

# **Legislative Hearing:**

# **Robert and Eloise Costner House Landmark Designation**

# **Application and Consultant's Report for Local Land Mark Designation Consideration**

**Robert A. and Eloise Costner House Local Landmark Report**  
**528 North Laurel Street**  
**Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina**

Principal Investigator and Author:  
Jason L. Harpe, MA

Prepared for:  
Melvin and Cynthia Whitener  
528 North Laurel Street  
Lincolnton, North Carolina 28092

Prepared by:  
Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc.  
525 Wait Avenue  
Wake Forest, North Carolina 27587

November 23, 2022

## APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

### Preparing Your Application:

Please type or use black ink and use paper no larger than 11" x 17" for the required supporting information. Lincoln County Historic Properties Commission (HPC) staff is available to provide advice in the preparation of this application.

### Filing Your Application:

When completed, the attached application will initiate consideration of a property for designation as a local historic landmark. The application will enable the HPC to determine whether the property qualifies for designation.

Mail the application to Lincoln County HPC, 115 West Main St., Lincolnton, NC 28092. Submitted materials become the property of the HPC and will not be returned. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant for revision. HPC staff will contact applicants after receiving an application to discuss the next steps of the designation process (see Landmark Designation Q & A for more information).

*Thank you very much for your interest in protecting HPC's historic resources!*

*\*The guidelines developed for this application are based on the evaluation process used by the National Register of Historic Places. National Register evaluation principles regarding criteria, category classifications, and integrity have been adapted for local applications.*

### **1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Robert A. and Eloise Costner House

Current Name: Robert A. and Eloise Costner House

### **2. Location**

Please include the full street address of the property, including its local planning jurisdiction. HPC Identification (PIN) and Real Estate Identification (REID) Numbers can be found at the Lincoln County GIS property information website at [www.linccomgov.org](http://www.linccomgov.org). Click on "County Government", then "Online Services" then click on "Lincoln County GIS System".

Street Address: 528 N. Laurel Street, Lincolnton, NC 28092

Planning Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_ PIN Number: 20316 REID: \_\_\_\_\_

### **3. Owner Information (If more than one, list primary contact)**

Name: Melvin and Cynthia Whitener

Address: 528 N. Laurel Street, Lincolnton, North Carolina 28092

Phone: (704) 740-7968 Email: meljw@bellsouth.net

### **4. Applicant/Contact Person (If other than owner)**

Name: Melvin and Cynthia Whitener

Address: 528 N. Laurel Street, Lincolnton, North Carolina 28092

Phone: (704) 740-7968 Email: meljw@bellsouth.net

### **5. Signatures**

*I have read the general information on landmark designation provided by the Lincoln County Historic Properties Commission and affirm that I support landmark designation of the property defined herein.*

Owner: Mel Whitener

Date: 11/15/2022

Applicant: Mel Whitener

Date: 11/15/2022

**OFFICE USE ONLY: Received by:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **6. General Date/Site Information**

A. Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: ca. 1928; 2018-2019

B. Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: Garage, ca. 1945; Garage and Carport, 2022

C. Approximate lot size or acreage: .437

D. Architect, builder, carpenter, and /or mason: Unknown

E. Original Use: Dwelling

F. Present Use: Dwelling

G. Significance for Landmark Designation: Architecture

7. Classification

A. Category (fill in type from below): Building

- Building – created principally to shelter any form of human activity (i.e., house, barn/stable, hotel, church, school, theater, etc.)
- Structure – constructed usually for purposes other than creating human shelter (i.e., tunnel, bridge, highway, silo, etc.)
- Object – constructions that are primarily artistic in nature. Although movable by nature or design, an object is typically associated with a specific setting or environment (i.e., monument, fountain, etc.)
- Site – the location of a historic event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value, regardless of the value of any existing structure (i.e., battlefields, cemeteries, designed landscape, etc.)

B. Ownership (check one):  Private  Public

C. Number of Contributing and non-contributing resources on the property:

A contributing building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities, or archeological values for which a property is significant because it was present during the period of significance, relates to the documented significance of the property, and possesses historic integrity or is capable of yielding important information about the period.

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Non-contributing</u>
Buildings	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Structures	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Objects	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Sites	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom): N/A

E. National Register Status and date (listed, eligible, study list): N/A

8. Supporting Documentation (Please type or print and attach to application on separate sheets. Please check box when item complete.)



A. Required Photographs

All photographs are required to be digital, in JPEG (.jpg) format, and submitted on a CD or DVD. Please note the following requirements:

- Minimum Standard: 6.5" x 4.5" at a resolution of 300ppi (a pixel dimension of 1950 x 1350)
- File Size: There is no maximum or minimum for the file size of an image; however, smaller file sizes may be necessary when emailing images.
- Proof Sheet: Proof sheets are still required to show what is on a CD or DVD without having to load to disk. Proofs may be printed in either color or black and white as long as the images are crisp and legible. There should be a minimum of four and a maximum of six proofs per 8.5" x 11" sheet, with no image smaller than 3.25" on its longest side. Proofs should be labeled as they appear on the disk.
- Naming Images: Please label image files for the Local Designation Application as follows:  
LN\_PropertyName\_Description.jpg (ex. LN\_ABCHouse\_front\_façade.jpg)

For buildings and structures, include all elevations and at least one (1) photo of all other contributing and non-contributing resources, as well as at least one (1) photo showing the main building or structure within its setting. For objects, include a view of the object within its setting, as well as a variety of representative views. For sites, include overall views and any significant details.



**B. Floor Plan (for buildings and structures)**

Please include a detailed floor plan showing the original layout, dimensions of all rooms, and any additions (with dates) to the building or structure. Drawings do not have to be professionally produced nor do they need to be to exact scale but should accurately depict the layout and dimensions of the property.



**C. Maps**

Include two (2) maps: one (1) clearly indicating the location of the property in relation to the local community, and one (1) showing the boundaries of the property. Tax maps with the boundaries of the property are preferred, but survey or sketch maps are acceptable. Please show street names and numbers and all structures on the property.



**D. Historical significance (Applies to all classifications)**

Note any significant events, people, and/or families associated with the property. Please clearly define the significance of the property in the commercial, social, or political history of Lincoln County or of the local community. Include all major property owners of the property, if known. Include a bibliography of sources consulted.



**E. Architectural description, significance, and integrity (for buildings, structures, and objects)**

For buildings and structures, describe significant exterior architectural features, additions, remodeling, alterations, and any significant outbuildings. For objects, describe the physical appearance of the object(s) to be designated in context of the history of the local community or of Lincoln County. For example, a building or structure might be a community's only surviving example of Greek Revival architecture or it may be a unique local interpretation of the Arts and Crafts movement. An object might be a statue designed by a notable sculptor. Include a description of how the building, structure or object currently conveys its historic integrity. For example, does it retain elements of its original design, materials, location, workmanship, setting, historic associations, or feeling, or any combination thereof? Please include a bibliography of sources consulted.



**F. Property boundary, significance and integrity (Applies to all classifications)**

Describe the land area to be designated, address any prominent landscape features. Clearly explain the significance of the land area proposed for designation and its historical relationship to the building(s), structure(s) or object(s) located within the property boundary or, in the case of sites, the historical event or events that make the land area significant. For buildings and structures, the designated land area may represent part of or the entire original parcel boundaries or may encompass vegetative buffers or important outbuildings. For objects, the designated land area may continue to provide the object's historic context (i.e., a statue's historic park setting). For sites, the designated area may encompass a landscape that retains its historic integrity (i.e., a battlefield encompassing undisturbed historic view sheds).

8A. Required Photographs

*Post renovation Photographs*



Figure 1. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_facade\_westelevation



Figure 2. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_facade\_westelevation\_centralentry



Figure 3. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_facade\_westerelevation\_central entry



Figure 4. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_facade\_westerelevation



Figure 5. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_northwestcorner



Figure 6. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_northwestcorner\_sunroom



Figure 7. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_northelevation\_sunroom



Figure 8. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_northelevation\_sunroom



Figure 9. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_northeastcorner



Figure 10. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_southwestcorner



Figure 11. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_southwestcorner



Figure 12. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_southelevation



Figure 13. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_southelevation



Figure 14. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_southelevation



Figure 15. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_southelevationandgarage



Figure 16. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_eastelevation\_garage



Figure 17. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_eastelevation\_garage



Figure 18. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_eastelevation\_mudroom



Figure 19. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_backporch\_eastelevation



Figure 20. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_backporch\_mudroom\_eastelevation



Figure 21. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_eastelevation



Figure 22. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_basement\_southelevation



Figure 23. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_livingroom\_westelevation



Figure 24. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_livingroom\_westelevation



Figure 25. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_livingroom\_westelevation



Figure 26. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_livingroom\_westelevation



Figure 27. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_centralentry\_livingroom\_westelevation

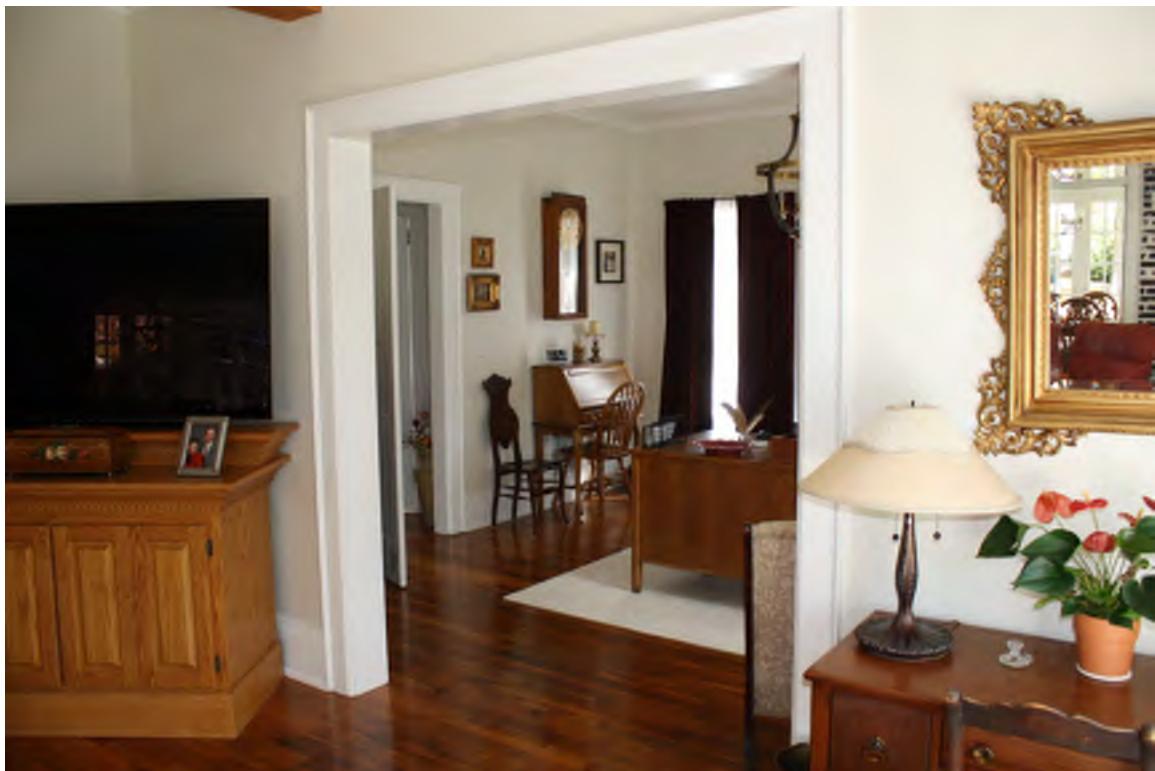


Figure 28. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_livingroomandoffice\_westelevation



Figure 29. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_office\_southwestcorner



Figure 30. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_office\_southwestcorner



Figure 31. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_sunroom\_northelevation



Figure 32. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_sunroom\_northwestcorner



Figure 33. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_sunroom\_northwestcorner



Figure 34. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_sunroom\_northwestcorner



Figure 35. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_bedroom\_northelevation



Figure 36. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_bedroom\_northelevation



Figure 37. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_hallway\_northelevation



Figure 38. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_hallway\_northelevation



Figure 39. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_bathroom\_eastelevation

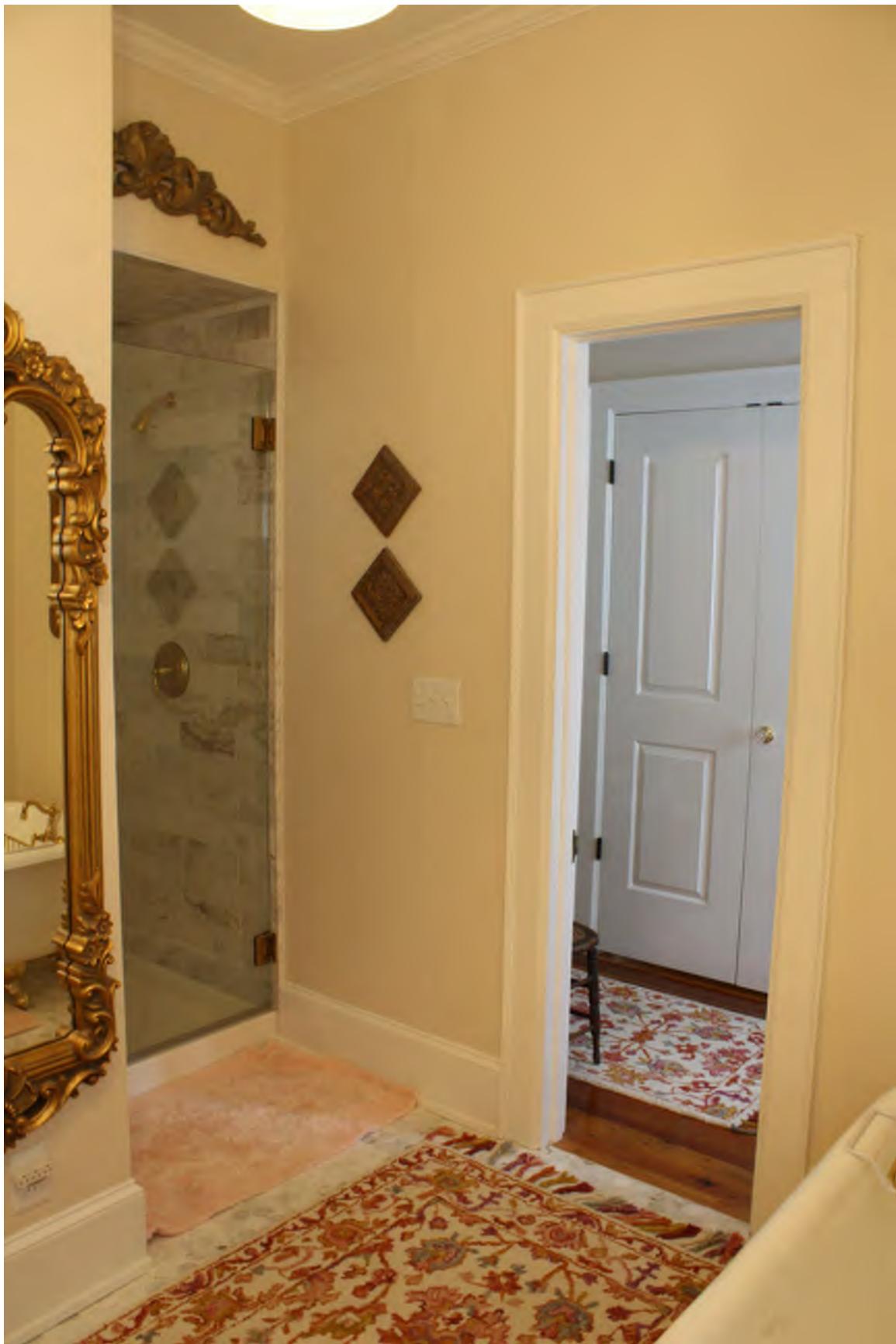


Figure 40. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_bathroom\_eastelevation



Figure 41. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_kitchen\_southeastcorner



Figure 42. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_diningroom\_eastelevation



Figure 43. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_kitchen\_southeastcorner



Figure 44. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_kitchen\_southeastcorner



Figure 45. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_diningroom\_eastelevation



Figure 46. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_diningroom\_eastelevation



Figure 47. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_diningroom\_and\_kitchen\_eastelevation

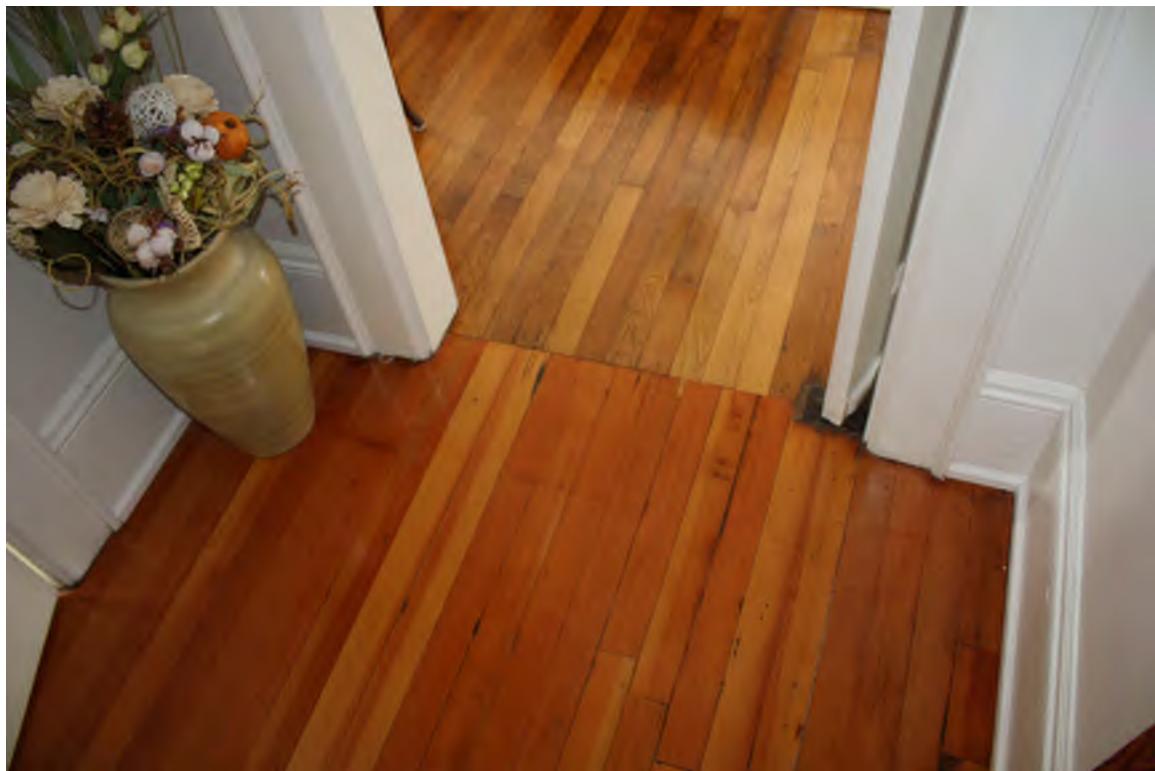


Figure 48. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_flooring



Figure 49. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_bathroom\_between\_diningroomandoffice



Figure 50. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_diningroomandoffice



Figure 51. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_laundryroom\_northeastcorner



Figure 52. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_laundryroom\_northeastcorner



Figure 53. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_laundryroom\_northeastcorner



Figure 54. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_enclosedstaircase



Figure 55. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_enclosedstaircase



Figure 56. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_hallway\_in\_halfstory



Figure 57. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_hallway\_in\_halfstory



Figure 58. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_halfstorybedroom\_northelevation



Figure 59. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_halfstorybedroom\_northelevation

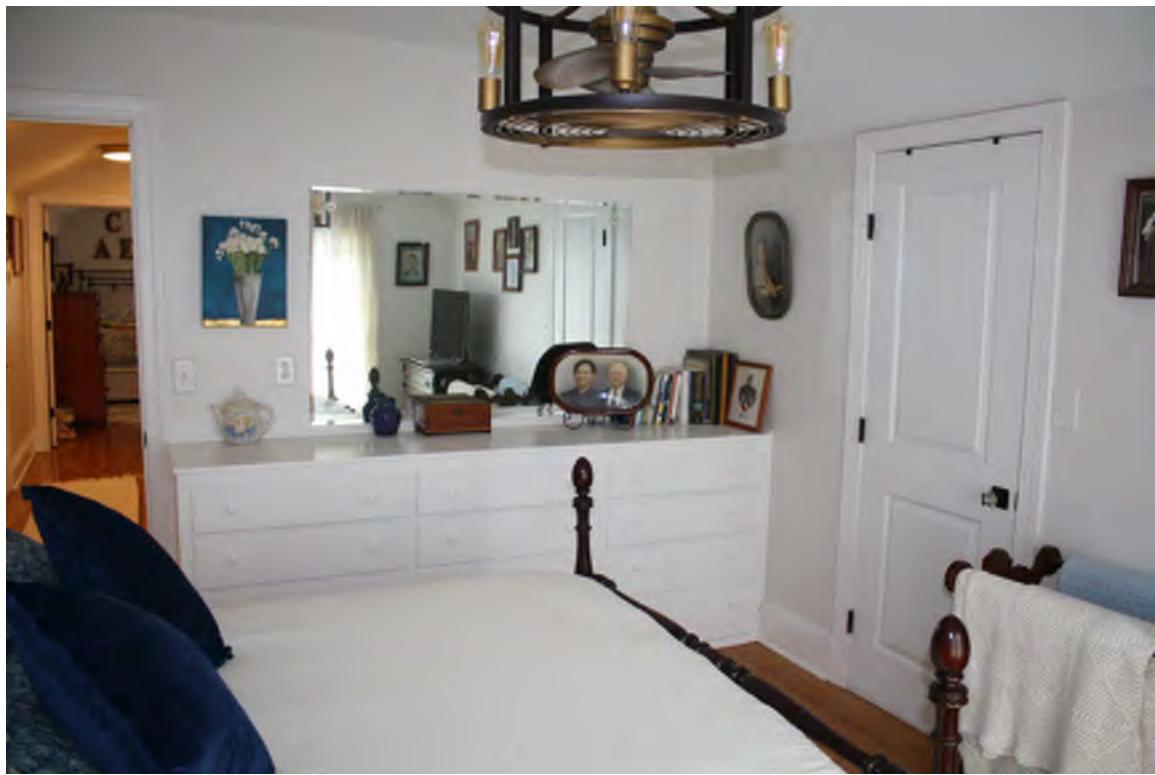


Figure 60. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_halfstorybedroom\_southelevation

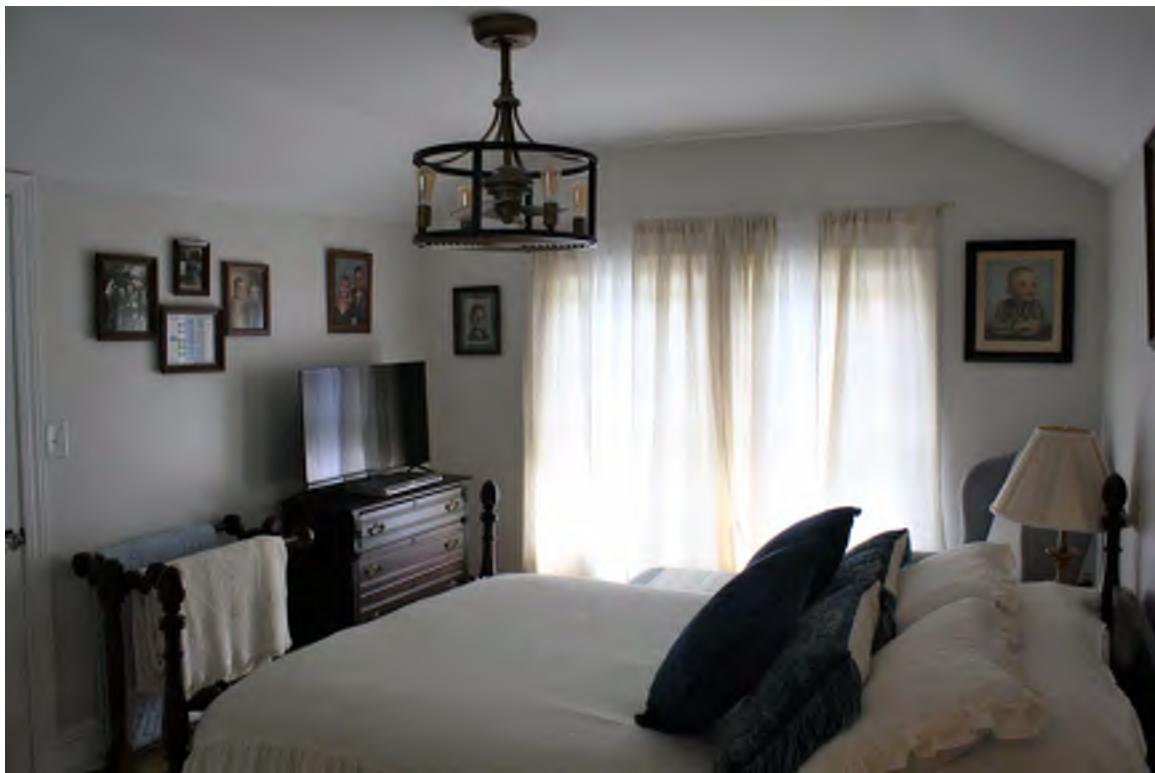


Figure 61. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_halfstorybedroom\_southelevation



Figure 62. LN\_LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_garage\_ca1945

*Pre-renovation photographs, 2018 and 2019.*

Photographs provided by current property owners, Melvin and Cindy Whitener.

Exterior



Figure 63. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_facade\_westelevation



Figure 64. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_facade\_westelevation



Figure 65. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_sunroom\_northelevation



Figure 66. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_backporch\_and\_mudroom\_eastelevation

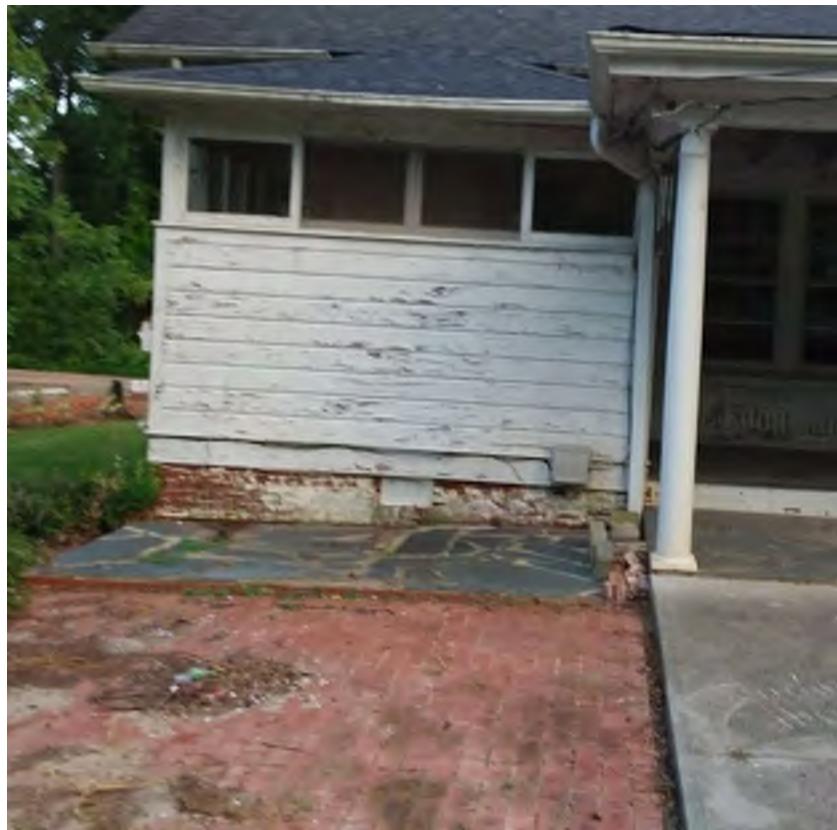


Figure 67. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_mudroom\_eastelevation



