

Raleigh Department of City Planning  
One Exchange Plaza  
3rd floor  
Raleigh, NC 27602  
919-516-2626

[www.raleighnc.gov/planning](http://www.raleighnc.gov/planning)

Fee	<u>\$289</u>
A mt Paid	<u>\$289</u>
Check #	<u>5698</u>
Rec'd Date:	<u>3/10/15</u>
Rec'd By:	<u>TGT</u>
Completion Date:	_____

(Processing Fee: \$266.00 - valid until June 30, 2011 - Checks payable to the City of Raleigh.)

## RALEIGH HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION

This application initiates consideration of a property for designation as a Raleigh Historic Landmark by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission (RHDC) and the Raleigh City Council. It enables evaluation of the resource to determine if it qualifies for designation. The evaluation is made by the Research Committee of the RHDC, which makes its recommendation to the full commission which in turn makes its recommendation to the City Council. Procedures for administration by the RHDC are outlined in the Raleigh City Code, Section 10-1053.

Please type if possible. Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper for supporting documentation and if additional space is needed. All materials submitted become the property of the RHDC and cannot be returned. Return completed application to the RHDC office at One Exchange Plaza, Suite 300, Raleigh or mail to:

Raleigh Historic Districts Commission  
PO Box 829 Century Station  
Raleigh, NC 27602

1. Name of Property (if historic name is unknown, give current name or street address):

Historic Name: Owen and Dorothy Smith House

Current Name: Owen and Dorothy Smith House

2. Location:

Street 122 Perquimans Drive , Raleigh, NC 27609

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

NC PIN No.: 0795955585

(Can be obtained from <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>)

3. Legal Owner of Property (If more than one, list primary contact):

Name: Jonathan Wellons Anderson Revocable Trust (Jon Anderson, Trustee)

Address: PO Box 6356

City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27628-6356

Telephone No: (919) (578)-(3075) Fax No. ( ) ( ) -( )

E-Mail: jon@lawofficejwa.com

4. Applicant/Contact Person (If other than owner):

Name: Cynthia de Miranda, MdM Historical Consultants

Address: PO Box 1399

City: Durham State: NC Zip: 27702

Telephone No: (919) (906)-(3136) Fax No. ( ) ( ) -( )

E-Mail: cynthia@mdmhnc.com

5. General Data/Site Information:

Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: 1954-1959

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: carport

Approximate lot size or acreage: 1.64 acres

Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason: Owen F. Smith, architect & builder

Original Use: dwelling & office

Present Use: dwelling

6. Classification:

## A. Category (check all that apply):

Building(s) ☒ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐

## B. Ownership

Private ☒

Public ☐ Local ☐ State ☐ Federal ☐

## C. Number of contributing and non-contributing resources on the property:

	Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings	1	0
Structures	1	0
Objects	0	0

## D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom): Ruth Little, "The Development of Modernism in Raleigh," 2006.

## E. National Register of Historic Places Status:

Check One:

Entered X Date: <input type="checkbox"/>	Nominated <input type="checkbox"/>
Determined Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:	Determined Not Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Nomination Not Requested x	Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Significant changes in integrity since listing should be noted in section 10.B. below.	

7. Reason for Request: To ensure preservation of architectural fabric; to recognize significance of building.

8. Is the property income producing? Yes ☐ No ☒

9. Are any interior spaces being included for designation? Yes ☐ No ☒

10. Supporting Documentation (Attach to application on separate sheets. Please type or print):

A. Photographs/Slides:

At least *two sets of current exterior archival-grade photographic prints* (minimum print size 5"x7") of all facades of the building and at least one photo of all other contributing and non-contributing resources. If interior spaces of the property are being considered for designation, please include two sets of photos for these features. Prints may be created by using archival-grade black and white film photography and processing or digital photography. The minimum standard for a digital print is 5x7 at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch (ppi). This translates into a pixel dimension of 1950 x 1350. Digital images must be printed with an acceptable ink and paper combination as determined by the National Park Service Go to: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/photopolicy/index.htm>. All photographs must be labeled with the name of the structure, address and date the photograph was taken with pencil or archival-approved photo pen. In addition to prints, all digital images should be submitted on a CD-R in TIF format. Any additional exterior or interior views and views of other structures on the property (color, black and white, or slides) will be helpful.

B. Boundary Map:

Please include a map showing the location of the property. A sketch map is acceptable, but please note street names and number. Any other structures on the property should also be shown. Please include a "North" arrow. Map should be no larger than 11" x 17". A tax map with boundaries marked is preferred, which can be found at: <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>.

C. Architectural Significance:

Describe the property, including exterior architectural features, additions, remodelings, and alterations. Also describe significant outbuildings and landscape features. If the owner is including interior features in the nomination for the purpose of design review protection; describe them in detail and note their locations. Include a statement regarding the architectural significance of the property.

