

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Benson Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication

city, town Benson N/A vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Johnston code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple owners

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Johnston County Register of Deeds

street & number Johnston County Courthouse

city, town Smithfield state N.C. 27577

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Johnston County
Historic Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records North Carolina Division of Archives and History,
Survey and Planning Branch

city, town Raleigh state N.C. 27611

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	date _____ Various
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Incorporated in 1887, Benson, North Carolina, was born after a railroad line from Contentnea to Fayetteville passed through the present location of the town. Benson grew rapidly in the following four decades as various individuals settled in the area, attracted by the entrepreneurial opportunities presented by the close proximity of rich agricultural lands and the advent of a railway transportation route. With an economy largely centered around the sale and trade of farm products and supplies, Benson became a modest-sized commercial center with a variety of mercantile and industrial concerns established to serve a growing population. The Benson Historic District encompasses the most visually cohesive, intact group of architecturally and historically significant commercial, residential, ecclesiastical, and educational structures in the town, built by many of the individuals who played a vital role in Benson's early development. These buildings, most of which date from about 1900 to 1930, embody the economic and social forces which influenced both the manner in which the town acquired its present physical form and the selection of various stylistic modes of architectural expression.

The earliest known map of Benson, dated December 28, 1892, shows the town streets laid out in a grid pattern with individual blocks divided into numbered lots. This grid arrangement was well-suited to Benson's flat terrain. The district boundaries are drawn to include the three blocks of Main Street between Wall and Elm streets shown on this map, which are oriented to either side of the north-south axis of the railroad. Two blocks adjacent to either side of the railroad and directly south of Main Street are also included. This area, which historically formed the town's commercial core, has a high concentration of attached one and two-story brick buildings which occupy relatively narrow lots with shallow setbacks. The predominantly residential blocks contiguous to the commercial area, and roughly defined by West Main, East and West Church, and East Hill streets between Farmer Drive and Johnson Street, are also part of the district. These tree-lined streets, all of which have sidewalks, are characterized by an abundance of one, one-and-one-half, and two-story frame and brick houses. These structures are situated on medium to large-sized lots, many with a variety of trees and deep setbacks. A number of these residences were home to Benson's wealthiest citizens, many of whom operated businesses along Main Street. The location of Benson's six major churches and two surviving school buildings in the neighborhood underscores the strong relationship between this part of the district and the historic development of the town. Of the 143 structures in the district, 17 are pivotal, 87 are contributing, 23 are non-contributing, and 16 are intrusive.

The building fabric of the district, most of which retains its historic integrity, is characterized by a variety of architectural styles popularly employed for late nineteenth and early twentieth century structures. Most of the commercial buildings were erected between 1903 and 1925, following three fires during 1902 and 1903 which damaged or destroyed a majority of the early frame structures on Main Street. The buildings exhibit fairly typical interpretations of early 1900s stylistic modes. Distinguishing characteristics of these buildings include facade windows in simple rectangular or arched enframements, occasionally emphasized by brick or stone lintels, and corbelled frieze and cornice decoration. In most cases, the street-level entries and display windows on these structures have been altered. With the exception of the outstanding Neo-classical Revival Farmers Commercial Bank from 1921 (No. 39), none of the buildings were architect-designed.

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In addition to the bank, particularly notable commercial structures include the (Former) C. T. Johnson Building (No. 12), which was built around 1910 and has a decorative second-story metal front with Classical elements; the (Former) Charles and Walton Johnson Store from about 1910 (No. 21), which features a beige-colored brick facade with highly original contrasting frieze decoration; the (Former) Preston Woodall Store (No. 41), which was constructed around 1905 and has second-story arched windows outlined by a corbel course; and the (Former) James E. Wilson Livery Stable and Store (No. 27), erected around 1925, which retains its original display windows and decorative first-story cornice, and has architectural features recalling its former use as a stable and live-stock shelter. The c. 1918 Carolina-Parrish Hotel (No. 8), which was built during Benson's boom years as a railroad town and is the only three-story building in the district, serves as a visual anchor at the western end of the commercial area.

A number of changes have occurred in the commercial area which have somewhat altered its original appearance, including the demolition of several buildings and the remodeling of individual facades. Structures which have been razed, for which documentary photographs exist, include a small one-story brick building which at one time housed the Citizens Bank and occupied the present site of building No. 14; the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Passenger Station and freight depot, a one-story brick structure with a hip roof formerly situated on the west side of Southeast Railroad Street at the corner of East Main Street (No. 133); and the Hotel Benson, a large two-story frame building with a cross-gabled roof and Victorian detailing which faced the railroad on the present site of building No. 124.

The residential structures in the district can be divided into categories based upon relative size, the smallest being traditional Triple-A houses. A second group includes the medium-sized homes built by the more prosperous merchants, and the third is comprised of the largest homes in the district, originally belonging to some of Benson's most prominent citizens. These residences can also be separated into broad stylistic categories, including Victorian, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical Revival, Bungalow, and such period revivals as Dutch Colonial and Tudor. While most of the houses are representative of only one category, a number display characteristics common to more than one style. A majority of these structures are intact, the most commonly made changes being the alteration or replacement of porches and windows.

Traditional one-story, frame Triple-A houses with full-width porches are by far the most prevalent residential forms in the district. These structures, which were built between about 1900 and 1925, are comparatively small and have simple gable and porch detailing consistent with the Victorian, Colonial Revival or Bungalow styles. The Triple-A structures with Victorian details are the oldest in the district, and include the c. 1900 Hockaday-Poole and Wilson Rental houses (Nos. 85 and 88). The Boon-Lawhorn House (No. 29), a two-story, single-pile I-house, is another early example of a traditional residential form displaying Victorian architectural details. Colonial Revival examples of the type, dating from about 1910 and 1915 respectively, are the William McLamb House (No. 2) and the Charles W. Anderson House (No. 107). Triple-A

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residences with Bungalow-style porches include the c. 1916 Lonnie Stevens House (No. 83) and the c. 1915 H. A. Parker House (No. 84).

The second group of houses in the district is comprised of medium-sized frame or brick structures which have a variety of basic forms and more elaborate architectural details corresponding to individual styles. These residences include the Dr. Parker-Allen House (No. 54), a Queen Anne home built around 1910 and finished with Colonial Revival elements; the Colonial Revival Alonzo Stephenson House, constructed around 1911 (No. 67); and the Parrish-McLamb and Moses A. Peacock houses, both representative of the Bungalow style and built between 1920 and 1922 (Nos. 56 and 79). Period revival houses which are also part of this group include the Canaday House, a Dutch Colonial structure built in 1925 (No. 5), and the Dr. Stacy A. Duncan House, constructed in the Tudor Revival style in 1937 (No. 6).

The third distinctive group, which consists of the largest residences in the district, includes many well-executed examples of the Colonial or Neoclassical Revival styles. These frame houses are distinguished by their sophisticated interpretation of these styles and display such features as monumental pedimented porticos supported by Classical columns, art glass windows, notable mantels, and prominent staircases. The Neoclassical Revival (Former) C. T. Johnson House, built in 1912 (No. 128), is the most ambitious of the structures in this group, which also includes the Neoclassical Revival Parrish-Smith House from 1905 (No. 31) and the c. 1915 Colonial Revival James E. Wilson House (No. 143).

The six churches and two schools in the district are two other notable groups. Of frame or brick construction, these buildings include the Baptist Church, built between 1914 and 1915 (No. 82), and the United Methodist Church (No. 91), constructed in 1917. Both of these structures are highly original brick interpretations of the Gothic Revival style commonly used for ecclesiastical buildings. The Presbyterian Church from 1917 is a more scaled-down frame building representative of the style (No. 101), while the Pentecostal Holiness, Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist and Catholic churches (Nos. 95, 110 and 74) display few distinguishing architectural features. The latter two buildings, which were built around 1895 and 1910, were originally frame structures and have been extensively altered. The educational buildings in the district are the (Former) Benson Graded High School, or Dixie School (No. 99), a large, two-story turn-of-the-century frame structure, and the Benson Elementary School (No. 92), a handsome Colonial Revival brick building constructed around 1915, which typifies the popular stylistic approach to school design in North Carolina during the 1910s and 1920s. The Elementary School in particular retains its architectural integrity, while the Dixie School has been converted into apartments.

Structures that have been demolished, which were formerly located in the residential part of the district, include the Hodges House, a large two-story frame residence similar in design to the Neoclassical Revival Preston Woodall House (No. 108) and formerly situated at the southwest corner of West Church and North Wall streets (No. 59); and the Dr. H. H. Utley House, a large-scale, two-story, Neoclassical Revival frame structure with a unique corner entry enframed by a monumental pedimented portico atop paired Doric columns, which was on the current site of the Robin Hood Stop-N-Shop

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convenience store (No. 122). In addition to these changes, both the Dixie School (No. 99) and the Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist Church (No. 110) have been moved to their present sites.

Unlike many other small towns which have suffered the effects of economic decline, Benson remains a vital community, due in part to its location along Interstate 95, a major United States highway, and its ability to attract new industries. Because development pressures in the town have been relatively few, the community retains a majority of its historic architecture. In recent years, a number of small and medium-sized commercial and residential structures have appeared, primarily along Main, Railroad, Church, and Hill streets. These intrusive buildings, which tend to be concentrated in specific areas, represent about eleven percent of the total number of structures in the district and do not greatly detract from its overall historic character.

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- P 1. William Daniel Boon House--Rose Funeral Home. 301 West Main Street, 1918. One of a group of five surviving large-scale Neoclassical Revival residences built in Benson during the prosperous cotton years of the early twentieth century, this large, two-story hip-roofed frame house was built in 1918 for William Daniel Boon (1875-1937), the son of James H. and Lora Ann (Price) Boon. William joined his father's mercantile firm, J. H. Boon and Son, which grew to be one of the largest supply houses in this section of the state. He married Eva Holder (1872-1954) in 1902 and purchased this lot the following year from R. F. Smith.

The Boon House, which is the second residential structure on the site and is based upon a design from a Sears Roebuck catalog, has a three-bay facade dominated by a monumental two-story portico. A 1925 photograph shows that the original portico was supported by clusters of three fluted Corinthian columns, making it the only house in Benson other than the C. T. Johnson residence, now the Macon Hotel, to have three column clusters instead of paired columns. The facade contains a handsome fanlight entrance, over which projects a shallow balcony. Large scenic windows flanked by nine-over-nine sash windows and spanned by a transom are located to either side of the entry. A dentil course and modillions mark the continuous boxed cornice. Finishing the exterior are nine-over-one sash windows in flat surrounds, a pedimented dormer, interior brick chimneys, a flanking sun porch on the south-east and a porte cochere (now enclosed) on the northwest. The balustrades that marked an uncovered front terrace, the top of the flat-roofed portico, and the truncated top of the hip roof, have been removed.

The property, lost by the Boon family during the Depression, was purchased in 1940 by James Rose, Jr., a prominent local furniture dealer and operator of funeral homes in Benson and Dunn. The house was converted into a funeral home at this time, involving major changes to the plastered center-hall plan interior (including removal and replacement of the stairs) and the later erection of the brick ambulance area at the rear. A brick chapel was built onto the northwest elevation in 1964. The funeral home continues in Rose family ownership and operation.

- C 2. William McLamb House. 213 West Main Street, c. 1910. This typical one-story Triple-A frame residence with an original Colonial Revival porch was built by "Sir" William McLamb, a saw mill employee. Distinctive features of this residence include the returns in the gables, the circular louvered attic vents, each centered with a star, and the Doric-columned front porch. The windows are six-over-six sash.
- C 3. Walton Johnson House. 211 West Main Street, 1912. Walton Johnson, a Benson businessman who operated a mercantile concern with his brother Charles, built this large, handsome, Colonial Revival frame house which retains much of its original appearance. The one-story residence has a gable-on-hip roof with a metal cresting and a number of decorative elements, including arched attic

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window surrounds centered by keystones, returns in the gables, and chamfered corners on the northwest and southeast elevations highlighted by scrolled brackets under the eaves. The facade is dominated by a full-width porch with fluted Ionic columns and a center pediment. The porch wraps around to the sides of the house as well. A center gable rises from the roofline above the entrance, which is flanked by sidelights and a transom light. The windows are one-over-one sash. The house is currently in the possession of Walton Johnson's daughter.

- C 4. Eldridge McLamb House. 209 West Main Street, c. 1915. This greatly altered Colonial Revival home was reportedly built by Benson carpenter S. E. Williams, who sold the lot to the McLamb family in 1918. The one-story frame residence with replacement vinyl siding has a high hip roof with a center gable and side gables with returns. The front porch, which is supported by square posts, originally had Classical columns, as suggested by the stylistically compatible semicircular pilasters remaining near the corners of the facade. The entrance has a typical Colonial Revival treatment with sidelights and a transom light. The windows are all one-over-one sash. This home remains in possession of the McLamb family.
- C 5. Canaday House. 207 West Main Street, 1925. This well-executed Dutch Colonial house, the only structure of this style in the district, was built by local contractor S. E. Williams for prominent Benson attorney Claude C. Canaday. Mr. Canaday, who served as mayor of Benson from 1919 until 1923, was responsible for paving the town's streets and installing street lights and water and sewer systems. He was elected state senator from the Eighth Senatorial District in 1927 and was re-elected two years later.

The Canaday house, which has a side-gabled roof with gambrel insets at each end, features a brick first story and a wood-shingled upper story, offset by the broad slope of the gambrel ends. The front entrance is highlighted by a portico echoing the gambrel roof form and supported by paired Doric columns beneath a wide entablature. The doorway is set into an elliptical opening topped by a fanlight. Half-fanlights are also located in the gambrel ends of the roof at the attic level. A screened-in sun porch with slender Doric columns completes the design. The tripartite nine-over-nine sash windows on the facade are covered by decorative metal grates. Harry Canaday, son of the original owner and a former state supreme court judge, currently owns the home.

