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Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name DENNIS-NEWTON HOUSE

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

### 2. Location

street & number 421 NORTH ALBANY STREET

|     |                     |
|-----|---------------------|
| N/A | not for publication |
| N/A | vicinity            |

city or town ITHACA

state NEW YORK code NY county TOMPKINS code 109 zip code 14850

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Richard Pierpont DSHPO 7/8/16  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:)

Dr. Edson H. Beall 9.6.16  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only **one** box.)

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

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Federal |

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

| Contributing | Noncontributing |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1            | 0               | buildings    |
| 0            | 0               | sites        |
| 0            | 0               | structures   |
| 0            | 0               | objects      |
| 1            | 0               | <b>Total</b> |

**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**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/residence

SOCIAL/fraternal hall

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/residence

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Italianate

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: stone

walls: wood

roof: asphalt

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The residence at 421 North Albany Street is a two-story wood-frame dwelling with clapboard siding situated in a residential neighborhood on the northeast side of North Albany Street in Ithaca, Tompkins County. The building occupies a lot measuring 33 feet wide by 99 feet deep and faces the eastern end of Esty Street where it terminates at North Albany Street. The foundation is rough stone and the main body of the house has a hipped roof covered in non-historic roofing material with a single brick chimney. The house maintains its basic rectangular plan with some additions, most notable a wooden, single-story porch on the front of the house, added sometime between 1898 and 1904. It has a shed roof, decorative brackets between the posts, and a wooden balustrade running across the façade. Between 1898 and 1904, the rear of the house was altered and an additional story was added to the original single-story rear (east) elevation of the house. This rear addition has a flat roof. During the same period, a small addition was built on the southeastern corner of the house. By 1910, an exterior door with a covered porch and stairs was added to the southeastern corner addition and another small single-story porch was added to the northeastern rear corner of the house. By 1929, a small bay window was added to the middle of the north elevation. Despite being unoccupied for many years, the interior of the house is highly intact and maintains its original floorplan along with key period details such as the original wooden staircase, wooden Tuscan columns framing the opening between the front parlor and dining room, period light fixtures, and millwork trim and molding around interior doors and windows. Although the house is in deteriorated condition on the exterior and interior, it retains a high level of integrity in terms of material and design with very few non-historic alterations.

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**Narrative Description**

The Dennis-Newton House at 421 North Albany Street is a two-story, three-bay dwelling covered in clapboard. The form of this house is a simple rectangular block. The front porch of the house sits near the edge of the sidewalk on the North Albany Street lot line. Both the south and north elevations of the house stand just a few feet from the lot lines of the neighboring houses. There is no driveway from the street to the house. Its wood-frame construction and proximity to the sidewalk are consistent with several of the neighboring houses dating from the late nineteenth century along this stretch of North Albany Street. With its neighboring properties, this

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house is part of a tight residential streetscape that is typical of many Ithaca streets with residences erected in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The house is the only building on the property.

## **Exterior**

When viewed from North Albany Street, the facade of the house is three bays wide with three window openings on the second story that are vertically aligned with the front door and the window openings of the first story. The spacing is wider between the second and third windows on the second story than the spacing between the first and second windows. An undated historic black and white photograph of the house shows shutters on these windows that are no longer extant (although some are stored in the basement of the house). The fenestration on the south and north elevations is different from the front façade. The south elevation has four windows on the first story with an exterior door on the rear addition. This door leads to a set of steps exiting to the west of the house and some pavers leading to the front sidewalk. On the second story, windows are closely spaced and grouped near the rear of the house and are vertically aligned with all but one of the windows on the first story. On the north elevation, there are few windows (likely due to the proximity with the neighboring structure to the north of this lot) with the exception of a three window bay located in the middle of the first story and a window near the rear on the second story. The windows on the first floor consist of a single narrow horizontal light over a larger lower light. All of the windows on the second story are two-over-two sash windows with wooden frames.

The façade of the house has a single-story wooden porch that was added after the initial construction. Built in an ornamental style typical of the late Victorian period, the porch has decorative fan brackets located between the turned wooden posts of the porch with a spindled frieze band running between the posts under the eaves. A similar open wooden balustrade and railing also runs along the lower level of the porch. The sloping shed porch roof is covered in asphalt roofing and extends the full width of the front façade on the first story. A set of wooden steps with a wooden railing extends down to the right side of the porch toward the neighboring house on the south side. The porch skirt is covered in wooden shingles. The front entrance located on the left side of the front façade consists of paired doors of glass and wood with a glass transom. Wooden dentils are visible under the projecting roof along the eave and the dentils run along the façade, north, and south elevations of the house. The main roof of the house is a hipped roof and a flat roof is on the rear addition.

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The rear (east) elevation of the house has wooden shingles covering the foundation level and a flat roof. A wooden board now covers one of the rear basement windows. On the left side of the first story of this elevation is a large window with a small fixed light over a single large glass light. A deteriorated single-story porch area is located on the right side. This wooden porch is now boarded up, but appears it originally had an opening with shutters on either side. On the second story, there are three windows: the two on the left and center of the elevation are two-over-two wooden windows while the far right window is a smaller square with a single light. The cornice on the rear of the house is missing. A flat grass yard extends from the rear of the house to the rear property line.

The overall exterior condition of the house is deteriorated but retains a substantial amount of historic fabric. The clapboard on the house's exterior needs repainting and some boards show signs of decay. On the rear, vegetation has grown over and attached itself to some sections of the exterior walls. Some shingles from the front porch skirt are missing along with some vertical rail posts. Several stair treads are cracked and damaged. Several of the window frames also show signs of damage and a few windows have broken panes of glass.

## **Interior**

The interior of the house retains much of the original late nineteenth-century plan, design and detailing. The first floor includes a front hall with a large main staircase on the northern side of the house leading to the second floor. Also accessible from the front hall are the front parlor room with an opening leading to the dining room with wooden Tuscan columns on plinths framing the opening between the front parlor and dining room. Beyond this are a side pantry room, and a rear kitchen adjoining a small rear entry room. A staircase at the middle of the main floor hallway leads down to an unfinished cellar that contains the heating equipment and shows the fieldstone foundation. The second floor includes a hall leading to a large bedroom with closet area at the front of the house and a middle bedroom. Another bedroom and a bathroom are at the rear of the house in the 1898-1904 addition.

