

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Herbert and Ann Creef House**

Manteo, Dare County, DR0129, Listed 04/11/2025

Nomination by J. Daniel Pezzoni and Allison Martin, Landmark Preservation Associates

Photographs by Allison Martin and Malcolm Fearing, May, July 2023; July 2024



South (front) and east sides of house, view facing northwest.



East and north sides of house, view facing west.

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: Herbert and Ann Creef House

Other names/site number: DR0129

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: 301 Budleigh Street

City or town: Manteo State: NC County: Dare

Not For Publication:  N/A  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

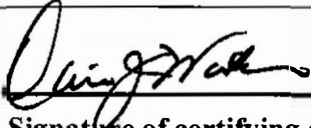
I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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 X C \_\_\_ D

	<u>2/24/25</u>
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title: State Historic Preservation Officer Date</b> <u>North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources</u> <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>

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<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>
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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

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

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**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>0</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>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modernist

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Metal, Glass, Asphalt

**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.)

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**Summary Paragraph**

The ca. 1941 Herbert and Ann Creef House, located at 301 Budleigh Street in Manteo, Dare County, North Carolina, is a two-story, Modernist house with variegated brick veneer, a range of fenestration types and sizes, and a low-pitched (nearly flat) hipped roof. The house is approximately L-shaped with west and east extensions. One-story projections include an entry porch, a sitting porch, and a two-vehicle garage with an added carport. The interior features plaster wall and ceiling finishes, mostly oak floorboard floors, mahogany baseboards and other

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trim, and simple decorative finishes like arched doorways, metal stair balusters, and a period kitchen and bathrooms. Rehabilitation work was underway on the house at the time of writing in July 2024. The house faces slightly east of south, in accordance with Manteo's downtown street grid, though to simplify the text it is described as facing south. The 0.52-acre rectangular lot on which the house stands occupies the northwest corner of the intersection of Budleigh Street (south side) and Lord Essex Avenue (east side). The house occupies the east part of the lot; the rest of the lot is yard area bordered by trees at the back. The property lies in the potential Manteo Historic District, which was added to the state Study List by the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) in 1995. It is situated at the transition between Manteo's historic commercial sector (largely to the east) and its historic residential area (largely to the west), with historic and recent houses and commercial buildings of one- and two-story height visible from the premises. Mount Olivet United Methodist Church adjoins the lot on the north side. Across Lord Essex Avenue is a park known as the Town Common. Like the rest of Manteo, the house stands on Roanoke Island a few feet above sea level. The house is in the drainage of Shallowbag Bay, an extension of Roanoke Sound which is in turn an extension of Albemarle Sound. The house is about four miles as the seagull flies from the Atlantic Ocean.

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## **Narrative Description**

### *House Exterior*

The Herbert and Ann Creef House is constructed of concrete block with brick veneer. The lightly textured brick is randomly variegated in hues of salmon, orange, and red with darker-hued speckles and splotches. The raked mortar joints are light gray in color. A single course of bricks projects as a belt course at the second-story window level. Bricks project to form windowsills for most of the first story and stair landing level windows and a few windows in the second story. The brickwork also projects to form corbeled caps at the top of a chimney on the west side and a rear boiler flue. The current hipped roof over the main part of the house is so shallowly pitched as to appear flat when viewed close to the house. The roof replaces one of a similar form which appears in photos from the mid-twentieth century. The roof has deeply overhanging eaves with wood soffits. Historic photos show gutters and downspouts were present from the early years of the house.

The house has an overall cubical appearance, but its massing is broken up by various two-story recesses and projections, principal among them is a recess at the front southeast corner and a wing on the north side. The elevations are also modulated by one-story extensions and other visually prominent features. The front (south) elevation has a partly recessed entry porch at the southeast corner and next to it, a large living room window. Also visible from the front and dominating the west side is a sitting porch projection. The east side, which faces Lord Essex Avenue, has a bay window, an ascending row of stairway windows, and the front of the rear garage and carport. The garage wing dominates the north side. The one-story projections have hipped roofs of varying pitch sheathed with asphalt shingles.

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The front entry porch features pole-like metal supports with strut-like triangular metal brackets. The porch metalwork has been painted black. Where the brackets join the poles and the porch roof structure they have Greek key-like ornaments. Three steps rise to the porch, flanked by rounded cheeks constructed of the same brick as the house. Echoing the curve of the cheeks are metal handrails with three concentric segments that join together into a single stem at the base. At the top the segments, the handrails attach to a pole support on one side and a pole newel with a ball finial on the other side. The metal porch railing has a pattern of rectangles created by slender horizontal and vertical elements which continue the forms of the step handrails. The porch floor is paved with terra-cotta tiles in an irregular pattern. The concrete walk leading up to the porch dates to the 1940s; it and the sidewalks along the streets were made of sand and shells from local beaches.

The front porch shelters an entry with a door with a diamond-shaped windowpane at the top. The wood surface of the door is ornamented with diagonal grooves that radiate outward from the diamond opening, creating a concentric diamond effect in the upper half of the door and a chevron effect in the lower half. An identical door is located at a side entry next to the garage, and both doors have aluminum and glass storm doors. The inside surfaces of the doors are grooved like the outsides. The windows of the house are predominately steel-framed industrial type with casement and fixed sashes. They vary in size and rectangular shape depending on the functions of the rooms inside. There are several windows that are more distinctive. The front first story has a large and long window, eight panes across by five panes high, which lights the living room. The east side has a cantilevered first-story bay window (rectangular in plan), six panes across and five panes high, which lights the dining room. Next to it are three narrow windows, which ascend in tandem with a stair inside, and above these is a glass-block window. A second, smaller glass-block window lights the top of the servant stair.

The west-side sitting porch is rectangular in plan. Its base and corners are concrete block with a brick veneer of the same type as the rest of the house. On the north side of the porch is a low flight of steps of the same bricks, which serves the exterior entry to the porch. The three large side openings of the porch were originally filled with screening with a support/muntin system with decorative borders. The screening and borders were replaced by jalousie windows and a jalousie door in the second half of the twentieth century. These were removed in the current rehabilitation and the original support/muntin system and decorative borders were closely replicated in wood. It is not clear from historic photos whether the supports and muntins were wood or metal. The vertical borders of the current support/muntin system form rectangular openings whereas the transom-like borders across the top have squarish openings. Also removed from the porch openings and from the main front window of the house were non-historic, demountable hurricane shutters. The porch had a ceiling of panels (perhaps a Celotex-like material) and battens, which have been removed to facilitate repairs and will be replaced with similar material. The floor is paved with terra-cotta tiles in an irregular pattern. The west side chimney rises through the porch interior and up the second story of the elevation above, passing through the roof edge to project at the top.

