



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

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper  
Secretary Susi H. Hamilton

Office of Archives and History  
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

November 9, 2018

MEMORANDUM

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

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

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report, Widen NC 279 from SR 2478 to SR 2435, U-5821,  
PA 18-02-0012, Gaston County, ER 18-2810

Thank you for your September 11, 2018, letter, transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the report and concur that the following properties are not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under any criterion for the reasons outlined.

- GS0323 – Suggs House
- GS1722 – Center Baptist Church
- GS1723 – Neely's Grove AME Zion Church

However, we disagree with the evaluation of the New Hope Presbyterian Church (GS1724). The church appears to be eligible under Criterion C, in the area of architecture, as a fine example of designed modern 1960s church architecture in rural Gaston County.

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 919-814-6579 or [environmental.review@ncdcr.gov](mailto:environmental.review@ncdcr.gov). In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT, [mfurr@ncdot.gov](mailto:mfurr@ncdot.gov)

Received: 09/20/2018  
State Historic Preservation Office



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III  
SECRETARY

Renee Gledhill-Earley  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
4617 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617

September 11, 2018

**ER 18-2810**

Due -- 10/12/18

Dear Gledhill-Earley:

RE: Historic Structure Survey Report, TIP# U-5821, PA# 18-02-0012, Widen NC Highway 279 (New Hope Rd) from SR 2478 (Titman Rd) to Sr 2435 (Union Hope Rd) in Gaston County

H- ep letters  
11/8/18  
RSE

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to Widen NC Highway 279 (New Hope Rd) from SR 2478 (Titman Rd) to Sr 2435 (Union Hope Rd). Calyx prepared the attached Eligibility Report and recommend none of the evaluated properties are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The report and survey materials are enclosed for your review and comment per 36CFR.800. Please let me know if you have any additional questions regarding this project. I can be reached at (919) 707-6088 or by email at slreap@ncdot.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shelby Reap".

Shelby Reap  
Historic Architecture Section

Attachment

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Location:  
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RALEIGH NC 27610

# HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT

Widen NC Highway 279 (New Hope Road) from SR 2478 (Titman Road) to SR 2435 (Union Hope Road)

TIP# U-5821

WBS# 44393.1.1

Prepared for:

Environmental Analysis Unit

North Carolina Department of Transportation

1598 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, North Carolina, 27699

Prepared by:



CALYX Engineers and Consultants

6750 Tryon Road

Cary, North Carolina, 27518

**SEPTEMBER 2018**

# HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT

Widen NC Highway 279 (New Hope Road) from SR 2478 (Titman Road) to SR 2435 (Union Hope Road)

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6750 Tryon Road

Cary, North Carolina, 27518

**SEPTEMBER 2018**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher R. Mroczka".

---

Chris Mroczka, Principal Investigator

September 6, 2018

Date

---

Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor

Historic Architecture Group

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Date

## Management Summary

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to realign N.C. Highway (NC) 279 (South New Hope Road) from Secondary Road (SR) 2478 (Titman Road) to SR 2435 (Union New Hope Road) in Gaston County. The project's Area of Potential Effects (APE), as defined by NCDOT, is a 500-foot-wide corridor illustrated in Figure 2. NCDOT architectural historians reviewed the properties within the APE and determined that four individual properties greater than 50 years of age warranted further evaluation for potential National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility.

This project is subject to review under the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects (NCDOT/NCHPO/FHWA/USFS 2015). An NCDOT Architectural Historian defined an APE and conducted a site visit to identify and assess all resources of approximately fifty years of age or more within the APE. Four resources within the APE warrant intensive National Register eligibility evaluations, and they are the subject of this report. NCDOT Architectural Historians determined that all other properties and districts are not worthy of further study and evaluation due to lack of historical significance and/or integrity.

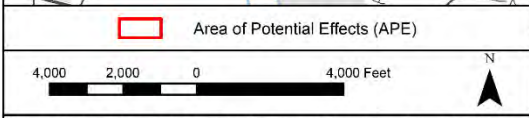
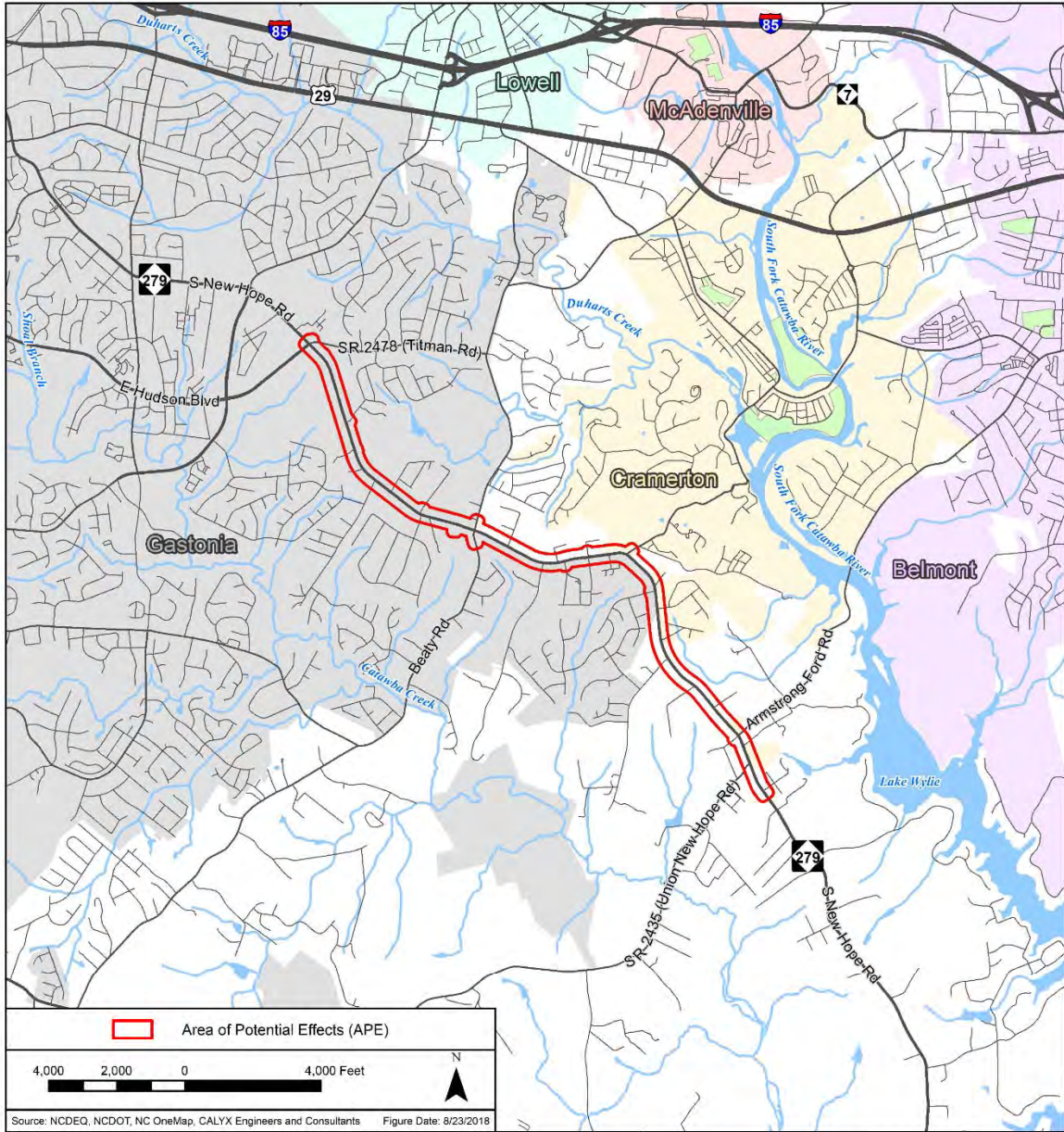
Gaston County was comprehensively surveyed in 1982, and the Suggs House (GS 323) was surveyed and documented at that time.

In May 2018, NCDOT requested that CALYX Engineers and Consultants (CALYX) complete research, an intensive-level historic resources field survey, and NRHP evaluations for these four properties. Based on the field survey, background research, and the evaluations documented in this report, the recommendations for the NRHP are as follows:

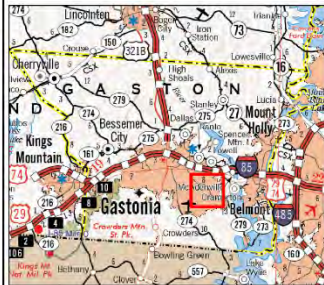
<b>Property Name</b>	<b>NCHPO Survey Site Number</b>	<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Center Baptist Church	GS 1722	Not Eligible	N/A
Neely's Grove AME Zion Church	GS 1723	Not Eligible	N/A
Suggs House	GS 323	Not Eligible	N/A
New Hope Presbyterian Church	GS 1818	Not Eligible	N/A

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Source: NCDEQ, NCDOT, NC OneMap, CALYX Engineers and Consultants Figure Date: 8/23/2018