The first floor hall includes an open, straight staircase with the original newel post, railing and balusters. An early Arts and Crafts-era light fixture hangs from the ceiling in the hallway. All of the wooden doors and trim are intact, as is the wooden wainscoting in both the hallway and the staircase wall. Although damaged in some areas, the majority of the plaster wall finishes are extant throughout the front hall, front parlor and dining room

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and the wooden trim of the windows and door openings is intact. An early twentieth century light fixture hangs from the ceiling of the dining room area and the dining room walls feature wallpaper from the early twentieth century. All ceiling heights are the same since the original construction of the house. The rear addition of the house contains the kitchen and small rear entry room, which show water infiltration, but the main body of the original house remains intact.

The second floor front bedroom and the middle second floor bedroom both feature wallpaper from the twentieth-century. The wooden window and door trim in these spaces were painted white at an unknown date. The rear addition bedroom was recently stripped of its ceiling and wall surfaces and finishes, leaving the wooden studs and ceiling framing exposed. Water damage from the rear addition roof is apparent here. The rear bathroom was painted at some point and its ceiling and walls are also water damaged. In spite of water damage, the interior and exterior of the house are intact, revealing a substantial degree of integrity for this modest house.

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**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social history

Ethnic Heritage: African American

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

Ca. 1869-1932

**Significant Dates**

1869, 1905, 1932

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period begins with the initial construction date of the house and ends with the death date of second owner, Edward Newton (1932).

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A**

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Dennis-Newton house, at 421 North Albany Street, is significant under criterion A in the area of social history for its association with two prominent African American families in Ithaca, both of whom were well known in the local African American community. The Newton family, in particular, played a role in the formation of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the first Greek letter, African-American collegiate fraternity in the United States. The house was built around 1869-70 for Norman Dennis (1833-1908), an African American resident of Ithaca who worked as a laborer and mason and was a founding member of the African-America lodge of the Odd Fellows in Elmira (Chemung County). The house is also significant as a modest example of an Italianate style building, reflecting Norman Dennis's working class background. Dennis's daughter, Lula (1859-1928), married Edward Newton (c.1856-1932), a longtime employee at the Psi Upsilon fraternity house at Cornell University and an active member of Ithaca's African American community.

Since Cornell lacked male dormitories until the 1910s, many students lived in rooming houses or rented rooms near the campus. Limited housing opportunities made fraternity lodges appealing to many male students; however, the school's African-American students faced extra challenges. Similar to their white counterparts, black male students rented rooms or apartments, but even when white and black male students lived in the same building, they did not mingle. By the fall of 1905, fifteen African-American students were studying at Cornell, but the university lacked a common place for them to meet on campus for socializing and mutual support. Edward Newton knew several of these students and rented a room to Charles C. Poindexter, who initiated the idea for a regular academic and social gathering of the African-American students in the house at 421 North Albany Street. Emphasis for academic excellence was a clear motivation and it was founded as a study group; however, at the beginning of the 1906-07 academic year, the group introduced the idea of forming a fraternity.”<sup>1</sup> On October 23, 1906, they adopted the name *Alpha Phi Alpha* and on October 30, 1906, they held their initiation banquet at the Ithaca Masonic Hall (also called the Odd Fellows Hall or Red Man's Hall). The seven founders of Alpha Phi Alpha were Nathaniel A. Murray, Robert H. Ogle, Charles H. Chapman, George B. Kelley, Henry A. Callis, and Vertner W. Tandy, all of whom were at the 1905 meeting, and Eugene Kinckle Jones, who came to Cornell in 1906 to pursue a master's degree. By late 1917, there were 18 other Alpha Phi

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<sup>1</sup>Charles H. Wesley, *The History of Alpha Phi Alpha* (Chicago: The Foundation Publishers, 1939), 18.



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Alpha chapters established at universities across the country, which expanded to over 550 collegiate chapters nationwide throughout the twentieth century.

Many of the original Alpha Phi Alpha members went on to successful careers after leaving Cornell. Within the history of Alpha Phi Alpha, Edward Newton and his wife, Lula Dennis, are considered the father and mother of the fraternity since they offered their home as the first place for the students to gather, away from the racial prejudice that was encountered on campus. The group began as a mutual study and support group for the students and developed into a fraternity, based on principles of scholarship, character, fellowship and the betterment of humanity. The house at 421 North Albany is regarded by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. as the birthplace of their organization, making it significant for its association with an important event in African-American history in Ithaca and the history of African American Greek-letter organizations in general.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Ithaca's Early Settlement and African Americans in Ithaca**

Ithaca's origins as an organized community date to 1807, when Simeon DeWitt laid out the basic street grid for Ithaca with the settlement centering on North Aurora Street between Seneca and Buffalo Streets.<sup>2</sup> The Catskill Turnpike was an important stagecoach route, traveling through Ithaca along what became known as Owego Street (now State Street), heading west from the settlement.<sup>3</sup> This road served as a main thoroughfare and was developed by early settlers along the street, which continued during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Owego and Aurora streets formed the center of Ithaca, which was incorporated as a village in 1821. By the early 1830s, Ithaca was an important land, water, and rail transportation center for Tompkins County and the community continued to grow into the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>5</sup> The opening of Cornell University in 1868 played a crucial role in the continued growth of Ithaca and encouraged its expansion, a fact that was reflected in its change in status from village to city in 1888. The rise of local businesses and the presence of manufacturing concerns such as Ithaca Gun Company, Ithaca Paper Company, Ithaca Glass Works, and, later, the Morse Chain Company, all contributed to Ithaca's growth in the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>2</sup>Jane Marsh Dieckmann, *A Short History of Tompkins County* (Ithaca, NY: DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, 1986), 31.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 34.

<sup>4</sup>Daniel R. Snodderly, *Ithaca and Its Past: The History and Architecture of Downtown* (Ithaca, NY: DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, 1982), 11.

<sup>5</sup>Dieckmann, 41-43.