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The attached garage has roll-up wood and glass panel doors in its two bays, metal-framed windows on its other elevations, and a wood and glass door on its west, or rear, elevation which opens onto a small brick patio. In front of the garage extends a two-vehicle carport with a flat metal roof and slender metal supports with crisscross webbing. The carport was likely added in the late 1950s. The garage and an adjacent laundry room are two steps down from the rest of the house, which is raised slightly above grade to create a crawlspace. Small vents with metal gratings ventilate the crawlspace around the perimeter.

### *House Interior*

The front entry leads into an elliptically barrel-vaulted space with a coat closet to the side and a small overhead light recessed into the vault. The vaulted space opens into a stair hall. The three-run stair has wooden treads and risers, the lower turning with a landing and the turning between the middle and upper runs with a winder step. A decorative metal railing rises with the stair, with slender square-section balusters of two alternating types: one twisted and the other with a molded ornament at about the midpoint. All the balusters have molded bases. Heavier tubular balusters stand at the turnings and foot and top of the stair. The handrail ramps and flairs out slightly at the foot, and the heavy baluster that supports it stands on a rounded tread end. The stair hall and other rooms have narrow cove cornices and varnished mahogany baseboards. In the stair hall hang long doorbell chimes that connect to doorbells at the front entry, the side porch, and the rear entry next to the garage. Each doorbell produces a different set of notes.

From the stair hall, three doorways lead to the living room, dining room, and a hallway to the first-floor bedroom. The doorways have shallow, elliptical-arched heads. The living room, at the front of the house, has as its visual focus a brick fireplace mantel that combines Craftsman and Modernist elements. Its brick construction is Craftsman, whereas the stack-bond treatment of the narrow "Roman" bricks that frame the fireplace opening on either side is Modernist. Other features include vertical brickwork over the opening, corbeled brickwork above, a black marble shelf, a tile hearth, and a firebrick fireplace lining. Over the ends of the mantel are sconce light fixtures, to the left is a French door to the sitting porch, and to the right is a metal-framed window looking into the sitting porch. This window and the large front window have wood drapery valences, as do several other windows in the house.

The first-floor bedroom has wooden entry and closet doors with deeply recessed single panels, wide moldings around the panels, varnished finish, and original metal doorknobs. The second-floor bedrooms and a few other rooms of the house have similar doors, all with birch panels and cypress rails and stiles. The first-floor bedroom closets and other bedroom closets in the house have the original shoe shelves. The first-floor bathroom, entered from the bedroom hallway, has a maroon tile wainscot trimmed with white tile at top and bottom, an original tub with a wide Moderne molded border, and a square and octagon pattern white and marron tile floor. The mirror over the original sink is flanked by vertical metal sconces for fluorescent tube lights.

A doorway from the stair hall leads into the dining room with its bay window and on to the kitchen. The kitchen has the original wooden base and wall cabinets, painted blue, and a



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decorative valence across the top of the window. The counter and backsplash are finished with original white and blue tiles, the backsplash with panels outlined with narrow blue tiles. The wood flooring was covered with blue and white floor tiles, which have been removed. A doorway from the kitchen leads to a rear entry/stair hall containing a three-run servant stair. The stair has winders and also square wood newels with molded caps connected by tubular wood railings. Doorways lead from the rear entry/stair hall into the garage and into a laundry room/bathroom for a live-in maid.

The second floor contains five bedrooms, a bathroom, a short hallway, and the upper landings of the two stairwells. The hallway branches off the front stair hall to serve two bedrooms at the front of the house, a bedroom and bathroom behind, and two closets. A door at the back of the front stair hall leads to bedrooms over the dining room and kitchen. The bedroom over the kitchen was occupied by a live-in maid and has direct access to the top of the back stair. The second floor is finished much like the first floor, with untrimmed windows, wood door trim, and single-panel room and closet doors. The top of the front stair has a solid railing with wood coping or top trim. The railing terminates at a square newel with a squashed ball finial. A laundry chute in the maid's bedroom connects to the kitchen. The second-floor bathroom is entered through a door with a glass-block sidelight. The block has a gridded pattern to obscure visibility for privacy. The bathroom is original, with a pink sink, toilet, and bathtub to match the pink tile wainscot. The pink tile, which is trimmed at top and bottom with maroon tile, rises to just over window height at the end of the room opposite the entrance. Set into the tile over the second-floor bathroom sink is a small compartment with a flip-out metal door on which is mounted a holder for toothbrushes and a glass. The main and shower floors have square and octagonal tiles in white, pink, and light blue.

### *Integrity Assessment*

The Herbert and Ann Creef House possesses a high degree of integrity from the period of significance with most of its original exterior and interior features and finishes intact. The house remains at its original location and possesses good exterior integrity in that it retains most of its historic design, materials, and workmanship. The principal exception is the roof, originally flat or low-pitched hipped, which was rebuilt at a steeper pitched hipped form in recent years, an alteration made in the early 2000s to correct leaks that were damaging the structure. Another notable exterior change was to the originally screened side porch, which was enclosed with windows; however, the porch has been converted back to a screened porch modeled on the original. The house possesses good interior integrity with its original plan arrangement and decorative features intact. At the time of writing (July 2024), the house is being converted to a restaurant, which will necessitate the addition of a wheelchair-accessible restroom with a ramp on the first story, but otherwise, changes will be sympathetic to the historic character. The house also possesses integrity of association in that it is directly linked to the historical developments that formed it.

