

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
**Office of Archives and History**  
**Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Samuel Warren Branch House**

Enfield vicinity, Halifax County, HX1599, Listed 6/8/2021

Nomination by Cynthia de Miranda, MdM Historical Consultants, Inc.

Photographs by Cynthia de Miranda, October 2018



Samuel Warren Branch House (SWB), view SE



Back parlor and mantel

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Branch, Samuel Warren, House

other names/site number Branch Grove, Samuel Warren Branch House

### 2. Location

street & number 16212 Highway 125

n/a ☐ not for publication

city or town Enfield

☒ vicinity

state North Carolina

code NC

county Halifax

code 083

zip code 27839

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



/ DSHPO

4/21/2021

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other,

(explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action


Branch, Samuel Warren, House  
Name of Property

Halifax County, NC  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	total

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

### Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal  
Greek Revival

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, CONCRETE

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof METAL

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☒ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☒ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1828, construction date of Samuel Warren Branch House

ca. 1849, Greek Revival remodel

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1828, construction date of Samuel Warren Branch House

ca. 1849, Greek Revival remodel

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

Branch, Samuel Warren, House  
Name of Property

Halifax County, NC  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 2.92 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing  
B \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing  
D \_\_\_\_\_

☒ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia de Miranda  
organization MdM Historical Consultants, Inc. April 1, 2021  
street & number P.O. Box 1399 telephone 919-906-3136  
city or town Durham state NC zip code 27702

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Andrus Properties, LLC, James & Julia Andrus  
street & number 112 W. Franklin Street telephone 252-445-5903  
city or town Enfield state NC zip code 27823

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The ca. 1828 tripartite Samuel Warren Branch House is a tripartite dwelling with Federal and Greek Revival detailing. Attached to the house is the ca. 1790 Georgian-style William Branch Jr. House. The houses were built for two members of the white Branch family, which owned and lived on land north of Beech Swamp in today's Halifax County since the mid-1700s. The houses were connected, likely in the 1820s, both with a physical link and with similar architectural detailing. Later, around 1849, they both received some Greek Revival updates.

The houses were previously listed as a single contributing building in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 as Branch Grove, the plantation of Samuel Warren Branch. Branch Grove had been rented for about a century by the time of its listing and then unoccupied for roughly the last thirty years. Two Georgian mantels and much of the original hardware had been removed. By 2005, Branch Grove was in serious disrepair. Holes in the roof exposed the interior to the elements, and ivy covered much of the exterior. Preservation North Carolina (PNC), the statewide not-for-profit organization, obtained an option to acquire and move the dwellings.

In 2017, under active threat of demolition and collapse, the houses were separated and moved, reattached in a different configuration, and rehabilitated. The move was not given prior permission from the National Park Service, so the property was subsequently delisted from the NRHP. This nomination refers to the houses in their original location as Branch Grove and in their new location, because they were separated and reattached in a new configuration, as the William Branch Jr. House and the Samuel Warren Branch House or collectively as the Branch houses. They are now considered two separate houses; this is reflected in the resource count in this nomination, where they are listed as two buildings, the Samuel Warren Branch House as contributing, and the William Branch Jr. House as non-contributing.

The Branch houses stand on a 40-acre parcel at the southwest corner of NC Highways 481 and 125. The surrounding rural area generally consists of agricultural fields dotted with residential sites, including a neighboring house hidden behind trees north of Highway 481 west of the intersection. Two early-twentieth frame groceries stand at the northwest and southeast corners of the intersection; a late-twentieth-century modular house stands on the northeast corner.

The Branch houses' parcel is on higher ground than surrounding properties. A meandering creek travels northwest to southeast and bisects the parcel nearly in half. Land northeast of the creek is largely cleared of trees; to the southwest, the parcel is wooded. The houses are situated toward the north end of the cleared area, on a flat, high point of the parcel. Land then slopes very gently to the south and west toward the creek and drops sharply at the north and east to the roadway. The William Branch Jr. House faces northeast toward the intersection, but the view which is

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obscured by a stand of trees. The Samuel Warren Branch House faces northwest, overlooking woods and farmland along the north side of Highway 481. A drive enters the east side of the Branch houses' parcel from Highway 125, extends past the back of the Samuel Warren Branch House, and completes a circle at the front.

*Branch Grove Original Site*

Branch Grove was listed in the NRHP in 1982 with twenty-seven acres of what was then a thousand-acre farm. The boundary was polygonal, its north line running along the south side of NC 481 and its east, south, and west boundary lines meeting each other at right angles. The dwelling at Branch Grove stood a thousand feet south of the modern highway on the highest part of the rolling landscape. At the time of listing, a dirt farm lane extended south from the highway before it angled south-southwest as it passed the house. Several yards behind the house, the road turned west-northwest and finally northwest to loop back to the highway. Another leg of the farm lane branched southeast from the east end of the most lateral section of the path, then turned more easterly to pass behind the house and continue to the edge of cleared fields.

At that time, the acreage was selected to provide a contextual rural setting for the house, although the setting did not reflect the historic appearance. The dwelling stood in the south third of the NR bounded area. A pair of twentieth-century barns and four twentieth-century tobacco barns stood on the land, beyond the three acres of farmyard that surrounded the house; these buildings were mentioned in the earlier nomination without description or elaboration, as they post-dated the periods in which the houses were built. Documentation records that early outbuildings included a kitchen, smokehouse, laundry, gin house, and still house; none survived when the nomination was written. Similarly, the apple orchard noted in early accounts did not survive. By 2017, cleared fields surrounded the house and thick woods edged the fields to the south, buffering the farm from Beech Swamp.

*Research into Historic Setting and Orientation to Roadways*

The historic orientation of house to road for either phase of building—the ca. 1790 Georgian House and the ca. 1828 tripartite house—has not been determined. For this nomination, research into historic road patterns and historic descriptions of the setting yielded the following information.

