



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

Peter B. Sandbeck, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

Office of Archives and History
Division of Historical Resources
David Brook, Director

April 21, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Greg Thorpe, Ph.D., Director
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Peter Sandbeck *Peter Sandbeck*

SUBJECT: Improvements to US 29 – 74 (Wilkinson Boulevard) and US 521 (Billy Graham Parkway),
Charlotte, U-2704B, Mecklenburg County, ER 01-9611

On January 31, 2006, our office and the NC Department of Transportation, Human Environment Unit, met to review additional information that we requested regarding the November 22, 2005, Historic Architectural survey report for the above project.

At the meeting we signed an eligibility concurrence form reiterating our National Register eligibility concurrence for the McCoy Service Station. We also concurred that the Oakden Motel is eligible for the National Register.

Therefore, for purposes of Section 106 compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following properties are eligible for the National Register under the criteria cited:

- The McCoy Service Station, State Study-listed and located at 5315 Wilkinson Boulevard, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for commerce and C for architecture. The property retains good integrity and is a fine and rare example of the gas station type, once common in Mecklenburg County and nationwide. The gas station stands as one of the first roadside establishments along Wilkinson Boulevard, the state's first four-lane highway.

We concur with the proposed National Register boundaries as described, defined, and delineated in the report. The boundaries include a ca. 1950 auto repair/storage facility.

- The Oakden Motel, 5104 Wilkinson Boulevard, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, as an intact example of the mid twentieth-century motel type in Charlotte. The motel's parallel building plan, single-story blocks, central parking area, highway-oriented office, and rare surviving highway sign, illustrate the distinctive characteristics of a parallel motel plan type.

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We concur with the proposed National Register boundaries as described, justified, and delineated in the survey report.

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

cc: Mary Pope Furr
Richard Silverman

bc: Southern/McBride
County

Subject: U-2704B, Charlotte, Mecklenburg

Date: Tue, 24 Jan 2006 15:26:30 -0500

From: Richard Silverman <rlsilverman@dot.state.nc.us>

Organization: North Carolina Department of Transportation

To: "McBride, Sarah" <sarah.mcbride@ncmail.net>

Sarah,

RE: U-2704B, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County

This project is on the concurrence meeting agenda for January 31st. We received the HPO letter of Jan. 4, 2006 (ER 01-9611) stating that HPO was unable to concur on the eligibility for the Oakden Motel. We were asked to provide a justification under Criterion C (and I am happy to do so).


Attached you will find a justification for the Oakden Motel's eligibility under Criterion C.

If possible, can you all provide your comments at the next concurrence meeting on Jan. 31st? I hope to have this resolved at that meeting as this needs to be completed and moved off my desk.

Thanks very much! RS

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Richard Silverman
Historic Architecture Section
NC Department of Transportation
T 919.715.1618
F 919.715.1501

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Evaluation for National Register Eligibility under Criterion C for Architecture

Oakden Motel (Property #5)
5104 Wilkinson Boulevard
Charlotte, NC 28208

The 1952 Oakden Motel is architecturally significant under Criterion C because it embodies distinctive characteristics of the mid-20th century motel type as well as the specific form of the "parallel" motel plan type. In the 2000 study entitled *Motorized Landscape: The Development of Modernism in Charlotte, 1945-1960*¹ authors Sarah A. Woodard and Sherry Joines Wyatt explain that two mid-20th century motel plan types were identified in Charlotte. The first plan type is described as a courtyard, composed of buildings that form an "U", an "L", or a complete circle or square. The second type is the parallel plan type, defined as two long, single-story narrow, bar shaped buildings facing one another with a parking lot located between. To the rear of the complex, one might find a lawn area or a swimming pool, while the front of the building is typically occupied by an office. The Oakden clearly contains characteristics of the "parallel" plan type as expressed in its narrow lot that favored the placement of a pair of bar-shaped building blocks separated by a central parking area serving room fronts. The Oakden's front lawn provides a pleasant green buffer between the highway and the office which is located in the front of the western building block. Open space is provided at the rear of the property, but it is not clear if the land has been used for recreational purposes. Other distinctive characteristics of the Oakden Motel apply to the general pattern of features common to mid-20th century motels. The oblong single-story rectangular form of the building is representative of motels of this period. The characteristics of this building type are also expressed in the building's style. Its commercialized ranch and colonial influenced design formula was tailored to suit the popular tastes of automobile travelers who sought a familiar image of domesticity along the roadside. Stylistic choices also informed the selection of materials, such as application of brick veneer on the gable end walls which face the highway. Wood siding applied to the upper gable and the hipped roof vent provide a material that would complement the brick. The most significant feature or trait that commonly occurs with this building type is the presence of an eye-catching highway sign. In the rapidly developing and re-developing Charlotte area, it is quite rare to find a building of this type which retains its original neon-lit sign. Without the original sign, it would be difficult for a mid-20th century motel to convey its significance as a true representative of its type.

National Register Criteria Assessment

The Oakden Motel is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C (Design/Construction) for its architectural significance. *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.* Constructed in 1952, the Oakden Motel's parallel building plan, single-story blocks, central parking area, highway-oriented office, and rare surviving highway sign illustrate the distinctive qualities of a mid-20th century motel and the specific characteristics of a parallel motel plan type. Operating under its original function, the Oakden Motel retains its plan type, its integrity of design, a majority of its original materials, and its setting. As documented, the Oakden Motel clearly illustrates distinctive characteristics of its type and usage. Due to intensive commercial redevelopment along major highways leading into Charlotte, only a few 1950s motels survive intact. An informal windshield survey conducted by Mattson, Alexander & Associates of Charlotte revealed just three intact examples among the approximately twenty-five motels recorded in the city directories in the mid-1950s.² Thus the Oakden Motel is a rare, intact example of its type.

¹ Sarah A. Woodard and Sherry Joines Wyatt, *Motorized Landscape: The Development of Modernism in Charlotte, 1945-1960*, September 2000.

² Mattson, Alexander & Associates, Draft Report: *West Corridor Rapid Transit Project, Charlotte Area Transit System*, 2005.