

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 6 1976

DATE ENTERED

OCT 8 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC *Stewart Manor*

AND/OR COMMON *Charles B. Sommers Home (Houses)*

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 3650 Cold Spring Road

CITY, TOWN Indianapolis

STATE Indiana

VICINITY OF
CODE 018

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 11th

COUNTY CODE
Marion 097

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Board of School Commissioners

STREET & NUMBER 120 E. Walnut Street

CITY, TOWN Indianapolis

STATE Indiana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City-County Building

STREET & NUMBER Washington Street

CITY, TOWN Indianapolis

STATE Indiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Indiana Historic Preservation Program and Survey

DATE 1972-1974 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Indiana Department of Natural Resources

CITY, TOWN Indianapolis

STATE Indiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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

Stewart Manor, built during 1923 and 1924 is a 2 1/2 story stone house located on a wooded knoll with extensive landscaping and reached by a curving driveway that leads to a drive-through portico. Designed for Charles B. Sommers by Bass Knowton and Co. and built by the Bedford Stone and Construction Co., it was clearly designed to give the impression of a Mediaveal English Country House.

The general configuration of the house is rectangular but it has many irregular projections and wings which conceal that fact. An irregular gable roof with many levels, eyebrow dormers as well as hipped and flat portions add to a feeling of flowing complexity. The shingled roof with rounded edges and swept gables gives a thatched roof appearance. The exterior is fieldstone with irregularly placed portions of square rubble. The gable ends are timbered and some timbers are located around the smaller windows with bricks set in varied patterns between them. The large windows have squared rubble segmental arches over them and rough stone sills. Some of the windows have small diamond lights and some have rectangular lights. On the first floor they are set with various circular stained glass patterns about one-third of the way down the top. There are entrance ways with both semi-circular arches, and segmental arches. Originally the house had striped awnings over some of the windows and downspouts twisted to give a spiral effect. This results in an overall effect of intricacy, elaboration and lavishness.

The interior of Stewart Manor is as elaborate as the exterior. One enters through a mammoth oak door flanked by heavy iron lamps into a vaulted entryway. Straight ahead is a sunroom extensively decorated with Rookwood tile. The tiles, depicting scenic murals of lush scenes of nature are arranged in four recessed arches and a fifth makes a verdant background for a pool and fountain. On the left is the living room paneled in dark wood with many built-in bookcases, and a large fireplace with a surprisingly simple mantle. The large oriental rug that was originally on the floor is still in place. Turning right one enters the dining room with its high and decorated ceiling. The original dining table also had a fountain in the center. The first floor originally contained the kitchen but that was removed and placed in the basement when the house was converted to a womens dormatory for Tudor Hall School in 1968-69. The second floor contained guest rooms, the family's living quarters and a large suite for Mrs. Sommers. The bathrooms contain the latest fixtures of the time including showers and a built-in scale.

The third floor has the simplest rooms in the house as they were intended for servants quarters. An elevator served all three floors and the basement. Some of the rooms on both the second and third floors have been divided during the conversion to a dormatory but this was so well done that it is not noticable. The cornices for example were duplicated in all partitions.

Charles M. Sommers liked to associate with famous people and had two pains of glass with the signatures of such persons as Ruyard Kipling, Thomas Edison, Joseph Conrad, Luther Burbank, Alexander Graham Bell, Orville Wright and James Whitcomb Riley, carefully etched in the glass.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
APR 6 1976
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED OCT 8 1976

Description Charles B. Sommers House
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

Located on 38 acres of ground, Stewart Manor has the remains of an elaborate landscaping project geared to the enjoyment of the outdoors. There was a swimming pool and a private canal running to the White River nearby. Ponds, bridges, gardens and plantings of various kinds originally designed by a Japanese artist with a profusion of decoration that complemented the exterior and interior of the house. Today much of these gardens remain but have not been kept the way they were intended. The property has not lost much of its original appearance. There have been no major alterations to the exterior and those done on the interior were done well. Since 1970 the property has been owned by the Indianapolis School Board and they are using it as an environmental study center but have made no modifications to the building.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1923-1924

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Bass Knowton & Company
Bedford Stone & Construction Co.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sommers House is an interesting example of the eclectic architecture employed by the wealthy in the 1920's. Although the roof, half-timber gables, leaded and stained glass windows, and irregular projections suggest an English Tudor style, the many rounded arches and elliptically-arched windows suggest a California Mission style. The Japanese garden also suggests a west coast influence.

Mr. Charles B. Sommers was a prosperous Indianapolis businessman. Although best known for his large downtown furniture store he was President of both the Gibson and Empire Automobile companies as well as a bank director and dairy executive. He also had an interest in music and the dramatic arts. Stewart Manor is a fine example of the kind of a house a prosperous businessman with a flair for the dramatic would build. He was known as an entertainer of movie stars and celebrities of all kinds. Queen Marie of Romania once was a dinner guest. The house was designed to have a variety of interior and exterior areas that would be pleasant and atmospheric for both family and guests. The Rookwood tile in the sunroom is an example of the kind of art that was used to provide this feeling. The Japanese gardens also provided a number of small but beautiful locations for intimate groups to gather. During the twenties a staff of 27 was required to keep the house and grounds in order.

After Mrs. Sommers death in 1957 the home was used as a dormitory for Tudor Hall School and in 1970 was given to the Indianapolis Public School System. These uses have not damaged the interior or exterior of the home, although most of the original furniture is gone.

Stewart Manor provides an excellent illustration of picturesque design as it was executed in the 1920's. The interior, exterior and landscaping all blend together in an elaborate array of effects that give the house its architectural significance.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Indianapolis News, August 4, 1969

Indianapolis News, June 6, 1941

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	5,6,8,2,3,5	4,4,0,7,9,5,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dr. Magdalene A. Davis

ORGANIZATION

Indianapolis Public Schools

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Indianapolis

STATE

Indiana

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

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 31, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 10/8/76

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 9/29/76