D. Historic Significance:

Note any significant events, people, and/or families associated with the property. Include all major owners. Note if the property has ever been recorded during a historic building survey by the City of Raleigh or by the NC State Historic Preservation Office. If so, who and when? (See application item 6.D.) Please include a bibliography of sources. Information regarding prior designations can be found by contacting the Survey and Planning Branch of the NC State Historic Preservation Office (NCSHPO) at 919-807-6570, 919-807-6573 or at: <http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/spbranch.htm>.

E. Special Significance Summary:

Include a one to two paragraph summary of those elements of the property that are integral to its historical, prehistorical, architectural, archaeological, and/or cultural importance.



**Section 10A: Photographs**

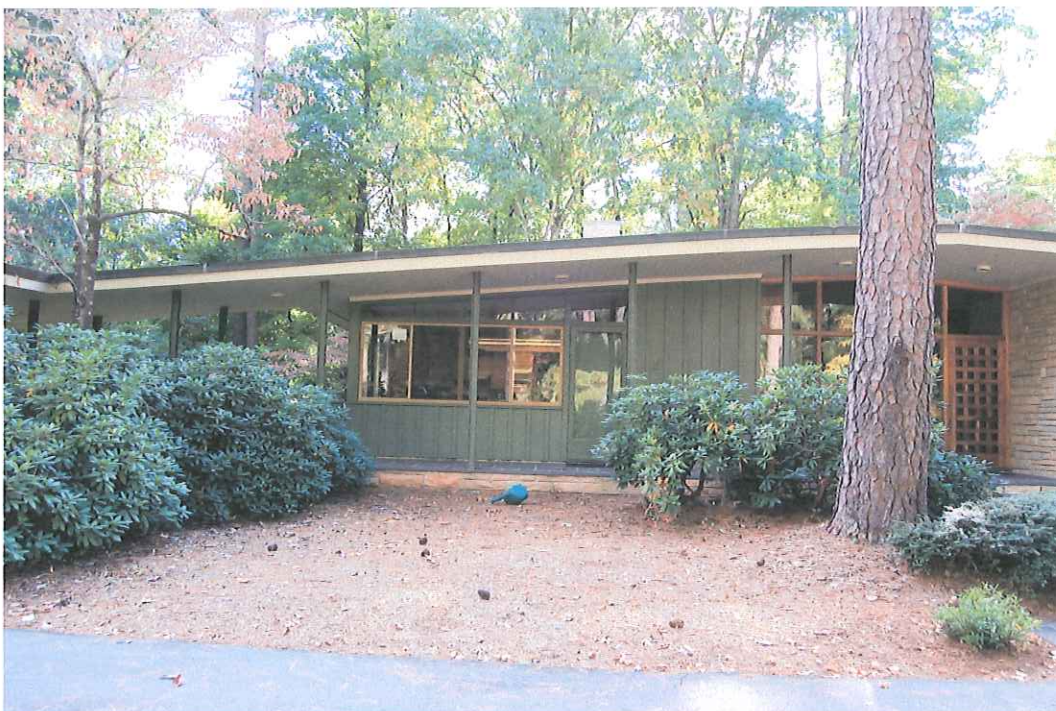


Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
Façade, view S

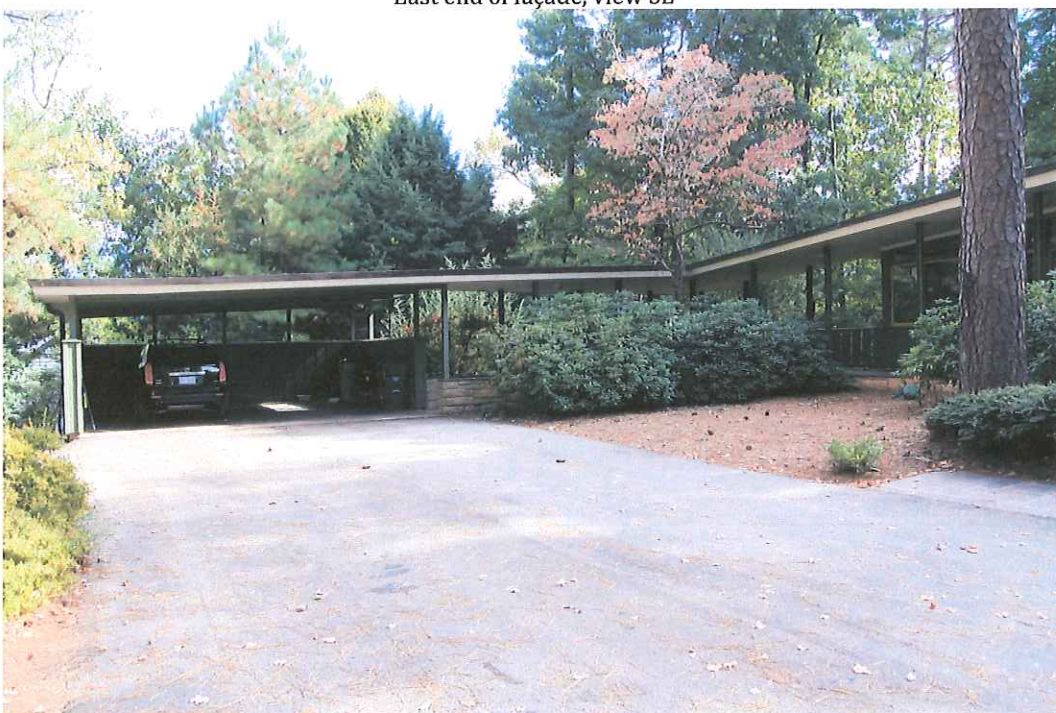


Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
West end of façade, view SW





Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
East end of façade, view SE



Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
Carport and covered walk, view E





Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
Carport north elevation, view SW



Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
East elevation, view SW





Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
East elevation, view NW

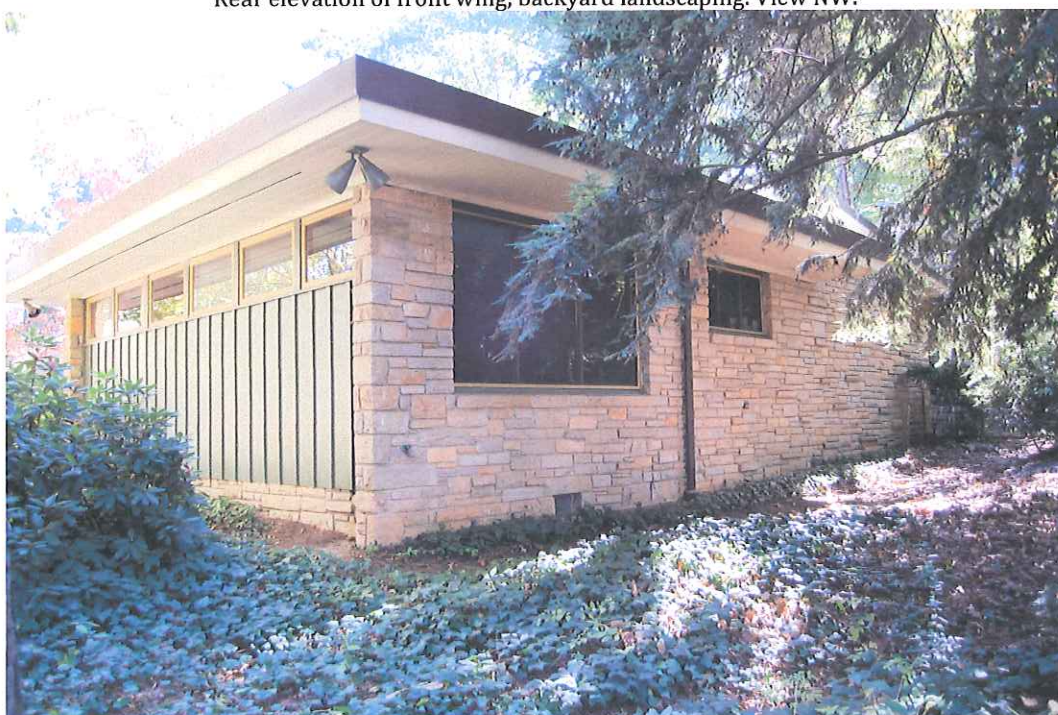


Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
Rear screened porch, west elevation of rear wing, rear yard landscaping. View NE





Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
Rear elevation of front wing, backyard landscaping. View NW.



Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
West elevation, view SE





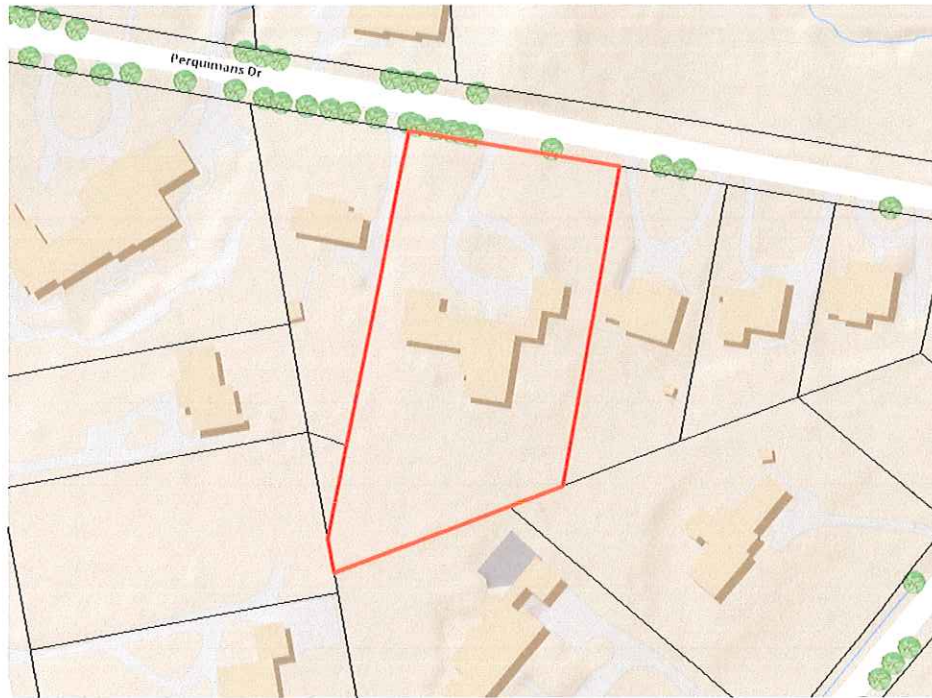
Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
Foyer, view NW



Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh, Wake County  
Living room and dining room (at left behind fireplace wall), view NE



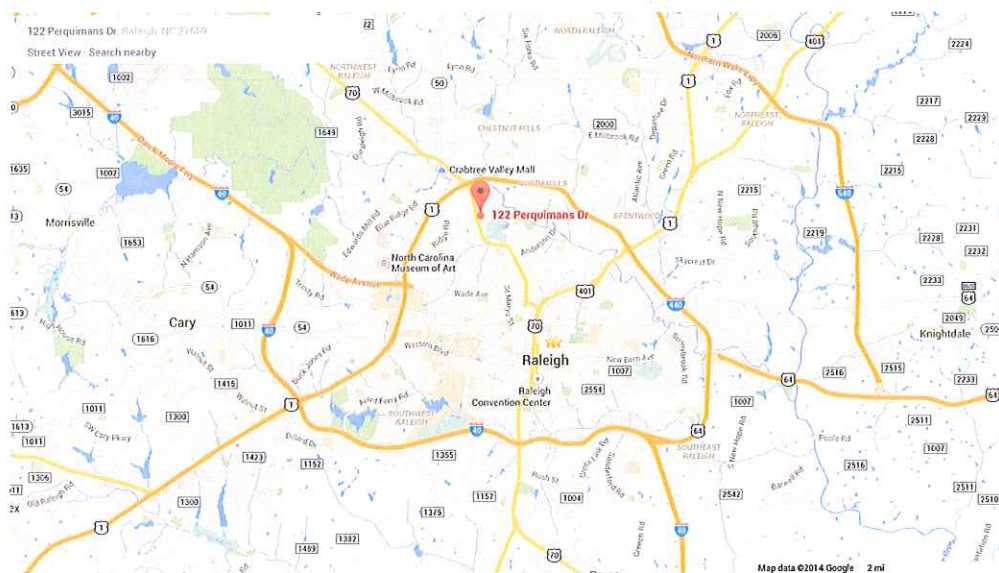
## Section 10B: Maps



Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh Wake County  
Tax Map showing parcel associated with PIN 0795955585

122 Perquimans Dr - Google Maps

11/5/14, 9:44 PM



Owen and Dorothy Smith House, 122 Perquimans Drive, Raleigh Wake County  
Location Map



## **Section 10C: Architectural Significance**

The Owen and Dorothy Smith House is an excellent and intact example of the humanist strain of Modernism practiced by a number of Raleigh's postwar architects. While the style was popular among the design set, it generally didn't find favor with local developers and residents during Raleigh's impressive residential building boom of the second half of the twentieth century. Rather, Modernism was only rarely employed.

### *Property Description*

The Owen and Dorothy Smith House at 122 Perquimans Drive in Raleigh is a 1959 Modernist house of wood and stone. It combines shed, flat, and low-pitched gabled roofs over a modified L-plan. The front-facing wing of the house contains bedrooms and private spaces, sequestered from the larger public living spaces housed in the shorter, broader wing that projects to the rear from the east side. A covered walk links the house to a freestanding carport and expands the breadth of its simple facade. The dwelling rests on a stone foundation and a brick-and-concrete-block basement on a wooded parcel of a little more than one-and-a-half acres in the Country Club Hills neighborhood just inside the I-440 Beltline at Glenwood Avenue. The house fits into the humanist strain of Modernist residential design that was heavily influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright.

