

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Rocky Ridge, Country Club, Buttons, Laurel Hill Roads  not for publication  
city, town Chapel Hill & Laurel Hill Circle  vicinity  
state North Carolina code NC county Orange code 135 zip code 27514

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>26</u>	<u>12</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>3</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>5</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>34</u>	<u>12</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

William S. Fin  
Signature of certifying official 6-26-89  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling(s)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling(s)

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Tudor Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood

Stucco

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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7. Description

The Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District is a small, dumbbell-shaped residential district whose elements include thirty-four residences, four contemporaneous garages, four structures or instances of landscape design using stone within property boundaries, and a single network or site of road-defining stone walls running the length of the district along portions of its principal roads, Country Club Road, Laurel Hill Road and Laurel Hill Circle. In addition, three examples of quality landscaping, gardens and plantings evocative of the botanical work of some of its earliest residents, are included. All are arranged along a ridge adjacent to the eastern boundary of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill campus. The District slopes sharply southeast from Country Club Road to a point on Laurel Hill Road below the William Couch House, No. 19, at what was, in the area's first platting, a circular turn-around. Subsequent development has resulted in building along Laurel Hill Road, the principal link between both clusters of the development, and the connecting of Laurel Hill Road on the south with the 15-501 By-Pass highway which follows the Morgan Creek watershed southeast of Chapel Hill.

Thirty-four buildings, sites and structures are classified as contributing. The buildings are uniformly of balloon frame construction, sided with a variety of materials, brick, shingle, stucco and weatherboard. They were built in two distinct periods, 1928-30 and 1936-40. In style, three dating from the first period (the Totten, Farrar, and Howe Houses-- Nos. 6, 7 and 28) suggest European or English Manor/Cotswold themes, freely translated as were others like them elsewhere by American builders and architects; the majority of the remaining contributing structures represents permutations of the pre-World War II Colonial

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Revivalism of other such suburban neighborhoods.

Post-World War II and subsequent development around the two cores of the neighborhood has resulted in the establishment of compatible residences, mostly non-contributing on the basis of their construction dates. These dot the remaining hillocks along the principal and tributary roads. In 1954, a protected stand of remaining Coker forest land on the western edge of the development along Meeting-of-the-Waters Creek -- land called the "Pinetum" -- was deeded to the University of North Carolina Botanical Gardens for oversight and protection (Orange County Registry of Deeds; Record Book 151, p. 40). All of this later material represents a second phase of the proposed historic district when it becomes eligible.

The boundaries of the District have been determined from two plat maps and include lots 1-16 of the "Rocky Ridge Development" (dated June, 1927) and lots 1-14 of the "Buttons Development on Rocky Ridge Farm" (July, 1927), plus eight additional houses, five of which are contributing, built just prior to WWII, which round out the first two periods of the District's development, 1928-1930 and 1936-1940. The District is distinguished by the quality of its landscaping and the distinctive curvilinear stone walls of random-coursed ashlar, mostly mortared, that line its roads, significant specimens of the art of landscape design.

The entire district is heavily wooded with tall hardwoods and pine trees. Although all of the developed properties have lawns surrounding the houses, all of the district's parcels (including three undeveloped lots) are sizable, ranging from approximately one-half acre to 3.35 acres, and include natural areas of mature trees and undergrowth which create a forested setting.

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INVENTORY LIST

The inventory below is listed according to addresses along principal roads, those running N to S listed first, cross roads afterwards, starting from the upper left of the enclosed site map. The numbers in the inventory are keyed to this map as are photo views from the photo list. Original owners of contributing buildings, brief historical notes and names of architects are included where known. City directory, interview, and manuscript information sources are included by abbreviation. Significant stone wall networks and landscaping features are noted by symbol on the map.

C = Contributing  
NC = Non-Contributing

Address	C or NC	Date	Description
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Rocky Ridge Rd.

1. 1 Rocky Ridge	C	ca. 1937	<u>Fred McCall House.</u> An L-shaped two-story Col. Rev/Cotswold eclectic with attached garage (CD, interviews)
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1A.	C		<u>Stone terrace</u> of random-coursed ashlar decking. (CD, interviews)
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2 2 Rocky Ridge	C	ca. 1928	<u>John Couch House.</u> A two-story frame, weatherboarded eclectic Col. Rev. with dormers. John N. Couch was a botanist and colleague of W. C. Coker. George Watts Carr, architect. (CD, interviews)
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2A.	C		<u>Contemporaneous garage.</u> Frame Col. Revival.
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Laurel Hill Road (west side)

3. 102 L. H. Rd. NC ca. 1960 Red brick, vaguely Col. Rev. ranch.

