

**AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE DR. E.N. LAWRENCE HOUSE, 2121 LAKE WHEELER ROAD IN THE PLANNING JURISDICTION OF RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, A HISTORIC LANDMARK.**

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina authorized the creation of a countywide Historic Preservation Commission for Wake County and otherwise provided for the preservation of certain historic sites and buildings by the passage of Part 3C, Chapter 160A, Article 19 of the North Carolina General Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the City of Raleigh agreed to participate in the countywide Historic Preservation Commission through an interlocal agreement with Wake County; and

WHEREAS, the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission has made an investigation and recommended the following property be designated a historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, on May 21, 2002 a public hearing was held in the City Council Chamber of the Municipal Building, Raleigh, by the City Council of the City of Raleigh to determine whether the hereinafter described property should be designated a historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, all requirements of Part 3C, Chapter 160A, Article 19 of the North Carolina General Statutes, preceding the adoption of this ordinance, have been met.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE RALEIGH CITY COUNCIL THAT:**

Section 1. The property designated as the Dr. E.N. Lawrence House, owned by the Linda and Rufus Edmisten, in the planning jurisdiction of Raleigh, North Carolina, be and is declared a Raleigh Historic Landmark. Said property being more particularly described as follows:

The Dr. E.N. Lawrence House at 2121 Lake Wheeler Road, (Wake County PIN # 0792.88 4355), approximately 2.6 acres, including the entire parcel on which the building stands.

Section 2. Those elements that are integral to its historical, architectural, archaeological significance, or any combination thereof are as follows:

Exterior of the house, exterior of garage, mature trees and shrubs.

Section 3. No building, site, structure, or object that is designated in this ordinance located on the hereinbefore described site may be altered, restored, moved, remodeled, or reconstructed so that a change in design, material, or outer appearance occurs unless and until a certificate of appropriateness is obtained from the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission or its successors.

Section 4. No building, site, structure, or object that is designated in this ordinance located on the hereinbefore described site may be demolished unless and until either approval of demolition is obtained from the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission or a period of three hundred sixty-five (365) days has elapsed following final review by the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission of a request for demolition (or any longer period required by N.C.G.S. 160A-400.14 as it may be amended hereafter).

Section 5. All owners of the property hereinabove described, whose identity and addresses can be ascertained by the exercise of due diligence, shall be sent by certified mail a copy of this ordinance.

Section 6. This ordinance shall be indexed after the property owner's name in the grantor and grantee indexes in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Wake County.

Section 7. City administration and the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission are hereby authorized to have erected an appropriate sign on the site herein described setting forth the fact that said site has been designated a historic landmark by action of the Raleigh City Council and the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission.

Section 8. In the event any building, site, structure, or object is demolished in accordance with the ordinances of the city of Raleigh, this ordinance may be repealed.

Section 9. Any violation of this ordinance shall be unlawful as by law provided.

Wake County, NC 61  
Laura M Riddick, Register Of Deeds

Presented & Recorded 07/25/2002 09:39:33

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Council Member Meeker made a motion that the above ordinance be adopted. Council Member Kirkman seconded the motion, and upon vote, the motion carried this the 21<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2002.

Effective Date: Upon Adoption

Adopted: May 21, 2002

Distribution: Wake County Register of Deeds  
Wake County Historic Preservation Commission  
Word Proc – Taylor  
Planning – Brandon, Becker, Hill



*City Of Raleigh*  
*North Carolina*

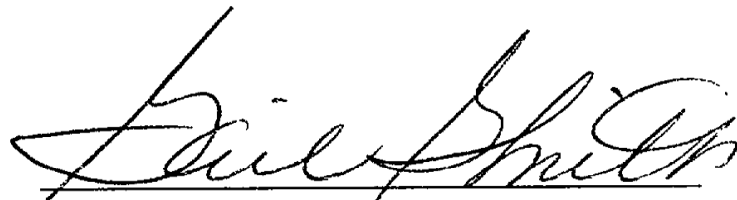
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)  
COUNTY OF WAKE)

**CERTIFICATION**

I, Gail G. Smith, City Clerk of the City of Raleigh, North Carolina, do hereby certify that the attached is a true and exact copy of City of Raleigh Ordinance No. (2002) 212 adopted by the City Council at their meeting held on May 21, 2002.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have unto set my hand and have caused the Seal of the City of Raleigh to be affixed this 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2002.



  
Gail G. Smith  
City Clerk

Laura M Riddick  
Register of Deeds  
Wake County, NC



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**Yellow probate sheet is a vital part of your recorded document.  
Please retain with original document and submit for rerecording.**



**Wake County Register of Deeds  
Laura M. Riddick  
Register of Deeds**

**North Carolina - Wake County**

The foregoing certificate \_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Notary(ies) Public is (are) certified to be correct. This instrument and this certificate are duly registered at the date and time and in the book and page shown on the first page hereof.

