



## North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor  
Betty Ray McCain, Secretary

Division of Archives and History  
William S. Price, Jr., Director

December 10, 1993

Nicholas L. Graf  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
Department of Transportation  
310 New Bern Avenue  
Raleigh, N.C. 27601-1442

Re: Historic Structures Survey Report for widening of  
NC 49 from Buster Boyd Bridge to Tyvola Road,  
Mecklenburg County, U-2512, 8.1673501, STP-  
49(2), ER 94-7781

Dear Mr. Graf:

Thank you for your letter of November 2, 1993, transmitting the historic structures survey report by Mattson and Associates concerning the above project.

The following property was placed on our state study list on April 13, 1989:

McDowell House (MK 1374)

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following properties are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under the criterion cited:

McDowell House (MK 1374). Criterion C--The house is considered to be one of the finest examples of a Colonial Revival farm seat in Mecklenburg County.

DOES

Frank Watt House (MK 1380). Criterion C--The house is a largely intact and increasingly rare example of an early twentieth century middle-class farmhouse in Mecklenburg County.

The following properties were determined not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

James Brown Grier House (MK 1366). The house has been demolished.

Kendrick-Knox House (#10). The house has undergone numerous character-altering changes.

Nicholas L. Graf  
December 10, 1993, Page 2

Pleasant Hill Prebyterian Church Cemetery (MK 1443). The cemetery does not meet the exceptions specified in Criterion Consideration D of the National Park Service's guidelines regarding the registration of cemeteries.

(former) Steele Creek School (#6). The school has undergone numerous character-altering changes.

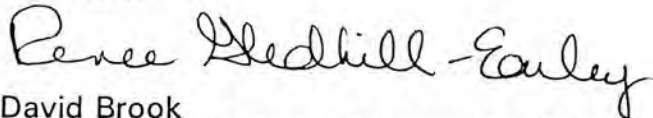
J. B. Watt House (MK 1379). The house has undergone numerous character-altering changes.

In general the report meets our office's guidelines and those of the Secretary of the Interior.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 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, please contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763.

Sincerely,



*for* David Brook  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DB:slw

cc: H. F. Vick  
B. Church  
Mattson and Associates, Charlotte  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic  
Landmarks Commission

b: Highway  
Brown/Stancil  
County  
RF

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AN ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY AND EVALUATIONS  
FOR N.C. 49 WIDENING  
FROM THE BUSTER BOYD BRIDGE TO THE TYVOLA ROAD EXTENSION  
MECKLENBURG COUNTY  
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
T.I.P. NUMBER U-2512  
STATE PROJECT NUMBER 8.1673501

Prepared for

CRS Surrine Engineers, Inc.  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Prepared by

Mattson and Associates  
Richard L. Mattson, Ph.D.  
Charlotte, North Carolina

MAY 28, 1993

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## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

This project is entitled *NC 49 Widening from the Buster Boyd Bridge to the Tyvola Road Extension*. The TIP Number is U-2512 and the State Project Number is 8.1673501. The proposed project provides for additional lanes and safety improvements along the 10.3-mile length of NC 49 (York Road) in Mecklenburg County from its intersection with Tyvola Road Extension to the Buster Boyd Bridge. The scope of the project consists generally of upgrading the existing two-lane NC 49 to a multi-lane facility. The proposed roadway improvements are considered necessary to meet existing and projected highway demands. The North Carolina TIP includes a project (B-3004) to replace the Buster Boyd Bridge, which spans Lake Wylie at the South Carolina state line. This project will be coordinated with the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation (SCDHPT).

Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, an architectural survey was necessary in planning for this federally funded project. The survey had the following goals: (1) to determine the area of potential effects (APE) for the proposed NC 49 widening project; (2) to locate and identify all resources 50 years of age or older within the APE; and (3) to determine the potential eligibility of these resources for the National Register of Historic Places.

The methodology for the survey consisted of background research into the historical and architectural development of the area and a field survey of the general project area. The field survey was conducted by automobile as well as on foot to identify all properties greater than 50 years of age in the general area. In addition, the purpose of the field survey was to delineate the APE of the proposed highway alternatives. The boundaries of the APE are shown on U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographical maps (see Figure 3). (For a discussion on how these boundaries were determined, see pages 4 and 6). The project area encompassed approximately 68 acres of mostly automobile-oriented commercial strip development, single- and multi-family residential subdivisions, industrial facilities, and fields. One hundred percent of the APE was surveyed.



Mattson and Associates evaluated seven properties for National Register eligibility. These resources included two mid-nineteenth-century farmhouses, a church cemetery, two early twentieth-century farmhouses, a former school built in the early twentieth century, and a previously recorded late nineteenth-century farmhouse which is no longer extant. Two properties, the McDowell House (#1)(MK 1347) and the Frank Watt House (#3)(MK 1380) were found to be potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. The properties evaluated and found to be ineligible were: the James Brown Grier House (MK 1366), which is no longer extant; Kendrick-Knox House (#10); Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery (#11)(MK 1443); (Former) Steele Creek School (#6); and the J. B. Watt House (#2)(MK 1379).

Properties Listed in the National Register

None

National Register Study List Properties

McDowell House (#1)(MK 1374)

Properties Potentially Eligible for the National Register

McDowell House (#1)(MK 1374)

Frank Watt House (#3)(MK 1380)

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Properties Potentially Ineligible for the National Register

James Brown Grier House (MK 1366)(no longer extant)

49

Kendrick-Knox House (#10) MK 2071

50-53

Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery (#11)(MK 1443)

54-59

(Former) Steele Creek School (#6) MK 2070

60-62

J. B. Watt House (#2)(MK 1379)

63-67



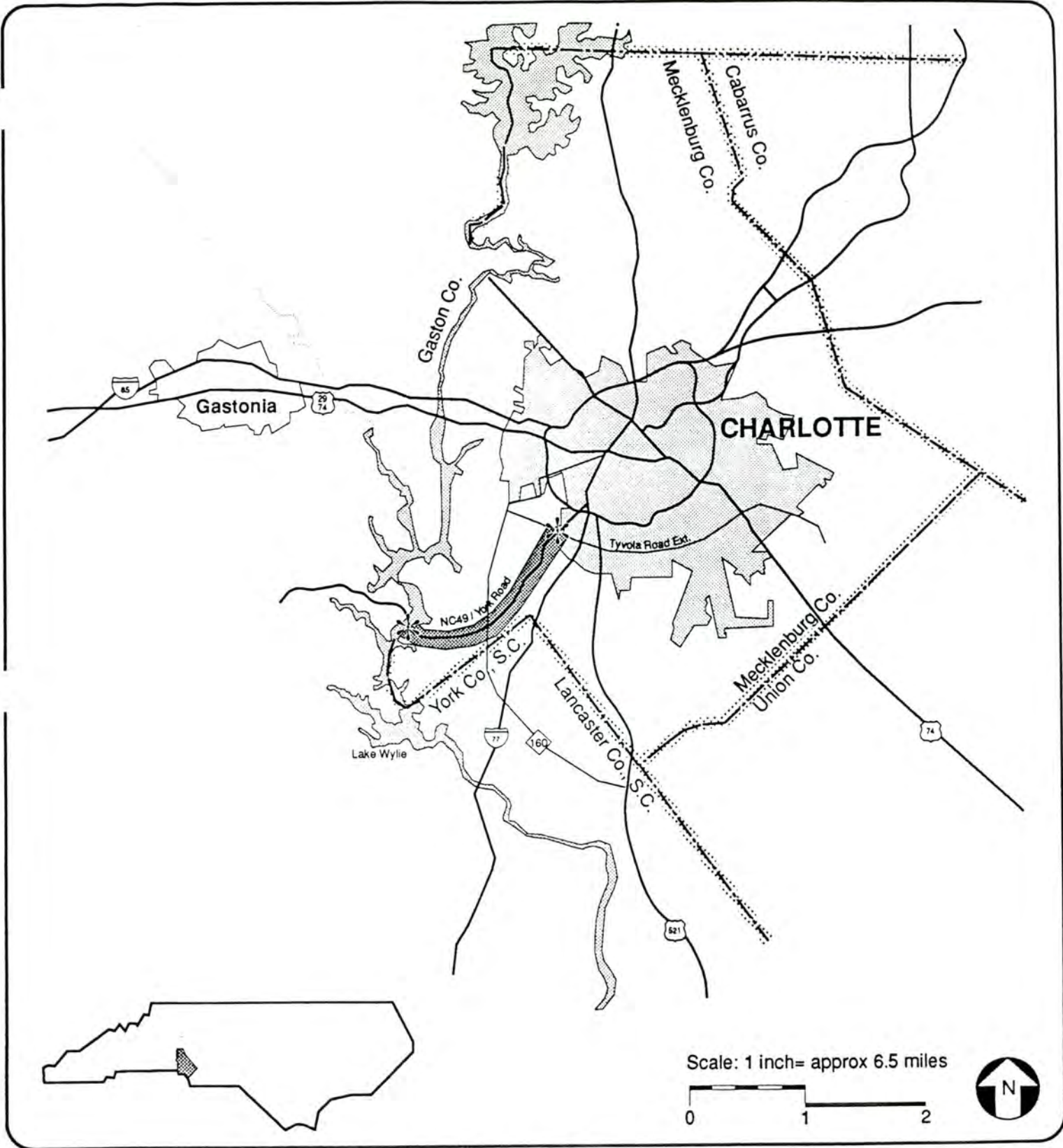
## INTRODUCTION

This architectural survey and evaluations report is prepared for the proposed widening of NC 49 in southwest Mecklenburg County, from just north of the Buster Boyed Bridge to the Tyvola Road Extension (Figures 1 and 2). The length of the project is approximately 10.3 miles, and the scope generally consists of upgrading the existing two-lane facility to multi lanes with safety improvements. The TIP Number is U-2512 and the State Project Number is 8.1673501.

The purpose of the project is to provide safe and efficient travel along this section of NC 49, which offers the only direct access to and from western York County, South Carolina. The safety of motorists will be enhanced by increasing lane widths, providing usable shoulders, increasing turning radii at intersections and providing adequate sight distances. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Transportation Improvement Program as revised (March 1990) includes the proposed roadway improvements along NC 49 as the third highest priority project.

Other projects scheduled which directly relate to the NC 49 Widening Project include the Buster Boyd Bridge Replacement Project (B-3004) for which planning and design will begin in 1993, the Charlotte Western Outer Loop Project (R-2248AA) which is currently in the design phase, and Westinghouse Boulevard (SR 1128) Improvements (U-2806) which involves multi-laning Westinghouse Boulevard from NC 49 to Interstate Highway 77. The latter project is in the planning and design phase.

The architectural resources survey report and draft environmental assessment were prepared on behalf of CRS Sirrinc Engineers, Inc., Raleigh North Carolina under contract with the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Mr. Brian D. Dehler, P.E. was the project manager for CRS Sirrinc Engineers, Inc. The principal investigator for the architectural resources survey was Richard L. Mattson, Ph.D. of Mattson and Associates, Charlotte, North Carolina.