The sections of the farm lane extending south from NC 481 to the Branch Grove dwelling were not part of an historic circulation pattern; early maps show that those portions that connect to the state highway post-date the 1910s. A fragment of the farm lane as documented in 1982 did exist in the early twentieth-century period: the section that extends from the west edge of the original

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NR boundary to the east edge, including the jog in the roadway south of the building. It connected to the main road from Enfield to Tillery well west of the recent southward legs of the farm lane, at the point where the main road to Tillery branched from the road out of Enfield northeast to Halifax. The alignment of NC Highway 481 that forms the north boundary of the original NR parcel also dates at least to the mid-1910s, although that route from Enfield to Tillery was not designated as a state highway until sometime between 1930 and 1940.<sup>1</sup>

Oddly, the house is not depicted on two of three maps found from the 1910s. Its distance from the highway could be a reason, although the soil map, for one, does indicate a number of houses set far back from main roadways. Perhaps its omission was an oversight from an early map perpetuated by use of that map in creating later maps. Alternatively, it is possible that, at that time, Branch Grove stood in a grove or wooded area that obscured a view of the house from the road from the main roads of that period. The house may appear on a 1915 map of Halifax collaboratively produced by the county boards of education and county commissioners and the Good Roads Commission. If it does, marked with the number “3” in square J10, it seems to have been marked a bit to the west of its actual original location.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence of nineteenth century and earlier roadways is much scarcer. An 1833 map of the county reproduced in *Halifax County NC Miscellaneous Land Records (1761-1917)* shows the basic alignment from Enfield to Tillery that later became Highway 481. An earlier iteration with different alignment may appear on maps dating from 1775 and 1808, but Enfield is not marked on those maps, making comparisons difficult. A map of the area drawn by Jeremy Francis Gilmer during the Civil War depicts the road that exits Enfield to the northeast and the right branch toward Tillery that became NC 481 nearly seventy years later. Smaller roads are not drawn on this map, although a number of homesteads are; Branch Grove is not indicated, again possibly because it was obscured by a grove of trees, as its name hints. According to period articles in the *North Carolina Free Press*, published in Halifax, Crowell’s Crossroads was a named place as early as the 1820s.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Soil Map, North Carolina, Halifax County Sheet* (Baltimore: A. Hoen & Co., 1916), and United States Post Office Department, *Rural Delivery Routes, Halifax County, NC*, [Washington, D.C.]: Post Office Department, ca. 1910-1919, both in the North Carolina Maps Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; N. C. Hughes and C. F. Gore, *Map of the County of Halifax, North Carolina, 1914-1915*, Weldon, N.C.: Halifax County, 1915; and North Carolina State Highway and Public Works Commission, “North Carolina Highways 1940,” and “State Highway System of North Carolina, July 1, 1930,” both viewed online on April 3, 2019 at the State Transportation Map page at [ncdot.gov](http://ncdot.gov).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Stewart E. Dunaway, *Halifax County NC Miscellaneous Land Records (1761-1917)* (Halifax County: Stewart E. Dunaway, 2018), 193-196; Jeremy Francis Gilmer, Area between Roanoke River (Weldon) and Tar River including and northwest of Rocky Mount, ca. 1861-1865, Gilmer Civil War Maps Collection, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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The announcement of the auction sale of the property upon the death of Samuel Warren Branch reveals just a little about the setting, including 250 acres of cleared and drained swamp land; 300 acres of land cleared for cotton cultivation; and “a fine Apple Orchard in full bearing, which will make this year twenty-five barrels of Brandy; also a good Peach Orchard.” The description continues with information about the buildings: “a good Dwelling House and Office, Gin-House, and Cotton Screw; a Distillery, the most complete in the County, and all other necessary out-houses.”<sup>4</sup>

*The New Site and Moving Process*

The new parcel was selected for its availability, its location in the same rural neighborhood, and because the acreage appeared sufficient to place the house deep on the lot. Every effort was made to reestablish its historic orientation, immediate setting, and general environment. The intention was to recreate the original deep setback, but physical limitations on the parcel prevented this. The general placement was on the parcel’s highest elevation; within that area, requirements of the septic system directed the final placement. Locations farther back on the lot failed the perk test for the septic permit.

An archaeological study completed at the new location in May 2017 found “a very sparse scatter of material related to what appears to be a domestic site dating to the first half of the twentieth century” that did not have the potential to yield significant information. The study determined that the site was not currently listed in the NRHP and did not appear eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D or any other criteria.

The two dwellings were moved separately, as a rotted and heavily altered rear porch was all that connected them. All of the porches had been rebuilt over time and were removed before the relocation. Each dwelling was lifted off its foundation and repairs were made to the pegged mortise-and-tenon framing and sills. Each house was set down on its own flatbed truck and driven down Highway 481 to the new location. The dwellings were placed on new foundations, rehabilitated inside and out, and the short connector extending from the enclosed back porch was built. The two altered back porches at the tripartite wings were not moved or rebuilt; rather, two small enclosed additions were made.

The change in the way the two houses are joined was made in order to address roof drainage issues that caused chronic saturation of the back wall of the ca. 1790 dwelling. In the original configuration, water ran off the rear slope of the smaller dwelling onto the roof of the connecting porch. In turn, the water ran off that porch and drenched the back wall of the ca. 1790 house. The

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<sup>4</sup> “Sale of Land,” *The (Raleigh) Daily Confederate*, September 9, 1864.

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weatherboards and support structure of this wall suffered extensive deterioration as a result. The wall has been rebuilt, and new beaded weatherboards cover the entire house, replacing the replacement weatherboards.

**Samuel Warren Branch House**

ca. 1828, ca. 1849, ca. 1920, moved and rehabilitated 2017-2018  
Contributing Building

The Federal-Greek Revival-style tripartite house consists of a two-story front-gabled center block flanked by single-story side-gabled wings. The house appears to have built in the Federal style around 1828 with Greek Revival updates around 1849. A number of changes were made in the 1920s, when the house was used as a rental property, including enclosing fireboxes and back porches and likely the installation of a stylistically different new front porch. Those changes were largely undone in the rehabilitation completed in 2018 after the house was moved in 2017. The pedimented portico that now shelters the original front entrance at the center of the façade is a reconstruction based on surviving evidence at the facade. Each side wing has a new rear shed room where there was formerly a shed-roofed porch; only the porch structures were removed and the back wall of the house remains intact, although the exterior siding does not. Reconstructed exterior chimneys are at the gable ends and at the gabled rear elevation of the two-story block. Everything stands on a new concrete-block-pier foundation with brick veneer; piers are in the same location as the surviving piers at the previous site. Slightly recessed brick curtain walls connect the brick-veneered piers for a continuous look to the foundation.

The tripartite house has weatherboard siding with molded, pilastered corner boards; those at the second-story are finished with Greek Revival-style corner blocks. Wood window sash are original and generally six-over-nine. A set of nine-over-nine sash flank the front door as well as the back chimney at the first floor of the two-story section. Narrow four-over-six windows flank the chimney at the south side wing. A four-over-six and six-over-nine window flank the chimney at the north wing. Molded architraves at windows feature mitered corners and thick squared sills. Hinged, louvered shutters are at all windows at the façade, in place of the decorative replacement shutters that were on the house before the move. The new PVC shutters were designed based on a 1981 survey photograph of the building as well as appropriate details from the original construction period. Standing-seam metal sheathes the roof. The new chimneys recreate the concave shoulders and freestanding stacks that characterized the originals; however, according to the owner, flashing installed to prevent water penetration gives the appearance that the stacks are not freestanding. The metal roofing, brick chimneys, PVC shutters, and brick-faced foundation, and drywall above wainscot are all new materials. Some of the weatherboarding has been replaced with wood boards salvaged from the ca. 1790 house, which were not original to that dwelling.

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The two-story center section of the tripartite dwelling is three bays wide with a reconstructed gabled portico of wood with milled PVC at the skirtboards, fascia, and crown. The porch is centered at the first floor; the design and scale were based on shadow marks and surviving pilasters at the façade as well as remnants of the original handrail. The portico shelters the original front entry, a double-leaf door with five panels each leaf, all surrounded by a molded architrave with mitered corners. An unusual arched fanlight tops the door and has molded trim accented by augured circular depressions. A grid of flat panels with molded trim surround the entry and span the width between pilasters at the portico's outside edges. Above the portico, in the main pediment, a large round louver in a square frame vents the attic. The frame is highly decorative, featuring similar augured decoration to that in the fanlight molding, as well as incised star shapes set in circles. The two-story section is three bays deep, deeper than either of its wings, but the roof ridges of the side wings rise too high to accommodate windows in the first bay of each side elevation.

The two wings are each a single bay in width, pierced at the façade with a centered six-over-nine window. While the wings are in perfect balance viewed from the façade, the north wing is 5-1/2 feet deeper than the south wing. Both rear shed rooms replaced original open porches that were removed for the move.

*Samuel Warren Branch House Interior*

The interior has a good deal of features remaining from the period of significance: paneled and unpaneled wainscot at the first floor rooms; closed-stringer stair with railing and diagonal flush-board sheathing; and baseboard, chair rail, Federal mantels, paneled doors, molded trim, and flooring throughout. The front hall contains the stair, which turns halfway up the flight and is nestled in the southeast corner of the room. Slender squared balusters support a molded handrail along the stair. The handrail has a bead at the lower edge and finishes with a squared newel with molded cap and chamfered edges. Throughout the house, window architraves merge into the chair rail, using it as the sill. The notable parlor mantel features a sunburst in the center of the frieze flanked by alternating sections of reeding and molding. Cornerblocks with a reeded diamond shape cap the mantel's pilasters. Other original mantels are simpler, with paneled friezes and console-shaped pilasters; one common detail is the way the shelf overshoots the architrave of flanking windows.

New features are based on documentary evidence found in the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office survey file and on physical evidence in both houses. The sole mantel upstairs, in the back bedroom, is of Georgian style, featuring dentil molding beneath the narrow shelf, a fat cushion, and a simple frame around the firebox. It is a reproduction, the original having been stolen, but is based on survey documentation predating the looting and physical evidence remaining at the wall. It is identical in detail to the documented mantel at the main

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room of the older dwelling, which was also stolen prior to the move but reproduced in the rehabilitation. The floor plan of the tripartite is original or reflects early alterations with the exceptions of the added shed rooms. Those rooms, originally porches, now hold a bathroom and a hall that extends northeast to connect the two dwellings. Drywall has replaced plaster throughout the house, but the profiles of window trim and wainscot remain intact. The north parlor has been converted to a kitchen and a room at the second story has been converted to a bathroom. Original finishes have been retained either in place or, in the case of installation of cabinetry, in storage.

**William Branch Jr. House**

ca. 1790, ca. 1828, ca. 1849, ca. 1920, moved and rehabilitated 2017-2018  
Non-contributing Building

The William Branch Jr. House is one-and-a-half-stories, side-gabled, and has a full-width, shed-roofed front porch. The house appears to have been built in the late eighteenth century with updates when the tripartite house was built around 1828 and remodeled around 1849. A wall separating the two back rooms appears to have been built ca. 1920, the house was moved and rehabilitated in 2017 through 2018.

The house faces northeast; the two-bay façade holds a very wide eight-paneled door with a nine-over-nine-sash window to the right. Window openings have molded architraves with mitered corners and thick sills with a rounded profile. At the east elevation, windows are nine-over-nine in the first floor and nine-over-six in the gable end. The west elevation features six-over-four windows at the far north and south ends of the wall and a single nine-over-six window centered below the peak of the gable at the half-story. New louvered PVC shutters like those at the tripartite house are installed on operable hinges at the windows at the façade and the west elevation. The house has boxed cornices and pilastered cornerboards that come together at a mitered corner.

A reconstructed exterior chimney is at the front half of the west elevation. For building code reasons, the new double-shouldered chimney is much taller than the original, which stood until the 1970s, would have been. The new chimney does not follow shadow lines of the original that are documented in photographs from the early 1980s. However, the rehabilitation took careful note of the evidence of the chimney that appeared at the building's framing. Evidence in the form of mortar fragments on the framing members was visible up to the bottom edge of the new firebox on the second floor. These marks determined the width of the new chimney.

The very advanced state of deterioration of this older dwelling in its original location, along with the loss of original materials over its long lifespan including from its years of abandonment and

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lack of maintenance, resulted in the need for some reconstruction. Items found under the porch in its original location helped guide the rehabilitation of this house. A bit of original beaded weatherboard and a chamfered porch post served as models for the reproductions. All the windows are replacement wood sash; existing windows in 2017 were themselves replacements. No porch railing survived, and a simple iron railing was added for building code purposes. The new beaded weatherboards are of wood; other new materials used at the porch and to replace rotted trim are milled PVC. The house was placed on a new concrete-block pier foundation with brick veneer after the move, and a new roof structure with metal sheathing was installed as part of the rehabilitation to replace the collapsed roof. The dimensions and slope of the new roof match those of the original, and the framing at the gable walls are original.

The short, gable-roofed connection between the houses is little more than the width of the paired windows that light it at both its east and west sides. These new windows, mimicking those on the dwellings, have molded architraves with mitered corners. The sills are thick and squared like those at the tripartite dwelling. To help mark these windows as new construction, shutters were not installed.

*William Branch Jr. House Interior*

The house has six-panel doors along with flush-board wainscot and a Georgian-style mantel on the first floor, a reproduction based on physical evidence and photo documentation of the stolen original. It may have originally had a two-room plan with a single open room at the half-story attic. Today, the first floor has three rooms. The entry hall at the front is the largest room and occupies the full width of the house while two rooms split the back portion. The owner, during rehabilitation, observed that the quality of wood used in the partition wall between the two back rooms appeared to date to the early twentieth century. The large front room and the room in the half story share the sole chimney in the dwelling.

