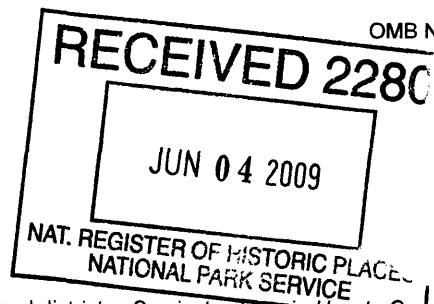


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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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 *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 Stratford
other names/site number Sterchi Mansion

2. Location

street & number 809 Dry Gap Pike NA not for publication
city or town Knoxville NA vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Knox code 093 zip code 37912

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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
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 _____

Box
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 7-16-09

Stratford

Name of Property

Knox County, TN

County and State

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	
3	0	buildings
1	1	sites
4	1	structures
		objects
		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Knoxville and Knox County MPS

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Terra Cotta tile

other Wood

Narrative Description

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

Stratford
Name of Property

Knox County, TN
County and State

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 a birthplace or grave.
- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance

1910-1932

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

Sterchi, James Gilbert

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Graf, Richard Franklin, Architect

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 Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

Stratford
Name of Property

Knox County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.23 acres 146 SW Fountain City

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 231979 3991223
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; Pamela Dishongh, Intern
Organization Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission date March 23, 2009
street & number Suite 403, 400 Main Street telephone 865/215-2500
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 Buddy and Linda Malin
street & number 809 Dry Gap Pike telephone 865/689-8084
city or town Knoxville state TN zip code 37912

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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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Stratford is the former residence of Knoxville businessman and community leader James Gilbert (J.G.) Sterchi. The Classical Revival house was designed by architect Richard Franklin Graf and built in 1910. The house is frame construction with a cream colored brick exterior. It is two stories, with full basement, and recently finished attic floor. The estate includes the house, a detached garage, a spring house, and a gazebo that is approximately two years old and replicates a gazebo that was original to the property. With the exception of the gazebo, the remaining buildings and their architectural features are original. The property is just within current northern city limits of Knoxville, at 809 Dry Gap Pike, a narrow and twisting two-lane road, in the valley between Beaver Ridge and Black Oak Ridge in Knox County, Tennessee.

Stratford sits atop a broad knoll, one hundred yards above the road, and overlooks rolling hills and valleys. In front of the house a natural, grassy terrace slopes downward for seventy-five yards to a small marshland, creek, and spring house at the bottom of the hill, adjacent to Dry Gap Pike. The house faces Dry Gap Pike and is reached by a winding drive marked by brick gateposts; from there it crosses the stream and climbs the hill in front of Stratford, where it is possible to enter a parking court or to travel into a porte cochere.

From the recently installed parking court in front of the house, a walk leads to seven wide, marble steps with ashlar marble buttresses and marble caps that climb to a two story entry portico with a beige terrazzo front porch floor trimmed at the perimeter with a triple color band of terrazzo consisting of black on the outside, green in the center, and red on the inside. The ceiling of the two story front porch is wood tongue-and-groove beadboard. The foundation of the house and porch is limestone, random course ashlar. Set into the front porch foundation, decorative wrought iron vents allow air to flow beneath the front porch.

The house is topped by a hip roof covered with original tile laid in a straight barrel Mission style pattern. Attic dormers to the side and rear of the house are topped with hip roofs and feature double, fixed, single light Craftsman style windows and original tile that duplicates the roof covering. A string course of corbelled brick connects the second floor lintels along all elevations of the house, as does a marble water table that separates the stone foundation from the brick walls.

The symmetrical, three bay east façade is dominated by the two story entry portico. A one bay pedimented section projects from the main portico, which is the full width of the house. Centered in the pediment is an elliptical fanlight of wood, with applied keystones and an oval vent window with tracery. There are six fluted wood columns with Scamozzi capitals embellished with egg-and-dart and acanthus leaf trim. Dentil molding is below the cornice on the façade, in the pediment, and on the elevations. Two fluted, square, pilasters with Scamozzi capitals are found at the corners of the façade. Large one-over-one double-hung sash flank the entries on the first and second stories. The principal entry is a single leaf wood door with the original, three-fourth length, beveled glass pane. The entry is Adamesque in style and features an elliptical, leaded glass

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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

fanlight and leaded sidelights. A wood arch with applied wood keystone and segmental brick arch top the fanlight. Colonettes and narrow pilasters separate the door and sidelights. A balcony with original wrought iron railing and wrought iron supporting brackets is centered over the first story door. The paired, full-view French doors that lead onto the balcony are topped with a four light transom. Eight light sidelights with two light transoms flank the paired French doors. Above the transom is a flat, marble lintel.

The north elevation reveals a large two story, three-sided bay at the west edge of the elevation. The bay has three one-over-one double-hung sash on the second story and two one-over-one double-hung sash on the first story. At the center of the bay on the first story are horizontally oriented, small paired, single sash leaded beveled glass windows set on a horizontal plane with the tops of the larger first story windows. East of this configuration is an exterior, through-the-cornice, brick chimney with marble detailing at the chimney breast and corbelled brick at the chimney cap. One-over-one double-hung sash flank the chimney on both stories. All windows have marble sills and lintels.

