

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Cary Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number S. Academy Street, Faculty Avenue, S. Harrison Avenue, W. Park Street, and Dry Avenue N/A Not for publication

city or town Cary N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27512

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Crow 3/2/01  
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

I, hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the

National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the

National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ removed from the National

Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ other (explain):

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5. Classification

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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)

| Number of Resources within Property<br>(Do not include previously listed resources in the count) |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Contributing   | Noncontributing |
| 39   | 10              |
| 0  | 0               |
| 0  | 5               |
| 0  | 0               |
| 39   | 15              |

buildings  
sites  
structures  
objects  
Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (ca. 1770-1941)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
DOMESTIC: secondary structure  
EDUCATION: school  
COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
DOMESTIC: secondary structure  
EDUCATION: school  
EDUCATION: library  
RELIGION: religious facility  
COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian  
Queen Anne  
Bungalow/Craftsman

(See continuation sheet)

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: brick  
Walls: weatherboard  
brick veneer  
roof: asphalt  
other: N/A

see continuation sheet

Narrative Description

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



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Cary Historic District, Wake County, North Carolina

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**SECTION 7: DESCRIPTION**

**Architectural Classification, continued**

Colonial Revival  
Tudor Revival  
Classical Revival  
Other: I-house  
No style

**Materials, continued**

**foundation:** concrete  
**walls:** stone veneer  
aluminum  
asbestos  
**roof:** metal  
**other:** N/A

**Narrative Description**

The Cary Historic District, located two blocks south of the town's central commercial district, is bounded by S. Academy Street, S. Harrison Avenue, W. Park Street, Dry Avenue, and a small portion of Faculty Avenue. Primarily residential in character, the district includes thirty historic dwellings, assorted domestic outbuildings, and the old Cary High School building, which date from ca. 1890 to 1945. Laid out in an informal grid plan, the streets are lined with mature hardwood trees.

Although S. Academy Street forms the eastern edge of the district, as the primary north-south street in town it is essentially the spine of the historic district. Leading south from the railroad, which represents the origins of the town, and Chatham Street, old Cary's main commercial thoroughfare, S. Academy Street is the address of most of the town's oldest dwellings, as well as the former Cary High School (now Cary Elementary School) and two historic church congregations (whose churches are outside of the district).

The visual focal point of the district, and perhaps the whole downtown, the Neoclassical Revival former high school building (no. 30) sits on a slight hill overlooking downtown Cary at the southern end of S. Academy. Built in 1939 by the Works Progress Administration, the two-story, red-brick building is

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Cary Historic District, Wake County, North Carolina

the last of a succession of school buildings that were located on this same site, its prominent location clearly illustrating the significant role of education in Cary's history.

Dwellings throughout the district range in age from the 1890s to around 1945. A few, such as the elaborate Queen Anne dwellings known as the Captain Harrison P. Guess House (no. 7) and the James Jones House (no. 5), illustrate Cary's late nineteenth-century prosperity as both a commercial and an educational center. Principals, teachers, and students, as well as ministers and businessmen, built or lived in homes from this era on S. Academy Street and adjacent streets. Marcus Baxter Dry, who served as principal of the high school for over thirty years, lived in a turn-of-the-century house adjacent to the campus (no. 12). Most of the houses within the district are fairly modest frame or brick-veneered bungalows or period cottages built in the first half of the twentieth century. From the 1920s to the 1950s, the town's two doctors lived and worked in S. Academy Street in buildings dating from this era. Dr. Frank W. Yarborough had his home and office at the corner of S. Academy and E. Park streets. Attached to his Colonial Revival house by a breezeway, the former medical office still retains the two front doors used by white and black patients respectively, during those years of segregation (no. 8). The town's other doctor, John P. Hunter, officed in a small building (outside the district) that now houses a restaurant. His home, a richly detailed Craftsman-style dwelling, still stands in the district at 311 S. Academy Street (no. 11).