Gaston County

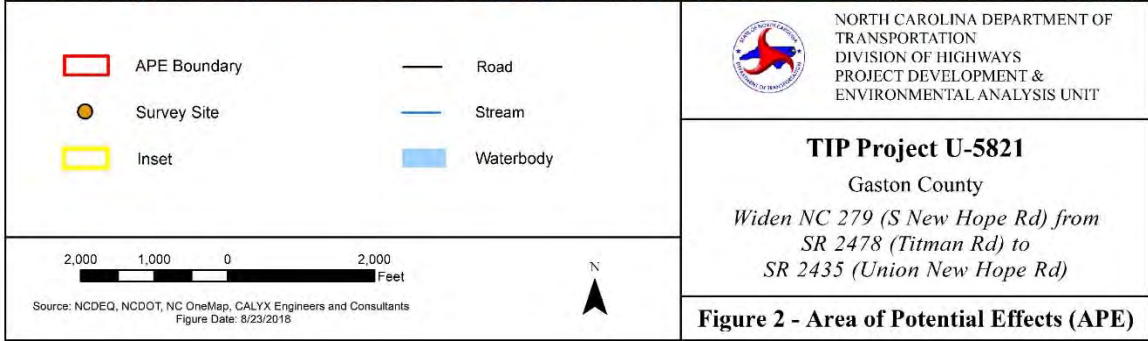
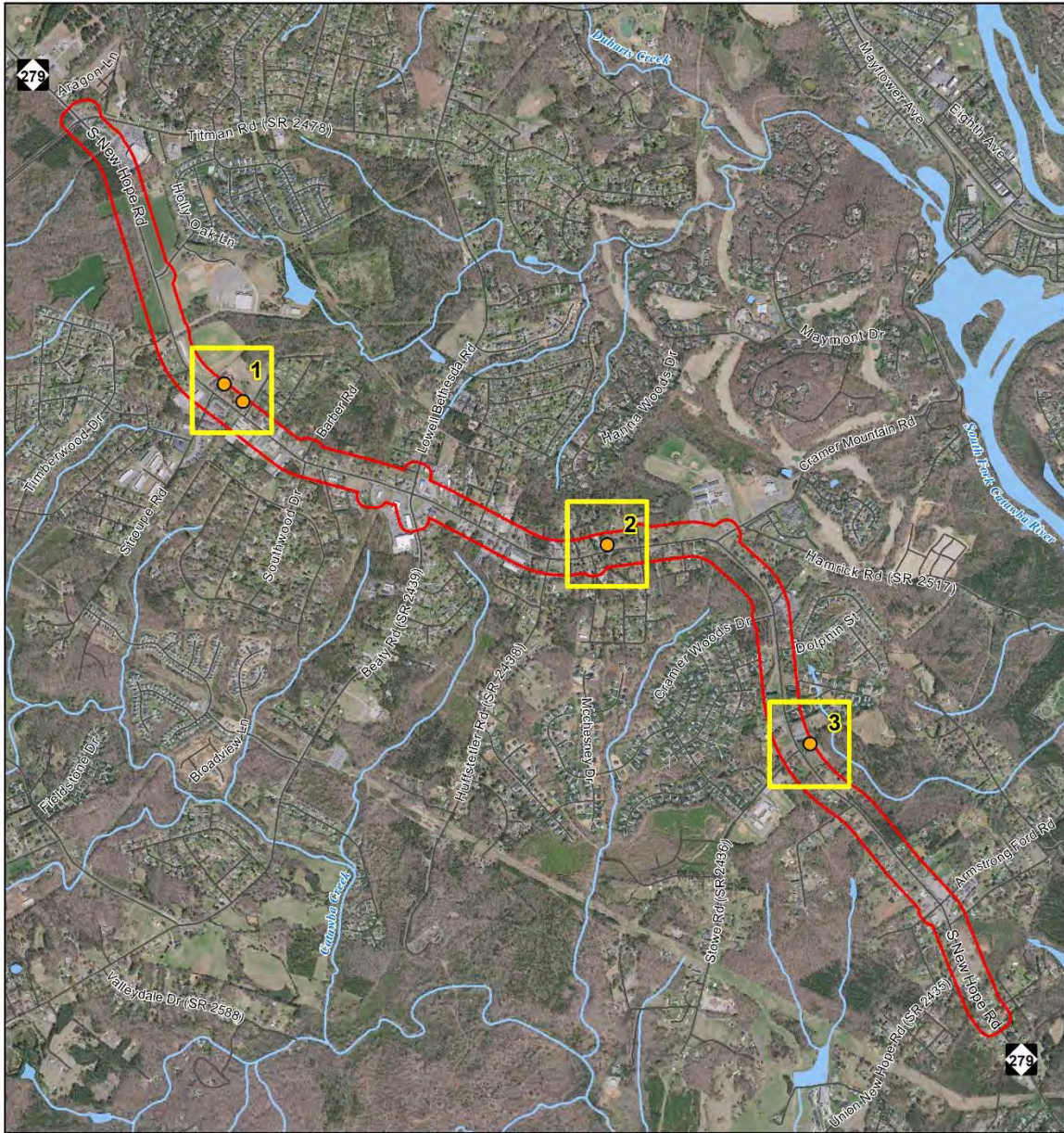


NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT &  
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT

**TIP Project U-5821**



Gaston County  
Widen NC 279 (S New Hope Rd) from  
SR 2478 (Titman Rd) to  
SR 2435 (Union New Hope Rd)

