

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name John Vowles House
other names/site number 1111 and 1113 West Main Street

2. Location

street & number 1111 and 1113 West Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Charlottesville N/A vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Charlottesville code 540 zip code 22901
(city)

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>3</u>	<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Director, VA Department of Historic Resources Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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 _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling
Domestic: secondary structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: office
Domestic: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic: Federal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls brick

roof slate
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The John Vowles House (1111 West Main Street) and the adjoining house at 1113 West Main Street are a pair of Federal style two-story, three-bay, gable-roofed town houses located at the northeast corner of Twelfth and West Main Streets in Charlottesville. The John Vowles House, built in 1824, features 6/9 sash windows on the first floor, 6/6 windows on the second story, a door with decorative transom on the southeast corner and an elaborate wood cornice on the front facade. There is an unusual round headed window with double-hung sash and a circular window on the rear facade. The facade of the house at 1113 West Main Street features a brick mousetooth cornice and a rare example of a triple-hung sash window above the door. The interior floor plan of the John Vowles house consists of the typical Federal period side-passage, double-parlor arrangement, with the original kitchen and dining room located in the basement. Nearly all of the interior woodwork is original. The original floor plan of the adjoining house has been altered somewhat and contains less of its original woodwork. To the rear of 1113 West Main is a small one-and-one-half story, L-shaped, gable-roofed brick outbuilding built as a kitchen and added on to in the 1920s.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1111 W. Main- 1824-1930
1113 W. Main and
kitchen- 1839 1930's

Significant Dates

1824
1839

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

1111 W. Main- James Dinsmore (?)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary Statement of Significance

The houses at 1111 and 1113 West Main Street are significant and well-preserved examples of the Federal style and are two of only a handful of buildings from this period still standing on Main Street in Charlottesville. The townhouses share many similarities with other brick residences built during this period on Court Square, East Jefferson and Fourth Streets in downtown Charlottesville. The John Vowles House (1111 West Main Street) differs from these in the sophistication of its design, as reflected in the entrance and transom with its delicate tracery, the elaborate carved wood cornice and the large amount of interior Federal style woodwork. The detached kitchen of the adjoining 1839 house is a rare example of an early nineteenth century service building in Charlottesville.

The John Vowles House stands on property sold in 1823 by James Dinsmore, the Scottish carpenter brought by Thomas Jefferson to Virginia to assist in the construction of the Rotunda and academic buildings at the University of Virginia. The similarity between many of the architectural features and woodwork of this house and those seen at his other documented commissions is strong evidence that Dinsmore was responsible for the construction of Vowles' house. Dinsmore, who practiced in Charlottesville until his death, exercised a strong influence on the quality and style of architecture in the city before the Civil War.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Land Records- Albemarle County Land Records Deed Book 23, page 342 and Deed Book 29, page 86.
Charlottesville City Land Records Deed Book 313, page 412.
Lay, K. Edward, "Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy", The Magazine of Albemarle County History, Volume 46, May 1988, 67 pages.
Cote, Richard C. "Jefferson's Workmen and the Virginia Landmarks Register", Notes on Virginia, Number 28, Spring 1986, pages 26-29.
Martin, Joseph, Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia and the District of Columbia, (Charlottesville, Virginia: Mosely and Thompkins) 1835.
Chataigne and Gillis, Virginia Business Directory and Gazetteer and Richmond Directory, (Richmond, Virginia) 1877-1878, also 1880, 1890, 1893 and 1911.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 17 719695 4212260
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies city lots 9 and 10 as shown on Tax Map 10, Parcel 55 in the Charlottesville City Clerk's Office and commonly known as 1111 and 1113 West Main Street at the northeast corner of 12th and West Main Streets.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire two city lots that have been historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Geoffrey Henry
 organization _____ date March, 1988
 street & number 1515 Rutledge Avenue telephone 804-293-8006
 city or town Charlottesville, state Va. zip code 22901

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Architectural Description

The John Vowles House (1111 West Main Street) and the adjoining house at 1113 West Main Street are a pair of Federal style brick townhouses located at the northeast corner of Twelfth and West Main Streets in Charlottesville. The houses, located three blocks east of the Rotunda and University of Virginia and one block south of the Wertland Street Historic District, are in a neighborhood of one-and-two-story twentieth century commercial buildings and nineteenth century residences.

