
WEST BURLINGTON ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY UPDATE



Prepared by hmwPreservation
2021

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The activity that is the subject of this publication has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

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PROJECT HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

In 2020, the City of Burlington received a Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NC HPO) and contracted with hmwPreservation to undertake an architectural survey update of historic resources in west Burlington, roughly bounded by South Church Street, Tarleton Avenue, and West Webb Avenue.

Many historic properties in and around the survey area were first surveyed by Allison Harris (Black) in 1982. That survey documented the properties throughout the city, including most of the surviving nineteenth century buildings and many important early-twentieth century buildings, focusing on buildings constructed prior to 1940. Using the information compiled during the survey, 165 primary buildings comprising the West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. In 1987, portions of the survey were published by Black in *An Architectural History of Burlington, North Carolina*, a project undertaken by the Historic District Commission of the City of Burlington. Additionally, in 1987, the Historic District Commission designated a Local Historic District with boundaries that differ only slightly from the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District.

In 1991, Helen Walton undertook additional survey in the study area, documenting many of the more modest early-twentieth century houses that stand adjacent to the 1984 National Register Historic District, and proposed several boundary increases that were placed on the North Carolina Study List in 1992.

The primary objective for this project was to update the existing survey data for all previously surveyed properties in the study area and to evaluate potential historic districts and re-evaluate potential historic district expansion areas. The project updated survey data for 137 resources within the existing National Register Historic District and 181 individual resources outside the existing historic district, all of which were previously surveyed by Black or Walton in 1982 or 1991, respectively. An additional 105 resources were newly surveyed as part of this project, including 28 resources that are located within the existing historic district boundary but were not previously intensively surveyed; 74 resources that are recommended for inclusion in historic district expansion areas; one school; two churches; and two early- to mid-twentieth-century neighborhoods.



Figure 1: Map of Study Area

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The West Burlington Architectural Survey Update focused on the documentation of historic resources within and surrounding the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District (NRHD), roughly bounded by South Church Street (US Highway 70), West Webb Avenue (NC Highway 100), and Tarleton Avenue. Heather Slane and Cheri Szcodronski served as the principal investigators and Sunny Townes Stewart provided field assistance.

A planning phase took place in April 2021, during which surveyors and NC HPO staff identified resources outside of the National Register historic district boundary that have not been previously surveyed and warranted documentation. The surveyors conducted a windshield survey to establish properties to be intensively surveyed. Surveyors prioritized buildings with high material integrity and interesting or unique design elements, as well as those contiguous to the existing National Register Historic District. Surveyors also identified neighborhoods that warranted documentation. Further, a working bibliography was prepared during the planning phase.

Fieldwork took place from April to June 2021, during which time surveyors verified the existence of 318 previously surveyed individual resources and comprehensively resurveyed those properties, producing updated field survey forms, written descriptions, and digital photographs. Additional properties (including subdivisions/neighborhoods) identified during the planning phase were documented through field survey forms, brief written descriptions, and photos.

Basic archival research, including the examination of historic plats, historic newspapers, Sanborn maps (1904, 1908, 1913, 1918, 1924, 1929, 1948, and 1952), city directories (1909, 1920, 1924, 1927, 1929, 1935, 1943, 1946, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1956, and 1958-1963), and additional property records, was carried out to provide additional data for properties and neighborhoods. Interviews were conducted when feasible and special notation was made of properties that appear potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Materials gathered during fieldwork and research phases were used to update and fully populate database records. Written summaries were prepared for all newly surveyed properties and changes to previously surveyed properties were noted as appropriate in the written summaries. For each newly identified neighborhood/subdivision, representative houses and streetscapes were photographed, plats collected, and a brief written summary prepared that addresses the area overall rather than each of its components.

Database

Photos and written descriptions present in the 1982 and 1991 paper survey files and the 1984 National Register documentation were used to code all previously surveyed buildings as No Change, Altered, Deteriorated, Improved, Demolished, or Relocated (see Appendix A). For all previously surveyed properties, the NC HPO scanned documentation from previous surveys. This content, together with written entries included in the NRHD nomination, were pasted into the written summary field of the respective database records. The remainder of each database record was fully populated for each property, summaries of previously recorded properties updated, and report forms generated from the database for inclusion in the paper survey files.

A digital copy of the database was presented to both the NC HPO and staff of the Burlington Historic Preservation Commission.

Photographs

Digital survey photos were taken from the public right-of-way using a digital SLR camera. Photos of both primary and secondary resources were labeled according to the NC HPO guidelines and contact sheets were printed for inclusion in the paper survey files. DVDs of all labeled survey photos were prepared for the NC HPO and staff of the Burlington Historic Preservation Commission.

Paper Files

For each previously surveyed property, the field survey notes, printed contact sheets, and printed database records, as well as any related notes and documentation gathered during the project were added to the existing paper files in the NC HPO archives. New paper files were created for newly surveyed properties.

Maps

Annotated paper maps and online GIS maps were used during the planning phase and field survey to identify the potential boundary increases for the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District as well as the location of both previously surveyed properties and new properties to be surveyed. Maps were also included to delineate the development boundaries of the two neighborhoods that were surveyed.

Survey Report

Upon completion of the field survey and database records, this report was prepared to outline the project methodology, to summarize changes to the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District, and to make recommendations for further study. The methodology summarizes the sources used, properties surveyed, and criteria considered for selecting buildings for new survey. The report also outlines changes to the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District including demolition, deterioration, and new construction, using maps to illustrate trends in these activities. It includes additional historic and architectural context for the development of Burlington, specifically for the 1930-1975 period. The consultant will present the findings of the survey to the Burlington City Council and to Burlington residents.

Study List Recommendations

Included within the survey report are recommendations for a boundary increase and boundary decrease to the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District, a Central Heights National Register Historic District, and National Register designation for the Walter M. Williams High School. These properties have been selected because they appear to have exceptional historic and/or architectural significance and a high level of material integrity. The report explains why each property was selected. The consultant will present these properties to the North Carolina National Register Advisory Committee for consideration for placement in the North Carolina Study List.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Establishment of Burlington, 1856 – 1930

The North Carolina Railroad Company was established in 1848, extending across central North Carolina from Goldsboro to Charlotte. In 1856, the railroad established a complex of repair shops including machine shops, carpenter shop, blacksmith shop, boiler house, foundry, roundhouse, storage house, freight house, and passenger depot, as well as homes for the employees of the repair shops and company officials, a hotel, and the multi-denominational Union Church, which also housed the local school. Alamance County, established in 1849, was the midpoint of the railroad, so its county seat, Graham, was originally selected as the location for this complex. However, the town rebuffed the railroad due to the noise of increased railroad traffic, which officials feared would interfere with court proceedings. Instead, the complex was built just northwest of Graham and became known as the town of Company Shops, though little of that original development remains extant today.¹



Figure 2: North Carolina Railroad Company Shops, Burlington, Alamance County, NC (Durwood Barbour Collection of North Carolina Postcards (P077), North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.)

In 1863, the railroad company began to sell land for private development. As a result, Company Shops evolved from a company town in which the railroad owned the property to a market center for the area, home to merchants and professionals in addition to the railroad repair shops. In 1886, the railroad moved the repair shops out of the town and a committee of citizens chose "Burlington" as the new name for their community.² The town was incorporated in 1893.

By the late nineteenth century, Burlington not only had railroad service and a strong commercial core, but had become known for its textile industries as well. The Holt family was one of the first and most prominent textile milling families to come to Burlington. E.M. Holt had opened the Alamance Cotton Factory on



Figure 3: Alamance Plaid (Alamance County Historical Museum, <https://www.alamance-museum.org/Portals/0/History/Alamance%20Plaid%20quilt%201.PNG>)

¹ Claudia P. Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1984, Section 8, 1; Allison Harris Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington, North Carolina* (Burlington, NC: City of Burlington Historic District Commission, 1987), 13-15; Helen Walton, "A Preservation Plan for Burlington, North Carolina" (Burlington, NC: City of Burlington Historic Preservation Commission, 1997), 9; Don Bolden, *Burlington* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 7.

² Walton, "A Preservation Plan for Burlington, North Carolina," 9.

banks offered favorable loan terms, and many employees took advantage of this opportunity for home ownership.⁹

Within the study area, the E.M. Holt Plaid Mills (AM0897) represents Burlington's industrial history. The company was established in 1883 and incorporated the following year, becoming the second cotton mill to open in the city. The mill grew slowly at first, employing about seventy-five workers on 140 looms for the first two decades. The mill was expanded with a two-story addition between 1914-1918, which included additional looms and a dye room, and by 1919 the mill employed 126 workers on 236 looms. Another addition, including an office, was built in 1924, and by 1927 the mill employed 200 workers on 500 looms. In 1939, Burlington Industries acquired the Plaid Mills and constructed an addition in 1951 with a new weaving room, cloth room, cloth warehouse, and shipping area. The windows were also bricked in around this time, suggesting the mill was fitted with air conditioning and filtration systems.¹⁰

Efforts to unionize laborers in many trades throughout North Carolina had begun in the mid-nineteenth century, and by World War I, the textile, tobacco, and furniture industries had become the focus of these efforts statewide. To aid recovery during the Great Depression, the National Industrial Recovery Act was passed in 1933 with the goal of protecting existing jobs, creating new jobs, limiting the numbers of hours worked each day, setting a minimum wage, and protecting workers' rights to join a union. Union membership increased nationwide; however, wages remained low, hours remained long, and union members were frequently threatened with job loss.¹¹

By the fall of 1934, the United Textile Workers union called for a strike, and many of Burlington's mills, including Plaid Mills, participated.¹² On September 14, 1934, as workers attempted to cross peaceful picket lines to enter the mill for the morning shift, they were stopped by a traveling motorcade of picketers, known as a flying squadron and not associated with the mill. The National Guard was called in to disperse the crowd, which they achieved through the use of tear gas and bayonets, causing minor injuries to at least five participants. Later that day, several sticks of stolen dynamite were thrown at the mill, though



Figure 5: "Tear Gas and Bayonet Used Today at Plaid Mills," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, September 14, 1934, www.newspapers.com (accessed July 2021)

⁹ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 40-41.

¹⁰ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 40-42, 65-66.

¹¹ B.J. Davis, "Textile Strike of 1934," *NCpedia*, <https://www.ncpedia.org/textiles/strike-1934> (accessed July 2021), reprinted from "Walking Out: The Great Textile Strike of 1934," *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2010.

¹² B.J. Davis, "Textile Strike of 1934."

little damage was done.¹³ Ten people were arrested in connection with the dynamite theft and use at the mill. The League for Southern Labor supported the men, who they believed were scapegoats, and the organization raised funds for their defense through a pamphlet campaign. Four of the accused accepted deals and testified against the other six, who were all convicted at trial.¹⁴

As they were in Burlington, the National Guard was called in to suppress violence at numerous mill towns across the country, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt established a committee, known as the Winant Board, to make recommendations for ending the nationwide strikes. Though the board's recommendations, released on September 18, 1934, did not include wage increases, shorter workdays, or other improvements to working conditions, the United Textile Workers union called an end to what they called a successful strike.¹⁵

Like many nineteenth-century textile mills, the Plaid Mills included a village of modest, company-owned housing for its employees. In 1937, the mill began subdividing the house lots and selling them, most being purchased by the family that occupied each home at the time of the sale. This allowed the company to redirect funds previously dedicated to upkeep and maintenance of worker housing and instead ensure continued operation during the depression, as well as later investments in updating equipment and expanding the mill complex. The village is located at the north end of the study area adjacent to the mill complex, including Askew, Ava, Kivett, Peele, Plaid, and Trollinger streets, West Webb Avenue, and Wildwood Lane. A small commercial district remains extant on Trollinger Avenue as well, though most of the houses and commercial buildings have been highly altered since their sale into private ownership.¹⁶



Figure 6: Pamphlet to support textile workers accused of dynamiting Plaid Mills (<https://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/2015/09/14/the-general-textile-strike-of-1934-violence-in-burlington>)

Textiles remained the city's strongest industry during the mid-twentieth century, and there were important new developments in textile technology during that time. In the 1950s, Bill Leath of the Chadbourn Hosiery Mill developed stretch yarn that allowed hosiery to be manufactured in small, medium, and large sizes, rather than individual sizes, which in turn

¹³ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 65-66; "Tear Gas and Bayonet Used Today at Plaid Mills," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, September 14, 1934, www.newspapers.com (accessed July 2021); "Union is Preparing to Help N.C. Strikers," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, September 15, 1934, www.newspapers.com (accessed July 2021); George W. Troxler, "Flying Squadrons," *NCpedia*, <https://www.ncpedia.org/flying-squadrons> (accessed July 2021).

¹⁴ North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, "The General Textile Strike of 1934: Violence in Burlington," <https://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/2015/09/14/the-general-textile-strike-of-1934-violence-in-burlington> (accessed July 2021).

¹⁵ Davis, "Textile Strike of 1934."

¹⁶ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 40-41, 65-66; "E.M. Holt Plaid Mill Inc., Burlington, NC, Plaid Mill Section," May 1937, Plat Book 1, Page 108, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina; Walton, "A Preservation Plan for Burlington, North Carolina," 60-65.

reduced inventory and storage needs for retailers. Stretch yarn also led to the development of pantyhose, patented by Allen Gant Sr., of the Glen Raven Hosiery mill.¹⁷

Industry in Burlington had been focused on textile mills during most of its history but became increasingly diverse starting in the 1940s. World War II brought Fairchild Aircraft, which manufactured airplanes, followed by Western Electric Company (AM2021, NR2016), which manufactured components for Nike missile defense systems during the war in a former textile mill on the east side of the city.¹⁸ Like much of the Piedmont region, biomedical facilities were established in Burlington. The Carolina Biological Supply Company, which manufactured chemicals, laboratory apparatus, microbiological media, and more, was established in 1929 by Dr. Thomas E. Powell Jr., and remains in operation on York Road, east of the study area.¹⁹ In the 1960s, Powell's sons, Thomas E. Powell, III, Dr. James B. Powell, and John Powell, established Biomedical Reference Laboratories, a biomedical company that offered anatomic and clinical pathology services. Biomedical Reference Laboratories was acquired by Hoffman-La Roche (later Roche Biomedical Laboratories) in 1982, which then merged with National Health Laboratories to become LabCorp in 1995. LabCorp remains headquartered in downtown Burlington.²⁰ Granite Diagnostics manufactured microbiological media and animal blood products at the former Rainey Hospital on the east side of the city but is no longer operating in Burlington.²¹



Figure 7: Western Electric Company-Tarheel Army Missile Plant (AM2021) Image courtesy of Heather Fearnbach, July 2015

Transportation improvements were important to the viability of industry in Burlington during this period. Barnwell Brothers Trucking Lines was established in 1930, and in 1942 it merged with several other local companies to form Associated Transport, Incorporated.²² U.S. Highway 70 was built in 1926 north of the city's commercial core. Interstate 40 and Interstate 85, which run together south of the city, were built in the late 1950s and widened in the 1990s. Although these highways drew retail customers away from downtown businesses, improved roads meant improved trucking transportation for local industries.²³ In 1962, Southern Railway ended passenger service, though passenger service was later restored through Amtrak and freight service continues through Norfolk Southern Railway.²⁴

¹⁷ Bolden, *Burlington*, 8, 85.

¹⁸ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 41.

¹⁹ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 41; Bolden, *Burlington*, 9; Carolina, "About Us," <https://www.carolina.com/our-company/about-us> (accessed August 2021).

²⁰ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 41; Bolden, *Burlington*, 9; LabCorp, "History," <https://www.labcorp.com/about-us/history> (accessed August 2021).

²¹ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 41; Bolden, *Burlington*, 9.

²² Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 41.

²³ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 42; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 77.

²⁴ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 42.

Expansion of Community Churches, 1920 – 1980

Most of Burlington's churches trace their roots to the multi-denominational Company Shops Union Church built in 1874 as part of the North Carolina Railroad repair shop complex in the mid-nineteenth century. By the late nineteenth century and turn of the twentieth century, these churches began to establish their own church buildings and complexes throughout the city. The churches continued to grow with the city's population, and as a result, many of the churches, including those in the study area, expanded substantially during the mid-twentieth century.

