



## IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 810 Locust Avenue  
 Map and Parcel: 51-74  
 Census Track & Block: 3-316  
 Present Owner: Downing Smith  
 Address: 810 Locust Avenue  
 Present Use: Residence  
 Original Owner: George Sinclair  
 Original Use: Residence

## BASE DATA

Historic Name: Locust Grove  
 Date/Period: 1840-4  
 Style: Late Georgian  
 Height to Cornice:  
 Height in Stories: 2  
 Present Zoning: R-2  
 Land Area (sq.ft.): 90,685 sq. ft.  
 Assessed Value (land + imp.): 6600 + 11,850 = 18,430

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Locust Grove is a fine example of the survival of eighteenth century Georgian forms well into the nineteenth century. Characteristically, the house is five bays wide, two stories high, with a hipped tin roof and end chimneys. The entrance is sheltered by a formal portico of coupled paneled columns. The brick walls are laid in common bond, the wooden cornice is very simple, and the window and door architraves are not treated with moldings. To preserve the effect of symmetry, blind windows are fitted into the north and south sides. The interior is based on the double pile plan with a fine double run stair. All the mantels are identical, simple Greek revival designs. The high basement houses a rare set of double parlors, one of which served as a dining room. The original kitchen and smoke house are still standing, as is the pre-1844 residence.

## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

On September 19, 1839, George Sinclair purchased 534 acres from Thomas Meriwether for \$16,000. The land was originally a part of "The Farm" granted to Nicholas Meriwether in 1735. Construction on the existing house was begun shortly after the purchase and lasted over a period of four years. During Sheridan's raid a regiment encamped here and carried off horses, servants and other valuables. The property was purchased by the Locust Grove Investment Co. in 1876 and subdivided. In 1893 the mansion and five acres were sold to Judge John White. Judge Lemuel Smith, a Justice of The Supreme Court of Virginia, purchased the property. It is presently owned by Justice Smith's son, Downing Smith. Deed references; ACDB 37-438, 98-341, 98-427, 99-175, 159-146, City DB 45-361, 140-353, 159-147, 195-139, 209-379.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Locust Grove is a very late example of the Georgian style. It was the manor house of a 534-acre farm now comprising most of the northeast portion of Charlottesville.

## CONDITIONS

Good

## SOURCES

City and County Records, Mrs. Downing Smith, Stevens, Virginia House Tour, p. 131.

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Dawning Smith 1958 209-379 \$33,800  
MOTHE - GRACE SMITH 1956 195-139

L.F. : GRACE SMITH ~~1948~~ 159-147 \$17,000  
LEAUEL 140-353

judge  
John W. Seaburne : Samuel J. Smith from <sup>ad.</sup> J.G.A. Cole \$20,000  
1923 45-361 (Seaburne 1/2 interest to Smith 1924 47-188)

Cole from John S. White : Hunter Pendleton, ex of John M. White  
1915 ACDB 159-146 - w/ PLAT

John M. White from Locust Grove Investment Co.  
By two deeds [ 1893 ACDB 98-427 \$7000 - Dwelling: 2 acres  
1893 " 99-175 \$500  
LOT #1 w/ MANSION HOUSE : 5 8/1000 acres

~~A.G.I.C. to Mrs. George Perkins (Plot) 1893 98-917~~

LOCUST GROVE INVESTMENT from ESTATE of George Sinclair  
1876 ACDB 98 p. 341 \$39,000 - 500 acres

ACDB 37-438-534 acres Sept 19, 1839 \$16,000 from Thomas W. Meriwether  
41-218 \$2500 - 3 tracts of land from  
J.W. Saunders : v. Southall - 1843

PURCHASED  
FROM LEWIS FAMILY

~~98-341~~

#158

Street Address: 810 LOCUST AVE.

Historic Name:

Map & Parcel: 51-74

Date/Period:

Census Tract & Block:

Style:

Present Owner: DOWNING SMITH

Height to Cornice:

Address: SAME

Height to Eaves:

Present Use: DWELLING

Present Zoning: R-2 4.4 acres

Original Owner:

Land Area (a. ft.): 302' frontage

Original Use:

Assessed Value (land+imp)