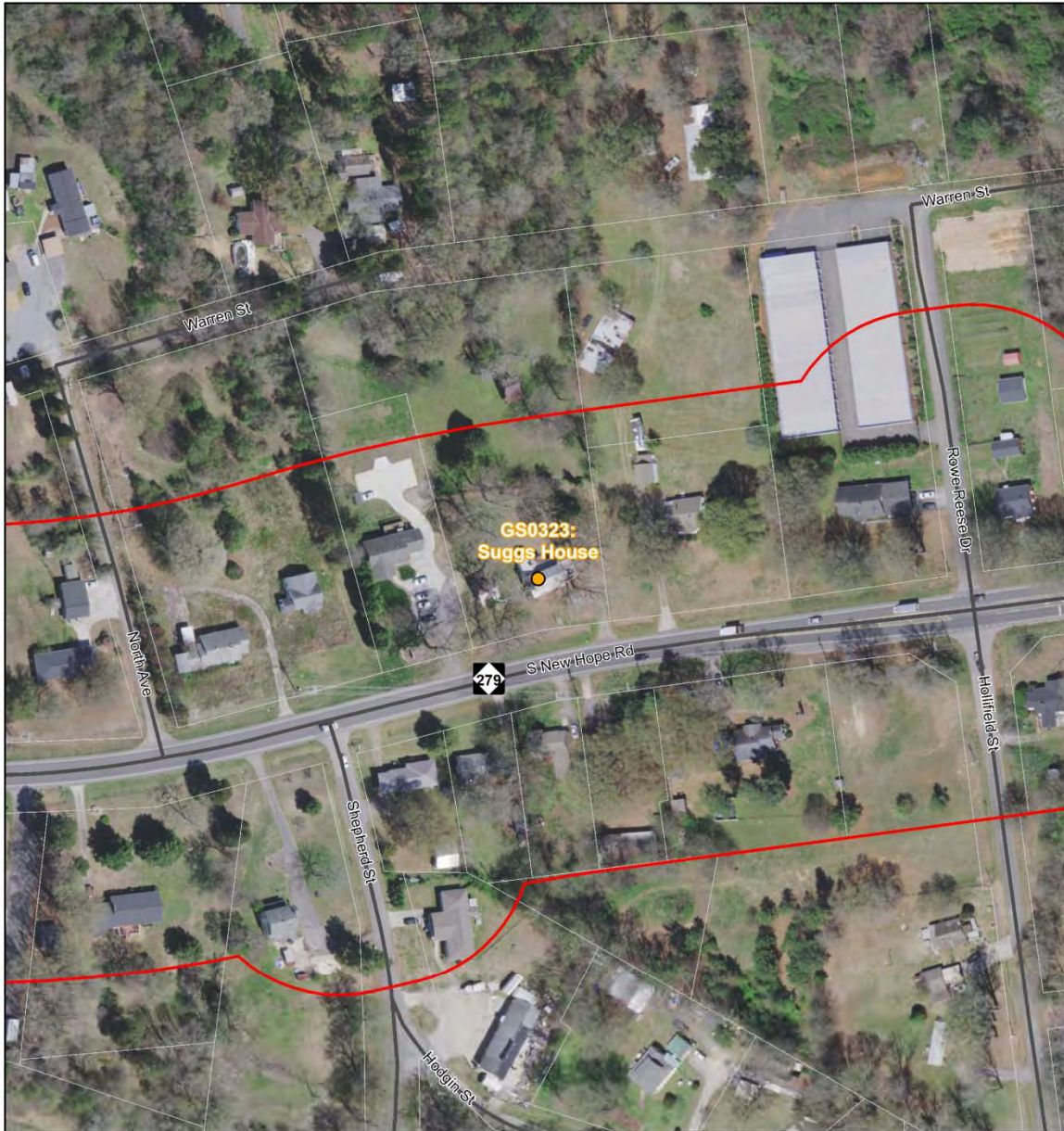
**Figure 1 - Project Vicinity**





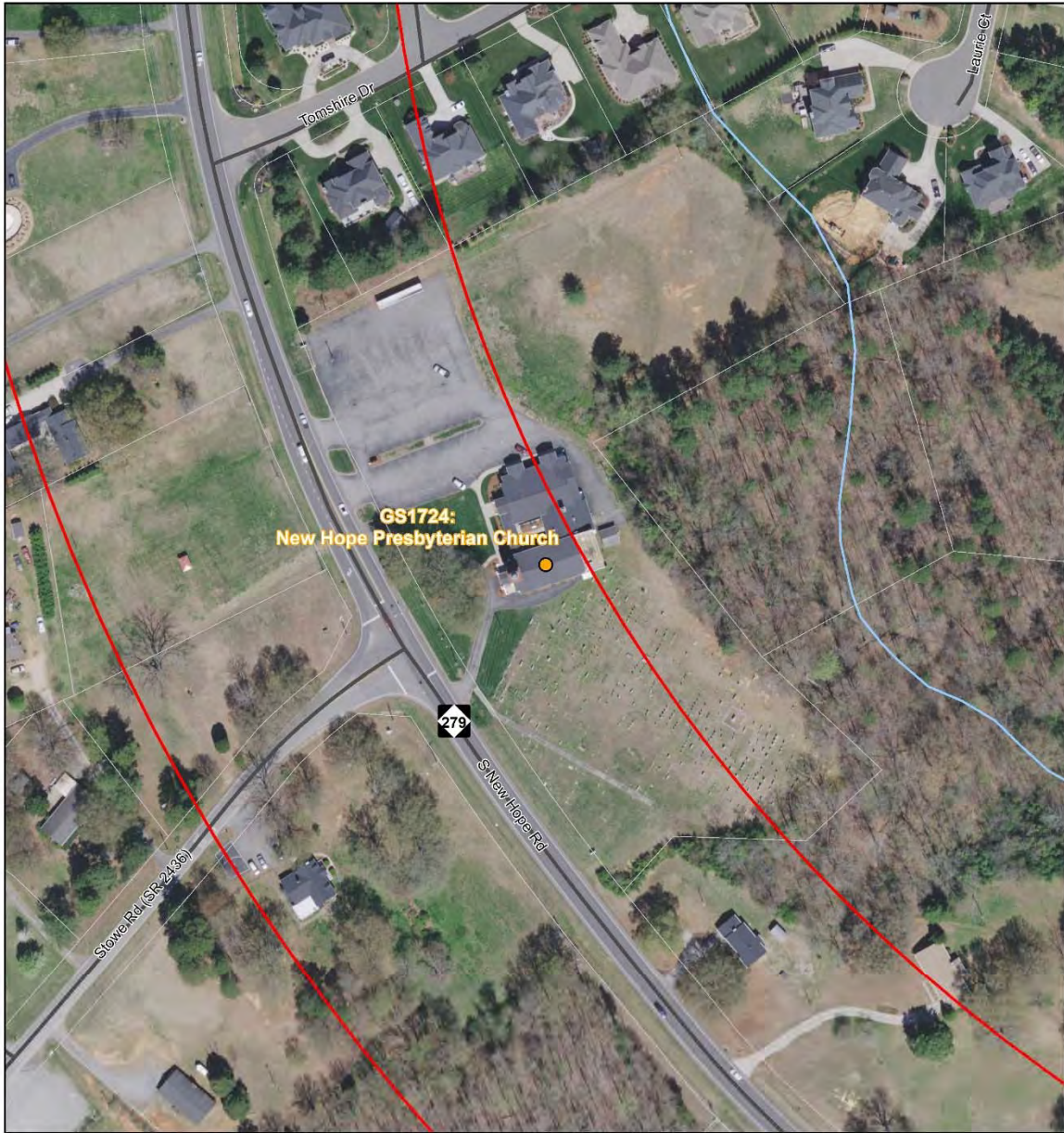




<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> APE Boundary</li> <li><span style="color: yellow; font-size: 1.2em; margin-right: 5px;">●</span> Survey Site</li> <li><span style="border: 2px solid yellow; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Inset</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid gray; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Property Line</li> <li><span style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Road</li> <li><span style="border-bottom: 1px solid blue; width: 20px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Stream</li> <li><span style="background-color: lightblue; width: 20px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Waterbody</li> </ul>	 <p>NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT &amp; ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT</p>
<p>150    75    0    150 Feet</p> 	<p><b>TIP Project U-5821</b> Gaston County <i>Widen NC 279 (S New Hope Rd) from SR 2478 (Titman Rd) to SR 2435 (Union New Hope Rd)</i></p>
<p>Source: NCDEQ, NCDOT, NC OneMap, CALYX Engineers and Consultants Figure Date: 8/23/2018</p>	<p><b>Figure 3 - APE Inset 1</b></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> APE Boundary</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Survey Site</li> <li><span style="border: 2px solid yellow; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Inset</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid gray; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Property Line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 20px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Road</li> <li><span style="border-bottom: 1px solid blue; display: inline-block; width: 20px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Stream</li> <li><span style="background-color: lightblue; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Waterbody</li> </ul>	 <p>NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT &amp; ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT</p>
<p><b>TIP Project U-5821</b> Gaston County <i>Widen NC 279 (S New Hope Rd) from SR 2478 (Titman Rd) to SR 2435 (Union New Hope Rd)</i></p>		
<p>150    75    0    150 Feet</p> <p>Source: NCDEQ, NCDOT, NC OneMap, CALYX Engineers and Consultants Figure Date: 8/23/2018</p>		
<p><b>Figure 4 - APE Inset 2</b></p>		



APE Boundary	Road
Survey Site	Stream
Inset	Waterbody
Property Line	

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION  
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PROJECT DEVELOPMENT &  
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT

**TIP Project U-5821**

Gaston County

*Widen NC 279 (S New Hope Rd) from  
SR 2478 (Titman Rd) to  
SR 2435 (Union New Hope Rd)*

**Figure 5 - APE Inset 3**

150 75 0 150 Feet

Source: NCDEQ, NCDOT, NC OneMap, CALYX Engineers and Consultants  
Figure Date: 8/23/2018

## Methodology

On July 24 and 25, 2018, CALYX Architectural Historians Matt McDaniel and Chris Mroczka visited Gaston County and completed photo documentation of all four resources. CALYX Architectural Historian Sarah David undertook research at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, the Gaston County Register of Deeds, the North Carolina State Library, and the North Carolina State Archives. David also used online research tools and resources, including Gaston County GIS Mapping, the website findagrave.com, and the web-based subscription services ancestry.com and newspapers.com. McDaniel and Mroczka drove portions of southeastern, northeastern, southwestern, and northwestern Gaston County on July 25 in search of comparable building types.

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: Center Baptist Church

Resource Name	Center Baptist Church
HPO Survey Site Number	GS 1722
Street Address	3301 South New Hope Road
PIN	3564949424
Construction Dates	1959
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



### Description

Center Baptist Church is located in southeast Gaston County, approximately five miles southeast of downtown Gastonia. The church property is located at 3301 South New Hope Road (SR 279) and spans the northwest and southeast quadrants of the South New Hope Road and Stroupe Road (SR 2470) T-intersection. The overall setting around the church includes residential and commercial properties, and another church property to the southeast. A golf ball driving range is located on the adjacent property to the northwest of the church. Non-historic commercial properties have been built to the southwest across South New Hope Road. Interior access to the church was denied despite repeated attempts to contact church staff.



Figure 6: Center Baptist Church Site Plan

Center Baptist Church faces southwest towards the South Hope Road at Stroupe Road T-intersection. A non-historic, side-gabled brick outbuilding is located to the rear of the church. Two non-historic storage sheds are located to the southeast of the outbuilding. A cemetery associated with the property is located to the immediate southeast of the church. An asphalt parking lot for the property is located on the northwest side of the church.

Center Baptist Church is a front-gabled brick building. A side-gabled wing extends from the rear portion of the building's side elevations forming what was originally a T-shaped church. Based on a church cornerstone, the church was renovated in 2014, and both side elevations have been canted outward to form a ninety-degree cross axis at the elevations' midpoint. Therefore, the church no longer retains its historic T-shape plan.



*Figure 7: Facing northeast to Center Baptist Church*

The front-gabled façade consists of three bays. A small centrally located brick tower rises above the façade breaking the front gable's apex. The tower is adorned with a modest cupola and steeple. The central entry is flanked by arched steel-framed stained-glass windows in the outer bays, the lower portion of which appear to be awning windows. A decorative brick front entry extends slightly out from the façade's central bay. The entry comprises a slightly projecting gable and brick arch adorned by keystones; stepped brickwork on its outer edges mimics engaged buttresses. The double door entryway is recessed within the brick arch and is flush with the outer bays' wall surface. The non-historic metal front doors are topped with an arched stained-glass transom. The façade has two cornerstones, one each in the outer bays. The cornerstones detail the founding of the church and its reconstruction and renovation. Brick steps with metal balustrades lead to the front entrance. Two sets of concrete steps

aligned parallel to the façade meet forming a stoop adjacent to the front entry. A brick wall with a metal balustrade obscures the stairs when looking towards the façade.



*Figure 8: Center Baptist Church, entrance detail*

The side elevations are symmetrical in design and are canted outward creating a ninety-degree cross axis at their midpoint compared to the church's original longitudinal axis. Each side elevation has a canted wall facing towards South Hope Road and another canted wall facing towards the rear of the church. Each canted wall is three-bays wide. Canted walls facing South Hope Road have arched stained-glass, metal-framed windows on their outer bays and an empty central bay. The canted walls facing towards the rear of the church have similar stained-glass, metal-framed windows within each of the three bays. A concrete handicap ramp with metal balustrade is located adjacent and parallel to the rear-facing wall on the church's northwest side; the ramp leads to a non-historic metal door.



*Figure 9: Center Baptist Church, facing northwest to side elevation*



*Figure 10: Center Baptist Church, facing northwest to side elevation*





*Figure 11: Center Baptist Church, facing southeast to side elevation*



*Figure 12: Center Baptist Church, facing northeast to side elevation*

The gabled ends forming the wing at the rear of the church are symmetrical in design with minor discrepancies in door and window placement. Both facades of the rear wing are obscured by the canted side elevations and are one-bay wide consisting of vinyl-clad windows on each of the two stories. The side elevations of the gabled ends are three-bays wide consisting of vinyl-clad windows on each story of the outer bays. The inner bays both have a non-historic metal door. The northwest side elevation also has a vinyl-clad window in the upper story above the door. The church's rear elevation is two-stories

high and seven-bays wide. The windows on this elevation are all vinyl-clad sash and the doors are composed of non-historic metal. From southeast to northwest along the upper-story the bays consist of a window, vacant bay, window, door, and three windows in the remaining bays. From southeast to northwest along the lower-story the bays consist of a window, four vacant bays, door, and window. A concrete staircase with metal balustrade aligned parallel to the rear elevation accesses the centrally located upper-story doorway.



Figure 13: Center Baptist Church, facing southwest to rear wing



Figure 14: Center Baptist Church, facing southeast to rear wing



*Figure 15: Center Baptist Church, facing northeast along handicap ramp*

A non-historic, side-gabled brick building is located to the rear of the church. Two non-historic storage sheds are located to the southeast of the brick outbuilding.



*Figure 16: Center Baptist Church, facing northeast to side-gabled outbuilding*



*Figure 17: Center Baptist Church, facing northwest to side-gabled outbuilding*



*Figure 18: Center Baptist Church, facing northeast to storage sheds*



*Figure 19: Center Baptist Church, facing northeast to storage sheds*

The church's cemetery is located to the southeast of the building, between the church building and Neely's Grove AME Zion Church to the east. The Neely's Grove AME Zion Church also has a cemetery and the two cemeteries blend together between the properties without any obvious delineations. The website, [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com), records 222 interments for the Center Baptist Church Cemetery. The graves range in date from the early twentieth century to present day. The cemetery has numerous grave marker types including wide block headstones made of marble, tablet markers composed of sandstone, and concrete obelisks. The markers are of simple design and lack artistic distinction.



*Figure 20: Center Baptist Church, facing southeast in front of church to cemetery*



*Figure 21: Center Baptist Church, facing northeast in front of church to cemetery*

## History and Architectural Context

Prior to the Civil War, most African Americans in Gaston County were enslaved, but after emancipation, African Americans established rural farming communities, including Neely's Grove. An architectural inventory of the county's African American resources described Neely's Grove as one of a handful of "closely-knit, all-black enclaves." As African Americans established these settlements, they also founded churches, and Neely's Grove was large enough to support two churches: Center Baptist Church and the adjacent Neely's Grove AME Zion Church. Both churches served the immediate community and African Americans from the Baltimore community on the edge of the Cramerton mill village, about two miles east.<sup>1</sup>

The Neely's community first established Neely's Grove AME Zion Church in 1876, but just three years later, they formed Center Baptist in 1879. The Baptists built a frame, gable-front structure, presumably similar to rural churches built for black and white congregations across the state.<sup>2</sup> Beyond a description of the building as frame and gable-front, the original appearance is not known, but most new churches forming in North Carolina in the nineteenth century started with modest, one-room buildings.

Center Baptist was part of a wave of Baptist churches established by black communities during the postbellum years. In North Carolina, as black members quickly withdrew from white Baptist churches in the long-established Baptist State Convention, African American Baptists convened the General Baptist Convention in Goldsboro in 1867.<sup>3</sup> By 1882, the General Baptist Convention represented eight hundred churches across North Carolina, and because Center Baptist is part of the General Baptist Convention today, it is assumed that Center was a member from its earliest days.<sup>4</sup>

In 1959, Center Baptist replaced its earlier building with this existing brick sanctuary.<sup>5</sup>

Neighboring Neely's Grove AME Zion had been forced to replace their building after a fire the previous year, but that the Neely's Grove community could support the construction of two new brick churches at nearly the same time is a testament to the community's solid economic footing during the post-World War II years. Center was part of the post-World War II pattern of constructing new, modern brick sanctuaries that reflected the congregation's prosperity through the prism of traditional architecture (usually Colonial Revival or Gothic Revival) that illustrated the congregation's commitment to solid, traditional values.

Center Baptist, with its gable-front edifice and entrance flanked with shallow buttresses, displaying modest Gothic Revival references, falls squarely into that architectural context.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Ramsey and Lara Ramsey, "Planning Phase Report and Multiple Property Documentation Form For the Survey of African American Resources in Gaston County," report filed with North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC, 2000, E-6.

<sup>2</sup> Ramsey, E-12.

<sup>3</sup> General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, "Our History," accessed July, 2018, via the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina website, <http://gbsconline.org>.

<sup>4</sup> North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, This Day in North Carolina History, "African American Baptists in North Carolina Organized, 1867," accessed July 2018 via <https://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/2014/10/18/african-american-baptists-in-north-carolina-organized-1867>.

<sup>5</sup> Cornerstone.

A cornerstone from 2014 commemorates a renovation and, indeed, images of the church illustrate that the addition of wings on the main block's side elevations and an expansion of the rear cross-wings happened between 2013 and 2017. The wings on the side elevation have broadened the façade and hidden the side elevations, thereby obscuring the original design and making the church's place within the history of church architecture in North Carolina less obvious.

While obituaries and articles in newspapers from the twentieth century specifically identify Neely's Grove AME Zion Church Cemetery and Center Baptist Church Cemetery separately when referring to burials, the cemeteries appear, on the ground, to be merged with no obvious dividing line between the two. The earliest burials in the half closest to Center Baptist date from the 1890s, although fewer than five graves predate 1920. The bulk of marked burials date to the mid-twentieth century forward.

### Comparable Examples

Simple front-gabled brick churches are located throughout Gaston County. The majority of the comparable churches surveyed retained a front-gabled design with a rectangular or T-shaped sanctuary without significant overall design modifications. Oconoor Grove AME Church located at 613 North Main Street in Belmont was built in 1961 and is a simple front-gabled brick church. The church has a modest cupola and steeple and a comparable decorative entrance with a gabled vestibule and arched entrance way. The shape and size of the façade and the side elevations' stained-glass windows are also similar to Center Baptist Church, but this church has retained its rectangular sanctuary plan.



Figure 22: Oconoor Grove AME Church

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<sup>6</sup> Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005, portable edition), 462-463.



Neely's Grove AME Zion Church (GS 1723), located on the adjacent parcel at 3321 South New Hope Road, was re-built in 1958. Neely's Grove AME Zion Church serves as a good comparable church building because it is front-gabled with a T-shaped sanctuary plan. However, Neely's Grove AME Zion Church lacks Gothic Revival ornamentation as was common with African-American churches during this mid-twentieth century design era. Center Baptist Church has a more elaborate front-entrance but Neely's Grove AME Zion Church retains its original T-shaped sanctuary design.



Figure 23: Neely's Grove AME Zion Church (GS 1723)

Berea Baptist Church, located at 2522 Hickory Grove Road in Gastonia, was built in 1940. Berea Baptist Church is a front-gabled, T-shaped brick building similar in mass to Center Baptist Church. The church has similar side elevation stained-glass windows and a modest cupola and steeple. Berea Baptist Church has a simple decorative front entrance with a front-gabled porch supported by columns but lacks the architectural details expressed in the front entrance to Center Baptist Church. Berea Baptist Church has retained its T-shaped sanctuary design.



*Figure 24: Berea Baptist Church*

Pisgah Presbyterian Church is located at 3600 Linwood Road in Gastonia and was built in 1951. Pisgah Presbyterian Church has a similar mass to Center Baptist Church and comparable detailed front entrances with elaborate brickwork and arched entrances. Pisgah Presbyterian Church is also front-gabled and retains its T-shaped sanctuary. A contrastable element of Pisgah Presbyterian Church is its Gothic Revival ornamentation expressed through ogee arched entrances and window shapes, multiple triangular arches on the façade, and decorative window tracery.



*Figure 25: Pisgah Presbyterian Church*

## National Register Evaluation

### Integrity

Center Baptist Church retains integrity of location. The church is located at its historic construction site. The church property lacks integrity of setting as late twentieth century commercial development has been built within the viewshed across South New Hope Road. Center Baptist Church also lacks integrity of design, material, workmanship, feeling, and association. The church has recently undergone significant design changes by canting outward the side elevations which has substantially modified and obscured its historic T-shaped plan. Additionally, several windows have been replaced with non-historic vinyl-clad sash windows, and historic-period doors have been replaced with non-historic metal doors. Due to compromised design and material integrity, the church lacks integrity of workmanship and does not retain the feeling and association of a mid-twentieth century, T-shaped church.

### Criteria Evaluations

Center Baptist Church is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with events or broad patterns of history significant in our history. This property is not known to be associated with any significant events, such as a denominational split or a secular event. Although the church remains in use as a religious facility, background research indicates that the church is not associated with any important event or broad patterns of religious history.

Center Baptist Church is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for an association with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations were identified during background research.

Center Baptist Church is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. For purposes of this evaluation, the *Gaston County African-American Resources Survey*, published in 2000 by consultants Emily and Lara Ramsey, was referenced. Based on the survey, the vast majority of significant historic African-American churches constructed after the Jim Crow era began, c.1900, were in the Gothic Revival style. While Center Baptist Church represents a mid-twentieth century front-gabled brick church the property is a common sample of its type and lacks significant Gothic Revival stylistic elements. Similar churches in the surrounding county serve as better examples of its type with more stylistic components. Additionally, due to significant design changes, the church lacks integrity to convey architectural significance. The church's cemetery also does not contain remarkable funerary art. The historic gravestones are typical of their time period and lack significant stylistic features or workmanship. Therefore, the Center Baptist Church and its associated cemetery are not eligible under Criterion C.

Center Baptist Church 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.

Center Baptist Church does not meet Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties. The church building lacks significance in architectural or artistic distinction. The church building also lacks historical importance. Therefore, the property fails to meet Criteria Consideration A.

## Evaluation: Neely's Grove AME Zion Church

Resource Name	Neely's Grove AME Zion Church
HPO Survey Site Number	GS 1723
Street Address	3321 South New Hope Road
PIN	3574041258
Construction Dates	1958
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



### Description

Neely's Grove AME Zion Church (Neely's Grove Church) is in southeast Gaston County, approximately five miles southeast of downtown Gastonia. The church property is located at 3321 South New Hope Road (SR 279) on the northeast quadrant of the South New Hope Road and Neely Grove Road (CR 2470) T-intersection. The overall setting around the church includes residential and commercial properties, and a church property to the northwest. Non-historic commercial properties have been built to the southwest across South New Hope Road and to the southeast across Neelys Grove Road. Interior access to the church was denied despite repeated attempts to contact church staff.



Figure 26: Neely's Grove Church Site Plan

Neely's Grove Church faces southwest toward South New Hope Road. The property's terrain slopes slightly downward from southwest to northeast, from the church's façade to the rear elevation. Neely's Grove Church's cemetery is located to the northwest of the church and blends with a similar cemetery associated with the neighboring Center Baptist Church. An asphalt parking lot is located to the building's immediate southeast.

Neely's Grove Church is a front-gabled brick building. A side-gabled wing extends from the rear forming an overall T-shaped plan. The central bay of the three-bay façade slightly protrudes from the outer two bays. As a result, the double door entryway appears slightly recessed within a decorative brick arch but is in fact flush with the outer two bays. The central entryway consists of non-historic, metal-paneled, one-light doors with an arched wooden vent above. A modest square cupola and steeple rise above this central bay. Each of the outer bays have single arched, stained-glass windows with brick sills. The lower rectangular portion of the metal-framed stained-glass windows appears to function as an awning window. The façade has two cornerstones, one each on the outer bays. The cornerstones detail the founding of the church and its reconstruction. Brick steps with metal balustrades lead to the front entrance.



*Figure 27: Facing north to Neely's Grove Church*



*Figure 28: Facing northeast to Neely's Grove Church façade and northwest side elevation*

The rear wing's façade elevation extends from either side of the main body of the church. Each side consists of two bays with metal-paneled doorways adorned by metal awnings on the inside bays and single one-over-one, vinyl-clad sash windows on the outer bays. Brick steps with an outside metal balustrade lead to the rear wing on the southeast side elevation. A poured concrete handicap ramp with a brick foundation leads up to the rear wing on the northwest side.

The southeast side elevation consists of six bays along the front-gabled portion of the church. Each of the six bays has metal-framed, stained-glass windows similar to the windows on the façade. Due to the sloping terrain, the southeast side elevation of the rear wing has a basement level. The basement level consists of a metal-paneled door sheltered with a metal awning. The main level of the southeast side elevation has three-bays, each bay with a one-over-one, vinyl-clad sash window.

The northwest side elevation consists of six bays along the church’s main front-gabled mass. Each of the six bays has metal-framed, stained-glass windows similar to the windows on the façade. The rear wing’s basement level on the northwest side elevation consists of a metal-paneled door with a metal awning and a three-light metal awning window. The main level of the northwest side elevation has three-bays. Each outer bay has a vinyl-clad sash window. The central bay has a single, six-over-six wood-framed sash window.

The church’s rear elevation consists of six-bays with a basement level and main level. The first five bays from southeast to northwest consist of one-over-one, vinyl-clad sash windows along the main level and six-light, metal-framed casement windows along the basement level. The outer bay on the rear elevation’s northwest side has a nine-light, metal-framed casement window.



*Figure 29: Neely’s Grove Church, facing north to southeast side elevation*



*Figure 30: Neely's Grove Church, facing southeast to northwest side elevation*



*Figure 31: Neely's Grove Church, facing southwest to rear elevation*





*Figure 32: Neely's Grove Church, facing southwest to southeast side elevation and rear elevation*

To the building's rear, a concrete parking pad extends off the church's parking lot. An open carport with a front-gabled roof supported by metal poles is located at the end of the parking pad. Adjacent to the parking pad is a small concrete storage building. The church's paved parking lot extends parallel to the church's southwest side elevation and accesses both South New Hope Road and Neely's Grove Road. The church's cemetery is located to the northwest of the building and is located between the church building and Center Baptist Church to the west. Center Baptist Church also has a cemetery and the two cemeteries blend together between the properties without any obvious delineations. The website, [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com), records 126 internments for the Neely's Grove Cemetery. The graves range in date from the early twentieth century to present day. The cemetery has numerous grave marker types including wide block headstones made of marble, tablet markers composed of sandstone, and concrete obelisks. The markers are of simple design and lack artistic distinction.



