



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

February 1, 2019

John Niffenegger John.Niffenegger@raleighnc.gov
City of Raleigh | Housing & Neighborhoods Department
Community Development Division
421 Fayetteville Street, Suite 1200
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Longacres Subdivision, Raleigh, Wake County, ER 18-3969

Dear Mr. Niffenegger:

This letter is to follow up on my January 14, 2019, email to you apologizing for the long delay in our response to the report on Longacres subdivision prepared for the City of Raleigh by Mary Ruffin Hanbury of Hanbury Preservation. Since the report was not linked to a specific proposed undertaking, we were at a loss on how to process it. As a result, its handling was delayed. We came to understand that the report was prepared in anticipation of the City's undertaking Community Development activities in the area.

Having reviewed the report, there might be a case made for Longacres having significance as a Post-WWII subdivision based on the planning principles espoused by the FHA. However, there is not enough information in the report to assess the integrity of the individual buildings. While the report notes that 138 of the 151 houses were built between 1952-1959, there is no assessment of whether or not they retain integrity and contribute to the whole.

If the City wishes to undertake the survey work necessary to assess their condition and integrity, we will be pleased to review a revised report that would include a property inventory, database for the subdivision, maps and photographs per our Historic Structures Survey Report Guidelines at:
http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/er/Section106_Standards.html

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 and 110 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. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

Sincerely,



for Ramona M. Bartos

cc: Mary Ruffin Hanbury
Tania Tully, HPC

maryruffin@hanburypreservation.com
tania.tully@raleighnc.gov

**National Register Eligibility Evaluation of Longacres
(WA4440)
Raleigh, North Carolina**

NOW STARTING
LONGACRES
SUBDIVISION

*Poolo Road Just East of
Smith-Melville Dairy.*

2 and 3 bedroom, brick veneer homes.
All City utilities
Paved streets with curbs and gutters

Wright Construction Co.
600 Lawyers Bldg. Phone 3-6796

*Can Use Carpenters, Helpers, Painters and Laborers.
Apply at Project.*

**Mary Ruffin Hanbury, Hanbury Preservation Consulting
August 2018**

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The City of Raleigh Department of Community Development operating under the provisions of a programmatic agreement, employed certified staff to identify historic properties in project areas. Section II.A.2 of the agreement reads:

If the property is not on the roster or Study List and is over fifty (50) years old, (or if a property is less than fifty years old but appears to meet the National Register Criteria Consideration G), Certified Staff will evaluate the property against the National Register Criteria. If Certified Staff determines that a property is eligible for the National Register, a report will be submitted to SHPQ requesting concurrence with this determination. If the SHPO opinion is not rendered within fifteen (15) working days, it will be assumed that the SHPO is in agreement with the findings of Certified Staff and the property will be addressed under the terms of this Agreement.

Further, II.2.3 reads:

Program activities may be proposed in areas that are unsurveyed or merit re-survey due to age. Certified Staff will evaluate any potential districts against the National Register Criteria. If Certified Staff determines that a district is eligible for the National Register, a report will be submitted to SHPO requesting concurrence with this determination. If the SH PO opinion is not rendered within fifteen (15) working days, it will be assumed that the SHPO is in agreement with the findings of Certified Staff and any affected properties will be addressed under the terms of this Agreement.

In compliance with this agreement, Hanbury Preservation Consulting as certified staff completed an assessment of the Longacres' (WA4440) eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Architectural historian Mary Ruffin Hanbury, who meets the Secretary of the Interior's qualifications for architectural history (36 CFR Part 61) conducted the fieldwork in August 2018 and prepared this study. Investigation included research through the Wake County Register of Deeds, archival copies of the News and Observer, and materials through the Olivia Raney Branch of the Wake County Public Library.

The field work and study comply with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; and the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office's (HPO)'s *Report Standards for Historic Structure Survey Reports/Determinations of Eligibility/Section 106/110 Compliance Reports in North Carolina*.

As a result of this study, Hanbury Preservation Consulting recommends that Longacres (WA4440) is eligible for the NRHP at the local level under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development.

