

Tarboro Architectural Survey Update Final Report

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PROJECT BACKGROUND, COORDINATION, AND ADMINISTRATION

The Historic Architecture Staff of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in-house Environmental Analysis Unit sought assistance from MdM Historical Consultants (MdM) to conduct an architectural survey and prepare a comprehensive architectural history inventory of Tarboro, North Carolina. This is one of several phases of mitigation to document the existing architectural heritage of the region prior to being impacted by the construction and operational launch of planned CSX track improvements and an intermodal terminal. NCDOT funding will be used for all phases of the mitigation. The study area for this project is generally the Town of Tarboro and its Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) limits in Edgecombe County, North Carolina.

This report describes the intensive-level survey in and around Tarboro in 2020 and 2021 that constitutes the historic architectural inventory. This work has been supervised by NCDOT Historic Architecture staff and completed according to survey standards established by the North Carolina HPO (HPO) and described in the HPO survey manual, *North Carolina Historic Preservation Office Architectural Survey Manual: Practical Advice for Recording Historic Structures* (2008 edition). MdM meets 36 CFR 61 qualifications for architectural historian. Staff from the HPO reviewed and commented on the deliverables generated by this project, including this report.

During a reconnaissance phase in early 2020, MdM worked with HPO staff to prepare for this intensive survey. Andrew Edmonds, GIS Technical Support Analyst, supplied MdM with an Access database populated with previously surveyed Tarboro properties and to which newly surveyed resources could be added. Chandrea Burch, HPO Technical Assistant, provided survey site numbers (SSN) for the newly surveyed properties. MdM contacted Tina Parker, Commercial Development and Main Street Coordinator for the Town of Tarboro, and Catherine W. Grimm, Planning Director for the Town of Tarboro at the suggestion of Scott Power, who was at the time the Regional Supervisor in the Eastern Office of HPO.

The architectural survey took place during the Covid 19 pandemic and resulting quarantine, which included restrictions on gatherings that made public meetings, typical of projects like this, impossible. Instead, MdM described the survey and posted questions to two Facebook pages: “Yesteryear in Tarboro and Edgecombe County” and “Edgecombe County Genealogical and Historical Society.” Together, those pages have over five thousand members, and MdM received many helpful replies to queries about individual buildings and developments.

The authors are grateful to a number of local history experts consulted on the project, including Monika Fleming, Watson Brown, and Reid Thomas. Pam Edmonson, the local history librarian at the Edgecombe County Memorial Library in Tarboro, was generous with her time and expertise. Likewise, the authors credit residents and property owners with providing a wealth of information as well as access to properties. This benefitted the project enormously.

METHODOLOGY

The project required re-survey of 650 previously identified properties, including the large Tarboro Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) in 1980, as well as survey of 350 previously unidentified properties. The intensive survey was guided by the HPO survey manual, previous intensive survey results, and the reconnaissance survey report that MdM prepared in May 2020. That study identified two residential developments for survey as well as several individual properties spanning multiple building types and architectural styles. The properties reflect development and architectural trends in the late nineteenth century to circa 1975, expanding the scope of historical and architectural trends documented in survey around Tarboro. While the date range of these buildings is concentrated in the first three quarters of the twentieth century, there are a few outliers that date to the late nineteenth century and to the later 1970s.



Left: 900 block of Main Street (west side); right: 400 block Main Street (west side), both in the Tarboro Historic District

MdM Principal Investigators and Architectural Historians Jennifer Martin and Cynthia de Miranda intensively surveyed the properties in the spring and summer of 2021 and the winter of 2022, documenting individual properties in the field with DSLR photography and survey notes. MdM undertook research for each individual property from their offices in Durham, examining digitized records from the Edgecombe County GIS department (which included building construction dates that generally seem accurate); the Edgecombe County Register of Deeds; and the NC HPO GIS mapping service. MdM also scoured digitized versions of Tarboro city directories and telephone books from the twentieth century as well as digitized census records, vital records, and other records from Ancestry.com. MdM completed a wide array of searches for individual properties, businesses, and residents on Newspapers.com. MdM also completed research on some individual properties as well as neighborhoods at the Local History Room of the Edgecombe County Library in Tarboro.

The survey provided information on demolitions of and alterations to buildings previously documented in the nomination. Additionally, the survey expanded documentation in Tarboro to include neighborhoods surrounding the historic district, including those previously undocumented and others developed after the period of significance of the original district. Survey in these later developments identified some Neotraditional buildings that may relate to the nascent historic preservation movement of the 1970s that was briefly mentioned in the nomination.

This project updates and expands upon work undertaken in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Tarboro was previously studied and documented by the HPO in the late 1970s, with a study area based on the full extent of the 1931 Sanborn Maps of Tarboro. That work culminated in two products: the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled “Historic Resources of Tarboro” and the NR nomination for the Tarboro Historic District. Both were completed in 1980 by Catherine Bishir and Joe Mobley of the Survey and Planning Branch of the state’s Division of Archives and History with assistance from Angela Barnett and Susan Mooring on the MPDF.

This report builds on information presented in the MPDF and the NR nomination: architectural and historical context for Tarboro from 1760 through the 1930s. This report, therefore, presents architectural history and context from 1940 through 1975 and highlights physical changes in the district since its listing. Boundaries for the NR district follow Albemarle Avenue, the Tar River, and Panola Street on the west, south, and east sides, respectively. The north end is an irregular line south of the railroad. While the rail line would have been a logical boundary, a loss of architectural integrity just south of the tracks necessitated defining a boundary based on the parcel lines of intact properties rather than the edge of the rail corridor. This report also includes summary histories of East Tarboro and West Tarboro; these areas were developed during the period covered by the nomination but were not part of the study area at that time.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF TARBORO, EDGECOMBE COUNTY, 1940-1975

Previous documentation records that, from founding, the town has been a colonial port, a regional trade center, a county seat, an industrial center, and—in very recent decades—a heritage tourism destination. The Tar River has heavily influenced the character and economy of the town throughout its history, enabling transportation and trade long before road and rail infrastructure could be built. In the early nineteenth century, enslaved Black workers in the rural areas around Tarboro cultivated cotton for white planters. Exportation of that crop helped develop the local economy in the early nineteenth century. Later, agricultural industries that included textiles and tobacco fueled Tarboro’s economic engine. White merchants, planters, politicians, and professionals historically made up the power brokers in town, but Tarboro was also home to Black and white carpenters, masons, builders, teachers, grocers, shopkeepers, farmers, laborers, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and factory and mill workers.

War Years and Immediate Post-War Period, 1940-1949

Restarting the Twin Economic Engines of Industry and Agriculture

Tarboro had enjoyed significant growth before the Depression of the 1930s severely curtailed development. Wartime production got the economy going again in the early 1940s. The Tarboro Historic District nomination mentions the Tarboro Tent Company as “one of the new war industries established in Tarboro” in the period. Previously existing companies benefitted as well: the rapid expansion of military installations fueled growth for Carolina Telephone and Telegraph (ED1516), for example, and vaulted that company out of its Depression-era doldrums. During the war, demand for phone service came from new and expanded military bases in the company’s service area, including Fort Bragg at Fayetteville, Camp Lejeune at Jacksonville, Cherry Point Marine Air Station at Havelock, Camp Davis at Holly Ridge, and the Maxton-

Laurinburg Glider Base at Maxton.¹ Another benefactor of the war-effort economic boost was the Tarboro Veneer Products Company, which was established just before the war in 1938 and converted to wartime production, producing veneer for airplane construction.²

Population growth was limited throughout the 1940s, growing by less than a thousand residents from the 1940 population of 7,148. One noticeable decline in population and influence occurred in the town's Jewish community, a group that had been active in Tarboro's business, real estate, and social life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the 1940s, B'nai Israel, the Jewish congregation whose synagogue was dedicated in 1897, had become largely inactive as the number of Jewish families dwindled. The Jews who remained in Tarboro in the 1940s and 1950s traveled to Rocky Mount to worship with a larger congregation. The synagogue located at 1105 North Main Street was torn down in the 1970s.³

Beginning in 1945, local industry's involvement in the war effort sped post-war recovery. Textile plants were able to switch back to civilian goods very quickly upon the cancellation of their contracts.⁴ Other companies, like the Tarboro Veneer Company, did the same.⁵ A number of new light-industrial and retail businesses opened north of the east-west rail line, including a car dealership and repair garage (ED2020), a lumber yard, appliance store and warehouse (ED2021), bottling plant (ED2017), and a dry-cleaning plant (ED2018). Long Manufacturing Company embarked upon a notable expansion in this period. Bill Long had started the company in 1940 to sell parts for farm equipment. In 1944, the company began making and selling oil stoves used for curing tobacco. Starting in 1948, Long Manufacturing Company made tractors, the only company doing so in the state at that time. In 1949, Long employed sixty workers.⁶ While work was becoming more plentiful in town, working conditions were not always ideal: in the spring of 1949, the workers at the 550-employee Hart Cotton Mill went on strike, closing the mill for six months.⁷ The role of industry had clearly been important in the post-war economy, validating the vision of nineteenth-century Tarboro boosters who augmented the agricultural economy with an industrial base. In 1948, the *Raleigh News and Observer* touted Tarboro's unusual possession of these double-economic drivers.⁸

The industrial economy had clearly been important in the local post-war recovery, but agriculture remained the backbone of Edgecombe County's economy. Tarboro, as the county seat, served as a market for local farm products. The town hosted cotton, peanut, hog, and tobacco markets. The two tobacco auction warehouses near the river at Water, Granville, and Pitt Streets and west of Albemarle were soon joined by four more, ensuring a lively tobacco market each year in late

¹ James R. Nichols, *The First Hundred Years: A History of Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company, 1895-1995* ([Tarboro, N.C.]: Carolina Telephone and Telegraph, 1995), 90-91.

² Tarboro Chamber of Commerce, "Tarboro Means Business!" [Tarboro]: N.p., [1947]; "New Corporations," *Raleigh News and Observer*, November 20, 1938.

³ "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities: Tarboro, North Carolina," Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, isjl.org, <https://www.isjl.org/north-carolina-tarboro-encyclopedia.html>, accessed January 12, 2022; "Dedication of the Synagogue," *The Tarborough Southerner*, February 11, 1897.

⁴ "Textile Mills Set for Civilian Work," *Charlotte Observer*, August 17, 1945.

⁵ "Tarboro Means Business!"

⁶ "Tarboro Tobacco Market Ready to Begin '53 Auction Season," *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 18, 1953; "Tarboro's Bill Long Has Only Tractor Plant in State," *Rocky Mount Evening Telegram*, January 21, 1949.