5000 + 6000 = \$11,000

Architectural Description

Common Bond - VERY PLAIN PLAIN  
DOORWAY TRANSOM : SIDELIGHTS

6/6 glazing -

Smoke House : Kitchen w/ moose tooth cornice

3 Bays on Back w/

False window

Historic Description

PINE MANTELS

DOUBLE PARLORS on Ground : FIRST  
FLOOR

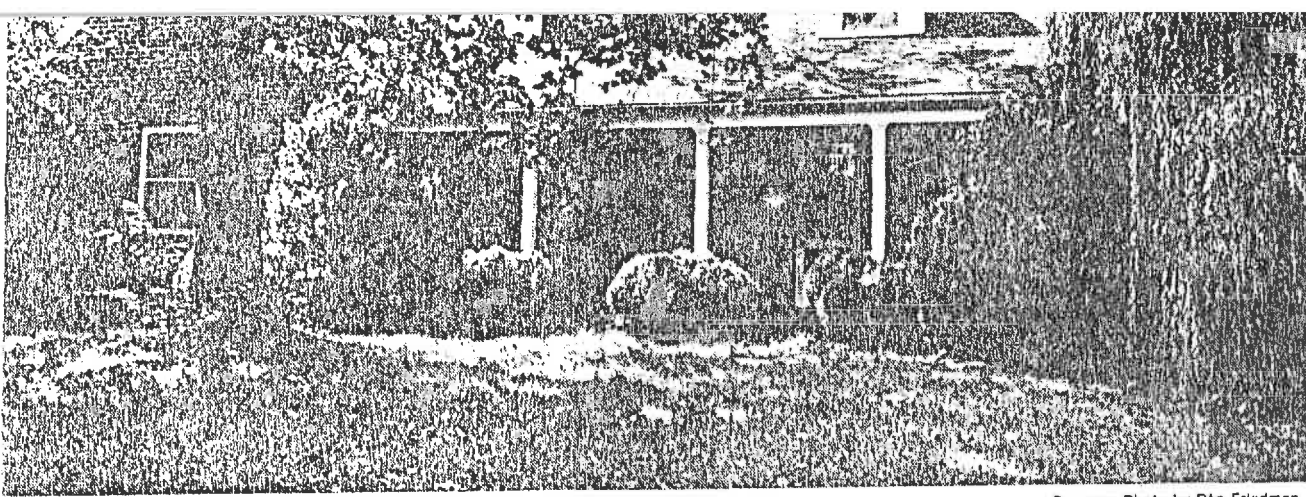
Name of Persons Interviewed:

'899	" " "	14 ac 57 3/4	"	2086 + " = 6026
915	" " " est	" " "	" " "	2860 + 3500 = 6360
'13, '19, '20	Col J A Cole	E side L B	ben	1000 + 3600 = 4600
'21, '22, '23	"	"	"	4500 + 4100 = 8600
'24	Fishburne & Smith	"	"	" " " fig 1460
'25	L F Loomis	4.44	"	" " "
'26 - '31	"	"	"	+ 5500 = "
'31 (except land)	"	"	"	7000 + 6500 = 13,500
'31	"	"	"	6900 + 6500 = 13,400
'31	"	"	"	12000 + 8000 = 20,000
'31, '38 est	"	"	"	6925 + 8000 = 14,925
'37	"	"	"	45000 + " = "

~~1871~~ - 1871 Geo Sinclair est 492 ac 40, per acre 40, 1/2 + 4000 = 24,612.50  
 857,52,40,63

1820	Thos W. Lewis est	835 ac		+ 3375 = 18,487
1826-28	" " "	"		<del>18,487</del> + 4210 = 19,622
31	Ely. Lewis (clover)	290 ac		+ 2710 = 4926
36-39	Thos. W. Mendenhall	534 ac		" = 10,680 for NH + Ely. Lewis + measured
40	" " "	"		+ 1500 = 11,945
41	Geo St. Clair	535 ac		" = 11,775 for Thos W. Mendenhall
45	Geo Sinclair	572 "		" = 13,427
46-47	" " "	567 "		" = 13,317
48-50	" " "	493 "		" = 10,077
1871 - 1871	" " est	492 ac 40, 7		+ 4000 = 24,612.50
1892	" " "	506 ac 80, 7		" = 19,725.50





Progress Photo by Dan Friedman

**BRICK HOUSE BEHIND MANSION IS OLDER THAN THE MAIN HOUSE**  
Pre-1844 House Was Itself Made of Salvaged Bricks

## Locust Grove Gates Now Gone

# City Has Overtaken Plantation

By DAN FRIEDMAN  
of The Progress Staff

"Locust Grove," Mr. and Mrs. Downing Smith's imposing four-story home of late Georgian design on Locust Avenue in Charlottesville, is a good example of a meticulous and loving preservation of an historic residence.

With some of the best houses both in the city and county threatened by the bulldozer, developments or sheer neglect, it's reassuring to see a place of historic significance so well attended to.

Situated on four acres of extensive gardens and magnificent old trees, Locust Grove has been the Smith family home since 1913 when Judge Lemuel Smith — a former Virginia Supreme Court Justice and father of the present owner — purchased the property.

The 12 room red-brick mansion was originally a part of the Nicholas Meriwether grant of 1735, and associated, therefore, with Meriwether's Charlottesville home, "The Farm," still standing on Farm Lane. And on September 19, 1839 — according to the Historic Landmark Survey — a Meriwether descendant sold 534 acres for \$16,000 to George Sinclair, who built Locust Grove a year later.

During the Civil War Gen. Philip Sheridan raided the area and a Union regiment occupied Locust Grove, carrying off horses, servants and other valuables. Mrs. Sinclair at the time reputedly was nursing a seriously wounded Confederate soldier and successfully concealed his presence.

