

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Pat McCrory  
Secretary Susan Kluttz

Office of Archives and History  
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

June 22, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Megan Privett  
Human Environment Unit  
NC Department of Transportation

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley   
Environmental Review Coordinator

SUBJECT: Eligibility Evaluation for Adams Family House (HT1183), SS-4906BZ, Harnett County,  
ER 15-1361

Thank you for your letter of June 8, 2015, transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the materials submitted and concur that the **Adams Family House (HT1183) is not eligible for listing** in the National Register of Historic Places due to a loss of integrity.

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 919-807-6579 or [environmental.review@ncdcr.gov](mailto:environmental.review@ncdcr.gov). In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

[mfurr@ncdot.gov](mailto:mfurr@ncdot.gov)

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**FINAL EVALUATION OF ELIGIBILITY REPORT  
ADAMS FAMILY HOUSE**

**IMPROVE SIGHT DISTANCE AT THE INTERSECTION  
OF SR 1500 (BENSON ROAD) AND SR 1549 (YOUNG ROAD)  
HARNETT COUNTY**

**Project No. SS-4906BZ  
WBS No. 44269.1.FD1  
PA No. 14-09-0016  
Limited Services Contract No. 7000014413**

**Prepared by:**

**Frances Alexander, Project Manager  
Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.  
2228 Winter Street  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28205**

**Prepared for:**

**North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Human Environment Section  
Raleigh, North Carolina**

**2 June 2015**

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**2 June 2015**

**MATTSON, ALEXANDER AND ASSOCIATES, INC.**

*Frances Alexander*

29 May 2015

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**Frances P. Alexander, M.A.**

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**Date**

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**Richard L. Mattson, Ph.D.**

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**Date**

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**North Carolina Department of Transportation**

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**Date**

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## Introduction

This eligibility report was prepared in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) project entitled, *Improve Sight Distance at the Intersection of SR 1500 (Benson Rd) and SR 1549 (Young Rd)*. The project is located in Harnett County. The Project Number is SS-4906BZ, and the WBS Number is 44269.1.FD1. The project consists of cutting into the hill along SR 1500 (Benson Road) at the eastbound approach to the intersection with SR 1546 (Young Road) to improve the sight distance. The project measures 0.19 miles and will not necessitate the acquisition of additional right-of-way. However, temporary and permanent easements will be required. The project location is shown on both **Figures 1** and **2**.

The area of potential effects (APE) for the project extends seventy-five feet beyond the sixty-foot right-of-way along Benson Road (SR 1500), except in one location on the north side where the APE has been drawn to exclude a farm pond. Along Young Road (SR 1546), the APE extends fifty feet beyond the sixty-foot right-of-way. The Adams Family House (HT1183) is the only resource within the APE that warrants intensive-level investigation (**Table 1**). The APE is depicted in **Figure 2**.

This investigation was conducted to evaluate the Adams Family House for National Register eligibility. The current evaluation of eligibility is part of the environmental studies undertaken by NCDOT and is on file at NCDOT, Raleigh, North Carolina. This documentation complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (36 CFR 800), the National Register criteria set forth in 36 CFR 61, and NCDOT's current *Guidelines for Survey Reports for Historic Architectural Resources*. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of federally funded, licensed, or permitted projects on properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office (HPO) a reasonable opportunity to comment.

This eligibility evaluation consisted of research into the history and architecture of the Adams Family House and a field survey of the property. For the research phase, both primary and secondary sources were examined, including deeds, plat maps, and the HPO survey files for Harnett County. Of particular help was the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Harnett County, North Carolina, ca. 1770-1950*, prepared by TRC Garrow and Associates, Inc. and the HPO in 2008.

Field work took place on 12 May 2015. The house as well as the outbuildings on the property were examined and documented with photographs to assess the level of current integrity. The principal investigators also conducted a windshield survey of other dwellings and farmsteads in the area that historically belonged to the Adams family. Large tracts of land on the north side of the Black River in northeastern Harnett County have been in the Adams family since the mid-eighteenth century, and the additional survey provided the assurance that there was not a rural historic district encompassing farms associated with the Adamses. The current tax parcel for the Adams Family House is shown on **Figure 6**.

**Table 1**

<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Survey Site Number</b>	<b>Eligibility Recommendation</b>
Adams Family House	HT1183	Not Eligible

Figure 1

Adams Family House  
General Location Map

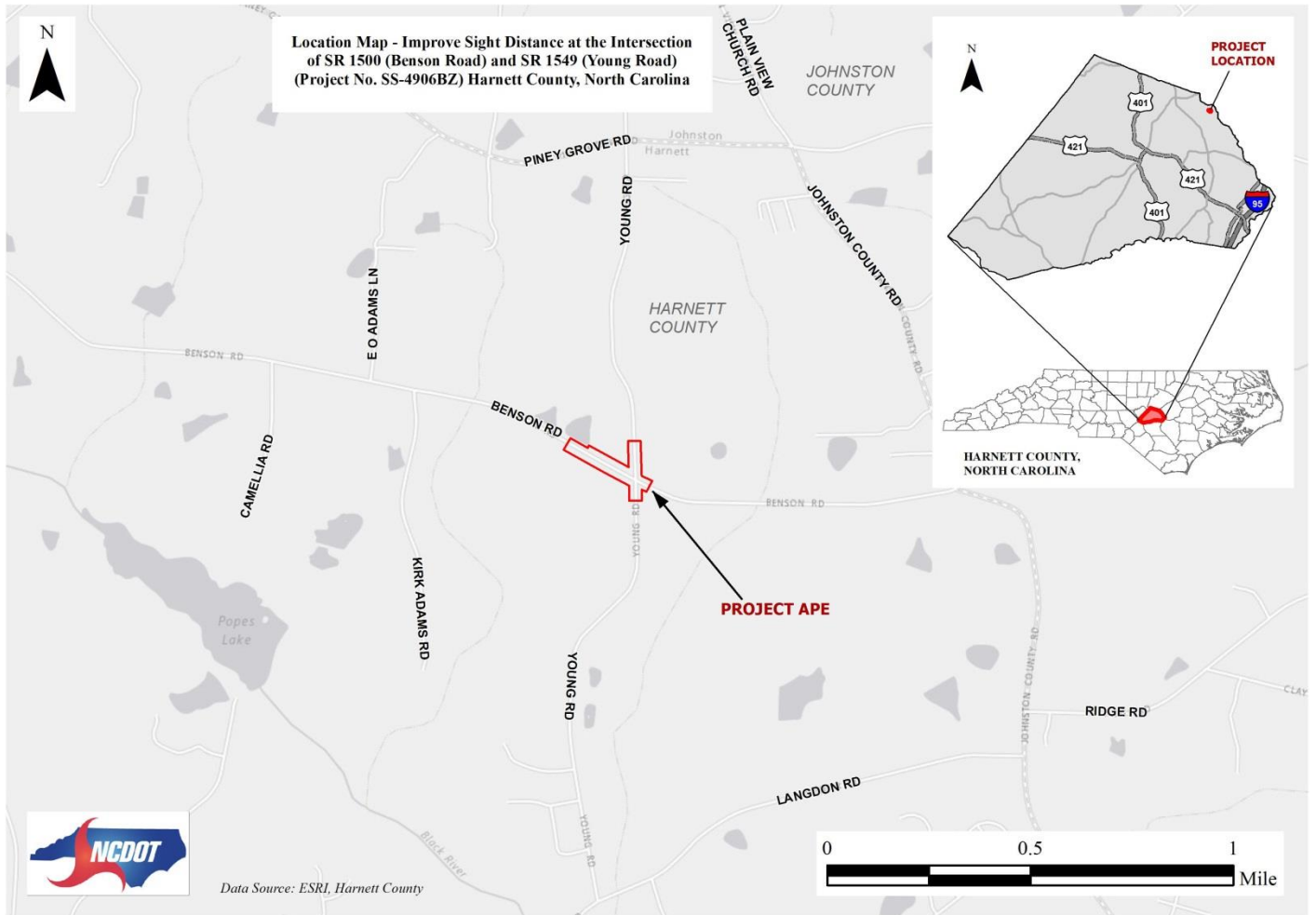
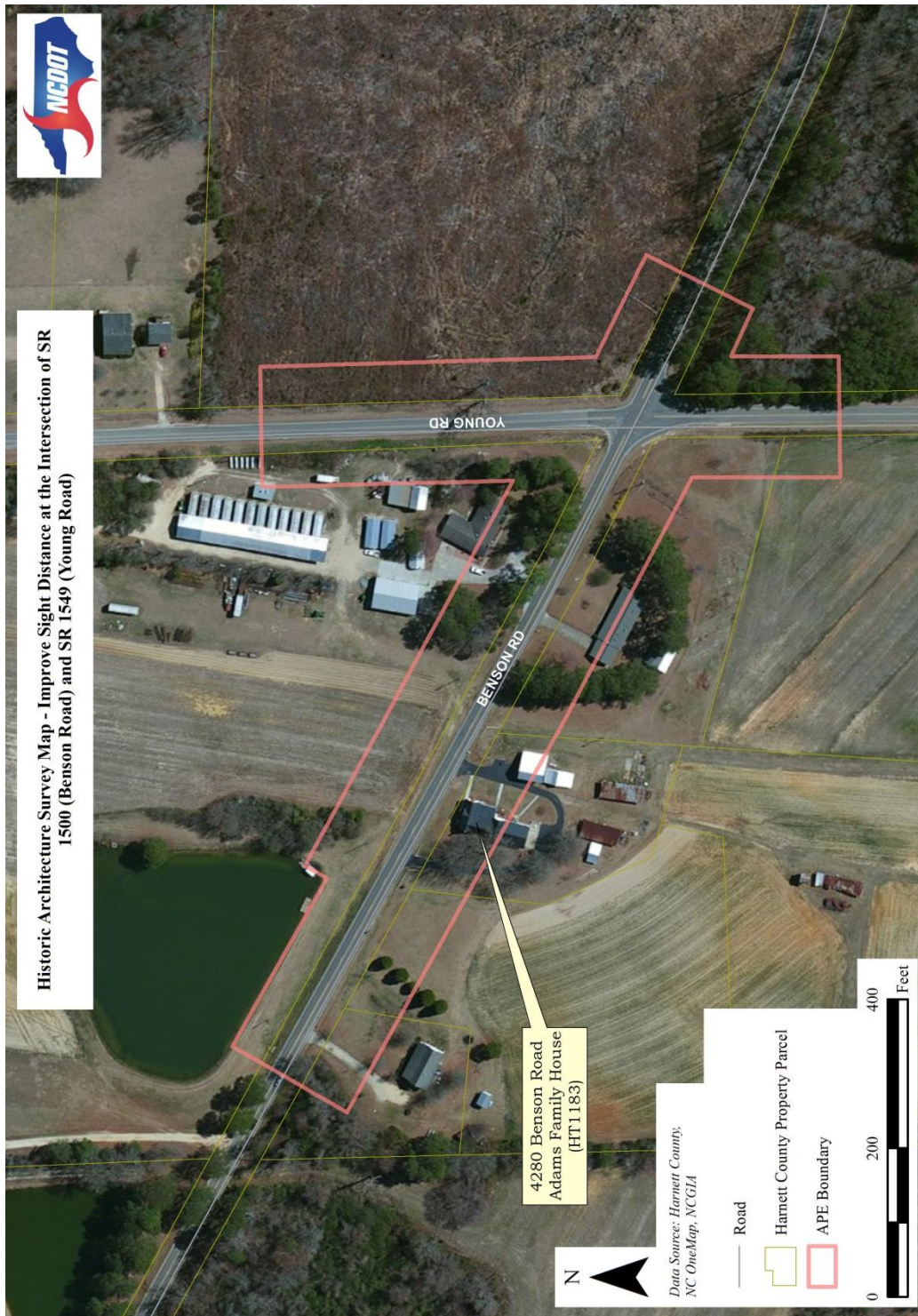


Figure 2

Adams Family House  
Area of Potential Effects (APE) Map



## Property Evaluation of Eligibility

**Adams Family House (HT1183)**  
**(PIN 0693-81-4468.000)**  
4280 Benson Road  
Angier Vicinity, Harnett County

Eligibility Recommendation: Not Eligible  
Date of Construction: circa 1890



### Physical Description (Figures 3-6)

Now extensively altered, the Adams Family House occupies a 1.42-acre tract on the south side of Benson Road, east of Angier, in northeastern Harnett County. The small parcel is part of a subdivision of a much larger Adams family farm, and nearby are modern dwellings and remodeled farmhouses from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that were owned by family members. This area of the county remains agricultural, and farmland continues to surround the house lot. The house is a traditional, frame, one-story, single-pile dwelling with a triple-A roof configuration. The original dwelling includes a one-story, two-room (two-bay) rear hyphen that connects the main body of the house to the rear kitchen wing. The kitchen is capped by a side-gable roof that runs parallel to the main triple-A roof. The house has original brick, exterior end chimneys, and a brick chimney stack pierces the roof the junction of the hyphen and rear kitchen. The three-bay façade of the house includes original four-over-four light, double-hung, wood-sash windows on either side of the center door. The foundation of the house retains its original brick piers as well as later brick infill. The standing-seam metal roof is modern although probably replaced a roof of similar material.

Although the original form of the house remains evident, the house has been heavily remodeled in recent decades. The house now has vinyl siding, and with the exception of the two façade windows, all the original four-over-four light windows are replacements. No original doors survive. The front porch has also been reconfigured with a narrower hip roof, a center gable, and a broken terra cotta tile deck that is laid at ground level. The square porch posts are modern replacements. The hyphen had a porch along the east elevation that has been enclosed, and a new porch, with a roof balustrade, has been added. This new porch has square posts matching those on the front porch of the house. The side porch shelters a modern door and paired, eight-over-eight light, double-hung, wood-sash windows. The kitchen's original shed-roofed porch has also been enclosed and is now attached to a modern, gable-roofed carport. The carport extends southward from the rear of the kitchen.

The principal investigators gained access to the interior, but photographs were not permitted. Although the main body of the house retains its center-hall plan, no original mantels survive, the doors are modern replacements, and sheetrock now covers the walls and ceilings.

The property retains a metal-veneered tobacco packhouse/grading room and two equipment sheds that date to the mid-twentieth century. A pair of modern, frame, prefabricated tool sheds

completes the small complex. The variety of tobacco barns, livestock barns, and other agricultural and domestic outbuildings that once characterized this farmstead are now gone (Adams Interview 2015).



Adams Family House, Overall View, Looking South.





Adams Family House, Façade, Looking Southeast.



Adams Family House, Side (West) Elevation, Looking Southeast.



Adams Family House, Side (West) Elevation and Carport, Looking Northeast.



Adams Family House, Rear (South) Elevation and Carport, Looking North.



Adams Family House, Side (East) Elevation, Looking West.



Adams Family House, Side (East) Elevation, Chimney and Replacement Windows, Looking West.



Adams Family House, Packhouse and Prefabricated Shed, Looking East.



Adams Family House, Equipment Sheds, Looking South.



Adams Family House, Equipment Shed and Prefabricated Shed, Looking South.

### Historical Background

The Adams house now sits on a 1.42-acre parcel owned by Rexwell (1926-) and Charlotte Adams (1928-2011). The house appears to have been built circa 1890 by Joseph O. Adams (1850-1915) and his wife, Florence Pleasant (1865-1904), grandparents of the current owner. At his death in 1915, Joseph Adams owned nearly 300 acres of farmland which was divided among his eleven children. A plat map from 1917 shows the location and division of the property (**Figure 3**). One son, Everett (referred to as E.O.) Adams (1893-1946), father of current owner, Rexwell F. Adams, Sr., inherited twenty-seven acres, according to the 1917 plat map. He also later acquired other parcels from various family members. Although E.O. died in 1946, and his wife, Nellie Young (1894-1978), lived until 1978, their approximately 195-acre farm was subdivided in 1962 rather than at the time of either of their deaths. A 1962 plat map shows the division of the farm into thirteen tracts for their children (**Figure 4**) (Harnett County Deed Books 2: 458; 485: 86; Harnett County Map Book 12: 51; Everett O. Adams, [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com); Joseph O. Adams, [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)).

The Adamses are descendants of early immigrants from Greenoch, Scotland, who migrated as part of the wave of Highland Scots that streamed into the Cape Fear River Valley in the mid-eighteenth century. The Adamses quickly settled in this area on the north side of the Black River which was then in the northern confines of Bladen County. With the subdivision of Bladen County in 1754, this section became part of Cumberland County and later became part of Harnett County at its formation in 1855. By 1755, James Adams was listed on the tax rolls of the newly established Cumberland County. His son, John James, married Delilah Green in the early 1790s, and their son, Edwin Green Adams, was born in 1819 and died during the Civil War. Edwin Green Adams married Mariah Holland (born 1822), and they were the parents of Joseph O. Adams (*Origins of the Scottish in Harnett County*).

Figure 3

1917 Plat Map Showing Division of Joseph Adams's Farm

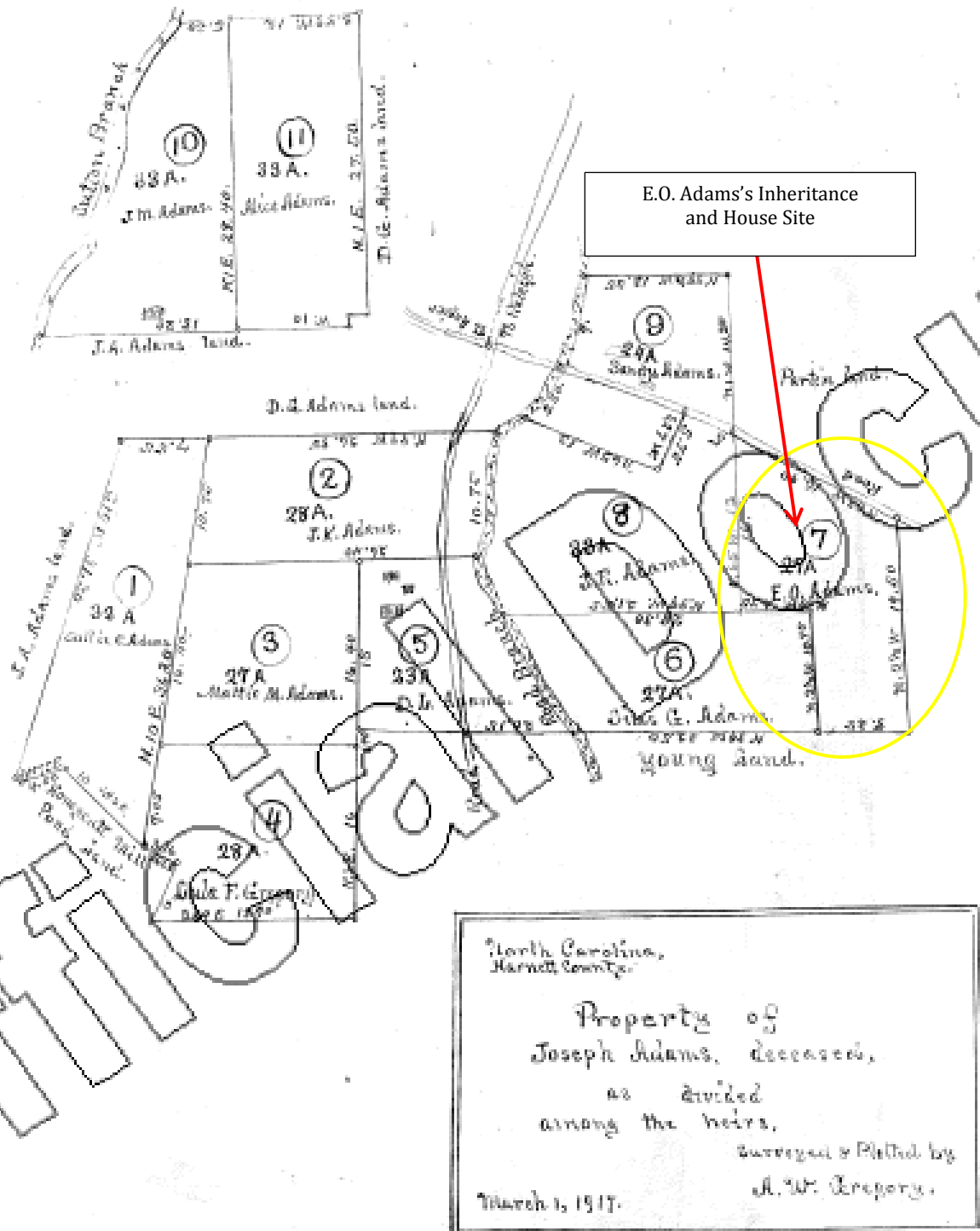
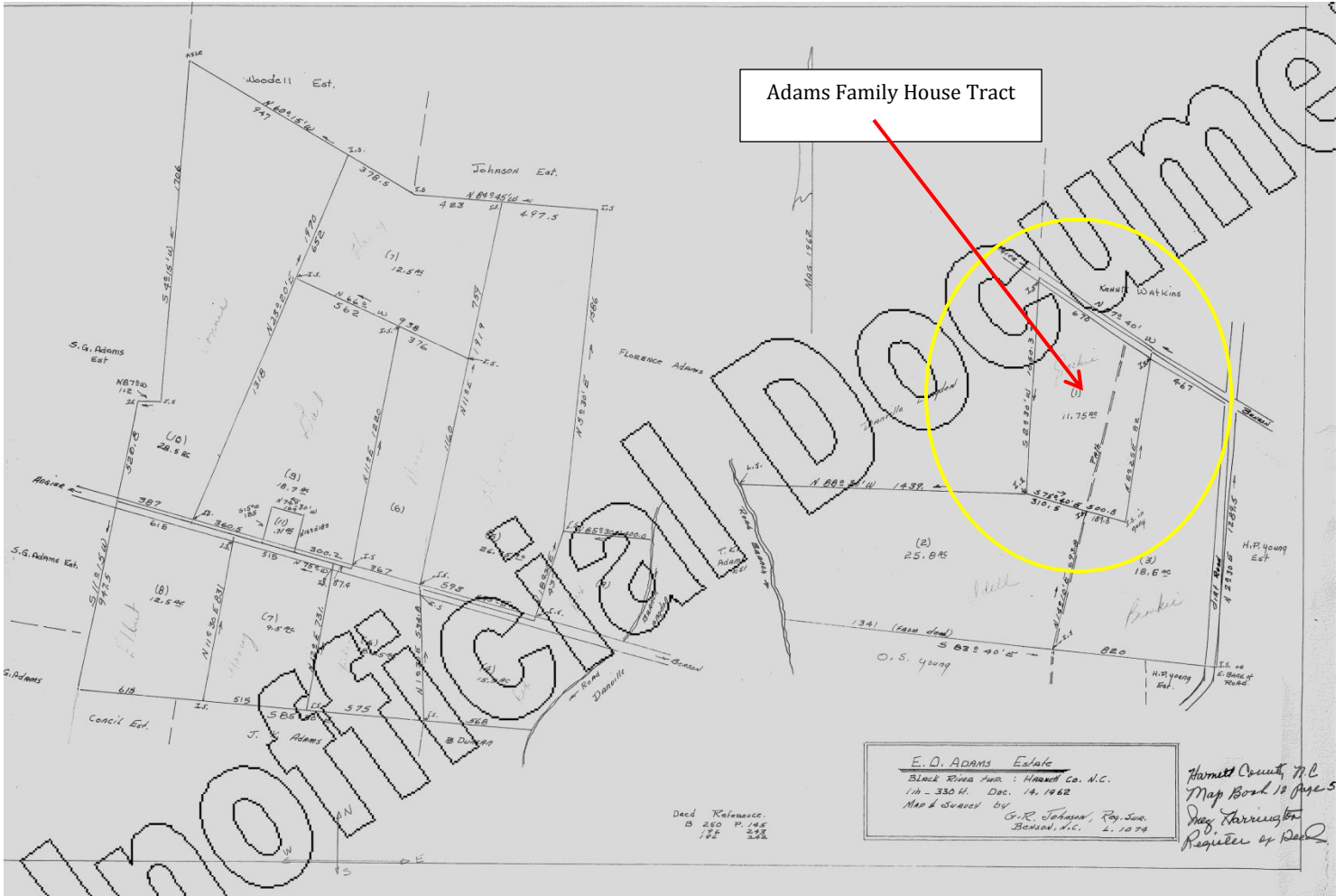


Figure 4

1962 Plat Map Showing Division of E.O. Adams's Estate



Joseph Adams married Florence Ada Pleasant (1865-1904) in 1882, and the following year he and his two brothers inherited the 431-acre estate of their parents, Edwin Green and Mariah Adams. This inheritance formed the nucleus of Joseph's 300-acre farm. The Adams Family House appears to have been built by Joseph and Florence Adams sometime after 1883, but it is not clear whether this was ever their principal residence. The dwelling which the current owner, Rexwell F. Adams, Sr., refers to as the home place is located on nearby Kirk Adams Road. (The family cemetery is also located on Kirk Adams Road.) The home place was inherited by another son of Joseph and Florence Adams, J. Kirk Adams, and may have been the family's main house. The J. Kirk Adams house survives in highly altered condition. The Adams Family House may have been Joseph and Florence's home during the lifetime of Joseph's widowed mother, Mariah Adams, or it may have been built for her (Harnett County Deed Book, recorded November 29, 1884 and referenced in Deed Book 250: 145; Rexwell Adams Interview 2015; *Origins of the Scottish in Harnett County*).

Although its origins are not clear, the Adams Family House sits on the twenty-seven-acre Lot 7 which E.O. inherited in the 1915 subdivision, and in 1920, he acquired at least two other parcels. One of the 1920 purchases was also a twenty-seven-acre tract (Lot 6 of the 1915 division) which E.O. bought from his brother, Silas G. Adams. In 1933, E.O. acquired an additional 141 acres that had originally been part of the 1883 inheritance of Joseph's brother, Daniel G. The land had passed to Daniel's son, John L., who had defaulted on the property in 1929. The land was subsequently sold at public auction (Harnett County Deed Books 250: 145; 343: 528; 196: 242; 196: 243).

