

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

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Governor Roy Cooper
Secretary Susi H. Hamilton

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

March 19, 2018

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, Modernize US 19/23, PA 17-05-0002, U-6048,
Haywood County, ER 18-0434

Thank you for your February 28, 2018, memorandum transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the report and offer the following comments.

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

Engadine (BN0376), which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2001, remains eligible for listing under Criterion C as an excellent and intact example of the Queen Anne style of architecture in western Buncombe County. The appropriate boundary is the current National Register boundary, which encompasses 2.01 acres of the 3.69-acre tax parcel on which Engadine is located.

Owl Restaurant and Drive-In (HW0463) is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of transportation and commerce for its use as a roadside restaurant and under Criterion C as an unusual and intact vernacular interpretation of the Craftsman and Mediterranean Revival/Mission styles of architecture. While the Owl Drive-In is not notable under Criterion C, two factors suggest that it should be included within the eligible boundaries and identified as a contributing resource on the property. The tax parcel is bisected by the current alignment of Route 19/23, which was paved to the south of the Owl Restaurant. Thus, these two buildings are located on the same tax parcel, which is a justifiable boundary for the eligible resource. Additionally, the Owl Drive-In was built to perpetuate the Skaggs family's commercial use of the property for serving tourists after the road was re-routed. To ignore this continuity of use suggests that the significance of the Owl Restaurant ends in 1951 when it closed. In fact, the entire property is significant from 1932 to at least 1964, when I-40 was built to the north, for its association with tourism-related commerce along one of the primary transportation routes in Buncombe and Haywood counties. While some of the exterior materials have been altered, the building retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. We recommend the entire parcel as National Register-eligible, with the Owl Restaurant as the primary resource and the Owl Drive-In as a contributing/secondary resource on the property.

We concur that the following properties are not eligible for listing in the National Register for the reasons outlined in the report.

- **Smathers-Mease House (HW0504)**
- **Ward Piano (HW0664)**

We also note that the Turnpike Hotel (BN0715) is no longer extant in the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and that the eligible Hominy Creek Railroad Bridge appears to fall outside the APE.

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

Received: 03/02/2018
State Historic Preservation Office



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III
SECRETARY

ER 18-0434

February 28, 2018

MEMORANDUM

Due -- 3/26/18

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

H-

*ER letters
3/10*

FROM: Kate Husband
Architectural Historian
NCDOT Division of Highways

SUBJECT: PA No. 17-05-0002, U-6048, Modernize US 19/23 in Haywood and Buncombe Counties

Enclosed please find the Historic Structures Survey Report, survey site database, and additional materials for the above referenced project for your review and comment per 36CFR.800. Please contact me by phone (919-707-6075) or email (klhusband@ncdot.gov) if you have any additional questions or comments. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Historic Structures Survey Report for the Modernization of US19/23 from SR 1836 (Chestnut Mountain Road) to SR 1200 (Wiggins Road)

Haywood County, North Carolina

TIP# U-6048
WBS# 46994.1.1
PA # 17-05-0002



New South Associates, Inc.

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Historic Structures Survey Report for the
Modernization of US19/23
from SR 1836 (Chestnut Mountain Road) to SR 1200 (Wiggins Road)

Haywood County, North Carolina

TIP# U-6048
WBS# 46994.1.1
PA # 17-05-0002

Report submitted to:

North Carolina Department of Transportation, Environmental Analysis Unit
1598 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina, 27699-1598

Mary Pope Furr – Historic Architecture Supervisor

Report prepared by:
New South Associates, Inc.
6150 East Ponce de Leon Avenue
Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083



Mary Beth Reed – Principal Investigator

Terri DeLoach Gillett – Historian and Author
Kristie Person - Historian and Author

February 20, 2018 – Final Report
New South Associates Technical Report 2786

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1.0. MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) project TIP# U-6048 (WSB# 46994.1.1, PA# 17-05-0002) proposes to modernize US 19/23 from SR 1836 (Chestnut Mountain Road) to SR 1200 (Wiggins Road), approximately 3.5 miles, in Haywood and Buncombe counties. The project area is located approximately one mile east of downtown Canton. This project is subject to review under the Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects in North Carolina (NCDOT 2009). NCDOT architectural historians established an Area of Potential Effects (APE) and conducted a preliminary investigation, identifying four properties in the APE requiring a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility evaluation and one property, the NRHP-listed Engadine (BN0376), warranting a brief evaluation. Another resource, the North Hominy Creek Railroad Bridge (HW0156), which was determined eligible under Criterion C in 2002, is also located within the APE.

In September 2017, New South Associates, Inc. (New South) surveyed the five resources that NCDOT had identified for intensive study. As a result of this study, for the purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, New South recommends that the status of the NRHP-listed Engadine remain the same, while one of the remaining four resources evaluated is recommended eligible and two are recommended not eligible for listing in the NRHP. The fourth resource investigated was no longer extant.

Survey Site #	Resource Name/Address	NRHP Eligibility Recommendation
BN0376	Engadine	NRHP-Listed
BN0715	Turnpike Hotel	Not Extant
HW0463	Owl Drive-In	Eligible
HW0504	Smathers-Mease House	Not Eligible
HW0664	Ward Piano	Not Eligible

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2.0. Project Description and Methodology

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) project TIP# U-6048 (WSB# 46994.1.1, PA# 17-05-0002) proposes to modernize US 19/23 from SR 1836 (Chestnut Mountain Road) to SR 1200 (Wiggins Road), approximately 3.5 miles, in Haywood and Buncombe counties. The project area is located approximately one mile east of downtown Canton (Figure 2.1). This project is subject to review under the Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects in North Carolina (NCDOT 2009). NCDOT architectural historians established an Area of Potential Effects (APE) and, pursuant to 36 CFR Section 800.4(b), identified five architectural resources – two houses, two hotels, and one manufacturing resource that may be affected by this undertaking (Figure 2.2). Another property, the North Hominy Creek Railroad Bridge (HW0156), has already been determined eligible.

In September 2017, NCDOT requested that New South Associates, Inc. (New South) intensively survey the Turnpike Hotel and Store (BN0715), the Owl Drive-In (HW0463), the Smathers-Mease House (HW0504), and Ward Piano (HW0664) and prepare a report assessing the eligibility of each property for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). All but one of the resources, Ward Piano, had been previously surveyed. Engadine (BN0376) was listed on the NRHP in 2001, and NCDOT requested a reevaluation of that property.

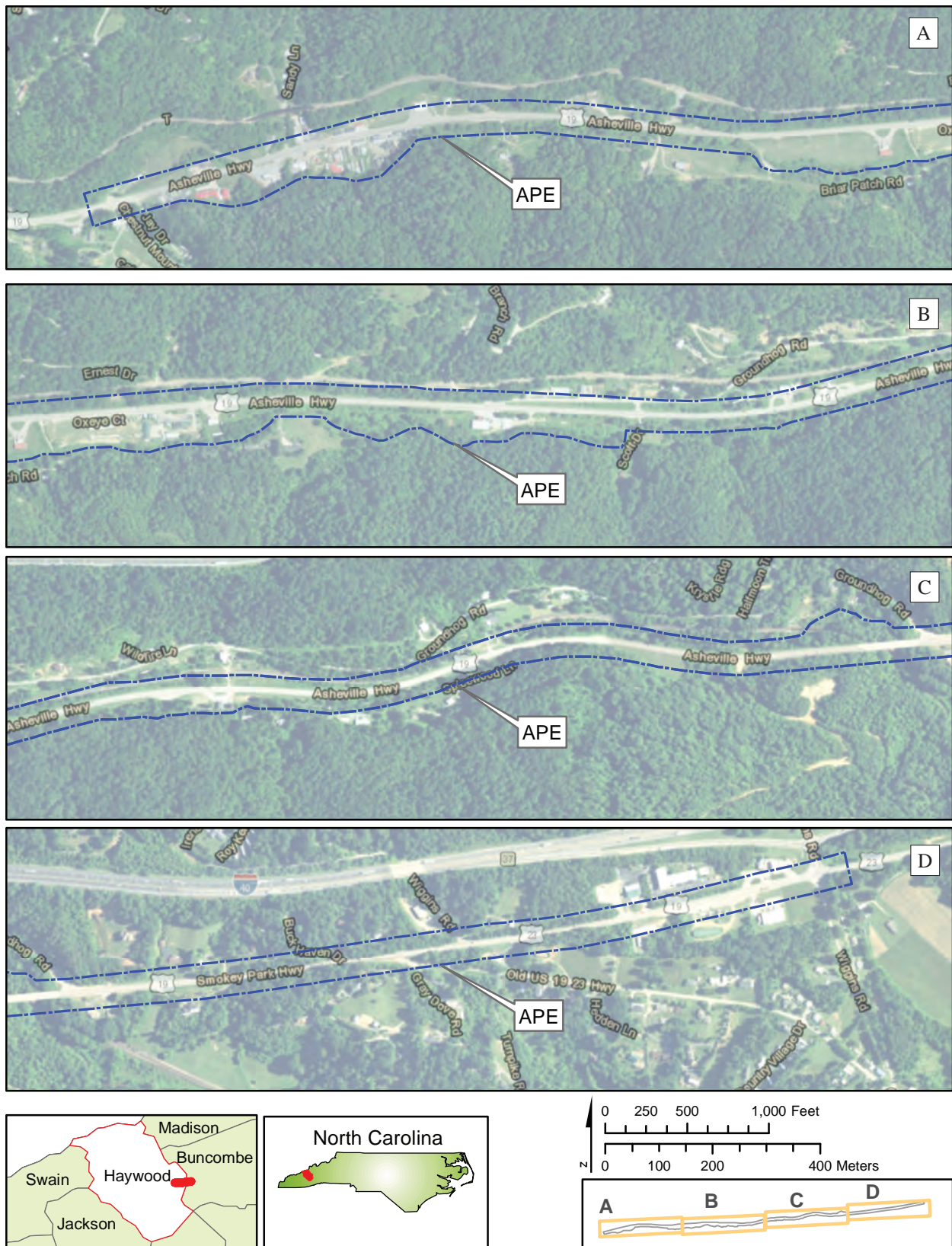
Prior to fieldwork, the statewide architectural survey records of the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) were reviewed using HPOWEB, their online GIS service, which did not reveal any other previously recorded resources within the project APE. The survey and subject files located at the Western Office of the HPO in Asheville, were also examined. Historic topographic maps and aerial photographs were viewed at historicaerials.com, nationalmap.gov, the North Carolina Maps collection online at the University of North Carolina, and the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) historical topographic map collection. Property information was obtained from the Transylvania County Tax Assessor's website. The digital collection at the Transylvania County Library (DigitalNC) was also examined.