Macedonia Lutheran Church (AM2685) was organized in 1869 and first worshipped under a brush arbor before moving to the newly built Union Church in 1874. The congregation built their first church building near the present location at Hoke (now South Fisher) and West Front streets. In 1895, the building was moved slightly southwest to a lot facing West Front Street, and a parsonage was built at 803 Front Street at that time, though it was demolished in 1954. The sanctuary was replaced with a larger building completed in 1909. A new, larger Sunday School Building was built in 1925 and later connected to a new, larger Education Building built 1953-1954. The present sanctuary was started in 1963 and completed in 1965, and it remains extant, along with the Sunday School and Education buildings, at 421 West Front Street in the study area.²⁵

The first group of Methodists in Company Shops also worshipped at the Union Church, and in 1887, when the congregation had reached around eighty members, they began to look for a place to build their own church building. They built a small brick church just northeast of the present church building, facing Front Street, known as the Front Street Methodist Episcopal Church South. The cornerstone was laid in 1888 and the church was dedicated in 1891. As the congregation grew and more space was needed, plans for a new church began. The new building was completed in 1912 and included a full basement for Sunday School classes and a



Figure 8: 1909 Macedonia Lutheran Church (Larry W. Fuqua, *Centennial History of Macedonia Lutheran Church, 1869-1969* (Burlington, NC: Macedonia Lutheran Church, 1969), 10)

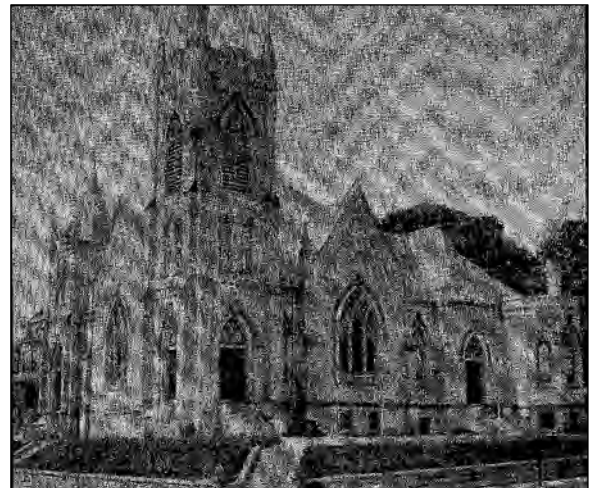


Figure 9: 1912 Front Street Methodist Episcopal Church (Richard Joseph Moore, *Our Goodly Heritage: A History of the Front Street United Methodist Church of Burlington, North Carolina, 1888-1984* (Burlington, NC: Front Street United Methodist Church, 1984), 16)

²⁵ Larry W. Fuqua, *Centennial History of Macedonia Lutheran Church, 1869-1969* (Burlington, NC: Macedonia Lutheran Church, 1969), 6-23; Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Section 8, 5-6; Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 42.

fellowship hall seating five hundred people. In 1949, the congregation began construction on a new education building; however, a fire destroyed the sanctuary that year and the project was temporarily stopped while plans were made for a new sanctuary. While the new sanctuary was under construction, the congregation met in the nearby Fisher Street School (no longer extant). The education building was redesigned to compliment the new sanctuary. It was completed in 1951 and the sanctuary completed in 1952 (AM0831). The congregation continued to grow through the mid-twentieth century, and in 1978, a large addition was completed, including Aldersgate Hall, a library, staff offices, and kitchen.²⁶

Though Presbyterians were meeting as early as 1857 in various locations in and around Company Shops, the congregation was officially recognized by the Orange Presbytery in 1879 and began holding services at the Union Church. The church was first known as the Company Shops Presbyterian Church but changed its name to First Presbyterian Church of Burlington when the town's name was changed in 1887. The congregation purchased a lot at the corner of Front and Church streets in 1889 and completed the first church building of their own in 1891, though it is also no longer extant. An adjacent home on West Davis Street became the first manse in 1894, though it is also no longer extant. In 1901, the church tower and steeple were destroyed by fire after a lightning strike and were rebuilt later that year with a taller steeple. A new sanctuary with additional classrooms was constructed to face Church Street in 1909. A new manse was built on Church Street at this time as well, though it is no longer extant. A log building used for classrooms and a fellowship hall built in 1922 are no longer standing. The house at 504 Fountain Place (AM0813) was purchased in 1935 to serve as the third and final manse and remains extant in the study area, though the church sold the house in 1970. Plans for the current church building began in 1941, and the lot was purchased in 1945. The building was completed in 1952 at 508 West Davis Street in the study area (AM0812), and an education wing was added to the church in 1965 and expanded in the early 2000s.²⁷



Figure 10: 1891 First Presbyterian Church (<https://fpcburlington.org/who-and-why/our-history/>)

Two other churches also met first at Union Church before moving into the study area. Formed in 1888, the First Christian United Church of Christ (AM0655, NR1984) built its first sanctuary in 1891 at 415 South Church Street. In 1920, this building was demolished and the present

²⁶ Richard Joseph Moore, *Our Goodly Heritage: A History of the Front Street United Methodist Church of Burlington, North Carolina, 1888-1984* (Burlington, NC: Front Street United Methodist Church, 1984), 8-37, 114-115; Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Section 8, 6; Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 42; Bolden, *Burlington*, 62.

²⁷ Robert D. and Frances W. White, *Centennial History of First Presbyterian Church, Burlington, North Carolina, 1879-1979* (Burlington, NC: First Presbyterian Church, 1979), 9-23; Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Section 8, 6; Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 42; Bolden, *Burlington*, 61.

sanctuary built on the same site. An education building was constructed southwest of the sanctuary in 1953 and connected by a small hallway. In 1980, an office wing was constructed on the southwest elevation of the education wing.²⁸ The First Reformed United Church of Christ (AM0814) had been established in 1889 and built its own church in 1901 at its present location at 513 West Front Street. The church complex was later enlarged with classrooms in 1909 and a parsonage in 1917, though the parsonage was later demolished. Though plans for the present church and education building were made in 1925, only the education building was completed at that time, while the present sanctuary was completed in 1941.²⁹

The last church to be established in the study area was the Catholic parish. In the early 1900s, Burlington's two Catholic residents were served by an itinerant priest who conducted mass four times a year. The number of Catholics in the city began to increase over the next couple of decades, and the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church was established in 1928 when the congregation purchased the James Henry Holt Sr., house on West Davis Street (AM0901) for use as a church and rectory. In 1935, the house was demolished and a new sanctuary and rectory were constructed. Blessed Sacrament also built and opened a school and convent in 1935. The congregation continued to expand, and in 1951 a new school, convent, and auditorium were completed, followed by a new sanctuary in 1971.³⁰ In 1995, the Blessed Sacrament School moved into the former Hillcrest Elementary School on Hillcrest Avenue (AM0879). In 2011, a new sanctuary was constructed in nearby Graham, while the 1971 building became known as the Chapel of Saint Clare and houses the Parish office.

School Growth and Integration, 1920 – 1970

The city's population had grown from 1,716 people in 1890, just before the city's incorporation, to 5,952 people by 1920. At that time, the youth attended school at the Burlington Graded and High School near the intersection of Broad and Hawkins streets in the southeastern section of the city.³¹ More space was needed as the population continued to grow, and Hillcrest Elementary School was completed about 1932 at 515 Hillcrest Avenue in the study area (AM0879). By 1935, the city school system included eight schools for its 3,754 white students and four schools for its 744 African American students, growing to thirteen white schools and five African American schools by 1950.³²

Walter M. Williams High School (AM2714) opened for the 1951-1952 school year at 1307 South Church Street at the south end of the study area. The school's namesake, Walter M. Williams, was associated with Virginia Mills, Inc., in nearby Swepsonville, North Carolina, and was the chair of the Burlington Board of Education who helped acquire the land for the new school. The

²⁸ Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Section 8, 6; Claudia P. Roberts, "First Christian Church of Burlington," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1984, Section 7; Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 42; Bolden, *Burlington*, 62.

²⁹ Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Section 8, 6; Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 42; Bolden, *Burlington*, 65.

³⁰ Unknown Author, *Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Burlington, N.C.* (Skokie, IL: LeMann & Associates, 1978); Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Section 8, 6.

³¹ Ernest H. Miller, comp., *Burlington, Graham, and Haw River, N.C., City Directory 1920-1921* (Burlington, NC: The House of Directories, 1920), 13.

³² *Hill's Burlington (Alamance County, N.C.) City Directory, 1935* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., Inc., Publishers, 1935), 14; *Hill's Burlington (Alamance County, N.C.) City Directory, 1950-1951* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., Inc., Publishers, 1950), XIV.

school was built on the former location of the Piedmont Country Club golf course and functionally replaced the earlier Burlington High School. The school's stadium, which was built prior to the school building, served not only the high school, but also Elon University until the college's own Rhodes Stadium opened in 2001.³³

By the 1963-1964 school year, it had become apparent that many schools throughout the South, those in the city of Burlington included, were unwilling to comply with the requirements for integration established by the *Brown vs Board of Education* Supreme Court decision a decade earlier. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted to address this issue by granting authority to withhold federal funding from segregated school systems. In response, city officials adopted a four-year gradual integration plan; however, the plan failed to achieve any meaningful level of integration for two reasons. First, students could only be reassigned to the school closest to their home, and Burlington's segregated housing practices ensured that neighborhood schools remained segregated. Second, reassignment was voluntary and had to be requested by the student's parents, resulting in a small number of African American students choosing to attend white schools and none of the reverse.³⁴

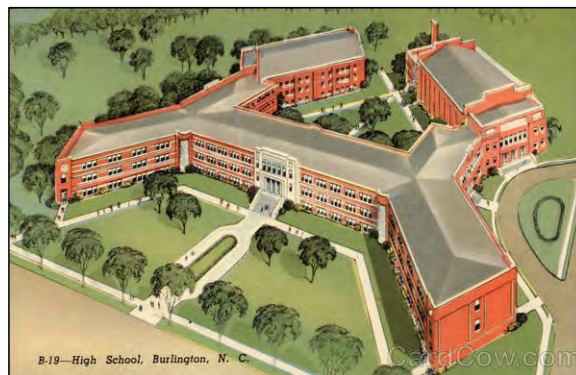


Figure 11: Postcard image of the 1951 Walter M. Williams High School (<https://www.cardcow.com/336600/burlington-north-carolina-high-school/>)

Additional mandates from the federal government with increasingly specific requirements for complying with Title VI were released over the following years; however, the city continued to avoid true integration of the schools through creative application of various freedom of choice plans without making any significant change in the ratios of white and Black students at any schools.³⁵ In 1968, the Supreme Court ruled that freedom of choice plans did not fulfill the integration requirements of the Civil Rights Act, and the school superintendent was notified that the district's attempts to integrate schools to that point were therefore inadequate to comply with the Act.³⁶ Although a small number of African American students attended the white Walter M. Williams High School (in the study area) by that time, numbering only 75 of the 1,700 total students, the student body at Jordan Sellars High School (on Apple Street northeast of the study area, AM1666) remained entirely Black. Rather than sending white students to Jordan Sellars High School, the city school board made plans to phase out the African American school by building an entirely new high school, Hugh M. Cummings High School, on the east side of the city. By the 1970-1971 school year, high school students in Burlington attended either Cummings or Williams high schools, both integrated, depending on their geographic proximity.³⁷

³³ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 43; Bolden, *Burlington*, 46-47.

³⁴ Jim Bissett, "The Dilemma Over Moderates: School Desegregation in Alamance County, North Carolina," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 81, No. 4, November 2015, 894-895.

³⁵ Bissett, "The Dilemma Over Moderates," 900-902.

³⁶ Bissett, "The Dilemma Over Moderates," 909.

³⁷ Bissett, "The Dilemma Over Moderates," 913, 919-920; Jim Lasley, "WHS Resumes Its Classes; Most Black Students Absent," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 15, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

Integration of the high schools resulted in increased racial tension, which came to a head in May of 1969 when four African American students at Walter M. Williams High School auditioned for the cheerleading squad. Tryouts took place in front of the student body and the results were decided by student body vote. The four African American candidates were booed by white students during their tryouts, and none of the four students was selected for the squad. The following Wednesday, May 14, a physical altercation took place in the Williams High School parking lot between white students from the school and African American students from both Williams and Jordan Sellars high schools. A second altercation in the hallway of the school and a third altercation in the parking lot followed, involving a total of around forty students. The Burlington Police Department arrived to help quell the disturbances and ultimately forced the school to close early for the day. The school reopened the following day; however, over three hundred students were absent from school, including all but four of the African American students enrolled there, and local police remained present at the school throughout the day.³⁸

Rather than attend classes, the African American students at Walter M. Williams High School staged a sit-in on the lawn of the school the following day, Friday, May 16. The students were joined by approximately two hundred students from Jordan Sellars High School, who walked out of class and marched to Williams High School to join the sit-in. The peaceful protest soon escalated to a march on the school district's administrative offices on Fisher Street to demand formation of a Black Committee, a Black publishing center, a Black-operated board of inquiry to investigate violence against African American students, and the formation of a Black social or cultural center at the school. Around one hundred students entered the building, turning over tables and chairs, pulling books from shelves and papers from desks, and breaking windows. Fifteen students were arrested, charged with disorderly conduct and malicious damage, and later released on \$100 bond.³⁹



Figure 12: “Black Students Congregate at Williams High,” *Burlington Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

These protests further escalated into a violent riot that resulted in the burning of three local stores and the exchange of gunfire between police officers and rioters. It required the combined efforts of approximately six hundred officers from the Burlington Police and Police Auxiliary, the Alamance County Sheriff's Office, the North Carolina State Police, the North

³⁸ William Murray Vincent, *Historic Alamance County: A Biographical History* (San Antonio, TX: Historical Publishing Network, 2009), 21-24; Lasley, “WHS Resumes Its Classes,” *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*.

³⁹ Vincent, *Historic Alamance County*, 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 66; Jim Lasley, “Store Gutted in Fire Bombing,” *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); “Guard Units Patrol City, Youth Killed,” *Statesville Record & Landmark*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Jim Lasley, “Guard to Remain Ready for Call,” *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 19, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

Carolina Department of Corrections, officers from the North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control system, the State Bureau of Investigation, and the National Guard to end the violence. Twenty-five African Americans were arrested, three African Americans were injured, and Leon Mebane, a fifteen-year-old African American middle schooler, was killed. The city declared a state of emergency and a county-wide curfew was instituted, prohibiting travel on public streets, possession or sale of firearms, sale or consumption of alcohol, and the sale of gasoline from 8:00 pm on Saturday, May 17, until noon the following Monday. Two hundred and fifty people, white and Black, were arrested for violating the curfew. Those arrested were housed at the Alamance County Jail and, when the jail became full, on North Carolina Department of Corrections buses until the curfew was lifted or they posted the \$50 bond.⁴⁰

Following these events, Burlington Mayor W. L. Beamon lamented, "...last night and this morning will stay with us in our history as one of our darkest."⁴¹ Likewise, one resident commented to the local newspaper, "It just wasn't the same... our city wasn't the same this morning."⁴² Gradually, racial tensions in the city eased. When Walter M. Williams High School reopened on Monday morning, a number of African American students met with the principal, Jesse W. Harrington, and other members of the school district administration, to discuss improving conditions for African American students. Some of the African American students who tried out for the Williams High School cheerleading squad were added to the group, though how many Black students made the squad is not clear. To further help ease integration at the school, Jerome Evans, a former football coach at Jordan Sellars High School, was appointed head football coach at Walter M. Williams High School in 1970, becoming the first African American to serve as the head coach at a formerly all-white school in the South. However, this change resulted in protests from white families in the district until C.A. Frye, the white football coach replaced by Evans, was appointed athletic director. A Human Relations Council was also formed at the school, with space guaranteed in each school newspaper to report on its activities, and this group worked with the state's Good Neighbor Council to improve race relations at the school.⁴³

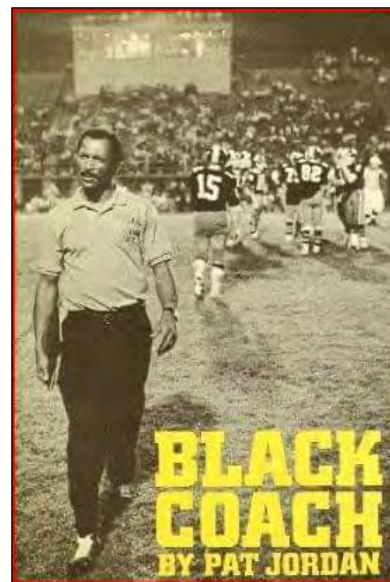


Figure 13: Jerome Evans (Pat Jordan, *Black Coach* (New York, NY: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1971), cover image.)

