



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

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper
Secretary Susi H. Hamilton

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

March 12, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelby Reap
Office of Human Environment
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley 
Environmental Review Coordinator

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report, U-5819, Improve Intersection at NC 27 and SR 2534,
PA 18-07-0030, Gaston County, ER 19-0745

Thank you for your January 31, 2019, letter transmitting the report for the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the report and offer the following comments.

We concur that the Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for Architecture and with further research it may also be eligible under Criterion A for Social History. The proposed boundary appears appropriate.

We also concur that the (former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423) is not eligible for listing in the National Register for the reasons outlined in the report.

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 919-814-6579 or 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

Received: 02/05/2019
State Historic Preservation Office



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III
SECRETARY

January 31, 2019

ER 19-0745

Ms. Renee Gledhill-Earley
Environmental Review Coordinator, State Historic Preservation Office
North Carolina Department of Natural & Cultural Resources
4617 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617

Due -- 2/27/19

H- ER letters
3/8/19

Dear Renee:

RE: Historic Structures Survey Report, Improve Intersection at NC 27 and SR 2534
(Hawthorne St), PA 18-07-0030, U-5819, Gaston County

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to improve the intersection of NC 27 and Hawthorne Road in Gaston County. Louis Berger prepared the attached Eligibility Report and recommends the Mt Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422) eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

① agree digital
j.r.b.
(future research may reveal also eligible under criteria A - social history)

The report and survey materials are enclosed for your review and comment per 36CFR.800. Please let me know if you have any additional questions regarding this project. I can be reached at (919) 707-6088 or by email at sreap@ncdot.gov.

Sincerely,

Shelby Reap

Shelby Reap
Historic Architecture Team

② Agree - Not eligible
- (former Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building)

Attachments

Mailing Address:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PDEA-HUMAN ENVIRONMENT SECTION
MAIL SERVICE CENTER 1598
RALEIGH NC, 27699-1598

Telephone: (919) 707-6000
Fax: (919) 212-5785
Customer Service: 1-877-368-4968

Location:
1020 BIRCH RIDGE RD
RALEIGH NC 27610

Website: www.ncdot.gov

HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT IMPROVE INTERSECTION AT NC 27 AND SR 2534 (HAWTHORNE ST.)

Gaston County, North Carolina

WBS No. 44391.1.1 / TIP No. U-5819 / PA No. 18-07-0030



Prepared for:



North Carolina Department of Transportation
Environmental Analysis Unit
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1598

Prepared by:



Louis Berger

Louis Berger
1001 Wade Avenue, Suite 400
Raleigh, North Carolina 27605

Final
January 17, 2019

HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT IMPROVE INTERSECTION AT NC 27 AND SR 2534 (HAWTHORNE ST.)

Gaston County, North Carolina

WBS No. 44391.1.1
TIP No. U-5819
PA No. 18-07-0030

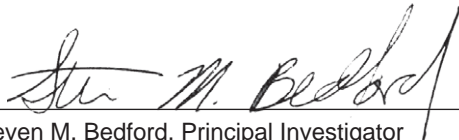
Prepared for:

**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Environmental Analysis Unit**
1598 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1598

Prepared by:

Megan Privett

Louis Berger
1001 Wade Avenue, Suite 400
Raleigh, North Carolina 27605
919.866.4400



Steven M. Bedford, Principal Investigator
Louis Berger

1/17/2019

Date

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

Date

Final
January 17, 2019

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Louis Berger U.S., Inc. (Louis Berger) conducted an architectural survey and evaluation in preparation for intersection improvements to NC 27 (W. Charlotte Avenue) and SR 2534 (Hawthorne Street) in Mount Holly, North Carolina. The state project number is WBS No. 44391.1.1; the T.I.P. No. is U-5819, and the PA No. is 18-07-0030. The scope of the current evaluation included the survey and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) evaluation of two properties.

The study area is located in eastern Gaston County in the town of Mount Holly, at the intersection of NC 27 and SR 2534 just west of downtown Mount Holly. The project’s Area of Potential Effects (APE) follows the study area diagram for the project delineated by NCDOT. Forming an irregular polygon, the APE extends east to west along NC 27 from First Street to Hilltop Street, and north to south along Hawthorne Street from just past Norton Road to W. Central Avenue, crossing over the Seaboard Coast Line Railway, approximately 200 feet from both sides of the centerline.

In November 2018 NCDOT requested Louis Berger to complete an architectural survey and eligibility evaluation for listing in the NRHP for two properties that fell within the project’s APE: Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422) and CBC Memorial Apostolic Church (GS2423). These properties had previously been deemed worthy of further study by a preliminary investigation conducted by an NCDOT architectural historian. Neither the Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM nor the CBC Apostolic Memorial Church (formerly the Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building) had been previously recorded or surveyed in any type of county-wide or town architectural survey.

As a result of the survey and evaluation, the Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM has been determined eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C for architecture as a rare and early example of a Masonic Lodge building constructed with restrained elements of the modernist style of architecture in Gaston County. No other recorded fraternal organizations in Gaston County are known to have been built with modern architectural features in mind.

The (former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building, now the CBC Memorial Apostolic Church, has been determined not eligible for the NRHP because it lacks historic integrity. Better examples of the architectural style and type of the building exist in Gaston County that have a higher degree of integrity and present a stronger example of the building type, retaining their feeling and association with their original purpose.

TABLE MS-1

SURVEYED PROPERTIES, PROPOSED INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT, NC 27 AND SR 2534, GASTON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

RESOURCE NAME	SITE SURVEY NUMBER	NRHP ELIGIBILITY RECOMMENDATION	SITE ADDRESS/PIN No.
Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM	GS2422	Eligible	322 W. Charlotte Ave. Mount Holly, NC / 3597608199
(former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building	GS2423	Not Eligible	330 W. Charlotte Ave. Mount Holly, NC / 3597700191

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Description

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Louis Berger U.S., Inc. (Louis Berger) conducted an architectural survey and evaluation in preparation for intersection improvements to NC 27 (W. Charlotte Avenue) and SR 2534 (Hawthorne Street) in Mount Holly, North Carolina (Figure 1). The scope of the current evaluation included the survey and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) evaluation of two properties: Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422) and the (former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), both located near downtown Mount Holly in eastern Gaston County. Gaston County's gently rolling hills, various waterways, and small mountainous areas is typical of the western Piedmont region of North Carolina. The Catawba River is the county's most dominant natural feature, with other primary waterways consisting of several large creeks, such as Crowder's Creek and Dutchman's Creek. The study area for U-5819 lies just north of the Seaboard Coast Line Railway and west of the Catawba River within the town limits of Mount Holly in the northeast quadrant of the county (Figure 2).

1.2 Methodology

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for this project consists of the U-5819 study area as delineated by NCDOT (see Figure 1). Forming an irregular polygon, the APE extends east to west along NC 27 from First Street to Hilltop Street, and north to south along Hawthorne Street from just past Norton Road to W. Central Avenue, crossing over the Seaboard Coast Line Railway, approximately 200 feet from both sides of the centerline (see Figure 1). The APE is primarily composed of mid-twentieth-century residential properties with a handful of commercial and civic/religious properties and is located just west of downtown Mount Holly. NCDOT Architectural Historian Shelby Reap conducted a preliminary screening for the project and determined that two resources in the APE warranted additional evaluation for NRHP eligibility. The APE as defined captures the historic resources that would be affected not only by project construction activities but also by any new traffic patterns, widening of streets, paving, or staging of equipment. Preliminary design plans available from NCDOT at the time of this survey are shown in Figure 3.

The investigation included research and fieldwork. Prior to the fieldwork, Louis Berger Architectural Historian Megan Privett consulted the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office's (NC HPO) online GIS mapping system (HPOweb), as well as the most recent Gaston County architectural survey, completed in 1982, for basic geographical and contextual information of the project area. Historical research included primary and secondary source investigation at various local and state archival repositories, such as the Gaston County Public Library Mount Holly Branch, the Mount Holly Historical Society Archives, and the NC HPO survey file room. Online sources, such as UNC Maps Collection, Ancestry.com, newspapers.com, and U.S. Census records, were consulted for information on the history of the properties. Property information was also acquired online through Gaston County's Register of Deeds office and from interviews with local residents of Mount Holly.

Ms. Privett conducted the fieldwork on December 6 and 14, 2018, which included surveying and photographing the exterior and interior of each resource, along with interviewing local residents and Lodge 544 members, and conducting a windshield survey of nearby comparable resources in the area, photographing the resources for architectural context. Ms. Privett wrote the report.

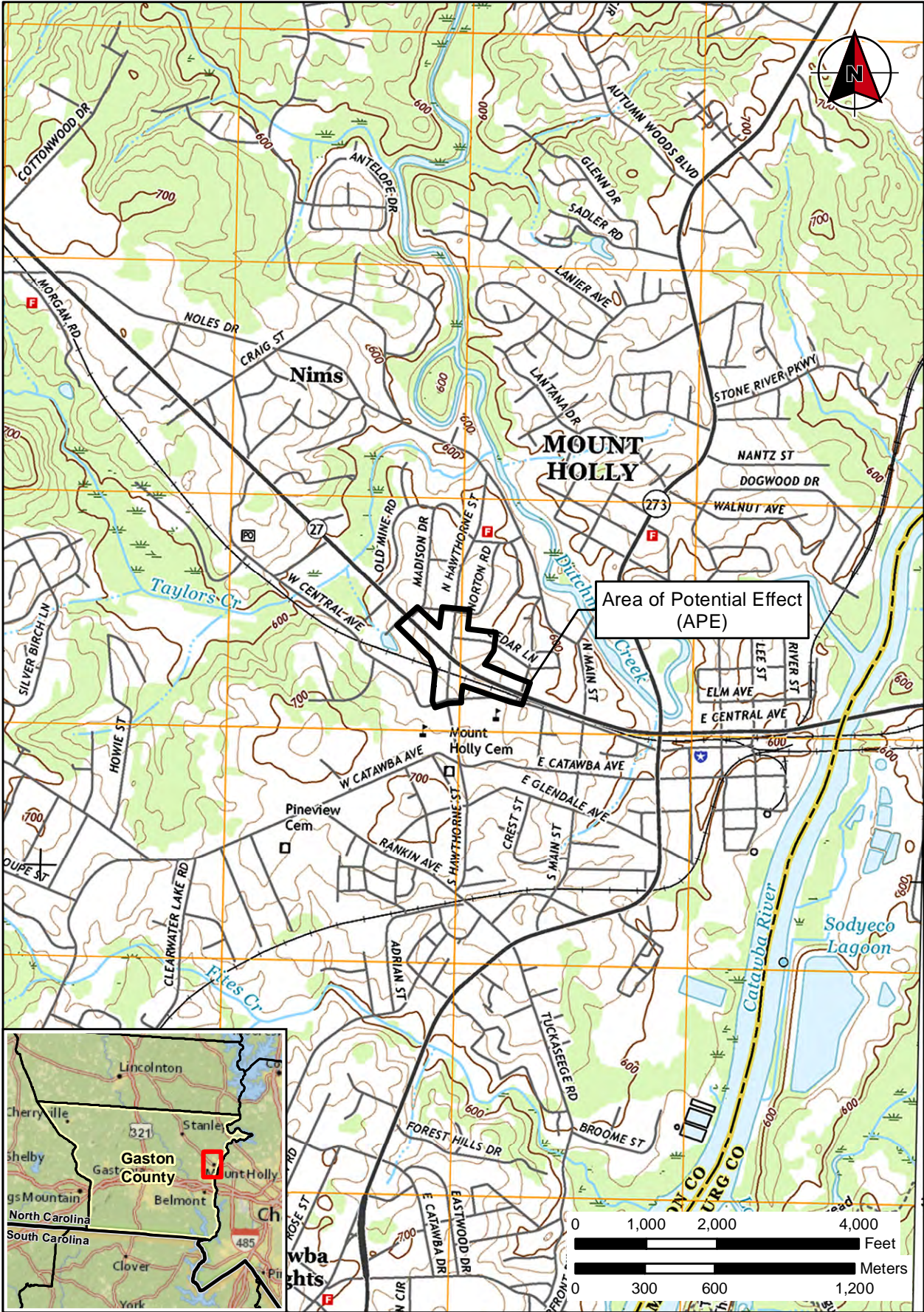


FIGURE 1: U-5819 Project Study Area Vicinity Map, Gaston County, North Carolina (USGS Mount Holly 2016)

