

VLR ✓ 3/13/02
NRHP - 6/16/02

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

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 Smith's Pharmacy
other names/site number 121-5066

2. Location

street & number 3114 Chestnut Avenue not for publication N/A
city or town Newport News vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Newport News (Independent City) code 700 Zip 23607

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 locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

M. Catherine Alusse April 18, 2002
Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
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: removed from the National Register
 entered in the National Register other (explain): _____
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the Signature of Keeper _____
National Register
 See continuation sheet. Date of Action _____
 determined not eligible for the National Register

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Smith's Pharmacy
Newport News, VA

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture _____
Health/Medicine _____
Social History _____
Education _____

Period of Significance 1946-1952 _____

Significant Dates 1946 _____
1952 _____

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
Smith, Dr. Charles C. _____

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Henry L. Livas, Architect _____
Elbert Walker, Project Architect _____

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

Acres of Property .06 _____

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

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
1 18 374600 4094820 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: Mary C. Taylor/ Administrative Assistant

Organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources date January 17, 2002

street & number: 612 Court Street, Third Floor telephone (757) 396-6707

city or town Portsmouth state VA zip code 23704

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 Mrs. Patricia Mainor

street & number 3112 Chestnut Avenue telephone (757) 247-7680

city or town Newport News state VA zip code 23607

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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Smith's Pharmacy
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7. Summary Description:

Smith's Pharmacy is a mid-twentieth century American movement commercial style building. The masonry building consists of two stories of approximately four thousand total square feet. The brick load-bearing structure contains wood frame floor joists and a roof rafter structural system. The first floor was built in 1946 to become Dr. Charles Calvin Smith's pharmacy with the second floor being added in 1952 to serve as office space. The first floor remains virtually unaltered with the original pharmaceutical retail space and counters being on the west side and the original soda fountain and wooden booths on the east side. Most of the plumbing and lighting fixtures remain original as well.

Exterior:

The architectural firm of Henry Lewis Livas, Architect built the site in 1946. Livas was one of the earliest African-American architects and architectural instructors in Virginia. The Henry L. Livas Firm continues to practice today in Norfolk, Virginia despite Mr. Livas's death in the late 1970's. The Pharmacy was located on the first floor with the second floor being added later in 1952 for medical offices. The south side of the building houses the front door, which is flanked by two commercial storefront bulkheads and faces Chestnut Avenue. The east storefront still retains all of its original features while the west storefront has been removed to accommodate more counter space in the pharmacy. The interior base of the storefronts is wood-frame with wood framed recessed panels and trimmed mullions as well as a lowered ceiling finished with painted plywood. The exterior base of the storefronts is brick accented with a soldier row of brick at the bottom. The exterior mullions are standard commercial aluminum mullions. The full glass panel front door contains wood stiles and rails with the original painted sign spanning across it and the storefront.

Above the front door an electric sign is mounted perpendicular to the front elevation. Two double hung sash windows are centered over the storefronts at the second floor and are accented by a soldier row of brick headers. There is a recessed brick panel containing a monument stone stating the builder and date of construction on the brick parapet. This parapet is capped with cast stone coping.

Interior:

The interior of the pharmacy remains in virtually in tact since it's building in 1946. The first floor contains open retail space ending with a wood frame medicine shelf. Located on the East Side is a soda fountain with a plastic laminate covered counter and wood shelves set behind the fountain.

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**Smith's Pharmacy
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Two wood framed restaurant booths sit behind the soda fountain counter adjacent to the pharmacy area. On the West Side glass display cases are set in front of the wall while medicine and retail display shelves run along the entire length of the retail space. The ceiling remains covered with its original Celetex tiles and the original fluorescent light fixture run along both the east and west walls. The pharmacy counter is wood framed with plastic laminate covering the counter surface. The medicine shelves are also sheathed in plastic laminate. The drawers and the cabinets are made out of plywood and are covered with carpet. There is a small office as well as a storage room just behind the retail space where the original mechanical equipment is situated.

There is a second floor entrance at the rear of the building for the two original medical offices. The second floor has a double loaded center corridor with office and exam rooms flanking the sides. This corridor ends with a waiting room located at the front of the building. Although some of the door casings and moldings have been replaced the overall plan configuration, doors and windows remains original.

