

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: Sturgis, R.L. and Annie, HouseOther names/site number: Sturgis-Sumner House

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**2. Location**Street & number: 522 East Main StreetCity or town: Rock Hill State: SC County: YorkNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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 X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  A   B XC   D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

11/29/2021

Date

Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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Name of Property

York, South Carolina  
County and State

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

#### 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

☐☐

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Site

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

1

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register                     

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: BRICK

Walls: BRICK, WOOD/Weatherboard

Roof: STONE/Slate, SYNTHETICS/Fiberglass

### 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.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The R.L. and Annie Sturgis House, 522 East Main Street in Rock Hill, SC, is on a .769-acre parcel in the East Main neighborhood, a historically middle- to upper-class residential area along downtown's primary thoroughfare. The Colonial Revival-style house was designed by notable regional architect Nat Gaillard Walker and was constructed in 1910. It is an approximately 6,000 square foot, two-story, painted-brick-veneer building. The house retains elements indicative of its style, such as its full-width porch supported by Composite columns and symmetrical facade with a centered door that is accentuated by pilasters, transom, and sidelights. The house faces north toward East Main Street and, like other residences on the street, it maintains a close proximity to the road with a modest front lawn and a path to the sidewalk from the house. The front lawn consists only of grass with no other plantings or trees. The original driveway runs from the street along the east side of the house, and a line of mature trees provides a buffer between it and the neighboring house. On the west side, the adjacent parcel is an asphalt-paved parking lot. A non-contributing storage and utility building constructed in the 1960s is set directly behind the house along the south boundary of the property (Photos 8 and 9). From the

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1950s to 1990s, the house was altered through the enclosure of the side porches and a small addition to accommodate its use change from a residence to an office. In more recent years, from 2004 to the present, the building was restored through the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program. Although the house has undergone some alterations since its construction, it remains a good example of the Colonial Revival style and the early work of Nat Gaillard Walker. The house retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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## Narrative Description

### **Sturgis House (1910) – Contributing Building**

#### *Exterior*

The Sturgis House is a two-story, three-bay by five-bay, wood-frame, brick veneer Colonial Revival house (Photos 1-7). The house plan was originally designed as a rectangular-plan main block, with two small two-story projecting bays on both the east and west elevations, and a one-story ell off the south (rear) elevation of the house (Figure 1). The main block measures approximately sixty-eight feet wide by fifty-three feet deep, with a one-story front porch spanning the full width of the rectangular block on the facade, and flanking side porches extending south to meet the projecting bays (Photos 1, 2, and 6). A back porch runs alongside the kitchen ell (Photo 3). When the house was occupied by the Rock Hill School District from 1951 to 1992, several changes were made to the original plan. The back porch was enclosed and a small one-story brick addition at the southeast corner of the house was constructed for file storage in 1951, while the side porches were enclosed to create more office space sometime between 1966 and 1969 (Figure 2). Additionally, the exterior brick was painted grey sometime after 1951. Fortunately, the important architectural features and overall historic character of the house still read through these alterations. The house has a brick foundation, laid in a running bond, with a slightly larger projecting stone course at the ground and another projecting stone course that underlines the first floor. The brick itself is slightly elongated and has very fine mortar lines. The foundation is continuous at the same height across the width of the house, except for in front of the flanking side porches where it is higher and set back slightly from the front porch foundation.

The first and second story walls are painted brick veneer while later enclosures and additions are clad in weatherboard. Fenestration consists primarily of one-over-one, double-hung, wood sash windows in wood surrounds with plain brick sills, topped with splayed lintels featuring stone keystones. The building also contains eight-light wood casement windows with lintels and sills matching the double hung sash. All first-floor rooflines feature a detailed decorative wood entablature that features built up straight and cavetto moldings, while the roofline on the second story has a deep overhang and a plain cornice rather than a full entablature. These generous eaves and their soffits conceal an original Yankee gutter system. The house has a cross-hipped slate roof, with hipped dormers projecting on the north and south sides. The north dormer has a four-over-four window with decorative brackets while the south dormer window has been removed and replaced with a vent (Photo 7). Decorative copper ridge caps are present at the

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roof's peaks as well as the peaks of the dormers. Its four primary chimneys are constructed of red brick with corbeling at the crown.

### *Facade/North Elevation*

The symmetrical, three-bay facade (north) elevation is visually framed by matching one-story enclosed porches that extend from the east and west elevations (Photo 1). The edges of the main block on the first story are delineated with pilasters. The facade has Colonial Revival-style central entrance surrounds, flanked by single windows, on both the first and second stories. The first-floor door is typical of the style, featuring a single-leaf door with sixteen lights, a transom, and sidelights (Figure 5). Small Composite pilasters divide the door from the sidelights; this three-part division is carried up to the transom, which is equally proportioned with elaborate molding carrying the line of the pilasters upward. The second-story door assembly is similar but includes a shorter wood paneled door with simpler pilasters.

The full-width front porch is one-story with a flat roof. The roof is supported at each end by two large brick columns that extend directly to the foundation and are corbelled to give the impression of rusticated stone. Four wooden Composite columns with square bases also support the roof in between these brick columns. (Two columns are currently removed for restoration and can be seen in Figure 4. The details of the column capitals can be seen in Figure 9.) The cement stairs to the main entrance are centered on the porch, with brick knee walls to accentuate and run the full depth of the stairs. The knee walls match the foundation and are capped in painted concrete. On each end of the elevation, two columns are paired close together at the stair, while the third column is placed adjacent to the brick column supports at the porch's ends. To the west, the porch terminates with a small stair to the parking lot. The porch flooring is tongue and groove wood, and the roof, which acts as the floor of the second-floor porch, is clad in modern rolled rubber. Anchoring for a missing balustrade is visible along the edge of the second-floor porch.

### *West Elevation*

The west elevation is five bays wide, with a slightly off-center two-story, two-bay-by-one-bay cross-gable, and enclosed one-story porch (Photo 2). The cross-gable bay has a slightly projecting bay window on its first story consisting of four one-over-one windows, and two typical windows in the second story. To the north, the enclosed porch extends slightly beyond the cross-gable bay. The side porch has a pair of grouped one-over-one windows and is clad with clapboard, a feature that differentiates it from the original block of the house. The same entablature from the facade continues here over the porch enclosure, and the porch roof is hipped with composite shingles that mimic slate. There are two typical windows above the porch on the main block. To the south of the cross-gable, there are single windows in the first and second story of the casement variety described above.

### *South Elevation*

The rear (south) elevation is three bays wide and asymmetrical due to the projection of the one-story kitchen ell to the west and a cross-gable bay directly above it on the second story (Photo 4). Alongside the kitchen ell is the original one-story back porch which is now enclosed. The east

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side of the elevation features the later one-story addition, built in 1951, along with a modern deck.

The enclosed porch is clad in Dutch-lap wood siding and has a wooden door with five horizontal panels leading to concrete steps that exit the building. On its west side, there are three three-over-three windows in the basement, and three six-over-six windows in the first story. The roof line is slightly lower than that of the adjacent kitchen ell and is clad in copper.

The original door for coal deliveries can be seen at the far east of the ell's basement level; it has since been sealed. This portion of the house has only one window on the far west side and features a door on its east elevation that leads to a modern wood deck, which follows the extent of the modern addition. In contrast to the long, flat brick used in the foundation and on the veneer, the brick used to construct this addition is of a standard dimensional proportion, and its wider mortar lines give the walls a slightly rougher appearance. The addition is laid in a common bond and has no fenestration, with a flat roof. Directly above the ell, the west side of the cross-gable bay has a wood paneled door with transom and typical lintel detail for access to the roof of the ell.

The rest of the elevation on the second story reveals the original rear wall of the house, with a primary focal point: a large arch window with a segmented arch transom, placed in the center of the overall width of the main block. The window has one large central pane with two smaller flanking side lights. An arched light is centered over the large lower pane, and the arched transom is divided into four sections. The typical lintel is present above and extends only over the two center transom segments. To the far east, there is one casement window.