- C 6. Dr. Stacy A. Duncan House. 205 West Main Street, 1937. This handsome two-story Tudor Revival residence was built for Dr. Stacy A. Duncan, who first set up a medical practice in Benson in 1928. The home has an irregular roof form featuring a wide front gable, a clipped gable on the southeast side, and a gabled dormer on the northwest side. The first story of the structure is brick, while the upper story is stuccoed and finished with characteristic half-timbering. Other features of the home consistent with the Tudor Revival

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style include the modified Tudor-arched doorway, the diamond-pane casement window on the facade, and the corbelled chimney. A flat-roofed open terrace topped by a decorative wood balustrade is located on the southeastern side of the house.

- C 7. James H. Duncan House. 203 West Main Street, c. 1900. This traditional L-plan frame dwelling with wood shingled gables and a Victorian porch was built by James Henry Duncan, a Benson farmer. After Duncan's death, his wife Sarah ran a boarding house at this address. The one-story home, which retains much of its original character, has a front and side-gabled roof with returns and an L-shaped porch with a low, turned balustrade and turned posts topped by decorative scrolled brackets. The windows are four-over-four sash. Norman Duncan, son of the builder and Benson Utilities Commissioner for twenty-four years, acquired this house from his brother-in-law Claude Canaday in 1924 and resided there for many years.
- P 8. Carolina-Parrish Hotel. South side West Main Street southeast corner South Wall Street, c. 1918. This large, three-story brick hotel, erected during Benson's boom period as a railroad town, was built by wealthy businessman Alonzo Parrish. According to the 1925 Sanborn Map of Benson, this structure was originally known as the North State Hotel. The relatively plain facade is divided into three sections by flat brick pilasters which stop at the second and third floors and then reappear at the corbelled brick cornice line. Each section of the facade is three bays wide. The one-over-one sash windows are topped by flat stone lintels. A 1925 picture of the lobby shows that it had a wide dog-leg stair and double-leaf doors at the southwest end. A dining room was adjacent to the lobby area. The hotel was sold to Cap Jernigan in the 1930s, at which time it was known as the LaBelle Hotel. It was later acquired by a Mr. Johnson who called it the Carolina Hotel, and then by a Mr. Parrish, no relation to the original builder. The structure, which is currently vacant, has retail space on the ground floor.
- P 9. (Former) Princess Theater Building. South side West Main Street adjacent to the Carolina-Parrish Hotel, c. 1918. This building, most likely executed at the same time as the Carolina-Parrish Hotel, originally housed the Princess Theater, the first movie house in Benson, in its northwest half. The two-story brick building is similar in design to the hotel adjacent on the northwest side, having identical flat brick pilasters which divide the facade into two sections, a corbelled brick cornice, and flat stone lintels above the windows on the second story. The southeast half of the structure contains commercial space. Both the theater and the upper story on the southeast half of the structure are no longer in use. This building was owned for many years by J. B. Benton.

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- C 10. (Former) Peacock Drug Company--Billy Byrd Shoes. 101 West Main Street, c. 1910. This plain two-story brick building with an angled corner was originally the location of the Peacock Drug Company, owned by Benson pharmacist Moses A. Peacock. The relatively unadorned structure has one-over-one sash windows with flat stone lintels on the second story and a corbel course beneath the cornice line. A plain brick stringcourse defines the cornice itself. The retail space on the first floor features large display windows topped by transom lights and an entry set into the angled corner. A projecting simple wood cornice distinguishes the street level commercial space from the upper story. Billy Byrd Shoes currently occupies the building.
- C 11. (Former) C. T. Johnson Building. 107-111 West Main Street, c. 1910. This typical large, two-story brick building was at one time owned by C. T. Johnson, Benson merchant, cotton buyer, and large landowner. The structure originally housed a grocery at the northwest end and was also the location of Johnson's dry goods store. The upper story, which is eight bays wide, features one-over-one sash windows with two-tiered brick surrounds, the higher of which terminates at a corbel course which proceeds across the entire facade near the tops of the windows. A brick stringcourse is located between the windows and the cornice line. The cornice itself is distinguished by a row of corbelled brick dentils. The first floor is divided into three separate commercial establishments, all with double-leaf entry doors and altered display windows. The center and southeasternmost stores are currently vacant.
- C 12. (Former) C. T. Johnson Clothing Store--Billy Byrd Discount Store. South side West Main Street northwest corner South Railroad Street, c. 1910. This two-story brick building with an unusual decorative metal facade featuring Classical elements was built for C. T. Johnson, who operated a men's and women's clothing store at this location. The distinctive facade, which is unique in Benson, has paired columns with stylized capitals between each of the four one-over-one sash windows. Each column sits atop a rectangular base ornamented with two rosettes. The columns support a full entablature with a frieze distinguished by a row of circular ornaments and an overhanging cornice supported by large, paired brackets and a row of modillions. A parapet, which rose above the cornice, has been removed. The more diminutive metal cornice on the lower story has projecting blocks at each end with acanthus leaf motifs at their centers. The display windows and entry have been altered. The structure is currently occupied by the Billy Byrd Discount Store.
- C 13. Benson Drug Company. 104 East Main Street, c. 1905. This two-story brick building, with an angled corner like No. 10, replaced an earlier Benson Drug Company structure on the site destroyed in a 1903 fire. Originally run by J. W. Benson, the Benson Drug Company was the first pharmacy in town, established in 1887. The structure has one-over-one sash windows in the upper story which are topped by flat stone lintels. Two brick stringcourses are located above the windows and a third stringcourse defines the cornice line.

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An advertisement for Coca Cola, most likely from the 1940s, is painted on the side of the building facing Southeast Railroad Street. The drugstore, which is currently part of the Rexall chain, has an altered display window and a false wooden front which hides the original first floor cornice.

- C 14. Commercial Building. 106 East Main Street, c. 1945. This plain one-story brick building replaces an earlier structure which had a facade identical to No. 15, adjacent on the southeast side, and housed the Citizens Bank. The current structure is occupied by accountants' offices.
- C 15. Commercial Building. 108 East Main Street, c. 1910. This one-story brick building with slender columns at street level was at one time the site of a grocery, according to the 1918 Sanborn map. The columns support a wide frieze with three recessed panels, above which is located a brick stringcourse. Narrow display windows flank the entry, which is set back from the street behind the columns. A beauty shop and clothing store currently occupy each half of the structure.
- C 16. Commercial Building. 110-112 East Main Street, c. 1905. This greatly altered, one-story brick structure, which is divided into two business establishments, was originally occupied on the southeastern side by J. W. Whittenton's jewelry store. The business, established in an earlier building on the site in 1895, was the first jewelry store in Benson. A tavern, operated by Nathan Porter, originally occupied the northwestern side. The building currently has an altered facade, the northwestern half covered by a carrera glass front and the southeastern half covered by a false brick front. The display windows at street level have also been altered. A barber shop and insurance office presently occupy the structure.
- C 17. Commercial Building. 114 East Main Street, c. 1910. This one-story brick structure with a decorative frieze and columns at street level similar to those on No. 15, was occupied by the Benson Post Office in 1918. The building has two narrow Classical columns which frame the entry and support a frieze with three recessed panels finished at their tops by a row of corbelling. Each of the four vertical bands which define the panels is corbelled at its base. A shorter vertical band with corbelling at its base accentuates the center frieze panel. The original entry, which is partially intact, is flanked by display windows. The structure is currently used as office space.
- C 18. Commercial Building. 118-120 East Main Street, c. 1910. A one-story brick structure with a relatively ornamental entablature, this building is divided into two business establishments. A barber occupied the northwestern half of the structure in 1918. The area above the entry is characterized by panels with an inverted "U" shape, the horizontal portions of which are corbelled. Three projecting vertical bars, corbelled at their bases, divide this area into two sections corresponding to the individual businesses. Two recessed frieze panels are situated beneath the corbelled cornice line. The entries to both stores located in the building have been somewhat altered.

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- C 19. Commercial Building. 122 East Main Street, c. 1910. This one-story brick building with typical frieze decoration was the location of a printing office in 1918. The frieze itself is comprised of a projecting panel with a row of corbelled dentils at its top. The wide sides of the panel terminate in corbelling at their bottoms. The street-level portion of this structure, which houses a clothing store, has been altered.
- NC 20. (Former) Kelly's Store--City Florist. 124 East Main Street, c. 1940. Built by Benson merchant Kelly Joseph, this large, plain, two-story brick building has four sixteen-light windows on the second story. The retail space on the first floor has been altered to accommodate the present use of this structure by a florist.
- C 21. (Former) Charles and Walton Johnson Store--Value Pak Health and Beauty Center and Benson Flower Shop. 202-204 East Main Street, c. 1910. This two-story, beige-toned, brick building with unusual detailing was built by Benson contractor B. B. Hudson for brothers Charles and Walton Johnson, who operated a store here. The upper story features five four-over-four sash windows with arched brick lintels. The center window has been filled in. A brick string-course proceeds along the facade at the level of the lintels. The entablature is characterized by eight panels of contrasting red brick laid in a geometric pattern. The space between each panel is marked by a rectangular pendent with corbelling at its base. A diamond-shaped ornament is substituted for a pendent above the center window. A row of red bricks in a sawtooth pattern and a second row simulating dentils are located beneath the cornice, which is corbelled. The retail area at street level has been altered with the installation of false storefronts.
- C 22. Commercial Building. 206 East Main Street, c. 1920. This typical one-story commercial building with an unoriginal carrera glass front, has a plain facade and altered display windows. The structure, which is of brick construction, is currently the site of a children's clothing store.
- C 23. Commercial Building. 208 East Main Street, c. 1930. This relatively plain one-story brick building has a frieze panel featuring three rows of brick in alternating horizontally and vertically-laid squares. The structure, which has been altered at street level, is currently vacant.
- C 24. Commercial Building. 210-212 East Main Street, c. 1925. This large two-story brick building with a plain facade was built for C. T. Johnson, owner of several structures on Main Street (see Nos. 11 and 12). The store building, which most likely housed three businesses at one time, has nine one-over-one sash windows across the facade. These second-story windows are arranged in groups of three and are topped by flat stone lintels. The six northwestern-most windows have been boarded up. The original retail space on the first floor has been altered by recent occupants.

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- NC 25. Commercial Building. 214 East Main Street, c. 1935. This narrow one-story brick building with an altered entry and a plain facade is currently occupied by a beauty salon.
- C 26. Commercial Building. 216 East Main Street, c. 1925. This unremarkable one-story brick building may at one time have been the location of a garage or warehouse, as indicated by the large rectangular openings at street level. The structure has an unadorned facade and a recessed entry flanked by display windows.
- C 27. (Former) James E. Wilson Livery Stable and Store Building--J. Don Johnson Company. 222 East Main Street, 1925. This largely intact, two-story red brick building with fine details was originally the location of a large livery stable and supply store owned by prominent Benson businessman James E. Wilson. Architectural elements which remain from this original use include the wide arched openings enframing the stable doors on the southeast and southwest elevations, and the arched stable windows on the same elevations. The facade, which is essentially intact, has six windows of six-over-six sash each. Flat lintels of rough-textured stone top each window. A brick stringcourse in a contrasting color is located below the cornice, which is characterized by corbelled brick of the same contrasting tone. Two separate entries flanked by original display windows are located at street level. A wide, molded cornice with decorative brackets at each end and in the center is situated above the display area. The J. Don Johnson Company, a hardware and building supplies store, currently occupies the structure.
- C 28. Farmer House. 300 West Main Street, c. 1930. This pleasant one-and-one-half story Bungalow-style frame house has a side-gabled roof and a full-width porch which wraps around the southeast side of the structure. The porch, which is supported by tapered square posts atop brick piers typical of the Bungalow style, extends to encompass a porte cochere on the northwest side. Other elements consistent with the Bungalow style include the wide bracketed eaves, the exposed rafters of the porch roof, the central shed dormer with a similar roof treatment, and the vertically-laid three-over-one sash of the first floor windows. The house was occupied by Ira O. Farmer for many years and remains in the ownership of the Farmer family.
- P 29. Boon-Lawhorn House. 212 West Main Street, c. 1900. A handsome example of the traditional two-story, single-pile I-house decorated with a Victorian porch and wood shingle gables, this is the most stylistically sophisticated of the two structures with this basic form in the district. The frame house was built for James H. Boon (1848-1929), who is listed in the 1880 census as a farmer in Clayton Township, and by 1900 had moved to Benson where he was the manager of a livery stable. He later branched into the general mercantile business, running the J. H. Boon and Son store with his son William, who resided at 301 West Main Street.

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The facade of the Boon-Lawhorn House is dominated by a decorative porch carried by turned posts with side brackets; the balustrade has been lost. The porch turns at the northwest corner with a cone-roofed pavilion, and continues along the Farmer Street elevation. Completing the exterior decoration are curved porch rafters, a bracketed boxed cornice, louvered trefoil vents, and four-over-four sash windows. The house is expanded on the rear and sides by several ells and later rooms. Boon sold the property in 1927, and in 1935 it was acquired by J. M. and Eula Lawhorn. The property remains in ownership of Lawhorn heirs.

