



**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

January 24, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vanessa Patrick
Human Environment Unit
NC Department of Transportation

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

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report, Widen North 23rd Street from US 74 (MLK Parkway) to
NC 113 (Castle Hayne Road), PA 17-12-0077, U-6083, New Hanover County, ER 18-4181

Thank you for your December 4, 2018, memorandum transmitting the report for the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the report and concur that the North Carolina State Correctional Facility (NH0539) is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under any criteria. While the building appears to be one of the first prisons constructed in an effort to provide better housing to prisoners who worked for state-operated road-work crews, it is an outlier. The larger collection of standardized prison buildings constructed in the 1930s better represents the way prisoners were housed and managed in North Carolina. The main prison building has undergone numerous changes, including the application of a later building material to its character-defining crenellation towers, and replacement of windows and doors. It, therefore, no longer retains its historic integrity.

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. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

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



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III
SECRETARY

ER 18-4181

To: Renee Gledhill-Earley, NCHPO
From: Vanessa E. Patrick, NCDOT Due -- 1/14/19
Date: December 4, 2018
Subject: *Historic Structures Survey Report, Widen North 23d Street from US 74 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway) to NC 133 (Castle Hayne Road), New Hanover County, North Carolina. TIP No. U-6083, WBS No. 47479.1.1, PA Tracking Nos. 17-12-0077.*

H- ER letters
RJE 1/22/19

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is conducting planning studies for the above-referenced project. Enclosed for your review is a report presenting the evaluation of historic architectural resources in the U-6083, New Hanover County project area (one hard copy and one CD-ROM). Survey photographs, GIS data, and site forms are provided on a second CD-ROM, and hard copies of the site forms are also supplied.

The report considers one resource – the North Carolina State Correction Facility (NH0539) – and recommends it as not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Initial screening of the project area by NCDOT Historic Architecture identified which resources warranted additional study.

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

V.E.P.

Attachments

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HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT

Widen North 23rd Street from US 74 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway) to NC 133
(Castle Hayne Road)

New Hanover County

TIP# U-6083

WBS# 47479.1.1

PA# 17-12-0077

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

NOVEMBER 2018

HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT

Widen North 23rd Street from US 74 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway) to NC 133
(Castle Hayne Road)
New Hanover County
TIP# U-6083
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6750 Tryon Road
Cary, North Carolina, 27518

NOVEMBER 2018



Sarah Woodard David, Principal Investigator

November 30, 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 widen North 23rd Street from US Highway 74 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway) to NC Highway 133 (Castle Hayne Road) in Wilmington and New Hanover County. The project's Area of Potential Effects (APE), as defined by NCDOT, is illustrated in Figure 2. NCDOT architectural historians reviewed the properties within the APE and determined that one individual property greater than fifty 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. Only one resource, the North Carolina State Correctional Facility (NH 539), warranted an intensive NRHP eligibility evaluation, and it is 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.

New Hanover County was comprehensively surveyed in 1985, but the North Carolina State Correctional Facility (NH 539) was not surveyed until 2010.