### *East Elevation*

The east elevation of the house closely mirrors the west elevation, with a slightly off-center two-story, two-bay-by-one-bay cross-gable, and enclosed one-story porch (Photos 5 and 6). The bay features two typical windows on the first floor rather than the bay window, otherwise the fenestration is the same. The rest of the elevation is nearly identical to the west elevation with one exception: an exterior entrance with a five-panel wood door and screen door has been added to the side of the enclosed porch, with a set of concrete stairs running parallel to the wall. This is made possible by the lack of a projecting bay window on this elevation's cross-bay.

### *Interior*

Though the interior has seen alteration over time, as is typical of residential interiors, it is perhaps this aspect of the house that best demonstrates the fine workmanship of the property. The interior of the home follows a modified central passage plan arranged around a double-loaded hall. On the first story, the hall runs north to south, with a staircase running along the east and south sides at the south end of the hall, before turning at the west side and ascending to the second story. This floor consists of two parlors or living spaces, an office, library, washroom, dining room, and kitchen, along with a small storage addition. On the second story, the central hall is T-shaped. The stair lands on the portion of the hall that runs east to west, which is joined in the center by a smaller hall which runs north to south. The second floor is open to the staircase

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below along the south side. This floor includes three bedrooms, a fourth bedroom that was subdivided into two rooms sometime between 1966 and 1969, now a closet and gym, and two bathrooms (one of which is an en suite).

Original finishes and details in the main block of the house include plastered walls and ceilings with decorative ceiling, crown, door, and window moldings, tiled fireplace surrounds, and wooden interior doors with original hardware. The washroom and bathroom retain their original mosaic tile flooring (Photo 18). Original heart pine tongue and groove flooring has been restored and refinished throughout most of the house, with the exception of the stair hall and staircase.

On the first floor, the main entrance opens to a foyer with impressive decorative columns (Photo 12, Figure 6). The foyer leads into the hall where the grand staircase is the focal point (Photo 11). The elaborate carvings on both the columns and the newel post are finely detailed and coordinated and repeat a Classical Greek guttae motif present on the exterior dormer roof brackets (Photo 7). The massive arched window on the house's south elevation backlights the stair's landing, which falls halfway between the first and second floors. Flanking the foyer, enclosed by massive wood pocket doors, are two parlors with fireplaces, beyond which are the side porches which now serve as an office and library. Originally both side porches had exterior doors, both of which are still in place today on the interior, leading to adjacent rooms. A washroom and dining room flank the large, open staircase hall, with the kitchen ell accessible from the west side of the hall and the later storage addition accessible under the staircase. The kitchen has been renovated to modern standards and does not include many original details; however, the originally open back porch is accessible from here (Photo 16). The once exterior back porch wall provides a look at the original unpainted red brick with thin mortar lines, and the lintel detail and trim work can be seen. Ceiling heights are twelve feet throughout the first floor.

On the second floor, when exiting the staircase, the east-west hallway provides access to the bedrooms and a bathroom (Figure 7). The north-south portion of the hall provides access to two bedrooms and acts as an open parlor or living area in the center, which would have originally led to the second-floor balcony (Photo 17). The door to the balcony is still present and it is still accessible, though there is no railing or balustrade. Each bedroom features a fireplace which has been restored with surrounds and mantels that have appropriate dimensions based on historic evidence uncovered in the renovations. Ceiling heights on this floor are eleven feet.

Aside from the hall and staircase, unquestionably the most impressive and elaborate room in the house is the dining room (Photos 13-15). It has been sensitively restored and features all its original woodwork, most of quarter sawn oak, which includes decorative wainscoting, a coffered ceiling, a built-in hutch, and a carved mantel with the guttae motif echoed from the newel post and dormer brackets. The fireplace is intact with original tile surround, and the west wall features a group of four windows that fills the space with natural light. In contrast to the tongue and groove flooring throughout the house, the dining room has top-nailed narrow plank white oak flooring which has been carefully restored. Wallpaper remnants were found in the portions of wall between the wainscoting and ceiling, but were unable to be restored.



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There are several interesting features of the interior that demonstrate how the house incorporated the newest technologies and was a highly customized build. The house was built with knob-and-tube electricity installed, and a gravity fed water pressure system for the baths, the tank for which remains in the attic today. High quality hardware of the time was used, such as the “Dix Noiseless Rail” found on some of the pocket doors, and much of the interior woodwork was custom milled for the house, bearing a stamp that reads “R.L. Sturgis Rock Hill, S.C” (Figure 8).

### **Storage/Utility Building (1960s) – Noncontributing Building**

A one-story storage and utility building constructed of concrete masonry units with a flat roof was erected in the early 1960s, during the house’s use by the Rock Hill School District. It is set directly behind the house, such that it is not visible when looking at the facade from the street.

### **Historic Integrity**

Throughout its first several decades, there were few alterations to the house. According to historic maps, a greenhouse was added to the rear sometime between 1916 and 1926 but has since been removed (Figure 3). From 1951 until 1992, when the house was in use as the school district office, more changes came.<sup>1</sup> A small addition to the rear was added for the school district’s file storage in 1951, and around the same time the original back porch was enclosed to create a mailroom. Additionally, the side porches were enclosed to create more usable square footage (circa late 1960s-early 1970s), a storage building was erected to the rear of the house, and an elevator was added (both early 1960s). (The shaft for the elevator was created from two small, stacked hall closets, which avoided making any significant changes to the floor plan.) A paved parking lot was created on the adjacent lot where a house stood until at least 1963, and possibly as late as 1975.<sup>2</sup> Other alterations to the home are more difficult to chronologize but include the removal of the second-level balustrade, the painting of exterior brick, and the loss of two large trees along the street. Changes made to the house since then have been for the purpose of restoring or replacing historic detail with historically appropriate materials. Despite the change in owners and a period of change in use, the Sturgis House retains its integrity as an impressive example of Colonial Revival architecture in Rock Hill, as well as the first residential work of Nat Walker, who would go on to become widely recognized for his residential architecture.

The setting of the home, aside from the addition of the parking lot, remains similar to the original. East Main Street still consists of mainly residential architecture from the time of the neighborhood’s initial development, all with similar setbacks, lot sizes, and a continuous sidewalk. The Sturgis House maintains this pattern with its small front lawn and path leading

<sup>1</sup> “Rock Hill School District Faces Moving Day Drudgery,” *The Charlotte Observer*, September 4, 1992, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/626316225/>.

<sup>2</sup> “518 East Main Street,” *Roots and Recall*, accessed May 16, 2021, <https://www.rootsandrecall.com/york-county-sc/buildings/518-east-main-street/>; “Historic Aerials: Viewer.” *NETROnline*. Rock Hill [air photo]. 1965. <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

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from the sidewalk to the main entrance, along with its original driveway along the east elevation. Even the later additions and outbuildings added to the back of the house, while not contributing to its significance, are not entirely without precedent. According to Sanborn maps, it appears there may have been several outbuildings toward the rear of the lot in its early days, fitting given the storage and utility needs of a house of its size (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

The overall design and materials of the house also remain largely unchanged from its construction. The current owner has maintained all original windows and details such as the porch columns, keystone lintels, dormer brackets, and roof finials. Elements added over time that were not in keeping with the original design, such as shutters and later six-over-six windows on the side porches, were removed. There are no plans to reverse the enclosure of the side porches. Though their enclosure does give these projections more visual weight than when they were open, they do not extend beyond the house's original footprint or past their original rooflines, and they are clad in weatherboard which distinguishes the enclosure as a later alteration. Similarly, the enclosure of the back porch and the one-story addition for file storage do not detract from the overall integrity of the house since they are on the south elevation, which is not visible by the public and is the elevation which least contributes to the house as an example of the Colonial Revival style. Perhaps the most impactful changes to the design of the house are the loss of the second-floor balustrade and painting of the brick. When comparing the Sturgis House's current appearance with the historic photograph (Figure 3), the contrast created with the white woodwork against the unpainted brick has been lost. The current owner has painted the keystones in a contrasting black in order to regain some visual emphasis. The white second-floor wood balustrade was another element that added depth and contrast to the original design. Its absence is less noticeable with the lighter tone of the current brick color, but without it the second-floor porch is not functional. These changes do not affect the integrity of the house's overall design.