⁴⁰ Vincent, *Historic Alamance County*, 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 66; Jim Lasley, "Black Youth Killed in Night of Violence," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com; Lasley, "Store Guttled in Fire Bombing," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*; Jim Lasley, "Curfew in Effect Until Removed," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Jim Lasley, "Calm Falls Over City," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 19, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Lasley, "Guard to Remain Ready for Call," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*.

⁴¹ Lasley, "Curfew in Effect Until Removed," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*.

⁴² A. Howard White, "It Was a Long, Tragic Night for Burlington; Evaluations are Made," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

⁴³ Vincent, *Historic Alamance County*, 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 66; Lasley, "Black Youth Killed in Night of Violence," *Burlington Daily Times-News*; Lasley, "Store Guttled in Fire Bombing," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*; "One Killed in Riots in

Although integration of the high school grades had begun in 1968, the elementary and middle grades were still partially segregated. Specifically, J.F. Gunn Elementary School on Rosenwald Street, northeast of the study area, remained a predominantly African American school. As a result, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), which was tasked with enforcing the Civil Rights Act, informed the school system that it was in violation of the Civil Rights Act and therefore, under the authority provided by Title VI, would not receive federal funding for the 1969-1970 school year.⁴⁴ The school superintendent attended a hearing to reinstate funding, arguing that residential segregation patterns resulted in the de facto segregation of the neighborhood elementary schools, and therefore the school system should not be penalized. Although the city initially won the case, the HEW appealed. The case escalated to district court in Greensboro in 1971, at which time the original decision was reversed and the school system was ordered to fully integrate all schools. To finally comply with Title VI, the former Jordan Sellars High School became Sellars-Gunn Junior High School, an integrated ninth grade school, and J.F. Gunn Elementary School was integrated and became known as Sellars-Gunn Elementary School.⁴⁵

Change in Burlington, 1970 – 2000

Although textiles had been the foundation of Burlington’s industrial landscape since the late nineteenth century, by the late twentieth century, local mills began to close as textile companies shifted production to overseas facilities. The Lakeside Mills, northeast of the study area, closed as early as 1960 and in 1962 was leased to the Annedeem Hosiery Mill. The E. M. Holt Plaid Mills (AM0897), at the north end of the study area and the Elmira Cotton Mill (AM0773) north of Plaid Mills and outside of the study area, were both operated by Burlington Industries until they were shuttered in the 1970s. In 1979, Martin Fibers, Inc., owned by Unifi, Inc.,



Figure 14: E. M. Holt Plaid Mills (AM0897)

of Yadkinville, acquired the former Plaid Mills and began operations with 270 workers, but the facility was again closed in 1982. Annedeem Hosiery Mill, which had been operating out of the former Lakeside Mills, sold that facility in 1983 and moved their operations to the former Plaid Mills. In 1995, Mount Airy-based hosiery company Renfro Corp. acquired Great American Knitting Mills, Inc., which operated the Annedeem plant, though the facility was sold in 2013 and is now vacant. In 2001, unable to compete with foreign exports, Burlington Industries filed for bankruptcy and was purchased in 2004 by International Textile Group.⁴⁶

Burlington,” *The High Point Enterprise*,” May 18, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

⁴⁴ Bissett, “The Dilemma Over Moderates,” 915; Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 43; Bolden, *Burlington*, 46-47.

⁴⁵ Bissett, “The Dilemma Over Moderates,” 917-921; Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 43; Bolden, *Burlington*, 46-47.

⁴⁶ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 41-42, 65-66; “Hosiery Company Finishes Negotiations to Buy Knitting Mills,” *Greensboro News & Record*, May 9, 1995, https://greensboro.com/hosiery-company-finishes-negotiations-to-buy-knitting-mills/article_5e27102c-

Community institutions also evolved through the late twentieth century. Sellars-Gunn Junior High School in northeast Burlington continued to serve as the ninth grade school until 1982, when the ninth grade was added to the Williams and Cummings high schools. The elementary school building was demolished in 1983, and in 1995, the junior high school building reopened as an alternative education center known as Sellars-Gunn Education Center, offering technical career programs and programs for students facing long-term suspension from school until a new facility, the Ray Street Academy, opened in Graham for that purpose in 2012. The Sellars-Gunn Education Center is now a multi-purpose facility for the school system, housing staff offices, meeting and storage spaces, and athletic events, and the elementary school building was demolished in 1983.⁴⁷ In 1993, Hillcrest Elementary School was relocated to a new building at 1714 West Davis Street, west of the study area, and the former building on Hillcrest Street became the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church parochial school. In 2011, the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church relocated to a larger building on Hanford Street in Graham, and the 1971 sanctuary on West Davis Street became the Parish office and is now known as the Chapel of Saint Clare.⁴⁸

Preservation Efforts in Burlington, 1970 – 2021

Following physical changes to the city in the late twentieth century, residents became increasingly interested in preserving the city’s historic places. Burlington’s organized efforts to preserve its architectural heritage began with the 1978 formation of the Burlington Historic Properties Commission, a group of citizens who began exploring historic district designations in 1980. The Commission was renamed the Burlington Historic District Commission that year. The Commission’s work began with an architectural survey by Allison Harris Black in the early 1980s, which was later published in book form in 1987. In addition, National Register of Historic Places nominations for two historic districts and sixteen individual properties were prepared by Claudia P. Roberts in 1984, based on Black’s survey.⁴⁹ Within the study area, nominations included the West Davis-Fountain Place Historic District (AM0491, NR1984) and

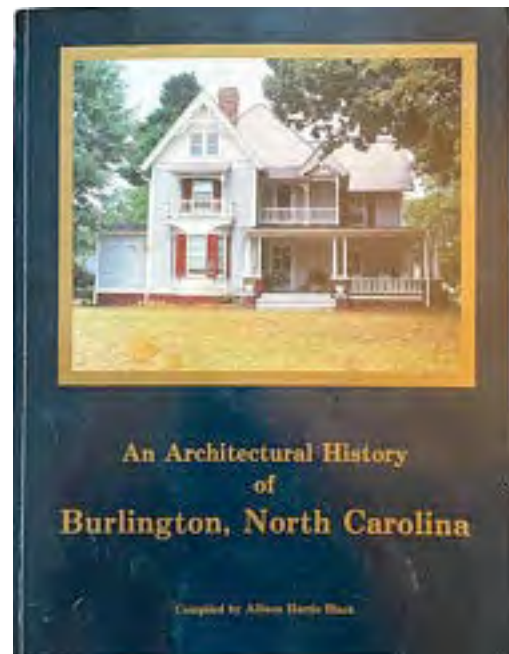


Figure 15: *An Architectural History of Burlington, North Carolina*

15cc-5684-b6d5-eab4e477ffcb.html (accessed July 2021); Roberts, “Lakeside Mills District,” Section 8, 3.

⁴⁷ Jim Lasley, “Elmira Parents Start Own School,” *Burlington Daily Times-News*, September 1, 1970, www.newspapers.com (accessed July 2021); *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 67; Mike Wilder, “We Checked It Out: Sellars School Still in Use,” *Burlington Times-News*, November 23, 2012, <https://www.thetimesnews.com/article/20121123/News/311239854> (accessed July 2021); Isaac Groves, “Markers Sought for Sites of Historic Black Schools in Burlington,” *Burlington Times-News*, October 22, 2015, <https://www.thetimesnews.com/article/20151022/NEWS/151029600> (accessed July 2021).

⁴⁸ Unknown Author, *Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church*; Roberts, “West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District,” Section 8, 6.

⁴⁹ Walton, “A Preservation Plan for Burlington, North Carolina,” 15.

the First Christian Church of Burlington (AM0655, NR1984). Two additional properties were added to the North Carolina Study List in 1992: the Hillcrest Elementary School (AM0879, SL1992) and the Ben V. May House (AM1145, SL1992).

Once much of the city's oldest historic fabric was recognized through National Register designation, the Burlington Historic District Commission next turned its attention to establishing local historic districts to increase protection for these important resources. In 1987, the West Front/West Davis/Fountain Place local historic district was established and design standards were adopted so that future construction, alterations, and additions would be in congruity with the special character of the district. The following year, the Commission was granted a role in reviewing local landmarks in addition to local historic districts, and the group was renamed the Burlington Historic Resources Commission. The name was changed to the Historic Preservation Commission in 1991, and the Commission adopted updated design guidelines in 1992.⁵⁰

In 1988, the city was designated a Certified Local Government through the National Park Service and accredited as a Main Street program through the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the State of North Carolina.⁵¹

Preservation efforts continue today through the Historic Preservation Commission, which plays a role in determining congruity with the special character of resources within the city's two local historic districts, three local landmark properties, and the Glencoe Mill Village; offers assistance to owners of historic properties; and conducts public education and outreach.⁵²

⁵⁰ Walton, "A Preservation Plan for Burlington, North Carolina," 15-16.

⁵¹ Walton, "A Preservation Plan for Burlington, North Carolina," 16; Main Street America, <https://www.mainstreet.org/home> (accessed July 2021).

⁵² City of Burlington, North Carolina, "Historic Preservation Commission," <https://www.burlingtonnc.gov/199/Historic-Preservation-Commission> (accessed July 2021).

DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Early Neighborhood Development

As the textile industry brought newcomers to the growing city, the area west of the commercial core and south of the industrial complexes, specifically along West Davis Street and West Front Street, began to be developed for upper- and middle-class housing. As a result, the residential resources at the core of the study area are notable as a concentration of Burlington's earliest middle-class housing in the city, the neighborhoods established by bankers, merchants, and professionals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Claudia Roberts observed in the West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, "By the late 1920s, most of the 1000 block of West Davis Street had been developed, clearly indicating that the city's future growth, particularly in the upper middle class residential construction, would continue in a westerly direction."⁵³

Meanwhile, working class neighborhoods formed in the northern and eastern areas of the town, as well as in the northern portion of the study area, adjacent to Plaid Mills.⁵⁴ Concentrations of extant mill housing remain west of the mill along Plaid and Ava streets and West Webb Avenue. South and southeast of the mill, housing is more varied and was constructed by private developers. The entire area is centered on a small commercial center in the 200-400 blocks of Trollinger Street, just southwest of the mill.

Growth throughout West Burlington occurred both through the private development of individual lots as well as with planned, speculative developments. Roberts notes that "until about 1920, construction in the West Davis Street-Fountain Place District was private, usually the result of an individual property owner commissioning a contractor to build his house, rather than planned development of multiple lots."⁵⁵ Further, lot sizes varied as late nineteenth century homeplaces were subdivided by heirs. In 1916, the Dixon family property was subdivided into seventeen rectangular lots between West Davis and West Front streets, starting at Tarpley Street and extending west almost to Peele Street.⁵⁶ Walter E. Sharpe of Alamance Insurance and Real Estate Company laid out forty-nine lots in 1919 between West Davis and West Front streets, including Central Avenue, Atwater Street, and Trollinger Street.⁵⁷ The Brooks property was subdivided in 1939 into seven lots along Brooks Street, north of West Front Street and south of the Brooks family homeplace on West Webb Avenue.⁵⁸



Figure 16: 1916 Plat of Dixon Heirs Property (Alamance County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 1, Page 15)

⁵³ Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Section 8, 9.

⁵⁴ Walton, "A Preservation Plan for Burlington, North Carolina," 11.

⁵⁵ Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Section 8, 8.

⁵⁶ "Sub-Division of Dixon Heirs Property," September 6, 1916, Plat Book 1, Page 52, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

⁵⁷ "Property of W.E. Sharpe," April 9, 1919, Plat Book 1, Page 70, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

In 1941, the Cicero T. Holt property north of West Davis Street and west of Tarpley Street in the northeast section of the study area was subdivided.⁵⁹ After that time, the few vacant lots in the historic district were developed as speculative or rental properties, and the neighborhood was largely built out by about 1940. Thus, construction in this area after the mid-twentieth century typically involved the demolition of older structures to make way for new ones.⁶⁰

Planned Neighborhoods, 1920 – 1955

The success of the textile industry in Burlington and the rapidly increasing enrollment of veterans at nearby Elon University following World War II brought more people to Burlington to live and work. The population grew from 5,952 people in 1920 to 9,737 people in 1930 – a sixty-three percent increase – and to 12,198 people in 1940. Despite vacant lots in the West Davis Street area being developed during that time, a housing shortage occurred. Residential development therefore continued to the west with the establishment of the Fountain Place neighborhood. Unlike the organic private development of the previous decades, development in Fountain Place was initiated by developer Walter E. Sharpe of the Alamance Insurance and Real Estate Company, who purchased several acres of former pasture from the Isley family. Sharpe hired an engineer to lay out lots measuring approximately 70 feet wide and 150-185 feet deep along a new road he named Fountain Place for a fountain installed near the middle. The streetscape was planted with sycamore trees and lighted with lampposts, and stone pillars and walls marked the entrance to the new neighborhood from West Davis Street. The neighborhood was extended south beyond Kime Street in the mid-1930s, and houses continued to be built in this area into the 1950s.⁶¹

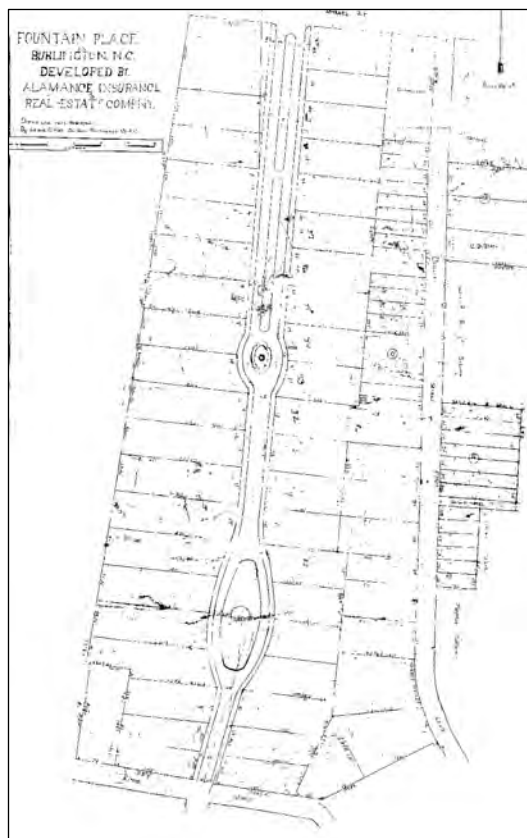


Figure 17: c.1919 Plat of Fountain Place (Alamance County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 2, Page 29)

Sharpe also developed the Brookwood neighborhood, which extends along West Front Street, West Davis Street, and Edgewood Avenue, between Central and Tarleton avenues, the easternmost part of the development located within the West Davis Street-Fountain Place

⁵⁸ "The Brooks Property," November 6, 1939, Plat Book 1, Page 31, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

⁵⁹ "Plat of the Cicero T. Holt Property," July 1941, Plat Book 4, Page 110, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

⁶⁰ Roberts, "West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District," Section 8, 8; Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 127-128.