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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.)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1940-41  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1940-41  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Lublin, Alfred M. (architect)  
Scarborough, Robert Edward Lee (builder)  
Tugwell, Harry King (finish carpenter)

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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 Herbert and Ann Creef House in Manteo, Dare County, North Carolina, is a ca. 1941 Modernist house designed by Norfolk, Virginia-based architect Alfred M. Lublin. The original owners were Manteo businessman Herbert A. Creef Sr. and his wife, Ann Burrus Creef. The two-story masonry house, veneered in variegated warm-toned brick, has blocky massing and a low-pitched hipped roof of flat appearance. Steel-framed windows in a variety of shapes and sizes, glass block windows, and decorative front porch metalwork are other exterior features. The interior has arched doorways, decorative metal stair detail, and a Craftsman/Modernist-inspired brick fireplace mantel. The German-born Lublin attended the Technische Hochschule of Berlin where he was exposed to Modernism and other architectural trends current in the Weimar Republic of the 1920s and early 1930s. His work in America suggests influences as diverse as the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe, German design of the Weimar period, the Moderne and International styles, and the Foursquare house form. Contactor Robert E. L. Scarborough built the house and Harry Tugwell did the interior trim. The Herbert and Ann Creef House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the Architecture area of significance as a unique, sophisticated, and well-preserved blend of stylistic influences current on the eve of World War II. The period of significance corresponds to 1940-41. The house lot was purchased in October 1940 and most evidence suggests construction of the house was well underway in 1941. The Creef House is eligible at the local level of significance.<sup>1</sup>

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

*Historical Background*

Prior to the creation of Dare County in 1870, the site of the town of Manteo was largely agricultural in character, possibly with a commercial fishery on the shore of Shallowbag Bay near the location of the future downtown. A courthouse site was designated at the location in 1870, and the first permanent courthouse was erected in 1873. The construction of the courthouse spurred development of the town, which in the early 1870s probably numbered a handful of hotels, general stores, and dwellings. The Creef family were prominent early residents, active in boat building and other business pursuits. Out of towners came for the fishing and hunting in the town's surrounding waters and wildlands, providing the basis for a tourism component to the local economy. Among visitors to the community were radio pioneer Reginald Fessenden, who arrived in 1901 with his wife, Helen Fessenden, to establish an experimental

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<sup>1</sup> A number of individuals assisted in the research and preparation of this report, foremost among them Allison Martin, the daughter of owners Malcolm K. Fearing and Susan F. Fearing, whose help included researching and photographing the house and interviewing knowledgeable individuals. Others who assisted included interviewees Lee Tugwell, Buddy Creef, Henry "Bootsie" Parker, Julia McPhearson, Ruth Stetson, and LizAnne Creef, and Lauren Poole, Jeff Smith, and Chandrea Burch with the HPO.

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wireless station on the island, and around the same time Orville and Wilbur Wright overnighted in the town on several occasions leading up to their successful flight at Kill Devil Hills on December 17, 1903.<sup>2</sup>

The town experienced growth in the early twentieth century, from a population of 312 in 1900 to 1,000 in 1910. The business community developed as well, boasting a bank, insurance and real estate agency, and carriage dealership in addition to a complement of stores and hotels by 1910. The architecture of the era, as illustrated by historic photos and surviving buildings, was largely Queen Anne in character, with complex rooflines, turned millwork, wood-shingle sheathing, and other accoutrements of the style. The town's 1904 county courthouse was originally Romanesque Revival in style, and in the 1920s and 1930s a number of Craftsman-style houses, bungalows and Foursquares, were erected. Architecturally, Manteo was not that different from other small northeastern North Carolina communities during the period.<sup>3</sup>

On October 8, 1940, Herbert Augustus Creef Sr. (1892-1960) and his wife, Ann Burrus Creef (1898-1970), purchased the lot on which the Herbert and Ann Creef House was built from Sophia Tillett Evans and her husband, R. C. Evans.<sup>4</sup> Herbert Creef was descended from a family of long standing in the Manteo community, whereas Ann was a native of Ocracoke Island in the Outer Banks. Herbert was a businessman with diversified business interests in northeastern North Carolina and adjacent areas of Virginia. The foundational Creef enterprise was the family's boat building and repair business. According to a historian of the business, Herbert's son Herbert Augustus Creef Jr., his father's "special area of expertise was in the mechanical side of the boat repair business, and with the advent of the gasoline engine he became the area's first Ford dealer . . . When Chevrolet came out with an overhead cam engine that he especially liked, Herbert Creef gave up the Ford dealership and became the Chevrolet dealer of the island."<sup>5</sup> In the late 1920s and early 1930s Herbert became interested in building speedboats.<sup>6</sup>

Another important Manteo business of Herbert's was the Creef Chevrolet Company, in existence in the late 1930s and afterward known as the Creef & Ward Motor Company. According to the Creefs' granddaughter LizAnne Creef, Herbert "owned several movie theatres; at least 2 theatres in Elizabeth City. One of which is still in existence. One on Weeksville Road called 'Webbs Drive Inn.' The Pioneer Theatre in Manteo and several in Culpepper, Virginia." According to the Creefs' grandson Herbert Augustus "Buddy" Creef III, "Holland Webster 'Webb' was [Herbert's] business partner and like a third son to Herbert. 'Webster Drive In' was one of the, at least three, theatres that they owned in Elizabeth City."<sup>7</sup> Buddy Creef adds that, "Herbert owned

<sup>2</sup> Pezzoni, "Manteo Historic Architectural Survey Report," 4-7.

<sup>3</sup> Pezzoni, "Manteo Historic Architectural Survey Report," 9, 12-14.

<sup>4</sup> Dare County Deed Book 23, p. 310. The Creefs purchased the adjacent parcel on the west side in 1942 to create the current parcel (Dare County Deed Book 25, p. 241).

<sup>5</sup> Creef, "History of Boat Building in Manteo," 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> Creef, "History of Boat Building in Manteo," 4.

<sup>7</sup> "Creef House interviews."

