

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 19, 2019

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley 
Environmental Review Coordinator

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report, Widen SR 2467 (Mallard Creek Road) from SR 2472 (West Mallard Creek Church Road) to SR 6032 (Amanda Ellan Road), PA 18-07-0010, U-6028, Mecklenburg County, ER 19-0051

Thank you for your January 4, 2019, letter transmitting the report for the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the report and offer the following comments.

We concur that Mallard Creek School (MK1308) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significance in education as a largely intact early-twentieth-century school building in rural Mecklenburg County and a rare survivor of a once-common building type. While the exterior is very intact and many original materials remain, the school has lost its interior plan, which negates its eligibility under Criterion C.

If there is a C argument to be made for this property, it may be tied to the complex's identity (since 1929) as the site of a large regional barbecue which is a major social and cultural event in this part of the state. There appear to be at least five ancillary buildings connected to preparing and serving barbecue. As these buildings are not eligible for education and not part of the property's Criterion C argument as a school, it may be that the property could be evaluated under Criteria A and C for its role in the history of regional barbecue festivals.

Given the determination of the school as eligible under Criterion A, we leave it to NCDOT to determine if the additional/alternative study needs to be undertaken.

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



Received: 01/08/2019
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

January 4, 2019

ER 19-0051

Due -- 1/31/19

Dear Ms. Gledhill-Earley:

RE: Historic Structure Survey Report, TIP# U-6028, PA# 18-07-0010, Widen SR
2467(Mallard Creek Rd) from SR 2472 (W. Mallard Creek Church Rd) to SR 6032
(Amanda Ellan Rd) in Mecklenburg County

H- 2R letters
2/14/19
RJE

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to widen Mallard Creek Rd in Mecklenburg County. Commonwealth Heritage Group prepared the attached Eligibility Report and recommends the Mallard Creek School 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 sreap@ncdot.gov.

Sincerely,

Shelby Reap
Historic Architecture Section

Attachment

Mailing Address:
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Website: www.ncdot.gov

Location:
1020 BIRCH RIDGE RD
RALEIGH NC 27610

**HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT
WIDEN SR 2467 (MALLARD CREEK ROAD) TO FOUR LANES FROM SR 2472
(W. MALLARD CREEK CHURCH ROAD) TO SR 6032 (AMANDA ELLEN ROAD),
MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

**TIP Project U-6028
WBS No. 47153.1.1
PA No. 18-07-0010**

**Prepared for:
Moffatt and Nichol
4700 Falls of Neuse, Suite 300
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609**

And

**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division 10**

**Prepared by:
Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.
P.O. BOX 1198
201 WEST WILSON STREET
TARBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27886**

**Megan Funk
*Architectural Historian***

NCR-0784

OCTOBER 2018

**HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT
WIDEN SR 2467 (MALLARD CREEK ROAD) TO FOUR LANES FROM SR 2472
(W. MALLARD CREEK CHURCH ROAD) TO SR 6032 (AMANDA ELLEN ROAD),
MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

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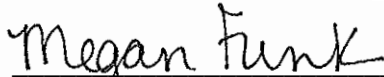
**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division 10**

**Prepared by:
Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.
P.O. BOX 1198
201 WEST WILSON STREET
TARBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27886**

**Megan Funk
*Architectural Historian***

NCR-0784

OCTOBER 2018



**Megan Funk, Principal Investigator
Commonwealth Heritage Group**

10-28-2018

Date

**Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor
Historic Architecture Group, NCDOT**

Date

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to widen SR 2467 (Mallard Creek Road) to four lanes from SR 2472 (W. Mallard Creek Church Road) to SR 6032 (Amanda Ellen Road), Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. The study limits extend approximately 2.25 miles along SR 2467 (Mallard Creek Road) from SR 2472 (W. Mallard Creek Church Road) in the west to SR 6032 (Amanda Ellen Road) in the east. This project is included in the North Carolina State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) as Project Number U- U-6028 and is federally funded. NCDOT architectural historians established an Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project to include the study area for the project.

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. One resource warranted an intensive National Register eligibility evaluation and is the subject of this report. NCDOT Architectural Historians determined that there are no other properties over 50 years of age in the APE worthy of evaluation.

This report represents the documentation of one property located within the APE for this project, as per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. For the preparation of this evaluation report, the Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc. (Commonwealth), architectural historian conducted architectural analysis and in-depth National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) evaluation of the requested property in the study area. Field documentation included notes, sketch maps, and digital photography. Background research was conducted at the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds, both online and on site. Additional background research was conducted at the Commonwealth library in Tarboro, North Carolina, and using online sources. This report recommends the Mallard Creek School as eligible for listing on the NRHP.

PROPERTY NAME	HPO SSN	ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION	CRITERIA
Mallard Creek School	MK1308	Yes	A and C

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METHODOLOGY

For the preparation of this report, the Commonwealth architectural historian conducted architectural analysis and in-depth NRHP evaluations of the requested property in the study area in October 2018. Field documentation included notes, sketch maps, and digital photography. Background research was conducted at the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds, both online and on site, and at the Commonwealth library in Tarboro, North Carolina, in addition to using online sources. This report includes the architectural analysis and in-depth evaluation of one historic property in the APE, Mallard Creek School (MK1308). In 2001, the property was added to the North Carolina Study List, a precursor for listing on the NRHP. This report is on file at NCDOT and is available for review by the public.