<sup>3</sup> Sanborn Map Company, "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Rock Hill, SC," City of Rock Hill, SC, April 1916, Scale 100':1," page 9, accessed May 28, 2021. <https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/SFMAPS/id/1848>.

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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

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**Period of Significance**

1910

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**Significant Dates**

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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**Cultural Affiliation**

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**Architect/Builder**

Walker, Nat Gaillard

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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 R.L. and Annie Sturgis House is located on East Main Street in Rock Hill, York County, South Carolina. It is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for its local significance as the first residential work of renowned architect Nat Gaillard Walker, representing his oldest known extant design. The house embodies the work of a master in its refined Colonial Revival design and craftsmanship. Its period of significance corresponds to its completion date of 1910. Walker was a prominent local architect, designing many Rock Hill businesses, public buildings, and homes during a time of extensive growth in the city in the first quarter of the 20th century. During this time, he also designed buildings throughout the state, including in Orangeburg and Sumter, before moving his practice to Florida in 1925 where he gained national recognition.

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

**Criterion C: Architecture**

Built in 1910 for R.L. Sturgis, a prominent local planter and established businessman, and his wife Annie, the Sturgis House is a strong example of Colonial Revival architecture in the East Main neighborhood of Rock Hill and an important work of master architect Nat Gaillard Walker. At a time when the city's economy was booming due to the Carolina Piedmont's emergence as a textile manufacturing powerhouse, East Main Street was a desirable area in which to build due to its proximity to downtown and its middle- to upper-class homes.<sup>4</sup> The population of Rock Hill had increased rapidly from 800 citizens from the opening of its first mill in 1881, to almost 6,000 in 1900. East Main Street was one of the early suburbs that quickly expanded to house the white professional class.<sup>5</sup> A notice appearing in the Rock Hill Herald in July of 1909 announced bids were being accepted "for the erection and completion of a brick veneered residence and hot water heating plant for same."<sup>6</sup> The advertisement names Nat Walker as the architect. By October, the McDonnell Stone Company of Atlanta, GA and Greenwood, SC had been contracted for providing stone for the house.<sup>7</sup> The builder is not known.

Beginning in the 1880s, Colonial Revival emerged as a distinctly American style of architecture. Earlier styles such as the Italianate and Queen Anne drew from various European influences, particularly from the medieval period.<sup>8</sup> Many societal forces and events combined to catalyze this new style, with the American centennial playing a major role. With this historic event, many Americans, not least the country's architects, began reflecting on the nation's heritage.

<sup>4</sup> "Invest in Rock Hill Real Estate," *The Rock Hill Herald*, April 2, 1910.

<sup>5</sup> Lynn Willoughby, *The "Good Town" Does Well: Rock Hill, S.C., 1852-2002*, (Orangeburg, S.C.: Written in Stone, for the Rock Hill Sesquicentennial Committee, 2002), 78.

<sup>6</sup> "Sealed Proposals Wanted," Classified Column, *The Rock Hill Herald*, July 3, 1909.

<sup>7</sup> "Local and Personal Around the City," *The Rock Hill Herald*, October 3, 1909.

<sup>8</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 286, 350.

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Previously regarded by some as uncouth and lacking taste, the colonial house was beginning to be appreciated as an important resource around the 1870s.<sup>9</sup> Robert Peabody, an architect trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris who had returned to the States, remarked in 1877: "With our centennial year have we not discovered that we have a past worthy of study?...Our Colonial work is our only native source of antiquarian study and inspiration."<sup>10</sup> Later, the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 contributed to an increase of popularity in the Colonial Revival. The state pavilions there showed a diverse range of regional influence and showcased many classical elements, demonstrating that the style was versatile enough to be adapted to many different locations and conditions.<sup>11</sup> While the early expression of Colonial Revival had its roots in the examination of the folk colonial houses of the Northeast, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century architects began drawing more commonly from the Georgian and Federal styles, with an eye toward greater "archaeological correctness," accompanied by an increase in the use of classical elements.<sup>12</sup> As with many revivals however, Colonial Revival houses were not often true copies of earlier styles. Common characteristics of the Colonial Revival style include a symmetrical façade with emphasis around the front door that might include sidelights, fanlights, or pediments; double-hung windows with multi-pane glazing; and emphasized cornices that may consist of decoration with dentils, other moldings, or a deep overhang.<sup>13</sup> The year in which the Sturgis house was built represents an important turning point for the style, as it was soon to become the dominant style for domestic building in America.<sup>14</sup>

The Sturgis House belongs to the subtype of Colonial Revival that features a hipped roof and full-width porch, which comprises about a third of this style of home built before 1915. This specific subtype, most popular between 1890 and 1915, directly corresponds with the development of the East Main Street neighborhood and other residential areas surrounding downtown Rock Hill, representing a period of rapid growth for the city.<sup>15</sup> Colonial Revival characteristics exemplified by the Sturgis House are its symmetrical façade with double-hung windows, its centered door, which is accentuated by pilasters, transom, and sidelights, and its hipped dormer, common on its subtype. Decorative woodwork on the dormer brackets, the newel post, the dining room mantel, and the interior columns draw on classical motifs (triglyphs and guttae) which is also typical of the style. While the Sturgis house is heavily influenced by colonial architecture, it deviates from some of its key characteristics, making it a less than academic reproduction. Its symmetry, single aligned façade windows, and decorative door surround may resemble that of a Georgian house, but its full-width front porch and its windows' one-over-one pane configuration are not historically accurate. Keystone lintels over windows and the arched window at the rear of the house recall a Federal influence, while the placement of the arched window deviates greatly from the style, which would more traditionally have had a classic Palladian window over the main entrance. In this way, the Sturgis house represents a

<sup>9</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, 38.

<sup>11</sup> Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, 50.

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, 86.

<sup>13</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 409-410.

<sup>14</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 414.

<sup>15</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 409, 413.

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mixture of historic and contemporary influences present in much of Colonial Revival architecture in America around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In April of 1910, the Sturgis home was almost finished and was already being described as “one of the handsomest residences in Rock Hill.”<sup>16</sup> The house seems to have been admired by Rock Hill society. In 1911, the Sturgises hosted a large reception at the house, and an article in the *Rock Hill Herald* described the scene: “The elegant colonial mansion...was brilliantly lighted throughout...the interior was all ablaze of light and beauty.” The article also described the activities taking place in numerous interior spaces throughout the course of the 300-person gathering, including the grand stairway and hallway underneath, the east parlor, the west parlor, and the dining room.<sup>17</sup> Though the house is quite large at around 6,000 square feet, grand residences were not entirely uncommon on East Main Street at the time, as many upper-class Rock Hill residents designed their homes to reflect their wealth and allow them to entertain. Other events taking place at the house included parties, dances, and many Episcopal church functions, one a reception for over one hundred members of the church’s Women’s Auxiliary.<sup>18</sup> Compared with other Colonial Revival houses on East Main Street, however, the Sturgis house is larger in massing and scale, as well as more formal. Though the house and its Colonial Revival neighbors of about the same age at 546 and 604 East Main share hipped roofs and decorative wood columns, the Sturgis House is the only two-story example constructed with brick veneer, allowing the home to be designed with details such as keystones over windows and massive rusticated brick columns supporting the porch roof. In the East Main section of the local historic district where the Sturgis House is located, it is the only residence with four prominent chimneys, which relates to its size in comparison to nearby homes and therefore helps convey the original owner’s wealth. The grand scale, craftsmanship, and attention to detail applied to Walker’s first residential project would prepare him for later commissions for even larger, more lavish houses, with higher-profile clients.

Nat G. Walker moved to Rock Hill from his native Charleston in 1907, having little formal architectural training. His career quickly took off and by 1908 he had his first project: the Neely and Moore stables in Rock Hill. Following this project, Walker completed many others in quick succession, mostly commercial structures. Attributed to him in 1909 alone were: the Charles S. Cobb Business Building, the London Business Building, and the Carhartt Cotton Mills School, in addition to other projects outside of Rock Hill. In this year, Walker also began work on his first known residential project, the R.L. Sturgis house. It was completed when Walker was only 24 years old.<sup>19</sup> Over the next fifteen years, Walker gained state-wide recognition. He became president of the South Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1921 and later

<sup>16</sup> “Invest in Rock Hill Real Estate,” *The Rock Hill Herald*, April 2, 1910.

