



**North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office**

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Division of Historical Resources
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June 18, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Greg Thorpe, Manager
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: David Brook *David Brook*

SUBJECT: Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Replacement of
Bridge No. 338 on SR 1362 over Roaring Fork Creek, B-4013, Ashe County,
ER02-8493

Thank you for your letter of May 6, 2003, transmitting the survey report by Circa, Inc.

We concur that there are no properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) that are eligible for listing in the National Register.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Circa, Inc.
Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

bc: Southern/McBride
County

www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us

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HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT

REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGE NO. 338 ON S.R. 1320
OVER ROARING FORK CREEK
ASHE COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
T.I.P. NO. B-4013
STATE PROJECT NO. 8.2712301
FEDERAL-AID PROJECT NO. BRZ-1320 (4)

Prepared for:

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Prepared by:

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April 2003

Mary Pope
Historic Architecture, NCDOT

5.6.2003

**Replacement of Bridge No. 338 on SR 1320
over Roaring Fork Creek
Ashe County
TIP No. B-4013
State Project No. 8.2712301
Federal-Aid Project No. BRZ-1320 (4)**

Management Summary

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 338 on SR 1320 over Roaring Fork Creek in Ashe County (Figure 1). The project proposes to replace the existing bridge with a wider, safer structure. Alternatives 1 & 2 entail the construction of a new structure, either a box culvert or a new bridge, located on new alignment on the downstream (northwest) side of the existing bridge (Figures 2 & 3). There will be no new construction for the purpose of a detour during construction. Either the existing bridge will be used as the on-site detour or traffic will be detoured to SR 1319 and SR 1317.

Circa, Inc. conducted the intensive survey by automobile and by foot in January 2003, covering one hundred percent of the Area of Potential Effects (APE). Circa photographed, mapped, and evaluated every property over fifty years of age within the APE. Those properties considered worthy of further analysis were researched and evaluated in January 2003.

In addition to the field survey of the project area, Circa reviewed the survey files, as well as National Register and Study List files, at the Survey and Planning Branch of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh. Background research was also conducted at the Ashe County Courthouse in Jefferson, the Ashe County Public Library in West Jefferson, and in a meeting with the property owner.

Circa staff delineated the APE, which includes parcels immediately adjacent to the present bridge and those impacted, physically or visually, by any of the proposed alternatives. One property, the Laurel Hill Baptist Church, was identified within the APE, and evaluated as part of this report.

Properties Listed in the National Register or the North Carolina State Study List: None.

Properties Evaluated and considered eligible for the National Register: None

**Properties Evaluated and considered not eligible for the National Register:
Laurel Hill Baptist Church.**

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**Replacement of Bridge No. 338 on SR 1320
over Roaring Fork Creek
Ashe County
TIP No. B-4013
State Project No. 8.2712301
Federal-Aid Project No. BRZ-1320 (4)**