⁶¹ Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 145; Walton, "A Preservation Plan for Burlington, North Carolina," 12; "Fountain Place, Burlington, N.C.," no date, Plat Book 2, Page 29, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

National Register Historic District. The neighborhood was laid out by the Alamance Insurance and Real Estate Company in 1926, though the company went into bankruptcy two years later. It features a curvilinear street pattern and planned green space (now the Burlington Arboretum), both typical of early twentieth century upper- and middle-class suburban developments. Relatively consistent lots measure from 70 to 125 feet wide, though with varying depths due to the irregularity of the blocks.⁶² An expansion of Brookwood known as the Trollinger Section (AM2857) was platted in 1937 and added sixty-one lots north of West Front Street, arranged along East Willowbrook Drive, Central Avenue, and Wildwood Lane. This section of the development followed the curvilinear street plan of the earlier section, with lots typically 100 feet wide with varying depths, though much of the neighborhood was not built until the 1950s or later.⁶³ In 1939, a second addition to the Brookwood development was laid out northwest of the Trollinger Section across present-day Springdale, Burlingate, and Granville streets. This section of the neighborhood added 102 lots that were much narrower than those of the previous sections at only twenty-five feet wide, though depths still varied with the curvature of the streets.⁶⁴ It too was largely developed in the 1950s or later, though with more modest-sized houses than are found in the Trollinger Section of Brookwood.

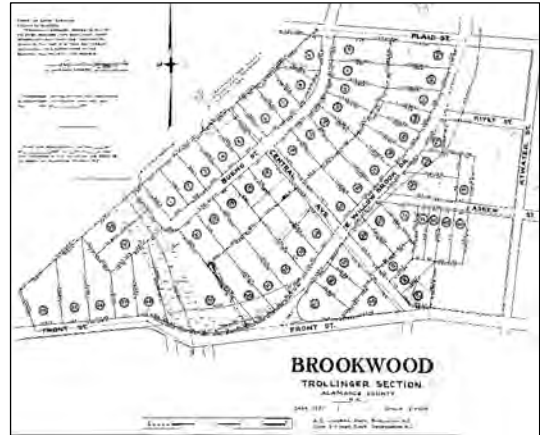


Figure 18: 1926 Plat of Brookwood: Trollinger Section (Alamance County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 2, Page 130.)

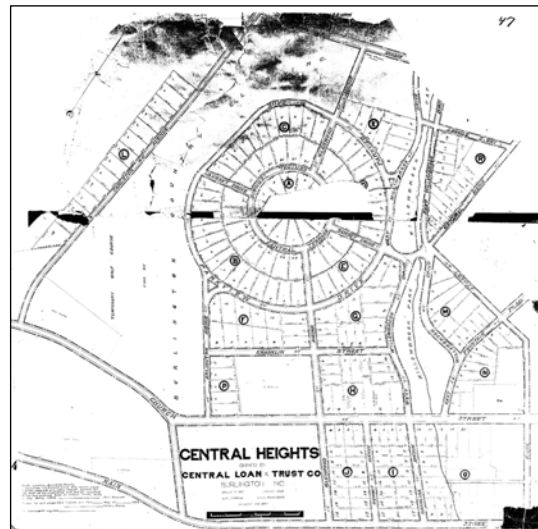


Figure 19: 1925 Plat of Central Heights (Alamance County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 2, Page 130.)

In the southwestern section of the study area, Central Heights (AM2856) was laid out in 1925 by the Central Loan and Trust Company. Located south of the Brookwood development and southwest of Fountain Place, the neighborhood was laid out with two concentric circular drives and cross streets extending north, east, and south. The lot sizes are fairly consistent, typically 75-100 feet wide with varying depths.⁶⁵ Green space at the east end of the development connects to the green space of the adjacent Brookwood development, collectively forming the modern-day Burlington Arboretum. Planned green space on the west end of the development was initially

⁶² Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 40, 125; “Brookwood, a Suburb of Burlington, N.C.,” June 15, 1926, Plat Book 2, Page 59, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

⁶³ “Brookwood Trollinger Section,” September 1937, Plat Book 2, Page 130, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

⁶⁴ “G.L. Amick’s Addition to Brookwood, Burlington, N.C.,” April 12, 1939, Plat Book 1, Page 127, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

⁶⁵ “Central Heights,” January 1925, Plat Book 2, Page 47, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

used as a golf course by the Piedmont Country Club. However, when the Country Club relocated in the 1940s, the land was developed. In 1945, the northwest end of the golf course was developed by the Moser Brothers and laid out on curvilinear streets with lot sizes similar to those of the original section.⁶⁶ The south end of the golf course was acquired by the school district for the construction of Walter M. Williams High School.

Country Club Estates, located in the southwest corner of the study area and named for its proximity to the Piedmont Country Club, was platted in 1941. It is located just south of the Walter M. Williams High School and athletic fields, which were constructed in 1951 on the site of the former golf course. It is bounded by Little Alamance Creek to the west and U.S. Highway 70 (South Church Street) the south, beyond which Little Alamance Creek continues through Burlington City Park. The land was owned by C.G. Somers, who owned C.G. Somers Real Estate Company, and his wife Lillie. They hired engineers A.C. Linberg and C.S. Kirby to lay out the neighborhood, which was laid out with parallel streets extending between Country Club Drive and South Church Street. The neighborhood includes 105 irregularly shaped lots ranging from 70 to 100 feet wide and from 160 to over 300 feet deep.⁶⁷ It contains small, Minimal Traditional-style and Ranch houses constructed in the late 1940s through the 1950s.

The population of Burlington continued to grow rapidly during the mid-twentieth century, doubling from 12,198 people in 1940 to 24,560 in 1950 and then growing to 33,199 in 1960. Most of the vacant land in the study area had been subdivided by the 1940s and was largely built out by the 1950s, but additional private development continued on the fringes along Tarleton Avenue in the northwest section of the study area. The Foley property between May Court and West Front Street on Tarleton Avenue was subdivided into seven lots, in addition to the homeplace, in 1954.⁶⁸ The following year, the Ross family property just to the north was subdivided into eighteen lots on Granville Street and



Figure 20: Sign marking the 8th hole of the Piedmont Country Club golf course. The sign remains near the intersection of Edgewood and Tarleton Avenues.

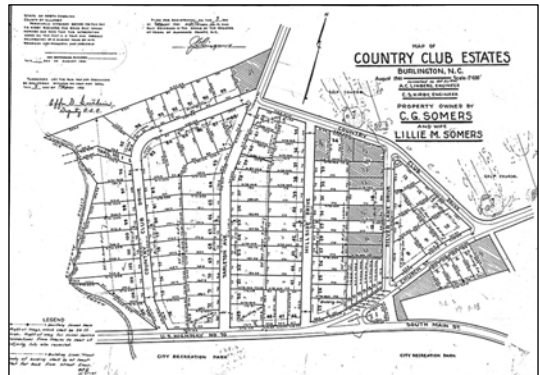


Figure 21: 1941 Plat of Country Club Estates (Alamance County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 4, Page 11.)

⁶⁶ "Central Heights 'Burlington Golf Course Property,'" October 1945, Plat Book 4, Page 97, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

⁶⁷ "Map of Country Club Estates," Plat Book 4, Page 11, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

⁶⁸ "Plat Showing Property of Mrs. Louise S. Foley, Burlington, North Carolina," August 25, 1954, Plat Book 8, Page 87, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

Burlingate Place at Tarleton Avenue.⁶⁹ And just to the north of this, additional Ross property had been subdivided on Springdale Drive at Tarleton Avenue in 1950.⁷⁰

Architectural Overview

The 1984 West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District (AM0491) makes up approximately one-third of the study area, and the nomination provides architectural context for residential and religious buildings constructed through about 1940. Styles covered in the nomination include the Queen Anne style and vernacular forms and details of the late 1800s; Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, Neoclassical Revival, and Tudor Revival styles of the early 1900s; and the Craftsman and Period Revival styles of the 1920s and 1930s. Additionally, the nomination addresses the early twentieth century Romanesque Revival-, Neo-Gothic Revival- and Georgian/Colonial Revival-style churches within the district boundary.

Throughout the study area are representative examples of mid-twentieth-century architectural styles, including Minimal Traditional, Ranch, and Modernist styles that post-date 1940 and for which context was not provided in the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District nomination. South and west of the historic district, including in the Central Heights development, houses generally date from the 1930s through the 1950s and illustrate a continuation of the later styles found within the district. These buildings follow the same styles and echo the same forms as those within the historic district, but are generally less ornate, representing the adaptation of the forms and styles to the homes of middle- and working-class residents.

Properties in the northern one-third of the study area, including the majority of properties north of West Front Street, are largely modest vernacular or Minimal Traditional-style houses, many of



Figure 22: Morrow-Barnwell House, 426 West Front Street (AM1168)



Figure 23: Central Heights, 508-514 Circle Drive (AM2856)



Figure 24: 1202-1212 East Willowbrook Drive

⁶⁹ "Property of Mrs. S.D. Ross, Burlington, Alamance County, N.C.," March 1955, Plat Book 9, Page 33, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

⁷⁰ "Property of Mrs. S.D. Ross, Burlington, Alamance County, N.C.," March 2, 1950, Plat Book 6, Page 80, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

them originally associated with the E. M. Holt Plaid Mills or constructed as working-class housing for the mills that extended along the West Webb Avenue corridor. Few of these retain sufficient material integrity to warrant documentation. Northwest of the district, houses along Granville Street, Central Avenue, Wildwood Lane, and East Willowbrook Drive are generally Ranch and Minimal Traditional-style houses, constructed in the 1950s and 1960s and today having varying levels of integrity. Southwest of the historic district, the Country Club Estates development includes Minimal Traditional and small-scale Ranch houses.

Craftsman and Colonial Revival, 1930-1941

While many communities throughout the country experienced slow or stagnate building construction in the 1930s, Burlington's continued production of textiles stabilized the local economy and building construction continued throughout the 1930s, albeit with smaller-scale houses than were generally constructed in the preceding decades. Approximately 140 buildings were documented in study area from this period, most constructed in the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles. The 1933 E. L. Payne House (AM1187) is typical of the many brick bungalows constructed both inside of and adjacent to the historic district in the 1930s. It features Craftsman-style wood-sash windows, grouped posts on brick piers supporting the porch, and faux half-timbering in the clipped porch gable. The 1941 Walter M. Williams House (AM1293) is a good example of the Colonial Revival style as it was executed in the mid-twentieth century. It features an asymmetrical facade that is less formal than Colonial Revival-style houses of the 1910s and 1920s and has a metal-framed window at the south end of the façade that is typical of windows found on Ranch houses of the 1950s and 1960s. In other instances, modest-sized houses were constructed utilizing a combination of Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and even Tudor Revival details. The c.1937 Louis Allen Sr. House (AM0664) features an arched batten door and faux half-timbering common in Tudor Revival-style homes combined with Craftsman-style two-part brick piers supporting the porte cochere and Colonial Revival-style six-over-one wood-sash windows. The advent of World War II fueled the demand for woven goods and fabrics, sustaining Burlington's economy. However, new housing construction slowed considerably until the close of the war in 1945.



Figure 25: E. L. Payne House, 509 Atwater Street (AM1187)



Figure 26: Walter M. Williams House, 1303 West Davis Street (AM1293)



Figure 27: Louis Allen Sr. House, 336 Hillcrest Avenue (AM0664)

Minimal Traditional, 1938-1941 and 1946-1953

In the late 1930s and again in the late 1940s and early 1950s, smaller houses with restrained ornamentation were constructed on vacant lots within Burlington's historic neighborhoods as well as on the fringes of Burlington's historic core. Characterized by a very simple rectangular, side- or front-gabled form, flush eaves, and a lack of architectural detail, Minimal Traditional-style houses were a response to the limited resources of the Depression and World War II, and then the need for rapid home building after the war. These houses, with their small size and compact footprints, were well-suited to existing urban lots.⁷¹

Among the earliest of these is the 1939 E. Graham Cheek House (AM0726) with characteristic flush eaves, double-hung windows, and uncovered front entrance. While many of the Minimal Traditional-style houses within the historic district were constructed with brick veneers, those located north and west, especially those near the working-class housing adjacent to the E. M. Holt Plaid Mills, were constructed of frame with plain weatherboard siding. The 1940 House at 1325 West Davis Street (AM2682) is an example of the one-and-a-half-story type with gabled dormers on the façade and characteristic flush eaves.

Ranch and Colonial Revival, 1948-1975

As was typical throughout the country, the traditional details of the Period Revival- and Minimal Traditional-style houses of the early twentieth century generally gave way to Ranch homes in the 1950s and 1960s. The wide, low, one-story houses, most often constructed with brick veneers, were attractive to working-class families looking for a low-maintenance alternative to siding, which required regular repainting. The wide forms were best suited to new developments, where they could "spread out" across multiple lots. The c.1950 house at 1204 Edgewood Avenue (AM2739) takes full advantage of the 1.29-acre lot on which it stands, with a sprawling façade under a low-pitched, stepped hip roof with deep eaves that further emphasizes the horizontality of the house. The house is a rare example of a wood-sided Ranch house in the study area. Ranch houses continued to be constructed in the study area through



Figure 28: E. Graham Cheek House, 416 Fountain Place (AM0726)



Figure 29: House, 1325 West Davis Street (AM2682)



Figure 30: House, 1204 Edgewood Avenue (AM2739)

⁷¹ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred P. Knopf, 2015), 586-589.

the early 1970s, including on vacant lots within the historic district. However, those within the district tended to be smaller in form and have Colonial Revival details rather than Modernist influences. The c.1970 house at 704 West Front Street (AM2691) illustrates this with double-hung multi-light windows and a small entrance porch supported by turned posts.



Figure 31: House, 704 West Front Street (AM2691)

Despite the nationwide popularity of the Ranch house, the Colonial Revival style remained popular, especially for middle-class housing in West Burlington, through the late twentieth century. While mid- to late-twentieth-century examples were generally less ornate in their detailing—specifically in their door and window surrounds and porch detailing—they tended to retain the stately, two-story symmetrical forms of the early-twentieth-century houses of the same style. The c.1955 house at 1218 Edgewood Avenue (AM2741) has a frame upper level and an arched, inset entrance bay sheltering a six-panel door with sidelights and fanlight. The c.1968 house at 1203 Aycock Avenue (AM2743) illustrates the style's continued popularity into the 1970s. It is very similar to Colonial Revival-style houses of the 1920s, though its details are more restrained.



Figure 32: House, 1218 Edgewood Avenue (AM2741)

The formality of the Colonial Revival style was well suited to religious buildings, several of which were constructed in the study area in the 1950s. Among these is the 1951-1952 Front Street Methodist Church (AM0831). Replacing an earlier sanctuary that burned in 1949, the complex features a front-gabled sanctuary to the southwest and a large, hip-roofed education building to the northeast, both with classical detailing. The sanctuary has a square tower centered on the pedimented façade and paired paneled doors in an inset entrance with a broken pediment surround. Just three blocks to the southwest, the 1952-1953 First Presbyterian Church (AM0812) has a Flemish bond veneer and a projecting, pedimented portico with monumental columns and pilasters supporting a dentiled pediment and sheltering paired doors.



Figure 33: House, 1203 Aycock Avenue (AM2743)



Figure 34: Front Street Methodist Church, 138 South Fisher Street (AM0831)

Modern Architecture, 1949-1964

While Modern styles of architecture emerged as early as the 1920s, the Art Moderne and Modernist styles did not gain traction nationwide until the 1930s and 1950s, respectively, and their use in small and mid-sized American cities was delayed even further.

The Art Moderne style is generally tied to the industrial design of ships, airplanes, and automobiles, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, and was the prevalent modernistic mode after 1930. It is generally characterized by smooth surfaces, curved corners, and horizontal emphasis, producing a streamlined aesthetic.⁷² With its connotations of efficiency, the 1951 Art Moderne-style additions stand in contrast to the Romanesque and Italianate detailing of the turn-of-the-twentieth-century portions of the E. M. Holt Plaid Mills (AM0897). The additions, which wrap much of the earlier building, feature horizontal bands of projecting brick, bands of windows with continuous sills (now enclosed with brick), and entrances flanked by curved brick walls and topped by flat awnings below vertical bays of glass block.



Figure 35: E. M. Holt Plaid Mills, 661 Plaid Street (AM0897)



Figure 36: Walter M. Williams High School, 1307 South Church Street (AM2714)

The Art Moderne style was also employed for the 1948-1951 Walter M. Williams High School (AM2714), its overall aesthetic indicating an efficient, state-of-the-art building for learning, while its scale and symmetrical façade with cast-concrete detailing give the building a sense of formality and permanence. The main entrance and the entrances to the Auditorium and Gymnasium all feature doors with transoms separated by curved concrete and with a molded concrete surround. Bands of concrete across the façade and grouped windows with horizontal panes contribute to the horizontality of the building, while curved bays with two-and-a-half-story glass block windows at the intersections of the building's wings mimic the curved concrete at the entrances.

