

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Harden Thomas Martin House

and or common

2. Location

street & number 204 N. Mendenhall Street not for publication

city, town Greensboro vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Guilford code 081

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Charles Forrester and Maggie Kessee-Forrester

street & number 204 N. Mendenhall Street

city, town Greensboro vicinity of state North Carolina

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Guilford County Courthouse, Register of Deeds,

street & number 201 S. Eugene St. (P.O. Box 3427)

city, town Greensboro state NC

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title An Inventory of Historic Architecture, Greensboro, NC
has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records NC Division of Archives and History, 109 E Jones St.

city, town Raleigh state NC 27611

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Set amidst mature oaks on a residential street a short distance west of downtown Greensboro, the Harden Thomas Martin House is a frame, two-and-a-half-story, Colonial Revival style residence with a hip roof. A handsome retaining wall of Mt. Airy granite, whose materials match those of the foundation, lines Mendenhall Street in front of the residence. An early photograph of the house does not show this wall, which was probably added during the 1920s when the grade of Mendenhall Street was lowered to meet the newly created Madison (now Friendly) Avenue to the south.

The house consists of a double-pile main block with shallow, gable-roofed projections on the side and rear elevations; two one-story, hip-roofed rear wings containing the kitchen and a bathroom; and a porte-cochere along the north (left side) elevation.

The main block is three bays wide and two bays deep. The centrally placed entrance consists of a three-panel door with an elliptical beveled glass window, sidelights, and a three-light transom; it is framed by fluted pilasters. The two bays flanking the entrance have sets of three 1/1, double-hung sash windows with unusual bowed panes. A similar group of windows - set in a projecting, semicircular bay - lights the dining room on the house's south (right side) elevation. The house's other bays have large 1/1, double-hung sash windows. Three chimneys, which retain their original tall, corbeled stacks, serve the main block's eight fireplaces. Three dormers pierce the roof on the facade elevation. Two small dormers with pediments and 1/1, double-hung sash windows flank a large gable-roofed one adorned by a door with latticed sidelights and a fan-shaped transom.

The dominant exterior feature of the Martin residence is the broad front porch with Tuscan columns and a turned balustrade which carries across the full facade and the forward bays of each side elevation. The centerpiece of the porch - and of the entire house - is the bowed, two-story portico supported by four fluted Ionic columns with large terra cotta capitals. The portico shelters a bowed, second story balcony with a turned balustrade. A low balustrade formerly crowned the flat-roofed portico, but it has been removed.

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The Martin House follows a double-pile, center hall plan on both floors. The hall, which is a full 12 feet wide on both floors, is perhaps the most striking feature of the interior. A handsome portal composed of Tuscan pilasters and colonnettes rising from paneled pedestals frames the front entrance. Behind the portal, a passage connects the hall to the porte-cochere on the north (left) side of the house. At the rear of the hall, a broad stair rises in a single run to a broad landing, and then rises forward in a split run to the second floor. The stair is composed of thick molded handrails terminating in volutes (on the ground floor) and thin, closely spaced balusters. A substantial stair with a square newel and turned balusters rises from the second floor hall to the attic.

Virtually all of the house's original finish remains intact. Pocket doors with leaves of six horizontal panels span the passages between the first floor hall and the two front rooms, which are referred to in Armfield's plans as the library and the parlor. A third pocket door is set in the passage between the parlor and the dining room to the rear. All eight fireplaces remain in place, and they retain their mantels, tile insets, and ornamental coal grates. Each of the fireplaces has a different combination of design elements. Among the most notable is the one in the dining room, which features a mirrored overmantel with a shelf upheld by cherub heads, and Nile green tile surrounding an ornamental coal grate with dancing cherubs.

Aside from the ornamental flourishes of the portal, stairs, and fireplaces, the interior finish of the Martin House is simple. The walls are plaster with high baseboards and picture moldings; doors and windows are set in standard surrounds with simple crown moldings; and doors display the typical arrangements of five or six horizontal panels. Several turned corner spools are set into the corners of the first floor walls.