Figure 68. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_diningroom\_eastelevation



Figure 69. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_kitchen\_southeastcorner

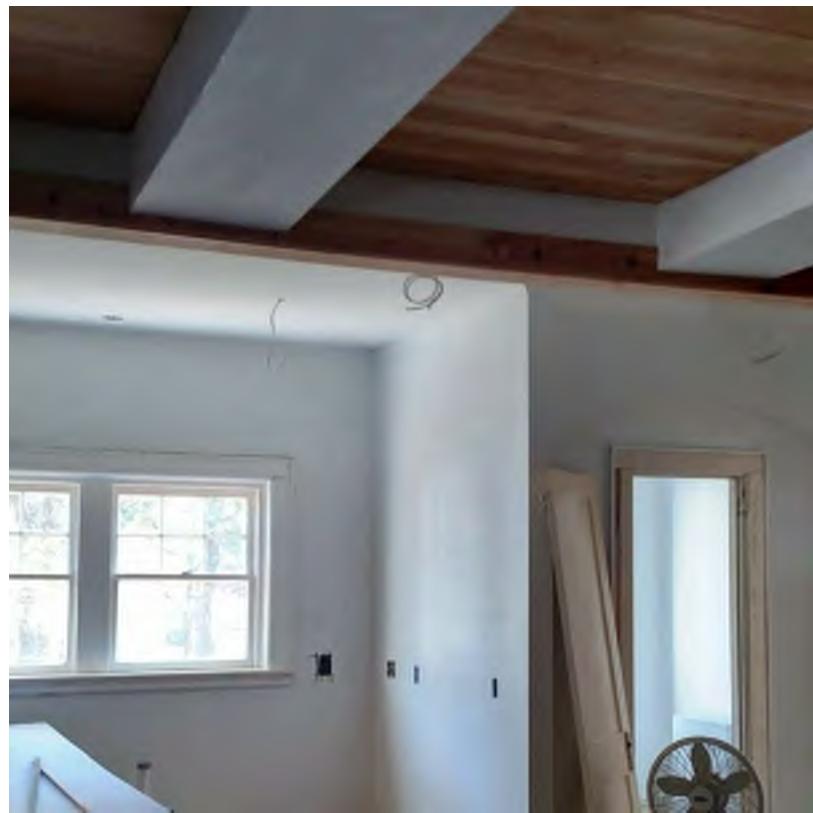


Figure 70. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_kitchenandbathroom\_southeastcorner



Figure 71. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_fireplace\_livingroom\_westelevation

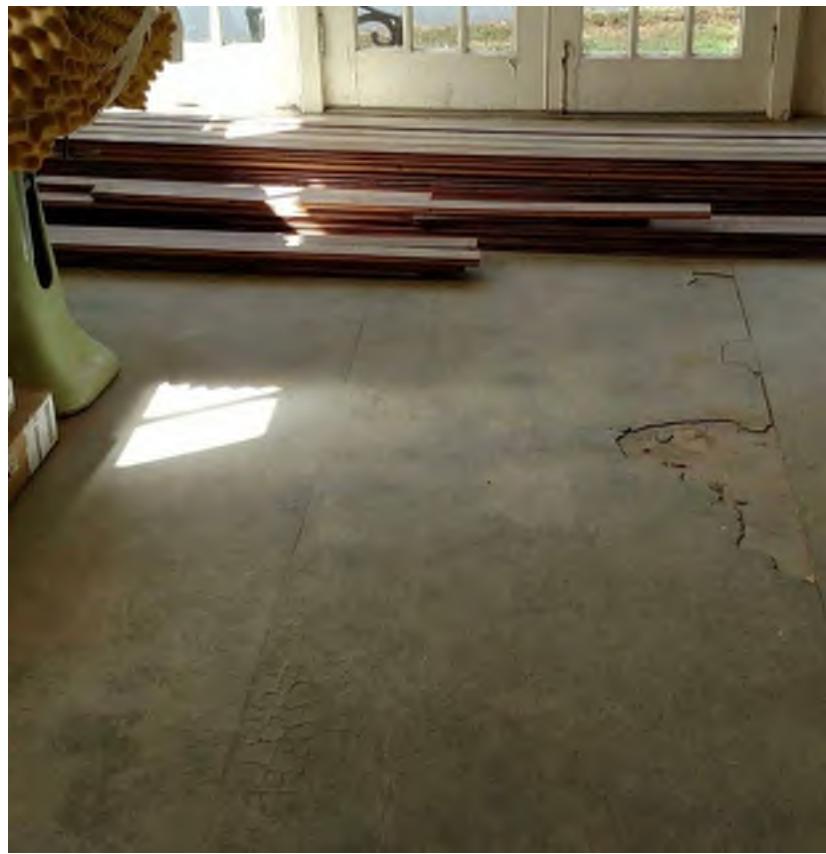


Figure 72. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_sunroom\_flooring

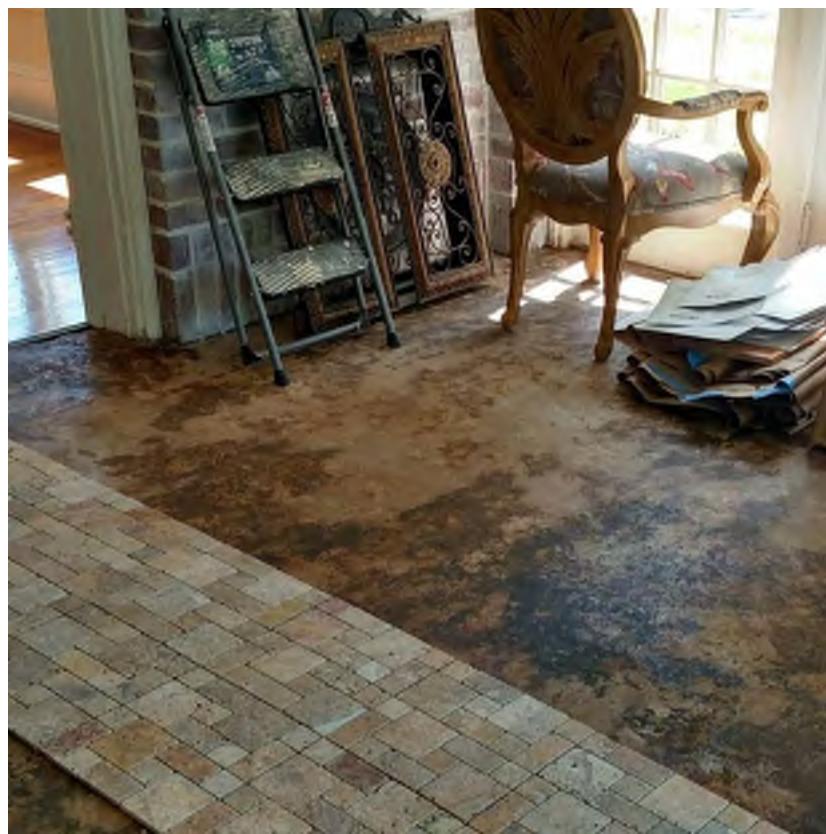


Figure 73. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_sunroom\_flooring



Figure 74. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_mudroom\_southeastcorner



Figure 75. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_mudroom\_southeastcorner



Figure 76. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_mudroom\_southeastcorner



Figure 77. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_halfstorybedroom\_northelevation

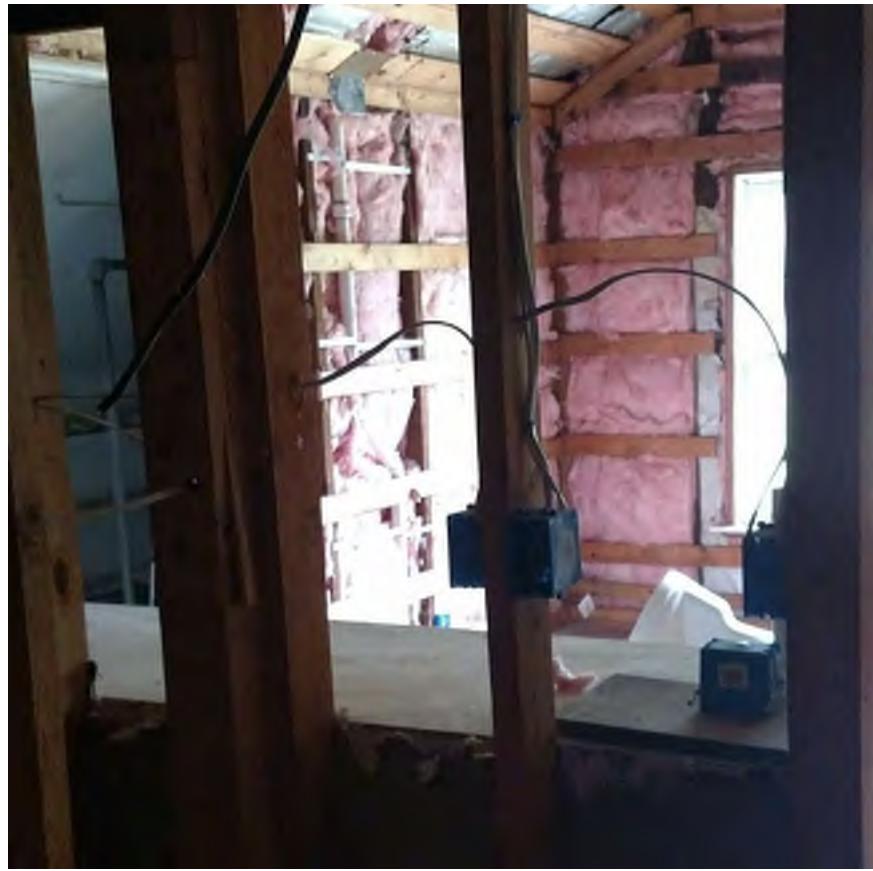


Figure 78. LN\_RobertandEloiseCostnerHouse\_halfstorybedroom\_southelevation

*Photographs of comparison properties*



Figure 79. View of Robert Steve Reinhardt House (LN0673), ca. 1925, 224 West Main Street, Lincolnton, NC



Figure 80. View of Sheldon M. Roper House (LN0284), 1928, 114 North High Street, Lincolnton, NC