<sup>17</sup> “In the Realms of Rock Hill Society: Happenings of Interest to Women,” *The Rock Hill Herald*, June 27, 1911.

<sup>18</sup> “Rock Hill Entertains Woman’s Meeting,” *The Charlotte News*, May 17, 1912,

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/63218527/>; “Carolina Society: Rock Hill, SC,” *The Charlotte Observer*, November 12, 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/616131902/>; “State Society: Rock Hill, SC,” *The Charlotte News*, December 31, 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/59750198/>; “Society: Rock Hill, SC,” *The Charlotte Observer*, September 15, 1918, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/616158654/>.

<sup>19</sup> “Invest in Rock Hill Real Estate,” *The Rock Hill Herald*, April 2, 1910.

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became the first Regional Director of the South Atlantic Region in 1923.<sup>20</sup> During these years, he completed twenty-five known projects in South Carolina including churches, businesses, schools, and civic buildings in York, Orangeburg, Chester, and Sumter Counties, but only five residential projects.<sup>21</sup> From earliest to latest they are: R.L. Sturgis Residence (522 East Main Street, Rock Hill), L.A. Niven Residence (Rock Hill), Reid-Martin Residence (3303 Edgeland Highway, Richburg), A.W. Huckle Residence (301 College Avenue, Rock Hill), and the W.L. Craig Residence (Chester).<sup>22</sup> Out of these, only the locations of the R.L. Sturgis, A.W. Huckle, and Reid-Martin residences have been definitively located and are extant.<sup>23</sup> Walker's work on these homes and his growing reputation during this period would represent an important stage in his career that laid the groundwork for his future success.

The Reid-Martin House in Richburg, built by Walker sometime between 1910 and 1913, is an exuberant Neoclassical style home in a rural setting, built for a prosperous farmer.<sup>24</sup> The Reid-Martin House is overall rectangular in massing with an attached porte-cochere and two flanking side porches similar to that of the Sturgis House. Other than this general similarity in plans and the utilization of classical details, the exteriors of the two homes are very different. Though smaller than the Sturgis House at 4,667 square feet, the amount and scale of the Reid-Martin House's decorative features are much greater, giving it a grander appearance. Some examples of this include: the deep roof overhang accentuated by both dentils and modillions; the large windows on the façade first floor, each delineated by pilasters with decorative crown moldings; and the elaborate fanlight over the front entrance. While the Sturgis House's six porch columns and their Composite capitals are slender and proportionally balanced, punctuated by the corbelled brick columns, the Reid-Martin House's four Corinthian columns are massive, supporting a two-story full façade porch roof. Four smaller versions of the same columns raised on plinths are positioned between the large columns to support the porch's second floor, which features a large cornice with dentils. The overall effect of these features is dazzling compared to the restrained decoration of the Sturgis House. When considering the two home's interiors, the inverse is true. Whereas the Sturgis House features a grand staircase, elaborate interior woodwork, and an impressive dining room, there are few architectural accents inside the Reid-Martin House.<sup>25</sup> Despite this disparity, there are small details that the two houses share inside. Most notably, the mantle in one of the parlors of the Reid-Martin House is carved with a triglyph and guttae motif similar to that of the dormer brackets and the dining room mantel at the Sturgis

<sup>20</sup> Adrienne Montare, "100 Years of Advocacy: The Chapter's History of 'Improving the Profession,'" *South Carolina Architecture*, January 2013, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Wells, John E. and Robert E. Dalton. *The South Carolina Architects: 1885-1935*. Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1992, 191-192.

<sup>22</sup> Wells, 191-192; "3303 Edgeland Road - Reid and Martin House," *Roots and Recall*, accessed May 16, 2021, <https://www.rootsandrecall.com/chester/buildings/3303-edgeland-road/>.

<sup>23</sup> The W.L. Craig Residence is suspected to be present day 160 Walnut Street in Chester, based on descriptions of the home in contemporary bid notices, but conflicting Census addresses and oral accounts prevent a conclusive identification. Further support for this theory lies in the strong similarities between 160 Walnut Street and the A.W. Huckle House in Rock Hill.

<sup>24</sup> "3303 Edgeland Road - Reid and Martin House," *Roots and Recall*.

<sup>25</sup> The lack of interior ornamentation in the Reid-Martin House may correspond to fewer opportunities for entertaining guests in the rural house as compared to an urban house, or it is possible the interior of the home was substantially altered over time.



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House. Additionally, the dining rooms of both houses feature a coffered ceiling, and the newel posts both have a carved detail form which mimics an architectural bracket. While the Sturgis House and Reid-Martin House are very different, there are some clear trademarks Walker established in his first residential commission that he carried through his other high-end residential work in the 1910s.

The only other identified residential project of Nat Walker's in Rock Hill, the A.W. Huckle Residence at 301 College Avenue, was completed over a decade later in 1924. A departure from the large, elaborate Sturgis and Reid-Martin houses, the Tudor-style Huckle House is a modest 2,550 square feet and has seen a good deal of alteration over time. Its most unique feature is its false thatch roof which, while rare, was at the height of its popularity in the early 1920s.<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting that the Huckle Residence bears striking similarities to the house suspected to be the W.L. Craig residence built the same year in Chester, with its own false thatch roof and diminutive front porches. The Huckle House's flanking side porches, a mainstay in Walker's designs by the mid-1920s, are small and flush with the façade, not set back behind a full front porch like that of the Sturgis House. Both side porches were enclosed previously, to the detriment of the house's overall massing and feel of the design. One side porch was reopened in 2013, revealing the house's only remaining Tuscan column that had been mostly obscured. Further, the Huckle House's siding has been replaced and now has a pattern that does not appear to be in keeping with the period and style of the house. The Huckle House, while much smaller and less formal than Walker's previous works, does bear a few similarities to his other homes by virtue of its symmetrical facade, hipped roof, projecting side porches, entry sidelights, and centered dormer (though the Huckle dormer is of the eyebrow variety). Overall, however, it is much more modest and less formal than his earlier work, relying less on classical detailing and elements. Whether the differences between Walker's earlier houses and the Huckle House reflect a progression in Walker's design sensibilities or rather a result of differing client preferences and settings is difficult to determine, but the Sturgis House set a precedent for his utilization of classical detailing and emphasis on incorporating outdoor spaces in his designs. The latter would become increasingly important as he began work further south.

Walker moved his practice to Fort Myers, Florida in 1925. One of his first commissions in the state would also become one of his most recognized residential works: the 1926 Jewett-Thompson House. The Jewett-Thompson House is a large winter estate designed in the Spanish Revival style and is said to be the largest and most elaborate home of its kind in Fort Myers.<sup>27</sup> The Mediterranean and Spanish Revival styles were introduced in Florida around 1920, and quickly gained popularity due to the styles' abilities to adapt to the climate and their relationship to the state's history.<sup>28</sup> Featuring many classic Spanish Revival characteristics such as an asymmetrical plan, clay tile roof, round tower, and courtyard, the estate includes a large pool and bathhouse as well as a three-car garage. Both in terms of its style and its scale, it is difficult to find any similarities between the Jewett-Thompson House and the Sturgis House beyond the use

<sup>26</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 450.

Gary Cooke, Barry Huber, Mike Lienemann, "Shingle Thatch," *Fine Homebuilding*, July 25, 2018, <https://www.finehomebuilding.com/1984/11/01/shingle-thatch>.

<sup>27</sup> Welcher, *Jewett-Thompson House*, 12.

<sup>28</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 522.

