

**B-3414 · Replace Bridge 181 on NC 151 over South Hominy Creek
Buncombe County · Historic Structures Survey Report**

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT
REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 181 ON NC 151
OVER SOUTH HOMINY CREEK
BUNCOMBE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TIP NUMBER B-3414
FEDERAL PROJECT NUMBER BRSTP-151(1)
STATE PROJECT NUMBER 8.1844601**

**Prepared for
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**BN
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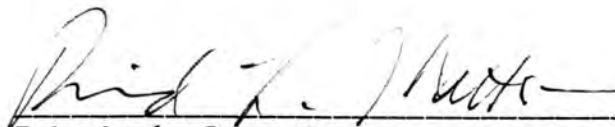
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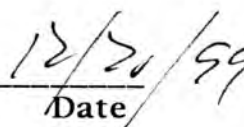
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Principal Investigator
Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.


Date

Historic Architectural Resources
North Carolina Department of Transportation

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OVER SOUTH HOMINY CREEK
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The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 181 on NC 151 over South Hominy Creek in Buncombe County (Figures 1 and 2). Two alternatives were studied, both of which require the removal of the current bridge and are described below.

Alternative 1 replaces the existing bridge with a two-lane span at the existing location. An off-site detour is not available in the project vicinity. Therefore, during construction, traffic will be maintained by an on-site detour located immediately downstream from the existing bridge. The approach work would begin approximately 700 feet south of SR 3463 (Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church Road) and end just south of SR 1110 (Warren Creek Road) for a total distance of approximately 1900 feet. Hydraulic requirements for elevations on the new bridge and substandard vertical curvature south of the existing bridge require adjustments to the vertical alignment that will raise the elevation of NC 151 through the project area and eliminate the existing sight distance limitations on the northbound approach to the bridge. Right-of-way and construction easements will be required on both sides of NC 151 throughout the project limits.

Alternative 2 replaces the existing bridge with a two-lane span downstream. During construction, traffic will be maintained on existing NC 151. The approach work for the new bridge would begin approximately 700 feet south of SR 3463 (Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church Road) and end just south of SR 1110 (Warren Creek Road) for a total distance of approximately 1900 feet. Hydraulic requirements for elevations on the new bridge and substandard vertical curvature south of the existing bridge require adjustments to the vertical alignment that will raise the elevation of NC 151 through the project area and eliminate the existing sight distance limitations on the northbound approach to the bridge. Right-of-way and construction easements will be required on the east side of NC 151 throughout the project limits to accommodate the realigned roadway.

Purpose of Survey and Report

This survey was conducted and the report prepared in order to identify historical architectural resources located within the area of potential effect (APE) as part of the environmental studies conducted by NCDOT and documented by a Categorical Exclusion (CE). This report is prepared as a technical appendix to the CE and as part of the documentation of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended. Section 106 of the NHPA requires that if a federally funded, licensed, or permitted project has an effect on a property listed in or potentially eligible for the National Register of

Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation be given a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

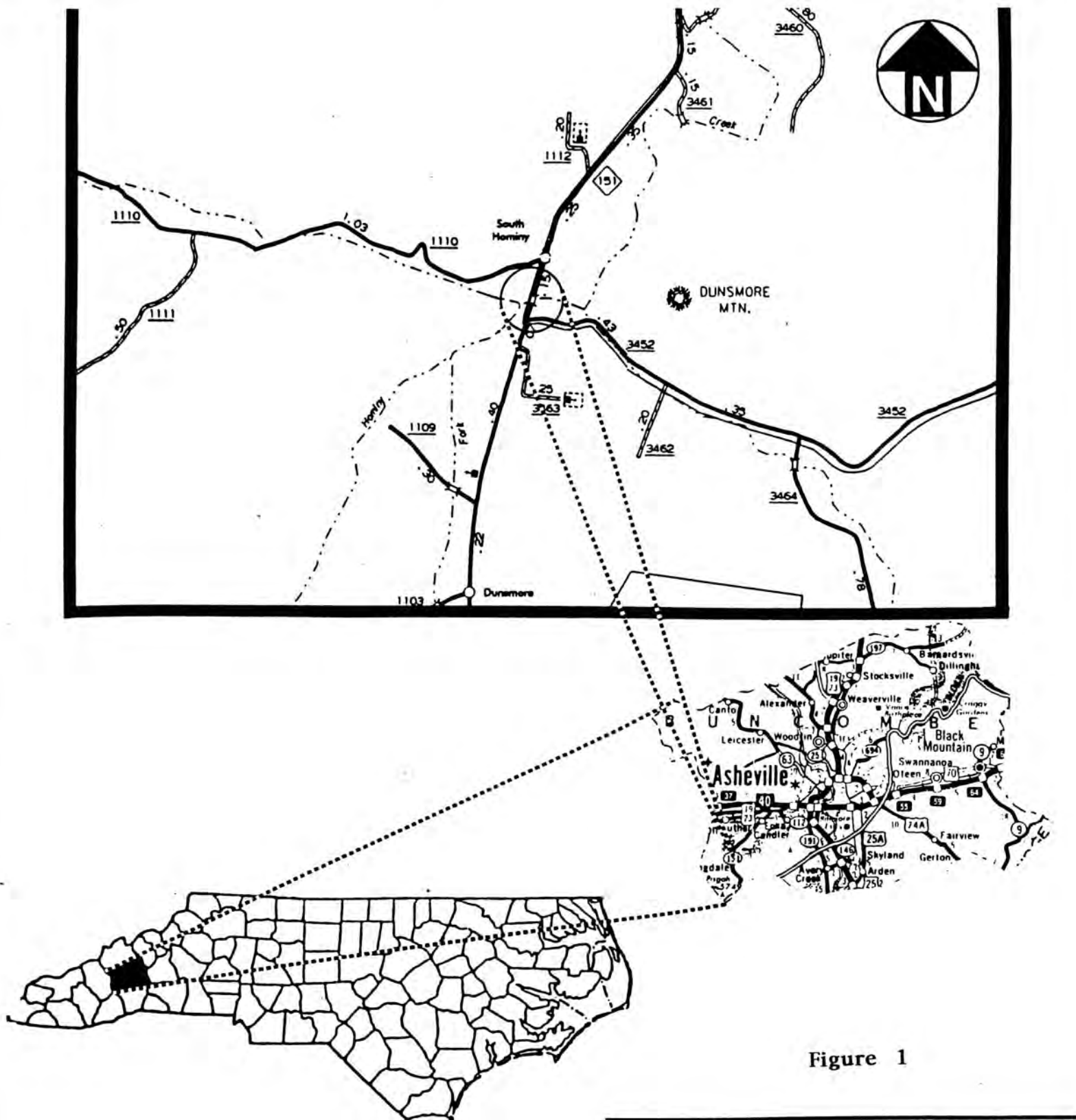


Figure 1

	<p>NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH</p>
<p>NC 151 REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGE No. 181 OVER SOUTH HOMINY CREEK BUNCOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA STATE PROJECT No. 8.1844601 (B-3414)</p>	
<p>PROJECT LOCATION MAP</p>	

