United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received APR 1 9 1983 date entered

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

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1. Nam	ne					
historic	Robertson. Dr	. and M	rs. Char	les G., H	ouse and Garden	
and/or common	·			· ·		
2. Loca	ation					
street & number	್. 460 Leffelle	Street	South		1	I∕A not for publication
city, town	Salem		N/A vi	cinity of	Fifth Congression	nal District
state	Oregon	code	41	county	Marion	code 047
3. Clas	sificatio	n				
Category district _X_ building(s) structure site object	Ownership public _X_ private both Public Acquisiti N/A in process N/A being conside	on <i>i</i>	Accessibl yes: re	upied n progress l e	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park X private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. O wn	er of Pro	pert	У			
name	Robert M. and	Nancy 1	W. Gorms	en		
street & number	460 Leffelle	Street :	South			
city, town	Salem		N/A vi	cinity of	state	Oregon 97302
5. Loca	ation of L	.egal	Des	criptic	on	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc.	Mario	n County	Clerk (R	ecorder)	
street & number		Mario	n County	Courthou	se	
city, town		Salem			state	Oregon 97301
6. Rep	resentati	on in	Exi	sting \$	Surveys	
title	Statewide Inv Historic Prop		of	has this pro	perty been determined eli	gible?yes _Xno
date	1982				federal X_ stat	e county loca
depository for su	urvey records	State	Histori	c Preserv	ation Office	
city, town		Salem			state	Oregon 97310

7. Description

X_excellent deterioratedX_ unalteredX_ original site ĝood j ruins altered moved dateN/A fair unexposed		
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

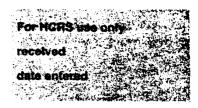
The Charles G. and Mildred Robertson House and Garden occupy a 150x192-foot site with a 20 to 25% grade on the north slope of Fairmount Hill in South Salem. The property is situated in a fashionable residential neighborhood at the west end of Leffelle Street, where a bluff drops off to bottom land of the Willamette River and Slough to the west. The most distinctive characteristic of the site, topographically, is that from Leffelle Street to the rear lot line, the property rises nearly 40 feet in elevation in a run of 150 feet. Here, architect Clarence Smith and the landscape architectural firm of Lord and Schryver skillfully adapted the front driveway, the house and rear garden to the demanding site in a sequence of traverses and terraces. Developed in 1931 and 1932, the property is an outstanding example in the Leffelle Street neighborhood and in Salem of the harmonious integration of period house and garden which was the ideal of the so-called "rational modern movement." The house, a substantial building in the English Cottage style, is related to its setting by native plant materials and a rear garden of intimate scale informally planted on a formal, axial plan.

A paved driveway ascends the front half of the property on a traverse from east to west. The driveway is lined by low retaining walls, and the embankment, planted in ivy and ferns, is outlined by low shrubs and trees and a cresting of Ionicera hedge. Atop the embankment, the driveway leads directly to the garage at the west end of the house and loops eastward to terminate in a paved parking area in front of the main entrance. From the parking area, which is lined by a low, stone retaining wall and flowering shrubs, stone steps rise to the front walk. The area surrounding the pavement is planted in lawn bordered by mature trees, including mountain ash, fir and plum.

The Robertson House is rectangular in plan, measuring 31x77 feet, and is oriented with its main axis east to west. The principal facade thus faces the driveway approach on the north. The south elevation overlooks the garden in the rear. While the house is only one -and-a-half stories in height, it is nonetheless imposing because of the steeply-pitched hipped roof which dominates the main volume. A hip-roofed study wing is telescoped from the east end of the main volume, and a large brick chimney imitating the clustered flues of English manor houses of the 16th and 17th centuries straddles the ridge of this wing. Exterior walls are veneered with used brick, and fenestration is in the Tudor vein with leaded panes fitted into heavily mullioned openings. The entrance core of the house is marked by a set of steeply-pitched gables, that of the porch being graduated in size and telescoped from the major gable, in which a vertical expanse of mullioned windows lights the stair hall interior. Small, shed roofed dormers with multi-paned casement windows light upstairs bedrooms.