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of eight-light casement windows. However, the high-profile owners Walker built for while in South Carolina, beginning with the Sturgis Family, played a great role in preparing the architect to successfully execute projects of this caliber. The drastic stylistic differences between the Colonial Revival and Neoclassical homes and restrained commercial buildings Walker designed in South Carolina and the Jewett-Thompson House demonstrate his innovation, versatility, and adaptability as an architect. The years immediately following the Jewett-Thompson House's completion were especially successful for Walker. Notably, he was commissioned by Thomas Edison to create various designs for his Fort Myers Estate, including the Botanical Laboratory and swimming pool in 1928.<sup>29</sup>

After designing a few relatively modest Mediterranean style homes toward the end of the 1920s, the Great Depression significantly decreased the availability of residential work for a time.<sup>30</sup> Walker pivoted to the government sector when he was awarded a contract from the Works Progress Administration to design a new post office and federal building in downtown Fort Myers. Despite the stringent budget constraints and the many redesigns required by the federal government, Walker delivered an exuberant Neoclassical building that was well-loved by the public in 1933.<sup>31</sup> The building was dedicated in December of the same year and is in use today as an arts center. One of its most unique features is the original loggia with massive Ionic columns, which housed outdoor mailboxes that could be accessed at any time. The integration of outdoor space into the function of the building along with the generous use of classical details echoes Walker's earlier experience in designing residences, such as the Sturgis House, in South Carolina. His previous school and library projects there likely also helped prepare him to design a large public building.

By 1936, a new wave of wealthy clients had arrived in Lee County, Florida looking to create private retreats along the coast, continuing Walker's series of designs for the affluent into a third decade. Walker was engaged by Alan and Gratia Rinehart of New York to create a resort on Palmetto Key, a small island on the Gulf Coast. His work there included a twelve-room house, a boat house, and two cottages.<sup>32</sup> Palmetto Key went on to have another life as a marine research station, and is now an inn (known as Cabbage Key) that is open to the public, with most of Walker's original structures still intact.<sup>33</sup> Aside from Palmetto Key, Walker was engaged in six other high-profile residential projects in the summer of 1936, including one home estimated to cost \$20,000.<sup>34</sup>

Though he catered to the wealthy in the late 1930s, Walker had become familiar with the challenges of homeownership for the middle and lower classes during the early 1930s via his

<sup>29</sup> Sidney Johnston and Carl Shiver, "Cabbage Key Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, 2015, <https://www.leegov.com/dcd/Documents/Agendas/HPB/2016/06/JUN012016.pdf>, 89.

<sup>30</sup> "Bids for Boca Grande Homes To Be Opened Monday by N. Walker," *Fort Myers News-Press*, August 7, 1929, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/211063977/>.

<sup>31</sup> "A Beautiful Building," *Fort Myers News-Press*, July 24, 1933, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/219430752/>.

<sup>32</sup> Johnston and Shiver, "Cabbage Key Historic District," 74.

<sup>33</sup> Johnston and Shiver, "Cabbage Key Historic District," 63.

<sup>34</sup> "New Building Boom Started on Gulf Coast," *Fort Myers News-Press*, July 10, 1936, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/219850632/>.

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work with the Federal Home Loan Bank. This experience in working-class housing carried into his work in later years. In addition to working with the Federal Housing Administration on military housing during World War II, Walker helped form Bayside Developers as Vice President. He subsequently designed Bayside Park, a subdivision of thirty-eight modest modern houses ranging in size from duplex to two-bedroom. Though designed for the public at large, most of the units were initially rented by civilian defense employees working at nearby airfields.<sup>35</sup> Completed in 1943, these simple concrete block and stucco homes are in stark contrast to Walker's design for the Sturgis House and later lavish residences for wealthy clients, but were still designed with modern conveniences and an eye toward quality finishes such as oak flooring "found only in more expensive homes."<sup>36</sup> By the fourth and last decade of his career, Nat Walker had proven that his abilities as an architect were not limited by style, scope, or lack of formal training. His real-world experiences, starting with the design of the Sturgis House, built upon each other to catapult Walker to a career of wide-spread acclaim.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

**R.L. Sturgis**

Richard Leroy (R.L.) Sturgis was born outside of Rock Hill near the Catawba River in 1864. His great-great-grandfather, Daniel Sturgis, was an early settler in the area with a homestead on the west side of the Catawba River. The early generations of the Sturgis family farmed, ran a trading post and operated a ferry across the Catawba. The river crossing was a part of the Catawba Indian Trading Trail that was incorporated into the Great Wagon Road.<sup>37</sup> Around 1825, it was estimated that Daniel Sturgis owned over 1,200 acres of former Catawba Indian Land.<sup>38</sup> Richard Sturgis was raised at his ancestral home and farmed there before moving to the city of Rock Hill at the age of 29, where he became active in business and society while maintaining his farms.<sup>39</sup> By 1905, he had become the president of the Farmer's Association and at one point was considered one of the largest cotton planters in the area.<sup>40</sup> In 1908 he married Annie Adams of Norfolk, VA, and they welcomed a son the following year.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>"40 Families Start Moving Into Bayside Park Today," *Fort Myers News-Press*, July 24, 1943, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/221312338/>.

<sup>36</sup> "40 Families Start Moving Into Bayside Park Today."

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Dys, "Revolutionary War-era Rock Hill cemetery vandalized," *The State*, June 21, 2013, <https://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article14435156.html>.

Elizabeth Stepp, "The Link between the Willson Line and Frontier Ferryman Daniel Sturgis 'of John,'" *The Bulletin: Quarterly Magazine of the Genealogical Forum of Oregon*, June 2015, [http://www.bmgcn.com/document/scans/Bulletin\\_GenealogicalForumOregon\\_2015\\_June\\_Scans.pdf](http://www.bmgcn.com/document/scans/Bulletin_GenealogicalForumOregon_2015_June_Scans.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> "Daniel Sturgis Family – Heritage Plat Map Of Mount Holly And More," *Roots and Recall*, accessed May 16, 2021, <https://www.rootsandrecall.com/york-county-sc/buildings/daniel-sturgis-family/>.

<sup>39</sup> Janice Miller, "Richard Leroy Sturgis (1864-1939)," *City of Rock Hill*, 2018, 1.

<sup>40</sup> "Fighting the Southern," *The Charlotte News*, September 5, 1905, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/59349218/>; "Death Claims Rock Hill Man," *The Charlotte Observer*, August 17, 1939, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/617484191/>.

<sup>41</sup> "Three Marriages in Near Future," *The Rock Hill Herald*, June 10, 1908.

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Sturgis served as a board member of the York County Southern Cotton Association and a director of the People's National Bank.<sup>42</sup> During the house's construction and shortly after its completion, Sturgis further involved himself in Rock Hill real estate, purchasing property to build a hotel (though according to Sanborn maps, this plan never came to fruition), and forming East Rock Hill Realty Company in 1910.<sup>43</sup> Notably, due to his agricultural roots and his increasing political and social recognition, Sturgis was appointed as one of three York County committee members tasked with implementing the "Rock Hill Plan" in York County.<sup>44</sup> The "Rock Hill Plan" was a scheme promoted by John G. Anderson, owner of the Rock Hill Buggy Company (later Anderson Motor Company) to help stabilize cotton prices to benefit the common farmer and merchant. The Plan asked farmers across the region to reduce their acreage of cotton by at least twenty-five percent over the next year in order to drive prices up. The plan was successful with about half of all farmers solicited agreeing to the plan, resulting in about a sixteen percent reduction of the crop in 1912 and a rebound in prices.<sup>45</sup>

As he became more well known throughout the city, Sturgis served in several other leadership roles. He was a city alderman, Director of the Chamber of Commerce, and in 1917 when Rock Hill changed its form of government, Sturgis was voted mayor, serving for a year.<sup>46</sup> Though his term was short, he led Rock Hill during a period of upheaval. When the US entered World War I, he presided over parades meant to bolster patriotism and raise spirits, and he authored a stirring proclamation for citizens on Independence Day, noting the significance of the day in relation to the war.<sup>47</sup>

Later in life, Sturgis remained active in various local organizations, and unsuccessfully ran for South Carolina House of Representatives in 1930.<sup>48</sup> His son, R.L. Sturgis, Jr., went on to become an Episcopal priest after studying at the University of the South. Coincidentally, he is recorded

<sup>42</sup> "York County Cotton Growers Association," *The Yorkville Enquirer*, May 21, 1907, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/339399518/>; "Watch Us Grow!" *The Rock Hill Herald*, September 26, 1908.

