



Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission

201 Worth Street, Asheboro, North Carolina 27203 ♦ 336-318-6806 ♦ www.rchlpc.org

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

6:00 p.m.

***Location Change:** *Asheboro Public Works Conference Room, 1312 N. Fayetteville St.,
Asheboro**

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Old Business**

Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting on April 28, 2021

3. **New Business**

- a. Designation application of Local Historic Landmark – Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House, ca. 1815

i. Public Hearing

- ii. Consider adoption of Resolution Recommending Local Historic Landmark Designation for Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House, ca. 1815

- b. Updates and Announcements

4. **Adjourn**



Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission

201 Worth Street ♦ Asheboro, North Carolina 27203

April 28, 2021

The Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission (HLPC) met in Asheboro Public Works Conference Room, 1312 N. Fayetteville St., Asheboro, NC, and the meeting was called to order by Chairman Mac Whatley at 6:00 p.m. Members present were Chairman Mac Whatley, Ross Holt, Chip Womick, Warren Dixon, Hal Pugh, and Dan Warren. Lynne Qualls, Robyn Hankins, Bill Ivey, and Don Simmons were absent. Clerk to the Board Sarah Pack was also present.

Approval of Minutes

On motion of Dixon, seconded by Warren, the HLPC voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2019, meeting.

Chip Womick was sworn in by Clerk to the Board Sarah Pack.

Designation Application of Local Historic Landmark for the Henry Moring Robins House

Chairman Whatley said there are two items of business for consideration. Both houses are in close proximity to the two McCrary houses that are already designated as historic locations. A historic landmark is something that is very important, and that designation is not given out without research and review. Guilford County has designated 702 landmarks, but they have a designated planning staff to assist with the administrative aspect of the designation.

Ross Holt, Randolph County Library Director, said that the two homes up for designation are side by side on Main Street. The homes under consideration are the Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. House (Bunch House) and the Henry Moring Robins House (Robins House). These two houses are identical to many other houses in Asheboro, as they were constructed by the same builder. These two homes are true to the original construction style and are tied to important historical figures. The namesakes of both homes both served as mayors in Asheboro.

Mr. Holt said the Robins House was built in 1924 and was, at that time, the residence of a former Asheboro Mayor and acting attorney. It is a colonial revival style home with craftsman influence. It is located on South Main Street in Asheboro. The designation boundary follows the lot boundary. Mr. Holt showed photos of distinct original construction aspects of the house. This home is true to its original architectural integrity. Mr. Holt showed photographs of some interior elements that are original. The property also boasts historical elements. Mr. Holt gave a brief history of the property ownership and accomplishments of prior owners. Thomas Jefferson Lassiter, a local builder, constructed the Robins House after the previous Marsh Robins House was torn down. Elements of the Marsh Robins House appear in the current Robins House. The stones bordering the property are from the chimney of the Marsh Robins House. Mr. Holt detailed some of the accomplishments from Mr. Robins' life. The Asheboro Library has benefitted from Mr. Robins' trust and book collection. This house has many ties to historical figures in the community.

The State Historic Preservation Office has indicated that there is sufficient evidence to consider this site for historic designation.

Chairman Whatley said the Robins family is prominent in Randolph County. He briefly discussed the history of the Robins family.

Public Hearing

At 6:27 p.m., Chairman Whatley opened the duly noticed public hearing. Hearing no comments, Chairman Whatley closed the public hearing.

On motion of Dixon, seconded by Womick, the HLPC voted unanimously to approve the Resolution Recommending Local Historic Landmark Designation for the Henry Moring Robins House, 1924, as follows:

Resolution Recommending Local Historic Landmark Designation Henry Moring Robins House, 1924

***WHEREAS**, Chapter 160A, Article 19, Part 3C of the North Carolina General Statutes provides for the designation of local historic landmarks; and*

***WHEREAS**, the Randolph County Board of Commissioners has appointed the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission, having the authority to exercise all powers and duties given it by the Randolph County Historic Preservation Ordinance; and*

***WHEREAS**, the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission has taken into consideration all information contained in the Historic Landmark Designation Application for the Henry Moring Robins House, 1924; and*

***WHEREAS**, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office, has been given the opportunity to review the Local Landmark Designation Report and has advised that the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission will have sufficient evidence to prove that the Henry Moring Robins House possesses the requisite special character and integrity for designation as a local historic landmark; and*

***WHEREAS**, the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission conducted the required public hearing, having published legal notices with mailings to adjoining property owners; and*

***WHEREAS**, the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission finds that the Henry Moring Robins House, 1924, meets the following specific criteria outlined in the Ordinance establishing the Commission: (1) Critical part of the City of Asheboro's heritage by having value as an example of the cultural, historic and social heritage of City of Asheboro; (2) Its identification with persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historical, social or other aspect of the development of the City of Asheboro; (3) Its important architecture as an exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship; (4) Its distinctive theme, representing an architectural, cultural, economic, historic or other theme expressed through a distinctive building.*

WHEREAS, the property is more specifically described as follows:

The Henry Moring Robins House is located at 117 S. Main St., Asheboro, N.C., PIN 7751927411, Asheboro Township, Randolph County, N.C.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, this 28th day of April 2021, that the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission approves the application for local landmark designation, and recommends to Asheboro City Council that the exterior of the Henry Moring Robins House, 1924, be designated as a Local Historic Landmark.

Designation Application of Local Historic Landmark for the Walter Anderson Bunch House

Mr. Holt said the Bunch House was built in 1919. This house is also a colonial revival style with craftsman influence. The wraparound veranda is of note. There are many original architectural features in this house. The Bunch House sits north of the Robins House on Main Street. The historic designation boundary is the lot boundary. The homeowners believe that the kitchen and bathroom are original, but it is hard to tell without at least partially destroying the finishes. The dining room windows are original. This house was also built by Thomas Jefferson Lassiter. Mr. Holt gave a brief history of Walter Anderson Bunch's life and community development. The Bunch House meets all criteria for landmark designation. It also has ties to prominent historical figures.

Chairman Whatley said these two houses are worthwhile sites in Asheboro. He believes that the whole district should have historic designation.

Public Hearing

At 6:35 p.m., Chairman Whatley opened the duly noticed public hearing. Hearing no comments, Chairman Whatley closed the public hearing.

On motion of Womick, seconded by Warren, the HLPC voted unanimously to approve the Resolution Recommending Local Historic Landmark Designation for the Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. House, 1919, as follows:

***Resolution Recommending Local Historic Landmark Designation
Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. House, 1919***

WHEREAS, Chapter 160A, Article 19, Part 3C of the North Carolina General Statutes provides for the designation of local historic landmarks; and

WHEREAS, the Randolph County Board of Commissioners has appointed the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission, having the authority to exercise all powers and duties given it by the Randolph County Historic Preservation Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission has taken into consideration all information contained in the Historic Landmark Designation Application for the Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. House, 1919; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office, has been given the opportunity to review the Local Landmark Designation Report and has advised that the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation

Commission will have sufficient evidence to prove that the Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. House possesses the requisite special character and integrity for designation as a local historic landmark; and

***WHEREAS,** the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission conducted the required public hearing, having published legal notices with mailings to adjoining property owners; and*

***WHEREAS,** the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission finds that the Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. House, 1919, meets the following specific criteria outlined in the Ordinance establishing the Commission: (1) Critical part of the City of Asheboro's heritage by having value as an example of the cultural, historic and social heritage of City of Asheboro; (2) Its identification with persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historical, social or other aspect of the development of the City of Asheboro; (3) Its important architecture as an exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship; (4) Its distinctive theme, representing an architectural, cultural, economic, historic or other theme expressed through a distinctive building.*

***WHEREAS,** the property is more specifically described as follows:*

The Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. House is located at 111 S. Main St., Asheboro, N.C., PIN 7751926417, Asheboro Township, Randolph County, N.C.

