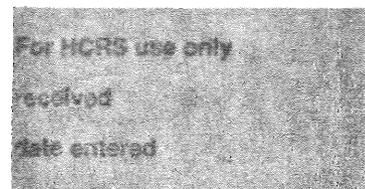


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

1. Name

historic Providence Presbyterian Church and Cemetery

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 10140 Providence Road not for publication

city, town Matthews vicinity of congressional district Ninth

state North Carolina code 037 county Mecklenburg code 119

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Providence Presbyterian Church, Mr. Don Lea, Clerk of the Session

street & number 10140 Providence Road

city, town Matthews vicinity of state N. C. 28105

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mecklenburg County Courthouse

street & number 720 East Fourth Street

city, town Charlotte state N. C. 28202

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Providence Presbyterian Church, a handsome antebellum frame church with flanking mid-twentieth century weatherboarded frame wings, sits in a grove of oak (and other deciduous) trees on a slight rise on the west side of Providence Road in southeastern Mecklenburg County. On the east side of Providence Road, once one of the principal roads between Charlotte and Camden, South Carolina, is a large informally landscaped cemetery containing the graves of numerous members of the Providence congregation and one of its ministers, James Wallis (1762-1819). Many of the nineteenth-century grave markers are signed by their makers. Located to the south of the church and also on the west side of Providence Road stands the church manse and a frame garage. Included in this nomination are the church, the cemetery, and the manse, all of which are located on a single wooded tract of nearly twenty-four acres belonging to the congregation. The church is the oldest known least altered frame house of worship in Mecklenburg County and an important member of a larger group of frame antebellum Presbyterian churches in the state.

The weatherboarded gable-front, rectangular frame church, three-bays wide and four bays deep, rests on a low stone foundation. The wide, flat molded projecting eaves have a shallow return on each gable end. The principal architectural feature of the building are the extraordinarily tall window openings occurring on all four elevations which contain triple hung sash having sixteen panes each. These are set in plain unmolded board surrounds with slightly projecting sills and retain their original louvered blinds. A pair of windows flank the central entrance on the front (east) elevation. Four windows are symmetrically arranged along the north and south side elevations opposite each other while a second pair are set into the west wall opposite the pair on the front elevation. The main entrance, reached by a set of four shallow steps enclosed at their ends by handrails, consists of a pair of four-panel doors surmounted by a fixed six-pane transom. This arrangement is, in turn, surmounted by a tall three-part window comprised of a central opening containing nine-over-nine sash flanked by vertically oriented six-over-six sash. A louvered ventilator terminates the weatherboarded gable ends on the front and rear elevations.

A common-bond brick chimney stands in the center of the north elevation between the two interior windows. Opposite it, in the center of the south bay, is a short gable roof addition, made in 1979, which shelters a flight of steps into the basement beneath the building. A six-panel door is set in the center of its south elevation. The weatherboarded frame wings on either side of the sanctuary are reached by one-story gabled roof brick arcades set to the west of the westernmost bays on the north and south elevations. The arcade on the south connects to the Fellowship Hall. The arcade on the north connects to the Educational Building.

Through the pair of doors comprising the main entrance to the church one enters a vestibule which extends to the depth of the easternmost of the side bays. According to congregational tradition the vestibule was originally built with a closet on either side. The closet to the left (south) was eventually enlarged and came to be known as the Ladies Parlor. In this century the parlor came to be known as the Session Room, and in 1960 it was again enlarged and refurbished as a memorial to a deceased elder of the church. To the right (north) are a flight of stairs to the gallery with a closet beneath them. Originally these stairs were only accessible by an exterior door on the north side elevation and according to custom and tradition were used by blacks to reach the gallery.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received _____
date entered _____

Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 1

That exterior door has since been removed.

Originally there was a pair of doors from the vestibule into the sanctuary reflecting the double aisle plan of the sanctuary; however, after the turn of the century those doors were closed and the present central opening containing a pair of doors was installed. Each of these doors has six horizontal panels. The doors are set in a two-part molded surround.

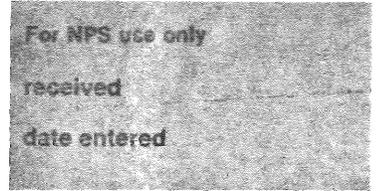
The sanctuary of Providence Presbyterian Church is an impressive two-story chamber with a second-story gallery carrying along the north, east, and south elevations. The pulpit, ministers' chairs, and flower stands are set on a raised platform between the two tall windows on the west wall. The walls are sheathed with flush horizontally applied boards. A stained chair rail carries around the sanctuary on both stories. The ceiling is covered with hand-planed board-and-batten running in an east-west orientation. The window and door surrounds here are two-part. The stained and grained pews on the first floor are original and have curved ends above a flat panel. The main rank of pews carries down the center of the church and are separated at the center by solid rail. The rows of pews along the outside walls of the church abut the wall directly. Several of these are peirced by the polygonal columns supporting the gallery. It has a blind flat paneled railing which has been topped by an additional, complimentary open railing in recent times. The pews and woodwork in the church were refinished in 1966. There are also short rows of pews facing the raised chancel at the west end of the church. The organ and choirloft are located in the gallery above the vestibule. Pews in the galleries along the side elevations are set on a diagonal facing the pulpit. There are doors at each (western) end of the side galleries which operate a metal stair that serves only as a fire escape.