The house perches high above the street. Its exterior includes board-and-batten siding and Wake County stone. Glass is also used in abundance: fixed window walls occur in conjunction with large sliders, sliding glass doors, and clerestory awnings. The off-center main entrance favors the east end of the façade. At the west end, a flat-roofed room projects forward and slightly modifies the L-plan. Balancing this, the two-bay carport stands northeast of the house with its west side open to the driveway that loops in front of the house. Naturalistic landscaping edges the drive and fills the area inside the circle with trees and shrubs.

A low-pitched, asymmetrically gabled roof shelters the heart of the façade, where wide boxed eaves create a loggia floored with random-cut bluestone tiles. The front entry is at the west end of the space, set into a wood-framed window wall that lights a large foyer. The single-leaf custom-made front door has thirty-six square panels and a matching wood screen door. Slender steel I-beams support the front edge of the roof eave east of the entry. The back wall here combines wood and glass. A band of large slider windows under fixed clerestory lights pierce the upper half of board-and-batten walls enclosing the kitchen.

West of the front door, a transverse wall of random-cut Wake County ashlar projects forward to mark the terminus of the gabled roof and loggia. Beyond the stone wall, the remainder of the façade features two stretches of board-and-batten siding beneath clerestory awning windows. The second projects forward and another transverse stone wall forms the east side of that portion. Both sections are under a flat roof. The boxed eaves are deep and finished with copper coping.



A covered walkway links the east end of the house to the nearby carport, and architectural elements integrate the connecting path to both structures. The dwelling's gabled roofline merges into that of the covered walkway and the loggia's tiled bluestone floor extends into the same space. Slender steel I-beams, like those at the loggia, support the south side of the covered walkway's roof, and both sides feature balustrades with molded rails and slim vertical boards separated by wider spaces that echo the rhythm of the board and batten. Several steps lead down to the north-south leg of the path, which is bordered by stone walls with bluestone caps below I-beams supporting the roof cover. On the east side, the low stone wall becomes a retaining wall at the lower side yard.

As the passage turns north, ceramic tile replaces the more expensive bluestone. The path exits directly into the concrete-floored carport. The carport has board-and-batten three-quarter-height walls. Steel I-beams support the shed roof, separating it from the walls to create openings that offer light and views. The carport's foundation walls of Wake County stone enclose a daylight basement; the entry is at the north end of its east side with clerestory 1/1 awning windows to the left of the single-leaf door and random-cut ashlar below and at the north and south sides.

The east elevation of the house, like that of the carport, exposes a basement. Wake County stone cut in random ashlar clads walls pierced by five sets of large slider windows. Glazed doors at the south end provide egress from the basement to a grassy side yard, where a low stone wall with bluestone cap retains the earth to the south and near the basement entry. The east elevation wall of the house overhangs slightly over the basement wall. Board-and-batten clads the wall and slider windows light the kitchen and dining room spaces within. A broad interior stone chimney rises through the shed roof in the middle of this wing.

A large screened porch with a shallow, rear-facing, gabled-roof joins the house at the south elevation of the rear wing. The porch foundation of Wake County stone has louvered wood vents to air out the furnace room housed within the crawlspace below the porch. Egress from the porch is on its narrow west elevation, adjacent to the west elevation of the projecting wing.

That elevation and the south side of front wing effectively form the back of the house. The former has board-and-batten siding and fixed windows that reach nearly to the ground; the wing houses the more public living spaces. The deep eave of the shed roof shelters a bluestone-floored loggia as at the front. The south side of the front wing—the bedroom wing—combines board-and-batten siding with smaller bands of windows. Those are set at the eave to afford more privacy to the rooms within. The eave here is more shallow and landscaping replaces a loggia. Together, the wings partially enclose a back garden of gravel and landscaping. Low stone walls edge other sections of the back garden, and stone steps in a south wall lead up to the wooded acreage that buffers the outdoor space from surrounding houses. The west side of the house is stone with windows cut into the north end.

The interior features wood and stone throughout. Wood and plywood paneling sheathes most rooms, accented with walls of Wake County stone. Marble tile is used in the bathrooms. Flooring originally included bluestone, cork, terrazzo, and carpeting; carpeting has been removed and replaced with wood floors in the living room. From the stone wall in the front hall, a long corridor with clerestory awning windows over built-in cabinetry leads across the front of the bedroom wing to a smaller foyer at the west end. The three bedrooms and bathrooms are all accessible from this space. The master bedroom and its bathroom are alternately reached from a short hall leading from the den that adjoins the vestibule. The arrangement creates a suite that overlooks the rear garden.

Public spaces in the other wing include an eat-in kitchen, a dining room, a living room, and the screened porch. Huge sliding glass doors open to the terrazzo-floored back porch, enabling the living room and dining room spaces to flow uninterrupted out to the screened outdoor space. The central space of the foyer flows directly into the living room. To the left is stair access to the basement, a coat closet, and entry into the kitchen. The basement has a bathroom in the stair hall and a long, open room beneath the kitchen and dining room.

