

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Central Orphanage  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Antioch Drive and Raleigh Road N/A not for publication  
city, town Oxford N/A vicinity  
state North Carolina code NC county Granville code 077 zip code 27565

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

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

#### Category of Property

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

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic and Architectural Resources of  
Granville County, North Carolina

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

William S. Price, Jr. 6-14-88  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_
- See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_
- determined not eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_
- removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Other: institutional buildings

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Other: institutional buildings

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof asphalt

other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 DESCRIPTION

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The Henry Plummer Cheatham Building, which anchors Oxford's Central Orphanage physically and architecturally, is the finest early institutional building in the county and also its finest example of the Italianate style. Two stories tall, with a three-and-half-story tower at its front, it was built in 1915 of brick made on the Orphanage grounds. Its three bay front elevation is marked by large rounded-arch windows and the soaring front tower. Segmental arches frame its other windows and, in conformance with its Italianate finish, brackets underpin its projecting low hipped roofs. A one-story kitchen ell, built of brick and similarly articulated, is affixed to its rear. The first floor of the building is largely occupied by a spacious cafeteria and a front stair hall containing two runs of stairs. Tongue and groove wainscoting adorns both hall and cafeteria, the latter room also marked by chamfered concrete posts. The kitchen opens from the rear of the cafeteria. An auditorium fills the upstairs, adorned with the same wainscoting as below and exposed, boxed, ceiling beams. A stage stands to its rear.

The appearance and use of the building have changed little since they were described in a 1924 report by the North Carolina Board of Charities and Public Welfare:

This building contains the chapel, dining room, kitchen and one classroom.

1. Chapel

The chapel is on the second floor and is large enough to accomodate the children. It is large enough to accomodate 700 persons and has a nice stage in the rear. On account of lack of space it is being used as a school room for the primary children.

2. Dining room

The dining room is well lighted, having windows on two sides of the room. There are 12 long tables that are used by the children and two small ones that the matrons and workers use. The boys and girls do not eat at the same time, usually the boys eat first and leave the dining room and the girls have their meals. White oilcloth is used on all the tables.

Though aged since 1924, the building is in fair condition and is to be renovated in 1988 through the means of an \$89,900 state legislative grant.

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Although the Orphanage's other major early buildings have been destroyed, two smaller, early twentieth century, contributing buildings still stand near the Cheatham Building ["A" on accompanying sketch map]. To the southwest, between its front entry and Raleigh Road, is a small, square, brick building [B] that was erected in 1934 as Cheatham's office.<sup>3</sup> One-story tall, it is capped by a high hipped roof and a central chimney. Rounded hoods shade the doorways of its front and south facades. Its east facing rear entry is shaded by a porch. No longer an office, it is now used for storage. Also used for storage is an L-shaped, one-story building [C] to the Cheatham Building's south. Originally a smokehouse, the L-shaped building is built of brick laid in five-over-one common bond, as is the Cheatham Building, and capped by a low hipped roof. Its central block appears on the Sanborn maps of 1915 and 1922, an extension on the map of 1928.<sup>4</sup> The remaining buildings on the Orphanage property, with the exception of a few deteriorated brick outbuildings, were built within the past 50 years and the nomination is therefore restricted to the three described buildings and their grounds.

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<sup>1</sup>The 1915 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Oxford includes an accurate rendering of the floor plan of the Cheatham Building drawn "from plans," indicating that the structure was built in that year. Annual Reports of the Orphanage from the 1920s and 1930s describe the Orphanage's, and orphans', extensive brick making activities. An account in the Report of July 1, 1929 - June 30, 1930, brings to life the brick yard, which stood near the northern edge of the Orphanage, and also some of the child-raising philosophy of the institution:

It is a rather difficult thing to keep the thirty or thirty-five little boys away from the brick yard after they are once carried there and allowed to play in the sand under the sheds. This not only keeps them out of mischief, but the brick-making activities appear to dispel the monotony and sameness, as it were, of the play hours of the little ones around the dormitories on the campus proper.

The older boys do the grinding and moulding, tossing, setting and burning of the brick, while the little boys interrupt their play in the sand from time to time to bring the drinking water and do other light chores, with the idea in mind of developing in them a fondness for skilled labor

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and a desire to perform it. While immediate benefits may not be reflected from this theory and training, yet in the final analysis this early training in conjunction with play hours unquestionably redounds to the good of the children and has its effect in the make-up of their lives.

