

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Edgecombe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Mount Prospect (Exum Lewis, Jr., House)

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Southeast corner of S.R. 1409 and S.R. 1428

CITY OR TOWN:
Leggett vicinity
Second Congressional District
The Hon. L. H. Fountain

STATE North Carolina	CODE 37	COUNTY: Edgecombe	CODE 065
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. Joe S. Sugg

STREET AND NUMBER:
517 Shady Circle Drive

CITY OR TOWN:
Rocky Mount

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

Home - 446-7801
ofc - Peanut Growers Assoc - before

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Edgecombe County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Tarboro

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

*Burned
UP
& tore
down
1976
CW*

Mon

STATE: North Carolina

COUNTY: Edgecombe

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Mount Prospect is a two-story frame plantation house of late Georgian style. Although somewhat neglected in recent years, it is still in good condition. It stands amid the remains of what must have been an impressively laid out estate, which still includes a number of significant outbuildings, a family graveyard, many large trees and flowering shrubs, and the remains of boxwood and flower gardens and an orchard. The house stands in a grove of trees, facing west. Arranged to its sides and rear in a square are dependencies. To the south is a small office, which is rundown; it has a well-executed molded cornice and substantial brick chimney. To the east (rear) of the office is a boxwood garden scattered with bulbs, and east of the garden is a small family graveyard including the grave of Exum Lewis (1771-1839). North of the graveyard, and to the rear of the house across an open yard, is a smokehouse of unusually large size, reportedly accommodating 10,000 pounds of meat. North of it, at the corner of the house lot, is a barn with open wings, and west of the barn, roughly north of the house, is a brick dairy, which has been reworked inside and is almost unrecognizably overgrown with ivy and bushes, but which still retains its openwork sawn frieze. The area south and southwest of the house is fenced, and there are flowers growing wild. South of this is an orchard; one account states that there was a peach orchard on one side of the house and an apple orchard on the other. (In the early nineteenth century, Lewis advertised brandy for sale--probably distilled from the products of this orchard.)

The dwelling itself consists of the two-story main block, which is five bays wide and two deep; attached to the northwest part of the rear elevation is a two-story addition of nineteenth century vintage, and a rather ungainly two-story later addition extending north from this. With the exception of these additions and a nineteenth century one-story hip-roof porch across the facade of the main block, the eighteenth century plantation house is essentially unaltered.

The house, which rests on a cellar of brick laid in English bond, is covered with apparently original weatherboards with a molded edge of unusually complex profile. Consistent throughout are windows set in molded frames with narrow molded sills; those at the first level have nine-over-nine sash and those at the second, nine-over-six. Small four-pane windows occur in the gables, and the front first-story north end window has been replaced with a smaller one with four-over-four sash. The central front entrance has a single door with six raised panels, which is woodgrained. It is set in a heavy molded architrave, and above is a fanlight framed by a heavy molding. Each end of the facade is defined by fluted corner posts, which carry a heavy molded cornice that returns slightly into the gable ends. Beneath the cornice is a course of unusual sawn bracket-like modillions. The same treatment occurs on the rear facade, the lower part of which is covered by a hip-roof porch in the L formed by the main block and the nineteenth century addition.

Centered on each end elevation is a large double-shoulder chimney of brick. That on the south end has steep paved shoulders and is of an irregular combination of Flemish and common bond. That on the north is extremely wide serving two corner fireplaces. It has paved shoulders and

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it is laid in common bond--varying from one-to-three to one-to-five.

The interior follows a "Quaker" plan--one large room to the south and two small ones to the north, the latter served by corner fireplaces. The enclosed stair opens from the great (south) room just inside the front door, and rises front-to-rear along the partition through the smaller rooms to the north. The finish of the house is consistent vernacular Georgian, with only minor alterations. Walls are plastered above a flat-paneled wainscot with Georgian moldings, a simple chair rail, and a baseboard that is the lower rail of the paneling scheme. The chair rail serves as window sills beneath molded frames. Single panels, each made of one wide board, run the lengths of walls. Doors with six raised panels are set in heavy molded frames. An inventory in 1968 indicated that many of them retained early locks, but few of these--or any other early hardware--remain now. The door that closes off the stair is a batten door hung with rising butt-plate hinges.

