



RANDOLPH COUNTY

Historic Landmark Preservation Commission

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The Local Landmark Designation Report: Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site, c. 1775-1800

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site, c. 1775-1800, is located between the two streams of the Caraway Creek and the Uwharrie River, situated on a narrow wooded ridge about 3,000 feet southwest of the peak of Mt. Shepherd, being about 200 feet south from the camp director's residence at 1043 Mt. Shepherd Rd. Ext., Asheboro, N.C. in Tabernacle Township, Randolph County.

The excavation of and the artifacts from the Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site in 1974 and 1975 represents the most comprehensive documentation of a late-eighteenth-century earthenware pottery in the piedmont region of North Carolina. Prior to the Mt. Shepherd excavation, only two pottery manufacturing sites had been excavated in North Carolina: Gottfried Aust site c. 1755 to 1771 and the Krause-Butner site c. 1802-1850 both in Bethabara, Forsyth County. The Mt. Shepherd site, in operation c. 1775-1800 thus fills a void in our knowledge of pottery making in 18th century North Carolina.

The ceramics found at the site provide insights into the Mt. Shepherd master potter's, Jacob Meyer, work and provides evidence of his training Gottfried Aust and other Wachovia potters in old Salem and Bethabara.

Located along the Old Indian Trading Path depicted on the 1770 John Collet map, the site represents a late 18th century industry in the heart of the Piedmont Backcountry. The incredibly well preserved ruins of the kiln, associated pottery manufacturing features, and products allow a unique opportunity to study the operation of a country earthenware potter, during this early period.

The products from the site suggest the Backcountry was self sufficient as far as ceramic products were concerned. Extremely versatile, the Mt. Shepherd potter made stoves to warm houses, smoking pipes for entertainment, a variety of earthenware vessels for everyday use and decorative slipwares, which rival those of the more sophisticated areas, for special use. The stove tiles which carry equestrian figures and soldiers at attention are unique in America. All other known examples include simple geometric or floral motifs.

ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY:

Much of the Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site was excavated in 1974 and 1975 by the archaeologist Alain C. Outlaw, now President of the Wheatland Foundation, Inc., Williamsburg, Virginia. Before 1974, natural growth, natural ground

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Greensboro/Liberty: 218.4555 • Archdale/Trinity: 819-3555

Local Landmark Designation Report
Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site, ca 1775-1800
Page 2

accumulation, and vegetative cover had protected the site for almost 200 years, since it appeared to have been undisturbed since it had been abandoned around 1800.

One pottery manufacturing structure that was uncovered was a well preserved, five-flued circular kiln, approximately nine feet in diameter. The Mt. Shepherd kiln itself, among all the structures and artifacts found, stands unique in North Carolina and the United States. According to local historian Mac Whatley, "Very few kilns have been excavated in the United States, and few of those exhibit similar characteristics."

According to archaeologist Alain C. Outlaw, "The site is important since it readily lends itself to public interpretation. Stabilized ruins with explanatory media provide an excellent opportunity to graphically display the beginnings of the continuing local pottery tradition in the Piedmont."

When contacted in 2010, Outlaw felt that the site should be re-opened, the covered and fill materials removed, the natural erosion areas stabilized, the security fences upgraded and repaired, the interpretive signage upgraded, all under the supervision of a professional archaeologist so that the public could clearly view and interpret the significance of this historic eighteen century pottery site.

BASIC DATA:

Name and Street Address Nearest Site: Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site
1043 Mt. Shepherd Rd. Ext., Asheboro, NC
27205

Name and Address of Property Owners: High Point District of the United Methodist
Church
Mt. Shepherd Retreat Center & Camp
1045 Mt. Shepherd Rd. Ext.
Asheboro, N.C. 27205

Date of Site: c. 1775 - 1800

Date Listed on National Register of Historic Places: 1980

PIN #: 7713617423 (531.07 Acres)

Description and Justification of Boundaries of Site Proposed for Designation:

The Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site, c. 1775-1800, is located between the two streams of the Caraway Creek and the Uwharrie River, situated on a narrow wooded ridge about 3,000 feet southwest of the peak of Mt. Shepherd, being about 200 feet south from the camp director's residence at 1043 Mt. Shepherd Rd. Ext., Asheboro, N.C. in Tabernacle Township, Randolph County. Mt. Shepherd is the highest peak of the Uwharrie Mountain Range in Randolph County. The site is located approximately eight miles west of Asheboro, via US Highway 64 West.