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the area encompassed in the district has become increasingly mixed in use, with several former dwellings now serving as businesses and offices and newer commercial buildings located on former residential lots. The historic district's boundaries have been drawn to eliminate as many later intrusions as possible while including the highest number of contributing resources. There are thirty-nine contributing resources out of a total number of fifty-five. With two major exceptions, the sixteen non-contributing resources consist of residential buildings and structures: two dwellings and twelve modern and relatively modest outbuildings and structures. None of these detracts from the historic character of the district. Of the two dwellings, one (no. 3) was altered with the addition of brick veneer siding beyond the period of significance and was thus rendered non-contributing. The other (no. 24) was built in 1951 outside of the period of significance. The noncontributing outbuildings and structures consist primarily of garages, carports, and storage buildings that are located at the rear of their lots and thus do not interfere with the district's overall integrity. The first exception, a one-story office building built around 1968 (no. 9), occupies what were probably originally two residential lots at the intersection of S. Academy and E. Park streets. While this building is larger than most of the buildings on S. Academy Street, its one-story height and simple Colonial Revival detailing render it relatively unobtrusive. The second, Cary Public Library (no. 2) at 310 S. Academy Street, was built in 1977. The building's low height, natural materials, wooded lot, and a setback that matches the adjacent residential properties keep it from being a major intrusion in the district.

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**Inventory List**

The inventory list begins with the north-south streets in the district and continues with the east-west streets. The north-south streets include, from east to west, S. Academy Street, Faculty Avenue, and S. Harrison Avenue. East-west streets include, from north to south, W. Park Street and Dry Avenue. Resources on north-south streets are listed from north to south, beginning on the east side of each street and ending on the west side. Resources on each east-west street are listed from east to west, beginning on the north side of each street and ending on the south side.

**Inventory List Key**

C=Contributing  
NC=Non-Contributing  
B=Building  
S=Structure

- |   |                                       |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | 302 S. Academy St.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1890 | <b>Esther Ivey House (Raven House).</b> Known locally as the Esther Ivey House for long-time Cary resident who lived in the house for most of the twentieth century, this frame, I-house with large rear shed is said to have been occupied in the late nineteenth century by A. R. Raven, first pastor of the First Methodist Church (Cary News, 25th Anniversary publication, 1988; Cary Walking Tour, 1987, 1994). The house features the triple-A roof so common on houses of the period, as well as a full-facade front porch supported by narrow Doric columns. The front entrance is surrounded by a transom and sidelights, and the north elevation is embellished by a bay window. Windows are six-over-six sash. |
|   | C-B<br>early 20th c.                  | <u>1a. Shed.</u> Frame, gable-front shed with corrugated metal walls and exposed rafter ends.  |
| 2 | 310 S. Academy St.<br>NC-B<br>1977    | <b>Cary Public Library.</b> This rectangular one-story building was constructed in 1977 to house the town's library (Byrd, 118). The building features stone walls and a straight-sided mansard roof similar to the one found on the Page-Walker Hotel. Although the footprint of the building is large, its low height, natural materials and tree-lined site, combined with a setback that matches those of nearby residences, softens its visual impact on S. Academy Street. Non-contributing due to age.  |

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3 318 S. Academy St.  
NC-B  
ca. 1923; ca. 1962 **(Former) Methodist Parsonage.** Believed to have been built around 1923 to serve as the parsonage for the First Methodist Church, this frame, one-story, gable-front bungalow was completely remodeled around 1962 by the Hill family (Mrs. Louis Hill, interview). During the remodeling, a brick veneer was added to the exterior and the doors, windows, and porch supports were replaced. The building is non-contributing due to alterations, but is in keeping with the area's historic character.

C-B  
ca. 1940 **3a. Garage.** Gable-roofed, one-car garage with concrete-block walls, plain weatherboards in the gables, and a paneled door.

4 320 S. Academy St.  
C-B  
ca. 1940 **Henry Adams House.** Built and owned for many years by Henry Adams, the owner of a downtown drugstore (which became Ashworth's Drug Store in 1957), this one-and-a-half-story brick-veneered period cottage features simple Tudor Revival details (Survey and Planning files). These include a multi-gabled roof, a prominent brick chimney on the front of the house, and a rounded front entrance outlined in stone.

NC-S  
1980s **4a. Carport.** Modern metal carport. Non-contributing due to age.

5 324 S. Academy St.  
C-B  
ca. 1890 **James Jones House.** This one-story Queen Anne cottage is said to have been built in the late nineteenth century by James Jones and occupied at various times by several principals and students of Cary High School (Cary Walking Tour, 1987, 1994). The house features many original Queen Anne features, such as the picturesque roofline, wrap-around porch with sawn and turned ornamentation, scalloped trim and small multi-paned windows in the gables, and a cutaway bay window. The house, which has been converted for use as a business, has been altered with the glass enclosure of the front porch and the addition of aluminum siding.

NC-B  
ca. 1990 **5a. Storage building.** Modern frame storage building.