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** this 28th day of April 2021, that the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission approves the application for local landmark designation, and recommends to Asheboro City Council that the exterior of the Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. House, 1919, be designated as a Local Historic Landmark.*

Updates

Chairman Whatley said that the requirements for historic designation have become more stringent. Mr. Holt was very pleased with recent interactions with state officials in completing a prior designation application. Chairman Whatley said other local towns and cities have historic districts. He is working on an application for the Cedar Falls Textile Mill District.

Mr. Holt gave an overview of updates to the HLPC website. The prior website had the capabilities of geolocating historic sites, but it was difficult to attach further information to each site. The new site uses a different platform and shows not only historic sites, but more information about the Commission itself. He showed several pages on the site, including different available functions. Related sites can be linked as well.

Commission Updates

Chairman Whatley thanked Mr. Holt for his work on upgrading the website and gave some other updates. There is a meeting on April 29, 2021, with architects regarding turning the offices on the ground floor of the historic courthouse into a museum. Exhibits in the museum will help to bring more information to light regarding the monument in front of the Historic Courthouse. The NC Textile bill has passed the first reading in the House and Senate with multiple co-sponsors. It is now in the Appropriations Committee.

Dan Warren has been working on publishing a book about the history of Archdale. It is currently 350 pages. He has also started one on Trinity and Trinity High School.

Hal Pugh also has a book being published about Naomi Wise, a murder victim from Randleman memorialized in a ballad.

Adjourn

With no further business to discuss, on motion of Dixon, seconded by Warren, the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

L. Mac Whatley, Chairman

Sarah Pack, Clerk to the HLPC



Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission

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LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House, ca. 1815



1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Jeduthan Harper House

Other Name: Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House

2. Location

Street Address: 4033 Red Fox Road

City/Town/Jurisdiction: Trinity, NC 27370

Zoning Jurisdiction: Trinity, NC

Tax Parcel ID Number: 6796990508

3. Owner Information

Name: Leslie Benton Farmer

Address: P.O. Box 325, Jamestown, NC 27282

Phone/email: 336-454-5141/benfarmer@northstate.net

4. Applicant/Contact Person

Name: Ross A. Holt, Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission

Contact: 201 Worth Street, Asheboro, NC 27203/336-318-6806/rholt@randolphlibrary.org

5. General Data/Site Information

A. Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: ca. 1815; addition wing and interior modifications 1830; 1908 chimney and fireplace modifications; historically accurate restoration ca. 1980 with modern kitchen addition at rear; 1908 modifications removed.

B. Number, type and date of construction of outbuildings: Former kitchen ca. 1815, renovated as barn ca. 2014

C. Approximate lot size or acreage: 3.017

D. Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason: Jeduthan and/or Jesse Harper

E. Original Use: Residence

F. Present Use: Residence

6. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building/lot

7. Function or Use

Historic Function: Residence

Current Function: Residence

8. Description

Architectural Classification: Dwelling

LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House, ca. 1815

Adapted and expanded from the National Register of Historic Places Nomination by Gwynne S. Taylor, consultant, and David W. Parham, survey specialist, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1979, by Ross A. Holt, Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission, 2021

ABSTRACT

The Jesse Harper House in Trinity Township, Randolph County, North Carolina is an unusually fine, highly original example of Piedmont North Carolina architecture from the Federal period. The third oldest dwelling still standing in Randolph County, it also exemplifies the circumstances of Randolph County's major landowners – and of the enslaved people who made their prosperity and leisure possible. Built circa 1815, the house is associated with the Harper family, whose members were politically prominent in Randolph County. There is some uncertainty as to who initiated construction of the house – either Jeduthun Harper (1736-1819) or his son Jesse Harper (1787-1851), although Jesse became its primary occupant. Jeduthun Harper was a member of the Hillsborough Provincial Congress of 1775 and of the Fourth Provincial Congress of 1776; Harper also held several local offices such as Justice of the Peace, Register of Deeds, and Clerk of Court in addition to serving in the North Carolina Legislature. Harper's children and grandchildren intermarried with other prominent families in the area, among them daughter Sarah (1789-1858), who became the second wife of Gen. Alexander Gray (1768-1864), the county's largest landowner; and granddaughter Ann Eliza Lindsay, who married John Motley Morehead (1796-1866) of Greensboro, governor of North Carolina 1841-1845. Jesse Harper, like his father, served as Civil Clerk of Court in Randolph County. A political ally of Morehead, he served on the state Board of Internal Improvement during the governor's administration.

The Harper House meets the criteria for designation as a Randolph County Historic Landmark as follows:

- It represents a critical part of the county's heritage, as it exemplifies a plantation that was unusually large for Randolph County and relied on enslaved labor;
- It is associated with significant persons, the Harper family, whose members had a significant impact on the early history of the county;
- It is architecturally important and possesses integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and association, because of its status as an example of a Piedmont vernacular transitional Georgian-Federal dwelling circa 1815;
- It evinces a distinctive theme, that of the lifestyle of well-to-do citizens of the early statehood and pre-civil war eras, and the enslaved people who facilitated the high socioeconomic status of those citizens; and
- It meets criteria for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, to which it was added in 1979.¹

Although the house contains elaborate interior woodwork which combines Georgian and Federal elements reflecting the cultural lag which caused the late arrival and extended popularity of stylistic forms in rural North Carolina, the landmark designation proposal is for the exterior only. The proposed designation boundary includes the house and its entire three-acre lot (see Appendix A, Site Plan and Designation Boundary).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Harper House in Trinity Township, Randolph County, North Carolina was built for a family whose political and social impact on their community was considerable. The exterior of the house and its outstanding interior woodwork mark it as a notable example of Piedmont North Carolina architecture of the Federal period.

The date of construction of the Harper House and the identity of the builder are a subject of some confusion and speculation. The available documentary evidence indicates that the house could have been built either for Lt. Col. Jeduthun Harper (1736-1819) or for his son Jesse (1781-1851), both of whom owned large tracts of land in the Trinity Township. The architectural evidence shows that the house was probably built circa 1815. Both the stylistic indications of the house and nail chronology dating which found that the earliest construction was around 1815 support such a date. The ambiguity of the evidence relating to the builder of the house in no way detracts from the significance of the structure which is important both for its architectural merits and for its association with the locally prominent Harper family.² It is reasonable to assume that enslaved labor contributed to construction of the house; the 1810 census shows that Jeduthun Harper owned 25 enslaved people.³ Handmade bricks are present at the house and surrounding property; the current homeowner has found at least one brick with finger and thumb prints in it, suggesting the bricks may have been made on site presumably by enslaved residents. The owner has found other artifacts on the property, including a clay pipe and a hand-crafted bone knife.

