

VLR-10/20/87 NRHP-12/4/87

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 Nichols, Edward, House
other names/site number Hillcrest DHL File No. 253-63

2. Location

street & number 330 West Market Street N/A not for publication
city, town Leesburg N/A vicinity
state Virginia code 51 county Loudoun code 107 zip code 22075

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>5</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>5</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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: [Signature] Date: 11/2/87
Director, Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks

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 sheer.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single dwelling

7. DescriptionArchitectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/granite

walls Brick

roof Metal/copper

other Stone/sandstone

Metal/tin/iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Summary Description

The Edward Nichols House is a large, 2½-story beige brick dwelling located on a two-acre lot at 330 West Market Street in the town of Leesburg. Situated on a gradually rising knoll overlooking a modern subdivision, the house stood originally on the western outskirts of town in a predominantly rural setting. The imposing dwelling, built in 1899, is most distinguished for its knowing combination of Victorian and Colonial Revival architectural features, its superb craftsmanship, and its remarkable degree of original architectural integrity. Three frame and weatherboarded outbuildings -- a laundry, carriage house/barn with attached water tower, and storage shed -- are also associated with the residence, making the complex of buildings a fairly complete representation of the turn-of-the-century urban lifestyle of one of Leesburg's most prosperous citizens. A wooden gazebo dating from the 1920s is also a handsome addition to the collection of outbuildings at the rear of the house.

Architectural Analysis

The Edward Nichols House is an irregularly shaped 2½-story 5-course American-bond beige brick dwelling. It features a two-story rear ell as well as projecting two-story bay windows topped with gables on the front and east elevations. A tall hipped roof covered in copper sheathing is capped by a wrought-iron balustraded deck. Tall brick chimneys with molded brick and stone caps punctuate the roof as do several triangular pedimented dormers flanked by Doric pilasters. Completely surrounded by a molded wood cornice supported by modillion blocks, the house also features hidden tin gutters and decorative slate-covered gables containing lunette windows with copper tracery. A narrow brick dentil row is seen about a foot below the cornice, creating the impression of a brick frieze surrounding the building. One of the most handsome features of the house is the three-bay front porch which consists of a brick foundation, concrete floor, paired and tripled red sandstone Tuscan columns atop brick pedestals, and a copper shed roof above a wooden entablature. According to the original drawings, the gable which rises above the entrance bay originally displayed a wooden sunburst design. However, it later was replaced by the present board-and-batten design. The front porch as well as smaller side porches display a decorative wrought-iron balustrade. Windows are tall 1/1 sash double-hung examples with flared stone lintels with keystones and stone sills. Windows on the west side of the house are flanked by unusual casement storm windows that act as shutters when not in use. The front entrance consists of paneled double doors highlighted by a graceful elliptical fanlight above.

The Nichols House was designed by Lemuel Norris, a little known Washington, D.C. architect who practiced from 1895 to about 1918. The house is the only known dwelling

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
1899; 1920s

Significant Dates
1899; 1920s

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Norris, Lemuel - Architect

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

Statement of Significance

The Edward Nichols House, also known as Hillcrest, is significant as the most architecturally distinguished turn-of-the-century dwelling in the town of Leesburg. Built in 1899 for prominent local lawyer and businessman, Edward Nichols, the house was designed by Washington, D.C. architect Lemuel Norris, who combined elements of both the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles to create one of Leesburg's finest residences. The original architectural drawings and builder specifications for the house, in the possession of the current owners, attest to the architect's talent, high standards of quality, and attention to detail. The Nichols House possesses a remarkable degree of original architectural integrity and serves as a tangible reminder of Leesburg's recovery from the economic hardships of the post-bellum era. The property also includes a laundry, storage shed, and carriage house/barn with an unusual water storage tower rising above its roof. In addition to these three outbuildings, there is a 1920s gazebo associated with the property. The house and associated outbuildings, all in a nearly perfect state of preservation, represent a rare surviving turn-of-the-century complex of urban domestic buildings.

Historical Background

The Edward Nichols House, located at 330 West Market Street in the town of Leesburg, was built in 1899 on the western outskirts of town near the junction of the town's two principal east-west thoroughfares. Although originally surrounded almost entirely by rural landscape, the house is decidedly an upper middle class urban dwelling of surprising scale and sophistication.

The small town of Leesburg in Loudoun County has served as the political and social focus of Loudoun society since the town's designation as the county seat in 1757. By the turn of the twentieth century Leesburg had begun to show increased signs of economic prosperity, after experiencing several decades of depressed economic conditions following the Civil War. It is not surprising, therefore, that one of the town's largest and finest residences took form during this period. Built for prominent lawyer and businessman, Edward Nichols, it is one of the few houses in Loudoun County designed by a registered architect before the early 1900s. The Nichols House is

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Loudoun County Deed Book 6-S, p. 225 (1882).

Loudoun County Deed Book 9-R, pp. 356-358 (1923).