# Project Location

Figure 1

## Legend

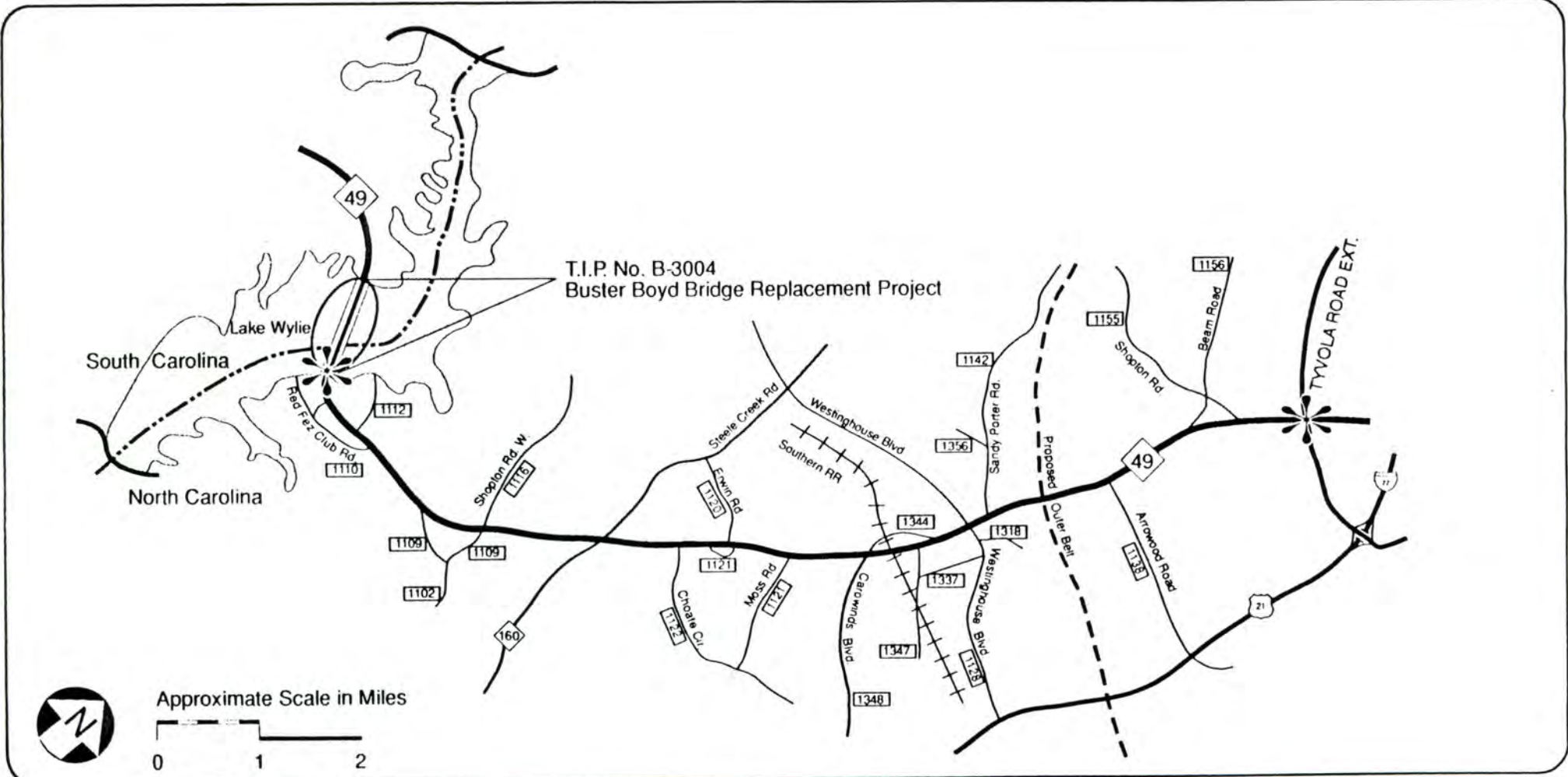
\* Project Limits

NC49 Widening from the  
Buster Boyd Bridge to  
Tyvola Road Extension

*Mecklenburg County, North Carolina*







**Legend**

\* Project Limits

**Project Corridor**

NC49 Widening from the  
Buster Boyd Bridge to  
Tyvola Road Extension

FIGURE 2

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina



This architectural resources survey was conducted as part of the planning for the widening of NC 49 in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. The survey was conducted in order to comply with the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the report was prepared according to guidelines set forth by the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. The survey field work was conducted between August 6 and August 11, 1992, and February 15 and March 3, 1993.

Contract specifications, including the scope of services, are found in the Appendix. Briefly, the identification of properties within the area of potential environmental impact was required for this federally funded project under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (36 C.F.R. 800) and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Section 106 first requires the identification of all properties eligible and potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places according to criteria defined in 36 C.F.R. 60. Secondly, this legislation requires that any federal undertaking be evaluated as to the effect of the project on historic resources within the area of potential effects using the criteria of effect outlined in 36 C.F.R. 800.9.

In order to comply with the requirements of both the N.H.P.A. and Section 4(f), the work program of this contract included the following: (1) historical and architectural research focusing on the general survey area--basically NC 49 and its environs; (2) reconnaissance field work within this survey area to identify the location of properties listed in, or potentially eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places; (3) intensive field work within the area of potential effects (APE), which is defined as the geographical area, or areas, within which an undertaking may cause changes to the character or use of historic properties, if such potentially eligible properties exist; and (4) the preparation of a report describing the project, the survey process, and the conclusions of the survey.

The APE is delineated on USGS maps and is illustrated in Figure 3. The APE has generally the same configuration as the project area, following NC 49 from the



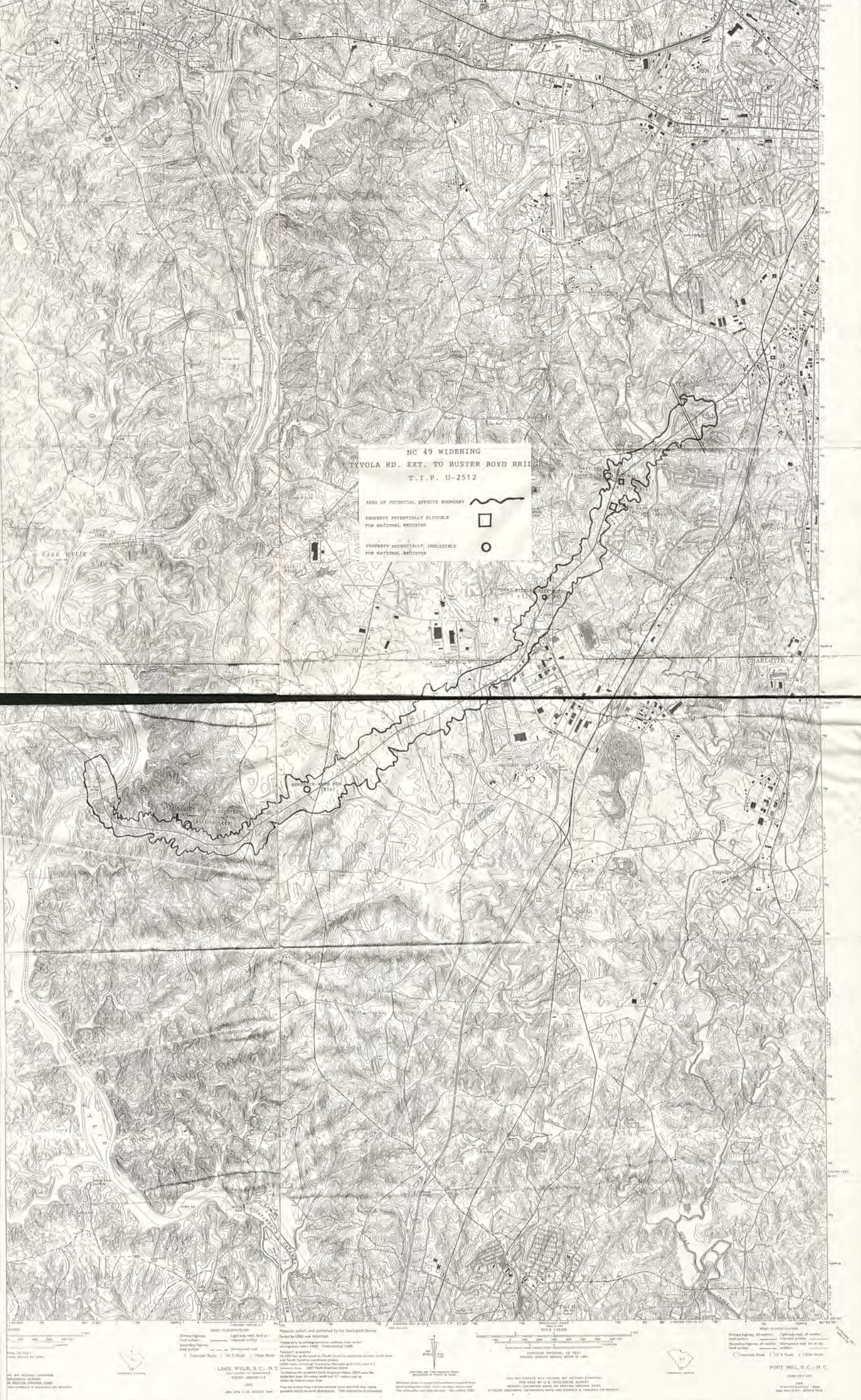


NC 49 WIDENING  
 TYVOLA RD. EXT. TO BUSTER BOYD BRIDGE  
 T.I.P. U-2512

AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS BOUNDARY

PROPERTY POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

PROPERTY POTENTIALLY INELIGIBLE FOR NATIONAL REGISTER



**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

Primary highway  
 Secondary highway  
 Tertiary highway  
 Interstate Route  
 Federal Aid Road  
 State Road  
 County Road  
 Local Road

**LAKE WYLIE, S.C. - N.**  
 1:24,000  
 1967



Scale: 1:24,000  
 Contour Interval: 10 Feet  
 Vertical Datum: Mean Sea Level  
 Horizontal Datum: NAD 83

PROPERTY POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

PROPERTY POTENTIALLY INELIGIBLE FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

LAKE WYLIE, S.C. - N.  
 1:24,000  
 1967



South Carolina state line, at the Catawba River (Lake Wylie), in a northeasterly direction to the Tyvola Road Extension. In general the APE boundary follows topographical features and modern development, and extends between approximately .10 and .5 mile beyond the project area, usually to points where sight lines are significantly broken by woodland, rolling terrain, or post-World War II construction.

At the northeast end of the project, at the Tyvola Road Extension, the APE boundary is defined by woodland and modern residential development. Moving southwest, the APE is characterized largely by woodland, which ends abruptly at modern, planned residential subdivisions in the vicinity of the intersection of NC 49 and Beam Road (SR 1156). Between this intersection and NC 160, the APE is defined variously by rolling fields, woodland, and intensive modern construction, reflecting the recent development of NC 49 into a major commercial and residential corridor. This center portion of the project is bordered on the east side by particularly extensive industrial and business parks organized around NC 49, Interstate Highway 77, and the Southern Railroad. Consequently, in this location the APE boundary is especially close to the project area. The undulating terrain, wooded areas, and modern land uses effectively shield the project from the scattered farmhouses located primarily west of the project. To the west of NC 160, the western section of the APE is defined mostly by woodland along the Catawba River, buffering the adjacent rolling, wooded landscape from the project area.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The project area, which is approximately 10.3 miles long and comprises roughly 68 acres, follows existing NC 49 (York Road) from the Buster Boyd Bridge, at the South Carolina state line, to the Tyvola Road Extension. Reflecting Mecklenburg County's location in the western Piedmont of North Carolina, the APE and project area comprise mostly gently rolling terrain, with elevations ranging from 600 to 650 feet. Drained by streams flowing into the Catawba River, which marks the southwest terminus of the project, a significant portion of this landscape remains fields or woodland (Plate 1). For example, wooded McDowell Park, a county park, is located near the southwest end of the project area, while stretches of wooded areas border NC 49 along the project area's northeast section. However, because of tremendous suburban development pressure and Charlotte's aggressive annexation policy in recent decades, this historically agrarian landscape is changing dramatically. As Charlotte has expanded to the south and west, NC 49, historically an important transportation route, has emerged as an intensively developed artery into Charlotte. Consequently, many existing fields in the APE and project area are now overgrown and targeted for residential or commercial uses. The dairy farms which had characterized the APE and project area during the early decades of this century are today rare. Farmland has been transformed primarily into business and industrial parks, planned residential subdivisions, and commercial strip development oriented to the major intersections along NC 49 (Plates 2 and 3).

