

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 Johnston Hall

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 103 Antioch Street N/A not for publication

city or town Elon College N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Alamance code 001 zip code 27244

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 forth 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.)

William S. Price - SHPO 1-25-94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Johnston Hall
Name of Property

Alamance County
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 the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	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: institutional housing
Education: library
Other: orphanage administrative offices

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: education-related
Other: Orphanage offices

Social: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
walls brick

roof asphalt shingles

other concrete
vinyl

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.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
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.
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:

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Period of Significance

1925

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wood, John H., contractor

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): N/A

- 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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Elon Homes for Children,
Elon College, NC

Johnston Hall
Name of Property

Alamance Co., NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

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3	9	95	9	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

2

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4

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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 Patricia S. Dickinson

organization consultant date November 7, 1993

street & number 4606 Hunt Road telephone (919) 732-5439

city or town Hillsborough state NC zip code 27278

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 Board of Trustees c/o Michael G. White, Vice President, Development

Elon Homes for Children, Inc.
street & number 103 Antioch Street telephone (919) 584-4026

city or town Elon College state NC zip code 27244

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 listings. 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 20503.

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Johnston Hall
Elon College, NC

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Johnston Hall, constructed in 1925, is a substantial, two-story red brick Classical Revival style building. It is the sole surviving building associated with the second building campaign of the Christian Orphanage (no original buildings survive) established in 1907, and is the historical centerpiece of the Elon Homes for Children. Johnston Hall was originally used by the Christian Orphanage for administrative offices, as a library, and for kitchen/dining room purposes, with childrens' bedrooms on the second floor. The building is used today for administrative offices, as a reception center, and for staff training classes.

Johnston Hall is located on the east side of Antioch Avenue near its intersection with Trollinger Avenue in a residential area of the small Alamance County town of Elon College, which adjoins Burlington, North Carolina. Trollinger Avenue parallels the south side of the railroad tracks which bisect Elon College, with Lebanon Avenue paralleling the north side of the tracks. These streets are the principal residential thoroughfares in the town. They were developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, primarily for faculty housing in conjunction with the development of the Elon College campus (NR) which lies along the north side of Lebanon Avenue.

Johnston Hall is located at the north end of the twenty-five acres of the campus where buildings are clustered (another one hundred acres of the property are primarily in mown fields). The Elon Homes for Children campus forms an approximate oval with some buildings fronting along the Antioch Avenue and others facing a grassy center commons area (see attached site map). The campus is shaded by large oaks, magnolias, crepe myrtles and assorted evergreen trees. Antioch Avenue and the campus occupy a north-south ridge, or "eminence" as an early description termed it. Mown fields, dotted with rolled hay bales, slope away at the rear of the buildings on the east side of the campus, to a sizable pond at the south end, to O'Kelly Avenue at west, and to the railroad tracks at the north end. The Elon Homes campus overlooks Elon College (NR), located a short distance northwest of the tracks. Other buildings on the Elon Homes for Children campus include a chapel built in 1956, six residential cottages built between 1961 and 1975, a gymnasium/swimming pool complex built in 1961, and an administration building built in 1975. The campus is visually unified by the use of red brick for all of the buildings and attractive green signage with white lettering. A flourishing rose garden, located across Antioch Avenue, west of Johnston

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Hall, presents a gracious entrance to the serene campus.

Forming an overall H-shaped plan, Johnston Hall is composed of a major hip-roofed broad west block with a narrower gable-roofed rear wing which is attached at the second story to a transverse hip-roofed traditional North Carolina "sleeping porch," used as a dormitory from the first hot nights of Spring until the first cool Fall nights. The clapboard-clad sleeping porch is perched atop tall square brick piers, and the ends of the porch project beyond the sides of the H's center section.

Except for the sleeping porch, the entire structure is stucco-trimmed brick, and is two stories tall on a raised basement. The main block displays a symmetrical composition that is five-bays wide and three-bays deep. Its low hip asphalt shingle-clad roof displays a small central hip roof dormer and wide overhanging eaves. The red brick walls have full-height brick pilasters with corbeled brick capitals which are located between the window bays on the main and side elevations. The building is lit by paired nine-over-one sash windows with keystones and splayed arches rendered in white stucco. The window sills are stone and the window surrounds are wood. The sleeping porch, now used for office space, features a band of nine-over-one windows above horizontal clapboards. A less than full-width one-story flat-roof porch carried by brick piers flanked by stone-capped half-piers and crowned with a solid-panel balustrade, dominates the main elevation. The porch provides both a distinctive entrance to the building and the inviting, homey touch of a spacious porch for sitting. The balustrade is ornamented with applied wooden downward-pointing arrows. The main entry is approached by central one bay-wide concrete steps. A twelve-light transom is located above the main entrance that contains a wood-paneled door with a single large light in its upper half.