Commonwealth prepared this historic architectural resources evaluation report in accordance with the provisions of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*¹ and NCDOT's *Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources*. This report meets NCDOT and National Park Service guidelines. Resources are evaluated according to NRHP criteria. The location of the project area and the evaluated resource is shown in Figure 2.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The study area consists of a roughly 2.25-mile stretch of SR 2467 (Mallard Creek Road) in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is characterized by residential development that is oriented away from SR 2467 and shielded from the road by buffers of trees. A few residences with large lawns are oriented toward SR 2467. They are also surrounded by and separated from one another by wooded areas, though they are not shielded from the road. The western end of the study area, where SR 2467 intersects with SR 2472 (W. Mallard Creek Church Road), is characterized by commercial development including a CVS Pharmacy, Walgreens, and Fifth Third Bank among a variety of other restaurants and shops. Novant Health University Family Physicians and a U-Haul facility are located 0.25 miles inward of the western boundary, both with large parking lots. Other large facilities that are less visible from the road include the Mecklenburg County Horticultural Center, the Mallard Creek Recreation Center, and the Tradition Golf Club, all of which are surrounded by densely wooded areas. I-485 intersects with SR 2467 approximately 0.35 miles from the eastern end of the study area and exhibits a diverging diamond interchange in addition to typical on and off ramps. The Mallard Creek School is located at the center of the study area in a section defined by large swaths of woodlands. The parcel the school stands on is cleared with a number of ancillary structures standing behind the school building and a radio or cell tower that is disguised as a tree and rises from the northern edge of the clearing.

¹ National Park Service, 2017. 48 CFR 44716; 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60.

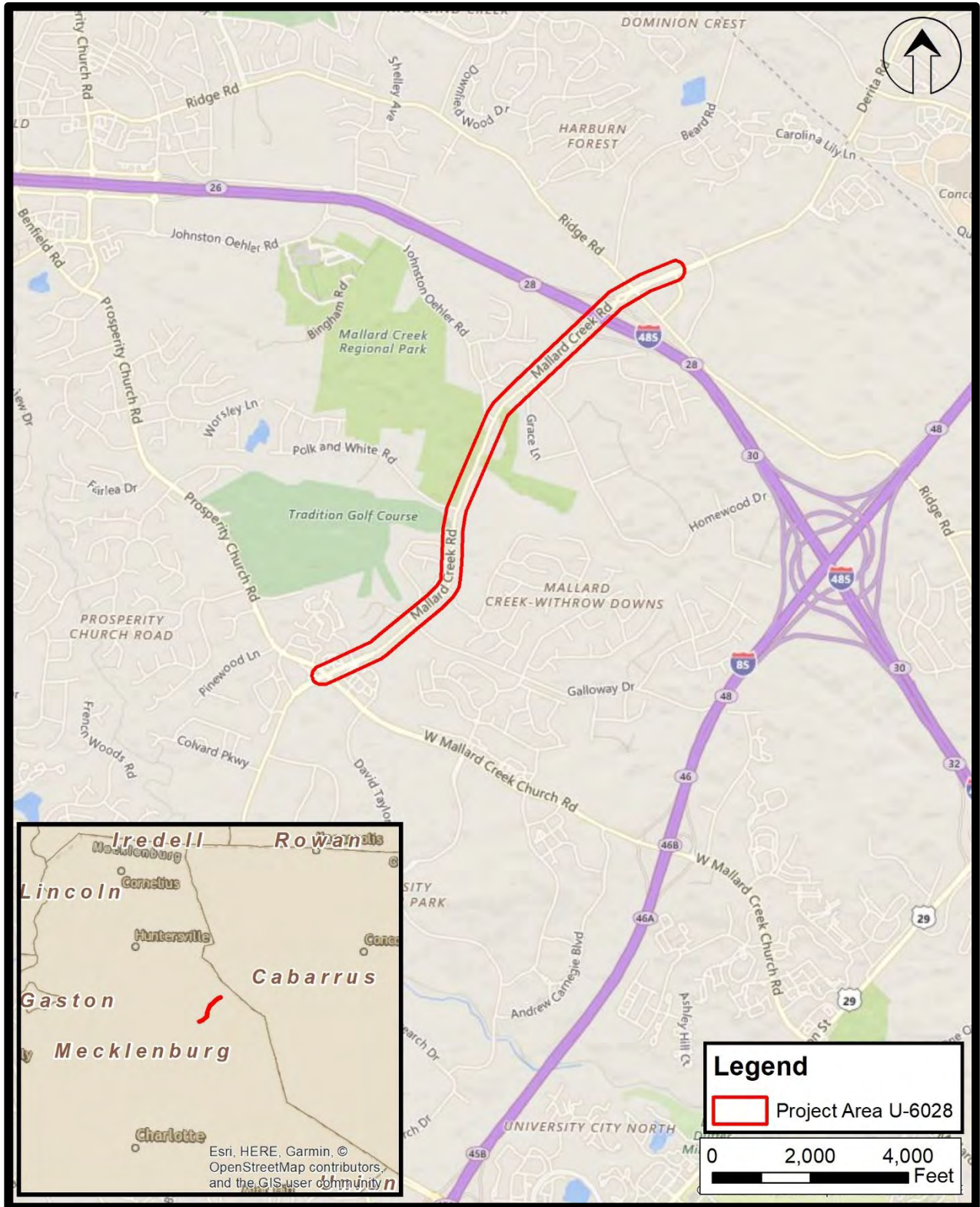


Figure 1: General Location.



Figure 2: Location of Resources.

PROPERTY INVENTORY AND EVALUATIONS

Resource Name:	Mallard Creek School
NCDOT Survey Site Number:	001
HPO Survey Site Number:	MK1308
Location:	11400 Mallard Creek Rd, Charlotte, NC 28262
Parcel ID:	02913101
Dates(s) of Construction:	Ca. 1920
Recommendation:	Eligible



Figure 3: Mallard Creek School, Looking East.

