

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House**

Thomasville, Davidson County, DV0835, Listed 08/26/2019

Nomination by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.

Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, January 2018 and March 2019



North elevation, looking south



Library, looking west

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Finch, T. Austin and Ernestine L., House

other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 17 East Main Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Thomasville

N/A vicinity

state North Carolina

code NC

county Davidson

code 057

zip code 27360

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Finch, T. Austin and Ernestine L., House  
Name of Property

Davidson County, NC  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

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

**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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls STUCCO

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

roof TERRA COTTA

\_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

#### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

#### Period of Significance

1921

1938

#### Significant Dates

1921

1938

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Unknown

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

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

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

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

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Thomasville Public Library

Finch, T. Austin and Ernestine L., House  
Name of Property

Davidson County, NC  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreeage of Property** Approximately one acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1                                   
Zone Easting Northing  
2                                 

3                                   
Zone Easting Northing  
4                                 

See continuation sheet

Latitude 35.882876 Longitude -80.079775

### Verbal Boundary Description

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

### Boundary Justification

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

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Heather Fearnbach  
organization Fearnbach History Services, Inc. date 2/11/2018  
street & number 3334 Nottingham Road telephone 336-765-2661  
city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27104

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

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

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

### Photographs

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

### Additional items

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

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## Property Owner

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

name Andrew Clement, A&H Development, LLC  
street & number 1511 McCormick Street telephone 336-312-1770  
city or town Greensboro state NC zip code 27403

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

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

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Davidson County, NC

## Section 7. Narrative Description

### Setting

The Renaissance Revival-style T. Austin and Ernestine Lambeth Finch House, erected in 1921 and enlarged in 1938, is situated in the northeast quadrant of a 1.42-acre tax parcel at 17 East Main Street in Thomasville. A complementary garage, also constructed in 1921 and expanded and remodeled in 1938, stands south of the dwelling. The Finches erected the 1921 buildings on a lot that they received as a wedding gift from her parents John Walter and Daisy Sumner Lambeth, who then resided in the home on the adjacent parcel to the east. The Finches purchased the parcel west of their house in 1936 and demolished the two-story residence on the property to allow for the 1938 addition. They subsequently acquired the block's westernmost parcel and removed another two-story dwelling by 1938. The asphalt-paved parking lot that now fills the parcel's northwest corner was excluded from the National Register boundary as it was added in the late twentieth century. The residual one-acre tract provides an appropriate estate-like setting.

The Finch House has a deep setback, with the front lawn's central section remaining open inside the arc created by a paved semicircular asphalt driveway installed after 1938. The semicircular driveway intersects the shared, straight, north-south driveway between the Finch and Lambeth residences that leads to rear outbuildings and a parking area. Deciduous and evergreen shrubs and pine, oak, and magnolia trees punctuate the lawn and the lot's perimeter. Mature boxwood, and viburnum shrubs line the dwelling's north and east elevations. It is likely that the rear yard once contained a formal garden, but no traces of historic landscape features remain. The northwest parking lot was constructed to accommodate the property's commercial function after Ernestine Finch Mobley's 1983 death. The concrete sidewalks that facilitate connectivity between the parking lot, driveways, entrances, concrete rear patio, and garage were added from the late 1990s through the early twenty-first century.

The Finch and Lambeth residences' surroundings evolved as the city grew. A railroad corridor bisects Main Street and the commercial district north of the dwellings. Development to the east and west is commercial, institutional, and industrial, while the area to the south is primarily residential. Two north-south roads—Xenia Place (now Cramer Street) and Alpha Place (now School Street)—were created east and west of the Finch and Lambeth houses between 1923 and 1930 to connect East Main Street and Montlieu Avenue. Thomasville Graded School, a two-and-a-half-story brick edifice erected in 1902 as the municipality's first public educational institution for white children, occupied a large tract east of Alpha Place. After the structure was destroyed in an April 1922 fire, the expansive three-story brick Main Street School was constructed at the same location in 1923 to serve all grades of the city's white youth. Although the school closed in 1975 and was soon demolished, the City of

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Thomasville maintains the 1943 gymnasium for use as Central Recreation Center.<sup>1</sup> Tennis courts and a playground occupy the school site north of the gymnasium. A baseball field is to the south.

## **T. Austin and Ernestine Lambeth Finch House, 1921, 1938, contributing building**

### *Exterior*

The Finch House conveys a refined, subtle sense of permanence and wealth. The expansiveness of the austere yet sophisticated edifice is unequaled in Thomasville's 1920s and 1930s residential architecture. The green Ludowici-Celadon tile hip roof, deep eaves, and shaped rafter ends, and large multipane windows and French doors exhibit the influence of the Renaissance Revival style, a departure from the more popular period revival styles common in Thomasville during that period. The spacious two-story residence was erected in two phases: the original dwelling completed in 1921, and a 1938 west addition that doubled its size. Architects and contractors have not been identified for either phase.

The 1921 section comprises a two-story two-bay-wide main block with a classical portico and flanking offset hip-roofed wings. The east wing's setback is deeper to allow for an original one-story, flat-roofed, corner porch. The original one-bay-wide west wing's setback facilitates a smooth transition into the 1938 west addition, which encompasses a three-bay central section in the same plane as the original wing as well as a two-bay-wide west block that projects north to the same extent as the 1921 house. The addition emulates the original residence's green Ludowici-Celadon tile roof, deep eaves, shaped rafter ends, and white stuccoed walls. However, architects employed more classical embellishment in the addition and specified a raised stuccoed band that wraps around the building beneath the second-story windows. Original double-hung six-over-six and eight-over-eight wood-sash windows and wood casement windows illuminate the interior. Three tall, rectangular, parged chimney stacks—one at each end of the building and one near the center—pierce the roof. Copper gutters and downspouts tie into underground drains.

The classical portico on the 1921 north elevation heralds the tone of the reception area within. Tuscan columns and square pilasters support the molded stepped cornice capped with a flat roof and the cast-iron balustrade that secures the shallow balcony. The thinner west column appears to be a replacement. The tall octagonal leaded-glass panel with a peacock motif in the single-leaf front door was added after 1938. The door opens into an entrance vestibule with a complementary high leaded-

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<sup>1</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, Thomasville, Davidson County, Sheet 11, July 1923, Sheet 6, September 1930; Mary Green Matthews and M[argaret] Jewell Sink, *Wheels of Faith and Courage: A History of Thomasville, North Carolina* (High Point: Hall Printing Company, 1952; Reprint, Thomasville: Habitat for Humanity of Thomasville Area, Inc., 2002), 55-57; Wint Capel, *A Recent History of Thomasville, North Carolina, 1952-1991* (Thomasville: Wint Capel, 1991), 122-123.

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glass window on the west elevation. The double-leaf balcony door has six-pane upper sections. Wood-frame storm doors have been installed at both entrances. The portico's bluestone floor and steps and the short matching sidewalk that extends north to the driveway appear to be mid-twentieth century additions. The original steps were likely granite, like those of the northeast porch. The first-floor exterior door sills throughout the dwelling are granite.

The northeast porch was executed in much the same manner as the portico, although the robust grouped Tuscan columns are spanned by open wood lattice. The cast-iron roof balustrade (which matches the portico roof balustrade) likely replaced the original wood roof balustrade in 1938. A granite step leads to the granite-bordered square red terra-cotta tile floor. A single-leaf, multipane, wood south door provides access to the sunroom at the building's east end, while a single-leaf, two-panel, wood west door leads to the expansive living room. A wood-frame storm door has been added at the living room entrance. A concrete sidewalk connects the porch to the east driveway.

A group of four six-over-six sash pierces each level of the 1921 main block east of the portico. The 1921 east wing has a second-story wood casement window with two six-pane sash. The original west wing has a matching first-story window and a six-over-six second-story sash. In the 1938 addition's three-bay central section, a first-story multipane oculus with a keystone surround and two narrow three-vertical-pane wood sash light the vestibule and flanking restrooms north of the dining room. Three six-over-six sash illuminate the upper floor. The addition's west section contains a Palladian-style tripartite first-story library entrance with a tall, double-leaf, multipane wood door flanked by triple-hung four-pane sash. The classical surround comprises pilasters; a projecting, molded, denticulated cornice; and a blind round-arch tympanum featuring a central sunburst-motif and keystone. The two second-story windows have six-over-six sash.

The west elevation's first story is windowless due to the library bookshelves within. A chimney rises at the wall's center and pierces the eaves. The second story includes an eight-over-eight sash north of the chimney. A straight run of steel stairs with a metal-pipe railing leads to the single-leaf paneled door on the chimney's south side.

