



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Pat McCrory
Secretary Susan Kluttz

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

December 17, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelby Reap
Office of Human Environment
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Ramona M. Bartos

RSR for Ramona M. Bartos

SUBJECT: Eligibility Evaluation for the Wentworth Historic District, Sidewalks along NC 65, WBS No. 43658, PA No. 13-04-0029, Rockingham County, ER 13-2213

Thank you for your memorandum of October 26, 2013, transmitting the above survey report. We apologize for our major delay in reviewing the report and offering our comments.

For the purpose of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the **Wentworth Historic District** is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, under Criteria A and C.

However, we believe that three additional properties outside the western end of the proposed district boundaries should be considered contributing, and the boundaries expanded accordingly: the McMichael Rakestraw house (RK 1610), the House (RK 1611, at 1180 NC 65), and the Rakestraw House (RK 1612) were all built during the period of significance and are related to the district's historic significance. We also recommend that the Community Building at the Wentworth Presbyterian Church be considered contributing as well. Likewise, although the Thomas A. Ratliffe Store (RK 1603) has been altered from its original configuration, these changes were made during the period of significance; we recommend that the Ratliffe Store be considered a contributing resource.

For record keeping purposes, we note that it appears the Garfield Wilson Store (RK 1602) was previously surveyed as the Wentworth Post Office (RK 0835) and the R. G. Mitchell Store (RK 1606) was previously surveyed as the General Store (RK 0808).

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-807-6579 or renee.gledhill-earley@ncdcr.gov. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT, mfurr@ncdot.gov

Eligibility Evaluation of the Wentworth Historic District for Sidewalks and Pedestrian Crosswalks Along NC 65

Rockingham County, North Carolina

WBS # 43658



New South Associates, Inc.

Eligibility Evaluation of the Wentworth Historic District for Sidewalks and Pedestrian Crosswalks Along NC 65

Rockingham County, North Carolina

WBS # 43658

Report submitted to:

North Carolina Department of Transportation, Human Environment Section •
1598 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699

Report prepared by:

New South Associates • 6150 East Ponce de Leon Avenue •
Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083



Mary Beth Reed – Principal Investigator

Ellen Turco – Architectural Historian and Author

September 19, 2013 • **Final Report**
New South Associates Technical Report 2284

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to install sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks along NC 65 in Wentworth, Rockingham County (WBS# 43658). This report contains an evaluation of the study-listed Wentworth Historic District (RK 1584) located on the NC 65 corridor in Wentworth. This project complies with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, other state and federal regulations, and NCDOT's current Guidelines for Survey Reports for Historic Architectural Resources.

In May of 2013, New South Associates, Inc. conducted an intensive level survey of the project vicinity to assess the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of the potential historic district. A historic district and five individual properties were recorded, totaling 24 properties. New South recommends a 35.84-acre area on the north and south sides of NC 65 in Wentworth containing 19 properties (see below) as an NRHP-eligible historic district under Criteria A and C. The district is recommended significant on the local level as Rockingham County's seat of government for the time period circa 1815 through circa 1963. It is also recommended significant as a collection of buildings representative of architectural types, forms, and styles from circa 1815 through circa 1930. The table below contains the addresses and PINS for each property within the district.

Table 1. Properties in Recommended NRHP-Eligible Historic District

Survey Site Number	Name	Address	PIN#
RK 5	Rockingham County Courthouse	1086 NC 65	797603340532
RK 7	Wright Tavern	1073 NC 65	797601353028
RK 225	Rockingham County Jail	1101 NC 65	797601352285
RK 257	Wentworth Presbyterian Church	1065 NC 65	797603346856
RK 1285	James Thomas Smith House	998 NC 65	797603348148
RK 1596	Alfred M. Scales House	958 NC 65	797603443226
RK 1597	Wentworth Presbyterian Church Manse	1065 NC 65	797601354055
RK 1598	Single wide	1046 NC 65	797603333816
RK 1599	Parlier House	1018 NC 65	797603346376
RK 1600	Magnolia Vale	1058 NC 64	797603343631
RK 1602	Garfield Wilson Store	1100 NC 65	797603249718
RK 1603	Thomas Ratliff Store	1091 NC 65	797601352008
RK 1604	McMichael Law Office	1107 NC 65	797601350084
RK 1605	Scott-Reid Law Office	1105 NC 65	797601351115
RK 1606	R.G. Mitchell Store	1123 NC 65	797601350392
RK 1607	R.G. Mitchell House	1121 NC 65	797601350392
RK 1608	Mitchell-Adam-Perdue #2	1129 NC 65	797601350392
RK 1609	Martin-Irving House	1122 NC 65	797603246992
RK 1613	Mitchell-Adam-Perdue #1	1125 NC 65	797601350392

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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to install sidewalks and crosswalks along NC 65 in Wentworth. The project's purpose is to improve pedestrian safety between the former Rockingham County Courthouse and the Wright Tavern, which are used as museums. An approximate 0.57-mile corridor along NC 65 was surveyed (Figures 1-5).

In May 2013, New South Associates, Inc. received a scope of work from NCDOT requesting an intensive analysis and recommendation of National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility for the study-listed Wentworth Historic District (RK 1584). On May 23 and 24, 2013, New South senior historian Ellen Turco inventoried and photographed 19 resources in the study-listed district. Five properties also were recorded west of the study list district (Appendix A). Ms. Turco conducted interviews with Mr. Bob W. Carter, Rockingham County Historian, and Ms. Kim Proctor, Director of the Rockingham County Museum and Archive (MARC). Research was conducted at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NC HPO) and the MARC. Real estate data was obtained from the Rockingham County WebGIS site.

The NC HPO placed the Wentworth Historic District (RK 1584) on the state study list in 2003; however, an exact boundary for the district was not determined. The properties recommended for inclusion in the study list district were recorded in groups on "block face" files RK 1282, RK 1283, and RK 1284. The James Thomas Smith House was recorded on file RK 1285. Research conducted at the NC HPO determined that two properties in the study-listed district were listed in the NRHP. These properties are: the Rockingham County Court House and Jail (RK 5, listed 1979) and the Wright Tavern (RK 7, listed 1970).

This report contains the requested evaluation of the study-listed Wentworth Historic District and complies with the basic requirements of the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended; the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation regulations and procedures (23 CFR 771 and Technical Advisory T 6640.8A); the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations on the Protection of Historic Properties (36 CFR 800); and NCDOT's Historic Architectural Resources, Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines.

Figure 1. Map Showing the Survey Area

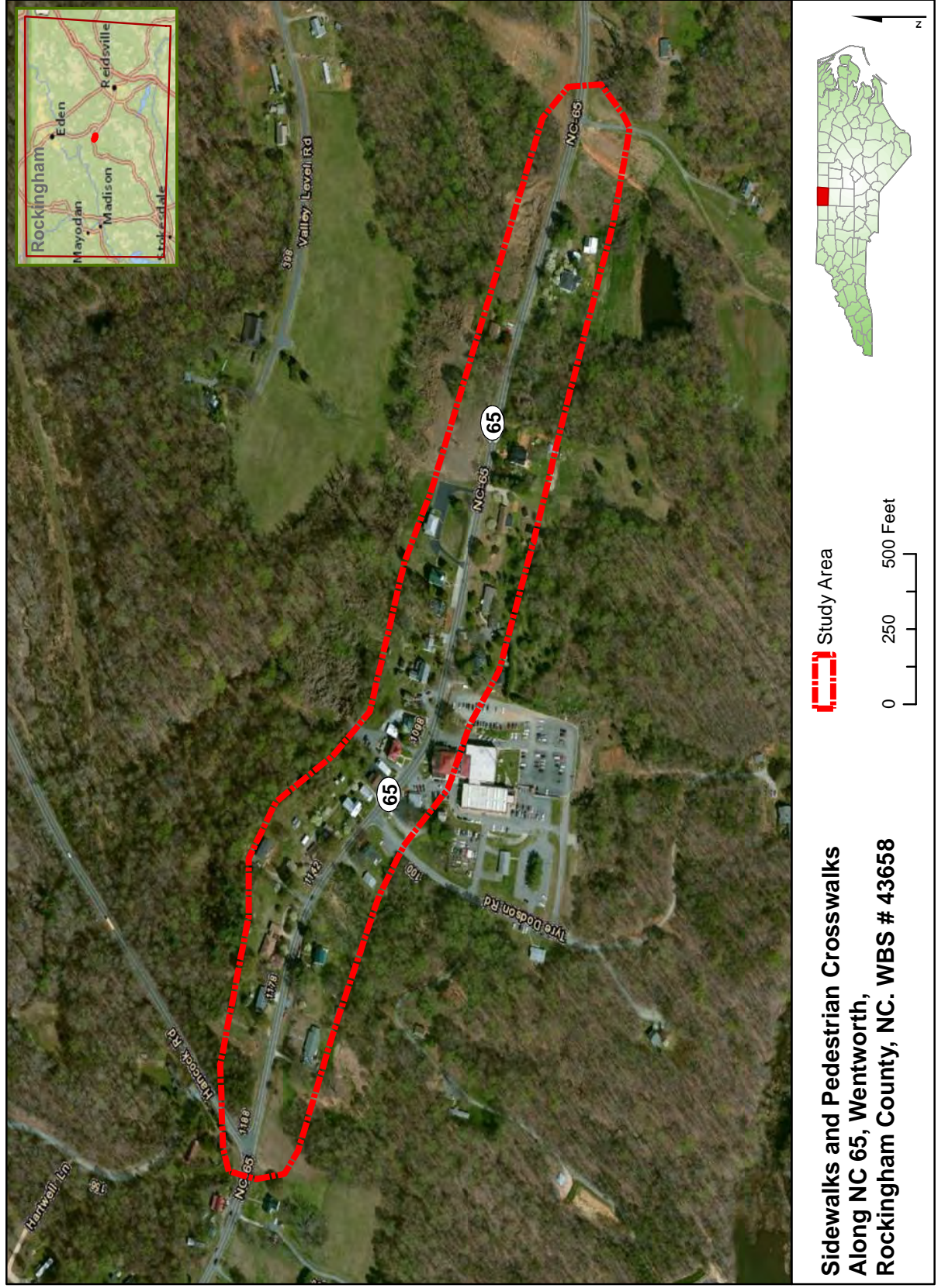


Figure 2. View from the Approximate Location of Wentworth Presbyterian Church on NC 65, Looking West Toward Courthouse



Figure 3. View from the Approximate Location of R. G. Mitchell Store (RK 1606) on NC 65, Looking East



Figure 4. View from Tyre Dodson Road (West of Courthouse), Looking West Along NC 65



Figure 5. View from General Alfred M. Scales House (RK 1596), Looking East Along NC 65 to Edge of District



II. HISTORY OF PROJECT AREA

Rockingham County, located in North Carolina's Piedmont, shares its northern border with Henry and Pittsylvania counties of Virginia. The 14.4-square-mile Village of Wentworth is located in central Rockingham County. The historic village center runs along the north and south sides of NC 65 for approximately one quarter of a mile east and west of the 1907 Rockingham County Courthouse (RK 5). NC 65 follows the crest of a ridge that slopes down to Rocky Branch and Jail House Branch on the north and south sides of the ridge, respectively. The historic village center contains the county's former courthouse and jail buildings, three former store buildings, the Wentworth Presbyterian Church and cemetery, a post office located in the circa 1815 Wright Tavern and approximately one dozen private residences built between circa 1850 and circa 1950.