⁷ "Scott to make new effort to end strike," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, October 18, 1949; "Jail sentences of works are suspended," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, December 25, 1949. The Long Company plant is no longer extant.

⁸ "The Heart of the Magic Circle," *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 17, 1948.

summer.⁹ By the 1950s, Tarboro’s tobacco warehouses handled twelve to fourteen million pounds of bright leaf tobacco each season.¹⁰

In 1941, Hart Cotton Mills sold a parcel on the south side of West St. James Street in the eastern portion of its mill village to prominent merchant W. S. Clark and Sons, Inc., which had operated a bustling retail store on Main Street beginning in 1872 under its founder William Samuel Clark (1846-1923). In 1952, the *Rocky Mount Telegram* reported that “since the war we find them erecting several large warehouses on St. James Street to take care of the tremendous farm supplies and fertilizer business.” In fact, the company built five brick warehouses used for storing agricultural supplies, fertilizer, and tobacco (ED2037). Edgar L. Hart (1898-1982) supervised the operation in the 1940s and early 1950s.¹¹

In 1944, to boost local farmers’ income, state senator W. G. (Cousin Willie) Clark and his son, W. G. Clark Jr., donated \$10,000 to build segregated curb markets in downtown Tarboro. W. G.



Black farmers curb market (ED2023) on East Wilson Street

Clark Sr. was the son of wealthy merchant William Samuel Clark. W. G. Clark and W. G. Clark Jr. directed that \$8,000 go toward the construction of the white market and the remaining \$2,000 be used for the Black farmers’ curb market. At the time, town officials called it the most significant gift made to the town since Joseph Howell gave the land for the town common in 1760. Dr. I. O. Schaub, director of the North Carolina College Extension Service, announced “the fine gift will help both the town and the country people around Tarboro and will aid the Extension workers in doing a much better job of aiding farmers

in marketing vegetables, fruits, eggs, poultry and other products.”¹² During the summer months, farmers could sell fruits and vegetables several times a week at the markets. During winter months, the schedule shifted to a once-a-week market. The concrete-block Black Curb Market (ED2023) was built at 509 East Wilson Street in East Tarboro while the white Curb Market (ED1402) stands on Albemarle Avenue. Wilson architect Thomas B. Herman designed both buildings, which were dedicated in 1954.¹³



White farmers curb market (ED1402) on Albemarle Avenue

⁹ C. Rudolph Knight and Lawrence W. S. Auld, *From Water Street to East Tarboro, Keechtown, and The Depot: Tarboro African American Neighborhoods* (Tarboro: Perry-Weston Institute, 2010), 18.

¹⁰ “Tarboro Tobacco Market is Located in Center of Coastal Plain Region,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 14, 1954.

¹¹ Edgecombe County Deed Book 395, page 2, dated May 30, 1941; “Clarks in Business 81 Years in Tarboro; Employees Amass Long Records of Service,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, January 20, 1952.

¹² “Clarks Give Fund for Curb Market,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, January 6, 1944.

¹³ “Advertisement for Bids,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, September 9, 1953.

The availability of surplus military materials also characterized the immediate post-war period. Quonset huts once used for barracks were repurposed as classrooms at W. S. Pattillo High School, the high school for Black students in still-segregated Tarboro at that time.¹⁴ Perhaps the



Quigless Clinic (ED1041) at 109 Water Street (NR)

most notable use of surplus war material in Tarboro was in the creation of the Quigless Clinic (ED1041) in 1946 by Dr. Milton Quigless, an African American doctor who had been practicing in and around Tarboro and Princeville for a decade. As his career in Tarboro began in the 1930s, segregation and racial discrimination left him with no option but to see Black patients in their own homes. Later, he created a makeshift clinic in an unused fish market building. Finally, Dr. Quigless was able to borrow funds to demolish that office and erect a purpose-built medical facility. He acquired surplus military equipment to outfit it. The

Quigless Clinic is located at the south end of the Tarboro Historic District—convenient to both Tarboro and Princeville—and the availability of medical care led to a profound improvement in the lives of the Black population.¹⁵ The building is individually listed in the NR. It is a non-contributing building in the Tarboro Historic District due to its age, but text in the nomination makes it clear that its history and significance were not known to the authors when the nomination was written in 1980.

Post-War Suburban Development Begins

The built landscape transformed in the middle decades of the twentieth century as residents ventured beyond the town center and mill villages to settle in neighborhoods north of central Tarboro. Through the late 1940s, quality housing was in short supply across the country because of the downturn in construction during the Great Depression and World War II. Beginning in 1945, insured mortgages through the federal government and other housing programs such as those offered through the G.I. Bill provided assistance to home buyers and investors seeking to develop residential neighborhoods where new houses could be constructed.

Local developers platted and sold lots in suburban housing developments to address the housing shortage. In 1946, brothers Reginald Morton (“Runt”) and Vinton Epstein (V.E.) Fountain, brothers of Congressman Lawrence Hardy (L.H.) Fountain, subdivided land on the west side of North Main Street to create Fairview Park. The Fountains imposed covenants on the 109 lots in the subdivision, including a provision that all buildings had to harmonize and conform to guidelines imposed by a committee made up of Runt Fountain, V.E. Fountain, and L. H. Fountain. Typical of the period, the deed restrictions declared that “no persons or any race other than the Caucasian race shall use or occupy any building or any lot, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or

¹⁴ C. Rudolph Knight, *Historical Reflections on African American Tarboro* (Tarboro: Perry-Weston Institute, 2014), 20.

¹⁵ Heather Barrett, “Quigless Clinic,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2000.

tenant.”¹⁶ Minimal Traditional houses were built along the development’s three streets, Mayo Street and North and South Fairview Circles, in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

In 1947 and 1949, Gertrude and Clinton H. Henderson, who owned construction and lumber companies, subdivided acreage on the east side of St. Andrews Street into seventy-one lots for the Cromwell subdivision.¹⁷ Henderson constructed mostly modest Minimal Traditional houses on Thrash, Morrison, Longview, and Cromwell Avenues. In 1949, Thelma Hill Marrow and Edward Hines Marrow Jr. purchased a lot from the Hendersons and had a Westchester model

Lustron house (ED2029) assembled on the site, mostly likely by Henderson Construction Company. Mr. Marrow worked for Carolina Telephone and Telegraph after receiving training in radar technology at the English Royal Air Force School in Canada. He later served as an instructor in radar at the Corpus Christi Naval Air Technical Training Center in Texas before moving back to Tarboro, his hometown.¹⁸ The one-story, side-gabled house rests on a concrete-block foundation. All structural elements including the wall framing and roof



Marrow Lustron House (ED2029) on Cromwell Avenue in the Cromwell subdivision

trusses are steel with porcelain enameled steel panels affixed to them. Each two-foot-by-two-foot exterior panel exhibits a glass-like maintenance-free finish. The exterior color is dove gray, one of four color choices given to buyers.

In 1949, the Glenburnie plat subdivided the area west of Albemarle Avenue and south of Howard Avenue on land belonging to Lizzie Rawls Howard (1873-1959), widow of George Howard III. When George Howard III died in 1925, the *Raleigh News and Observer* reported that “he was a very large property owner.”¹⁹ His wife, Lizzie Rawls Howard, apparently inherited much of his land and in 1952 transferred ownership of the unsold parcels in Glenburnie to her sons, Rawls and Robert Howard. They sold the remaining lots. Residents built Colonial Revival-style and Minimal Traditional houses as well Ranch dwellings. Nancy B. and Haywood Dail Holderness, president of Carolina Telephone and Telegraph, built a substantial Colonial Revival-style brick house at 805 South Howard Circle.²⁰ Many residents of these new neighborhoods worked in the town’s industries and factories.

Growth, Expansion, Desegregation, and Historic Preservation, 1950-1975

Industry

The 1950s brought a mix of mild recession followed by significant industrial and residential expansion. As late as 1958, the local agricultural economy was still more profitable than the

¹⁶ “Restrictions on Fairview Park,” Edgecombe County Deed Book 395, page 178, October 27, 1941.

¹⁷ Edgecombe County Book of Maps 7, page 12, January 1, 1947.

¹⁸ “Marrow-Hill,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, September 19, 1943.

¹⁹ “George Howard Dies in Tarboro,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, February 22, 1925.

²⁰ Edgecombe County Deed Book 366, 444, August 11, 1938; *Hill’s Tarboro City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1956), 36.

industrial base in town, but the local drive to expand industry remained strong. Some Tarboro businessmen formed an industrial development board in that year and employed a strategy of attracting “a succession of small plants” for which the town could provide labor with the existing workforce. The plants, in turn, would expand the industrial economy and attract workers as well



Mayo Knitting Mill (ED1775) built in 1955 at 701 Chestnut Street in west Tarboro

as investment. In the meantime, existing local manufacturers expanded. Mayo Knitting Mill erected a new plant (ED1775) in 1955, and Hart Cotton Mills became part of Burlington Industries. Hart employed 600 workers and Runnymede Mills had 200 workers on the payroll.²¹ Long Manufacturing became the town’s leading industrial employer with 750 workers. In 1958, the Rocky Mount newspaper called Long Manufacturing and Hart Cotton Mills “two of Edgecombe County’s largest concerns.”²²

By the 1960s, the work of the industrial board was bearing fruit. Glenoit Mills, manufacturers of knit fabrics, opened in 1960 with 125 workers in a modern building at the north end of town.²³ The Anaconda Cable and Wire Plant opened in 1966 at 2801 Anaconda Avenue.²⁴ A Black and Decker manufacturing plant opened on 60 acres on Highway 45 in 1971.²⁵

By the 1960s, the work of the industrial board

Post-war prosperity and expanded service area fueled continued growth for Carolina Telephone and Telegraph. In the 1950s, expansion came in the form of facilities that were part of the burgeoning television broadcasting network. Wage increases for workers, many based in Tarboro, came in most years between 1943 and 1957. In 1957, the company broke all its own single-year records for expansion expenditures with a \$17 million outlay for facilities. This record-breaking period came just three years after Hurricane Hazel severely damaged company equipment in all 41 counties that it served at that time. By 1969, the company had built a six-story Modernist office tower (ED1516) directly adjacent to its original 1912 Classical Revival-style office building (ED0021). A 1979 Brutalist campus (ED2015) on Western Boulevard replaced the downtown office buildings and modernized the analog system with digital switches.²⁶



Carolina Telephone and Telegraph building (ED1516) constructed on East St. James Street in 1969

²¹ “Industrious Tarboro: A Town on the Move,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, October 30, 1960.

²² “Tarboro proclaims: ‘Great things to come!’” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, August 31, 1958.

²³ “Tarboro—Moderate Growth or Boom?” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, July 10, 1960.