<sup>43</sup> Miller, "Richard Leroy Sturgis (1864-1939)," 2; "Transfers of Realty," *The Yorkville Enquirer*, May 10, 1918, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/339444588/>; "Much Building in Rock Hill," *The Charlotte News*, May 2, 1910, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/59013919/>; "May Build Modern Hotel," *The Rock Hill Herald*, March 19, 1910.

<sup>44</sup> "Reduction of the Acreage," *The Yorkville Enquirer*, January 12, 1912, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/339333777/>.

<sup>45</sup> Willoughby, *The "Good Town" Does Well*, 151.

<sup>46</sup> "Directors Elected," *The Yorkville Enquirer*, May 21, 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/339383405/>; "Rock Hill's New City Council's First Meeting," *The Evening Chronicle*, February 6, 1912, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/57877695/>; "Sturgis Chosen as New Rock Hill Councilman," *The Charlotte Observer*, January 12, 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/616129908/>; "Harmony Prevails in City Council," *The Charlotte News*, January 31, 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/59340103/>; "Rock Hill Council Re-elects Mayor," *The Charlotte Observer*, February 1, 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/616134204/>.

<sup>47</sup> "Get Ready for Parade Tonight," *The Evening Herald*, June 4, 1917; "Bells of City Will Toll Tomorrow," *The Evening Herald*, July 3, 1917.

<sup>48</sup> Miller, "Richard Leroy Sturgis (1864-1939)," 3.

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as giving a sermon at the Church of the Holy Comforter in Sumter, which was designed by Nat Walker, a fellow Episcopalian.<sup>49</sup>

In the few years before his death in 1939, Sturgis sold the home, and he and his wife moved to a modest home just one block away, on the corner of Stonewall and East Black Streets.<sup>50</sup> The 1910 house then passed through a series of owners including: Dr. Roy D. Sumner, a prominent doctor and city medical officer; John G. Marshall, Comptroller of Rock Hill Printing and Finishing, a large textile plant; the Rock Hill School District; and Marc and Stacy Helms, the current owners.<sup>51</sup>

### **Nat Walker**

Nathaniel “Nat” Gaillard Walker was born to Henry Mazyck Walker and Elizabeth Jenkins Prentiss in Charleston, SC in 1886. Walker attended Crafts School followed by Porter Military Academy, which still exists as a prestigious private school in Charleston, now called Porter-Gaud School.<sup>52</sup> He graduated in 1903 and began a career in surveying, working in Texas and Louisiana before returning to South Carolina in late 1906.<sup>53</sup> Aside from a university extension course and a year of study in Europe that occurred after his architectural career had already begun, there is no evidence of Walker undertaking any secondary education or formal training in architecture. By the age of 21, Walker had made his way upstate and was working with architects J.J. Keller & Co. in Yorkville, SC (now known as York, about fifteen miles from Rock Hill).<sup>54</sup> His first project came in 1908 with the construction of the Neely and Moore stables in Rock Hill. The building was a three-story brick structure, estimated to cost between \$3,000 to \$4,000. On Oct. 21, 1908, it was reported by the *Rock Hill Record* that the new building was nearing completion, and on New Year's Day 1909 a grand opening sale was advertised.<sup>55</sup> (The stables were demolished in the City's Urban Renewal efforts.)

Soon after the completion of the Sturgis House in 1910, Walker put his past experience in surveying to use, partnering with J.J. Keller to create an updated map of York County.<sup>56</sup> For about the next fifteen years, Walker would go on to complete a number of churches, businesses,

<sup>49</sup> “R.L. Sturgis To Be Ordained to Ministry,” *The Charlotte News*, July 11, 1935, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/617249495/>; “Alexander First of Lenten Visitors at Holy Comforter,” *The Item*, February 24, 1953, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/668976514/>.

<sup>50</sup> “Death Claims Rock Hill Man,” *The Charlotte Observer*, August 17, 1939, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/617484191/>.

*Baldwin's Rock Hill South Carolina City Directory*, (Charleston, SC: Baldwin Directory Company, 1936), 181.

<sup>51</sup> “Assumes Duties,” *The Greenville News*, May 15, 1931, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/188443006>.

<sup>52</sup> “S.C. Birthday,” *The News and Courier*, March 21, 1946, <https://www.genealogybank.com/nbshare/AC01210314164431312011622250266>.

<sup>53</sup> “Society,” *The Evening Post*, November 7, 1906, <https://www.genealogybank.com/nbshare/AC01210314164431312011622250598>.

<sup>54</sup> “Engineer and Architect,” *The Yorkville Enquirer*, June 14, 1907, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/339399790/>.

<sup>55</sup> “126 East Black Street-A.B. Poe and Company Store,” *Roots and Recall*, accessed May 29, 2021, <https://www.rootsandrecall.com/york-county-sc/buildings/126-east-black-street>.

<sup>56</sup> “Map of York County,” *The Yorkville Enquirer*, February 25, 1910, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/339343140/>.



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schools, and civic buildings in South Carolina, with most of his work being in Rock Hill.<sup>57</sup> One of his most notable works of this period is the Carnegie Public Library in Sumter, a brick Beaux-Arts building completed in 1917, which is currently the earliest of Walker's works to be individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>58</sup> In 1918, Walker's work paused while he served as a first Lieutenant of Engineers in World War I, again calling upon his skills as a surveyor.<sup>59</sup> Walker married in 1919, at the age of 33, to Pauline Bradley Love of Washington, D.C. (Little is known about Love, except that she was a year younger than Walker and appears to have been married previously.)<sup>60</sup> They were to remain married through the remainder of Walker's life and had no children.

Aside from his work as an architect, Walker had strong ties his local business community. In 1924, as he served as president of the Rock Hill Chamber of Commerce (an office formerly held by his client R.L. Sturgis).<sup>61</sup> Around 1925, Walker became associated with Leonard L. Hunter, an architect in Charlotte with an additional office location in Fort Myers, Florida. This may have influenced Walker's move to Fort Myers late that year. Through the early 1920s, Florida had been experiencing a land boom, with the population increasing by about twenty-five percent in the first half of the decade.<sup>62</sup> Many factors contributed to this growth. During World War I, some wealthy individuals looked to travel domestically since they could not spend their usual holidays in Europe, leading them south to warm Florida beaches.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, the 1920s was a period of economic prosperity in general, with an increasing portion of the middle-class having access to credit, the means to purchase automobiles, and the ability to take vacations, enabling regional travel. Land speculators caught on to this trend and quickly bought up land, selling it to wealthy buyers who would go on to build mansions and resorts, as well as to those in the middle class who dreamed of having a second home, whether or not they could afford it in the long term.<sup>64</sup> Though the boom would largely end by 1926 due to natural disasters and the overburdening of the railway system that transported goods and building materials to previously remote locations, Walker was still able to capitalize on Florida's development early in his time

<sup>57</sup> Wells, John E. and Robert E. Dalton. *The South Carolina Architects: 1885-1935*. Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1992, 191-192.

<sup>58</sup> Katharine H. Richardson, "Carnegie Public Library," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Heritage Preservation Associates, Sumter, SC, 1993.

<http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/sumter/S10817743004/S10817743004.pdf>.

<sup>59</sup> "United States, Veterans Administration Master Index, 1917-1940," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:W7LP-2H2M> : 26 October 2019), Nat Gaillard Walker, 16 Dec 1918; citing Military Service, NARA microfilm publication 76193916 (St. Louis: National Archives and Records Administration, 1985), various roll numbers.

<sup>60</sup> "District of Columbia Marriages, 1830-1921," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:F71Y-8LX> : 11 January 2020), Pauline Bradley Love in entry for Nat G. Walker, 1919.

<sup>61</sup> "Elected Chamber Lead," *The Greenville News*, May 5, 1924, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/188175080/>.

<sup>62</sup> Florida Center for Instructional Technology, "Florida's Land Boom," *Florida Center for Instructional Technology*, accessed May 20, 2021, [https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/ld\\_boom/ld\\_boom1.htm](https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/ld_boom/ld_boom1.htm).