Setting

Mallard Creek School is located on the east side of Mallard Creek Road, from which it sits back approximately 120 feet, and faces west toward an intersection with Polk and White Road. It belongs to a larger complex of buildings and shelters but is the closest to the road. The other structures stand to its north and east and are surrounded by paved and graveled areas designed to accommodate traffic at the annual Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church Barbecue. The main driveway creates a large U-shape that extends from Mallard Creek Road just south of the parcel's southern boundary, across the parcel, and reconnects with the road, north of the parcel's northern boundary. Another driveway, that is no longer used, extends from the road past the southern edge of the school and connects with the U-shaped drive. Though most of the land

between the buildings is paved or graveled, the complex itself is surrounded by spacious lawns with a few large trees. There are three baseball diamonds to the northeast of the parcel and a cell tower with ancillary structures rises from the lawn north of the parcel. The baseball diamonds and lawns are bordered by wooded areas. A majority of the parcels on the west side of Mallard Creek Road are wooded as well (Figure 4).

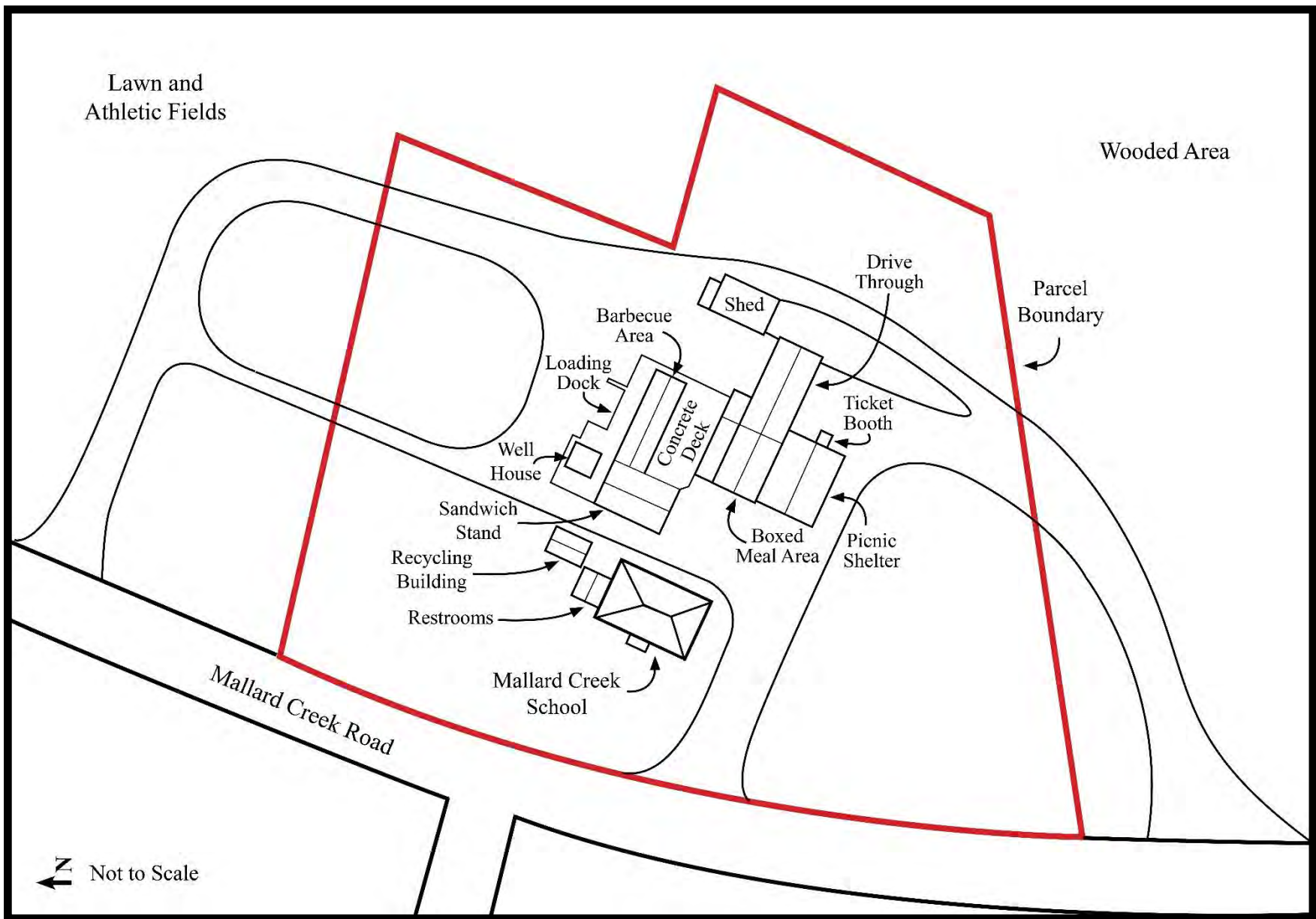


Figure 4: Site Map.

Property Description

Exterior

Constructed in 1920, The Mallard Creek School is a one-story frame building with a steeply pitched hipped roof that is covered with standing seam metal. The building is clad with plain weatherboard siding and rests on a brick pier foundation. A survey and research report found on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission's website states that the school rests on large heart pine joists.² The building is three bays wide and two bays deep, a form suggestive of its four classroom and center hall plan, and its west (front) elevation contains a centered double leaf entry door (Figure 3). According to the report, one door is original and the other is a replacement. The doors, however, are very similar with the addition of extra molding on the right door being the only obvious distinction (Figure 5). The entry is sheltered by a shed-roofed porch supported by simple wooden posts. Ten windows covered by operable wooden shutters, flank the entry. The windows are arranged as paired, individual, paired on each side of the door, though, according to the report, the many of the original six-over-six windows have been removed. Two corbelled brick chimneys rise from the ridge of the roof and the roof's wide eaves exhibit exposed rafter tails.