*Figure 33: Neely's Grove Church, facing southwest to carport and outbuilding*



*Figure 34: Neely's Grove Church, facing northeast to cemetery (Neely's Grove Church in background)*



*Figure 35: Neely's Grove Church, facing northeast to cemetery from South New Hope Road*



*Figure 36: Neely's Grove Church, representative gravestones*



*Figure 37: Neely's Grove Church, representative gravestone*



*Figure 38: Neely's Grove Church, representative gravestone*

### History and Architectural Context

Prior to the Civil War, most African Americans in Gaston County were enslaved, but after emancipation, African Americans established rural farming communities, including Neely's Grove. An architectural inventory of the county's African American resources described Neely's Grove as one of a handful of "closely-knit, all-black enclaves." As African Americans established these settlements, they also founded

churches, and Neely's Grove was large enough to support two churches: Neely's Grove AME Zion Church and the adjacent Center Baptist Church. Both churches were formed in the 1870s, and both served the immediate community and African Americans from the Baltimore community on the edge of the Cramerton mill village, about two miles east.<sup>7</sup>

Neely's Grove AME Zion Church was organized in 1876, at the end of Reconstruction, which had been a period of increasing prosperity for African Americans eager to use their new freedom to achieve economic independence. The denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, originated in New York in the eighteenth century and fully separated from its white counterpart, the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1821. Until the Civil War, the AME Zion Church was wholly contained within northern, free states, but it actively supported freedom and abolition. Postbellum, the church was poised to spread quickly across the South, achieving significant religious status in North Carolina by the late nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Several churches in the Lincolnton District of the Western North Carolina Conference of AME Zion Churches (which includes Gaston County) date from the mid-1860s, but within Gaston County, Neely's Grove appears to be among the older AME Zion congregations.<sup>9</sup>

What the first Neely's Grove sanctuary building looked like is not known, however, most newly-formed churches in the second half of the nineteenth century started in buildings like those in the first half of the century: modest, one-room buildings executed in log or frame. In 1941, the sanctuary burned down, but the congregating quickly rebuilt. However, fire struck again in the late 1950s, destroying the 1941 building, and in August of 1958, the congregation completed the existing building.<sup>10</sup>

In the post-World War II years, most North Carolinians enjoyed economic prosperity and, particularly in the state's manufacturing heart of the Piedmont, many people profited from mills and factories. This prosperity prompted many religious congregations to build new sanctuaries. Indeed, brick churches dating from between 1945 and 1965 may be the most common type of church building in the state, and most of these buildings were executed in some form of the Colonial Revival or Gothic Revival styles. They range from elaborate and fairly academic studies to modest treatments that reflect a scarcity of materials in the immediate post-war years and the residential use of the stripped-down Colonial Revival called Minimal Traditional.<sup>11</sup>

Neely's Grove was built out of necessity, but its architecture falls into this traditional pattern of replacing a sanctuary in a period of prosperity, like the 1950s. Like so many congregations across the state in the mid-twentieth century, Neely's Grove chose traditional, restrained architecture that reflected both solidity and prosperity, but also modest restraint.

The Neely's Grove AME Zion Church Cemetery adjoins the Center Baptist Church Cemetery, and while obituaries clearly delineate between the two, the cemeteries are not visually or physically separated.

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<sup>7</sup> Ramsey, E-6.

<sup>8</sup> Ramsey, E-12, and William S. Powell and Jay Mazzocchi, *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 14-15.

<sup>9</sup> Lincolnton District Layman's Council, *History of African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches in the Lincolnton District of the Western North Carolina Conference* (Gastonia, NC: Lincolnton District's Layman Council, 1982), no page numbers.

<sup>10</sup> Lincolnton District Layman's Council, no page numbers, and *Gastonia Gazette*, March 21, 1958, page 1.

<sup>11</sup> Bishir, 459-464.

Based on an approximation of the location of the parcel lot line between the two church properties, the earliest marked graves in the AME Zion section appear to date from the early 1910s.

### Comparable Examples

Simple front-gabled brick churches are located throughout Gaston County. Berea Baptist Church built in 1940 and located at 2522 Hickory Grove Road in Gaston is an ideal comparison to Neely's Grove Church. Berea Baptist Church is a front-gabled T-shaped brick building similar in mass to Neely's Grove Church. The church has similar side elevation stained-glass windows and a modest cupola and steeple. Berea Baptist Church has a more elaborate entrance with a front-gabled porch supported by columns.



*Figure 39: Berea Baptist Church*

Oconoor Grove AME Church located at 613 North Main Street in Belmont was built in 1961. Oconoor Grove AME Church is a simple front-gabled brick church. The church has a similar cupola and steeple, but a more expressive front entrance with a vestibule and arched entrance way. The shape and size of the façade and side elevation stained-glass windows are also comparable.



*Figure 40: Oconoor Grove AME Church*

Center Baptist Church (GS 1722) is located on the adjacent parcel at 3301 South New Hope Road to the northwest of Neely's Grove Church. The two churches are both front-gabled T-shaped brick buildings and comparable in mass. They also have similar build dates as Center Baptist Church was built in 1959. Center Baptist Church has a more elaborate façade with a central tower and decorative keystones along the arched front entry. However, the Center Baptist Church building has undergone a recent design transformation with canted walls on its side elevations. The church has similar steel-framed, stained-glass windows.



*Figure 41: Center Baptist Church (GS 1722)*

Puett Methodist Church is located at 3009 Dallas Cherryville Highway in Dallas and was built in 1957. Puett Methodist Church is a front-gabled brick church similar in mass to Neely's Grove Church. The church also has a modest cupola and steeple and similar size stained-glass windows on the side elevations. Analogous to Berea Baptist Church, this church has a more elaborate façade with a pedimented entrance supported by columns. The church also has decorative brick quoins on its façade corners.



Figure 42: Puett Methodist Church

## National Register Evaluation

### Integrity

Neely's Grove Church retains integrity of location. The church is located at its historic construction site. The church property lacks integrity of setting as late twentieth century commercial development has been built within the viewshed across South New Hope Road. Neely's Grove Church retains integrity of design and workmanship as the church's original design has remained intact. Integrity of materials has been diminished through the use of non-historic doors and vinyl-clad windows in the church's rear wing. Through intact design the church building retains integrity of feeling and association as a mid-twentieth century, front-gabled church.

### Criteria Evaluations

Neely's Grove Church is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with events or broad patterns of history significant in our history. This property is not known to be associated with any significant events, such as a denominational split or a secular event. Although the church remains in use as a religious facility, background research indicates that the church is not



associated with any important event or broad patterns of religious history. Additionally, the church building does not possess any features which would convey a historic association to religious history.

Neely's Grove Church is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for an association with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations were identified during background research.

Neely's Grove Church is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. For purposes of this evaluation, the *Gaston County African-American Resources Survey*, published in 2000 by consultants Emily and Lara Ramsey, was referenced. Based on the survey, the vast majority of significant historic African-American churches constructed after the Jim Crow era began, c.1900, were in the Gothic Revival style. This building represents a mid-twentieth century, front-gabled brick church and is a common sample of its type. It lacks any significant ornamentation. Similar churches in the surrounding county serve as better examples of this common type and convey more stylistic components. Additionally, several windows have been altered and doors have been replaced with non-historic materials thus diminishing the building's overall material integrity. The church's cemetery does not contain remarkable funerary art. The historic gravestones are typical of their time period and lack significant stylistic features or workmanship. Therefore, the Center Baptist Church and its associated cemetery are not eligible under Criterion C.

Neely's Grove Church 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.

Neely's Grove Church does not meet Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties. The church building lacks significance in architectural or artistic distinction. The church building also lacks historical importance. Therefore, the property fails to meet Criteria Consideration A.

## Evaluation: Suggs House

Resource Name	Suggs House
HPO Survey Site Number	GS 0323
Street Address	4007 South New Hope Road
PIN	3574523162
Construction Dates	Ca. 1885
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



### Description

The Suggs House is in southeast Gaston County, approximately six miles southeast of downtown Gastonia. The property is located at 4007 South New Hope Road (SR 279) between North Avenue and Rowe Reese Drive. The Suggs House is set within a series of residential homes along South New Hope Road. The surrounding residential properties date from the mid-twentieth century to early twenty first century. Interior access to the house was denied despite repeated attempts to contact the owner.



Figure 43: Suggs House Site Plan

The Suggs House faces south towards South New Hope Road on a 1.93-acre parcel. A two-story, side-gabled historic outbuilding is located west of the house. A one-story, side-gabled barn is located in the field to the rear of the house.

The Suggs House is a two-story, three-bay I-house with rear additions. It has a vinyl-siding exterior, side-gabled metal roof, and two exterior gable-end chimneys. The windows throughout the house are wood sash. The foundation consists of brick piers with concrete block infill. A full-width, metal-clad, hipped-roof porch covers the front entrance. The porch is supported by six chamfered wood posts connecting to the roof through stepped, sawn-wood brackets. The inner two sets of supporting wood posts flanking the front porch stairs are spaced closed together and connected by decorative wood lattice. The wood porch floor has a concrete-block infilled foundation. The front porch stairs are wood with flanking wood hand rails and have a separate poured concrete foundation. The central entryway contains a non-historic, wood-paneled front door flanked by original four-light sidelights. Both the lower and upper stories' outer bays have six-over-six windows. The lower-story windows are flanked by wood shutters which do not appear on the photos in the SHPO survey site file. A non-historic, wood-framed handicap ramp with a concrete block foundation is aligned parallel to the façade and accesses the porch's south end.



Figure 44: Facing north to Suggs House



*Figure 45: Suggs House, entrance detail*



*Figure 46: Suggs House, facing northeast to west side elevation*

The main block's identical gable ends consist of an exterior brick chimney flanked by windows on both the lower and upper story. The lower story has six-over-six windows and the upper story has one-over-one windows.



*Figure 47: Suggs House, facing northwest to east side elevation*



*Figure 48: Suggs House, facing west to east side elevation*



*Figure 49: Suggs House, facing southeast to west side elevation*

A side-gabled ell extends off the rear elevation's west bay. The ell has two interior brick chimneys, one standard in size and the other a smaller flue. The ell's west elevation has an eight-light window on the south and what appears to be an original wood-paneled door serving as a side entryway on the north. The lower sash of the window has been removed and replaced with an air conditioning unit. Concrete steps lead up to the side entry. The rear or north elevation of the ell has a three-over-one window, and the east elevation has a single six-over-six window.

A hipped-roof, enclosed porch extends off the east and central bays of the main mass's rear elevation and connects with the rear ell. The porch enclosure has a single six-over-six window on the east and an off-center rear entryway. The rear entryway is a wood door with a large rectangular jalousie window. A metal shed roof covers a small wood porch fronting the rear entryway. The upper story of the house's rear elevation has one centrally located window. The window has a six-light upper sash and a decorative ten-light, diamond-paned lower sash.



*Figure 50: Suggs House, facing southwest to rear elevation*



*Figure 51: Suggs House, facing south to rear elevation*



*Figure 52: Suggs House, facing south to rear elevation*

The Suggs house parcel is generally flat terrain with large hardwood trees scattered throughout the property. The property lacks any signs of agricultural fields. A sloped drainage ditch is on the periphery of the front lawn paralleling both South New Hope Road and the house's south façade. Both outbuildings to the north and rear of the house are set in open grass areas. An unpaved driveway leads from South New Hope Road to the house's east side elevation. A poured concrete parking area, designated as handicap parking, has been recently constructed adjacent to the east side elevation.

