



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

September 12, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vanessa Patrick
Human Environment Unit
NC Department of Transportation

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

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report, Replace Bridge 352 on Willow Road over
I-40-85 Business, B-5713, PA 16-01-0107, Guilford County, ER 16-1528

Thank you for your memorandum of August 25, 2016 transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the report and concur that Bluford Park Subdivision (GF8955) is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for the reasons outlined in 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

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



PAT McCRORY
Governor

NICHOLAS J. TENNYSON
Secretary

To: Renee Gledhill-Earley, NCHPO
From: Vanessa E. Patrick, NCDOT
Date: August 25, 2016
Subject: *Historic Architectural Resources Evaluation Report for
T.I.P. No. B-5713, Guilford County, North Carolina –
PA Project 16-01-0107*

1528
EZ 16

#

DC 9/19/16

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is conducting planning studies for the above-referenced project. Enclosed for your review is a report presenting an evaluation of one historic architectural resource in the B-5713, Guilford County project area (one hard copy and a CD).

The report addresses the Bluford Park subdivision (GF8955) in Greensboro and recommends it as *not eligible* for the National Register of Historic Places.

Photographs, GIS data, and a survey site form (all on CD) for the evaluated resource are also enclosed.

We look forward to receiving your comments on the report. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at vepatrick@ncdot.gov or 919-707-6082. Thank you.

V.E.P.

Attachments



HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCE REPORT

INTENSIVE EVALUATION FOR

BLUFORD PARK

Replace Bridge No. 352 on Willow Road over I-40/85 Business
Guilford County
WBS# 45669.1.1
B-5713

Prepared for:
Human Environment Section
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1598 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina, 27699

Prepared by:
 CALYX
CALYX Engineers and Consultants
6750 Tryon Road
Cary, North Carolina, 27518

AUGUST 2016

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AUGUST 2016

August 5, 2016

Date
Sarah Woodard David, Principal Investigator

Date
Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor
Historic Architecture Group
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Management Summary

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes replacing Bridge No. 352 on Willow Road over I-40/I-85 Business in Guilford County. The NCDOT defines this project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) as 100 feet on either side of Bridge No. 352 and 300 feet from each end of the structure, north and south, along Willow Road. NCDOT architectural historians reviewed the properties within the APE and determined that one property greater than 50 years of age warranted further evaluation: the Bluford Park Subdivision (GF8955). Architectural surveys of the city, overseen by the State Historic Preservation Office, were undertaken in late 1975, 1989-1990, 1995-1996, and 2006-2008. The Bluford Park Subdivision was not documented in any past architectural survey.

This project is subject to review under the *Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects* (NCDOT/NCHPO/FHWA, revised and reauthorized in 2015) NCDOT architectural historians established an APE for the project and conducted a preliminary investigation, identifying one resource warranting additional study and eligibility evaluation.

There were no other properties within the APE that are greater than 50 years of age, and none which appear to meet Criteria Consideration G for properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years. This report does not address Bridge No. 352. Built in 1958, the span is a common bridge type that does not have the engineering or aesthetic significance for National Register eligibility under any criterion (NCDOT Historic Bridge Inventory, 2005).

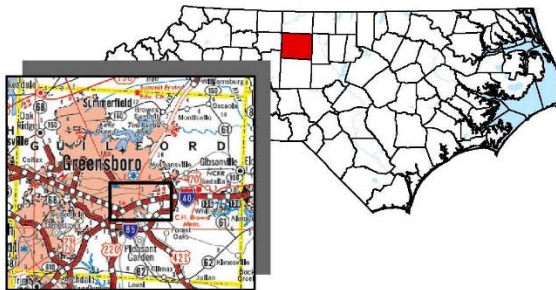
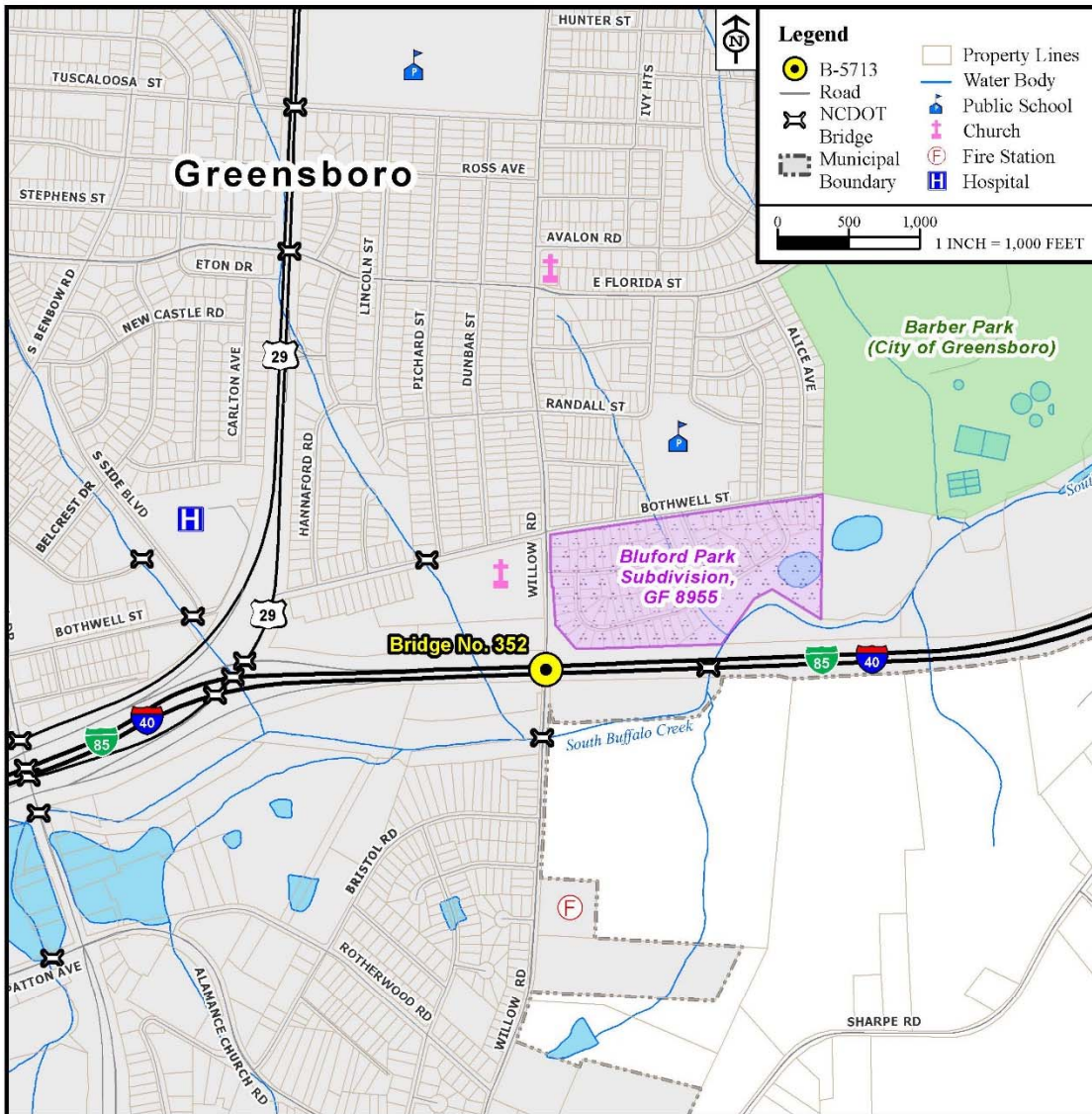
In May 2016, NCDOT requested that CALYX Engineers and Consultants (CALYX) complete research, an intensive-level historic field survey, and a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) evaluation of the Bluford Park Subdivision.