Loudoun Times, Leesburg, Va. 23 August 1923, p. 1.

Poland, Charles P. From Frontier to Suburbia.

Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1976.

Architectural drawings and specifications of Edward Nichols House by Lemuel Norris, Architect, in possession of current owners. Copies on file at DHL.

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:

Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks
221 Governor Street
Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.4 acres

UTM References

A

1	8
Zone	Easting

2	7	7	5	2	0
Northing					

4	3	3	2	8	3	0
Northing						

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone	Easting				Northing				

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is described as the 2.4-acre lot at 330 West Market Street in the town of Leesburg, Virginia as recorded in Loudoun County Deed Book 953, p. 222. The enclosed sketch map (scale 1"=75'), clearly denoting the buildings on the property, is a copy of the plat accompanying the deed as recorded.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David A. Edwards - Architectural Historian; John S. Salmon - Historian

organization Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks date October 7, 1987

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone 804/786-3143

city or town Richmond state Virginia zip code 23219

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

designed by Norris in Loudoun County. A perusal of Norris' architectural drawings and specifications, together with a careful architectural inspection of the present condition of the house, reveals how little the house has changed over the last eighty-eight years. A copper roof instead of a slate roof and sandstone porch columns instead of cast-iron columns are the only major differences between the architect's drawings and the present appearance of the house, and these changes may have occurred while the house was under construction.

The house plan is basically a central passage-double pile configuration with an offset at the rear of the central passage to accommodate the double flight stair and a rear service ell. A small entrance vestibule leads to the central passage through a Georgian-inspired frontispiece entrance consisting of a heavy paneled door with a large square leaded-glass panel with copper tracery, flanking leaded-glass sidelights, fluted Doric pilasters, and an elliptical arched fanlight surmounting the composition.

The spacious central passage or hall is surrounded by a dark stained paneled oak wainscot and a thin decorative plaster cornice. The main first-floor rooms have sliding paneled oak doors framed by heavy architrave trim and finished with gold bronze hardware. As stated in the builder's specifications "All the hardware of the first story to be gold bronze except the rooms and halls of the extension." The most prominent feature of the interior is the double flight stair, leading from the stair hall to the second floor. It is richly paneled below a decoratively incised stringer. The balustrade features three turned balusters per step, a molded hand rail, and a square newel faced with fluted pilasters and topped by an urn finial. A large square window capped by a rounded arch transom with copper tracery dominates the stair landing and floods the rear stair hall with natural light. An elliptical arch originally divided the front entrance hall from the stair hall; however, it was removed by later occupants.

The room to the west of the central passage is designated as the library on the architect's floor plan. The room currently displays walls covered in gold silk wallpaper, probably dating to the 1920s. A photograph taken of the original owners in this room shows plain walls with stenciled floral swags bordering the ceiling. A raised plaster ceiling design of laurel crowns and ribbons highlights the ceiling in this room; however, this decorative element must have been executed after the original owners' occupancy as it is not shown in the above mentioned photograph. The mantel in the library is unusual for its tapered pilasters with carved lions' paw bases on pedestals and its grotesque free-standing carved griffins which support a shelf above a large mirrored overmantel.

The room to the east of the central passage is designated the parlor on the original architectural drawings. Its walls are clad in blue silk wallpaper and a plaster cove molding surrounds the room. The ceiling in this room features a delicate raised plaster floral design with four richly detailed bouquets of painted flowers, each of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

them different, located in each corner of the room. The parlor mantel is painted oak and has bracketed modillions above a decoratively carved frieze. No overmantel is present. All fireplaces in the house have shallow coal-burning grates framed by rectangular ceramic tiles of various colors.

The dining room is located east of the stair hall and contains a dark stained paneled oak wainscot with green silk wallpaper above. The oak mantel is simple in design and is flanked by tall pedestals, presumably used to hold statuary or vases.

A smaller room, called the den in the original architectural drawings, is situated to the west of the stair hall. Its interior woodwork is similar to the other first-floor rooms while a door with a rectangular transom provides access to a small porch with red sandstone Tuscan columns on brick pedestals.

Immediately north of the stair hall and dining room is the rear service ell consisting of a hall with a narrow service stair to the second floor, a small pantry, and a kitchen with an adjacent porch. These rooms are finished in a simple manner using less elaborate wood trim and less expensive hardware. The kitchen is the only room in the house that has been modernized, although original finishes remain intact.

Four spacious bedrooms, a tiled bathroom, a large stair hall, and rear servants' quarters are located on the second floor. Each of these rooms has plaster walls and a minimum of decorative woodwork. High molded baseboards and molded door trim are seen in each principal room and most mantels consist of a simple shelf supported by free-standing columns of different orders on pedestals. Freizes are usually adorned with a classical motif.