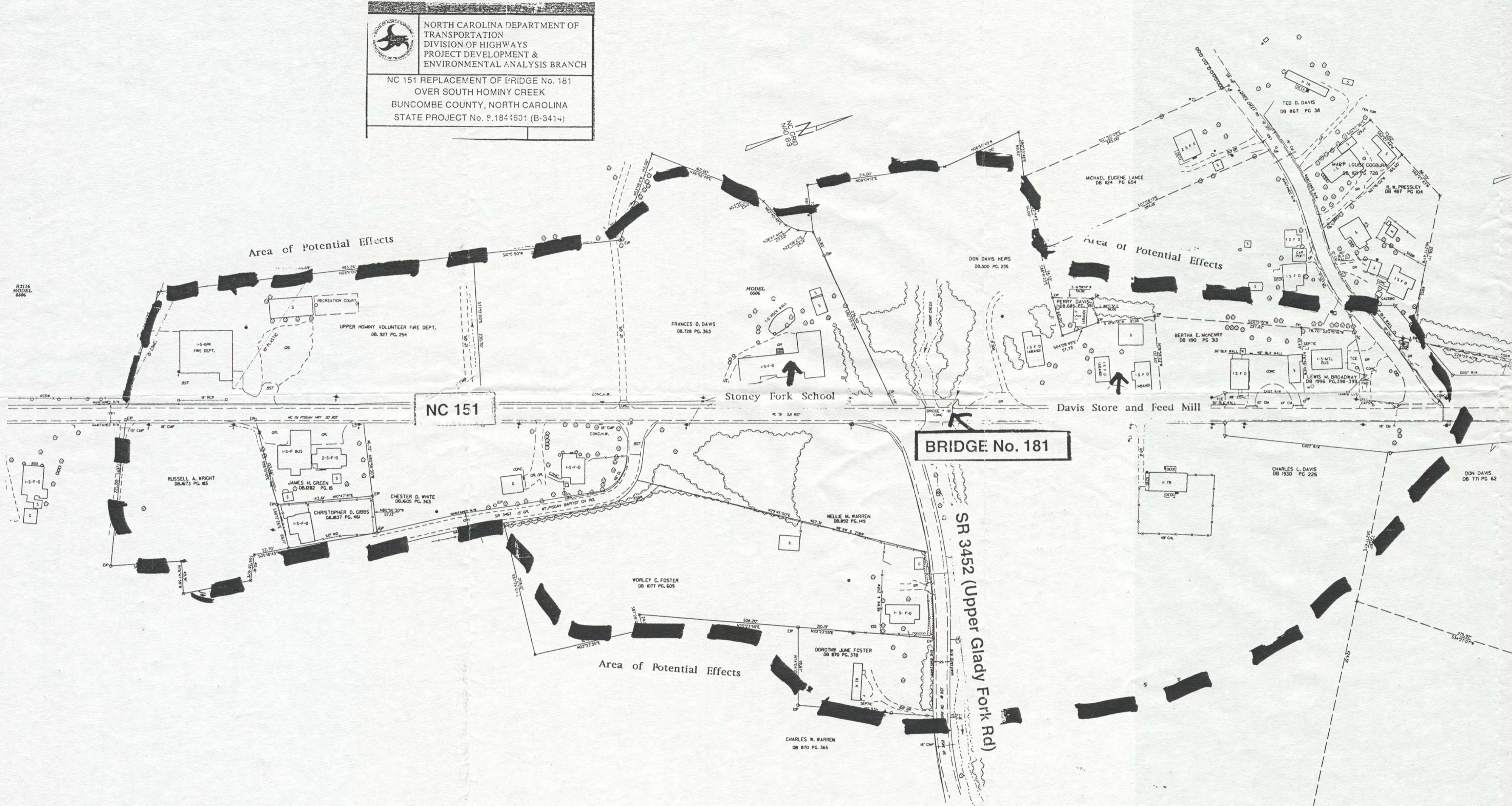
1" = 100'

Figure 2

Project Map/Area of Potential Effects

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

NC 151 REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGE No. 181
 OVER SOUTH HOMINY CREEK
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
 STATE PROJECT No. P.1844601 (B-3414)



Area of Potential Effects

Area of Potential Effects

Area of Potential Effects

NC 151

BRIDGE No. 181

SR 3452 (Upper Gladly Fork Rd)

Stoney Fork School

Davis Store and Feed Mill

RUSSELL A. WRIGHT DB 6673 PG. 85

JAMES H. GREEN DB 6282 PG. 6

CHESTER D. WHITE DB 6605 PG. 363

CHRISTOPHER D. DBS DB 8337 PG. 461

WORLEY C. FOSTER DB 1017 PG. 609

MELLIE M. WARREN DB 892 PG. 119

DOROTHY JUNE FOSTER DB 870 PG. 378

CHARLES W. WARREN DB 870 PG. 365

DON DAVIS HEIRS DB 500 PG. 235

PERRY DAVIS DB 648 PG. 21

BERTHA E. MCHENRY DB 180 PG. 313

CHARLES L. DAVIS DB 1930 PG. 226

DON DAVIS DB 771 PG. 62

MICHAEL EUGENE LANCE DB 824 PG. 654

TED D. DAVIS DB 867 PG. 38

MARY LOUISE COBBURN DB 102 PG. 728

B. W. PRESSLEY DB 487 PG. 104

Methodology

This survey was conducted and the report compiled in accordance with the provisions of FHWA Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60; and Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources by NCDOT.

The "Final Identification and Evaluation" was conducted with the following goals: 1) to determine the APE, defined as the geographic area or areas within which a project may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist; 2) to identify all significant resources within the APE; and 3) to evaluate these resources according to the National Register of Historic Places criteria.

The methodology consisted of background research into the historical and architectural development of the area and a field survey of the APE. The field survey was conducted in October 1999, by automobile as well as on foot, to delineate the APE and to identify all properties within this area which were built prior to 1950. The boundaries of the APE are shown in Figure 2. The APE is defined by modern construction, topographical features, and sight lines, and one hundred percent of this area was surveyed.

Local residents, Charles Davis and Frances Davis, provided information on the Davis Store and Feed Mill and the Stoney Fork School, respectively. Both properties are located within the APE. Douglas Swaim's publication, *Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina*, provided historical and architectural background information for this report (Swaim 1981). Finally, Clay Griffith, Head of the Western Office of the Survey and Planning Branch, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, was consulted regarding historic resources in the general vicinity of the project area.

Summary Findings of the Survey

The project area follows NC 151 across Bridge No. 181 over South Hominy Creek in rural Buncombe County. This rural area is characterized by the bottom lands of South Hominy Creek and development beginning in the 1920s along NC 151 and the adjoining secondary roads. Dunsmore Mountain commands the view to the east of the project. Three properties, Stoney Fork School (ca. 1928), Davis Store and Feed Mill (ca. 1928), and Bridge No. 181 (1928) were identified within the APE and evaluated in the "Property Inventory and Evaluations" section of this report. Stoney Fork School and Davis Store and Feed Mill were recommended eligible for the National Register.

