Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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FOR NPS USE ONLY
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The Edward R. Stanly House is a New Bern adaptation of the Renaissance Revival Style. It is built of brick laid in Flemish bond, and consists of a side-hall rectangular main block three stories high with varied fenestration and a two-story wing two bays wide and two bays deep. The wing is connected to the rear of the main block by a passage which is narrower than either of the two elements it links, giving the house a modified L shape. The box cornices, low hip roofs, and the general lack of protruding elements work together to emphasize the box-like quality of the house. Only two features break the smooth planes of the facades -- a wide corbel cornice directly below the third floor windows which is original to the house, and a one-bay wooden porch, added to the house in the early twentieth century. The porch is composed of heavy Tuscan pillars connected on each face by an elliptical arch which springs from curvilinear corbels accented with hemispherical turned studs. Sawn pierced scallop bands outline the arches, and lozenge diaper work fills the spandrels. In addition all the ornamental components are carried on the "inside" faces of the porch. This porch shelters a double door, each leaf of which has a glozed panel above two flat panels outlined with heavy applied ornamentation. The stone steps which lead to the porch have been recently overlaid with brick.

Because of the side-hall arrangement, the fenestration of the main block varies from two bays on the hall (east) side to four bays on the west side, the front facade being three bays wide. All elevations follow a similar vertical pattern of fenestration, with the windows diminishing in size from floor-to-ceiling openings at the first level to eyebrow windows on the third level. The windows on the first two levels are defined by sandstone lintels and sills. Two types of cast-iron grilles add greatly to the visual interest of the exterior. The eyebrow windows and the lower portion of the first floor windows are screened with delicate scroll-pattern grilles while the basement openings are overlaid with solid cast-iron covers, which have a raised design around the perimeter and occasionally also in the center.

Several stylistic periods spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are exhibited inside the Stanly House, and all work harmoniously together. Double doors similar in design to those outside lead from the small foyer into the side hall which opens onto two rooms to the west. The stair, which now ascends from front-to-rear against the east wall, formerly was reversed; the present arrangement appears to be a turn-of-the-century alteration. Turned termini surmounted by urns serve as the newel and posts and together with slender turned balusters support a ramped handrail. A pressed tin wainscot covers the lower portion of the hall and follows the general profile of the stair which rises very gradually with three landings. At the bottom of the dado, panels embossed with a geometric design alternate with a foliated urn motif; each of the short panels above contains a fantastic dragon.

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Opposite the stair, two free-standing Ionic columns flanked by Tuscan antae together support a full entablature and frame the entance to the front parlor. This room and the one behind are appointed similarly with black marble Tudor-arched mantels flanked by floor-to-ceiling windows surrounded by wide three-part molded architraves. The rooms, which have wide elaborately ornamented pressed-tin cornices, are separated by sliding doors. Although modern light fixtures have been installed, their placement does not disturb the handsome plaster medallions and gaslight chandeliers.

An arch at the rear of the hall frames the entrance to the small vestibule which contains on the west side a four-panel door that serves as a side entrance. To the rear of the vestibule is a room which probably was the dining room and now is used as a conference room. Like the hall this rear room has a pressed tin wainscot and cove ceiling. The two west window openings have been bricked up and converted into book cases. On the rear wall a pair of imaginative attenuated columns was applied to either side of built-in bookcases, and drawers rather than shelves fill the lower part. These cases flank a green-gray marble mantel in which turned columns carry a three-part frieze. Paneled end blocks and a raised center tablet are surmounted by a straight shelf with beveled edges.

On the second floor, the plan is basically that of the first floor, except that space between the two major rooms has been enclosed to create closets. Lavatories have been installed in the east side of the vestibule leading to the rear wing room and the front of the hall, where a marble wash basin has been integrated into the modern facility. Only one mantel, that in the front room, survives. It is wooden, but in form resembles its marble counterpart below. When the house was converted recently into office space, much of the wall surfaces on the second floor was covered with modern wood paneling (sheathing).

The stair to the third floor is a curious combination of styles. The tapered newel and posts and the rounded handrail, although rather heavy, have definite Federal antecedents and contrast strongly with the turned balusters which are different from those employed on the first flight. The balustrade around the stairwell on the third floor retains the tapered posts and rounded handrail, but has balusters square in section.

Divided into three rooms, the third floor is treated simply with plastered walls and a beaded baseboard. Two types of the late nineteenth or early twentieth-century coat hooks affixed to rails testify again to the various styles and changes of taste displayed in the Stanly House.

An extremely handsome cast-iron fence encloses the small side yard, and a stone mounting block remains near the street curb.

PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	☐ 18th Century	∑X, 20th Century
☐ 15th Century	17th Century	□XI 19th Century	
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Edward R. Stanly was born in 1816 in Jones County, North Carolina, and was evidently not related to the more famous Stanly family of New Bern. He was already in New Bern in 1839 when he sold the Jones County land willed to him by his father. He bought the land on which he constructed his house in 1847 and apparently had completed construction of the house by 1852. In an insurance policy of that year for the James Davis house, which stood on the Hancock Street lot to the rear of the Stanly house, it is noted that "Stanly's brick house is thirty-five feet from the (Davis) dwelling house." This certainly fits well with the traditional history of the house and is borne out by its style, so that a construction date of circa 1850, is likely.

The 1850 census lists Stanly as thirty-four years old, a manufacturer, and owning property in excess of \$10,000. He was a Mason, a member of St. John's Lodge No. 3 in New Bern, and served the order in various offices. When the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company was organized in 1854, Edward R. Stanly became one of its first directors.

He was evidently a man of unusual wealth, for in 1869, when he and his wife transferred one of their New Bern lots to J. Graham Tull, a relative in Philadelphia, the transfer enumerated thirty-one other lots which they owned in New Bern, where they were listed as residents. Other deeds listed a considerable amount of land outside the town of New Bern, and when Stanly died, his will showed property not only in North Carolina, but in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut as well.

Like many other New Bern structures, Edward R. Stanly's house was pressed into use between 1862 and 1865 when the town was held by the Union Forces. The history of the 44th Massachusetts Volunteers notes in listing houses where officers were billeted, "Colonel Amory, on Pollock Street, in Ed. R. Stanley's [sic] house." Thomas Jonathan Coffin Amory of Massachusetts had graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1851. By May of 1861 he was an infantry captain, rising to major in 1864, colonel and brevet brigadier general in 1864. He was the brigade and division commander of the XVIII Corps, North Carolina, and finally commanded the defenses of New Bern. He died in the New Bern yellow fever epidemic in 1864, though wheter in the Stanly House or one of the military hospitals is not known. Because of his position and responsibilities, however, the house was directly involved in much of the military history of New Bern during the Civil War.

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The structure continued to serve residential uses until well into the twentieth century. It served for a number of years as the New Bern USO, and currently houses the Neuse River Regional Planning and Development Council.

The Edward R. Stanly House is an impressive example of the Renaissance Revival style that was popular in the mid-nineteenth century, especially in large cities. The building embodies the essential characteristics of that style in the cubic blockiness of its mass, diminution of fenestration, a rather flat roof, and an emphatic cornice; the house also demonstrates the strength of the local building traditions which substituted Flemish bond brick and New Bern's perennial side-hall plan for the dressed stone and strict symmetry of facade that were hallmarks of the style. Because of the rareness of the type in New Bern and the excellence of its execution, it is a notable building. In addition, the recent renovation carried out by the owner, architect Robert H. Stephens, has preserved the important physical fabric of the structure, while superbly adapting it to a twentieth century use.

9	MAJOR	BIBLIOGRAPHICAL R	EFERENCES								
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Date

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