



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

February 21, 2006

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Peter Sandbeck *PBS for Peter Sandbeck*

SUBJECT: Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report Addendum, Widen SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) between SR 1613 (N. Winstead Ave.) and NC 43/48 (Benvenue Road), Rocky Mount, U-3621, State Project No. 8.2321801, Federal Aid Project No. STP-1604 (1), Nash County, ER 02-10887

Thank you for your letter of January 10, 2006, transmitting the survey report addendum by Vanessa E. Patrick for the above project.

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following properties are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

- Kemp D. Battle House, 1730 Hunter Hill Road, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, as an outstanding example of the Colonial Revival designed by noted architect Arthur C. Nash, whose works at the University of North Carolina and elsewhere in the state remain valued and vital components of the built environment.

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

- Shearin House, 1821 Hunter Hill Road, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, for architecture. The house is a representative example of the common I-house but embodies local aspirations and adaptations exhibited in the house's structural and ornamental changes over the course of the twentieth century. The Shearin House is one of the earliest remaining dwellings in Rocky Mount. Although the house has been vinyl-sided, the house's details remain unaltered and it retains sufficient integrity to convey its local significance.

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

	Location	Mailing Address	Telephone/Fax
ADMINISTRATION	507 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617	(919)733-4763/733-8653
RESTORATION	515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617	(919)733-6547/715-4801
SURVEY & PLANNING	515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh, NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617	(919)733-6545/715-4801

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following property was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in the 2004 Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report (U-3621) for the project.

- Falls of the River Particular Baptist Church and Cemetery.

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following properties are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

- Properties 9 – 12, 15 – 34.

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
Heather Fearnbach, Edwards-Pitman Environmental

bc: Southern/McBride
County



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

January 10, 2006

RECEIVED
JAN 11 2006

Mr. Peter B. Sandbeck
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
4617 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Ref ER 02-10887
Sarah
2/2/06

Re: U-3621, Nash County
Widen SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) between SR 1613 (N. Winstead Ave.)
and NC 43/48 (Benvenue Road), Rocky Mount
State Project No. 8.2321801, Federal Aid Project No. STP-1604(1)

Dear Mr. Sandbeck:

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is planning to widen part of SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) in Rocky Mount according to the above-referenced project. This letter accompanies two copies of the Historic Architectural Resources Addendum report for the project area, specifically the section west of Country Club Road (SR 1616). The report meets NCDOT and National Park Service guidelines for survey procedures and concludes that two properties – the Kemp D. Battle House and the Shearin House -- within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Our earlier report of March 2004 addressed the project area as originally defined, that is, east of Country Club Road, and found that the Falls of the Tar River Particular Baptist Church is eligible for the National Register. Your office has agreed with the finding (via letter dated June 24, 2004).

Please review the attached report and provide us with your comments. Should you have any questions, please contact Vanessa Patrick, Historic Architecture Section, 919-715-1617.

Sincerely,

Mary Pope Furr
Supervisor, Historic Architecture Section

Attachment
copy to: John F. Sullivan III, P.E., FHWA

MAILING ADDRESS:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
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RALEIGH NC 27699-1583

TELEPHONE: 919-715-1500
FAX: 919-715-1522

WEBSITE: WWW.NCDOT.ORG

LOCATION:
PARKER LINCOLN BUILDING
2728 CAPITAL BOULEVARD, SUITE 168
RALEIGH, NC 27604

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

ADDENDUM

**SR 1604 (HUNTER HILL ROAD)
from SR 1613 (N. Winstead Avenue)
to NC 43/48 (Benvenue Road)**

**ROCKY MOUNT, NASH COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA**

T.I.P. No. U-3621
STATE PROJECT No. 8.2321801
FEDERAL AID PROJECT No. STP-1604(1)



The
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ARCHITECTURE**
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**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES
ADDENDUM**

**SR 1604 (HUNTER HILL ROAD)
from SR 1613 (N. Winstead Avenue)
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**ROCKY MOUNT, NASH COUNTY
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T.I.P. NO. U-3621
STATE PROJECT NO. 8.2321801
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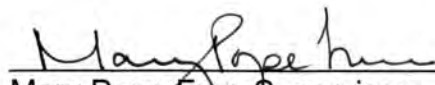
**VANESSA E. PATRICK
ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DECEMBER 2005**



Vanessa E. Patrick, Principal Investigator
Historic Architecture Section
North Carolina Department of Transportation

January 9, 2006

Date



Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor
Historic Architecture Section
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Jan. 9, 2006

Date

Management Summary

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes widening SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) to a multi-lane facility from SR 1613 (N. Winstead Avenue) to NC 43/48 (Benvenue Road) in Rocky Mount, Nash County (T.I.P. No. U-3621). Initially confined to the 1.2-mile long section of SR 1604 between SR 1616 (Country Club Road) and NC 43/48, the project has been extended westward to SR 1613 for a total of 2.9 miles.

This report documents historic architectural resources in the western section of the project area (west of SR 1616), specifically in an Area of Potential Effects (APE) delineated and surveyed on November 3, 2004. An NCDOT architectural historian identified twenty-seven properties within the APE that appeared to be at least fifty years old. Of the twenty-seven, twenty-five were determined not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NR) and not worthy of further evaluation in a consultation meeting between the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) and NCDOT held on November 29, 2004 (see concurrence form in Appendix). At that meeting, NCDOT and the HPO agreed that two of the properties required additional investigation: the Kemp D. Battle House (Property No. 13) and the Shearin House (Property No. 14).

NCDOT consulted primary and secondary sources in a variety of repositories and conducted fieldwork to establish historical and architectural contexts for the project area, as well as to trace the development of individual buildings. Field survey, research, and evaluation suggest that both the Battle and the Shearin Houses are eligible for listing in the National Register. The original section of the U-3621 project area (east of SR 1616) yielded one NR-eligible property, the Falls of the Tar River Particular Baptist Church and Cemetery (Property No. 1). This earlier study is presented in a March 2004 report by NCDOT, "Historic Architectural Resources – Final Identification and Evaluation. SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) from SR 1616 (Country Club Road) to NC 43/48 (Benvenue Road), Rocky Mount, Nash County, North Carolina. T.I.P. No. U-3621, State Project No. 8.2321801, Federal Aid Project No. STP-1604(1)."

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Project Description

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to widen SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) to a multi-lane facility from SR 1613 (N. Winstead Avenue) to NC 43/48 (Benvenue Road) in Rocky Mount, Nash County (Figure 1). The purpose of the project is to increase the vehicular capacity and safety of the route. The proposed widening of SR 1604, currently a two-lane, two-way facility with a pavement width of twenty-four feet and soil shoulders on approximately sixty feet of right-of-way, entails construction of one or a combination of two alternatives: 1) a four-lane, curb-and-gutter facility with a raised median and 90-100 feet of right-of-way or 2) a five-lane, curb-and-gutter facility with 90-100 feet of right-of-way. The proposed improvements also include the replacement of a four-span, 195-foot-long, steel-stringer bridge (No. 181), which carries SR 1604 over the US 301 Bypass. The project (T.I.P. No. U-3621) is both federally (Project No. STP-1604(1)) and state (Project No. 8.2321801) funded.

Initially confined to the 1.2-mile-long section of SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) between SR 1616 (Country Club Road) and NC 43/48 (Benvenue Road), the project has been extended westward to SR 1613 (N. Winstead Avenue) for a total of 2.9 miles.

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for historic architectural resources was delineated by an NCDOT staff architectural historian and reviewed in the field on November 3, 2004 (Figure 2). It surrounds the extended section of the proposed widening between SR 1616 (Country Club Road) and SR 1613 (N. Winstead Avenue) and includes those areas that may be affected either physically or visually by new construction. Land use in the extended project area is predominantly single-family residential.

Purpose of Survey and Report

NCDOT conducted survey and compiled this report in order to identify historic architectural resources located within the APE as part of the environmental studies performed by NCDOT for the proposed project T.I.P. No. U-3621, SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road), Nash County, 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) of 1969 and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended. It also supplements the earlier report addressing historic architectural resources in the project area as originally defined.¹ Section 106 of the NHPA, as amended, 16 U.S.C. Section

¹ Vanessa E. Patrick, "Historic Architectural Resources – Final Identification and Evaluation. SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) from SR 1616 (Country Club Road) to NC 43/48 (Benvenue Road),