<sup>2</sup>"Report of Mary G. Shotwell of the North Carolina State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, March 25, 1924." Shotwell's Report - along with the Applications for Assistance to The Duke Endowment of 1927 and 1928 - is very revealing of life at the Orphanage. For example, she recounts the meals served to the 216 children on January 28, 1924, the day of her visit. Breakfast was bacon, gravy and cornbread, dinner turnips, potatoes, meat and cornbread, and supper apple butter, biscuits, milk and molasses.

<sup>3</sup>The Oxford Public Ledger of June 15, 1934, in an article entitled "Colored Orphanage Office Building is Erected on Campus," recorded Cheatham's comments on his new office:

'Yes, sir; I've had my office [sic] in my home all these years, some time in the kitchen, some time in the dining room and some time in other parts of the house, but it just became necessary to move out and with Mr. Well's help, we have put this little office building here.'

<sup>4</sup>Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Oxford of 1915, 1922 and 1928.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage: Black  
Social History  
Architecture

Period of Significance

1883-1937

Significant Dates

1883  
1915

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Cheatham, Henry Plummer

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A pioneer North Carolina black orphanage, the Central Orphanage, founded in 1883, is one of Granville County's major early institutions and its premier black one. (See Historic Context 2: Education in the Bright Tobacco Era, and 3: The Ascendancy of Oxford: 1866-1937)<sup>1</sup> Its centerpiece - the 1915 Henry Plummer Cheatham Building - is the finest early institutional building surviving in the county. It is also the county's finest Italianate style building. (See Associated Property Types 4 - Romantic, Victorian and Eclectic Style Buildings in Oxford - and 5.C. - Commercial, Industrial, Institutional and Religious Buildings in Bright Leaf Era Oxford) Henry Plummer Cheatham, Granville County's most prominent black resident, more than earned the honor of having the Orphanage's central building named for him. A former U.S. Representative, he was the Orphanage's superintendent from 1907 until his death in 1935 and oversaw the construction of its early major brick<sup>2</sup> buildings and its rise as an institution of statewide importance. See Property Type Addendum Sheet, Educational Buildings, for the significance of the Cheatham Building within the type.

The Colored Orphanage Association was formed in 1882 in Henderson, North Carolina, by the members of the Shiloh and Wake Associations, black Baptist organizations, at the suggestion of Rev. Augustus Shepard. The following year it purchased 23 acres of land just to the south of Oxford for \$1,565 and established the Grant Colored Asylum. In 1887 it incorporated as the non-denominational Colored Orphanage Asylum of North Carolina and named Rev. Robert Shepard, Augustus' brother, as its superintendent.<sup>3</sup> When Shepard, without pay initially, came to the institution, it consisted of a dilapidated barn and a small house sheltering eight children cared for by a matron. Born a slave in Raleigh and essentially an orphan himself - while he was a small child he was given to the daughter of his owner as a wedding present - Shepard<sup>4</sup> oversaw the growth of the institution in both size and stature. During his 20 year tenure, donations were secured from churches, fraternal orders, associations, Benjamin N. Duke of Durham and the state legislature. 148 acres of land were added, including a 44 acre farm purchased for \$1,440 in 1895. Cotton and corn were raised on this farm, and the institution's other land, by the orphans as a cash crop and other crops were grown for food.

Shepard was succeeded in 1907 by the Orphanage's second major and most prominent figure, former United States Congressman Henry Plummer Cheatham (1857-1935). Also born a slave, Cheatham graduated from Shaw University in Raleigh in 1882 and was elected

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Register of Deeds in Vance County, recently divided from Granville County, in 1885. Elected to the House of Representatives in 1888 and again in 1890, he was its only black member during his first term. Under his superintendency, the Orphanage became a major institution of statewide importance. He replaced its frame buildings with ones built of brick formed and fired by the orphans, the funds for the work gathered from numerous sources throughout the state. In the Annual Report of its Orphan Section of 1937, the Duke Foundation, a major contributor to the Orphanage after he became superintendent, wrote that "During the Cheatham administration the institution's place in the life of the State was attained." Of Cheatham in particular they wrote: "The late Henry P. Cheatham is more responsible, perhaps, than any other individual for the successful operation of this institution during the past quarter century. He gave the best years of his life to this work and deserves credit and praise for his management of the affairs of the institution."

The building that bears his name was raised through his efforts in 1915. He also oversaw the erection of the Orphanage's other major early buildings - the Girls' Dormitory, raised between his advent as superintendent and 1915, and the Boys' Dormitory, built in 1922 or 1923 - and a number of smaller subsidiary buildings. The Boys' Dormitory, which stood to the north of the Cheatham Building, was destroyed by fire in 1948 and replaced by a dormitory that was destroyed in 1986, like its predecessor, by fire. The Girls' Dormitory, standing empty to the south of the Cheatham Building, was torn down in 1986 along with the charred remains of the Boys' Dormitory.

