Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

	STATE:
	North Carolina
	COUNTY:
	Orange
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	☐ Object	☐ Both	Being C	onsidered	Preservation work	k Unr	estricted			
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7.	DESCRIPTION								
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	DESCRIBE THE PE	RESE	NT AND OR	GINAL (if kno	own) PHYSICAL	. APPEA	RANCE		

Moorefields is a small Federal country house consisting of a two-story central block, three bays wide, with flanking one-bay wings. All three sections have low brick foundations and are covered by molded weatherboards applied with rosehead nails. A molded cornice occurs under the slightly splayed eaves of the low gable roof of each section.

The first level of the main (south) facade of the central block is protected by a shed porch which has turned wooden posts and is enclosed by a replacement balustrade. The impression of the original molded hand rail is still visible on the pilasters at either end of the porch. The flush sheathing under the porch is pierced by three openings: two narrow windows with heavy molded sills containing nine-over-nine sash and an entrance in the west bay. The entrance originally contained an unusually tall six-panel door, but early in the twentieth century the two upper panels were cut off to provide space for the present four-light transom. At the second level of the main facade in the two outer bays are small six-over-six windows with louvered shutters. All other windows have the same treatment except those under the porches where the shutters are flat-paneled.

The wings are two bays deep and extend beyond the main block to the rear, enclosing the sides of the shed porch on this facade. This porch was also enclosed early in the twentieth century but all the original elements including the chamfered wooden supports were left intact.

The chimney placement, arranged to heat both the main block and wings with only two chimneys, reflects the side-hall plan of the main block. An exterior brick chimney, located on the gable end of the west wing, heats only this wing while the other, placed at the junction of the main block and the east wing, serves both the parlor beside the hall and the east wing. There are no fireplaces on the second floor.

Moorefields includes a side hall with a large parlor to the east in the main block and two rooms in each wing. In the hall is an interesting closed string stair that rises on the west wall and winds around the rear wall to the second level. Both the single stringer and the spandrel below are flatpaneled. The most remarkable feature of the stair is the fine Chinese Chippendale balustrade with heavy molded handrail and square newel with molded cap. The parlor, finished with walls plastered above and below a molded chair rail, is dominated by the mantel in the center of the east wall. One of the earliest expressions of Federal design in Piedmont North Carolina, the mantel consists of a molded architrave around the rectangular opening with slender reeded pilasters rising within the architrave and supporting unadorned end blocks. The outer molding of the architrave breaks out over the pilasters to form caps. The end blocks flank a wide diagonally reeded frieze and support a delicately molded shelf that breaks over the end blocks. mantel consists of three ranges of three flat panels each flanked by tall, thin reeded pilasters with caps formed by the heavy molded cornice which carries around the parlor. To the right of the mantel a low door leads into the south room of the west wing, which now serves as a dining room but was originally a bedroom. Both rooms in this wing are heated by tiny corner fireplaces located in the northwest and southwest corners respectively.

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE							
North Carolina							
COUNTY							
Orange							
FOR NPS USE ONLY							
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE						

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

7.

Each room has lost most of its original trim.

The west wing is reached through a doorway located in the west wall of the side hall just in front of the stair. The rooms in this wing are also heated by corner fireplaces but with much larger openings. The south room contains its original trim with a beaded chair rail and a narrow concave wooden cornice. The mantel is similar to the one in the main parlor but diminished in scale and features an overmantel consisting of two ranges of three large flat panels.

The second floor of Moorefileds contains a stair hall in the northwest corner with two bedrooms across the front and a smaller roon to the east of the hall. All the rooms are plainly finished with plaster walls and little elaboration other than the simple architraves around the windows. The only major change to this floor is the conversion of the small east room into a bathroom.

B.

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Pre-Columbian	16th Century	☐ 18th Century ☑ 19th Century	20th Century
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable	le and Known)		
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☐ Art	Architecture	Social/Human-	
Commerce	Literature	itarian	
Communications	Military	Theater	
☐ Conservation	Music	Transportation	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The builder of Moorefields was Alfred Moore of Wilmington, a distinguished soldier and judge. In 1758 Moore was appointed captain in the First North Carolina Regiment, which later fought at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge. After resigning his commission in 1777, he returned to his Wilmington plantation where his activities in the local militia caused the British to burn his home. At the war's end Moore found himself destitute and turned to the practice of law, having previously studied for that profession under his father.

At Hillsborough in 1782, Moore acted as prosecutor in several important cases while the state attorney general was absent. The services he rendered on this occasion won him an appointment that year as attorney general. While holding this office, in 1785, he built Moorefields west of Hillsborough. Moore served until 1790 when, secure financially, he left his position for plantation life. During this period of retirement he helped prepare an ordinance to establish the seat of the University of North Carolina and to lay off the town of Chapel Hill. In 1798 Alfred Moore returned to public life when he was elected one of the judges of the North Carolina Supreme Court. His tenure on the state bench was cut short when in 1799 he was appointed to fill the position of the late James Trenell on the United States Supreme Court. Justice Moore served in this position until failing health forced his resignation in 1804.

Moore died October 15, 1810, and willed Moorefields to his son, Alfred, who followed the family tradition of practicing law and entering politics. Alfred Moore the younger was elected to the North Carolina House of Commons in 1813 and again in 1817. Serving until 1826, he further distinguished himself in the 1823-1824 term when he was elected speaker. He died in 1837, leaving Moorefields to his son-in-law, Francis Nash Waddell. In 1847 the estate was divided with the tract containing the house going to Alfred Moore s daughter, Augusta. It remained in the family until 1913 when it was advertised for public sale.

In the following years the subsequent owners were not members of the Moore family. In 1949, however, Edward T. Draper-Savage, who is related to the Moore family by marriage, acquired and began restoring the house. It is now in excellent condition.

Moorefieleds, historically significant as the home of the politically prominent Moore family, is architecturally important as one of the earliest appearances of the Federal style in the state. It is further distinguished by the well-executed mantels and fine Chinese Chippendale stair.

9.	MAJOR	BIBLIOGRAP	HICAL R	EFERENCES								
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