- I 30. West Funeral Home. 208 West Main Street, c. 1975. This is a one-story, brick funeral home with a front-gabled roof and a rear "T" section.
- P 31. Parrish-Smith House. 206 West Main Street, 1905-06. Alonzo Parrish (1876-1967), a prominent and wealthy Benson businessman, had this impressive and well-preserved Neoclassical Revival house, one of a group of five similar structures in the district, built in 1905. The son of pioneer Benson merchant J. D. Parrish, Alonzo joined the firm in 1897, acquiring sole ownership in 1911. He was also involved in mercantile, banking, farming, automobile, and creamery businesses, and was the owner and proprietor of the Carolina-Parrish Hotel, the large three-story brick building that now stands vacant at the southeast corner of the intersection of West Main and South Wall streets. His wife was Nellie Spence (1876-1959), a native of Harnett County, whom he married in 1898.

The two-story, double-pile frame house features a monumental, two-story pedimented portico on the facade that is carried by a pair of fluted Ionic columns. It extends beyond the one-story porch which turns each corner of the facade and continues along the side elevations on unfluted Ionic columns. A handsome second story porch rests on the first floor roof and is sheltered by the portico. Piercing the hip roof, which is crowned by a pair of finials, are interior chimneys built of rock-faced cement blocks, the use of which is common in Benson. The continuous boxed cornice is finished with modillions and enframes the gables on the front and side elevations; these gables, which contain demi-lune lights with art glass, are sheathed with slate shingles. Completing the house are the one-over-one sash windows, having fanlight lintels of leaded glass on the porch facade, with fluted pilaster surrounds and a keystone above the fanlights. The entrance is enframed by leaded glass sidelights and slender pilasters which support a molded architrave. Shed rooms and a short ell occupy the rear elevation.

The spacious, largely intact interior is typical of the fine houses built by the wealthy of the period. The center hall has a closed stringer stair with a Chippendale-inspired railing and a two-tier wainscot of raised panels. A pair of large sliding doors lead to each of the front parlors, which are highlighted by handsome Colonial Revival mantels with overmantels. Of note in the

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dining room is the curved glass front of the built-in china cabinet. The house has original brass hardware with a scallop shell motif. Applied egg-and-dart molding is used extensively throughout, appearing on the stair treads, on the architraves of the surrounds, on the mantels, and on the china cabinet.

Lost by the Parrish family during the Depression, the house was purchased in 1939 by Robert Franklin Smith (1874-1961) and his wife, Myrte Irene (Weeks) Smith (1879-1975). Smith was a prominent Benson lumber mill operator, merchant, and tobacco warehouse owner. In 1912, he started the Smith Manufacturing Company, later known as the Star Manufacturing Company. Smith undertook a renovation of the house, adding bathrooms, a breezeway, and a garage. In 1982, the house was acquired by Jeff and Ann (Johnson) Stephenson. Undertaking an extensive renovation, they have returned the house to its place of architectural prominence in Benson.

- C 32. House. 202 West Main Street, c. 1900. This fine Triple-A house with a Victorian porch was reportedly built by a Mr. Brannon, and later occupied by a Mr. Mashburn, information which could not be verified. The one-story frame structure is highlighted by a full-width porch with chamfered posts and turned spindles and has circular louvered vents overlaid with a decorative motif at the center of each gable. All three gables are accented by returns. The windows are four-over-four sash.
- P 33. James F. Lee House. 200 West Main Street, c. 1900. James Franklin Lee (1858-1923) had this large, two-story frame residence with an altered porch built in the Colonial Revival style. A successful farmer and general merchant in Benson, Lee had moved to Benson in the late 1880s and married Cassie Barber (1865-1940) of Clayton vicinity in 1891. The square plan house is sheltered under a high hip roof topped by a crested ornament. Entrances on both the West Main Street and the North Wall Street elevations have sunburst gables at the steps. Only the entrance bay sections of the wraparound porch survive, carried by paired Tuscan columns with terra cotta Ionic capitals and connected with a railing of heavy, urn-shaped balusters. Located at a prominent intersection at the western edge of Benson's commercial district, the house is occupied by the builder's daughter, Mary Tomlinson (Lee) Dixon.
- C 34. (Former) J. H. Boon and Son Store--Benson Auto Supply and Western Auto. 120 and 123 West Main Street, c. 1918. These adjacent two-story, brick store buildings, the southeasternmost of which has an aluminum facade, were originally the location of the J. H. Boon and Son Store. William Boon purchased the lot for these stores from J. D. Morgan in 1916. The establishment was one of the largest fertilizer, feed, and cotton supply houses in eastern North Carolina. The structure at the northeast corner of West Main and North Wall streets retains its brick facade, which features six boarded-up windows in plain enframements and a corbelled cornice line. The commercial space on the first floor has been altered on both buildings.

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- C 35. (Former) Farmers Commercial Bank Building--E. A. Johnson, Jewelqr. 121 West Main Street, c. 1905. This greatly altered one-story brick building with a plain parapet-wall facade was formerly the location of the Farmers Commercial Bank. By 1925, it was the site of the Sherrill Drug Company, established by Benson doctor H. H. Utley, who also had his office there. The street level part of the structure has been changed with the various uses it has served over the years.
- NC 36. Commercial Building. 108 West Main Street, c. 1940. This narrow one-story brick building with a simple facade was the location of a grocery store in 1918, and presently serves the same function. The structure has no distinguishing ornamentation and features a somewhat altered retail area.
- NC 37. Office Building. 106 West Main Street, c. 1960. This is a one-story brick building with a side entry and a plain facade which houses an attorney's office.
- C 38. (Former) Rose and Woodall Store--Heilig-Meyers Furniture. 104 West Main Street, c. 1920. This two-story, brick structure, which is entirely covered by an aluminum facade, originally was occupied by the Rose and Woodall furniture store. A 1925 photograph shows that the store had eight second-story windows of one-over-one sash, topped by narrow stone lintels. A plain brick stringcourse was located near the top of the building. On the first story, large display windows flanked the recessed center entry. This basic arrangement remains, although the windows have been altered. These windows and the entry were all topped by plain transoms and highlighted with awnings. This building currently houses a furniture store.
- P 39. Farmers Commercial Bank--First-Citizens Bank and Trust. 100 West Main Street, 1921. The most impressive commercial building in Johnston County, this grandly-scaled Neoclassical Revival bank was built on a prominent site adjacent to the railroad and diagonally across the street from the depot, now razed (see No. 133). The Farmers Commercial Bank, which had operated previously as the Bank of Benson and the Bank of Smithfield, formerly occupied a site to the west of the present building (No. 35). Because of a similarity of form, details, and time, there is speculation that the bank may have been designed by architect Harry Barton of Greensboro, who designed the 1921 Johnston County Courthouse in Smithfield.

The three-story, three-bay-by-eight-bay structure is faced with cut stone and is embellished with a wide variety of stylish details. Foremost are the monumental fluted Roman Doric pilasters which have capitals of egg-and-dart molding and rest on raised bases. These pilasters support a massive entablature that extends across the West Main Street and Northeast Railroad Street elevations. This entablature features a modillioned and dentiled cornice and the bank's name set in the frieze. The upper part of the building is comprised of shortened, unfluted pilasters with a cornice composed of courses

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of dentils and foliate molding that wraps around the pilasters to serve as capitals. The paired one-over-one windows on the first floor are contained in cast iron casings with enframing pilasters and a frieze of classical garlands. A similar garland spans an intermediate frieze between the first and second floors. The windows of the upper floor have been bricked in. A handsome rounded hood is supported over the front entrance by decorated scrolled corbels and contains a cartouche flanked by overflowing cornucopias, an appropriate detail for the rich agricultural area of Benson.

The tall first floor interior also has fluted Roman pilasters, crowned with stylized capitals having Ionic scrolls and anthemion foliage. These pilasters support the heavy beamed ceiling, which is finished like an entablature, and display multiple courses of moldings, including egg-and-dart. The entrance surround is a massive, round-arched marble portal with a central circular medallion and a medallion frieze. A description of the building appearing in the Smithfield Herald in 1924 said that "the basement contains pressing club and barber shop with seven chairs and six shower baths. A person can get anything in the building from a shoe shine to an X-ray picture of his entire body." The interior was remodeled in the early 1960s, at which time the present teller windows and the suspended lights were added. The structure became known as the First National Bank in 1924 and for many years has served the Benson community as the First-Citizens Bank and Trust.

- C 40. Commercial Building. 101 East Main Street, c. 1935. This typical one-story brick building with a plain facade and modern roof over the entrance and flanking windows is currently occupied by an insurance agency.
- C 41. (Former) Preston Woodall Store. 105 East Main Street, c. 1905. This attractive two-story brick structure with fine brick details was built for prosperous merchant Preston Woodall, who operated a dry goods store here. The upper story has six windows which have been boarded up and are set into arched enframements. Beneath each window is a recessed rectangular panel with a corbelled top. A corbel course proceeds across the facade above the windows, following the arched configuration of the enframements. A second corbel course and a row of bricks laid with their ends facing the street located beneath two recessed, rectangular frieze panels. The cornice line is completed by a row of bricks resembling dentils. The largely original retail space at street level consists of two recessed center entries with double-leaf doors corresponding to the two halves of the original store. These entries are enframed by columns and are flanked by display windows. The building is currently vacant.
- NC 42. (Former) P. B. Johnson Store--Jeanette's. 107 East Main Street, c. 1905. This two-story brick building with a completely bricked-over facade was originally the location of the P. B. Johnson Store, which specialized in hardware, fertilizer, and building materials. In addition to the upper portion of the facade, the commercial space on the first floor has been altered.

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- C 43. (Former) R. B. Brady Store--Abdallah's. 109-111 East Main Street, c. 1905. This two-story brick structure, half of which retains its original facade with simple detailing and half of which is covered with aluminum, was originally occupied by R. B. Brady's general store. The intact section of the facade is characterized by three narrow arched windows with a corbel course below them and a second course level with their centers. A string-course echoing the arched form of the windows outlines their tops. Several rows of corbelling define the cornice line. The retail area on the first floor has been altered. The building is currently occupied by a clothing store.
- C 44. (Former) J. W. Greenthal Store--The Branch. 113 East Main Street, c. 1910. This one-story brick building with a replacement aluminum facade was the location of Jake Greenthal's clothing store. Greenthal, a Baltimore native who arrived in Benson in 1910, opened his business two years later. In addition to the aluminum front, the commercial area is a modern alteration.
- NC 45. Commercial Building. 115 East Main Street, c. 1945. This narrow one-story brick building with a plain facade is most likely not original to the site. It is presently the location of a clothing store.
- C 46. J. F. Woodall Store. 119 East Main Street, c. 1905. These two, two-story brick buildings, one of which retains its distinctive decorative facade and one of which has been altered, were originally the location of J. F. Woodall's general store. The business, established in 1906, still occupies the same site. The store building which has its original facade features two four-over-four sash windows set into arched enframements. The shutters on the windows are not original. A row of bricks laid in a sawtooth pattern is located near the bottoms of the windows, while corbel courses of varying widths proceed across the facade. Corbelled pilasters, alternately long and short in length, finish off the top of the building. A row of bricks in a sawtooth pattern marks the space between each pilaster. The retail space on the first floor, which has a recessed center entry and large display windows offset by corner columns, has been modernized. The altered store building has a plain brick facade and modern commercial space on the first floor.
- C 47. (Former) A. B. Hudson Store. 121 East Main Street, c. 1910. This typical one-story brick building with simple detailing was the location of a general store owned by Allen B. Hudson, who had diversified business interests in Benson. The structure has a recessed rectangular panel above the entry and is finished with a corbelled cornice line. The roof over the center entry and display windows is a modern addition.
- C 48. Commercial Building. 123 East Main Street, c. 1935. This large, two-story red brick building on a prominent corner has brick detailing of a contrasting color around the windows and below the roofline. The upper story is characterized by a multitude of one-over-one sash windows, the majority of which

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are on the North Market Street elevation. All the windows are accentuated by beige brick enframements. Small squares of the same color brick appear on two bands above the windows which proceed across the facade and North Market Street elevation. The first floor has been altered by the current occupant, Raleigh Federal Savings and Loan.

- C 49. (Former) Eli S. Turlington Store--Pope's. 213 East Main Street, c. 1910. This unfortunately altered two-story brick structure with nice detailing was originally the location of Eli S. Turlington and Company, a furniture and hardware store. The upper story is distinguished by flat brick pilasters which articulate six bays, each of which originally had a window at its center. The windows, which have been bricked in, are marked by an arched brick stringcourse. The top of each bay contains a second stringcourse and four corbelled projections resembling dentils. A row of more diminutive dentil-like projections defines the area directly below the cornice line. The cornice itself is corbelled. The double recessed entries and display windows on the first floor have been altered. The building is currently occupied by a general store.
- C 50. Commercial Building. 213 East Main Street, c. 1925. This two-story brick building with a relatively plain facade and a recessed central archway on the first floor was most likely built by wealthy Benson merchant Samuel Stone. The second story windows are one-over-one sash and are topped by flat lintels of rough-cut stone. The window sills are of the same material. The cornice line is defined by several rows of corbelled brick. The storefronts of the two businesses which occupy the building have been altered.
- C 51. Commercial Building. 211 East Main Street, c. 1945. This one-story brick building with a plain facade and altered retail space is divided into two businesses. The structure is situated on part of the site formerly occupied by the C. W. Anderson grocery store, built around 1925.
- NC 52. Commercial Building. 219 East Main Street, c. 1945. This undistinguished one-story brick building houses four business establishments, all of which have recessed center entries flanked by display windows. The northwestern end of the building is on the site formerly occupied by the C. W. Anderson grocery store.
- C 53. (Former) J. W. Parrish Garage and Filling Station--Dot's Lingerie Outlet and Benson Fabric Center. 217 East Main Street, c. 1920. This greatly altered one-story brick building was originally the location of a garage and filling station operated by Benson automobile dealer J. W. Parrish. A 1925 photograph shows that the establishment had an angled entry in the corner of the northwest bay. The rectangular spaces which are now filled in with windows were open to the street, allowing cars to drive in for service. The recessed rectangular panels above each store are part of the original design. The structure is currently occupied by two retail concerns.