The west or rear elevation contains a chimney that matches that on the north elevation. There are two one-over-one double-hung sash on both the first and second stories. A single leaf entry capped by a transom window leads to a one story half-hip roof porch. Concrete steps extend from the south end of the porch. Like the rest of the house, the porch has a tile roof and rests on a stone foundation.

The south elevation contains a variety of single and paired double-hung windows on both stories. The most prominent feature of this elevation is the one story porte cochere. The flat roof porte cochere has a denticulated cornice and is supported by square brick free standing columns and engaged columns. These brick columns have stylized wood capitals and are set on a five foot ashlar stone wall. Between the square columns are four round slender wood columns on brick bases. These columns mimic the larger façade columns. Beneath the porte cochere is a wood stoop with wood steps to the east and west and a single leaf door leading into the house. The steps to the west are shortened by a tread, creating an elevated bottom step that served as a carriage mount.

The floor plan is a central hall plan. The staircase and all woodwork and doors in the first floor public rooms are cherry. Pine is used in the kitchen and the servant's stair, while the second floor trim and doors are quarter-sawn oak. Baseboards are in every room. Window and door trim throughout the house consists of flat boards with applied top molding. Doors to second floor rooms have stiles and rails of quarter-sawn oak with plywood central panels of book-matched oak veneer. Public rooms, as well as the master bedroom, feature three-inch heart pine flooring with a two-inch surrounding border of oak. Decorative ceiling medallions have been added by current owners around light fixtures in the entry hall, sitting room, and kitchen. Light fixtures in the house are a combination of fixtures found stored in the attic by the present owners, and fixtures that were purchased by them to complement the architecture of the building. The new fixtures include those

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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

in the family parlor and dining room, which are Venetian glass and were purchased in Europe. Although old fixtures found in the house were reused, their original location is unknown and may not be duplicated by their current placement. Other original features on the interior include the floors, plaster walls, and wood trim and doors, all of which have been restored. Radiators, which are also original and continue to supply heat, are located throughout the house.

The main parlor is at the southeast corner of the first floor. Entry is through a colonnade composed of columns with Scamozzi capitals set on low oak panels. The entire opening is cased in cherry. Plaster walls with thin strips of gilded wood, original to the house and restored by the present owner, are arranged to mimic paneling and add lightness to the room. Cherry panels below the large windows in this room seem to provide a contrasting grounding. Open, built-in, original bookcases capped by scrolled woodwork flank the fireplace. This bookcase stands next to an elaborate mahogany mantelpiece with hand carved detailing and original mirror. On the mahogany mantel, fluted colonettes with Scamozzi capitals border the fireplace opening. Smaller Corinthian columns form colonettes bordering the overmantel mirror. Dentils and bas relief urns and floral designs embellish the fireplace frieze and mantel shelf. A swan's neck pediment and decorative urns are above the mirror.

The family parlor (northeast) connects to the entry hall with a large, wood trimmed square opening with original, fully functioning, cherry pocket doors. An identical entrance, along with pocket doors, leads into the dining room to the west. The ceiling is coffered with cherry exposed beams. The fireplace features original, Arts and Crafts style, green tile surround with a horizontal strip of hand painted, eight inch, decorative tiles depicting trees, river, and mountains. Although the maker of these tiles is not known, similar tiles are found in the Getaz House, 505 E. Scott, in the Old North Knoxville Historic District (NR 5/14/92). The tiles resemble several types of twentieth century American art or faience tiles; however, the owner has been told that the tiles are Portuguese.

The dining room's main feature is a large bay with paired, leaded, single pane windows flanked by the one-over-one double-hung sash used throughout the rest of the house. The room has a coffered ceiling and a chair rail. The fireplace in this room is decorated in tile similar to that in the adjacent parlor, but with a different scene. A built-in china cabinet is located on the west dining room wall, which is paneled. The china cabinet has double, cherry cupboards and drawers beneath two wood doors with full, leaded glass panels that in pattern match the paired windows on the dining room bay window.

A door from the dining room leads to the redesigned kitchen and an adjoining space used as a breakfast room. Wood cabinets and appliances in the kitchen are new and topped by marble countertops, original windows are used throughout, and tile flooring is new, but the size of the space has not been changed. A pantry is located in the back hall leading to the kitchen, as well as a half bath under the stair rehabilitated by the present owner. There are also stairs leading to the basement, which houses the mechanical equipment for the house. Between the kitchen and breakfast room spaces on the back wall an original door leads to the back (west elevation) porch.

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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

The large central hall leads to the main dogleg stairway. It is straight-run to a well-lit landing illuminated by paired, double-hung, leaded glass windows, then turns 180 degrees and continues to the second floor. The open string stair has a balustrade of turned cherry, a square paneled cherry newel post, cherry stanchions, and a curtail step. Forming the walls of the L-shaped hall, below the open string, are exquisitely finished cherry panels. To the west side of the open string stair is a pine wall string that travels up from the hall outside the kitchen to a door on the stair landing; on the landing, the two staircases merge to form one stair to the second story.