Properties Listed on the National Register

None

Properties Listed on the North Carolina State Study List

None

Properties Considered Eligible for the National Register

Stoney Fork School
Davis Store and Feed Mill

Properties Evaluated Intensively and
Considered Not Eligible for the National Register

Bridge No. 181

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ESSAY

Located in the Blue Ridge chain of the Southern Appalachians in western North Carolina, Buncombe County was created in 1792. As the population grew in the ensuing decades, Buncombe's massive land area would eventually accommodate all or parts of eleven additional counties. In common with the state's mountain region as a whole, county growth was hampered by poor transportation routes and the rugged terrain. While the region's isolation had profound effects on the social and economic landscape throughout the nineteenth century, the completion of the Buncombe Turnpike in 1827 testified early on to the benefits of good transportation. The toll road linked Tennessee and Kentucky to South Carolina with an overland route that followed the French Broad River and cut through the center of Buncombe County. The major route for drovers herding livestock from the mountains to markets in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, the turnpike also sparked local commerce and the beginnings of a cash-crop economy in western North Carolina. The pike road generated scores of small drovers' stands offering lodging for herders and stock pens for animals. Local farmers raised feed for sale at these stands, as well as shipped their own livestock and surplus produce via the turnpike to destinations throughout the lowland South (Sondley 1977: 619-621).

Consequently, Buncombe County grew steadily during the antebellum decades, and by 1850 contained 13,425 residents (including 1,717 slaves). County farmers raised corn and oats to feed livestock, and by 1860 were also producing quantities of apples and peaches for market. Between 1850 and the eve of the Civil War the dollar value of orchard fruits in the county jumped from \$1,000 to over \$28,000 (Swaim 1981: 11-15, 17-19; Bishir et al. 1999: 25-26).

The long-anticipated arrival of the Western North Carolina Railroad, which reached Asheville in 1880, spurred growth after the Civil War. By 1890, Asheville was linked by rail to the Ohio River, eastern coastal ports, and northern urban markets. Between 1880 and 1890, Asheville's population soared from 2,690 to 10,235, as the former mountain town became a progressive urban center. In 1880, the town limits were confined to land within a mile radius of the Buncombe County Courthouse. Three years later, the General Assembly designated Asheville a "city" with expanded boundaries that stretched to the French Broad River on the west and to just south of Beaucatcher's ridge to the east. By 1890, Asheville boasted a streetcar system, a waterworks, an electrical plant and two electric light systems, a sewer system, a gas company, an improved public school system, a \$100,000 post office, a public library, and a Board of Trade (Swaim 1981: 38-39, 77-80).

North of the project area, a major western spur of the Western North Carolina Railroad connected Asheville to Murphy, North Carolina, and gave rise to the small rail towns of Hominy and Candler. By 1896, Hominy contained 200 residents, several saw mills and gristmills, and a collection of general stores oriented to the rail line. Other towns arose or expanded along the Western North Carolina rail line north and east of Asheville, providing shipping points for the surrounding farming communities (Branson 1896).

Away from the rail lines, scores of crossroads communities took shape to provide local services. The crossroads node of Glady developed to the north of the project area, and Dunsmore arose to the south. Each contained a general store and a gristmill by the end of the nineteenth century. Countywide--along the bottom lands and in the small mountain hollows--subsistence farming increasingly gave way to commercial agriculture, particularly the cultivation of tobacco and orchard crops, which boomed in the late nineteenth century. The value of farm property in Buncombe County climbed dramatically from approximately two and one-half million dollars in 1880 to thirteen and one-half million dollars in 1910 (Branson 1896; Swaim 1981: 20, 24).

However, the railroad also brought local farm products in competition with larger regional and national markets. By the early twentieth century shifts in the market led to the sharp decline in the production of flue-cured tobacco, and farmers increasingly turned to orchard crops and dairy production to meet the growing demands of the region's urban population. As the twentieth century progressed, larger landowners prospered with the rise of mechanized farming, while many marginal farmers left the land in search of employment in booming Asheville. Although the population of the county continued to increase in this period, most of the rural townships lost residents (Swaim 1981: 22-23; Bishir et al. 1999: 62).

Poor roads remained a chronic hindrance to economic growth, but with the growing use of the motor truck and automobile after World War I, significant strides were taken to improve roadway travel. As a result of vigorous state and local campaigns for good highways, new or improved roads and bridges were gradually constructed through the county's mountain gaps and narrow valleys. After the passing of the 1921 Highway Act, a state-supported highway system was established, and funds were expended to build highways linking the state's county seats. By 1930, two major state highways, NC 10 and NC 20 (present-day US 19-23-74 and NC 251, respectively), bisected the county, connecting Asheville and the smaller rail towns to an emerging statewide system of hard-surfaced highways (Lefler and Newsome 1973: 600, 650; Bishir et al. 1999: 49-50).

Within the project area, in 1928, the county funded the construction of Bridge No. 181 over South Hominy Creek along present-day NC 151. The road, which winds north-south for approximately fifteen miles between Hominy and Little Pisgah Mountain, was probably maintained as an unpaved county road until the late 1930s or early 1940s. Perhaps with the construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway over Little Pisgah Mountain, this county road, which connects to the parkway, was paved and incorporated into the state highway system ("North Carolina Highway Map" 1941).

Shortly after the completion of South Hominy Creek Bridge, Stoney Fork School was erected facing the county road on the south side of the creek, and the Davis Store and Feed Mill was built facing the road on the creek's north side. These buildings, together with several small, roadside bungalows and a collection of middling farms along South Hominy Creek, constituted the community of South Hominy. By the early 1960s, the settlement also included a simple frame garage that served the local volunteer fire department (Charles Davis Interview 1999).

The onset of the Great Depression stalled new construction throughout Buncombe County, and brought Asheville's boom period to an abrupt halt. The city fell into bankruptcy in 1930, and would not completely recovered from its economic collapse until the late twentieth century.

In both the city and the countryside, the hardships brought on by the depression were relieved in part by a variety of federal work programs. Most notable was the building of the Blue Ridge Parkway, connecting Shenandoah National Park in Virginia to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina. By 1942, when public funds for the scenic parkway were redirected for use in World War II, one half of the road was completed. The Blue Ridge Parkway winds diagonally across the south side of Buncombe County, and marks the southwest border of the county roughly three miles south of the project area (Bishir et al. 1999: 85-88).

Since World War II, Buncombe County and the region have experienced unprecedented growth created in large measure by steady improvements in transportation, the widespread availability of electric power, and the vigorous promotion of the Blue Ridge as a tourist destination. Sweeping economic and social changes in the modern era have engendered dramatic changes to the landscape. Near the project area, the construction of four-lane US 19-23-74 and Interstate Highway 40 has brought Asheville to within easy commuting distance and encouraged suburban development. While the South Hominy Creek community remains largely rural and agrarian, middling farmsteads now commingle with modern dwellings sited on subdivided parcels. Typical of the region as a whole, many local farmers also hold second jobs outside the community. The persistence of rural schools and churches continue to give South Hominy and other such rural settlements distinct identities, but the major commercial activities now take place in and around Asheville and the larger towns north of the project area.