The rear elevation's larger windows capitalize on the southern exposure. At the west end, the 1938 addition's library entrance is identical to that on the north elevation. Two eight-over-eight sash light the second-story bedroom. The addition's projecting central section is distinguished by the dining room's tall bow window comprised of five triple-hung six-pane sash. The classical surround includes a molded cornice and a cast-iron railing. A group of three eight-over-eight sash surmount the railing and two six-over-six sash pierce the wall to the east. In the recessed area beneath the central window, a pair of six-over-six sash light what was a butler's pantry. The shed-roofed porch at the addition's east end was enclosed with painted plywood panels in conjunction with the early-twenty-first-century commercial kitchen installation. The concrete patio south of the library and dining room and the U-



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shaped concrete sidewalk and low handicap-accessible ramp that lead from the patio to the single-leaf door in the enclosed porch were added during the same period.

To the east, the 1921 south elevation encompasses a projecting central section, a shed-roofed one-story west room that extends further south, and an offset east wing that contains a first-story sunroom and a second-story bathroom. The wing setback allows for what was originally a corner terrace, which became a covered porch in the mid-twentieth century. The second-story fenestration comprises paired six-over-six west sash, paired eight-over-eight central sash, and a wood casement window with two six-pane sash in the bathroom at the east end. A below-grade straight run of concrete steps with metal-pipe railings adjacent to the projecting west room leads to the single-leaf basement entrance. A matching railing secures the light well to the east that serves a pair of six-over-six basement sash.

The southeast porch retains parged granite-capped planters, a granite-bordered square red terra-cotta tile floor, and granite steps. The planters serve as a kneewall for the aluminum posts that support the corrugated-aluminum straight-sloped canopy added in the mid-twentieth century. A double-leaf multipane wood door and wood-frame screen door at the porch's west end provide access to a narrow room east of the kitchen. A group of three six-over-six sash pierces the east elevation's second story above this room.

On the east wing's south elevation, a large window with four tall, narrow, eight-pane sash illuminates the sunroom and a four-over-four sash lights the adjacent restroom. The second-story bathroom has a central wood casement window with six-pane sash. On the east elevation, a large window with five tall, narrow, eight-pane sash fills the sunroom wall. A wood casement window with six-pane sash lights the second-story bathroom.

## *Interior*

The 6,570-square-foot dwelling has a finely crafted but unpretentious interior. The 1921 first floor comprises an entrance vestibule, reception hall, living room, sunroom, stair hall, kitchen, and adjacent service areas. The 1938 addition's first story includes a butler's pantry, dining room, library, and two restrooms accessed from an east-west corridor. The 1921 dwelling was remodeled in conjunction with the 1938 addition's construction. The formal public spaces—the reception hall, dining room, living room, and library—are embellished with classical cornices, door and window surrounds, wainscoting, chair rails, baseboards, and mantels. Single- and double-leaf raised-panel doors and multipane French doors retain original hardware. Smooth plaster walls and ceilings and tongue-and-groove oak floors are intact.

The entrance vestibule has mirrored walls and a black-and-white tile floor. A high leaded-glass window pierces the west elevation. A wood cover with wire-mesh doors disguises the radiator below

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the window. The vestibule opens into a reception hall ornamented with a molded cornice and window and door surrounds, paneled wainscoting, and paired fluted corner pilasters at the room's canted corners. Two of the double-arm crystal sconces that were mounted between the pilasters at each corner remain. A built-in paneled-wood radiator cover with metal top and bottom vents is beneath the window on the north elevation. The distinctive floor features progressively longer boards radiating out from the center in four triangular sections. A single-leaf door with two vertical panels at the south wall's west end provides kitchen access. The adjacent taller arched opening on the west elevation leads to the 1938 corridor. Three raised octagonal panels of varying size adorn the double-leaf door at the east elevation's center adjacent to the living room, introducing a motif seen elsewhere in the house. An identical door near the west end of the living room's south wall provides access to the stair hall.

The living room's location in proximity to the reception hall, northeast porch, and sunporch facilitated entertaining. The molded cornice, baseboards, window and door surrounds; patterned oak floor; and the built-in paneled-wood radiator screen beneath the four grouped north sash are intact. The window surround includes a molded cornice and projecting fluted pilasters. Linear fluorescent lights have been installed beneath the cornice. The classical mantel at the east elevation's center features fluted pilasters, a central sunburst-motif frieze panel flanked by reeded panels, and a black-and-white-marble firebox surround. The interior face of the single-leaf door north of the fireplace, which leads to the northeast porch, is embellished with fretwork and three octagonal panels. The sunporch entrance south of the fireplace has a matching door, installed to display the fretwork face when open.

The sunporch is pragmatically finished. Square red terra-cotta tile sheathes the floor, continuing the treatment of the adjacent porch and terrace. The corner fireplace has a small, shallow, arched, originally coal-burning firebox and a molded mantel shelf supported by two brackets. Radiators are exposed beneath the south and east windows.

A dramatic corner staircase dominates the hall south of the living room. The stair features a cast-iron foliate railing, twisted and straight cast-iron balusters, a molded wood handrail, painted risers, and hardwood treads. The configuration requires three landings, the first of which is two steps above the hall floor. The enclosure beneath the upper run contains the single-leaf basement stair entrance.

The restaurant tenant extensively remodeled the kitchen and adjacent service areas in the early twenty-first century. Vinyl composition tile sheathes most floors and fiberglass-reinforced-plastic-panels cover the walls and ceilings. Small square black ceramic floor tiles were laid beneath the commercial gas range and hood and in the adjacent service area to the east. The ceiling height was lowered to allow for ductwork and fluorescent lighting. The narrow rooms east and west of the kitchen, both originally likely pantries lined with built-in cabinets, now contain long stainless-steel sinks and wire shelves. The room between the east pantry and the southeast terrace may have served as a breakfast room. The small restroom at the northeast corner retains a single-leaf door with two vertical panels.

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A full-height bow window with five triple-hung six-pane sash spans the dining room's entire south elevation. The room's classical embellishment comprises molded window and door surrounds, an egg-and-dart cornice, paneled wainscoting, and four triple-arm crystal sconces. Near the east elevation's north end, a single-leaf door with two vertical panels remains at the former pantry entrance. A double-leaf door with louvered and raised panels and original brass hardware—round knobs, starburst backplates, and hinges—is centered on the north elevation.

The addition has narrow oak floors with the exception of the central first-story corridor, where wider oak boards are ornamented with faux pegs, a popular Tudor Revival treatment. The corridor is further distinguished by an arched ceiling and crosssetted door surrounds at the reception hall, library, dining room, and restroom vestibule entrances. Simple molded chair rails and baseboards create the appearance of wainscoting. The arched reception hall and library door openings at the corridor's ends are topped with keystones.

Men's and women's restrooms flank a vestibule on the corridor's north side. A multipane oculus illuminates the vestibule. Each restroom retains a single-leaf door with two vertical panels, but both have been updated with fiberglass-reinforced-plastic-panel wainscoting and replacement fixtures. Ceramic tile covers a portion of the women's restroom floor, while the men's restroom has a vinyl-composition-tile floor.

The library at the corridor's west end, which spans the addition's full depth, is the dwelling's most finely finished room. The woodwork displays exceptional carving prowess. The craftsmen have not been identified. To maximize ceiling height, the architect lowered the library floor level three steps below the remainder of the first story. The arched rosewood-paneled corridor door opening frames a view of the fireplace at the west elevation's center. The rosewood mantel's embellishment includes foliate frieze panels and a beaded and acanthus-leaf cornice beneath a molded shelf. Projecting curved pilasters flank the burgundy marble firebox surround. Raised rosewood panels, fluted Doric pilasters, and cornices with foliate modillions ornament the walls. Wide three-section bookshelves are recessed in the walls flanking the fireplace and the corridor entrance. Each bookcase is topped with a central, scalloped, round-arch tympanum with a keystone, echoing the exterior treatment of the library entrances on the north and south elevations. On the interior surrounds, narrow fluted pilasters separate the tall, double-leaf, multipane wood doors and triple-hung four-pane-sash sidelights.

Smooth plaster walls and ceilings, simple crown molding, molded wood window and door surrounds, single-leaf doors with two vertical panels, baseboards with molded upper edges, and tongue-and-groove oak floors are intact throughout the second story. The 1921 section encompasses a central stair hall, an expansive master bedroom and bathroom, two smaller bedrooms, and a sewing room. A

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decorative cast-iron railing curves around the top of the stair opening. A small closet is located at the hall's northeast corner adjacent to the master bedroom entrance.

The master bedroom is the same size as the living room below and also features a patterned hardwood floor. A classical mantel with paneled pilasters, a central frieze panel with an urn-and-swag motif, a molded shelf, and a yellow-glazed-square-ceramic-tile firebox surround ornament the fireplace. The shallow arched firebox was originally coal-burning. The double-leaf door to the shallow balcony above the entrance portico is in the small closet at the bedroom's northwest corner. A door near the south elevation's east end opens into a short corridor with a small closet on its east side. The corridor leads to what was once a sewing room. Bands of multipane windows span the sewing room's south and east elevations.