On the second floor, a large central hallway is directly accessed by the stair, and is located above the large first floor entry hall. From this central hall, the paired French doors lead to the façade balcony mentioned above.

Opposite the balcony at the other end of the hall is a full bathroom original to the house with the original cast iron tub and toilet, tongue-and-groove wainscoting and a black and white tile floor; this bath has been altered by the addition of a built-in vanity. A second bath on the second floor was created from closets with a connecting door between the two bedrooms on the north elevation of the house. In creating this bath, new fixtures were added and the connection between the two bedrooms was eliminated in favor of space for a shower and vanity.

Upstairs, the central hall is separated into a front (east) and rear (west) section by an archway flanked by smooth, round oak pilasters that are similar to the facade columns of the house. Above the archway is crown molding with applied dentils. All doors off the hall have stiles and rails of quarter sawn oak and four central panels of plywood, book-matched oak. Single light transoms are located above.

Three out of the four bedrooms on this floor have fireplaces. There is no fireplace in the servant's bedroom. Fireplaces on this floor have original cream colored tile hearths and surrounds, wood mantelpieces and mantelshelves, and pilasters that vary in decorative detail. One of the bedrooms features a mantelpiece with an original, built-in mirror. All rooms have original, cast iron radiators, oak baseboards, and window trim.

Closets in the upstairs bedrooms are original to the house. A small laundry room has been added to the master bedroom. The two full bathrooms that are upstairs have been modernized, but current owners reused all original fixtures where they could.

Open stairs from the second story to the attic are located off the second floor landing and have been reconstructed by the current owner. The attic space has been converted into a large finished room with tongue-and-groove beadboard ceiling and wood paneling.

All public spaces remain unchanged. All existing, original hardware has been restored and left in place. Central air and heating has been added, and the house has been electrically rewired,

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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

although it was wired when it was constructed. Original cast iron radiators remain in all rooms and are still functioning. Present owners removed carpet to uncover original floors, which were refinished. All plaster has been repaired. Small, missing bits of original carving along mantelpieces has been painstakingly reproduced and replaced. The kitchen has been modernized, and a fireplace was changed in that modernization.

Stratford is in excellent condition and has been restored to a high standard, as close to the original as possible. Current owners have commissioned craftsmen and obtained fixtures from over the world in a dedicated attempt to authenticate the original home.

CARRIAGE HOUSE/GARAGE:

The 1910 carriage house is located to the rear of the main residence. It is built of the same cream colored brick as the primary building, and at the same time the primary building was built. The carriage house has a front gable roof with v-crimp metal roof covering. The front (south elevation) of the building is single bay with paired, arched wood doors with cross bracing. There is a brick arch with keystone above. Windows are four-over-four, wood, double-hung and wood, fixed. To the rear is a two room residential component, and in the center of this section is a brick flue. (C)

SPRING HOUSE:

The spring house, constructed 1910, is of cream colored brick that matches the main house. It is one bay with double-hung, two-over-one, wood sash windows. A hip roof with composite shingles covers the structure. Along one side is a two light single wood door underneath gabled stoop. (C)

GAZEBO

Open structure with elaborate wood trellis walls, gable roof with fishscale shingle covering and fixed bench seat. Constructed around 2007 as a replica of the gazebo original to the property, in the original location and reusing salvageable elements from the original. (NC)

ENTRANCE GATEPOSTS AND WALLS

Stairstepped low brick walls of buff brick with marble caps; carriage lamps mounted on gateposts. Constructed 1910. (C)