The Fellowship Hall, built in 1958, to the south of the church is a single story frame building on a brick basement. It is covered with weatherboards and a gable roof whose ridge line is perpendicular to the ridge line of the church roof. A porch carries across the full east front of the building and is engaged under the gabled roof. It is supported by simple square posts. This east elevation has a six bay division behind the porch with the principal entrance in the northernmost bay marked by a gable dormer on the roof. This entrance and a secondary entrance--in the fourth bay to the south of the main door--contain pairs of doors with glazing above three horizontal panels. The interior of the Fellowship Hall consists of two rooms, the larger of which is the main hall occupying the space behind five of the six exterior bays. A kitchen carries across the south end of the building and is reached from the hall by a pair of symmetrically placed swinging doors. The walls of the assembly room are covered with sheetrock; however, the oak floors remain uncovered. The kitchen has a tile floor. A staircase in the north-west corner of the assembly room leads to the basement which is partitioned into an assembly room, bathrooms, storage rooms, and a furnaceroom.

The Educational Building, built in 1951 on the north side of the church, is a larger rectangular frame building, resting on a low brick foundation, with a three-bay wide gable front. The single story entrance consists of a pair of six panel doors recessed behind the gabled-roof porch with enclosed sides. The window openings contain eight-over-eight sash on both stories. The north elevation has a symmetrical seven-bay division while the opposite south elevation has a similar arrangement. The rear west gable end also has a three-bay division with entrances in the center bays of both stories. A tall metal

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Description

Item number 7

Page 2

platform and stairs serve as the fire exit for the second floor. The interior of the building follows a center-hall plan with offices and classrooms ranked along either side of the hall. The woodwork here is simple and lacks any particular architectural refinement. The building was covered with aluminum siding in 1979.

The present manse for Providence Presbyterian Church was completed in August 1949. It is a one and a half story brick veneered colonial revival dwelling. A chimney rises above its south gable end between the main block and a short one-story gabled roof block, preceded by a porch, which contains the pastor's study.

The front east elevation of the main block has a symmetrical five-bay division with the central entrance enframed by a free classically inspired doorway. A trio of weather-boarded gabled roof dormers are set into the roof above the door and between the bays. There is only a shallow stoop in front of the door while a porch carries fully across the front of the one-story block on the house's south gable end. The window openings contain six-over-six sash. A den has recently been added to the rear elevation. The interior of the manse follows a center hall plan with a study, living room, dining room, kitchen, den, bedroom and bathroom on the first floor and two large bedrooms, a nursery, and a bathroom on the second floor. The interior finish of the manse is typical of its period.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1858 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

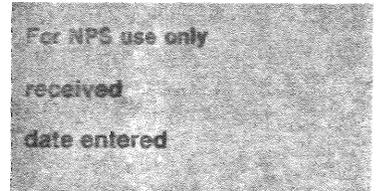
Providence Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, located in a quiet unspoiled rural setting along Providence Road in southeastern Mecklenburg County, possesses an architectural and historical significance on both a local and regional scale. Although the congregation was organized in 1767, the existence of a grave marker dated 1764 in the church cemetery suggests that services were held here by the Presbyterian Scotch-Irish settlers of this section of the western Piedmont at least by that date if not earlier. The church achieved an early prominence in the Piedmont under the long pastorate of the Reverend James Wallis who ministered to the congregation and taught a classical school here from 1792 until his death in 1819. It was these close ties between religion and education which caused members of the Presbyterian clergy including the Reverend Samuel Eusebius McCorkle to be involved in the formation of the University of North Carolina and later Davidson College in northwestern Mecklenburg County. Reverend Wallis was on the governing board of the university. Two ministers of Providence Church later became presidents of Davidson College. The Reverend Robert Hall Morrison (1798-1889) ministered to the Providence congregation in 1821 and 1822; in 1837 he resigned his pastorate at Sugaw Creek Church to become the first president of Davidson College and served until (resigning because of his health) 1840. He was succeeded as president of Davidson College by the Reverend Samuel Williamson who had succeeded him as minister of Providence Church in 1823. He served the congregation until resigning in 1840 to accept a post as professor of mathematics at Davidson from which position he rose to the presidency. The present building, erected during the great prosperity of the ante bellum period and one of a number of highly important Piedmont ante bellum Presbyterian churches, was erected in 1858 during the pastorate of the Reverend Jethro Rumble who ministered here from 1856 until 1860 when he removed to Salisbury. Rumble, who is counted among the most distinguished Presbyterian ministers of the nineteenth century in North Carolina, served the First Presbyterian Church in Salisbury from 1860 until his death in 1906. Although the twentieth century of the church has been somewhat less dramatic than the impressive events associated with the church in the nineteenth century, the church has remained a religious and social center of its community to the present. The congregation's particular affection for their faith and indeed this building in which it worships has resulted in the preservation and high degree of maintenance given this oldest frame church in Mecklenburg County. Similar care has been given to the cemetery across Providence Road which contains the graves of the Reverend Wallis and a number of Revolutionary patriots among the hundreds of graves of its membership.

