

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Leslie-Alford-Mims House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 100 Avent Ferry Road [N/A] not for publication

city or town Holly Springs [N/A] vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27540

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination
 request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cheryl Crow SHPO 1/21/97
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Leslie-Alford-Mims House
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
2		sites
		structures
1		objects
4	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Historic & Architectural Resources of Wake
County, NC (ca. 1770-1941)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling
Landscape: natural feature
Recreation & Culture: work of art
Funerary/cemetery
Domestic/secondary structure
Domestic/secondary structure

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling
Landscape: natural feature
Recreation & Culture : work of art
Funerary/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Weatherboard
Wood
roof Tin
other Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Leslie-Alford-Mims House
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieved significance within the last 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed on the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Community Development

Period of Significance

ca 1840-1924

Significant Dates

Circa 1840, 1876, and 1900

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Leslie, Archibald; Alford, George Benton

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Leslie-Alford-Mims House
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 13.33

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dan L. Turner

organization _____ date August 1, 1996

street & number PO Box 10593 telephone (919)552-7373;552-1688 (fax)

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27605

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. Edwin Mims

street & number PO Box 248 telephone (919) 552-4934

city or town Holly Springs state NC zip code 27540

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Leslie-Alford-Mims House, Holly Springs, Wake County, NC

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SETTING

The Leslie-Alford-Mims House is a large, handsome, three-story Greek Revival dwelling with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century additions set a short distance from Avent Ferry Road (State Road 1115) in the town of Holly Springs. The residence is oriented facing due south on a large lot shaded by mature magnolia, oak, maple, holly, and other native trees. It is approached from the east by way of a wide asphalt drive which passes directly in front of the main facade of the house, continues past the porte cochere on the west elevation, and circumscribes the Confederate monument located in the southwest corner of the house lot. The small, brick, cruciform Gothic Revival Holly Springs Methodist Church, located on a large lot south and west of the residence, defines an area reminiscent of a New England town square. The monument commemorating the valor of North Carolina soldiers in the Civil War and World War I is a large granite obelisk rising from a square masonry base topped by a white cararra marble sculpture of a Confederate soldier.

The nominated property is the residual 13.33 acres of the original 180 acre tract.¹ All of the acreage, with the exception of approximately two acres in the vicinity of the residence, is forested and appears to contain evidence of archeological remains of antebellum and post-bellum agricultural dependencies. Formerly, the house was flanked by its dependencies, gardens, and a store building. The original Archibald Leslie store building was located a short distance south of the main house. In 1876, fire destroyed the building; and George B. Alford, who had purchased the Leslie property that year, built a larger and more impressive two story mercantile building one hundred yards east of his residence.² Of the once extensive complement of outbuildings, only a small barn and a wash-smokehouse survive to the present, but are considered noncontributing because of their disrepair. The barn is located approximately seventy-five feet north of the main house and is a simple rectangular frame building rising beneath a front-gabled roof with boxed eaves and simple cornice. Simple open-ended shed additions shelter each side of the main block. The present owner remembers having been told by his grandfather Alford that the barn was standing when the property was purchased from Archibald Leslie. The circa 1900 one-story, frame, side-gabled combination wash-smokehouse stands a short distance north of the porte cochere and is a small rectangular frame structure having exterior details similar to the barn. General locations are known for slave dwellings, the original detached kitchen, harness and carriage house, turpentine distillery, and dovecote.³

The small family cemetery, enclosed by a cast iron fence, is located a short distance northwest of the main house. A large gray tombstone marks the center of the cemetery in which is located the graves of George Benton Alford and his first wife, Charlotte. Two additional grave sites of Alford's niece and nephew are also evident. Located at the bottom of a gently sloping, wooded hill west of the cemetery are the five natural springs from which the town of Holly Springs takes its name. The springs bubble gently out of the ground and create the source of a small stream that runs north across the property.⁴

PRESENT APPEARANCE OF THE HOUSE

The present appearance of the Leslie-Alford-Mims House evolved over a period of approximately sixty years beginning around 1840 with the construction of the original Archibald Leslie house known as "Leslie

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Hall". The oldest section of the structure is the original Greek Revival-style two-story house with a handsome two-story Doric porch that forms the center bays of the present main elevation.⁵ George Benton Alford purchased Leslie Hall in 1876 and built the remainder of the first floor block, the east wing, the kitchen, and the meal-flour room on the rear.⁶ The Colonial Revival additions to the house were made around 1900 by Alford with the construction of the remainder of the second floor block, the third floor, the attic monitor, the widow's walk, the west wing, and the porte cochere.⁷ These circa 1876 and circa 1900 additions to the house were directly related to Mr. Alford's wealth, interest in building, ready access to a large supply of building materials from his own sawmills, and the availability of cheap labor in the area. All of these factors were instrumental in the creation of what was to become one of the largest houses in the county.