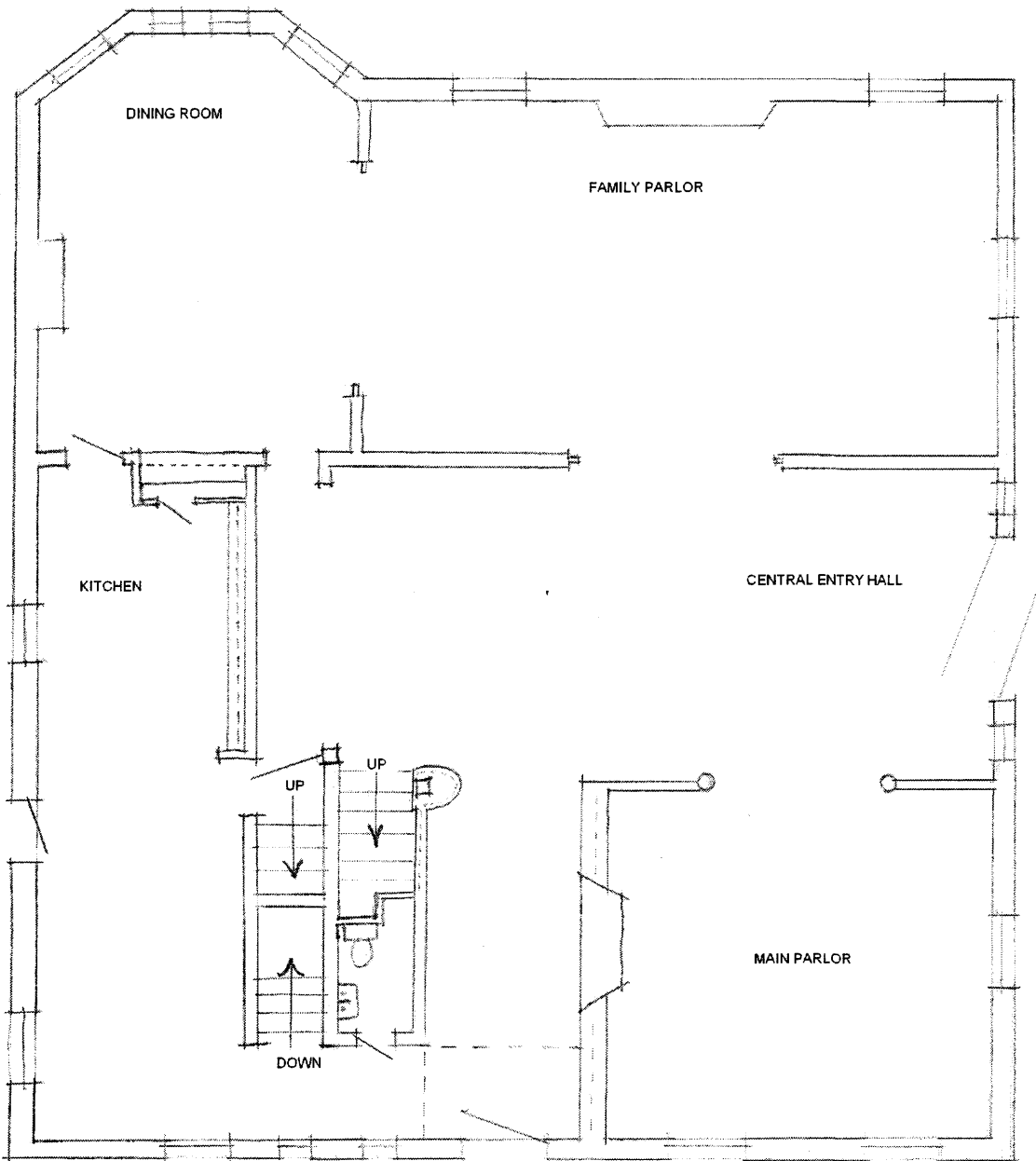
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Stratford
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Sketch plan first floor not to scale N 



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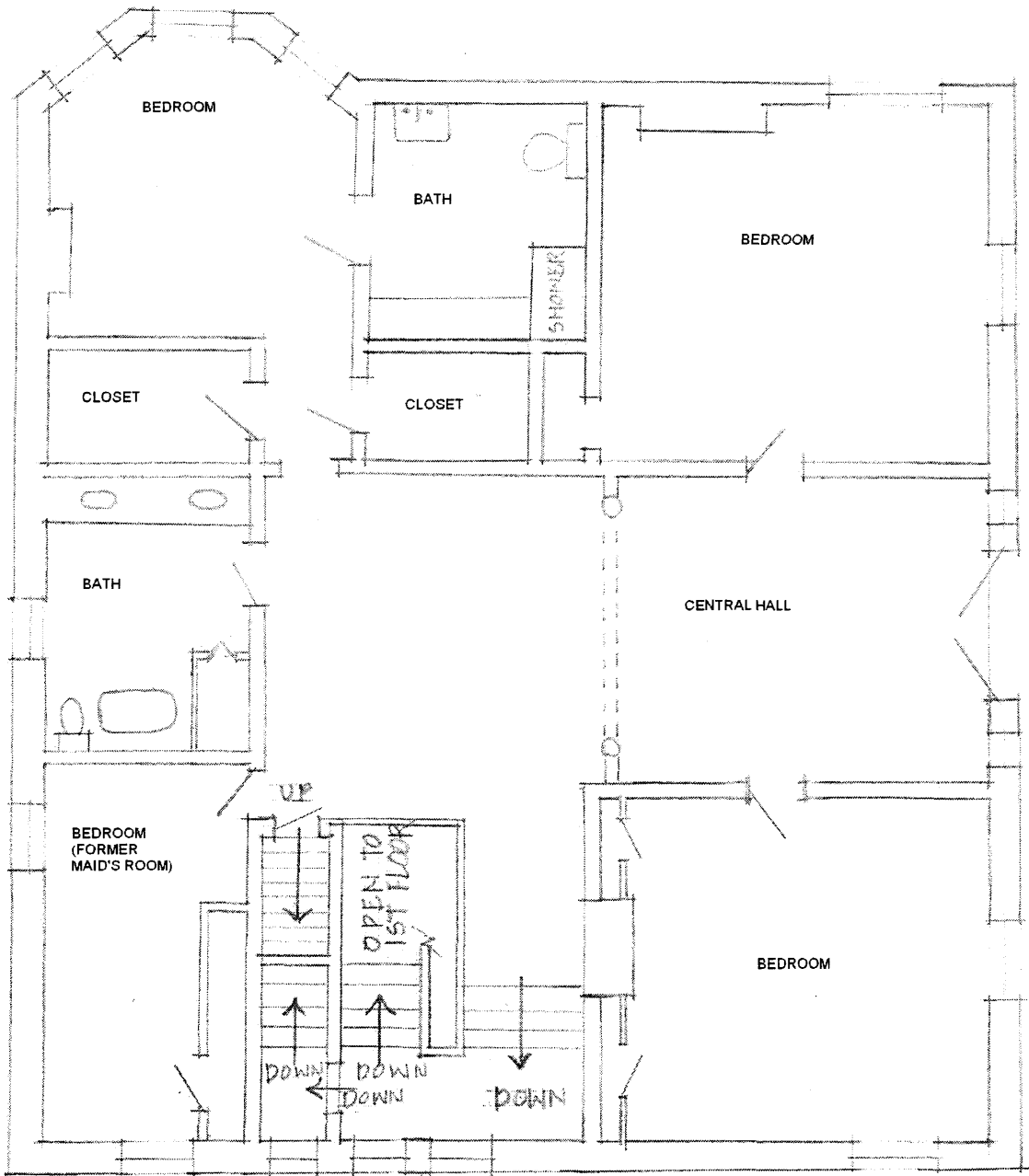
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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