Criteria Assessment:

- A. Providence Presbyterian Church, itself founded in 1767 and being one of seven churches founded in the 1750s and 1760s in the area of present day Mecklenburg County, is associated with the settlement of that section of Piedmont North Carolina by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in the mid-eighteenth century. Worship was a pivotal concern of these Presbyterian settlers and thus the churches which they established were central to their individual and community lives. That powerful social role of the church continues to the present, particularly in rural areas.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

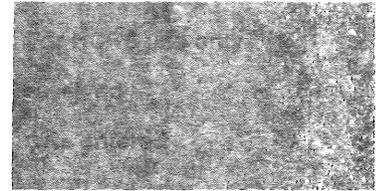
Item number Eight

Page 1

- B. The church is associated with the lives of at least three patriots of the American Revolution who were members of Providence Presbyterian Church and who are buried in the cemetery. They are: Henry Downs (1728-1798), Neill Morrison (____-1784), and John Flennekin (no dates).
The church is also associated with the life of the Reverend James Wallis who ministered to its congregation from his ordination in 1792 until his death in 1819, the longest period of a pastor's service in the church's history. Wallis is recognized as one of the state's foremost educators and operated a classical school at Providence throughout his service there. He also served on the board of trustees of the University of North Carolina.
The present church building was constructed during the pastorate (1856-1860) of the Reverend Jethro Rumble (1827-1906) who is recognized as one of the most distinguished members of the Presbyterian clergy in nineteenth century North Carolina. He was on the board of directors of Union Theological Seminary and the board of trustees of Davidson College. His larger fame, however, is associated with his pastorate of forty-six years at First Presbyterian Church, Salisbury, North Carolina. While there he authored The History of Presbyterianism in North Carolina and A History of Rowan County, North Carolina (1881). The unusually handsome Romanesque Revival brick church erected by the Salisbury congregation in 1892 was pulled down in 1976, thus Providence Presbyterian Church is the only standing structure associated directly with his ministry.
- C. Providence Presbyterian Church, the oldest intact and only ante bellum frame church in Mecklenburg County, embodies the distinctive characteristics of vernacular Greek Revival meeting house architecture. Providence Church is further an important member of a group of rural Piedmont North Carolina Presbyterian churches erected in the immediate ante bellum period when the fortunes of their congregations (and their members) were at their highest. Included in that group are: Back Creek (1857) and Thyatira (1860) churches in Rowan County (to be nominated in 1982), Poplar Tent (ca. 1850) and Rocky River (1861) churches in Cabarrus County (to be nominated in 1982), Bethesda (1853) and Centre Presbyterian (1854) churches in Iredell County (to be nominated in 1982), and Hawfields Presbyterian Church (1852) in Alamance County (entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1980). Providence Church and Bethesda are the only frame churches in this group which also include the brick Hopewell Church in northern Mecklenburg County.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page 2

The Providence Presbyterian Church is located in southeastern Mecklenburg County, near the community of Matthews. The church traces its history back to the 1760s and is one of the "mother churches" of the area. The present church structure is the third and was built in 1858. It is perhaps the oldest unaltered church building in the county.

Groups of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians began to settle in the Providence Township area of present day Mecklenburg County around 1750.¹ This was part of a larger migration which saw thousands of Scotch-Irish² settle in the North Carolina back country in the three decades preceding the Revolution. These settlers did not, for the most part, come directly from the old world, but rather came down the "Great Wagon Road," from Pennsylvania, by way of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, into North Carolina. Many were making their second, third, or even fourth move by the time they came into the province, and many continued to move into South Carolina, Georgia, or further west.³ Lured by "thousands of neglected acres," many settled in the "border [region] between the two Carolinas. This mesopotamia became the home of a great concentration of Scotch-Irish."⁴ Most of the settlers in the Mecklenburg area were apparently from Pennsylvania and Virginia, with some from Maryland. Many followed the noted Presbyterian minister Alexander Craighead who relocated in the area from Virginia in the middle 1750s.⁵

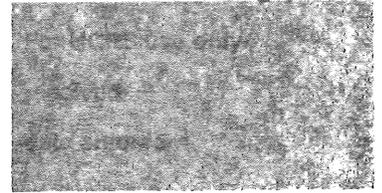
The overwhelming majority of Scotch-Irish settlers were Presbyterian, and they usually wasted little time in establishing houses of worship in their new surroundings. The newcomers to Mecklenburg were no exception. Rocky River was founded in 1753, Sugar Creek in 1758, Poplar Tent in 1764, Steele Creek, Hopewell, and Centre, in 1765, and Providence in 1767. These churches are frequently referred to as the "seven churches of Mecklenburg." There are references to Providence as early as 1765, and at least one tombstone in the church graveyard is dated 1764. The church, however, was not formally organized until 1767, and that date is usually considered to founding date of the church.⁶ The first church building was completed in 1767, a crude log structure, and William Richardson was installed as the first minister. Andrew Rea, Aaron Howie, Joshua Ramsey, and Archibald Crockett were the first elders. Richardson was a son-in-law of Craighead and was popular and busy until his suspicious and tragic death in 1771.⁷