U-3621 Entire Project (With New Extension) Nash County

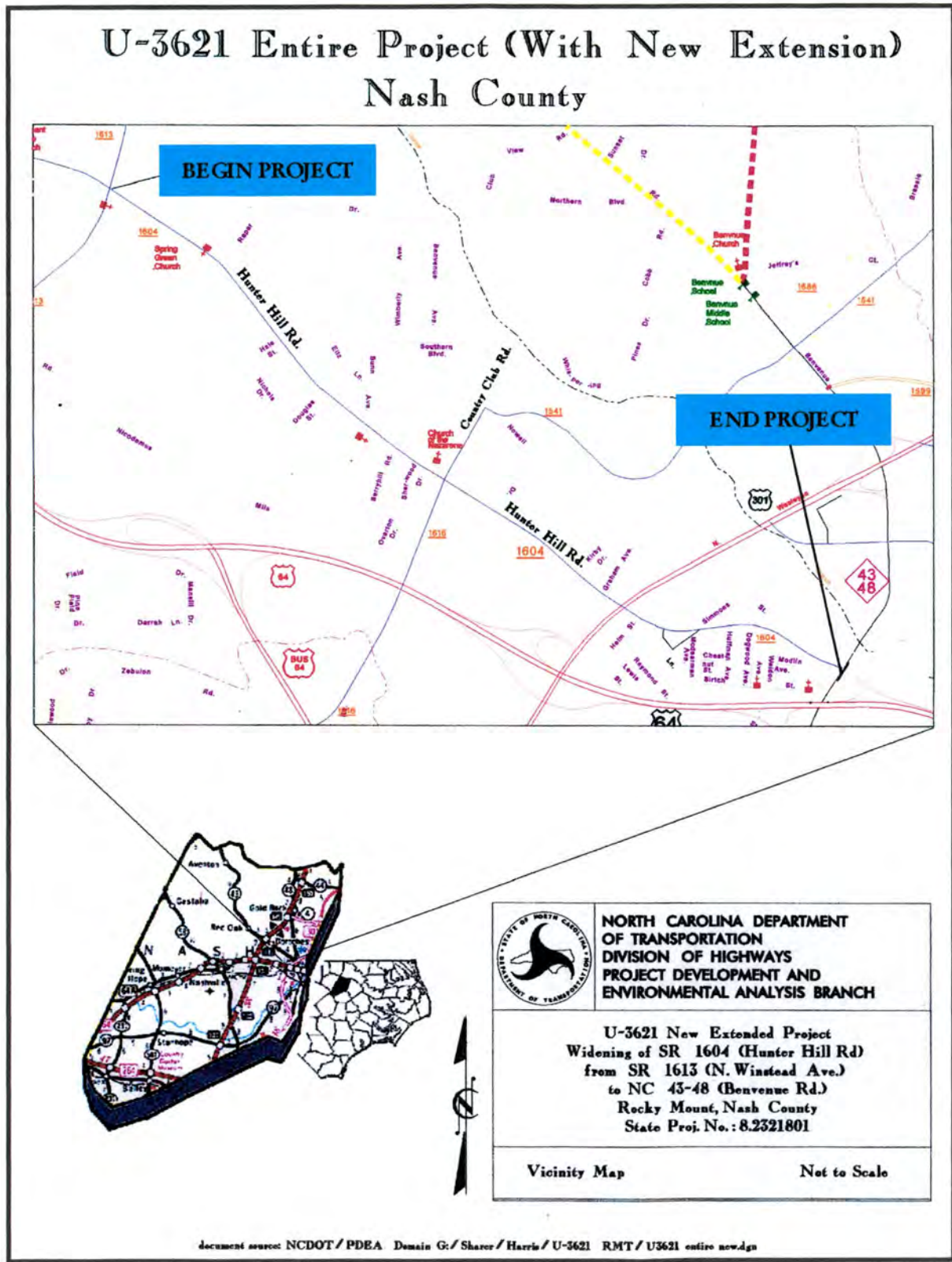


Figure 1. Project Location. Not to scale.

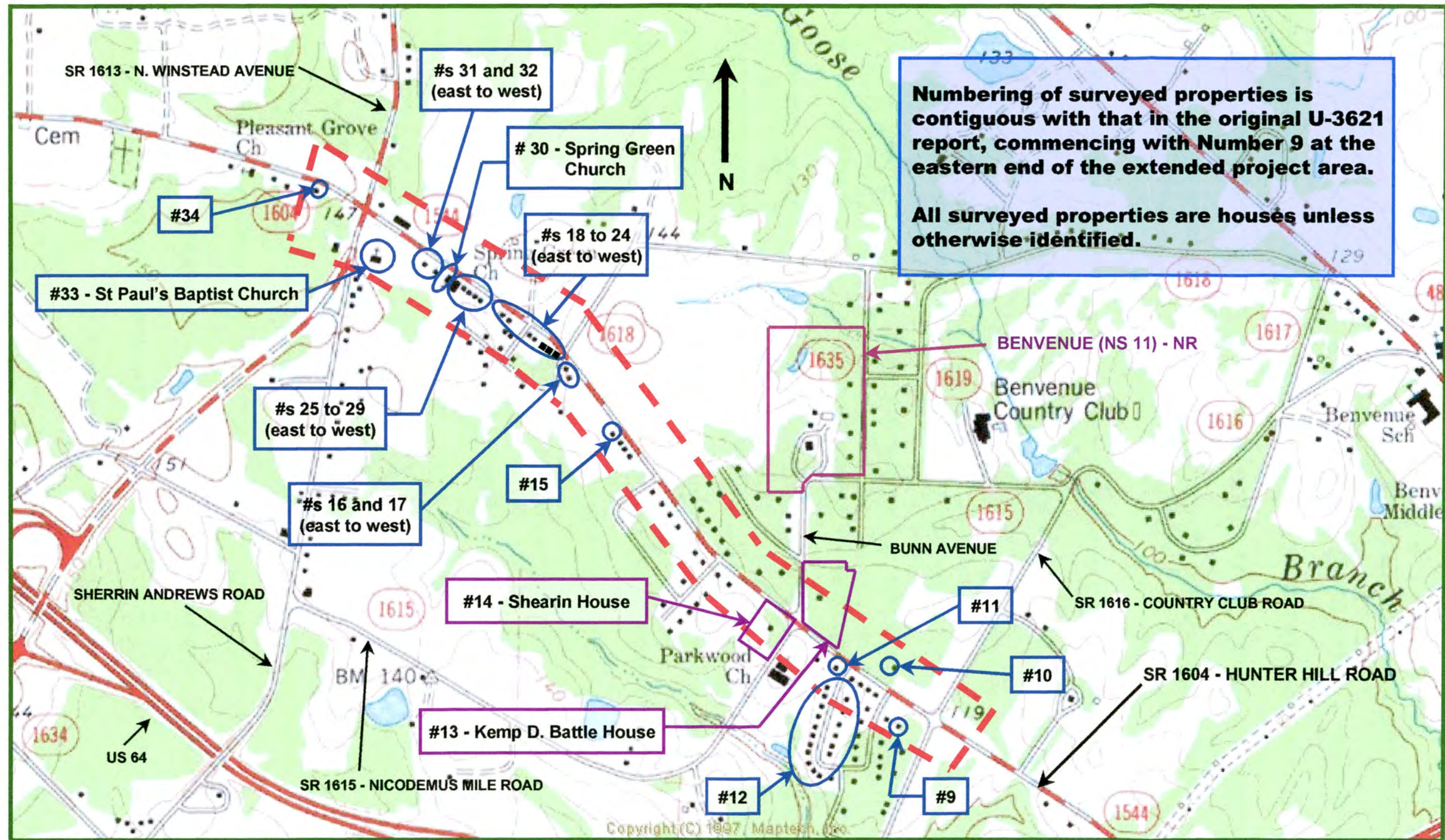


Figure 2. Historic Architectural Resources
Rocky Mount USGS 7.5' quadrangle (NTS)

U-3621 (extended)
- - - = Area of Potential Effects (APE)

Nash County (Rocky Mount)
November 2004

470f, requires Federal agencies to take into account the effect of their undertakings on properties included 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. This report is on file at NCDOT and is available for review by the general public.

Methodology

NCDOT conducted the survey and prepared this report in accordance with the provisions of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Technical Advisory T6640.8A (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 CFR 44716); 36 CFR Part 60; 36 CFR Part 800; and Historic Architectural Resources: Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines (NCDOT, 2003). This survey and report meet the guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service.

An intensive survey was undertaken 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 and record all significant resources within the APE; and (3) to evaluate these resources according to the National Register of Historic Places criteria.

The APE, as illustrated in Figure 2, was delineated to allow for flexibility in the design of avoidance alternatives.

An NCDOT architectural historian conducted a field survey on November 3, 2004, covering 100% of the APE by automobile and on foot. All structures over fifty years of age in the APE were identified, evaluated, photographed, and recorded on the appropriate United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps (see Figure 2). All recorded properties were evaluated for National Register eligibility as individual resources or contributing elements to historic districts.

An NCDOT architectural historian pursued preliminary documentary research to establish historical and architectural contexts for the project area, as well as the development of individual buildings and structures. The principal resources consulted included survey and National Register files at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO), public records at the North Carolina State Library and Archives, both in Raleigh, and public records at the Nash County Courthouse and Tax Office in Nashville. Both primary and

Rocky Mount, Nash County, North Carolina. T.I.P. No. U-3621, State Project No. 8.2321801, Federal Aid Project No. STP-1604(1)." Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Transportation, March 2004.

secondary sources held in the North Carolina State Library and Archives and North Carolina State University Libraries in Raleigh, the Wilson Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the Braswell Memorial Library in Rocky Mount yielded additional information. Mr. T. E. Ricks of the Nash County Historical Association generously shared his knowledge of the Hunter Hill Road area.

Summary Findings of the Survey

The section of SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) west of SR 1616 (Country Club Road), like that to the east, traces a level path roughly parallel to and between two small waterways – Goose Branch and Stony Creek. The buildings located in this western part of the U-3621 project area are predominantly domestic in design and function, interspersed with a number of mid- to late-twentieth-century churches and related structures. Concentrations of mid-twentieth-century houses appear at either end of the road. Two houses standing at the Bunn Avenue/Nicodemus Mile Road (SR 1615) intersection are older, larger, and more architecturally sophisticated than the other buildings along this section of Hunter Hill Road (SR 1604).

No properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR), the state study list, or otherwise determined NR-eligible are located within the APE. Twenty-seven properties were identified as greater than fifty years of age (see Figure 2). Of the twenty-seven, twenty-five were determined not eligible for the National Register and not worthy of further evaluation in a consultation meeting between the HPO and NCDOT held on November 29, 2004 (see Appendix). This report includes photographs and brief statements of their ineligibility. Additional investigation of the remaining two properties, the Kemp D. Battle House (Property No. 13) and the Shearin House (Property No. 14), suggests that they should be considered eligible for the National Register, and they are treated accordingly in this report. Only the Shearin House is represented in the HPO survey files for Nash County. It was recorded in 1976 and did not receive a county survey number.

The original section of the U-3621 project area east of SR 1616 (Country Club Road) yielded only one NR-eligible property, the Falls of the Tar River Particular Baptist Church and Cemetery (Property No. 1) (see the report referenced in footnote 1). The HPO agreed with the eligibility finding in 2004.

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.

