

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Laurel Hall

Other names/site number: Fletcher, Stoughton A., Estate; Ladywood School for Girls

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 5395 Emerson Way

City or town: Indianapolis State: IN County: Marion

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
--	-------------------------------

<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Tudor Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE
walls: BRICK
STONE: limestone
roof: TERRA COTTA
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Laurel Hall is a two-and-a-half story brick and stone building with a green tile roof situated on a landscaped hill on Indianapolis's suburban northeast side. Its scale and execution of detail in the English Tudor Revival style make it one of the finest examples in Indianapolis. Built in 1916 as a country estate by the Fletcher banking family, the former residence continues to read as the architect intended with vistas to and from the home, with impressive carved stone, stained and leaded art glass windows, and an expansive use of wood detailing. Minor modifications were made to the building during the time it was Ladywood School, most notable of these was the conversion of a second story addition on the south porch and the ballroom converted to a chapel area for students that featured original ribbed groin vaulting and niches with stained art glass windows.

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Narrative Description

OVERVIEW-SITE, 1916. Contributing. Alex Tuschinsky, landscape architect

The roughly six-acre site was part of a much larger estate that was developed in 1916 by the Fletcher family. The wooded hills feature a long winding drive, Windridge, that leads up from Emerson Way to Manor House Circle where the house is located. Windridge Drive forms most of the southwest border of the property and features a low stone retaining wall along its north/east edge (photo 08). A wooded ravine is located along the east side of the property and features a concrete arch bridge, c. 1925, near its south end (photo 10). The bridge spans an existing property line with the Cathedral High School campus to the east. Additionally, a stone staircase (photo 33) that cascades down the ravine on the school campus is part of this nomination. Both the bridge and stairs are contributing structures. The ravine has occasional water that flows down to the north where it empties into Fall Creek. The site's landscaping has a natural organization around the site perimeter and features wildflowers and large, mature native trees. Near the home, the landscaping is organized into evergreen hedges along terraces and a few specimen evergreens on the west and north sides of the house.

Based on early aerial photographs, the site was only slightly less wooded. The 1937 and 1941 aerial photographs show the ravine area to the east and hillside to the southwest, lining the main road leading up to Laurel Hall as being wooded, as they are today. This includes the convergence of wooded areas along the road, leading over the concrete bridge, spanning the ravine and the ravine southeast of Laurel Hall. It appears that the area north of Laurel Hall was shaped into greens of lawn that terraced down to Fall Creek (1937 photo), however, by the time the 1941 aerial photograph was taken, there seems to be less landscaping between the greens, which appears to last into the 1970s. Only the upper green where a pool was once located in the late 1970s remains, the lower areas are wooded. The cascading stair on Cathedral's campus is east of this upper green. The earlier aerial photographs also show a slightly less wooded hillside lawn west of Laurel Hall, which likely maximized the view of the building as one approached on the road leading up to the building. Probably more so due to maturing trees between the road and building, some of this area appears more wooded in modern aerial photography. The Fletchers developed a horse track south of the mansion house, roughly near the present-day 5000 block of N. Emerson, just south of its western bend, on the east side of the road. The land comprising the track was sold and developed for housing by 1962. Present-day Emerson Way did not cut through the estate originally; the city built it between 1956 and 1962. Originally, Millersville Road led directly to the area by the house and across the historic concrete bridge included in this nomination. Across present-day Emerson Way, southwest of the mansion house, a caretaker's cottage and a thirty-foot-tall boulder stone water tower stood until about 2005. The water tower supplied the estate using a gravity system. A few traces of the estate, boulder stone walls, and a small milkhouse/wellhouse house, remain in this area, now isolated from the mansion house (included in the boundaries of Ladywood Apartments, NR, 2019). The meadow area southwest of the house, now on the east side of Emerson Way, is where developer Robert Welch built Windridge Condominiums in the mid-1970s. The construction of Emerson Way and Windridge

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Condominiums left the nominated area as an impressive but relatively small 5.9 acre remnant of the once-vast estate.

The large, L-shaped house is situated atop the hill with Manor House Circle drive extending up to and under a porte cochere, forming a circle at the building (photo 03). Parking is on the drive and a parking lot is southeast of the house; this is screened from Windridge Drive by a stone wall. A brick and stone terrace extend along the full width of the west façade (photo 02), overlooking the hillside lawn and Windridge Drive below. The terrace wraps around the northwest corner with steps that lead down to a lower terrace off the north façade (photos 06-07). A wide set of steps leads down from the north terrace to a lawn area that was developed into a pool area that is no longer extant, though the pumphouse and fence remain (photo 09). Steps from the west terrace lead down to a concrete sidewalk that extends north and south to the parking area and a set of stone steps that leads down to Windridge Drive (photo 08). The organization of the site composes a contributing resource with several contributing structures. The pool area structures developed in the 1970s are considered non-contributing (photo 09).

LAUREL HALL, 1916. Tudor Revival. Contributing
Herbert L. Bass & Company, architects.
Latham & Walters, contractors.

Exterior

The L-shaped, two-and-a-half story house features a basement which opens to a terrace on its north end (photo 07). The walls are composed of tan-colored brick with extensive stone trim including sills, label lintels, tabbing, coping, finials, balustrades, and carved panels. A thin, projecting carved stone belt course is between the second floor and half-story top floor. There are a number of window types, but most are metal casements with multiple small square panes in leaded mullions. The gabled roof features multiple dormers with gabled and hipped roofs and is covered with variegated green-colored flat tiles. The eaves have boxed gutters with stone scuppers. The house has multiple prominent chimneys, many of which have several shafts grouped together rising from a single, wide chimney shaft, all capped with stone. The exterior facades will be described as follows: vestibule/port-cochere, front/south and front/east for the front façade that composes the inside corner of the L-plan, south façade, west façade, north façade, and east façade.

The one-story vestibule and port-cochere are in the inside corner and project to the southwest (photo 03). The four-sided port-cochere features wide Tudor-arched openings in its outside walls. The openings are trimmed with stone tabbing, label lintels, and carved spandrels in the upper corners. The outside corners of the port-cochere feature stepped buttresses capped with stone. A stone cornice is at the bottom of the crenellated parapet. The front wall of the port-cochere features a carved stone panel centered in the parapet. The vestibule features a pair of wood doors with art glass, Tudor-arched transom in the back wall of the port-cochere. The arch is brick with stone keys. A pair of art glass casement windows with carved stone transoms is in the south and east walls of the one-story vestibule.

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

The front/south section of the front façade is the south-facing shorter leg of the L-plan (right side of photo 03). The first story features a pair of casement windows with carved stone transoms in its west half and two casement windows with transoms in its east half. These windows feature stone tabbing and label lintels. The second story features a grouping of four small casement windows with stone tabbing and a label lintel. The middle two windows have carved stone transoms and are located in a side staircase landing. A three-sided, projecting bay with cutaway corners is in the south half of the second story. It has stone walls and a brick and stone parapet. The corner walls feature casement windows, and the front wall features a pair of casement windows. The upper story features two gabled through-parapet dormers, each with two pairs of casement windows. The west gable is surmounted by a carved stone finial. A small dormer with a hipped roof is west of each of the gabled dormers. Each has a small square casement window. All of the dormer windows feature stone tabbing and simple lintels. Two chimneys rise from each end of the roof in the front/south section of the front façade.

The front/east section of the front façade is divided into two parts: a wide section at the inside corner and a narrower gabled parapet section at the south end (right side of photo 04). The wide section is divided in half by a wide chimney that has a narrow casement window in its second story. The chimney is flanked by two segmental-arched openings on the first story. Each has a pair of casement windows with stone tabbing and segmental-arched transom divided in half. The second story has two projecting, three-sided bays with cutaway corners (one to each side of the chimney). These match the one on the front/south section. A grouping of three casement windows with stone tabbing and label lintel is in the north end of the second story. The upper story features two dormers with gabled parapets, one to each side of the chimney. These dormers feature pairs of casement windows with bands of stained art glass, stone tabbing, and a simple lintel. A wide dormer with a hipped roof is in the north end of the upper story and features two pairs of casement windows, stone tabbing, and a simple lintel. Besides the wide chimney centered on this section, two additional chimneys rise from near each end of the roof of this roof slope.

The projecting, gabled, south part of the front/east section features a grouping of five casement windows with transoms centered in the first story. These have stone tabbing and a label lintel. The second story features a grouping of four casement windows with stone tabbing and a label lintel. The upper story/gable wall features a grouping of three casement windows with stone tabbing and a label lintel. A small attic vent is centered at the top of the gable wall which is surmounted by a carved stone finial. A matching finial is in the lower, north corner of the wall but its pair is missing in the lower south corner.

The south façade (photo 05) is mostly composed of a two-story former sunporch with a carved stone balustrade at the top of the parapet wall. The first story features wide pilasters with stone tabbing and capitals that flank a wide center section of stone. Within this stone section are three large, segmental arched windows with recessed carved panels under the windows. The windows are composed of pairs of casements with segmental arched transom also composed of small square panes. Large stone voussoirs compose the arches, and the first story is topped with a projecting belt course of stone. The second story features three pairs of large casement windows with simple stone sills and lintels. A two-story brick bay is east of the east pilaster. The

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

fenestration arrangement is repeated on the west façade and east façade, except that a pair of doors is in the center opening on the east façade. The east façade's second story features a pair of casement windows centered on the façade and a casement window in the south end. The west façade's second story features a single casement window in the center flanked by pairs of casement windows.

