

I. General Information

1. John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House
2. 14175 NC 801 HWY. Mt Ulla, NC 28125
3. Tax parcel # 566 048
4. John Carlyle Sherrill
5. 14175 NC 801 HWY. Mt Ulla, NC 28125
6. Appraised value: House 214,365 Building site 31,860

II. Abstract

The John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House is a two-story Colonial Revival Farmhouse built 1937-38. It is located on 1.75 acres on NC HWY 801 in the Rowan County village of Mt. Ulla. It is significant to Rowan County for architectural and cultural importance. It is one of a very few remaining Colonial Revival farmhouses in Rowan County. Additionally, the builder of this home, as well as, the builder's family contributed heavily to the economic development of Mount Ulla and Western Rowan County by developing a milling industry and other commercial/retail businesses in the area. Without the Sherrill-Carlyle family it is unlikely that the village of Mount Ulla would have developed. The house along with 1.18 acres are to be included in the local designation.

III Historical Background

The John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House is one of the two architectural landmarks in Mount Ulla. This house along with the Rankin-Sherrill House on the adjacent lot (NHR #82003508) stand as the principal reminders of the family's milling and mercantile operations in the village, spanning three generations of ownership, and the critical role of John Carlyle Sherrill in shaping the civic and commercial life of Mount Ulla in the first half of the twentieth century.

The history of this house and the role of John Carlyle Sherrill (1884-1948) as a successful merchant, miller, and leading citizen of Mount Ulla until his death in 1948, begins with the family's relocation from Catawba County to the fertile fields of western Rowan County in December 1884.

Adam Elliott Sherrill (father of John Carlyle Sherrill) who established the family at Mount Ulla was the great-great-great-grandson of pioneer Adam Sherrill (ca. 1699-ca. 1774), a native of Maryland, who migrated south on the Great Wagon Road and crossed the Catawba River in 1747 into what was then Indian territory and is now Catawba County. The point of his crossing has thereafter been known as Sherrill's Ford.

The Sherrill Family Moves to Mount Ulla

1. On 26 November 1884 Adam Elliott Sherrill purchased a tract of 148 acres in Mount Ulla from John W. Poteat and his wife. The Poteat property apparently included a house which the Sherrill family moved into in December 1884. Just over a year later Adam Elliott Sherrill acquired 260.75 acres from Sylvester Chalmers Rankin which included an antebellum Greek Revival-style brick house built by Dr. Samuel D. Rankin. In 1886, the Sherrill family moved into the Dr. Rankin house. Adam Elliott Sherrill's purchase of the Rankin property also included a frame store building in which Chalmers Rankin had operated a general mercantile business. The store re-opened by the Sherrills and offered rural residences groceries, clothing, hardware, seeds, fertilizers, agricultural supplies and other merchandise. This store was operated by three generations of the Sherrill family until it closed in 1966.

The Sherrill Family's Milling and Mercantile Operations

Adam Elliott Sherrill prospered in his agricultural and mercantile operations and fortune continued to benefit him and his family in the closing decade of the nineteenth century. In about 1897, the route of the North Carolina Midland Railroad was devised through Mount Ulla. Adam and Josephine Sherrill conveyed a portion of their property to the railroad along their northern border. A depot was built on this tract, and Adam Elliott Sherrill was appointed agent for the railroad and the depot supervisor.

Railroad transportation and links to markets and towns in a larger region presented Mr. Sherrill and his neighbors at Mount Ulla with new opportunity. On 26 October 1899, Mr. Sherrill, Robert Cowan Knox, and John Knox Goodman formed the Mount Ulla Roller Mill Company. They built a large, three-story wood frame mill on the Sherrill property. Mr. Sherrill and his partners clearly saw the potential of buying grains grown locally, milling said grains into flour and meal for both human and animal consumption, and selling their products locally, regionally, and in the area beyond. Grains brought to their mill by wagon and rail would be converted to products that the railroad could easily transport to a wide market.