Laura M. Riddick, Register of Deeds

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant/Deputy Register of Deeds

**This Customer Group**  
\_\_\_\_\_ # of Time Stamps Needed

**This Document**  
\_\_\_\_\_ New Time Stamp  
\_\_\_\_\_ # of Pages  
4

(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Lawrence, Dr. Elmo N., House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 2121 Lake Wheeler Road n/a  not for publication

city or town Raleigh n/a  vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27603

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey A. Cross SHPO 2/25/05  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Lawrence, Dr. Elmo N., House  
Name of Property

Wake County, NC  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local       | <input type="checkbox"/> district               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State       | <input type="checkbox"/> site                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal     | <input type="checkbox"/> structure              |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> object                 |

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Wake County MPS

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

Stucco

roof Asphalt

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Lawrence, Dr. Elmo N., House  
Name of Property

Wake County, NC  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is: n/a

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

Ca. 1922  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

Ca. 1922  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lawrence, Dr. Elmo N., House  
Name of Property

Wake County, NC  
County and State

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 2.6 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 710860 3958820  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Jennifer Martin  
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date December 1, 2004  
street & number P.O. Box 1171 telephone 919/682-2211  
city or town Durham state NC zip code 27702

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#### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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#### Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Linda and Rufus Edmisten  
street & number 2121 Lake Wheeler Road telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27603

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.



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National Park Service

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Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House  
Wake County, NC

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### 7. Description

#### *Setting*

The ca. 1922 Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House stands on a 2.6-acre tract on the southeast side of Lake Wheeler Road (SR 1009) to the south-southwest of downtown Raleigh. Interstate 40, running roughly west-east, is less than one mile to the northeast. Suburban housing built within the last twenty years surrounds the house on the east, west, and south. With the thoughtful planting of hundreds of varieties of shrubs and trees on the two-and-half-acre parcel, the Lawrence House remains shielded both visually and aurally from nearby densely developed neighborhoods and traffic along busy Lake Wheeler Road. The 1901 Lawrence House, built by Dr. E.N. Lawrence's brother, stands immediately to the north on an adjacent parcel. Another brother's house, built in 1915, once stood to the immediate south, but was demolished to make way for modern housing.

A one-lane gravel and dirt drive leads from the east side of Lake Wheeler Road to the front of the house. The lane gradually drops down as it leaves the paved road and winds through dense vegetation and an iron gate, then up a slight incline in the home's front yard. Flora Lawrence, Dr. Lawrence's wife and a member of the Raleigh Garden Club, laid out the driveway that forms a circle around the house. Mrs. Lawrence was also responsible for many of the ornamental trees and shrubs that enhance the house site. The current owners continue to tend Mrs. Lawrence's plantings and over the years have added additional plants and gardens to the property. A carpet of mature grass grows over a large percentage of the yard.

#### *Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House*

*Ca. 1922*

#### *Contributing Building*

The Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House faces northwest and stands near the center of the rear half of the rectangular 2.6-acre parcel. The one-and-a-half story Craftsman bungalow is built of 12 ½-inch-by-5-inch tooled-face (scored with vertical lines) concrete blocks sheathed in cement stucco. The cement stucco has always covered the blocks, was not applied after initial construction, and provides a finished look to the house. Asphalt shingles cover the side-gabled roof and shed dormers punctuate the center of both the front and rear roof slopes. Triangular knee braces occur along the eaves of the side gables and the sides of the dormers. Rafter tails punctuate the overhanging shed roofs of the dormers.

The symmetrical, five-bay front elevation displays a partial-width terrace and a single-leaf, partially-glazed front door. Single five-over-one double-hung sash windows flank each side of the

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door, while a pair of smaller, four-over-one sash pierce the façade on the outside of each central window.

The south-facing side elevation features the south end of the sun porch, as well as three, four-over-one windows on the first level and one set of paired four-over-four windows on the upper level. One smaller four-over-four window illuminating the bathroom pierces the exterior to the right of (or east of) the upper story paired windows. A small lunette window nestled in the space just below the roof's ridge crowns this elevation.

The east or rear elevation features a glass-enclosed sunroom added around 1960 that extends along approximately two-thirds of the elevation. A small utility room extension with a shed roof projects out from the northern third of this elevation. This modest addition was built in 2002. A pair of four-over-four sash is located immediately north of the utility room.

The north-facing side elevation features two doors—one leading to the rear shed room and the other positioned just west of the center of this side of the house and leading to a small foyer. A small hipped roof entry porch with triangular knee braces shields the rear shed door, while a front gabled entry porch with the same knee braces shelters the more forward door. A single four-over-four window is to the left of (or east of) the rear door. A set of paired four-over-four windows that illuminate the kitchen are to the left of (or east of) the more forward door. A single-shouldered chimney flanked by tall and narrow windows and added in the 1990s is positioned on the right side (or northwest side) of the elevation. Originally, a large window occupied the space on the first floor from where the chimney now rises. A pair of four-over-four windows occupies the center of the upper level. A lunette window, identical to the one on the south elevation, crowns this elevation.