The architect's attention to detail is clearly seen throughout the drawings and specifications. His interest in using the best available materials is noted in instructions to contractors. Such statements as "The entire surface of cellar floors and areas to be rendered with best cement concrete, put down in the best manner;"² or "All the walls and partitions to be built of the best hard brick in mortar, with small joints slushed up full and well bonded. No soft or salmon brick to be used;"³ or "All the lathing to be done with the best quality spruce laths,"⁴ indicate a professional standard rarely seen in local architects or contractors of the period. Even the attic did not escape the architect's attention. The entire space is finished in tongue-and-grooved vertical wood boards and divided into convenient storage units. Free-standing chamfered posts help support the copper hipped roof and even a stair leading to the deck atop the roof has turned balusters and a turned newel.

The architectural drawings of the Nichols House do not indicate the construction of any outbuildings; however, based on their general architectural character, three contributing outbuildings located to the rear of the house appear to date from the same period.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

The largest outbuilding is a two-story frame and weatherboarded carriage house/barn featuring slatted wooden vents on the upper floor, a central front gable covered in decorative wood shingles, and a standing-seam metal roof with a square vented cupola topped by a weathervane. An unusual rectangular weatherboarded water tower rises behind the carriage house/barn. The uppermost stage of the tower is clad in decorative slate shingles. Partially supported by chamfered brackets, it overhangs the tall rectangular base. This compartment holds two large wooden vats once used to store water that was piped up from a subterranean well.

The other two turn-of-the-century outbuildings include a two-story frame and weatherboarded laundry with a central front shingled gable and 6/6 sash double-hung windows and a small one-story frame and weatherboarded storage shed. The only other building besides the turn-of-the-century outbuildings associated with the property is a frame gazebo west of the house which consists of Tuscan columns, a turned balustrade, and a standing-seam metal hipped roof. Dating from the 1920s, the gazebo has retained its architectural character and contributes to the collection of outbuildings associated with the house from 1899 to the 1920s.

The house and outbuildings are situated on a two-acre town lot bordered on the west by a wooden fence, on the north and east by a wire fence, and on the south (front) by a handsome three-foot high red sandstone wall with openings for a drive leading to the west side of the house and a wrought-iron gate and gravel walk leading to the west side of the house. The lawn is dotted with mature shade trees and ornamental shrubbery and the remnants of a boxwood garden are seen northwest of the house.

DAE

NOTES

1. Copy of building specifications for the Edward Nichols House in possession of current owner, p. 20.
2. Ibid. p. 3.
3. Ibid. p. 4.
4. Ibid. p. 9.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

exceptional in its quality of design workmanship. Norris' design combined an irregular Queen Anne building mass and plan with elegant and finely articulated Colonial Revival details and features. The house is without rival for sophistication of design in the Leesburg area.

Edward Nichols for whom the house was built, was born 1 March 1847 in Columbiana County, Ohio. His father, Jesse Nichols, who had moved to Ohio from Loudoun County, Virginia, returned to Loudoun County with his family in 1870. Edward Nichols began that year to study law while continuing to work on his father's farm, and in 1872 he was admitted to the bar and opened an office in Leesburg. Soon thereafter, he became a respected attorney and businessman, investing in the Leesburg Inn, becoming a director of the Waterford Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and becoming the president of the Loudoun National Bank of Leesburg.

Nichols also was prominent in local civic affairs. He promoted the construction of the Leesburg town hall, the 1893 Loudoun County Courthouse, as well as the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument in the courthouse square.

On 19 June 1882 Nichols purchased from Alfred Cline three lots just outside Leesburg³ and hired Lemuel Norris, a Washington, D.C. architect, to design a house for the site.⁴ The house was erected in 1899 and was probably built by John Norris and Sons (no known relation to the architect) who was the area's most prolific building contractor of the period.

The architect of the Nichols House, Lemuel Norris, began to study architecture in 1868 and started an independent practice in 1895. He is not listed as an architect in national architects directories published in 1887 and 1894; however, he became an associate member of the American Institute of Architects on 7 August 1901⁵ and was still a member in 1914.⁶ Besides being the architect of the Nichols House, Norris was the designer of a three-story brick⁷ commercial building known as the C. C. Glover Building in Washington, D.C. in 1900⁷ as well as the Joseph L. Norris Building in Leesburg in 1899.⁸ In the 1918 edition of Hendrick's Commercial Register Lemuel Norris is listed as an architect whose practice was located at 1441 U Street, N. W. in Washington, D.C., but surprisingly, he is not listed in the 1917 city business directory.