The northeast section of the project area and APE retains a significant amount of woodland and open space, including a portion of the Renaissance Park Golf Course, a public facility created on a county land fill. This section of the project area also contains the two most imposing remaining early farmhouses along NC 49, the J. B. Watt House and the McDowell House. Today bordered by modern residential subdivisions, these two dwellings face each other on opposite sides of NC 49, at the Beam Road intersection. Moving southwest, the project area is characterized by commercial, office, and industrial land uses congregated around the intersections of NC 49 and Sandy Porter Road, Arrowood Road, and Westinghouse Boulevard. The latter two roads





Plate 1. Woodland Bordering NC 49 at North End of Project, Looking South.



Plate 2. Commercial-Strip Development Near Sandy Porter Road, Looking North.



have spurred development, connecting the project area to Interstate Highway 77, which runs roughly parallel to NC 49 to the east. Today, for example, expansive Commerce Industrial Park, Arrowood Southern Industrial Park, and other planned developments for manufacturing, distribution, and administration, have taken shape on land between NC 49 and the interstate highway.

Southwest of Westinghouse Boulevard, the APE and project area vividly illustrate a landscape in rapid transition, as fields, woodland, and scattered farm buildings are located adjacent to modern lodging facilities, planned business parks, and suburban residential complexes. The section of the project between NC 160 and the Catawba River (Lake Wylie) has experienced less intensive modern development. To the east and north of McDowell Park, woodland and fields mix with modern single-family residences facing NC 49. West of the park, a planned residential subdivision of large single-family houses on wooded lots is located north of the project area, overlooking Lake Wylie. Near Lake Wylie, at the southwest terminus of the project area, stands a modern marina and restaurant and the steel-arched Buster Boyd Bridge, erected in 1960 (Plate 4).

Zoning within the APE and project area reflects the dramatic shift from traditional agricultural to modern residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. The northern end of the project area and APE are variously zoned Suburban Residential, Residential Multi-Family, and, at the northern terminus, Neighborhood Business (R-4, R-17 MF, and B-I, respectively). Moving south, around the intersection of NC 49 and Beam Road, this mixed-use zoning pattern continues, with the McDowell House tract (#1)(MK 1374)(National Register Study List) zoned Suburban Residential. The area in the vicinity of Arrowood Road includes not only tracts zoned for Neighborhood Business and Suburban and Multi-Family Residential, but also for Light Industry (I-1). Between Arrowood Road and Carowinds Boulevard, the southeast side of NC 49 is zoned for Light Industry and General Industry (I-2), while the northwest side is zoned for Multi-Family Residential. Moving southwest, the areas on both sides of NC 49 are predominantly zoned



Plate 3. Planned Residential Development on Former Pasture Near Moss Road, Looking Northwest.



Plate 4. Southwestern Terminus of Project at Buster Boyd Bridge, Looking Northeast.

for Suburban Residential land use, with small pockets oriented to NC 160 and Shopton Road zoned for Neighborhood Business, General Business (B-2), and Residential Multi-Family. The southwest terminus of the project, at the Catawba River (Lake Wylie), is zoned for General Business (Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Planning Commission 1992; *Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Zoning Map, 1992*).

In conclusion, the environmental setting reflects a cultural landscape that is experiencing intensive development pressure. Although woodland and agricultural pursuits persist within the APE and project area, during recent decades the landscape along NC 49 has been transformed by automobile-induced suburban expansion. Within the project area, this roadway is developing into a major residential and commercial corridor linked to both Interstate Highway 77 and downtown Charlotte. Approximately 35 percent of the project area remains fields or woodland, 35 percent is residential, 15 percent is commercial, 10 percent is for manufacturing purposes, and 5 percent is given to other land uses.



## ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### **White Settlement: Frontier Period to the Civil War**

Located near the Catawba River and historic trading paths and stage routes through the Carolina Piedmont, the project area and the area of potential effects (APE) transect one of the principal early sections of white settlement in Mecklenburg County. NC Highway 49 (York Road) roughly follows an early road linking Charlotte with York, South Carolina. This north-south road branched from Nations Ford Road, south of Charlotte, and crossed the Catawba River below present-day Buster Boyd Bridge (Collett 1790). Nations Ford Road, which ran east of York Road, was part of a major trading route in the eighteenth century, extending to the south and west into the lands of the Catawba and Cherokee, and northward through Charlotte, Salisbury, Hillsboro, and into Virginia (Merrens 1964, 162).

The white settlement of Mecklenburg County formed part of the broader pattern of migration into the Piedmont during the middle decades of the eighteenth century (Merrens 1964, 55-60; Meinig 1986, 291). Created in 1762, the county was populated by Germans, English, Welsh, and particularly by the Scotch-Irish. The vast majority of these pioneers followed the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania, passing through the Roanoke Gap southward into the Carolinas. By the 1760s, the influx of Scotch-Irish into Mecklenburg County was well represented by the establishment of Presbyterian churches at Hopewell, Sugaw Creek, Rocky River, Providence, and Steele Creek. These five churches, in turn, became the centers of farming communities that developed throughout Mecklenburg County (Blythe and Brockman 1961, 195; Pickens and Snodgrass 1993).

The project area and APE are located in the Steele Creek community, whose early settlers were attracted by the fertile soils along the eastern banks of the Catawba River. While Steele Creek Presbyterian Church was established northwest of the APE about 1760, the development of this area did not hit full stride until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Between 1790



and 1840, the population of the county grew from 11,395 to 18,273, and Steele Creek developed apace. The population expansion was marked by the formation of new Presbyterian churches serving the proliferation of Scotch-Irish farming families near the river and its tributaries. In 1793, a house of worship was founded at Blackstock (or Lower Steele Creek), southeast of the APE, and in 1836, 42 members of the church at Steele Creek organized Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church (#11)(MK 1443) along York Road (see Plates 32-38). Although the existing Pleasant Hill church building dates to 1973, and the cemetery comprises mostly twentieth-century headstones, the earliest surviving markers identify many of the pioneering Scotch-Irish families in this area, including the Griers, Erwins, Prices, Neelys, and Knoxes (Gatza 1987-1988; Blackwelder 1984, 12).

The Steele Creek area in this period, like other parts of the Piedmont, was composed mostly of small farmers who engaged in diversified farming, raising corn, wheat, oats, and some livestock (Tompkins 1903, 87; Huffman and Mattson 1990). Because of the geographical isolation and the absence of navigable waterways, subsistence farming predominated in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Grain surpluses, however, were transported for sale along the overland trade routes. Indeed, when George Washington toured North Carolina in 1791, he characterized the region around Charlotte and Salisbury as "wheat country." The town of Charlotte, which was founded in 1768 northeast of Steele Creek, was a market source as well as an agricultural distribution point, though its population lingered below 1,000 into the antebellum decades (Merrens 1964, 119, 166).

During the antebellum period, the coming of railroads to Charlotte opened new markets and led to major changes in the agrarian economy. Subsistence farming was gradually supplanted by an emerging cash-crop agriculture. While rail transportation elevated overall agricultural sales, cotton became the principal market crop. By 1852, cotton could be shipped to the port of Charleston along the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad, and by 1860, three additional rail lines had reached Charlotte, linking the city to North Carolina ports as well as to Northern urban centers. On the eve of the Civil War, expanding cotton production and rail lines had helped turn Charlotte into an

important cotton brokerage center (Blythe and Brockman 1961, 260; Mattson and Huffman 1990).

As cotton production rose so did the demand for slave labor. In 1850, there were 17 planters owning more than 30 slaves in the county, and a decade later there were 30. The vast majority of slave holders, however, owned only a few slaves. In 1850, for example, of the 678 slave owners in the county, only 155 held title to more than six slaves (Tompkins 1903, 87, 97-100; Davidson 1982, 24-25). Although no major planter class took shape around Steele Creek, by 1860, John McDowell owned nine slaves, William Grier owned 11, James and Samuel Knox each owned 12, and J. B. Watt owned 18 slaves. These landowners were among the largest in the community, operating cotton farms with total holdings as large as 1,400 acres (the John McDowell farm). However, the typical antebellum farmers in Steele Creek, reflecting county trends, held less than 100 acres of improved land and worked their farmsteads with few or no slaves (Eighth Census of the U.S., Slave and Agricultural Schedules 1860).

#### Built Environment

Today, the Steele Creek community retains a small collection of farmhouses built during the settlement and antebellum eras. Situated east of the APE, near Nations Ford Road, and west of the APE, near Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, the earliest extant houses illustrate architectural forms, materials, and elements of design that marked the development of the rural Piedmont in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Bishir 1990, 101-114, 149-159; Swaim 1978, 28-45). For example, the Cooper Log House on Dixie River Road represents the practice of log construction that Scotch-Irish pioneers brought with them into the region, and which persisted as a popular choice for farmhouse construction into the middle decades of the nineteenth century (Jordan and Kaups 1989, 135-210; Rehder 1992). Built ca. 1780 and expanded ca. 1840, this two-story dwelling has half-dovetailed notching and follows a traditional hall-and-parlor plan (Gatza 1987-1988; Mattson and Huffman 1990; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission Files).

In the early nineteenth century, prosperous Steele Creek farmers John Dinkins, Samuel Neel, and William Grier asserted their status by erecting two-story, frame residences with handsome, vernacular Federal-style trim.

Located along east and west of the APE, these houses, like the Cooper House, also demonstrate the conservative building patterns of the region. Each dwelling displays the tall, slim I-house form, hall-and-parlor plan, gable roof, and exterior end chimneys that characterized the residences of wealthier Piedmont landowners from 1780 into the antebellum period (Southern 1978; Gatza 1987-1988; Mattson and Huffman 1990; Bishir 1990, 101; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission Files).

During the 1840s and 1850s, restrained, vernacular versions of the Greek Revival style, frequently mixed with Federal traits, rose to popularity in Mecklenburg County. Situated west of the APE, the ca. 1850 Hovis-Spratt House is typical. The frame residence has an I-house form, formal central hall, shallow-pitched gable roof, and hip-roofed front porch with heavy classical piers. The paired entry doors are framed by sidelights and transom (Gatza 1987-1988; Mattson and Huffman 1990; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission Files).

Within the APE, two antebellum farmhouses survive. Situated along NC 49, the extensively remodeled, ca. 1848 J. B. Watt House (#2)(MK 1379) retains its Federal-style modillion cornice and basic two-story, double-pile plan. When constructed, this substantial frame residence was presumably among the most imposing houses in Steele Creek, reflecting Watt's prominent position as a landowner and Presbyterian minister. The Reverend Watt (1820-1860) served the Steele Creek, Sardis, and Pleasant Hill Presbyterian churches between the 1840s and the Civil War, and the 1860 Agricultural Census records Watt possessing 250 acres of cultivated land in Steele Creek. About 1900, the Watt House was moved approximately 100 yards east to its present site overlooking York Road. The house has undergone a series of major alterations, including the ca. 1900 replacement of original chimneys and windows, extensive interior and exterior renovations in the 1950s, and the application of vinyl siding in the 1980s (Gatza 1987-1988). Thus the J. B. Watt House is not considered to be potentially eligible for the National Register (see Plates 42-47).

Also situated along York Road, the Kendrick-Knox House (#10) reflects the influence of Greek Revival design in the broad, story-and-a-half, side-gable form, hip-roofed porch with tapered posts, and paired, four-panel entry doors



flanked by sidelights. The delicate, flush eaves on the gable ends suggest a lingering Federal influence. The house may have been built for Richard Kendrick, who farmed 120 acres in Steele Creek on the eve of the Civil War (Eighth Census of the U.S., Agricultural Schedule 1860). Today extensively remodeled, with such alterations as aluminum siding, replacement window sash, and modern brick mantels, the Kendrick-Knox House is not considered to be potentially eligible for the National Register (Plates 28-31).

### **Post-Civil War Period to Ca. 1940**

During the decades after the Civil War and continuing into the early twentieth century, Steele Creek, like the rest of Mecklenburg County and the region, experienced profound social and economic changes. In the aftermath of the Civil War, landholding patterns were dramatically altered, as planters and small farmers alike sold or rented portions of their acreage. Into the middle decades of the twentieth century, farm tenantry multiplied throughout the county and the Steele Creek community. The evolution of the rural cultural landscape was also characterized by the proliferation of crossroads settlements--with stores and cotton gins--and the growth of churches and public schools for both whites and African-Americans.

