

# Mount Airy Architectural Survey Update Final Report

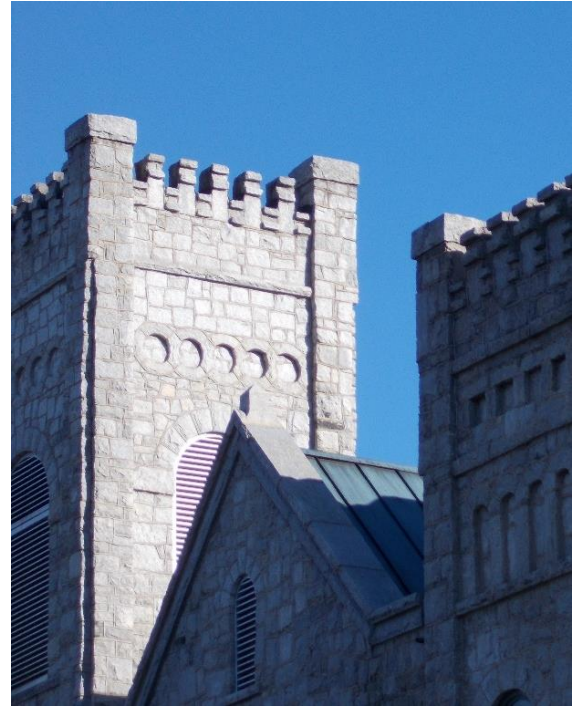
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First Baptist Church, Mount Airy

## Introduction

In January 2018 the City of Mount Airy contracted with Landmark Preservation Associates to conduct an architectural survey and survey update of approximately 450 properties located within the city's municipal boundaries. The project resulted in the updating of approximately 280 existing property records: 220 properties in the Mount Airy Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, and 60 properties outside the district. The project also resulted in the creation of over 176 survey records for newly identified individual resources and resource groupings outside the existing district and its 2012 boundary increase area. The project was funded by the City of Mount Airy and Historic Preservation Fund monies administered by the N.C. State Historic Preservation Office (HPO).

The project had two phases: a planning phase, conducted in January and February 2018, and the survey proper, completed in August 2018. The planning phase was designed to identify and characterize resources for survey, to gather relevant contextual historical information, and to introduce the project to the community. The project area was defined by the current limits of the City, an area of 7,551.61 acres with an estimated population of 10,347 in 2016. The survey proper involved the photography of resources and the noting of architectural features. The history of the resources was determined largely from references in secondary sources, primary sources such as city directories and Sanborn maps, and interviews with knowledgeable individuals.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Historical information for the project was gathered at the following repositories:

New and updated information was entered into the HPO's survey database and generated as paper files archived at the HPO's Raleigh office. A digital version of the property records and photographs was also provided to the City. Another survey product is this final report which summarizes the project findings and includes recommendations for properties and areas that warrant consideration for the state's Study List of resources that appear to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The project's Study List recommendations are schedule to be presented to the N.C. National Register Advisory Committee at its October 2018 meeting.<sup>2</sup>

Many individuals contributed to the success of the project, foremost among them Ben Barcroft, City Planner with the Mount Airy Planning and Development Department, and Claudia Brown, Architectural Survey Coordinator with the HPO. Matthew J. Edwards and Amy Snyder with the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History made the museum's resources available to the project, including research on downtown buildings by Glenda Edwards, and Ted Alexander with Preservation North Carolina provided support and encouragement. Help was provided by HPO staff including Chandra Burch, Andrew Edmonds, Anna Grantham, Michael Southern, and Brett Sturm. Mount Airy residents who provided information on properties and neighborhoods, put the consultant in touch with property owners and knowledgeable individuals, and helped arrange site visits included Carol Burke, Nancy Davis, John Kidwell, Shelby King, Edward McDaniel, Bettsee McPhail, Suzanne Settle, George Speight, John Springthorpe Jr., and Jeannie Studnicki. Others welcomed the consultant into their homes and businesses and their contributions are acknowledged in the individual survey files.

## Historical Overview

Non-native settlement of the area that would become Mount Airy commenced by the end of the 1760s. The majority of early non-native settlers were of European descent. Individuals of African descent, free or enslaved, presumably arrived about the same time. The community is thought to have taken its name from the Mount Airy plantation of Jonathan Unthank, which existed near a stage road crossing of the Ararat River in the early 1800s. The location was favorable for community development, as indicated by the construction of the Blue Ridge Inn about 1830, the designation of the Mount Airy Post Office in 1832, and the erection of a "few scattering roadside stores" about the same time.<sup>3</sup> According to a 1936 article in *The State* magazine, the first post office was located in the "old Armfield house . . . which is about a mile

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- City of Mount Airy Public Works Plat Room
  - Mount Airy Museum of Regional History
  - Mount Airy Public Library
  - N.C. State Historic Preservation Office File Room, Raleigh
  - State Library of North Carolina, Raleigh

<sup>2</sup> The listing of a property in the National Register places no obligation or restriction on a private owner using private resources to maintain or alter the property. National Register listing should not be confused with local historic property and historic district designations. These designations are made by a local governing board on the recommendation of a local historic preservation commission.

<sup>3</sup> Patricia S. Dickinson, "Mount Airy Historic District" (National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, 1985), 8.2-8.4

south of the present city.”<sup>4</sup> Architectural historian Patricia Dickinson, author of the National Register nomination for the Mount Airy Historic District (1985), writes that “the community originally developed as a convenient stop along the stagecoach route” that served the community.<sup>5</sup>

A village grew up around the Blue Ridge Inn, with an estimated 300 people calling Mount Airy home by 1860. Small-scale industrial activity contributed to the growth. Jacob W. Brower established a textile mill about 1840 and William T. Schaub established a woodworking shop and wagon factory in the 1850s.<sup>6</sup> Another early industry, one that would become increasingly important as a driver of community growth as the nineteenth century progressed, was tobacco manufacturing. Railroads, which reached Greensboro and Danville by the end of the 1850s, offered enhanced transportation opportunities to the county’s tobacco growers and manufacturers. The local industry, which focused on plug (chewing) tobacco production, may have begun in the antebellum period—the years 1852 or 1853 are mentioned—although other information suggests tobacco manufacturing waited until after the Civil War and the opening of William M. Banner’s factory in town.<sup>7</sup> Architectural historian Laura Phillips identifies the 1880s and early 1890s as the heyday of the industry, with nine tobacco factories listed for Mount Airy in an 1890 business directory.<sup>8</sup>

A watershed event in Mount Airy’s development was the arrival of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad in 1888. By linking the town to national and international markets the railroad spurred industrialization which in turn stimulated rapid population growth, from approximately 500 inhabitants in 1880 to approximately 3,000 by 1893. The swelling population needed housing and other buildings. On a single day in 1891 a newspaper reporter counted five tobacco factories or warehouses under construction as well as five commercial buildings, a dozen residences, and a summer resort. A leading developer of the era was tobacco manufacturer J. A. Hadley who is credited with the construction of over fifty rental houses in the town. The early 1910s saw another population spike, from 3,800 inhabitants in 1910 to 5,100 in 1915.<sup>9</sup>

An early beneficiary of rail transport was the granite industry. In 1888 a railroad station contractor named Thomas Woodruff acquired the extensive “Flat Rock” granite formation on the town’s east side. Woodruff’s North Carolina Granite Corporation, so named in 1904, would develop what is today considered the largest open-faced granite quarry in the world, and “Mount Airy white granite” has gone into the construction of prominent memorials around the country and numerous local houses, churches, commercial buildings, and other structures. The town’s important granite industry has earned it the nickname Granite City. Furniture manufacturing was another important local industry with roots in the railroad boom. The 1893 Mount Airy Furniture Company was the first large-scale furniture manufacturer to locate in the community.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *The State*, November 7, 1936, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Dickinson, “Mount Airy Historic District,” 8.2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.6; Laura A. W. Phillips, *Simple Treasures: The Architectural Legacy of Surry County*. (Mount Airy, N.C.: Surry County Historical Society, 1987), 41.