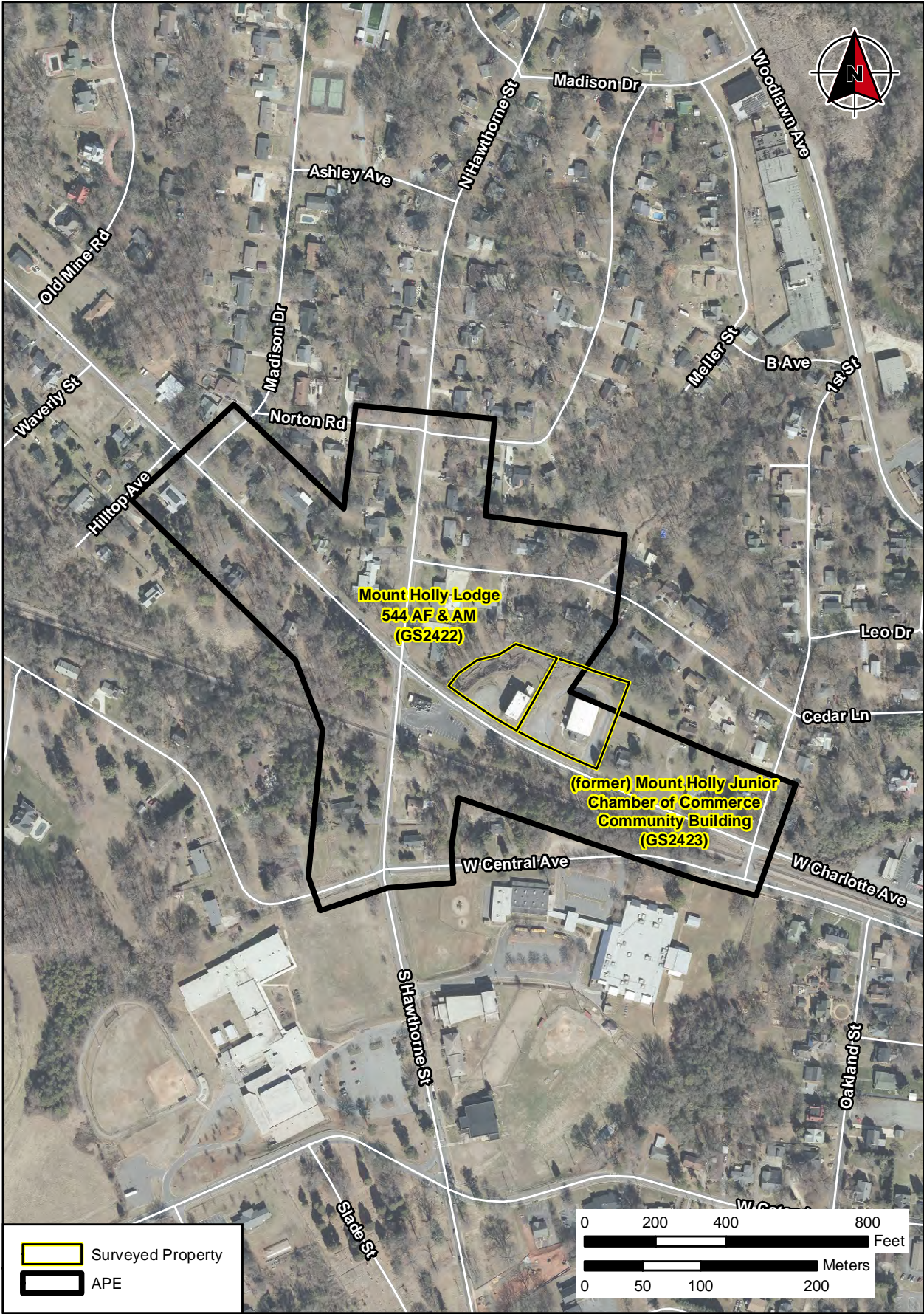


FIGURE 2: U-5819 Project Area of Potential Effects (APE) for NRHP Eligibility Study, Mount Holly, Gaston County, North Carolina (NC OneMap 2015)

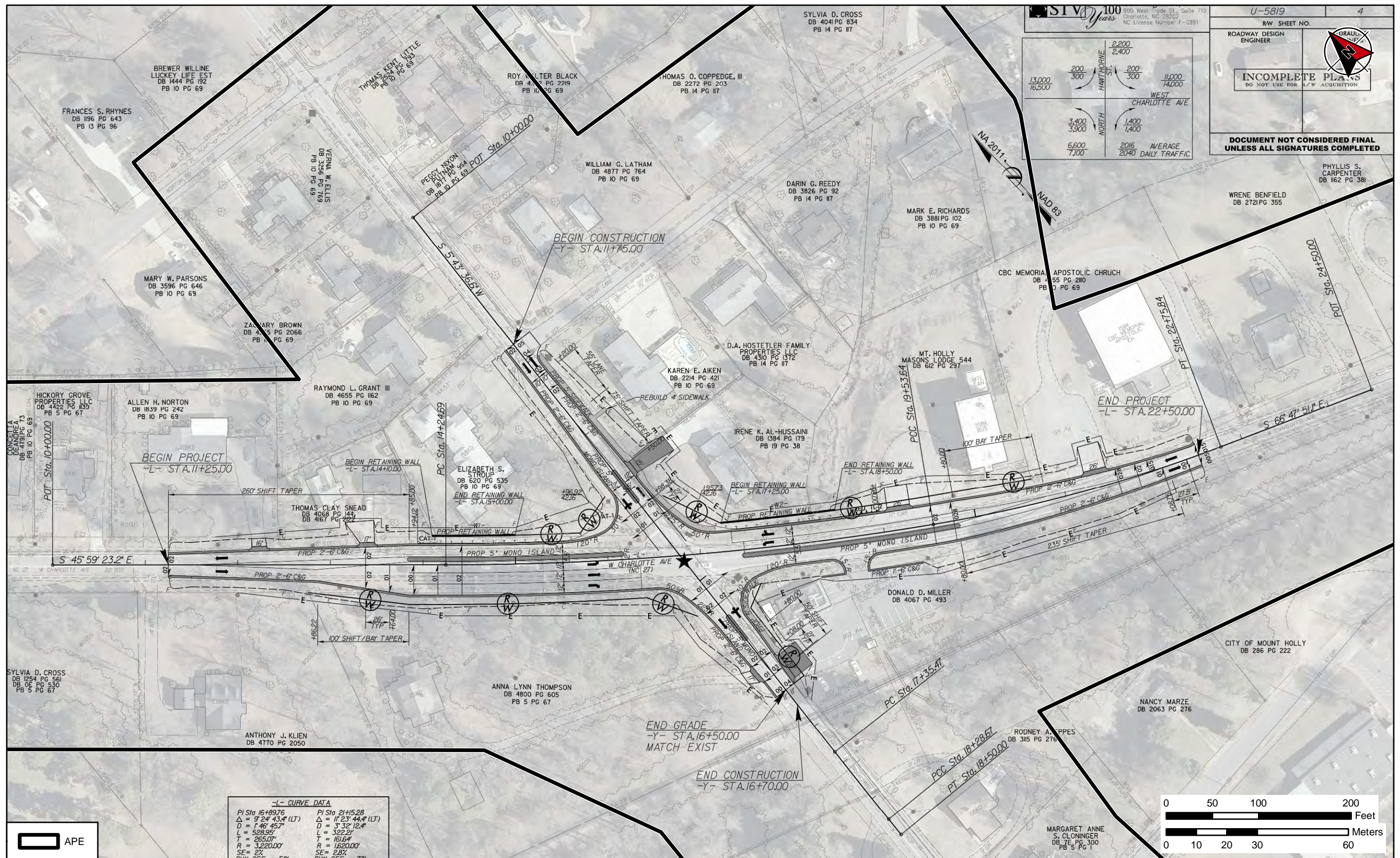


FIGURE 3: U-5819 Project APE Map Showing Preliminary Designs, 2018 (NC OneMap 2015; NCDOT 2018)

This report was prepared in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation of 1983 (48 *Federal Register* 44716), as amended; *Architectural Survey Manual: Practical Advice for Recording Historic Resources* (North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources [NC DCR] 2008); NCDOT's current Historic Architecture Group Procedures and Work Products; and the NC HPO's *Report Standards for Historic Structure Survey Reports/Determinations of Eligibility/Section 106/110 Compliance Reports in North Carolina* (NC HPO 2018). The architectural historian who performed the assessments meets or exceeds the Professional Qualifications Standards specified in 36 CFR 61.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY EVALUATIONS

2.1 Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM

Resource Name	Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM
HPO Survey Site No.	GS2422
Location	322 W. Charlotte Avenue Mount Holly, NC 28120
PIN	3597608199
Date(s) of Construction	1955-1959
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible, Criterion C



2.1.1 Setting and Description

Situated on a 0.92-acre parcel on the northern side of NC 27 with little setback from the roadway, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM faces NC 27 and is located across from the Seaboard Coastline Railway, which is south of the roadway and screened with trees and vegetation. The property lies within a neighborhood of mid-twentieth-century housing known as Madison Park, which was platted in the early 1950s and falls within Riverbend Township in Mount Holly. Built upon on a slight incline with a gravel parking lot west of the building, the rear of the property is screened with vegetation and includes a covered barbecue pit. A set of concrete steps descends from the east elevation of the building to the rear barbecue pit and yard. The property's small front lawn contains a wood sign, a flagpole, a small set of steps, and a wood ADA ramp leading to the main entrance on the south elevation of the building (Figure 4).

