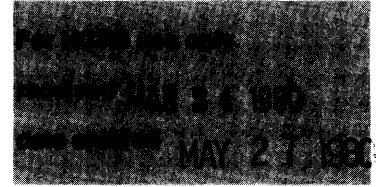


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



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

## 1. Name

historic Robert M. Carrier House

and/or common Matthews House

## 2. Location

street & number 642 South Willett Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Memphis \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district Eighth

state Tennessee code 047 county Shelby code 157

## 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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. William M. Matthews, Jr.

street & number 642 South Willett Street

city, town Memphis \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Tennessee 38104

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Registrar's Office

street & number 160 North Main Street

city, town Memphis \_\_\_\_\_ state Tennessee 38103

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Memphis Landmarks Commission has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date January, 1978 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records Memphis Landmarks Commission

city, town Memphis \_\_\_\_\_ state Tennessee 38103

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved      date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Carrier House is a unique example in Memphis of the Jacobethan Revival Style. Since much of the fabric of the house was brought from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century estates and abbeys in England and since architect Bryant Fleming painstakingly designed the house to accommodate these Elizabethan, Jacobean and Tudor elements, the house has the authentic appearance of an English country estate. This is reinforced by the landscaping plan of Mr. Fleming, who advocated an easy transition between interior and exterior. A series of bricked terraces and the extensive planting of boxwood and trailing ivy as well as a wide variety of trees (maple, red oak, chinaberry, persimmon, cedar and lilac) recreates an English country garden. The landscaping has been somewhat altered but still retains its original effect.

Jacobethan Revival buildings--all of which use brick for walls and stone for window frames, door frames, parapets and ornament--have asymmetrical plans and fenestration patterns. Windows are rectangular with leaded rectangular or diamond panes. In the Carrier House casement windows are employed extensively as are Tudor arches in both exterior and interior doorways. The roof is a combination of steeply pitched parapet and stepped gables. Chimneys are tall with corbelling in some. As was mentioned previously, much of the house's fabric was salvaged from seventeenth- and eighteenth century English buildings. This includes the brick used in the walls, driveway and terraces; leaded casement windows; and wrought iron gates and grilles. For the interior carved oak paneling and cabinets, an eighteenth-century pine cabinet, painted glass panels or rondels (some of which date from the seventeenth century), and marble flooring were imported.

The Carrier House, which faces west, is located in the center of a two-acre lot on the east side of South Willett Street. The lot is surrounded by a high brick wall with the main entrance gate located on the northern end of the lot on Willett. The stone lions on the brick posts flanking the gate were chosen by the original owner, R. M. Carrier. Another gate is located in the south wall. The main gate was brought from England while the south gate was made by a local craftsman, Leo Barthol. The main gate opens onto a drive of shoe leather brick, which follows the northern boundary of the lot until the drive curves at the northeast corner of the house to form the rear entrance court. The main entrance of the house is in the rear or east facade. A carriage house is located east of the north end of the house. A pool has been added south of the carriage house. This was originally the site of flower and vegetable gardens. Southeast of the pool is a small tea house. Both outbuildings are the same style as the house and are brick. An English wrought iron gate at the head of a flight of steps leads from the entrance court to the tea house. Southeast of the house is a brick terrace; a gargoyle court (the gargoyles have been removed) is located on the south end of the house. A brick terrace with a stone balustrade spans the front or west elevation.

The Carrier House is a two-story structure with an asymmetrical plan. The main section of the house, rectangular in form, extends north and south under a steep gable tile roof. The northern half of the roof is slightly lower than the southern half; a stepped gable on the west facade and a projection of the wall plane on the east facade mark this division. On the west elevation two rectangular gable wings--one at the south end of the building and another just north of the center of the house--project

## 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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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** 1926 **Builder/Architect** Bryant Fleming