A two-story, wood-framed outbuilding is located west of the house. The historic use of this outbuilding is unknown. The outbuilding is side-gabled with a stone foundation and side shed roof extension supported by wood posts. A wellhead is located beneath an overhang within the building. What appears to be a door is located on the upper level. Additionally, single small windows are located on each story of the west side elevation. Given its close proximity to the house and its incorporation of a well, it was likely used for food storage, but that is not certain.

A second outbuilding, a small barn, is located in a small field to the rear of the house. This outbuilding is side-gabled with a metal roof and shed roof overhang supported by two logs. The barn's interior contains livestock pens and a hay loft.





*Figure 53: Suggs House, facing northeast to house and two-story outbuilding*



*Figure 54: Suggs House, facing northwest to two-story outbuilding*



*Figure 55: Suggs House, facing southwest to two-story outbuilding*



*Figure 56: Suggs House, facing northwest to outbuilding located to rear of house*



*Figure 57: Suggs House, facing southeast to outbuilding located to rear of house*



*Figure 58: Suggs House, interior of outbuilding located to rear of house*

## History

Gaston County was carved from Lincoln County in 1846 and is located in North Carolina's southwest Piedmont region, bordering South Carolina. Catawba and Cherokee Indians were the county's first inhabitants. European settlers of Scotch-Irish, German, and English descent began populating the region in the mid-1700s, and they established a culture of small-scale subsistence farming. Agriculture was not particularly profitable in the area, and the most abundant crop, corn, was often converted into whisky,

making Gaston County one of the leading counties for distilling by the late 1800s. Lime, sulfur, gold, tin, and iron mines also played into the county's economy. The county, however, is best known for its large number of textile mills and mill towns, including Gastonia, McAdenville, Lowell, and Cramerton. The county's mills pioneered the use of electric lights and air conditioning, and giant mills hummed twenty-four hours per day in the early twentieth century.<sup>12</sup>

John and Eliza Suggs probably built this house around the time of their 1885 marriage, in the midst of the beginning of the county's textile-manufacturing boom. John was born in 1845, the son of William and Margaret Suggs of Mecklenburg County. William Suggs was a blacksmith, and John served in the Confederate Army as a private. Eliza was born in 1847 to farmers, M.H. and Rebecca Gullick, of Gaston County. Very little is known of John and Eliza Suggs prior to John's death in 1901, but the 1900 census records them as farmers with one son, Arthur.<sup>13</sup>

In 1910, Eliza was listed as the head of a household that included her son, Arthur, and his wife. Eliza owned the farm and worked as a farmer, and Arthur worked as a farm laborer. In 1916, Eliza sold this property to William and Fannie Jenkins, who bought two other tracts in the area, and the 1920 census records Eliza living in Arthur's household.<sup>14</sup>

The Jenkins family does not appear to have lived here. Census records consistently document William and Fannie in Gastonia where William worked as a piano and organ salesman. After William Jenkins' death in 1930, Fannie sold this farm to Bryte Callie Warren, a married woman who made numerous land purchases in her own name.<sup>15</sup> The Warrens lived several places in Gaston County during their lifespans, but it is unclear if they ever occupied this house.<sup>16</sup> The Warrens did, however, subdivide the farm into 175 small lots in 1946.<sup>17</sup>

After Bryte's death in 1979, Joyce Warren Stroupe, presumably Bryte's daughter, inherited the farm and sold it to Everette and Jeanette Barker in 1980.<sup>18</sup> The Barkers and, later, their children, owned the home until 2018 when the family sold it to a boat and RV storage business.<sup>19</sup>

### Architectural Context

In Gaston County during the eighteenth century, log construction was the most common method of construction for houses. This was due to both the prevalence of wood throughout the region and the unnecessary requirement of elaborate tools which were hard to come by for the average house builder.

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<sup>12</sup> Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 477.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census Records, 1850, 1860, and 1900, accessed via ancestry.com.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Records, 1910 and 1920, accessed via ancestry.com, and Eliza A. Suggs to W.E. Jenkins, Gaston County Deed Book 120, page 462, December 27, 1916.

<sup>15</sup> Fannie Jenkins to Bryte C. Warren, Gaston County Deed Book 302, page 591, October 5, 1934.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census Records, 1920, 1930, and 1940, accessed via ancestry.com.

<sup>17</sup> Gaston County Plat Book 7, page 104.

<sup>18</sup> Joyce Warren Stroupe and R. Dean Stroupe to Everette and Jeanette Barker, Gaston County Deed Book 1328, page 526, April 21, 1980.

<sup>19</sup> Donna B. Stowe, Sandra B. Massey, and Ronald and Judie Barker to H3 Boat and RV Storage, Inc., Gaston County Deed Book 4970, page 989.

Log houses were commonly one room with a loft or sometimes two-story.<sup>20</sup> This floor plan typically evolved into a hall-parlor form as houses expanded. By the nineteenth century, log houses gave way to larger frame houses in Gaston County.<sup>21</sup> The I-house form is a two-story dwelling typically with a central hallway flanked by a room on each side; it gained popularity in North Carolina in the early 1800s and slowly displaced the earlier hall-parlor form. An ell or earlier house is often appended to the rear elevation. Commonly the kitchen would be placed in the rear ell. The plan maximizes the visual impact of a four-room house by making the house as tall and wide as possible, letting the owner impress passersby with the size of his or her home. The broad façade also provided ample room for adding gables on the front roof slope and full-width porches, all of which provided additional opportunities for adding sawn work, spindles, decorative shingles, or any other ornamentation the owner preferred and could afford. This well-worn form to which stylish ornamentation could be added to display wealth and fashion awareness was perfectly suited for deployment during an era of rapid economic growth.

The finer I-houses of early nineteenth century Gaston County were built in the Federal style, and in fewer cases the Georgian style. By the 1830s, builders commonly transitioned to the Greek Revival style. After the mid-nineteenth century, house architecture influenced by the Italianate style appeared in Gaston County. Common traits of this style found on I-houses included decorative porches with ornamental sawn work, decorative brackets on porches and eaves, and shallow-gabled roofs.<sup>22</sup> An example of the Italianate influence is expressed on the William Craig House (see Figure 59). By the turn of the twentieth century, modest houses in addition to finer homes in the area were being built with increased ornamentation in the Italianate style.<sup>23</sup> Elaborate Queen Anne designs came into vogue as more and more towns and rural areas gained access to inexpensive decorative trim and sawn work. The most high-style Queen Anne houses are located in urban areas.

In Gaston County, examples of I-houses are common, with Italianate examples and plain examples with little to no stylistic treatment. Although examples of intact I-houses remain, numerous houses have suffered substantial exterior modifications. Common alterations include application of aluminum and vinyl siding, comprehensive replacement of doors and windows, and removal of chimneys. Although these changes have generally left the I-House form and mass of affected houses discernible, they have also obscured, if not destroyed, their historic exterior materials and the quality of their carpentry and joinery.

### Comparable Examples

The William Newton Craig House is listed on the National Register as a contributing building to the Craig Homestead (GS 320). The house is located at 118 Craigsland Lane in Gastonia and serves as a good example of a late nineteenth century I-house. It is similar in mass to the Suggs House as both are three-bays wide with two exterior end chimneys and a full-width porch. The William Newton Craig House has Italianate style ornamentation including roof line brackets, sawn brackets within the porch area, and turned balusters.

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<sup>20</sup> Kim Withers Brengle, *The Architectural Heritage of Gaston County North Carolina* (Gastonia: Commercial Printers, Inc, 1982), 4-13.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 22-24.



*Figure 59: William Newton Craig House (GS0320)*

The Rufus Pasour I-house (GS 209) shares similar characteristics to the Suggs House including mass, relatively plain porches, historic windows, and minimal overall decorative ornamentation. However, the Rufus Pasour House has retained its historic siding and historic front door.



*Figure 60: Rufus Pasour House (GS0209)*

The I-house located at 2114 Whitworth Road in Cherryville was built around the mid-nineteenth century with early twentieth century modifications. This I-house is three-bays wide with one exterior end chimney and a centered front entry with sidelights. The porch is more detailed than at the Suggs House

porch and uses Craftsman style elements. Façade windows appear to be replacement one-over-one sash windows.



Figure 61: 2114 Whitworth Road, Cherryville

The I-house located at 6366 Union Road in Gastonia was also built around the turn of the twentieth century. This I-house is an ideal comparison to the Suggs House as they have a similar mass, façade, and minimal ornamentation on the porch. This I-house has also retained its historic six-over-six sash windows and has replacement vinyl siding.



Figure 62: 6366 Union Road, Gastonia

## National Register Evaluation

### Integrity

The Suggs House retains integrity of location. The house remains at its historic construction site. Integrity of setting as seat of a historic-period farm has been compromised by the lack of agricultural fields, which were subdivided and sold. Additionally, a concrete parking pad has been constructed adjacent to the east side elevation for commercial purposes. Therefore, integrity of feeling and association as a rural farm and farm house has been eliminated. The Suggs House retains integrity of design, as several key design components remain intact, including its overall form, the porch and its posts, façade windows, sidelights, and exterior chimneys. Integrity of materials and workmanship have been compromised as the historic siding and front door have been replaced with non-historic materials.

### Criteria Evaluations

The Suggs House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for an association with an event or broad pattern of history. The house retains two historic outbuildings expressing its former association with agriculture. However, the house does not retain any agricultural fields, or the open land associated with farming. Therefore, the property no longer conveys a significant association with agriculture.

The Suggs House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B. No one associated with the house is known to have been a significant figure in history.

The Suggs House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It is a plain and altered example of the relatively common I-house type, and other I-house examples in the county are substantially more intact and boast more stylistic features, such as the William Nelson Craig House and the property at 2114 Whitworth Road. Additionally, although the Suggs House generally retains design integrity, its integrity of materials and workmanship has been diminished through the application of vinyl siding and the replacement of the historic front door. Due to these alterations, the Suggs House does not represent an architecturally significant I-house.

The Suggs House 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.



## Evaluation: New Hope Presbyterian Church

Resource Name	New Hope Presbyterian Church
HPO Survey Site Number	GS 1724
Street Address	4357 South New Hope Road
PIN	3573894151
Construction Dates	1965
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



### Description

New Hope Presbyterian Church is located in southeast Gaston County, approximately six miles southeast of downtown Gastonia. The church property is located at 4357 South New Hope Road (NC 279) and spans the northeast and southeast side of the South New Hope Road and Stowe Road (CR 2436) T-intersection. The overall setting around the church includes residential properties, and open grass fields coupled with dense woodlands.



Figure 63: New Hope Presbyterian Church Site Plan

New Hope Presbyterian Church faces west towards the T-intersection of South New Hope Road and Stowe Road. The church is flanked by its historic-period Education Building and adjacent parking lot on the north and the church’s cemetery on the south. A semicircular driveway fronts the church and accesses South New Hope Road immediately south and north of the church building.