Rockingham County was formed on December 29, 1785, from a section of northern Guilford County, when a bill that was passed by the North Carolina General Assembly. This bill also directed that the first court session be held at Adam Tate's house, located on the south side of the Dan River at a place called Eagle Falls, approximately seven miles northeast of the project area. Eagle Falls was chosen because it was the best place to cross the river in the county and was located on a major road (Carter 1998a). The bill only stipulated the location of the first court session; subsequent sessions could be held at a new county courthouse built at a location selected by the court justices. This condition of the bill led to widespread and ongoing disagreement about the location of the courthouse.

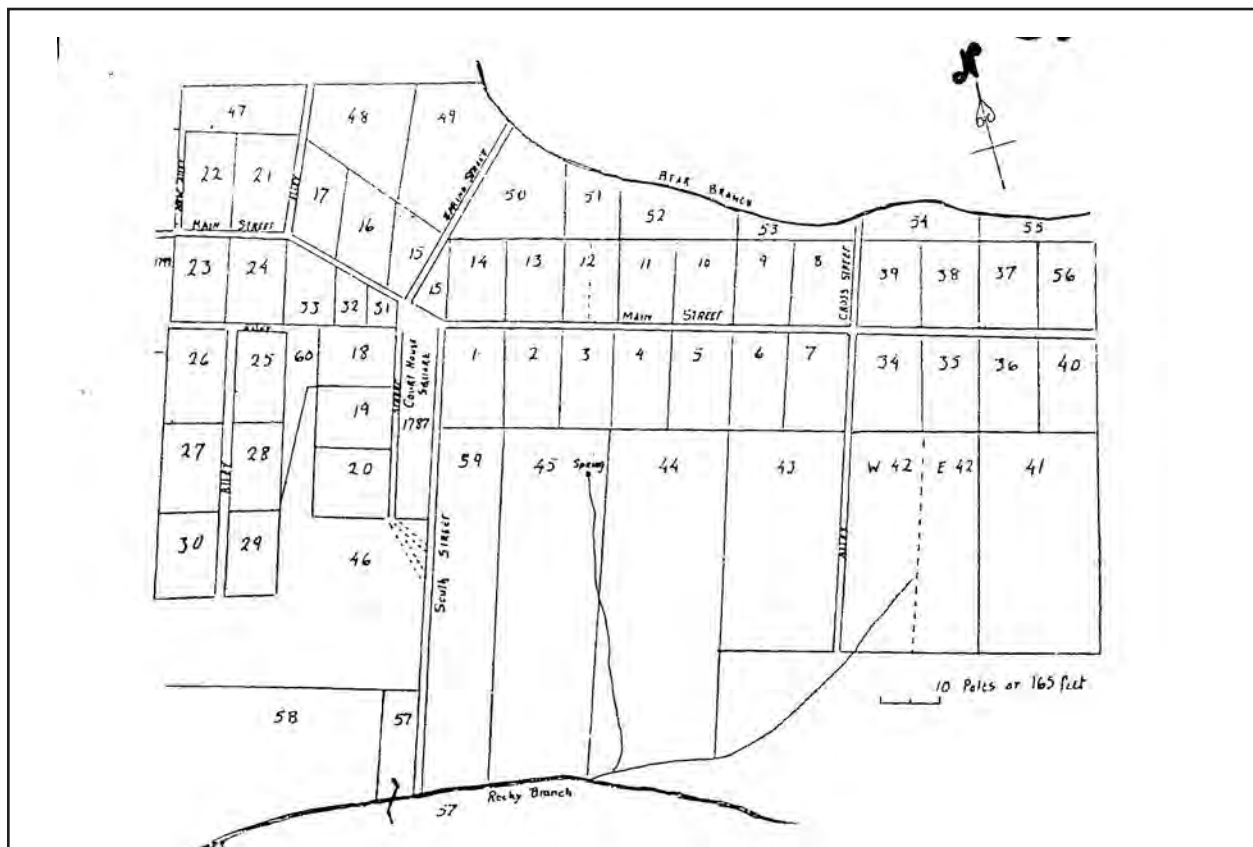
Eagle Falls was an unpopular location with residents south of the Dan River. They petitioned the legislature to require that the permanent courthouse be built at the geographical center of the county. On January 1, 1787, the legislature amended the law to require that the courthouse be erected at the center of the county on the lands of Charles Mitchell. Although Mitchell's land was centrally located, the area was sparsely populated due to its poor soils and was without a major road or navigable waterways. In anticipation of the new courthouse, Charles Galloway purchased 200 acres from Mitchell in April of 1787. In August, Galloway sold one acre to the county commissioners for a courthouse square with a courthouse, prison, and stocks (Rockingham County Deed Book 1787a:54). The exact site of the first courthouse is unknown, but local historians believe it was on or very near the site of the extant 1907 Rockingham County Courthouse (RK 5) (Butler 1982:21). By May 1788, contractor Richard Sharp had completed a 36x24-foot frame courthouse.

For the next nine years, the small village known as "Rockingham Courthouse" functioned as a regional outpost whose population grew temporarily when the court was in session, a pattern that would continue through the twentieth century. Visitors were accommodated in Charles Galloway's tavern. The exact location of Galloway's tavern remains unknown. The county's first post office was established at Rockingham Courthouse in 1794 (Butler 1982:22). Galloway's reluctance to sell additional parcels for development limited the growth of the community. Five-

hundred and twenty-one Rockingham County residents signed a petition objecting to Galloway's "monopoly" of the land around the courthouse and submitted it to the General Assembly during the session of 1796-1797 (Carter 1998a). In an attempt to force Galloway's hand, the legislature passed a law requiring the county commissioners purchase land for a courthouse town, either from Galloway or at another location. By this time, Galloway realized that his land had little value if the courthouse was relocated and agreed to sell 125 acres to the county commissioners. In 1798, the commissioners laid out a village called Wentworth in honor of the Charles Watson-Wentworth, the second Marquess of Rockingham, and a British friend to the colonies during the Revolution. The village consisted of a main east-west street, a courthouse square, and 21 building lots to be sold at public auction on April 23, 1799. Twenty-first-century Wentworth is a slightly expanded version of this plan.

During the early nineteenth century, Wentworth developed modestly as a center for county administrative and judicial functions. Shops, taverns, and rooming houses served a transient population that waxed and waned with the quarterly court sessions (Figure 6). An 1810 account described the village as "...remarkable for nothing, except its high and healthy situation...we have here a tolerable wooden Court House...some public houses for the accommodation of strangers and the citizens tho' scarcely enough for so populous a county" (Carter 1998:82).

Figure 6. Map of Wentworth Circa 1830, Drawn by Bob W. Carter Based on Deed Research. Early town plats have not survived.



The circa 1815 Wright Tavern (RK 7, NRHP 1970) is the oldest extant structure in Wentworth. Built in multiple phases, the tavern is architecturally significant for its open stair hall or “dog-run” plan and Federal stylistic details. Around 1815, tavern owner William Wright appended a two-story, four-bay addition to the west side of an earlier one-and-a-half-story dwelling. The earlier section, now gone, was identified during an archaeological study of the tavern site. The circa 1815 section consists of a large first floor dining or public room and five bedchambers on the second floor. Sometime after William’s death in 1824, his son James Wright expanded the tavern replacing the one-and-a-half-story section with a two-story, three-bay addition. The Wright family used the new section as their private residence. The extended façade was unified with a shed porch. Also around 1824, a one-story Federal-style building was moved to the site and attached to the rear of the tavern at the northwest corner, expanding the tavern’s public dining rooms. This addition is thought to have originally been a freestanding Clerk of Court’s office or a law office associated with the courthouse site (Carter 2013; J.G. Zehmer 1970).

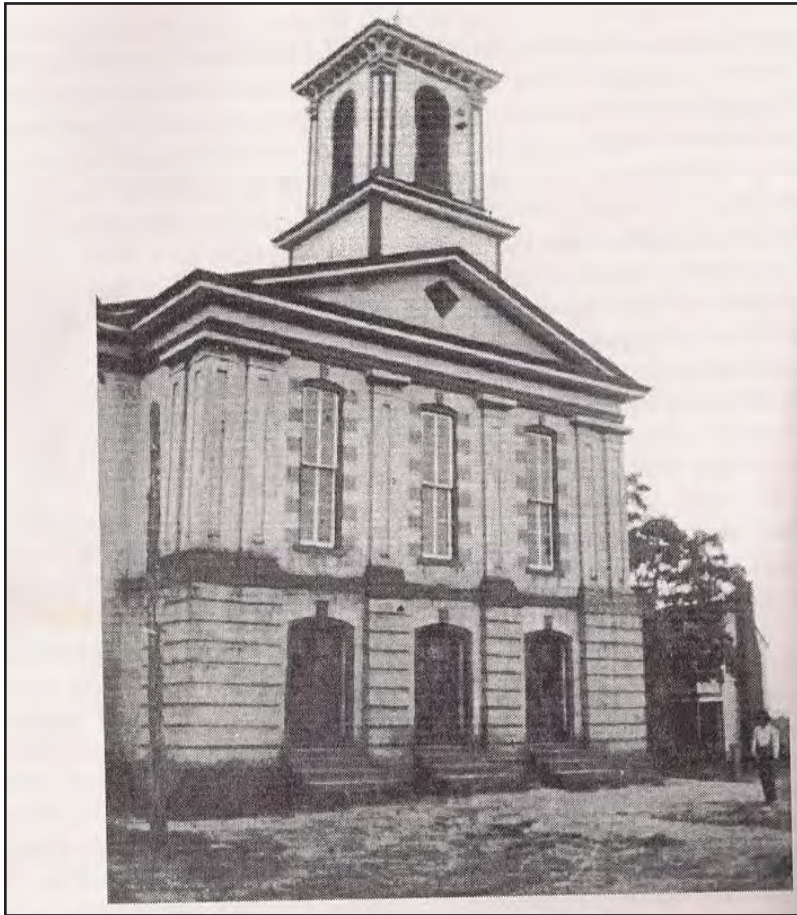
The Wright family continued to run the town’s most successful and enduring boarding tavern. James Wright operated the Wright Tavern until his death in 1870, at which time his daughter Nannie Wright took over. Nannie Wright was assisted by her sister Anne’s son, James W. Reid and the tavern became known as the Reid Hotel. Also around 1870, a one-story gabled building was erected just west of the tavern. It connected to the tavern’s front porch with an open breezeway and was used as the hotel office, and as the post office during the postmasterships of tavern proprietor Numa R. Reid (1906-1913 and 1929-1946) (Figure 7). It was demolished around 1950; the tavern annex was demolished two decades earlier in 1932 (Perdue 1998a:114).

Figure 7. Historic Photograph Showing Wright Tavern with Office on its West Side



Source: MARC

Figure 8. View of 1825 Courthouse (remodeled 1881) circa 1906



Source: Rockingham County Community College Historical Collection

Judges, lawyers, and others with court business boarded at the Wright Tavern through the 1950s. The tavern's detached kitchen provided meals for visitors staying at other accommodations in the village, and the dining room was a popular place for meetings and entertainment. The tavern's success allowed James Wright to expand around 1850 with the construction of a freestanding two-story, four-bedroom annex immediately to the west.

A new brick county courthouse and jail was built in Wentworth in 1825. The building was renovated in 1881 (Figure 8). The exterior walls were stuccoed and a cupola added to give it a more modern appearance. In addition to court functions the building was used for political and civic rallies, teacher training and religious functions throughout the nineteenth century (Perdue 1998a:93).