<sup>63</sup> Vicki L. Welcher, "Jewett-Thompson House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, 1988, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/f21f0d88-f543-4977-899a-60663dac46a2>, 9.

<sup>64</sup> Florida Center for Instructional Technology, "Florida's Land Boom."

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there, with commissions such as the Jewett-Thompson House and various designs for Thomas Edison's estate in Fort Myers.<sup>65</sup>

Into the 1930s, Walker became widely known as an architect, businessman, and booster in the Fort Myers Community, serving in several roles including President of the Florida Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, President of the Chamber of Commerce, and even as Postmaster for a brief period after his completion of the Fort Myers Post Office.<sup>66</sup> Though there was a greater focus on non-residential work in the early 1930s for Walker due to the Great Depression, at this time he also participated in a few new roles that illustrated his expertise and passion for residential design, particularly given the economic state of the country. In 1931, Walker served on the Design Committee for the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, a meeting held to examine the challenges involved in homeownership in hopes of encouraging it during the Depression.<sup>67</sup> Later, in 1934, he became the State Supervisor of Reconditioning Work for the Federal Home Loan Bank, a system established in 1932 to help increase access to credit for mortgages.<sup>68</sup> The role required Walker to promote government loans available to homeowners for renovations and repairs.<sup>69</sup> By the late 1930s, he was once again busy with high-end residential projects.<sup>70</sup> Later in his career he also designed apartments and modest homes to house those stationed at a nearby base during World War II.<sup>71</sup>

Schools were also a large part of Walker's career. In South Carolina, he had designed schools in Fort Mill, Clover, Barnwell, and Sumter.<sup>72</sup> He designed at least four schools in Florida, three of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The last commission Walker would receive a week before his death was for a new school in the Edison Park neighborhood. Nathaniel Gaillard Walker died on June 10, 1946, at the age of 60.<sup>73</sup> Leaving behind many buildings across the Carolinas and Florida, he is remembered as a "highly regarded wunderkind"

<sup>65</sup> Sidney Johnston and Carl Shiver, "Cabbage Key Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, 2015, <https://www.leegov.com/dcd/Documents/Agendas/HPB/2016/06/JUN012016.pdf>, 89.

<sup>66</sup> "Postmaster Walker Assumes New Duties," *Fort Myers News-Press*, November 16, 1933, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/220418676/>.

<sup>67</sup> Directory of Committee Personnel, December 2-5, 1931, United States: President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, 1931, 20.

<sup>68</sup> Stefan Gissler and Borghan Narajabad, "The Increased Role of the Federal Home Loan Bank System in Funding Markets, Part 1: Background," *Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System*, last modified October 18, 2017, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/the-increased-role-of-the-federal-home-loan-bank-system-in-funding-markets-part-1-background-20171018.htm>

<sup>69</sup> "Nat Walker Outlines Home Loan Benefits," *Fort Myers News-Press*, August 14, 1934, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/220393627/>.

<sup>70</sup> "New Building Boom Started on Gulf Coast," *Fort Myers News-Press*, July 10, 1936, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/219850632/>.

<sup>71</sup> "40 Families Start Moving Into Bayside Park Today," *Fort Myers News-Press*, July 24, 1943, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/221312338/>.

<sup>72</sup> Wells, 192; "Sealed Proposals Wanted," *The Charlotte News*, June 1, 1919, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/61733634/>.

<sup>73</sup> "Death Takes Nat G. Walker and Frank Alderman Sr.," *Fort Myers News-Press*, June 11, 1946, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/221450470/>.

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and “pioneer” of the Fort Myers area with his Post Office remaining a major downtown attraction.<sup>74</sup>

Below is a summary of Walker’s works that have been listed in the National Register or have been identified by statewide survey as eligible for listing either individually or as part of a district or multiple property listing.

**South Carolina:**

R.L. Sturgis House, Rock Hill (eligible)

A.W. Huckle Residence (eligible as part of proposed Oakland Avenue Historic District)

Carnegie Public Library, Sumter (NR 1994)

National Bank of Sharon, Sharon (Sharon Downtown Historic District, NR 2001)

London Printery, Rock Hill (eligible as part of proposed Rock Hill Downtown Historic District Expansion)

Grace Lutheran Church, Rock Hill (eligible as part of proposed Oakland Avenue Historic District)

**Florida:**

Jewett-Thompson House, Fort Myers (NR 1988)

Fort Myers Post Office, Fort Myers (Fort Myers Downtown Commercial District, NR 1990)

Laboratory and various structures, Thomas Edison Winter Estate, Fort Myers (NR 1991)

Cabbage Key Historic District, Pineland vicinity (NR 2015)

Boca Grande School, Boca Grande (NR 1995)

Colin J. English School, North Fort Myers (NR 1999)

Bonita Springs School, Bonita Springs (NR 1999)

<sup>74</sup> “40 Families Start Moving Into Bayside Park Today.”



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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 3915

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** .769

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: 34.921530 Longitude: -81.019311

2. Latitude: Longitude:

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3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

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

The nominated parcel number is 6270703007, and is bound on the north by East Main Street; on the west by a parcel with paved parking lot; on the south by the back of the non-contributing utility building; and on the east by a line of trees beyond the historic driveway.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were chosen to include the entire historic property, including the house, its grounds, and one non-contributing resource.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Lauren Fowler-Ellis  
organization: Fowler-Ellis Preservation Consulting  
street & number: 2118 High Pines Road  
city or town: Rock Hill state: SC zip code: 29732  
e-mail: lrnfowler@gmail.com  
telephone: 864.380.7219  
date: September 28, 2021

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**Additional Documentation**

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,

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photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: R.L. Sturgis House

City or Vicinity: Rock Hill

County: York

State: SC

Photographer: Marc Helms

Date Photographed: 2021

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 18: Façade (north) elevation, camera facing south.

2 of 18: West elevation, camera facing east.

3 of 18: Southwest corner, camera facing northeast.

4 of 18: South elevation, camera facing northwest.

5 of 18: East elevation, camera facing northwest.

6 of 18: East elevation, camera facing southwest.

7 of 18: Façade (north) elevation, detail of dormer, camera facing south.

8 of 18: Northwest corner of non-contributing outbuilding, camera facing southeast.

9 of 18: North elevation of non-contributing outbuilding, camera facing southwest.

10 of 18: Coal Room in basement, camera facing east.

11 of 18: Grand staircase in front hall, camera facing south.

12 of 18: Detail of columns in foyer opposite grand staircase, camera facing northwest.

13 of 18: Dining Room, camera facing southwest.

14 of 18: Detail of Dining Room Ceiling, camera facing southwest.



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- 15 of 18: Detail of Dining Room Fireplace, camera facing southwest.
- 16 of 18: Kitchen, camera facing south.
- 17 of 18: Second Floor Hall, camera facing north.
- 18 of 18: Second floor bathroom mosaic tile floor, camera facing southeast.