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

With its attention to detail, excellent craftsmanship and integration of landscape and architecture planning, the Carrier House is one of the finest examples in the country and the only one in Memphis of the Jacobethan Revival. Elaborately carved oak panels, leaded casement windows, stone lintels and sills, marble flooring, bricks for the house, drive and terraces, and painted glass panels were brought from residences and abbeys in Europe, lending the house a sense of authenticity that vividly evokes an English country estate. Bryant Fleming, who designed the house and grounds, was a professor of landscape architecture at Cornell University as well as an architect who was primarily in the residential and country estate field from the turn of the century into the late 1930s. His work is characterized by an easy transition between interior and exterior. Among his principal accomplishments in landscape-architecture were the estates of Everitt Macy at Scarborough, New York, and Andrew Carnegie in Lenox, Massachusetts. In Tennessee Mr. Fleming designed the estate of Leslie Cheek, Cheekwood, in Nashville and, in Memphis, the residence of C. Leroy King, now the main building of Harding Academy.

The house was constructed in 1926 for Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Carrier. It was later occupied by the Kent and then the Wren families. The present owners, Mr. and Mrs. William S. Matthews, Jr., purchased the house in 1974.

The boundaries of this nomination were drawn to the dimensions of the lot on which the house sits.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Interview with Mrs. William M. Matthews, Jr., 21 September 1979.  
 Landscape Architecture, January 1947, pp. 57-9.  
 Letter from Bryant Fleming to R.M. Carrier, 2 March 1926.

# 10. Geographical Data

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Quadrangle name Northwest Memphis, Tenn. - Ark. Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	5	7	7	2	4	8	0	3	8	9	1	2	2	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

## Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is a single tract of land bounded on the west by South Willett Street and on the north by Harbert Avenue. *See continuation sheet rec'd 5/15/80 KOC*

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kay Benton

organization Memphis Landmarks Commission date October 1979

street & number 22 North Front Street telephone 901/528-2834

city or town Memphis state Tennessee 38103

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hays

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 3/6/80

For HCERS use only

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

John W. Ray  
 Keeper of the National Register

date 5/27/80

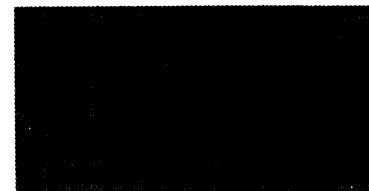
Attest: Kristin J. O'Connell

date 5/15/80

Chief of Registration

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from the west elevation forming a U. The south gable wing extends across the main section to the east elevation, terminating in a parapet gable end flush with the east elevation. Within the U on the west facade is a one-story enclosed living porch with a flat parapet roof.

The east or rear elevation contains the main entrance in the south section and a secondary entrance in the north section. Both doorways are located behind gabled brick entryways with Tudor-arched openings accented by stone around the arch and at the front corners. Left of the main entrance are two bays contained under the south gable end with the windows in the first story offset from those in the second story. All windows are casement with leaded panes either rectangular or diamond shaped and have stone lintels and sills. The first story features a hipped roof, wooden-pegged bay window in the end bay. In the second story above this window are a grouping of three pairs of windows with transoms on the left and a pair of windows on the right. To the right of the main entrance is a two-story mullioned window with a sloping base that follows the incline of the interior staircase. The wall plane north of this window projects slightly. This northern section of the east elevation contains a pair of casement windows and, immediately north of this, the second entrance. Two pairs of windows are set into the second story above and to the right of the first story window. To the north of the entrance is a second-story oriel window containing four casements with transoms having trefoil arches. The first story has a large rectangular mullioned window and a large louvered metal opening. A one-story buttress is located at the southeast corner of the building while a two-story buttress is located to the right of the two-story window. Three interior chimneys are located at the northern end of the east elevation.

The south facade features a one-story bay with a parapet roof decorated with brick corbelling and stone coping. The bay has two tiers, each with six windows; windows in the top tier have Tudor-arched openings. Two windows are found above and to the left of the bay window. All windows are leaded casement with stone surrounds.