While cash-crop agriculture predominated, fueled by rising farm prices in the early twentieth century, the addition of new rail lines with unprecedented connections to an expanding national railroad network also sparked New South industrialization. During the decades around the turn of the century, textile factories and mill villages rapidly developed around Charlotte and neighboring railroad towns, including Pineville southeast of Steele Creek. Charlotte grew at an astounding pace, its population soaring from 18,000 in 1900, to over 82,000 by the Depression. Concurrently, the county's population more than doubled, reaching almost 128,000 in 1930. This urban and industrial growth provided expanding markets for Steele Creek agricultural products and offered new sources of employment, notably "public work" in the cotton mills, for a portion of the farming population (Mattson and Huffman 1990; Mary Miller Interview 1993; James Knox Interview 1993; Goldfield 1982, 80-138; Blythe and Brockman 1961, 441, 449).

Between the late nineteenth century and the 1920s, farms in Steele Creek and throughout the county continued to raise primarily cotton and small grains. The county's recovery from the Civil War could be measured in cotton production, which tripled between 1860 and 1880, and which peaked at more than 24,000 bales in 1910 (Eighth, Tenth, and Thirteenth Censuses of the U.S., Agricultural Schedules 1880 and 1910). In 1924, 50,131 acres in the county were devoted to cotton, compared to 34,155 to corn, the main cereal crop (Thompson 1926, 174-175).

In 1903, Tompkins (160-161) had these observations about farming in the county:

It is noticeable that as Mecklenburg has grown richer and more populous, the farms have increased in number and decreased in size. The average number of acres in a farm in the county is seventy-five. There is only one which contains more than a thousand acres. There are 227,995 acres of land and the 4,190 farms are occupied by 1,226 owners, . . . 631 cash paying tenants and 1,966 share tenants. Sixty percent of the farms are occupied by white people, and 40 percent by colored people.

The growth of the Steele Creek community typified rural development in the county. By the early twentieth century, growth was expressed in a collection of new crossroads commercial centers, churches, and public schools--including churches and schools for African-Americans (Figure 4). York Road, as the principal roadway through Steele Creek, was the focus of a great deal of new construction. The small commercial nodes of Potts Store and Kendrick Crossroads took shape along the road, each providing the surrounding agrarian population with general stores and cotton gins (Branson 1896; Mary Miller Interview 1993). Near Potts Store, Central Steele Creek Presbyterian Church was established on York Road in 1884 (the existing church was built in 1949). The African-Americans of Steele Creek organized McClintock Presbyterian Church on a site north of York Road (and north of the APE) after the Civil War, and, in 1922, erected the McClintock School beside the church. Today a Designated Local Historic Property in Mecklenburg County, this school was financed by a matching grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and was one of 21 such Rosenwald Schools built for rural blacks in the county between



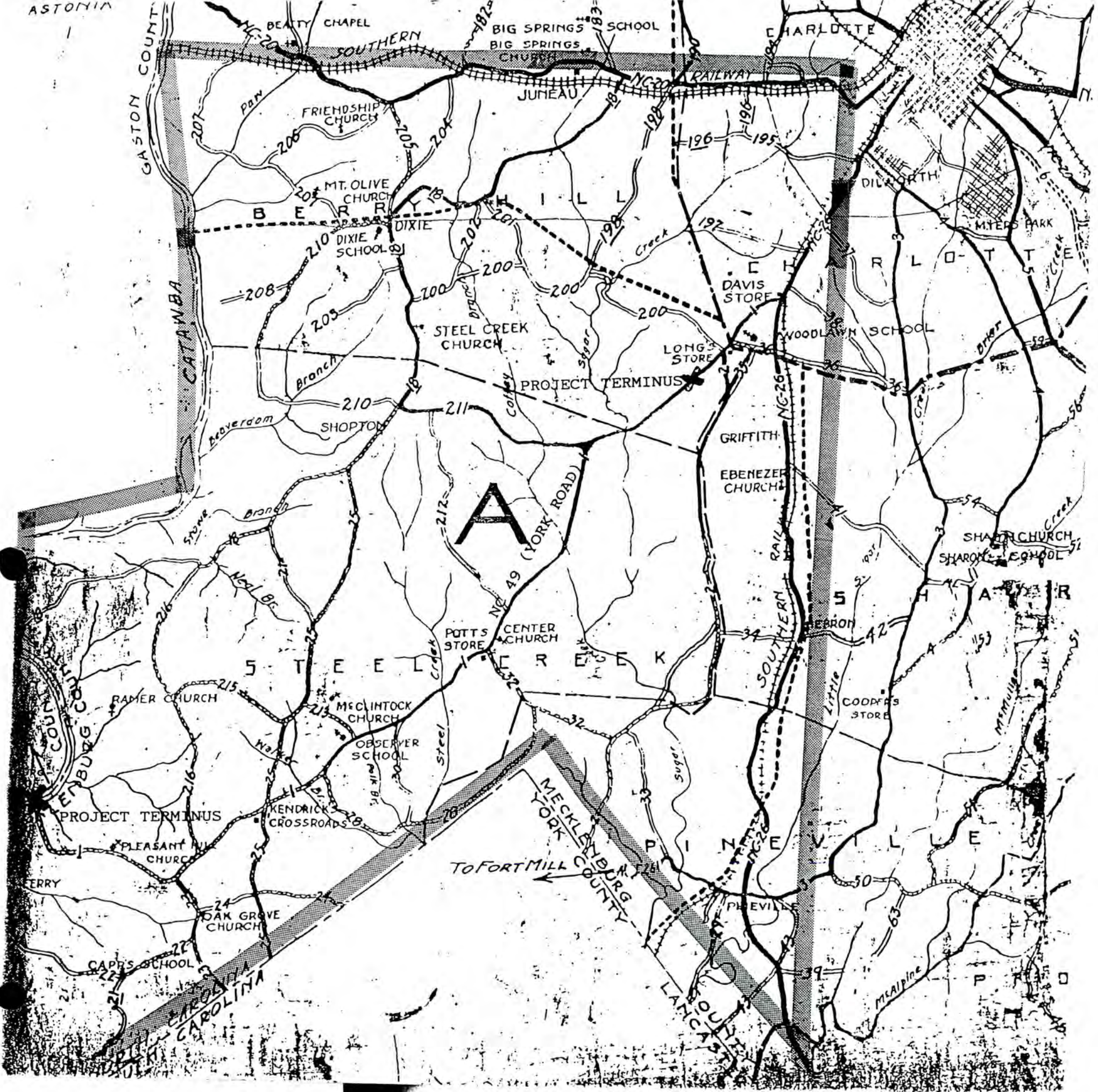
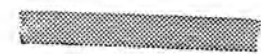


FIGURE 4

GENERAL STUDY AREA, 1922



SOURCE: ROAD MAP OF MECK. CO., NC  
 NOVEMBER 1922



1918 and 1930 (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission Files; Hanchett 1988; Gatza 1987-1988).

York Road was a convenient location for Steele Creek's public schools for white students. Between the late nineteenth century and 1920s, a series of schoolhouses for whites appeared along the roadway, including Reid's School, Steele Creek School (#6), Observer School, and finally, the consolidated Steele Creek High School. Today, only the Steele Creek School (#6) survives (Dean Bassett Interview 1993; John Knox Interview 1993; Mary Miler Interview 1993; Tompkins 1903).

York Road also attracted some of the finest farmhouses in Steele Creek. By the early twentieth century, stylish frame residences occupied by the McDowell, Watt, Grier, Potts, Choate, and Neely families lined the highway within the APE. These houses were typically the seats of sizable farms, producing cotton and small-grain crops, as well as raising swine and other livestock (Mary Miller Interview 1993; Gatza 1987-1988).

After World War I, these York Road farmsteads combined with others in the community to create an important dairy farming area in the county (Thompson 1926, 184-186). Although cotton remained the leading crop in the 1920s, the decline in cotton prices and the growing devastation of the boll weevil were catalysts for change. Furthermore, improved highways (York Road was paved in the 1920s) and the booming Charlotte market brightened the prospects for profitable dairying. A creamery was established at Shopton and, northwest of the APE, the Hunter farm was developed into one of the major dairy operations in the region. The production of milk, cream, and butter persisted on farms throughout the APE into the decades after World War II, ultimately declining amidst suburban and industrial expansion (DeAdwyler 1984; Gatza 1987-1988; Mattson and Huffman 1990; Kenley Interview 1992).

### Built Environment

As a result of extensive modern construction, the architectural evidence of Steele Creek's rural development is rare within the APE. A case in point was the demolition of the J. B. Grier House (MK 1366) in the late 1980s. This frame I-house, trimmed with picturesque spindlework and treated with a decorative

center roof gable, was built ca. 1899 as the seat of the sizable Grier family farm (Gatza 1987-1988). The vacant tract is today targeted for commercial land use. Currently, of the York Road farmhouses built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, only the 1912 McDowell House and the 1913 Frank Watt House survive. Built for the scions of prominent Steele Creek families, both houses represent clear departures from the traditional I-house type in Mecklenburg County and the emergence of fuller expressions of nationally popular house designs. As modern development rapidly transforms the Mecklenburg County countryside, such rare surviving farmhouses gain added significance (Mattson and Huffman 1990). Each house remains largely intact and is considered potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for architecture.

Built for Robert McDowell (1887-1937), whose family had amassed more than 1,000 acres of land in the York Road vicinity, the McDowell House (#1)(MK 1374) ranks among the finest remaining Colonial Revival farmhouses in Mecklenburg County (Gatza 1987-1988; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission Files) (see Plates 5-15). The two-and-a-half story, white, frame residence is the result of the 1912 expansion and remodeling of an I-house built by the McDowell family ca. 1843, which itself incorporated part of a ca. 1790 log dwelling. The McDowell House displays such hallmarks of the early twentieth-century Colonial Revival style as a symmetrical boxy form, bold classical features, and a large front porch with paired Ionic columns, center pediment, and dentilled frieze. The handsome interior contains a variety of classical and Craftsman-style mantels, five-panel doors, and a broad center hall with an open-string stairway and wainscoting. The McDowell House occupies an embowered setting overlooking the highway. Major portions of the original McDowell estate, however, have been developed into planned residential subdivisions.

Located south of the McDowell House, the Frank Watt House (#3)(MK 1380) was built in 1913 for the grandson of the Reverend J. B. Watt (see Plates 16-27). Frank Watt operated a sizeable cotton and dairy farm consisting of approximately 300 acres (Gatza 1987-1988; Kenley Interview 1992). The story-and-a-half, frame house has a handsome assortment of Colonial Revival elements of design. The house is two rooms deep and has a high hip roof with

subsidiary cross gables capping projecting bays. The roof is covered with slate shingles and decorated with metal finials. A hip-roofed verandah with Tuscan columns on brick piers extends around the facade. Following a center-hall plan, the interior contains a largely intact Colonial Revival finish. Although the upper story was never finished, the first floor features fluted door surrounds, tongue-and-groove wainscoting in the principal rooms and hall, and a variety of classical mantels. Only one early outbuilding, a tenant house, remains on the property, but the 24.61-acre tract includes former pasture and woodland.

In addition to the McDowell and Frank Watt houses, the APE contains the ca. 1902 (Former) Steele Creek School (#6). Although this former schoolhouse performed an important educational role in the community, the building has undergone extensive alterations. The second story was removed in the 1920s, when the facility was converted to a community center, and the building has been modified by other alterations and additions in recent decades (Dean Bassett Interview 1993; Mary Miller Interview 1993). The (Former) Steele Creek School is thus not considered to be potentially eligible for the National Register (see Plates 39-41).

