

~~DATA~~  
NRHA - 4/01/02  
VLR - 9/12/01  
OMB No. 1024-0018

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 Dr. William H. Pitts House

other names/site number 140-0022

#### 2. Location

street & number 247 East Main Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Abingdon vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state Virginia code VA county Washington code 191 Zip 24210

#### 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.)

[Signature] / [Signature] 2/4/02  
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:     other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
    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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper  
Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_



**7. Description**

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

   Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century Greek Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation    Stone: Limestone \_\_\_\_\_  
roof    Metal \_\_\_\_\_  
walls    Stucco \_\_\_\_\_  
   Wood: Weatherboard \_\_\_\_\_  
other    Brick \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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.
- X   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**  1854-1900 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**  1854 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**  N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**  Adam Hickman, Builder \_\_\_\_\_

**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:  Washington County Historical Society \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property**  less than one acre \_\_\_\_\_

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

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

1 17 4063200 413550    2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_    4 \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet.

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Abingdon, Virginia

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

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

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Ashley L. Robbins, AIA, ASID & Susan G. Deihl, Historic Preservation Consultant

Organization: Kapp & Robbins Architects date 03/04/01

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

city or town Galax state VA zip code 24333

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**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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name Edison & Andrea Jennings

street & number 247 East Main Street telephone (540) 623-1873

city or town Abingdon state VA zip code 24210

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing 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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**7. Summary Description:**

The Dr. William H. Pitts House is a two-story, single family dwelling built in 1854 in the Greek Revival style that was popular in the mid-nineteenth century. Constructed with little setback from the street and located at the historic intersection of East Main Street and White's Alley, the house figures prominently in a streetscape that historically included and currently encompasses a variety of residential, commercial, and community buildings.

The original house features a symmetrical five-bay, single pile form and a central recessed entrance, which is commonly seen in the Town of Abingdon. The plan includes a central stair hall flanked by parlors on the first floor and bedrooms on the second floor. The main block of the house is constructed upon an ashlar-cut limestone foundation. The walls are built of masonry and sheathed in stucco, which designates the Dr. Pitts House the only stucco-covered residence in Abingdon. On the east and west elevations of the house, the walls rise above the roof to form stepped-gable parapet walls which flank the paired chimneys on each end. A wood cornice delineates the junction between wall and roof on the south elevation (front façade) of the house, and the roof is sheathed in standing-seam terne metal. The original appearance of the north elevation is obscured by a late nineteenth century wood-frame addition.

Specific elements of the Dr. Pitts House include the recessed entrance which features a double-leaf wood entrance door surrounded by a transom and sidelights. In addition, several types of double-hung wood windows can be seen on each elevation of the house. The south façade includes 6/6 sash in the west bays of the first floor and in the center and east bays of the second floor; 9/9 sash in the east bays of the first floor; and 9/6 lights in the west bays of the second floor. In the first floor of the west façade, windows exhibit 2/2 sash, a late nineteenth to early twentieth century type. The upper windows of the west façade are 9/6. A small, fixed sash window can be seen within the parapet wall on this elevation which allows light into the attic space. The windows of the east façade include 9/9 lights in the first floor and 9/6 sash in the upper floor; a fixed sash attic window is seen on this elevation as well. Other elements include the narrow shed roofs which shelter the opening of the recessed entrance, the second story windows on the west façade, and the second story windows of the east façade. Interior paired chimneys are located on each end of the house; they are sheathed in stucco and are capped with exposed masonry.

Many decorative elements of the exterior and interior of the Dr. Pitts House have survived since its construction. Exterior decoration is seen in the recessed entrance surround, which includes simple, narrow pilasters, a wide cornice, and sawnwork brackets which support the shed

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**Summary Description (continued):**

roof above the opening. The wide cornice and sawnwork brackets also decorate the shed roofs that shelter the second floor windows on the east and west elevations. Other decoration includes cast stone ornamentation along the upper edges of the parapet walls. Original decorative elements on the interior include the turned newel post and square-cut balusters, the simple architrave moldings that surround windows and doors, the interior shutters with recessed panels, and the classically-inspired mantels, all of which reflect the simple Greek Revival style of the house.