4. 104 L. H. Rd. NC ca. 1945 Brick cape cod with fanlight. (CD)

4A. NC Contemporaneous garage. Brick veneer cape cod.

5. 106 L. H. Rd. C ca. 1937 Daniel Huston Buchanan House. A 2-story frame Col. Rev. with stone and weatherboard veneer and 2-story pedimented gallery. (CD, mss.)

6. 110 L. H. Rd. C ca. 1929 Henry Roland Totten House. A 2-story vaguely cotswold revival with 1-story stone ell and pedimented portico entry. Totten was a colleague of Coker, his agent in Rocky Ridge Farm land sales, and well-known botanist. (CD, interview, mss.)

6A. C Contemporaneous specimen garden.

7. 114 L. H. Rd. C ca. 1929 Preston Farrar House. A 2-story, vaguely Tudor Rev. frame house with stucco veneer. Farrar was a UNC professor of drama. (CD, interview, mss.)

7A. C Stone terrace of random ashlar and decking used as a theatre. Contemporaneous.

7B. C Contemporaneous specimen garden.

8. 116 L.H. Rd. C ca. 1929 Cornelia Spencer Love House. A 1-story eclectic, shingled

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cottage with hipped roof. Cornelia Love was an amateur historian, author, and librarian and granddaughter of Chapel Hill civic leader, Cornelia Phillips Spencer. (CD, mss.)

9. 204 L.H. Rd. NC ca. 1960 Remodelled 1 1/2-story cape cod.

10. <sup>200</sup>210 L. H. Rd. NC ca. 1965 Colonial Revival 1-story ranch.

11. <sup>201</sup>212 L. H. Rd. NC ca. 1965 Two-story Colonial Revival.

12. 306 L. H. Rd. C ca. 1940 Arthur Wernath House. A 5-bay, 2-story Col. Rev. with shingle siding and asbestos roof. (CD)

13. 500 L. H. Rd. NC ca. 1948 Two-story Col. Rev., brick veneer and frame.

Laurel Hill Road (east side)

14. 303 L. H. Rd. C ca. 1939 Glen Haydon House. A 2-story brick and weatherboard Col. Rev. with fanlight, single story addition, pilasters with bulls-eye detail. Haydon was chair of the UNC Music Department. (CD, mss.)

14A. C Contemporaneous stone retaining wall of random-coursed ashlar.

15. 401 L. H. Rd. C ca. 1939 Earl Brown House. An eclectic red brick 2-story house, Col. Rev. and Cotswold in feeling. Brown was the dean of the UNC School of Public Health. (CD, mss.)

16. 403 L.H. Rd. C ca. 1938 Carl Pegg House. A 2-story brick 3-bay Col. Rev. with 1-story addition. Architects: Hackney and Knott, Durham. (CD, interviews)

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17. 501 L.H.Rd. NC ca. 1945 Asbestos shingle-sided 1 1/2-story cape cod with addition.  
(CD)
18. 503 L.H. Rd. NC ca. 1945 Beaded weatherboard cape cod (Williamsburg) with recent  
2-story addition. (CD)
19. 601 L. H. Rd. C ca. 1928 Gustav Harrer House. A 3-bay, 2-story, L-shaped Col. Rev.  
with shingle siding. (CD, mss.interview)
20. 603 L.H.Rd. C ca. 1939 William Couch House. A 2-story brick and stone Col. Rev. with  
2-story gallery and single-story addition. William Couch was  
editor of the UNC Press, brother of botanist John N. Couch.  
William Sprinkle, architect. (CD, interview)
- Country Club Road(south side)
21. 304 C. C. Rd. C ca. 1940 Dudley Cowden House. A frame 2-story Col. Rev. with stone  
2-story west extension and front gallery.
- 21A C Contemporaneous stone terrace of random stone decking.
- 21B. C Contemporaneous specimen garden.
- 21C. C Contemporaneous garage. Stone veneer and frame.
22. 306 C. C. Rd. C ca. 1937 Dudley Carroll House. A red brick Col. Rev. with asymmetrical  
front facade, fan-lighted entry and dentilled cornice.  
(CD, interview)

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Country Club Road (north side)

23. 305 C.C.Rd. C ca. 1940 Horace Crockford House. A 2-story brick and frame Col. Rev. with attached garage. William Sprinkle, architect. (CD, interview)
24. 309 C.C.Rd. C ca. 1940 Frances Gardham House. Col. Rev. with vernacular detailing. William Sprinkle, architect. (CD, interview)
25. <sup>307</sup> 313 C.C.Rd. NC ca. 1955 One-and-a-half-story Colonial Revival/Cape Cod. (CD)
26. 321 C.C.Rd. C ca. 1936 Gaston Rogers House. A shingle-sided 2-story frame Col. Rev. with rear additions. (CD)

Buttons Road

27. 2 Buttons Rd. C ca. 1928 George Howe House. A vaguely English-manor/cotswold with stucco veneer. (CD, interview)
28. 11 Buttons Rd. C ca. 1937 Charles Robson House. Three-bay, 2-story weather-boarded Col. Rev. with 1-story addition. (CD)
29. 5 Buttons Rd. C ca. 1939 James Clarence Andrews House. A 2-story frame Col. Rev. with shingle siding. Bradford Eddy, architect. (CD, interview)
30. 5 Buttons Rd. NC ca. 1960 Brick and weatherboard 1-story ranch. (CD)
31. 1 Buttons Rd. NC ca. 1965 Brick 1-story Col. Rev. ranch. (CD)

Laurel Hill Circle

32. 105 L.H.Cir. C ca. 1940 John J. Wright House. Two-story, 3-bay Col. Rev. with shingle siding. Wright is a physician. Eugene Stroud, architect. (CD, mss.)

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33. 103 L.H. Cir. C ca. 1930. Russell Gruman House. Gambrel-roofed Dutch Col. Rev. with rough-mortared brick veneer and shingle siding. (CD)
- 33A C Contemporaneous garage. Brick and frame.
34. 106 L.H. Cir. C ca. 1940 William Carmichael House. Two-story red brick Col. Rev. with Adamesque details. George Watts Carr, architect. Carmichael was the UNC Comptroller. (CD, interview; mss.)
35. C Road-defining stone wall system or network of random-coursed ashlar in a variety of heights lines Country Club Rd., Laurel Hill Road and Laurel Hill Circle.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning/Development  
Landscape Architecture  
Architecture

Period of Significance

1927-1940  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1927  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Carr, George Watts; Sprinkle, William; et. a

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

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## 8. Significance

The Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. Developed during 1928-30 and 1936-40, the District is the best and only example in the town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina of the early twentieth-century residential movement sometimes referred to as "planned suburbanization," a national movement, aspects of which traded on or were identified with such concepts as Ebenezer Howard's "Garden City" and Charles Mulford Robinson's "City Beautiful" movements. Many of its contributing structures were designed by architects who were building important reputations, and in styles that reflected the tastes of the '20's and '30's for revival styles. The construction of some of the buildings was by Chapel Hill contractor Brodie Thompson. Its landscaping and other amenities represent the botanical work of some of its residents as well as the art of local masons. Finally, it is the only instance of the collaborative planning and road design work of William Chambers Coker (1872-1953), a local botany professor who acquired a state-wide reputation as a planner and landscape designer, and T. Felix Hickerson, another UNC professor whose work set the stage nationally for a new approach to designing roads.

## Architectural Context

Many of the buildings in the Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District represent the work of NC piedmont architects, among them George Watts Carr of Durham, who had a vast practice and reputation in North Carolina, Durham's Hackney and Knott and William Sprinkle, and Eugene Stroud; others, like Bradford Eddy, practiced elsewhere in the country. The houses they designed were elegant by Chapel Hill standards.

Of the 23 contributing residences, 3 are eclectic instances of European cottage styling. Each has its own special characteristics, however. The Howe House, No. 27, is U-shaped, its roof line vaguely mansard; the Totten House, No. 6, features stone work details; the Farrar House, No. 7, home of a drama professor, features both indoor and outdoor stages for rehearsals and small productions. All three date from the district's early period

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(1928-30).

Seventeen of the residences exhibit Colonial Revival features. Seven are sided primarily in painted weatherboard, and some of these from both periods feature two-story galleried porches (Cowden-20, and Buchanan-5). Six are sided in shingle (Womrath-12, Harrer-18, Rogers-25, Andrews-28, and Wright-31). Five are brick, vaguely Georgian, occasionally painted; and the remainder are from a variety of traditions, including Dutch Colonial (Gruman-32) and simple vernacular (Love-8).

Community Planning /Development and Landscape Architecture Context

While grander examples of planned suburbs were found on the fringes of such urban centers as Cleveland ( Van Sweringens' Shaker Heights), Baltimore ( Olmsted's Roland Park) and Charlotte (Nolen's Myers Park), examples were also found in small towns across the country, including other college towns.

The Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District exemplifies features of these and other planned suburbs in the following ways:

- 1.) Land in the District was sold off for residences and developed by a single visionary planner, University of North Carolina botanist William Chambers Coker, original owner of the property.
- 2.) In order to control the density and composite of neighborhood buildings, Coker employed what were the most common means at the time, restrictive covenants of the sort that represented land control before residential zoning took hold in Chapel Hill and elsewhere. His deeds directed the numbers of structures per lot, the approximate costs of houses built (thus dictating that buildings of relative quality would be constructed), and, in the early deeds, the race of the residents and appropriate uses of the land (disallowing the raising of cows, pigs and chickens, but later allowing chickens) (1). Even into the '50's plans for new houses had to have Coker's approval and residents recall his walking from site to new housing site as he supervised building in situ. In the '40's and '50', the supervision work and sale of lots was taken over by Coker's colleague and Rocky Ridge resident, Henry Roland Totten, but always in Coker's behalf and with his consultation.

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3.) The character of the development mirrored aspects of other planned developments throughout the country, most particularly in the South. Most notable are its contiguity with a university campus, its associated golf course, and its emphasis on landscape features through road- and garden-design and its picturesque amenities such as lot-defining stone walls.

While there were two other residential developments in Chapel Hill dating from the 1920's, Westwood and Gimghoul, the Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District is the only planned development that combines architect-designed buildings, adjacent campus/country club siting, and landscape amenities under the strict control of the original developer to render the Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District a textbook example of a national movement.

Between a golf course and a campus, Coker's Rocky Ridge Farm property, whose platting took place in 1927 and whose first house was started in 1928, had two features in place which characterized premier residential developments throughout the state. In Durham, for instance, Homeland Improvement Company had used what a commentator has called the "tactic of building a golf course" to attract buyers to its development on Club Boulevard. The Forest Hills and Hope Valley developments there, built in the early decades of the 20th century by New Hope Realty and Mebane and Sharpe, were both built around golf courses. The upscale Hope Valley Development was also planned relatively close to the new Duke University Medical School and sites were purchased by Medical School faculty and department heads. In 1929, Duke University began to develop its own lands in Duke Forest for faculty, as did the developers of the College View development near the North Carolina College (now North Carolina Central University), a development which also featured a recreational facility, in this case a tennis club (2).

Other cities in North Carolina followed similar patterns. In Greensboro, a development bordered a college campus, the College Hill neighborhood; Irving Park developed around its John Nolen-designed golf course (3). And Winston-Salem had its clutch of "country club suburbs" with college campus associations (4). Because all of the original

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owners of Coker property were university-affiliated. his record of providing near-campus housing opportunities for faculty and staff was probably better than most.

The planting of gardens and provision of amenities and their relation to the structures they enhanced were other features of the planned suburb. In the Rocky Ridge Farm District, because many of the earliest residents were Coker's colleagues in the Botany Department, the interest in gardens and landscaping was academic as well as aesthetic. This interest ranged from the deliberate planting of formal specimen gardens in the case of the Totten, Cowden and Farrar properties, to decisions, even into the '50's, about what trees to clear and what to save in establishing residential sites (5).

The stone walls found throughout the development were constructed coincident with the building of residences by several local black stone masons, including James Blackwell and Jesse Jones (6). Reflecting wall-building throughout the village of Chapel Hill and the University campus, reportedly the idea of Professor of Chemistry Elisha Mitchell, who wished to see replicated those of his native New England, these walls added character to the neighborhood and delineated its special topographical features.