Based on the field survey, background research, and the evaluation documented in this report, Bluford Park is not recommended eligible for the NRHP.

Property Name	NCHPO Survey Site Number	Eligibility Determination	Criteria
Bluford Park Subdivision	GF8955	Not Eligible	N/A

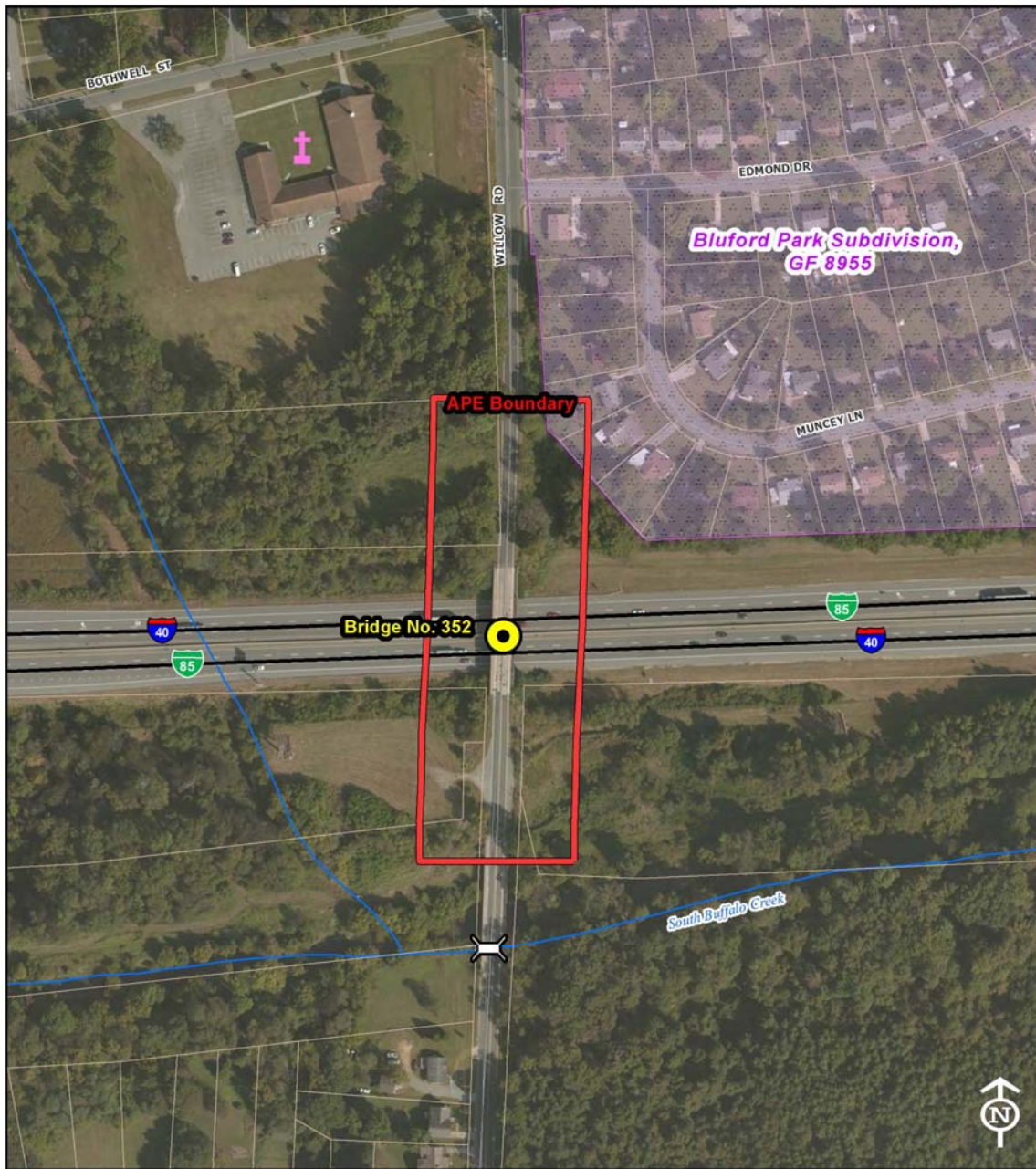
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	NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT
	<p align="center"> GUILFORD COUNTY <i>Replace Bridge No. 352 on Willow Rd. over I-40/I-85 Business in Greensboro</i> STIP No. B-5713 / WBS No. 45669.1.1 Federal Aid No. NHP-0040(022) </p>
Project Vicinity	