At the rear of the house, two frame outbuildings dating from

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the early twentieth century stand side-by-side. The building farthest from the house has a shed roof and board-and-batten siding and was probably used for storage. The one closer to the house has a hip roof and may have housed an automobile and a shop.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1909 **Builder/Architect** G. Will Armfield

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Completed in early 1909, the Harden Thomas Martin House is one of a handful of early Colonial Revival style residences surviving in the city of Greensboro. Designed by Greensboro architect G. Will Armfield, the house features a bowed, two-story, Ionic portico and an exceptionally generous center hall with a grand split-run stair. The house's interior trim - including a handsome first-floor portal and eight mantels - remains completely intact. The house is the only known residential design of Armfield, (1848-1927), a Guilford County native who pursued a successful career as a dry goods merchant before taking up architecture in his late 50's. The house was built for Harden Thomas Martin (1857-1936) a native of Rockingham County who operated stores in the communities of Ayersville and Reidsville before moving to Greensboro in 1909, where he entered semi-retirement and engaged in small-scale real estate development.

A. Associated with the growth and development of the City of Greensboro during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and with the development of the architectural profession in the state during the same period.

B. Associated with G. Will Armfield (1848-1927), a successful merchant who took the unusual step of pursuing an architectural career after passing the age of fifty, and with Harden Thomas Martin (1857-1936), a prominent Rockingham County merchant who moved to Greensboro in 1909.

C. The Harden Thomas Martin House embodies distinctive elements of the early Colonial Revival style, and is one of the very few fine examples of the style surviving in Greensboro.

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Harden Thomas Martin was born January 15, 1857, on a farm near Ayersville in northwest Rockingham County (1). His father, John Wesley Martin (1810-1883), operated a general store and a tobacco factory in addition to his substantial farm (2). The younger Martin began working in his father's store at an early age, became the Ayersville postmaster, and eventually took over the operation of the store from his father (3).

On November 18, 1883, Martin married Mary Lavinia Irvin (1861-1963) also of Rockingham County (4). The Martins raised three children - Agnes Viola (d. 1967), Eva May (d. 1984), and Clarence Ashy (1897-). A fourth child, Irvin, died in infancy (5).

In 1885 Martin sold the Ayersville store to his sister and moved to Reidsville (6), where he established a store on Scales Street in partnership with Samuel N. White (7). According to an 1887 city directory, the store, known as White and Martin, sold boots and shoes, clothing, hats and caps, dry goods, crockery, glassware, feed, flour, and groceries (8).

At the turn of the century, Martin's interest began turning to the larger city of Greensboro in neighboring Guilford County. From 1899 to 1904 he made a number of investments in downtown Greensboro real estate, including properties on Sycamore and Elm streets (9). In April, 1906, he bought the Mendenhall Street lot on which his house stands (10). Late in 1908, he sold his part of the Reidsville store and arranged for the construction of Mendenhall Street residence. The family moved to Greensboro in the spring of 1909 (11).

Although the move to Greensboro signalled Martin's semi-retirement from full-time business activities, he remained active in small-scale commercial and real estate endeavors. He operated a small store on North Elm Street for a number of years (12), and built three apartment buildings on lots directly adjoining his residence. All three are still standing, and the largest of them, erected in 1925, retains its original name, "The Martinique" (13).

Martin died in Greensboro on September 28, 1936 (14). After his death, his widow Mary and their two unmarried daughters, Agnes and Eva, continued to occupy the residence. In 1955 Mary, then 94, deeded the house to Agnes and Eva. Upon Agnes' death in 1967, the house passed to Eva by will (15). Eva lived in the house until 1973, when she sold it to Milton S. and Martha D. Kern (16). In 1977, Milton Kern sold the house to Charles R. Forrester (17). Forrester, a Greensboro businessman, has been the Chairman of the Greensboro Historic District Commission since

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its inception in 1980. His wife, Margaret Kessee-Forrester, has represented Guilford County in the North Carolina House for five consecutive terms.

The man who designed the Martin House, G. Will (George Williamson) Armfield, did not turn to architecture until late in his career. He was born near Jamestown, Guilford County, on January 23, 1848 (18), to Joseph S. and Nellie Iddings Armfield (19). He married Esther Wakefield in 1875, and the couple raised seven children (20).

