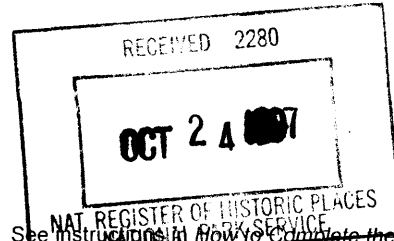


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1463

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on 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 Wilder, General John T., House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 2027 Riverside Drive

not for publication N/A

city or town Knoxville

vicinity N/A

state Tennessee

code TN

county Knox

code 093

zip code 37914

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 for 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.)

Herbert L. Hays
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/13/97
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

State or 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:

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:)

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

11-24-97
Date of Action

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 count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)N/A**Number of Contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)DOMESTIC: single dwellingDOMESTIC: secondary structure**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions)DOMESTIC: single dwellingDOMESTIC: secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)OTHER: Classical Revival influence**Materials**
(Enter categories from instructions)foundation BRICKwalls WEATHERBOARDroof CEMENT TILESother WOOD**Narrative Description**

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

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 N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 year 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): N/A

- 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 _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1904-1912

Significant Dates

1904

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

Wilder, General John T.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Knoxville-Knox Co. Metro Planning Commission

Wilder, General John T., House
Name of Property

Knox County, Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.94 acres Knoxville Quad 147NW

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 239400 3983900
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

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 Ann K. Bennett, Senior Planner, and Cathryn E. Irwin Edited by Susan A. Besser
organization Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission date September 29, 1997
street & number 403 City-County Building, 400 Main Avenue telephone (423) 215-2500
city or town Knoxville state TN zip code 37902

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 Robert F. Geibel
street & number 2027 Riverside Drive telephone (423) 673-8807
city or town Knoxville state TN zip code 37914

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 listing. 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 20303.

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Wilder, General John T., House

VII. DESCRIPTION

The John T. Wilder House is a large, two-story frame structure constructed in 1904 in the Classical Revival style. Its form is a modified "T," with both sections the same height. The house faces southeast, fronting Riverside Drive, and is elevated above and sits well back from the roadway on a large lot with mature landscaping and trees. A driveway from Riverside Drive travels behind the house and exits on the side street to the north. Views to the southeast feature a Knoxville Utilities Board water treatment plant and a vacant, grassy area across Riverside Drive, with the Holston River at the foot of a slope and the Smoky Mountains looming on the distant horizon.

The foundation of the John T. Wilder House is brick. Walls are covered in a novelty drop siding with each board sawn to resemble two lap boards with beveled edges. The house was originally roofed with wooden shingles, but cement tiles with ridge line caps were installed circa 1920 and now provide the roof covering.

The symmetrically arranged gable wing section, or southeastern facade of the house, is approached from Riverside Drive. The front, or southeast facade of the house, is composed of three bays surmounted by a gable. An extended, flat roof shelters an immense porch with stylistic influence from the Classical Revival. The porch covers nearly the entire width of the first story, with a slightly vaulted ceiling. Round wood columns support the one-story porch roof. The capitals on the front porch are now Doric; the original column capitals were made of terra cotta and were Ionic. Stairs lead onto the large porch and into the enframed entryway, featuring a paneled door with rectangular sidelights and transom comprised of one large light flanked by two smaller lights. The front facade contains three bays. On either side of the doorway are double-hung windows flanked by paneled shutters. The second story of the gable front section exhibits three one-over-one double-hung windows. Above them, a double-hung window with partial cornice returns appears in the centered front gable.

The northeast elevation shows an irregular plane broken by two enclosed porches the dates of the enclosure being unknown. The gable end displays one double-hung window on the east corner of the first and second story. The gable returns house small triangular attic windows. The first addition is set in approximately eight feet from the gable end. The roofline follows the original gable roof with a gable return on the northern corner. Double-hung windows are located on the first and second floor. At the northernmost corner of the house is an enclosed one story porch with a flat roof. A single door surrounded by fixed pane windows identifies the porch addition. Connected to the porch is a small shed-roofed projection that leads to the basement by way of a paneled door.

The ell section is attached to the gable wing on the southwest elevation, set in from the gable wing corner approximately one foot. The fenestration on this elevation consists of three double-hung windows on both the first and second floors. In the gable end on this elevation is a single fixed pane window. Partial cornice returns in the gable ends are also present on this elevation.