Both Jeduthun and Jesse Harper figured prominently in the history of Randolph County. Jeduthun was a member of the Hillsborough Provincial Congress which met on August 21, 1775. It was here that he was appointed a Lieutenant Colonel. He was also a member of the 1776 Fourth Provincial Congress which met at Halifax in April of that year. In 1788 when the Legislature, then sitting in Fayetteville, passed an act establishing Johnstonville on Thomas Dougan's property in Randolph County, Jeduthun Harper was appointed a Commissioner.⁴ Harper also served at various times as a Justice of the Peace, Register of Deeds, Clerk of Court, and a member of the N. C. Legislature.⁵

The children born to Jeduthun and Gizeal Park Harper were Mary (1777-1817), Elizabeth (1782-1821), Letitia (1785-1835), Jesse (1784-1851), Sarah (1789-1858), Absalom Tatum, and two other sons who died in infancy.⁶

Enslaved people on the estate named in Jeduthun's will, and distributed among his wife and children following his death, included Adam, Big Holly and her child Zack, Carister and her children, Chancy, Daniel, Delly, Edom, Harry, Jack, Jim, Jude, Little Holly, Lucinda, Lucy, Nelly, Quaker, Rachel, Sal, Spencer, and Zaza. Jeduthun directed that two elderly enslaved couples, Cesar and Dinah, and Hannah and Jude, be able to choose their masters and instructed his son Jesse to ensure that they would be cared for.⁷

Jesse Harper never married. From the house, he presided over a 1,485-acre plantation described at the time of his death in 1851 as "very valuable on account of the fertility and productiveness of the soil, being well-adapted to the culture of corn, wheat, cotton tobacco and the grasses; beside the situation is beautiful and healthy."⁸ Infrastructure included the "commodious Dwelling House, StoreHouse, Cotton Gin and Screw, and all necessary out buildings."⁹ A board and batten kitchen, which has been converted into a barn, survives.

Jesse was described as “a quiet, unassuming citizen; possessed of a considerable property which he inherited, and which he has honestly improved, by years of untiring industry, and the most strict and persevering business habits, (traits which, by the way, characterize his family...)”¹⁰

Aside from his agricultural endeavors, Jesse served as Randolph County’s Civil Clerk of Court from 1807-1832, succeeding his father. He was active in the Whig Party at the local and state levels, nominating his niece Eliza’s husband, John Motley Morehead, for re-election as governor at the party’s 1842 state convention.¹¹ Previously Jesse had been appointed by Morehead to the state’s Board of Internal Improvement.¹² A member of the Methodist Episcopal church, Jesse was among the founding trustees of the Greensboro Female College (later to become Greensboro College), and served as president of the board in 1842.¹³

Jesse also participated in attempts to bring a railroad to the Randolph County. In 1840, he was appointed commissioner along with Alexander Gray, John Long, Henry Branson Elliott and Jonathan Worth to oversee the selling of stock for the Fayetteville and Western Rail Road Company, an attempt to extend a railroad from Fayetteville to Lincolnton with a spur to Asheboro that ultimately failed.¹⁴ In May 1849, he was among Randolph, Guilford and Davidson County residents named as delegates to a Railroad Convention in Salisbury, having pledged \$2,000 in cash to the cause of routing a railroad through the northwestern Randolph County area.¹⁵

Jesse’s success as a farmer and businessman, and his leisure to engage in political and civic activities, was built on the backs of an enslaved population on his farm that numbered as many as 50 people.¹⁶ Although Randolph County – owing in large part to its Quaker heritage – could claim one of the lowest numbers of enslaved people per capita of any county east of the North Carolina mountains, owners of agricultural and commercial operations relied on enslaved labor in their business and domestic endeavors, and such labor was integral to the local economy.

The magnitude of Jesse Harper’s enterprise was unusual for Randolph County, and bore some of the hallmarks often associated with Southern plantations, including the employment of overseers.¹⁷ As with his neighbor and brother-in-law Alexander Gray – who, despite being the owner of the largest number of enslaved people in Randolph County, believed in gradual emancipation and allowed the Manumission Society to hold meetings in his barn – there is evidence that Jesse may have been an ambivalent enslaver, although he nonetheless profited off the practice for more than 35 years (and as inheritor of his father’s legacy).

In his will, he acted forcefully to ensure the future of certain of his enslaved people, and would have emancipated them had the law allowed it.¹⁸ Because he had been advised that his “trusty and truly faithful and obedient servants” Harry, Kitty and her children Frances, Julia, Sylvia, Sandy and “little” Harry could not be emancipated through his will, he gave them to his nephews Jeduthan H. Lindsay, Jesse H. Lindsay and Robert Lindsay, who were his executors. He stipulated that the executors emancipate Harry, Kitty and the children if possible, and if not, to facilitate their movement to Liberia, which was seen as a potential emigration destination for free people of color and formerly enslaved people, or to a free U.S. state. Failing that, he directed that the executors enable them to live as freely as possible with resources he also bequeathed them in the will, including livestock, tack, furnishings (including to Kitty a feather bed, bedstead and associated furniture), clothing and other possessions. He required his executors to provide them with a \$500 annuity-producing trust, and a portion of his land on which they were to be enabled “use their own time and liberty in as full and ample a measure as may be permitted by the laws

of our state.” If they were able to travel to Liberia or a free state, they were to receive the same money and property, plus proceeds from sale of the land.

Jesse willed to an enslaved man, Zack, \$100, and left to Zack, Julia, Jane, Cinda and Sylvia each a feather bed, bedstead and associated furniture. Other than Kitty, Harry and the children, remainder of the 38 enslaved people were divided up among Jesse’s 14 nieces, nephews and other heirs. Jesse directed that no husband-and-wife couples be separated when this occurred, and it appears from the estate papers that families were not separated.¹⁹ In addition to those already named, the enslaved people were Adam, Ann and her infant child, Caroline, Chainy’s daughter, Dan, Dilly, Dorothea, Charister, Charles, Charry (or Sarry), Cinda’s daughter, Cynthia, Eliza, Ellick, Henrietta, Henry, Henry, Horace, Jack, Louisa, Jerry, Mary, Moses, Pheribe, Polly, Rachel, Turner, Zaza, William, and York.²⁰

Notably, Jesse’s will disinherited any of his nieces and nephews who might object to the arrangements he had made for the enslaved people, re-dividing the shares of the recalcitrant among the approving heirs. If none of the heirs could countenance the terms of the will, he would give half his estate to the American Bible Society and half to the American Colonization Society, which advocated for emigration to Liberia of people of color.²¹

The Harper family graveyard can be found in the woods about a mile from the house. It is surrounded by a low stone wall, specified in Jesse Harper's 1851 will. "It is my desire that my Executors hereinafter named shall cause to be erected around my family burying ground a good and suitable wall the foundation of which shall be of stone, and the remainder of the wall either of stone or brick at their discretion with an iron gate leading therein."²²

By the spring of 1852, the 14 heirs had instructed Jesse’s executors to sell most of his real estate and divide the proceeds among them (see Appendix B, Chain of Title).²³ The main plantation tract, including the homeplace, totaled about 1,485 acres and was sold to Jesse’s brother-in-law Alexander Gray.²⁴ The next year, former state legislator Alfred Gaither Foster (1826-1866) – who was married to Jesse’s niece Letitia Harper Foster (1826-1860) – purchased 908 acres from Gray, including the Harper homeplace.²⁵ The sale appears to have signaled the Fosters relocation from Davidson County to Randolph County, where Foster would become locally prominent.