#### **Conclusion: Post-World War II Decades to Present**

The general study area and APE remained largely agrarian during the 1940s and 1950s. However, the close proximity of Steele Creek to Charlotte, and the role of York Road as a main transportation artery contributed significantly to the area's subsequent transformation. By 1950, York Road was incorporated into NC Highway 49, which was one of the major state highways serving Charlotte and the western Piedmont. In that year, a *Charlotte Observer* article focused on the important role of NC 49 as a major new artery linking Charlotte to Salisbury, Asheboro, and Burlington to the north, and, beyond the South Carolina state line, to a string of cities extending southeast to Charleston (Norton 1950). Hailing Charlotte as a "gigantic hub," the article forecasted the transformation of NC 49 into one of the county's prime residential, commercial, and industrial corridors. As the decade ensued, farming families began subdividing parcels along the highway for nonfarm residences, which were within convenient commuting distance to Charlotte. In the 1960s, 1970s,



and 1980s, the evolution of NC 49 rapidly increased, accelerated by the nearby construction of Interstate Highway 77 and Charlotte's continued growth and aggressive annexation policies (Mattson and Huffman 1990).

Today, little survives of the historic cultural landscape along NC 49. Although fields persist, their association with the farmsteads that once dominated the project area and APE is now tenuous. Remaining early farm buildings are rare, and farmland is either leased to absentee farmers or is no longer in use and is targeted for commercial, residential, or industrial development. Of the properties within the APE identified as 50 years of age or older, only the McDowell House (#1)(MK 1374) and the Frank Watt House (#3)(MK 1380) remain essentially intact and are considered potentially eligible for the National Register.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology consisted of two phases. In Phase 1, a reconnaissance level survey was conducted. The architectural survey files at the Survey and Planning Branch of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History in Raleigh were searched for National Register and Study List properties located in the general study area. The files at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission in Charlotte were also searched for historic resources located in the vicinity of the project. Sufficient background historical research was conducted to acquire a basic understanding of the history and architectural development of the area. Local historians and property owners were interviewed, notably Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Consulting Director of the Landmarks Commission.

The field work conducted during Phase 1 comprised a windshield survey of the general study area and the recording on USGS maps of all National Register or Study List resources. Other properties, which in the professional judgement of the principal investigator warranted additional study, were also mapped. Sufficient photographs were taken to illustrate the findings. The results of this preliminary inventory of historic or potentially historic resources were then presented for discussion at a meeting with the North Carolina Department of Transportation staff.

During Phase 2, an intensive architectural survey was conducted and additional historical research was undertaken. The APE was determined and delineated on USGS maps. Within this area, all properties 50 years of age or older, which in the professional judgment of the surveyor were worthy of being so recorded, were photographed and keyed to USGS maps. A sufficient number of photographs were taken of these properties to assess or verify their National Register qualifications. For those properties evaluated as being potentially eligible for the National Register, proposed National Register boundaries were delineated on tax maps.

The background research conducted in Phase 2 included the analysis of an assortment of primary and secondary sources at local libraries and historical

Not all  
→ 50y.o.  
properties  
mapped



commissions. Of note were the architectural survey files completed during the 1987-1988 architectural inventory of rural Mecklenburg County (Gatza 1987-1988) and the "National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form for Rural Mecklenburg County" (Mattson and Huffman 1990). The 1987-1988 architectural inventory was a comprehensive survey of historic rural properties in the county. The survey culminated in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, which is a cover document consisting of National Register nominations for 15 of the county's finest inventoried farmhouses, country stores, and rural churches. Future nominations are planned. The architectural survey forms and the Multiple Property Documentation Form are available at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission.

The Charlotte Public Library and the library at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte are also important repositories of historical data, including documentary maps, newspaper clippings, census data, and published county and community histories. Finally, numerous local residents were interviewed during the course of the Phase 2 field work.

## ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY AND EVALUATIONS

### **Summary**

Of the seven recorded sites within the APE, two properties were recommended as eligible for the National Register. These properties were the McDowell House (#1)(MK 1374) and the Frank Watt House (#3)(MK 1380). Both dwellings are early twentieth-century farmhouses. Other sites recorded but considered ineligible upon evaluation were the Kendrick-Knox House (#10), the (Former) Steele Creek School (#6), the Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery (#11)(MK 1443), and the J. B. Watt House (#2)(MK 1379). One previously recorded property, the James Brown Grier House (MK 1366), is no longer extant and is indicated as such in the following property lists. The following section includes physical descriptions, historical data, and eligibility assessments for the recorded properties located within the APE.



**Property List**

Properties Listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

None

Properties on the North Carolina Study List for the National Register:

McDowell House (#1)(MK 1374)

Properties Considered Potentially Eligible for the National Register:

McDowell House (#1)(MK 1374))

Frank Watt House (#3)(MK 1380)

Properties Recorded, But Found Not Potentially Eligible for the National Register:

James Brown Grier House (MK 1443)(no longer extant)

Kendrick-Knox House (#10)

(Former) Steele Creek School (#6)

Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery (#11)(MK 1443)

J. B. Watt House (#2)(MK 1379)

forms  
submitted  
need \$\$\$

## POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

### **McDowell House (#1)(MK 1374)(National Register Study List)**

(p. 20 in essay)

Southeast side NC 49 at junction with SR 1156

Charlotte vicinity

Facing northwest towards NC 49, the two-and-a-half story, Colonial Revival McDowell House assumed its current form in 1912 (Plates 5-15). The existing double-pile residence encompasses both a section of a ca. 1790 log dwelling and a two-story frame, single-pile house, which was added to the log unit ca. 1843. The one-story log unit today is a rear shed extension, while the ca. 1843, two-story block forms the rear half of the main body of the present house (Gatza 1987-1988; Robert McDowell Interview 1992). When the house was enlarged and remodeled in 1912, the earlier sections of the residence were extensively updated. The windows were replaced, the interior of the ca. 1843 unit was refashioned in the Colonial Revival style, and the entire building was covered with new weatherboarding. The exterior chimneys were also removed and interior chimneys were constructed.

The history of the land on which this house stands can be traced to a land grant made to John and Mary McDowell in 1739 (Gatza 1987-1988). The original homestead, built in the mid-eighteenth century, was said to be a three-room log dwelling located on the west side of NC 49. In 1790, John McDowell built a two-story log house east of the present residence. McDowell's grandson, John McDowell (1821-1858), erected the ca. 1843 farmhouse, incorporating a section of the 1790 log residence. The existing house was built for his son, Robert (1887-1937), and Robert's wife, Grace Bradford McDowell. During the course of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the McDowell family amassed extensive landholdings in this area, operating a farm consisting of 1,400 acres. The house continues to be owned and occupied by a member of the McDowell family (Robert McDowell Interview 1992).

The main body of the 1912 McDowell House survives today essentially intact. The exterior consists of a three-bay-wide, double-pile block capped by a broad, side-gable roof pierced by two corbelled chimneys. An oversized, pedimented



dormer is centered above the facade and includes a tripartite window. A simpler rear dormer with a hip roof is positioned over the middle bay of the east elevation. Windows throughout the house have six panes in the upper sash and one sash below. A dentilled cornice extends around the entire two-story section. The glazed front door is framed by sidelights and a transom. The facade-width front porch features paired Ionic columns, a center pediment, and dentilled frieze. The north and south elevations have bay windows. The rear (ca. 1843) half of the house sits on stone piers which have been infilled with brick, while the front (1912) portion rests on a brick foundation. A modern wood stairway on the south elevation leads to a second-story entrance, added in recent decades. The rear ell has been enlarged and totally modernized. It has modern casement windows on the north and south elevations, a rear deck, and a rear entry with sidelights and a fanlight.

The interior of the main body of the McDowell House reflects the Colonial Revival design of the exterior. The broad center stairhall has an open-string stairway, tongue-and-groove wainscoting, picture molding, and double, multi-paned glass doors with molded surrounds. The principal four rooms on the first floor feature handsome mantels which display a variety of classical and Craftsman-style elements of design. Of note is the dining-room mantel which features decorative braces supporting a leaded-glass cabinet on the mantel shelf. The doors joining the first-floor rooms have five horizontal panels. Original wood floors and plaster walls and ceilings survive intact.

The great majority of the original McDowell tract has been developed in recent decades into residential subdivisions. Today, the McDowell House stands on a 2.65-acre parcel consisting of a rise of land with a broad front lawn shaded by mature oak trees. The house occupies a prominent setting oriented to NC 49 (York Road) and facing the substantial J. B. Watt House (#2)(MK 1379), which commands a wooded knoll on the west side of the highway. The southwest corner of the McDowell parcel contains a post-World War II granite marker erected by the Mecklenburg Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. This marker is in memory of Jane Parks, wife of Captain John McDowell, who, in 1780, ". . . rode 10 perilous miles to notify American Camp of British evacuation of Charlotte." A ca. 1945 brick auto garage and two modern frame equipment sheds are located behind the house. A modern brick ranch

house is situated immediately north of the parcel, and modern buildings associated with the McDowell family's excavation business stand directly east of the property.

The McDowell House is considered to be potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for architecture. A National Register Study List property, the house is considered to be one of the finest examples of a Colonial Revival farm seat in the county (Gatza 1987-1988). The potential National Register boundaries follow the present property lines, encompassing 2.65 acres (Figures 5-6).

ck





Plate 5. McDowell House and Setting, Looking East.



Plate 6. McDowell House, Main Facade, Looking East.



Plate 7. McDowell House, Main Facade and South Elevation, Looking Northeast.



Plate 8. McDowell House, Main Facade and North Elevation, Looking Southeast.





Plate 9. McDowell House, Rear Elevation, Looking West.



Plate 10. McDowell House, Stairhall.



Plate 11. McDowell House, Mantel, North Front Room.

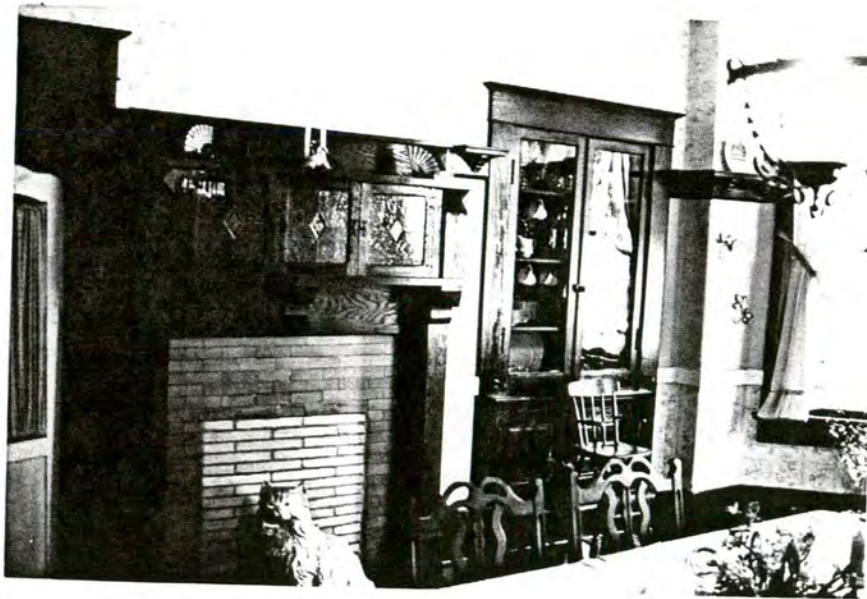


Plate 12. McDowell House, Mantel, Dining Room.





Plate 13. McDowell House Property, D.A.R. Marker.



Plate 14. McDowell House Property, Looking West towards NC 49 and J. B. Watt House.



Plate 15. McDowell House Property, Auto Garage, Looking North.



