

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 SMITH, GOVERNOR JOHN WALTER, HOUSE
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 104 South Church Street N/A not for publication
city, town Snow Hill N/A vicinity
state Maryland code MD county Worcester code 047 zip code 21863

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>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>2</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] STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER Date 8/12/94

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

WO-127

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)

QUEEN ANNE

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls WeatherboardShingleroof Slateother Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

The Governor John Walter Smith house, located at 104 South Church Street, is an expansive two-and-a-half story Queen Anne frame house erected in 1889-1890. The dwelling is supported on a raised brick foundation and covered by a broad slate hip roof extended by numerous towers and bays. Encircling the house on several sides is a Tuscan columned wraparound porch, and extending to the rear is a two-and-a-half story service wing. The interior boasts much of its original woodwork and hardware including a rare collection of Art Nouveau colored glass windows. The house occupies a generous lot dotted with mature shade trees and shrubs in a southern residential district of Snow Hill, Maryland. A one story frameout building stands to the rear of the house.

See continuation sheet no. 1
for General Description

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 7 Page 1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Governor John Walter Smith house stands at 104 South Church Street in the southern residential district of Snow Hill, Worcester County, Maryland. The two-and-a-half story frame house faces northeast with the main roof oriented on a northwest/southeast axis.

Designed by Baltimore architect, Jackson C. Gott and built in 1889-90, the expansive Queen Anne frame dwelling is supported by raised five-course common bond brick foundation, and the building is sheathed with a combination of narrow cypress weatherboards and decorative fish-scale shingles. The complex, steeply pitched hip roof, as well as the adjacent towers, are covered with slate. Standing behind the house is a single-story frame smokehouse that has been converted into an outside bathroom.

The northeast (main) facade is an asymmetrical elevation with a centralized double-door entrance and flanking polygonal towers. Stretching across the full front and around to the sides is a single-story porch supported by paired Tuscan columns on shingled bases. Fitting between the columns is a rectangular baluster railing with a molded handrail. The front entrance to the porch is marked by a shallow pediment, and the porch ceiling is sheathed with narrow tongue-and-groove beaded boards. Fixed atop the center bay of the porch is a second floor balcony that is covered by a shed roof supported by turned posts. The double front door covered with period screen doors, is distinguished by molded panels. Behind the paneled doors is another set of paneled doors that are fitted with elaborate colored glass and topped by a colored glass transom. The glass panels are highlighted by many faceted, gem-like medallions. Immediately right of the double front doors is a colored glass sash window. The other windows that light the front rooms are filled with single-pane sash and are flanked by louvered and paneled shutters. Rising on the northeast corner of the house is a three-story polygonal tower that is capped by a bell-shaped roof, while to the southeast a slightly shorter polygonal tower is covered by a conical tower. The main, northeast roof slope is distinguished by a large gable as well as a five-sided dormer. Marking the uppermost roof slope is a pair of eyebrow-shaped vents. The ridge of the hip roof, as well as the peaks to the dormers and

See Continuation Sheet No. 2

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 7 Page 2

towers, are trimmed with copper cresting and/or finials. Flanking the ridge of the hip roof are a pair of large brick chimney stacks with decorated sides.

The northwest side elevation is marked by a projecting two-and-a-half story, two-bay pavilion that is covered by a clipped gable roof. A combination of colored glass and single-pane sash windows illuminate the first and second floors. Six-pane windows pierce the brick foundation wall, and six-over-one sash windows light the third floor.

Extending to the southwest is a two-and-a-half story, two-bay service wing that is covered by a clipped gable roof. A single gabled dormer marks the north roof slope. Single-story shed roof additions extend from each side to enlarge the service areas of the house. An enclosed one-room section fills the southeast second floor corner of the service wing.

The southeast side of the main house is detailed in a similar manner as the rest of the house, aside from a single-story pavilion that marks the southeast corner. The bay is illuminated by large-size two-over-two sash windows. A side stair to the wraparound porch leads to a partially glazed door that opens into the main house.

The interior retains an incredible amount of original features and finishes. The generous center hall is fitted with high, paneled oak wainscoting, and sliding pocket doors open into the adjacent rooms. Next to the entrance is a small niche fitted with built-in seats on carved bracket feet. The niche also retains its decorative plaster ceiling. Spanning the distance of the niche opening is a delicate wood screen of sawn and turned spindle decoration. The wood screens also survive above the nine-panel sliding doors that provide access to the adjacent rooms. The doors, framed by molded surrounds, also retain original brass hardware. The stair, fixed along the southeast passage wall, is a dominant feature with a pair of bold paneled newel posts that feature carved post heads. Ornamental figurines surmounted with gas-lighted globes formerly topped each post head. A series of intermediate turned newel posts and turned balusters distinguish the balustrade. Located in the south end of the center hall is a

See Continuation Sheet No. 3

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

WO-127

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 7 Page 3

corner fireplace fitted with an elaborate period mantel, reddish-pink hearth tiles, and a decorative iron firebox. The outside edge of the firebox is trimmed with a brass surround. Above the mantel is an overmantel of beveled glass. The rear wall of the hall is also distinguished by another colored glass sash window.

North of the passage is a parlor or reception room which is highlighted by a cherry mantel and overmantel. The Victorian columned mantel is topped by an overmantel of beveled glass mirrors and small shelves to each side. Slender spindles support the individual shelves. The entire mantel is topped by a decorative scroll pediment. In contrast to the hall fireplace, this hearth is fitted with greenish-yellow tiles that depict cherubs, and cherubs are delineated on the iron fireback as well. During the recent removal of a later tile ceiling, the original painted ceiling was uncovered and awaits restoration.

The southeast parlor retains many original features. In contrast to any other room in the house, the woodwork is painted white with gold highlights. The Victorian mantel includes a mirrored overmantel, and the hearth is faced with a white marble. The plaster ceiling has survived in this room with its bold, molded cornice and intricate center medallion. Located at the south end of the room is a flat arch which spans the opening into a recessed bay. The arch is supported by plaster imposts. A plaster medallion decorates the bay ceiling.

The dining room, located northwest of the hall, is a large rectangular room with a fireplace fixed in the southwest corner. The Victorian mantel and mirrored overmantel follow along similar lines to the mantel in the hall and northeast parlor. The firebox is trimmed with a brass surround, and a "fire god" emblem with flames radiating from a face set within a circle marks the fireback. Special to this room is the abundance of colored glass in the upper sash of the dining room windows. The doors, framed by molded surrounds, are grained in imitation oak, and the walls are fitted with chair rail and baseboard moldings.

The fourth first floor room of the main house is the study, which is located on the southwest side of the hall. There is a cherry mantel fixed to the end wall with a mirrored overmantel and

See Continuation Sheet No. 4

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 7 Page 4

flanking shelves. An iron stove insert has been placed in the firebox, but the former owner related that a devil's face is featured on the fireback. Also distinctive are the built-in bookshelves with glazed doors and drawers along the bottom. A classical cornice trims the top edge of the cabinets. The lead muntins on the doors follow a repeating Gothic arch and shield motif.

The service wing is partitioned into smaller rooms. A seven-panel door off the center hall opens into a rear hall that contains a back staircase. A turned newel post and turned balusters support a molded handrail. The open string stair rises to the finished attic on the third floor.

The second floor of the main block is divided in a similar manner to the first floor with large bedrooms disposed around a spacious center hall. Seven-panel bedroom doors are topped by movable glass transoms. Much of the late nineteenth century oak graining survives. At the north end of the upstairs hall there is a small sitting room that opens onto the second floor balcony.

The southeast bedroom features a Victorian mantel and a tiled-faced hearth that follows in the same style established in other rooms. At the south end of the room, plaster impostes support the arch that spans the opening into the bay recess. A tiled bathroom is located in the northeast corner of the room, and the bathroom walls are highlighted by a row of shell motif tiles capped by a row of egg-and-dart molded tiles. The sash window is fitted with frosted glass that has a decorative pattern.

The northeast bedroom is distinguished by a cherry mantel with a beveled edge mirrored overmantel and flanking shelves. The reddish-pink hearth tiles incorporate a leaf pattern, and the firebox is rendered in an abstract pyramidal design.

The northwest bedroom has been fully paneled with knotty pine vertical boards, but the period oak mantel with tiled hearth was maintained during the remodeling. Instead of the slender spindle supports like other mantels in the house, the overmantel shelves are supported by brackets. The hearth tiles follow an abstract circular design, and the iron firebox is executed in a basketweave

See Continuation Sheet No. 5

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 7 Page 5

pattern.