<sup>8</sup> Phillips, *Simple Treasures*, 41.

<sup>9</sup> Dickinson, “Mount Airy Historic District,” 8.8-8.10, 8.14.

<sup>10</sup> Phillips, *Simple Treasures*, 42.

Downtown Mount Airy achieved its present character in the early twentieth century, with streets lined by closely-built multistory buildings of brick and granite construction. Key landmarks include the ca. 1890 Galloway Opera House, the ca. 1910 Merritt Building (now Mount Airy Museum of Regional History), the 1914 Martin Memorial Hospital, the 1931 Masonic Temple, and the 1932-33 Mount Airy Post Office. Around the downtown, such as on the south and north extensions of Main Street, residential blocks filled with the stylish homes of business and professional men.<sup>11</sup> Main Street followed ridgelines to the north and south, giving the new houses elevated sites and distant views. Also adjacent to downtown was the tobacco manufacturing district centered on Willow Street which in the 1920s and 1930s was largely converted to the production of hosiery and children's clothing. Spencer's textile mill, also known as the Mount Airy Knitting Company, employed 705 workers in 1958 and produced over \$4.3 million in clothing.<sup>12</sup>

The automobile emerged as an important force in the physical development of the town during the first half of the twentieth century. Businesses began to appear on the main roads leading in and out of town. An early example is the Derby Restaurant, established in 1937 on Highway 52 south of the downtown in the Bannertown commercial area. The original building, described on the restaurant's website as a "roadside dive," served sandwiches and beer. The current Moderne building of curved form was built in 1947.<sup>13</sup> Construction of the Highway 52 Bypass on the west side of town after World War II generated commercial growth in formerly rural areas. Attention-grabbing signage was a hallmark of the era's roadside development, and along the bypass are found such examples as the Big Man Shell sign in the form of a waving gas pump attendant, the rotating milk carton in front of the Coble Dairy Products Co-op, and the Star Lite Motel sign, modeled on the Holiday Inn signs of the era.<sup>14</sup>

The automobile was also increasingly a factor in residential development in the city as the twentieth century progressed. West Lebanon Street and adjacent streets, located a quarter mile and more from the north end of the town's commercial area, began to see residential development by the end of the nineteenth century, but development accelerated during the early decades of the automobile era as car ownership made the area more accessible. The Taylor Park subdivision, developed by James Marion Burke beginning in the 1930s, is representative of the early automobile suburb form, with curving streets and irregular lots that proved popular with the community's more affluent homebuilders of the period and later. Taylor Park helped establish a northern trajectory for upscale residential development, as did a cluster of home construction on Country Club Road facing the town's 1920s country club. The cluster may include a few houses from the 1930s but mostly filled in in the 1940s and 1950s. By the 1960s solid residential development extended between Taylor Park and Country Club Road and beyond, accounting in part for the top heavy form of Mount Airy's annexed areas, which include more acreage to the north of the town core than to the south.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>12</sup> Phillips, "Mount Airy Historic District Boundary Increase," 22, 25-28.

<sup>13</sup> Derby Restaurant website.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas D. Perry, *Images of Mount Airy, North Carolina* (Ararat, Va.: Laurel Hill Publishing, 2010), 208.

Mount Airy's working class neighborhoods tend to concentrate to the south of the downtown, the principal vector of development being Rockford Street. Mount Airy does not have representatives of the mill village form, a common development type in other Piedmont towns. Instead, small blocks of worker housing, usually characterized by a few repeated house forms, were built throughout town, probably through the initiative of individual developers rather than large industrial concerns. These dispersed clusters, most dating to the 1910s and 1920s, extend as far south as Forrest Drive and Grove Lane and adjacent streets, beyond the US 52 Bypass.

The decade of the 1960s, the end of the historic period that is the focus of the survey, witnessed further important changes in Mount Airy's physical development. At the beginning of the decade the town turned its attention toward the African American commercial and residential area on the northwest side of the downtown, centered on Virginia Street. In 1961 *The State* magazine reported: "The Mount Airy Planning Board is responsible to a large degree for the urban renewal plans now underway. These plans call for the reclaiming of 57 acres of blighted area and the building of a new city hall. This project is almost to the 'ground breaking' stage, and will give Mount Airy face-lifting." A housing project was built in the area. The same article also noted areas near town considered for annexation and predicted a resulting total population of 14,000.<sup>15</sup>

Mount Airy also achieved national fame during the 1960s as the model for the mythical Mayberry in television's *Andy Griffith Show*. The show's namesake and lead character, actor Andy Griffith, was born and grew up in Mount Airy.<sup>16</sup> The first large suburban shopping centers opened in 1968. The ThruWay Shopping Center began on the bypass with the construction of a motel and other businesses that were the initiative of developer Paul Branch. Across the way the Mayberry Mall was developed by Stephen D. Bell and Company of Greensboro. Among the mall's three initial tenants were The Cambridge Shop, Marion's Jewelers, and Ellis Clothing, and in 1970 Belk Department Store, built by the John S. Clark Construction Company, was added to the complex. Belk's opening at the mall coincided with the closing of its Main Street location.<sup>17</sup> The rise of suburban shopping centers and other roadside enterprises siphoned business away from the downtown, but Mount Airy's historic central business district weathered the worst of the exurban migration in the late twentieth century and enjoys high occupancy rates and other indications of economic health in the early twenty-first century.<sup>18</sup> By the end of the historic period the town's population numbered 7,325 inhabitants according to the 1970 census. The current population stands at 10,347 (2016 estimate).

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<sup>15</sup> *The State*, April 29, 1961, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Mount Airy News*, June 30 and November 13, 1970, and March 31, 1988; 8.17.

<sup>18</sup> Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 112.

## Architectural Overview

Mount Airy's early settlers introduced architectural traditions that would have been indistinguishable from construction occurring elsewhere in the county. Log buildings presumably predominated, although frame buildings probably existed by the early nineteenth century and stone was used for foundations and chimneys and specialized buildings such as springhouses. Both types of wooden construction made use of the area's abundant stands of timber. Brick construction, though known to the settlers, was presumably rare, reserved for the most prominent structures like the 1855 Blue Ridge Inn, a two-story brick hotel of modified domestic form. The inn, which stood on present-day Main Street, was demolished in the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

The William A. Moore House (SR0350; *right*) at 202 Moore Ave., thought to date to the early 1860s but remodeled later in the nineteenth century, is probably the oldest surviving building in the downtown area of the city. The two-story frame residence, which is individually listed in the National Register, has Gothic Revival features such as a lancet window and bargeboards, Italianate cornice brackets, interior graining and marbling, and, in the yard, a Rustic-style hexagonal summer house or gazebo constructed with twining laurel roots. The gazebo was inspired by a design in the 1844 book *The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* by architectural theorist Andrew Jackson Downing, and its cut-nailed



construction indicates a date of construction before about 1890.<sup>20</sup> Also early is the ca. 1875 William A. Estes House (SR0406) at 724 S. Main, which is Greek Revival in character.<sup>21</sup> Expansion of the city through annexation has brought other old houses inside the city limits. The nineteenth-century Edwards-Thomas House (SR1068) at 2343 Wards Gap Rd. contains two log rooms separated by a gap that was made into a hallway in the 1940s. The arrangement is reminiscent of the dogtrot form. Another house that appears to be early is the small dwelling at 670 Allred Mill Road.