The John Vowles House, built in 1824, is a two-story, three-bay, gable-roofed townhouse with a facade laid in Flemish bond. There are six-over-nine sash windows on the first story and six-over-six windows on the second story, all with plain lintels and corner blocks. A door with panelled jambs and a decorative transom is at the southeast corner. An unusual round-headed double-hung sash window and a circular window with its central axis slightly askew are on the second story of the rear facade. The elaborate cornice on the front facade is the only one of its kind from this period in Charlottesville and features a frieze of egg-and-dart moulding, foliated modillions and a floral design set in the coffered soffit.

The interior floor plan consists of the typical Federal period side hall/double parlor arrangement on both floors, with the original kitchen and dining room located in the basement. Nearly all of the interior woodwork is original, including the six fireplaces, panelled window jambs, stairway, chair rail and interior doors. The fireplace mantels are all well-executed examples of Federal period craftsmanship and feature a variety of reeded, wall-of-troy, and rope moulding designs.

The adjoining house at 1113 West Main Street was built in 1839 and is a two-story, three-bay, gable-roofed townhouse with Flemish bond facade, mousetooth cornice and a double chimney at the west gable end. Above the door on the southeast corner is an unusual six-over-six-over-six triple hung sash window. The original floor plan of a side-hall/triple parlor arrangement has been altered somewhat and less of the original woodwork survives in this house than at the Vowles house, although all three corner fireplaces survive on the first floor. In the late nineteenth century doors were inserted to connect the two houses on both floors.

The small detached brick kitchen located to the rear of 1113 West Main Street was also built in 1839. There are two rooms on each floor and some original woodwork survives. A perpendicular wing was added in the 1920s.

All three buildings are in a good state of preservation.

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Statement of Significance

The houses at 1111 and 1113 West Main Street are significant as well-preserved examples of Federal style architecture and are two of only a handful of buildings from this period still standing on Main Street in Charlottesville. West Main Street, which connects downtown Charlottesville with the University of Virginia, was once made up of early and mid-nineteenth century brick residences, rooming houses and small stores. Of these, only the buildings at 333, 503 and 1211 West Main Street, along with the two nominated houses, still remain.

The townhouses share many similarities with other brick residences built during this period on Court Square, East Jefferson and Fourth Streets in downtown Charlottesville. Features common to these buildings include Flemish bond brickwork, mouse tooth cornice, a "fish-eye" design in the transom window (seen at 224 Court Square and the Carter-Gilmer house on East Jefferson Street) and the usual side hall/double parlor floor plan. The John Vowles House differs from these in the sophistication of its design, as reflected in the entrance and transom with its intricate tracery, the elaborate wood cornice and ceiling medallions, and the large amount of original interior Federal style woodwork.

The detached kitchen of the adjoining building at 1113 West Main Street is a rare example of an ante-bellum service building in Charlottesville. Only a few such buildings remain; behind 333 West Main, 810 Locust Avenue and Oaklawn (built 1822) on Cherry Avenue.

The John Vowles House stands on property sold to Vowles in 1823 by James Dinsmore.¹ Dinsmore (1771-1830), a Scottish carpenter, was brought from Philadelphia by Thomas Jefferson to assist in the construction of Monticello and his retreat at Poplar Forest in Bedford County.² Along with the carpenter John Neilson, he was responsible for the design and/or construction of a number of important buildings including John Hartwell Coker's Bremo in Fluvanna County (1817-1820), James Madison's Montpelier in Orange County (1809-1810) and Oaklawn in Charlottesville (1822).³ Jefferson, who had recommended Dinsmore to Benjamin Latrobe for restoration work at the U.S. Capitol⁴, also employed him at the University of Virginia. He was principal master carpenter for Pavillions III, V, and VIII, fourteen dormitories, and together with Neilson, the Rotunda and Anatomical Theater. He resided in Charlottesville for most of this period and between 1818 and 1825 subdivided thirteen contiguous lots, one of them being the Vowles property. (See accompanying map) Land and tax records, along with the strong similarities between the design of the Vowles house and Dinsmore's other commissions are strong evidence that he was responsible for this house.