Floors are reclaimed heart pine, installed due to the rotted state of the original flooring and floor structure. The interior trim, however, is original. The wainscot has very wide boards laid horizontally and is finished with floor molding and chair rail. As in the tripartite house, the molded window architraves use the chair rail as a window sill. A boxed winder stair begins just inside the front door in the northeast corner and turns to rise along the east wall to the second story, where slender squared balusters support a molded handrail with beaded edge. Plain, flat baseboard and chair rail encircle the room. A new mantel at the small fireplace in the attic room replicates the molded architraves of the windows; the original mantel was missing and not documented. The roof of this section had collapsed before the rehabilitation, so the entire roof structure and ceiling is rebuilt of new materials but matches the proportion and slope of the original. The original base board and chair rail had been removed from the house while the roof structure was rebuilt and were reinstalled.

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The front door and the interior full-sized six-panel doors are all reproductions, replacing heavily damaged or replacement doors of other styles. Their raised panels are based on the surviving original paneled door at the small closet below the stair with the exception of the front door, which is a reproduction based on the original front door. The original front door was extant, but in pieces, before the move. The rear room on the west side has a back door that leads to the connector to the tripartite house. The wall between the two small rooms has been slightly altered from the previous configuration with a jog to accommodate the new shower the east room, now a bathroom.

**INTEGRITY ASSESSMENT**

The Branch houses retain the essential physical features that convey their historic identities as Georgian- and Federal-style dwellings of timber-frame construction. Each building still has the massing, proportion, fenestration pattern, and ornament that characterizes its architectural style and the Samuel Warren Branch house retains the massing that characterizes its tripartite form. Original interior and exterior finishes remain at the Samuel Warren Branch House and the original arrangement of interior space appears intact. Original and early interior finishes remain at the William Branch Jr. House as well, and the open front room with boxed winder stair remains intact. Changes have been made to the floor plan at the back section of the house, although the original configuration has not been definitively determined.

The Samuel Warren Branch house retains five of seven aspects of integrity. It has lost integrity of location and setting due to the move and reorientation, which removed the house from a 27-acre listed tract with sufficient agricultural land, centered on the farmstead, to provide the proper understanding of the house's role on its original site. The new siting does not reflect the historic development of both the houses as the center of a large agricultural environment, and significantly reconfigured the relationship of the two houses to one another. The move however did enable preservation of the materials, workmanship, and design, keeping intact those aspects of integrity in light of imminent demolition threat. Because the move did not require the dwelling to be dismantled, original materials and workmanship that survived to 2017 remain intact. Exceptions include the original plaster walls which were deteriorated prior to the move, and the exterior chimneys and brick foundation piers, reconstruction of both not unreasonable from a restoration perspective for a moved house. The latter two elements had been compromised before the initial listing in the NRHP: the chimneys had already been partially rebuilt and many of the brick foundation piers were replacements. Some integrity of association has been preserved by keeping the Branch Houses together and in the same general rural neighborhood a couple of miles east of its original location. Preservation of these four aspects has also kept intact some integrity of feeling, as the remaining original physical features and the location within the same

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rural neighborhood still convey the essential elements of the dwellings' periods, styles, and rural location.

The William Branch Jr. House, presumably originally a free-standing eighteenth-century building, is considered a non-contributing building. The William Branch Jr. House has lost integrity of location and setting due to the move, and relocation to a location that is not historical and with a different reconfiguration as a dependency or addition sited perpendicularly to and connected with a hyphen and passageway to the left wing of the tripartite Samuel Warren Branch House, necessitating a change to the roofline of the left wing. The collapsed roof and rotted back wall of the dwelling required replacement of a good deal of original material, including a rebuilt roof with metal sheathing and boxed cornice, a concrete-block foundation with brick veneer, rebuilt chimney, replaced clapboards with wood under the porch and PVC elsewhere, a non-historic iron porch railing with chamfered porch posts based on historic fragments, PVC shutters, replacement window sashes, door and fireplace mantel reproductions based on historical conjecture, all collectively representing a loss of integrity of materials through extensive reconstruction. The original eighteenth century plan or design was altered from one room to two rooms circa 1920, and then to three rooms in 2019, calling into question integrity of design. Overall, the William Branch Jr. House, through the combination of extensive reconstruction, non-historical relation to the Samuel Warren Branch House, and lack of solid documentation to support scholarly speculation, fails to meet the historic integrity of materials, location, design, feeling and association, to contribute to the architectural significance of the Samuel Branch House.

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SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Samuel Warren Branch House is eligible at the local level for the NRHP under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an intact example of an antebellum Federal-style tripartite house. The house additionally features a few Greek Revival details and has an original timber frame with pegged mortise-and-tenon joints. While the Samuel Warren Branch House shares elements in common with the relocated Sally-Billy House (HX0010, NR 1973) and the Hermitage (NR HX0005, NR 1975), both Halifax County tripartite houses in good condition, there are also notable differences that contribute to our understanding of architectural trends in the county.

Moved properties can be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if they are significant under Criterion C and if they retain sufficient historic features to convey their essential architectural values. They must retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship; integrity of location and setting, of course, are lost in the move. The Samuel Warren Branch House, as discussed above, does retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship and is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The property meets the special requirements of Criteria Consideration B for moved properties.

Some reconstruction was required during the rehabilitation. In all cases, reconstruction was undertaken with respect for original surviving architectural detail and with an aim to reproduce architectural detail where there was physical evidence to use as a guide. Materials choices reflect currently available long-wearing materials. According to NPS Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, this property is not required to meet Criteria Consideration E for reconstructed properties because it still has the majority of its original fabric.

The Period of Significance for properties eligible under Criterion C is the date of construction and/or the dates of significant alterations and additions. The Period of Significance is ca. 1828, the date of construction of the Samuel Warren Branch House and ca. 1849, the date of the Greek Revival remodel.

NARRATIVE HISTORY

The original NRHP nomination includes a narrative history which will not be repeated here. Briefly, it asserts that the tripartite house was built in the late 1840s and that the older Georgian cottage was attached around the 1920s. The first date was based on an insurance policy description and the fact of Branch's second marriage around that time; the latter detail about connecting the two dwellings was based on oral history from the tenant living in the house in the early 1980s.

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Since the initial listing of Branch Grove in the NRHP, the oral history claim that the Georgian house was moved up to meet the corner of the tripartite in the early twentieth century has been called into question. The 1849 insurance application recorded at the Register of Deeds office describes the house thus, with original punctuation intact:

“of wood & nearly new 34 + 40. 2 stories high including wings each side which are single story 4 chimneys & 6 fireplaces, attached is a room 20 + 30.”

The attached “room” mentioned could be the Georgian dwelling, which does measure roughly 20’ by 30’. It has, of course, two rooms and an attic. However, the tripartite house alone has just three chimneys and four fireplaces. Adding two fireplaces with only one additional chimney alludes to a multi-room arrangement in whatever building was attached. If the brief description in the insurance application does refer to Georgian cottage as the attached “room,” the application dates their connection to 1849 at the latest.

