



HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION

P.O. Box 2511

Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27102

919-727-2087

APPLICATION for HISTORIC DESIGNATION HISTORIC and ARCHITECTURAL

INFORMATION FORM

1. Name of Property: Historic John Henry Pfaff House
Common N/A
2. Owner's Name and Address: William Ammons and Rebekah Ellerbe
4798 Pfaff Lane
Pfafftown, NC 27040
3. Location of Property: 4798 Pfaff Lane, Pfafftown, Forsyth County, NC
4. Amount of Land to be Designated: 1+ acre
5. Tax Block: 4633 Tax Lot: 410

ADDITIONAL SHEETS OF PAPER WILL BE NECESSARY FOR
DOCUMENTATION ON QUESTIONS 6 THROUGH 13.

6. When was the building erected? For Whom? (If you don't know the exact date, please give a general time frame.) Have there been additions or modifications? If so, describe and give dates.
7. Do you know the names of any of the craftsmen who worked on the building? (i.e., architects, carpenters, contractors, landscape designers, etc.) Do any architect's plans or building accounts exist? Where?
8. Do you have any old photographs of the building? If so, do you know the dates of the photographs?
9. How has the building been passed down through the years, from whom to whom? (i.e., a quick chain of title) If possible, please give some background on each occupant, (i.e., occupations or other interesting facts). List the sources of your information.
10. What was the building's original use, if different from today? Has the building ever been moved? List the sources of your information.
11. What is the significance of this property (Please be specific and to the point). Include a complete list of sources for your information.

City of
Winston-Salem

County of
Forsyth

Town of
Kernersville

12. Describe the architecture and present condition of the structure, also including any outbuildings or other appurtenant features to be included in the designation. If the property has been restored, what were the dates of restoration and was the restoration done under the supervision of any historical group or in compliance with their requirements. If the property has not been restored, is any restoration planned for the property?
13. Is the property listed in any existing Historic Register or survey (i.e., the National Register of Historic Places or any other state or local history)? If so, please give the title of the listing.

In addition to the written application, the following materials must be submitted simultaneously:

- a black and white, 8" x 10" overall photograph clearly depicting the property being designated.
- color slides showing all 4 sides of the building (may also include any architectural details, interior and exterior, which add to the property's significance)
- a map showing the location of the property, including any outbuildings and appurtenant features

(Please label the above materials with the name of the property owner)

APPLICATION FEE \$50.00 (Check payable to Forsyth County)

The following information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

9/1/97
Date

William Armon
Signature of Property Owner

Mailing Address:

P. O. Box 580

Pfafftown, NC 27040-0580

Telephone: 

APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION

John Henry Pfaff House

Continuation Sheets

6. The house was erected during the first decade of the twentieth century for John Henry Pfaff. Ken Pfaff, J. H. Pfaff's grandson, asserts that his grandfather told him that he built the house in 1900. Other family members suggest that the house was built in 1904, or 1913 (though Ken Pfaff insists that his older brother was born in the house in 1911). There have been no additions to the house and few alterations. During the Rosenthal ownership, 1988-1990, the well located south of the rear ell was filled in and the well shed was remodeled and converted to a gazebo. The interior chimneys of the house were partly rebuilt. Crown molding and new hearth tiles were added to the interior of the house, the kitchen was remodeled, and modern bathrooms were added on both floors. A gable-roofed carport was built adjacent to the south side of the house.
7. According to Ken Pfaff, local builder Pleasant Henderson Stimpson constructed J. H. Pfaff's house. No plans or building accounts are known to exist.
8. The owner has an early-twentieth-century photograph (photocopy attached) of the house, but its exact date is not known.
9. Between 1893 and 1897, J. H. Pfaff amassed four small tracts of land totalling approximately two acres from Isaac Pfaff, Albert T. Pfaff, Edwin P. Pfaff, and Eugene R. Pfaff. This became known as his homeplace and by Pfaff's death contained a two-story frame house, a frame store building, and several frame outbuildings. Initially, Pfaff built a two-room house with a separate kitchen on the property, but after a few years he replaced it with the present two-story house (Deed Book 304, pp. 298-301; Administrators inventory of the estate of J. H. Pfaff, 11/22/49; Pfaff and Blankenship Interview).