The master bathroom door is on the east elevation south of the fireplace. The bathroom is at a slightly lower level than the bedroom. The white small-hexagonal-tile floor was removed in 2018, exposing a narrow-board subfloor. Although the white rectangular-ceramic-tile wainscoting has been removed, the original mirrored wood medicine cabinet remains recessed in the east wall. The original white porcelain pedestal sink and tub will be reused. A shower will be installed in the closet at the room's southwest corner.

The south bedroom, accessed from the staircase's upper landing or the central corridor, has an original ensuite bathroom. A mirrored wood medicine cabinet and white porcelain tub and toilet remain from 1921, while the white porcelain sink with tapered polished chrome legs was added in 1938. The vinyl-composition-tile floor is a later addition.

The north bedroom, which has a patterned hardwood floor, shares a bathroom with the adjacent bedroom in the 1938 addition. The original white porcelain sink has tapered polished chrome legs. The current owner reglazed the original pink square-ceramic-tile wainscoting and arched recessed tub/shower surround white, but the pink ceramic Art Deco sconces on either side of the mirrored metal medicine cabinet are intact. The toilet has been replaced.

A central east-west corridor leads to the 1938 addition's three bedrooms, all of which feature molded chair rails and baseboards and vaulted ceilings. A ladder stair in the corridor linen closet provides attic access.

The south bedroom has a closet with a single-leaf mirrored door at its northeast corner. The ensuite bathroom to the south retains white square-ceramic-tile wainscoting ornamented with an upper band of smaller alternating white-and-silver square tiles. The white-square-ceramic-tile floor is embellished with an outer three-row band of smaller white square tiles. White square ceramic tile sheathes the shower walls and ceiling and smaller white square ceramic tiles its floor. The original white porcelain

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sink has tapered polished chrome legs. White ceramic Art Deco sconces remain on either side of the mirrored metal medicine cabinet. A medicine cabinet with a paneled wood door is recessed in the wall above the replacement toilet.

The commodious west bedroom includes a dressing room at its northwest corner lined with mirrored closets that retain original faceted-glass door knobs. The room has a vaulted ceiling. The bathroom accessed from the dressing room's east side is distinguished by variegated blue-and-green square-ceramic-tile wainscoting with an upper band of smaller alternating square tiles of the same shades. An outer three-row band of matching small tiles embellishes the variegated blue-and-green square-ceramic-tile floor. The same tile sheathes the arched recessed tub/shower surround. Unlike the other 1938 bathrooms, the door and window surrounds are also tile. The original white porcelain sink has tapered polished chrome legs. Diamond-shaped, variegated blue-and-green ceramic Art Deco sconces on either side of the mirrored metal medicine cabinet feature scalloped ceramic bulb covers. A medicine cabinet with a mirrored wood door is recessed in the wall above the tub faucet. The toilet has been replaced.

Wood steps lead from the stair hall to the 1921 dwelling's full basement, which contains two servants' rooms, a bathroom, a mechanical room, and two coal rooms. The staircase's upper run is enclosed. A simple wood railing with a square newel post, slender rectangular balusters, and a molded wood handrail secures the lower run. Utilitarian finishes comprise concrete floors and baseboards and hollow-terra-cotta-block walls that are parged in most locations other than the coal rooms. Flat-board window and door surrounds and five-horizontal-panel wood doors are intact. The bathroom retains a porcelain-enameled steel tub and matching wall-mounted corner sink. The coal rooms' board-and-batten doors are elevated several feet above floor level.

## **Garage, 1921, 1938, contributing building**

A one-story, stuccoed, rectangular garage stands south of the house. The building comprises a north room, a three-bay south garage, and a mid-twentieth-century rear shed addition. The 1921 garage's appearance is unknown, but Sanborn maps illustrate that the building had a square footprint approximately the size of the north room. The south section was added in conjunction with the 1938 expansion and remodeling. The green Ludowici-Celadon tile hip roof with deep eaves and shaped rafter ends unites the sections. A chimney rises at the center of the wall between the north room and the garage bays to a parged rectangular stack that straddles the roof ridge. The north elevation contains a single-leaf door with three horizontal octagonal panes and two flanking double-hung six-over-six wood sash. Projecting bays span the north ends of the east and west elevations. The west bay encompasses a central double-leaf door with ten-pane upper sections and raised-panel bases as well as two large double-hung ten-over-fifteen wood sash. The door provides access to a poured-concrete patio that wraps around the north elevation. The east bay contains three large double-hung ten-over-

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fifteen wood sash. To the south, the east elevation's three wide garage door openings have been enclosed with plywood. However, two multipane oculi with keystone surrounds remain on the garage's west elevation. The windows match the one on the 1938 addition's north elevation. A windowless stuccoed late-twentieth-century concrete-block addition with an almost-flat roof spans the south elevation. A central single-leaf door with a glazed upper section provides access.

The north room has plaster walls, a vaulted plaster ceiling, molded wood window and door surrounds, and a simple flat baseboard. The walls and ceiling have a mid-twentieth-century textured finish. Vinyl composition tiles have been removed from most of the room, revealing a plywood subfloor. The restroom at the southwest corner has replacement white porcelain fixtures, a vinyl-composition-tile floor, rubber cove base, and fiberglass-reinforced-plastic wall and ceiling panels. Electrical conduit is surface-mounted throughout the building. A shallow firebox serves the chimney at the south elevation's center.

The garage floor level is three steps lower than that of the north room. Smooth painted gypsum board sheathes the east walls, while fiberglass-reinforced-plastic panels cover the remaining walls and ceilings. The concrete floor has been painted. The rear shed addition contains a central corridor flanked by a west shower room and an east restroom. The concrete block walls, concrete floor, and smooth gypsum board ceiling are painted. The mechanical room at the garage's northwest corner is finished in the same manner.

## Integrity Statement

The remarkably intact T. Austin and Ernestine Lambeth Finch House possesses the seven qualities of historic integrity—location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship—required for National Register designation. The dwelling maintains integrity of location as it stands on its original site. Although the planting and hardscape configuration has evolved, the front lawn is substantially intact. The concrete sidewalks and rear patio are not intrusive. The asphalt-paved parking lot at the parcel's northwest corner fills what was initially a separate residential tract and has thus been excluded from the National Register boundary. The one-acre tract provides appropriate estate-like surroundings in keeping with the property's Renaissance Revival character, thus allowing for integrity of setting, feeling, and association.

The Finch House also displays integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. A consistent Renaissance Revival-style treatment approach—white stucco walls, a Ludowici-Celadon tile roof, deep eaves, and shaped rafter ends—and classical elements such as a molded modillion cornice unify the 1921 and 1938 sections. Only a few inconspicuous exterior alterations have been made since the 1938 expansion and remodeling, and most were on the rear elevation. The mid-twentieth-century corrugated-aluminum straight-sloped canopy that shelters the southeast terrace could be easily

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removed. Although painted plywood panels were used to enclose the shed-roofed porch at the 1938's addition's east end in the early twenty-first century, the original square posts remain.

The interior retains original room volumes and finishes. The formal public spaces—reception hall, dining room, living room, and library—are characterized by classical cornices, door and window surrounds, wainscoting, chair rails, baseboards, and mantels. Single- and double-leaf raised-panel doors and multipane French doors with original hardware, smooth plaster walls and ceilings, tongue-and-groove oak floors, the rosewood library woodwork, and winding staircase are particularly significant. The early-twenty-first-century commercial kitchen installation did not impact the overall first-floor plan, as it occupies the original kitchen, flanking pantries, and rear shed porch. Smooth plaster walls and ceilings, simple crown molding, molded wood window and door surrounds, single-leaf doors with two vertical panels, baseboards with molded upper edges, and tongue-and-groove oak floors are intact throughout the second story. Most original bathroom tile and many fixtures remain.

The garage also maintains a predominantly 1938 appearance. Modifications such as plywood enclosure of the three wide garage door openings on the east elevation and the mid-twentieth-century rear addition have minimal impact on its overall character.

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## Section 8. Statement of Significance

The T. Austin and Ernestine Lambeth Finch House, erected in 1921 and enlarged in 1938, meets National Register Criterion C for architecture as a remarkably intact and locally significant example of the Renaissance Revival style. The dwelling's white stuccoed walls, green Ludowici-Celadon tile hip roof, and deep eaves supported by shaped rafter ends exemplify the style and unify the 1921 and 1938 sections. As was typical in such residences, the Finch House features wood casement and double-hung multipane windows and French doors. Finely crafted classical elements including Tuscan porch columns and Palladian library entrance surrounds contribute to the sophisticated aesthetic. Classical cornices, door and window surrounds, wainscoting, chair rails, baseboards, and mantels distinguish the reception hall, dining room, living room, and library. Although similar dwellings were constructed throughout the United States in elite subdivisions developed during the 1920s and 1930s, the Finch House is unique in Thomasville, where the wealthy favored Tudor, Georgian, and Classical Revival styles. The dwelling's expansiveness and estate-like setting are particularly notable, as most of the city's early- to mid-twentieth-century subdivisions contain modest bungalows, period cottages, and Minimal Traditional houses on small parcels. The stuccoed, green-tile-roofed, three-bay garage northwest of the house, built in 1921 and remodeled to match the house in 1938, is a rare survival. The period of significance is the construction date of each phase: 1921 and 1938.