Of the other buildings raised during Cheatham's tenure, two are included in the nomination; his office, built in 1934 to the front of the Cheatham Building, and a brick smokehouse raised to the Cheatham Building's south prior to 1915 and extended between 1922 and 1928. The Oxford Public Ledger briefly described the office building in an article announcing its completion:

Brick, for the building, which is near the center of the campus near the highway, were made in the brick yard of the institution, but the work of building was done by others, using some of the labor from the Orphanage. A director's room, quarters for the superintendent [sic] and his assistant, a document room and a file room and

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laboratory [sic] are included in the attractive little brick building, which has a portico on the front.<sup>11</sup>

In 1927 the Orphanage was reincorporated under the name of the Colored Orphanage of North Carolina and its name was again changed in 1965 to the Central Orphanage of North Carolina.<sup>12</sup> Much reduced in size in recent years - it had 55 students in September, 1987 - it is now known as the Central Children's Home of North Carolina. In 1987 the Orphanage received an \$89,900 grant from the state legislature to renovate the Cheatham Building, the first floor of which is still used as a cafeteria, the second floor as an auditorium.<sup>13</sup> Both the smokehouse and office are used for storage and there are no plans to renovate or restore them.

The Orphanage has continued in its original function since it was established, though it has not achieved exceptional significance within the past 50 years; therefore its period of significance does not extend beyond 1937. With the exception of the Cheatham Building, office and smokehouse - and a few deteriorated brick outbuildings scattered over its 323 acres - the Orphanage's buildings were raised within the past 50 years; the nomination is therefore limited to the Cheatham Building and the adjacent office, smokehouse and grounds.

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<sup>1</sup>The Duke Endowment 12th Annual Report of Orphan Section, August, 1936, pp. 87-91. The Orphanage's chronological position among black orphanages in North Carolina cannot be determined with certainty. The Duke Endowment - which was probably quite familiar with the activities of major orphanages throughout the region - accords it preeminent position in the state at page 87 of its Report:

It is the second oldest institution for the care of children in North Carolina and was the first institution for the care of Negro children in North Carolina and South Carolina. It was one of the first in this section of the United States to be established for the care of Negro children. It is significant that the first two child institutions established in North Carolina were located in the same community, Oxford.

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The other orphanage referred to is the white, Masonic, Oxford Orphanage.

For a discussion of pre-Civil War institutions in Oxford and Granville County, see Historic Context 1 - The Plantation Era in Granville County, 1746-1865.

<sup>2</sup>The Duke Endowment 12th Annual Report of Orphan Section, August, 1936, pp. 87-91.

<sup>3</sup>Historical accounts of the Orphanage vary in slight details from source to source. This account was taken from the Orphanage's 1971 "Report of the Superintendent."

<sup>4</sup>In an April 18, 1941, article entitled "Orphanage Building to be Named for Robert Shepard" - clipped by Francis B. Hays from an unknown source (probably the Oxford Public Ledger) and included in Volume 100 of his scrapbooks - Shepard's childhood is briefly recounted:

He was born of slave parents, Richard and Flora Shepard in Raleigh, North Carolina. When a small boy he was given to the daughter of the family as a wedding gift. He was taken to a new home away from his mother whom he never saw again. He grew to young manhood without a mother's love or care. This experience helped to fit him for the work of caring for motherless boys and girls after he reached maturity.

<sup>5</sup>Orphanage's 1971 "Report of the Superintendent."

<sup>6</sup>"H. P. Cheatham, The Only Colored Member of the New House of Representatives," Harper's Weekly, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1680, March 2, 1889, p. 165; "Orphanage is Great Memorial to Former Negro Congressman," The News and Observer, February 7, 1937.

<sup>7</sup>The Duke Endowment 12th Annual Report of the Orphan Section, August, 1936, pp. 89, 91.

<sup>8</sup>Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Oxford, North Carolina" of 1915; December 9, 1941, article of the Oxford Public Ledger entitled "Negro Educator Honored Here" describes the naming of the building after Cheatham.

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<sup>9</sup>"Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Oxford, North Carolina" of 1915, 1922 and 1928; "Report of Mary G. Shotwell of the North Carolina State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, March 25, 1924."

<sup>10</sup>Interview of September 21, 1987, with Jauncey H. McDougle, business manager of the Orphanage, who has been employed there since 1939.