**S. ACADEMY STREET, EAST SIDE**

6 209 S. Academy St. **House.** Built ca. 1927, this one-and-a-half-story, frame period cottage is simply detailed with a cross-gable roof, plain weatherboard siding, and

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- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | C-B<br>ca. 1927   | six-over-six windows (some of which are paired). The foundation and exterior end chimney are of brick.   |
| 7 | 215 S. Academy St.<br>C-B<br>1830s; ca. 1900;<br>ca. 1990 | <p><b>Captain Harrison P. Guess House.</b> Built in several stages beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, this three-story frame house, the most prominent dwelling on S. Academy Street, was apparently a traditional two-story Greek Revival I-house with a rear ell originally. The house was significantly expanded and remodeled in the Queen Anne Style around the turn of the twentieth century. The remodeled dwelling was enriched by a three-story tower, front bay window, corner tower, and much decorative woodwork, including patterned shingles, fanlike spandrels, finials, and pendants. Turned posts with sawn brackets and a turned balustrade support a one-story front porch from this period. Small colored panes border the top sashes of the front windows. In the late twentieth century a large rear wing was added and the front entry steps were enlarged.</p> <p>Although known locally as the Guess House, this prominent S. Academy Street dwelling had many owners throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Railroad "roadmaster" Captain Harrison P. Guess and his wife, Aurelia, purchased the property from Frank Page in 1880 (Byrd, 51, 166). The house was expanded and remodeled by John White, a Baptist minister, who purchased the property in 1896. Local tradition holds that White added the tower so that he could look out over the town while writing his sermons (Byrd, 166). Mr. and Mrs. N. G. Yarborough, parents of Dr. Frank W. Yarborough, are said to have owned the property for many years (Byrd, 92). Their son's former home and office are on an adjacent lot (see entry 8). The property has had several owners in the late twentieth century (Byrd, 166).</p> |
|   | C-B<br>early 20th c.                                      | <u>7a. Garage.</u> Frame, gable-front, one-car garage.   |
|   | NC-S<br>ca. 1940; ca. 1990                                | <u>7b. Wellhouse.</u> Small, concrete-block, rectangular wellhouse altered recently with an octagonal roof (to match a nearby gazebo). Non-contributing due to alterations.  |
|   | NC-S<br>ca. 1990  | <u>7c. Gazebo.</u> Modern frame gazebo. Non-contributing due to age.   |

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|-----|--|---|
|     | NC-B<br>ca. 1990                           | <u>7d. Greenhouse.</u> Modern glass greenhouse. Non-contributing due to age.  |
| 8   | 219 S. Academy St.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1935      | <b>Dr. Frank W. Yarborough House.</b> Built ca. 1935, this one-and-a-half-story, frame period cottage features simple Colonial Revival details. These include three gabled dormer windows on the front of the house, eight-over-eight and six-over-six sash windows, a simple fluted front door surround, and slender columns supporting a side porch. A one-story gable-roofed wing attached on the south side originally housed Dr. Yarborough's office. This section, which faces E. Park Street, retains two front doors that mark the segregated entrances for the doctor's black and white patients (Byrd, 91). |
| 9   | 301-305 S. Academy St.<br>NC-B<br>ca. 1968 | <b>Office Building.</b> One-story, slightly U-shaped, brick office building with flat parapet roof and simple Colonial Revival detailing. Non-contributing due to age.  |
| 10  | 307 S. Academy St.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1900      | <b>Pasmore House.</b> Known locally as the Pasmore House, this frame, one-and-a-half-story, triple-A-roofed house served for some years in the twentieth century as a boarding house for students of Cary High School (Cary Walking Tour, 1987, 1994). Probably built around the turn of the twentieth century, the house features a full-facade front porch supported by simple square posts separated by turned balusters. Windows are four-over-four sash. Gabled dormers flank the front gable. Aluminum siding has been added to the exterior.   |
|     | NC-S<br>ca. 1980                           | <u>10a. Carport.</u> Modern metal carport. Non-contributing due to age.   |
|     | C-B<br>ca. 1920                            | <u>10b. Shed.</u> Small, shed-roofed frame shed.  |
| 11. | 311 S. Academy St.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1925      | <b>Dr. John P. Hunter House.</b> Built ca. 1925 for Dr. John P. Hunter, this well-preserved brick bungalow is one-and-a-half-stories tall. The side-gable roof is punctuated with three front dormers: two shed dormers flanking one gabled dormer. The long horizontal front porch is enclosed on the south end and extends into a porte cochere on the north end, supported by tapered wood posts on brick piers. Windows feature multi-pane upper sashes over single-pane lower sashes.  |