The house and its parcel display exceptional architectural integrity, with very few changes since construction. A metal balustrade at the staircase to the basement has been replaced with wood, and originally carpeted areas have been fitted with new wood floors. Owen Franklin Smith lived in the house from its construction until his death in 2012; he housed his architectural practice in the daylight basement room for a time.

#### *Architectural Context*

At the close of World War II, residential building in Raleigh was mired in a massive slump brought on by the Great Depression and extended by wartime rationing. The industry rebounded nicely by the 1950s. Architectural historian Ruth Little, who conducted a survey of Raleigh buildings erected between 1945 and 1965, records that the tony new development of Country Club Hills, platted in 1947, was "one of the earliest upper-middle class subdivisions" of this post-war period. "Buyers purchased a lot and contracted with a builder to construct a custom dwelling." Budleigh was another such neighborhood, and the two "provided ample lots and a modern suburban atmosphere where a series of modern houses were designed by faculty and former students of North Carolina State University." Examples, built from 1950 on in Country Club Hills, include the Kamphoefner House (NR 1996, RHL 2000), the Paschal House (NR 1994; now demolished), and the Fadum House (NR and RHL 1993).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Little, "The Development of Modernism in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1945-1965," 2006, 8, available online at [www.ncmodernist.org](http://www.ncmodernist.org).



The architects associated with the university's School of Design (SoD), established by Dean Henry Kamphoefner in 1948, joined an existing group of local professionals. The latter was unassociated with SoD but had set up practices in Raleigh following World War II, some resuming nascent careers interrupted by the war. Little states that "practicing professionals such as William H. Deitrick, F. Carter Williams, John Holloway, Albert Haskins, and Leif Valand were already designing modern buildings in Raleigh by the time Henry Kamphoefner and his innovative and influential group of designers...made their mark on Raleigh's architecture." The professors tended to be architectural purists, while those not associated with the school worked outside the Modernist mode when it suited their clients. Still, the two groups did not function separately, but formed a strong design community within Raleigh.<sup>2</sup>

Owen Smith fell into the second group of architects, those not associated with SoD. He began practicing architecture in North Carolina after his 1938 graduation from North Carolina State College with a degree in Architectural Engineering. After serving in the military during the war, Smith returned to North Carolina and resumed his practice, which focused on institutional buildings, particularly schools. He also designed several houses in Raleigh, including a few commodious Modernist dwellings similar to his own 1959 house. (A fuller biography of Smith is below.)

Despite the wealth of local architectural talent—and their preference for Modernist design—Little's survey found that the style "never became widely accepted in Raleigh" for residential work. The Colonial Revival dominated until the "mid-1950s, when the Ranch and Split-Level completely took over." While both of those 1950s house types owe much to Modernism's more open-plan approach, their exterior decoration in Raleigh tended to include watered-down elements of the Colonial Revival, including decorative shutters, six-over-six sash, and occasionally columns or pediments. As a result, Raleigh's collection of Modernist postwar dwellings is small and nearly all architect-designed.<sup>3</sup>

Documenting the emergence of Modernism in the South in their 1960 book *The South Builds*, architect Edward Waugh and historian Elizabeth Waugh distinguish between a "formalist" Modernism and a more "humanist" or "romantic" version. Formalists followed the lead of Mies van der Rohe and his modular design or Le Corbusier and his sculptural enclosure of space. The humanist or romantic architect let the intended function of space drive the design. Frank Lloyd Wright was the most famous of the humanist architects and his work exerted enormous influence over residential design and planning in the middle of the twentieth century. A 1958 book by *House Beautiful* declared that Wright's "architectural philosophy has become a major part of our living culture, an indispensable tool for our architects and

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<sup>2</sup> Little, 14, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Little, 13.

builders.” In fact, the humanist strain espoused by Wright was very influential among several of Raleigh’s Modernist architects in the 1950s.<sup>4</sup>

The Owen Smith House falls squarely into the humanist strain and in fact owes much to the legacy of the modest Usonian house type developed by Wright in the 1930s: a carport integrated into the façade; an orientation to outdoor spaces, particularly backyard patios; sequestered bedrooms; a long, tight corridor that sets off the expansiveness of public rooms; and sections of interior masonry that help define sheltered space. Significant differences are the size of the dwelling and the use of sloped in addition to typically flat Usonian roofs. Smith also includes a prominent and striking front door and large areas of plate-glass windows at the façade. Wright, in contrast, tended to hide the main entrance and limit façade windows to clerestories in his Usonian designs.<sup>5</sup>