Enriching the narrative is the fact that details observed in 1981 and again during the move and rehabilitation showed that a second chimney originally heated the back room on the west side of the William Branch Jr. House, putting two chimneys on a single elevation. Unlike the other chimney in the house, this served only one fireplace. The width of the mantel removed from this room—evident from a break in the wainscot, since covered in the rehabilitation—matches exactly the width of the Georgian-style mantel installed in the second-floor back bedroom at the tripartite house. The design of that mantel matches exactly the surviving original Georgian-style mantel in the front room of the older dwelling and is unlike other mantels in the later house. The precise fit of this mantel in the tripartite house, with the flanking windows directly abutting its sides, does give the appearance of having been placed there at construction of the tripartite.

In other words, if the “room” is the Georgian cottage, its second chimney had been eliminated as early as 1849, according to the insurance application. If the Georgian mantel is original to the tripartite house, however, then the chimney was eliminated from the ca. 1790 house around 1828 and reused in the new house. The appearance of matching mantels in both hints that the attached “room” described in the insurance application is in fact the Georgian dwelling. The dwellings share other interior architectural detail: unpaneled wainscot, mitered molded window architraves, chair rail that doubles as window sill, matching stair balustrades and handrails. If the buildings were linked when the tripartite was built, it would make sense that some matching trim would be installed in the older building or copied at the new one. It also seems more likely, as pointed out by restoration contractor Dean Ruedrich in an interview in December 2018, that the tripartite was built to meet the corner of the existing Georgian house than that the latter was moved to the former and placed corner-to-corner. Ruedrich maintained that such precise placement would

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have been very difficult to achieve with a relocated building, but rather simple with new construction built alongside an existing building.

Adding to this new narrative, physical evidence indicates that the two back rooms of the Georgian dwelling were altered, although observations from the 1980s and from the 2017 rehabilitation do not agree on the type or date of alterations. Physical evidence observed during the rehabilitation seems to indicate that the partition wall dividing the two may date to the early twentieth century. However, historians documenting the house in the early 1980s surmised that the shelving in the east room, including on the partition wall, dated to the mid-nineteenth century or earlier. They recorded that the shelving supports matched a detail on a bench (since lost) incorporated into the Georgian dwelling's porch. Additionally, the shelving was painted "a deep Tuscan green" according to survey notes, which also indicate that that color was used in "many local colonial and federal period buildings." Neither the shelving nor the bench survived to 2017. There has also been conjecture that, at the rear elevation, the location of the exterior door and window were swapped; that is, the door originally exited from the east side. Whether the two back rooms were originally a single room and/or when the partition wall was built and whether it has been moved has not been definitively determined.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, this nomination presents the possibility that the tripartite dwelling dates to the 1820s. Samuel Warren Branch inherited the land around 1824, according to the nomination, and was first married in 1827. An 1820s date dovetails with these events and puts construction of the house more in line with other surviving tripartites in the county: the Sally-Billy House dates to ca. 1800 and the Hermitage to 1810. The earlier date also makes sense for the Federal detail in the house. By the late 1840s, the Greek Revival was fully in vogue. It would follow that the house was remodeled a bit with some Greek Revival detail in 1849, just after Branch's second marriage, and insured at that time.

Eighteenth-century records support a case that the Georgian House was built for William Branch Jr., the father of Samuel Warren Branch. Deeds as early as 1759 show that white planters with the name Branch owned land on the north side of Beech Swamp—John Branch Sr., John Branch Jr., William Branch Sr., and William Branch Jr. had tracts adjoining each other for decades, according to descriptions in deeds throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. The 1782 tax list for the county recorded that William Branch "of Marsh" in District 8 had 1,325 acres comprising separate tracts of 800 acres and 525 acres; he also enslaved sixteen people. One imagines he would have had a fine house on one of the tracts. Four years later, a William Branch Jr. enumerated the 1786 census for his Halifax District 8. That list recorded a "William Branch" household, apparently his father's, and showed five white males under twenty-one and over sixty years of age; three white females; and fourteen black people. There was not a separate listing for

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<sup>5</sup> Survey notes from 1981 are in the survey file at the State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh.

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the younger William Branch, so one assumes he and his father were in the same household, with his father being over sixty years old and he being under twenty-one. Four years later, the tax list of 1790 lists William Branch Jr. as head of a household consisting of himself and six black people on 820 acres. This information is in accord with the estimated construction date of the Georgian cottage; it appears that William Branch Jr.'s father gave or sold him the 800-acre tract and he built a dwelling there. It faced south, toward the swamp, perhaps the direction of his father's house.<sup>6</sup>

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

### *Tripartite Houses in Halifax County*

Architectural trends from neighboring Virginia influenced building trends in Halifax County; tobacco plantations in the area sent their product to Virginia markets and had good, close communication with cities like Petersburg, Richmond, and Norfolk. A notable example of this is the tripartite house form, generally consisting of a two-story front-gabled section with flanking single-story gabled wings. Such a house provided about the same amount of space as a hall-parlor dwelling with rear shed rooms. The arrangement, however, created a broader, statelier edifice that telegraphed wealth more effectively than a compact dwelling. The tripartite was also derivative of a Roman country villa in the style of Palladio, referring back to classical architecture and eschewing the Georgian influence rooted in English tradition.<sup>7</sup>

The Semple House in Williamsburg is considered the progenitor of a group of tripartite dwellings that dotted the Halifax County rural landscape in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The first known North Carolina version was Willie Jones's The Grove in Halifax County, likely built in the 1770s and demolished around 1915. Jones is thought to have been a friend of Thomas Jefferson's, who is in turn thought to have designed or had a hand in the design of the Williamsburg Semple House. There is conjecture that Jefferson also designed or drew sketches for The Grove.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen E. Bradley, Jr., comp., *The Deeds of Halifax County, North Carolina 1758-1771* (N.p.: Colonial Roots, 1989), 5, 31; Stephen E. Bradley, Jr., comp., *The Deeds of Halifax County, North Carolina 1771-1786* (N.p.: Colonial Roots, 1989), 53, 85; Susie Brickell Anderson, *Records of Halifax County, North Carolina, Tax Lists for Years 1782 and 1790 and Census for years 1786 and 1800* (Roanoke Rapids: Anderson, [19--?]), 11, 28, 50-51.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Cockshutt Bishir and Davyd Foard Hood, *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse Basin*, ([Raleigh, N.C.]: Survey and Planning Branch, Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1977), 16; Catherine Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture (Portable Edition)*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 112-114.

<sup>8</sup> Bishir and Hood, 16; Norman D. Askins, Chapter 2 of "William Finnie House Architectural Report," (Originally "Architectural Report: Semple House (Draft)," 1971-1972, Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library, <https://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/>).