With its Gothic, Italianate, and Rustic features, the Moore property illustrates several of the nationally current architectural styles represented in Mount Airy during the late nineteenth century. The Italianate style is most closely associated with the town's early boom years in the late 1880s and 1890s, followed by the Queen Anne style which was popular from the 1890s into the early twentieth century. The W. W. Burke House (SR0367) at 314 W. Pine and the Robert Hines House (SR0365) at 329 W. Pine, with their decorative friezes, corner pilasters, and

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<sup>19</sup> Phillips, *Simple Treasures*, 7-13, 40.

<sup>20</sup> Patricia S. Dickinson, "William Alfred Moore House" (National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, 1985); Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 283-284. The gazebo's cut-nailed construction suggests a date before 1890. A similar gazebo also stood at White Sulphur Springs several miles north of Mount Airy.

<sup>21</sup> Phillips, *Simple Treasures*, 40, 173.

sawtooth window hoods, are representative of the Italianate style as it was typically expressed in Mount Airy. The Queen Anne style is epitomized by the James A. Hadley House (SR0357; *right*) at 400 W. Pine, begun in 1894 (possibly earlier) and completed in 1900, which features a tower with bell-cast roof, a bay window treatment of the front wing, and a wraparound veranda. The first story is granite, making the house the first in town to use the celebrated local stone, and the second story is brick with granite embellishments. Etched and stained glass, sumptuous wood and plaster interior detail, and a stair hall archway with marble colonettes are other notable features.



The Queen Anne style was also popular for one-story dwellings, to which it lent an imposing presence. Representative of the one-story form is the individually National Register-listed 1909 Edgar Harvey Hennis House (SR0277) at 1056 N. Main, distinguished by a hip roof with prominent front gables and a number of classically inspired details indicative of Classical Revival influence.<sup>22</sup> The Classical Revival style, which was popularized by the Chicago World Columbian Exposition of 1893, appealed to affluent Mount Airy homebuilders after 1900. The monumental portico which is a hallmark of the style appears on the W. F. Carter House (SR0399) at 418 S. Main, an older dwelling remodeled ca. 1908, and on the 1917 Campbell A. Baird House (SR0389) at 311 Cherry. The Carter House portico is Ionic and the Baird House portico is Doric, but in both instances the porticos engage one-story porches that extend across the façade.



Among Mount Airy’s earliest surviving commercial buildings is the Galloway Opera House (SR0314; *left*) at 420 N. Main, built ca. 1890 (prior to 1891). The large, two-story, brick building houses retail spaces on the first floor and featured an upstairs meeting hall for travelling shows, school commencements, and other gatherings. The building has a stepped front parapet, whereas most other downtown buildings feature flat parapets, some ornamented with corbelled brickwork or pressed metal cornices. Space demands encouraged side-by-side or party wall construction, resulting in continuous building fronts that contrast with the detached character of most residential development in the town. Typical commercial architectural features include

storefronts with plate-glass display windows and recessed entries, and upper-story windows with flat, segmental, or round-arched heads.

<sup>22</sup> Patricia S. Dickinson, “Edgar Harvey Hennis House” (National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, 1985).

Several buildings preserve early or original storefront features. The ca. 1896 Snappy Lunch Building (SR0341) at 125 N. Main has a storefront with chamfered pilasters and two surviving “Queen Anne” transoms with large rectangular center panes bordered by small colored glass panes. The building also retains its 1940s Snappy Lunch sign picturing a svelte waitress and waving motorist. The original storefront of the 1896-97 Leonard Block (SR0332) at 113-117 Franklin has chamfered pilasters, tall transom windows, and a molded wood cornice. The ca. 1891 Hale Dry Goods Store (SR0323) at 226 N. Main and the 1906 Banner Building (SR0338) at 153-155 N. Main St. have metal façade elements identified as the work of the George L. Mesker and Company, a major supplier of metal architectural elements at the turn of the twentieth century. The Midkiff Hardware Store Building (SR0320; Main-Oak Building) at 248 N. Main has cast iron storefront elements such as slender cylindrical display window corners with molded caps and bases and flanking square-edged pilasters with fluting, flared bases and caps, and rosettes.<sup>23</sup>

Most of Mount Airy’s historic commercial buildings possess some level of decorative treatment, but a few were clearly intended as architectural showpieces. The Merritt Building (SR0319) at 301-307 N. Main (the current Mount Airy Museum of Regional History), built about 1905-10 as a hardware and furniture store, evokes the Classical Revival style through the use of boldly arched windows, pilasters, and a heavy modillion cornice. The building’s rounded corner gracefully responds to the corner site. Classical elements lend gravitas to the downtown’s two historic bank buildings: the First National Bank (SR0326; *right*) at 200 N. Main, an 1893 building given a granite façade with



monumental pilasters in the 1910s, and the 1923 Bank of Mount Airy (SR0328) at 201 N. Main, which has contrasting smooth and quarry-faced granite cladding and monumental Doric columns in antis. Classicism and Art Deco, an early modern style, characterize the 1932-33 Mount Airy Post Office (SR0344) at 111 S. Main, which combines an imposing symmetrical façade of classical character with geometric ornament and fluted bands typical of the Art Deco. The 1931 Masonic Temple (SR0345) at 212 Franklin features stepped parapet projections in the Art Deco style and peaked parapet panels reminiscent of the Tudor Revival style. The downtown’s most flamboyant Art Deco building is the 1938 Earle Theatre (SR0340) at 142 N. Main, which has an outward-stepping façade flanked by channeled pilasters.

Tobacco manufacturing, which boomed with the coming of the railroad, clustered at the intersection of Willow and Oak streets, an area that was added to the National Register-listed Mount Airy Historic District in 2012.<sup>24</sup> The earliest tobacco factory in the complex is the ca. 1888 Sparger Brothers Tobacco Factory No. 1 (SR0348) at 329 Willow, a four-and-a-half-story

<sup>23</sup> Glenda Edwards, “Mount Airy Downtown Walking Tour” (May 2016 script prepared for the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History, Mount Airy, N.C.).

<sup>24</sup> Laura A. W. Phillips, “Mount Airy Historic District Boundary Increase” (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2012).



brick building with stepped gable parapets. Nearly contemporaneous is the Sparger Brothers Tobacco Factory No. 2 (SR0346) at 239 Willow, built in 1892, and a ca. 1890 warehouse. Tobacco-related construction continued in the complex into the early twentieth century, most of it with the brick walls and heavy timber interior structure characteristic of the era's slow-burn construction. Changes in the tobacco industry resulted in the idling of the factories for tobacco processing, but the large structures were put to new use for apparel production beginning in the 1920s. More recently many of the buildings in the group have been repurposed again as condominiums. The early 1890s R. Roberts Leaf Tobacco House (SR0668; *right*)



at 165 Virginia, a four-and-a-half-story brick building better known as Renfro Mill, is the first of these conversions with rehabilitation finalized in 2004.<sup>25</sup> At some remove from the main group is the Hadley and Smith Tobacco Factory (SR0384) at 600 W. Pine St., built in 1891, which is also somewhat unusual as the city's only surviving frame tobacco factory. The 1896 Sanborn map noted the building's operations as prizing, steaming, cooling, packing, and casing the final product, chewing tobacco. Of Mount Airy's coterie of tobacco auction warehouses only one survives: the 1946 Liberty Tobacco Warehouse (SR0902) at 207 E. Oak. Sadly, the Liberty Warehouse was severely damaged by fire in June 2018.