PROPERTY INVENTORY AND EVALUATIONS

Properties Evaluated Intensively and Recommended Eligible
for the National Register

Stoney Fork School

West side NC 151, 0.1 mile south of SR 3452, South Hominy
Buncombe County

Evaluation of Integrity (Plates 1-11) (Figure 3)

Constructed ca. 1928, Stoney Fork School is a substantially intact one-story, frame, German-sided schoolhouse with a standing-seam metal roof. The building was originally constructed with a river-rock veneer, but in the early 1940s that facade was replaced with the present German siding because of defective mortar. The building follows an I-shaped plan, with flanking hip-roofed classroom wings connected by a cross-gable central core. The center section contained classrooms as well as the main office and entrance. The gable-front entry bay is partially recessed and retains the original horizontal-paneled door capped by a transom. The classrooms are designated by banks of tall, sixteen-over-sixteen, wood-sash windows, which remain intact along the central core and south wing. The rear elevation contains an original fixed-sash window that marks the office, wooden doors, and steps descending to a large service entrance leading to the basement, which held the furnace. A rear classroom wing was added to the north side of the school in 1948 (Frances Davis Interview 1999).

The principal changes to the exterior of the schoolhouse have occurred since the 1950s, when the north side was converted to a residence. The windows on the north wings were replaced by bands of smaller sash windows, and several new window and door openings were installed. (The original windows have been saved and are stored on the premises.) The north side of the building was covered with aluminum siding in the 1970s (Frances Davis Interview 1999).

Like the exterior, the interior of the center core and south side remains well-preserved, though the north side has been partially modernized for residential use. Wooden floors, tongue-and-groove wainscot, wood-paneled doors, and plaster walls survive throughout the center and south sections and in portions of the north side. The entry vestibule has beaded-board walls. A dropped, composition-tile ceiling was probably added in the 1940s, and is now deteriorated. The south and center rooms are currently used for general storage, while the north side remains a residence (Frances Davis Interview 1999).

Stoney Fork School retains its original setting. The building faces east towards the roadway on a rise of land above South Hominy Creek. The expansive school grounds, which once held ball fields and playgrounds, are overgrown but intact. A modern, shed-roofed auto garage built by the Davises stands immediately northwest the school (Frances Davis Interview 1999).

Historical Background and Context

Stoney Fork School, a four-teacher, four-classroom school, was constructed ca. 1928 to replace a smaller one-room school established in the South Hominy community in early 1900s. The new school in the Upper Hominy School District was built on a rise of land facing a county road, which appears to have been constructed or improved through South Hominy Creek Valley in the mid-1920s. The school provided instruction for grades one through seven, and operated until about 1951, when the larger, brick Pisgah Elementary School was constructed several miles to the north (Miller 1965: 21-23; Charles Davis Interview 1999; Frances Davis Interview 1999).

In the mid-1950s, Ray Davis, who ran the Davis Store and Feed Mill just north of Stoney Fork School, purchased the building. In 1959, he married Frances Davis, and the Davises remodeled the north rooms as their residence, while using the rest of the building for general storage. The building remains the residence of Frances Davis.

Into the early twentieth century, educational opportunities in Buncombe County and throughout the region were limited. Schoolhouses were poorly constructed, often using donated labor and materials. Confronted by the opposition of many large property owners who opposed tax-supported public education, Buncombe County voters finally approved the funding of public schools in 1887 (eight years after the legislature authorized the county to levy taxes for schools). The county established separate white and black school districts and gradually constructed schoolhouses for both races, first in Asheville (Orange Street School in 1888) and subsequently in the surrounding mountain communities. By the early 1900s, one-room and two-room, frame schoolhouses had been built in most of the 117 districts. The one-room facilities outnumbered the larger schools almost four to one, and nearly two-thirds offered only the first grades, while the remainder provided instruction through the seventh grade (Miller 1965: 9-15).

At the beginning of the 1905-1906 academic year, the Buncombe County public school system included 103 schoolhouses, ninety-five of which were one-room buildings and fifty-three had homemade desks. Only ten schools offered high school subjects. A decade later conditions had improved only marginally. For the school year 1915-1916, the Superintendent of Buncombe County Schools reported 103 rural schools, fifty-seven of which were one-room facilities and thirty-four were two-room. Only eight schools were four-room buildings (employing four teachers) and just fifteen schools offered high school courses. Although the great majority of schools were weatherboarded, six (all for white children) were brick (Miller 1965: 21).

In the Upper Hominy School District, where the current project is located, ten schools were in service by 1905-1906. Among these was the original Stoney Fork School, situated in the vicinity of the existing schoolhouse in the project area. Apparently a one-room building, Stoney Fork School was built at a cost of \$100 and operated until the completion of the present schoolhouse in the late 1920s (Miller 1965: 96).

Between 1916 and the Great Depression, as part of local and statewide campaigns to improve educational facilities and consolidate schools,

substantial new schoolhouses arose throughout the county. Scores of larger facilities were erected in this period, including Candler High School, which was erected in the railroad town of Candler north of the project area. In the rural sections of Upper Hominy School District, four-classroom (four-teacher) schools replaced the one-room buildings. While designs varied, the new schools were distinguished by banks of tall, multiple-paned windows to allow in natural light. Within the project limits the existing Stoney Fork School (ca. 1928) replaced the turn-of-the-century, single-room schoolhouse. The new four-classroom facility was built on a rise of land facing east towards to the road, just south of South Hominy Creek (Lefler and Newsome 1973: 601-602; Miller 1965: 21-23; Charles Davis Interview 1999).

Typical of rural schools in the early twentieth century, Stoney Fork School operated for six months each year and offered instruction for grades one through seven. Graduates were then sent to Candler High School for secondary education. The four-classroom school employed four teachers who lived in the area and were paid through county and local tax dollars. In 1951, the construction of the spacious, red-brick Pisgah Elementary School along NC 151 north of the project area marked the end of the four-room schoolhouses in the Upper Hominy Creek district. The smaller schools were subsequently either razed or converted to other uses. Gladys School (late 1920s), a boxy, hip-roofed, four-room schoolhouse that also survives along NC 151 several miles north of the project area, was converted to a church. No other rural schools from the early twentieth century are known to remain in this area, and such schoolhouses, once commonplace, are now rare in Buncombe County and throughout the region (see, for example, Martin 1995: F: 121-123; Bishir et al. 1999: 302).

Evaluation of Eligibility

Stoney Fork School is recommended eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for education. Erected ca. 1928, the schoolhouse clearly represents early local and statewide efforts to improve and consolidate rural schools. Although the original stone facade no longer survives, the existing German siding dates from the period of significance. The north side of the building has been remodeled for use as a residence, but the original form, plan, and key elements of design survive intact. The setting is also substantially intact, with the original school grounds extending to the south and west.

The property is not considered eligible under any other criterion. The schoolhouse is not eligible under Criterion B because it is not associated with individuals whose activities were demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context. The property also does not possess sufficient architectural significance for eligibility under Criterion C. Finally, the property is not considered eligible under Criterion D because the architectural components are not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology.