2.1.1.1 Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM, 1955-1959

Completed in 1959 with brick made in Mount Holly and used in the construction process by Lodge 544's own brick masons, the two-story, rectangular, brick-veneered modernist Mount Holly Lodge 544 building features a three-bay façade and brick-infilled window bays on its side elevations, a six-to-one brick common bond with elevated brick courses, a nearly flat roof, and possesses restrained but classic modernist architectural elements in its overall minimalistic design. The building rests on a concrete slab foundation (Plate 1).

The south elevation (façade) is composed of three bays on each story. The first story features a double-leaf entrance of solid metal doors marked with the masonic emblem with a brick soldier course surround, sheltered by a flat, metal awning supported by metal brackets. The entrance is flanked by two evenly spaced, glass-block window bays composed of 32 lights each, accented by soldier course lintels and rowlock sills. A bronze plaque attached to the masonry to the right of the entrance commemorates the building's construction date. The second story is also pierced by three bays, which consist of four-light, metal, horizontal-sash windows also with soldier course lintels and rowlock sills. Directly between the central window bay on the second story and the central entrance with awning on the first story is an electric sign (Plate 2).

The east and west elevations are nearly identical to each other, composed of four window bays on the first and second stories that have been infilled with brick. The second-story windows were originally designed this way, but the first story windows were infilled at a later date. All bays possess soldier course lintels and



FIGURE 4: Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422) Site Plan, Mount Holly, Gaston County, North Carolina (NC OneMap 2015)



PLATE 1: Oblique View of South and East Elevations, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 2: South Elevation, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina

rowlock sills (Plate 3). A single-leaf, metal door pierces the far northern end of the east elevation of the building, topped with a soldier course lintel. The brick veneer on the east and west elevations is a classic common bond as opposed to the façade, which features a brick bond pattern with slightly elevated courses of brick stretchers instead of headers. Small vents pierce the top of each of the side elevations, and metal coping covers the top edge underneath the roofline (Plate 4).

The north (rear) elevation of the building contains a central, single-leaf, metal entrance bay on its first story and an additional single-leaf, metal entrance bay on the second story with a set of metal stairs leading down to the ground level. The first-story entrance is flanked by two window bays, also infilled with brick. A brick chimney flue also stands at the western end of the north elevation (Plate 5). A barbecue pit made of concrete block and metal smokers is covered by a metal carport located immediately north of the north elevation (Plate 6).

The interior of Lodge 544 consists of an entry vestibule with restrooms leading to an open event space on the first floor, the far northern end of which consists of a small kitchen and storage area. The event space features wood paneling covering the concrete block walls, a tile floor, and rounded metal columns supporting the structure in the center of the room (Plate 7). An acoustical tile ceiling with fluorescent lighting illuminates the space. A staircase at the eastern end of the entrance vestibule leads to the second story, which is composed of the main lodge meeting room and a few small preparation/storage areas at the southern end. One enters the main meeting room from one of the two preparation rooms, which holds various items used in Masonic rituals and for bi-monthly meetings (Plate 8). The main lodge meeting room is designed in a standardized, Masonic interior plan: the east and west sides of the room consist of seating for members with a wood altar in the center along with a black and white checkerboard tile floor, in the center of which is the pentagram (Plate 9). The north side of the room contains the seat and podium of the worshipful master elevated on a stepped platform and flanked by two desks. The podium is decorated with a banner hanging from it reading “Wisdom” (Plate 10). The south end of the meeting room also features a stepped platform containing a seat and podium with an attached banner reading “strength.” The two Pillars of Lamech are situated to the right of the platform (Plate 11). The seating on the east side of the meeting room is divided by a small raised platform containing a podium with the banner reading “Beauty.” The meeting room floor is carpeted, and the walls are covered in wood paneling. The ceiling, as on the first floor, consists of acoustical tiles and fluorescent lighting. The walls of the meeting room are adorned with framed photographs of past and present members of Lodge 544 and individuals important to freemasonry in North Carolina and nationwide (Plate 12).

2.1.2 History

Chartered in 1906, Mount Holly Lodge 544 Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (AF & AM) originally met downtown in a small, brick, storefront building on Main Street. Freemasonry along with other fraternal organizations in North Carolina steadily grew beginning in the late eighteenth century, and Mount Holly’s lodge formed during the town’s boom period as a manufacturing community with a diverse commercial economy. Gaston County was already home to several other Masonic lodges, the earliest of which was formed in Gastonia during 1867 (Breen 2002:255). By the time of the new Mount Holly 544 Lodge construction during the 1950s, Masonic lodges existed in Gaston County communities such as Belmont, Lowell, Gastonia, Stanley, St. Matthews, and others. Today, the county boasts 11 Masonic Lodges located in towns throughout the county.

The building erected in 1955-1959 for Mount Holly Lodge 544 was the first building constructed specifically for the purpose of freemasonry in Mount Holly. The masonry work was done by two of Lodge 544’s own members with local brick from Mount Holly. Original sketch plans obtained from the Mount Holly Historical Society show some slight differences in the outcome of the exterior of the building, but the interior floor plans largely followed the drawings (Figure 5).



PLATE 3: West Elevation, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 4: East Elevation, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 5: North Elevation, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM
(GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 6: Detail of Barbecue Pit Located off North Elevation, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 7: Interior of First Story, Facing South, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina

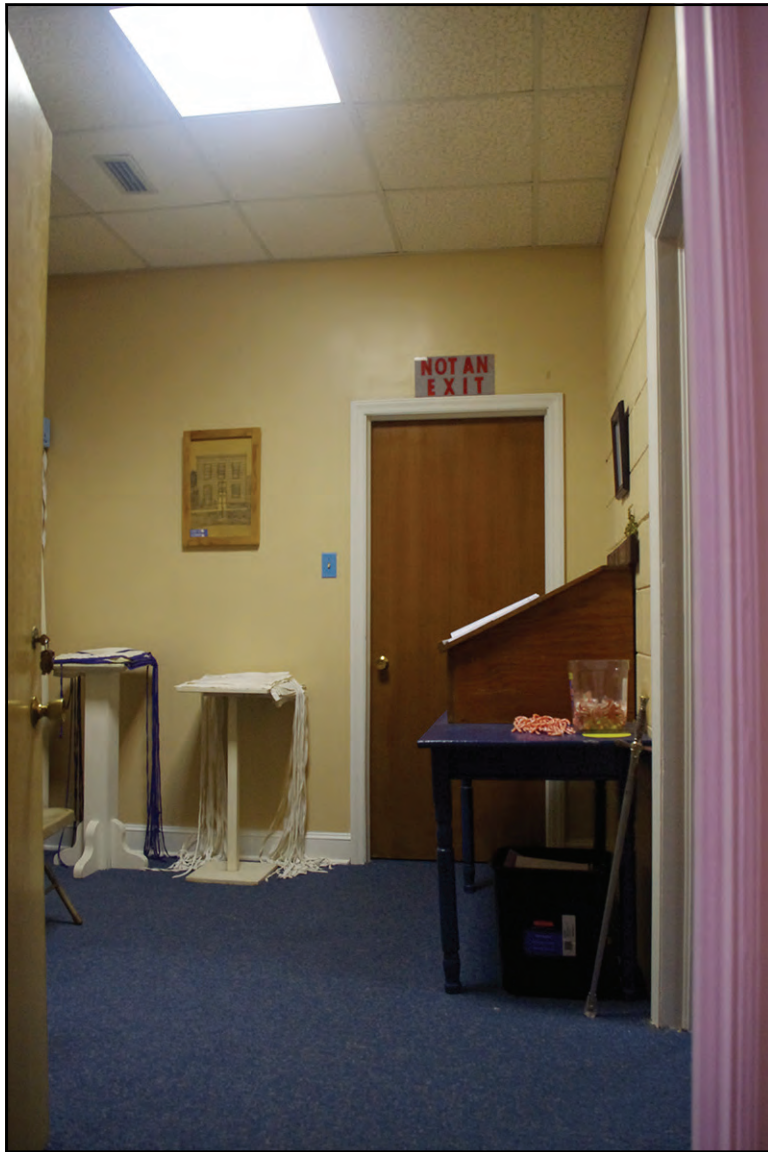


PLATE 8: Interior Detail of Preparation room, Facing west, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 9: Second-Story Meeting Room, Facing Southeast, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 10: Detail of North End of Second-Story Meeting Room, Facing North, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 11: Detail of South End of Second-Story Meeting Room, Facing South, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 12: Second-Story Meeting Room, Facing North, Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, North Carolina