The house, set on a common bond brick foundation, is covered with plain heart-of-pine weatherboarding, with flush sheathing beneath the central portico. A bracketed cornice continues around the original block of the house. Each front corner is accentuated by fluted cornerboard pilasters. The low hip roof is covered with standing seam tin. Common bond brick chimneys with decorative caps are centered on the east and west facades of the original block of the house.

The south (main) facade of the Leslie-Alford-Mims House is three-bays wide and is dominated by a distinguished and sophisticated two-tier pedimented Doric entrance portico. The two-tiered porch shelters the central doorway on both floors. The portico has, at each level, paired and fluted Doric columns; these recur as pilasters on the south facade at the ends of the porch. The upper level portico is encompassed by a flatsawn, fashioned balustrade beneath a heavy molded rail. The central entrance contains a double door beneath a four-light transom; the whole is enframed by a molded surround. The circa 1876 front door has two vertical glass panels set above two molded wooden, rectangular panels. Directly above, at the upper porch level, are original double doors, each with simple, long, vertical panels set within a molded surround. The north, east, and west doors are similar to the lower, main front door, have no sidelights or transoms, and are believed to be from the 1876 and 1900 renovations respectively. The windows of the original house are quite large and are framed with fluted molded surrounds with plain corner blocks above wide plain sills. Those at the first level contain nine-over-nine; those at the second contain six-over-nine.

THE CA. 1840 GREEK REVIVAL HOUSE

The house is entered through double-leaf doors leading into the central stair hall. The stair hall ceiling and walls are plastered above low flat-paneled wainscoting topped with a simple chair rail. Door surrounds here, as in the two rooms that flank the hall, are wide, symmetrically molded three-part strips. The doors are two panel, and each panel is framed with Greek cymareversa moldings similar to those found in the Asher Benjamin pattern books.⁸ Wide heart-of-pine flooring is found in the entry hall and throughout the house. The southeast gentlemen's parlor is typical of Greek Revival interiors of the 1840s and 1850s, with high ceilings, plaster walls and ceiling surfaces, symmetrically molded window and door surrounds and low flush-paneled wainscoting topped by chair rail that doubles as window sills. The woodwork retains its notable decorative wood graining. The mantel is typical Greek Revival pilaster and lintel design; the pilasters are incised with rounded arched grooves, the frieze is inset with rectangular flat panels, and there is a handsomely molded

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cornice. The mantel shelf features an unusual scalloped-edge design. The initials of the original builder, "A. L." (Archibald Leslie) are placed in unusual plaster moldings above the mantel. A wide, fashioned plaster mold circumscribes the cornice; and the ceiling is embellished with a large plaster medallion featuring a feather motif. A doorway on the north wall leads into the circa 1876 dining room.

On the southwest side of the entry hall is the ladies' parlor. With the exceptions of a more simply detailed mantel and painted woodwork, this room is finished in the same manner as the gentlemen's parlor. Above the mantel are the initials "I. L." for Isabel Leslie, mistress of "Leslie Hall," and a sunflower motif medallion decorates the ceiling in this room. A doorway on the north wall leads into the circa 1876 side hall and ballroom.

From the entry hall, access to the second floor is gained by the open-string stair which ascends along the east side of the hall in a single run back-to-front. A turned newel post with a pointed finial and circa 1876 turned balusters carry a rounded handrail. The open-string is ornamented only by simple moldings at each tread. With the exception of slightly lower baseboards and plainer mantels, the two rooms of the original second floor are finished in a manner similar to the first floor parlors.

THE CA. 1876 EXPANSION OF THE HOUSE

The interior of the 1840 northeast one-story dining room ell is believed to have been accessible from both the gentlemen's parlor and a porch that extended along the north and west facades of the original 1840 block. With the circa 1876 renovation, the west, north, and east walls were removed and expanded outward in order to complete the main block of the first floor; and the original 1840 dining room that was contained in a one-story ell evolved into what is now the spacious ballroom.⁹