Foster and Letitia appear to have lived on the homestead until their deaths. Foster, an Iredell County native who grew up in Lexington, N.C., and graduated from the University of North Carolina, was an attorney who read law under Richmond Mumford Pearson (1805-1878), who would become Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court.²⁶ Foster represented Randolph County in the North Carolina House of Commons during the 1856-57 term, and served as a Randolph County delegate to the North Carolina Secession Convention in 1861. An ardent Whig, he advocated for preservation union without a resolution of the question of slavery.²⁷ The 1860 census shows that Foster owned as many as 30 enslaved people.²⁸

Three years after Foster’s death, his executors sold his 908 acres to William P. Wharton.²⁹ Wharton promptly resold the property in three tracts, with 300 acres including the homeplace going to T.S. Welborn.³⁰ In 1875, Welborn and his wife Elizabeth deeded the property to their son W.D. (Winfield Doak) Welborn.³¹ Welborn and his wife Nannie lived there until their deaths well into the mid-20th century. At the time of the National Register nomination in 1979, there was an extant photograph of Welborn in front of the house in 1932, just before his 80th birthday.³² In 1925, the Welborns contracted with W.B. Miller Sr. and his wife Burchie to live on the land and work it, and provide for the Welborns in their old age. In return, the Millers would inherit the property.³³ In 1977, the Millers’ son W.W. Miller and his wife Dora deeded the

house to Howard Boling.³⁴ In 1978, Boling deeded the house and its three-acre lot to the Historic Preservation Fund of North Carolina.³⁵

That same year, the Preservation Fund sold the property to architect and designer John May with a historic preservation covenant on the deed.³⁶ The covenant included a requirement that May restore the house to its original state. He was permitted exceptions for livability such as modern kitchen facilities, restrooms and heating/air conditioning. He completed the restoration, decorated the interior with an abundance of collectible items, and sold the property in 1986 to the current owner.³⁷

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The exterior of the Harper House is that of a vernacular transitional Georgian-Federal period Piedmont North Carolina farmhouse. Its interior woodwork is of unusually elaborate vernacular Federal period character, and it retains much of its original hardware, wood graining, and molding. In its relatively unaltered state, the house characterizes the prosperous ownership of its early years.

The house consists of a two-story main block with a lower two-story wing on the west side (see Appendix C, Floor Plan). The structure is sheathed in weatherboards and rests on a brick foundation with stone footings which have been exposed by soil erosion. The main block of the house is three bays wide by two bays deep constructed on a one room deep side hall plan. The entrance consists of a plain four panel door with sidelights and a transom overlight, and, like the rear entrance, may be a replacement of the original door. The wing is also three bays by two bays with no exterior entrance on the front elevation. The fenestration consists of nine-over-nine sash on the first story and six-over-six sash on the second, except on the east elevation where the windows flanking the chimney are six-over-six, two lights wide by six lights tall. There is an exterior brick chimney on the main block centered on the eastern elevation. An early 20th century chimney on the south (rear) elevation of the main block and associated fireplaces in the interior were removed during May's restoration.³⁸ The roof of the wing is pierced by a central brick chimney. The Harper House has a standing seam tin roof of a low hip design which replaced the original gable roof circa 1830, when the west wing was expanded.³⁹ The present porch on the main block is apparently the third porch to be constructed on the house; a low hip roof is carried on four paneled square posts of which three are not original but of similar design to the remaining original post. The south elevation features three entrances, one a four-panel door leading into the hall of the main block, and the others leading into the rooms of the wing. The original porch on the rear of the main block has been removed. During restoration, May added to the rear of the wing a one-story enclosed space with a low hip roof that took the place of a 20th century shed porch. The space extends to main block entrance area and includes a modern kitchen, but preserves the rear entrances into the house as interior doors.

The rooms of the main block are arranged to the left of the stair hall with a parlor on the first floor and two bedrooms on the second floor. The left wall of the stair hall was apparently moved during the 1830 alterations. At the same time a small room was partitioned off from the north side of the stair-hall on the second floor. On the right side of the stair hall is the entrance to the wing, which is arranged two rooms wide on both floors. The interior of the house features wood floors, plaster walls, wainscots, and wood or plaster ceilings.

The open-string stair rises from the right rear corner of the hall to a landing halfway up the flight from where the stair returns upon itself; in the 1950s a door was built on the landing,

but it has since been removed.⁴⁰ The stair features carved ornamental brackets on the string and slender turned balusters. A turned newel post supports a handrail which ends in a graceful curve. On the wall of the staircase, a chair rail with a cable molding rises at the same level and angle of the stair. An elaborate door with six raised panels leads to a closet under the stair. To the right a doorway into the west wing of the house has a beautifully carved, crosstetted surround. The door which leads to the rear porch is under the stair landing.

The parlor on the first floor of the main block of the house is reached through a door immediately to the left of the stair in the entrance hall. On the east wall of the parlor is an elaborately carved, vernacular mantel boasting slender, stylized Ionic columns which support a molded frieze and mantel shelf. The chimney breast is flanked by tall, thin windows whose woodwork carries a raised panel at the head with lunetted corners. Molded baseboards, chairrail, and cornice accent the parlor.

To the right of the entrance hall in the west wing of the house is a room with a fireplace on the west wall, a staircase in the southeast corner, and a door to the rear porch on the south wall. This room is the original portion of the wing. The mantel carries thin pilasters and a deep, molded frieze. Just under the mantel shelf is a band of intricate carving. The enclosed stair rises along the same wall as the main staircase in the entrance hall, and the risers are carved with bands of cable molding as in the entrance hall. Similar well-executed woodwork as that found in the main block of the Harper House is displayed in this room, attesting to its contemporary relationship with the main block.

To the west of the above described room is a room which was used as an interior kitchen, a part of the additions made circa 1830. A four-panel door with a two-light transom and a beaded surround leads from this room to the rear porch. The fireplace surround is a plain post and lintel design. The finishes in this room suggest that the room remained unfinished until the late nineteenth century.

Three rooms open off of the second floor hall in the main block of the house. The two eastern rooms feature corner fireplaces, flushed sheathed wainscoting, and molded chair rails and baseboards. The fireplaces display deep, flush sheathed friezes with bolection molding and molded mantel shelves. There is an original fireplace in the northeast corner. The room, like the parlor, does not appear to have been divided at any time. In the northeast room there is evidence of woodgraining on the fireplace frieze and on the baseboard. Above the mantel in this room are written the words, "Robert Goodloe Harper, 1846." Robert Goodlow Harper was probably a nephew or great nephew of the builder. The doors leading to both of these rooms have six raised panels which are woodgrained and contain the original hardware. The third room located on the north side of the hall is small and shows evidence of a former staircase on the west wall leading to the attic.

During the 1950s a door was opened from the second floor stair hall to the wing of the house. Formerly, the second floor of the wing could be reached only by way of the stair on the first floor of the wing. Upstairs in the wing is one large room and a smaller room behind it. The door to the large room is accented by the same carved, crosstetted woodwork found in the entrance hall and was probably relocated when the east wall of the entry hall was moved. The door itself is the most elaborate one remaining in the house. It contains six raised panels with lunetted corners, woodgraining, and original hardware.

The only original outbuilding remaining on the property is a one-story board and batten structure with a tin roof which local tradition maintains was once a kitchen where enslaved people worked, but which partially burned in later years. There is some brick nagging in the

building, and the doors and roof framing seem to have been adapted from the original construction. A stone chimney foundation survives at the north end of the building. There were two original entrances to the building, side by side; the doors were fitted with what appeared to be the original strap hinges. In the 2010s, the current homeowner renovated the structure, retaining the board and batten pattern, but replacing the doors with a single sliding door. Because the former kitchen building retains some original design elements and was significant to the house in its historical era, the kitchen is included in this proposed landmark designation. In recent years a dog kennel has been added to the back yard, set back into the woods; this outbuilding is not included in the proposed designation.