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Cary Historic District, Wake County, North Carolina

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|----|---|--|
|    | C-B<br>ca. 1925                                   | <u>11a. Chicken House.</u> This rectangular, shed-roofed frame building served as a chicken house.   |
|    |   | <b><u>FACULTY AVENUE, WEST SIDE</u></b>  |
| 12 | 400 Faculty Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1900               | <b>Marcus Baxter Dry House.</b> Facing the former Cary High School to the east, this one-story, frame house was the home of Marcus Baxter Dry, long-time principal of the school. Similar to many such homes built around the turn of the century in Cary and throughout Wake County, with its triple-A-roof and simple Victorian details, the house is marked by four-over-four and six-over-six sash windows, a wrap-around porch with simple square posts and balusters, and patterned shingles in the gables.<br><br>Marcus Baxter Dry served as Cary High School's principal from 1908 to 1942. In addition to being known widely as an innovative educator, Dry was instrumental in the construction and modernization of the school's buildings during his tenure. The current school building, which now serves as Cary Elementary School, was constructed ca. 1939 by the Works Progress Administration just a few years before Dry's retirement. This building replaced a 1913 brick building, also constructed under the leadership of Dry. |
|    | NC-B<br>ca. 1990                                  | <u>12a. Garage.</u> Modern frame garage. Non-contributing due to age.  |
|    |   | <b><u>S. HARRISON AVENUE, WEST SIDE</u></b>  |
| 13 | 208 S. Harrison Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1935           | <b>House.</b> This frame, one-and-a-half-story period cottage has simple Tudor Revival detailing with its multi-gabled roof and arched front entry. Lower walls have red brick veneer, while the upper walls are clad in asbestos siding.  |
| 14 | 212 S. Harrison Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1900; ca. 1945 | <b>House.</b> Probably built around the turn of the century, this frame I-house features the popular triple-A-roof. The house was remodeled in the Colonial Revival style, probably around 1945, when the two-story "Mount Vernon" porch was added and the windows and door surround were replaced. The house is clad in asbestos siding.  |
|    | C-B<br>ca. 1940                                   | <u>14a. Garage.</u> This frame, gable-front, one-and-a-half-story garage houses two cars and appears to have been built around 1940.   |

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|----|---|--|
| 15 | 302 S. Harrison Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1941 | <b>House.</b> This frame, one-story period cottage has simple Tudor Revival detailing with its multi-gabled roof and prominent front chimney. Asbestos siding covers the exterior walls.   |
| 16 | 326 S. Harrison Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1922 | <b>House.</b> With its horizontal lines and low-pitched, multi-gable roof, this frame bungalow is a good example of the Craftsman-style houses commonly built in the 1920s and 1930s. The roofline is embellished with triangular brackets and slender wooden posts grouped in threes support the porch. Windows are nine-over-one sash. The exterior has been re-sided with aluminum. |
| 17 | 400 S. Harrison Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1926 | <b>House.</b> This two-story frame house is a well-preserved example of Craftsman-style architecture. The side-gabled dwelling with offset front attic gable is clad in plain wood siding with shingles and triangular brackets in the gables. Tapered wood posts on brick piers support the wrap-around front porch. Windows have eight-over-one sashes.                              |

**S. HARRISON AVENUE, EAST SIDE**

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 18 | 307 S. Harrison Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1930 | <b>House.</b> One story with a gable-front orientation, this simple frame bungalow features German siding and triangular brackets in its gables. The partial front porch has been screened in. Windows are six-over-six sash. |
|----|---|---|

**W. PARK STREET, NORTH SIDE**

- |    |                                    |  |
|----|------------------------------------|--|
| 19 | 116 W. Park St.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1940 | <b>House.</b> One story with a side-gable roof, this very simple period cottage features brick veneer lower walls with wood in the gables, paired six-over-six sash windows, and an interior brick chimney. A small screened porch is found on the southeast corner. The property is now owned by First Baptist Church and used for church functions and activities. |
| 20 | 120 W. Park St.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1932 | <b>House.</b> This one-story period cottage features very simple eclectic details with its gabled dormers and six-over-six sash windows (Colonial Revival), and arched entry and side porch (Tudor Revival). The exterior is clad in dark red brick veneer. The property is now owned by First Baptist Church and used for church functions and activities.          |

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Cary Historic District, Wake County, North Carolina