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Although a small number of slaves and free persons of color were included in the 1820 census of Tompkins County, by 1830, the African-American population of Ithaca was listed as 112.<sup>6</sup> After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, Ithaca became a known stop along the Underground Railroad. The St. James AME Zion Church, an early African American church that was first chartered in 1833, was an important religious and cultural center for the African American community in Ithaca. It served as a significant place of support and safety for those seeking freedom on the Underground Railroad and some of its early pastors were former slaves. St. James was visited by important abolitionists, including Harriett Tubman and Frederick Douglass, and served as an enlistment site during the Civil War for soldiers of the 26<sup>th</sup> Regiment United States Colored Infantry. The church was built in the neighborhood known as Southside, an area whose neighborhood boundaries are based primarily around South Cayuga, Clinton, Meadow and State streets.

Beginning in the 1830s, African-Americans settled in Ithaca's Southside and, by the late nineteenth century, formed a neighborhood along North Albany, Cascadilla, and Esty Streets. While both Southside and the North Albany neighborhoods housed primarily African American members of the community and also had white residents living in those areas. By 1900, 117 African American heads of households were listed in Ithaca with 33 percent owning their own homes.<sup>7</sup> Several local organizations formed during this period, such as a Masonic society, known as the Henry Highland Garnet Lodge, and the "Young Colored Men's Club," a group that met at 116 South Tioga Street in 1908 and 141 South Aurora Street in 1911.<sup>8</sup>

### **421 North Albany Street: Ownership and Additions (Criterion C: Architecture)**

Evidence of construction dates for 421 North Albany Street came from early Ithaca village and city maps, Sanborn Insurance maps of Ithaca, and property deed transactions that also provide dates for the later additions. In a deed dated 24 October 1867, Norman Dennis (1833-1908) was listed as the purchaser of the lot at 421 North Albany Street.<sup>9</sup> Norman Dennis first appeared as residing at this address in the 1869 Ithaca directory.<sup>10</sup> An 1872 map of Ithaca had the house with the name "N. Dennis" inscribed across the lot.<sup>11</sup> Based on this

<sup>6</sup> "Black Timeline in Ithaca," *St. James AME Zion Church 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet*, May 24, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Field Home, "Ithaca's Black Community," *A Heritage Uncovered: The Black Experience in Upstate New York 1800-1925* (Elmira, NY: Chemung County Historical Society, 1988), 20.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

<sup>9</sup> The purchase price is listed as \$175, Tompkins County Clerk deed records, Book 8, Page 300.

<sup>10</sup> The address in 1869 was 71 North Albany. By 1878, the house number was 73 North Albany and by 1899 it was 421 North Albany, its current address.

<sup>11</sup> A. G. Bardin and John H. Rutherford, 1872 *Map of the Corporation of Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York* (Philadelphia: T.C. Van Arsdale), online at <http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15085coll6/id/122>.

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evidence, the house was first built around 1869 in an area just west of downtown Ithaca that saw increasing levels of residential construction and growth in the village from 1851 to 1872. By examining the 1882 L. R. Burleigh *Bird's Eye view of Ithaca*, a depiction of the house showed its original form as a two-story hipped roof structure with a small enclosure on the left side of the building around the front door, presumably with steps leading to it. The house began its life as a modest version of a simplified transitional Italianate dwelling. The property lacked any associated outbuildings and later Sanborn maps continued to show only the house on the lot. Like many of the neighboring houses on the street depicted in the 1882 image, the Dennis-Newton House was part of a residential strip of one and one-half story and two-story modest residences on small lots set close to the street with their main facades fronting the street. One block to the south was a school and one block west was the Ithaca Gas Works.

The first addition to the house occurred between 1872 and 1888, when a small, single-story addition at the rear extended the footprint of the dwelling. More significant additions to 421 North Albany Street took place between 1898 and 1904, as indicated by comparisons of 1898 and 1904 Sanborn maps. A wooden, single-story porch was added to the front of the house sometime between 1898 and 1904 and was given an ornamented Victorian treatment of a shed roof with decorative brackets between the posts and a wooden railing running across the façade. Between 1898 and 1904, the rear of the house was also altered and an additional story was added to the single story rear (east) elevation of the house. During the same period, a small addition was built on the southeastern corner of the house. These additions corresponded with the period when Norman Dennis's daughter, Lula, and her husband, Edward Newton, assumed full ownership of the house, suggesting that the additions/alterations were made to suit their needs. By 1910, an exterior door with a covered porch was added to the southeastern corner addition and another small single-story porch was added to the northeastern rear corner of the house. A final addition to the house occurred sometime between 1919 and 1929, when a small bay window was added to the middle of the north elevation, depicted on a Sanborn map.

Edward Newton first appeared in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census as a fifteen-year-old living with his family in Ithaca. In 1876, Ithaca directories listed him as a laborer and then as a porter for Sage College at Cornell University in 1878. The 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Ithaca listed Edward M. Newton as living as a boarder at

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the Norman Dennis house at 421 North Albany Street, marrying the daughter, Lula Dennis, in 1883.<sup>12</sup> Newton was an active member of the historic St. James AME Zion Church on Cleveland Avenue on the Southside of Ithaca and worked for the white-only Psi Upsilon fraternity at Cornell for 56 years, starting in 1876 as a waiter, then moving on to janitor, valet and eventually steward. Newton remained an employee of Psi Upsilon until his death in 1932 and was well-regarded by its fraternity brothers at Cornell. Upon his death, tributes along with his obituaries appeared in the *Cornell Alumni News*, the official newsletter of Psi Upsilon, and in the *Ithaca Journal News*.<sup>13</sup>

Norman Dennis (1833-1908) appears in the 1850 census for Tompkins County as a 17-year-old working at the Clinton House Hotel on North Cayuga Street in Ithaca. Later Ithaca directories listed Dennis as a laborer and mason and other records reported that he was married to Helen M. Dennis, who died in 1893. Information from his obituaries published in local newspapers stated that he was the founder of the African-American lodge of the Old Fellows in Elmira, New York, and that he and his wife lived in Elmira in their later years. When he died in 1908, he was working in the home of insurance agent Jacob V. Shappee.<sup>14</sup> His remains were brought back to Ithaca, where he was buried in the Ithaca City Cemetery. When Helen Dennis died in 1893, Lula Dennis inherited the house from her mother, but transferred the deed in 1898 to her husband, Edward Newton.<sup>15</sup> Lula and Edward Newton lived at 421 North Albany from 1880 until their deaths in 1928 and 1932, respectively. After three generations of Newton family ownership, the deed to the house was transferred by Lula and Edward Newton's son, Norman Dennis Newton, and then to a new owner in 1982.<sup>16</sup>