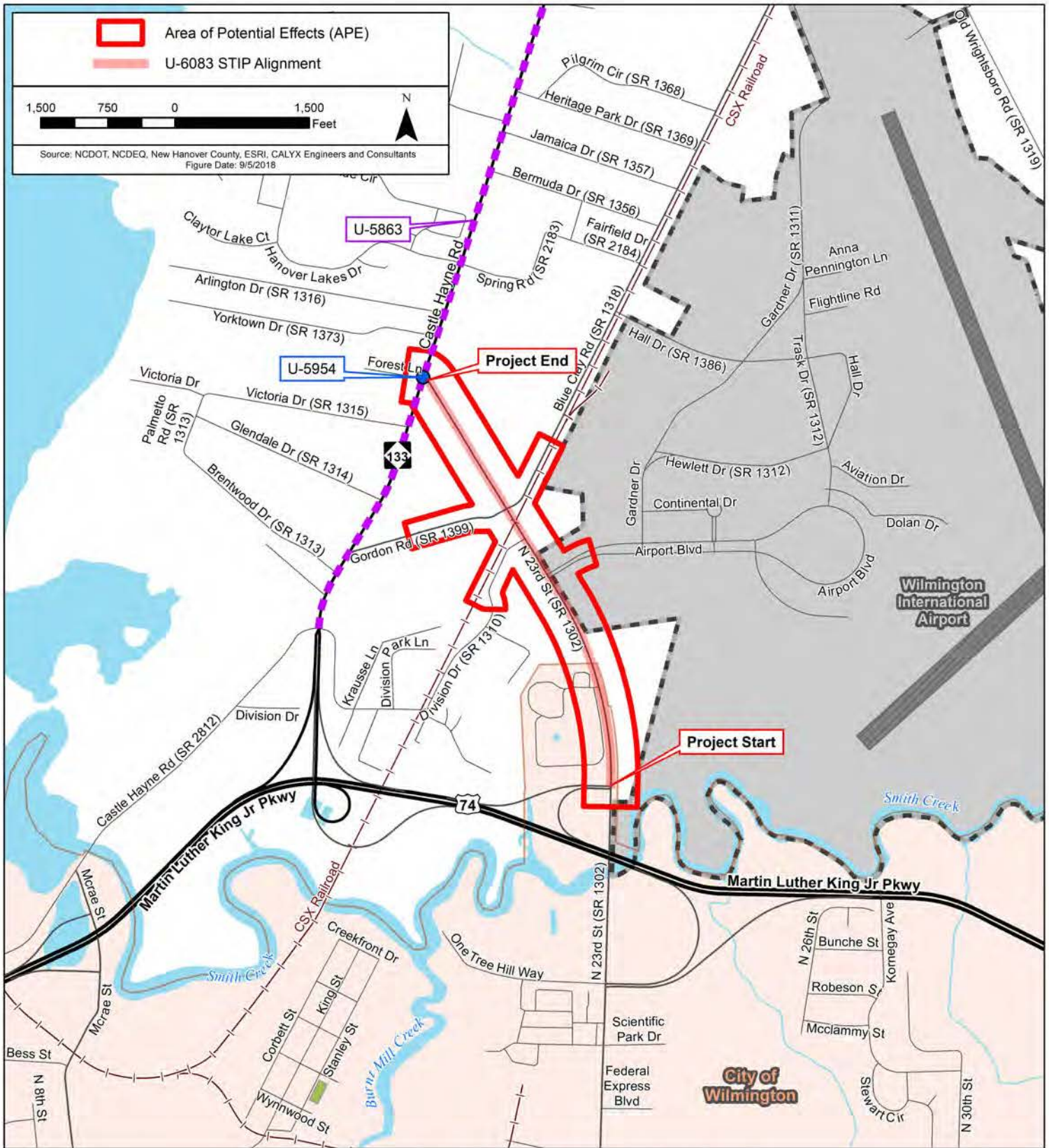
In March 2018, NCDOT requested that CALYX Engineers and Consultants (CALYX) complete research, an intensive-level historic resource field survey, and NRHP evaluation for this property.

Based on the field survey, background research, and the evaluation documented in this report, the recommendation for the NRHP is as follows:

Property Name	NCHPO Survey Site Number	Eligibility Determination	Criterion
N.C. State Correctional Facility	NH 539	Not Eligible	