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Land and tax records, along with a dated brick, fix the construction of the adjoining house at 1839. At some point in the mid nineteenth century, doors were inserted to connect the two houses and by the late nineteenth century the two houses were being sold together as one property. The townhouses were operated as boarding houses for students and transients. Physical reminders of this era include the rooms' numbers carved on some of the second floor doors as well as Greek fraternity letters scratched on mantels and windows. After the 1930's the townhouses were converted to commercial use, a function they have retained to the present day.

Footnotes --

- 1 Albemarle County Land Record DB23, P342.
- 2 Cote , p. 27.
- 3 Lay, p.33.
- 4 Lay, p.22.

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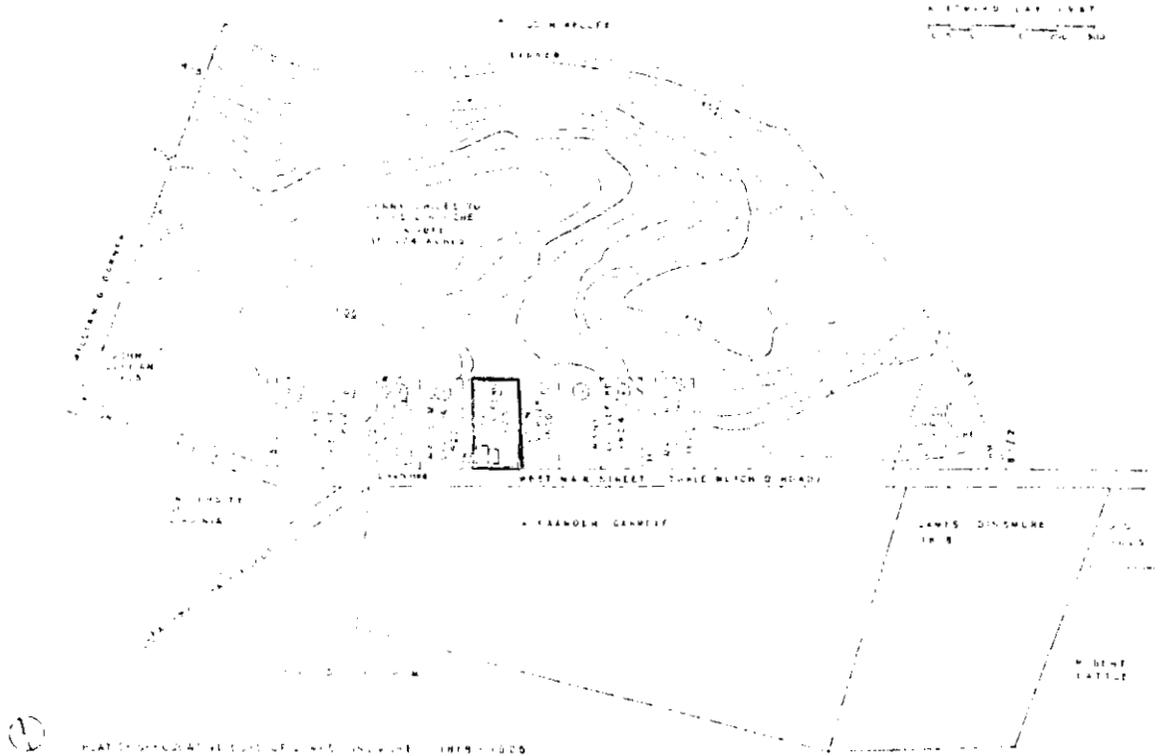
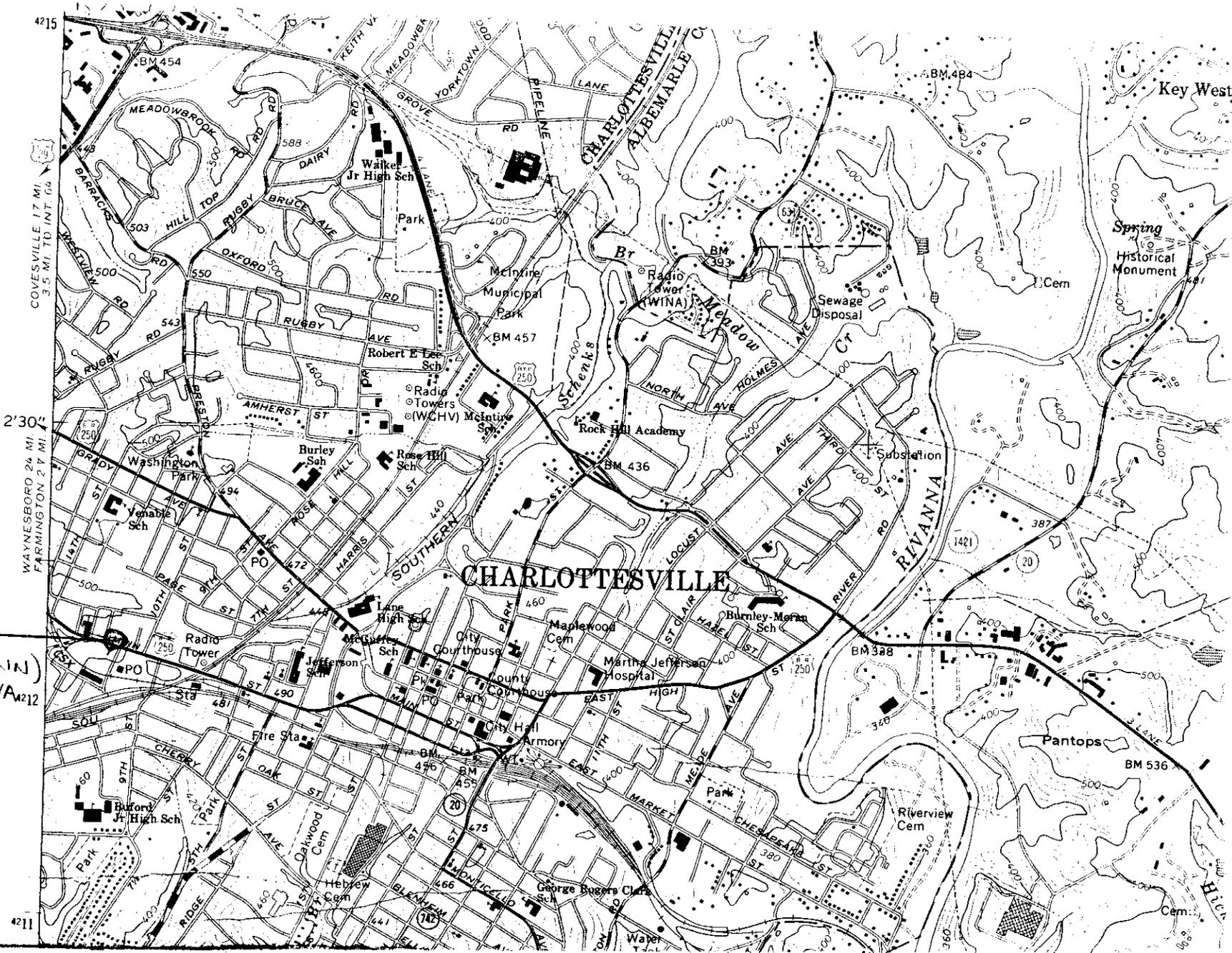


Fig. 2. Plat of James Dinsmore's speculative lots, 1818-1825.

Plat showing location of 1111 and 1113 West Main Streets, part of James Dinsmore's speculative lots. (Courtesy K. Edward Lay)
Source: "Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy", The Magazine of Albemarle County History, Volume 46, May 1988, page 34.



VOWLES HOUSE
(1111 & 1113 W. MAIN)
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 2212
17/719695/4212260