

VLR = 6/14/00  
NRHA - 2/5/2002

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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. 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 Felts, Gordon C., House

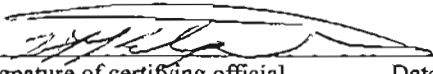
other names/site number 113-5002

#### 2. Location

street & number 404 North Main Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Galax vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state Virginia code VA county N/A code 640 Zip 24333

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 12/7/01  
Signature of certifying official Date  
**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

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

#### 4. 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 Keeper  
Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_



**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Spanish Revival

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick with stucco

roof Spanish Tile

walls stucco

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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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 1930-1949

Significant Dates 1930  
1944

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder Martin F. Garry, AIA  
Alexander Joseph Sheffey, AIA

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: \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1 1/2 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

1 17 506400    4057500    2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_    4 \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet.

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.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Paul Hardin Kapp, AIA

Organization: Kapp and Robbins Architects date March 30, 2000

street & number: 107 West Grayson Street telephone (540)-236-7775

city or town Galax state VA zip code 24333

**Additional Documentation**

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)

**Property Owner**

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

name Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Luague

street & number 404 North Main Street telephone (540)-236-9898

city or town Galax state VA zip code 24333

**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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

### Summary

The Gordon C. Felts House is located on an approximately one and a half acre building lot on the southeast intersection of North Main Street and Webster Street in downtown Galax, Virginia. The lot and house face North Main Street, the eastern boundary of the site, and it terminates at Jefferson Street, the western boundary of the site. The house was completed in 1930 and was designed by the noted Bluefield, West Virginia architectural firm of Garry and Sheffey. The large two and a half story house is designed in the Spanish Revival Style with stucco covered brick exterior walls and a terra cotta mission style gabled roof. On the north side it has a large bluestone terrace covered by a pergola supported by six large Grecian Doric columns; on the south side the house has an enclosed sleeping porch defined with four large Grecian Doric columns. The interior plan is open on the east side of the house with the Living Room leading into the Dining Room. The kitchen, den, stairhall and master bedroom surround the living and dining room on the west side of the house. The property also contains a contributing three-car garage with an apartment built above for the support staff of the house and a small Victorian children's playhouse which is also a contributing resource to the property. The playhouse was originally built for Gordon C. Felts when he was a child was moved to its current site in 1930 after the completion of the house. The site still contains all of its deciduous and coniferous trees as well as the original boxwood garden. The current owners built a medical office addition behind the garage in the 1980's; it is sympathetic to the original property both in its style and in its use of materials.

### Inventory

1. Gordon C. Felts House (1930). Contributing building.
2. Garage/Apartment (1930). Contributing building.
3. Playhouse (built, 1900, moved to current location, 1930). Contributing structure.
4. Office (attached to Garage, 1984). Noncontributing building.

### Main House: Exterior

The Gordon C. Felts House is designed in the Spanish Revival Style (also known as the

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a defining arch on the front elevation, decorative tiles, and an asymmetrical composition. The exterior walls are built with soft; wire cut brick that are covered with a Portland cement based stucco. The roofing material is S shaped terracotta Spanish tile, and the windows are divided steel frame casement windows.

The massing composition of the house is balanced yet asymmetrical consisting of a large asymmetrical gable (oriented east west facing North Main Street) with two smaller gables extending toward the east. The extended gable on the southeast corner has a scrolled shaped parapet at the gable end. The long north and south elevations both have gabled dormers with a shaped parapet at the rake. The west elevation facing the rear garden also has a gable form and is asymmetrical in composition. The roofs have a pitch of approximately 6 to 12 with the south side extending longer than the north side. The overhangs are supported by decorative wood brackets every two feet at the fascia ends of the roof and at the bearing points of the rakes of the gables. The two stuccoed "gable hooded" chimneys have terra cotta tiled roofs. Painted ceramic tiles accentuate the exterior walls. These tiles are used on the east elevation as a frieze, in a fanlight pattern, as decorative window surrounds, and as a window box below major fenestration. On the south elevation, tile is used for a decorative attic panel.

One large terrace wraps around the front of the house and extends twenty-two feet to the north side of the house. The terrace has bluestone flooring and a pergola supported by six large Grecian Doric columns. The southeastern corner of the house has an enclosed sleeping porch, it has casement windows between the columns and undivided plate glass in the three openings on the east façade.

On the north elevation a 10' by 10' porch outside of the kitchen has been extended and enclosed for a Breakfast and Laundry Room during the period of significance of the property.