The original lot survey and layout of the Rocky Ridge Farm District's principal roads (Country Club, Laurel Hill, Hillview -- now Laurel Hill Circle-- and Buttons Roads) were the work of road planner T. F. Hickerson, Chapel Hill resident and UNC professor of Applied Mathematics, whose concept of topographically-determined curvilinear street design influenced suburban residential road planning as well as road development ideas nationally throughout the first half of the twentieth-century.

### Historical Background

Chapel Hill was a special case from the start. Founded as the site for the state's (and the nation's) first public university campus in 1792, it "produced" scholars, its local entrepreneurs founding student-oriented enterprises like bookstores and boarding houses. It thus makes sense that its first developer-planner would be a professor.

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William Chambers Coker was born in Hartsville, S. C. in 1872, the third son of James Lide Coker, a cotton planter, Confederate officer and developer of planting theories that influenced cotton production across the South. Another son, William Coker's older brother David, experimented with and produced hybrid cotton and peanut seed out of which a Coker family fortune was built in the late nineteenth-century.

W. C. Coker represented the scholarly side of the "Cokers of Carolina" (7). Educated at the University of South Carolina and at Johns Hopkins, site of the country's first Ph. D. program in botany, he came to the University of North Carolina in 1902, the sole member of a yet-to-be-founded Botany Department, which he proceeded to establish and whose faculty he eventually trained. His early work included studies based on observations of local flora and pioneering work on fungi. His lifetime *oeuvre* includes some 157 books and papers, among them The Saprolegniaceae (begun in 1908 and published in 1923), a work on fungi of international significance (8).

Coker was both owner and planner of his own property. In this he differed from the developers of such suburbs as Myers Park in Charlotte, whose developer, George Stephens, hired landscape designer (and founder [in 1917] of the American City Planning Institute) John Nolen of Boston to provide the plan. Coker did echo, however, the strategies of other developers like the Van Sweringen brothers of Cleveland who, after successfully planning and marketing a smaller version of North Union Shaker lands into "Shaker Heights" for a Buffalo syndicate (one of whose partners was John D. Rockefeller), purchased the remaining Shaker lands from the syndicate and developed them from the ground up.

W. C. Coker was in every sense a planner and landscape designer in the mold of these predecessors. Landscape design was not an academic discipline, nor was urban planning, in the early twentieth century. Those entrepreneurs who came into the field--and, in a sense, created it--received training in other disciplines (engineering, architecture, botany) and came self-taught to their vocations by virtue of natural inclination.

The planning impulse itself with its imposition of rational order

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on more random processes represented a type of reform. In Chapel Hill, planning first arrived in the form of a decision on the part of UNC President Harry Woodburn Chase to produce a plan for the orderly development of the campus after over nearly a century of helter-skelter progress (9). In 1918, two committees were charged with overseeing the planning, the Faculty Committee on Buildings and Grounds chaired by Coker, and the Building and Grounds Committee of the Board of Trustees. Coker sat *ex officio* on the second of these bodies and was formally appointed a member in 1921 (10), thus becoming a full (and the most active) member of both.

The formation of these committees represented the first time the university was in sole charge of its own building program, the State Building Commission having been abolished at about the same time by the legislature (11). One of their first official acts was the hiring of John Nolen to draw up a campus-wide plan. His work, produced in February 1919, provided for 14 new buildings, including classrooms, a gymnasium and three dormitories (12). The implementation of the Nolen plan was undertaken by hiring the nationally-respected firm of McKim, Meade and White as consulting architects who oversaw the layout of buildings more or less according to the Nolen plan through local people who eventually became partners, Thomas Atwood and Arthur Nash, the latter an architect trained at Harvard and for five years at Paris' prestigious L'Ecole des Beaux Arts (13).

Subsequent action by the two planning committees demonstrates what Coker learned from Nolen and the planning process itself. He had conducted his first formal venture in landscape planning in 1903 when, at the invitation of then-president Francis Venable, the young assistant professor developed the six acre Coker Arboretum of the UNC Campus, transforming a "crawfish bog," in the words of his colleague, university librarian Louis Round Wilson, "into a thing of abiding loveliness" (14).

The Arboretum antedated the 1919-1930 University plan, but Coker's later involvement with other aspects of planning was similarly practical and hands on. From 1920-1925 he broadened his professional planning activity to include the establishment of the UNC Extension Division's Bureau of Design and Improvement of School Grounds. The function of the Bureau was "to promote beautification of school grounds in North Carolina and to provide expert advice on landscaping and planting." Established under Coker's direction, he provided plans and drawings while a field assistant made regular site visits around the state,

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eventually resulting in contacts, both direct and by mailed instructions, with superintendents and school planners in dozens of communities ( 15).

