



**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

July 21, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kate Husband
Office of Human Environment
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley *Renee Gledhill-Earley*
Environmental Review Coordinator

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report for Replacement of Bridge 144 on SR 1397, Whittier,
PA 10-03-0126, Jackson County, ER 16-1098

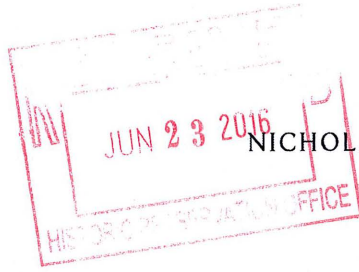
Thank you for your memorandum of June 21, 2016, transmitting the report for the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the report and **concur that the Wilmot Wesleyan Church (JK0340) is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places** for the reasons outlined.

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

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

mfurr@ncdot.gov



PAT McCRORY
Governor

NICHOLAS J. TENNYSON
Secretary

June 21, 2016

ER 16-1098

MEMORANDUM

TO: Renee Gledhill-Earley
Environmental Review Coordinator
North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

FROM: Kate Husband
Architectural Historian
NCDOT Division of Highways

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Annie
7/14 not eligible
7/11/16
Duz 7/18/16

SUBJECT: Replace Bridge No. 144 on SR 1397 (Thomas Valley Road), Historic
Architecture Eligibility Evaluation (PA No. 10-03-0126)
Whittier, Jackson County

Enclosed please find the eligibility report and survey site form for the above referenced project. Please feel free to contact me by phone (919-707-6075) if you have any additional questions or comments. We look forward to hearing from you.





HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION REPORT

Replace Bridge No. 144 over Nation's Creek on SR 1397 (Thomas Valley Road)

**2029 Thomas Valley Road
WBS# 17BP.14.R.150**

Prepared for:

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Prepared by:

JMT
1130 Situs Court
Suite 200
Raleigh, North Carolina 27606

Sara B. McLaughlin
Senior Architectural Historian



HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION REPORT

Replace Bridge No. 144 over Jackson Creek on SR 1397 (Thomas Valley Road)

WBS# 17BP.14.R.150

Prepared for:

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Prepared by:

JMT
1130 Situs Court
Suite 200
Raleigh, North Carolina 27606

Sara B. McLaughlin
Senior Architectural Historian

Sara B. McLaughlin, Senior Architectural Historian
JMT

Date

Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Date

Management Summary

JMT prepared this report in April and May of 2016 in response to North Carolina Department of Transportation’s proposal to replace Bridge No. 144 over Nations Creek on SR 1397 (Thomas Valley Road) in Jackson County. The project area is located within the unincorporated area of Whittier. The APE has been defined by the NC DOT as extending “75 feet from the center of the existing road each way and 300 feet from each end of the bridge” (Figure 3). One property has been identified within the Area of Potential Effects (APE), the Wilmot Wesleyan Church (JK 0340) as requiring further evaluation.

Investigations comply 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, Historic Architecture Group Procedures and Work Products and the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office’s (HPO) Report Standards for Historic Structure Survey Reports/ Determinations of Eligibility/Section 106/110 Compliance Reports in North Carolina.

Resource Name	NC HPO Survey Number	NRHP Eligibility Recommendation	NRHP Criteria
Wilmot Wesleyan Church	JK 0340	Not Eligible	N/A

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Project Description and Methodology

North Carolina Department of Transportation requested an intensive-level survey, in the form of an Eligibility Evaluation Report, of the Wilmot Wesleyan Church, 2029 Thomas Valley Road, Whittier, Jackson County (Figures 1, 2 and 3). Sara McLaughlin, Senior Architectural Historian at JMT completed this report.