²⁴ “Tarboro plant nearing completion,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, May 19, 1966.

²⁵ “Open House Plans,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, March 26, 1971.

²⁶ Nichols, 90-92, 105; “Tarboro Historic District,” 7.22.

The downtown underwent significant changes in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s as Tarboro attempted to modernize its commercial and government core. New buildings went up and numerous commercial buildings were transformed, including the circa 1890 Edgecombe Bank and Trust Company (ED1444) at 316-318 Main Street. A late 1960s remodeling of the façade converted the building into a neo-Colonial Revival-style building. In March 1955, a new library



Tarboro Town Hall (ED1449) from 1963 at 500 Main Street

(ED1453) opened on Main Street. Designed by Fayetteville architect Charles C. Jenkins, public and private funding provided for construction of the Modernist one-story brick building. In 1960, W. G. Clark Jr. replaced the venerable 1890 Hotel Farrar with a massive Modernist brick building (ED1445) to house a Rose's Department Store. Located at 322 Main Street, the building also included offices of Carolina Telephone and Telegraph.²⁷ In late 1962, Tarboro town council approved demolition of the grand 1890s town hall. Prominently featuring a corner clock tower, the highly ornate

building originally housed an opera house on the upper level and police and administrative offices on the lower level. In 1963, a two-story Modernist building (ED1449) designed by the architectural firm of Edwards, Dove, Parker and Associates replaced the town hall.²⁸ The building is boxy and austere in stark contrast to its predecessor, featuring cream-colored brick veneer and a centered entrance set into a window wall that rises the full height of the building. The next year, 1964, a new county courthouse (ED0439) was built and an addition constructed to the rear of the 1914 post office (ED0058). The Colonial Revival-style courthouse is two stories on a raised basement with a Flemish-bond brick exterior, a modillion cornice, and a copper-covered mansard roof. The post office addition is compatible with the Neoclassical Revival style of the original early-twentieth-century building. The scale of the building is massive in comparison to public buildings of earlier decades. In 1972, the one-story brick and precast concrete North Carolina National Bank (ED1446) was completed on the site of the old courthouse. A modern fire station (ED1521) was completed in 1966 at 205 East St. John Street. The one-story, brick-and-concrete Modernist building includes a kitchen and break rooms and large bays for housing engines and equipment.²⁹

Suburban Development, Public Housing, and Urban Renewal

The town itself prepared for expansion that would follow the economic development with infrastructure and facility planning as well as adoption of a zoning ordinance in 1948.³⁰ New suburban subdivision plats dating from the 1950s included the mill villages noted above as well as middle- to upper-middle-class white neighborhoods like Forest Acres, Howard Circle, and West Acres. Forest Acres, platted by the Fountains who had developed Fairview Park, also

²⁷ "Tarboro—Moderate Growth or Boom?" *Rocky Mount Telegram*, July 10, 1960.

²⁸ "Tarboro to Tear Down City Hall, Build Another," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, November 15, 1962.

²⁹ "Tarboro's New Fire Station Formally Dedicated Sunday," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, June 27, 1966.

³⁰ Nan Leatherman and Vernon Sawyer, "Preliminary Survey Toward a Comprehensive Plan for Tarboro," (Chapel Hill: Department of City and Regional Planning, UNC-CH, 1950), 64.

included covenants banning Black residents and requiring architectural design review. Runt Fountain planned development over three or four decades with homes in three price ranges established by deed covenants.³¹ Also platted were more modest subdivisions like Lyndale Acres and Rawls Howard. Residential developments survive with more integrity than do retail or commercial establishments. Updates to the latter building types as well as to public housing often result changes in character and materials that translate to a loss of architectural integrity.

The federal American Housing Act of 1949 had an impact locally by promoting construction of dwelling units for residents with lower incomes. The town established the Tarboro Housing Authority that same year.³² Within a few years, under programs created by the act, the town built segregated public housing: Eastside Homes for Black residents between Edmonson and Bradley Avenues at Wooten Street and Pinehurst Homes on Sherwood Avenue for whites.³³ The public housing built in the 1950s at Eastside Homes no longer exists. The buildings comprising Pinehurst Homes have been altered with vinyl siding and replacement windows.

Throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, suburban development also included commercial properties like motels and shopping centers as well as subdivision residential development. The William Vance Motel opened on West Wilson Avenue in southwest Tarboro with twelve units; it was quickly expanded to twenty with another block of rooms in a separate building. Neither building survives today. Fairview Shopping Center occupied a city block on North Main Street as early as 1956; like many strip malls, it has been altered since construction.³⁴

In 1964, the U.S. 64 Bypass around Tarboro was approved to redirect thru-traffic from Main Street. Funding came from a \$300 million state bond issue. The 5.1-mile route met with almost unanimous local support except from some residents of the Speight Forest neighborhood, which was affected by the chosen route on the west side of town. One Edgecombe County commissioner called Tarboro “a bottleneck” and said the project was crucial “no matter how long it takes.”³⁵ State and local officials dedicated the road, now known as Western Boulevard, in November 1967.³⁶ The bypass’s completion heralded a wave of suburban development on the west side of Tarboro. Parkhill Mall opened in 1971; Edwards, Dove, Knight and Associates were the architects and it was built by Commercial Builders, both of Rocky Mount. The mall, like many suburban retail outlets in Tarboro, has been altered repeatedly.³⁷

Later public housing expenditures first improved earlier projects and then, in the 1970s, sought to incorporate public housing throughout the community.³⁸ Tarboro established a Redevelopment Commission in 1967 for housing projects as well as for what was known as “urban renewal” in Panola Heights and Keechtown, also known as Hendricks Park. The work involved both the removal and improvement of substandard dwellings, as well as construction and improvement of streets, curbs, and gutters. Funding came from the federal Department of

³¹ Edgecombe County Deed Book 760, page 62.

³² Leatherman and Sawyer, 30.

³³ Knight, 214.

³⁴ “Tarboro Proclaims: ‘Great Things To Come!’” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, August 31, 1958.

³⁵ “Edgecombe Backs Plan for US 64,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, March 25, 1964.

³⁶ “Hunt Answers Critics on Interstate Roads at Tarboro Bypass Dedication,” *News and Observer*, November 22, 1967.

³⁷ “Ground Broken for New Belk Store in Parkhill Mall Center at Tarboro,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, July 8, 1971.

³⁸ “Tarboro Planning for More Public Housing,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, October 21, 1970.

Housing and Urban Development (HUD). All the houses in the redevelopment area for Keechtown were demolished, and the Elmhurst low-income apartment buildings were erected in their place in 1977; the collection of duplex apartments on Simmons Street west of Albemarle Avenue has been altered with replacement windows and vinyl siding.³⁹ Federal grants were also used to develop low-income housing and to rehabilitate dwellings in other parts of town. The *Rocky Mount Telegram* reported that the HUD Area Director wrote to HUD Secretary Carla A. Hills in 1977 that “If you ever need to point to a small community that has eliminated its substandard housing...then Tarboro can easily qualify.”⁴⁰ Institutional properties, like the Elks Lodge and St. Paul’s Baptist Church (ED0432), were also rehabilitated with federal funds under the program.

Contributing to the stock of housing for people with lower incomes, the congregations of four churches formed the Panola Heights Housing Development Corporation and, in 1971, dedicated United Manor Courts, a 50-unit low-income housing development on six acres on Elm Street. Dr. Moses A. Ray, Tarboro’s first Black dentist, was president of the group. He later served on the city council and then as mayor of Tarboro from 1987 until his death in 1995. The United Manor Courts complex was completely destroyed by flooding in 1999 following Hurricane Floyd. The apartments were rebuilt five years later.⁴¹

Desegregation and Integration

As evidenced by plans to build separate curb markets for Black and white farmers, Tarboro, like towns throughout the South, remained racially segregated into the middle decades of the twentieth century. Townspeople did not welcome organized displays of racial hostility and preferred to project an image of peaceful, but separate, coexistence between Black and white residents. In 1950, at the behest of local ministers, the city commissioners released an ordinance designed to prevent the Ku Klux Klan from forming in Tarboro. The ordinance prohibited the wearing of any mask in public that concealed the identity of the wearer. Exceptions were made for children, workers who required safety equipment, and masks associated with Halloween costumes, masquerade balls, and theatrical productions.⁴²

Schools were still strictly segregated at the start of the 1950s. The former Tarboro Colored High School, housed in a 1924 brick building erected using some Rosenwald funding, had been renamed for its long-time Black principal, W. A. Pattillo, in 1943. The school had seen facility enlargements in the form of an additional 1931 building as well as the surplus Quonset huts after the war.⁴³ Younger Black students attended one of two schools: Pattillo Elementary (not extant), housed on the same campus, and Princeville Elementary across the river. White students attended Tarboro High School (now Martin Millennial Academy, ED0040) on East Johnston Street, just northeast of the historic district, and Bridgers Elementary (ED0348), North Tarboro Elementary (now Stocks Elementary at 400 W. Hope Lodge Street), and, after its construction in 1964, West Tarboro Junior High (ED2027).⁴⁴

The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision mandated an end to segregated schools, but it was civil rights legislation in 1964 and later that required an end to discrimination

³⁹ Knight and Auld, 134-135.

⁴⁰ “Tarboro Redevelopment Commission is Ten Years Old,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, January 2, 1977.

⁴¹ Knight, 221-222; “Five years later, low-income apartments rebuilt,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, September 25, 2004.

⁴² “‘Anti Klan’ Action Taken by Tarboro Commissioners,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, January 11, 1950.

⁴³ Knight, 221-222.

