



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

November 3, 2015

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley 
Environmental Review Coordinator

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report for Replacement of Bridge 35 on SR 1520 over Hollands Creek, PA15-03-0012, Rutherford County, ER 15-2403

Thank you for your October 19, 2015, letter transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the report and concur with the finding that the **Mitchum-Hensley House (RF0654)** is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

We would note that while the property has lost integrity due to extensive alterations in the late twentieth century, this is secondary to the fact that the property is not significant under any criteria, as documented on pages 12-13 of the report.

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. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

**FINAL EVALUATION OF ELIGIBILITY REPORT
MITCHUM-HENSLEY HOUSE**

**REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 35 ON SR 1520 (ROCK ROAD)
OVER HOLLANDS CREEK
RUTHERFORD COUNTY**

**TIP No. B-4812
WBS No. 38582.1.FD2
Limited Services Contract No. 7000014413**

Prepared by:

**Frances Alexander, Project Manager
Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.
2228 Winter Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28205**

Prepared for:

**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Human Environment Section
Raleigh, North Carolina**

8 October 2015

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MATTSON, ALEXANDER AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

Frances P. Alexander

8 October 2015

Frances P. Alexander, M.A.

Date

Richard L. Mattson, Ph.D.

Date

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Date

Introduction

This eligibility report was prepared in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) project entitled, *Replace Bridge No. 35 on SR 1520 (Rock Road) over Hollands Creek*. The project is located in Rutherford County. The TIP Number is B-4812, and the WBS Number is 38582.1.FD2. The project location is shown on both **Figures 1 and 2**.

This project is subject to review under the *Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects* (NCDOT/NCHPO/FHWA, 2007). The project is state funded and requires federal permits. NCDOT architectural historians established an area of potential effects (APE) for the project that extends seventy-five (75) feet on either side of Bridge No. 35 and 700 feet from each end of that structure. The APE is depicted in **Figure 2**. NCDOT architectural historians also conducted a preliminary investigation of the APE to identify resources that warranted additional study to determine their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The architectural historians concluded that the Mitchum-Hensley House (RF654) was the only property fifty years of age or older that warranted further evaluation. Rutherford County Bridge No. 137 is not addressed in this report. Built in 1952 and reconstructed in 1973, the structure does not exemplify any distinctive engineering or aesthetic type and thus does not have the significance needed for National Register eligibility under any criterion.

This investigation was conducted to evaluate the Mitchum-Hensley House for National Register eligibility. The current evaluation of eligibility is part of the environmental studies undertaken by NCDOT and is on file at NCDOT, Raleigh, North Carolina. This documentation complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (36 CFR 800), the National Register criteria set forth in 36 CFR 61, and NCDOT Historic Architecture Group Procedures and Work Products. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of federally funded, licensed, or permitted projects on properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the HPO a reasonable opportunity to comment.

The eligibility evaluation consisted of research into the history and architecture of the Mitchum-Hensley House and a field survey of the property. For the research phase, both primary and secondary sources were examined, including the HPO survey files for Rutherford County. Of particular help was the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, *The Historic Architecture of Rutherford County*, North Carolina, prepared by Kimberly I. Merkel in 1983. In addition, Mr. Herman Hensley, a former resident of the Mitchum-Hensley House, provided information regarding the history of the house and changes to the property over time.

Field work took place on 19 August 2015. The house as well as other buildings on the property were examined and documented with photographs to assess their current level of integrity. The principal investigators also conducted a windshield survey of other dwellings in the area to investigate whether other surviving houses built in the same period displayed similar forms and methods of construction. A site plan showing the current tax parcels for the Mitchum-Hensley House is depicted in **Figure 3**.

As noted below in **Table 1**, the Mitchum-Hensley House is not recommended for National Register eligibility under any criterion because of a loss of integrity.

