

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: The Highlands

Other names/site number: W. Burton Dillon House; DHR ID# 044-5576

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 510 Edgewood Drive

City or town: Stanleytown State: Virginia County: Henry

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity:

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 forth 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 3 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	sites
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	objects
<u> 6 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

LANDSCAPE: garden

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

LANDSCAPE: garden

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Tudor Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD, BRICK, STONE, METAL, CONCRETE, GLASS

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Highlands, located at 510 Edgewood Drive in Stanleytown, Henry County, Virginia, is a 1936-37 Tudor Revival house set amidst landscaped grounds. The two-story Flemish-bond brick house has a slate-shingled side-gable roof with multiple gabled, hipped, and shed-roofed projections such as dormers. Some walls have brick facing on cinder block. Principal design elements include a two-story gable-fronted entry wing, a front chimney with “clustered” stacks, a side porch with arched openings, and a semi-detached garage wing with an upstairs apartment. The interior features a manorial entry hall with paneled walls and stair; low-relief plaster ornaments on the walls of the principal spaces; and floors with false pegs and butterfly dovetails. The house stands at the high point of a 13.01-acre parcel amid extensive plantings including a garden area with boxwood rows, brick walkways, a parterre, and a Tudor Revival gazebo. In the wooded northern portion of the parcel stand a brick dependency and a frame garden shed. The southern part of the parcel is open, with a curving driveway that joins another driveway at brick gate pillars. The second driveway, which serves The Highlands and an adjacent property, connects to Edgewood Drive which defines the parcel at its south end. The north end of the parcel lies near Fairystone Park Highway (Route 57). A small branch flows through the north end and on to Smith River, a tributary of the Dan and Roanoke rivers. Elevations range from about 770 feet above sea level along the branch to about 830 feet near the house. The property has distant views of hills on the other side of Smith River and closer views of neighboring

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houses including the National Register-listed house Stoneleigh, which stands across Edgewood Drive.

Narrative Description

Inventory

1. The Highlands. 1936-37. Contributing building.
2. Garden. Late 1940s. Contributing site.
3. Gazebo. Late 1940s. Contributing structure.
4. Gate pillars. Mid-20th century. Contributing structure.
5. Brick dependency. Mid-20th century. Contributing building.
6. Garden shed. Mid-20th century. Contributing building.

House: Exterior

The south-facing front elevation is organized around an entryway projection and chimney, a popular Tudor Revival composition. The entryway has a varnished wood-panel door with a small inset window. The door is contained in a Tudor-arched embrasure with a limestone surround with a molded edge and a square label molding above. The limestone, which is also employed for lintels over certain windows and for curved corbels at the bases of gables, has a light buff color that contrasts with the red of the surrounding brickwork.

Above the entryway is a cottage-style brass light and above that, in the second story, a bank of three casement windows with fixed transom panes that light a stair landing inside. The tripartite window composition is repeated in other window groupings (triple, double, and single windows are common). The windows have multiple lead-camed panes, as do most other windows of the house, but they also have painted-glass heraldic shields. In the gable of the entryway projection is a narrow vent that evokes the loopholes (arrow ports) of medieval architecture. Mid-twentieth-century photographs show that the house's first-story windows were formerly shaded by striped canvas awnings.

A pent-like bay separates the entry projection from the chimney to its right. The chimney has a single slate-sheathed weathering on its lower portion and rises to a brick-paved cap or weathering at roof level. Above the cap the stack is treated as a cluster of angular piers crowned by corbeled brickwork and a concrete coping. The effect, which evokes the clustered flues of Tudor architecture, masks two true flues of different sizes inside the chimney. Glazed terra-cotta chimney pots—one squat, the other taller—project above the coping.

At the west end of the front elevation is a one-story sunroom lighted by banks of large windows, the front windows incorporating French doors. At the opposite east end of the house, engaged under the upstairs master bedroom, is a porch with paired round-arched openings on its three sides, six openings in all. The flagstone floor of the porch continues outside to form a terrace and

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walkway. At the center of the stucco porch ceiling is a light fixture in the form of a compass rose with north indicated by a fleur-de-lis and east and west by the letters E and W (the letter S for south is missing). Opening onto the porch from the interior (the living room) are double-leaf varnished panel doors with the original double-leaf screen doors with decorative grillwork.