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New Hanover County



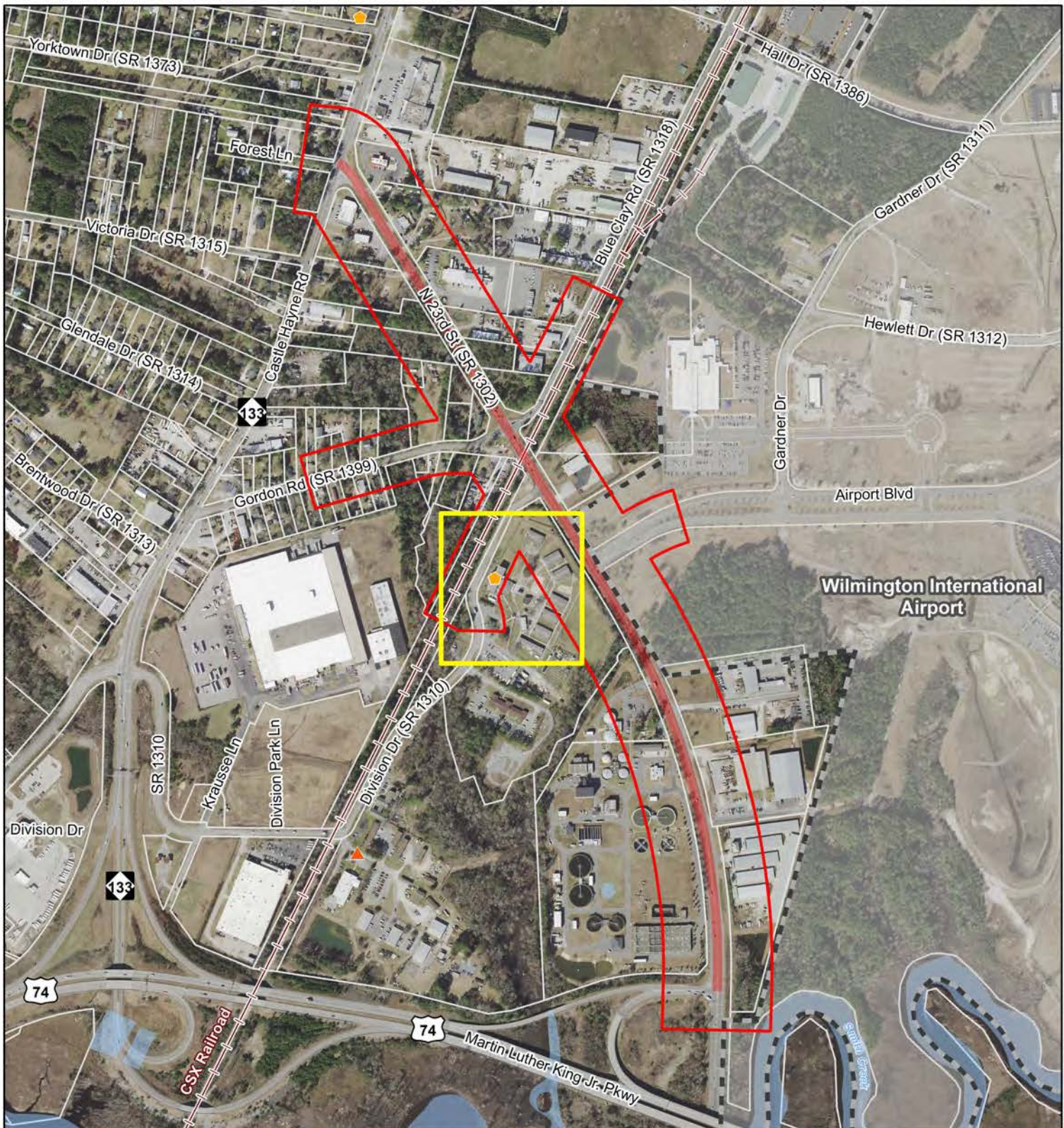


NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

TIP Project U-6083
New Hanover County

*Widen North 23rd Street from
US 74 (Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway)
to NC 133 (Castle Hayne Road)*

Figure 1 - Project Vicinity



- Historic Property - Surveyed Only
- ▲ Historic Property - Determined Eligible
- APE Boundary
- Inset
- U-6083 TIP Alignment
- Railroad
- Property Line
- Airport Boundary
- Waterbody



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

TIP Project U-6083

New Hanover County

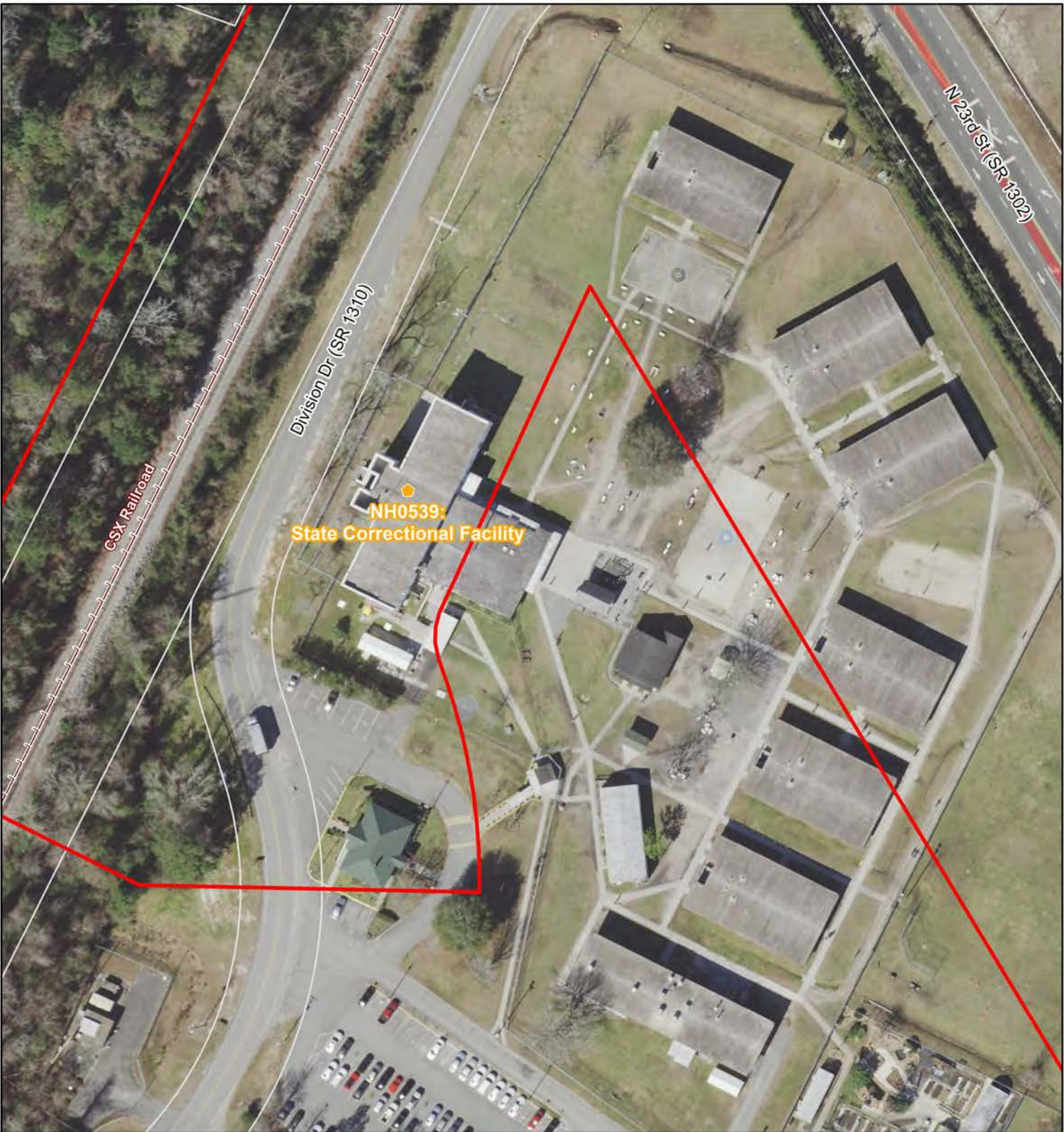
*Widen North 23rd Street from
US 74 (Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway)
to NC 133 (Castle Hayne Road)*