Table 1

Property Name	Survey Site Number	Eligibility Recommendation	Criteria
Mitchum-Hensley House	RF0654	Ineligible	None

Figure 1
Mitchum-Hensley House
General Location Map

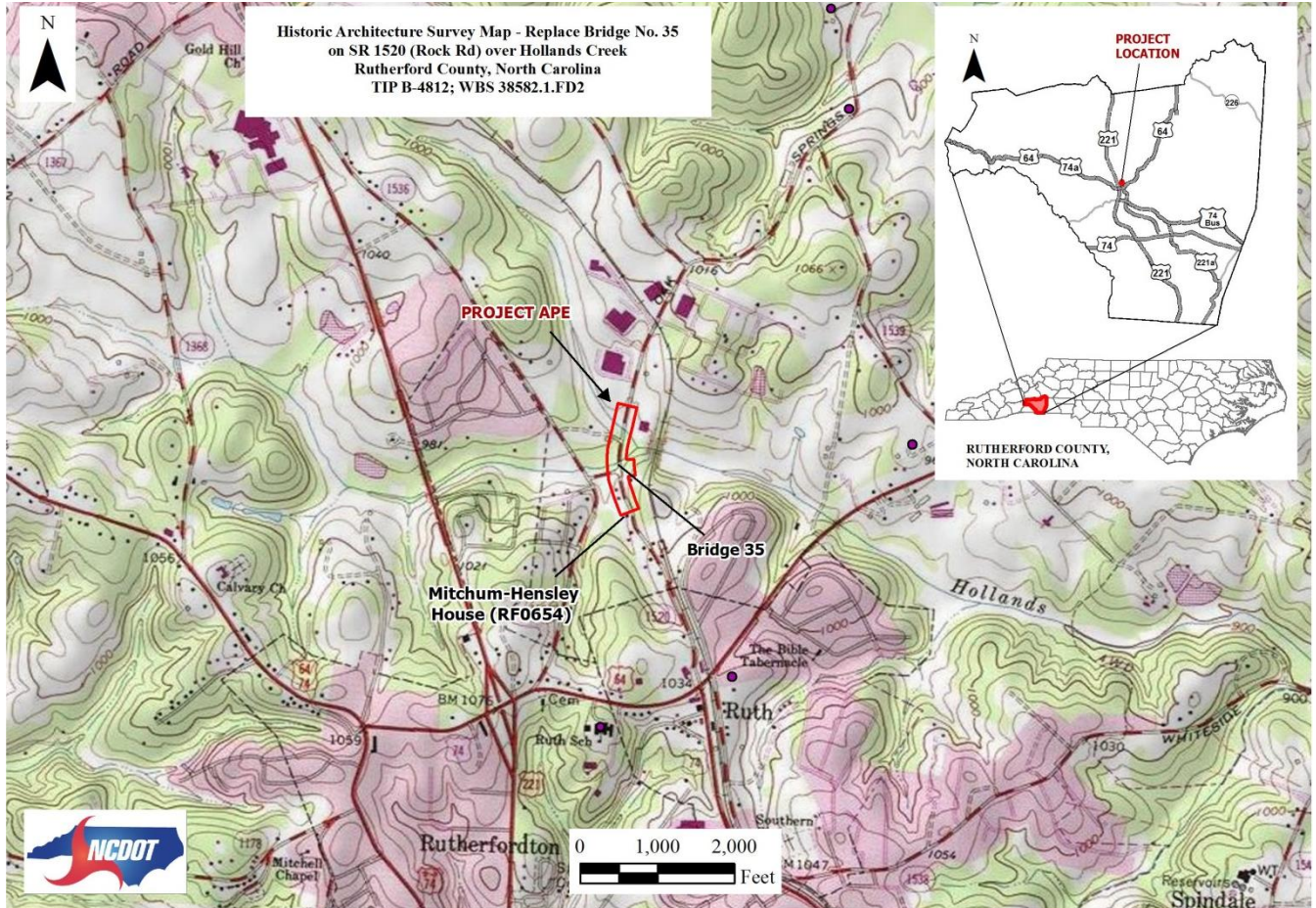
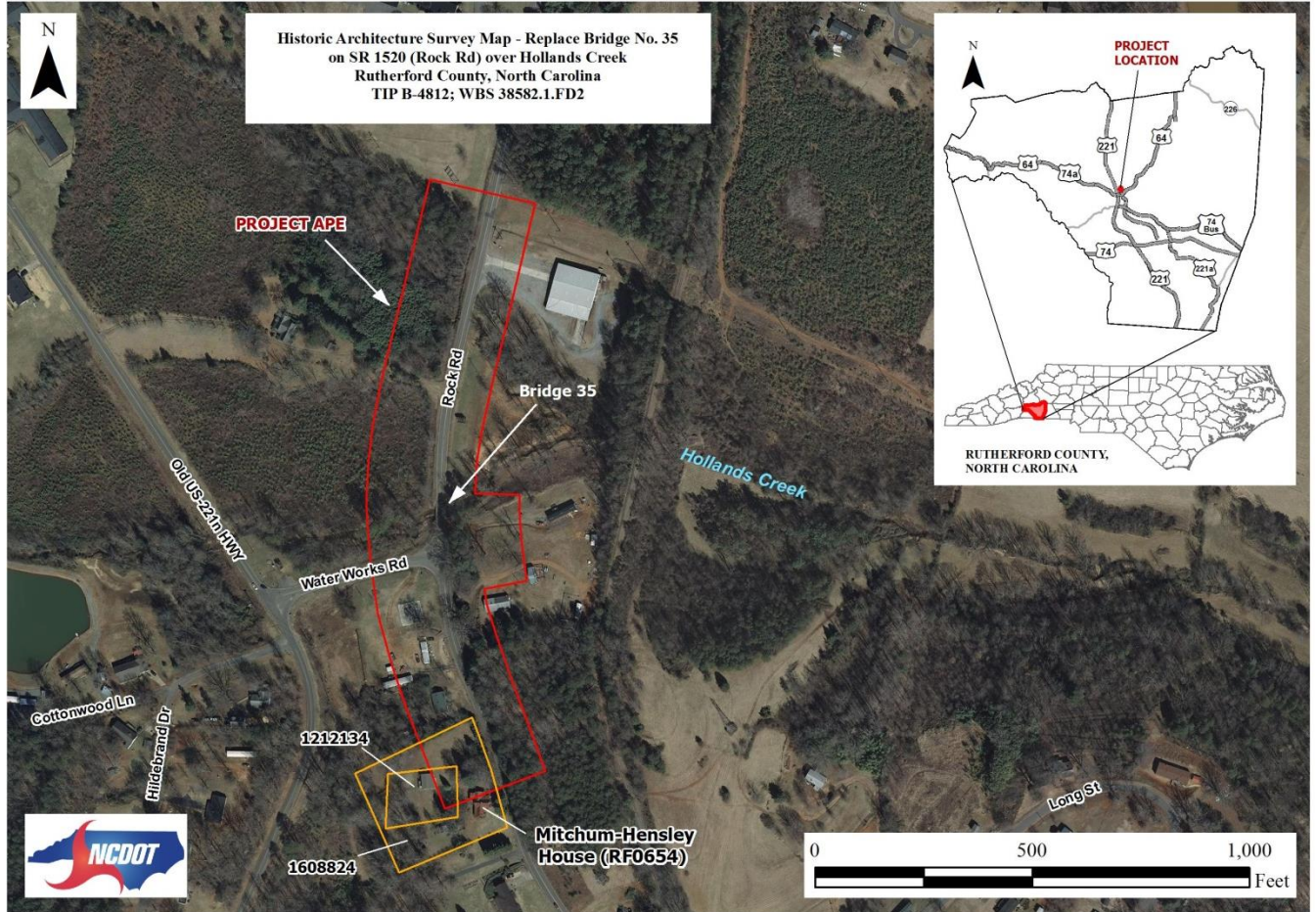