On the rear north elevation is a bay window for a breakfast room on the interior. The bay has a concave copper-sheathed hip roof. Next to it is a gabled one-story hyphen that connects to the one-and-a-half-story garage. On the east side the hyphen is enclosed by a brick wall with a window and a wood batten door. On the west side, facing the end of the driveway, the hyphen is open and porch-like (it is described as a "service porch" in the 1936 plans). A wood and glass panel door opens from the porch into the kitchen and a metal-sheathed door opens into the garage. The varnished wood posts that support the hyphen/porch roof on the open side have curved cruck-like brackets. The porch floor is paved with terra-cotta tiles.

The garage has two vehicle bays on the west side, with wood panel doors with small four-pane windows (the doors appear to be modern replacements but are likely similar to the originals). A single small hipped dormer projects on each roof plane and an exterior stair rises to a door in the north gable. The landing at the top of the stair was enlarged, probably in recent decades, to form a deck with a wood railing. The peak of the gable projects over the landing door as a small roof supported by cruck brackets.

The west gable end of the house has a centered chimney with steep slate-sheathed weatherings at attic level, a brick-paved cap above, and a stack treated as a cluster of flues, although the "flues" are right-angled rather than set at a diagonal as on the front-elevation chimney. A deep round-arched embrasure on the face of the chimney at the second-story level contains a window; a second, square-headed embrasure below contains a bathroom window.

House: Interior

Despite the irregular exterior massing, The Highlands has a fairly regular interior layout, a modification of the classic two-room-deep center-passage plan. The entry hall, which contains the main stair, terminates at a small breakfast room at the back of the house. On the right is the living room and behind it the dining room. On the left is the library with the sun room beyond. In the northwest corner is the kitchen with a servant's stair and bathroom between it and the library. As noted in the summary, floors are mostly wood (tile in the bathrooms and flagstone in the sunroom) and walls and ceilings have plaster finishes, with the exception of the library which has beaded knotty pine paneling (described as white pine in the 1936 specifications) and parts of the entry hall which have rectangular wood paneling. Doors are typically wood panel with a varnished finish and decorative brass door knobs. Many first-floor rooms have crown moldings.

The walls of the entry hall, living room, and breakfast room are decorated with low-relief plaster ornaments in a variety of forms. Designs include fleur-de-lis, portcullis with chain, shield, crown, castle, rose blossom, thistle, tulip, stylized floret, bunch of grapes and grape leaf, pomegranate fruit, pear fruit and leaf, and (possibly) olives. The choice of ornaments to decorate

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each space was not random. The ornaments in the breakfast room have a predominately fruit and flower theme; those in the entry hall are generally bigger than in other rooms, befitting the grander scale of the space; and those in the living room appear to be spaced to allow for picture-hanging.

The main feature of the entry hall is the stair which rises from the back of the hall forward. The stair has two runs with a long landing in between, spanning the entry. The railing has a closed stringer, vasiform turned newels, heavy molded handrails, and chamfered newels with faceted finial spikes. The wall under the stair is paneled in walnut as is the wainscot that rises with the stair, and there are various air-exchange registers built into the base. The walnut paneling wraps around the front of the hall and the paneled wainscot wraps around the whole space. Segmental-arched niches flank the double-leaf doors to the breakfast room.

The living room, entered through a segmental-arched opening from the hall, is dominated by a fireplace with a high paneled mantel surround. The surround features a band of linenfold panels at the top, a cornice with a dentil-like treatment, and octagonal-section pilasters at the outside corners. At the two ends are wrought iron light sconces. The fireplace surround proper is carved limestone with a Tudor arch and spandrel carving with shield, rose, leaf, and tendril motifs. Inside the fireplace is an antique cast iron fireback with the lion and unicorn of the British royal arms. The fireback is not original to the house and was inserted in recent years.