Sketch plan

second floor

not to scale



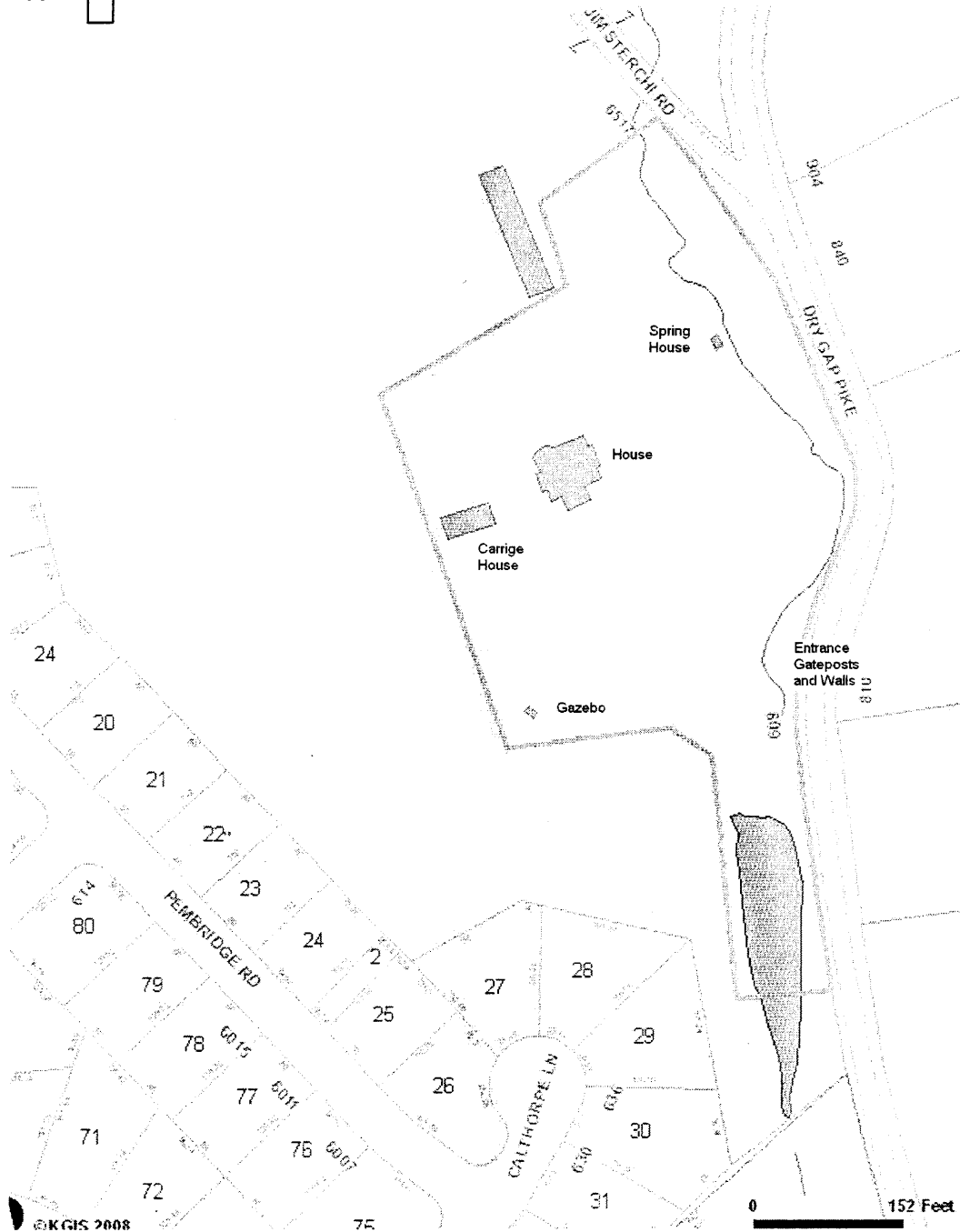
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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