Exterior changes to Johnston Hall have been minimal; they are largely confined to the rear of the building with the application of narrow-lap vinyl siding to the clapboards of the sleeping porch and to the undersides of the wide roof eaves. The vinyl is not visible from the street, and does not detract from the historic appearance of Johnston Hall.

On the interior of the 11,000 square foot building, the west-facing main block is filled with a large open parlor/reception room flanked at the north end by an office, an adjoining copier/file room and a restroom, and at the south by a conference room and restroom. The focal point of the parlor is a brick fireplace that is located on the east wall. This

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fireplace is distinguished by an arched firebox surround formed by a soldier course of brick. Tiers of corbeled brick project slightly to carry a plain wood mantel shelf. A portrait of Charles D. Johnston, Orphanage Superintendent from 1916-1949, occupies a prominent place of honor above the fireplace. Johnston Hall is currently undergoing a partial restoration. The maple flooring, covered with carpet for many years, has been exposed and refinished.

Pairs of French doors on either side of the fireplace, give access to another large open room (originally used as a dining room), now filled with rows of chairs and used as an auditorium/staff training room. This room is also centered by a fireplace, a duplicate of the parlor's. A small office, used as the "alumni center" is located in the north corner of the room, and a kitchen and pantry are located in the south end of the room. The first story walls are plaster. A simple molding is used to accent the tall oak baseboards, door and window trim. The trim is original throughout the first floor of the main block, as are the doors and door trim. French doors located at the south end of the parlor give access to the conference room and fill it with light.

An enclosed stairwell to the second floor is located on the north wall of the training room/auditorium; the stairs have "institutional" metal treads and railings. The unrestored second floor of the main block has been divided into offices around the perimeter; here the doors are modern, varnished hollow-core types surrounded by simple board trim. A large, sheetrock and glass-walled office occupies the center of the main block.

The former sleeping porch is used for offices also and includes a large, sunny nurse's office and a small examining room. Originally, the second floor was filled with bedrooms, each shared by two children; girls' rooms were on the south end, with the boys' rooms at the west. Bathrooms were located on the center rear wall of the main block. They do not survive, but new restrooms have been constructed elsewhere on this floor.

The original fabric of Johnston Hall survives virtually intact on the exterior and on the interior of the first floor. The interior of the second story has been altered to accommodate the various offices needed to operate a modern residential child care facility. While the bedrooms formerly located on this floor are now found in the residential cottages located on the campus grounds, the contemporary office use of the second story does not unduly detract from the historic integrity of Johnston Hall. Instead, its present busy office use helps to maintain

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the ongoing vitality, and institutionl centrality of the building. From the exterior, there appear to have been no changes to the second story. The present offices, particularly those found in the former sleeping porch, enjoy the ample light and ventialetion provided by the original large windows.

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SUMMARY:

Johnston Hall is a handsome, nearly intact two-story red brick Classical Revival style building built in 1925 on the campus of the former Christian Orphanage (now Elon Homes for Children), in Elon College, North Carolina. Part of a regionally significant orphanage that was founded in 1906, Johnston Hall is locally significant as a manifestation of the widespread concern for the well-being of orphaned children exhibited by various religious institutions in the state during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is also historically significant as the sole surviving structure associated with the Christian Orphanage's second building campaign undertaken during the 1920s when the original 1906 Orphanage building was replaced. Until World War II, Johnston Hall was the center of a complex of buildings surrounded by a thriving farm on which the residents of the orphanage raised garden crops and livestock for consumption and sale. Today the building is the historical anchor of the campus of Elon Homes for Children which continues the Orphanage's mission of providing residential care for orphaned, neglected or abused children.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL HISTORY CONTEXT:

The following information is drawn from a comprehensive history written in 1987 by Alan Keith-Lucas entitled Building for the Future with Pride in Our Past: A History of Elon Homes for Children; from interviews conducted in October, 1993 with Lynn Dorsett and Clyde Rudd, Sr. who lived in Johnston Hall from 1924-1938 and 1926-1937 respectively; and from an interview with Nancy Brooks who lived in Johnston Hall from 1943-1957. Each of these former wards of the Orphanage feels a deep and warm attachment to the institution and maintain close ties to it today. Mr. Rudd serves on the Board of Directors of the Elon Homes for Children and Mrs. Brooks works at Johnston Hall as a secretary/receptionist. Michael G. White, the Homes' Development Director was instrumental in providing historical background for the years since the publication of Mr. Keith-Lucas' well-researched book to the present, as well as in facilitating the preparation of this National Register nomination.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century efforts began

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in North Carolina to plan for the care of children who were orphaned as a result of the social and economic conditions that followed the Civil War. These conditions included the continuing disruption of the economy, poverty, and poor diet with its attendant diseases such as pelagra, tuberculosis and typhoid fever which cost the lives of many parents. As early as 1868, the North Carolina Constitution provided that "there shall be, as soon as practicable, measures devised by the state for the establishment of one or more orphan houses, where destitute orphans may be cared for, educated and taught some business or trade."¹

Although North Carolina's Masons established the first orphanage in the state in Oxford in 1872, North Carolina's churches soon followed. Church sponsored orphanages were proposed by the Baptists and Presbyterians in 1884 and 1889 respectively. In 1892, the Southern Christian (Church of Christ) Convention, meeting in Elon College, urged establishment of an orphanage, but fund raising was slow and sporadic and nearly fifteen years would pass before the orphanage became a reality. A committee of Christian Church members looked for a farm of at least of 100 acres on which to build an "industrial school" type of orphanage with "dwelling, a school, shops, barns, etcetera" and which would "be a place to rear children to manhood and womanhood, instilled with the principles of the church."² By 1905 a 112-acre site, described as an "eminence" in full view of the Elon College Campus, was assembled and construction commenced on the main building of The Christian Orphanage (name adopted in 1906). Documentary photographs reveal that it was a rather formidable two-story brick building, 112 feet in length and containing sixteen bedrooms, a chapel, living room, office area and kitchen and pantries. A Mr. Kirkpatrick was the contractor and mason for the Christian Orphanage. His work was not entirely satisfactory, because some of the mortar failed by freezing and crumbling. The building had no running water or electricity and heat was provided by the many fireplaces. Running water and electricity were installed in 1910.

The institutional character of this original orphanage building erected by the Christian Church contrasted with some other orphanages constructed in the state during this era. For instance, the main building of Eliada Home built in Asheville in 1907 (destroyed) with a consciously domestic theme, and looked like an enlarged version of the Colonial Revival and Foursquare residences of the period. Later buildings on the Eliada campus (NR, 1993) included other domestic styles of their periods

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including Craftsman, and rustic log construction for the campus guest cottages. The cottages on the campus of the Oxford Orphanage also display more domestic-scaled Colonial Revival features.

The Reverend John L. Foster, an early booster of the Orphanage idea, was named the first Superintendent of the Christian Orphanage and he served in that capacity from the official opening date of January 1, 1907 until 1912. By 1908 twenty-five children, ranging in age from five years to fourteen years, were residents of the orphanage. Most of the children had lost both parents and others were "half-orphans" (usually fatherless). Most orphanages would not accept children with living fathers at that time. "It was the father's duty to support his children, with or without the help of his wife, and to relieve him of this responsibility was considered immoral, whereas a widow was not expected to be a breadwinner."³ The Christian Orphanage did follow an unusual policy: rather than providing everything for the child (as was customary), the Christian Orphanage entered into a contract with the child's guardian or nearest relative which stipulated a payment of three to five dollars per month until "the child is old enough to work." The children were not placed for adoption, in foster homes or as apprentices, since the Board believed they were better off in an institution.

The Orphanage's finances were precarious in the first decade of the twentieth century, and the continued existence of the institution was in some doubt. Superintendent Foster resigned in 1912 due to poor health and during the next four years the Orphanage had three different superintendents, a situation which perhaps contributed to the perception that the children's "morale was very low."⁴

In 1916 the Board of Trustees named its chairman, Charles D. Johnston, to the Superintendent's position. As they hoped, he was able to get the institution back on its feet. At the time of his appointment, Johnston was Register of Deeds for Alamance County and a trustee and the treasurer of Elon College. The Board paid him \$1,500 in 1916, or more than twice what his predecessor had been paid, and gave him steady raises until by 1925 when he was paid \$3,600 of which he returned \$600 to the Orphanage.