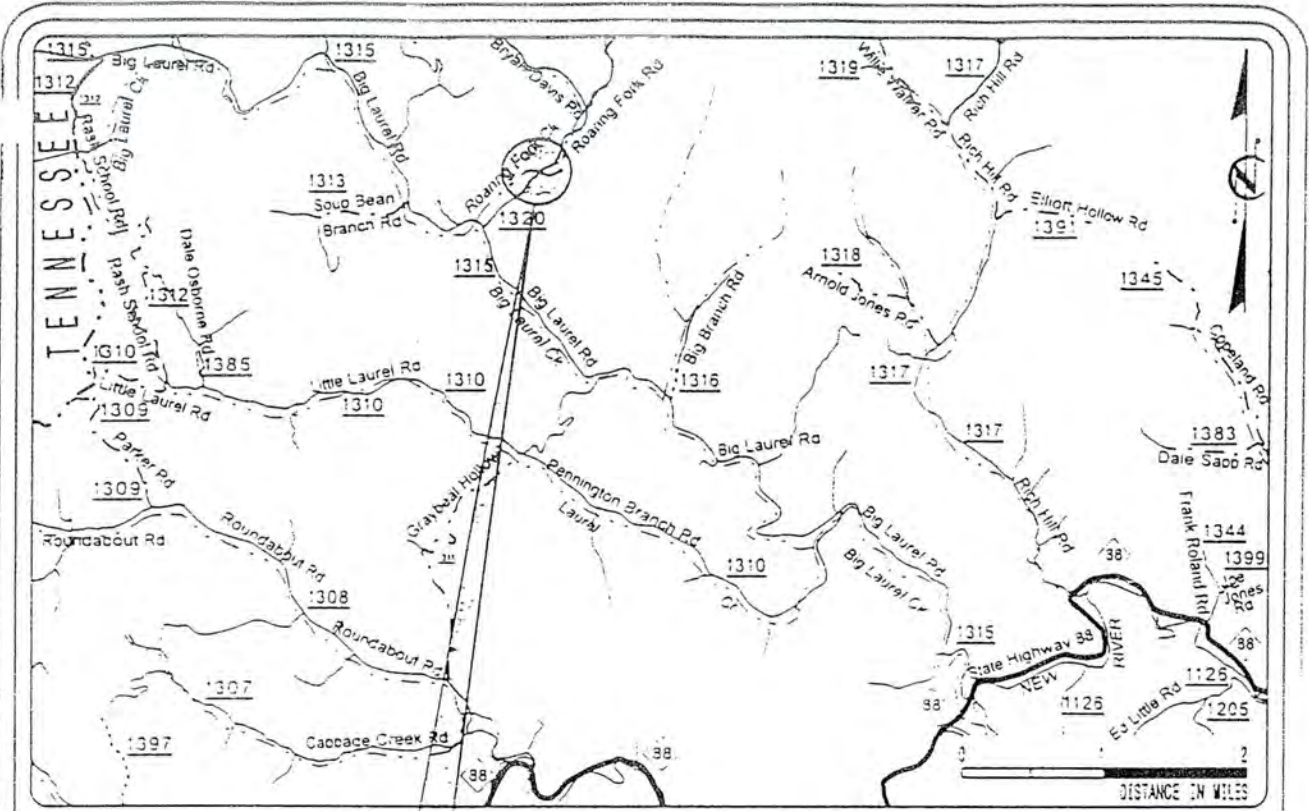
Project Description

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 338 on SR 1320 over Roaring Fork Creek in Ashe County (Figure 1). The current bridge, completed in 1967, consists of a timber floor on I-beams with a substructure of timber posts and caps. Bridge No. 338 is classified as structurally insufficient by the NCDOT Bridge Maintenance Unit, scoring a sufficiency rating of 34.3 out of a possible 100 in 1999.

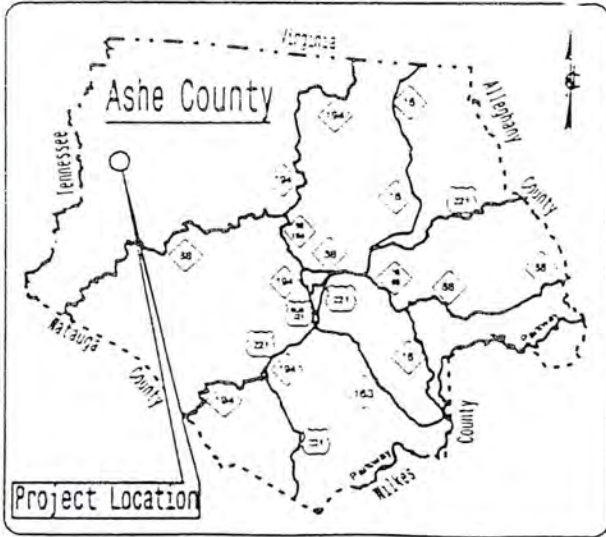
The project entails the replacement of the existing bridge with a wider, safer structure. Alternatives 1 & 2 entail the construction of a new structure, either a box culvert or a new bridge, located on new alignment on the downstream (northwest) side of the existing bridge (Figures 2 & 3). There will be no new construction for the purpose of a detour during construction. Either the existing bridge will be used as the on-site detour or traffic will be detoured to SR 1319 and SR 1317.

Purpose of Survey and Report

A survey was conducted to identify all historic resources located within the area of potential effects (APE) and its immediate vicinity (Figures 2 & 3). This survey and report are part of the environmental studies conducted by NCDOT and documented by a categorical exclusion (CE). This report was prepared as a technical appendix to the CE and is part of the compliance documentation required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended. Section 106 of the NHPA states that if a federally funded, licensed, or permitted project has an effect on a property listed in, or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation should be given an opportunity to comment on the proposed undertaking. This report is on file with NCDOT and available for review by the public.



PROJECT LOCATION



SR 1320
(ROARING FORK ROAD)
REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 338 over
ROARING FORK CREEK

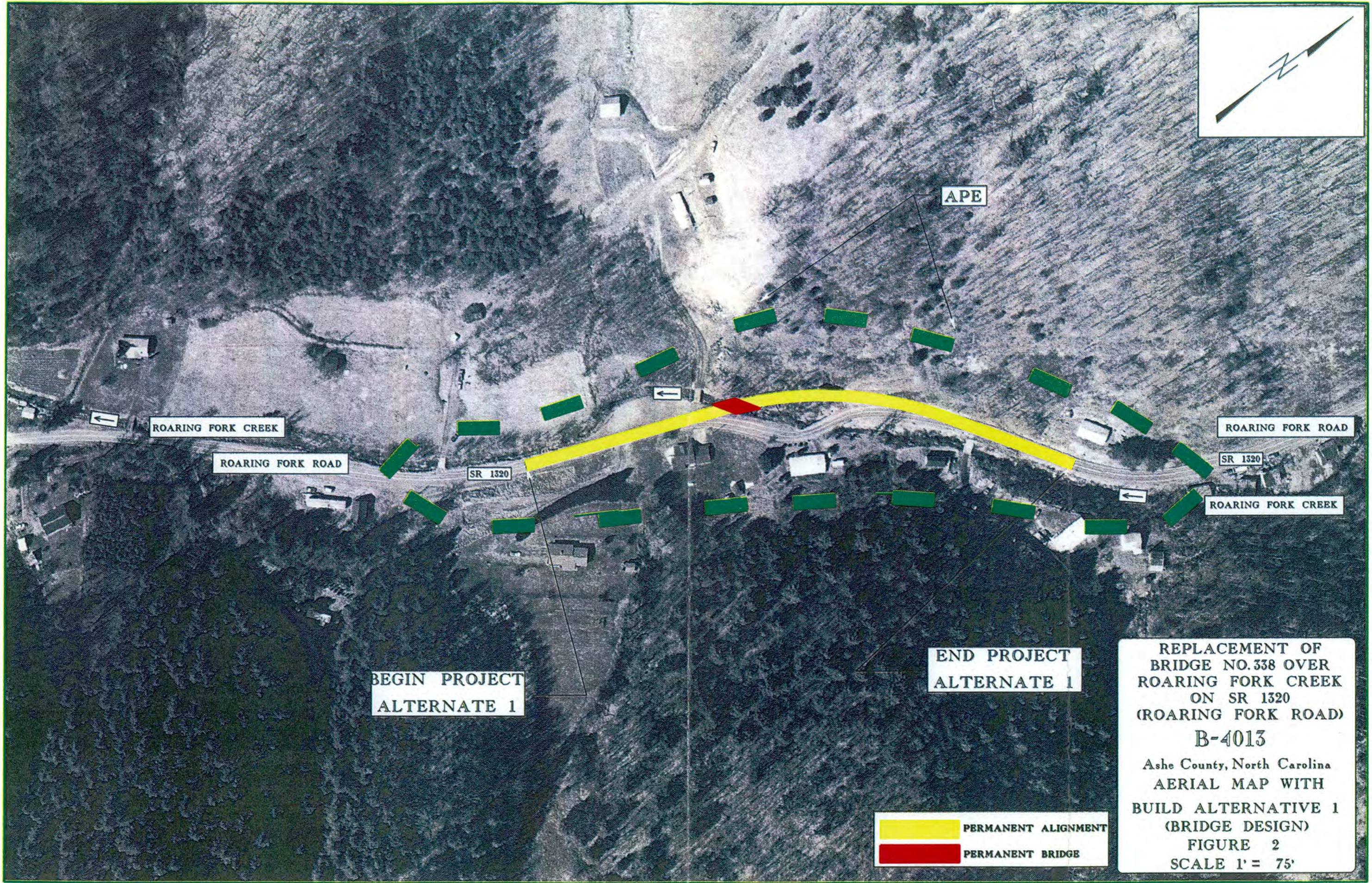
B-4013

Ashe County, North Carolina

PROJECT VICINITY

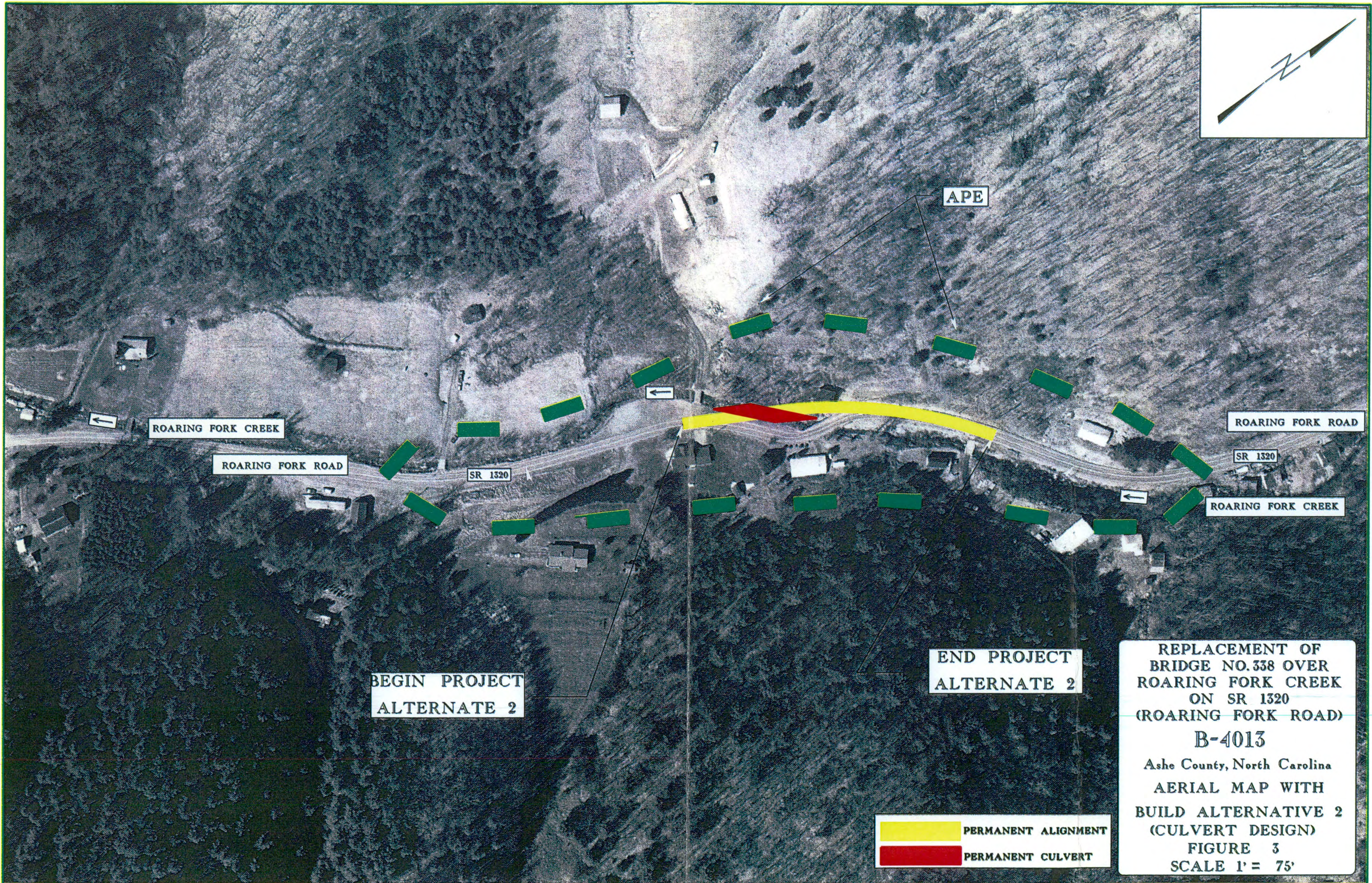
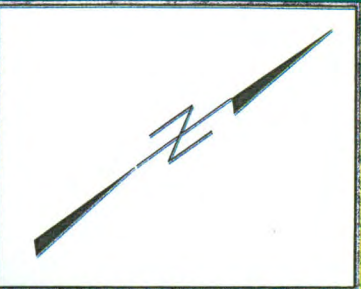
Figure 1

11/15/02



PERMANENT ALIGNMENT
PERMANENT BRIDGE

REPLACEMENT OF
BRIDGE NO. 338 OVER
ROARING FORK CREEK
ON SR 1320
(ROARING FORK ROAD)
B-4013
Ashe County, North Carolina
AERIAL MAP WITH
BUILD ALTERNATE 1
(BRIDGE DESIGN)
FIGURE 2
SCALE 1' = 75'



ROARING FORK CREEK

ROARING FORK ROAD

SR 1320

BEGIN PROJECT
ALTERNATE 2

APE

END PROJECT
ALTERNATE 2

ROARING FORK ROAD

SR 1320

ROARING FORK CREEK

PERMANENT ALIGNMENT
PERMANENT CULVERT

REPLACEMENT OF
BRIDGE NO. 338 OVER
ROARING FORK CREEK
ON SR 1320
(ROARING FORK ROAD)
B-4013
Ashe County, North Carolina
AERIAL MAP WITH
BUILD ALTERNATE 2
(CULVERT DESIGN)
FIGURE 3
SCALE 1" = 75'

Methodology

This report was prepared in accordance with the provisions of Federal Highways 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 CRR 44716); 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60; and the Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources by NCDOT. This report meets the guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service.

This survey was conducted to evaluate the Laurel Hill Baptist Church and determine its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. An earlier field survey of the APE and immediate vicinity identified the church as potentially eligible. The methodology included field recordation of the church and surroundings and background research of the project area and region. The research was conducted at the Survey and Planning Branch of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh, the Ashe County Courthouse in Jefferson, the Ashe County Public Library in West Jefferson, and during a meeting with the property owner.

Summary of Survey Findings

The project area includes one potentially eligible historic resource. That property, the Laurel Hill Baptist Church, was constructed in 1954 and **does not meet National Register Criterion Consideration G** for properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years. The church represents a common building type, of which more historically and architecturally significant examples survive in Ashe County.

Properties Listed in the National Register or the North Carolina State Study List:
None.

Properties Evaluated and considered eligible for the National Register: None

Properties Evaluated and considered not eligible for the National Register: Laurel Hill Baptist Church.

Brief History of Ashe County

Note: This section adapted from "Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Replacement of Bridge No. 281 on SR 1358 Over Big Horse Creek, Ashe County, TIP No. B-4014."

The project area is located in the northwest corner of Ashe County, in the northwest corner of North Carolina. The county is approximately 3,000 feet above sea level, on the west side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Because of the mountain barrier, Ashe County became known as one of the "lost provinces" of North Carolina. Prior to the Good Roads Movement of the 1920s, Ashe County was relatively isolated from the eastern part of the state. However, trade was possible with the neighboring states of Virginia and Tennessee due to the numerous passes through the Stone Mountains and the north-flowing New River. Despite its relative isolation, Ashe County was unique among the mountain counties of western North Carolina because of its rolling, rather than rugged, terrain and fertile farmland, which is well watered by the New River and its tributaries. Because of these conditions, Ashe County has remained overwhelmingly agrarian throughout its history.

Named for Governor Samuel Ashe, Ashe County was created in 1799 after settlers arrived in the area from the Shenandoah Valley to the north and the North Carolina Piedmont to the east. Sited at the base of Mount Jefferson, the county seat of Jefferson was incorporated in 1803, but has remained small in part because the county's gentle topography and good farmland encouraged settlers to disperse uniformly throughout the county. Small crossroads communities with stores, mills, and churches emerged to serve nearby farms, and the county developed few large towns. Located just a few miles south of the county seat, West Jefferson emerged in the early-twentieth century as the commercial center of Ashe County after a branch of the Norfolk and Western Railway was extended south from Virginia in 1915.

Since its founding at the end of the American Revolution, Ashe County has been rural, with more than ninety-one percent of its area designated as farmland into the late 1950s. Despite good farming conditions, poor transportation and the absence of ready markets stymied the development of commercial agriculture, and subsistence farms predominated in Ashe County until the early-twentieth century when the economy diversified somewhat. The early settlers cultivated rye, buckwheat and corn. Eventually, these fields turned to grasses, which in turn supported livestock. In 1879, there were thirty-eight cattle traders in the county. Livestock production continued to be a profitable part of the agricultural economy through the twentieth century, and by the post-World War I period Ashe County was the leading producer of beef and dairy cattle in the state and the second largest producer of sheep. Ashe, along with neighboring Watauga and Allegheny Counties, has also been a major producer of wool and dairy products. Only since the 1920s has Ashe County joined other mountain counties in cultivating burley tobacco as a cash crop. By 1965 it had become the third leading producer in North Carolina.

Manufacturing has remained a minor part of the economy, employing less than nine percent of the county work force into the 1960s. Much of the manufacturing sector has been concentrated in the processing of agricultural products, timber-related industries and some textile products.

Because of its largely subsistence economy and geographical isolation, Ashe County was generally less affected by the Civil War than other regions of the state. Both Union and Confederate sympathizers were present, and clashes between the two groups were common. The county remained a Republican stronghold through the end of the nineteenth century, in contrast to the rest of North Carolina.