⁴⁴ Town of Tarboro, “Community Facilities Plan and Public Improvements Program, 1965,” 38-40.

in employment, public accommodation, and housing and guaranteed voting rights. Segregated facilities, therefore, continued to be built throughout the 1950s and 1960s, including at still-segregated schools. A gymnasium and science and vocational buildings were added to Pattillo High School in the 1950s using state and federal funding, and West Tarboro Junior High (ED2027) was built in 1964. A notable civic improvement in 1957 was the \$50,000 East Tarboro Swimming Pool (ED2036) built for Black citizens who were prohibited from the WPA-built outdoor pool.⁴⁵ The WPA pool remained in use on the block behind the Blount-Bridgers House; when it was recommended for upgrades in a 1965, the report referred to it as the “white pool.”⁴⁶

Black citizens led the way toward integration and federal legislation and court decisions ultimately enforced it. Several Black residents asked the mayor to establish a biracial committee to address integration; in 1963, he did so, creating the Community Relations Committee with five Black members and eight white. The committee focused on adult education and employment opportunities, not on integrating schools, facilities, or businesses. That same year, a group of Black high school students took a more direct approach and asked to be served in a segregated restaurant in a planned effort at integration. They left when the local police chief asked them.⁴⁷

Beginning in 1964, a decade after *Brown v. Board*, a few Black parents enrolled their children in white schools. Local historian C. Rudolph Knight recounts that Emanuel and Vivian Pippen enrolled their son Earl at Bridgers School that August. “There were no protesters nor law enforcement personnel present that day,” Knight recounts, recalling the Little Rock Nine who integrated their local white high school in 1957 with the protection of the Arkansas National Guard. Knight writes that twelve white fifth graders “gave [Earl] a very cold and unfriendly reception, basically ignoring him.” This eventually gave way to bullying and beating him and, in the case of just a single white student, befriending him. Four children of Roland and Nina Clark enrolled at the school within a few weeks.⁴⁸ In the following year, several Black students enrolled at Tarboro Senior High School under the city’s new “Freedom of Choice” plan, proposed to comply with federal requirements for integration. The plan was insufficient: by the 1970-1971 school year, federal court decisions required that all schools, not just school systems, be integrated. Days before the start of school in 1970, the Tarboro Board of Education accepted and implemented a federal student assignment plan that placed all Tarboro students in grades 10 through 12 to Tarboro High School (the former West Tarboro Junior High), all students in grades 7 through 9 to Martin Junior High School (the former Tarboro High School), all students in grades 5 and 6 to Pattillo School, and all younger students to one of three elementary schools depending on their residence.⁴⁹ The two-story Rosenwald-funded portion of Pattillo High School was demolished later in the 1970s.⁵⁰

In the same period, Rose’s variety store (ED1445) removed its lunch counter stools to avoid the question of who could sit. The town’s other two drugstore lunch counters eventually allowed Black customers to sit at their counters, according to Knight’s account, presumably in the second

⁴⁵ “Tarboro Proclaims: ‘Great Things To Come!’” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, August 31, 1958.

⁴⁶ Town of Tarboro, “Community Facilities Plan and Public Improvements Program,” 1965, 26, 29.

⁴⁷ Knight, 76-92.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 77-92.

⁴⁹ “Tarboro School Board ‘Reluctantly’ Accepts Student Assignment Plan,” *Rocky Mount Telegram* August 24, 1970.

⁵⁰ Knight, 77-92.

half of the 1960s. Over time, Black workers began to be hired in retail and industrial businesses that had previously only hired whites.⁵¹

Historic Preservation Movement

Postwar prosperity and development across the country came, in some cases, at the expense of earlier buildings, some of great architectural, historical, or cultural significance. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 was passed in response to these losses, creating the NR as well as a framework for identifying potential historic properties before a federal program might harm or destroy them. State laws and local ordinances were also passed in this period. In North Carolina, state enabling legislation allowed localities to establish historic preservation commissions. This interest in historic preservation manifested in Tarboro in the 1960s and 1970s with the establishment of a large NR historic district and in the erection of Neotraditional government buildings such as the new Edgecombe County Courthouse (ED0439) and suburban dwellings like the Ann and Joe Clay Powell House (ED1882) in Forest Acres.

In Tarboro, historic buildings, sites, and structures have been preserved and restored through the actions of individuals, such as homeowners, and by organizations with members who recognized the importance of the town's history and built environment. The first organized historic preservation campaign in Tarboro in this period came in 1968, when a local citizen bestowed \$13,000 upon the Town of Tarboro with the stipulation that the money be spent within two years to start a town museum. Town council created the Tarboro Historical Commission and charged it with raising matching funds and developing a museum. Intrepid members of the commission acquired the Walston-Bullock House and moved it to the town-owned property where the circa 1800 Blount-Bridgers House stands. The Pender Museum was completed and dedicated in late 1969 after receiving additional funding from HUD, which was the first time HUD provided support for historic preservation in North Carolina.⁵² In the early 1970s, the Edgecombe Historical Society saved an 1860 mule-drawn cotton press, which now stands on the town common. The Common was listed in the NR in 1970.

In 1971, the North Carolina General Assembly passed an act to allow all municipalities and counties to create historic district commissions. Prior to this, only Bath, Edenton, Halifax, Hillsborough, Murfreesboro, New Bern, Wilmington, and Winston-Salem could create preservation commissions. This early act in the history of preservation in North Carolina gave commissions only ninety days' notice of a demolition within the boundaries of a local district. That was later extended to an optional 365 days. The act also gave commissions the power to "acquire, restore, preserve, and operate historic structures and sites or acquire and sell or lease properties to preserve them."⁵³ Owing to the interest in safeguarding its significant buildings, the Tarboro Town Council created the Tarboro Historic Preservation Commission in 1971.

Notable historic preservation activities after 1975 include the 1980 listing in the NR of the Tarboro Historic District, the culmination of work that had begun years earlier. Spearheaded by several local residents including Tarboro planner and Edgecombe County native, Watson Brown, who began working for the town in 1974, and the Edgecombe Historical Society, the district

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 76-92.

⁵² "Tarboro Preserves Its Past," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, April 25, 1978; "Tarboro Citizens Beat Odds," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, May 16, 1977.

⁵³ "Local Effort in Historic Preservation Being Urged," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, January 31, 1974.

includes a high concentration of domestic, institutional, and commercial historic resources dating from the eighteenth through the late twentieth century.⁵⁴

Also in 1980, the National Trust for Historic Preservation chose Tarboro as one of thirty small communities across the country to participate in its National Main Street Center pilot program. As a Main Street community, Tarboro received guidance from well-known planners and other experts in downtown revitalization as it worked toward invigorating its central business district. Under Main Street manager Phillip Guy, the program led to the creation of the courthouse square and landscaping of the riverfront common. Perhaps the most significant undertaking of the Main Street program was the promotion and facilitating of the construction of the Albemarle, a retirement facility built in 1983 on a seven-acre tract once occupied by commercial and industrial buildings in the southwest corner of downtown Tarboro.⁵⁵ Tarboro remains an active component of the Main Street America program.

EAST TARBORO HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the area east of Panola Street became a thriving Black neighborhood attracting a range of families. Prior to 1900, it appears Black residents lived in scattered areas around Tarboro. The 1896 Sanborn map indicates a settlement of Black people concentrated around the intersection of Albemarle Avenue and Water Street where a “Baptist Church (colored)” and several houses are labeled “negro shanties.” Notations in the 1910 census indicate Black residents living west of downtown on Albemarle Avenue and Hendricks Streets and south of downtown on Water and Granville Streets. Prior to its residential development, the area known as East Tarboro had been mostly occupied by two large, prosperous farms.



Oakland Plantation (ED0430, NR) on Edmondson Avenue was the seat of the Lloyd property in east Tarboro

Oakland Plantation, also known as the Lloyd Farm, owned in the late nineteenth century by Joseph W. Lloyd, included 450 acres of improved land and 750 acres of unimproved land on the east side of Tarboro. After Joseph Lloyd’s death, James B. Lloyd acquired ownership of the portion containing the antebellum Lloyd House (ED0430). In 1906, James B. Lloyd sold the plantation to Henry Johnston, who sold it to William G. Clark, a real estate developer who divided the property into parcels. By 1931, streets had been laid out on the former Oakland Plantation and the old Lloyd house had become the Elks Home, a Black fraternal lodge.⁵⁶

Panola Plantation, originally home to Mary Toole Parker and Theophilus Parker, occupied a large area immediately east of Tarboro. The Parkers sold the 908-acre cotton plantation in 1852 to Robert Norfleet and John S. Dancy. An April 1853 newspaper reporter’s account described the plantation as having an 800-yard front on the town. Cabins for enslaved people stood in two

⁵⁴ “Tarboro Planning Director Honored,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, December 1, 1981.

⁵⁵ “Downtown Revitalization Makes Impact in Tarboro,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, August 16, 1981.

⁵⁶ “Oakland,” Tarboro Multiple Resource Nomination.

parallel rows forming a square with the overseer's house at one end. The overseer's house included an attached dining room that John Dancy labelled, "African Hall."⁵⁷ Two years later in 1855, another newspaper reporter described Panola as "the most splendid plantation" and adjoining "the beautiful and prosperous town of Tarboro." The account included a description of "the neat and village-like appearance of the negro quarters...arranged in a parallelogram square of about two acres, in the centre of which stood the Manager's House, so situated that he could, from his residence, see the doors of all the houses of the negroes." Of the cabins, he recalled they "were all framed houses, resting upon brick pillars about two feet high, with brick chimneys, and the whole painted white. They were all as comfortable and as elegant as the cabins of any of our watering places."⁵⁸ Around 1857, Dancy sold a portion of land on the west side of his plantation for the creation of several residential lots and the laying out of Panola Street.⁵⁹

Following John S. Dancy's death in August 1888, Commissioner James Norfleet held a public sale of the 900-acre farm, which he described as "situated on the east side of and adjoining Tarboro."⁶⁰ George Howard and Owen Farrar bought all or part of the farm evidenced by an article in the local paper describing the sweet potato crop they cultivated on "their Panola Farm" in February 1890.⁶¹ Several other white businessmen, including Henry Johnston, bought the former farmland with the intention of developing a neighborhood.⁶²

In the late nineteenth century, a few Black families built or bought houses and established social and community institutions in east Tarboro. Around 1870, Black educators Almira Scott Jones (1851-1923) and John C. Jones (1829-1911) built a one-story, Queen Anne-style house with latticework bracketed porch posts (ED0036) at 411 East Pitt Street. Viola G. (1878-1949) and Dr. Alexander McMillan (1867-1933) bought the house in 1905. He graduated from Leonard



Mary Eliza and Rev. John W. Perry House (ED0062) on East St. James Street in east Tarboro

Medical School at Shaw University in 1898 and operated a medical practice in Tarboro. Viola McMillan, a native of Wisconsin and also an alumna of Shaw University, was active in statewide Baptist women's organizations, helped found Union Baptist Church, and worked for the National Youth Administration, a program of the New Deal.⁶³

In 1891, Mary Eliza Pettipher Perry (1854-1929) and her husband, Rev. John W. Perry (1850-1918), bought or built a one-story, Queen Anne-style house (ED0062) on East St. James Street. They acquired the property from white businessman George Howard. Both Perrys attended St. Augustine's Normal School in

⁵⁷ "Edgecombe," *The Tarborough Southerner*, April 2, 1853.

⁵⁸ "Edgecombe Farming," *The Tarborough Southerner*, October 6, 1855.

⁵⁹ "Tarboro and Vicinity," *The Tarborough Southerner*, May 23, 1857.

⁶⁰ "Sale of Valuable Land," *The Tarborough Southerner*, October 4, 1888.