There are three churches in or near the historic village of Wentworth: the Wentworth Methodist Episcopal Church, the Wentworth Baptist Church and the Wentworth Presbyterian Church; Wentworth Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery (RK 28; NRHP listed 1985) is located approximately 0.5 mile west of the courthouse. Wentworth Baptist Church is located just west of the historic village in a historically African American community known as Georgetown (Carter 2013). The Wentworth Presbyterian Church (RK 257) is located 500 feet east of the courthouse. Presbyterians were meeting in Wentworth by the 1840s, perhaps in the Methodist meetinghouse at the village's west end (Carter 1998b:114). Charter members of the Presbyterian church were Thomas

A. Ratliffe, Jesse Carter, Colonel James Irvin, General Alfred M. Scales, and Reverend John W. Montgomery formally organized the church on November 25, 1859 at Ratliffe's Store. Acting as agent for the congregation, Irvin purchased the two-acre "old jail site" from the county for \$453.39. The sanctuary was completed by the spring of 1861.

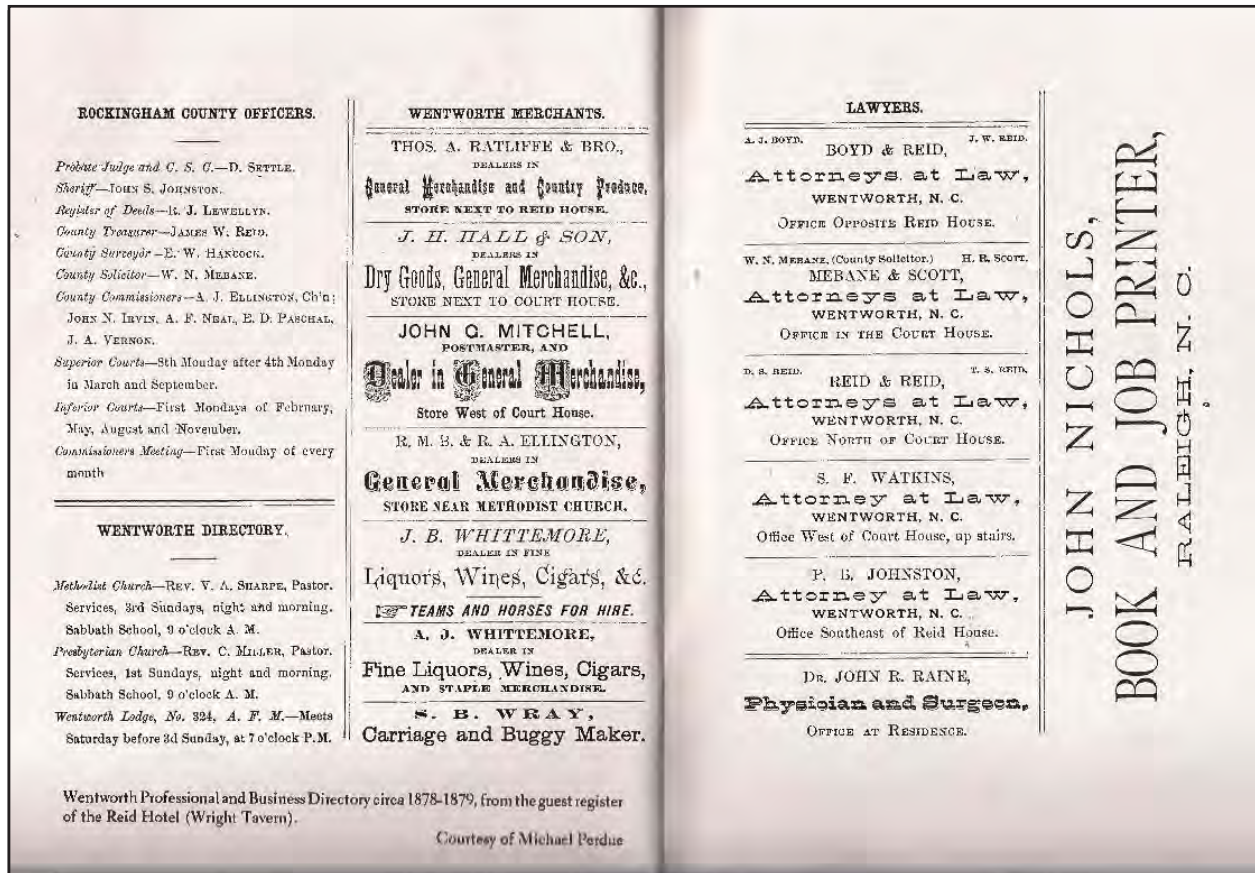
Prominent citizens built several substantial houses in the mid-nineteenth century. Colonel James Irvin constructed a house (RK 1596) in the Greek Revival style around 1858 on lot 34 at the east end of the village (Rockingham County Deed Book 1858:2DV:247). After the Civil War, the Greek Revival-style house was acquired by Brigadier General Alfred M. Scales, the highest-ranking confederate officer from Rockingham County (Butler 1982:52). After the war Scales returned to practicing law and went into politics. He served his first term in the U.S. Congress from 1857-1859 prior to his move to Wentworth. After relocating, Scales served in the North Carolina legislature from 1866-1869. He was reelected for his second term in the U.S. Congress in 1874 and ended up serving two more terms until 1884. It was during this time, in 1875, that Scales sold his property to Wentworth merchant J. A. Jones in 1875 (Rockingham County Deed Book 1875:3dE:356). Scales would go onto serve as Governor of North Carolina from 1874-1888.

Thomas A. Ratliffe, a merchant and prominent citizen of Wentworth built the front-gable Ratliffe General Merchandise Store (RK 1603) across from the courthouse around 1859 and inhabited the mid-nineteenth century Magnolia Vale House (RK 1600). Ratliffe was the village postmaster during the Civil War and the post office was located in his store. The store remained in operation under subsequent owners until the 1930s when it was converted to a residence for Tyre Dodson.

Local attorneys Thomas Settle, John H. Dillard, and Thomas Ruffin Jr. built the Martin-Irving House (RK 1609) around 1850. All three men were eventually appointed justices of the North Carolina Supreme Court; Settle in 1868, Dillard in 1878, and Ruffin in 1881. Settle also served as the United States Minister to Peru. The two-story, single-pile brick dwelling was built as the lawyers' pied-a-terre where they stayed when court was in session, taking meals at Wright Tavern (Perdue 1998a:72; Carter 2013). Local tradition says that the lawyers sold the house during or just after the Civil War. In the late 1800s, the house was converted to a hotel. The Martin and Irving families owned the property from about 1900-1950. Around 1900, a frame rear wing was added to the house and the roofline of the original block was reconfigured.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Wentworth had several taverns and hotels as well as ten practicing attorneys. Four general stores, five physicians, a dentist and three druggists, a school, and three churches served the few hundred inhabitants and the transient and fluctuating population that traveled to Wentworth to conduct business at the courthouse (Butler 1982:41; Perdue 1998c:135-138) (Figure 9). Wentworth's population peaked in the 1870s and 1880s (Carter 1998a:83). The community was dependent on courthouse business and never developed lasting industries. Newspaper accounts reveal the presence of small manufacturing enterprises such as tobacco manufacturers and carriage factories prior to the Civil War. Yet, after the war, the towns of Reidsville, Leakesville, Eden, Madison, and Stoneville grew because they were connected by rail with Virginia, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem, unlike Wentworth. The poor land of the surrounding area, ill-suited to commercial agriculture, was another factor that limited the Wentworth's growth.

Figure 9. Wentworth Professional and Business Directory circa 1878-1879



Source: The Journal of Rockingham County History and Genealogy. Volume XXIII, Number 2, page 137

By the 1900s, the village's few manufacturing enterprises relocated to Reidsville and only the Wright Tavern, other smaller hotels, general merchandise stores, and attorneys' offices remained to cater to the business of government and justice (Carter 2013).

On October 2, 1906, the 1825 Rockingham County Courthouse burned down. The loss of the courthouse reawakened the dormant dispute about the location of the county seat. Reidsville, located approximately five miles southeast of Wentworth, was a growing tobacco-manufacturing center with excellent rail connections. Reidsville's business leaders and politicians promoted their town as a larger, more convenient, and more modern county seat. Heated arguments played out in the local press. The county commissioners could not decide whether to rebuild the courthouse in Wentworth, Reidsville, or elsewhere, and in early 1907, the issue was returned yet again to the North Carolina General Assembly. Disinterested in the local politicking, the General Assembly took no action and the county seat remained in Wentworth. Wentworth was still an unincorporated village at this time.

The county commissioners selected Washington D.C. architect Frank P. Milburn to design a three-story, brick, Neo-classical courthouse. The selection of Milburn's firm demonstrates the commissioners' desire for a thoroughly modern and contemporary building. Milburn's firm was

prolific, designing more than 16 courthouses across the state (Lee and Mobley 1979: 7.2-3). The construction contract was awarded to B.F. Smith Fireproof and Construction Company for an amount not to exceed \$25,000 (Lee and Mobley 1979; Perdue 1998b:94). The building was dedicated in February of 1908 (Figure 10). As the community's largest building by far, it was used for many purposes in addition to government and judicial functions, such as commencements, theatrical productions, fairs, dances, and rallies. Trials and court proceedings were also a source of "entertainment." Additions to the rear and sides of the house were made between 1937 and 1938. The two-story additions, designed by architect J.W. Hopper of Leakesville, mirrored the heavy foundation, arched window openings, and modillion cornice of Milburn's earlier design (Figure 11).

In 1910, two years after the completion of the courthouse, a new jail facility (RK 225) was erected on the north side of NC 65, directly across from the courthouse (Figure 12). A jailhouse has been on this site since 1857. The jail was designed by the architectural firm of Wheeler and Stern of Charlotte and built by Camden Ironworks of Salem, Virginia. The brick building, with an imposing central tower, shares Neo-classical themes with the courthouse as well as similar red tile roofs.

While the completion of the jail marked the last of the major public building projects within Wentworth's historic core until the 1970s, building continued with the erection of small commercial buildings and residences west of the courthouse. Given Wentworth's long period of occupancy, these new buildings were often built on the sites of previous ones. The Mitchells, a family of local merchants, were responsible for the majority of buildings that were erected west of the courthouse

Figure 10. View Showing Courthouse after Completion, circa 1908



Source: The Journal of Rockingham County History and Genealogy. Volume XXIII, Number 2, page 95.

Figure 11. View Showing 1937-1938 Courthouse Additions under Construction



Source: The Journal of Rockingham County History and Genealogy. Volume XXIII, Number 2, page 95.

Figure 12. Circa 1914 Main Street, Looking East



Source: Benton Pipkin Photographic Collection, Rockingham County Community College Historical Collection.

between 1907 and 1935. Until 1904, Robert G. Mitchell and his father, John G. Mitchell, operated a general merchandise store out of a brick mid-nineteenth-century commercial building, that is now demolished, that had stood immediately east of the Martin-Irving House (RK 1609).

The Mitchells left the “old brick store” for a short tenure at the former Ratliffe Store. Robert G. Mitchell built a single-story grocery and general merchandise store (RK 1606) with a stepped parapet front at the site of the Old Ellington Hotel, which burned in 1904. Mitchell operated Wentworth’s first soda fountain and maintained an icehouse in the rear yard. On the adjacent lot to the west, Mitchell built his own home, a one-story, triple-A form dwelling (RK 1607) in 1909. Mitchell closed the store in 1942 and vacated his home a few years later (Perdue 1998a:71-72). Both buildings have remained vacant since Mitchell’s departure but have been maintained enough to prevent significant deterioration. As a result, they have the greatest degree of historic integrity of the buildings in Wentworth.