During the two decades following the death of Richardson Providence was unable to secure the services of a full time minister, but was forced to use pastors from neighboring churches. This was not unusual. Presbyterian ministers were required to be college graduates. This made it virtually impossible to supply all the wilderness churches with full time pastors. This problem plagued the Presbyterian Church throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth and caused the loss of many worshipers to other protestant denominations, especially Baptist and Methodist who could supply more ministers. The problem was further exacerbrated by the outbreak of hostilities between the colonists and Great Britain in 1775.⁸ Most Scotch-Irish supported the Revolution and the members of Providence were no exception. Patriots in the congregation included Henry Downs, Neill Morrison, and John Flennekin. The area around Providence was the scene of numerous skirmishes during the latter part of the war. Leading the Patriot forces in many of these encounters was future governor William Richardson Davie (1798-1799), namesake and nephew of Providence's first minister.⁹

Following the war the still-young congregation of Providence received some badly needed stability under the tenure of James Wallis. He was installed as minister in 1792 and remained in this position until 1819. His 27 year residence is the longest in the

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page 3

church's history. During this period the Great Revival of 1802 occurred. A new building was constructed for services in 1804. Wallis, who was recognized as one of the state's foremost educators, established the Wallis Classical School in 1792 and operated it throughout his time at Providence. Wallis later served on the board of trustees of the University of North Carolina.¹⁰ In 1795 future United States president James Knox Polk was born within the bounds of the congregation. The infant Polk was refused baptism in the church because of his father's refusal to confirm his faith.¹¹

Providence generally prospered during the antebellum period. There were occasional gaps in the ministry, but they were not long lived. Two of the church's pastors, Robert Hall Morrison (1821-1822), and Samuel Williamson (1823-1840) became the first two presidents of Davidson College. In 1854 the church reached its prewar peak with 390 communicants. Of this number 101 were designated "colored" communicants, either slaves or free blacks.¹² Membership began to decline shortly thereafter and it was noted in the church records that "many families have moved westward; and their places were not filled by Presbyterians."¹³

Despite the decline in membership the congregation remained prosperous enough to build a new church structure. The third and present building was completed in 1858 under the leadership of minister Jethro Rumble, who served from 1856 until 1860. Rumble was one of the most distinguished members of the Presbyterian clergy in nineteenth century North Carolina. He served for many years on the board of trustees of Davidson College, and the board of directors of Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. After the war he served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury for forty-six years. Rumble was also a writer of note, authoring a definitive history of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina until the end of the nineteenth century. The new building built during this period cost \$2,800.¹⁴

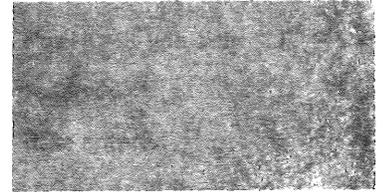
Providence struggled during the difficult days of the Civil War and its aftermath. It kept its doors open, however, largely through the efforts of Robert Zenas Johnston, who served as pastor from 1861 until 1870. Providence had difficulty securing regular pastors during the 1870s and 1880s. In 1892 Jesse W. Siler took over as pastor. He remained in that position until 1900. He reemphasized education and gave the church some badly needed stability. Enrollment dropped to a low of 100 in 1884, but had climbed back to 140 by the end of Siler's tenure.¹⁵

Siler was succeeded by W. H. Davis (1900-1903), J. B. Mack (1904-1906), Henry M. Parker (1906-1910), and Charles C. Carson (1910-1912). During Carson's three years a number of improvements were made to the church, including the installation of the first church furnace and the laying of the first carpet in the building. Charles Kingsley was pastor from 1913 until 1921. Enrollment increased greatly during this period, reaching 182 in 1921. Henry Gurney was pastor from 1922 until 1928. Enrollment continued to climb to 221 by 1928. John G. Garth was minister during the worst years of the Depression. Although enrollment declined to a low of 150 in 1931 services continued.¹⁶

Ewell Van Buren Wiley became pastor of Providence in 1934 and remained in that position until 1948. His fifteen years is the third longest pastorate in the church's history, surpassed only by James Wallis and Samuel Williamson. A community house was completed in 1936. The church was first wired for electricity in 1939. In 1946 the church library was established in honor of David Matthews, the only member of the congregation to die in combat during World War Two. When Wiley left in 1948 Providence had expanded to 261 communicants.¹⁷

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page 4

Providence has continued to grow since the end of the war. In 1949 a new brick home was erected on the manse site. The Educational Building was completed in 1951. A Fellowship Building was completed in 1958. The two hundredth anniversary of the church was celebrated in 1967 with the publishing of a church history.¹⁸

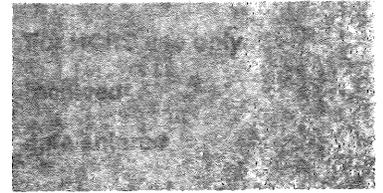
Providence is considered, in whole or in part, as the mother church of ten other churches: Clear Creek, established in 1770; Harrison Methodist, established in 1785; Sardis, established in 1794; Sharon, established in 1832; Murkland, established in 1864; Pineville, established in 1875; Matthews, established in 1877; Jonesville A.M.E. Zion, established in 1884; Banks, established in 1891; and Siler, established in 1895.¹⁹ Despite these losses the enrollment of the church is currently approaching 500 and threatens to overwhelm the sanctuary built for a smaller congregation.²⁰ The adjacent cemetery contains the 1764 grave of John McKee. The three Revolutionary patriots Downs, Morrison, and Flennekin are also buried at Providence, as is James Wallis, the minister who served the church for the longest period of time.²¹ The church owns over 20 acres of land, containing the sanctuary, the manse, the graveyard, the educational building, the fellowship building, and other structures.