Replace Bridge No. 352 Over I-40/85
 Guilford County
 WBS 45669.1.1
 B-5713



<p>Area of Potential Effects (APE) STIP No. B-5713 / WBS No. 45669.1.1 Federal Aid No. NHP-0040(022)</p> 	<p align="center">GUILFORD COUNTY</p> <p align="center"><i>Replace Bridge No. 352 on Willow Rd. over I-40/I-85 Business in Greensboro</i></p>  <p align="center">1 INCH = 200 FEET</p>
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Methodology

On May 25, 2016, CALYX Architectural Historian Sarah Woodard David visited the Bluford Park Subdivision, completed photo documentation, and conducted a windshield survey for comparable examples of similar resources in Greensboro. The investigator undertook research at the Greensboro Public Library, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, and the North Carolina State Archives. The investigator interviewed and corresponded with a historian with the Greensboro Historical Museum, the subdivision developer's son, and Greensboro Parks and Recreation staff. The investigator also used online research tools and resources, including the Guilford County Register of Deeds online index, Guilford County GIS Mapping, and the web-based subscription services ancestry.com and newspapers.com.

CALYX conducted all fieldwork, research, and evaluations to meet the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR 800, as well as NCDOT's *Guidelines for the Survey Reports for Historic Architectural Resources*.

Evaluation: Bluford Park

Resource Name	Bluford Park Subdivision
HPO Survey Site Number	GF8955
Street Address	Muncey Ln., Bothwell St., Eastwood Dr., Edmund Dr., Eastwood Ct.
PIN	Multiple
Construction Dates	1961-1963
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



Property Description

Bluford Park is a small residential subdivision, containing 96 modest mid-twentieth-century Ranch houses, located in southeast Greensboro in Guilford County in North Carolina's Piedmont region. The neighborhood is situated on a gentle slope running from the subdivision's northern boundary of Bothwell Street downhill toward South Buffalo Creek, present-day Interstate 40/85 Business, and a public park, also called Bluford Park, located on the edge of the subdivision. An unnamed tributary of South Buffalo Creek bisects the subdivision from north to south.

The unnamed creek creates a distinct barrier between the subdivision's two sections and only a small wooden footbridge crosses it. The creek bank is wooded and a grassy buffer flanks both sides of the creek.

To the west of the unnamed creek, the subdivision follows a J-shaped street named Muncey Lane that runs south from Bothwell Street, turns west and then north to connect with Edmund Drive, which runs east-west from Willow Street on the west to Muncey Lane on the east. To the east of the unnamed creek, the neighborhood is laid out along Eastwood Drive, which runs in a U-shape starting and ending on Bothwell Street. On Eastwood Drive's short east-west length at the bottom of the U, a cul-de-sac called Eastwood Court extends to the north.

The subdivision is well-defined with Willow Road on the west separating the neighborhood from a large open tract occupied by a church. Bothwell Street, on the north, is lined with houses from another subdivision, but on the east and south, the subdivision adjoins city park land and the Interstate 40/85 Business corridor. The east half of the subdivision is particularly

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sequestered with all houses on Eastwood Drive facing woodland, the unnamed creek, or open park land on the opposite side of the street.

Most yards are relatively flat, grassy, lawns, and most have only one or two trees in the front yard along with modest shrubs. Heavily treed yards or elaborate landscaping do not exist.

The subdivision's uniformity is remarkable. Bluford Park houses are 950-square-foot Ranch houses with minimal stylistic expression. All houses have side-gable roofs, continuous brick foundations, and all entrances are off-center, single-leaf front doors. To one side of the door, the shorter width of façade incorporates a picture window or bank of two or three windows. To the other side of the door, two short windows or two pairs of short windows occupy the longer section of the façade. All houses are brick veneer or brick veneer with a section of siding on the façade. Those that are not sided entirely in brick feature a plane of non-brick siding surrounding the short windows in the longer section of the façade. Commonly, vinyl siding covers this area, but, in a few cases, apparently original aluminum siding (figure 7) and original asbestos shingle siding (figure 8) remains. Houses have unsheltered front stoops rather than porches. The interior plans are not known.

Variation among the houses occurs with windows. Some houses have divided-light, double-hung sash that reference Colonial Revival sensibilities (figure 6). Paneled or louvered shutters usually flank these windows. Others houses feature single-light casement windows or two-light, double-hung windows that create a somewhat more modern or Modernist feel, and shutters are absent on these houses (figure 8).

Common modifications include the installation of vinyl siding over the non-brick areas of siding and the replacement of original windows. While some houses have been modestly expanded to the rear, or in rare cases, to the side through an extension of the existing roof, most houses remain nearly unaltered. Only a very small number of houses have had front porches added. A second story was added to one house on Eastwood Drive.

Bluford Park houses have paved driveways, but they did not have garages or carports originally except in two instances where topography allows for basement-level garages under the houses. Today, only about 15 percent of the subdivision's 96 houses have garages or carports, and most of those are free-standing, prefabricated carports (figure 10).

Outbuildings accompany many houses, but nearly all of them are small, prefabricated storage buildings (figure 12). Two large examples appear to be workshops.



1: Aerial photograph of Bluford Park, 2010



2: 2200 block of Bothwell Street, facing west

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3: 1800 block of Eastwood Drive, facing southeast



4: 1800 block of Muncey Lane, facing west

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5: Typical Bluford Park house with vinyl siding, 2104 Bothwell Street



6: Typical Bluford Park house with replacement windows, 2300 Bothwell Street

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7: Typical Bluford Park house with Colonial Revival references, 1804 Eastwood Avenue



8: Typical Bluford Park house with original aluminum siding, 1812 Muncey Lane

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9: Typical Bluford Park house with original asbestos siding and Modernist windows, 2108 Edmund Drive



10: Bluford Park house with significant alterations including vinyl siding, replacement windows, new bay window, 1826 Muncey Lane

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11: Typical Bluford Park house with carport and stoop additions, 1831 Muncey Lane



12: One of a small number of porch additions; carport in rear yard, 2108 Bothwell Street

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13: Typical Bluford Park prefabricated outbuilding, 1809 Willow Road



14: The unnamed creek corridor, facing south, in the 1800 block of Eastwood Drive

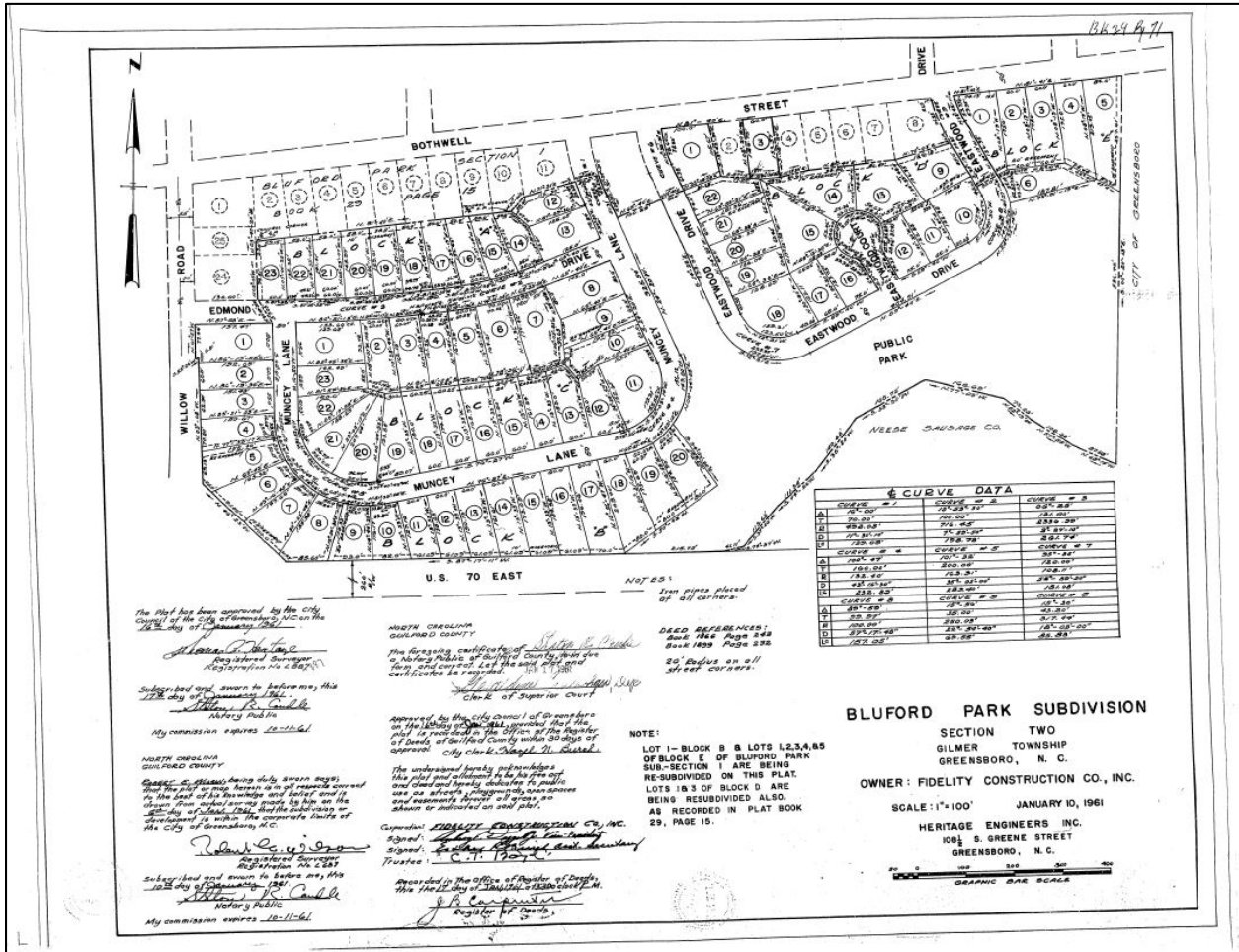


15: Bluford Park, facing southwest

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Historical Background

Fidelity Construction Company platted Bluford Park in 1960 and 1961.¹ The 1958 Greensboro City Directory confirms that no one lived at any of the addresses included in Bluford Park at that time. The next available city directory is 1962, and it suggests that the Bothwell Street section was nearly completely built-out while a few people were scattered among the other streets. By 1963, the city directory records all the subdivision's streets as being fully or nearly fully occupied with the exception of Muncey Lane, which had only two occupants but a long list of vacant addresses signifying that construction was underway.²