Figure 5: Entry Door, Mallard Creek School, Looking East.

The south (side) elevation contains an off-center entry door constructed of beaded boards and approached by rudimentary wooden steps. To the right of the door, a metal gutter spans the building at mid-height and small vertical battens are present below the gutter. Their purpose is not for certain, but it seems that the vertical elements may serve to hold down warped siding and the gutters to protect them from water infiltration (Figure 6).

The east (rear) elevation is similar to the west (front) elevation with a centrally placed double-leaf entry door flanked by ten shuttered windows. The windows are arranged in the same pattern as on the west elevation. Unlike the front door, which is paneled, this door is constructed of a single sheet of wood with cross braces. Gutters are also present at the ends of the building (past the windows) and to the left of the entry door (Figure 7).

The north (side) elevation is blind with no windows or entry doors (Figure 8).

² Emily D. Ramsey, *Survey and Research Report on the Mallard Creek School*, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, Electronic document, <http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/Surveys&rmallardcreek.htm>, accessed September 2018.



Figure 6: Mallard Creek School, Looking North.



Figure 7: Mallard Creek School, Looking West.



Figure 8: Mallard Creek School, Looking Southeast.

Interior

Although access to the interior could not be obtained, the survey and research report describes the interior as containing four classrooms with movable partitions and a center hall – a plan that was almost undoubtedly borrowed from or inspired by the Rosenwald Fund. The report goes on to describe original materials, such as the heart pine flooring, plaster walls with pine wainscoting, and wooden doors. The greatest alterations to the interior include covering the pine board ceilings in three of the four rooms and the center hall with acoustic tile and removing the movable partitions.³ Bob Oehler, who was present at the time of the survey, but did not have access to the interior, confirmed that the original materials are still in place.

³ Ramsey.

Ancillary Structures

North of the school is a small concrete block, front-gabled building that houses restrooms. A recess with entrances to the men's and women's sections is located on the east (rear) elevation (Figure 9).

Northeast of the restrooms is a small building that is clad with weatherboard siding and covered by a gabled, standing seam metal roof. The building rests on wooden piers. According to Mr. Oehler, the building is used for recycling and clean up after the barbecue. It has a garage door on the south elevation, which serves as the main entry point, and a single-leaf door on the east elevation (Figure 10). The north and west elevations have two large openings each that appear to have been used as pass-through windows – such as a concession stand or ticket booth – at some point. The windows are now boarded over (Figure 11).



Figure 9: Restrooms, Mallard Creek School, Looking West.



Figure 10: Recycling Building, Mallard Creek School, Looking West.



Figure 11: Recycling Building, Mallard Creek School, Looking West.

A building that Mr. Oehler referred to as the sandwich stand is located east of the first three buildings. It is constructed of concrete block and has a gabled roof. The west elevation can be described as having four bays. The two northmost bays have paired single-light windows with screens, while the third bay is blind and the fourth bay has an entry door flanked on the north by a boarded over window. The south elevation contains three large pass-through windows that are currently covered/closed and are sheltered by a shed-roofed awning (Figure 12). The north elevation is similar with three large windows, these, however, are paired single-light windows like those on the west elevation. An entry door exists east of the windows as well (Figure 13). The east elevation of the sandwich stand is partially covered by a long, gabled wing used for heating the barbecue on the day of the event. The uncovered portion of the elevation contains a single entry door. The north and south elevations of the wing are lit by ribbons of screened windows with a screened door at the center and the west elevation contains a garage door (Figure 14).



Figure 12: Sandwich Stand, Mallard Creek School, Looking Northeast.



Figure 13: Sandwich Stand and Barbecue Building, Mallard Creek School, Looking Southeast.



Figure 14: Sandwich Stand and Barbecue Building, Mallard Creek School, Looking Northeast.

North of the sandwich stand is a small concrete block building that originally served as a well house. It has a flat roof that extends west and north and is supported by simple wooden posts. A door exists on the east elevation and the building now houses a water heater and storage space (Figure 15).

South of the sandwich stand and barbecue building is a building used for assembling boxed meals. The main portion of the building is a front-gabled, concrete block structure. It has a large centered entrance with no doors on its east and west elevations. The east elevation also has two pass-through windows north of the entrance and is sheltered by a large open structure that serves as the drive-through during the barbecue (Figures 16 and 17). Attached to the south elevation of the building is a picnic shelter (Figure 18). It shelters five large windows on the south elevation of the main building, two of which are permanently covered. The remaining three sides are open and there is a small ticket booth that stands at the center of the west side (Figure 19). Along the north elevation of the main building is a screened section with a shed roof (Figure 20).

Northeast of these buildings is a shed used for storing some of the smokers for the barbecue. It is clad with vertical metal siding and has a shed roof, two garage doors and metal entry door on the west elevation, and a shed roofed addition for wood storage on the north elevation (Figure 22).



Figure 15: Former Well House, Mallard Creek School, Looking North.



Figure 16: Boxed Meal Area, Mallard Creek School, Looking East.



Figure 17: Boxed Meal Area, Mallard Creek School, Looking West.



Figure 18: Picnic Shelter, Mallard Creek School, Looking East.



Figure 19: Ticket Booth and Picnic Shelter, Mallard Creek School, Looking Northwest.



Figure 20: Screened Section of Boxed Meal Area, Mallard Creek School, Looking Southeast.



Figure 21: Drive Through, Mallard Creek School, Looking North.



Figure 22: Shed, Mallard Creek School, Looking Southeast.

