise at the side elevations and, as fire walls, between each unit. The eaves of the side and rear elevations are pierced by small cast-iron grills. Three of the side elevation windows are small casements with borders of colored glass set in segmental-arched openings. Other sash windows at the sides are capped by segmental arches or marble lintels. The four-over-four sash windows of the rear elevation are all set in segmental-arched

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Greensboro, Guilford Co., NC

openings. A deep recess at the center of the rear elevation creates a light well for the center units. The building is also notched in at the south side facade, providing a nascent light well for additional townhouses that might have been added to the south. The wooden stairs and second-story porches at the rear are later additions. The four doorways that open onto the upper porches are not original, but were set in the place of a rear window at each unit after the building was divided into eight apartments.

The building's four front entries lead into vestibules with two doorways, one for each of the four downstairs apartments and one for each of the four apartments above. The doorways leading to the upstairs apartments are topped by transoms and have molded surrounds like those of the interiors of the downstairs apartments. This suggests that there was always a doorway at the foot of the stairs in each vestibule, even though the building was constructed originally with four two-story townhouses. Inside, the plaster-walled townhouses have a straightforward plan and a simple Colonial Revival style finish. A principal room crosses the front with a room of similar dimensions to its rear. Each original first-story kitchen can be reached through a small corridor from the rear room or through the back door. Some original five-panel doors set in molded surrounds remain in place, as do some of the downstairs mantels, which angle into the two principal rooms from shared chimney stacks. Colonial Revival in style, the mantels have tall attenuated columns and colored tiles set around coal grates.

**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  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

ca. 1905  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

ca. 1905  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

See continuation sheet

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Greensboro, Guilford Co., NCSummary

The Lyndon Street Townhouses, constructed about 1905, are Greensboro's sole surviving early townhouses. Their energetic, eclectic design and finish well represent the influence of the Colonial Revival and Queen Anne styles, which were the three most popular styles in the city during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Utilizing a form never popular in North Carolina until recent times, they are among the few early townhouses in the state. At first home to upper-income white residents, the townhouses quickly devolved to working-class white housing, probably because of their close proximity to the railroad line and to modest dwellings occupied by blacks. Throughout the 1920s they were owned by a black entrepreneur but had white occupants, a hierarchal situation certainly extremely unusual in the city. The period of significance of the townhouses is ca. 1905, their date of construction. Their historic context is covered in the related multiple property documentation form by the second of Greensboro's historic contexts, Modern Suburbanization and Industrialization, 1900-1941, particularly the subsection on neighborhood development. Their architectural context is discussed at Property Type 3, multiple-family dwellings. Further background for their stylistic elements is provided at the description of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles at Property Type 1.

Historical Background

It is not certain who built the ca. 1905 townhouses, for in 1905 and 1906 the property upon which they stand had three different owners. In March, 1905, S.J. and Mattie N. McCauley sold property on the east side of Lyndon Street which included the townhouse lot to W.A. Lash for \$4,600 (Guilford County Deed Book 150, Page 541). Lash and his wife Annie sold the townhouse lot to Mrs. Helen E. Brown in December of the following year for \$7,200 (Guilford County Deed Book 192, Page 548.) The increase in value of a subdivided lot suggests that the Lashes had built the townhouses in the intervening months. The building was standing by the time the 1905-1906 city directory was compiled, the first in which it appears (Greensboro City Directories).

The townhouses were an unusual sight early in the century, for the form was extremely rare in Greensboro and throughout the state. Among the few other surviving townhouse blocks in the state are: Fogle Flats, a five-unit, brick row built around 1910 at 300-308 Cedar Alley in Winston-Salem; the ca. 1915 four-unit, brick, Colonial Revival

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style row at 840-846 West Fourth Street in Winston-Salem; the frame row at 524-532 South Bloodworth Street, built ca. 1914 in east Raleigh; and the 1916 Tudor Revival style frame row at 130 Woodburn Road, also in Raleigh (Taylor 1981:207, 225; Phillips and Taylor 1986; Harris 1978:174). In Greensboro a five-unit brick row, no longer extant, stood a block to the west of the Lyndon Street Townhouses at the southwest corner of East Sycamore and Forbis streets early in the century (Sanborn Map Company 1919).