The exterior changes—most notably the rear shed expansion and the addition of the north elevation chimney—do not detract from the overall setting, feeling, design, materials, and workmanship of the Lawrence House. The dwelling retains the characteristics that epitomize the Craftsman style from the early 1920s in Raleigh and Wake County. Its overall form, materials, and features remain intact.

The Lawrence House's interior remains intact overall. Alterations to the dwelling's interior include the addition of the sunroom and expansion of the kitchen to include a breakfast room and bathroom, with both alterations occurring in the 1960s; the addition of the chimney and mantel to the north elevation in the 1990s; and the addition of the rear elevation small utility/laundry room in 2002. Where changes have been made, they have been carried out with the utmost respect to the dwelling's original form, finishes, and style, and therefore do not compromise the house's overall interior integrity. All of the walls are plaster, the doors and windows are original, and the original hardware remains in place.

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Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House  
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The dwelling follows an irregular plan typical in bungalows and centered on a parlor that is the hearth of the house. Heated by a large projecting fireplace enhanced by a formal paneled skirt, the parlor is roughly rectangular in shape with doors positioned on each wall. A single-leaf paneled door on the south wall of the parlor leads to a smaller hall that provides access to two bedrooms and a bath. French doors on the west end of the parlor's north wall lead to a den occupied by a recently-added period mantel that blends harmoniously with the dwelling's Craftsman features. Another set of French doors, these in the center of the east wall, lead to a small dining room. The kitchen, with its Craftsman-style tile floors and tile countertops, is adjacent and on the north side of the dining room. In 1960, the kitchen was extended to the rear to accommodate a breakfast room and small bathroom. In 2002, a shed-roofed addition was made to the bathroom to accommodate utility space. The sun porch, dating from around 1960, is reached from a door on the southern side of the breakfast room.

A staircase located in a foyer positioned between the den and kitchen on the north side of the interior provides access to the upper level. The foyer also provides access to a closet. The upper level contains a spacious common area, three bedrooms—one of which has been converted to an office—four closets, and a bathroom. Like the first floor, all of the original finishes remain intact.

*Garage*  
*Ca. 1922*  
*Contributing Building*

A hipped-roof garage constructed of exposed tooled-face concrete block stands off the northeast side of the house. Unlike the house, this building was never sheathed in stucco. Facing toward the house, the garage features exposed rafter tails on its side elevations and double doors on its front elevation. A small window pierces the east elevation, while a door and a large window covered with boards occupy the western elevation. In the early 1940s, a stone addition was made to the rear to provide living space to the property's caretaker. The stone addition is flush with the west elevation, but extends a few feet beyond the east elevation. A stone chimney provided heat to the occupants. An African American named Isaac (called "Uncle Isaac" by Irvin Lawrence) first occupied the addition. He worked as a caretaker and yardman for the family. Later, a couple named Robert and Florence lived there. A cousin later lived there.

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Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House  
Wake County, NC

## 8. Significance

### *Summary*

The Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House—constructed circa 1922—is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an intact and rare-surviving example of a Craftsman bungalow built of hollow-core, tooled-face concrete block that was covered with stucco at the time of its construction. Although factory-produced concrete block was a popular building material in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, buildings constructed of handmade concrete blocks, such as the Lawrence House, are much rarer in Raleigh. Constructed for a long-time Raleigh dentist and orthodontist, the Lawrence House stands as a well-preserved example of a concrete block house with a cement stucco exterior, a house type widely espoused by Gustav Stickley's *Craftsman* magazine for its inexpensiveness, ease of construction, and stylishness. Concrete block played a significant role in construction in the early twentieth century by employing new technology that allowed builders to construct substantial houses with relatively inexpensive and widely available material. The open plan of the Lawrence House is based on Stickley's Greek cross-plan in which the stair occupies the center of the house thereby allowing light and outside air into the rooms that surround it. Although magazines and builders' catalogs of the 1920s disseminated ideas about concrete block construction for domestic buildings, block dwellings in the Craftsman style are rare in Raleigh and its vicinity, where only one other example from the period has been identified.

Historic context for the Lawrence House is discussed in the multiple property documentation form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (circa 1770 to 1941)" under Context 4: "Boom, Bust, and Recovery between the World Wars (1919 to 1941)." Craftsman-style houses are discussed in Property Type 3C: "Twentieth Century Popular House Types (circa 1910 to 1941)." The multiple property documentation form notes the predominance of frame Craftsman houses as well as brick and stone examples, but does not include a discussion of concrete block Craftsman houses suggesting their rarity in Wake County. The Lawrence House meets the Registration Requirements for historic and architectural integrity for this property type as an intact house that is not at the center of a farm complex.

