

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sharpe-Gentry Farm
other names/site number Sharpe, John O. Farm

2. Location

street & number NW cor., jct. NC 10 & SR 1137 not for publication
city, town Propst Crossroads vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Catawba code 035 zip code 28601

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u>2</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic & Architectural Resources
of Catawba County, N.C.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

William S. Fair, Jr. 4-19-90
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Domestic: single dwelling
 Agriculture/Subsistence: animal facility
 Agriculture/Subsistence: storage
 Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural field

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Domestic: single dwelling
 Agriculture/Subsistence: animal facility
 Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural field

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
 walls weatherboard

roof tin
 other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Sharpe-Gentry Farm, located in southwest Catawba County, near Propst Crossroads on N.C. Highway 10, is a well-preserved, typical example of a turn-of-the-century farmstead in Catawba County. The circa 1903 Queen Anne style farmhouse is accompanied by a well-maintained frame barn, granary, enginehouse, and smaller outbuildings. The Sharpe-Gentry House faces south directly onto N.C. Highway 10, at an elevation approximately ten feet above the road. The yard is planted in shrubbery, with flowering bushes and magnolias, cedar and boxwoods around the yard and outbuildings. A driveway winds into the property between the barn and house. Behind the house, to the north, is a densely wooded area, behind which lay rolling agricultural fields.

The Sharpe-Gentry House ("A" on attached Sketch Map), one-and-one-half story, is a steeply pitched hip-roofed frame cottage with a small, center front gabled dormer and large flanking cross-gables, each with a small square single sash window. Two brick, corbelled cap interior chimneys project out of the hipped roof, flanking the crown of the deep hip roof.

The front door is centered in the main facade, directly below the gabled dormer. It is a simple door, with paneled lower and glass upper. Simple, sash windows flank both sides of the door.

Each side of the house retains near symmetry. On the front, the gabled sections project very slightly from the entrance elevation and each section contains a one-over-one sash window. Gables above the rear third of each side do not extend beyond the rest of the side elevations. The overall symmetry is broken, however, by a wrap-around veranda, comparatively decorative to the house, which envelopes the front (south) and west sides of the house. The veranda is detailed by decorative turned posts and balusters, giving an overall lighter appearance, and terminates at the north end of the west facade in a projecting gabled pavilion.

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The rear of the house is a circa 1940 addition, which created a kitchen/bathroom area. It is covered by a shed roof, next to an existing rear gable.

The interior of the house is a center-hall two room deep plan. The stair rises against the east/wall with a plain, square wood newel post. The two front rooms were likely sitting room and bedroom, while the two rear rooms were bedroom and dining room. Each of the four rooms has a fireplace, with simple wood mantels decorated only with single turned colonettes flanking each side of the fire boxes. In the northwest corner of the house a small kitchen addition extends from the dining room. The rear hall door, with paneled lower and single glass pane upper, leads to the enclosed porch and bathroom, which were added to the house circa 1945. Prior to that time the original porch was open. The downstairs rooms are finished with mahogany stained and painted wainscots and plastered walls. All ceilings have been covered in the last twenty years with celotex. The southeast room has been paneled in recent years along the east wall.

Upstairs are two small bedrooms. The stairs lead directly into the north room, which has a sloped ceiling which corresponds with the angle of the pitched roof. A two-panel door leads to the south bedroom, which also features the sloped ceiling. Each room is lit by a single small bay window, which is gabled outside. The wooden floors in both rooms have been covered with linoleum.

Outbuildings on the property are typical of many in Catawba County. Integrity of the outbuildings is generally good, and most of the buildings are believed to be contemporary with the house.

A poured-concrete, gable-roofed engine room (B, contributing), built circa 1923, stands directly northwest of the house. The floors are also poured concrete and the roof is wood frame, covered in metal roofing. It has a south facade wood door. This building was used to house the generator and batteries before Duke Power extended electricity to this part of the county circa 1935.

A shed (C, contributing) stands behind the house, beyond the garden. It is a frame, shed-roofed structure, with stone founda-

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tion and dirt floors, which, according to the owner, was used as a dog house, and dates from the early 1930s.