⁶¹ "A Novelty," *The Tarborough Southerner*, February 20, 1890.

⁶² Johnston is listed on several deeds as grantor for parcels in east Tarboro.

⁶³ "Leaders Address Negro Meeting," *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 5, 1942; "Prominent Baptist Woman's Leader Dies," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, May 18, 1949; "Doctor's Widow Dies at Home in Tarboro," *Raleigh News and Observer*, May 18, 1949.

Raleigh. John W. Perry was a close friend and associate of Episcopal Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire (1814-1899), rector of Calvary Church. With the support of Cheshire and his parish, St. Luke's Episcopal Church was established in a building supplied by Calvary Church. St. Luke's was admitted into the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina in 1872. The church languished without a clergyman until Rev. Perry became rector in 1882. Perry was ordained in 1887 and St. Luke's built a church (ED0054) in 1893 on Panola Street.⁶⁴ Around the time Rev. Perry arrived in Tarboro, he and Mary Eliza founded a school for Black students (not extant), which stood just north of the church on Panola Street. St. Luke's Parochial School, also known as the Peoples' High School, predated the white graded school in Tarboro.⁶⁵ In 1889, Rev. Perry became rector of St. Mark's Chapel in Wilson, splitting his time between the church and school in Tarboro and St. Mark's Chapel.⁶⁶ After the deaths of Mary Eliza and John W. Perry, their daughter, Catherine Cornelia Perry Weston and her husband, Rev. Milton Moran Weston, who served as rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church (ED0054) following Rev. Perry's death, operated the school until 1957.⁶⁷



St. Luke's Episcopal Church (ED0054) at 301 Panola Street

By the beginning of the twentieth century, east Tarboro was becoming a center for Black life in Tarboro as white developers sold lots on newly plotted streets to Black families or to white investors and landlords. Social and civic organizations established in the neighborhood helped to foster a sense of community. In 1906, the former Tarboro Presbyterian Church, which had been built in 1872-1873, was moved to East Church Street to house the congregation of Eastern Star Missionary Baptist Church (ED0029). Unfortunately, the building was demolished in 2000 after Hurricane Floyd left five feet of water inside in 1999.⁶⁸ In 1915,

Union Baptist Church (ED1319) was completed at 613 East St. John Street. The gable-front, Gothic Revival-style building includes a bell tower topped with steeply pitched gables on four sides. Brick veneer was added to the exterior in 1975. It remains an active congregation. Around 1926, the building housing St. Paul Baptist Church (ED0432; NR 1980) was moved to a corner lot at Lloyd Street and Edmondson Avenue. The building, constructed in 1871, originally stood on North Main Street.

The neighborhood's development coincided with a period of intense racism as statewide white supremacist campaigns instituted local statutes aimed at segregating the races and suppressing

⁶⁴ "Short Sketches of Historically Black Episcopal Church in North Carolina," episdionc.org, accessed January 10, 2022.

⁶⁵ "Communicated," *The Tarborough Southerner*, January 26, 1882; "To the Commissioners," *The Tarborough Southerner*, May 28, 1885.

⁶⁶ Rev. Dr. Brooks Graebner, "Historically Black Episcopal Congregations in the Diocese of North Carolina: 1865-1959," dated November 15, 2018,

https://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3258312/Historical_Background_-_Truth_Telling_and_Resilience_in_a_Time_of_Injustice_and_Inequality.pdf, accessed January 10, 2022.

⁶⁷ "Retirees learn about Perry-Weston Educational and Cultural Institute," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, May 1, 2011.

⁶⁸ "Church Coming Down," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, October 1, 2000.

the Black vote. One of the most egregious efforts at disenfranchisement came when William Mayo Pippen Sr., a successful and well-known Tarboro merchant, maneuvered to disenfranchise Black residents in Tarboro as Reconstruction was ending. In 1875, he petitioned the state legislature to amend the town charter to allow for the division of the majority-Black town into three wards—two containing mostly whites and the third almost all Black residents. As a result, Black voters, who were the majority, lost their voting power.⁶⁹ By 1900, although Black citizens in Tarboro outnumbered whites 2,385 to 1,675, they had little freedom under Jim Crow, including the right to live where they wished.

For many Black people, east Tarboro offered an attractive neighborhood to establish a home. By the 1910s, east Tarboro boasted neat rows of frame single and double shotgun houses, side-gabled dwellings, duplexes, and wing-and-gable houses. Larger houses with Queen Anne massing appeared on East St. James Street by the early 1910s and 1920s.

In 1901, prominent Black educator Charles Montgomery Eppes (1858-1942), son of Reconstruction-era state legislator Rev. Henry Eppes, bought the property at 512 East St. James Street from George Howard. It is likely Eppes built the one-story, L-plan house (ED0313). Eppes, born into slavery, attended Shaw University and North Carolina A&T College and worked in education for sixty-seven years.⁷⁰ In 1937, Eppes sold the house to Bertha and Leonza Williams, a World War I veteran who worked as a carpenter.⁷¹

In a 1993 interview, Durham pharmacist Dr. York David Garrett recalled his parents, Sarah Roberson Garrett (1860-1932) and York David Garrett (1859-1928), owned a grocery store in Tarboro in the early twentieth century but the family lived in Princeville. His parents, both born into slavery, bought a lot on East St. James Street in 1906 and built an eight-room, two-story, hipped-roof dwelling (ED0311). The house remained in the family until 1985.⁷²

Sallie Jean and Walter Alexander Pattillo Jr. bought an I-house (ED1519) on East St. James Street in 1917. The Pattillos came to Tarboro from Oxford in 1912 so that Mr. Pattillo could serve as principal of Tarboro Colored School, a position he held for thirty-five years. In 1925, the school was renamed W. A. Pattillo High School. Upon his death in 1951, the *Rocky Mount Telegram* called him “a pioneer and leader in Negro education in North Carolina.”⁷³ The Pattillo family owned the house until 1963.



Pattillo House (ED1519) on East St. James Street

Construction continued in the neighborhood into the middle decades of the twentieth century, when Ranch houses, Minimal Traditional

⁶⁹ “William Mayo Pippen Sr.,” Find a Grave website, findagrave.com, accessed January 12, 2022.

⁷⁰ “Charles Eppes Rites to be Held Tomorrow,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 2, 1942.

⁷¹ Edgecombe County Deed Book 901, page 446, December 12, 1949.

⁷² Interview with York David Garrett by Kara Miles, Durham, North Carolina, June 3, 1993, “Behind the Veil: Documenting African American Life in the Jim Crow South” Digital Collection, John Hope Franklin Research Center, Duke University Libraries, <https://repository.duke.edu/dc/behindtheveil/btvnc03014>, accessed June 3, 2021.

⁷³ “W. A. Pattillo’s Death,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, November 18, 1951.

houses, and other modest dwelling forms began appearing in east Tarboro. Around 1954, Cora Howard Baker (1911-1993) bought a lot at 504 East Church Street, where she had a side-gabled brick house constructed (ED1323). It included a front sunroom and wide brick chimney on one gable end. Her son, Leroy Howard, an assistant superintendent of Edgecombe County Public Schools, lived here until his death. He was a member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church and several fraternal organizations.⁷⁴

The Wharton House (ED1677) at 521 East St. James Street remains one of the most intact mid-twentieth century houses in east Tarboro and it exemplifies the type of dwellings built in the



Wharton House (ED1677), ca. 1954, on East St. James Street in East Tarboro

1950s across the state. The one-story, side-gabled brick Minimal Traditional house includes metal casement windows, including at the dwelling's corners, and a brick chimney at the center of an intersecting front-gabled facade wing. In 1948, Annie Harris Wharton (1885-1891) and Fletcher Decatur (F.D.) Wharton (1889-1977) bought the parcel and completed the house by 1954. F.D. Wharton graduated with a degree in agriculture from North Carolina A&T College and served as an agricultural extension agent in Edgecombe County beginning during the period when

extension services were segregated by race. During his successful career, Wharton, who was known as "Professor," encouraged Black farmers to grow crops and raise livestock for their own use and to improve the houses and buildings on their farms. In 1943, Wharton established Black curb markets in Tarboro and Rocky Mount, giving farmers and their families a direct method for selling their products.⁷⁵ That year, the *Charlotte Observer* called Wharton an "untiring Negro farm agent and a hustling fellow when it comes to working for the improvement of his people in rural districts."⁷⁶ In 1945, Wharton established the Edgecombe Credit Union to encourage saving and to provide a source for low interest loans.⁷⁷ In 1970, the Whartons sold the house to their daughter, Juanita, and her husband, Thomas Taylor.⁷⁸

Beginning in 1966, east Tarboro became the focus of extensive urban renewal under federally funded programs aimed at eliminating substandard housing. Using HUD grants, the locally formed Tarboro Redevelopment Commission targeted the neighborhood as well as Hendricks Park, located in west Tarboro, as an area to concentrate its campaign for better housing. In east Tarboro, the commission renovated dwellings it deemed to be sound and demolished buildings judged as beyond repair.⁷⁹ The result was the loss of an unknown number of early- to mid-twentieth-century houses including a row of a least eight shotgun and double-shotgun houses on the north side of East Church Street near where Lloyd Street once intersected. (Urban renewal efforts are also covered under the history of the town from 1940-1970 in this report.)

⁷⁴ "Leroy Howard," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, September 12, 2012.

⁷⁵ "Extension Guidance Aids Negro Farmers," *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 13, 1944.

⁷⁶ "Carolina Farm News and Notes," *Charlotte Observer*, December 6, 1943.

⁷⁷ "Fletcher D. Wharton (obituary)," *Durham Sun*, April 19, 1977.

⁷⁸ Edgecombe County Deed Book 799, page 174, January 14, 1970.

⁷⁹ "Tarboro Redevelopment Commission is Ten Years Old," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, January 2, 1977.

