

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF GREENSBORO, GREENE COUNTY, GEORGIA

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY #6

I. IDENTIFICATION

NAME OF PROPERTY: **Dr. Calvin M. Baber House**
LOCATION: Penfield Road
CITY: Greensboro
COUNTY: Greene (code 133)
STATE: Georgia (code 013)
ZIP CODE: 30642
OWNER: Joseph Luke
OWNER ADDRESS: Route 2, Box 5C, Union Point, Georgia 30669
CLASSIFICATION: Building
CURRENT USE: Rental residential
ACREAGE: less than one acre
U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE: Greensboro, Ga.
U.T.M. REFERENCE: Z17 E298240 N3718000
V.B.D. OR TAX MAP NUMBER: G13-40 (current/historic lot)

II. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

One-story, frame, Bungalow-style house sheathed in weatherboard; gabled metal roof, bracketed eaves, exposed rafter ends; porch extends across entire front facade with gabled roof facing street, supported by square wood columns set on granite slabs and brick piers, granite entrance steps with brick cheek walls, portion of porch screened; board-and-batten detailing in front and rear gables; windows vary, 2/2 at front porch, remainder 6/6, 1/9; interior chimney; brick foundation piers; additions appear obvious as projecting rooms on side and rear of structure; interior features plaster walls with some wallpaper, wood floors, and tongue-and-groove ceilings; house situated on small city lot, unkept landscape of foundation shrubs and grass lawn. Fair condition.

PHOTOGRAPH NUMBERS: 106-107

III. HISTORY

ORIGINAL OWNER: Dr. Calvin M. Baber
ORIGINAL USE: residence
ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown
HISTORIC ACREAGE: same as current
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1924-1925
DATE(S) OF MAJOR ALTERATIONS: not documented

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

Dr. Calvin M. Baber came to Greensboro from Alabama in the early 1920s after the death of Dr. A. T. Chisolm, referred to in the

local newspaper as a "respected colored physician." Dr. Chisolm was apparently Greensboro's first black doctor; Baber became the community's second black physician. Dr. George Lawrence, who now practices medicine at Emory University, was the third.

Dr. Baber had received his medical degree from Meharry Medical College in Tennessee in 1921. That same year he was licensed to practice medicine. According to local property tax records, he arrived in Greensboro and began practicing medicine in 1923. He practiced medicine from this time until his death in 1945. Again according to local property tax records, he most likely built his house in the period from 1924 to 1925; however, he may have built the house a year earlier. In addition to practicing medicine, Dr. Baber was active in real estate from the time he arrived in Greensboro until his death. Deed references note that Baber purchased a number of lots and buildings in the community. Several were later resold to other individuals and in several instances the property was deeded to his mother, Sally Baber of Milstead, Alabama. Dr. Baber also owned a lodge (now demolished) in downtown Greensboro where he had his office along with other black enterprises. The house he built is located in the "Railroad" section of Greensboro, one of two distinctly black neighborhoods. The other area is known as "Canaan." Local informants noted that Baber had a reputation for buying property with dilapidated structures, tearing down the structures, and then reusing the materials. This may explain the variety of window types found in Baber's residence. The house and property were apparently given to Sallie Baber and willed to her daughter, Pearl Jeter, at her death in 1944. The property was sold by the Jeter estate to Joseph and Indiana Luke on November 29, 1967. In these transactions the property was noted as the "Sallie Baber or C.M. Baber House, located in the section of the city known as 'Railroad' 80' x 180'". Dr. Baber died on November 22, 1945. According to newspaper accounts, he was in Atlanta and "became ill while witnessing two negro colleges play football. He was taken to an automobile and died before reaching the hospital." Income at the time of his death included the rent from his store building and the rent from five other buildings as well as from his medical practice.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA: B, C

AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Medicine, Black History

SIGNIFICANT DATE(S): 1924-1925

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture/Black History. The Dr. Calvin M. Baber House is significant architecturally as a good local example in

Greensboro's black community of an early 20th-century Craftsman/Bungalow house. It features many of the architectural characteristics that typify this style: low proportions and massing, broad gable roofs, wide front porch with brick and tapered wooden supports, exposed rafter ends, and other woodwork including board-and-batten finishes in the gables. This example of Craftsman/Bungalow architecture is virtually unique in the multiple resource area since, by the 1920s, the community's economy was stagnating due to the decline in cotton agriculture. Moreover, it is a landmark historic building in Greensboro's black neighborhoods, whose historic structures have, by and large, not survived. In a small town like Greensboro it is relatively unusual for a residence in black neighborhoods to make such overt references to prevailing national architectural styles.

Medicine/Black History. In terms of Greensboro's medical history, this house is important for its associations with Dr. Calvin M. Baber, Greensboro's second black physician. Moreover, it is the only historic structure in the community--residence or office--associated with Greensboro's black physicians. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries it was difficult for many rural and small-town blacks to obtain qualified medical services. Doctors like Baber played crucial roles in the health and well-being of black Georgians. Because of their important role in the community, they customarily were respected figures and community leaders, and such was the case with Dr. Baber. In addition to practicing medicine, Dr. Baber also bought, sold, and improved real estate and owned a major commercial building in which were housed his office and other black professional offices and businesses.

