

# RALEIGH HISTORIC PROPERTY DESIGNATION APPLICATION AND REPORT

1. NAME OF THE PROPERTY: (If historic name is unknown, give current name or give street address)

Historic Name Wake County Home

Current Name, or Address \_\_\_\_\_

2. LOCATION: 401 E. Whitaker Mill Road Raleigh Wake County  
street city and/or county

3. LEGAL OWNER: Name Wake County day phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address Room 1100 County Office Bldg. Raleigh NC 27601  
street city state zip

4. APPLICANT/CONTACT PERSON: Name N/A day phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
street city state zip

5. REASON FOR REQUEST: N/A

6. GENERAL DATA:

a. Date of construction and alterations: 1913/14, 1980/81

b. Outbuildings: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X If yes, number \_\_\_\_\_

c. Approximate acreage or dimensions: Approximately 6 acres

d. Architect, builder, carpenter and/or mason: Charles E. Hartge

e. Use: Original County Home Present Offices, Care Centers

f. Is the property income producing? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X

7. CLASSIFICATION:

a. Category: building(s) X structure \_\_\_\_\_ object \_\_\_\_\_ site \_\_\_\_\_

b. Ownership: private \_\_\_\_\_ public: local X state \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_

Number of resources within property:	Contributing	Non-contributing
buildings	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
structures	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
objects	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
sites	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

d. National Register of Historic Places status (check one): Entered (date) \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
nominated: eligible \_\_\_\_\_ not eligible \_\_\_\_\_ ; not requested X ; removed (date) \_\_\_\_\_

e. Has the property been recorded during a historic survey by the City of Raleigh or the NC Historic Preservation Office? By whom and when No

8. SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

## Wake County Home

### 9. (c.) Justification for Land to be Designated

This nomination for the Wake County Home includes approximately 6 acres of the original 43.97 acre County Home tract. The proposed boundaries are drawn to include the landscaped front and side lawns of the building as well as the rear parking lot, but excludes adjacent modern buildings on the County Home grounds. These boundaries would provide an appropriate setting for the building.

### 9. (d.) Architectural Description and Significance

Located on a slight rise, the Classical Revival style Wake County Home building is a large, E-plan brick building set back from the north line of Whitaker Mill Road where it intersects with Pine Road. In front of the building is a semi-circular drive and landscaped lawn. To the east and west of the home are large oak and pecan trees set in a grassed lawn, while to the immediate rear of the building is a small parking lot.

Built of five-and-one common bond brick with red mortar joints, the home building has painted cast stone window sills and lintels, a cast stone belt course along the top of the wall and a cast stone water table. Its overhanging eaves with hidden gutters are formed of sheetmetal. The symmetrically-arranged front elevation of the two-story building faces south and is twenty-three bays wide. This broad expanse is divided into two slightly-projecting end pavillions and a central entrance pavillion, joined by long, slightly-recessed wings. Although of several different shapes and groupings, all of the windows on the front elevation have one over one sash. The windows on the end and entrance pavillions are paired, while the intermediate windows are single, except that the middle window on each level is flanked by sidelights.

Capping the building is a series of intersecting, hipped slate roofs that have round sheetmetal ventilators straddling the ridges. The central entrance pavillion roof is also topped by a large wood and sheetmetal square, louvered cupola with a hipped roof.

The three-bay entrance pavillion at the center of the south elevation is fronted by a colossal portico of four wood Tuscan columns supporting a deep sheetmetal and wood entablature that has a dentilled basemolding. Atop the portico is a balustrade of panelled sheetmetal pedestals with X-panel railings of sheetmetal between them. The entrance itself has a broad basket arch of cast stone, but the entrance doors, sidelights and transom are of modern, white-finished aluminum.

The west elevation, facing Pine Road, is eleven bays long with a central, one-story hipped portico that has triple Tuscan columns

at the outer corners. The entrance behind this portico has original sidelights and transoms, but the door is modern. Over the portico is a window with sidelights, while the two outer bays on each side of the elevation have doubled windows set in slight recesses. At the opposite end of the building, the east elevation is identical, except that the portico is raised about five feet above grade and has square posts instead of columns.

The rear elevation of the County Home is more complex than the front. The east and west wings project to the north, terminating in three-bay elevations of doubled windows. Together with the front wing they form a U, from the inner faces of which project a total of four smaller, hipped pavillions, each three bays wide. In the center of the U is a semi-detached, two-story, hipped wing, three bays wide, fronted by a hipped porch with square posts. A small, flat-roofed brick elevator tower has been added where this rear, central pavillion joins the front wing.

Joining the rear pavillion with the side pavillions are a pair of wooden, covered walkways, apparently early additions. These walkways are divided along their lengths by walls of vertical tongue and groove boards.

In addition to interior renovations which have removed most of the original finishes and altered room layouts, the principal exterior alterations have been the addition of steel fire escapes to the northwest corners of each of the rear pavillions.