While the Dr. Pitts House retains its historic integrity and original appearance, several alterations have been made to the house. A significant alteration is seen in the rear of the house, where a two-story wood frame addition was added onto the north facade in the late nineteenth century. The addition—which extends the full width of the house, is covered by a shed roof, and is sheathed in clapboard—houses a kitchen and storage space. The two-story kitchen ell also includes a double porch that is open to the rear yard on the first floor and is partially screened-in on the second floor. Windows in the ell are 2/2. The ell is simply decorated and features no discernable architectural style; decorative elements include chamfered porch supports and simple corner boards. Additional alterations can be seen on other elevations of the house; they were likely introduced at the time the rear addition was constructed. As shown by the numerous window types viewed on the south, east, and west elevations of the house, several windows have been altered. Dates of these alterations are not known, although it is clear that the 2/2 sash on the first floor of the west façade were installed in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. In addition, the roof exhibits standing-seam metal sheathing, which was added in the late nineteenth century to replace the original roof material.

No outbuildings survive on the property, although features of the landscape (along with evidence from historic Sanborn Maps) indicate that they existed. The rear yard, which slopes from the house upward to a higher grade at the rear of the lot, includes a flattened depression at the northeastern corner where White's Alley intersects with Plumb Alley. This depression in the landscape may indicate the location of an outbuilding. Currently, a non-contributing structure is located on the western lot line. Vegetation on the house's lot is modest and includes a few trees and a large open space.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

The Dr. William H. Pitts House is a contributing resource to the Abingdon Historic District and is eligible for individual listing in the National and State Registers under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its distinctive Greek Revival style and for its historic exterior finish of lime-based stucco, which is unique to the Abingdon Historic District. The period of significance begins in 1854, when the house was constructed by Adam Hickman, and extends to 1900, the approximate date of its last alteration. In a 1998 Architectural Survey Report prepared for the Town of Abingdon by Thomason and Associates, Preservation Planners, of Nashville, Tennessee, the Dr. Pitts House was noted as having potential to produce archaeological remains.<sup>1</sup> This statement was primarily based upon evidence of outbuildings (no longer extant) found during documentary research, which included the examination of Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Determination of any remains or their significance has never been pursued, and any archaeological evidence on the site remains suspect at this time.

### Historical background and significance:

The Town of Abingdon, Virginia, located in the southwestern region of the state, was founded in 1778 near the site of an earlier fort erected to defend settlers against Indian attacks. Originally consisting of 120 acres, the town grew throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century and was designated the seat of Washington County; the town even became the clearinghouse for all mail sent to Southwest Virginia by 1793. Abingdon experienced continued growth and prosperity throughout the early to mid-nineteenth century, as numerous commercial and manufacturing institutions were built, churches were constructed, and residences were established.<sup>2</sup>

The residence located at 247 East Main Street, which came to be known as the Dr. William H. Pitts House, was constructed in 1854 by Adam Hickman. Hickman was a local builder who also owned several properties throughout the county and was a member of the Town Council. He constructed numerous buildings in Abingdon in the mid-nineteenth century, including the residence known as the Cave House (so named because it is believed to be built on the site of a cave where Daniel Boone fought with wolves that lived there)<sup>3</sup>, the 1857 Swedenborgian Church (no longer extant)<sup>4</sup>, and other buildings and residences. After purchasing  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a lot on East Main Street in July of 1853, Hickman built the stuccoed



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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

Greek Revival-style house on speculation. It was occupied for a short time afterwards by John W. Stevens, a tailor who owned a shop across the street.<sup>5</sup>

In December of 1859, Adam Hickman sold the property to Dr. William H. Pitts, who had moved to southwestern Virginia from Richmond in 1858.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Pitts practiced medicine in Abingdon before and during the Civil War and was one of five surgeons who attended to wounded soldiers at Abingdon's Confederate hospital, which was maintained in a nearby residence.<sup>7</sup> After the Civil War concluded, he served on Abingdon's first Board of Health, established in 1866, and was assigned the duty of examining conditions of the town's streets, alleys, and residences.<sup>8</sup> Dr. William Pitts died on May 25, 1869 and is buried in the Sinking Spring Cemetery in Abingdon.