The north end of the central stair hall opens onto the ballroom, which is finished in a manner typical of the 1870s and 1880s with painted flush pine ceiling, plaster walls, symmetrically molded window and door surrounds, high baseboards with vertical beaded-board wainscoting topped by a wide, beaded-board chair rail, and five-panel doors. The ballroom is illuminated by a skylight, the well of which extends down from the roof of the widow's walk. Rectangular wooden columns in the northwest corner separate the musicians gallery from the main room. The west hall extends from the ballroom, separating the musician's gallery from the ladies parlor, and opens onto the covered porch of the west wing which, in turn, affords access to the porte cochere. A simple, large mantel, added in the 1900 renovation and whose high shelf and molded cornice is supported by plain round columns, frames the plaster and brick fireplace opening. Directly behind the fireplace is a small powder room and to the right of the fireplace is a narrow doorway leading into the butler's pantry. A cased double opening along the east wall offers access into the circa 1876 dining room in the east wing.

The circa 1876 one-story, gabled two-bay wing with plainer finish and later sash extends from the east side of the main block and consists of the dining room, George Benton Alford's office, butler's pantry, kitchen, and meal-flour room.¹⁰ On the east facade of the addition is a three-part window. At the front and rear of the east wing is a one-story shed porch: the front porch extends the length of the east wing and the rear porch extends approximately two-thirds the length of the addition. The front and rear porches are supported by bracketed square posts. The balustrade of the front porch repeats the pattern of that found on the upper level of the main portico. The rear balustrade consists of latticework beneath a heavy molded rail. This design is repeated on all the remaining shed porches.

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The dining room and the office are finished with plaster walls and ceilings, symmetrically molded window and door surrounds, wide baseboards, and simply detailed Victorian mantels. Doorways on the south wall of the dining room open into the gentlemen's parlor and onto the southeast shed porch. To the right of the dining room mantel is the door leading into Alford's large rectangular office.

Projecting from the northeast corner of the north (rear) facade of the main block is a circa 1876 one-story two-bay frame kitchen with plainer finish and later sash of six-over-six. The kitchen rises beneath a gabled roof with simple boxed eaves and cornice. A one story shed porch runs the length of the east facade. At right angle to the kitchen extends the five-bay meal-flour room. A small shed addition runs across the north rear meal-flour room; this addition was used for meat storage. Inset into the shed of the meal-flour room is the entrance to the unfinished cellar which runs the length and width of the room above. The meal-flour room rises beneath a gabled roof with a repeat of the kitchen eaves and cornice. The butler's pantry and kitchen are found directly north of the dining room. These rooms are sheathed in flush wide pine boards, with molded window and door surrounds. Exterior doorways along the east facade of the pantry and kitchen open onto shed porches. The kitchen fireplace is surrounded by a simple Victorian pilaster and lintel mantel.

The meal-flour room extends from the kitchen at right angles along the west wall and is finished in the same manner as the kitchen and butler's pantry. A central doorway along the south wall originally led onto a shed porch which sheltered the well for the house and offered access to the kitchen and the main house. This connecting porch was dismantled and the well closed in the mid-1950s.¹¹

The 1900 Colonial Revival Addition

The 1900 expansion of the house encompasses the construction of the Colonial Revival west wing and porte cochere, the addition of the third floor, and completion of the second floor block. This expansion of the house was planned to accommodate visitors which Alford hoped to attract to natural springs on his property.¹² Significant features of the 1900 addition include ceilings and walls sheathed in flush pine boards, wide baseboards, three-part symmetrically molded surrounds, and five-panel doors. The windows here, as well as in the 1876 addition with the exception of the east wing and the third floor, feature principally a pattern of six-over-six.

Extending from the west facade of the main block is the large two-story west wing, five-bays in length on the upper level and four-bays on the lower level and three-bays in width, which rises beneath a low hipped roof. The eaves are boxed below a molded cornice and the roof is pierced by an interior chimney with molded cap. Protecting the bays of the west wing is a two-tiered porch with filleted Doric columns at each level. The frieze between the levels of the porch is embellished with rectangular inset molded panels. Between the columns on the second level runs a solid balustrade consisting of vertical tongue-and-groove beaded board beneath a heavy molded rail. The covered porch serves as a covered passageway leading to the grand porte cochere.