The dining room has a painted paneled wainscot below walls papered with garden-themed wallpaper depicting flowers, trees, pheasants and other birds, and butterflies. In two corners are built-in china cabinet niches with open fronts, round-arched keyblock surrounds, shell tops, and decoratively-edged shelves. The breakfast room, which communicates with the dining room and the kitchen, has built-in cabinets flanking the door to the entry hall. The cabinets have glass doors at the top, with arched upper panes, and beaded batten doors at the bottom (both upper and lower doors are hung on HL hinges). The kitchen has modern cabinetry but original stainless steel counter tops and a small hatch for what was originally a trash chute. The chute has been repurposed as an HVAC duct. The library has the aforementioned pine paneling and an angled corner fireplace with a mantel shelf supported by rounded wood corbels. The sunroom also has an angled corner fireplace which is back to back with the one in the library.

The three painted glass panes in the landing windows portray the Dillon, Vaughan, and McManaway coats of arms. The upstairs floor plan is similar to that below, with four bedrooms arranged around a center hall. At the north end of the hall is a small room identified as a sew room in the original plans. The master bedroom has a dressing room and an angled corner fireplace. The upstairs bathrooms have predominately pink or green tile floors (the first-floor bathroom has brown, beige, and white tiles). The servant's stair connects the first and second floor to the basement and has winders at the turnings. The basement has painted poured concrete walls and is illuminated by high windows with window wells on the outside.

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Other Resources

Although much of the property is landscaped in some way, the principal **garden** area (inventory no. 2) is located east of the house and wraps around on the north side to the end of the garage wing. The chief organizing element is a brick-paved walkway that begins at the garage and passes through masses of boxwood and along the edge of the yard on the northeast side of the house to the gazebo (described below). On the south side of the gazebo the walkway continues as one spoke of a radiating system of walkways inside a semi-octagonal parterre. The walkways converge on a millstone set into the brick pavers at the center of the parterre. Millstones appear as pavement accents at various points of the main walkway as well.

The brick pavers of the main walkway and most other walkways are laid in a basketweave pattern. Some walkways and terraces are paved with what is described as Kentucky blue slate in a modern source, although the 1936 specifications called for either “greenstone flooring” or “Rocky Mount flagstone” as an outdoor paving material. Where the main walkway borders the yard it has a segmented curving form, and near the garage it passes through an archway formed by boxwood. At the time of survey (early April 2017) the garden’s flowering plants included daffodil, dogwood, redbud, and azalea. Plants that bloom later in the growing season include iris, foxglove, hyacinth, and rose.

The **gazebo** (3) is an octagonal-plan structure with a steep pyramidal wood-shingled roof, square posts and balusters, and a floor with concentric brick pavers and a center millstone. The gazebo has four openings, each leading to a path or walkway. The north and south openings, which are the ones through which the main walkway pass, have gabled archways with hammer-beam-like arches.

The driveway where it passes in front of the house is bordered on its uphill side by a sandstone retaining wall and on its downhill side by a concrete curb. The retaining wall curves inward where it is intersected by the front walk, which is on axis with the front entry, and has stone pedestals on which stand concrete lions. At the entrance to the driveway are brick **gate pillars** (4) capped by concrete pineapples.

In the woods to the north of the house and garden, located on a wide grassy path that connects the east and west sides of the property, are the **brick dependency** (5) and garden shed. The dependency, described in one account as a smokehouse converted to a gardener’s “cottage,” is a one-story building of stretcher-bond brick construction or veneer, with an asphalt-shingled side-gable roof, a brick end chimney, and a poured concrete foundation. There are two entries with French doors and between them a six-over-six window with board shutters with shield-shaped cutouts. An exterior stair rises on the east end to a door to the attic and the roof engages a back porch. The left entry opens into a room with a Craftsman brick mantel. The right entry opens into a small storage room. The dependency connects to the driveway via a walkway paved with brick bats laid in an irregular decorative pattern.

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The **garden shed** (6) is a small gable-fronted frame building with novelty weatherboard siding, asphalt-shingle roofing, and a cinder block foundation. The replacement front door is sheltered by a shed roof on struts and there are six-over-six windows on the sides. The shed is currently painted dark green but was formerly painted brown and possibly white or off white.

Magnolias, oaks, and other mature trees dot the grounds and there are hemlocks, probably planted, in the woods near the garden. Beyond the garden on the east edge of the property is an arcing row of boxwoods which creates a backdrop for the rest of the garden. A similar row brackets the grounds at the west end.

