



## North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

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

Division of Archives and History  
Jeffrey J. Crow, Director

May 20, 1998

### MEMORANDUM

TO: David Robinson, PE, Assistant Manager  
Planning and Environmental Branch  
Division of Highways  
Department of Transportation

FROM: David Brook   
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

SUBJECT: US 64 from NC 45 east of Plymouth to  
SR 1235 east of Columbia, Washington  
and Tyrrell Counties, State Project  
6.149001T, TIP R-2548, ER 98-7178

Thank you for your letter of May 1, 1998, providing additional information about five properties within the above project's area of potential effect.

We concur that the following properties are not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due to a loss of integrity:

Holy Disciples Church

Former Schoolhouse

Downing-Spruill House (WH 427)

We concur that the proposed areas of significance and boundaries for the Will Chesson House (WH 366) are appropriate.

We understand that the boundaries for the Tarkenton House include 21.23 acres.

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, please contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763.

DB:slw

cc: B. Church

bc: File Brown/Bevin Eastern Office County RF





STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JAMES B. HUNT JR.  
GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 25201, RALEIGH, N.C. 27611-5201

E. NORRIS TOLSON  
SECRETARY

May 1, 1998

Ref 98 - 7178  
due 5/26  
DKB

DLB5/15/98

RECEIVED  
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Mr. David Brook  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
507 North Blount Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27604-1109

Dear Mr. Brook:

RE: US 64 from NC 45 East of Plymouth to SR 1235 East of Columbia, Washington and Tyrrell Counties, State Project 6.149001T, TIP Project R-2548

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NC DOT) is conducting planning studies for the above-referenced project (TIP No. R-2548). On July 17, 1997 NC DOT submitted the Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report for the above project. On August 26, 1997 your office sent the NC DOT a memorandum with comments regarding that report. In this letter, the NC DOT addresses the questions put forth by your office so as to secure concurrence.

**Tarkenton House (Site # 121)**

The tax map included in the June 1996 report indicates the correct proposed historic boundary and acreage for the Tarkenton House. The proposed historic boundary for the house contains the 21.23 acres currently associated with the property. The boundary description in the June 1996 report is incorrect and we are sorry that the survey report of July 1997 did not rectify this error. Nevertheless, please note that the back of the ditch along US 64 was chosen as the western length of the proposed historic boundary for the Tarkenton House in the July 1997 report. The right-of-way for US 64 extends beyond this ditch, into the front yard of the house, but it includes some of the landscape features that are historically associated with the house. Therefore, the proposed historic boundary must include this small portion of the NC DOT's right-of-way so as to preserve the historic integrity of the property.

OK

**Holy Disciples Church (Site # 17)**

In the July 1997 survey report, this property was incorrectly identified the "Holy Disciples Church." Further research into the history of this structure has uncovered the correct name of the current owner as, "Smyrna Church of Christ Holy Disciples." Your

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August 26, 1997 memorandum asked for the appropriate historic name for this former Rosenwald School and any available history. A chain of title search revealed that the land on which the building sits was sold to the Washington County Board of Education (Public Committee for District No. 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Colored Race) in 1885 with the understanding that a school was to be erected. By the early 1950s, the school building was determined to be no longer necessary for school purposes and ordered sold at auction. The school building and its surrounding 0.5 acres were referred to in the deed as the Macedonia School Site. However, there is no Rosenwald school in the Register of Rosenwald Schools that goes by this name. There are only two Rosenwald Schools listed for Washington County, the Plymouth School and the Roper School. Since this particular school is halfway between the two towns, and the built form is not similar to either of the plan types for these two schools, it remains unclear as to whether or not this former schoolhouse was built using money from the Julius Rosenwald Fund.