Modernism was introduced to North Carolinians in the late 1940s, but most residential examples statewide date to the 1950s and 1960s or later. While there are very few residential examples within the study area (and none that were surveyed), two local churches constructed sanctuaries in the 1960s, both with Modernist detailing. While the west part of Westminster Presbyterian Church was constructed in 1950 and features Colonial Revival-style elements, the 1962 sanctuary is more Modernist in style. The front-gabled building has a prowed gable sheltering a wall that is almost entirely covered with concrete panels that extend up to the roofline. Low gables on the side elevations of the sanctuary are also prowed, both sheltering entrances.

⁷² McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 582.

The most overtly Modernist building in the study area is the 1964 sanctuary for the Macedonia Lutheran Church (AM2685). While the Sunday School and Education wings of the church date to 1925 and 1953-1954 respectively, the 1964 sanctuary replaced an earlier structure built in 1909. The front-gabled building has a soaring façade of cast concrete with six narrow, vertical, pointed-arch stained-glass windows. A shallow, projecting concrete cross is elongated to extend the full height of the façade with the horizontal element projecting above the roofline. The side elevations of the Sanctuary are irregular: projecting angles step toward the rear of the building, each with a narrow vertical stained-glass window in the shallow part of the angled bays. One-story, hip-roofed wings project from the side elevations, resulting in a T-shaped plan, and more closely mimic the Gothic/Tudor detailing of the 1925 Sunday School wing.



Figure 37: Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1126 West Webb Avenue (AM2708)



Figure 38: Macedonia Lutheran Church, 421 West Front Street (AM2685)

FINDINGS

The 1982 and 1991 architectural surveys in West Burlington included 318 individually surveyed resources within the study area. The 2021 architectural survey update of West Burlington included the re-survey of 137 resources within the boundary of the 1984 West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District, while twenty-eight resources within the boundary were surveyed for the first time. Additionally, 181 resources outside of the historic district boundary were re-surveyed and seventy-seven additional resources outside of the boundary were newly surveyed. The 105 newly surveyed properties include one school, two churches, two early- to mid-twentieth-century neighborhoods, and approximately 74 dwellings that would likely be eligible for inclusion in an expansion of the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District. (See Appendix B for a complete list of all newly surveyed properties.)

West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District

Since the 1982 and 1991 surveys, changes within the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District have been minimal, due in part to its additional designation as a local historic district in which the Burlington Historic Preservation Commission plays a role in determining congruity with the special character of the district for new construction, alterations, additions, relocations, and demolitions. Nearly all of the 137 previously surveyed resources within the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District fall into the No Change category. Only twenty-one properties (fifteen percent) exhibit clear visual alteration. Of these, the majority of alterations can be classified as material replacement (doors, windows, or siding) and did not substantially change the appearance of the building, streetscape, or district. Additionally, the exteriors of twelve properties within the district boundary appear to have been rehabilitated since 1982/1991. These are listed in the following table. Thus, within the district, the extant architecture still reflects the prosperity of the early-twentieth-century textile industry in Burlington.

Table 1. Rehabilitated Properties within the National Register Historic District boundary

SS#	Name	Address	Date
AM0929	M. B. Lindsey House	503 W. Davis Street	c.1925
AM0871	John A. Hall House	706 W. Davis Street	c.1917
AM0932	House	721 W. Davis Street	c.1935
AM0934	House	811 W. Davis Street	c.1924
AM0935	House	912 W. Davis Street	c.1938
AM0936	House	919 W. Davis Street	c.1925
AM0954	Luther Cates House	303 S. Fisher Street	c.1925
AM0691	Bason House	414 W. Front Street	c.1910
AM0976	House	512 W. Front Street	c.1915
AM0870	Dan Hall House	619 W. Front Street	1897
AM0822	John L. Fonville House	610 Peele Street	c.1900
AM1026	House	415 Tarpley Street	c.1930

Six properties within the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District have been demolished since 1984. These properties, which represent less than 4% of the total resources included in the historic district, are located throughout the district, half of them

demolished by religious institutions. It should be noted that the house at 612 West Front Street (AM0891) was severely damaged by fire in August of 2021, while this report was being prepared, and will likely be demolished. No properties within the boundary of the historic district were classified as deteriorated or moved.

Table 2. Demolished Properties within the National Register Historic District boundary

SS#	Name	Address	Date
AM0937	House (Gone)	1010 W. Davis Street	c.1935
AM0833	Allen Gant House (Gone)	1021 Edgewood Avenue	c.1920
AM1143	Roy W. Malone House (Gone)	407 W. Front Street	c.1920
AM0710	(former) Levi Burke Funeral Home (Gone)	411 W. Front Street	c.1905
AM0978	House (Gone)	606 W. Front Street	c.1925
AM0815	First Reformed United Church of Christ Parsonage (Gone)	210 Tarpley Street	c.1917

Properties Outside of the National Register Historic District

An additional 181 properties surveyed in 1982 and 1991 are located outside the boundaries of the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District. Within this part of the study area, the findings include more alterations and demolition than was found within the historic district. Additionally, it is important to note that the areas outside of the historic district boundary were not comprehensively surveyed, either in 1982/1991 or as part of this survey. Rather, representative examples of building types were surveyed along with entire blocks surveyed as a single unit, or “blockface.” Thus, the number of properties identified in this project that have been classified as altered or demolished is not indicative of the total number of affected properties in the study area, which is much higher.

Of those properties surveyed in 1982/1991, sixty-four properties (thirty-five percent of the total surveyed) were classified as altered. While these alterations were generally material alterations—including the replacement of doors, windows, siding, or porches—the properties were more likely to have multiple altered components than those properties within the historic district boundary, resulting in a cumulative loss of material and historic integrity.

Demolition has had a greater impact on the historic resources located outside the historic district boundary. Since the 1982/1991 surveys, ten properties (or 5.5% of the resources) have been demolished. Six of the ten demolished properties are located in the southeast part of the study area, three of these demolished by a religious institution.

Table 3. Demolished Properties outside the National Register Historic District boundary

SS#	Name	Address	Date
AM0842	Gilliam House (Gone)	1003 S. Church Street	c.1895
AM0939	House (Gone)	312 W. Fifth Street	c.1920
AM0946	House (Gone)	409 W. Fifth Street	1898
AM0949	House (Gone)	415 W. Fifth Street	c.1925
AM1483	House (Gone)	427 W. Fifth Street	c.1900
AM1163	E. H. Moore Apartments (Gone)	317 Fountain Place	1933

AM1018	House (Gone)	1128 Plaid Street	c.1900
AM0740	Commercial Building (Gone)	648 W. Webb Avenue	Not specified
AM1310	S & W Grocery (Gone)	652 W. Webb Avenue	c.1880
AM1235	William L. Shoffner House (Gone)	708 W. Willowbrook Avenue	1938

Areas immediately adjacent to the historic district, including those areas included in a proposed boundary increase to the district (approved for the North Carolina Study List in 1992) were generally less affected. Several properties were even noted to have been rehabilitated since 1982/1991. None of the properties were classified as deteriorated or moved.

Table 4. Rehabilitated Properties outside the National Register Historic District boundary

SS#	Name	Address	Date
AM0923	House	811 Central Avenue	c.1933
AM0760	Francis Leon Davis House	914 W. Front Street	c.1923
AM0769	A. J. Ellington House	532 Hillcrest Avenue	1933

In summary, changes within the West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District have been limited to isolated material replacement and limited building demolition. Those properties located outside of the historic district were more likely to have experienced significant alteration or demolition.

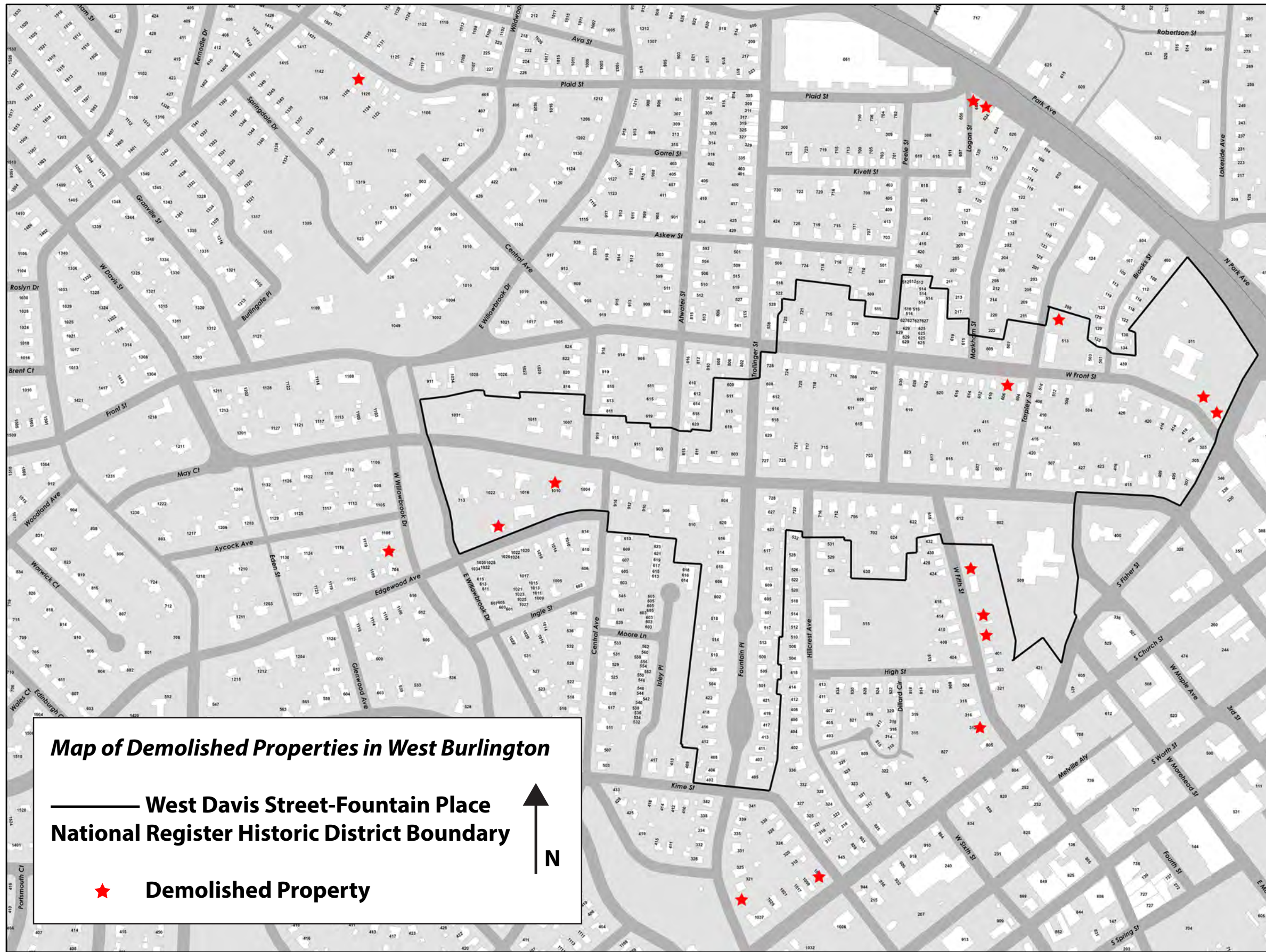


Figure 39: Map of Demolished Properties

RECOMMENDATIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER STUDY LIST

The following resources are proposed for placement on the North Carolina National Register Study List as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

Walter M. Williams High School, 1307 South Church Street

The Walter M. Williams High School (AM2714) appears eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its Educational and Civil Rights significance and under Criterion C for Architecture. Constructed from 1947 to 1955, the school was built on the site of the former Piedmont Country Club. A 1925 plat of Central Heights (the housing development to the east) denotes this irregularly shaped 23.5-acre parcel as the southern end of a “temporary golf course used by the Burlington Country Club.” The club, eventually renamed Piedmont Country Club, closed in 1945 and the Alamance Country Club opened outside of town in 1946. The south 42 acres were auctioned off from the estate of Ben V. May. Walter M. and Flonie C. Williams purchased the land for the construction of a new high school, selling the land to the Board of Education in October 1946 for \$10.⁷³



Figures 40-41: Walter M. Williams High School (AM2714). Top to bottom: façade facing north, main entrance detail.

The school was designed by Durham-based architect R. R. Markley as a two-story-with-raised-basement, H-shaped building. Work began on the main school building and the auditorium in 1949. The cornerstones on the front of the building read “AD” and “1949,” though the main school building was not completed until mid-1951. The building features a wide center section with flanking, angled east and west wings. The red brick exterior has parapet roofs (with later gabled roof behind it, not visible from the exterior), stacked metal-sash awning windows with continuous sills, a cast-concrete water table, and cast-concrete detailing. The center portion of the façade projects slightly beneath a stepped parapet with decorative metal cornice. A wide concrete stair flanked by brick cheek walls leads to the front entrance, featuring three three-light-over-one-panel doors, each with a two-light transom, all within a cast-concrete, Art Moderne-style surround. A single entrance and cornerstone are located at the ground level on each side of the stair. At the upper level are seven windows below a wide concrete panel that reads “Walter M Williams High School.” Narrow, fluted

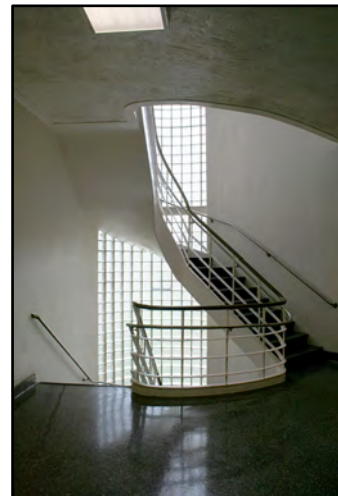
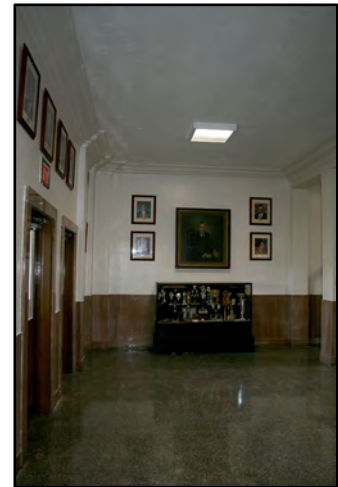
⁷³ “Walter M. Williams and wife, Flonie C. Williams to the Board of Education of Burlington City Administrative School Unit.” Deed Book 530, Pages 640-641, Alamance County Register of Deeds, Graham, North Carolina.

concrete panels flank the wide panel. The building is symmetrical, having five bays on each side of the projecting center section. At the intersection of the main block and the east and west wings are three-story, rounded bays with glass block extending nearly the full height of the elevation, lighting stairwells on the interior.

The bifurcated side wings contain four bays on the façade and ten bays, angled at the center, on the east and west elevations. Finishes on these elevations match those on the façade. A projecting entrance bay near the north end of the east elevation features paired aluminum-framed glass doors with a two-light transom all within a cast-stone surround. Above the entrance are paired windows, and a cast-concrete panel in the parapet reads “Administration.” A matching wing on the west elevation features doors accessed by a wide concrete stair with brick cheek walls, and the panel in the parapet reads “Physical Education.” The rear of the main building originally opened to a courtyard, now a paved parking area. It is less decorative than the façade and features none of the decorative cast stone detailing. It has a similar window pattern and a projecting rounded bay centered on the elevation that contains the stair opposite the main entrance to the building.

The interior of the main building retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, including original double-loaded corridors with terrazzo floors, plaster walls, metal lockers inset into the walls, and solid wood doors with textured or frosted lights in the upper half. The front entrance hall and administrative wing retain marble wainscot. Circular stairs retain original railings and most bathrooms retain original tile floors and walls. Classrooms retain wood-framed bulletin and whiteboards, the latter installed over existing blackboards. Spaces throughout have dropped, acoustic tile ceilings. When the original basement-level cafeteria was renovated c.2000, only the original terrazzo floors were retained.