By 1959, when Smith’s house was complete, at least fifteen Modernist dwellings had been built in Raleigh. The earliest houses tend more toward the humanist strain, but after 1951, formalist examples were in evidence as well. Smith used wood and stone in his dwellings, much like other Raleigh modernists like Leif Valand, F. Carter Williams, and Arthur McKimmon, and in contrast to the glass-and-steel look of Formalist Modernism. The trend continued through the 1960s, but for residential architecture, Modernism was always the exception rather than the rule across Raleigh. Ruth Little’s local survey work determined that Modernist houses in Raleigh are historically significant for “their progressive architectural character.” The Owen Smith House is among these rare examples Raleigh, beautifully exhibiting the humanist strain of Modernist residential architecture.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Section 10D: Historic Significance**

Owen Smith designed this house for his family in the early 1950s and oversaw its construction from 1954 to 1960. Smith had been practicing architecture since the late 1930s and he established his own firm in Raleigh after World War II, eventually focusing on institutional projects. Throughout his career, however, he also did residential work. In the 1950s and 1960s, he completed some commodious and stylish dwellings in the Wrightian tradition of organic Modernist architecture. His own house was among them.

##### *Owen Franklin Smith Bio*

Owen Franklin Smith was born in Benson, North Carolina, in 1917. His family owned Star Manufacturing, a lumber and finish mill in town, and Smith grew up helping make millwork. His childhood passion, however, was aeronautics and he spent his

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<sup>4</sup> Edward Waugh and Elizabeth Waugh, *The South Builds: New Architecture in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 25; Joseph Barry, *The House Beautiful Treasury of Contemporary American Homes* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1958), 12; Little, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Grant Hildebrand, *The Wright Space: Pattern and Meaning in Frank Lloyd’s Wright’s Houses* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 116-145.

<sup>6</sup> Little, 21-22.



spare time building model planes. In high school, he began making model Napoleonic coaches as part of competitions sponsored by General Motors and its Fisher Body division. Smith won one of the competitions, which offered prize money and scholarship funds, and showed his model at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago. *Popular Mechanics* reported on the competition in that year, explaining that entrants got a set of plans and specifications for the model coach. "The job calls for a high degree of skill in...wood-working, metal-working, leather-working, textile-working, painting and trim." Winning entries took, on average, a thousand hours of work and judging them required two or three hours by "experienced craftsmen." There were contests in the U.S. and in Canada, and—though it seems incredible—the magazine reported, "There are more than 500,000 entries in each contest."<sup>7</sup>

Smith wanted to study aeronautics at a school in Nebraska, but in a compromise with his father he enrolled at North Carolina State College (now University) and began coursework in mechanical engineering. Before long, Smith's brother suggested that architectural training would be well suited to the family's millwork business. Smith made the switch and completed his architectural engineering degree from State College in 1938. This was a decade before the establishment of the School of Design, organized and headed by Henry Kamphoefner, at State. Though the program in architecture resided within the engineering school at that time, the 1936-1937 catalog stated, "the curriculum is based on the belief that an architect should have an education in liberal studies, as well as a fundamental and technical knowledge." The coursework would ideally "teach him to regard building construction as an expression of his art as well as a useful accomplishment." Coursework in architectural history and ornament was required, as was instruction in freehand and perspective drawing; work with watercolor, charcoal, pencil, and pen and ink; shade and shadow study; and photography. Advanced engineering coursework included materials, statics, physics, mechanics, and math, all taken after the basic first year coursework in engineering. Finally, the fourth year included several courses related to the business of running an architectural firm. Electives in liberal arts were required throughout the four-year degree program.<sup>8</sup>

Upon graduation in 1938, Smith moved to Fayetteville to open an office for another architect. He soon returned to Benson and began work in the family business. In 1940, Smith married Dorothy Helen. They might have settled down in Benson but the mill caught fire and burned in 1941. The Smith family did not reopen the business, but Owen Smith found he had four job offers in the aftermath of the fire: two from millwork companies like his family's; one from a general contractor; and

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<sup>7</sup> Owen F. Smith, interview by Kate Walker, Raleigh, 2012, viewed at <http://www.ncmodernist.org/owensmith.htm> October 23, 2014; "Builders of Coach Models Devise Own Tools," *Popular Mechanics*, December 1933, viewed online at [www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com) on January 15, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Owen F. Smith interview; *North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering 1936-1937* (Raleigh: n.p., 1936), viewed online at [www.mocavo.com](http://www.mocavo.com), January 15, 2015.

one from Raleigh architect Thomas Cooper. The young architect enthusiastically accepted Cooper's offer and the Smiths moved to Raleigh.<sup>9</sup>

Cooper became one of Smith's architectural mentors, along with later employer and prolific Raleigh architect William Henley Deitrick. Both architects worked in traditional as well as contemporary styles. Cooper designed a number of revival-style houses in the Hayes Barton neighborhoods, and Deitrick notably designed Raleigh's Romanesque-style Broughton High School. Interestingly, both are also known for local Modernist firsts. Deitrick's 1938 Crosby-Garfield School is one of Raleigh's earliest Modernist buildings. Cooper's 1951 Beth Meyer Synagogue was the city's first Modernist house of worship.<sup>10</sup>