### **Criterion A: Fraternities and Cornell**

American college fraternities existed since 1776, when Phi Beta Kappa, the first Greek-letter collegiate group, was founded at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. Fraternities, and later sororities, reflected the larger American society with its racial, ethnic and religious biases with members being mostly white and protestant. By the late nineteenth century, increased numbers of students from different ethnic and racial backgrounds began to enroll in American colleges and universities, forcing these groups to found their

<sup>12</sup> "United States Census, 1880." Index and images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MZNQ-Y2X>; accessed 11 Sep 2014), Edward M Newton in household of Norman S. Dennis, Ithaca, Tompkins, New York, United States; citing sheet 254D, NARA microfilm publication T9. At that time, the street address was 73 North Albany Street.

<sup>13</sup> "E.M. Newton, 56 years with Psi U, is Dead," *Ithaca Journal News*, July 13, 1932; "Edward M. Newton, Dies 56 Years with Our Chi Chapter," *The Diamond of Psi Upsilon* (November, 1932), 58-59 and "Psi U Retainer Dies," *Cornell Alumni News* (September 1932).

<sup>14</sup> "Norman S. Dennis" *Ithaca Daily News*, January 30, 1908: 2 and *The (Elmira, NY) Telegram*, February 2, 1908.

<sup>15</sup> Helen Dennis's will was admitted to probate on September 5, 1893, Tompkins County Clerk records, Book 148, page 288. For the transfer of property from Lula to Edward Newton, see Tompkins County Clerk records, Book 150, page 488, indenture dated 2 December 1898 (Lula M. Newton to Edward M. Newton).

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own societies in the face of discriminatory practices by established Greek-letter organizations. The first was Pi Lambda Phi, founded in 1895 as a non-sectarian fraternity that welcomed Jewish members. Alpha Phi Alpha, the first African-American college fraternity, was founded in 1906 at Cornell University and Pi Alpha Pi for Asian-Americans in 1926 at the University of California at Berkeley.<sup>17</sup>

In his study of black fraternal organizations, Ramon DeMar Jenkins stated that the founding of Alpha Phi Alpha happened at a time when racial tensions were high and the isolation of African-American college-age students from the larger student population resulted in extremely low African-American retention rates, especially at predominantly white Ivy League colleges:

While American society was being shaped by overt Jim Crow segregation, seven African-American students: Henry A. Callis, Vertner W. Tandy, George B. Kelley, Charles H. Chapman, Nathaniel A. Murray, Robert H. Ogle, and Eugene K. Jones who attended Cornell during the 1906-1907 academic year created one of the most influential fraternal organizations of all time, the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., a brotherhood based on *Manly Deeds, Scholarship, and love for all Mankind*. The overall mission of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. is to responsibly enhance the social and academic pursuit of its members...

Through Alpha Phi Alpha's fraternal magazine, the *Sphinx*, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. has been able to address fraternity business and write essays that deal with the "struggle against segregation, prejudice, discrimination and the advancement of its members and their people..." Although being of service to community is the most important principle of black fraternal life, scholarship and brotherhood are two other main principles of Greek life. Before many of these organizations were founded, black men were "perceived as lacking in intellectual skills stereotyped via racism and sexism as being more body than mind and appearing to be slow." During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, African-Americans looked to education as a way "to move from bondage to freedom." Therefore, those African-Americans who founded their respective black fraternal organizations on the campuses of Cornell University, Indiana University, Howard University, and Morgan State College required all potential members to maintain a high scholastic record in order to be accepted for membership intake.<sup>18</sup>

Emphasis for academic excellence was a clear motivation for the founding of Alpha Phi Alpha, which began as a study group, before officially reorganizing as a fraternity.

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<sup>16</sup>Tompkins County Clerk records, Book 665, page 570, instrument #069924-001 dated 25 August 1982.

<sup>17</sup>Matthew W. Hughey, "Crossing the Sands, Crossing the Color Line: Non-Black Members of Black Greek Letter Organizations," *Journal of African American Studies*, vol. 11 No 1 (June 2007), 59, 61.

<sup>18</sup>Ramon DeMar Jenkins, "Black Fraternal Organizations: Understanding the Development of Hegemonic Masculinity and Sexuality," *Journal of African American Studies*, vol. 16, no 2 (June 2012), 227-228, 231.

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Many of the original Alpha Phi Alpha members went on to successful careers after leaving Cornell. Nathaniel A. Murray became a high school teacher in Washington, D.C. Robert H. Ogle became the secretary of the Senate Appropriations Committee and clerked for two municipal court judges. Charles H. Chapman was older than some of the other students, having taken some courses at Hampton College and Ohio State University. He came from Cayuga County, New York, studied agriculture at Cornell, and later taught the subject at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College, Jackson State College, and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College. George B. Kelley took courses at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute before earning his civil engineering degree at Cornell. After graduation, Kelley worked for the New York State Engineering Department and later for the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. Henry A. Callis, a son of an AME pastor from Binghamton, New York, attended medical school after completing his studies at Cornell, receiving his medical degree in 1922 from Rush Medical College in Chicago. Throughout his life, Dr. Callis promoted the idea of medical training for African-Americans to increase the number of practicing African-American physicians. After first attending Tuskegee, Vertner W. Tandy studied architecture at Cornell and became one of the first licensed African American architects in New York.<sup>19</sup>

Since its founding in 1865, white fraternities were a part of Cornell University, all established during the university's first year, with most meeting in rented spaces in Ithaca.<sup>20</sup> Since Cornell lacked male dormitories until the 1910s, students lived in rooming houses or rented rooms near the campus. Limited university housing opportunities made fraternity lodges appealing to many male students. From the 1880s through the early 1900s, several fraternity chapters were established at Cornell and numerous large and impressive fraternity houses were erected on the north and west sides of the campus. By 1908, the Cornell yearbook listed 42 fraternities, of which 32 had fully established residential fraternity houses. For many of Cornell's African-American students, admittance to these white-only fraternities was as employees, rather than members.