The great room is distinguished from the others by somewhat more elaborate finish. It is dominated by a large, vernacular Georgian mantel of curious design. A square fire opening is flanked by very wide fluted pilaster strips, which rise from well-articulated bases (also fluted), and continue upward to flank a frieze with two flat panels separated by a vertical fluted member. The rails above and below the panels are unfluted, and are visually extended horizontally by a plain space interrupting the fluting of the pilasters. The mantel terminates with a heavy molded cornice shelf, augmented by a scalloped band and a course of gouged acute triangles.

There is a heavy molded cornice in this room, which does not recur in the other rooms. The arrangement of the front entrance and the entry to the stair is unusual. The exterior treatment of the door and fanlight are repeated, and partition wall and door casing of the stair entry interrupt the molding around the fanlight, with the stair entry casing having only three sides, its lintel element terminating at the base of the fanlight molding.

The two north rooms, served by the large single chimney, both have corner fireplaces. That in the rear room is a smaller, simpler version of the large one in the great room, with the same oddly-spaced fluting. That in the front room is simpler yet, with a single-panel frieze above a square fire opening, with a molding framing the mantel but stopping where it intersects the molded chair rail of the wainscot.

The enclosed stair is finished with wide flush boards--horizontally placed halfway up, vertically above that. The stair well is protected by a simple balustrade with a chamfered post square in section, and a molded hand-rail carried on balusters rectangular in section. There are two second-floor rooms in the main block, which repeat the flat-paneled wainscot but have mantels of apparently mid-nineteenth century design. That in the north room is a plain Greek Revival one, that in the south (evidently of the same era)

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has applied urns on the pilasters and frieze panels with spearhead designs of slightly Gothic character. The attic is plastered. The finish of the two-story additions is plain and undistinguished.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian; 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) not known - late 18th century

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mount Prospect is a handsome Georgian plantation house, its main block essentially unaltered despite additions to the rear. It was the home of Exum Lewis, Jr., an active and influential citizen of Edgecombe County--postmaster, storekeeper, mill-owner, and planter. In 1815 Lewis played host at Mount Prospect to the noted Methodist pioneer Francis Asbury. The large frame house, notable for its "Quaker" plan and fine traditional finish inside and out, stands in a pleasant setting amid a group of outbuildings, along with a family cemetery, boxwood garden, and an orchard.

Exum Lewis, Jr., was one of nine children of Colonel Exum Lewis, a Revolutionary soldier and early settler of Edgecombe County. Although Colonel Lewis was himself a large landholder, his will--probated in August, 1796--excluded his namesake from sharing in his wealth of real estate. Colonel Lewis's son Green was devised a 420-acre plantation which included his father's homeplace. The remainder of the dead soldier's landholdings was divided between his sons Thomas and Bartholemew, with Exum, Jr., receiving only money, debts due the estate, and the stock in trade of a store operated by the elder Lewis at the time of his death. In addition, the will provided that Exum Lewis, Jr., should maintain the store as a going concern until his brother Edwin should attain the age of twenty, at which time the accumulated earnings of the store were to be divided equally between them.

Soon after receiving this inheritance, Exum Lewis, Jr., began acquiring large tracts of Edgecombe County land lying on both sides of Swift Creek, near the White Oak Swamp. It is unclear as to which of these adjoining tracts included the mansion house later to be called "Mount Prospect," but it is likely that Lewis and John Williams purchased the homeplace tract from Etheldred Williams in December, 1796, for "six hundred Silver dollars." This tract, comprised of 221 acres lying on the north side of Swift Creek, had descended to Etheldred Williams from his father, James Williams, Sr., who had resided there until his death in 1789. James Williams, Sr., had in turn acquired the tract in 1772 from Benjamin Williams, for the sum of "ten Pounds Current money of this Province." The wide disparity in selling prices between 1772 and 1796 suggests that the dwelling house was built either by Etheldred Williams or his father James Williams, Sr., sometime during this period; from stylistic evidence, either Williams or Lewis could have built the late Georgian house.

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In August, 1797, John Williams conveyed his half of the 221-acre tract to Exum Lewis, Jr., who paid "three hundred & fifty silver dollars" for it. During the ensuing twenty-three year period, Lewis acquired four additional tracts adjoining the former Etheldred Williams property. The aggregate of the five tracts, totaling 905 acres, eventually came to be called "Mount Prospect."