Boundaries (Figure 3)

The proposed National Register boundaries encompass the roughly 4.5-acre tax parcel, which reflects the original boundaries of the school. These borders include the schoolhouse (contributing), the modern auto garage (non-contributing), and the adjoining open space which defines the setting.



Plate 1. Stoney Fork School, Looking Northwest.



Plate 2. Stoney Fork School and Setting, Looking North towards Bridge No. 181.



Plate 3. Stoney Fork School, Front Facade, Looking West.



Plate 4. Stoney Fork School, Main Entrance, Looking West.

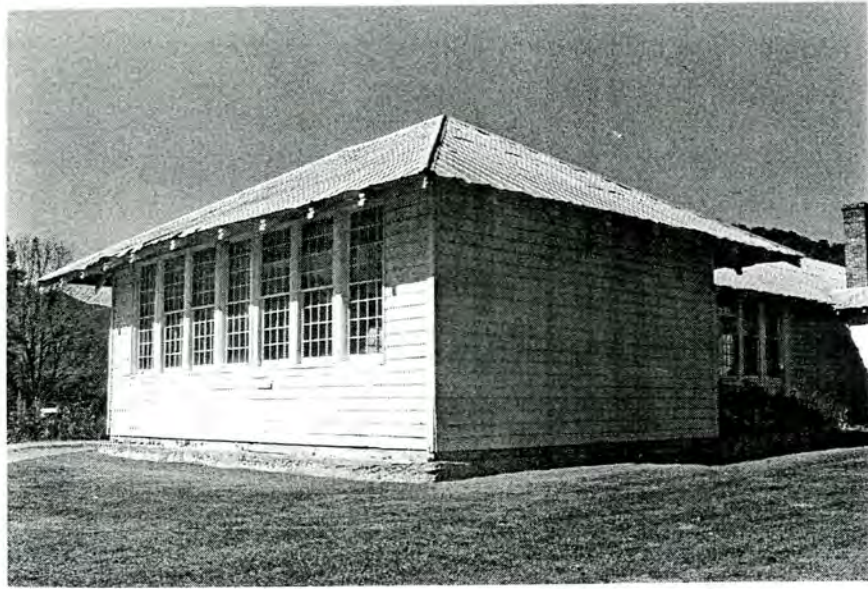


Plate 5. Stoney Fork School, South Front Wing, Looking Northwest.



Plate 6. Stoney Fork School, Rear Elevation and Rear Wing, Looking North.



Plate 7. Stoney Fork School, Modernized North Front Wing, Looking Northwest.

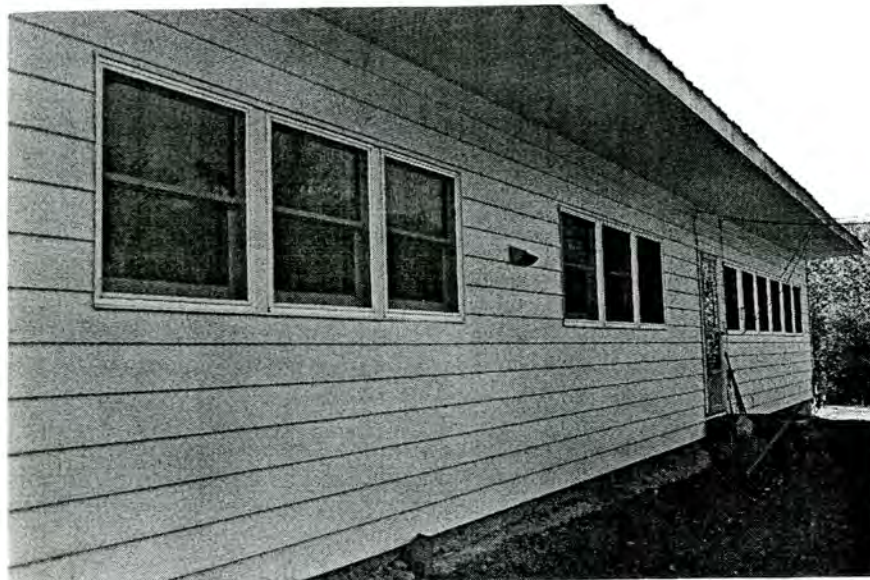


Plate 8. Stoney Fork School, Modernized North Elevation, Looking West.



Plate 9. Stoney Fork School, Classroom Interior.



Plate 10. Stoney Fork School, Classroom Interior.

