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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property
   historic name Harris-Currin House
   other names/site number

2. Location
   street & number State Road 1129
   city, town Wilton
   state North Carolina code NC county Granville code 077 zip code 27522

3. Classification
   Ownership of Property
   □ private
   □ public-local
   □ public-State
   □ public-Federal
   Category of Property
   □ building(s)
   □ district
   □ site
   □ structure
   □ object
   Number of Resources within Property
   Contributing Noncontributing
   □ 1 buildings
   □ 1 sites
   □ 1 structures
   □ 2 objects
   □ Total

   Name of related multiple property listing:
   Historic and Architectural Resources of Granville County, N.C.
   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

4. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. □ See continuation sheet.
   Signature of certifying official
   Date

   In my opinion, the property □ meets □ does not meet the National Register criteria. □ See continuation sheet.
   Signature of commenting or other official
   Date

5. National Park Service Certification
   I, hereby, certify that this property is:
   □ entered in the National Register.
   □ See continuation sheet.
   □ determined eligible for the National Register. □ See continuation sheet.
   □ determined not eligible for the National Register.
   □ removed from the National Register.
   □ other, (explain:)
   □ See continuation sheet.
   Signature of the Keeper
   Date of Action
### Action or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacant/not in use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(enter categories from instructions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queen Anne</th>
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**Materials (enter categories from instructions)**

- **foundation**: stone
- **walls**: weatherboard
- **roof**: metal
- **other**: brick, wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[See continuation sheet]
Set behind an expanse of yard and uncultivated fields that separate it from the intersection of two paved roads to its southeast, the circa 1883 Harris-Currin House is one of the most ornate and stylish late nineteenth century Queen Anne houses surviving in rural Granville County. Retaining only one outbuilding to its rear—a deteriorated, and therefore non-contributing, late nineteenth or early twentieth century stable—it was once the center of a thriving bright leaf tobacco farm. Twenty-one acres of that farm, now owned with the house by Lucius A. Currin’s daughter, Ethel Stephenson, are included in the nomination, acres that contribute to the house’s rural integrity.

Two stories tall and weatherboarded, the frame house is in plan and shape largely outside the I-house tradition that reigned supreme in rural Granville County in the 1880s. Its front section does have a center hallway bracketed by single rooms, but the house is actually L-plan in conception, with a triangular entrance foyer connecting its southeast front and southwest rear rooms. It also falls outside the tradition in the configuration and placement of its porch, roofs and chimneys. Its porch wraps around its northeast-facing front and southeast-facing side facades rather than just its front facade; it has a partially hipped roof, rather than a gable end one, and three facade gables, two to the front and one centered to the side; and it has only one exterior end chimney, its second main chimney a corbelled, interior stack between its southeast and southwest rooms.

Not only in plan and configuration is the house unusual for rural Granville County; its Queen Anne finish, particularly that of its porch, is the most ornate and complete surviving in the countryside from its period of construction. One story high and wrapping around the two main facades of the house, the porch is profusely decorated with sawn woodwork. Its decorative elements include turned posts, tiny spindles, sawn toothwork and pendants, and curlicued, looping brackets and infill. The house’s two front facade gables are adorned with similarly articulated bargeboards and molded cornice returns. Its pedimented side gable is finished with patterned wood shingles. And, although its two-over-two windows are set in plain surrounds, its two-leaf front doorway is ornately finished with small inset panels and applied ornament.
The plastered interior is more simply finished than the porch or gables. It features molded baseboards and surrounds and seven-panel doors with narrow horizontal panels sandwiched between three long and three short vertical panels. The mantels, with their peaked lintels and spindles and brackets, have been removed from the house and stored for safekeeping. The one-story rear kitchen and dining room ell is plainly finished. Not original to the house, it was probably added by Lucius Currin shortly after he acquired the property.

The house’s complement of tobacco farm outbuildings, but for an impressively large but deteriorated two-story wooden stable, have been destroyed, as has the small country store that Lucius Currin ran at the northwest corner of the junction of State Road 1129 and State Route 56. The house is still neatly framed, however, in the triangle formed by a stand of woods to its rear and the two roads to its fore, within a sheltering swell of yard and former fields.

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1 Interview with Ethel Currin Stephenson, daughter of Lucius and Lelia Currin, September 28, 1987.

