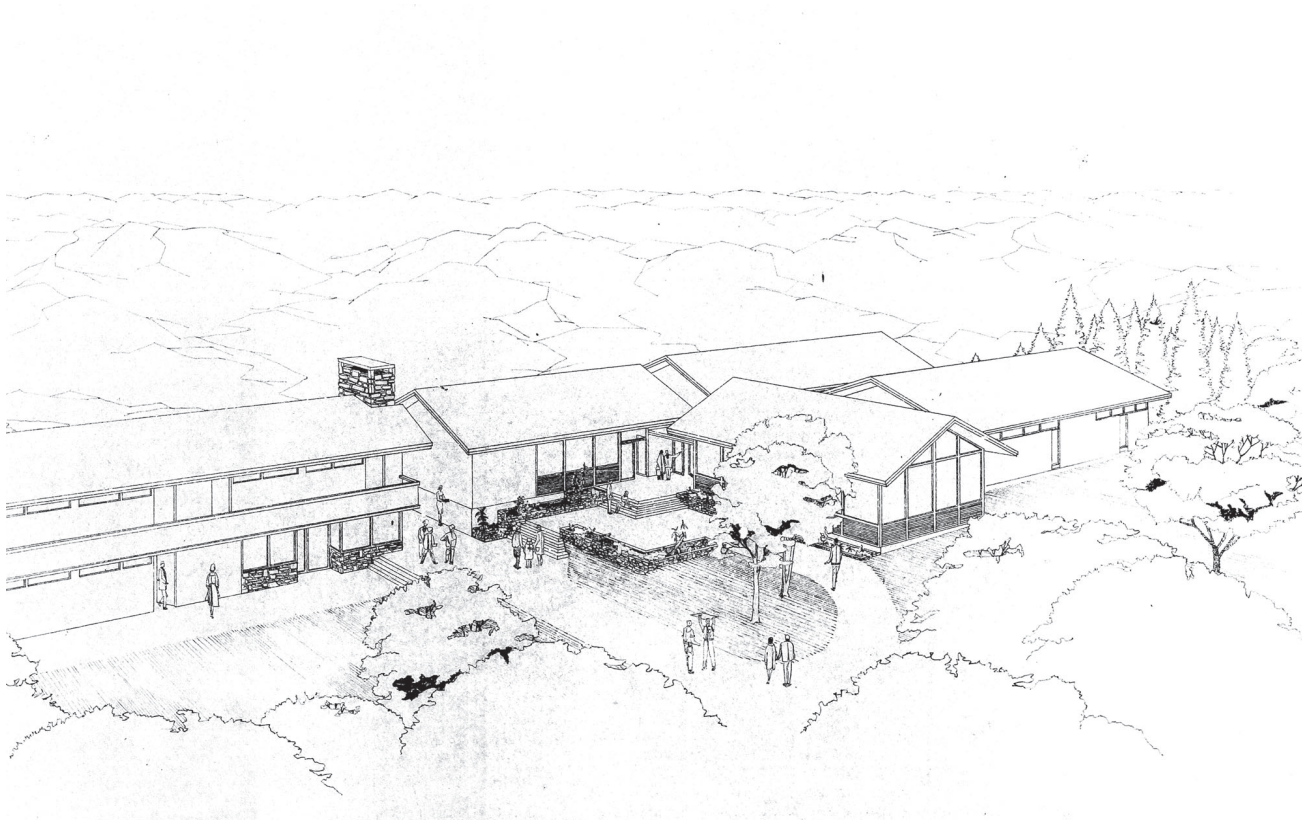

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
INCREMENTAL HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT PART I
PISGAH INN



Prepared by: Arin Streeter, Historical Architect

US Department of the Interior • National Park Service • Interior Region 2 : South Atlantic-Gulf • Cultural
Resources, Partnerships, and Science Division • Atlanta, GA
December 2025



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally-owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under US administration.

US Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Publication Credits: Graphics from sources other than federal repositories may not be reproduced without the permission of the owners noted in the captions. Other information in this publication may be copied and used with the condition that full credit be given to the authors and publisher. Appropriate citations and bibliographic credits should be made for each use.

Title Page: Proposed Buildings for Mount Pisgah Inn (Blue Ridge Parkway), Foy & Lee Architects, Waynesville, North Carolina, 1964. (NPS TIC #BLRI-8001-Z3)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	iv
Introduction	vii
Study Summary	viii
Statement of Significance	x
Administrative Data	xii
Related NPS Studies	xiii
Maps	xv
 PART 1: DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY	 XXI
Historical Background and Context	1
Precontact Occupation and White Settlement	1
The Resort Era	3
Timber Extraction and the Nascent Conservation Movement	5
The Vanderbilt Era	7
Forest Reserves in the East	11
Development of Pisgah National Forest Inn	12
National Parks in the East	14
The Blue Ridge Parkway	19
Mount Pisgah Recreation Area	43
Pisgah Inn	50
Chronology of Development and Use	69
Pisgah Inn Timeline	71
Photographic Documentation of Existing Conditions	77
Photo Log and Key Plans	78
Deviations from Original Design	103
Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties	103
Mission 66 Context	105
National Historic Landmark Context	106
Observable Modifications	109
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 121

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

Figure 1.	Location map of the Blue Ridge Parkway.	xv
Figure 2.	Map of the Blue Ridge Parkway, from the south end of Skyline Drive on Shenandoah National Park to Smart View.	xvi
Figure 3.	Map of the Blue Ridge Parkway, from Smart View south to Moses H. Cone Memorial Park.	xvii
Figure 4.	Map of the Blue Ridge Parkway, from Moses H. Cone Memorial Park south to the terminus at Oconaluftee.	xviii
Figure 5.	Detail map of the existing components of Mt. Pisgah Recreation Area.	xix
Figure 6.	Excerpt from <i>Map of the Indian Tribes of North America</i> .	2
Figure 7.	Excerpt from <i>Railroad Map of North Carolina, 1900</i> .	4
Figure 8.	Champion Fibre Company operations at Sunburst, North Carolina, about 1920.	7
Figure 9.	White pine plantings in Vanderbilt estate forests, labeled for scientific research, about 1929.	8
Figure 10.	Buck Spring Lodge.	10
Figure 11.	Edith and Cornelia Vanderbilt attending the memorial dedication of Pisgah National Forest.	12
Figure 12.	Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge.	13
Figure 13.	Map of proposed boundaries of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1927.	15
Figure 14.	Map of proposed boundaries of Shenandoah National Park, 1926.	17
Figure 15.	Merritt Parkway, Connecticut.	20
Figure 16.	Merritt Parkway, Connecticut.	20
Figure 17.	Proposed Eastern National Park-to-Park Highway system, 1931.	23
Figure 18.	Map of the proposed route for the southern portion of the Appalachian Park-to-Park Highway through Tennessee.	27
Figure 19.	Map of the proposed scenic parkway through North Carolina, accepted by Secretary Harold L. Ickes.	28
Figure 20.	R. Getty Browning, chief locating engineer for the North Carolina State Highway Commission, 1952.	30
Figure 21.	Early construction on Section 2-A-1, Buncombe County, North Carolina.	31
Figure 22.	CCC Camp at Rock Castle Gorge, Blue Ridge Parkway, 1938.	33

Figure 23.	CCC crew moving trees, Blue Ridge Parkway, about 1938.	33
Figure 24.	Blue Ridge Parkway Master Development Plan, Part 1, March 1940.	35
Figure 25.	Blue Ridge Parkway Master Development Plan, Part 2, March 1940.	36
Figure 26.	Blue Ridge Parkway Master Development Plan, Part 3, March 1940.	37
Figure 27.	Pages from <i>Our Heritage</i> , a promotional publication on the Mission 66 program.	40
Figure 28.	Pages from <i>Our Heritage</i> , a promotional publication on the Mission 66 program.	41
Figure 29.	Mt. Pisgah area from the 1946 Master Plan.	44
Figure 30.	Mt. Pisgah Recreation Area development as shown in the 1952 Master Plan.	45
Figure 31.	General Development Plan for Mt. Pisgah, part of the 1959 Master Plan.	47
Figure 32.	Letterhead of Pisgah Inn Inc.	53
Figure 33.	Proposed Buildings for Mt. Pisgah Inn, Foy & Lee Architects, January 1964.	55
Figure 34.	Proposed site plan for the addition of Unit C, Foy & Lee Architects, December 1968.	56
Figure 35.	Original color sample chips submitted by Foy & Lee Architects, June 1965.	59
Figure 36.	The parking lot and buildings at Pisgah Inn, August 1973.	60
Figure 37.	Northwest corner of Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge, 1987.	62
Figure 38.	The lobby of Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge, 1987.	62
Figure 39.	Kalmia Cabin.	64
Figure 40.	Chewink Cabin, abandoned.	64
Figure 41.	Phyllis O'Connell in front of the Lodge and Office Building of Pisgah Inn during the May snowstorm of 1992.	65
Figure 42.	Unit C in the early days of the 2008 renovations.	66
Figure 43.	Unit C late in the 2008 season.	66
Figure 44.	Ramp and planter addition to the restaurant entrance.	108
Figure 45.	View of Dining Room with added waiter service area.	108
Figure 46.	Plan of Restaurant and Lodge buildings, with changes to character-defining spaces and features noted.	109
Figure 47.	Elevations of Restaurant and Lodge buildings, with changes to character-defining spaces and features noted.	110
Figure 48.	The large deck constructed off the rear of the Gift Shop.	111

Figure 49.	Rear view of the Lodge showing the rear addition and changes to the fenestration patterns.	111
Figure 50.	Typical bay at rear of Gift Shop.	111
Figure 51.	Typical guest door at Lodge.	111
Figure 52.	Building enclosure at utility rooms at south corner of motel Unit B.	112
Figure 53.	Enlarged elevation of typical bay, north side of Unit B.	112
Figure 54.	Enlarged elevation of typical bay, south side of Unit B.	112
Figure 55.	Typical bay at north side of Unit B.	113
Figure 56.	View of center bays of south side of Unit B, showing modified doors.	113
Figure 57.	Modifications to top rails at balcony side of Unit B.	113
Figure 58.	Enlarged elevations of typical south and north bays at Unit C.	114
Figure 59.	Enlarged elevations of typical north and south bays at Unit C, as renovated.	114
Figure 60.	One of two replacement stairs at motel Unit C.	115
Figure 61.	Typical guest entrance configuration after the 2008 renovations.	115
Figure 62.	A typical bay on the balcony side of Unit C, showing the replaced railings.	115
Figure 63.	Floor plan of Store renovations, with building additions shaded in red.	116
Figure 64.	Elevations of Store renovations.	116
Figure 65.	Mt. Pisgah gas station in its original configuration, August 1974.	117
Figure 66.	View of Mt. Pisgah Country Store, May 2004.	117

INTRODUCTION

The Blue Ridge Parkway was the first national parkway. Conceived during a period when tourism was evolving from a pastime of the wealthy to a phenomenon of the masses, the Parkway illustrates Americans' quickly changing relationship with the automobile. The sudden availability of affordable independent travel caused a reimagining of the ideas of leisure and recreation. Motoring, and the scenery that could be experienced along the way, became part of the allure.

The idea of a scenic roadway linking other tourist “destinations” may have been a natural outgrowth of the explosion in popularity of motor touring, but nothing on the scale of the Blue Ridge Parkway had been tried before. Planned as a link between two of the new National Parks in the East – Shenandoah in Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina – the roadway would have to traverse more than 400 miles of terrain, much of it so rugged and inaccessible that good maps did not yet exist.

To resolve the conflict between creating a means by which visitors could experience the pastoral beauty and scenic grandeur of the landscapes of the southern Appalachians and the fact that a roadway would encourage those visitors to experience those features only at speed, planners of the Blue Ridge Parkway envisioned the road not just as one linear park, but as a series of parks within a park. These would take the form of a series of Recreation Areas where tourists would be encouraged to stop for a while to enjoy the landscape, hike to a point of interest, or have a sandwich and a cup of coffee surrounded by some of the best natural landscapes that the United States had to offer.

Mount Pisgah Recreation Area is located on one of the last sections of the Parkway to be completed, though development in the immediate area predated the arrival of the National Park Service by several decades. George Washington Vanderbilt, who had purchased thousands of acres around Asheville for the creation of his “Pisgah Forest” estate, Biltmore, had a hunting lodge built on Pisgah Ledge in 1896. After G. W. Vanderbilt’s death, his widow Edith Vanderbilt sold much of the surrounding acreage to the National Forest Service, and in 1919, George Farrington Weston and his wife Mary Wheeler Weston built Pisgah Forest Inn one mile south of the Vanderbilt family’s lodge under a concession agreement with that agency's successor.

With plans for the Blue Ridge Parkway bringing the roadway very near both of these sites, the United States Forest Service transferred ownership of the land immediately surrounding the roadway's path to the National Park Service, whose 1961 development plan for the site included a campground, a gas station and camp store, a picnic area, expanded lodging facilities to replace the Westons' older buildings, a restaurant, and a potential visitor center. Of these, the lodging facilities, restaurant, and gas station and camp store were to be constructed by concessioners. Five structures were built according to the master development plans during this period as "Pisgah Inn," and all five of these structures are extant in 2025.

STUDY SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to document the development, use, and current condition of the buildings associated with the Pisgah Inn, located at Milepost 408.6 of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina. The National Park Service will use this report to inform and guide their stewardship of this property.

This report is incremental in nature, as outlined in *Preservation Brief #43: The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports*. It is not an exhaustive study of the historical background and context of the structures and site being addressed. The larger landscape context is studied in *Mt. Pisgah, Blue Ridge Parkway: A Cultural Landscape Report (2017)* and the broader historical context through an exhaustive National Historic Landmark nomination for the entire Blue Ridge Parkway completed in 2024. This report supplements these by establishing baseline conditions for the extant buildings at Pisgah Inn that were originally built during the period of reinvestment and development of this site between 1964 and 1971.

With a few exceptions, the National Register of Historic Places, authorized as part of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), establishes 50 years as the minimum age for a structure to be considered historic. Under the NHPA, Section 110 tasks all federal agencies with the development of historic preservation programs for the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties under their care. Section 106 of the NHPA ensures that federal agencies consider the effects of their actions on historic properties. That involvement includes funding, licensing or permitting, staffing, or providing other assistance.

For most of their existence, the remaining structures of the Pisgah Inn have not been subject to any limitations or constraints under the NHPA because

they did not yet qualify as historic properties or merit consideration due to their age. As they have aged into consideration, however, their relationships to the overall landscape of the Blue Ridge Parkway and their historical place within the mid-twentieth century push for improved touristic facilities throughout the National Park Service's system have been reconsidered. The current study of changes to the property, documented or otherwise, finds buildings that maintain a high degree of integrity of location and setting, but which have undergone modifications over time inconsistent with the treatment of historic structures – because they had not yet achieved sufficient age for this to be a consideration. Changes in materials, workmanship, and design are widely dispersed, affecting some buildings and specific portions of buildings much more than others, and leaving none untouched.

This study, then, approaches the buildings in the same way as any Historic Structure Report – observation of existing conditions coupled with an examination of the historical record. By comparison with most historic structures for which such efforts are undertaken, the available documentation is extensive. Because the structures were built on property that belonged to the National Park Service from their inception, most of the construction documents and subsequent changes have been captured in official government records. The comprehensive assessment of these records as found in NPS's databases, the Blue Ridge Parkway's Resource Management Files and park archives, and the findings of other reports that have touched upon the Pisgah Inn buildings has been the largest part of this study effort.

Physical investigations of the buildings revealed a few inconsistencies – approved projects not completed or completed only in part, variations between the buildings' current conditions and their initial construction drawings that may have been original as-built differences, and some evident modifications for which records could not be correlated. In those cases, the records were supplemented by oral interviews with the current concession operator, whose family has held the concessions contract on Pisgah Inn since 1978.

This report consists of Part I: Developmental History. While a full Historic Structure Report goes a step further to develop treatment documents, this study is primarily concerned with documenting the administrative and developmental history of the property, and examining it within the context its immediate surroundings and contemporary buildings. Part I provides a brief review of local geography, property ownership, and development, along with known information about the construction of the building and subsequent changes over time. A chronology of these changes is provided. Further

changes to the buildings and structures should be considered only after the completion of an HSR Part II: Treatment and Work Recommendations. That task is beyond the scope of the current project. Typically, for a property of this use, a Part II would provide recommendations for the treatment of the buildings and structures in conformance with applicable laws, regulations, planning, and functional requirements of the property as a park concession.

A bibliography provides reference information for all sources that are cited.

This report was prepared by Arin Streeter, Historical Architect with NPS Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf, with the assistance of Cultural Resource Specialist Andrew Triplett, Museum Curator Coquelicot Shirey, and Blue Ridge Parkway’s resource and concessions staff.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although individual districts within the Blue Ridge Parkway’s property, such as Moses H. Cone Memorial Park (Flat Top Estate, NR #13000978), have been listed in the National Register over time, consideration of the significance of the Blue Ridge Parkway as a whole has required a substantially more extensive study and process. Three efforts led to the designation of the Blue Ridge Parkway as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in December 2024. In 2005, Ian W. Firth prepared a draft nomination, building on a 1993 Historic Resource Study completed for the park, which was updated with the assistance of Rachel Hildebrandt. This draft nomination was updated in 2017 by Jacqueline Bass and Susan Cianci Salvatore. A final version of the nomination, building on these two earlier efforts, was completed in 2024 by a team led by Stephen Olausen.

As approved, the NHL district includes the entirety of federal lands making up the Blue Ridge Parkway property within Virginia and North Carolina, with a period of significance stretching from 1933, with the authorization of the parkway’s construction, to 1987, when the full, uninterrupted extent of the parkway was opened upon the completion of the Linn Cove Viaduct. The Blue Ridge Parkway has been determined to be nationally significant “as the pinnacle achievement of the American parkway movement of the early twentieth century and for its associations with important trends and events related to automobile tourism, the expansion of the National Park System in the eastern United States, national parkway development, national recreation planning, conservation, and the federal government’s

response to the Great Depression.”¹ It has additional national significance “as a masterwork of landscape architecture and transportation engineering and as one of the finest examples of the collaborative work of the National Park Service (NPS) and the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR).”²

Across the Parkway’s extent, roadway features from its period of significance as well as associated features such as campgrounds, inns, and picnic sites contribute to its national significance. As a National Historic Landmark, the contributing features of the Blue Ridge Parkway were assigned the management category “Must Be Preserved and Maintained.”

The extant structures that comprise Pisgah Inn date to two of the distinct eras in the Parkway’s history identified in the nomination: Mission 66 (1956-1966), when alternative approaches to providing visitor amenities led to the planning of concession facilities at Mt. Pisgah Recreation Area and the initial construction of these facilities, and Final Construction (1967-1987), when additional components of the Master Plan for the area were completed. Despite changes to the Mount Pisgah developed area that post-date Pisgah Inn’s period of significance, the function of the property as a parkway recreation area remains unchanged. The master planning of the site that arose from the NPS and BPR collaboration is still realized in its existing components, with little impairment from the preservation-ambivalent maintenance approaches that have in the intervening years been applied to its structures and landscape features.

¹ Stephen Olausen, Melissa J. Andrade, Jill Miller, and Jill Chin, *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Blue Ridge Parkway* (National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service, December 2024), 4.

² Olausen, et al., *National Historic Landmark Nomination*, 4.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Building Names:	CRIS ID:	BLRI ID:	State Inventory ID:
Pisgah Inn Restaurant	1173050	B241	HW0646
Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office (Unit A)	1173051	B241A	HW0647
Pisgah Inn Unit B	1173052	B495	HW0644
Pisgah Inn Unit C	1173053	B754	HW0645
Mt. Pisgah Country Store	1173054	B242	HW0643

Park: Blue Ridge Parkway (BLRI)

State: North Carolina

County: Transylvania (Restaurant, Lodge and Office, Unit B, Unit C)
Haywood (Country Store)

City: Canton vicinity

Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost: 408.60

Latitude/Longitude: 35°24'10"N / 82°45'16"W

Note that the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office's architectural inventory uses names for these resources that differ from NPS's Cultural Resource Inventory System (CRIS). Additionally, all structures in their system are given site numbers for Haywood County, where the majority of the Mt. Pisgah Recreation Area is located. The North Carolina SHPO's naming system is used for the photo names included with the Photographic Documentation section of this report, with the CRIS names used elsewhere.

Building Names in the North Carolina architectural inventory system:

HW0646	Mount Pisgah Inn: Restaurant
HW0647	Mount Pisgah Inn: Lodge and Office
HW0644	Mount Pisgah Inn: Motel Unit B
HW0645	Mount Pisgah Inn: Motel Unit C
HW0643	Mount Pisgah Inn: Country Store

RELATED NPS STUDIES

The Jaeger Company. *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Mount Pisgah, Blue Ridge Parkway – Pisgah District*. National Park Service, 1998.

<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2195847>

The Jaeger Company. *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Pisgah Inn, Blue Ridge Parkway – Pisgah District*. National Park Service, 2002.

<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2195862>

Stephen Olausen, Melissa J. Andrade, Jill Miller, and Jill Chin. *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Blue Ridge Parkway*. National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service, December 2024.

<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2307272>

Richard Quin. *Blue Ridge Parkway: HAER Report No. NC-42*. Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, 1997. <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/master/pnp/habshaer/nc/nc0400/nc0478/data/nc0478data.pdf>

Suzanne Turner Associates. *Mt. Pisgah, Blue Ridge Parkway: A Cultural Landscape Report*. Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service, 2017.