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a horse farm called Nags Head Stables for Standard bread trotters and pacers. They also owned Afton Farms for racing horses in Elizabeth City on Weeksville Road.”<sup>8</sup>

According to Henry “Bootsie” Parker, Herbert and Ann’s son-in-law, Ann Creef was Pentecostal, though she was active in the Methodist Church that stands next to the house. Parker notes: “She played the organ, piano and sang in the Church. She also opened her home for daily worship services, and constant prayer meetings with singing and dancing. [“Bootsie”] says that people were saved and healed in this home. Ann was known for feeding and taking care of the poor.”<sup>9</sup> Living in the house with the Creefs during the early years was their maid, a Black woman named Stella. She occupied the second-story room at the top of the back stairs.<sup>10</sup> After Herbert’s death in 1960 and Ann’s in 1970, Ann’s heirs sold the house to Herbert Augustus Creef Jr. and his wife, Elizabeth H. Creef, in 1972.<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Creef’s executor, Herbert Augustus “Buddy” Creef III, sold the property to Malcolm K. Fearing III and his wife, Susan F. Fearing, in 2023.<sup>12</sup>

*Criterion C Architecture Area of Significance: Alfred M. Lublin and Modernism*

Architectural Modernism arrived in Manteo in 1939-40 with the construction of the Creef & Ward Motor Company at 321 N. Virginia Dare Road, a Moderne automobile dealership and garage designed by Norfolk, Virginia-based architect Alfred M. Lublin for local businessman Herbert A. Creef Sr. The Herbert and Ann Creef House, built ca. 1941, was another Modernist Creef/Lublin collaboration (the house and dealership are discussed in greater detail below). Modernism as an architectural movement was a reaction against the Historicism that had dominated Western architecture since the Renaissance. The movement was not simply a reaction; in a positive sense, its practitioners embraced modern materials and construction techniques and explored new formal and spatial possibilities. Modernism had diverse sources. An important early practitioner was the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who developed his revolutionary Prairie Style around 1900, followed by Le Corbusier in France, Walter Gropius in Germany, and a host of other European Modernist architects beginning around 1920. Modernism entered the American mainstream in earnest in the late 1920s with buildings in the ornamental Art Deco style. A related, but more reserved and elemental style, Moderne, developed in the 1930s and reached its apogee in the 1940s. Most early Modernist buildings in small-town North Carolina are Moderne, with theaters and car dealerships—associated with businesses that traded on novelty—often the first Moderne, and hence Modernist, buildings in North Carolina communities.

Alfred M. Lublin (1904-60), the architect of the Herbert and Ann Creef House, was a native of Cassel (Kassel), Germany. He attended the Technische Hochschule of Berlin (TH Berlin) in the 1920s, a period in German political history known as the Weimar Republic, where he was

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<sup>8</sup> “Creef House interviews.”

<sup>9</sup> “Creef House interviews.”

<sup>10</sup> “Creef House interviews.”

<sup>11</sup> Dare County Deed Book 190, p. 624.

<sup>12</sup> Dare County Deed Book 2679, p. 793.

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exposed to the various European architectural modalities of the era.<sup>13</sup> Teaching at TH Berlin were two prominent German architects, Heinrich Tessenow (1876-1950) and Hans Poelzig (1869-1936). Tessenow, at the school from 1926 until he was forced out by the Nazis in the 1930s, espoused a simplified version of traditional and classical architecture. Historian Joachim Fest writes that Tessenow's designs "were conceived in deliberate opposition to the bold and often exaggerated modernity that was fashionable then."<sup>14</sup> Despite his penchant for traditionalism, Tessenow occasionally produced work more in keeping with the architectural tenets of the Bauhaus, the leading proponent of Modernism in Germany during the period. An example is his design for Heinrich Schutz School (1927-30), described as an arrangement of "cube-shaped buildings with low-pitched roofs and purist, rigorous facades."<sup>15</sup> Tessenow belonged to architectural circles that included such Modernist luminaries as Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Erich Mendelsohn.<sup>16</sup>

Tessenow's protégé Albert Speer, later to become Hitler's favorite architect, claimed that his mentor's traditionalism attracted students with Nazi sympathies, whereas students with Communist leanings gravitated toward Hans Poelzig.<sup>17</sup> Poelzig was more experimental than Tessenow, though his large-scale industrial projects such as the design for the IG-Farben Administrative Block (1928-30) has a stripped-down quality not too different from Tessenow's larger building projects.<sup>18</sup> Poelzig, like Tessenow, associated with famous Modernists; Walter Gropius was a friend.<sup>19</sup> The work of Tessenow and Poelzig is representative of the architectural influences with which Lublin came into contact during his years at TH Berlin. In 1933, a few years after Lublin would have graduated in the mid- to late 1920s, the Weimar Republic collapsed. The Nazi dictatorship that replaced it profoundly altered the practice of architecture in Germany through its rejection of architectural Modernism.

A more momentous and sinister development of the Nazi era was the officially sanctioned antisemitism that ultimately led to the Holocaust. Lublin, who was Jewish, fled to France, his mother's native country, and then, in 1936, to New York. Lublin's friend and biographer Park Rouse writes:

There he practiced with a big firm, but he soon yearned to have his own. He talked with the late William B. Thalheimer, of Richmond, who then headed Thalheimer's stores, and who was helping talented Jewish refugees to emigrate to the United States and find

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<sup>13</sup> Rouse, "Architectural Career of Alf Lublin." The Technische Hochschule (Technical Highschool) of Berlin was originally the Technische Hochschule of Charlottenburg but by the time Lublin attended it had been renamed for the larger city.

<sup>14</sup> Fest, *Speer*, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Nerdinger and Tafel, *Architectural Guide Germany 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 307.

<sup>16</sup> Riley and Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin*, 52-53, 256.

<sup>17</sup> Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Nerdinger and Tafel, *Architectural Guide Germany 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 286-287.

<sup>19</sup> Isaacs, *Gropius*, 201.

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careers. Thalhimer suggested Norfolk, and Lublin and his bride, the former Mary Calverley of Vogue magazine, moved there about 1938.<sup>20</sup>

According to Rouse, one of Lublin's first designs in America was the Indian Springs development in Williamsburg, Virginia. During World War II Lublin undertook several hospital projects. In 1943 he was the architect for the expansion of the Northampton-Accomack Memorial Hospital and Nurse's Home in Nassawadox, Virginia, and the following year he was the architect for the Martinsville General Hospital in Martinsville, Virginia, both Modernist designs.<sup>21</sup> Another Lublin project from this early period was the Palace Theatre in Cape Charles, Virginia, a simple Moderne building completed in 1942.<sup>22</sup> In 1945 Lublin partnered with civil engineer John McGaughy to form Lublin, McLaughlin and Associates.<sup>23</sup>

Rouse claims Lublin was "a modernist architect of the Bauhaus school of German design" who admired the work of the Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius and American architect Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>24</sup> Analysis of known examples of Lublin's designs, or the designs of his firm, demonstrates that he was a skilled practitioner of Modernism. His expertise is illustrated by the Martinsville General Hospital, a three-story brick-veneer building completed in 1945, which features a dramatic Modernist entry composition of multistory curved and blocky elements and a soaring cantilevered roof.<sup>25</sup> Norfolk's Henry and Elizabeth Kirn Memorial Library (1959-62) is representative of Lublin's design shortly before his death. The library has been described by architectural historians Richard Guy Wilson et al as "starkly modern in appearance and materials" but with an exterior "organized in a classicizing manner." The building is a four-story Miesian composition with banded glass and metal stories above a two-story glass-walled lobby level.<sup>26</sup>

Lublin came to the attention of Manteo businessman Herbert A. Creef Sr. in the late 1930s when Creef invested in a Norfolk-area theater and commercial development designed by the architect. Their first Manteo collaboration was the 1939-40 Creef & Ward Motor Company at 321 N. Virginia Dare Road, a Moderne dealership and garage with a curving window wall capped by a stone or simulated stone parapet.<sup>27</sup> Creef built the building to replace the Creef Chevrolet

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<sup>20</sup> Rouse, "Architectural Career of Alf Lublin."