Historical Background

Populated as early as the 1820s when the Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church built their first meeting house, Mallard Creek thrived as a rural farming community for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As evidenced by the church, many of its early residents were Scots-Irish Presbyterians who were known to value religion, hard work, and education. The church, like in many rural communities during the nineteenth century, acted as the social center of the community providing not only a place to worship but also a place for community events, meetings, and schooling.⁴

Following the Civil War, Mallard Creek, and Mecklenburg County as a whole, began to prosper greatly from the textile and cotton trade industries that were established in the county seat of Charlotte.⁵ The success of these industries eventually led to Charlotte becoming the largest city in North Carolina. The nineteenth century was also a time of great educational reform in the state. Between 1840, the year after the first public school law was passed, and 1861, the number of “common” schools in North Carolina increased from 632 to roughly 4,000 with the average number of pupils per school increasing from less than 24 to around 40. The Civil War took a toll on many of the schools, with many suspending classes and many closing altogether. A new constitution, passed in 1868, however, strove to remedy this situation by resolving to “provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of public schools, wherein tuition shall be free of charge to all of the children of the State between the ages of six and twenty-one years.” It also stipulated that the school term be four months long.

Though the legislation also specified how the school system would be funded, it took a number of years for the state to acquire sufficient resources placing the financial responsibility on local governments and communities. In order to raise funding, cities and towns levied taxes and many individuals made personal contributions to local school districts. Rural areas, such as Mallard Creek, which often lacked the mechanisms to collect taxes and the wealthy individuals to subsidize educational efforts, often fell behind incorporated areas.⁶ In Mallard Creek, however, the community banded together and constructed its first dedicated school house in 1875. Though the school would have been sanctioned by the county school board and likely received some funding toward the construction costs, the operation of the school likely fell to the community as well. A photo labeled “Mallard Creek School, about 1903” shows students standing in front of a brick building with shuttered windows, possibly the 1875 schoolhouse (Figure 23). Other one-room schoolhouses were soon constructed in the area including Oehler School and Union School (Figure 24).⁷

Over time, the number of students increased while the condition of aging one-room schools diminished. As this took place, state legislation regarding public school systems was also advancing and by the early twentieth century a movement to consolidate the many small rural schools was well underway. In August 1920, P. H. Crenshaw conveyed 2.35 acres and W. O. Cochrane and wife, Bessie Thompson Cochrane, conveyed 2.73 acres to the County Board of

⁴ Ramsey.

⁵ Ramsey.

⁶ *The History of Education in North Carolina*, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, 1993.

⁷ Ramsey.



Figure 23: "Mallard Creek School, about 1903," (Mallard Creek Barbecue, www.mallardcreekbbq.com).



Figure 24: "Oehler School," (Mallard Creek Barbecue, www.mallardcreekbbq.com).

Education of Mecklenburg County.⁸ A few days later, the board of education officially accepted the land, which though conveyed, was donated to the board, and in July they authorized an application to the state for \$1,500 to go towards the construction of a new school. The old school as well as the Oehler School were to be sold and the proceeds contributed to the building fund as well.⁹ The new Mallard Creek School was constructed by volunteer laborers, most of whom were members of the Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church, and was completed in time for school to begin in the fall of that year.

During the early twentieth century, more emphasis was also placed on equal education for African American children, which lacked greatly from that offered to white children. Recognizing this deficiency, Booker T. Washington convinced Julius Rosenwald, the president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, to create the Rosenwald Fund, which promoted the education of African Americans in the South by distributing matching grants for the construction of public schools. In addition to offering grants, the Rosenwald Fund developed architectural plans for schools. The plans were grounded in progressive ideas and emphasized sturdy construction, adequate lighting and ventilation, as well as generous classroom sizes, and ranged from one-teacher schools to schools with upwards of ten classrooms. Overall, the program funded nearly 5,000 schools for African Americans, including 787 in North Carolina, more than any other state.¹⁰ Though the Mallard Creek school served only white students, making it ineligible for the Rosenwald Fund, its frame construction with simple white-painted weatherboard, banks of windows, four classrooms around a center hall, and moveable partitions suggests that it was influenced by or possibly built from plans distributed by the fund. In fact, the only detail of the school that greatly differs from those constructed by the Rosenwald Fund is its steeply pitched roof, which some argue is representative of “northern” school plans while others point out that it is similar to the roofs other schools in the county including McClintock Rosenwald School (MK1447) and the no longer extant Rockwell Rosenwald School (MK1316).¹¹

For the next 11 years, the school educated students in the area and hosted local events such as plays and picnics. During this time, North Carolina continued to consolidate the small rural schools into larger schools that worked within an organization of districts rather than independently. In Mecklenburg County, fourteen such districts were created and centered around union schools with smaller feeder schools serving additional students. Though this process continued into the 1950s, the students that attended the Mallard Creek School were quickly absorbed by larger schools in Derita and Newell.¹²

The biggest change to education came, however, in 1929, when the stock market crashed. All schools, not just rural ones, were impacted by the depression which essentially eliminated funding for teacher salaries and school maintenance. Due to this, many rural schools, including Mallard Creek, joined with larger schools. At the state level, the legislature enacted the “School

⁸ Deed book 430, page 500.

⁹ Mecklenburg County Board of Education Minute Books, Volumes 4-7, University of North Carolina at Charlotte Special Collections.

¹⁰ Marvin A. Brown, *Research Report: Tools for Assessing the Significance and Integrity of North Carolina's Rosenwald Schools* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Transportation, 2007).

¹¹ Ramsey.

¹² Ramsey.

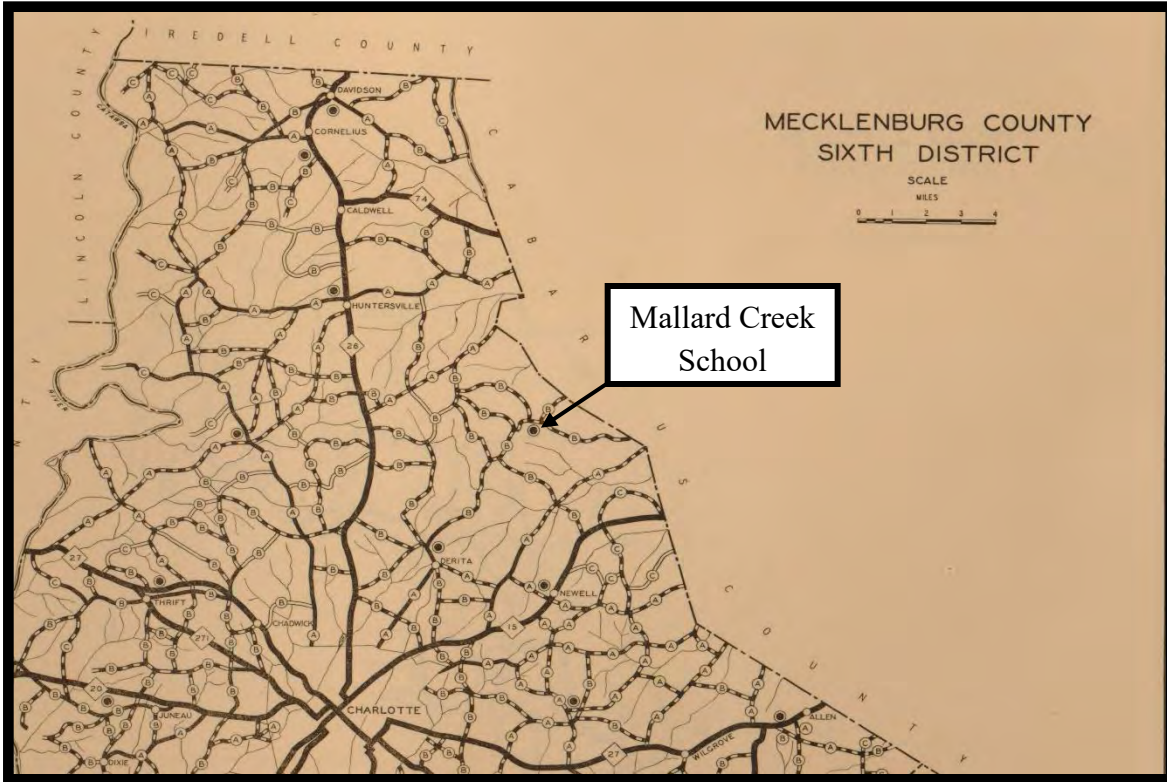


Figure 25: 1930 North Carolina County Road Survey of Mecklenburg County (North Carolina State Archives). The outlined circled indicates that the school was consolidated.

Machinery Act” in 1931, which provided full state support for the school system as a way of “providing a free and uniform education to all the children of North Carolina.” Counties, which formed the basis of the new system, retained the responsibility of constructing and maintaining buildings but were no longer required to contribute matching funds to receive funding from the state.¹³

The year after the school closed, the Presbyterian Church purchased the land from the board of education for \$250 and renamed it as the Mallard Creek Community House.¹⁴ The church continued to use the building for social functions, most notably its annual Mallard Creek Barbecue Festival, which began in 1929 as a fundraiser to help pay for a new Sunday School building. In its first year, the meal consisted of three or four pigs and one goat. Though it raised just \$89.50, the amount was enough to cover the outstanding balance for the new building and to start a new tradition. Over the past 80 years the barbecue has grown to be one of the largest events in the county. In 2016, it served 25,000 people with 14,000 pounds of barbecue pork and 4000 pounds of cole slaw.¹⁵

¹³ *The History of Education in North Carolina.*

¹⁴ Deed book 804, page 224.

¹⁵ “Mallard Creek BBQ Segment on PBS Channel 42 – Charlotte 2016,” Mallard Creek Barbecue, <http://mallardcreekbbq.com/category/history>, accessed October 2018.

Exemplary of the close-knit community that settled the area and later constructed the school, the festival is today run by the descendants of those who first organized it. These include J.W. Oehler, Sr., who served as the General Chairman from 1929 to 1943, his son, J.W. Oehler, Jr., who filled the position from 1966 to 1978, and his grandsons, Donald Lee Oehler and Richard Craven Oehler, who were appointed Co-Chairmen in 1979.¹⁶ In a news segment, a volunteer joked that he needed to start looking for his own replacement.¹⁷

In the early years of the festival, all the food, including the pigs, was provided by members of the church. The pigs were prepared at the home of H.Y. Galloway before being taken to the community house (Mallard Creek School) to be cooked overnight in ditches that ran from the current ticket booth to the woods and were filled with hickory coals. The cooked meat was chopped by church members the next day. In 1946, a concrete block building was added to the site and as the festival grew, more buildings were constructed including one that incorporated concrete block pits for cooking the barbecue inside. The slaw has been made in multiple places over time but is today made at the community house as it was originally. Other changes include no longer using china and silverware and transitioning the serving line from the front right room of the community house to tents then to the 1946 concrete block building. Today there are also four drive through take-out lines. The property was expanded in 1984 when land adjoining the community house was purchased to provide additional parking, and more buildings were constructed including restrooms in 1989, a shelter attached to the serving building in 1992, and the drive through in 1997. More often than not, the buildings were constructed entirely by church members.¹⁸

While the event began as a way for the church to pay what it owed on the Sunday School buildings it now raises money for even larger causes such as hurricane relief after Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and to fund mission projects, often raising “tens of thousands of dollars.” It has also become a popular meet and greet for local political candidates, encouraged by its occurrence in late October.¹⁹

¹⁶ “A History: 1929 to 1979 plus...,” <http://mallardcreekbbq.com/about/history>, accessed October 2018.