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1936-ca. 1950

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Eubank and Caldwell (architect)

Gracie (wallpaper)

Farnham, Albert Ayrton (landscape architect)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Highlands, located in Henry County, Virginia, is a manorial Tudor Revival house built in 1936-37 for furniture executive W. Burton Dillon and his wife, Alma McManaway Dillon. The two-story brick house, designed by the Roanoke architectural firm of Eubank and Caldwell, features an imposing front chimney, a roof with gables and dormers in a variety of forms, and lead-camed casement windows, some with heraldic painted panes. Inside are a paneled entry hall, plaster wall ornaments in over a dozen designs including the Tudor portcullis and rose, and a living room fireplace with carved stonework and linenfold wood panels. The grounds were designed in the late 1940s by Roanoke landscape architect Albert Ayrton Farnham and feature a garden with boxwood rows and allées, a parterre, and an octagonal Tudor Revival gazebo. The Highlands is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance for the quality and sophistication of its Tudor Revival architecture and landscaped grounds, both the work of professional designers. The period of significance extends from 1936, the year work began on the house, through ca. 1950, representative of the mid-twentieth century construction of the property's several outbuildings and structures and the design of the garden in the late 1940s. The Highlands is eligible at the local level of significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historic Context

The Highlands was the home of furniture executive William Burton Dillon (ca. 1886-1965) and his wife, Alma Hylton McManaway Dillon (1901-2001). Burton was related to the Vaughan family of the Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Company, a leading Virginia furniture manufacturer. A 2001 newspaper account identified him as the co-founder of Hooker Furniture, which was formed in Martinsville in 1924 and was originally known as Hooker-Bassett Furniture. In 1936 Burton served the company as its secretary-treasurer. Burton's twin brother J. Benton Dillon, identified as a bank cashier in the 1940 census, lived in a Colonial Revival house next door to The Highlands. Alma Dillon, a native of Bedford County, attended the Lewis-Gale School of Nursing in Roanoke, graduating in 1927. In the early 1930s she was hired as an industrial nurse by a local company. "I delivered babies all over the county," Alma recalled in 2001. A portrait of her in her nurse's uniform hangs in the Bassett Historical Center in the nearby town of Bassett.¹

Alma and Burton married in 1935, but before then there are indications planning for The Highlands had begun. In November 1934 W. B. Dillon and J. B. Dillon purchased two tracts

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totaling 13.84 acres in the John R. Brown Farm subdivision in Stanleytown. W. B. Dillon was W. Burton Dillon and J. B. Dillon was presumably J. Benton Dillon, and although a 1927 plat of the subdivision appears to show different lot lines than currently exist, the 1934 purchase most likely represents the acquisition of the site where The Highlands was subsequently built. In 1927 a schoolhouse stood near the property, possibly near the foot of the driveway. Edgewood Drive, which is not shown on the 1927 plat, took its name from Edgewood, an antebellum brick house which stands just west of The Highlands. W. Burton Dillon and J. Benton Dillon owned Edgewood in the mid-1940s. Edgewood is also a former name for Stanleytown and Edgewood Drive was formerly designated State Route 754.²

The Dillons hired the Roanoke architectural firm Eubank and Caldwell to design their house. Eubank and Caldwell's first concept for the house, a Colonial Revival design, is dated January 1936. This was superseded by a Tudor Revival design, which was essentially the house that was built, shown on a floor plan dated February 21, 1936. Another indication of impending construction is a February 1936 site plan which shows the basic division of the property into a wooded northern half and a mostly open southern half. Construction drawings and specifications were produced in April 1936, followed by revisions and detail drawings through the end of the year. The names of the architects directly responsible for the design and construction supervision are unknown except for one, M. L. Johnson, who was apparently the on-site supervisor in February 1937.³

Surviving receipts and delivery tickets identify suppliers of building materials and fittings. These included the Blue Ridge Hardware and Supply Company of Bassett; the Everhard Manufacturing Company of Canton, Ohio; and the Roanoke Iron and Bridge Works, Stone Tile and Supply Company, and Valley Lumber Corporation, all of Roanoke. The T. B. Dornin-Adams Company of Lynchburg provided and installed the slate roofing. The roof was apparently newly in place in January 1937 when H. L. Goolsby of T. B. Dornin-Adams Company wrote to Eubank and Caldwell regarding a roof leak. Eubank and Caldwell's original blueprints called for the garage to have brick walls but during construction a six-inch cinder block backing was substituted for the inner brickwork. The architect's specifications called for "Oversize Locker [Locher] or Webster brick" and central air conditioning.⁴