In addition to agriculture, a number of minerals were discovered during the late antebellum period, and several mining communities emerged by the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1870s, Ore Knob was a bustling boomtown for copper mining, leading the nation in the production of the metal. During its brief period of prosperity, Ore Knob was the largest town in the county. The community quickly declined with the closing of the mines in the 1880s and has since vanished. Throughout the nineteenth century iron was also mined, and number of forges were established for iron production. Unlike Ore Knob, the town of Helton, which once boasted several iron mines and forges, survives although its iron production has long since ended. By 1884, Creston, with its grist and saw mills, tannery and furniture and wagon factory, had emerged as the largest town in Ashe County.

Like much of western North Carolina, a seasonal tourist industry began to emerge in Ashe County by the end of the nineteenth century as wealthy families wanting to escape the summer heat began to "take the waters" at local mineral springs. Spa resorts such as Shatley Springs, Thompson's Bromine, Arsenic Springs (NR), and the Glendale Springs flourished with seasonal visitors.

In the 1970s, Ashe County found itself embroiled in controversy with a proposal by the Appalachian Power Company to dam the New River in Virginia, effectively impounding the river on the North Carolina side. Environmentalist succeeded in having the river designated as a Wild and Scenic River, and the proposal died. Since then, Ashe County has profited from the growing interest in outdoor sports, particularly rafting, and the river valleys of the county have become popular spots for vacation home construction. Despite these changes, the rural, agrarian way of life survives remarkably intact in Ashe County.

Brief History of the Union Baptists in Ashe County

Baptist migration began in the early 1770s as settlers traveled from North Carolina's Piedmont and the Shenandoah River valley to the Blue Ridge region. Revolutionary War General William Lenoir, who settled in what today is Wilkes County, noted a large Baptist church and community meeting house at Mulberry Fields near Wilkesboro, in the 1770s. By 1799, the year of Ashe County's creation, the Mountain Baptist Association contained ten churches: New River, North Fork of New River, South Fork of Roaring River, Beaver Creek, Head of Yadkin, Cedar Island, and Three Forks in North Carolina, as well as Rye Valley and St. Claire's Bottom were located in Virginia (A. L. Fletcher, 152). Given Ashe County's isolation, it was not uncommon for churches of any denomination to form associations with those in southern Virginia.

By the 1830s, two distinct ideologies were developing within the Baptist denomination statewide. In Ashe County 1853 became known as the "year of the great split," when the "Missionary Baptists" formally withdrew from the Mountain Baptist Association. The "Primitive Baptists" disapproved of the Missionary Baptists participation in domestic and foreign missionary activities. The Primitive Baptists believed that the missionary lifestyle and philosophy glorified the individual over religious practice and belief in God.

The Civil War further divided the denominations as Missionary Baptist congregations generally supported the Confederate cause and some Primitive Baptists allied with Union interests. In 1867 Union Baptists throughout the region separated from Primitive Baptists over differences relating to the war. However, the churches of the new Mountain Union Baptist Association continued to disapprove of missionary activity and retained many of the customs of the Primitive Baptists, such as paying their preachers little and requiring that they earn a living with their own labor. The Mountain Union Baptist Association annual meeting minutes of 1959 listed twenty churches in attendance, including Laurel Hill Baptist Church, and 1,675 members, including Laurel Hill Baptist Church members E. E. Woods and G. W. Campbell (A. L. Fletcher, 157-159).

Architectural Context: Early-to-mid-Twentieth Century Churches in Ashe County

Churches built in Ashe County and throughout the mountain region during the late - nineteenth and early twentieth centuries usually conformed to a few common designs. Primarily rural, Protestant congregations tended to erect simple, frame, gable-front buildings with restrained classical or Gothic Revival elements. More ambitious and highly ornamented designs were found in the towns and larger communities, such as the county seat of Jefferson or the larger railroad town of West Jefferson. By the early-twentieth century, access to saw mills permitted new construction campaigns and designs more in keeping with nationally popular trends. Even rural churches were often enhanced by prominent entry towers, decorative carpentry, pointed-arch window

openings, and stained glass windows as expressions of the Gothic Revival style. Of note are three Gothic Revival churches, St. Mary's Episcopal Church near Beaver Creek, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church at Glendale Springs, and Sutherland Methodist Church in Sutherland. The congregation at Creston Methodist Church selected an ambitious Gothic Revival design. The church has a tall three-stage tower capped by pinnacles. It is sided with a combination of weatherboards and diamond-patterned shingles and also displays Gothic-arched windows.