<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2253587>

MAPS

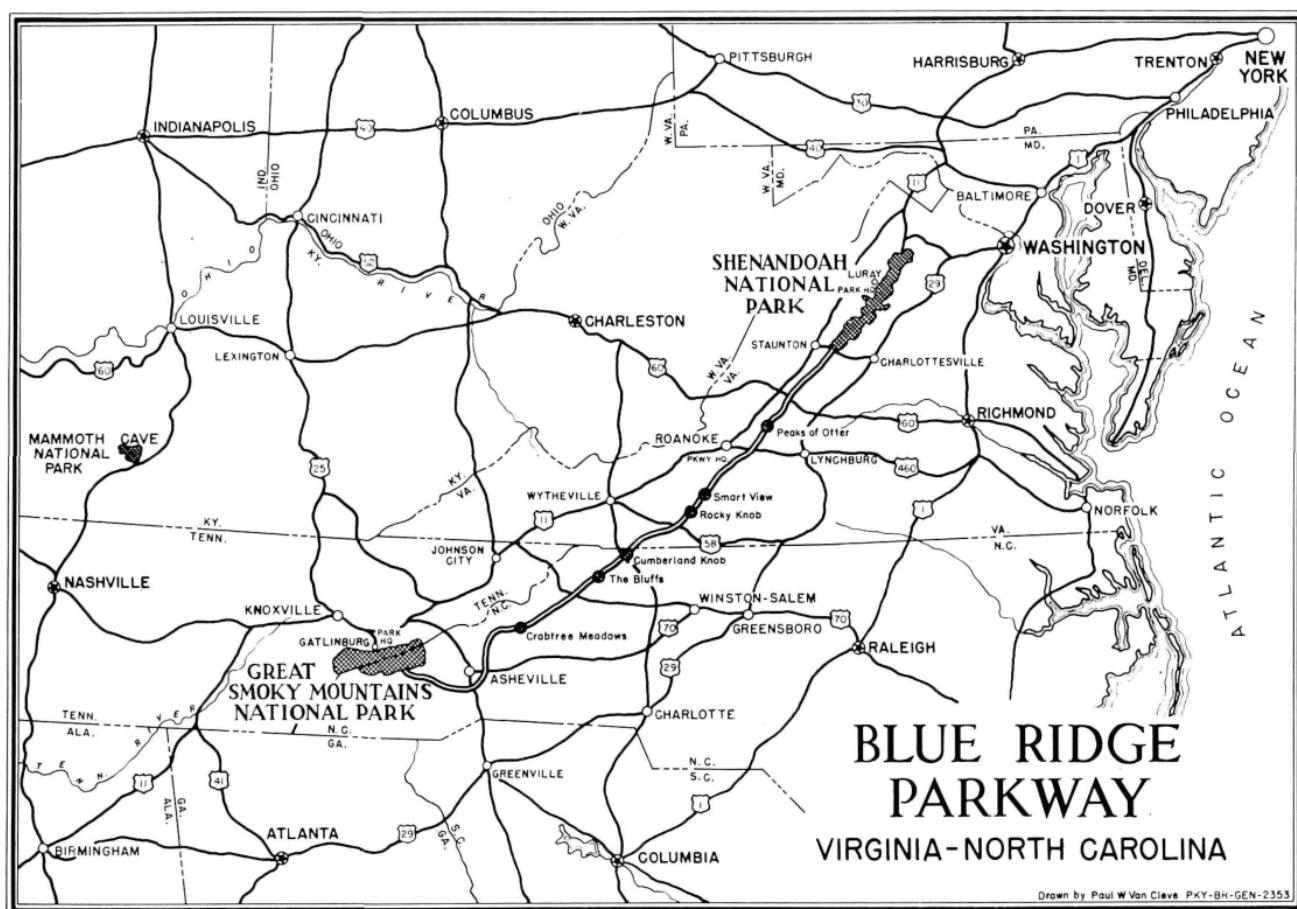


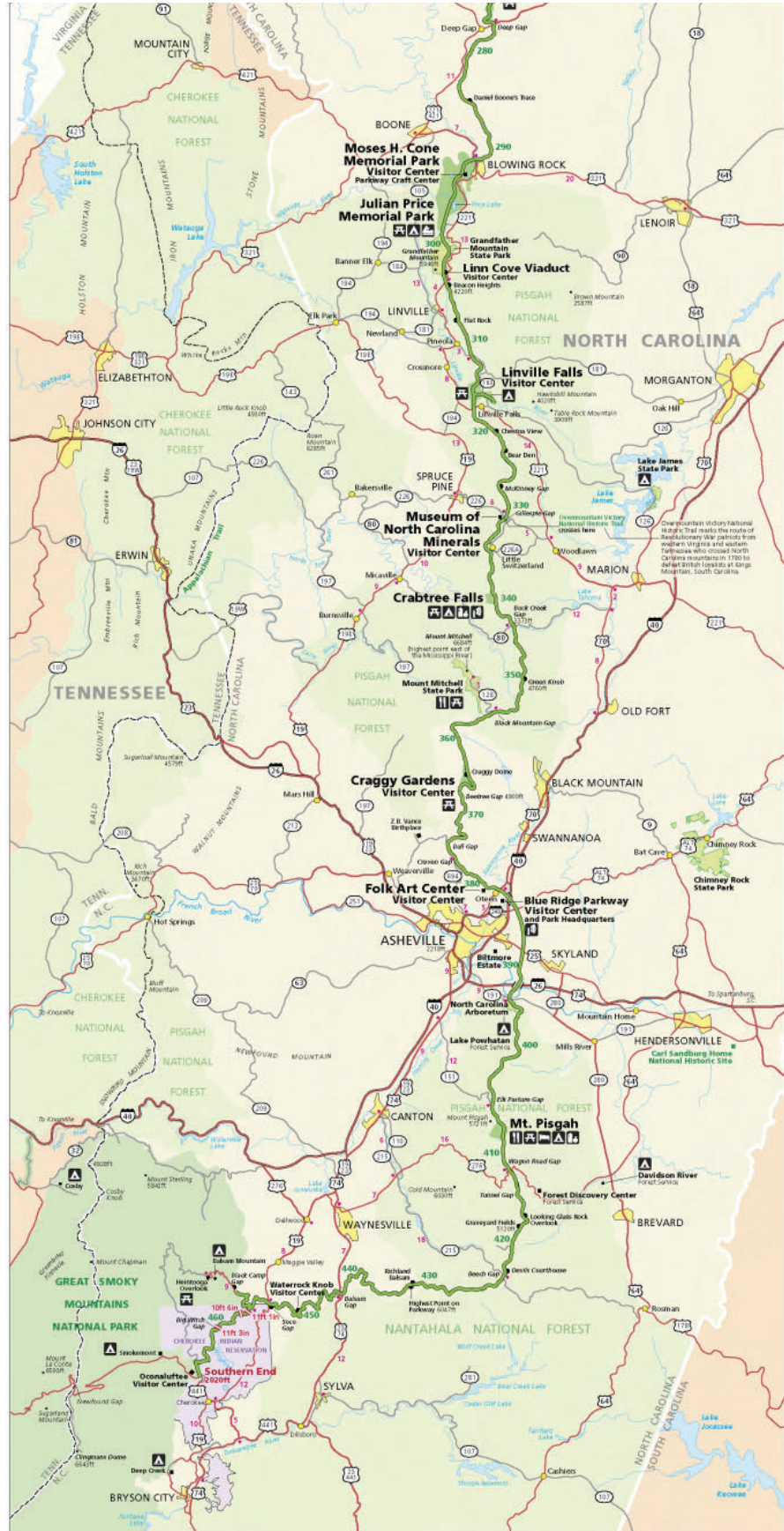
Figure 1. Location map of the Blue Ridge Parkway. (Drawn by Paul W. Van Cleve for *National Parks Magazine*, 1949)





Figure 3. Map of the Blue Ridge Parkway, from Smart View south to Moses H. Cone Memorial Park. (NPS)

Figure 4. Map of the Blue Ridge Parkway, from Moses H. Cone Memorial Park south to the terminus at Great Smoky Mountains National Park at Oconaluftee. Note Mt. Pisgah south of Asheville. (NPS)



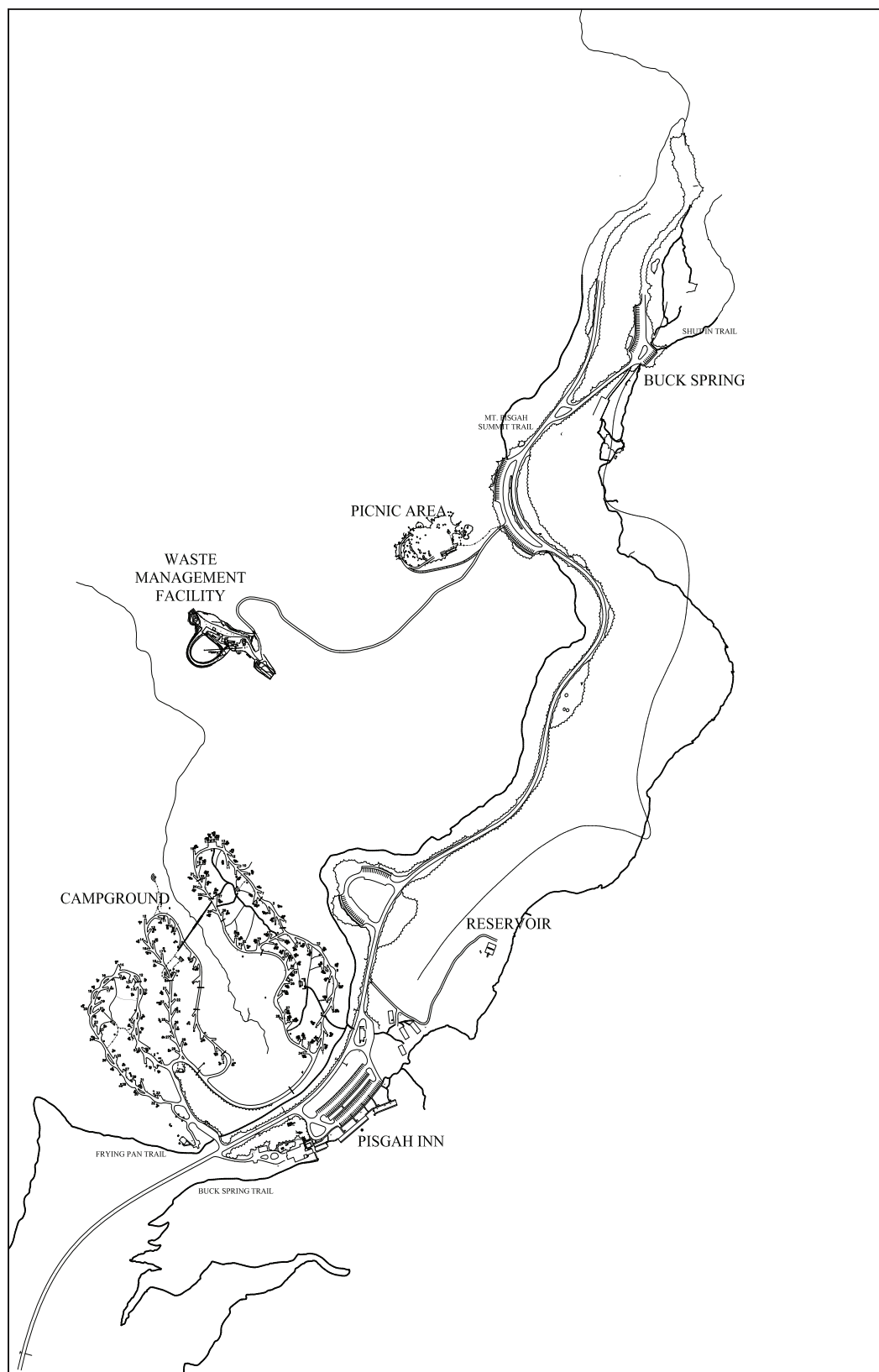
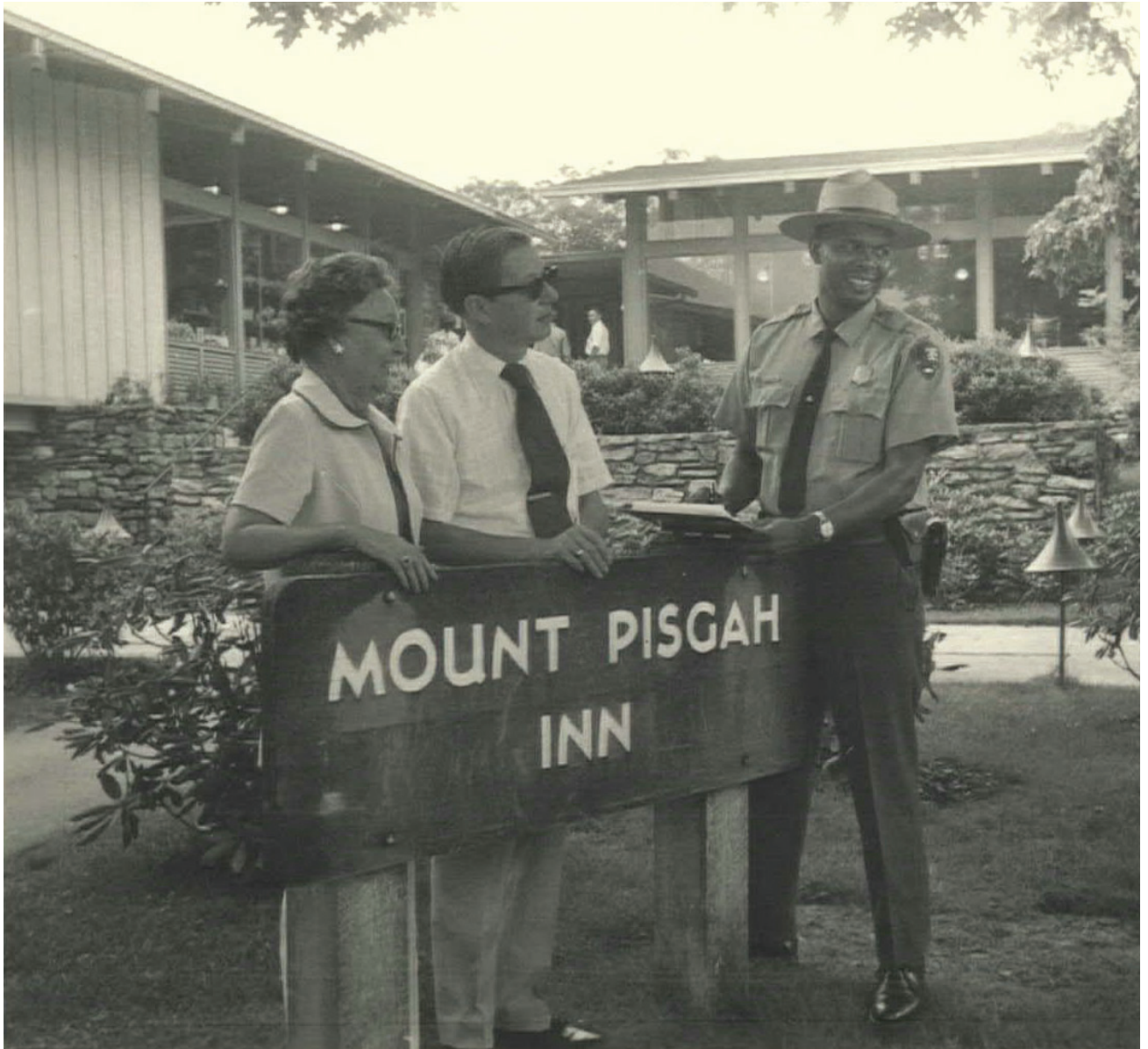


Figure 5. Detail map of the existing components of Mt. Pisgah Recreation Area. (Suzanne Turner Associates for NPS, 2017)



PART I: DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT AND USE

PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

DEVIATIONS FROM ORIGINAL DESIGN

Overleaf: Ranger Willie McDaniel giving out travel folders in front of Pisgah Inn Restaurant, 1973. Photograph by C. E. Westveer. (National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway Historic Photograph Collection [1933-1979], negative #3693. <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/0a1ae145-c546-4567-84be-f1f8747d24fa>)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

PRECONTACT OCCUPATION AND WHITE SETTLEMENT

Precontact archeological evidence shows that the mountains of southern Appalachia, through which the Blue Ridge Parkway passes, were inhabited by cultures distinct from the Indians of historic times. At least by the early 1700s, the region was occupied by tribes including the Catawba, Cherokee, and Creek, with the Tutelo, Monacan, and Saponi in the northern reaches of the Parkway's path. By the end of that century, however, the powerful Iroquois confederation had driven most of the smaller tribes out of the northern Appalachians, and the Cherokee dominated in the mountains of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

White settlers of European descent began making inroads into the Appalachian Mountains in the 1730s, sparking inevitable conflict with the indigenous peoples. Their populations reduced by disease and conflict, the Indians of the southern Appalachians retreated to more isolated locations. By the time of the American Revolution, the pattern of small subsistence farms of white settlers was well-established in the valleys, and they ranged their livestock in the high mountains in the summer before driving them to markets in the east each fall.³

Mount Pisgah had been named "Elseetoss" by the Cherokee, and Pisgah Ridge was known as "Warwasseeta." Both were used as hunting grounds. The name "Mount Pisgah" was applied to the peak before 1808, when it first appeared in records as part of the description of the new boundary for Haywood County, split at that time from Buncombe County. The name originates from the Bible; in the book Deuteronomy, Moses climbed Mount Pisgah northeast of the Dead Sea to view the "Promised Land" destined for the tribes of Israel.⁴ How the name came to be applied to one of North Carolina's western mountains is unknown, but the reference is evocative – its ridges standing on the boundary between the white settled areas of the east and the "unsettled" western frontier.

The uneasy coexistence of indigenous peoples and white settlers in the region was largely brought to a close with the Treaty of the Holston in 1791, which drew a boundary line between the Cherokee nation and the

³ Richard Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway: HAER Report No. NC-42* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Historic American Engineering Record, 1997), 10-11.

⁴ Jaeger Company, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Mount Pisgah, Blue Ridge Parkway – Pisgah District* (Atlanta: National Park Service, 2002), 22.

lands of the United States and the Cherokee relinquishing claims on lands drained by the lower Holston and French Broad Rivers. By the early 1800s, most indigenous people had been driven from the region, and the surrendered lands were soon divided by enormous land grants to white men from the east. A tract that included Mount Pisgah within its 250,243 acres was granted to David Allison in 1797.⁵ Allison's lands were parceled out over the next century. Thomas Lanier Clingman, later a United States Congressman and Senator from North Carolina, purchased approximately

Figure 6. Excerpt from *Map of the Indian Tribes of North America*, Albert Gallatin, 1836. (Library of Congress. <https://ccn.loc.gov/2002622260>)

⁵ Suzanne Turner Associates, *Mt. Pisgah, Blue Ridge Parkway: A Cultural Landscape Report* (Atlanta: National Park Service, 2017), 1.



300 acres on and around Mount Pisgah as a young man in the 1830s.⁶ Clingman was famously among ten members expelled from the U.S. Senate on July 11, 1861, for his support of the Southern rebellion, and he served during the Civil War as a brigadier general in the Confederate Army.

THE RESORT ERA

Despite many divisions and changes in property ownership since the early state land grants, very little development occurred in the high mountains of western North Carolina in the first few decades under white ownership. Beginning in the 1820s, however, parts of the southern foothills of the Appalachians began to be used as a summer retreat for planters from the South Carolina Lowcountry, overlaying a complicating pattern of wealth and leisure on the subsistence agriculture that characterized the region. James Patton opened the Sulphur Springs Hotel at Warm Springs on the French Broad River northwest of Asheville in 1831. By the 1840s, Flat Rock, the Cashiers Valley, Asheville, and Warm Springs were well-established summer resorts, oases of comfort among the hardscrabble existence that marked most of the southern Appalachians. Complementing the growth of resorts in North Carolina, 1832 saw the construction of a log hotel at Montvale Springs in the foothills on the Tennessee side of the mountains, which soon grew to include a three-story hotel and 50 cottages. North Carolina's resorts, however, would have an explosive economic impact on the surrounding communities while Tennessee's were largely only incidental.⁷

As an urban center, Asheville remained little more than a crossroads until the 1870s and 1880s, but still stood in contrast to the more utilitarian commercial towns that primarily served the local population. Charles Dudley Warner wrote of his first impression of the city in 1882, "Asheville was in all its watering-place gaiety, as we reined up at the Swannanoa Hotel. A band was playing on the balcony. We had reached ice-water, barbers, waiters, and civilization."⁸

The Western North Carolina Railroad was extended to Asheville and Waynesville in 1880, bringing the mountain resorts closer to visitors, and ushering in waves of tourists drawn to its salubrious climate. Asheville shortly became a hub for rail travel in the South, especially during its resort season,

⁶ Jaeger, *CLI: Mount Pisgah*, 22.

⁷ L. Alex Tooman, "The Evolving Economic Impact of Tourism on the Greater Smoky Mountain Region of East Tennessee and Western North Carolina," (PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 1995), 60.

⁸ Charles Dudley Warner, *On Horseback: A Tour of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1888), 110.

soon seeing as many as 30,000 summer visitors each year – visitors that came not only from the South, but with its growing reputation, from the North as well. By 1900, the number of seasonal visitors had grown to 50,000.⁹



Figure 7. Excerpt from *Railroad Map of North Carolina, 1900*, H.C. Brown. Note Blue Ridge along the southeast borders of Haywood and Buncombe Counties. (Library of Congress. <https://lccn.loc.gov/98688533>)

Mineral spring waters and scenic curiosities were the nominal attractions of the mountain resorts, although the marketing – directed toward the upper classes – did not always align with contemporary opinion. The sulfur water of White Sulphur Springs Hotel in Waynesville, for example, was advertised widely for its curative properties but was generally judged not to be the best for either health or taste. The cooler mountain air, good food, entertainments of mountain music and dancing, and scenic carriage rides in the lower reaches of the mountains were the greater enticements.¹⁰

The summer resorts represented a break in routine for the idle class, and a chance for social interactions outside normally constrained circles in hometowns and cities. Mineral spas differed notably from hotels in urban centers, which catered to the needs of male business travelers. Mountain resorts were predominantly the domain of women, who might spend their entire summers in cool relaxation with their children, joined only intermittently by their husbands.¹¹ Poor roads outside the resorts meant that only the most adventurous of these visitors extended their travels much beyond their immediate vicinities. Would-be hikers and adventurers could find no formal accommodations further afield, so would either have to carry their own tents and provisions or seek food, supplies, and lodging at the cabins and farmsteads of local residents.¹² Writer Horace Kephart

⁹ Tooman, “Evolving Economic Impact,” 215-219.

¹⁰ W. Clark Medford, *The Middle History of Haywood County* (Asheville: Miller Printing Co., 1968), 4.

¹¹ Tooman, “Evolving Economic Impact,” 51.

¹² Public Archaeological Laboratory (PAL), *Great Smoky Mountain National Park Historic Resource Study* (Atlanta: National Park Service, 2015), 70; Tooman, “Evolving Economic Impact,” 101.

warned in 1913 that “the chief drawback to travel in the region, aside from the roads, is not the character of the people, but the quality of bed and board.”¹³

TIMBER EXTRACTION AND THE NASCENT CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

One resource that the southern Appalachians had to offer in abundance was timber, though the economics of its transportation from the most remote locations within the mountains were difficult. In the early settlement days, when the emphasis was on clearing land for arable fields, timber activity was exceptionally wasteful. With the cost of moving trees to mills unrecoverable, the timber cleared for farmland was mainly used locally – for fuel, fencing, and lumber – but much was simply lost in burning the forests for pasturage.¹⁴ Certain trees still had enough value to be worth the trouble. A 1901 report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture noted that even in the remotest areas of Appalachia the forest had been lightly gone over for the removal of the choicest timber, such as walnut and cherry.¹⁵

Within the southern mountains, small local sawmills had begun operation by the 1860s, but extraction increased exponentially with the arrival of outside firms in the 1880s, bringing with them both skilled loggers and investment capital far beyond what was available locally. The isolated valleys, coves, and ridgetops of the southern Appalachians, places of – at least in the telling – endless untouched primeval forest, were on the precipice. The grand landscapes that had been the stuff of explorers’ tales since the first exploration by white settlers were in imminent danger of being, if not lost, irrevocably altered.

Perhaps the first public suggestion of a centralized governmental effort to preserve a portion of the southern Appalachians in their natural state was made by Dr. Henry O. Marcy of Boston on October 29, 1885, in an address to the American Academy of Medicine in New York, when he proposed the conservation of some portion of the high mountains of North Carolina for the health benefits that the climate and medicinal waters had for many, including his own patients.¹⁶ In 1893, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a resolution urging its representatives in the U.S. Congress to seek legislation for the creation of a national mountain park.¹⁷ On a more grassroots level, the

¹³ Horace Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders* (New York: Outing Publishing Co., 1913), 196.