A **pumphouse** (D, noncontributing), built circa 1945, stands in the tall weeds east of the house, near SR 1138. It is made of concrete block with a metal gable roof. The south side is covered with glass windows, where Mrs. Gentry kept her flowers.

Northwest of the house is the **chicken coop** (E, noncontributing). It is the combination of an old potato house on the west side, which had been moved from another location, and a chicken coop addition on the north side. The building is wood frame with a shed, metal roof and screened openings to the south. The structure was built circa 1925, however is considered noncontributing due to deterioration.

The **granary** (F, contributing), which stands near the driveway west of the house and smokehouse, is a one story, gable-roofed frame, weatherboarded structure. It has a stone foundation, wood floor, a wood, south facade door, and no windows. Inside are three wood grain bins. It is painted red, and is likely contemporary with the house.

Behind the granary is the **garage** (G, contributing), which is a wood frame building with a metal, gabled roof, dirt floor, and an opening on the south facade. It was built in 1925 when Mrs. Gentry bought her first car.

The **barn** (H, contributing) is a large, rectangular frame structure, with stone foundation, dirt floors, metal-covered gable roof, and shed addition onto the rear, north wall. On the south facade of the barn are small, diamond-shaped vent windows about six feet above ground level. In the center of the east facade is a large door made of spaced, vertical slats to allow for ventilation. Above the door is a rectangular, horizontal slat vented window, and to the south of the door is an window opening. The barn is enclosed by an attractive, cross-board fence. Though once white, the barn, garage and granary were painted red in the 1950s. The barn is believed to be contemporary with the house.

The **pigsty** (I, noncontributing) is an open-air, penned area, with a loosely frame structure, covered by a gable roof. This structure is of an indeterminate date and in a deteriorated condition.

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The farm acreage (J, contributing) lies north of the farm buildings. The approximately 28 acres are still farmed, though by neighboring renters, since the Sharpe-Gentry Farm is not fully operational at this time. A dense band of trees and undergrowth stands between the house and north fields, which are mostly used for growing corn, soybeans and winter wheat. North of the fields, near the north property line, is another band of trees which act as a wind-break. The fields give the Sharpe-Gentry Farm its rural integrity.

The old Absalom Propst House, though at one time located on the nominated property on the north side of N.C. Highway 10, is not included as a historic resource in this nomination because it was moved to the parcel on the south side of N.C. Highway 10 (which is not part of the nominated property) and has lost its historic context.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture _____
 Agriculture _____

Period of Significance
 ca. 1903-1939

Significant Dates
 ca. 1903

Cultural Affiliation
 N/A

Significant Person
 N/A

Architect/Builder
 Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

:

The Sharpe-Gentry Farm is a representative early twentieth century farmstead located in southwest Catawba County near the village of Propst Crossroads. The farm consists of a Queen Anne style circa 1903 farmhouse, with its decorative veranda constructed of turned posts and balusters, as well as a frame barn, granary, garage, and sheds. John Sharpe, builder of the house, was an early twentieth century small farmer and lumberman and may have purchased the land to harvest its lumber. In 1919 he sold the property to John and Lucille Gentry. John Gentry was a crane operator most of his life, and spent a great deal of time away from home, however, Lucille Gentry ran a small dairy on the farm to supplement their income. The Sharpe-Gentry Farm, as an example of one of the most intact twentieth century farmsteads in Catawba County, is significant under the Historic Context "Agricultural Development of Catawba County, 1820-1939," under Criterion A and the attractive Queen Anne style house and associated outbuildings are significant under the Property Types, "Houses of Catawba County: Twentieth Century (1900-1939)," and "Rural Outbuildings of Catawba County (1820-1939)."

See continuation sheet

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Sharpe-Gentry Farm
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Historical Background

The Sharpe-Gentry Farm is a well-preserved, representative example of a turn-of-the-century agricultural unit. Located in southwest Catawba County, about nine miles south of Hickory, near Propst Crossroads, the farmhouse and adjacent outbuildings have been scarcely altered. Despite some minor deterioration in recent years, the house and farming complex retain their architectural integrity and strong visual qualities. The yard-scape is enhanced by shrubs and flowers planted in the yard. Unlike neighboring farms, the present-day Gentry farm still has its barn garage, and granary.