Property Name	Survey Site Number	Eligibility Recommendation	Criteria
Longacres Historic District	WA4440	Eligible	A-- Community Planning and Development. Tract subdivision illustrating policies promulgated by the Federal Housing Authority

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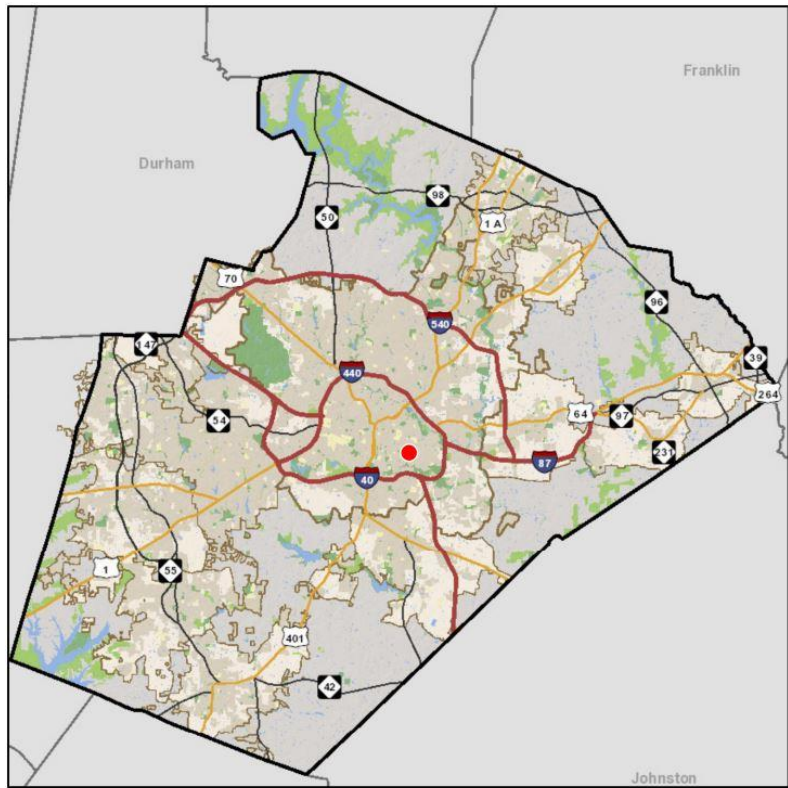
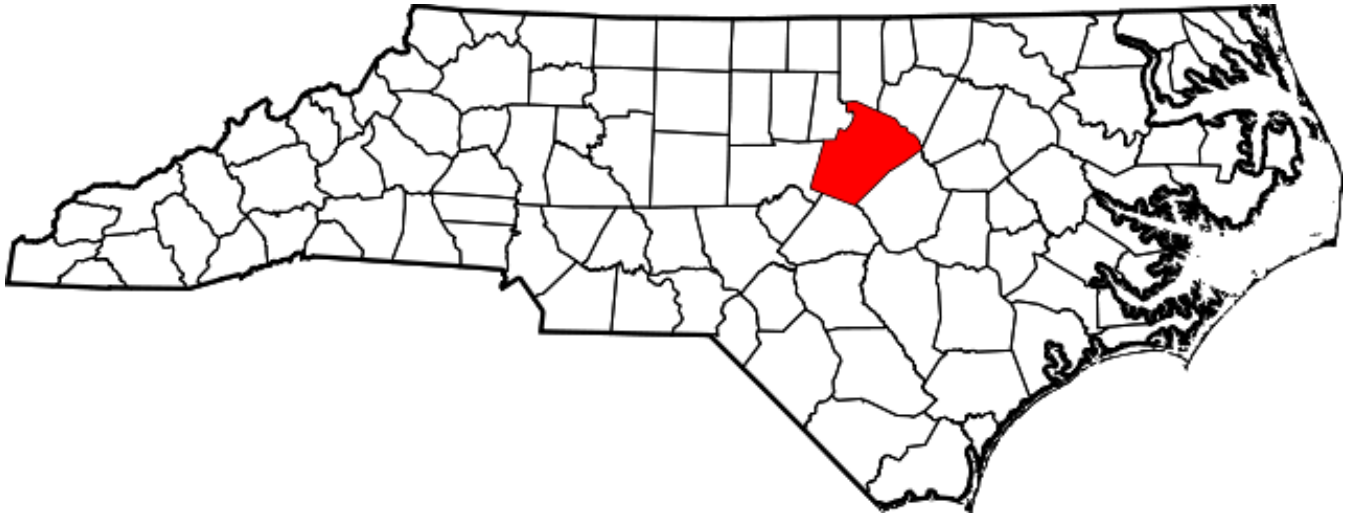
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I. METHODOLOGY