## Architecture Context

The Renaissance Revival-style T. Austin and Ernestine Lambeth Finch House emulates villas on the Mediterranean coasts of France, Spain, and Italy characterized by low-pitched hipped roofs sheathed with ceramic tiles, deep bracketed eaves, arches above large windows, French doors, symmetrical façades, and light-colored stucco walls that deflect heat. One- or two-story wings were common features. Regular fenestration and balance are important components of the style, which enjoyed widespread popularity in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s. The Finch House also displays classical elements, employing ancient Grecian and Roman architecture as archetypes for overall composition and details. The selection of ornament drawn from classical precedents was a fashionable choice intended to embody permanence and refinement. The use of period architectural elements reflected national trends as well as the owners' elite social and economic status.

The Finch House's white stuccoed walls, green Ludowici-Celadon tile hip roof, and deep eaves supported by shaped rafter ends exemplify the Renaissance Revival style. Although the spacious two-story dwelling is asymmetrical as it was built in two phases, regular fenestration provides a sense of balance. As was typical of the style, wood casement and double-hung multipane windows and French doors provide ample light and ventilation in addition to views connecting the inside and outside worlds.



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Finely crafted classical exterior and interior elements also embellish the residence. Tuscan columns grace the 1921 north portico and northeast corner porch. The tripartite library entrance surrounds on the 1938 addition's north and south elevations exhibit a Palladian influence. Each comprises pilasters; a projecting, molded, denticulated cornice; and a blind round-arch tympanum with a central sunburst-motif and keystone. Classical cornices, door and window surrounds, wainscoting, chair rails, baseboards, and mantels distinguish the reception hall, dining room, living room, and library. The library's rosewood woodwork is exceptionally well-executed. Smooth plaster walls and ceilings, tongue-and-groove oak floors, and single- and double-leaf raised-panel doors and multipane French doors with original hardware are intact throughout the house. The corner staircase in the hall south of the living room features a cast-iron foliate railing and twisted and straight cast-iron balusters.

The Finch House's structure incorporates the most substantial and fire resistant construction technology available during the period. Comprised of a brick foundation and a terra cotta block and steel frame, the edifice met the highest structural standards of the 1920s and 1930s and remains completely sound.

The 1938 renovation extended to the garage south of the house, also designed to be fire resistant. The stuccoed three-bay garage features a green Ludowici-Celadon tile-roof, double-hung multipane windows, and two multipane oculi with keystone surrounds.

The Finch House is unique in Thomasville, where the wealthy favored Tudor, Georgian, and Classical Revival styles. The dwelling's expansiveness and estate-like setting are also notable, as most of the city's early- to mid-twentieth-century subdivisions contain modest bungalows, period cottages, and Minimal Traditional houses on smaller parcels. The twenty-three residences in the Salem Street Historic District (NR 2006), for example, include 1920s Craftsman bungalows, Foursquares, and Colonial Revival-style houses.<sup>2</sup>

Although there are no Renaissance Revival-style dwellings comparable to the Finch House in Thomasville, the Oakwood subdivision developed by Charles F. Finch beginning in the 1920s contains a few modest Spanish- and Mediterranean-influenced residences.<sup>3</sup> The neighborhood, which became known as "Kinneywood" by the 1940s, includes a one-story, flat-roofed, stuccoed, circa 1920 dwelling at 200 Oakwood Drive with a shaped east parapet, an arcaded screened porch, an adjacent open porch, a basement garage, and paired multipane windows.<sup>4</sup> Variegated red asphalt shingles have replaced the original red terra cotta-tile porch roofs.

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<sup>2</sup> Laura A. W. Phillips, "Salem Street Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Charles S. Kirby, engineer, "Plat of Oakwood, Thomasville, N. C.," December 1927, Davidson County Plat Book 3, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Construction dates for properties within the Kinneywood subdivision are from Davidson County property record cards.

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Textured stucco, a red terra-cotta barrel-tile roof, and irregular massing characterize the nearby one-story circa 1930 dwelling at 214 Forsyth Street. A large flat-roofed wing extends north and west from the gabled southeast corner section. A square chimney rises on the south elevation at the center of a projecting, shallow, shed-roofed bay. A low stuccoed wall encloses the southeast terrace outside the primary entrance.

The textured-stucco 1949 dwelling at 311 Kinney Avenue's original red metal barrel-tile roof has been recently replaced with a copper-colored 5V-crimp metal roof. A one-story hip-roofed wing wraps around the central two-story gabled block and a one-story, hip-roofed, two-bay garage projects from the northwest corner. The portico comprises a shed-roofed one-bay-wide entrance and an adjacent circular green-metal-dome-roofed section topped with a tall finial.

Approximately eleven miles to the southwest in Davidson County's seat, the Lexington Residential Historic District (NR 2007) contains several classic examples of the Renaissance Revival style. The two-story, brick, circa 1920 William W. and Sadie L. Woodruff House at 300 West Second Avenue has a green tile hip roof with a bracketed cornice, an entry framed by sidelights and a fanlight, a gabled entry porch supported by Tuscan columns, and a front terrace with brick posts spanned by a wood balustrade. The circa 1920 Joseph and Sadie Walser House, located just around the corner at 146 West First Avenue, is almost identical in form and stylistic elements, but has a stuccoed exterior and hipped dormers. The main block of the Buchanan-Koontz House, constructed at 409 South State Street circa 1929, is flanked by an open porch and an enclosed sunporch, but is otherwise identical to the Woodruff House. Both the Buchanan-Koontz and Woodruff Houses feature garages designed to complement the houses. Cabell and Daisy Philpott built a more expansive Renaissance Revival dwelling at 209 West Second Avenue in 1927. The red tile roof, recessed entry with sidelights and a transom, and French doors across the façade are typical of the style, but the Palladian window in the central bay below a gabled parapet is a distinctive classical touch.<sup>5</sup>

## Historical Background

Daisy Ernestine Lambeth and Thomas Austin Finch's November 6, 1919 marriage at Main Street Methodist Church in Thomasville joined two prominent North Carolina furniture-manufacturing dynasties: Lambeth Furniture and Thomasville Chair Company. Ernestine, born in 1898, was John Walter and Daisy Sumner Lambeth's only daughter. She was planning the wedding as she completed her degree from Greensboro College for Women, a Methodist institution, in June 1919. T. Austin, eight years her senior, was the eldest of Thomas Jefferson Finch and Hannah Louise Brown Finch's six sons. He had been employed at Thomasville Chair Company since his 1909 graduation with honors from Trinity College in Durham, also subsidized by the Methodist church, which became Duke

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<sup>5</sup> Heather Fearnbach, "Lexington Residential Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2007.

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University in 1924. T. Austin's family had early connections with Trinity College, as it grew from a private subscription school organized in 1838 at Brown's Schoolhouse, a one-room log building on his great-grandfather John Brown's Randolph County farm.<sup>6</sup>

T. Austin Finch worked in all of Thomasville Chair Company's departments, gradually assuming more responsibility. He served as secretary-treasurer beginning in 1914. T. Austin also developed leadership skills as a Thomasville city councilman from 1915 until 1917 and on local Democratic committees.<sup>7</sup>

Upon their return from a honeymoon tour of several northern cities, the Finches resided in Ernestine's parents' home at East Main and School Street's southwest corner. In May 1920 the couple announced their plans to erect a house on the adjacent lot, which the Lambeths had given them the day after their wedding. Construction commenced in September and the residence was substantially complete by late May 1921.<sup>8</sup> The two-story Renaissance Revival-style dwelling manifested the couple's elite social status and T. Austin's burgeoning career. The architect and builder have not been identified.

The Finches prospered personally and professionally in the 1920s. T. Austin became Thomasville's mayor in 1923, and the couple's only child, Thomas Austin Finch Jr., was born that year. T. Austin, his father T. J., and his brothers Alfred and Charles incorporated Thomasville Chair Company in February 1925. T. J. Finch continued to function as president and T. Austin was promoted to vice president, a position he held until becoming president after his father's 1929 death. The business had experienced exponential growth since its 1904 founding by G. A. Allison. When T. J. Finch and his brother C. F. Finch acquired the concern in 1907, it was a one-hundred employee operation with a three-hundred-chair daily production capacity. In 1913, 260 workers fabricated up to 1,300 chairs each day. By 1925, 860 men and 26 women operated four plants, earning weekly wages of between \$1.50 and \$8.00. That year, the company expanded its product line from chairs to suites of dining room furniture. Two outside manufacturers supplied tables and buffets until 1927, when Thomasville Chair Company had the capability to fabricate them in-house. The concern also introduced a line of bedroom furniture.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "Thomasville," *The Dispatch* (Lexington), June 11, 1919, p. 8, and November 11, 1919, p. 8; "Thomasville," *Greensboro Daily News*, November 9, 1919, p. 2M; "Finch-Lambeth Engagement Announcement," *Winston-Salem Journal*, October 28, 1919, p. 3; Maureen McCormick Harlow, Duke University Archives, "Duke University," timeline, 2013, <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/collections/creators/corporations/dukeuniversity> (accessed February 2018).