The upper story/gabled parapet wall of the south facade rises above the two-story section and features a grouping of three casement windows with stone tabbing and label lintel. A diamond-shaped carved stone panel is centered in the gable wall and a large chimney rises through the gable. A small gabled dormer with a door is east of the gabled wall. The door, which has a window at the top, leads to the balcony over the two-story section.

The west façade is divided into four sections (photos 02, 06). The north section is less prominent, giving the remaining three sections a far more formal and symmetrical appearance when viewed without the north section. The middle section will be described first, followed by the south section, then the flanking north section, followed by the extreme north section. The wide, middle section features five large, Tudor arched openings with stone tabs on the first story. The middle and outer openings feature a wood door with window flanked by side-lites and a Tudor arched transom divided in half. The other two openings feature pairs of casement windows and a Tudor arched transom divided in half. Large bronze lanterns hung from the wall flank the center opening. The second story features a carved stone panel with heraldic shield and a small pair of casement windows with stone tabs and label lintel centered in the section. These are flanked by projecting bays of stone with cutaway corners. The bays have a casement window in their corner walls and a pair of casement windows in their front wall. The bays have a parapet-like top of brick with stone tabs and cap. The top story features three dormers with gabled parapets surmounted by a carved stone finial. Each dormer features a pair of casement windows with a band of stained art glass in each window. The middle section is flanked by tall chimneys that rise from the inside corners with the flanking, projecting sections of the façade.

The west façade's south, projecting gabled section features a two-story projecting bay with cutaway corners and is topped with a carved stone balustrade. The first story of the bay is stone and features pairs of art glass windows with transoms in the cutaway corner walls and a row of three art glass windows in the front wall. The first story is topped by a stone cornice. The second story of the bay features stone tabbing on its corners, pairs of casement windows in its cutaway corner walls, and a row of three casement windows in its front wall. The bay features a brick parapet with stone tabs and coping. The bay's south and north walls feature a pair of art glass windows with transoms composed of carved stone panels in the first story and a single casement window in the second story of the south façade. The upper story (gable wall) of the south section features a grouping of three casement windows with stone tabs and label lintel. A small vent is centered in the top of the gable wall, which is surmounted by a carved stone finial. Matching finials are in the lower corners of the gable wall.

The flanking north section of the west façade projects forward and features a gabled parapet. This section features the grand staircase on the interior allowing for mid-level windows. The first story features a grouping of three art glass windows with stone tabbing and label lintel. It is

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

flanked by narrow art glass windows with stone tabbing and simple lintels. The second and upper story windows are in the staircase landings and feature carved stone quatre-foil panels between the second and upper windows. Each story has five art glass windows with transoms and stone tabbing. The upper story transoms are Tudor-arched and the stone belt course at the top of the second story rises over the group of five windows to form a label-lintel-like hood. The gable wall features a diamond-shaped carved stone panel and is surmounted by a carved stone finial. Matching finials are in the lower corners of the gable wall.

The extreme north section of the west façade (left side of photo 02) features a row of five large casement windows with transoms, stone tabbing, and a label lintel centered in the first story. The second story features a short pair of casement windows flanked by slightly larger pairs of casement windows. These pairs of windows feature stone tabbing and label lintels.

The north façade is composed of two parts. The west end features a projecting walk-out basement wall and solarium on the first story, behind which rises the second story and gabled wall of the upper story (photo 07). The east part of the façade features rows of windows in the first and second stories and a wide through-cornice dormer with gabled roof in the top story. The basement wall and solarium are flanked by wide pilasters with stone tabbing and capitals at the top of the solarium/first story. The basement wall features a pair of French doors flanked by pairs of casement windows. These feature stone tabs and simple lintels. The solarium wall, which is matched on its east and west facades, features three full-round arched openings divided by stone pilasters. Each opening has a pair of casement windows set on recessed stone panels topped with transoms, also divided into two, topped with arches composed of stone voussoirs. The middle opening on the west façade features a pair of French doors rather than windows. The solarium is topped with a stone balustrade composed of carved balusters with a stone railing. The corners of the balustrade are composed of wide piers of brick and stone tabbing. The second story of the west end features two groupings of three casement windows with transoms divided by a chimney. The top story/gable wall features two pairs of casements flanking the chimney. Narrow attic vents flank the chimney in the top of the gable wall. The gable wall is surmounted by a carved stone finial with matching finials in its lower corners.

The north façade, east of the solarium and walk-out basement, has two groupings of four casement windows with transoms on the first story. The second story features two pairs of casement windows in the east and west ends. A grouping of three casement windows is east of the west pair and a small casement window is west of the east pair. The top story features a large gabled dormer with three casement windows. It is flanked by dormers with hipped roofs that feature a pair of casement windows in their front wall.

The east façade (right side of photo 03) is two-and-a-half stories with a tall, gabled parapet surmounted by a carved stone finial. Two identical finials are located at the bottom corners of the gabled wall. The first story features two groups of three casement windows with transoms. The groupings feature stone tab work and label lintel. The casements and transoms are divided by stone trim. A two-panel wood door with transom is in the north end of the east façade and features stone tab work and label lintel. The transom has been replaced by louvers. The second story features three pairs of casement windows with stone tabs and label lintel. The top story

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

gable wall features a row of three pairs of casement windows in a single grouping with stone tabs and label lintel. A narrow rectangular vent is at the top of the gable.

Interior

The plan of Laurel Hall is composed of several large rooms and smaller service rooms on the first story and large bedrooms with small closets and bathrooms on the second story. The top story is characterized by smaller rooms with dormers in the short leg of the L-plan and a chapel with dormers in the long leg of the L-plan. The basement is composed of several large rooms, mostly devoted to storage and mechanical systems except for the billiards room under the solarium (photo 20), which has a pair of doors that open to a terrace on the north side of the house. The billiard room features a wood floor and tall wood wainscot. A carved stone fireplace is centered in its south wall and the plaster ceiling is coffered by wood beams. Another notable feature of the basement is the former ice box room for cold storage. The first, second, and top stories are connected by a grand staircase near the outside corner of the L-plan (photo 12). Two additional service stairs, much simpler in design, are in the south end of the house and off the kitchen near the east end of the house. These service stairs connect to all stories including the basement.

Entering the first story from the port-cochere, guests pass through a small vestibule then into the great hall (photos 11-12) which features the grand staircase at its west end. Small service closets are under each corner of the grand staircase. The hall's east end features cutaway corners, one that leads to the vestibule and the other that leads to toilet rooms in the east end of the short leg of the L-plan. A large fireplace and entry to a stair hall is in the east half of the north wall, while a pair of doors lead to a formal dining room between the grand staircase and fireplace in the west half. The dining room doors align with a pair of doors into a drawing hall centered in the south wall of the grand hall. The grand hall features wood floors and wood paneled walls with blind Tudor arches over windows and doorways. The fireplace surround is carved limestone and the ceiling is coffered with plaster moldings in geometric lozenge patterns. The grand staircase, in a two-story space, is also all wood with a balustrade composed of carved, square balusters joined by carved arches. The newel posts have recessed, Tudor arched panels and lantern-like finials. The groupings of windows in the west wall of the staircase area are casements composed of multiple geometric-shaped panes in lead coming with painted stained-glass depictions centered in the windows.

The formal dining area, off the north side of the great hall, has cutaway corners in its west wall that form wood cabinetry with pairs of glass doors (photo 13). The north wall features a large carved limestone fireplace flanked by pairs of wood doors that lead into the solarium. A butler's pantry is off the northeast corner and leads east to the kitchen and service entry in the east end of the short leg of the L-plan. The formal dining room features a wood floor in herringbone pattern and tall wood wainscot, paneled, topped by moldings. The remaining wall and ceiling is plaster with wood cornice moldings and wood beams. A larger north/south beam near the west wall is supported by carved stone brackets. The kitchen has modern fixtures and finishes (photo 15).

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

The solarium (photo 14), off the north end of the formal dining room, features three Tudor-arched windows with transoms, divided by stylized stone pilasters, in each of its outside walls. The west wall features a pair of doors with transom onto the west terrace in the center opening. The solarium has a checkerboard marble floor, stone outer walls, and brick south wall. A carved stone fireplace is centered in the south wall, between the pairs of doors to the formal dining room. It features a carved stone panel above the fireplace. A passageway to the butler's pantry is in the southeast corner of the solarium. The ceiling is plastered.

The drawing room (photo 16), off the south end of the great hall, is the largest room in the house. It features four Tudor-arched windows with transoms along its east wall, divided in the middle by a carved stone fireplace, and five Tudor-arched openings with three doors and two windows with transoms in its west wall. The doors lead to the west terrace. Two pairs of doors are in the south wall of the drawing hall. These feature two steps that lead to the music room on the east and library, now boardroom, on the west. The drawing hall has a wood floor in a basketweave pattern and plaster walls topped by a painted wood cornice. The plaster ceiling has moldings in geometric patterns and painted wood beams that span east/west across the room. These are visually supported by faux pilasters that were introduced for mechanical systems.