## Index of Figures

- 1 of 9: 1916 Sanborn Map, with 522 East Main visible at lower center. (Source: University of South Carolina Digital Collection.)
- 2 of 9: Schematic plan showing various parts of house and their alterations. (Source: Author.)
- 3 of 9: Historic photo of Sturgis House, c. 1910-1915. (Source: Marc Helms.)
- 4 of 9: Façade c. 2015, with all original columns in place. (Source: Marc Helms.)
- 5 of 9: Front door during restoration, c. 2016. (Source: Marc Helms.)
- 6 of 9: Foyer looking at front door during restoration, c. 2016. (Source: Marc Helms.)
- 7 of 9: Second floor guest bedroom with restored fireplace, c. 2015. (Source: Marc Helms.)
- 8 of 9: Detail of custom woodwork found during restoration, camera facing downward, c. 2015. (Source: Marc Helms.)
- 9 of 9: Original column capital from front porch, stripped to original wood for restoration, c. 2021. (Source: Marc Helms.)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours  
Tier 2 – 120 hours  
Tier 3 – 230 hours  
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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## Legend

Address

▲ Occupied

▲ Meter

▲ Vacant

1: 720



## Notes

Tax Parcel Map

0.0 0 0.01 0.0 Miles

NAD\_1983\_StatePlane\_South\_Carolina\_FIPS\_3900\_Feet\_Intl  
GIS@YorkCountyGov.com

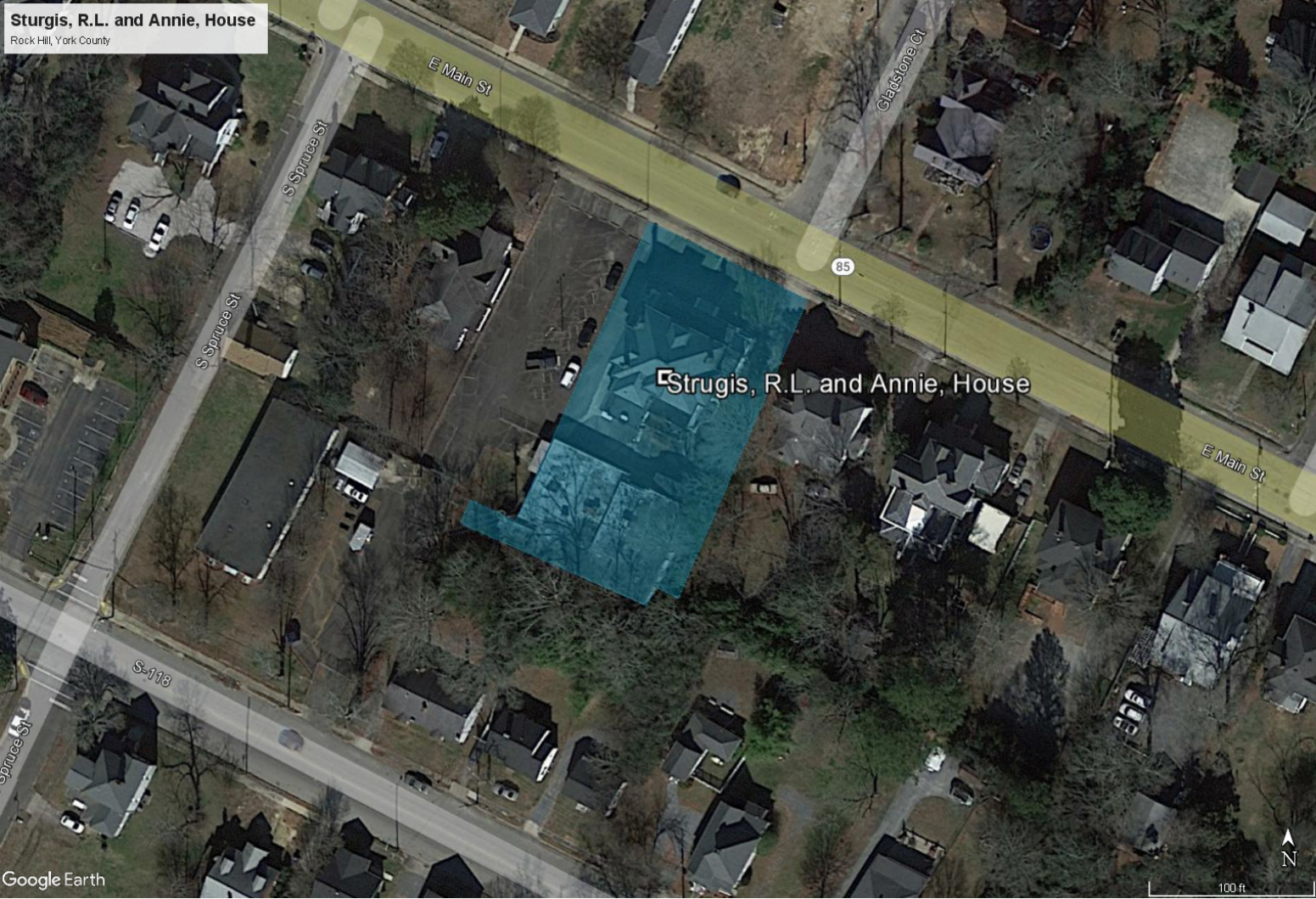
Printed: 10/25/2021

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

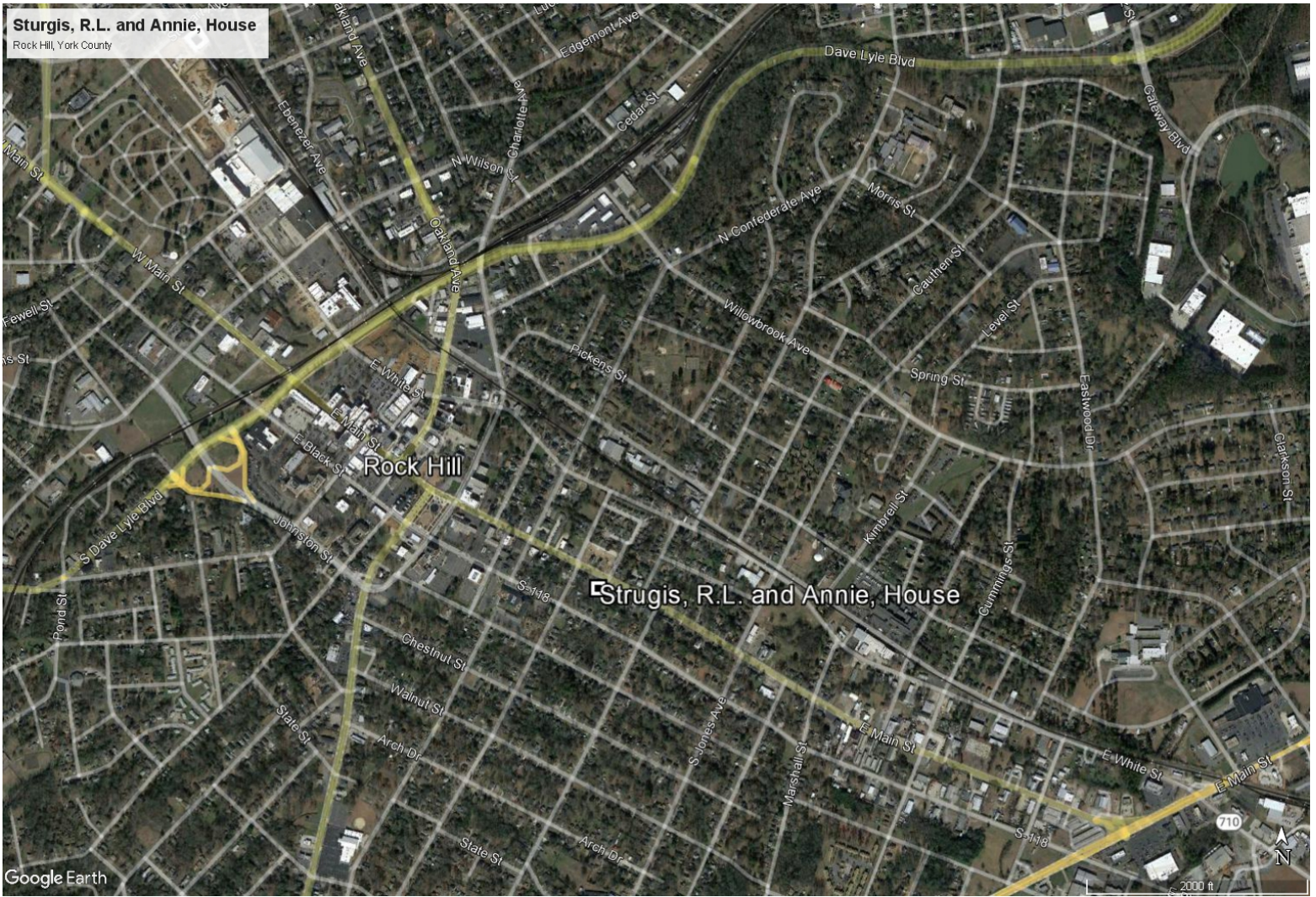


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Rock Hill, York County





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Rock Hill, York County





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Rock Hill, York County