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- P 54. Dr. Parker-Allen House. 217 West Church Street, c. 1910. This fine one-story Queen Anne frame house finished with Colonial Revival elements was built for Dr. George Elijah Parker (1862-1940). Dr. Parker, who maintained a general medical practice in Benson from the late 1880s until his death, was the first physician to settle in the town. The structure is an excellent example of a Queen Anne form with Colonial Revival details, and exhibits such distinctive features as a high hip roof with gables, individual roof crestings, and an entrance portico with paired Tuscan columns supporting a gable with a sunburst motif. Completing the exterior are one-over-one window sash in simple surrounds, arched gable windows with keystone ornamentation, and interior chimneys built of rock-faced cement blocks. A Tuscan-columned wraparound porch was removed in the 1940s.

On the interior, the spacious center hall is divided by an intricate Victorian sawn screen. The mantels, tall baseboards, and entablature surrounds on plinths are typical of the period. The house, which for many years was the home of Nellie Smith Allen (1894-1980), was purchased in 1982 and thoroughly renovated by Devah and Katherine Barbour.

- NC 55. Lawrence Parrish House. 213 West Church Street, c. 1960. One-and-one-half-story frame house with gable ends and front gable built by Lawrence Parrish.
- C 56. Parrish-McLamb House. 209 West Church Street, c. 1920. John W. Parrish, the original owner of this handsome one-and-one-half-story Bungalow-style frame home, came to Benson in 1917 as the manager of the Sanders Motor Company, and had this house built between 1918 and 1925. The structure is one of several large-scale Bungalow residences located on West Church Street, and features a gable-sided roof with overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets, a prominent shed dormer, and a wide, engaged porch supported by six battered square posts atop high brick piers which extend across the entire facade. All the first floor windows are either nine-over-nine or twelve-over-one sash, and the front dormer and gabled portions of the house are finished with wood shingles. No major alterations have been made to this home, which was later occupied by John B. McLamb and was purchased around 1980 by Rapon Best.
- P 57. Godwin-Johnson House. 207 West Church Street, c. 1910. This striking and unusual variation of the Bungalow style was built for farm supplies merchant J. H. "Bud" Godwin, Jr. (1882-1938) and his wife, Eva P. Godwin (1888-1956). They had purchased the lot in 1909 from J. D. Parrish. The one-and-one-half story brick home has a dominant front gable roof that extends to engage a full-width porch carried on paired pillars atop brick pedestals. Recessed into the gable, which is covered with wood shingles, is a small balcony that is framed by diminutive paired pillars similar to those on the porch. Details heightening the house's unique character include projecting decorative corner beams above the porch pillars, curved brackets under the eaves, and shed

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dormers along the side elevations. Of note is the subtle pattern of the brick walls, which are laid in common bond with every fifth course being comprised of alternating stretchers and headers. The windows are one-over-one sash. Ed and Gladys Johnson occupied the house for a number of years from the 1940s to 1970; the present owner, Anthony J. Augustine, Jr., purchased it in 1981.

- C 58. House. 205 West Church Street, c. 1910. This one-story frame home has the traditional triple-gable form common to many historic structures in Benson. The Colonial Revival gabled portico with square posts, returns, and a sunburst design similar to that at 217 West Church Street is a distinguishing feature. A triangular molding above the vent on the front gable echoes the portico roof form. The facade windows are six-over-six sash while those on the side elevations are two-over-two sash.
- 59. Benson Baptist Church Parking Lot. Former site of Hodges House.
- I 60. Benson Auto Supply Machine Shop. Southeast corner East Church and Northeast Railroad Street, c. 1975. This one-story brick structure with a front-gabled roof houses a machine shop for the Benson Auto Supply store located at 120 West Main Street.
- I 61. Ace Auto Parts. 103 West Church Street, c. 1975. This one-story brick store has a low-pitched gable roof and is the site of an auto parts dealer.
- I 62. Short Stop. 106 East Church Street, c. 1975. This one-story brick commercial building with a side-gabled roof is the location of a small-item grocery store.
- C 63. Elijah F. Moore House. 200 East Church Street, c. 1900. Elijah F. Moore, the original owner of this large, two-story frame residence with Victorian details, was involved in the manufacture and sale of turpentine, an important industry in Benson's early years. The Moore home is an L-shaped structure with a hip roof with exposed rafters, simple Victorian-era door and first floor window surrounds, and a porch with square posts, not original to the structure, which spans the entire facade. A Victorian-period door on the second story above the main entrance suggests the original presence of a balcony in this location. All windows on the house are four-over-four sash. The structure is presently used as a multiple-family dwelling.
- 64. Vacant lot.
- C 65. J. Oscar Johnson House. 204 East Church Street, c. 1905. This one-story traditional Triple-A frame house with an unusual clipped gable on the south-east side and a one-and-one-half-story rear ell was built for J. Oscar Johnson, who is listed as a salesman in the 1910 census. The fish-scale shingles in the gabled portions of the roof are a Queen Anne feature. The

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shingled gable denoting the front entrance is the only remaining element from the original porch, which has been replaced with square wooden posts atop brick piers. The structure is currently divided into two apartments.

- C 66. J. F. Woodall House. 206 East Church Street, c. 1910. This largely intact Colonial Revival house was built for Benson merchant J. F. Woodall on land he acquired from Mary C. Benson in 1910. The one-and-one-half-story frame residence features a high hip roof with multiple gables and a pedimented dormer above the main entrance. The returns on this dormer and the front gables are Colonial Revival aspects of the structure, as is the wraparound porch with slender Classical columns and a pediment above the entrance. The windows are one-over-one sash. Ownership of this home remains in the Woodall family.
- C 67. Alonzo Stephenson House. 300 East Church Street, c. 1911. This one-and-one-half-story Colonial Revival frame house, typical of medium-sized structures of this type in Benson, was built by Alonzo Stephenson on a lot acquired from Mary C. Benson in 1911. The structure has a high hip roof with a central front gable and side gables. Each gable contains an arched window with a sunburst motif in its upper portion. All other windows are one-over-one sash. The treatment of the main entrance exemplifies the expression of the Colonial Revival style common to many Benson homes, with its gabled portico supported by pairs of stylized Classical square posts and the sidelights and transom light surrounding the entry itself. A porch at one time spanned the entire facade and connected to the side porches, one of which has been partially enclosed. The house is currently divided into two dwelling units.
- NC 68. Marshall Woodall House. 302 East Church Street, c. 1960. This is a one-story L-shaped brick house with gable ends and a gable front. An engaged porch is flush with the projecting part of the ell and occupies the width of the facade.
- NC 69. Jesse Stephenson House. 304 East Church Street, c. 1915. Jesse Stephenson, listed as a mail carrier in the 1910 census, was the original occupant of this greatly altered home. He was the brother of Alonzo Stephenson, who apparently built this structure as well as the home at 300 East Church Street. This one-and-one-half-story frame house was extensively altered following a fire which destroyed the upper story and a two-story front porch. The structure has a side-gabled roof as well as a front gable and a one-story gambrel-roofed main entrance. A carport on the southeast side of the house was added by the current owners.
- C 70. Tony Johnson House. 306 East Church Street, c. 1930. This is a traditional two-story Colonial Revival frame home with gable ends and a symmetrical facade. The facade features a wide gabled portico with a curved underside and such Colonial Revival elements as stylized Classical square posts and returns. The main door is flanked by sidelights and topped by a transom light set into a slightly-peaked surround. All the windows are eight-over-eight sash.

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- C 71. Benton House. 400 East Church Street, c. 1905. This one-and-one-half-story standard frame Colonial Revival house was built by Jacob Wheeler, also owner of the structure at 401 East Church Street. The Benton family acquired it in 1916 and remodeled it in the Colonial Revival style. The structure features a high hip roof and gabled dormers on the front, back, and sides. The gabled front portico with Colonial Revival details is similar to that on other homes from the same time period along the south side of East Church Street. A porch originally located across the entire facade was removed in the 1930s. The first-floor windows on the front are six-over-one sash while those elsewhere on the structure are four-over-one. The home remains in possession of the Benton family.
- C 72. Hudson House. 402 East Church Street, c. 1910. This traditional Triple-A structure with a Colonial Revival porch was most likely built by prominent Benson merchant Allen B. Hudson and was later occupied by his son Arthur. The one-story frame house has returns on all three gables and a simple one-story porch with stylized Classical square posts across the facade. The paired-arch louvered vents at the attic level are an additional decorative feature. This essentially unaltered structure has four-over-one sash windows.
- I 73. House. 404-406 East Church Street, c. 1960. This is a one-story two-family home with a gabled-end roof and aluminum siding.
- NC 74. St. Anthony Catholic Church. 408 East Church Street, c. 1910. This extensively altered, originally frame church has been in the possession of the congregation since about 1910. The simple one-story structure has a front-gabled roof and four bays on each side. The non-original double-leaf doors at the entrance are contained within a gabled pavilion. The entire structure is covered with aluminum siding.
- C 75. House. 218 West Church Street, c. 1915. This is a typical one-and-one-half story Triple-A frame house with simple Colonial Revival details. These include the one-story, full-width porch with squared posts topped by stylized capitals, the returns on the side gables, and the sidelights and transom light surrounding the entrance. The windows are one-over-one sash.
- C 76. Nathan Porter House. 216 West Church Street, c. 1905. This extensively altered, traditional Triple-A frame house with its southwest side facing the street was apparently built by Benson salesman Rufus J. Austin. The one-story structure has an altered porch across the facade, which faces southeast. This porch has been enclosed on the northeast end, the original supports have been removed, and the orientation of the original front entrance has been changed. A gabled portico with returns denotes an entrance on the southwest, or Church Street, side of the house. Decorative features of the structure include the louvered attic vents with a star-in-circle motif at their centers and the returns on all the gables. The house was owned for many years by Nathan Porter, a whiskey manufacturer and carpenter.

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- C 77. Dr. Moore-Stephenson House. 214 West Church Street, c. 1905. Dr. F. T. Moore (1855-1918), the original owner of this altered Triple-A frame residence, was one of the earliest physicians to settle in Benson, opening his practice in 1902. While in the town, he helped to organize the Benson Presbyterian Church and served as its ruling elder. The one-story home has Victorian-era peaked window and door surrounds and one-over-one sash windows. The basic form of the surrounds is repeated for the attic vent enframements. The original porch has been replaced with a high balustrade even with the cornice line which is supported by square posts. The house has been owned by the Stephenson family for many years.
- C 78. Gideon Dixon House. 212 West Church Street, c. 1920. This unsympathetically altered one-and-one-half-story Colonial Revival house was built for Gideon Dixon on land he purchased from John Smith in 1915. The frame structure has a high hip roof with front and side gables accented by returns. The original porch with Ionic columns has been enclosed on the facade, but the section which wraps around the southeast side is intact. The remaining original windows on the sides and in the gables are one-over-one sash. The house is currently a multiple-family rental property.
- C 79. Moses A. Peacock House. 208 West Church Street, 1922. Druggist Moses A. Peacock (1887-1961), operator of a pharmacy on West Main Street, was the original owner of this well-executed one-and-one-half-story Bungalow-style house with a side-gabled roof. The dwelling has many elements commonly found on homes of this type, including wide eaves with decorative brackets, a center gabled dormer above the front entrance, and an engaged front porch with a broad sloping roof and exposed rafters. The porch roof is supported by tapered square posts atop brick piers. The windows are all one-over-one sash. James Peacock, son of the original owner, currently occupies the home.
- C 80. Hudson-Johnson-Gilbert House. 206 West Church Street, c. 1924. This fine one-story brick Bungalow home with a front gable roof was built for John Hudson. With its wide bracketed eaves and porch with brick piers, it is one of several diversified examples of the Bungalow style on West Church Street. The secondary front gable above the porch and decorative hexagonal shingles in the southeast side gable are distinctive features, as are the windows with vertically-laid four-over-one sash. The house was occupied by Joseph A. Johnson during the 1940s and was purchased by Charles M. Gilbert, the current owner, in about 1950.
- NC 81. Benson Baptist Church Parsonage. 204 West Church Street, 1951. This two-story, L-shaped structure has gable ends and a front gable. The original parsonage on the site was moved to North Wall Street in 1950 in order to make room for this frame and brick veneer residence.

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- P 82. Benson Baptist Church. 200 West Church Street, 1914-1915. The Benson Baptist Church, a brick building executed in the Gothic Revival mode, is one of the most prominent structures in the town. The congregation was organized on January 24, 1887 as the Bethany Baptist Church and was renamed in September 1887. The first church belonging to the congregation was constructed in late 1887 and destroyed by a windstorm in 1891. A second church was erected on the present site on land donated by the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. By 1914 the church had outgrown its second building and construction was begun on the current structure during that year. Of note is the fact that Alonzo Parrish, one of Benson's leading citizens, paid one-tenth of the total building cost and supplied all the brick for the project.

The hip-roofed church building, first occupied in June 1915, is dominated by its tall corner bell tower and has shorter battlemented towers at the side entrances. Gothic-arched windows, buttresses, corbelled brickwork, and the prominent finials on the roof heighten the building's picturesque ecclesiastical presence.

On the interior, stained glass windows containing a prominent fleur-de-lis motif flood the sanctuary with brilliant shades of blue, purple, and green. A flat, circular dome is recessed into the roof. The interior was renovated in 1956, at which time the seating capacity was increased, and again in 1977. The adjacent Educational Building was erected in 1960 and exhibits Gothic references which compliment the church.