Figure 2
Mitchum-Hensley House
Area of Potential Effects (APE) Map



Property Evaluation of Eligibility

Mitchum-Hensley House (RF0654) (PINs 1608824; 1212134)

341 Rock Road
Rutherfordton, Rutherford County

Eligibility Recommendation: Not Eligible
Date of Construction: circa 1897



Physical Description (Figure 3)

Now extensively altered, the Mitchum-Hensley House occupies a 1.3-acre lot (divided into two tax parcels) on the west side of two-lane Rock Road at the northeast periphery of Rutherfordton. The house faces south, perpendicular to Rock Road. According to Herman Hensley, long-time resident, the dwelling is oriented to the original, more circuitous route of Rock Road before the roadway's realignment and improvements in the mid-twentieth century. The house now sits near the road and occupies a clearing, with woodland to the west and north as well as to the east across Rock Road. In the early twentieth century, this area was at the northern outskirts of the community of Ruth, a small, industrial suburb of Rutherfordton. However, Ruth developed primarily along the railroad line south of the Mitchum-Hensley House which still retains its predominately rural setting (Herman Hensley Interview 2015).

The original core of the circa 1897 Mitchum-Hensley House is of light-frame construction and consists of a one-story, single-pile, two-room main block with a rear, one-room ell. Both the side-gable main block and gable-roofed ell have original board-and-batten siding and four-over-four light, double-hung, wood-sash windows. The main block also has a modern, metal-sash, awning window in the west gable end. The gables in the two-room main block have later weatherboarding and modern attic windows. The gable in the rear ell has German siding. The house is located on a slight embankment with an exposed, concrete-block foundation that accommodates a crawl space along the west elevation and rear ell. Two of the original brick foundation piers remain evident in the rear ell.

The major alterations and additions to the house have occurred since the late 1950s when the Hensley family purchased the property. A modern, gable-roofed kitchen wing was added to the west bay of the façade (south elevation). This front wing has board-and-batten siding that matches the siding on the original main block, a weatherboarded gable, and wood-sash, pivot windows. A later shed extension with board-and-batten and weatherboard siding was also added to the side (west) elevation of the modern kitchen wing. The original front porch has been replaced by a two-bay, shed-roofed porch at the junction of the kitchen wing and the façade. Sheltering the front entrance, this porch has thick turned porch posts that were added after 1981 by Kenneth and Priscilla Hensley. The Hensleys also removed the brick, interior chimney that was originally situated between the two rooms in the main block. The standing-seam, metal roof is also modern (Herman Hensley Interview 2015).

The shed-roofed rear porch of the house appears to have its original configuration, sheltering the north side of the main block and extending along the west elevation of the rear wing. However, the

wood porch floor is modern, and the turned porch posts, which match those on the front porch, as well as the as the decorative sawn brackets were also added after 1981. The Hensleys also added the decorative, reeded surround that frames the rear door and constructed the nearly flat-roofed, weatherboarded bedroom bay that extends from the side (west) elevation of the ell. A small extension of the bedroom bay is currently under construction (Herman Hensley Interview 2015).

The principal investigators did not gain access to the interior of the house. Like the exterior, the interior is said to have been remodeled by the Hensleys. For example, the walls have modern sheetrock, and the mantels have been replaced (Herman Hensley Interview 2015).

The property contains one outbuilding which is located southwest of the house. Now in deteriorated condition, this frame, gable-front storage building has shed extensions and plywood siding. The house lot was subdivided in 1981 to create a 0.44-acre parcel in the middle of the property for the Hensleys' son, Kenneth, and his wife, Priscilla. A modern dwelling was subsequently built on the tract. This simple, one-story, rectangular, frame house has a side-gable roof and engaged front porch.



Mitchum-Hensley House, Façade (South Elevation) and Modern Kitchen Wing, Looking North.



Mitchum-Hensley House, Façade (South Elevation), Modern Kitchen Wing, and Side Extension, Looking North.



Mitchum-Hensley House, Front Porch, Looking North.



Mitchum-Hensley House, Rear (North) Elevation and Rear Ell, Looking Southwest.



Mitchum-Hensley House, Rear (North) Elevation and Rear Ell, Looking South.



Mitchum-Hensley House, Rear Ell and Porch, Looking West.



Mitchum-Hensley House, Side (West) Elevation, Bedroom Bay (Left), and Side Kitchen Extension (Right), Looking Northeast.



Mitchum-Hensley House, Storage Shed, Looking South.



Mitchum-Hensley House, Modern House on Subdivided Lot, Looking West.

Historical Background

The Mitchum-Hensley House is located in the community of Ruth, an industrial suburb that developed along the railroad tracks on the northern outskirts of Rutherfordton. Ruth was originally incorporated in 1893 as Hampton to honor the first mayor of the town. The community was renamed Ruth in 1906, using the first part of the county name, and for a period served as the temporary county seat. Two lumber companies—Citizens Manufacturing Company and the Sparks Lumber Company—formed the basis of the local economy ([Ruth http://rutherfordcoc.org/media/history](http://rutherfordcoc.org/media/history)).