The Dillons moved into the house in 1937 and lived in it year-round except for a month in Florida each winter. Their maid and cook lived in the apartment over the garage (in the 1970s the apartment was rented out). The Dillons served on the first board of trustees of the Bassett Public Library in 1946. Alma was the board's first treasurer and later served in other capacities including, in 1961, board president. In 1996 she was the only charter trustee still serving on the library board. Alma was also an avid gardener and member of the Bassett Garden Club. "I was famous for my flowers, my roses especially," she recalled in 2001. "I took all the prizes at the flower shows." Alma was assisted in maintaining the grounds by a number of gardeners. According to a 2004 newspaper article, Alma's sister is said to have remarked that Alma "spent all her time in the gardens and cared little for the house."⁵

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W. Burton died in 1965 and Alma in 2001. Frank Smith and Reade Taylor purchased the property in 2002 and opened it for Virginia Garden Week in 2004. Among the few changes Smith and Taylor made to the house was the removal of a partition in the second-floor master bedroom and replacement of the original gothic-style Bakelite thermostats. Current owners Jim and Julie Roberts acquired the property in 2016.⁶

Architectural Discussion

The Highlands is a sophisticated example of Tudor Revival domestic architecture. The style was one of several eclectic styles popular in America during the early twentieth century. It originated in Britain as a revival of late medieval/early modern prototypes associated with the era of the Tudor monarchs. The earliest American examples date to the end of the nineteenth century but the style did not achieve widespread popularity until the 1910s. It was especially common in the 1920s and 1930s and, to a lesser degree, later. Characteristic features of the style include steep roof forms, which The Highlands has, and false half-timbering (which the house does not have).

The Dillons were presumably influenced in their choice of the Tudor Revival style by the neighboring Tudor Revival house Stoneleigh (1929-31), the home of furniture executive Thomas B. Stanley who served as Virginia's governor from 1954 to 1958. Stoneleigh was designed by Leland McBroom of the Des Moines, Iowa, architectural firm Tinsley and McBroom, with landscaping by Earl S. Draper and Charles Gillette. Stoneleigh, as its name suggests, has a stone facing instead of brick, but it is otherwise similar to The Highlands by virtue of its multi-gabled roof, prominent front chimney with false clustered flues, and multiple casement windows. Another source of inspiration for The Highlands may have been the brick great houses and royal residences constructed in Britain during the sixteenth century. The best known of these was Hampton Court, Henry VIII's palace near London, which features asymmetrical façade compositions, entryways topped by prominent windows, and clustered flues.⁷

Eubank and Caldwell, architects of The Highlands, was formed by architect Beaufort N. Eubank and engineer James A. Walker Caldwell in late 1919 or early 1920. Eubank had previously worked as a draftsman; Caldwell had worked as a draftsman with the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company and, in 1919, as a civil engineer; and both men had worked for or with Roanoke architect George R. Ragan prior to forming their own firm. In January 1920 they announced in the *American Contractor* that they had "opened an office for the practice of architecture in the Express Building, Roanoke, Va., under the firm name of Eubank & Caldwell, and desire samples and catalogues of all kinds of building materials." A 1920 Roanoke directory described their business as "bldg service, architecture and construction." According to the website of Eubank and Caldwell's successor firm SFCS, Eubank and Caldwell "handled both architecture and construction for homes, churches, schools, and theaters throughout Southwest Virginia." The list of the firm's projects published in Wells and Dalton's *Virginia Architects* (1997) suggests single-family residences were not the firm's main emphasis. The firm's Virginia projects concentrated in Roanoke and Salem with other commissions ranging from Richmond in the east to Marion in the west. The firm was relatively active in Martinsville. Commissions in the town included First United Methodist Church (1922), a Knights of Pythias Lodge (1927), and the J. Ernest Howard

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House (1928). The Howard House, which may not have been completed until the mid-1930s, is a two-story Colonial Revival brick residence. First United Methodist is a pedimented Classical Revival building.⁸