- C 83. Lonnie Stevens House. 106 West Church Street, c. 1916. Lonnie Stevens, the original owner of this typical one-story Triple-A residence with a Bungaloid porch, purchased the lot on which it stands from Harvey Creech in 1916. Distinguishing features include the quatrefoil-shaped louvered vent in the front gable and the sidelights and transom light surrounding the front door. The central gable is accentuated with returns. The windows are vertically-laid four-over-one sash. The Stevens residence is similar in overall form and appearance to the H. A. Parker house adjacent on the southeast.
- C 84. H. A. Parker House. 104 West Church Street, c. 1915. H. A. Parker acquired the lot for this one-story Triple-A home from J. Gideon Dixon in 1915. Like its neighbor the Lonnie Stevens house, this structure has a Bungaloid porch. The porch itself features paired chamfered posts atop brick piers. The front gable has a diamond-shaped louvered vent at its center. All windows are one-over-one sash.
- C 85. Hockaday-Poole House. 102 West Church Street, c. 1900. This frame structure is a highly decorative interpretation of the one-story Triple-A form, displaying elaborate sawn and scrolled bargeboards and a traditional Victorian-era porch. The porch itself features a ball and spindle frieze and turned posts with scrolled brackets at their tops. The windows are four-over-four sash. An early owner of this house was Jesse M. Britt, a blacksmith who purchased the property in 1904. W. W. Hockaday acquired the house in 1919 and sold it to J. H. Poole in 1934.

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- I 86. Edgerton's Garage. 100 West Church Street, c. 1960. This is a one-story brick garage with a flat roof occupied by a car repair business.
- C 87. M. T. Britt House. 101 East Church Street, c. 1915. M. T. Britt acquired the land for this large Triple-A home with a stylized Colonial Revival porch from D. B. Woodall in 1915. Britt was the cashier of the Farmers Commercial Bank when it opened in 1908, and served as its head and on the board of directors in the ensuing years. The one-story frame structure is highlighted by a full-width Colonial Revival porch with paired square posts and a decorative rail featuring wooden slats laid in a star pattern. The sidelights with six panes each which flank the entrance are another Colonial Revival feature. The windows are one-over-one sash.
- C 88. Wilson Rental House. 105 East Church Street, c. 1900. This traditional Triple-A frame house has an intact Victorian porch with chamfered posts topped by brackets with decorative cutouts and sawwork. The entry is surrounded by simple sidelights and a transom light set into a scalloped enframingent. The four-over-four sash windows have arched enframingents typical of vernacular Victorian houses. This structure, acquired by the Wilson family in the 1930s, resembles the Hockaday-Poole house at 102 West Church Street in overall form and detailing.
- P 89. Samuel D. Stone House. 201 East Church Street, c. 1918. Contractor Whitt Norris of Benson built this handsome Neoclassical Revival residence in about 1918 for prosperous farmer Samuel D. Stone (1870-1930). The house is one of a group of five residences erected in this style in Benson during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In 1911, the Stones purchased the James W. Benson residence which was then demolished for the erection of this house. The imposing two-story, double-pile frame house has a "T" shape with a hip roof above the front portion and gables on either side. The facade features a monumental pedimented portico with paired, fluted Corinthian columns and a wraparound porch, now partially enclosed, of fluted Ionic columns; the capitals are terra cotta. A second-story balustraded balcony occupies the space between the columns above the entrance. Especially noteworthy are the tympanums of the pediment and gables which contain art glass windows, are stuccoed with a pebbled texture, and are enframed by a dentil course and a modillioned cornice. The rear two-room ell displays a false gable with similar detailing. Several original outbuildings remain on the property.

The spacious interior contains the substantial, well-executed features usually found in the finer houses of the 1910s: a massive closed-stringer staircase with slender balusters and a square, paneled newel, raised panel wainscots, and large sliding doors leading to individual rooms off the stair hall. The house, divided into several apartments, is occupied by the original owner's daughters, Virginia Dare (Stone) Loveless and Naomi Stone.

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NC 90. Benson United Methodist Church Parsonage. 203 East Church Street, c. 1960. This is a one-and-one-half-story brick house with a side-gabled roof and a projecting, gabled entrance pavilion. This vaguely Tudor structure serves as the residence of the pastor for Benson United Methodist Church and refers to the style of the church building.

P 91. Benson United Methodist Church. 205 East Church Street, 1917. One of two fine Gothic Revival churches in Benson, this massive brick edifice was constructed at a cost of \$50,000. That such a large and costly church was built was not only a testament to the members' faith, but also to the very prosperous times of the period. It was built to replace an earlier frame church building on the present site. This earlier church was erected over a period of years following the congregation's organization on September 16, 1898. The lot had been given to the congregation by Benson druggist James W. Benson, whose house stood on the lot now occupied by the Samuel D. Stone House.

This highly eclectic building has a corner, three-tier bell tower with a soaring spire which is echoed by smaller spires at the corner entrances. The bell tower has such distinctively Gothic Revival features as buttresses, cement sills and caps, and pointed-arch open belfry windows. A Tudor-arched arcade with prominent water spouts screens the recessed porch and entrance. The multifaceted exuberance of the exterior continues with an octagonal projecting spiral stair tower, Gothic windows, and a variety of projections along the pyramidal roofline.

The interior is equally grand, with the ribs of the shallow, cross-vaulted ceiling decorated with molding and springing from engaged columns to meet at the central oculus. Other highlights of the interior include the stained-glass windows, the balcony above the West Church Street entrance, and the pews with Gothic-arch insets.

P 92. Benson Elementary School. 300 Block East Church Street, c. 1915. This handsome Colonial Revival school, built between 1912 and 1916, typifies many educational buildings constructed in North Carolina at this time. The two-story red brick building with a full basement and flat roof is on the site formerly occupied by the Benson Graded School, a 1905 frame structure which was moved to 208 East Hill Street to make room for the new construction.

The main entrance to the building is recessed behind an arched opening which is surrounded by paired Doric columns supporting a full entablature. The six-over-six sash windows are all set into openings topped by triple-course, segmental-arched brick lintels of a contrasting shade. A secondary entrance facing North Johnson Street is contained within a projecting one-story pavilion with a similar segmental-arched brick lintel. The three-story annex adjacent to the school on the northwest side was built in 1926 and is connected to the main building by arcaded walkways corresponding to each of the three stories.

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Each opening in the arcade and all the windows in the front of the annex are capped by segmental-arched lintels similar to those on the main building. All other windows on the annex have flat lintels. The one-story brick school cafeteria, a detached flat-roofed structure erected in the 1970s at the north-west corner of the site, is currently being converted into the Benson Fire Station (No. 92A).

The school originally housed all grades, but from 1969 until 1983 it was used solely for grades 4 through 8. The town of Benson currently owns the structure and plans to renovate it for office space.

- C 93. Jacob Wheeler House. 401 East Church Street, c. 1905. Benson grocer Jacob Wheeler purchased the lot for this traditional Triple-A house with an altered porch from G. M. Benson in 1904. The one-story frame structure has sidelights and a transom light surrounding the front door, and four-over-four sash windows. The full-width front porch with square posts on brick piers and a simple balustrade differs from the original, which wrapped around the north-west side of the house.
- C 94. House. 403 East Church Street, c. 1910. This Triple-A frame residence with four-over-four sash windows has been altered from its original appearance through relocation of the main entrance to the southeast side and removal of the full-width front porch. The paired-arch louvered vents in the side gables are similar to those on the Hudson house at 402 East Church Street. The structure is currently owned by the Benson Pentecostal Holiness Church adjacent on the southeast side.
- NC 95. Benson Pentecostal Holiness Church, 407 East Church Street, c. 1945. The Benson Pentecostal Holiness congregation was established in October 1942, and soon thereafter built this standard one-and-one-half-story brick church with Gothic Revival references. The structure has a front-gabled roof and a one-story entrance pavilion topped by a parapet gable and anchored by shallow buttresses at the corners. Similar buttresses are also located at the corners of the facade. The entrance itself is into a Gothic-arched enframingent with a keystone at its apex, as are the stained-glass windows in the front gable and those on the sides. A two-story brick annex, added in the 1960s, is located at the rear of the structure.
- I 96. Carolina Telephone Utility Building. South side East Hill Street southeast corner Northeast Railroad Street, c. 1970. This one-story brick building with a flat roof is owned by Carolina Telephone and houses switching equipment for the utility.
- C 97. Royal House. 202-204 East Hill Street, c. 1910 and c. 1920. This typical two-family frame structure with a gable roof was built by Phoebe Royal, the original owner of the adjacent house at 202 North Market Street. The southeast end of this one-and-one-half-story, L-shaped residence appears to have been

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constructed around 1910, while the northwest extension and front porch were added in about 1920. The porch, which has unusual supports consisting of two posts flanking a trellis-like configuration, extends across the entire facade and is enclosed at the southeast end. The windows in the northwest end are four-over-four sash.

98. Vacant lot.

- P 99. (Former) Dixie School. 208 East Hill Street, 1905. This large, relatively plain, two-story frame building with a cross-gabled roof originally housed the Benson Graded High School, known locally as the Dixie School. The foundation for this structure, which replaced an earlier two-room schoolhouse, was laid in 1905. Between 1911 and 1916, the Dixie School was moved from the 300 block on the north side of East Church Street to its present location in order to make room for construction of the new Benson High School. Historic photographs show that the main entrance to the building was on the southeast side at the base of the two-story gabled pavilion. This pavilion was formerly topped by a tower with a pyramidal roof. An exterior staircase led to the second floor on the northern side of the pavilion. The northeast, or current front, elevation has a two-story Colonial Revival porch not original to the structure. The windows are original nine-over-nine sash.

According to a description of the school written in 1911, the first floor originally contained "four recitation rooms, 32 by 26 ft. each, furnished with modern patent desks, blackboards, globes, private library, etc., also suitable cloak rooms (and) large open halls, affording almost perfect ventilation. The second story (had) four recitation rooms and (an) auditorium." [Annual Catalogue of Benson High School. (Wilson, N.C.: Barrett's Print, 1911), pp. 6-7.] This former school building with a cross-hall plan and four diagonally-placed interior chimneys is currently divided into apartments. This use is reflected in the alteration of the fenestration pattern and the installation of six doors corresponding to individual dwelling units on the facade.

- C 100. William Woodall House. 400 East Hill Street, c. 1920. This appealing one-and-one-half-story Colonial Revival residence was most likely built by Preston Woodall, one of Benson's leading citizens, who acquired the property from W. Jesse Stephenson in 1917. Woodall's son William occupied the house for many years. The frame structure has a high hip roof with front and side gables and a one-and-one-half-story gabled ell at the rear. The original Colonial Revival porch with Ionic columns proceeds across the entire facade and wraps around the northwest side of the house. Other Colonial Revival elements include the returns on the rear ell gable and the sidelights and transom light surrounding the front door. The remaining original windows are one-over-one sash.

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- C 101. Benson Presbyterian Church. 402 East Hill Street, 1917. This frame church, which follows traditional Gothic Revival forms, was erected by the Benson Presbyterian congregation. Organized in June 1916 by the Reverend Abram Troy Lassiter, the seventeen charter members of the congregation first met in an old schoolhouse before occupying this building for the first time on Sunday, July 12, 1917. The one-story, front-gabled structure is centered by a bell tower with a crenelated top. Sets of double-leaf doors topped by Gothic-arched transoms with stippled glass provide access to the church at each side of the tower. Characteristic Gothic-arched windows of stippled glass are located along the nave, and a small apse is situated at the rear. Lassiter, a prominent Presbyterian minister and farmer, served as the church's pastor until 1925.
- C 102. John Turlington House. 404 East Hill Street, c. 1923. John Turlington, an early occupant of this one-and-one-half-story frame residence with Bungalow-style allusions, purchased this lot from C. T. Johnson in 1923. Turlington may have remodeled the house, which has a side-gabled roof and a shed dormer in front, from an earlier structure on the site. Both the dormer and wrap-around porch with tapered square posts atop brick piers are Bungalow-style elements, while the basic house form is not consistent with this style. The facade has paired one-over-one sash windows and sidelights and a transom light around the entrance. The house is currently divided into apartments.
- NC 103. Ethel Turlington House. 406 East Hill Street, c. 1935. This two-story frame residence has a side-gabled roof with a gabled dormer in front. The entrance, located at the southeast corner of the house, is offset by a porch with simple square posts which proceeds across part of the facade and wraps around the southeast side of the structure. The windows are six-over-six sash.
- C 104. Charles Johnson House. 101 East Hill Street, 1906. This house, built by Benson merchant Charles Johnson, is a fine example of the Queen Anne style interpreted on a modest scale. The two-story frame structure with a gable-on-hip roof has such traditional Queen Anne elements as multiple wood-shingled gables with returns, a full-width porch with a center gable with returns denoting the entrance, and a clipped corner at the northwest end of the facade. The porch supports have been altered. Several of the windows have slightly-peaked surrounds which are consistent with the Queen Anne style, as is the tripartite arrangement of the first-floor facade windows. Most of the windows have vertically-laid four-over-one sash. Other distinctive features of the site include ornamental lawn curbs in front of the house and a frame rear storage shed with latticework corners.
- C 105. W. O. Rackley House. 103 East Hill Street, c. 1915. This standard two-story Colonial Revival home with Bungalow-style elements was built by W. O. Rackley, who acquired the lot from J. O. Johnson in 1915. Colonial Revival features of the frame residence include the returns in the gabled ends of the roof, the

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full-width porch with a gabled center pavilion, and the transom light and sidelights surrounding the entrance. The tapered porch supports atop brick piers are part of a Bungalow-style remodeling, as is the three-bay shed dormer on the facade. The windows in the front portion of the house are vertically-laid four-over-one sash, while those in the rear ell portion are four-over-four.