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Wilder, General John T., House

The northwest, or rear elevation, displays an enclosed rear porch (date unknown) and a rear entry door flanked by a double-hung window. A double-hung window appears on the second story above the rear entry door. Partial cornice returns are also present at the roofline on this elevation. The projecting addition, formerly a porch displays no windows. Double-hung windows on the first and second story of the original house are located to the east side of this elevation. Also, evident from this elevation is the small shed roof projection that forms the entrance to the basement.

The Wilder House contains three brick chimneys, two interior end chimneys on the southwest and northeast facades, and one interior end chimney on the rear ell.

The front entrance leads to a wide central stair hall on the interior, with rooms opening from the hall on each side of the house. Through a door beyond the stairs, a hall leads to two additional rooms, one of which is a kitchen. This arrangement of rooms and access hall is duplicated on the second story. Boxed stairs lead from the second story to a finished attic that retains the original hand-screened wallpaper. Interior details are from the Classical Revival design era, and include five-panel doors, elaborate door hardware, oak fireplace mantels with Classical columns, and an oak stair balustrade with turned balusters and a square newel post. Original cast iron fireplace grates and metal screens are still in place, as is much of the original tile on the fireplace surrounds and hearths. Working transoms still exist above each of the interior doors.

The only modifications to the house show primarily on the exterior of the rear elevation, where back porches on the north side of the original wing were enclosed to provide bath and closet space. The porches were probably enclosed circa 1950. Although the house has not been modified since the porches were enclosed in the 1950s, it was for a number of years very poorly maintained. New owners are now making repairs to the structure, taking care to follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and are pursuing a complete rehabilitation of the house.

Two additional buildings exist on the site, as follows:

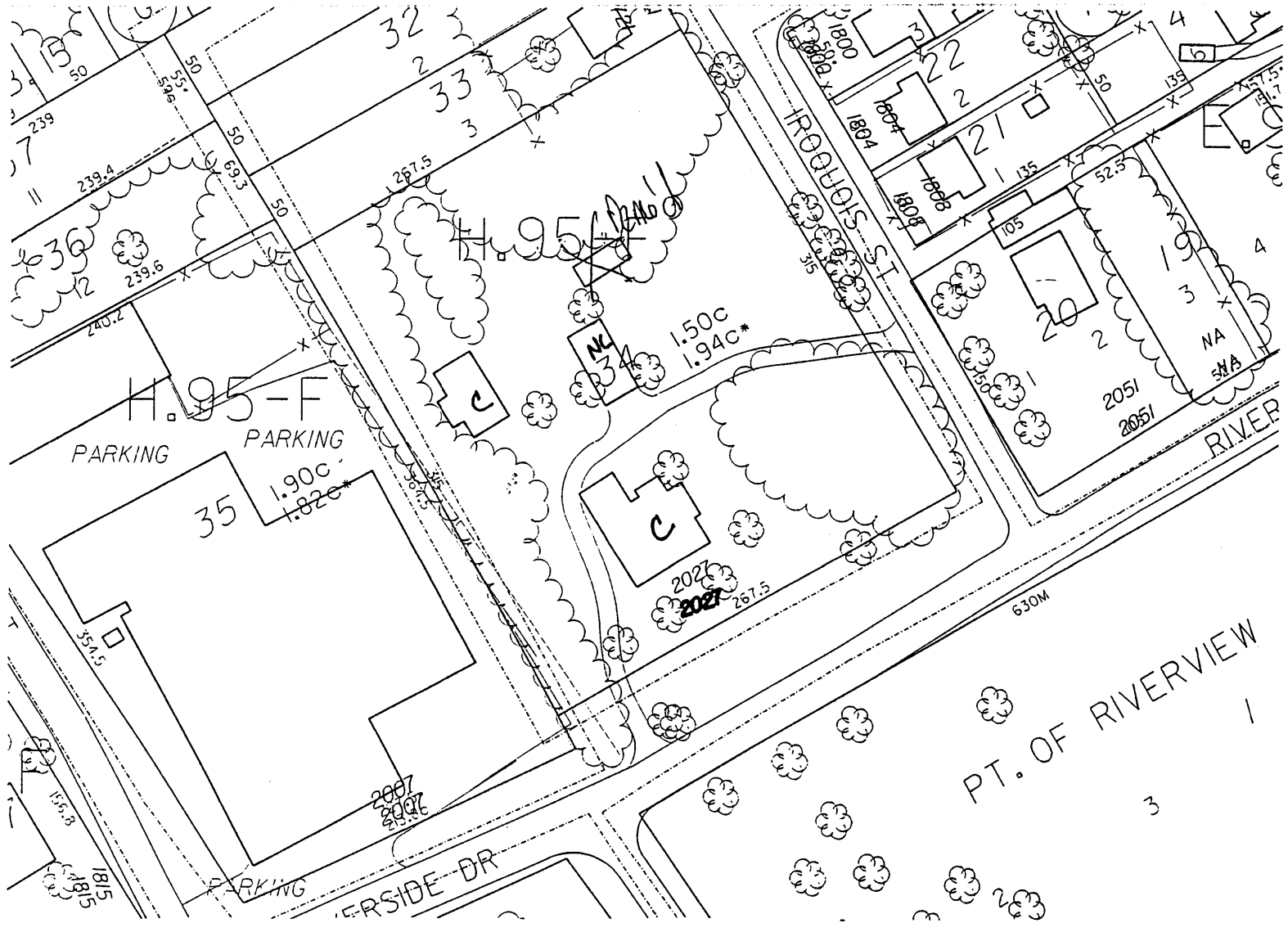
- 1) One-story frame cottage with a brick foundation and weatherboard exterior. The cottage was probably built as servants' quarters in 1904, when the main structure was completed. It possesses no obvious stylistic attribution, has a side gable roof, a brick flue, and sits northwest of the primary structure. (C)
- 2) A frame garage with an end gable roof dating from circa 1920. The exterior of the garage is asbestos shingles, the roof is covered with asphalt shingles, and the doors are large, paneled, swinging doors. (NC)