Fieldwork was completed on May 28, 2016. The parcel was accessed and each structure was photographed and documented. Background historical research was conducted at the Jackson County Library in Sylva, North Carolina, the Jackson County Register of Deeds, and the Jackson County online Land Records service. Additionally, the HPOWEB GIS service was consulted and revealed no other historic resources within the project area. JMT obtained the existing Wilmot Wesleyan Church file from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office's (HPO) Western Office of Archives and History and reviewed National Register of Historic Places Registration Forms for similar churches in the area to provide further context.

The current pastor at the church was contacted, however, he was unable to provide any historical information. Interiors were not accessed.



Figure 1: Project area (Source: NC DOT)

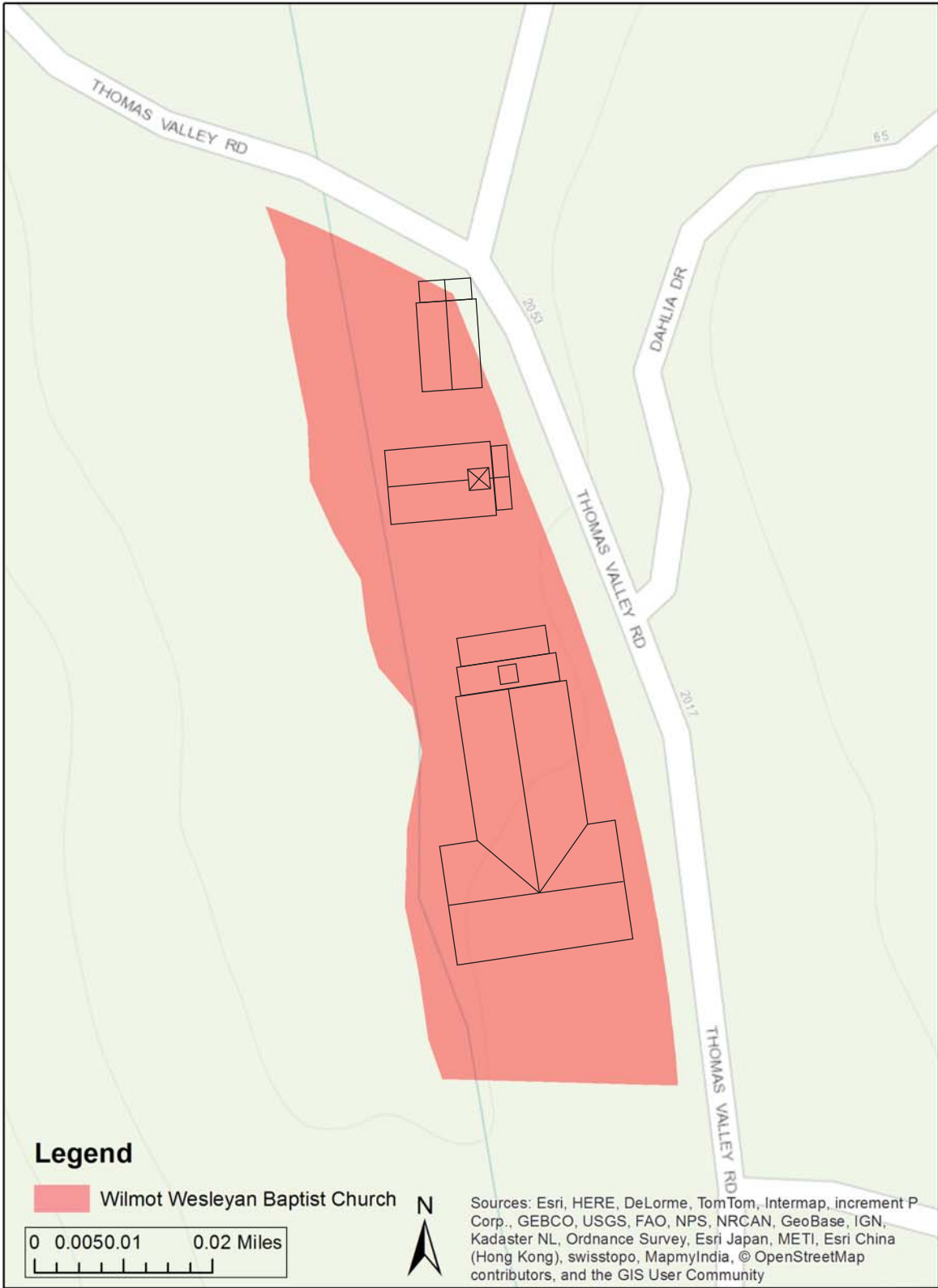


Figure 2: Wilmot Wesleyan Church parcel boundary (Source: ESRI)



Figure 3: Project area and APE (Source: ESRI)

Description

The Wilmot Wesleyan Church sits on 1.93 acres southwest of the intersection of Thomas Valley Road and Wilmont Cemetery Road. The parcel is situated just south of the Tuckasegee River and the Great Smoky Mountain Expressway. Although located on an improved, major roadway, the surrounding area is rural and sparsely populated. The topography is characterized by rolling hills and dense trees.

Currently, there are four structures on the property: the original church building (Fellowship Hall), a church with an associated shed, and a new church currently under construction. The northernmost buildings are surrounded by an asphalt-paved parking lot, while the southernmost building sits on a grassy lawn.

The original church, located at the northernmost end of the property, was constructed between 1912 and 1913 (Photograph 1). The single story, rectangular front gable building is of rusticated concrete block construction with a parged foundation. The main block is one bay wide by three bays deep, and full width concrete portico is attached to the façade (north elevation). The portico features a front gable pedimented roof of standing seam metal supported by square wood posts. This portico was added sometime after 1989 when the property was first surveyed. The original wood shingles on the gable ends have been replaced with vinyl and feature non-original louvered vents (Photograph 2). The roof is pierced by a metal chimney.

The main entrance is located on the north elevation beneath the portico. The original double door opening has been infilled with weatherboard siding and a single paneled door (Photograph 3). Three symmetrical window openings are located on the east and west elevations. All windows are replacement nine-over-six vinyl with simulated divided lights and wood siding to infill the large original openings (Photograph 4).