<sup>11</sup>"Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Oxford, North Carolina" of 1915, 1922 and 1928; "Colored Orphanage Office Building is Erected on Campus," Oxford Public Ledger, June 15, 1934.

<sup>12</sup>Orphanage's 1971 "Report of the Superintendent."

<sup>13</sup>Interview with Michael R. L. Alston, Sr., executive director, Central Orphanage, September 23, 1987.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data: \_\_\_\_\_

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property approximately 2 acres

UTM References

A            
Zone Easting Northing

B            
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Marvin A. Brown/Architectural Historian & Patricia Esperon/Historian  
organization Granville County-Oxford Historic Survey date 10/21/87  
street & number P.O. Box 1556 (State Historic Pres. Office) telephone 919-693-1491  
city or town Oxford state N.C. zip code 27565

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Public Ledger (June 15, 1934). Copy of article, taken from  
Hays Collection, located in Central Orphanage File at  
Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

Granville County Deeds. Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, N.C.

Hays, Francis B. Unpublished collection of 135 scrapbooks on  
Granville County history located at Richard H. Thornton  
Public Library, Oxford, N.C.

"H. P. Cheatham, The Only Colored Member of the New House of  
Representatives." Harper's Weekly, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1680  
(March 2, 1889), p. 165. Engraving of Cheatham and brief  
biography.

Interview with Michael R. L. Alston, Sr., executive director,  
Central Orphanage, September 21, 1987.

Interview with James Cheatham Baptiste, daughter of Henry Plummer  
Cheatham, September 23, 1987.

Interview with Elizabeth Chavis, September 23, 1987.

Interview with Jauncey H. McDougale, business manager, Central  
Orphanage, September 21, 1987. Mrs. McDougale has been  
employed at the Orphanage since 1939.

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"Negro Educator Honored Here." Oxford Public Ledger (December 9, 1941). Copy of article, taken from Hays Collection, located in Central Orphanage File, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

"Orphanage Building to be Named for Robert Shepard." Copy from the Hays Collection, Volume 100, of unidentified newspaper article of April 18, 1941, located in Central Orphanage File at Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

"Orphanage is Great Memorial to Former Negro Congressman." The News and Observer (February 7, 1937). Copy of Raleigh, N.C. newspaper article from the Hays Collection, Volume 100, located in Central Orphanage File at Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

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The Duke Endowment 12th Annual Report of Orphan Section. August, 1936, pp. 87-91. Copy located in Central Orphanage File at Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

"The Duke Endowment, Orphan Section, Application for Assistance." March 25, 1927. Copy of typewritten application of Orphanage to Duke Endowment for funds, located in Central Orphanage File at Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

"The Duke Endowment, Orphan Section, Application for Assistance." March 20, 1928. Copy of typewritten application of Orphanage to Duke Endowment for funds, located in Central Orphanage File at Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

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Continuation SheetSection number 10 Page 1 GEOGRAPHICAL DATAUTM REFERENCES

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	717950	4019040
B	17	718050	4019020
C	17	718060	4018960
D	17	718040	4018960
E	17	718040	4018950
F	17	717970	4018930

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at point A: 17 717950 4019040 on the USGS polygon, where the south side of State Road 1606 (Antioch Drive) intersects with the east side of State Road 1650 (Raleigh Road), continuing along the south side of State Road 1606 approximately 300 feet to point B: 17 718050 4019020 on the polygon, where the south side of State Road 1606 intersects with the west side of the dirt road. Continuing in a straight line south, along the west side of the dirt road, approximately 200 feet to point C: 17 718060 4018960 on the polygon, where the west side of the dirt lane is parallel with, and two feet north of, the north side of a concrete block outbuilding. Continuing in a straight line west, two feet north of the northern edge of the concrete block outbuilding, approximately 30 feet to point D: 17 718040 4018960 on the polygon, two feet west of the northwest corner of the concrete block outbuilding. Continuing in a straight line south, parallel with and two feet west of the western edge of the concrete block outbuilding, approximately 30 feet to point E: 17 718040 4018950 on the polygon, two feet west of the southwest corner of the concrete block outbuilding. Continuing west 230 feet in a straight line paralleling, and two feet south of, the back of the smokehouse, to point F: 17 717970 4018930 on the polygon, at the east side of State Road 1650. Continuing north along the east side of State Road 1650, approximately 375 feet to the point of origin.