The City of Raleigh is proposing rehabilitation work at 415 Lamont Street in the Longacres subdivision using federal funds. In July 2018, the City of Raleigh requested review of the proposed project. Preliminary research indicated that the Longacres neighborhood in which the subject property is located had been surveyed in 2006 as part of the Post-World War II and Modern Architecture in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1945-1965 survey conducted by Ruth Little. It had not, however, been evaluated for National Register eligibility. Hanbury Preservation Consulting has surveyed Longacres (WA4440) and prepared this report assessing the property's eligibility for the NRHP.

Background research included review of primary source material at the Olivia Raney Branch of the Wake County Public Library and the Wake County Register of Deeds. Fieldwork was conducted on August 17, 2018, and complied with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, other state and federal regulations, and the HPO's *Report Standards for Historic Structure Survey Reports/Determinations of Eligibility/Section 106/110 Compliance Reports in North Carolina*. The survey included update of the survey form for the identified historic resource.

Name of Resource	Longacres
Survey Site Number	WA 4440
Location	Nelson, Peyton, Walton, Lamont, Shannon, Lansing, Ramseur Streets and Parnell Drive, Raleigh NC 27610
Dates of Construction	1952-9, 1965, 1994, 2011-2105
Recommendation	Eligible under Criteria A for Community Planning and Development