After his father died, it was John Carlyle Sherrill who came to the aid of his mother in the operation of the family farm, the store, and the Mount Ulla Roller Mill Company. His son, John Carlyle Sherrill Jr. (1914-1987) recalled his rise to the occasion in an article published in the Salisbury Post on the closing of the family store in 1966. "He (Mr. Sherrill Sr.) was a student at old Trinity College when his father died. He quit his studies at Trinity and came home to help run the business." The farm prospered, as did the store. However, the roller mill operation failed for reasons now unknown. In 1914, the Mount Ulla Roller Mill Company was formally dissolved. Six years later, John Carlyle Sherrill with a renewed interest in milling, formed the Mount Ulla Flour Mills and erected a three-story frame building with a basement in 1923. In time the mill came to include a sizable two-story shed addition, a one-story shed, and concrete grain silos. This enterprise was successful and physically enhanced Mount Ulla's role as a commercial trading center in western Rowan County.

The Houses of John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill

2. On 25th of October in 1911, John Carlyle Sherrill, then twenty-seven years old, married Anita Miller, a native of Mocksville, NC. She was a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a school teacher. John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill established themselves in a one-story frame Queen Anne- style cottage at 665 Grampian Road. They resided in that house until 1931. Four children were born to the couple: John Carlyle Sherrill Jr. (1914-1987), William Miller Sherrill (1917-1918), Margaret Hill Sherrill (1922-1922) and Sarah Josephine Sherrill (1924-2000).

Josephine Sherrill, the widow of Adam Elliott Sherrill, decided to subdivide the family's real estate holdings following the death of her oldest daughter in 1915. She retained possession of the Rankin-Sherrill Homeplace and the store, but the remaining 413-plus acres were divided among her five surviving children and the minor heirs of her deceased daughter. Whether this was done to encourage each of the six to build close to Mrs. Sherrill or to build up the village is unclear, but only three of the six heirs would eventually build on these lots.

3. **Construction Date 1938:** In June 1920, Price Sherrill and his wife, Carolyn Miller, a younger sister of Anita (Miller) Sherrill, built a large frame bungalow on lot number three. They also erected the frame two-car garage which remains. In 1931 Price and Carolyn decided to relocate from Mount Ulla to Mooresville and subsequently sold the large bungalow residence to Anita M. Sherrill. Anita and John Carlyle Sherrill moved their household from the Grampian Road to the Price Sherrill bungalow. Their enjoyment of the house was relatively short lived. In mid-1936, a fire broke out on the second story and eventually consumed the entire house. John & Anita Sherrill and their three children moved into rooms on the second story of the store and resided there until March of 1938 during the building of this house which is the subject of this Rowan County Landmark Application.

The source of the design of the house is not known. However, it was constructed by Charles Henry Brown of Troutman, North Carolina. The house was erected slightly east of the site of the Price Sherrill bungalow and northeast of the frame garage which the Sherrill family continued to use. Its brick construction and symmetrical façade repeated features of the antebellum Rankin-Sherrill house while its Colonial Revival style was in contrast to the Greek Revival character of the earlier home. Mr. and Mrs. Sherrill occupied the house until their deaths. Several of the house's six second-story bedrooms were also rented to Mrs. Sherrill's fellow teachers at the Mount Ulla School in the 1930s and 1940s.

Ancillary Development in Mount Ulla

John Carlyle Sherrill was engaged in two major building projects at Mount Ulla in the 1920s. First, in 1923, he moved the two-story nineteenth-century frame store back on the store lot to the south and erected a sizable two-story brick store building. Its symmetrical façade featured a centered, recessed first-story entrance flanked by large plate glass display windows, and a five-bay second-story elevation below a horizontal recessed brickwork panel. Later, in 1930, Mr. Sherrill entered into a lease agreement with the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey (Esso) to install gasoline pumps at the front of the store.

On Friday evening, 7 November 1947, a fire began burning in the frame mill while only three millers were at work, effectively destroying the mill in the space of a few hours. The Salisbury Post gave front-page coverage to the fire under a headline, “\$150,000 Fire Consumes Mount Ulla Mill and Grain”. John Carlyle Sherrill did not see the rebuilding of the Mount Ulla Flour Mills. Mr. Sherrill died in Lowrance Hospital, Mooresville, on 26 February 1948. His obituary, published on the front page of the Salisbury Post on 27 February 1948 described him as “One of the best known and most influential citizens of Western Rowan County”. Anita Miller Sherrill survived her husband by thirty-nine years, dying on 11 December 1977. During this period the mill at Mount Ulla was enlarged and rebuilt in brick and operated by their son John Carlyle Sherrill Jr. (1914-1987) who resided with his wife and four children in the Rankin-Sherrill House. Mr. John Carlyle Sherrill, Jr. operated the store into June 1966. As it neared its closing, the concern operated by three generations of the Sherrill family was described by staff writer Heath Thomas as “Rowan County’s oldest country store” in an article published in the Salisbury Post on 29 May 1966 under the caption “Old Rowan Store to Close Doors.” An editorial published in the same newspaper concluded with a lament. “After visiting Sherrill’s Store now, one walks away with a feeling that he is looking back for the last time forever at something that is forever gone.” It was about this time that John Carlyle Sherrill Jr. ceased the personal management of the flour mills and leased the mill facility to Coastal Mills of Johnson City, Tennessee. The mill was also rented for a time to Ward Ratledge.