<sup>7</sup> "T. Austin Finch," *Duke Alumni Register*, February 1943, p. 39; "Thomasville Township Democrats in Session," *Greensboro Daily News*, March 31, 1920, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Davidson County Deed Book 85, p. 410; Plat Book 2, p. 15; *The Dispatch*, May 11, 1920, p. 8, September 21, 1920, p. 6, and May 26, 1921, p. 8; U. S. Census, Population Schedule, 1920.

<sup>9</sup> H. B. Varner, commissioner, *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzell and Company, 1908), 260-261; "Charters Issued By the Secretary," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, February 21, 1925, p. 12; Frank D. Grist, commissioner, *Thirty-Fifth Report of the Department of Labor and*

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The area surrounding the Finch and Lambeth residences evolved between 1923 and 1930 as the town grew. North-south roads were created to the east and west—Xenia Place (now Cramer Street) and Alpha Place (now School Street)—to connect East Main Street and Montlieu Avenue. Main Street School, erected in 1923 on the site of a 1902 school, occupied a large tract east of Alpha Place.<sup>10</sup>

The early 1930s brought significant economic challenges. The dearth of furniture demand during the Great Depression required Thomasville Chair Company to dramatically reduce prices in order to make sales. However, the concern creatively offset losses through scrupulous material conservation and expedited production. Surplus inventory was warehoused until the economy improved in the late 1930s. The company took advantage of the opportunity to develop new furniture lines and update machinery.<sup>11</sup> These efforts soon garnered results, as Thomasville Chair Company was North Carolina's most sizable wood household furniture manufacturer in 1937, with between 1,500 and 2,000 workers. Standard Chair Company and Thomasville Furniture Company, both also based in Thomasville, were the next largest, each with approximately 200 to 250 employees.<sup>12</sup>

The Finches also suffered personal losses during this period. T. Austin's mother Hannah Brown Finch and Ernestine's mother Daisy Sumner Lambeth died in 1933, followed by Ernestine's father J. Walter Lambeth the following year. Her only sibling, politician, dairy proprietor, and investor J. Walter Lambeth Jr., who had resided with his parents when in town, inherited the family home. Lambeth Jr., a World War I veteran who had been president of Lambeth Furniture Company, a North Carolina senator in 1921, and Thomasville's mayor from 1925 until 1929, served in the United States House of Representatives from 1930 until 1939.<sup>13</sup> In memory of their mothers, the Finches and Lambeth subsidized the 1934 construction of a nurses' home at City Memorial Hospital, which had been erected on Pine Street in 1930 utilizing equal donations from the Finches and the Duke Endowment.<sup>14</sup>

T. Austin and Ernestine Finch expanded and remodeled their home as the economy strengthened. On September 17, 1936, the couple purchased the lot west of their house, which contained a two-story dwelling with a one-story rear ell that had been owned and occupied by Sue Rounsaville until her 1934 death. The residence and a small outbuilding were demolished to allow for the 1938 addition that

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*Printing of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Mitchell Printing Company, 1926), 94-95; "Thomasville Furniture Industries," *We the People of North Carolina*, September 1979; Matthews and Sink, *Wheels of Faith and Courage*, 29-30.

<sup>10</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, Thomasville, Davidson County, Sheet 11, July 1923, Sheet 6, September 1930.

<sup>11</sup> "Thomasville Furniture Industries," *We the People of North Carolina*, September 1979.

<sup>12</sup> North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, *Industrial Directory and Reference Book of North Carolina* (Durham: Christian Printing Company, 1938), 87, 343.

<sup>13</sup> U. S. Census, Population Schedule, 1930; "Last Rites Slated for Lambeth," *High Point Enterprise*, January 13, 1961, p. 11A.

<sup>14</sup> Matthews and Sink, *Wheels of Faith and Courage*, 112.

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doubled the Finch House's size. They subsequently acquired the block's westernmost parcel and removed another two-story dwelling by 1938.<sup>15</sup>

Thomasville Chair Company increased production in the late 1930s and during World War II, when the concern fulfilled U. S. government orders for items ranging from rolling pins and spatulas to tent stakes, bunk beds, "Victory" desks, and plywood plane components.<sup>16</sup> However, the business experienced a significant loss when T. Austin Finch suffered a heart attack and died on January 11, 1943 at the age of fifty-two. Thomasville Chair Company closed all of its plants for his January 13<sup>th</sup> funeral. Finch had served on numerous boards including those of Thomasville City Memorial Hospital, Main Street Methodist Church, First National Bank of Thomasville, and the High Point, Thomasville, and Denton Railway. He was Thomasville Rotary Club's first president. In Winston-Salem, he held director and trustee positions at Wachovia Bank and Trust Company, Security Life and Trust Company, Winston-Salem Teachers College (now Winston-Salem State University), and the Methodist Children's Home. Finch championed industrial interests during his tenure as the Southern Furniture Manufacturers' Association president, a director of the North Carolina Board of Vocational Education and the American Furniture Mart in Chicago's Board of Governors, and a Southern Furniture Exposition Building vice president and director. During the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt appointed him to the National Recovery Administration's Industrial Advisory Board and the United States Department of Commerce's Business Advisory Council.<sup>17</sup>

Doak Finch assumed Thomasville Chair Company's leadership upon his brother's death. As furniture demand escalated during the post-war housing boom, the concern was one of many North Carolina manufacturers located within 150 miles of High Point, a region responsible for an estimated sixty percent of furniture production in the United States in the mid-twentieth century. Showcasing new product lines for national and international buyers was a critical element of the sales process. This practice evolved from an annual Southern Furniture Market established in High Point in 1909 to biannual trade shows. The April and October markets introduced in the 1950s remain among the industry's largest.<sup>18</sup>

Thomasville Chair Company and Winston-Salem based Huntley Furniture Company merged in 1961 as Thomasville Furniture Industries, Inc. At that time, T. A. Finch Jr., known as Tom, who had joined the family business as vice president in 1946, became the concern's president. Tom had attended

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<sup>15</sup> Davidson County Deed Book 125, p. 557; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, Thomasville, Davidson County, Sheet 6, September 1930 and March 1938.

<sup>16</sup> "Thomasville Furniture Industries," *We the People of North Carolina*, September 1979.

<sup>17</sup> "T. Austin Finch," *Duke Alumni Register*, February 1943, p. 39; I. G. Greer, "Austin Finch Built a Great Industry," *We the People of North Carolina*, May 1943, p. 20; "Thomas Austin Finch," unpublished ca. 1943 biographical sketch in a Finch family vertical file, Thomasville Library.

<sup>18</sup> "Thomasville Furniture Industries," *We the People of North Carolina*, September 1979, p. 32.

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Woodberry Forest School in Orange, Virginia, and attained an engineering degree at Princeton University in 1943 prior to serving in the United States Navy for three years during World War II. He married Meredith Clark Slane of High Point in 1949 and the couple had five children. Under his leadership during the 1960s, Thomasville Furniture Industries, Inc. acquired Caldwell Furniture Company in Lenoir, Founders Furniture Company in Pleasant Garden, Western Furniture Company in Hickory, and Phoenix (also spelled "Phenix") Chair Company in West Jefferson. A 1968 merger with Armstrong Cork Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, resulted in the introduction of new affordably priced product lines. That year, three thousand employees operated twelve Thomasville plants and two thousand operatives ran facilities elsewhere. Thomasville Furniture Industries retained its corporate identity and management. Tom Finch remained president and became an Armstrong Cork Company vice president in 1969. In January 1979, he resigned from his executive positions to chair Thomasville Furniture Industries' board of directors. At that time, the concern's 6,500-person workforce was distributed among seven North Carolina locations (Hickory, Lenoir, Pleasant Garden, Sawmills, Thomasville, West Jefferson, and Winston-Salem) and several Mississippi and Virginia sites.<sup>19</sup> In 1990 Thomasville Furniture Industries employed approximately eight thousand individuals at thirty-five plants, roughly a third of which were in Thomasville. According to *Furniture Today*, the concern was then the nation's fifth-largest furniture manufacturer.<sup>20</sup>