Figure 2 - Area of Potential Effects (APE)

750 375 0 750 Feet

Source: NCDEQ, NCDOT, NCHPO, NC OneMap,
CALYX Engineers and Consultants
Figure Date: 9/5/2018





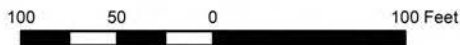
- ◆ Historic Property - Surveyed Only
- APE Boundary
- U-6083 TIP Alignment
- Railroad
- Property Line



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

TIP Project U-6083

New Hanover County
*Widen North 23rd Street from
 US 74 (Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway)
 to NC 133 (Castle Hayne Road)*



Source: NCDOT, NCHPO, NC OneMap, CALYX Engineers and Consultants
 Figure Date: 9/5/2018

Figure 3 - APE Inset

Methodology

On August 6, 2018, CALYX Architectural Historian Sarah Woodard David visited New Hanover County and completed photo documentation for the N.C. State Correctional Facility. The investigator interviewed Michael Ditta, the prison's superintendent, and undertook research at the New Hanover County Public Library. David also undertook research at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, the North Carolina State Library, and the North Carolina State Archives. Additionally, the investigator used online research tools and resources, including the New Hanover County Register of Deeds website and the web-based subscription service, newspapers.com. The investigator also visited historic county prisons in Brunswick and Onslow Counties.

Please note that records about prisons are carefully monitored by the State Archives because records concerning individual prisoners are sealed, and the USA Patriot Act of 2001 restricts public access to documents concerning facilities and buildings, such as blueprints. Additionally, photography within the buildings and grounds was somewhat limited because of the presence of prisoners. Some photographs in the report include prisoners, but their faces have been obscured.

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: North Carolina State Correctional Facility

Resource Name	North Carolina State Correctional Facility
HPO Survey Site Number	NH 539
Street Address	330 Division Drive
PIN	3128-59-4585
Construction Dates	1915
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



A note about the name

For the purposes of this report, this building is called the North Carolina State Correctional Facility, which is the name used in the State Historic Preservation Office's files. The building's original name was the New Hanover County Prison, but use of that name could cause confusion with the county's modern-day prison, which is separate from this state-run facility. The campus' current official name is the New Hanover Correctional Center. Use of North Carolina State Correctional Facility is imperfect because it does not reflect the original name, but it does reduce confusion with the county prison and reinforces the fact that this is a state prison, not a county facility.

Description

The North Carolina State Correctional Facility (NCSCF) stands on Wilmington's northern edge, north of Smith Creek, about four miles north of the city's downtown core. The terrain is flat. The main building faces west and sits very close to Division Drive. A rail corridor is located on the opposite side of Division Drive.

The following inventory list is arranged beginning with the main building and is keyed to the accompanying site plan.

All construction dates are based on information provided by Superintendent Michael Ditta and estimates made by the author.



3: North Carolina State Correctional Facility Site Plan, keyed to inventory list

1. Main Block
1915

The NCSCF is a two-story, west-facing rectangular building with a central projecting bay composed of two square towers with a hyphen between them at the first floor level. The building is constructed of board-formed concrete. Slightly projecting courses create a water-table between the first floor and basement level, a band between the first and second floor, and a cornice between the second floor and the parapet. The parapet is stepped on the sides and is taller at the front of the building. Across the front, the parapet steps up to a center bay from which the towers project. Windows throughout the building are metal-frame replacements. Wide, shallow projecting concrete surrounds and sills frame the windows.



4: NCSCF west and north elevations



5: NCSCF, NC SHPO survey photo, 1985



6: NCSCF, west elevation



7: NCSCF, west and south elevations



8: NCSCF, window detail

The west façade is symmetrical with five bays on either side of the projecting central tower bay. The central projection is composed of two towers with a hyphen between. At the first floor level, the hyphen is flush with the towers' facades and houses a central entrance with a heavy metal door sheltered by a shallow stoop porch roof. Concrete steps with concrete cheek walls lead up to this entry. At the second floor level, the hyphen is recessed and contains a pair of windows, one of which has been enclosed.

