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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property
historic name Mitchell-Ward House
other names/site number BE 3615
2. Location
street & number 201 N. Nelson
city or town Gentry vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Benton code 007 zip code 72734
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this image nomination is 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property image is meets in the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant in ationally statewide in the National Register criteria. In ationally statewide is a statewide in the National Register criteria. In ationally in the property is statewide in the National Register criteria. In my opinion, the property in meets in does not meet the National Register criteria. In my opinion, the property in meets in does not meet the National Register criteria. In my opinion, the property in meets in does not meet the National Register criteria. In the National Register criteria in the National Register criteria. In the National Register criteria in the National Register criteria in the National Register criteria. In the National Register criteria in the National Register criteria in the National Register criteria. In the National Register criteria in the National Register criteria in the National Register criteria. In the National Register criteria in the National Register of Register of Historia Property in the National Register criteria in the National Register of Register o
4. National Park Service Certification
I hereby certify that the property is: entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet determined eligible for the
National Register. See continuation sheet determined not eligible for the
National Register. removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)

Mitchell-Ward House Name of Property	Benton County, Arkansas County and State
5. Classification	A STATE
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in count.)
□ private □ public-local □ public-State □ public-Federal □ structure □ object □ object □ private □ public-Federal □ structure □ object □ object	Contributing Noncontributing 2 0 buildings 0 0 sites 0 0 structures 0 0 objects 2 0 Total
Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A	Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
6. Function or Use	
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling	DOMESTIC/single dwelling
7. Description	
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) LATE VICTORIAN/Folk Victorian	Materials (Enter categories from instructions) foundation BRICK walls WEATHERBOARD
	roof ASPHALT other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Mitchell-Ward House	Benton County, Arkansas
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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.)	Levels of Significance (local, state, national) LOCAL
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) ARCHITECTURE
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.	Period of Significance c. 1897
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.)	Significant Dates c. 1897
Property is: A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	
☐ B removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)
□ C moved from its original location.□ D a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	
☐ F a commemorative property	Architect/Builder
☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.	Builder: Robert L. Summers
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	
9. Major Bibliographical References	
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one of	or more continuation sheets.)
Previous documentation on file (NPS): preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register Previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	Primary location of additional data: State Historic Preservation Office Other State Agency Federal Agency Local Government University Other Name of repository:

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10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property Less than one acre	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
1 15 366661 4014838	3
Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
2	4
	See continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) Boundary Justification	
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Benita Duvall, National Register Historian	
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program	date September 28, 2004
street & number 323 Center Street	telephone (501) 324-9880
city or town Little Rock state	
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location	
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage	or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white photographs of the property.	
Additional items (Cheek with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)	
Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)	
name Justin Osteen	
street & number P. O. Box 1106	telephone 479-736-2015
city or town Gentry state	e Arkansas zip code 72734

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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

The Mitchell-Ward House, located at 210 N. Nelson in Gentry, Arkansas, is an excellent example of a two-story, post-railroad Folk Victorian house with Queen Anne influences. Dated signatures of its craftsman, Robert L. Summers, have been found on interior trim pieces indicating that the house was constructed in 1897. The two-story front gable and wing main section features a one-and-one-half story rear ell. The house sits on a corner lot. The east (front) and south elevations of the main section that face the street are sheathed with three-inch tongue-and-groove drop siding. The north and west sides of the main section and the rear ell are sheathed in six-inch tongue-and-groove drop siding. Both sidings are original to the house.