¹⁴ Michael Frome, *Strangers in High Places* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 164.

¹⁵ Frome, *Strangers*, 162.

¹⁶ Peter Shelburne Givens, “Cataloochee and the Establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park,” (PhD diss., Western Carolina University, 1978), 1.

¹⁷ Frome, *Strangers*, 174.

Appalachian National Park Association was formed in Asheville in 1899 as an advocacy group for the preservation of the remaining forests of southern Appalachia.¹⁸ Unsure of what was potentially accomplishable and willing to test the political winds, the group was broad in its geographical reach. As the movement grew, the Association held a convention in Asheville on October 25, 1902, that was attended by over 1,500 people from several states. Despite the success of the existing western National Parks, which were able to be created from land already owned by the United States government, there were serious questions regarding the legality of the creation of similar preserves in the east, which would require acquisition of vast acreage from private interests.

For a brief time it seemed that conservation and business interests might come into alignment in a fashion that could prevail in Washington, DC. In response to concerns about the impacts unregulated logging had downstream – flooding and the associated loss of topsoil resulting from the loss of forest cover upstream – Congress considered a bill in 1903 that would have authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to purchase up to 4,000,000 acres in West Virginia, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama for the creation of a National Appalachian Forest Reserve. Concurrently, the Secretary of Agriculture had warned of the unsustainability of the rapacious nature of timber exploitation throughout the mountains. It was estimated that at the then-current rate of destruction by timber activities and fire, the forests of the Appalachians would be gone in ten years – without regulation, the industry would do itself in.¹⁹ Although this bill clearly diverged from the original idea pushed by conservationists, proposing a managed national forest reserve rather than a national park, advocates adapted in hopes of securing at least some protection for the forests, and the Appalachian National Park Association changed its name to the Appalachian Forest Reserve Association. The 1903 bill passed in the U.S. Senate but stalled in the House.²⁰ The Appalachian National Park Association never came so close to success again, and the group disbanded in 1905.

With broader attempts at regulation and forest management failing, logging continued unabated throughout the Appalachians. In their 1901 study of forest conditions and the effects of logging for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, foresters H. B. Ayers and W. W. Ashe looked at the forest cover of over 5,400,000 mountainous acres from Virginia to Alabama, and found that just 303,000

¹⁸ William Elliott, *Speech of Hon. William Elliott of South Carolina in the House of Representatives, May 14, 1902* (Washington, DC: Southern Appalachian Forest Reserve, 1902), 3.

¹⁹ Elliott, *Speech*, 4-9.

²⁰ Frome, *Strangers*, 177.

acres, or 7.4 percent, was still in primeval condition.²¹ By 1901, the largest operators had only recently arrived in the region. Col. W. B. Townsend's Little River Company purchased 86,000 acres above Tuckaleechee in Tennessee and ran a railroad up Little River Gorge to address the problem of transportation. In 1916, after years of cutting timber from the company lands, Townsend reported to the Third Appalachian Logging Congress in Knoxville that his forests were still so full of virgin timber that he was cutting 40,000 board feet per acre. The Scottish Carolina Timber and Land Company built a large mill near the Pigeon River in Newport, Tennessee. In North Carolina, Ritter Lumber Company produced 70,000 board feet of lumber per day at its sawmill in Proctor, and Parsons Pulp and Lumber Company had a mill at Ravensford on the Oconaluftee River and a railroad from Maggie Valley through Cherokee. Sunburst Lumber Company had a large operation on the Pigeon River and a sawmill in Waynesville on Richmond Creek. Champion Fibre Company arrived relatively late, but acquired 92,000 acres in Greenbrier Cove, along the crest of the Smoky Mountains at Kuwohi (Clingman's Dome) and Mount Kephart, and along the Oconaluftee and Pigeon Rivers, completing its factory in Canton, North Carolina, in 1908.²²



Figure 8. Champion Fibre Company operations at Sunburst, North Carolina, about 1920. (Image HL_RP_334, Southern Appalachian Digital Collections, Western Carolina University)

THE VANDERBILT ERA

The confluence of public concern over industrial timber extraction from the mountains of western North Carolina and the region's history as a resort area for the wealthy is embodied by George Washington Vanderbilt. Heir to a portion of the fortune of the Vanderbilt family, amassed during two previous generations through steamboats and railroad development, George W. Vanderbilt was not much interested in business, and instead used his fortune to further his interests in forestry and farming.

²¹ Frome, *Strangers*, 161-162.

²² Frome, *Strangers*, 166-167; Hattie Caldwell Davis, *Reflections of Cataloochee Valley and its Vanished People in the Great Smoky Mountains* (Maggie Valley, NC, 1999), 165-166.

Vanderbilt began acquiring land south and southeast of Asheville in 1889, surreptitiously purchasing via a land agent around 18,000 acres that year, assembled from 143 separate but contiguous parcels.²³ Eventually the property he assembled for his “Pisgah Forest Estate” amounted to over 125,000 acres, including most of Mount Pisgah. He worked closely with architect Richard Morris Hunt on the design for Biltmore, his country home and centerpiece of the estate, which was completed in 1895. The grounds around the house were improved according to plans by Frederick Law Olmsted.

With the death of his mother in 1896, George W. Vanderbilt went to live at his North Carolina estate full time, and set about becoming an expert stockbreeder, farmer, and forester. He was joined in his efforts in 1898 by his new bride, Edith Stuyvesant Dresser of Newport, Rhode Island. The flat lands of the estate were used for dairy production and the raising of pedigreed hogs, and the mountainous land he acquired was devoted primarily to timber operations. The Biltmore Nursery, which concentrated on the trees and plants of southern Appalachia, also became an important part of the estate’s production.²⁴

Much of the forested property had been mismanaged by previous timber operations, with clearcutting and subsequent erosion being the normal

Figure 9. White pine plantings in Vanderbilt estate forests, labeled for scientific research, about 1929. (Used with permission from The Biltmore Company, Asheville, North Carolina)



²³ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 28.

²⁴ Joe L. Morgan, “Vanderbilt, George Washington,” in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, ed. William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

condition. These landscapes, described 30 years later by writer Raymond Fuller as “the transformation of that region of surpassing beauty into a desolation of cut-over stumpage,” were inconsistent with Vanderbilt’s vision of a productive country estate, which could not simply extract the maximum resource value out of the land before moving on.²⁵ To ensure responsible management of the timber on his property, Vanderbilt hired Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania, educated in forestry management in Europe, as the first superintendent of the estate and its timber operations. When Pinchot left in 1898 to become the head of the U.S. Division of Forestry, he was succeeded by Dr. Carl Schenck from the University of Darmstadt. Schenck pioneered “scientific forestry” on Vanderbilt’s property, founding the Biltmore School of Forestry, the first school of its kind in the United States.²⁶ George W. Vanderbilt believed that “management” of forests was necessary to keep them in constant production over years – good business policy as well as good citizenship.

Private ownership of any resource necessary to the general welfare carries with it the moral obligation of faithful stewardship to the public. . . . No man is a good citizen who destroys for selfish ends a good forest.²⁷

BUCK SPRING LODGE

Prior to completing his Asheville estate, George W. Vanderbilt had explored the mountainous area in hiking and camping trips to discover its best locations and scenery. The idea for a second house higher in the mountains at one of these locations emerged in 1895, and Vanderbilt purchased Thomas Lanier Clingman’s 300-acre parcel on Mount Pisgah in 1897, shortly before Clingman’s death, in order to build the mountain lodge he envisioned. Buck Spring Gap below Mount Pisgah, where this house was to be located, was chosen for the diversity of its flora, which made it an ideal habitat for migratory birds, and for its location directly above the Pink Beds, an area named for its extravagant rhododendron display in the spring. Vanderbilt hired Richard Morris Hunt, Biltmore’s architect, to design his mountaintop retreat, but after the architect’s death in July 1895, the design of the structure was completed by his son, Richard Howland Hunt. The style for Vanderbilt’s structure was evocative of a German hunting lodge, but with an American flavor, using bark-on logs in the style pioneered by William West Durant in the Adirondacks of upstate New York just a couple years earlier.²⁸

²⁵ Raymond Fuller, “Old-Time American Stock, *The Mentor* (August 1928): 17.

²⁶ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 274.

²⁷ Morgan, “Vanderbilt.”

²⁸ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 37; Jaeger, *Mount Pisgah*, 22.

The Adirondacks paralleled much of what George Vanderbilt was accomplishing 800 miles to their southwest. Established as a preserve in 1892 after the outcry New York City residents raised upon seeing the Hudson River run brown because of flooding and soil degradation resulting from vast clearcut operations in the northern part of the state, the Adirondack region quickly became a cool, mountain summer retreat for the segment of New York high society who wanted more adventure than Newport, Rhode Island, could offer.²⁹ Durant's first three "camps" in the Adirondacks – Pine Knot, Uncas, and Sagamore – were completed between 1873 and 1897. Durant sold Sagamore to George W. Vanderbilt's nephew Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt in 1901.³⁰



Figure 10. Buck Spring Lodge, photographed in August 1961 by Earl W. Estes Jr. and Garrett A. Smathers. (NPS, Blue Ridge Parkway Historic Photograph Collection (1933-1979), negative #1654. <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/f1e6b0da-3b95-4d2c-91dd-e6e3f4609741>)

Similar to the mountain lodges being built in the Adirondacks, the isolated location of George W. Vanderbilt's mountain house required an enormous investment in infrastructure. Just accessing the site for the construction of Buck Spring Lodge required a four-mile road to be carved into the mountainside from Cruso in the valley below. When it was complete, the complex consisted of over a dozen buildings – the main four-bedroom lodge building, which was connected to two two-bedroom cottages by breezeways, a separate kitchen and dining hall, a caretaker's house, servants' quarters, a playhouse and school room for George and Edith's daughter Cornelia, a bathhouse, a springhouse, a stable, an automobile garage, a root cellar, a poultry house, an ice house, and an assistant ranger's house.³¹ Also like the Adirondack camps, the complex was intended only for summer use, so while it had indoor plumbing supplied by spring water directed to the buildings and provisions for sewage treatment, the lodge was not centrally heated. The isolation was part of the intent, but it required a full-time staff who lived on site even when none of the Vanderbilts were present, to ensure that the maintenance was done, the vegetable garden was kept up, and the chickens were fed.

²⁹ Beverly Bridger, *Great Camp Sagamore* (Charleston: The History Press, 2012), 23.

³⁰ Bridger, *Great Camp Sagamore*, 29-33.

³¹ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 39-41; Jaeger, *Mount Pisgah*, 22.

FOREST RESERVES IN THE EAST

While the State of New York had stepped in to arrest the despoilation of the Adirondacks, any similar efforts in the southern Appalachians were left in the hands of private individuals like the Vanderbilts. Congress had passed the Forest Reserve Act in 1891, but it only gave the federal government the power to set aside land already owned by the public for the purpose of protecting watersheds. More than 40 bills were brought before Congress in the early 1900s calling for some measure of protection for the eastern forests, but all failed in the face of opposition for varying reasons – the main obstacle being that the federal government lacked the constitutional authority to purchase private property.

The election of 1904, which brought to the presidency Theodore Roosevelt and his conservation crusade, boosted the effort. The U.S. Forest Service was established in 1905 under the direction of Gifford Pinchot, creating an entity under which national forest preserves could be professionally managed. Nine eastern states gave permission to the U.S. Geological Survey to make recommendations on land that should be purchased and incorporated into national forest reserves, and then granted consent for federal land purchases.

THE WEEKS ACT

What remained to be resolved was the federal government's authority to make these purchases. Congressman John Weeks of Massachusetts, who summered with his family in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, was concerned about the damage timber activities had done there. He introduced a bill in 1908 proposing that the federal government use the receipts from timber sales from established forest reserves in the West to purchase lands near the headwaters of streams in the East. After some wrangling over the text of the bill to satisfy business concerns, the language was amended to include the provision that these lands would be permanently maintained as federal forest reserves for the purposes of protecting navigable waterways further downstream – a clarification that passed muster under the limitations of the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution. After passage in the House and Senate, President William Howard Taft signed the Weeks Act into law on March 1, 1911.³²

PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST

As early as October 1912, following the passage of the Weeks Act, George W. Vanderbilt began considering the transfer of much of his property

³² “Passing the Weeks Act,” Forest History Society, accessed 8 November 2024, <https://foresthistory.org/research-explore/us-forest-service-history/policy-and-law/the-weeks-act/passing-weeks-act/>.

around Mount Pisgah to the federal government to be managed by them as a forest preserve. A number of National Forest Commissioners were invited to stay at Buck Spring Lodge for a few days in 1913, presumably to discuss these possibilities, but an agreement could not be reached.³³

George W. Vanderbilt died unexpectedly in March 1914 from complications resulting from an appendectomy, and Cornelia Vanderbilt inherited his estate in the form of a trust. In 1917 Edith Vanderbilt reopened negotiations around the Pisgah Forest Estate's property, and ultimately sold 80,248 acres to the National Forest Commission, reserving a 472-acre parcel around the family's lodge in Buck Spring Gap.³⁴ Writing to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, she asked that Pisgah Forest be protected for the purposes of public recreation and "to perpetuate my husband's pioneer work in forest conservation."³⁵ The Vanderbilt acreage became the nucleus of Pisgah National Forest.

Figure 11. Edith Stuyvesant Vanderbilt (left) and Cornelia Vanderbilt (second from right) attending the memorial dedication of Pisgah National Forest, 1920. (Used with permission from The Biltmore Company, Asheville, North Carolina)



DEVELOPMENT OF PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST INN

The establishment of this forest preserve marked the end of most private development in the area surrounding Mount Pisgah. The notable exception to this was the Pisgah National Forest Inn, constructed in 1919 and opened in 1920 by George Farrington Weston and his wife Mary Wheeler Weston, about a mile south of Buck Spring Lodge.

³³ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 46.

³⁴ Jaeger, *Mount Pisgah*, 22.

³⁵ Marci Spencer, *Pisgah Inn* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2020), 18.

George Weston, an English-born architect and engineer, had worked as superintendent of George W. Vanderbilt's pig, poultry, and dairy farms on the Biltmore estate between 1895 and 1903. In 1917, he approached the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) about the possibility of securing a concession for the construction of a lodge on Pisgah Ridge. The Forest Service, concurrently in the process of

planning a new campground at Flat Laurel Gap, approved the Westons' plan and gave them a 30-year lease on 2.91 acres of property at an elevation of 5,120 feet. George Weston drew the plans himself for the log-framed, board-and-batten sided building that rose on his chosen site, and supervised the construction. The main building housed eleven guest rooms and baths, a restaurant, and a gift shop. Rounding out the complex were four other overnight cabins – given the names Kalmia Cottage, Chinquapin Cottage, Chewink Cottage, and Treetops – a workshop and garage building, and a laundry. Visitors, who accessed the inn by a narrow winding road up the north face of the ridge, a part of which is now followed by North Carolina Highway 151, generally stayed for weeks at a time or for the entire summer.³⁶

The Westons sold the inn in 1937 to H. H. Nash and Harold Moon, who, after a decline in visitation around World War II, decided to sell the inn themselves in 1948, one year before the expiration of the original USFS lease. The purchasers, Marine Hess and Bess Cameron, were able to renew the concessions lease, and they subsequently sold the property to Leslie G. and Leda Kirschner in 1955.³⁷



Figure 12. Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge, photographed in 1987 by J. Weiland for the Historic American Buildings Survey. (Library of Congress, HABS NC-356-12. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/nc0431.photos.212296p/>)

³⁶ Spencer, *Pisgah Inn*, 26-27; The Jaeger Company, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Pisgah Inn, Blue Ridge Parkway – Pisgah District* (Atlanta: National Park Service, 1998), 23; Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 275.

³⁷ Jaeger, *Pisgah Inn*, 25.

NATIONAL PARKS IN THE EAST

George W. Vanderbilt's assemblage of substantial acreage and his institution of a management regime that paralleled the intentions of the U.S. Forest Service's reserves enabled Pisgah National Forest to be established with relative ease. Elsewhere, efforts were complicated by misalignment of interests. Further to the southwest, the Forest Service established the Smoky Mountain Purchase Unit, which optioned 61,350 acres from the Little River Lumber Company for purchase between 1911 and 1916, but the federal government ultimately judged the old Tennessee land titles to be too unreliable to accept. When timber prices rose at the beginning of World War I, Little River Co. cancelled the options.³⁸

With the end of World War I came a change in the national political climate, corresponding to the growing economic and cultural importance of recreational tourism. The idea of a National Park in the southern Appalachians reemerged as a real possibility, and with the founding of the National Park Service in 1916 an agency had been created that could be tasked with preserving and interpreting the cultural and natural touchstones of the country. Stephen T. Mather, the ambitious first director of the NPS, skilled at working the political channels required to reach his goals, urged the creation of eastern national parks as early as 1919.³⁹

Growing affluence and the freedom afforded by private automobiles had ignited leisure travel as a pastime not just of the elite, as it had been during the heyday of the mineral spas, but also of the middle class. And, as Horace Kephart, tireless advocate for mountain conservation, argued in a letter to Congressman Zebulon Weaver of North Carolina, while the days of boundless logging were numbered, protecting the land from the devastation of timber and mining development would create perpetual income for the region through tourism.⁴⁰ Conservation coupled with the economic benefits of tourism – potentially greater than the economic benefits accruing to private lumber interests – became an effective sales pitch for the creation of an Appalachian national park where conservation alone had failed twenty years earlier.⁴¹

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Several bills were introduced in Congress during its 1922 and 1923 sessions to establish a national park in various areas of the Appalachians, but these proposals collapsed over disagreements on whether such parks would be

³⁸ Frome, *Strangers*, 168, 177-178.

³⁹ Darwin Lambert, *Administrative History, Shenandoah National Park, 1924-1976* (Luray, VA: National Park Service, 1976), 12.

⁴⁰ Starnes, "Tourism, Landscape, and History," 269-270.

⁴¹ Tooman, "Evolving Economic Impact," 74.

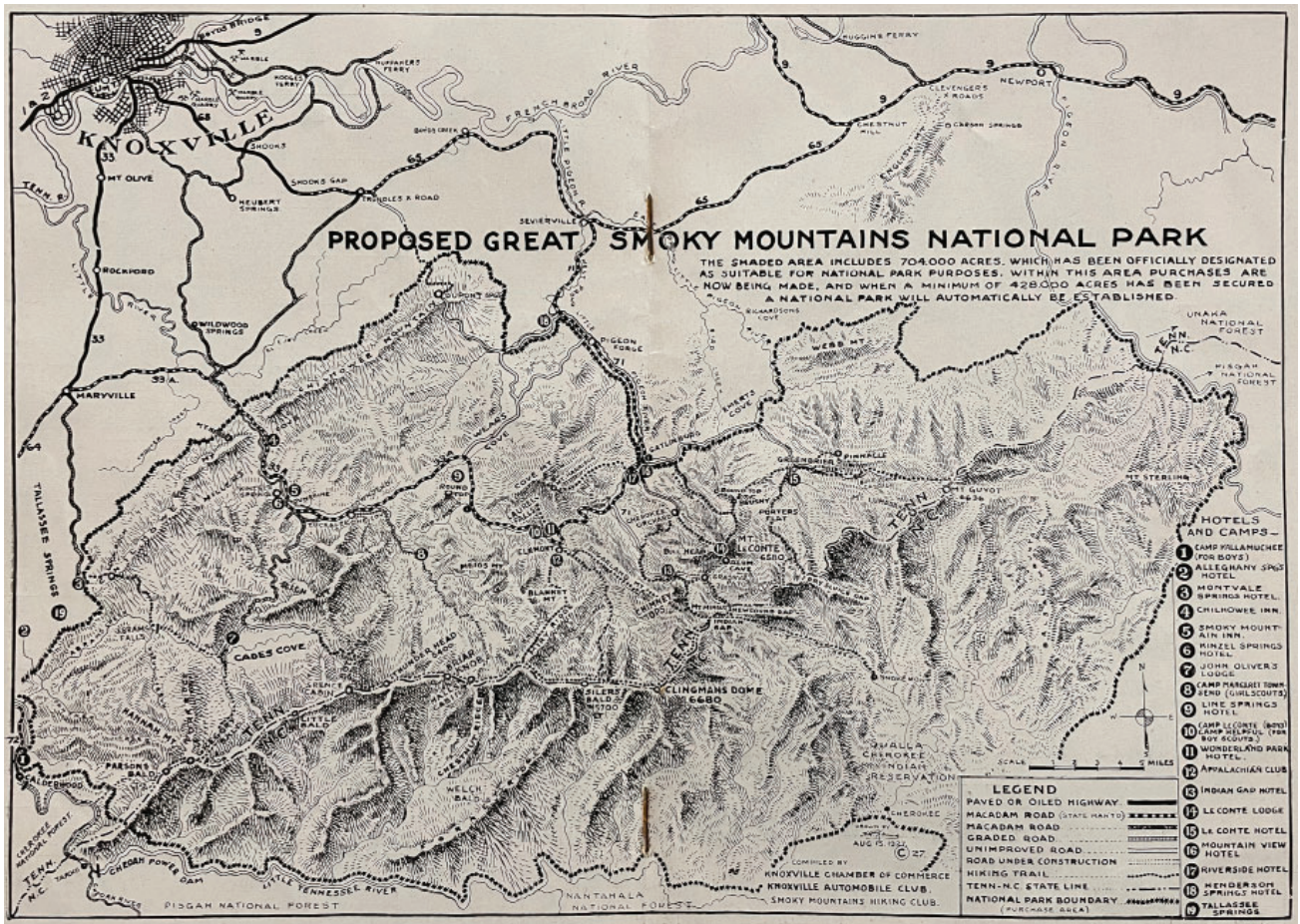


Figure 13. Map of proposed boundaries of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1927. From *Spend Your Vacation in East Tennessee and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, published by East Tennessee Automobile Club (Knoxville). (McClung Collection, Knox County Public Library)

better left to the states to manage.⁴² Conservation advocates continued to push for mountain preserves not just in the Smoky Mountains but also within the mountains at the border between Georgia and South Carolina, and in North Carolina in such places as Linville Falls in the Blue Ridge Mountains and Mount Mitchell. Concurrently, Congress appropriated funds in 1925 for surveys to be conducted for a potential park in North Carolina and Tennessee, and – in order to balance interests – a proposed park in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and another in the Mammoth Cave region of Kentucky.⁴³ The Secretary of the Interior was authorized to visit the mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia to report on the possibility of reserving portions of these areas as national parks. A favorable report was issued in 1924, and Congress passed a bill enabling the park and authorizing the acquisition of land in the Smoky Mountains, to be equally divided between

⁴² Frome, *Strangers*, 180.

⁴³ National Parks Association, *Picture News of Recreational America* (1924), 2-4; “\$50,000 Being Raised to Promote Plans to Secure Smoky Mountains National Park,” *Appalachian Journal* 18, no. 6-7 (June-July 1925): 19.

