



**North Carolina Department of Natural and 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

March 28, 2016

Daniel Bridges, PE  
WSP/Parson Brinckerhoff  
121 W Trade Street, Suite  
Charlotte, NC 28202

[bridges@pbworld.com](mailto:bridges@pbworld.com)

Re: Upgrade Main Street, Huntersville, U-5908, Mecklenburg County, ER 15-2365

Dear Mr. Bridges:

We are in receipt of the revised Historic Structures Survey Report prepared by Coastal Carolina Research, for the above-referenced undertaking. Having reviewed the report, we offer the following comments.

We concur that the following properties **are eligible for listing** in the National Register of Historic Places

- **Ranson House (MK1351)** under Criterion C as a locally significant Colonial Revival style residence
- **Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299)** under Criteria A and C for its association with the town's enforcement of its legal code (Law) and as a representative example of masonry and metal jail construction in the 1930s.

The proposed boundaries appear to be appropriate for the properties.

Additional information and photographs were included in the overall report for the Huntersville Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (MK1342) dating to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Based on the very limited information in the report, we are still unable to determine whether it is eligible for the National Register. Post WWII churches were not typically identified in many of the earlier county and city surveys, and evaluating individual buildings will need to "start from scratch" in terms of the local context and the level of finishes found in churches of this period. We assume there are no other post WWII Colonial Revival churches in Huntersville. Please confirm this. If there are others, then more information about comparable buildings is needed. Also, information/photographs about the interior is needed. Finally, it is important to establish the construction date of this relatively recent church.

Churches dating to the 1950s and 60s are not the same as those built earlier in the century. Often they are less elaborate in their interpretation of the Colonial Revival style. While the lack of features such as round-headed windows, Palladian windows, decorative brickwork, etc. may be indicative of the level of finish typical of these churches, the question that needs asking is whether or not the church has the representative characteristics of the period.

A second question is the effect of the later additions on the church's design. The rear-most one-bay deep addition has had very little impact on the integrity of the sanctuary building. The older church hall is still identifiable in terms of its massing and building fabric. The side addition is difficult to see in the photographs, and we cannot be sure how it has impacted the church's design on both the exterior and interior. Please provide additional photographs and further information about the effect of the side addition on the church's design.

We would like to note that Christ the King Catholic Church and School in High Point, used as a comparable property, was placed on the State Study List under Criterion A for education, not Criterion C. All of the wood features on the church exterior have been wrapped in synthetic siding so that it does not have enough architectural integrity. However, it was approved because the Catholic Church operated an elementary school for African American children behind the church, and the church was a strong advocate for African American education in the community.


We will look forward to receipt of the additional information and photographs of the Huntersville Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church.

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 [environmental.review@ncdcr.gov](mailto:environmental.review@ncdcr.gov). In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

Sincerely,



 Ramona M. Bartos

cc: Susan E. Bamann, CCR



Coastal Carolina Research  
 P.O. BOX 1198, Tarboro, North Carolina 27886  
 (252) 641-1444 | (252) 641-1235 fax  
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February 26, 2016

Renee Gledhill-Earley  
 Environmental Review Coordinator  
 State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)  
 109 East Jones Street, Room 258  
 Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

ER 15-2205  
 #  
 ANN S  
 3/25  
 To ER Gledhill-Earley  
 3/26/16 BPE

**RE: U-5908 – Upgrade Main Street, Huntersville, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina  
 Submission of Architectural Survey Report, ER# 15-2365**

Dear Ms. Gledhill-Earley:

Due 3/28/16

With respect to the project referenced above, please find enclosed the following:

- revised architectural survey report (original date October 2015) addressing HPO comments from December 2015 including additional documentation for the Huntersville Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (MK1342)
- addendum report for in-depth evaluations of the Ranson House (MK1351) and the Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299)
- printouts of HPO survey database forms for surveyed properties, with photo proof sheets attached
- CD containing electronic versions of reports, photo jpegs, databases related to each report, and shapefiles for recommended National Register property boundaries for Ranson House and Town Jail

Coastal Carolina Research (CCR), on behalf of WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff and the Town of Huntersville, is requesting review of the enclosed materials. Your comments may be directed to:

WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff  
 Daniel Bridges, PE  
 121 West Trade Street - Suite 1950  
 Charlotte, North Carolina 28202  
 (704) 342-5404, bridges@pbworld.com

Sincerely,

Susan E. Bamann, Ph.D.  
 Regional Director/Project Manager

encl.

cc: Brian Byfield, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff  
 Nicole Bennett, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff  
 Daniel Bridges, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff  
 Theresa Ellerby, NCDOT

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**ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY  
ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS, NC 115, N. MAIN STREET,  
S. MAIN STREET, AND GILEAD/HUNTERSVILLE-CONCORD  
ROAD, TOWN OF HUNTERSVILLE, MECKLENBURG  
COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
ADDENDUM FOR IN-DEPTH EVALUATION OF THE RANSON  
HOUSE AND HUNTERSVILLE TOWN JAIL  
TIP# U-5908; ER# 15-2365**

**ADDENDUM:  
IN-DEPTH EVALUATION OF THE RANSON HOUSE (MK1351) AND  
THE HUNTERSVILLE TOWN JAIL (MK3299)**

**PREPARED FOR:  
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*Architectural Historian***

**NCR-0722**

**FEBRUARY 2016**

## ABSTRACT

The town of Huntersville proposes roadway improvements along North and South Main Streets, between their intersections with NC 115 (Old Statesville Road) in the north and south, with intersection-related improvements along Gilead/Huntersville-Concord Road and Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road in the Town of Huntersville, Mecklenburg, North Carolina. In September 2015, Coastal Carolina Research (CCR), a wholly owned subsidiary of Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group, Inc., conducted an architectural survey of the proposed project area (Van den Hurk and Bamann 2015). As a result of the survey, two of the resources were recommended as needing further evaluation to determine their National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. The two resources are the Ranson House (MK1351), which appeared to have potential for eligibility under Criterion C, for its architectural significance (as a good example of a Colonial Revival-style dwelling retaining a high level of architectural integrity), and the Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), which appeared to have potential for eligibility under Criteria A and C for its association with the development of law enforcement in North Carolina and its architectural significance (as a rare surviving example of a small jail retaining a high level of architectural integrity). CCR conducted fieldwork for the in-depth architectural evaluations of these resources for WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff on January 14 and 15, 2016. The current report contains the results of the intensive evaluations.