At the time of his father's death in 1796, Exum Lewis, Jr., was twenty-five years old. He later married Ann Harrison of Virginia and became the father of eight children. He apparently took an immediate and active interest in the store formerly owned by his father. At least as early as 1803, Lewis--in partnership with Horatio Gates Clinch--operated the store under the firm name of Lewis & Clinch. Lewis's brother Edwin, who was scheduled to receive one-half of the accumulated profits of the store upon reaching the age of twenty, is said to have moved to Baldwin County, Alabama, in 1803, and to have died there in 1819.

In addition to running the store, Lewis also entered the milling business. A contemporary, writing to the editors of The Star (Raleigh) in 1812, noted that

some valuable Mills have lately been erected on Swift Creek . . . by Mr. E. Lewis about 12 miles from Tarboro. It the creek has lately been cleared out up to the mills for the passage of considerable boats. Near this place is Mount Prospect the seat of Mr. Lewis, who has kept a store here for several years, & is a place of considerable trade.

In February, 1812, Lewis was appointed chairman of the Edgecombe County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, a position he was to fill "with honor to himself and advantage to the community . . ." until February, 1819. At about this same time, he purchased an advertisement in a Raleigh newspaper for "a Man well acquainted with teaching the English Language grammatically, writing, and Arithmetick." Lewis pledged that "should any person undertake a school at this place Mount Prospect calculated to please, he may expect a birth sic for several years." Despite Lewis's efforts to establish an academy in Edgecombe at this early date, it was not until 1820 that Mount Prospect Academy was established. This institution is said to have been a "mixed school of importance," and to have numbered among its early faculty James C. Cary and George Pendleton, both of Virginia. It is uncertain how long the academy remained in existence after 1820.

Lewis and his family also became identified as staunch Methodists. He is said to have been an "active agent in dividing the Church, when many members separated from the Meth. Epis. Ch. & formed the Meth. Prot. Ch." Methodist pioneer Francis Asbury, after dining with Lewis and his family in February, 1815, wrote: "this favoured pair have been renewed and quickened. The house of their father was amongst the first in former days to receive the Methodists, and the children now open their house, and hearts, and hands to

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them. . . ."

In the midst of his other responsibilities, Lewis served as postmaster at Mount Prospect from 1819 to at least as late as 1831. He was also active in the manufacture and sale of brandy, the breeding of horses, and the sale of real estate. The census of 1820 reveals that Lewis's immediate household consisted of fourteen persons. The 1830 census credits him with the ownership of forty-two slaves.

After Lewis's death in August or September, 1839, his executors advertised for sale "About 2000 Acres. This tract has considerable cleared land on it, and several settlements with dwelling houses. . . ." Lewis's will provided his wife Ann with a life interest in "the land & plantation wheron I now live . . . ," with "the balance of my property . . . to be equally divided between the whole of my children. . . ."

Shortly before Mrs. Lewis's death in November, 1843, Exum Lewis III conveyed to his brother William F. Lewis his remainder interest in the dower tract. In July, 1849, Exum Lewis, Jr.'s executor sold to William F. Lewis five tracts of land "comprising together 896 acres . . . known as the Mount Prospect plan." The younger Lewis paid \$2,800 for the property.

In 1872 William F. Lewis and his wife mortgaged the property and apparently defaulted; in April, 1880, the tract--now said to comprise 850 acres--was sold at auction to Richard H. Lewis, the high bidder, for \$7,050. In February, 1913, Richard Lewis and his wife conveyed the property to H. L. Speight and others, who paid \$15,000 for the tract. In 1920 Speight and his wife purchased a sole interest in a 347.2-acre portion of the original tract. At Speight's death in 1940, the property passed in fee simple to his widow Annie, who in 1956 deeded a 112.8-acre portion (including the homeplace) to Joe S. Sugg, the present owner. It is currently used as a tenant house.

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9.

Edgecombe County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers).

Edgecombe County Record of Inventories and Accounts of Estates; Record of Wills. Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Edgecombe County Courthouse, Tarboro.

Free Press (Tarborough). Advertisements, February 1, May 30, 1828; August 21, 1829.

Newsome, Albert Ray. "Twelve North Carolina Counties in 1810-1811." North Carolina Historical Review, VI (January, 1929), 67-99.

Raleigh Register, and North Carolina Gazette. Obituary, December 29, 1843. Tarboro' Press. Advertisement, October 5, 1839.