Institutional architecture is another legacy of the boom and the years that followed. The oldest surviving church is Trinity Episcopal Church (SR0312) at 427 N. Main, built in 1896 to a design by Frank Woodruff of the quarry-owning Woodruff (or Woodroffe) family and constructed of granite from the family quarry. The building's Gothic Revival style was the preferred idiom for most in-town congregations of the era, and its granite construction marks it as likely the first building in town to be built entirely out of the local stone. Other congregations adopted the Gothic style and local granite for their construction projects, and between 1904 and 1921 Gothic Revival granite churches were built for Baptist, Catholic, Friends, and Presbyterian congregations. Two church projects of the 1920s bucked the trend: the ca. 1922 Haymore Memorial Baptist Church (SR0376) at 319 Rockford and the 1925-29 Rockford Street Methodist Church (SR0377) at 526 Rockford were built with brick veneer in the Colonial Revival style, a relative of the Classical Revival style. The facades of the two churches are dominated by pedimented Doric porticos.

In 1916 the town erected the Mount Airy High School (no longer extant). The two-story brick building, which was restricted to white students during the era of segregation, stood on the site of the current Mount Airy Municipal Building (SR0771) at 300 S. Main. The school was symmetrical in form and classical in detail with banks of large classroom windows, a common fixture of progressive school design in an era when natural light was still needed for adequate illumination. Associated with the high school was the ca. 1930 Rockford Street School Gymnasium/Auditorium (SR0810) at 218 Rockford, built to a design by the Winston-Salem architectural firm of Northup and O'Brien and since 2008 home to the Andy Griffith Museum.

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<sup>25</sup> Laura A. W. Phillips, "Renfro Mill" (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1999).

For the community's African American students the J. J. Jones High School (SR1064) was built at 215 Jones School Road, superseding the Virginia Street School which stood in the downtown. The Jones School, which was built to a design by Elkin architect J. M. Franklin and opened in 1940, was for a time the only high school serving African American students in Surry County and all or parts of surrounding counties such as Stokes and Yadkin in North Carolina and Patrick in Virginia. The detached gymnasium/auditorium added to the school complex in 1947 was built in part by the high school's masonry class students.

New house styles appeared in Mount Airy in the 1910s and 1920s. The Colonial Revival style loosely evoked the classicism of the colonial and early national periods of American history. Some of the hybrid Queen Anne/Classical Revival houses discussed above might be regarded as examples of early Colonial Revival influence, but the style in its more recognizable sense, typified by traditional forms and finishes such as the side-gable house type, brick veneer, and simple classical treatments around entries, windows, and eaves, tends to be later. A textbook example is the Edward C. Ashby House (SR0388) at 302 Cherry, built ca. 1930 to a design by Winston-Salem architects Northrup and O'Brien. The two-story brick-veneered house features a front entry with a fanlight and pedimented surround, arched dormers on the slate-shingled side-gable roof, and paired chimneys on the gable ends. Early Colonial Revival influence may be present in the design of the 1914 Ed H. Kochtitzky House (SR0801) at 339 W. Pine, specifically in the simple symmetrical massing of the house and its classical porches and porte cochere. Kochtitzky was a founder of the Mount Airy Furniture Company, an association which would likely have familiarized him with the Colonial Revival style in furniture design. Laura Phillips notes a similar phenomenon: the use of fine woods in the interior appointment of a number of houses, a result of the availability of quality materials through the presence of the local furniture industry.<sup>26</sup>

The Colonial Revival style was also employed for commercial buildings. An early example is the ca. 1925 Coca-Cola Bottling Plant (SR0330) at 126-136 Moore, distinguished by an arcaded first story, purely decorative iron balcony railings in front of the end windows in the second story, and a false gable roof sheathed with variegated terra-cotta tiles. Colonial Revival with a Modernist flare characterizes the Colonial Frozen Foods Locker Plant (SR1006) at 327 W. Lebanon, built in 1947 to a design by an unidentified architect. As built, the early 1960s Mayberry Motor Inn (SR0928; originally Mount Airy Motel; *right*) at 501 N. Andy Griffith Parkway (US 52) was Modernist in character, with stripped-down cinder block walls and high horizontal windows, but in 1973 then-owners Alma and L. P. Venable remodeled the building in the Colonial Revival style, adding such details as fluted surrounds around doors and lozenge panels under enlarged windows. The style was used as an architectural expression for the Ranch houses of the early post-war period, as illustrated by the 1953-54 Marion and Mary Burke House (SR1001) at 308 Wrenn, designed by Winston-Salem



<sup>26</sup> Phillips, *Simple Treasures*, 42.

architect Hal Crews, which features decorative metal porch supports (evocative of antebellum ironwork) and Federal-inspired mantels.

A popular alternative to the Colonial Revival style was the Tudor Revival style, which evoked the architecture of the Tudor monarchies and late medieval/early modern British architecture in general. The 1919 J. D. Sargent House (SR0300) at 619 N. Main is an early local representative of the style, indicated by the patterned false half-timbering in its gables and a gabled front dormer, although the house's simple side-gable form and full-façade porch owe more to the contemporaneous Craftsman style. The main story of the story-and-a-half house is constructed of granite; the original owner, J. D. Sargent, owned the North Carolina Granite Corporation at the time. Another notable feature of the Sargent property is its handsome granite garage, which coordinates through its material and design with the house and which heralds the importance of the automobile as a force in local architecture and community development. More characteristic of the Tudor Revival style in their asymmetrical massing and complex roof forms are the 1924 Randall Sparger House (SR0392) at 330 Cherry, the 1930 John Sobotta House (SR0361) at 347 W. Pine, and the 1920s William E. Merritt House (SR0306) at 127 Rawley. Mount Airy also has its share of Spanish- or Mediterranean-influenced houses such as the 1920s James F. Yokely House (SR0360) at 350 W. Pine, with its stuccoed exterior, tiled roof, and arcaded porch with twisted columns, and even a rare example of French Eclectic or Norman influence: the 1937 John and Pansy Springthorpe House (SR0272) at 218 N. Park, which boasts a chateausque entry tower with a tall octagonal roof.

Most of the styles adapted for Mount Airy's domestic architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century looked to historic precedent for inspiration. That began to change in the 1910s and 1920s with the introduction of a new residential mode, the Craftsman style, which though rooted in various Western and non-Western architectural traditions developed forms and details that might be considered proto-modern in their eschewal of historicism. A representative example is the ca. 1920 W. E. Lindsay House (SR0276) at 1065 N. Main, a story-and-a-half frame house of a type that was almost synonymous with the Craftsman style: the bungalow form. The house features a sweeping, low-pitched side-gable roof which engages a porch on the front and supports a prominent gabled dormer, more an extension of the upstairs living space than a mere window feature. Details include triangular gable braces, exposed rafters, "Craftsman" porch supports of heavy wood posts on stone pedestals, and a porte cochere with the same posts. Another, more original example of the bungalow form is the ca. 1923 Sam and Ada Hennis House (SR0284) at 215 E. Lebanon. In addition to a deeply overhanging, low-pitched, side-gable roof the house features a wraparound porch with a prominent front gable, squat stone porch pillars, and a pop-up second-story section. Craftsman bungalows of side-gabled and gable-fronted form were popular house types in the various "string town" developments that coalesced on rural roads around Mount Airy (subsequently annexed into the city) during the early and middle decades of the twentieth century. The once-rural Ararat Community (SR1098) on North Main Street features several Craftsman bungalows, among them the 1928 Charles and Nora Thompson House (*right*) at 2133 N. Main.