Edward Nichols may have been prompted to construct his house by thoughts of matrimony. On a visit to Europe in 1897 he met Florence Brown of Cleveland, Ohio whom he married in 1899, the year the house was built.¹⁰ Mrs. Nichols was an active patron of the arts, particularly painting, which implies that she probably hired local artists to decorate the ceilings of the principal first-floor rooms of the house. It is known that she commissioned a local artist, Hugh H. Breckenridge, to paint portraits of various circuit court judges which hang in the 1893 courthouse along with one of Edward Nichols.¹¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Edward Nichols died suddenly on 20 August 1923, while summering with his wife in Uniontown, Pennsylvania.¹² His funeral was held at his home in Leesburg. Having been a member of the Friends Society of nearby Lincoln, he was buried in the Friends cemetery there.¹³ Mrs. Nichols soon sold the house to Frank D. Paul and left Leesburg.¹⁴ Since the Paul's occupancy, the house has only changed ownership twice in the last several decades and each family has fastidiously maintained the house and grounds. The property remains one of the best preserved examples of turn-of-the-century architecture in Loudoun County.

DAE/JSS

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

NOTES

1. Loudoun Times, 23 August 1923, p. 1.
2. Ibid.
3. Loudoun County, Deed Book Liber 6-S, folio 225, recorded 24 June 1882.
4. Undated blueprints and specifications in possession of current owners; copies at DHL.
5. Report from American Institute of Architects in possession of current owners.
6. Provided by Dr. Edward Lay, professor of architectural history, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.
7. Manufacturers' Record, 5:17, n.p. 1900.
8. Manufacturers' Record, 3:3, n.p. 1899.
9. Hendricks' Commercial Register of the United States for Buyers and Sellers, 27th Annual Edition. (New York, New York: S. E. Hendricks Co., Inc., 1918), p. 42.
10. Loudoun County Land Tax Books, 1898-1900; no value was entered for buildings in 1898 or 1899, but \$9,000 was added in 1900.
11. Reminiscence by unidentified nephew or niece of Nichols, n.d., in possession of current owners.
12. Loudoun Times, 23 August 1923, p. 1.
13. Loudoun Times, 23 August 1923, p. 1.
14. Loudoun County, Deed Book 9-R, pp. 356-358, recorded 26 November 1923.

April 1, 1988

TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL
RE BAR RECOMMENDATION OF A NEW HISTORIC SITE

Pursuant to Section 3B-8 of the Leesburg Historic District Regulations, the Board of Architectural Review has recommended that "Hillcrest," (the Edward Nichols House) the property at 330 West Market Street, be designated as an individual historic site governed by the same regulations as the Old and Historic District.

The Historic District Regulations adopted on February 12, 1987, provide a procedure for both expansion of the Historic District as well as designation of individual properties outside the Historic District. If so designated, a property would retain its underlying zoning district classification and would have the "H-1" overlay zone. This means that all changes to the property would require approval of the Board of Architectural Review. The designation would not affect adjacent properties. Establishment of the "H-1" overlay is officially a zoning map amendment that must follow the same procedure as any other rezoning, including notification to adjacent property owners and public hearings.

At the BAR meeting on March 21, Tom Jewell and Kevin Goeller, co-owners of Hillcrest, made a presentation to the Board describing the history and significance of their property. Hillcrest has been listed on both the Virginia and National Registers of Historic Places. A copy of the National Register Nomination form and the Leesburg architectural survey form are attached. The Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks' staff assessed the property as "the most architecturally distinguished turn-of-the-century dwelling in the Town of Leesburg," and as being "in a

nearly perfect state of preservation." The property includes the distinguished 1899 Colonial Revival residence and a laundry, storage shed and carriage house/barn.

The Board believes that the recognition of Hillcrest on the National Register demonstrates its worthiness for protection by local ordinance. According to the zoning ordinance, a site must meet one or more of the criteria listed in Section 3B-8(b)(1) to be recommended for local protection. Hillcrest certainly meets the first two criteria:

- ((a)) has significant character, interest or value as part of the town's development or heritage.
- ((b)) portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

The Board also passed a motion of 4 to 0 with two abstentions to recommend that Council work with the owners of Hillcrest to find an adaptive reuse for the property that would preserve it while bringing in a reasonable economic return. If adoption of the revised residential districts would expand the potential uses for Hillcrest, then the Board recommends that the Council consider expediting their review.

The owners of Hillcrest support the Board's recommendation to designate their property as an individual historic site. Therefore, we recommend that the Council initiate a zoning map amendment to rezone the property to the H-1 overlay and set a joint Council/Planning Commission public hearing to consider this amendment. The next available hearing date is May 11, 1988.

Susan Sherman

Susan Sherman, AICP
Planner

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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1. Name of Property

historic name Nichols, Edward, House
other names/site number Hillcrest DHL File No. 253-63

2. Location

street & number 330 West Market Street not for publication
city, town Leesburg vicinity
state Virginia code 51 county Loudoun code 107 zip code 22075

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>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>3</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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 _____ 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

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/granite

walls Brick

roof Metal/copper

other Stone/sandstone

Metal/tin/iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Summary Description

The Edward Nichols House is a large, 2½-story beige brick dwelling located on a two-acre lot at 330 West Market Street in the town of Leesburg. Situated on a gradually rising knoll overlooking a modern subdivision, the house stood originally on the western outskirts of town in a predominantly rural setting. The imposing dwelling, built in 1899, is most distinguished for its knowing combination of Victorian and Colonial Revival architectural features, its superb craftsmanship, and its remarkable degree of original architectural integrity. Three frame and weatherboarded outbuildings -- a laundry, carriage house/barn with attached water tower, and storage shed -- are also associated with the residence, making the complex of buildings a fairly complete representation of the turn-of-the-century urban lifestyle of one of Leesburg's most prosperous citizens.