**Main House: Interior**

The house has two stories, a partial basement and a partially finished attic. The main entrance is located off the tiled terrace in the center of the east façade. Entering into the Living Room there is a grand fireplace centered on the north wall. A wrought iron frame surrounds the hearth and flanked with scrolled limestone columns, which support a limestone mantle. A mosaic tile scene of a Spanish galleon is centered above the mantle within a plaster frame. The west wall, opposite of the entrance has a centered door flanked by Moorish inspired bookshelves. The trim including the built in Section

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bookshelves and six large false beams are made out of walnut. Two pairs of double doors in the Room have leaded glass panels, while another opposite side double door is solid walnut. To the north of the Living Room is the Dining Room, which also has walnut trim and false beams. Behind the Dining Room, is a small Breakfast Room with built-in seating and a Butler's Pantry, which leads into the kitchen that was modernized by the past two owners. The hardware and lighting in these rooms (except for the Kitchen) are original.

South of the Living Room is the long narrow enclosed Sleeping Porch. The Sleeping Porch has an exposed ceiling consisting of 3x8 timbers at four feet on center and 2x6 decking, all of which is stained. The enclosed porch is defined by four large Tuscan columns, which define three bays. The bays are enclosed with casement windows and stucco bases accented with decorative iron railings. The floor is covered with tile.

A door through the Living Room can also reach the Stair Hall, located in the same zone as the Kitchen, Storage Closet, and two Baths. The Bathrooms have all of their original fixtures and 5'-0" high tile wainscoting. At the southern end of this zone is the Master Bedroom. Three bedrooms are situated to the west of this zone, overlooking the gardens. The center bedroom was renovated by Robert Sheffey in 1944 into a walnut paneled Library with false beams and Moorish Revival inspired bookshelves.

The second floor has three bedrooms and one bath, all of which have their original lighting and plumbing fixtures. In the attic there is a large finished space designed for the storage of clothes, hats, and footwear. A cedar lined linen closet terminates the stair hall.

The basement contains a large Billiard Room, two conditioned Storage Rooms for meats and vegetables, a Laundry Room, a Drying Room and a Boiler Room with a coal bin. All of these rooms are predominately unfinished, with painted poured in place concrete walls. The freezer equipment remains intact.

### **Outbuildings and Landscape Features**

On the northwest side of the house there is a three car detached garage with an apartment above that was also designed by Garry and Sheffey. Like the main house, it has stucco walls, and a gabled terracotta Spanish tile roof. The Bedroom, Kitchen, Sitting Room and Bathroom of the apartment, originally used by the household staff have been remodeled in a contemporary style. The garage



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doors consist of sliding and made out of "V" grooved wood panels detailed in the Spanish Revival style. The third garage bay has been incorporated into the 1,500 square foot addition that the current owners built on the west side of the garage for their medical practice. The addition is sympathetic in character with stucco walls and a 4 to 12 gabled roof with terra-cotta tiles; it does not visual detract from the integrity of the property.

A formal boxwood garden is in the backyard or west part of the site. On the southwest corner of the yard, the Playhouse is situated. It is built in the scale of a child with 5'- 0" doors. Sheathed in German clapboard and painted white, the playhouse has two small rooms. One of the rooms has a false chimney and fireplace. All of the doors have four panels and the trim consists of small baseboards, crown mouldings and cut casings. The roof is hipped with a small porch on the front or east side.

**Integrity Statement**

The architectural integrity of the Gordon C. Felts House remains remarkably intact. The asymmetrical yet balanced composition has never been altered. None of the original building finishes have been changed or covered with modern and incompatible materials. The landscape has changed little since the planning of the landscape by Mr. and Mrs. Felts in the 1930's. The current owners have carefully preserved the house, its landscape and its outbuildings, most notably, the playhouse. Only the medical office is noncontributing to the property, however, it is carefully designed to compliment the property with similar massing and materials.

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## Statement of Significance

### Summary Statement of Significance and Justification of Criteria

The Gordon C. Felts House, located on Main Street and completed in 1930, is one of the premier historic properties in Galax. The notoriety of the client, the unusual style of the house and the reputation of the architect make the Gordon C. Felts House significant to the City of Galax, the Southwestern Virginia region, and the state of West Virginia. The house was commissioned by Thomas L. Felts, a founding developer of the City of Galax, State Senator of Virginia and President of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency for his son, Gordon C. Felts and his wife, Alice. It is designed in the Spanish Revival Style; a style rarely used in the mountainous Southwestern Virginia Region by the Bluefield, West Virginia architectural firm of Garry and Sheffey. The Gordon C. Felts House is eligible for National Register designation at the local level of significance under Criterion C as a remarkable example of the work of significant and talented architectural firm, Garry and Sheffey and also as an example of a rarely used architectural style in Southwestern Virginia, the Spanish Revival Style.

### Acknowledgements

The West Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History provided biographical information of the architectural firm of Garry and Sheffey. Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Luague of Galax and Mr. Ted Boggess, AIA, Architect of Bluefield, West Virginia provided both drawings and information of the house and the architects. The Jeff Mathews Memorial Museum provided the 1930 Sandborn Map of the City of Galax and information about the original owners, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon C. Felts.