By the early-twentieth century, some churches in the mountain counties were constructed of stone. Often built of the smooth river rock plentiful in the mountain streams or of field stone, these churches reflected the emergence of a regional architecture inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement. Characterized by rustic picturesque designs and a preference for native materials, the style was commonly found in the new resort buildings of the region, such as the Grove Park Inn Asheville or the High Hampton Inn in Cashiers, and in the summer houses of wealthy residents. Stone was used less often for churches. However, stone construction emerged as a popular choice for Presbyterian churches, probably following the model of the Presbyterian Church's center at Montreat, begun in 1916, in Buncombe County, where river rock was used for many buildings. In Ashe County, the Lansing Presbyterian Church and the West Jefferson Presbyterian Church utilize stone construction and display Gothic Revival stylistic elements. Stone was less common for small country churches. Foster Memorial Presbyterian Church is a rare example of a small, rural Ashe County church of rough cut stone that has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Despite the presence of stone construction and Gothic-inspired designs, the majority of Ashe County's early-twentieth century rural churches are simple, functional buildings that lack high-style details. These frame churches are characterized by their front-gable, meeting house form. They often have double-leaf entries, and the simplest lack porticoes or projecting entry vestibules and belfries. Many, such as Baptist Home Church in the Parker vicinity and Three-Top Baptist Church in the crossroads community of Trout have been altered by the application of vinyl or aluminum siding. Mountain View Baptist Church near Roten retains original weatherboard siding. These rural frame churches do not differ significantly in form, materials, or construction from those throughout the state.

Property Evaluation

Laurel Hill Baptist Church

East side SR 1320 .5 miles north of junction with SR 1315, Laurel Township, Ashe County (Figure 3).

Date of Construction

1954

Setting

The Laurel Hill Baptist Church is located in a rural, mountainous setting in the northwest corner of Ashe County. The building faces west and sits on a flat, one-acre parcel on the east side of SR 1320, (Roaring Fork Road) across from Roaring Fork Creek. Two mobile homes on either side of the church were moved to the parcel in the early 1990s (Campbell interview). The land rises quickly behind the church to the east. Across SR 1320 is a livestock grazing meadow. Bridge No. 338 is located approximately .5 miles northeast of the church on SR 1320.

Physical Description

The Laurel Hill Baptist Church was constructed in 1954 with materials salvaged from a nearby school building (Campbell interview). The one-story, frame, front-gable church is covered with asbestos shingles. Diagonal board sheathing is visible underneath the shingles. The church sits on wood piers and is covered by a standing-seam metal roof. Exposed rafter tails are visible in the eaves. The front entry contains a set of double-leaf, six-panel doors. Above the entry is wood sign painted with the inscription:

“Laurel Hill Baptist Church
Service 1st Sat. & Sun.
4th Sun. night of each month.”

The north elevation features three, six-over-one double-hung sash windows and a concrete block stove flue. The south elevation has three six-over-six double-hung sash windows. The building appears to be in fair condition. However, the property owner reports that the roof leaks, and water is damaging the interior. The property owner did not grant access to the interior of the structure.

Historical Background

Former members of the Big Laurel Baptist Church constructed the Laurel Hill Baptist Church after the former was destroyed by a road construction project in the early 1950s. Big Laurel Baptist Church was located north of the Laurel Hill Baptist Church and served as one of several churches for Baptist families in Laurel Township. After the demolition of Big Laurel Baptist Church, George Washington Campbell, his father Conley Campbell, E. E. Woods and Floyd Horseman created Laurel Hill Baptist Church

as a small community church to serve the immediate area (Campbell interview). The men formed a board of trustees in order to obtain a charter from the Mountain Union Baptist Association. Conley Campbell purchased the one-acre parcel on SR 1320 for \$400 (Campbell interview). The church was built with materials salvaged from the old Stags Creek School that stood nearby.

Laurel Hill Baptist Church never served a large congregation, but was a small community church for the trustees' families and neighbors. George Washington Campbell's son, Harold Campbell, recalls that services had approximately eight to ten adults in attendance. Mr. Campbell remembers that the church never acquired a permanent pastor and that services were conducted by the members themselves. Some time prior to 1988, the Ashe County Baptist Association "relinquished" the church at which time the property reverted to the trustees' ownership. According to Mr. Campbell the church was never active after that time. Harold Campbell inherited the property from his father in 1993. Mr. Campbell and his sister reside in the mobile homes on either side of the church. He currently uses the church for storage.