Architectural Analysis

The Edward Nichols House is an irregularly-shaped 2½-story 5-course American bond beige brick dwelling. It features a two-story rear ell as well as projecting two-story bay windows topped with gables on the front and east elevations. A tall hipped roof covered in copper sheathing is capped by a wrought-iron balustraded deck. Tall brick chimneys with molded brick and stone caps punctuate the roof as do several triangular pedimented dormers flanked by Doric pilasters. Completely surrounded by a molded wood cornice supported by modillion blocks, the house also features hidden tin gutters and decorative slate-covered gables containing lunette windows with copper tracery. A narrow brick dentil row is seen about a foot below the cornice, creating the impression of a brick frieze surrounding the building. One of the most handsome features of the house is the three-bay front porch which consists of a brick foundation, concrete floor, paired and tripled red sandstone Tuscan columns atop brick pedestals, and a copper shed roof above a wooden entablature. According to the original drawings, the gable which rises above the entrance bay originally displayed a wooden sunburst design. However, it later was replaced by the present board-and-batten design. The front porch as well as smaller side porches display a decorative wrought-iron balustrade. Windows are tall 1/1 sash double-hung examples with flared stone lintels with keystones and stone sills. The front entrance consists of paneled double doors highlighted by a graceful elliptical fanlight above.

The Nichols House was designed by Lemuel Norris, a little known Washington, D.C. architect who practiced from 1895 to about 1918. The house is the only known dwelling designed by Norris in Loudoun County. A perusal of Norris' architectural drawings and specifications, together with a careful architectural inspection of the present

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

condition of the house, reveals how little the house has changed over the last eighty-eight years.

The house plan is basically a central passage-double pile configuration with an offset at the rear of the central passage to accommodate the double flight stair and a rear service ell. A small entrance vestibule leads to the central passage through a Georgian-inspired frontispiece entrance consisting of a heavy paneled door with a large square leaded glass panel with copper tracery, flanking leaded glass sidelights, fluted Doric pilasters, and an elliptical arched fanlight surmounting the composition.

The spacious central passage or hall is surrounded by a dark stained paneled oak wainscot and a thin decorative plaster cornice. The main first-floor rooms have sliding paneled oak doors framed by heavy architrave trim and finished with gold bronze hardware. As stated in the builder's specifications "All the hardware of the first story to be gold bronze except the rooms and halls of the extension." The most prominent feature of the interior is the double flight stair, leading from the stair hall to the second floor. It is richly paneled below a decoratively incised stringer. The balustrade features three turned balusters per step, a molded hand rail, and a square newel faced with fluted pilasters and topped by an urn finial. A large square window capped by a rounded arch transom with copper tracery dominates the stair landing and floods the rear stair hall with natural light.

The room to the west of the central passage is designated as the library on the architect's floor plan. The room currently displays walls covered in gold silk wallpaper, probably dating to the 1920s. A photograph taken of the original owners in this room shows plain walls with stenciled floral swags bordering the ceiling. A raised plaster ceiling design of laurel crowns and ribbons highlights the ceiling in this room; however, this decorative element must have been executed after the original owners' occupancy as it is not shown in the above mentioned photograph. The mantel in the library is unusual for its tapered pilasters with carved lions' paw bases on pedestals and its grotesque free-standing carved griffins which support a shelf above a large mirrored overmantel.

The room to the east of the central passage is designated the parlor on the original architectural drawings. Its walls are clad in blue silk wallpaper and a plaster cove molding surrounds the room. The ceiling in this room features a delicate raised plaster floral design with four richly detailed bouquets of painted flowers, each of them different, located in each corner of the room. The parlor mantel is painted oak and has bracketed modillions above a decoratively carved frieze. No overmantel is present. All fireplaces in the house have shallow coal-burning grates framed by rectangular ceramic tiles of various colors.

The dining room is located east of the stair hall and contains a dark stained paneled oak wainscot with green silk wallpaper above. The oak mantel is simple in design and is flanked by tall pedestals, presumably used to hold statuary or vases.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

A smaller room, called the den in the original architectural drawings, is situated to the west of the stair hall. Its interior woodwork is similar to the other first-floor rooms while a door with a rectangular transom provides access to a small porch with red sandstone Tuscan columns on brick pedestals.

Immediately north of the stair hall and dining room is the rear service ell consisting of a hall with a narrow service stair to the second floor, a small pantry, and a kitchen with an adjacent porch. These rooms are finished in a simple manner using less elaborate wood trim and less expensive hardware. The kitchen is the only room in the house that has been modernized, although original finishes remain intact.