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A photograph, taken when The Grove had been long abandoned, shows that it indeed shared basic proportions with the Semple House. Both had a three-bay wide, two-story center section with a pedimented gabled roof flanked by side-gabled wings two bays wide at the façade. At The Grove, a modillioned boxed eave at the main block's roof was repeated at the wings, and the pedimented gable had flush-board sheathing and dentil molding along the raked gable ends. The porch is missing by this time, but the placement of its gabled roof remained evident. The porch stretched across the full width of the center block, and the peak of the gable hit just below the sill of the center second-story window. Weatherboards likely had a beaded edge. The windows and doors were already gone, and the building was demolished around 1915. Differences at the Semple House include the setback of the wings from the façade of the center block, and the entry porch that sheltered only the front door.<sup>9</sup>

Halifax County had as many as a dozen tripartite houses after Jones built The Grove. Only three survive. The ca. 1810 Hermitage (HX0005, NR 1975) stands on the north side of NC 481, just over three miles from the new site of the Branch houses. The ca. 1800 Sally-Billy House (HX0010, originally NR 1973, relisted in new location NR 1975) was relocated in 1974 from the Scotland Neck area to Historic Halifax, a state historic site in the town of Halifax in the central part of the county. Both are consistently maintained.<sup>10</sup>

The three houses represent iterations of the three-part Palladian type. All share the Semple House arrangement of pedimented center section with side-gabled wings, and all three have Federal-style detailing that was characteristic of the early nineteenth-century period. The houses have exterior chimneys at the gable walls at the side elevations of the wings and rear elevation of the main block, an arrangement different from the Semple House. All three also have weatherboard exteriors, nine-over-nine sash, and pedimented porches sheltering just the front entrance. All three were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in large part because they were examples of a notable planter house type that had become extremely rare on the landscape.

The Hermitage has proportions close to those of the Semple House and The Grove, with a three-bay center block and two-bay-wide flanking wings. Window size is consistent across the façade. Sheathing at the pediments of the main block and the porch is laid diagonally, highlighting the rake of the roofline. Weatherboards have a beaded edge and the cornice has both modillions and

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<sup>9</sup> Henry V. Taves, Allison H. Black, and David R. Black, *The Historic Architecture of Halifax County, North Carolina* (Halifax, N.C.: Halifax County Historical Association, 2010), 18.

<sup>10</sup> Bishir and Hood, 16; John Baxton Flowers and Catherine Cockshutt [Bishir], "The Hermitage," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1975, <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/HX0005.pdf>; and Charles Blue, Jr., and Catherine Cockshutt [Bishir], "Sally-Billy House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1973, <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/HX0010.pdf>

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dentil molding. The front door is single-leaf with eight raised panels, set beneath a transom and enframed in an unusual architrave with crossetting offset from the corners, itself framed by reeded pilasters on pedestals. Mantels feature similarly quirky transitional Georgian-Federal detailing, including mitered, heavily molded frames and friezes with plain center tablets and decorative endblocks. The floor plan at The Hermitage is unusual, employing a lateral corridor between the entrance hall, which holds the stair, and a back parlor. The second-floor corridor, in contrast, runs front-to-back along one side of the floor plan. A fourth interior chimney rises through the roof of the two-story block to provide a fireplace in the back wall of the entrance hall.<sup>11</sup>

The Sally-Billy House is a diminutive example: its center section is only a single bay wide, despite the double-bay width of the side wings. Like The Hermitage, it has modillioned pediments and beaded weatherboards. It has a double-leaf paneled front door under a multilight rectangular transom. Six-panel doors hang on L-hinges, and flush wainscots adorn the walls. Mantels have pilasters under a molded shelf with a dentil cornice and two-paneled frieze, and the stair has a Chippendale balustrade. The Sally-Billy House, like the Samuel Warren Branch house, has the typical tripartite floor plan, with a front entrance hall featuring a stair and leading to all other first-floor rooms. Both houses also have six-over-nine sash at the second story, a slightly smaller window than the nine-over-nine sash at the ground floor. The Sally-Billy House was also once in disrepair and under threat of demolition. Its relocation to Historic Halifax and subsequent rehabilitation has ensured its preservation. The house was moved from its original rural location to the outskirts of the town of Halifax.<sup>12</sup>

The Samuel Warren Branch House also has individualistic detailing as well as architectural style from multiple periods. The gougework at the exterior and the interior sides of the front door transom, as well as the vent in the main gable, is an interesting mark of the unknown carpenter who built the house. The carved sunburst and extensive reeding at interior mantels are also notable craftsmanship and style. The Greek Revival-style exterior detailing appears to have been part of a remodel that intended to refresh the house upon the occasion of Branch's second marriage, to Eveline Gary, in 1849. The detail, notably cornerblocks at pilastered cornerboards, is also seen at the William Branch Jr. House. The Samuel Warren Branch House is significant as a rare survivor of what had been an important collection of tripartite planters' houses in Halifax County that reflected the wealth gained from agriculture as well as the evolution of architectural style that indicated separation from the English colonial heritage.

<sup>11</sup> Bishir, 112-113; Flowers and Bishir, "The Hermitage," NRHP Nomination.

<sup>12</sup> Blue and Bishir, "The Sally-Billy House," NRHP Nomination.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary coincides with portions of two sides of the parcel identified by the number 0600906 in the Halifax County GIS system. The boundary is generally rectangular, with a northwest line, a southwest line, a southeast line, and a northeast line.

Northwest boundary line: Starting at the north corner of the tax parcel, the boundary proceeds along the northwest parcel line to the southwest for 450 feet to the west corner of the NRHP boundary.

Southwest boundary line: Starting from end of the northwest NRHP boundary line and at the west corner of the NRHP boundary, the southwest boundary line extends to the southeast for 300 feet, forming a roughly ninety-degree angle with the northwest boundary line and with the southeast boundary line.

Southeast boundary line: Starting from end of the southwest NRHP boundary line and at the south corner of the NRHP boundary, the southeast boundary line extends to the northeast for 400 feet, forming a roughly ninety-degree angle with the southwest boundary line.

Northeast boundary line: Starting at the end of the southeast NRHP boundary line and at the east corner of the NRHP boundary, the northeast boundary line follows the north most 288 feet of the northeast tax parcel line, meeting the northwest NRHP boundary line at the north corner of the tax parcel.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary includes a roughly three-acre portion of the parcel that the Branch houses now occupy and is drawn to include a portion of the surrounding land to allow for a setting for the houses. The boundary is anchored at one corner of the tax parcel boundary for simplicity and encompasses roughly a rectangular area that positions the houses at roughly the center of the bounded area.

The Branch houses stand at Longitude: -77.557299/ Latitude:36.224396.