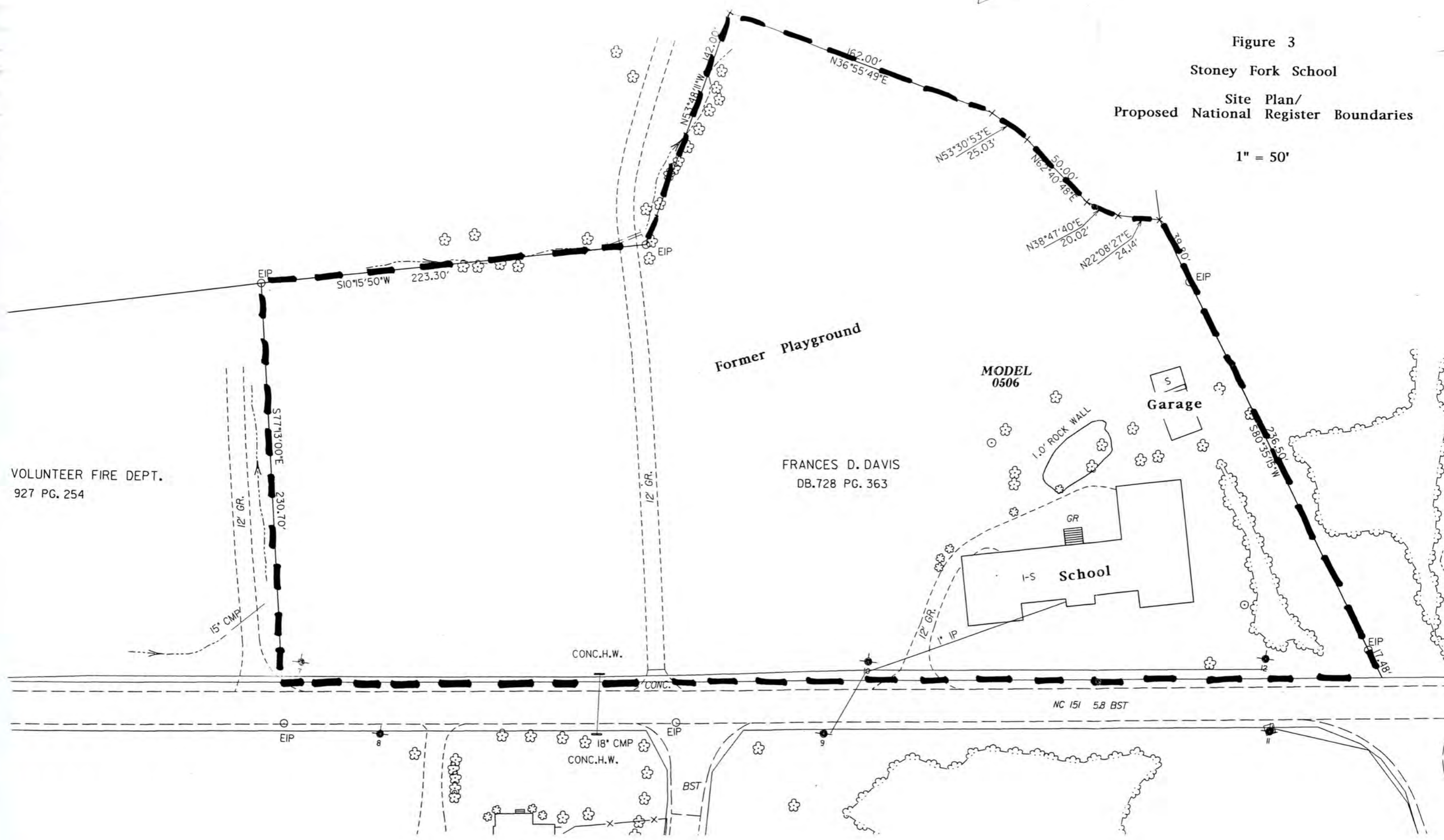


Plate 11. Stoney Fork School, School Grounds, Looking South.

N/C GRID
NAD 83

Figure 3
Stoney Fork School
Site Plan/
Proposed National Register Boundaries

1" = 50'



No. 2 Davis Store and Feed Mill

West side NC 151, 0.2 mile north of SR 3452, South Hominy
Buncombe County

Evaluation of Integrity (Plates 12-23) (Figure 4)

Constructed ca. 1928, Davis Store and Feed Mill comprises a substantially intact one-story, frame, German-sided store and an adjacent frame, weatherboard feed mill. Typical of small rural stores of this period, the store is a long, narrow building with a gable-front roof that projects over the facade to create an engaged front porch. The exterior retains its original standing-seam metal roof, slender wooden porch posts, six-over-six windows, double doors on the front facade, and paneled doors with glazed upper sections on the side and rear elevations. The building features simple bungalow-inspired elements, including the bracketed eaves on front and rear elevations, exposed rafters along the sides, and wood shingles in the gable ends. Access inside was denied, but the owner states that the interior retains original wooden floors and walls, a beaded-board ceiling, and wooden shelves (Charles Davis Interview 1999).

Now used for general storage, the store is in disrepair but remains in fair condition. The main front porch and the one-bay side porch both require repairs to the wood floors, posts, and ceilings. Some of the wooden foundation piers are said to be rotting and must be replaced to stabilize the building (Charles Davis Interview 1999).

Located just south of the store, the one-story feed mill is a utilitarian structure with a standing-seam metal, gable-front roof, a recessed, off-set entry porch with two horizontal-paneled doors, and two-over-two windows. The roof extends to the rear to shelter an equipment shed. This area has a dirt floor and simple, vertical-board siding on the south and rear elevations. Access to the interior of the feed mill was denied, but the interior is said to contain the original milling equipment for grinding corn. Now used for general storage, the building remains in stable condition (Charles Davis Interview 1999).

The property also includes a one-story, frame garage built in the 1960s for the Upper Hominy Volunteer Fire Department. Now vacant, this shed-roofed structure stands directly behind the store. Located to the south of the Davis Store and Feed Mill is a deteriorated gable-front bungalow. Now overgrown and abandoned, it was built for a member of Davis family. However, the main Davis family house is a sizable story-and-a-half bungalow (1930s) that stands east of the APE, on the east side of South Hominy Creek (Charles Davis Interview 1999).

Historical Background and Context

Davis Store and Feed Mill was built ca. 1928 along the newly constructed county road (now NC 151) through South Hominy Creek Valley southwest of Asheville. The first store owner was a Lon McElray, who operated the business only briefly before selling it to Don Davis. A local farmer, Davis owned farmland along the bottom lands of South Hominy Creek, where he built his bungalow farmhouse just east of the creek near the base of Dunsmore Mountain (east of the APE). The Davis Store on the roadway sold a variety of general merchandise to a local clientele. The store included gas pumps (now gone) and a lift on the north side for oil changes and minor repairs. In the adjacent feed

mill building, an electric-powered mill (still extant) crushed corn for cattle feed (Charles Davis Interview 1999; Frances Davis Interview 1999).

Don Davis's son, Ray, subsequently ran the business until the 1980s, when the store ceased operation. Ray Davis and his wife, Frances, resided in the nearby Stoney Fork School, which he purchased and converted to a residence in the mid-1950s, when the school closed. In the early 1960s, the Davis family donated land behind the store for the volunteer fire department, reflecting the store's central location in the community and the traditional role of crossroads stores as gathering places for social and civic activities (Charles Davis Interview 1999; Frances Davis Interview 1999).

The Davis Store and Feed Mill typifies rural commercial enterprises built in rural Buncombe County and throughout the region after World War I. Often positioned at a major crossroads or a rail depot stop in the communities they served, such establishments provided social centers as well as a variety of groceries, hardware, clothing, fertilizer, and seeds. Many also included adjacent mills for grinding corn or sawing lumber, and by the 1920s, featured gas pumps and offered minor automobile repair and service (Bishir et al. 1999: 66).

During the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, these stores were typically simple gable-front buildings with deep, rectangular plans and wide front porches. Many were two stories high and some had parapet front gables with recessed entries. In Buncombe County and throughout the state, the two-story form was more common before the arrival of the automobile and improved roads after World War I. Slow overland transportation made frequent restocking impractical, and thus crossroads merchants ordered greater volumes of stock which they stored on the premises. The upper story could be used as an apartment for the merchant and his family (Davis 1992).

By World War I, this pattern of commerce began to change. The rise of automobile travel, and subsequent highway and bridge construction campaigns, brought greater mobility to the countryside and began to concentrate commercial functions in the larger rail towns and county seats. Consequently, the smaller, one-story country store emerged as the common commercial unit in rural communities. The smaller size reflected improvements in transportation which allowed for frequent restocking and which changed the buying patterns of rural residents. By the 1920s, large purchases and the acquisition of specialty items were commonly made in the bigger towns, while the crossroads store provided a limited array of everyday goods and services catering to local farmers as well as motorists. Many crossroads merchants installed gas pumps under projecting canopies, and added hydraulic lifts to the property for minor auto repairs and services (Bishir et al. 1999: 62-63).

The trend away from dispersed rural general stores and towards commercial centralization within larger towns has increased in recent decades. Interstate highway construction and overall road improvements have made crossroads stores increasingly obsolete. Near the project area, scores of retail and service-related enterprises line four-lane US 19-23-74 leading to Asheville, which itself has become a main shopping destination. Furthermore, the farming population which once traded at local stores has steadily declined, while farmland has given way to suburban development. Although small

agricultural holdings persist in Buncombe County, the labor-intensive family farm has disappeared, and thus the traditional market for crossroads stores has sharply declined (Bishir et al. 1999: 82; Charles Davis Interview 1999).