Figure 81. View of Chamberlain House (LN0299), ca. 1927, 415 E. Sumner Street

#### 8C. Maps

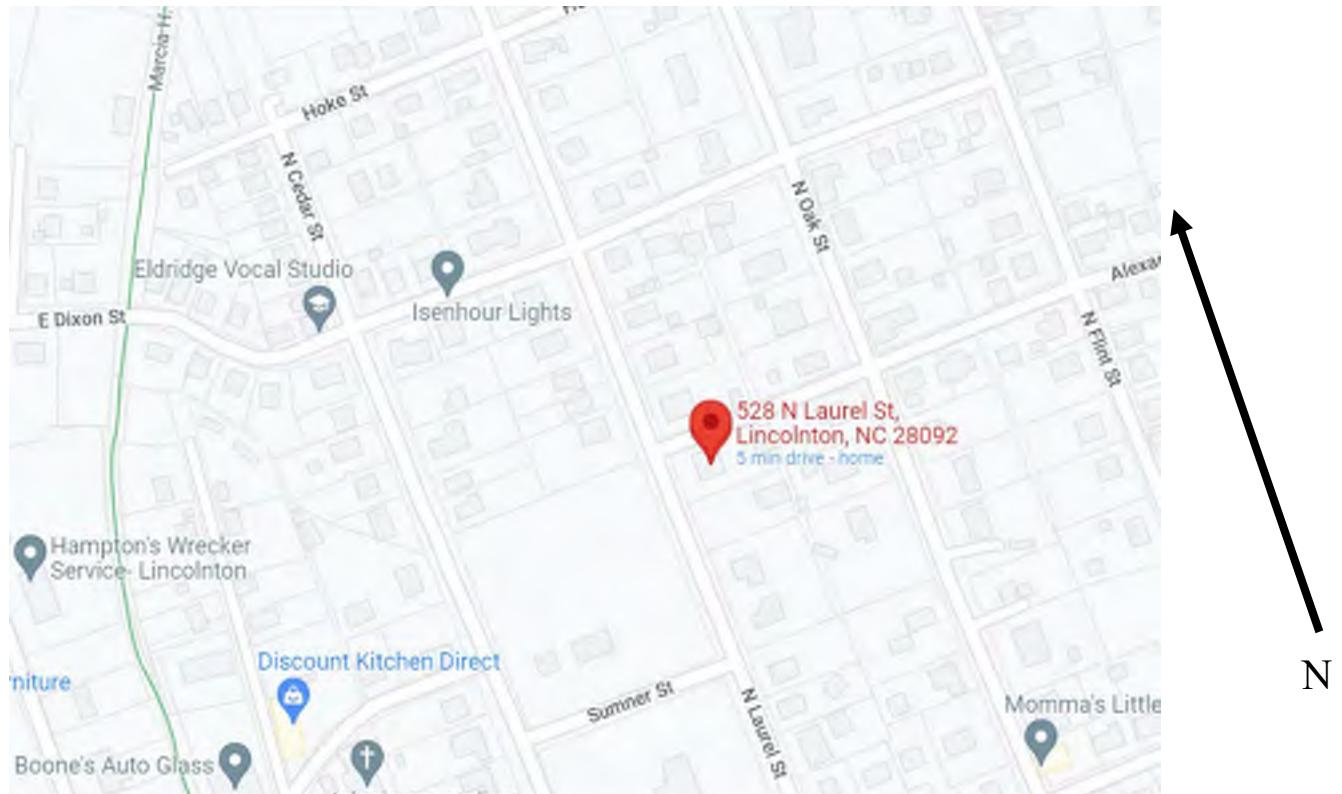


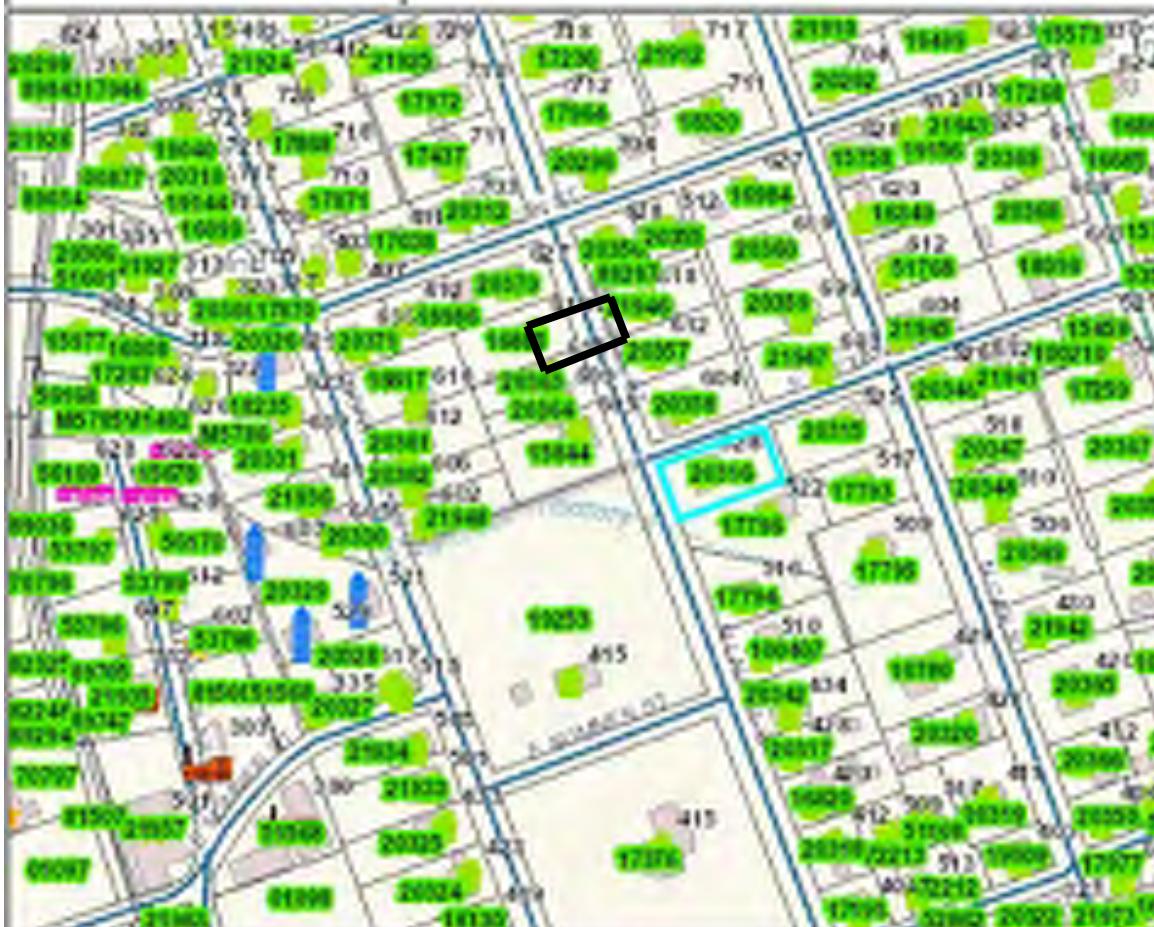
Figure 82. Location Map, 528 N. Laurel Street, Lincolnton, North Carolina



## Lincoln County, NC

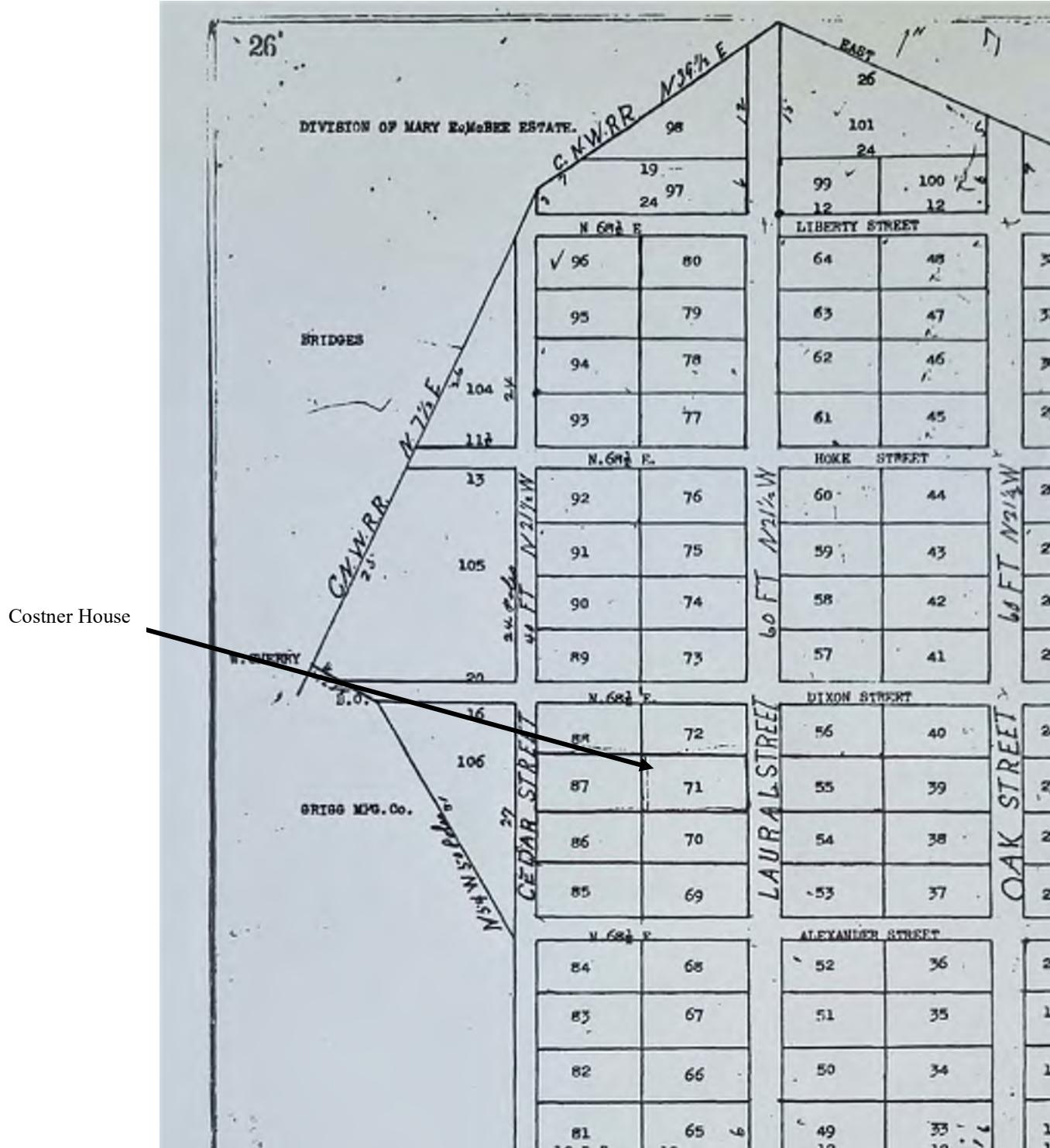
### Office of the Tax Administrator, GIS Mapping Division

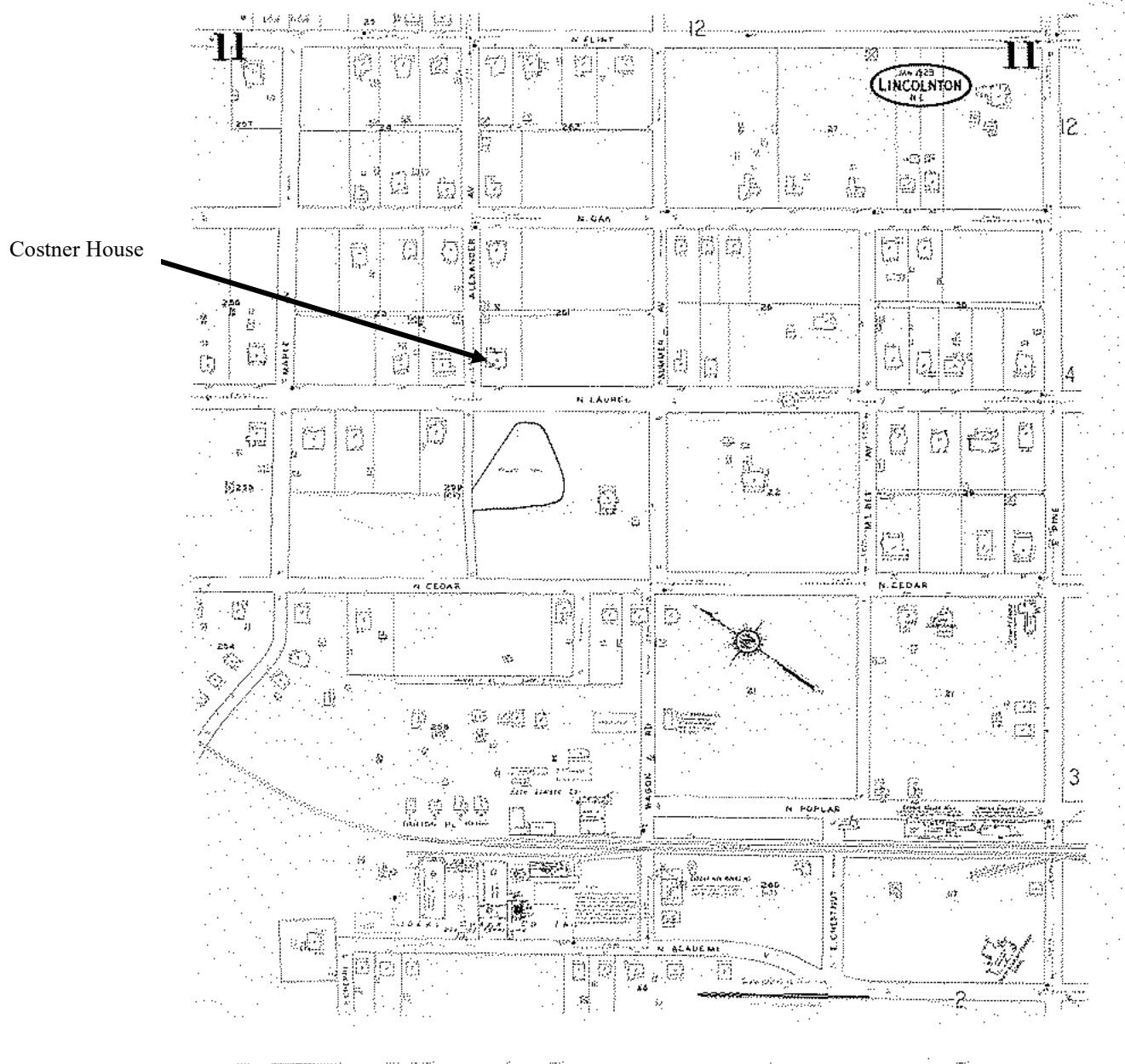
Lincoln County and its mapping contractors assume no legal responsibility for the information contained on this map. This map is not to be used for land conveyance. The map is based on NC StatePlane Coordinate System 1983 N. Date: 10/25/2022



Parcel ID	20206	Owner	WHITEAKER, MELVIN J
Map	3623	Mailing	528 N LAUREL ST
Account	0368860	Address	LINCOLNTON, NC 28092
Deed	2726 513	Last Transaction Date	01/31/2008
Plat		Subdivision	HORNBE LAND COV
Land Value	\$22,000	Improvement Value	\$143,279
Previous Parcel			Total
*****All values for Tax Year 2022*****			
Description	528 N LAUREL-LEXWIND		
Address	528 N LAUREL ST		
		Deed	
		Tax #	