Across the hall, the southwest bedroom woodwork has been painted white, but the cherry mantel is marked by Victorian columns, bracketed overmantel shelves, and beveled edge mirrors.

The second floor of the service wing is divided into several small rooms, and the turned baluster stair rises to the third floor. The attic, or the third floor, is divided into several rooms that open off a center hallway. The front part of the attic is partitioned into five generous sized rooms with five-panel doors framed by plain surrounds. Shorter four-panel doors open into closets. The doors retain porcelain knobs and metal box locks.

The cellar is fully excavated and divided by foot-thick brick partitions. Underpinning the various stacks are arched supports, some of which retain the wooden centering used by the masons to lay the arches.

Standing behind the house is an early twentieth century, single-story frame outbuilding that is supported by a concrete block foundation, is sheathed with narrow weatherboards, and covered by a steeply pitched roof. The building, originally used as a smokehouse, was converted to a bath house and storage building.

See Continuation Sheet No. 6

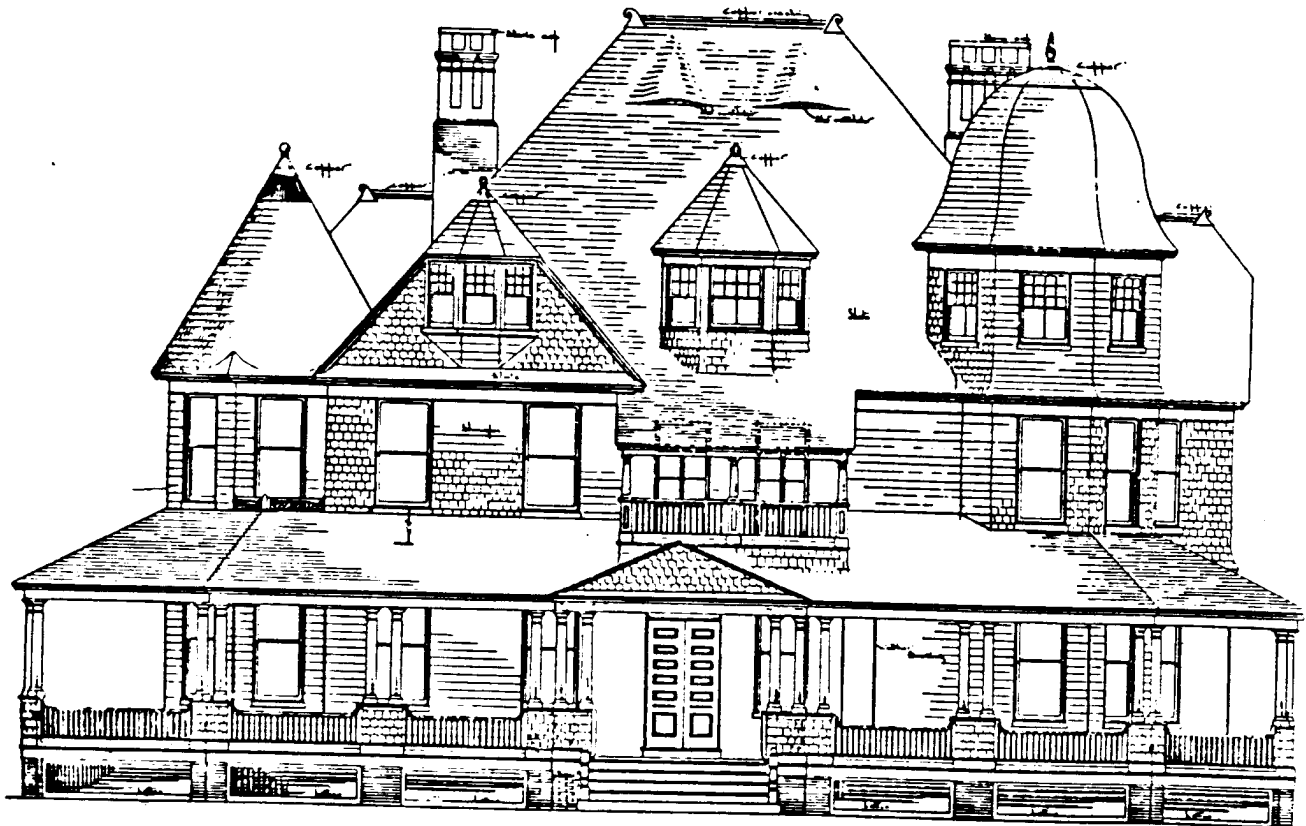
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 7 Page 6

Design of Dwelling
J. Walter Smith Esq.
Snow Hill Md.
Scale of 1/8 inch John C. Gott, Architect
Dulles, Md.



