

cc: Sarah Mc Bride
NC-HPO



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

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SECRETARY

November 7, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Sandbeck:

RE: B-4274, Replace Bridge No. 14 on NC 144 over Big Shoe Heel Creek, Scotland County (State Project Number 8.2590701, Federal Aid Number BRSTP-1405 (5), WBS Number 33615.1.1, NC-HPO Tracking Number ER03-3643)

We recently received comments from your office regarding the Phase II report for the abovementioned project, submitted to you all on September 15, 2005. Specifically, the comments requested two things: one, that Criterion C be included in the evaluation of significance for the Spring Hill Historic District. A correction page, to be implemented in the Phase II report, will be attached to this letter. The second request was for an addendum to the report. This requested addendum, within the contents of this letter, is to provide further information and an evaluation of a small brick wall located within the proposed historic district.

The following addendum was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The report accompanying this addendum is on file at NCDOT and is available for review by the general public. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S. C. Section 470f, requires Federal agencies to take into account the effect of their undertakings on properties included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

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NCDOT conducted the survey and prepared the report and addendum in accordance with the provisions of FHWA Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60; and Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources by NCDOT (2003 edition). This addendum meets the guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service.

Attachment

cc: John F. Sullivan, III, P. E., Federal Highway Administration

Vincent J. Rhea, P. E., NCDOT

Renee Gledhill-Earley, NC-HPO

✓ Sarah McBride, NC-HPO

Penne Sandbeck, NCDOT

Evaluation of brick wall, McNeill Memorial Park, Scotland County

Physical Description and Context



Figure 1: McNeill Memorial Park, east side SR 1411, across from Spring Hill Cemetery (Ellerslie, the John Charles McNeill Birthplace, is in the distance). April 2005.

At the entrance to the John Charles McNeill Memorial Park, located on SR 1411 in Scotland County's Spring Hill rural community, is a small brick wall approximately four feet high and twelve feet wide, roughly located between an unpaved driveway leading to the John Charles McNeill House ("Ellerslie") and another unpaved driveway leading to a 1980s house east of the park. Both drives, at SR 1411, are approximately 500 feet apart.

The wall itself consists of three square brick piers linked by a polygonal wall segment, possibly in homage to the polygonal Richmond Temperance and Literary Society Hall (Figure 2). All piers and wall segments are surmounted with concrete coping. The brick itself, laid in running bond, is rough-textured and variegated, similar to tapestry brick often seen in the 1920s and 1930s, but without the orange hues seen with those examples. It is not of the same type or bond as the brick used for the 1967 brick gazebo (Figure 3)



Figure 2: Brick fence-wall at entrance of McNeill Memorial Park.



Figure 3: Gazebo, ca. 1967, McNeill Memorial Park

constructed in memory of the McNeill family around the time the park first opened.¹ The wall's relative lack of finesse and the mortar's want of precision are more typical of 1970s structures. The wall, furthermore, does not appear in earlier photographs of the site, which was the location of the Spring Hill Baptist Church until the 1950s.

Conjecturally, the wall was built to provide entrance signage to the park, although the wall has always been plain. When Ellerslie first opened to the public in 1967, there were plans afoot to create a memorial garden devoted to McNeill's poetry:

"Work will begin shortly on the long-planned project of development. In the natural woodland setting where sweet gum trees abound and where McNeill's 'creatures' find a happy haven his poems will be preserved in bronze, will rest atop pedestals set along graveled walkways. Here in the idyllic setting where they came to life will be the beloved words of the lyric poet, to be read in all the bright Octobers, bleak Decembers, green Aprils and merry Mays of the future."²

The 1972 Richmond Temperance and Literary Society Hall brochure mentions a memorial park being underway, "gradually developed under the direction of a landscape architect," and a projected completion in 1974.³ The landscape architect in question may have been Harold Weston of Cheraw, South Carolina, who co-designed the McNeill brick gazebo with the assistance of the Wagram Garden Club.⁴ But gravel paths and bronzed poems on pedestals have yet to appear in the park. It is not known if the park entrance brick wall was part of that overall plan.

Summary Evaluation

As a circa 1970 non-functional masonry structure not intrinsically connected to the McNeill Memorial Park other than as a small gateway, the brick wall at SR 1411's east side is not a contributing element to the Spring Hill Historic District, which was determined eligible by NCDOT and concurred upon as such by NC-HPO.

We hope this information satisfies your request.

Yours truly,



Mary Pope Furr
Historic Architecture Section

¹ "Richmond Temperance and Literary Society Hall, and John Charles McNeill House and Memorial Gardens." Brochure, ca. 1972. Research Branch Collection, North Carolina Office of Archives and History (NCOAH), Raleigh, NC. "Poet's Birthplace Moved; Spring On Hill Developed." *Laurinburg (NC) Exchange*, April 14, 1967 (no page number given; Clippings File, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

² Margaret McMahan, "Garden in Scotland County to Memorialize N. C. Poet." *The News & Observer* (Raleigh, NC), Sunday, October 9, 1966 (no page number given; Clippings File, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

³ "Richmond Temperance and Literary Society Hall" brochure.

⁴ *Laurinburg Exchange*, April 14, 1967. Everett G. Gardner, who worked for Springs Mills, Inc., and resided part-time in Wagram, designed the brick gazebo with Weston and the Wagram Garden Club.