The architect for the new county home was Charles E. Hartge of Raleigh. (N. & O., 10 September 1913) Hartge (1865-1918) was born in Hamburg, Germany and educated in Europe and America. In the early 1890s he was a builder, architect, building superintendent and supply dealer in Tarboro. (Bishir, etal, p. 285) At the turn of the century Hartge was active in Rocky Mount, moving to Raleigh about 1903. (N & O, 28 October 1918 and Raleigh Times, 25 October 1918) Although no complete list has been made of his Wake County buildings, he is known to have been the architect for the remodelling of Smedes Hall and for the construction of Pittman Auditorium at St. Mary's College (1906-07), to have planned buildings at NC A & M in Raleigh and to have designed the Church of the Good Shepherd (1914) and Wakelon School (1908-09). (Harris, Early Raleigh, p. 13) His obituary in the Raleigh Times says that "some of the best known buildings in the State are products of his genius and the building trade in general loses one of its most prominent members." He was elected president of the North Carolina AIA in 1916 and was Secretary of the North Carolina State Board of Architecture when he died in the flu epidemic of 1918. (N. & O., 26 October 1918)

Except for the Church of the Good Shepherd, Hartge's known buildings show the influence of northern European design in the late nineteenth century, with their mix of red and tan brick and stone, strong articulation of masses, and heavy wood and sheetmetal cornices and ornament.

Hartge's design for the Wake County Home shows a similar deftness in arranging and detailing masses and in using a variety of materials. The building is well-proportioned and much more handsome than one might expect in what could be described as a utilitarian structure. The home has been essentially well-preserved over the years and even the interior remodelling of 1980-81 left the exterior intact.

#### 9. (e.) Historical Significance

In the years immediately before World War I, the county commissioners of Wake County decided to build a new county home to replace one which had been constructed on the Oxford Road north of Raleigh in the early 1880s. Forty-four acres of former Whitaker land were purchased just north of Raleigh in July of 1913. (Wake Deeds, Book 276, page 349 and Wake Maps, Book 1911, p. 69) Plans were prepared by Raleigh architect Charles E. Hartge and bids for construction taken in September of 1913. The general contract was awarded to M. A. Moser of Raleigh for a bid of \$71, 875, while the Raleigh Iron Works Company won a contract to install the heating plant for a bid of \$5,026. (N. & O., 10 September 1913) Newspaper reports indicate that work began on the building, referred to as the new "county hospital," almost immediately. (N. & O., 21 November 1913) We have not been able to determine exactly when the building was completed, but apparently it opened some time during 1914. The old county home was advertised for bids and sold for \$26, 825 in January of 1914, with possession subject to the finishing of the new building. (N. & O., 4 December 1913 and 10 January 1914)

Funding for the construction of the new home was provided by the sale of bonds by Wake County, which was also raising money for a new court house and jail. (N. & O., 11 December 1913 and 24 January 1914)

The North Carolina State Constitution of 1868, recognizing that "beneficent provision for the poor, unfortunate, and orphan, being one of the first duties of a civilized and Christian state...", established the groundwork for the building of homes or institutions to care for the indigent. Administration and funding of the welfare system was left to the counties. To alleviate the burden of providing for the poor, the counties petitioned the General Assembly at the turn of the century to allow them to issue bonds for the purpose of purchasing sites and erecting buildings for the care of the poor, aged and infirm. (Robinson, p. 8-1)

In 1923, 92 of 100 counties maintained county homes housing a total of 1,500 persons, including an estimated 500 "feebleminded" persons and more than 400 persons reported sick. County homes were usually administered by a superintendent, who was also often expected to run the county farm. These superintendents, according to a state report, were generally "barely above the level of the inmates." (N. & O., 7 January 1923) Another report in 1928 noted that within the previous ten years 31 new county

homes had been built, despite well-known problems with the county home system and an estimated cost of \$900,000 per year to keep 2,100 inmates. It concluded that "the county home is still the dumping ground for the misfits of society." (N. & O., 18 November 1928) Lacking an adequate state system to care for the mentally handicapped, disabled and aged poor who had no other resources, most counties clung to the system they knew and which had state sanction.

New Deal legislation creating the Social Security system and the enactment of a state system of public assistance in 1937 led to the closing of many small county homes. A report in 1941 noted that 16 homes had closed over the previous four years. (N. & O., 7 September 1941) Social Security benefits and federal and state welfare programs made it possible to provide for the elderly indigent in private facilities where they were available, while the establishment of state hospitals for the mentally retarded gave them a more appropriate place to live.

The Wake County Home remained open as a residential facility until 1979, despite plans to close it in the 1960s due to numerous safety and sanitation problems. By that point, most inmates had been transferred to private facilities. (N. & O., 23 January 1963 and 3 June 1979) In 1980-81 the building was renovated to provide offices for private social service agencies and to house a public health clinic, senior citizens center and an independent living center for mentally handicapped adults. (N & O, 27 June 1980)

The Wake County Home building is a tangible reminder of the development of social services in Wake and other North Carolina counties over the past hundred years. It represents the county's attempt to aid the indigent, aged and disabled when no other options existed.

#### Bibliography

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Harris, Linda, Ed. An Architectural and Historical Inventory of Raleigh, North Carolina. Raleigh: City of Raleigh, 1978.

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Robinson, Rachel. National Register Nomination for Carteret County Home. North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 11 September 1984.

Raleigh (NC) News and Observer

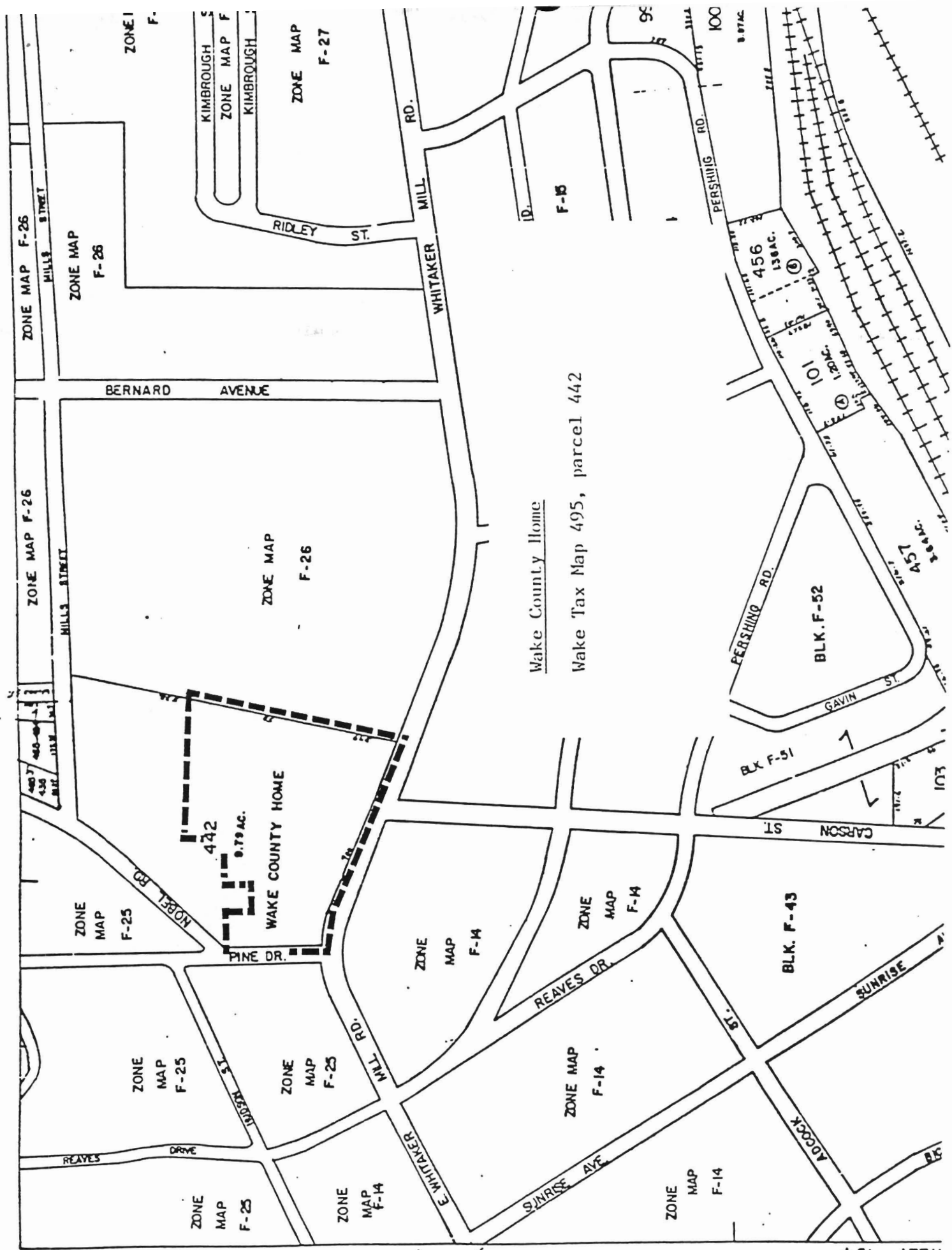
9 September 1913, p. 5. "Awards Contract."

21 November 1913, p. 10. "In and About City."  
27 November 1913, p. 12. "In and About City."  
4 December 1913, p. 8. "Legal Notice."  
11 December 1913, p. 7. "Legal Notice."  
10 January 1914, p. 8. "Local News."  
24 January 1914, p. 8. "Legal Notice."  
26 October 1918, p. 8. "Charles E. Hartge, Architect,  
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28 October 1918, p. 3. "Funeral C. E. Hartge."  
7 January 1923, p. 24. "Declares County Home is Failure in  
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18 November 1928, p. 7. "Million Dollars Annually for  
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7 September 1941, p. 12. "Seventy County Homes Remaining in  
State."  
23 January 1963, p. 22.  
2 November 1966, p. 30. "County Home, Hospital Affiliations  
Asked."  
27 June 1980, p. 24. "Wake County Home to House Centers."

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25 October 1918, p. 6. "C. E. Hartge Dies at Rex Hospital."  
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Wake County Home  
Wake Tax Map 495, parcel 442