Figure 83. Tax Map, 528 N. Laurel Street, Lincolnton, North Carolina





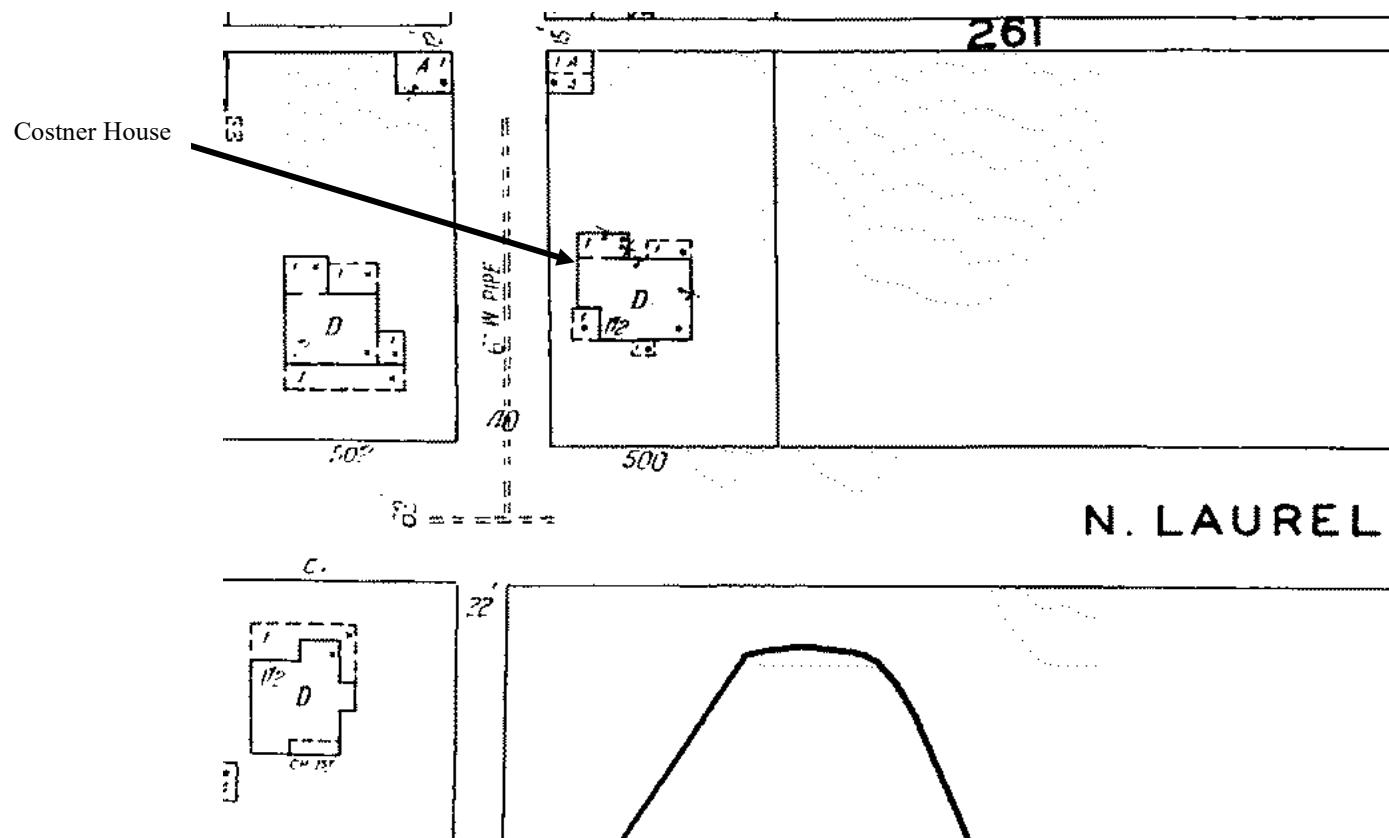


Figure 86. 1929 Sanborn Map, Lincolnton, NC

## 8B. Floor Plan

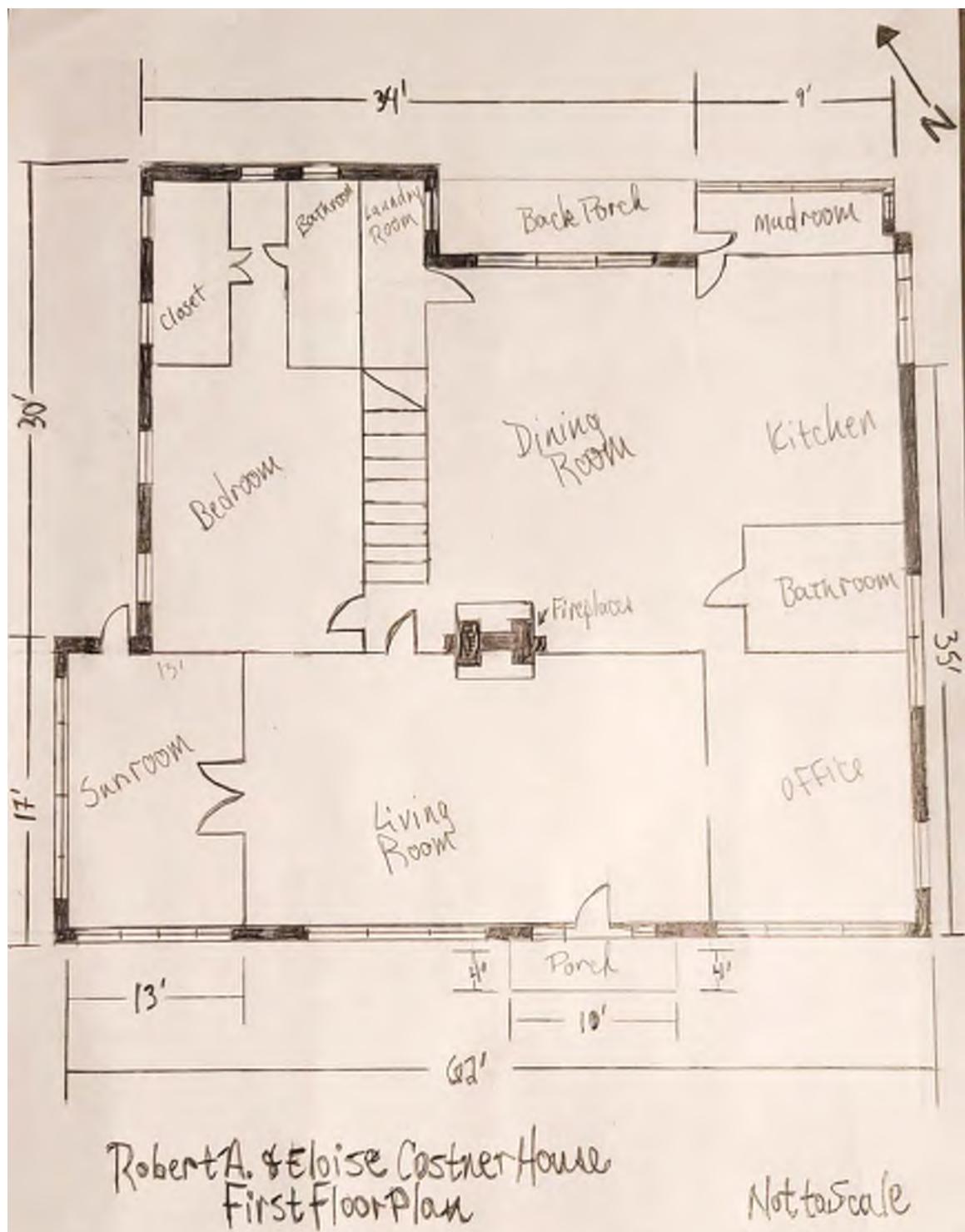


Figure 87. First Floor Plan, Robert A. and Eloise Costner House

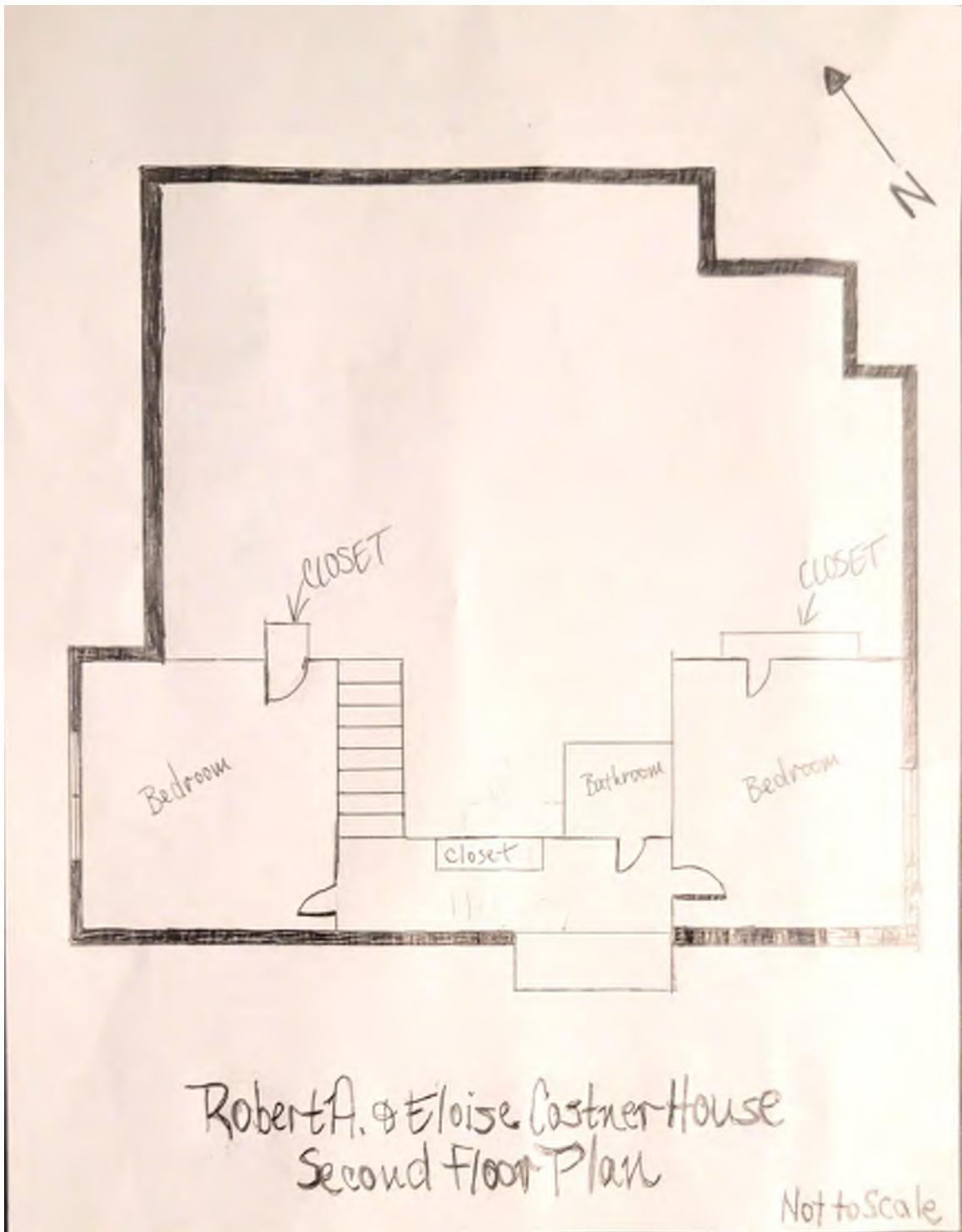


Figure 88. Second Floor Plan, Robert A. and Eloise Costner House

## 8D. Historical Significance

### Abstract

The Robert A. and Eloise Costner House is being proposed for local landmark designation to recognize its historical and architectural significance in Lincolnton and Lincoln County, North Carolina. The Robert and A. and Eloise Costner House stands as a good example of a one-and-a-half story Colonial Revival brick cottage with classical entry and Craftsman-style clipped gables that was built ca. 1928 in one of Lincolnton's earliest residential neighborhoods. The property is being proposed for local landmark designation so that the building's material integrity can be maintained through the design review process administered by the Lincoln County Historic Properties Commission. The proposed landmark designation applies only to the building's exterior.

### Historical Background

#### Brief History of Lincoln County and Lincolnton

Lincoln County is situated in the southwestern portion of North Carolina's Piedmont region. The county's boundaries, encompassing 305 square miles, extend in the form of a long rectangle measuring 30 miles in length and 10 miles wide. The county is bordered by the Catawba River to the east, Cleveland County to the west, Gaston County to the south, and Catawba County to the north. Lincoln County's landscape contains a rolling terrain full of gentle streams and creeks with natural resources that enrich the area's environment and contribute to economic development (Harpe 2000: 7).

The Catawba River delineated the county's eastern boundary, while the western boundary lay close to and/or crossed several smaller waterways, including Glenn Creek, Little Creek, and Buffalo Creek.<sup>1</sup> Marking the western quarter of the county is Indian Creek, a substantial waterway that flows south from its headwaters near the Catawba County line before feeding into the South Fork Catawba River.<sup>2</sup> The South Fork Catawba River bisects the county north-to-south, passing to the west of the county seat of Lincolnton, before its confluence with the Catawba River at Lake Wylie, on the border between Gaston and Mecklenburg Counties. These abundant water resources stimulated settlement across the county and spurred industrial development early in Lincoln County's history. These abundant water resources stimulated settlement across the county. Fueled by waterpower, industry developed early in Lincoln County's history. Yet most of the mills or factories operating in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were for the production of paper, furniture, flour, or iron (Sherrill 1937: 441-449).

On April 10, 1769, a bill was passed in the North Carolina House of Commons creating a new county called Tryon out of portions of Mecklenburg County west of the Catawba River. The county was named for Governor William Tryon, who had been appointed governor of the province of North Carolina by the English king. As the Revolutionary War approached, Governor Tryon, representing the English Crown, became unpopular

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<sup>1</sup> Lake Norman, formed by the 1963 impoundment of the Catawba River by construction of Cowans Ford Dam by Duke Energy, now substantially forms the county's eastern boundary. From the county's founding through the 1960s, the eastern boundary was defined by the Catawba River.

<sup>2</sup> Though historically known as the South Fork of the Catawba River, "of the" has fallen out of use, and it is now simply known as the South Fork Catawba River

and a movement began to eliminate Tryon County. In April 1779, the eastern portion of Tryon County became the large county of Lincoln, encompassing what is today three-and-one-half counties. The new county was named in honor of General Benjamin Lincolnton, a Massachusetts general of the American Revolution (Corbitt 1950: 137). In addition to being the seat of local government, Lincolnton was the main trading post in the county (Harpe 2000: 4). For many of the residents, travelling over poor roads to the county seat of Lincolnton was laborious.

As early as the mid-eighteenth century, settlers from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, primarily of German and Scots-Irish descent, flocked to the area to take advantage of the inexpensive land and rich farmland prevalent in the Carolina backcountry. Traversing the rugged terrain of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Staunton River Gap along the Great Wagon Road, immigrants established homesteads throughout Lincoln County. They brought with them traces of their native homelands in the forms of speech, behavior, religious beliefs, art, and written and oral traditions (Harpe 2000: 7).

The Scots-Irish populated much of the eastern portion of present-day Lincoln County near Beatties Ford, while the German population settled the land to the west. These early settlers erected homes, churches, and schools to build a strong communal environment and raise their families (Harpe 2000: 7).

By 1840, there was considerable sentiment to divide the county. This became a reality when Cleveland County was created from the western side of Lincoln County and the eastern side of Rutherford County in 1841. A year later, Catawba County was created out of the northern part of Lincoln County, followed by Gaston County in 1846. The divisions left Lincoln County smaller in land area than some of the counties that had been carved from it. However, the division left Lincoln County's 1,038 families with an area rich in history and full of promise for the future (Harpe 2000: 4).

### City of Lincolnton

The City of Lincolnton, founded in 1785, is the county seat and only incorporated town in Lincoln County. Like the county, the city was named in honor of Revolutionary War General Benjamin Lincoln of Massachusetts (Powell 302). Of the 300 acres of vacant land set aside for the city, 50 acres were laid off into squares, streets, and lots of one-half acre and sold at public auction. Lincolnton is in the center of the county and was chosen as county seat due to it being on both sides of "the wagon road leading from the Tuckaseegee Ford to Ramsour's Mill and including the forks of the road leading to Cansler's sawmill" and is in close proximity to the South Fork Catawba River (Brown and York 1986: 246-247). In 1802, French botanist Francois Andre Michaux, wrote that Lincolnton was "formed by the junction of forty houses, surrounded by the woods like all the small towns of the interior" (Brown and York 1986: 262).