Historic Architectural Resources in the APE

Properties Listed on the National Register:

None

Properties Listed on the North Carolina State Study List:

None

*Properties Evaluated and Determined Not Eligible
for the National Register*:*

Properties No. 9-12 and 15-35

*Properties Evaluated and Considered Eligible
for the National Register:*

Property No. 13 – Kemp D. Battle House

Property No. 14 – Shearin House

*Several of the properties in this category were determined not eligible during investigations for three earlier projects (cited below), as summarized in the following table.

U-3621 Property #	Name	Thoroughfare Property #	U-4019 Property #	R-2823 Property #
30	Spring Green Church	15	-	-
32	House	17	-	-
33	St. Paul's Baptist Church	14	-	221
34	House	12	1	222

Scott Owen, "Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report – Final Identification, Rocky Mount **Thoroughfare** Plan, Northern Section" (Raleigh: NCDOT, 1997).

Vanessa E. Patrick, **U-4019**, Rocky Mount, Nash County memos, survey map, and HPO concurrence form, NCDOT Historic Architecture Project Files, Raleigh, 2002.

Vanessa E. Patrick and Penne Sandbeck, "Historic Architectural Resources Addendum – Rocky Mount Northern Connector [T.I. P. **R-2823**] (Raleigh: NCDOT, 2005).

**PROPERTIES EVALUATED
AND
CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE
FOR THE
NATIONAL REGISTER
OF
HISTORIC PLACES**

Property No. 13 – Kemp D. Battle House

Location. This property occupies the northeast quadrant of the Bunn Avenue / Nicodemus Mile (SR 1615) and Hunter Hill Road (SR 1604) intersection. Its street address is 1730 Hunter Hill Road and parcel number is 384119723049 (Nash County 2005 Tax Records).

Description. The Kemp D. Battle House is a two-story, hip-roofed building of brick construction and formal Colonial Revival design (Figures 3 and 4). The core of the house is a near cube, five bays (forty-eight feet) wide and three bays (thirty-two feet) deep. It is pierced with regularly placed, six-over-six, double-hung-sash windows with blinds in both stories and transomed doorways in the ground floor. Three round-headed dormers appear in the façade (south elevation), aligned with three gabled dormers in the rear (north) elevation. A multi-flued, interior chimney stack with a pair of single-brick-width belt courses and corbelling above rises from each end (east and west) rake of the roof near the ridge. A two-story, ten-foot-deep, galleried, hexastyle portico sitting on a low stylobate extends across the façade. Tuscan-inspired, monumental pilasters support an entablature of similarly imposing scale, which, in turn, encompasses the entire two-story core of the building. The entablature includes a simply molded and boxed cornice, a broad, unornamented frieze, and an unsubdivided architrave. A short, plain parapet with a central, shallowly gabled panel crowns the portico.

The house is further augmented at its rear and side elevations. A one-story, three-bay portico, a smaller and simpler version of that on the façade, is centered on the west elevation; a ten-foot-wide bay meets a patio on the east elevation. A one-story, hip-roofed rear wing lengthens the house approximately forty feet to the north. All brickwork is laid in Flemish bond. Window and doorway architraves reflect the simplicity of the entablature; dormer cornices are similarly designed, as well as boxed and returned. Slate roofing predominates, and all trim, except the black/dark green blinds, is painted white. A one-story carport/garage resembling the west portico stands northwest of the house.

The Battle House is oriented towards Hunter Hill Road at the south. The approximately four acres immediately surrounding it are formally landscaped. This area includes the Hunter Hill Road and Bunn Avenue frontages, the four-foot-high, brick (Flemish bond) perimeter wall, and the gated entrance to the property at the west. Slightly less than two additional acres of essentially undeveloped land complete the site to the north and east. The property is well maintained and the structures appear to be in excellent condition.



Figure 3. Kemp D. Battle House. South (main) and west elevations. Photographed November 3, 2004 (above) and September 28, 2005 (below).





Figure 4. Kemp D. Battle House. West and north (rear) elevations (above), including perimeter wall, and west elevation from Bunn Avenue (below). Photographed November 3, 2004 and September 29, 2005 respectively.



History. In 1962 the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, Division of Community Planning issued a report on the neighborhoods of Rocky Mount. While the study notes residential development “taking place along the existing state or county roads or in subdivisions scattered throughout” the Hunter Hill Road vicinity, it concluded that the area remained “predominately [sic] rural in character.”² If neighborhoods like Swelton Heights at the eastern end of the project area, containing many structures dating to the 1920s and 1930s, and the cluster of later houses near Spring Green Church (Property No. 30) at the western end illustrate the gradual and currently intensifying suburbanization of Hunter Hill Road, two properties located just west of the Country Club Road (SR 1616) intersection represent earlier and, in part, concurrent aspects of its architectural evolution (see Figure 2).³ The mid-nineteenth-century, vernacular Shearin House (Property No. 14) served one of the many farms once located along and near Hunter Hill Road (see pp.19-32 this report). The Kemp D. Battle House (Property No. 13) is an essay in the Colonial Revival built around 1930 as the home of a prominent Rocky Mount lawyer. The origins of the Battle property may be traced to nearby Benvenue, the antebellum plantation of the Bunn family that at one time constituted several hundred acres immediately north of Hunter Hill Road.

In 1917 Kemp Davis Battle (1888-1973) married Laura Maud Bunn (1891-1975). Battle was one of the founding partners in the Rocky Mount law firm Battle and Winslow (now Battle, Winslow, Scott, and Wiley) and the son of Thomas Hall Battle, president of the Bank of Rocky Mount and other financial entities and Rocky Mount Mills executive. Laura Maud Bunn, daughter of attorney and congressman Benjamin Hickman Bunn, grew up in the family home Benvenue, just north of Hunter Hill Road (see Figure 2). Built in 1844 as the principal residence of the Redmond Bunn plantation, the house acquired its name and extensive renovations in 1889 during the ownership of Redmond’s son, Benjamin Hickman Bunn. Benjamin Bunn died in 1907 leaving the Benvenue property, then still a working farm, to his wife Harriet A. Bunn. In 1927 Harriet sold four acres at the intersection of Bunn Avenue and Hunter Hill Road to her daughter Maud and son-in-law Kemp D. Battle (Figure 5). That the Battles, then living in downtown Rocky Mount, contemplated building a house on the land is indicated by a covenant included in the deed recording the sale stating

that no building shall be erected on said land nearer than 100 feet from the center of Bunn Avenue, within a period of 20 years from the date of this conveyance unless this covenant shall have been previously released by the then owner of the home place [Benvenue] of the party of

² North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, Division of Community Planning, *Neighborhood Analysis, Rocky Mount, North Carolina* (Rocky Mount: 1962), p. 126.

³ Jno. J. Wells’ “Map of Rocky Mount, N.C. and Suburbs 1923 (Rocky Mount: 1923) identifies the grid of streets immediately west of the Falls of the Tar River Particular Baptist Church as “Swelton Heights.” This area lies outside the U-3621 APE; see Figure 2 in the report on historic architectural resources in the project area as originally defined, referenced in footnote 1.

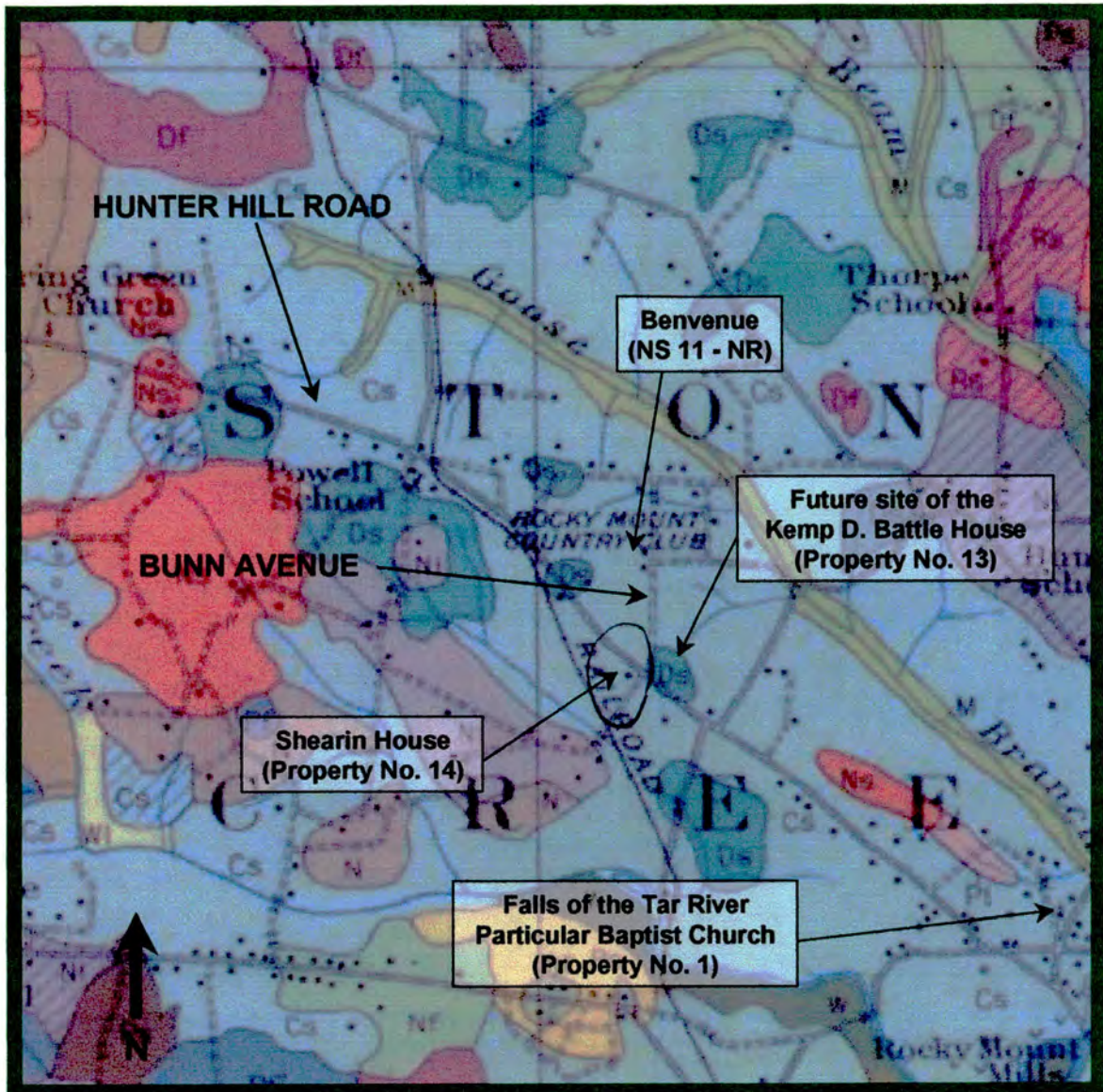


Figure 5. The U-3621 Project Area in 1926. Detail of Nash County Soil Survey Map (United States Department of Agriculture, 1926) with annotations (showing all but the extreme western end of the project area). The Rocky Mount (now Benvenue) Country Club was established in the early 1920s just east of Benvenue on lands formerly part of the property. The railroad belonged to the Tar River Lumber Company and connected Rocky Mount with Hillardston (it does not appear on the 1902 USGS map - see Figure 10 - nor on the 1918-1919 map of Nash County by Wellis and Brinkley, North Carolina State Library and Archives, Raleigh). Interestingly, the site of the Battle House appears as an island of Dunbar sandy loam (Ds) in a sea of the agriculturally superior Chesterfield Sandy Loam (Cs) that predominates in Nash County (see Lee and Bacon, *Soil Survey of Nash County, North Carolina* (Washington, D.C.: 1926)).

Original map 1" = 1 mile; above graphic not to scale.

the first part [Harriet A. Bunn] located at the end of said avenue.

By 1930 the Battles had moved into their new home, constructed on the four acres once part of Benvenue.⁴

Kemp D. Battle's connections with the University of North Carolina undoubtedly influenced his and his wife's selection of architect Arthur Cleveland Nash (1871-1969) to design their house on Hunter Hill Road. Battle, as well as his father, were active alumni, and his late grandfather, Kemp Plummer Battle, was a highly regarded president (1876-1891) and historian (and also an alumnus) of the university. Nash held the position of university architect from 1922 to 1930 and worked with the Durham builder and engineer T. C. Atwood and the consulting architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White to carry out an unprecedented expansion of the campus. His collaborations with William Kendall of McKim, Mead, and White include Venable Hall (1925), the new (now Louis Round Wilson) Library (1928), and the Graham Memorial (1931). Among his independent designs are the Carolina Inn (1924), Kenan Stadium (1927), and New Memorial Hall (1930). Trained at Harvard (A.B. 1894) and the École des Beaux-Arts (diploma 1900), Arthur C. Nash maintained a thriving practice in New York City prior to his arrival in North Carolina. He specialized in domestic and collegiate buildings, most often executed according to a Colonial Revival aesthetic. He was particularly well suited to institute the new campus master plan, which was firmly based on the premise that "there is opportunity for a renaissance of Southern Colonial at Chapel Hill." Nash's advocacy of the Colonial Revival extended beyond the university via his designs for commercial structures like the Old Hill Building (1925) in Durham and, especially, domestic

⁴ The biographical information on the Battle and Bunn families, both long-established and prominent in the Rocky Mount area, is drawn from William S. Powell, ed. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: 1979), vol. 1, pp. 113, 114, 117, and 270; *City Directories of the United States. Rocky Mount, N.C.* (Woodridge, Ct.: 2003), 1908 – 1934; United States Bureau of the Census, Tenth (1880) – Fifteenth (1930) Census, Nash County, North Carolina, Rocky Mount City and Stony Creek Township, Population Schedules; Herbert Bemerton Battle, *The Battle Book* (Montgomery, Al.: 1930), pp. xiii, 181, 193, 495, 503; James Alfred Ellis, ed., *History of the Bunn Family of America* (Chicago: 1928), pp. 284-286; Daniel Lindsey Grant, ed., *Alumni History of the University of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: 1924), Battle entries; "Battle, Winslow, Scott & Wiley, PA," www.bwsw.com. Both Thomas Hall Battle and Benjamin Hickman Bunn served terms as president of Rocky Mount Mills and mayor of Rocky Mount; the former was the great-grandson of Joel Battle, one of the founders of Rocky Mount Mills, the latter a descendent of Bennett Bunn, the builder of Stonewall (NS 7). The core of the Benvenue property containing the main house, outbuildings, and approximately twelve acres ceased to be owned by the Bunn family in 1965, see Terrell Armistead Crow and Jim Sumner, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form – Benvenue (1980), National Register Files, State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh. Benvenue (NS 11) was listed on the National Register in 1982; it is outside the U-3621 APE. Benjamin Hickman Bunn's will is recorded in Nash County Will Book 6, pp. 399-400 (probated September 2, 1907). All public records cited subsequently may be assumed to originate in Nash County unless otherwise noted. Deed Book 322, pp. 443-444 (November 15, 1927). Deed Book 330, p. 303 (May 10, 1928) records the conveyance by Harriet A. Bunn to Maud B. and Kemp D. Battle of an additional five-foot-wide strip of land along the eastern edge of the four-acre tract.

buildings like the Alexander Sprunt House in Wilmington (1929-1930) and the Governor J. Melvin Broughton House (1928) in Raleigh. The architect's association with the University of North Carolina surely recommended him to the Battles. His architectural philosophy and the success of his residential designs, to say nothing of his prestigious clients, certainly figured as well in their decision to engage him to create their new house.⁵

By the 1920s the Colonial Revival was well established as a mode of American architecture. At first glance merely one of the many period styles popular during the later nineteenth century, it actually exerted an appeal both far more complex and unique. Evocative of the (admittedly idealized) American past, the Colonial Revival undeniably satisfied nationalistic sentiments, but it also answered a growing preference for aesthetic simplicity, honesty of materials, and stylistic cohesiveness. Among the earliest buildings in Rocky Mount to display the style were the houses built along Church Street around 1900 by the city's businessmen and professionals. The residence of Thomas Hall Battle, an amalgam of irregular Queen Anne massing and somewhat randomly applied colonial ornament, was typical in its architectural conception, as well as the socio-economic status of its owner. When Thomas' son Kemp D. Battle began to plan his new house, a stricter symmetry of form and comprehensiveness of features defined the Colonial Revival ideal. In such fully realized buildings like the Battle House on Hunter Hill Road, the Colonial Revival is employed as a system or philosophy of design and not simply a decorative style. As Arthur C. Nash observed

The test of any properly designed building is that it should suitably perform the functions for which it was planned Therefore where the Colonial style is adopted ... literal copying of old models must, to a large extent, give way to a re-interpretation, or 're-creation' of that kind of architecture.

⁵ Powell, vol. 1, pp. 113, 114, and 117 and Grant, Battle entries. Powell, vol. 4, p. 357. John V. Allcott, *The Campus at Chapel Hill* (Chapel Hill: 1986), pp. 65-74; quotation from the 1921 master plan prepared by Aberthaw & Company of Atlanta (p. 66). Archibald Henderson, *The Campus of the First State University* (Chapel Hill: 1949), pp. 344-347, 351-352, 368-369, and, especially, Arthur C. Nash's account of the design philosophy guiding the 1920s building campaign, pp. 326-340. National Register and Architectural Survey Files, State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh. Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: 1990), pp. 396-397. Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: 1996), pp. 258-259 and *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: 2003), pp. 110, 192, 194, 206, 209, 231-235. Claudia P. Roberts, et al., *The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory* (Durham: 1982), pp. 30, 39-41, 243. In 1930 Nash retired and moved to Washington, D.C.; he continued his work with the University of North Carolina as a consulting architect from 1930 to 1953.

Nash considered himself “an adapter of the Classical Tradition to modern programs,” and in his work for Kemp D. Battle he created a modern house of great “dignity, repose and cultivation.”⁶

As a Colonial Revival building, albeit an exceptionally grand one, the Kemp D. Battle House exemplifies the type of residence increasingly favored by middle- and upper-class Southerners beginning in the early twentieth century. Just as the modern house incorporated historical elements, so was it perceived as expressing a contemporary prosperity rooted in a distinguished and, most significantly, antebellum past. For someone like Kemp D. Battle, conscious of his family heritage and something of an amateur historian, his house perfectly reflected his identity and achievements. As the Rocky Mount downtown aged and grew increasingly commercial, others chose to build residences outside the city limits in areas like West Haven and Falls Road. A number of ambitious houses from the 1910s and 1920s survive and illustrate various interpretations of the Colonial Revival by North Carolina architects like John Koch (Rosenbloom-Feurst House), Thomas Herman (H. Alex Easley House), H. P. S. Keller (Machaven), and John C. Stout (Frank S. Spruill House). Most are of frame construction and arguably less sophisticated than the Battle House. That the Battle House was always exceptional is suggested by the 1930 federal census recording of houses in Stony Creek Township. Of 367 dwellings noted, 60 are assigned a cash value; the average is approximately \$4800, only eight exceed \$10,000, and the Battle House leads the list at \$30,000.⁷

The division of the Benvenue property and its subsequent development in the 1930s and later as the “Benvenue Country Club Subdivision” provided the Battle House with Colonial Revival neighbors. Restrictive covenants governed the siting, scale, and design of the subdivision houses, as well as who might own them. The Benvenue houses serve as a reminder that the Colonial Revival, so often exercised as an homage to ideals of freedom and individual expression,

⁶ This brief account of the Colonial Revival is informed by Catherine W. Bishir, “Landmarks of Power” in *Where These Memories Grow*, ed. by W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: 2000), especially pp. 155-161; David Gebhard, “The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 22 (Summer-Autumn 1987), especially pp. 109-110 and 119-120; and Bridget A. May, “Progressivism and the Colonial Revival – The Modern Colonial House, 1900-1920,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 26 (Summer-Autumn 1991), especially pp. 107-111 and 121-122. Thomas Hall Battle’s house no longer stands, but is illustrated in Richard L. Mattson, *The History and Architecture of Nash County, North Carolina* (Nashville, N.C.: 1987) p. 300 and Bugs Barringer, et al., *Rocky Mount: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk, Va.: 1977), p. 103. Arthur C. Nash’s comments appear in the chapter he contributed to Henderson’s book, “Campus Architecture: Survey and Prospect,” specifically on pp. 329 and 337; in Powell, vol. 4, p. 357; and in a letter dated September 23, 1941 in the Arthur Cleveland Nash Papers held in the Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. No documentary or graphic materials related to the Kemp D. Battle House are included in the manuscript collection.

⁷ Bishir, “Landmarks of Power,” loc. cit. Powell, vol. 1, pp. 113-114. Mattson, pp. 280, 284-286, 294. United States Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census 1930, Nash County, North Carolina, Stony Creek Township (ED 64-40), Population Schedule. Will Book 9, pp. 390-392 (Harriet A. Bunn, probated December 6, 1929). Benvenue was valued at \$15,000 and the Shearin House at \$1000.

also could be appropriated to reinforce less admirable beliefs. Maud B. and Kemp D. Battle achieved prominence in civic, educational, and charitable organizations in Rocky Mount, Nash County, and the state of North Carolina. They lived in their house on Hunter Hill Road until their deaths in the 1970s. Their two daughters inherited the "homeplace" and ultimately sold it to Jack A. and Helen H. Laughery, the current owners, in 1976.⁸

Evaluation. For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, the Kemp D. Battle House is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The building qualifies for eligibility under Criterion C as significant locally and regionally in the area of architecture.

The property is **not eligible** for the National Register of Historic Places 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 pre-history or history or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a state, or the 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.*⁹ The Kemp D. Battle House does not qualify as a site of any significant event. While a product of the growth of Rocky Mount, it is not alone in representing the evolution of the region.

The property is **not eligible** for the National Register 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 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.*

⁸ Members of the Bunn family, including Maud B. Battle, retained ownership of lots in the new subdivision (see for example, Deed Book 631, pp. 333-334 (February 20, 1956). The Benvenue Country Club Subdivision is delineated in Plat Book 1, p. 156A (December 1935) and Plat Book 4, p. 60 (January 1965). Deed Book 357, p. 63 (November 25, 1931) "consolidate[s] in one description the land conveyed" to Maud B. and Kemp D. Battle by Harriet A. Bunn amounting to 11.14 acres and including the four-acre house site. Powell, vol. 1, pp. 113-114. Estate Files 73E-198 (Kemp D. Battle, probated July 11, 1973) and 75E-206 (Maud B. Battle, probated September 29, 1975). Deed Book 981, pp. 653-658 (March 4, 1976); 986, pp. 612-614 (July 29, 1976) and pp. 615-618 (June 28, 1976); and 1931, pp. 1-3 (Jack A. and Helen H. Laughery, Trustees of the Helen H. Laughery Living Trust, December 31, 2002).

⁹ United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: 1998), p. 12. All subsequent definitions of the criteria are drawn from this source.

While Maud B. and Kemp D. Battle belonged to locally prominent families and actively participated in civic life, their identities are preeminantly collective.

The property is **eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C (design/construction) for architecture. *For a property to be eligible for significance under Criterion C, 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 lack individual distinction.* The Kemp D. Battle House is an outstanding example of the Colonial Revival. It was designed by architect Arthur C. Nash, whose works at the University of North Carolina and elsewhere in the state remain valued and vital components of the built environment.

The property is **not eligible** for the National Register 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 or pre-history, and 2) the information must be considered important.* The Kemp D. Battle house is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology.

The Kemp D. Battle House retains the elements of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling that constitute its historical identity. It has experienced no perceivable alteration or deterioration; its grounds and perimeter wall remain intact as well. It thus possesses sufficient integrity to be judged a locally and regionally significant example of Colonial Revival design.

Boundary. The National Register boundary for the Kemp D. Battle House is determined by the present-day parcel containing the historic features that directly contribute to its significance. The use of existing legal boundaries is appropriate because they are consistent with the historical partition and ownership of the property, as well as its remaining integrity. The boundary is more precisely defined in Figure 6. The legal boundaries are recorded as current Nash County tax parcel number 384119723049 on property ownership map numbers 3841.19 and 3841.20. The southern and western boundary lines conform to the rights-of-way along Hunter Hill Road and Bunn Avenue respectively. The area proposed as eligible for the National Register contains approximately six acres.

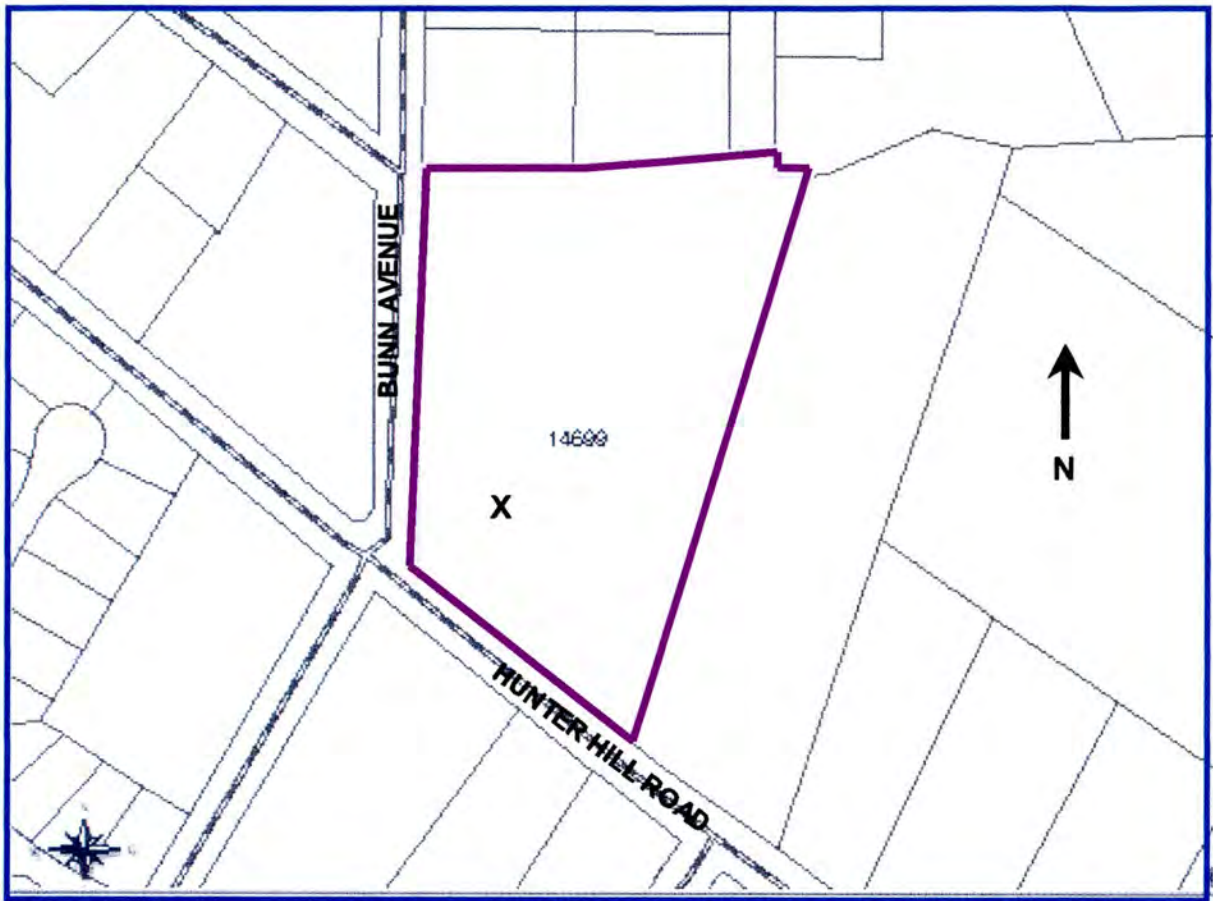


Figure 6. Property No. 13 - Kemp D. Battle House. Proposed National Register boundaries conform to those indicated on the current Nash County tax map (2005). House located at X. Not to scale.

Property No. 14 - Shearin House

Location. This property occupies the southwest quadrant of the Nicodemus Mile (SR 1615) / Bunn Avenue and Hunter Hill Road (SR 1604) intersection. Its street address is 1821 Hunter Hill Road and parcel number is 384119618852 (Nash County 2005 Tax Records).

Description. The dominant building on the property is a two-story, framed, gable-roofed dwelling resting on a continuous brick foundation (Figure 7). Its three-bay façade, approximately 38 feet long, is oriented towards Hunter Hill Road. The centrally placed main doorway is framed by four-pane sidelights, simply molded pilasters, and a deep pediment infilled with a stylized, applied sunray ornament. Symmetrically flanking the doorway and aligned in the second story are six-over-six-light, double-hung sash windows, each supplied with a plain, but bold drip cap and blinds. Windows in the side and rear elevations are similarly provided with blinds, but display more simply finished architraves. A blind gable projects from the roof over the central bay of the façade. Moderately deep soffits are closed, and cornices and rakes are plainly boxed, as are the cornice returns in each side elevation.