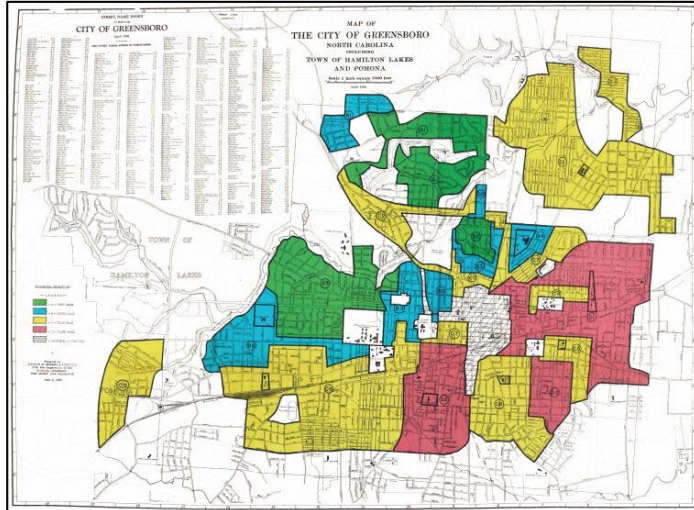


16: Bluford Park plat map, 1961

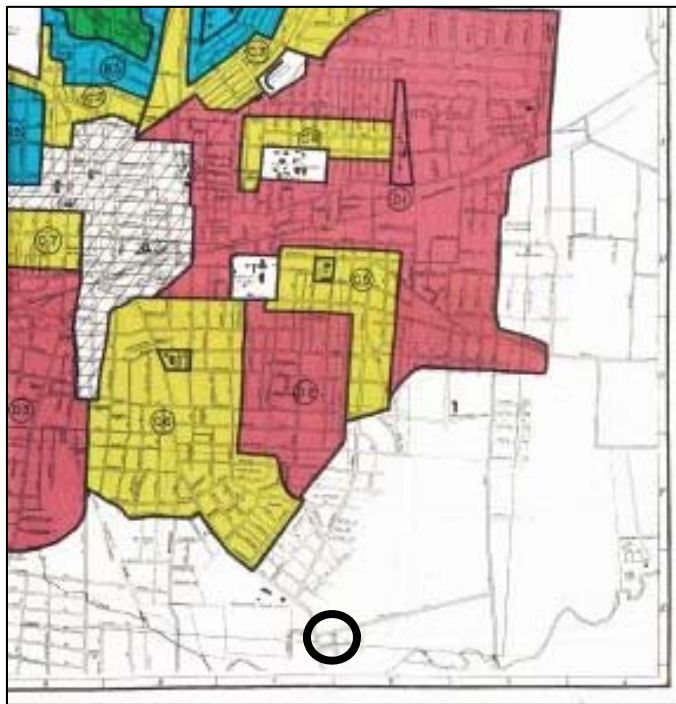
All the original occupants were homeowners, and based on a sampling of census records corresponding to the names in the earliest city directories, all appear to have been African

¹ Guilford County Plat Book 29, page 15, and Plat Book 29, page 71.

² Greensboro City Directories, various years.



17: FHA Residential Security Map of Greensboro, 1937, with red areas being riskiest for lenders and yellow being next riskiest. Map available via the University of Richmond's Digital Scholarship Lab at http://dsl.richmond.edu/holc_national/.



