



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

David L. S. Brook, Administrator

James B. Hunt Jr., Governor
Betty Ray McCain, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
Jeffrey J. Crow, Director

November 9, 1999

MEMORANDUM

TO: William D. Gilmore, P.E., Manager
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
Division of Highways
Department of Transportation

FROM: David Brook *Re: for DB*
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

RE: **Widening of US 1 Business from south of Peter Gill Road (SR 1548) to Dabney Drive (SR 1267), TIP No. R-2503, Vance County, 98-E-4220-0703**

Thank you for your letter of September 28, 1999, transmitting the survey report by Richard L. Silverman concerning the above project.

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under the criterion cited:

VN0329

The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A (event) and Criterion C (Architecture). The property is eligible under Criterion A as it is an early example of commercial architecture that reflects the rise of automobile-oriented culture in mid-twentieth century life. The property is also eligible under Criterion C as its design represents the development of highway oriented commercial architectural style that became prevalent after World War II on the United States.

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, please contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763.

DB:ldb

cc: B. Church

bc: **Brown/Alperin** county rf



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601
September 28, 1999

IN REPLY REFER TO
HO-NC

Mr. David Brook
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Department of Cultural Resources
109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Ref
AA
Due 10/26/99

Subject: Widening of US 1 Business from South of Peter Gill Road (SR-1548) to Dabney Drive (SR-1267) in Henderson, Vance County, NC, Federal-aid Project STP-001B(1), State Project 8.1391101, TIP Project R-2503.

Dear Mr. Brook:

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is conducting planning studies for the subject project. Enclosed are three copies of the Phase II Final Identification and Evaluation Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, which meets NCDOT's and National Park Service survey procedures guidelines. This report concludes that there is one property within the Area of Potential Effects that is eligible for the National Register, the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theater.

Please review the report and give us your concurrence. If you have any questions concerning the report, please call Ms. Barbara Church, Historic Architecture Section, at (919) 733-3141.

Sincerely yours,

Nicholas L. Graf

For Nicholas L. Graf, P.E.
Division Administrator

Enclosures (3)

RECEIVED
OCT 5 1999

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT

PHASE II:
FINAL IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION
ABRIDGED



WIDENING OF US 1 BUSINESS
FROM SOUTH OF PETER GILL ROAD(SR 1548) TO
DABNEY DRIVE (SR 1267) IN HENDERSON, NC

VANCE COUNTY
TIP # R-2503
STATE PROJECT # 8.1391101
FEDERAL AID PROJECT # STP-001B(1)

North Carolina Department of Transportation
Report Prepared by Richard L. Silverman, Architectural Historian

August 1999

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT
PHASE II:
FINAL IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION
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VANCE COUNTY
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STATE PROJECT # 8.1391101
FEDERAL AID PROJECT # STP-001B(1)

North Carolina Department of Transportation
Report Prepared by Richard L. Silverman, Architectural Historian

August 1999

Richard L. Silverman _____ *09-07-1999*
Principal Investigator Date
Historic Architecture Section
North Carolina Department of Transportation

for Mary Pope _____ *9.7.1999*
Barbara Church, Supervisor Date
Historic Architecture Section
North Carolina Department of Transportation

II. MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to widen US 1 Business from a two-lane roadway to a five-lane (64-foot) curb and gutter facility from south of Peter Gill Road (SR 1548), to Dabney Drive (SR 1267), in Henderson, NC.¹ The project also proposes to realign the intersection of Welcome Avenue (SR 1138) and Belmont Drive (SR 1101) to eliminate an offset intersection. The portion of St. Matthews Street (SR 1143) north of the Welcome Avenue/Belmont Drive intersection is proposed to be closed. First Street (SR 1118) is proposed to be extended to connect to St. Matthews Street. The project length is 3.00 miles. This project is federally funded [FA# STP-001B(1)].

A Final Identification and Evaluation Survey (Phase II) was conducted to determine the Area of Potential Effect (APE), and to identify and evaluate all structures over fifty years of age within the APE according to the Criteria of Evaluation for the National Register of Historic Places (Figure 1). Fifty-four properties were identified in this survey. Among these, fifty-three were shown at a consulting meeting between NCDOT and the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and determined not eligible and not worthy of further evaluation. The remaining property, the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre, has been evaluated in this report according to National Register Criteria. It is the conclusion of the principal investigator that the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for event and Criterion C for architecture. At present, there are no properties in the APE that are listed on the National Register.

Properties Listed on the National Register

None

Properties Considered Definitely Eligible for the National Register

Property #9: Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre

Properties Listed on the North Carolina State Study List and Considered Eligible for the National Register

None

¹NCDOT Historic Architecture staff was notified by memo on August 31, 1998 that the southern project limit was extended to south of Peter Gill Road (SR 1548). A decision was made not to extend the project at the northern end to US 1-158 business. The project was studied by NCDOT Historic Architecture within these limits.

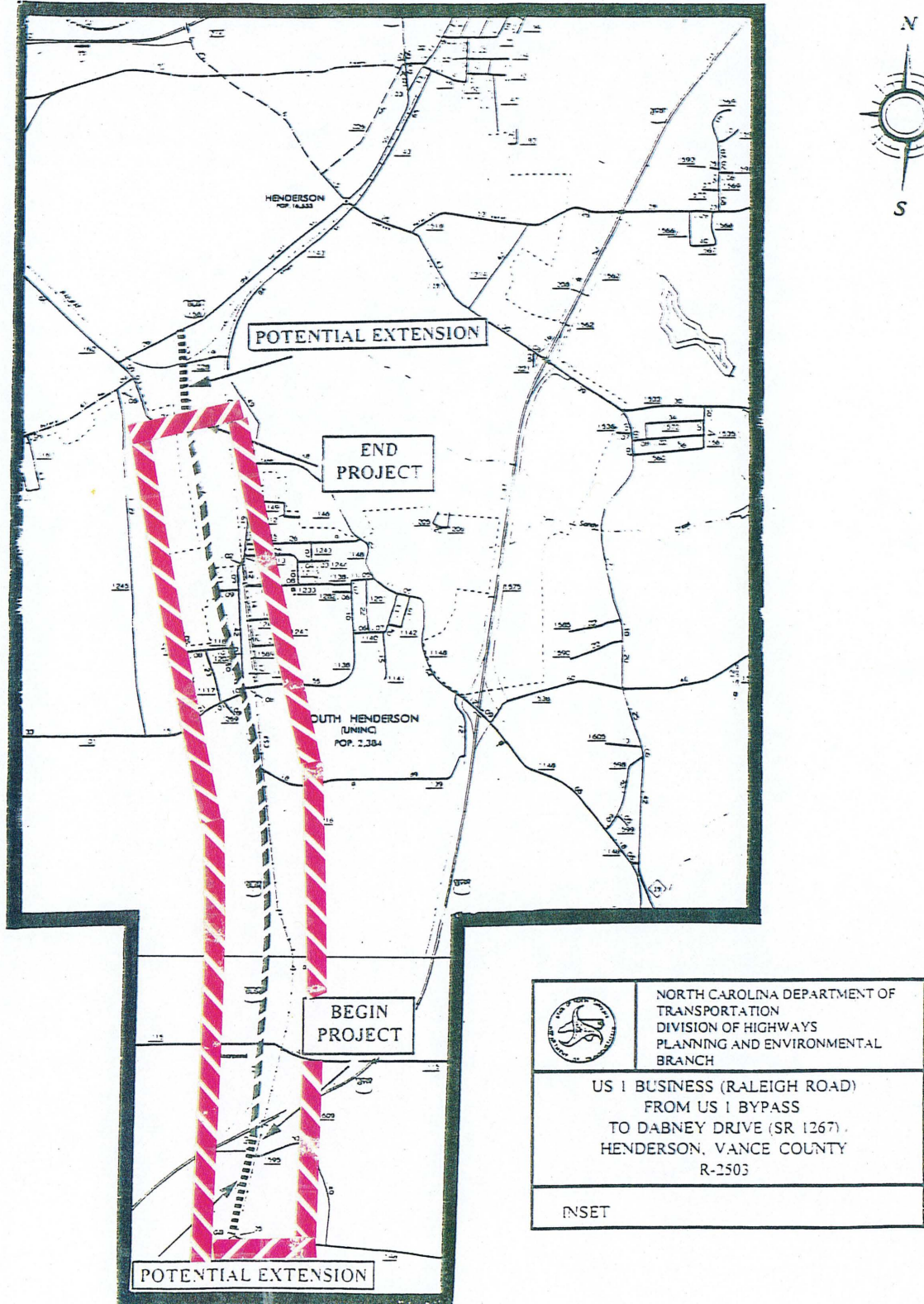
Properties Determined Not Eligible for the National Register and Not Worthy of Further Evaluation


Property #1	House	2-story single pile; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #2	Commercial/Residential Building	2-story t-plan with mansard canopy; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #3	House	Bungalow; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #4	House	Tudor cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #5	House	2-story single pile; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #6	Gas Station/Commercial Building	1-story brick with canopy; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #7	House	2-story frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #8	House	Four square; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #10	House	Bungalow; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #11	House	Craftsman cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #12	House	Craftsman cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #13	House	Craftsman cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #14	House	Colonial bungalow; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #15	House	Craftsman cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #16	House	Craftsman cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #17	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #18	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #19	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #20	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #21	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #22	House	1-1/2-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #23	House	1-story hip roof cottage; lacks historic

		or architectural significance
Property #24	House	1-story minimal traditional; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #25	House	1-story craftsman cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #26	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #27	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #28	House	Craftsman cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #29	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #30	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #31	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #32	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #33	House	2-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #34	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #35	House	1-story hip roof cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #36	House	Bungalow; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #37	House	Bungalow; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #38	House	Mission Revival bungalow; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #39	House	Colonial Revival; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #40	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #41	House	2-story single pile; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #42	House	Craftsman cottage; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #43	House	Bungalow/Colonial Revival; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #44	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #45	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #46	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #47	Commercial Building	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance

Property #48	Manufacturing Building/ Coca-Cola Building	2-story brick Colonial Revival; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #49	House	2-story Colonial Revival; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #50	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #51	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #52	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #53	House	1-story wood frame; lacks historic or architectural significance
Property #54	House	2-story single pile; lacks historic or architectural significance

FIGURE 1: PROJECT MAP
(AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT OUTLINED IN RED)



	NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL BRANCH
US 1 BUSINESS (RALEIGH ROAD) FROM US 1 BYPASS TO DABNEY DRIVE (SR 1267) HENDERSON, VANCE COUNTY R-2503	
INSET	

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IV. PURPOSE OF SURVEY AND REPORT

This survey was conducted and the Phase II report prepared in order to identify historic architectural resources located within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) as part of the environmental studies conducted by NCDOT and documented by an Environmental Assessment (EA). This report is prepared as a technical addendum to the EA and as part of the documentation of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended. This report is on file at NCDOT and is available for review by the general public. Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. Section 470f, requires Federal agencies to take into account the effect of their undertakings on properties included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

V. METHODOLOGY

NCDOT conducted the survey and prepared this Phase II report in accordance with the provisions of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60; and Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service. In addition, this report conforms to the expanded requirements for architectural survey reports developed by NCDOT and the North Carolina SHPO dated February 2, 1996.

NCDOT conducted a Final Identification and Evaluation survey with the following goals:

- (1) To determine the APE, defined as the geographic area or areas within which a project may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist.
- (2) To identify all significant resources within the APE.
- (3) To evaluate these resources according to the National Register of Historic Places Criteria.

The survey methodology consisted of a field survey and historical background research of the project area. On September 11, 1998, January 11, 1999, and August 16, 1999 surveys were conducted by automobile and on foot, covering 100% of the APE. All structures over fifty years of age were photographed and keyed to a USGS quadrangle map.

Background research about the project area concentrated on the architectural development and the historical context of the single eligible historic property, the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre. Investigators conducted an examination of deeds, tax records, and maps located in the Vance County Courthouse and the North Carolina State Archives. There are no

properties in the APE listed on the National Register and no properties listed on the North Carolina State Study List.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AREA

This project is situated in the Henderson USGS quadrangle map in Henderson, Vance County, North Carolina. The general project area is characterized by a mix of highway commercial properties as well as early twentieth-century single-family dwellings. The project corridor runs along a north-south axis, as do the nearby CSX railway line and U.S. Bypass 1. The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre site is located approximately two miles from the historic town center of Henderson, North Carolina.

VII. SUMMARY RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Fifty-four properties were identified in this survey. One property is evaluated in-depth within this report according to National Register Criteria (Property #9). The remaining fifty-three properties were determined not eligible for the National Register and not worthy of further evaluation in a consulting meeting between North Carolina SHPO and NCDOT on February 4, 1999 and February 18, 1999. These properties are represented in this report with photographs and brief reasons for their ineligibility.

A. PROPERTIES UNDER FIFTY YEARS OF AGE

Criterion Consideration G, for properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years, states that properties less than fifty years of age may be listed on the National Register only if they are of exceptional importance or if they are integral parts of districts eligible for the National Register. There are no properties in the APE that qualify for the National Register under Criterion Consideration G.

B. PROPERTIES CONSIDERED DEFINITELY ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Property #9 - Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre (Illustration pages 1-11) Historic Name: The Moon-Glo

Location:

U.S. 1 Business, .75 miles north of SR 1115 and approximately two miles south of the town center of Henderson, North Carolina

Physical Description:

The 1949 Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre (illustration pages 1-11) sits on a 9.9 acre rectangular-shaped tract that has eastern frontage on U.S. 1 Business (Raleigh Road). To the north and south of the property along Raleigh road are residential and small commercial properties, while directly across U.S. 1 Business stands the Bible Baptist Church. The rear of the theatre property, the western boundary, is largely wooded. The property, which maintains a flat grade, is enclosed on the northern, southern, and western sides by fencing that delineates the current property lines for the theatre site. The theatre property consists of an entry court area that allows for the stacking of cars as well as an "interior" parking area for viewing movies. Situated within the entry court area is the (1) Attraction Board/Marquee; (2) Entry Piers; (3) Ticket/Collection Booth; (4) The back board of the Sign Tower. The interior parking area is comprised of (1) The Screen Tower; (2) Parking stalls with speaker poles; (3) The Projection Booth/Snack Bar.

Attraction Board/Marquee at Road: The Attraction Board (illustrations-1) is the first structure encountered when approaching the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre site by car from U.S. 1 Business. The illuminated translucent message panel area

with magnetic lettering is enclosed by a sign box that sits on the ground. Above the attraction board is a smaller sign that identifies the name of the theatre. Damaged by Hurricane Fran in 1996, the attraction board and its painted plywood sheathing is in poor condition at the time of this report.

Entry Piers: Situated at the main entrance along U.S. Business 1 are two painted concrete masonry unit (CMU) piers (illustrations-3) crowned with concrete caps and illuminated by metal downlights. Appended to each pier is a step-down detail, also of painted CMU. These piers appear to be an original site design element.

Ticket/Collection Booth: This single-room structure consists of a flat-roofed enclosed booth for collecting money and dispensing tickets and a drive-through, sloped-roof canopy supported by four thin posts (illustrations-4). The eave of the collection booth has a wide overhang area which accommodates exterior fluorescent strip lighting. The original booth was severely damaged by Hurricane Fran in 1996 and the current booth structure rebuilt on the existing foundations and according to similar plans.²

Screen Tower: The most obvious and elaborate design feature of the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre is the screen tower structure, which is clad in painted corrugated sheet metal (illustrations-1,2,5,7,9, & 10). Rectangular in plan, the tower rises from a flared base and terminates in a triangular wedge shape that points towards the sky. The backboard of the screen tower features open-faced individual letter neon signage with the name "Outdoor Theatre" advertised to cars passing down U.S. 1 Business. The sign originally read "Moon-Glo Outdoor Theatre" but after the ownership of the theatre changed, the first part of the name was removed. The remaining signage currently reads, "Outdoor Theatre"³ Flanking the sign are braced telephone poles which support the screen "wings" that were added in the early 1950's when the theatre converted to a Cinemascope format which necessitated this modification. The original screen, 36 feet high by 48 feet wide, is built of painted corrugated sheet metal that is perforated. The current enlarged theatre screen conceals the original smooth sheet metal screen.⁴

Parking Stalls with Ramps: Upon entering the interior of the theatre from the ticket/collection booth, cars proceed along a ring road that provides access to nine rows of parking stalls that radiate outward. The original parking capacity was approximately 300 cars.⁵ As typical of theatre site layouts of the late 1940's and 1950's, the parking stalls originally were ramped to increase visibility for the patrons.⁶ These raised parking stalls have since eroded and thus no longer exist as a current site feature. Adjacent to the parking stalls are pairs of speaker boxes set on metal

² Telephone interview with owner of theatre, Beth Lyles, August 19, 1999.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "New 'Moon-Glo' Theatre Opened" Henderson (N.C.) Daily Dispatch. 16 July 1949; interview with owner.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

poles⁷. These speakers were taken out of service when the theatre began its sound broadcast by FM radio in the 1980's.⁸

Projection Booth/Snack Bar: A low-slung building with painted CMU walls and a flat roof, the projection booth/snack bar building is centrally located in the parking area to serve its various functions. Films are projected through rectangular protruding guards that are punched through the front masonry wall. The snack bar is accessed from the side of the building as are the rest room facilities. A newspaper article promoting the opening day for the theater noted that "pictures are as clear as daylight through the use of a giant telescopic lens, perfect sound by RCA and Brenkert projection machines."⁹

AND NOW 1949 the Organization that Has Always Been a Part of Henderson is Proud to Announce the Opening of it's Grand New Modern

OUTDOOR THEATRE the MOON-GLO

Located on No. 1 Highway (Raleigh Road) 2 Miles South—Opposite Dickson's Food Town
MANY NEW INNOVATIONS WILL BE ADDED FOR YOUR PLEASURE FROM TIME TO TIME

GRAND OPENING FRIDAY, JULY 15th, 7:30 P.M.