Four spacious bedrooms, a tiled bathroom, a large stair hall, and rear servants' quarters are located on the second floor. Each of these rooms has plaster walls and a minimum of decorative woodwork. High molded baseboards and molded door trim are seen in each principal room and most mantels consist of a simple shelf supported by free-standing columns of different orders on pedestals. Freizes are usually adorned with a classical motif.

The architect's attention to detail is clearly seen throughout the drawings and specifications. His interest in using the best available materials is noted in instructions to contractors. Such statements as "The entire surface of cellar floors and areas to be rendered with best cement concrete, put down in the best manner;"² or "All the walls and partitions to be built of the best hard brick in mortar, with small joints slushed up full and well bonded. No soft or salmon brick to be used;"³ or "All the lathing to be done with the best quality spruce laths,"⁴ indicate a professional standard rarely seen in local architects or contractors of the period. Even the attic did not escape the architect's attention. The entire space is finished in tongue-and-grooved vertical wood boards and divided into convenient storage units. Free-standing chamfered posts help support the copper hipped roof and even a stair leading to the deck atop the roof has turned balusters and a turned newel.

The architectural drawings of the Nichols House do not indicate the construction of any outbuildings; however, based on their general architectural character, contributing outbuildings located to the rear of the house appear to date from the same period.

The largest outbuilding is a two-story frame and weatherboarded carriage house/barn featuring slatted wooden vents on the upper floor, a central front gable covered in decorative wood shingles, and a standing seam metal roof with a square vented cupola topped by a weathervane. An unusual rectangular weatherboarded water tower rises behind the carriage house/barn. The uppermost stage of the tower is clad in decorative slate shingles. Partially supported by chamfered brackets, it overhangs the tall rectangular base. This compartment holds two large wooden vats once used to store water that was piped up from a subterranean well.

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

1899

Significant Dates

1899

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Norris, Lemuel - Architect

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

Statement of Significance

✓ The Edward Nichols House, also known as Hillcrest, is significant as the most architecturally distinguished turn-of-the-century dwelling in the town of Leesburg. Built in 1899 for prominent local lawyer and businessman, Edward Nichols, the house was designed by Washington, D.C. architect Lemuel Norris, who combined elements of both the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles to create one of Leesburg's finest residences. The original architectural drawings and builder specifications for the house, in the possession of the current owners, attest to the architect's talent, high standards of quality, and attention to detail. The Nichols House possesses a remarkable degree of original architectural integrity and serves as a tangible reminder of Leesburg's recovery from the economic hardships of the post-bellum era. The property also includes a laundry, storage shed, and carriage house/barn with an unusual water storage tower rising above its roof. The house and associated outbuildings, all in a nearly perfect state of preservation, represent a rare surviving turn-of-the-century complex of urban domestic buildings.

Historical Background

The Edward Nichols House, located at 330 West Market Street in the town of Leesburg, was built in 1899 on the western outskirts of town near the junction of the town's two principal east-west thoroughfares. Although originally surrounded almost entirely by rural landscape, the house is decidedly an upper middle class urban dwelling of surprising scale and sophistication.

The small town of Leesburg in Loudoun County has served as the political and social focus of Loudoun society since the town's designation as the county seat in 1757. By the turn of the twentieth century Leesburg had begun to show increased signs of economic prosperity, after experiencing several decades of depressed economic conditions following the Civil War. It is not surprising, therefore, that one of the town's largest and finest residences took form during this period. Built for prominent lawyer and businessman, Edward Nichols, it is one of the few houses in Loudoun County designed by a registered architect before the early 1900s. The Nichols House is

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Loudoun County Deed Book 6-S, p. 225 (1882).

Loudoun County Deed Book 9-R, pp. 356-358 (1923).

Loudoun Times, Leesburg, Va. 23 August 1923, p. 1.

Poland, Charles P. From Frontier to Suburbia.
Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1976.

Architectural drawings and specifications of Edward Nichols House by Lemuel Norris,
Architect, in possession of current owners. Copies on file at DHL.

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:

Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks
221 Governor Street
Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.4 acres

UTM References

A 18 277520 4332830
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is described as the 2.4-acre lot at 330 West Market Street in the town of Leesburg, Virginia as recorded in Loudoun County Deed Book 953, p. 222. The enclosed sketch map (scale 1"=75'), clearly denoting the buildings on the property, is a copy of the plat accompanying the deed as recorded.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David A. Edwards - Architectural Historian; John S. Salmon - Historian

organization Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks date October 7, 1987

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone 804/786-3143

city or town Richmond state Virginia zip code 23219

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

The other two contributing outbuildings include a two-story frame and weatherboarded laundry with a central front shingled gable and 6/6 sash double-hung windows and a small one-story frame and weatherboarded storage shed. The only other building associated with the property is a frame gazebo west of the house which consists of Tuscan columns, a turned balustrade, and a standing seam metal hipped roof. Dating from the 1920s, the gazebo was not built during the property's period of significance and is therefore considered a noncontributing element.