Challenges faced by Cornell's African-American students at the turn-of-the-twentieth century resulted in a dualism that made them "part of the university, but also apart by virtue of their race."<sup>21</sup> Similar to their white counterparts, black male students rented rooms or apartments, but even when both races lived in the same

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<sup>19</sup>Stefan Bradley, "The First and Finest: The Founders of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity" in Gregory S. Parks, ed. *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the Twenty-first Century* (Lexington: the University of Kentucky Press, 2008), 25-35.

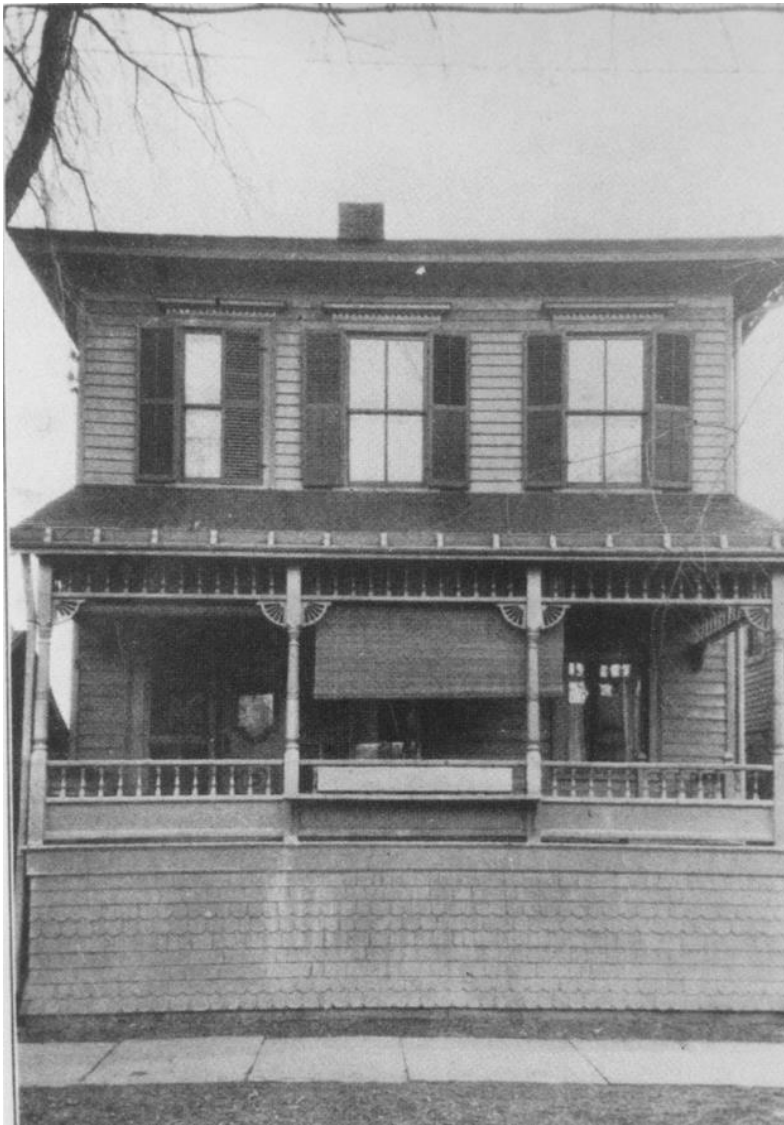
<sup>20</sup>Morris Bishop, *A History of Cornell* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962) 138.

<sup>21</sup>Carol Kammen, *Part & Apart: The Black Experience at Cornell, 1865-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2009), 1.

Dennis-Newton House  
Name of Property

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building, they still lived “separately.”<sup>22</sup> East Hill, a residential area near the campus with many rooming houses for students, was a popular choice and some students also lived downtown. Two addresses on East Hill, 214 Linden Street and 411 East State Street, often appear as listings for residences for African American students.<sup>23</sup> The building at 411 East State Street was owned by the Singletons, an African-American family, who often rented rooms to African-American Cornell students, including the first members of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. Others found rooms with African-American families living in Southside.



421 North Albany Street ca. 1908

By the fall of 1905, fifteen African-American students were studying at Cornell, but the university lacked a common place for them to meet on campus for socializing and mutual support. Edward Newton knew several of these students and rented a room to Charles C. Poindexter, who initiated the idea for a regular academic and social gathering of the African-American students that met in the house at 421 North Albany Street. Charles C. Poindexter (1880-1913) received a degree in agriculture in 1903 from Ohio State University and arrived at Cornell in the fall of 1905 to pursue graduate studies. He left in January of 1907 to work at the Hampton Institute before moving to Nashville, Tennessee, to become a professor of agronomy and biology at Fisk University.<sup>24</sup> Poindexter married the Newton’s daughter, Florence. Lula and Edward Newton opened their home to the group, paving the way for the formation of

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>24</sup> Biographical information for Poindexter from the *Cornell Alumni News*, January 22, 1925: 215 and his obituary published June 6, 1913 in the *Nashville Globe*.

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the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. The initial social gatherings evolved into a social study group and literary society with the first official meeting taking place at 421 North Albany Street during the fall semester of 1905. In Charles Wesley's history of Alpha Phi Alpha, he stated that Edward Newton "acted as a father to all the students" and "expressed great interest in this particular occasion."<sup>25</sup> Although the group intended to meet regularly (twice a month), they met sporadically over the 1905-06 academic year in different locations besides the Newton's home, which included 411 East State Street (the home of Archie Singleton), and 604 East Buffalo Street. Elected officers for the group were Charles C. Poindexter, president; Henry A. Callis, secretary; and, George B. Kelley, treasurer.<sup>26</sup> When the group met at the beginning of the new academic year on October 16, 1906 the idea was introduced of forming a fraternity.<sup>27</sup> On October 23, 1906, they adopted the name *Alpha Phi Alpha* and on October 30, 1906, held an initiation banquet at the Ithaca Masonic Hall (also called the Odd Fellows Hall or Red Man's Hall).