**W. PARK STREET, SOUTH SIDE**

- 21 107 W. Park St.  
C-B  
ca. 1940
- House.** Built ca. 1940, this two-story frame house displays simple Colonial Revival details. The house is topped by a side-gable roof with an interior brick chimney and has a full-facade porch supported by simple square posts. Windows are six-over-six sash. Exterior walls are plain weatherboard siding.
- NC-B  
ca. 1990
- 21a. Storage Building.** Modern frame gable-roofed outbuilding. Non-contributing due to age.
- 22 111 W. Park St.  
C-B  
ca. 1940
- House.** This one-and-a-half-story brick-veneered bungalow is topped by a side-gable roof. Its most prominent feature is a gable-roofed front porch sheltering the entrance, supported by tapered wooden posts on brick piers. Other notable details include an exterior-end brick chimney and six-over-one sash windows. The front yard is bordered by a low stone retaining wall.
- 23 115 W. Park St.  
C-B  
ca. 1930
- House.** This very simple period cottage is one-and-a-half stories tall and covered with dark red brick veneer. The house features simple Tudor Revival influence in its arched entry porch, multi-gable roof, and exterior-end chimney with a single shoulder. Windows are six-over-one sash.
- 24 119 W. Park St.  
NC-B  
ca. 1951
- House.** This simple, Colonial Revival-influenced, brick ranch house was built ca. 1951. It is non-contributing due to age.

**DRY AVENUE, NORTH SIDE**

- 25 106 Dry Ave.  
C-B  
ca. 1920
- House.** One story and topped by a pyramidal roof, this frame house has four-over-four sash windows and an interior brick chimney. The house has been changed over the years with aluminum siding and the partial enclosure of the recessed front porch, but retains its overall integrity.
- 26 110 Dry Ave.  
C-B  
ca. 1918
- House.** Topped by a hip roof, this modest frame bungalow has a gable-roofed front porch supported by square posts on brick piers and a decorative picket balustrade. Windows are two-over-two sash. Alterations include the addition of aluminum siding and the enclosure of the open triangular gable braces.

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- |    |                                 |  |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 27 | 112 Dry Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1930 | <b>House.</b> This one-and-a-half-story period cottage is marked by simple Colonial Revival details, such as the gabled roof dormers, six-over-six sash windows, and simple gable-roofed entry porch. The house is clad in asbestos siding.  |
| 28 | 114 Dry Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1920 | <b>House.</b> Topped by a low-pitched gable roof, this frame bungalow features a broad roof overhang embellished with triangular brackets. Although some windows have been replaced, a few original windows with multi-paned upper sashes over one lower sash remain. The front porch has been screened in, and aluminum siding has been added to the exterior.              |
|    | NC-S<br>ca. 1990                | <u>28a. Carport.</u> Modern metal carport. Non-contributing due to age.  |
|    | NC-B<br>ca. 1990                | <u>28b. Garage.</u> Modern frame two-car garage. Non-contributing due to age.  |
|    | NC-B<br>ca. 1990                | <u>28c. Storage building.</u> Modern metal storage building. Non-contributing due to age.  |
| 29 | 120 Dry Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1918 | <b>House.</b> One-and-a-half stories tall, this multi-gabled, frame bungalow features brick veneer lower walls and asbestos siding in the gables. The house has an engaged, wrap-around porch that extends into a porte cochere and is supported by full-height brick piers. Other notable details include exposed rafter ends and some original four-over-one sash windows. |
|    | C-B<br>ca. 1918                 | <u>29a. Garage.</u> Pyramidal-roofed, brick, one-car garage.   |

**DRY AVENUE, SOUTH SIDE**

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 30 | 100 Dry Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1939, 1950s | <b>(Former) Cary High School.</b> Built in 1939 for \$132,000 by the Works Progress Administration, this two-story brick building originally served as Cary High School. A good example of the neoclassical architecture preferred by WPA architects, this building is richly detailed with a two-story pedimented portico, a modillioned cornice, arched dormer vents, and keystone window lintels. Hip-roofed wings flank the taller central section with gable parapets rising to pairs of false chimneys. The main entrance is emphasized with a full entablature and a fanlight transom. |
|----|--|---|

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The current Doric columns and nine-over-nine sash windows are replacements--an early photograph shows Ionic columns and twelve-over-one sash windows. A two-story rear wing appears to have been added in the 1950s.

Founded in 1907 after the General Assembly passed legislation creating a system of public high schools in North Carolina, Cary High School was the first public high school in Wake County--and believed to be the first in the state under the 1907 law. The high school initially purchased and utilized the facilities of a former private high school, the Cary Academy, which had been located in the community since 1870. Cary High School was housed in a succession of buildings, all located on the present site and now demolished, before the current building was constructed in 1939.

- |    |                                 |  |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 31 | 115 Dry Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1940 | <p><b>House.</b> This one-and-a-half-story gable-front frame bungalow features a one-story gable-roofed front porch supported by tapered wood posts on brick piers and triangular brackets in the gables. Windows are two-over-two sash. The exterior has been covered with aluminum siding.</p> |
|    | C-B<br>ca. 1923                 | <p><u>31a. Garage.</u> Frame, gable-roofed one-car garage.</p>   |
| 32 | 119 Dry Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1922 | <p><b>House.</b> One-story tall, this brick-veneered, gable-front bungalow features a gable-roofed porch supported by brick piers and enhanced with shingles in the gable. Windows are six-over-one sash.</p>  |
|    | C-B<br>ca. 1922                 | <p><u>32a. Garage.</u> Brick-veneered two-car garage topped by a low pyramidal roof.</p>   |
| 33 | 121 Dry Ave.<br>C-B<br>ca. 1930 | <p><b>House.</b> This one-story, frame bungalow features simple Craftsman details, such as exposed rafter ends, three-over-one sash windows, and a porch supported by tapered wood posts on brick piers. Aluminum siding has been added to the exterior.</p>                                     |
|    | C-B<br>ca. 1930                 | <p><u>33a. Garage.</u> Frame, gable-roofed, one-car garage with German siding.</p>   |

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8. Statement of Significance

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**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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 prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

**Architecture**  
**Education**

Period of Significance  
**Ca. 1890 – 1945**

Significant Dates  
**1907**

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

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

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
**Works Progress Administration**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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 in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: Wake County Planning Department

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Cary Historic District, Wake County, North Carolina

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**SECTION 8: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Summary**

The Cary Historic District qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architectural significance and Criterion A for its educational significance. The intact ensemble of small-town residential and educational architecture constructed from ca. 1890 to 1945 depicts the development of the town of Cary as a railroad village and educational center. This ensemble includes both modest examples of typical residential styles built during this period throughout small-town Wake County and North Carolina, as well as distinctive buildings unique to Cary, such as the impressive Queen Anne Captain Harrison P. Guess House and the Neoclassical Revival former Cary High School building. The 1939 high school building, along with a number of nearby residences that housed the school's faculty and students, symbolizes the prominent role of education in the town's history. Founded in 1907 as the first public high school in Wake County, Cary High School was also one of the first public high schools in North Carolina and served as a model for other schools across the state. The period of significance for the district begins around 1890, corresponding with the approximate date of construction of the oldest building in the district, and extends through 1945, which marked the beginning of the town's tremendous post-war suburban development. The context is established in the "Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (ca. 1770-1941)," a Multiple Property Documentation Form prepared in 1993. The most relevant historic contexts include: Populism to Progressivism (1885-1918) and Boom, Bust and Recovery Between World Wars (1919-1941). The architectural significance of the district relates to the following property types: houses, outbuildings, and institutional buildings.

**Historical Background**

The town of Cary has its roots in an eighteenth-century crossroads inn known as Bradford's Ordinary (Murray, 103; Byrd and Miller, 2). The inn, which was located near the old Raleigh to Hillsborough Road (present-day NC 54), was owned first by John Bradford, and later by the Yates family (Byrd and Miller, 2-3). In 1854, Allison Francis (Frank) and Catherine (Kate) Page purchased 300 acres, including the old inn, from the Yates family (Byrd and Miller, 17).

The North Carolina Rail Road, the state's second railroad, was chartered in 1849 to link the cities of Goldsboro and Charlotte through Raleigh, Hillsborough, Greensboro, and Salisbury. To avoid rough terrain along what would be the most direct passage, the railroad was routed through the Cary area with its relatively level topography, roughly following the Raleigh to Hillsborough Road (present-day NC 54). The railroad was constructed through the area in 1856, with a "turnout" near the Page property where trains traveling in both directions could pass each other. That same year a post office was established at "Cary" with A. F. Page its first post master (Byrd and Miller, 20). Page, a devoted advocate of temperance, is believed to have named the post office, and later the town, after Samuel Fenton Cary, a renowned temperance advocate from Ohio who later visited Raleigh (Lally, 329).