Site plan N 



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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Stratford, built in 1910, in Knox County, Tennessee is being nominated to the National Register under criteria B and C for its local significance in commerce and architecture. Under Criterion B, the property is significant as the home of J.G. Sterchi, a prominent Knoxville businessman and community leader who, during the time he lived at Stratford (1910-1932), built Sterchi Brothers Furniture from a local furniture business to a company of national stature. Sterchi exemplified the contribution of the Swiss community in Knoxville and the importance of Knoxville as a regional economic center. J.G. Sterchi was also actively involved in the civic life of the city, helping with the local 1910 exposition and donating land for a park in 1921. The property is also significant under Criterion C for its representation of the Classical Revival style. Designed by Knoxville architect Richard Franklin Graf, the house, and matching carriage house, exemplifies the Classical Revival in its impressive two story portico with Scamozzi order capitals, exterior symmetry, and intricate interior woodwork. The nominated property meets the registration requirements of the Knoxville and Knox County MPS and it retains its architectural and historic integrity.

Grandson of Swiss immigrants, J.G. Sterchi started with little but ended his life as one of the most well-respected and successful names in the business and civic life of Knoxville and beyond. His grandparents sailed to the United States in 1848. Onboard ship they met two other Swiss families, both headed to a German and Swiss colony being settled in Wartburg, Morgan County, Tennessee. With these two families, the Sterchis later moved to Knoxville. In December 1848 James's grandfather, Francois Sterchi, bought 371 acres from Thomas Bell on the Knob Fork of Beaver Creek in Hinds Valley, where he built a log cabin (no longer standing). He named the farm Bellefontaine.

Broad acres of level and rolling land with deep, rich soil afforded a desirable location for early farmers. Combined with moderate seasons, the protection of the valley, and altitude provided by the hills, nearly every crop can be grown here. In addition to desirable farmland, early settlers were attracted to the area by heavily timbered tracts of land, limestone enriched meadows for cows and horses to graze and a multitude of springs.

The Sterchi's first year at Bellefontaine was difficult. Francois Sterchi was not a farmer, and had it not been for the help of the other Swiss families with whom they had moved to Knoxville they would not have survived. In Switzerland Francois Sterchi had served as Chief Civil Engineer, an occupation he eventually continued to pursue in Knoxville. One of the projects he completed in Knoxville was to survey what is now the city's main downtown thoroughfare, Gay Street.

J.G. Sterchi was born to Parthenia and John Louis Augustus Sterchi on June 23, 1867. One of ten children, he grew up in a log cabin on his grandfather Sterchi's farm. His career began as a clerk at \$3 a week. Sterchi and his brothers, J.C. and E.H. founded Sterchi Brothers Furniture Company in 1888. In 1896 the company bought out the furniture business of King, Oates, and Company and began their wholesale business, selling by catalogue. This expanded their business

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 10Stratford
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to other southeastern states. On April 7, 1897, the building where Sterchi Brothers was located, in what is now the 300 block of Gay Street, was destroyed in what Knoxville historians have termed the "Million Dollar fire." Following that fire, Sterchi Brothers moved to the 100 block of South Gay Street in 1898. Sterchi Brothers occupied a five story building known as The Emporium, which still stands in Knoxville at the corner of Gay Street and Jackson Avenue, at 100, 102, and 104 Gay Street (Southern Terminal and Warehouse Historic District, NR 11/18/85). Around 1900, J.C. and J.G. were running the company, as it continued to expand.

A 1918 ad in the *Grand Rapids Furniture Record* reported under "What a Big Furniture House says about Federal" that the Chattanooga branch of the company was using Federal Motor Trucks for deliveries. *Best's Insurance News* of 1920 noted that the company had eighteen stores in the south. When the company moved into a new building in El Paso Texas around this time, E.H. Sterchi said in an interview that Sterchi Brothers was one of the largest furniture manufacturers in the South. Sources vary on the date that J.G. obtained control of the company, but by circa 1928, J.G. Sterchi had purchased his brothers' interests in the Knoxville store, with the provision that he continue to use the name "Sterchi Brothers." J.G. was responsible for building the Sterchi Building, located at 114 South Gay Street (Southern Terminal and Warehouse Historic District). In 1928, J.G. founded the Sterchi Brothers Corporation. This company, incorporated in Delaware, was reported to be the world's largest furniture chain, including both manufacturing and sales. Until this time J.G. was actively managing the company but with incorporation he became chairman of the board. One example of the corporation's importance is a report in the *New York Times* on March 24, 1929, that forty-eight furniture stores and two factories were involved in a merger under the name of Sterchi Brothers Stores, Inc., headed by J.G. Sterchi.

Sterchi laid the foundation for and supervised the initial growth of a company that eventually grew to be a major company in the southeast. As the business continued to grow, goods were shipped to every state in the South and exported to parts of Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. In 1946 Sterchi Brothers Stores, Inc. went on the New York Stock Exchange, the only Knoxville company to do so at that time. In addition to selling furniture, Sterchi owned forest land in Kentucky from which timber was used to produce the furniture he sold. The company also operated five manufacturing plants. By 1985 Sterchi Brothers had grown to a chain of seventy-three stores in seven southeastern states.