Tennessee and North Carolina.⁴⁴ By 1925, the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service had both approved in concept – without definitive boundaries – the plan for the creation of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Arno B. Cammerer, Assistant Director of the National Park Service, wrote, “There is no finer scenery anywhere in the world than the Great Smoky Mountains. They are eminently worthy to be included in our national park system along with Yellowstone, the Yosemite, and the Grand Canyon.”⁴⁵ The North Carolina Park Commission, which had been organized by the State of North Carolina to manage property acquisition, acted both as property agent and tourism promoter by publishing pamphlets promoting the inchoate park.

Once the National Park Service takes possession, there will be automobile roads, bridle paths, and hiking trails through the mountains, and by that time, if not sooner, splendid state highways now planned will make access to them easy. Then what throngs of motorists, mountain climbers, hikers, campers, and nature lovers will see the Great Smokies for escape from the summer heat, for rest amid incomparably beautiful surroundings, for the thrill of sojourning above the clouds, and for the spiritual exaltation of acquaintanceship with Nature at her noblest!”⁴⁶

According to the enabling legislation, the Department of the Interior would assume responsibility for the management and protection of the park after 150,000 acres purchased by North Carolina and Tennessee were presented to and accepted by the federal government.

SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

In February 1924, Stephen T. Mather convinced the Secretary of the Interior, Dr. Hubert Work, to appoint an advisory committee to identify a location for potential national parks south of Maryland.⁴⁷ Inspections were shortly made in North Carolina and Tennessee around the Great Smoky Mountains, in north Georgia, and around White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia. Late in the summer of 1924, local officials began to push for the consideration of an area – yet to be defined – in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Two members of the park advisory, returning to Washington, DC, from a visit to West Virginia, decided to detour through Luray, Virginia, where they were met by delegations that spent the next three days determined to show them the best locations in the Blue Ridge and Massanutten Mountains – Skyland, White Oak Canyon, Stony Man Mountain, and ridges to the

⁴⁴ William C. Allen, *The Annals of Haywood County, North Carolina, 1808-1935* (Spartanburg, SC: Reprint Company Publishers, 1977), 204.

⁴⁵ North Carolina Park Commission, *Great Smoky Mountains* (Asheville: 1925), 3-4.

⁴⁶ NC Park Commission, *Great Smoky Mountains*, 7-10.

⁴⁷ Lambert, *Administrative History*, 17.

south. The committee members were so favorably impressed that further investigation was postponed until the entire committee could visit.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, the committee struggled to rule out options elsewhere. An area in Alabama was eliminated from consideration in October because of mineral deposits. A region straddling north Georgia and the Carolinas was rejected for being too thickly settled. Cumberland Gap was considered but dismissed because of its mining prospects.

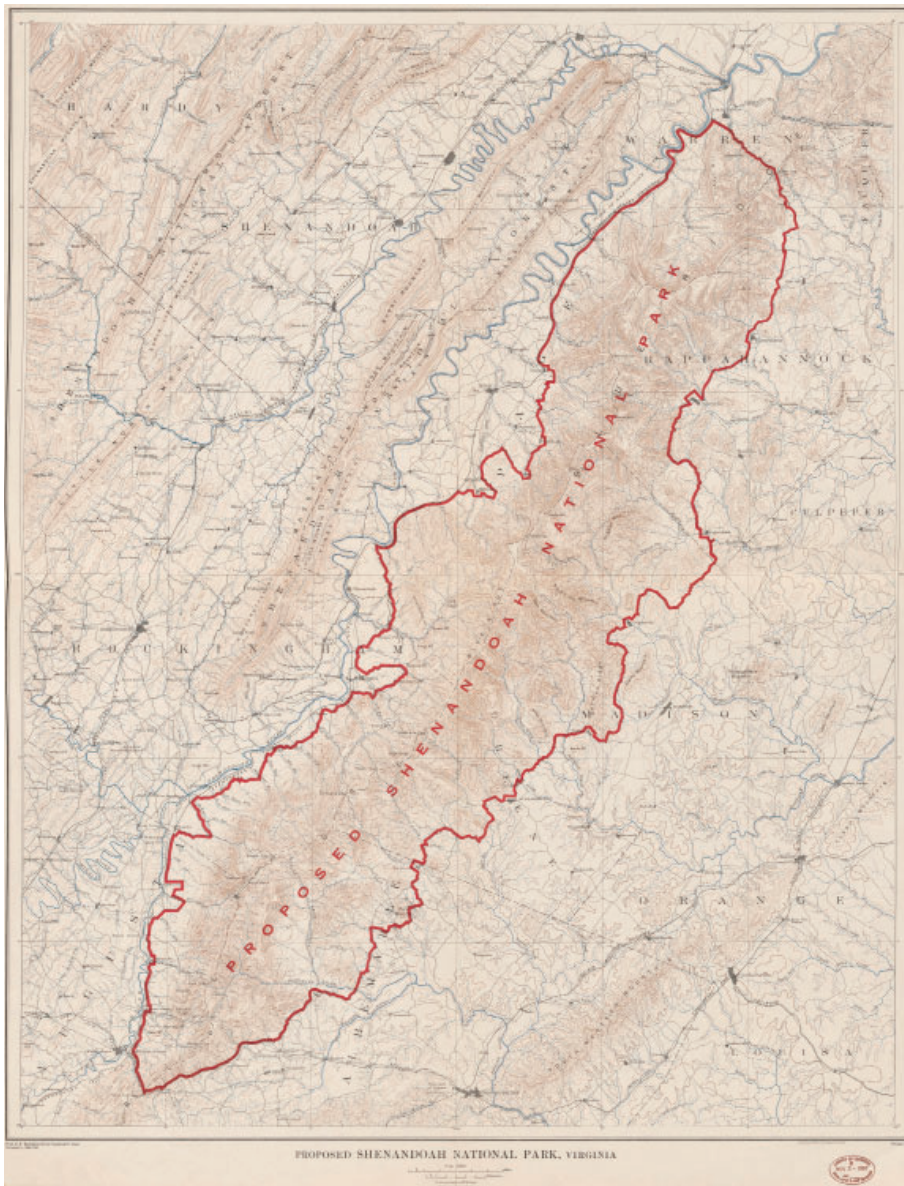


Figure 14. Map of proposed boundaries of Shenandoah National Park, 1926. (US Geological Survey. <https://lccn.loc.gov/97684222>)

⁴⁸ Lambert, *Administrative History*, 23-24.

In November, the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce unanimously passed a resolution supporting the Blue Ridge location, and three days later, the Northern Virginia Park Association mailed several thousand copies of a 16-page pamphlet entitled, “A National Park Near the Nation’s Capital,” to influential citizens, civic organizations, state officials, and members of Congress.⁴⁹ Remaining resistance to the site selection soon collapsed, though the committee’s decision-making session report to Secretary Work in December 1924 was cautious. Many locations of unsurpassed scenic natural beauty were found, but reservations remained over private ownership and settlement of the lands.

The Blue Ridge of Virginia, one of the sections which had your committee’s careful study, while secondary to the Great Smokies in altitude and some other features, constitutes in our judgment the outstanding and logical place for the creation of the first national park in the southern Appalachians . . . It will surprise the American people to learn that a national park site with fine scenic and recreational qualities can be found within a 3-hour ride of our National Capital and within a day’s ride of 40,000,000 of our inhabitants. It has many canyons and gorges with beautiful cascading streams. It has some splendid primeval forests, and the opportunity is there to develop an animal refuge of national importance. Along with the whole southern Appalachians, this area is full of historic interest, the mountains looking down on valleys with their many battlefields of Revolutionary and Civil War periods, and the birthplaces of many of the Presidents of the United States. Within easy access are the famous caverns of the Shenandoah Valley.

The greatest single feature, however, is a possible sky-line drive along the mountain top, following a continuous ridge and looking down westerly on the Shenandoah Valley, from 2,500 to 3,500 feet below, and also commanding a view of the Piedmont Plain stretching easterly to the Washington Monument.⁵⁰

Similar to the arrangement in Tennessee and North Carolina, the state would need to acquire the land, to be turned over to the federal government. When the total of pledged funds gave enough confidence that the overall effort would be successful, a bill was introduced in Congress for the authorization of both Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks in May 1926, which was shortly passed by both houses and signed by President Calvin Coolidge.

⁴⁹ Lambert, *Administrative History*, 25-27.

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, “Final Report of the Southern Appalachian National Park Commission to the Secretary of the Interior” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), 8.

THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

THE PARKWAY IN THE UNITED STATES

For most of human history, roadways have been developed to solve entirely utilitarian concerns – travel of goods, armies, and people in the simplest and quickest manner that could be justified in their construction methods and paths. The idea of a “parkway” to carry travelers from one point to another has its roots in eighteenth century English landscape design, with ideals exemplified by architects such as Lancelot “Capability” Brown and Humphrey Repton: picturesque routing of paths, not ruled by considerations of the shortest distance or easiest travel, but in order to present attractive views and contrived vistas emerging from the surrounding wilder landscape. In the United States, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux translated these ideas into the 1858 Greensward Plan for New York City’s Central Park, which – in the furthest thing possible from the relentless unbroken regularity of the city’s overall street grid – featured meandering pleasure drives. The purpose was not the destination, but the journey. Designs for similar park drives in Brooklyn, Buffalo, and Chicago followed. Soon after Olmsted’s 1880 design for a winding carriage drive between Boston’s Back Bay and the city’s Franklin Park was begun, the term “parkway” had come to refer to a landscaped roadway connecting two or more parks.⁵¹ The 1901 Senate Park Commission Plan for Washington, DC, included a series of these “parkways” linking the parks within the capital city and with the Great Falls of the Potomac.

In an early departure from the understanding that a “parkway’s” foundational purpose was pleasure traffic, the Bronx River Parkway, planned in 1906 for horse and carriage traffic between the Bronx Zoo and Botanical Garden and Kensico Reservoir, had its plans modified before construction in order to accommodate automobile traffic. Generally acknowledged as the first modern motor parkway, it exhibited many of the hallmarks associated with the modern understanding of a “parkway” – easy curvature of the roadway, naturalistic roadside slopes, limited on-and-off access to avoid interruption in the flow of traffic, and a wide right-of-way treated as a natural preserve to limit encroachment by surrounding development. These features proved to be easily adaptable to the greater travel speeds of

⁵¹ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 12.

the automobile, which in turn influenced parkway design to deemphasize views of the landscape to the sides in favor of the view ahead.

Three additional parkways were constructed in Westchester County, New York, through which most of the Bronx River Parkway passed, before 1931. Similar in their emphasis on landscape treatments and recreational rather than commercial development, they nevertheless soon gained heavy use as commuter roads into the city.⁵²

It became obvious to traffic planners and engineers that some of the design aspects of parkways – especially their protected rights-of-way that limited access, and grade separation at major intersections – allowed heavy volumes of traffic to move efficiently, and this spawned a new type of parkway in the late 1930s and 1940s in which pleasure driving gave way to high-speed travel. Connecticut’s Merritt Parkway and New York’s Taconic State Parkway were this new type, with landscaping and ornamental infrastructure included to elevate the travel experience, but with a design intended to allow travel speeds up to 50 miles per hour.⁵³

Figure 15. (Left) Merritt Parkway, Connecticut, showing the wide, landscaped shoulders and ornamental bridges of the grade separated crossings.

Figure 16. (Right) Merritt Parkway, Connecticut, showing a controlled access intersection. (Both photographs by Marion Post Wolcott, 1941; Library of Congress. <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017807043> and <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017807068>)



THE PARKWAY IN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

In the early years of the National Park Service, a small number of parkways had been transferred to its administration or established as separate NPS units. The Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway in Washington, DC, authorized by Congress in 1913 as a pleasure drive to connect West Potomac Park and Rock Creek Park, was the first federal parkway. Congress authorized the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway in 1928, which was completed

⁵² Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 13.

⁵³ Gabrielle Esperdy, *Merritt Parkway: HAER Report No. CT-63* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Historic American Record, 1992), 41.

in 1932 and transferred to the NPS in May 1933. In July 1930, Congress authorized the Colonial Parkway, connecting Jamestown with the restored colonial capital of Williamsburg and the Yorktown Battlefield, as part of Colonial National Historical Park in Virginia, making it the first parkway with which the NPS was involved from its outset.⁵⁴

Automobile clubs and tourism interests pushed aggressively for an improved system of highways nationwide through the 1920s, and included in their advocacy the development of park-to-park highways. Thomas MacDonald, Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, which had assumed responsibility for the construction of most roads within the national parks, was an enthusiastic supporter of the creation of “elongated parks” to connect the nation’s great sites.⁵⁵ In the 1930s, the National Park Service proposed an ambitious program of parkway development. In contrast with the short suburban parkways that had become common in the Northeast, these were envisioned as “scenic rural parkways” extending over long distances. To ensure that these roadways would encourage travelers to experience the scenery along their way and not spoil the effect by constantly being required to leave the controlled scenic way to access services, these parkways would be provided with recreational areas at regular intervals.⁵⁶ A terminal “destination” would not be a prerequisite for the enjoyment of these linear parks.

The U.S. Department of the Interior issued a standard definition to distinguish between a parkway and a regular highway. Parkway were predominantly for recreational passenger-car traffic, would occupy wide park-like rights-of-way, and should pass through “undeveloped areas of scenic beauty.”⁵⁷ This definition was not universally adopted outside the Department, and local interpretations varied, but the essential distinction between a normal roadway and a parkway was one of utility versus aesthetics; in some local definitions, simply banning commercial traffic answered the question of “utility,” and controlling the landscape margins within the designated right-of-way satisfied the question of aesthetics.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 17.

⁵⁵ Thomas A. MacDonald and A.E. Demaray, “Parkways of the Future: A Radio Discussion between Mr. MacDonald, Chief of the United States Bureau of Public Roads, and Mr. Demaray, Associate Director of the National Park Service,” transcript of an NBC Radio broadcast, 13 April 1935, in *Parkways: A Manual of the Revised Requirements, Instructions and Information Relating to National Parkways for Use in the National Park Service* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1938).

⁵⁶ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 17.

⁵⁷ Quoted in US Department of the Interior, “Parkways Defined,” memorandum from the US Department of the Interior to the National Park Service (1 March 1944).

⁵⁸ Esperdy, *Merritt Parkway*, 22.

Within the Department of the Interior, basic standards were approved by Secretary Harold L. Ickes for application to the number of planned national parkways of the 1930s – acquisition of sufficient right-of-way to protect the scenic environment; grade separation for all highway and railroad crossings; the limitation of access from minor roadways; harmonious design of bridges, retaining walls, and drainage infrastructure; roadway curvature and limited grades to allow for easy motoring; the exclusion of commercial traffic; and the inclusion of service areas to provide for the needs of the leisure motorist.⁵⁹ Dudley C. Bayliss, a landscape architect who worked for the NPS on parkway design beginning in 1934, described the vision for the national parkways as, “essentially elongated parks, in which campgrounds, picnic areas, lodges and other visitor services are planned and developed [and] selected to best fit the topography and requirements of the project.”⁶⁰

Relatively few of the National Park Service’s ambitious parkway plans came to fruition. Surveys were undertaken in 1933 for a “Green Mountain Parkway” in Vermont, though construction was never authorized. In 1935, Congress authorized the “Washington Lincoln Memorial-Gettysburg Boulevard” to connect the Lincoln Memorial with Gettysburg Battlefield, but no funding was allocated and no work was begun. Although the Foothills Parkway in Tennessee, planned to skirt the northern boundary of the Great Smoky Mountains, was authorized in 1944 and construction has been completed for noncontiguous sections, the overall roadway remains incomplete. A “Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Parkway” was authorized in 1950 to correspond with the development of Chesapeake & Ohio National Park, and studies of alignments were conducted in the 1950s, but no construction ever began. In 1951, the NPS completed a survey for the “Mississippi River Parkway,” later renamed “The Great River Road,” which was intended generally to follow the path of the Mississippi River from the Trans-Canada Highway to the Gulf of Mexico, but its development was mainly left to the states through which it passed; its standards were haphazardly applied, and the route often was simply designated to follow existing roadways that bore no resemblance to the common understanding of a “parkway.” Of all the proposals for national parkways advanced in the 1930s, the only two that were completed

⁵⁹ Dudley C. Bayliss, “Parkway Development Under the National Park Service,” *Parks and Recreation* XX (February 1937).

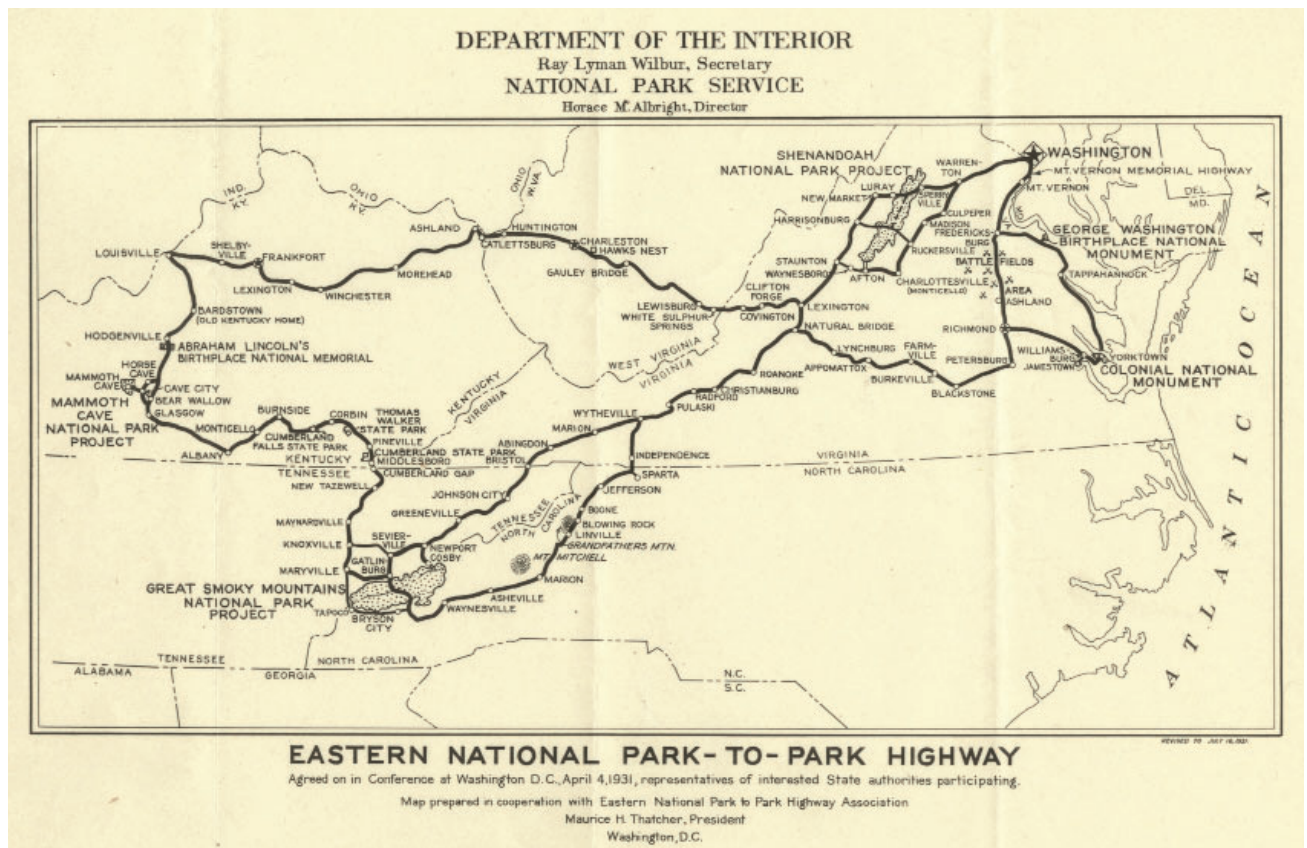
⁶⁰ Dudley C. Bayliss, *Planning Our National Park Roads and Our National Parkway* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1957).

in their entirety were the Natchez Trace Parkway, stretching from Natchez, Mississippi, to Nashville, Tennessee, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.⁶¹

A PARKWAY ALONG THE BLUE RIDGE

Proposals and efforts at scenic roadways in some areas now traveled by the Blue Ridge Parkway predate the National Park Service's involvement by several decades. In 1906, Joseph Hyde Pratt, the head of North Carolina's Geological and Economic Survey, proposed a scenic "Crest of the Blue Ridge Highway" to run from Marion, Virginia, to Tallulah Falls, Georgia, and launched a campaign to raise money for its construction. According to Pratt, the roadway was "destined to be one of the greatest scenic roads in America, surpassing anything in the East and rivaling those in Yosemite Valley and Yellowstone National Park."⁶² Surveying for this parkway was initiated in 1910, and work began in North Carolina in 1914. With the outbreak of World War I, however,

Figure 17. Proposed Eastern National Park-to-Park Highway system, 1931. (Duke University)



⁶¹ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 22; Ian Firth, "Historical Significance of the Blue Ridge Parkway," Appalachian Cultural Resource Workshop Papers (National Park Service, n.d.), accessed at https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/sero/appalachian/sec2.htm.

⁶² Harley E. Jolley, *The Blue Ridge Parkway* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 1; Louisa DeSaussure Duls, *The Story of Little Switzerland* (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1982), 17.

manpower and materials were diverted, and progress was abruptly halted with only a section between Altapass and Pineola completed; it never resumed.⁶³

After eastern national parks were authorized and their reality became imminent, the Eastern branch of the National Park-to-Park Highway Association, hoping to recreate in the East a version of the National Park-to-Park Highway loop that connected twelve national parks in the West, began advocating for a highway to link Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountain National Parks.⁶⁴ The federal government, already embarking on major road construction projects in both of those parks in the early 1930s – Skyline Drive at Shenandoah and Newfound Gap Road at Great Smoky Mountains – clearly saw the value in improved roads as park infrastructure necessary for the realization of the economic benefits of tourism. The Southern Appalachians, where decades of poor farming and logging practices had degraded the land and eroded the thin soils, were in a desperate condition economically even before the outbreak of the Great Depression, and could clearly benefit from the employment that another major public works project would produce.

The National Industrial Recovery Act, initiating a set of public works projects with the goal of relieving unemployment, was passed by Congress in June 1933. The idea of a park-to-park highway between Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains, consistent with this act, reemerged after a proposal to extend Skyline Drive south of Shenandoah National Park was presented to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes by Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia. Roosevelt suggested that the route be constructed as a toll road, but this was adamantly opposed by the governor of North Carolina. The project was approved in concept by Secretary Ickes in November 1933, and the responsibility for the planning of the route was given to the National Park Service. Virginia and North Carolina both asked that the federal government assume all costs, but Ickes felt that the states should share in the cost burden because of the direct benefits they would realize. In the compromise that was reached, the federal government allocated \$4 million to the project under the condition that the states through which the parkway was to be built would acquire the land determined to be necessary.⁶⁵

PLANNING THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

Vigorous debate ensued for more than a year over whether the southern portion of the parkway should travel through Tennessee or North Carolina.

⁶³ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 26.

⁶⁴ Jolley, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 16-17.

⁶⁵ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 11; Jolley, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 26, 44.

Thomas C. Vint, the National Park Service's Chief of the Branch of Plans and Design, and N. J. Spelman, District Engineer in charge of the Bureau of Public Roads' Eastern Office, assessed alternate routes. For a few months in 1933 and 1934, Jay Downer, who had been the chief engineer for the Westchester County parkways in New York, was brought on as an engineering consultant, but his most lasting impact was the recommendation of Stanley W. Abbott, who had been in charge of public relations on the Westchester parkways, as Resident Landscape Architect for the project; Abbott would later become the Blue Ridge Parkway's first superintendent.⁶⁶

Harold Ickes, as Secretary of the Interior and Administrator of Public Works, was the ultimate arbiter of the dispute over the routing of the parkway, and after taking into consideration the arguments made by the states of North Carolina and Tennessee on the relative superiority of their scenery, topography, and potential land acquisition issues, made a final decision in late 1934 in favor of the North Carolina route from Blowing Rock to Oconaluftee, a decision that was influenced by the fact that substantial federal funds were already being spent in Tennessee by the Tennessee Valley Authority.⁶⁷ On November 12, 1934, two days after Ickes notified the governors of North Carolina and Tennessee of his choice, the Department of the Interior issued a press release explaining the decision: both routes were equal for their potential scenery, but Tennessee already benefited from being the location of the principal entrance to Great Smoky Mountains National Park at Gatlinburg, and there was concern over the negative impact that directing all park traffic to the Tennessee side would have on tourism in North Carolina. Additionally, if the roadway were later to be made part of a greater Appalachian Parkway stretching from New England to Georgia, the North Carolina route would be a more logical segment.⁶⁸

The general guidance of Secretary Ickes's decision was that the parkway should be run along the crest of the Blue Ridge, but specific routing was going to require detailed reconnaissance through mountains remote enough that good maps did not exist for all locations. Much of the early effort was spent creating topographic surveys.⁶⁹ Perhaps counterintuitively, there was concern that a path that strictly followed the ridgeline, in a continuation of the pattern established by Shenandoah's Skyline Drive, would result in a monotony of panoramic views if extended for another 500 miles. As Thomas Vint wrote, "There is a good deal of feeling of isolation to one driving over a mountain road, which up to a

⁶⁶ Firth, "Historical Significance;" Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 14; Edward H. Abbuehl, "Fifty Years Under Construction" (1985), 6.

⁶⁷ Jolley, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 87.

⁶⁸ US Department of the Interior, "Memorandum for the Press," 12 November 1934.

⁶⁹ Edward H. Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway" (1948), 2.

certain point is one of the objectives of the project. It is a question in our minds whether the average person would enjoy driving over its entire distance.”⁷⁰

Stanley Abbott and William M. Austin, Resident Engineer for the Bureau of Public Roads’ Roanoke Office, agreed, and determined that the parkway route should deliberately vary the scenery from mountaintop to stream to bottomland to woodland. Abbott, additionally, strongly advocated for a more rural route in order to ensure that the parkway would remain devoted to purposes of tourism and recreation, noting that the parkways in the Northeast, regardless of their initial purposes for leisure travel, carried large volumes of commuter traffic. All of these considerations would have the added benefit of keeping land acquisition and construction costs within reasonable limits, and allowing a path that left the ridgeline when practical would help maintain acceptable roadway curvature and grade.⁷¹

Field reconnaissance of possible routes began in several locations, and most of the line of the parkway was physically flagged by engineers in 1934 and 1935, though major segments had enough remaining questions or competing interests advocating for one particular path or another that the connections between flagged sections remained unclear. Because the states of North Carolina and Virginia were going to have to pay for the property over which the route passed, balancing costs was also a consideration – the land that the states could acquire the most cheaply might be too rugged to allow economical road construction, while level land that would make for easy construction often was worth more than the states were willing to pay.⁷² Both North Carolina and Virginia routinely objected to the specifics of routing. Although the NPS landscape architects ultimately had the final say over routing and right-of-way boundaries, they did not always prevail due to political influence from outside the agency. Abbott, for example, wanted the parkway’s route to include Virginia’s Natural Bridge, but the lowland route that this would entail was opposed by Senator Carter Glass on the basis of the expense of acquiring the quantity of agricultural land that would be needed when the majority of the property needed for the alternative route could be acquired at no cost from the U.S. Forest Service.⁷³ With much of the route being solidified, gaps in property ownership remained, and surveyors in the field had to be somewhat circumspect about their activities to avoid driving up land prices.

⁷⁰ Thomas C. Vint to Director, National Park Service, 8 June 1934.

⁷¹ Firth, “Historical Significance;” Stanley W. Abbott, oral history interview by S. Herbert Evison, 1958, Tape. No. 55, 2-3; Stanley W. Abbott, “The Blue Ridge Parkway,” *The Regional Review* 3, No. 1 (July 1939).

⁷² Abbuehl, “History.”

⁷³ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 55.

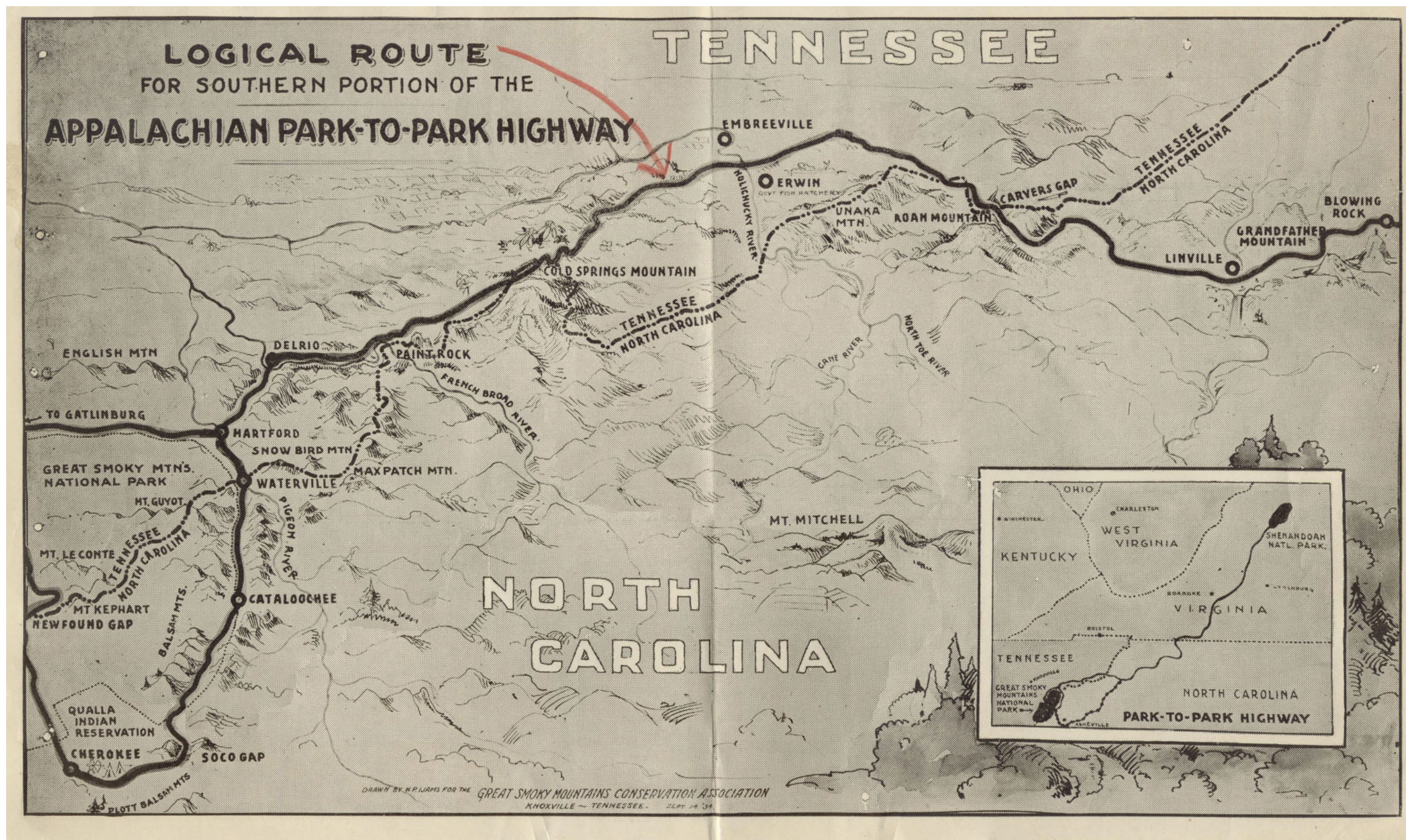


Figure 18. Map depicting the proposed route for the southern portion of the Appalachian Park-to-Park Highway through Tennessee. Drawn by Harry P. Ijams, 1934. (University of North Carolina Digital Collections. <https://dcr.lib.unc.edu/record/df853dec-ceb3-4d0b-87bd-3e4727ed2753>)

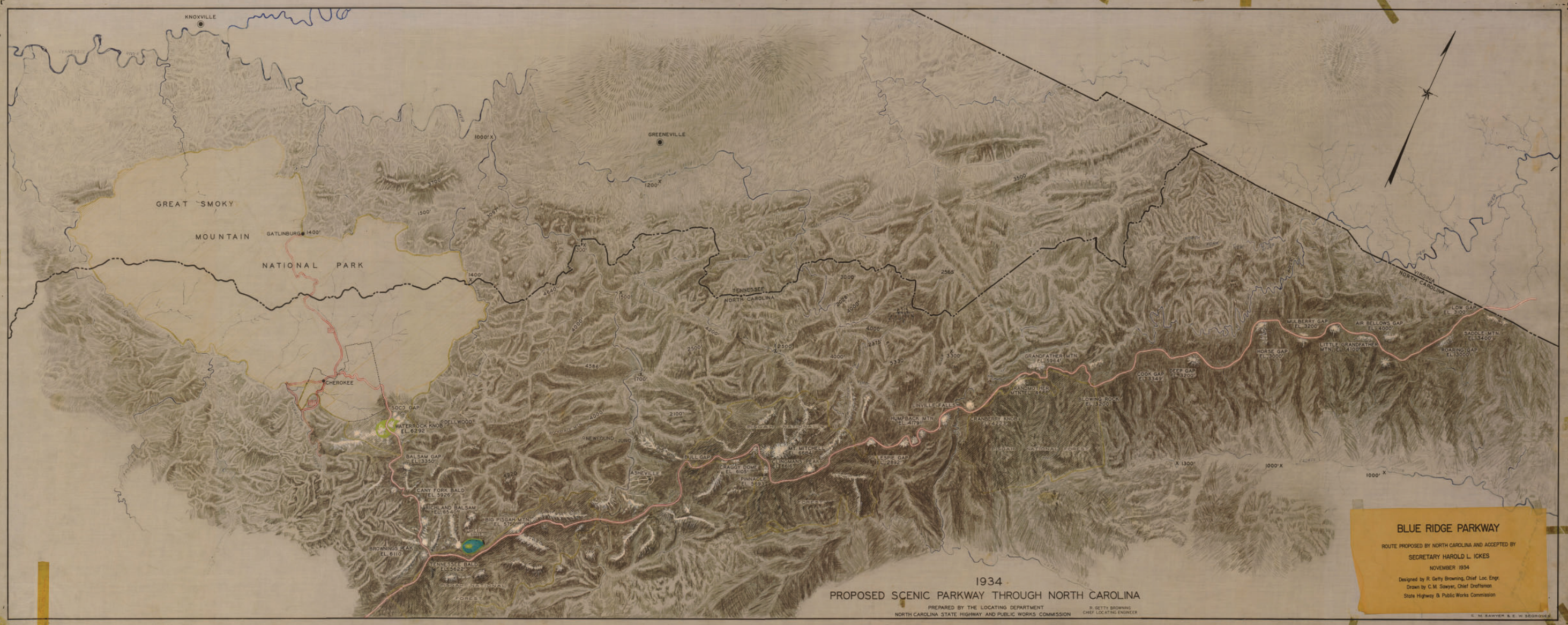


Figure 19. Map depicting the proposed scenic parkway through North Carolina, accepted by Secretary Harold L. Ickes. Drawn by C.M. Sawyer and E.W. Segroves, 1934. (North Carolina State Archives)

Parkway planners were reluctant to force people off their land if they did not want to move willingly, so opportunism was an ongoing concern.⁷⁴

After both the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads agreed to the routing of segments, the state highway departments made detailed topographic surveys and mapped the property boundaries. The NPS and the BPR used the state surveys to produce a series of Parkway Development Plans to lay out the specifics of what property needed to be acquired.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND THE START OF CONSTRUCTION

North Carolina's State Highway and Public Works Commission was authorized by its General Assembly in January 1935 to begin acquisition of right-of-way for the parkway. Virginia followed with similar authorizing legislation in February 1936 after legal questions over its ability to condemn private property were resolved. Both states endeavored to acquire property without the need for condemnation both because of the delays that the legal process would mean for construction and to avoid damage to the relationships with the people who lived along the path of the parkway.⁷⁵ The majority of the right-of-way was acquired without substantial trouble, but accommodations were sometimes made to facilitate progress. In some instances, houses were moved from the right-of-way to other areas on people's property, and some families were granted life tenancies and continued to live beside the roadway for years.⁷⁶

Stanley Abbott, with his skill in public relations, was instrumental in smoothing over disagreements and providing an overall clarifying vision for the project to back the efforts of the states and their highway departments. He had to persuade officials in Washington, DC, of his ideas for the design of the parkway while also working to maintain the general support of the parkway's neighbors – the rural, mountain people whose property the parkway was to go past, or through – to avoid political pressure from their political representatives.⁷⁷

In North Carolina, R. Getty Browning, the highway department's chief locating engineer, had been a strong advocate for the North Carolina route for the southern portion of the parkway, and he facilitated land acquisition according to the needs conveyed by the National Park Service. In Virginia, land acquisition, particularly within productive agricultural areas, proved considerably more difficult. Plans had initially encouraged

⁷⁴ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 51, 63.

⁷⁵ Firth, "Historical Significance."

⁷⁶ Abbott, interview by S. Herbert Evison, 21.

⁷⁷ S. Herbert Evison, Introduction to 1958 oral history interview with Stanley W. Abbott, 1974.

relatively narrow rights-of-way with wider viewshed areas to be protected through the use of scenic easements, but these easements proved difficult to acquire for anything less than the cost of the land itself, and the state eventually agreed to purchase wider strips to ease the process.⁷⁸



Figure 20. R. Getty Browning, chief locating engineer for the North Carolina State Highway Commission, 1952. Browning was known for having walked the entire route of the Blue Ridge Parkway. (North Carolina State University)

Envisioned initially as a more prosaic roadway project, enabling legislation caught up with the more expansive and detailed vision being developed by Abbott and his colleagues in June 1936 with the passage by the 74th Congress of Public Law No. 848, which formally authorized the “Blue Ridge Parkway” as a recreational motor road to be administered and maintained by the National Park Service, with the “recreational” aspect to be facilitated by a requirement that the U.S. Forest Service work with the NPS on the development of recreational functions on existing federal lands along the route.⁷⁹

With the Blue Ridge Parkway officially under the permanent responsibility of the National Park Service, granular features of the infrastructure had a clearer direction. The design philosophy established at the western national parks – rustic styles of built objects and naturalistic effects of modified landscapes – translated to the east with simple adjustments to the material palette through the use of materials native to the local region, ensuring that features fit

aesthetically into their natural settings. Larger design decisions incorporated the important features of the suburban parkways of the Northeast – limited access, grade separation at interchanges, curvilinear alignments for picturesque effect, and landscape margins to limit the visibility of surrounding development – though the right-of-way in most locations is several times wider than those precedents. Compromises were incorporated to respond to the anticipated difference in traffic volume and the difficulties of mountain terrain, including an undivided roadway and a design speed of 45 miles per hour.⁸⁰ Altogether, according to engineers Jay Downer and Gilmore D. Clarke, “The location, alignment and gradient of the drive, and the attention to the

⁷⁸ Abbuehl, “History,” 7-9.

⁷⁹ Public Law No. 848, 74th Congress, Sess. II, Chs. 883, 884 (30 June 1936), 2041.

⁸⁰ Firth, “Historic Significance.”

policy of utilizing the most modern practices give to this great parkway a distinction unequalled by any other project of its character in the world.”⁸¹

In September 1935, the first construction contract was awarded, and work began on Section 2-A in North Carolina. Construction began in Virginia in February of 1936. Even as sections were completed, such as the first section of roadway opened to the public near Roanoke,



Virginia, in April 1939, land acquisition continued elsewhere along the route as details continued to be hammered out.⁸² By 1942, most of the right-of-way for the roadway had been acquired, with the exception of a stretch around Roanoke, a few private landowners in North Carolina, and the final boundaries where the route would pass through land owned by the U.S. Forest Service.⁸³

Figure 21. Early construction on Section 2-A-1, Buncombe County, North Carolina, July 1936. (Library of Congress, HAER NC, 11-ASHV.V, 2--226. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/nc0478.photos.345926p/>)

With the outbreak of World War II, major construction on the parkway was halted in the fall of 1942. Projects that could not be completed expeditiously were abandoned and remained shut down for the duration of the war. By this point, 171 miles of the parkway had been paved, 162 miles had been graded, and 144 miles remained to be started.⁸⁴ While even maintenance of the existing works was halted, planning of the uncompleted portions continued, and North Carolina and Virginia continued property acquisition.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Jay Downer and Gilmore D. Clarke, “Notes on Shenandoah – Blue Ridge – Great Smoky Mountains Parkway” (Salem, VA: National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design, 1940), 8.

⁸² Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 70-72.

⁸³ Firth, “Historic Significance.”

⁸⁴ Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director, National Park Service, to Byrd, 28 June 1946.

⁸⁵ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 80.

THE NEW DEAL

Title II, Section 202a of the National Industrial Recovery Act, enacted June 16, 1933, included “public highways and parkways” in its authorization of a broad series of public works. The creation of the Blue Ridge Parkway is firmly rooted in this Act. The first money spent toward the implementation of the roadway consisted of \$4 million in federal funds that were allotted by the Public Works Administration on December 5, 1933, toward a “scenic highway connecting the Shenandoah and Smoky Mountains National Park.”

Administration of the project intended the greatest possible economic benefit to the region. Companies were required to hire labor locally to the greatest extent possible, and thousands were ultimately employed from the region. Although it relied on the states for property acquisition, the National Park Service urged Virginia and North Carolina to make offers above fair market value to the affected landowners, which, in addition to the immediate benefit that had for the impoverished farmers of the region, ensured that the construction work would not be delayed by prolonged condemnation proceedings. The Resettlement Administration program of the National Emergency Council also had made funds available for the purchase of “submarginal” agricultural lands in order to enable farmers to resettle in locations with better prospects, with the property acquired to be designated for public recreation. Extended areas beyond the right-of-way necessary for the roadway were acquired for five of the Parkway’s recreation areas through this program.

As sections of the roadway were completed, maintenance of the roadway and waysides offered continued employment. Concessions that would be authorized along the path would offer at least seasonal local employment, and the anticipated influx of visitors would boost the economies of communities along the route.⁸⁶

In contrast to many projects created under the National Industrial Recovery Act, the majority of the work on the Blue Ridge Parkway was by private contract, with stipulations for the recruitment of a local labor force, but some work was done by men working under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In these instances, hand labor was extensively used even where machine labor might have been more efficient because the purpose was to put as many men to work as possible.

⁸⁶ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 30-32, 77.

Stanley Abbott requested that nine Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps be assigned to the Parkway around 1937. The CCC, which had been organized in the spring of 1933, had a peak enrollment by 1936 of over 500,000 men in 2,600 camps operating in every state in the nation. Ultimately, only four camps were assigned to work on the Blue Ridge Parkway.⁸⁷



Figure 22. CCC Camp at Rock Castle Gorge, Blue Ridge Parkway, May 1938. Photo by EMD. (NPS, Blue Ridge Parkway Historic Photograph Collection (1933-1979), negative #8612. <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/fdea8a8c-a2c6-448d-b636-6bd915bfda2c>)



Figure 23. CCC crew moving trees, Blue Ridge Parkway, about 1938. (NPS, Blue Ridge Parkway Historic Photograph Collection (1933-1979), negative #5503. <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/b9875763-6018-4840-884c-b3b0f272a46d>)

RECREATION AREAS

An innovation peculiar to the planning of the Blue Ridge Parkway was the inclusion of recreation areas. With a right-of-way that had been authorized to be as narrow as 200 feet in some locations, Abbott believed that the most effective way to control the scenic viewshed was to limit, however possible, surrounding commercial encroachment. The needs of tourists would be

⁸⁷ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 75.

met one way or another, and if the National Park Service were to provide on its property all the necessary services – food, lodging, gasoline, picnic areas, campgrounds – through controlled concessions, they could mitigate the potential for negative impacts to the parkway from outside.⁸⁸ These concession areas could be incorporated into wider recreational stopping points – parks-within-a-park. It was an idea that had not been part of the original conception for the parkway, but it grew out of Abbott’s experience with the Westchester Park Commission. In Abbott’s estimation, these waypoints would be as important as the roadway itself for the purpose of leisure, elevating it from just a roadway ribbon between two major points to one that could be an experience in itself – driving interspersed with frequent stops for the enjoyment of the country through which the roadway passed. As Abbott wrote early on, “It is unquestionably desirable, therefore, to set aside certain worthwhile areas at which the motorist may stop and to provide facilities for such activities as camping, picnicking, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, and swimming.”⁸⁹ Abbott, the visionary, referred to these stopping points as “beads on a string; the rare gems in the necklace.”⁹⁰ Thomas Vint, the engineer, called them “bulges.”⁹¹

The first Master Plan for the parkway, approved by Secretary Ickes in January 1935, included nineteen major and minor recreational areas, with six larger areas that were to be acquired to preserve their scenic qualities. The general idea, with some flexibility, was to have a major park every 60 miles and two smaller day-use areas in between.⁹²

The Master Plan was updated on a regular basis and soon noted that in addition to the outlined recreation areas already planned, there were two places along the proposed route where overnight accommodations were already offered: Bent Creek National Forest Recreation Area in Section 2-S, where camping and swimming facilities were provided along the French Broad River, and at Mount Pisgah in Section 2-T and 2-U, where Pisgah Forest Inn provided food and overnight lodging. Secretary Ickes approved both of these areas to be added to the list of potential recreation areas along the parkway in August 1936.⁹³

⁸⁸ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 65.

⁸⁹ Stanley W. Abbott, “Appalachian National Parkway from Shenandoah National Park to Great Smoky Mountains National Park: Report on Recreation and Service Areas, Type and Scope of Development Proposed” (Salem, VA: National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Designs, 15 December 1934).

⁹⁰ Abbott, interview by S. Herbert Evison, 2.

⁹¹ Abbott, interview by S. Herbert Evison, 10.

⁹² Abbott, interview by S. Herbert Evison, 23.

⁹³ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 14.