His salary was money well earned. Johnston was "a born fund raiser," with a statewide network of friends.⁵ In four years he had changed a debt of \$7,000 into more than \$4,000 in excess revenues. More importantly, he inspired in the orphans

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a feeling of confident self-reliance and sense of being valued. The children were expected to work hard, not only in the village schools they attended, but at the Orphanage. The girls generally worked in the kitchen/dining room and in the laundry and sewing room where they made workshirts and overalls for the boys. The boys worked on the Orphanage farm growing vegetables and grains and tending the farm's hogs and cattle. "Some years they produced 10,000 pounds of pork, although the standard diet of that time did not appear to include a lot of meat. In the summer the children subsisted largely on biscuits and gravy for breakfast and supper, with vegetables for lunch, and in winter the typical meal was pinto beans, sweet potatoes and cornbread." Many years after they had lived there, a man and woman re-met at Johnston Hall. She greeted him with "I used to make your clothes and your room" and he replied, "I used to milk your cows."

The years 1917-1919 were particularly trying because there was first, a nationwide coal shortage during an unusually cold winter and then, the Spanish influenza pandemic. Everyone at the Orphanage, except Johnston and one boy, caught the flu but only one child died from it. There were also difficulties involving the childrens' education. Originally, it was intended that the children would attend public schools in Elon College, but the schools were overcrowded and it was not until 1909 that this was possible. They were excluded again in 1916 because the village schools were then overcrowded. They were educated at the Orphanage until 1921, when the public schools were taken over by the County and the children returned to the town's classrooms.

When Johnston assumed the Superintendency in 1916, there were forty-three children in residence and their numbers increased steadily until 1920 when the population reached sixty, and in 1924 when it reached 100. The sixty children in 1920 were still housed in the one building, but the Board decided that year to build a second building, largely to house younger children. It was called the "Baby Cottage" although none of the children was an infant. Documentary photographs reveal that the building, dedicated in 1921, was quite similar to Johnston Hall which would be built four years later. Both were smaller, on a more domestic scale, than the original Main building. The Baby Cottage was a two-story red brick Classical Revival structure with a tall raised basement, a low hip roof broken by wall dormers, full-height corbeled pilasters at the corners, and a projecting one-story flat-roofed porch whose

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cornice was ornamented with applied wooden arrows, and paired windows with splayed arches with keystones.

The Baby Cottage relieved some of the over-crowded conditions, but when the population reached 100 in 1924 (with seventy-five additional applications pending) the Board planned a third building. There were at that time twenty-one boys and twenty-six girls in the old building and twenty-four girls and thirty-two boys in the "Baby Cottage." (Most orphanages of the time divided the sexes, but here they preferred to divide the children by age.) At that time a total of 104 children were in residence and seventy-two of them, or more than two thirds were between the ages of five and twelve. The nature of the population was changing: "in the early days of the Orphanage, roughly one half of the children admitted were full orphans, but of the first twenty five children admitted in 1925, no one had lost both parents."

The new \$30,000 building with indoor plumbing was begun in 1925 by John H. Wood of Burlington who was the low bidder. It was named Johnston Hall in 1927 and was dedicated in 1928. A pall was cast over the ceremony when a fatal heart attack felled the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. W.K. Holt.

The institution was in sound financial shape through the 1920s. The Orphanage's forest provided the timber for a new barn built 1921 that burned in 1929 and was almost immediately rebuilt. A car was purchased for Mr. Johnston in 1922. A concrete swimming pool was added to the campus in 1923. The Orphanage, like all others in North and South Carolina, began to receive aid each year from the endowment that James B. Duke established in 1926. Duke's brother, Benjamin N. Duke, left \$15,000 to the Orphanage that same year.

The Depression years of the early 1930s were not as difficult on the Orphanage as might have been expected. Certainly income fell--from approximately \$22,000 to about \$17,000 per year--but not nearly as large a drop as many similar institutions saw. By 1936 income had largely recovered. "There is no record in the [Board] minutes of salaries being cut, of bills left unpaid, of buildings closed for lack of funds or of funds lost through bank failures. For this the Orphanage had to thank Mr. Johnston's business acumen and the productivity of its farm, which was producing from \$7,000 to \$8,000 worth of crops each year."

Clyde Rudd Sr. and Lynn Dorsett were roommates at the Orphanage from the mid-1920s to the late 1930s. They describe it as "the only home many of us had" and remember calling its

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Superintendent, "Uncle Charlie" (Johnston). They remember that "so many things were given to the Orphanage, including food and clothing." Much of the plentiful food was raised on the grounds including beans, sweet and Irish potatoes and corn. There were smoke houses and potato houses on the grounds and the Orphanage girls kept busy processing and canning peaches donated to, and used by, the institution.

The Orphanage children attended school classes in the "old building" until there was room for them in the County's schools. For a time elementary and high school classes were held in one of the buildings on the Elon College campus. This was close enough that the children could walk home for lunch and then return for afternoon classes. The Orphanage library/study hall was located in Johnston Hall in the present conference room. Mssrs. Dorsett and Rudd recalled that then bookcases lined the walls, and the local "newspaper was on the table every morning" The newspaper was a source for their "current events" reports for school. They also read Dorothy Dix's column--"the Ann Landers of her day"--as a source for sex education. The Orphanage also subscribed to various magazines, but the a more popular series was probably the collection of Horatio Alger, Tom Swift, and Rover Boys books. The "center room" (recently restored as the main parlor) with its well-waxed wooden floors, was usually just a "pass through" that was used only for visitors or for occasional gatherings around the piano for singing. Mr. Johnston's office as well as that of his secretary were in an adjacent office at the north end of the large parlor.

There were many chores on the Orphanage farm to be done, but the children were also given time and encouragement to earn a little personal pocket money. Several former residents remember that their regimented schedules and hard schedules and hard work was tempered by humor and camaraderie. Mr. Dorsett remembers being assigned to work in the dairy where the fifteen cows he tended knew which milking stanchion was theirs and they learned to operate a type of "cow drinking fountain" by stepping on a lever. He also delivered milk to various households in town. He remembers one house where, from the porch, he kept hearing an order to "leave more milk," a request he honored until he learned that he was hearing a pet parrot mimicing the homeowner. It was also Mr. Dorsett's morning responsibility to build a fire for the breakfast cook before he reported to the dairy so that she could sleep a half hour later. Mr. Rudd delivered groceries for a local market and he and Mr. Dorsett gathered acorns--a favorite swine treat--which fell from the

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many campus oaks and sold them to the swine manager. They also split kindling for various village residents and laid kitchen and bedroom fires so that the homeowners could arise to a warm house. With permission, the children could leave the campus and when hitchhiking "you could get picked up easily if they knew you were from the Orphanage."

Dorsett and Rudd remembered that the children created their own recreation. Since Orphanage farm tasks interfered with after school football practice, it made the town high school's efforts to field a team very difficult, but basketball could be played at night after the chores were finished. For many of the children who had come from secluded farms, this was their first exposure to organized team sports. They played baseball "in the bottom" below one of the buildings, and they dug a saw-dust pit near the north end of Johnston Hall and rigged a pole set on nails so that they could practice pole vaulting and high jumping. Mr. Rudd recalled marking a one-mile long course along the railroad tracks for foot races. There was good sledding on the gentle slope behind Johnston Hall. A time-honored "snipe hunt" was often organized for "the new guys." And there was just general "horsing around": once Mr. Rudd climbed up on a boys' bathroom sink and¹² inadvertently broke it, flooding the parlor directly below.

Through bequests, the Orphanage acquired some adjoining¹³ and nearby properties so that by 1940 it owned 250 acres. The farm operation continued to be an important part of the Orphanage, both as a work and training place for the children and a continuing source of solid income: by 1938 the dairy was producing 7,200 gallons of milk a month, enough to provide for the Orphanage kitchen's needs, sell some to private customers¹⁴ and the supply all that Elon College needed.

There is apparently no record of the number of Orphanage children who served in the Armed Forces during the World War II, but the Board minutes during those years noted that many of the older boys did enlist or take war-related job until they were old enough to enlist. Mr. Johnston did complain that it was hard to find housemothers or matrons because many potential employees went elsewhere when the Orphanage could not compete with the high war-time wages. The War also postponed any plans the Orphanage had for major new buildings including a campus chapel.¹⁵ Some smaller structures were built, however, including a new silo, modern milk house and a barn.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the number of orphans declined nationwide due to improved public health and medical advances,

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and due to the influence of social scientists who were emphasizing the importance of close parent-child relationships which resulted in fewer parentless children being placed in institutions. "During this time, one quarter of all orphanages in the country closed and most of those which did not, developed foster family home programs for younger children. Orphanages defined their programs as caring for the 'orphans of the living,' children who were neglected or abused in their own homes."¹⁶

A new era began at the Orphanage in 1943 when the Board agreed to accept ten children whose parents were living. By 1946 twenty per cent of the children at the Orphanage had both parents living. The age of the Orphanage's residents decreased also. "Of the first twenty-five children admitted in 1944 five were under six years of age and only three teen-agers."¹⁷

Nancy Brooks, who now works as a receptionist/secretary in Johnston Hall, was a resident at the Orphanage from 1943-1957. She remembers that the boys lived in Johnston Hall then and while they were at work in the farm fields, the girls made their beds and did the laundry on a wringer-type washing machines in the outer room of the present kitchen. She remembers a swimming pool which located behind the present site of the gymnasium. Other recreation included ice skating on the frozen pond at the south end of the campus and a television which was located in the dining¹⁸ room of Johnston Hall where staff training classes are now held. Documentary photographs from the early 1950s record cows grazing in the field with a barn in the background and several other small gable front white storage buildings with tin roofs, exposed rafter ends, and dark contrasting corner boards (construction dates unknown). None of these agricultural outbuildings survive today.

Charles D. Johnston died on February 27, 1949. He is considered one of the great superintendents of the institution. He took over during a time of crisis and gave it a lasting stability. In the five month interim before Dr. John G. Truitt was appointed Superintendent, Board chairman Vitus R. Holt acted as Superintendent. He was continuing the record of leadership the Holt family had provided the Orphanage throughout its history. Dr. Truitt, a successful minister and noted preacher, served until 1960, presiding over the process of transforming the Orphanage into a Children's Home.

A 1952 promotional/fund raising brochure for the Orphanage noted that the construction of a chapel was "about to be realized." A donation from the children of William Kirkpatrick and Maud May Holt funded the chapel's construction in 1956.

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The brochure went on to say that the Orphanage "urgently needs a dining room, kitchen and coldstorage building" because the children and matrons crowd our small dining room, over-crowd our kitchen, and lessen the possibilities for receiving new children."¹⁹

In 1956 a new charter was adopted that changed the institution's name to the Congregational Christian Home for Children. The name was changed again in 1964 to the present Elon Homes for Children. The new Charter authorized the Home to care for "orphans, half-orphans and children from broken or unfit homes." A Survey Committee of the Southern Convention of the Congregational Church also suggested that the Home "make full use of social workers, both general and psychiatric, provided by Alamance County, other counties and/or child welfare agencies." The emphasis of the Committee's report was on adoption but this emphasis was not adapted by the home then. "If the Home had adopted this policy it would have foreshadowed by many years the concepts of placement plans, case reviews, and permanency planning which developed in the field as a whole in the 1970s and 80's, and might have prevented many children from becoming institutionalized."²⁰ The concept of working with the children's parents to help them re-establish a home for their children was still in the future. The Home was moving away from the "orphanage concept" with as many children as possible under the care of one woman. By the end of Dr. Truitt's superintendency, two cottages (which would house about twelve children apiece), were being planned.

By 1955 the dairy operation had been discontinued because it was no longer profitable. By 1958 the Home's farming operations were confined to supplying grain, hay and vegetables for Home use alone. In 1960 Dr. Truitt retired and he was succeeded by the Reverend Walstein Snyder who served another long tenure, until he was succeeded in 1988 by the present President/Chief Executive Officer, Richard P. Walker. During Dr. Snyder's tenure, the Home began the process of becoming a Children's Home, adopting the goal of returning the child to his own family as soon as possible, emphasizing to individualization of children, and moving²¹ towards becoming a treatment center for disturbed children.