The music room (photo 18) features a grouping of five windows with transoms centered in its east wall and two small cabinets in the corners of its west wall. The overall feeling is more Colonial Revival/Adamesque in this room. The south wall of the music room features a pair of windows in its east end that overlook an entry stairway and pair of doors in its west end that lead to the former porch, now reception area. The elaborate plaster fireplace surround is centered in the south wall. The music room features a wood floor and plaster walls trimmed with plaster moldings in panel patterns. The plaster ceiling features painted cornice and plaster moldings. The library (photo 17) has cutaway corners on its east and west ends. The east wall and its corners are lined with wood book shelving. This wraps around to the middle of the north wall. The south wall features a pair of doors that lead down to the former porch, now the reception area. A carved stone fireplace with large hood is centered in the south wall. The west end of the library forms a bay with casement windows and transoms. The library has wood floors and paneled walls. The plaster ceiling is divided into geometric patterns by plaster moldings.

The former porch area that now functions as a reception area has three Tudor-arched openings in each of its outside walls, composed of brick and stone, and a brick north wall. The openings feature windows with arched transoms in the west and south walls. The east wall's openings have been filled in with drywall and doorways. The center opening leads to a service staircase and side entry (seen in photo 19). The porch was enclosed during the time the house was converted into a school with the service staircase and side entry added at that time (between 1926-1976; likely earlier during this period). A modern office was added to the southwest corner but does not intersect the large Tudor-arched windows. The floor is carpeted, and modern infill is drywall. The former porch ceiling is plastered. The service staircase is metal with a square newel post that is Art Deco in design.

The second story features a central hallway that leads south off the grand staircase landing and east from a doorway on the north side of the landing. Most of the woodwork on the second story

Laurel Hall

Name of Property

Marion County, IN

County and State

is painted, including the fireplace surrounds. Most details are Colonial Revival in style. There are four bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms (photo 27) that flank the south hallway. Each has a painted wood fireplace surround, wood floors, and plaster walls and ceilings. These four bedrooms also each feature a projecting bay with cutaway corners filled with windows (photo 26). At the original end of the south hallway is a wide foyer for the master bedroom on the west and large bedroom on the east. These have en-suite bathrooms and fireplaces centered in their south walls. The master bedroom (photo 25) has a large bay with cutaway corners in its west wall. These bedrooms also have wood floors and plaster walls and ceilings. A small hallway centered in the foyer leads south to what was a balcony over the former porch. This area was enclosed at the time the house was converted to a school and features a large foyer (photo 28) surrounded by three bedrooms with bathrooms and a staircase on its east side. These spaces have more modern finishes.

The east hallway that leads from the north side of the grand staircase landing features a closet in its west end and a large bedroom suite in its northwest corner (photo 22). This suite features flanking closets and an en-suite bathroom, and a fireplace centered in its south wall. Groups of windows overlook the roof of the solarium in the north wall of the suite. A large room with a fireplace in its north wall is east of the landing, off the southeast corner of the east hallway. Three bedrooms, a shared bathroom, and three closets flank the east end of the east hallway. The bedroom in the southeast corner features a projecting bay with cutaway corners in its south wall and fireplace in its north wall. The northeast corner bedroom features a fireplace centered in its south wall (photo 23). These rooms have wood floors and plaster walls and ceilings. The service stairs are also off the south side of the east corridor (photo 24).

The top story which is a half-story located in the tall attic of the house features a large room, used as a chapel during the time the building was used as a school, off the south end of the grand staircase landing (photo 29). The chapel features six niche-like alcoves with dormer windows on its east and west walls (photo 30). The windows have bands of stained art glass, and the alcoves are vaulted with Gothic arches. The south end of the chapel features a deeply recessed former altar area with a row of three windows (seen on the left side of photo 29). Flanking the south end of the chapel are a small office with toilet room on the west side and closets and service staircase on the east side. These served as a priest's room and sacristy during its use as a chapel. The chapel has a wood floor in a herringbone pattern and plaster walls. The plaster ceiling features groin vaulting with plaster moldings that form ribs. These rest on plaster corbels at the bottom of the vault. The short leg of the L-plan replicates the second story east hallway and features five former bedrooms, closets, service staircase, and shared bathrooms that flank the hallway. These rooms, likely created between 1926-1930s, feature wood floors and plaster walls and ceilings, many of which are raked with the slope of the roof. The wood trim on the top story is also mostly painted and some built-in wood cabinetry is located in former bedrooms. See photos 31-32.

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

OTHER SITE FEATURES/RESOURCES

FLETCHER ESTATE/LADYWOOD SCHOOL BRIDGE, c. 1925. Contributing (structure)

Photo 10

An open-spandrel, concrete arch bridge crosses a ravine southeast of the house. It once led to a continuation of the grounds, and later the Catholic school on the opposite side of the ravine. The bridge is significantly deteriorated but retains features such as its decorative balustrade with end piers (that once carried lampposts) and humpback design of the bridge deck. It has a wide, center arch and two outer arches that create approaches to either side of the main deck/arch. The bridge spans two property owner parcels.

STONE RETAINING WALL & STEPS, c. 1930. Contributing (structure)

Photo 08

A low retaining wall composed of rusticated limestone ashlar with a wide capstone lines the north edge of Windridge Drive, the south boundary of the site. It follows the drive as it winds its way up the hill to the house, ending near its intersection with Manor Circle, the drive that leads to Laurel Hall. Incorporated into the retaining wall is a set of steps composed of the same stone that features a pair of piers at the top and bottom of the steps. The long set of steps winds its way up the hill to a sidewalk and parking off the southwest corner of the house.

STONE SCREEN WALL, c. 1930. Contributing (structure)

A screen wall composed of rusticated limestone ashlar, matching the retaining wall, is at the southeast end of a parking area and used to screen it from the drive. The wall is flanked by square piers with stone caps.

CASCADING STEPS/TEMPLE, c. 1925. Contributing (structure)

Photo 33

A long, cascading set of stone steps is located on the opposite side of the ravine, east of the Laurel Hall property on the adjacent Cathedral High School campus which was once part of the Fletcher Estate. They are nearly directly east of the green (former pool area) off the north end of the house. The steps are divided into two sections by a stone trough for a fountain that originates in a temple-like structure near the top of the ravine. The temple features eight Corinthian columns in a circle that support a stone cornice and conical roof covered with tiles. Low stone walls surround a terrace that encircles the temple under which is a pool for the fountain. The steps lead down from the west side of the terrace, divided by the trough, and flanked by stone. Two short landings are part of the cascading steps. These flare out and descend around each side of a stone wall that forms a bench seat on its front (west). The middle of the wall features a tall, square stone carved in high relief of a couple. Behind the stone is an outlet for the water trough which terminates in a semicircular pool in front of the carved stone.

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

POOL PUMPHOUSE, c. 1976. Non-contributing

Left side of photo 09

A square, brick pumphouse is located off the northwest corner of the house and was constructed to support a pool in the lawn terrace off the north end of the house (the pool no longer exists). The pumphouse has 1/1 windows and a metal door and a pyramidal roof covered with asphalt shingles. The pumphouse matches the gatehouse at the entry to the development off of Emerson Way (not part of this nomination).

POOL FENCE, c. 1976. Non-contributing (structure)

Photo 09

A black iron fence composed of tall pickets connects to the pumphouse and two brick corner wall sections capped with stone. The fence is atop a concrete berm and once enclosed a pool installed in the late 1970s.

POOL STEPS, c. 1976. Non-contributing (structure)

Right side of photo 09

A wide set of concrete steps flanked by stepped brick walls capped with stone is off the north end of the house and led down to a pool area constructed in the late 1970s.

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

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.
- 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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Period of Significance

1916
1926-1976

Significant Dates

Significant Person (last name, first name)
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder (last name, first name)

Bass, Herbert L. & Company
Latham & Walters
Tuschinsky, Alex

Period of Significance (justification)

There are two periods of significance. First, under architecture, the period of significance is 1916, the year Laurel Hall was constructed. The second is the period of operation as Ladywood School for Girls and Ladywood-St. Agnes School, from 1926-1976, the mandatory fifty-year cutoff for eligibility.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Fletcher Mansion, Laurel Hall, and its grounds, constitute a locally significant Country-Estate-era property of few equals in Marion County. Laurel Hall is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places using criterion C under architecture as the area of significance. Both the scale and execution of detail of this English Tudor Revival style residence

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

makes it one of the finest in Indianapolis. Built as a country estate by the Fletcher banking family, the former residence continues to read as the architect intended with vistas to and from the home, with impressive carved stone, stained and leaded art glass windows, and an expansive use of wood detailing. It was among the earliest and best Tudor Revival houses in the city and its architect, Herbert L. Bass, was a leading practitioner in Indianapolis.