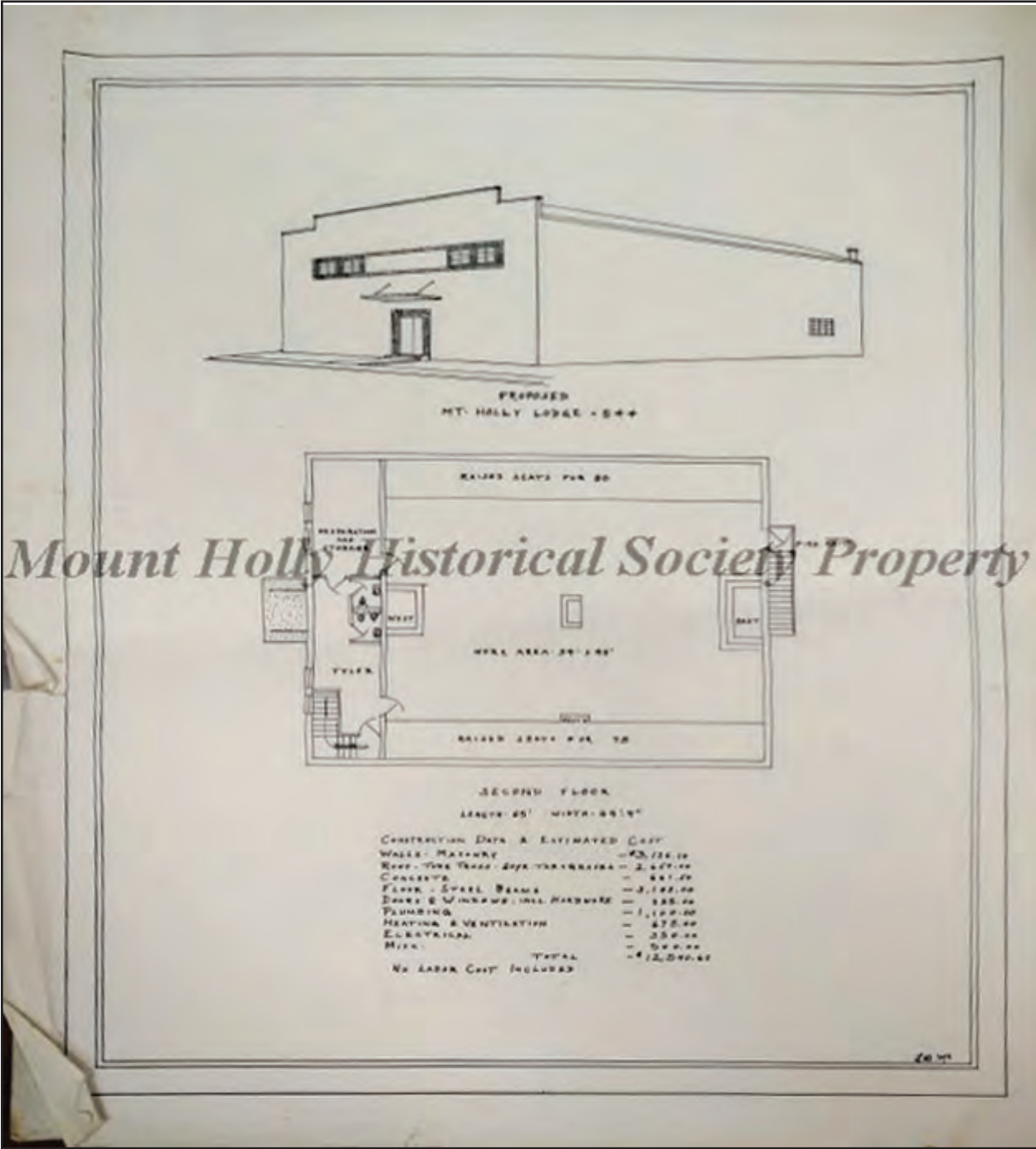


FIGURE 5: Sketch Plans for Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Exterior and Second Story (Mount Holly Historical Society Archives)

Mount Holly Lodge 544 trustees were officially deeded the property in 1953 from American and Efirid Mills, Inc. for \$10 (Gaston County Deed Books [GCDB] 612/297-298). The property, formerly a textile mill property, at that time had recently been platted as part of Madison Park, a mid-twentieth-century residential neighborhood (GCPB 10/69) (Figure 6). Although the second-story windows have always been infilled with brick matching the bond of the exterior walls, the first-story windows were not infilled until a later date, according to Lodge 544 member Bobby Blankenship (2018). Masonic organizations, although a secret society, are typically engaged in a wide variety of charity work and community involvement, and Mount Holly Lodge 544 is no exception. The property has been under the ownership of Mount Holly Lodge 544 since its initial deed and construction in 1953 (Blankenship 2018).

Freemasonry evolved from an ancient guild system of European craftsmen, including stone workers, brick masons, and other construction workers, and peaked during the Renaissance. Modern freemasonry has existed in North Carolina since the 1730s. The organization transformed from a trade guild into a fraternal, secret society during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as it sought to increase its ranks with influential statesmen and other significant community members. The organization, which split into various factions, emphasized concepts such as personal enlightenment, democracy, local charity, and rituals that cemented loyalty to the Brotherhood and to Masonic ideals (Grand Lodge of North Carolina 2018).

The first documented establishment of freemasonry in North Carolina dates to 1755 with the establishment oldest lodge in the state, Saint John's Lodge of Wilmington. In the Cape Fear area near Wilmington and New Bern, another early significant event in the organization's history occurred in 1771 with the commissioning of Joseph Montfort by the Duke of Beaufort as the first Provincial Grand Master of North Carolina. Since the mid-eighteenth century, individual lodges continued to be founded throughout the state, spreading as new cities and towns were developed (Kobrin and Moody 2006:1-3). Only open to men, freemasonry's sister organization for women is known as the Eastern Star and also maintains chapters throughout North Carolina, though much fewer in number.

Masonic activity in Gaston County began in the mid-nineteenth century, with the lodge founded in Gastonia shortly after the Civil War. Like freemasonry, other fraternal and benevolent organizations developed and played an active role in their local communities, including the Elks Club, Lions Club, Odd Fellows Club, Order of the Eagles, Knights of Pythias, Rotary Club, and many other social societies that encouraged civic involvement, charity work, and public service, and played a vital role in the social lives of community members. Mount Holly's economy was based on the textile industry and other commercial business, and would have benefited from the influential and wealthy members of the textile industry who were involved in these fraternal organizations. Occasionally Mount Holly Lodge 544 and other Gaston County Masonic lodges were involved in district meetings and regional ceremonies complete with keynote speakers, networking, social activities, and opportunities for fellow masons to demonstrate their practice and knowledge of freemasonry depending on which degree of the society they had reached. A 1911 article in *The Gastonia Gazette* records activities from a convention of 21 lodges comprising the 23rd District, with seven Gaston County lodges represented. One the highlights of the convention was the formal establishment of a chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star within the district (*The Gastonia Gazette* 1911:1).

Figure 7 shows Mount Holly in 1922. By the start of World War II, when Lodge 544 initiated plans for constructing its new building, Mount Holly had grown to 2,055 residents, and Gaston County possessed 100 active textile mills and 145 churches. At the dawn of the 1960s, Mount Holly's population reached a little over 4,000 individuals, with a sharp decrease from the early twentieth century in the number of Gaston County citizens who lived in rural areas. New industries began to flourish in Gaston County in addition to its manufacturing sector because of low tax rates, good and affordable housing, an abundance of labor, proximity to highways and natural resources, and the presence of skilled craftsmen (Williams 1998:153-171).

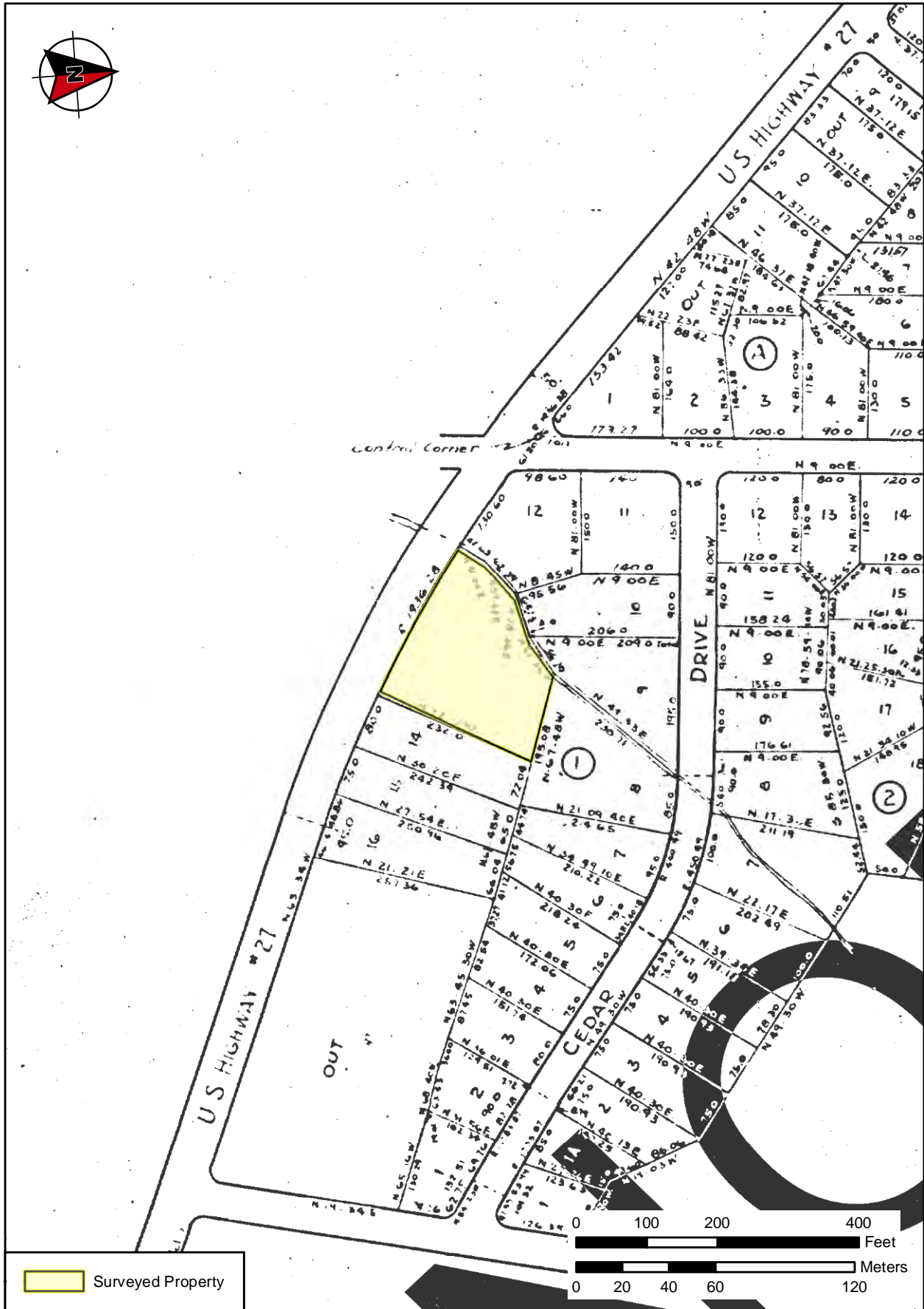


FIGURE 6: Plat of Madison Park Showing lot for Mount Holly Lodge 544, Mount Holly, North Carolina, 1951 (Gaston County Plat Books 1951) 18

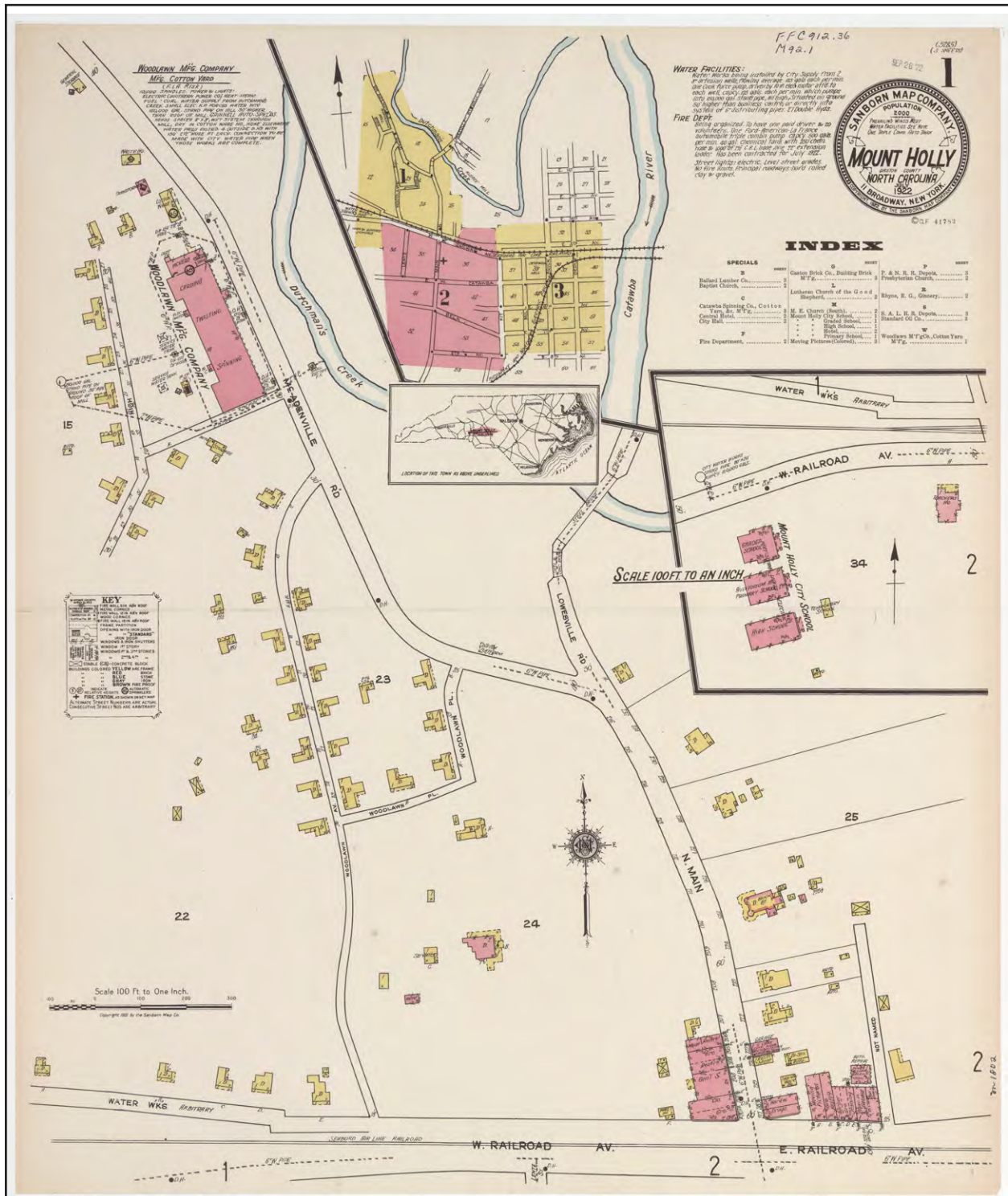


FIGURE 7: 1922 Sanborn Map of Mount Holly, North Carolina (Sanborn 1922)

Today, Lodge 544 continues to operate largely as it did during the mid-twentieth century, hosting annual fundraising events and sponsoring community activities for local charities. According to current Lodge 544 members, the group hosts fundraisers to provide funding to a variety of local charitable organizations, such as college scholarships for Mount Holly high school students, the Masonic Service Association's Disaster Relief and Veterans Hospital programs, the Mount Holly C.R.O, and the Masonic Home for Children. Lodge 544 currently retains approximately 150 members and meets twice monthly, with three degrees necessary to ascend to the level of "master mason" (Blankenship and McRae 2018).

2.1.3 Architecture Context and NRHP Evaluation

Masonic Lodges have long been recognized for their outstanding architectural execution of craftsmanship, some in nationally popular styles of the day and others with Egyptian motifs and Masonic symbolism applied to the exterior of the structures. Many are carefully planned to very specific guidelines for sacred and standardized interior floor plans common in the majority of Masonic lodges. North Carolina's Masonic lodges did vary in terms of their locale and the means available to construct the building, with more significant Masonic temples constructed in more established, metropolitan areas with a strong Masonic membership. Exterior forms of masonic lodge buildings are most often found in North Carolina in a two-story, "temple front" or front-gabled form. Some Masonic "temple front" buildings contained elaborate entrance porticos and impressive porches, and others did not. If located along a main street in a downtown area, Masonic lodges resemble their brick, commercial storefront counterparts. Nineteenth-century lodges most often resembled dwellings, but as freemasonry grew in prominence in North Carolina, its architecture signifying the organization's presence within the community became more distinct (Bishir 1990:471; Turco 2007:8-10-8-11). Occasionally, mid-twentieth-century lodges utilized forms and styles common to miscellaneous modernist architecture, and the Grand Lodge of North Carolina in Raleigh employs a high-style version of this mid-twentieth-century pattern.

Interior floor plans of Masonic lodges and temples typically placed meeting halls reserved for rites and rituals, the most important space within the lodge, on the second story accessed by a private stairway, to ensure privacy. Antechambers may have been attached to the main meeting hall for member preparation prior to entering the meeting hall and for storage. The interior arrangement of a Masonic meeting hall is highly specific, with an altar and checkerboard patterned floor placed in the center of the room, the senior warden at one end of the room, and the worshipful master along with other officers at the opposite end. Seating for members typically lines the sides of the meeting hall, which is laid out usually from east to west, but in the case of Mount Holly's Lodge, it is oriented north to south. The first stories of lodges and temples were usually reserved for events, educational purposes, charity functions, or religious worship. Some lodges even rented out their first-story spaces (Blankenship and McRae 2018; Turco 2007:8-10-8-11).

Constructed in 1955-1959, Mount Holly Lodge 544 reflects the prevailing architectural style of the mid-twentieth century for public and civic-oriented buildings: modernist architecture. Prior to the 1959 completion of the building, it does not appear that any other structures were located on the property, which is located in Madison Park, which was platted in 1951. Modernism was beginning to dominate architectural trends throughout Gaston County for commercial and government-oriented buildings during the mid-twentieth century, strongly influenced by nearby Charlotte's growth and cutting-edge architectural firms. Although Masonic lodges tended to follow more traditional architectural patterns that served their specific organizational and ritualistic needs, exterior stylistic details were still often influenced by national and statewide trends.

Mount Holly's growth, following national trends of suburbanization after World War II, extended outward from downtown into the surrounding countryside as the increased availability of automobiles no longer required people to live close to downtown amenities. Embodied modestly in Mount Holly Lodge 544,

modern architecture's departure from revivalist styles was a tangible representation of a new age of technological innovation and prosperity, such as that espoused by President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" and its affiliated reforms. By the 1960s modernism had been accepted as the mainstream style for new commercial, institutional, and government facilities; the style embodied certain ideals favored by corporations and reflected the design principle that form follows function. Pragmatic accessibility is an overriding theme for modernist architecture, exemplified by the use of modern technology, a focus on the sculptural aspects of structural elements, and an architectural reconciliation of the indoors with the outdoors. Common modernist architectural features include unadorned entrances, ribbon windows or glass curtain walls, asymmetrical façades with horizontal massing and clean lines, low-pitched or flat rooflines, textured walls contrasting with smooth, blank walls, and outdoor living spaces or courtyards. Modernism in North Carolina was heavily influenced by the International style and largely employed in its earliest examples by architects of the School of Design at North Carolina State University. The style is most notably expressed through the works of architectural icons such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, and Eero Saarinen, among others (Fearnbach 2010:74-79; Gelernter 1999:263-279).

Very few of Gaston County's Masonic lodges that have been previously surveyed embody modernist architectural elements, but some of Mount Holly's commercial buildings typify the style. Out of North Carolina's 117 previously recorded Masonic lodge buildings, only five survive in Gaston County (HPOweb), but other lodges not previously surveyed also exist. Statewide, 11 Masonic Lodge buildings have been listed in the NRHP and two have been determined eligible for the NRHP. Most of Gaston County's Masonic lodges are designed with the front-gabled, "temple front" or are located in repurposed, commercial storefront buildings that represent architectural patterns and styles for commercial architecture that were popular in the early twentieth century along the main streets of cities and towns.

One of the Gaston County Masonic lodges whose eligibility remains in question is located in Lowell, Hiram Masonic Lodge No. 22 (GS1711). A rare example of an African-American Masonic Lodge established during the era of Jim Crow and segregation, Hiram Masonic Lodge No. 22 is a ca. 1962, two-story, concrete-block building featuring a hipped roof, steel-sash windows, and simple entrance canopies (Plate 13). Although it is not significant for architecture, it may retain significance under Criterion A for Ethnic Heritage and entertainment/recreation. Hiram Masonic Lodge No. 22 is both architecturally dissimilar to that of Mount Holly Lodge 544 and historically unique with roots in the historic context of Black Freemasonry of North Carolina (Alexander 2017:218-226).

Similar in form to the Mount Holly Lodge 544 except for its front-gabled roofline, the Belmont Masonic Lodge (GS0132) located at 201 S. Main Street in Belmont features an exterior brick with a bond pattern and coursing similar to that of the Mount Holly Lodge. Both lodges, although constructed in different time periods and architectural styles, possess rectangular, two-story forms with symmetrical façades and fenestration on their side elevations, the window bays all infilled with brick (Plate 14). The early twentieth-century Belmont Masonic Lodge highlights classical architectural elements rather than modernist, but the massing, materials, and form are highly comparable to that of Mount Holly Lodge 544. Both also appear to retain excellent historic integrity (NC HPO Survey File, GS0132).

Another example of a recorded Gaston County resource associated with fraternal societies is the Whetstone Masonic Lodge (GS1598) located in downtown Bessemer City. Built in 1907, altered in 1930, and remodeled in 1990, the Whetstone Masonic Lodge is a common example of a brick-veneered, two-story, commercial storefront building that was commonly used by freemasons as a meeting hall (Plate 15). Unlike Mount Holly Lodge 544, the Whetstone Masonic Lodge and others, such as Gastonia Lodge No. 369, represent Masonic meeting halls and temples that were designed and built into downtown commercial streetscapes rather than as freestanding facilities. Often, especially in smaller or mid-sized communities, these buildings blend in with the other commercial storefront buildings lining the main streets of small



PLATE 13: Hiram Mason Lodge No. 22 (GS1711), Oblique View of North and East Elevations, Lowell, North Carolina



PLATE 14: Belmont Masonic Lodge (GS0132), Oblique View of West and North Elevations, Belmont, North Carolina



PLATE 15: Whetstone Masonic Lodge (GS1598), North Elevation, Bessemer City, North Carolina

towns rather than standing out as architecturally distinct showpieces. Neither the Whetstone Masonic Lodge nor the Gastonia Lodge No. 369 have been evaluated for NRHP eligibility; however, both appear to retain a medium to good degree of historic integrity and still serve their original purposes (NC HPO Survey File, GS1598).