### Architectural Context

#### *Concrete Block as a Building Material*

Concrete's history as a building material dates back to the Romans who used it to build the Pantheon (118-128 AD). Once Portland cement began to be used on a wide scale in the 1880s, concrete construction became more practical and more popular. By using mold plates, plain

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concrete block could be turned into imitative dressed stonework.<sup>1</sup> The modern hollow-block industry began in 1900 when Harmon S. Palmer patented his cast iron block machine. Other inventors developed similar machines, but they all shared a common technique. The operator mixed a combination of Portland cement, water, sand, and stone or gravel aggregate, shoveled it into the machine, and tamped it down in order to remove any air. The operator pulled a lever and a block was formed and ready for drying. Each block had to cure for several weeks in order to harden.<sup>2</sup>

The heyday of concrete block—especially those blocks cast in decorative forms—occurred from the late nineteenth century through the 1930s. The construction of a stucco-sheathed, concrete block and Portland cement model home across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House in 1923 symbolized the material's renown during the early twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Concrete block enjoyed popularity because of its cost-effectiveness, strength, and convenience and because it could be adapted to the popular house styles of the period—namely the bungalow and Colonial Revival styles. Although local contractors and building supply companies typically provided blocks for projects, Sears, Roebuck, and Company sold a large number of block-making machines and related supplies and hardware during the early twentieth century. Well into the twentieth century, refinements in block making machines attracted many homeowners who made their own blocks to build dwellings and outbuildings.

Gustav Stickley, editor of *Craftsman* magazine from 1901 to 1916, widely espoused the use of concrete block as a way to bring the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement to the larger population. He called for simple styles of building without the excess decoration that had plagued earlier Victorian houses. Although he rejected machine-made ornament for dwellings, he supported machines as a useful tool for the worker and builder. In his magazine, he published designs for concrete block houses—especially those built of plainface blocks that could be stuccoed.<sup>4</sup> Stickley's magazine also featured concrete houses built on an open plan—more specifically the Greek cross-plan in which the stair was placed in the center of the house to allow for each room to receive natural light and air from the outside. The Lawrence house closely follows this plan with the stair to the second floor ascending from the vestibule at the center of the north elevation. With the stair occupying the windowless core of the house, the outlying rooms benefit from the free movement of air and light encouraged by the abundance of windows on each elevation.

<sup>1</sup> J. Randall Cotton, "Ornamental Concrete Block Houses," *Old-House Journal* (October 1984), 180.

<sup>2</sup> Pamela H. Simpson, "Blocks Like Rocks," *Building Renovation* (Spring 1995), 49.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Atterbury Smith, *The Books of A Thousand Homes*, Volume I (New York: Homeowners Service Institute, 1923), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Pamela H. Simpson, *Cheap, Quick and Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials, 1870-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 148-149.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House  
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Architectural historian Pamela Simpson identifies the period from around 1900 to 1920 as the backyard phase of concrete block making. During this period, building contractors and sometimes homeowners made blocks using the widely available block-making machines. It was not uncommon for a builder to construct several buildings using one or more block machines. In 1905, C. K. Harvey of Smithfield, Virginia purchased a block-making machine from Sears to build his own house. Pleased with the results, he started a contracting business. He later relocated to Murfreesboro, North Carolina where he constructed forty-nine concrete-block homes, churches, and commercial buildings before he died in 1936.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1910s, concrete-block-making businesses had been established across the country. In 1921, H.B. Leonard started a block-making plant on Brushy Fork Creek in Davidson County, North Carolina. He not only sold the block, but also built many block houses in the Piedmont, specifically around Winston-Salem, High Point, and Lexington.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1920s, the development of new aggregates led to the introduction of cinder block. These strong, yet lightweight blocks proved easier to work with than concrete blocks. They could also be veneered with brick. During this period, builders did not abandon concrete block entirely, and improvements were even made to them. Early concrete block varied in size making it difficult for architects and builders to make construction plans. In 1924, concrete block trade industries agreed that block size needed to be standardized and settled on eight-by-eight-by-sixteen-inch as the dimensions for concrete blocks. By the 1930s however, new lightweight aggregates that were being introduced to improve cinder blocks coupled with homeowners' changing tastes led to the decline in the popularity of traditional concrete blocks.<sup>7</sup>

*Concrete Block Houses in Raleigh and Vicinity*

The 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for Raleigh are color-coded for construction material. The location in the city of wood frame, brick, brick tile, stone-faced, and concrete and cinder block houses are indicated on the maps. Over time the maps were updated to reflect new construction and the addition of streets to the area covered by the maps. These updates occurred into the 1950s and even later in some areas of Raleigh covered by the maps. A careful review of the maps indicates that only a handful of concrete block houses were built before 1930. Follow-up field work and research in the city directories shows that of those noted on the Sanborn maps, only one pre-1930 concrete block house survives in Raleigh. The Walton House at 415 Calvin Street dates

<sup>5</sup> Simpson, *Cheap, Quick, and Easy*, 14-16.

<sup>6</sup> Simpson, *Cheap, Quick, and Easy*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Simpson, *Cheap, Quick, and Easy*, 27; Cotton, "Ornamental Concrete Block Houses," 180; J. Randall Cotton, "Return to Concrete Block Houses," *Old-House Journal* (March/April 1995), 35-37.