The study was undertaken in a manner consistent with compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s regulations for compliance with Section 106, codified as 36 CFR Part 800. The investigation was conducted according to the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation Projects* (Federal Register, Vol. 48, No. 190, September 1983, P. 44716-44742, et seq.), and the current evaluation report was prepared according to project review guidelines issued by the State Historic Preservation Office (HPO).

As a result of the current study, both resources (the Ranson House and the Huntersville Town Jail) are recommended as eligible for the NRHP. Each of these resources was previously designated as a local landmark with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Evaluated Resources.

<b>HPO Survey Site Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Previous Status</b>	<b>NRHP Eligibility Recommendation</b>	<b>NRHP Eligibility Criteria</b>
MK1351	Ranson House	412 S. Old Statesville Rd., Huntersville	1913	Local Landmark Status, 2007	Eligible	C
MK3299	Huntersville Town Jail	301 Huntersville-Concord Rd., Huntersville	ca. 1935	Local Landmark Status, 2004	Eligible	A & C

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The town of Huntersville proposes roadway improvements along North and South Main Streets, between their intersections with NC 115 (Old Statesville Road) in the north and south, with intersection-related improvements along Gilead/Huntersville-Concord Road and Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road in the Town of Huntersville, Mecklenburg, North Carolina (Figure 1.1-1). In September 2015, Coastal Carolina Research (CCR), a wholly owned subsidiary of Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group, Inc., conducted an architectural survey of the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) (Van den Hurk and Bamann 2015) (see Figure 1.1-1). The APE was defined as including those architectural resources adjacent to or visible from North and South Main Streets as well as those resources in a broader study area encompassing the proposed improvements. As a result of the survey, two of the resources were recommended as needing further evaluation to determine their National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. The two resources are the Ranson House (MK1351), which appeared to have potential for eligibility under Criterion C, for its architectural significance (as a good example of a Colonial Revival-style dwelling retaining a high level of architectural integrity), and the Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), which appeared to have potential for eligibility under Criteria A and C for its association with the development of law enforcement in North Carolina and its architectural significance (as a rare surviving example of a small jail retaining a high level of architectural integrity). Each of these resources was previously designated as a local landmark with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, in 2007 and 2004, respectively.

### **1.2 COMPLIANCE**

The study was undertaken in a manner consistent with compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for compliance with Section 106, codified as 36 CFR Part 800. The investigation was conducted according to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation Projects* (Federal Register, Vol. 48, No. 190, September 1983, P. 44716-44742, et seq.), and the current cultural resources report was prepared according to project review guidelines issued by the State Historic Preservation Office (HPO).

### **1.3 PROJECT STAFF**

CCR conducted fieldwork for the in-depth architectural evaluations of the Ranson House and the Huntersville Town Jail for WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff on January 14 and 15, 2016. Jeroen van den Hurk, Ph.D., was the architectural historian and principal researcher and author, D. Allen Poyner assisted with GIS recordation, and Susan E. Bamann, Ph.D., was the project manager.

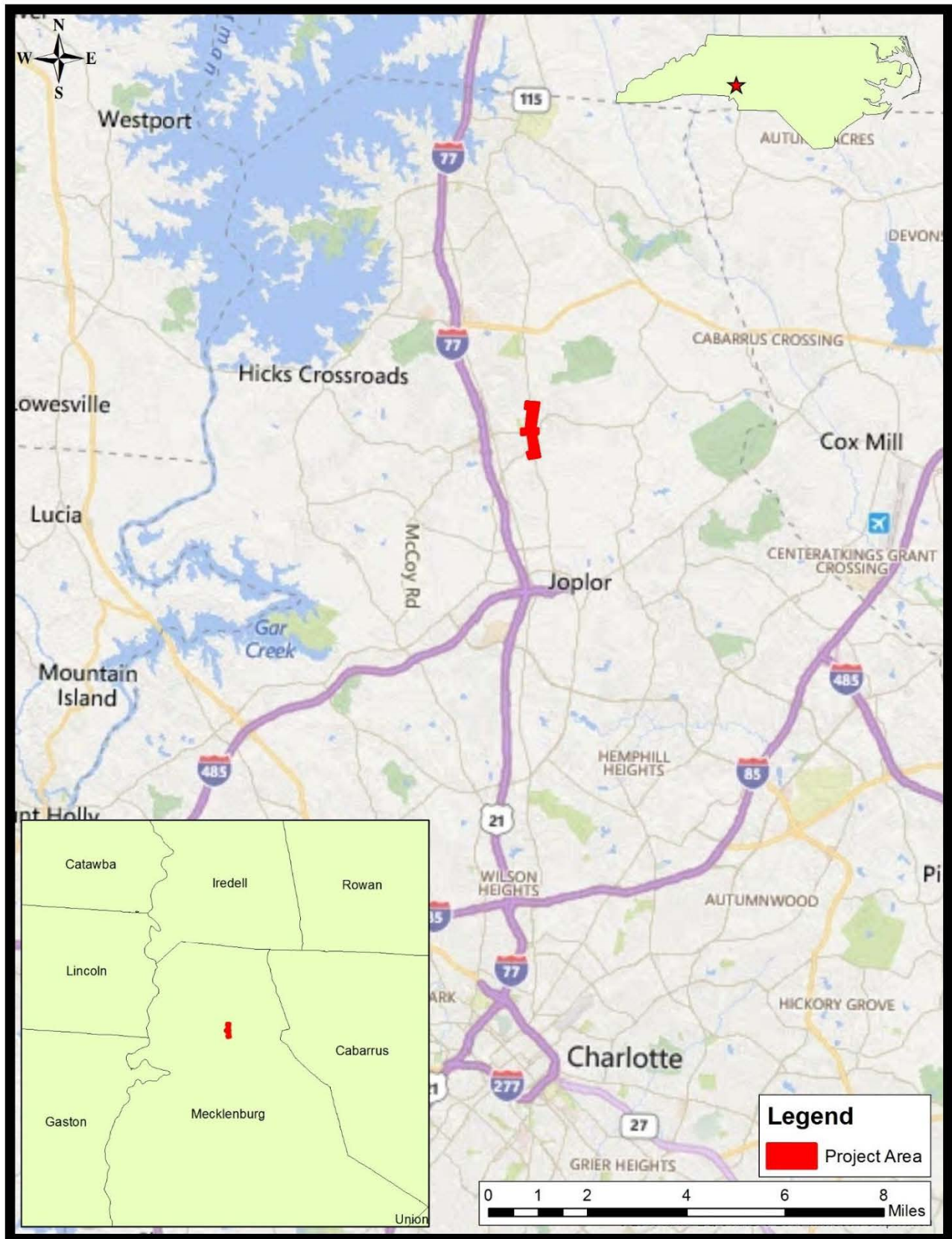


Figure 1.1-1: General Location of the Project.