PG. 23

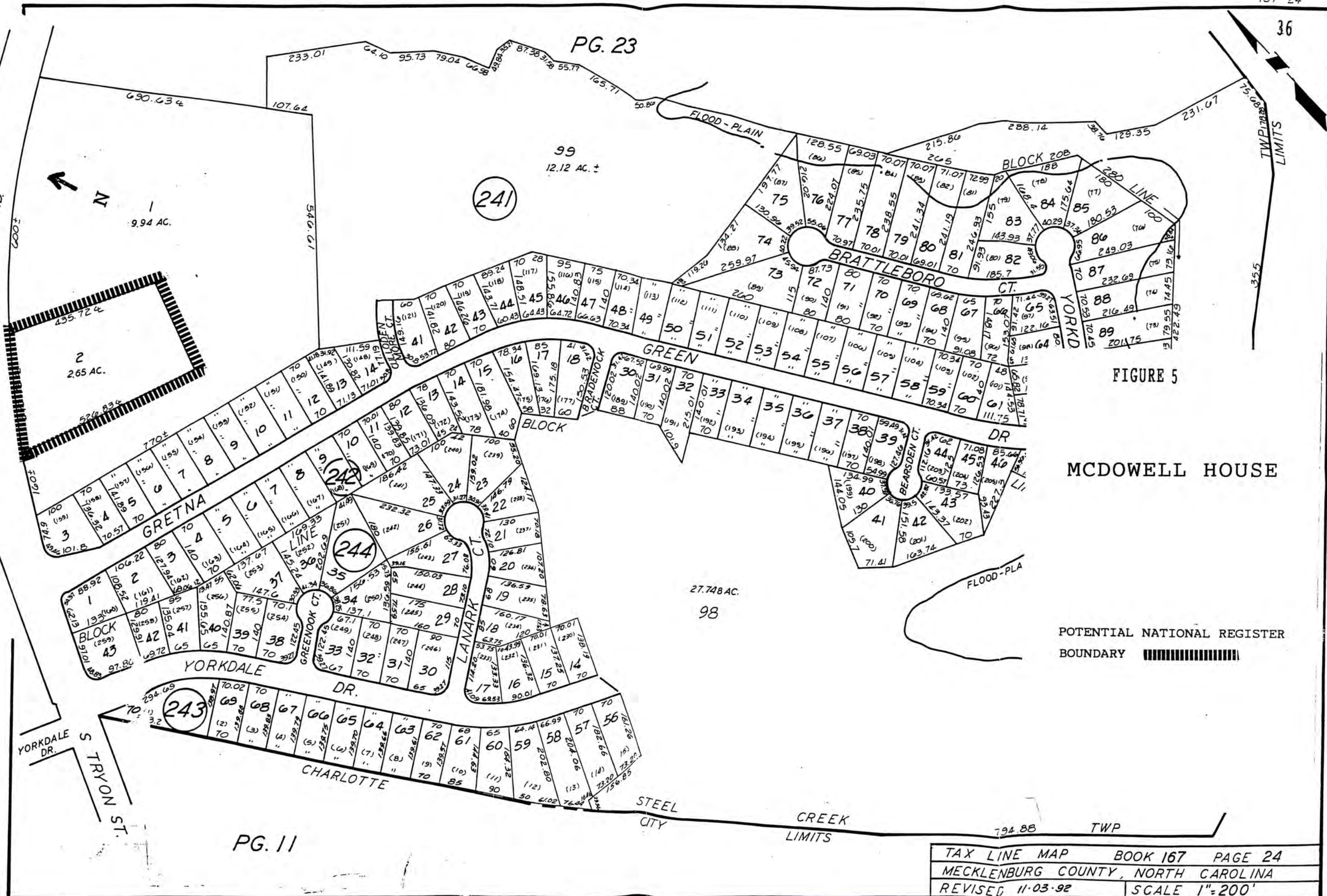
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FIGURE 5

MCDOWELL HOUSE

POTENTIAL NATIONAL REGISTER  
BOUNDARY 

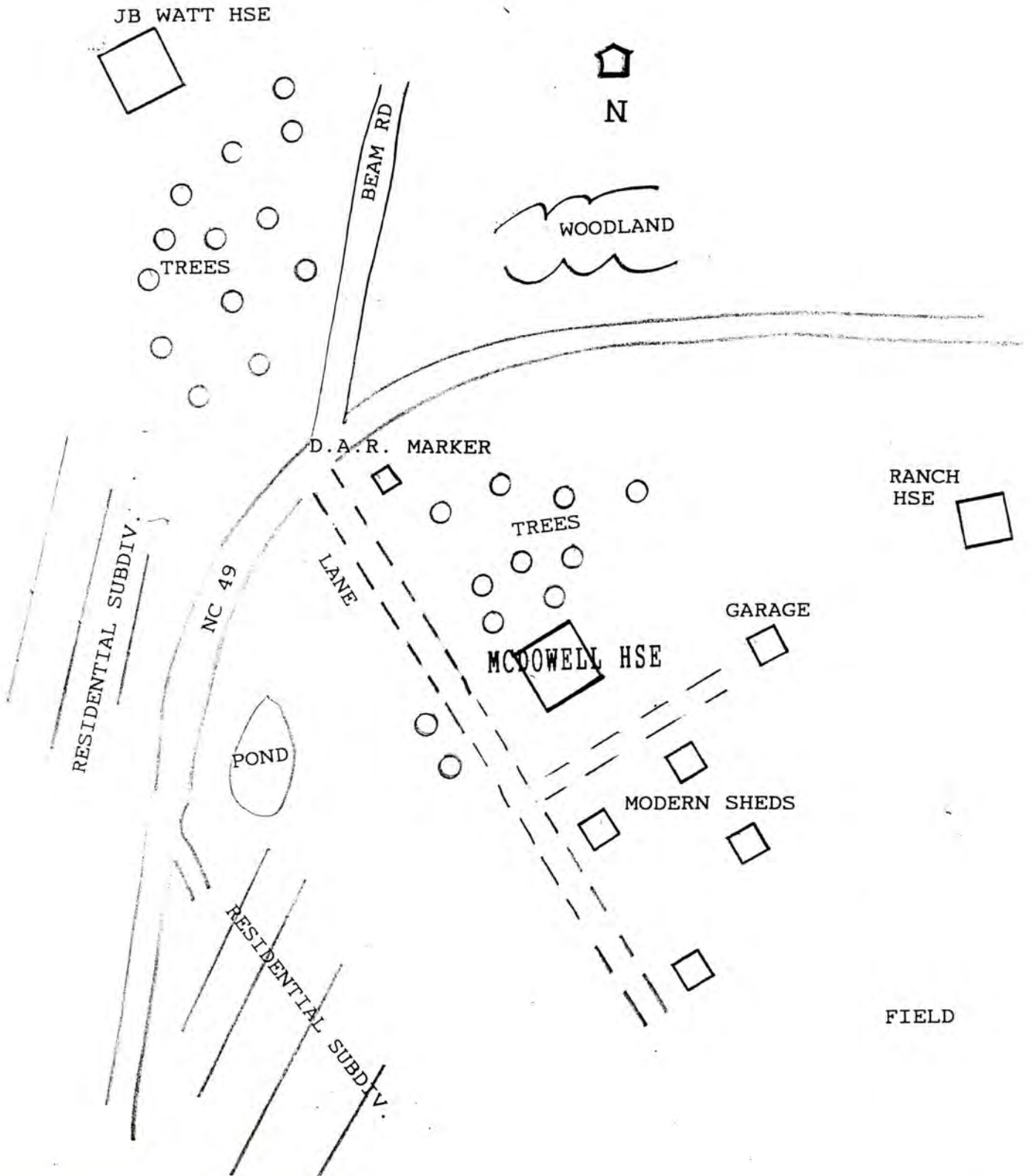


TAX LINE MAP	BOOK 167	PAGE 24
MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA		
REVISED 11-03-92	SCALE 1"=200'	



Figure 6

MCDOWELL HOUSE  
SITE PLAN  
(not to scale)





**Frank Watt House (# 3)(MK 1380)** (pp. 20-21 in essay)  
Southeast side NC 49, .25 mile south of junction with SR 1156  
Charlotte vicinity

Facing west towards NC 49, the Frank Watt House was erected in 1913 for William Franklin Watt, who operated a 300-acre dairy farm (Gatza 1987-1988; Calvin Kenley Interview 1992) (Plates 16-27). Although the house been recently covered with vinyl siding, it survives largely intact, revealing primarily Colonial Revival elements. This story-and-a-half, frame dwelling has an asymmetrical main block with projecting bays on the main facade and north and south elevations. A kitchen wing and parallel bedroom wing extend from the rear elevation. The main block is two rooms deep, three bays wide, and capped by a high hip roof with cross gables. The roof is covered with slate shingles, decorated with metal finials, and pierced by two tall brick chimney stacks. A hip-roofed dormer with paired fixed-sash windows is centered over the main entrance, while the front-facing gable has a single fixed-sash window. The gables on the north and south elevations have paired, double-hung, sash windows located between heavily molded gable returns.

The first-story exterior is dominated by a hip-roofed, wraparound porch with Tuscan columns resting on brick piers. The porch railing has been recently removed. The porch shields a handsome main entrance composed of a door with an oval, beveled-glass window and applied decoration, framed by a wide entablature with supporting pilasters. Original double-hung, one-over-one, sash windows survive throughout the main block, and are paired on the north elevation. The north elevation features a distinctive shallow bay window supported by heavy wood corbels. The kitchen wing has been altered by replacement windows and an enclosed porch, which has been incorporated into a small rear addition resting on a modern brick foundation. The main block retains the original brick foundation.

The essentially intact interior follows a center-hall plan, with four principal rooms organized around the stairhall. Although the upper story was never finished and has always been used for general storage, the first story has original plaster walls and ceilings, wood floors, and a Colonial Revival finish. The center hall contains an open-string staircase with tongue-and-groove

wainscoting and heavily molded square newels, and doorways with wide, fluted surrounds. Tongue-and-groove wainscoting also decorates the dining room, which is distinguished by double, multi-paned glass doors, and a corner mantel with slender pilasters treated with applied medallions below the mantel shelf. The mantels in the other three rooms have heavy entablatures supported by free-standing classical columns flanking the fire openings. Doors with six panels and molded surrounds survive throughout the first-floor interior.

Today, the Frank Watt House stands on a 24.61-acre tract, which includes the house, woodland and fields east of the house, a modern carport, a shed, three-vehicle garage, and a former tenant house. The tenant house was moved in recent years to its present site behind the main residence and is used for general storage. A modern residential subdivision is located immediately south of the tract, and an evangelical religious building stands to the west, across NC 49. The Frank Watt House remains owner-occupied and in good condition.

The Frank Watt House is considered to be potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for architecture. It is a largely intact example of an early twentieth-century, middle-class farmhouse in Mecklenburg County. Importantly, the architectural significance of the Frank Watt House is magnified in rural Mecklenburg County, where rapid and sprawling suburban development is destroying a great deal of the rural architectural heritage. Surviving examples of local early twentieth-century farmhouses, which were once common, are now rare. Dr. Dan L. Morrill, the consulting director of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, asserts that the Frank Watt House stands among the finest Colonial Revival farmhouses that remain in the county (Dan L. Morrill Interview 1992). Moreover, the house is included among the "notable examples" of surviving Colonial Revival farmhouses in the "National Register Multiple Property Nomination for Rural Mecklenburg County" (Mattson and Huffman 1990). The potential National Register boundaries coincide with the current property lines. These boundaries contain the house, outbuildings, and the fields and woodland, which provide the setting (Figures 7-8). Other boundaries were considered, but the rural acreage enhances the significance of the property, and no clearly defined smaller boundaries exist which also encompass adjacent fields and woods. JK





Plate 16. Frank Watt House and Setting, Looking East.



Plate 17. Frank Watt House, Main Entrance, Looking East.



Plate 18. Frank Watt House, Main Facade and South Elevation, Looking Northeast.



Plate 19. Frank Watt House, North Elevation, Looking South.





Plate 20. Frank Watt House, Rear Elevation, Looking West.



Plate 21. Frank Watt House, Stairhall.