Lastly, a portion of the building was used as a feed store into the early 1980s. From about 1985 the mill building and its grain bins stood unused.

The John Carlyle Sherrill Home from 1977 to Present

Following Anita Miller Sherrill’s death in 1977, her heirs conveyed this house to John Carlyle Sherrill Jr. On 31 August 1980 John Carlyle Sherrill Jr. and his wife conveyed this house and grounds of 1.180 acres to their only son, John Carlyle Sherrill III (b. 1953) and his wife, Susan (Reid) Sherrill who were married in 1977. Five years later, in 1985, a sliver of land on the east side of this house, 0.142 acres, was added by the Sherrills to their son’s holdings. In 1988, as part of their divorce settlement, Susan Reid Sherrill conveyed the house and its grounds to John Carlyle Sherrill III. Mr. Sherrill, his second wife, April Eddinger (b. 1962), who were married in 1994, and their family continue to occupy the John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House.

4 Additions and alterations:

Date: Ca 1980 During John Carlyle Sherrill III’s ownership and occupation of his grandparents’ house, it has remained virtually unchanged except for the renovations in the kitchen. However, changes have occurred in the appearance of the family compound at the heart of Mount Ulla.

Date: Ca 2001 Originally, the terrace carried fully across the north elevation of the sun parlor; however, that eastern most portion of the terrace, damaged by freezing water that penetrated the mortar, has been taken up prior to rehabilitation.

Date: Ca 1990 The present owner has added an open wood deck across the south front of the porch with steps descending to ground level off its east and west ends.

September 1989: Damage incurred as a result of strong winds and small tornados during Hurricane Hugo on 22 September 1989. The oak grove that shaded the lawn and grounds of the Sherrill House was decimated that day when thirteen oaks, a walnut tree, a pine tree, and a locust tree were downed by the wind and had to be removed. Shade trees were also lost on the adjoining grounds of the Rankin-Sherrill House. Some replanting on both properties has occurred.

IV. Assessment

1. Description of significance:

The architectural significance of the John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House derives from its dual importance of being both a noteworthy example of a village house in the Colonial revival style and one of the rare examples of the style erected as farm seats.

The Sherril-Carlyle House is historically significant to Rowan County architecturally as one of the few remaining Colonial Revival farmhouses. It is culturally significant as the home of one of Rowan County's most important entrepreneurial families.

The Sherrill-Carlyle House is one of the two architectural landmarks in Mount Ulla. This house along with the Rankin-Sherril House on the adjacent lot (NHR #82003508) stand as the principal reminders of the family's milling and mercantile operations in the village, spanning three generations of ownership, and the critical role of John Carlyle Sherrill in shaping the civic and commercial life of Mount Ulla in the first half of the twentieth century.

In 1937-38, when this house was built, it was the seat of Mr. Sherrill's farming operations while also the home of Mount Ulla's merchant and mill owner. As such, it represents an important example of the final phase of important farmhouse construction in rural Rowan County that closed with World War II. After the war, there was very little important domestic building in the Rowan countryside as textile mills lured returning veterans to their plants along with many of the county's others sons and daughters. When the agricultural economy enabled the construction of the next generation of farm residences, they were a rural variant of one-story suburban Ranch houses.