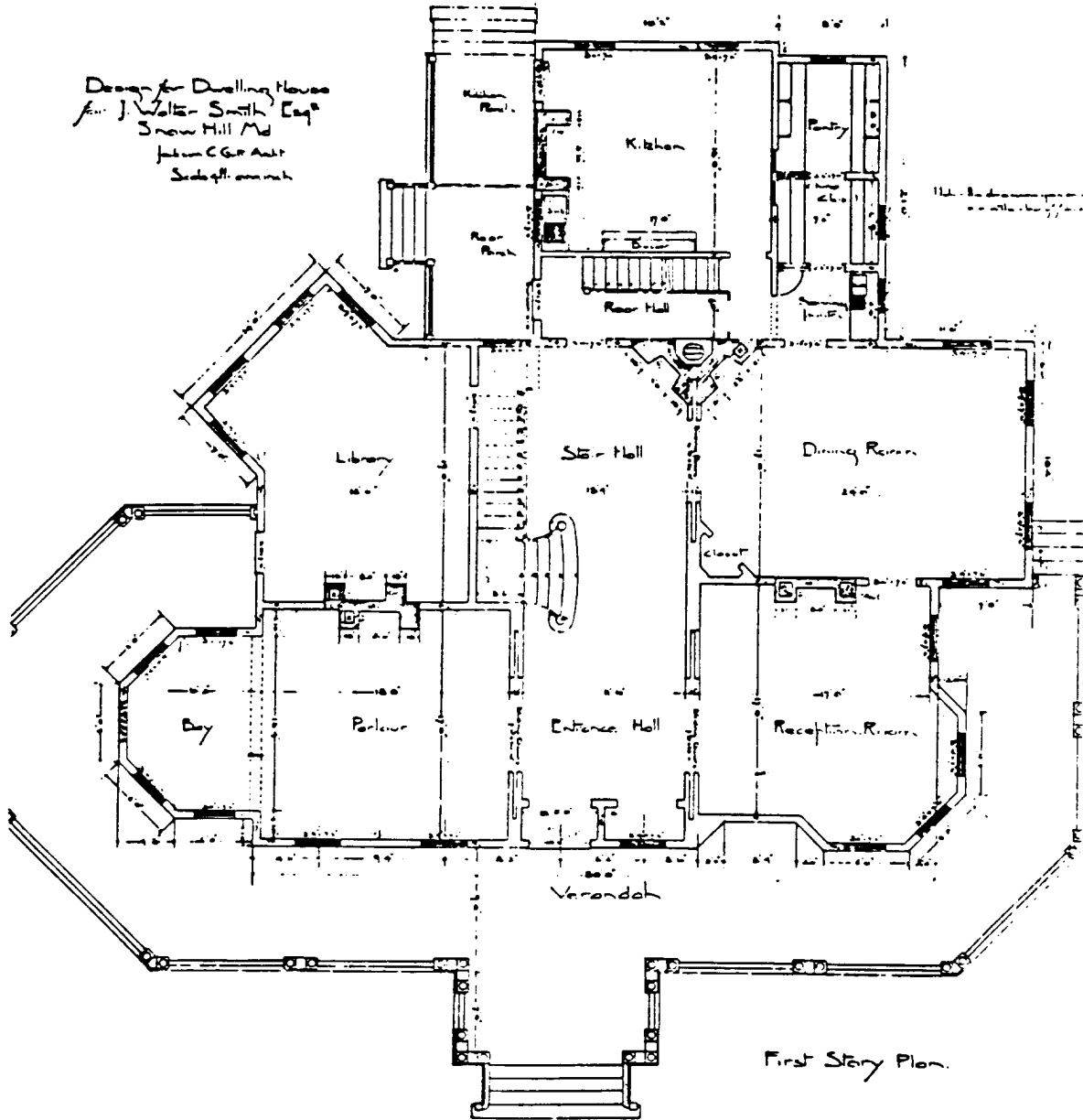
See Continuation Sheet No. 7

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 7 Page 7



8. Statement of Significance

WO-127

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
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1889-1925