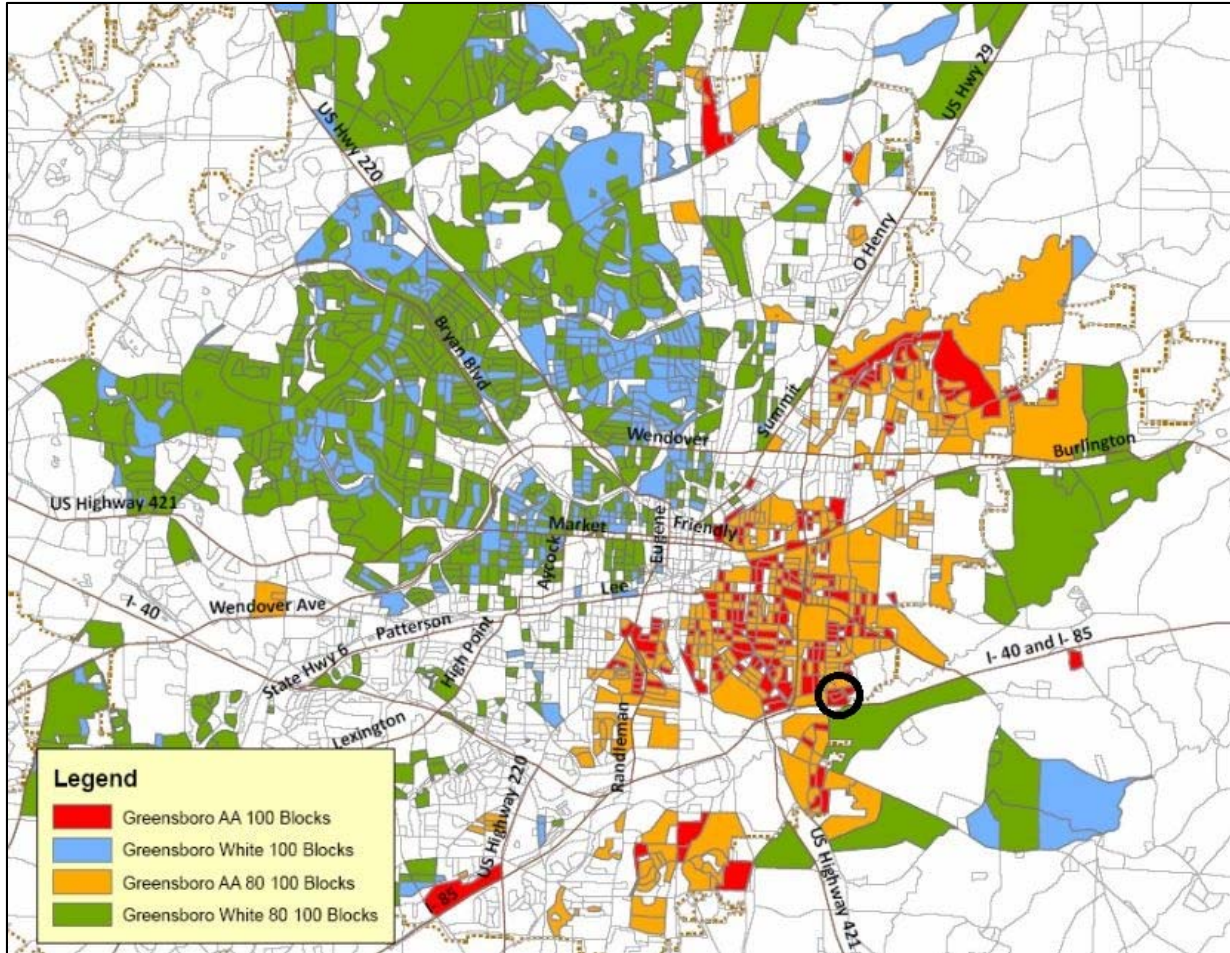
18: Detail of 1937 FHA "redline" map with Bluford Park area circled at bottom center

American. Most residents held blue-collar jobs, such as mechanic, bricklayer, custodian, janitor, or manufacturing employee. Other occupations included restaurant manager, one member of the U.S. Army, and one teacher at Bluford School, which was a near-by African American elementary school.

Bluford Park's creation came at the height of racial segregation when Greensboro's African American community began protesting separate but supposedly equal fountains, lunch counters, schools, universities, and buses. The most famous protests were the sit-ins that started at Greensboro's Woolworth lunch counter in February of 1960.

Commercial spaces and public buildings were not, however, the only segregated places. Neighborhoods, too, were separated by race through several practices and policies, both informal and formal, intentional and habitual.

Of those practices and policies, redlining was one of the most insidious methods for dividing cities into race-based neighborhoods. Redlining is the practice of denying services, usually financial in nature, to a geographic area, and whether redlining caused racial segregation or merely reflected it, redlining codified neighborhood segregation when the Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) codified the practice with Residential Security Maps. Both programs were New Deal creations, and their maps classified



19: Map of Greensboro with predominantly African American blocks shaded red and orange, Bluford Park circled in black. From a 2008 Fair Housing Choice Update Report available via <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=3438>.

neighborhoods by their level of risk to a lender. While assessing the riskiness of a loan seems reasonable, the map-makers consistently and intentionally based their judgements of risk on a neighborhood's racial demographics. The maps became a government-sanctioned stamp of approval or disapproval that guided private and public investment dollars. As a result, lenders and insurance companies would not make loans or write policies for properties in high-risk or "unsafe" (African American) sections of a city. The policy left redlined areas starved for capital, and all kinds of services became unavailable or too expensive for residents to obtain. In most cases, redlined areas of the pre-World War II era remain impoverished to this day, as Figure 19 illustrates.³

³ Ta-Nehisi, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic* (June 2014): www.theatlantic.com/magazine/toc/2014/06/; Emily Badger, "Redlining: Still a Thing," *Washington Post*, May 28, 2015; and "1934-1968: FHA Mortgage Insurance Requirements Utilize Redlining," *The Fair*

As geographic segregation became an entrenched, standardized, government-sanctioned practice among urban planners, realtors, developers, and bankers, certain sections of cities were reserved, either formally or informally, legally or illegally, for certain races. The pattern set forth in Greensboro's 1937 FHA map remains in place today with east and south Greensboro being predominately lower income and African American while west and north Greensboro is white and generally wealthier.

Bluford Park was built in an area that the FHA did not evaluate in 1937 because the area was undeveloped (see figures 17 and 18), but it's location in southeast Greensboro is exactly where one would expect it to be as redlining reinforced segregation well into the mid-twentieth century.

The neighborhood's name comes either directly from F. D. Bluford or from a near-by school built and named for him in 1956. Bluford was one of North Carolina A&T State University's longest-serving and most-influential presidents, and he had died the previous year.⁴ Another place bears his name as well. Bluford Park is a public park that forms the south edge of part of the Bluford Park subdivision. The neighborhood's plat map calls the park simply "public park," and when it was officially named "Bluford" is not known.