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Cary Historic District, Wake County, North Carolina

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Although passenger service from Cary on the North Carolina Rail Road began as early as 1867, the first official depot was built the following year when the Chatham Railroad (now Seaboard Air Line) was constructed through Cary on its way south from Raleigh to the Chatham County coalfields (Byrd and Miller, 21). The two intersecting railroads shared the depot. The Pages, who were in the lumber and general merchandise business, greatly profited from their location adjacent to these railroads. In the late 1860s, the family built a fine hotel in the Second Empire style near the depot to accommodate railroad passengers later known as the Page-Walker Hotel (NR, 1979). The Pages also laid out streets and sold one-acre lots for a new town. The town of Cary, officially described as “one-half mile in each direction of the four walls of the Chatham Railroad warehouse,” was chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1871 (Byrd and Miller, 22, 24). At the time of Cary’s incorporation, there were 150 residents; by 1880 the town boasted a population of 316. During these years, in addition to the hotel, the village supported several saw- and gristmills, a sash-and-blind factory, at least three general merchandise stores and two churches, Methodist and Baptist (Murray, 651).

In the late nineteenth century, Cary’s residents built houses, both simple and ornate, on the newly laid out streets, most prominent of which was S. Academy. The Esther Ivey House (no. 1), a traditional I-house, and the James Jones House (no. 5), a richly detailed Queen Anne cottage, date from this period. Although originally built in the mid-nineteenth century, mostly likely as a two-story farmhouse, the Captain Harrison P. Guess House (no. 7) was expanded and elaborately remodeled in the Queen Anne style around the turn of the twentieth century.

While the railroad and the businesses that it spawned put Cary on the map, it was education that eventually kept it there. While laying out the town of Cary, Frank and Kate Page set aside one of their lots for a school. Cary Academy was founded in 1870, and a two-story, four-room building was built on top of a small hill at the end of S. Academy Street. A private boarding school, Cary Academy was incorporated as Cary High School in 1896, owned by as many as twenty-three stockholders. Under the leadership of principal E. L. Middleton, the school became a highly respected institution throughout the state (Byrd and Miller, 55). In 1900, the school had five teachers who taught 248 students (Byrd and Miller, 61), many of whom boarded in local homes, such as the Pasmore House (no. 10) and the James Jones House (no. 5) on S. Academy Street. In the early twentieth century, the old school building was enlarged to provide dormitory rooms and additional classrooms.

In 1907, under the leadership of Governor Charles B. Aycock, the General Assembly passed into law a bill creating a system of public high schools in North Carolina. Almost immediately thereafter, the stockholders of Cary High School offered the campus for sale to the Wake County Board of Education. On April 3, 1907, just eight days after the legislation was passed, the offer was accepted and paid for with both county and state funds. Cary High School became the first public high school in Wake County and, given the speed with which it was acquired and opened, was likely the first state-assisted public high school in North Carolina under the new state law (Byrd and Miller, 62).

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Under Marcus Baxter Dry, who served as principal from 1908 to 1942, Cary High School became a model for public high schools in the state due to its strong academics and innovative programming. During the 1910s and 1920s, the school offered, along with its academic subjects, vocational agriculture, home economics, and teacher training (Byrd and Miller, 63-64). In 1913, local bond funds and state funds paid for a modern brick main building. This building was in turn replaced in 1939 by a new, two-story, brick main building. Designed and constructed by the Works Progress Administration in the Neoclassical Revival style, the building cost an impressive \$132,000 to build. It served as the town's high school until 1960 and has been used as Cary Elementary School since that time.

With its close proximity to Raleigh and the capital city's booming post-World War I economy, Cary essentially developed into a bedroom community for the capital city by the 1920s (Byrd and Miller, 75). A rural sociological study of Wake County conducted in the 1920s classified Cary as a "retired farmer village" (Zimmerman and Taylor). The town, then with a population of 645, supported two general stores, two doctors, one bank, one drugstore, one clothing store, and one cotton buyer (Lally, 329). Many Cary residents routinely traveled to Raleigh for professional goods and services, as well as entertainment and cultural events. Automobiles and good roads facilitated travel between the capital city and Cary. The Central Highway, one of the first paved roads in the state, was constructed between the two municipalities by 1920 (Byrd and Miller, 75). Within a few years, Cary was also connected by paved roads to Durham and Apex (Byrd and Miller, 79). In the two decades that followed, Cary became a convenient home for commuters to Raleigh, particularly employees of North Carolina State University and state government workers. These residents built relatively modest homes in the Craftsman and period revival styles, such as those found on S. Academy Street, Dry Avenue, and S. Harrison Avenue in the district, as well as elsewhere in town.