The interior of the house is arranged around the two-story stairhall which is traditional for period houses of this type. The stairhall, offset slightly from a small vestibule, is distinguished by a stair railing based on late medieval precedent in which sections of the balusters, with their heavy, vasiform turnings, are raked to be parallel with the flights of stairs. To the east of the stairhall is the livingroom, beyond which is the study. To the west of the stairhall is a service hall leading to the breakfast room and kitchen in the southwest corner. The garage takes up the northwest corner of the ground plan. The diningroom, directly behind the stairhall, overlooks the garden, as do all rooms in the house with a south exposure. The diningroom has particular significance in the garden layout, however, as the main, north-south axis is centered on the diningroom window. At the south east corner of the house, in the angle created by the study wing, is a small, secluded porch which gives access to the garden from the study. This porch is one of the distinctive ways in which the landscape architects achieved circulation between house and garden. At the

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west side of the house, a service walk leads from the driveway to the kitchen and garden gateway. Access to the garden is also provided by French doors opening from the breakfast room.

Interior finish is typical of the period type, with plaster walls and dark-stained woodwork generally, and dark-stained paneling in the study, where the medieval theme is further carried out by a heraldic motif in colored glass in one of the leaded paned windows. Doorways between the diningroom and stairhall and the livingroom have ogee arch heads. The livingroom chimneypiece has a Tudor-arched fireplace opening and a chimneybreast of linenfold paneling.

The rear garden is both compact and rich in composition. It is constructed on two levels, or terraces, and is laid out on a cross axial plan. The main, or north-south axis is centered on the diningroom window and a bench at the garden wall at the uppermost reach of the property. The cross axis is a path through the flower garden which separates upper and lower terraces. At the intersection of the axes is an oval, hedge-lined spatial compartment, the focal point of which is a sundial. At the west end of the lower terrace is a grape arbor, originally of wood construction, but rebuilt of brick for the Robert Gormsens, the current owners, under supervision of Edith Schryver after bases of the original posts At the east end of the lower terrace is a naturalistic pond which combines with a corridor of space relating to the southeast porch as a distinct, internal vista. A trellis at the west end of the upper terrace marks the entrance to a small reserve garden. The whole is characterized by a harmonious profusion of plant materials in boxwood hedgelined compartments shaded by mature evergreens, fruit trees and trees of ornamental variety. In recent years, drainage from a greenhouse constructed on neighboring property lying upslope weakened the root systems of tulip trees flanking the garden wall bench. Such trees have been removed or replaced over the years as need required under supervision of the original landscape firm. The original plant scheme is partially documented in the Lord and Schryver landscape plan drawn in the "Fall of 1931". The watercolor presentation drawing was mounted and framed for use as a fireplace screen by the Robertsons and has remained on the premises to the present day. One of the architectural features which Lord and Schryver occasionally used in their Salem gardens was iron fencing and cresting salvaged from redeveloped historic properties. The Robertson-Gormsen garden was enlivened by an iron railing from the old Marion County Courthouse (1872-1873), demolished in 1952.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture architecture art commerce communications		X_ landscape architectur law literature military music t philosophy politics/government	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1931-1932	Builder/Architect Clar	ence L. Smith, arch	itect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Lord and Schryver, landscape architects

The commodious, one-and-a-half story English Cottage at 460 Leffelle Street South in Salem, Oregon was designed for Charles G. and Mildred Robertson by Clarence L. Smith and was completed in 1932. It is locally significant under National Register criterion "c" as one of the best preserved mature works of the capital city's leading designers of period houses during the late 1920s and early 1930s. It is one of five residences designed by Smith in the same idiom which stand in a fashionable enclave at the westerly terminus of Leffelle Street on the north slope of Fairmount Hill. The Robertson House, however, is a pivotal property in this context. It is the largest in scope and represents the best design. The house is an apt blend of several period styles, including Tudor and French Provincial, which are closely related to the English Cottage style. It displays the steeply-pitched hipped roof, the prominent, steep, graduated gables marking the entrance core, and the masonry walls and heavily-mullioned windows which are distinctive characteristics of these period styles. At the core of the unaltered interior is the traditional medieval stairhall with a stair railing in which several sections have raking balusters. Leaded panes and heraldic colored glass motifs, dark-stained paneling, ogee arched doorways, a chimneypiece with Tudor-arched fireplace opening and linen fold paneling also epitomize this period type.