New Hope Presbyterian Church is a two-story, front-gabled brick building with Colonial Revival ornamentation. A two-story rectangular brick building with a flat roof is attached to the church’s rear elevation. The attached rectangular building is an original extension of the front-gabled section of the church and serves as classroom and office space. The west façade has a central, front-gabled arcaded porch covering the entryway. This front entryway consists of a brick porch floor leading to paneled doors with a transom. The entry porch is detailed with boxed eaves, brick quoins, and a brick arch with a keystone. A central tower topped by a square belfry and steeple rises above the front entrance. This central tower is flanked by single-bays featuring nine-light, steel-framed windows on both the lower and upper stories.



*Figure 64: Facing northeast to New Hope Presbyterian Church*



*Figure 65: Facing northeast to New Hope Presbyterian Church*



*Figure 66: New Hope Presbyterian Church, entrance detail*

The church's south side elevation has six-bays along its main mass. The westernmost bay has nine-light, steel-framed windows on both the lower and upper story. The central four bays feature long rectangular stained-glass, thirty-six-light, steel-framed windows. The upper and lower eight-lights of these windows function as awning windows. The window opening in the easternmost bay has been infilled with bricks or was originally blind. The south side elevation of the rear rectangular extension has brick steps leading

up to a stoop and covered side entry. The upper story features a single eight-over-eight, wood-sash window.



*Figure 67: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing north to south side elevation*



*Figure 68: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing northeast to south side elevation*

The rear or east rear elevation of the church's main mass is comprised of the flat-roofed, rear rectangular extension. Due to the sloping topography, the rear elevation has two stories and an exposed basement level. The rear elevation is five bays wide, and the first four bays from south to north feature eight-over-eight, wood-sash windows on the two upper levels. The northernmost bay has a single eight-

over-eight, wood-sash window located between the top two stories indicating this bay is most likely a stairwell.



*Figure 69: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing northwest to rear elevation of church*

The church's north side elevation is symmetrical to the south side but is partially obscured due to connecting structures between the church and the adjacent Education Building. The visible bays on the north side elevation include thirty-six-light steel windows similar to those on the south side elevation.



*Figure 70: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing southeast to north side elevation of church*

The north side elevation of the church building’s main mass is connected to the Education Building’s south side elevation by two separate structures. A side-gabled covered walkway extends from the church building’s westernmost bay on its north side elevation to a front-gabled porch fronting the Education Building. This covered walkway is supported by rectangular brick columns forming an arcaded walkway between the two buildings. The covered walkway was built by the church in 1965. The second connecting structure is a side-gabled rectangular building forming a hyphen between the church and Education Building. The hyphen is aligned parallel to the covered walkway and extends from the easternmost bay of the church’s north side elevation to the Education Building. Based on historic photos, this gabled hyphen previously served as a connector between the Education Building and the previous church building that existed between the years 1858-1964. The hyphen’s west elevation, facing an interior courtyard, is covered with stucco and has five-bays featuring one-over-one, vinyl replacement windows in the central three-bays and non-historic doors in the outer two bays. The interior courtyard with plantings and a concrete walkway is thus framed by the church, Education Building, and their two connecting structures.



*Figure 71: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing east to covered walkway*



Figure 72: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing east to gabled hyphen between church and Education Building

A rectangular brick extension with a shed roof is attached to the rear of the gabled hyphen. This rectangular extension and connects the flat roof extension at the rear of the church's main mass with the rear elevation of the Education Building. The hyphen's rear elevation is one story with an exposed basement level and features non-historic, one-over-one, wood-sash windows and a rear entryway.

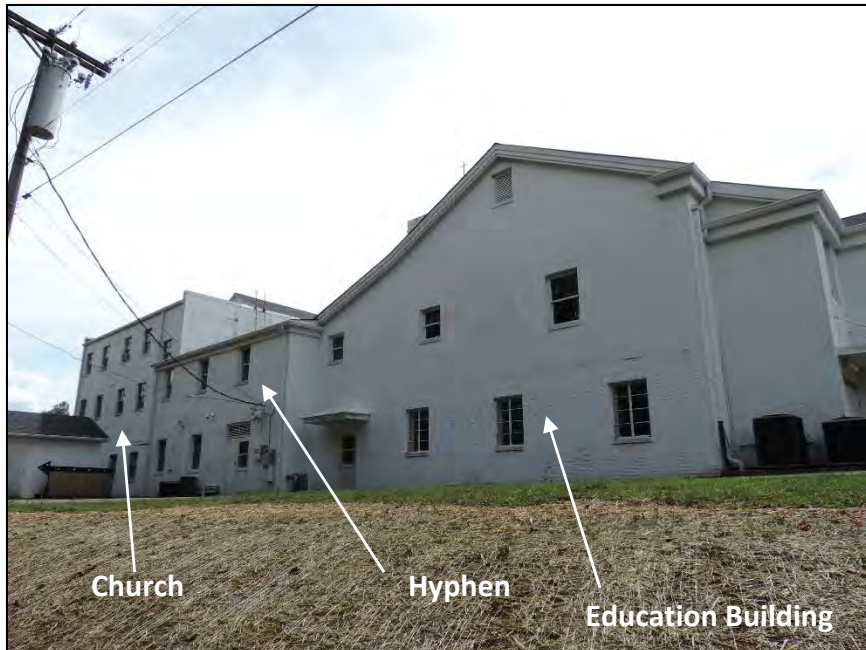
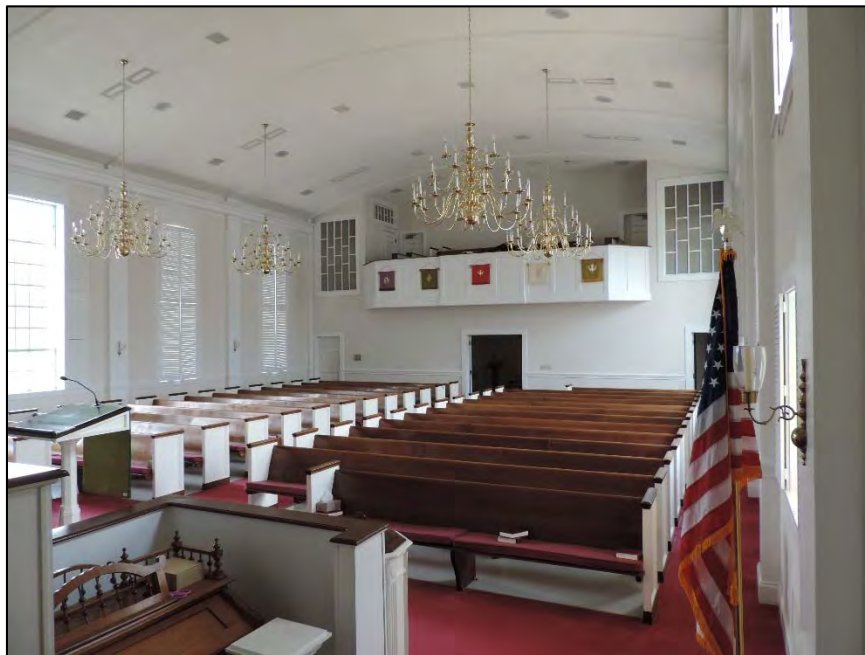


Figure 73: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing southwest to rear elevations

The front-gabled Education Building was built in 1921 and was originally located across the street as New Hope Grade School. After the school was closed, the church purchased the building and moved it to the present location in 1952. Prior to the move, a basement level containing a fellowship hall, stage, and kitchen was built for the relocated, one-and-a-half-story building. The old school building was moved on top of this prepared basement level. According to church records, the Education Building underwent an overall refurbishment in 1984 including reapplication of a brick exterior which was an original feature of the building. The Education Building has a front-gabled, arcaded porch mirroring the church's entry porch. The Education Building's front entryway is not original to the building and was most likely added in 1965 to match the new church's front entrance.

The church's double front doors lead into rectangular vestibule. The sanctuary has a barrel ceiling and center isle flanked by rows of pews. A small balcony overlooks the rear of the sanctuary. The sanctuary has Colonial Revival style ornamentation including pediments over exiting doorways and a recessed area of the front wall with a cross flanked by pilasters and adorned by a pediment.



*Figure 74: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing toward rear of sanctuary*





*Figure 75: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing toward front of sanctuary*



*Figure 76: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing east to façade of Education Building*

The Education Building's north side elevation features two projecting gabled wings. Based on historic aerial photography, the wings were most likely added for additional space during the 1984 refurbishment. The westernmost wing has a one-over-one, vinyl-clad sash window and a one-light metal-framed awning window along the basement level. The easternmost wing features a one-over-one, wood-sash window along the main story and a one-over-one, vinyl-clad sash window on the basement level. Along the north side elevation between the two projecting gabled wings are two rows of four

individual one-over-one, vinyl-clad sash windows. One row is along the main story of the building and the second set is along the basement level. The easternmost bay of the north side elevation is slightly projected with a shed roof and consists of a one-over-one, wood-sash window along the main story and concrete steps leading down to double metal-paneled doors with a transom along the basement level.



*Figure 77: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing southeast to north side elevation of Education Building*

The rear elevation of the Education Building features three one-over-one wood sash windows along the main story and a row of three individual eight-light metal awning windows (see Figure 73). The south side of the rear elevation's basement level has a rear doorway covered by a metal awning.

The Education Building's south side elevation is partially obscured by the two connecting structures, the walkway and gabled hyphen, between this building and the church. Along the south side elevation and between the two connecting structures are four one-over-one, vinyl-clad sash windows. A brick staircase fronts the south side elevation and leads to the basement level of the building.



*Figure 78: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing northeast to south side elevation of Education Building*

An asphalt parking lot with delineated parking spaces is located on the property and to the north of the Education Building. The head of a natural spring is visible in the grassed area to the east of the parking lot. The stream runs through a gully located parallel to the parking lot, Education Building, and church building. Based on church records, the head of the natural spring served as a meeting place for the local community before the church had been built. To the rear of the church is a gabled concrete-block storage building.

The church's cemetery borders South New Hope Road to the immediate southeast of the church building. The website, [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com), records 703 internments for the cemetery. The graves range in date from the early nineteenth century to present day. The cemetery has numerous grave marker types including wide block headstones made of marble and tablet markers composed of sandstone. Several obelisk markers, ledger footstones, and box tombs are scattered throughout the cemetery as well. A few family plots are delineated by low concrete walls forming a rectangle encompassing the designated area.