The porte cochere rises underneath a low hipped roof and is supported by filleted Doric columns atop brick plinths. The structure boasts a well-defined boxed eaves and molded cornice. The frieze repeats the inset, rectangular panels of the west wing porch detail, continuing the full length and width of the porte cochere. The

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structure is sealed with tongue-and-groove beaded board. Four carriages could be accommodated simultaneously beneath the structure. A brick pier divides the south entrance of the porte cochere into two lanes. It is reported that the pier served to mark a safe distance between arriving carriages, which helped to ensure the safety of the guests as they alighted.¹³

Access to the 1900 west wing is gained from the west hall and from a passageway located behind the musician's gallery in the ballroom. A large twenty by thirty-two feet sitting room comprises the entire first floor of the west wing. The sitting room ceiling is sheathed with flush pine boards, and the walls are of board and batten design over a wide baseboard. A large free-standing painted brick chimney dominates the center of the room and provides ventilation for a wood heating stove. A doorway along the south wall opens onto the gallery leading to the porte cochere and north and west doors open into the side and rear yards. These north and west doors originally accessed a wrap-around shed porch, dismantled in the 1950s, which encircled the west wing.¹⁴

A cased double opening on the second floor defines the transition between the 1840 stair hall and the central back hall added in 1900. Just north of this opening, projecting into space of the back hall and parallel to the interior east wall, is the rectangular shaft of the skylight and the enclosed well of the stairs leading to the third floor. The stairs ascend to an immediate landing, turn at a ninety degree angle, and continue in a single run to the third floor. The third floor consists of a transverse hallway serving four small rooms for servants.

On the right side of the 1900 back hall are the east and northeast bedrooms and the second floor bathroom. From the east bedroom, a doorway in the exterior wall provides access to the attic space over the 1876 dining room and office. On the left side of the back hall is the west bedroom, which features an exterior door onto the west wing gallery. Also radiating from the left is the long T-shaped west wing hall which reveals three guest bedrooms along the north wall and four along the south wall. An intersecting hall offers access onto the west wing gallery.

The 1900 attic monitor rises above the roof line of the main block. The walls are opened with large rectangular casement windows: two on the front and back, and three on each side. The eaves are boxed below a molded cornice. The attic monitor is crowned by a balustraded widow's walk. The railing of the widow's walk consists of close-set square balusters and an intricately molded handrail (The railing of the widow's walk has been temporarily removed for repair). The north (rear) facade of the main block is five-bays in width with plainer finish and later sash of six-over-six, which are boarded up for security and preservation. The simple five panel exterior door with simple molded surround opens into the back yard.

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Summary Statement of Significance

The Leslie-Alford-Mims House is an imposing Wake County landmark that evolved over a period of sixty years beginning circa 1840 in the town of Holly Springs, North Carolina. The Greek Revival style is evident in the original block with its hallmark two-story central Doric portico and its refined architectural appointments including original Asher Benjamin-inspired details. The 1840 residence was built by prominent Holly Springs businessman and tailor, Mr. Archibald Leslie. In 1876, Leslie sold the house to Mr. George Benton Alford; and under Alford's tenure the large Colonial Revival additions of 1876 and 1900 were completed. The Leslie-Alford-Mims House is associated with the productive lives of Archibald Leslie and George Benton Alford, who made substantial contributions to commerce and community development in southern Wake County during much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The interior and exterior integrity of the house remains remarkably intact and accurately reflects the importance of the builders in the Holly Spring community. In addition to the house, the thirteen-acre nominated property that is the residual portion of an original 180-acre tract, contains a 1923 Confederate memorial, the natural springs for which Holly Springs was named, and possible ante-bellum and post-bellum archeological remains.

Fully developed historical contexts for Wake County are found in the Multiple Property Documentation Form: "Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina" (Circa 1770-1941) written by Kelly Lally, Preservation Planner for the Wake County Planning Department, and Todd Johnson, Consultant. The Leslie-Alford-Mims House was placed on the North Carolina National Register Study List in 1991 following Ms. Lally's comprehensive survey of the county. Archibald Leslie's commercial successes relate to Context 1: "British and Africans Shape an Agrarian Society (Colonial Period to 1860)." George Benton Alford purchased the property in 1876. His commercial and community accomplishments fall within Context 2: "Civil War, Reconstruction, and a Shift to Commercial Agriculture (1861-1885);" and Context 3: "Populism to Progressivism (1885-1918)." The applicable property types include Property Type 3: Houses: A. "Houses Built from the Colonial Period to the Civil War Era (circa 1770-1865)" and B. "Houses Built Between the Civil War and World War I (1865-1918)."

Historical Background

Published sources indicate that the Leslie-Alford-Mims House was begun by a Scots tailor named Archibald Leslie who erected a patternbook-inspired Greek Revival House in the early 1840s near the group of five natural springs shaded by large holly trees at the intersection of the major roads of Fish Dam and Avent Ferry roads. Leslie married Isabel Rogers, a daughter of a prominent local family, and, according to tradition, built a fashionable two-story house as a wedding present for his bride. In addition to the house and outbuildings necessary for operating a subsistence farm and nineteenth century household, Leslie built a country store south of his house and established his tailoring business at the crossroads. A bustling village which came to be known as Holly Springs grew up around his store where Leslie served as postmaster from 1849 to 1859.^{15 16} As a successful businessman and as one of the leading citizens of the area, Leslie's house with its compliment of outbuildings on his 180-acre tract, reflected his status in the community.

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Leslie-Alford-Mims House, Holly Springs, Wake County, NC

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By 1860 the village of Holly Springs consisted of five stores, a large church, the Holly Springs Academy, and a Masonic lodge, all surrounded by a community of established middling farmers; but the Civil War ended this period of prosperity.¹⁷ In April 1865, General William T. Sherman's army reached Holly Springs, wreaked havoc in the village and roamed the countryside in foraging parties. Colonel W. J. Palmer appropriated the Leslie home for about two weeks as the headquarters of the Fourteenth Army Corps.¹⁸

As with the rest of North Carolina, the local economy of Holly Springs was devastated by the war and Reconstruction which followed. The effects of these events were further exacerbated by the construction of what became the Seaboard Air Line railroad through the neighboring hamlet of Apex to the northwest, drawing businesses and residents away from Holly Springs. By 1871, Holly Springs was described as a "deserted village"; but in 1875, George Benton Alford moved his successful mercantile business from nearby Middle Creek Township to Holly Springs and was instrumental in beginning an economic revival in the village.¹⁹

Alford purchased the Leslie property in 1876; and, as his family, wealth, and status in the community grew, he made significant additions and improvements to the house.²⁰ As part of the 1876 expansion of the house, Alford added an office to accommodate his numerous business activities. As the leading citizen of the village of Holly Springs, he expected his home to be the social center of area. This is reflected in the ballroom and larger dining room which were added at this time.

George Benton Alford was born July 25, 1845 some two miles south of the town of Cary. As the son of Green Haywood and Rebecca Jones Alford, he descended through both his father and mother from old and prominent Wake County families which had long been active in the affairs of the county.²¹ Alford married twice. His first wife was Charlotte Ann Olive, by whom he had two children, Mattie and Green Haywood. His second marriage was to Texanna Branch Collins, widow of Joseph Walter Collins.²² Alford was a civic-minded individual, serving at various times as both a justice of the peace and a county commissioner, and a successful and progressive businessman with a dream of making Holly Springs into an industrial city. The village became something of a boom town at the turn of this century largely through his efforts.²³

At Alford's insistence, the North Carolina General Assembly granted Holly Springs a charter of incorporation in 1877; and by 1880 the town had a population of around three hundred.²⁴ Under the leadership of Alford and Dr. B. S. Utley, the defunct Holly Springs Academy was re-established in the Masonic Lodge as the Holly Springs Institute in 1883. When the town's public high school was established, Alford became the chairman of the public high school committee.²⁵

Alford had numerous business interests, among which were the general mercantile store, a sawmill, a cotton gin, and the Holly Springs Land and Improvement Company which, along other things, was to build and operate cotton mills.²⁶ In 1899 he founded the Cape Fear News and Advertising Company, which published the *Cape Fear Enterprise*. This newspaper was the voice of Alford's single-handed attempt to promote the town. His weekly editorials touted the achievements and attributes of Holly Springs and urged investors to buy stock

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in the Holly Springs Land and Improvement Company.²⁷ In 1891 Alford, along with twenty other prominent men in the Holly Springs community, formed and received a charter of incorporation from the General Assembly for the Cape Fear and Northern Railroad.²⁸ Construction began on the railroad in 1898 with Alford as its first president. This railroad was later purchased by Benjamin Duke and became the Durham and Southern.²⁹

Alford sought not only to foster the growth of Holly Springs through education and industrial development, but attempted to capitalize on the area's natural beauty and resources by developing the springs into a resort. The large 1900 addition to the Leslie-Alford-Mims House was designed as guest quarters to accommodate visitors to Holly Springs, but the success of nearby Fuquay Springs thwarted his efforts and plans for a resort were never realized.³⁰

Alford was a Confederate veteran, having served as a private in Company I, 41st Regiment North Carolina State Troops (3rd Regiment, North Carolina Cavalry) and was instrumental in the establishment of the Oscar R. Rand Camp of the United Confederate Veterans.³¹ It was from his leadership of the local UCV troop and his devotion to keeping alive the achievements and sacrifices of the 41st regiment that Alford earned his honorary title of colonel, and it was Alford who erected the handsome monument in front of the house honoring Wake County Confederate veterans. The monument was unveiled on October 25, 1923 during an impressive ceremony attended by dignitaries from across the state.³²