The Providence Presbyterian Church has been honored by both the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historical Properties Commission and the American Presbyterian/Reformed Historical Society. The modest, but sturdy wood structure exemplifies the spirit of the pioneer farmers who founded the church over two centuries ago.

The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8

Page 5

¹¹Matthews, Providence Church, 87-89; Charles Sellers, James K. Polk: Jacksonian, 1795-1843 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 23-25. The refusal of Wallis to baptise Polk was apparently part of a long series of disagreements between Samuel Polk, father of James Polk, and Wallis. The latter, who was evidently quite rigid in his principles, felt that the Polks were the leaders of the "deistic" movement in the area, while Polk felt that Wallis was dictatorial. Ezekial Polk, grandfather of James K. Polk, and father of Samuel Polk, was one of the founders of what Rumple called "an infidel debating club, with an infidel library." This library contained books by Hume, Paine, Gibbon, and others, all of whom were regarded as too liberal in their religious views by Wallis and other Presbyterians. The affair engendered much bitterness, and the community argued about it for many years.

¹²Matthews, Providence Church, 101-115, 279. The 1854 figures include some members of the Sharon congregation, who had formed their own church in 1832.

¹³Matthews, Providence Church, 132-133.

¹⁴Matthews, Providence Church, 135-136; Rumple, Presbyterianism in North Carolina, foreword.

¹⁵Matthews, Providence Church, 139-184, 279-280.

¹⁶Matthews, Providence Church, 189-207, 280.

¹⁷Matthews, Providence Church, 207-211, 280.

¹⁸Matthews, Providence Church, 215-227; Charlotte Observer, February 11, 1967; May 6, 1967.

¹⁹Matthews, Providence Church, 287.

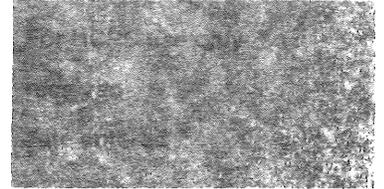
²⁰Louise Barber Matthews to William Price, May 23, 1981, copy in file.

²¹Matthews, Providence Church, 290-309.

²²Local tradition is that David Rea donated the original land for the church. The deed was apparently lost in an Anson County Courthouse fire. In 1834 David Rea conveyed 5 acres to the church for \$62.50. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 25, p. 169. In 1884 Thomas Vail conveyed 8¼ acres to the church for \$165.00. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 37, p. 242. This is the manse property. In 1903 H. Q. Alexander sold 3½ acres to the church for \$87.50. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 174, p. 362. A number of other smaller purchases have occurred in this century.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Item number 8

Page 6

NOTES

¹LeGette Blythe and Charles Raven Brockman, Hornet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (Charlotte: McNally of Charlotte, 1961), 17-21; Louise Barber Matthews, A History of Providence Presbyterian Church (Charlotte: Brooks Litho, 1967), 6-8, hereinafter cited as Matthews, Providence Church. Mecklenburg County was formed from Anson County in 1762.

²Lefler considers the term "Scotch-Irish" to be "a misnomer. It is geographical and not racial and does not imply a mixture of two national stocks. It refers to Scots, chiefly Lowlanders, who settled in Ireland, or to the descendants of these people." Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, third edition, 1973), 81, hereinafter cited as Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina. Leyburn, however, argues that "A century of use has established the double name and no substitute is accurate." James G. Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish: A Social History (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 333, hereinafter cited as Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish.

³Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, 81-85; Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish, 210-218. The Scotch-Irish settlers should not be confused with the Scottish Highlanders who settled in the Cape Fear region beginning in the 1730s.

⁴Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish, 214.

⁵Matthews, Providence Church, 5-8.

⁶Matthews, Providence Church, 29-30; Jethro Rumble, The History of Presbyterianism in North Carolina (Richmond: Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1966, reprinted from The North Carolina Presbyterian, 1878-1887, 43-51, hereinafter cited as Rumble, Presbyterianism in North Carolina. William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), 190, 201. Although located across the county line in Rowan (now Iredell) County, Centre Church is usually listed as one of the "seven churches of Mecklenburg" because most of its congregation lived in Mecklenburg.

⁷Matthews, Providence Church, 45-56. Richardson was found dead in his house with a bridle around his neck. Foul play was suspected but never proven. Others felt that the minister had taken his own life.

⁸Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish, 274-277; Matthews, Providence Church, 72-77.

⁹Matthews, Providence Church, 59-71.