The house rests on a continuous brick foundation and the gable roofs are covered with composition shingles. Brick chimney flues are intact on the front gable and wing sections and a centrally located brick fireplace chimney is intact on the rear ell. The high-pitched gables of the front and wing are enclosed with pent roofs. A third gable of the main section is centered on the east side-gable roof of the wing. These gables, each with a unique design, retain original shinglework and stickwork decorative elements. Decorative spandrels that existed at the three gable-peaks are being replicated from patterns documented in a circa 1920 historic photograph. Two four-window bays with shinglework trim project from the lower levels of the east front gable and south gable side of the wing. The main section retains all of its original windows and doors with original trim and in the original configuration. A one-story L-shaped, flat-roofed porch inset in the east front gable and wing, that featured turned-spindle balustrades and frieze, was documented by the circa 1920 historic photograph and is being fully replicated by the owner. The centered rear ell features a dropped-roof porch inset on the south and an enclosed room addition on the north. A one-story porch wraps around the west and north sides of the ell joining the north room addition. The interior retains virtually all of its original hand-crafted decorative elements including window and door trim, spindle-work in arched openings, raisedpanel staircase, and mantel. A carriage house, sheathed in the same drop siding as the house, has been preserved from the historic period.

ELABORATION

The Mitchell-Ward House was built in 1897 as a single-family residence. In the 1960s the structure was altered as a multi-unit rental property. The non-historic alterations were easily identified by the present owner and removed. The house is being restored to provide over-night accommodations for tourists while retaining the architectural integrity of the structure. Fortunately, previous alterations disturbed very little of the interior or exterior original structural and decorative features, which allows for an accurate restoration of the original architecture.

The simple front gable and wing style of the two-story Mitchell-Ward House is embellished with elaborate architectural ornamentation popular across America at the time of its construction. The railroad was responsible for bringing not only the construction materials to the new town of Gentry, but also paint and

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wallpaper for decorative treatments. It may also have brought the design texts that local craftsmen used to build the newest and most popular styles of the time. Robert L. Summers, a craftsman residing in the area, was proud enough of the house he built at 201 N. Nelson that he signed an interior trim piece of the house as "Architect and Builder" and dated it 1897.

The front gable and wing along with the one-and-one-half story rear ell are all covered with composition shingles in a color replicating the weathered appearance of the original wood shingles. Original brick chimney flues are intact on each front gable and wing section. The original brick fireplace chimney is centrally located on the gable roof of the rear ell. The house is in its original location and rests on its original continuous brick foundation. Porches rest on brick piers.

East Elevation

The east (front) elevation reveals a two-story front gable and wing house with high-pitched gables, one interrupting the side-gable roof of the wing. A pent roof encloses original patterned wood shingle and stickwork on the front gable section. The spindlework sprandrel at the gable-peak that is documented by a circa 1920 historic photograph of the house, will be recreated and installed by the present owner. The gable of the wing retains a differing pattern of shinglework and the missing gable-peak spandrel will be returned. A porch from the non-historic period of the house replaced the original L-shaped, flat-roofed porch inset within the L of the wing. The original porch is being replicated including turned-spindle and jigsawn balustrades that surrounded the flat roof and the floor of the porch. Turned-spindle porch supports topped by a decorative spindlework frieze are being recreated to restore this elaborately ornamented elevation to its original appearance.

The one-over-one fixed upper sash windows of the east elevation on both levels are intact with original trim and in their original configuration. Two doorways, the lower level entry with a transom and an upper level opening onto the flat-roofed porch, retain their original doors, door trim and hand-crated screen doors. Both are in their original configuration.

The lower level of the front gable features a four-window bay with a bottom band of patterned shinglework, topped by paired windows on the upper level. The entry door is off-set to the north on the wing under the porch. Two large one-over-one windows open onto the porch, one from the south-facing wing and the other from the front gable section. Windows are centered above these windows on the upper level. All window placement in the main section of the house was designed to provide window openings on three sides of each interior room.

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South Elevation

The south elevation reveals the porch of the east elevation, the gable-end of the main section wing, and the one-and-one-half story rear-facing ell that is centered on the west wall of the main section. The high-pitched gable of the wing retains the original pent and patterned shinglework, differing from either of the gable decorations of the east elevation. The spindlework spandrel documented on the circa 1920s historic photograph of the house indicates a different spandrel design from those of the east elevation. The variation in design is being replicated by the owner.

The lower level of the wing gable-end features a four-window bay, banded on the bottom with patterned shinglework. Paired windows are centered above the bay on the upper level. One significant exterior construction detail is the use of quarter-round trim applied with undecorated corner boards, creating rounded corners. This distinguishing feature is noted in other historic structures of the same time period in Gentry. The original paint scheme has been established by microscopic analysis and will be recreated on the exterior by the owners.