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to around 1926 and is a two-story, Craftsman Foursquare with stucco sheathing. Pharmacist Russell Walton, owner of Walton's Pharmacy, likely built the house. A concrete block house dating from the same period stood at 705 Brooks Street, but was replaced sometime in the 1970s or 1980s by an apartment building.<sup>8</sup>

The Lawrence House, although now in the Raleigh city limits, was in Raleigh's rural environs in the 1914-1950s era represented on the Sanborn map. The number of early twentieth-century concrete block houses in rural Wake County is unknown, but this type appears to have been quite rare until the 1940s. Those houses built in the 1940s and later were most likely constructed of mass-produced cinder block, which was widely available during the period.

Historic context for the Lawrence House is discussed in the multiple property documentation form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (circa 1770 to 1941)" under Context 4: "Boom, Bust, and Recovery between the World Wars (1919 to 1941)." Craftsman-style houses are discussed in Property Type 3C: "Twentieth Century Popular House Types (circa 1910 to 1941)." The multiple property documentation form notes the predominance of frame Craftsman houses as well as brick and stone examples, but does not include a discussion of concrete block Craftsman houses suggesting their rarity in Wake County. The Lawrence House meets the Registration Requirements for historic and architectural integrity for this property type as an intact house that is not at the center of a farm complex.

The Sanborn maps reveal the location of several later concrete and/or cinder block houses, commercial buildings, and institutional buildings. A cursory survey of neighborhoods inside the I-440 beltline indicates that several block houses from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s remain standing. Among those are Colonial Revival houses at 1659 Oberlin Road and 1009 Gardner Street, both dating from the 1930s or 1940s. More common are post-World War II cinder block dwellings including a duplex at 1430 Duplin Road, a stylish modernist ranch house on Gardner Street just south of Wade Avenue, and a duplex at 2615 Wade Avenue that appears to date to the late 1940s.

The Lawrence House stands as a rare early example of a hollow-core concrete block bungalow in Raleigh. Much more common are later houses and buildings constructed during the 1930s through 1950s when manufacturing concerns mass-produced concrete and cinder blocks. One of the largest makers of concrete blocks in the 1950s was Standard Concrete Products, which had a plant near the junction of North Dawson and McDowell streets in the 1950s.<sup>9</sup> Because of the

<sup>8</sup> 1914 Sanborn Maps (with updated paste-overs), in possession of the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission; *Raleigh City Directory, 1925* (Richmond: Hills Directory Company, Inc., 1925).

<sup>9</sup> *Raleigh City Directory, 1950*, advertisement, n.p.

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Wake County, NC

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popularity of block-making machines from 1900 to 1930, it is most likely that the Lawrence House and its attendant garage were built of blocks made on site.

### Historical Background

Elmo N. Lawrence was born on June 14, 1881 in northern Wake County near the Granville County line. As a child, he was educated by tutors, and then studied at Mars Hill College in Madison County. He completed academic degrees at Campbell College and North Carolina State University and received his degree in dentistry from the University of Maryland at Baltimore. He attended the Dewey School of Orthodontia in New York, which had been established in 1911, for specialized training.<sup>10</sup> At the time, the Dewey School, like the other two schools that provided orthodontist training in the United States, offered a six-week training program. Dr. Lawrence married Flora Louis of Louisburg and the couple had one child, Mary Flora, who was born in 1914. The couple later divorced and he remarried.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Lawrence first practiced in Statesville in Iredell County. In the 1910s he and his family lived on East Bell Street and he kept an office at 540 ½ Center Street. At the time he practiced in Statesville, four other dentists served the town.<sup>12</sup>

E.N. Lawrence opened a dental office at 5 West Hargett Street in Raleigh around 1920. Lawrence was one of fourteen dentists practicing in Raleigh and the majority had offices on West Hargett Street or Fayetteville Street.<sup>13</sup> At the time, Lawrence and his wife lived at 540 North Blount Street with their daughter.<sup>14</sup> By 1922, Dr. Lawrence had moved his office to 120 Fayetteville Street. In 1922 he was residing on Dix Hill Road, a reference to present-day Lake Wheeler Road, although the property where he built his house in the early 1920s was not officially transferred by deed from his brother, Irvin Lawrence, to him until October 7, 1935.<sup>15</sup> The next year his office was at 230 ½ Fayetteville Street where it remained until 1925 when he established a practice at 19 West Hargett Street. By this time, twenty-one other dentists were practicing in Raleigh.<sup>16</sup> From

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<sup>10</sup> *The News and Observer*, October 19, 1959.

<sup>11</sup> Letter, from Irvin Lawrence to Linda Harris Edmisten, 17 July 1995.

<sup>12</sup> *Statesville City Directory, 1916-1917* (Asheville: Piedmont Directory Co., 1917), 149, 202.

<sup>13</sup> *Raleigh City Directory, 1919-1920* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, Inc., 1920), 78.

<sup>14</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Wake County, Population Schedule, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh).

<sup>15</sup> *Raleigh City Directory, 1921-1922* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, Inc., 1922), 77; Wake County Deed Book 871, page 26.

<sup>16</sup> *Raleigh City Directory, 1922-1923* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, Inc. 1923), 73; *Raleigh City Directory, 1925* (Richmond: Hills Directory Company, Inc., 1925), 348.