George Benton Alford died April 5, 1924 and was buried in the family cemetery by the springs.³³ The house continued to be occupied by his widow, Texanna Alford until her death in 1938. The residence was then inherited by her daughter, Delcie, who continued to live there with her husband, Marcus E. Mims, until her death in 1969. The Leslie-Alford-Mims house is presently occupied by their son, Edwin Mims, who has preserved it largely in its 1900 condition.³⁴

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Endnotes:

- ¹ Wake County Record of Deeds (microfilm), Book 44, pp. 494-495, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.
- ² Edwin Mims, Interview, February 3, 1996.
- ³ *ibid.*
- ⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁵ Elizabeth Reid Murray, Interview, February 23, 1996 and Mary Hicks Hamilton, "Mims' House was a Gift to Bride 100 Years Ago," (Raleigh) *The News and Observer*, August 24, 1949.
- ⁶ Wake County Record of Deeds (microfilm), Book, 44, pp. 494-495, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.
- ⁷ Mims Interview.
- ⁸ Asher Benjamin, *Practice of Architecture, The Builder's Guide* (New York, 1994), p. 6, plate 1.
- ⁹ Mims Interview.
- ¹⁰ *ibid.*
- ¹¹ *ibid.*
- ¹² *ibid.*
- ¹³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Table of the Post Offices in the United States, 1849, 1859, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.
- ¹⁶ Brooks Sanders, "Metamorphosis", (Fuquay-Varina) *The Independent*, May 12, 19, 26, 1966, p. 1.
- ¹⁷ Sanders, p. 3.
- ¹⁸ Moses N. Amis, *Historical Raleigh with Sketches of Wake County and Its Important Towns* (Raleigh: Commercial Printing Company, 1913), p. 245.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 245.
- ²⁰ Wake County Record of Deeds (microfilm), Book 44, pp. 494-495, North Carolina State Archives.
- ²¹ Lodwick Alford, ed., *AAFA Action: The Official Publication of the Alford American Family Association*, Volume III, Number 3, December 1990, pp. 32-33.
- ²² Alford, p. 54.
- ²³ Sanders, p. 6.
- ²⁴ *Laws of North Carolina, 1876-1877*, c. 55
- ²⁵ Amis, p. 251.
- ²⁶ *Laws of North Carolina, 1891*, c. 246.
- ²⁷ Sanders, p. 6.
- ²⁸ *Laws of North Carolina, 1891*, c. 482.
- ²⁹ Amis, p. 246.
- ³⁰ Mims Interview.
- ³¹ Louis H. Manarin and Weymouth T. Jordan, Jr. (eds.), *North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1968), vol. II, p. 246.
- ³² Jonathan Daniels, "Unveil Memorial to Confederacy," *Raleigh News and Observer*, October 26, 1923.
- ³³ North Carolina State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Certificates of Death, File 852, p. 381, North Carolina State Archives.
- ³⁴ Mims Interview.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