The rear elevation has been altered to accommodate a paneled door in the west bay, which opens onto a concrete ramp with a metal hand rail on the west side to allow for ADA access (Photograph 4).

To the south of the original structure, a church was constructed in 1947 (the original plaque from this structure has been moved and worked into the new church currently under construction). The banked church is a one story, front gable structure of concrete block set on a concrete block foundation (Photograph 5). It is one bay wide by four bays deep with a standing seam metal roof. The front, east elevation features a square concrete block bell tower topped by a hipped standing seam metal roof with diamond-shaped louvered vents below the eaves. The main entrance is located on the first story below the tower. A replacement double door with semicircular lights beneath a large stained glass fanlight is set in a thick surround. A full-width pedimented portico has been attached to the façade. Wide concrete steps and a concrete ADA ramp lead to a concrete platform beneath the standing seam metal front gable roof, which has boxed metal eaves and is



The Wilmot Wesleyan Church looking southwest

Resource Name	Wilmot Wesleyan Church
HPO Survey Site #	JK 0340
Street Address	2029 Thomas Valley Road
PIN	7612-49-9195
Construction Date(s)	1912-1913, 1947
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible

supported by fluted piers. The gable end is clad in vinyl siding and has an octagonal louvered vent. (Photograph 6)

The north and south (side) elevations are symmetrical. Each have four, in-filled arched window openings. The openings have cast sills and arched lintels. Beneath the three western windows on each elevation, the lower level is fenestrated by replacement vinyl two-light windows beneath cast lintels. (Photograph 7)

The rear, west elevation has a central door with a cast lintel on the lower level. The door opening was likely an original window opening as its top height and lintel match the flanking windows. It is sheltered by a non-original front gable portico with a standing seam metal roof and vinyl siding in the gable end. The roof is supported by thin metal piers set into concrete block wing walls. Flanking this entrance are replacement vinyl, four-over-four, double-hung windows beneath cast lintels. Directly above the two lower level windows are arched three-light stained glass windows. The openings have cast sills and arched lintels. (Photograph 8)

To the southwest of the c. 1947 building is a single story, front gable concrete block shed (Photograph 9). It is one bay wide by one bay deep and is capped by an asphalt shingle roof with wide overhanging eaves and exposed wood rafters. The structure is set on a concrete block foundation and has a replacement roll-up garage door on the east elevation (Photograph 10).

