

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 29 1985

date entered SEP 26 1985

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

1. Name

historic William Smith House (5AH280)
and/or common William Smith House

2. Location

street & number 412 Oswego Court NA not for publication
city, town Aurora n/a vicinity of
state Colorado code 08 county Arapahoe code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Randall & Kathy Sanders
street & number 412 Oswego Court
city, town Aurora n/a vicinity of state Colorado

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Arapahoe County Courthouse
street & number 5334 S. Prince Street
city, town Littleton state Colorado

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Aurora Historic Preservation Inventory, Volume I has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1978 federal state county local
depository for survey records Colorado Historical Society, OAHP, 1300 Broadway
city, town Denver state Colorado 80203

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The William Smith House is a single, detached, brick dwelling of rectangular plan, located in a 1960s residential neighborhood, and overlooking the Highline Canal which runs directly behind the property. An example of the American Foursquare style of architecture, the Smith House is one of only two Foursquare residences in Aurora, and has remained basically unaltered since it was built in 1910.

Characteristic elements of the Foursquare style of architecture evident in the Smith House include the square plan, hipped roof, broad overhanging eaves with brackets of Oregon pine, two story side bay, and a porch with hipped roof, supported by square posts.

The house has wood frame, double-hung, one over one sash windows with plain surrounds and stone sills. A brick belt course connects the sills of the larger windows on both stories. There are two small windows on the second story, one on the southwest side and the other centered on the front facade. On the southwest and northeast sides of the house are stained glass windows with stone sills and capped with radiating voussoirs and brick keystones.

The main door is a single panel with a pine core and white oak veneer, and a large window pane and sidelights. There are two external chimneys, both brick, located on the southwest and northeast sides of the structure. Sidelight windows are leaded glass.

Porch details include a pedimented entrance decorated with fishscale shingles, concrete steps, square posts with flat stone caps. The original screens have been removed. The porch wraps around the front facade to the southwest wall.

A two-story frame addition on the rear wall is original and features a lean-to roof, large screened windows, and a staircase connecting the two floors. The second floor veranda was enclosed at a later date.

A small brick, one-car garage¹ with wood doors and gable roof is located on the southeast corner of the lot. Most of the original landscaping has been removed with the exception of the large trees which line the canal.

The interior of the Smith House remains basically intact with the exception of the renovation of the unfinished basement into living space. The basic style of the interior is Craftsman, with emphasis on natural wood materials. Ground floor wood is oak, and pine on the second floor. All of the moldings are original, as are the fireplace with green tiles and the built-in buffet with leaded glass doors in the dining room. The stairs are of Texas pine.

Original architectural drawings indicate that there have been no major alterations to the Smith House since it was built. The only major change has occurred in the site which has changed from an agricultural setting to a residential setting.

¹The garage dates to about 1915 when the original owner, William Smith, purchased a car. The building is intact and is considered a contributing element. The nomination therefore includes the main house and garage, both contributing buildings.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
___ 1800-1899	___ commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1910 **Builder/Architect** Joseph Wilson, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The William Smith House is significant for its association with William Smith, gentleman farmer and a prime mover in the organization of Aurora School District, #28; for its association with the agricultural heritage of Aurora; and as one of the best examples of historic residential architecture in Aurora as well as being one of only two surviving illustrations of the American Foursquare style in the community.

The town of Aurora¹ in which the Smith House is located was settled in the 1870s and '80s primarily through the efforts of "The English Company"--a term loosely applied to a group of English, Scottish and American investors. This group was instrumental in the construction of the Highline Canal which provided irrigation for farms scattered throughout the region.

Agriculture continued as the economic base through the first part of the 20th century and provided the stimulus for growth in the small town. It was not until World War I and the establishment of Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Aurora that the major emphasis of the economy shifted to that centered around the military presence.

William Smith was very much a part of the settlement and development of Aurora. Born in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1860, Smith came to America in 1878 under the sponsorship of Lord James W. Barclay. Barclay was head of the banking house of Barclay and Company, a member of the English Parliament, and a director of the Colorado Mortgage and Investment Company of London, Ltd. The Colorado Mortgage and Investment Company was involved in numerous irrigation projects, but is best known for its development of the Highline Canal. James Duff was the local director of the company and its subsidiary, the Platte Land Company which managed land along the canal. Lord Barclay arranged for Smith to work for Duff in Denver for a period of twelve months in exchange for his passage and expenses traveling from New York to Denver.²

By 1882 William Smith was able to purchase his own farm land in the vicinity of what is now Sixth Avenue and Peoria Street in Aurora. He built a one-room frame house to which more rooms were added. The yard was a field of cactus bordering the Highline Canal which watered the semi-arid fields to the north. The land south of the canal had to be dry-land farmed. Smith raised sheep, alfalfa, barley, corn, wheat, and sugar beets in addition to a small dairy operation.³

William Smith's official involvement with the Aurora schools began around 1885 when the school district was organized. However, the district would not have been developed without the participation of Smith, who rode up and down the canal promoting the establishment of the school district. Smith was appointed secretary of the school board in 1885, a position he held for fifty years, the longest term for any school board member in the state. The district, which stretched from the city limits of Fletcher (now Aurora) to Colorado Boulevard, was one of the largest school districts in the state. Smith loaned a parcel of land to the school district for the site of the first school in Aurora,

9. Major Bibliographical References

Pearce, Sarah J. and Merrill Ann Wilson. A Guide to Colorado Architecture. Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1983.
McFadden, Carl Vincent, et al. Early Aurora. Aurora: Aurora Technical Center, 1978.
(continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .35

Quadrangle name Fitzsimons (1965/1980)

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	3	5	1	2	9	0	0	4	3	9	6	6	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 12, Block 4, Park East Addition, 3rd Filing

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah J. Pearce, Consultant

organization

date 6/1/85

street & number 888 S. Dexter, #710

telephone (303) 691-0187

city or town

state

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Bahara Sudler

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8-13-85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John A. Brown
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 9/26/85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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a frame structure built in 1886. It was replaced in 1892 by a brick, one-room school. In recognition of his long service to the Aurora Public Schools, the first high school in Aurora was named in his honor in 1931: William Smith High School.⁴

In 1910, William Smith commissioned Denver architect Joseph Wilson to built a new home. The large brick house is one of only two examples of the Foursquare style of architecture in Aurora.⁵ The other example will be torn down next year to make way for a housing development.

The Smith House features many of the characteristic elements of the Foursquare, including the square plan, hipped roof, broad overhanging eaves with brackets, two-story side bay, and a wrap-around porch. The house also features a built-in buffet with leaded glass doors and stained glass windows. The original architectural drawings aided in the restoration of the house and indicated that very few changes have occurred to the property since 1910. Only the setting has changed significantly from an agricultural environment to a residential neighborhood. However, the Highline Canal still flows directly behind the house, and some of the original vegetation remains on the property.⁶

The Smith House remained in the family until 1983 when Margaret Smith, the eldest daughter of William Smith, passed away.

¹Originally, Aurora was known as Fletcher, named for one of the investors, Donald Fletcher. In 1907, the citizens of Fletcher voted to change the name of their community to Aurora.

²Alvin T. Steinel, History of Agriculture in Colorado, (Fort Collins: Colorado State Agricultural College, 1926), pp. 167-235. Also Smith Family Papers and collection, Aurora History Center, Aurora, Colorado.

³Carl Vincent McFadden, et al. Early Aurora, (Aurora: Aurora Technical Center, 1978), pp. 234-235.

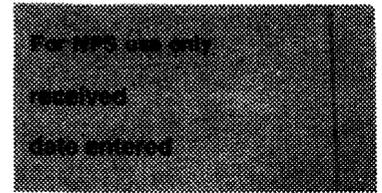
⁴Ibid., pp. 234-235.

⁵A survey of architectural and historical sites in Aurora conducted during the spring and summer of 1985, revealed only two examples of the Foursquare style of architecture. The majority of residential structures in Aurora which pre-date 1935 are of the Bungalow or vernacular styles of architecture.

⁶Sarah J. Pearce and Merrill Wilson, A Guide to Colorado Architecture, (Denver: Colorado State Historical Society, 1983), pp. 36.

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Steinel, Alvin T. History of Agriculture in Colorado. Fort Collins: Colorado State Agricultural College. 1926.

Smith Family Papers and Collection. Aurora History Center. Aurora, Colorado.

Aurora Historical Society Newsletter. Volume 9, Number 3. May, 1984.