2. Architectural Description:

The John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House, a well-preserved two-story Colonial Revival-style brick house, meets National Register Criterion C and holds local significance in the area of architecture. National Historic Register of Historic Places #09000704. The house was begun in the second half of 1937, probably in the autumn, and completed in about March 1938, when Mr. and Mrs. Sherrill and their family occupied it. The Sherrill House has remained remarkably intact and little changed during its sixty-year existence. It remained the home of its builders through the death of Mr. Sherrill in 1948, and until the death of Mrs. Anita Sherrill in 1977. Having been rented for about two years, it became the property and the residence of the

Sherrill's grandson, John Carlyle Sherrill III, in 1980, and the Sherrill House remains his home to the present. During those six decades, the only change of any note occurred in the kitchen. In its form, plan, materials, pre-World War II finish, craftsmanship, and feeling, the John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House reflects the final chapter in the long history of the Colonial Revival style in Rowan County.

The symmetrical north-facing façade of the Sherrill House is three bays wide. Its architectural development is focused on the central entrance and the one-story, one-bay porch that shelters it. The classically-finished porch is supported by trios of wood Tuscan columns at its northeast and northwest front corners. Its molded frieze rises to a flush sheathed eave of beveled boards. The columns stand on a floor paved with broken terra cotta tiles, enframed in a soldier-course brick border that extends as an open terrace to the east. Originally, the terrace carried fully across the north elevation of the sun parlor; however, that eastern most portion of the terrace, damaged by freezing water that penetrated the mortar, has been taken up prior to rehabilitation. The house's arch-headed entrance is enframed by a flush soldier-course surround. The six-panel door retains its original brass hardware. It is flanked by eight pane sidelights above molded panels and surmounted by a Federal-style fanlight with wood tracery. The flanking bays on the first-story elevation contain large three-part windows that illuminate the living and dining rooms in the house's northeast and northwest corners, respectively. On the second story, openings holding paired sash windows flank a smaller window that illuminates a bathroom between the front corner bedrooms.

The west elevation of the house has a generally symmetrical four-bay elevation. Complementing openings holding paired sash windows are set in the near center of the elevation. The north "third" of the elevation has a symmetrical two-bay fenestration with single windows in complementing positions on each story. In the south portion of the wall small paired sash windows appear on the first story, positioned above the interior kitchen sink, while a single window is located above on the second story. A single small window, replicating the size of those in the kitchen, appears in the west face of the shallow one-story projecting, shed-like bay that contains the pantry. Small four-pane windows at the base of the elevation, just above ground level, illuminate the house's basement.

The appearance of the Sherrill House's east elevation is dominated by the one-story sun parlor that occupies the north half of its first story. The sun parlor walls are fitted with a centered glazed door flanked by windows on the north elevation, a large opening holding four sash windows on its long east elevation, and an opening holding paired windows on its south side. Its shallow hip roof is encircled by a white picket railing. (The sun parlor has doorways in its interior west wall opening into both the living room and the family sitting room in the east center of the house.) A glazed fifteen-pane door and single window, serving the sitting room, are set in the center of the first-story east elevation while an opening holding paired sash illuminates Mr. and Mrs. Sherrill's bedroom in the house's southeast corner. The fenestration on the three-bay second story reflects the arrangement of three bedrooms here, along the east side of the second-

story hall, an arrangement recurring on the west side of the hall but less clearly evident on the exterior.

On the rear elevation, the projecting shed-like one- one-story block fully occupies the first story of the house. The frame center section of this projection, containing the enclosed porch, is framed by brick blocks of unequal size that contain the pantry on the west and a part of the Sherrill's bedroom on the east. The porch itself projects about two feet beyond the hip-roof "shed." It has four-over-four sash windows in its narrow east and west ends and a three-part arrangement on the long south elevation featuring a center opening with paired replacement doors flanked by equal-sized openings fitted with paired sash windows. The present owner has added an open wood deck across the south front of the porch with steps descending to ground level off its east and west ends. Above, on the three-bay second story of the house single windows serving the southeast and southwest corner bedrooms flank a smaller window that illuminates the rear second-story bathroom.