A one-story porch with a dropped-roof and turned-spindle and jigsawn balustrade is inset within the L of the wing and rear ell. Paint shadows found on the house indicate that the original porch supports were turned-posts. During the 1897 to 1920s time period, when the extant historic photograph was taken, both the porch flooring and porch supports had been replaced. The turned-post supports are being returned to restore the original presentation of this elevation. One doorway is off center to the east on the rear ell under the porch. Another doorway opens onto the porch from the west wall of the wing section. They retain their original doors, door trim with hand-crafted decorative crowns, and hand-crafted screen doors. All of the original, hand-crafted screen doors were created with different designs. The decorative crowns of the doors and windows opening onto the south porch differ in design from those of the main section. Paired windows and a three-window-one-door bay are located to the west of the rear ell doorway. The west end of the porch adjoins a wrap-porch on the west elevation.

West Elevation

In the 1960s, when the Mitchell-Ward House was used as a multi-unit rental property, the original west elevation (rear) wrap-porch was expanded and enclosed. Fortunately, the rafters and porch footings were left in place to document the porch dimensions. Paint shadows on the house document that the same turned porch supports and balustrade were repeated from the south porch allowing the present owner to return the west elevation to its original presentation. Steps from this porch landed next to a stone-lined well that was used prior to the installation of municipal water lines. The well has been sealed with a concrete cap. The stair steps are now aligned with the gable-peak of the rear ell.

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North Elevation

The north elevation reveals the two-story side-gable of the main section and the centered one-and-one-half story rear-facing ell. The main section retains four single symmetrically aligned windows, two on the upper level and two on the lower level. The rear ell features an enclosed room on the same footprint as an historic addition to the house. Six multi-pane double-hung sash windows have been installed on the north and west walls of the room. The historic addition featured a one-story shed roof attached to the west wall of the main front gable section. Severe deterioration of the walls and roof occurred due to improper alignment with the existing rear ell gable roof. The present roofline repeats the profile of the dropped-roof porch on the south elevation and facilitates proper water runoff. The wrap-porch of the west elevation continues along the west end of this elevation and adjoins the room addition.

A two-story carriage house sheathed in six-inch drop siding lies only a few feet from the northwest corner of the house. It exists from the original construction period of the house. The present use of the structure is storage and laundry facilities, but no modifications have been made to the exterior.

Interior

The original glazed entry door with transom opens from the east elevation onto the stair hall. The staircase is enclosed with raised-paneling. A hand-crafted turned-spindle balustrade features a newel post of four turned spindles capped with a chamfered and turned crown. The stair hall opens to the north and south parlors and rear ell. No original lighting fixtures remain in the house.

The north parlor wall construction is repeated throughout the main section of the house. Rough, circular-sawn sheathing was applied horizontally. Canvas was then stretched over the wood surface and wallpapers were applied over the canvas. Therefore, each room was designed to be papered.

The north parlor retains original arched openings into the east bay and the adjoining library room. Hand-crafted spindlework detailing adorns the arches. Reeded window and door trim is topped with hand-crafted rosette corner blocks. This parlor and the library will be used as a bedroom with adjoining bathroom.

The south parlor features the same window and door trim. It is in this room that the signatures of the craftsman who built the house were found. Baseboard trim from the bay was inscribed "Rob Summers-Architect and Builder, June 22, 1897. Another baseboard corner block was inscribed "In God I trust-Rob Summers, July 1st, 1897."

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The upper level of the main section includes three bedrooms that open from the stair hall. A door opens on the east wall of the hall to the flat-roofed east porch. Each bedroom features closets. The interior as well as the exterior closet door framing is topped with hand-crafted rosette corner blocks. The ceiling and wall junctures are rounded in all bedrooms. The smallest of the bedrooms will become a bathroom.

The rear ell includes the dining room and kitchen. The dining room features a brick firebox opening with the original hand-crafted mantel. The shallow firebox indicates that coal was probably used as the heat source.