Laurel Hall is also eligible using criterion A under education due to its nearly 45-year long use by the Catholic boarding school known as Ladywood School. Minor modifications were made to the building during this time, but most notable was the conversion of the top story's south wing as a chapel area for students. Ladywood, and its final iteration after a 1970 merger, Ladywood-St. Agnes, was a distinctive and academically prestigious option for the city's wealthy, especially for Catholic families. The reputation of the school also attracted families from outside central Indiana to send their daughters there.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

ARCHITECTURE

When Laurel Hall was constructed between 1915-1916 northeast of central Indianapolis, the area was a fairly rural setting with wooded hills and ravines lining Fall Creek. By this time, the city's boulevard system was being organized and suburban development was expanding with it to the north. The boulevards, and Meridian Street, the city's main north/south street leading into the city center, were being lined with large estate homes in a variety of early revival styles. One of the most prominent and frequently used of these was Tudor Revival. The style reached its peak in popularity during this development period of the city with a number of exceptional homes constructed in the style. Laurel Hall, built by Indiana's prominent Fletcher banking family, was one of the largest and finest of these estate homes with few rivals. The architectural significance of such a building is only heightened by its rolling, landscaped six-acre site.

Stoughton A. Fletcher, who descended from generations of prominent Indiana financiers, contracted with Indianapolis architect Herbert L. Bass to design his family home after he purchased 1,500 acres of farm and woodlands along the south edge of Fall Creek. When it was completed in 1916, the residence had cost \$2 million to build. Fletcher named the house, which was positioned on the crest of a wooded hill overlooking Fall Creek, Laurel Hall in honor of his mother's name. Indianapolis landscape architect, Alex Tuschinsky, who apprenticed in the gardens of European nobility, was contracted to design the landscaped site.

The Americanized version of Tudor Revival style was more an interpretation of a variety of Late Medieval English and Early Renaissance prototypes than it was a recreation of architectural characteristics of the early 16th century Tudor period in England. Typical features of the style include steeply pitched roofs, multiple front gables, and for many homes, stucco and the use of half-timbering in the stucco walls. In other more formal residences and buildings, half-timbering and stucco were typically replaced with brick and stone, particularly in the English or Jacobethan

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

interpretation of the style. Studied asymmetry and “weathered” details enhanced the style’s appeal and sense of historicity. The style was popular in the United States during the 1910s through the 1930s, particularly in residential design. Some of the most exclusive residential neighborhoods developed in the first half of the 20th century in large cities across Indiana included examples of the style. The city’s earliest examples of Tudor Revival design appears to be the Van Camp House (1905, N. Meridian just north of Fall Creek, demolished). Other notable early Tudor Revival houses include the Glossbrenner House (1909, 3202 N. Meridian St., NR, 1982) and the Forrest-Howe House (1909, Irvington Historic District, NR, 1987).

Herbert L. Bass (1877-1926) graduated from the city’s vocational Manual High School where he received training from his uncle and continued his architectural training in several architectural firms. He started his own firm in 1903 under the name Herbert L. Bass & Company where his reputation for refined exquisite residences in Indianapolis grew. Industrialist James A. Allison hired Bass in 1913 to design his impressive estate home which fused Arts & Crafts detail with the Prairie Style in its brick and stone-trimmed design with tile roof. Within three years, Bass produced designs for Laurel Hall despite Stoughton Fletcher’s initial submission of plans by Philadelphia architect William Price.

A newspaper article in 1915 stated that the estimated cost was \$200,000 and that the house would be built of rough brick trimmed with stone in the architectural style of English Tudor. The contract for construction was let to Latham & Walters.¹ The house was described, and featured interior photographs, in a 1916 newspaper article. The house was called one of the most unusual and imposing country estates in the central west and was planned by Mrs. Fletcher. The house is described as Tudor in design with Tudor wood plank, pegged floors and windows in the grand staircase that bear Tudor coats of arms. The ballroom in the top story is described as Gothic with Tudor benches located in the niches (dormer areas). A ladies’ and men’s dressing room were off either side of the ballroom. The billiard room in the basement is also described as outfitted with a fireplace and red-leather Tudor furniture. Much of the article focuses on the furnishings of the home. It was also stated that the Fletchers had been entertaining guests every night at the new home and that in the following week, invitations to 600 guests were being sent for an elaborate gala.²

Herbert Bass’s organizing system to the plan relied on an inside corner entry and port cochere in an L-shaped plan (photo 03). From the great hall inside the entry, the grand staircase and other large primary rooms extend and ultimately are terminated by large sunlit solariums and porches at the north and south extents of the house. The grand house rose two-and-a-half stories in tan-colored brick and stone trim, punctuated on all sides by gabled parapets, dormers, and projecting three-sided bays with cutaway corners. The asymmetry of the front façade, which featured both the south-facing east leg and east-facing south leg of the L-plan, was formal but rambling in nature (photo 03). This is juxtaposed with the grand west façade which was viewed first by visitors to the estate as they ascended the hillside drive and entered the estate grounds (photo 02). The west façade rises from a brick terrace with carved stone balustrade across the full width of

¹ “To Build Country Home” *Indianapolis News*. 7 May 1915. Pg. 14, col. 4

² “Imposing and Unusual Home Now is Furnished” *Indianapolis News*. 16 Dec 1916. Pg. 16, col. 1

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

the house. While the façade is divided into four parts, the northernmost part has a demurred presence leaving the south three parts to work in unison for a highly formal and nearly symmetrical view. A central section, wholly symmetrical with projecting second story bays and gabled dormers, is flanked by large projecting sections with gabled parapets, each with a slightly different window organization.

Bass's organizing principle on the exterior was meted out through the use of stonework and other details. This begins with the port cochere that features three large stone Tudor-arched openings, stepped buttresses with stone caps, and a crenellated parapet. Nearly all windows and doorways incorporate tabbed stonework in their surrounds and are typically topped by Tudor stylized label lintels or Tudor arches, also composed of stone. Bass used carved stone panels and spandrels, somewhat sparingly, that included heraldic shields and other Tudor motifs. Laurel Hall's second story features a number of three-sided projecting bays with cutaway corners topped by parapets.

The style continues into the top story with dormers that rise from the wall and feature parapeted gables with carved stone finials. These match the more prominent gabled walls of sections of the house that intersect the legs of the L-plan or terminate these legs. Laurel Hall's windows also show refinement of the style through the use of casements divided into multiple panes by lead coming. Most of these windows have transoms, some of which have Tudor-arched tops. Many of these windows, particularly those in the grand staircase, also have stained art glass scenes and symbols or bands of stained art glass in the former chapel. Laurel Hall also features nine large chimneys, each with multiple shafts that rise from the wide main chimney shaft, another feature associated with the style.

The interior of the building harkens the great hall residences of British Isle nobility from its voluminous rooms to its expansive wood paneling and large carved stone fireplaces, often with Tudor arches. Rooms such as the great hall, formal dining room, and the former library all exhibit an extensive amount of wood paneling and some ceiling beam work (photos 11-13). The plaster ceilings in these spaces, along with the large drawing room, have an array of geometric patterns created by plaster moldings. Bass used cutaway corners in the great hall, formal dining room, and former library (photo 17) to add sophistication and architectural interest. He provided formality by centering carved stone fireplaces in many of these large rooms, often flanked by pairs of doors into other rooms. The solarium, drawing room, and former porch at the south end each highlight the use of stone-arched doorways and windows.

The grand staircase and its two-story volume with landings that overlook the great hall and back toward the staircase is one of Laurel Hall's most important features (photos 12, 21, 29). The wide staircase ascends from the northwest corner of the great hall to a mid-level landing, then back up to the east at the second story. It continues up again in the northwest corner to a mid-level landing, then back up to the east at the top story. The wide landings, as well as the first story space under the first mid-level landing, feature a wide grouping of casement windows with transoms. These provide a dramatic effect as one ascends and descends and fills the two-story volume with natural light. These windows also have painted stained art glass scenes and the top story features Tudor-arched transoms. The walls and ceilings, and the underside of the staircase is covered with square panels of wood. The balustrade is composed of carved and sawn wood

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

features with square balusters connected by arches at the top. The newel posts are also square with recessed, Tudor-arched panels and topped by large lantern-like finials.

Another important room in the house is the former ballroom/chapel in the south half of the top story (photo 30). The space was converted into a chapel when Ladywood School occupied the building. The large space features a groin-vaulted ceiling with ribs composed of plaster moldings. This feature carries through into the niche-like dormers that feature Gothic-arched ceilings with plaster ribs. These niches feature pairs of casement windows with bands of stained art glass in the dormer walls. The far south end of the former chapel has a deeply recessed space that was used for the altar and has a backdrop of three casement windows.

The Fletcher Estate is endowed with several components that convey a large, early estate including planned features of the landscape. This is most evident in the classically inspired bridge that once led to the remainder of the property on the east side of the ravine, and in a set of cascading stone steps with a temple and fountain feature east of the home's north green, on the opposite side of the ravine. The steps, integrated with a trough in the middle for a fountain that originates under a classical temple near the top of the ravine, flow down the wooded hillside and terminate at a small semicircular pool. Stone bench seats flank the pool, and a carved stone of a couple is at the back of the pool. The bridge and stair structures seem to represent an early development of the site. To the extent the building's architect and landscape architect collaborated on features is unknown, but it seems clear the features and general landscape plan were coordinated between the two. Two limestone screen walls nearer Laurel Hall, represent the later development of the site after it became a girls' school. The overall setting of the house, atop a hill upon entering from the main road, and generous, mature landscaping, and greens act in unison to create a landscape planned for strolling and other outdoor leisure enjoyment.