Other fraternal and benevolent societies erected lodge buildings that can serve as comparable examples to Mount Holly Lodge 544, such as Elks Lodge No. 1679 (LE0854) located at 910 Carthage Street in Sanford, Lee County. As very few lodge buildings have been evaluated for NRHP eligibility in North Carolina, it is necessary to look outside Gaston County for comparison, especially when studying a building constructed in the same timeframe in a similar architectural style. Elks Lodge No. 1679, built in 1958 and expanded in 1968, features modernist architectural elements with minimal exterior embellishment; its exterior is clad with brick and vertical aluminum siding. Its one-story, rectangular form is partially banked into a hillside and possesses a flat roof with recessed portions and flat-roofed canopies located at primary entrances of the building (Plate 16). Like Mount Holly Lodge 544, the general stylistic elements of the building favor modernism, but the Elks Lodge is an entirely different form and less restrained in its overall modernist design than Mount Holly Lodge 544. Lodge 544 follows general forms and interior floor plans typical of Masonic temples and lodges, which are very specific to their rites, rituals, and purposes within the community. Elks Lodge No. 1679 was determined in 2017 to be not eligible for listing in the NRHP after a thorough evaluation (NC HPO Survey File, LE0854; Van den Hurk 2017:1-5).

Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM retains a fairly high degree of the seven aspects of integrity. It stands in its original location, retaining integrity of location in addition to setting, as there have not been many major changes to the streetscape, neighborhood, or landscape surrounding the property since the lodge was built (Plate 17). Mount Holly Lodge 544 has been little altered since its initial construction in 1959, therefore retaining a strong degree of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Its original exterior architectural features, doors, and windows are intact in addition to its interior floor plan and meeting hall space on the second story. The most substantial exterior alteration is the brick infill of the first-story windows and the slight change in pitch of the roof, which cannot be noticed from the ground level. The property also retains integrity of feeling and association as it still serves its original purpose as a Masonic lodge meeting hall for Mount Holly's freemasons.

Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM is recommended as not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for association with significant events in history or historical patterns or trends. Chartered in 1906, the 1959 lodge building is associated with the growth of fraternal orders such as freemasonry in North Carolina; however, many other Masonic lodges survive in Gaston County and throughout North Carolina that have made more outstanding contributions to history, such as the Saint Joseph's Lodge in Wilmington. Furthermore, Gaston County's first Masonic lodge, founded in 1867, survives in Gastonia, and the Mount Holly Lodge 544 is not known to have any other association with documented historical events, patterns, or trends in local, state, or national history.

Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM is recommended as not eligible under Criterion B for association with significant individuals in history. Although many upstanding citizens and prominent community members have been involved as members of Lodge 544, no single individual, officer, or lodge member could be identified who contributes significantly to the history of Gaston County in an outstanding way that has been documented.

Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM was found to be eligible under Criterion C for architecture as a rare local example of modern architecture employed for a Masonic lodge building in Gaston County. No other Masonic lodges in the county are known to have been designed with modernist stylistic elements in mind; instead they take on the more traditional "temple-front" form or can be characterized as a standard, downtown, commercial storefront building following nationally popular styles of the period. Only one other



PLATE 16: Elks Lodge No. 1679 (LE0854), Oblique View of East and South Elevations, Sanford, North Carolina



PLATE 17: Facing West Toward Mount Holly Lodge 544 (GS2422), Looking West Down W. Charlotte Avenue, Mount Holly, North Carolina

Masonic lodge building in Gaston County is considered potentially eligible, Hiram Masonic Lodge No. 22 in Lowell. Completed in 1959, Mount Holly Lodge 544 was designed specifically as a stand-alone lodge by a local freemason and constructed with the help of its fellow members who were brick masons. It also retains a high degree of integrity with very few alterations since its construction to the exterior of the building or to the second-story interior meeting hall, its most significant ceremonial space.

A building may be eligible under Criterion D if the buildings and/or structures have the potential to yield important information pertaining to undocumented or rare local building traditions. Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM does not meet Criterion D.

2.1.4 Recommended NRHP Boundaries

The recommended NRHP boundaries for Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM are drawn to include the lodge building and its associated landscape and hardscape features (Figure 8). The boundaries generally follow tax parcel lines or NCDOT right-of-way (ROW) ditch lines, beginning with the tax parcel boundary at southeast corner intersecting with W. Charlotte Avenue, running north, then west, then sloping down the tax parcel line to the south and intersecting with W. Charlotte Avenue at the NCDOT ROW ditch line, then following the ditch and tree line eastward to complete the polygon. When they are adjacent to W. Charlotte Avenue/NC 27, NRHP boundaries follow NCDOT ROW lines and include boundary features such as signage, the flagpole, and vegetative screening or hedges. The recommended NRHP boundary encompasses a total of approximately 0.97 acre (see Figure 8).



FIGURE 8: Recommended NRHP Boundaries for Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM (GS2422), Mount Holly, Gaston County, North Carolina (NC OneMap 2015)

2.2 (Former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building

Resource Name	(former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building
HPO Survey Site No.	GS2423
Location	330 W. Charlotte Avenue Mount Holly, NC 28120
PIN	3597700191
Date(s) of Construction	ca. 1952
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



2.2.1 Setting and Description

Located just east of Mount Holly Lodge 544 AF & AM on the north side of NC 27 in the town of Mount Holly is the CBC Memorial Apostolic Church, formerly the Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Building and later home to the Jaycees Community Building. The 1.32-acre parcel falls within Riverbend Township in Mount Holly and is surrounded by mid-twentieth-century housing known as Madison Park which was platted in the early 1950s. The Seaboard Coastline Railway runs east-west directly south of NC 27 across from the parcel. The property consists of the church building itself, which is surrounded by an arced gravel drive on three of its elevations, meeting NC 27 on either side of the building. A gravel parking area is situated west of the building. The property's small front lawn features a brick sign, landscaping, and a flagpole, with a sidewalk located along the south elevation of the building and curving around to the west elevation (Figure 9).

2.2.1.1 (former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) Community Building, ca. 1952

The one-story, brick-veneered, modernist, former community building was constructed in 1952 for the Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees). The rectangular, main block of the building features a rounded, brick parapet roofline with a concrete cap on its north and south elevations, and bands of clerestory windows, now infilled with siding, divided by brick pilasters on its east and west elevations. The building's roof itself is also arced, supported by a steel substructure (Plate 18). The main block contains a shorter, gabled, entrance vestibule on the south elevation (façade) also built of brick. The entire building is executed in a seven-to-one brick common bond veneer and rests on a concrete foundation.

The building's south elevation features a brick, front-gabled entrance wing consisting of a double-leaf set of glass and metal doors topped with a transom and divided sidelights, highlighted with a prominent stucco surround (Plate 19). The gable end of the entrance wing has been covered in synthetic siding. The entrance wing's roof, originally flat, is covered in asphalt shingles and features overhanging eaves sheltering a band of glass-block window bays with concrete sills on its east and west elevations. The roof of the wing is crowned with a pyramidal steeple topped with a wood cross (Plate 20). The entry wing was originally flat-roofed with a flat metal awning sheltering the main entrance, as seen in an image of the building's dedication from the 1952 Durene Festival program (Mount Holly Chamber of Commerce 1952) (Figure 10). A set of window blocks filled with metal awning sash originally pierced the south elevation above the entry wing; these window blocks are now infilled and mostly obstructed by the current entry wing's altered roofline. The elevation's brickwork features two raised, stretcher courses at the same height as the clerestory windows.



FIGURE 9: Former Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423) Site Plan, Mount Holly, Gaston County, North Carolina (NC OneMap 2015)



PLATE 18: Oblique View of South and East Elevations, Former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 19: South Elevation, Former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 20: Entrance Wing Roof Detail, South Elevation, Former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), Mount Holly, North Carolina

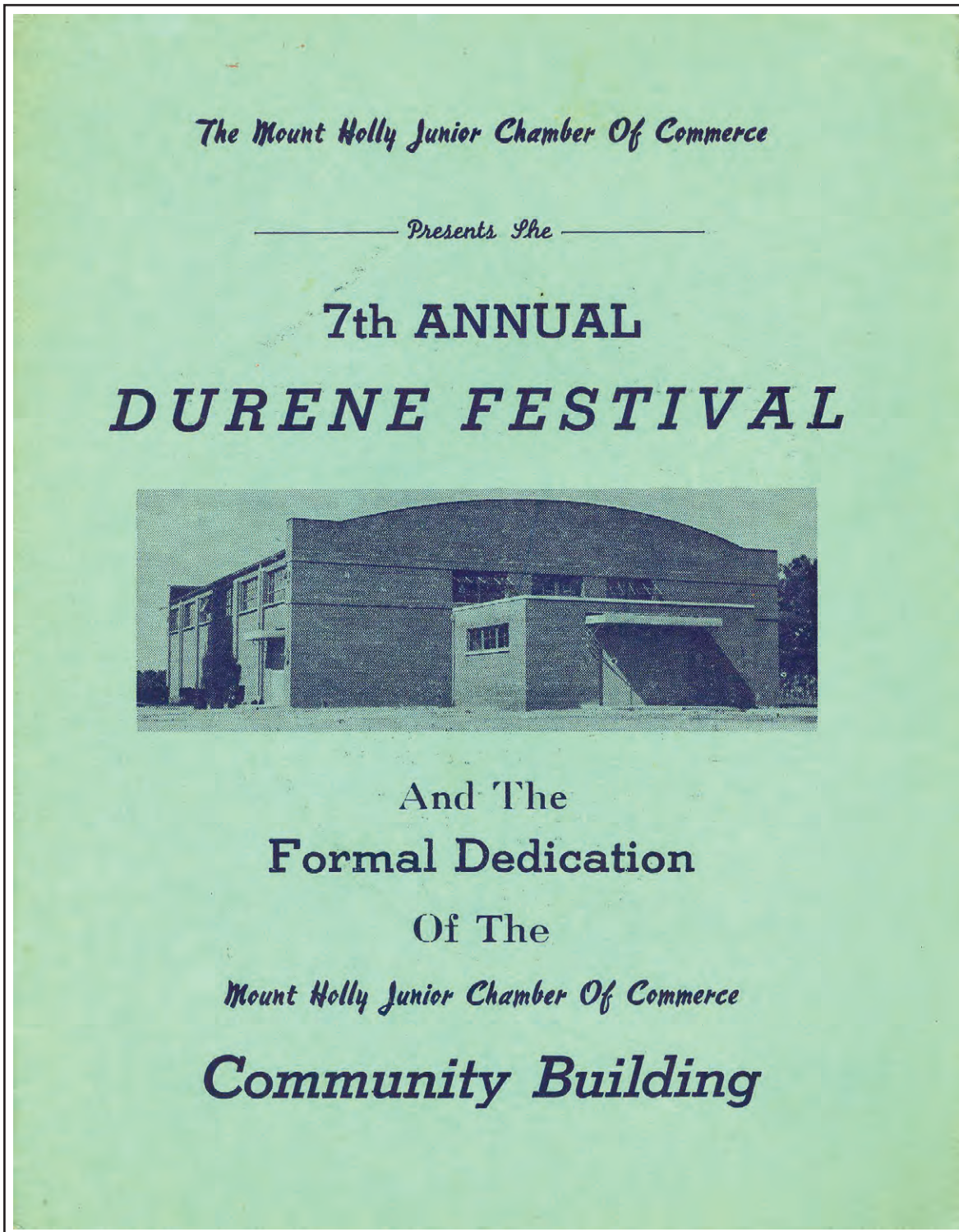


FIGURE 10: Cover of the 7th Annual Durene Festival Program, Mount Holly, North Carolina
(Courtesy of Mount Holly Historical Society Collection)

Slightly recessed because of the parapet “wings” of the roofline, the east and west elevations of the building each feature six “bays” of clerestory windows above brick exterior walls, divided by plain brick pilasters with concrete caps (Plate 21). Both elevations are pierced by two additional window bays at eye level at their northern ends, both boarded over. The west elevation also contains HVAC equipment attached to its exterior walls in addition to a brick chimney flue and a double-leaf, metal entrance bay at the far southern end of the elevation (Plate 22). The entrance bay on the west elevation leads to a set of brick steps that descend into the gravel parking lot west of the building. The north elevation of the building is pierced by three former window bays on the second story, now infilled with siding, and two double-leaf entrances consisting of metal doors on the first story (Plate 23).