This 15 Acre Spacious and Modern Outdoor Theatre Offers Its Patrons—

A Huge Steel Tower with a Picture 40 x 50 As Bright As Day.

Individual In-Car Speakers with Volume Control, Giving You Perfect Sound.

— POLICY —

Open Nightly 7 Nights a Week at 7:30 P.M.
RAIN or STARS
Show Starts 7:45 P.M. and 9:45 P.M.
4 Program Changes Weekly

ADMISSION—40c Inc. Tax
Children Under 12 in Cars — FREE
All Walk-Ins—40c

FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT, NOTHING LARGER THAN PICK UPS
—TRUCKS AND BUSES NOT PERMITTED!



Spacious Parking and Ramped for Perfect Vision.

MODERN REST ROOMS

An Up to Date CONCESSION BAR in Center of Parking Area for Your Convenience—Offering: Popcorn, Candy, Cold Drinks, Ice Cream and Snacks

A Large Parking Area Outside for Those Who Wish to Wait.

Courteous Service—Your Patronage Appreciated

Enjoy this Modern Outdoor Theatre in the Comfort of Your Car.

- Dress As You Please
- Smoke If You Wish
- Enjoy the Refreshment Stand
- Bring the Family—Perfect Vision from Either Front or Rear Seats of Your Car.

OPENING PROGRAM — FRIDAY NIGHT, JULY 15th
— In Technicolor — It's Beautiful Outdoors
"ALI BABA AND FORTY THIEVES"
• • • Starring — MARIA MONTEZ • • •
PLUS — 3 COLOR CARTOONS
ALWAYS SOMETHING FOR THE KIDS and GROWN UPS
— Showing Saturday —
William (Wild Bill) Elliott in "WYOMING"

Newspaper Advertisement Promoting Theatre¹⁰

⁷ The original speaker boxes are known to be by RCA.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Drive-in Theatre Opens Tomorrow" Henderson (N.C.) Daily Dispatch. 14 July 1949.

¹⁰ Henderson (N.C.) Daily Dispatch. 14 July 1949

Historical Background:

In his book, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, Professor Chester H. Liebs pioneered a scholarly study of commercial architecture in the United States. A chapter of his book is devoted to the study of drive-in theatres, a building type which is an American invention, and one that has not changed significantly since its inception in the early 1930's.¹¹ Professor Liebs analysis forms the basis for evaluating the historic significance of the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre in Henderson, North Carolina.

According to Liebs, the concept for the drive-in theatre was conceived by Richard M. Hollingshead, Jr. in the early 1930's. Hollingshead experimented with the idea of showing movies outdoors by setting up a projector on the hood of his car and aiming it at his garage. He further developed the idea into a commercially viable concept that was protected by a patent granted in 1933. In the patent, a car is shown entering a driveway, passing through a collection booth, driving to an empty "stallway" on one of the radiating ramps to watch a movie on a screen framed by a "screen house." This format has remained largely constant since Hollingshead's patent was originally issued in the 1930's.¹²

With the help of a cousin who owned a chain of parking lots, Hollingshead built the first drive-in theatre on a busy thoroughfare in Camden, New Jersey, a city located just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. With the success of this project, Hollingshead formed a company called Park-In Theatres which sold prospective investors the right to use the drive-in concept. Aware of the success of the pioneering Camden theatre, an investor purchased rights to the drive-in concept and constructed the second drive-in theatre in Los Angeles, California in 1934. By 1945, there were 102 drive-in theatres operating in the United States.¹³

After World War II, the design and construction of drive-in theatres in the United States began in earnest. Made possible by an increase in automobile ownership, a rise in family incomes, post-war population increases, and the rapid expansion of development into suburban areas, the number of drive-in theatres increased to more than 1,700 by 1950.¹⁴ A year prior, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the drive-in theatre was not a patentable idea, and thus open air theatres could now be built by anyone.¹⁵ As a result, there was a boom in drive-in theatre construction between the years 1950 and 1958, pausing only in 1951 during a non-essential construction ban due to the Korean War.¹⁶

¹¹ Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Company, 1985) 153-167.

¹² *Ibid*, 153.

¹³ Jan Jennings, ed. *Roadside America: The Automobile in Design and Culture* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990) 145.

¹⁴ Liebs, 157.

¹⁵ Will Anderson, *Mid-Atlantic Roadside Delights* (Portland, Maine: Anderson & Sons Publishing Co., 1989) 37.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 162.

The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre, originally owned and operated by S.S. Stevenson, incorporates many of the post-World War II design improvements that are emblematic of the successful development of the drive-in theatre as a standardized building type in the 1950's.¹⁷ One of the main problems encountered at drive-in theatres was the poor quality of the sound systems. Early drive-in theatres had the speakers located at the top of the screen tower. Since sound does not travel as quickly as light, there were all too obvious synchronization problems. The in-car speaker was a solution that became widely accepted in the early 1940's and integrated into mainstream drive-in theatre design into the 1950's.¹⁸ In-car speakers are present, though not currently used, at the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre. Another improvement developed in the 1940's and widely implemented in the 1950's was the angled screen. Prior to the 1940's screens were designed to be perfectly vertical, which caused the projected images on the screen to be distorted. The angled screen, a notable improvement, is a feature encompassed in the design of the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre.

Other improvements to drive-in theatre designs were site-related. Early drive-in theatres were often placed very close to the road to increase visibility. This created the tendency for traffic to build up near theatre entrances. After a drive-in theatre study was published in 1949 by highway officials, drive-in theatre designers and owners incorporated generous car stacking areas in front of their theatres. Such is the case with the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre which fronts U.S. 1 Business. Owners also added features to the drive in that would add to their convenience and profitability such as rest rooms and snack bars, and paved access roads. The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre incorporates many of these major improvements that were inaugurated in the post-World War II period.

In areas where there were multiple theatres in the same market, competition led to the development of more elaborate attractions, such as playgrounds, picnic benches, and swimming pools, shuffleboard courts, and even night clubs built into the screen tower. While the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre did not incorporate any of these supporting features, one of its main advertising points, however, was the use of colored exterior site lighting. The muted glow of colored light created an impression of a moon-lit setting within the theatre while movies were playing. The historic name of the theatre, "The Moon Glo", served to remind patrons of this unique feature. The Moon Glo drew patrons from Lewisburg, Raleigh, Oxford, as well as customers from the south side of Virginia. Its closest competitor was the Henderson Drive-In, which ceased operation in the 1970's and has since been demolished.¹⁹

While amenities and site design improvements were made to attract patrons and enhance the experience of going to the drive in, the most significant architectural feature of the drive-in remains the screen tower. Much like a billboard, the screen tower served as a means for advertising the theatre's name as well as the backdrop for projecting movies. Stylistically, the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre displays a wedged shaped dynamic form that is designed to attract the attention of cars passing by. The simplicity of the design and its lack of any historic stylistic references or

¹⁷ The theatre was constructed between April and July, 1949 and opened July 15, 1949.

¹⁸ Liebs, 157.

¹⁹ Interview with theatre owner.

complicated design detailing most assuredly allowed the sign tower to be constructed very economically. The modestly designed attraction board, located near the edge of the highway was also designed to catch traffic from both lanes of the highway. Like the screen tower, its design is simple and economical; however, it lacks the dynamic form of the screen tower.

In the 1950's, Cinemascope became the predominant format for projecting films at drive-in theatres. Screen towers which were not built to accommodate this format had to be modified by either replacement or expansion of screen areas.²⁰ At the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre, wings were added to the original screen tower, supported by telephone poles that remain today as exposed construction.

After its peak of popularity in 1958, drive in theatres began a period of decline that has yet to be reversed. This national trend certainly mirrors the decline of drive-in theatre popularity in North Carolina. Between 1948 and 1954, the number of drive-in theatres in North Carolina increased from 66 to 206. In 1958, the number of drive-in theatres peaked at 209 and then began a steep decline to only 23 by 1987. In 1999, there are approximately 12 drive-in theatres remaining in North Carolina.²¹ There are many reasons cited for the decline of drive-ins, among them, the advent of television and later VCR's. Others suggest that the drive-in format was simply a novelty that began to wear off by the end of the 1950's. Financial pressures associated with the rise of land costs in outlying areas have also made many drive-in theatres uneconomical.²² In many small town settings, such as Henderson, some of these land development pressures have yet to be a concern for theatre owners.

The Moon Glo Drive-In Theatre, today known as the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre, is one of the few remaining in-tact examples of drive-in theatres constructed during the early post-war boom. Built at a time when many of the emblematic design features of the drive-in were becoming standard, the theatre is an in-tact example of roadside commercial architecture of this period in North Carolina. Should land development pressures continue throughout North Carolina, the sale and demolition of drive-in theatres are likely to continue according to the historic trend. The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre, therefore, should be considered a rare example of its type that is historically significant within the history of commercial architecture in North Carolina.

Evaluation:

The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre is **eligible** for the National Register under Criterion A (event). To be eligible for significance under Criterion A, the property must retain integrity and must be associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American history or a pattern of events or historic trend that

²⁰ Liebs, 162.

²¹ Baldin Road Drive in Theatre (Albemarle, NC); Bel-Air Drive in Theatre (Walkertown, NC); Belmont Drive-In Theatre (Belmont, NC); Bessemer City Drive-In Theatre (Kings Mountain, NC); Bright Leaf Drive In Theatre (Mount Airy, NC); Eden Drive-In (Eden, NC); Fort Drive-In Theatre 1 2 & 3 (Fayetteville, NC); Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre (Henderson, NC); Starlite Drive-In Theatre (Durham, NC); Sunset Drive-In (Shelby, NC); Tri-City Drive-In Theatre (Forest City, NC); Waynesville Drive In Theatre (Waynesville, NC).

²² Liebs, 164-167.

made a significant contribution to the development of a community. The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theater (historic name: The Moon-Glo) is significant because it is an early example of commercial architecture that reflects the rise of automobile-oriented culture in mid-twentieth century life. This property also represents the distinct transition from a town-oriented streetscape architecture to a form of building, landscape, and site planning oriented toward the automobile and favoring large-scale objects meant to be viewed by passing vehicles. Constructed only four years after World War II, the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theater is an early and rare example of commercial, highway-oriented architecture and site planning of this building type in North Carolina. Furthermore, the property remains largely in its original configuration and operates at the time of this report in 1999 with a majority of its original architectural and site features documented in tact.

The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion B (person) for its association 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. For a property to be eligible for significance under Criterion B, it must retain integrity and (1) be associated with persons individually significant within the 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 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.²³ The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre is not associated with an individual who is demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context.

The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre is **eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C (Design/Construction) for its significance in architecture. 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.²⁴ The Raleigh Outdoor Theatre, which operates at the time of this report, is one of approximately twelve remaining drive-in theatres in North Carolina. The theatre retains the majority of its original materials and design features. The design is important because it represents the development of a highway-oriented commercial architectural style that became prevalent after World War II in the United States. This style is characterized by the use of dynamic geometries and building forms, application of utilitarian and industrial materials, and the use of highway-scale signage. Alterations made during the recent past do not greatly affect the overall integrity of the theatre because they were added with similar materials and with compatible designs. Most of the changes have been made to ancillary structures and not to the main design element, the screen tower. The overall setting, including its topographical features, interior road and parking layouts, structures and objects,

²³ Ibid., 15.

²⁴ Ibid., 17.

building placements, highway views, and relationships to open space have not been significantly altered since the theatre's opening day of July 15, 1949.

The Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion D (Information Potential). 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 the understanding of human history or prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important.²⁵ The architectural component of the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre and its ancillary buildings and structures are not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology. Their building construction methods and materials were relatively commonplace within the context of commercial architecture; therefore, they are not eligible for the National Register under Criterion D.

²⁵ Ibid., 21.

National Register Boundary Description:

The National Register Boundary for the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre has been drawn according to the guidelines of National Register Bulletin 21, "Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties." The boundary follows the current and historic property lines.²⁶ This boundary contains 9.9 acres and includes the theatre and its support buildings and structures.

The boundary is outlined on the attached parcel map of the area, shown on Map No. 221, Parcel 4, from the Vance County Tax Map Office in Henderson, North Carolina.

National Register Boundary Justification:

The National Register boundary for the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre encompasses all of the historic features of the property that directly contribute to the significance of the property. These include the Screen Tower, Attraction Board/Marquee Sign, Collection/Ticket Booth, Projection/Snack Bar Building, and Parking Area. The use of current legal boundaries is appropriate because these boundaries encompass the eligible property and are consistent with its historical significance and remaining integrity. All land historically part of the Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre site, since the purchase of the land by Moon Theatres, Inc. on March 5, 1949, has been included in the National Register Boundary.²⁷

²⁶ The current boundary lines are the same as the historic boundary lines.

²⁷ Vance County Deed Book 264, page 573.