Project location



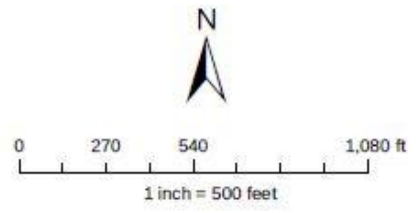
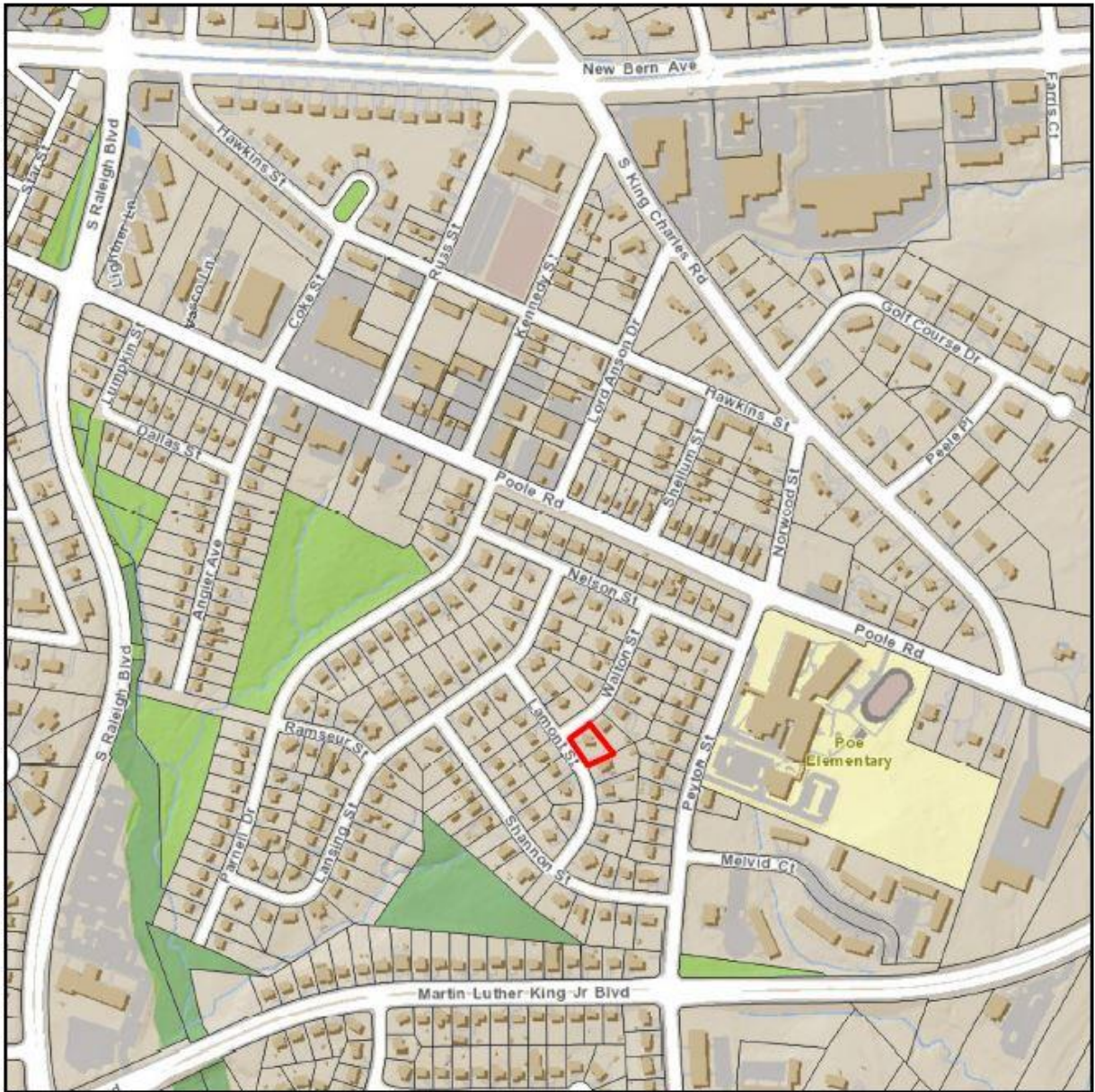


Figure 2: APE Map

II. NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION OF LONGACRES (WA4440)

Name of Resource	Longacres
Survey Site Number	WA 4440
Location	Nelson, Peyton, Walton, Lamont, Shannon, Lansing, Ramseur Streets and Parnell Drive, Raleigh NC 27610
Dates of Construction	1952-9, 1965, 1994, 2011-2105
Recommendation	Eligible under Criteria A for Community Planning and Development

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Longacres is a 55.48 acre subdivision located south of Poole Road, approximately 2 miles east of the Raleigh downtown area. To the east of the neighborhood is the Poe Elementary School. Undeveloped acreage is adjacent to the neighborhood on the west and south. Commercial development is found to the northwest along Poole Road.

The development is organized largely around curvilinear roads most of which intersect with or ultimately connect to larger arterial roads. Parnell Drive is the sole road that terminates in a dead end, at its south. Lot sizes range from .15 to .52 acres, with most being less than .3 areas.

All of the houses are one story, single family dwellings. 138 of the 151 houses in the neighborhood were within the period of significance (1952-1959), and are side-gabled, brick-veneered, minimal traditional houses.