The original main block of the house is two bays or approximately 16 feet wide, that is, one room in depth (Figure 8). It includes an exterior brick chimney, double-shouldered and stuccoed, at its eastern end and a louvred, semi-circular vent in its western gable. The vent may mark the location of a second end chimney stack, usual in houses of this type, possibly removed during the construction of a two-story, 11-foot deep, low-hip-roofed rear addition served by an interior, double-flued chimney. The chimney, doorway, and window placement of the earliest part of the house suggest a center passage plan. A subsequent period of building further extended the house to the south with a single-story, 29-foot-deep, gable-roofed addition, including a possibly even later open porch at its southeast corner. The composition roofing and aluminum/vinyl siding of the house, as well as a reworking of the rear ell, belong to these more recent programs of improvements.

A large, modern garage and dog pen are situated just south of the house along the Nicodemus Mile Road or eastern side of the property. All three structures are clustered near one short end, specifically the northeastern corner, of the rectangular, two-acre parcel. An unpaved driveway enters the property from Nicodemus Mile Road near the Hunter Hill Road intersection. Surrounding the house are large, mature trees and other established plantings, partially screening it from the roads to its north and east, as well as from the Charleston Place subdivision to its south and west. The property is well maintained, and the condition of the structures appears excellent.



Figure 7. Shearin House. General view looking south from Hunter Hill Road (above) and north (main) elevation (below).
Photographed September 28, 2005 and November 3, 2004 respectively.





Figure 8. Shearin House. North (main) and east elevations (above) and north (main) and west elevations (below).
Photographed September 28, 2005.



History. Shortly after 1900 three brothers from Halifax County – Edward Waddell (E. W.), John Henry (J. H.), and Nick D. Shearin – began to purchase land and take up residence in Stony Creek Township, immediately west of Rocky Mount Mills. The City of Rocky Mount, just across the Tar River to the south, had recently entered a period of dramatic expansion. Its commercial amenities, particularly its tobacco market, as well as the agricultural potential of Nash County, undoubtedly figured in the Shearins’ decision to relocate in the area. In 1907 J. H. and Nick sold their equal shares in several parcels, amounting to about 245 acres, to E. W., who on the same day sold two of the parcels as a 113-acre property to J. H. The 1910 federal census for Nash County lists “John H. Sherron” as a 52-year-old farmer, the owner and resident – with his wife Stella, five children, and a boarder – of a farm in Stony Creek Township. Of the nearly 4200 farms recorded in Nash County that year, J. H. Shearin’s property, grown to 148 acres, exceeded the average in size and numbered among the 20% or so largest holdings. Identified as a general farm, it likely supported the cultivation of cotton and tobacco, both long-established cash crops in Nash County, as well as corn and garden vegetables and fruits, the latter largely for home consumption. J. H. Shearin died in 1918 apparently intestate, and the county superior court divided his property and allotted it to his wife and six children in that same year. Stella H. Shearin received a life right to “Tract No. 4” or the “Dower Tract,” some 29.5 acres containing the family’s dwelling house and graveyard (Figure 9).¹⁰

The 1920 federal census indicates that Stella Shearin continued to farm, like most residents along Hunter Hill Road. The farm no longer exceeded the Nash County average in size, but agricultural properties in general were shrinking with essentially no attendant loss of productivity. If the farm was typical, its owner was not, as only about 4% of such holdings belonged to women. In 1930 two boarders – a teacher and an office clerk – and Stella’s daughter Eva, a stenographer, shared the house with her. In that same year she granted a permanent easement on the property for an electric power line to Rocky Mount Mills. Towards the middle of the 1930s it appears that Stella moved to Eva’s house in Farmville, North Carolina. In December of 1944 she transferred

¹⁰ The identities and relationships of those members of the Shearin family associated with the property under discussion are detailed in Charles Thomas Cantrell, ed., *The 20th Century Shearin Genealogy* (n.p.: 1996), pp. 49, 105-106. The late-nineteenth- / early-twentieth-century boom of Rocky Mount is addressed concisely in Kate Mearns, *Central City Historic Buildings Inventory – Rocky Mount, North Carolina* (Rocky Mount: 1979), “Historical and Cultural Background” section and Bill Sharpe, *A New Geography of North Carolina* (Raleigh: 1954), vol. 1, pp. 295-297. Deed Book 132, pp. 66 (December 18, 1902) and 120 (January 9, 1903); and 162, pp. 273 and 275 (December 5, 1907). United States Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census 1910, Nash County, North Carolina, Stony Creek Township (E.D. 78), Schedule 1 – Population, p. 6B. The Nash County farm profile for 1910 is derived from the University of Virginia – Geospatial and Statistical Data Center – Historical Census Browser, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus>, hereafter cited as Historical Census Browser. W. D. Lee and S. R. Bacon, *Soil Survey of Nash County, North Carolina* (Washington, D.C.: 1926), pp. 4-9. Deed Book 193, pp. 223-225 (December 7, 1918).

ownership of the "Dower Tract" to Eva and her husband B.M. Lewis, who within a month sold it to Hunter Hill Road neighbors Maud B. and Kemp D. Battle (see Property No. 13), reserving rights in the graveyard located on the property. Stella Shearin died in 1951 and joined her husband John H. Shearin and other members of the extended family "in the family cemetery at the homeplace near Rocky Mount."¹¹

The Battles apparently continued the cultivation of the Shearin "Dower Tract," predominantly in cotton and tobacco, through leasing the land, as most likely did Stella Shearin during the 1930s and early 1940s. They also sold about half of its acreage in several small parcels, most destined to become sites for the new single-family houses that proliferated along Hunter Hill Road in the post-World War II years. In 1950 Arthur E. and Mae Nichols Shearin purchased and took up residence in "the old John H. Shearin home" and surrounding 14.67 acres, thus restoring the property to their family's ownership. At Arthur's death in 1979 his son Edwin A. Shearin inherited the 14.6-acre property. In 1994 Edwin sold the house and the two acres immediately surrounding it to Louis B. Weeks, the current owner. Over the next several years he also sold the remaining acreage to the developers of the Charleston Place subdivision, reserving access to the family cemetery.¹²

The original part of the Shearin House is believed to have been built prior to the Civil War, possibly as early as during the 1840s. That a structure existed on the land purchased by the Shearin brothers in the early 1900s is certain, given the evidence of the 1902 USGS Rocky Mount quadrangle map, as well as the relative price paid for the property (Figure 10). That the building served an established agricultural operation is proved by the inclusion of farming implements and machinery, as well as hogs and cattle "on said farm," in an earlier, 1901 deed for the land. The title prior to 1896 is somewhat obscured by contested ownership, court-ordered sales, and reported lost documents, but Nash County land records suggest that the property may have been part of the

¹¹ United States Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census 1920, Nash County, North Carolina, Stony Creek Township (E.D. 88), Schedule 1 – Population, p. 18B and Fifteenth Census 1930, Nash County, North Carolina, Stony Creek Township (E.D. 64-40), Population Schedule, p. 17A. The 1920 Nash County farm profile is drawn from the Historical Census Browser. Deed Book 352, pp. 231-232 (August 19, 1930). Obituary of Stella Shearin, *The [Rocky Mount] Evening Telegram* 20 December 1951, p. 5B, col. 2. Deed Book 491, pp. 350-351 (December 16, 1944) and 375 (January 1, 1945). Timothy W. Rackley, ed., *Nash County North Carolina Church and Family Cemeteries* (Kernersville, NC: 1997), K-Z vol., p. 66 ("John H. Shearin Cemetery").

¹² The deed conveying 6.13 acres of the J. H. Shearin "Dower Tract" (Deed Book 491, p. 454 – March 7, 1945) stipulates that the entire 29.5 acres "shall remain as a unit for allocation of cotton and tobacco acreage allotments" and prohibits the cultivation of both crops on the acreage sold. Deed Book 557, p. 200 (December 28, 1950). Arthur Shearin was the nephew of J. H. Shearin, the son of J.H.'s half-brother Nick. Estate Files 69-E-297 (N[ick]. D. Shearin, d. June 17, 1960); 79E-18 (Mae N. Shearin, d. September 28, 1978); 79E-119 (Arthur E. Shearin, d. March 30, 1979). Deed Book 1443, pp. 884-885 (February 25, 1994) and Plat Book 22, p. 89 (August 27, 1993). Plat Book 24, p. 330 (February 28, 1997).

