NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED 2280
JUN 2 1996
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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 Mason, Charles T., House

other names/site number Mason Croft

2. Location

street & number 111 Mason Croft — not for publication ___
city or town Sumter — vicinity ___
state S. C. code SC county Sumter — code 85 zip code 29150

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 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.)

Mary W. Edmonds 5/27/97
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 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:

Elson R. Beall 7-3-97

✓ 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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
- ___ public-local
- ___ public-State
- ___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	___	buildings
___	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
3	___	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation Brick
roof Terra Cotta
walls Brick
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.
- 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 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
ca. 1905

Significant Dates
ca. 1905

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/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
X Other
Name of repository: Sumter Co. Museum Archives, Sumter, S.C.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 10.5 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	558900	3754680	3	17	559260	3754180
2	17	559260	3754680	4	17	559900	3754180

__ 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 Katherine H. Richardson

organization Heritage Preservation Associates date 9-2-96

street & number 26 Harby Avenue telephone 803-775-6682

city or town Sumter state SC zip code 29150

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. Gene F. Dickerson

street & number 111 Mason Croft telephone 803-778-1003

city or town Sumter state SC zip code 29150

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.

Summary Paragraph

The Charles T. Mason House, historically known as Mason Croft, is a 2 and 1/2 story Neoclassical Revival house located at 111 Mason Croft in Sumter, S. C. Built after 1904, the brick house has a full height portico supported by fluted columns with Corinthian capitals. The hipped roof is covered in terra cotta tiles. The front facade has a gabled dormer with cornice returns and a Palladian window. The interior of the house is distinguished by high style woodwork. The house is surrounded by 10.5 acres of the original 126.5 acre tract in the older suburbs of Sumter, S.C. The house and associated outbuildings rests among its historical landscape, which includes old plantings and trees, a goldfish pond, and a circular drive. The property has been recently restored and is in excellent condition. It is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a property which embodies the distionctive characteristics of the Neoclassical Revival style at the local level of significance.

The House

The front elevation of the Charles T. Mason House is three-ranked with a centrally located door on both the first and second stories. Each door is flanked by a 1/1 sash window. The door on the first floor projects on to the full height entry porch and gives entry to a small foyer which then leads into the main hallway. This door is flanked by a set of square columns which support a balcony at the second floor level. Both central doors on the front elevation are double glass doors. The first floor door has a bevelled glass transom. The second floor door has a plain transon and side lights. The house has four interior brick chimneys with corbelled caps.

The cornice of the full height front porch has dentil molding and is bracketed. It is supported by 6 massive fluted columns with Corinthian capitals and pilasters with Corinthian capitals at each side of the front elevation. A one story porch supported by round Tuscan columns wraps around the western and eastern facades of the house. A porte cochere projects from the western facade.

The eastern facade of the house is five-ranked with a set of 1/1 sash windows flanking a smaller central window on each floor. The western facade is asymetrically five-ranked. The northern, or rear, facade originally had a rear door with a hipped gable above it which is now obscured by a sympathetic one story addition which extends the rear of the house several feet. Like the eastern and western facades, the addition has a one story porch supported by round Tuscan columns. It has a centrally placed door with four consecutive 1/1 sash windows on each side. The

addition is topped by a baluster with square posts and has a low brick chimney.

The interior of the house is arranged around a central hallway which runs the length of the original part of the house. The hall is entered through the front foyer and is flanked by two front parlors. The hallway and parlors are defined by a row of Corinthian columns on pedestals and the floor plan is open. The hallway contains the staircase which rises from the rear of the hallway to the second floor. The rear of the original part of the house contains a dining room and kitchen on the western side and a den on the eastern side. The one story addition at the rear of the house contains a den.

The Garage

The garage at the Charles T. Mason House appears to have been built at the same time as the house. It has a hipped roof and an entrance for cars on the front, or southern elevation of the building. It is located just west of the rear of the house.