### Historic Background

In 1929, Mr. Gordon Felts (1893-1957) and his wife, Alice L. Felts (1893-1974) began considering the design and construction of their new home in downtown Galax. Felts' father, Thomas L. Felts, the infamous head of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, funded the home<sup>1</sup>. This detective agency captured the Allen Clan after the 1912 Carroll County Courthouse Shoot-out in Hillsville, Virginia and was involved as a union buster in the Matewan Coal Strike Uprising in West Virginia. Gordon

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and was involved as a union buster in the Matewan Coal Strike Uprising in West Virginia. Gordon Felts owned and operated Twin County Automotive Company, which was located next door to the building site which the Felts' chose for their home<sup>2</sup>.

According to various family members, Mrs. Felts selected a Spanish Revival Style home from *Ladies Home Journal* to show her architects, Garry and Sheffey of Bluefield.<sup>3</sup> The Spanish Revival Style had recently been made popular by the 1915 Panama-California Exposition designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, and widely promoted 1920's developments such as Coral Gables, Florida by George Merrick and the works of Arthur Benton in California. However, it was a style typically not considered outside of Florida and the Southwest<sup>4</sup>.

One can assume that the Felts, through their business dealings in West Virginia, were familiar with Martin F. Garry and Alexander Joseph Sheffey, two of the most talented and scholarly architects in West Virginia. Sheffey was born in 1893 in Lynchburg, Virginia. After graduating from Lynchburg High School in 1910, he attended Randolph Macon College for two years before transferring to Cornell University where he received his Bachelor of Architecture in 1916. In 1919, he received his A.E.F. from L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. In 1920, he met Martin F. Garry in Bluefield and started a partnership. Little is known of the personal background of Garry.<sup>5</sup>

The firm designed numerous public buildings in West Virginia which are now local Landmarks such as the City Hall of Bluefield, (currently the Arts Center of Bluefield), and the Appalachian Power Company Building (where they located their office) in Bluefield, Concord College and Saint Lukes Hospital. In Virginia, the firm designed a building for Mabel Bradley in East Radford, Virginia, which was listed in *MR* on 16 November 1922.<sup>6</sup>

In 1941, the firm dissolved after Garry retired. Sheffey continued to practice as Robert J. Sheffey, Architect until he died in 1958. The firm was then taken over by his staff and moved to Charleston, West Virginia where it was renamed ZMS Architects. It is currently a major institutional and commercial architectural firm in West Virginia.<sup>7</sup>

In 1930, the design and construction of the Felts House, was a truly novel event in the young town of Galax. The original cost of \$80,000.00 was unheard of in Galax where the median income was around \$6,000.00. The Galax Gazette even wrote an article about the Spanish roofing tile when it arrived by train to Galax.<sup>8</sup> When the Felts moved into the house, they brought with them Felts' childhood playhouse from his father's nearby estate, Cliffside. The early twentieth century playhouse is still intact and is located on the southwest corner of the building lot at the intersection of Webster

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When Gordon Felts died in 1957, Alice Felts continued to live in the home until her death in 1974. William and Georgetta Combs purchased the home in 1976, and sold it to the current owners, Dr. and Mrs. Samuel B. Luague in 1983. The Luagues added a small but complimentary medical office to the rear of the garage.<sup>9</sup>

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**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Committee for the Bicentennial of Galax, VA, Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, (1976), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ms. Nancy Luague, interview with author, April 13, 1998, Galax, Virginia.

<sup>4</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 417.

<sup>5</sup> West Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Archives, Charleston, West Virginia, November 1998

<sup>6</sup> John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955, A Biographical Dictionary*, (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1997), 127.

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Ted Boggess, AIA, interview with author, April 22, 1998, Bluefield, West Virginia.

<sup>8</sup> Galax Gazette Archives, Jeff Mathews Museum, Galax, Virginia, April 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Deed Book

197, Pgs, 710-717, Grayson County, Virginia.

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Will Book 18. Pages 331. Will and Testament of Alice Felts. 1974. County of Grayson, Virginia.  
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McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Homes*. (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).  
Wells, John E. and Robert E. Dalton. *The Virginia Architects 1835-1955, A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1997).

## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Gordon C. Felts is shown on the accompanying map entitled "Exhibit A: Site Plan of the Gordon C. Felts House, Galax, Virginia". Starting at the northwest corner point A, the boundary runs south 120 feet to the southwest corner point B; then east 240 feet to southeast corner point C; then 120 feet to the northeast corner point C; and then west 240 feet to close at corner point A.

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**Boundary Justification**

As depicted on the accompanying map entitled "Exhibit A: Site Plan of the Gordon C. Felts House, Galax, Virginia", the boundary of the Gordon C. Felts is based on the 1930 and 1945 Sandborn Insurance Map of Galax, Virginia. The map reflects the original building lot purchased by the Felts Family in 1929 and includes the main house, the garage/apartment, the playhouse and the new addition medical office along with all of the original landscape features including the original trees and formal gardens.

✓ 412 113-9002  
BORN C. FELTS  
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