Although no comprehensive inventory of rural stores in Buncombe County has been undertaken, it is acknowledged that such buildings throughout the state's mountain region have "fallen to changing times" (Bishir et al. 1999: 209; see, too, Martin 1995: F: 124-127). Within the project area, the Davis Store and Feed Mill (ca. 1928) stands as an unusual survivor. Now abandoned, the store typifies the small, crossroads commercial establishments of the period in its one-story, gable-end form and projecting front porch. The adjacent feed mill (also no longer in use) is a utilitarian frame building with a one-story, gable-end shape and a rear equipment shelter. Together, this tandem of store and mill are a rare example of the commercial functions once commonplace in farming areas throughout Buncombe County.

Evaluation of Eligibility

Davis Store and Feed Mill is recommended eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for commerce. The property is not considered eligible under any other criterion. The buildings are not eligible under Criterion B because they are not associated with individuals whose activities were demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context. The property also does not possess sufficient architectural significance for eligibility under Criterion C. Finally, the property is not considered eligible under Criterion D because the architectural components are not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology.

Boundaries (Figure 4)

The proposed National Register boundaries encompass the northeast corner (approximately one-half acre) of the current tax parcel. The boundaries are drawn to include the store and the feed mill (both contributing resources) and the adjacent 1960s volunteer fire department building (non-contributing). The recommended boundaries exclude the abandoned and deteriorated dwelling located to the south of the feed mill, as well as fields and woodland that constitute the remainder of the tax parcel to the southwest of the Davis Store and Feed Mill.



Plate 12. Davis Store and Feed Mill, Setting, Looking North from Bridge No. 181.



Plate 13. Davis Store and Feed Mill, Looking Southwest.



Plate 14. Davis Store and Feed Mill, Looking Northwest.



Plate 15. Davis Store, Front Facade, Looking West.



Plate 16. Davis Store, South Elevation.



Plate 17. Davis Store, Rear Elevation, Looking East.



Plate 18. Davis Feed Mill, North Elevation, Looking South.



Plate 19. Davis Feed Mill, North Elevation, Looking South.



Plate 20. Davis Feed Mill, Rear Elevation, Looking East.

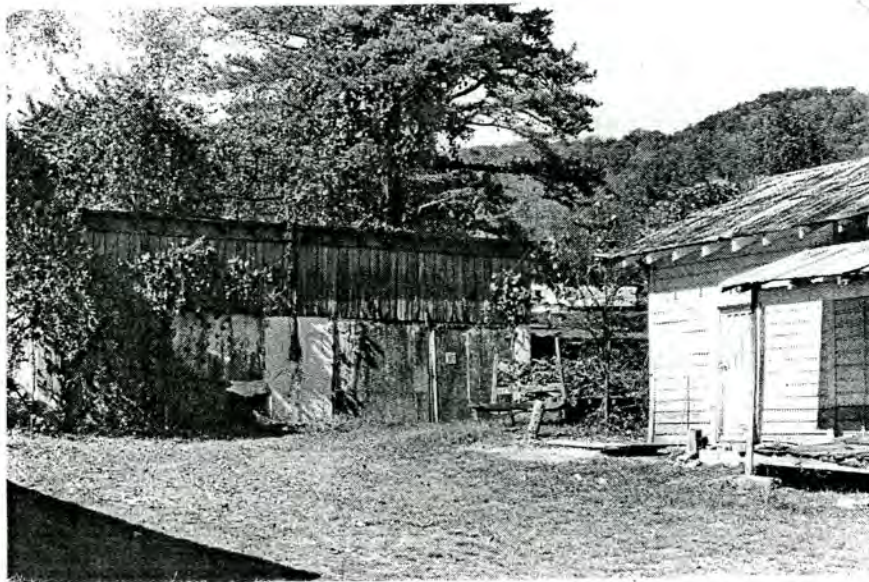


Plate 21. Davis Store and Feed Mill, Volunteer Fire Department, Looking West.



Plate 22. Davis Store and Feed Mill, Abandoned Dwelling, Looking West.



Plate 23. Davis Store and Feed Mill, Looking South.

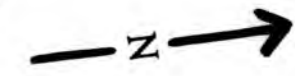
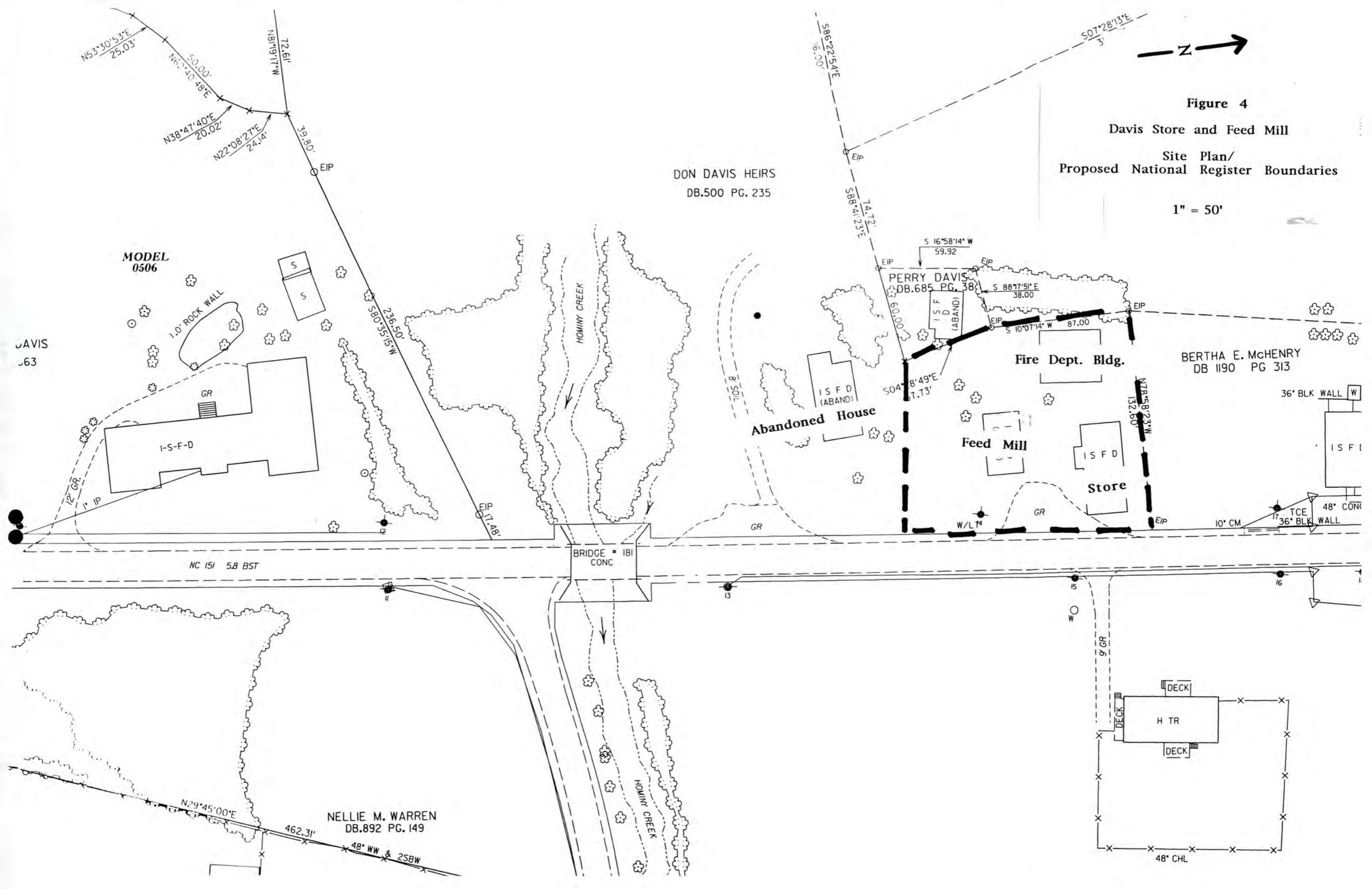