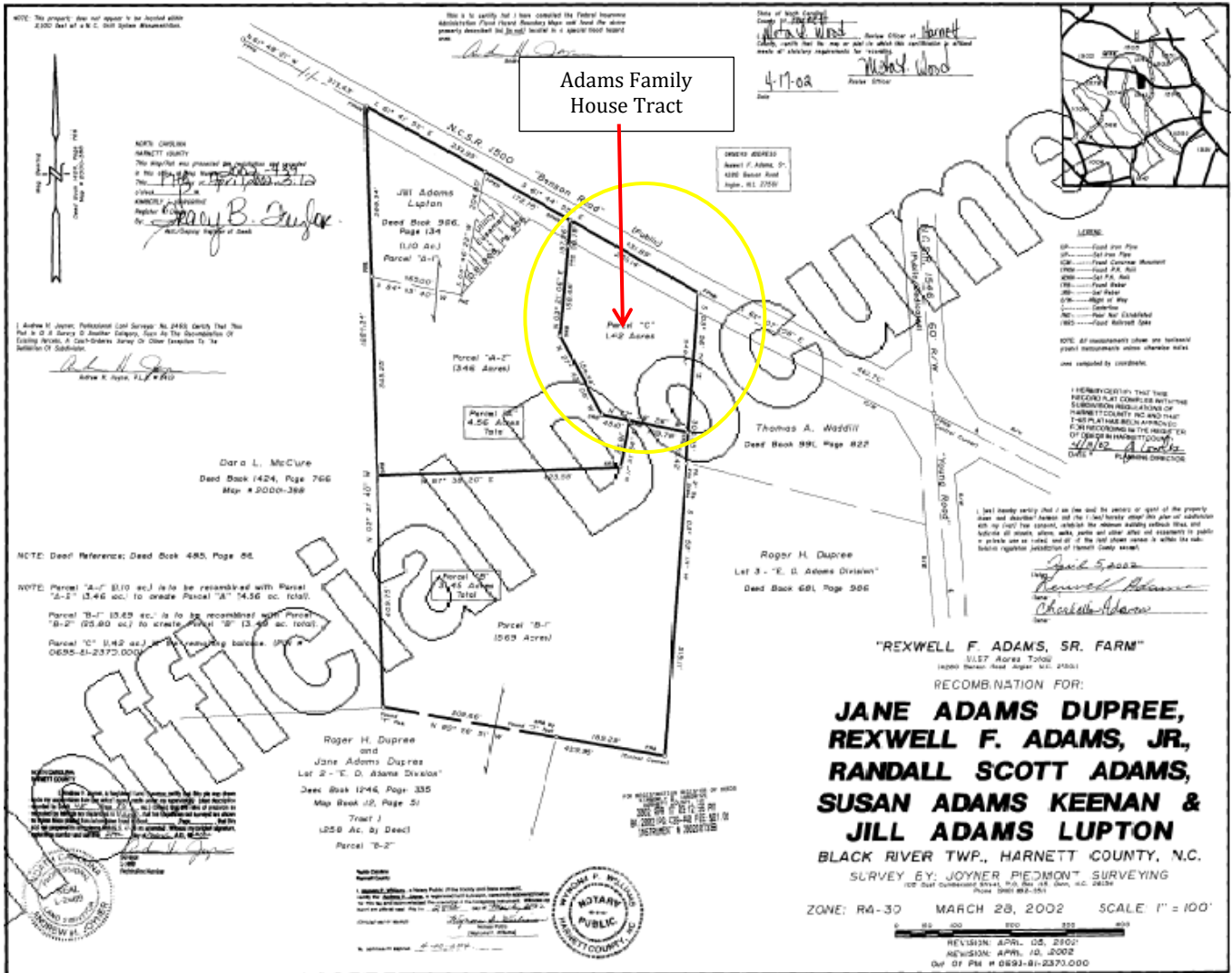
Typical of the county's farmers during this period, E.O. Adams cultivated bright-leaf tobacco. In the twentieth century, many Harnett County farmers moved from cotton to bright-leaf tobacco production. Between 1912 and the mid-1950s, the value of cotton production dropped gradually to \$1,000,000 per year while tobacco grew to \$13,000,000 annually. After E.O.'s death in 1946, his son, Rexwell, took over the farm and continued growing tobacco until the mid-1960s when he became a truck driver. He subsequently rented out the farmland. The farm once had the numerous domestic and agricultural outbuildings, including a livestock barn, smokehouse, potato house, wash house, and tobacco barns, but all have been demolished in the intervening years (TRC Garrow 2008: Section E, page 25; Rexwell Adams Interview 2015).