EDUCATION

Laurel Hall transitioned from the Fletcher's private residence and estate to a girls' Catholic preparatory school in 1926 operated by the Sisters of Providence from St. Mary-of-the-Woods in Terre Haute. The purchase of the property allowed the development of "Ladywood School for Girls" at Laurel Hall and eventual creation of a new campus for Indianapolis' Catholic Cathedral High School east of Laurel Hall. The use of Laurel Hall as a girls' private school continued through 1970 and establishes significance under education.

The transition of Laurel Hall from private residence to a school begins with tragedy in the Fletcher family only a few years after the Fletchers occupied the home. On March 23, 1921, Stoughton Fletcher's wife, May, committed suicide in the home after a two-year battle with illness. Her mother, Eva Henley who lived in the home, drank of the same poison that killed her daughter and died in the same room that day.³ Whether this was accidental in tasting the drink, or intentional over the loss of her daughter has been a point of speculation, however, this tragedy set into motion events that led the Fletcher family to leave the home. By the end of 1921,

³ "Henley Death Held Accident by Relatives" *Indianapolis Star*. 24 March 1921. Pg. 1, col. 6

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Stoughton Fletcher and Indianapolis Mayor-elect William Lewis Shank were having conversations about the city's purchase of the property. It was felt that the property could offer additional city parks as the city expanded northward and that the home could be converted into a home for convalescent soldiers.⁴

Laurel Hall had loomed large with the city's elite, particularly given social events that were held at the home and the fact that the estate boasted a horse racing track and bred racehorses enjoyed by statesmen such as Thomas Taggart, who leased the property during the mid-1920s. As early as 1917, Laurel Hall Farm was credited for raising Indiana's standing as the leader in producing thoroughbred racehorses.⁵ Stoughton Fletcher himself had a racing horse named Peter the Great and it was reported that he rode the horse into the drawing room to warm themselves by the fireplace. Fletcher had purchased and consolidated two manufacturing plants to boost production during World War I but financed them through his own personal assets as collateral. The war ended and Fletcher's government contracts were canceled, which led to great loss on the two plants. He realized his resources were in jeopardy of being lost so he gave up controlling interest in his estate to Fletcher National Bank in late 1921.⁶ In 1922, the property was briefly considered for the newly-formed Broadmoor Country Club,⁷ but ultimately, Thomas Taggart, noted Indiana politician and former Indianapolis mayor, leased the property from about this time through October 1925 for breeding and raising racehorses.⁸

While Indianapolis Mayor William Shank continued his effort to purchase Laurel Hall for city parks expansion and a home for veterans through 1925, it had been announced late that year the Sisters of Providence, a Catholic order of nuns in Terre Haute, were negotiating the purchase of the property. The goal was to develop a girls' boarding and college preparatory school. The Sisters of Providence owned and operated St. Mary-of-the-Woods College for Girls outside of Terre Haute and operated about seventy-five other similar preparatory schools throughout the Midwest.⁹ They also operated St. John's Academy (a girls' school) in downtown Indianapolis. The purchase of Laurel Hall by the Sisters of Providence was finalized in 1926 for about \$600,000 and work began on converting the two upper floors into boarding rooms. Later growth of the school required the construction of the second story over the south porch, which was enclosed, to gain more rooms, and a staircase bay along its east side (photos 05, 19). The large rooms were used for dining and education and the former ballroom in the top story was converted into a chapel for services.

⁴ "Shank Contemplates Buying Fletcher Country Estate as Home for Disabled Yanks" *Indiana Daily Times*. 10 Dec 1921. Pg. 1, cols. 2-3

⁵ "Laurel Hall Farm, Home of Famous Speed Sire and Blue-Blooded Matrons, Puts Indiana in the Lead as Producer of Thoroughbreds" *Indianapolis News*. 1 Dec 1917. Pg. 15, cols. 1-8. The track was located north of the northeast corner of 46th St. and Emerson Ave. Developers platted off the land in the 1950s and Ranch houses were built over the site. Ladywood seems to have utilized the Fletcher horse stables for their horseback riding programs. Coincidentally or not, stables located just north of Laurel Hall, across Fall Creek, offered horse rentals for the Fall Creek bridle paths well into the 1970s.

⁶ Lenkowsky, Kate. *The Herman Kahn Center of the Hudson Institute*. Pg. 5

⁷ "Fletcher's Laurel Hall Estate May Be Purchased for Broadmoor Clubhouse" *Indianapolis Sunday Star*. 2 July 1922. Pg. 1, col. 3

⁸ "Thomas D. Taggart to Sell Trotting Stock" *Indianapolis News*. 19 Aug 1925. Pg. 20, col. 1

⁹ "May Buy Laurel Hall for School for Girls" *Indianapolis News*. 4 Nov 1925. Pg. 1, col. 2

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Laurel Hall was renamed “Ladywood School” and opened for the 1926-1927 school year. The public was invited to visit the school and grounds on Sunday, September 26, 1926. The school officially opened two days later with a ceremony conducted by Mother General Mary Raphael, superior of the Sisters of Providence in the United States, and Right Reverend Joseph Chartrand, Bishop at Indianapolis.¹⁰ Sixteen boarding rooms were established in the former residence and classes were held in the south wing and former sunporch which was enclosed. The great hall was used as a study room and the dining room continued to be used for dining. The top story rooms were used as living quarters by the Sisters for administrative and teaching staff. The other small residences that came with the property east of the ravine were used for the resident priest and caretakers of the property. The conversion of the ballroom to chapel included sacristy and priest’s room to each side of the altar, which was recessed into the south wall. The dormer areas created niches for shrines.¹¹

A large newspaper advertisement in December 1926 for Ladywood School describes it as a national resident school for girls for college preparatory and general courses. The description included that the school and site present a scene of rare beauty in an inspiring atmosphere of culture and refinement in a suburban setting. A noted educator was quoted as saying “in all my travels, I have never seen a more ideal site for a girls’ school than Ladywood.”¹² Ladywood would boast such alumni as Mari Hulman George, daughter of Indianapolis Motor Speedway owner Tony Hulman, and actress Dorothy Maguire. In the years following the Cuban Revolution of the 1950s, the Sisters and diocese funded the education of about twenty young Cuban women whose families sent them to the United States for their safety.¹³

There were four other Catholic girls’ schools in Indianapolis: St. John’s Academy, St. Agnes, St. Mary’s Academy, and Our Lady of Grace, a late 1950s addition to the options for girls. The Sisters of Providence operated St. John’s Academy, which offered primary classes, secondary classes, and boarding from 1895-1959 (school not extant). The fact that the Sisters of Providence had a school in Indianapolis which offered elementary and secondary education as well as boarding put the sisters in good stead to operate Ladywood when the opportunity arose in 1926. St. Agnes, which would merge with Ladywood in 1970, was located on North Meridian Street next to the Catholic Center (former Cathedral High School) north of downtown Indianapolis and it still stands. It did not offer boarding. St. Mary’s (non-boarding, Franciscan-affiliated) was located behind St. Mary’s Catholic Church on North New Jersey Street near Lockerbie Square, just northeast of downtown Indianapolis; it is extant. Our Lady of Grace was a Benedictine – operated academy that was open from 1956-1978. It had some rooms for boarders and is extant. Ladywood School for Girls seemed to be set apart from other Catholic girls’ schools in Indianapolis. Foremost, it was a boarding school which, through its elite setting and educational nature, allowed recruitment of students from privileged backgrounds across Indiana and the Midwest. While the other Catholic boarding schools for girls were declining, Ladywood/Ladywood – St. Agnes continued to operate. Over time, Ladywood’s popularity

¹⁰ “Ladywood Open to Public Today” *Indianapolis Star*. 26 Sept 1926. Pg. 8, col. 4

¹¹ “Girl Prep School to Open Sept 28” *Indianapolis Star*. 1 Sept 1926. Pg. 6, col. 5

¹² “Ladywood-the School Beautiful of Indianapolis” *Indianapolis Star*. 31 Dec 1926. Pg. 15, cols. 4-8

¹³ Lenkowsky, pg. 8

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

resulted in the need to construct a new school building east of Laurel Hall in 1963 to increase its overall capacity to 600 students.

There were also a number of coeducational secondary Catholic schools throughout the city. Typically, each parish church also had at least a primary parochial school, then several parishes were united under a few Catholic secondary schools in the city as archdiocese-controlled high schools. Ladywood, however, seemed to be set apart for its use as a suburban boarding school, the rigor of its college preparatory classes, classical language education, and other offerings, such as horseback riding. For example, from 1949 – 1969, Ladywood was a National Honor Society school.¹⁴ In the 1950s, school brochures touted several education tracks: an advanced placement program, a college preparatory program, and a four year certificate in Fine Arts. The school was intended for students who would go on to college; school literature boasts that 98% of their students were accepted at the college of their choice all over the world. Hyperbole aside, there were only a small number of places so focused on the secondary education of young women in Indianapolis. Ladywood/Ladywood-St. Agnes was part of small group of non-diocese-controlled, academically rigorous Catholic high schools in Marion County. By the later post-war era, the other two were Brebeuf Preparatory School (a boys' school, founded 1962) and Cathedral High School (a boys' school, 1918).¹⁵ Societal and educational changes were to shake all three to their core in the 1970s.