The Sharpe-Gentry House was built circa 1903-1905 by John O. Sharpe (b. 1872). Sharpe was from the prominent Sharpe family who, along with the Propst family, settled and developed the Propst Crossroads area in the second half of the nineteenth century. Peter M. Sharpe (probably John's father), was a large area farmer and first postmaster of the crossroads post office when it opened in 1899. As early as 1896 John had established a separate household, but he did not yet own land.¹ Sometime during the 1890s, he married Crese Propst, the daughter of Adolphus Propst, his neighbor.² She died soon after their marriage. In 1903 John married again, to Anna (maiden name unknown).³ In the same year John bought sixty-seven acres from his brother-in-law and sister-in-law from his first marriage, Eli and Lucinda Hoyle, paying \$700 for it.⁴

Presumably construction on the present house was begun shortly after the purchase. The barn and granary were built about the same time. The Absalom Propst house was on the property and moved to its present location, south of Highway 10, which at that time was part of the farm. Sharpe still had a mortgage on the farm in 1910 when he, his wife, and two daughters lived in the house. Beginning in 1910 John Sharpe invested in property on Jacobs Fork River, a few miles north of Propst Crossroads.⁵ Besides farming, Sharpe was also a lumberman and may have bought the property for the purpose of harvesting the timber. In 1919 John O. and Anna Sharpe sold the seventy-three acre homeplace to John W. and Lucille Gentry for \$5,000.⁶ Thus Sharpe's sale price was several times his purchase price of \$700, reflecting the improvements he made to the property. After the sale he moved to a tract on present N.C. 127 between Propst Crossroads and Hickory.

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John William Gentry (24 September 1890-7 November 1963) married Lucille Pickens (28 March 1896-6 September 1985) on July 4, 1917. They had met in Oconee County, South Carolina, in the previous year. Gentry worked for a Southern Railway contractor on a grading project which crossed the Pickens farm. The newlywed couple moved around before settling in Catawba County. Their first child was born in West Virginia in 1918. They purchased the farm from Sharpe in 1919 but did not move into the main house. Instead they lived in the old Propst house on the edge of the property. On Thanksgiving Day in 1923, after they had made the final payment to Sharpe, they moved into the house he had built. After that date the Gentrys rented the older house to tenants who farmed the greater part of the seventy-three acres. Structural changes to the Sharpe-Gentry house and rest of the farm since the Gentrys' purchase have been few. They added a garage in 1925 when Mrs. Gentry bought her first car. The cement sidewalk from the porch to the road was built in the late 1920s. Smaller outbuildings were built around 1940. The only changes to the house were made to some rooms in the mid-1940s, when the kitchen was remodeled and a bathroom added. Plantings of decorative shrubbery and flower beds have added considerably to the place's appearance.⁷

John W. Gentry worked for most of his life as a crane operator for contractors operating out of Charlotte, Norfolk, and other cities. As a result he was often away from the farm and his wife was left to oversee its operation and raise their children. Yet, as Mrs. Gentry recently put it, "It don't go me hard to live alone." Their first born, Mary Louise, died at the age of two in 1920. Born during the 1920s were John William, Jr., his father's namesake, who moved to Norfolk; Juanita Pickens, who married George Randall and lived near Spartanburg, South Carolina; and David Allen, who lives in Hickory and is the only surviving child. Lucille Gentry sold milk to a local dairy company up until the 1960s. When machine-milking made her small operation obsolete she left the business, selling all but one cow.⁸ Following her husband's death in 1963 Mrs. Gentry received by the terms of his will, the seventy-three acre homeplace, a fifteen-acre tract elsewhere in the county, and all personal property.⁹ A project which occupied much of Mrs. Gentry's time in her last years was the erection of a monument at nearby Wesley's Chapel. The memorial, for which she had saved for twenty years, marks the site of a nineteenth century academy.¹⁰ By the terms of Lucille Gentry's will, a twenty-eight acre tract of the farm was given to her son, David Allen Gentry, who rents the house out to tenants.