The house and outbuildings are situated on a two-acre town lot bordered on the west by a wooden fence, on the north and east by a wire fence, and on the south (front) by a handsome three-foot high red sandstone wall with openings for a drive leading to the west side of the house and a wrought-iron gate and gravel walk leading to the west side of the house. The lawn is dotted with mature shade trees and ornamental shrubbery and the remnants of a boxwood garden are seen northwest of the house.

DAE

NOTES

1. Copy of building specifications for the Edward Nichols House in possession of current owner, p. 20.
2. Ibid. p. 3.
3. Ibid. p. 4.
4. Ibid. p. 9.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

✓ exceptional in its quality of design workmanship. Norris' design combined an irregular Queen Anne building mass and plan with elegant and finely articulated Colonial Revival details and features. The house is without rival for sophistication of design in the Leesburg area.

Edward Nichols for whom the house was built, was born 1 March 1847 in Columbiana County, Ohio. His father, Jesse Nichols, who had moved to Ohio from Loudoun County, Virginia, returned to Loudoun County with his family in 1870. Edward Nichols began that year to study law while continuing to work on his father's farm, and in 1872 he was admitted to the bar and opened an office in Leesburg. Soon thereafter, he became a respected attorney and businessman, investing in the Leesburg Inn, becoming a director of the Waterford Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and becoming the president of the Loudoun National Bank of Leesburg.

Nichols also was prominent in local civic affairs. He promoted the construction of the Leesburg town hall, the 1893 Loudoun County Courthouse, as well as the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument in the courthouse square.

On 19 June 1882 Nichols purchased from Alfred Cline three lots just outside Leesburg³ and hired Lemuel Norris, a Washington, D.C. architect, to design a house for the site.⁴ The house was erected in 1899 and was probably built by John Norris and Sons (no known relation to the architect) who was the area's most prolific building contractor of the period.

The architect of the Nichols House, Lemuel Norris, began to study architecture in 1868 and started an independent practice in 1895. He is not listed as an architect in national architects directories published in 1887 and 1894; however, he became an associate member of the American Institute of Architects on 7 August 1901⁵ and was still a member in 1914.⁶ Besides being the architect of the Nichols House, Norris was the designer of a three-story brick commercial building known as the C. C. Glover Building in Washington, D.C. in 1900⁷ as well as the Joseph L. Norris Building in Leesburg in 1899.⁸ In the 1918 edition of Hendrick's Commercial Register Lemuel Norris is listed as an architect whose practice was located at 1441 U Street, N. W. in Washington, D.C., but surprisingly, he is not listed in the 1917 city business directory.

Edward Nichols may have been prompted to construct his house by thoughts of matrimony. On a visit to Europe in 1897 he met Florence Brown of Cleveland, Ohio whom he married in 1899, the year the house was built.¹⁰ Mrs. Nichols was an active patron of the arts, particularly painting, which implies that she probably hired local artists to decorate the ceilings of the principal first-floor rooms of the house. It is known that she commissioned a local artist, Hugh H. Breckenridge, to paint portraits of various circuit court judges which hang in the 1893 courthouse along with one of Edward Nichols.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