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Wilder, General John T., House

Site Plan



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Wilder, General John T., House

VIII. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The General John T. Wilder House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B. It is significant for its association with the original owner, General John T. Wilder, who had a distinguished Civil War career, was instrumental in the iron industry, post-Civil War politics in Chattanooga and later in Knoxville.

General John T. Wilder was born in 1830 in Hunter's Village, New York. He moved to Indiana in 1857, and established a small foundry and millwright establishment. By 1861, Wilder's business had branched into Illinois, Wisconsin, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. It was in that year that he recruited the first three year light artillery regiment in Indiana, which became known as the 17th Indiana Infantry. Wilder was chosen as the regiment's Captain and had the distinction of becoming a Lieutenant Colonel without first becoming a Major. Due to his distinguished military exploits Wilder earned the rank of General before the Battle of Chattanooga.

Wilder's "Lightning Brigade" was instrumental in the Battle of Chattanooga and Chickamauga, and in other battles throughout Tennessee. Wilder's contributions to military warfare include his unique fighting style of issuing Spencer Repeaters to his mounted brigade. Wilder was convinced that this was the weapon of choice, but knew that the paperwork to process such a request would take months. Consequently, every soldier in the brigade purchased his own rifle at a cost of \$35. Prior to engaging in battle, the men would dismount from their horses and commence firing their artillery which was quite effective due to the ability to continue firing without reloading. The efficiency of these weapons was noted by Wilder, "the fire from the guns and the repeating rifles was so direct and intense that men could not stay in (the ditch) and live. At this point it actually seemed a pity to kill men so." (Baumgartner, inside cover) There were five regiments within the Brigade which participated in approximately 219 battles and skirmishes.

Although Wilder resided in Indiana prior to the Civil War, citing health reasons, he moved to Chattanooga in 1866. He established the Roane Rolling Mills formed to manufacture railroad rails, taking advantage of the mineral resources found in that area. In 1867, he joined forces with Major W. A. Rockwood and Captain H. S. Chamberlain to organize the Roane Iron Company. Wilder and Chamberlain bought 928 acres of property from John Brown and the Joseph Kimbrough heirs. At this site a furnace was built in 1868, making the Roane Iron Company the first in the South to utilize coke rather than charcoal in the production of pig iron. This foundry became a prominent company drawing settlers from Wales, England, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana

General Wilder was elected Mayor of Chattanooga in 1871 serving eight months, and served as Postmaster in 1877. While a resident of Chattanooga, Wilder was instrumental in establishing the Chattanooga Free

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School system. Wilder left Chattanooga in the 1880's and moved to Johnson City, Tennessee, where he was the Vice President of the Cincinnati Southern Railway, a company that later merged with the Monon Railroad that is presently owned by CSX.

Wilder was recommended by President Benjamin Harrison for the position of Pension Agent in Knoxville in 1897. President McKinley made the appointment, which Wilder accepted. Wilder then moved to Knoxville, where he acted as Pension Agent and maintained his business interests in Harriman County. In addition to the iron works, he also owned a hotel in Harriman. About this time, Wilder foresaw the coming importance of water as a resource for power development. He purchased water rights along the Little Tennessee River, that probably became the basis for the Aluminum Company of America's privately constructed dams built in the 1920s. In Knoxville, Wilder was prominent in the development of real estate projects, including Wilder Place, an area near his home on Riverside Drive. Wilder was also instrumental in establishing a free public library system in Knoxville, meeting with Andrew Carnegie in 1901 to secure funds for the establishment of the system.