The Playhouse

The playhouse is located some distance west of the house. It is a small, square brick building with a gable end roof clad in terra cotta tiles. It has a centrally placed door on its eastern facade and centrally placed 1/1 sash windows on the southern and western elevations. Each window has wooden shutters and a window box below the sill. The gable end is clad in weatherboard.

The Charles T. Mason House is an outstanding example of the Neoclassical Revival style built on the outskirts of Sumter after 1904.[1] Mason built an ornate Victorian house on South Main Street in Sumter in 1891. The Mason Croft House superseded this earlier residence.[2] His second house was built on a 126.5 acre tract on the outskirts of Sumter which he acquired in 1904. There he built the Neoclassical Revival house which was considered a mansion by the people of Sumter, both then and now. It is one of four large Neoclassical Revival houses which remain in the city of Sumter. The house was so remarkable upon his death in 1928 that it was described in his obituary as "one of the show places of Sumter County."[3]

The house was built with the finest of materials. Some of the interior woods were reportedly imported from Greece. His vision for the property was on a grand scale for Sumter, which is and was a town of gracious old homes on moderately-sized lots. Mason's 126.5 acre tract lay west of the town, bound by the then unfinished West Calhoun Street which is now one of the boundaries of the local historic district known as the Hampton Park Historic District. He chose a location for the house at the northern reaches of the property near Shot Pouch Creek, waters of the Pocataligo River. There he created a pond and surrounded his home with beautifully landscaped grounds.[4] The 126.5-acre tract remained intact until his death in 1928, after which all but twenty-five acres surrounding the house was divided into streets and lots, becoming one of Sumter's early bungalow suburbs of the 1930s and 1940s.[5]

By 1948, the twenty-five acres around the house had been further subdivided into lots, leaving approximately ten acres around the Mason residence. In the ensuing years, the suburbs of Sumter steadily marched westward beyond the Mason enclave, leaving it as one of the few large in-town estates.

Charles T. Mason was the son of Charles Thomas Mason, Sr. (b. 1829) and his first wife, Judith Grier Britton. His father was renowned in Sumter as a watchmaker and inventor. Mason Sr.'s inventions included a low-cost gas for fueling gas light which was made from waste grease. He was also the superintendent of the telegraph service of the Confederate

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[1]Sumter County Deeds, vol. VVV, p. 358.

[2]The Watchman and Southron, August 12, 1891.

[3]The Sumter Daily Item, Dec. 27, 1928, p. 1.

[4]Sumter County Plat Book V-4, p. 455.

[5]Ibid.

States of America and manufactured the telegraphic instruments used throughout the Confederate States in Sumter. Other inventions included an electric fan, a burglar alarm used by banks, and a method of nonmagnetizing wrist watches.[6]

Charles T. Mason, Jr. inherited his father's penchant for inventions. In 1869, when he was twelve years old, Charles Jr. received a silver medal in the Fair of the Agricultural and Mechanical Society of South Carolina. His award prompted the Scientific American to highlight him in an article as the "Remarkable Boy Mechanic." At age 16, he left Sumter to work in the machine shops of George Page & Co. in Baltimore, Md. and later he became department foreman for Farquhars Agricultural Works in York, Pa. He eventually returned home to Sumter, opening his own machine shops, said to be the best south of Philadelphia, Pa. All of his machinery was electrically powered. In 1880, he invented a cotton picking machine which distinguished between fibrous and non-fibrous materials. The Southern Bivouac wrote of his cotton harvestor in 1886, stating that many harvestors had been invented on paper, but only Charles Mason's machine was a success in reality. Consequently, Mason formed the Mason Cotton Harvestor Company. The machines he produced could harvest 4,000 pounds of cotton a day. He was a bit ahead of his time, for labor was plentiful and cheap; it was not until years later that cotton harvestors replaced manual workers. Later harvestors worked on the same principal used in Mason's machine.[7]

In 1899, Mason organized the Sumter Telephone Manufacturing Company, one of the largest in the United States. He employed as many as 400 workers and shipped telephones world-wide. The company was later sold to Western Electric, a subsidiary of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.[8]

Mason also organized the Three M Magneto Company which manufactured magnetos used to start airplanes during World War I. This company was later sold to Splitdorf Electrical Company.[9]

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[6]Cassie Nichols, Historical Sketches of Sumter County, vol. 1, pp. 400-1.

