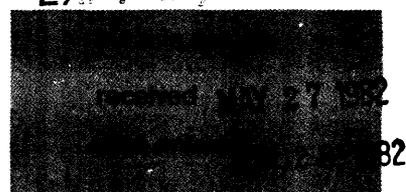


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 Smith/Benning House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 520 Oakdale Road, NE <sup>(6)</sup> N/A not for publication

city, town Atlanta N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Georgia code 013 county Dekalb code 089

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Robert and Carol Craig

street & number 520 Oakdale Road, NE

city, town Atlanta N/A vicinity of state Georgia 30307

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Dekalb County Courthouse

city, town Decatur state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Structures Field Survey:  
title Fulton County/City of Atlanta has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta state Georgia

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Smith-Benning House, built about 1886, is a two-story, wood frame Victorian-Eclectic style house with a prominent mansard-roofed tower and Eastlake details. The House is located on a small lot at the corner of Oakdale Road and Benning Place in Atlanta, Dekalb County, Georgia.

The Smith-Benning House is asymmetrically massed with a multi-gabled roof line. The balloon framed house is sheathed with weatherboards and sits on a brick pier foundation which is infilled with brick. Except in the area protected by the front porch, the weatherboarding has been covered with asbestos shingles, but the weatherboards remain in good condition underneath. Two-over-two double hung sash windows and exterior doors have surrounds that feature shaped wood lintels with incised scrollwork. Three interior chimneys are badly deteriorated above the roofline. The house's most prominent decorative features are concentrated on the complex front facade with its tower, porches, balconies and bay window. A bay window, topped by a small balcony that is protected by a bracketed hood, is located on the wing which projects forward at the north corner. The central tower, capped with a mansard roof, rises above the main entrance and is fronted by a two-tier portico with a gable-roofed balcony at the second story level. A first floor porch that begins at the portico wraps around the south front and side of the house terminating at a polygonal sunroom wing. Detailing is Eastlake in character. The porch has chamfered posts, turned spindlework, pendants and console-style brackets. Portico pediments have scrollwork, and the gable ends on the front and sides feature elaborate stickwork. The rear of the house has been changed by a series of additions and alterations. A one-story rear ell porch was enclosed at an early date, and in the early to mid-twentieth century a gable-roofed, weatherboarded kitchen was built to the rear of the house. Porches on either side of the kitchen have also been enclosed. The kitchen area has been turned into a modern two-bedroom living space by the present owners so they can live on the premises while restoring the main part of the house, presently in seriously deteriorated condition.

The interior of the house features a variation on the four-over-four with central stairhall plan, with small auxiliary rooms such as bathrooms, closets and the sun room located to the rear of the four main rooms on each level. The two main rooms on the first floor north side are connected by pocket doors and have fireplaces on their exterior walls. On the south side, the fireplaces are back to back between the two rooms. Interior detailing is more restrained than exterior detailing. Ceilings and walls are plastered; walls have baseboards and picture rails. Window and door surrounds feature filleted trim that terminates at bull's eye corner blocks. Mantels are of cast iron, some of them marbleized. The open, dog-leg stairway has an elaborately carved Eastlake style newel post and turned balusters. Downstairs woodwork and plaster walls and ceilings are virtually intact. Upstairs, plaster has been removed from walls and lower ceilings, and much of the woodwork has been removed and stored, awaiting restoration. Original doors with their hardware are extant throughout.

The Smith-Benning House is located on a small sloping corner lot which is presently very overgrown, but which retains many of its earlier plantings, including large shade trees, flowering trees and foundation shrubs. A recently installed wrought iron fence (1979-80) extends across the front of the property and down the  
(CONTINUED)

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet

Description

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north side to the house, and a cement patio is located to the rear.

The Smith/Benning House is the largest and probably oldest house in the historic residential neighborhood of Candler Park, which surrounds it and which dates to the early through mid-twentieth century. Immediately to the south of the house, is a property containing the much altered carriage house, originally associated with the Smith-Benning House. To the north, across Benning Place, is the Benning family's "winter house" built in 1905 because the main house was impossible to heat during the winter. Apartments are located to the west.