Ernestine Finch had married Michigan native Lewis Kempton Mobley (1889-1974) in 1948 and the couple remained in residence at 17 East Main Street. Dr. Mobley retired in Thomasville after operating a New York City dentistry practice for forty years. Mrs. Mobley's ongoing philanthropy allowed for many community improvements. Along with her brother John Walter Lambeth Jr. and son Tom, she advocated for and donated \$75,000 to facilitate Davidson County's construction of Thomasville's public library in 1958. The library had previously been housed in a room in City Hall. John Walter Lambeth Jr.'s estate provided a \$20,000 bequest to the library system following his 1961 death. Mrs. Mobley and Tom Finch contributed the additional \$10,000 required to erect a two-story library addition in 1964. In 1975, they donated \$300,000 to the public school system for amenities including air conditioning and theater seating in Thomasville High School's approximately 1,200-seat auditorium. The building, designed by High Point architect Aaron Allred, was named in memory of T. Austin Finch Sr. upon its 1977 completion. Since the deaths of Mrs. Mobley in 1983 and Tom Finch in 1984, the Thomas Austin Finch Foundation, created in 1944, has continued awarding grants to myriad charitable causes in Thomasville, including a \$300,000 contribution toward construction cost

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Marks, "Tom A. Finch," *High Point Enterprise*, October 20, 1968; "Thomas Finch Jr., industrialist, dies," *Thomasville Times*, March 26, 1984; "Thomasville Furniture Industries," *We the People of North Carolina*, September 1979, pp. 32, 56.

<sup>20</sup> Capel, *A Recent History of Thomasville*, 77.

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of the \$1.5-million library finished in 1990. Finch family members also established four other foundations between 1960 and 1984.<sup>21</sup>

After Ernestine Mobley's death, Keever and Durbin acquired the house at 17 East Main Street and conveyed it to Carl W. and Linda H. Grubb in November 1993. The Grubbs sold the property in March 1994 to Future Unlimited, which leased it to a series of tenants including a restaurant. The most significant modifications during this period were the installation of a commercial kitchen and the rear porch's enclosure. A&H Development LLC purchased the property from Future Unlimited on October 10, 2017 and is undertaking rehabilitation work. The house will serve as offices and an event venue. The garage will be a workshop for The Chair City MAKERspace, a 501c3 non-profit whose mission is to promote and facilitate the MAKER movement in Thomasville and Davidson County.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Bonnie Moore, "Bequest By Lambeth Will Boost Thomasville Library Book Total," *High Point Enterprise*, February 5, 1961, p. 11; "Thomasville Library Addition Dedicated," *High Point Enterprise*, April 15, 1964, p. 12B; "Holt McPherson, "Thomasville Auditorium Gets Big Boost," *High Point Enterprise*, January 12, 1975, p. 2; "Auditorium Groundbreaking," *High Point Enterprise*, March 12, 1976, p. 10; "Board Considers Auditorium Plans," *High Point Enterprise*, June 19, 1975, p. 9B; "Dr. Mobley of Thomasville," *High Point Enterprise*, January 21, 1974, p. 2B; Davidson County, "Dedication Thomasville Library," October 28, 1990 program; Capel, *A Recent History of Thomasville*, 138-140, 155-158, 165-

<sup>22</sup> Davidson County Deed Book 888, p. 796; Deed Book 894, p. 592; Deed Book 2289, p. 1772.

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## Section 10. Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of approximately one acre of Davidson County tax parcel # 6787-01-07-1944 (1.42 acres) as indicated by the heavy solid line on the enclosed map. Scale: one inch equals approximately sixty feet.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated tract contains the T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House, garage, and associated historic landscape. The asphalt-paved parking lot that now fills the 1.42-acre parcel's northwest corner was excluded from the National Register boundary as it was added in the late twentieth century. The residual one-acre tract provides an appropriate estate-like setting.

### Additional Documentation: Historic Photograph



Thomasville entrepreneur Charles R. Thomas commissioned professional photographs of the city's significant buildings, including the Finch House, in 1927, and had a series of postcards printed to sell in his West Main Street drug store.

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## Additional Documentation: Current Photographs

All photographs by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc., 3334 Nottingham Road, Winston-Salem, NC, 27104, in January 2018 and March 2019. Digital images located at the North Carolina SHPO.

1. Façade (north elevation)
2. Rear (south) elevation
3. West elevation
4. Southeast oblique
5. Garage, northwest oblique
6. Reception hall, looking northeast
7. Living room, looking east
8. Dining room, looking south
9. Library, looking west
10. Stair hall, looking southeast
11. Master (east) bedroom, looking northeast
12. West bedroom, looking west
13. Northwest bathroom, looking south

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1. Façade (north elevation), looking south (above) and 2. Rear elevation, looking north (below)





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3. West elevation (above) and 4. Southeast oblique (below)



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**5. Garage, northwest oblique**

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6. Reception hall, looking northeast (above) and 7. Living room, looking east (below)





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8. Dining room, looking south (above) 9. Library, looking west (below)





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10. Stair Hall, looking southeast

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11. Master (east) bedroom, looking northeast (above) and 12. West bedroom, looking west (below)



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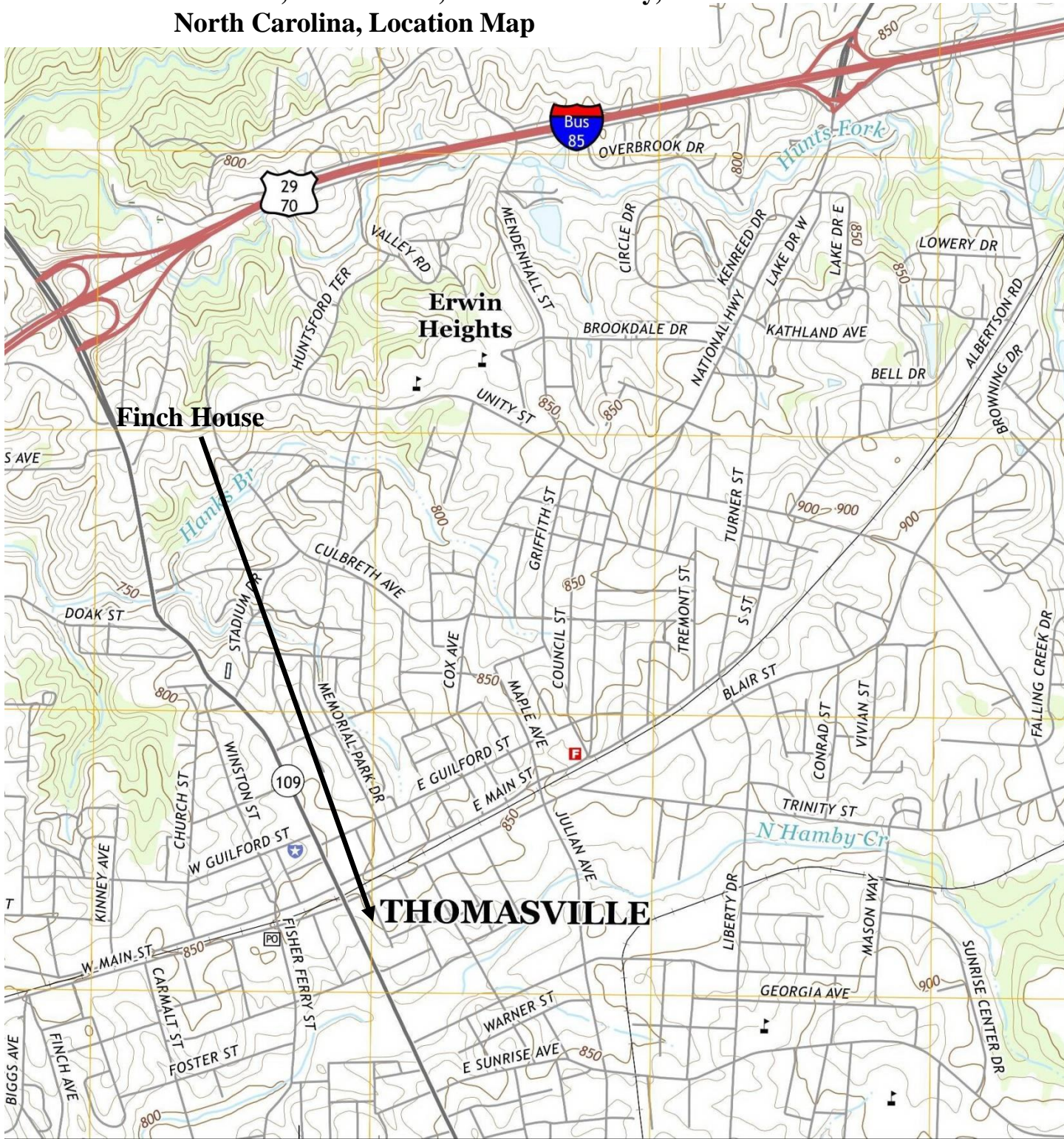