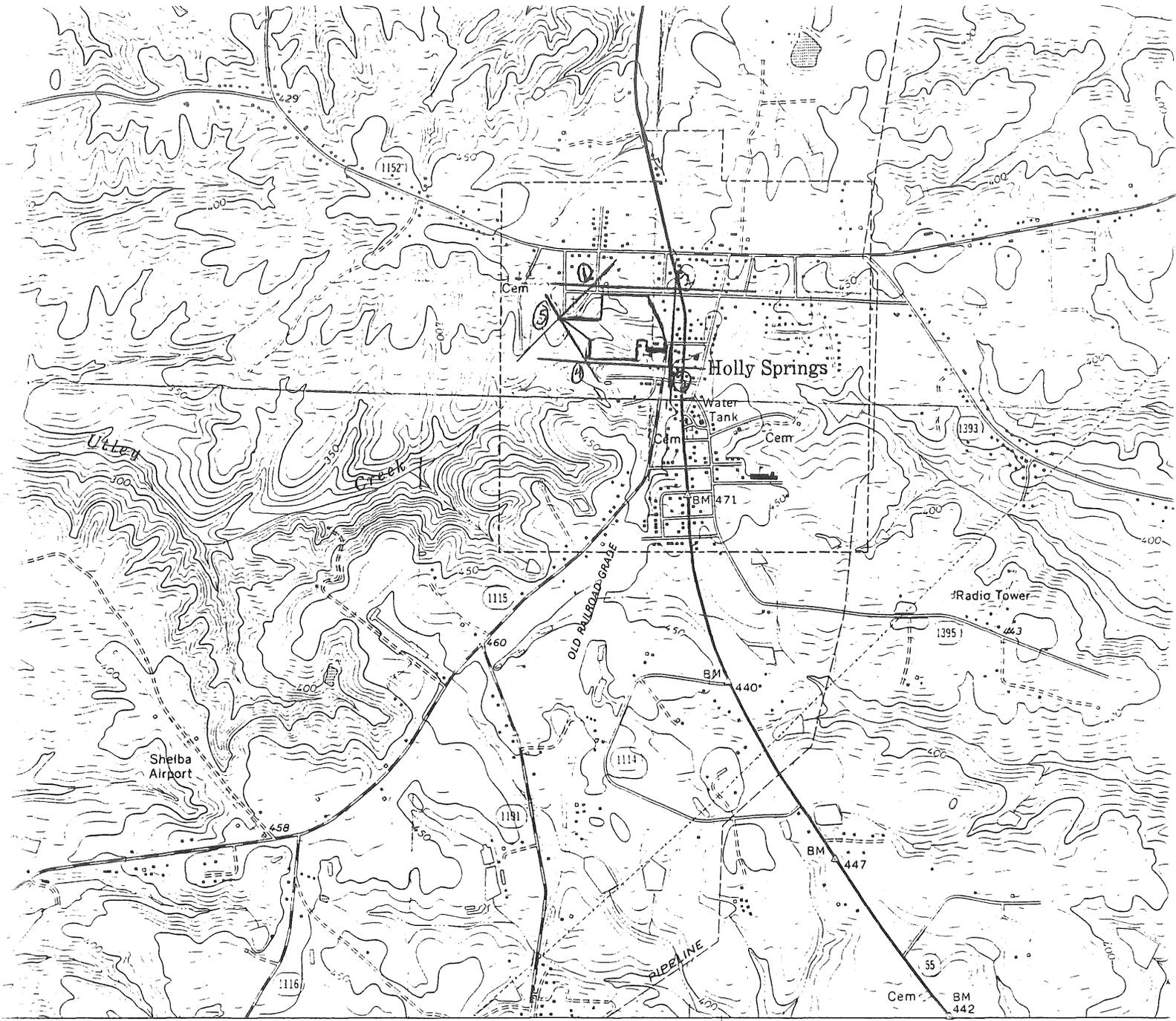
The property being nominated consists of the 13.33 acre tract shown as Parcel 1, Tax Map 134 (PIN 0649.20823039) and Parcel 2, Tax Map 134 (PIN 0649.20827431), Holly Springs Township, Wake County, North Carolina, as illustrated by the heavy black line on the accompanying 100-scale tax map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the nominated property includes the residual 13.33-acre tract historically associated with the Leslie-Alford-Mims House tract. The nominated property provides an appropriate setting for the house, the cemetery and the natural springs associated with the lives of the builders.

UTM References

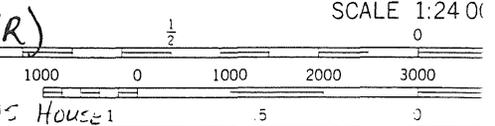
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E 695710
2. N 3947480
E 696100
3. N 3947140
E 696080
4. N 3947160
E 695700
5. N 3947340
E 695580



2 040 000 FEET 694 695 696 50' FUQUAY-VARINA 5.3 MI. (FUQUAY-VARINA 5255 III SE)

Published by the Geological Survey
 and North Carolina Geodetic Survey
 using metric methods from aerial photographs
 taken in 1974
 Grid ticks: North Carolina coordinate
 (conic). 1000-meter Universal
 ticks, zone 17, shown in blue
 datum.
 1927 North American Datum and North American
 datum 7.5-minute intersections is given in USGS
 datum shown by dashed corner ticks
 buildings which only landmark buildings are shown
 buildings within the boundaries of
 elevations shown on this map
 areas to be submerged