New South architectural historian Terri DeLoach Gillett visited the resources selected for further study on September 28, 2017. The properties, with the exception of the Turnpike Hotel and Store, which burned down in 1989, were visually inspected, and the exteriors, including settings, were documented through written notes and digital photographs. The historical development, architecture, and cultural significance of the four extant resources were assessed and evaluated within their respective contexts according to the established NRHP criteria.

The results of this intensive-level investigation and NRHP evaluation are presented in the following chapters of this report. This report complies with the basic requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation regulations and procedures (23 CFR 771 and Technical Advisory T 6640.8A); the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations on the Protection of Historic Properties (36 CFR 800); NCDOT's current Historic Architecture Group Procedures and Work Products; and the HPO's Report Standards for Historic Structure Survey Reports/Determinations of Eligibility/Section 106/110 Compliance Reports in North Carolina.

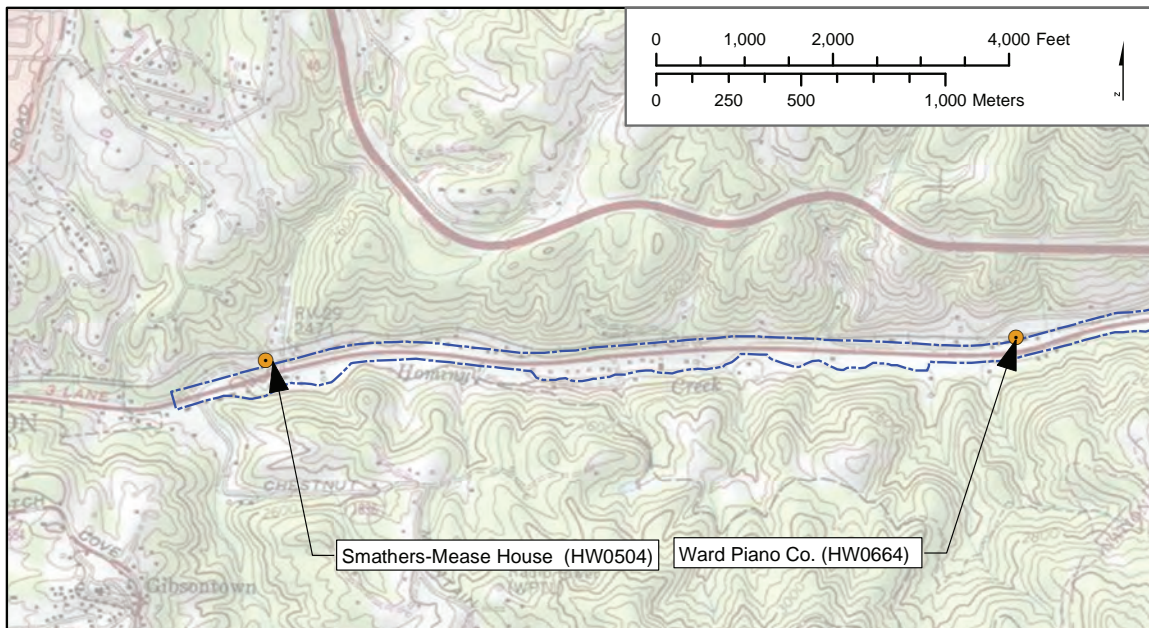
HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF
US 19/23 FROM SR 1836 (CHESTNUT MOUNTAIN ROAD) TO SR 1200 (WIGGINS ROAD)

Figure 2.1. Project Study Area, West to East

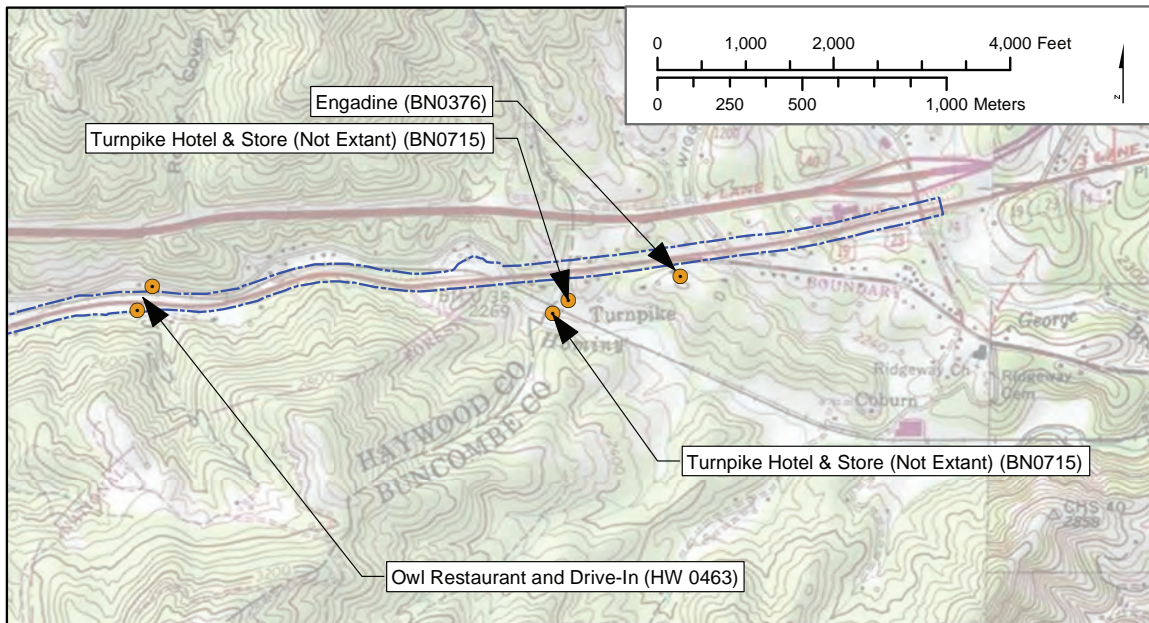


HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF
US 19/23 FROM SR 1836 (CHESTNUT MOUNTAIN ROAD) TO SR 1200 (WIGGINS ROAD)

Figure 2.2. Location of Historic Resources



Source: USGS Canton, North Carolina Quadrangle



Source: USGS Canton and Enka, North Carolina Quadrangles

3.0. Engadine (BN0376)

Resource Name	Engadine
HPO Survey Site #	BN0376
Location	2630 Smokey Park Highway; south side of US 19/23, 0.3 mile east of the Buncombe-Haywood county line
PIN	868712220500000
Date(s) of Construction	1885; c. 1945; c. 1990
Recommendation	Remains Eligible for NRHP Under Criterion C



3.1. DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

Engadine faces north on the south side of two-lane US 19/23, west of Candler and east of Canton (Figure 3.1). A paved switchback driveway running parallel to the highway accesses the property. The house sits atop a hill partially shielded from highway traffic by mature pines, hemlocks, and evergreens. The house sits on a nearly four-acre parcel, with its immediate surroundings consisting of a paved drive, a small paved parking area, and rolling hills with mowed grass to the rear, where two of the property’s six rental cabins are visible.

Figure 3.1. Engadine Site Plan



Source: ESRI Resource Data

3.2. INVENTORY LIST

3.2.1. *Engadine, 1885*

The 1885, two-and-one-half story, rectangular Queen Anne house has a galvanized-metal hipped roof with six dormers (Figure 3.2). The house is clad in wood weatherboard siding on its first story and features alternating rows of plain and scalloped shingle siding covering the second story and dormers. The house rests on a continuous brick foundation.



Figure 3.2. Engadine, Facing Southwest

The façade is asymmetrical and features a flat-roof, two-story turret at its northeast corner (Figure 3.3). Four bays on the first story and two on the second are covered by an engaged, two-story porch. The porch wraps around the building's east elevation at varying lengths on the first and second stories. Square, chamfered porch posts on the first story are bracketed beneath a frieze of light cutouts. Small running arches over a spindle row carry the molded, lower-level railing. A series of large sunray brackets sits below the roofline of the second-story porch. The turret carries the decorative motifs of each level.

Above the wooden, half-light, double-door entrance bay is a double segmental-arch window (Figures 3.4, see Figure 3.2). A matching segmental-arch window marks the first story's western end bay, which is topped by a projecting corner balcony on the second story (Figures 3.5 and 3.6). Except where otherwise noted, windows are one-over-one wood sash hung alone or in pairs.



Figure 3.3. Turret and Porches, Facing East



Figure 3.4. Double-Door Entrance, Facing South



Figure 3.5. First-Story, Segmental-Arch Window, Facing South



Figure 3.6. Projecting Corner Balcony, Facing East

An exterior wooden staircase leading from the second story to the ground level, added prior to the writing of the NRHP nomination, remains present on the east elevation (Figure 3.7). A one-story, pyramidal roof kitchen wing covers the southwest corner of the west elevation (Figure 3.8). The rear elevation includes a central entrance and sash windows.



Figure 3.7. East Elevation, Facing West



Figure 3.8. West Elevation and Kitchen Wing, Facing East

Permission to view the interior of the property was not given. The following is adapted from the 2001 NRHP nomination report.

The interior has been carefully preserved. Characteristic of the late nineteenth century, the interior uses a variety of woods (pine, walnut, oak, American chestnut, cherry) and high-quality workmanship. In the foyer is a closed stringer stairway and spindle arch. Parlor and dining room entrances have hard pine pocket doors, which include original working brass hardware. The parlor contains hard pine wainscoting, and the mantel features pilasters and a beveled mirror. The dining room contains hard pine paneling and wainscoting. The fireplace has a multi-shelved mantel, and the floor heat registers are original cut iron. Second-story fireplaces in each room have intricate mantels, solid pine doors, and wooden doorknobs. Closets throughout the house have rounded walls with curved moldings. Small washrooms, between bedrooms, contain original marble vanities and basins. Brass drawer pulls and door hinges are stamped with Eastlake designs (Carter 2001:7).

3.2.2. Barn, circa 1945

The circa-1945, gambrel-roof barn mentioned in the nomination remains in place approximately 150 feet southwest of the house (Figure 3.9). Flush vertical wood boards cover the wood-frame, one-and-one-half story, side-drive crib barn, and its roof is clad in standing-seam metal. A vertical, wood-board double door, second-level hayloft, and first-story window opening are accessible in the gable end. Plexiglas covers the first-story window and hayloft. The side-drive barn was constructed in 1988.



Figure 3.9. Barn, Facing Southwest

3.2.3. Carport/Storage Building, circa 1990

A circa-1990 carport/storage building sits just southwest of the house (Figure 3.10). The closed storage portion and gables are covered in vertical plywood-board siding, while the open storage portion on the east elevation and west elevation of the carport are covered by wood trellises. An open breezeway topped by a gabled roof to the east connects this building to the house.



Figure 3.10. Carport/Storage Building, Facing South

3.3. HISTORY

The text that follows is summarized from information found in the 2001 NRHP nomination (Carter 2001).

John Keais Hoyt, a captain in the confederate army during the Civil War, constructed the Queen Anne stye house as his family’s private residence in 1885. The architect of the house is unknown. Named Engadine due to the apparent similarities of Switzerland’s Engadine Valley and the western region of North Carolina, the house was outfitted with up-to-date amenities during its construction: electricity via a “Dynamo” generator in a powerhouse on the property, gravity-fed running water, central heating from a coal-burning furnace in the basement, and charcoal insulation.

In nearby Asheville, the Queen Anne and other Victorian-era high styles were becoming popular in the late 1800s. However, particularly noteworthy examples of Queen Anne architecture within the city limits post-date Engadine’s 1885 construction. Its suburban location meant Engadine’s high style was particularly uncommon, and its shingle-wrapped second story was more common to coastal beach communities.

Hoyt operated a winery on Engadine's grounds shortly after building the house, and helped found the Western North Carolina Fruit Grower's Association in 1887. The wine was entered into domestic and international competitions and enjoyed by guests of the nearby Turnpike Hotel at the turn of the century. However, winery operations ceased in 1910, when the state passed a law prohibiting the production of distilled beverages within a one-mile radius of a church.

Captain Hoyt died in 1912, and his wife Mary lived at Engadine until 1918, when she sold the property to E.J. and E.F. Willingham. The Willingham's restored the property and purchased additional surrounding acreage before selling the property to the Betts family from New Jersey in 1933. The Betts used Engadine as a summer home for 11 years and then sold it to Glenn Howell in 1944. To date, the Howells were the longest residents of Engadine, but their alterations to the property were considered to be minor. Electricity to the house was updated, as was the furnace; the basement floor was covered by a concrete slab; and the driveway was paved. The Howells razed an original three-room kitchen wing, which included the kitchen, a dining room, and a storeroom, and converted a study in the main house into a kitchen. On the location of the former winery, the Howells constructed the circa-1945 barn and built a garage northeast of the house around the same time. This garage, described in the nomination as altered for use as a well house in 1971, no longer stands.

After the Howell family sold the property in the late 1980s, one of the later owners returned the kitchen to a study/office and constructed the present pyramidal-roof kitchen wing. In 1994, Linda Crawford opened the house as a bed and breakfast. When the house was converted for use as such, the east elevation exterior staircase was added. The house continued to be modernized with sympathetic updates to electrical, heating, and plumbing systems.

Though the property has changed hands several times since 1994, current owners Rick Bell and Tom Watson continue to operate Engadine as a bed and breakfast. Six non-historic rental cabins located south of the house are now part of the property. These cabins were not constructed within the two-acre NRHP boundary.

3.4. NRHP EVALUATION

Engadine was listed on the NRHP in 2001 under Criterion C:

...for its local architecture significance. Engadine is an excellent example of an elaborate Queen Anne style dwelling in western Buncombe County from the late nineteenth century...Engadine is one of only a few fully realized residential expressions of the Queen Anne style found in the rural areas of the county outside Asheville (Carter 2001:8).

The 2.01-acre NRHP boundary sits within the 3.79-acre tax parcel PIN 868712220500000 and includes the house, its stone steps, a rear brick terrace, and an original gravel drive. The historic barn is not included in the boundary, as the period of significance is only the year of Engadine's construction. The other circa-1945 garage building mentioned in the nomination was not considered to be contributing in the nomination, and it does not appear to be standing today. Though not mentioned in the nomination, the carport/storage building was erected prior to the nomination's completion. This building is not recommended as contributing to the NRHP property. There are no apparent exterior changes that have occurred since the writing of the nomination. The addition of the cabins to the hill behind Engadine, which is outside of the NRHP boundary, do not appear to alter the historic integrity of the listed property. The interior of the building was inaccessible during the field visit. *The property retains the physical characteristics that qualified it for listing, and no change is recommended to its NRHP status.*

4.0. Owl Drive-in (HW0463)

Resource Name	Owl Restaurant-Skaggs House and Owl Drive-In
HPO Survey Site #	HW0463
Location	US 19/23, approximately 0.7 miles east of its west intersection with Groundhog Road
PIN	8677-52-0360
Date(s) of Construction	1932-1960, 1953
Recommendation	Eligible, Criterion C



4.1. DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The resource recorded as the Owl Drive-In in the state survey files is located in the vicinity of Canton, NC, approximately three-and-one-half miles east of downtown, on US 19/23 near its western intersection with Groundhog Road (Figure 4.1). The recorded name for the resource is somewhat confusing as the building pictured in the resource files and above is the circa-1932-1960 Owl Restaurant and home to the Skaggs family. The 1953 Owl Drive-In is a much smaller building that sits across the road to the south of US 19/23. The property occupies a 2.3-acre parcel of land that is bisected by US 19/23. The Owl Restaurant-Skaggs House is located in the north section of the parcel and sits atop a hill facing north on Groundhog Road. Behind the building to the south are the tracks of the Southern Railway and beyond that, US 19/23. The Owl Drive-In, now known as the Owl Produce Market, is in the southern section of the parcel. US 19/23 runs east-west along

Figure 4.1. Owl Drive-In Site Plan



Source: ESRI Resource Data

a sparsely populated area, where houses and small businesses can be found dotting the landscape, most along the roadway where the ground is the most level. On both sides of the highway, small crop plots are on much of the available space that is cleared and level.

4.2. INVENTORY LIST

4.2.1. Owl Restaurant-Skaggs House, 1932 through circa 1960

The Owl Restaurant-Skaggs House is a large, symmetrical, three-story, concrete and river rock building that is an interesting example of vernacular architecture (Figure 4.2). The building is sited on a hill facing Groundhog Road and has a one-story façade and a three-story rear wall (Figure 4.3). It appears to have been influenced by both the Art Deco and Mission architectural styles. Massive grooved concrete piers are situated around the perimeter of the building, at each



Figure 4.2. The Owl Restaurant, as Seen from South of US 19/23, Looking North



Figure 4.3. Oblique View of the Façade, Looking Southwest



Figure 4.4. Detail of Column and Wall

corner and two more in the center of each wall, emphasizing the vertical. In between the piers, the walls consist of large smooth river stones suspended in concrete (Figure 4.4). The roof is flat, but the exterior walls rise above it to form a decorative curved parapet. It was built in stages over approximately two decades and has been used as both a business and a home.

The north-facing façade of the building is one-story with three bays (see Figure 4.3). A concrete canopy featuring a decorative parapet extends from the center bay and housed gas pumps at one time (Figure 4.5). The roof of the canopy is no longer extant. The middle bay of the building has



Figure 4.5. Oblique View of the Façade, Looking Southeast



Figure 4.6. Center Bay of the Façade, Looking South



Figure 4.7. Original Front Door

a centered front door with flanking storefront windows (Figure 4.6). The wood door with glass panel and fanlight above are original (Figure 4.7). The word “OWL” is etched into the concrete arch over the door. In recent years, a metal awning has been installed in the center bay. The side bays feature large bay-width windows with vertically divided lights, but the majority of panes are missing. There are concrete sills below the window openings, while above, there are flush horizontal bands of concrete that were used as signboards.

The side walls, facing east and west, are virtually identical; however, the east wall has had many additions applied over the years. Like the other exterior walls, the west wall has three bays, delineated by substantial concrete pillars (Figure 4.8). The center bay is approximately twice as wide as the side bays. The north bay has no openings, while the other two bays feature two types of windows. The first type has a large fixed pane in the center, with smaller lights at the sides and



Figure 4.8. East Wall, Looking Northeast



Figure 4.9. East Wall, Looking South On Flight of Stairs



Figure 4.10. Stairs, Retaining Wall and Planting Bed, Looking Northeast

above. The bottom three lights on the sides are hinged. The second window type is a vertical slider window with four lights. All of the windows are deeply recessed, supported by a concrete sill, and have a wide concrete lintel above (Figure 4.9). Two flights of concrete and stone stairs go up the side of the building from the bottom of the ground floor at the back of the building to the ground floor in the front. There is a single-door entrance to the second floor on the center landing. A concrete and stone retaining wall and garden bed are located to the west of the stairs (Figure 4.10).



Figure 4.11. East Wall, Looking Southwest



Figure 4.12. East Wall Additions, Looking North

The east wall has several additions (Figure 4.11). On the top level facing Groundhog Road, a small, concrete-block restroom facility was added, likely in the late 1940s. The “Ladies” and “Men” signs are still visible on the doors. There is an awning-covered porch on the top floor as well, with steps that lead down to a patio on the second floor, which is also accessed by a set of stairs from Groundhog Road. Adjacent to the stairs and patio, to the east, is an attached garage with a steeply pitched gable roof (Figure 4.12). A small shed-roof addition is attached south of the steps.



Figure 4.13. South Wall, Looking North



Figure 4.14. Rear Porch, Looking East

The south-facing rear of the house has three bays of almost equal width (Figure 4.13). The bay to the left has a one-car garage in the bottom level, with one window in each of the upper stories. The center bay features a metal-awning covered porch on the second level with two small windows



Figure 4.15. Looking North

above (Figure 4.14). A T-shaped set of steps leads up to the porch and is hidden by a scalloped, concrete bulkhead. The right bay has one window on each floor. In front of the right bay is a patio screened by a length of concrete breezeblocks with a small, stucco pavilion on the east edge.

The building is surrounded by lawn and shrubs, and flowers are planted informally around the perimeter of the building. A partially paved driveway leads from the garage, over the railroad tracks, to US 19/23 (Figure 4.15). An invitation to view the interior of the property was not extended.