In 1901, while a resident of Knoxville, Wilder built a home in the Fort Sanders neighborhood. This house has since been demolished. In 1904, Wilder married Dora E. Lee, a distant relative of Robert E. Lee from North Carolina. Dora Lee Wilder was considerably younger than her husband. It is believed that she was the first woman to pass the medical examination for physicians in Tennessee. About the time of his second marriage, Wilder built the house at 2027 Riverside Drive. The house was located on a working farm, and was probably intended to be a country residence. Folk history tells of General Wilder as an elderly man, sitting at the front windows of the home on Riverside watching his wife, Dora, as she gave parties and dances on the large front porch. Wilder sold the Riverside Drive house in 1912, moving to Monterey, Tennessee. It is not known how long he lived in Monterey, but he died in Jacksonville, Florida in 1917, at the age of 87 years. He is buried in Forrest Hills Cemetery in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

After Wilder's ownership of the Riverside Drive house, two more families owned the structure before it was purchased by the present owner, Robert F. Geibel, in 1996. He has begun an extensive program of preserving and renovating the house, and is committed to retaining its architectural features and enhancing its historic significance.

General John T. Wilder was significant locally for both civic, commercial, and industrial endeavors. He was instrumental in obtaining an endowment for the Knoxville Public Library system from Andrew Carnegie. He developed several real estate projects in Knoxville, one of which, Wilder Place, still bears his name. By establishing the Roane Iron Company, General Wilder aided in restoring the economy of the war damaged region by providing both a new smelting industry and jobs for the New South.

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Wilder, General John T., House

Indiana, the Lightning Brigade, under the command of U. S. General Rosecrans, was long and distinguished. He led his brigade in the battles throughout Tennessee. Particularly noteworthy is the siege of Chattanooga during 1863, when both the Battle of Chickamagua and Missionary Ridge were fought. Union victory dissected Confederate rail lines, cutting means of travel for Southern troops and supplies. So significant was Wilder's Lightning Brigade in these battles that he and his men are forever memorialized by a monument on Missionary Ridge Battlefield Park in Chattanooga.

As a U. S. Pension Agent, Wilder was nominated by former President Benjamin Harrison, received the position from President William McKinley, and was later reappointed by Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft. These continued appointments undoubtedly stood for confidence in his capabilities.

Two other properties located in Tennessee are associated with General John T. Wilder and one has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. One of these is located in Monterey, Tennessee and the other in Roan Mountain, Tennessee. The Roan Mountain property was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

The house located in Knoxville, Tennessee, is the only surviving example of the time period when General Wilder was the U. S. Pension Agent for Knoxville, serving under four presidents (Harrison, McKinley, Roosevelt and Taft) Wilder's exemplary service during the Civil War, as well as his contributions to industry in the post-Civil War era command recognition. As a mark of the esteem in which he was held by other residents of Knoxville, it has been over eighty years since the house on Riverside Drive was owned by him, yet the house is locally designated as the General John T. Wilder House. It was in this house that General Wilder and his wife frequently entertained the residents of Knoxville; these activities may have enhanced the house's significance.

The house is a nearly intact example of the Classical Revival influence on a Vernacular structure. The association of this property with General Wilder, whose prominence as an industrialist, as well as his standing and important position at the local and federal level warrant the nomination of this house for its significant association with General John T. Wilder. The house is locally significant for Wilder's impact on Knoxville.

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Wilder, General John T., House

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Boatner, Mark M. The Civil War Dictionary. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1987.