## 2.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL EVALUATION

### 2.1 METHODS

The Ranson House (MK1351) and the Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299) were revisited and interior photographs were taken. Background information on each resource was obtained and deed research was undertaken. Research was conducted at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Main Library (Charlotte) and the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds (Charlotte).

Both resources (MK1351 and MK3299), the locations of which are shown in Figure 2.1-1, were assessed against the criteria of eligibility for the NRHP. These criteria state that “the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association” and that

- A. are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. embody the distinctive characteristic of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (National Park Service 2015).

### 2.2 RESULTS

The Ranson House (MK1351) and the Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299) were evaluated for eligibility for the NRHP. Descriptions and recommendations for each resource are presented in the following section, along with illustrations of proposed NRHP boundaries.

***HPO SITE SURVEY NUMBER:*** MK1351

***RESOURCE NAME AND ADDRESS:*** Ranson House, 421 S. Old Statesville Road, Huntersville

***DATE(S):*** 1913

***Description:*** The Ranson House is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Old Statesville Road (NC 115) and Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road (SR 2004). It is a two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, hip-roofed frame dwelling, clad in plain weatherboard with a (recent) M-panel metal roof, that was once the centerpiece of a 3,200-acre dairy farm (Figure 2.2-1). The dwelling contains elements of the Colonial Revival style, which was popular from the 1880s through to the early 1950s. The building sits on a stuccoed-brick



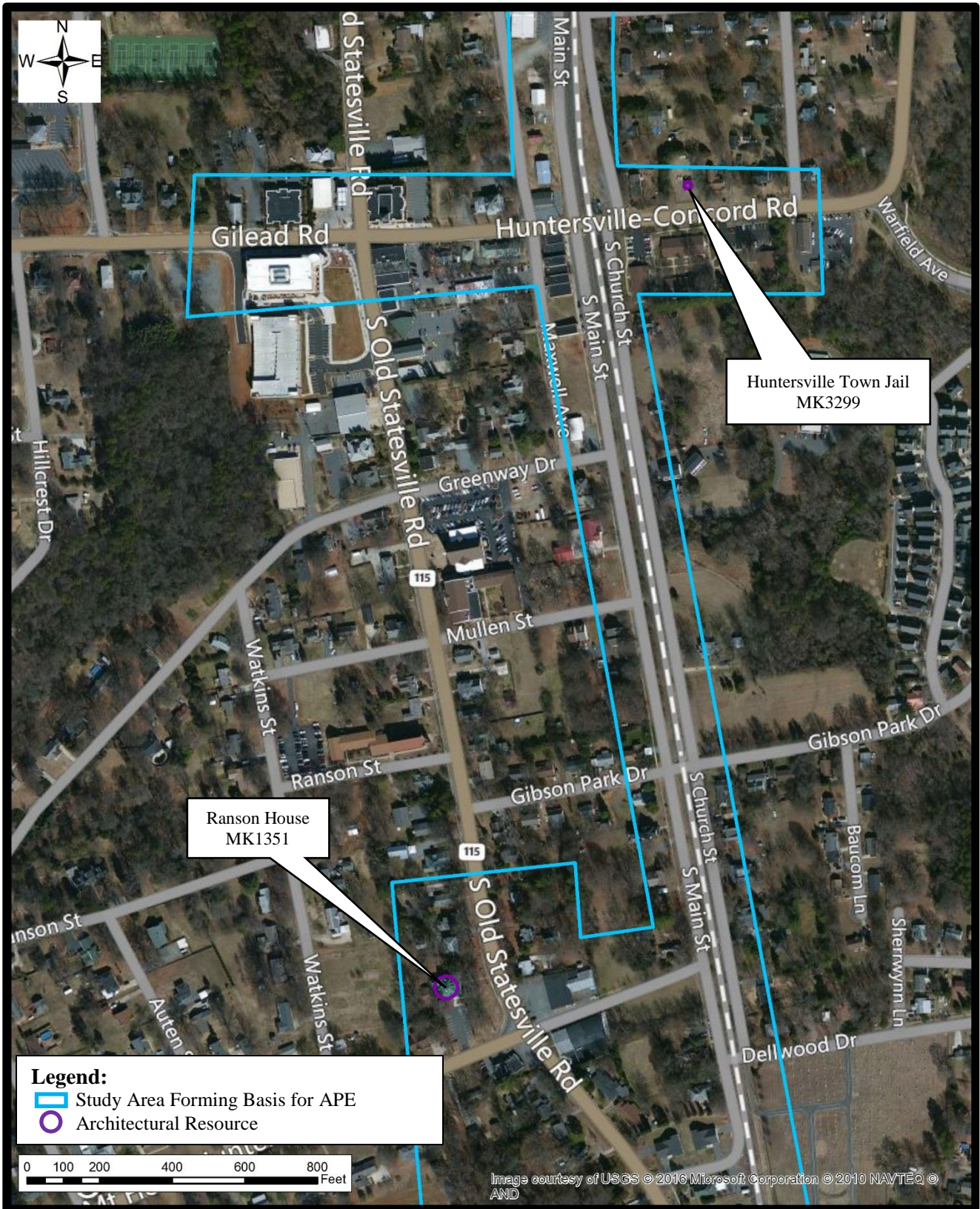


Figure 2.1-1: Locations of Architectural Resources (MK1351 and MK3299).

foundation, and (capped) brick chimneys pierce the north and south slopes of the roof. A hip-roofed porch, supported by Tuscan columns, extends across the east (front) elevation of the dwelling and wraps around the north and south (side) elevations where it connects with projecting bays on each side elevation. The projecting bays give the main block of the dwelling a truncated T-shaped footprint (Figure 2.2-2). A centrally located cross-gabled section of the porch marks the location of the main entrance on the front elevation. Sidelights and a transom light surround the glazed entry door, which is flanked by double twelve-over-one wooden sash windows (Figure 2.2-3 and 2.2-4). Two hip-roofed dormers clad in wooden shingles sit on the front slope of the roof, and a single hip-roofed dormer is centered on the rear slope of the roof (Figure 2.2-5). A one-story, gable-roofed wing extends off the west (rear) elevation of the main block; this has enclosed shed-roofed porches running along the south (side) elevation and west (rear) gable end (Figures 2.2-6 and 2.2-7).