The southernmost building on the property is a brick church currently under construction (Photograph 11). It is a single story, "T"-shaped brick building with a front gable porch and a steeple. Because it is currently being constructed, it does not meet the age requirements for potential National Register listing.



Photograph 1: North and west elevations of the original church; looking southeast.



Photograph 2: North and east elevations of the original church; looking southwest.



Photograph 3: Replacement door of the original church on the north facade; looking south.



Photograph 4: South and west elevations of the original church; looking northeast.



Photograph 5: East and south elevations of the c. 1947 church; looking northwest.



Photograph 6: East elevation of the c. 1947 church; looking west.



Photograph 7: North and west elevations of the c. 1947 church; looking southeast.



Photograph 8: West elevation of the c. 1947 church; looking southeast.



Photograph 9: East and south elevations of the block shed; looking west.



Photograph 10: North elevation of the block shed; looking south.



Photograph 11: North and west elevations of the modern church; looking south.

History

The Wilmot Wesleyan Church, also known as the Wilmot/Wilmont Baptist Church or the Wilmot/Wilmont Missionary Baptist Church, was constructed between 1912 and 1913 at 2029 Thomas Valley Road in Whittier. According to a February 21, 1913 article in *The Jackson County Journal*, the church was nearing completion and was set to be dedicated on February 4, 1913. The congregation however, was originally established by J.P. Painter in 1893 (Williams).

The first rail line made it to western North Carolina in 1880, when the Southern Railway reached Asheville. In 1884, the line expanded further west to the town of Murphy, running through the towns of Wilmot and Whittier. The Historic District application for downtown Sylva describes: "Industrial production increased exponentially after 1884, when the Western North Carolina Railroad extended its line originating in Salisbury to Jackson County. A fifty-year span of extensive growth ensued, with logging, mining, and tourism fueling the area's development" (Section 8 p 56).

The area was particularly favorable for the lumber industry. A 1912 publication by the Southern Railway described the Wilmot station area:

Located at a point where Bradley Creek, from the south, and Camp Creek, from the North, flow into the Tuckasegee River, Wilmot is peculiarly favored in its lumbering operations, which are considerable. Both the Plott Balsam and the Cowee Mountains in the near vicinity of the village are covered with fine hardwood timber. Portable saw mills are located far up towards the summit of the mountains, and the manufactured lumber is sent down into the valley in a huge flume through which a stream of water has been diverted. At the lower terminus of this flume the timber is disposed among the wood-working plants near the station (Western 41).

As industry boomed, more settlers arrived in this far western portion of the state. As the community grew, schools, civic buildings, and religious institutions were formed. The Baptist community was particularly strong in Jackson County. The county's oldest church, Cullowhee Baptist, was constructed around 1918, though the congregation was established nearly a century prior in 1821 (Breedlove 2009; Hotaling 2013). The county is home to nearly 20 extant Baptist churches and "Baptist congregations outnumber Methodist churches by about six to one" (Hotaling 2013).

The current Wilmot Wesleyan property is made up of five individual lots acquired over a nearly a century. Between 1905 and 1909, Missionary Baptist Church of Wilmot acquired two parcels of land from D.C. Dills and Cora Dills, M.M. Buchanan, and C.E. Buchanan to construct a church (Jackson County Deed Books 41:204, 58:506).