- C 106. (Former) M. C. Stewart House--Benson Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist Church Parsonage. 105 East Hill Street, c. 1905. This completely remodeled traditional two-story, single-pile I-house was built by M. C. Stewart on land purchased from C. W. Anderson in 1905. This originally frame structure, renovated for use as the Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist Church parsonage in 1974, has a brick veneer, a modern Colonial Revival porch and a modern broken-pedimented door surround.
- C 107. Charles W. Anderson House. 107 East Hill Street, c. 1915. This largely-unaltered Triple-A residence with a fine Colonial Revival wraparound porch was built by Charles W. Anderson, a Benson merchant and charter member of the Benson Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist Church. Prominent Colonial Revival elements on this one-story frame structure include the returns in the gables, the porch with Tuscan columns topped by fluted Ionic capitals, and the sidelights and transom lights surrounding the entrance. The circular vent openings in the three main gables are an additional decorative feature. The windows are one-over-one sash.
- P 108. Preston Woodall House. 201 East Hill Street, c. 1910. This distinguished Neoclassical Revival residence, one of a group of five large-scale homes in a similar stylistic mode built by Benson's prosperous merchants between 1900 and 1920, was constructed for Preston Woodall (1874-1945). Woodall operated a large department store in Benson, which he organized in 1899, as well as twenty farms and five saw mills in the Benson vicinity. In addition, he served as vice-president of Farmers Commercial Bank for five years, as president of Citizens Bank and Trust Company for six years, and as alderman of Benson for ten years. He was also secretary to the Board of Elders of the Presbyterian Church and was active in community affairs.

The two-story, frame Woodall residence is dominated by a central two-story portico which is carried by fluted Corinthian columns and extends to shelter a one-story porch of unfluted Ionic columns across the facade. The first floor porch wraps around the northwest elevation, where it is centered by a projecting gable over the side stairs, and again turns to continue across the rear and along the northwest elevation of the rear ell. The ell portion of this porch has since been enclosed. Flat surrounds with molded and peaked lintel hoods enframe the four-over-four sash windows and the trabeated entrances. Several bay windows and clipped corners alleviate the rigidity of the double-pile plan. The rear ell is further embellished through the use of wood shingles in the gables, which are framed by returning boxed cornices; identical shingles are in the small gable projection over the northwest side steps.

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The plastered interior is organized by the center and transverse halls; of note in the transverse hall is the large metal furnace grate. Rising from the rear of the hall is a closed-stringer stair with turned balusters which is anchored by a large square newel carrying the handrail. Finishing elements include Colonial Revival mantels, two with mirrored overmantels, molded surrounds, and seven raised-panel doors.

- C 109. Fred Allen House. 203 East Hill Street, c. 1915. This nice, traditional Triple-A house with Colonial Revival elements and a Bungalow-style porch was reportedly built by Preston Woodall, owner of the adjacent residence at 201 East Hill Street, for his mother. The one-story frame structure has Colonial Revival details, including returns in the gables and louvered attic vents set into peaked surrounds. The Bungalow-style porch, most likely a remodeling of an earlier porch, features tapered square posts mounted on high brick piers. The windows are six-over-six sash. Fred Allen, son of Seth Allen, the original owner of 207 East Hill Street, purchased this house in 1938. The structure remains in the Allen family.
- C 110. Benson Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist Church. 205 East Hill Street, c. 1895. This simple one-story gable-roofed church building, originally a frame structure, was built in the late 1890s and has been associated with the Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist congregation in Benson since its founding in 1900. The greatly altered building, originally owned by Charles W. Anderson, was initially located near the intersection of East Holmes and North Market streets and was moved to its present site on East Hill Street in December 1930. The current appearance of the T-shaped building is the result of several changes made over the years, including the construction of the gabled front vestibule in 1944, the removal of the original bell tower in 1957 and the installation of the present steeple in 1971, the construction of a brick veneer in 1971, and the installation of the stained-glass windows and transom light to replace the original two-over-two windows and plain transom. A two-story, gable-roofed brick educational building was constructed at the rear of the church in 1962.
- C 111. Seth Allen House. 207 East Hill Street, c. 1901. This modest-sized, relatively plain one-and-one-half-story Bungalow-style house with a side-gabled roof was built by Benson merchant and farmer Seth Allen, who acquired the lot from Nathan E. Lee in 1901. The present appearance of this frame residence most likely reflects a Bungalow-style remodeling of the original structure on the site. Elements of this style include the shed dormer with wide, bracketed eaves on the facade, the similarly-bracketed eaves elsewhere on the house, and the tapered, square supports on the full-width front porch and on the porch at the southeast side. The windows are four-over-four sash.
- I 112. House. 301 East Hill Street, c. 1970. This is a one-story brick residence with a hip roof and center interior chimney similar to those structures at 303 and 305 East Hill Street.

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- I 113. House. 303 East Hill Street, c. 1970. This is a one-story brick house with a side-gabled roof and attached carport on the southeast side. The structure is similar in overall form to the houses at 301 and 305 East Hill Street.
- I 114. House. 305 East Hill Street, c. 1970. This is a one-story brick house with a side-gabled roof and a pedimented front porch supported by wrought-iron posts. An attached carport is located on the southeast side. The structure is similar in appearance to the houses at 301 and 303 East Hill Street.
- C 115. Johnson-Lee House. 307 East Hill Street, c. 1925. This well-executed Bungalow-style residence with fine detailing was built by Paul Johnson, son of C. T. Johnson, one of Benson's most prominent citizens. The two-and-one-half-story frame structure has a side-gabled roof with wide eaves supported by brackets, and a gabled dormer with similar eave treatment on the facade. An engaged full-width porch extends out on the northwest side to encompass a porte cochere and also wraps around the southeast side of the house. The wide porch is supported by paired square posts with Colonial Revival detailing atop brick piers. A plain balustrade proceeds along the entire porch. The center entrance is flanked by sidelights with wood mullions forming a decorative pattern. Six-over-six tripartite windows are located to each side of the entry. The other windows are also six-over-one sash. The home was purchased by Paul Lee in the 1930s. Donald Parker, the current owner, acquired the structure in 1977 and undertook a complete renovation at that time.
- C 116. James Raynor House. 401 East Hill Street, c. 1920. This excellent Bungalow-style home with an unusual wood-shingled exterior was built by Benson attorney James Raynor on a lot he acquired from Paul Johnson in 1920. The one-story residence has a multi-gabled roofline with wide eaves and an expansive northwest elevation. The eaves on this elevation are supported by uniquely-styled brackets exhibiting a trellis-like form. Identical brackets are located on the Dallas Langdon house at 409 East Hill Street. The engaged wraparound porch at the northwest corner of the irregularly-shaped house features tapered piers of exaggerated proportions which define the entrance. The porch rail, which is decorated by wooden slats laid in a star pattern, is similar to that on the M. T. Britt house at 101 East Church Street. This house remained in possession of the Raynor family for over forty years.
- C 117. House. 403 East Hill Street, c. 1918. This traditional one-story Triple-A frame residence with a Colonial Revival porch was reportedly built by James Raynor, original owner of the adjacent property at 401 East Hill Street, but was never occupied by him. The house features a full-width attached porch with attenuated Classical columns, a simple Colonial Revival door surround, and one-over-one sash windows.

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- C 118. Holmes-Stewart House. 405 East Hill Street, c. 1915. This typical Triple-A house with Colonial Revival details and replacement vinyl siding was built by J. Ed Holmes and acquired by Herbert Stewart soon thereafter. The one-story residence has an attached full-width porch with Doric columns which originally wrapped around the southeast side of the structure, but is presently enclosed in this area. The porte cochere at the northwest end of the facade is also a later addition. In addition to the front porch, Colonial Revival details of the residence include the returns in the gables and the sidelights flanking the entrance. The windows are one-over-one sash.
- NC 119. Ed Barbour House. 407 East Hill Street, c. 1950. This is a one-story side-gabled, aluminum-sided house with a gabled entrance pavilion and an attached porch at the northwest corner.
- C 120. Dallas Langdon House. 409 East Hill Street, c. 1919. This modest-sized Bungalow-style home with largely intact detailing was built by Dallas Langdon on property he purchased from Mrs. M. C. Benson in 1919. The frame residence has a side-gabled roof with wide eaves supported by trellis-like brackets identical to those on the James Raynor house at 401 East Hill Street. The center entrance is accentuated by a prominent gable with bracketed eaves identical to those on the sides of the house. The gable is supported by the tapered square posts atop brick piers which comprise the wide, engaged porch across the entire facade. A smaller gable without brackets rises from the roof slightly to the west of the entry gable. The tripartite windows on the facade, as well as those on the side elevations, have vertically-laid four-over-one sash typical of the Bungalow style. An open porch at the rear of the structure has been enclosed.
- C 121. House. 101 Farmer Drive, c. 1910. This plain Triple-A frame house has an altered porch with lattice posts and a replacement picture window on the facade. The one-story structure features returns in the gables and a simple entry. The remaining original windows are four-over-four sash.
- I 122. Robin Hood Stop-N-Shop. West side South Wall Street, southwest corner West Main Street, c. 1975. This is a one-story convenience store with a flat roof and a stone veneer. The structure occupies the former site of the Dr. H. H. Utley residence.
- NC 123. Weaver's Bait and Tackle. 208 North Wall Street, c. 1945. This is a one-story brick commercial building with a stepped-parapet front and a gable roof.
- I 124. Carolina Graphics. 102 West Parrish Street, c. 1970. This is a plain one-story concrete building with a flat roof. This structure is located on the former site of the Hotel Benson.
125. Vacant lot.
- NC 126. Commercial Building. 401 Southwest Railroad Street, c. 1950. This is a one-story brick building with a plain facade which faces the railroad.

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- C 127. (Former) Benson Post Office--The Parts House. West side Southwest Railroad Street adjacent to 401 Southwest Railroad Street on the northeast side, c. 1910. This two-story brick building, which faces the railroad and displays fine brick detailing, initially served as a boarding house and, after about 1920, as the Benson Post Office. The largely original upper story has three six-over-six sash windows which are set into arched enframements. The entablature consists of two rectangular panels of corbelled brick which are connected by three corbel courses. The cornice line is highlighted by four vertically-laid rectangular panels which are evenly spaced and overlap a narrow row of dentils. The commercial space on the first floor has been radically altered by the current occupant of the structure.
- P 128. (Former) C. T. Johnson House--Macon Hotel. 109 Northwest Railroad Street, 1912. This monumental, two-story Neoclassical Revival residence, the most impressive in Benson, was built for C. T. Johnson and his wife Georgia (Tenning) Johnson. Johnson (1871-1951), who made his fortune as a cotton buyer, also had several mercantile establishments in the town. His home, which cost \$7,000 to build, is said to have been patterned after a house he had always admired in the neighboring town of Dunn. Johnson's home was sited so that it faced the railroad, affording an ample opportunity for those passing by on trains to take note of this symbol of the town's prosperity during the 1910s.

Like the other residences of this basic form in Benson, the facade of this hip-roofed frame structure is dominated by a two-story pedimented portico, in this case supported by ornate fluted Ionic columns in a triple-cluster arrangement. An elongated fanlight of intricate leaded glass is located at the center of the pediment. A wide, open porch supported by Ionic columns proceeds across the facade at the first story level and wraps around the northeast and southwest elevations. The porch is finished with a full entablature featuring a denticulated cornice line. The center entry, which is set into a wide arched enframement with a keystone at its center, is delineated by flat, fluted pilasters and is offset by sidelights and a fanlight of leaded glass. The entry is further offset by the first story porch, which curves around at this point and supports a balcony with a wide balustrade above the door. The exterior is finished by a wide, denticulated cornice, pedimented pavilions on the side elevations with similar cornice treatment and fanlights at their centers, rock-faced cement block chimneys, and a two-story porch, now partially enclosed, at the rear. All the windows are one-over-one sash.

On the interior, the first floor is organized around an expansive center hall featuring a mahogany wood closed-stringer staircase opposite the entry. The staircase has a highly decorative balustrade consisting of individual panels of four narrow turned balusters each, which are anchored by square panels with a cutout design at their centers. A balcony encircles the stairwell on the second floor. Other notable features of the first floor include original hand-laid oak parquet floors, paneled wainscoting, and brass hardware. Sliding

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doors lead from the center hall to the original parlor, music room, library, and dining room. Each of these formal rooms has an ornate mahogany mantel with heavy wood carving, ceramic tile surrounding the fireplace opening, and a mirrored overmantel.

The Johnson family lost this house during the Depression, and it was acquired in the late 1930s by Erskins Honeycutt, who converted the structure into four apartments. The house was subsequently sold to Cap Jernigan, a Benson resident who turned it into a boarding house known as the Macon Hotel. The present owner, Mrs. Minnie Ellis, bought the residence with her husband in 1947. She continues to operate it as the Macon Hotel, having altered the second floor by dividing the large bedrooms into smaller rooms which can accommodate about twenty boarders.