As a young man Armfield moved to Greensboro, where he became engaged in the dry goods trade, first as a salesman for the firm of Houston and Causey and then as a partner in the firm of Brown and Armfield. By 1887, he was the sole proprietor of a dry goods store on South Elm Street (21). Armfield operated this establishment until 1893, when he sold the business to the partnership of Thacker and Brockman (22).

The sale began a period of transition in Armfield's life. The Greensboro City Directory for 1896-1897 listed Armfield as a partner in the firm of Armfield, Ridge, and Vickery, but did not list a place of business for the company. Two years later, Armfield's listing in the directory did not indicate an occupation. The following year, he was listed as a bookkeeper for the Benefield Furniture Company, but the 1903-1904 directory again did not indicate an occupation. By 1905, however, Armfield had apparently begun his second career, for the directory that year listed him as an architect (23).

Relatively little is known of Armfield's second career. Although he was in his late fifties when he began his architectural practice, Greensboro city directories listed him as an architect as late as 1924, when he was 76 (24). It is possible, however, that Armfield did not pursue his new calling on a full-time basis. Unlike the city's other architects, whose numbers grew from 3 in 1905 to 10 in 1924, Armfield worked out of his home rather than a downtown office. Moreover, the city directory's business listings included him only occasionally, while such prominent Greensboro architects as Harry Barton and Charles Hartmann were included every year (25).

Among the handful of Armfield's known works, the most substantial is Alumni Hall on the campus of the Oak Ridge Institute (now the Oak Ridge Military Academy) in northwest Guilford County (26). Erected in 1914, it is a two-story, brick building whose fifteen bay facade is accentuated by a tetrastyle Ionic portico. Alumni hall has served as the school's main building since its construction and is now a pivotal building in the Oak Ridge Military Academy Historic District, which is listed in the

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National Register of Historic Places. Armfield's obituary identified two downtown commercial structures as his work - the Bevill and Ellis-Stone buildings on Elm Street (27). Nothing was learned of the Bevill Building, but the Ellis-Stone Building, erected about 1906, is still standing. According to the National Register nomination for the Downtown Greensboro Historic District, Armfield's design for the building was simplified Italianate. During the 1920s or 1930s, however, the building's owners gave it an Art Deco facelift that covered the original facade (28). Armfield's plans for the Harden Thomas Martin House have survived to document it as his work, but it is his only known residential design (29).

Armfield was active in Guilford County's civic affairs throughout both of his careers. During the 1880s and 1890s, he was an original board member of the Guilford Battleground Company, which purchased and developed what is now the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, and he played a significant role in bringing the North Carolina Industrial and Normal College (now a campus of the University of North Carolina) to Greensboro. During the twentieth century, he served several terms on the Guilford County Board of Commissioners. In this capacity he spearheaded early roadbuilding efforts in Greensboro and its environs (30).

Armfield suffered from declining health for several years during the 1920s, and finally succumbed on March 29, 1927, at the age of 79 (31). His obituary in the Greensboro Daily News called him "one of the city's best-known men" (32).

The Harden Thomas Martin House is significant because of its association with G. Will Armfield and Harden Thomas Martin, but it is primarily significant for its architecture. The Martin House is one of a dwindling number of fine early Colonial Revival style houses still standing in the city of Greensboro. Although Greensboro has a rich legacy of Colonial Revival style residences from the 1920s in the still-fashionable Irving Park neighborhood, most of the city's early examples of the style have fallen in the path of public and private redevelopment projects. The 1976 inventory of Greensboro's architectural resources identified only 5 early Colonial Revival residences of comparable quality to the

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Martin House - 336 Asheboro Street, the Rucker House in the Aycock School neighborhood, and the Grimsley-Frye, Stanley, and Justice houses in the Fisher Park neighborhood (33). Since the inventory's completion, the Justice House has been destroyed. The Martin House is a remarkably well-preserved example of an architectural style once common but now sadly rare in the city.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Guilford County, Vital Statistics: Death Book 50, p. 603 (September 28, 1936).
2. Encyclopedia of American Biography, S.V. "Harden Thomas Martin" (New York: American Historical Society, 1938), p. 129.
3. Encyclopedia, "Martin", p. 129.
4. Encyclopedia, "Martin", p. 130.
5. Interview with Clarence Ashby and Irene Martin, July 20, 1985.
6. Encyclopedia, "Martin", p. 130.
7. Greensboro City Directory for 1887 ... A Directory of Reidsville Will be Found Following (Newburgh, N.Y.: Thompson, Breed, and Crofutt, 1887).
8. Greensboro and Reidsville Directory for 1887.
9. In 1899, Martin purchased property on South Elm Street for \$7,600 from W.E. and Lula Halley (Guilford Record of Deeds, Book 120, page 508). In 1901, he purchased property on the north side of Sycamore Street for \$2,044 from M.E. Yates (130/567), and an additional Sycamore Street property from Carrie Yates (156/620). And in 1904, he purchased a North Elm Street property for \$3,500 from Sallie L. Gilmer (164/539).
10. Guilford Record of Deeds, Book 188, page 95 (April 13, 1906).
11. Interview with Clarence Ashby Martin.
12. Encyclopedia, "Martin", p. 131.
13. Interview with Clarence Ashby Martin.
14. Guilford Death Book 50, p. 603.

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15. Guilford Record of Deeds, Book 1575, page 679 (1955), and Guilford Record of Wills, Book 234, page K44 (1968).
16. Guilford Record of Deeds, Book 2580, page 640.
17. Guilford Record of Deeds, Book 2854, page 837.
18. Guilford Death Book 18, page 175 (March 29, 1927).
19. Death Book 18, page 175.
20. Sallie W. Stockard, The History of Guilford County, North Carolina (Knoxville, Tenn.: Gaut-Ogden Printers and Bookbinders, 1902), pp. 158-159.
21. Greensboro and Reidsville City Directory for 1887.
22. Stockard, p. 159.
23. A Directory of the City of Greensboro, North Carolina, 1896 and 1897 (Charlotte: Observer Printing and Publishing House, 1896); Maloney's 1899-1900 Greensboro, North Carolina City Directory (Atlanta: Maloney Directory Company, 1899); Maloney's 1901 City Directory (Atlanta: Maloney, 1901); Greensboro, North Carolina City Directory, 1903-04 (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1903); and Greensboro North Carolina City Directory, 1905-06 (Richmond: Hill, 1905).
24. Hill Directory Company's Greensboro, North Carolina City Directory, 1924 (Richmond: Hill Directory Company).
25. City Directories for 1905-1924 published by the Hill Directory Company of Richmond.

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26. H. McKelden Smith, Architectural Resources: An Inventory of Historic Architecture for High Point, Jamestown, Gibsonville, and Guilford County (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1979), p. 158.

27. "G. Will Armfield Dead After Illness/ Was Well Known Here", Greensboro Daily News, March 30, 1927, p. 7.

28. Ray Manieri, "National Register Nomination for the Downtown Greensboro Historic District", inventory list, page 5.

29. G. Will Armfield, "Plans for the H.T. Martin House", in the possession of Charles Forrester.

30. "G. Will Armfield Dead", Greensboro Daily News.

31. Guilford Death Book 18, page 175.

32. "G. Will Armfield Dead" Greensboro Daily News.

33. Ruth Little-Stokes, An Inventory of Historic Architecture, Greensboro, North Carolina (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1976).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.54 acres

Quadrangle name Greensboro NC

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 17 6068100 33916610
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached map.

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	code	county	code		

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter and Leslie J. Kaplan

organization Preservation Consultants

date September 20, 1985

street & number 825 W. Bessemer Ave.

telephone (919) 273-2393

city or town Greensboro

state NC

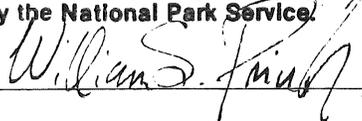
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10-10-85

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Encyclopedia of American Biography. S.V. "Harden Thomas Martin". New York: American Historical Society, 1938.

"G. Will Armfield Dead After Illness/Was Well Known Here." Greensboro Daily News, March 30, 1927, p. 7.

Greensboro, North Carolina City Directories. Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1903-1924.

Guilford County. Record of Deeds. Various Volumes.