4.2.2. Owl Drive-In, 1953

The Owl Drive-In is a one-story, irregular, hexagonal building that is located south of the Owl Restaurant-Skaggs House across US 19/23 (Figure 4.16). The building has a raised concrete slab foundation and exterior walls (Figure 4.17). There is a concrete awning that extends out from the façade approximately three feet around the entire building, with the exception of the back wall. The walls rise another few feet above the awning and are then capped with a hipped roof. The north-facing façade is symmetrical with a centered single-door entrance. The door is flanked by storefront windows that wrap around to the side walls. The windows sit on a short bulkhead and



Figure 4.16. Owl Drive-In From North of US 19/23, Looking Southwest



Figure 4.17. Owl Drive-In Façade, Looking Southwest



Figure 4.18. East Wall, Looking West



Figure 4.19. West Wall, Looking East

rise almost to the concrete awning above. Several of the window panes have been replaced by plywood. Window openings take up the front two-thirds of the east wall, and there are two single door entrances near the rear (Figure 4.18). The west wall has a bay that was added sometime after construction and may have been used for walk-up orders (Figure 4.19). Another addition was made at the rear of the building, where a small room was added above the concrete awning. It is accessed by a set of wooden stairs. The window openings on this wall have also been boarded up. The building is currently owned by the step-grandson of the original builder and is used as a roadside produce market.

4.3. HISTORY

Earnest Opal Skaggs, a West Virginia native, came to Haywood County from Florida during the Great Depression for his wife's health and bought the land where the Owl Restaurant-Skaggs House and Owl Drive-In would be constructed. He was a skilled carpenter, but did not immediately find work. Between odd jobs in 1932, he began building the large stone building, with the intention of having "a place to run a business and house his family" (Conover 1991).

He was working on a bridge over Pigeon River when he began hauling river rocks back to his property. The first section of the building, adjacent to Groundhog Road, took 15 years to complete. It was two stories, 40-feet long and 12-feet deep, with poured concrete pilings and a curved parapet. The Skaggs lived on the bottom floor, and ran their restaurant on the top floor. A dumbwaiter brought the hot food up from the kitchen on the bottom floor. The building had a drive-through canopy with gas pumps facing the old Asheville Highway (now Groundhog Road).



Figure 4.20. *Façade of Owl Restaurant, circa 1951*

Photograph Provided by
the Skaggs Family

The Owl Restaurant was named for a screech owl that visited the building during construction and because “owl” only has three letters and Skaggs figured if he was going to be writing something a lot, it would be better to make it short (Conover 1991). Skaggs originally wanted to build a beer and dance hall, but after polling his neighbors, he decided on a roadside restaurant. When it opened in 1947, it was one of only two restaurants on the road between Asheville and Canton and did a booming business in the post-WWII economy. It was a popular spot for locals as well as tourists coming to visit the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Figure 4.20). When the restaurant opened, Skaggs was working for the Champion Paper Mill in Canton as a builder. His wife, Hazel, ran the restaurant at home, but soon Skaggs had to quit his job to help. In addition to the restaurant, the Owl sold gas, produce, Native American souvenirs, and anything else they thought would turn a profit.

Increased traffic to the National Park began to overload the old Asheville Highway on the north side of the Owl Restaurant in the 1940s and plans were made for a new road, US 19/23, through the valley on the south side of the building. Skaggs saw that the new road would divert traffic and be bad for business, so he began building a new, more modern, building on his property adjacent to the new highway. The new restaurant would be a small one-story building with an open floor plan. The new building was called the “Owl Drive-In.” Skaggs oversaw the construction himself, forming each of the building’s concrete blocks by hand. The Owl Drive-In opened in 1953 (Figure 4.21). Within a few years, the Skaggs would have to contend with another new road rerouting business traffic. The section of Interstate 40 from Clyde to Wiggins Road opened in 1964 and diverted the majority of traffic away from US 19/23; however, the Owl Drive-In stayed open for another decade, closing its doors in 1974.

According to a 1991 newspaper article, Skaggs closed the original Owl Restaurant in 1951 due to the impact of US 19/23. From that point on the large stone building served exclusively as the family’s home and the former dining area was converted into a family room. About the same time,



Figure 4.21. Owl Drive-In, circa 1954



Photographs Provided by
the Skaggs Family

Skaggs decided to expand his house. He paid a local acquaintance, down on his luck but with “a field full of rocks,” to haul the rocks to his property. Everytime the man came by, he would bring a load. After two years, 285 yards of stone had been deposited on the property. Skaggs and his son, Ted, built the back two bays of the building over the next decade, designing as they went. Ted eventually went on to school for engineering at Georgia Tech (Conover 1991).

Skaggs retired in 1970 to garden and tinker, but lived another 30 years. His 2001 obituary states that he was a well-known builder, constructing many of the homes in the Fiberville community in Canton. He was also an inventor and was known for his interior craftsmanship, which could be found in several area churches, homes, and motels. Today, Skaggs’ step-grandson runs a produce stand in the Owl Drive-In south of US 19/23.

4.4. NRHP EVALUATION

4.4.1. Architectural Context

People traveling long distances by automobile during the 1920s and 1930s had very few options to purchase a meal along the way. Most people packed their own food and had roadside picnics out of necessity. The first institutions to offer a solution were called Tearooms, the name itself invoking a feeling of respectability, which appealed to motorists that were seeking a safe, family-friendly place in the era of Prohibition. The majority of tearoom operators were women that often sold gifts and souvenirs alongside their food offerings. These early roadside businesses were independently operated and vernacular in form, usually constructed of local materials. The original Owl Restaurant was likely inspired by such establishments. The Owl Restaurant functioned both as a restaurant, store, and gas station, as well as the Skaggs family home from 1947 to 1951, after which it served exclusively as the family’s residence.

A search of surveyed properties revealed no similar roadside restaurants from the time period in the region. Stylistically, the Owl Restaurant is one-of-a-kind, influenced both by the Art Deco and the Mission architectural styles; however, a few other buildings using like materials were found in the nearby communities. While granite, field stone, and rough faced rock are relatively common building materials, particularly in mountainous areas where it is abundant, smooth rounded river rocks are used less frequently. A search of properties on HPOWEB found no properties that were described as using river rocks in Haywood County, but some were identified in neighboring Buncombe County and are contributing resources in the Kimberly Amendment to the Grove Park Historic District (BN0198), which was listed on the NRHP in 1990.

The Owenby-Morris House (BN1220) is a one-and-one-half-story front-gable bungalow located at 16 Warwick Place (Figure 4.22). The exterior walls are elaborately fashioned from tightly-spaced smooth river rock. The projecting front gable features an arched entrance flanked by two

smaller arches, each capped with oblong stones carefully positioned to form the crown. There are numerous other architectural embellishments fashioned from the stones evident on the house, as well as a stone retaining wall that continues in front of the house next door, the Kate Cole McCaffrey House (BN1221), which is also constructed using river rock (Figure 4.23). This house is L-shaped and two-story, displaying elements of the Colonial Revival style, with bay windows, deep entry porch, and sidelights. Although neither of these two houses are similar in type or style to the Owl Restaurant, each embodies a similar method of construction and possesses high artistic value. A third river rock resource was located in Jackson County to the west. The 1938 Greystone Building (JK0123) in Dillsboro is a simple commercial building sheathed in river rock (JK0123). It was placed on the Study List in 1992 and has been determined ineligible.

The second generation of roadside restaurants, the family restaurant chain that included institutions such as Stuckey's and Howard Johnson's, started to become popular on more heavily traveled highways and the new interstates, but the independently-run roadside restaurant continued to be the standard through the middle of the twentieth century in less-populated rural areas. Drive-in restaurants were the next important evolution restaurants that emerged between the sit-down chain restaurants and the modern fast-food restaurant. The idea of serving food to customers in their vehicles actually started at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century before the automobile-age was in full swing, when several urban drug stores and soda fountains hired waiters to serve customers waiting outside in their buggies.

In the 1920s, food-stands with curbside service had appeared where customers could pull up alongside the curb to order and have their food brought out on a tray and passed through the car window. Soon, the concept was expanded with bigger lots for people to park on the premises and "tray girls" to serve the food. This expansion would also influence the design of the restaurants in order to accommodate as many cars as possible, leading to a distinctive "drive-in-restaurant" building type, typically a rectangle or circle around which customers cars radiated like spokes from the hub of a wheel (Liebs 1985). The buildings were often capped with large illuminated signs had an abundance of windows so that customers could witness the activity inside. Many of the original windows on the sides of 1954 Owl Drive-In have been boarded up.

No other historic drive-in restaurants were located in Haywood County on HPOWEB or during the survey; however, one was found in neighboring Buncombe County at 959 Haywood Road in West Asheville (Figure 4.25). Although it was recorded as LeVaughn Drive-In Restaurant (BN5202) (SO 2013), the *Asheville City Directory* listed it as Lavonne's Drive-In Restaurant, which was open from 1951 to 1958, after which it became the Toot and Tell Drive-In for a year, then Geneva's Italian restaurant. It must have continued to use the drive-in model as Geneva's, because a May 1962 classified ad in the *Asheville Citizen Times* was seeking three "curb girls" over eighteen. The building is round with a flat roof and pent awning clad in wood shingles. A gable-roof concrete



Figure 4.22. Owenby-Morris House (BN1220)



Figure 4.23. Kate Cole McCaffrey House (BN1221)



Figure 4.24. Greystone Building (JK0123)



Figure 4.25. *LaVaughn's Drive-In (BN5202)*

block wing is attached to the rear. There is a small projection on the front of the building housing the entrance, which is flanked by two large picture windows with security bars. The rest of the building is clad in vertical wood siding, which may be covering more windows.

Both the Owl Drive-In and LaVaughn's Drive-In exhibit the distinctive plan of the drive-in-restaurant building type. Unfortunately, both also suffer from a lack of integrity, having been significantly altered. Additionally, neither has been used as a drive-in restaurant for decades.

4.4.2. *Integrity*

In order to be eligible for the NRHP, a property must possess several, usually the majority, of the seven aspects of integrity: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The Owl Restaurant retains all of these aspects. It remains in its original location in similar setting to its historic setting. Its original building materials, design, and workmanship are largely intact. The roof of the canopy is no longer extant and there are some areas of the façade that are in need of repair, for example, water damage is evident on the west wall near the front of the building where the concrete has eroded and the stone are in danger of coming loose. The current owner, Skaggs' daughter-in-law and step-grandson, have also made some unsympathetic repairs using inappropriate building materials, such as Portland cement, but overall the building retains its physical integrity. Though the building served as both restaurant and home originally, it has been used exclusively as a residence since 1951 and is still able to convey feeling as a historic rural vernacular home, that was once used as a business. It also retains integrity of association, as it is still used as a residence by members of the builder's family.