The interior of the Ranson House has a center-passage double-pile plan. Double five-panel doors divide the passage/hallway into two sections, and a stair, which gives access to the second floor, is located in the rear section of the hallway (Figures 2.2-8 and 2.2-9). Four of the five rooms on the first floor are heated – the fifth room is an original bathroom – and three of the four mantels have a mirrored overmantle flanked by attenuated classical columns (Figures 2.2-10 through 2.2-13). An unusual feature on the first floor is the presence of elaborate pressed-tin coved ceilings that are usually more common in the commercial buildings of the period. The hallway has a coffered ceiling with an egg-and-dart cornice, and the rooms have a geometric pattern – square tiles with diamonds with inset paterae – and an egg-and-dart cornice (Figures 2.2-14 and 2.2-15). The second-floor plan mirrors that of the first floor, with a center passage double pile plan. The finishes on the second floor are much plainer than on the first floor, with narrow-board ceilings and simple mantelpieces (Figures 2.2-16 through 2.2-20).

With the exception of seven replacement windows on the front and side elevations of second floor (of the seventeen original windows on the second floor) and a new tin ceiling in the northeast room on the first floor, each of which were added after fire damage, the Ranson House retains much of its original fabric (personal communication Rehnea Raines, January 2016). The current owners did add partition walls on the second floor in the two rooms on the north side of the house, creating a master bathroom and a large walk-in closet. They also renovated much of the rear wing (personal communication Rehnea Raines, January 2016).

Located behind the house are two historic outbuildings. Off the southwest corner of the rear wing is a one-story, side-gabled structure. The tripartite, concrete-block and brick building was originally associated with the dairy operations at the farm. Located to the southwest of the dairy is a small hip-roofed frame building that originally functioned as the gashouse for the Ranson House before it was electrified. After the introduction of electricity the small building served various purposes and was moved around the property several times (Figures 2.2-21 through 2.2-23).





Figure 2.2-1: View of Ranson House (MK1351), Looking West.



Figure 2.2-2: View of Ranson House (MK1351), Looking Northwest.





Figure 2.2-3: View of Ranson House (MK1351), Main Entrance Looking West.



Figure 2.2-4: View of Ranson House (MK1351), Double Window Looking Southwest.



Figure 2.2-5: View of Ranson House (MK1351), Detail of Dormers Looking Northwest.



Figure 2.2-6: View of Ranson House (MK1351), Rear Wing Looking Northeast.





Figure 2.2-7: View of Ranson House (MK1351), Rear Wing Looking Southeast.



Figure 2.2-8: Ranson House (MK1351),  
Hallway Looking East.



Figure 2.2-9: Ranson House (MK1351), Hallway Looking West.

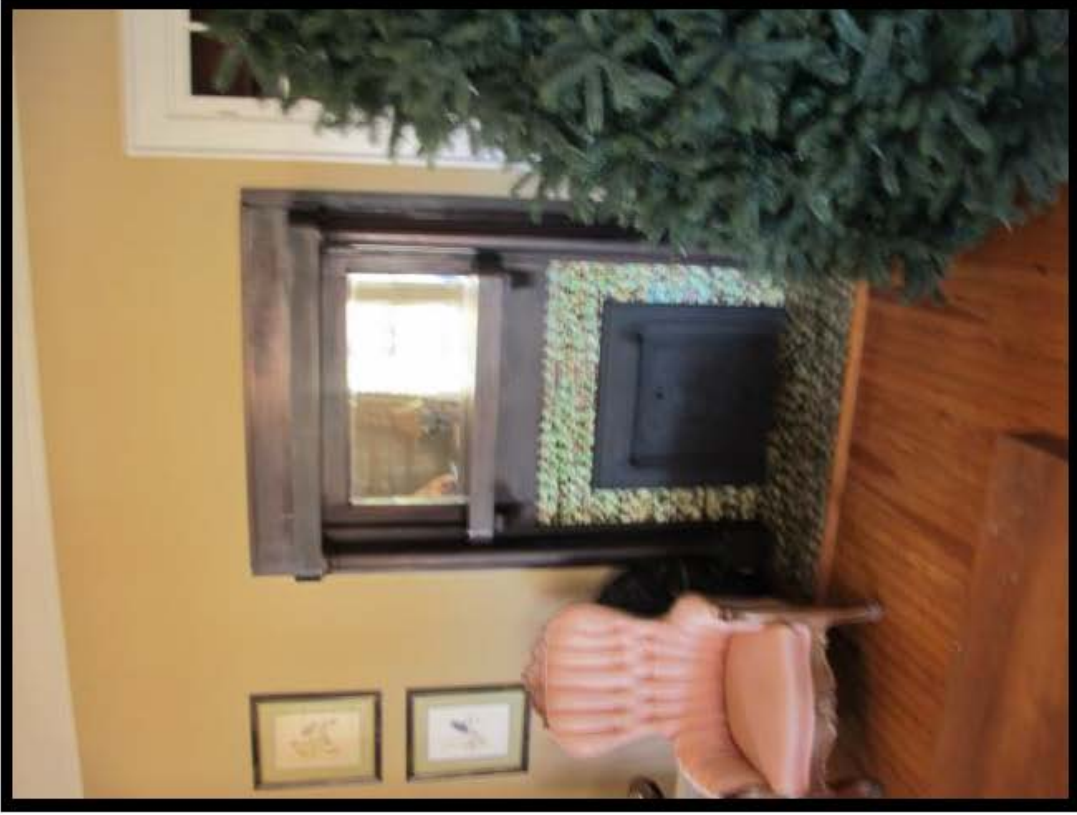


Figure 2.2-10: Ranson House (MK1351), Mantel in Northeast Room.