In 1921, the work of the Bureau expanded to include service to "home grounds and factory grounds." Knowledge about the planning and design of such areas was acquired mostly ad hoc, but Coker also corresponded with Earle Sumner Draper , a protege of John Nolen, who had been placed in charge of the Myers Park development in Charlotte as Nolen's field representative and was, by the early '20's, a landscape architect and city planner in his own right. He sent Coker a print of his "Morehead School Planting Plan" and offered Coker "prints of other work [I] think would be of interest to your department," an offer which says volumes about how the new business of landscape design was fostered ( 16).

Meanwhile, as the University plan proceeded, Coker developed his "Coker Plan A" for the siting of dormitories on the campus' east border ( later known as the "Coker-Nash Plan" )( 17). In December, 1922, he and a campus subcommittee were placed in charge of "the entire care and improvement of the campus. . . as a department, and. . . the entire budget placed in their control and administered by them as in the case of any department of the University." This step took him clearly beyond mere membership in a planning committee ( 18); by this means, Coker had become de facto the university's first professional planner-in-residence.

In the meantime, he had begun to invest in Chapel Hill real estate. In 1923 he donated his first piece of private property on Rocky Ridge Farm to a group of individuals for the purpose of developing a golf course near the campus, and oversaw the provision of road access by easement through university land and his own to the site ( 19). Thus was the golf course in place to form Chapel Hill's first country club suburb.

The curvilinear street configuration characteristic of Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District and other such planned suburbs is here the work of Thomas Felix Hikerson, Professor of Civil Engineering and Applied Mathematics at the University of North Carolina from 1910 to 1952. Hickerson was a road designer of national repute as well as being locally influential. In addition to his planning of Coker's Rocky Ridge Farm , he was the principal land surveyor of Orange and Wilkes Counties in the '20's and '30's and functioned for a time as

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the city engineer of Chapel Hill, in which capacity he was responsible for designing the village's sewer system.

Active into the 1950's, his most influential work by far was in the area of road building. His Rocky Ridge Farm work mirrors his 1920 assertion that "more attention should be paid to the aesthetic features of road planning" (20). A member of the first North Carolina State Highway Commission (1915-1919), he surveyed the portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway from Linville to Asheville, and published articles on road building in the state including "Culverts and Bridges for North Carolina Highways" and "The Crest-of-the-Blue-Ridge Highway" for the Elisha Mitchell Journal and Southern Good Roads. His major work, Route Location and Design (McGraw Hill; first published as Highway Curves and Earthworks in 1926) was, for any number of years, the key textbook for academic programs in civil engineering and road design in some 83 colleges and universities across the country including Cal Tech and Purdue (21). In this light, the rumors that Hickerson's ideas influenced the construction of the Burma Road during World War II have considerable credence.

Residential development through neighborhood planning has since become commonplace in Chapel Hill and other cities in the South. The origins of this phenomenon, however, rest squarely in such clusters as the Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District. It remains special in the lives of its early and subsequent residents, whose concern for their neighborhood represents that evanescent but discernible psychological allegiance to place that informed the neighborhood planning impulse at its best.

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NOTES

1. Orange County Registry of deeds. Record books 125, p. 209; 520, p. 107.
2. Claudia Roberts Brown. "Durham's Early Twentieth-Century Suburban Neighborhoods" in Bishir, Catherine and Early, Laurence, eds. Early 20th Century Suburbs in North Carolina (Raleigh: NC Dept. of Cultural Resources, 1985) pp. 45-6.
3. Gayle Hicks Fripp. "Greensboro's Early Suburbs." Ibid., pp. 49-57.
4. Davyd Foard Hood. "Winston-Salem's Suburbs--West End to Reynolda Park." Ibid., p. 64.
5. George R. Hackney and Charles F. Knott, Architects, Specifications for the J. P. Harland Residence, Laurel Hill Road, Chapel Hill, 1953.
6. W. W. Prouty, Bill Prouty's Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill: Chapel Hill Historical Society, 1979) p. 105.
7. George Lee Simpson, Jr. The Cokers of Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956) pp. 238-247.
8. Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, ed. by W. S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) p. 398.
9. Antebellum planning by Alexander Jackson Davis and William Percival had guided University building and landscaping, giving way to a more haphazard process after the Civil War.
10. "Report of the Building Committee to the Trustees," June 14, 1921, in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.
11. "Report of the University Building Committee, January 24, 1922, in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