OK  
An additional site visit to the property was made by NC DOT staff on March 25, 1998. After an intensive investigation of the structural integrity of the property from the exterior, staff concluded that the property does not retain sufficient integrity to qualify for inclusion on the National Register. The principle facade has undergone significant changes including a new double door entrance flanked by pointed-arch windows of colored glass. The new entry is sheltered by a small porch composed of a small gable roof supported on slender iron posts mounted on a newly laid brick floor and stairs. The other pair of windows on the front elevation have also been replaced with smaller, diamond-paned windows of colored glass. A bank of windows on the eastern elevation have also been replaced by these diamond-paned windows. The windows along the western elevation have been replaced with colored panes or painted white. The interior was only visible through the new entrance but it was apparent that new partitions have been built. Other alterations to the interior were not apparent because of the large number of used refrigerators being stored in the building.

#### **Will Chesson House (Site # 129, WH 366)**

Your August 26, 1997 memorandum concurred that the Chesson House was eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. However, you asked for more information about the house's builder and use of the property associated with the house. A chain of title search revealed that the property was held by five generations of Chessons between 1867 and 1978. The earliest records show that during the 1830s and 1840s, J. B. Chesson was registered for a number of small deeds (each about 50 to 80 acres) south of the Albemarle Sound in Washington County. Andrew L. Chesson bought a 350 acre parcel of land with all appurtenances from J. B. Chesson on January 22, 1867. In January 1880, Andrew Chesson sells 375 acres with all appurtenances to William R. Chesson. This land becomes the center of William R. Chesson's agricultural estate called "Beach Neck Farm." The acreage is divided among his children upon his death in 1914 and one son, William B. Chesson, acquires the house and 25 surrounding acres. The house and 25 acres are then passed down to Chesson's son, William R. Chesson, who bequeaths it to his son, William R. Chesson, Jr. in 1978. Current tax records state that the property belongs to Mabel F. Chesson, widow of William R. Chesson, Jr.

The Federal and Greek Revival features of the house indicate that it was probably built during J. B. Chesson's ownership. In addition, Preservation North Carolina believes that the house was constructed in 1838; however NC DOT was unable to obtain supporting documentation.

OK  
 NC DOT staff maintains that the Chesson House is not eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for significance in agriculture. Aside from the barn and smokehouse, the domestic and agricultural outbuildings necessary to convey the appearance as a nineteenth-century farm complex do not survive. The other areas of significance under Criterion A were considered and found not to be appropriate. The Chesson House is not eligible for the National Register under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past because there are no persons of national, state, or local significance associated with the property. In addition, the architectural component of the Chesson House is not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology. Its building construction methods and materials were relatively commonplace; and therefore it is not eligible for the National Register under Criterion D.

With regard to the boundaries for the property, NC DOT staff considers that the proposed National Register boundary for the Chesson House should follow the current property line marked on the attached tax map. The boundary contains 24.9 acres includes the house, outbuildings, and the fields surrounding the house. The boundary does not contain two small areas which were sold off at earlier dates. The boundary extends to the back of the drainage ditch along US 64 on the south side. The back of the ditch has been chosen as the southern limit of the proposed National Register boundary because the NC DOT's right-of-way extends deeper into the property and contains several historic landscape elements associated with the Chesson House.

**Former Schoolhouse (Site # 118)**

OK  
 No additional information was available about the integrity of the interior of the school or its history, and after revisiting the site, we believe that the property is not eligible for the National Register.

**Downing-Spruill House (Site #48, WH 427)**

OK  
 NC DOT staff visited the Downing-Spruill House on March 25, 1998 and found the structure in the midst of renovations that severely compromise its integrity. The building had been covered in new vinyl siding and all of the window and door surrounds were replaced. In addition, all of the plaster and lath had been removed from the interior rooms, only the chair rail and interior door surrounds remained. The future of this property is uncertain, but it is clearly not eligible for the National Register because of its lack of integrity.

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact Ms. Barbara Church, Historic Architectural Resources Section, (919) 733-3141.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. Robinson".

David Robinson, P.E., Ph.D., Assist. Manager  
Planning and Environmental Branch

DR/hrs

Attachments

cc: Richard B. Davis, P.E., Assistant Manager, Planning and Environmental Branch