Using the name "Bluford" for the school, the neighborhood, and the park took advantage of the reverence that Greensboro's African American community felt toward Dr. Bluford. The name also served as a useful geographic reference, letting potential buyers know the subdivision was close to the school, which appears to have been named first. Possibly most importantly, however, it furthered the not-so-subtle marketing of the neighborhood toward African Americans

Fidelity Construction Company built Bluford Park. Its president was a white man named Roger P. Kavanagh who was a prolific homebuilder across North Carolina. It appears most of Kavanagh's work was with white neighborhoods and, concurrent with his involvement with Bluford Park, his other company, Kavanagh-Smith and Company, built O. Henry Oaks on the north side of town.⁵

Housing Center of Greater Boston, via <http://www.bostonfairhousing.org/timeline/1934-1968-FHA-Redlining.html>.

⁴ Karen Hawkins and Cate McDowell, "Desegregation and Integration of Greensboro's Public Schools, 1954-1974," from the University of North Carolina Greensboro's Civil Rights Greensboro digital collection accessed via <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/essaygreensboroschools/collection/CivilRights>; North Carolina A&T State University Presidents and Chancellors, Ferdinand D. Bluford biography, accessed via <http://www.library.ncat.edu/resources/archives/leaders.html>; and Miles Wolff, *Lunch at the 5 & 10*, revised edition. (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1990), 70.

⁵ John Kavanagh (son of Roger Kavanagh), interview with the author, June 1, 2016.

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Like Bluford Park, O. Henry Oaks takes its name from a famous, locally venerated person: Greensboro-born writer, William Sidney Porter, who used the pen name O. Henry. Both subdivisions are named for acclaimed representatives of the city's African American and white residents, thereby helping potential buyers know the racial expectations for each neighborhood.

Architectural Context

Beginning in the nineteenth century, subdivision designers looked to English Garden Cities and romantic American suburbs such as Llewellyn Park in New Jersey and Riverside, a Chicago suburb, for inspiration, resulting in neighborhoods with curvilinear streets, often following or responding to topography, with houses set within natural or naturalistic landscapes. By the late-post-World War II era, when Bluford Park was constructed, developers had stripped the concept of a sylvan oasis down to its very barest bones. Developers, landscape architects, and engineers spent less time and money on design and drew streets to maximize land use rather than visual interest or beauty.

At Bluford Park, the street layout is based on two U-shapes that extend south from a straight east-west running street. Rather than incorporating the unnamed creek in the middle of the property as an appealing attribute, as a designer might have done in an earlier subdivision or in a more expensive neighborhood, the creek forms a barrier between two halves of the neighborhood. The layout design is basic, with no apparent thought given to topography or to creating curving streets merely for the sake of creating aesthetic interest.

Likewise, Bluford Park's residences are basic, no-frills, tract houses. Tract housing is the practice of building many similar houses on a tract of land that is then subdivided and sold. It originated in the late 1930s as FHA began promoting pre-approved houses and house forms. FHA "minimum houses" and its "small house program" disseminated plans for simple dwellings with "safe" traditional, modestly Colonial Revival detailing. To take advantage of FHA-qualified homebuyers and maximize profits, builders worked on larger scales, filling subdivisions with only one or two different FHA-approved houses rather than selling lots to owners to build individualized houses. Today, tract housing remains a common way for builders to maximize profits on inexpensive houses.

Redlining meant that FHA qualification was not a factor in the decision to develop Bluford Park using a tract housing model, but the practice had proven so profitable that it had become entrenched in the construction industry. With little money invested in design or ornamentation, the developer was able to sell inexpensive houses to working class African Americans regardless of their access to financing.

Bluford Park's developer employed the same techniques with only slightly more architectural variation at O. Henry Oaks on the north side of Greensboro. O. Henry Oaks buyers were

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working class whites who, presumably, had easier access to FHA loans, which allowed the builder to build slightly larger and slightly less uniform tract houses.

Both the plainness of the layout and the plainness of the houses reveal the developer's focus on building and selling cheaply and quickly. In turn, the customer may not have expected much more or could not have afforded much more from his or her purchase than a basic house on a cleared lot.

The use of the Ranch house form is not surprising. Alan Hess writes that, "Beginning in the 1950s, the Ranch House became one of the most widespread, successful, and purposeful of American housing types."⁶ Through *Sunset* magazine, Cliff May popularized the form, to which styles, most usually Modernism or Colonial Revival, could be applied. Architecturally distinctive Ranch houses were ground-hugging buildings with low-pitched roofs that incorporated nature, usually through the use of natural materials like stone or through the use of large picture windows and sliding glass doors that, in theory, could bring the outdoors in.

Bluford Park's houses come out of the Ranch tradition, but they are simplified and stripped down to the Ranch's most basic components: a one-story, side-gable form lacking a porch, a picture window or pair of windows on the façade, short windows in the zoned bedroom portion of the house, and a change in materials to emphasize the house's horizontal orientation. They do not respond particularly to their landscape and because they are so small, they are not long, rambling, "classic" Ranch houses.

Comparable Examples

The most obvious architectural comparison to Bluford Park is O. Henry Oaks, built by the same developer at the same time and with very similar building designs. O. Henry Oaks is laid out on a grid with a few slight curves added. The houses are similar to Bluford Park residences - compact Ranch houses without garages. The houses appear to have been constructed with slightly more architectural variation than the Bluford Park dwellings, and somewhat larger with original-form houses ranging from 1,100 to 1,300 square feet in size, compared to Bluford Park's uniformly 950 square-foot houses.

Today, O. Henry Oaks appears to be a neighborhood of modest means, but most of the houses have been altered and updated with the addition of rooms, garages, and porches. The frequency with which the houses were altered likely reflects the fact that this neighborhood was for white families who generally enjoyed more prosperity than their African American counterparts who did not or could not expand their Bluford Park houses.