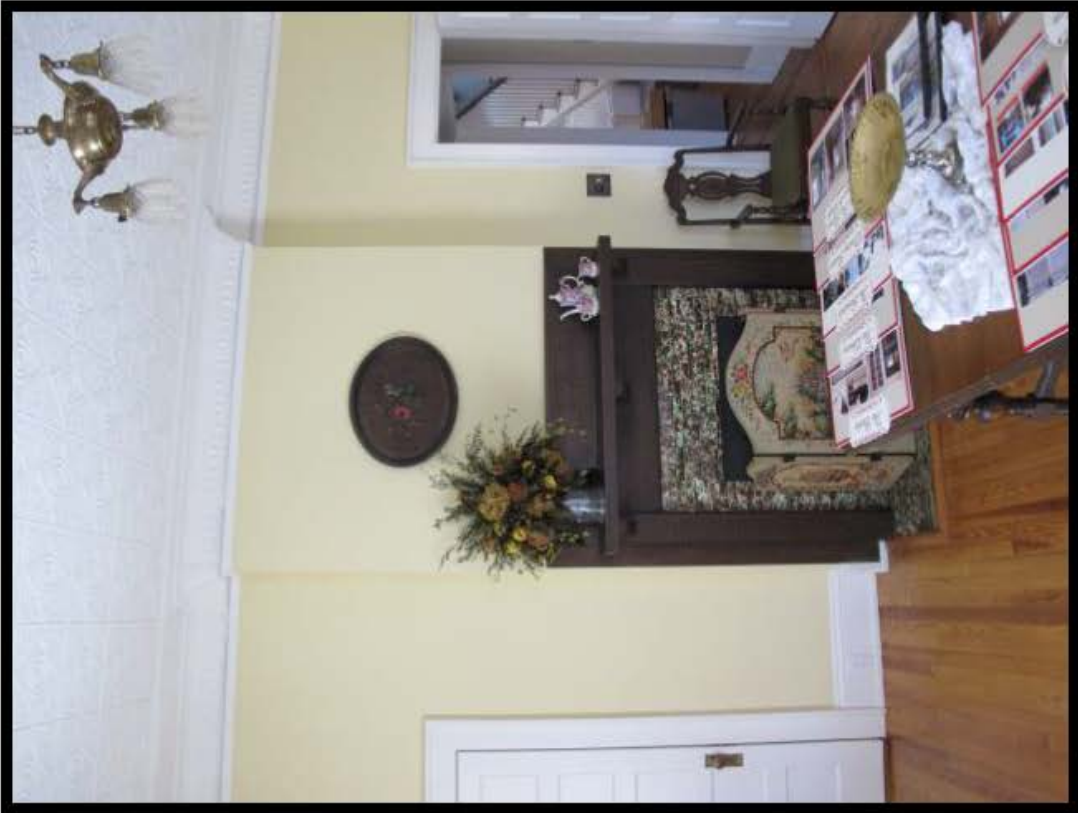


Figure 2.2-11: Ranson House (MK1351), Mantel in Southeast Room.

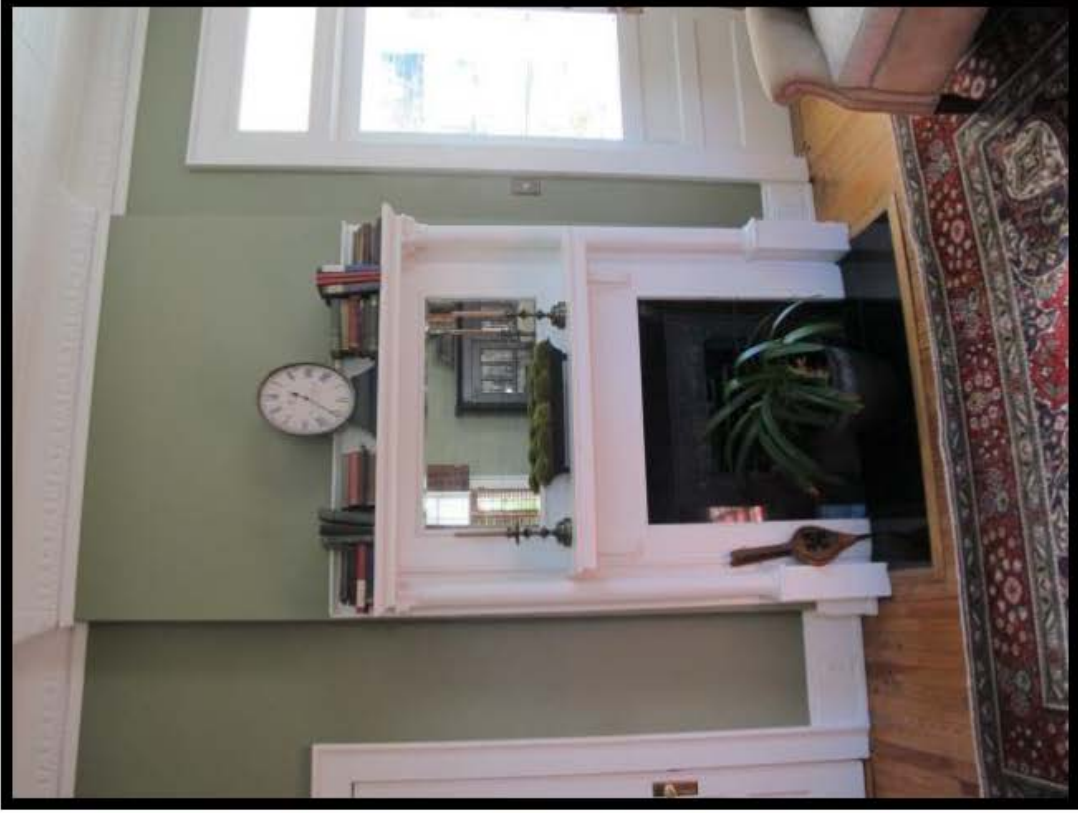


Figure 2.2-12: Ranson House (MK1351), Mantel in Southwest Room.



Figure 2.2-13: Ranson House (MK1351), Mantel in Northwest (Dining) Room.



Figure 2.2-14: Ranson House (MK1351),  
Ceiling in First-Floor Hallway.



Figure 2.2-15: Ranson House (MK1351), First Floor Ceiling in Southeast Room.



Figure 2.2-16: Ranson House (MK1351),  
Second Floor Hallway Looking West.



Figure 2.2-17: Ranson House (MK1352), Second Floor Ceiling in Northwest Room.



Figure 2.2-18: Ranson House (MK1351), Second Floor Mantel in Southwest Room.





Figure 2.2-19: Ranson House (MK1351), Second Floor Mantel in Southeast Room.



Figure 2.2-20: Ranson House (MK1351), Second Floor Mantel in Northeast Room.





Figure 2.2-21: Ranson House (MK1351), Dairy Looking Northwest.



Figure 2.2-22: Ranson House (MK1351), (former) Gashouse Looking Southeast.



Figure 2.2-23: Ranson House (MK1351), Only Surviving Original Gas Fixture in Second Floor Bathroom.

***Historic Context:*** William Joseph Ranson and Ellen Viola Hunter Ranson built the Ranson House in 1913. The current owners, William F. Raines III and Rehnea Raines purchased the house from two of the grandchildren of William and Ellen Ranson, C. Frederick and Virginia Cornue, in 2006 (Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds, Charlotte, North Carolina, 2006: Deed Book 20367:212).