Figure 4
Davis Store and Feed Mill
**Site Plan/
Proposed National Register Boundaries**
1" = 50'



Properties Evaluated Intensively and Recommended
Not Eligible for the National Register

Bridge No. 181 (South Hominy Creek Bridge)
NC 151 over South Hominy Creek, South Hominy
Buncombe County

Evaluation of Integrity (Plates 24-27)

Bridge No. 181 is a reinforced concrete, T-beam bridge that carries NC 151 over South Hominy Creek in rural Buncombe County. The narrow, two-lane vehicular bridge is forty feet long with classically derived concrete rails and portals treated with simple, recessed panels. The inscription in the date plates in the portals reads, "South Hominy Creek Bridge, Built By Buncombe County Highway Comm., R. O. Stevens Contr., 1928."

Historical Background and Context

The construction of Bridge No. 181 (1928) coincided with the building of the north-south county road through South Hominy Creek Valley during the late 1920s. The new bridge and the roadway reflected early local, state, and federal campaigns to improve roads to keep pace with soaring automotive travel after World War I. The county road linked the agricultural communities of South Hominy, Gladys, Dunsmore, and Stoney Fork in southwestern Buncombe County to the larger towns of Candler and Hominy along east-west NC 10 (now US 19-23-74) and the Southern Railway (originally the Western Railroad). By the end of the 1920s, Buncombe County was crisscrossed by NC highways 10, 63, 69, and 20, connecting the larger towns to the city of Asheville, and linking Asheville to the state's principal towns and cities. Highways 10 and 20 were also part of the emerging federal highway system, connecting Asheville and the county to a new national network of highways.

Bridge No. 181 was one of countless concrete vehicular spans erected along the newly built or improved roadways appearing throughout Buncombe County and the nation during the 1920s and 1930s. With its reinforced concrete, T-beam, deck girder system, the bridge illustrates an increasing standardization of bridge design by the interwar years. The perfection of concrete technology during the early twentieth century had permitted a distillation of structural techniques, and reinforced concrete, deck or slab construction became common for vehicular bridges. In Buncombe County and across the entire mountain region, where overland travel was historically hampered by myriad creek crossings, the building of such small, reinforced-concrete bridges over waterways boosted travel and trade. Numerous versions of these concrete bridges, with T-beam substructures and deck girders, remain intact in the county and statewide. Although many have been razed since World War II as a result of an almost continual schedule of bridge replacements, 659 examples built prior to 1957 still survive in North Carolina.

Evaluation of Eligibility

Bridge No. 181 is not recommended eligible for the National Register under any Criterion. The bridge is not eligible under Criterion A because it is not associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The bridge is not eligible under Criterion B because it is not associated with individuals whose activities were demonstrably

important within a local, state, or national historic context. The bridge does not possess the special design or engineering significance for eligibility under Criterion C. Finally, Bridge No. 181 is not considered eligible under Criterion D because the architectural components are not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology.



Plate 24. Bridge No. 181, Looking North.

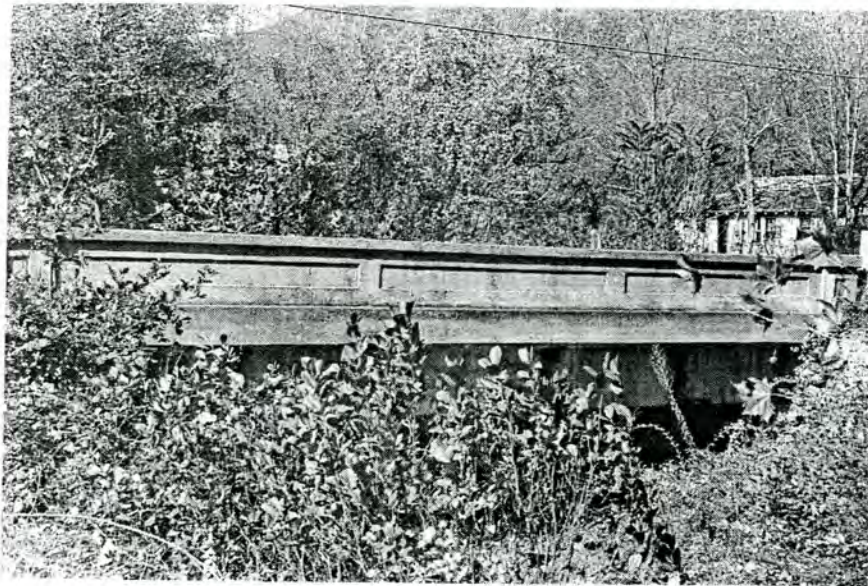


Plate 25. Bridge No. 181, Looking West.



Plate 26. Bridge No. 181, Looking South.

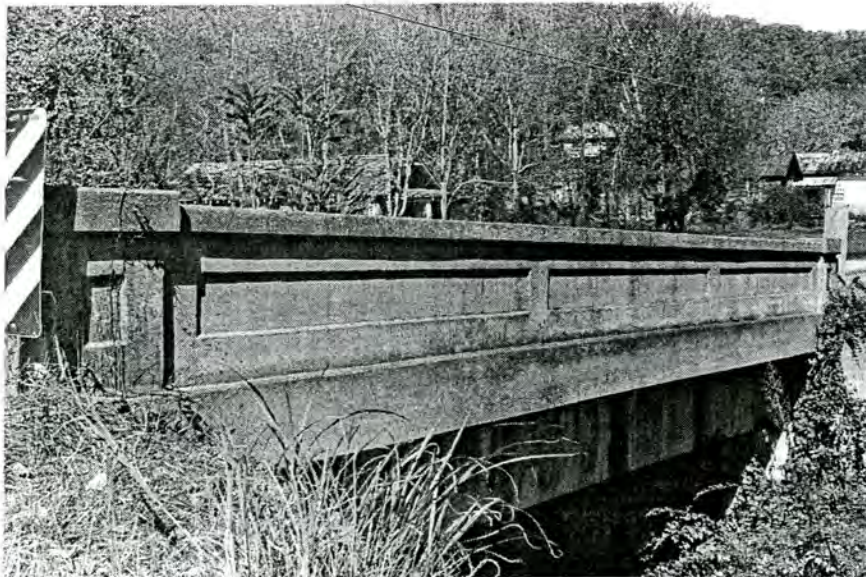


Plate 27. Bridge No. 181, Looking Northwest.

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