Members of the Mitchell family built two additional houses at the west end of the village in the early 1930s, a bungalow with an Asian-inspired front porch supported by massive stone piers (RK 1613), and an adjacent one-story, side-gable house built of recycled brick (RK 1608) from the “old brick store.” Both dwellings were subsequently owned by the Adams and Perdue families (Carter 2013). Also in the early 1930s, merchant Garfield Wilson built a frame commercial building with double storefronts (RK 1602) on the site of a former livery stable west of the courthouse. Wilson formerly operated out of the former Ratliffe store and built his new store and service station when the Ratliffe Store was converted to a residence (Perdue 1998a:69-70). The Garfield Wilson Store conducted commerce until 1984 under various owners. It was subsequently used for county offices and is now vacant.

By 1945, Wentworth had no resident attorneys; nonetheless, the village remained the center of county government and small-town life continued for the residents. In the 1970s, all county offices were consolidated in Wentworth, which prompted an expansion to the rear of the courthouse in 1971, and the construction of an addition known as the Law and Order Building, between 1974-1977 (Perdue 1998b:96-97). Upon completion of the Law and Order Building, the 1910 jail was vacated. It has been used for various county offices since the 1970s, but it is presently vacant (Proctor 2013).

In 1987, most county administrative offices were moved to a newly constructed governmental center one mile east of the historic courthouse. However, the Register of Deeds Office and courts remained in the 1907 structure until completion of a new courthouse at the government center complex in 2010. Today, the historic courthouse is the headquarters of the Rockingham County Museum and Archive and various art non-profit organizations.

Despite the county courthouse’s location in Wentworth since 1788, the town was not officially incorporated until 1998. In 1997, the neighboring City of Reidsville announced plans to annex the land east of the historic village. Many Wentworth residents were concerned that the annexation would take the governmental center and new courthouse, in effect making Reidsville the county

seat. In response, the residents proposed a town boundary and requested the General Assembly allow a local referendum on the incorporation of Wentworth. On November 4, 1997, voters within the proposed boundary approved the measure and Wentworth's 1798 charter was amended to allow the community to incorporate. The Town of Wentworth, containing 14.4 square miles and 2,100 residents was incorporated on July 1, 1998.

III. SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF THE DISTRICT

Resource Name	Wentworth Historic District
HP Survey Site Nos.	RK 1584
Location	NC 65, Wentworth, east and west of the former Rockingham County Courthouse
Parcel ID	multiple
Dates of Construction:	Circa 1815 to Circa 1930s
Recommendation	Eligible under Criteria A and C

DISTRICT DESCRIPTION/SETTING

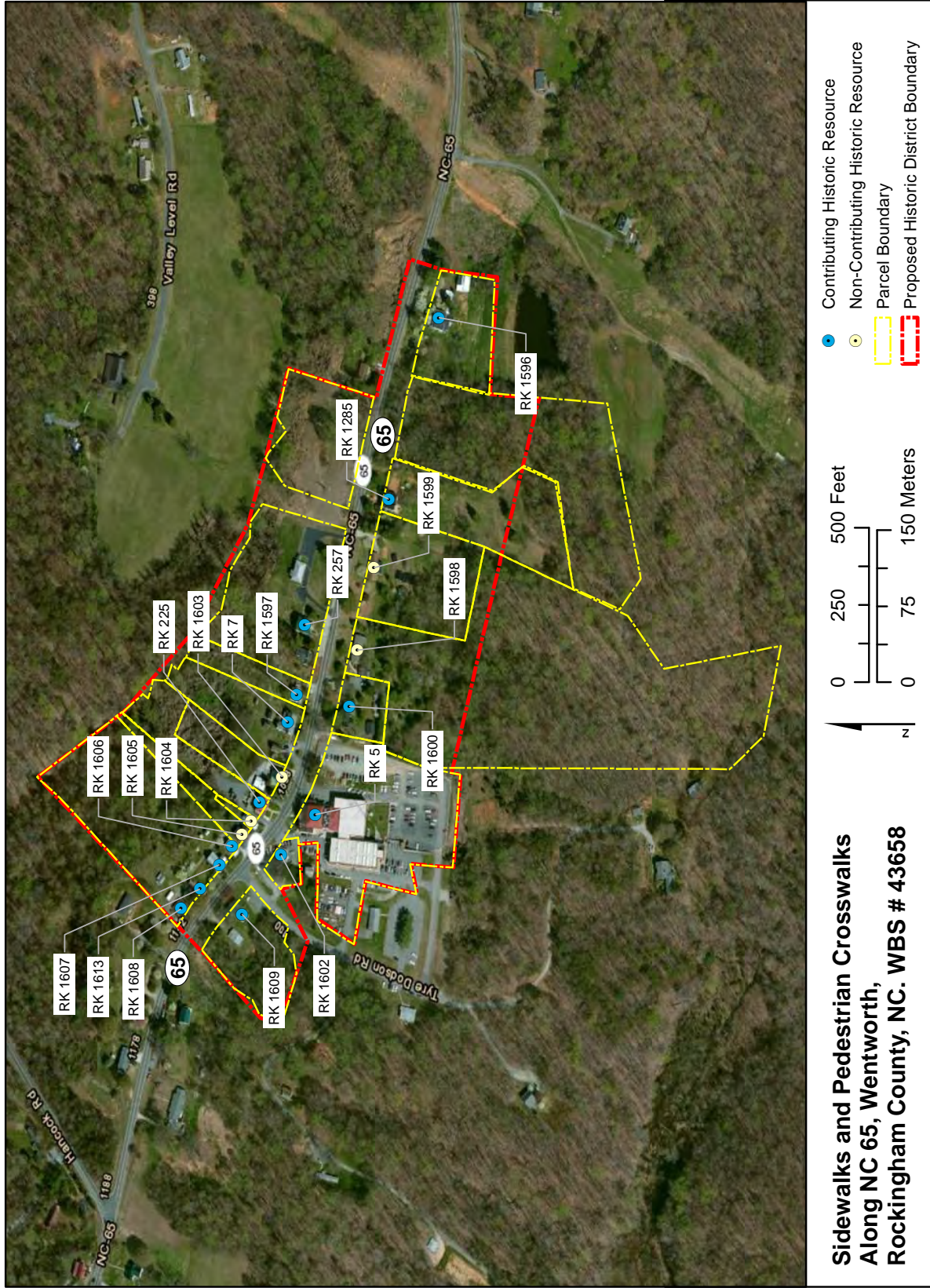
The recommended Wentworth Historic District lies within the Wentworth corporate boundary and is comprised of properties on the north and south sides of NC 65 (Figure 13). The linear district is approximately 0.57 miles long, encompasses 35.84 acres and contains 19 properties. Of these, 14 are considered contributing resources, while five are non-contributing. The buildings depict an approximately 115-year period of modest physical growth and economic prosperity directly attributable to the village’s status as the county seat of Rockingham County. The district’s period of significance begins circa 1815, with construction of the Wright Tavern, and continues to 1963 because the village remained a center of the county’s governmental and judicial functions.

Thirteen of the 14 contributing resources can be categorized into three types of buildings: public governmental buildings, commercial buildings, and residences/lodges. There is also one religious building. The village is organized with the monumental brick courthouse and jail (RK 5 and RK 255) at its topographical high point and geographical center. This is the third courthouse at this location, and the site has been in public use since the 1780s. The 1907 courthouse is the community’s most significant public building and symbolizes Wentworth’s pride in its history as the seat of county governance.

Modest frame stores and law offices encompass the area around the courthouse and jail, reminiscent of rural county seats of the nineteenth century. Two twentieth-century stores, the 1907 R.G. Mitchell Store and (RK 1606) and the circa 1930 Garfield Wilson Store (RK 1602) illustrate the ongoing role of local merchants within the village’s small economy, providing the goods required to run boarding houses and households.

Residential and lodge-type properties extend east and west from the courthouse along NC 65. The most architecturally and historically significant is the circa 1815 Federal-style Wright Tavern (RK 7) at the district’s east end. The property’s historical, social, and architectural importance was recognized with NRHP listing in 1970 and noted architectural historian Catherine W. Bishir called the Wright Tavern “one of the state’s best examples of the inns essential to antebellum courthouse towns” (Bishir and Southern 2003:349).

Figure 13. Map Showing the Recommended NRHP Boundary and Survey Properties



A the eastern edge of the district, the Wentworth Presbyterian Church, completed in 1861, is the only religious structure within the recommended NRHP boundary. The church was established by prominent men of Wentworth and remains an important and enduring part of religious life within the community. The church is significant as a local interpretation of Greek Revival-style architecture with twin entries and an interior slave gallery.

From 1850 through the 1930s, Wentworth's merchants, postmasters, and lawyers erected dwellings in popular styles. The Greek Revival style, vernacular Triple-A form, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow and Craftsman houses are represented.

Two resources are categorized as non-contributing due to age: the circa 1980 singlewide mobile home (RK 1598) and the 1972 Parleir House (RK 1599). Three resources are categorized as non-contributing due to alterations: the Thomas Ratliffe Store (RK 1603); the McMichael Law Office (RK 1604); and the Scott Reid Law Office (RK 1605).

The district is a distinguishable entity that differs from its surroundings in several ways. Land east and west of the district is sparsely developed and more rural in character than the land within the boundary (Figure 13). In fact, there are no historic buildings east of the district's eastern boundary. At the west end, the district's cohesiveness does not exist beyond the boundaries due to the presence of 1970s Ranch houses and historic period buildings that have lost integrity of materials.

INVENTORY LIST

RK 1596: ALFRED M. SCALES HOUSE, 958 NC 65, PIN 797603443226, CIRCA 1858; CIRCA 1900; CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

The earliest (front) section of the Alfred M. Scales House was built around 1858 in the Greek Revival style (Figure 14). The two-story, three-bay house was one-room deep with a hipped-roof porch spanning the façade. Around 1900, state congressman Reuben D. Reid expanded the dwelling to its current double-pile form and a hipped roof was built to shelter the two sections (Figure 15). Also at this time, the original side windows were replaced with paired 4/4 sashes. The dwelling's façade retains Greek Revival-style details including original 6/6 sashes, paneled double-leaf front entry doors surrounded by sidelights and transom, and robust moldings and corner blocks (Figure 16). Granite steps lead to the hipped porch with square chamfered posts and jigsaw balusters (Figure 17). A documentary photograph shows the corbelled caps of two interior chimneys projecting from the roofline at the east and west elevations (Figures 18-19). The west chimney has been removed. Aluminum siding covers the exterior walls. The foundation under the circa 1850s section is brick, while the foundation under the circa 1900 addition is stone. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

Figure 14. Alfred M. Scales House, Front, View North



Figure 15. Alfred M. Scales House, West Side



Figure 16. Alfred M. Scales House, Entry Detail



Figure 17. Alfred M. Scales House, Porch Balustrade Detail



Figure 18. Historic Photograph of the Alfred M. Scales House, 1960s Front



Source: MARC

Figure 19. Historic Photograph of the Alfred M. Scales House, 1960s West Side



Source: MARC

Situated east of the house are two non-historic outbuildings (Figures 20-21). One is a metal carport of recent construction, and the other is a gabled shed built at an unknown date. The shed has shed-roofed additions on the east and west sides and has been further altered with the installation of a large picture window and vinyl siding.