The original dining room will serve as a sitting room and the north room addition now serves as a dining room. The seven foot multi-pane windows in this north room were salvaged from the Siloam Springs railroad depot. They replace windows associated with the non-historic alterations.

The walls of the kitchen were bead-board, most of which was removed in non-historic alterations. The present owner has retained the remaining original wall treatment and applied wallboard on the rest of the wall surfaces. Two small windows were installed above a sink area on the west wall. An original hand-crafted kitchen cabinet unit that had been removed from the house has been purchased by the present owner and is being returned to its original location in the room. Additional cabinets will be of a complementary design.

INTEGRITY

The Mitchell-Ward House, built in 1897, is regaining its original integrity under the careful restoration efforts of its present owner. In spite of alterations made to the structure in its non-historic period, the Mitchell-Ward House retains a significant degree of its original exterior architectural features. A circa 1920s historic photograph provides documentation for missing features that are being replicated and returned to the house. The original construction of the interior of the main section of the house is virtually intact. This architecturally significant Folk Victorian structure dating from Gentry's earliest settlement remains in a residential setting among other houses of historic value. It is an outstanding example of the influence the arrival of the railroad had on built culture of rural Arkansas.

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SUMMARY

The Mitchell-Ward House, built in 1897 at 201 N. Nelson in Gentry, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with local significance as an excellent example of a two-story post-railroad Folk Victorian style house with Queen Anne influences. The arrival of the railroad to the area in 1894 gave rise to Gentry as a center for the area's prosperous fruit growing and rail industries. The Mitchell-Ward House represents the corresponding influence of the railroad in the construction and house style changes evidenced in rural Arkansas, at the end of the nineteenth century. The gable front and wing house is elaborately embellished with decorative ornamentation popular across America. The Mitchell-Ward House was constructed by local craftsman Robert L. Summers and remains one of the most architecturally significant structures in Gentry today.

ELABORATION

The town of Gentry, intersected by State Highways 59 and 264, is situated along the western border of Benton County. The county itself is located in the extreme northwestern corner of Arkansas and is bounded on the north by Missouri and on the west by Oklahoma. Benton County was established as the state's thirty-fourth county on September 30th, 1836, the same day that Arkansas became a state. The county was named in honor of Missouri's U. S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton who led a strong campaign to secure statehood for Arkansas.

The site of Benton County is a plateau of the Ozark Mountains with elevations of the land ranging from 1,400 feet to 1,600 feet. The soils are well suited to diversified agriculture with numerous waterways and springs. Its greatest advantage in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was its complete adaptability to horticulture with apples, peaches, pears, plums, grapes and other small fruit grown in abundance in the county. At that time, it acquired the title of 'Apple Orchard of America'.

From the time of the first settlement of Benton County in the 1830s, the population increased only gradually until 1880. In that year the first railroad through the county, the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad, was completed. National advertisements stating that the region was "unexcelled in the United States for growing all kinds of fruit" brought an influx of immigrants into the county.

In the 1890s, Arthur E. Stillwell established the Kansas City-Pittsburg and Gulf Railway starting in Kansas City, Missouri, with the intent of extending it to the Gulf of Mexico. It was this railroad that spawned the settlement of the town of Gentry in 1894. It became the residential and financial center for the vast fruit-growing industry. Indeed, for a short time the town was called Orchard but was incorporated in 1898 as Gentry, named in honor of the president of the railroad. The name of the railroad was changed to Kansas City

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Southern on April 1, 1900. By 1903 Gentry had a population of 1,000 people.

Gentry was surrounded by fruit farms from the large apple growers to the small berry growers. The industries of the town included shipping, evaporating and canning of fruits, as well as tourism. Numerous merchants in Benton County relocated to Gentry and several banks and hotels were established. Emphasis on education was evident. A public school costing \$10,000, and a private Methodist academy existed by 1902.

The Mitchell-Ward House is an excellent example of the rapid growth of the community once the railroad was established. In addition to small and modest houses being built in Gentry for the influx of farming, railroad, and commercial employees, there were also larger, more elaborate houses being constructed for the merchants, bankers, and real estate brokers moving to the rapidly expanding community.