At the first floor level of each tower, a bank of windows is located on the façade. A single window occupies each first floor side elevation of the towers. The towers' second floors feature two windows on the west elevations and exterior side elevations, and a single window on each interior side where the hyphen's second floor is recessed. A railing pilaster along the interior side elevation of each tower suggests that a railing may have extended between the towers, above the front door. Each towers' cornice is covered with vertical vinyl siding. This siding obscures the original crenellation.

The north and south elevations are identical. Each are three bays wide and feature single windows flanking a central, single-leaf door. At the first floor, the door opens onto a set of concrete steps with concrete cheek walls. At the second floor, the door opens onto an exterior metal stair case. On the south end, the two easternmost windows on both levels are enclosed. On the north end, only the upstairs westernmost window remains open; the other three have been enclosed.



9: NCSCF, south elevation



10: NCSCF, south and east elevation

The east elevation is purely utilitarian with a combination of metal frame windows and enclosed window openings. A one-story, flat-roof, brick addition with metal frame windows extends from the east elevation. A ghost mark on the main block indicates that this addition replaced an earlier, gable-roof structure.



11: NCSCF, east elevation



12: NCSCF, southeast corner

The interior features thick concrete walls, corridors with flanking offices, and jail cells at the building's north end. The interior is utilitarian and free of ornamentation.

2. Carport and Shed
ca. 2000

A modern, prefabricated, metal carport and prefabricated shed stands off the main block's southeast corner.

3. Workout Pavilion
ca. 1990

Immediately east of the main block is an open-sided, gable-roof pavilion that shelters free weights and other work-out equipment.

4. Chapel
Ca. 1985

East of the workout shelter is a gable-front chapel. This building is frame with vinyl siding. An attached, gable-front porch with square posts shelters two front doors and two windows.



13: NCSCF, chapel

5. Storage Shed
Ca. 2000

Prefabricated storage shed.

6. Classroom Trailer
Ca. 2000

A pair of prefabricated, modular classroom buildings with vertical siding are joined to provide classroom space.

7. Guard Building
Ca. 1970

Small, gable-roof building with vinyl siding.

8. Office Building

Ca. 1930

This is a one-story, frame, hip-roof office building similar to those built at other prison camps across the state. A small, gable-front portico projects from the west façade. The building is covered in vinyl siding, and all windows are modern, vinyl replacements. The interior has been modified with wood paneling and other modern finishes.



14: NCSCF, office, west elevation



15: NCSCF, office, northwest corner

9. Dorm 1

Ca. 1950

One-story, brick dormitory building with a nearly flat roof. This building has two-light, metal frame windows, and heavy steel doors.



16: NCSCF, Dorm 1, with Dorm 2 visible at right

10. Dorm 2

Ca. 1950

One-story, brick dormitory building with a nearly flat roof. This building has two-light, metal frame windows, and heavy steel doors. On the end facing toward the yard, HVAC equipment is set into a recess centered on the end of the building.

11. Dorm 3

Ca. 1970

One-story, brick dormitory building with a nearly flat roof. This building has two-light, metal frame windows, and heavy steel doors. On the end facing toward the yard, HVAC equipment is set into a recess centered on the end of the building.

12. Dorm 4

Ca. 1970

One-story, brick dormitory building with a nearly flat roof. This building has two-light, metal frame windows, and heavy steel doors. On the end facing toward the yard, HVAC equipment is set into a recess centered on the end of the building.



17: NCSCF, Dorm 4

13. Dorm 5

Ca. 1970

One-story, brick dormitory building with a nearly flat roof. This building has two-light, metal frame windows, and heavy steel doors. On the end facing toward the yard, HVAC equipment is set into a recess centered on the end of the building.

14. Dorm 6

Ca. 1996

One-story, brick dormitory building with a nearly flat roof. This building has two-light, metal frame windows, and heavy steel doors. On the end facing toward the yard, HVAC equipment is set into a recess centered on the end of the building.



18: NCSCF, Dorm 6, with classroom trailer to the left and food building to the right

15. Food Building

Ca. 1970

One-story, brick cafeteria building with a nearly flat roof. This building has single-light metal frame windows, and some windows divided into four-light configurations.



19: NCSCF, Food Building

16. Outbuildings

Ca. 1950-1990

Various small brick and prefabricated storage buildings.

Historical Background

Prior to the Civil War, North Carolina had no state prisons, but the 1868 state constitution provided for construction of a state penitentiary and established the prison system as a state agency.¹ By 1875, the state was leasing prisoners to private employers as laborers in a system that may have started as a temporary way to defray costs while seeking financing of a better prison system. However, leasing prisoners had long been a feature of imprisonment across the United States, even before the Civil War, and as it came into common use in North Carolina, the system became a form of reconstituted enslavement.² Especially in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, plantation owners with land but no labor were particularly fond of the prisoner leasing system.³

Eventually, however, as parts of the South, and North Carolina in particular, boomed into a post-bellum, industrial New South economy, leaders started looking to convicts for labor in the public's interest. Specifically in North Carolina this tradition of prison labor caught the eye of state and local officials interested in road-building.⁴

¹ North Carolina State Constitution, 1868, Article XI, Section 3, and Edward Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century American South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 35.

