

The Local Landmark Designation Report: 1911 Pisgah Covered Bridge

SIGNIFICANCE:

The 1911 Pisgah Covered Bridge is located in the Uwharrie National Forest at 6925 Pisgah Covered Bridge Road, Asheboro, N.C. in Union Township, Randolph County. It is the only remaining covered bridge in Randolph County, and one of the two remaining covered bridges in the state of North Carolina. The covered bridge is a part of the cultural and historical heritage of Randolph County, and rises to the Criteria for Significance and Aspects of Integrity considered necessary for Local Historical Landmark designation. The bridge is a direct connection to the county's past mode of transportation when horse and wagon transportation were common and automobile travel was in its infancy. As Dr. David Jones, Executive Director of the N.C. Zoological Park has stated, "It represents a quieter time gone by when things were less rushed and the sound of tumbling water in the creek was all that could be heard apart from the birds' songs and rustling leaves."

It not only stands as a link to the county's past way of life, but it also stands as a symbol to the county's current and future life. It is symbolized and preserved in the official seal of Randolph County. Quoting Dr. Jones again, he states, "The old bridge has become such an important icon in reflecting the history and the heritage of this area."

It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction in the building of covering bridges. These characteristics and the architectural significance of this covered bridge are detailed in the attachment labeled, "Construction Aspects of the Pisgah Covered Bridge."

It has yielded and will likely yield more important historical significance in that it is one of the two remaining covered bridges in the entire state of North Carolina. It was the last covered bridge to be owned and to be maintained by the N.C. Department of Transportation.

ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY:

Although the bridge floated off its foundational stone pillars and came apart more than 100 feet downstream in August 2003, more than 90 % of the bridge's components were recovered and accounted for. Using these recovered materials and being reconstructed to the exact measurements and dimensions at the exact original location, the bridge retains its previous identity and appearance.

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Based on scaled and detailed measurements, and computer drawn plans of the bridge's timbers and components, a Randolph Community College student, preserved the plans of the 1911 bridge, two years before its destruction. A North Carolina licensed building contractor and 20 of his workers, followed these previously drawn plans and reconstructed the bridge.

To both the casual and detailed observer of the Pisgah Covered Bridge, one sees the same bridge at the same location in its same setting and in its same physical environment, resting on what appears to be the same four dry stacked stone piers. The bridge's previous tin roof was replaced with hand split cedar shakes, being very similar to the bridge's original hand split oak shakes. The modern technology of concrete and steel I beams for the bridge's foundational and support system are all concealed to the physical eye being covered with the previous stones and with the same wood or replaced old wood. The bridge, in its form and design, retains the appearance of the original workmanship of the bridge. The detailed examples of the eight flying buttresses on the bridge's lower exterior are but one example of the retention of the bridge's original workmanship. More than 90% of the bridge's materials and components were placed back into the rebuilt bridge. The Pisgah Covered Bridge retains its unique character and continues to reflect the transportation history and heritage of Randolph County and North Carolina.

BASIC DATA:

Name and Street Address: 6925 Pisgah Covered Bridge Rd., Asheboro, NC 27205

Name and Address of Property Owners:

The Bridge & Right-of-Way: N.C. Zoological Park, 4401 Zoo Parkway,
Asheboro, N.C. 27205

The West Side of Branch: Land Trust for Central N.C. Inc., P.O. Box 4284,
Salisbury, NC 28145

The East Side of Branch: Lena S. Baker Heirs, 6875 Pisgah Covered Bridge
Rd., Asheboro, N.C. 27205 (With a Conservation
Easement)

Date of Original Construction: 1911

Date Reconstructed: 2003-2004

Date Listed on National Register of Historic Places: January 20, 1972

PIN #: 7635430492 (Lena S. Baker Heirs) (East Side of Branch) (0.89 Acres)
7635338170 (Land Trust for Central N.C. Inc.) (West Side of Branch)
(2.32 Acres)

Description and Justification of Boundaries of Structure Proposed for Designation:

The covered bridge structure spans the West Fork Branch of the Little River. The bridge itself is owned by the N.C. Zoological Park. There are no other structures to be designated at this site. The covered bridge that is to be designated as a Local Historical Landmark is approximately 60 feet south of the current NCDOT bridge spanning the West Fork Branch of the Little River that flows beneath the Pisgah Covered Bridge Road. There is currently an approximate 20 wide access road from Pisgah Covered Bridge Road providing for existing and future public access to the bridge site. Randolph County G.I.S. identification number, specifically designated based on physical location, for the bridge site, is 6925 Pisgah Covered Bridge Road, Union Township, Randolph County. The dimensions of the covered bridge structure to be designated for the Historic Landmark structure are 10 feet wide (exclusive of side flying buttresses) by 54 feet long (exclusive of roof overhangs). Randolph County G.I.S. mapping is included with this report that designates, through the use of air photography, the bridge structure site.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Pisgah Covered Bridge Historical Report by Randle E. Brim attached.
The Construction Aspects of the Pisgah Covered Bridge by Randle E. Brim attached.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION NARRATIVE OF ALL RESOURCES ON THE SITE:

The covered bridge structure spans the West Fork Branch of the Little River. The bridge itself is owned by the N.C. Zoological Park. The adjacent property on the west side of the branch is owned by the Land Trust for Central N.C., Inc. The adjacent property on the east side of the branch is owned by the Lena S. Baker Heirs with a Conservation Easement. The bridge structure measures 10 feet wide (exclusive of side flying buttresses) by 54 feet long (exclusive of roof overhangs). It is approximately 60 feet south of the current NCDOT bridge over the West Fork Branch of the Little River of Pisgah Covered Bridge, Union Township, Randolph County. The covered bridge is the main feature of a small passive recreational park that includes an access road, a parking area, picnic tables, and a walking trail with foot bridges adjacent to the branch on both sides, south of the covered bridge, beginning and ending at both ends of the covered bridge. The bridge is located over the West Fork Branch of the Little River within the Uwharrie National Forest in southwest Randolph County.

The stream of water is noted for a higher quality of water that flows into Little River. The adjacent banks and grounds are undeveloped and covered with native plants and trees. The N.C. Zoological Park provides upkeep and maintenance necessary for the bridge and site. Nearby community residents assist in gate locking and general grounds clean-up.

MAP AND PLANS

A Geographic Information System (GIS) air photograph map, (produced by the Randolph County Planning Department) of this property and covered bridge site and reflecting its relation to the nearby SR 1114 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 covered bridge, pre-flood, before the bridge was destroyed, its destruction, its reconstruction, the May 18, 2004 rededication, and 2009 current images of the bridge.

ILLUSTRATED DRAWINGS:

Submitted as part of this report are a set of four detailed illustrated architectural drawings that were drawn by Nora Lucas Miller in 2001, two years before the covered bridge was destroyed. These drawings were used by lead contractor William Moffitt, Jr. to reconstruct the bridge in 2003-2004.

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 and the construction aspects included is as prepared and documented by staff person, Randle E. Brim, January 7, 2010.

**NORTH CAROLINA
RANDOLPH COUNTY**

Date

Hal Johnson, Chairman
Randolph county, HLPC