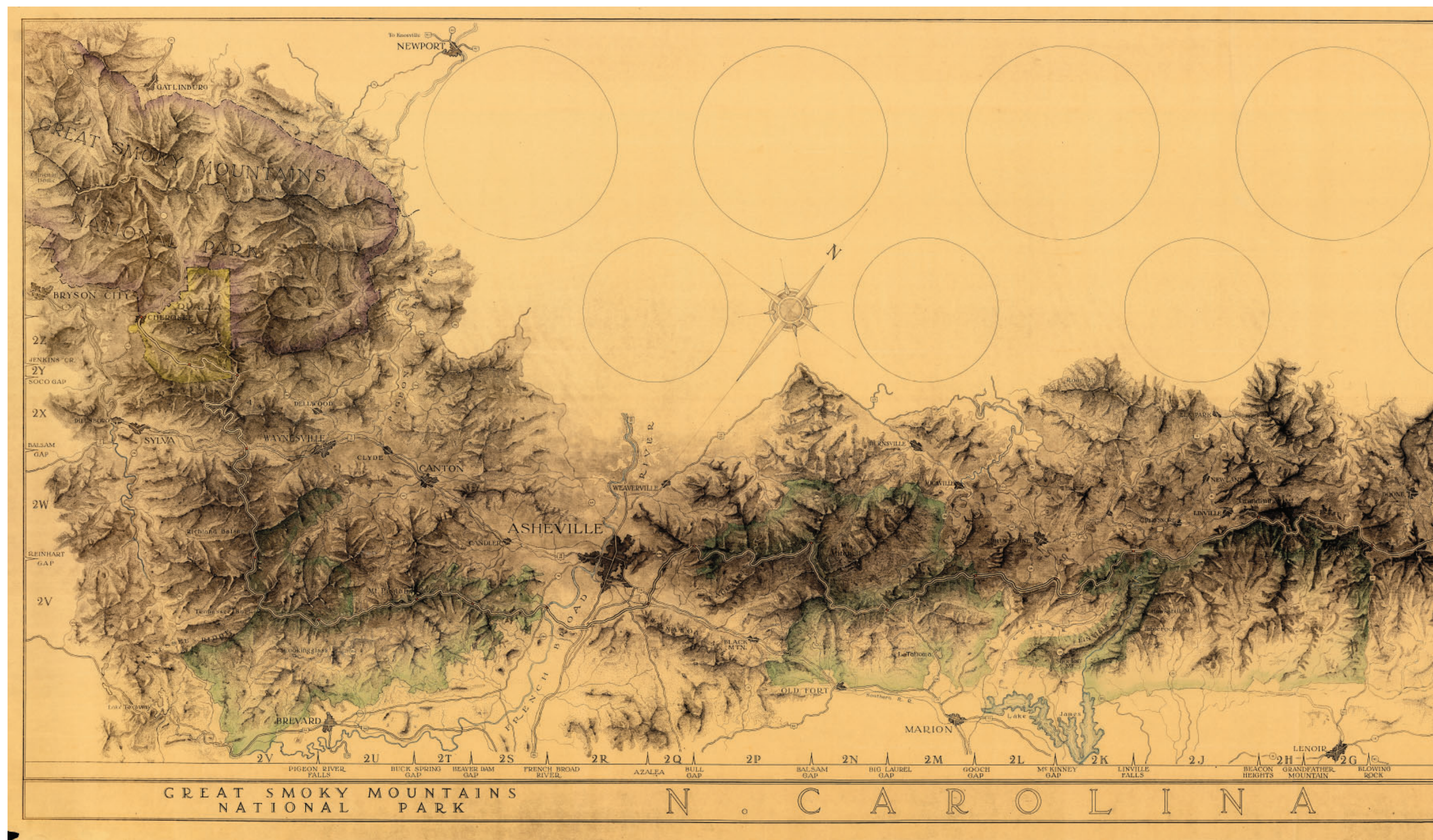


Figure 24. Blue Ridge Parkway Master Development Plan, Part 1, March 1940. The circles are for enlarged views of the Recreation Areas, but at that time none of these had been finalized for the southern end of the Parkway. (NPS TIC #BLRI-1051-A)

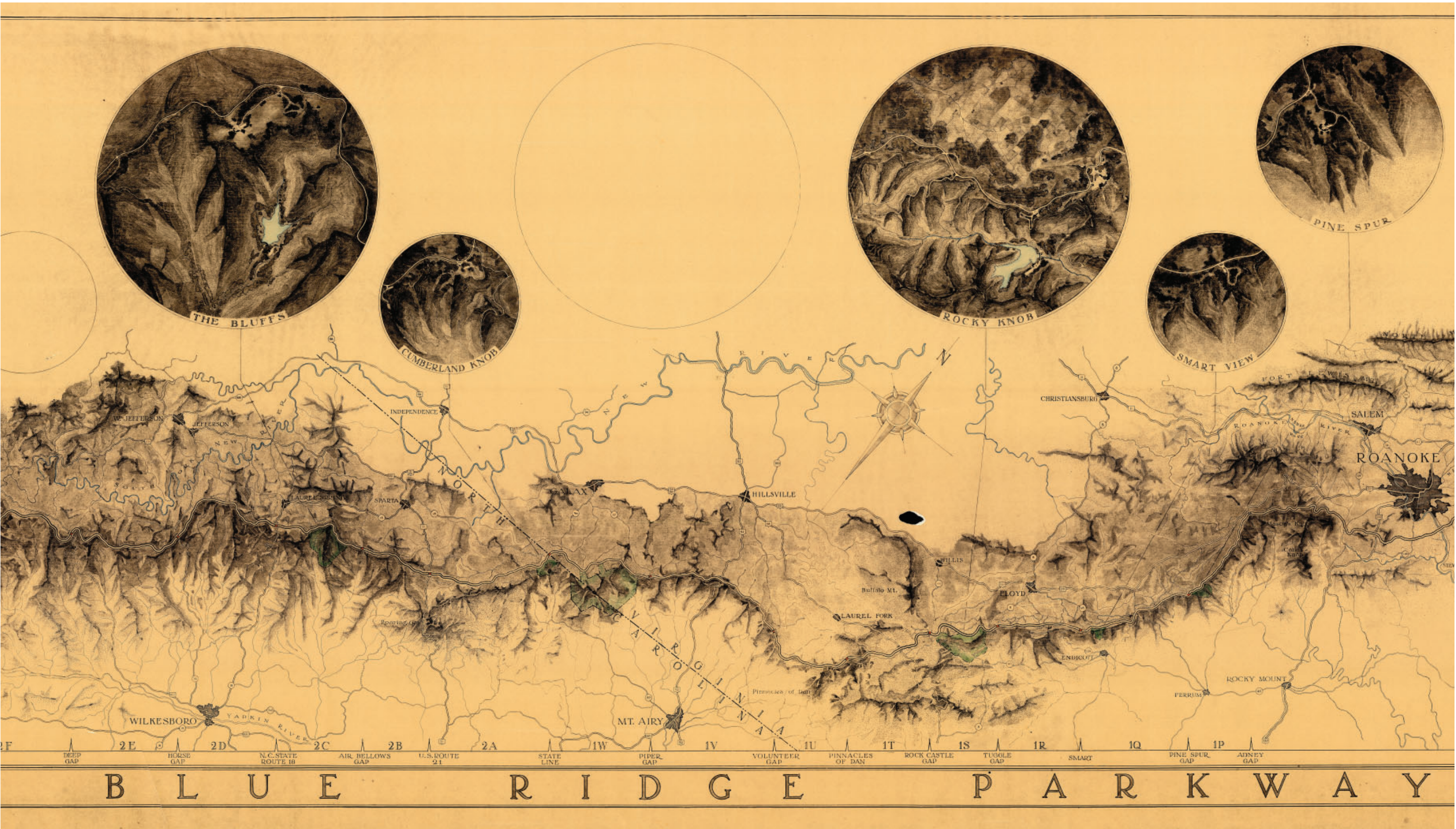


Figure 25. Blue Ridge Parkway Master Development Plan, Part 2, March 1940. The circles illustrate enlarged views of the Recreation Areas planned by that date. (NPS TIC #BLRI-1051-A)

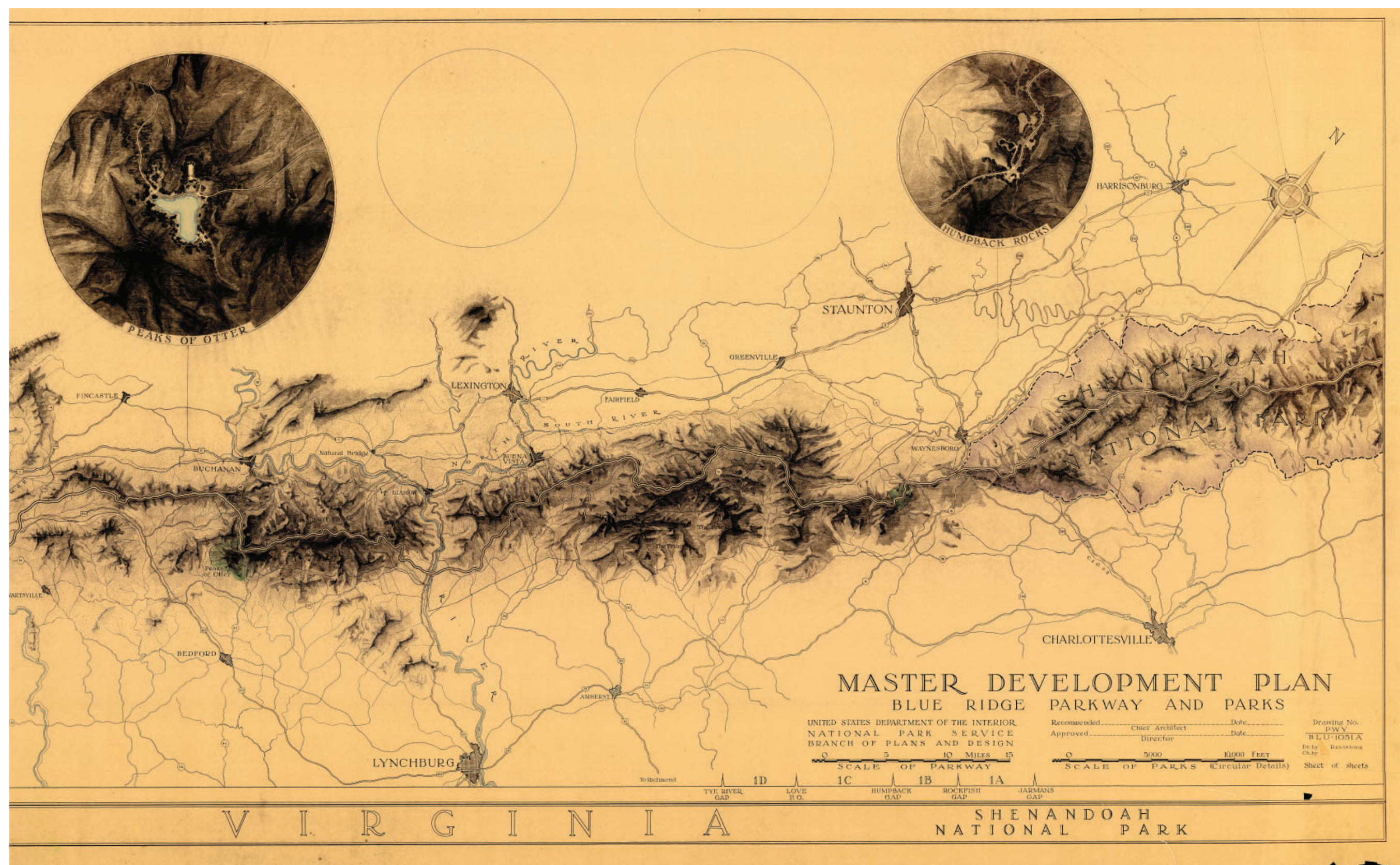


Figure 26. Blue Ridge Parkway Master Development Plan, Part 3, March 1940. The circles illustrate enlarged views of the Recreation Areas planned by that date. (NPS TIC #BLRI-1051-A)

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Acquisition of the property needed for the recreation areas was complicated by the fact that they were not envisioned in the original agreements with Virginia and North Carolina, who declined to take responsibility for purchasing them. Tourist and resort interests in both states, most vocally in North Carolina, criticized the inclusion of food, gas, and lodging facilities on the parkway as anticompetitive, counter to the tourism benefits that had been promised.⁹⁴ Some funding was made available by leveraging the Resettlement Administration's program for the purchase of submarginal agricultural lands in 1935, and five of the nineteen targeted areas were acquired through this process prior to World War II.⁹⁵ Nine of the other fourteen were on land that belonged to the U.S. Forest Service; the lands ultimately transferred to the National Park Service for these areas were much smaller in extent than Abbott had visualized.⁹⁶

RESUMPTION OF CONSTRUCTION

Disagreements over the route through the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' Qualla Boundary were resolved in 1940, but more minor routing decisions at difficult locations remained to be ironed out after World War II.⁹⁷ Stanley Abbott, Resident Landscape Architect for the project, who had been designated Acting Superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the spring of 1937, was called into military service in 1944. He returned to the first of those positions after the war, but Sam P. Weems, who had been a project manager for the Blue Ridge Parkway since 1935, had been made superintendent in his absence, and remained in that job. Abbott returned to the Regional Office in Richmond, Virginia, in 1946, where he continued to advise on the parkway until 1949.⁹⁸

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 earmarked \$10 million in postwar funds for work on national parkways, and a portion of this money was to come to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Several short sections were completed in 1946. Works accelerated in 1948, and the roadway was substantially complete between the James River in Virginia and Asheville, North Carolina, by 1950, a long enough continuous roadway that a dedication ceremony for the Parkway was scheduled for August 12, 1950. The outbreak of the Korean War, however, caused President Harry S. Truman

⁹⁴ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 170.

⁹⁵ Stanley W. Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway: Historical Report to the Chief Architect, Branch of Plans and Design, for the Years 1934, 1935, and 1936 by the Resident Landscape Architect, Roanoke, Virginia" (Salem, VA: National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design, 10 January 1937).

⁹⁶ Abbott, interview by S. Herbert Evison, 2.

⁹⁷ Stanley W. Abbott, "Annual Report of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Roanoke, Virginia, to the Director, National Park Service" (National Park Service, 30 June 1940).

⁹⁸ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 66, 83; Firth, "Historic Significance;" "'Father of Parkway' Weems Dies," *Roanoke Times* (7 May 1993), B-2.

to cancel his planned attendance. Subsequent attempts to reschedule the ceremony failed, and no dedication was held until the 1980s.⁹⁹

MISSION 66

By the mid-1950s, when approximately one third of the Blue Ridge Parkway had been completed and opened to travel, many national parks suffered from aging and dilapidated facilities, overcrowding of the areas most easily accessible to the public, oftentimes designed to accommodate visitor numbers from decades earlier, and indifferent maintenance. Conrad L. Wirth became director of the National Park Service in 1951, inheriting a system that could not be improved with the inadequate funding allotted, and set about planning how to modernize the agency. Wirth announced the program he envisioned, Mission 66, in 1955 – a ten-year program to address the needs of modern visitors. He described the goals of the program to park personnel.

The purpose of MISSION 66 is to make an intensive study of the problems of protection, public use, interpretation, development, staffing, legislation, financing, and all other phases of park operation, and to produce a comprehensive and integrated program of use and protection that is in harmony with the obligations of the National Park Service under the [Organic] Act of 1916.¹⁰⁰

Figure 27. Pages from *Our Heritage* (1956), a promotional publication on the Mission 66 program, illustrating inadequate facilities, overcrowding, and enormous growth in the numbers of visitors with which the system had to contend. (NPS. https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/npsg/our_heritage.pdf)

⁹⁹ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 86.

¹⁰⁰ Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 241-242.





There was an obvious conflict between the conservation goals of national parks and sweeping, agency-wide development plans to allow expanded visitor use, and the program was criticized by the environmental movement. Wirth contended that visitor congestion was already causing degradation, and that new roads, trails, campgrounds, picnic areas, comfort stations, and visitor centers, if located where the negative effects of tourism were overwhelming the natural conditions, would have an overall positive impact on the protection of resources.¹⁰¹ This conflict was less of an issue for the Blue Ridge Parkway because of the linear nature of the park. It was not in its conception or arrangement a park whose purpose was the protection of swaths of fragile ecosystems, and the expanded nodes of the park had been planned expressly for the purposes of recreation.

Wirth's "comprehensive and integrated program of use and protection" had construction as an integral part of its program. Current projections anticipated annual visitor numbers of 80,000,000 across the National Park system, and "enjoyment without impairment" could not be accomplished without new facilities in place to greet those visitors.¹⁰² Mission 66 was largely driven by the needs of the automobile tourist, and transportation-oriented projects such as the Blue Ridge Parkway were given priority.

¹⁰¹ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 54.

¹⁰² Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 88.

Figure 28. Pages from *Our Heritage* (1956), a promotional publication on the Mission 66 program. With the amount of investment needed, the intent from the outset was to include private development in the area of concessions. (NPS. https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/npsgr/our_heritage.pdf)

Superintendent Sam Weems greeted the announcement of the program with enthusiasm.¹⁰³ Much of the roadway that had been completed had been in less complex sections, and most of the work that remained would be difficult construction in rugged terrain, where an infusion of funding could have dramatic impact on the slow progress of the completion of the roadway.¹⁰⁴ The Park Service shortly announced a list of priority projects. The Blue Ridge Parkway was scheduled for development and improvements in the amount of \$31,600,000. Of that, \$5 million was allocated to the improvement of facilities, including a new maintenance and office complex in Asheville and new employee residences, but the majority of funds were for extension and completion of the roadway, including several of the most difficult sections in North Carolina. The state was pressured to turn over the right-of-way as soon as possible so that construction could begin promptly.¹⁰⁵ The U.S. Forest Service transferred the remaining right-of-way for the sections of the parkway crossing its property in 1957.

Commercial and tourism interests greeted the announcement of Mission 66 with ambivalence. A system of national parks that would support increased tourist numbers should unquestionably be a benefit to affected regions, but the National Park Service's plans to expand touristic facilities within the parks could negate those effects. The Blue Ridge Parkway, as a narrow ribbon of land, could see private development to support tourist traffic very near the road's path, but the Park Service already had a general policy of not allowing advertisements on its property for commercial enterprises located off of the parkway. It was feared that the location of sanctioned developments on the parkway itself would siphon tourist traffic from the surrounding communities by satisfying the needs of travelers without them needing to venture afield at all. Businesses near Blowing Rock held several public hearings on the matter. Although Mission 66 proposed that all additional accommodations planned would be built and equipped by private enterprise, the North Carolina State Legislature, at the urging of private tourism interests, passed resolutions opposing the Park Service's plans for provision of lodging along the parkway.¹⁰⁶ Despite the vociferous complaints of the North Carolina tourist industry, the National Park Service announced in July 1956 that \$4 million would be spent on the construction of additional concession facilities along the Blue Ridge Parkway as part of the Mission 66 program, including the replacement of the

¹⁰³ Sam P. Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report" (Roanoke: Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service, 1956), 1.

¹⁰⁴ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 87.

¹⁰⁵ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 53; Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 88-89.

¹⁰⁶ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 55; Sam P. Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report" (Roanoke: Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service, 1957), 2.

temporary sandwich shop at Cumberland Knob with a permanent building; expansion of the 24-room Bluffs Lodge at Doughton Park to 50 units and the addition of dining facilities; construction of new gas stations and lunch/craft shops at Tompkins Knob Park, Linville Falls, and Tennessee Knob; replacement of the temporary lunch/craft shop at Crabtree Meadows with a permanent building; and the expansion of lodging facilities at Mt. Pisgah from 30 rooms to 75, along with new dining facilities and a gas station. Though the Park Service would provide the infrastructure to support these developments, none of the facilities themselves was to be built or operated using public funds.¹⁰⁷

MOUNT PISGAH RECREATION AREA

As late as 1941, the Master Plans for the Blue Ridge Parkway still did not include development plans for the Mount Pisgah area. With the majority of the property in the area under the ownership of the U.S. Forest Service, who already managed campground facilities in the vicinity, the assumption was that the Forest Service would retain ownership and responsibility for the area.¹⁰⁸ By the 1946 version of the Master Plan, this earlier understanding had been supplanted, under the direction of Stanley Abbott, by a number of recommendations for facilities that would be undertaken by the National Park Service: the construction of a parking area for a trailhead serving a trail to the summit of Mt. Pisgah; the conversion of the Vanderbilts' Buck Spring Lodge – not yet in NPS ownership – into a museum devoted to George W. Vanderbilt's role in the introduction of "scientific forestry" to the United States; construction of an overlook connecting to a trail leading to Little Bald; demolition and replacement of the Pisgah National Forest Inn with a new lodge and coffee shop; provision of a new gas station; and construction of two new loop roads with facilities for camping and picnicking.¹⁰⁹ A few refinements to the plans for these features were made in the 1952 version of the Master Plan, but questions remained, and plans were still being modified in 1958 due to unresolved questions about the Vanderbilt property and what to do about the Pisgah National Forest Inn and its proprietors.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission, "Report on the Question of Construction of Concession Facilities on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 1957, 2-3.

¹⁰⁸ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 19; Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 276.

¹⁰⁹ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 21-22; Jaeger, *Pisgah Inn*, 23.

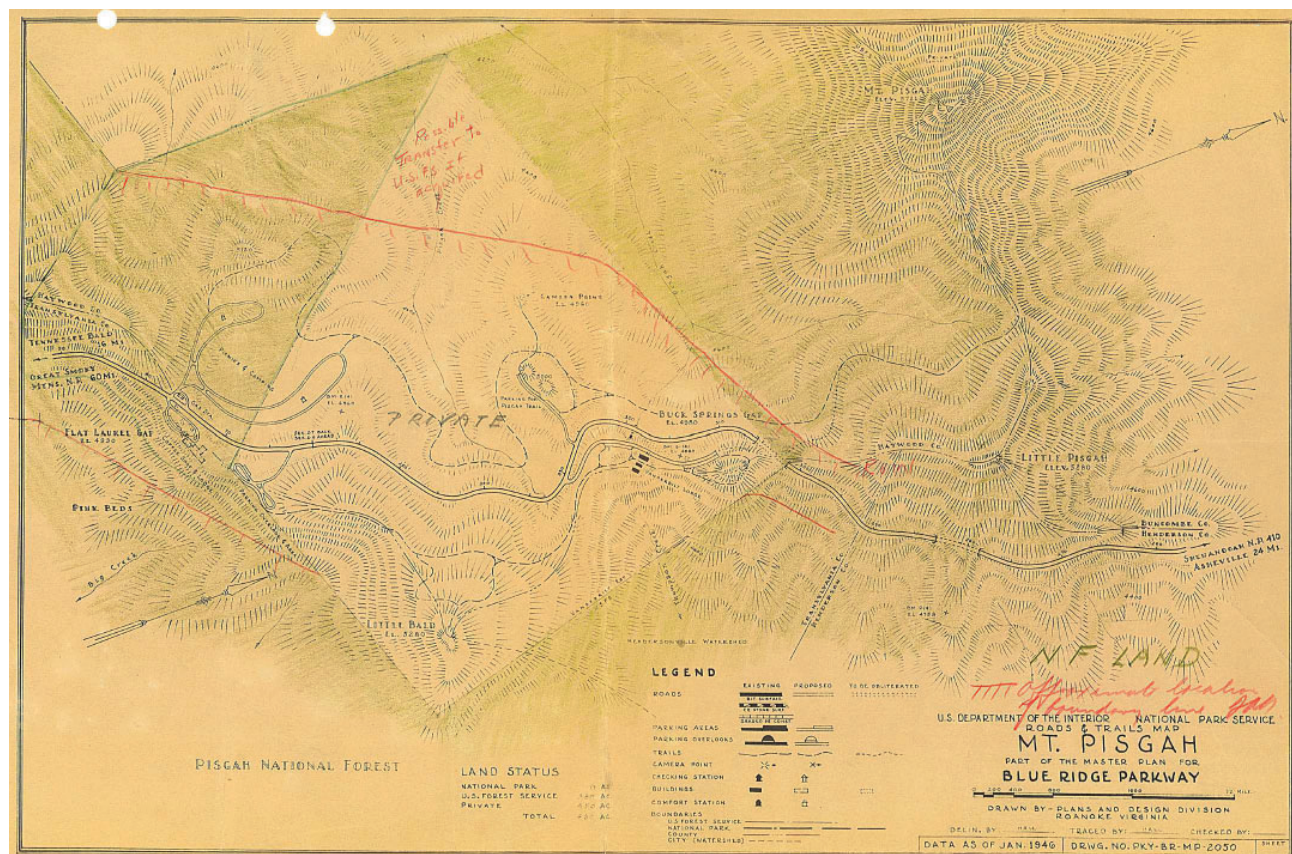
¹¹⁰ National Park Service, "The Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia and North Carolina, Developed Areas," June 1952; Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 58.