Deitrick's firm had done exceptionally well during the Depression, owing to his tenacity in securing federally funded school projects across the state. Cooper's firm, however, shut down during the Second World War. Smith left Raleigh in this period and worked in Newport News, Virginia, with the Farm Security Administration, supervising construction of temporary housing for those working in the shipbuilding yards. Smith then served in the Navy for the final year of the war.<sup>11</sup>

Smith returned to Raleigh after the war and established his own firm. His work in Deitrick's office had included residential jobs, and Deitrick eventually offered Smith a position running the residential division of his firm. Smith declined, however, as his business was already established. Perhaps mimicking Deitrick's earlier approach, Smith personally approached many school boards around the state seeking work under a \$40 million appropriation for school building by the state. Like Deitrick, he was very successful in getting the work. Smith ultimately completed 120 school projects by his count. All were Modernist designs.<sup>12</sup>

In a 2012 interview, Smith conceded that Frank Lloyd Wright influenced his work, but asserted that he was not a "worshipper" of Wright. Frank Smith, a son of Owen F. Smith's, recalls that his father stayed current on architectural trends and building technology throughout his career; the elder Smith never retired and remained a practicing, licensed architect until his death in 2012. Frank Smith considers his father a Modernist, albeit one fully capable of and amenable to working in other styles as directed by clients. The younger Smith recalled that, in the early 1960s, Smith designed a Modernist sanctuary for Hayes Barton Baptist Church to replace the building that burned in 1962 at Five Points. The building committee accepted the design, but some members of the congregation strenuously objected. Smith redesigned the church in Georgian Revival style; it was completed in 1966 and still

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<sup>9</sup> Owen F. Smith interview; O. Franklin Smith (Frank Smith), telephone interview with the author, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> "Owen F. Smith, Sr." *News & Observer*, September 6, 2012; "Thomas Wright Cooper" and "William Henley Deitrick," *North Carolina Architects & Builders*, viewed online at <http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu> January 19, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> "Deitrick," *NC Architects & Builders*; Smith interview and obit.

<sup>12</sup> Owen F. Smith interview.



stands in Raleigh's Bloomsbury Historic District. Documents from Smith's papers also show that he highlighted his traditional design education and experience to prospective clients.<sup>13</sup>

According to his own account, Owen Smith's modernism seems to have developed practically. In describing houses he designed in the 1940s and early 1950s, Smith explained "if you put a two-foot overhang on the roof, that was a touch of Modern, and more windows and something maybe other than double-hung windows, so one thing kind of led to another." The 1949 Thomas and Sue Byrne House in Wake Forest is an example; the house takes a traditional gable-roofed form in a compact L-plan, but ribbons of casement windows distinguish it from other houses of its time. The 1953 Ranch house designed for Samuel and Jean Wilkinson at 2617 Wells Avenue in Raleigh has awning windows, a deep overhang on its shallow gabled roof, and a broad chimney that hints at a wide, welcoming hearth inside.<sup>14</sup>

While Smith asserts that he "just kind of drifted into" the choice of Modernism for his own home, it is a fully realized and well-executed Modernist design. The thoughtful use of materials, including stone walls at the interior and exterior and the use of glass to minimize the transition between indoor and outdoor spaces are classic elements of the style. The spatial planning that separates private spaces from public and outdoor areas and contrasts them from vaulted, open, flowing public spaces is derived from Wright's humanist mode that resonated with several Raleigh architects in the post-war period.

### **Section 10E: Special Significance Summary**

The Owen and Dorothy Smith House is locally significant for its Modernist architectural design. The house is an excellent and intact example of the softer, Wright-influenced, "humanist" mode of Modernism that occurred in Raleigh in the 1950s. Its board-and-batten siding and Wake County stone create an approachable and organic feeling and present a distinctive façade. The house integrates with nature through formal garden spaces, naturalistic landscaping, walkways, loggia, and a screened porch. Houses with Modernist design from the mid-twentieth century are locally rare. Intact examples like the Owen Smith House are significant as representatives of an important architectural trend in the post-war period.

### **Local Landmark Boundary Description**

The boundary line coincides with the lot lines of the parcel that the house occupies, as depicted in the Tax Map above.

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<sup>13</sup> Owen F. Smith interview; O. Franklin Smith interview; Owen Smith to Gordon H. Rutherford, November 30, 1989, letter in collection of Frank Smith.

<sup>14</sup> Owen F. Smith interview; "Owen Smith," *North Carolina Modernist Houses*, viewed online at <http://www.ncmodernist.org/owensmith.htm> January 19, 2015.

*Major Bibliographic Sources*

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