Soon after its founding, Lincolnton grew into a center of trade, culture, and government where members of founding pioneer families became financially prosperous. This growth led to the North Carolina General Assembly's 1816 decision to authorize local officials to

lay out additional town lots, two of which were reserved for an academy and a church.<sup>3</sup> In 1820, the City of Lincolnton consisted of 161 lots.

Financial prosperity in Lincolnton after the period of settlement is attributable to its commerce drawing people from as far away as Charlotte. This prosperity was reflected in the improvement in construction of residential buildings. The county's earliest settlers built small, one-story edifices from hand-hewn logs, but Lincolnton's prosperous families built more substantial two-story frame and brick dwellings. Lawson Henderson, Lincoln County planter, sheriff, and clerk of court, built his imposing two-story brick house in 1798 just southwest of downtown Lincolnton. David Ramsour, grandson of pioneer Diedrich Ramsour, built a monumental two-story brick building on East Main Street in 1820 that featured a five-bay front façade with four Corinthian pilasters and denticulated triangular pediment, and Paul Kistler, a success businessman who operated a tannery, built his two-story, Flemish bond brick residence on West Main Street in 1824.

Michael Schenk's construction of a cotton-spinning mill on McDaniel's Spring near Lincolnton in 1813 marked the textile industry's introduction in North Carolina (Glass 1992: 7).<sup>4</sup> After a devastating flood in early 1816 that almost completely destroyed the mill and dam, Schenk and his new business partner, Absalom Warlick, hired Michael Beam in April of that year to build a larger machine on a portion of Warlick's property one mile east of Lincolnton and below the location of the original mill. The new enterprise was named the Schenk-Warlick Mill (Brown and York 1986: 255). Between 1818 and 1819, Michael Schenck, Dr. James Bivens, and Lincolnton merchant Col. John Hoke erected an even larger mill on the South Fork Catawba River, two miles south of Lincolnton. This enterprise, the Lincoln Cotton Mills, produced cotton yarn. On August 19, 1831, the mill operated twelve looms and 1,280 spindles, and by 1840 represented an investment of \$18,000, employed 84 persons, and manufactured products with a value of \$21,373. The Lincoln Cotton Mills operated until it was destroyed by fire in 1863 (Brown and York 1986: 46).

The success of these mills, along with other industrial enterprises, did not protect Lincolnton from a declining economy and lack of investments in new manufacturing ventures between the 1850s and the 1870s. Lincolnton suffered a debilitating blow in 1854 when Charlotte was connected to the North Carolina Railroad, making it the cotton market for eastern Lincoln County and taking business away from the county seat (Phillips 2005 Section 8: Page 50). Farmers from north and west of Lincolnton continued doing business in town, but farmers in the eastern part of the county only came to town for legal or court matters. The success of the iron industry having played out, Lincoln County's economy was bleak in the wake of the Civil War. During reconstruction, the impoverished county saw more residents leave for better prospects elsewhere. By 1880, fewer than 800 residents lived in Lincolnton (McDonald and Harpe 2022 Section 8: Page 18). Although three textile mills were operating by 1872, Lincoln nevertheless lagged behind nearby Gaston County. In the 1840s and 1850s, Gaston County began to emerge as a major textile center, with Woodlawn Cotton Mills, Stowe's Cotton Mills, and the Mt.

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<sup>3</sup> Pleasant Retreat Academy, chartered in 1813, was built on the north side of Lincolnton between 1817 and 1821. A female academy was built on the south side of town during 1825 and 1826.

<sup>4</sup> With construction of this mill, Schenk is attributed with building the first textile plant south of the Potomac River.

Island Cotton Mills all operating in 1872 (Branson 1872: 100). Although North Carolina's textile industry began in Lincoln County in the 1810s, with what appeared to be consistent, progressive expansion through the mid-nineteenth century, the county remained overwhelmingly agricultural through the 1870s (Brown and York 1986: 270-271).

The chief factor in the development and growth of the textile industry across Lincoln County during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was the influence of Gaston County native and industrialist Daniel Efird Rhyne. Born in neighboring Gaston County in 1852, Rhyne moved to Lincolnton in 1887, after building and operating in partnership with his brother, Abel Rhyne, the Mount Holly Cotton Mill (1876) and Tuckaseegee Mill (1883), both of which were in Gaston County (*The News and Observer* 1933: 25 February; Cauble 1994: 24-25). In 1887, Rhyne partnered with James Alonzo Abernethy to convert a facility two miles south of Lincolnton used by the Confederate government as a laboratory to produce medicines during the Civil War.

Over the next 20 years, Rhyne and his partners increased their textile interests and single-handedly transformed Lincolnton's economy. In 1895, Rhyne built the Lincoln Cotton Mill, known in Lincoln County as Southside Mill, and used the South Fork Catawba River to power the mill and manufacture long-staple cotton yarn. Three or four years later, Rhyne, with his nephews Ed Love and Robert Love, and A.M. Price, increased his textile interests by building a third plant, Daniel Manufacturing Company, about one mile from the courthouse in Lincolnton, to spin fine yarn from combed sea island cotton. After Rhyne sold his interest in the Daniel Manufacturing Company, he partnered with James Alonzo Abernethy and started the Wampum Mill and Indian Creek Mill. He also became associated with the Rhodes Manufacturing Company, located south of Lincolnton, started by William Rhodes of Lincolnton, by purchasing interest in the company and changing the name to Rhodes-Rhyne Weaving Company. This plant was located about one mile from Laboratory and manufactured bedspreads. His manufacturing interests expanded to include four mills in Cherryville, Gaston County; eight mills in Belmont, Gaston County, and one mill in Henry River, Burke County, North Carolina (Cauble 1994: 19).

Others followed Rhyne's lead in the construction of textile mills in Lincoln County, and the 1890s saw an industrial boom in the area, with twelve mills in operation by 1900 (Cauble 1994: 19). In 1896, members of the Mauney family and Dr. W.R. Crouse built the Long Shoals Cotton Mill on the site of the former Lincoln Paper Mill (*The Lincoln County News* 1935: 7 October). In the 1890s, Captain Joseph Graham Morrison built the Mariposa Mill in southeastern Lincoln County's Lowesville community (Handsel and Grissop 1999: 384). In 1906, the Eureka Manufacturing Company began production of coarse cotton yarn in an existing two-story brick building constructed as a foundry and machine shop in downtown Lincolnton, less than 300 yards west of the Wampum Mill (Harpe 2013: Section 8, Page 13). In 1907, the Rhodes family built the Rhodes Manufacturing Company Cotton Mill three miles south of downtown Lincolnton. Thorne and David Clark purchased the company before 1919, and renamed it Massapoag (*The Lincoln County News* 1919: 9 October). Around 1909, James Lee Love and his brother, Edgar Love, established the Saxony Spinning Company's combed and Sea Island Cotton yarn mill in Lincolnton (*The Lincoln County News* 1950: 11 May). In 1918, Robert C. Boger and Alfred Crawford, textile manufacturers from Philadelphia, established Boger

and Crawford Spinning Mills in the unincorporated community of Goodsonville, three miles east of Lincolnton (Harpe 2000: 48).

At the turn of the twentieth century, the streets in and around downtown Lincolnton were unpaved but lined by brick commercial buildings and substantial residential buildings. East Main Street was the commercial core of the city and supported department stores, hardware stores, and other specialty stores. By 1910, there were two banks, two railroad depots, a post office, a high school, a hospital, and churches of all major denominations. For people needing their services, there was a good supply of lawyers and doctors, and two newspapers were published weekly. There was a host of boardinghouses and two full-service hotels. In 1919, Representative Edgar Love introduced a bill to the state legislature directing the Lincoln County commissioners to erect a new courthouse. The old courthouse was vacated in May 1921 and torn down. The new courthouse was a monumental Neoclassical building designed by James W. Salter that was completed in June 1923. The first court was held in the new courthouse on July 16, 1923, with Judge James L. Webb presiding (Harpe 2000:13).

### **Twentieth Century Residential Development and McBee Family Land in Lincolnton**

Lincolnton's earliest residential neighborhoods were developed around downtown Lincolnton and met the housing needs of a growing number of people who moved from farms to towns to seek work mainly in mills. Two other factors that could have influenced the development of suburban neighborhoods in Lincolnton during the first two decades of the twentieth century were interest in city planning and the neighborhood movement. The impetus behind comprehensive planning was an interest in "street access and protection for commercial and expensive residential properties," and the neighborhood movement was an attempt in certain instances to "resurrect the village ideal in American life so rudely overrun by burgeoning urbanization" (Bishir and Earley 1985: 13).

These neighborhoods, few in number, were developed by prominent men in Lincoln County, usually real estate developers, and consisted of small one-story, brick or frame bungalows. These neighborhoods also feature a few houses built of an eclectic mix of styles such as Colonial Revival and Queen Anne dating to the nineteenth century that were located in the area around which developers built their neighborhoods. Most of the houses in these neighborhoods were not architect designed, but a few have been attributed to G.W. Hunter, Lincolnton architect and builder.<sup>5</sup> In 1907 and 1908, Hunter was credited with designing residences "of colonial style and will embrace a number of new ideas" and building a workshop in Oakland Heights "where those who contemplate building can go and select their patterns and have the lumber cut out in the shop and made ready to put together on their lot" (*The Lincoln County News*, 1908: 31 January). Reinhardt Heights, Oakland Heights, and McBee Heights were the earliest neighborhoods developed near downtown Lincolnton during the first two decades of the twentieth century, and little of their original architectural integrity has been retained by past and current owners.

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<sup>5</sup> In this period, the distinction between architects and builders was less rigid than later in the century.

Real estate developer and textile manufacturer Robert S. Reinhardt developed Reinhardt Heights in northwest Lincolnton around Lincoln County's "most complete expression" of the Craftsman Bungalow, the Reinhardt-Brown House, that he built for his daughter Lena Reinhardt Brown between 1907-1908 (Brown and York 1986: 30). The property encompassing the Reinhardt Heights neighborhood is located just south of the South Fork Catawba River, on which Reinhardt's Elm Grove Cotton Mill was located. Reinhardt laid out the Reinhardt Heights sub-division in 1908. The *Lincoln County News* reported on February 15, 1907, that "Mr. R.S. Reinhardt has sold quite a number of building lots recently from the handsome tract he is developing in the Northeast part of town." The newspaper described the neighborhood's location as "a high plateau commanding a fine view of town and country," and predicted it was "destined to become one of the most desirable residential sections of our growing city" (*The Lincoln County News* 1907: 15 February).

The Oakland Heights neighborhood is located in northeast Lincolnton, about one mile from downtown. Developers began auctioning lots in each of the neighborhood's five blocks on May 1, 1907. Oakland Heights was touted, like Reinhardt Heights, as being "the Finest Suburban property within ten minutes walk of the Court House, and is on an elevation, the highest point in town, and gives a fine view of the city and surrounding country." Lincolnton was promoted as being transformed during the first decade of the twentieth century from the "proverbial 'Sleepy Village' to a thriving Business Center and is now the talk of the surrounding country and towns because of its rapid progress." During this decade, the City of Lincolnton had "installed water work, voted a special school tax, which gives it one of the best Graded School, has voted bonds for Sewerage and Electric Lights, both of which will be installed during the next twelve months" (*The Lincoln County News* 1907: 23 April).

The property on which the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House is situated was originally associated with the McBee family. Vardry Alexander McBee (1818-1904), a lawyer, superior court clerk, and promoter of public improvements, developed property that he inherited or acquired during the nineteenth century into McBee Heights. The November 12, 1907 edition of *The Lincoln County News* reported that McBee lands and town lots were divided into eight equal parts between V.A. McBee's children: Thomas McBee, Silas McBee, Vardry McBee, James T. Williams, Mrs. Mary McBee Hoke, Mrs. Anna McBee Guerry, Martha T. Mikell, and Elizabeth Grimes. The eight blocks of the neighborhood are laid out in a grid pattern with Cedar, Laurel, and Oak Streets running north to south and intersected east to west by Sumner, Alexander, Dixon, Hoke, and Liberty Streets (LCRD 1907 101: 26) (Figure 85). V.A. McBee's daughter Martha T. Mikell and her husband W.E. Mikell sold Lot #52 in McBee Heights to Robert A. Costner in 1920 (see Figure 84).

### **The Costner Family**

The Costner family has a deep and rooted history within Lincoln County and the Lincolnton community. Ambrose Costner, great-great-grandson of pioneer Adam Costner, was born at the old Costner family homeplace near what is today the town of Dallas in Gaston County on June 14, 1825, to Jacob and Anna Costner (Findagrave.com

2009).<sup>6</sup> He received his early education at Lincolnton Academy (a male academy also known as Pleasant Retreat Academy) in Lincolnton, and married Catherine Malinda Quickel on March 18, 1846 (Sherrill 1927: 327). In 1868, Costner purchased land in Laboratory, an area about three miles from Lincolnton, and was a successful farmer and owner of Costner Flour Mill.<sup>7</sup> In 1873, Costner and brothers Daniel E. Rhyne and Abel Patterson Rhyne, Costner's son-in-law, partnered on the planning and erection of a cotton mill near what is now the town of Mt. Holly. They completed the mill in 1874 and operated the business under the name A. P. Rhyne and Company (Phillips 2003: Section 8, Page 20-21). Costner purchased Daniel E. Rhyne's interest in the Mt. Holly mill in 1883 when Rhyne left the business.

Ambrose Costner's successful business career did not avert his interest in public service. He served as a magistrate, chairman of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, President of the County National Bank until his death in 1911, and was a large financial contributor to Gaston College when it was established in Dallas, NC. He was not physically able to serve during the Civil War, but he furnished the uniforms for soldiers who fought in Captain George W. Seagle's Company. He represented Lincoln County in the North Carolina House of Representatives for four terms (1858, 1862, 1864, and 1873), and in the North Carolina Senate in 1883 (Sherrill 1937: 327-328; *The Lincoln County News* 1911: 9 June). Labeled "a great worker for Lutheranism in the county," Ambrose Costner was a devout member of Salem Lutheran and United Church of Christ in Lincolnton where he served as an elder, delegate to the Tennessee Synod, and the congregation's historian (*The Catawba County News* 1915: November 12; Carpenter 2008: 27).