The Lyndon Street Townhouses briefly flirted with being a prestigious address. At their first directory listing, the townhouse at 199 Lyndon was occupied by Jennings B. Mathis, president of the J.B. Mathis Shoe Co., and the unit at 201 was occupied by Junius I. Scales, an attorney with the prestigious firm of Scales, Taylor & Scales. Scales and Mathis were to be the townhouses' first and last upper-income occupants, however. The state of the other two units in the 1905-1906 directory provided a clearer vision of the future. An electrician, Claude M. Elam, occupied 197; 195 was vacant. By the compiling of the 1907-1908 directory, both Scales and Mathis had moved. Scales' townhouse was occupied by Albert M. Stanton, a steamfitter, and Mathis' was vacant. Elam had also moved, leaving his unit vacant. The residence at 195 finally had a tenant, Thomas A. Vincent, who was a division superintendent for The International Correspondence Schools. For the next twenty years the units changed occupants yearly, one or another often shared by two tenants or standing vacant. The tenants were generally skilled laborers such as bricklayers and paperhangers or white collar workers such as salesmen and clerks (Greensboro City Directories).

The failure of the townhouses to attract higher-class tenants was probably due to their location at the eastern edge of downtown, almost up against the tracks of the Southern Railway beyond which were the black neighborhoods of east Greensboro. Their almost immediate transformation to working- or lower middle-class housing was likely due to the construction of working-class black housing immediately to their rear along the railroad tracks in 1907 or 1908. These one-story shotgun duplexes, which no longer stand, were built by Daniel C. Suggs, a black teacher and entrepreneur, on an alley named after him (Sanborn Map Company, 1907 and 1913; Greensboro City Directories).

Suggs had started to acquire property on the east side of Lyndon Street, on all three sides of the townhouses lot, early in the decade (Guilford County Deed Book 134, Page 240; Deed Book 186, Page 681; and

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Deed Book 230, Page 350, for example). Although listed in city directories as a teacher, Suggs was also an entrepreneur. He owned and lived in a large, two-story, frame house at the southeast corner of Lyndon and East Market streets, two doors up from the townhouses. A block to the west, at 239-245 East Market Street, he owned the Suggs Building, a three-story brick commercial block which housed a variety of black businesses including a restaurant, a tailor shop, and a drugstore (Greensboro City Directories; Sanborn Map Company, 1919).

Suggs's impact on the townhouses was to extend beyond any effect his construction of the houses on Suggs Alley may have caused. In 1919 S.S. and Helen G. Brown sold them to him, which gave him possession of all of the property on the east side of Lyndon between Washington and Market streets and the tracks (Guilford County Deed Book 330, Page 465). Surprisingly, until 1928 the tenants in the townhouses continued to be white. During these years, Suggs was almost certainly one of the only black landlords in Greensboro who had white tenants. Ironically, in 1929, a year after the building's tenants shifted from white to black, Suggs and his wife, Mary, defaulted on their mortgage and the townhouses came into the hands of a white owner, Mrs. Lottie Hughes Wallace (Guilford County Deed Book 634, Page 83; Greensboro City Directories). Since 1929 the townhouses have generally continued to be rented to low- and lower-income African-Americans.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.35

UTM References

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B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Lyndon Street Townhouses are those of Greensboro Tax Map 15, Block 7, Parcel 4.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated property encompass all of the land historically associated with the Lyndon Street Townhouses.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marvin A. Brown

organization Greensboro Preservation Society date 9-15-91

street & number 447 West Washington Street telephone 919-272-5003

city or town Greensboro state North Carolina zip code 27402

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Harris, Linda L. 1978. An Architectural and Historical Inventory of Raleigh, North Carolina. Raleigh: City of Raleigh Planning Department and North Carolina Division of Archives and History.

Phillips, Laura A.W. and Gwynne S. Taylor. 1986. "West End Historic District [Winston-Salem] - National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form." Located at North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch, Raleigh.

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