According to the county tax records, the house was built circa 1897 by the Mitchum family who continue to have extensive holdings in the area. Although many houses in Ruth and its vicinity were built by the local lumber companies for their workers, this dwelling was constructed for the Mitchums. In 1957, Jessie Hensley (1914-?) and his wife, Addie Bradley Hensley (1910-1997), bought the property. In 1981, the Hensleys subdivided a 0.44-acre tract in the middle of their property for their son, Kenneth and his wife Priscilla, and in 1988 further subdivisions of land were conveyed to Kenneth and another son, Herman. Hensley. The Hensleys were originally from a community called Mumford's Cove, but Jessie Hensley's father, George, who was a carpenter, came to the area to construct houses for Citizens Manufacturing Company as well as houses at Lake Lure. Jessie Hensley also worked for Citizens. In the 1940 federal census, Jessie is listed as a truck driver for Citizens and living with his wife and their two sons in a rental house on the west side of the railroad in Ruth. (In 1930, the Hensleys were living on North Main Street in Rutherfordton.) The lot on which the house sits remained in a life estate for the elder Hensleys, and at their deaths, went to Kenneth and Priscilla who recently sold the property outside the family (U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Rutherford County, 1930, 1940; Rutherford County Deed Book 430: 298; 533: 230; Herman Hensley Interview).

National Register Criteria Evaluation

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Mitchum-Hensley House is recommended **not eligible** for the National Register under any criterion because of a loss of integrity.

Integrity

The circa 1897 Mitchum-Hensley House does not retain the seven aspects of integrity needed for National Register eligibility. Although the house remains on its original location and thus has integrity of location, its integrity of setting, feeling, and association have been compromised, in part, by the realignment of Rock Road. The dwelling is no longer oriented to the roadway which has been rerouted to the east. The house lot has also been subdivided, and a modern dwelling now stands near the center of the original parcel. Furthermore, the house has lost much of its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The house has been heavily remodeled with numerous additions, replacement porches, some replacement windows, doors, and weatherboard siding, and the removal of the interior chimney.

Criterion A

The Mitchum-Hensley House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion A (Event). To be eligible under Criterion A, the property must retain integrity and must be associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American prehistory or history or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a state, or a nation. Furthermore, the property must have existed at the time and be documented to be associated with the events. Finally, the property's specific association must be important as well (National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: 14*).

The Mitchum-Hensley House is not eligible under Criterion A because the house does not illustrate significant patterns of events within a local, state, or national historic context.

Criterion B

The Mitchum-Hensley House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion B (Person). To be eligible for significance under Criterion B, the house must retain integrity and 1) be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, i.e. individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context; 2) be normally associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he/she achieved significance; and 3) should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person's historic contributions. Furthermore, a property is not eligible if its only justification is that it was owned or used by a person who is or was a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group (National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: 14*).

The property is not eligible under Criterion B because it is not associated with individuals whose activities were demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context.

Criterion C

The Mitchum-Hensley House is not eligible under Criterion C for architecture. For a property to be eligible under this criterion, it must retain integrity and either 1) embody 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 (National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: 17*).

The dwelling does not possess the architectural integrity or the level of architectural significance needed for eligibility under Criterion C. The one-story, single-pile, two-room house is a traditional domestic type widely constructed in Rutherford County and throughout the region into the early twentieth century. Although never commonly used, board-and-batten siding has been recorded on Rutherford County dwellings built in the 1870s. One example is the circa 1875 James Keeter House (RF0071), located north of Rutherfordton (Gilkey Township). The Keeter house is similar to the Mitchum-Hensley House, as originally built, with its side-gable, single-pile form; two-room plan; interior, brick chimney; and board-and-batten siding. The Mitchum-Hensley House has been heavily remodeled with modern front and side additions that obscure the original form and massing of the house and replacement doors, windows, and porches. The chimney has been removed, and only some of the board-and-batten siding and four-over-four light windows on side and rear elevations remain intact. Furthermore, the interior has been modernized (Merkel 1983: 64).

Criterion D

The Mitchum-Hensley House is **not 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 or prehistory; and 2) the information must be considered important (National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15*: 21).

The property is not eligible under Criterion D because it is not likely to yield any exceptionally new information pertaining to the history of building design or technology.

Figure 3
Mitchum-Hensley House
Site Plan



Bibliography

Hensley, Herman. Interview with principal investigators. Rutherfordton, North Carolina. 19 August 2015. Mr. Hensley was a long-time resident of the Mitchum-Hensley House.

Jakle, John A., et al., *Common Houses in America's Small Towns: The Atlantic Seaboard to the Mississippi Valley*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989.

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