2200 Block of Nelson Street



2200 Block of Nelson Street



2200 Block of Shannon Street



400 Block of Lansing Street



400 Block of Walton Street



433 Parnell Drive



500 Block of Parnell Drive

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Longacres was developed by Raleigh builder and developer G. H. Wright. Born in Montgomery County, North Carolina, he moved with his parents in 1911 to Wendell NC. A graduate of Wake Forest College, he served as Wendell postmaster before moving into the construction business. During a lull in construction during World War II he taught at North Carolina State College (now North Carolina State University). However in the post-war boom, Wright returned to residential development and was the developer/builder for several mid-century Raleigh neighborhoods including Hi-Mount (platted 1927-1947), Capital Heights (platted 1946), Longview Park (platted 1947-1953), Milburnie Homes (platted 1948), Windsor Park (platted 1949), Whitaker Park (platted 1949), and Longacres (platted 1952), and Lockwood (platted 1954-1960).¹

Wright was active in politics and professional organizations. He ran unsuccessfully for state office as a Republican. He was a member of a 1950 city committee reviewing a subdivision ordinance and served on the board of realtors.

Wright frequently availed himself of FHA financing and marketed his homes heavily to veterans who could receive VA funding. A 1949 newspaper article about Whitaker Park noted that Wright's 190 unit rental housing project would receive \$1.5 million in support from the FHA and would contribute to the total of 609 new housing units to be built in the Raleigh area in that year alone.²

Also that year, he responded to a model house touted nationally by federal official Tighe Woods referencing his own projects that had produced larger and less expensive housing that fit within the federal criteria.

G. H. Wright, of Wright Construction Company, said he has built houses on Milburnie Road for \$6,900 that have 206 more square feet than Woods' house. This particular style house contains four rooms. There are two bedrooms, a living room and a dining room-kitchen combination. Built on a 60 by 150-foot lot, included in the cost, the house contains an oil floor furnace, electric water heater and kitchen cabinets. Rock-wool insulation is another feature.

Their house, Wright said, can be bought on a VA-FHA financed loan for monthly payments of \$43. Payments included taxes and insurance. Bernard Crocker, local real estate dealer and Veterans Administration-approved appraiser, said his figures show Woods' house cost \$10 per square foot to build. His figures include an allowance of \$1,000 for a lot. He said Raleigh contractors are building low-cost houses for from \$7,50 to \$8,50 per square foot, Woods' price runs from 20 to 30 per cent above local prices, he added.³

¹ "New Development Opened Here," *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 13, 1954, p. 6.

² "Apartment Plan Announced Here," *Raleigh News and Observer*, June 30, 1949, p. 1.

³ "Builders Cite Low Housing Costs in Raleigh," *Raleigh News and Observer*, July 31, 1949, p. 14.

Housing construction boomed in the post-war years to meet increasing demand. A 1949 article in the News and Observer stated

Postwar Raleigh, since 1945, has seen hundreds upon hundreds of new dwelling units go up within and just outside its borders, yet it cannot be said that there's any perceptible slackening in construction or in demand for the finished home."

"The State Labor Department's breakdown of construction statistics, sent to it by the City of Raleigh, shows that well over 1,700 family units have been built within the city proper since January, 1946. What makes this figure unsatisfactory is the fact that it doesn't include the countless hundreds of homes built just outside the city's limits and others within easy commuting distance during this same period.⁴

In January of 1953 a photo caption in the News and Observer suggested the boom was continuing "Home and apartment building boomed in Raleigh during the past year, with the number of family dwelling units authorized by the city building inspector's office almost double the figure for 1951."⁵

Whether this statistic included development on the boundaries of the city limit is not clear as one of the projects begun in 1952 was Longacres.

A July 1952 article in the News and Observer announced that

G. H. Wright, head of the Wright Construction Company, said his firm has begun work on a 70-acre development on the old Smith Dairy farm on Poole Road....Wright said that immediate plans call for erection of 50 houses, with construction of additional dwelling units scheduled later. He said there are 175 lots in the development which will be known as Longacres. The first of the 50 houses are expected to be completed about October 1...They'll be of brick veneer construction with two and three bedrooms. Wright said all streets in the development would be paved and all houses would be furnished city utilities. He also added that Raleigh city schools have purchased a site near the development for construction of a school.⁶

A map dated July 15, 1952, drawn by Fred W. Habel was recorded in the Wake County Register of deeds Map Book 1952 Page 23. The map is entitled MAP OF LONGACRES POOLE ROAD RALEIGH, NC.⁷

⁴ "Raleigh Builders Strive to Meet Home Demands," *Raleigh News and Observer*, February 20, 1949, p. 15.