<sup>21</sup> *Eastern Shore Herald*, September 11 and November 27, 1943; *Bassett Journal*, November 23, 1944.

<sup>22</sup> "Historic Palace Theatre."

<sup>23</sup> Lightman, "Historical Context Study," 96. Lublin, McLaughlin and Associates continued after Lublin's death in a plane crash on his way to Ankara, Turkiye, in January 1960 (*Northern Virginia Daily*, January 21, 1960). In later years the firm was known as MMM Design Group.

<sup>24</sup> Rouse, "Architectural Career of Alf Lublin."

<sup>25</sup> Blanton et al, "Historic Architectural Survey of Martinsville, 44; Wells and Dalton. *The Virginia Architects*, 269.

<sup>26</sup> Wilson, *Buildings of Virginia: Tidewater and Piedmont*, 415; "Notable Modern Architecture in Virginia," Norfolk Redevelopment & Housing Authority Photo Archive.

<sup>27</sup> Pezzoni, "Manteo Historic Architectural Survey Report," 15-16. The Pioneer Theater, established in the late 1910s, has been proposed as another Creef/Lublin collaboration, but although Creef had the classically-influenced building built, it is thought to date to 1934, before Lublin arrived in the US



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Company which was destroyed in the September 11, 1939, conflagration that burned down twenty-one buildings in the heart of Manteo.<sup>28</sup> On September 22, 1939, the *Dare County Times* reported, "H. A. Creef, A. H. Ward and Leigh Hassell have joined forces and plan a new service station, machine shop, and automobile show room which may cost as much as \$20,000."<sup>29</sup> In October, the *Times* provided readers a detailed account of Creef's rebuilding activities:

H. A. Creef is a busy man these days. He's helping the workmen put up a new brick building on the corner of Highway Street and the Fort Raleigh highway, which when completed will be known as the Creef and Ward Company. Alvah Ward, on whose property the building is being put up, is now in partnership with Mr. Creef, and they expect to be ready for business in about three months.

The building, 50 by 100 feet, will be entirely fire proof with concrete floors, steel window frames, and metal tiling. The fifty-foot side will be the front facing on the Fort Raleigh highway and gas pumps will be installed in front of the building. A Chevrolet display room will be on the corner where the street and road meet, and a machine shop, lavatories, office and garage will take up the rest of the space.<sup>30</sup>

Planning for Herbert and Ann Creef's new house at 301 Budleigh Street was presumably already underway when the Creefs purchased the lot in October 1940. According to Herbert A. Creef Jr., interviewed in 1995, his parents' contractor was Robert Edward Lee Scarborough (1895 or 1896-1965). Harry King Tugwell (1914-93) did the trim work on the interior. According to Harry's son Lee Tugwell, Harry, a native of Farmville in Pitt County, was "looking for work and heard there might be an opportunity to build wooden hangars for the blimps at the blimp base in Elizabeth City. While there Herbert Sr. recruited him to come to Manteo" to build boats. "Herbert Sr would have him come to the house to do the mahogany trim work and stairwells, then [Harry would] head over to the speed boat shop," Lee Tugwell recalled.<sup>31</sup> The timing of construction at the Elizabeth City blimp base accords well with a construction scenario for the Creef House involving initial work in late 1940 and completion in 1941. Construction materials for non-government projects became increasingly difficult to obtain during the restrictions that followed US entry into World War II in December 1941.<sup>32</sup>

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(Pioneer Theater website; Pezzoni, "Manteo Historic Architectural Survey Report," 16; Pezzoni, "Herbert A., Sr. and Ann Creef House").

<sup>28</sup> *Dare County Times*, September 15, 1939.

<sup>29</sup> *Dare County Times*, September 22, 1939.

<sup>30</sup> *Dare County Times*, September 22, 1939.

<sup>31</sup> Pezzoni, "Herbert A., Sr. and Ann Creef House;" "Creef House interviews." According to Herbert A. Creef Jr., Lublin also designed a chicken house for his father. According to Buddy Creef, Herbert A. Creef Jr.'s son, "There were two homes for birds on the property. The first was located on the back side of the lot by the fire station and church. It was approximately 40'x20' with a roof and screened in. One half housed the chickens and turkeys to eat, and the other half housed lovebirds, parakeets, quails and pheasants. There was another smaller structure closer to the house by the fence that also housed parakeets" ("Creef House interviews").

<sup>32</sup> The brick for the house was manufactured in Ohio and was probably shipped through Elizabeth City (Pezoni, "Herbert A., Sr. and Ann Creef House"). According to Buddy Creef, "The original windows

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The Herbert and Creef House can be understood partly in the context of Lublin's German architectural background and partly in the context of broader architectural trends. With its cubical form and widely overhanging eaves, the house is most akin to the Prairie Style houses of Frank Lloyd Wright and his followers and the related Foursquare house form, the latter a more common house type/style in northeastern North Carolina and Lublin's adopted community of Norfolk, Virginia.<sup>33</sup> The gridlike border treatment of the Creef House side porch in its original form resembles Wrightian fenestration. Prairie Style houses and Foursquares typically have relatively low-pitched, but still prominent, hip roofs, whereas the Creef House roof originally had a flat appearance. This flatness, and secondarily, the industrial appearance of the metal-framed windows and aspects of their grouping, are most akin to the International Style or, generically, to the Art Deco and Moderne house designs of the era, which often present a flat-roofed appearance. According to longtime Manteo resident John F. Wilson IV, interviewed in 1995, the original plans of the house showed it with a hip roof and an elevator. Because the house appears to have originally had a hip roof, albeit of shallow pitch, this might be interpreted to mean it was to have a more pronounced hip roof at some point during the design process.<sup>34</sup> This is also suggested by Buddy Creef who notes, "the house was not originally designed to have a flat roof but more of a hip roof like it currently has."<sup>35</sup>

Wrightian and International Style influences seem most likely to explain the design of the Creef House, but there is another close match in the oeuvre of Heinrich Tessenow, whose designs for the 1927-28 Brieskow-Finkenherd Housing Estate in Germany's Brandenburg Province featured two-story row houses of cubical form with overhanging hip roofs of such low pitch that they appear flat. Other points in common with the Creef House are masonry construction, prominent chimney masses, and one-story flat-roofed or flat-parapeted side extensions. The simplicity of the Brieskow-Finkenherd houses may reflect their function as miner housing as much as any Modernist influence, and their gable-fronted entry porches suggest the stripped-down classicism typical of Tessenow's designs. It is possible Lublin was familiar with the project, given Tessenow's stature and the timing of Lublin's studies at the TH Berlin.<sup>36</sup> It is not inconceivable Tessenow was influenced by the Prairie Style designs of Wright, who was popular in German architectural circles beginning in the early twentieth century.

Architectural influences can also be discerned in the details of the house. One of the house's most distinctive features is the unusual metalwork of its front porch. The brackets at the top of the metal porch supports have a geometric scroll motif that calls to mind a Greek key. Stylized

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were aluminum and were sitting in a warehouse in Norfolk when they were confiscated for the WWII effort, so they used steel windows instead" ("Creef House interviews").

<sup>33</sup> McAlester and McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 438-451.

<sup>34</sup> Pezzoni, "Herbert A., Sr. and Ann Creef House."

<sup>35</sup> "Creef House interviews." Buddy Creef also notes that the kitchen was originally meant to be larger than it is, and the "furniture throughout the house was Thomasville Furniture and came from High Point Furniture Market of NC and White Furniture Company of NC." Landscaping was done by Albert "Skipper" Bell who ran a nursery on Roanoke Island.

<sup>36</sup> Nerdinger and Tafel, *Architectural Guide Germany 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 178-179.

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classical ornament is sometimes observed in Art Deco and Moderne buildings, although the form could be evidence of Tessenow-like classicism. Also unusual are the curved forms of the handrails, which have a billowing quality reminiscent of certain Art Deco and Moderne treatments, for example the overlapping rounded forms at the top of New York's Chrysler Building.

Modernist in a more philosophical sense are the three vertical windows that ascend with the stair on the interior, an expression of the "form follows function" ethos. The glass block in the upper-story window was a popular material of the era often associated with Moderne architecture, though not diagnostic of it. Another notable feature of the house's fenestration is its variety, which has a form-follows-function aspect—the big living room and dining room windows, the medium-sized bedroom windows, and the small bathroom windows, for example—but the variety also has an aesthetic aspect, serving to add visual interest to what would otherwise be relatively featureless elevations. Strictly speaking, the dining room bay window does not have to be a bay window, but making it so, in combination with the ascending stairway windows and the glass-block window, generates visual complexity.

Some aspects of the house exterior are early examples of treatments that became more common after World War II. They include the variegated brickwork, common on Ranch houses of the 1950s and 1960s; the diamond-shaped door windows of the front and side doors, also common for the doors of Ranch houses and other house types of the era; and the two-vehicle attached garage. According to Herbert A. Creef Jr., the attached garage was one of the first in Manteo.<sup>37</sup> The interior of the house is more conservative than the exterior. The several elliptical-headed doorways have their counterparts in the arched doorways of houses of various styles from the era. The decorative ironwork of the stair is reminiscent of Spanish- or Mediterranean-influenced architecture of the era though it may have been considered purely decorative without any specific stylistic association. The brick living room fireplace mantel is not unlike Craftsman-influenced brick mantels common from the 1920s to the 1940s.

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<sup>37</sup> Pezzoni, "Herbert A., Sr. and Ann Creef House."

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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

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\_\_\_ 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):** DR0129

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** approximately 0.52 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: 35.909419                      Longitude: -75.672022

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

The boundary corresponds to the Dare County, North Carolina, tax parcel 024567000 (PIN # 988019522451) on which the sole historic resource associated with the property, the Herbert and Ann Creef House, stands.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary embraces the sole historic resource associated with the property, the Herbert and Ann Creef House, and all of the land historically associated with the house.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: J. Daniel Pezzoni and Allison Martin  
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: November 3, 2024

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### 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.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Herbert and Ann Creef House  
City or Vicinity: Manteo County: Dare State: North Carolina  
Photographer: varies Date Photographed: varies  
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: varies

1 of 15.

Photographer: Allison Martin

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Date Photographed: July 2024

Description of Photograph: South (front) and east sides of house, view facing northwest.

2 of 15.

Photographer: Allison Martin

Date Photographed: July 2024

Description of Photograph: West and south (front) sides of house, view facing northeast.

3 of 15.

Photographer: Malcolm Fearing

Date Photographed: July 2023

Description of Photograph: East side of house, view facing west.

4 of 15.

Photographer: Malcolm Fearing

Date Photographed: May 2023

Description of Photograph: East and north sides of house, view facing west.

5 of 15.

Photographer: Allison Martin

Date Photographed: July 2024

Description of Photograph: North side of house, view facing east.

6 of 15.

Photographer: Allison Martin

Date Photographed: July 2023

Description of Photograph: Front entry, view facing north.

7 of 15.

Photographer: Allison Martin

Date Photographed: July 2023

Description of Photograph: Front stair hall stair.

8 of 15.

Photographer: Allison Martin

Date Photographed: July 2023

Description of Photograph: View from front stair hall into living room.

9 of 15.

Photographer: Allison Martin

Date Photographed: July 2023

Description of Photograph: View from front stair hall through dining room to kitchen.

10 of 15.



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Photographer: Allison Martin  
Date Photographed: July 2023  
Description of Photograph: First-floor bedroom closets.

11 of 15.  
Photographer: Allison Martin  
Date Photographed: July 2023  
Description of Photograph: Kitchen.

12 of 15.  
Photographer: Allison Martin  
Date Photographed: July 2023  
Description of Photograph: Second-floor front stair.

13 of 15.  
Photographer: Allison Martin  
Date Photographed: July 2023  
Description of Photograph: Second-floor hallway.

14 of 15.  
Photographer: Allison Martin  
Date Photographed: July 2023  
Description of Photograph: Second-floor bathroom.

15 of 15.  
Photographer: Allison Martin  
Date Photographed: July 2023  
Description of Photograph: First-floor bathroom.

**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

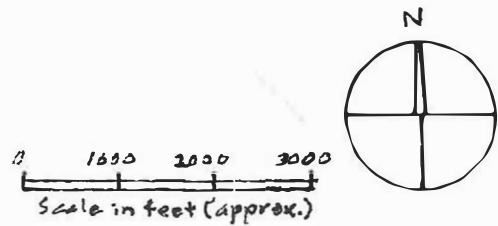
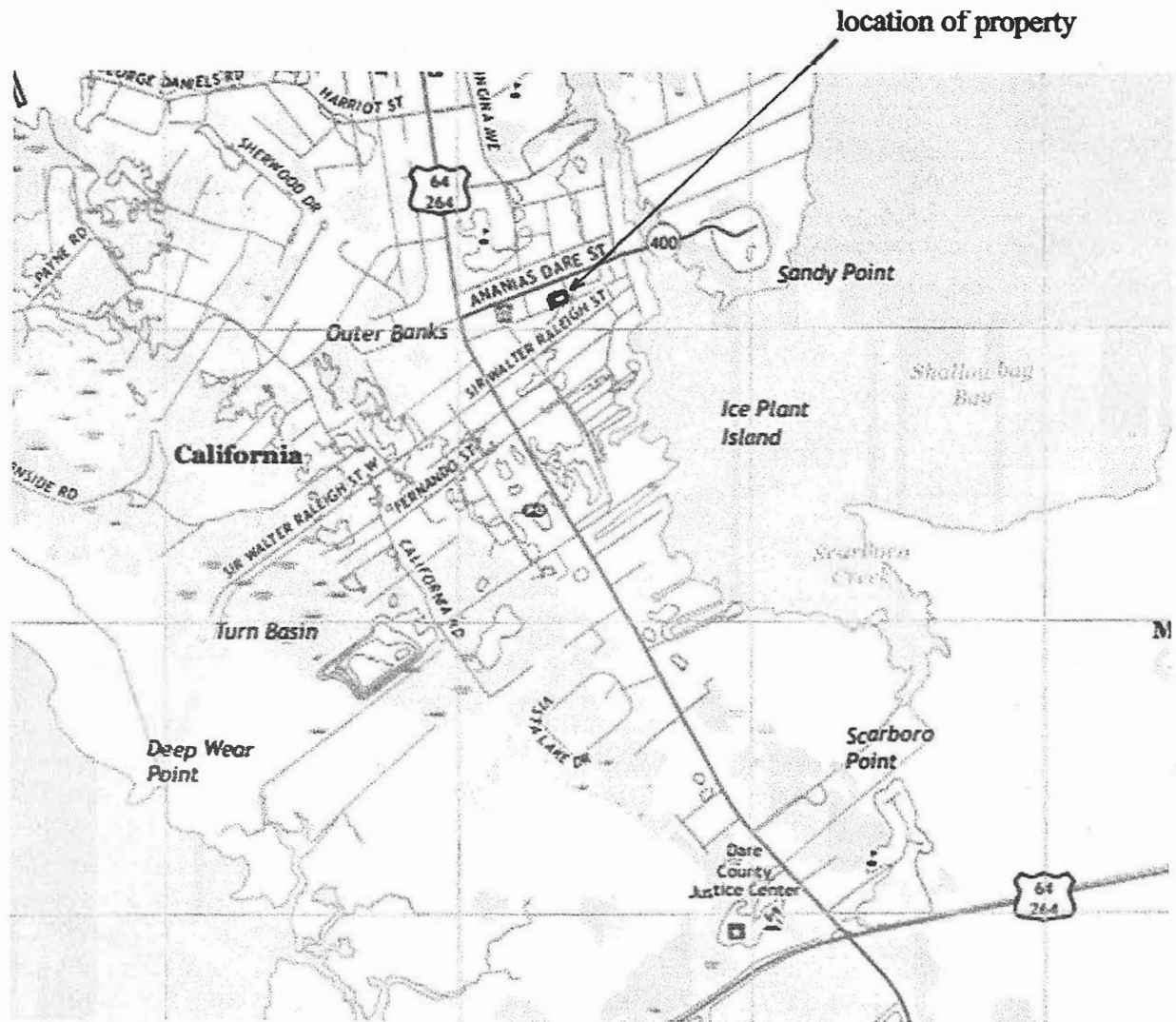
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201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

# Herbert and Ann Creef House

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## Location Map

Latitude: 35.909419 Longitude: -75.672022  
Map prepared by J. Daniel Pezzoni, Landmark Preservation Associates.  
Map source: USGS Manteo Quadrangle 7.5-minute series, 2022.

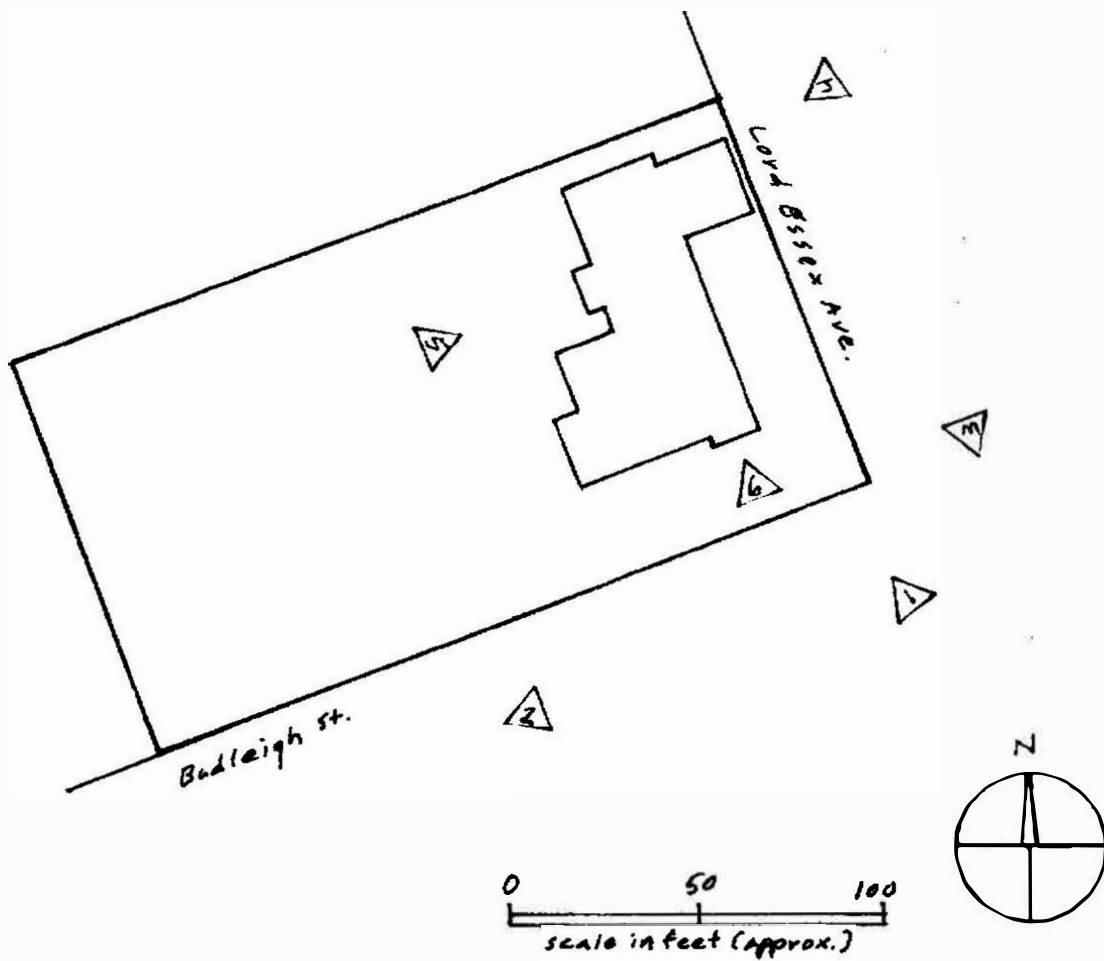


# Herbert and Ann Creef House

301 Budleigh Street  
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## Boundary Map

Triangular markers indicate the number and direction of view of nomination photos. Map prepared by J. Daniel Pezzoni, Landmark Preservation Associates.

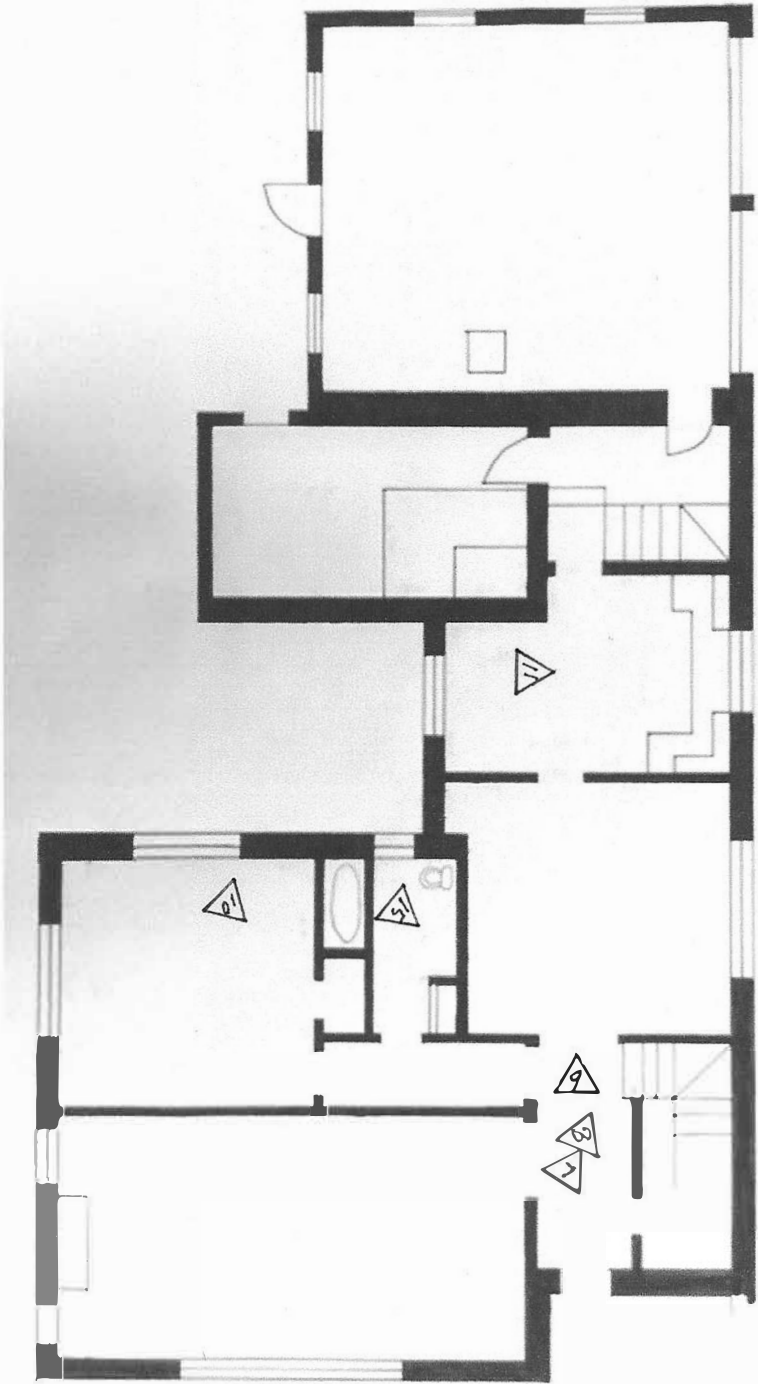


# Herbert and Ann Creef House

301 Budleigh Street, Manteo, Dare County, North Carolina

## First-floor Plan and Photo Key

Triangular markers indicate the number and direction of view of nomination photos. Plan drawn by Allison Martin, 2024.



# Herbert and Ann Creef House

301 Budleigh Street, Manteo, Dare County, North Carolina

## Second-floor Plan and Photo Key

Triangular markers indicate the number and direction of view of nomination photos. Plan drawn by Allison Martin, 2024.