Laurel Hall and its environs were part of a historic, unprecedented realignment of Catholic secondary education in 1970s Indianapolis. St. Agnes Girls School and Ladywood merged in 1970, forming a new entity called Ladywood-St. Agnes. By 1976, enrollment at Ladywood-St. Agnes had declined and its leaders announced the school's imminent closure. Cathedral, meanwhile, had closed its downtown location in June 1973, but plans were under way to reopen the school on the Ladywood site. Upon announcing the re-opening of Cathedral at the Ladywood campus, both "new" Cathedral and Brebeuf simultaneously announced they would be co-educational schools starting in 1976.¹⁶ The subsequent expansion, in facilities and in enrollment, of Cathedral and Brebeuf fostered the spread of Catholic secondary education to the Indianapolis suburbs, a trend still under way today.

Approximately 84 acres of the Laurel Hall property were sold to an Indianapolis developer named Robert Welch who facilitated the sale of the remaining 34 acres to Cathedral High School

¹⁴ Elicker, Paul E., Secretary, National Honor Society, letter to Sister Marie Jeanette, Ladywood, May 27, 1949.

¹⁵ Examples of the academic level of these include Brebeuf's adoption of biology teaching modules from Purdue freshmen-level classes in the mid-late 1970s and Cathedral's arrangement with Notre Dame, allowing top students at Cathedral to attend Notre Dame for their Junior and Senior high school years while receiving joint academic credit. It is unknown how long the Cathedral-Notre Dame connection remained in place but it existed in the 1930s and 40s. The school was directly staffed by the Brothers of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, for years.

¹⁶ The closure of Sacred Heart High School (renamed John F. Kennedy High School in 1966) in 1969, along with the merging of Chartrand and JFK to form Roncalli High School, was a south side equivalent in the Central Indiana realignment of Catholic secondary education. The archdiocese had built a series of suburban Catholic high schools in the 1950s and 60s (Chatard, Seccina, Chartrand/Roncalli, and Ritter). Both "new" Cathedral and Brebeuf were in previously unserved suburban areas.

Laurel Hall

Name of Property

Marion County, IN

County and State

in 1976.¹⁷ Cathedral High School began to develop the campus east of Laurel Hall, which opened in the fall of 1976. Welch converted Laurel Hall to private apartments in the upper stories. The first story was used for private parties and as a private dining hall.¹⁸ Welch also created a swimming pool in place of the sunken gardens off the north end of the solarium. The pool is no longer extant, but structures remain from this development, c. 1976.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

The Fletcher family name was associated with Indiana banking and politics nearly a hundred years before Laurel Hall was constructed. Calvin Fletcher arrived in Indiana in 1821 and after receiving an education in law, was for a period Indianapolis's only attorney. Calvin Fletcher purchased real estate, allowing for the further accumulation of wealth. Fletcher was also engaged in politics and was elected to the state legislature. With prompting by the governor, he also established a state bank. Stoughton A. Fletcher, Calvin's younger brother, arrived in Indianapolis in 1831 and purchased vast amounts of farmland in the region. He established S. A. Fletcher & Company Bank, which was a small private bank in partnership with a third brother. As the city of Indianapolis grew, so did the Fletcher family's prosperity provided through the bank. Stoughton J. Fletcher took over the bank from his father, Stoughton A. Fletcher, after his death in 1882.¹⁹ Stoughton J. Fletcher married Lizzie Laurel Locke and had four children: Julia, Hilda, Louisa (once the wife of Booth Tarkington), and Stoughton A. Fletcher.

The younger Stoughton Fletcher received his education at Princeton University and took over the bank from his father when he was 27 years old. In 1901, he married May Henley in Indianapolis. Fletcher State Bank had been elevated to Fletcher National Bank in 1900, then after a merger in the 1910s, it became known as Fletcher American National Bank, boasting assets of nearly \$44 million in 1920. At that time, it was considered the largest national bank in Indiana. Stoughton A. Fletcher diversified by purchasing manufacturing facilities as well, including Remy Electric in Anderson,²⁰ and two companies that he merged near the end of World War I. These latter two purchases would ultimately lead to his financial collapse. After the loss of his wife in 1921, and most of his resources by 1922, Stoughton lived out his later years with his sister in New York.

Laurel Hall was purchased by the Hudson Institute in 1986, a non-partisan policy research association which occupied the building for twenty years. In 2006, the Endowment Fund of Phi Kappa Psi purchased the building for use as headquarters for the national fraternity and offices for the foundation.

¹⁷ Welch was a Cathedral alum, member of the Cathedral board of trustees, and facilitated the relocation/reopening of Cathedral on the Fletcher Estate property.

¹⁸ Ibid, pg. 9

¹⁹ Lenkowsky, pgs. 1-2

²⁰ Lenkowsky, pgs. 3-4

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Aerial photographs: 1937, 1941, 1956. MapIndy: <https://maps.indy.gov/MapIndy/>.

Architectural drawings by Merlin King, Inc. Builders, c. 2010, used for plans keyed with photos.

Cathedral High School web site, <https://www.gocathedral.com/about-us/school-history>, accessed 2/18/2026

Elicker, Paul E., Secretary, National Honor Society, letter to Sister Marie Jeanette, Ladywood, May 27, 1949, awarding Ladywood NHS status.

“Fletcher’s Laurel Hall Estate May Be Purchased for Broadmoor Clubhouse” *Indianapolis Sunday Star*. 2 July 1922. Pg. 1, col. 3

“Girl Prep School to Open Sept 28” *Indianapolis Star*. 1 Sept 1926. Pg. 6, col. 5

“Henley Death Held Accident by Relatives” *Indianapolis Star*. 24 March 1921. Pg. 1, col. 6

“Imposing and Unusual Home Now is Furnished” *Indianapolis News*. 16 Dec 1916. Pg. 16, col. 1

“Ladywood Open to Public Today” *Indianapolis Star*. 26 Sept 1926. Pg. 8, col. 4

“Ladywood-the School Beautiful of Indianapolis” *Indianapolis Star*. 31 Dec 1926. Pg. 15, cols. 4-8

Ladywood School Brochure, c. 1950. Collection of the Sisters of Providence, Terre Haute, IN

“Laurel Hall Farm, Home of Famous Speed Sire and Blue-Blooded Matrons, Puts Indiana in the Lead as Producer of Thoroughbreds” *Indianapolis News*. 1 Dec 1917. Pg. 15, cols. 1-8

Lenkowsky, Kate. The Herman Kahn Center of the Hudson Institute. Pg. 5

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

“May Buy Laurel Hall for School for Girls” *Indianapolis News*. 4 Nov 1925. Pg. 1, col. 2

McAlester, Virginia. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.
“Shank Contemplates Buying Fletcher Country Estate as Home for Disabled Yanks” *Indiana Daily Times*. 10 Dec 1921. Pg. 1, cols. 2-3

“Thomas D. Taggart to Sell Trotting Stock” *Indianapolis News*. 19 Aug 1925. Pg. 20, col. 1

“To Build Country Home” *Indianapolis News*. 7 May 1915. Pg. 14, col. 4

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 097-295-00145, 097-295-00147

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 5.9 acres

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Use the UTM system

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 578451 | Northing: 4411650 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See enclosed survey with property boundaries and legal description. The legal boundary of the property is adjusted to include the concrete bridge, that extends onto the Cathedral High School campus and the set of cascading steps and temple structure also located on the campus. The boundaries for these structures extend from the Laurel Hall property boundary five feet from the widest point on each side of the structures.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were established through a reduction of acreage of the property known as Laurel Hall since it was owned by the Fletcher family in 1916, through 1970 and 1986 when the property was divided and ultimately the house and adjacent grounds, totaling about 6 acres, were set apart from the original Fletcher estate. This roughly six-acre section includes the primary manor house and landscaped grounds created in 1916, but not other aspects of the Fletcher estate that were subdivided for residential development and a school campus.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kurt West Garner
organization: Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity & Foundation
street & number: 12954 6th Road
city or town: Plymouth state: IN zip code: 46563
e-mail: kwgarner@kwgarner.com
telephone: 574-780-1423

Laurel Hall
Name of Property
date: May 1, 2024

Marion County, IN
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Laurel Hall
City or Vicinity: Indianapolis
County: Marion State: Indiana
Photographer: Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed: March 12, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest at Laurel Hall from Windridge Drive

1 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking east at Laurel Hall from the lawn off Windridge Drive

2 of 33.

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest at the port cochere and entry off Manor House Circle

3 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west at the south end of the front façade from Manor House Circle

4 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking north at the south façade

5 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast just off the west terrace toward the west facade

6 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast at the north facade

7 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast up the stone stairs from Windridge Drive

8 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast at the former pool facility resources (non-contributing)

9 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast at the concrete arch bridge over the ravine

10 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast in Great Hall

11 of 33.

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west at grand stairs in Great Hall

12 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest in formal dining room

13 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast in solarium

14 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west in kitchen

15 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast in drawing room

16 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast in library

17 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast in music room

18 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast in former porch/reception area toward side entry and stairs

19 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest in basement billiard hall

20 of 32.

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest in second story landing of grand stairs

21 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south in second story north bedroom off of landing

22 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south in east bedroom

23 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking down/southeast in east service stairs

24 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast in master suite on second story

25 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest in north bedroom off south corridor on second story

26 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south through shared bathroom off south corridor on second story

27 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest in second story addition foyer over former porch

28 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest in top story landing

29 of 33.

Laurel Hall
Name of Property

Marion County, IN
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast in former ballroom/chapel

30 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast in former bedroom/office off of east corridor, top story

31 of 33.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest in former bedroom/office at east end of east corridor, top story

32 of 33.

Photographer: Paul Diebold/State Historic Preservation Office

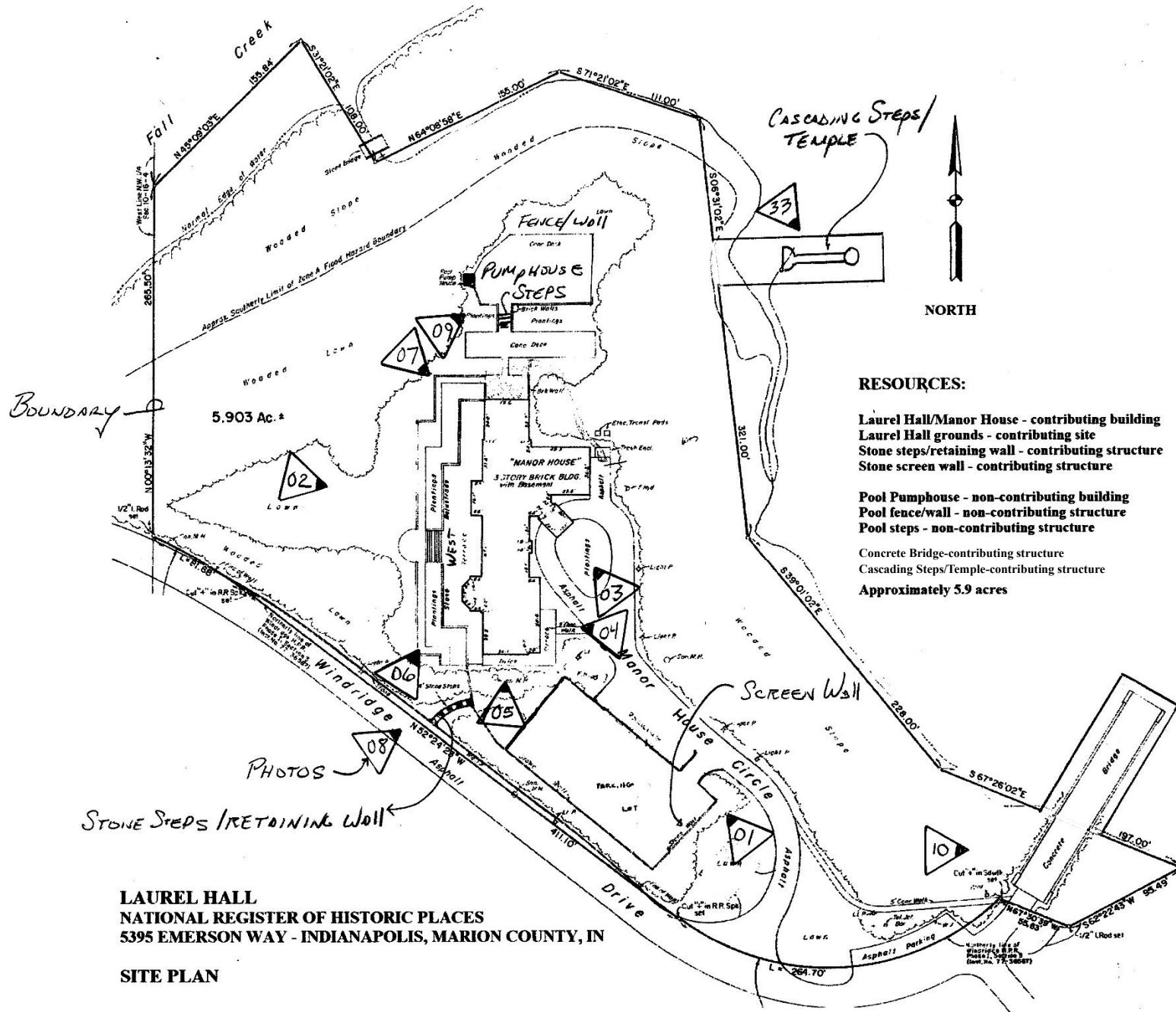
Date Photographed: 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast at cascading steps and temple (Cathedral High School campus)

33 of 33.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



RESOURCES:

- Laurel Hall/Manor House - contributing building
- Laurel Hall grounds - contributing site
- Stone steps/retaining wall - contributing structure
- Stone screen wall - contributing structure
- Pool Pumphouse - non-contributing building
- Pool fence/wall - non-contributing structure
- Pool steps - non-contributing structure
- Concrete Bridge-contributing structure
- Cascading Steps/Temple-contributing structure
- Approximately 5.9 acres

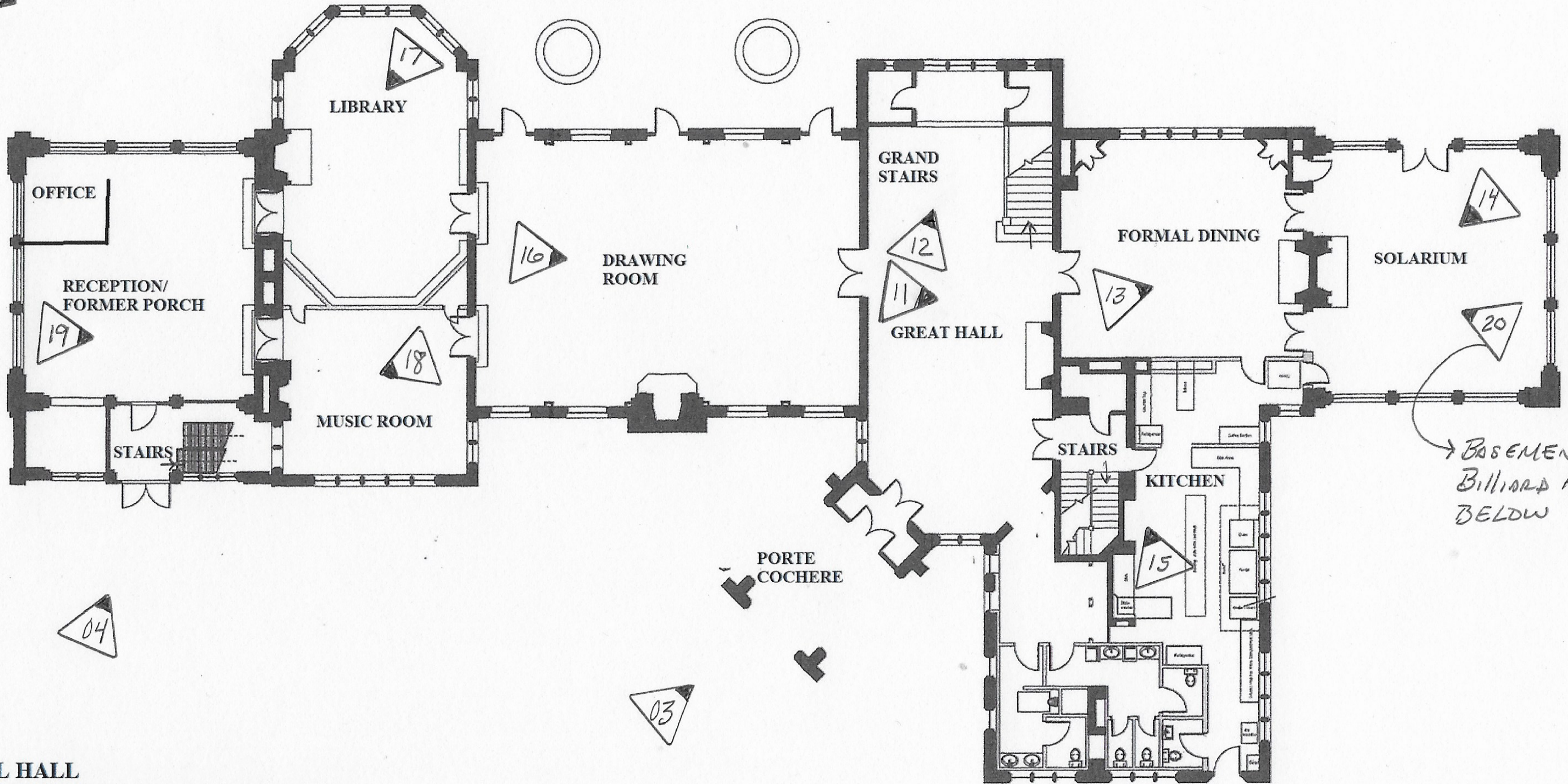
LAUREL HALL
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
5395 EMERSON WAY - INDIANAPOLIS, MARION COUNTY, IN
SITE PLAN