Alfred M. Scales House (RK 1596) is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 20. Detail of the Alfred M. Scales House Outbuildings, Gabled Shed



Figure 21. Detail of the Alfred M. Scales House, Outbuilding, Carport



RK 1285: JAMES THOMAS SMITH HOUSE, 998 NC 65, PIN 797603348148, 1907, CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

The James Thomas Smith House is a two-story, triple-A form dwelling with twin, two-story, gabled rear ells (Figures 22-25). On the interior, a central hallway leading to eight bedrooms connects the ells. A corbelled chimney cap projects from the roof of each ell. A one-story porch, supported by replacement metal posts, extends across the façade and wraps around to the east and west elevations. Vinyl siding covers the exterior walls, soffits and window surrounds, yet the original 2/2 window sashes remain. The house is built on a stone foundation. The roof of the house and porch is covered with standing seam metal. A wood deck was built off the rear elevation around 1995. In 1907, James Thomas Smith hired local contractor J.F. Ramsey to build this Wentworth home. Smith resided in the house during his tenure as the Rockingham County Clerk of Court and his family also boarded circuit court judges. In 1917, Smith sold the house to Annie McMichael. McMichael, a widow, lived in the house with her seven sons and also took in boarders. In the mid-twentieth century, the house was divided into apartments. The Bell family purchased the property in 1984 and remains there today (Smith 2002).

James Thomas Smith (RK 1285) is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 22. James Thomas Smith House, Front, North Side



Figure 23. James Thomas Smith House, East Side



Figure 24. James Thomas Smith House, Back, South Side



Figure 25. James Thomas Smith House, West Side



RK 1559: PARLEIR HOUSE, 1018 NC 55, 797603346376, 1972; NON- CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

This building lot was subdivided from the adjacent “McMichael property” in 1966. In 1972, Mozelle and Truette Parleir built this brick linear Ranch with a carport at the east end and a rear shed addition (Figures 26-27). There are three non-historic outbuildings in the back yard; a metal clad shed, a metal carport, and shed clad with T-111 (Figures 28-29).

The Parleir House (RK 1559) does not contribute to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District due to its age and lack of historic significance.

Figure 26. Parleir House, Front, North Side



Figure 27. Parlier House, East and South Sides



Figure 28. Parlier House Outbuildings, Metal Shed and Carport



Figure 29. Parlier House Outbuilding, Shed



RK 257: WENTWORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1065 NC 65, PIN 797603346856, CIRCA 1860; CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

This plain rectangular frame church has paired entrances in the pedimented front end, each featuring a set of paneled double-leaf doors (Figure 30). The doors open to a one-room sanctuary with an elevated slave gallery on the north wall accessed by an enclosed stair at the northeast corner. The raised pulpit is situated between the front entries on the south wall, an arrangement often seen in mid-nineteenth-century rural Presbyterian churches.

The church is clad in aluminum siding and has a standing seam metal roof. A 60-foot metal-clad steeple thought to date from the early twentieth century, surmounts the church. Three large 6/6 windows on the east and west sides light the interior (Figures 31 and 32), and wood louvered shutters flank the side window openings. The rear elevation has a double tier of windows to accommodate the interior slave gallery (Figure 33). The rear window sashes are 6/6 and the openings lack shutters. The northwest rear window has been covered by a small shed addition containing an exterior stair.

Figure 30. Wentworth Presbyterian Church, Front, South Side



Figure 31. Wentworth Presbyterian Church, South and East Sides



Figure 32. Wentworth Presbyterian Church, South and West Sides



Figure 33. Wentworth Presbyterian Church, North Side



The foundation is constructed of bricks laid in a 4:1 bond. The exterior rear foundation wall has a set of paired 6/6 windows at each end. The wall between the windows is made of stone, which may be a vestige of an early county jail structure which was on this site from 1816 through 1860 (Carter 2013). The west foundation wall has narrow ventilation openings cut into the brick. A narrow twentieth-century stove flue is on the west exterior wall. The east foundation wall has an entry door at the north end that accesses the church's finished basement, and two window openings at the south end.

The congregational cemetery is located behind the church with approximately one dozen marked graves dating from the 1880s through the 1940s (Figures 34-36). Burials are marked with commercially produced tablets, obelisks, and flush stones made of marble and concrete. The church was one of only two in Wentworth prior to the Civil War (the other is the Wentworth Methodist Episcopal Church (RK 28; NRHP listed 1985) west of the historic village core), so it is very likely that the cemetery contains many unmarked burials. A prefabricated wood storage building sits at the cemetery's west edge (Figure 37).

In the 1950s, the congregation allowed the village to erect a concrete block community building on its lot. A paved circular drive east of the church accesses the former Wentworth Community Building (Figures 38-39). This one-story concrete block building has a broken-hipped roof with exposed rafter ends visible in the eaves and 6/6 windows. Just east of the building is a wood picnic shelter with a metal roof, which has a barbeque of irregular stone with raised mortar joints. A metal "whirl-around", a piece of 1950s playground equipment, sits on the lawn in front of the building (Figure 40). The church retained ownership of the land and by the early 1960s, the church assumed use and ownership of the building.

Wentworth Presbyterian Church (RK 257) is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 34. Wentworth Presbyterian Church Cemetery, View from Rear of Cemetery Looking South



Figure 35. Wentworth Presbyterian Church Cemetery, View from Rear of East Edge of Cemetery Looking Northwest



Figure 36. Wentworth Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Gravemarkers



Figure 37. Other Buildings Associated with the Wentworth Presbyterian Church, Shed



Figure 38. Other Buildings Associated with the Wentworth Presbyterian Church, Community Building and Drive, Looking West



Figure 39. Other Buildings Associated with the Wentworth Presbyterian Church, Community Building



Figure 40. Other Buildings Associated with the Wentworth Presbyterian Church, Community Building “Whirl-Around”



RK 1598: SINGLEWIDE MOBILE HOME, 1046 NC 65; PIN 797603333816; 1985; NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

Local attorney Daniel Bailey moved this singlewide mobile home to this lot on the south side of NC 65 in the 1980s (Figure 41). Bailey retains ownership of the property today. West of the mobile home is a small, one-story side-gabled structure built as a summer cottage by a Mr. Sanders (Carter 2013) (Figure 42). The cottage has been altered with vinyl siding, replacement vinyl windows and a shed addition across the rear. West of the cottage is a prefabricated gambrel-roofed storage shed.

The buildings on property RK 1598 do not contribute to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District due to age and lack of historic significance.

Figure 41. Buildings at RK 1598, Singlewide Mobile Home, Front, North Side



Figure 42. Buildings at RK 1598, Cottage, North Side



**RK 1600: MAGNOLIA VALE; PIN 797603343631; CIRCA 1850; CIRCA 1953;
CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.**

The two-story central block of this tripartite house was a Greek Revival structure built around 1860 by local merchant Thomas Ratliffe (Figures 43-46). The house was modified in the 1950s by Iris Smith Venable to its present Colonial Revival character. The 6/6 windows of the façade, and the shouldered chimney and pedimented gable of the east side of the central block are the few remaining details from the dwelling's first period of construction. The 1950s one-story gabled wings with 6/6 windows flank the central block. An exterior brick-shouldered chimney stands on the west wall of the west addition and the larger east wing includes a rear ell. The foundation of the 1860s section is brick; concrete blocks make up of the foundation of the side wings. The wings have 6/6 paired and single windows. The Mount Vernon-style front porch and Colonial Revival fanlight entry surround also date from the 1950s renovation. The house is covered with aluminum siding and composite shingles cover the roof. Faux shutters flank the windows on the street side.

The rear yard contains a one-and-half-story side-gable garage of recent construction (Figure 44). It is covered with vinyl siding, has a composite shingle roof, and a foundation of concrete block. Iris Smith Venable Powell retains ownership to this day. Ms. Powell is Wentworth's longest serving postmaster, holding the position from 1953 through 1986.

Magnolia Vale (RK 1600) is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 43. Magnolia Vale, Front, North Side



Figure 44. Magnolia Vale, West Side with Garage



Figure 45. Historic View of Magnolia Vale, Front, North Side



Figure 46. Historic View of Magnolia Vale, West Side



Source: MARC

RK 1957: WENTWORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MANSE. 797601354055; CIRCA 1949; CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

The Wentworth Presbyterian Church built this Cape Cod-style house in 1949 as a minister's residence (Figure 47). The one-and-a-half-story, three-bay dwelling sits on a half basement of concrete blocks (Figure 48). Two gabled roof dormers project from the front roof slope. The house is clad with original asbestos shingle siding and the roof is covered with composite shingles. The house retains the original 6/6 wood widow sashes, metal basement windows, and glazed and paneled entry door. Alterations are minor and include a metal entry awning and a deck off the east side (Figure 49). The deck dates to circa 2000. A metal storage shed sits at the west edge of the rear yard.

The Wentworth Presbyterian Church Manse is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 47. Wentworth Presbyterian Church Manse, Front, South Side



Figure 48. Wentworth Presbyterian Church Manse, North and West Sides with Shed



Figure 49. Wentworth Presbyterian Church Manse, North and East Sides



RK 7: WRIGHT TAVERN, 1073 NC 65; PIN 797601353028; CIRCA 1815; CIRCA 1824; CIRCA 1969; CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE (NRHP LISTED 1970).

Originally constructed about 1815, the oldest extant part of Wright Tavern is the two-story, four-bay section at the west end (Figure 50). Around 1830 a two-story, three-bay addition on the east side replaced an older, possibly eighteenth-century, one-and-a-half story structure (Figure 51). The two sections now appear as a side-gable, eight-bay dwelling unified by a full-façade, one-story, shed-roof porch supported by attenuated square posts with simple plinths and caps (Figure 52). The posts are replacements based on the original design. The tavern's most significant architectural detail is the open central passage, framed by a Federal-style keystone arch, with paneled wainscot and a Federal-style stair leading to the tavern keeper's private residence (Figures 53-55). The exterior walls are covered with beaded weatherboards on the west section and plain weatherboards on the east section; the siding under the porch is flush. The windows are 9/9 on the first story and 6/9 on the second story. Original louvered shutters hang from lift-off hinges (Figures 56-57). There are two front doors on the façade. The west entry has an original four-panel door accessing the tavern's public room. The east door is a twentieth-century replacement that accesses the town post office. (Figures 58-59). Stepped shoulder chimneys are located at the east and west ends of the building. The earlier west chimney is laid in Flemish bond while the east chimney is common bond (Figure 57). Two-small 4/4 windows flank the east chimney on the second story.

There have been various changes to the rear of the building. Around 1824, a gabled, one-room building was relocated to the rear yard of the tavern and attached by a passage creating a rear ell at the west end of the building (Figure 59). This addition is thought to have originally been a freestanding Clerk of Court's office that stood near the courthouse. In its new location, the building

Figure 50. Wright Tavern, Front, South Side



Figure 51. Wright Tavern, Front, South and East Sides



Figure 52. Wright Tavern, Porch, Looking East



Figure 53. Wright Tavern, Central Passage Looking North



Figure 54. Wright Tavern, Central Passage Stair



Figure 55. Wright Tavern, Central Passage Stair Detail



Figure 56. Wright Tavern, Exterior Shutter Detail



Figure 57. Wright Tavern, West Chimney



Figure 58. Wright Tavern, Post Office Interior



Figure 59. Wright Tavern, Wright Tavern, West Side



expanded the tavern's public dining room. The dining wing is differentiated from the tavern's main block by its dentil cornice. The ell has three 9/9 windows on west side flanking a center entry with a door of six raised panels. A 1969 restoration project undertaken by the Rockingham County Historical Society and the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources resulted in alterations made to restore the building to its circa 1824 time period. An early twentieth-century board-and-batten kitchen addition was removed from the north end of the ell and an exterior stepped shoulder chimney rebuilt. The east end of the tavern was originally thought to have a small one-story rear shed, which was increased to two stories in height in the late nineteenth century. In 1969, the rear shed was returned to one-story height and a stepped shoulder chimney built on the east side (Zehmer 1970). A shed porch was rebuilt across the rear elevation between the shed addition and the ell.