Cary's population growth was relatively slow and steady until after World War II when several factors transformed it from a sleepy small town to a major suburban community, and ultimately to an independent economic center. Raleigh's fast-paced post-World War II development sparked the initial growth, as soldiers returning from war settled with their families in areas convenient to the capital city and the jobs it offered. A 1947 article on the town in *The State* notes that: "There has been an unusually large amount of residential building in the town of late . . . (Q)uite a number of college teachers live here and have built recently. This also applies to college students. There's a community near the outskirts of town which is known as Veterans hill. Thus far, thirteen new homes have been built in this section. You have to be a veteran in order to purchase a lot and build your house" (Goerch in *The State*, 20). An advertisement in the same publication touts Cary as "'The biggest little town in the South' To Live . . . To Locate . . . To Build." The ad features a picture of the period cottages along W. Park Street (including nos. 19 and 20) with the caption: "Cary is a town with an unusually large number of attractive and comfortable homes. The above are typical of the type of residences which you will find here."

The development of Research Triangle Park along the nearby Wake/Durham county border in the

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Cary Historic District, Wake County, North Carolina

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late 1950s and early 1960s brought tremendous additional growth to Cary, as did the growth of Raleigh-Durham Airport, also located nearby. As the farm fields around the town were quickly transformed into subdivisions and shopping centers to house and serve the town's new residents, the town began annexing nearby subdivisions and rural areas. In 1945, the town's original boundaries of 1871 were still intact, including 640 acres. By its 100-year anniversary in 1971, the town encompassed over 4,100 acres, spreading over 6.4 square miles (Byrd and Miller, 110). Cary's population tripled from just over 1,000 residents in 1940 to over 3,000 in 1960--and continued to more than double with each passing decade (Byrd and Miller, 185). In 2000, over 96,000 people call Cary home (Town of Cary Planning Department), most living and shopping in large-scale developments such as Kildaire Farms, MacGregor Downs, Lochmere, and Preston. Local historians Tom Byrd and Jerry Miller note that over eighty percent of Cary has been built since 1971 (Byrd and Miller, 133).

Amazingly, despite all of this phenomenal growth, the intersection of Chatham and Academy streets still serves as the heart of Cary. The town's current governmental offices were constructed in the 1970s on land owned by Frank and Kate Page. Although only a few original commercial buildings survive along Chatham Street, the downtown business district still serves old and new residents alike with a drugstore, post office, gas station, several restaurants, and specialty businesses. The Baptist and Methodist churches continue to occupy their original locations along S. Academy Street with enlarged buildings to serve growing congregations. The homes along S. Academy and S. Harrison in the district were built and occupied by the town's earliest citizens, business people, and educators. Although increasingly commercial in use, S. Academy Street still retains its residential nature, as do adjoining streets. Early Cary landmarks, such as the Guess House (no. 7) and the Esther Ivey House (no. 1), stand among newer buildings, such as the Cary Public Library (no. 2). The 1939 former high school building anchors the district and still reigns over downtown.

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**SECTION 10**

**UTM References**

|          | <b>Easting</b> | <b>Northing</b> |
|----------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>1</b> | 700280         | 3962440         |
| <b>2</b> | 700580         | 3962480         |
| <b>3</b> | 700290         | 3962080         |
| <b>4</b> | 700620         | 3962080         |

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary for the Cary Historic District is shown with a solid line on the accompanying map, drawn at a scale of 1" = 200'.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary for the Cary Historic District is drawn to include the greatest concentration of pre-1945 historic resources associated with the town's history and development.

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Cary Historic District, Wake County, North Carolina

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**Photographs**

The following information applies to all photographs included in the Cary Historic District National Register nomination unless otherwise noted.

Cary Historic District

Wake County, North Carolina

Photographer: Kelly Lally Molloy

March 2000

Negatives on file at North Carolina Division of Archives and History

Letters below are keyed to the sketch map.

- A. (former) Cary High School from the northeast
- B. Marcus B. Dry House from the southeast
- C. Houses, 200 and 300 blocks S. Academy, E. side, from the southwest
- D. Cary Public Library from the northeast
- E. Esther Ivey House from the southeast
- F. Captain Harrison P. Guess House from the west
- G. Houses, 116 and 120 W. Park Street, from the southeast

W CHATHAM ST

WALDO ST

First Baptist Church

E PARK ST

W PARK ST

S HARRISON AVE

Parking lot

S ACADEMY ST

DRY AVE

PAGE ST

FACULTY AVE

WALNUT ST