Smith's Pharmacy remained unaltered during its occupancy as a pharmacy by the Smith family from 1946 until 1999 and was left in this state after being sold to the Eckerd Corporation. It retains almost all of its original architectural features as well as lighting and plumbing fixtures. Moreover, Smith's Pharmacy has retained all of its original furniture, pharmacy and soda fountain equipment. Due to this fact, Smith's Pharmacy is an excellent example of a post World War II community pharmacy in Virginia.

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Smith's Pharmacy
Newport News, VA

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8. Statement of Significance

Summary:

Smith's Pharmacy is significant based on Criteria B and C. This two-story brick pharmacy represents the vision of an ambitious young African-American in post World War II America. Following his graduation from Shaw University's Leonard School of Pharmacy and an honorable discharge from the United States Army in 1918, Charles Smith found himself working in White's Pharmacy in Newport News, Virginia as a pharmacist. This job encouraged his drive to establish a pharmacy to serve the Negro population of the peninsula. In 1921, he achieved that dream when he opened Tidewater Pharmacy, which closed in 1932 only to be followed by Smith's Pharmacy in 1946. Smith's Pharmacy remained under the control of the Smith family through January 1999 when it was sold to the Eckerd Corporation. Following historic designation, Dr. Charles Calvin Smith III will return to manage the store as the fifth family member to hold the position. The interior of the pharmacy went virtually unchanged throughout its lifetime. It still retains the original storefront bulkheads, counters, soda fountain and equipment as well as most of the original plumbing and lighting fixtures. The unaltered state of Smith's Pharmacy provides a step back in time to when pharmacies provided a gathering place for the community as well as the valuable retail service of medications.

History:

Criterion B focuses on the life of Dr. Smith and his significance in the community of Newport News. In 1921, Dr. Charles Calvin Smith Sr. opened Tidewater Drugstore as his first pharmacy and the first black owned pharmacy in Newport News. He was forced to close the pharmacy after allowing people to purchase medication on a tab, providing a needed community service during the early years of the Depression. Unfortunately this act of graciousness for the community left Dr. Smith unable to pay his suppliers and forced him to close this pharmacy in 1932. After working odd jobs, including one with the WPA, and saving his money, he was able to purchase land at the corner of Chestnut Avenue and 32nd Street in 1943. Three years later, in 1946, the doctor opened Smith's Pharmacy. The store soon became an educational outlet for aspiring black pharmacy students while segregation was being practiced in Newport News. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the pharmacy became a valuable externship experience for students to gain practical experience for their pharmaceutical licensure. Dr. Smith's pharmacy was also the drop off location for newspapers that high school students would deliver to East End residents in an attempt to earn wages for higher education. He always encouraged his employees to aspire for career

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advancement, which led many of them to find secretarial and sales jobs. Dr. Smith was also instrumental in inspiring anyone who came through his door to register and vote.

The pharmacy stayed open late to allow the shipyard workers a place to congregate after their late night shifts. He remained open until 1 AM for the last shipyard bus. This meant the workers could gather to rehash the day's events, purchase some sodas and cigarettes, and learn the latest gossip. This courtesy extended by Dr. Smith earned him a great respect that is evidenced by several of the workers waiting for him to lock up so they could walk him safely home. On Sundays the pharmacy became an ice cream parlor where families would stop on their way home from church for a cone or a sundae accompanied by a storm of conversation. As well as becoming a community meeting place, the pharmacy was also the source of numerous charitable donations. Dr. Smith believed in supporting the surrounding area with donations to church and school funds drives. He also allowed people with medical emergencies to take home the medicine, but hold off on payment until the next payday. Dr. Smith created an atmosphere that attracted the community to his store and won him a loyal customer following.

Dr. Smith passed away in 1973, but his pharmacy did not. His son, Dr. Charles C. Smith Jr., took control of the store solely until his mother's death when his sister Dr. Margaret Smith Taylor joined him. The two managed the business jointly until Dr. Smith Jr. passed away in 1997. His sister continued to manage the store with the help of her niece, Dr. Margaret Smith Robinson, until January 1999 when she sold it to the Eckerd Corporation. Three generations of the Smith family were pharmacists who worked in the creation of Dr. Charles Smith Sr. The architectural firm of Henry Lewis Livas, Architect built the site in 1946. Livas was one of the earliest African-American architects and architectural instructors in Virginia. He founded his firm shortly after the Second World War and taught as an associate professor at Hampton Institute, currently Hampton University, in the 1950s and 1960s. The Henry L. Livas Firm continues to practice today in Norfolk, Virginia despite Mr. Livas's death in the late 1970's.

The shell of the pharmacy also requires recognition under criterion C. The architecture of the building is an excellent example of the early 20th century American movement commercial style.

The east storefront bulkheads retain original features and materials with aluminum mullions and a lowered painted plywood ceiling. The glass front door and windows are also original. The original metal painted sign still graces the front door as well.

The interior of the Pharmacy also remains primarily original. The layout of the store with the retail pharmacy on the west and the soda fountain and booths on the east create a snapshot of 1946.

The counters maintain their plastic laminate covering from the forties as does the ceiling with its Celetex tiles and the walls retain their original fluorescent light fixtures. Along with the lighting

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fixtures the plumbing fixtures remain original as well. The display cases and shelves for retail goods and pharmaceutical products grace the west wall today as they did in 1946. On the East Side the original wooden booths for the soda fountain remain standing. They are located behind the soda fountain that also remains original. Behind the retail space are an office room and a storage room that holds the original mechanical equipment.

The second floor retains the same layout as when it was built with a single hallway spanning the length of the building beginning with the door at the rear and ending with a waiting room in the front. There are still offices and exam rooms flanking the corridor which retain their original doors and windows while only a few molding and door casings have been replaced.

The continued use of the store as a pharmacy for over fifty-five years with its original fixtures, display cases and hardware qualifies Smith's Pharmacy as a cultural resource in Newport News. The maintenance of the original structure has allowed generations of families to experience the same community atmosphere and feel as though they have stepped back in time to the 1940s.

Dr. Smith's generous donations to the community and educational influence have had a lasting effect on the East End area of Newport News. His family remained in control of the pharmacy until 1999 and the third generation will return to manage the store and continue the tradition of community support once it is reopened following historic designation.

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Bibliography

Brown, Alexander Crosby. *Newport News' 325 Years*. Newport News, Virginia: The Newport News Golden Anniversary Corporation, 1946.

Dalton, Robert E. and John E. Wells. *The Virginia Architects: 1835 to 1955*. Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997.

Smith, Dr. Margaret Taylor, Interview by Mrs. Patricia Mainor, summer 2001.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Begin at the corner of Chestnut Avenue and 32nd Street, move east 106.25 feet, move south 25 feet, move west 106.25 feet, and then north 25 feet back to starting point. The property is located on property map, sheet number 301.01 in section 6, parcel 1. See attached Real Estate Assessment Map of the City of Newport News, Virginia.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated building is located on the entire parcel deeded to the property owner that is historically associated with the site.

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Section Photo Page 8

All Photographs are of:

SMITH'S PHARMACY
Newport News, Virginia
VDHR File Number: 121-5066
Paige Weiss, photographer
February 2002

All negatives are stored with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

VIEW OF: Western elevation, 1st floor detail
NEG NO.: 19716
PHOTO 1 OF 10

VIEW OF: Western elevation
NEG NO.: 19716
PHOTO 2 OF 10

VIEW OF: Western elevation, looking northeast
NEG NO.: 19716
PHOTO 3 OF 10

VIEW OF: Eastern elevation, looking southwest
NEG NO.: 19716
PHOTO 4 OF 10

VIEW OF: Interior south wall, soda fountain, looking southeast
NEG NO.: 19716
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VIEW OF: Interior southeastern corner
NEG NO.: 19716
PHOTO 6 OF 10

VIEW OF: Interior northeastern corner
NEG NO.: 19716
PHOTO 7 OF 10

VIEW OF: Interior, looking southwest
NEG NO.: 19716
PHOTO 8 OF 10

VIEW OF: Interior north wall, looking northwest
NEG NO.: 19716
PHOTO 9 OF 10

VIEW OF: Interior, second floor waiting room, looking north east
NEG NO.: 19716
PHOTO 10 OF 10



MAP 301.02

*Smith's Pharmacy
Newport News, VA
VDHR # 101-50066*

12093996
3526894

31 Jul 01

100 200

REAL ESTATE ASSESSMENT MAP
of the
CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA

SHEET NO.
301.01
PROPERTY MAP

Smith's Pharmacy
Newport News, VA.
121-5066

18/374604/4094820

NEWPORT NEWS SOUTH QUADRANGLE
VIRGINIA

7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