FIGURE 2: SITE PLAN
RALEIGH ROAD OUTDOOR THEATRE
HENDERSON, NORTH CAROLINA

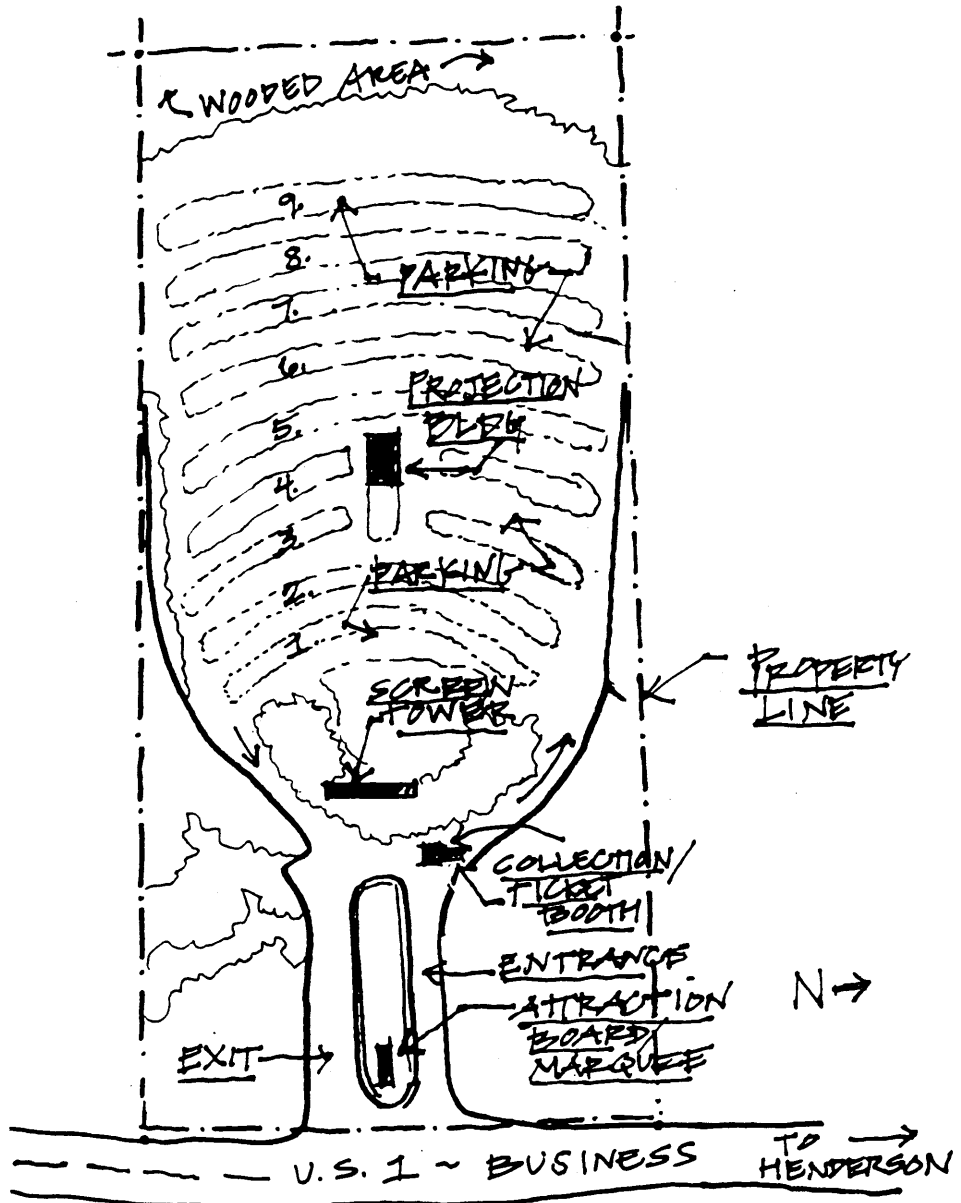
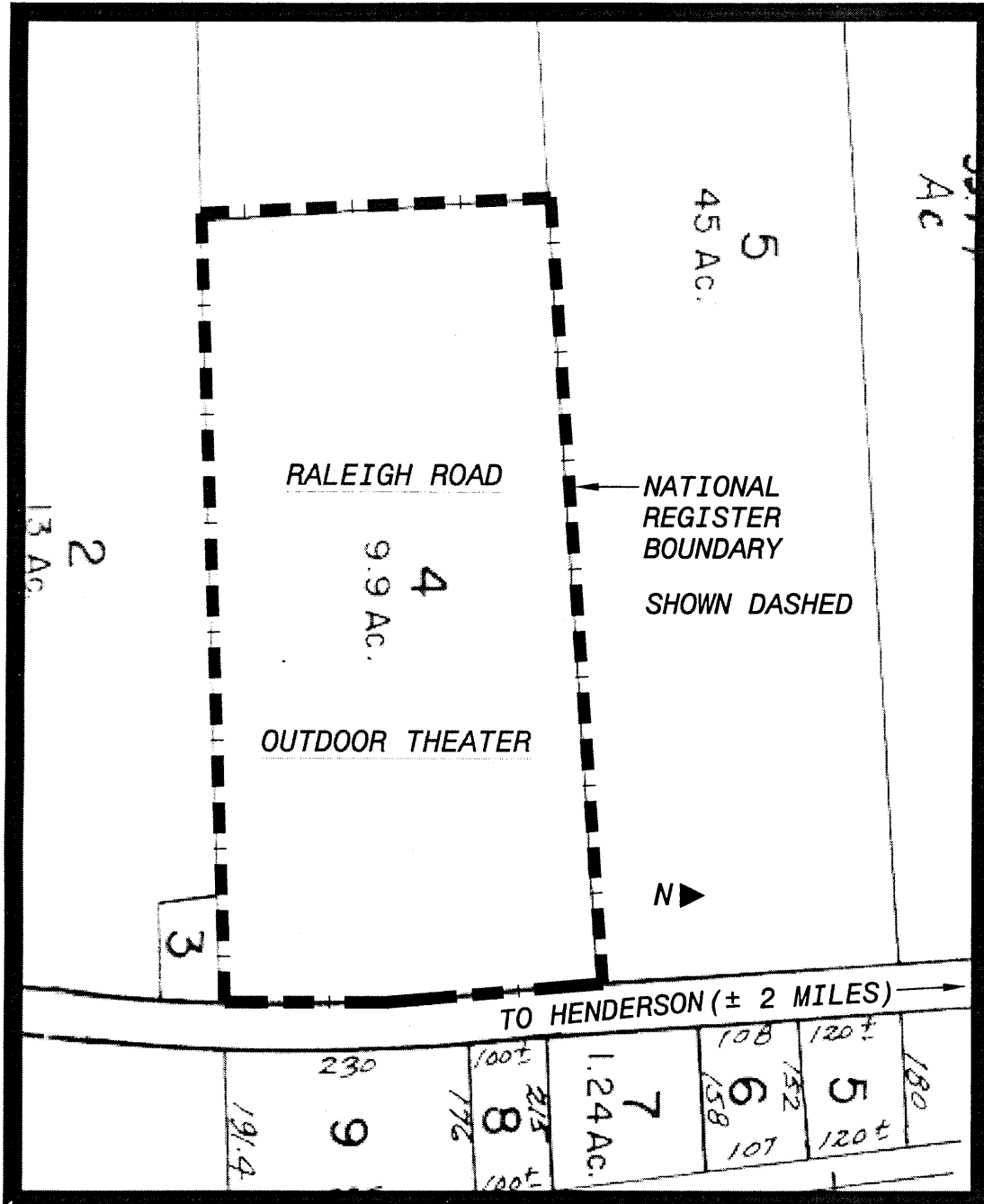


FIGURE 3: TAX MAP
RALEIGH ROAD OUTDOOR THEATRE
HENDERSON, NORTH CAROLINA
 (National Register Boundary Shown Dashed)



VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Silverman, Richard. Telephone interview with Beth Lyles, owner of Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre, 19 August 1999.
- Vance County, North Carolina Records. Henderson, NC: Vance County Courthouse.

X. APPENDIX: CONCURRENCE FORM FOR PROPERTIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Federal Aid # STP-001B(1) TIP # R-2503 County Vance

CONCURRENCE FORM FOR PROPERTIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Brief Project Description Widen US 1-Business from SR 1548 to SR 1267

On 2-4-99, representatives of the

- North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- Other _____

reviewed the subject project at

- A scoping meeting
- Historic architectural resources photograph review session/consultation
- Other _____

All parties present agreed

there are no properties over fifty years old within the project's area of potential effects.

there are no properties less than fifty years old which are considered to meet Criterion Consideration G within the project's area of potential effects.

there are properties over fifty years old (list attached) within the project's area of potential effects, but based on the historical information available and the photographs of each property, properties identified as 1-8, 10-48 are considered not eligible for National Register and no further evaluation of them is necessary.

there are no National Register-listed properties within the project's area of potential effects.

Signed:

Carrie Allen 2-4-99
Representative, NCDOT Date

W. J. Travis 2/4/99
FHWA, for the Division Administrator, or other Federal Agency Date

J. F. M. 2/4/99
Representative, SHPO Date

W. D. Wood, Deputy 2/19/99
State Historic Preservation Officer Date

X. APPENDIX: CONCURRENCE FORM FOR PROPERTIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Federal Aid # B.1391101 TIP # R-2503 County Vance

CONCURRENCE FORM FOR PROPERTIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Brief Project Description Widen US 1 Business from SR1548 to SR 1267

On 2-18-99, representatives of the

- North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- Other _____

reviewed the subject project at

- A scoping meeting
- Historic architectural resources photograph review session/consultation
- Other _____

All parties present agree

- there are no properties over fifty years old within the project's area of potential effects.
- there are no properties less than fifty years old which are considered to meet Criterion Consideration G within the project's area of potential effects.
- there are properties over fifty years old (list attached) within the project's area of potential effects, but based on the historical information available and the photographs of each property, properties identified as #49 - 54 are considered not eligible for National Register and no further evaluation of them is necessary.
- there are no National Register-listed properties within the project's area of potential effects.

Signed:

Carris Allen 2-18-99
Representative, NCDOT Date

Wendy J. Travis 3/11/99
FHWA, for the Division Administrator, or other Federal Agency Date

Claudia Brown 2-18-99
Representative, SHPO Date

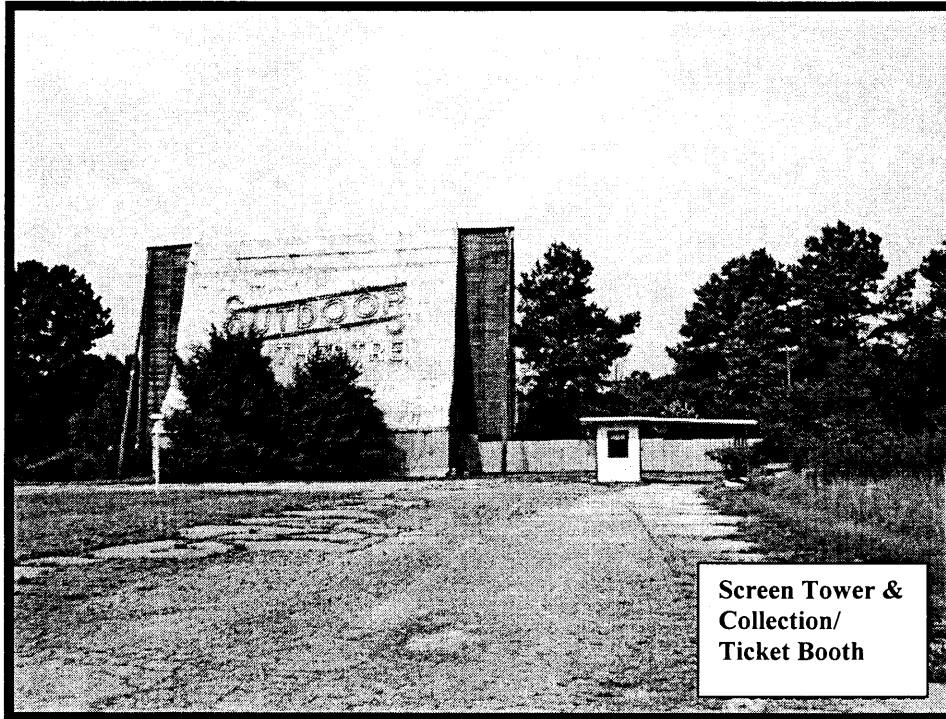
David Wood, Deputy 3/25/99
State Historic Preservation Officer Date



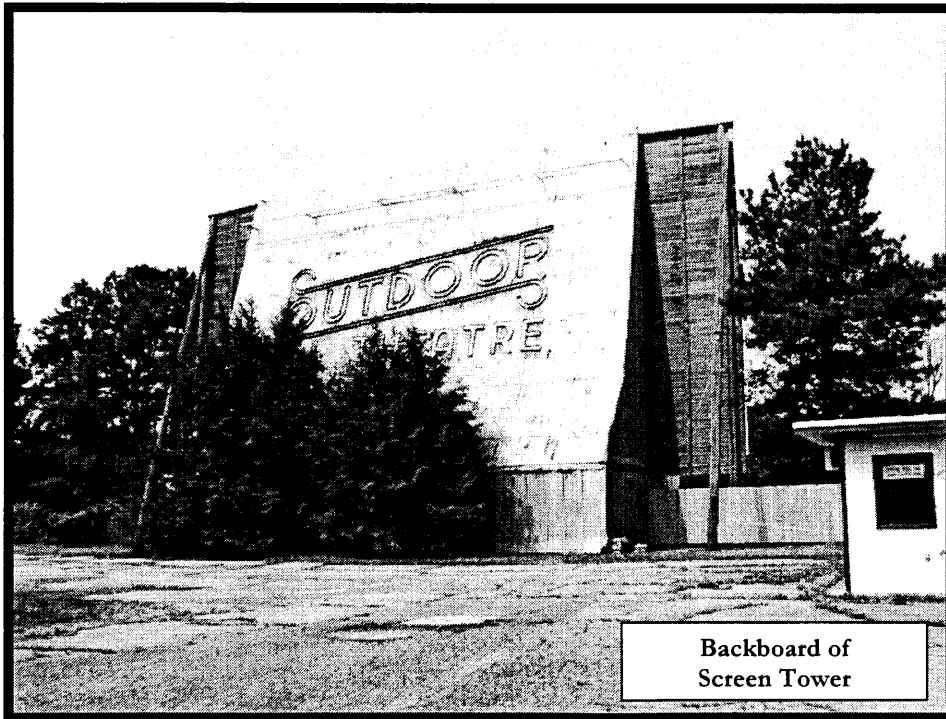
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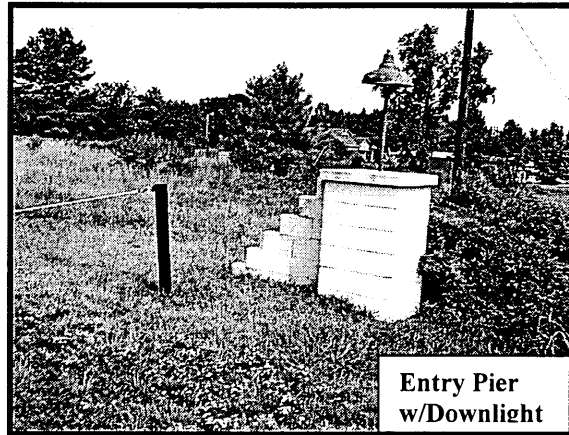
Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre

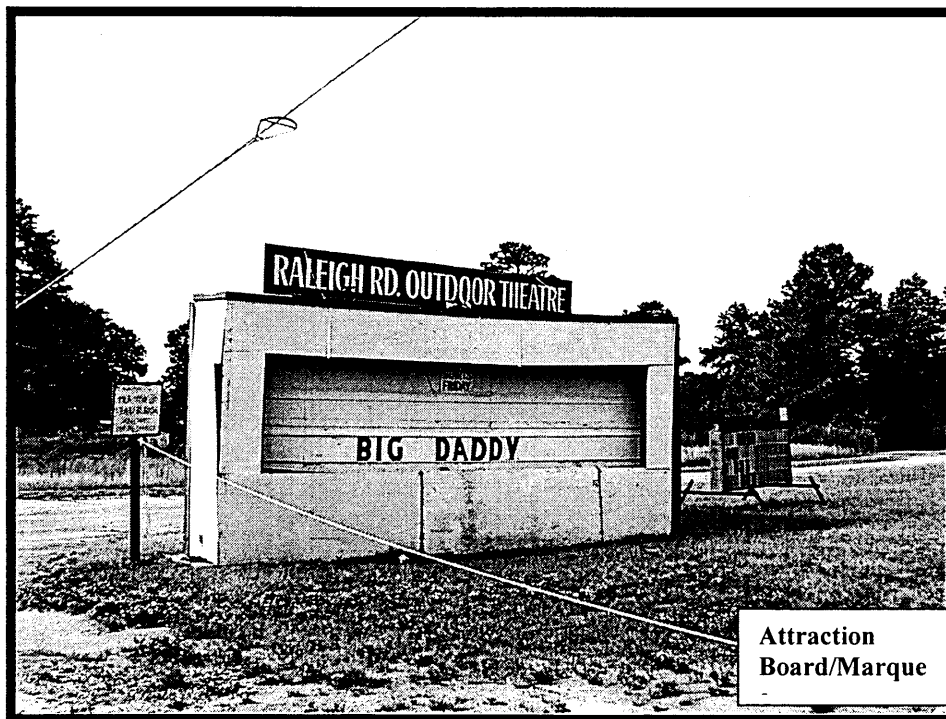


Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



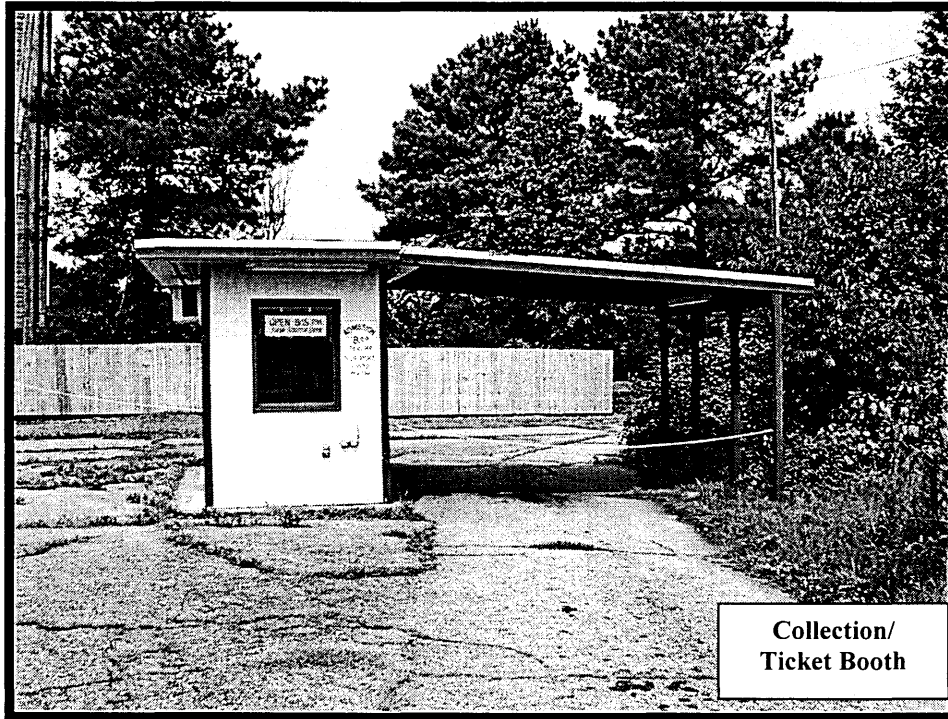
Entry Pier
w/Downlight

Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



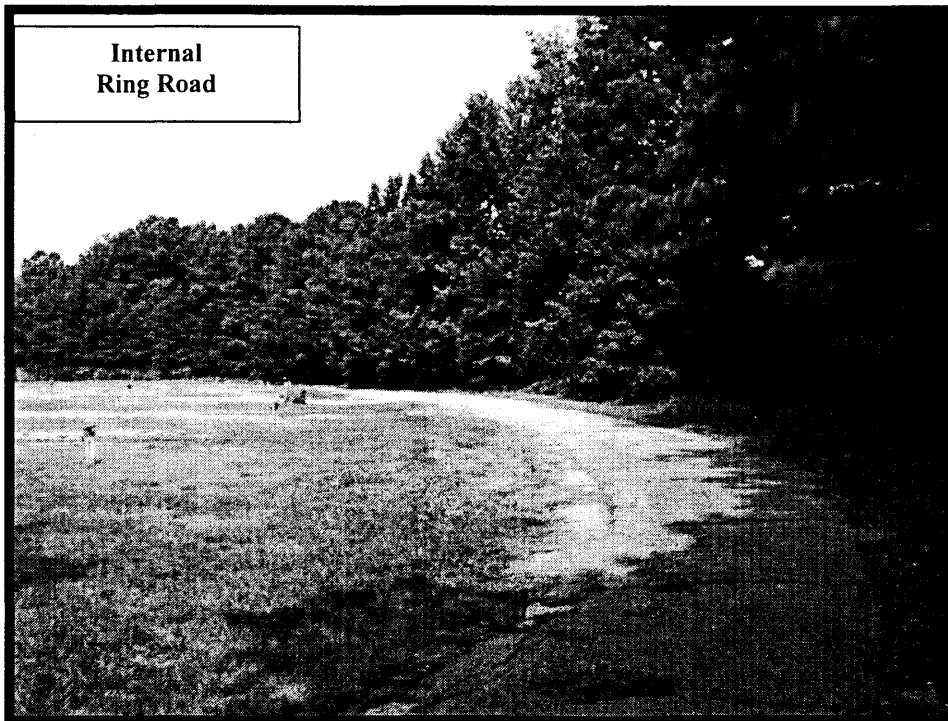
Attraction
Board/Marque

Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



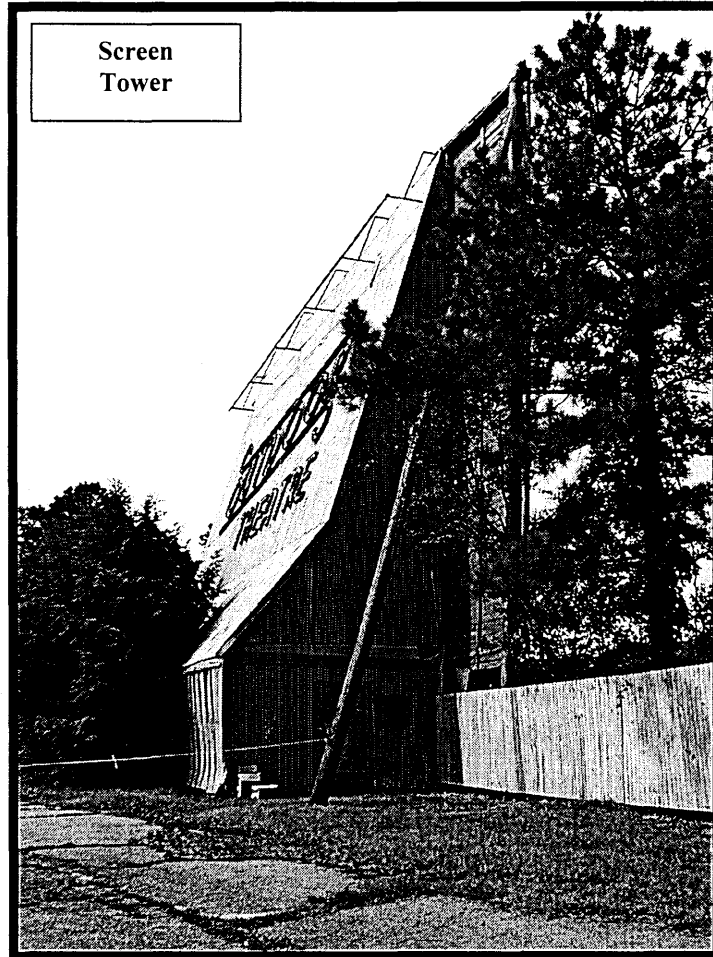
**Collection/
Ticket Booth**

Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre

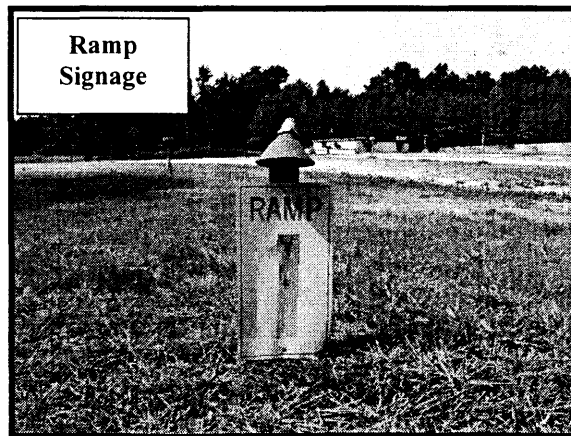


**Internal
Ring Road**

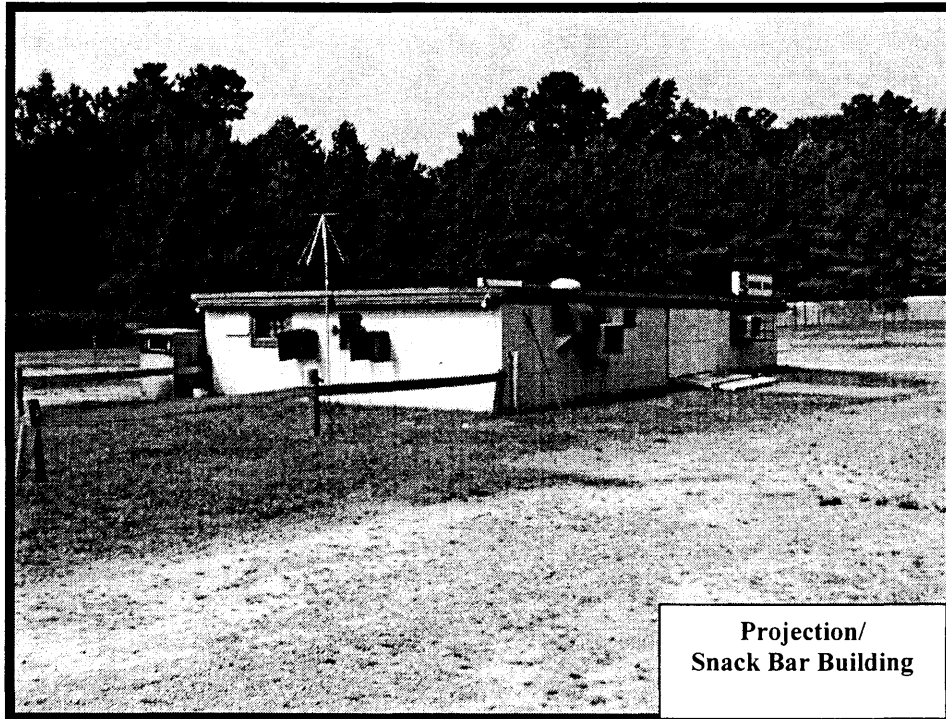
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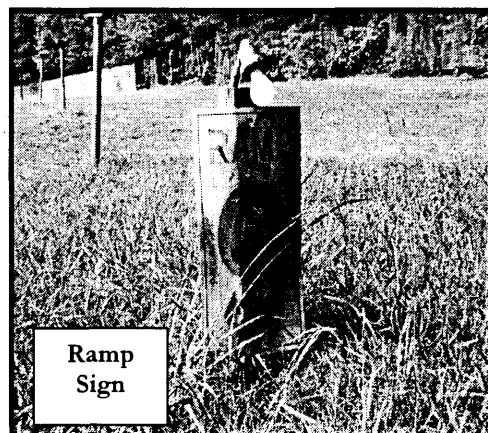
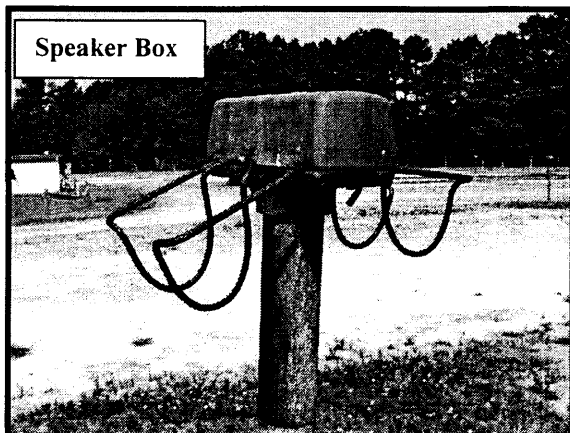
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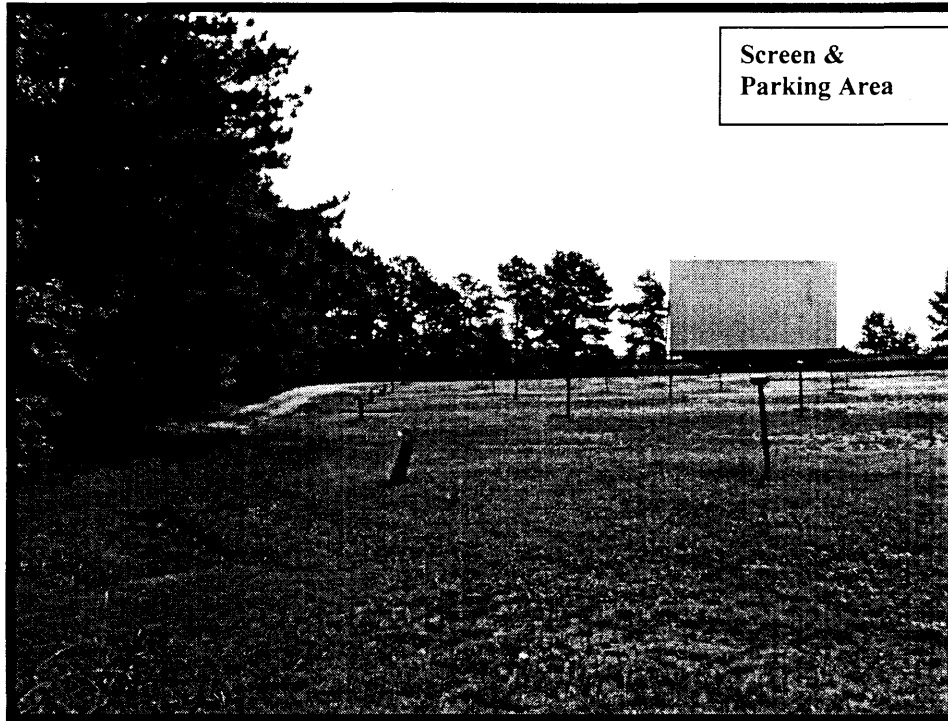
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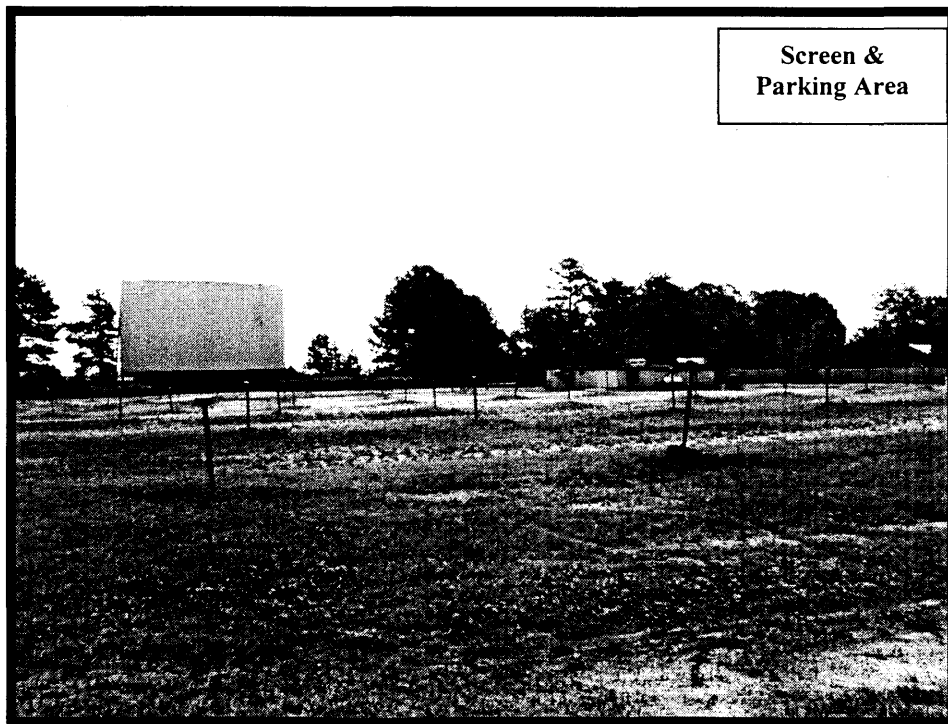
Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



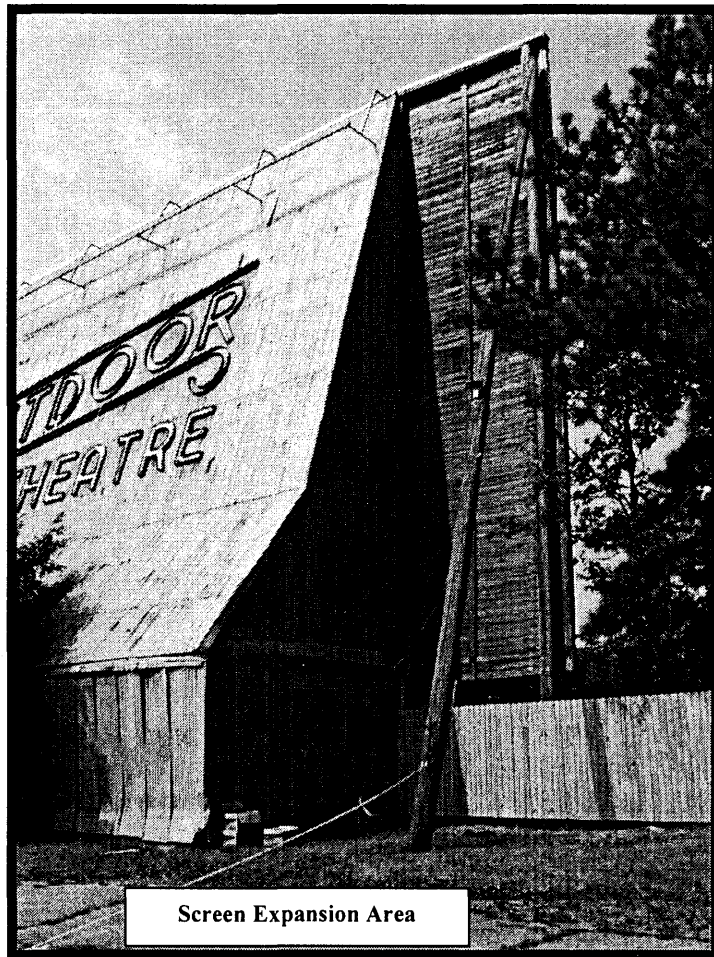
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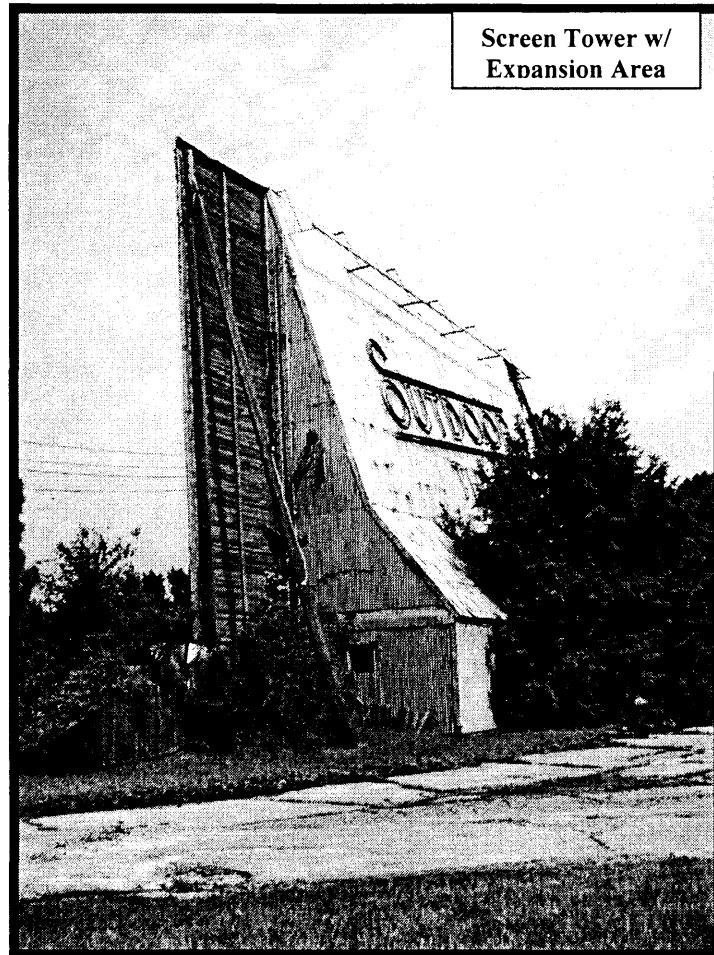
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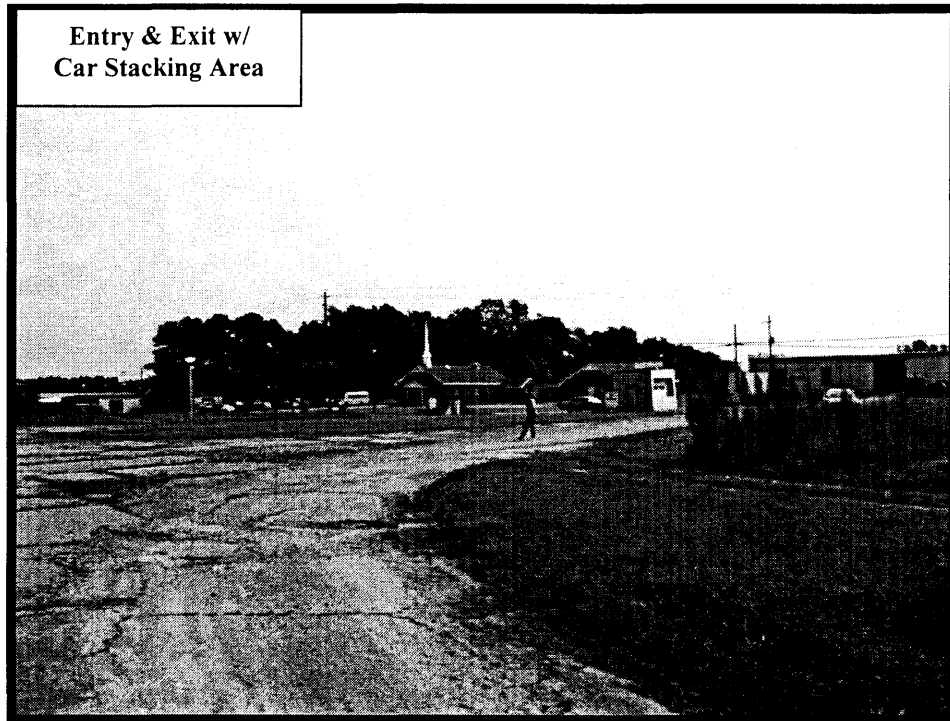
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Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



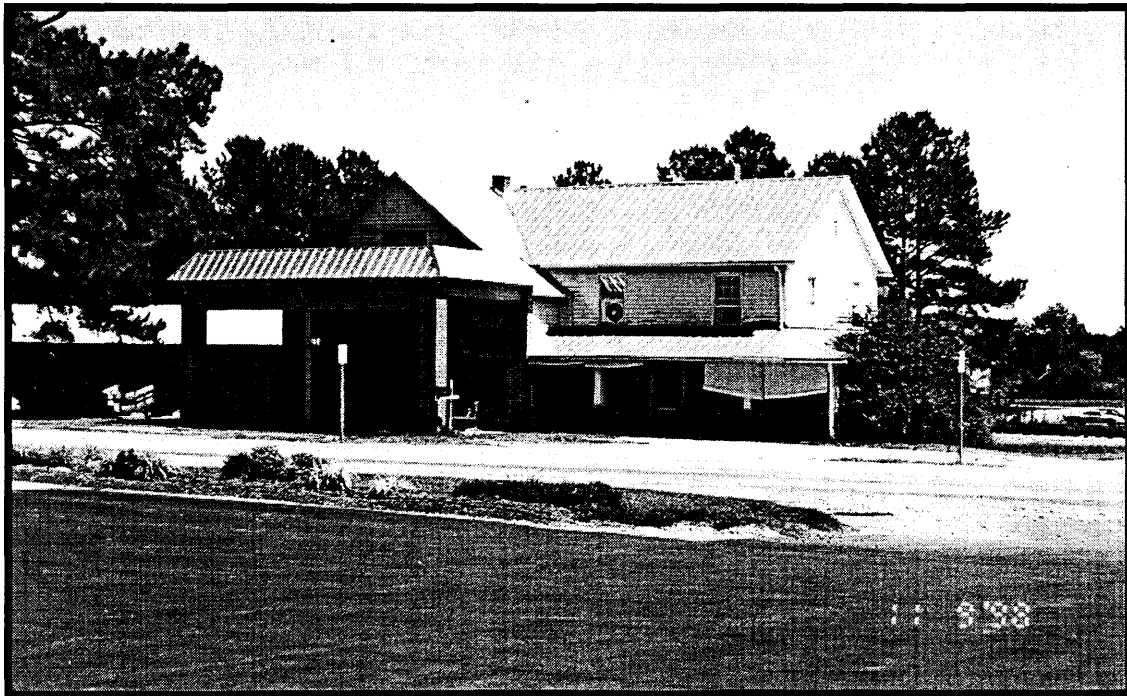
Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



Property #9 – Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre



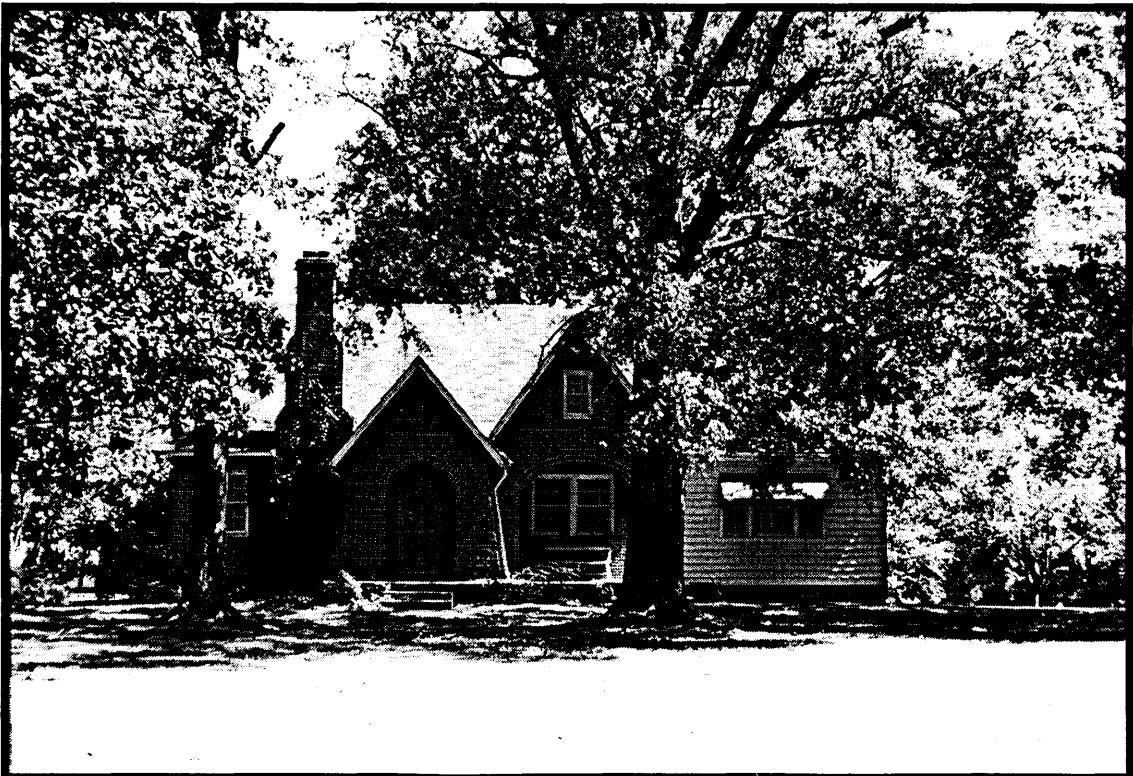
Property #1 - House



Property #2 - Commercial/Residential Building



Property #3 - House



Property #4 - House



Property #5 - House



Property #6 - Gas Station/Commercial Building



Property #7 - House



Property #8 - House



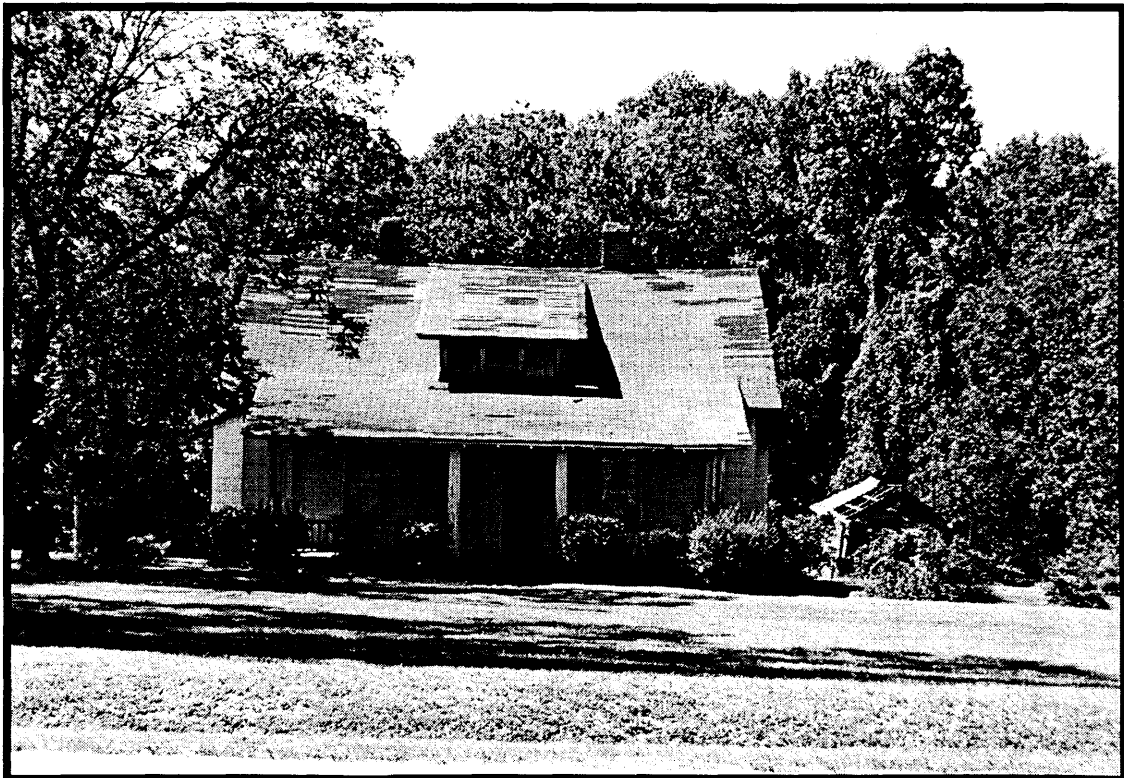
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Property #11 - House



Property #12 - House



Property #13 - House



Property #14 - House



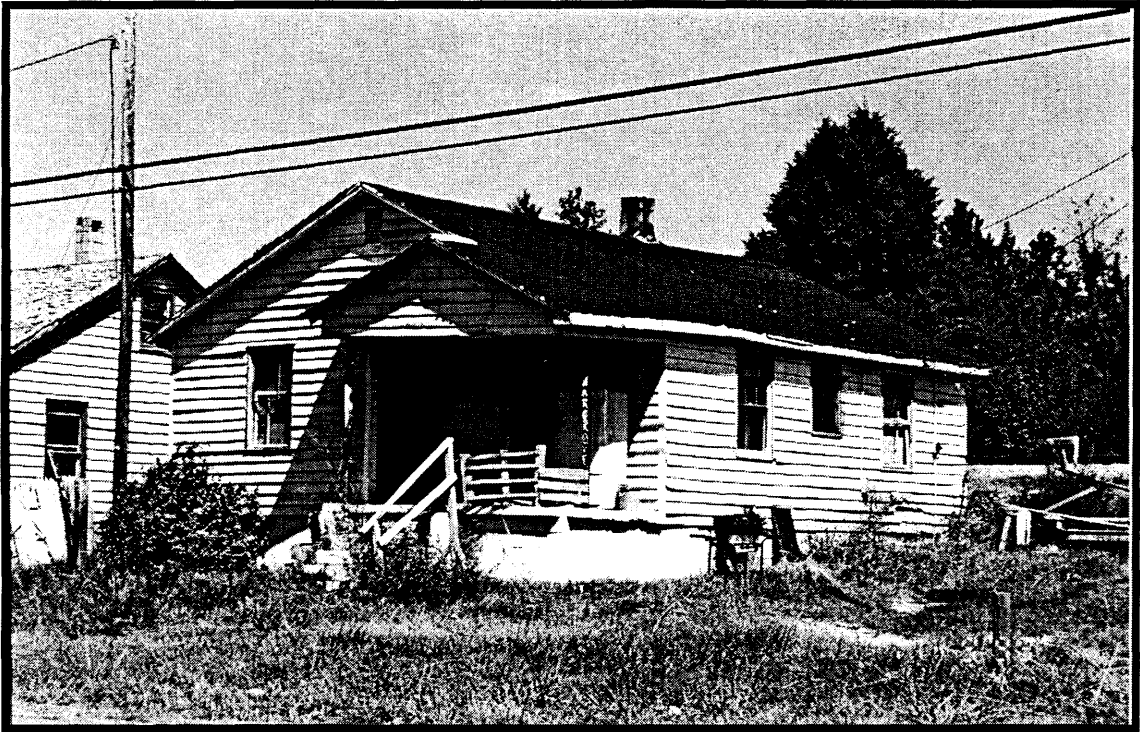
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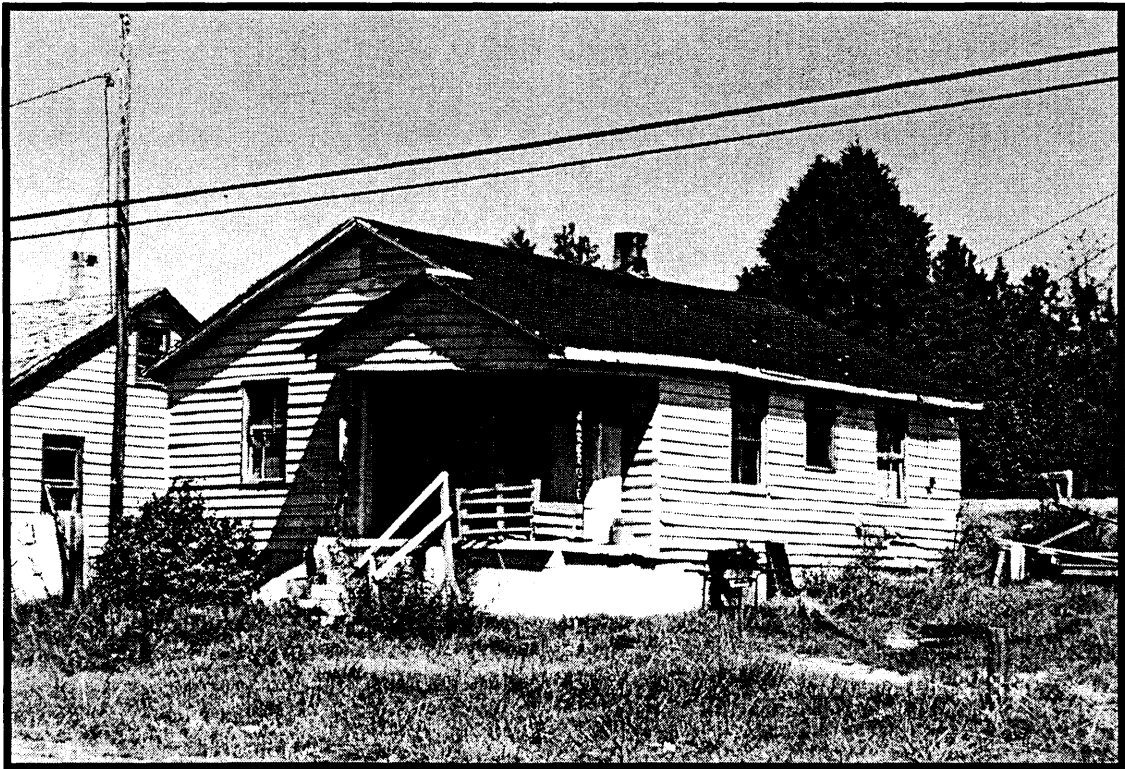
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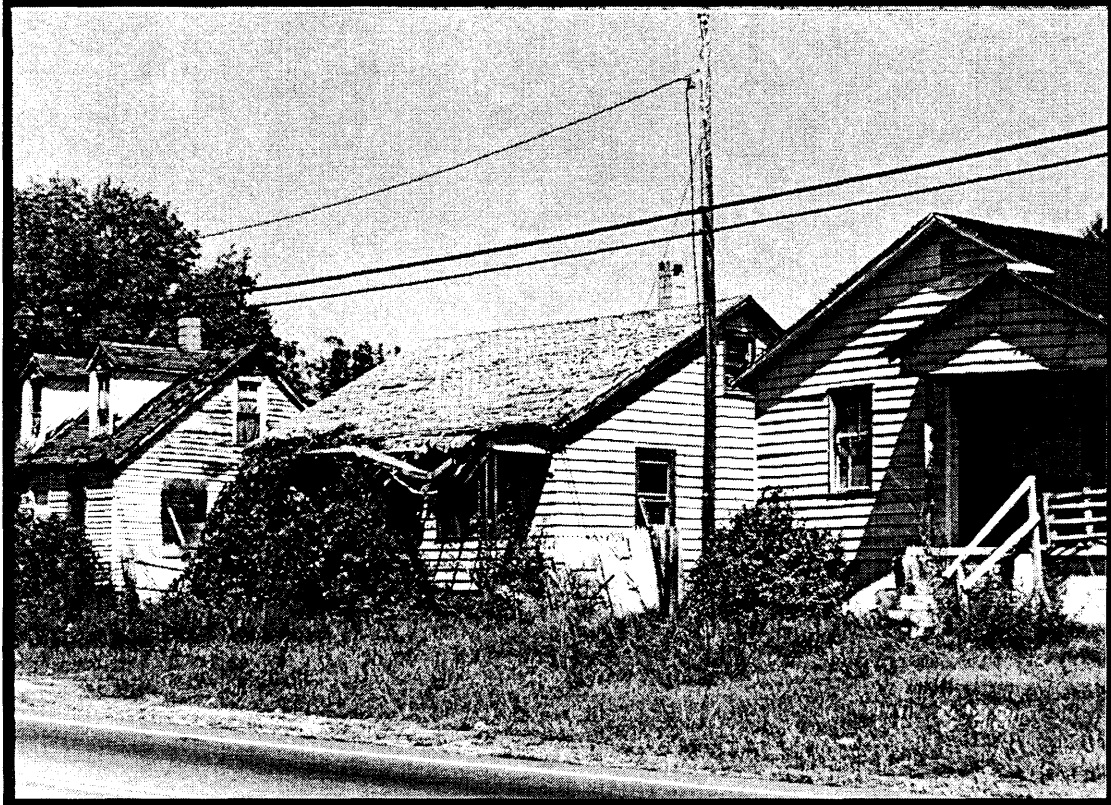
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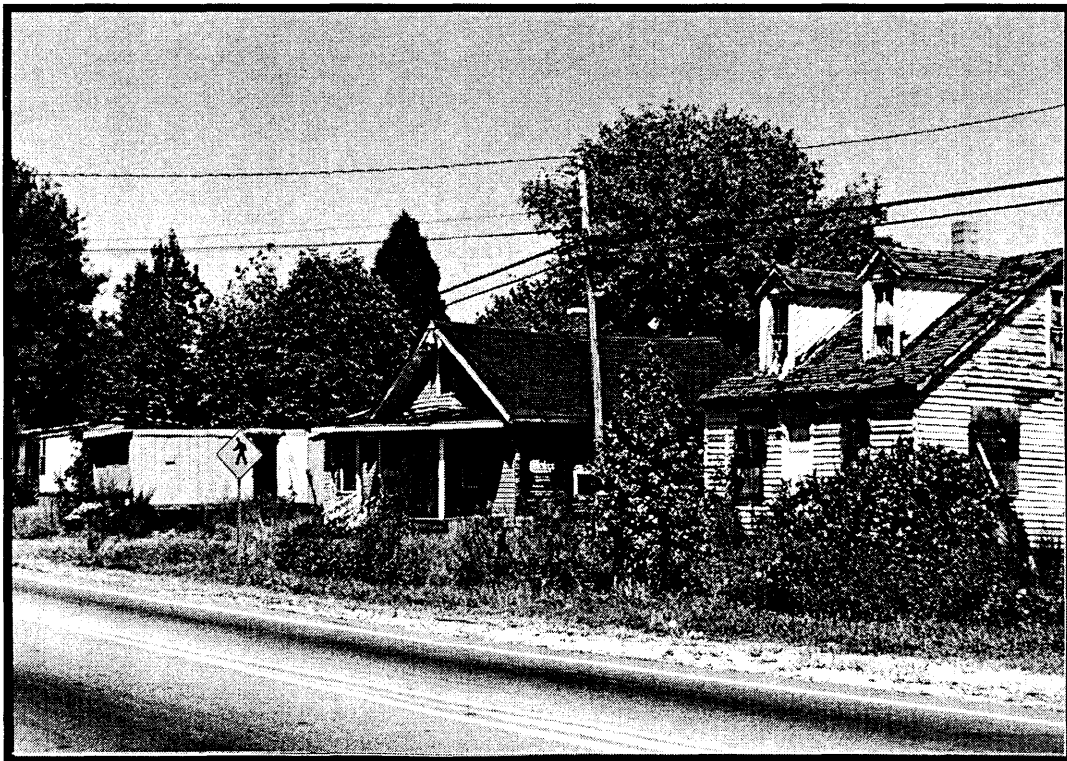
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Property #19 - House



Property #20 - House



Property #21 - House



Property #22 - House



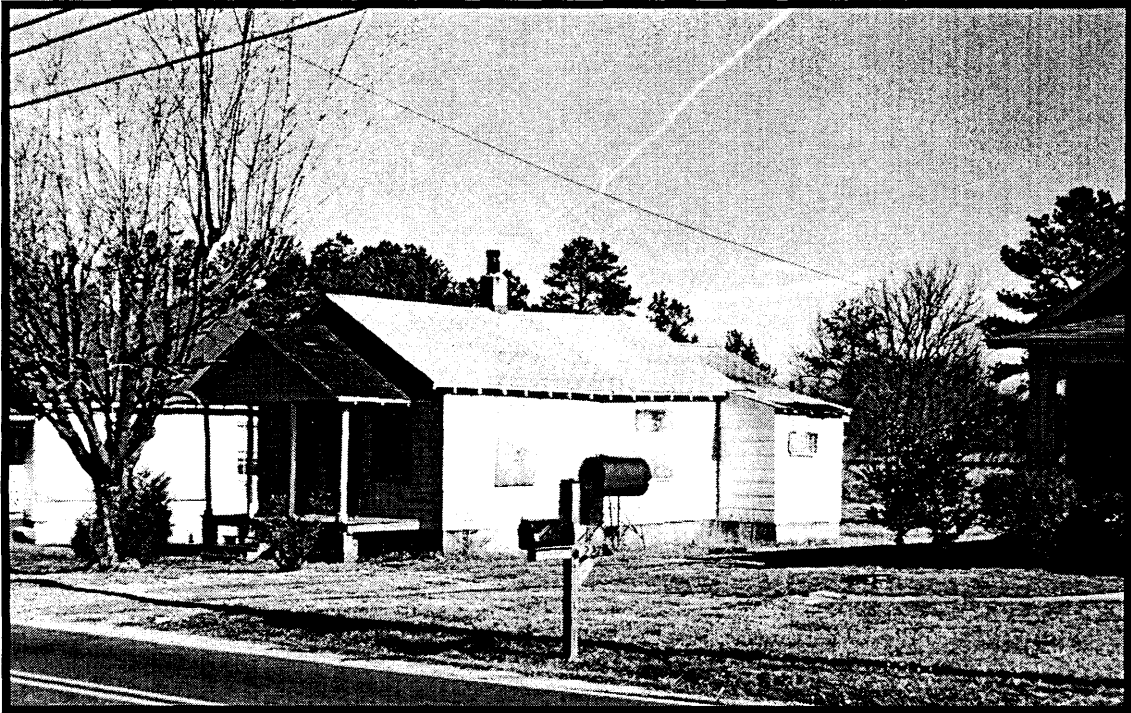
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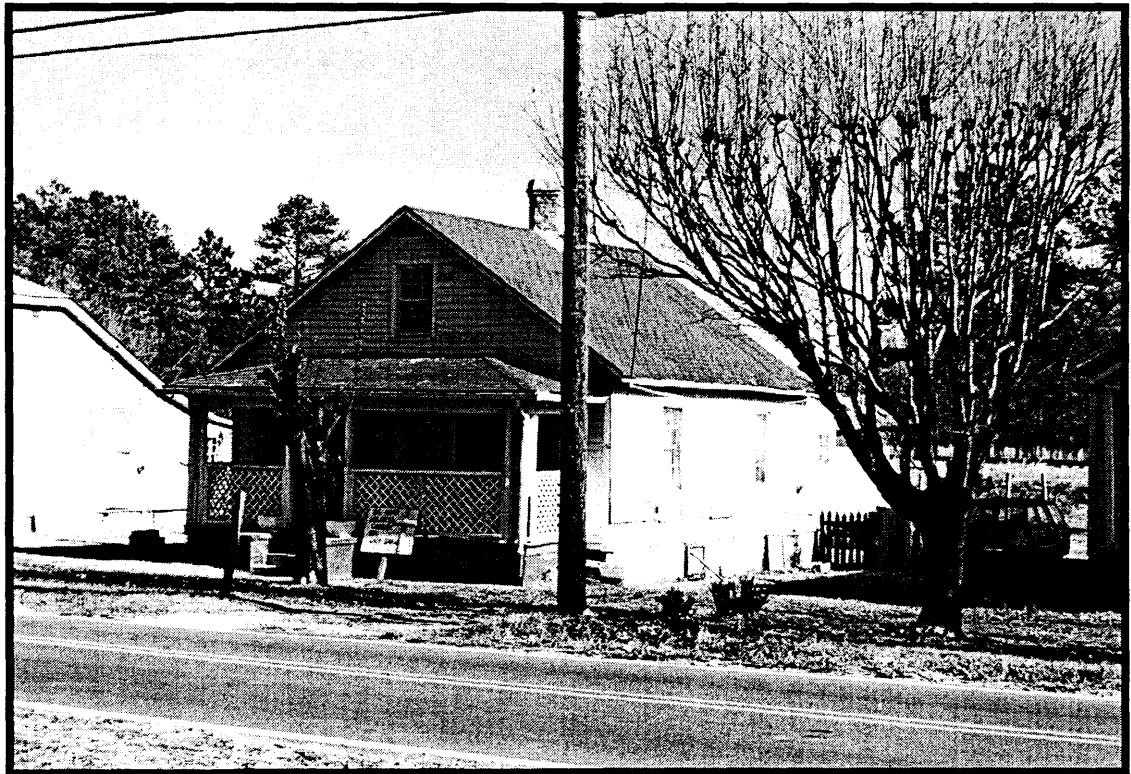
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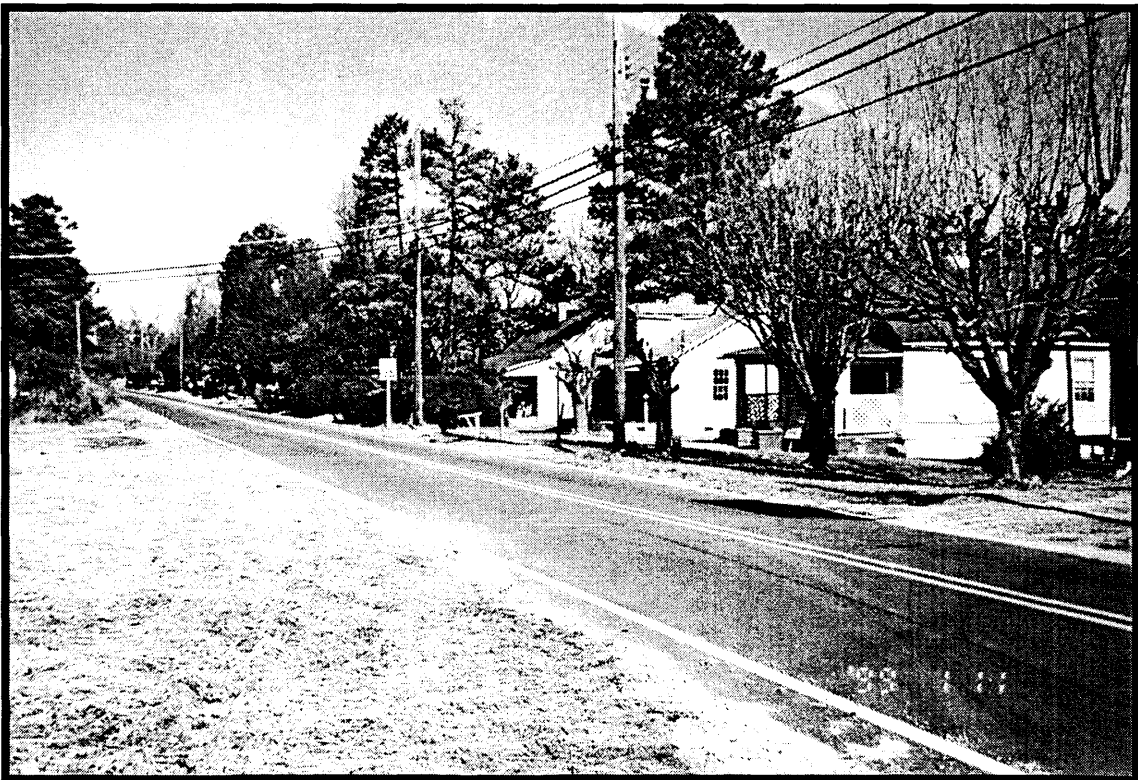
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Property #27 - House