Several new residential cottages were completed during the 1960s and 1970s. Two were completed in 1961 and Johnston Hall was remodeled that year; a new swimming pool was constructed also. In 1965 the Home opened the Vitus R. Holt Day Care Center which was housed in Johnston Hall until 1976, when a new brick

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building was constructed for the day care center directly behind Wisseman Cottage, fronting on O'Kelly Street. The old Main building and the Baby Cottage were demolished in 1967. A third residential cottage was completed in 1970. A generous bequest enabled the Home to build two more new residential buildings, Harden and McEwen cottages, in 1971; McFarland Activities Building was also constructed that year. In 1971 plans were made to build a new administration building just north of Johnston Hall; it was named in honor of Dr. Truitt and dedicated in 1975.²²

Children who came to the campus in early 1980s did so for various reasons, "some because they were no longer acceptable in foster homes or were exhibiting behavior for which a 'more structured environment'--a common phrase at that time--was thought desirable. . . .Children's Homes were in danger of becoming little more than placements of last resort for children whom public agencies were finding too difficult to handle."²³ By 1983 the Home was phasing out its foster home program after more than twenty years. The Elon Homes for Children's basic program is called Permanency Planning, a time-limited program (a year is usual) in which "intensive work with the parents and the child is directed towards determining whether the parents want the child and can make the necessary adjustment to take him or her back, whether they cannot do this but are able to be constructive part-time parents, with the Home providing the actual care, or whether it would be wise for the child to find permanency with some other family or in some other way."²⁴

In 1985 the Homes expanded by merging with a boys home in Pineville, North Carolina near Charlotte. This second campus was named the Fred Kennedy Campus of Elon Homes for Children. At that time, the Elon College campus was renamed the Snyder Campus. The 123-acre Kennedy campus has four cottages housing thirty-five children ages eight to eighteen years old.

Today the Elon Homes for Children is a multi-service agency. It provides residential group care for over over 250 children annually on two campuses. The Crisis Care and Diagnostic Evaluation Center located on Snyder Campus is the first facility of its kind in the state. The Snyder Campus offers family-centered residential services: assisting families in distress, helping them plan their futures and become reunited families; youth-centered residential services, providing a structure for children to grow in without reunification being the principle objective; and preparation for adult living, assisting young adults (ages sixteen to twenty-one) with the skills to live independently.

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Footnotes

- 1 The 1868 North Carolina State Constitution as quoted in Alan Keith-Lucas, Building for the Future with Pride in Our Past: A History of Elon Homes for Children (privately printed by Elon Homes for Children, 1987), p. 1. Hereinafter cited as Keith-Lucas.
- 2 Keith-Lucas, pp. 3-4.
- 3 Keith-Lucas, p. 7.
- 4 Keith-Lucas, p. 13.
- 5 Personal interview with Michael G. White, September 16, 1993; also see Keith-Lucas, p. 19.
- 6 Keith-Lucas, p. 20.
- 7 Personal interview with Clyde Rudd, Sr., September 23, 1993.
- 8 Keith-Lucas, p. 23.
- 9 Keith-Lucas, p. 23.
- 10 Keith-Lucas, p. 24.
- 11 Keith-Lucas, p. 27.
- 12 Personal interviews with Clyde Rudd, Sr. and Lynn Dorsett, September 23, 1993.
- 13 Keith-Lucas, p. 27.
- 14 Keith-Lucas, p. 29.
- 15 Keith-Lucas, pp. 27-28.
- 16 Keith-Lucas, p. 30.
- 17 Keith-Lucas, p. 31.
- 18 Personal interview with Nancy Brooks, September 23, 1993.

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19 "Let Me Tell You About The Christian Orphanage, Inc.,"
1952. Pamphlet in the files of the Elon Homes for Children,
Elon College, North Carolina.

20 Keith-Lucas, p. 38.

21 Keith-Lucas, pp. 49-51.

22 Keith-Lucas, p. 67.

23 Keith-Lucas, p. 81.

24 Keith-Lucas, p. 82.

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Author's interviews with Clyde Rudd, Jr., Lynn Dorsett, Nancy Brooks, and Michael G. White.

Keith-Lucas, Alan. Building for the Future with Pride in Our Past: A History of Elon Homes for Children. Privately printed by Elon Homes for Children, Elon College, North Carolina, 1987.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property includes a portion of Lot 6 as indicated by a dotted line on the accompanying Alamance County Tax Map 222, Block 871. A measured line, forming a rectangle, about fifty feet from the wall of Johnston Hall encompasses the nominated property, but excludes the adjacent parking lot, and other buildings on the campus of the Elon Homes for Children which date from the mid-1950s to the 1970s.