The Ranson and Hunter families played an important role in the growth of Huntersville during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Huntersville was initially called Craighead, after Alexander Craighead, an at times controversial Presbyterian minister who had preached in Pennsylvania and Virginia before settling in Mecklenburg County, where he died in 1766 (Morgan 1979). Craighead was renamed Huntersville in 1873, after either Joseph Nicholas Hunter or his brother Robert Boston Hunter (Gray and Lunsford 2007). Huntersville was one of several small towns in Mecklenburg that thrived in the late nineteenth century as a result of the expansion of the railroad connecting it to Charlotte and northern markets. Local merchants established cotton gins and other businesses, and in 1898 the Anchor Mills opened. The Hunter family was part of this community, and Joseph Nicholas Hunter was the first postmaster in town. The Ranson family arrived later than the Hunters from Anderson, South Carolina, but quickly established themselves as one of the leading families in town. The Reverend Alexander Ranson established the first formal congregation of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Huntersville in 1875, of which Robert Boston Hunter was a member (Gray and Lunsford 2007). Around 1872, William Joseph Ranson, the nephew of Alexander Ranson, came to live with his brother in Huntersville and helped operate the family cotton gin: Ranson Brothers Gin Company. Ultimately, William Joseph took over the business and operated Huntersville's principal cotton gin (Mattson 1991).

William Joseph Ranson married Ellen Viola Hunter in 1890. Ellen was the daughter of Andrew Jones Hunter, the oldest son of Robert Boston Hunter (Ancestry.com 2016a and 2016b). According to the 1910 Census, William and Ellen had nine children, and they were living in Huntersville Township (Ancestry.com 2016c). In 1913, they employed Will Potts, a builder from nearby Cornelius, to build their house in Huntersville (Mattson 1991). The dwelling was the centerpiece of a 3200-acre farm at what was then the outskirts of Huntersville. The Ransons had a dairy operation, and William also operated a cotton gin on the property (Gray and Lunsford 2007). Besides being a home to the Ransons the house also became a gathering place for the community with the Ransons hosting an annual New Year's party as well as Associate Reformed Presbyterian (ARP) Church events and visiting athletic teams (Gray and Lunsford 2007). Over the next decades the Ranson family sold off much of the 3200 acres. By the late 1990s the property passed on to C. Frederick and Virginia Cornue, the children of Katherine Isabel Ranson Cornue, the youngest daughter of William and Ellen Ranson. They sold the 1.7-acre tract on which the house sits, together with two smaller tracts, to William and Rehnea Raines in 2006.

**Recommendation:** The Ranson House is recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level under Criterion C as an excellent early twentieth-century example of the Colonial Revival style retaining a high level of integrity.

The Ranson House was reviewed under Criteria A, B, and D, but does not appear eligible under any of these. For Criterion A, it was noted that the Ranson House is associated with the agricultural history of the Mecklenburg County as it was once the centerpiece of a 3200-acre dairy farm. However, due to the loss of most of its associated outbuildings and the redevelopment of the farmland it can no longer convey this. As noted in the local landmark documentation by Gray and Lunsford (2007), the Ranson and Hunter families played an important role in the development of Huntersville from the late nineteenth century and into the first half of the twentieth century, which was considered with respect to Criterion B. The Ranson House, however, dates to 1913 and is only associated with the later lives of William Joseph Ranson and Ellen Viola Hunter Ranson, after 23 years of marriage, and their descendants. Ranson was a farmer and large landowner in Huntersville, and he was also a merchant and one of the operators of the town's principal cotton gin that was started by his family. The Ranson House also served as a social gathering place. William and Ellen made it the site of ARP Church events and large annual New Year's parties, and it was also a place for visiting high school athletic teams to spend the night after road games against Huntersville High School. Despite the prominence of William and Ellen Ranson with respect to the local community, it is difficult to make the case that they gained exceptional importance within their profession, class, or group. It is therefore recommended that the Ranson House is not associated with a person or persons of demonstrable importance in our past and is not eligible under Criterion B. It is not likely that the Ranson House or the property on which it sits will yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology, and it is therefore recommended not eligible under Criterion D.

The Colonial Revival style was popular from around 1880 to 1955 and was the dominant style for domestic architecture during the first half of the twentieth century (McAlester 2013). The style was popularized through books, magazines, and architects but also through expositions highlighting America's colonial past, such as the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 (Bishir 1990). The passion for colonial architecture came at a time of mass immigration and as a response to increased patriotism. In the South a return to earlier styles was also viewed as a return to a pre-Civil War culture. Bishir (1990) quoted Charlotte architect C. C. Hook, writing in the *Charlotte Observer* in 1903, who stated that "the civil war marked the change from good to bad architecture in the South," and "all colonial details and proportions were discarded," but now "out of all this chaos we again have a revival of the colonial," which in its "purity expresses more real refined sentiment and more intimate associations with our history." Hook's designs were predominantly white, focusing on symmetry and with a grand portico (Bishir 1990). In North Carolina, the style was also referred to as Southern Colonial, and typified by two-story box-like houses with large central porticoes supported by colossal classical columns and one-story wrap-around porches.



According to the HPOWEB database, twenty-eight (28) properties have been surveyed in Mecklenburg County that have been identified as Colonial Revival, ten of which are considered eligible for the NRHP. Two nearby examples are the R. C. Biberstein House (MK0139), of ca. 1906 and the John C. Kilgo House (MK0160) of ca. 1915. Both houses are located in Charlotte, and the Biberstein House was determined eligible in 2006, and the Kilgo House was listed in the National Register in 2009. Both houses are examples of a more modest Colonial Revival-style dwelling similar to that of the Ranson House and retain high levels of integrity (Figures 2.2-24 and 2.2-25). In Huntersville two similar houses survive from the beginning of the twentieth century, the Holbrooks House (MK1334) and the Hunter-Mayberry House (MK1341); however, both resources lack the same level of integrity as the Ranson House (Figures 2.2-26 and 2.2-27).