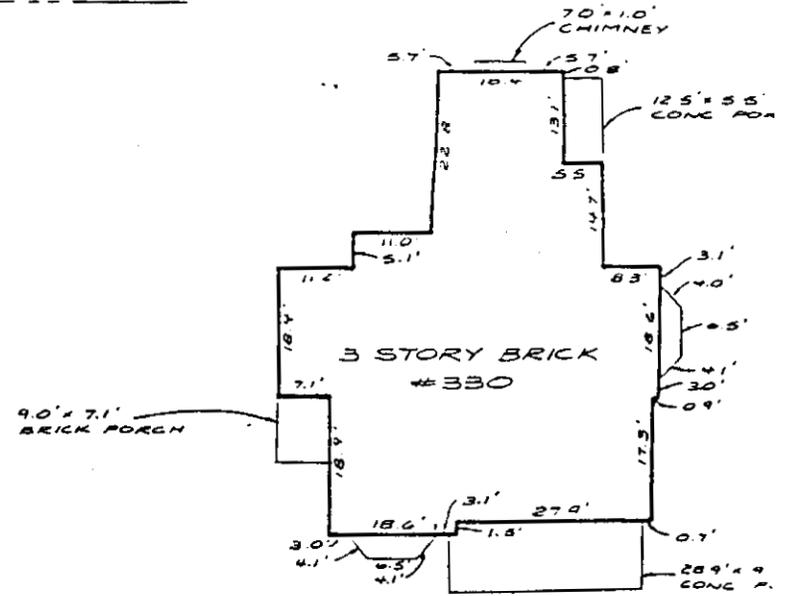
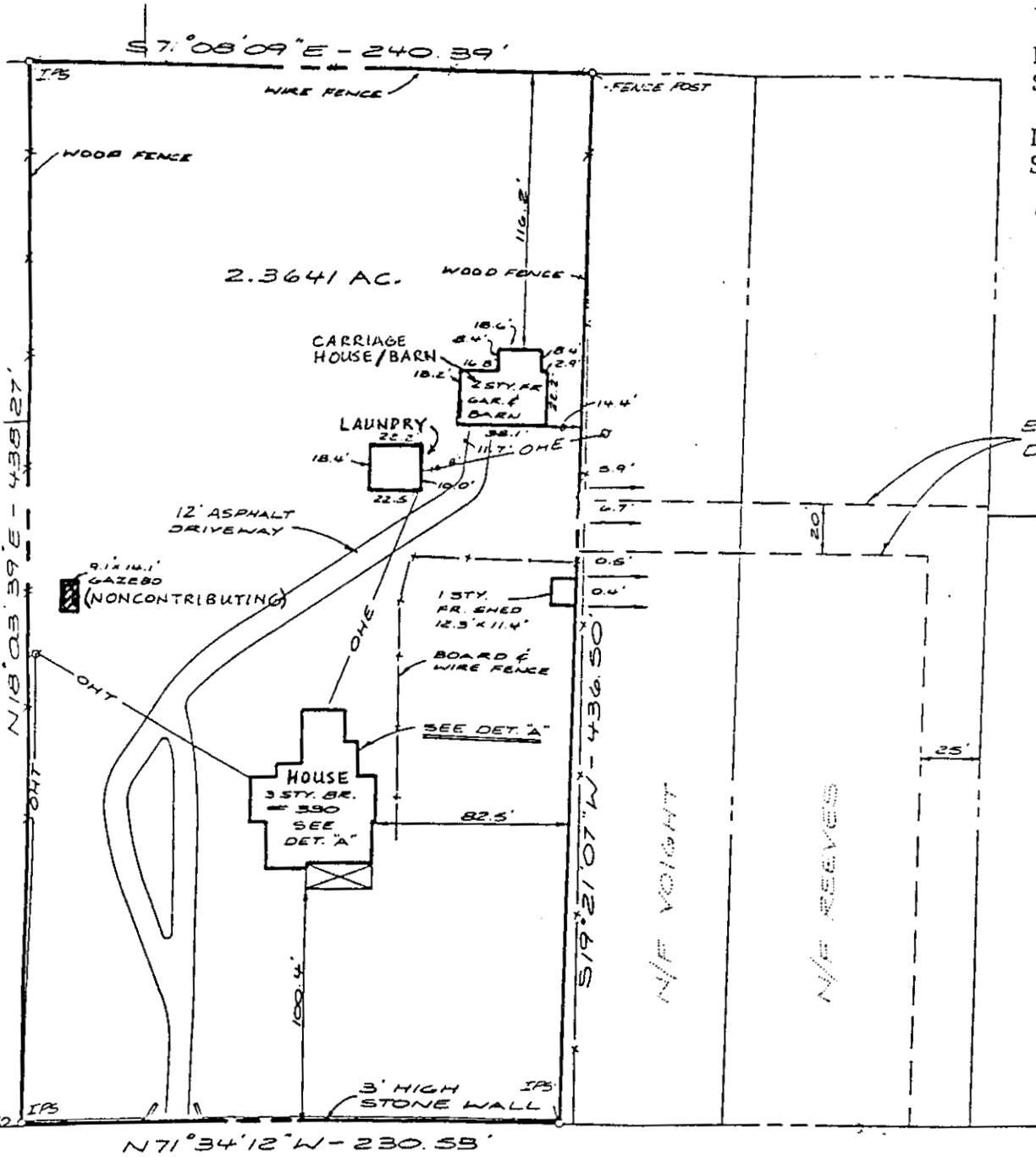
Edward Nichols died suddenly on 20 August 1923, while summering with his wife in Uniontown, Pennsylvania.¹² His funeral was held at his home in Leesburg. Having been a member of the Friends Society of nearby Lincoln, he was buried in the Friends cemetery there.¹³ Mrs. Nichols soon sold the house to Frank D. Paul and left Leesburg.¹⁴ Since the Paul's occupancy, the house has only changed ownership twice in the last several decades and each family has fastidiously maintained the house and grounds. The property remains one of the best preserved examples of turn-of-the-century architecture in Loudoun County.

DAE/JSS

LEESBURG, LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

PLAT MAP MAP 1 of 2
SOURCE: Loudoun County Clerk's Office
Leesburg, VA
DATE: 1987
SCALE; 1"=75'

■ = NONCONTRIBUTING



DETAIL 'A'
1" = 20'

RTE. 7
(W. MARKET STREET)
(30' WIDE)
1" = 75'