BOUNDARY

The boundary of the nominated property, outlined with a heavy black line on the enclosed surveyor's map, is all the historic property presently associated with the Smith-Benning House. The tract of land originally associated with the house was much larger, but was sold off at various dates. In 1945 a large portion of the property was sold for apartments. About the same time, Benning Place was cut through the property, separating the Benning's "winter house" from the main house. The section of the property containing the carriage house was separated from the main house in the most recent 1980 land transaction. The greatly altered state of the carriage house justifies its exclusion from the National Register Smith-Benning House property boundary.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Historic Preservation Section has determined that the photographs taken in June, 1981 still represent the character and appearance of the property. No significant changes have been made since that date.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

**Specific dates** ca. 1886 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Smith-Benning House, built about 1886, is historically significant in the areas of architecture and local history. Architecturally, the house is a good example of a Victorian-Eclectic style residence with Eastlake detailing. Few such houses remain in the Atlanta area. In terms of local history, it is significant as the home of two prominent Edgewood figures. Judge Charles Smith (1856–1923), who built the house, was a major figure in the founding of Edgewood, a small suburban community now part of the city of Atlanta. Augustus Harrison Benning (1840–1904), who purchased the house from Smith in 1889, was a wealthy sea captain who retired to Edgewood and used his fortune to help build, in 1897, what is now Atlanta's oldest extant skyscraper, the English-American Building (the Flatiron Building). These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register criteria B and C.

Architecturally, the house exemplifies the Victorian Eclectic style of residential architecture popular during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Architectural features were borrowed from a number of sources and melded together according to the tastes of the architect. Here, the mansard-roofed tower is a Second Empire feature, the wrap-around porch relates to Queen Anne building and the exterior wood decoration and trim are of Eastlake design. The Eastlake details, including the scrollwork in the portico pediments, the porch pendants, turned balusters, chamfered supports and console brackets, and the incised window and door lintels are particularly fine. Relatively few houses of this age and style remain in the Atlanta area. In Candler Park (earlier Edgewood), where the house is located, the Smith-Benning House is one of the very few extant houses from the 1880's, the period which coincides with the early development of Edgewood. Although the house is in a deteriorated condition, nearly all of the extensive and high quality decorative details remain.

In terms of local history, the house is significant as the home of Judge Charles W. Smith (1856–1923) who probably moved to the area in 1886 and built the house. Judge Smith was a major figure in the Early history of Edgewood, the community in which the house was located. Edgewood grew up in the late 1870's as an Atlanta suburb, clustered around a Georgia Railroad depot which provided transportation to Atlanta. By 1879, it had a population of from 250–300 people, a church, a school and some fine residences. Judge Smith was known as the founder of Edgewood. He was the community's first mayor after its 1898 incorporation, and he served as an Atlanta city councilman from 1912–1915, representing Edgewood on the council following its 1909 annexation to Atlanta. He also was a prominent judge. Although Judge Smith lived in the house for only three or four years, his later Edgewood residence was destroyed, leaving this house as the only remaining association with this important figure in the history of Edgewood (Candler Park).

(continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached Sheet

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED  
UTM NOT VERIFIED

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Less than one-half acre

Quadrangle name Northeast Atlanta, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	6	7	4	6	1	4	0	3	7	3	9	4	3	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

Property boundary is described and justified in Section 7.

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 Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher

Historic Preservation Section, Georgia

organization Department of Natural Resources

date April 26, 1982

street & number 270 Washington Street, SW

telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta

state Georgia

# 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

*Elizabeth A. Lyon*  
Elizabeth A. Lyon

date 5/10/82

title State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only

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

*Delores Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 6/28/82

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Registration

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The house has additional significance in the area of local history as the home of Augustus Harrison Benning (1840-1904). Benning, a native of Savannah, spent much of his life as a ship's captain carrying trade under the British flag at the ports of Hong Kong and Shanghai. He returned to the United States, married his second cousin who lived in Atlanta, and in 1889 bought the house in Edgewood from Judge Smith. For a short time he operated a coal business in Atlanta. Then, in 1896-97, he and a group of businessmen formed the English-American Savings and Trust Company. Benning, Vice-President of the organization, put up much of his China Sea trading fortune for the English-American Building, which was built in 1897. The building, listed on the National Register and now known as the Flatiron Building, is Atlanta's oldest remaining skyscraper, a building which has continued to play an important role in Atlanta's commercial and architectural history to this day. The Smith-Benning House remained in the Benning family's ownership until the 1960's.