Evaluation of National Register Eligibility

The Laurel Hill Baptist Church is **not eligible for the National Register under Criterion A** because the property is not associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history. The church is also **not eligible under Criterion B** because it is not associated with individuals whose activities were demonstrably important within a local, state or national historic context. The church is **not eligible under Criterion C** because it does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, nor does it present the work of a master or possess high artistic value. Laurel Hill Baptist Church is **not eligible under Criterion D** because the architectural component is unlikely to yield information in the history of building technology. Furthermore, the property does **not meet Criterion Consideration G** for properties that have achieved exception significance in the last fifty years.

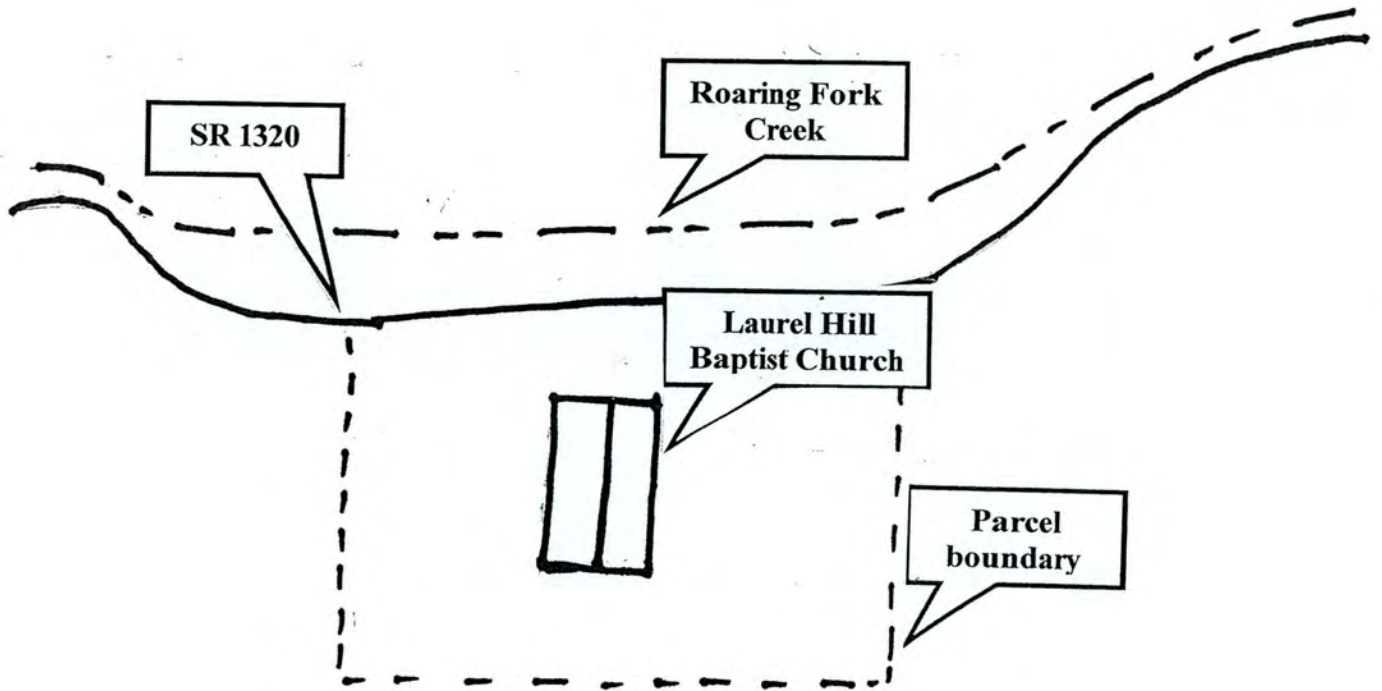


Figure 4. Laurel Hill Baptist Church - site plan





Plate 1. Laurel Hill Baptist Church - façade (west elevation)



Plate 2. Laurel Hill Baptist Church - north elevation



Plate 3. Laurel Hill Baptist Church – south elevation



Plate 4. Laurel Hill Baptist Church – setting



Plate 5. Laurel Hill Baptist Church – setting



Plate 6. Laurel Hill Baptist Church – entry detail



Plate 7. Laurel Hill Baptist Church – wood foundation piers



Plate 8. View from Laurel Hill Baptist Church

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