- C 129. House. 203 Northwest Railroad Street, c. 1920. This is a typical one-story Triple-A frame residence with an attached porch supported by tapered square wooden posts. The windows are four-over-four sash.
- NC 130. House. 205 Northwest Railroad Street, c. 1950. This small, one-story shotgun-style frame house has a front-gabled roof and an attached porch with turned balusters. The structure, which is identical to No. 131, currently serves as rental property.
- NC 131. House. 207 Northwest Railroad Street, c. 1950. This small, one-story shotgun-style frame house has a front-gabled roof and an attached porch with turned balusters. The structure, which is identical to No. 130, serves as rental property.
- C 132. House. 209 Northwest Railroad Street, c. 1920. This simple one-story L-plan frame house with a full-width attached porch has a gable roof and two separate front entrances. The porch is supported by tapered square posts and the windows are one-over-one sash. The structure is currently maintained as a rental property.
- 133. Parking lot. Former site of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad passenger station and freight depot.
- I 134. Medlin and Dorman Warehouse. North side East Parrish Street corner Southeast Railroad Street, c. 1960. This is a one-story brick building with a flat roof used for storage purposes.
- 135. Vacant lot. Former site of a feed storage building.
- C 136. Commercial Building. East side Southeast Railroad Street adjacent to inventoried property No. 135, c. 1915. This is a two-story brick building with fine corbelled brick detailing and a first-story metal storefront. The structure housed a building materials store in 1925. The upper level features three windows set

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into arched enframements finished with brick lintels, anchored on either end by five-sided stone ornaments. Two recessed frieze panels, outlined with rows of corbelling, are located above the windows. The cornice line, which is also corbelled, is divided into two sections by corbelled brick pilasters which begin at the sides of the frieze panels. The first-story metal front has a recessed center entry with double-leaf doors which is enframed by slender metal columns at the corners of the display windows.

- NC 137. Commercial Building. 105 Southeast Railroad Street, c. 1945. This one-story simple brick building with a modernized facade is the location of two offices.
- C 138. Commercial Building. East side Southeast Railroad Street corner East Main Street, c. 1920. This typical two-story brick building with a greatly altered first floor originally housed the Benson City Hall in its northeastern half. The second story has one-over-one sash windows in simple enframements which are finished with flat stone lintels. The cornice line is marked by vertically-laid rows of corbelled brick appearing at evenly spaced intervals. A doctor's office and a beauty salon currently occupy the altered first story.
- I 139. ABC Store. Northeast Railroad Street southeast corner East Church Street, c. 1970. This plain one-story brick commercial building with a flat roof is the location of a state-owned liquor store.
- C 140. (Former) J. H. Godwin Store--Dan's Used Furniture. West side South Market Street northwest corner East Parrish Street, 1925. This typical two-story brick building was originally the location of a farm supply store owned by J. H. Godwin. The upper story has six windows, now boarded up, which are set into simple enframements. This story has a plain cornice line, while the first story is delineated by a wide molded cornice. The two original first-floor recessed entries flanked by display windows and topped by glass transoms are intact. A used furniture business currently occupies the building.
- C 141. Commercial Building. West side South Market Street adjacent to inventoried property No. 140, c. 1930. This is a relatively plain two-story brick building with a center-arched doorway between the two business establishments on the first floor. The four one-over-one sash windows on the second floor are set into simple enframements. Two recessed frieze panels are located above the windows, corresponding to each of the two businesses in the building. The retail space on the first floor, which is offset by a molded cornice, has been altered.
- NC 142. Benson Town Hall. 101 North Market Street, c. 1940. This typical two-story brick building, which has a garage at its southwestern corner, is the location of several town offices which have been remodeled over the years.

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- P 143. James E. Wilson House. 205 North Market Street, c. 1915. Carpenter Hunter Pool constructed this handsome one-story Colonial Revival residence with a gable-on-hip roof for James E. Wilson (1882-1949). Wilson was a successful farmer, livestock dealer, Benson merchant, and Chevrolet dealer in Smithfield. The facade of this frame house features a deep full-width porch which turns and continues along both side elevations and terminates with a porte cochere on the south. Tuscan columns with Ionic terra cotta capitals support the porch. Other distinguishing details include the art glass elliptical windows in the gabled dormers, the leaded and beveled glass sidelights and transom on the facade, and the dentiled entrance surround. The windows are one-over-one sash. A rear ell, kitchen/dining wing, and porches expand the house in the back. Surviving contemporary outbuildings include the smokehouse, the garage, and several sections of tall paling fence. The house remains in the ownership of the Wilson family.

- C 144. Eli S. Turlington House. 207 North Market Street, c. 1915. This extensively altered traditional Triple-A frame house with replacement aluminum siding and a replacement porch was built for Benson merchant Eli S. Turlington. The one-story structure has a plain center entrance and paired four-over-four sash windows on the facade. The replacement porch, which is enclosed at the southwestern end, is supported by wrought-iron posts. The house, which has a large ell addition at the rear, remains in the possession of the Turlington family.

- NC 145. Commercial Building. 100 North Market Street, c. 1945. This plain two-story brick building with an altered facade is currently used as office space.

- I 146. Office Building. East side North Market Street adjacent to inventoried property No. 145, c. 1970. This is a typical one-story brick building with a flat roof which is occupied by a doctor's office.

- C 147. Phoebe Royal House. 202 North Market Street, c. 1905. This completely remodeled one-and-one-half-story Victorian-era frame residence with a side-gabled roof was built for Phoebe Royal, who operated a boarding house here. Victorian architectural details which remain include the peaked window and door surrounds and the full-width front porch with turned posts. The entry is framed by sidelights and a transom light, above which is located a gabled dormer with a small balcony resting on the roof. Changes made to the house include the installation of new first-floor windows, the placement of triangular brackets under the eaves, and the removal of a projecting bay at the north-eastern corner of the house. Donald Parker, the current owner, renovated this structure for his law office in 1976.

- C 148. Isham McLamb House. 100 North Elm Street, c. 1935. This two-story brick residence with Spanish Colonial Revival allusions is the only structure of this style in the district. Distinctive features of this house include the tiled, side-gabled roof finished with crest tiles, the one-story gabled portico with

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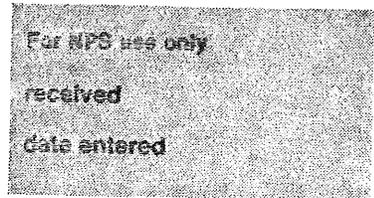
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triple arches and tapered corners, and the tripartite nine-over-one sash windows to either side of the entry. An attached sun porch is located on the northeastern side of the structure.

- I 149. P. D. Lucas House. 204 North Johnson Street, c. 1970. This is a small, one-story aluminum-sided house with a side-gabled roof..

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Continuation sheet Boundary Description Item number 10 Page 1
and Justification

Beginning at the southern, or rear, boundary of the property located at the southwest corner of West Main Street and Farmer Drive and continuing east along the rear boundaries of the 200 block on the south side of West Main Street, crossing South Wall Street (U.S. 301) and continuing along for one block to an alley, crossing the alley and proceeding south one block along the western, or rear, boundaries of those properties facing Southwest Railroad Street, and terminating at West Parrish Street. Continuing east along West Parrish Street, crossing the railroad and proceeding along East Parrish Street one block to South Market Street, continuing north along the west side of South Market Street and crossing to the east side of the street at a point even with the southern, or rear, boundaries of the properties in the 200 block on the south side of East Main Street. Continuing east along the rear of the properties in the 200 block, terminating at the eastern edge of the block and proceeding north along the eastern edge, across East Main Street to the northern side, and continuing to the northern boundary of the easternmost property on East Main Street. Proceeding across North Elm Street to the eastern side and encompassing the property at 100 North Elm, then continuing along the 300 block on the southern side of East Church Street, crossing North Johnson Street, continuing along the 400 block of East Church, and terminating at the eastern edge of the block. Proceeding north along the western side of North Lee Street, crossing East Church and East Hill streets, and continuing west along the northern, or rear, boundaries of the properties in the 400 block on the north side of East Hill Street, crossing North Johnson Street and continuing along the rear of the properties in the 300 block, crossing North Elm Street and continuing along the rear of the properties in the 200 block, and crossing North Market Street and encompassing the properties in the 100 block. Continuing south along the western edge of the 100 block to the northeast corner of East Hill and Northeast Railroad streets, then crossing Northeast Railroad and continuing to the southwest corner of Northwest Railroad and West Hill streets. Proceeding west along West Hill Street to the western, or rear, boundaries of the properties in the 200 block on the west side of Northwest Railroad Street, then south along the rear of these properties to the rear of the easternmost property on the north side of West Church Street. Continuing west along the northern, or rear, boundaries of the properties in the 100 block of West Church Street, crossing North Wall Street (U.S. 301), continuing along the 200 block of West Church Street, and terminating at the western edge of the block. Continuing south along the eastern side of Farmer Drive, crossing to the southeast corner of Farmer Drive and West Church Street, proceeding west across Farmer Drive and continuing to the western, or rear, boundary of the property at 101 Farmer Drive, proceeding south along this boundary to the western edge of the property at 300 West Main Street, then crossing West Main to the southern side of the street and continuing south to the point of beginning, the whole area containing approximately 53 acres.

Boundary Justification

The area encompassed by the Benson Historic District is comprised of the most visually cohesive, intact group of architecturally and historically significant commercial, residential, ecclesiastical, and educational structures in the town of Benson. These buildings represent a majority of the pre-1930s architectural fabric in the town, and provide a strong visual link to Benson's early development as a modest-sized commercial center along a railroad line.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		
Specific dates	Various	Builder/Architect	Various/Unknown	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Located in the southwestern corner of Johnston County in a fertile agricultural region, the town of Benson, North Carolina, developed along a railroad line which in 1886 passed through a large tract of land principally owned by Alfred Monroe ("Mim") Benson. With physical ties to the railway and a close proximity to productive farmland, the town, which was chartered in 1887, developed a diversified economy in its formative years, centered around such enterprises as turpentine distilleries, cotton gins, mercantile establishments, and the produce and cotton trades. The entrepreneurs who settled in Benson between 1887 and 1920 erected many of the brick commercial buildings which line Main Street and a majority of the frame and brick houses, churches, and school in the areas contiguous to the commercial core. The Benson Historic District is comprised of the most cohesive group of architecturally and historically significant commercial, residential, educational, and ecclesiastical structures in the town, most of which date from the years 1900 to 1930 and provide a strong visual link to Benson's early development.

Criteria Assessment

- A. Representative of the effects of transportation on the establishment of a small North Carolina town, Benson developed along a railroad line passing through southwestern Johnston County. The availability of a convenient railway shipping route and the close proximity to fertile farmland led to the establishment of agriculture-related businesses and industrial and mercantile concerns, all of which flourished during the early twentieth century.
- B. Associated with a number of locally prominent individuals, including Alonzo Parrish, who built some of Benson's most outstanding structures and avidly participated in community affairs; and with C. T. Johnson, a large landowner and local businessman who owned the most monumental home in Benson along with several commercial buildings.
- C. The Benson Historic District encompasses the most cohesive group of intact late nineteenth and early twentieth century structures in the town, including commercial, residential, educational, and ecclesiastical examples executed in a variety of period styles.

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The town of Benson, which derives its name from early settler Alfred Monroe ("Mim") Benson, owes much of its historical development to the advent of a railroad line from Contentnea to Fayetteville which passed through the present location of the town in 1886. A. M. Benson, originally from Black Creek, had purchased a 402-acre tract along the Smithfield-Fayetteville Road from J. Green Rainer in 1874, initiating settlement of the area which is now Benson.¹ During the 1880s, Benson sold portions of his original tract to incoming settlers, many of whom were farmers attracted to the rich agricultural lands of the region. When the railroad project was begun in 1885, ownership of some of this land was surrendered to railway officials requesting right-of-way permission.²

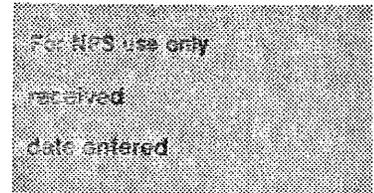
Construction of the 70-mile railroad line, known as the Fayetteville cutoff, was part of a plan by the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad to shorten the traveling distance between North and South Carolina.³ In addition to accomplishing this goal, the railroad provided the impetus for the growth of the small commercial center of Benson in a heretofore rural section of North Carolina. Benson was incorporated in 1887, and soon attracted a number of individuals who were to shape its physical appearance and economic climate as they took advantage of the entrepreneurial opportunities presented by a new town along an important transportation route.

The earliest known map of Benson, dated December 28, 1892, shows the town streets laid out in a grid pattern with individual blocks divided into numbered lots.⁴ The railroad is depicted as the central focus of the town plan, running north and south and effectively dividing the community into an eastern and western portion. The Benson Historic District, which encompasses a section of the town shown on this early map and also includes an area known as the Mrs. Mary C. Benson addition of 1903, essentially has a commercial and residential component.⁵ Historically, the three blocks of Main Street between Wall and Elm streets formed the commercial core of the town and are thus an integral part of the district. Most of the brick buildings in this area were built between 1903 and 1925, following three fires during 1902 and 1903 which damaged or destroyed a majority of the early frame structures. The 1918 Sanborn map of Benson indicates that the blocks between Wall and Market streets were almost entirely built up by that year, while the 1925 map shows that the block between Market and Elm acquired its present appearance primarily during the years 1918 to 1925.

The predominantly residential blocks contiguous to the commercial area and roughly defined by West Main, East and West Church, and East Hill streets were home to the town's most prosperous citizens, many of whom operated businesses along Main Street. The abundance of fine early twentieth-century residences lining these streets recalls the favorable economic conditions which produced the distinctive architectural character of the area. This neighborhood is also the location of Benson's six major churches and its two surviving school buildings, underscoring the strong relationship between this part of the district, which retains much of its historic integrity, and the town's development.