According to Jackson County property records, what is now Fellowship Hall was originally built in 1960 and was significantly remodeled in 1980; however, historic news articles and a visual analysis indicate that the Fellowship Hall was constructed between 1912 and 1913 as the first church building on the property (Big J February 21 and 28, 1913).

In the 1990s, the church acquired the land south of the original site in order to erect a new, larger church to support their increased membership. They began construction of the new church in 2013, and it is expected to be completed in 2016.

Architectural Context

There has always been a strong Baptist presence in Jackson County. The county's oldest church, the wood-framed, Cullowhee Baptist was constructed around 1918, though the congregation was established nearly a century prior in 1821 (Breedlove 2009; Hotaling 2013). The National Register listed Webster Baptist Church, constructed in 1900, serves as an example of typical Baptist church in Jackson County. Its rural Victorian style, weatherboard construction, bell tower and gable end plan is "typical of first-generation rural churches built in Jackson County during the second half of the nineteenth century" (Humphries 4).

Constructed between 1912 and 1913, the Wilmot Wesleyan Church was unlike other churches in the county.

During that era in Jackson County's history, many dwellings were characterized with decorated framework, and churches were likewise of decorated frame construction. Most of these structures were small, rectangular buildings with the entrance in the gable end of the building, and most of the places of worship had belfries capped by conical or pyramid shaped roofs (Jackson County Planning Department 2012:7.3).

Comparatively, the Wilmot Wesleyan Church was a single story, front gable building constructed of concrete block and devoid of any ornamentation including a belfry or bell tower. The only similarity to other churches was the placement of its main entrance in the gable end. The 1947 church was designed with a belfry, however, its construction materials and arched windows are not consistent with the prototypical church design of the county.

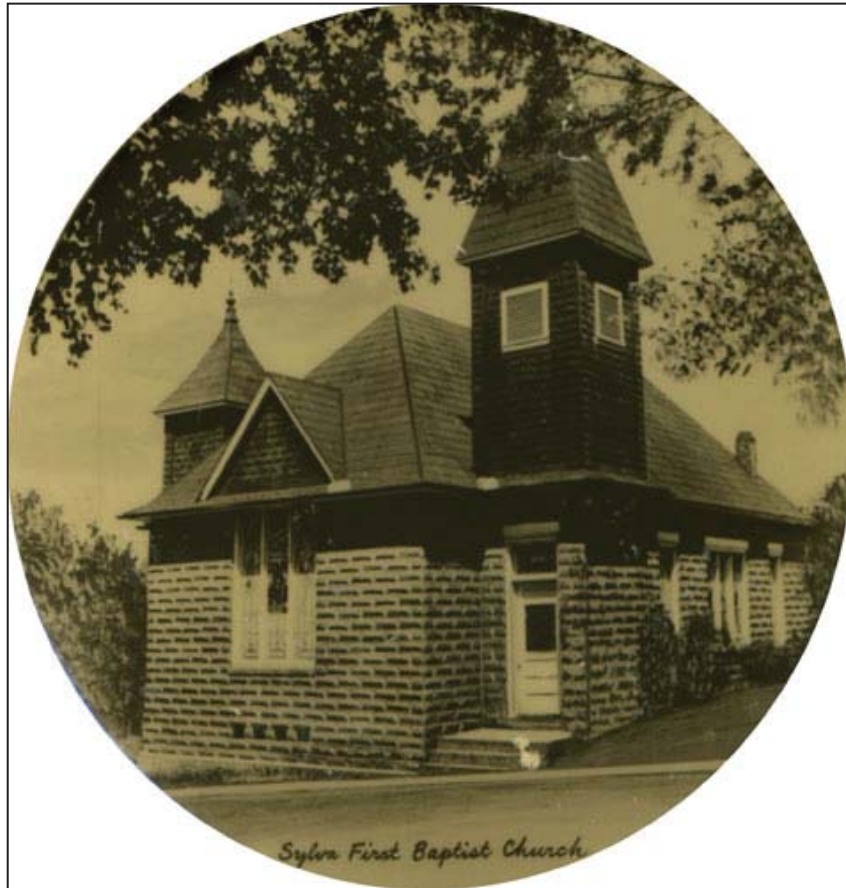
The predominantly working-class community of Wilmot developed around the lumber industry after construction of the Murphy Branch of the Western North Carolina Railroad (later the Southern Railway System). The design of the Wilmot Wesleyan Church reflects the working community with its utilitarian, functional aesthetic. While other churches around Jackson County (i.e.: Webster Methodist Church and Webster Baptist Church) were frame, Gothic Revival and rural Victorian

