

Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Historic Landmarks Commission

Subject: **Rezoning Petition Comments**

To: Charlotte Planning, Design & Development
From: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission
HLC Staff Contact: Tommy Warlick
Date: May 25, 2023

Petition #/Petitioner: 2023-030/ Rhyne Land Holdings, LLC

Parcel ID #: 05142102, 05113202, & 05113204

Location of Property: Approximately 123.80 acres located along the south side of University City Boulevard, east of Interstate 485, south of Harris Houston Road.

Existing Zoning: MX-2(INNOV)

Proposed Zoning: I-2(CD)

Background Information

The parcels in question incorporate two early twentieth-century dairy farms. As noted by journalist John Vaughan in a 1985 *Charlotte Observer* article about one of these farms, “The end of farm life in Mecklenburg is within sight.” Today, such places are increasingly rare in and around Charlotte and serve as irreplaceable reminders of Mecklenburg County’s rich agricultural history.

Parcel ID# 05142102 (11220 University City Boulevard) contains a circa 1935 Dutch Colonial frame house and other 1930s barns and outbuildings, extant elements of the historic Banks-Cochrane Farm which has been in continuous family ownership for five generations dating back to 1906. In 1978, in recognition of that longstanding agricultural tradition on property originally derived from a colonial land grant, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture granted the Banks-Cochrane Farm the designation of “Century Farm,” making it one of only sixteen farms in Mecklenburg County to earn that distinction. According to a 2010 survey by the State Historic Preservation Office of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, the Banks-Cochrane Farm is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under both Criteria A for its association with significant events and under Criteria C for its Design/Construction. The State Historic Preservation Office has singled out the Banks-Cochrane Farm for its architectural significance – with its asymmetrical two-and-one-half-story massing, side-facing gambrel with cross gable, and wraparound porch – as “an outstanding example of the Dutch Colonial Revival

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style in a rural setting.” The Banks-Cochrane Farm offers a unique representation of early twentieth-century dairy and livestock farming in Mecklenburg County’s Newell community.¹

Much of the historic Garrison-Stroup Farm – including the circa 1906 frame I-house with wall dormers and associated early twentieth-century barns and outbuildings – is situated on Parcel ID# 05113202 (10800 University City Boulevard). John C. Garrison acquired the farm in November 1901, where he raised cotton and “Georgia rattlesnake watermelons” in addition to livestock. An active member of the Mecklenburg County Republican Party, Garrison frequently served as a county representative for statewide party conventions but proved unsuccessful in his bids for the North Carolina House of Representatives and Charlotte City Council in 1916 and 1926 respectively. Garrison passed the farm down to his daughter and her husband, Macie Garrison and Paul A. Stroup, in August 1958. The farm has remained in the Stroup family for at least two additional generations.² The State Historic Preservation Office’s 2010 survey considered the Garrison-Stroup Farm ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places but offered no additional assessment as to the integrity or historical or architectural significance of the farm. However, the Garrison-Stroup Farm has been identified previously by the Historic Landmarks Commission as a good example of early twentieth-century vernacular architecture and rural farm operations.³

Given the age of the structures described above – as well as the 1949 farmhouse on Parcel ID# 05113204 – and their local architectural, cultural, and historic significance, the Banks-Cochrane Farm and the Garrison-Stroup Farm are likely suitable candidates for local historic landmark designation. Further inspection, assessment, and analysis of the properties is warranted to confirm the structures’ potential eligibility as local historic landmarks, as well as to determine the integrity of the structures and the availability of appropriate preservation options that could allow the petitioner to achieve its development objectives while also maintaining the extant structures for future generations. The Historic Landmarks Commission requests the opportunity for a site visit to the properties prior to any final action on the petition in order to conduct such an inspection and to offer viable recommendations.

¹ John Vaughan, “The Death of Farm Life in Mecklenburg County,” *Charlotte Observer*, December 15, 1985, 1E, 8E; Obituary of Eugene Wilson Cochrane, *Charlotte Observer*, June 10, 2011, 5B; North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, “Century and Bicentennial Farm Family Information,” accessed May 24, 2023, <http://www.ncagr.gov/paffairs/century/index.htm>; Mead & Hunt, Inc., “Historic Architectural Resources Report: Replacement of Bridge No. 30 on U.S. Highway 321 Business over North Carolina Highway 150” (June 2019), 18, 22, accessed May 24, 2023, https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/historic-preservation-office/PDFs/ER_19-2232.pdf.

² Mecklenburg County Deed Book 161, Page 558; “Cotton Malady Appearing Here,” *Charlotte Evening Chronicle*, September 11, 1913, 2; “Briefs,” *Charlotte Observer*, August 6, 1910, 5; “Filling Out Ticket Poinoff [sic],” *Charlotte News*, September 16, 1908, 1; “Mecklenburg Republicans Sit on Federal Office-Holders In Convention,” *Charlotte News*, May 15, 1910, 2; “Majority of Mecklenburg Delegates Favor Morehead,” *Charlotte News*, July 30, 1910, 1; “Republicans Will Put Out Ticket,” *Charlotte News*, May 2, 1916, 2; “Republicans To Have Mass Meeting To Nominate Candidates,” *Charlotte News*, May 7, 1916, 2; “City Council Race Narrowing; Withdrawals Closing Today,” *Charlotte Observer*, May 3, 1929, section 2, page 1; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1989, Page 104.

³ North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, HPOWEB 2.0, accessed May 24, 2023, <https://nc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d2d04d8d7e03403f889419526e682529>; Sherry J. Joines and Dan L. Morrill, “Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina,” Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission (1997), on file in the office of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission.

Impact Under Current Zoning

The current zoning for the parcel would not permit the proposed use.

Impact of the Proposed Rezoning/Development

The proposed project would likely result in the demolition of the extant farmhouses and associated barns and outbuildings to accommodate a variety of warehousing, warehouse distribution, office, and other industrial uses.

Recommendations

Approval of Rezoning Petition #2023-030 would likely result in the demolition of two historic dairy farms, including a century-old operation eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Efforts to identify and implement suitable preservation strategies for the structures as part of any future development of the properties is recommended, and the Historic Landmarks Commission is available to consult with the petitioner to accomplish those goals.