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1926 until his death in 1959, Lawrence operated his dental practice from an office in the Professional Building at 123 West Hargett Street.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Lawrence practiced dentistry for fifty years. He received a certificate of distinction from the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery and the Dental School of the University of Maryland. In 1956 he was awarded a certificate of appreciation from the Raleigh Dental Society.<sup>18</sup> For many years he traveled to Kinston on Tuesdays to provide services in a dental office. Lawrence died on October 18, 1959 and was buried in Montlawn cemetery.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Raleigh City Directories*, 1926 through 1959 (Richmond: Hill Directory, Company, Inc.), passim.

<sup>18</sup> *The News and Observer*, October 19, 1959.

<sup>19</sup> *The News and Observer*, October 19, 1959.

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Wake County Deed Book 871, page 26. October 7, 1935. Wake County Register of Deeds Office,  
Raleigh, North Carolina.

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Wake County, NC

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## 10. Geographical Data

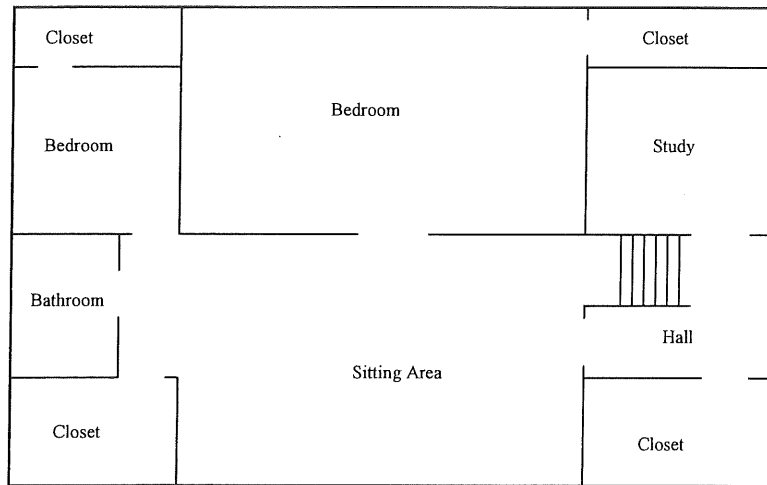
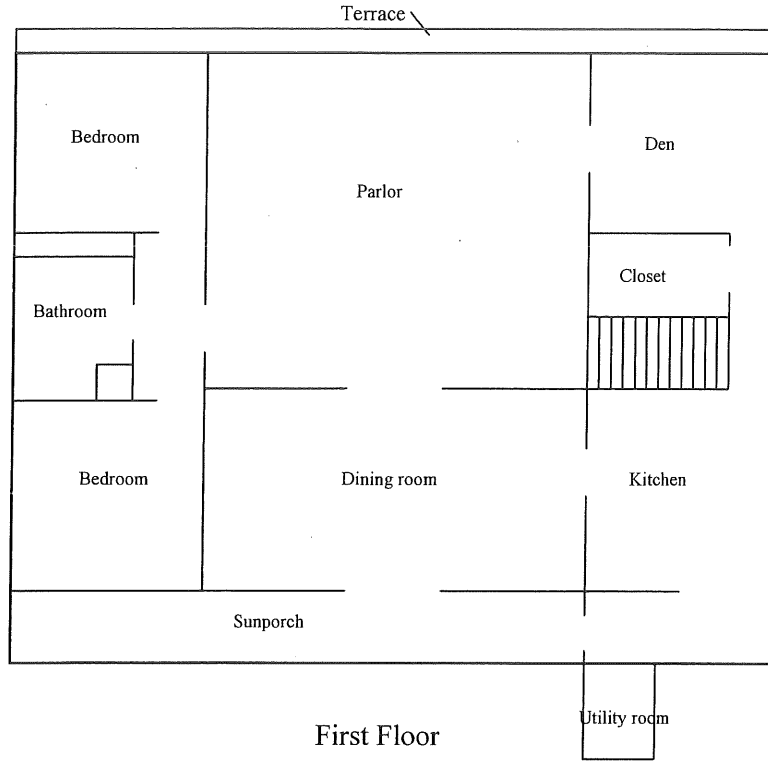
### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House is indicated by the dark line on the accompanying tax map, parcel 0792884355, which is drawn at a scale of 1" = 200'.

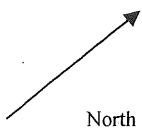
### Boundary Justification

The boundary for the Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House is the 2.6-acre parcel historically associated with the property.