The 1927 Raymond Sargent House (SR0394) at 418 Cherry is a Craftsman bungalow which makes extensive and original use of local granite for battered (tapered) porch columns and side chimney (the latter with a date block) and as a heavy Stonehenge-like terrace railing. Granite saw imaginative use in the town's domestic and non-domestic architecture during the twentieth century. Granite columns with exaggerated battering appear in the porch of the 1920s John H. Midkiff House (SR1025) at 235 Orchard and turned Doric columns and bulbous vasiform balusters of granite ornament the porch of the 1920s Craftsman bungalow at 116 Bank (SR0957). The ca. 1960 office of the Acme Stone Company (SR1090) at 1700 Fancy Gap Road features a quarryfaced granite front with smooth granite corner pilasters and window and door surrounds. The smooth stone around the center entry and flanking windows is carved with the company's name and has a carved ivy leaf border and fluted bases. Smooth granite facings were a staple of Modernist institutional architecture beginning with the Reeves Community Center (SR0900) at 113 Renfro, designed by Shelby architect Fred Simmons and built 1951-52, and extending through the 1978 Mount Airy Municipal Building (SR0771) at 300 S. Main and the 1982 Mount Airy Public Library (SR0809) at 145 Rockford, designed by Charlotte architects J. N. Pease Associates.

The Modernist impulse seen in downtown buildings like the Masonic Temple and Earle Theatre had its domestic counterpart in such houses as the 1939 W. Guy Bondurant House (SR0280) at 203 W. Lebanon. The Moderne-style two-story house features a flat roof line and planar stuccoed walls enlivened by rounded corners and a striped motif in the parapet. The Bondurant House was followed in 1941 or 1942 by the Hale and Nina Yokley House (SR0273) at 224 Howard in the Taylor Park neighborhood on the north side of town, developed by James Marion Burke beginning in the 1930s. The flat-roofed two-story frame house was remodeled in the International style in the 1960s. The Taylor Park neighborhood and adjacent areas became a locus of modern house design. Other Modernist houses in the area include the ca. 1950 Caldwell House (SR1004) at 227 Grace, a brick-veneered house with an overhanging flat roof and



multiple metal-framed corner windows; the 1953-54 Ben and Barbara Graves House (SR0669; *left*) at 309 Fairview, an International-style frame house designed by NCSU School of Design professor Cecil D. Elliott; and the 1957 Jerome and Marilyn Samet House (SR1031) at 335 Grace, a wedge-shaped residence inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian house designs and built by Jerome Samet, an area contractor. Early Modernist houses were also built in the vicinity of the country club north of town, most notably the late 1940s Natt Ferguson House (SR0267; also known as the Dr. Renzo Sutter House) at 339 Country Club, an early Modernist flat-roofed house with International

Style influences.

The post-war building boom supported a resident architect conversant in the Modernist style: Dwight Kenneth Cooke Sr., the son of early-twentieth-century Mount Airy architect Dwight H.

Cooke (whose only known work is the I. M. Gordon House in Pilot Mountain).<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Cooke's best-known commission is the Derby Restaurant (SR0941) at 1901 S. Main, a 1947 brick-veneered Moderne building of rounded plan formerly fronted by a little building known as the "hat" for the black derby that formed its roof (the building served as a gas pump attendant's hut and then an ice cream counter before being torn down. A local newspaper article on the eve of the restaurant's opening praised its "futuristic lines."<sup>28</sup> Cooke is probably responsible for the Moderne style of Hutchens Laundry and Cleaners (SR1005) at 209 Spring, a 1939 brick building given a rounded Moderne corner in a ca. 1946 remodeling. Cooke's wife was Frances Hutchens Cooke, suggesting a family connection to the business.

The Derby Restaurant belonged to a new form of commercial development which became prevalent in Mount Airy after the war: strip development. The first stirrings of strip development date to before the war, as seen in the various service stations built on Main Street leading into and out of town. The first of these, such as the Mission-influenced ca. 1930 Blue's Esso Service Station (SR0783) at 631 S. Main, were often eclectic in character, but after the war they were typically built in the various modern styles of the era. Other types of strip development were also predominately Modernist after the war. Examples include the Dairy Center (SR1007) at 407 W. Lebanon, a late 1940s restaurant with an overhanging flat roof, and Blue Ridge Enterprises (SR1089) at 1120 W. Lebanon, the 1960s office building of a contracting firm, which has such International-style features as white stucco wall surfaces, large expanses of plate glass, an exterior stair behind a perforated block screen, and a front porch with slender, black-painted, square metal posts. The apotheosis of post-war strip development is Mayberry Mall (SR0931) at 388 Frederick, a concatenation of large flat-roofed cinder block buildings, the first of which opened to the public in 1968.

The first half of the twentieth century saw a proliferation of small-scale industrial plants. The introduction of apparel manufacturing in the 1920s, which focused on the Willow/Oak/Franklin Street complex of repurposed tobacco factories, inspired smaller operations at various locations around town. Among the first of these were the 1920s Argonne Hosiery Mill (SR1072; *right*) at 800 Willow, a two-story brick knitting mill, and the ca. 1929 Bruce Springthorpe and Sons Mill (SR1071; later known as the Granite Trailer Manufacturing Company) across the street at 713 Willow, originally housed in a one-story brick building with a bow truss roof where sweaters and swimming suits were made. Although these two concerns were located on Willow Street, they were distant from the main Willow Street industrial complex at the point where the granite quarry branch line crossed the street. At the south end of town was the Barber Hosiery Mills (SR1045) at 1078 S. Main, organized in April 1938 by T. C. Barber and others to manufacture infants' and misses' anklets. The Barber mill began as a two-story building with a monitor



<sup>27</sup> Phillips, *Simple Treasures*, 52.

<sup>28</sup> *Mount Airy Times*, November 7, 1947.

running the length of its gable roof ridge, although recent renovations have given it a metal-clad front of standard industrial-park appearance. A late entry in the small mill sweepstakes was the Ashburn Hosiery Mill (SR1059) at 719 S. South, an austere concrete block building with one- and two-story wings that dates to the late 1940s.

Commercial and industrial activity generated a need for lodgings and apartments. The nineteenth-century hostelries that once thronged the downtown are gone, but a small-scale downtown hotel from the following century survives: the 1931 New Willow Hotel (SR0706) at 304 Franklin. The three-story brick-veneered building, designed and built by contractor Matt Hines, features granite window sills and lintel accents, a granite cornice supported by brick corbels, and granite pilaster strips. The establishment advertised itself as “Northwest North Carolina’s Newest and Finest Small Hotel” when it opened.<sup>29</sup> The 1920s Hatcher Apartments (SR1037) at 135-141 W. Church, a two-story brick-veneered building, stands in the midst of a residential neighborhood, whereas the 1939 Snyder Court Apartments (SR0951) at 1007 S. Main, also two stories and brick veneered, stands on a busy thoroughfare leading into the downtown. On West Lebanon Street, the state highway leading into town from the north, several homeowners built or converted their houses to tourist homes. The best documented of these are the Maple Grove Tourist Home (SR1009) at 207 W. Lebanon and the Hines Tourist Home (SR1010) at 219 W. Lebanon. About 1960 an apartment complex of Ranch house character was built at the corner of Rockford and Hadley streets (SR1050; 504-510 Rockford Street and 305-311 Hadley Street). Presumably the domestic-scaled units were meant to appeal to renters during the heyday of the Ranch house form’s popularity.