The 1954 Owl Drive-In does not retain its integrity. Although it remains in its as-built located in a similar setting, the building has been considerably altered. Most notably, the flat roof was capped

with a hipped roof structure due to leaks in the 1990s. Additionally, many of its windows have been boarded up and the metal sign boards surrounding the building that rose from its concrete awning are gone, as is the large Owl Drive-In sign that sat atop the roof. The Owl Drive-In closed in 1974 and sat vacant for many years. It is currently being used as a the Owl Produce Market by the step-grandson of the original builder, so while it retains association being owned and run by the same family throughout its history, it is no longer used in its original capacity, nor does it convey the feeling of a mid-century drive-in restaurant.

4.4.3. Evaluation

Properties can be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A if they are associated with a significant event or pattern of events that have made contributions to history at the local, state, or national level. The Owl Restaurant was found to be locally significant under themes of transportation and commerce for its operation as a popular roadside business during the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Owl Drive-In was found to be locally significant under the same themes as a mid-century drive-in-restaurant; however, the building does not possess the integrity required for listing. *Therefore, only the Owl Restaurant is recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A.*

Properties can also be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B if they are associated with persons that have made contributions significant to our past. Ernest Opal Skaggs constructed both the Owl Restaurant and the Owl Drive-In, but research did not identify Skaggs as significant within local, state, or national historic contexts. *Therefore, the Owl Restaurant and Owl Drive-In are recommended not eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B.*

Properties may be eligible under Criterion C if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic value. The Owl Restaurant was found to be significant in a local context as an example of a one-of-a-kind vernacular building constructed by a master craftsman. Ernest Opal Skaggs made his living as a skilled carpenter and builder and used those talents to construct the large three-story building that has become a local landmark in Haywood County. Skaggs' craftsmanship is evident in the seamless appearance of the poured-in-place concrete walls and columns, the decorative column grooves, scalloped parapet, as well as the building's coherent design, built over a span of 30 years, yet appearing if it was designed and constructed simultaneously. *Therefore, the Owl Restaurant is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C.*

The Owl Drive-In was found to possess elements of the distinctive drive-in-restaurant building type in its polygonal plan and ample parking meant to accommodate as many cars as possible; however, the building does not possess the integrity for listing. *Therefore, the Owl Drive-In is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C.*

It is unlikely that additional study of this property would yield any additional data not discoverable through informant interviews and documentary sources. *Therefore, the Owl Drive-In is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D.*

4.4.4. NRHP Boundary Justification

The proposed NRHP Boundary for the Owl Restaurant adheres to the tax parcel for the property that lies on the north side of US 19/23, within which all character-defining features are located (Figure 4.26). Because the Owl Drive-In was not found to be eligible for listing, the portion of the property that lies south of US 19/23 was not included in the eligible boundary.

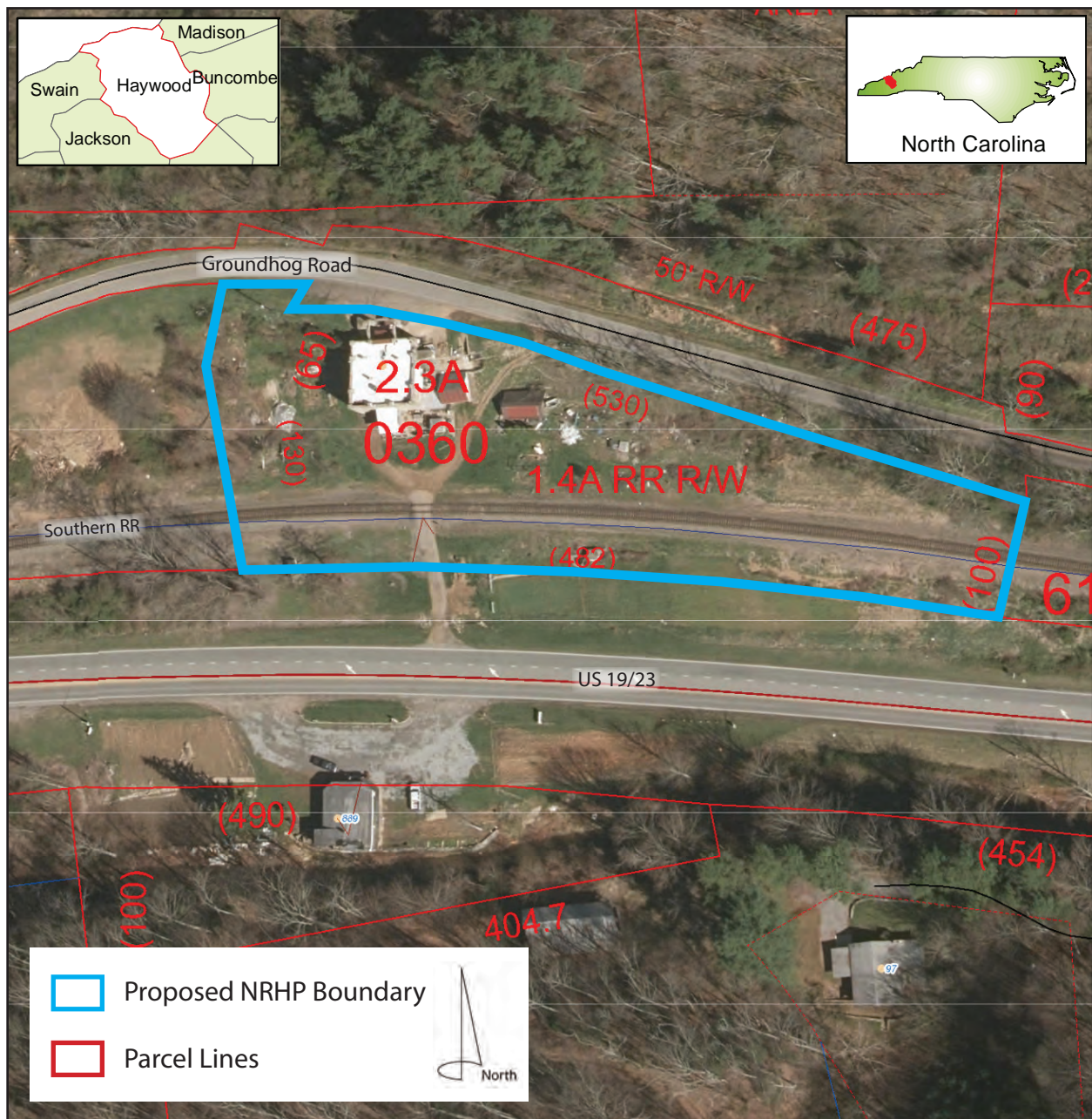


Figure 4.26. Proposed National Register of Historic Places Boundary

5.0. Smathers-Mease House (HW0504)

Resource Name	Smathers-Mease House
HPO Survey Site #	HW0504
Location	2884 Asheville Highway; north side of US 19/23, 1.0 mile east of Canton
PIN	8667-41-6717
Date(s) of Construction	c. 1900; c. 1960; c. 1990
Recommendation	Not Eligible



5.1. DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The Smathers-Mease House faces south on the north side of three-lane Asheville Highway (US 19/23), approximately one mile east of Canton (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Development in the vicinity consists of a variety of historic and non-historic commercial and residential buildings (Figures 5.3 and 5.4). The house is located on the south boundary of the 1.28-acre parcel, near the southeast corner. The imposing North Hominy Creek Railroad Bridge, a truss bridge operated by Norfolk-Southern Railway, bounds the parcel to the north. Gravel Sandy Lane lines the property to the east, while a commercial property and a vacant parcel zoned for residential use bound the parcel to the west. A short, gravel drive leads from Asheville Highway onto the property. While approximately two-thirds of the parcel to the west of the house is wooded, the immediate landscape surrounding the house consists of a grass lawn, parcel line plantings, mature trees, and foundation plantings (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.1. Smathers-Mease House Site Plan



Source: ESRI Resource Data



Figure 5.2. Smathers-Mease Property, Facing North



Figure 5.3. Surrounding Development, Facing West



Figure 5.4. Surrounding Development, Facing East



Figure 5.5. Immediate Landscape, Facing Northwest

5.2. INVENTORY LIST

5.2.1. *Smathers-Mease House, circa 1900*

The circa-1900, two-story, L-shaped, wood-frame, Folk Victorian house has a cross-gabled roof covered in asphalt shingles and sits on an uncoursed stone foundation (Figures 5.6 and 5.7). The house is clad in wood clapboard siding and has a one-story kitchen ell addition along its rear elevation. The main massing includes a west gable-end brick chimney that has been replaced, while the kitchen ell has a lateral exterior concrete block chimney along its east elevation (Figure 5.8). The house features simple Victorian detailing such as diamond-shaped wood shingles in the



Figure 5.6. Smathers-Mease House, Facing Northwest



Figure 5.7. Foundation, Facing Northwest



Figure 5.8. Smathers-Mease House, Facing Southwest

front-facing house gable and in porch gables, simple pediment window surrounds in the front-facing gable elevation, and some remaining six-over-one wood sash (Figures 5.9-5.11). Cornices are boxed with gable returns, and a three-sided bay window marks the first floor front elevation.



Figure 5.9. Patterned Shingles, Facing Northeast



Figure 5.10. Sash Window, Facing Northwest



Figure 5.11. Sash Window, Facing West

The façade or south elevation is asymmetrical, with a half-light wood door behind an aluminum screen door set in the south end of the enclosed front porch (Figure 5.12). Accessing the entrance is a west-facing wood ramp with wood railings, which culminates in a small shed-roof porch carried by wood posts and lined by a matching wood railing. One additional bay in the enclosed porch consists of a horizontal two-over-two wood sash window in the west elevation.



Figure 5.12. Entrance and Enclosed Porch, Facing Northeast

Most windows are six-over-one wood sash, while the bay window holds one-over-one wood sash (see Figure 5.11; Figure 5.13). A variety of historic and non-historic replacement windows are found on the east and west first-floor elevations, as well as on the kitchen ell. The most substantial window replacement is a large, metal sliding window on the east elevation, whose presence has resulted in a significant enlargement of the window opening (Figure 5.14).



Figure 5.13. Bay Window, Facing Northwest



Figure 5.14. East Elevation, Facing West

The juncture of the west elevation and kitchen ell includes a small shed-roof addition atop a stucco-covered foundation (Figure 5.15). Original kitchen ell windows include paired and single three-over-one wood sash, four-over-four wood sash, and a three-light wood casement in the gable end. The kitchen ell porch along the west elevation has been enclosed and a small shed-roof extension has been constructed along the west elevation of the enclosed porch. Two attempts to make contact with the residents of the house were made during the survey and no one was home either time. Therefore the interior was not accessed.