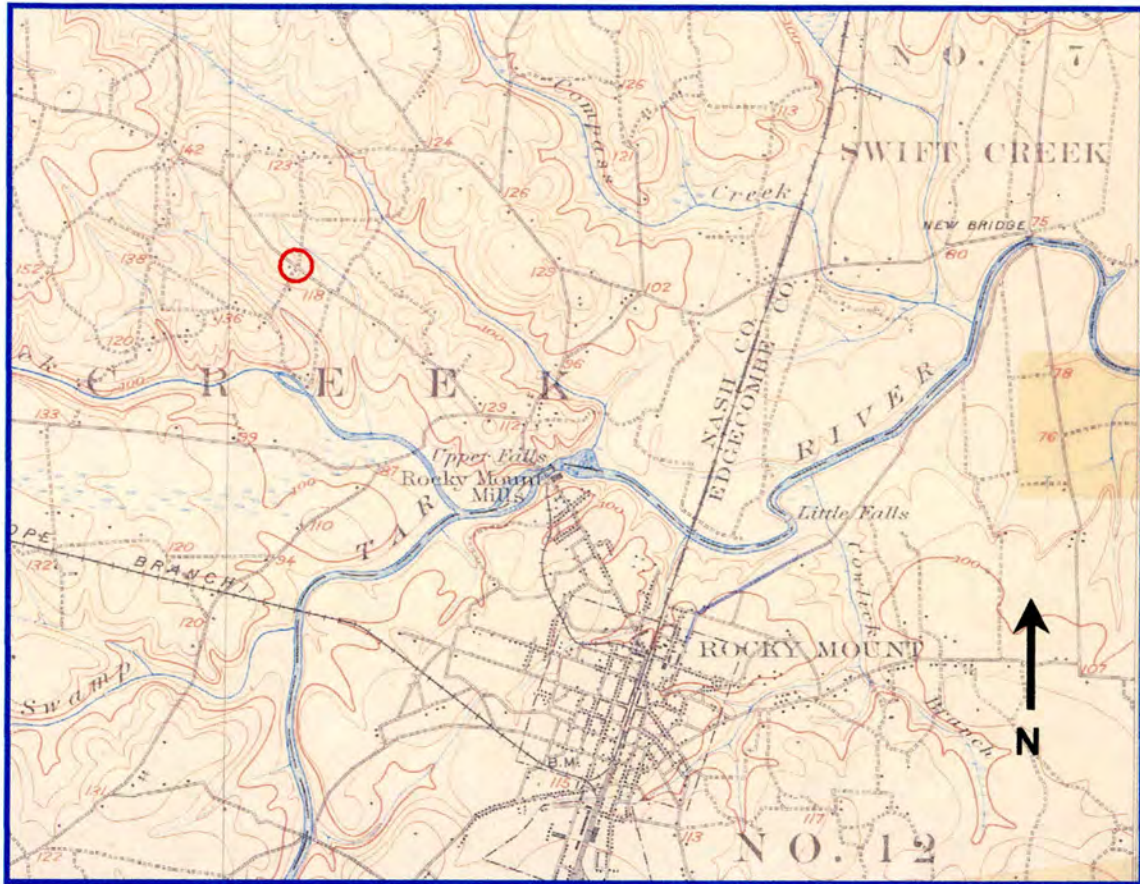


Figure 10. Detail of 1902 Rocky Mount quadrangle (USGS: 1904 ed., 1:62500). The Shearin House and adjacent Hunter Hill Road intersection are circled in red. The unpaved predecessors of Nicodemus Mile Road ("Shearin's Road") and Bunn Avenue are delineated, as is Benvenue; the site of the Kemp D. Battle House (Property No. 13) remains vacant (see Figures 5 and 9).

"Newby Home tract." Mary V. Shearin, wife of John D. Shearin, appears to have owned the property in the 1880s, and her father Thomas N. Newby is the probable antebellum resident -- and perhaps builder -- of the Shearin House. The 1880 federal census lists farmer John D. Shearin, his wife Mary, and their family as living in Stony Creek Township, so perhaps they occupied, at least for a while, the house on Hunter Hill Road. Thomas N. Newby's land acquisitions appear to include what would become the Shearin property; an 1855 deed locates a tract "on the road from Rocky Mount to Hilliardston [essentially Hunter Hill Road] near said Newby's dwelling house." The 1864 map of eastern North Carolina by Confederate engineer Jeremy Francis Gilmer places a "Mrs Newby," presumably Thomas' widow Roena, in a location north of the Tar River consistent with such a chain of ownership. The property passed through a quick succession of owners during the 1890s until its return to Shearin ownership in 1903.¹³

The form of the Shearin House – two-story, single-pile, gable-roofed with a symmetrically disposed façade – is consistent with a circa-1900 or, indeed, a late-antebellum construction date. The Shearin House is an example of a vernacular domestic type whose geography is as broad as its chronology. Often referred to as the "I-house," it appeared from the Chesapeake to the Upland South to the Mid-west, from the late-eighteenth century to the early decades of

¹³ The building is represented in the "Old Homes, Buildings, and Sites" section (p. 313) of *Nash County Historical Notes* (Rocky Mount: 1976), edited by T. E. Ricks, as "Arthur Shearin House. Pre Civil War. Two rooms are quite old but are obscured by later additions. In excellent condition." T. E. Ricks cites Arthur Shearin as the source of the 1840s date (interview with author, September 11, 2005). The 1976 county survey notes (State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh) record the owner's statement that the house was rented in 1867 and described by its tenant as old at that time. A year later the "Tar-Neuse" survey described the structure as "a mid-nineteenth century two-story frame house" ("Historical and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin – Appendix for Region L" (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1977), p. 16-13). USGS Rocky Mount quadrangle (1:62500), 1902; Deed Book 162, pp. 273-275 (December 5, 1907). Deed Book 122, pp. 347-349 (December 13, 1901). Difficulties in the title are addressed in Deed Book 97, pp. 492-494 (May 21, 1896) and 46, pp. 103-104 (February 22, 1881). John Dawson Shearin was the second cousin once removed of E. W., J. H., and Nick Shearin (Cantrell, pp. 5-6, 10, 20, 49 and www.familysearch.org). In 1875 he and Mary V. Newby were married by Elder P. B. Gold of the nearby Falls of the Tar Particular (Primitive) Baptist Church (Timothy W. Rackley, ed., *Nash County North Carolina Marriages 1869-1887* (Kernersville, NC: 1997), p. 68). John Walker, et al., eds., *Nash County, North Carolina Federal Census of 1880* (Lucama, NC: 1999), pp. 121 and 358. Thomas Newby's real estate purchases are detailed in Deed Book 18, pp. 19-20 (August 28, 1841) and 20-21 (November 15, 1842); 21, pp. 215-216 (November 11, 1851), 219 (1855), and 315 (April 2, 1856). Newby's relative prosperity is indicated by his productive farm of 313 acres on which he grew cotton, corn, and market vegetables, as well as his ownership at his death in 1853 of four slaves (United States Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census 1850, Nash County, North Carolina, Schedule 4 – Agriculture, pp.17-18 and Estates Records 1853, p. 361. Jeremy Francis Gilmer, "Map of Eastern North Carolina" (Richmond: 1864), Map Collection (MC 101-A), North Carolina State Library and Archives, Raleigh; Deed Book 22, p. 9 (February 1853) records Roena Newby's one-third interest in her recently deceased husband Thomas' lands. Orders and Decrees, vol. 3, pp. 225-260 (May 11, 1894). Deed Book 102, pp. 114-116 (November 21, 1896); 122, pp. 347-349 (December 13, 1901); and 132, p. 120 (January 9, 1903).

the twentieth. Regional and temporal variations in materials, embellishment, and expansion rendered the I-house exceptionally versatile, and it always expressed a certain level of economic success achieved by the owner. Greatly favored throughout North Carolina, the I-house in the Nash County area was typically framed, three bays in width, served by exterior end chimnies, and often augmented with shed-roofed, full-length front porches and rear-room additions. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, hip-roofed front porches and perpendicularly placed rear ells emerged as the preferred elements for enlarging I-houses. At the same time the application of a central gable became a very popular method for modernizing the façades of not only I-houses, but all manner of domestic buildings.¹⁴

The Coley House (NS 19), located just west of Rocky Mount near Dortches and built around 1910, is a late example of the I-house, somewhat less attenuated than the earlier Shearin House, but displaying the same basic form. Mid-nineteenth-century examples of the type surviving in the county more closely resemble the Shearin House in proportion, including roof pitch, and size. The Amos Ricks House near Oak Level and the Harris-Baines House in Spring Hope are but two of a number of such buildings, all displaying features – like the Queen Anne-ornamented front porch and central gable of the latter – acquired after initial construction. The presence of the I-house in not only rural but urbanized locations, is illustrated by the depiction of several such buildings in a painting by local artist Lena Bulluck Davis (1882-1967) entitled “Rocky Mount at the Turn of the Century (Essence of Times Around 1900)” (Figure 11). Davis’ work depicts the city, in spirited architectural detail, from a vantage point near Stonewall (the Lewis House) and the Falls of the Tar Particular Baptist Church (Property No. 1) at the southeastern end of the U-3621 project area. The growth of Rocky Mount and the expansion of the city into the surrounding farmlands, especially during the first several decades of the twentieth century, removed many venerable I-houses from the local landscape. The Shearin House is a rare survivor of the type near and now within the city limits.¹⁵

¹⁴ Fred Kniffen, “Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55 (December 1965): 549-577. Michael Southern, “The I-House as a Carrier of Style in Three Counties of the Northeastern Piedmont” in Doug Swaim, ed., *Carolina Dwelling* (Raleigh: 1978), pp. 71-72 and 80-82. Doug Swaim, “North Carolina Folk Housing” in Swaim, pp. 38-39 and 42-43. Bishir and Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*, pp. 19, 37, 38, and 332. Mattson, pp. 14-16, 19, 24-25, 42, 98, 118, 123, 163-164, 222, 227, 229-230, 246, 251, 257.

¹⁵ Mattson, pp. 123, 222, and 230. The Davis painting is owned by the Nash County Historical Society (ACT 02 05 01). See *Lena Bulluck Davis: Retrospective* [exhibition catalog] (Rocky Mount: 2002). Observations about the relative absence of the older I-house from the Rocky Mount vicinity are based upon the graphic record and existing architectural survey materials – including Ricks, op cit.; Barringer, et al.; Monika S. Fleming, *Rocky Mount and Nash County* (Charleston, SC: 1998); Survey Files, State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh – as well as recent field investigation.



Figure 11. “Rocky Mount at the Turn of the Century (Essence of Times around 1900)” by Lena Bullock Davis (1882-1967). Oil on board, ca. 1950-1960. Collection of the Nash County Historical Society. Photographed with permission in September 2005. View is from the vicinity of the southeastern end of the project area.

The Shearin House may have received all the usual augmentations at various times in its existence; certainly a rear ell and central gable are present today. A full structural investigation can supply a firmer chronology of building change, but the currently available physical and documentary evidence indicates three key periods of development: 1) the initial construction of a typical I-house sometime in the middle of the nineteenth century, 2) a major expansion during the early years of the twentieth century, and 3) further renovation around the end of the twentieth century. The likelihood of a mid-nineteenth-century origin for the house, addressed above, is further suggested by the contention that the Shearins expanded their new residence during the early 1900s. The rear ell indicated on the 1918 division plat (Figure 9), as well as the center gable, probably date to this second period of building. The ell may be the same element photographed (incompletely) for the 1976 county survey and, in turn, remodelled in a third campaign of improvements. The Shearin House not only exemplifies a regionally important building type, but a classic pattern of continuing architectural use and adaptation. Moreover, its presence within today's city limits recalls the rural, agricultural character that prevailed along Hunter Hill Road and in the Rocky Mount environs well into the twentieth century.¹⁶

Evaluation. For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, the Shearin House is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The building qualifies for eligibility under Criterion C as significant locally in the area of architecture.