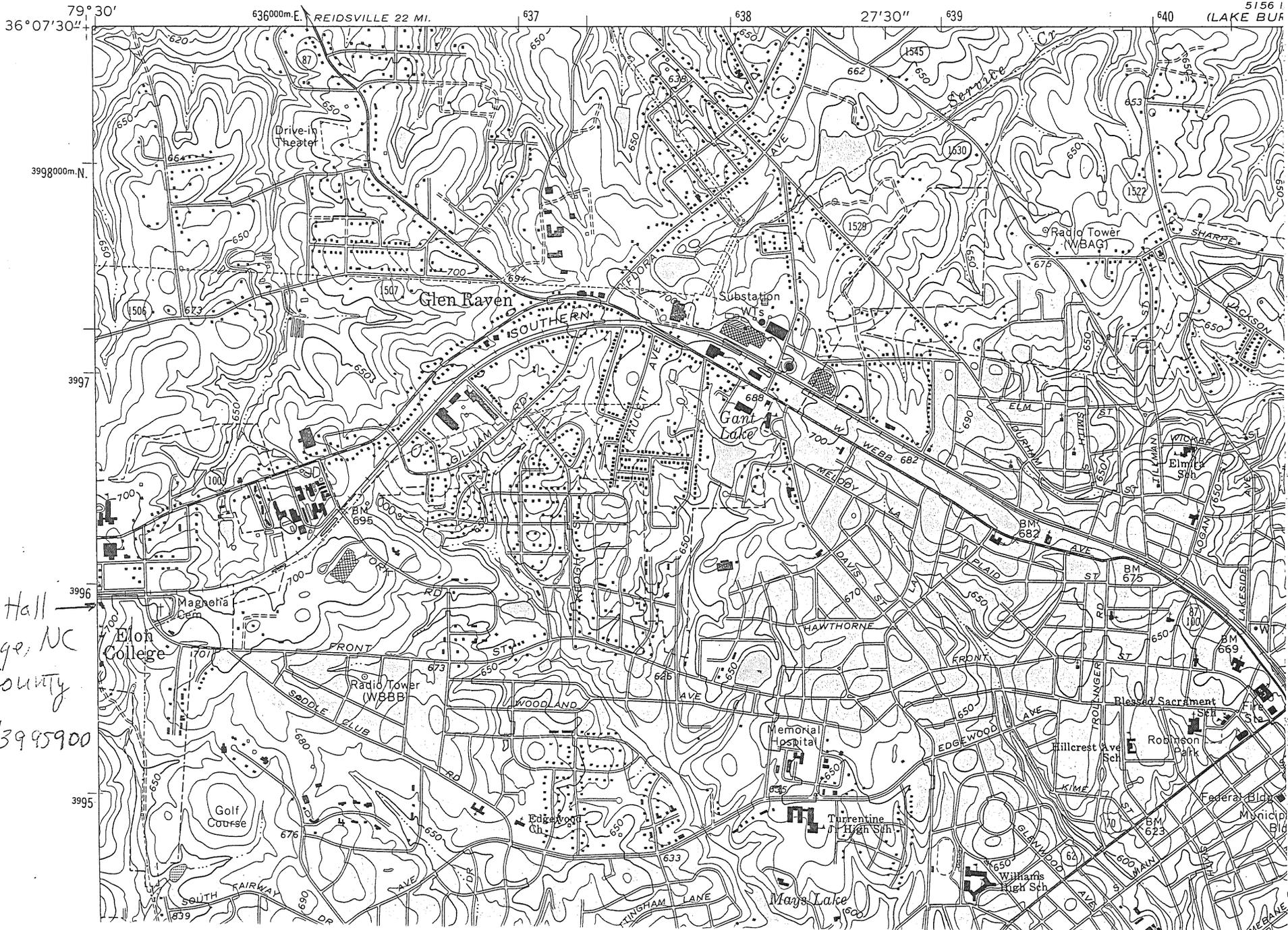
Boundary Justification

The nominated tract contains Johnston Hall, the only surviving architectural resource from the original 1906 Christian Orphanage property.

5
5066 J. NE
(OSI:PEE)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA
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