Turner, J. Kelly, and John L. Bridgers, Jr. History of Edgecombe County, North Carolina. n.p.: By the Authors, n.d.

Lewis Family Papers and Mount Prospect Papers. Southern Historical Collection. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

U. S. Census Office. Fourth Census of the United States: Edgecombe County, North Carolina; Fifth Census of the United States: Edgecombe County, North Carolina, Population Schedules.

Williams, Ruth Smith, and Margarette Glenn Griffin. Bible Records of Early Edgecombe. Rocky Mount: Dixie Letter Service, 1958.

_____. Tombstone and Census Records of Early Edgecombe. Rocky Mount: Dixie Letter Service, 1959.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research by Robert Topkins, survey specialist; architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, survey supervisor.
 Carroll, Grady L. E., ed. Francis Asbury in North Carolina: The North Carolina Portions of the Journal of Francis Asbury. Nashville: Parthenon Press, n.d.
 Edgecombe County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions. Minutes, 1800-1813; 1813-1820, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.
 Edgecombe County Records, Edgecombe County Courthouse, Tarboro, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	36° 00' 31"	77° 38' 33"		°	'	"
NE	36° 00' 31"	77° 38' 25"				
SE	36° 00' 23"	77° 38' 25"				
SW	36° 00' 23"	77° 38' 33"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 10 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Survey and Planning Unit
 ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History DATE: 12 September 1974
 STREET AND NUMBER:
109 East Jones Street
 CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Robert E. Stipe
 Title State Historic Preservation Officer
 Date 12 September 1974

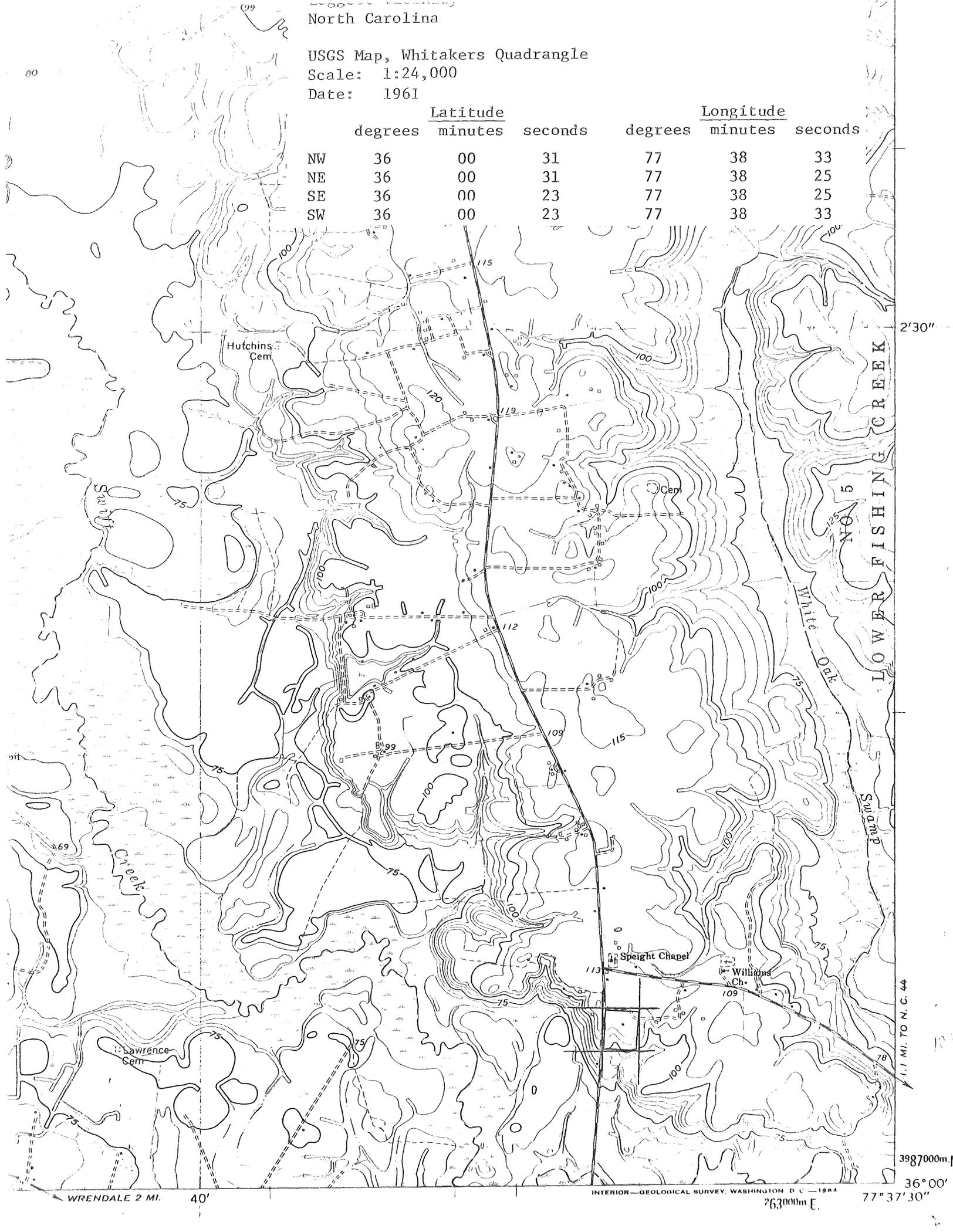
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
 Date _____
 ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register
 Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