THE VANDERBILT PROPERTY

While the U.S. Forest Service had acquired the majority of George W. Vanderbilt's land around Mount Pisgah in 1917, Edith Vanderbilt retained 472 acres in Buck Spring Gap surrounding Buck Spring Lodge. The larger transfer of land into public ownership marked an end to private property development on Mount Pisgah, but Buck Spring Lodge and the nearby Pisgah National Forest Inn remained.¹¹¹ Edith Stuyvesant Vanderbilt (who had remarried in 1925 to Senator Peter Gerry of Rhode Island) died in 1958. Her grandson George Cecil, faced with the impending completion of the Blue Ridge Parkway through the area and the end of Buck Spring Lodge's value as an isolated retreat, reversed his grandmother's longstanding opposition to the sale of the family's remaining acreage and sold the property in late 1959.¹¹² Attention necessarily shifted away from questions about Pisgah National Forest Inn to the disposition of the Vanderbilt structures.

Figure 29. Mt. Pisgah area from the 1946 Master Plan. The Vanderbilt property is marked "Private" in the center. The Pisgah Inn site is just outside its south corner. (NPS, Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, RG 7, Series 58, Box 85, Drawing #PKY-BR-MP-2050)

One early suggestion was that the Buck Spring Lodge structures could be assigned to the operators of Pisgah National Forest Inn as additional lodging



¹¹¹ Jaeger, *Pisgah Inn*, 16.

¹¹² Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 56.

space, but inspections of the water supply and sewage disposal systems showed them to be inadequate for a more intensive use of the site.¹¹³ The State of North Carolina, which had purchased the Vanderbilt property on behalf of the Park Service, had been informed that NPS had no use for the buildings. Director Wirth, however, over the objection of Assistant Superintendent Howard Stricklin, suggested alternatively that the main lodge could be adapted for use as a visitor center and exhibit on the historical use of the area and asked for a study to be made of that structure for possible reuse. Stricklin argued that the lodge was not suitable as it existed, could not be adapted without destroying the historic character that made its buildings so appealing, and that upkeep on the structures, already nearing 80 years old, would be a maintenance burden on the park.¹¹⁴ When the Master Plan for Mt. Pisgah Recreation Area was approved by Director Wirth in June 1961 the acquisition of the Vanderbilt property was no longer an impediment, but a resolution on what to do with Buck Spring Lodge still lingered. Ultimately, no reuse solution proved acceptable to the park administration, and the Buck Spring Lodge structures were removed by the National Park Service in 1963, leaving only the springhouse and several stone retaining walls.¹¹⁵

The delay in a decision about Buck Spring Lodge contributed to dooming the development of what was intended to be the centerpiece of the Mount Pisgah Recreation Area, its visitor center. A site for the new building,

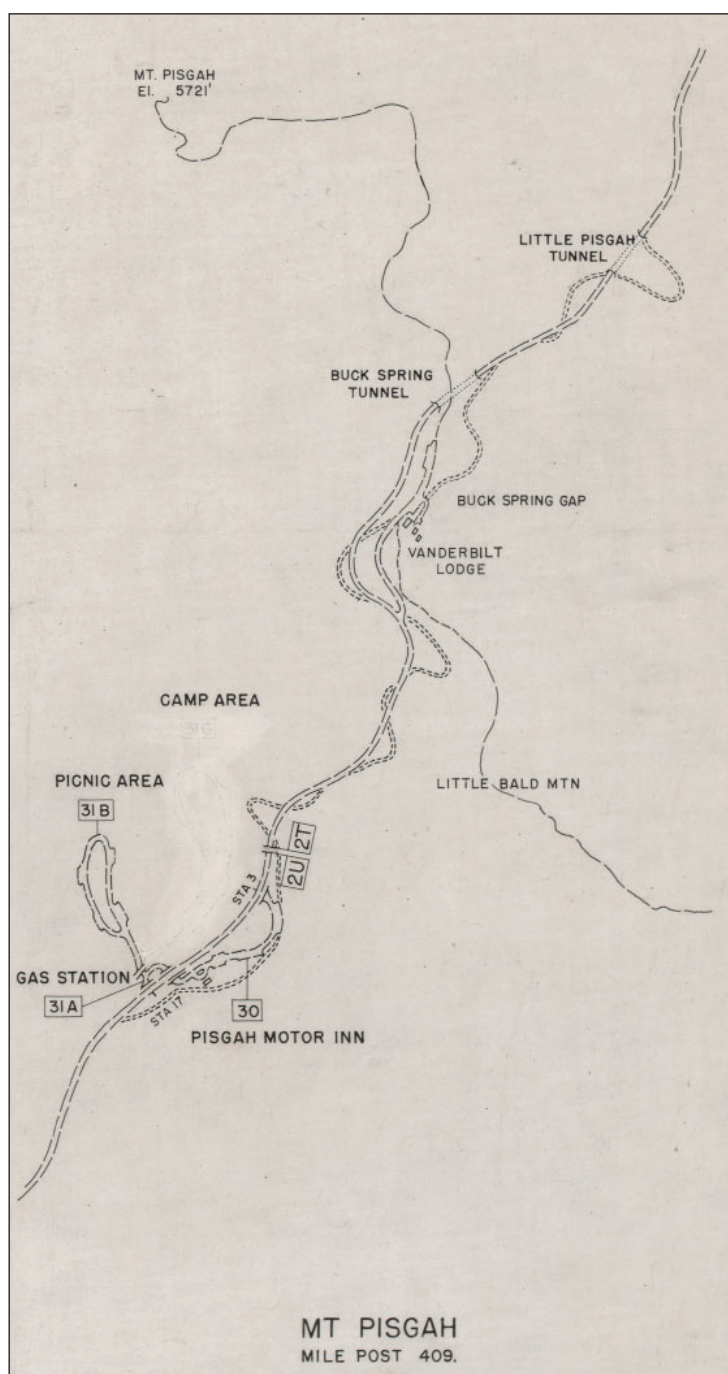


Figure 30. Mt. Pisgah Recreation Area development as shown in the 1952 Master Plan. (NPS Drawing #PKY-BR-GEN-2386C, Sheet 39, via University of North Carolina. <https://dcr.lib.unc.edu/record/91941dc4-fcda-4be8-b08d-5c90305d2b55>)

¹¹³ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 61-62.

¹¹⁴ Howard B. Stricklin, Acting Superintendent, to Regional Director, Region One, "Master Plan, Mount Pisgah Development, Blue Ridge Parkway," 5 July 1961.

¹¹⁵ Jaeger, *Mount Pisgah*, 2.

independent of the Buck Spring Lodge site, was shown in the 1961 Master Plan, but the National Park Service's Washington Office withheld approval for a new building, instead directing that the park explore options for combining its function with a planned "Cradle of Forestry" visitor center to be developed by the U.S. Forest Service. After exploration of this option and further internal discussions, the shared arrangement proved unsatisfactory, and the Washington Office withdrew its objections in December 1965. A visitor center for Mount Pisgah was added to the Parkway's funding priorities list for 1968, but by that time Mission 66 funds were no longer available and the funding never materialized.¹¹⁶

THE KIRSCHNERS AND THE FORMATION OF PISGAH INN INC.

In January 1959, Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Sam P. Weems emphasized the difficulties that the National Park Service was causing for Leslie and Leda Kirschner and their Pisgah National Forest Inn through the extended delay in finalizing plans for the Mount Pisgah Recreation Area in a letter to the Chief of NPS's Eastern Office of Design and Construction (EODC).

Not knowing what to look for in the future has been a big handicap to the Kirschners who operate Pisgah Inn. . . . The Kirschners appear to be doing a nice job, but they have little capital of their own. Before they can raise any money they will need to know what the Park Service has in mind for the Pisgah development.¹¹⁷

The acquisition of the Vanderbilt parcel near the end of 1959 removed remaining impediments to the completion of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the area of Buck Spring and Flat Laurel Gaps below Mount Pisgah, so the route of the roadway itself and the locations of planned amenities could be decided. Road construction on the segment began in July 1960 and was completed in October 1962, marking the completion of the entire roadway between Oconaluftee and Mount Pisgah.¹¹⁸ The property transfer did not, however, fully resolve the question of what should be done with the existing Pisgah National Forest Inn. The Kirschners were running their inn on a concession arrangement with the U.S. Forest Service, and they continued to express concerns over what access and property ownership changes would mean for the continuation of their business. When the land finally came under the control of the National Park Service in 1962, the fundamental uncertainty was resolved – Leslie and Leda Kirschner were informed that their existing permits for operation of the inn would be maintained under NPS management.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 83-84.

¹¹⁷ Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to Chief, EODC, "Master Plan for Mount Pisgah – Blue Ridge Parkway" (27 Jan 1959).

¹¹⁸ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 57.

¹¹⁹ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 176; Jaeger, *Pisgah Inn*, 25.

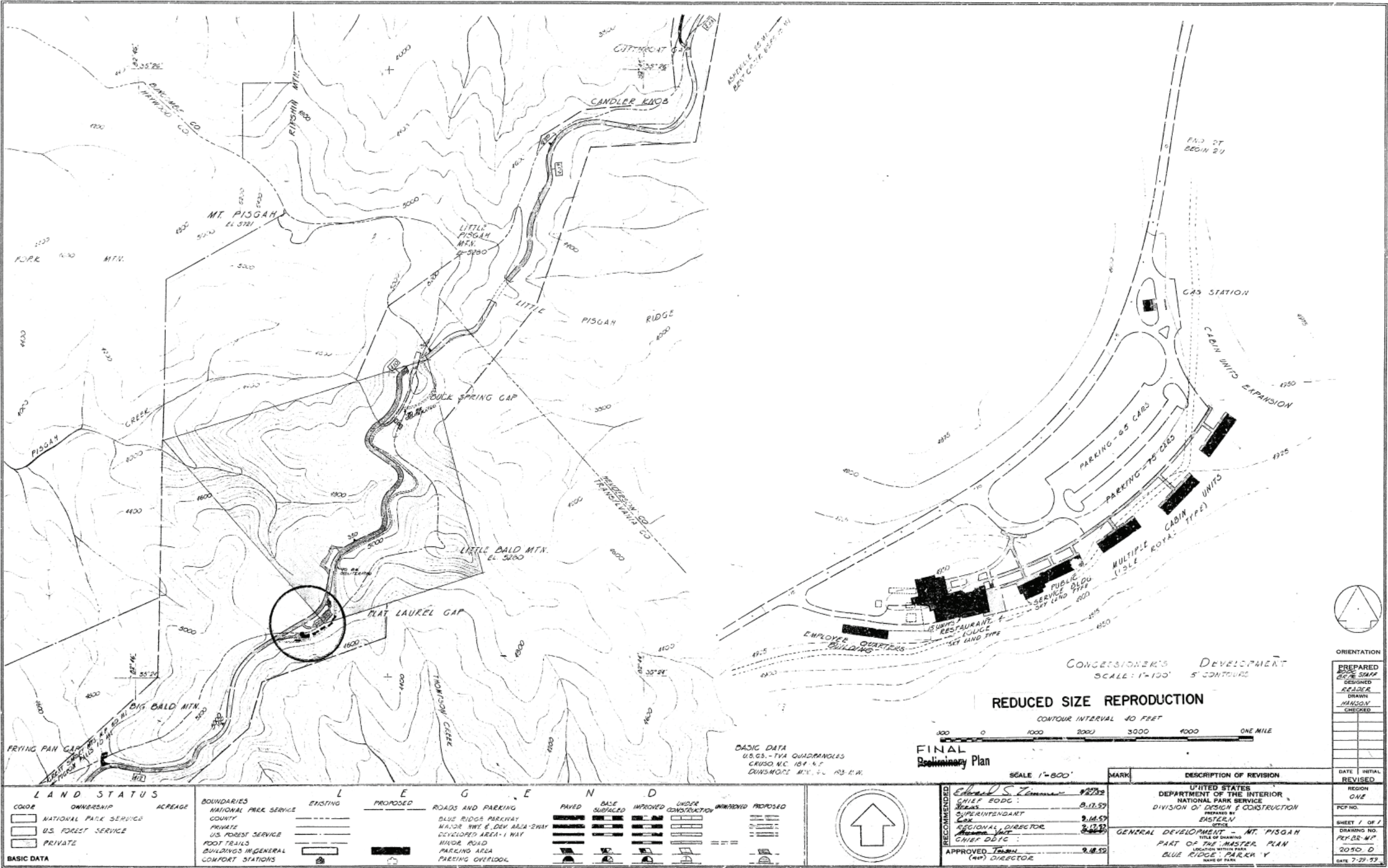


Figure 31. General Development Plan for Mt. Pisgah, part of the 1959 Master Plan. The existing Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge building was to be replaced by a new Employee Quarters Building. (NPS TIC #BLRI-2050-D-Z30)

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

What this meant for the Kirschners' operations long-term, however, was little clearer, since development of the Master Plan for the area had proceeded under the assumption that the old buildings would be removed. Engineer Thomas Vint, who had visited the site in 1958, suggested a new building combining a restaurant and lodge for the site, to be located near the old inn so that its buildings could be gradually phased out of use. He also proposed expansion to the northeast with additional lodge units should those be needed in the future. The National Park Service's Regional and Washington, DC, offices, ambivalent about plans for a visitor center at Mount Pisgah, also quibbled over a multi-building, phased development plan for the Pisgah Inn site. The EODC intervened in order to allow construction of the public infrastructure to proceed, and their final plan was much like the previous Master Plan, including a new restaurant and lodge but specifying that the concessioner would be allowed to add units as they deemed necessary. Decisions on a visitor center were deferred, but a parking lot for one would be built in a location separate from the Pisgah Inn development, at a location selected for being a good overlook to Mount Pisgah so that the parking area would have a useful purpose until such time as a visitor center might be built.¹²⁰ The 1961 Master Plan, finally approved by the EODC, the Regional Office, and Thomas Vint at the Washington Office, described the ultimate plan for the Pisgah Inn site.

Lodging and Meals. A 50-unit motel is proposed with possible expansion to 75 units. There is room for additional units if conditions should warrant. A restaurant with 15 units in the same building is to occupy the site of the present Pisgah Inn. Additional motel units will be added as required.

Gas and Stores. A small gas station, with campers' supplies, will be located on the main motor road in the concession area.¹²¹

It was estimated in the Master Plan that an investment of \$300,000 to \$400,000 would be needed to build the new structures that were envisioned for the site, an amount that the Kirschners did not have, so they set about assembling a corporation to be made up of investors from Waynesville; key among these new partners was banker J. Aaron Prevost. Superintendent Weems reported in 1961 that the park intended to offer a continued concessions contract to the Kirschners, and they were allowed some time to get a plan in order that would enable them to meet the new requirements.¹²² Following the transfer of ownership in the property from the U.S. Forest Service to the National Park Service, negotiations on a new concessions contract

¹²⁰ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 60-61.

¹²¹ Edward H. Abbuehl, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Blue Ridge Parkway, Volume 1, Chapter 5, Design Analysis, Mount Pisgah," May 1961, 17.

¹²² Sam P. Weems, "1961 Annual Report of the Blue Ridge Parkway Activities, for Director, National Park Service," (Roanoke: Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service), 3.

with Pisgah Inn Inc. were concluded and a contract signed in 1963 that stipulated that the old Pisgah National Forest Inn buildings – the lodge, four cabins, and various outbuildings – could continue to be used by the concessioner as needed for continuity of operations, but that they were eventually to be removed at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior.¹²³

PISGAH INN

BUILDINGS IN NATIONAL PARKS

By the 1930s, the “rustic style” of architecture that had been adopted in the Western national parks, with its emphasis on the use of native materials and the basic forms of local building styles, had made its way to the newer Eastern parks. With some adaptation to the local materials and building traditions, the new buildings and structures being created in Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, and Mammoth Cave National Parks, along with the Blue Ridge Parkway, stayed the course – with the general goal being that buildings should be as inconspicuous as possible while blending in with their natural surroundings or, in some cases, their picturesque pre-industrial, agrarian surroundings.

Stanley Abbott promoted a “building code” at the Blue Ridge Parkway under which all concessions structures would adhere to the same standards.¹²⁴ Even the color of buildings was to be standardized to a “driftwood gray.”¹²⁵ Edward H. Abbuehl conveyed similar thoughts in the text accompanying the Master Plans: the fundamental design principles were simplicity, the use of native materials, and the siting of structures to fit within the landscape.¹²⁶ By the time of Mission 66, when the structures of Mount Pisgah Recreation Area were to be developed, Modernist design had mostly supplanted the rustic style within national parks. Expanses of glass and severity of detailing were not in obvious conformance with the earlier directives, but buildings could reasonably be designed to fit within those fundamental principles somewhat independently of “style.” As Associate Director of the National Park Service A. E. Demaray emphasized as early as 1950, the Blue Ridge Parkway’s structures needed to continue to present a “general mountain flavor,” but that “It should be a relatively simple matter for a good designer to produce a combination of the

¹²³ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 65, 86; Jaeger, *Pisgah Inn*, 25-26.

¹²⁴ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 129.

¹²⁵ Stanley W. Abbott, “Memorandum for Project and Camp Superintendents,” 16 April 1940.

¹²⁶ Edward H. Abbuehl, “A Road Built for Pleasure,” *Landscape Architecture* 51, No. 4 (July 1961), 237.

right mass and materials to suggest the mountain type of architecture even with more modern materials than were generally used in these buildings.”¹²⁷

An added benefit, obvious to a National Park Service tasked with the maintenance of aging rustic wood and log structures from earlier decades, was efficiency and a lighter administrative burden associated with maintaining structures built to modern material, safety, and energy standards.

NEW BUILDINGS FOR PISGAH INN

Existing business interests in North Carolina, or at least a vocal segment of them, had continued to express opposition to the National Park Service’s plans for the provision of “unnecessary and unwarranted” lodging, dining, and other tourist support facilities on NPS property along the Blue Ridge Parkway. The state’s General Assembly created the North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission in 1947 as a way for these opposition forces to coalesce around a set of common concerns. A lengthy resolution was passed by the group in 1949 that laid out key points in the opposition position: that the need for new facilities should be clearly established through a series of public hearings and that their implementation should only be pursued after allowing private interests located off Parkway property to address those needs independently; that the National Park Service should allow roadside signage on the Parkway to direct visitors to private accommodations off the Parkway; and a general complaint regarding the difficulty in extracting from the National Park Service the exact nature of the concessions it planned.

The same year, a National Park Service report on planned development along the parkway stated that, “Even should 100 rooms be provided at The Bluffs and at Mt. Pisgah it is obvious that these facilities will not take care of all those who will travel the Parkway in North Carolina. The National Park Service plans to provide a bare minimum of accommodations in the Parkway – to set an example which it is hoped that private enterprise will ‘carry on.’”¹²⁸ Or, as the Commission disdainfully interpreted the National Park Service’s judgments on the effects of their facilities on outside businesses, “Even if it is competition with private enterprise, it is not much competition.”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ A. E. Demaray to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 8 December 1950.

¹²⁸ Quoted in North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission, “Report on the Question of Construction of Concession Facilities on the Blue Ridge Parkway,” 1957, 7.

¹²⁹ North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission, “Report,” 1957, 7-8.

By 1957, years after the 1949 Resolution, the group reflected that “The resolution gave the Park Service ample room to back down gracefully but at the same time reflected to the Federal officials the public resentment of the announced plans for a chain of Government hotels and eating places.”¹³⁰

As other groups such as the Asheville Chamber of Commerce continued to raise concerns with their political representatives, Parkway officials repeatedly justified their plans to regional National Park Service officials, and to officials in Washington, DC. The standard message regarding the development of government touristic facilities was conveyed by Acting Secretary of the Interior Fred G. Aandahl to North Carolina Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. in October 1956.

The National Park Service informs me that none of these facilities is in direct competition with privately-owned similar accommodations in nearby communities. We do not believe that visitor accommodations are necessary on the Parkway near places where adequate facilities exist nearby. We are depending upon your State’s established tourist industry to meet the vast majority of ever increasing food and lodging requirements of Parkway visitors, expected to exceed five million this year.¹³¹

At Mount Pisgah, with the ongoing uncertainty about property ownership and timelines for the completion of the roadway, lack of specificity on what concessions would ultimately look like lingered. The 1954 Concessions Development plans stated only that the recreation areas were, “Open to private enterprise as additional units of the Parkway are completed or access roads are developed.”¹³² As one of these areas distant from any city or town offering facilities, Mount Pisgah was targeted as a location for concession-provided overnight lodging, dining facilities, and a gasoline station, but exact specifications varied as the governing master plans were repeatedly updated. Overlaid on these plans were the goals of the National Park Service’s Mission 66 program, which had been unveiled by Director Conrad Wirth in late 1955. Public-facing promotional materials published by the National Park Service emphasized a need for park services to be adapted to modern recreational needs “through greater participation of private enterprise,” but also, “that facilities be provided in sufficient quantity to keep abreast, and even slightly ahead of, visitor requirements.”¹³³

¹³⁰ North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission, “Report,” 1957, 7.

¹³¹ Fred G. Aandahl, Acting Director, to Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr., 26 Oct 1956.

¹³² Chief of Design and Construction to Director, “Memo: Blue Ridge Parkway Concession Development,” 1 Nov 1954.

¹³³ *Our Heritage: A Plan for Its Protection and Use – Mission 66* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1956), 11, 12.

The 1951 special use permit from the U.S. Forest Service that Leslie and Leda Kirschner held for operation of Pisgah National Forest Inn on 2.91 acres of Pisgah National Forest land was set to expire on October 19, 1961. Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Sam Weems was aware of the difficulties that the National Park Service's indefinite, changeable plans caused for the Kirschners' operations, but he was also certainly aware of the political damage that could result from the National Park Service directly putting an existing facility out of business. As the 1961 date came and went, the Kirschners were allowed to remain in operation, and Weems helped to assemble a group of Waynesville businessmen to partner in a corporation with the Kirschners, a partnership that would provide them with the capital to meet the requirements laid out in the Parkway Master Plan. The directors of this new corporation were John N. Johnson, a contractor; George M. Kimball, manager of Waynesville Country Club, which had its own hostelry of 85 rooms, a restaurant, and a snack bar; J. Aaron Prevost, a banker and furniture manufacturer; and J. H. Woody, a retired banker.