⁶ Alan Hess. *The Ranch House*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004), 11.
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20: O. Henry Oaks streetscape, 1300 Block Twain Road



21: Typical O. Henry Oaks house with porch and carport additions, 3207 Harte Place

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22: Typical O. Henry Oaks house with vinyl and replacement windows, 3210 Harte Place



23: Larger example of a typical O. Henry Oaks house, 3215 Harte Place

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24: Smaller example of a typical O. Henry Oaks house, 3202 Conrad Street

More closely related to Bluford Park in terms of geography and social history are the near-by neighborhoods of Dudley Park, Dudley Heights, and Benbow Heights. Dudley Park and Dudley Heights are very close to Bluford Park, with the southern edge of Dudley Heights coming very close to the northern edge of Bluford Park. Benbow Heights is farther west but still in close proximity.

Dudley Park was platted in 1926 around the newly-completed Dudley High School, an African American school a little more than a mile away from Bluford Park, but most homes appear to date from the 1950s and 1960s and appear to be contemporary with Bluford Park.

Dudley Heights, laid out in 1944, is a larger subdivision adjacent to Dudley Park. Here, too, however, building does not appear to have started right away and most homes date from the 1960s and 1970s.

Benbow Heights was platted in 1959. Homes date from that point through the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

The houses in Dudley Park, Dudley Heights, and Benbow Park are modest dwellings and many of them are small, non-descript Ranches like those seen in Bluford Park. All three neighborhoods, however, show considerably more architectural variation than Bluford Park. Dudley Park and Dudley Heights houses are uniformly one-story, but more adventurous, modernist houses with low-slung gable fronts, low hip roofs, and more thoughtfully designed fenestration are sprinkled throughout the neighborhood. Benbow Park has a few two-story and

split-level houses, but here, too, most houses are one-story in height with a mix of traditional and more Modernist designs.



25: Dudley Heights streetscape, 1600 Block Dunbar Street



26: Dudley Heights house, 1611 Dunbar Street

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27: Dudley Park house, 1303 Willow Road



28: Dudley Park house, 1305 Willow Road

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29: Benbow Park house, 1918 Belcrest Drive



30: Benbow Park house, 1619 Hooks Street

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31: Benbow Park house, 2009 Barksdale Street

Clinton Hills, like Dudley Park, was a product of the 1920s that did not see much building until the mid-twentieth century. Homes in Clinton Hills are larger, much more architecturally diverse, and incorporate more high-style Modernist design elements. Most of the houses are long Ranches or split-levels. Clinton Hills houses often took advantage of topography to make a more dramatic hill-side impression or to create a more secluded residence. A small creek in the neighborhood is treated more as an amenity or open space with streets built around it rather than as a dividing feature, as at Bluford Park.



32: Clinton Hills split-level, 1204 East Side Drive

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33: Clinton Hills house, 1206 East Side Drive



34: Clinton Hills house, 1818 Curry Street

All four neighborhoods, Dudley Park, Dudley Heights, Benbow Park, and Clinton Hills, were and remain traditionally African American enclaves.

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National Register Evaluation

Bluford Park appears much as it did in its earliest days. It retains integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association. Modern replacement windows and doors are present on some houses while vinyl siding covers most of the non-brick sections on some of the houses. Most altered houses in Bluford Park have only one major change, such as vinyl siding or replacement windows, rather than both, but because of the dwellings' small sizes and minimal ornamentation, material integrity is exceptionally valuable and the loss of the non-brick areas of most houses with that configuration is notable. Thus, while the alterations are relatively few, their collective impact is significant. Still, however, the subdivision retains a good level of material integrity.

The Bluford Park subdivision is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. While Bluford Park is associated with African American suburban development in Greensboro, it is one of many African American subdivisions in east and southeast Greensboro, and it does not communicate or represent a particular aspect of Greensboro's African American history. Similarly, it is a good example of tract housing development, but many such developments are found in cities all across North Carolina. In Wilson, an African American developer created a subdivision of shotgun houses in the 1920s, and architectural surveys in Winston-Salem have documented many tract housing subdivisions, including African American neighborhoods from the 1940s and 1950s.⁷ In Raleigh, a study of post-war architecture uncovered at least six tract housing developments from the 1950s.⁸ Bluford Park is not a particularly early, influential, or significant example of a subdivision built for African Americans.

The Bluford Park subdivision is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past. None of the neighborhood's residents are known to have played significant roles in Greensboro's history and while the subdivision was developed at the height of the city's Civil Rights struggles, none of the residents are known to be significant participants in Civil Rights activities.

The Bluford Park subdivision is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C because it does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction nor does it represent the work of a master or possess high artistic value, nor does it represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. The architecture at Bluford Park is striking for its uniformity and for the continued preservation of that uniformity, but uniform tract housing was and remains common. Bluford Park's houses are so basic and stripped-down that they are not exceptional,

⁷ Catherine Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, portable edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 510, and Heather Fearnbach, "Forsyth County Phase III Survey Report, 2009," 76-77.

⁸ Ruth Little, "The Development of Modernism in Raleigh, 1945-1965," report prepared for the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, 2006, 27.

even collectively, and the neighborhood's construction in the early 1960s means that it is not among the earlier examples of tract housing for whites or African Americans in North Carolina. Further, the subdivision's spatial layout and landscape features are unexceptional. While Bluford Park retains good integrity, it is not distinctive or significant architecturally or historically.

The Bluford Park subdivision is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D because it has not yielded nor is it likely to yield information important to prehistory or history.

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