Ambrose and Catherine Costner had six children, William A., Henry A., Martha, Thomas F., Robert E., and James A. (Sherrill 1937: 329). Catherine died on March 18, 1903, and Ambrose died on June 5, 1911 (FindaGrave 2009). Both are buried at Salem Lutheran Church Cemetery in Lincolnton. William Alonzo (W.A.) Costner was born on June 1, 1849. W.A. Costner was married first to Sarah Frazier and married his second wife, Emma Killian, on November 2, 1910 (Ancestry.com 2015) He was a Confederate veteran and worked as a farmer until his death on December 26, 1932 (*The Charlotte News* 1932: 26 December; FindAGrave.com 2009). His son Oscar Ambrose (O.A.) Costner was born on July 2, 1876.

O.A. Costner married Olive Hoover on December 9, 1896. He started in the oil business with Standard Oil Company around 1906 (Ancestry.com 2015) and founded Costner Oil Company around 1914. By 1922, Costner changed the name of his business from Costner Oil Company to Carolina Oil Company and operated branches in Newton, Morganton, and Lenoir. The company sold Texas Petroleum Products throughout their service area with seven trucks and nine employees. Costner was considered "one of Lincolnton's most prominent business men" and "a progressive public spirited citizen" (*The Lincoln County News* 1922: 7 July). O.A. and Olive Costner were the parents of Walter V., Willie, Robert A., and Lucille (*The Charlotte Observer* 1960: 12 March). They built one of the few shingled houses in Lincolnton during the first decade of the twentieth century on North

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<sup>6</sup> Gaston County was formed in 1846 from Lincoln County, and the town of Dallas was the county seat. Dallas was incorporated in 1863, and remained the county seat until 1909, when Gastonia was selected as the county seat.

<sup>7</sup> Laboratory is a community in south central Lincoln County named for the Confederate drug manufactory operated under the direction of Dr. A.S. Piggott.

Laurel Street, across Alexander Street from where their son Robert would build his house in ca. 1928.

### **Robert A. and Eloise Costner**

Robert Allison Costner was born on May 1, 1903 (*The Charlotte Observer* 1997: 10 January). Robert attended the Lincolnton Grammar School before being matriculated at Lincolnton High School, from which he graduated in 1923 (*The Lincoln County News* 1923: 4 June).

Robert A. Costner purchased the property at 528 North Laurel Street from William E. Mikell and his wife Martha T. McBee Mikell on April 20, 1920 (Lincoln County Register of Deeds [LCRD] 1920 133:51). Mikell, a native of Sumpter, South Carolina, moved to Lincolnton in the 1890s to serve as the principal of Piedmont Seminary, and married Martha Turner McBee, daughter of prominent businessman Vardry Alexander McBee, on April 12, 1894 (*The Lincoln Courier* 1894: 13 April). Mikell graduated with a law degree from the University of Virginia in 1894, and he was a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania from 1898 to 1938. He served as the dean of Penn's law school from 1914 to 1929 (*The State* 1944: January 21).

On February 12, 1928, Robert A. Costner married Eloise Batchelor of Nashville, North Carolina (*The Charlotte Observer* 1928: 13 February). Eloise, born on February 8, 1906, was the only daughter of William Josephus Batchelor and Daisey Eaddy Batchelor, both of Nashville, North Carolina. Eloise's mother died on July 20, 1920, at the age of 38, and William raised Eloise and her three brothers, William, Fletcher, and Tom (*The Graphic* 1920: 22 July). Robert and Eloise were married in Eufala, Alabama, and upon their return to Lincolnton, lived with Costner's parents at 604 N. Laurel Street until Robert built his house.

Eloise was very active in music theater before and during her marriage. In July 1927, she spent several days in Oxford, North Carolina, coaching the musical comedy "See You Later" and it was reported that she was "very talented in this line and it is needless to predict that the presentation will be a decided success under her direction" (*The Nashville Graphic* 1927: 28 July). A September 8, 1927, edition of *The Nashville Graphic* made the public aware that Eloise had left Nashville for Kentucky where she would direct the play in several towns there (*The Nashville Graphic* 1927: 8 September). She spent the remaining months of 1927 traveling through towns in West Virginia directing a play titled "Kool Knights," and returned to Nashville in December to spend the holiday with her father and brothers (*The Nashville Graphic* 1927: 15 December).

Robert worked in the oil business with his father's company, Carolina Oil Company, before starting Costner Oil Company in Lincolnton in 1939. He retired from the oil business after working at Rhodes and Beal Oil Company of Lincolnton from 1970 to 1985 (*The Charlotte Observer* 1997: 10 January). He was an active member of First United Methodist Church in Lincolnton, and a member of Lincoln Lodge No. 137, A.F. & A.M., the Scottish Rite, and the Oasis Temple of Shriners in Charlotte, North Carolina (*The Charlotte Observer* 1997: 10 January).

Robert and Eloise were the parents of Robert 'Bob' Allison Costner, Jr., who was born on November 29, 1933, in Lincolnton (*The Nashville Graphic* 1933: 7 December). Bob spent his formative years at 528 North Laurel Street before attending the McCallie

School of Chattanooga, Tennessee.<sup>8</sup> He graduated from North Carolina State University in 1955 as a “Distinguished Air Force ROTC Graduate” with a degree in nuclear engineering. Bob was also a graduate of the Oak Ridge School of Reactor Technology (ORSORT). He was an Air Force veteran and spent his professional career working at the Oak Ridge National Lab (ORNL), TVA’s engineering division in Knoxville and General Engineering Division in Oak Ridge, and PAI, Inc (*Oak Ridge Today* 2015: 12 February).

Eloise died on January 25, 1996, and is buried at Hollybrook Cemetery in Lincolnton. Robert went to live with his son in Oak Ridge after Eloise’s death and died nearly one year later on January 8, 1997. Robert is buried beside Eloise at Hollybrook Cemetery.

#### Ownership After the Costner Family (1993-2018)

On September 20, 1993, Robert A. Costner and Eloise Costner, by Robert A. Costner, Jr, their Attorney-in-Fact, sold the house at 528 North Laurel Street to Mark S. and Donna Robinson (LCRD 1993 842:544). No changes were made to the property during the Robinsons’ ownership. The Robinsons sold the house to the current owners, Melvin J. and Cynthia A. Whitener, on July 31, 2018, and the Whiteners renovated the interior and added a one-story brick garage (LCRD 2018 2759:513). A description of the interior renovations is included in Section 8E of this report.

#### 8E. Architectural description, significance, and integrity

##### Setting

The Robert A. and Eloise Costner House is located at 528 North Laurel Street in Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina (Figures 81-85). Situated on the east side of North Laurel Street, the house is located at the intersection of North Laurel Street and Alexander Street. North Laurel Street contains a number of dwellings that date from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries, most notably the O.A. Costner House (the house built by Robert A. Costner’s father), William A. Hoke House, and Frank H. Chamberlain House (Figures 83-87).<sup>9</sup>

The parcel is bounded by Alexander Street to the north, contiguous buildings to the east, three single-family homes built within the past five years to the south, and Laurel Street to the west. The lot is .437 acres, and the house is set back from the road by about 73 feet. Along with the house, the lot also has a 1940s two-car garage, and a carport and garage built in 2022.

The lot on which the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House is located features a spacious, grassed front yard that slopes west from the house to North Laurel Street. Access to the house is provided by a slate-covered, brick sidewalk lined by monkey grass that leads from North Laurel Street to the front door. A paved driveway off Alexander Street provides access to the house’s west (rear) elevation. The parcel’s grassy lawn is manicured, and mature trees act as a barrier for the house at the lot’s eastern boundary. Landscaping surrounds the immediate perimeter of the house and includes a variety of small bushes and flowers planted by the current owners in 2018 and 2019. There is an

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<sup>8</sup> The McCallie School is a boy’s college-preparatory school on Missionary Ridge in Chattanooga. The school was founded in 1905, and its student body consists of boarding students in grades 9-12 and day students in grades 6-12.

<sup>9</sup> The Frank H. Chamberlain House is a local historic landmark that was officially designated under the name Frank H. and Rose Budd Chamberlain House.

elevated, slate-covered brick patio that runs along the foundation of the sunroom near the house's northwest corner and terminates at a set of parged brick steps at the sunroom's northeast corner.

The parcel identification number for the property is 3623963564, and the Tax Parcel ID number is 20316. The value of the property on which the building is located is \$22,000, and the value of the building is \$143,179.

*Robert A. and Eloise Costner House, ca. 1928*

## **Exterior**

The Robert A. and Eloise Costner House is a one-and-one-half story, Colonial Revival cottage with clipped gables and classical returns. It has a projecting sunroom at its north end and a hip-roofed rear wing at the north end of its rear (east) elevation. The house is clad with brick laid in a common bond pattern and has a low, side-gabled roof with widely overhanging eaves. It has a solid masonry foundation with a partial crawlspace and a full earthen basement level at the north elevation that is partially exposed due to a slight decline in the grade elevation on the south end of the property (Figure 22). Window and door openings throughout the house are deeply set and are framed by brick sills and lintels. All window units are flanked by louvered black shutters. An interior brick chimney pierces the gabled roof near the center of the house. Oriented with the primary façade facing west toward North Laurel Street, the house stands near the parcel's eastern boundary. A slate-covered brick walkway leads from North Laurel Street to a shallow front porch accessed by parged brick stairs with parged brick caps.

The façade is comprised of a three-bay, symmetrical section with a central entry and the sunroom at its north end. There is a decorative clipped gable over the entry bay which contains a fanlight. The classical, fifteen-light wood entry door with ten-light sidelights and a molded surround is sheltered by a low hipped-roof, classical entrance porch with a tall frieze and denticulated cornice supported by two Tuscan columns. On either side of the entry are triple window units composed of six-over-one, double-hung, wood sash windows. The one-story sunroom at the north end of the house is enclosed by two pairs of fifteen-light French doors on its front (west) elevation (Figures 1-4, 10).

The south elevation of the house has a pair of six-over-one, double-hung wood windows with molded surrounds at the upper story, and six-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows of different sizes at the first story. The current owner replaced metal sash windows that opened to the unfinished basement on this elevation with two new fixed windows with vinyl grilles (Figures 11-14).

The east (rear) elevation has a central, recessed porch with exposed rafters, two six-over-one, double-hung, wood sash windows near the northeast corner, and a mudroom at the southeast corner. The patio has a slate-covered, brick floor, a triple window unit of six-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows on the west wall, and a four-light, fixed sash on the north wall that was originally located near the house's southeast corner to provide light to the kitchen. An original wood door with a glazed upper half with nine square panes over three horizontal panels on the lower half and a single-paned horizontal transom opens into an enclosed mudroom at the house's southeast corner. The mudroom is sheathed with German siding topped by framed, single-pane fixed lights (Figures 18, 19-21).

The sunroom's north side elevation has a clipped-gable end with a classical fanlight and Craftsman style cedar siding painted white. Three pairs of fifteen-light French doors on the sunroom's north wall open out to a small, elevated slate-covered brick patio. An original fifteen-light wood entry door and wood louvered storm door near the sunroom's northeast corner opens to parged brick steps leading to the patio at this elevation. A six-over-one, double-hung wood sash window lights the upper story above the sunroom, and four six-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows are located in the rear wing east of the sunroom (Figures 5-9).

## Interior

On the interior, this 2,376 square foot house has exposed brick and finished plaster walls, and simple molded door and window openings and baseboards. The flooring throughout the house is made of original red and white oak, pine, and spruce. All first-floor paneled doors are original to the house, but two upper story bedroom doors were replaced in 2018 and 2019.

The principal entry opens into the living room which occupies half of the front section of the house. There is a simple, partially parged brick fireplace on the east wall, and a fifteen-light door north of the fireplace leads to a bedroom, hallway, and bathroom on the first floor and a 180-degree staircase leading to two bedrooms and a half bathroom in the upper half story. Due to structural issues with the living room's ceiling, oak beams were installed during renovations in 2018. Crown molding in this room is a reproduction of the original molding (Figures 23-28).

A second, smaller front room is located south of the living room and is accessed through an opening that formerly held French doors. This room is currently used as an office (Figures 29-30). A pair of fifteen-light French doors leads from the living room to the sunroom at the house's northwest corner. The sunroom was originally screened, and its French doors were installed during the 1940s or 1950s when Mrs. Costner used it as a music room. The French doors on the north and west walls are surmounted by a frieze of recessed panels and crown molding. A fifteen-light door at the room's northeast corner opens to a patio at the north elevation. Exposed brick and original bead board ceiling are painted white. The current owners floored the sunroom with travertine tile during renovations in 2018 (Figures 31-34 and 71-72).

The enclosed staircase off the living room leads to two upper story bedrooms, a full bathroom, and closets. The walls on both sides of the staircase are sheetrock with board and batten wainscotting and oak handrails running along the walls of the first and second flight of stairs (Figures 54-55). The two upstairs bedrooms and connecting hallway retain their original oak flooring, and door and window surrounds. The walls are sheetrock, and each room has built-in chests of drawers that likely date to the 1940s or 1950s (Figures 56-61).

Behind the front rooms of the first floor is a dining room, kitchen, half bathroom, and laundry room. Access to rooms at this elevation is provided from the exterior by an original wood door with a glazed upper half with nine square panes over three horizontal panels on the lower half on the mudroom's west wall. This door opens into the dining room and small kitchen which occupy over half of the rear section of the house. An interior paneled door off the office at the house's southwest corner provides access to the interior rooms at the rear elevation. An exposed brick fireplace with bracketed mantel shelf stands at the dining room's northwest corner beside a large built-in cabinet that

dates to the house's construction. The brick on the dining room's east wall is exposed, and the door at the room's northeast corner leads to a laundry room. New kitchen cabinetry and appliances occupy the southeast corner where the kitchen has been historically located. The current owners removed a wall between the kitchen and current dining room and enclosed new wiring and plumbing up the north wall and across the ceiling during renovations in 2018 and 2019. The half bathroom adjacent to the kitchen is in its original location, but the original fixtures had to be replaced. The flooring and baseboards in the kitchen, dining room, and bathroom are original, but the original ceiling materials in the kitchen were replaced with pine boards.