After Dr. Pitts death, the house remained in his family until it was purchased in May of 1870 by Henry S. Preston, an Abingdon attorney<sup>9</sup>. Preston's widow sold the house to her nieces, Anne C. White and Madge G. White, in 1918, and the property remained in the White family until it was purchased by the present owner in 1996.<sup>10</sup>

**9. Sources Cited:**

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<sup>1</sup> Thomason and Associates Preservation Planners, "Architectural Survey Report: Town of Abingdon, Virginia." Nashville, Tennessee: Thomason and Associates, 1998, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, Abingdon Historic District: National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, December 1969.

<sup>3</sup> Undated and unidentified newspaper article, Hickman Family file. Abingdon: Washington County Historical Society.

<sup>4</sup> King, Nanci, "Places in Time, Volume II: Abingdon, Meadowview & Glade Spring, Virginia." Library of Congress Catalogue No. 94-96303. Marion, Virginia: Tucker Printing, Inc., 1994, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> King, Nanci, "Places in Time, Volume I: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880." Library of Congress Catalogue No. 89-091439. Abingdon, Virginia: Abingdon Printing Services, 1996, p. 4.

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**Sources Cited (continued)**

<sup>6</sup> Obituary, "Dr. William Pitts." The Democrat (May 28, 1869), Abingdon, Virginia, p. 76.

<sup>7</sup> Summers, Lewis Preston, History of Southwest Virginia. Johnson City, Tennessee: The Overmountain Press, 1989, p. 545.

<sup>8</sup> King, Nanci, "Places in Time, Volume I: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880," p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Deed Book 88, Page 126 (May 3, 1870), Washington County Registry of Deeds, Abingdon, Virginia.

<sup>10</sup> Deed Book 90, Page 239 (March 1, 1918) and Deed Book 944, Page 281 (June 3, 1996), Washington County Registry of Deeds, Abingdon, Virginia.

**10. Geographical Data:**

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries of the Dr. William H. Pitts House property are indicated on the accompanying site map (please see enclosed map).

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Dr. William H. Pitts House, located at 247 East Main Street, Abingdon, Virginia.

**11. Additional Documentation:**

Photo List

All of the enclosed photographs illustrate the Dr. William H. Pitts House, 247 East Main Street, Town of Abingdon, Washington County, Virginia. All photographs on the following list were