CONTRIBUTING/NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:

1 contributing building

VII. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS: None

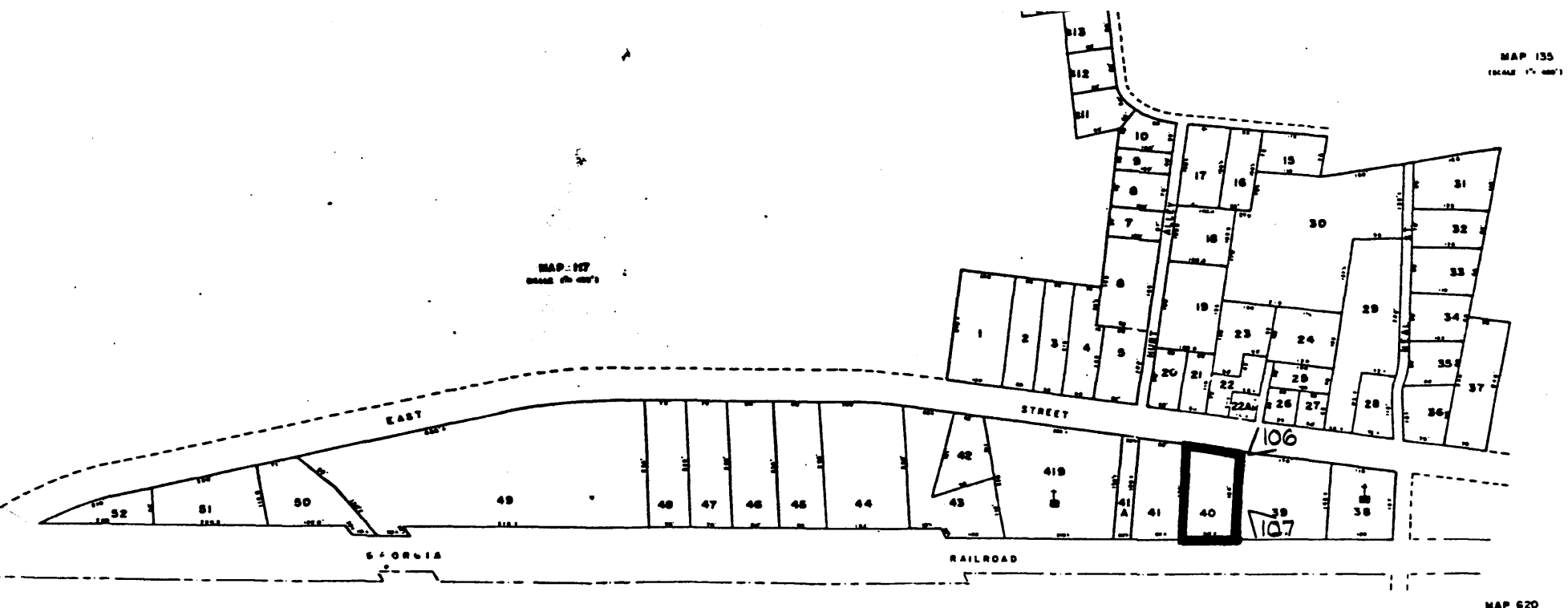
BIBLIOGRAPHY: SEE Bibliography, Section 9, National Register Nomination Form

FORM PREPARED BY: SEE Form Prepared By, Section 11, National Register Nomination Form

Historic Resources of Greensboro,
Greene County, Georgia

DR. CALVIN M. BABER HOUSE

North: ↗
 Scale: 1" = 275' 0' ----- 275'
 Boundary of nominated property: **█**
 Photograph/direction of view: >



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DONNICOTT & ASSOCIATES, INC. VALUERS FOR BUSINESS • CONSULTANTS 11 PITTENGER STREET	THE GREENSBORO MAP	1/2500' L.S.P.
	GREENE COUNTY GEORGIA	COUNTY C.O.B. 198 REC'D 10 24 11 88

July 20 1987

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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NATIONAL
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Section number _____ Page _____

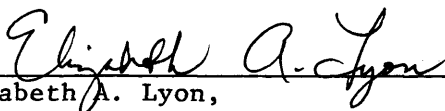
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Historic Resources of Greensboro, Greensboro, Greene County, Ga.
Individual Property #6
Dr. Calvin M. Baber House

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

Period of Significance: 1924/1925-1937

Dr. Baber practiced medicine and lived in this house in Greensboro from the date of its construction in 1924/1925 until his death in 1945. Dr. Baber is significant for being the second black physician in Greensboro, and his house is the only historic structure associated with Greensboro's black medical community and one of a very few historic black resources of any kind in the city. However, the significance of the house and its historical associations does not appear to be "exceptional" in terms of warranting an exception to the National Register's 50-year rule. Therefore, in accordance with guideline 21 of the Supplement to National Register Bulletin 16, "Guidelines for Completing National Register of Historic Places Forms," the period of significance for this property is 1924/1925-1937.



Elizabeth A. Lyon,
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

10/27/87
Date