

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 PropertyHistoric name: Ida Mae Francis Tourist HomeOther names/site number: DHR ID# 115-0430

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 252 North Mason StreetCity or town: HarrisonburgState: VACounty: Independent CityNot For Publication: N/AVicinity: N/A**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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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 ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD, BRICK, METAL: Aluminum

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

The Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home, located at 252 North Mason Street in Harrisonburg, Virginia, is a two-story frame house built ca. 1908. The house has aluminum siding, a metal-sheathed side-gable roof, a one-story front porch, and a two-story ell. The center-passage-plan interior has a mix of historic-period and later wall and floor finishes and several notable features including an elaborate mantel with lionhead carvings, a colonnaded screen, French doors, and decorative faux wood painting. The front yard is bordered by a decorative stone wall and the back yard has a shed and two historic-period birdbaths. The house stands at the corner of North Mason and East Rock Streets on the edge of the surviving portion of the Newtown African-American neighborhood. The block on which the house stands has a relatively full complement of historic-period houses, whereas the area across Mason Street to the west underwent urban renewal in the 1960s and has mostly commercial buildings from that period and later. The lots across East Rock Street to the north have also been redeveloped with a modern firehouse and other buildings. The house stands at an elevation of approximately 1,330 feet above sea level in the drainage of Blacks Run, a tributary of the North, Shenandoah, and Potomac Rivers.

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Narrative Description

Inventory

1. Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home. Ca. 1908. Contributing building.
2. Shed. 20th c. Noncontributing building.

House Exterior

The **Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home** (inventory no. 1) is a west-facing dwelling of one-room-deep two-story form, a house form sometimes referred to as an I house. The three-bay front elevation is asymmetrical on both stories. The first story has a single window to the left of the more or less centered front entry but a triple window to the right. In the second story the right window is closer to the center window than the left window. These second-story front windows retain historic-period though non-original Craftsman three-over-one wooden sashes. The first-story front windows have modern replacement sashes. Other windows in the house have either historic three-over-one sashes or modern replacement sashes.

The one-story front porch appears to date to the mid-twentieth century. It has brick pedestals with concrete caps that support modern replacement aluminum posts of cylindrical fluted form. A brick pedestal where the porch meets the house wall at the north end does not have a post. Other features of the porch include a poured concrete floor, a decorative metal railing, a vinyl-sheathed ceiling, and an aluminum awning across the front.

A pair of brick stove flues, painted red, project above the roof ridge. A third red-painted brick stove flue projects from the gable ridge of the ell. The ell features a jettied (overhanging) second story at the end. The shed roof of the jettied section suggests that it and perhaps the section of the kitchen under it may have been an addition to the ell. On the north-facing side of the ell are first- and second-story "sunrooms" with the character of enclosed porches, though they may not incorporate the porch that stood at the location in the early decades of the house. An exterior wooden stair with a decorative metal railing rises to an entry on the end of the second-story sunroom. The kitchen entry has a stack-panel door with an upper glass panel.

House Interior

The front entry, which has a natural wood-finish French door with decorative muntin patterning, opens into a center passage and stair hall. The stair has a long lower run and a short upper run above a landing. Other features of the stair include turned balusters, horizontal beaded tongue-and-groove sheathing in the spandrel, and square newels with molded caps, bases, and neckings. The doorways opening into the passage have molded cornices, a detail typical throughout the interior. Double French doors open on the right side into the parlor, the room with the triple front windows. Between the parlor and the dining room (which is the inner first-floor room of the ell)

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is a walk-through colonnaded screen consisting of square wood columns set on paneled bases. The columns have molded caps, bases, and neckings and are finished a natural wood color, as is the frame of the screen.

The focal point of the dining room is an elaborate mantel occupying the wall between the dining room and kitchen. The mantel, which is stained or painted a rich purple-hued brown color, has two basic divisions: a lower section framing a false fireplace and an upper section consisting of an overmantel. The lower section features flanking engaged Ionic columns which support a heavy cushion shelf. The columns and shelf frame a panel board scored and painted to simulate brick-pattern tiles and a false fireplace with a decorative lining. The overmantel features an arched motif with an outer cushion ring, an inner ring with alternating acanthus leaf and palmette carvings, and an inner treatment of radiating petallike forms with a decorative center boss. Low-relief ornaments consisting of arabesques, palmettes, and floral swags fill the spandrels above the outer ring. At the top is a cushion molding from which rises a decorative crest with a center scallop shell motif. Framing the overmantel and the upper part of the lower section are complex forms (reminiscent of cabriole furniture legs) with clawed lion's paw bases and lionhead finials. The lionheads have snarling maws with curving tongues, bulbous eyebrows, beards, and trailing manes. Below them are winglike or featherlike ornament with nipplelike bosses. The forms stand on tall paneled pedestals with floral ornament in the panels.

The parlor and dining room walls have wallpapered plaster-and-lath finishes. Other downstairs spaces, like the center passage, a bedroom opposite the parlor, and the kitchen have wood paneling. Floor finishes include wood, carpeting, and vinyl. Most spaces are heated by oil burners (the second floor is unheated). The kitchen has midcentury cabinetry and a large porcelain sink. A small area of vertical beaded tongue-and-groove sheathing near the stove flue is probably indicative of the original wall finishes in the space.

A highlight of the second floor is its mostly stack-panel doors, many of which have decorative faux wood painting. The painting has a mottled/squiggled appearance with pronounced brush strokes. The upstairs rooms, which were guest rooms and a storage room, have mostly paneled walls (the storage room has lightly patterned wall and ceiling paper). In addition to the stack-panel doors are a four-panel door and a two-panel door. Doorknobs include metal and porcelain knobs. The ell attic, visible through a ceiling hatch, has light sawn rafters butted and nailed at the ridge. Only wire nails have been observed in visible parts of the ell roof structure. Widely spaced roof boards suggest the house has had metal roofing since original construction.

Yard Features

The small front yard is bordered along the sidewalk by a low curb-like stone retaining wall. The wall is constructed of sandstone river cobbles with pronounced concrete mortar joints. At each end and flanking the steps to a walkway which leads to the front porch are low piers with pyramidal caps with buttonlike stone finials. The wall angles in at the steps and it turns back toward the northwest front corner of the house where there is a fifth pier. The sidewalk, which rises to a few feet above street level, is fenced with a pipe railing. The front walk leads to a

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concrete step at the porch which is flanked by concrete cheeks. A sycamore stands at the north end of the yard.

A low concrete-block retaining wall runs along Rock Street on the north side of the house in line with a steel mesh fence. The fence indents to form a gate for a walkway to an entrance on the north side of the ell. The gate is flanked by poured-concrete piers with ball finials. Beyond the gate the fence continues to the east end of the property with an indentation for a vehicle turn in. The back yard has a magnolia and plantings including boxwood, yucca, holly, and forsythia. There are two birdbaths of note. One is made of molded concrete, painted silver over green, with a complex lobed and scalloped form with upper and lower basins. The other is cast metal with an ornate base, a slender octagonal-section stem, and a basin with a lobed edge. Other yard features include clothes line poles, brick flowerbed borders, and a **shed** (inventory no. 2). The shed, which may date to the historic period, is a small one-story frame building with non-historic plywood siding and a metal-sheathed shed roof.

According to James Madison University archaeologist Carole Nash, who with her students has begun a study of the property, the potential for archaeological features associated with the historic period is high. While the rear (eastern end) of the other lots in the 200 block of North Mason Street hold more recent houses that front on Community Street, the back yard of the Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home is intact. Small depressions indicate traces of ornamental plantings that would have enhanced the enclosed space, and a larger depression to the rear may be associated with a former outbuilding.

Integrity Analysis

The Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home possesses sufficient integrity for listing. The house retains its overall exterior form and interior plan arrangement from the period of significance. The aluminum siding appears to have been added after the close of the period of significance but is in keeping with exterior treatments of the era. The porch, which has alterations that appear to postdate the period of significance, nevertheless retains its historic form, and it has Craftsman-inspired porch supports somewhat like those that existed historically. Key interior features like the lionhead mantel, colonnaded screen, and French doors date or appear to date to the historic period. The property therefore possesses sufficient overall integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. Integrity of setting is mixed. The block on which the house stands retains historic dwellings with overall good integrity. The areas to the west and north of the property have been redeveloped with largescale buildings dating from the 1960s and later (mostly later), a consequence of urban renewal, but the only remaining alignment of the original Mason Street, a connection between the Newtown/Northeast neighborhood and downtown Harrisonburg, fronts the 200 block where the Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home is located. The street remnant is a tangible reminder of the neighborhood prior to urban renewal, contributing to the integrity of setting. The survival of character-defining features contributes to the property's high integrity of feeling and association. The house stands at its historic location. The shed, though it may date to the period of significance, does not possess sufficient integrity to be classified as contributing.

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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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1912-1962

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

AFRICAN AMERICAN

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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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 Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home in Harrisonburg, Virginia, catered to an African American clientele during the era of segregation. Evidence suggests the two-story frame house was built for Ida Mae Francis and her husband, shoemaker Henry William Francis, about 1908. After Henry's death in 1912, Ida Mae took in boarders and short-term guests as a source of income. Dr. George Washington Carver is said to have stayed in the house in the 1920s, and in the 1950s and early 1960s Ida Mae advertised her tourist home in various editions of the *Green Book* guide to African American travel-oriented businesses. As historian Mark Sawin writes, the Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home "was a central hub of black middle-class life from the 1920s-60s" in Harrisonburg. The house features a number of architectural refinements including an elaborate mantel with lionhead carvings, a colonnaded screen, French doors, and decorative faux wood painting. The Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Black and Social History as a signature Harrisonburg African American social institution and *Green Book* property from the era of segregation. The period of significance begins in 1912, the year Ida Mae Francis is believed to have begun her boarding business, until 1962, the date of the tourist home's last *Green Book* entry and the year the boarding and tourist home business is believed to have ceased. The Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home is eligible at the local level of significance.

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

Historical Background and Criterion A Ethnic Heritage: Black and Social History Areas of Significance

The Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home is associated with Newtown, a historic African American community which coalesced on the northeast side of downtown Harrisonburg in the early postbellum period and which now corresponds approximately with the area known as the Northeast Neighborhood. The Newtown Cemetery, an African American burial ground, was established in what was known as Zirkle's Addition in 1869. First Baptist Church, another important African American institution, was built in the 1870s on the block of North Mason Street across from the future site of the tourist home. These developments occurred during a period of growth in Harrisonburg's black population, which increased from 390 individuals in 1860 to 997 individuals by 1880. After 1880 growth was more gradual, the black population increasing to 1,200 by 1920. Much of this population growth would have occurred in the Newtown neighborhood, which boasted about fifty residences in 1885.¹

¹ Pezzoni, "Bethel AME Church and Dallard-Newman House Historic District," 10-11; Ehrenpreis, *Picturing Harrisonburg*, 144. A number of individuals assisted the author in the preparation of the report, foremost among them the owner of the Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home, William Reed, and his daughter, Deanna Reed. Eastern Mennonite University history professor Mark Metzler Sawin conducted much of

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Evidence suggests the tourist home was built for Ida Mae Francis (1875-1976) and her husband, Henry William Francis (1876-1912). Henry was the son of Harrisonburg shoemaker Albert Francis and his wife, Angeline, and like his father he made shoes. An obituary at the time of his death from pneumonia in 1912 described him as an “industrious shoemaker.” In 1909 he was a First Baptist Church trustee, and the obituary mentions the presence at his funeral of the Rockingham Star Lodge, Knights of Pythias, an indication he was also a Pythian. In the words of his obituary, Henry “always took a lively interest in all matters pertaining to his race.” Ida Mae was the daughter of Jackson and Bettie Banks, residents of the Culpeper area. Jackson Banks was a barber and entrepreneur, and the Banks household welcomed boarders under its roof—experience that would prove beneficial to Ida Mae later. Ida Mae also had brothers and sisters who worked in the hotel industry and were familiar with the need for lodging services for black servants who accompanied their white employers while traveling. Ida and Henry married on December 4, 1902, in Harrisonburg.²

Though Henry Francis purchased the lot on the southeast corner of North Mason and East Rock Streets, designated lot no. 67 in Effingers’s Addition, in April 1909, evidence suggests the house was built for the Francises before 1909. Land tax records for 1905 identify Warren S. Lurty as the lot owner, at which time the value of buildings on the lot was listed as zero. Lurty, who was a lawyer, died in 1906 and subsequently the lot was listed as belonging to his estate. In 1907 the value of buildings on the lot was listed as \$150, increasing to \$250 in 1908, a value that remained constant through 1912. The 1909 land tax record, though continuing to list the Lurty estate as the owner of the lot, included the marginal note: “H. W. Francis ^{Col.} to pay.” The note indicated Francis was to pay taxes on the lot and suggests he already had an interest in the property. Research by historian Mark Sawin has uncovered information that in 1904 Warren Lurty had written up a contract to sell Henry Francis an unspecified lot. The Mason Street lot may be that lot, the transfer formalized by deed in 1909. The increase in value of buildings from \$150 in 1907 to \$250 in 1908 suggests the front section of the house was built first, followed by the ell, though other explanations of the increase are possible. In May 1911 Henry and Ida deeded the lot to E. D. Ott in order to secure a bond. Though record of ownership reverting to Henry and/or Ida has not been located, it evidently happened.³

the historical research on which section 8 is based. Assistance was also provided by Dr. Carole L. Nash with Mountain Valley Archaeology and James Madison University, Mollie Amelia Godfrey with James Madison University, and Virginia Department of Historic Resources staff members and emeriti Calder Loth, Michael Pulice, Amanda Terrell, and Aubrey Von Lindern.

² Mark Sawin, personal communication with the author, April 2024; Sawin, “252 N. Mason;” Rockingham County Deed Book 87, p. 470, and land tax records.

³ Mark Sawin, personal communication with the author, March 2024; Sawin, “Brief History of Ida Mae Francis;” Rockingham County Deed Book 86, p. 56, and Deed Book 92, p. 97; Rockingham County land tax records; Rockingham County Chancery Case Index No. 1909-084 (Original Case No. 328, Curators of *W. S. Lurty v. Annie Sheppard Lurty*, p. 1); Lee, *Buildings of Virginia*, 90. Lurty acquired the lot in 1893 by paying delinquent taxes totaling \$1.05 (Rockingham County Deed Book 47, p. 110). Land tax records for 1906 and after 1912 were not searched. Construction of the house may have begun in 1906 but the increase to the full value in 1908 is taken as evidence for completion of the house that year, hence the

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Henry's untimely death in 1912 left Ida Mae a widow and the principal support for the couple's young daughter, Mary Elizabeth (1907-84), who went by the nickname Pete and was later Mary Elizabeth Yokley. Ida Mae earned income by taking in laundry, as indicated by a 1927 city directory which listed her occupation as "laund." More germane to the significance of the property, she also took in boarders. This is indicated as early as 1920 when the federal census listed two "roomers" in the household of Ida Mae and Mary Francis: Columbia Brown, a domestic servant in a white home, and Rufus A. Arthurs, a Jamaican minister. Regarding Ida Mae's boarding business, Mark Sawin writes, "In Culpeper and in Harrisonburg, she had grown up in households that regularly rented rooms to lodgers and guests—it was a business she understood."⁴

"Throughout the 1920s," writes Sawin, Ida Mae and Mary "ran a successful boarding house, taking in black guests from across the nation who came through Harrisonburg's thriving black community . . . lots of 'normal' folks, but also a lot of characters, & even celebrities." One of the characters was a well-dressed flimflam artist who in 1925 "engaged quarters, in the home of Ida May Francis, colored," while running his con. At the other end of the reputability spectrum was renowned chemist Dr. George Washington Carver, who on April 18, 1928, spoke "before one of the largest audiences ever assembled to hear a lyceum member" at Bridgewater College near Harrisonburg. Carver is remembered as lodging in the Francis residence and he left a vase as a gift and memento.⁵

Not much is known about Ida Mae's tourist home business during the 1930s and 1940s, though Sawin writes that it continued during those decades. A 1937-38 city directory does not list Ida Mae's occupation though it does list Mary's occupation as a cook. According to family tradition, Mary worked as a cook and maid for a Washington, D.C., white family for several years in the early 1930s. Mary married Eddie Rouser in 1924, and though the marriage later failed it did produce two children: Lois "Snookie" Rouser (1924-2022) and Henry F. "Bubbles" (or "Bubba" or "Bub") Rouser (1926-2017). Mary remarried, to Harold Jacob "Joe" Yokley (ca. 1914-1998), in 1946. Yokley worked at the Arcade, an African American restaurant and pool hall in Harrisonburg. Regarding the early years of Mary and Harold's marriage, Sawin writes: "A steady stream of black travelers and tourists stayed with them, and their house became a hangout for black orchestras & performers." One musician known to have stayed at the house was bandleader Don Albert (Albert Dominique), whose orchestra played a Christmas concert at a local country club in 1935. Ida Mae, in addition to her business activities, engaged in other activities during the late 1930s and early 1940s, assisting the local chapter of the Colored Aid

ca. 1908 date adopted for the purposes of this report (the *circa* reflects the fact land tax records are sometimes approximate guides to completion).