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Between 1896 and 1916, Benson's population increased from about 400 to 1,711, and the town had such diversified industries as turpentine distilleries, lumber and brick yards, and cotton gins. Several produce and cotton markets opened after the turn of the century, catering to the farmers of lower Johnston County who wanted to sell their crops to Benson dealers or trade them for needed supplies.⁶ Mercantile businesses flourished at this time as well, supported in part by the agricultural markets. These developments are consistent with those occurring around the turn of the century in other small North Carolina towns with an essentially agricultural economic base. In 1901, the Bank of Benson opened to serve the growing number of residents with financial interests in the community. This institution was incorporated into the Bank of Smithfield in 1905 and later became the Farmers Commercial Bank. In 1921, the latter establishment was responsible for constructing the massive Neoclassical Revival bank building on West Main Street (No. 39) which is the most impressive structure of its type in Johnston County and perhaps more than any other exemplifies Benson's prosperity during the 1910s and 1920s.

During the first four decades of its existence, Benson's growth was influenced by a number of individuals whose commercial establishments and residences, many of which still survive, were significant elements of the town landscape. Among the early arrivals were C. T. Johnson and J. D. Parrish, both of whom established businesses in Benson. By 1890, the town had no less than nine general merchandise stores, a drugstore, and a hardware store.⁷ J. D. Parrish's son Alonzo, who initially went into business with his father as manager of the J. D. Parrish and Son store, became one of Benson's most prominent citizens. He built his impressive Neoclassical Revival home on West Main Street between 1905 and 1906 (No. 31), and constructed the Carolina-Parrish Hotel, originally known as the North State Hotel, on the same street around 1918 (No. 8). In addition, he operated an automobile dealership in town for nineteen years and served as president of the Citizens Bank and Trust Company.⁸ C. T. Johnson, who came to Benson around 1890 and built his grand-scale Neoclassical Revival residence on Northwest Railroad Street in 1912 (No. 127), made his fortune in the cotton-buying business. In addition to several farms, Johnson owned a West Main Street dry goods store (No. 11) and an adjacent establishment which sold men's and women's clothing (No. 12).⁹ With its unusual decorative metal facade featuring Classical elements, the clothing store, constructed about 1910, is one of the most architecturally distinctive structures on the street.

Other prosperous merchants who built commercial buildings on Main Street and large-scale Neoclassical or Colonial Revival homes in the historic district include William Daniel Boon and Preston Woodall. Boon's father, J. H. Boon, came to Benson around 1900 and initially managed a livery stable. He built the traditional I-house with Victorian detailing, which is among the oldest in the district (No. 29), soon after his arrival.¹⁰ William Boon later went into business with his father, running the J. H. Boon and Son store on West Main Street that sold groceries, fertilizers, and cotton, and was constructed in 1916 (No. 34). In 1918, Boon built his residence, the design for which was taken from a Sears Roebuck catalog, on the same street (No. 1). Preston Woodall, who established his business in 1899, operated a department store on East Main Street (No. 41), and erected his home on East Hill Street around 1910.¹¹

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Additional individuals who owned businesses on Main Street and played a role in Benson's early development into a commercial center include James Benson, who operated the first pharmacy in the town (No. 13); Moses A. Peacock, who also ran a drugstore (No. 10) and built his residence on West Church Street in 1922 (No. 79); Jake Greenthal, a merchant originally from Baltimore who came to Benson in 1910 and opened a department store (No. 44); Eli S. Turlington, who ran a furniture and hardware store (No. 49) and erected his home on North Market Street around 1914 (No. 144); and James E. Wilson, a livestock and horse dealer and cotton buyer who built his house on North Market Street around 1915 (No. 143), and whose store building retains architectural features from its original function as a livery stable and livestock shelter (No. 27).¹²

With the growth of the town came the establishment of the educational and religious institutions which were vital parts of community life. The Benson Graded High School, built in 1905 and moved to its present location on East Hill Street around 1915 (No. 99), soon became too small for the town's educational needs, and the well-executed Colonial Revival school building on East Church Street currently known as the Benson Elementary School (No. 92) was constructed c. 1915 to accommodate grades 1 through 12. The six churches encompassed by the historic district were constructed between about 1895 and 1945 by the town's Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal Holiness, Pentecostal Free Will Baptist, Presbyterian, and Catholic congregations. The Baptist and Methodist churches, from 1914-1915 and 1917 respectively (No. 82 and No. 91), are particularly noteworthy for their ambitious design and creative interpretation of popularly-accepted ecclesiastical forms.

An article about Benson that appeared in the Smithfield Herald in 1924 described the physical appearance of the town in that year, stating that

within the past decade (Benson) has made rapid strides in different phases of improvements and now presents to the visitor a neat, clean little town sprinkled about with a goodly number of lovely homes, handsome churches and school building, a modern brick hotel, (and) two large banks, the Farmers Commercial occupying one of the most expensive and up to date buildings in the state.¹³

Another account published in the Benson Review during the following year made the optimistic prediction that by the year 1950, "all the one story brick buildings (on Main Street) will have been replaced by skyscrapers."¹⁴

The depression era had a severe effect on Benson, causing the collapse of the cotton market and forcing many local merchants, who had traded with the farmers, into insurmountable debt. During this time some of the town's most prominent citizens, including C. T. Johnson and Alonzo Parrish, lost possession of their homes. Although Benson recovered in the decades following World War II, the declining importance of the community as a railroad stop and agricultural trading center contributed to a change in the economic base which had spurred its early development and produced its historic

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architecture. Taken as a whole, the Benson Historic District represents the most cohesive group of intact commercial, residential, religious, and educational structures in the town built between about 1900 and 1930. Through their significant historical associations and architectural integrity, these structures, which are interrupted by a small number of intrusions, provide a direct visual link to the town's pre-depression-era growth and affluence.

Footnotes

¹Herky Ledbetter, "The Benson Story: The Founding of a Town--Benson," Benson Review, March 16, 1964, p. 3. The deed between Rainer and Benson, executed April 2, 1874, and filed October 11, 1880, is entered in Johnston County Deed Book X-3, p. 281.

²Herky Ledbetter, "The Benson Story: Coming of the Railroad," Benson Review, March 5, 1964, p. 4.

³"The Benson Story: Coming of the Railroad," p. 4.

⁴Johnston County Plat Book 2, p. 12.

⁵Johnston County Deed Book L-8, p. 293. The map of the Mrs. Mary C. Benson addition was filed May 4, 1903.

⁶Herky Ledbetter, "The Benson Story: Early Produce Market," Benson Review, December 23, 1964, p. 3.

⁷Levi Branson and Myrtle C. Branson, Branson's North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh, N.C.: Levi Branson, 1889), pp. 395-396.

⁸Eastern North Carolina Chamber of Commerce, Builders of Eastern North Carolina (Kinston, N.C.: Eastern North Carolina Chamber of Commerce, 1931), p. 85.

⁹"Macon Hotel--Memories of a Day Gone By," Benson Review, September 9, 1976, p. 4.

¹⁰Johnston County Census, Banner Township, Town of Benson, 1900, p. 3.

¹¹Information based on a conversation with Mr. Harold Medlin of Benson on September 13, 1984, and on the architectural survey files compiled by Thomas Butchko as part of the Johnston County Historic Inventory undertaken during 1982.

¹²Information on commercial buildings contained in an article entitled "Benson Has Been on the Upgrade for Many Years," appearing in the Benson Review February 12, 1925, p. 1, and corroborated during the conversation with Mr. Harold Medlin (see fn. 11).

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¹³Mrs. J. R. Barbour, "Facts of Interest About Benson," Smithfield Herald, 1924, n.p. Copy of this article was lent by Mr. Harold Medlin.

¹⁴"Sounds, Reads and Looks Like Sure Enough Fairy Tale," Benson Review, July 16, 1925, p. 1.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See separate sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Benson Approx. - 53

Quadrangle name _____ Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	1 7	7 2 2 5 2 0	3 9 1 8 3 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 7	7 2 3 0 3 0	3 9 1 7 5 6 0
E			
G			

B	1 7	7 2 3 2 4 0	3 9 1 7 8 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1 7	7 2 2 3 2 0	3 9 1 8 0 3 0
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See separate sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county		code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dana E. Mintzer, Preservation Consultant

organization North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch date January 10, 1985

street & number 515 North Blount Street telephone 919/733-6545

city or town Raleigh state N.C. 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. P... date January 10, 1985

title State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Bibliography Item number 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

Continuation sheet

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Item number 9

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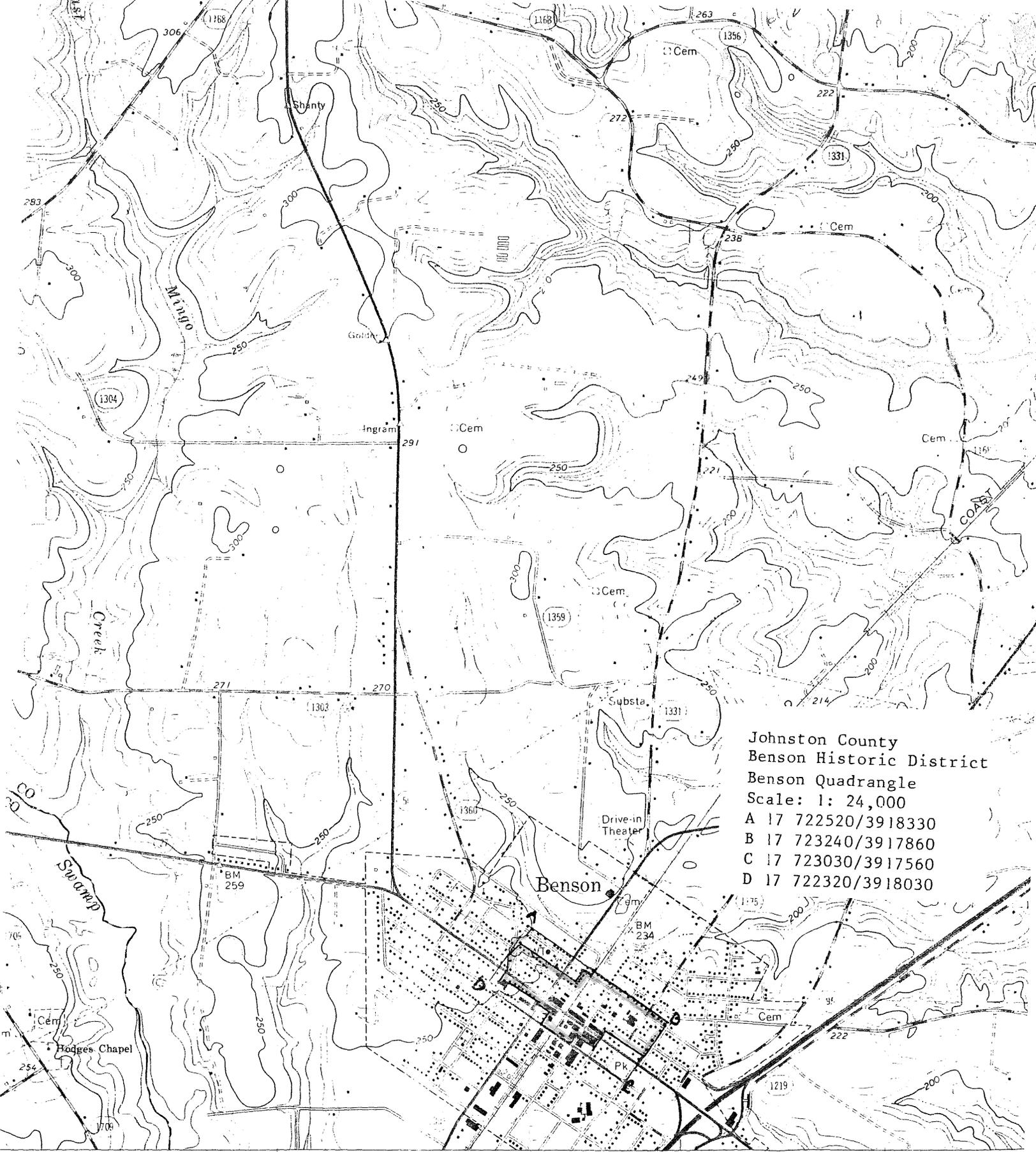
Interviews:

The following individuals supplied invaluable information concerning Benson history and the location of historic resources:

Mr. N. Coats
Mr. Harry Canaday
Mrs. Mary Dixon
Mr. B. B. Hudson
Mrs. Mabel Johnson
Mrs. Margaret M. Lee
Mr. Harold Medlin
Mrs. Ernestine Parker
Mr. James Peacock

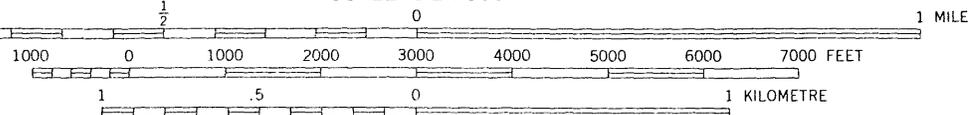
BOUNDARIES FOR PROPOSED
BENSON NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

The proposed district encompasses all the properties in the area roughly bounded by Farmer Road, Main Street between Farmer Road and the west side of North Elm Street, East Church Street between North Elm Street and the west side of North Lee Street, East Hill Street between North Lee Street and Northeast Railroad Street, and West Church Street between Northwest Railroad Street and Farmer Road. Both sides of Railroad Street between Main and Parrish streets and the west side of South Market Street between East Main and East Parrish streets are also included.



Johnston County
 Benson Historic District
 Benson Quadrangle
 Scale: 1: 24,000
 A 17 722520/3918330
 B 17 723240/3917860
 C 17 723030/3917560
 D 17 722320/3918030

SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

JT 473