[7]Nichols, p. 403.

[8]Ibid., p. 402.

[9]Ibid., p. 403.

Charles Mason died on Dec. 27, 1928 at the age of 73, leaving his property to his second wife, Edith Evans Mason, sons C. Stewart Mason and Carl F. Mason, daughter Emma Mason Friar, and grandson Charles Mason Crowson.[10]

Sumter was founded in 1800 as the seat of Sumter District, which then included Lee Sumter and Clarendon Counties. The town grew slowly and remained concentrated around Main Street until c. 1870, when residential neighborhoods began to spread west of the town down West Calhoun and West Hampton Streets and north on North Main Street, as well as south toward the railroad tracks.[11] By 1902, the town still remained within a one-mile radius of the intersection of Liberty and Main Streets.[12]

The new suburbs which grew around the business district of Sumter represented the prosperity which the citizens of this small town realized after ca. 1870. The largest town in this rural, agricultural county, Sumter was the center of commerce and transportation. Sumter became a manufacturing center for furniture and telephones and did a booming business in livery. Cotton manufacturing and turpentine production were large industries, as were cotton oil and fertilizer. Timber increasingly became an important industry after the turn of the twentieth century.[13]

In the 1880s, Sumter became a railroad hub when several lines converged at the Sumter depot on the south side of the town. This increased manufacturing oportunities as well as brought travelers seeking accomodations to the town. Amenities in Sumter improved greatly during the 1880s. In 1883, the town had ten miles of elevated sidewalks made of rammed clay with wooden curbs. In 1889, the Sumter Electric Light Company was chartered and on November 1st of that year the whole city was lit by electric lights for the first time. In 1892, the first city-wide water works was put in place. The small country town moved into the twentieth century with a progressive mindset. Charles T. Mason was responsible for much of that progressive thought through his work in electricity, telephones, and agricultural inventions. His house at Mason Croft stands

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[10]Will of Charles T. Mason, Bundle 218, pkg. 63, 1928, Sumter County Probate Office.

[11]Katherine H. Richardson, Survey of Sumter County Deeds, 1800 - 1994.

[12]1902 Map of Sumter, Sumter County Deeds, vol. O-4, p. 59, Sumter County Courthouse, Sumter, S. C.

[13]Anne King Gregorie, History of Sumter County, (Sumter: The Library Board of Sumter County, 1954), pp. 484-8.

as a symbol of his successes in these arenas as well as the prosperity of Sumter during the late 19th century and early 2oth century.[14]

The Charles T. Mason House remains as a fine example of Neoclassical Revival architecture in this city. It is recommended that it be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C at the local level of significance.

[14]Gregorie, pp. 478-484.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Sumter County Deeds

Sumter County Plats

Sumter County Wills

Secondary Sources:

Gregorie, Anne King. History of Sumter County. Sumter: The Library Board of Sumter County, 1954.

Nichols, Cassie. Historical Sketches of Sumter County, vol. 1. Columbia: The R. L. Bryan Co., 1975.

The Sumter Daily Item, Sumter, S.C.

The Watchman and Southron, Sumter, S.C.

Verbal Boundary Description: Sumter County Tax Parcel 228-02-2-7

Boundary Justification: The 10.5 acre parcel surrounding the house was retained from the original 126.5 acre tract and has served as the yard for the house since the surrounding suburban neighborhoods were laid off in the early 20th century.

The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property:	Charles T. Mason House
Location of Property:	Sumter, Sumter County, South Carolina
Name of Photographer:	Katherine H. Richardson
Date of Photographs:	July 1996
Location of Original Negatives:	S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

1. Front facade facing northwest.

2. Detail of front facade facing northwest.

3. Side elevation facing southwest.

4. Rear elevation facing southeast.

5. Side elevation facing northeast.

6. Playhouse facing northwest.

7. Playhouse facing northeast.