The west facade is complex with projecting and recessed wall planes. Two rectangular gable wings project from the west facade. Between the two wings is a flat-roofed one-story enclosed living porch; a stone lion sits at the southwest corner of the roof, with a recessed porch area at the south end. A pair of French doors, located at the south end of the one story section, opens onto a recessed entry court. The south gable has a two-story bay window constructed of stone with a flat parapet roof. The first story has six windows with transoms; the second story also has six windows. These windows, and the remaining windows in the facade, are rectangular with leaded diamond panes encased in stone panels (in the one-story section) or stone surrounds. Six windows are grouped in the one-story section while the north gable has two individual windows with transoms in the first story and three abreast in the second. The north elevation of this gable wing has a dormer window as well as two windows in the first story. The south slope of the north gable wing has a tall chimney containing three flues. Behind the gable, on the main section, is a stepped gable with a chimney and weather vane on the ridge. The remainder of the wall plane, recessed behind the north gable wing, has casement windows in the second story and decorative brick panels in the first.

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The north facade has a single window on the second story and a brick wall attached to the east end of a one-story addition.

The authenticity of design and adherence to Jacobethan and Elizabethan forms evident on the exterior is painstakingly reproduced in the house's interior. Elaborately carved oak paneling brought from European houses and abbeys is found in all the first-floor rooms. Windows in several rooms also contain oval and rectangular glass panels painted with ships or town scenes, two of which are indicated as being Aire and Aberdeen.

The rear main entrance leads to a foyer. From the foyer ornate wrought iron doors at the base of three steps lead to the main hall stretching the length of the house. This area features black and white marble flooring and wood beams in a plaster ceiling. The beams are original, but the plaster ceiling was a later addition. A doorway at the south end of the hall leads to the living room, which features a reflected plaster ceiling with brocade decorations (coats-of-arms, fleur-de-lys and geometric patterns) taken from Jacobson and Company. The fireplace in the north wall has carved stone around the opening and an ornately carved mantel and over mantel divided into three panels. The panels contain shields with coats-of-arms. Between the panels are intricate carvings featuring the wine god Bacchus and fruit motifs. In the oak paneling covering the lower two-thirds of the wall surface, rectangular panels are separated by Corinthian pilasters. The cornice of the paneling is decorated with egg and dart molding. The west wall and the east end of the south wall have leaded casement windows with shield panels.

The west wall of the main hall contains three doorways opening into a library on the south, an enclosed living porch in the center and a dining room on the north. All have the oak paneling and stone fireplaces as well as painted glass panels, or rondels, in the windows. The morning room features black and white marble flooring and an eighteenth century pine built-in cabinet with an arched opening. Carving is a foliated motif decorates the area above the arch. The dining room contains handworked tongue and groove oak floors, a molded cornice, a built-in cabinet beside the fireplace and long casement windows with transoms on the west and north walls. The fireplace has a marble hearth and an overmantel intricately carved with paired colonnettes that separate panels carved with grotesques. Cherubs and grotesques are carved into the stone around the fireplace.

The north end of the hallway contains a doorway leading to the kitchen area.

On the east side of the hallway are a small room on the south end paneled in oak and, on the north end, the entrance to a quarter turn stairway with landing. The landing has a floor-to-ceiling window with rondels and a pegged wooden frame. On the south wall of the landing is a built-in cabinet with leaded panes above and an iron grille below. Railing at the head of the stairway also has iron grille work.

The second floor contains an enclosed sleeping porch now used as a sitting room and five bedrooms. The hallway features half-timbering. The bedroom at the north end is decorated with half-timbering and an over mantel carved with symbolic figures.

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At the rear of the lot is the tea house. This has a pyramid roof and, in three elevations, French doors with leaded panes. The east elevation has a chimney. The carriage house, which faces south, has a hip roof with a gable wing on the east elevation. Windows are double hung sash. A balcony is located on the south facade and two dormers are found in the east facade.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Carrier House

Beginning at a point on the east side of Willett 161 feet south of the intersection of Willett and Harbert Streets running south along Willett approximately 204 feet then east approximately 207 feet then north 50 feet then back east 100 feet then north 150 feet then due west 307 feet to the point of beginning.