The Highland's interior is notable for its decorative wall finishes. The walls of the entry hall, living room, and breakfast room are dotted with the low-relief plaster ornaments described in Section 7. The unidentified manufacturer of these appears to have been inspired by the British tradition of decorative plasterwork known as pargeting. The sixteenth-century Welsh house Plas Mawr is a particularly spirited example of pargeting that was described and illustrated in turn-of-the-twentieth-century publications including George Bankart's classic *The Art of the Plasterer* (1908). Plas Mawr features at least three of the designs present at The Highlands: the fleur de lis, the portcullis and chain, and the rose. The portcullis and rose were emblems of the Tudor family. Other plaster motifs at The Highlands may have been inspired by stock illustrations. They do not have the stylistic unity that would be expected had they been designed from scratch by a plaster artisan, although their variety lends a whimsical and unstudied quality to The Highlands' interiors.⁹

The dining room has "original hand-painted wallpaper from Gracie in New York," according to a 2004 *Virginia Living* article. The reference is to the Gracie wallpaper firm, established by Charles R. Gracie in 1898. According to the firm's website, "During the 1930s, a friend of Mr. Gracie's, a textile trader, returned from a visit to China with a roll of exquisite hand painted wallpapers that he had discovered in Beijing. Mr. Gracie was immediately enthusiastic, and felt that he had a market for this product. A relationship was established with the studio that produced the wallpaper and continued until the Chinese revolution in 1949, when the studio was relocated to Taiwan under new management." The dining room wallpaper may therefore be Chinese-made, as its design suggests, however the overlapping of some figures suggests screen or block printing rather than hand-painting was involved in its manufacture.¹⁰

For the landscaping scheme at The Highlands the Dillons turned to landscape architect Albert Ayrton Farnham (ca. 1892-1954). Farnham, a native of Westfield, Massachusetts, earned a bachelor of science degree in agriculture at the University of Illinois in 1916 and obtained a second degree at Pennsylvania State College (Penn State University) in 1918, working at the latter school as a surveying instructor in the early 1920s. He appears to have moved to Virginia a few years later. His early Virginia projects include landscape design for the Richard and Mary Clemmer House (1927) at 656 Cherry Avenue in Waynesboro; the H. H. Harris House (1927) at 1700 Rivermont Avenue in Lynchburg; and the dramatically situated house Rockledge (1929) at 1801 Prospect Road on Roanoke's Mill Mountain. From 1934 to 1943 Farnham taught landscape engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) and was also the university's landscape engineer during the period. He continued to work for the university after returning to the private sector and maintained an office in Roanoke in the 1950s. Some of his better-known commissions include the 1938 landscape design for the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke and the Beale Memorial Garden at Hollins University in Roanoke County, designed in 1930.¹¹

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Farnham's finished design for The Highlands does not appear to survive but a "General Plan for the Grounds of Mr. W. B. Dillon" dated September 1945 shows his concept in embryo. Already present is the concept of a yard area defined by boxwoods and other ornamental plantings. The segmented walkway that bounds the yard appears, as do an octagonal gazebo located on axis with the east porch; a walkway on axis with the breakfast room bay window, with steps and a terminal statue or urn; a boxwood alcove off the main walkway (larger and grander than the one realized); boxwood rows and other features to the northeast of the gazebo that evoke the geometry of the plantings that were realized in that area; and the flagstone terrace by the porch. The parterre is not shown. The front walks and plantings appear in the Farnham design but they also appear in a tracing paper and colored pencil drawing of the grounds produced by Myers Nurseries of Danville, which was apparently owned by T. M. Myers in the 1920s. The Myers design shows a formal garden extending eastward from the house with a lawn bordered by flagstone walks, flower beds, and shrubs and terminating at an apsidal alcove with a birdbath. Farnham borrowed very little from this design. Early photographs of the house suggest that some features of the present landscaping may predate Farnham's late 1940s design.¹²

Endnotes

¹ Pulice, "The Highlands;" US census; "Furnishing a Nation;" Cleal and Herbert, *Foresight, Founders, and Fortitude*, 83; *Martinsville Bulletin* (undated 2001 clipping at the Bassett Historical Center). A number of individuals assisted with the preparation of the report, foremost among them the owners of The Highlands, Jim and Julie Roberts. Assistance was also provided by Marc Brodsky, Public Services and Reference Archivist, Virginia Tech; the staffs of the Bassett Historical Center and the Henry County Courthouse including GIS specialist David Bowyer; and Michael Pulice and Lena Sweeten McDonald at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

² Henry County Deed Book 55, p. 96; Map Book 1, p. 29; Davis and Davis, "Edgewood;" Davis, Davis, and Pulice, "Edgewood," 7.