⁴ Sawin, "252 N. Mason;" Sawin, "Brief History of Ida Mae Francis;" Miller, *Harrisonburg, Virginia, City Directory, 1927*, 144. The Miller directory does not list Ida Mae's establishment under the heading "Boarding & Lodging." This omission persisted in other city directories through the 1960s.

⁵ Sawin, "252 N. Mason;" William Reed personal communication with the author, March 2024.

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Red Cross Fund in 1939 and serving as a delegate to a local Republican nominating convention in 1940.⁶

The tourist home entered a new era when in 1954 the “Mrs. Ida M. Francis Tourist Home” was listed in *The Negro Travelers’ Green Book*. Known simply as the *Green Book*, the publication was the inspiration of New York City postman and entrepreneur Victor Hugo Green (1892-1960), who in 1936 published his first guide for African American motorists. As historian Nikisha M. Pickett writes, the *Green Book* “provided African Americans a list of safe places to eat, sleep and even fuel their cars as they navigated unfamiliar and potentially unsafe parts of the country during the Jim Crow era.” Or as the introduction to the 1937 edition put it: “The idea of ‘The Green Book’ is to compile facts and information connected with motoring, which the Negro Motorist can use and depend upon.” The guide initially focused on the New York City area, but Green later expanded his geographic range nationwide by tapping his postal carrier compadres and others for information. Sales of the guide eventually topped 15,000 copies per year, aided by an arrangement with Standard Oil that offered the guide for purchase at its Esso service stations. Anti-discrimination legislation in the 1960s reduced the need for the guide and the last edition was published in 1966.⁷

The 1954 *Green Book* listing and two that followed in 1955 and 1956 mistakenly identified the Francis tourist home’s address as 252 North Main Street, but this was corrected in subsequent editions. The name evolved as well, from “Mrs. Ida M. Francis Tourist Home” in 1954 through 1956 to “Mrs. Ida Francis Tourist Home” in 1957 and “Mrs. Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home” in 1962. The listing was not renewed for the 1963-64 and 1966-67 editions. The Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home was not the only Harrisonburg business of its kind to advertise in the *Green Book*. A Mrs. Johnson advertised her tourist home at 371 North Federal Street at some date before 1950.⁸

According to Mark Sawin, 1962 was the last year the Francis family operated their residence as a boarding house. Ida Mae was then eighty-seven years old; she lived to a hundred and one, dying in 1977. Henry F. “Bubbles” Rouser played a role in the evolution of the house during the postwar period. He was stationed in the military in Germany in 1952-54 and sent home a number of mementos that still adorn the premises. Henry’s European connection may explain the house’s elaborate Renaissance Revival mantel, which is atypical of the ornate mantels typically seen in the region’s houses from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century period. After he returned to the states Henry worked as an assistant parts manager at Town & Country Auto and then at

⁶ Sawin, “252 N. Mason;” Sawin, “Ida Mae Francis Family info;” Sawin, “Brief History of Ida Mae Francis;” *Miller’s Harrisonburg, Va., City Directory, 1937-1938*, 142.

⁷ Pickett, “Victor H. Green;” *Negro Motorist Green Book 1937 Edition*, 1.

⁸ Green, *Negro Travelers’ Green Book [1954 edition]*, 67; Green, *Negro Travelers’ Green Book [1955 edition]*, 66; Green, *Negro Travelers’ Green Book [1956 edition]*, 65; Green, *Negro Travelers’ Green Book [1957 edition]*, 66; *Green Book guide for travel and vacations [1962 edition]*, 96; Sawin, “252 N. Mason.” Frank’s Restaurant, another Harrisonburg business catering to an African American clientele, advertised in the *Green Book* in 1953 and earlier (*Green Book. An International Travel Guide. 1950 Edition*, 77; *Negro Travelers’ Green Book [1953 edition]*, 69).

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Harrisonburg's Mick or Mack grocery store. His sister Lois worked as a salesperson at various Harrisonburg clothing stores owned by the Ney family. Henry and Lois continued to live at 252 North Mason until his death in 2017 and her death in 2022. In their later years the Rousers were cared for by neighbor William Reed, the current owner of the tourist home.⁹

As this context demonstrates, the Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home was an important fixture in the social life of Harrisonburg's African American community during the era of segregation. The property's significance is reflected in its listing as a *Green Book* property in the 1950s and 1960s and for its role in providing lodgings for African American visitors to the community, both famous ones like George Washington Carver and many others who are less well known. The property's significance is enhanced by its genteel interior which possesses a high degree of integrity from the period of significance.