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Wilder, General John T., House

X. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Nominated property is Parcel 34, CLT Map 95 known as 2027 Riverside Drive. The property begins at the northwest corner of the intersection of Riverside Drive with Iroquois Street; thence northwest 315 feet to a point on the southwest side of Iroquois Street and the side property line of 1721 Iroquois Street; thence southwesterly along the property line of 1721 Iroquois Street to a point on the property line of 2007 Riverside Drive; thence southeastwardly 315 feet along the joint property line of 2027 and 2007 Riverside Drive to a point on the northwest side of the right of way of Riverside Drive; thence northeastwardly along the northwest right of way of Riverside Drive 267.50 feet to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property is the site of the General John T. Wilder house and includes a one story frame cottage (C) and a frame garage. (NC)

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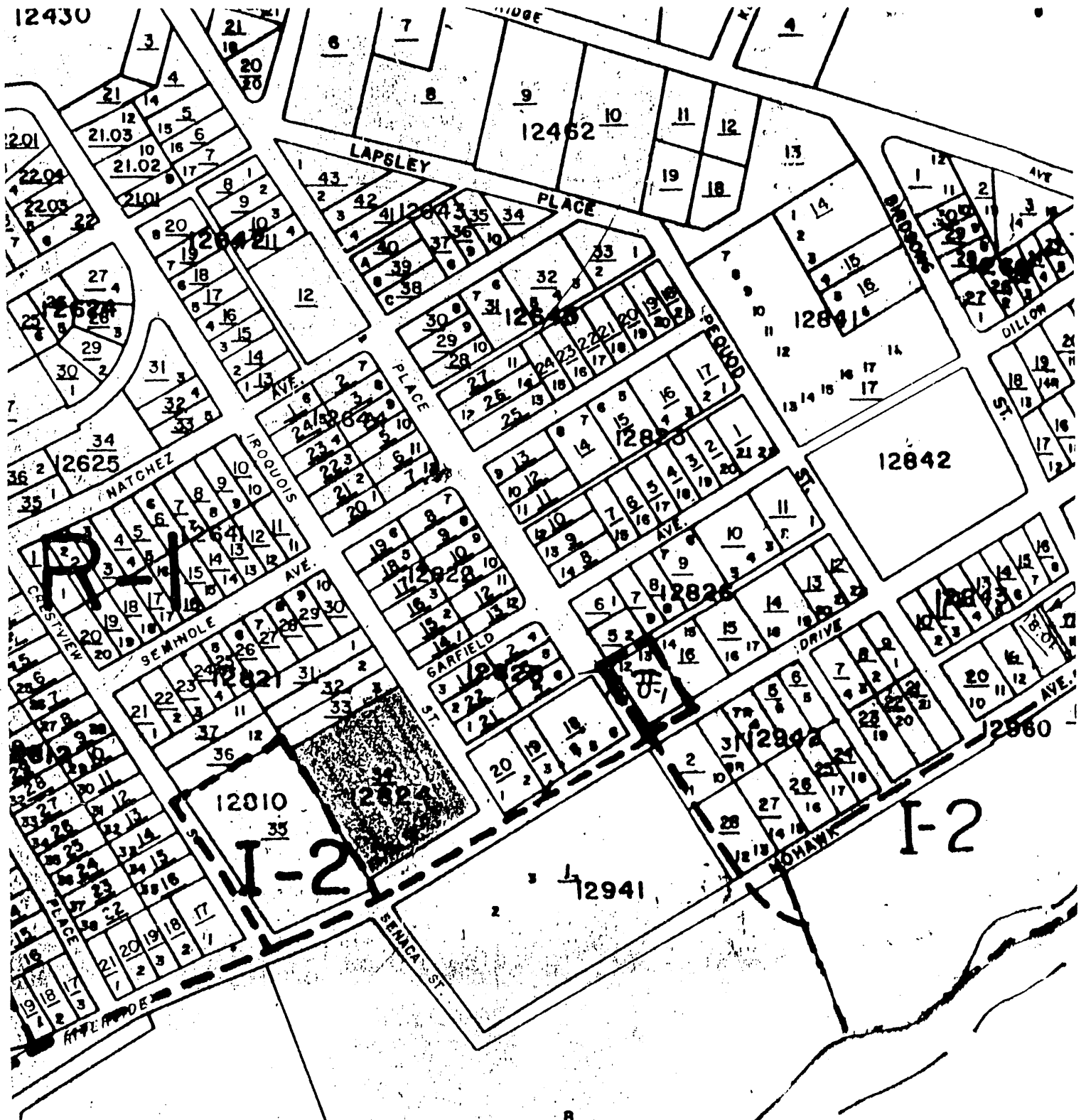
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Wilder, General John T., House



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Wilder, General John T., House

Photographs

Photos by: Ann K. Bennett

Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission

Date: August 10, 1996

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

Southeast facade, facing northwest

1 of 7

Northeast elevation, facing southwest

2 of 7

Northwest elevation, facing southeast

3 of 7

Southwest elevation, facing northeast

4 of 7

Exterior detail: novelty siding

5 of 7

Interior detail: mantel, front parlor

6 of 7

Interior detail: staircase, entry hall

7 of 7