The Ranson House embodies the distinctive characteristics of a Colonial Revival-style dwelling as they were built across the South during the first decades of the twentieth century. It has the typical two-story, center-passage, double-pile massing and a hipped roof. It lacks the two-story portico characteristic of more high-styled Southern Colonial dwellings, but it does have a one-story porch that extends along the front elevation and wraps around the side elevations. The dwelling retains the integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship. Any changes that have occurred have been sympathetic to the overall feeling of the design. The dwelling has lost some of its original setting as a farmhouse, due to the loss of most of its outbuildings and the subdivision that developed around it after World War II, but several of the trees that were planted when the house was built survive (personal communication Rehnea Raines, January 2016) (Figures 2.2-28 and 2.2-29).

The proposed NRHP Boundary is defined by the current tax parcel, which contains the dwelling, the dairy house, the gashouse, and the majority of the historic trees (1.7 acres; Mecklenburg County Parcel ID 01711306) (Figure 2.2-30).

The Ranson House is recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level under Criterion C as an excellent early twentieth-century example of a Colonial Revival-style dwelling. The Ranson House is not recommended eligible under Criteria A, B, and D. There are no events associated with the property that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and its association with its original agricultural context is no longer conveyed by its current setting. Despite the association with William Joseph and Ellen Viola Ranson, who appear to have played an active role in the Huntersville community, they were not necessarily of demonstrable importance based on their public service or various occupations. The property also does not appear likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.



Figure 2.2-24: View of R. C. Biberstein House (MK0139), Looking Southwest.



Figure 2.2-25: View of John C. Kilgo House (MK0160), Looking East.





Figure 2.2-26: View Holbrooks House (MK1334), Looking Northwest.



Figure 2.2-27: View of Hunter-Mayberry House (MK1341), Looking Northeast.





Figure 2.2-28: View of Ranson House (MK1351) Circa 1915, Looking West (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission 2007a).



Figure 2.2-29: View of Ranson House (MK1351), Looking Northwest.





Figure 2.2-30: Aerial View of the Ranson House (MK1351), Showing Proposed NRHP Boundary.

**HPO SITE SURVEY NUMBER:** MK3299

**RESOURCE NAME AND ADDRESS:** Huntersville Town Jail, 301 Huntersville-Concord Road, Huntersville

**DATE(S):** ca. 1935

**Description:** The Huntersville Town Jail is located on the north side of Huntersville-Concord Road (SR 2448), approximately 185 ft east of the intersection with North Church Street. It is a one-story hip-roofed brick building with an interior brick chimney against the east wall. The roof has exposed rafter tails, and the walls are laid in five-over-one common bond (Figure 2.2-31). The building is placed perpendicular to the street with two (boarded-up) six-over-six wooden sash windows facing south towards Huntersville-Concord Road. The only door is a five-panel door located in the west elevation. It is flanked to the left by a three-light hopper window with a slightly projecting brick sill, set high in the wall, which swings into the building. A similar window pierces the north elevation, and two additional hopper windows with brick sills are located in the east elevation (Figures 2.2-32 and 2.2-33).

The building is divided into two spaces. The entry door opens into the office space, which is lit by the two six-over-six wooden sash windows in the south wall and a hopper window in the east wall (Figure 2.2-34 and 2.2-35). A brick partition wall with a five-panel wooden door separates the office space from the space that houses the actual cellblock (Figure 2.2-36). The interior chimney is located against the exterior east wall where it meets with the partition wall. The cellblock is a freestanding, floor-to-ceiling, steel box that contains two cells (Figure 2.2-37). The smaller of the two cells contains two iron bunks and a toilet, and the larger contains three iron bunks and a toilet (Figures 2.2-38 and 2.2-39). An additional iron bunk and toilet are located against the exterior east wall of the cellblock (Figure 2.2-40). Two steel-lattice cell doors are located in the south wall of the cellblock, and a section of the rear wall of each cell consists of steel bars, which allow for secondary light from the hopper window in the north wall of the jail to enter the cells (Figure 2.2-41).

With the exception of the ceiling and some of the roof framing, which has suffered from water damage, the jail retains a large amount of its original fabric.

**Historic Context:** The Town of Huntersville purchased the lot on which the jail stands in 1925 from Minnie Lee Contois and her husband C. F. Contois (Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1925: Deed Book 601:228).

The lot was located across from the town's older one-room brick jail and just east of the train depot and the small commercial district along Main Street near the intersection with Huntersville-Concord Road (Gray 2013). The town started construction of the new jail around 1935. The building may have been built by Ruffus McCay, a brick mason who was active in Huntersville in the 1930s (Gray 2013). The new jail is not only reflective of the municipal development of Huntersville during that period, but also of the changes in law enforcement in Mecklenburg County and the county's transitioning from an agricultural based economy to one increasingly determined by manufacturing, trade, and





Figure 2.2-31: View of Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), Looking Northeast.



Figure 2.2-32: View of Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), Looking East.





Figure 2.2-33: Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), Three-Light Hopper Window.



Figure 2.2-34: Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), Office Space Looking Southeast.



Figure 2.2-35: Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), Office Space Looking Northeast.



Figure 2.2-36: Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), View of Cell Block Looking North.





Figure 2.2-37: Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), View of Corner of Cellblock Looking Northwest.



Figure 2.2-38: Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), View of Smaller of the Two Cells Looking Southeast.



Figure 2.2-39: Huntsville Town Jail (MK3299), View of Larger of the Two Cells Looking Northwest.



Figure 2.2-40: Huntsville Town Jail (MK3299), View of Ancillary Bunk and Toilet Looking South.





Figure 2.2-41: Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), View of Rear Wall of Cell Block Looking East.

transportation (Gray 2013). North Carolina had struggled with building proper jails since the late nineteenth century, and the situation had not improved by the beginning of the twentieth century as noted by Joseph F. Fishman, a federal jail inspector, in 1923 (Gray 2013; Ruddell 2010). The construction date of the first Huntersville jail is unknown, but it was nothing more than a small one-room brick structure with no plumbing or heating.

The construction of the new jail also falls in line with improvements in law enforcement. Mecklenburg County had a sheriff since its formation in 1763, and the Charlotte Police Department was established in 1866. In 1917 the Rural Police was organized by the Sheriff's office, and they became independent in 1925. The Town of Huntersville's police department dates back to around 1929. According to contemporary reports, crime was a serious and persistent problem in Mecklenburg County with offences ranging from gang violence to the illegal production and sale of alcohol. With the onset of the Great Depression crime may have increased (Gray 2013). It unknown if the Huntersville Town Jail benefited from funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) or the Public Works Administration (PWA), but the 1930s saw an increase in public building projects, despite the effects of the Great Depression. Mecklenburg County saw numerous projects completed due to federal funding from the WPA or PWA (Gray 2006).