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Sharpe-Gentry Farm
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FOOTNOTES

¹Catawba County Tax Records, North Carolina State Archives.

²Twelfth Census, 1910, Population Schedule.

³Thirteenth Census, 1910, Population Schedule.

⁴Catawba County Deed Book 83, pp. 223-224. John Sharpe bought the property on March 17, 1903, together with Morris P. Sharpe. The deed excepted eighteen acres "sold to John O. Sharpe previous to this date," indicating that he may have begun construction of the house prior to 1903. At any rate, in October 1904, John Sharpe became the sole owner when he bought Morris Sharpe's half-interest for \$450.

⁵Catawba County Deed Book 95, p. 148 and Deed Book 102, pp. 219, 221, and 227.

⁶Catawba County Deed Book 144, p. 338.

⁷Lucille Pickens Gentry, interview conducted by Davyd Foard Hood, 27 November 1982 (notes and correspondence on file in the Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.)

⁸Gentry interview, 27 November 1982, and correspondence, 3 July 1982.

⁹Catawba County Will Book 9, p. 357.

¹⁰Observer-News-Enterprise (Newton), 13 September 1979: "Wesley's Chapel Academy," unpublished broadside.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 28.43 acres

UTM References

A

1	7
---	---

4	6	6	1	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	4	2	6	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

1	7
---	---

4	6	6	4	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	4	2	6	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	7
---	---

4	6	6	3	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	4	2	4	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

D

1	7
---	---

4	6	6	1	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	4	2	4	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All of lot 2, block 2, sheet 1-J, Catawba County Tax Maps.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Entire remaining parcel associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Koolman, compiler & description; Michael Hill, history
organization Catawba County Historical Assn., Inc. date 7/29/89
street & number Rt. 1, Box 76 AB telephone 704/256-3040
city or town Conover state N.C. zip code 28613

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Sharpe-Gentry Farm
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Catawba County Deeds, Tax Records and Wills. North Carolina State Archives.

Gentry, Lucille Pickens. Interview conducted by Davyd Foard Hood, 27 November 1982. Notes (plus followup correspondence and photographs) on file in the Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Observer-News-Enterprise (Newton), 13 September 1979.

United States. Twelfth and Thirteenth Censuses, 1860-1910: Agricultural and Population Schedules.

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Section number Photos Page 1 Sharpe-Gentry Farm, Catawba County, NC

The following pertains to all photographs:

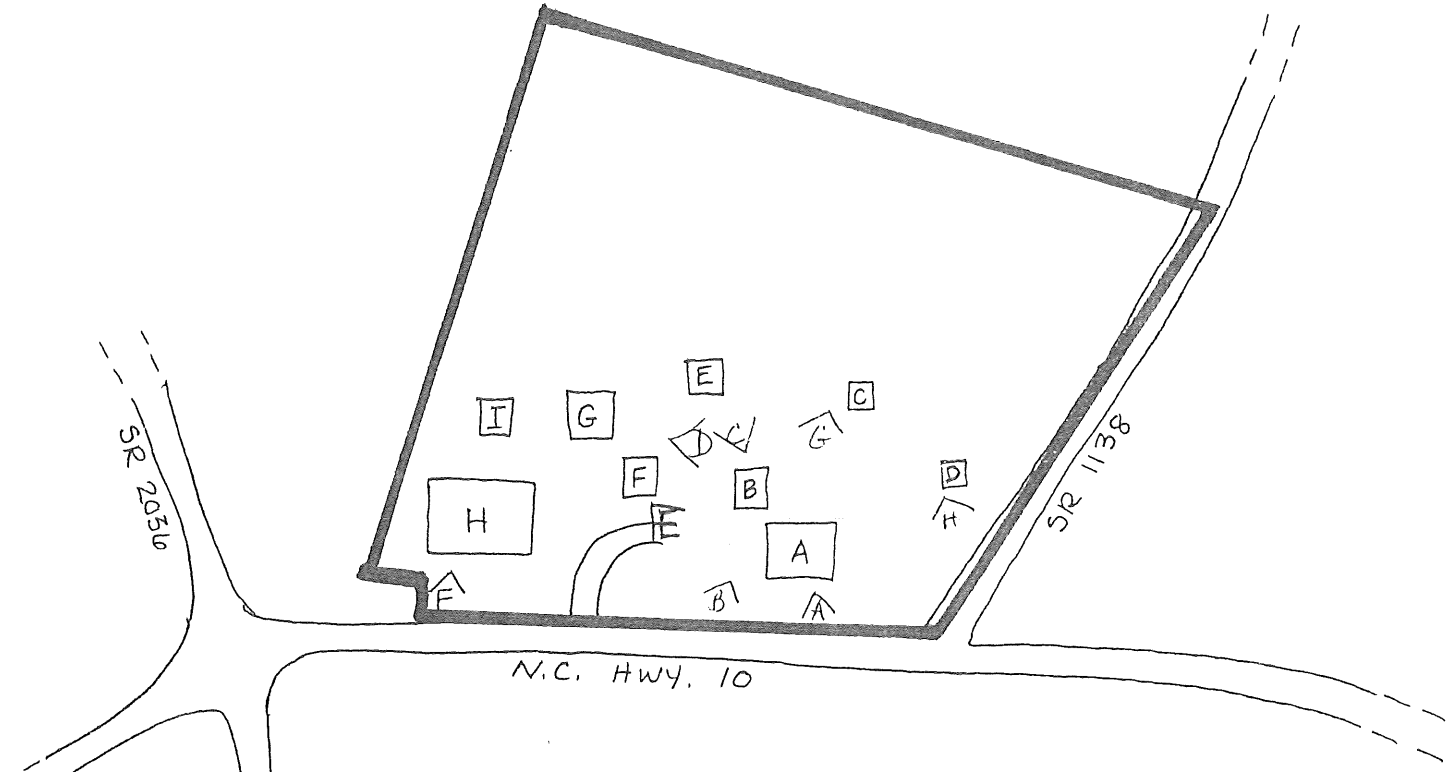
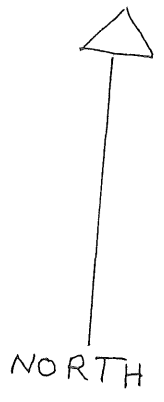
- 1) Sharpe-Gentry Farm
 - 2) Propst Crossroads vicinity, North Carolina
 - 5) North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC
-
- A.
 - 3) Barbara Kooiman
 - 4) July 1989
 - 6) House (A), north
 - B.
 - 3) Randall Page
 - 4) March 1982
 - 6) House (A), northeast
 - C.
 - 3) Randall Page
 - 4) March 1982
 - 6) House (A) and engine room (B), southeast
 - D.
 - 3) Randall Page
 - 4) March 1982
 - 6) Outbuildings (F, G, H & I), west
 - E.
 - 3) Barbara Kooiman
 - 4) July 1989
 - 6) Granary (F), north
 - F.
 - 3) Randall Page
 - 4) March 1982
 - 6) Barn (H), north
 - G.
 - 3) Randall Page
 - 4) March 1982
 - 6) Shed (C), northeast
 - H.
 - 3) Randall Page
 - 4) March 1982
 - 6) Pumphouse (D), north
 - I.
 - 3) unknown
 - 4) ca. 1950
 - 6) aerial view of farm, northeast

NOTE: Most of the photos used in this nomination were taken in 1982. All resources have been thoroughly field checked by Barbara Kooiman in 1989 and have been determined to be unchanged from their appearance and condition portrayed in the earlier photos.

SHARPE-GENTRY FARM

PROPST CROSSROADS VICINITY
 CATAWBA COUNTY, N.C.
 MAP 1-J, BLOCK 2, LOT 2

SCALE
 1" = 400'



BUILDINGS

- A - SHARPE-GENTRY HOUSE (C)
- B - ENGINE ROOM (C)
- C - SHED (C)
- D - PUMPHOUSE (NC)
- F - GRANARY (C)
- G - Garage (C)
- H - Barn (C)

STRUCTURES

- E - Chicken COOP (NC)
- I - PIG STY (NC)

SITE

- J - FARM ACREAGE (C)

C = CONTRIBUTING
 NC = NONCONTRIBUTING