13. Northwest bathroom, looking south

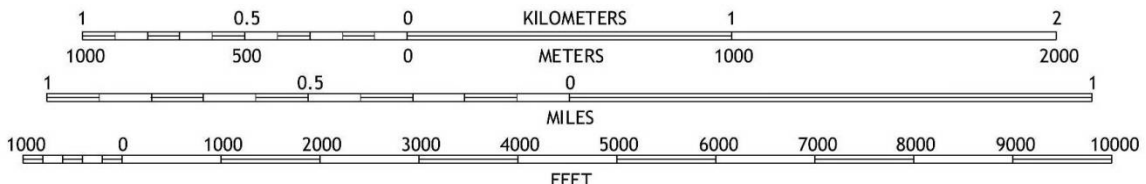


**T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House**  
**17 East Main Street, Thomasville, Davidson County,**  
**North Carolina, Location Map**

U. S. Geological Survey  
High Point West Quadrangle, 2016



SCALE 1:24 000





**T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House**  
**17 East Main Street, Thomasville, Davidson County, North Carolina**  
**National Register Boundary**



East Main Street

T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House, 1921/1938 contributing building  
Latitude: 35.882876  
Longitude: -80.079775

Garage, 1921/1938 contributing building

National Register Boundary

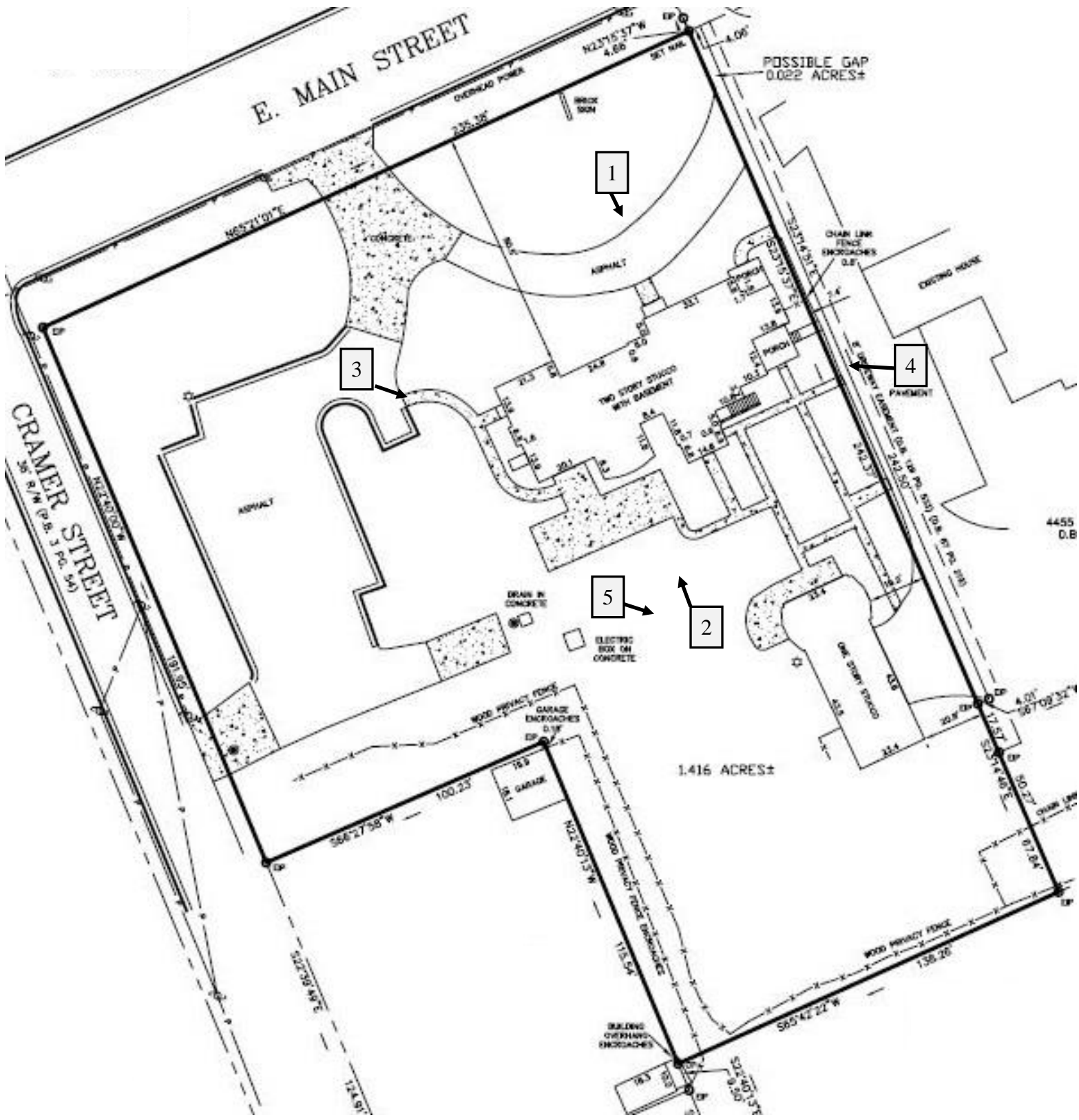
Cramer Street



one inch equals sixty feet



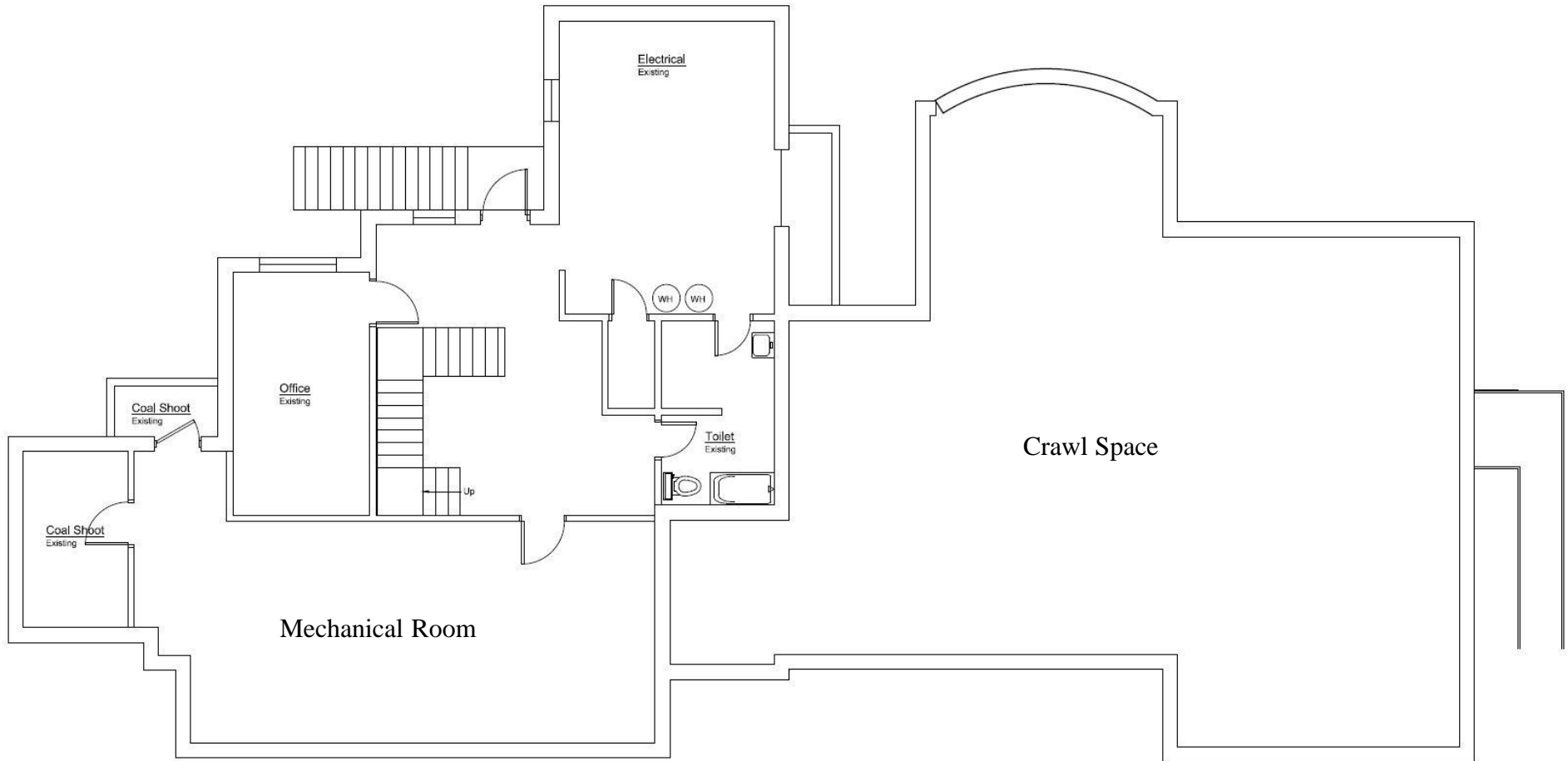
**T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House**  
**17 East Main Street, Thomasville, Davidson County, North Carolina**  
**Site Plan Photograph Key**