### **Exterior and Interior Renovations in 2018 and 2019**

When the current owners purchased the property in 2018, the house had suffered from many years of neglect and deferred maintenance and required both exterior and interior renovations. Exterior restoration included the reglazing and repainting of windows and doors; re-parging the front stairs leading to the central entry; rebuilding the slate-covered brick patio outside the sunroom on the north side of the house; repainting the mudroom's German siding; and repainting the shingled siding in the clipped-gable end at the north elevation. A door on the rear porch's north wall was removed and replaced with brick finished to match bricks on the porch's other two walls. Two deteriorated, metal sash windows that opened to the unfinished basement at the south elevation were replaced with new fixed windows with vinyl grilles, but these windows are not visible from the street and do not compromise the house's integrity.

The house's interior required extensive renovations before it could be inhabited by the current owners. The ceiling in the living room had structural issues that required the support of oak beams spanning the length of the room, and multiple layers of rotted linoleum in each first-floor room were removed and the original wood flooring was exposed and refinished. In the sunroom, travertine tile replaced rotted linoleum and all the French doors were reglazed and repainted. A wall separating the small original kitchen at the house's southeast corner and the adjacent dining room was removed. Modern electrical wiring and plumbing lines had to be routed through the dining room and kitchen. The new electrical and plumbing lines were extended up the dining room's north wall and across the ceiling and housed in wood enclosures. New kitchen cabinets, appliances, and fixtures were installed at the house's southeast corner where the original kitchen was located. The original closet of the first-floor bedroom at the house's north elevation was expanded, creating a hallway between a large closet and bathroom at this elevation.

### *Carport and Garage, 2022*

A brick and frame garage and carport are connected to the mudroom and recessed back porch at the house's southeast corner. Completed in 2022, the garage, carport, and rear patio is sheltered by a low gable roof with clipped gables and classical returns that is supported by Tuscan columns. Each gable end is clad with Craftsman style cedar siding painted white to match the siding at the Costner House's north end.

### *Garage, ca. 1945*

An original shed-roof, two-car garage is located near the rear property line to the northeast of the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House. The frame garage is clad with German siding and has a metal roof. Two metal roll-up doors occupy the garage's north wall (Figure 62).

## **Statement of Significance**

The Robert A. and Eloise Costner House possesses significance at the local level within Lincolnton and Lincoln County, North Carolina. Built ca. 1928, the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House stands as an excellent example of a Colonial Revival cottage with classical entry and a side porch in Lincolnton. The Robert A. and Eloise Costner House's character-defining features of an early twentieth century Colonial Revival style dwelling include a symmetrical façade with a classical central entrance porch with denticulated cornice supported by Tuscan columns, fanlight, sidelights, groups of divided light windows, shutters, and a one-story sunroom on the north side of the house. The house also retains its minimal Craftsman style features of clipped gables and shingled cladding at the north gable. Overall, the house reflects the wealth and prosperity brought about by the oil industry within Lincolnton.

The Robert A. and Eloise Costner House is associated with the Costner family, particularly Robert A. Costner who made his own lasting mark on the oil industry in Lincolnton.

## **Integrity Statement**

The Robert A. and Eloise Costner House retains a very high level of material integrity and ranks high on the evaluation of its integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, association, and location. The building remains on its original site and has not been moved since its construction in ca. 1928. In addition, the setting remains intact in terms of its proximity to downtown Lincolnton and the other historic houses on North Laurel Street, despite the recent construction of three single-family dwellings at the property's southern boundary. The Robert A. and Eloise Costner House also retains a high level of integrity with regard to design, materials, and workmanship. The house possesses characteristic features of an early twentieth century Colonial Revival style dwelling that include a symmetrical façade with a classical central entrance porch with denticulated cornice supported by Tuscan columns, fanlight, sidelights, groups of divided light windows, shutters, and a one-story sunroom on the north side of the house that is "characteristic of many Colonial Revival houses from the 1920s" (Phillips 2022: Section 7, Page 5). Not only are the exterior materials still intact, but so too are some of the interior materials that were salvageable during the 2018 renovation including the door and window surrounds; baseboards; red and white oak, spruce, and heart pine floors; plaster walls; fireplaces; and French doors. Overall, the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House, despite no longer having an association with the Costner family, has a strong feeling of the Colonial Revival style with minimal Craftsman style details from its construction date of ca. 1928.

## **Architectural Context**

Popularity of the Colonial Revival style was sparked by a renewed interest in early English and Dutch houses along the Atlantic coast (McAlester 2015: 414). Architects also drew inspiration from post-medieval English architecture. The Colonial Revival style was popularized in the United States by the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. The exposition featured buildings that were based upon historically significant colonial designs. Around this same time, efforts were being made to preserve Old South

Church in Boston and George Washington's Mount Vernon, which furthered the public's interest in colonial architecture. In turn, books and periodicals spread the Colonial Revival style throughout the United States. At first, the buildings constructed were rarely historically accurate (McAlester 2015: 432). During the first few decades of the twentieth century, care was taken to better understand the style and construction of colonial homes. As a result, buildings executed in the Colonial Revival style between 1920 and 1930 are more historically accurate than their predecessors (McAlester 2015: 432). This trend did not last long as the Great Depression, World War II, and changes in postwar style led to a simplification of the Colonial Revival style in the 1940s and 1950s (McAlester 2015: 432).

Colonial Revival houses are characterized by their simple forms, which are typically rectangular but may include one-story side wings. Other character-defining features of the style include symmetrical facades with balanced windows and a central entry, front doors accentuated with classical surrounds, small pedimented entries or full-façade porches, double-hung sashes with multi-pane glazing and classical surrounds, window shutters, denticulated cornices, and cornice returns at the gable ends. The most common execution of the Colonial Revival style nationally is the two-story side gable or hipped roof form.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, Lincolnton saw an increase in population from 828 in 1890 to 3,390 by 1920 due to a revived economy and rapid growth. This increase precipitated the need for more houses, and by 1920 there were 650 dwellings in the city limits of Lincolnton. Many of these houses were built in an eclectic mix of the Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, and bungalow styles (Brown and York 1986: 26, 28).

There are three previously identified and surveyed Colonial Revival style residential buildings with side porches within a mile of the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House which were built between 1925 and 1928. The earliest of these houses is the Robert Steve Reinhardt House (LN0673), built ca. 1925 at 224 West Main Street, .66 miles from the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House (Figure 79). The Reinhardt House was surveyed by Marvin Brown in 1985 during the countywide architectural survey of Lincoln County and is a contributing building in the West Main Street Historic District (listed 2022). The two-story Reinhardt House has a low hipped roof with widely overhanging boxed eaves supported by paired brackets, a three-bay facade with grouped twelve-over-one and nine-over-one sash windows, and a central entrance porch with a flat roof and triple Tuscan columns at each corner. Characteristic of many Colonial Revival houses from the 1920s, the Reinhardt House has a one-story sunroom on the east side of the house, balanced by a one-story porch on the west side. Another Colonial Revival house at 114 North High Street, less than one block north of the Reinhardt House, is the Sheldon M. Roper House (LN0284), which was built in 1928 (Figure 80). The Roper House was surveyed in 2001 and is a contributing building in the West Main Street Historic District. The Roper house was originally one-and-a-half story but was enlarged to two full stories during the 1940s. The one-and-a-half-story house features a steep side-gabled roof with full-length shed dormers projecting from the front and rear roof slopes, and the symmetrical façade's central entrance is sheltered by a segmental-arched hood supported by Tuscan columns. Both a sun porch (1935) and screened porch project from the south side of the house and are balanced by a small gabled addition on the north side.

The Frank H. Chamberlain House (LN0299), built in 1927 at 415 E. Sumner Street, is located on a large adjacent lot west of the Robert A. and Eloise Costner (see Figure 81). The Chamberlain House was surveyed by Marvin Brown in 1985 and was individually designated as a local historic landmark in 2020. The two-story, side-gabled Chamberlain House has a symmetrical five-bay-wide façade with a classical fifteen-light wood entry door with ten-light sidelights sheltered by a one-story, low hipped-roof entrance porch supported by two square columns. Two pedimented hipped-roof dormers covered with shingle siding protrude from the roof, and a sun porch and “swinging porch” are located at the north and west sides of the house, respectively.

The exteriors of the Robert Steve Reinhardt House and Sheldon M. Roper house have been sheathed with artificial siding, and the Roper House has one-over-one replacement windows. The Chamberlain House maintains a high level of material integrity and has only received a few changes such as replacing screening with one-over-one double wood windows on the second floor sleeping porch and the first floor “swinging porch.” These three houses in Lincolnton make good comparisons to the Costner House in regard to the classical tenets of Colonial Revival style, but the Costner House is the only one-and-half-story, brick cottage among the group. Among this group of Colonial Revival style houses, the Chamberlain House and the Costner House retain the highest level of material integrity. Overall, the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House is an outstanding and highly intact example of a Colonial Revival style cottage in Lincolnton.

8F. Property boundary, significance, and integrity

#### **Verbal Boundary Justification**

The local landmark boundaries follow the parcel lines of Parcel 20316 as shown with heavy black lines on the Lincoln County GIS map at one inch = 200 feet. This map is Figure 84 in Section 8 C of this landmark report.

#### **Boundary Justification**

The boundaries encompass .437 acres at 528 N. Laurel Street in Lincolnton, which is the property historically associated with this house and property.

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# **Comments from Department of Cultural Resources State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)**



## North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

### State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper  
Secretary D. Reid Wilson

Office of Archives and History  
Deputy Secretary Darin J. Waters, Ph.D.

February 2, 2023

Andrew Bryant  
Lincoln County Historic Properties Commission  
303 N. Academy St., Suite A  
Lincolnton, NC 28092

RE: Proposed Designation of the **Robert A. and Eloise Costner House, 528 N. Laurel St., Lincolnton, Lincoln County.**

Dear Mr. Bryant:

Thank you for the report we received on the proposed designation of the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House, 528 N. Laurel St., Lincolnton, Lincoln County. We have reviewed the report and offer the following comments in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 160D-946.

According to the report, the Robert A. and Eloise Costner house is of special local significance because it is a good example of a Colonial Revival brick cottage, built in one of Lincolnton's earliest neighborhoods. While the house is a good example of its type and the owners should be commended for their excellent work in preserving the house, our office questions whether the house rises to the level of special local significance.

The report is complete and well done. We believe it provides the preservation commission and local governing board sufficient information to determine whether the Robert A. and Eloise Costner House possesses the requisite special local significance and integrity for local historic landmark designation.

Landmark designation means the community recognizes the property is worthy of preservation because of its special significance to the local community. If designated, any substantial changes in design, materials, and appearance to the property is subject to the design review procedures of the preservation commission. The owner may receive an annual deferral of up to fifty percent of the property taxes for as long as the property is designated and retains significance and integrity. (N.C.G.S. 105-278 *et seq.*).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report. Please note, our comments are advisory only and therefore, nonbinding. Once the governing board has received a recommendation from the Lincoln County Historic Properties Commission, it should proceed in the same manner as would otherwise be

required for an amendment to the zoning ordinance. Once the decision has been made, please return a completed copy of the enclosed form to our office.

This letter serves as our comments on the proposed designation of the Robert A. & Eloise Costner House. Please contact me at [Kristi.brantley@ncdcr.gov](mailto:Kristi.brantley@ncdcr.gov) (preferred) or 919-814-6576 should you have any questions about our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristi Brantley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Kristi" on the top line and "Brantley" on the bottom line, slightly overlapping.

Kristi Brantley  
Local Preservation Commissions / CLG Coordinator

CC: Commission Chair

Enclosure

## **Joshua Grant**

---

**From:** Brantley, Kristi <kristi.brantley@ncdcr.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 2, 2023 6:34 PM  
**To:** Andrew Bryant  
**Cc:** 'Jason Harpe'; Josh Grant; Sturm, Brett  
**Subject:** Costner House Comments  
**Attachments:** LN0848\_HPO comment letter\_Costner House.pdf; LN0848\_Costner House\_REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION CONFIRMATION.docx

**CAUTION:** This Email is from an EXTERNAL source. Ensure you trust this sender before clicking on any links or attachments.

Dear Andrew,

Attached is a copy of the letter written in response to the proposed designation of the **Robert A. and Eloise Costner House, 528 N. Laurel St., Lincolnton, Lincoln County**. Please share a copy of this letter with your Commission Chair.

Also attached is a copy of the designation confirmation form. If an ordinance is adopted to designate the property, please return a completed copy of the confirmation form to me with the date the ordinance was adopted.

I've copied Restoration Specialist Brett Sturm as Lincoln County is in his territory. Brett is a great resource and offers technical advice to historic property owners. He also works with the Rehabilitation Tax Credit program.

Architectural Survey Coordinator Beth King reviewed the report and offers the following comments:

*This house is charming, and the current owners should be commended for making excellent choices for its preservation. Photos provided by the current owners demonstrate that the house was in an advanced state of disrepair in 2018.*

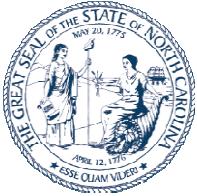
*My only concern about this local landmark candidate is just because a house is substantially intact to its date of construction doesn't mean the house is significant.*

*I want to be clear that the report appears to be very complete, and the necessary arguments regarding Significance and Integrity are framed correctly. This is the kind of property that would be an excellent addition to a historic district but might not rise to the level of individual listing.*

Thank you for the opportunity to review this report. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Best regards,

*Kristi*



**Kristi Brantley**  
CLG/Local Government Coordinator  
NC State Historic Preservation Office  
NC Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources  
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**WEAR** a face covering.

**WAIT** 6 feet apart from other people.

**WASH** your hands often.



**NC DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**