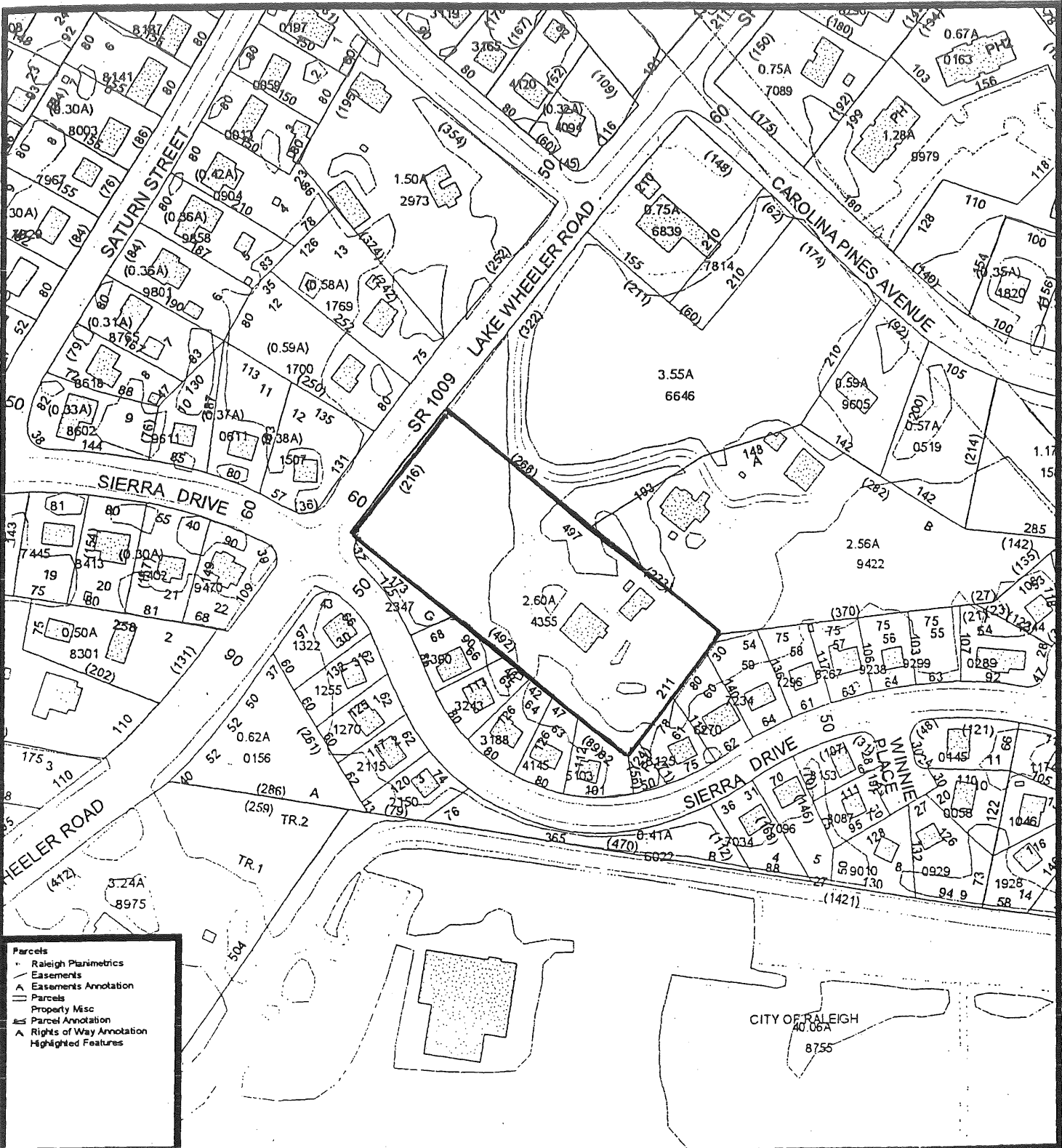
Dr. E.N. Lawrence House  
2121 Lake Wheeler Road  
Raleigh, Wake County, NC



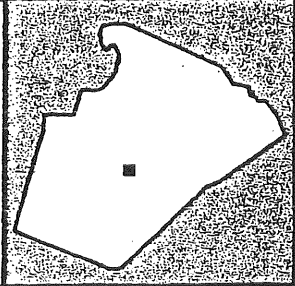
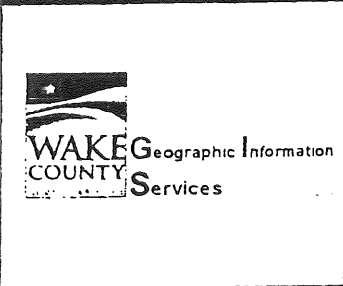
Upper Story