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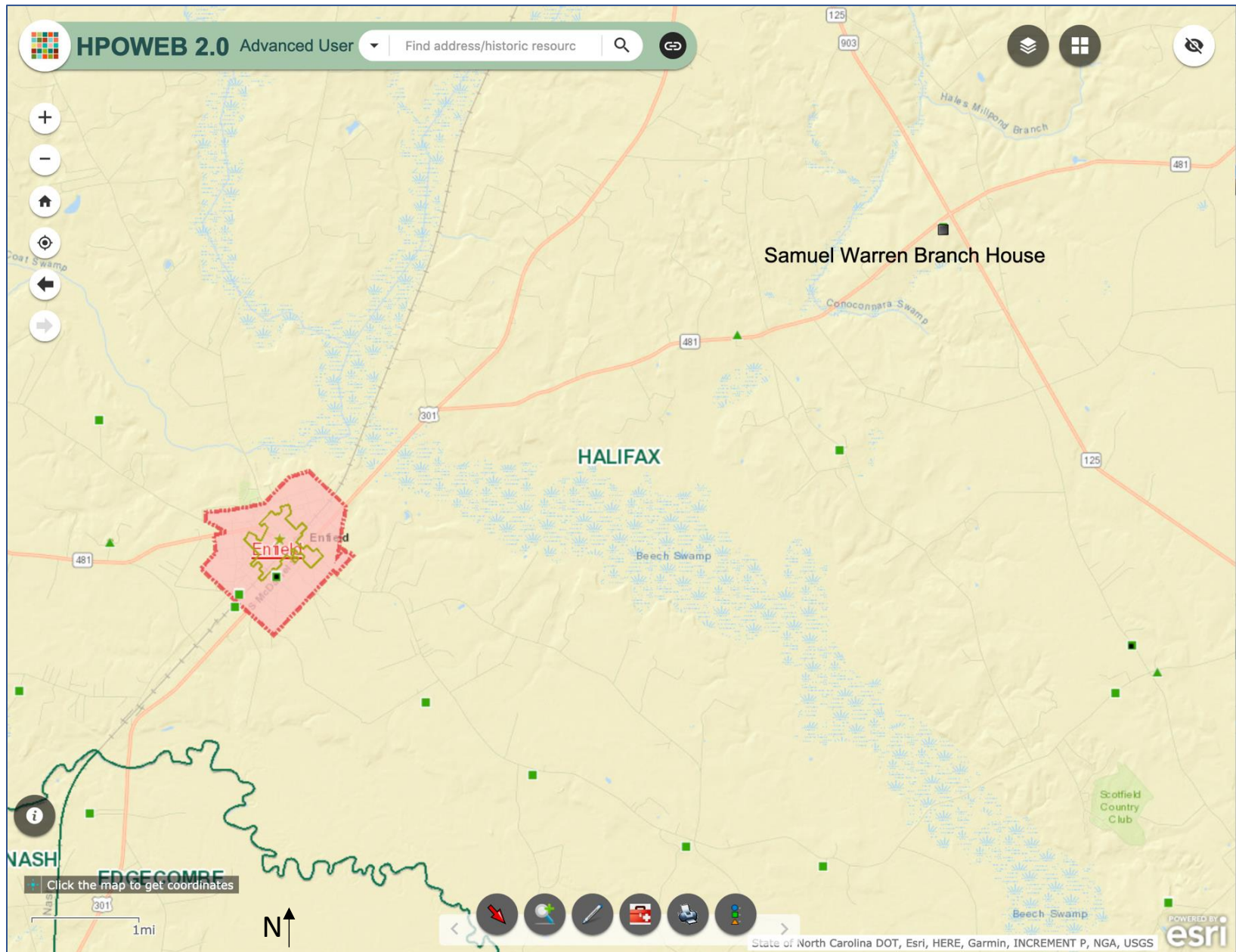
Branch, Samuel Warren, House  
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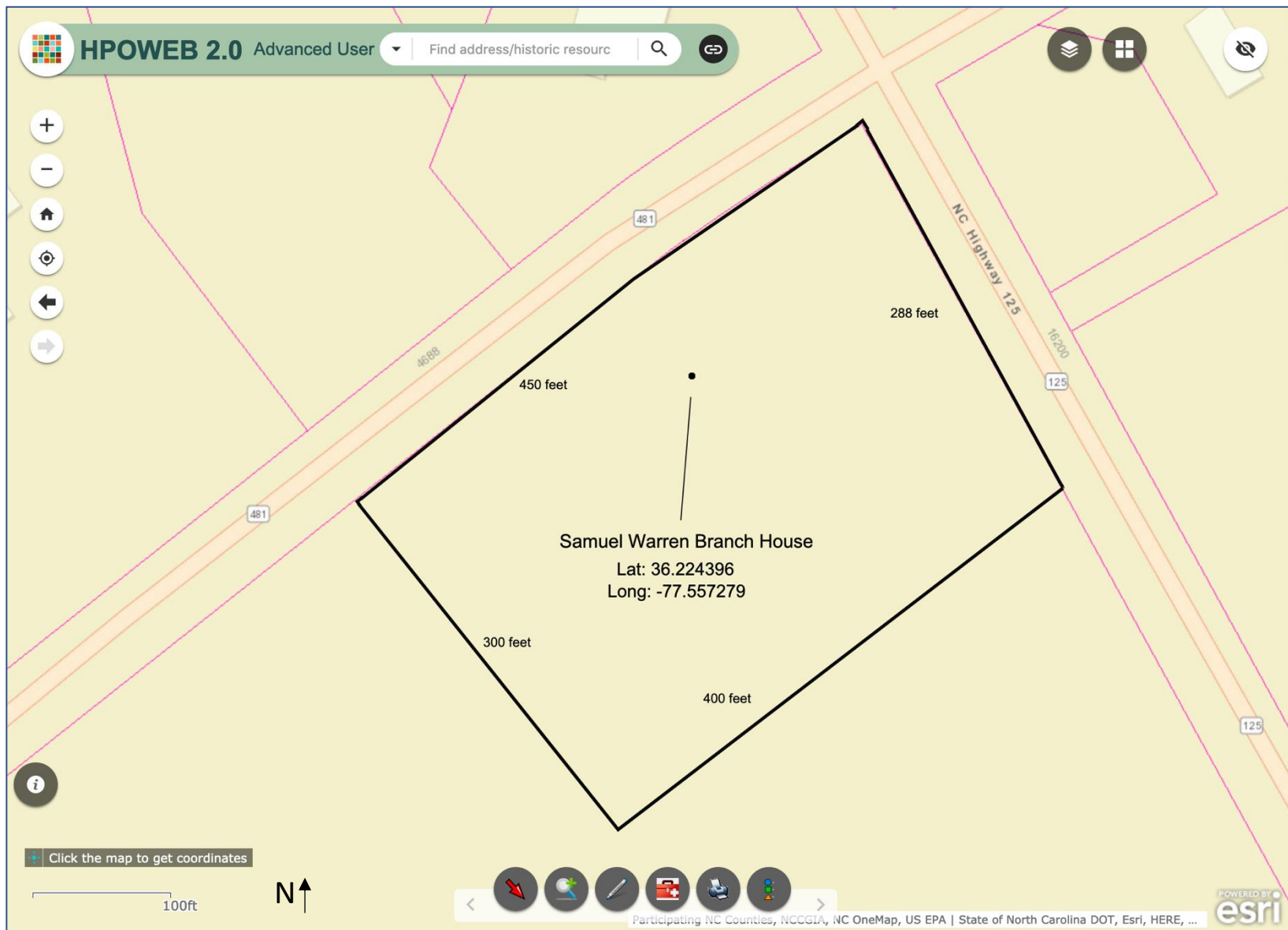
**PHOTOGRAPHS**