³ Pulice, "The Highlands;" Highlands collection.

⁴ Highlands collection.

⁵ Jim Roberts personal communication; *Martinsville Bulletin* (undated 2001 clipping at the Bassett Historical Center); Bassett Public Library 50th Anniversary Brochure; *News & Record*, April 17, 2004.

⁶ *News & Record*, April 17, 2004; *Martinsville Bulletin*, April 18, 2004; "The House that Furniture Built."

⁷ Cote and Scarlett, "Stoneleigh."

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⁸ Wells and Dalton, *The Virginia Architects*, 63, 133-134; *American Contractor*, January 24, 1920; *Roanoke, Va. City Directory, 1920-21*, 304; SFCS website; Blanton, "East Church Street/Starling Avenue Historic District," 15-16.

⁹ Bankart, *Art of the Plasterer*, 109.

¹⁰ "House that Furniture Built," 83; Gracie website.

¹¹ Lee, *Buildings of Virginia*, 116, 415, 425; Marc Brodsky personal communication; *Semi-centennial Alumni Record of the University of Illinois*, 617; *Pennsylvania State College Bulletin General Catalogue, 1921-1922*, 27; Hodge, "Re-greening of the Garden;" "Historic Garden Week in Roanoke;" Giles and Kern, "Hotel Roanoke," 9-10, 17.

¹² Highlands collection; *The Bee*, September 7, 1925.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Roberts, Jim. Personal communication with the author, April 2017.

Semi-centennial Alumni Record of the University of Illinois. Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1918.

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United States Census.

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

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___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR ID# 044-5576

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 13.01 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.739090 | Longitude: -79.949500 |
| 2. Latitude: 36.739650 | Longitude: -79.948790 |
| 3. Latitude: 36.739560 | Longitude: -79.947570 |
| 4. Latitude: 36.737100 | Longitude: -79.947360 |
| 5. Latitude: 36.736680 | Longitude: -79.948840 |
| 6. Latitude: 36.738380 | Longitude: -79.949740 |

Or

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UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries correspond to Henry County tax parcel 28.1(095A)000 /000G,.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries correspond to the modern parcel on which the historic resources are located.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: J. Daniel Pezzoni
organization: Landmark Preservation Associates
street & number: 6 Houston St.
city or town: Lexington state: Virginia zip code: 24450
e-mail: gilespezzoni@rockbridge.net
telephone: (540) 464-5315
date: May 27, 2017

Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Information common to all photos:

Name of Property: The Highlands
City or Vicinity: Stanleytown
County: Henry
State: Virginia
Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni
Date Photographed: April 2017

Specific information:

Photo 1 of 13
VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0001
House and grounds, view facing northwest.

Photo 2 of 13
VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0002
House south (front) elevation, view facing north.

Photo 3 of 13
VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0003

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House east and north elevations, view facing west.

Photo 4 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0004

House west elevation, view facing east.

Photo 5 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0005

House stairway.

Photo 6 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0006

House living room.

Photo 7 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0007

House breakfast room wallpaper detail.

Photo 8 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0008

House upstairs bedroom.

Photo 9 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0009

House upstairs bathroom tile.

Photo 10 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0010

Garden and yard area on north side of house, view facing northeast.

Photo 11 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0011

Garden parterre with gazebo (right) and house (left), view facing northwest.

Photo 12 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0012

Brick dependency, view facing north.

Photo 13 of 13

VA_HenryCounty_TheHighlands_0013

Garden shed, view facing north.

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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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Sketch Map/ Photo Key

The Highlands

DHR No. 044-5576

Henry County, Virginia. Resources keyed to nomination inventory. Size and location of resources with respect to nomination boundaries approximate. Number and direction of view of nomination photos indicated by triangular markers.

Inventory

1. The Highlands. Contributing building.
2. Garden. Contributing site.
3. Gazebo. Contributing structure.
4. Gate pillars. Contributing structure.
5. Brick dependency. Contributing building.
6. Garden shed. Contributing building.