¹⁰Matthews, Providence Church, 81-94; Rumble, Presbyterians in North Carolina, 50.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Foote, William Henry. Sketches of North Carolina. New York: Robert Carter, 1846.
- Leyburn, James G. The Scotch-Irish: A Social History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962.
- Matthews, Louise Barber. A History of Providence Presbyterian Church. Charlotte: Brooks Litho, 1967.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 23.48 acres

Quadrangle name Weddington

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	7
---	---

5	2	0	6	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	8	1	0	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	7
---	---

5	2	1	0	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	8	0	8	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

C

1	7
---	---

5	2	0	9	7	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	8	0	6	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

D

1	7
---	---

5	2	0	8	2	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	8	0	6	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

E

1	7
---	---

5	2	0	9	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	8	0	3	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

F

1	7
---	---

5	2	0	8	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	8	0	3	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

G

1	7
---	---

5	2	0	7	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	8	0	6	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

H

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached plat map outlined in red.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davyd Foard Hood, Survey Specialist, Survey and Planning Branch
Jim Sumner, Researcher, Research Branch

organization Division of Archives and History date December 22, 1981

street & number 109 East Jones Street telephone (919) 733-6545

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William J. Finley

title State Historic Preservation Officer date April 14, 1982

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

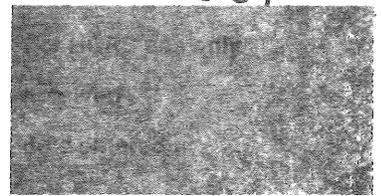
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet BIBLIOGRAPHY Item number 9 Page 1

Blythe, LeGette, and Brockman, Charles Raven. Hornet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Charlotte: McNally of Mecklenburg, 1961.

Charlotte Observer. February 11, 1967; May 6, 1967.

Foote, William Henry. Sketches of North Carolina. New York: Robert Carter, 1846.

Lefler, Hugh Talmage and Newsome, Albert Ray. North Carolina: The History of a Southern State. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, third edition, 1973.

Leyburn, James G. The Scotch-Irish: A Social History. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962.

Matthews, Louise Barber. A History of Providence Presbyterian Church. Charlotte: Brooks Litho, 1967.

Matthews, Louise Barber to Price, William S. May 23, 1981. Copy on file.

Mecklenburg County Deed Books. Microfilm copies. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History.

Rumple, Jethro. The History of Presbyterianism in North Carolina. Richmond: Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1966. Reprinted from The North Carolina Presbyterian, 1878-1887.

Sellers, Charles. James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Providence Presbyterian Church and
Cemetery (Boundary Decrease)
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 1-7 Page 1

AMENDMENT

1. **Name of Property:** Providence Presbyterian Church and Cemetery
(Boundary Decrease)
2. **Location:** 10414 Providence Road
Charlotte, North Carolina, code: NC
Mecklenburg County, code: 119
zip code: 28277

3. **State Agency Certification:**

<i>William S. P. Jr.</i> SHPO	11-7-94
Signature of Certifying Official/Title	Date

State Agency

5. **Number and type of resources being deleted:**
2 noncontributing buildings

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed: Unknown due to the fact that the original nomination was written in 1981, when exact counts were not enumerated on the nomination form. However, the original count is believed be 1 contributing building and 1 contributing site.

7. **Description:** Providence Presbyterian Church and Cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. The present National Register boundary runs north and south, as well as east and west, of the intersection of Providence Road (NC Highway 16) and Alexa Road.

The simple, front-gabled, frame church, built in 1858 as the third sanctuary to serve the congregation, is situated in a grove of trees on a slight rise on the west side of Providence Road. Modern auxiliary buildings flank the present sanctuary; however, they do not intrude upon the elegant simplicity of the church. On the east side of Providence Road is a large informally

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7-8 Page 2

Providence Presbyterian Church and
Cemetery (Boundary Decrease)
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

landscaped cemetery containing both traditional marked graves and, east of a stone wall, largely unmarked graves of slaves and free blacks. Graves date from 1764 to the present. A tremendous boulder sits close to the road and is traditionally believed to be the place from which the Reverend Alexander Craighhead, and possibly other ministers, first addressed the Providence congregation. A path leads through the black cemetery down a steep slope to a small branch of Fourmile Creek. Here a stone structure believed to predate colonial settlement in the area shelters a spring that is reported to have been a traditional stopping point for travellers along the nearby "Indian Trading Path."

Located south of the church (south of Alexa Road) and also on the west side of Providence Road stands the 1949 church manse and its frame garage. The purpose of this amendment is to delete from the National Register boundaries the lot containing the noncontributing manse and garage, as well as the lot between the manse and Alexa Road, because they do not contribute to the historically and architecturally significant complex.

The former manse for the church was constructed in 1949 and is a relatively modest one-and-one-half story brick Colonial Revival inspired cottage, five bays wide. The central entrance is flanked by two six-over-six, double-hung windows, and three gable-roofed dormers pierce the facade slope of the side gable roof. To the southwest of the manse stands a non-historic frame garage. The lot located between Alexa Road and the manse has recently been cleared of trees and underbrush and has been deeply graded. This lot is scheduled to be turned into recreational and sporting areas for the church.

8. **Statement of Significance (Reasons for Boundary Decrease):** The Providence Presbyterian Church and Cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 under Criteria A, B, and C for local significance in the areas of architecture and religion. The period of significance marked on the nomination was 1800-1899, with the specific date given as 1858.

The property proposed to be deleted from the National Register boundaries--two parcels located south of the sanctuary tract--was

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Providence Presbyterian Church and
Cemetery (Boundary Decrease)
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8, 10 Page 3

sold to the church in 1884 by Mr. and Mrs. T.L. Vail. The property faced Providence Road and was to be the site of a permanent parsonage. The particulars of construction were not recorded; however, it is known that Rev. Roger Martin and his family were the first occupants beginning in approximately 1888. The residence is said to have been a two-story, white frame house, and it is known that Rev. and Mrs. Siler, who replaced the Martins in 1892, added a two-room addition to the east elevation for Mrs. Siler's school.