The earliest reference to the new Huntersville Town Jail is found in the 1937 town minutes when a constable with the Rural Police requests the permission to use one of the cells. In 1940, a motion was approved to designate one of the cells for white offenders and the other for "colored" offenders (Gray 2013). Alcohol offenses seem to have been the primary reason for people to end up in the town jail. The jail was also used as a voting site and during World War II Civil Defense meetings took place there. More often than not prisoners were taken to the County Jail in Charlotte, and the building was relegated to storage by the mid-1960s (Gray 2013).

***Recommendation:*** The Huntersville Town Jail is recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level under Criteria A and C, for its association with the development of the penal system and law enforcement in North Carolina and Mecklenburg County, and as an excellent example of a small jail from the first half of the twentieth century.

The jail is associated with the development of and improvements to the penal system in North Carolina in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, and the development of law enforcement in Mecklenburg County.

Due to its small size and utilitarian function, the jail did not follow a specific style, nor was it embellished with specific stylistic elements. The use of the five-over-one common bond is the most distinct and decorative element of the building.

According to the HPOWEB database, forty-nine (49) prisons/jails have been surveyed in North Carolina, the Huntersville Town Jail being the only one in Mecklenburg County. Fourteen out of the forty-nine are considered eligible for the NRHP. The Second Yadkin County Jail (YK0586/NR 1988) from ca. 1892 is very similar in its design to the

Huntersville Town Jail. It is a one-story, hip-roofed building with five-over-one common bond brick walls and a two-room plan (Figure 2.2-42).

The Huntersville Town Jail embodies the characteristics of a small jail built in North Carolina from the turn of the twentieth century through the first half of the twentieth century. The building retains the integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship. Little changes have occurred other than some deterioration due to neglect. The jail has lost some of its original setting due to the development of the surrounding area in the second half of the twentieth century.

The proposed NRHP Boundary is defined by the current tax parcel, which contains the jail and some of its historic setting (0.3 acres; Mecklenburg County Parcel ID 01903407) (Figure 2.2-43).

The jail is recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP at a local level under Criteria A and C for its association with the development of the penal system and law enforcement in Mecklenburg County and North Carolina and as a rare surviving example of small town jail from the first half of the twentieth century. The jail is not considered eligible under Criteria B and D. The building is not associated with the lives of persons significant for our past, and the property does not seem likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.



Figure 2.2-42: View of Second Yadkin County Jail (YD0586) Circa 1892, Looking Northwest.

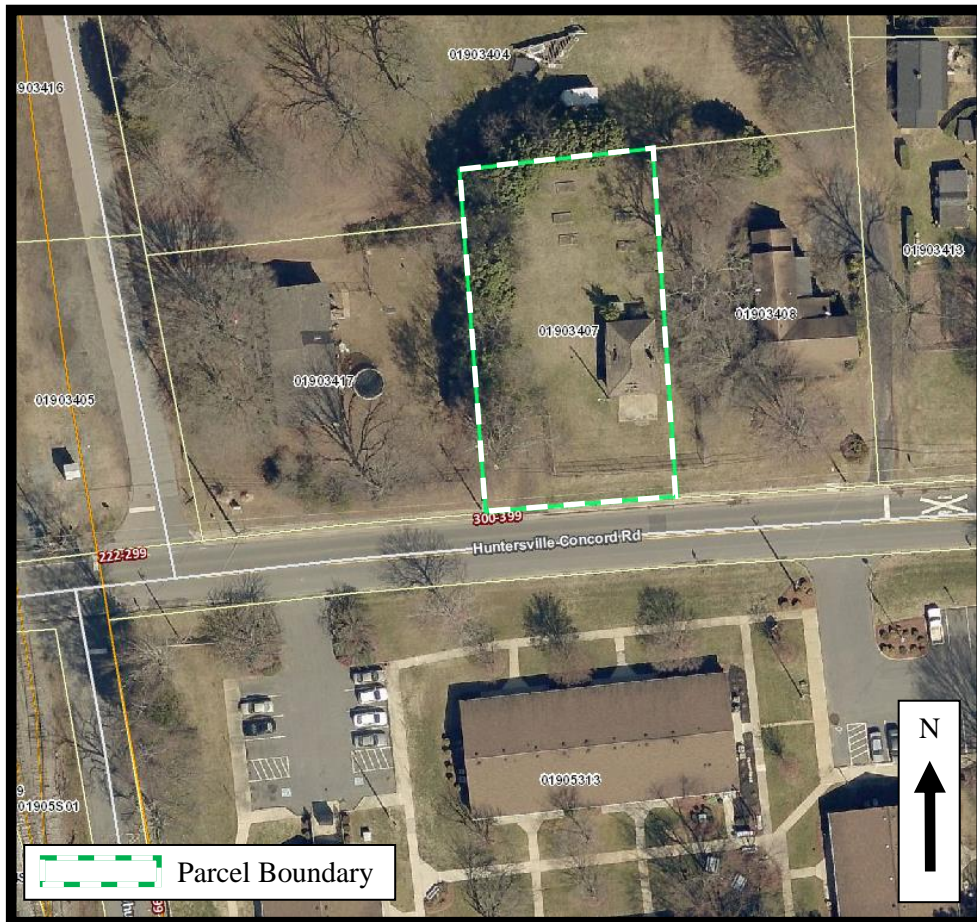


Figure 2.2-43: Aerial View of the Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), Showing Proposed NRHP Boundary.



## 2.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An architectural evaluation of two previously identified resources recorded was undertaken for the proposed widening of Main Street in the Town of Huntersville, North Carolina. Both of the resources surveyed, the Ranson House (MK1351) and the Huntersville Town Jail (MK3299), appear to possess sufficient architectural significance and integrity to qualify for individual listing on the NHRP. Each of these resources was previously designated as a local historic landmark (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission 2007b and 2014).

The Ranson House (1913) is recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level under Criterion C as an excellent early twentieth-century example of the Colonial Revival style. The proposed NRHP boundary consist of the current tax parcel.

The Huntersville Town Jail (ca. 1935) is recommended as eligible for listing in the NRPH at the local level under Criteria A and C, for its association with the development of the penal system and law enforcement in North Carolina and Mecklenburg County, and as an excellent example of a small jail from the first half of the twentieth century.

The current report does not incorporate information from current design plans, so it may only be stated that, in terms of direct effects, the Main Street widening project *may* encroach upon the proposed boundaries of the Ransom House and Huntersville Town Jail. Indirect effects such as visual and noise effects should be considered as well as the potential impact of noise-related vibration on the structures.