All photographs taken by Cynthia de Miranda in October 2018.  
The digital files are held at the State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh, North Carolina.  
The digital files are named  
NC\_HalifaxCounty\_WilliamBranchJr.HouseandSamuelWarrenBranchHouse\_00xx

- 01 Samuel Warren Branch House (SWB), view SE
- 02 William Branch Jr. House (WB Jr.), view SW
- 03 Branch Houses, view SE
- 04 SWB, side elevation, view NE
- 05 SWB, rear elevation, and WB Jr., side elevation, view NW
- 06 WB Jr., side elevation and façade, view SW
- 07 WB Jr., façade and side elevation, and SWB, side elevation and façade, view S
- 08 SWB, detail of vent in gable at façade, view SE
- 09 SWB, entry detail, view SE
- 10 SWB, interior showing stair in entrance hall
- 11 SWB, south wing with mantel
- 12 SWB, back parlor and mantel
- 13 SWB, north wing and mantel
- 14 SWB, second-floor bedrooms and mantel
- 15 WB Jr., hall and mantel
- 16 WB Jr., stair
- 17 WB Jr., attic story



**Samuel Warren Branch House Location Map**  
Lat: 36.224396 Long: -77.557279  
16212 Highway 125, Enfield vic., Halifax County, North Carolina



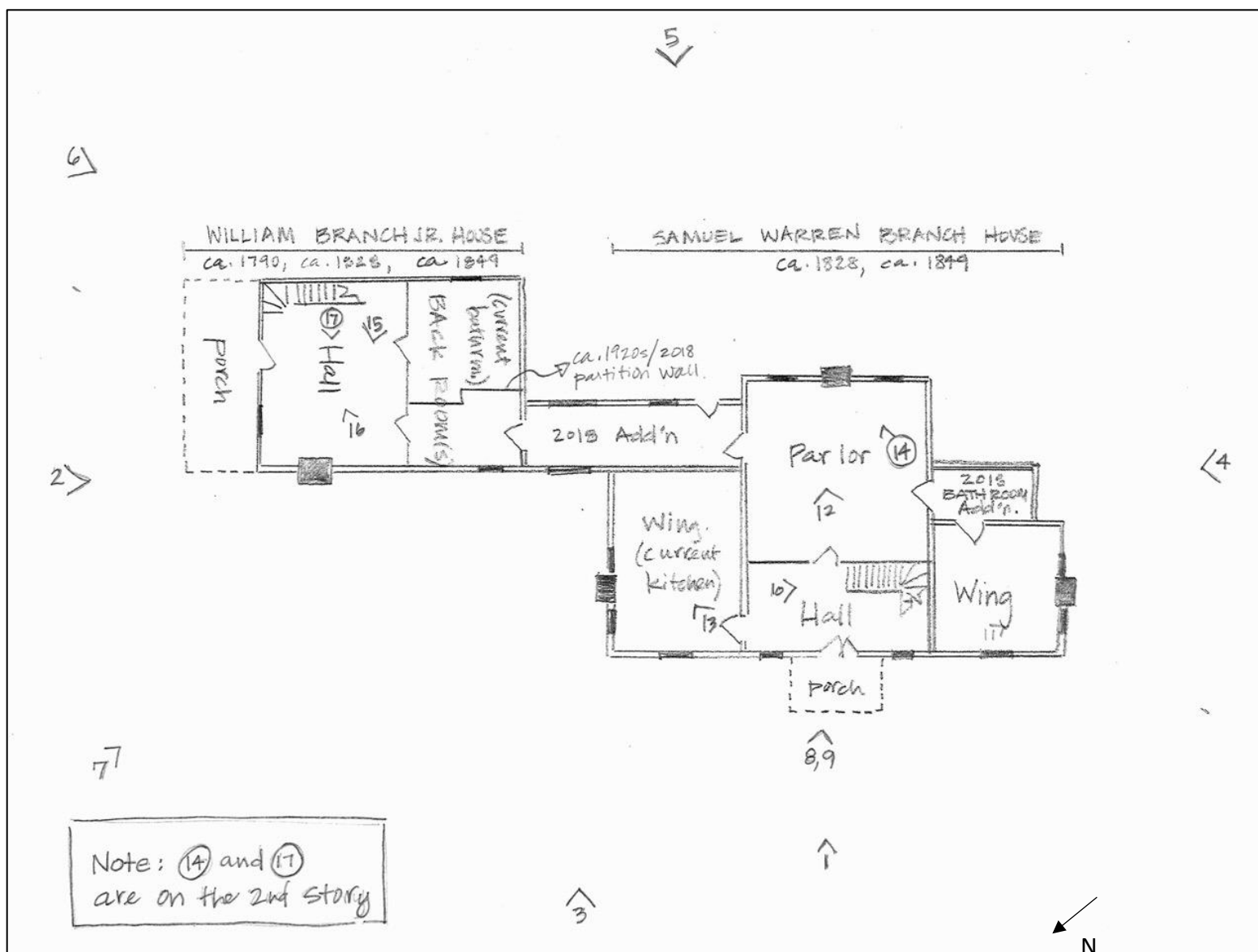
**Samuel Warren Branch House NR Boundary**  
16212 Highway 125, Enfield vic., Halifax County, North Carolina  
Part of Parcel Number 0600906



**Samuel Warren Branch House Aerial View of intersection and view to northwest**  
16212 Highway 125, Enfield vic., Halifax County, North Carolina



**Samuel Warren Branch House Aerial View of new site**  
16212 Highway 125, Enfield vic., Halifax County, North Carolina



**Samuel Warren Branch House First Floor Plan and Photo Key**  
 16212 Highway 125, Enfield vic., Halifax County, North Carolina  
 (not to scale)