² Scott Christianson, *With Liberty for Some: Five Hundred Years of Imprisonment in America* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 182, and Ayers, 190.

³ Ayers, 192.

⁴ Courtney Foley, Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report: US 21 from SR 1172 to US 21, TIP R-4060, September 2006, 6.

North Carolina's push for better roads started at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1902, advocates formed the North Carolina Good Roads Association to promote improved transportation in the state. Ten years later, Locke Craig was elected as the first governor to run on a "Good Roads" platform, and after years of advocacy by state geologist, Joseph Hyde Pratt, the state created the State Highway Commission in 1915.⁵ As prisons and road building became paired, Pratt appears to have made some recommendations about prison and work camp reform in 1917, but the exact nature of his recommendations is not clear.⁶

With its leaders advocating for Good Roads, the state began tapping into prisons as a source of cheap and ready labor. Funneling prisoners into public works effectively ended the leasing of prisoners to private individuals, and as this system of hard labor for the public's benefit became entrenched in North Carolina, the legislature in 1910 clarified that the state prison system must retain responsibility for prisoners even when they were contracted out for work. In order to maintain this mandated responsibility, officials created an informal system of prison camps in each county. These camps provided a local, centralized location from which prisoners could be loaned to road projects and monitored, and while the legislature put the responsibility for prisoners with the state, the operation of these local camps was left in the hands of the counties.⁷

Conditions were deplorable with prisoners kept in modified railroad box cars or wooden cages that circuses had used to transport animals. In a few cases, counties built shoddy, temporary wooden barracks. Prisoners were usually chained together or to cots for sleeping.⁸ A description from 1923 was probably applicable to the earliest camps as well:

The most common perhaps is the steel cage on wheels. This has the advantage of being easily moved from place to place, and of making it unnecessary to chain the men. The only protection against storm, however, is to let down heavy canvas covers over the sides. If they are let down for a storm early in the night, usually no one troubles himself to put them up again in case the storm subsides before morning. In the meantime, the eighteen men crowded inside must suffer for want of ventilation. Moreover, the men are often confined in the cages on rainy days and Sundays, without exercise and with scarcely room to do anything except lie in their bunks.⁹

In 1908, the State Board of Public Charities documented forty-four prison camps in thirty-seven counties. Of those camps, only thirty-one had responded to the board's request for information, and of those, only twenty-seven had provided population statistics. Those statistics, however, reveal that the twenty-seven camps reporting imprisoned 177 white males compared to 796 African American males and 3 African American females. Thirty-eight of the camps used "flogging with the leather strap" as punishment for infractions.¹⁰

⁵ William Powell, ed., *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 513-514.

⁶ State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, "The Bulletin of the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare: A Study of Prison Conditions in North Carolina" (Raleigh, NC: State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, 1923), 3. Biographies of Pratt focus on his roads advocacy and work in geology, never mentioning any work related to prisons.

⁷ Foley, 6.

⁸ Foley, 6.

⁹ State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, 16.

¹⁰ William Blair, Chairman, "Annual Report of the Board of Public Charities, 1908" (Raleigh: E.M. Uzzell and Co., State Printers and Binders, 1909), 21

The report documented only nine deaths, and did not detail the specific conditions of the camps, but the report notes that the Board made recommendations three years earlier. The report admonished the state to follow-through on those recommendations, which the Board was now repeating. Those recommendations included placing the supervision of the camps under the State Prison Board or another State board. The report wanted to see improvements in “conditions,” and the institution of “moral and some educational advantages as reformatory agencies, so that when returned to the community, [the prisoner] may be a help and not a hindrance.”¹¹

Reform continued to be an object of some activists and social reformers, but it appears to have gained little interest from politicians or the public. In 1923, the Board of Public Charities again reported on horrific prison conditions to the General Assembly, lamenting that the advocacy of R.F. Beasley and Joseph Hyde Pratt (the Good Roads advocate) from 1917 was not followed up on as the government’s attention turned to World War I.¹² Still, no changes seem to have come from any of these reports, and substantial improvements in prisons would have to wait until the early 1930s.¹³

In New Hanover County, however, the county commissioners made an early decision to provide prisoners with better housing. It appears that Martin S. Willard, Chairman of the New Hanover County Commissioners, was an advocate for a better prison. Willard was the son of Massachusetts natives who had moved to North Carolina in 1845 and to Wilmington in 1866. He and his father were both well-respected businessmen, but Willard’s views on the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 are not known. The so-called riot was really an effective coup in which white supremacist mobs ran duly-elected African American officials out of town and burned the headquarters of an African American newspaper. Willard was a member of the Wilmington Light Infantry, which intimidated and killed African Americans during the uprising, and he represented the county in the General Assembly as a Democrat in 1899-1901, which was an era of extreme white supremacy in the legislature.¹⁴

How Willard’s background and political views affected his support for a new prison are not known, but in his county commissioner’s report of 1913, he spoke passionately about the need for a better prison and about his desire to see New Hanover County be a leader in prison reform. Prison improvements appear to have been a significant part of his political platform, and while he supported law and order, he seems to have been more occupied with the moral and physical health of the prisoners and their ability to contribute to society after serving their sentences.¹⁵

Beyond Willard’s advocacy, however, nothing is known about how the commissioners decided to act when the state seemed content to let prisoners languish in substandard camps across the state. In 1914, the county hired Wilmington architect James F. Gause, Jr. to design the prison and A.D. O’Brien to build the prison.¹⁶ Gause was noted for his advocacy of fireproof buildings, and he built several institutional

¹¹ Blair, 21-22

¹² State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, 3.