In July 1897, craftsman Robert L. Summers signed the backs of several trim pieces in the Mitchell-Ward House. Two pieces of baseboard trim in the south parlor are inscribed in pencil, "Rob Summers-Architect and Builder, June 22, 1897" and "In God I trust-Rob Summers, July 1st, 1897." Summers is listed in the 1900 U. S. census as a house carpenter. He was lodging at the residence of Henderson Mitchell, a merchant from Missouri, who moved to Gentry. According to the property abstract, Mitchell was the owner of the property at that time. Summers may have lodged with the family also during the time he finished construction of the house.

It is unlikely that Summers was a trained architect even if he claimed that title as he signed his work. His family was from the neighboring community of Bloomfield. He was born in 1868 and died in 1950. His remains are buried in the Gentry cemetery. Elderly residents of the area remember him today with fondness and acknowledge him as an excellent craftsman. Since he resided in Gentry for an extended length of time there are undoubtedly numerous other houses in the area that he constructed.

Henderson Mitchell and his wife sold their house at 201 N. Nelson in 1902 for \$1,000. After several other owners, Nora Ward purchased the house in 1913. She and her sisters, Edith and Mabel, continued ownership until 1947. They served meals in the house to railroad passengers and tourists visiting Gentry. Because of their lengthy ownership and service to the community, the house continues to bear their name to the present day. The circa 1920s historic photograph shows several members of the Ward family.

Tourists were drawn to the Mitchell-Ward House because directly across the street to the east was a park that included several life-sized sculptures created by L. H. Moore. Moore was not only a sculptor but also the president of the State Bank in Gentry. In 1904 he sculpted six figures to adorn the bank building that he constructed on Main Street.

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This building remains as one of the town's most prominent buildings. Moore was described in a promotional pamphlet for Gentry as being "an artist and sculptor of remarkable ability who is recognized as such by the leading sculptors of the country."

The present owner of the Mitchell-Ward House is Justin Osteen. He purchased the property in June 2004, and is restoring the house to its original grandeur. Future use of the house will be as a bed-and-breakfast inn. While the immediate area around Gentry remains rural and the town itself is a small community of 2,100 people, Benton County is the center of extensive business and residential growth. Once again, just as in the beginning of the twentieth century, Gentry is part of an area of increasing expansion.

Justin Osteen's family has been in northwest Arkansas since 1879. His grandfather, John Shaffer, owned telephone companies in Cave Springs and Gentry in the early 1900s. A resident of Gentry in his early childhood, Osteen has kept close ties with the community throughout his life. He has extensive experience in residential renovation and restoration. His projects include restoration of an early farmhouse in south Texas, a loft in a nineteenth century butter factory in Manhattan, and an apartment in Paris, France. He has owned art galleries in New York City and Palm Springs, California. He also maintains a management consulting business serving non-profit organizations. He recently relocated to Gentry and resides in the Mitchell House, a 1927 Crafsman style bungalow that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Mitchell House is located across Nelson to the east of the Mitchell-Ward House. It was a kit house ordered from the Sears and Roebuck catalog and was brought to Gentry by the Kansas City Railroad.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mitchell-Ward House, built in 1897 at 201 N. Nelson in Gentry, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with local significance as an excellent example of a two-story post-railroad Folk Victorian style house with Queen Anne influences. The arrival of the railroad to the area in 1894 gave rise to Gentry as a center for the area's prosperous fruit growing and rail industries. The Mitchell-Ward House represents the corresponding influence of the railroad in the construction and house style changes evidenced in rural Arkansas at the end of the nineteenth century. The gable front and wing house is elaborately embellished with decorative ornamentation popular across America. The Mitchell-Ward House was constructed by local craftsman Robert L. Summers and remains one of the most architecturally significant structures in Gentry today.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 5 and 6 in Block 15 in the Original Town of Gentry, Section 10, Township 18 in Benton County, Arkansas.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all property historically associated with the Mitchell-Ward House.