3. There are no known contributing archaeological element on the property.

4 Property evaluation.

Whatever the origin of the design of the John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House, it stands at the close of the long, pre-World War II chapter in the history of the style that had its origins in events associated with the Centennial celebrations in 1876. In Rowan County elements of the style appeared first in Salisbury, the county seat, as decorative features in turn-of-the-century Queen Anne-style houses whose design, fabric and finish are such a successful amalgam of the two styles that they are alternately cited at times, by some, as examples of both styles incorporating the influence of the other. This group includes the Louis H. Clement House of about 1899 at 302 South Ellis Street, the Milton Brown House of about 1902 at 208 South Fulton Street, and the McKenzie-Grimes House, also dating to about 1902, at 228 West Bank Street. Development of the Colonial revival style continued in Salisbury in the decades leading up to World War II with some degree of asymmetry seen in the style's combination with the four-square form or an alternative, increasing symmetry seen in conventional three and five-bay brick or frame houses, such as the Reamus-Gambley House at 602 Mitchell Avenue, and imposing one-and-a-half-story houses covered with gambrel roofs, such as the Ernest Lauriston Hardin House of about 1921 at 702 Mitchell Avenue (see Fulton Heights HD, NR, 1999). In other instances the Colonial Revival style was combined with the Classical Revival style on at least three houses with two-story porticoes in the Salisbury Historic District (NR, 1975): the David Franklin cannon House of 1906 at 202 South Fulton Street; and the Walter Henderson Woodson House of 1925 at 100 North Fulton Street.

In Rowan County beyond the border of Salisbury, the Colonial Revival style arrived later, appearing first in the county's smaller towns and villages, and next in the countryside in rare instances as the seat of a farm, as here on a sizable edge-of-a-village farm. Arguably the most popular Colonial Revival-style house was the large, symmetrical, somewhat "boxy" house with a wide, usually three-bay façade, incorporating large, multiple-sash windows, expansive one-story porches supported by Tuscan columns, and tall hip roofs featuring gable-roof dormers. The

Edwards-Black House of about 1909 at 421 South Main Street, Landis, with its three-bay façade, one-story Tuscan-column porch, and Palladian-style attic dormer, is one example and another is the Paul Talmadge Goodman House of about 1916, at the edge of Gold Hill, whose one-story porch features pairs and trios of columns on stone plinths (Hood, 240, 259). A third example of the style with a one-story Tuscan-column, wrap-around porch was built in about 1912 on Grampian Road (now 585 Grampian Road) in Mount Ulla for Dr. George Alexander Brown (1869-1938), another of Mount Ulla's leading citizens (Hood, 150),

In Rowan county's smaller towns, as in the county seat, houses in variant Colonial Revival modes continued to be built in the 1920s but with fewer examples in the 1930s, such as the beige brick Enoch Arthur Goodman House of 1936 at 602 South Fulton Street, Salisbury, built for a co-founder of the Goodman Lumber Company. During this period the expansive full-façade and wrap-around porches of the 1900s and 1910s gave way in the 1920s to smaller, single-bay classically-detailed entrance porches seen on both the Goodman residence and that of the Sherrills. Completed in 1938, the Sherrill House is among the very last of those built before World War II, which interrupted much of the domestic construction and altered representation of the style in residential construction. After the war and through the 1950s, "Colonial" houses, mostly erected in suburbs, had an altogether different character.

The architectural significance of the John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House derives from its dual importance of being both a noteworthy example of a village house in the Colonial revival style and one of the rare examples of the style erected as farm seats. When Dr. Samuel D Rankin and the Reverend Andrew Y. Lockridge (1801-1876), minister to both Third Creek and Back Creek Presbyterian churches (for Lockridge see Hood, 150-51), built their houses at what is now Mount Ulla, this part of Rowan County was entirely rural. Their houses were the seats of farms of sizable acreages. While Mount Ulla took on the character of a village with the sequential construction of the railway depot, the Mount Ulla Roller Mills facility in about 1900, John Carlyle Sherrill's ca. 1911 dwelling on Grampian Road, the completion of Dr. Brown's house and office in 1912, and John Carlyle Sherrill's new brick store in 1923, the antebellum Rankin House and the Lockridge-Goodman House remained farm seats, while the village developed between them.

5. The house and 1.18 acres is representative of the original setting. The landscaping is representative of the original setting.

V. Supporting Documentation

1. Digital photographs of each elevation (the pictures need to be numbered and identified)

1. North Elevation

2. South Elevation

3. East Elevation

- 4. West Elevation**
- 2. Sketch of the floor plan**
- 3. Site plan**
- 4. Tax Map**

VI. Bibliography/Source Citations

John Carlyle and Anita Sherrill House, National Historic Register of Historic Places, Sept.1,2009, # 09000704.

John Carlyle Sherrill Interview by Rowan County Historic Landmark Commission, Date: