



**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

July 20, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vanessa Patrick  
Human Environment Unit  
NC Department of Transportation

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley   
Environmental Review Coordinator

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report for Curve Improvements on NC 210 west of I-40,  
W-5204D, PA 15-02-0053, Johnston County, ER 15-1560

We have reviewed the report prepared for the above-cited project, and concur that the **James Monroe Langdon House (JT0833) is not eligible for listing** in the National Register of Historic Places due to alterations to the house and other changes to the farm landscape.

In addition to preparing the report, the consultant prepared a survey file on the house, with a property report generated from the database record as well as a complete set of photos of the property. It appears that the written summary of the database record was adapted for the inventory list and history portions of the report, and in the process some of the text of the history was misplaced in the report.

The four sentences at the beginning of the last paragraph on p. 17 of the report should stand as a discrete second full paragraph on p. 21. Also, in the second paragraph of the architectural context, the word *Smithfield* is missing from the second line (after "Hood-Strickland House in"). We would like these corrections made before accepting the report for our library.

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)

# Historic Architectural Resources Evaluation Report Curve Improvements on NC 210 West of I-40

Johnston County, North Carolina

TIP No. W-5204D  
WBS No. 45334.1.4



Prepared for the  
North Carolina Department of Transportation, Human Environment Section  
by

NEW SOUTH ASSOCIATES, INC.  
JUNE 2015



**Historic Architectural Resources Evaluation Report  
Curve Improvements on NC 210 West of I-40  
Johnston County, North Carolina**

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Prepared for:  
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Ellen Turco – Historian and Co-Author,  
New South Associates

June 24, 2015 • **Final Report**  
New South Associates Technical Report #2488



## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes curve improvements on NC 210 west of I-40 in Johnston County (W-5204D). This project is subject to review under the *Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects* (NCDOT/NCHPO/FHWA, 2007). NCDOT architectural historians established an Area of Potential Effects (APE) and conducted a preliminary investigation, identifying one property, the James Monroe (formerly Ben) Langdon House (JT 833), warranting additional study and eligibility evaluation.

The two-part Area of Potential Effects (APE) for this project is centered on the proximate, but discontinuous, proposed construction locations on NC 210 approximately one-mile apart. The east section of the APE, containing the subject property, begins approximately 0.5 miles west of the I-40 and NC 210 interchange. It is 1,600 feet long, east to west, and extends 100 feet north and south of the centerline. The western section of the APE is also 1,600 feet long, but is 200 feet wide and contains no above-ground resources of concern.

In March 2015, NCDOT requested New South Associates, Inc. (New South) assess the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of the James Monroe (formerly Ben) Langdon House (JT 833) and provide this report.

As a result of this study, for the purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, New South recommends the Langdon House not eligible for the NRHP.

*Table 1. Evaluated Resource*

Survey Site Number	Resource Name	NRHP Eligibility Recommendation	Criteria
JT 833	James Monroe (formerly Ben) Langdon House	Not Eligible	None



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## I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

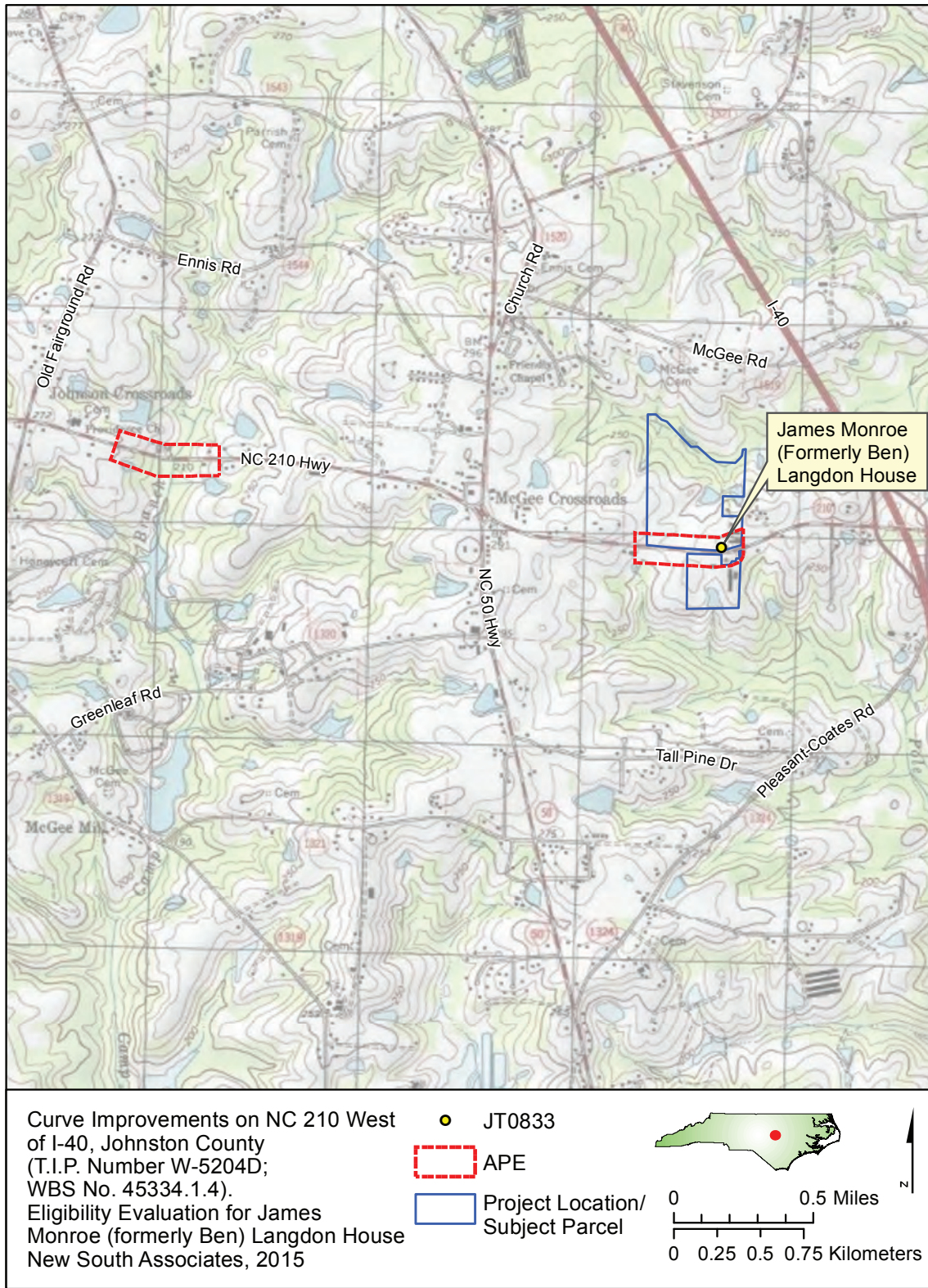
The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes curve improvements on NC 210 west of I-40 in Johnston County (W-5204D) (Figure 1). This project is subject to review under the *Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects* (NCDOT/NCHPO/FHWA, 2007). NCDOT architectural historians established an Area of Potential Effects (APE) Pursuant to 36 CFR Section 800.4(b) and identified one architectural resource, the James Monroe (formerly Ben) Langdon House (JT 833), that might be affected by the undertaking. The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for this project is discontinuous and consists of two sections on NC 210 approximately one mile apart. The east section of the APE, containing the subject property, begins approximately 0.5 miles west of the I-40 and NC 210 interchange. It is 1,600 feet long, east to west, and extends 100 feet north and south of the centerline. The western section of the APE is also 1,600 feet long, but is 200 feet wide and contains no above-ground resources of concern.

In March 2015, NCDOT requested New South Associates, Inc. (New South) intensively survey the Langdon House and prepare a report assessing the property's eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Langdon House was surveyed in 1982 during the Johnston County comprehensive architectural survey. At that time, the property name "Ben Langdon House" was assigned. Research conducted for this evaluation report indicated that James Monroe Langdon was the builder and long-time occupant. For purposes of historical accuracy, the property is referred to as the James Monroe Langdon House or the Langdon House herein.

New South senior architectural historian Ellen Turco visited the Langdon House on April 27, 2015. The property was visually inspected and the exterior, associated outbuildings and setting were documented through written notes and digital photographs. An on-site interview was conducted with Frank Matthews, the son of the current owner, Daniel G. Matthews, and the great grandson of James Monroe Langdon. Research was conducted at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office and the Johnston County Heritage Center. The historical development, architecture, and cultural significance of the Langdon House was assessed and evaluated within its respective contexts according to the established NRHP criteria.

The results of this intensive-level investigation and NRHP evaluation are presented in the following chapters of this report. This report complies with the basic requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation regulations and procedures (23 CFR 771 and Technical Advisory T 6640.8A); the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations on the Protection of Historic Properties (36 CFR 800); and NCDOT's Historic Architectural Resources, Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines.

Figure 1. Project Location, APE, and Location of James Monroe (formerly Ben) Langdon House (JT 833)



## II. NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION OF THE JAMES MONROE (FORMERLY BEN) LANGDON HOUSE

Resource Name	James Monroe (formerly Ben) Langdon House
HPO Survey Site #	JT 833
Location	12741 NC 210, Benson, Johnston County
PIN	162400-83-5620
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1885; circa 1943; 2002
Recommendation	Not Eligible for NRHP



### DESCRIPTION

### SETTING

The James Monroe Langdon House is located in Pleasant Grove Township, Johnston County approximately eight miles north of Benson, the county seat. The irregularly shaped parcel, containing 67 acres, is positioned on the north and south sides NC 210 approximately 0.5 miles west of the interchange with I-40 (Figure 2). The landscape contains cleared cattle pasture, woods, three farm ponds, and two dwelling sites (Figure 3). The historic house site of James Monroe Langdon is situated at the parcel's eastern edge on the north side of NC 210. The house is close to the road and faces south. A low stone and concrete wall defines the front yard and runs parallel with the road (figure 4). Mature plantings include oak and pecan trees, as well as crepe myrtles. Behind the house are a circa-1900 washhouse and an above ground oil storage tank (Figure 5). A storage barn, tobacco pack house and concrete block farm supply store immediately east of the house are accessed by an unpaved circular driveway off of NC 210 (Figure 6). On the south side of NC 210, is a circa-1970 brick Ranch House (Figure 7). East of the Ranch house is a chicken house, which was inaccessible.

Figure 2. James Monroe (formerly Ben) Langdon House Parcel Aerial Photograph and Site





*Figure 3. Farm Pond and Pasture Looking North*



*Figure 4. Looking East on NC 210. Red Shed Roof is Farm Supply Store.*



Figure 5. *View of Rear Yard Looking South*



Figure 6. *Tobacco Pack House and Farm Supply Complex*



*Figure 7. Circa 1970 brick Ranch House built by Shelton Matthews*



## INVENTORY LIST

### *James Monroe Langdon House; Circa 1885; Circa 1943; 2002*

The Langdon House reached its present day appearance in two stages (Figures 8-13). The earliest part of the house was built around 1885 by James Monroe Langdon. His son, Thomas “Tommy” Sirius Langdon, built a gabled rear kitchen addition with an engaged side porch in the 1940s (Frank Matthews personal communication). The circa-1885 section is a frame, one-story, side-gable dwelling with a gabled front wing, a composition that gives the house an L-form. Original stylistic details are restrained and limited to paired eave modillions and slightly arched window openings, which impart an Italianate flavor. Other than these decorative embellishments, the house is finished with simple treatments common to vernacular country houses of the late nineteenth century: wood weatherboard siding, plain corner boards, a wide frieze and gable ends with returns and quatrefoil eave vents. The original wood window sashes were removed in 2002 and replaced with vinyl windows with muntin grilles in a fourteen-over-nine configuration on the circa 1885 section and a six-over-six configuration on the kitchen addition (Figure 14). There are two double-shouldered end chimneys; the east one was rebuilt in the 1940s. The house sits on continuous brick foundation. Composite shingles cover the roof.

The dwelling has three shed-roofed porches: one across the front and two on the east side. All of the porches display turned wood posts and turned balustrades dating from 2002 (Figure 15). These replaced foliated wrought iron posts dating to the 1940s (Butchko 1982a). The design of the original porch posts and balustrades is unknown. The house has a total of five entries, an unusual number for a house of this small size. Family lore holds that the rooms of the front wing were let to circuit preachers and local schoolteachers and the multiple doors allowed these rooms to be accessed directly from the outside (Frank Matthews, personal communication, 2015). All of the original entries, two under the front porch and a third one under the side porch, are set in surrounds composed of three-light transoms and four-light paired sidelights over raised panels (Figure 16). The front porch entries, one on the main block and one on the front wing, are arranged at a 90-degree angle. The south-facing main entry has a louvered wood storm door. The installation of a simulated six-over-six vinyl window over a panel converted the west-facing front wing entry into to a window opening in 2002 (Figure 17). The 1940s west entry on the front wing is sheltered by an arched pent supported by an assembly of faux rafter ends and sawn brackets (Figure 18). All entries have six-panel doors that date from the 1940s renovation.

The interior was not accessed but the informant states it was heavily remodeled in 2002.

### *Wash House; circa 1900*

This front-gabled frame wash house has weatherboard siding and a metal roof with exposed rafter ends. A brick heating flue projects from the roof (Figure 19).



*Figure 8. Front/South Side*



*Figure 9. West Side*



*Figure 10. West Side of 1940s Kitchen Addition*



*Figure 11. Rear/North Side*



*Figure 12. Rear/North and West Side*



*Figure 13. West Side and Front/South Side*



*Figure 14. Typical Vinyl Replacement Window on Circa 1885 Section*



*Figure 15. Replacement Posts and Balustrade on Front Porch.*



*Figure 16. Main front Entry Door on South Side*



*Figure 17. Original West Entry of Front Wing, altered in 2002.*



*Figure 18. Circa 1940s Entry on West Side of Front Wing*



*Figure 19. Wash House*



### *Tobacco Pack House; 1920*

This front-gable tobacco pack house has a large partially enclosed shed projecting off the east side. The pack house is covered with weatherboard siding, has a 5-V metal roof, and rests on partially continuous concrete block foundation. There are three entry doors across the front and hayloft opening centered in the gable. All openings have plywood doors. The frame shed was added at an unknown date sometime prior to 1965. It is open across the back and the roof and rear wall are sheathed with 5-V metal (Figures 20 and 21).

### *Farm Supply Store; 1960s; 2005*

This three-bay, flat roofed, concrete block building was built in two stages. The west two bays were erected first for use as a farm supply store. The east bay was added shortly afterwards as a place to store sweet potatoes. The end bays have almost full-height garage doors; the center bay is a customer entry and is sheltered by a recently constructed frame shed. A metal frieze wraps around all four sides. The roofing material was not visible (Figures 22 and 23).

### *Storage Barn; circa 1980*

The roof and walls of this gabled storage barn are sheathed in 5-V metal. Sliding doors cover the bays on the south side (Figure 24).

### *Ranch House; Circa 1970*

This side-gable, three-part, brick Ranch has a number of Colonial Revival-style features such as nine-over-nine windows with flat arches, a dentil cornice and a recessed entry with a transom over double leaf six-panel doors (see Figure 7).

## **HISTORY**

James Monroe Langdon (1854-1928) built this one-story Italianate-influenced dwelling around 1885. Langdon, a farmer, married Eliza Jane Coats in 1876 (U.S. Census Bureau 1900; 1910) (Figure 25). The couple erected the house within the first decade after their marriage.

In the 1960s, Shelton Langdon erected the concrete block farm supply store east of the historic dwelling. A few years later, he added another bay to the building to store sweet potatoes. In 1968, Shelton and his first wife, Werneth Stephenson, divorced and a few years later he married Ann King. His second marriage was the impetus to build the Colonial Revival-style Ranch house on the south side of NC 210. Shelton died of a brain tumor at the age of 44 in 1974. His son, Mitchell, was left the home place (Frank Matthews, personal communication 2015). The U.S. Census of 1900 recorded the pair in Pleasant Grove Township with their nine children: Della, Francis, Grover



Figure 20. Wash House



Figure 21. Tobacco Pack House South Side



*Figure 22. Tobacco Pack House North Side*



*Figure 23. Farm Supply Store, South Side*



*Figure 24. Farm Supply Store, North Side*

*Figure 25. James Monroe Langdon and Eliza Jane Coats Langdon, Date Unknown.*



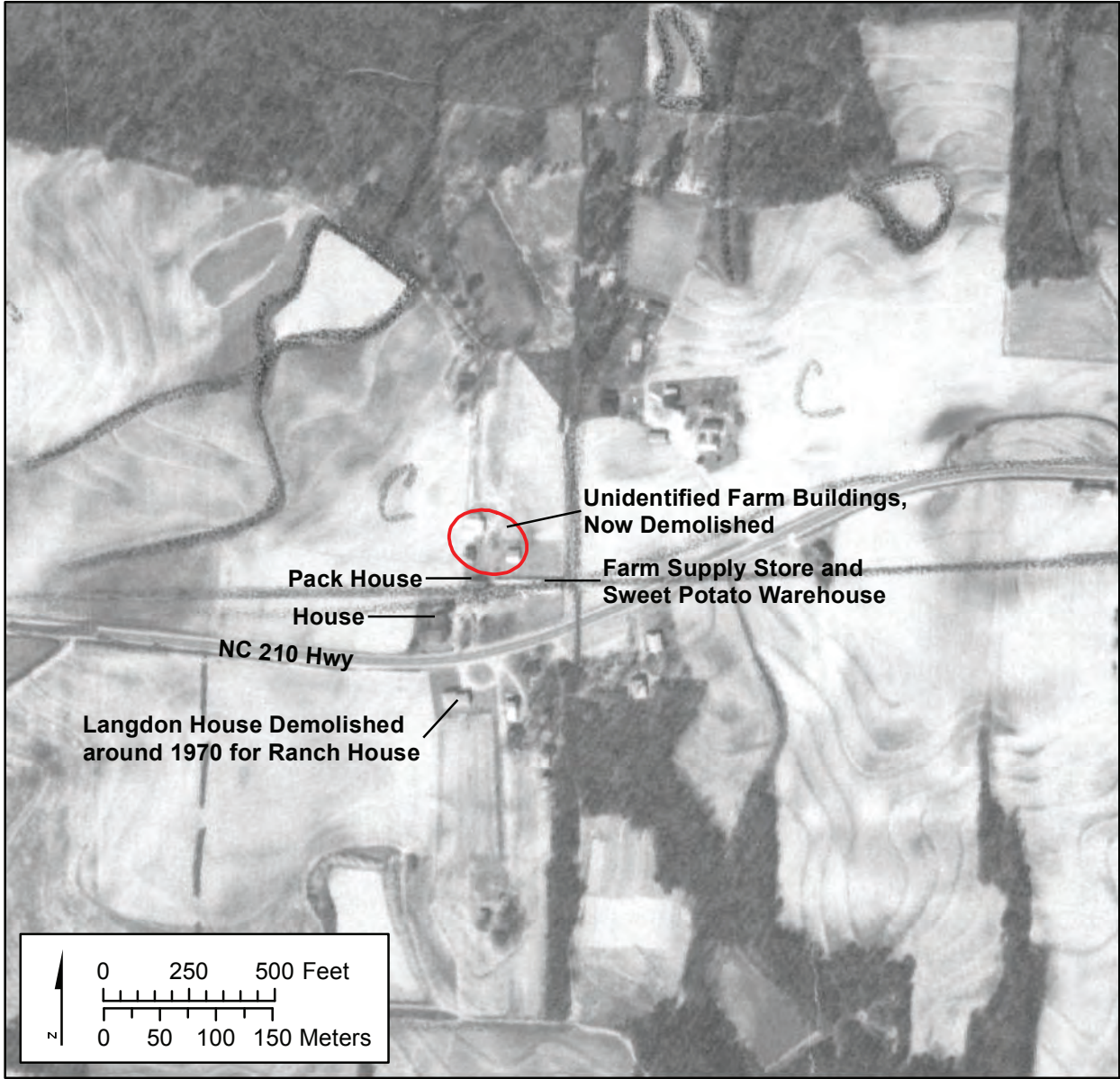
Source: Ancestry.com

Cleveland, Flora, Zacheriah (named after James Monroe Langdon's father), Eliza, James, William and Lucy. The couple had 12 children in total and in 1901, their youngest son, Thomas "Tommy" Sirios Langdon was born (Frank Matthews, personal communication, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau 1900, 1910).

All of the Langdon children were given shares of James Monroe Langdon's 1,000-acre farm. Tommy Langdon received the tract with the circa-1885 home place. He married Nellie Vita Coats (1902-1943) in 1923 and the couple raised two children, Thomas Shelton, who went by Shelton, and Loleta, in the house. The family farmed tobacco, corn, and hogs (Frank Matthews, personal communication, 2015). Several frame outbuildings from this era survived northeast of the house into the 1980s but are longer standing (Butchko 1982a) (Figure 26). Nellie died at the age of 44 in 1943. Shortly after her passing, Tommy expanded the family home by adding the rear kitchen addition, which replaced an earlier detached kitchen. Other modifications made at that time were the rebuilding of the east chimney and the front and side porches, the addition of a new pented entry on the west side of the house, and the replacement of the perimeter foundation piers with a continuous brick foundation. Thomas was married for a second time, to Betsey Stewart, in 1948.