East Tarboro remained the focus of intense redevelopment in the late 1970s and 1980s. The Tarboro Housing and Community Development Citizens Advisory Committee, which classified the neighborhood as “containing the highest degree of substandard housing and environmental blight remaining in Tarboro,” sought federal funds to demolish and rehabilitate houses and improve streets, sidewalks, and drainage.⁸⁰ In the late 1980s, the town used Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to demolish and rehabilitate houses.⁸¹

WEST TARBORO HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In 1891, a group of investors formed the West Tarboro Land and Improvement Company with the purpose of creating a residential development that included cotton and tobacco factories. A writer from Washington, D.C. described the property as “much higher than the town proper, well drained and beautifully situated.” The company intended that the residential lots would measure 50 feet by 143 feet with an alley of 14 feet behind each parcel. “We are glad,” announced the *Farmer's Advocate*, “to note this effort on the part of home and foreign capital to enhance the interests of Tarboro. Our town, like all Southern towns, needs more factories, workshops, and warehouses.”⁸²

In 1891, the West Tarboro Land & Improvement Company released a prospectus outlining its development intentions, which included “to advance and encourage the growth and development of the town of Tarboro on the land of the Company.” The company initially focused on industrial development and vowed to “devote its energies to the introduction and establishment of new plants, manufacturers, and industries.”⁸³ In 1891, the first tobacco warehouse in its development was built along the right of way of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad. Fountain Cotton Mills was built at the northwest corner of the company’s development.⁸⁴

The company developed some industrial concerns, but residential properties became its focus by the early decades of the twentieth century. By 1905, according to a map made that year by Albert Pike, only a few houses stood in West Tarboro, mostly along Howard Avenue and Walnut Street.⁸⁵ However, residential development accelerated after 1905. On June 3, 1909, *The Tarborough Southerner* noted “by the time one house is completed in West Tarboro, another is ready to be put up. Just now three dwellings are being erected there.”⁸⁶



400 block West Walnut Street (south side) in West Tarboro

⁸⁰ “Town Approves \$6 Million Plan for Housing, Downtown Facelift,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, January 10, 1979.

⁸¹ “Housing Rehabilitation Funds are Now Available in Tarboro,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, March 22, 1988.

⁸² “Busy and Healthful: the Enterprising Little City of Tarboro, North Carolina,” *The Farmer's Advocate*, August 12, 1891.

⁸³ “The W.T.L. & I. Co.,” *The Tarborough Southerner*, August 6, 1891.

⁸⁴ “The First Tobacco Warehouse,” *The Tarborough Southerner*, June 25, 1891.

⁸⁵ Map of Edgecombe County, North Carolina (Albert Pike), North Carolina Maps, Digital Exhibitions and Collections, UNC Chapel Hill Libraries, library.unc.edu, accessed January 10, 2022.

⁸⁶ “West Tarboro Growing,” *The Tarborough Southerner*, June 3, 1909.

Throughout the early twentieth century, individuals purchased lots from the West Tarboro Land & Improvement Company and had houses built on parcels in the neatly delineated subdivision. Many of the residents worked in nearby mills while others worked in service jobs. The neighborhood housed exclusively white residents in the first several decades of the twentieth century.

Into the 1970s, the conditions in West Tarboro caught the attention of town and county officials. From 1970-1973, the town administered the West Tarboro Concentrated Code Enforcement Project. With a matching grant from HUD, the Town of Tarboro improved streets, sidewalks, and gutters. Loans and grants to homeowners addressed what the Town of Tarboro saw as deficiencies in housing by replacing roofs, flooring, sills, joists, siding, plumbing, and heating units. At least thirteen houses were demolished and over 120 were rehabilitated.⁸⁷

The early 1970s rehabilitation projects affected the appearance of houses in West Tarboro. Many of the alterations carried out during that period endure and have impacted the historic integrity of the subdivision. An overwhelming majority of the houses have replacement windows and synthetic siding.

West Tarboro is notable as an early twentieth-century residential development for industrial and primarily non-professional workers. The community was all-white for decades but is currently extremely diverse in its demographic makeup.

ARCHITECTURE OF TARBORO, 1940-1979

The Tarboro Historic District NR Nomination documented a wide range of property types and architectural styles reflecting the breadth of activity in Tarboro from the eighteenth century through the 1930s. The 1980 nomination prefaced the chronological history with a statement that remains true in 2022: “The sequence of economic and hence physical development of Tarboro is well represented in its surviving architectural fabric, both in what is present and in what is absent.”⁸⁸

The nomination alluded to rapid development in the mid-twentieth century, a period in which demolition of older buildings or even neighborhoods often made space for such construction. Both processes shaped the appearance of the town, and the demolitions spurred the preservation movement that got underway locally in the 1970s. In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, new construction continued to exhibit well-established architectural modes like the Colonial Revival style even as the nascent Modern Movement took hold in commercial and residential quarters.

New architectural styles and forms in Tarboro since the end of the period covered in the district nomination include Ranch, Minimal Traditional, Modernist, and Neotraditional styles. The Colonial Revival style remained in use for both residential and institutional buildings; elements indicating the style were very often applied to Ranch houses in the 1960s and 1970s.

Colonial Revival, 1940-1970

The Colonial Revival style was established in Tarboro in the prosperous years of the 1920s. The NR nomination states that “Tarboro’s leading citizens of the 1920s erected ambitious Colonial Revival houses, usually of brick, sometimes frame, with narrow eaves, boxy forms, small-paned

⁸⁷ “City of Tarboro Gets Going...And Growing,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, April 25, 1978.

⁸⁸ Catherine Bishir and Joe Mobley, “Tarboro Historic District,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1980, page 7.5.

windows, and often symmetrical facades dominated by elaborate doorway treatments” but without front porches. The nomination describes them as atypical of “traditional” Tarboro houses because they stand “in contrast to generations of frame houses with porches.” But, according to the nomination, brick exteriors were gaining ground for residential building. The trend of brick Colonial Revival houses continued into the mid-twentieth century, and brick veneer also persisted on Ranch houses, a house form and style discussed below.

Examples of Colonial Revival houses from the 1940s and 1950s cluster on the north end of St. Andrew Street in the district. The 1943 Howell House (ED1491) at 1405 St. Andrew Street



Howell House (ED1491) at 1405 St. Andrew Street, Tarboro

reflects the spare esthetic that emerged after the Depression and in the immediate postwar years, but the house also has the side-gabled roof, boxed eaves, symmetrical façade, and multi-light sash windows common to the style. The front door, crowned with a segmental-arched fanlight, is recessed in a trabeated architrave with a dentillated cornice and curvilinear molding framing a rosette. The Moye House (ED1487) at 1300 St. Andrew Street has single-story, flat-roofed side wings with balustrades at rooftop patios and a front-entrance enframed by fluted pilasters and a broken pediment.

The 1968 Hussey House (ED1468) at 200 East Park Avenue is an intact example of the Colonial Revival style with the wider proportions of the late 1960s and the stately, symmetrical three-bay façade that exemplifies the style. A flat-roofed portico appears in this example, sheltering the

paneled front entry that is set into an architrave with sidelights and transom. The mix of red, brown, and tan brick is a hallmark of the late 1960s. The 1973 Howard Memorial Presbyterian Church Manse (ED1887) at 1415 East Canal Street in Forest Acres is a more architecturally interesting example, reflecting an overlapping trend of detail-oriented Neotraditional designs seen in the 1970s (see Neotraditional Houses, 1970-1979, below). The brick-veneered manse is side-gabled with end returns and is massed with a three-bay-wide main block flanked by wings with slightly lower roof ridges. The centered front entry in the main block is deeply inset with paneling, sidelights, and a transom; the architrave is framed with post-and-lintel molding. Windows are eight-over-two sash under flat arches at the main section’s first floor, while windows at the wings and in roof dormers are six-over-six sash.



Hussey House (ED1468) at 200 East Park Avenue, Tarboro



Bridgers House (ED2001) at 1400 W. Canal Street, Tarboro

Some examples of the Dutch Colonial Revival and a few hybrid Monterey Revival/Colonial Revival-style dwellings are also in evidence in Tarboro's white middle-class housing of the mid- to late-twentieth century. The 1967 Summerlin House (ED1995) at 1606 Captains Road includes the defining gambrel roof of the Dutch Colonial Revival style over a brick-veneered, five-bay, rectangular-plan house. The attached garage in a gabled wing at the north end is a marker of the late-twentieth-century construction date. The best of a few examples that exhibit

some of the Monterey Revival style identified in the survey is the 1958 Bridgers House (ED2001) at 612 Lucille Drive. This two-story, side-gabled dwelling has board-and-batten siding and nine-over-nine wood sash windows at the first floor and replacement aluminum siding with six-over-six wood sash windows at the second. Three bays of the four-bay façade are recessed to form porches at both stories. The second story overhangs the first only at the fourth bay. A façade chimney at the recessed part of the façade rises through the front roof slope. The 1958 Fountain House (ED2025) at 1102 Panola Street mixes elements of the Monterey Revival style with the mid-century Colonial Revival style, employing the symmetrical façade, rectangular plan, and side wings of the latter with the former's typical cantilevered second-story porch. In this case, there are iron columns and a balustrade of the so-called "Creole French" type, with foliate designs in graceful S-curves.



Fountain House (ED2025) at 1102 W. Panola Street, Tarboro

The Colonial Revival also appears in government buildings dating to the 1960s and 1970s. The 1968 Edgecombe County Courthouse at 301 St. Andrew Street is the most prominent example, thanks to the large scale of the building as well as to detailing and materials. The building has a Flemish-bond brick exterior, a modillion cornice, a copper-covered mansard roof, and a vented cupola with clock. A pedimented entrance bay at the center of façade holds the main entrance recessed behind Tuscan columns. The Edgecombe County Administration Building (ED1432) at 201 St. Andrew Street applies colonial details to a building with a scale more akin to a factory than to previous government office buildings. Colonial details include corner quoins, Flemish-bond brick, stone lintels with keystones, a modillion cornice, and a pedimented architrave at the front entrance. The main entry is centered at the first floor and is enframed by a pedimented architrave with pilasters and a broad lintel. Copper covers the slopes of the flat-topped mansard roof.

Minimal Traditional, 1935-1960

As in the rest of the country, Minimal Traditional dwellings found immense favor among builders, developers, and would-be homeowners in Tarboro just before and to a larger degree in the period after World War II. A scaled-back and simplified expression of earlier, traditional architectural styles, the Minimal Traditional house displays an unadorned façade and medium-pitched side-gabled roof. Often subdued Tudor Revival-style elements such as front-facing gables and façade chimneys appear, as do Colonial Revival elements, again in their most modest expressions. Typically built of wood or brick, Minimal Traditional houses in Tarboro are compact with inset entrances or stoops and standard double-hung sash windows, casement windows, or three-part picture windows. An early example in town is the Nancy T. Lewis House (ED1689) at 609 West Walnut Street. The very modest single-story side-gabled dwelling has a front-gabled portico supported with iron columns that shelters a single-leaf, multi-light and wood-paneled front door. Windows are six-over six sash. The vinyl siding obscures the original cladding material, likely either weatherboards or asbestos shingle siding.

