

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

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

1. Name of property

historic name Alexander, William T., House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Northeast side Mallard Creek Church Road (SR 2472), 0.1 mile west of junction US 29 not for publication N/A

city or town Charlotte vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Mecklenburg code 119 zip code 28213

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX 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 XX locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPO 11/18/02
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

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u> </u> entered in the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

Alexander, William T. House
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	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 Rural Mecklenburg County, NC

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic/Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Stone
- roof Metal
- walls Brick
- Weatherboard
- other Asphalt

Narrative Description

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

Alexander, William T. House
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1820-1830

Significant Dates

1820-1830

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed 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: NC Office of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch, Raleigh; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Landmarks Commission, Charlotte

Alexander, William T. House
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.67 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 17 524100 3908700
2 _____

Zone Easting Northing
3 _____
4 _____
____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.

organization _____ date 4/20/02

street & number 228 Winter Street telephone 704-376-0985

city or town Charlotte state NC zip code 28205

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
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Mecklenburg County, N.C.**Physical Description**

The William T. Alexander House is located on a rise of land near the intersection of US Highway 29 and Mallard Creek Church Road in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Formerly part of a substantial agricultural estate owned by the Alexander family, this area is now characterized by modern suburban development at the northern outskirts of Charlotte. The surviving 4.67-acre parcel consists of the 1820s house, the fieldstone remains of a 1928 barn, a 1936 garage/apartment, a 1936 well house, and a 1940s chicken house. The house is the only contributing resource, and no outbuildings contemporary with the construction of the house or the operation of the antebellum plantation survive. The remaining outbuildings stand either behind the house or beyond the main lawn that surrounds the residence. The vegetation around the house includes mature boxwoods, a magnolia, and cedar trees. Remnants of early-twentieth-century fruit orchards exist along the west and northwest sides of the tract and constitute portions of the wooded areas around the periphery that buffer the house and outbuildings from surrounding modern development.

William T. Alexander House (Contributing)

Probably built between 1820 and 1830, the William T. Alexander House is a well-preserved plantation seat with a conservative blend of Georgian and Federal design elements. Nearly square in plan, the two-story, side-gable house is constructed of Flemish-bond brick walls resting on an ashlar stone foundation of cut granite. The brick walls were re-pointed in the 1970s. The roof is covered with early-twentieth-century patterned metal shingles and there are no gutters. The house features intricate Federal-style wooden cornices front and rear. Across the façade, the slender cornice displays a rope molding and a pattern of flat scalloped pendants. At the rear, the cornice configuration is more traditional, with a wide molded frieze supported by a boxed overhang. The three-bay façade has a central entrance capped by a transom and sheltered by a 1920s center-bay porch. This porch has a flared, standing-seam metal roof and slender wood columns and pilasters. The rear elevation also has a center door with a transom. Nine-over-nine sash windows mark the first story of the house and nine-over-six windows the second, with smaller nine-light casement attic windows in the gable ends. Capped by brick jack arches on the first story and soldier courses on the second, the windows have simple molded surrounds with heavy square wooden sills. All of the windows on the main body of the house have replacement three-panel wood shutters fabricated to duplicate closely the original. The strap hinges and drive pintles are original. At the gable ends of the house, exterior brick chimneys with single paved shoulders rise from low stone bases (Morrill and Boyte 1976; Lee Morgan, Inc. 2000).

The rear elevation has a one-story, weatherboard shed wing across the full width of the house. The wing's straight-lap siding and rough-sawn joists suggest that it was built in the early twentieth century. The wing consists of three rooms: a bedroom (south); a center bathroom; and

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Mecklenburg County, N.C.

a dining area (north). In 1936, the paired nine-over-nine windows were installed in this wing and the side-gable kitchen appendage was added to the north side. This kitchen wing has weatherboard siding, single and paired six-over-six sash windows, flush eaves in the gable ends, and a brick chimney in the north gable end that was probably constructed with brick salvaged during the demolition of the original kitchen. The two doors on the north and east elevations lead into the wing (Morrill and Boyte 1976; Lee Morgan, Inc. 2000).

The interior retains notable original features, though the original hall-parlor plan was altered by the addition of the center hall during a remodeling that occurred in the late nineteenth century. With this remodeling, narrower floorboards were installed directly on top of the original wide oak flooring in the present hall and the living room (south room). The original wainscot along the open side of the stair has delicately molded tongue-and-groove panels that differ from the later wainscot with wider panels along the hall partition and in the living room. Original Georgian cornices border the tongue-and-groove ceilings in both the south and the north (originally the parlor) rooms. These principal rooms have original six-panel doors and the windows are set in flared plaster coves with wooden seats. The mantel in the south room contains a large fireplace surrounded by a Federal mantel featuring simple pilasters rising to the narrow molded mantel shelf (Morrill and Boyte 1976; Lee Morgan Inc. 2000).

The smaller north room (the parlor) has an original six-panel door on the rear elevation that now leads to the adjoining kitchen. The corbeled mantel in this room was added in recent years. There is evidence that this room was originally two smaller rooms with corner fireplaces. The existing ceiling and south wall reveal the imprint of the former partition. The center stair hall that separates the north and south rooms contains an open-string staircase embellished with delicate mahogany double-scroll brackets and a simple tapered newel. The balustrade consists of small square tapered posts and a simple round rail (Morrill and Boyte 1976; Lee Morgan Inc. 2000).

The interior finish on the second floor includes much of the original paneled wainscoting and molded chair rails, wide board ceilings, crown molding, and molded window and door surrounds. Now consisting of four bedrooms, the original layout, as indicated by the imprint of former partitions, indicates that there were five or six rooms on the second floor. Interior non-bearing walls have vertical beaded boards, while the exterior wall has plastered brick. The small corner fireplaces that originally heated the bedrooms no longer survive. From the stair hall, the original six-panel door with iron box locks and strap hinges leads to the two bedrooms on the south side. Along the south side of the stair hall is a narrow enclosure in which a steep stair rises to the attic. Wide hand-planed boards floor the entire attic, and rough-cut, wood roofing slats are exposed between the mortised and tenoned oak rafters.

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Alexander, William T. House
Mecklenburg County, N.C.

Barn (Non-Contributing)

All that now survives of the ruinous 1928 dairy barn south of the house is the fieldstone lower level. The walls are roughly five feet high and fourteen inches thick, and measure approximately one hundred feet by thirty-six feet. The original barn was a sizable two-story, gambrel-roofed building with a weatherboarded upper level and a broad center passageway flanked by stalls for dairy cattle on the lower level. The building was constructed into sloping terrain that allowed for direct access to the second story from the uphill (north) side. The lower level retains the small masonry openings for ventilation along the east and west elevations, and two rows of heavy concrete columns. The concrete flooring also remains. Abandoned for decades, the barn suffered severe damage during Hurricane Hugo in 1989 (Morrill and Boyte 1976).

Garage/Apartment (Non-Contributing)

Constructed north of the house in 1936, the two-story, fieldstone and weatherboard garage/apartment is capped by a side-gable roof with a Palladian window in the center gable. The lower level has replacement garage doors, and a modern brick chimney fills the north gable end. The interior of the upstairs apartment has been extensively modernized.

Well House (Non-Contributing)

Located directly behind the Alexander House, the 1936 well house is a one-story, frame, side-gable building has large, paired, multiple-paned windows on the south elevation, weatherboard siding, and patterned metal roof shingles.

Chicken House (Non-Contributing)

Erected ca. 1940 north of the carriage house, the chicken house is a one-story, frame, shed-roofed building with weatherboard siding. It stands abandoned and in disrepair.

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Mecklenburg County, N.C.**Statement of Significance**

Constructed between 1820 and 1830, the William T. Alexander House is among the finest antebellum plantation houses in Mecklenburg County. The house is considered eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for architecture (see *Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, 1990. Associated Property Type I—Houses--Plantation Era Farmhouses). During the early nineteenth century, wealthy Mecklenburg County landowners often selected houses that were a conservative mix of Federal and lingering Georgian elements. Builders typically applied a limited repertoire of Georgian and Federal motifs to customary side-gable house forms, which often contained traditional hall-parlor plans. In its two-story, side-gable form and blend of restrained Federal and Georgian features, the William T. Alexander House epitomizes the finer plantation seats erected in the county during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Now surrounded by modern development north of Charlotte, the house is an extremely rare surviving example of antebellum domestic architecture in the county. It is one of the county's oldest remaining houses and the earliest example of brick construction.

Historical Background

William Tasse Alexander was born in Mecklenburg County on December 10, 1802, the son of Moses Alexander and Elizabeth Orr Alexander. A native of Cecil County, Maryland, Moses Alexander was part of the great wave of Scotch-Irish settlers who migrated from the Middle Atlantic region into the North Carolina piedmont during the middle and late eighteenth century. William T. Alexander bought the first 100 acres of his plantation along Mallard Creek in north Mecklenburg County from Samuel Caldwell in October 1819. By 1860, Alexander had amassed 972 acres of land worth approximately \$10,550. Although local tradition contends that the present plantation house was built by a John E. Orr in 1799 and was included in a parcel of land sold to Alexander, no evidence yet found supports this claim. More likely, Alexander built the house between 1820 and 1830 as the centerpiece of his growing farm. With the labor of thirty-three slaves, the plantation in 1860 produced 600 bushels of wheat, 2,000 bushels of corn, and 24 bales of ginned cotton. Additional income was earned from the property's extensive woodlands of hardwoods and pine, which the Alexanders timbered for the market (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 19, page 84; U. S. Census Records 1860: Agricultural Schedule; Morrill and Boyte 1976; Alexander 1990: 364).

After the Civil War, W. T. Alexander, along with his fourth wife, Margery Helen Cochran, and his six surviving children, continued to operate the farm with the assistance of tenant farmers, many of which were his former slaves. Upon the death of W. T. Alexander in 1870, the substantial estate was divided equally between his wife and children. William Tasse Alexander II

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Mecklenburg County, N.C.

inherited 190 acres and the family homestead, and resided in the house with his wife, Mary Charlotte Watkins Alexander, and his mother (Morrill and Boyte: 1976; William Tasse Alexander, Family Papers).

Little is known about agricultural activities on the Alexander farm during the early twentieth century, but typical of the region, the main rotation crops were cotton, wheat, and corn. In 1928, W. T. Alexander II replaced a smaller barn at the edge of a pasture just south of the house with the dairy barn (now ruinous). In a letter to her daughter dated February 19, 1928, Mary Alexander wrote that her husband, son William III, and farm tenants "are still building away on the barn. . . . They have the stables, the milking room, feed room . . . and the grain room built. The stairs and the doors and window shutters and such things have not been finished yet" (Mary Alexander Correspondence 1928). Fieldstone for the lower level of the barn was gathered from a nearby quarry and was laid by a stonemason (last name of Neal) from Macon County, North Carolina (Sarah Alexander Interview 2000).

With the death of W. T. Alexander II in 1928, the farm passed into the hands of his widow, Mary. The land surrounding the W. T. Alexander House remained an active farm (although on an increasingly reduced scale) until 1953. In the 1940s, for example, the farm purchased some forty head of Herefords and began raising beef cattle for market. Improvements also continued around the house tract after 1928. In 1936, the house was expanded with a rear addition and both the two-story garage/apartment and the well house were constructed. About 1940, the small chicken house was built for Mary Alexander's fifty chickens (Concord (N.C.) *Tribune* 1940; James Alexander Interview 1992; Sarah Alexander Interview 2000).

Four years before her death in 1964, Mary Alexander granted the house and 77.06 acres of land to her daughter-in-law, Sarah Land Alexander (wife of W. T. Alexander III), and her three granddaughters. The house tract remained in the Alexander family until the year 2000. At present, the 4.67-acre house tract is owned by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. Plans are in progress to convert the house to professional offices (Morrill and Boyte 1976; Sarah Alexander Interview 2000).

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Alexander, William T. House
Mecklenburg County, N.C.

Bibliography

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- Alexander, James Moses. Interview with Sarah Land Alexander. Tape recording. Spring 1992. Oral History Program, University of North Carolina at Charlotte Special Collections.
- Alexander, Mary Charlotte Watkins. Correspondence with Margaret Alexander. 19 February 1928. William Tasse Alexander Family Papers, University of North Carolina at Charlotte Special Collections.
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- Gatza, Mary Beth. Architectural Inventory Files for Rural Mecklenburg County. 1988. Files available at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, Charlotte.
- Lee Morgan, Inc. "W. T. Alexander Property, Historic Assessment, Job No. 199111." Submitted to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, Charlotte, North Carolina, October, 2000.
- Mattson, Richard L., and William H. Huffman. "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Nomination. 1990. On file at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.
- Morrill, Dan. L., and Jack O. Boyte. "Survey and Research Report on the W. T. Alexander House." No pagination. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1976.
- "The William Tasse Line of the Alexanders." Concord (N.C.) *Tribune*. 16 June 1940.
- United States Census Records. Eighth Census of the United States. Mecklenburg County. Agricultural Schedule and Slave Schedule, Mecklenburg County, 1860.

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Alexander, William T., House
Mecklenburg County, NC

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary is defined by the heavy line drawn on the accompanying Mecklenburg County property map, drawn at the 1 inch = 100 feet scale.

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary encompasses the William T. Alexander House, the associated outbuildings, and surrounding landscape features that define the historic setting. The non-contributing resources do not have a visual impact because they are situated to the rear of the primary resource or beyond the house lawn, and are screened from the house by mature vegetation.

Photographs

The following information pertains to each of the photographs:

Alexander, William T., House
Charlotte, Mecklenburg County
North Carolina

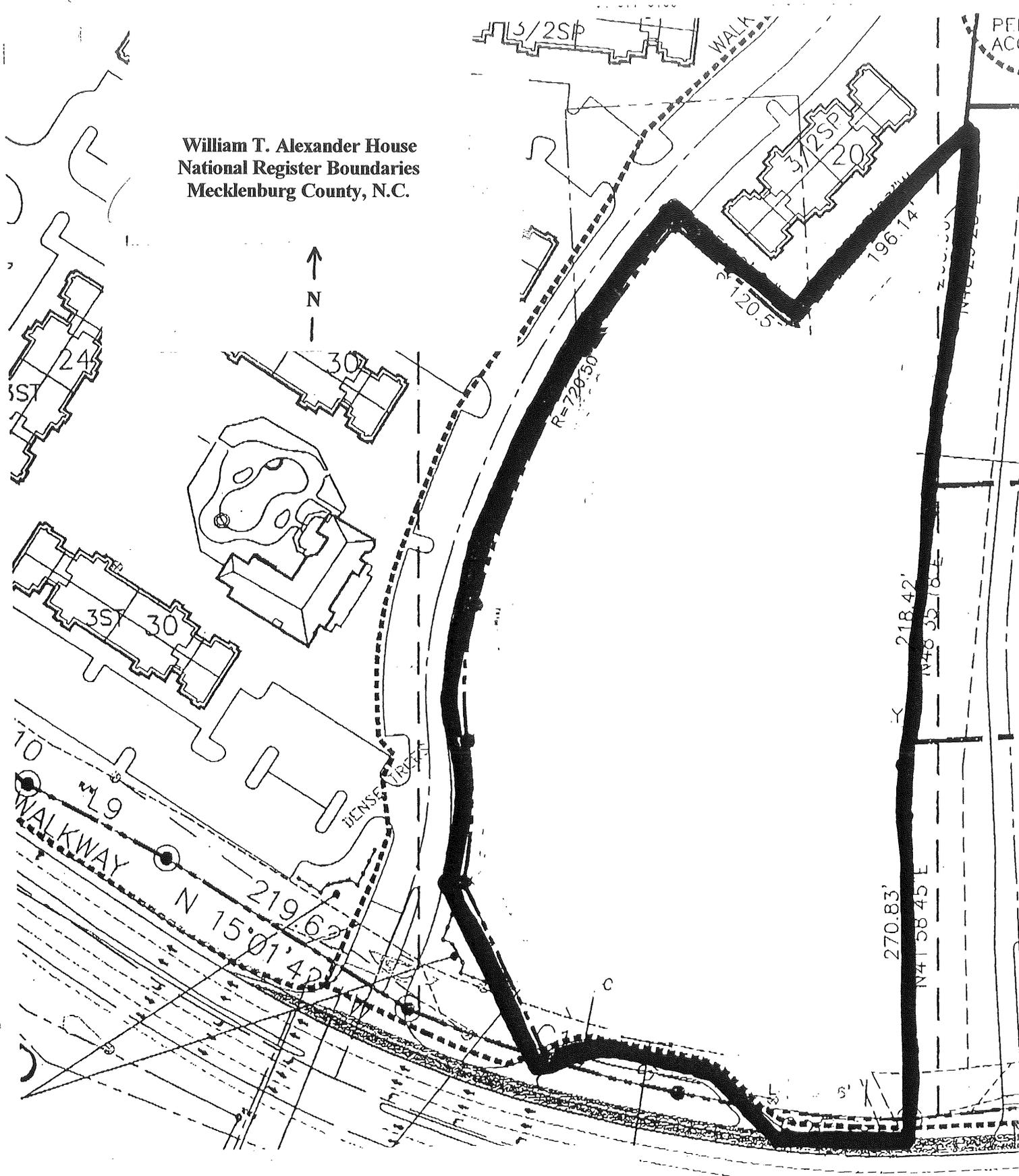
Photographer: Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.
Location of Negative: Survey and Planning Branch
North Carolina Office of Archives and History
109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2807

Date of Photographs: July 2001

Photographs:

1. Front (east) and South Elevations, Looking North
2. Front and North Elevations and Kitchen Wing, Looking South
3. Main Entrance, Looking West
4. South Elevation, Looking North
5. Rear (West) Elevation and Well House, Looking East
6. Garage/Apartment, Looking North
7. Chicken House, Looking North
8. South Front Room
9. North Front Room
10. Detail, Stairway
11. Upstairs Hall
12. Remains of Dairy Barn Foundation
13. South Elevation, Looking North

**William T. Alexander House
National Register Boundaries
Mecklenburg County, N.C.**



Scale-- 1" = 100'

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, Charlotte

SITE AREA: 4.67 AC. ±

William T.
Alexander
House
Charlotte via
Mecklenburg Co.
JNC
E 524100
N 3908700
Z-17
Harrisburg
Quad



3911
3910
20'
3909
3908
3907
4854 IV SE (DERITA)