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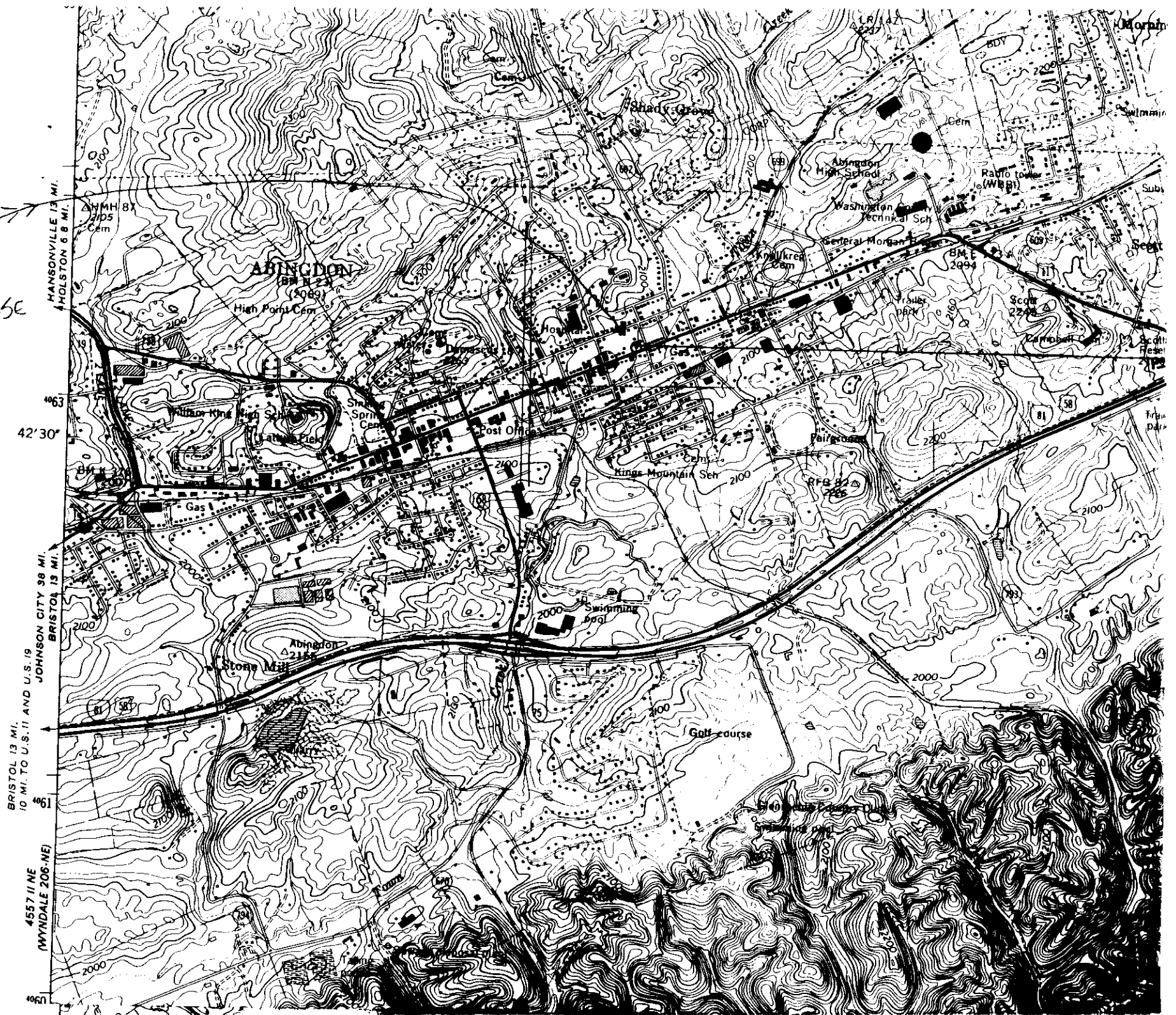
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Photo List (continued)

taken by Ashley L. Robbins, AIA, ASID, of Galax, Virginia, in April 2000. Original negatives are located in the inventory files of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The negative number for the Pitts House is 19034.

- Photo 01: South Elevation (entrance façade); view facing north. •  
02: West Elevation; view facing north.  
03: North Elevation (Addition to rear façade); view facing southwest.  
04: Interior detail; entrance door with transom and sidelights.  
05: Interior detail; east parlor.  
06: Interior detail; mantle, east parlor.  
07: Interior detail; center hall staircase.  
08: Interior detail; center hall stairs and newel post.  
09: Interior detail; mantle, west parlor.

DR. WM  
Pitts House



HANSONVILLE 13 MI.  
HOLSTON 6 MI.

42° 30'

JOHNSON CITY 38 MI.  
BRISTOL 13 MI.

BRISTOL 13 MI.  
10 MI. TO U.S. 11 AND U.S. 19

4557 IIINE  
WYNDALE 206-NE

ABINGDON

High Point Cem

William King High Sch

Post Off

Kings Mountain Sch

RF 82

Stone Mill

Golf course

Shady Grove

Abingdon High School

Washington Technical Sch

General Morgan

Radio tower (WVBP)

Scott 2244

Zarnhoff

Orphan

Subs

Scott

Scott Reser

Frien Park