⁵ "Home and Apartment Building Boomed," (photo caption), *Raleigh News and Observer*, January 4, 1953.

⁶ "Plans Big Housing Project," *Raleigh News and Observer*, July 24, 1952.

⁷ Wake County Map Book 1952 Page 23



The map delineates a residential subdivision, South of Pool Road, bounded by Peyton Street on the east and including lots on Parnell Drive, Nelson Street, Lansing Street, Walton Street, Lamont Street and Shannon Street. There are lots numbered 1-148, a reserved parcel west of Parnell Drive, and lost numbered 167-171.

The map is referenced in a Declaration and Agreement among Windsor Park, Inc., Wright Construction Company, the owners of the parcels; and Louis M. Smith, Sr., Margaret S. Smith, and W. Scott Smith, Trustee. The Declaration and Agreement crafts covenants that run with the land. The covenants assert that the parcels will be single family residential homes of no more than 2 1/2 stories, with a garage. Houses must cost at least \$5,500 with a ground floor area of at least 750 square feet. All must meet a minimum lot setback, and minimum lot sizes are enumerated. Utility easements are reserved. A prohibition against noxious or offensive activities is declared. Temporary structures, trailers, basements, tents, shacks, garages and barns used as a residences are prohibited. The document was executed, and filed on July 25, 1952.⁸

⁸ Wake County Deed Book 1102, p. 216

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

MID-CENTURY RALEIGH SUBDIVISIONS

In the *Post-World War II and Modern Architecture in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1945-1965*, National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, Ruth Little develops a historic context for Community Development and Transportation with a subsection devoted to housing. It is within this context Longacres should be assessed. Longacres is classified as a tract subdivision with houses that, unlike the others surveyed to date, have minimal traditional houses, not ranches, given their small size.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION

The National Park Service's description of criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places is:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A.** That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B.** That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- C.** That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D.** That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Within the multiple property document for *Post-World War II and Modern Architecture in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1945-1965*, the registration requirements for a National Register district are determined:

Subdivisions may be significant as historic districts under Criterion A in the area of community development and planning.... They must retain overall integrity of setting, feeling, association, design, and materials to be eligible as historic districts. The districts must retain the integrity of its layout, including its street plan, open spaces, curbs and sidewalks (or lack thereof), and other design features. Generally, individual buildings in the districts must retain a good degree of integrity. All subdivisions have at least a modest level of alteration, including replacement wall materials, minor additions such as garage wings, and replacement windows. If the historic architectural character of the majority of the individual houses is clearly evident and the subdivision has only a relatively small number of buildings dating from the post-1965 period, then the district is potentially eligible. In order to qualify, the district boundaries must encompass the largest concentration of intact houses within the original plat and exclude later expansions of the subdivision that post-date 1965 and blocks where major remodellings and/or tear-downs are occurring. Any later development within the district should be minimal and respect the setbacks and house size norms characteristic of the neighborhood.⁹

⁹ Ruth Little, *Post-World War II and Modern Architecture in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1945-1965*, National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2009, p. 34.

Longacres is significant at the local level, under Criterion A in the area of community development and planning with a period of significance of 1952-1959.

INTEGRITY

Longacres has not been moved, thus it retains its integrity of location. Its physical context is remarkably, retaining open space as noted on the plat, and the neighboring elementary school. Poole Road remains a major thoroughfare and boundary to the neighborhood. Thus the district retains its integrity of setting. The street plan and lot layout remain. 138 of the 151 houses currently in the subdivision were built between 1952 and 1959. There is little new construction. Some older houses have been changed and those that would likely be considered non-contributing have large additions or extensive new siding. It retains substantial integrity of design though the integrity of materials and workmanship may be compromised. As it continues to strongly communicate the sense of a mid-twentieth-century tract subdivision, it retains an integrity of feeling. As it continues to serve as a modest tract subdivision of single family housing, its integrity of association is undiminished.