¹³ Foley, 7.

¹⁴ Ann Hewlett Hutteman, *A Biographical Dictionary of New Hanover County, NC, Commissioners* (Wilmington: New Hanover County Public Library, 2010), 38; *Wilmington Messenger*, March 13, 1902, page 4; and LeRae Umfleet, *1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Office of Archives and History, 2006), 340.

¹⁵ *Wilmington Dispatch*, December 2, 1913, page 5.

¹⁶ *Wilmington Morning Star*, June 17, 1914, page 5.

buildings in Wilmington and New Bern, including two schools in New Bern that were eastern North Carolina's first "fire resistant" schools.¹⁷

The new prison building replaced and centralized "poorly equipped convict camps in the county," and could house a library. Additionally, prisoners would be able to access opportunities for "reform work" that had not been available previously. The prison was planned to be "second to none in the state," based on model prison and workhouses across the country, and would "enable the county to take its place as a leader in its methods of treating transgressors against the law." Furthermore, the building's "sanitary arrangements" were not equaled in the state and the "general lay of the whole building is the most complete in the whole state."¹⁸

When the New Hanover County Prison, known in the State Historic Preservation Office's survey files as the NCSCF, opened in August of 1915, it became the first road crew prison in the state.¹⁹

By 1921, in spite of the state having access to prison labor, only 135 miles of hard-surfaced road existed in North Carolina. That year, the General Assembly passed a law mandating state construction and control of 5,500 miles of roads. Progress was slow, however, and little changed until 1931 when Governor O. Max Gardener proposed that the state take over county roads and the deplorable county-owned prison camps. This proposal created the State Highways and Public Works Commission, which brought road construction and prisons under the same administrative roof. Eighty-six field camp units to house prisoners were constructed or updated as part of this merger. Unlike the imposing structure New Hanover County had built more than fifteen years earlier, these standardized camps were designed with a one-story dormitory building and surrounding, separate buildings for dining and other activities.²⁰

Although the New Hanover County prison's construction in 1914-1915 was clearly overseen and paid for by New Hanover County, the current superintendent described the property as having "always" been a state prison. It is likely that when the loose system of county camps, of which this prison was one, was combined with the State Highways Commission to create the State Highways and Public Works Commission in 1931, that the state assumed operations of the New Hanover County facility. In 1957, the Highways and Public Works Commission was divided into two separate agencies that are today's Department of Transportation and Department of Public Safety.²¹

In the 1950s and throughout the rest of the twentieth century, the NCSCF was expanded to include a total of six dorms. Improvements were made to the 1915 building, including modernization inside and the replacement of all windows. The crenelated tops of the towers were also covered, and an older rear wing or addition replaced with the existing, one-story, flat-roof wing.

Architectural Context

Placing the NCSCF in an architectural context is difficult. In addition to the older Central Prison in Raleigh, only one other prison of similar size and scale was found in the state, and that was the now-

¹⁷ Catherine Bishir, "James F. Gause, Jr." entry in *North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Biographical Dictionary*, accessed via <http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000433>, September 2018.

¹⁸ *Wilmington Morning Star*, June 17, 1914, page 5.

¹⁹ *Wilmington Morning Star*, July 22, 1915, page 6, and Michael Ditta, New Hanover County Correctional Center Superintendent, interview with the author, August 6, 2018.

²⁰ Foley, 7-8.

²¹ Ditta interview, and Foley, 8.

abandoned Craggy Mountain Prison in Asheville, which dates to the 1920s. Large prisons pre-dating the state's 1930s statewide building campaign appear to have been unusual, with most counties depending on temporary and woefully inadequate camps and modest county jails attached to county courthouses. The NCSCF is not part of the standardized program of prison construction undertaken in the 1930s.

Thus, the NCSCF does not fit within the pattern of prison construction seen in North Carolina, which was not subject to architectural consideration or public interest in the state during the 1910s. Instead, it is more architecturally aligned with other institutional buildings, including schools, "poor houses" for destitute elderly citizens, sanitariums, and hospitals, from the 1910s and 1920s. When considered as a rehabilitative, residential building, such as a hospital, the NCSCF can be seen as one of many institutional buildings constructed in the 1910s as advances in ideas about sanitation and cleanliness gained traction, and as governments took more steps to educate and care for the public.