The 1934 National Housing Act and the creation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) led to the emergence of the Minimal Traditional house as the most common house form of the 1940s. For the FHA, formed to insure home mortgages, the safest house to underwrite was a small house with little adornment or an unusual plan that would make it a risky investment. The FHA aggressively promoted the construction of small houses through standardized plans that appeared in publications like *Principles of Planning Small Houses*, which was first released in 1936. Beyond government publications, plans featuring Minimal Traditional dwellings appeared in newspapers, magazines, and catalogs for outlets selling prefabricated houses such as Sears and Aladdin. Evidenced by its ubiquity in America's residential landscape, the affordable Minimal Traditional house appealed to potential homeowners eager to snag their own piece of the American dream.

For families looking to build a house in Tarboro in the late 1930s through early 1960s, plans for Minimal Traditional houses commonly appeared in the *Rocky Mount Telegram*, the daily newspaper that covered Tarboro. The May 28, 1949, issue featured “brick house plan no. 309” from *Carolina Homes*, a plan book published by Brick and Tile Service, Inc. of Statesville. The article accompanying the plan concluded that “a pleasing exterior design plus an attractive, functional interior combine to make this a small house that is moderately priced.” Prominent architects also generated designs for Minimal Traditional houses. In October 1950, “brick house plan no. 202” by architect George F. Hackney appeared in the *Rocky Mount Telegram*. Well-known in his hometown of Durham, North Carolina, for the Tudor Revival-style houses he designed for the city's most prosperous families, Hackney contributed a rendering for a one-story, side-gabled “compactly arranged three-bedroom house that is designed to give you the most space possible.” The elevation sketch accompanying the plan depicts a small house with a stoop, double and single windows, and a wide interior chimney.⁸⁹

Minimal Traditional houses appeared in neighborhoods across Tarboro. The Annie Harris and Fletcher Decatur Wharton House (ED1677) at 521 East St. James Street in East Tarboro is an excellent example (see the section on East Tarboro for more information). Minimal Traditional houses are also found composing entire Tarboro neighborhoods, such as in Fairview Park, a

⁸⁹ “Brick House Plan No. 202,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, October 8, 1950.

subdivision platted on the west side of North Main Street in 1946 by brothers Reginald Morton (“Runt”) and Vinton Epstein Fountain. Nearly all of Fairview Park’s 109 lots lining Mayo Street and North and South Fairview Circles contain a Minimal Traditional house built in the late 1940s or 1950s. The uniformity resulted from developers’ requirements that all buildings harmonize and conform to their standards. Fairview Park builder Clifton H. Henderson, owner of C.H. Henderson Lumber Company and C.H. Henderson Construction, built over 200 houses by 1952.

The Henderson Construction Company likely also built the Lustron house (ED2029) at 210 Cromwell Avenue for Thelma and Edward Marrow. The patented, prefabricated Lustron house is in a category of its own but is not unrelated to the stripped-down Minimal Traditional style; Lustrons can also be seen through the lens of the Modern style discussed below. The Lustron Westchester model, like many Minimal Traditional houses in Tarboro, has a compact floor plan with an inset entry. Windows are metal casements rather than double-hung wood, and walls inside and out are of porcelain-enamel steel. Lustrons were sold as kit houses from dealerships—more like automobiles than the catalog kit houses that came before them. After the sale, a kit was trucked to the building site and assembled.



House (ED1856) for WWII veteran Ned Cauley at 809 Linden Street in west Tarboro

Veterans returning to Tarboro from service in World War II built Minimal Traditional houses, and some likely took advantage of financing from the G.I. Bill. After World War II, the Tarboro Veterans Housing Corporation formed to provide low-cost dwellings to returning servicemen. One of those houses is a one-story, side-gabled Minimal Traditional dwelling originally located in the Copeland Park neighborhood of Newport News, Virginia. The federal government created Copeland Park to provide housing to workers at the Norfolk shipyards during the war. After the war, the Tarboro Veterans Housing Corporation bought

one of the houses and moved it to the lot at 809 Linden Street (ED1856) in West Tarboro. Gertie May Cauley and Ned T. Cauley, a war veteran who worked in insurance, bought the house in 1949.⁹⁰

Ranch Houses, 1950s-1980s

The Ranch is a house form that became widespread in North Carolina in the 1950s and remained in use through the 1980s. The house is characterized by a broad façade with a rectangular plan that allowed for organization of public rooms at one end and private rooms at the other. That simple formula allowed for a lot of variation, both in terms of form and architectural style.

Early Tarboro Ranches were compact dwellings with simple rectangular floor plans arranged with the long side of the house parallel to the street. Often, a picture window in the façade

⁹⁰ Edgecombe County Deed Book 475, page 497, dated December 22, 1949; “Copeland-Newsome Park,” the Historical Marker Database, hmdb.org, accessed January 12, 2022; *Sale of Housing Projects in Virginia: Hearing Before a Subcommittee on Banking and Currency, United States Senate, April 20, 1955* (Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1955), 9.



House (ED2010) on Lucille Drive in Forest Acres

indicated the location of the living room. Bedrooms were clustered at the other end of the house. These dwellings were small due to the post-war housing boom and the need to build quickly, but also because they often occupied neighborhoods platted before the war and needed to conform to the narrow parcels common in that era. A good example in Forest Acres is the Henderson Lumber Company Spec House (ED2010) at 504 Lucille Drive. The gable-on-hip house has two-over-two horizontal sash windows, a picture window to the right of the door, and a side porch that broadens the roofline. Weatherboard siding

with mitered corners sheathes the walls. These small dwellings were commonly speculatively built (“spec”) houses and not custom builds.

Post-war plats, in contrast, featured larger parcels that allowed for broader facades. Ranch house plans could spread out and include larger rooms in the same basic rectangular footprint. Front-gabled projecting bays created shallow L-plans, and occasionally, Ranches might adopt a U-shaped plan, creating a rear courtyard for outdoor living space. In Tarboro, however, the vast majority of Ranch houses are rectangular-plan versions. Low pitched, side-gabled roofs were most common, followed by shallow hip roofs, the latter generally confined to the early spec houses and later styled custom builds. A good basic example from 1955 is the Katherine and Glenn Howse House (ED1995) at 513 Lucille Drive, a side-gabled brick-veneered dwelling with intact double-hung wood windows—including six-over-six, eight-over-eight with faux shutters, and a twenty-light picture window with four-over-four sidelight sash. The front door opens to an uncovered patio, and a side wing nestles at the west gable end.

Architectural detail became more elaborate in Ranches as facades and floor plans grew. The early compact, or archetypal, Ranches tended to be minimal in their architectural detail, often using exterior cladding materials or window configuration as the sole ornament. In 1955, Henderson Lumber Company speculatively built three compact Ranches (ED1945, ED1946, and ED1947) at 1502, 1500, and 1406 Roberson Drive in Forest Acres that exemplify this trend. Two



Worsley House (ED1982), 1515 Captains Road in Tarboro’s Forest Acres

have cross-gabled roofs to accommodate a front-facing gable within the rectangular plan; the third has a gable-on-hip roof. All three have living-room picture windows as well as side porches to extend the breadth of the roofline at the facade.

Many later, larger Ranches in Tarboro feature a variety of Colonial Revival-style details. Most frequently seen are large, multi-light double-hung sash windows set over panels with applied molding. Often, front entrances are slightly recessed and framed by paneled walls. The Colleen and James Davenport House (ED1895),

a side-gabled 1959 Ranch at 608 Clark Drive in Forest Acres, has eight-over-eight sash windows set over molded panels, a dentil cornice, and a recessed entry at the open stoop. The same year, the Lorraine and Carl Dawson House (ED1900) at 605 Clark Drive was built with a relatively rare pedimented entry portico on a side-gabled Ranch with a dentil cornice, six-over-six sash windows, and a six-panel door and storm door. The 1971 Sherry and Braxton Worsley House (ED1982) at 1515 Captains Road has elements of the French Eclectic style that had been briefly popular earlier in the twentieth century. The dwelling, like many of the Colonial Revival-style Ranches in the neighborhood, has eight-over-eight sash windows over recessed panels. The French Eclectic style is evident in the faux molded blinds; faux corner quoins; and a segmental-arch-with-keystone architrave at the front entrance. The three-bay center section of the house has paired windows and is flanked by slightly smaller two-bay wings.

Forest Acres also has a good example of a Modernist-style Ranch at 601 Clark Drive, the Madeline and Louis Corning House (ED1899). This 1956 dwelling has deep, overhanging eaves and a flat-roofed carport with a pierced brick wall adjacent to one back corner. The aluminum awning windows are set in groups of two and three across the façade; smaller versions are at the gable ends. The walls are clad in Roman brick, a characteristic masonry choice for the mid-twentieth-century Modernist style, but areas between bays of windows are clad in a contrasting board-and-batten siding. The recessed front entry has vertical siding, a sidelight with ridged glass, and a single-leaf door with six-panel glazed storm door. Integrated planters flank the front stoop. A broad brick chimney rises at the roof ridge near the center of the house.



Corning House (ED2010) at 601 Clark Drive in Tarboro's Forest Acres

Modern Movement, 1940-1975

Modernism is a broad term, loosely categorizing a twentieth-century movement that rejected historicist styles and embraced building technology that could offer alternatives to load-bearing walls. Modernism's several strains adhere to a few basic principles: a focus on enclosed space rather than exterior massing; the use of pattern to order designs rather than symmetry; and a tendency away from arbitrary decoration. While not dominant in Tarboro, Modernist styles are seen on virtually all building types in town, including commercial, institutional, educational, and residential.



Majestic Theater (ED0100) on Main Street in the Tarboro Historic District

(ED0100) at 214 Main Street, built in 1935. The Edgcombe Motor Company buildings (ED2020) at 1900 North Main Street include a modest section built in 1946 with some Moderne elements and a 1966 Modernist showroom. The older garage building has a towered entrance at

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Modernism came to Tarboro in the early twentieth century in the form of the modestly detailed Art Deco-style Majestic Theater

its south end on Main Street. The tower features a deeply recessed entry accented by a flat canopy under geometric-patterned brickwork. Steel-sash windows pierce the masonry wall to the north. The showroom, in contrast, has huge plate-glass windows, Roman brick, and a horizontal emphasis.

The 1959 Edgecombe General Hospital (ED2016) at 2901 North Main Street features the whimsical geometry often associated with Modernism in the late 1950s. The building has both horizontal and vertical emphases in which the geometry is made clear by outlining groups of two-over-two metal sash windows with projecting bands of poured concrete—either laterally across a story or by stacking sash on multiple stories. Spandrels are precast concrete finished with quartz chips of rose and white. Walls elsewhere are generally brick veneer except for a grid of quartz-embedded concrete panels at the uppermost story and west of the front entry block. A flat-roofed concrete canopy wraps the southwest corner of this block. Metal columns wrapped in trapezoidal panels of the quartz-embedded concrete support the canopy. A ca. 1980 Modernist addition of brick with glass curtain walls is at the northeast corner of the hospital and features its own entrance and small parking lot.