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Bibliography

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2

Atlanta Journal. November 9, 1978. "A Rare Glimpse Into Yesteryear." (An article about the construction of the English-American Building with biographical information on Augustus Benning).

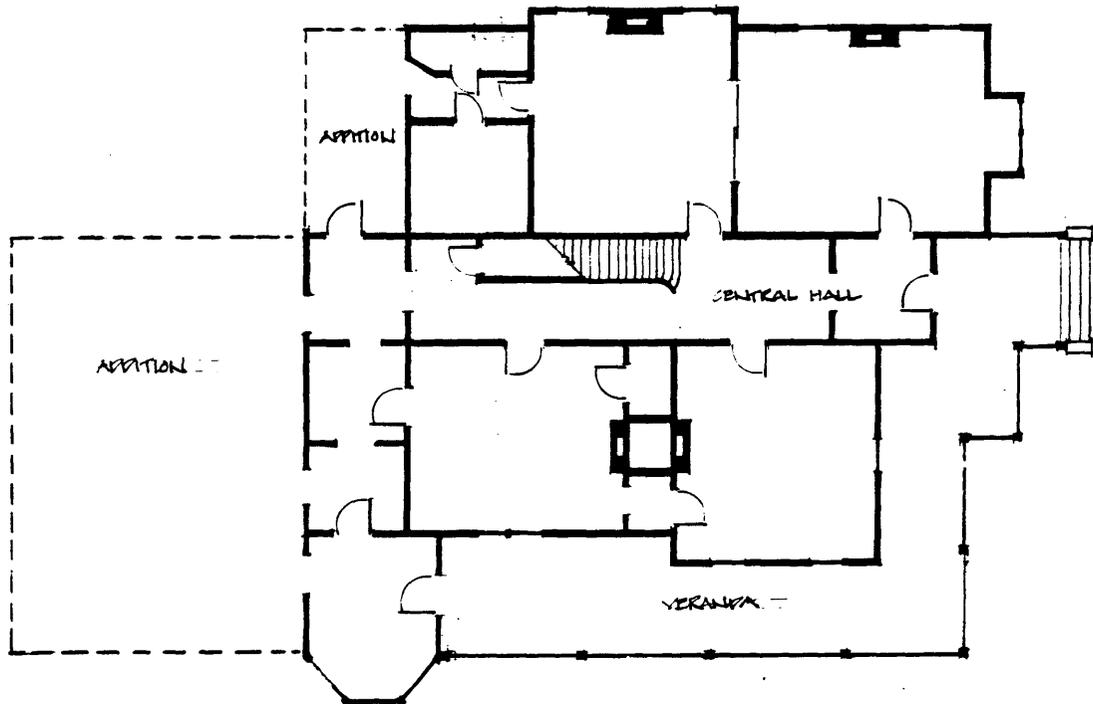
Carson, James E. Jr., "Nomination to the National Historic Register for the Benning House." March 16, 1981. On file at Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Craig, Robert. "Draft National Register Nomination Form." March, 1981. On file at Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