Base plan created by Wilson Surveying, Inc. in October 2017  
 Photograph views annotated by Fearnbach History Services, Inc. in March 2019

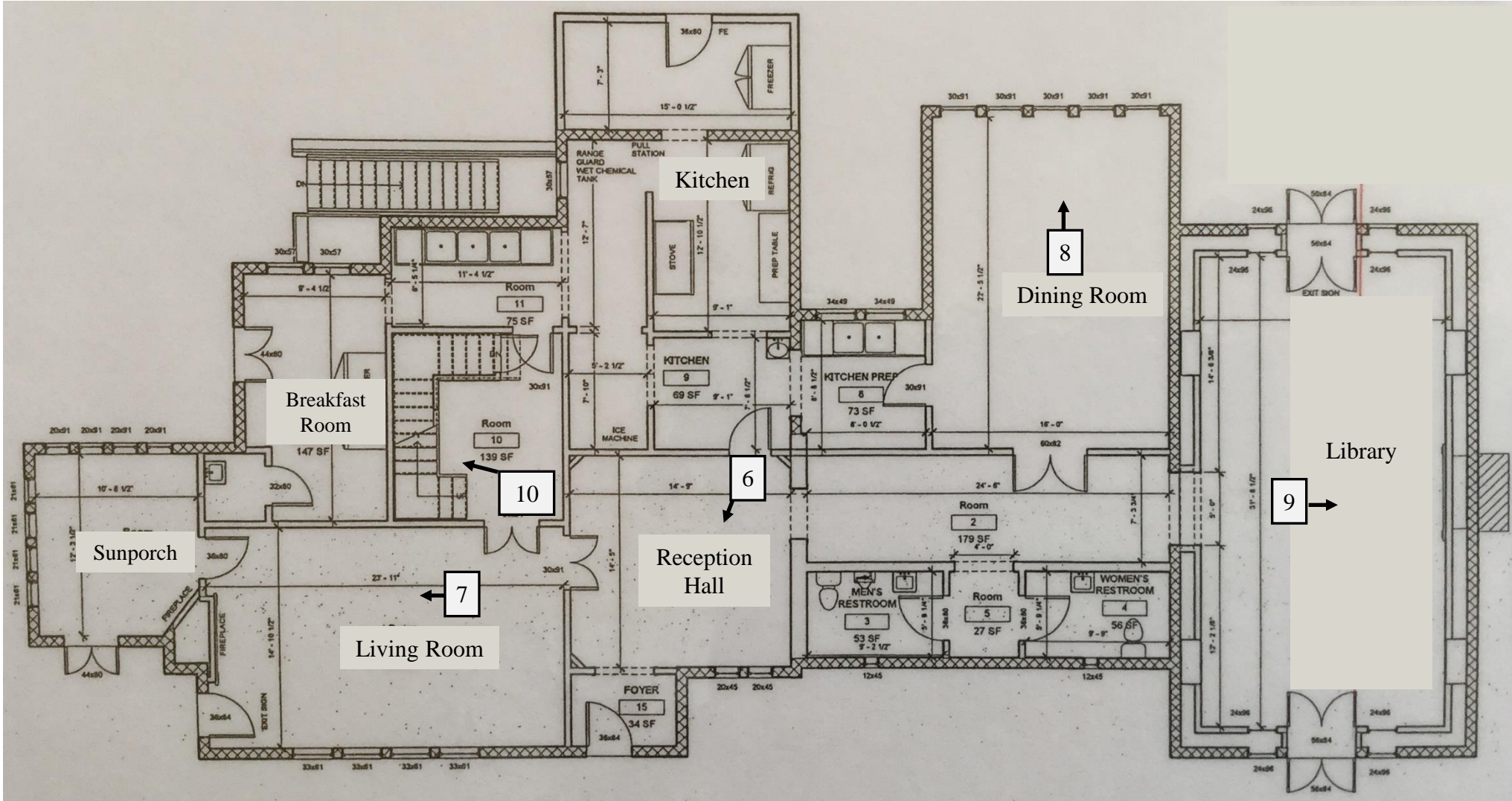


**T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House**  
**17 East Main Street, Thomasville, Davidson County, North Carolina**  
**Basement Plan**





**T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House**  
**17 East Main Street, Thomasville, Davidson County, North Carolina**  
**First Floor Plan Photograph Key**

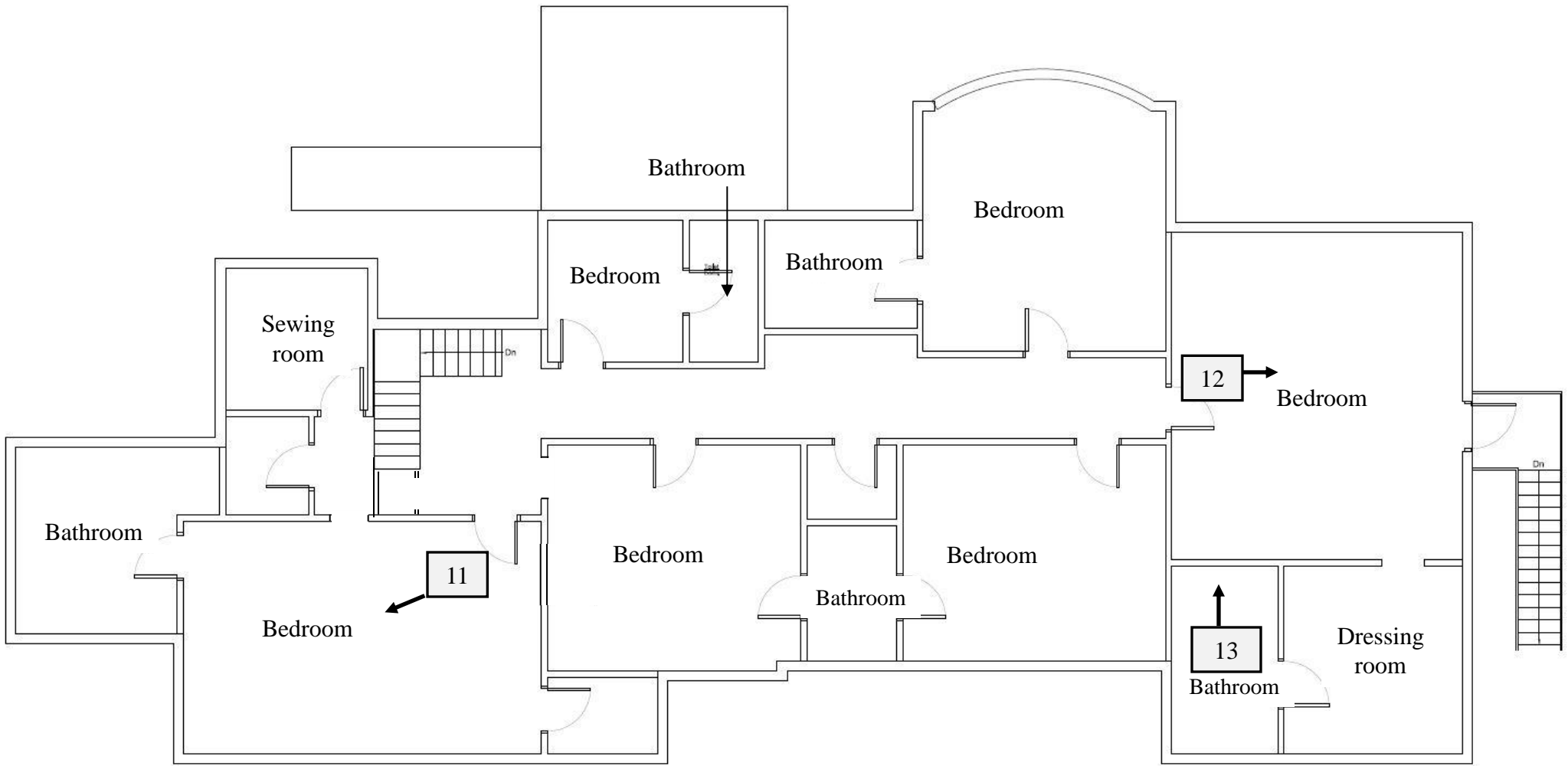


Base plan provided by a previous owner annotated by Fearnbach History Services, Inc. in March 2019





**T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House**  
**17 East Main Street, Thomasville, Davidson County, North Carolina**  
**Second Floor Plan Photograph Key**



**T. Austin and Ernestine L. Finch House**  
**17 East Main Street, Thomasville, Davidson County, North Carolina**  
**Garage Plan**