The Harper House sits on a mostly-cleared three-acre lot surrounded on three sides by woods. An iron fence designed by former owner and restorer May, with brick pillars at the entryway, surrounds the property. Trees, shrubs and hedges mostly obscure a view of the house from the road. The historic preservation covenant called for May to landscape the yard in keeping with the structure. The front and east sides of the house feature an expansive lawn dotted with trees. Two rock-encircled garden areas extend behind the house, which is shaded by crepe myrtle trees. The west side yard is narrow between the house and a wooded area, with another crepe myrtle rising at the side of the house. A concrete driveway arcs from the road across the front of the house, turning and narrowing along the west side to the front of the former kitchen outbuilding.

¹ The National Register nomination cites criteria B, Person; and C, Design/Construction. The North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, in its statutory comments on this landmark designation proposal, suggests that the site also has the potential for associated archaeological deposits, potentially satisfying criterion D, Information Potential. The NCHPO recommends that the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology be consulted before any ground disturbing activities take place to avoid inadvertent damage to or destruction of such resources.

² The confusion as to the identity of the builder of the Harper House results from the fact that there is no extant document which states unequivocally whether the house was built for Jeduthun Harper or for his son Jesse. There is circumstantial evidence to support both claims. Near the Harper House is a small cemetery which contains the grave of Jeduthun's infant son Samuel who died in 1797. In addition, Jeduthun's will left his "plantation" to Jesse. On the other hand, there is documentary evidence proving that Jesse possessed 748 acres on the Uwharrie River with an 1815 tax valuation of \$2700, a high figure suggesting that there was some improvement on the land such as a house. The most telling evidence that Jesse Harper was the builder is the report of the restoration architects; nail chronology shows that the eastern portion of the house, i.e. the larger block, and the first two bays of the first story of the western block were built circa 1815. This suggests that the house was built for Jesse, for it seems unlikely that Jeduthun Harper would have begun the construction of a large house at the age of 79 as he was in 1815. A final possibility is that Jeduthun built the house as a present to Jesse on a tract of 200 acres that he gave to Jesse in 1813. See Jeduthun Harper Will, N. C. State Archives, Raleigh; Winford Calvin Hinshaw (ed.), *1815 Tax List of Randolph County, N. C.* (Raleigh: WPJ Genealogical Publications, 1957), 8-9, 39; John Kinney and Edward Turberg, "Restoration Report--Harper House," December 8, 1978; Randolph County Deed Book 12/183, Randolph County Register of Deeds, Asheboro, N.C.

³ Year: 1810; Census Place: Randolph, North Carolina; Roll: 38; Page: 167; Image: 00312; Family History Library Film: 0337911. Ancestry.com. *1810 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

⁴ J.A. Blair, *Reminiscences of Randolph County* (Greensboro, N.C.: Reece-Elam Book and Job Printers, 1890), 4; Hugh Talmadge Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *The History of a Southern State, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 208, 218.

⁵ Blair, 2-3.

⁶ John Motley Morehead, III, *The Morehead Family of North Carolina and Virginia* (New York: author, 1921), 100-101.

⁷ Jeduthun Harper Will

⁸ "Real Estate," *The Greensboro Patriot*, 18 October 1851, 4.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "Mr. Harper," *The Greensboro Patriot*, 10 May 1842, 2.

¹¹ "State Politics," *Mecklenburg Jeffersonian* (Charlotte, N.C.), 10 May 1842, 2. Democrats decried Gov. Morehead's appointments to the Board of Internal Improvement, including Jesse Harper's, which tilted the three-member board to the Whigs. Harper was accused of plotting to redirect a planned turnpike by Morehead's factory. The attacks called Harper out as a "rich bachelor" doing his kinsman's bidding: "The Governor tickles the Colonel's [Harper's] elbow, and the Colonel scratches the Governor's head."

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Laws of the State of North Carolina passed by the General Assembly at the Session of 1838-'39* (Raleigh, N.C.: J. Gales and Son, Office the Raleigh Register), 100; and "Greensborough Female College," *The Greensboro Patriot*, 26 April 1842, 4.

¹⁴ *Randolph County 1779-1979* (Asheboro, N.C.: Randolph County Historical Society and Randolph Arts Guild, 1979), 64. For details about this initiative and its failure, see A.R. Newsome, "Simeon Colton's Railroad Report, 1840," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. IX No. 3 (July 1934), 205.

¹⁵ "Railroad Meeting at the Corners of Randolph, Guilford and Davidson," *Weekly Raleigh Register*, 30 May 1849, 3.

¹⁶ Census records show that Jesse Harper owned 40 enslaved people in 1830, 50 in 1840 and 39 in 1850.

¹⁷ See "Notice," *The Greensboro Patriot*, 5 October 1841, 3: William Bishop, who worked for Jesse Harper for five years as an overseer or superintendent of a farm prior to 1841, is running an ad for a similar situation.

¹⁸ *Wills, 1663-1978; Estate Papers, 1781-1928 (Randolph County)*; Author: *North Carolina. Division of Archives and History*; Probate Place: *Randolph, North Carolina*. Ancestry.com. *North Carolina, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1665-1998* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

¹⁹ The enslaved people, their monetary values and their destinations are listed in the estate settlement papers. See "Estates," *Randolph County Genealogical Society Journal* Vol. XXIX No. 3 (Fall 2005), 30.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Both of these organizations were controversial among abolitionists. The American Bible Society, whose mission was to distribute copies of the Bible as widely as possible, declined to distribute copies to enslaved people. Expatriation of people of color to Liberia often was advocated by white people who saw blacks as inferior and wanted them out of the country, and by owners of enslaved people who believed that as free people of color proliferated, they would promote rebellion among enslaved people.

²² Ibid.

²³ Randolph County Deed Book 29/71, 28/472 and "Estates," *Randolph County Genealogical Society Journal*, *ibid.*

²⁴ Randolph County Deed Book 29/71.

²⁵ Randolph County Deed Book 29/313. A contract recorded in the Randolph County Deed Book in 1925 by a subsequent owner of a 300 acre parcel of the larger original plantation refers to it as "known as the Jesse Harper home place and later known as the Alfred G. Foster place."

²⁶ McCormick, John Gilchrest, "Personnel of the Convention of 1861," *James Sprunt Historical Monograph No. 1* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Publications, 1900), 35.

²⁷ See "Whig Meeting in Randolph," *Fayetteville Semi-Weekly Observer*, 16 February 1860, 2. The convention adopted a series of resolution penned by Foster.

²⁸ The National Archives in Washington DC; Washington DC, USA; *Eighth Census of the United States 1860*; Series Number: *M653*; Record Group: *Records of the Bureau of the Census*; Record Group Number: 29. Ancestry.com. *1860 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010.

²⁹ Randolph County Deed Book 35/449.

³⁰ Randolph County Deed Book 38/95.

³¹ Randolph County Deed Book 59/187. The National Register researchers, lacking in 1979 digitized indexes and deeds, came to an erroneous conclusion about how and when W.D. Welborn came into possession of the property.

³² Mrs. Claudia Powe, "The Harper Horneplace and Burial Plot," June 16, 1932. Correspondence owned by Mrs. Robert Holt Edmonds, Greensboro, N.C.

³³ Randolph County Deed Book 310/628.

³⁴ Randolph County Deed Book 273/287; 1099/143.

³⁵ Randolph County Deed Book 1102/859.

³⁶ Randolph County Deed Book 1105/264.

³⁷ Randolph County Deed Book 1182/269.

³⁸ Mr. W. W. Miller, a long-time resident of Trinity Township, maintains that the south chimney was built in 1908.

³⁹ The alterations to the Harper House included replacing the original gable roof with the present low hip roof, adding the present porch on the facade of the main block, moving the east wall of the stair hall further east, and adding a small room on the north side of the second floor stair hall. In addition, the west wing, which originally consisted of one room with an exterior chimney, was altered into its present form of two stories, two rooms wide with an interior, central chimney. Through examination of the structure and through nail chronology dating, the restoration architects have been able to place the date of the alterations to the house at circa 1830. See John Kinney and Edward Turberg, "Restoration Report--Harper House," December 8, 1978.

⁴⁰ The stair probably led to the attic under the original gable roof, which according to the restoration architects was fully habitable and was divided into two rooms with low sidewalls and a board contact ceiling. See Kinney and Turberg, "Restoration Report -- Harper House."

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Appendix A: Site Plan and Designation Boundary



REID	4793	OWNER ADDRESS2	
PIN	6796990508	OWNER CITY	JAMESTOWN
TAXED ACREAGE	3.00	OWNER STATE	NC
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION	R1556;	OWNER ZIP	27282
DEED BOOK & PAGE	001182/00269	LOCATION ADDRESS	4033 RED FOX RD
PLAT BOOK & PAGE		LOCATION ZIP	TRINITY,27370
OWNER	FARMER, LESLIE BENTON	DATA REFRESHED	9/26/2021
OWNER ADDRESS	P O BOX 325		



Disclaimer: This map was compiled from recorded deeds, plats, and other public records and data. Users of this data are hereby notified that the aforementioned public information sources should be consulted for verification of the information. Randolph County, its agents and employees make no warranty as to the accuracy of the information on this map.

Map Scale
1 inch = 83 feet
 9/30/2021

9/30/21, 11:21 AM

Randolph County GIS

Appendix B: Chain of Title

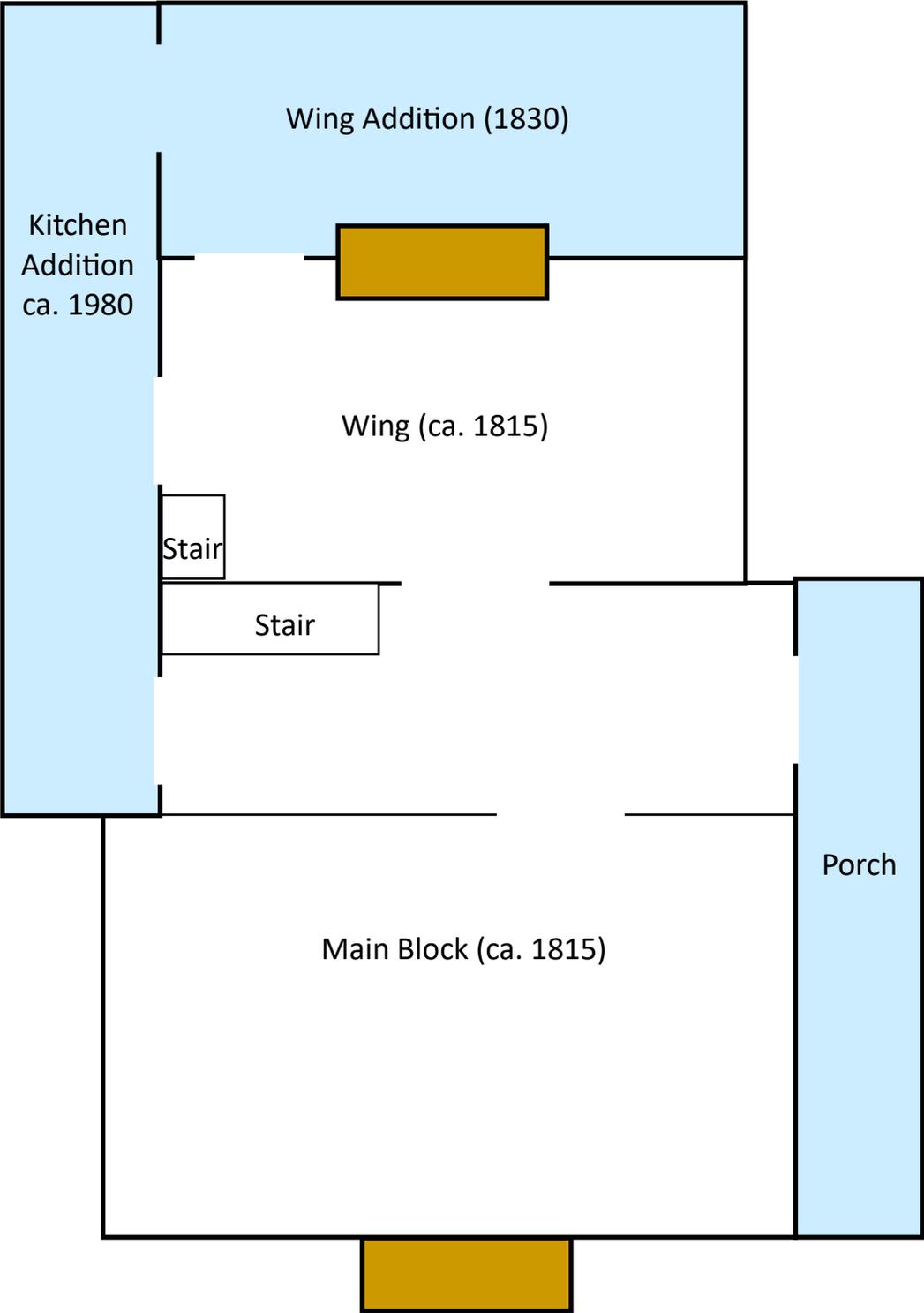
Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House
4033 Red Fox Road, Trinity, NC 27370
Trinity Township, Randolph County NC
Randolph County Tax Parcel ID# 6796990508

- 1986 DB 1182/269 John C. May to Leslie Benton Farmer
- 1978 DB 1105/264 Historic Preservation Fund of North Carolina to John C. May
- 1978 DB 1102/859 Howard Boling to Historic Preservation Fund of North Carolina, 3.017 acres
- 1977 DB 1099/143 W.W. Miller and Dora Miller to Howard Boling
- 1966 DB 920/26 Affidavit by R.G. Albertson for establishing title to lands owned W.W. Miller, sole heir of Burchie Miller
- 1955 Death of Burchie Miller, widow of W.B. Miller, 22 March 1955
- 1954 Death of W.B. Miller, 6 September 1954
- 1950 Death of Nannie Welborn, 12 December, 1950
- 1940 WB 22/96 Will of W.D. Welborn (dated 22 April 1925) probated 22 April 1940. Real estate to pass to W.B. Miller Sr. on death of Nannie Welborn
- 1940 Death of W.D. Welborn, 26 January 1940
- 1925 DB 310/628 Contract between W.D. Welborn, and W.B. Miller and wife Burchie Miller. Millers to reside in tenant house on 300-acre farm of Welborn known as the Jesse Harper homeplace and later as the Alfred G. Foster place; to care for property; to work the land to provide for Welborn and his wife Nannie [Mull] Welborn; and to care for Welborn and his wife if either become indisposed. If Millers remain on farm and perform required duties through the end of W.D. and Nannie Welborn's natural lives, the farm shall go to the Millers in fee simple, and to their heirs in perpetuity.
- 1875 DB 59/187 T.S. Welborn and wife Elizabeth Welborn to W.D. (Winfield Doak) Welborn, 300 acres
- 1870 DB 38/95 William P. Wharton to T.S. Welborn, 300 acres
- 1869 DB 35/449 Estate of Alfred G. Foster to William P. Wharton, 908 acres

- 1853 DB 29/313 Alexander Gray to Alfred G. Foster, 908 acres
- 1852 DB 29/71 Jeduthan H. Lindsay, Jesse H. Lindsay and Robert G. Lindsay, executors of the Jesse Harper estate, to Alexander Gray, 1,494 acres
- 1819 WILL Jeduthan Harper to Jesse Harper “the plantation where I now live at the death of my wife....” [the will is not recorded in Randolph County will books; the original is in the North Carolina Archives, Raleigh, N.C.]

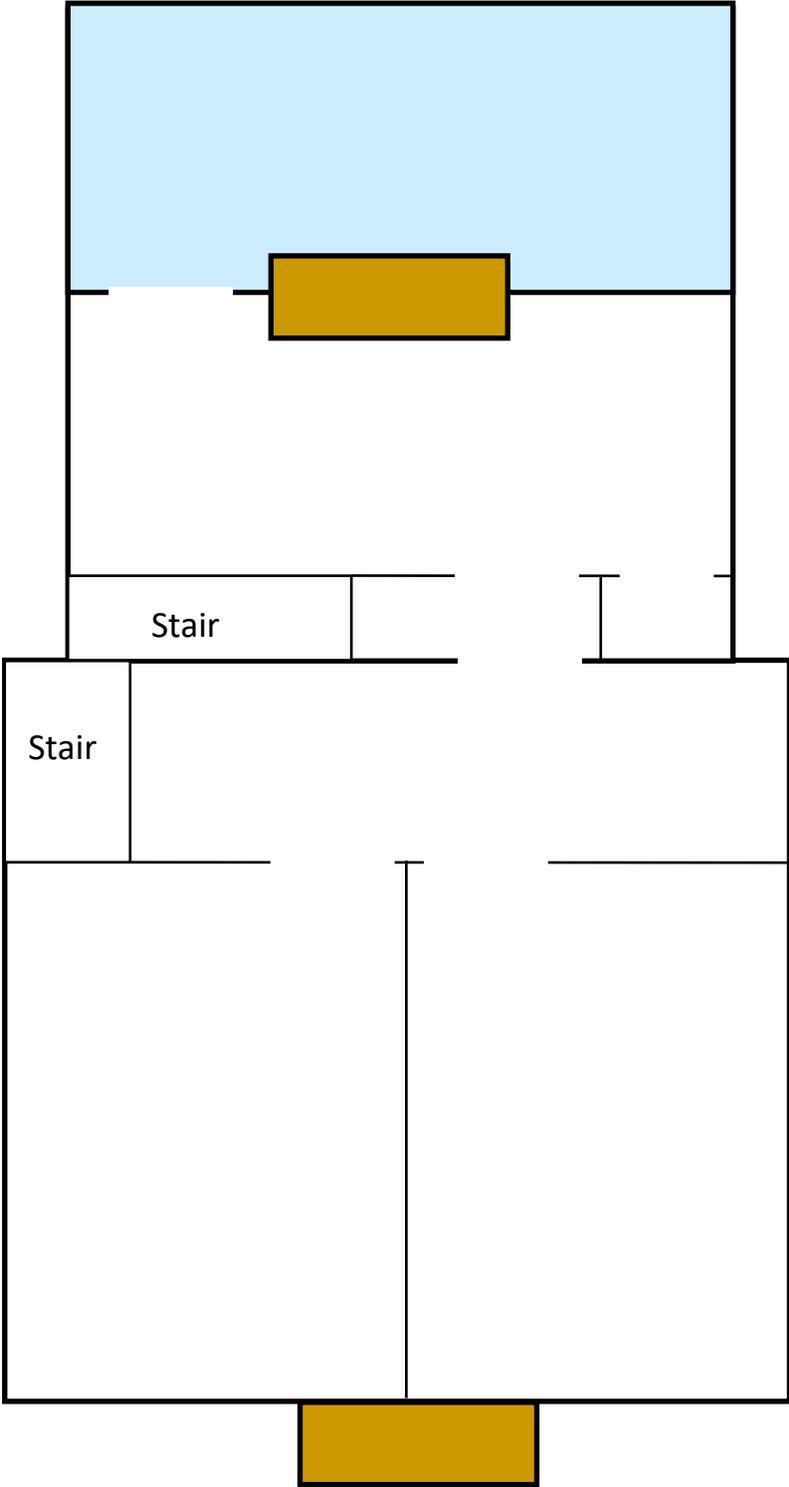
Appendix C: Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House Floor Plan

(first floor — not to scale)



Appendix C: Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House Floor Plan

(second floor — not to scale)



Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House, 1815



North Elevation



Northeast Elevation



East Elevation



Southeast Elevation



South Elevation Detail



South Elevation



West Elevation



Northwest Elevation



Former kitchen structure northeast elevation



Former kitchen structure east elevation; inset — chimney foundation, north elevation



Northeast elevation ca. 1979 prior to restoration



West elevation ca. 1979 prior to restoration. Rear chimney ca. 1908 was removed.



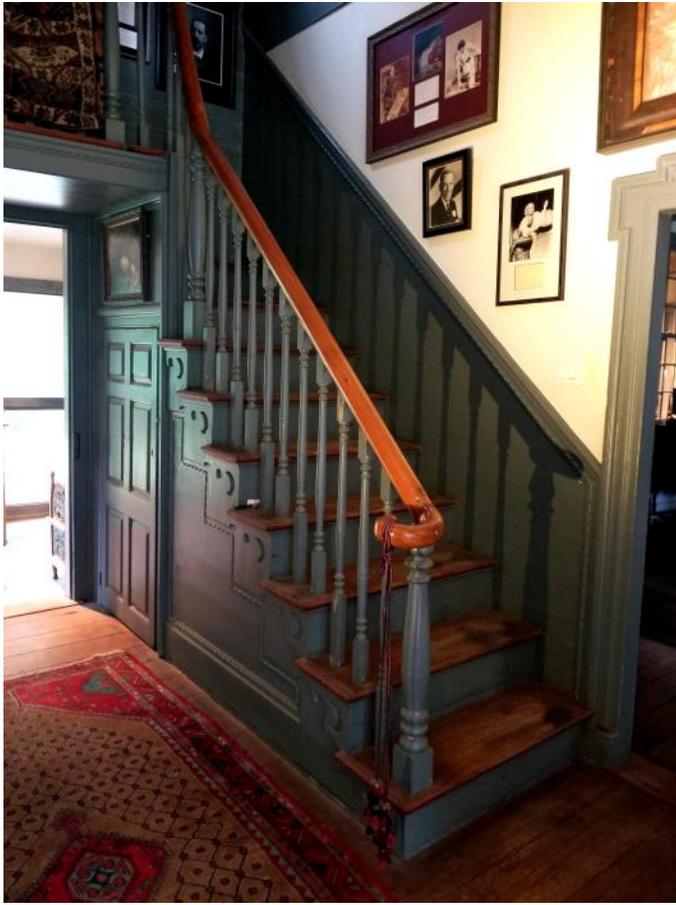
Front door detail



Exterior window detail (south elevation)