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12. John Nolen, Sketch Plan: "Redesign of Paths and Location of Future Buildings," February 20, 1919, in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

13. James Vickers, Chapel Hill, An Illustrated History (Chapel Hill: Barclay Publications, 1985) p. 127.

14 Prouty, op. cit. p. 73.

15. Files of the "Bureau of Design and Improvement of School Grounds " of the Extension Division of the University of North Carolina, 1920-1925' in the W. C. Coker Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. At one count, years 1920-21, 33 cities in North Carolina had been aided by site visit or correspondence (or both).

16. Earle Sumner Draper to William C. Coker, November 19, 1920, in W. C. Coker Papers, files of the Bureau of Design and Improvement of School Grounds, Southern Historic Collection, University of North Carolina.

17. Resolution of the Committee on Grounds and Buildings, November 4 and 5, 1922, in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

18. Resolution of the Grounds and Buildings Committee, December 14, 1922, in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

19. Vickers, op. cit., p. 129.

20. T. F. Hickerson. "Relation of the Engineer to Successful Road Location," presented to the Road Institute of South Carolina, March 4, 1920, p. 5. T. F. Hickerson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

21. T.F. Hickerson, Resumes, T. F. Hickerson Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

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The following information applies to all photographs, which are keyed to the sketch map:

NAME OF DISTRICT: Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District  
LOCATION: Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
PHOTOGRAPHER &  
DATE: Mary L. Reeb, 1989  
NEGATIVE LOCATION: NC Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC

Description of Views:

- A. Streetscape, Country Club Rd., with Dudley Carroll House (entry 22, left) and Dudley Cowden House (entry 21, right); to west
- B. Streetscape, Country Club Rd., with Dudley Cowden House (entry 21); to southeast
- C. Preston Farrar House (entry 7), from Laurel Hill Rd.; to west
- D. Streetscape, Laurel Hill Rd., with Henry Roland Totten House (entry 6) in background; to northeast
- E. Streetscape, Laurel Hill Rd., with non-contributing properties; to north
- F. George Howe House (entry 27); to south
- G. Streetscape, Laurel Hill Circle, with John J. Wright House (entry 32) and Russell J. Gruman House (entry 33, in background); to north
- H. William Carmichael House (entry 34); to east

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bishir, Catherine and Early, Laurence, eds. Early 20th Century Suburbs in North Carolina (Raleigh: NC Department of Cultural Resources, 1985).

Orange County Registry of Deeds.

Nolen, John. Sketch Plan: "Redesign of Paths and Location of Future Buildings," Feb. 20, 1919 in the Southern Historical Collection, UNC Library, Chapel Hill.

Prouty, W. W. Bill Prouty's Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill: Univeristy and Chapel Hill Historical Society, 1979).

Simpson, George Lee, Jr. The Cokers of Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956).

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 57) 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

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 55

UTM References

A 1 7 6 7 6 5 5 0 3 9 7 5 5 5 0
Zone Easting Northing

B 1 7 6 7 7 0 3 1 0 3 1 9 7 1 5 6 1 7 1 0
Zone Easting Northing

C 1 7 6 7 7 5 5 0 3 9 7 4 8 5 0

D 1 7 6 7 6 9 1 2 1 0 3 1 9 7 1 4 4 1 5 1 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Rocky Ridge Farm Historic District are shown as the solid bold line on the accompanying composite of Orange County Tax Maps 61, 62 and 63, at a scale of 1" = 100'.

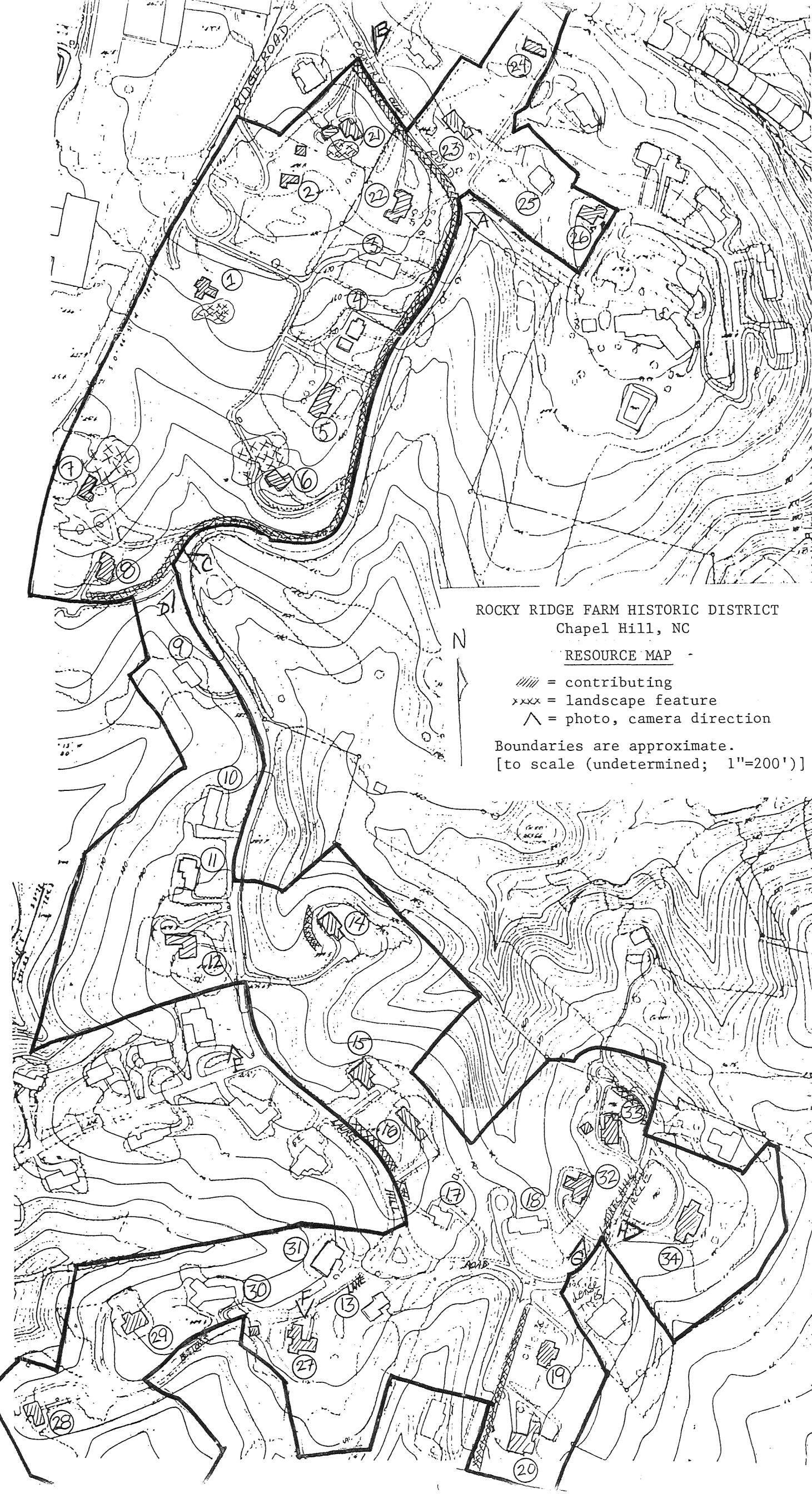
See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The boundaries are determined from two plat maps: lots 1-16 of the "Rocky Ridge DeveLopment" (dated June 1927) and lots 1-11 of the "Buttons Development of Rocky Ridge Farm" (July 1927), included with this nomination as exhibits. They also are determined by residences on 8 additional parcels, the development of which was influenced by and contemporary with the adjacent platted areas noted above. Excluded are all adjoining privately owned properties developed after 1941 and adjoining university lands east and west of the district's core. (Plats are enclosed.)

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary L. Reeb, Preservation Consultant
organization Historic Preservation Services date March 1989
street & number 608 Laurel Hill Road telephone (919) 967-2303
city or town Chapel Hill state NC zip code 27514



ROCKY RIDGE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Chapel Hill, NC

RESOURCE MAP

- //// = contributing
- xxxx = landscape feature
- ^ = photo, camera direction

Boundaries are approximate.  
[to scale (undetermined; 1"=200')]