Property#28 - House



Streetscape with Properties #27 and #28



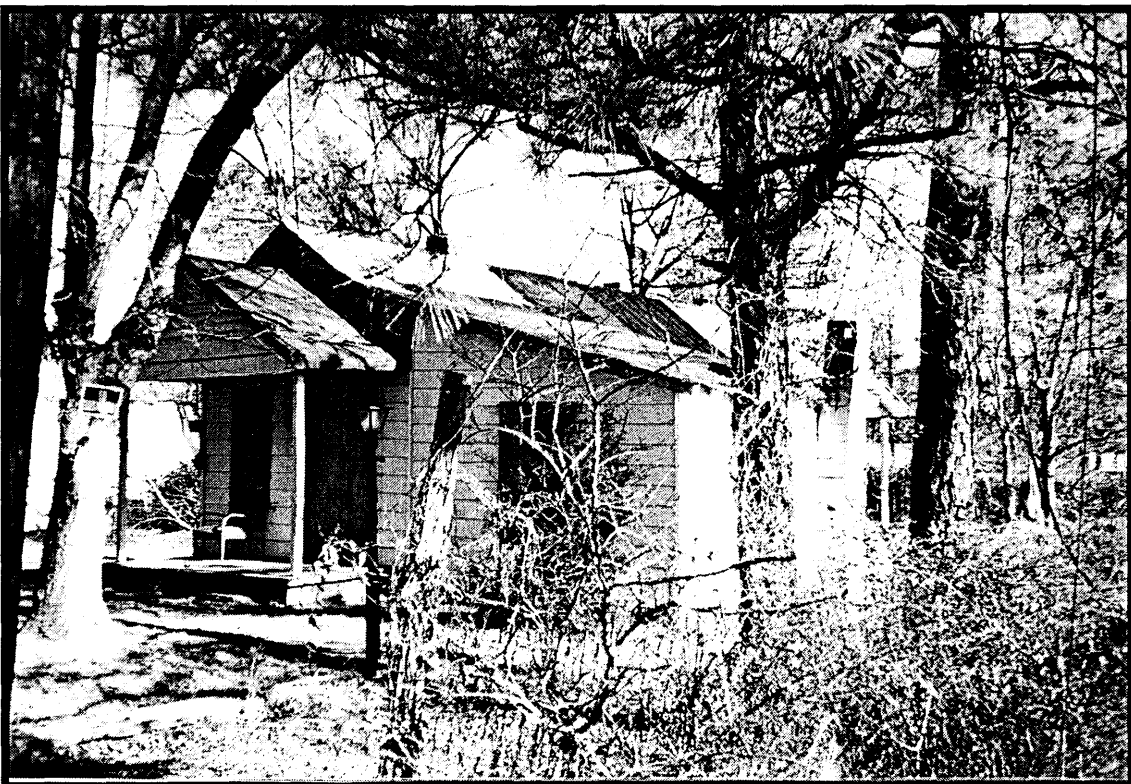
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Property #30 - House



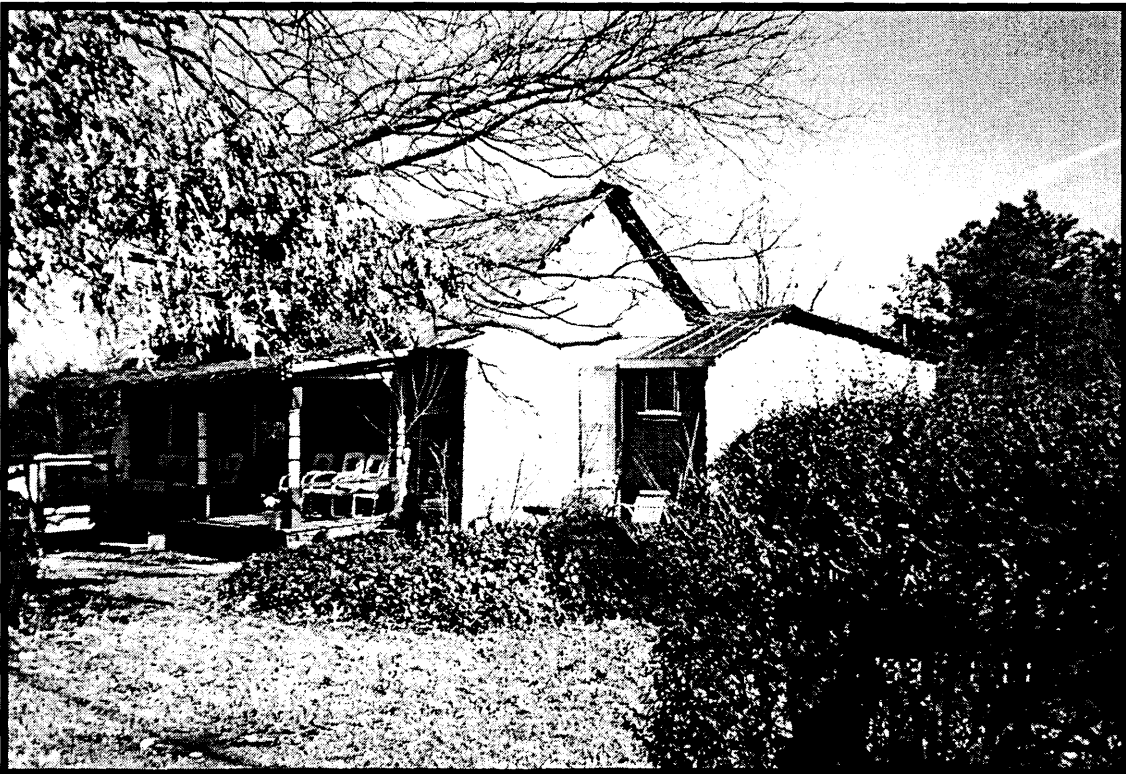
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Property #32 - House



Property #33 - House



Property #34 - House



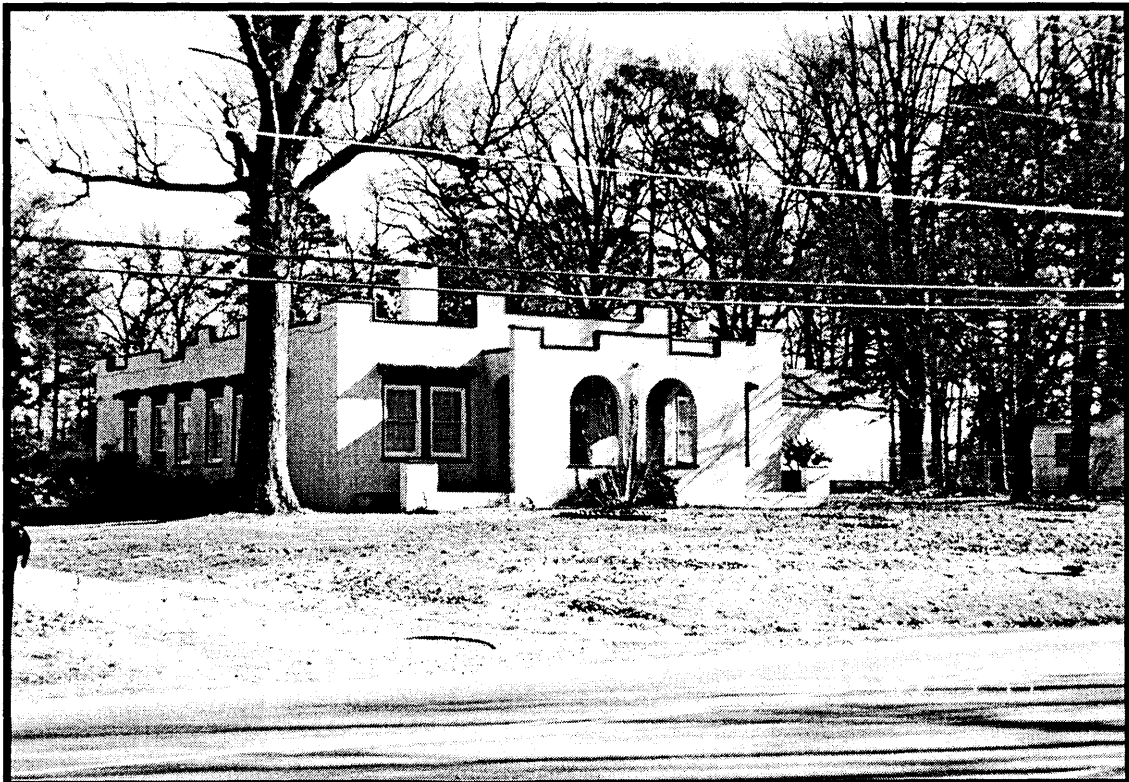
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Property #36 - House



Property #37 - House



Property #38 - House



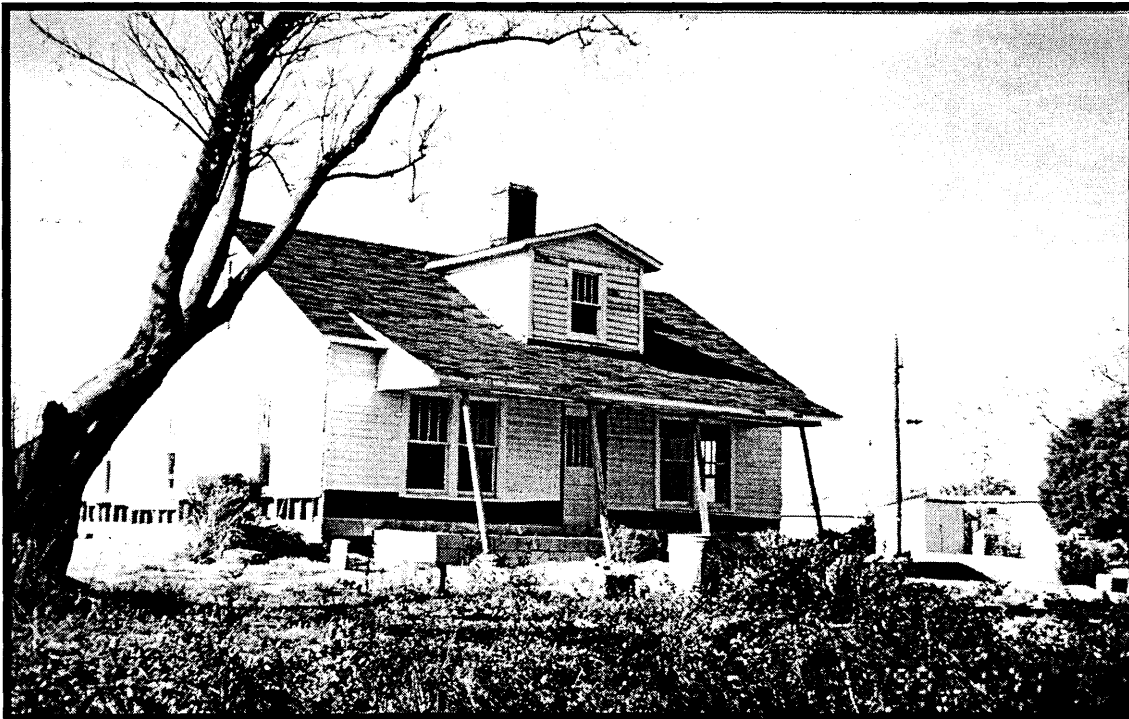
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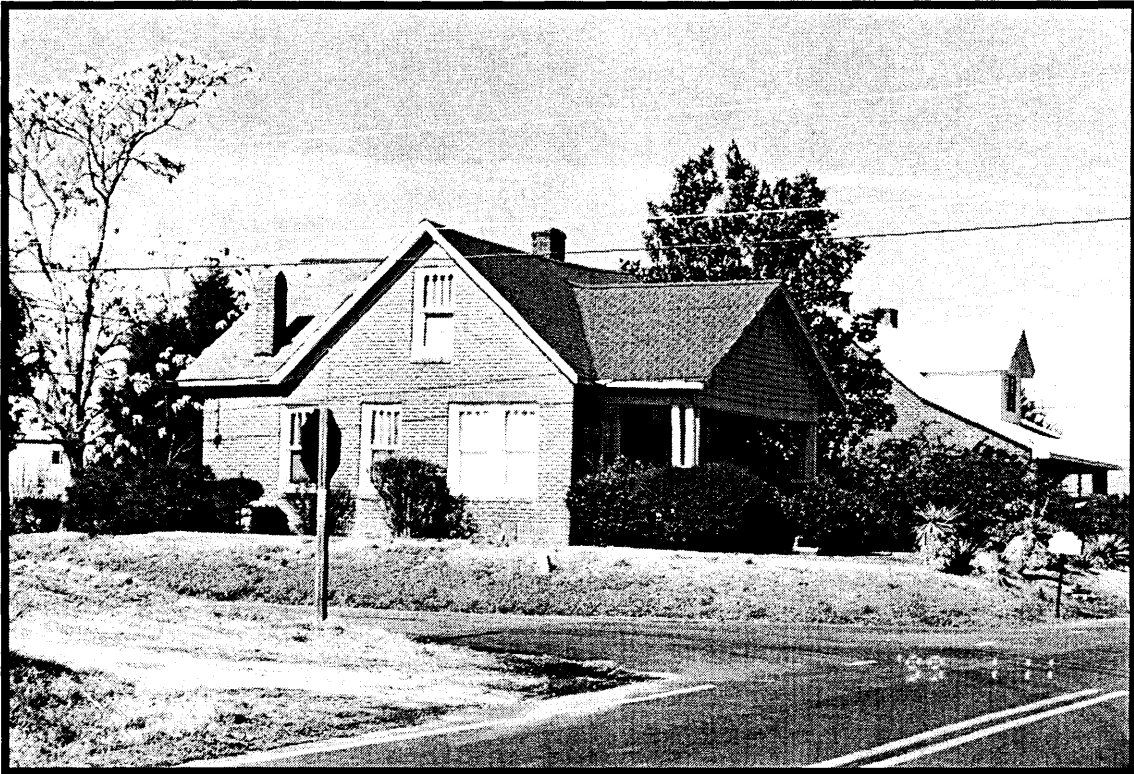
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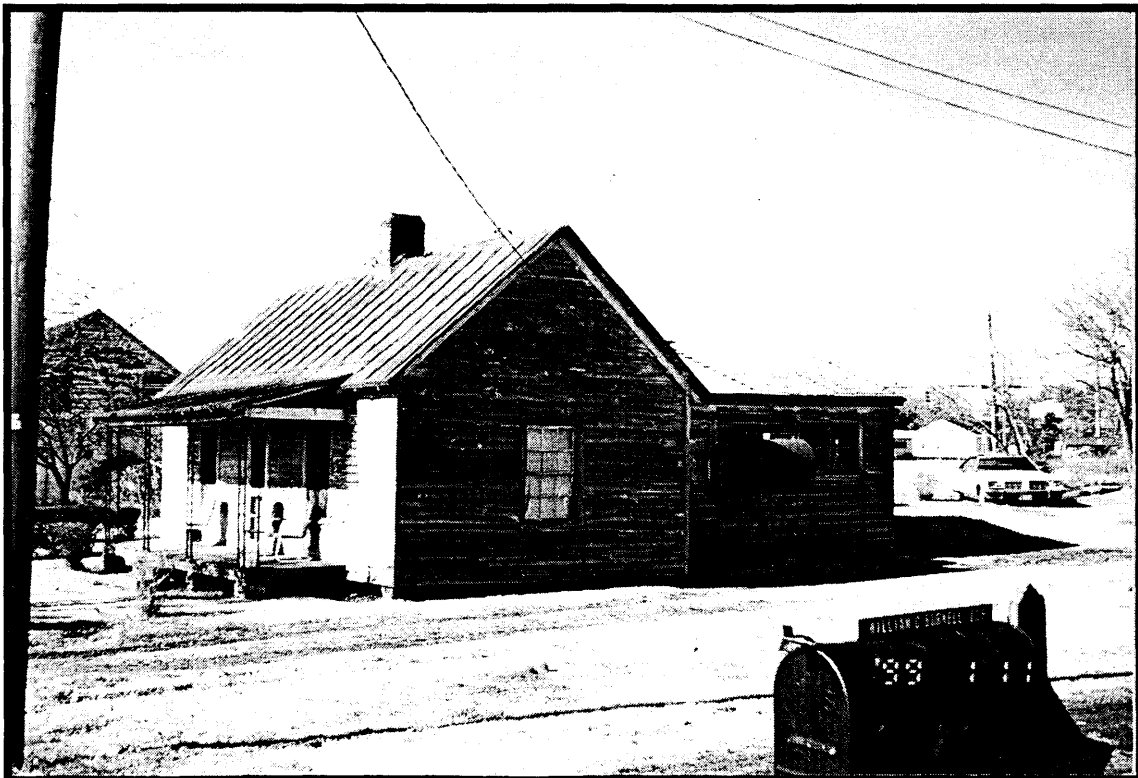
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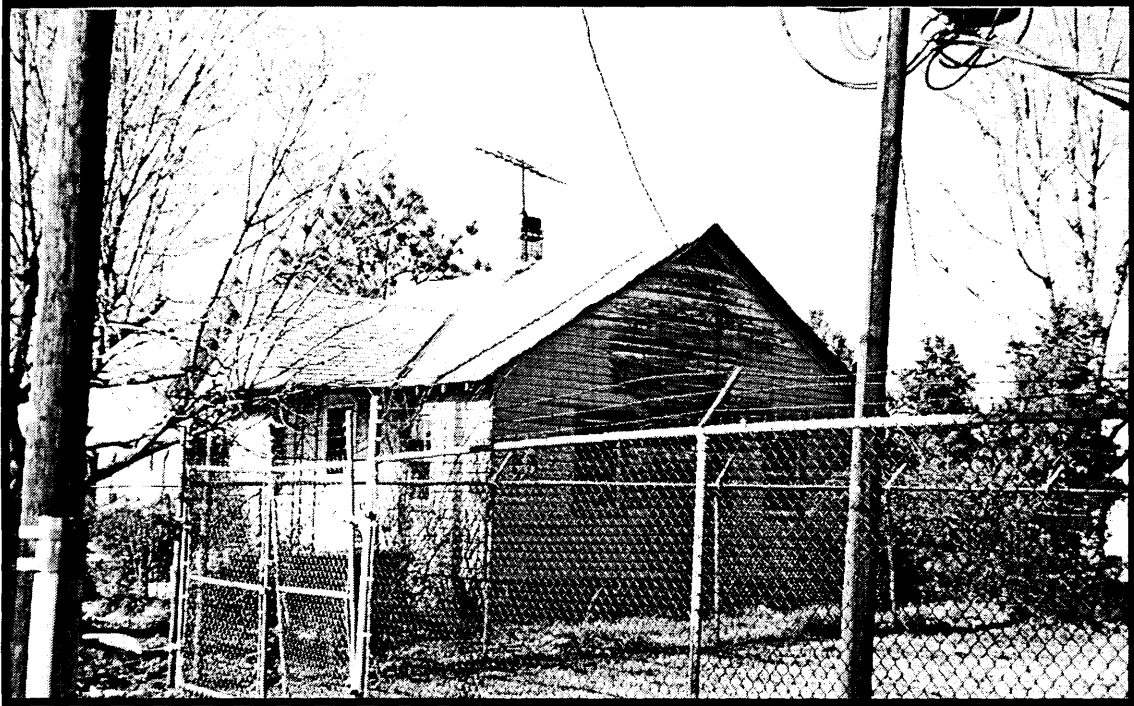
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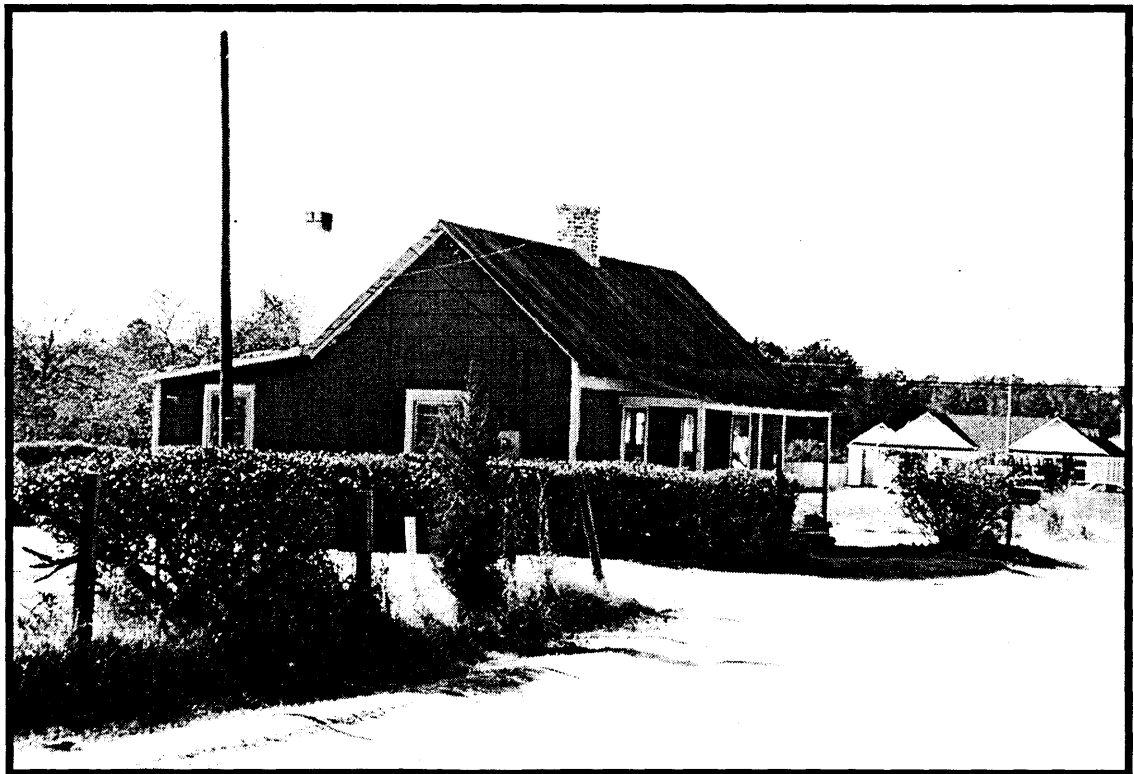
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Property #44 - House