5.15. Kitchen Ell and Shed Addition, Facing Southwest

5.2.2. *Shed, circa 1960*

A small, rectangular shed with corrugated metal walls set on concrete block piers is located near the northeast corner of the parcel (Figure 5.16). The shed has a gabled roof lined by exposed wood rafter tails and covered by corrugated metal. A particleboard door sits in the building's north elevation, while its west elevation holds two horizontal two-over-two aluminum sash windows.



Figure 5.16. *Shed, Facing Southwest*

5.2.3. *Garage, circa 1990*

The large, two-car, concrete block garage has a front-facing gabled roof and sits just west of the house (Figure 5.17). Synthetic siding covers the gable ends, while a panel of plywood divides the two multi-paneled, four-light vinyl garage doors. Vinyl windows line the east and west elevation, and a vinyl entrance door faces the house on the east elevation.



Figure 5.17. *Garage, Facing Northeast*

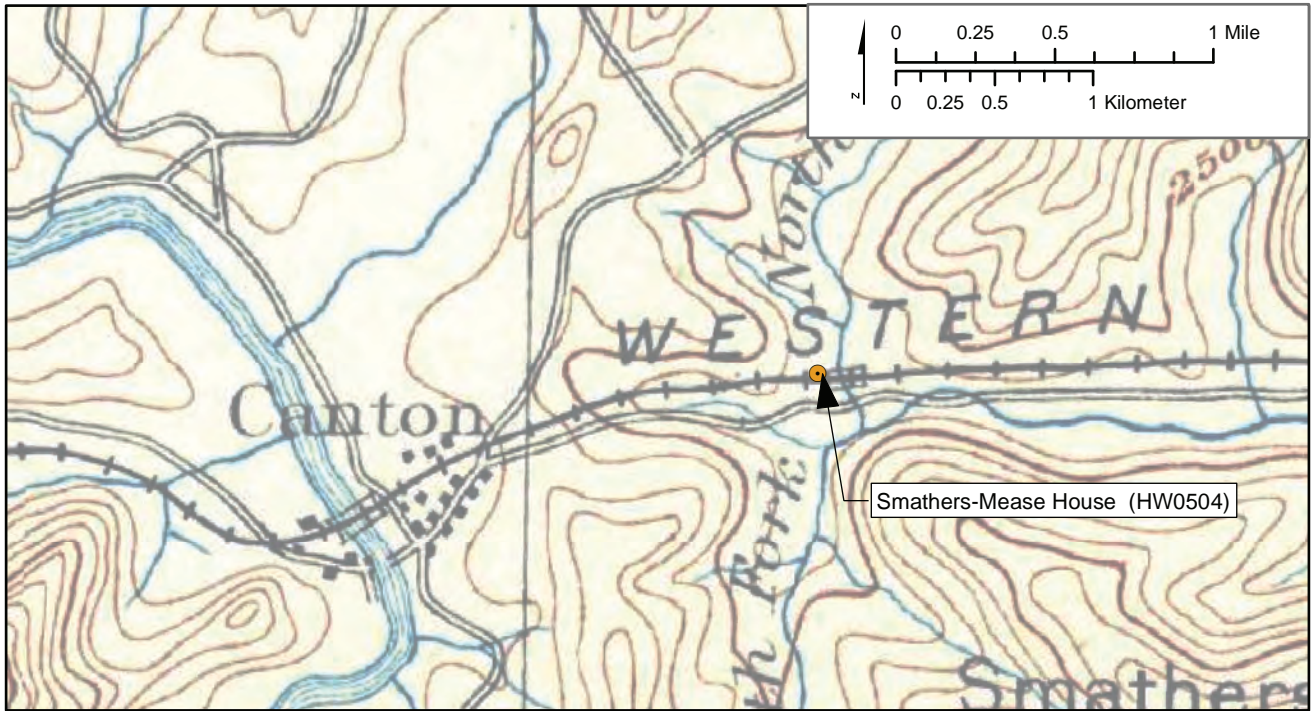
5.3. HISTORY

In 1793, the North Carolina General Assembly declared Western North Carolina open to white settlement, and Haywood County was formed from a part of Buncombe County in 1808. Waynesville was and still is the county seat. For the first 80 years, largely due to the difficulty in traversing the mountains, Haywood County was sparsely populated with small subsistence farms. Residents of this remote area learned to rely on themselves and their neighbors for survival. The Western Turnpike, a road from Asheville to the Tennessee state line, was finished in 1856 and increased the flow of traffic, commerce, and subsequent settlement in the area. The turnpike roughly followed a combination of what is now Groundhog Road (west of the Smathers-Mease House) and US 19/23 (Asheville Highway/Smokey Park Highway), which was constructed in the 1950s.

Using a prisoner labor force of about 400 people (about 1/3 of which were black), the Western North Carolina Railroad was completed to Pigeon River (now Canton) in 1881. In the project area, the railroad roughly parallels Asheville Highway/Smokey Park Highway. From 1881 to 1883, construction halted at that location due to financial complications. During its period as the “end of the line,” Pigeon River gained prominence, and the village that developed around the region’s most important shipping point was incorporated in 1889. The railroad also made the area more accessible to businesses that wanted to exploit the region’s natural resources, as well vacationers. By the turn of the twentieth century, Pigeon River would have a manufacturing economy that employed many in-town and rural residents. In 1894, the town was rechristened “Canton” after an iron truss bridge constructed over the Pigeon River that was manufactured by the Wrought Iron Bridge Company in Canton, Ohio (Figure 5.18).

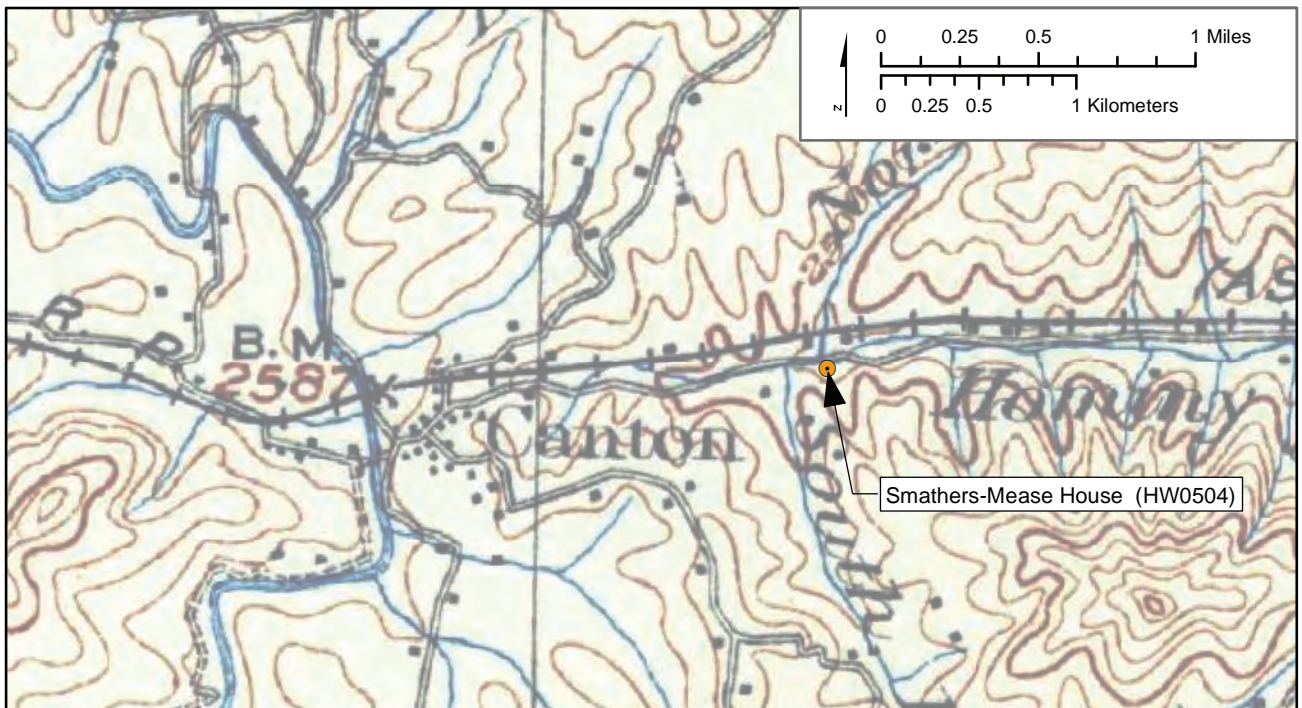
In 1894, the railroad was sold at foreclosure to Southern Railway Company, which operated the line for almost 90 years. According to a report from 1983, the imposing warren truss railroad bridge immediately north of the Smathers-Mease property was constructed in 1910 (Cotton 1983b). The citation given for this fact does not mention this bridge in particular, and no additional references found stated whether or not this bridge was constructed with the line in the 1880s or if it replaced an early span at this location. Nonetheless, a bridge of some sort is labeled crossing North Hominy Creek at this location in 1894 (see Figure 5.18). In 1982, the Southern merged with Norfolk & Western Railroad, forming the Norfolk Southern Railroad. This line remains active and in use by Norfolk Southern in 2017.

According to the tax assessor’s record and a 1983 survey, the Smathers-Mease House was constructed circa 1900 (Cotton 1983a). James Varnel Smathers, the nephew of John C. Smathers, who established the nearby popular Turnpike Hotel, constructed the house as his family’s residence. The large Smathers family was well represented in the area, with noteworthy homes in Canton to the west and a crossroads community namesake and Smathers View Mountain to the southeast (see Figure 5.18).



Source: 1894 USGS Ashville, North Carolina Quadrangle

Figure 5.18. Detail, 1894 Topographic Map



Source: 1901 USGS Ashville, North Carolina Quadrangle

Figure 5.19. Detail, 1901 Topographic Map

The Smathers-Mease House first appears on the Asheville USGS quadrangle map in 1901 (Figure 5.19). Census records from 1900 suggest that the Smathers family was present at the property by that year, as James Varnel and Doris L. (later records and a joint headstone give her name as Lavalia, Lavalia D., or Lavalia Westmoreland) Smathers are described as living at their house at Beaverdam, Haywood County with their nine children and her mother by that time. The house was erected as a farmhouse, and James Varnell and one child are described as farmers on census records from the early twentieth century. However, no farm support buildings remain in place on the property. No specific builder, architect, or woodworker was found to be associated with the house during background research.

A photograph of the house and the Smathers family dating to around 1935 gives a relatively early view of the house (Figure 5.20). Most notable in this view is the original open porch constructed at the juncture of the front-facing and west ells. Evident in this photograph are turned spindle porch posts that appear to be painted in alternating light and dark colors and scalloped trim lining the whole of the porch roof. While not completely clear in the photograph, it appears that the porch housed two entrances, including one half-light door in the west elevation.