The property also is distinctive under criterion "c" because it includes an important example of garden architecture by Lord and Schryver, the first landscape architecture firm in Oregon to be formed by women. Elizabeth Lord and Edith Schryver studied at the Lowthorpe School of Lancscape Architecture for Women in Groton, Massachusetts and established their practice in Salem in 1929. Their clients ranged as far north as Seattle and Tacoma, Washington. The Robertson garden, characteristically laid out at the time the house was planned and under construction, beginning in 1931, is an exceptionally well preserved example of Lord and Schryver's work, which is characterized by "meticulous detailing" and by formally-arranged spatial compartments "adapted to demanding sites." A quintessential Lord and Schryver garden, it is structured on boxwood-lined terraces ascending to the rear of the steeply sloping site. Having been faithfully maintained by subsequent owners, it is among the three or four best preserved of the firm's works in Salem.

Architect Clarence Smith gained his training at Cornell University School of Architecture and with several New York firms. He was briefly associated with the firm of Sutton and Whitney in his native Portland before coming to Salem in 1921 to become a draftsman for local contractor Cuyler Van Patten. The association of the house with prominent physician Charles G. Robertson, who made his career in the U.S. Navy Medical Corps after about 1942, is of subordinate interest under criterion "b" chiefly because Dr. Robertson and his wife, the former Mildred Apperson, developed their property in close cooperation with their architect and landscape architects. They lived in the house ten years.

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9. Ma	ajor Biblio	graphica	Refere	nces		
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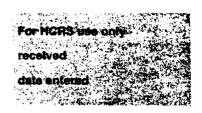
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Clarence Smith (1894-1951) was born in Portland, Oregon and was three years an apprentice to Charles Ertz and, subsequently, O. L. DuPuy in his native city. He studied two years at the Cornell University School of Architecture and served as draftsman to Gibb and Waltz in Ithaca, New York (1915-1916), Green and Wicks in Buffalo, New York (1916-1917), Kidd of New York City (1918), and Sutton and Whitney in Portland, Oregon (1919-1920). He arrived in Salem in 1921 as draftsman for contractor Cuyler Van Patten. In time, Smith pursued independent practice and became the capital city's leading designer of period houses. Although Smith used the title of architect for at least ten years, he qualified for a license by senior examination of the State Board of Architect Examiners as late as 1940, and being of somewhat independent temperament, he did not keep his fees paid after that year. Those who knew him in Salem characterized Smith as a creative person, a sort of "unsung artist," and "genius". All acknowledged his modesty and "wonderful ability to design." In 1938 he took the examinations of the State Board of Architect Examiners and, ironically, failed in the subject of architectural history. In 1940, the year in which he was successful in his bid for a license, letters of recommendation were submitted on his behalf by community leaders including Paul Wallace, William S. Walton and J. M. Devers. Smith was responsible for the most fashionable houses in the city during the 1920s and 1930s. He worked in a variety of period styles, most notably the Georgian, Colonial and English Cottage styles. Other noteworthy houses at the west end of Leffelle Street designed by Smith in the English Cottage vein are the Burt Ford House (1925), 490 Leffelle Street South; the P. D. Quisenberry House (1926), 360 Leffelle; the Edward R. Viesko House (1932), 445 Leffelle; and the Conde B. McCullough House (1934), 465 Leffelle. With its generous site, formal garden, and superior design, the Robertson House, completed in 1932, is the leading example of its period type in this enclave. Also completed in 1932 was Smith's ultimate work in the clear-cut French Provincial idiom, the stately house for Edgar Pierce at 1610 Fir Street South on Fairmount Hill. The preeminent example of residential architecture in the Mediterranean style in Salem, the Curtis Cross House (1924), at 1635 Fairmount Avenue on Fairmount Hill, was designed by Smith and listed in the National Register in 1981.

The Robertson House projectillustrates the customary working method of the landscape firm of Lord and Schryver. Clients, architect and landscape architects worked in concert from the planning stage, and the result was the kind of harmony between house, garden and site that was the ideal of the so-called "rational modern movement." In the first quarter of the 20th century, Charles Adams Platt, Wilson Eyre, Jr., Charles Barton Keene, John Russell Pope, Cope and Stewardson and others working chiefly on the East Coast had succeeded in formulating a kind of country house architecture which, owing to its utility in spatial organization, its expressive use of native materials and its harmonious integration with the setting, was felt by architectural critics of the day to have achieved a distinctly American character. Through their training and early experiences, the two partners of the firm of Lord and Schryver, were schooled in this tradition, and their individual talents were complementary. Edith Schryver had been a protege of the well-known landscape architect, Ellen Shipman, whom Charles Platt had instructed in draftsmanship at Cornish, New Hampshire. Miss Schryver was accomplished in design and construction, and Elizabeth Lord developed a mastery of plant composition. Their meeting in Lowthorpe School circles on the East Coast in the 1920s was fortuitous; their subsequent partnership was a long and fruitful one.