J.G. Sterchi married Bertha Karns in 1897 and a few years later bought the farm his grandfather and father had owned on Dry Gap Pike. In addition to the 371 acre farm he called Bellefontaine, Sterchi bought adjoining farms until he had amassed an estate of 1,400 acres. In 1910, he built Stratford, the home he and his wife used until his death on December 9, 1932.

Although he continued to spend time involved in the furniture business, J.G. spent his later years managing his greatest love, his farm on Dry Gap Pike. J.G. and his wife also continued to divide their residence, living in bad weather in the Hotel Farragut in downtown Knoxville (Gay Street Commercial Historic District, NR11/4/86) and Stratford on Dry Gap Pike. Before they lived in the

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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

Farragut, Sterchi had owned and lived part time at the Stratford Hotel in downtown Knoxville (no longer standing). For J.G. Sterchi, the farm surrounding Stratford was much more than a hobby. He owned the dairy located on the farm, and from Stratford he supplied fresh vegetables, fruit, butter, milk, and eggs to the Stratford Hotel and elsewhere. The dairy was apparently a commercial dairy, employing 100 people, and variously known as Sterchis, Sterchi Dairy Farm, and Sterchi and Son Farm Dairy.

In addition to his factories and stores, Sterchi supported local business efforts, becoming a mainstay of advertising support for Knoxville radio station WNOX. For a few years, Sterchi Brothers owned the radio station. The furniture company also distributed records for Vocalion Records. He served on the staff of Tennessee governor Austin Peay; on the board of stewards at Church Street Methodist Church; as a director of the First Appalachian Exposition in 1910, and in 1916 was president of the East Tennessee Division Fair held at Chilhowee Park. In 1921 he bought Chilhowee Park (known at the time as Hocus Pocus Park) and deeded it to the city for the free use of Knoxvillians. Other business interests included real estate and coal mine operations.

At J.G.'s death, the store in downtown Knoxville closed to honor him, draping its façade in gray bunting. His funeral was held at Stratford. Following his death, his widow continued to live at Stratford until the early 1970s. After her death in 1973, Stratford was purchased by Gilbert and "Dott" Pratt. Dorothea Pratt received the house by deed in 1991, and in 1998 Linda and Buddy (Hollis H., Jr.) Malin purchased Stratford and began the extensive restoration that showcases Stratford's current appearance.

The Classical Revival Stratford was designed by Richard F. Graf (1865-1929) of R.F. Graf and Sons (Knoxville, TN 1910-1929). Graf was born in Nashville, but is thought of as a Knoxville architect since Knoxville is the location of most of his work and his firm was headquartered in Knoxville. Graf's grandfather was one of the Swiss immigrants who came to Morgan County in the 1840s. Graf did cabinetwork and contracting while learning architecture. He was part of Vinson and Graf, contractors, from 1887 until 1891 when he became a supervisor for the Knoxville Cabinet and Mantel Company. He was a specifications writer and supervisor for the architectural company of Barber and Klutz in 1894, left for a while, and returned to the firm in 1901 as an associate. He formed R.F. Graf and Sons between 1907 and 1910. The company included Richard F., Herbert R., and John Richard Graf. Stratford was built in 1910, one of the company's earliest projects. The Graf's are recorded as the architects of other well-known buildings in Knoxville, including the ten-story Sterchi Brothers furniture store at 114 South Gay Street (Southern Terminal and Warehouse Historic District), and Miller's Department Store, 445 S. Gay Street (Gay Street Commercial Historic District). Other Graf-designed residences include the 1915 brick Queen Anne/Craftsman house at 2809 Kingston Pike (Kingston Pike Historic District), and Graf's personal residence, designed in the International style and located at 325 Woodlawn Pike. The company designed many other residences, commercial buildings, civic buildings, and churches. Like J.G. Sterchi, R.F. Graf was involved with the 1910 Appalachian Exposition.

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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

Popular from the late nineteenth century on, the Classical Revival style, sometimes called Neoclassical or Georgian Revival, is often characterized by a dominant façade portico with classical columns. As is the case with Stratford, the façade portico is frequently two stories, pedimented, and embellished with elaborate capitals, dentils, and boxed cornices. The symmetrical design of the exterior, hip roof, prominent entrance with sidelights and fanlight, and side porte cochere are other characteristic features of the style that are seen on the nominated house. The style was not as popular as the Colonial Revival style, but both had similar features that imitated colonial buildings. Knoxville has many Classical Revival houses but few that are as well-executed as Stratford. A later example of the style that is comparable in form but not as elaborately detailed is the Dempster House at 2805 Gibbs Drive (Gibbs Drive Historic District, NR 11/8/00).