Not all members of the study group supported the idea of a fraternity. By January 1907, Poindexter left Cornell to teach in Virginia. George Tompkins also withdrew from participation and Morgan T. Phillips, who was present at the 1905 meeting, did not return for the 1906-07 academic year.<sup>28</sup> Nathaniel A. Murray, Robert H. Ogle, Charles H. Chapman, George B. Kelley, Henry A. Callis, Vertner W. Tandy, all of whom were at the 1905 meeting at 421 North Albany Street, were joined by Eugene Kinckle Jones, who came to Cornell in 1906 to pursue a master's degree. These individuals became the seven founders of Alpha Phi Alpha. By late 1917, eighteen more Alpha Phi Alpha chapters were established at universities across the country, which expanded to over 550 collegiate chapters nationwide throughout the twentieth century.

Within the history of Alpha Phi Alpha, Edward Newton and his wife, Lula Dennis, were considered the father and mother of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the first Greek letter, African-American collegiate fraternity established in the United States.<sup>29</sup> They offered their home on North Albany Street in Ithaca as the first place for the students to gather, away from the racial prejudice that they encountered on campus. The group began as a mutual study and support group for the students and developed into a fraternity, based on principles of scholarship, character, fellowship and the betterment of humanity. The house at 421 North Albany is regarded

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<sup>25</sup> Wesley, *History of Alpha Phi Alpha*, 16.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 16-17.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.odlchapter.com/wordpress/?page\\_id=291](http://www.odlchapter.com/wordpress/?page_id=291).

<sup>29</sup> <http://skipmason.streamstudio.com/hm/hm17.htm>.



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by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. as the birthplace of its organization, making it significant for its association with an important event in African-American history in Ithaca and the history of black Greek-letter organizations in general.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

### ***Books, Articles, Directories***

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**Published Views, Maps, and Atlases:**

Beers, F.W. "Map of City of Ithaca, N.Y." New York: F. W. Beers & Co., 1889.  
Bevan, John. "Map of Ithaca, Tompkins County, N.Y." New York City, 1851.  
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Bardin, A. G. and J.H. Rutherford, "1872 Map of the corporation of Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York." Philadelphia: T.C. Van Arsdale), online at <http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15085coll6/id/122>.  
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"Death Came Suddenly." *The Telegram*, February 2, 1908 (Elmira, NY).  
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"E.M. Newton, 56 years with Psi U, is Dead." *Ithaca Journal News*, July 13, 1932.  
"Negro Fraternities Have Had Rapid Growth" *The Cornell Daily Sun*, 7 November 1923  
"Norman S. Dennis" obituary. *Ithaca Daily News*, January 30, 1908: 2.  
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"Psi U Retainer Dies." *Cornell Alumni News*, September, 1932: 3.  
"Who are the Jewels of Alpha Phi Alpha" [http://www.odlchapter.com/wordpress/?page\\_id=291](http://www.odlchapter.com/wordpress/?page_id=291).

**Public Records**

Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Tompkins County, New York  
Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Tompkins County, New York  
Tompkins County, New York, Deed Records, Tompkins County Clerk's Office.

- Instrument BF164757-001, 04/11/1874; Book 8, page 300; 24 Oct. 1867.
- Will of Helen Dennis, recorded July 26, 1897, Book 148, page 287-288, property bequeathed to daughter, Lula M. Newton; admitted to probate, September 5, 1893.
- Indenture, Book 150, page 488, December 2, 1898, Lula Newton to Edward M. Newton
- Indenture, Book 665, page 570, August 25, 1982 between Norman Dennis Newton and Steven A. Centeno, both of 421 North Albany Street.

Deed Instrument #069924-001, recorded 10/25/1991.

**Archival Sources**

Psi Upsilon records, 1875-1913. Archives #37-4-2060. Kroch Library Rare and Manuscripts Collection, Cornell University.  
Alpha Phi Alpha records, 1910-2010. Archives #37-4-2509. Kroch Library Rare and Manuscripts Collection, Cornell University.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: Historic Ithaca, Inc.

Dennis-Newton House  
Name of Property

Tompkins County, NY  
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |                                     |  |   |   |                                     |  |   |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | <u>18N</u><br>Zone                  | <u>376505</u><br>Easting               | <u>4700099</u><br>Northing              | 3 | <u>                    </u><br>Zone | <u>                    </u><br>Easting | <u>                    </u><br>Northing |
| 2 | <u>                    </u><br>Zone | <u>                    </u><br>Easting | <u>                    </u><br>Northing | 4 | <u>                    </u><br>Zone | <u>                    </u><br>Easting | <u>                    </u><br>Northing |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the same as in the period of significance.

---

### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Christine O'Malley, Preservation Services Coordinator  
organization Historic Ithaca, Inc. date 22 June 2016  
street & number 212 Center St telephone 607-273-6633  
city or town Ithaca state NY zip code 14850  
e-mail Christine@historicitythaca.org

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

### Photographs:

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Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 2000x3000 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. For districts, key all photographs to the sketch map.

Dennis-Newton House  
Name of Property

Tompkins County, NY  
County and State

Name of Property: Dennis-Newton House

City or Vicinity: Ithaca

County: Tompkins State: New York

Photographer: Historic Ithaca, Inc.

Date Photographed: 12 January 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001 of 0015: Façade of Dennis-Newton House, view looking east from North Albany St.
- 0002 of 0015: West and north elevations, view looking southeast.
- 0003 of 0015: Detail view of front porch.
- 0004 of 0015: North Albany Streetscape view, looking southeast.
- 0005 of 0015: East (rear) elevation
- 0006 of 0015: Detail of main entrance.
- 0007 of 0015: Interior view of main entrance.
- 0008 of 0015: Main hall looking toward entrance.
- 0009 of 0015: Main hall viewed from entrance.
- 0010 of 0015: Stair case, main hall.
- 0011 of 0015: Interior view showing window and door detail (first floor).
- 0012 of 0015: Interior view of dining room.
- 0013 of 0015: View of Tuscan columns looking into dining room.
- 0014 of 0015: View of upstairs bedroom (west end of house facing street).
- 0015 of 0015: View of upstairs room in rear of house.

---

**Property Owner:**

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

---

name Steven Centeno  
street & number 421 North Albany St telephone N/A  
city or town Ithaca state NY zip code 14850

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Dennis-Newton House  
Name of Property

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Dennis-Newton House  
Ithaca, Tompkins Co., NY

421 North Albany Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Dennis-Newton House



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

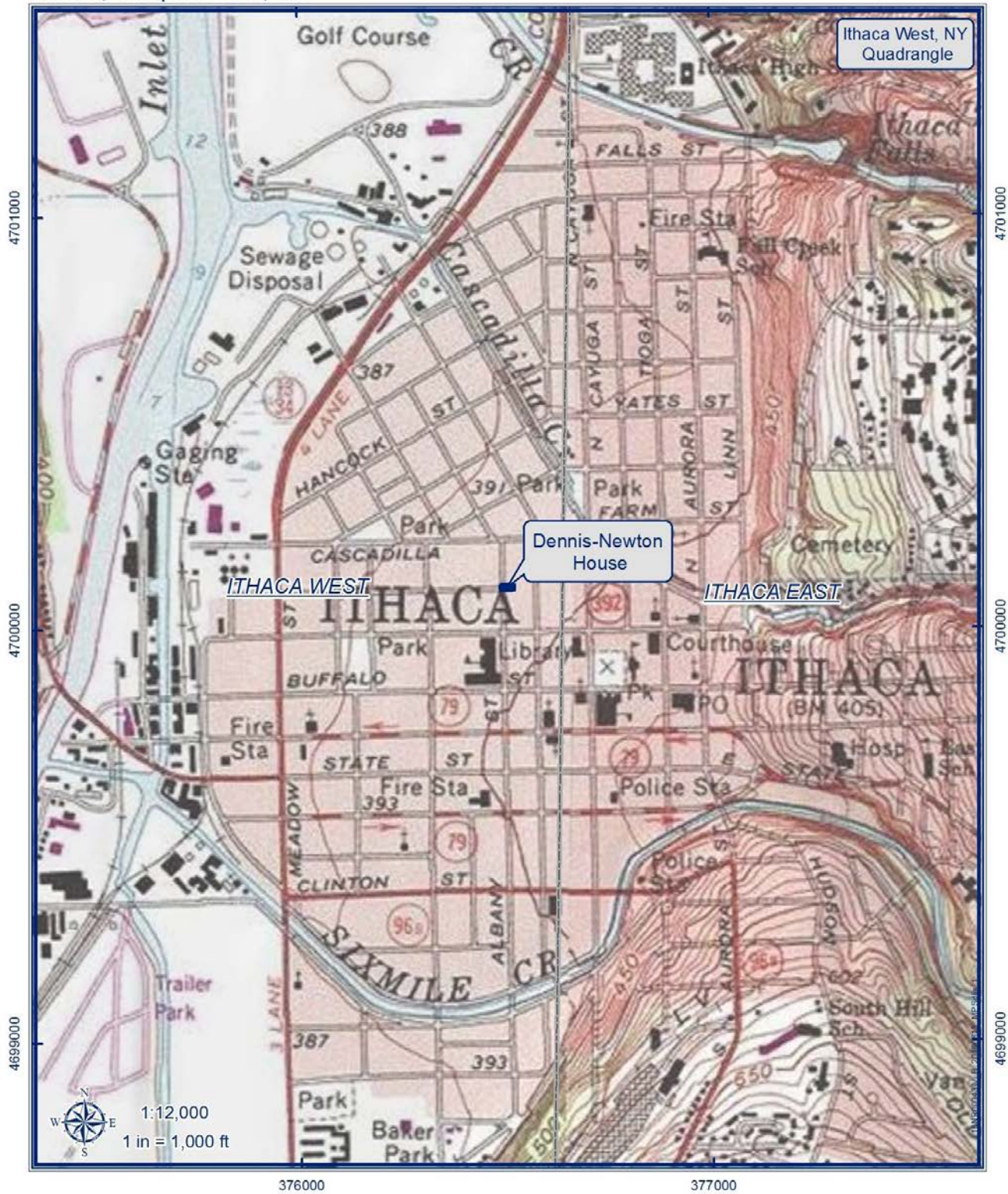


Dennis-Newton House  
Name of Property

Tompkins County, NY  
County and State

Dennis-Newton House  
Ithaca, Tompkins Co., NY

421 North Albany Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850



1:12,000  
1 in = 1,000 ft

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Dennis-Newton House



Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation













421




NO PARKING  
OR STOPPING  
PROHIBITED











421



















**IN-TOWN  
MOVES**

**\$19<sup>95</sup>**

U-HAUL











UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Dennis--Newton House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Tompkins

DATE RECEIVED: 7/22/16      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/10/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/25/16      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/06/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000590

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT       RETURN       REJECT      9.6.16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**ROSE HARVEY**  
Commissioner

**RECEIVED 2280**

**JUL 22 2016**

**Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service**

15 July 2016

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following six nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Depew High School, Erie County  
St. Theresa's Roman Catholic Church Complex, Erie County  
Buffalo Public School # 63 (PS 63), Erie County  
Dennis-Newton House, Tompkins County  
Second Walton Armory (Thirty-third Separate Company), Delaware County  
Ascension Roman Catholic Church Complex, Niagara County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

**Kathleen LaFrank**  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office

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**FIELD SERVICES BUREAU • DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTERS OF HISTORIC PLACES PROGRAM**

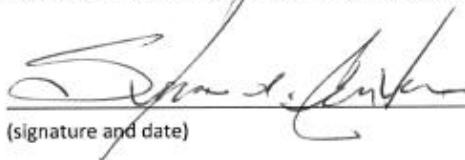
**STATEMENT OF OWNER SUPPORT**

Before an individual nomination proposal will be reviewed or nominated, the owner(s) of record must sign and date the following statement:

I, STEVEN CENTENO, am the owner of the property at  
(print or type owner name)

421 NORTH ALBANY ST. ITHACA NY 14850  
(street number and name, city, village or town, state of nominated property)

I support its consideration and inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature and date)