Over the years, Providence often shared a minister with another church, but the use of the manse was an attractive incentive and served as part of a minister's salary. The parsonage was used by ministers off and on throughout the first half of the twentieth century, but does not appear to have been utilized as a manse after circa 1935. Rather than repairing the apparently deteriorating older parsonage, in 1948 Providence decided to construct a new brick manse on the southernmost portion of the property. That residence still stands, but is used as rental property for the church. The portion of the lot where the circa 1888 manse appears to have been located has been cleared of trees and underbrush, and deeply graded within the last few months. Recreational and sporting facilities for the church are planned for this area.

In summary, the two parcels of land south of Alexa Road were not associated with Providence Presbyterian Church and Cemetery prior to 1884. The 1888 manse is no longer extant and its site has lost integrity due to recent clearing and grading. The 1949 manse and its garage are less than 50 years old and do not contribute to the historically and architecturally significant complex. Therefore, the two parcels south of Alexa Road should be deleted from the National Register boundaries.

10. Geographical Data for Area Being Deleted:

Acreage: approximately 10.3 acres

UTM References:

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A	17	520700	3880660
B	17	520820	3880690
C	17	520880	3880350
D	17	520760	3880330

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 4

Providence Presbyterian Church and
Cemetery (Boundary Decrease)
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundaries to be deleted are delineated by a solid black line and are shaded with cross-hatching on the accompanying plat map.

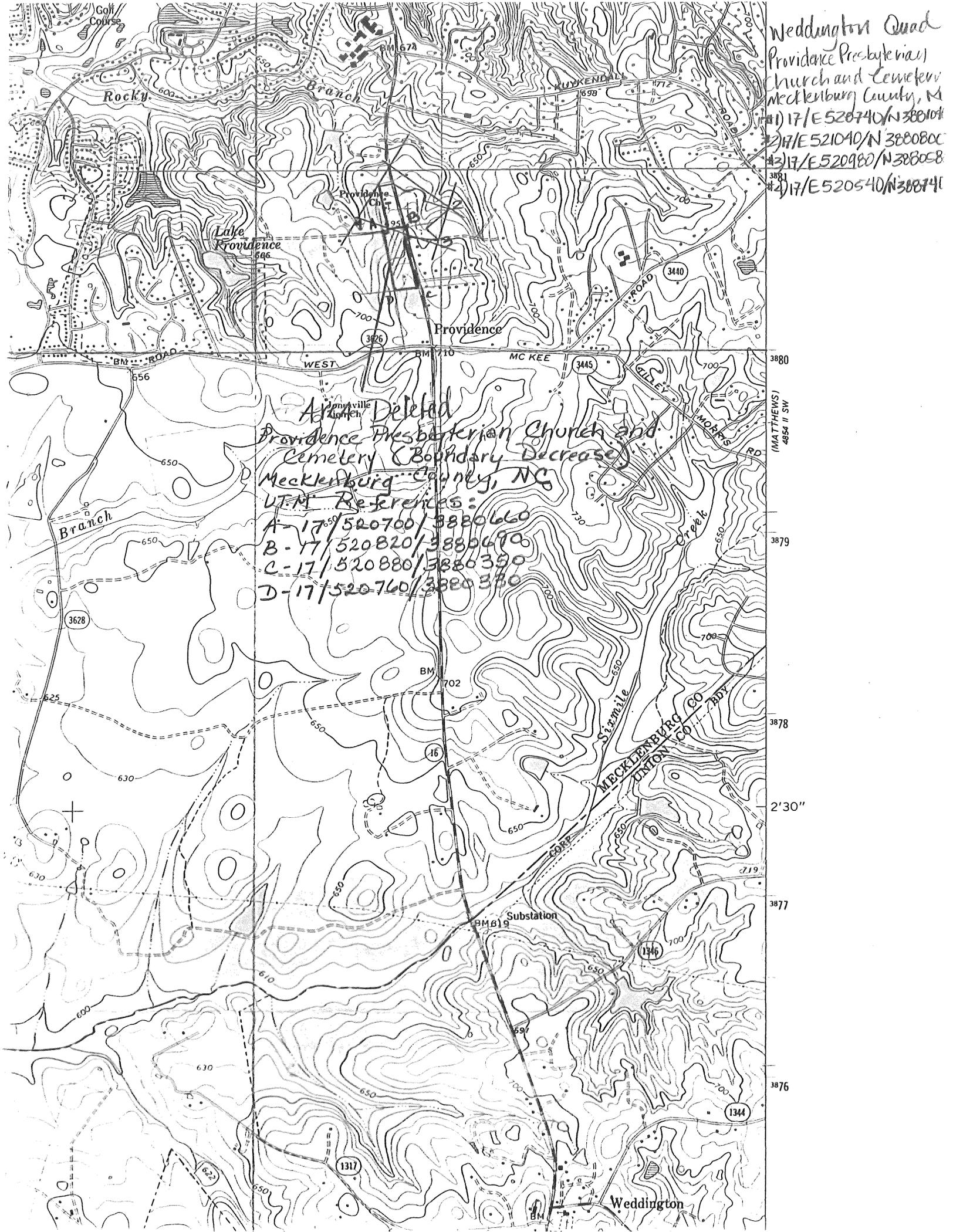
Boundary Justification: The area being deleted was not associated with Providence Presbyterian Church and Cemetery prior to 1884. This acreage includes the 1949 manse and its garage, which do not contribute historically or architecturally to the Providence Presbyterian Church and Cemetery property, and the land between the manse and the church, which has lost integrity due to recent clearing and deep grading.