Property #45 - House



Property #46 - House



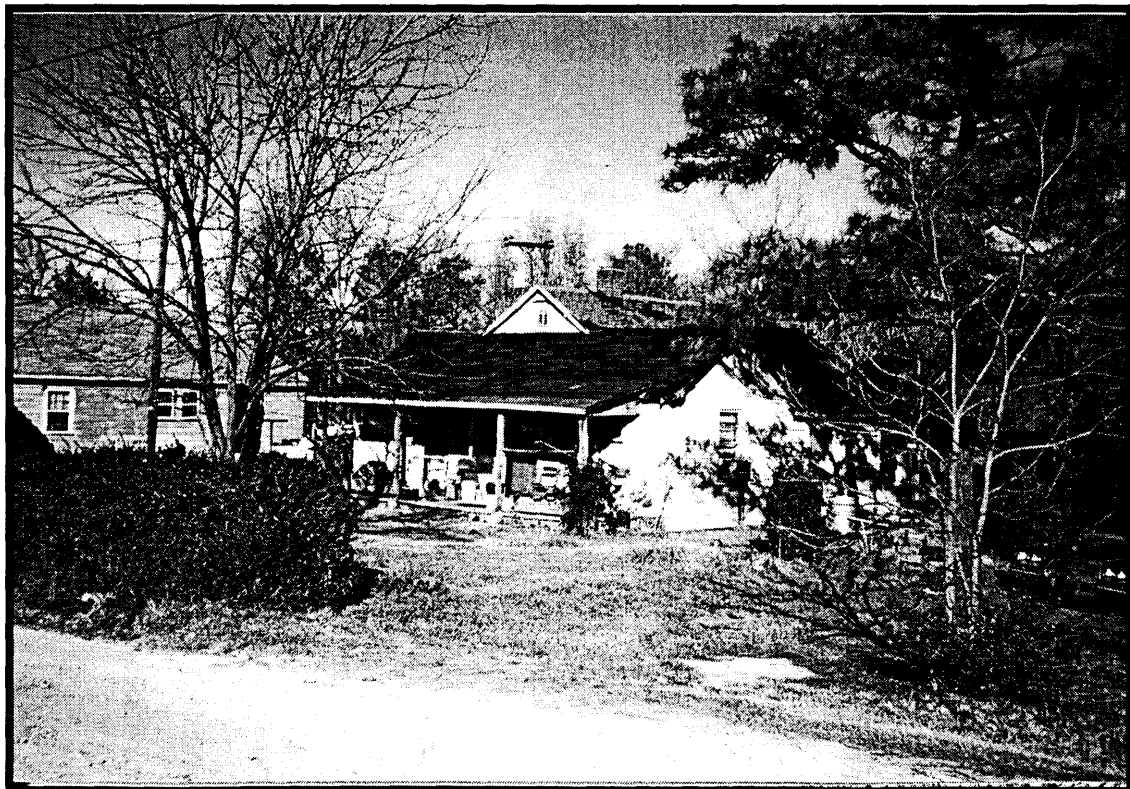
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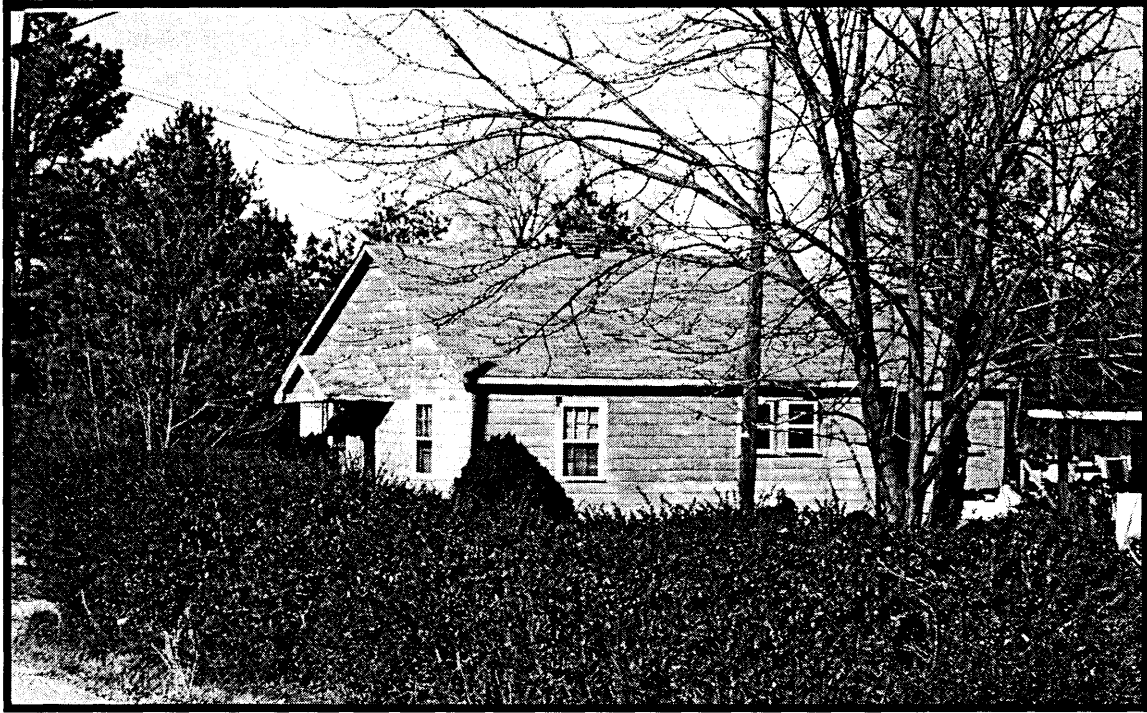
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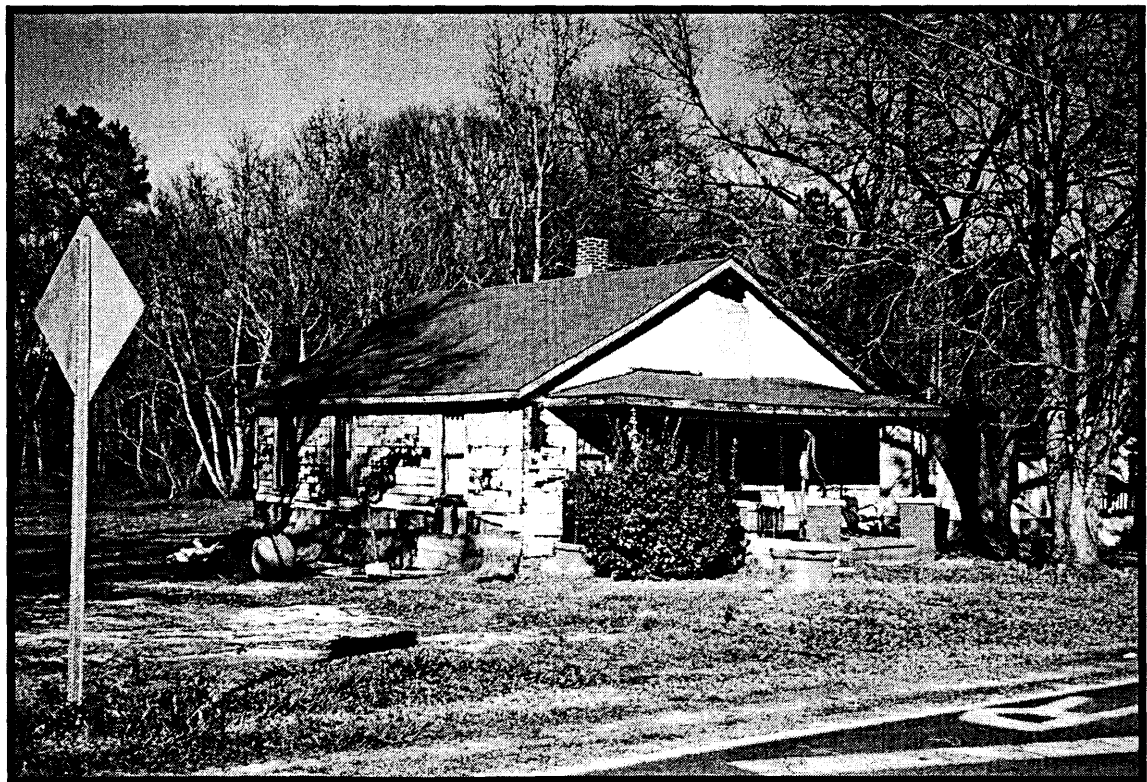
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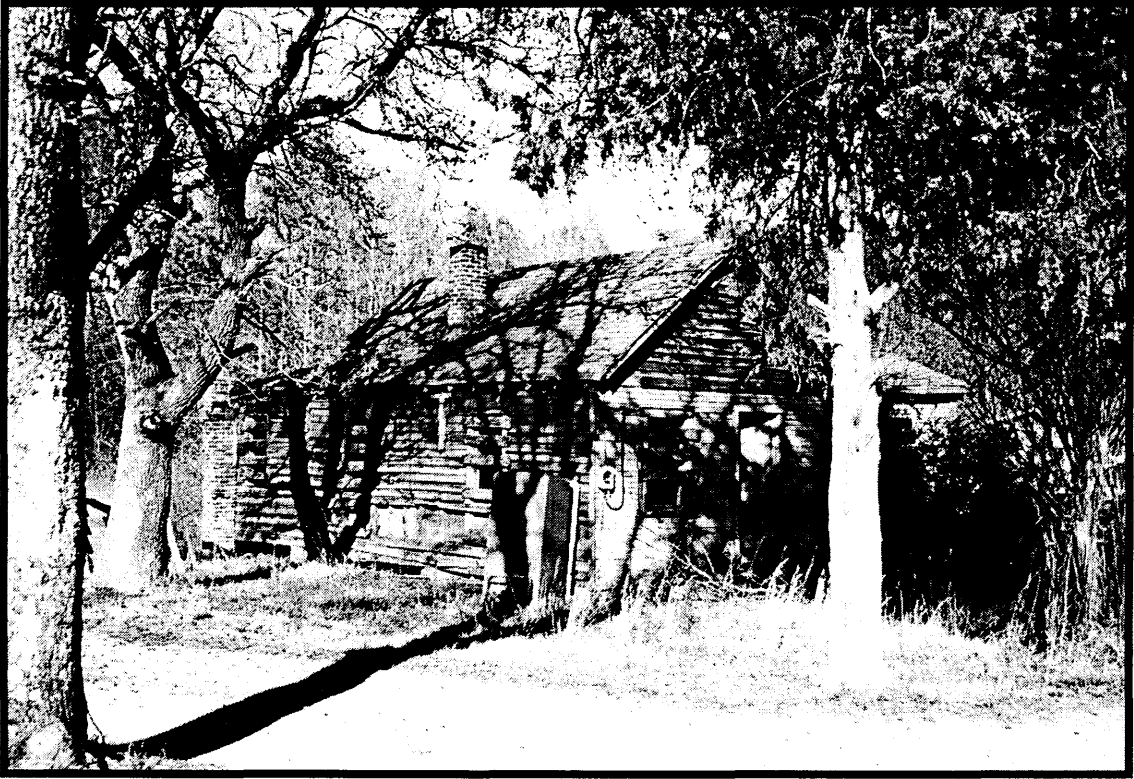
Property #50 - House



Property #51 - House



Property #52 - House



Property #53 - House



Property #54 - House