Applicable National Register Criteria:  
- [X] A  
- [ ] B  
- [X] C  
- [ ] D  

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):  
- [ ] A  
- [ ] B  
- [ ] C  
- [ ] D  
- [ ] E  
- [ ] F  
- [ ] G  

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):  
- **Architecture**  
- **Agriculture**  

Significant Person:  
- N/A  

Significant Person:  
- N/A  

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
The Harris-Currin House is architecturally significant for its exuberant Queen Anne finish — a rare feature among surviving late nineteenth and early twentieth century farmhouses in rural Granville County — and historically significant as a physical exemplar of the tremendous bright-leaf-tobacco-generated wealth of the county during those years. (See Associated Property Type 3 — Bright Leaf Era Farmhouses and Tenant Houses — and Historic Context 2 — Bright Leaf Tobacco and Rural Granville County, 1866-1937) Built in the 1880s by Robert W. Harris on the sandy soil of southern Granville County so conducive to the raising of bright leaf tobacco, the house is unusually stylish in its finish. Although the county was producing enormous amounts of valuable, high quality tobacco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in the 1880s in particular, the vast majority of its farmhouses were simply finished, traditional structures. Juxtaposed with the expansive, up-to-date dwellings raised in Oxford during the bright leaf era, these plain structures suggest where the tobacco wealth was and was not being concentrated. Harris’ house, with its L-shaped rather than one-room deep I-house plan and its luxuriant cut-out woodwork, was an exception to the rule of plainness of the standard rural county house, a statement of success and wealth raised on the very site where that wealth was produced. Although not exceptionally ornate or stylish by the standards of Oxford, the house remains one of the most fashionable rural dwellings surviving from the late nineteenth century in the county and one that most vibrantly bespeaks the wealth of the soil upon which it stands.

A prominent local citizen and prosperous farmer, Harris (1856-1918) purchased, in 1883, the 206 acre farm he was to raise his dwelling on from James and Mary Floyd for $1,545.00 [Deed Book 37, Page 141]. He and his wife, Mary Ella White (1863-1928), sold the house and 157 1/4 acres of its land to Lucius A. Currin in 1905 for $5,000.00 [Deed Book 58, Page 333]. As was so common among prosperous farm families during the period, they moved to Oxford. Harris' obituary described him most favorably:

Mr. Harris was a member of the Oxford Board of Commissioners for one term. He was a progressive citizen and was always found on the right side of public issues. He was a member of the Oxford Methodist Church and will be greatly missed in this community.
Lucius Currin (1878-1958) lived in the house, raising bright leaf tobacco on its acreage, until his death 53 years after its purchase. It has been empty since the early 1980s, when his second wife, Lelia Bobbitt (1887-1984), moved from it because of illness. It is maintained in fair condition by his heirs, who plan to restore it in 1988.

Although traditionally farmed within the past 50 years - a deteriorated frame stable that once held the animals that drew its farm equipment still stands to its rear - it has not experienced a period of significance within the past half century and its period of significance therefore closes with 1937.

1 According to the tenth and eleventh federal agricultural censuses, Granville County produced 4,606,358 pounds of tobacco in 1880 - the most in the state - and 4,170,071 pounds in 1890 - just shy of tops in the state, even though the county had lost considerable land in its 1881 division. On the quality of Granville County tobacco, see Nannie May Tilley, The Bright Tobacco Industry, 1860-1929 (Chapel Hill, 1948), pp. 113, 132, 133 and 135, and "Report on the Culture and Curing of Tobacco in the United States" by J. B. Killebrew in the Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, p. 705.

2 The Harrises purchased Cherry Hill Mansion in northwest Oxford, the former home of Oxford developer B. H. Cozart, for $7,500.00, $2,500.00 more than their 157 acre farm and house brought [Deed Book 59, Page 388, 1905].

3 Oxford Public Ledger, October 15, 1918.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: approximately 21.5 acres

UTM References

A (Zone 17) 41.6132 41.0025 10
B (Zone 17) 41.6180 41.0022 10
C (Zone 17) 41.6240 41.0022 10
D

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Harris-Currin House is the entire parcel owned by Mrs. Ethel Stephenson which is delineated on the accompanying 1987 survey map on the property.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries which follow the property lines of Ethel Stephenson as delineated on the accompanying 1987 survey map includes the house and fields that have been a historic part of the property, maintain historic integrity, and conveys the property's historic setting. The property outside these boundaries has been excluded because it has been divided into several parcels owned by different family members and no longer retains the historic integrity of being a single farm.

11. Form Prepared By

Marvin Brown/Architectural Historian & Patricia Esperon/Historian
Granville-Oxford Historic Survey

P.O. Box 1556 (State Hist. Pres. Office)
Oxford, N.C. 27565

919-693-1491

11/13/87
Granville County Deeds. Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, N.C.


Granville County, N.C.
Approximately 21 acres
Approximate scale 1" = 200'

Harris-Carr House

Deteriorated house site

North Carolina

Reconstructed house site

Roden-Blount House

Dismantled dwelling building

Stone dwelling building