John Henry Pfaff (1858-1949) was the great grandson of Peter Pfaff (1724-1804), who settled in the Pfafftown area in 1786 and for whom the crossroads community is named. As a young man, J. H. Pfaff went to Winston to work in a store. Later he moved to Bethania, where he worked in the O. J. Lehman tobacco factory and general store. While in Bethania, he married Sarah Tabitha Stroup (Strupe); they moved back to Pfafftown to make their home. John served as a deacon in the Christian Church and became a prosperous merchant in the community. He built a one-story frame store building on the southwest corner of the crossroads in Pfafftown and had a larger warehouse across the road. An old photograph of the store shows that its gable roof

had a stepped parapet false front and that a shed-roofed front porch extended beyond the store on the east side. It faced what is now Yadkinville Road. Pfaff's store sold groceries, general merchandise, sewing machines, watches and clocks, gasoline, Goodyear tires, Ford car parts, and Johnson Harvester machinery, such as reapers, mowing machines, hay rakes, and plows. Highly esteemed in the community and known for his benevolent spirit and deeds, Pfaff operated his store until the mid 1940s, a few years before his death. He and Sarah had five children who survived to adulthood: Sudie Alma, Anna Winona, Marion Edward, Kenneth William, and Mary Louise (Pfaff and Blankenship Interview; Ware, pp. 14, 87, 113; Application for Administrator of Estate of J. H. Pfaff).

When J. H. Pfaff died on October 17, 1949, he left no will. According to his grandchildren, he could not decide how to handle the disposition of his homeplace relative to two of his daughters, Mary Louise Pfaff Douthit and Anna Winona Pfaff, who did not get along. Louise had taken care of her father in his last years, but Anna had never married and needed a place to live. Pfaff left these difficult decisions to the administrators of his estate, sons Marion Edward Pfaff and Kenneth William Pfaff. They had the property resurveyed, with a dividing line running through the center hall of the house. Louise received that part of the homeplace located north of the line, while Anna received that part south of the line. Louise was married to William Cecil "Buck" Douthit; Anna was a school teacher who later worked in the Forsyth County Clerk of Court's Office (Deed Book 636, p. 282; Pfaff and Blankenship Interview).

When Louise Pfaff Douthit died on February 9, 1983, she left her part of the homeplace to her two children, Judith D. Vargas-Vila and Gerald E. Douthit. When Anna Pfaff died only a few months prior to Louise's death, she also left her part of the homeplace to Louise's children (Estate files #83E-257 and 83E-11; Pfaff and Blankenship interview).

On April 25, 1988, Judith Douthit Vargas-Vila and her brother, Gerald Douthit, conveyed their joint property to Paul M. Rosenthal, Jr. and his wife, Bobbie A. Rosenthal (Deed Book 1639, p. 868). Thus the two parts of the house were once again joined by single ownership. The Rosenthals restored/rehabilitated the Pfaff House as an investment, carefully preserving original stylistic details while remodeling the kitchen and bathrooms for modern use and comfort.

On October 15, 1990, the Rosenthals sold the property to Stephen L. and Victoria Hayford (Deed Book 1702, p. 3818); on February 18, 1997 they conveyed it to the present owners, William Ammons and his wife Rebekah Ellerbe (Deed Book 1936, p. 3589).

10. The building has always been used as a residence and stands at its original location.
11. Around 1770, at the same time that the Moravians were busy with the settlement of

Salem, they also turned their sights to the surrounding countryside of Wachovia. There they organized country congregations such as Friedberg, Friedland, and Hope that consisted of a church, perhaps a schoolhouse, and surrounding farms. One of the most active members of the Friedberg settlement was Peter Pfaff, who joined the congregation in 1771. In 1786 he left Friedberg to join his son, Isaac, on his farm near Bethania. The settlement that grew up around them came to be known as Pfafftown (Taylor, pp. 10-11).

By 1896, Pfafftown had grown to include one hundred residents. Lacking any major manufactories or mills, it remained primarily a farming community (Taylor, p. 46). John H. Pfaff (1858-1949), a great grandson of founding patriarch Peter Pfaff, operated for half a century a general store at the strategic location of Pfafftown's crossroads. Next to his store, during the early years of the twentieth century, Pfaff built a handsome frame home for his growing family. Pfaff's store was demolished in the 1960s, but the house survives as a testament to his prominent role in the community. It remained in Pfaff family ownership until 1988.

The significance of the John Henry Pfaff House is two-fold. First, it represents the continuation during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries of the important presence of the Pfaff family in the community that bears its name. Second, it remains a fine example of the traditional, vernacular houses built in the piedmont during the early twentieth century. Although many of these or similar houses existed in Forsyth County at one time, a perusal of Gwynne Taylor's architectural survey of the county conducted in the late 1970s demonstrates that few survive in a well-preserved state. The careful preservation of the Pfaff House has made it a prime example of this period house type in Forsyth County.