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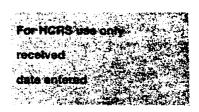
Edith Schryver, a native of the Hudson River Valley in New York, entered the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture for Women at Groton, Massachusetts in the fall of 1920. The school had just been re-opened in 1919 after a hiatus during the First War. It was destined to be closed, permanently, at the time of the Second World War. Miss Schryver was graduated in June, 1923 with the first class to complete the full, three-year course following the reopening of the school. The curriculum included horticulture, taught by a resident horticulturist, and landscape architecture, architecture and surveying, taught by visiting instructors from Boston and elsewhere. During the summers Miss Schryver found work with Ellen Shipman's firm in New York, and others. Following graduation, she worked full-time for Mrs. Shipman for five years.

Miss Elizabeth Lord, a native of Salem, Oregon, was the daughter of State Supreme Court Judge, Governor, and Ambassador to Argentina, William Paine Lord (1839-1911). She came by her interest in horticulture naturally. Her mother founded the Salem Floral Society, now the Salem Garden Club, in 1915. It was among the first such societies in the state. Following her mother's death in 1924, Miss Lord turned seriously to horticulture. entered the Lowthorpe School in the fall of 1926 and was enrolled there intermittently through the fall of 1928. It was in December of 1928 that Miss Lord and Miss Schryver came to Salem, where they formed their partnership and opened their office in the following Through the years they developed a clientele which ranged up and down the Northern Pacific Coast. Their Eastern connections, and connections of their own, broughtprivate garden commissions from well-to-do clients in Portland, Tacoma and Seattle as well as The essence of Lord and Schryver garden design is intimate scale and the juxtaposition of informal plantings with a strong axial plan. Within the formal skeletal framework, circulation between house and garden and enclosure are stressed. With its cross axial paths and a central focal point created by an oval, hedge-lined spatial compartment with sundial at its center, the Robertson Garden epitomizes the firm's work. Moreover, through a sequence of terraces, it is adapted to the peculiarities of the site, which has a rise of nearly 40 feet in the 150 feet from front to rear property line.

The body of work by Lord and Schryver was complete by the time of Miss Lord's death in 1976. Oregon landscapes and gardens by the firm which have been listed in the National Register to date are those associated with the Asahel Bush House, the Dr. Luke Port House ("Deepwood"), and the Daniel Jarman House, all in Salem; and the Dr. Henry J. Minthorn House (Herbert Hoover's Boyhood Home) in Newberg. The volume of the firm's work was not exceptional, for emphasis was placed on quality and meticulous detail. As landscape architect and historian Wallace Kay Huntington has explained, "the gardens of Lord and Schryver were demanding of the client; they imposed a program of maintenance and implied a knowledge of plants on the part of the client that might well intimidate more casual gardeners, or those unwillingly to pay for professional maintenance". Mr. Huntington has pointed out:

...eschewing the cliches of shifting fashion and having for clients a monied aristocracy both conservative and publicity-shy, the /Lord and Schryver/gardens remained largely unpublished--too remote from public view and too subtle for popular taste. Their reputation was with the cognoscenti.

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Nevertheless, the firm's contributions to landscape architecture in the capital city were civic in nature as well as private. Elizabeth Lord's first public service was as chairman of the Willamette Valley division of the State Federation of Garden Clubs. For the Salem Club, she was responsible for plantings on the grounds of the old Marion County Courthouse. She long served on the Salem Parks Board and Parks Advisory Committee and was the spearhead of the city's street tree planting program. She served on the Capitol Planning Commission from 1949 to 1963, and from 1949 to 1951 she was president of the Salem Art Association, an organization which has as a primary mission the preservation and operation of the Asahel Bush Historic House Museum in City-owned Bush's Pasture Park. Miss Lord and Miss Schryver both took personal interest in the development of Bush House as a public museum and devoted many years, collectively, to supervising the landscaping of the grounds and advising on interior furnishings. Miss Schryver continues to reside at the firm's long-time address on Mission Street in Salem, where the private garden is so skillfully arranged in its succession of bloom and spatial relationships that it is, in Mr. Huntington's words, a "tour de force of garden design."²