On the 531 acre Mt. Shepherd property tract, the approximate 2.60 acre archaeological pottery site is located about 200 feet south from the camp director's residence at 1043 Mt. Shepherd R. Ext. Asheboro, N.C. At the end of SR 1686, also known as the Mt. Shepherd Road, the state road stops and a private paved road continues, known as the Mt. Shepherd Road Extension, to the administrative offices of the Mt. Shepherd Retreat Center

The designated 2.60 acres archaeological pottery site begins on the left where the property line crosses at the dead end of SR 1686. It proceeds adjacent to and west of the private road known as Mt. Shepherd Road Ext. for approximately 240 feet. The site delineation then bears to the left at the beginning of the graveled maintenance and camp drive-way, proceeding northwestward for approximately 390 feet. At this point, the site delineation then runs south approximately 473 feet along the western property line. Then, the site delineation runs eastward approximately 298 feet along the southern property line, ending at the beginning point, and encompassing an area of approximately 2.60 acres.

Randolph County G.I.S. mapping is included with this report that designates, through the use of aerial photography, the Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The History of the Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site,
by Bill Johnson and Randle E. Brim, attached.

The Identity of the Mt. Shepherd Potter and His Work, summarized and critiqued by
Randle E. Brim, attached. Based on the journal article, "The Mt. Shepherd
Pottery: Correlating Archaeology and History," Journal of Early Southern
Decorative Arts, May 180, Pages 21-57, by L. McKay Whatley.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION NARRATIVE OF ALL RESOURCES ON THE SITE:

The approximate 2.60 acres as stated in the "Description and Justification of Boundaries of the Site" is the delineated and proposed designated area for the Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site to be placed on the Randolph County Historic Landmarks. It was on this same 2.60 acres that was excavated by the archaeologist Alain C. Outlaw in 1974 and 1975. Upon completion of the 1975 excavation, all the excavated areas and structures related to the 1775-1800 pottery manufacturing site, including the nine feet circular five-flued kiln, were covered and filled. A security fence was placed around the outer perimeter of the excavated areas. A kiosk, for interpreting and understanding the 1974 and 1975 excavation, was installed at the northern edge of the 2.60 acre site, adjacent to the graveled maintenance road, just south of the camp director's residence, being 1043 Mt. Shepherd Rd. Ext. Asheboro, N.C. 2705.

Many of the artifacts and ceramics discovered during the 1974 and 1975 excavation of the Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site are being held in a special glass cabinet at the administrative offices of the Mt. Shepherd Retreat Center. A small grant in 2007 from the North Carolina Archaeological Society in Raleigh allowed the consolidation and curation of the artifact collection made this arrangement and visible display possible.

MAP AND PLANS

A Geographic Information System (GIS) air photograph map, (produced by the Randolph County Planning Department) of this property and the Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site, and reflecting its relation to the nearby SR 1686 and nearby facilities, is included as part of this report.

PHOTOS

Submitted as part of this report are digital photographs, (including a compact disk) prepared by the Randolph County Planning Department. The photographs include images of the 1975 excavation and personages, the site as it appears now, and artifacts that were discovered during the 1974 and 1975 excavations of the Mt. Shepherd Archaeological Pottery Site.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH CERTIFICATION

Historical data used in this report has been reviewed in regular scheduled public meetings and unanimously approved by the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission for public presentation and use in this report. A final record of Certification, after a local landmark public hearing, will be reflected in the official minutes of the Commission. Historical information included is as prepared and documented by staff person, Randle E. Brim and Mt. Shepherd Retreat Center Board Member Bill Johnson, April 8, 2010.

**NORTH CAROLINA
RANDOLPH COUNTY**

June 7, 2010
Date

Hal Johnson
Hal Johnson, Chairman
Randolph County, HLPC