Front porch detail



Main block staircase



View through entrance hall from rear door



Modern kitchen enclosure with original rear exterior entrances



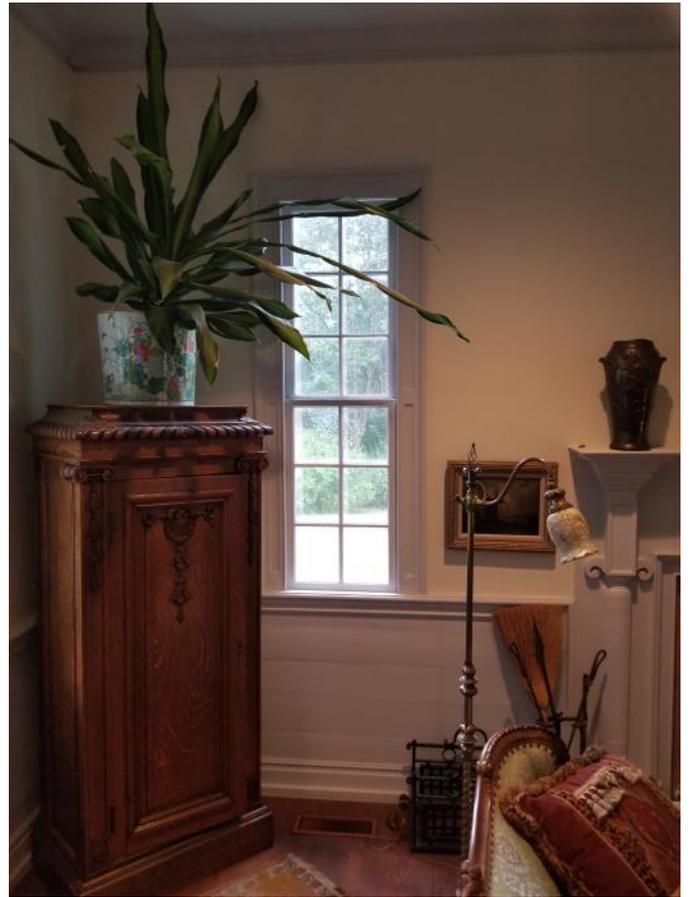
Staircase woodwork detail



Entrance area chair rail and woodwork detail



Main block parlor fireplace



Main block parlor east side window detail



Main block parlor mantel detail



Original wing parlor fireplace



Original wing interior window detail



Original wing mantel detail



Door from original wing to wing addition



Original wing staircase



Staircase detail



Second floor main block landing detail



Second floor View from wing to main block



Second floor wing closet door detail



Second floor main block southeast room detail



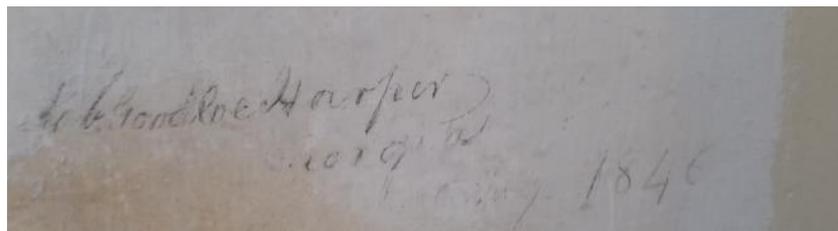
<— Corner fireplace detail



Second floor main block northeast room detail



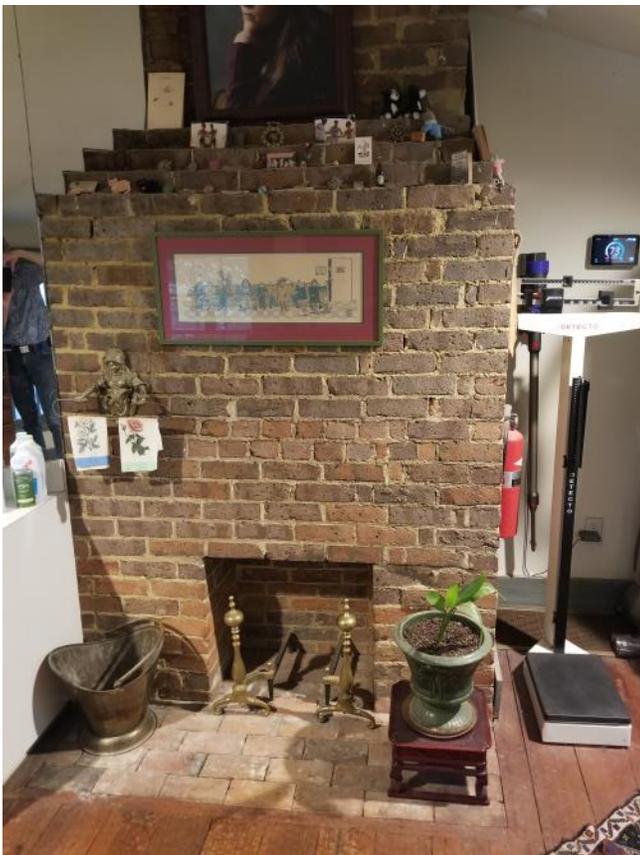
<— Fireplace detail



"Robert Gooldloe Harper, 1846" written over northeast room mantel



Second floor original wing room



Second floor wing addition fireplace detail



Second floor original wing ceiling and window detail



Bone knife found on property



Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission

201 Worth Street, Asheboro, North Carolina 27203 ♦ 336-318-6806 ♦ www.rchlpc.org

Resolution Recommending Local Historic Landmark Designation Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House, ca. 1815

WHEREAS, Chapter 160A, Article 19, Part 3C of the North Carolina General Statutes provides for the designation of local historic landmarks; and

WHEREAS, the Randolph County Board of Commissioners has appointed the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission, having the authority to exercise all powers and duties given it by the Randolph County Historic Preservation Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission has taken into consideration all information contained in the Historic Landmark Designation Application for the Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House, ca. 1815; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office, has been given the opportunity to review the Local Landmark Designation Report and has advised that the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission will have sufficient evidence to prove that the Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House possesses the requisite special character and integrity for designation as a local historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission conducted the required public hearing, having published legal notices with mailings to adjoining property owners; and

WHEREAS, the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission finds that the Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House, ca. 1815, meets the following specific criteria outlined in the Ordinance establishing the Commission: (1) Critical part of the Randolph County's heritage by having value as an example of the cultural, historic and social heritage of Randolph County; (2) Its identification with persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historical, social or other aspect of the development of the Randolph County; (3) Its important architecture as an exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship; (4) Its distinctive theme, representing an architectural, cultural, economic, historic or other theme expressed through a distinctive building.

WHEREAS, the property is more specifically described as follows:

The Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House is located at 4033 Red Fox Road, Trinity, N.C., PIN 6796990508, Trinity Township, Randolph County, N.C.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, this 26th day of January, 2022, that the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission approves the application for local landmark

designation, and recommends to Trinity City Council that the exterior of the Jeduthan/Jesse Harper House, ca. 1815, be designated as a Local Historic Landmark.

Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission

L. McKay Whatley Jr. Chairman



Attest: Sarah M. Pack

Date: _____