respectively, Wilmot is a simple, one room, concrete block structure with no ornamentation. The First Baptist Church of Sylva (razed in 1972) was a comparable example of a church constructed of concrete block but its bell tower, shingled roof, dormer, and fenestration pattern demonstrated a more elaborate design.

When the congregation outgrew their first small space, they constructed a larger structure just to the south. This 1947 concrete block building, shares more similarities with other churches in the area. Prior to the addition of the front portico, the building was a simple symmetrical front gable church with a rectangular footprint. The square bell tower with pyramid roof at the center of the façade holding the main entrance reflected more typical, regional church design. The banked construction, however, was unique.



North elevation of the Wilmot Wesleyan Church prior to the porch addition.
(Source: 1989 North Carolina Historic Structures Short Data Sheet)



Sylvan First Baptist Church (Source: *Sylva Herald*)

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation

Based on research completed for this report, JMT recommends the Wilmot Wesleyan Church not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. While the resource maintains its integrity of location, design, materials and association, it does not maintain its integrity of setting, workmanship, or feeling.

Wilmot Wesleyan Baptist Church is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion A (event). *To be eligible under Criterion A, a resource must be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.* Although the Baptists have a long history in Jackson County, North Carolina, the Wilmot Wesleyan Church has played no notable role in their development, unlike the Cullowhee Baptist Church whose congregation formed in 1821 and is still active today, or the National Register listed Webster National Church whose history can be traced back to 1854 and follows Webster's transformation from a congregation that traveled as many as eight miles round trip to established 'preaching points' to a congregation with their own 'meeting house'. It is for this reason that the Wilmot Wesleyan Church is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A.

Wilmot Wesleyan Baptist Church is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion B (person). *To be eligible under Criterion B, a resource must be associated with the lives of significant persons in our past.* Little was found about the people involved with the Wilmot Wesleyan Church including the congregation or church leadership. The resource is not associated with the lives of significant persons in our past therefore the church is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria B.

Wilmot Wesleyan Baptist Church is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C (design/construction). *To be eligible under Criterion C, a resource must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.* The architecture and design of the Wilmot Wesleyan Church is unlike the prototypical historic church in Jackson County. The original church's concrete block construction, lack of ornamentation and plain vernacular style is in high contrast to the more prevalent Gothic Revival or rural Victorian frame churches such as the National Register listed Webster Baptist Church and the Webster Methodist Church; also in Jackson County. Additionally, one of the primary architectural details of Jackson County churches, the belfry or bell tower is absent from the Wilmot Wesleyan Church. Although the 1947 church does retain a belfry, its modern roof and doors, arched windows and porch lessen the structure's rural church appearance. Additionally, modern alterations to the 1947 building including the porch addition, modern storm windows, modern doors and roof have further diminished the structure's architectural integrity. As a result of the loss of integrity, the resource does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Wilmot Wesleyan Baptist Church is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion D (potential to yield information). *To be eligible under Criterion D, a resource must yield or be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.* The early-twentieth-century church site is unlikely to contribute significant information pertaining to building technology or historical documentation not otherwise accessible from other extant resources and written records.

For these reasons, JMT recommends the Wilmot Wesleyan Church not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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