A 1951 auditorium wing, the first building to be completed, is located at the northeast corner of the school, adjacent to the Administration entrance. It is a massive, two-story, Art Moderne-style wing with a five-bay façade. The center three bays are flanked by brick pilasters and contain three pairs of aluminum-framed glass doors with two-light transoms, all in a cast-stone surround with rounded concrete between the doors. At the second-floor level, the auditorium wing has replacement windows with opaque panels above two-light windows, all with a continuous cast-concrete sill and lintel. A cast-concrete sign in the stepped parapet reads “Auditorium.” A cast-concrete cornice between the second floor and parapet wraps around the northeast corner of the wing. The side and rear elevations, separated into bays by projecting pilasters, are devoid of windows and have only paired exit doors

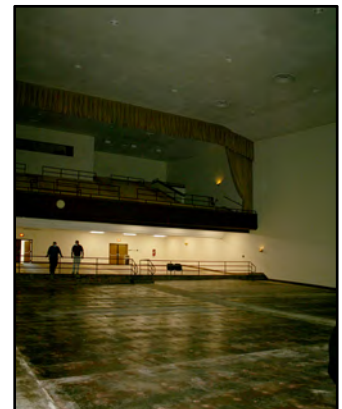


Figures 42-44: Walter M. Williams High School (AM2714). Top to bottom: main entrance hall, stairwell, typical hall.

spaced along the ground level. The roof steps down to the west and a wing at the far west houses backstage functions and band/music rooms. This two-story-with-raised-basement wing is four bays wide and features replacement windows and a stepped parapet.

The interior of the auditorium is currently being renovated with new systems, lighting, fire suppression, and seating. It retains many historic features including a lobby with terrazzo floors and a terrazzo compass incorporated into the flooring. It has large round columns with lit capitals supporting the balcony above, which is accessed by original wide stairs on each side of the lobby. Ticket windows and paired solid wood doors also remain. Office spaces on the west end of the lobby are being converted to bathrooms. The auditorium space itself has had the seating removed but retains sloped concrete floors, plaster walls and ceilings, metal railings, and curtains at the stage and framing the balcony. The two-tiered stage has original wood floors, stairs, and diagonal sheathing on the front walls. Flanking the stage are curved walls covered with wide wood lattice, behind which are the pipes from the original pipe organ, the organ unit itself having been replaced. With a 2,500-person seating capacity, including an interior balcony, it is the largest facility of its kind in Alamance County and, at the time of its construction, it ranked second in the state in seating capacity behind Raleigh’s Memorial Auditorium.⁷⁴

A gymnasium, completed in 1955, is located at the northwest corner of the main building, adjacent to the Physical Education entrance. The two-story building has a gabled roof behind stepped parapets on the north and south elevations. The façade on the south elevation matches the east façade of the auditorium, though the word “Gymnasium” is found in the parapet. The side elevations are each six bays deep. Projecting brick pilasters like those on the auditorium separate the bays. There are louvered windows at the upper level and metal-framed awning windows at the basement level. An entrance on the north elevation is located in a projecting shed-roofed bay and sheltered by a shed roof on brick piers accessed by two concrete stairs. The interior retains its original metal trusses, brick walls, and balcony on the south end. Wood floors and bleachers have been replaced. The lobby retains terrazzo flooring, marble wainscot, square columns supporting the balcony above, and a coffered ceiling with coved molding. Stairs on each side lead to the balcony and to the basement-level locker rooms. A



Figures 45-48: Walter M. Williams High School (AM2714). Top to bottom: auditorium exterior, stage detail, interior, lobby.

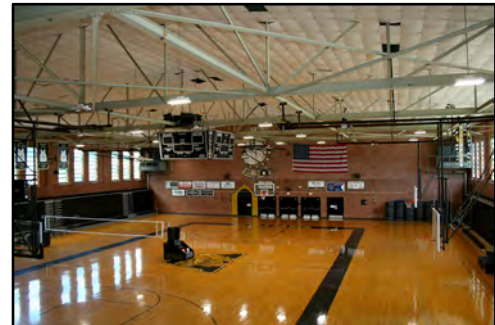
⁷⁴ “Interior of Auditorium at New High School,” *Burlington Daily-Times News*, May 19, 1951, www.newspapers.com (accessed September 2021).

swimming pool appears on the basement level of the original gymnasium plans but was never constructed. The gymnasium was completed in 1955 and named in June 1993 in honor of Dr. Lewis Everett Spikes, Superintendent of the Burlington City Schools from 1936 to 1963.

Bulldog Alley, a north-south private campus street, separates the school buildings from the athletic facilities to the west. These include the c.1947 Tommy Spoon Memorial Field House (named in memory of a star member of the football team and former athletic director who died in the late 1990s), the Kernodle football field (named in honor of Dr. Kernodle, the long-time football team physician), and a baseball field located southwest of the football stadium, near the intersection of Tarleton Avenue and Country Club Drive. The 1947-1949 Burlington City Schools Memorial Stadium includes a grassy field encircled by a track and concrete bleachers with aluminum seating along the east and west sides of the field. Stuccoed buildings on the east side of the stadium hold restrooms, concessions, and upper-level press boxes. Concrete-block ticket booths are also located on this side of the field adjacent to Bulldog Alley, and a metal sign supported by metal posts marks the entrances, reading "Burlington City Schools Memorial Stadium." A plaque on the main building notes that it was "constructed [between 1947-1949] as a living memorial to the veterans of World War II by the schools and citizens of Burlington, NC."

A c.2000 one-story, brick-veneered classroom building stands north of the school and east of the stadium, and is the only building on the campus that would be considered non-contributing.

The school was named in honor of philanthropist, industrialist, and former Burlington City Schools chairman Walter M. Williams. Williams, born in 1891, was a native of Liberty (Randolph County), North Carolina. He worked in the textile industry, serving as executive vice president and chairman of the board of Virginia Mills, Inc., in nearby Swepsonville, North Carolina, from 1940 to 1959. Williams also served on the Board of Aldermen, as chair of the Burlington School District's school board, and was instrumental in the



Figures 49-52: Walter M. Williams High School (AM2714). Top to bottom: Exterior facing east, gymnasium, lobby, Burlington City Schools Memorial Stadium

purchase of the land for the current campus.⁷⁵ Williams was resistant to having the school named for him. As a result, while the Board of Education voted to name the school for him in 1945 (after the purchase of the campus property), it didn't announce that decision until 1949. Large portraits of Walter M. Williams and his wife, Flonie Williams, face each other across the school's lobby.

The Walter M. Williams High School served an important role in school integration and the broader Civil Rights movement in Burlington, some of which is recorded in Daniel Koehler's documentary *Burlington: A City Divided*. The school was constructed to educate white students, while Jordan Sellers High School in northeastern Burlington served Black students. Following the *Brown vs Board of Education* ruling in 1954, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act addressed school segregation by granting authority to withhold federal funding from segregated school systems. In response, city officials adopted a four-year gradual integration plan. However, because students could only be assigned to the school closest to their home and reassignment was voluntary, as late as 1968 the district had failed to make any significant change in the ratios of white and Black students at any of its schools.⁷⁶

While the school board began construction of Hugh M. Cummings High School, an integrated school that would replace Jordan Sellers High School by 1970, racial tensions within Walter M. Williams High School came to a head in May of 1969. Four African American students at Williams High School auditioned for the cheerleading squad, which took place in front of the student body and was decided by student body vote. They were booed by white students during their tryouts, and none of the four students was selected for the squad. The following Wednesday, May 14, a physical altercation took place around noon in the Williams High School parking lot between white students from the school and African American students from both Water M. Williams and Jordan Sellers high schools during which three white students were struck with belts resulting in injuries requiring treatment at Memorial Hospital of Alamance. A second altercation took place between a white student and an African American student in the hallway of the school as students returned to classes following the lunch hour. The Burlington police arrested both students but only handcuffed the African American student, further increasing tensions among students. Shortly afterward, a third altercation took place among approximately thirty white and African American students remaining in the parking lot, and around 2:00 pm the police forced the closure of the school for the day.⁷⁷



Figure 53: "Police Observe as Pupils Board Bus," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, May 15, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

⁷⁵ "Walter M. Williams Dies," *The [Raleigh] News and Observer*, May 5, 1959, www.newspapers.com (accessed September 2021).

⁷⁶ Jim Bissett, "The Dilemma Over Moderates: School Desegregation in Alamance County, North Carolina," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 81, No. 4, November 2015, 894-895.

⁷⁷ William Murray Vincent, *Historic Alamance County: A Biographical History* (San Antonio, TX: Historical Publishing Network, 2009), 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March

When the school reopened the following day, over three hundred students were absent from school, including all but four of the African American students enrolled there, and local police remained present at the school throughout the day. A meeting between African American students, school officials, and city leaders also took place the following evening at the City Recreation Center on Jeffries Street. During this meeting, students presented a list of grievances including accusations of police brutality against the handcuffed African American student the previous day. No action was taken during the meeting, as Principal Jesse W. Harrington said the school constitution had to be taken into consideration before granting any requests, though new school rules had been enacted earlier that day prohibiting students from entering school grounds after 6:00 pm, prohibiting students from entering the parking lots during school hours, and shortening lunch periods by ten minutes.⁷⁸

Rather than attend classes, the African American students at Walter M. Williams High School staged a sit-in on the lawn of the school the following day, Friday, May 16. They were joined by approximately two hundred students from Jordan Sellars High School, who walked out of class and marched to Williams High School to join the sit-in. This peaceful protest soon escalated to a march on the school district's administrative offices on Fisher Street to demand formation of a Black Committee, a Black publishing center, a Black-operated board of inquiry to investigate violence against African American students, and the formation of a Black social or cultural center at the school. Around one hundred students entered the building, turning over tables and chairs, pulling books from shelves and papers from desks, and breaking windows. Fifteen students were arrested, charged with disorderly conduct and malicious damage, and later released on \$100 bond.⁷⁹

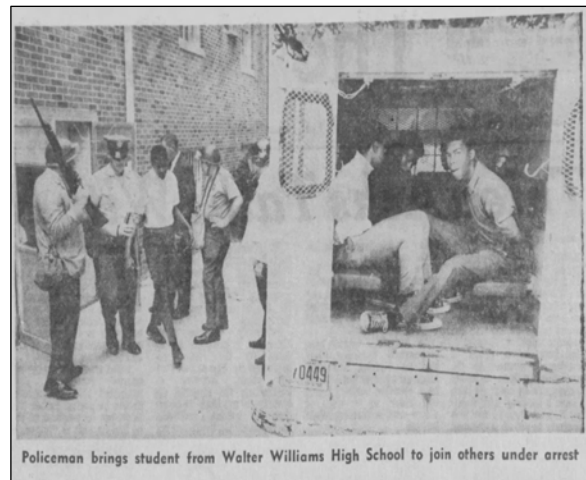


Figure 54: "Policeman Brings Student from Walter Williams High School to Join Others Under Arrest [at the school district administration building]," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, May 18, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

14, 1993, 66; ; Jim Lasley, "WHS Resumes Its Classes; Most Black Students Absent," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 15, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

⁷⁸ Lasley, "WHS Resumes Its Classes," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*; Jim Lasley, "Grievances to Be Aired at Meeting Here Today," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 15, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Jim Lasley, "New Rules are Made at School," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 15, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

⁷⁹ Vincent, *Historic Alamance County*, 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 66; Jim Lasley, "Store Gutted in Fire Bombing," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); "Guard Units Patrol City, Youth Killed," *Statesville Record & Landmark*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Jim Lasley, "Guard to Remain Ready for Call," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 19, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

These protests further escalated into a violent riot that resulted in the burning of three local stores and the exchange of gunfire between police officers and rioters. It required the combined efforts of approximately six hundred officers from the Burlington Police and Police Auxiliary, the Alamance County Sheriff's Office, the North Carolina State Police, the North Carolina Department of Corrections, officers from the North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control system, the State Bureau of Investigation, and the National Guard to end the violence. Twenty-five African Americans were arrested, three African Americans were injured, and Leon Mebane, a fifteen-year-old African American middle schooler, was killed. The City declared a state of emergency and a county-wide curfew was instituted, prohibiting travel on public streets, possession or sale of firearms, sale or consumption of alcohol, and the sale of gasoline from 8:00 pm on Saturday, May 17, until noon the following Monday. Two hundred and fifty people, white and Black, were arrested for violating the curfew. Those arrested were housed at the Alamance County Jail and, when the jail became full, on North Carolina Department of Corrections buses until the curfew was lifted or they posted the \$50 bond.⁸⁰

Following these events, Burlington Mayor W.L. Beamon lamented, "...last night and this morning will stay with us in our history as one of our darkest."⁸¹ Likewise, one resident commented to the local newspaper, "It just wasn't the same... our city wasn't the same this morning."⁸² But gradually, racial tensions in the city eased. When Walter M. Williams High School reopened on Monday morning, a number of African American students met with the principal, Jesse W. Harrington, and other members of the school district administration, to discuss options to improve conditions for African American students. The following evening, African American students from the school, along with their parents, presented a list of requests to the Alamance County Human Relations Council, including respect for Black students and faculty and action against their abuse, increased representation on the school board and within student clubs, and increased communication between African American students and school administrators. Some of the African American students who tried out for the Williams High School cheerleading squad were added to the group, though how many Black students made the squad is not clear. Jerome Evans, a former football coach at Jordan Sellars High School, was appointed head football coach at Williams High School in 1970, becoming the first African American to serve as the



Figure 55: "Burlington-A Ghost Town Under Curfew," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, May 19, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed August 2021).)

⁸⁰ Vincent, *Historic Alamance County*, 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 66; Jim Lasley, "Black Youth Killed in Night of Violence," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com; Lasley, "Store Guttled in Fire Bombing," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*; Jim Lasley, "Curfew in Effect Until Removed," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Jim Lasley, "Calm Falls Over City," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 19, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Jim Lasley, "Guard to Remain Ready for Call," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 19, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

⁸¹ Lasley, "Curfew in Effect Until Removed," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*.

⁸² A. Howard White, "It Was a Long, Tragic Night for Burlington; Evaluations are Made," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

head coach at a formerly all-white school in the South, though this change resulted in protests from white families in the district until C.A. Frye, the white football coach replaced by Evans, was appointed athletic director. A Human Relations Council was also formed at the school, with space guaranteed in each school newspaper to report on its activities.⁸³

The period surrounding integration at Walter M. Williams High School is documented in part in the book *Black Coach*, which tells the story of head football coach Jerome Evans, who served from 1970 to 1976. Evans, a former football coach at Jordan Sellers High School, was appointed at least in part to address concerns raised by African American students, their parents, and community members during the events of May of 1969.⁸⁴ Additionally, in 1971, after a district court in Greensboro ruled that the school system would need to fully integrate all schools in order to comply with the Civil Rights Act, the high schools were finally integrated. Ninth grade students were moved to the former Jordan Sellers High School campus, and Walter M. Williams High School housed tenth through twelfth graders until 1982, when all four grades began attending Williams High School.

The proposed Study List boundary should include the entire 23.5-acre parcel historically associated with the school and include all of the school buildings and athletic fields and facilities. The school stands well back from South Church Street, on a grassy lawn that is itself a character-defining feature of the site. The property is further bounded by Country Club Drive (the street named for the former country club in this location), Tarleton and Arlington avenues, and Sunset and Parkview drives.

The Period of Significance extends from 1947 to 1971, beginning with the construction of the stadium and fieldhouse in 1947 and extending to 1971, when a Greensboro district court ordered the full integration of all Burlington schools.⁸⁵ While the complex remains in use as a high school campus today, it does not meet Criterion Consideration G, because its continued use is not of exceptional significance.

⁸³ Vincent, *Historic Alamance County*, 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 66; Jim Lasley, "Black Youth Killed in Night of Violence," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com; Lasley, "Store Gutted in Fire Bombing," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*; "One Killed in Riots in Burlington," *The High Point Enterprise*, May 18, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Lasley, "Calm Falls Over City," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*; "Work Begins on Black Grievances, Requests," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 21, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); "School Grievances are Listed," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 21, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

⁸⁴ Vincent, *Historic Alamance County*, 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 66; Jim Lasley, "Black Youth Killed in Night of Violence," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com.