Complementing Stratford's status as one of the best preserved examples of the Classical Revival style in Knoxville and Knox County is its setting. Although the surrounding agricultural lands have given way to suburban development, the house's commanding presence on the knoll above Dry Gap Pike, together with its entrance gates and other outbuildings, provides a unique picture of a prosperous country farm. Much of the original landscaping is still visible, including one particularly rare ginkgo tree. The current owner became curious about the age of this very large tree, and contacted The University of Tennessee to perform an evaluation. This ginkgo has been dated at more than 300 years old. The current property owner says that further research provided by the University indicates that a French botanist may have visited the area around 1698. He is said to have landed in St. Augustine, Florida before making his way to what is now Tennessee. He is also said to have planted a tree on what is now known as "the hill" at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Although the historical record does not mention anything about the specific area in question being visited by the Frenchman, this account has some plausibility because the ginkgo is not native to the United States and therefore must have been imported. That ginkgo is part of the remaining early twentieth century landscaping, and the five acres surrounding Stratford is adequate to provide an appropriate setting for the restored house.

Stratford, with the preservation of its Classical Revival architecture and setting, is an excellent reminder of the prominence of its first owner, James Gilbert Sterchi. It is the property most closely associated with Sterchi.

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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

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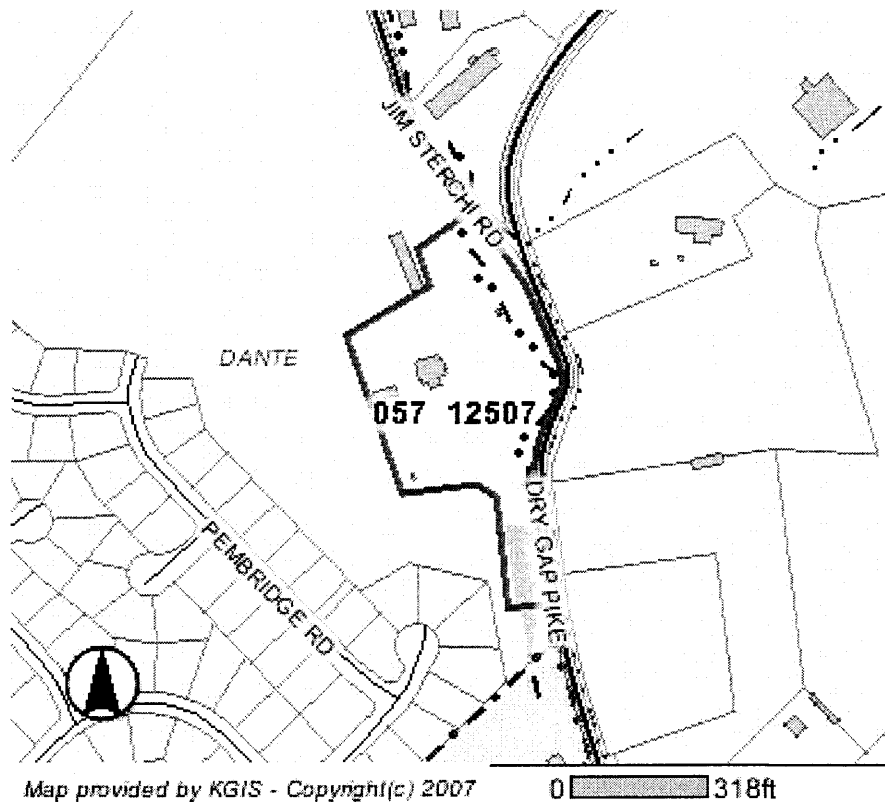
Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property includes all of parcel 057 12507 as recorded in Deed Book 227, p. 918. Deed dated Feb. 26, 1998. Start from point on Dry Gap Pike northwest approximately 925 feet, then southwest approximately 150 feet, then southeast approximately 90 feet, then southwest approximately 225 feet, then southeast approximately 390 feet, then east approximately 173 feet, then southeast approximately 50 feet, then south approximately 257 feet, then east approximately 98 feet to point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the remaining property associated with the Sterchi estate.



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Knox County, Tennessee



Additional photos. Above left: first floor central hall. Above: dining room. Below left: first floor central hall stair. Below: entry gates. All photos from (accessed 3/25/09) <http://the.gardenweb.com/forums/load/oldhouse/msg1121190014846.html>



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Stratford
Knox County, Tennessee

Photo by: Ann K. Bennett
Date: March 19, 2009
Digital images: Tennessee Historical Commission

East façade, facing west
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East façade and south elevation, facing northwest
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South elevation, facing north
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West and north elevations, facing southeast
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North elevation, facing south
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Exterior grate detail
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Porte cochere and carriage step on south elevation, facing northeast
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East façade column details
8 of 27

Stair in central hall, first floor, facing south
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Family parlor and central hall, first floor, facing southeast
10 of 27

Fireplace in family parlor
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Main parlor with fireplace, facing southwest
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China cabinet in dining room
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Stratford
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Dining room with fireplace, facing west
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Second floor stair and landing
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Second floor stair and landing
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Second floor central hall
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Detail of second floor central hall pilaster
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Leaded glass windows, stair landing between floors
19 of 27

Fireplace in northeast bedroom, second floor
20 of 27

Stair to attic
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Carriage house/garage, east facade, facing west
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Carriage house/garage, east façade and south elevation, facing southwest
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Springhouse
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Gazebo
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Gazebo and surrounding properties, facing west
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House and setting, facing west
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