Significant Dates

1889

1925

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

SMITH, JOHN WALTER

Architect/Builder

GOTT, JACKSON C., Architect

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

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Governor John Walter Smith house in Snow Hill, Worcester County, is significant for both its architectural character and for association with Governor Smith for whom it was built. The Smith house is one of the most sophisticated examples of a Queen Anne influenced house on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Built in 1889-1890, the house is characterized by an asymmetrical plan, multiple roof lines, polygonal towers, a variety of window types and materials, and elaborate decorative detailing on the interior. Of particular note is the extensive use of stained glass in the windows and the over-all grand scale of the building. The house was built for John Walter Smith (1845-1925), one of the most influential businessmen and politicians in Worcester County. Smith owned a large amount of land on the Eastern Shore and was involved in establishing and serving as a director of several businesses including lumber, transportation, banking, and agriculture. Politically, his most influential roles were as a two term Governor of Maryland from 1900-1908 and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. He served in the House from 1898 to 1900, just before being elected Governor, and in the Senate from 1908 to 1920, just after being the state's Governor. Serving in these major political positions, Smith brought great prestige and influence to the Lower Eastern Shore. The house was clearly built with entertainment in mind which is evident in the plan of the large public spaces which easily flow into each other. Smith resided in this home until his death in 1925.

See continuation sheet no. 8 for Historic Context and Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan data.

See continuation sheet no. 12

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:

Worcester County Library, Snow Hill

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of property 1+ acre
USGS quad. - Snow Hill, Maryland

UTM References

A

1	8
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4	6	5	4	3	0
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4	2	2	4	8	9	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet no. 13

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet no. 13

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian date 20 January 1994
 organization Private Consultant telephone (410) 651-1094
 street & number P.O. Box 5 state MD zip code 21871
 city or town Westover

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 8 Page 8

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Eastern Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture/Landscape Architecture/and Community
Planning Government/Law

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Known Design Source: Gott, Jackson C., architect

See Continuation Sheet No. 9

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLANDSection number 8 Page 9**HISTORIC CONTEXT:**

The Governor John Walter Smith house stands out clearly as one of the most distinctive and elaborate Queen Anne dwellings erected on the Eastern Shore during the late nineteenth century. Designed by Baltimore architect, Jackson C. Gott, this two-and-a-half story frame dwelling outdistances any contemporary regional examples in size and attention to impressive details. Other regional examples of comparable sophistication include the Gillis-Grier house in Salisbury's Newtown District, Wicomico County; the Partlett house in Easton, Talbot County, which was designed by Baltimore architect T. Buckler Ghequier; and the Pauline Crocket house in Crisfield, Somerset County. The Gov. John Walter Smith house, however, was conceived on an even grander scale than these other large houses with seemingly few limits in the finish of the exterior and interior. Clearly evident in the design of the floor plan are deliberate intentions to create formal entrance and reception into the house as well as distinct segregation for servants in the rear kitchen wing and attic bedrooms.

The over twenty-room interior is fitted with sophisticated period woodwork including paneled oak wainscoting, pocket doors, cherry and oak mantels with mirrored overmantels, tiled hearths, grained woodwork, original hardware, decorative plaster and painted ceilings, and most importantly, a sizeable collection of domestic colored glass windows. Not only are the glass windows in excellent condition, but they were used liberally throughout the first floor entrance and dining room. The dining room windows are particularly unusual as they depict various animals in the center panels.

The property is also significant as the residence of John Walter Smith (1845-1925), a former governor of Maryland. Elected as governor in 1899, he served a four-year term beginning in 1900. Significant accomplishments during his term of office include the initiation of state health programs in the fight against tuberculosis and the improvement of the state's rural schools. He is also recognized for his detection of fraud in the enumeration of Southern Maryland residents in the 1900 Federal census. He called a special legislative session in 1901 in order to correct the improper count, which, left in place, would have allowed for a probable increase in Republican representation from Southern

See Continuation Sheet No. 10

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 8 Page 10

Maryland.

John Walter Smith began his political career in local politics before his election to the Maryland State Senate, seated in 1889 and re-elected in 1893 and 1897. He also served in the United States House of Representatives and Senate; he was elected to the House in 1898, and he won the Senate seat in 1908 and again in 1914. While John Walter Smith retired from political office in 1921, he remained the Democratic National Committeeman for Maryland until his death in 1925.

In addition to his political positions John Walter Smith was one of the most prominent of Worcester County's businessmen and landowners during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. He owned a dozen farms on the Eastern Shore, and Smith held large shares in the Surry Lumber Company and the Cumberland Lumber Company, both located on the western shore of Virginia. He was also a co-founder of the First National Bank of Snow Hill, and a director in the Fidelity and Deposit Company; the Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington Railroad Company; the Jessup & Moore Paper Company; and the Southern Transportation Company.

According to the biography written at the time of his death in 1925, John Walter Smith started work in the Snow Hill mercantile business of George S. Richardson, then one of the wealthiest merchants in town. In a few years, John Walter Smith was working on his own grocery and milling business at a time of significant growth in Snow Hill. He was successful in marketing local county produce as well as milling timber and grain for the export market from the Pocomoke River port. After several years he was asked to join in partnership with his former employer, George S. Richardson, and the firm was later renamed, Richardson, Smith, Moore & Company.

John Walter Smith married Mary Frances Richardson, his partner's sister, in 1869, and the next year John Walter Smith is listed in the U.S. Census for Worcester County as a 25-year old merchant with personal property valued at \$2,000. In partnership with George S. Richardson, John R.P. Moore, and later Marion T. Hargis, John Walter Smith prospered like few others in Worcester County. His immense fortune was established primarily in the lumber business with timber holdings that extended through

See Continuation Sheet No. 11

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 8 Page 11

Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina.

By the late 1880s, John Walter Smith was ready to embark on the construction of his impressive Church Street dwelling, on a lot which he had purchased in February 1875. In fact, the unimproved lot is designated with his name on the Snow Hill town map published two years later by Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson in their Lower Eastern Shore atlas. Smith retained the services of Baltimore architect, Jackson C. Gott, who prepared ink drawings on linen that still survive. (The drawings are held by the current owner of the house, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Warren.) Older Snow Hill residents relate that John Walter Smith had wagon loads of oyster shells spread over the lot, which was then covered with topsoil.

On June 19, 1889, the Pocomoke City newspaper, the Record and Gazette, stated,

The foundation of the palatial residence of Col. J. Walter Smith is now being laid, and the work of erecting the building will go rapidly on. The house when completed will undoubtedly be the handsomest residence on the Eastern Shore.

After John Walter Smith's death in 1925, the Snow Hill property passed to his only heir, his daughter Georgie Smith Foster, who retained ownership until June 1940 when she sold her parent's house to John O. Byrd, who in turn transferred the property five years later to Dr. Paul Cohen and his wife, Mabel. Dr. Cohen operated a private medical practice in the house for many years. The current owners purchased the property in 1988.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 9 Page 12

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Worcester County Probate Records, Worcester County Courthouse, Snow
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

WO-127

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SMITH, GOV. JOHN W., HOUSE
WORCESTER COUNTY
MARYLAND

Section number 10 Page 13

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Worcester County Land Record, RHO 1532/544

Beginning for the same at the northernmost line of said Martin Street at a point 90 feet northeasterly from said land of Walter B. Hearthway (1) thence running in a northwesterly line parallel with the southeast line of the land of said Walter B. Hearthway a distance of 100 ft. (2) thence in a southwesterly direction to a line parallel with the northernmost line of said Martin St. a distance of 90 ft. to the southeast line of said land of Walter B. Hearthway (3) thence running in a northwesterly direction by and the land of Walter B. Hearthway a distance of 186 ft. 1 inch (4) thence running in a northerly direction in a line parallel with the southeasterly line of said last to the southwesterly side of Church St. (5) thence running in a southeasterly direction by and with Church St. to the intersection of said line with the northernmost line of said Martin St. (6) thence running by and with the confluence of said intersection and in a southwesterly direction by and with said Martin Street. The property is designated as Parcel 420 on Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation, Worcester County Map No. 200.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The nominated property consists of the town lot upon which the resources stand.

See Continuation Sheet No. 14