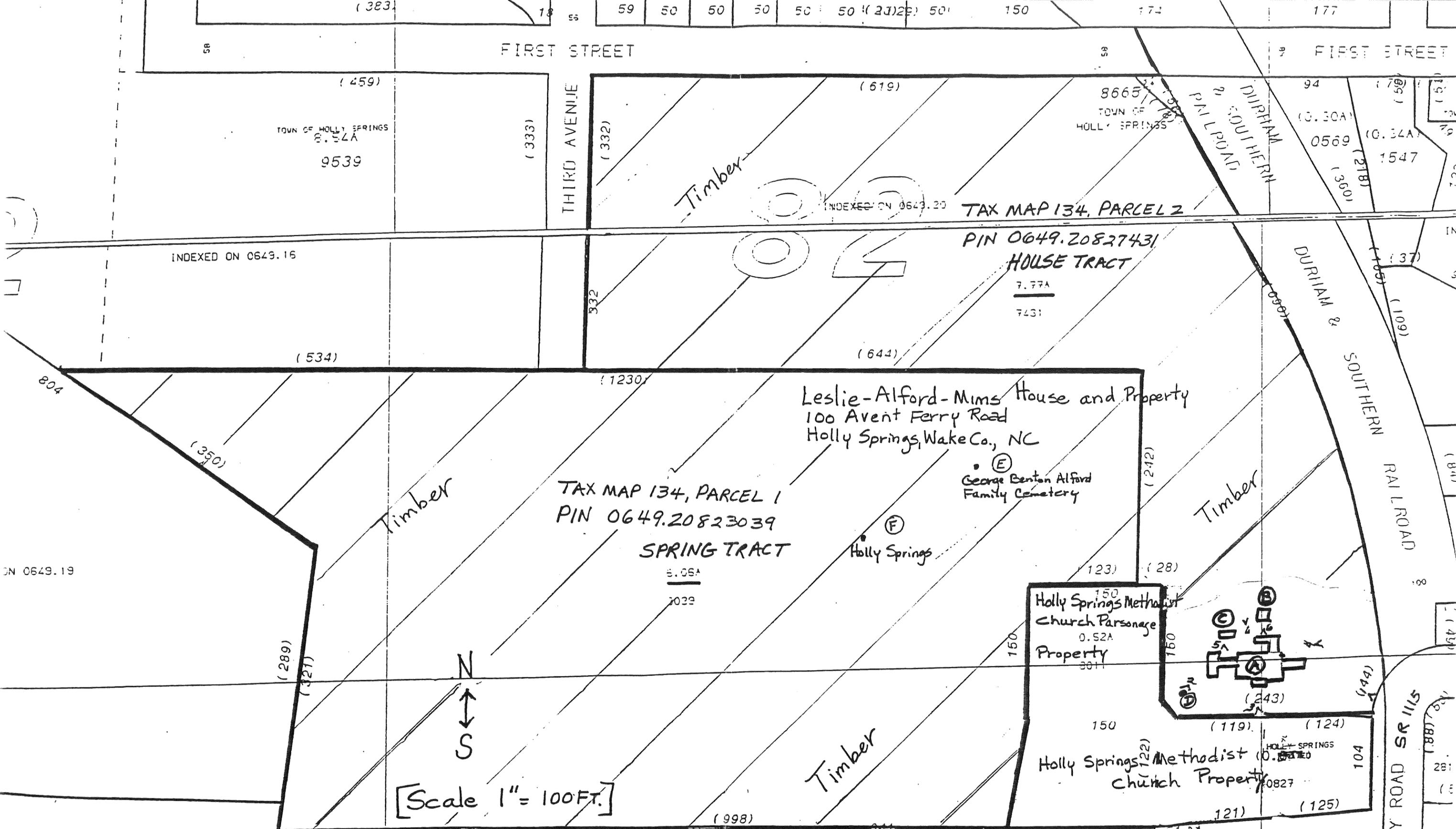
APEX QUAD (NR)



LESLIE-ALFORD-MIMS HOUSE
 HOLLY SPRINGS WAKE COUNTY, NC
 ZONE 17
 ① N 3947450 E 695710
 ④ N 3947160 E 695700

UTM GRID AND 1987 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET
 Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in
 cooperation with State of North Carolina agencies from
 aerial photographs taken 1984 and other sources. This
 information not field checked. Map edited 1987
 ② N 3947480 E 696100
 ③ N 3947190 E 696050

SCALE 1:24,000
 CONTOUR INTERVAL
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL
 THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
 DENVER, COLORADO 80225 OR REVISION
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND
 ⑤ N 3947340 E 695580



- (A) HOUSE - CONTRIBUTING
- (B) BARN - NONCONTRIBUTING
- (C) WASH - SMOKEHOUSE - NONCONTRIBUTING

- (D) CONFEDERATE MONUMENT - CONTRIBUTING
- (E) FAMILY CEMETERY - CONTRIBUTING
- (F) HOLLY SPRINGS - CONTRIBUTING