The property is **not eligible** for the National Register of Historic Places 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 pre-history or history or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a state, or the 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.* The Shearin House property reflected a certain level of economic success for its several owners and occupants, but served only one of many such farms in a traditionally agriculturally productive area.

The property is **not eligible** for the National Register 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*

¹⁶ Survey Files, State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh. "Historical and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin – Appendix for Region L," loc. cit.

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. While members of the Shearin family and other owners and occupants of the property achieved varying degrees of local prominence, they derived their identities chiefly from associations with occupational and social groups rather than notable individual activities.

The Shearin House is **eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C (design/construction) for architecture. *For a property to be eligible for significance under Criterion C, 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 lack individual distinction.* The Shearin House is one of several examples of its type surviving in Nash County, a type also well represented in the region and state as a whole. The evident structural and ornamental changes over the course of the twentieth century, as well as the absence of domestic and agricultural outbuildings, may be viewed as a loss of historical integrity to some degree. However, the additions and augmentations ultimately should be appreciated as characteristic methods for adapting the I-house to local needs and aspirations. Now within the city limits, the Shearin House figures among the oldest surviving structures in Rocky Mount, representing similar buildings that once stood in the early town and its hinterlands. The loss of the farm buildings and much of its original acreage eliminates the property from consideration as an agricultural complex or landscape.

The Shearin House is **not eligible** for the National Register 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 or pre-history, and 2) the information must be considered important.* The Shearin House is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology.

The Shearin House retains the elements of location and design that constitute its historical identity. Standing on its original site, the building conveys its essential style and configuration through massing, window and door placement, and a conformity with classic patterns of I-house enlargement and ornamentation. The Shearin House clearly expresses its historical, and current, purpose. While the acreage and support buildings of the farm the house served no longer exist, a vestige of its setting remains in the relationship of the house to its immediate surroundings, specifically the roads to its north and east, and in the long-established vegetation on the site, particularly to its north. The Shearin House

thus possesses sufficient integrity to be judged a locally significant example of domestic design.

Boundary. The National Register Boundary for the Shearin House is determined by the present-day parcel containing the historic features that directly contribute to its significance. The use of existing legal boundaries is appropriate because they are consistent with the historical partition and ownership of the property, as well as its remaining integrity. The boundary is more precisely defined in Figure 12. The legal boundaries are recorded as current Nash County tax parcel number 384119618852 on property ownership map number 3841.19. The northern and eastern boundary lines follow the existing rights-of-way along Hunter Hill Road (SR 1604) and Nicodemus Mile Road (SR 1615) respectively and a 10-foot-by-70-foot sight distance easement at the intersection of the two roads (Plat Book 22, p. 89 (August 27, 1993)). The area proposed as eligible for the National Register contains approximately two acres.

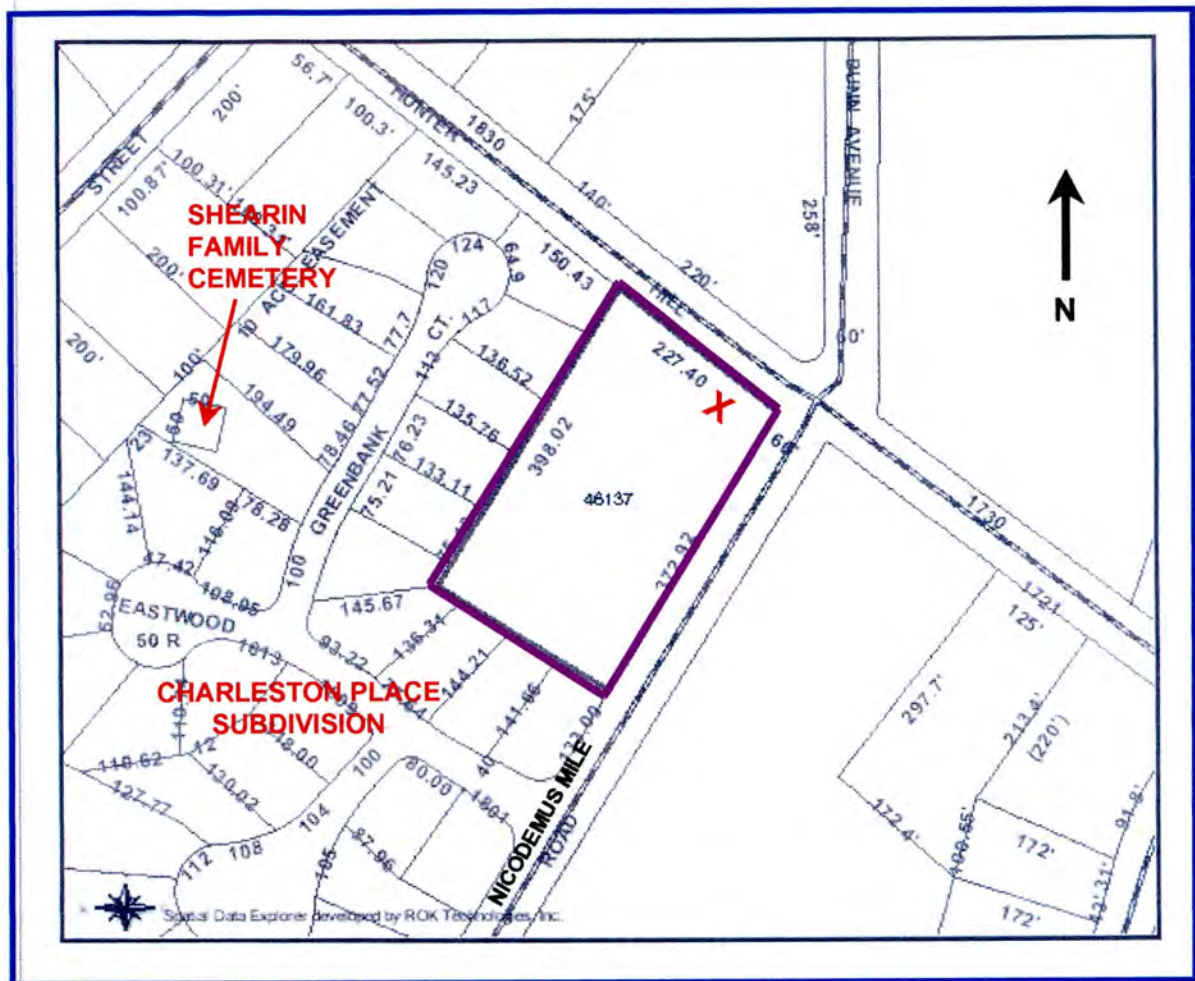


Figure 12. Property No. 14 - Shearin House. Proposed National Register boundaries conform to those indicated on the current Nash County tax map (2005). House located at X. Not to scale.

**PROPERTIES EVALUATED
AND
DETERMINED NOT ELIGIBLE
FOR THE
NATIONAL REGISTER
OF
HISTORIC PLACES**



Figure 13. Property No. 9 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 14. Property No. 10 - House (Parsonage of First Church of the Nazarene). The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 15. Property No. 11 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 16. Property No. 12 - House (representative example). The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 17. Property No. 15 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 18. Property No. 16 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 19. Property No. 17 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 20. Property No. 18 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 21. Property Nos. 19 (left) and 20 - Houses. The properties have been determined not eligible for the National Register because they are neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 22. Property No. 21 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 23. Property No. 22 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 24. Property No. 23 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 25. Property No. 24 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 26. Property No. 25 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 27. Property Nos. 26 (left) - House and 27 - House. The properties have been determined not eligible for the National Register because they are neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 28. Property No. 28 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 29. Property No. 29 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 30. Property No. 30 - Spring Green Church. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 31. Property No. 31 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 32. Property No. 32 - House. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 33. Property No. 33 - St. Paul's Baptist Church. The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



Figure 34. Property No. 34 - House. Main (north) and east elevations (above) and view west towards property from southeast corner of N. Winstead Avenue (SR 1613) and Hunter Hill Road (SR 1604) intersection (below). The property has been determined not eligible for the National Register because it is neither historically nor architecturally significant. Photographed November 3, 2004.



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APPENDIX

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

Project Description: Widen SR 1604 (Hunter Hill Road) between SR 1613 (N. Winstead Ave) and SR 1616 (Country Club Drive). N.B. This is an extension of the original project, located between SR 1616 (Country Club Drive and NC 43/48 (Benvenue Road).

On November 29, 2004 representatives of the

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

Reviewed the subject project at

- 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 Criteria Consideration G within the project's area of potential effects.
- There are properties over fifty years old within the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE), but based on the historical information available and the photographs of each property, the property identified as **(List Attached)** is considered not eligible for the National Register and no further evaluation of it is necessary. **#9-12, 15-35 (#13 & 14 to be studied)**
- There are no National Register-listed or Study Listed properties within the project's area of potential effects.
- All properties greater than 50 years of age located in the APE have been considered at this consultation, and based upon the above concurrence, all compliance for historic architecture with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and GS 121-12(a) has been completed for this project.
- There are no historic properties affected by this project. *(Attach any notes or documents as needed)*

Signed:

Vanessa E. Patrick 11-29-04
 Representative, NCDOT Date

N/A
 FHWA, for the Division Administrator, or other Federal Agency Date

Seamus D. [Signature] 11/29/04
 Representative, HPO Date

Renee Hedhill-Early 11/29/04
 State Historic Preservation Officer Date