SIGNIFICANCE

Longacres and its developer, G.H. Wright fit the description of a "merchant builder" as described in *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places*

By greatly increasing the credit available to private builders and liberalizing the terms of FHA-approved home mortgages, the 1948 Amendments to the National Housing Act provided ideal conditions for the emergence of large-scale corporate builders, called "merchant builders." Because of readily available financing, streamlined methods of construction, and an unprecedented demand for housing, these builders acquired large tracts of land, laid out neighborhoods according to FHA principles, and rapidly constructed large numbers of homes. Since completed homes sold quickly, developers could finance new phases of construction and, as neighborhoods neared completion, move on to new locations.¹⁰

Wright's use covenants is typical of period practices

Early land developers maintained control over the development of their subdivisions through the use of deed restrictions. The placement of restrictions on the deed of sale ensured that land was developed according to the original intent; it also protected real estate values for both home owners and the subdivider, who expected to sell improved lots over the course of many years.¹¹

His mode of development at Longacres and elsewhere was consistent with FHA priorities

¹⁰ David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* National Register Bulletin NPS September 2002, p. 29

¹¹ IBID p 32

The FHA encouraged large-scale operations, where development was financed and carried out under the direction of an "operative builder" who arranged for the purchase of land, the design of the subdivision plat, and the design and construction of the houses. Such large-scale operations offered a "broader and more profitable use of capital" and permitted the introduction of "industrial methods that resulted in savings in overhead, construction, and merchandising costs;" Developers were able to develop neighborhood plans in a consistent and harmonious manner.¹²
'92

Many design features are drawn from Federal Housing Authority (FHA) publications including *Subdivision Development*, *Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses*, *Planning Profitable Neighborhoods*, and *Successful Subdivisions*. Though not unusual today, the departure from the rectilinear grid as at Longacres was atypical, but championed by the FHA

Curvilinear plans had many advantages when compared to rectilinear gridiron plans: they provided greater privacy and visual interest; could be adapted to greater variations in topography; reduced the cost of utilities and road construction; and, by eliminating the need for dangerous four-way intersections, provided a safer environment for domestic activities.¹³

The advent of tract suburbs, such as at Longacres, was a direct result of FHA policies

The new FHA principles provided instructions for grouping similarly designed houses in cul-de-sacs and along streetscapes by varying the elements of exterior design in ways that avoided repetition and gave the neighborhood an interesting and pleasing character, for example, by varying the placement of each house on its lot and introducing a variety of wall materials and roof types. The principles were directed at operative builders who, taking advantage of the cost-reducing practices of standardization and more liberal financing terms, were becoming increasingly aware of the advantages of building homes on a large scale and, for the first time, were creating what has become known as "tract" housing,¹⁴

RECOMMENDED BOUNDARY

The recommended NRHP boundary follows the original plat and is noted on the map that follows.

¹² IBID p. 49

¹³ IBID

¹⁴ IBID p.62



Longacres Historic District



III. WORKS CITED

Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* National Register Bulletin NPS September 2002.

"Apartment Plan Announced Here," *Raleigh News and Observer*, June 30, 1949, p.1

"Builders Cite Low Housing Costs in Raleigh," *Raleigh News and Observer*, July 31, 1949, p.14.

"City Board Approves Plan for Housing Development," *Raleigh News and Observer*, May 26, 1953, p.24.

"Home and Apartment Building Boomed, " (photo caption), *Raleigh News and Observer*, January 4, 1953.

Little, Ruth. *Post-World War II and Modern Architecture in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1945-1965*, National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2009.

"New Development Opened Here," *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 13, 1954, p 6.

"Plans Big Housing Project, " *Raleigh News and Observer*, July 24, 1952.

"Raleigh Builders Strive to Meet Home Demands," *Raleigh News and Observer*, February 20, 1949, p. 15.

"Subdivision Law Studied," *Raleigh News and Observer*, April 22, 1950, p. 15.

Wake County Maps Books.

Wake County Deed Books.