The interior of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey despite multiple attempts to contact the church, its pastor, and church members. The entry vestibule was visible through the glass doors and appeared to consist of an updated, modernized interior of tile flooring, with restrooms on either side, and a set of doors leading to the primary sanctuary space (previously used as a gymnasium). Original interior photographs dating to 1954 reveal a steel-frame and concrete-block structure with a large, open, gymnasium-like meeting and events space (Plate 24).

2.2.2 History

The current CBC Memorial Apostolic Church building has only been used as a church since 2008. The building was constructed ca. 1952 as a community building for the Mount Holly Jaycees at a cost of nearly \$50,000. The property, acquired from American Yarn and Processing Company in 1951, was originally platted as Lots 14-16 of Madison Park, a mid-twentieth-century neighborhood just outside of downtown Mount Holly (see Figure 6). By 1963 the property had been transferred from the trustees of the Mount Holly Jaycees to the Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce, Inc. The community building functioned as a gymnasium, event space, and community center for the Jaycees until later in the twentieth century (GSDB 560/439, 576/38, 838/310; Mount Holly Chamber of Commerce 1952:11).

In 1984 the property changed hands from the Mount Holly Jaycees, Inc. to the Mount Holly Optimist Club, conveyed for \$10 (GCDB 1500/220). In the late 1990s it was transferred through a number of different owners, including Mighty Warriors Ministries, Inc. in 1997, to WAC Investments LLC in 2002, and finally to the current owner, CBC Memorial Apostolic Church, a branch of a larger congregation out of Charlotte, in 2002 (GCDB 2649/894, 2916/249, 3548/124, 3548/146, 4855/2110).

Settled in the late eighteenth century by early German and Scots-Irish settlers who joined the Catawba Indians who were already living along the banks of the Catawba River, Gaston County and Mount Holly in particular began as a region of small to middling farmsteads that grew into towns formed in large part from early textile mills established in the 1840s, with railroads fueling further economic growth shortly after the Civil War. The county was first founded from splitting off from Lincoln County in 1846. The first railroad to enter the county was the Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Railroad in 1860. The earliest mills included the Woodlawn Mill near Mount Holly, the Stovesville Cotton Mill, and the Mountain Island Mill. The next series of mills was erected during the 1870s and 1880s and continued to expand through the early twentieth century (Beatty et al. 2011:7-10; Dellinger and Caskey 2002:240, 287; Ramsey and Ramsey 2000:8-34; Stowe 1997:10-49; Williams 1998:153-171). Figure 11 shows roads in the county by the 1930s.

By the mid-twentieth century, near the time when the Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce initiated plans for constructing its new building, Mount Holly had a population of 2,055 residents, and Gaston County possessed 100 active mills and 145 churches. By the start of the 1960s, Mount Holly’s population reached a little over 4,000 individuals, with a sharp decrease from the early twentieth century in the number of Gaston County citizens who lived in rural areas. New industries began to flourish in Gaston County in



PLATE 21: East Elevation, Former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 22: West Elevation, Former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 23: North Elevation, Former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 24: Photograph from 1954 Durene Festival Banquet Showing Interior of the Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building, Mount Holly, North Carolina (Courtesy of Mount Holly Historical Society Collection)

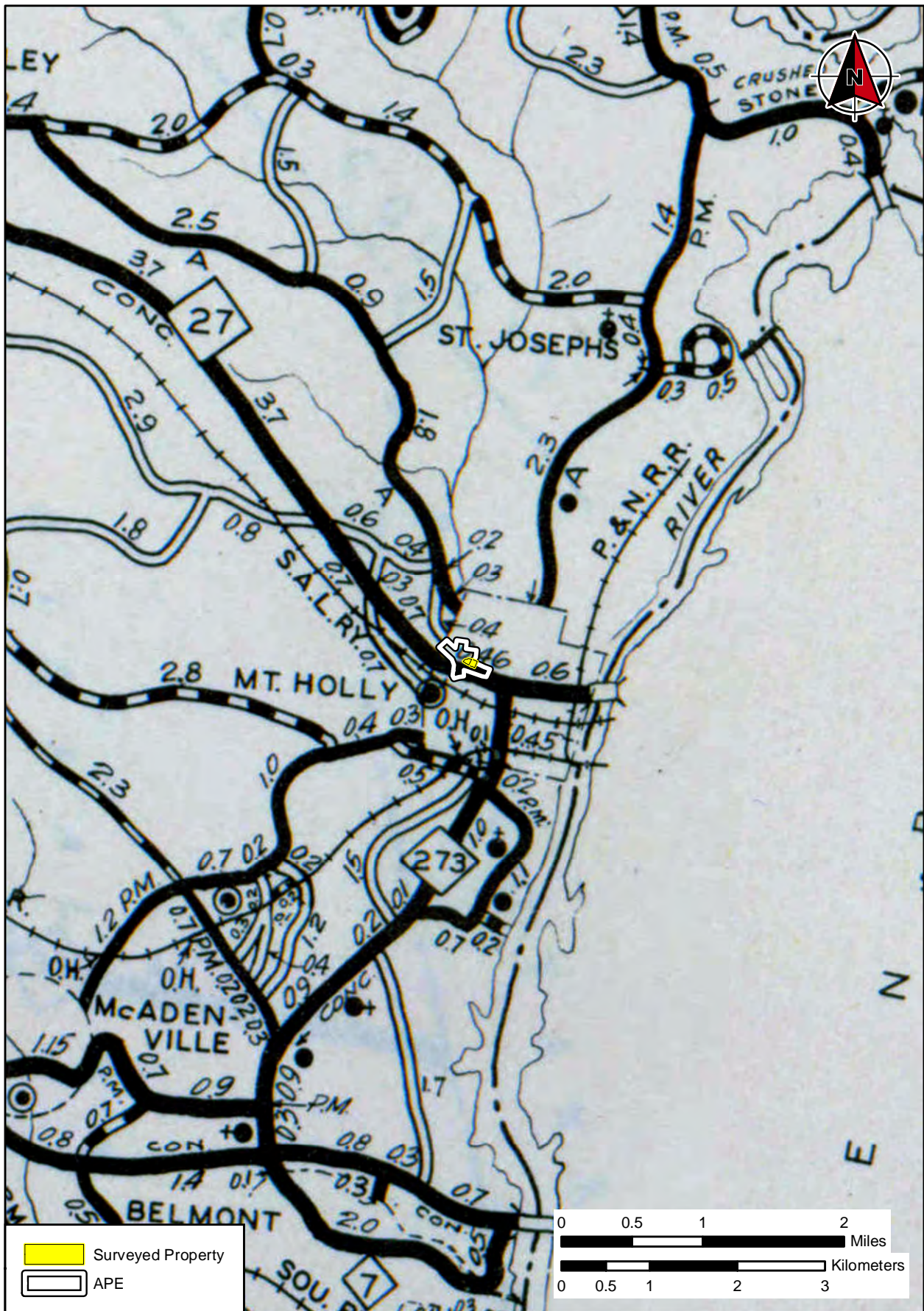


FIGURE 11: North Carolina Roads Survey Map, Gaston County, 1936 (North Carolina State Highway and Public Works Commission 1936)

addition to its manufacturing sector because of low tax rates, good and affordable housing, an abundance of labor, proximity to highways and natural resources, and the presence of skilled craftsmen (Williams 1998:153-171).

Chambers of Commerce such as Mount Holly's were established in droves during the mid-twentieth century across towns and cities throughout North Carolina. Mount Holly's downtown business district remained relatively small in comparison to larger towns such as Gastonia, but it grew in the twentieth century with new commercial buildings erected along Main Street and W. Charlotte Avenue. The community's commercial and business sectors, many fueled by textile mills, were large enough to support and engage an active Chamber of Commerce by the mid-twentieth century (Plate 25). The Mount Holly Jaycees sponsored an assortment of community events throughout the year, including the Durene Festival, textile festivals, air shows, weekly square dances, "Farmers Day," and hosts of other social and civic events in the community. Officers were typically elected annually and were often prominent Mount Holly citizens or business leaders. Evidence of early Mount Holly Jaycees activity appears during the 1940s, and it is likely the group was first organized during this time, with a reorganization completed in 1965. Prior to the 1952 community building's construction, Jaycees events were often held at local high school gymnasiums, churches, or outdoor areas. Even shortly after the construction of the community building, *The Gastonia Gazette* reported plans for beautifying the interior of the building with new paint and even discussed future plans for potential expansion and remodeling (*The Gastonia Gazette* 1948:5, 1956:21, 1957:9).

In 1952 the 7th Annual Durene Festival was sponsored and planned by the Mount Holly Jaycees in conjunction with the formal dedication of the Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building. The festival, recorded in a series of newspaper articles, was a grand affair complete with performances, recreational events, parades, a beauty contest, a banquet, a coronation ball, and many other activities, with a principal address given by United States Senator Clyde R. Hoey. The Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce states in its program for the event regarding the dedication of the community building, "The completion of this more than \$50,000 project by our organization makes it incumbent that we take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks for the co-operation we have received this past year and also for the past five years during which time the Community Building was in the planning stage as well as being under actual construction" (Mount Holly Chamber of Commerce 1952:1-11). An estimated 6,000 people witnessed or participated in the events of the week-long festival, and approximately \$1,900 was raised on behalf of the Mount Holly Jaycees. Another notable event hosted by Mount Holly's Junior Chamber of Commerce at the Jaycees Community Building was a district meeting in 1957 featuring national Jaycee President Wendell H. Ford, a Kentucky politician who later went on to serve as governor of the state and in the United States Senate. After the event over 400 members and their families from 15 clubs in the Jaycees regional district were expected to gather for a dinner meeting (Lazenby 1966:31; Mount Holly News 1952a, 1952b:1, 1952c:1, 1952d:1).