There are four unpainted outbuildings in the rear yard, none of which are original to the site. The outbuildings are contemporary with the tavern but were moved or built here in the 1980s to depict a typical urban yard of the nineteenth century. The open well house consists of a gabled roof supported by square columns covering an early hand dug well (Figure 60). The kitchen is a nineteenth-century timber frame structure covered with plain weatherboards. The nineteenth-century smokehouse has exposed hewn logs joined at the corners by half-dovetail joints; the gabled ends are sheathed with weatherboards (Figures 61). A raised crib, also constructed of dovetailed hewn logs was built by a boy scout troop at the rear of the yard in the 1980s (Proctor 2013) (Figure 62). All of the outbuildings are covered with wood shake roofs.

West of the tavern is a one-story, shotgun form building with gable end returns (Figure 63). Originally located on the west side of the courthouse, it was built as Ira Humphreys' law office in 1905 and housed the Wentworth Post Office from the late 1940s through 1981. In 1998, the building was moved to the east side of the Wright Tavern to serve as the office of the Rockingham County Historical Society (Perdue 1998a:68). The façade has a central entry with a replacement door under an original two-light transom. On either side of the entry are decorative windows with multi-light stained glass panes in the upper sashes. The side and rear windows are 2/2. The building rests on a stone foundation and is covered by a metal roof and enveloped by plain weatherboards (Figure 64).

Wright Tavern is the oldest building in Wentworth, as well as "one of the state's best examples of the inns essential to antebellum courthouse towns" (Bishir and Southern 2003:349). Built in multiple phases, the tavern is architecturally significant for its open central stair hall and Federal-style woodwork. The tavern, less than one-quarter-of-a-mile from the courthouse, played an essential role in the development of Wentworth as a seat of government by offering meals, lodging and livery services for circuit judges, lawyers and others who traveled to the somewhat isolated community to conduct legal business. The property was associated with the locally prominent Wright and Reid families (related by marriage) who ran the tavern until 1950s. Wright Tavern was listed in the NRHP in 1970. The property retains the integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, feeling and association that qualified it for listing.

Figure 60. Wright Tavern Outbuilding, Well Cover, West Side



*Figure 61. Wright Tavern Outbuilding, , Kitchen (Right) and Smokehouse (Left),
Looking Northeast*



Figure 62. Wright Tavern Outbuilding, Crib, West Side



Figure 63. Ira Humphreys Law Office at the Wright Tavern, Front, South Side



Figure 64. Ira Humphreys Law Office at the Wright Tavern, East and North Sides



RK 1603: THOMAS A. RATLIFF STORE, 1091 NC 65; PIN 797601352008; CIRCA 1859; CIRCA 1930; NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

Thomas A. Ratliffe built this two-story structure built circa 1859 with a pedimented gable end facing the street (Figure 65). It is not known if the original store entry was on the south or west side of the building. Around the 1930s, the building was converted to a residence for Tyre Dodson with the addition of the asbestos shingle siding and the enclosure of the south end of the porch. Presently, the western elevation functions as the “front” of a two-story, three-bay dwelling. (Figure 66). The central entry features a glazed and paneled front door flanked by sidelights and set in a fluted Colonial Revival surround. The porch and roof of the main block are covered with standing seam metal. Many of the original 6/6 windows survive along with 1930s board-and-batten novelty shutters that flank the window openings. A 6:1 bond stepped shoulder chimney is on the north wall. A carport has been built off the north wall (Figure 67). Behind the store is an elongated partially enclosed storage shed built of concrete blocks, cedar posts, and a metal roof (Figure 68).

Local attorney Stanley Allen bought the property in 1986 from Dodson descendants for use as a law office (Rockingham County Deed Book 1986:555–561). In recent years, the building has been leased from Allen by the Rockingham County Friends (Quaker) Meeting.

The Thomas A. Ratliffe Store is recommended to be a non-contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District due to compromises to the buildings circa 1859 appearance.

Figure 65. Thomas A. Ratliffe Store, Front, South Side



Figure 66. Thomas A. Ratliffe Store, West Side



Figure 67. Thomas A. Ratliffe Store, North Side



Figure 68. Thomas A. Ratliffe Store, Storage Shed, East Side



RK 5: ROCKINGHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 1086 NC 65; PIN 797603340532; 1907; 1937-1938; 1971; 1977; CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

The Rockingham County Courthouse, the third courthouse on the site, was designed and built by the architect Frank Milburn in 1907. The three-story pressed brick Neo-Classical Revival style building features a full height pedimented portico with Ionic columns sheltering the entry and a double tier of triple windows (Figures 69-70). A pediment surmounts the window assembly of the second story; the assembly above it has a concrete keystone. Replacement 1/1 sashes are set in segmentally arched openings. A squat two-stage cupola covered with red roof tiles surmounts the main block (Figure 71) and a modillion cornice embellishes the eaves (Figure 72). The structure rests on a poured concrete foundation topped by a projecting watercourse. In 1937, the courthouse was expanded with two-story wings on the east, west and south sides designed by J.W. Hopper of Leakesville. The wings were built with compatible, although not identical, bricks. The modillion cornice, concrete foundation, and tile roof materials of the 1907 section were replicated. The first story windows of the additions have segmental arches and the second story windows are set in rectangular openings. In 1971, another brick addition was appended to the southeast corner of the courthouse (Figure 73-74). This rectangular, two-story, addition is windowless but for two fixed light windows above the entries on the north side. An arcaded portico shelters the entries. The Law and Order Building (jail), connected to the west side of the courthouse, was completed in 1977 (Figure 75). It is also a two-story, windowless brick addition. The Rockingham County Courthouse and the associated jail were listed in the NRHP in 1979 as part of a statewide thematic nomination of county courthouses.

The Rockingham County Courthouse is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 69. Rockingham County Courthouse, Front, North Side



Figure 70. Rockingham County Courthouse, Front, North Side, Looking Southwest



Figure 71. Rockingham County Courthouse, Cupola Detail



Figure 72. Rockingham County Courthouse, Portico Detail



Figure 73. Rockingham County Courthouse, North and East Side, Showing 1971 Addition on Left



Figure 74. Rockingham County Courthouse, South Side Showing 1971 (Right) and 1977 (Left) Additions



Figure 75. Rockingham County Courthouse, Law and Order Building, Front, North, Side



**RK 225: ROCKINGHAM COUNTY JAIL, 1101 NC 65; PIN 797601352285; 1910;
CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.**

The Rockingham County Jail was designed by Wheeler and Stern of Charlotte and completed in 1910. The sturdy, two-story, hipped-roof, Renaissance Revival building features a three-story central entrance tower with an arched entry (Figures 76-78). The jail's pressed brick exterior and red tile roof match those of the courthouse. The dark red color of the brick walls and recessed panels contrast with accent features of poured concrete such as the wide classically inspired frieze, window keystones and sills, and the watertable and foundation (Figure 79). The corbelled cap of an interior chimney rises from the west end of the roof. The Works Projects Administration added a rear wing in 1941-1942; however, this section was partially demolished in 1981 leaving only the basement level offices (Figure 80). The Rockingham County Jail and the associated courthouse across from it were listed in the NRHP in 1979 as part of a statewide thematic nomination of county courthouses.

The Rockingham County Jail is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 76. Rockingham County Jail, Front, South Side



Figure 77. Rockingham County Jail, South and West Sides



Figure 78. Rockingham County Jail, Entrance Tower



Figure 79. Rockingham County Jail, Rockingham County Jail, Concrete Cornice and Window Detail, West Side



Figure 80. Rockingham County Jail, Rockingham County Jail, North and East Sides



RK 1602: GARFIELD WILSON STORE, 1100 NC 65; PIN 797603249718; CIRCA 1932; CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

Built west of the courthouse by local merchant Garfield Wilson in the early 1930s, this building operated as store until 1984. The one-story, shed-roofed building has two storefronts on the east side each with an entry door flanked by glass display windows divided by thick wood muntins (Figures 81-82). A single metal awning shelters the storefronts and spans the front elevation. A second, smaller metal awning covers the north elevation, sheltering a closed entry and triple window. Wood steps access a service entry on the south side. Aluminum siding covers the building.

The Garfield Wilson Store (RK 1602) is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 81. Garfield Wilson Store, Front (East) and South Sides



Figure 82. Garfield Wilson Store, Front (East) and North Sides



**RK 1604: MCMICHAEL LAW OFFICE, 1107 NC 65; PIN 797601350084; CIRCA 1850;
CIRCA 1950; NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.**

Very little is known about the history of this building, only that it was the law office of local attorney Charles A. McMichael during the 1910s (Figures 83-84). Given its proximity the courthouse site, it is possible this elongated structure was built as a law office, yet it is currently used as a residence.

The one-story building has its gable end facing NC 65. The flush gable ends and boxed eaves of the main block are suggestive of a nineteenth-century date of construction. The main block rests on a foundation of stone piers infilled with bricks. The shallow roof pitch of the front addition differs from that of the main block and suggests a construction date sometime after the middle of the twentieth century. Across the backside is a shed addition on a concrete block foundation. The building is encased in vinyl siding and covered by a metal roof. All of the window sashes are replacements.

The McMichael Law Office (RK 1604) is recommended to be a non-contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District due to compromises to the building's form and exterior fabric.

Figure 83. McMichael Law Office, Front, South Side



Figure 84. McMichael Law Office, North and East Sides



RK 1605: SCOTT-REID LAW OFFICE, 1105 NC 65; PIN 797601351115; 1905; NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

Attorneys Reuben D. Reid and Hugh Reid Scott erected this building in 1905 as a replacement for law offices that burned in 1893 and 1904 (Perdue 1998a; 71). The one-story, three-bay, side-gable office has gable end returns and a rear two-bay shed addition (Figures 85-86). It is not known if the building originally had a front porch and much of its exterior fabric was compromised by renovations in the 1980s. Vinyl siding covers the exterior and all of the original windows have been replaced with vinyl sashes. A wood stoop leads to the paneled replacement door on the front side. A three-light transom surmounts the entry. The main block of the office sits on a continuous stone foundation; the shed addition is on a foundation of concrete blocks. A central chimney pierces the roof, which is covered with composite shingles.

The Scott-Reid Law Office (RK 1605) is recommended to be a non-contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District due to compromises to the building's form and exterior fabric.

Figure 85. Scott-Reid Law Office, Front (South) and West Sides



Figure 86. Scott-Reid Law Office, North and East Sides



**RK 1606: R.G. MITCHELL STORE, 1123 NC 65; PIN 797601350392; 1907;
CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.**

Erected in 1907, this one-story, frame, gabled store has a straight parapet across the façade (Figures 87-88). Below it is a shed porch supported by turned posts with heavy square caps and bases (Figure 89). The porch floor is made of butt-joined planks. The original double-leaf entry doors consist of rectangular glass panes above recessed panels. On either side of the entry are fixed, four-light windows. The side elevations are windowless. The rear elevation has a central paneled service door flanked by 6/6 sashes (Figure 90). The building is covered in weatherboard siding, with the exception of the front parapet, which is covered with vinyl siding. The building rests on a stone foundation, while the roof is covered with metal.