One of the real splendors at Locust Grove today — and an indication of how large the early plantation once was — is its group of fascinating outbuildings. A guest house on the south lawn — which the Smith's use as a rental property — is older than the main house and was made from the bricks of the old dismantled slave quarters. There's a charming two-story brick kitchen building with a massive chimney behind the house which is used as a garage, and an original smoke house with elaborate brick cornice work which the owners have converted to a second guest house.

"Before the land was subdivided in the late nineteenth century," Mrs. Smith said, "the entrance gates for Locust Grove were located where Martha Jefferson hospital is today — five long city blocks away."

The main residence is a fairly standard four-over-four-over-four — that is, four rooms and a hall on each of the three main floors. The full attic — which is used for storage — has lovely former windows. All the rooms are of noble proportions. The ceilings on the first floor are 12 feet high, and there's a fireplace in every room and beautiful hand-painted ceramic tiles at the base of each fireplace.

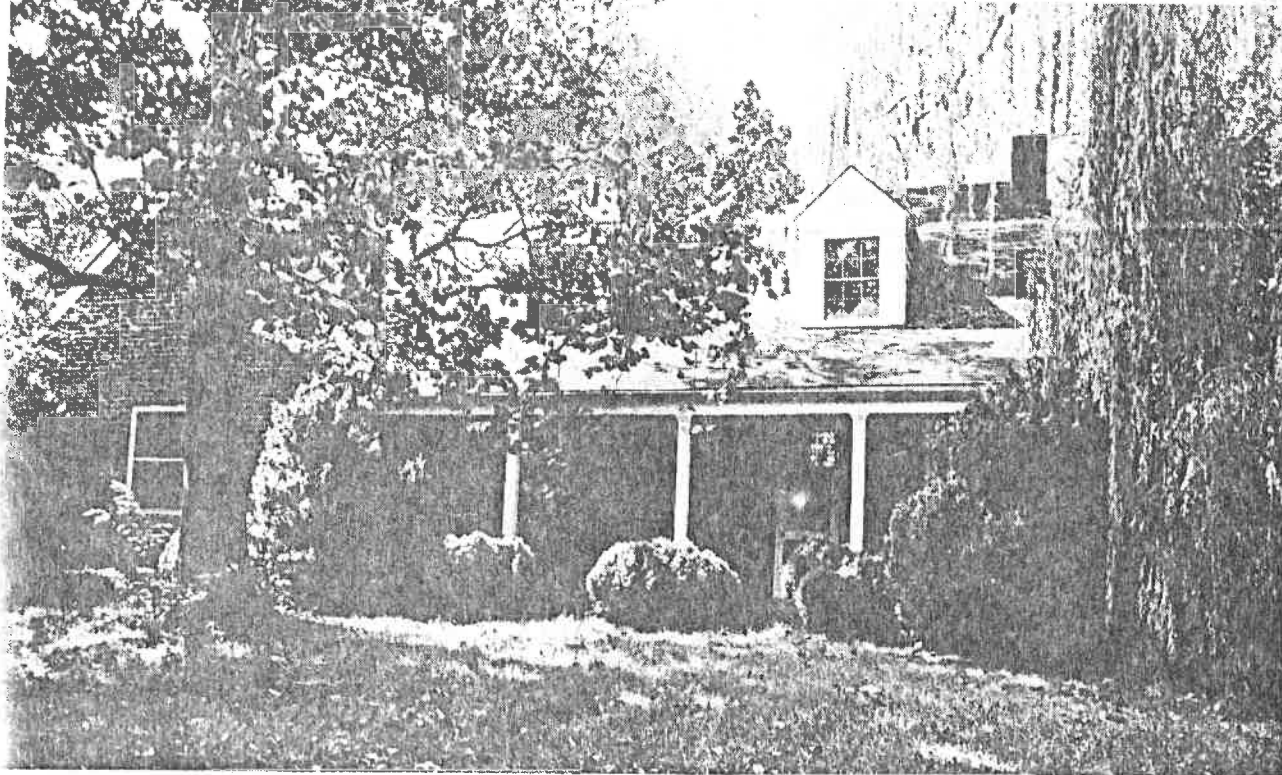
The house is decorated with a fine collection of family furniture and antiques, including an old clock in the living room and a pair of beds upstairs which were made by Smith's grandfather. In addition, there are some interesting Chinese vases which Smith's mother received from her first cousin, writer Pearl Buck.

"The place is home to us," Mrs. Smith said. "My husband has lived here since he was six years old, and, quite simply, we couldn't live anywhere else."



**MODEST KITCHEN BUILDING NOW SERVES AS GARAGE**  
Not Fine Old Brickwork in Building's Cornice

LOCUST GRO



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LOCUST GROVE A  
Balanc



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Not Fine Old Brickwork in Building's Cornice



Louise Brown

5-2 Am. of. Elm

W. 1/2 garage - "