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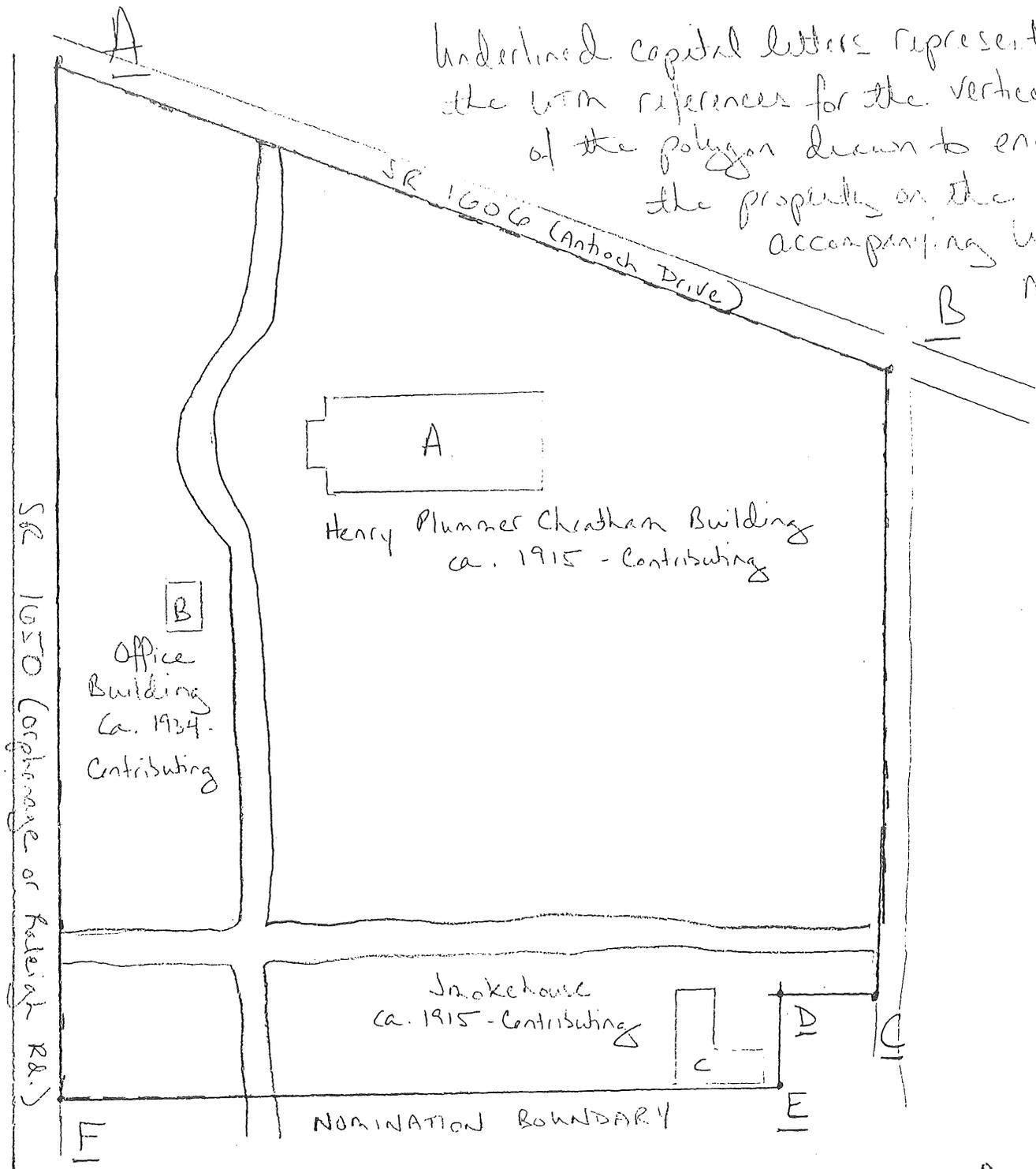
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### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Approximately two acres of the Central Orphanage that are historically associated with the Orphanage, maintain historic integrity and convey the property's historic setting are being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The remaining property has been excluded because of intruding structures.

The northern boundary from UTM points A to B includes the Cheatham Building to its south and excludes office, school and other buildings built within the past 50 years to its north. The eastern boundary from UTM points B to C, C to D, and D to E includes the smokehouse and excludes a modern concrete block outbuilding immediately to its east. The southern boundary from UTM points E to F includes the smokehouse to its north and excludes modern dormitories to its south. The western boundary from UTM points F to A includes the office building to its east and excludes property not owned by the Orphanage, and the superintendent's house built within the past 50 years, to its west.

Underlined capital letters represent the UTM references for the vertices of the polygon drawn to enclose the property on the accompanying USGS map.



CENTRAL ORPHANAGE  
GRANTVILLE COUNTY, N.C.

Approximate scale 1" = 50'

Approximately 1 acres



