



Name of Property: Dr. Bob's Home (Dr. Robert and Anne Smith House)
City, State: Akron, Ohio
Period of Significance: 1935-1950
NHL Criteria: 1 and 2
NHL Theme: I. Peopling Places
2. Health, Nutrition, and Disease
II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
2. Reform Movements
Previous Recognition: 1985 National Register of Historic Places
National Historic Context: XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements
B. Temperance and Prohibition

NHL Significance:

- Dr. Bob's Home is nationally significant for its central role in the establishment of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), a global organization whose mission is to assist alcoholics in achieving and maintaining sobriety. The establishment of AA marked a turning point in the history of alcoholism and its treatment.
- The property is also nationally significant for its association with Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith (Dr. Bob) and Anne Smith. Along with William Griffith Wilson (Bill W.), Dr. Bob co-founded Alcoholics Anonymous. Anne Smith and Lois Wilson, respective spouses of the founders of AA, co-founded Al-Anon, a program for the families of alcoholics.
- It was here that the philosophy and early practices that underlie AA's program were first

articulated and debated. Later, some of the stories that went into the first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous’s “the Big Book,” were written in the Smith’s dining room.

- Dr. Bob’s Home also provided a meeting space for the first years of AA and served as an experimentation site of various treatment methods used as part of the AA program. The philosophy and practices of AA developed and implemented here would later form the core of AA’s Twelve-Step Program. Alcoholics Anonymous eventually rested on “three pillars”—religion, medicine, and the fellowship of alcoholics—all of which were first articulated in the Smith’s home.

Integrity:

- The house had five owners between 1950 and 1984 who altered, and at times neglected, the home to varying degrees. However, since being purchased by the Founders Foundation in 1984, Dr. Bob’s Home has been restored and interpreted to its period of significance, 1935–1950. This is the period when Bob and Anne Smith resided here with their children (Sue and Robert “Smitty” Jr.).
- Today, Dr. Bob’s Home is a historic house museum. It offers visitors who are “welcomed home” daily a feeling of the time when Bob and Anne resided in the house and the tenets and practices of AA were being formulated. The building also conveys a strong sense of place and the annual Founder’s Day celebration held here every June attracts thousands of people from around the world.

Owner of Property: The Founders Foundation

Acreage of Property: Less than an acre

Origins of Nomination: The nomination originated as a paired nomination with Stepping Stones, the home of Bill and Lois Wilson in Katonah, New York. The nomination was prepared as a collaborative project within the University of Michigan’s Department of History with support from the Founders Foundation, the owners of the property.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Designation as an NHL will bring recognition to the property that proved central to the development of a significant recovery program that affected the lives of millions of people nationally and internationally.
- Designation will also bring recognition to the role of Dr. Bob and Anne Smith in the creation and development of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 4/25/12):

Annah Perch, Executive Director, Katonah, New York

Advisory Board Recommendation: