

College Park/Idlewild Mini-district Phase I Survey

Prepared by:

Longleaf Historic Resources

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Idlewild, subdivided in 1908, emerged as a community of mainly African American homeowners located in the area from Tarboro Street west to Linden Avenue, and from New Bern Avenue north to Glascock Street. Saint Augustine's College, established in 1867 for African Americans, stood on the north boundary of the subdivision. By the 1920s the community was made up of a number of blocks of owner-occupied housing, with little rental property. Apparently, Idlewild was first subdivided by white developers. Many large lots in the south end of the subdivision, especially along New Bern Avenue are known to have been sold at auction to white buyers. As sales lagged, an African American developer supposedly took over the area, developing it as an African American subdivision. Idlewild attracted African Americans who aspired to "be somebody" and who valued home ownership. The earlier houses were modest and home to a mixture of social and economic classes ranging from professionals, generally teachers, to skilled craftsmen and day laborers.<sup>1</sup>

The following two properties within the Idlewild neighborhood are known to have been originally owned by African Americans. The house at 310 Heck Street, one of the first houses in the neighborhood, was purchased by Dennis T. Taylor in 1910. Hilliard Yellerday, a railroad worker, built a tri-gable house at 1112 Oakwood Avenue circa 1915 and owned the property until his death.

The following properties are known to have been owned early by African Americans. Robert Hinton, who worked at the state capitol, owned a "big white house" on the corner of Idlewild and Jones streets. A large house at 212 State Street was home to African American doctor Lemuel T. Delaney. Across the street from the Delaney house, David Weaver, a janitor, owned a 1923 two-story Neoclassical Revival house at 1203 E. Lane Street. Elsa Hunt Perry occupied the house at 1306 E. Jones Street circa 1921. Later, Cullen K. Hunt, a barber, and his wife Arlene raised their family in this two-story Craftsman house from 1925 to 1938. The Hunts were probably the second residents of

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<sup>1</sup> Simmons-Henry, Linda and Linda H. Edmisten. *Culture Town, Life in Raleigh's African American Communities*, 1993.

the house. A circa 1920 Craftsman style house at 109 Idlewild Avenue was the homeplace of Mary Watson's family beginning in 1922. Additionally, African Americans probably owned the houses in the 100 block of N. Tarboro. The 1925 city directory lists a butler, waiter and clerk residing along the 100 block of N. Tarboro. The Hadden family lived at 18 N. Tarboro at one time. Jacob Hayes, an African American bricklayer, bought a new house circa 1912 at 202 N. Tarboro, where he lived until his death. A tri-gable house and I-house at 311 and 313 N. Tarboro are both pre-1909 residences owned by African American families from 1914-1938. Ed May owned the two-story hip roofed house at 205 N. Tarboro Road in the 1920s. The circa 1928 St. Monica's Catholic School located at the northwest corner of N. Tarboro and E. Edenton educated African American children from throughout Raleigh until at least 1960.

Idlewild is one of only a few black subdivisions from the early twentieth century remaining in Raleigh. Visually, a variety of vernacular house forms from the early twentieth century are represented in the neighborhood. Although significant architecturally, the Idlewild district is more meaningful as it represents the early history of home ownership by African Americans in Raleigh. The relatively intact neighborhood of Idlewild thus represents a rare and irreplaceable resource. In comparison, the middle-class African American community around present day Shaw University, which had a similar developmental history to Idlewild, is no longer intact. New construction and parking lots as a result of downtown expansion have erased much of the area's historic architectural fabric.

A preliminary historic district was carved out of the Idlewild community based on a drive-by survey by Claudia Brown and Linda Edmisten of the SHPO and Dan Becker of the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission. Irregularly shaped, the preliminary historic district makes up approximately 11 block faces and is generally bounded by Oakwood Avenue on the north, Edenton Street on the south, Idlewild Avenue on the west and N. Pettigrew Street on the east. On February 26<sup>th</sup>, the preliminary historic district was studied, building by building, in order to determine if the proposed area has the architectural integrity required for district designation. The pedestrian survey used five criteria in assessing the

architectural integrity of each building in the proposed district area: roofline, trim, windows, exterior wall cladding, and porches. Those properties that retained original or early materials for at least three of the five criteria were classified as contributing resources to the district, and all others were classified as non-contributing resources.

More contributing properties were found than non-contributing. Of the 101 buildings surveyed, 58 were counted as contributing, 33 were counted as non-contributing, and the remaining 10 must be documented as to their date or their integrity to determine their contributing or non-contributing status.

The majority of the houses in Idlewild are modest in size and are typical vernacular forms of the early twentieth century. Tri-gables, Folk Victorians, saddlebags, shotguns, and front gable bungalows are common to the area. In general, the larger properties are two-story dwellings with hipped roofs and Neoclassical elements.

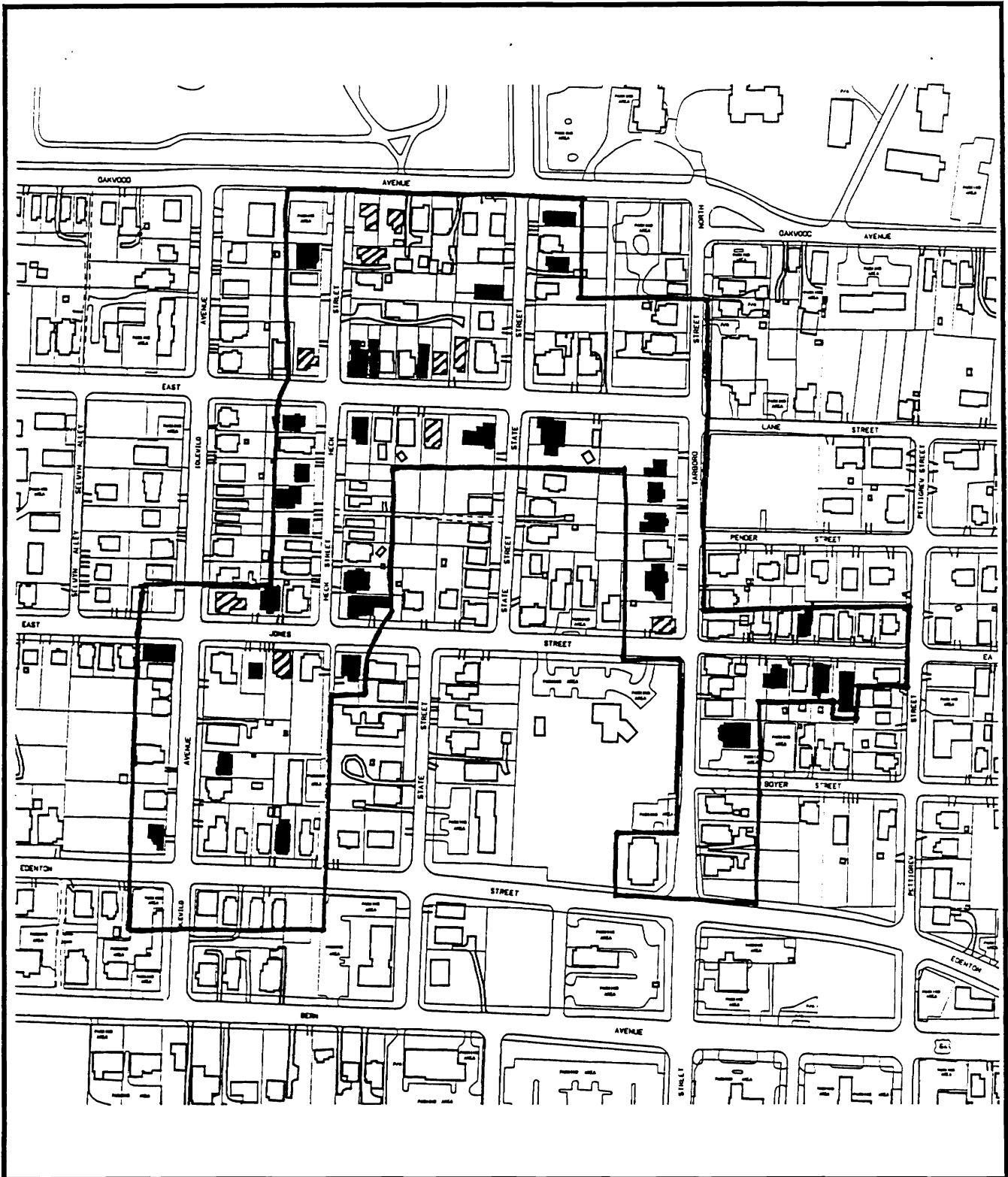
One-story tri-gable houses are probably the most common house form in the neighborhood. Examples can be found on every block of the proposed district. Among those, the one at 1008 E. Jones Street has the most integrity as an example of the one-story type. This house has its original siding, windows, and a decorative porch with a spindle frieze and turned porch posts. The houses at 115 and 117 Idlewild Avenue are also excellent examples of the one-story tri-gable; both of which retain their original porches. The house at 311 N. Tarboro Street is another one-story tri-gable which retains its integrity. The porch on this house has square classical porch posts as opposed to the more commonly found, turned posts. In front of this house is a low fieldstone retaining wall with entrance posts. 313 N. Tarboro Street is an example of a two-story tri-gable with a one-story wraparound porch with turned posts and sawnwork brackets. The house at 106 Idlewild Avenue is a good example of a Folk Victorian house with its original full-facade porch with a spindle frieze and brackets and turned porch posts. Another well preserved one-story gable and wing is the house at 20 N. Tarboro Street, which exhibits an Italianate style porch with slender paired porch posts. The well-maintained house at

307 Heck Street is a one and a half story hipped roof bungalow with dormer windows, wide eaves, and a porch with delicately turned porch posts and railings.

Almost identical buildings stand at 1114-14 1/2 and 1116-1116 1/2 Oakwood Avenue and 313-313 1/2 State Street, which represent multi-family dwellings in the area. All three duplex properties are one-story, four bay, front gable bungalows with 4/4 sash windows, and a small hipped roof porch with plain porch posts. Two examples of a “one over one” or “standup” are found at 218 and 220 Heck Street. Both dwellings have 6/6 sash windows and their original one-story shed porch. These properties were probably built for rental purposes.




Among the more substantial houses in the neighborhood is the house at 1203 E. Lane Street. This house (David Weaver House) is a two-story frame Neoclassical Revival building that is one of the most architecturally significant residences despite some exterior alterations, including asbestos siding and replacement wrought iron railing on the upper story porch. Another is the two-story, side gable, three bay house at 120 Idlewild Avenue. This house retains its original door with transom and sidelights and the original doors on the second story; however, it no longer retains its original wall cladding and two-story porch.

Some residents in the neighborhood are very supportive of the possible district designation of the Idlewild community. This small core of owners includes Ella Clark, Bernetta Pullen and Madge Johnson, all of whom are descendants of early African American homeowners in the area.



City of Raleigh

IDLEWILD/  
COLLEGE PARK  
SURVEY COUNT

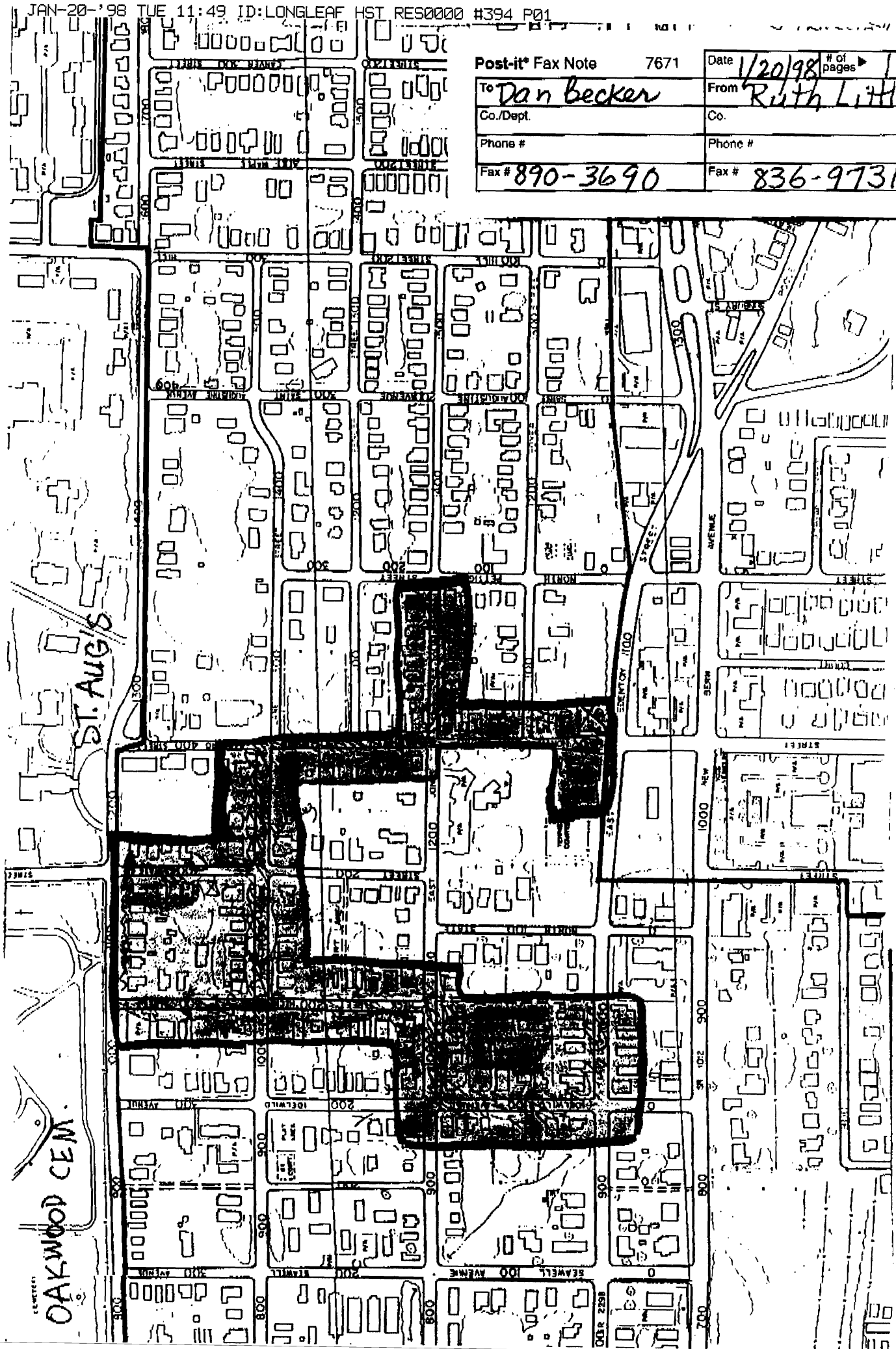
-  Contributing
-  Non-contributing
-  Needs additional  
age/integrity  
documentation



Scale 1"=294'  
 Author LONGO  
 Date 03/13/98

Information depicted herein is for reference purposes only and is compiled from the best available sources. The City of Raleigh assumes no responsibility for errors arising from the misuse of the map.

PROPOSED IDLEWILD NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT



Post-it* Fax Note	7671	Date	1/20/98	# of pages	1
To	Dan Becker		From	Ruth Little	
Co./Dept.			Co.		
Phone #			Phone #		
Fax #	890-3690		Fax #	836-9731	