The R.G. Mitchell Store is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 87. R.G. Mitchell Store, Front (South) and East Sides



Figure 88. R.G. Mitchell Store, Front (South) and West Sides



Figure 89. R.G. Mitchell Store, Porch Looking West



Figure 90. R.G. Mitchell Store, North Side



RK 1607: R.G. MITCHELL HOUSE, 1121 NC 65; PIN 797601350392; 1909; CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

R.G. Mitchell hired local builders Gunn and Cox to erect a dwelling next to his store in 1909. The result was a one-story, triple-A form dwelling with a rear ell (Figures 91-94). The house retains its original weatherboard siding and its trim includes a wide board frieze topped by a bed molding, corner boards, gable-end returns and diamond and polygonal shaped louvered vents. The hipped-roof porch has turned posts (which appear to be the same as the ones on Mitchell's store), sawn brackets and balustrade of square pickets set in a molded handrail. Original 2/2 windows remain and a shouldered chimney stands on the rear north wall of the main block. The rear ell has a porch with an enclosed room at the north end (Figure 95). The ell sits on a tall foundation of brick piers infilled with poured concrete and 6/6 windows. A door in the foundation's east wall accesses the ell's "basement" (Figure 96). The roof is covered with metal.

Behind the house is an open well cover on square posts (Figures 97-98). The floor is poured concrete. On top of the well opening is a wood box containing the well pump. East of the well house is a board-and-batten smokehouse with a brick exterior chimney at the east end. The roofs of both outbuildings are covered with sheet metal.

The R.G. Mitchell House is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 91. R.G. Mitchell House, Front, South Side



Figure 92. R.G. Mitchell House, South and East Sides



Figure 93. R.G. Mitchell House, South and West Sides



Figure 94. R.G. Mitchell House, Southwest Corner of Porch



Figure 95. R.G. Mitchell House, North Side of Ell



Figure 96. R.G. Mitchell House, East and North Side of Ell



Figure 97. R.G. Mitchell House Outbuildings, Well House (Left) and Smokehouse (Right), Front, South Side



Figure 98. R.G. Mitchell House Outbuildings, Well House (Left) and Smokehouse (Right), East Side



**RK 1613: MITCHELL-ADAM-PERDUE HOUSE (#1), 1123 NC 65; PIN 797601350392;
CIRCA 1930S; CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.**

An unidentified member of the Mitchell family built this small bungalow in the early 1930s. The side-gable house is covered with German siding and retains its original 8/8 and 9/6 window sashes and bracketed eaves (Figures 99-100). A rustic bungalow-style porch dominates the façade and features an exposed truss resting on battered stone posts with raised mortar joints (Figure Figures 101-102). Similar stonework is utilized on a chimney at the east side. An enclosed porch addition with vertical board siding was built at the west end at an unknown date. The house is covered with a composite shingle roof. A small side-gable playhouse with a shed roof porch sits in the east side yard. The playhouse was built shortly after the bungalow (Figure 103).

The Mitchell-Adam-Perdue House (#1) (RK 1613) is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 99. Mitchell-Adams-Perdue House (#1), Front (South) and East Sides



Figure 100. Mitchell-Adams-Perdue House (#1), West End



Figure 101. Mitchell-Adams-Perdue House (#1), Southeast Corner of Porch



Figure 102. Mitchell-Adams-Perdue House (#1), Porch Detail



Figure 103. Mitchell-Adams-Perdue House (#1), Playhouse in East Yard



RK 1608: MITCHELL-ADAM-PERDUE HOUSE (#2), 1129 NC 65; PIN 797601350392; CIRCA 1932; CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

The Mitchell-Adam-Perdue House (#2) is a one-story, side-gable, Craftsman-influenced dwelling built of salvaged brick from the “old brick store” owned by the Mitchells (Figures 104-105). The house has a stoop porch on turned posts with octagonal shingles and a round vent in the porch gable. Craftsman features include the three-light entry door, the 4/1 window sashes and the exposed rafter tails. The front yard features a brick retaining wall.

The Mitchell-Adam-Perdue House (#2) (RK 1608) is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 104. Mitchell-Adams-Perdue House (#2), Front (South) Side



Figure 105. Mitchell-Adams-Perdue House (#2), Front (South) and West Sides



RK 1609: MARTIN-IRVING HOUSE, 1122 NC 65; PIN 797603246992; CIRCA 1850; CIRCA 1900; CIRCA 1920S. CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE.

The Martin-Irving House was built as a two-story, brick Greek Revival I-house around 1850 (Figure 106). Despite alteration around 1900, the house retains some original features such as the 6/6 window sashes on the façade, the 3:1 bond brickwork and corbelled cornice, and the stepped-shoulder end chimneys (Figures 107-109). Around 1900, a frame two-story rear wing with 2/2 sashes (Figure 110) was added and the hipped roofline of the main block was raised with a decorative gable over the center bay of the façade. This bay now displays a Colonial Revival wood surround, which was added at an unknown date. In the 1920s or 1930s a one-story, shed roof addition with exposed rafter tails, 4/1 sashes and asbestos shingles was built off the east wall of the rear wing (Figures 111-113). It was likely at this time that the two-story wing was covered with asbestos shingles.

West of the house is a front-gabled storage shed with a set of double-bay doors, an entry door and a fixed four-light window on the front side facing NC 65.

The Martin-Irving House (RK 1609) is recommended to be a contributing resource to the proposed NRHP-eligible Wentworth Historic District.

Figure 106. Martin-Irving House, Front, North Side



Figure 107. Martin-Irving House, Corbelled Brick Cornice



Figure 108. Martin-Irving House, Stepped-Shoulder Chimney, West Side



Figure 109. Martin-Irving House, Brickwork, West Side



Figure 110. Martin-Irving House, East and North Sides



Figure 111. Martin-Irving House, South Side



Figure 112. Martin-Irving House, South and East Sides



Figure 113. Martin-Irving House, Shed, North Side



NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT EVALUATION

INTEGRITY

The recommended Wentworth Historic District contains a total of 19 resources. Fourteen of the resources are contributing, and five are non-contributing. Of the non-contributing resources, three are non-contributing due to alterations that compromise the buildings' historic appearance, and two are non-contributing due to construction dates after 1963. Approximately 80% of the resources within the district boundary convey their historic appearance from one or more phases of construction and therefore contribute to the overall historic character of the district.

The style, workmanship, and materials of the district's most architecturally significant resources, the Rockingham County Courthouse (RK 5), the Rockingham County Jail (RK 255), Wright Tavern (RK 7), and the Wentworth Presbyterian Church (RK 257), remain highly intact. Some buildings, such as the Alfred M. Scales House (RK 1596), Magnolia Vale (RK 1600), and the Martin-Irving House (RK 1609) display forms and materials from more than one historic period. These hybrid resources are important because they convey how residents modified buildings over time, rather than demolish them. The Thomas Ratliffe Store (RK 1603), Scott-Reid Law Office (RK 1605), and the McMichael Law Office (RK 1604) are non-contributing due to losses of historic fabric. However, their position across from the courthouse allows the street pattern to continue unbroken. The small massing of the law offices does not visually detract from the adjacent contributing resources. The singlewide trailer (RK 1598) and the Parlier House (RK 1599), adjacent to one another at the district's eastern end, are non-contributing due to age. However, infill construction is not uncommon in historic districts and the size and scale of these particular buildings does not detract from the overall historic character of the district.

Due to its overall integrity of plan, setting, and construction, and its historical importance to the governmental history of Rockingham County, the Wentworth Historic District is recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP as a historic district under Criterion A and C. The landscape, layout and collection of resources within the district continue to embody the location, setting, feeling and associations of a small rural courthouse town. The district's rural location, organization of buildings by type, and the alignment of NC 65 remain intact. No significant modern intrusions detract from the overall character of the district. Historic design, intent, and materials are evident on the contributing buildings.

CRITERION A

The Wentworth Historic District is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A (Event). To be eligible under Criterion A, a property must retain integrity and be associated with either a specific event marking an important moment in American prehistory or history, or a pattern of events that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, state or the nation. The property must have existed at the time of the event or pattern of events.

The Wentworth Historic District has played an essential role in the history of Rockingham County. The district was the epicenter the county's daily judicial and governmental activities for over two centuries. The district's business transactions and social interactions were engendered by the functions contained within the courthouse. This "pattern of events," over time, has imparted local historic significance to the district. Therefore, the historic district is locally significant to Rockingham County and is recommended under Criterion A.

CRITERION B

The Wentworth Historic District is not recommended eligible for the National Register under Criterion B (Person). For a property to be eligible for significance under Criterion B, it must retain integrity and be associated with the productive life of a person or persons important to local, state or national history. A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or occupied by a person who was a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group.

There were many notable residents of Wentworth, including General Alfred M. Scales, who became Governor of North Carolina after leaving Wentworth, and attorneys Thomas Settle, Thomas Ruffin, Jr. and John H. Dillard who were appointed at different times to the North Carolina Supreme Court. However, all of the men went on to their highest levels of professional accomplishment after leaving Wentworth. While they may have had formative experiences in Wentworth and made important professional contacts, the buildings in the district cannot be linked to the most productive years in their professional lives. The district is not known to be associated with the life or lives of persons significant to our past and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion B.

CRITERION C

The Wentworth Historic District is recommended eligible for the National Register under Criterion C (Design/Construction). For a property to be eligible under this criterion, it must retain integrity and 1) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; 2) represent the work of a master; 3) possess high artistic value; or 4) represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

The Wentworth Historic District is significant as a collection of buildings that tells the developmental history of a courthouse town. The buildings exemplify locally popular architecture from the early nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, including the Federal, Greek Revival, Neo-Classical, Colonial Revival, Renaissance Revival and Craftsman styles of architecture. Landmark public buildings such as the Presbyterian Church, Wright Tavern, and the jail and courthouse, retain very high integrity and are stitched together within a landscape of more modest residential and commercial buildings. The streetscape is an important historic feature which dates to Wentworth's platting by the county commissioners in 1798. The town's linear plan, and the grouping of buildings by use (governmental, commercial, residential) have remained constant over time and are significant historic features. Although some of the individual buildings within the district lack architectural distinction and have lost a degree of materials integrity, when considered

as a whole the landscape and buildings convey the period of significance circa 1815 through circa 1963 and issues of materials integrity do not detract from the overall setting, feeling and historic association of this district. The district is therefore recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C.