02

06

WEST TERRACE

07



05

RECEPTION/
FORMER PORCH

19

LIBRARY

17

DRAWING
ROOM

16

GRAND
STAIRS

12

11

GREAT HALL

FORMAL DINING

13

SOLARIUM

14

20

MUSIC ROOM

18

STAIRS

STAIRS

KITCHEN

15

PORTE
COCHERE

→ BASEMENT
Billiard Hall
BELDW

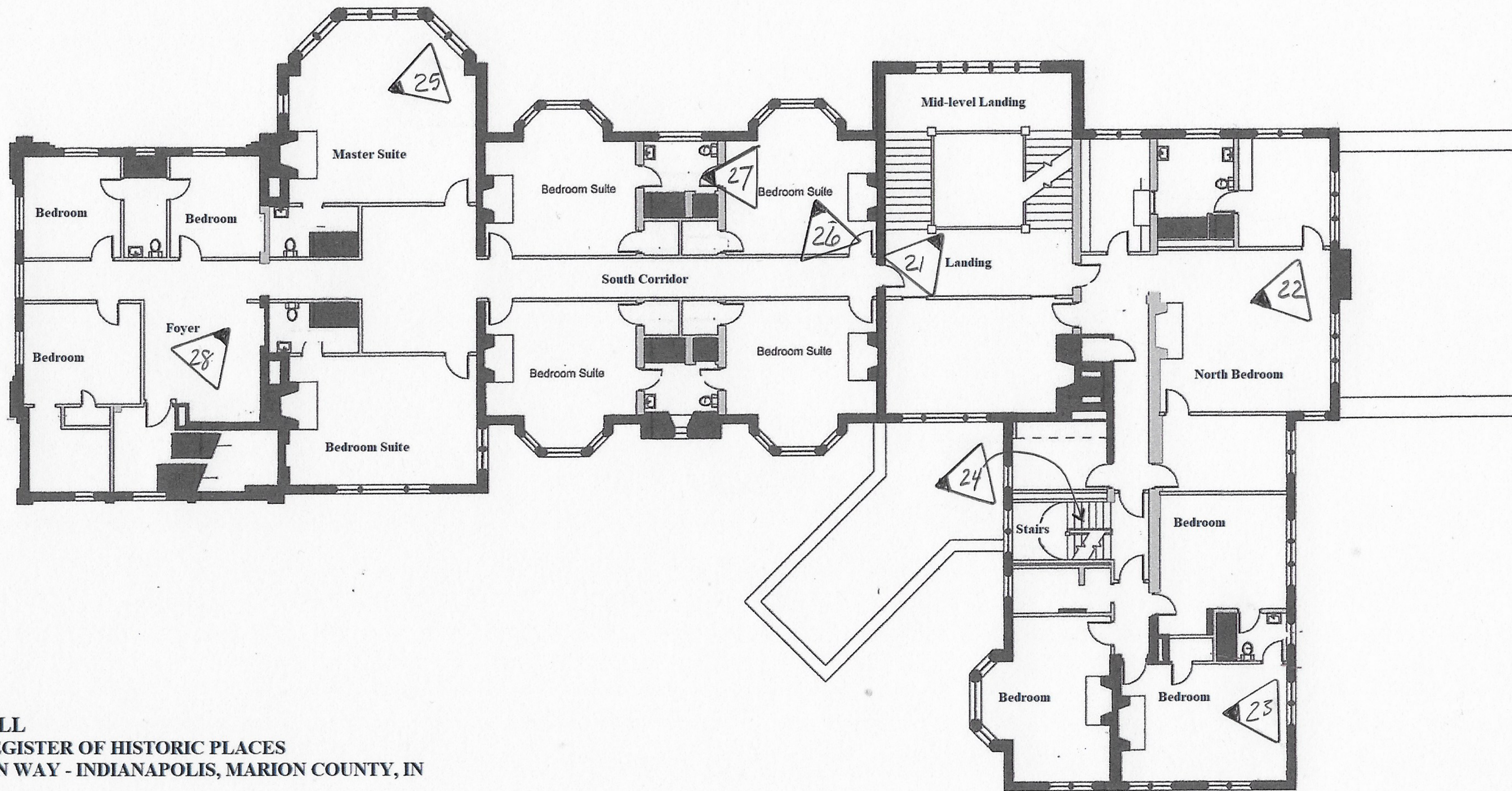
04

03

LAUREL HALL
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
5395 EMERSON WAY - INDIANAPOLIS, MARION COUNTY, IN

NORTH >

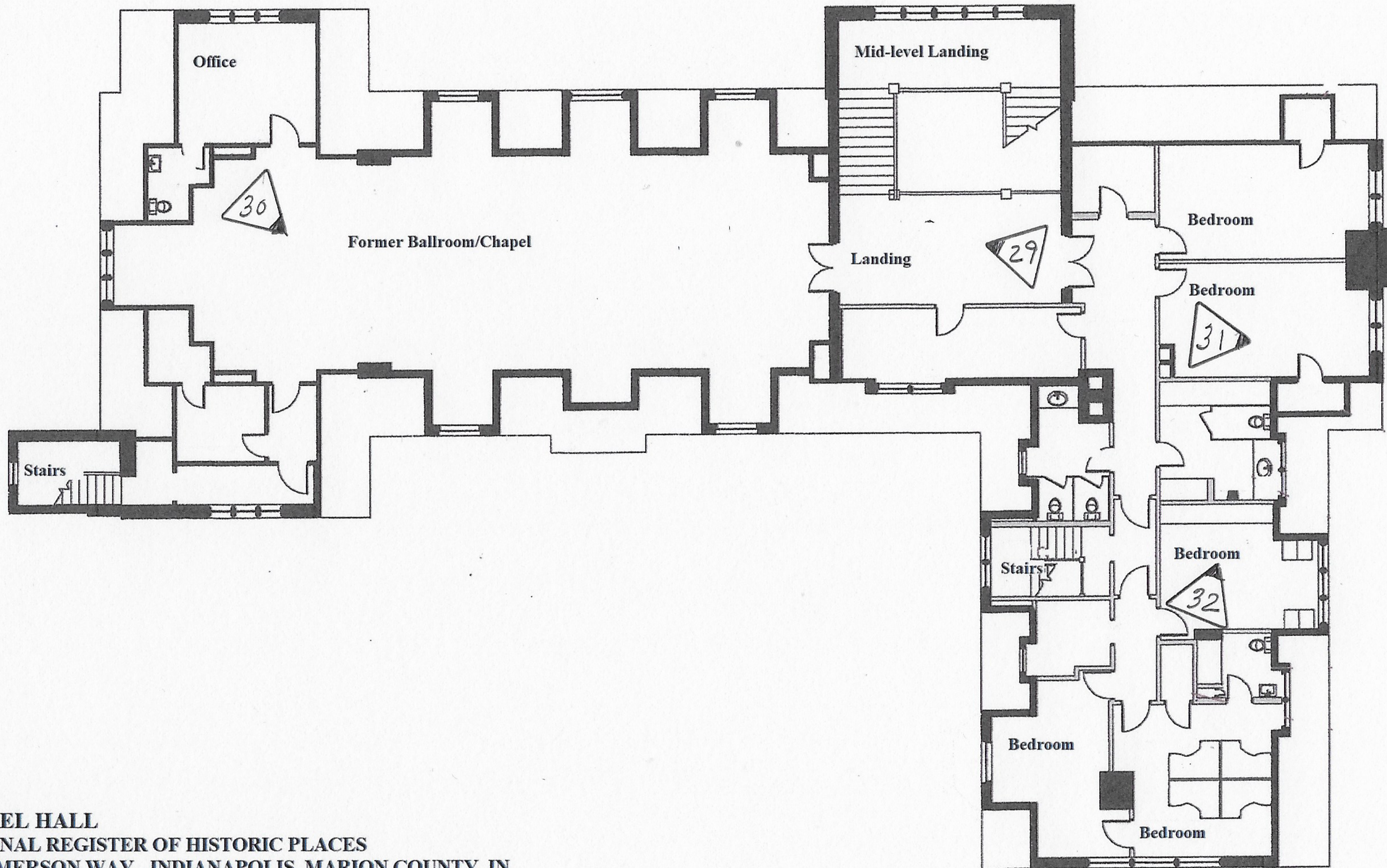
FIRST STORY



LAUREL HALL
 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 5395 EMERSON WAY - INDIANAPOLIS, MARION COUNTY, IN

NORTH >

SECOND STORY



LAUREL HALL
 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 5395 EMERSON WAY - INDIANAPOLIS, MARION COUNTY, IN

NORTH >

TOP STORY



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0001



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0002



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0003



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0007



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0008



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0009



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0010



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0011



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0012



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0014



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0018



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0020



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0023



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0028



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0030



IN_MarionCounty_LaurelHall_0033