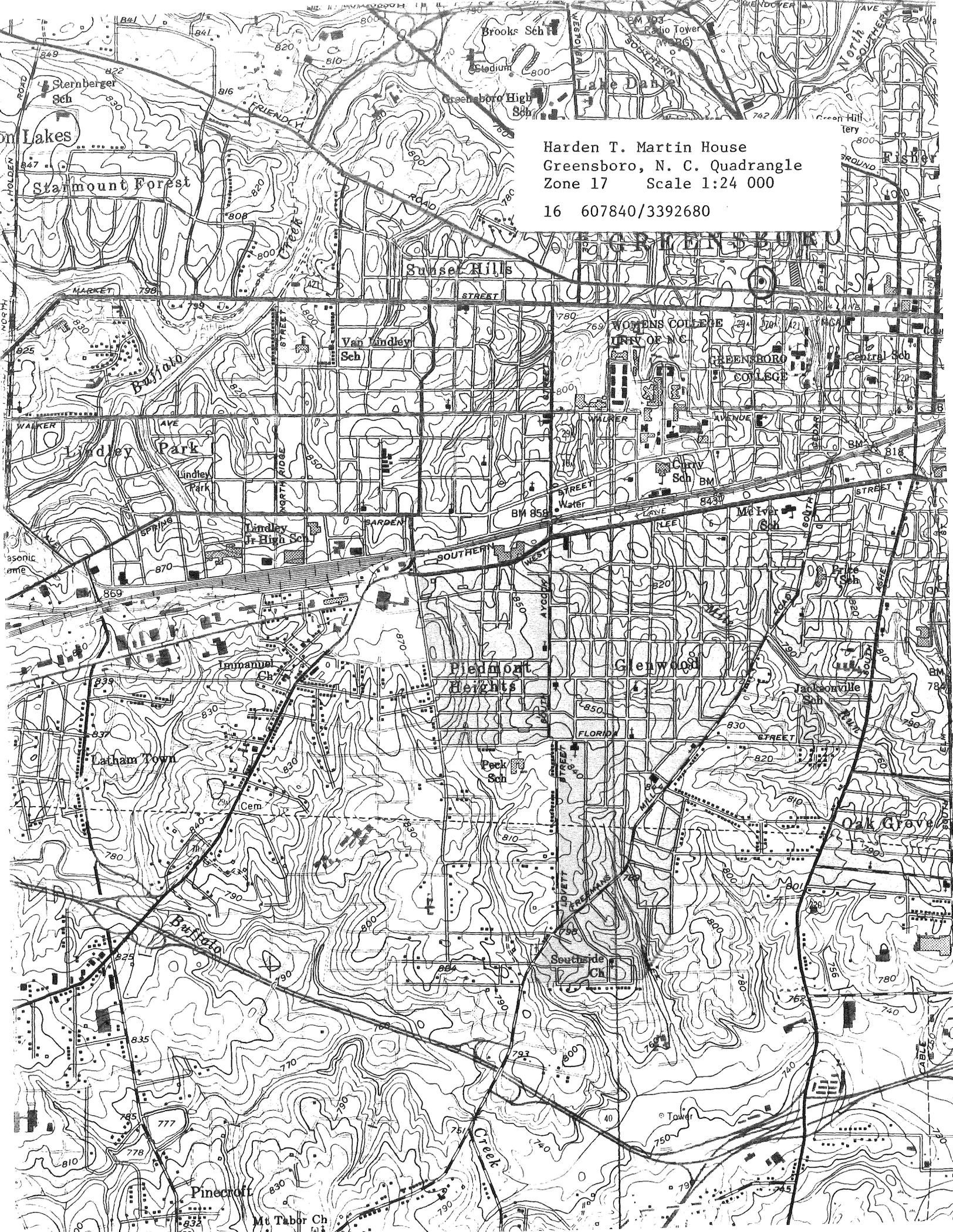
Guilford County. Vital Statistics: Death Book. Volumes 18 and 50.

Little-Stokes, Ruth. An Inventory of Historic Architecture, Greensboro, North Carolina. Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1976.

Martin, Clarence Ashby. Interview, July 20, 1985.

Smith, H. McKelden. Architectural Resources: An Inventory of Historic Architecture for High Point, Jamestown, Gibsonville, and Guilford County. Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1979.

Stockard, Sallie W. The History of Guilford County, North Carolina. Knoxville, Tennessee: Gaut-Ogden Printers and Bookbinders, 1902.



Harden T. Martin House
Greensboro, N. C. Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000
16 607840/3392680