By the end of the 1960s, Modernism was the favored style for a wide range of building types in Mount Airy. A prominent work in the style is Central United Methodist Church (SR1092) at 1909 N. Main, a church with the lofty proportions of a medieval cathedral expressed in a Modernist architectural idiom. Designed by Statesville architect Andrew L. Pendleton and associate William T. Leonard of Mount Airy, the 1965 church features an impressive septet of stained glass windows in the apse and is accompanied by Modernist administrative and educational buildings that with the church form two sides of a raised forecourt. Also in the Modernist vein is the 1969 Rockford Street Fire Station (SR1040) at 439 Rockford, with a front elevation distinguished by a series of boxy volumes created by brick pylons and wafer-thin flat concrete roofs. After the Martin Memorial Hospital burned in 1953, the community funded the construction of an impressive replacement, the 1957 Northern Hospital of Surry County (SR1095) at 830 Rockford. The original four-story brick-veneered building of lean flat-roofed Modernist form survives hidden behind later additions.

Mount Airy has a rich assemblage of buildings from every period of its development, including the antebellum period if one counts early houses that have been incorporated into the town through annexation. The town is notable for the quality of its historic construction, with exceptional examples of many of the architectural styles that were popular from the late nineteenth century on. This is partly due to the presence of furniture and building component manufacturers in the community, headed by executives with an understanding of and appreciation for design that translated into the houses they built for themselves. Design was an important aspect of Mount Airy’s largest and most celebrated industry, the North Carolina

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<sup>29</sup> *Mount Airy Times*, May 7, 1931.

Granite Corporation, which not only quarried the stone but employed a cadre of artisans to shape it into a host of architectural forms. The ready availability of granite and skilled workmen to work made the material a natural choice for builders, which used the material for trim, architectural flourishes, and entire building facades. Granite is so common in Mount Airy that it might even be regarded the city's signature material.

### *Historic Preservation*

The 1980s saw the beginnings of sustained preservation activity in the city. In 1981 the N.C. State Historic Preservation Office (HPO), the Surry County Historical Society, and the county's four municipal governments sponsored a comprehensive countywide architectural survey conducted by researchers Laura Phillips and Marion Venable.<sup>30</sup> The survey laid the foundation for the listing of the Mount Airy Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 and provided content for the publication *Simple Treasures: The Architectural Legacy of Surry County*, written by Laura Phillips and published by the Surry County Historical Society in 1987.

Mount Airy currently has seven listings in the National Register of Historic Places (with date of listing):

- Edgar Harvey Hennis House (1986)
- Mount Airy Historic District (1985)
- Mount Airy Historic District Boundary Increase (2012)
- Renfro Mill (2000)
- Trinity Episcopal Church (1986)
- W. F. Carter House (1985)
- William Alfred Moore House (1986)

National Register designation confers a number of benefits, among them qualifying owners of designated properties for participation in the state and federal rehabilitation tax credit programs. These programs have assisted the rehabilitation of thousands of historic properties nationwide. Mount Airy buildings/projects that have benefitted from the program through 2016 are (with project finalization date):

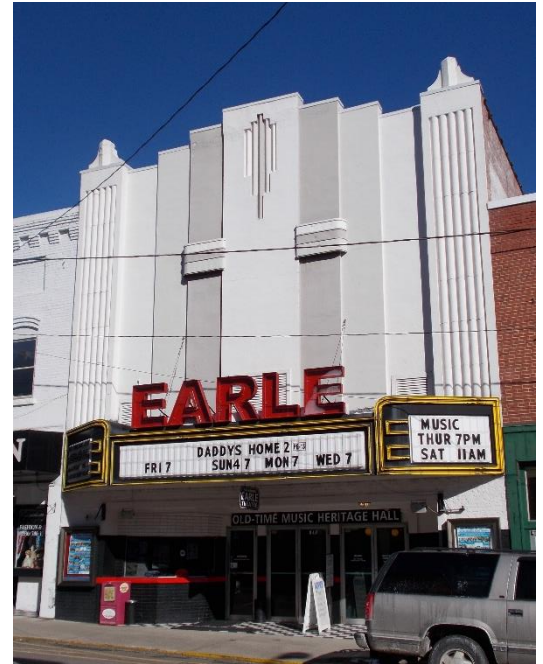
- Baird House, 305 Cherry (2010)
- Cato's, 235-241 N. Main (2015)
- Carter House, 418 S. Main (1983)
- Dollar Home, 142 Worth (1986)
- Dr. Edward C. Ashby House, 302 Cherry (2012)
- T. Benton Ashby House, 500 S. Main (1993)
- T. Garnet Fawcett House, 607 N. Main (2015)
- Globe Tobacco Warehouse, 838 S. Main (2008)
- J. D. Smith Store, 300 N. Main (2012)

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<sup>30</sup> "North Carolina Survey Status Report," report (2014) online at the N.C. Historic Preservation Office website, 124.

- Great American Produce Co. Building, 225-229 Market (2014)
- R. E. Forrest Poultry & Egg Co. #138, 235 Market (2014)
- Worth-Hollingsworth House, 325 S. Main (2016)
- William A. Estes House, 724 S. Main (1998)
- Renfro Mill, 165 Virginia (2004)<sup>31</sup>

Other forms of preservation activity occur in the town. The 1938 Art Deco Earle Theatre (SR0340; *right*) at 142 N. Main shut its doors in 1985 but in 1990 then-owner Carmike Cinemas donated the building to the Surry Arts Council, which renovated the building with funding from the North Carolina Arts Council and resumed showing movies in 1994.<sup>32</sup> Mount Airy Downtown, Inc., affiliated with the North Carolina Main Street program, fosters historically sympathetic revitalization in the downtown. Mount Airy entrepreneur Gene Rees has spearheaded the rehabilitation of historic industrial buildings as housing, for example the Renfro Loft project which created thirty-seven condominiums in the early 1890s Renfro Mill building.<sup>33</sup> Other tobacco/textile buildings in the Mount Airy Historic District Boundary Increase area centered on the intersection of Oak and Willow streets have undergone rehabilitation or await transformation.




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<sup>31</sup> “Completed ITA Projects by County 1976-2016,” spreadsheet (January 3, 2018) prepared by the Restoration Branch of the N.C. Historic Preservation Office; “Completed NTA Projects by County 1998-2016,” spreadsheet (January 3, 2018) prepared by the Restoration Branch of the N.C. Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>32</sup> “Earle History.” Article at the Surry County Music website.

<sup>33</sup> Mount Airy Downtown website.



## Recommendations

The survey identified individual buildings and areas that appear to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and are recommended for placement on the state's Study List. According to the HPO website, "the Study List identifies properties and districts that are likely to be eligible for the National Register, giving the green light to sponsors and staff to proceed with a formal nomination with reasonable assurance that the property can be successfully nominated." Likewise, as a review mechanism the Study List "screens out properties that are clearly not eligible or that are highly unlikely to be eligible for the National Register, saving time and effort on the part of the properties' sponsors and the State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) staff in preparing and reviewing unproductive nominations."

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts worthy of preservation for their significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture. The National Register was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The purpose of the Act is to ensure that as a matter of public policy, properties significant in national, state, and local history are considered in the planning of federal undertakings, and to encourage historic preservation initiatives by state and local governments and the private sector. The listing of a property in the National Register places no obligation or restriction on a private owner using private resources to maintain or alter the property.

The National Register and the HPO follow certain guidelines for defining the boundaries of potential historic districts such as those proposed for the Study List. The historic resources must represent a more or less cohesive grouping that is:

- Historically and/or architecturally significant
- Mostly dates to the historic period (in 2018 defined as pre-1969).
- Retains a generally high degree of architectural integrity; that is, the resources mostly retain the character they had during the historic period.

Changes in architectural character and historic development patterns may also contribute to defining district boundaries. In Mount Airy, an important factor in determining district boundaries was integrity. Historic resources may continue beyond a potential district boundary but are not included because as a whole they do not retain as high a level of integrity as resources within the boundary.