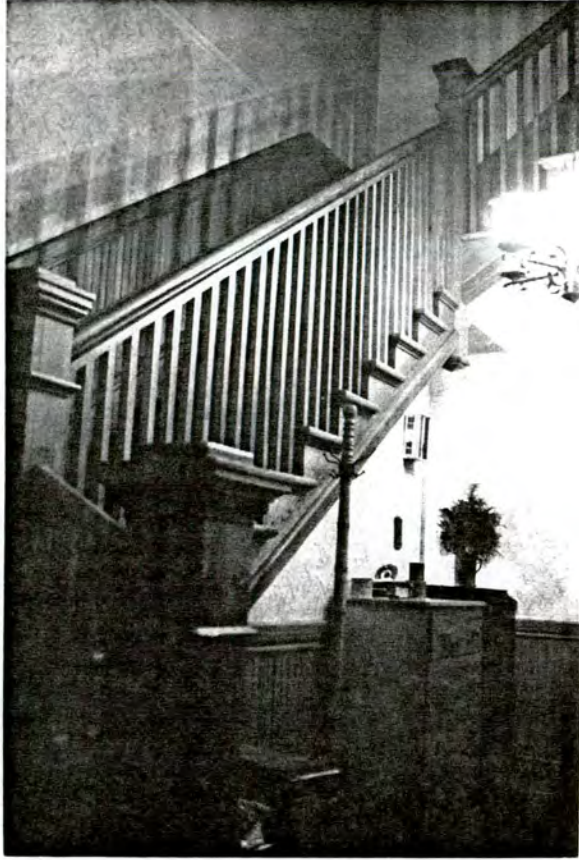


Plate 22. Frank Watt House, Stair.





Plate 23. Frank Watt House, Living Room Mantel.



Plate 24. Frank Watt House, Dining Room Mantel.



Plate 25. Frank Watt House Property. Garage, Looking South Towards Modern Subdivision.



Plate 26. Frank Watt House Property, Fields and Tenant House, Looking East.





Plate 27. Frank Watt House Property, Fields and Woodland Northeast of House, Looking Northeast.



BK. 201

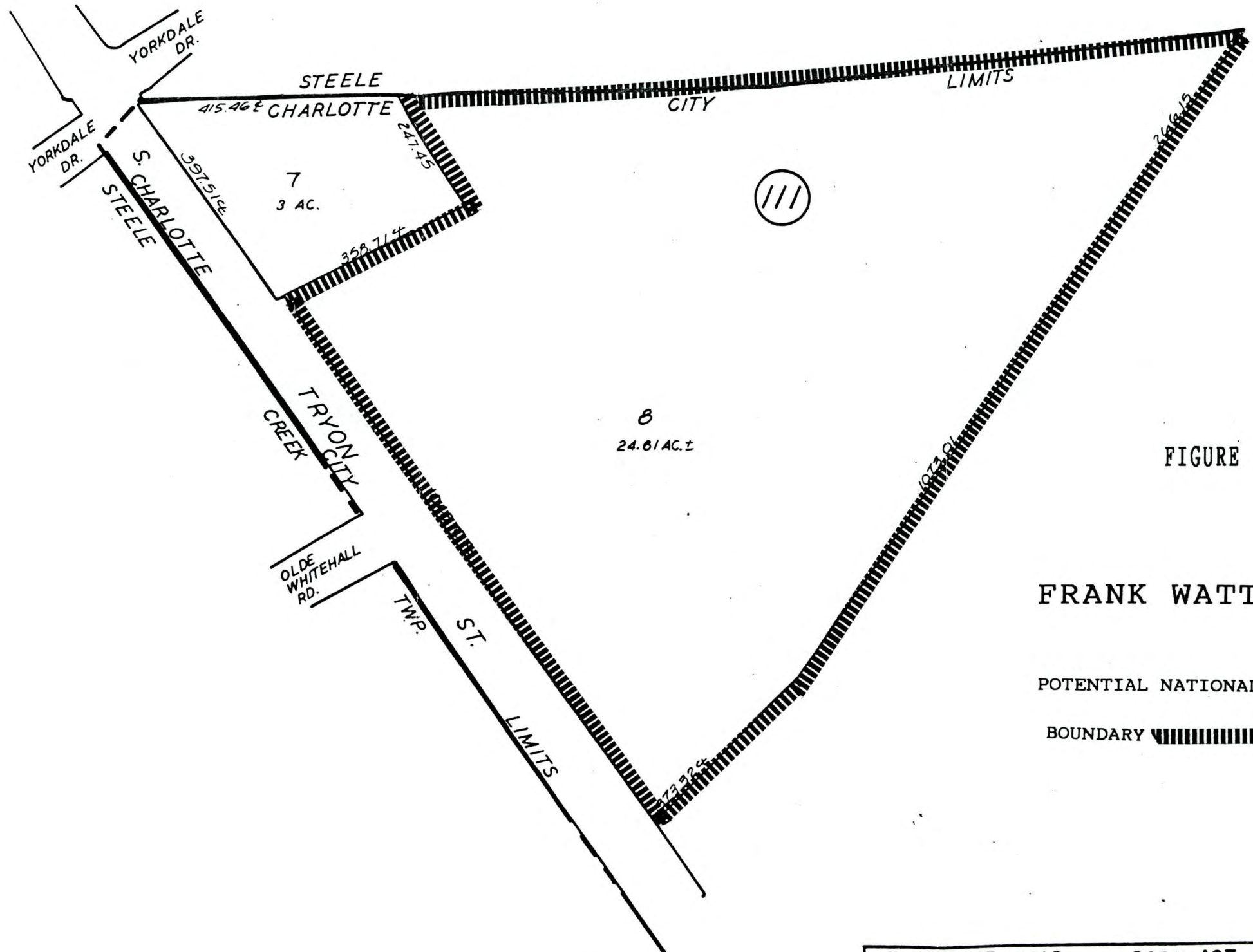


FIGURE 7

FRANK WATT HOUSE

POTENTIAL NATIONAL REGISTER

BOUNDARY

TAX LINE MAP	BOOK 167	PAGE 11
MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA		
REVISED 5-18-92	SCALE 1" = 200'	

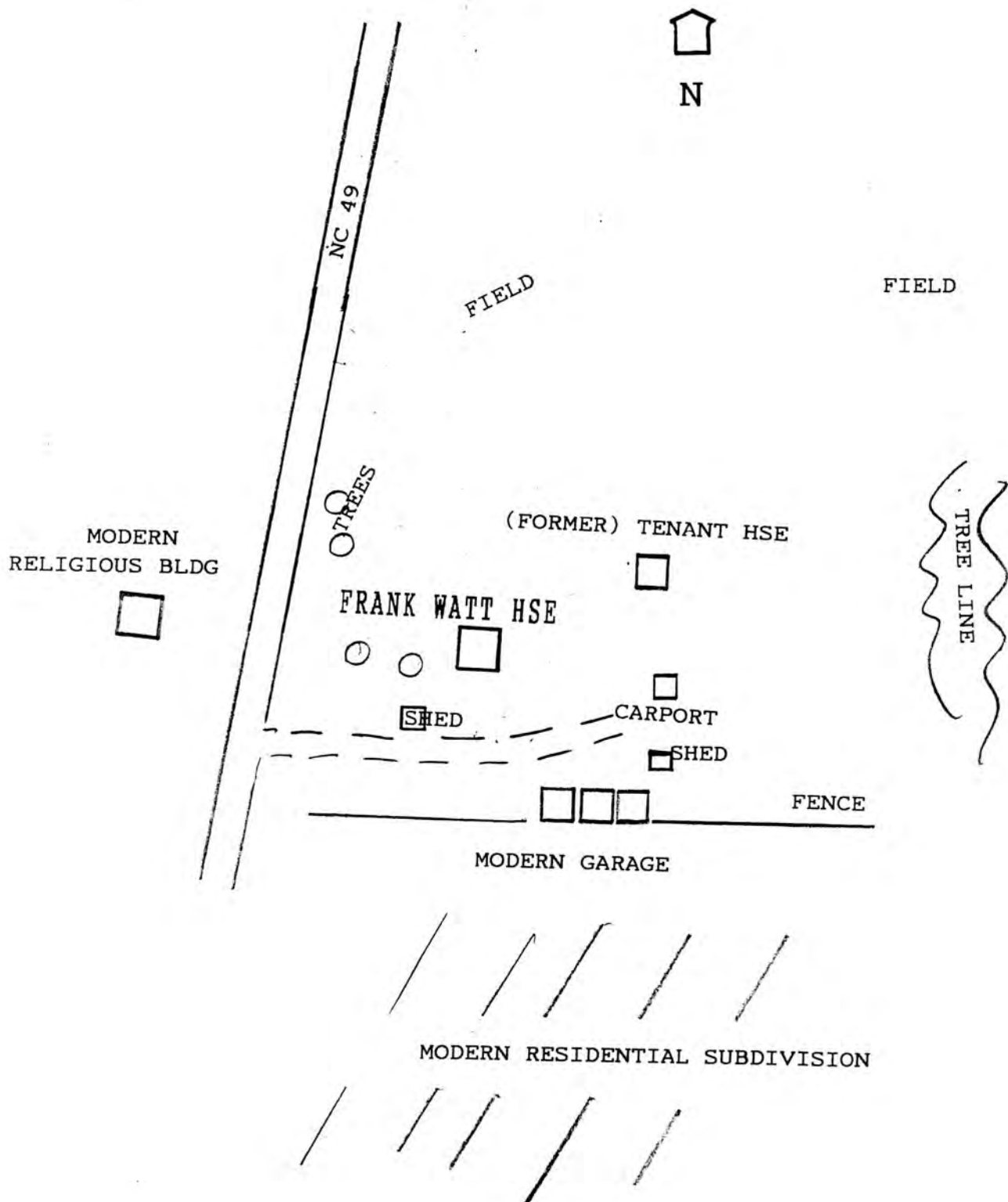


Figure 8

FRANK WATT HOUSE

SITE PLAN

(not to scale)



**POTENTIALLY INELIGIBLE PROPERTIES**

**James Brown Grier House (MK 1366)**

Southeast side NC 49, .2 mile northeast of junction with SR 1142

Charlotte vicinity

The James Brown Grier House is no longer extant, razed subsequent to the 1987-1988 architectural inventory of rural Mecklenburg County (Gatza 1987-1988).



**Kendrick-Knox House (#10)** (pp. 15-16 in essay)

North side NC 49, approximately .2 mile southwest of junction with NC 160  
Pineville vicinity

Although the construction date is not known, the Kendrick-Knox House may have been erected before the Civil War for farmer Richard Kendrick (John Knox Interview 1993) (Plates 28-31). The 1860 Agricultural Census for Mecklenburg County recorded Richard Kendrick as owning 120 improved acres in Steele Creek Township. Kendrick also held title to eight slaves. By 1880, the Agricultural Census recorded the Kendrick farm as comprising 275 acres, raising corn, oats, wheat, cotton, and swine. In 1922, the Kendrick tract was purchased by Stan Neely Knox, and the farm was operated by tenants into the middle decades of the twentieth century. The house is currently rental property. Fields survive to the north and east of the house, but they are no longer under cultivation (John Knox Interview 1993). An early twentieth-century gable-front, frame barn, and an auto garage are the only remaining outbuildings. The barn is severely deteriorated. The house is in stable condition but in need of substantial repairs.

The antebellum construction date of the Kendrick-Knox House is suggested by design elements representative of vernacular Federal/Greek Revival houses generally built before the Civil War in the Piedmont. The house has delicate, flush eaves on the gable ends, a hip-roofed porch with classically inspired tapered posts, and paired, four-panel entry doors flanked by sidelights. The broad, story-and-a-half form and double-pile, center-hall plan suggest the influence of the Greek Revival. Original or early wings extend from the east and rear elevations.

The Kendrick-Knox House, however, has undergone a number of alterations. Probably in the 1940s, a second rear ell and shed additions were constructed. In the 1960s, the brick infill foundation was added, the porch floor and balustrade replaced, and the brick front steps constructed. Ca. 1974, the weatherboard exterior was aluminum sided, the brick chimneys were covered with concrete to slow their deterioration, and modern metal-sash windows were installed (John Knox Interview 1993).

The interior has also been significantly altered. Although the center-hall plan is intact, the original mantels have been replaced by brick mantels, and the original stair balusters, newel, and rail are no longer extant. Several original four-panel doors survive, but others have been replaced. The principal investigator was not permitted to take interior photographs.