Architectural Discussion

The Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home first appears on a May 1918 Sanborn map of Harrisonburg (the 1912 Sanborn map did not cover construction in the area). The map shows a house very much like the present house in basic form, with a two-story front section and a two-story ell extending from the south end of the rear elevation. A front porch is shown, though it differs in footprint from the current porch. A back porch is shown in the reentrant angle of the house and ell where the two-story sunroom additions currently stand. The Sanborn map also shows two long outbuildings in the back yard.¹⁰

Historic photographs from the Francis-Rouser Family Collection, most taken from the 1920s on, show portions of the front of the house. A photo dated ca. 1922 shows a section of the front porch with cylindrical porch posts on pedestals. A photo from the 1930s shows more of the front of the house but is partly obscured by overexposure. It seems to show paneled square porch post pedestals supporting cylindrical posts, presumably the same porch treatment shown in the ca. 1922 photo. The porch appears to have had a solid railing with lozenge panels or cutouts, and it appears to match the current porch configuration which is more centered on the elevation than the porch indicated on the 1918 Sanborn map. The decorative stone wall along the sidewalk is clearly shown. A photo taken in 1960 appears to show cylindrical posts and a solid railing. The pedestals may already have been replaced with the current brick pedestals. The triple parlor window is visible in the 1960 photo, as are more sashes with Craftsman three-over-one sash arrangements than survive at present.¹¹

⁹ Sawin, "252 N. Mason;" Sawin, "Brief History of Ida Mae Francis;" William Reed, personal communication with the author, March 2024.

¹⁰ Sanborn Maps.

¹¹ Francis-Rouser Family Collection. These images appear in Mark Sawin's PowerPoint presentation "252 N. Mason, A Harrisonburg 'Green Book' House." Some of the images identified as 252 North Mason in the presentation are of other houses. The Craftsman stylistic classification for the house reflects the Craftsman windows and secondarily the current two-part porch supports which, though relatively late, are in keeping with the Craftsman style.

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Like the exterior, the interior has evolved through the years. Features like the stair newels and balusters are probably original, as may be the colonnaded screen between the parlor and dining room (unless the ell was not completed the same year as the front of the house, as suggested above). The French doors between the parlor and center passage were likely added. The elaborate dining room mantel may also be an addition. The mantel is Renaissance Revival in style, modeled on similarly ornate fireplace treatments which were popular in Europe during the 1500s and were revived in the 1800s. Though it is possible the mantel originally stood in a residence, hotel, or commercial building in Harrisonburg, its figural carving would have few local precedents and suggests the mantel may be a European import. Also of architectural note is the faux wood painting on several upstairs doors. The painting appears on possibly non-original stack-panel doors and may date as late as the mid-twentieth century. Such decorative painting was sometimes done by itinerant artists. Perhaps it was done by a boarder in exchange for room and board.

Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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1953.

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_____. "Ida Mae Francis Family info & 252 Mason St Green Book House Resources." Report, 2024.

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Traveler's Green Book, International Edition, 1963-64. New York: Victor H. Green & Co., 1963.

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Vanterve, Caroline. "Mrs. Ida Mae Francis." The Architecture of the Negro Travelers' Green Book website (<https://community.village.virginia.edu/greenbooks>).

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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: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR ID# 115-0430

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.17 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.451877 Longitude: -78.865848

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

The nominated area corresponds to City of Harrisonburg tax parcel 034 O 19.

Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home
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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary corresponds to the modern tax parcel on which the sole contributing resource associated with the property—the Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home—stands. All known historic resources and the property's immediate historic setting are included within the historic boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: J. Daniel Pezzoni
organization: Landmark Preservation Associates
street & number: 6 Houston Street
city or town: Lexington state: Virginia zip code: 24450
e-mail: gilespezzoni@rockbridge.net
telephone: (540) 464-5315
date: April 9, 2024

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 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, 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.

Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home

Name of Property

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home

City or Vicinity: Harrisonburg (independent city) County: N/A State: Virginia

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: March 2024

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

1 of 15.

Front (west) elevation of house showing decorative stone wall. View looking east.

2 of 15.

Rear of house and ell. View looking south.

3 of 15.