On June 6, 2018, project consultant Dan Pezzoni, HPO contact Claudia Brown, and City of Mount Airy planner Ben Barcroft drove the project area to identify properties and areas for recommendation to the state's Study List. The list below presents those properties/areas with brief discussion of their history, architectural character, significance, and integrity, beginning with the individual properties and proceeding to the proposed historic districts.

Note about names: the proposed district names are either historic (Gasoline Town, Taylor Park), descriptive (Northern Boundary Increase), or in the case of Lebanon Hill use a topographical

feature rather than a specific street name to refer to a large area with multiple streets. Research in pursuit of designation might suggest other names.

Note about the proposed Lebanon Hill and Taylor Park districts: these adjacent areas have different development histories and characters but they could conceivably be treated as a single larger district, if such an approach were advantageous, and if so might be referred to as the North Mount Airy Historic District.

J. J. Jones High School, 215 Jones School Rd.

(SR1064): When it opened in 1940, J. J. Jones High School was the only high school serving African American students in Surry County and all or parts of surrounding counties such as Stokes and Yadkin in North Carolina and Patrick in Virginia. The school was named for J. J. Jones, a leading African American educator in Mount Airy in the early twentieth century, whose son L. H. Jones was the school's first principal. The school was designed by architect J. M. Franklin of Elkin and built with



WPA monies and funds raised by local citizen groups. The original section of the utilitarian brick building consists of a tall auditorium block with lower office/library and classroom wings. Additions include a 1959 gymnasium wing and a Modernist 1967 classroom wing. A detached 1947 gymnasium/auditorium was built in part by the students and preserves a brick-laying classroom in its basement with red lines painted on the floor to indicate student work areas, a tool room with tool outlines painted on the wall, and even a pile of leftover practice bricks. In other classrooms are blackboard frames with chalk rails supported by small brackets and there are tongue-and-groove wainscots in classrooms and the main hallway. The school is potentially eligible under Criterion A in the ethnic heritage: black and education areas of significance for its association with the development of Mount Airy's African American community and educational system, and under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance as the city's best-preserved high school from the historic period. The school possesses high integrity.

Derby Restaurant, 1810 S. Main St. (SR0941): J. W.

Pell Sr. and Archie Dobson opened the Derby Cottage restaurant in 1937 and in 1947 replaced their original building with this curved brick Moderne restaurant, located on the main road leading into Mount Airy from the south. Their architect was Dwight Kenneth Cooke Sr., Mount Airy's only resident architect during the period. The building's curved form is echoed by a curving suspended aluminum awning, and windows are a mix of glass block and aluminum-framed. The interior retains many of its original wood booths with high wood-panel wainscots with chrome and black-painted metal trim. The basement was used for square



dances and retains some of its wood dance floor. The derby name derives from a derby-hatted gas pump attendant hut, now missing. The restaurant is potentially eligible under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance. It possesses good integrity.

Central United Methodist Church, 1909 N. Main St. (SR1092): This Modernist church and educational/administrative complex was designed by architects Andrew L. Pendleton and William T. Leonard and built in 1965. The church features soaring glulam arches and a septet of stained glass apse windows depicting the seven days of the biblical creation. A raised forecourt, rubble retaining walls reminiscent of pre-Columbian Mesoamerican masonry, and a 1966 Scout Hut are other features. The church complex is potentially eligible under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance. It possesses excellent integrity.



Mount Airy Historic District Northern Boundary Increase (SR1104): This small area adjoining the north end of the existing Mount Airy HD centers on Maple, West Elm, and Willow streets and Rawley Avenue. The area is part of the original late nineteenth century expansion beyond the original village of Mount Airy, as is the extension of North Main Street included in the existing historic district, and this history is reflected in the building stock which includes representatives of the Italianate, Queen Anne, Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival styles. The area includes two factories from the city's 1920s apparel manufacturing boom: the Argonne Hosiery Mill, centered on a two-story brick knitting mill, and the Granite Trailer

Manufacturing Company, originally Bruce Springthorpe and Sons, which has a bow-truss brick wing where sweaters and swimming suits were made, and a 1940s enlargement for a farm trailer manufacturer. The area is potentially eligible under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance for the quality and diversity of its historic architecture, in some respects an extension of development in the adjacent historic district, and under Criterion A in the community planning and development area of significance as part of Mount Airy's initial boom-period expansion. The area possesses good overall integrity, with solid historic development along Elm and Willow, less so along Rawley where there is more interspersed modern development and alteration of historic buildings. The Rawley and adjacent Maple areas, however, include five houses of such interest that they were the subject of survey prior to the current project and are featured in Laura Phillips' book *Simple Treasures: The Architectural Legacy of Surry County*. The boundary increase area was presumably excluded from the original historic district due to a combination of factors, possibly including budget limitations and a focus on the genteel homes along North Main Street.



Mount Airy Historic District Southern Boundary Increase (SR1105): This large area adjoining the south end of the existing Mount Airy HD centers on Rockford and West Church streets and sections of adjacent streets, with a second, smaller portion along Bank Street. The north end of Rockford Street, the historic road linking Mount Airy to the county seat at Dobson, is contained within the existing district; the proposed increase continues that vector, picking up a range of house types and styles including Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival, as well as two 1920s Colonial Revival churches—Haymore

Memorial Baptist Church and Rockford Street Methodist Church—and a 1969 Modernist fire station. West Church Street, which branches off South Main Street in the existing district, has more of a side street quality, with close-set development in the aforementioned styles. Bank Street has a notable collection of Craftsman bungalows. The area is potentially eligible under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance for the quality and diversity of its historic architecture, in some respects an extension of development in the adjacent historic district, and under Criterion A in the community planning and development area of significance as an important part of the city’s historic development. The area possesses good overall integrity. The boundary increase area was presumably excluded from the original historic district due to a combination of factors, possibly including budget limitations and a focus on the genteel homes along South Main Street.

Gasoline Town Historic District (SR1080): This complex of distributorships and other fuel facilities, labeled Gasoline Town on the 1929 Sanborn map, owed its existence to the growing local fleet of automobiles and trucks in the 1920s and the presence of the rail line leading into town, which allowed bulk shipment of fuel. Three main facilities survive in part: the Standard Oil Company complex (Harrell Oil Company), with silver-painted corrugated-metal-sided buildings; the Meyers Oil Company complex, with warehouses and a brick-veneered service station; and the Gulf Refining Company, with a brick storage warehouse with a bow-truss roof, industrial-type metal-framed windows, and batten freight doors. Similar buildings were built for Gulf throughout North Carolina. The complex is potentially eligible under Criterion A in the commerce and/or transportation areas of significance as a notable concentration of buildings that supported the economy of Mount Airy in the 1920s and later. The complex possesses good overall integrity despite the loss of some historic buildings and the abandonment of others.





Lebanon Hill Historic District (SR1103): The dominant landscape feature of this historic residential area to the north of the Mount Airy HD is Lebanon Hill, the site of the community’s original Methodist church in the nineteenth century. Development commenced by the end of the nineteenth century, as evidenced by the 1880s Pegram-Smith House, a Shingle Style-influenced Queen Anne house. Other styles represented in the area include Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Moderne, and Ranch. The area includes the 1909 Edgar Harvey Hennis House, individually listed in the National Register, and the 1939 W. Guy Bondurant House, a

Moderne house that is probably Mount Airy’s first Modernist house. Two or three residences used as tourist homes stand on West Lebanon Street, the principal road leading into town from the north. The area’s few non-residential buildings include Holy Angels Catholic Church, a granite chapel built in 1921 to a design by the Benedictine monk and architect Fr. Michael McInerney, and the late 1940s Dairy Center restaurant, a simple roadside Modernist building. The area is potentially eligible under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance for the quality and diversity of its historic architecture, and under Criterion A in the community planning and development area of significance as one of preeminent areas of Mount Airy’s expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The area possesses good overall integrity: most historic houses retain their character-defining features, there has been relatively little demolition and modern development, and even heavily travelled thoroughfares like West Lebanon Street and North Main Street retain their essential residential character.