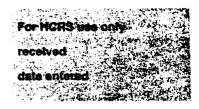
Charles G. Robertson, for whom the nominated property was developed, was the son of Charles H. Robertson, founder of the Salem Clinic, which opened about 1926. Upon completing his medical training, the younger Robertson joined his father in practice at the clinic until he was called to active duty in the United States Navy Medical Corps. Robertson's wife, the former Mildred Apperson, was the daughter of E. C. Apperson, a prosperous McMinnville banker. Robertson joined the Naval Reserve in 1924 and qualified for professional service as a doctor in 1937. He was called to active duty in 1941 or 1942, and remained in the Medical Corps until his retirement as Captain in 1960. In his later career in the Navy, he was a hospital administrator. Thus, the period of the Robertson's occupancy of the house did not exceed ten years.

The Robertson property has had only two subsequent owners, Carl E. Nelson and the current owners, Robert M. and Nancy Wallace Gormsen. Carl Nelson is noted in local history as president of the Miles Linen Mill, which opened in 1925 and was closed with much of the rest of the linen industry in Salem in the course of the Great Depression. In 1946, Nelson and his partner formed the wool brokerage firm of Nelson and Fitzmaurice. The Gormsens acquired the property from Nelson's heirs in 1952 and in the intervening years have scrupulously maintained the house and garden in the original configuration. The Gormsens have sought Edith Schryver's counsel from time to time on minor improvements to the garden and replacement of damaged trees as need required.

Wallace Kay Huntington, "Parks and Gardens of Western Oregon," Space, Style and Structure: Building in Northwest America (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974), page 563-564.

²Ibid.

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Clarence Smith

David Duniway, interviews with Mrs. Clarence Smith, Viva Poorman, Opal Young, Edith Schryver, Francis W. Smith, Alice McCormack, Robert Aiken, Shirley Hadley, and Nancy Gormsen, 1981-1982.

Oregon State Board of Architectural Examiners. Clarence L. Smith file (State Archives).
Morning Oregonian, June 22, 1951, Sec. 3, page 6, Funeral Notices.

Lord & Schryver

Huntington, Wallace Kay, "Parks and Gardens of Western Oregon," <u>Space,</u>
<u>Style and Structure: Building in Northwest America.</u> Portland, Oregon.

Oregon Historical Society, 1974, Vol. 2, page 563-4.

Mission Mill Museum Association, Program for Panegyric II, January 13, 1973, Profile by David Duniway of Elizabeth Lord, honored under category of Professions.

Elisabeth Walton Potter, interview with Edith Schryver, November 15, 1982.

Charles G. Robertson

David Duniway, interviews with Dr. Walcott Buren, Nancy Gormsen, Thomas Kay, and Robert M. Brownell, Jr.

Statesman-Journal, clipping file, June 2, 1950.

Charles G. Robertson, Jr. graduates from U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Capital Journal, July 16, 1941, page 4, Obituary, Dr. Charles G. Robertson.

Clark, Robert Carlton, History of the Willamette Valley, Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1927. Vol. 3., page 246-250. Biographical note on E. C. Apperson, father of Mildred Apperson Robertson.

Carl Nelson

Interviews with Nancy Gormsen, Thomas and Shirley Kay, and Jack Fitzmaurice.

Statesman-Journal, clipping file, May 6 and June 1, 1971.

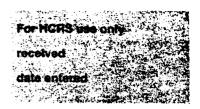
Wayne S. Nelson Promoted to Rear Admiral.

Oregon Statesman, October 22, 1925, page 8, Miles Linen Mill... starts.

Oregon Statesman, October 30, 1951, page 10, Carl E. Nelson Found Dead...

Capital Journal, Home Edition, May 16, 1952, page 2, Mr. and Mrs. Gormsen buy Carl Nelson Home.

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2 and 3, and the easterly 96' of Lots 10,11 and 12 of Block 21 of the Fairmount Park Addition to the Plat of Salem, Marion County, Oregon, excepting the terminus of a public alleyway measuring 12x50 feet at the center of the south edge of the property. The property thus contains in all 28,200 square feet, more or less.