Back yard showing house and shed. View looking west.

4 of 15.

Shed and decorative bird bath. View looking south.

5 of 15.

Center passage and stair.

6 of 15.

Double French door entrance to parlor from center passage.

7 of 15.

Colonnaded screen between parlor and dining room, view from parlor.

8 of 15.

Dining room mantel.

9 of 15.

Dining room mantel detail of lion head.

10 of 15.

Dining room mantel detail of arch motif.

11 of 15.

Kitchen.

12 of 15.

Ell upstairs.

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13 of 15.

Detail of decorative faux wood painting on an upstairs door.

14 of 15.

The 200 block of North Mason Street showing 252 North Mason on the left.

15 of 15.

View of the urban renewal area to the west of North Mason Street from the front porch of 252 North Mason.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



LOCATION MAP

Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home
City of Harrisonburg, VA
DHR No. 115-0430

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Latitude: 38.451877

Longitude: -78.865848

 Nominated Boundary

0 50 100 200
 Feet



Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN), VITA, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, NGA, USGS

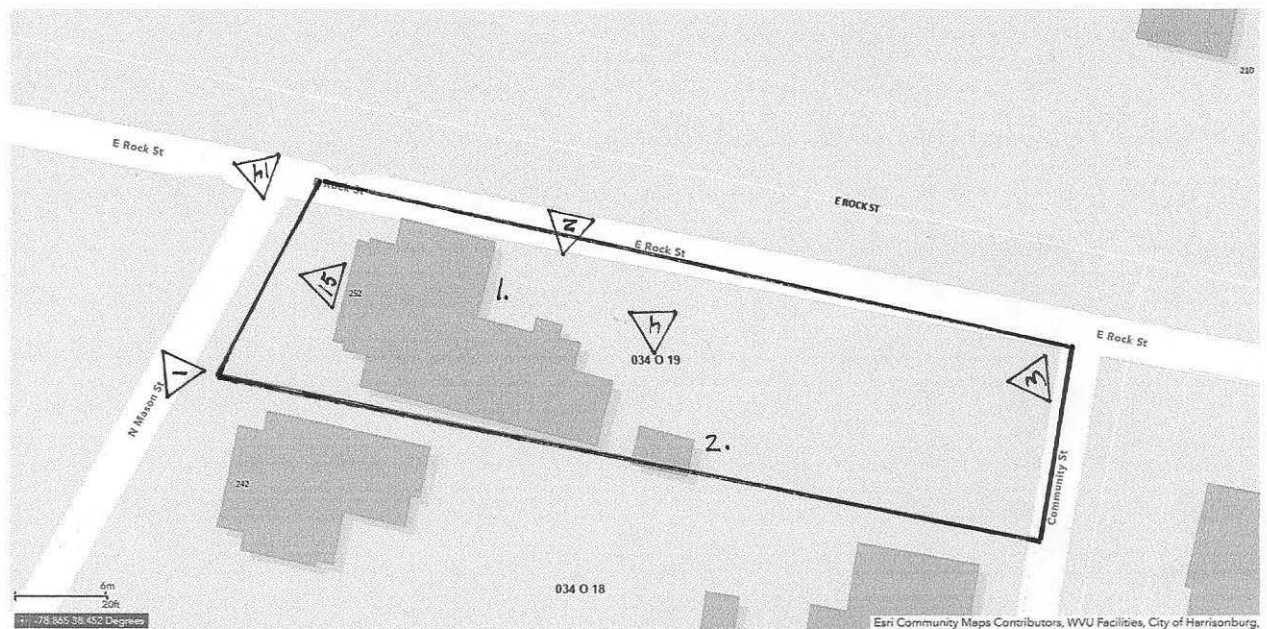


Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home

252 North Mason Street
Harrisonburg, Virginia
DHR ID# 115-0430

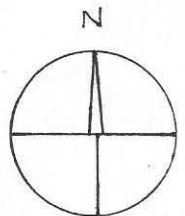
National Register of Historic Places Boundary Map, Site Plan & Photo Key

Triangular markers indicate number and direction of view of nomination photos and are keyed to the photo log in the nomination. Scale and placement of resources approximate. Twenty-foot scale shown on map.



Inventory

1. Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home. Contributing building.
2. Shed. Noncontributing building.



Ida Mae Francis Tourist Home

252 North Mason Street

Harrisonburg, Virginia

DHR ID# 115-0430

Parcel Map