The Kendrick-Knox House is not considered to be potentially eligible for the National Register under any Criterion. Although its basic original form and plan are intact, the dwelling has undergone a number of major exterior and interior alterations. Only two early outbuildings remain on the tract, and the barn, which is the only surviving agricultural building, is in deteriorating condition.





Plate 28. Kendrick-Knox House, Facade, Looking North.



Plate 29. Kendrick-Knox House, East Elevation, Looking Northwest.



Plate 30. Kendrick-Knox House, Rear Elevations, Looking South.



Plate 31. Kendrick-Knox Barn, Looking North.



**Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery (#11)(MK 1443)**

(p. 13 in essay)

North side NC 49, 1.1 mile west of junction with SR 1116

Pineville vicinity

This cemetery was established in 1839, shortly after the founding of the Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church on this site (Plates 32-38). The new church reflected the expansion of rural settlement in southwest Mecklenburg County and the growing need for a Presbyterian house of worship in the lower Steele Creek area. Founding members had been congregants at the Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, situated approximately 10 miles to the north. The existing church building, which faces NC 49 directly south of the cemetery, is a modern facility erected in 1973. It is the third one on this location and replaced a smaller brick church built in 1905 (Historical Committee 1978; Gatza 1987-1988).

Located behind the church, the existing cemetery measures approximately 250 feet on each side. Grounds immediately to the north have been excavated for the expansion of the cemetery. The headstones are arranged in parallel rows running north-south, and they face east. There are approximately 500 stones in the cemetery, and the older, nineteenth-century stones are located on the north side. These markers constitute approximately 25 percent of the headstones. The great majority of stones thus date from the twentieth century and roughly 40 percent post-date World War II. The earlier markers have traditionally restrained designs, with simple descriptions and flat, curvilinear, or pedimented tops. The earliest identified surviving headstone was erected in 1847.

A stone wall borders the east, west, and south sides of cemetery. Constructed in 1940 by stonemason Alfred Leaper of Aberdeen, Scotland, this wall is composed of dressed granite blocks and a wrought iron gate on the south side. The other sides comprise simpler fieldstones. Leaper also constructed dressed granite piers to flank the main driveway to the church.

The Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery is not considered to be potentially eligible for the National Register under any Criterion. The

cemetery does not possess special design significance, as the majority of the headstones date from the twentieth century and almost one-half are post-World War II. The nineteenth-century stones represent funerary art typical throughout the region. The information that this cemetery can impart is available in documentary sources, including church and deed records. The impact of Scotch-Irish Presbyterian settlement in this area is better conveyed through extant historic properties in the Steele Creek community, and particularly through the Steele Creek Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, a National Register property with an outstanding collection of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century headstones (Mattson and Huffman 1990).





Plate 32. Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church, Looking North.



Plate 33. Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Looking North.



Plate 34. Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Looking South.



Plate 35. Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery, South Wall.





Plate 36. Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Early Headstones, Looking West.



Plate 37. Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Looking Northwest.



Plate 38. Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Looking North.



(Former) Steele Creek School (#6) (p. 21 in essay)

Northwest side NC 49 approximately .1 mile north junction with Sandy Porter Road

Shopton vicinity

Steele Creek School was established ca. 1902, on a parcel which Mecklenburg County purchased from James Brown Grier (Plates 39-41). Serving white pupils in grades one through 11, this former public school building was originally two stories, with classrooms on the second floor and an auditorium occupying the ground floor. The weatherboarded building functioned as a school until 1922-1923, when a larger, brick consolidated school was erected several miles south at Erwin Road. The building was subsequently converted to a community center, and today serves the community as a used-clothing store operated by Central Steele Creek Presbyterian Church. The facility remains in good condition (Dean Bassett Interview 1993; Mary Miller Interview 1993).

This former schoolhouse has been substantially altered since its conversion to a community building. In the 1920s, the second story was removed and the existing hip roof was constructed over the first story. The gable-front entry porch and rear bathroom wing were also added during this remodeling. During the 1960s, with funds provided by Duke Power and the *Charlotte Observer* to improve community centers in the county, the wing was added to the west elevation, the existing six-over-six, double-hung sash windows were installed, the brick infill foundation was constructed, and the interior was sheathed with vertical wood paneling (Dean Bassett Interview 1993). The weatherboard siding on the main block, double entry doors, wood ceiling, and the platform at the north end of the interior appear to be original.

The former Steele Creek School does not appear to be eligible for the National Register under any Criterion. The building has undergone a series of significant alterations since its historical function as a schoolhouse, notably the removal of the original second story.



Plate 39. (Former) Steele Creek School, Facade and North Elevation, Looking Southwest.



Plate 40. (Former) Steele Creek School, Rear Elevation, Looking Northeast.





Plate 41. (Former) Steele Creek School, Interior of Main Block.

**J. B. Watt House (#2)(MK 1379)** (p. 15 in essay)

Northwest side NC 49 at junction with SR 1156

Charlotte vicinity

The J. B. Watt House faces east towards NC 49 and the McDowell House (#2)(MK 1374), which occupies a similarly prominent, tree-shaded site on the east side of NC 49 (Plates 42-47). Built ca. 1848, the Watt House is a frame, two-story, double-pile dwelling that has undergone extensive remodeling in the twentieth century. It was erected for the Reverend James Bell Watt I (1820-1860), a Presbyterian minister serving the Steele Creek, Sardis, and Pleasant Hill Presbyterian churches between the 1840s and the Civil War (Gatza 1987-1988; Historical Committee 1978, 49-50). About 1848, Watt purchased an 18-acre tract along York Road (NC 49) from his brother-in-law, Robert McDowell, and built this substantial house. About 1900, James B. Watt II moved this house approximately 100 yards east of its original site and remodeled the residence. For example, the original paired, exterior end chimneys were removed and replaced by the existing interior chimneys, and the windows were updated with two-over-two sash (Gatza 1987-1988).

In 1956, the front of the house was severely damaged as a result of an airplane crash, and extensive remodeling ensued. Existing evidence of the 1950s alterations include the flat-roofed front porch with square wooden posts and iron balustrade, the main entrance with sidelights and transom, and the five-over-one, double-hung sash windows on the main facade and side elevations. The interior was also significantly modernized at this time, and no early mantels or doors are said to survive (Michael Spruill Interview 1992). The principal investigator was denied access into the interior.

Subsequent alterations during the 1970s and 1980s have included the addition of shed appendages to the south and rear elevations and the application of vinyl siding to the entire exterior. Today, only the delicate modillion cornice across the facade reflects the dwelling's original stylistic treatment.

Although the J. B. Watt House continues to command a handsome site, with a broad, wooded front yard, the southern portion of the original tract has been recently developed into a residential subdivision. A modern brick ranch



house stands north of the house, and modern frame and concrete-block outbuildings are located immediately south and west of the residence. No early outbuildings survive.

The J. B. Watt House is not considered to be potentially eligible for the National Register under any Criterion. While the house retains its early geographical relationship to York Road and the McDowell House, the house has undergone a series of major exterior and interior alterations.



Plate 42. J. B. Watt House and Setting, Looking West.



Plate 43. J. B. Watt House, Main Facade, Looking West.





Plate 44. J. B. Watt House, South Elevation, Looking North.



Plate 45. J. B. Watt House, North Elevation, Looking South.



Plate 46. J. B. Watt House, Rear Elevation, Looking North.



Plate 47. J. B. Watt House Property, Looking East towards NC 49.



## SUMMARY OF ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

Seven properties within the APE were evaluated to determine their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The McDowell House (#1)(MK 1374) and the Frank Watt House (#3)(MK 1380) were found to be potentially eligible for the National Register. The remaining properties were assessed as not eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The ineligible properties were the Kendrick-Knox House (#10), Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery (#11)(MK 1443), (Former) Steele Creek School (#6), and the J. B. Watt House (#2)(MK 1379). One previously recorded property located within the APE, the James Brown Grier House (MK 1366), is no longer extant. A brief synopsis of the potentially eligible and ineligible National Register resources follows.

### **Potentially Eligible Properties**

The 1912 McDowell House is an imposing two-and-a-half-story, frame, Colonial Revival residence. A rare surviving example of an essentially intact early twentieth-century farmhouse in Mecklenburg County, the McDowell House epitomizes the Colonial Revival style in its frame, boxy form and bold classical features. The house commands a broad lot, shaded by mature trees, that overlooks NC 49. The McDowell House is considered potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for its architectural significance.

The 1913 Frank Watt House is a handsome one-and-a-half story, frame dwelling displaying Colonial Revival design elements. A rare surviving essentially intact farmhouse of the early twentieth century in Mecklenburg County, the house is situated on a 24.61-acre rural tract along NC 49. The Frank Watt House is considered potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for its architectural significance.

### **Potentially Ineligible Properties**

The Kendrick-Knox House is an extensively altered farmhouse that may have been constructed during the antebellum period. Exterior alterations include modern replacement windows, porch balustrade, and aluminum siding. The interior has replacement brick mantels and a replacement staircase.

Established in 1839, the Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery is dominated by post-World War II gravestones. A 1940 stone wall borders the south, east, and west sides. Excavation is underway to expand the cemetery to the north.

The one-story, frame (Former) Steele Creek School, built ca. 1902, has undergone numerous alterations. Notably, the original second story was removed in the early 1920s, when the building was converted to a community center. The entry porch and windows are also replacements and the wings are later additions.

The ca. 1848 J. B. Watt House, located across NC 49 from the McDowell House, is a frame, two-story, double-pile dwelling that has undergone a series of major alterations. In 1900, the house was moved approximately 100 yards and remodeled with replacement windows and chimneys. The house was subsequently remodeled in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and consequently few original or early design elements remain.



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Appendix

Contract Specifications

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## ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY REPORT

The Architectural Survey Report will examine buildings, structures, objects, districts, and cultural landscapes of potential architectural and/or historical significance that would likely be affected by the proposed NC 49 Widening from the Buster Boyd Bridge to Tyvola Road Extension. The investigation will be conducted through implementation of these steps.

1. Data collection through examination of published historical and architectural works, files of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office Survey and Planning Branch, and historic maps and photographs. Primary resources including county records and pertinent collections in the state archives and other repositories will be examined if determined to be helpful. Interviews with local historians and knowledgeable citizens will be conducted. This historical background research will culminate in an essay analyzing the history and architecture of the general study area, and establishing contexts for reference in the report.
2. Field survey during which all properties in the area of potential effects that are fifty years of age or older, and which in the professional judgment of the surveyor are worthy of being so recorded, will be photographed and keyed to USGS maps. A list of the properties listed in or determined potentially eligible for the National Register, and those properties that do not appear to meet the National Register criteria.
3. Historic Structures Data Sheets will be completed for those properties which have not been previously recorded and are to be included in the body of the survey report. The data sheets for previously recorded properties may also need to be updated (for those properties included in the body of the report).
4. Preparation of the preliminary draft and preliminary survey reports according to the appended Guidelines.
5. Providing summary of Step 4 for the environmental document.

## DELIVERABLES

The following documents will comprise the product to be delivered to the Consultant and other appropriate parties by the sub-consultant.:

1. Project area Photographic Inventory including 3x5 black and white photographs, labeled, keyed to USGS topographic maps, and accompanied by a list categorizing all properties as to their listing in or eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.
2. Draft survey report prepared according to the Guidelines set forth by the North Carolina SHPO, and modified by NCDOT.
3. Final survey report incorporating suggestions received concerning the content of the draft report.

4. North Carolina Site Forms and accompanying documentation for properties requiring recording at this level, i.e., those to be included in the body of the survey report.

5. Number of copies of reports to be submitted:

Three copies of the Draft Survey Report

Six copies of the Final Survey Report

#### WORK REQUIRING SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS

The following items, detailed in Sections VIII and IX of Attachment B, will require separate negotiations:

1. Formal "Requests for Determination Eligibility" submitted to the Secretary of the Interior.
2. Any 4(f) Statements required.
3. Memoranda of Agreement.