⁸⁵ Jim Bissett, "The Dilemma Over Moderates: School Desegregation in Alamance County, North Carolina," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 81, No. 4, November 2015, 917-921.



Figure 56: Map of Walter M. Williams High School (AM2714)

West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District Boundary Increase

The 1984 West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District (AM0491) includes 165 primary resources, encompassing the “highest concentration of surviving late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses built for the city’s growing middle class.”⁸⁶ The district extends along West Davis Street from South Fisher Street to East Willowbrook Avenue, along Fountain Place/Trollinger Street from Kime Street north to West Front Street, and along West Front Street from South Fisher Street to Trollinger Street.

While the 1984 district included a high concentration of architecturally significant residences and churches, the boundary did not include numerous modest early- and mid-twentieth-century buildings that stand directly adjacent to the historic district and retain high material integrity. Further, it did not include residential development from the 1930s through the 1960s that stands immediately adjacent to the district. Instead, the nomination noted, but did not include within the boundary, post-1930 construction in the 800-1000 blocks of West Front Street and west of Willowbrook Drive, as well as “undistinguished” late 1920s and post-1930s construction on Hillcrest and Central avenues. It further noted small lots with bungalows and period houses along Brooks, Tarpley, and Markham streets; vernacular houses on Fifth Street; and mill housing associated with the E. M. Holt Plaid Mills.

In 1992, five areas adjacent to the historic district were placed on the North Carolina Study List. These included working-class housing in the 100 block of Brooks Street; middle-class housing centered on the intersection of West Front and Atwater streets; middle-class housing in the 300 block of Fountain Place; middle-class housing in the 500 block of West Fifth street and along the 300-500 blocks of Hillcrest Avenue; and larger-scale, upper-class housing west of West Willowbrook Drive, along West Front and West Davis streets, Aycock, Edgewood, and Tarleton drives, and May Court.

This Study List recommendation serves to amend the 1992 Study List boundaries to include areas that fully reflect the middle- and upper-class development of West Burlington while excluding altered vernacular and working-class housing around the periphery of the district. It also includes a small boundary reduction to remove incompatible multi-family apartment buildings constructed in the 1980s.

The Boundary Increase includes 174 houses in four residential areas:



Figures 57-58: West Davis Street-Fountain Place NRHD Boundary Increase Area A. Top to bottom: 819 Central Avenue; 815 Central Avenue.

⁸⁶ Claudia P. Roberts, “West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District,” Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1984, Section 7, 1.

Boundary Increase Area A extends along the 800-block of Central Avenue and includes the south side of the 900-block of West Front Street and the west side of the 600-block of Atwood Avenue. It includes fourteen early- to mid-twentieth-century vernacular houses, Craftsman-style bungalows, and small-scale Ranch houses. The houses have medium integrity—several have replacement windows or siding—but collectively represent a typical streetscape of the era. Area A, which extends the boundary of the district to the north, is bounded by modern infill on its west, altered housing to its east, and a later mid-twentieth-century neighborhood across West Front Street to its north.



Boundary Increase Area B is the largest of the increase areas and illustrates the continued development of West Burlington (and the West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District) from the 1930s through the 1950s. It includes approximately 79 properties along West Davis Street, Aycock and Edgewood avenues, May Court, and Tarleton Avenue—all west of West Willowbrook Drive. Houses in the core of Area B are large-scale, generally Colonial Revival-style houses on large, well-landscaped lots. They include the c.1930 Ben V. May House (AM1145), a grand Tudor Revival-style house placed on the North Carolina Study List in 1992, the c.1935 W. W. Sellers House (AM1224), and the c.1941 Walter M. Williams House (AM1293). These houses, constructed by leaders in the community and textile industry, illustrate the continued appeal of West Burlington, throughout the mid-twentieth century, as a residential area for Burlington’s upper class.

Lots along the 1100-block of Edgewood Avenue and the 1300-block of West Davis Street are smaller in scale and contain Craftsman-style houses, Period Cottages, and Ranch houses, but their age and overall character is consistent with the adjacent housing and the rest of the district. The overall integrity of buildings throughout Area B is high and while there are several infill houses in the 1100-block of West Davis Street, they are generally in scale with the surrounding historic houses and do not detract from the district overall. Area B is bordered by mid-twentieth-century housing developments, made up almost entirely of Ranch houses, to the north and west and by Central Heights (AM2856) to its south.

Figures 59-62: West Davis Street-Fountain Place NRHD Boundary Increase Area B. Top to bottom: 1113 Aycock Avenue; 1217 Aycock Avenue; 806 Tarleton Avenue; 1314 West Davis Street.

Boundary Increase Area C includes eleven Craftsman-style houses dating largely from the 1930s and extending along the 600-block of Central Avenue and the 1000-block of Edgewood

Avenue. The overall integrity of buildings throughout this area is high. Area C adjoins the district to the north and is flanked on the east and west by later, multi-family development. Single-family housing to the south largely dates to the 1940s and 1950s but has low material integrity.

Boundary Increase Area D extends along the north end of the 400-block of West Fifth Street, the 300- to 500-blocks of Hillcrest Avenue, the 300-block of Fountain Place, and the 400-blocks of Kime Street and East Willowbrook Avenue. It includes approximately seventy intact early-twentieth-century vernacular and Craftsman-style houses along Fifth Street and Hillcrest Avenue and mid-twentieth-century Colonial Revival-, Craftsman-, and Minimal Traditional-style houses along Fountain Place, Kime Street, and East Willowbrook Avenue. It also includes the c.1931 Hillcrest Elementary School (AM0879), a three-story, brick school building placed on the North Carolina Study List in 1992. The buildings have medium integrity—several have replacement windows or siding—but collectively represent typical twentieth-century, middle-class housing in West Burlington. Area D is bounded by altered vernacular housing to the southeast and southwest, and later commercial development to the south.

Duplexes located in the 100-block of Brooks Street were included in the proposed 1992 Boundary Increase. However, many of these buildings have experienced material alteration. Further, the small scale and minimal detailing of the duplexes, generally constructed for textile workers, are not in keeping with the middle- and upper-class housing of the remainder of the district, but are instead more consistent with mill- and privately-constructed worker housing to the northwest. Thus, they are not proposed for inclusion in the current Boundary Increase.

The buildings within the proposed boundary increase have their topography, setbacks, and overall building size and scale in common with those in the existing West Davis Street-Fountain Place National Register Historic District. While the most prominent resources within the existing district illustrate fashionable architectural trends, buildings in the expansion areas follow the same styles and echo the same forms as those within the historic district, but are generally less



Figures 63-64: West Davis Street-Fountain Place NRHD Boundary Increase Area C. Top to bottom: 607 Central Avenue; 614 Central Avenue.

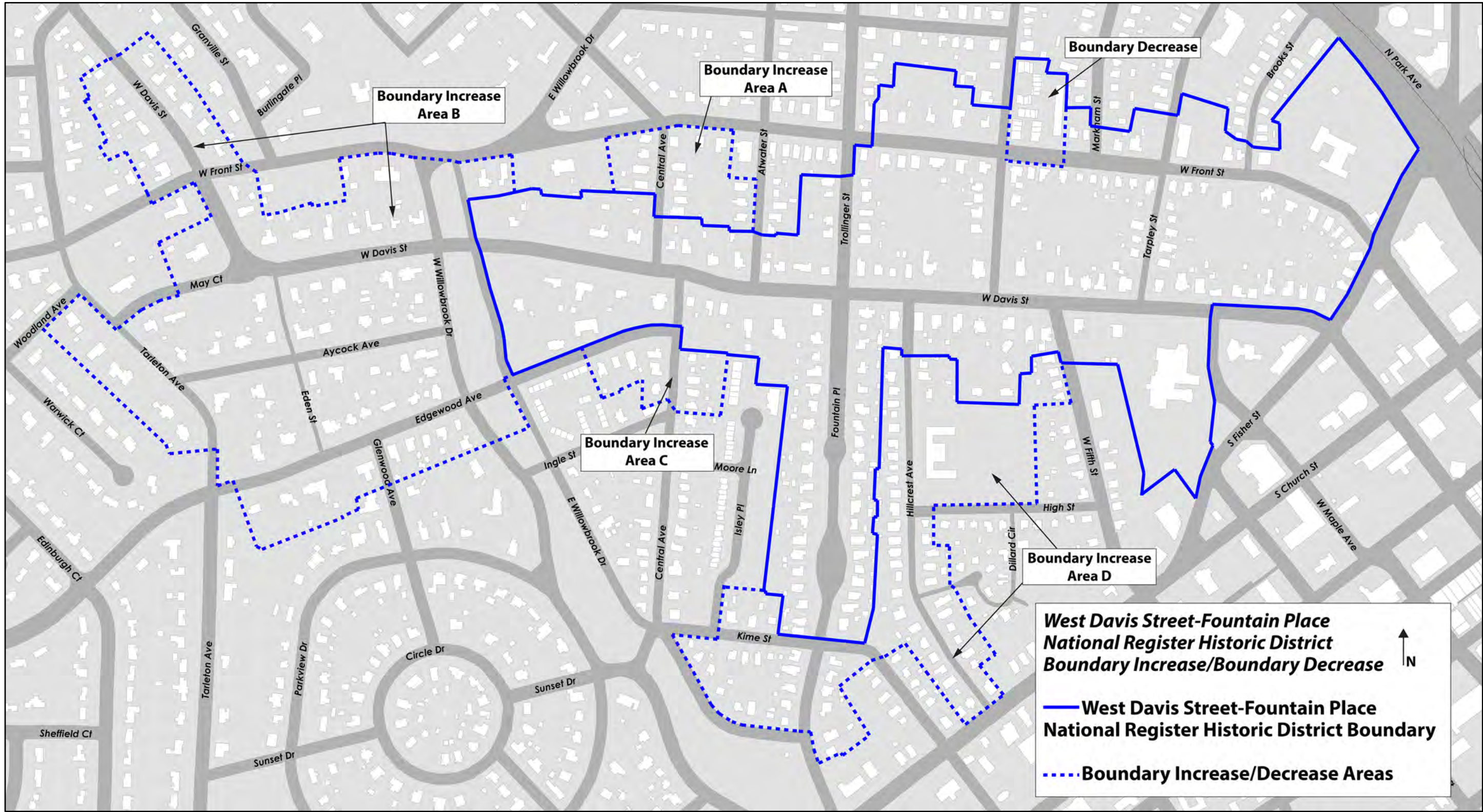


Figures 65-66: West Davis Street-Fountain Place NRHD Boundary Increase Area D. Top to bottom: 430-432 West Fifth Street; 332 Fountain Place.

ornate, representing middle- to working-class residents and mid-twentieth-century architectural styles. The boundary increase is largely bounded by incompatible residential and commercial construction, either altered or from a later period of development.

The West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic District Boundary Increase is significant under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and Criterion C for Architecture. The expansion areas include a significant collection of early- to mid-twentieth-century residential resources, illustrating the substantial growth of Burlington and its textile industry during this period. The period of significance for the Boundary Increase Areas extends from c.1920, the approximate date of the earliest extant resources, to the early 1960s, though the exact dates should be drawn from the building dates of houses in the boundary increase.

A Boundary Decrease should be considered for the multi-family housing complex at the northeast corner of West Front and Peele streets. The buildings, dated as 1975 and labeled as “intrusive” in the 1984 nomination, are not oriented to face the street and are not in keeping with the character with the single-family houses on West Front Street.



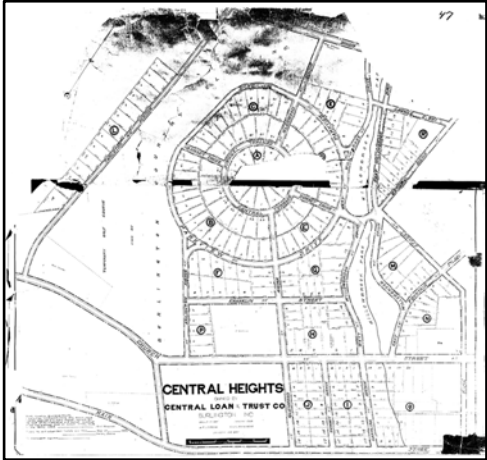
Central Heights Historic District

The Central Heights Historic District (AM2856) appears eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and Criterion C for Architecture. Located on the west end of the study area, the neighborhood was platted in 1925 and includes curvilinear streets, planned green space along a natural ravine, and land reserved for a “temporary golf course.”

Though the neighborhood features a relatively flat terrain, the streets at the center, along Circle Drive, are at the highest elevation and land to the east slopes down toward a natural ravine that extends along Willowbrook Drive. Streets are arranged with Circle Drive and Parkview Drive forming concentric circles and other streets intersecting the circles in a loose grid. Streets are paved with concrete gutters, though sidewalks are generally limited to Circle Drive and Glenwood Avenue, typical of the automobile-oriented suburbs of the 1940s and 1950s. Lots are wedge-shaped in the center of the development and generally rectangular throughout the rest of the neighborhood. The irregularly shaped blocks result in varied depths.

The center of the neighborhood was developed first, in the 1930s and 1940s, when Colonial Revival-, Craftsman-, and Tudor Revival-style houses were constructed along Circle Drive. Lots on the east end of the neighborhood overlooking the green space (now Burlington Arboretum) were also developed in this fashion. Low stone walls along Circle Drive and deep lawns along Parkview Drive that slope down toward the arboretum are a response to the natural topography of the area. Mature trees are present in the center of the neighborhood.

Construction after World War II continued to the north and west, spurred in part by the construction of Walter M. Williams High School (AM2714) and the subdivision of the former golf course into additional lots at the northwest end of the neighborhood. Houses from this era include smaller Period Cottages, Minimal Traditional-style houses, and Ranch houses, largely from the 1950s. The topography in these areas is generally more level and the landscaping is less developed. Despite the variation in housing size and style, the spacing and setbacks of buildings are



Figures 68-71: Central Heights (AM2856). From top to bottom: 1925 plat of Central Heights, 503-507 Circle Drive, 434-438 Parkview Drive

consistent throughout the neighborhood.

The neighborhood is one of several middle-class developments in Burlington that were platted in the 1920s including Fountain Place, Brookwood, and Country Club Estates in west Burlington and Beverly Hills in north Burlington. Fountain Place and Brookwood both had minimum housing values included in the covenants, resulting in larger houses on larger lots that were more consistent with the adjacent early-twentieth-century development along West Davis Street. Country Club Estates, while platted in the 1920s, wasn't developed until after World War II with small Minimal Traditional-style houses and Ranches. Central Heights is most consistent with the Beverly Hills Historic District (NR2009), with a curvilinear street pattern and houses ranging from the Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Period Revival styles of the 1930s to the Minimal Traditional and Ranch houses of the 1940s and 1950s.

The Central Heights neighborhood retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. While artificial siding is present, many houses retain original windows, additions are relegated to the rear of buildings, and there is little infill. The street patterns and landscaping are characteristic of the early- to mid-twentieth century development.

The period of significance extends from 1925, when the neighborhood was platted, to c.1960, when the last homes were constructed.⁸⁷ In considering the boundary of the Central Heights Historic District, properties in the 600-block of Glenwood Avenue and the north side of the 500-block of Parkview Drive, while not part of the original 1925 plat, share characteristics with the rest of the neighborhood and should be included. Conversely, properties along South Church Street are commercial in nature and should be excluded from the boundary, along with residential development southeast of South Church Street, a wide, four-lane thoroughfare that bisects the platted neighborhood. Finally, properties east of East Willowbrook Drive, while platted with Central Heights, are adjacent to, and visually consistent with, the West Davis Street-Fountain Place Historic



⁸⁷ Alamance County tax records indicate only two houses constructed in the 1960s and approximately seven houses constructed after 1970.

Figures 72-76: Central Heights (AM2856). From top to bottom: 403 Circle Drive, 508-514 Circle Drive, 406 Circle Drive, 531-537 Circle Drive, 540 Circle Drive.

