

STAFF REPORT
LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION
Bowman and Elizabeth Gray House
September 2, 2020

Staff: Michelle M. McCullough

Applicant: Heribert and Berkley von Feiltzsch

Owner: Same

LOCATION

Building: Bowman and Elizabeth Gray House

Street: 5909 Brookberry Farm Road

City: Lewisville (mailing address only)

Tax Block: 4620

Tax Lot: 260

PIN: 5896-30-1523

Acres: 11.38 acres

Designated Portions: The entire exterior and entire interior of the Bowman and Elizabeth Gary House; shed; utility building; wall and gas pump shelter; terrace wall and fountain; outbuildings, along with the entire tax block and lot upon which they sit.

APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF CATAGORIES A. through D. FOR LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

- C. Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

Please refer to the information provided with the application.

LOCAL LANDMARK CRITERIA: Per G. S. 160D-945, no property shall be recommended for designation as a historic landmark unless it is deemed and found by the preservation commission to be of special significance in terms of its historical, prehistorical, architectural, or cultural importance and to possess integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Statement of Significance

Bowman and Elizabeth Gray's 1950 residence at Brookberry Farm possesses the requisite architectural significance and integrity for local historic landmark designation as an intact Forsyth County example of a William Roy Wallace-designed Georgian Revival dwelling. Although the prolific Winston-Salem architect rendered plans for many residences, the Gray House is notable due to its size and finely executed classical features. Wallace emulated colonial Tidewater Virginia plantations as well as the manorial aesthetic and rambling asymmetrical plan of Bowman's parents' commodious Norman Revival home, Graylyn. The approximately twelve-thousand-square-foot Brookberry Farm house is much smaller than Graylyn, but the tripartite form—front-gable north wing, side-gable central block, and angled gabled south wing—is very similar. Lauded Charlotte architecture firm A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates designed the 2,500-square-foot Modernist 1960 swimming pool addition that extends south from the main block. The landscape is also significant due to its design by notable landscape architects. Robert G. Campbell of Philadelphia provided the initial site plan and H. Stuart Ortloff and Henry Bond Raymore of Huntington, New York rendered the Colonial Revival east garden in 1958. An 11.38-acre tract (Forsyth County PIN 5896-30-1523, block 4620, lot 260) remains associated with the house, once part of 795-acre dairy and cattle farm. The period of significance is 1950, the dwelling's construction date, and 1958, when the formal garden's execution began. (Heather Fearnbach, Bowman and Elizabeth Gray House Local Historic Landmark Application 6/19/2020)

The current owners are seeking complete Local Historic Landmark designation for the entire Bowman and Elizabeth Gray House exterior and interior and its landscape in order to recognize the property's architectural significance. A list of the character-defining features is found in the application on pages 35 and 36.

Integrity

The property is a significant example of Forsyth County's architecture that possesses integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Location

The Bowman and Elizabeth Gray House maintains integrity of location as it stands on its original site. Intact landscape features include the circular driveway, semicircular east terrace, east terrace walls and fountain, and three 1950 outbuildings: a brick wall and gas pump shelter, a brick utility building, and a frame shed.

Setting

The property still maintains its bucolic setting. The residence occupies a prominent hilltop site in the west portion of an 11.38 acre tax parcel in west Forsyth County between Lewisville and Winston-Salem. The property is situated on Ketner Road's east side between Robinhood Road to the north and Shallowford Road to the south. The house is entered from Ketner Road on Brookberry Farm Road, a gravel drive. The parcel is currently bounded by sizable wooded lots to the east and north and pastures and terraced fields bordered by split-rail fences and windbreaks to the west and south. However, the rural landscape west and south of the house is slated for development in conjunction with the expansion of Brookberry Farm subdivision, which encompasses

much of the acreage historically associated with the Gray's dairy and beef cattle operations.

Design, Material, and Workmanship

The Bowman and Elizabeth Gray House retains excellent integrity in terms of design, material, and workmanship. The most significant exterior features include brick walls, slate roof, concave cornice, copper gutters, wood window and door trim, paneled wood doors, multi-pane double-hung wood sash windows of various sizes with interior pull-down aluminum-frame insect screens, operable louvered wood shutters, and metal rear porch, stair, and terrace railings. Also significant is a louvered cupola with a flared pyramidal copper roof and antique copper weather vane, which tops the north wing.

The interior also retains excellent integrity in terms of design, material, and workmanship. The floor plan is intact and primary rooms possess original volumes and finishes. The first floor is characterized by smooth plaster walls and ceilings, tongue-and-groove oak floors, and molded classical cornices, wainscoting, door and window surrounds, baseboards, and mantels, some of which were salvaged from other dwellings. The quarter-turn wood stair at the reception hall's southeast corner has slender turned balusters capped by molded wood handrails that terminate in a spiral at the bottom. Full-height wood cabinets with drawers and doors remain in the breakfast room, kitchen and butler's pantry/mudroom, while the library features built-in bookshelves and cabinets. Single- and double-leaf raised-panel wood doors retain original brass hardware. Second floor finishes are similar: plaster walls, molded wood cornices, molded plaster cornice in the central stair hall, baseboards capped with molded trim, tongue-and-groove oak floors, simple door and window architraves with mitered corners, six-panel doors with brass hardware, built-in bookshelves and desks in the two north bedrooms, and a Federal mantel in the large south bedroom. An enclosed corner staircase leads to the third floor, which retains plaster walls and ceilings, heart pine floors, and wood cabinets and drawers. The swimming pool addition is distinguished by V-arched glue-laminated timbers, exposed wood decking, tall five-arm foliated sconces, an elevated seating area flanked by wide stone steps north of the pool, and stylized classical surrounds at bathroom and closet entrances.

Feeling and Association

Although the Gray family holdings have been subdivided and residential development surrounds the house, the residual 11.38-acre tract provides an appropriate estate-like setting, thus allowing for integrity of feeling and association.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends designation of the entire exterior and entire interior of the Bowman and Elizabeth Gary House; shed; utility building; wall and gas pump shelter; terrace wall and fountain; along with the entire tax block and lot upon which they sit. (Tax Block 4620, Lot 260 PIN 5896-30-1523).