Edgecombe Memorial Hospital (ED2016) on North Main Street dates to 1959

The former Tarboro Junior High School (ED2027), now Tarboro High School, at 1400 West Howard Avenue, is a typical red-brick, one-story, flat-roofed, long and low school building constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. Deep eaves shelter bands of oversized windows that allow abundant natural light into classrooms, and breezeways connect the main building to the 1970s vocational education addition.

Built in 1963 on the site of the demolished 1890 town hall and opera house, the new Tarboro municipal government building (ED1449) at 500 Main Street inserted a hint of Modernism into downtown. When completed, the *Rocky Mount Telegram* reported that some desired a more colonial design to blend with downtown's



The second Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Building (ED1516) on E. James Street.

historic buildings, but that "the new town hall fits into its cubbyhole on Main Street like a pink petal on a red rose."⁹¹ The two-story, flat-roofed, tan-brick building features fixed windows between tan enamel panels set in vertical bands on each elevation. Entrance is through a pair of fully glazed doors set in a full-height grid of fourteen large, fixed windows at the center of the street-facing façade. Rocky Mount architects Edwards, Dove, Parker, and Associates designed the building. They also designed the still-extant

⁹¹ "Tarboro Officials To Begin Moving Into Town Hall Monday," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, December 29, 1963.

Planters Bank on Barnes Street in Nashville (1963) and the still-standing George Street fire station in Rocky Mount (1964).

Edwards, Dove, Parker, and Associates also designed the 1969 Modernist headquarters of Carolina Telephone (ED1516), a tower that supplanted the original Neoclassical Revival-style building on East St. James Street (ED0021). Standing six stories tall and clad in precast concrete panels, the ground floor is fully glazed, but full-height pilasters on the floors above echo a similar pattern in the older building. In contrast to the city center location, the 1979 Carolina Telephone & Telegraph Company Headquarters (ED2015) at 720 Western Boulevard is a Modernist corporate office compound comprising manicured lawns surrounding an architecturally distinctive building set deep into the lot. The concrete-and-glass Brutalist building features the "corduroy" finish employed by Paul Rudolph at the 1963 Yale Art and Architecture Building in New Haven, Connecticut. Similar to the Rudolph design, the headquarters building juxtaposes sections of concrete with areas of glass curtain walls. The glass in this case is dark and reflective, limiting the ability to see into the building, and may be replacement. The building mass is low and spread across the generally flat landscape. A central, windowless concrete section juts over a concrete plinth.

Modernist single-family houses are relatively rare in Tarboro and early examples identified in the survey date to the 1960s. The Ruth Clark Schultz House (ED1888) at 1501 East Canal Street is a large, eclectic brick-veneered dwelling from 1966 that includes gabled, shed, and flat roofs; casement windows; a balcony at the façade backed by a window wall; and wrought-iron porch posts and railings.

Two Shed-style dwellings designed by Raleigh architect Robert Burns were built for doctors at the Tarboro Clinic and both appear to be substantially intact. The 1970 Martha (Motsie) and John



Brooks House (ED1980) on Captains Road in Forest Acres built 1970

Brooks House (ED1980) at 1507 Captains Road in Forest Acres is sited just like all the neighboring Ranch houses, but the vertical recessed windows and side entry distinguish the façade even before oblique views reveal the shed form. The 1969 Whaley House (ED2014) at 1001 Vance Drive is a pine-board-clad frame dwelling comprising a pair of double-pile wings arranged in an L-plan. Shed roofs intersect at different heights and allow for clerestory windows that provide light to the interior from above. A window wall provides a view of the wooded parcel from the formal living room. An original screened porch was enclosed by the original owners around 1975.

A 1974 example of the Contemporary house is the Jane and Turner Bass House (ED1983) at 1601 Captains Road, a forward-facing U-plan dwelling with gabled wings, board-and-batten siding, and single-light casement and fixed windows. As with many houses of all styles from this period, there is an attached garage. In this case, the placement of the house on a corner lot allows for entry to the garage from a side street, well away from the façade.

Neotraditional Houses, 1970-1979

The last quarter of the twentieth century brought a resurgence of historicism in residential architecture as the Ranch finally fell out of favor. The term “Neotraditional” is extremely broad, covering not just many architectural styles but the varying degrees of faithfulness to the style expressed in any given house. A small but notable trend in Tarboro in the 1970s was the construction of a few dwellings that reproduce the massing and detailing of Federal-era architecture. Scale and materials, however, are much more akin to late-twentieth-century dwellings, which were steadily increasing in size and replacing organic materials with synthetic versions.



Neotraditional house (ED2013) at 1509 Macon Place dates to 1978

A Neo Georgian-style dwelling at 1607 Captains Road (ED1984) is brick-veneered and side-gabled with five bays across the main section of the façade; two shorter nested wings are set back from the façade but add single bays at each end. Windows are nine-over-nine sash and six-over-nine sash within the five hipped dormers across the front roof slope. A massive interior brick chimney rises at the south gable end, centered on the roof ridge. The single-leaf front door has a four-light transom. Two later examples mimic the coastal cottage form. The frame dwellings feature the characteristic double-pitched side-gabled roofs sheltering inset porches. The example built in 1978 at 1509 Macon Place (ED2013) has a massive, double-shouldered brick chimney at one exterior gabled end, Chippendale porch railing, and gabled dormers to light the attic story. Beaded vinyl siding sheathes the house. The same year, a similar house was built at 1400 West Canal Street (ED1967). It has double-shouldered chimneys at each gable end and a paneled front door under a five-light transom, flanked at the façade by replacement nine-over-nine sash windows with operable shutters inside and out. The inset porch has chamfered porch columns and the house is clad in beaded cementitious lap siding. The interior is finished with richly molded crown, chair, and base molding and raised-panel mantels in the two front rooms. The impetus for the Neotraditional trend appears to be related both to the nascent historic preservation movement as well as the interest in early United States history prompted by the country’s bicentennial year of 1976.

PROJECT RESULTS

The comprehensive architectural survey update of Tarboro that NCDOT contracted MmM to complete called for an update of the roughly 650 previously surveyed properties and initial survey of approximately 350 previously undocumented properties, for a total of about 1,000 properties. Survey priorities for selecting new properties for documentation were established in the reconnaissance report with the caveat that decisions to change priorities may come in the course of the intensive survey.

A summary of properties that were updated and newly identified are detailed in the following table and lists. The Study List candidates then follow. No potential new districts were identified.

Total SSNs in Tarboro database resulting from this and previous surveys	1,053
Total new SSNs assigned	382
Total forms updated for demolished/moved properties	163
Total properties recommended for the Study List	9

Re-Survey of Previously Identified Properties

650 anticipated, 671 surveyed

Tarboro NR Historic District, ED0017, NR 1980

Central portion of Tarboro extending N from Tar River, total of 580 database records

- 18th-20th-century residential and commercial district
- 580 properties in NR district re-surveyed, outbuildings included
- 101 properties in NR district now demolished/moved and those database records updated
- Majority of NR district is also locally designated
- Total of 580 records includes 3 district files (ED0017, ED1167, ED1663), 461 resurveyed properties, 101 properties no longer on their sites, and 17 newly identified properties within the NR district boundary.

Previously Surveyed residential area E of Tarboro NR Historic District

Church and Saint John Streets, Edmondson and Bradley Avenues

- 88 properties
- Generally early 20th-century dwellings
- Historically Black neighborhood

Survey of Newly Identified Properties

350 total anticipated; 380 actually surveyed

Tarboro NR Historic District, ED0017, NR 1980

Central portion of Tarboro extending N from Tar River, total of 580 database records

- Added records for 17 previously unrecorded properties within NR district

West Tarboro, developed by the West Tarboro Land Development Company

N of Howard Street between Peach and Albemarle Streets and S of Howard Street between Ash and Albemarle S to Johnston Street, NW of Tarboro NR Historic District

- 171 records
- Late 19th-century through mid-20th century historically white residential district
- Includes 108 properties along Howard and Chestnut Streets, the areas identified in the reconnaissance survey as being the areas with the best integrity

Forest Acres Subdivision

Forest Acres Drive, Robeson Drive, Canal Street, Captains Road, Clark Drive, Lucille Drive, and Battle Street

- 137 records including overall Forest Acres neighborhood file
- Mid-twentieth-century professional-class white residential development
- Predominantly custom-built dwellings on large yards with some speculative houses built by local building contractors

Individual newly surveyed

- 57 properties
- Surveyed industrial, residential, commercial, and institutional properties, including shotgun houses, Greek Revival dwelling, typical FHA Minimal Traditional housing, typical mill village housing, architect-designed Modernist dwellings, Modernist education and health-care facilities, mid-twentieth-century Brutalist corporate headquarters building, Moderne retail building, cemetery, baseball stadium, light-industrial buildings, a large municipal cemetery.
- Date roughly from 1875 through 1978 with the majority being in the 1940s-1960s
- Includes 31 houses on three blocks of W. Walnut Street previously documented as a group under SSN ED1541

Records for “GONE” properties updated

- 163 records for properties that no longer exist at their documented site.
- Most, if not all, have been demolished or possibly relocated.
- MdM updated these records by entering information from the paper survey file into the database record.

Properties Recommended for the Study List for Possible Inclusion in the NR

SSN	Property Name	911 Address	Criteria/Criterion Consideration	Potential Areas of Significance	Potential Period of Significance
ED0041	Catherine D. and George Matthewson House	414 E. Church Street	Criteria B and C	Architecture	Ca. 1871-1923
ED0062	Mary Eliza and Rev. John W. Perry House	501 E. St. James Street	Criterion B	Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black	1891-1929
ED0054	St. Luke's Episcopal Church	301 Panola Street	Criteria A and C; Criterion Consideration A	Religion and Ethnic Heritage: Black; Architecture	1892-1972
ED0265	Mount Lebanon Masonic Lodge	501 E. Church Street	Criteria A and C	Social History and Ethnic Heritage: Black; Architecture	Ca. 1900-1972
ED0022	Minnie and Edwin Cherry House	907 St. David Street	Criterion C	Architecture	1925
ED1677	Annie H. and Fletcher Decatur Wharton House	521 E. St. James Street	Criterion B	Agriculture	1954-1977
ED2029	Thelma H. and Edward H. Marrow Jr. House	210 Cromwell Avenue	Criterion C	Architecture	1949
ED2014	Janie and John Whaley House	1001 Vance Drive	Criterion C	Architecture	1969, ca. 1975
ED1980	Martha (Motsie) and John Brooks House	1507 Captains Road	Criterion C	Architecture	1970

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