Source: Ancestry.com

Figure 5.20. Smathers-Mease House, circa 1935; Standing from Left to Right (Smathers Children): Hugh Heron, Roy Byron, Herman B, Carey Commodore, Berry Delaney, Inez Suney, Arlie Erastus, Claude Wood, John Bascombe, James Eggar. Seated Left to Right: Lavalia Westmoreland, James Varnel Smathers

While likely constructed elsewhere on the property around the same time as the house, the original west-elevation kitchen ell porch is just visible in the image. It was moved to the building's rear elevation around 1930. This image also shows the original stepped construction of the gable-end brick chimney. While reconstructed in brick, the present gable-end chimney is not stepped. The lateral chimney on the kitchen ell also appears to be a mid-century addition.

Lavalia Westmoreland Smathers passed away in 1940, and James Varnel Smathers followed in 1949. It appears that the Smathers resided in the house until their deaths, and in 1950, heirs sold the property to C.C. Williams for \$10. Williams' heirs sold the property to Grover C. and Jessie Mease in 1961. The property remained in the Mease family until 1986, when Adeline J. Ballard purchased the house. Ashby T. Hart purchased the property in 2014 and remains the owner to date.

Photographs taken during the 1983 survey give additional information as to the physical evolution of the Smathers-Mease House (Figure 5.21). By this time, the brick chimney had been replaced and the kitchen ell porch was enclosed. The front porch remained open, though it is not apparent if the scalloped motif along the porch roofline was intact in 1983. Aluminum awnings had been applied to the south and west porch ends, and six-over-one wood sash were in place at the bay window. The southeast oblique view taken in 1983 displays the significant recent addition of the east-elevation sliding window. At least one mature tree standing on the property at the time of the circa-1935 photograph was removed by 1983, and some of the trees present in 1983 are no longer standing today.

Figure 5.21. *Smathers-Mease, 1983*



- A. Façade
- B. Southeast Oblique
- C. Surrounding Landscape

Source: North Carolina Historic Structures Data Sheet, HW0504, Smathers-Mease House



5.4. NRHP EVALUATION

5.4.1. *Folk Victorian Architectural Context*

An adaptation on otherwise simple folk house forms, the Folk Victorian house presents Victorian decorative elements without the presence of easily recognizable forms or styling found on Queen Anne, Italianate, or Gothic homes (McAlester 2013:396-400). The Folk Victorian house features a basic form whose simple design is elevated by the presence of Victorian elements such as spindle work or jigsaw-cut trim porch detailing, cornice-lined brackets, and symmetry unless constructed in a gabled wing form. Porch supports are commonly turned spindles or chamfered square posts, while window surrounds may be topped by a simple pediment. Finally, porches in the gabled wing form are most commonly confined to the L-form created by the wings.

The prevalence of Folk Victorian styling was made possible by the growth of the railroad system. Heavy woodworking machinery could be transported and set up locally, where builders could purchase inexpensively produced Victorian architectural elements. Additionally, pre-cut woodwork could be easily transported to previously remote areas. As a result, folk house forms constructed with such applied decorative elements were most commonly built between around 1870 and 1910. While widely common throughout the country, the gabled wing house variant, as seen in the Smathers-Mease House, is most common to the south.

A search for Folk Victorian (or Victorian-Folk) houses in the area revealed few comparable resources. In adjacent Buncombe County, the Thomas Jarrett House (BN0479) was listed on the NRHP in 1993 (Figure 5.22A). The straightforward I-house form of the resource was elevated by the application of what the nomination calls “Queen Anne-style embellishments of the Victorian period” (Palmer 1993:10). The house is a textbook example of a two-story, side-gable subtype of the Folk Victorian style that includes a double porch with turned posts, sawn-work balustrades, and sawn and turned bracket and spandrel work. Additionally, the house includes detailed bargeboards in gable overhangs. Similarly, the Smathers-Mease House was constructed as a simple gabled-ell house, whose added jigsaw-cut trim, turned porch posts, and gable decoration elevated the otherwise unassuming house form. Also in Buncombe County is the Malinda Payne House (BN0582) (not pictured). The eventual simple L-shaped plan of the house was fashionably updated around 1890 with the addition of Victorian decorative elements including a jigsaw-cut gable bargeboard and balustrade, as well as brackets applied below eaves heighten an otherwise relatively basic house form (Preservation North Carolina). Though more intricate on this house than on the Smathers-Mease House, the jigsaw work and other added decoration to these two simple house forms reflects the popularity of Victorian design elements around 1900.

Figure 5.22. Folk Victorian Houses



A. Thomas Jarrett House (BN0479)
B. Boone-Withers House (HW0009)

Haywood County has a number of Queen Anne Houses whose decorative elements clearly influenced those architectural details applied to simpler forms. In Waynesville, the circa-1883 Boone-Withers House (HW0009) is an example of a high-style Queen Anne with intricately carved bargeboards and semi-elliptical skirts, alternating wood cladding, and decorative wood porch detailing (Figure 5.22A). This less-rural, high-style house may have influenced the Smathers-Mease House construction with its details such as scalloped cladding and jigsaw-cut porch trim. Both elements are reminiscent of details on the Smathers-Mease House, such as the patterned diamond cladding and original porch trim.

Another example is the Barker House (HW0319) in Clyde (Figure 5.23C). Here, the house is only made asymmetrical by an irregular hipped roof with cross gables. Otherwise, the façade bay arrangement is symmetrical. This 1893 house also has a more simplified form with more clearly Victorian-influenced embellishments in porch detailing, large and small bargeboards, and bracketed eaves. The simple Smathers-Mease House form, like the Barker House, was greatly enhanced by gable decoration and Victorian elements applied to its porch, such as turned posts and decorative trim.



Figure 5.23. Barker House (HW0319)

5.4.2. Integrity

In order to be eligible for the NRHP, a property must possess several, usually the majority, of the seven aspects of integrity: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The Smathers-Mease House remains on its original site. Since its construction, the house's setting has been altered from its place along a rural roadway amongst a sparse smattering of contemporary buildings to a surrounding filled with commercial and residential development that primarily post-dates the construction of the house. Furthermore, its immediate setting has diminished integrity due to the addition of the large, non-historic garage just west of the house. The house retains its overall historic form and massing, but has lost some integrity of design and workmanship due to the enclosure of both the front and kitchen ell porches, as well as the replacement of an east window bay with a significantly larger, non-historic window and replacement chimneys. Overall, the house retains integrity of materials through its preservation of some, but not all historic windows, simple pediment window surrounds, gable shingles, and wood clapboard. Despite some changes, the house retains the feeling of a historic farmhouse and is able to convey the historic character of a circa-1900 gabled ell house.

5.4.3. Evaluation

Properties can be eligible for the NRHP if they are associated with a significant event or pattern of events that have made contributions to history at the local, state, or national level. The Smathers-Mease House was not found to be associated with a specific historic event. Residential, resort, and industrial development was common along the turnpike and near the railroad by the time of its circa-1900 construction. The house was constructed as a farmhouse for a family working an agricultural property, which does not appear to have had any direct association with the events of mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century transportation development. *Therefore, the Smathers-Mease House is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A.*

Properties may be eligible under Criterion B if they are associated with a significant person that has made contributions at the local, state, or national level. While the greater Smathers family was large and influential in the region, the immediate James Varnel and Lavalia Westmoreland Smathers family does not appear to be of particular significance within the community, state, or nation. The Mease family, or the family associated with the second-longest period of ownership is also not known to have made any significant contributions to history. *Thus, the Smathers-Mease House is recommended not eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion B.*

Properties may be eligible under Criterion C if they embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic value. The Smathers-Mease House includes some elements of its original Folk Victorian style,

including diamond-shaped wood shingles in the front-facing house gable and in porch gables, simple pediment window surrounds in the front-facing gable elevation, some remaining six-over-one wood sash. However, its loss of additional Victorian elements due to the enclosed front porch, the replacement of a main massing window with a modern window of much larger size, the loss of multiple original sash windows, and replacement of its original chimney has diminished the historic integrity of the resource. The particularly significant losses of the front porch and the large replacement window have rendered the resource unable to convey its original or historic design. *Therefore, the Smathers-Mease House is recommended not eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion C.*

It is unlikely that additional study of this property would yield any unretrieved data not discoverable through informant interviews and documentary sources. *Therefore, the Smathers-Mease House is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D.*

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6.0. Ward Piano Company (TV0424)

Resource Name	Ward Piano Company
HPO Survey Site #	HW0664
Location	US 19/23, approximately 0.35 miles east of its west intersection with Groundhog Road
PIN	8677-31-2829
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1950 - 1965
Recommendation	Not Eligible



6.1. DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

Ward Piano Company is located in the vicinity of Canton, NC, approximately three miles east of downtown, on US 19/23 near its western intersection with Groundhog Road (Figure 6.1). US 19/23 runs east-west along a sparsely populated valley. Houses and small businesses can be found dotting the landscape, but most are located along US 19/23, where the ground is the most level. The three adjacent buildings that comprise the Ward Piano Company sit on a flat 0.7-acre parcel of land that is sandwiched between US 19/23 to the south and the tracks of Southern Railroad, which parallels the highway, to the north. In front of the buildings is a long gravel parking lot with three driveways that access US 19/23 (Figure 6.2). There are also areas of lawn and two mature cherry trees along the road. The building backs up to the railroad tracks, which is situated atop a berm, and there is vegetation on the slope (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.1. Ward Piano Company Site Plan



Source: ESRI Resource Data



Figure 6.2. Looking West From the Parking Area



Figure 6.3. Railroad Berm Behind Ward Piano, Looking Southwest

6.2. INVENTORY LIST

6.2.1. *Ward Piano Factory, circa 1950*

According to the tax records and the owner, the first building constructed for Ward Piano is the center building, which is a rectangular, two-story, building on a slab foundation (Figure 6.4). It measures 60-feet by 30-feet. The roof is flat, but stepped back toward the rear of the building in three levels. The exterior walls are brick veneer laid in a simple running bond pattern with no variation. At the roofline, the exterior wall is capped with metal on the façade and terra cotta tiles on the sides. The south-facing façade is symmetrical with four large evenly spaced window openings on the bottom floor and five window openings on the upper floor. The single door entrance is located between the two western-most windows, which have single fixed panes (Figure 6.5). The two eastern windows on the ground floor are industrial with metal mullions and 16 lights. The bottom three lights at each side pivot out for ventilation. The upper story windows are a little less than half the size of those below and have nine lights each. The side panes pivot out. The second window on the east differs from the others in that it has one single fixed pane in the place of six lights of the left. All of the windows have a sill comprised of brick headers on an angle. The side walls are similar to the façade, symmetrical, but have only two window openings per floor (Figure 6.6). Each has a single door entrance in the center of the wall that is covered by a breezeway connected to the adjacent buildings. The rear of the building has no openings on the ground floor but does have two sets of wooden stairs and covered decks sheltering doors that access the two apartments on the top floor (Figure 6.7). The interior has an open floor plan that is packed with pianos in various states of repair (Figure 6.8).