2.2.3 Architecture Context and NRHP Evaluation

With the majority of Gaston County's population employed in agriculture until the mid-nineteenth century, which until 1846 was part of Lincoln County, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century buildings were often unrefined log structures consisting of one room with a half-story above. Some early houses reflected two-story, hall-and-parlor plans, and others were covered with weatherboards to conceal their log construction. A handful of early brick houses were constructed by the county's leading elite citizens, which featured the symmetrical facades and center-hall plans that were becoming more fashionable as the nineteenth century progressed. Log houses were often updated with shed additions as families or farms expanded (Brengele 1982:4-7).

The Greek Revival style made its debut in Gaston County during the 1830s and quickly rose in popularity among the region's wealthy citizens, but vernacular forms were still extremely prevalent, although with



PLATE 25: Photograph of Mount Holly Chamber of Commerce, ca. 1960 (Courtesy of Mount Holly Historical Society Collection)

more refined and stylish elements. Also by the mid-nineteenth century, frame construction became almost universal in the county for residential construction. With the early textile industry blossoming and the growth of the railroads, the use of permanent, brick commercial architecture became common in the decades following the Civil War, particularly for textile mills and factory buildings. Their earlier counterparts in small towns such as Mount Holly tended to be frame stores or frame industrial buildings. A majority of the textile mills in the county were established by local businessmen, and many were founded by merchants who desired to utilize the mills to produce products to sell in their general stores (Brengele 1982:8-15).

By the late nineteenth century, like much of North Carolina, nationally popular styles began to dominate downtown areas in Gaston County's cities and towns, such as Queen Anne and Colonial Revival. Later in the early twentieth century and beyond, the Bungalow would become a leading house type throughout urban and rural areas of the state. Main streets in Gaston County's numerous small towns mostly followed prevailing architectural patterns of the day, with surviving structures primarily brick, one- and two-story, commercial storefront buildings with a modest amount of architectural ornament applied to the façade. In some cases local architects designed more significant buildings in downtown areas and employed Renaissance Revival or Art Deco styles. In Mount Holly surviving architecture reflects the shift from a rural to an industrial society and the growing affluence of the residents with the boom of the many textile industries located throughout the county. An increase in sophisticated architecture is noticeable, and as the twentieth century progressed, several domestic examples were built by contractor Robert F. Rankin as well as by a few Charlotte-based architects (Brengele 1982:22-33, 213-214).

Constructed in 1952, the former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building reflects the prevailing modernist architectural style of the mid-twentieth century for public and civic-oriented buildings. A close second to modernism's status at the time of the building's construction was the late Colonial Revival style for public buildings, as seen in other community buildings in Gaston County (discussed below). There is no evidence of a building on the site before the present building, and Madison Park, within which the parcel is located, was platted in 1951. Modernism was beginning to dominate stylistic trends throughout Gaston County for commercial and government-oriented buildings during the mid-twentieth century, strongly influenced by nearby Charlotte's growth and cutting-edge architectural firms.

As previously discussed (see Section 2.1.3), Mount Holly's growth, following national trends of suburbanization after World War II, extended outward from downtown as automobile use increased. Embodied modestly in the Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building, modern architecture's departure from revivalist styles was a tangible representation of a new age of technological innovation and prosperity. By the 1960s, modernism had been accepted as the mainstream style for new commercial, institutional, and government facilities; the style embodied certain ideals favored by corporations and reflected the design principle that form follows function. Pragmatic accessibility is an overriding theme for modernist architecture, and is exemplified by the use of modern technology, a focus on the sculptural aspects of structural elements, and an architectural reconciliation of the indoors with the outdoors. Common modernist architectural features include unadorned entrances, ribbon windows or glass curtain walls, asymmetrical facades with horizontal massing and clean lines, low-pitched or flat rooflines, textured walls contrasting with smooth, blank walls, and outdoor living spaces or courtyards. Modernism in North Carolina was heavily influenced by the International style and largely employed in its earliest examples by architects of the School of Design at North Carolina State University. The style is most notably expressed through the works of architectural icons such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, and Eero Saarinen, among others (Fearnbach 2010:74-79; Gelernter 1990:263-279).

Gaston County and Mount Holly boasted their share of modernist architecture, a large portion of it commercial or government-based, through the works of local or Charlotte-based architects. The architect of the Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building is unknown, although it may well have been a local architect who also designed the Mount Holly Parks and Recreation Building located on Hawthorne

Street adjacent to the former Mount Holly High School and auditorium. Although an early and not particularly high-style example of modernism, the former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building displays an avoidance of decorative ornament except for a few brick courses on its façade and flat, planar brick surfaces separated by brick pilasters and groupings of aluminum window blocks that emphasize vertical structural elements throughout the exterior (Plate 26).

Community centers became increasingly common among cities and towns during the mid-twentieth century, fostering an environment of belonging and serving a need in the local community by providing a space for local events and entertainment. Although many local examples of modernist architecture in Gaston County survive, only a few civic-oriented structures and other community center buildings that have been previously recorded in past architectural surveys were identified. A total of 36 community-center buildings are recorded statewide, and four are located in Gaston County (HPOweb).

The Cherryville Community Center (GS1686) located at 106 S. Jacob Street is one of the few modernist, community-center buildings previously surveyed in Gaston County that demonstrates the trend described above. Although it dates to significantly later (ca. 1975) than Mount Holly's former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building, it too embodies modernist architectural motifs such as aluminum-frame window bays, an absence of applied architectural ornament, and horizontal and vertical concrete members emphasizing the building's structure (Plate 27). The Cherryville Community Center was designed by architects James L. Beam Jr. and Associates; it still serves in its original function and retains a high degree of integrity (Fearnbach 2016:1; NCHPO Survey File, GS1686).

The J. Paul Ford Community Center (GS0145), on the other hand, is an earlier civic-oriented building constructed during the 1930s executed in the Colonial Revival style. Constructed for the town of Belmont and located at 40 E. Woodrow Avenue, the Ford Community Center previously served as a municipal building and was built by the Emergency Relief Fund of North Carolina. Its one-story, brick veneer with hip-roof form displays Classical architectural elements and a simplified Colonial Revival style (Plate 28) (NC HPO Survey File, GS0145).

The McAdenville Community Center (GS1256) located at 208 Main Street is also executed in a combination of Colonial Revival and Classical Revival styles, although at a later date than the Ford Community Center (Plate 29). Like the former Jaycees Community Building, however, the ca. 1949 one-story, brick structure is modest in its architectural detailing and stands just on the outskirts of downtown. It contains a 1978 rear addition consisting of a gymnasium as well as an exterior ball field and swimming pool. The interior displays more of a domestic feel than the Jaycees Community Building, with rooms other than its main meeting room featuring a stone fireplace, coffered ceilings, and paneled walls. Although representing an entirely different architectural style, the McAdenville Community Center retains a much higher degree of historic integrity than that of the former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (NCHPO Survey File, GS1256).

Perhaps the most comparable local example to the former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building is the Mount Holly Parks and Recreation Building/Complex located near 123 Hawthorne Street. Both were apparently constructed during the mid-twentieth century with very similar architectural elements, such as the rounded roofline with parapet, brick pilasters separating flat brick walls and window blocks, flat-roofed awnings and entrances, and an emphasis on clean lines and modernist architectural motifs (Plate 30). Not much is known about the Mount Holly Parks and Recreation Building other than that it shares a parcel with two other mid-twentieth-century civic buildings, including the former Mount Holly High School. Nevertheless, the building is a stronger example of a modernist community building retaining a higher degree of the seven aspects of integrity than that of the former Chamber of Commerce Community Building, which has lost much of its original fenestration and has an altered entrance wing.



PLATE 26: Oblique View of East and North Elevations, Former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 27: Cherryville Community Center (GS1686), East Elevation, Cherryville, North Carolina



PLATE 28: J. Paul Ford Community Center (GS0145), North Elevation, Belmont, North Carolina



PLATE 29: McAdenville Community Center (GS1256), East Elevation, McAdenville, North Carolina (Google Maps 2018)



PLATE 30: Mount Holly Parks and Recreation Building, Hawthorne Street, Mount Holly, North Carolina

The (former) Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (Plate 31) is lacking the seven aspects of integrity in several key areas. The property does retain its integrity of location and setting, as it has not been moved from its initial construction and the neighborhood and basic street/landscape features surrounding the property are little altered from the mid-twentieth century. Its integrity of materials, design, and workmanship have all been compromised with the alterations to the roofline of the south elevation's entry wing, with the gabled roofline now obscuring the original window blocks on the south elevation (previously exposed with the flat roofline of the entrance wing) (Plate 32). All clerestory windows and traditional window openings except for those of the one-story entrance wing have been infilled or boarded over. This character-defining feature has a significant impact upon the building's original exterior as well as the interior character. Furthermore, the main entrance to the building has been altered with a new stuccoed surround and glass entrance doors. The interior has probably been significantly altered now that it functions as a church instead of a community events space. The integrity of feeling and association have also been jeopardized because the former Community Building no longer retains any association or activity with the Jaycees. The building does not function in its original capacity as a community events center but rather as a church, resulting in reduced integrity of feeling.

The (former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building is recommended as not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for association with significant events in history or representative historical patterns or trends in Gaston County or North Carolina. Although at one time the building played a significant role in the social and recreational life of the Mount Holly community as the Jaycees Community Building, the property has lost integrity and is not representative of any type of significant events or trends that are remarkably notable in Gaston County history.

The (former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building is recommended as not eligible under Criterion B for an association with significant individuals in history. Although many upstanding citizens have been involved with the Chamber of Commerce and the Jaycees organization in Mount Holly, no single individual or member associated with the organizations could be identified who contributed significantly to the history of Gaston County in an outstanding way that has been documented.

The (former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building was also found to be not eligible under Criterion C for architecture. The building displays alterations to its exterior that have impacted its integrity, such as the modification of the entry wing roofline and the loss of the clerestory windows, and the building can no longer convey its architectural significance (see Plate 32). Other examples of modernist-influenced architecture survive in Gaston County, including a similar Mount Holly example, the Parks and Recreation Building located on Hawthorne Street.

A building may be eligible under Criterion D if the buildings and/or structures have the potential to yield important information pertaining to undocumented or rare local building traditions. The (former) Mount Holly Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building does not meet Criterion D.



PLATE 31: West Elevation, Former Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), Mount Holly, North Carolina



PLATE 32: Detail of New Roofline on Entry Wing of South Elevation, Former) Junior Chamber of Commerce Community Building (GS2423), Mount Holly, North Carolina

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Louis Berger