¹⁷ “Mallard Creek BBQ Segment on PBS Channel 42 – Charlotte 2016.”

¹⁸ “A History: 1929 to 1979 plus...”

¹⁹ “A History: 1929 to 1979 plus...”

NRHP Criteria Evaluation

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, the Mallard Creek School is recommended as eligible for the NRHP.

Integrity

Mallard Creek School stands in its original location with a setting of fields and woodlands, much like when it was constructed. It also retains its original design – reminiscent of early twentieth century school houses – materials, and workmanship including its wooden weatherboard siding, wooden sash windows (though covered), pine flooring and wainscoting, and plaster walls. Due to its unaltered form and retention of character defining features it continues to have a strong association with the early twentieth century and to convey the feeling of that period.

Criterion A

Mallard Creek School is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A (Event). To be eligible under Criterion A the property must retain integrity and must be associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American prehistory or history or pattern of events or historic trends that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a state, or a nation. Furthermore, the property must have existed at the time and be documented to be associated with the events. Finally, the property's specific association must be important as well.

According to a report on file at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, Mallard Creek School stands as a “tangible reminder of the community-based and locally supported system of education common in rural Mecklenburg County.”²⁰ Constructed in 1920, the school was one of the last community-centered schools built in the county and used by its rural residents before the nationwide trend of consolidating small rural schools into multi-classroom and multi-teacher facilities took hold in the area. Furthermore, the school exhibits influences of the Rosenwald Fund and serves as an example of how the plans created to improve schools for African American students bled into the designs of schools for white children. Additionally, it is one of very few frame school buildings constructed for white children that remains in the county. The property is also associated with the Annual Mallard Creek Barbecue Festival, a community event and charitable fundraiser that has taken place since 1929 and grown to be one of the largest one-day barbecues in the area. For these reasons, the Mallard Creek School is recommended eligible under Criterion A.

Criterion B

Mallard Creek School is not recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B (Person). For a property to be eligible for significance under Criterion B, it must retain integrity and 1) be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, i.e., individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context; 2) be normally associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he/she achieved significance; and 3) should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best

²⁰ Emily D. Ramsey, *Survey and Research Report on the Mallard Creek School*, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, Electronic document, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Mallard-Creek-School-SR.pdf>, accessed October 2018.

represent the person's historic contributions. Furthermore, a property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is or was a member of an identifiable profession, class or social or ethnic group.

The property is not associated with the life or lives of persons significant to our past and therefore is not recommended eligible under Criterion B.

Criterion C

Mallard Creek School is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C (design/construction). For a property to be eligible under this criterion, it must retain integrity and either 1) embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; 2) represent the work of a master; 3) possess high artistic value; or 4) represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Mallard Creek School stands as a well-preserved example of vernacular school construction in Mecklenburg County. The school is composed of elements borrowed from Rosenwald schools, including long banks of windows and a center-hall plan, and regionally popular features, like its steeply pitched roof and low-hanging eaves, and is similar to at least two other schools that were built in the county in the 1920s. These include McClintock Rosenwald School (MK1447) and the no longer extant Ben Salem School (Figure 26 and 27).

Like Mallard Creek School, the McClintock School, which was constructed in 1922, also shares its name with a Presbyterian church that stands just 350 feet to its northeast. The school also displays a similar massing as the Mallard Creek School with a rectangular footprint and a roof that is almost as steeply pitched as the roof of the Mallard Creek School. Other similar details include its banks of windows, deep eaves with exposed rafter tails, and a centrally-placed entrance. The school, however, falls short of the well-preserved state of the Mallard Creek School with replacement windows and an asphalt shingle roof. It has also lost its chimneys. Furthermore, it lacks integrity due to encroaching development and tract homes, which, though buffered by mature trees, stand within 200 feet of the school.

The Ben Salem School, which is no longer extant, repeats the same plan as the McClintock School and was also funded during the 1922/23 budget year of the Rosenwald Fund.²¹ One stylistic difference between the Rosenwald schools and the Mallard Creek School is the composition of the window surrounds. On both Rosenwald schools the windows are true ribbons sharing vertical elements, while Mallard Creek's five windows are essentially paired windows flanking a single window with a small amount of space in between, reinforcing that the school was influenced by but not constructed as a Rosenwald school.

²¹ Ben Salem School, Fisk University Rosewald Fund Card File Database, http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9Mjc1Nw==&school_county=mecklenburg&school_state=NC&button=Search&o=0, accessed October 2018.



Figure 26: McClintock Rosenwald School (MK1447).



Figure 27: Ben Salem School, no longer extant (Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database).



Figure 28: Caldwell Station School (MK1284).

Of the documented schools in Mecklenburg County, no other schools for white children were discovered to have such steeply pitched roofs, though some, such as the Caldwell Station School (MK1284), also show influences of Rosenwald designs (Figure 28).

In some regards, the design of the Mallard Creek School deviated from statewide trends which saw the number of rural schools in the 1920s shift from 248 brick schools and 3,698 one-room schools to 974 brick schools and only 1,887 one-room schools. During the decade, the number of larger frame schools, such as the Mallard Creek School, also decreased from 7,138 to 4,569.²² A 2001 survey of industrial, educational and institutional buildings in Mecklenburg County revealed seventeen extant schools from the 1920s. Nine of these are Rosenwald schools, one of which, Billingsville Rosenwald School (MK1862), is constructed of brick, and all of the extant 1920s schools within the municipal boundaries of Charlotte are constructed of brick and/or concrete. The urban schools are also distinguishable from the Mallard Creek School in that they display higher styles of architecture than their rural counterparts. The report does not specifically mention how many of the non-Rosenwald schools are located in Charlotte versus the rural parts of the county, but it can be deduced that there are only eight remaining schools between the two areas, making the Mallard Creek School one of only a few remaining rural school buildings.²³

²² Beth Keane, "The Development of North Carolina's Public School System Through 1940," unpublished report available at the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC, 10.