Figure 6.4. Factory Façade, Looking South



Figure 6.5. Factory Façade, Looking Southwest



Figure 6.6. Breezeway Between Factory and Workshop, Looking Southeast



Figure 6.7. Apartment Stairs, Looking West



Figure 6.8. Factory Interior

6.2.2. Ward Piano Showroom, circa 1955

The Showroom is the westernmost building in the Ward Piano Company complex. It is a rectangular, one-story building on a slab foundation with a sloped roof (Figure 6.9). The Showroom measures 60-feet by 32-feet. At the roofline is a wide band of metal fascia that overhangs the buildings walls. The double glass door entrance is centered on the façade and sheltered by a narrow pent roof, which projects from the fascia band. To the left of the door are two large single-pane storefront windows and to the right are three smaller horizontal light windows. The west wall has two small horizontal light windows (Figure 6.10). The east wall has one identical window and a single door entrance covered by a breezeway that connects to the Factory building (Figure 6.11). The rear wall of the building has two more horizontal light windows near the eastern end. The rest of the wall is solid (Figure 6.12).



Figure 6.9. Showroom, Looking South



Figure 6.10. Showroom East Wall, Looking West



Figure 6.11. Breezeway Between Factory and Showroom, Looking North



Figure 6.12. Rear Wall of Showroom, Looking East

6.2.1. Ward Piano Workshop, circa 1965

The eastern building is the Workshop (Figure 6.13). It is also a rectangular one-story building on a slab foundation. It is the largest of the three, measuring over 100 feet in length. The exterior walls are concrete block covered in stucco. The roof is slightly higher at the front of the building, but then steps down toward the rear. The façade is symmetrical with two single door entrances near each end, three windows in between them, and a window to the opposite side. The windows are 20-light industrial metal windows with hinged side-lights for ventilation (Figure 6.14). There are additions to the building on the east and rear that house a paint shop and other auxiliary operations (Figure 6.15).



Figure 6.13. Workshop Façade, Looking Southeast



Figure 6.14. Workshop Window Detail, Looking Southeast



Figure 6.15. Workshop Rear Wall, Looking Southwest

6.3. HISTORY

In 1793, the North Carolina General Assembly declared Western North Carolina open to white settlement and the Western Turnpike, a road from Asheville to the Tennessee state line, was finished in 1856. The turnpike roughly followed a combination of what is now Groundhog Road and US 19/23 (Asheville Highway/Smokey Park Highway), which was constructed in the 1950s.

Ward Piano Company was founded in 1944 when Lynn J. (L.J.) Ward drove to Philadelphia to pick up the first load of pianos. L.J. had just left his job of 17 years at the Champion Paper and Fiber Mill in Canton, and his son, Guy, was serving in the Army. When Guy left the military two years later, he joined the new family business (Moore 1994). The business was based in Canton where the Ward family lived, but they also had a presence in nearby Asheville.

A 1948 advertisement in the *Asheville Citizen Times* informed the reader that Ward's Piano Shop was moving from 424 Haywood Road to 649 Haywood Road, which is located in the part of the city known as West Asheville. There is also an entry for L.J. Ward Pianos at 649 Haywood Road in the Asheville City Directory from 1948-49. There is no more mention of Ward Piano in the Asheville City Directory after that date. A 1950 ad placed in the *Asheville Citizen Times* lists a self-playing piano for sale at L.J. Ward Piano Company in Canton. The Canton City Directory from 1950-51 lists their address as 164 Main Street, Canton. In 1954 another ad in the *Asheville Citizen Times* promotes an "Opening Sale of L.J. Ward Piano," located at the corner of Haywood Road and Brevard Road in West Asheville. The ad also states "we manufacture at our own factory the famous Microtone Piano..."

The first reference to the company being located in their current location comes July 27, 1956, with an advertisement publicizing the Grand Opening of L.J. Ward's Piano Store 1 ¾ miles from Canton on the Asheville Highway, adjoining the L. J. Ward Remanufacturing Plant (Figure 6.16). Therefore, presumably, at the time of that advertisement, the center building and the western building had been built. The company began advertising regularly in the *Asheville Citizen Times* after that. The Wards sold both used and new pianos, including grands, baby grands, uprights, spinets, and organs.



Source: Newspapers.com

Figure 6.16. 1956 Advertisement in the *Asheville Citizen Times*

At first, the Wards were just buying used pianos to sell, but in 1953, they started rebuilding and restoring old pianos, which became their primary business. Eventually, they would also sell new pianos. In a 2008 interview in the *Asheville Citizen Times*, Guy Ward says that after WWII there was a huge demand for used pianos because companies weren't making many new ones. At that time many people played or wanted their children to learn to play. At the height of business in the 1960s, Ward Piano Company employed 35 people, many of them skilled craftsmen and tuners, to handle the 30 to 50 pianos that would come in weekly for repair (Rich 2008). Figure 6.17 shows Guy Ward, his wife Phyllis and their four children, on a parade float in the 1960s (Figure 6.17). The demand has diminished over the decades, but the company still employed 10 people in 1994 and seven in 2002 (Cantrell 2002).



Figure 6.17. *The Ward Family on a Parade Float, 1960s*

Photograph Provided by
the Ward Family

L.J. Ward passed away in 1965. Guy Ward took over the business until he retired in 1986, but maintained a presence at the company for three more decades until his death in April 2017. Alden J. Ward and Kelly Ward Smith, two of Guy Ward's children, started working at the company as teenagers and returned in the 1980s after they had completed college. They are the current operators of the business, with Kelly up front in the office and Alden in the shop.

6.4. NRHP EVALUATION

6.4.1. Architectural Context

Architecturally, the box-like, brick buildings of Ward Piano Company represent a practical solution to the need for commercial and industrial space. This functional type of building features a straightforward design, with little, if any, ornamentation. They were constructed as frame buildings or with concrete block, an inexpensive, fireproof, and popular mid-century building material, and were sometimes veneered with brick. A thorough search of the state's resource files in Haywood, Buncombe, and Jackson counties using the search terms "factory," "mill," and "warehouse" found no resources that compared to Ward Piano Company when considering use, architecture, age, and stand-alone setting. A few recorded resources were found that were of a similar age and architecture, but they are located in listed industrial districts. None are singular, rural resources. There are likely similar resources located in the region; however, probably due to their relatively young age and lack of architectural interest, none have yet been recorded for the state's survey files.

The 1946 Massie Furniture Warehouse (JK0460), a contributing resource in the Downtown Sylva Historic District (JK0586), listed 2014, is one-story, flat-roof brick building (Figure 6.18). It features wood frame fixed picture windows on its symmetrical facade and metal-frame industrial windows on the other exterior walls. Like Ward Piano Company, it is unadorned and was described in the NRHP nomination form as "completely utilitarian."



Figure 6.18. Massie Furniture Warehouse (JK0460)



Figure 6.19. 6736 Carolina Highway



Figure 6.20. Asheville Cotton Mill Cloth Warehouse (BN3846)

An undocumented resource, found at 6736 Carolina Highway (US 19/23) in Clyde, is a circa 1965 flat-roofed rectangular brick building housing an industrial contracting company (Figure 6.19). This is an instance of a brick box that was constructed with some attention to ornamentation. The windowless facade is embossed with a regular grid of square of bricks in relief, giving it a more modern feeling and increasing its architectural interest.

The 1887 Asheville Cotton Mill Cloth Warehouse (BN3846) is a contributing resource in the Riverside Industrial Historic District (BN1827), listed in 2004 (Figure 6.20). The two-story, flat roof, common-bond brick building is seventeen bays long and two bays deep. The plain facade is perforated by metal-frame industrial sash with awning windows. Although much older and larger, this building is very similar architecturally to the middle building of the Ward Piano Company, but possesses much more visual interest due to its large windows and more lower wall-to-window ratio.

6.4.2. Integrity

In order to be eligible for the NRHP, a property must possess several, usually the majority, of the seven aspects of integrity: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Ward Piano Company remains in its as-built location in a setting that is similar to its historic setting on the highway between Asheville and Waynesville, which is sparsely populated by small businesses and houses with the railroad tracks running parallel to the road. The three buildings of Ward Piano Company retain their original exterior design, comprised of simplistic rectangular buildings with no architectural ornamentation and open floor plans. Integrity is also observed in the materials and workmanship, though some deterioration was noted, such as cracking in the stucco on the oldest building and other signs of normal wear and tear. The building still conveys the sense of small mid-century commercial/industrial facility and continues to be used in the same manner as it was historically. It is operated by the third generation of the family that started the business in the 1940s.

6.4.3 Evaluation

Properties can be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A if they are associated with events or a pattern of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history at the local, state, or national level. Ward Piano Company was not found to possess significance under the themes of industry or commerce. The company represents the efforts of one family to create a business that would sustain them financially, which was certainly significant to them, but not in the broader context. There are many other businesses that were much more impactful to Haywood County. One such business was the Champion Paper Mill in Canton, which employed the majority of the county's workforce, but there were also industries involving furniture, shoe, textile, rubber, etc. Therefore, Ward Piano Company is recommended not eligible for listing under Criterion A.

Properties can also be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B if they are associated with persons that have made contributions significant to our past. The Ward family was one among thousands of families that made their home in Haywood County. They were not found to be historically significant within local, state, or national historic contexts. Therefore, Ward Piano Company is recommended not eligible for listing under Criterion B.

Properties may be eligible under Criterion C if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic value. The simplified designs of the three buildings that make up the Ward Piano Company are not considered to be architecturally significant. They are buildings that house the different operations of the company and were designed for functionality with minimal thought toward architectural

ornamentation. Nor are they are not representative of any particular type, period, or method or construction. *Therefore, Ward Piano Company is recommended not eligible for listing under Criterion C.*

Properties can be eligible if they are likely to yield additional information important in prehistory or history under Criterion D. Ward Piano Company is unlikely to yield any important historical information not discoverable through other documentary sources. *Therefore, Ward Piano Company is not recommended eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion D.*

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