Since the early 1990s, Rexwell and Charlotte Adams have divided much of their land among their children. In particular, an 11.67-acre tract, known as the Rexwell F. Adams, Sr. Farm, was subdivided, leaving a residual 1.42-acre lot that is the current tax parcel and house lot. Rexwell and Charlotte Adams retained ownership of this parcel (**Figure 5**) (Harnett County Map Book 2002: 439; Harnett County Deed Book 485: 86).



Figure 5

2002 Rexwell F. Adams, Sr. Farm Recombination



## National Register Criteria Evaluation

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Adams Family House is recommended **not eligible** for the National Register eligibility under any criterion because of a loss of integrity.

### Integrity

The Adams Family House does not retain the seven aspects of integrity needed for National Register eligibility. The house remains on its original site surrounded by farmland and thus has integrity of location and setting, but the property has lost much of its feeling and association. Most of its agricultural and domestic outbuildings that once defined this former farm are now gone. Of the remaining five outbuildings, only the packhouse/grading room is associated with the bright-leaf tobacco farming that defined the property in the historic period. The other outbuildings are simply equipment or tool sheds. The house has lost its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The dwelling has been heavily modified and its integrity compromised by vinyl siding, replacement windows, modern front and side porches, and the addition of a large carport. The interior of the house has also been heavily remodeled, and the original mantels and doors no longer remain.

### Criterion A

The Adams Family House is **not eligible** for the National Register 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 prehistory or history or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a state, or a 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 (National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: 12*).

The Adams Family House does not illustrate significant patterns of events within a local, state, or national historic context. Specifically, the property does not illustrate the agricultural patterns and practices in Harnett County during the historic period. Although farmland historically associated with the dwelling still surrounds the 1.42-acre tax parcel, most of the agricultural and domestic outbuildings are now gone. Only the mid-twentieth-century tobacco packhouse/grading room and two equipment shelters survive to reflect the house's role as the centerpiece of a middling, bright-leaf tobacco farm

### Criterion B

The Adams Family House 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 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 (National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: 14*). .

The Adams Family House is 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.

### **Criterion C**

The Adams Family House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C (design/construction). For a property to be eligible under this criterion, it must retain integrity and either 1) embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; 2) represent the work of a master; 3) possess high artistic value; or 4) represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15*: 17).

The Adams Family House no longer has the integrity needed for eligibility under Criterion C for architecture. The house has undergone extensive alterations and additions in recent decades. While the original form of the house is evident, including the triple-A roof configuration, the dwelling now has vinyl siding, modern porches, and a large, rear carport addition. With the exception of the two façade windows, all the windows are modern replacements. The exterior doors are modern, and a modern roof balustrade now caps the porch along the rear hyphen. The interior has also been heavily remodeled, and key architectural elements, including the fireplace mantels, have been lost.

In Harnett County and in towns and rural areas across eastern North Carolina, large and small variations of the triple-A house type were built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The basic design reflected the picturesque cottages sporting front-facing gables that were popularized in the widely circulating patterns books of this period. In Harnett County and throughout the region, the one-story version consisted of the single-pile, three-bay form capped by a side-gable roof with a third, front-facing gable centered over the façade. Students of North Carolina vernacular architecture often label this house type the “triple-A” house in reference to the three gables. In adjacent Wake County, triple-A dwellings are acknowledged to have been the popular choice of farmers during the years before and after 1900 (Lally 1994: 105).

The 2008 Harnett County National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form noted that the county’s farmhouses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were typical of the neighboring counties. They included light-frame, triple-A houses as well as farmhouses with hip-roofed, square forms, front-gable houses, and occasionally irregularly massed plans. The most successful farmers erected residences with stylish Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Neo-Classical Revival designs. The 2008 study also found that most surviving rural houses from this period had been heavily altered, and National Register-eligible properties would have to be well-preserved examples of architectural types and styles with high degrees of both exterior and integrity (TRC Garrow 2008: Section F, pages 48-50). With its many alterations and additions, the Adams Family House does not meet this threshold of integrity.

## Criterion D

The Adams Family 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 prehistory; and 2) the information must be considered important (National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: 21*).

The property is not eligible under Criterion D because it is not likely to yield any exceptionally new information pertaining to the history of building design or technology.

**Figure 6**  
**Adams Family House**  
**Site Plan**



Source: Harnett County Tax Map

## Bibliography

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