	Latitude			Longitude		
	degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
NW	36	00	31	77	38	33
NE	36	00	31	77	38	25
SE	36	00	23	77	38	25
SW	36	00	23	77	38	33



2'30"

LOWER FISHING CREEK

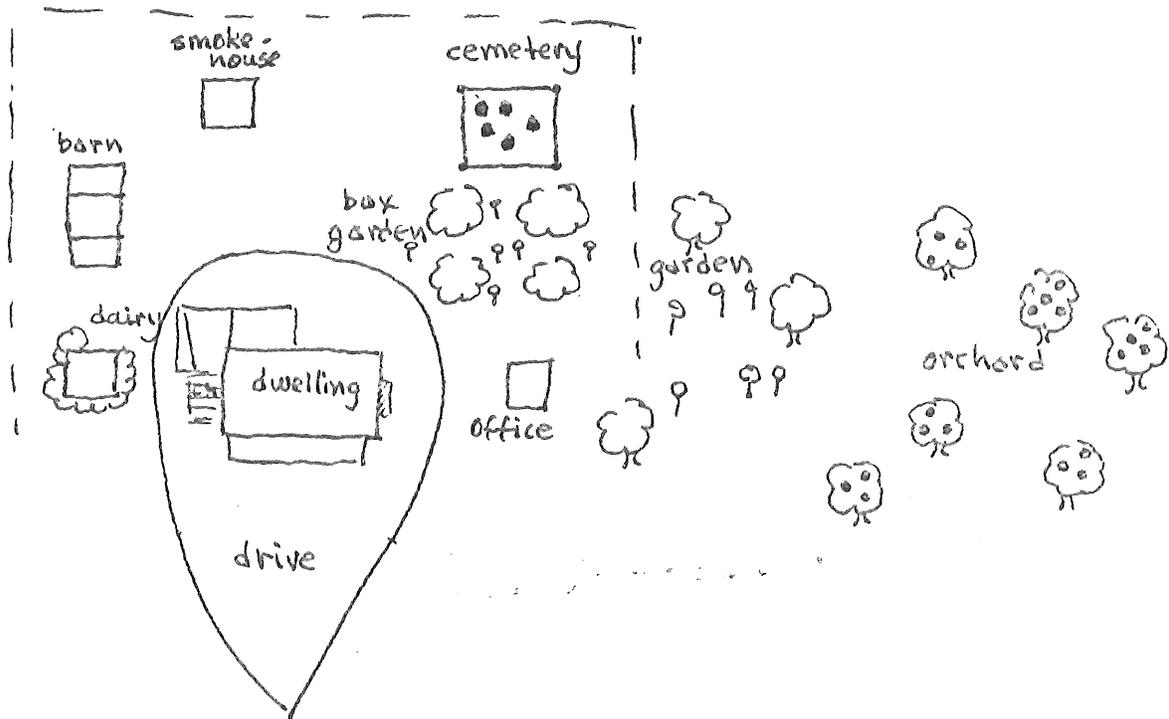
1.1 MI. TO N. C. 44

3987000m.

36° 00'

77° 37' 30"

WRENDALE 2 MI 40'



sketch of layout
of Mount Prospect
1974
not to scale.