Mailing Address:  
421 N. ALBANY ST.  
ITHACA NY 14850-4063  
\_\_\_\_\_

Revised 5/08



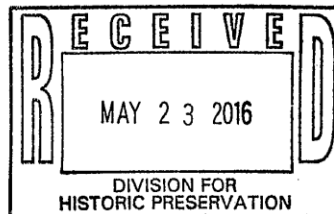
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**CITY OF ITHACA**  
108 East Green Street Ithaca, New York 14850

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR • SVANTE L. MYRICK  
Telephone: 607/274-6501 Fax: 607/274-6526



May 17, 2016

Dr. Virginia Bartos  
New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Division of Historic Preservation  
PO Box 189  
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

**Re: Dennis-Newton House at 421 N Albany St, Ithaca, Tompkins County**

Dear Dr. Bartos:

At the meeting held on May 10, 2016, the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission (ILPC) adopted the attached resolution concerning the eligibility of the Dennis-Newton House at 421 N Albany Street for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

I have reviewed the resolution and the considerations on which the ILPC has based their decision. I concur with the ILPC's determination that the nominated property meets National Register Criteria C and know of no other reason why the property should not be listed. I fully support the nomination of the Dennis-Newton House at 421 N Albany St to the State and National Registers of Historic Place and am honored to participate in the recognition of this significant historic resource.

Sincerely,

Svante Myrick  
Mayor, City of Ithaca

Enc.



Dennis-Newton House  
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ILPC Meeting – 05/10/2016  
Resolution - RD

**RE: Report on the Nomination of the Dennis-Newton House at 421 N Albany St, Ithaca, Tompkins County, to the State and National Registers of Historic Places**

**RESOLUTION: Moved by J. Minner, seconded by K. Olson.**

**WHEREAS,** in its capacity as a New York State Certified Local Government (CLG), as designated in 1986 by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (PARKS), the City of Ithaca required to participate in the nomination process for the Dennis-Newton House at 421 N Albany St, currently under consideration for nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places by the New York State Historic Preservation Review Board, and

**WHEREAS,** the specific requirements for participation include the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission (ILPC) preparing a report stating whether or not, in its opinion, the property meets criteria for listing on the New York State and National Registers and the City's elected official, Mayor Svante Myrick, transmitting the Commission's report and his recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Office, and

**WHEREAS,** based on the recommendations of the ILPC and City of Ithaca Planning Board, the Dennis-Newton House at 421 N Albany St, was designated by the City of Ithaca's Common Council as an individual local landmark on April 1, 2015, and

**WHEREAS,** the ILPC considered the nomination for the State and National Registers at the regular meeting held on May 10, 2016, the agenda for which is routinely posted in advance of the meeting in City Hall, 108 E Green St, and on the City's website, and

**WHEREAS,** documentation reviewed by the ILPC includes the letter dated April 19, 2016 sent from Ruth Pierpont, Director of the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau at PARKS, and accompanying material from PARKS including the National and State Registers Criteria for Evaluation, Frequently Asked Questions About the State and National Registers of Historic Places in New York State, and the draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, and

**WHEREAS,** of the four criteria listed, the nomination has been proposed under criteria A as follows:

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

**WHEREAS,** the ILPC concurs with Section 8 of the draft National Register of Historic Places Registration form, Statement of Significant, and specifically the statement:

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ILPC Meeting – 05/10/2016  
Resolution - RD

“Constructed c. 1869, the Dennis-Newton house at 421 North Albany Street in Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York is significant under Criterion A for its association with the early formation and founding of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the first Greek letter, African-American collegiate fraternity in the United States. It’s also significant for social history for its association with the African-American owners and their long ownership of the property.

**WHEREAS,** in making a determination about whether Criterion A has been met as it relates to educational history and African American ethnic heritage, the ILPC has noted the following:

Fraternities were an integral part of student life at Cornell University from its inception; however, African-American male students were not admitted membership into these organizations and generally lived apart, both literally and figuratively, from the rest of the student population. With the purpose of establishing an organization that would provide a platform for socialization and mutual support, a cohort of African-American students decided to form a study group and literary society. Their first meeting was held in the home of Edward and Lula Newton at 421 North Albany Street in 1905. This group would later evolve into Alpha Phi Alpha, the first Greek-letter, African-American collegiate fraternal organization in the United States, and 421 North Albany Street was considered its birthplace. The connection between the house and the formation of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity makes it a significant site for an important episode in African-American history and American collegiate education history.

**WHEREAS,** in making a determination about whether Criterion A has been met as it relates to social history and African American ethnic heritage, the ILPC has noted the following:

The residence at 421 North Albany Street was originally constructed around 1869 for Norman Dennis (1833-1908), an early African-American resident in the City of Ithaca who was born in New York State and worked as mason and laborer. Dennis also helped found the African-American lodge of the Odd Fellows in Elmira, New York. Dennis’ daughter, Lula, inherited the house in 1893 but transferred the deed in 1898 to her husband, Edward Newton. Edward Newton (c.1856-1932) worked as a porter for Sage College at Cornell University and was longtime employee at the Psi Upsilon fraternity house. He was an active member of Ithaca’s African-American community and supported the efforts of early-19<sup>th</sup> century African-American students at Cornell to form a fraternal organization. Lula and Edward Newton live in the house at 421 North Albany Street until their deaths in 1928 and 1932 respectively. The house remained in the Newton family until 1982 when the deed to the house was transferred by Lula and Edward Newton’s son, Norman Dennis Newton, to a new owner. In total, three generations of the Dennis-Newton family

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ILPC Meeting – 05/10/2016  
Resolution - RD

lived in the house. The house stands as a surviving example of a dwelling built for one of Ithaca's early African-American residents.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the ILPC finds that the documentation in the draft National Register nomination form demonstrates that the Dennis-Newton House at 421 N Albany St meets criteria for listing on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the ILPC recommends that the Dennis-Newton House be considered significant at both the local and national level as the property is associated with the founding of an organization that has national historic significance, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the ILPC recommends the listing of the Dennis-Newton House on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places.

**RECORD OF VOTE:**

Moved by: J. Minner

Seconded by: K. Olson

In Favor: D. Kramer, E. Finegan, K. Olson, S. Gibian, J. Minner

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: S. Stein, M. McGandy

Vacancies: 0