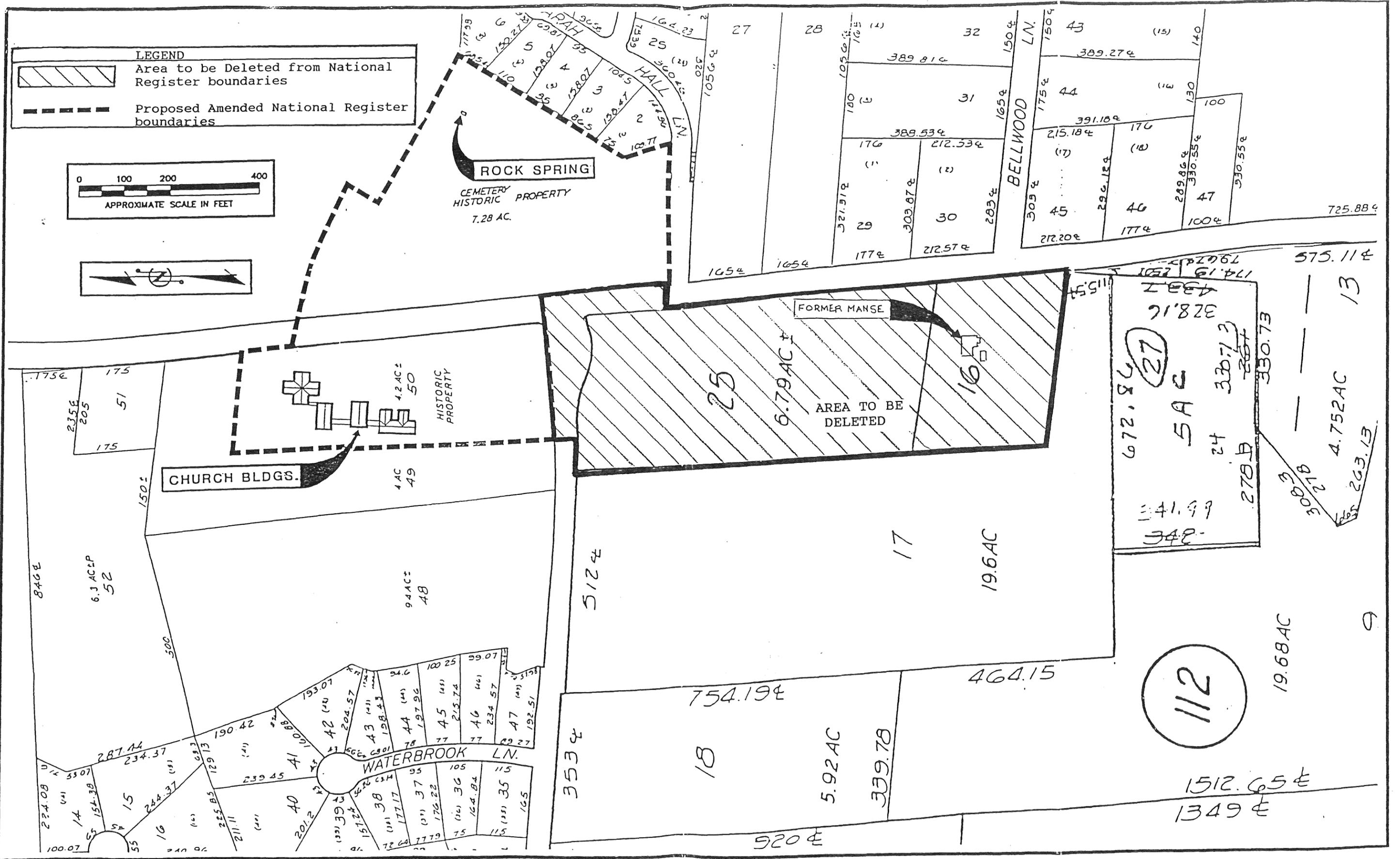
11. FORM PREPARED BY:

Robin Stancil, Survey and Planning Branch
State Historic Preservation Office
109 E. Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2807

Weddington Quad
Providence Presbyterian
Church and Cemetery
Mecklenburg County, NC
#1) 17/E 520740/N 3880104
#2) 17/E 521040/N 3880800
#3) 17/E 520980/N 3880058
#4) 17/E 520540/N 3880741

Area Deleted
Providence Presbyterian Church and
Cemetery (Boundary Decrease)
Mecklenburg County, NC
UTM References:
A - 17/520760/3880660
B - 17/520820/3880470
C - 17/520880/3880390
D - 17/520760/3880380





PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND CEMETERY (BOUNDARY DECREASE)
 MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