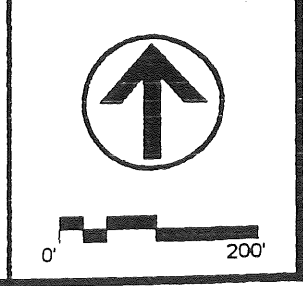
No Scale

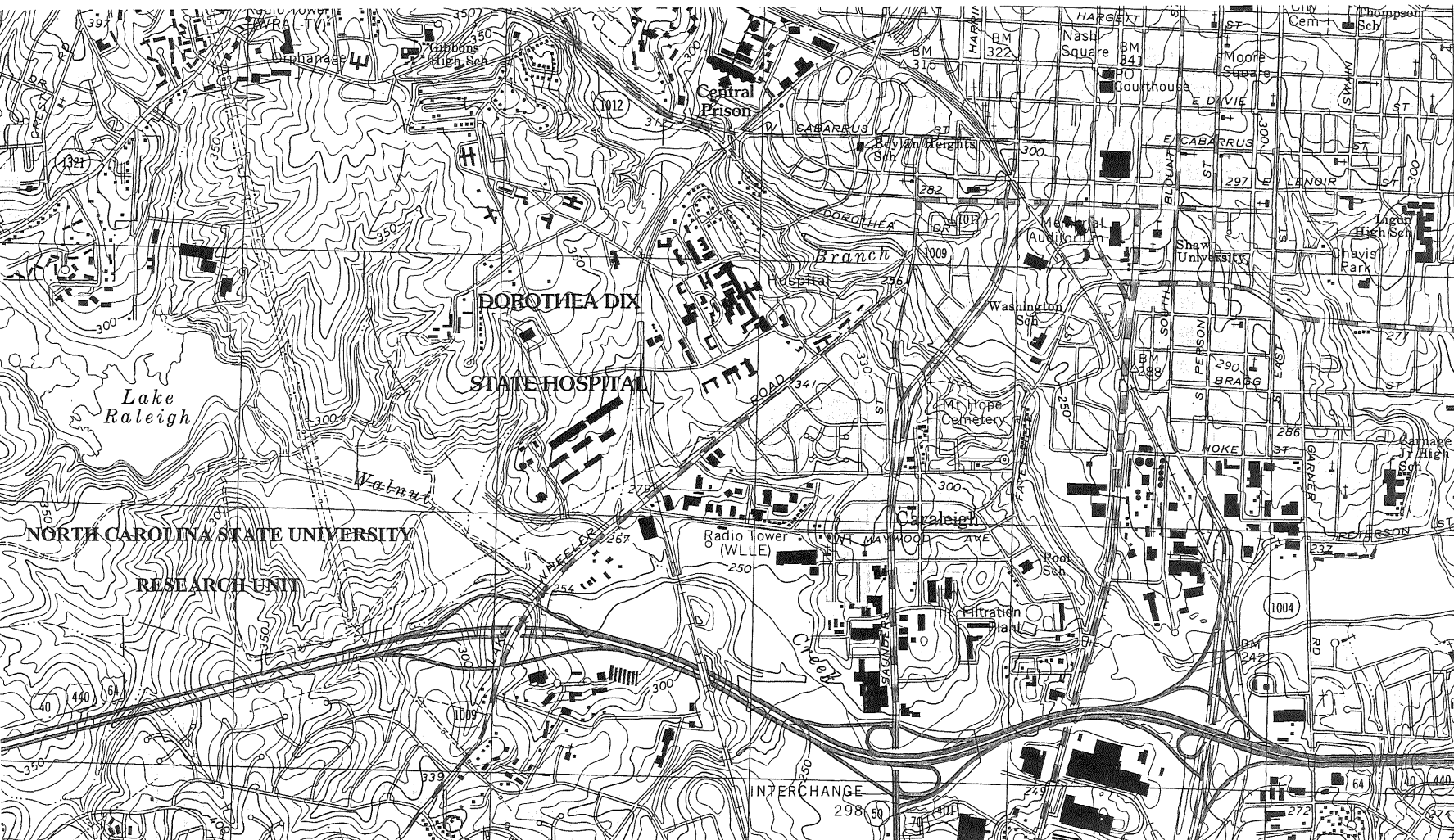


- Parcels
- Raleigh Planimetrics
- Easements
- Easements Annotation
- Parcels
- Property Misc
- Parcel Annotation
- Rights of Way Annotation
- Highlighted Features



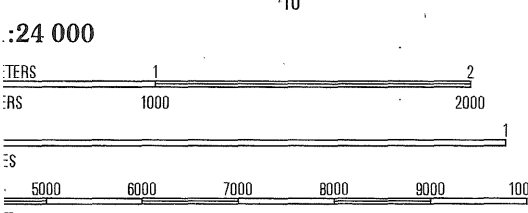
DR. Elmo N. Lawrence  
 House  
 Tax Parcel No.  
 0792 884355  
 Raleigh, WAKE CO. NC





3962  
3961  
3960  
3590mN  
35°45'  
78°37'30"

Dr. Elmo N. Lawrence House  
Raleigh, Wake Co., NC



INTERIOR - GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA - 1999

**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

Primary highway hard surface .....	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface .....
Secondary highway hard surface .....	Unimproved road .....
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
State Route	

UTM Reference:  
17/710800/  
3958820

VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

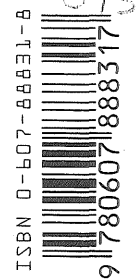
1	2	3	1 Southeast Durham 2 Bayleaf 3 Wake Forest
4		5	4 Cary 5 Raleigh East 6 Apex
6	7	8	7 Lake Wheeler 8 Garner

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

**RALEIGH WEST, NC**

1993

NIMA 5255 I SW-SERIES V842



FULL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225  
NO SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