District and should be considered as part of a Boundary Increase of that district.



Figure 77: Map of Central Heights Study List Historic District (AM2856)

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Several resources have histories that are complicated or unclear and thus require further study. Additionally, although tangential to the study area, the following topics go beyond the scope of the current survey project.

E.M. Holt Plaid Mills

The E.M. Holt Plaid Mills opened in 1883 on Plaid Street and remains the oldest extant mill in the city. The mill grew and expanded steadily through the early decades of the twentieth century and was one of the city's largest employers. In 1934, employees at the Plaid Mills participated in the United Textile Workers union strike, which affected textile mills throughout the South. On September 14, as workers attempted to cross peaceful picket lines, they were stopped by a traveling motorcade of picketers, requiring the assistance of the National Guard to disperse the crowd. Later that day, several sticks of stolen dynamite were thrown at the mill, and ten people were arrested in connection with the event. The League for Southern Labor supported the men, who they believed were scapegoats, and raised funds for their defense through a pamphlet campaign. Four of the accused accepted deals and testified against the other six, who were all convicted at trial. More research about these events is needed to determine whether the mill may be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for Social History – Labor History.



Figure 78: E. M. Holt Plaid Mills (AM0897), 661 Plaid Street.

Though the mill complex was expanded several times, the exterior retains sufficient architectural integrity to meet eligibility requirements for the National Register. However, the interior of the complex was not accessible for assessment and requires further investigation to determine eligibility for the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture.

A small commercial district related to the mill complex remains extant on Trollinger Street, and a mill village extends west and south of the mill complex. These commercial and residential buildings appear to have been highly altered but nonetheless should be evaluated for significance and architectural integrity in order to evaluate their eligibility for inclusion in a historic district.



Figure 79: Commercial Buildings (AM1099), 300-block Trollinger Street.

African American Resources

Burlington has a rich and largely unstudied African American history. The limited geographic area of this survey update included only historically white housing developments, the E. M. Plaid Holt Mills and associated development, and the Walter M. Williams High School, which is why only the school integration era of African American history is covered in the report.

Burlington faced many challenges during school integration. When freedom of choice plans were deemed inadequate to comply with school integration requirements in 1968, the Burlington School System closed Jordan Sellars High School for African American students, integrated the formerly all-white Walter M. Williams High School, and constructed a new, integrated school, Hugh M. Cummings High School. The transition at Walter M. Williams High School was difficult and included controversies over staff appointments and membership on student teams and clubs, some resulting in outbreaks of violence in the city. More research on these events at Williams High School is needed, as well as the formation and activities of the Human Relations Council established at the school during integration, and similar or related events that may have taken place at Cummings High School.

Although integration of the high schools began in 1968, the middle and elementary schools remained partially segregated. As a result, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), which was tasked with enforcing the Civil Rights Act, determined the school district was out of compliance with the Civil Rights Act and therefore in danger of losing federal funding for the 1969-1970 school year. As a result, J.F. Gunn Elementary School, previously an all-African American school, became a fully integrated elementary school known as Sellars-Gunn Elementary School, Jordan Sellars High School became a fully integrated ninth grade school known as Sellars-Gunn Junior High School, and the formerly all-white Elmira School was closed, resulting in weeks of protesting by the parents of Elmira School students and the establishment of a new private school. More research about these events and about the integration of the other middle and elementary schools throughout the city is needed to fully understand the city's integration story and to place the events at Walter M. Williams High School within appropriate and complete context.

The race riot of May 16, 1969, was a defining event in Burlington's history. Rooted in conflict between African American students and white students and administrators at Walter M. Williams High School, protests at the school and administrative offices escalated into a violent riot that resulted in the burning of three local stores and the exchange of gunfire between police officers and rioters. It required the combined efforts of approximately six hundred officers from the Burlington Police and Police Auxiliary, the Alamance County Sheriff's Office, the North Carolina State Police, the North Carolina Department of Corrections, officers from the North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control system, the State Bureau of Investigation, and the National Guard to end the violence.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ William Murray Vincent, *Historic Alamance County: A Biographical History* (San Antonio, TX: Historical Publishing Network, 2009), 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 66; Jim Lasley, "Black Youth Killed in Night of Violence," *Burlington Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com; Jim Lasley, "Store Gutted in Fire Bombing," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Jim Lasley, "Curfew in Effect Until Removed," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Jim Lasley, "Calm Falls Over City," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 19, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Jim Lasley, "Guard to Remain Ready for

Much of the confrontation between rioters and police took place at the Fox Fish Market on Rauhut Street, where police responded to reports of a fire. After extinguishing the fire, a force of about one hundred and fifty officers clashed with a crowd of approximately two hundred rioters, resulting in the use of tear gas and night sticks to disperse the crowd. Twenty-five rioters were arrested. Officers and fire fighters next responded to a fire at the Country Grocery on Rauhut Street, which was completely destroyed. A few hours later, police were called back to the store, and Leon Mebane, a fifteen-year-old African American student at Turrentine Middle School, was killed in a confrontation between officers and looters at the store. Police officials initially reported that eight to ten rioters, including Mebane, were looting the store when they arrived, and when the rioters refused to obey police commands to stop, two Burlington police officers and two State Bureau of Investigation officers opened fire. In the days following the incident, newspapers statewide quoted police officials stating both that Mebane was killed by crossfire between rioters and police, and that the source of the shots was unknown. Evelyn Richmond was shot with buckshot in the hips and back when police responded to a call about a broken window at a liquor store, though Richmond was not inside the store at the time and the details of the incident are unclear. Additionally, D. Everett Phillips was shot in the hand while walking down a street, though the details of this incident are also unclear.⁸⁹

The City declared a state of emergency and a county-wide curfew was instituted, prohibiting travel on public streets, possession or sale of firearms, sale or consumption of alcohol, and the sale of gasoline from 8:00 pm on Saturday, May 17, until noon the following Monday. Two hundred and fifty people, white and Black, were arrested for violating the curfew. Those arrested were housed at the Alamance County Jail and, when the jail became full, on North Carolina Department of Corrections buses until the curfew was lifted or they posted the \$50 bond. The only major outbreak of violence during the curfew took place on Saturday when officers were called to remove debris that had been piled on Rauhut Street and exchanged fire with people taking shelter in several nearby houses. Officers gave occupants an opportunity to surrender prior to the use of tear gas, and most complied. At least thirty-five people were arrested and charged with breach of the peace, and Cleatis Wade suffered a gunshot wound to the neck, though he survived the incident.⁹⁰

On Sunday, May 18, a memorial service was held for Leon Mebane at the First Baptist Church on Apple Street. Reportedly, three to four hundred people attended the service. A march to the Municipal Building was planned following the service; however, it did not take place. Local newspapers at the time speculated the march was canceled due to heavy rain that day, while others suggested the change was because police had banned the march and were prepared to prevent the event if it did occur. That evening, five hundred people attended a meeting of the

Call," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 19, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

⁸⁹ Vincent, *Historic Alamance County*, 21-24; *Burlington Times-News*, Centennial Souvenir Edition, March 14, 1993, 66; Lasley, "Black Youth Killed in Night of Violence," *Burlington Daily Times-News*; Lasley, "Store Gutted in Fire Bombing," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*.

⁹⁰ Jim Lasley, "Curfew in Effect Until Removed," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 17, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); Lasley, "Calm Falls Over City," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*; Lasley, "Guard to Remain Ready for Call," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*; Bob Lynch, "1 Dies; Burlington Under Curfew; Burlington Death Reports Differ," *The [Raleigh] News and Observer*, May 18, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) at the First Baptist Church. Attendees prepared a list of ten requests to improve the African American experience in Burlington, including expanded representation among school and city leadership, improved access to housing, and opportunities for employment with downtown businesses. These requests were presented to a meeting of the county's Human Relations Council on the following Tuesday, along with six requests specific to school operations made by African American students at Walter M. Williams High School, including respect for Black students and faculty and action against their abuse, increased representation on the school board and within student clubs, and increased communication between African American students and school administrators.⁹¹

More research is needed to fully understand the events of the May 1969 riot and subsequent formation of race relations committees. The Burlington riot was reported in nearly all fifty states and several Canadian provinces, often as front page news but also within stories about other race-related challenges across the country. Additional research is needed to understand how the events in Burlington fit into the broader context of racial inequality, race-related violence, and the actions of race relations committees nationwide at the time. More research is also needed to determine whether sites associated with the events in Burlington remain extant and may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for Black Ethnic Heritage or Civil Rights. Thus, a comprehensive survey of African American resources in Burlington, including historic and architectural context, is needed.

⁹¹ Lasley, "Calm Falls Over City," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*; "Work Begins on Black Grievances, Requests," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 21, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021); "School Grievances are Listed," *The [Burlington] Daily Times-News*, May 21, 1969, www.newspapers.com (accessed November 2021).

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APPENDIX A:

CLASSIFICATIONS OF SURVEYED PROPERTIES

No Change: Buildings with changes to paint color, or use, when it does not affect the exterior design or materials of the building, are classified as No Change.

Altered: Many properties experienced minor alterations including replacement windows, siding, and porch posts. These changes, while they frequently involved the removal of historic material, do not significantly change the historic form or interpretation of the historic structure. More substantial alterations include resized window or door openings, filled-in windows or doors, altered porch forms or rooflines, or large-scale additions. These changes would likely render a building non-contributing to a National Register historic district.

Improved: Buildings with rehabilitated exteriors include those that have had later coverings removed or have had replications of historic details re-installed.

Deteriorated: This classification is specifically meant to note buildings that are likely to be lost in the coming years if action is not taken to stabilize them.

Demolished: These buildings have been demolished, and, in some cases, replaced with new buildings.

Relocated: This classification is specifically meant to document the relocation of buildings from their original site to a new site, often to ensure preservation of the buildings.

**APPENDIX B:
LIST OF NEWLY SURVEYED PROPERTIES**

SS #	Property Name	Address	National Register Historic District	Date
AM2659	Duplex	130-132 Brooks Street	None	c.1939
AM2660	Duplex	134-136 Brooks Street	None	c.1935
AM2661	House	413 W. Davis Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1940
AM2662	House	511 W. Davis Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1933
AM2663	Apartment Buildings	624 W. Davis Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1968
AM2664	House	715 W. Davis Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.2000
AM2665	Duplex	801-803 W. Davis Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1976
AM2666	House	807 W. Davis Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1965
AM2667	Howard Fogleman House	915 W. Davis Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1928
AM2668	House	1118 W. Davis Street	None	2014
AM2669	House	1121 W. Davis Street	None	2004
AM2670	House	1122 W. Davis Street	None	c.1956
AM2671	House	1218 W. Davis Street	None	c.1920
AM2672	House	1304 W. Davis Street	None	c.1955
AM2673	House	1307 W. Davis Street	None	c.1956
AM2674	House	1308 W. Davis Street	None	c.1951
AM2675	House	1311 W. Davis Street	None	c.1950
AM2676	House	1314 W. Davis Street	None	c.1949
AM2677	House	1315 W. Davis Street	None	c.1937
AM2678	House	1318 W. Davis Street	None	c.1940
AM2679	House	1321 W. Davis Street	None	c.1923
AM2680	House	1322 W. Davis Street	None	c.1937
AM2681	House	1324 W. Davis Street	None	c.1938
AM2682	House	1325 W. Davis Street	None	c.1940
AM2683	House	1328 W. Davis Street	None	c.1936
AM2684	House	911 E. Willowbrook Street	None	c.1951
AM2685	Macedonia Lutheran Church	421 W. Front Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	1925; 1939; 1964
AM2686	Fourplex	439 W. Front Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1975

AM2687	House	615 W. Front Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1935
AM2688	Apartments	621 W. Front Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1975
AM2689	Condominiums	625-629 W. Front Street and 512-516 Peele Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1975
AM2690	Duplex	630 W. Front Street and 606 Peele Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1955
AM2691	House	704 W. Front Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1970
AM2692	House	714 W. Front Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1955
AM2693	Duplex	606-608 W. Front Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1987
AM2694	Duplex	616-618 W. Front Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1983
AM2695	House	608 Trollinger Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1950
AM2696	House	609 Trollinger Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1930
AM2697	House	611 Trollinger Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1930
AM2698	House	612 Trollinger Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1930
AM2699	Duplex	615-617 Trollinger Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1935
AM2700	House	616 Trollinger Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1930
AM2701	House	618 Trollinger Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1930
AM2702	House	619 Trollinger Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1935
AM2703	House	620 Trollinger Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1930
AM2704	House	915 W. Front Street	None	c.1953
AM2705	House	1034 W. Front Street	None	c.1930
AM2706	House	607 Peele Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1935
AM2707	House	609 Peele Street	West Davis-Fountain Place NRHD	c.1930
AM2708	Westminster Presbyterian Church	1126 W. Webb Avenue	None	1950; 1962
AM2709	House	321 Fountain Place	None	c.1954
AM2710	House	325 Fountain Place	None	c.1949
AM2711	House	925 S. Church Street	None	c.1925
AM2712	House	933 S. Church Street	None	c.1925
AM2713	House	939-941 S. Church Street	None	c.1925
AM2714	Walter M. Williams High School	1307 S. Church Street	None	1949-1951
AM2715	House	323 Hillcrest Avenue	None	c.1965
AM2716	House	324 Hillcrest Avenue	None	c.1956
AM2717	House	325 Hillcrest Avenue	None	c.1979

AM2718	House	328 Hillcrest Avenue	None	c.1947
AM2719	House	404 Hillcrest Avenue	None	c.1992
AM2720	House	418 Hillcrest Avenue	None	c.1953
AM2721	House	510 Hillcrest Avenue	None	c.1946
AM2722	House	520 Hillcrest Avenue	None	c.1978
AM2723	House	528 Hillcrest Avenue	None	1998
AM2724	House	531 Hillcrest Avenue	None	c.1953
AM2725	House	605 Central Avenue	None	c.1928
AM2726	House	606 Central Avenue	None	c.1946
AM2727	House	607 Central Avenue	None	c.1920
AM2728	House	609 Central Avenue	None	c.1980
AM2729	House	610 Central Avenue	None	c.1950
AM2730	House	613 Central Avenue	None	c.1930
AM2731	House	614 Central Avenue	None	c.1920
AM2732	House	813 Central Avenue	None	c.1956
AM2733	House	815 Central Avenue	None	c.1950
AM2734	Gant Triplex	1015-1019 Edgewood Avenue	None	c.1979
AM2735	House	1106 Edgewood Avenue	None	c.1952
AM2736	House	1123 Edgewood Avenue	None	c.1952
AM2737	House	1124 Edgewood Avenue	None	c.1951
AM2738	House	1127 Edgewood Avenue	None	c.1947
AM2739	House	1204 Edgewood Avenue	None	c.1950
AM2740	House	1212 Edgewood Avenue	None	c.1951
AM2741	House	1218 Edgewood Avenue	None	c.1955
AM2742	House	1129 Aycok Avenue	None	c.1957
AM2743	House	1203 Aycok Avenue	None	c.1968
AM2744	House	409 W. Kime Street	None	c.1960
AM2745	House	410 W. Kime Street	None	c.1946
AM2746	House	412 W. Kime Street	None	c.1938
AM2747	House	413 W. Kime Street	None	c.1936
AM2748	House	414 W. Kime Street	None	c.1953

AM2749	House	416 W. Kime Street	None	c.1965
AM2750	House	417 W. Kime Street	None	c.1935
AM2751	House	409-411 E. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1943
AM2752	House	415 E. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1934
AM2753	House	419 E. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1938
AM2754	House	425 E. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1934
AM2755	House	429 E. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1951
AM2756	House	433 E. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1951
AM2757	House	1230 May Court	None	c.1948
AM2758	House	808 Tarleton Avenue	None	c.1972
AM2851	House	606 W. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1956
AM2852	House	612 W. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1952
AM2853	House	616 W. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1940
AM2854	House	704 W. Willowbrook Drive	None	c.1950
AM2855	House	708 W. Willowbrook Drive	None	2017
AM2856	Central Heights	Circle, Franklin, Glenwood, Parkview, Sunset		platted 1925
AM2857	Trollinger Section of Brookwood	Central, W. Front, Wildwood, E. Willowbrook		platted 1937