*Figure 79: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing northwest to head of natural spring behind church*



*Figure 80: New Hope Presbyterian Church, facing southwest to storage building*



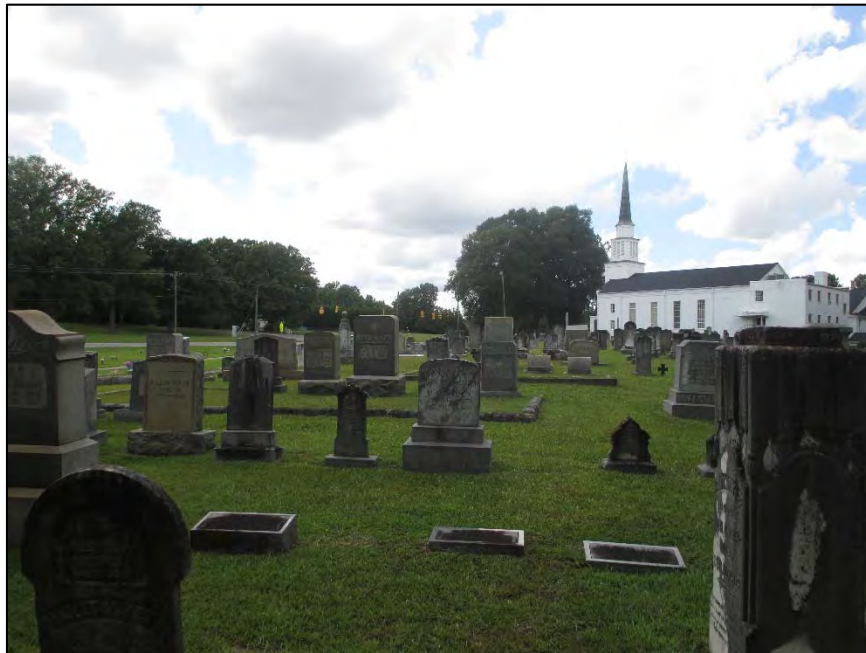
*Figure 81: New Hope Presbyterian Church Cemetery, representative gravestones*



*Figure 82: New Hope Presbyterian Church Cemetery, representative gravestones*



*Figure 83: New Hope Presbyterian Church Cemetery, representative gravestones*



*Figure 84: New Hope Presbyterian Church Cemetery, representative gravestones*

### History and Architectural Context

Gaston County was carved from Lincoln County in 1846 and is located in North Carolina's southwest Piedmont region, bordering South Carolina. Catawba and Cherokee Indians were the county's first inhabitants. European settlers, of Scotch-Irish, German, and English descent and enslaved African

Americans began populating the region in the mid-1700s, bringing with them a variety of Protestant religious traditions.<sup>24</sup>

Presbyterians began populating North Carolina in Duplin, Pender, and New Hanover counties in the 1730s, while a larger wave came down the Great Wagon Road in the 1740s. Among those migrants were Presbyterians who organized Gaston County's earliest known church, Goshen Presbyterian, in the 1760s. While Gaston County is home to many different religious traditions, the Presbyterians were the first to establish successful churches in the area.<sup>25</sup>

New Hope Presbyterian's earliest records date from S.L. Watson's time as pastor, between 1827 and 1835, and his writings document the church's establishment date as 1793. Goshen and another early Presbyterian congregation, Bethel, are considered New Hope's mother churches. Specifically, New Hope's formation stemmed from dissatisfaction with the search for a new minister at Bethel, and some members of Bethel left to form New Hope. In spite of this rift, however, New Hope remained under Bethel's wing for many years, and New Hope was not officially organized until 1814 and continued to be officially associated with Bethel until at least the late 1820s.<sup>26</sup>

The first congregation worshiped in a bush arbor, but they built a log sanctuary at some point.<sup>27</sup> This was typical of young churches across North Carolina that began life in a modest log building. In the 1830s and 1840s, the church purchased several tracts of land, and in 1858, they replaced their log structure with a frame, gable-front building.<sup>28</sup> Again, this puts New Hope's architectural development squarely in line with the state: as the church's congregants prospered during the antebellum years, they desired an improved and more fashionable worship space.<sup>29</sup> Over the course of a century, that building was remodeled to include two square, corner towers, one with a flat roof and one with a pyramidal roof.<sup>30</sup>

In 1962, demolition of the frame building made way for a new, brick sanctuary, completed in 1965.<sup>31</sup> Executed in the dignified Colonial Revival style, this building is a restrained reflection of prosperity and historical literacy.<sup>32</sup>

By the 1950s and 1960s, North Carolina was enjoying a post-war economic boom based on tobacco, textiles, and other manufacturing. As a result, congregations found themselves expanding and desiring more fashionable and up-to-date buildings, and they had the money to build. At this point, the traditional, all-American look of Colonial Revival designs were nationally popular for homes, colleges, and churches.<sup>33</sup> The Colonial Revival communicated solidity and Americanism, and created an edifice

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<sup>24</sup> Bishir and Southern, 477.

<sup>25</sup> Powell and Mazzocchi, 907, and Robert Allison Ragan, *The History of Gastonia and Gaston County, North Carolina* (Charlotte: Loftin and Company, 2010), 30-31.

<sup>26</sup> Brian D. Weger, *Hope Preserved: The Store of New Hope Presbyterian Church* (Unknown Publisher: Undated), 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> Weger, 92.

<sup>28</sup> Weger, 93.

<sup>29</sup> Bishir, 218.

<sup>30</sup> Ragan, 35, and undated, unattributed newspaper articles from the mid-1960s displayed in the current church building.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Bishir, 460-461.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, ed. *Re-Creating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 5-6.

that celebrated the congregation as established and tied to historic church designs.<sup>34</sup> Brick, gable-front sanctuaries, dating from the 1950s and 1960s and ranging from minimally enriched to more elaborate expressions of Colonial Revival, are found all across North Carolina today.

Historically, Presbyterians in North Carolina perceived themselves as well-educated and rightly so: the Presbyterian Church has supported a variety of schools and institutions, including Davidson College, and the denomination's academic grounding is reflected in its architecture. Baptists, for example, valued the believer's direct communication with God over the believer's educated and academic interpretation of the Bible, and often their churches mirrored this more basic, elemental worship method through very simplistic architecture. Presbyterians, however, tended to display their dignity and education through solid, well-finished, and refined academic designs. Greek Revival and, later, Colonial Revival were well-suited for this display: quiet, solid, and academic.

New Hope Presbyterian Church is situated within this tradition of conservative, respectable Colonial Revival design.

### Comparable Examples

Gaston County offers a multitude of comparable examples of mid-twentieth century churches with Colonial Revival ornamentation. Similar churches are located in various Gaston County settings, including urban downtown areas, on the fringe of cities, or within the countryside. First Baptist Church located at 23 North Central Avenue, in the city of Belmont, was built in 1950. It is a front-gabled brick church similar in mass to New Hope Presbyterian Church, but designed with a higher style of Colonial Revival architectural elements. First Baptist Church is fronted with a large, full-height pedimented porch with two-story columns. The church also has a central brick tower with a cupola and steeple. The arched windows on the side elevations are accented with keystones.

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<sup>34</sup> Bishir, 460-461.





*Figure 85: First Baptist Church, Belmont*

Goshen Presbyterian Church, located at 380 Woodlawn Street in Belmont, was built in 1950. The sanctuary portion of this front-gabled brick church is similar in shape to New Hope Presbyterian Church, but the rear bisects the educational and office portion of the church forming a T-shape plan. Goshen Presbyterian has a central brick tower that rises through the pedimented gable of the façade. The church lacks an elaborate columned front entrance, but its front entry is adorned with a broken pediment and pilasters. The side elevation windows are similar in shape but smaller in stature compared to those at New Hope Presbyterian Church.



*Figure 86: Goshen Presbyterian Church, Belmont*

Hickory Grove Baptist Church is located on the outskirts of Gastonia at 3717 Hickory Grove Road and was built in 1959. This front-gabled brick church has a similar mass to New Hope Presbyterian Church but a significantly more elaborate front entrance with a full-height, pedimented porch supported by two-story columns. The front corners of the church are styled with brick quoins. Hickory Grove Baptist Church has a cupola and steeple similar in scale to New Hope Presbyterian Church.

First Presbyterian Church of Bessemer City is located at 202 North 14<sup>th</sup> Street and was built in 1960. The front-gabled brick church is slightly smaller in scale than New Hope Presbyterian Church and with simpler Colonial Revival ornamentation. The church lacks a decorative pedimented front entrance and has a plain recessed arched entry, along with a small simple cupola and steeple. Similar to other comparable churches in the county, the building has decorative brick quoins on the façade's corners.



*Figure 87: Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Gastonia*



*Figure 88: First Presbyterian Church of Bessemer City*

## National Register Evaluation

### Integrity

New Hope Presbyterian Church retains integrity of location and setting. The church building is located at its historic construction site and the its residential setting has remained intact including the natural

spring behind the church. The Education Building was moved to its location adjacent to the church, but this occurred prior to the existing church's build date. The church retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship as the original design and material envelope remains intact. One side elevation window has been removed, but, as a whole, the church building retains the majority of its historic materials and thus conveys its workmanship. Through intact integrity of setting, design, materials, and workmanship, the church building also retains integrity of feeling and association as a mid-twentieth century church with Colonial Revival ornamentation.

The New Hope Presbyterian Church Educational Building was originally built across the street as a school house in 1921. The building was moved to its current location in 1952 and therefore lacks integrity of location. However, the building retains integrity of setting as the building has resided at its present location within the church complex for over sixty years and during that time the overall residential setting of the area has remained intact. The Educational Building lacks integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Design, material, and workmanship integrity have been compromised through non-historic alterations to the building including the addition of a non-historic entrance, two side elevation wings, and replacement of historic windows. Due to compromised integrity of design and materials, the building does not retain feeling and association of an early twentieth century schoolhouse.

#### Criteria Evaluations

New Hope Presbyterian Church is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for a historically significant association with an event or broad pattern of history. This property is not known to be associated with any significant events, such as a denominational split or a secular event. Although the church remains in use as a religious facility, background research indicates that the church is not associated with any important event or broad patterns of religious history. The church and its congregation appear to have historically served the local community. Additionally, the church building does not possess any features which would convey a historic association to religious history.

New Hope Presbyterian Church is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for an association with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations were identified during background research.

New Hope Presbyterian Church property is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. While the building represents a mid-twentieth century church with Colonial Revival ornamentation, the property is a typical example of this common type. Similar churches in the surrounding county serve as better examples with more prominent Colonial Revival features such as a full-height pedimented portico supported by columns. Additionally, the church's north side elevation is obscured by structures connecting the building to the adjacent and substantially altered Educational Building. Similar churches in the surrounding area, such as First Baptist Church and Goshen Presbyterian in Belmont, are less obscured by additions. The church's cemetery does not contain remarkable funerary art. The historic gravestones are typical of their time period and lack significant workmanship. Therefore, the New Hope Presbyterian Church and its associated cemetery are not eligible under Criterion C.

The Educational Building is also not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. This was previously an early twentieth century school house that was relocated adjacent to and utilized by the church. Due to this relocation and multiple non-historic alterations, the building lacks integrity and is also not eligible under Criterion C.

New Hope Presbyterian Church 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.

New Hope Presbyterian Church does not meet Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties. The church building lacks significance in architectural or artistic distinction. The church building also lacks historical importance. Therefore, the property fails to meet Criteria Consideration A.

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