A hospital, for example, is a very different type of use than a prison, but both are temporary residential facilities where it is intended that residents undergo improvements or positive changes, thus their architecture may share some similarities. In North Carolina, hospitals, like the state itself, underwent profound changes in the early twentieth century. They moved from being a rarity in the state to common place during the first half of the twentieth century. In the late-1800s and into the twentieth century, hospitals were often housed in former houses or commercial buildings, but in the late-1800s, some communities began building purpose-built hospitals, usually as part of a private organization. In 1913, the state legislature authorized counties to build hospitals, but hospitals remained a mostly privately-funded endeavor. Nevertheless, between 1900 and 1930, the number of general hospitals in North Carolina increased from only eighteen to fifty-eight.²²

The changes in hospitals came as North Carolina was experiencing an era of tremendous growth and change, as a predominantly rural state's cities began to explode in population. Rapidly, a chain of moderate-sized cities blossomed from Wilmington to Durham to Winston-Salem to Charlotte and Asheville. The state began making unprecedented investments in education and transportation. Catherine Bishir writes that "a pervasive sense of urgency to improve North Carolina's place in the national mainstream gained architectural expression." Leaders looked to "establish new institutions and strengthen old ones."²³ Those institutions included schools, sanitariums, hospitals, and, in New Hanover County, a prison.

Most of these buildings were executed in the popular Colonial Revival style and, in some cases, Mission Revival, both of which aimed to provide citizens a comforting and welcoming experience, particularly when applied to hospitals and asylums. Gothic Revival was also popular style for churches and schools, but it also had been the style used for the construction of the terrifyingly imposing Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia. Although Eastern State was eighty years old by the time James Gause designed the NCSCF, Eastern State was a famous prison design and may have influenced Gause's design choices.

While the exact motivations of New Hanover County leaders remains unknown and while the depth of Gause's research into prison construction is not known, the building clearly fits in this trend toward civic improvements to education, health, and sanitation, built with fire safety in mind.

²² David Black, "Maria Parham Hospital," National Register Nomination, 1994, section 8, page 4.

²³ Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005, portable edition), 427.

Comparable Examples

Because the NCSCF is a unique building within the record of North Carolina's prison construction, Craggy Mountain Prison, built in the 1920s in Asheville, makes the best comparison.



20: former Craggy Mountain Prison, photo from *A Thousand Country Roads*, accessed via <https://www.athousandcountryroads.com/2017/03/im-stuck-in-craggy-prison.html>

Other prisons closer geographically to the NCSCF have been recorded, such as the former Onslow and Brunswick county prisons, but they were part of the 1930s standardized buildings.



21: former Onslow County Prison



22: former Brunswick County Prison

In the Wilmington-Wrightsville Beach area, the best institutional building to compare to the NCSCF may have been the Babies Hospital, built in 1920, but it was torn down in 2004.



23: Babies Hospital, photo from NCPedia website, accessed via <https://www.ncpedia.org/babies-hospital>

The James Walker Nursing School Quarters, also in Wilmington, was built in 1921, but at four stories in height, is considerably larger than the NCSCF. Used more as an apartment building, it makes a reasonably good comparison as an institutional residential building. The Colonial Revival building is listed in the NRHP with statewide significance for its association with medical education in the state. The Nursing School Quarters is not eligible for the NRHP for architectural significance.



24: James Walker Nursing School Quarters, photo from Wikipedia entry, accessed via https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Walker_Nursing_School_Quarters

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The North Carolina State Correctional Facility retains integrity of location and setting; it has not been moved, and although additional dorms have been built on the campus, the main building dominates the landscape. Other county facilities are located nearby, as was the intention when the county developed the area as the “county farm,” prior to 1915. The building retains integrity of association and feeling as a working prison. Changes, including the replacement of all windows and doors, the covering of the towers’ crenelated tops, and the modernization of the interior, have had a significant and detrimental effect on the building’s integrity of materials, design, and workmanship.

Criteria Evaluations

The North Carolina State Correctional Facility is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for a significant historic association. The building appears to be the first or at least a very early prison constructed as an effort to provide better housing for the prisoners being used on state-operated road-work crews. However, it is an outlier and the larger collection of standardized prison buildings constructed in the 1930s better represents the way the majority of hard-labor prisoners were housed and managed in North Carolina. Additionally, the loss of the crenelation on the towers and other material losses are significant.

The North Carolina State Correctional Facility is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B. No person known to have significance in state or local history is associated with the NCSCF.

The North Carolina State Correctional Facility is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. The prison has undergone numerous changes, including the application of vinyl or aluminum siding over the character-defining crenelated tops of the towers on the façade. The crenelated towers added to the building’s imposing façade and referenced the intimidating Gothic Revival design of Eastern State Penitentiary in Pennsylvania. The loss of this design feature fundamentally alters the architectural composition and significantly diminishes the intended impact of

the foreboding design. Additionally, all historic windows and doors have been replaced. These changes cumulatively obscure the prison's historic appearance and substantially diminish its integrity of design and materials.

The North Carolina State Correctional Facility is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D because it has not yielded nor is it likely to yield information important to prehistory or history.

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