In the mid-1970s, the Langdon farm went into foreclosure. In order to keep the land in the family, Loleta Langdon Matthews and her husband Daniel Gray Matthews, bought the farm on the courthouse steps. The Matthews resided in Clayton and used the Langdon family home as a

Figure 26. 1965 Aerial Photograph Showing Langdon Farm. Source: Johnston County Heritage Center



Source: Johnston County Heritage Center

country retreat. Around 2002, the couple renovated the interior and replaced the original windows with the current vinyl ones. Loleta Langdon Matthews passed away in 2007 in the house in which she was born (Frank Matthews, personal communication 2015). Daniel Gray Matthews retains ownership of the property but does not reside in the house. The house is vacant but well maintained by the Matthews' son, Frank, who lives on the farm in a house he built in 1999 on a separate parcel north of the historic house. Frank Matthews operates Legacy Farms and Cattle, LLC. He raises free-range livestock and sells meat, organic produce, and Christmas trees at a seasonal farmers market that occupies the farm store building. A number of popular public events are held at the farm such as Easter egg hunts, hayrides, build-a-scarecrow events, and chili cookoffs (Legacy Farms and Cattle 2015).

## **ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

The James Monroe Langdon House is one-story, gabled, L-form house. Surviving features of the house illustrate how the Italianate style filtered down from its pure form to late-nineteenth century rural Johnston County. It was first popularized in England where it developed as a spirited reaction to the classicism that had prevailed for two centuries, which was interpreted in America through the Federal and Greek Revival styles. It was popular nationally from about 1840 to 1885, in part due to the architectural pattern books published by architectural designers Andrew Jackson Downing and Samuel Sloan. The style has several characteristic features that were used to embellish hipped, gabled, and flat roofed buildings, such as broad eaves with elaborate bracketed cornices, cupolas or towers, and narrow windows often with arched tops or elaborate hoods (McAlester and McAlester 1983:283–284, 302).

Good and intact examples of vernacular Italianate architecture survive in Johnston County. Six are on the State Study List (SL) and one, the Hood-Strickland House in (JT 319; NRHP 1990), is listed in the NRHP. One notable example is the Josephus Johnson Farm (JT 231; SL 1982). Built in 1870 in rural Elevation Township, the house shares some similarities with the Langdon House most notably its irregular, asymmetrical exterior, modillion cornice, gable end returns, Greek Revival entries and arched window openings. The Johnson House retains three elaborate porches with chamfered posts with pierced brackets and a turned balustrade. The interior remains intact (Butchko 1982b).

## **INTEGRITY**

In order to be eligible for the NRHP, a property must possess several, and usually most, of the seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association (Joeckel 2001:44). The James Monroe Langdon House does not retain enough of these qualities to convey historic significance.

The house remains on its original site in an agrarian setting; however, its workmanship and materials are less intact. It was modified in the 1940s with the construction of a rear kitchen addition, removal



of the original porch treatments, and the rebuilding of the foundation and one chimney, and again in 2002 when the porch supports were changed for a second time and the original windows were removed. The porch and window alterations are significant losses of materials and workmanship and the result is that the Italianate design of the dwelling is no longer strongly evident. The addition and changes to the chimney and foundation are less significant detractions. The property is owned by a descendant of James Monroe Langdon so it retains its historical associations with the family.

## EVALUATION

Properties can be eligible for the NRHP if they are associated with a significant event or pattern of events that have made contributions to history at the local, state, or national level. The James Monroe Langdon House was not found to be associated with any such events or historical trends. The house was the seat of a family-owned farm in the nineteenth century. The farm was divided into several smaller farms in the twentieth century. No nineteenth-century agricultural buildings were documented. Tobacco was the prevalent crop in the first half of twentieth century, and while the tobacco pack house remains intact, no tobacco barns or crop field patterns were documented. Today, the landscape reflects the property's uses for cattle production and agritourism. *Therefore, the James Monroe Langdon House is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A.*

Research conducted for this project did not identify members of the Langdon family as significant within community, state, or national historic contexts. *Therefore, the James Monroe Langdon House is recommended not eligible under Criterion B.*

Properties may be eligible under Criterion C if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic value. The James Monroe Langdon House is a one-story, L-plan dwelling with altered shed porches and a later gabled rear addition. The surviving modillion cornice and arched window openings are what remain of the house's Italianate-style decorative features. At least seven Italianate houses survive in the county. One has been listed in the NRHP and the quality and integrity of six others has been recognized with placement on the Study List. The James Monroe Langdon House does not compare well with other Italianate houses in Johnston County. *Therefore, James Monroe Langdon House is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C.*

It is unlikely that additional study of this property would yield any unretrieved data not discoverable through informant interviews and documentary sources. *Therefore, the James Monroe Langdon House is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D.*

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