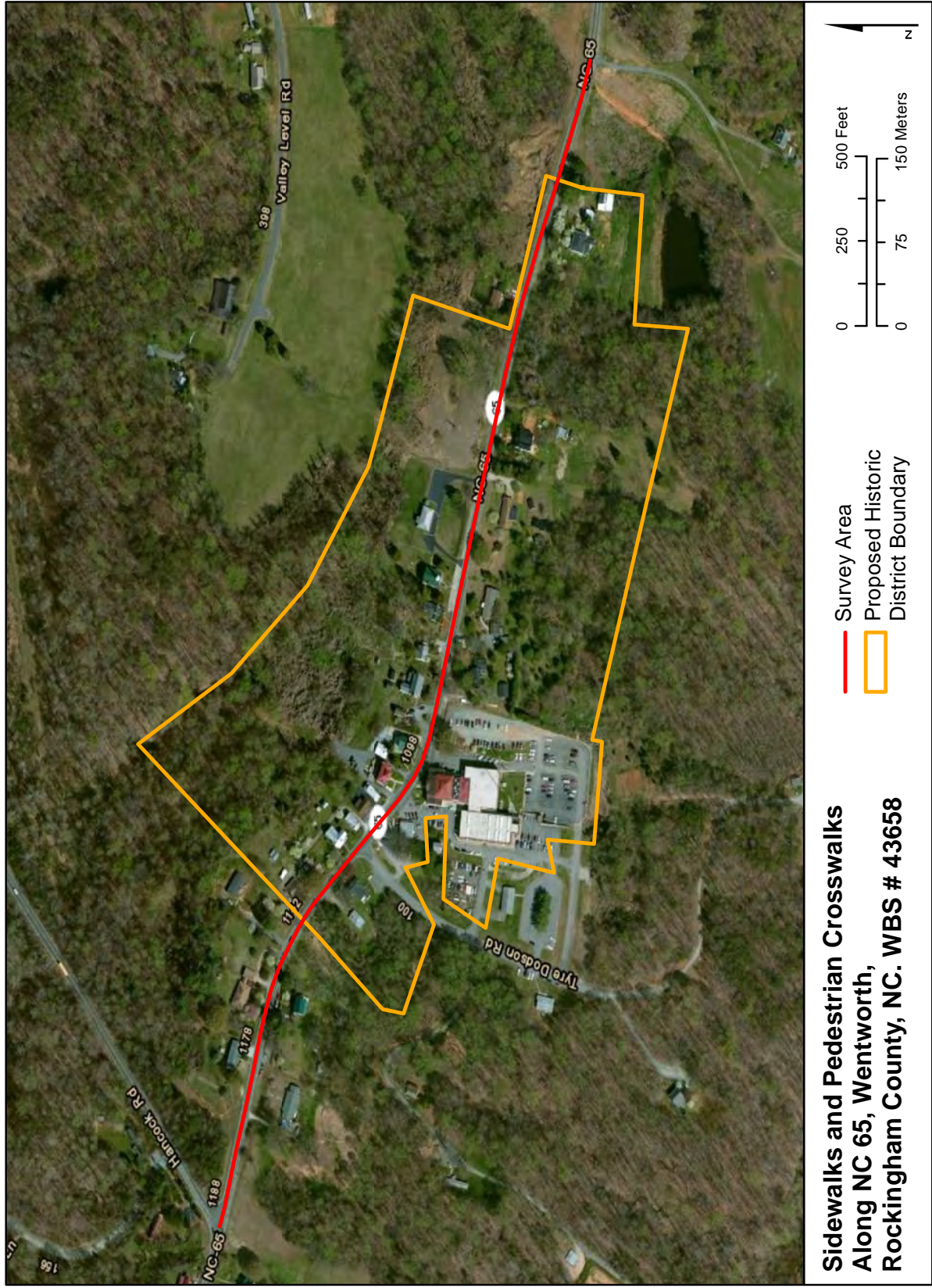
CRITERION D

The Wentworth Historic District is not recommended eligible for the National Register under Criterion D (potential to yield information). For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, it must meet two requirements: 1) the property must have, or have had, information to contribute to our understanding of human history and prehistory and 2) the information must be considered important. The district is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and therefore is not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The recommended NRHP district boundary is shown on Figure 114. The boundary is drawn to include the concentration of historic properties on the north and south side of NC 65 in the historic village of Wentworth. NC 65, Wentworth's Main Street, forms the spine of the district. The road remains on its historical alignment and is considered a contributing resource. The east boundary begins at the Alfred M. Scales House (RK 1596). The house is the first dwelling over 50 years of age when entering the district. It was the home of a Confederate general and important local lawyer and was therefore chosen as an appropriate starting point for the district. There are no historic buildings west of the Alfred M. Scales House. The district extends to the west to include 19 resources (five are non-contributing). It terminates at the west property line of the Mitchell-Adam-Perdue House (#2) (RK 1608), the westernmost dwelling in a series of four buildings erected by the Mitchell family in the twentieth century. Historic buildings west of the Mitchell-Adam-Perdue house were excluded from the district due either to their post-1963 construction dates and/or the larger parcels and more rural nature of the area. The north district boundary roughly follows the rear property lines of the resources on the north side of NC 65. The south district boundary follows the town's planning boundary.

Figure 115. Recommended NRHP District Boundary



**Sidewalks and Pedestrian Crosswalks
Along NC 65, Wentworth,
Rockingham County, NC. WBS # 43658**

Source: ESRI Resource Data, Imagery Layer

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APPENDIX A: INVENTORY LIST OF SURVEYED PROPERTIES OUTSIDE THE RECOMMENDED NRHP DISTRICT BOUNDARY

RK 1601: Harrington Law Office, 1084 NC 65, PIN 797603248780; Circa 1980s.

This Colonial Revival-style “house” was constructed by local attorney Thomas Harrington in the 1980s as a law office. The two-story building has a gambrel roofline and an oversized brick chimney on the south side. The house has weatherboard siding, 9/9 sash windows with paneled shutters, a brick foundation and a composite shingle roof.

RK 1610: MCMICHAEL RAKESTRAW HOUSE; 1158 NC 65; PIN 797601254084; 1932.

John W. Rakestraw built this house in 1932 after an earlier family dwelling on the site was destroyed by fire. The side-gable, two-story, three-bay dwelling has a Colonial Revival stoop porch with a vaulted ceiling and square posts. The entry door is concealed by a louvered storm door. The entry is flanked by six-pane sidelights over panels. A sun room is on the east side. The windows openings have 6/6 sashes and shutters. The house is now covered with aluminum siding. It rests on a continuous brick foundation and has a recent metal roof. There are interior chimneys at the east and west ends.

RK 1611: HOUSE; 1180 NC 65; PIN 797601252008; CIRCA 1960.

This Colonial Revival Ranch house is built on the site of the Wentworth School building, which was demolished in the late 1950s. The linear Ranch house has lesser wings on the east and west sides. The recessed entry has a paneled entry door flanked by sidelights. The German siding and 8/8 window sashes and louvered shutters are original. The house rests on a continuous brick foundation and has a composite shingle roof. There is an interior chimney at the east and a front chimney on the west wing.

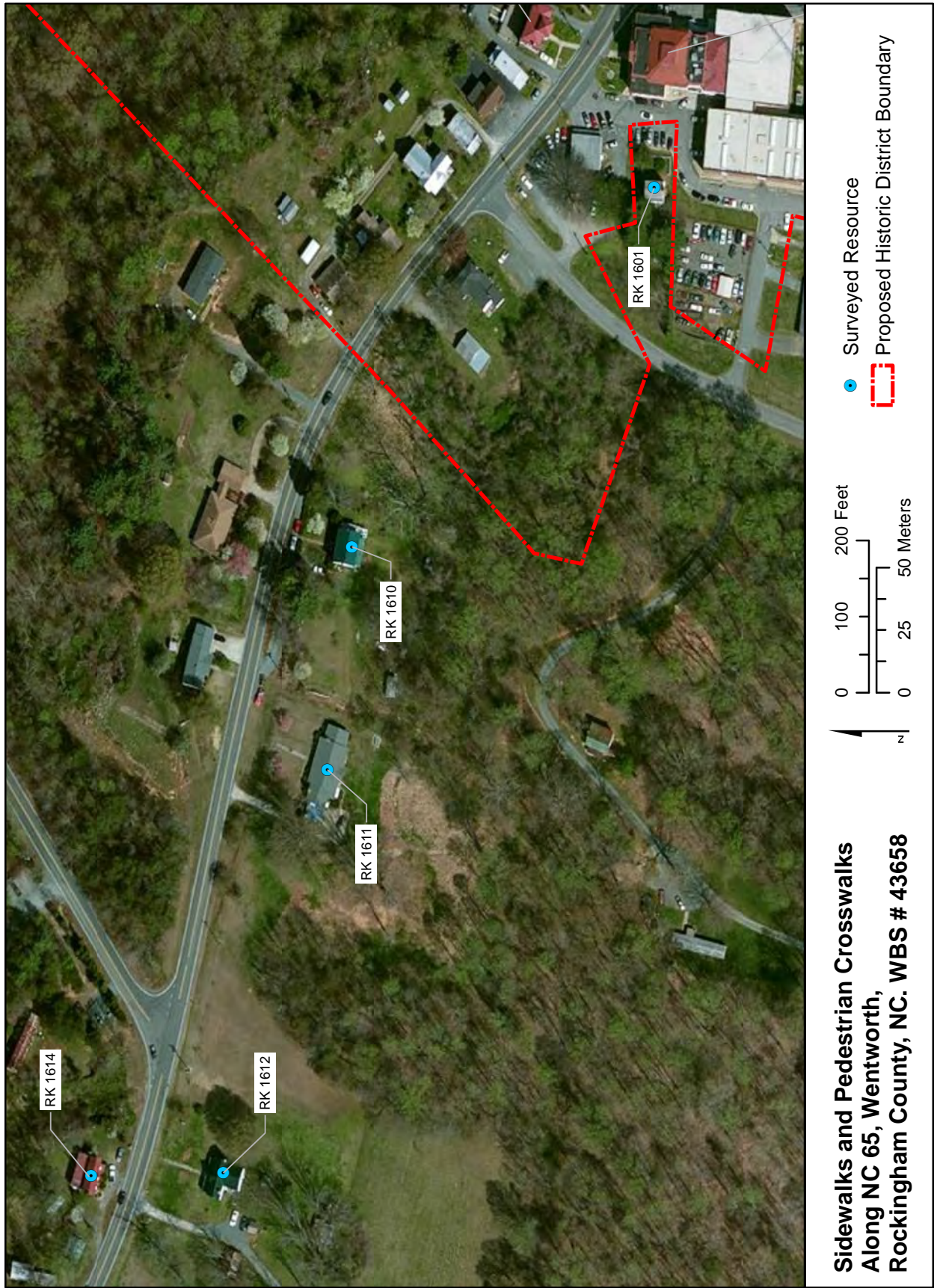
RK 1612: RAKESTRAW HOUSE; 1224 NC 65; PIN 79760314449; CIRCA 1900.

This two-story, triple-A form I-house has a one-story hipped porch with an unusual solid balustrade of irregularly-sized round stones. Rustic cedar posts support the porch roof. A two-story gabled wing projects from the rear side. Vinyl siding covers the house and trim, and the original windows have been replaced with 1/1 vinyl sashes. The front door has two arched lights above four vertical panels. The house rests on a stone foundation and has a standing seam metal roof. Original chimneys have not survived. A narrow concrete block stove flue rises from the east side.

RK 1614: House; 1227 NC 65; PIN 797601159602: circa 1920.

This two-story, triple-A form I-house retains its form but has undergone alterations to its historic materials, such as the application of vinyl siding and the replacement of the original windows with 1/1 vinyl sashes. The window openings of the facade have board-and-batten novelty shutters and aluminum awnings. The hipped-roof front porch has been enclosed with vinyl siding and vinyl windows. At each end is a shouldered exterior end chimney made of stone. A one-story shed addition spans the rear side. The house has a standing seam metal roof. The foundation material was not determined.

Locations of Surveyed Properties Outside the Recommended NRHP District Boundary





Harrington Law Office, RK 1601



McMichael Rakestraw House, RK 1610



House, RK 1611



Rakestraw House, RK 1612



House, RK 1614