SMITH-BENNING HOUSE  
Atlanta, DeKalb County, Georgia

HOUSE PLANS/FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS

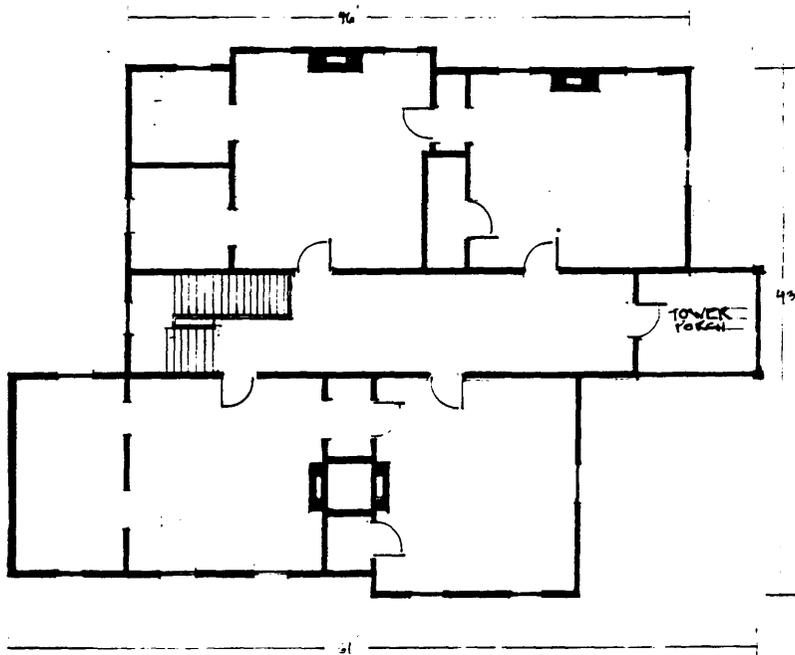
North: ↑



LOWER LEVEL PLAN



UPPER LEVEL PLAN



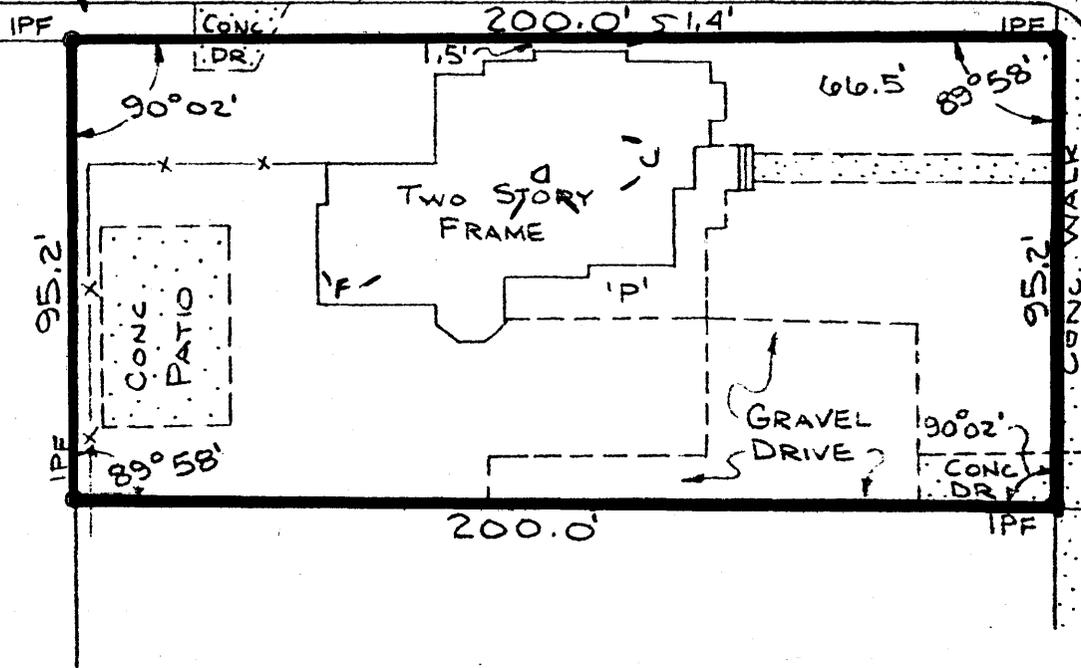
SMITH-BENNING HOUSE  
Atlanta, DeKalb County, Georgia

PROPERTY/SKETCH MAP

Source: Surveyor's Map  
Date: 5-7-80  
Scale: 1"=40'  
North: ↑  
Property Boundary: ———



BENNING PLACE  
(40' RIW)



OAKDALE ROAD (40' RIW)  
(FORMERLY WHITEFOOD AVENUE)

This property (is not) located in a Federal Flood Area as indicated by FIA Official Flood Hazard Maps.

I hereby certify that this plat is a true and correct representation of the land platted and has been prepared in conformity with the minimum standards and requirements of the law.



*Perry E. McClung*  
Perry E. McClung, Surveyor

Suite 550, 54 Perimeter Place, N.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30339

SURVEY FOR

ROBERT M. CRAIG

520 OAKDALE ROAD,  
ATLANTA, GA.

LAND LOT 240  
DISTRICT 15<sup>TH</sup> SECTION  
COUNTY DEKALB

GEORGIA  
DATE 5-7-80 SCALE 1" = 40'

PB PG  
JWV