Taylor Park Historic District (SR1106): The Taylor Park subdivision was developed by James Marion Burke beginning in the 1930s. The area, which extends from North Main Street almost to West Lebanon Street and includes the principal streets of Grace, Howard, and Marion, features a mix of standard residential building lots and larger, irregular lots on which several large houses were built, and it includes several curving streets, among the first of their kind in Mount Airy. The Winston-Salem architectural firm of Northup and O’Brien designed a rambling Colonial Revival residence for hosiery mill executive H. Lindsey Holcomb in 1934. Slightly later is the 1937 John and Pansy Springthorpe House, a granite house that mixes Tudor and Norman influences. The 1948 Donald C. Rector House, built for a bank president, is a sprawling Colonial Revival residence with a monumental Doric portico. The neighborhood is home to many of the city’s early Modernist houses, including the 1941 or 1942 Hale and Nina Yokley House, a flat-roofed frame residence remodeled in the International style in the 1960s; the ca. 1950 Caldwell House, a brick-veneered house with an overhanging flat roof and multiple metal-framed corner windows; and the 1957 Jerome and Marilyn Samet House, a wedge-shaped residence inspired by



Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian house designs and built by Jerome Samet, an area contractor. The 1953 Ranch house of James Marion Burke, the developer of the neighborhood, and his wife, Mary Burke, stands at the edge of the development. The sole non-residential building in the area is Grace Moravian Church, a 1925 granite building with a portico in antis. The area is potentially eligible under Criterion A in the community planning and development area of significance and under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance for the quality and diversity of its historic architecture, which includes several of the city's largest and most sophisticated houses from the middle third of the twentieth century, as well several of the city's small contingent of early Modernist houses. The area possesses excellent integrity, with few modern intrusions and the parklike character that was originally envisioned for the development.



Country Club Hill Historic District (SR1102): The Mount Airy Country Club (1927 and/or 1928) attracted residential development around its periphery. An intact row of stylish one-story, story-and-a-half, and two-story houses was built on the 500 block of Country Club Road facing the golf course. Most of the houses, which are in the Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Period Cottage, Minimal Traditional, and Ranch styles, appear to date to the late 1940s and 1950s. Other houses in similar styles were built on larger lots on the 600 and 700 blocks of Country Club Road and adjacent streets including Fairway Lane and Club View Drive. At the south end of the group is the late 1940s Natt Ferguson (Renzo Sutter)

House at 339 Country Club, a Moderne house of stuccoed construction and one- and two-story flat-roofed massing. The area is potentially eligible under Criterion A in the community planning and development area of significance and under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance. It possesses good overall integrity with few non-historic houses and with the character-defining features of its historic houses intact.

In addition to these proposed Study List properties/areas are additional properties and areas that may warrant placement on the Study List with additional research and/or survey, specifically interior survey for the individual properties:

Atlantic and Yadkin Railway Mount Airy Passenger Station, 580 Granite St. (SR0383)

John and Mazie Ayers House, 1001 Mitchell St. (SR1093)

Blue Ridge Enterprises, 1120 West Lebanon St. (SR1089)

Duke Power Gas Plant, 355 Galloway St. (SR0945)

Fairview/Main/Oakdale/Robin/Wrenn Historic Residential Neighborhood

Hadley and Smith Tobacco Factory, 600 W. Pine St. (SR0384)

Madoc Recreation Center, 318 Virginia St. (SR1097)

Mount Airy National Guard Armory, 85 Patrol Station Rd. (SR0832)

Proctor-Silex Plant, 561 Hay St. (SR1014)

Southern 500 Truck Stop, 1804 N. Andy Griffith Parkway (SR0933)

Other preservation-related projects and actions are recommended:

Additional Survey: The current project entailed the survey of 161 previously unsurveyed individual properties and 15 unsurveyed building groupings for a total of 176 new survey records. Though these new surveys broaden and deepen understanding of the city's historic resources, in that they include resource types not previously examined and focus in part on areas where little documentation formerly existed, the work demonstrates that there are many additional historic resources that warrant survey. A count was not made, but the total of historic (pre-ca.1970) resources not yet surveyed likely numbers in the multiple hundreds. If survey of these additional properties is undertaken, priority should be given to resources in the potential historic districts listed above, and in the Fairview/Main/Oakdale/Robin/Wrenn Historic Residential Neighborhood which, once adequately surveyed or sampled, may warrant consideration for the Study List.

National Register Designation: Nomination of individual properties and potential historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places would be a natural follow-up to the current project, and in fact is a step often taken by North Carolina communities that have undertaken community-wide architectural surveys. For privately-owned individual properties, presumably any designations would be owner-initiated. For publicly-owned individual properties and for districts, designation would presumably be a community undertaking, given the direct community benefit of designation and, for districts, the greater amount of work entailed. As all properties within a proposed historic district must be surveyed before or as part of the designation process, the process affords an opportunity to survey historic resources, accomplishing one of the chief goals of a community historic resource planning/management program and a recommendation of the "additional survey" discussion above. As it did for the current project, the HPO can provide technical assistance and funding in support of a historic district designation initiative due to Mount Airy's status as a Certified Local Government.

As to which of the several potential historic districts to focus on first, should the city decide to move forward with district designation, a number of factors may be involved, including need, planning priorities, community interest, and scope. Regarding the latter, in a budget sense smaller districts are more easily surveyed and designated than larger districts, and size was a secondary consideration in the characterization of potential districts in order to make them more manageable as projects. (The primary considerations were age of resources, significance, and integrity, reflecting National Register requirements; it may be possible to combine some of the contiguous potential districts, if that approach proves preferable.) In terms of community interest, the consultant is aware of strong interest in designation of the potential Lebanon Hill Historic District (also known locally as the West Lebanon Street historic area). The boundary increase areas are presented as two discrete areas, north and south, but a combined approach would be more cost-effective per resource than separate designation.

Existing District Revision: The current project updated information on the hundreds of resources in the existing Mount Airy National Register historic district. One outcome of the update was the discovery that most of the resources that were considered contributing in 1985 remain contributing, a testimony to the good stewardship of owners and the town government. Now that the survey update is complete, a logical follow up would be revision of the nomination report.

The chief benefit of revision would be the opportunity to expand the period of significance in order to classify more historic buildings as contributing. The end of the period of significance when the district was designated was 1935; were the district to be revised this year, the end would be 1968. The reclassification of buildings built between 1935 and 1968 as contributing would make participation in the state and federal rehabilitation tax credit programs possible for owners of those buildings. Revision of the existing district could be undertaken in conjunction with, or separate from, inclusion of the potential boundary increase areas.

Publication: Laura Phillips' book *Simple Treasures: The Architectural Legacy of Surry County* (1987), based on the Surry County architectural survey, has been an invaluable tool in local preservation efforts. A revision of the 1987 book, or an entirely new book devoted specifically to the historic architecture of Mount Airy, would provide similar benefits. North Carolina leads the nation in encouraging localities to disseminate architectural survey information in attractive and popular architectural history publications. Historical societies and preservation organizations typically spearhead publication efforts. A number of funding options exist to assist with publication, but generally funding relies on two main sources: donations from local governments, businesses, and/or individuals; and book sales.



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