12. The J. H. Pfaff House stands on a tract of just over one acre at the southwest corner of the intersection of Pfaff Lane (SR 1435) and Yadkinville Road (SR 1525), the main crossroads of the Pfafftown community. The house faces Pfaff Lane and is fronted by a row of large maple trees. Additional trees shade the yard, which is bordered on three sides by a white, horizontal-board fence. At the southwest corner of the property stands a frame granary that was probably built about the same time as the house. It has a brick pier foundation, board and batten siding, and a metal-sheathed gable roof. Adjacent to the south side of the house stands a frame, two-vehicle carport that dates from ca. 1990. It has square corner posts, a gable roof, and weatherboarded gable ends.

An early photograph (photocopy attached) of the exterior of the Pfaff House shows that it looks today nearly the same as it did when built. It is an early twentieth-century, two-story frame, vernacular dwelling with an L-shaped configuration and simple Colonial Revival-style detailing. The house features a brick foundation, brick nogging on the first story, weatherboard siding, and a gabled roof pierced by interior brick chimneys. A one-story, gable-roofed rear ell projects westward from the

northwest corner of the house. Windows are two-over-two sash, and most retain their wood louvered shutters. A shed-roofed porch supported by Tuscan columns carries across the three-bay facade of the house, wrapping around the projecting left front wing. The central entrance is composed of a pair of glass-and-wood-paneled doors. The rear ell is bordered on the south side by a shed-roofed porch with replacement turned posts and balustrade. At its west end, the porch extends to the south to cover with a pyramidal roof what originally was the well. Around 1990 the well was enclosed and the well shed was converted to an attached gazebo with a brick floor and turned posts and balustrade matching the replacement posts and balustrade of the ell porch. At the west end of the ell, a small gabled entrance leads to the partial cellar.

The interior of the Pfaff House still strongly reflects its original appearance, retaining consistent detailing throughout. The house is arranged with a center-hall plan. Walls are plastered, except for those of the rear room of the ell which are covered with beaded boards; ceilings throughout the house are sheathed with beaded boards. Beaded boards along with a molded chair rail also form a wainscot in the hall and lining the stairs. Crown moldings were added to the walls in the ca. 1990 restoration/rehabilitation of the house. Five-panel doors and windows are surrounded by molded casings with bull's-eye corner blocks. A handsome, open-string stair with paneled newels, molded handrail, and turned balusters rises from the front (east) end of the hall. Late classical post-and-lintel mantels are found in four rooms of the house--the two front rooms on the first floor and the two rooms to the left of the hall on the second floor. Primary interior alterations were all made ca. 1990 to upfit the house for modern living. They include: 1) the moving of the east wall in the first floor southwest room to create a bathroom and a walk-in closet (covering up the fireplace in the process); 2) the remodeling of the kitchen, using glass-and-wood-paneled cabinets appropriate to the period of the house; and 3) the conversion of the upstairs bedroom on the north side of the house into a large bathroom and walk-in closet.

The Pfaff House is in excellent condition. The granary is in fair condition.

13. The J. H. Pfaff House was included in the architectural survey of Forsyth County conducted by Gwynne S. Taylor in the late 1970s. It appears in the survey publication, *From Frontier to Factory: An Architectural History of Forsyth County* (Winston-Salem: City-County Planning Board, 1981) on page 176.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Forsyth County Records, Office of the Register of Deeds (Deeds), Office of the Clerk of Court (Estate Records), Forsyth County Courthouse, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Pfaff, Ken and Jo Pfaff Blankenship (grandson and granddaughter of J. H. Pfaff), Interview by Laura A. W. Phillips, August 29, 1997.

Taylor, Gwynne S. *From Frontier to Factory: An Architectural History of Forsyth County*. Winston-Salem: City-County Planning Board of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, 1981.

Ware, Charles Crossfield. *Star in Wachovia: Centennial History of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Pfafftown, N.C.* Wilson, NC: n.p., 1965.



J. H. PEASE HS.

PEASETOWN

LAWP - 8/97

(WM. AMMOS)



J. H. PAPP HS.
PAPPTOWN
LAW - 8/97
(AMMOS)

JOHN HENRY PFAFF HOUSE

4798 PFAFF LANE

PFAFFTOWN, NC

FORSYTH CO. TAX MAP 594874

BLOCK 4633

LOT 410

SCALE: 1" = 200'