²³ Sarah A. Woodard, Sherry Joines Wyatt, and David E. Gall, Industry, Transportation, and Education: The New South Development of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, Electronic document,

In summary, the 1920 Mallard Creek School was one of the last schools to be constructed and operated by a rural community before changes in state legislation and the movement toward consolidation forever altered the landscape of education in Mecklenburg County. It is also one of only a few frame schools constructed for white students that survive in the county. Furthermore, the school building has remained a useful asset to the Mallard Creek community serving as a community center and as the location of the Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church's annual barbecue. It is also incredibly well-preserved, undergoing little renovation over the past 98 years and allowing the school building to continue to convey its connection with early twentieth-century school architecture and the development of education in Mecklenburg County. For these reasons, Mallard Creek School is recommended eligible under Criterion C.

Criterion D

Mallard Creek School is not recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D (potential to yield information). For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, it must meet two requirements: 1) the property must have, or have had, information to contribute to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and 2) the information must be considered important.

The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

NRHP Boundary Justification

The NRHP boundary for Mallard Creek School has been drawn according to the guidelines of National Register Bulletin 21, Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties. The boundary follows the right-of-way of SR 2467 (Mallard Creek Road) and is drawn to include the school building and associated land. The NRHP boundary is identified as the current parcel 02913101 (Mecklenburg County PIN) and contains approximately 6.54 acres (Figure 29).

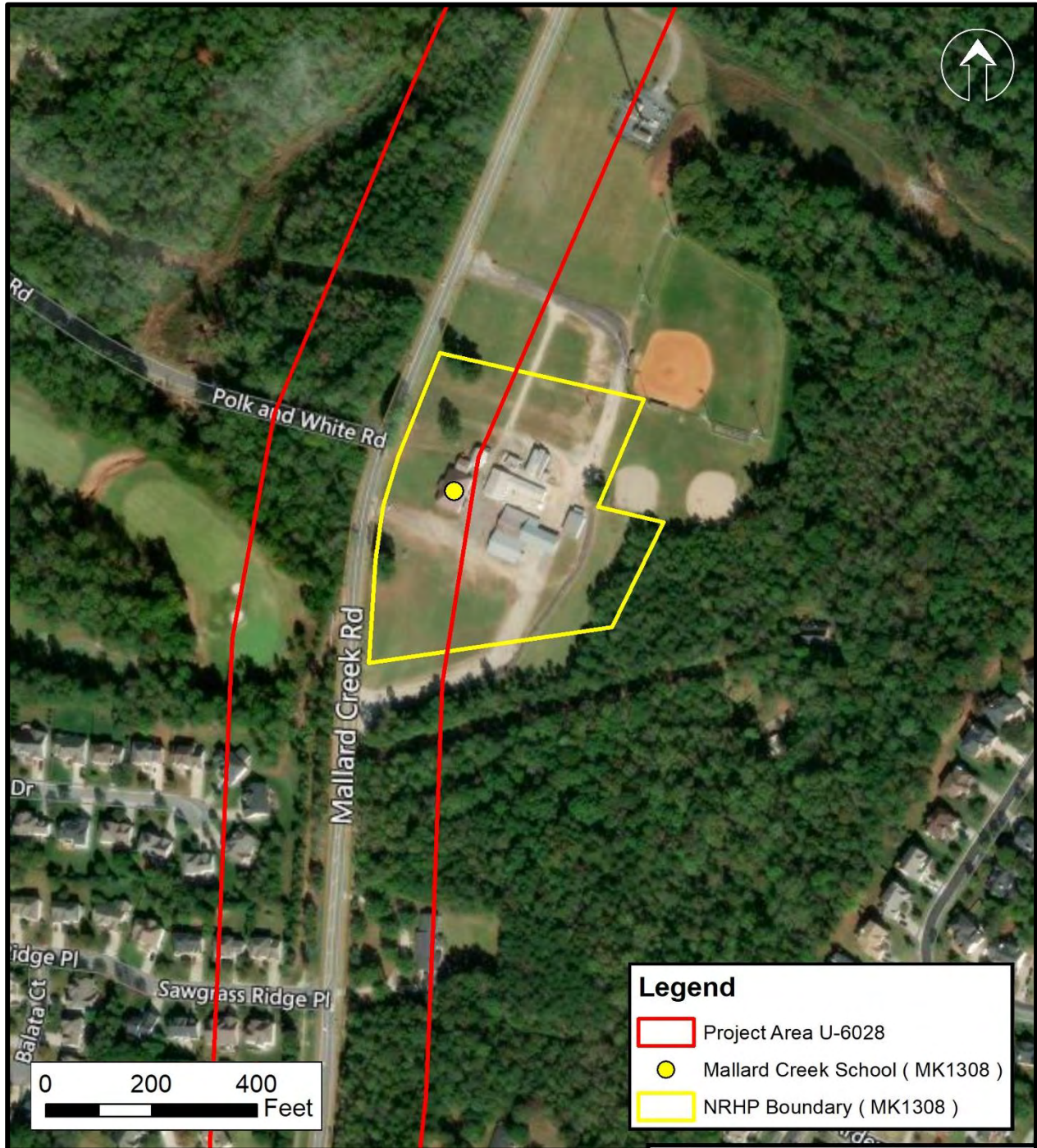


Figure 29: Mallard Creek School, NRHP Boundary.

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