In late June of 1962, with the Mount Pisgah property soon to be transferred from the USFS to NPS, the NPS Southeast Regional Chief of Concessions Management made a tour of all concessions operations on the Parkway between Roanoke and Soco Gap with Assistant Superintendent Howard Stricklin and found, "the existing concession buildings [at Mt. Pisgah] old, in poor condition, and inadequate."¹³⁴ The nascent corporation met at the end of June in Roanoke, and were encouraged to retain an architect and to subsequently present a proposal for the design of the necessary buildings, access, and parking, as well as their plan for financing their improvements. The proposal the group submitted to NPS a month later was for the construction of new facilities at the Pisgah National Forest Inn site to cost at least \$250,000 initially, with NPS paying the cost of the parking lot and utility infrastructure. 60 percent of the costs to the corporation would be financed by the Small Business Administration, with the balance raised from sale of stock in Pisgah Inn Inc. Leslie Kirschner would be obligated only to convey his present interest in the property and its existing buildings for \$12,500 in capital stock, with the other four stockholders raising the balance.¹³⁵ Pisgah Inn Inc. was allowed to hire the architect of their choice, and they



Figure 32. Letterhead of Pisgah Inn Inc. (Blue Ridge Parkway Archives)

¹³⁴ Chief of Concessions, NPS Southeast Region, to Regional Director, 11 Jul 1962.

¹³⁵ John N. Johnson, "Detailed Outline of the Proposed Financing of Pisgah Inn, Inc.," 28 Jul 1962.

selected Foy & Lee of Waynesville, North Carolina. The National Park Service reserved the right to require changes to the plans as those were developed.

After the approval of the concessions contract with Pisgah Inn Inc. on March 20, 1963, Superintendent Weems wrote to Leslie Kirschner to let him know that the corporation was authorized to proceed with having Foy & Lee complete plans for the first phase of construction, which was to include a new restaurant and gift shop building and a separate lodging building of 26 guest rooms. Weems noted that funds for work to provide the water, sewer, and electrical utilities to the new buildings would be available after July 1, subject to Congressional approval of the budget.¹³⁶ Preliminary plans were submitted for review in August, and landscape architect Edward Abbuehl inspected the plans on site the week of September 8, after which he carried a set of plans back to the EODC office for further study. Notes and revisions traveled back and forth between Foy & Lee, Blue Ridge Parkway headquarters, and the EODC office in Philadelphia through December 1963.¹³⁷ Plans were complete enough for a description to be included in an end-of-year list of facilities requiring expansion or upgrades sent by Superintendent Weems to the Southeast Regional Director.

Mt. Pisgah: Lodge of 15 rooms or more, dining room, gift shop, and service station now in process of design by Pisgah Inn, Inc. for construction in 1964 and completion by June 1, 1965. Lodging facilities of at least 15 additional rooms will be made available on or before June 1, 1967.¹³⁸

The site plan that was ultimately approved followed the 1961 Master Plan closely. New buildings were located just northeast of the old Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge, which allowed them to share the same magnificent view that had been the basis for the original building's placement. It also allowed the older structures to continue in use efficiently as the newer buildings were brought online.¹³⁹

The design of the new structures was led by Foy & Lee principal architect Tai Y. Lee, with Henry Foy weighing in periodically on aesthetics and site planning.¹⁴⁰ The contrast with the older structures was stark. While the earlier reliance on rustic materials and vernacular forms created a sense that the buildings

¹³⁶ Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to Leslie Kirschner, Pisgah Inn., Inc. 1 Apr 1963.

¹³⁷ Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to Robert G. Hall, Chief, EODC, 15 Aug 1963; Robert G. Hall, Chief, EODC, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge, 20 Sep 1963; Edward Abbuehl to Bruce Gregory, 20 Dec 1963.

¹³⁸ Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 3 Dec 1963.

¹³⁹ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 66.

¹⁴⁰ Scott McLeod, "Foy's Influence Will Endure," *Smoky Mountain News*, 18 Dec 2007; Wells Funeral Home, "Obituary: Henry Foy III," <https://wellsfuneralhome.com/obituaries/henry-foyiii>.

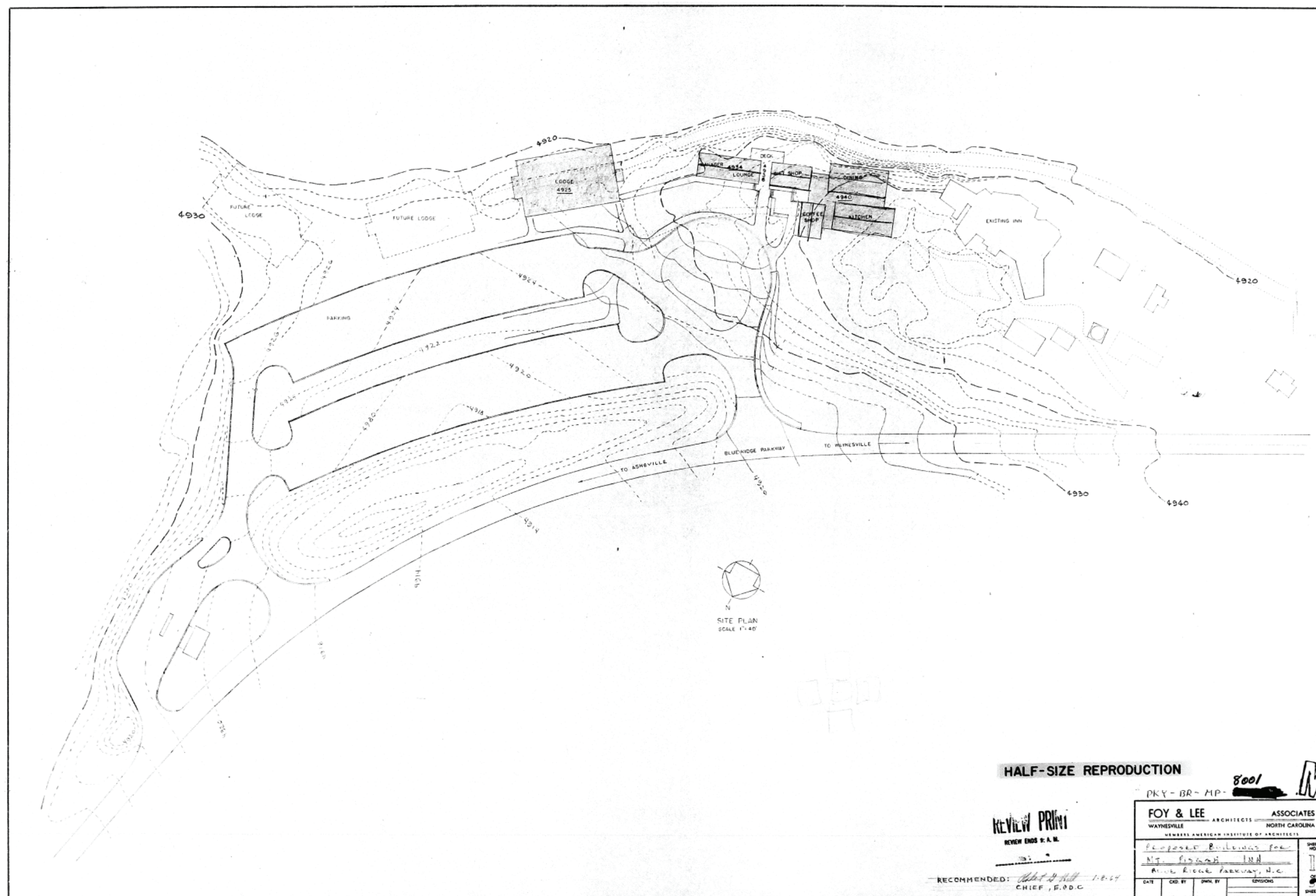
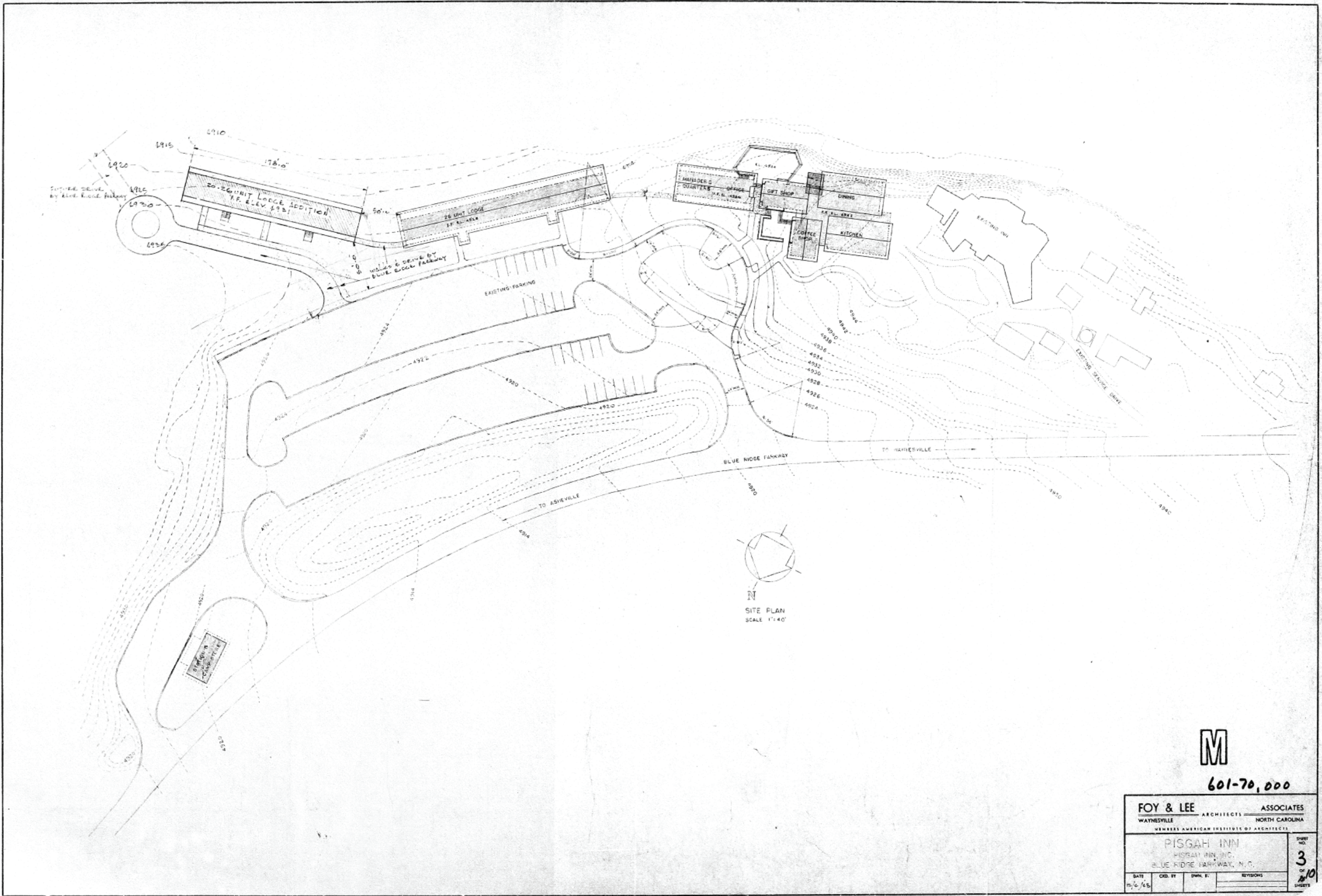


Figure 33. Proposed Buildings for Mt. Pisgah Inn, Foy & Lee Architects, January 1964. Details for the Lodge building were sparse in the initial submission, but A. J. Connell, Blue Ridge Parkway's landscape architect, objected to the two-room wide arrangement in which half the guest rooms would face the parking lot. This was revised to a single-room depth in subsequent drawings. (NPS TIC #BLRI-8001-Z3)

Figure 34. Proposed site plan for the addition of Unit C (on the left), Foy & Lee Architects, December 1968. The additional service drive shown was rejected by NPS. The hexagonal overlook behind the Restaurant and Office buildings was deferred and then never constructed. Note the old Pisgah National Forest Inn buildings continuing in existence to the right of the restaurant building. (NPS TIC #BLRI-70000)



“belonged” in their sites, dominated as those were by natural grandeur, the new architecture emphasized an experience of the site from the buildings themselves through the organization of space – guest rooms all oriented directly toward the views; floor-to-ceiling windows in the dining room to elevate diners into a landscape “untouched” by human activity – something that was not readily possible in the earlier style. The architects within NPS’s Eastern Office of Design and Construction promoted the difference as one simply of approach. The “rustic” design aesthetic that had been carefully cultivated in NPS’s own publications in previous decades, with its emphasis on the familiarity of handcrafted materials, was supplanted by an emphasis on spatial value and the psychological effect that buildings could have on their occupants. But, the overarching requirement that buildings should still be subordinate to their natural settings rather than grandly standing in prominence persisted, and this was a comfortable fit with Mission 66’s ideas about economy and value in building investments and future maintenance.¹⁴¹ Traditionalists within the National Park Service, including Weems and Abbuehl, were not enthusiastic about the plainness of this new architectural direction, but the EODC judged that objections were based, “not in sound architectural thinking but upon emotional response,” and the economic argument ultimately won out.¹⁴²

The plans that Foy & Lee sent to Philadelphia described the intended materials. The exterior was to have walls clad in native stone and rough-sawn wood siding, board on board; windows were to be wood; the roof was to be asphalt shingles, of a color still to be determined; exposed structure was to be either precast concrete or laminated wood beams; exterior walkways were to be concrete with a sand finish. On the interior, materials were generally to be economical and utilitarian, though the dining room was proposed to have wood panel walls and potentially an exposed wood roof deck.¹⁴³ Superintendent Weems appealed for a greater use of wood, especially for exposed structure; that the exterior walkways be paved in flagstone rather than concrete; that the buildings be moved as far away from the parking area as possible; and that concrete shingles be used rather than asphalt, though he acknowledged that the increased costs for these more durable materials might be more than the initial project could bear.¹⁴⁴ Concurrently, Robert E. Smith, Chief of the EODC, wrote to the Southeast Regional Director of his office’s approval of the plans, subject to some additional drawings to be provided on the lodge building, stating, “We believe the concessioner’s

¹⁴¹ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 66, 127; John B. Cabot, “Architecture in Parks, Only Changes in Expression,” *Parks and Recreation* 42, No. 4 (April 1959), 155.

¹⁴² John B. Cabot to Chief, EODC, “WASO Directive, Blue Ridge Architecture,” 8 Feb 1960.

¹⁴³ Tai Y. Lee to Chief, EODC, “Re: Pisgah Inn,” 23 Dec 1963.

¹⁴⁴ Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 7 Jan 1964.

architects, Foy & Lee have produced a fine design for the Mt. Pisgah complex, which will be very attractive and architecturally compatible with the area.”¹⁴⁵ A flurry of revisions to the plans followed in January and February of 1964 after A. J. Connell, the Parkway’s landscape architect, objected to a two-room wide arrangement for the lodge building, preferring a single-room depth so that every guest room would be oriented to the vista. Weems recommended to Regional Director Elbert Cox the revisions made by Foy & Lee for the 26-unit lodging building, and Cox notified the NPS Director that he had approved the plans on February 20.¹⁴⁶ Foy & Lee were approved to complete construction drawings for the two buildings, and Pisgah Inn Inc. proceeded with finalizing their financing. Mindful of costs, John N. Johnson, as president of the corporation, asked to be allowed to omit the planned overlook between the new buildings for the time being, a change that was approved by Connell and Weems in August, with Connell agreeing that it might be easier to assess how an overlook would best fit the site after the buildings were complete, and Weems directing that construction of this amenity could be held off until “after the building has been in operation a year or two.”¹⁴⁷

Pisgah Inn Inc. received approval for a \$235,000 loan from the Small Business Administration in October 1964, and a three-party agreement between the corporation, the United States, and Northwestern Bank for the construction of the new Pisgah Inn facilities was finalized early the next year. Construction began on the lodge and restaurant buildings during the spring of 1965, as work on Section 2-T of the Parkway in the same area was being completed.¹⁴⁸ Construction began on the service station building soon after, and it was completed that year along with the 26-room lodge. The restaurant building was not completed until May 1966.¹⁴⁹

The color scheme for the buildings proposed by architect Tai Y. Lee and approved by acting Superintendent James M. Eden was a complicated one, but it met the intent for the buildings to blend into their natural settings, including a weathered gray as the dominant color for the exterior board siding as a reference to vernacular agricultural buildings of the region. Louver panels were to be light brown, doors were to be one of two shades of olive,

¹⁴⁵ Robert E. Smith, Chief, EODC, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 8 Jan 1964.

¹⁴⁶ A. J. Connell to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 24 Jan 1964; Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 17 Feb 1964; Elbert Cox, Regional Director to Director, NPS, 20 Feb 1964.

¹⁴⁷ Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to John N. Johnson, 14 Aug 1964.

¹⁴⁸ “SBA Form 529”; Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to Thomas F. Flynn Jr., Chief, Division of Concessions Management, 8 Mar 1965.

¹⁴⁹ James M. Eden, Acting Superintendent, “Annual Narrative Report for Fiscal Year 1966 of Blue Ridge Parkway Activities for Director, NPS,” 14 Jun 1966.

exposed steel and fascias were to be painted charcoal gray, and wood guard rails tan.¹⁵⁰

With building construction projects nearing completion, Leslie Kirschner surprised the other directors of Pisgah Inn Inc. in May 1966 with a resignation letter and an offer to sell the Kirschner stock. Kimball, Woody, Prevost, and Johnson quickly came up with the necessary funds, but the more critical problem was finding a new manager for the inn. Kimball and Johnson reviewed 29 applicants for the position, and recommended Mr. and Mrs. F. Robert Wright. The remaining directors agreed, and Bob Wright was hired to manage the inn beginning June 10, 1966. That same month, the directors instructed Kimball, the corporate secretary, to issue 45 shares of stock each to Henry B. Foy and Tai Y. Lee as payment for their professional services, an arrangement that led to a flurry of letters among the corporation and Park Service administration, because all changes in ownership were to have been approved by the government in advance. NPS ultimately agreed to the arrangement.¹⁵¹

With the new lodging facilities in full operation, it was soon evident that they were not sufficient to meet the demand. The 1965 Master Plan for Mt. Pisgah was updated to include additional lodging buildings at the site. John N. Johnson wrote to Superintendent Weems in August 1966: "With the completion of the Parkway from Mills River to Oteen we will have inadequate facilities to provide the transient room demand. In consequence, we must prepare, with your approval, to provide additional rooms as soon as it is economically practical."¹⁵²

According to the terms of their loan from the Small Business Administration, Pisgah Inn Inc. had a limited capital spending agreement, but Johnson projected that their finances were such that they should be able to be released from this restriction within five years. Beating this schedule considerably, proposed plans for a new motel building at the northeast end of the site, again designed by Foy & Lee, were provided to NPS for review on December 9, 1968. With some minor

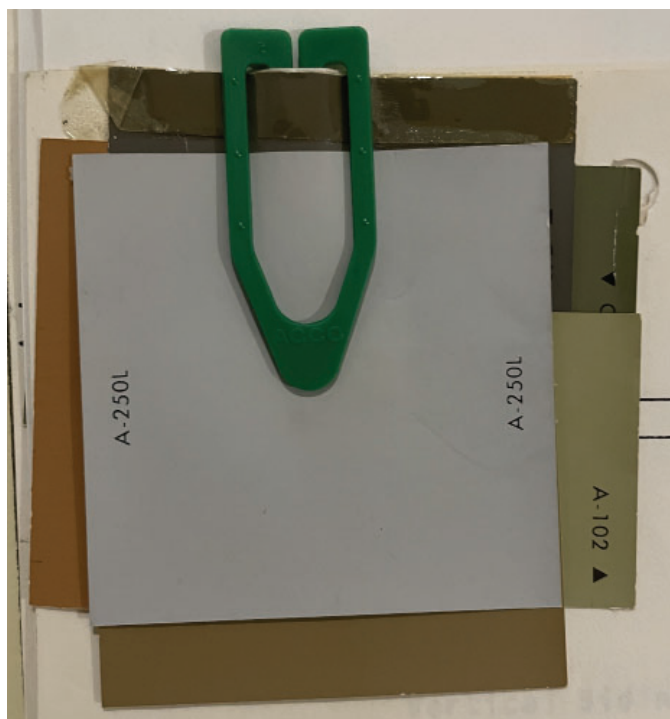


Figure 35. Original color sample chips submitted by Foy & Lee Architects, June 1965. The review official at the Eastern Office of Design and Construction commented back to Superintendent Sam P. Weems, "Looks OK to me, but this is a complicated scheme." (Blue Ridge Parkway Archives)

¹⁵⁰ James M. Eden, Acting Superintendent, to W. T. Doggett, Foy and Lee Associates, 17 Jun 1965.

¹⁵¹ Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 1 Aug 1966; Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to John N. Johnson, President, Pisgah Inn Inc., 13 Sep 1966.

¹⁵² John N. Johnson, President, Pisgah Inn Inc., to Sam Weems, Superintendent, 26 Aug 1966.

changes, mostly related to the deletion of a planned service drive fronting the new building, preliminary plans were approved in February 1969.¹⁵³

The local building climate at that moment was not conducive to a project of this type and scale. John N. Johnson wrote to Superintendent Granville Liles in July 1970 to explain why work still had not commenced. Pisgah Inn Inc. had contacted eighteen different contractors with their plans, and most expressed no interest in undertaking the project. At the same time, construction costs had increased dramatically in the last four years. Initial construction estimates anticipated a 35 percent increase in per-room cost from the older building, but contractor pricing was showing that this building would be approximately 50 percent more expensive. The plans were reduced to a total of 20 new guest rooms, and construction was finally able to begin in August 1970. Superintendent Liles was notified in July 1971 that the building was ready for final inspection and acceptance by the Park.¹⁵⁴

The completion of this last lodging building marked the end of major construction projects within Mount Pisgah Recreation Area. The completion of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the immediate vicinity of Laurel Gap was a dramatic change to the once-isolated location, and the new Pisgah Inn concession

Figure 36. The parking lot and buildings at Pisgah Inn, August 1973. Photographed by C. E. Westveer. (NPS, Blue Ridge Parkway Archives)



facilities reflected the shift in character from a remote mountain retreat to a site for the motoring tourist. Perhaps the most notable visual change was the clearance of vegetation necessary for accommodating the large parking area – 150 spaces – serving the motel and restaurant. With flat terrain limited, this parking lot fills nearly all the available ground.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Charles S. Marshall, Acting Regional Director, Southeast Region, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge, 11 Feb 1969.

¹⁵⁴ John N. Johnson to Granville Liles, Superintendent, 6 Jul 1970; Granville B. Liles, Superintendent, to Director, Eastern Service Center, 16 Sep 1970; F. R. Wright to Granville B. Liles, Superintendent, 16 Jul 1971.

¹⁵⁵ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 68.

THE FATE OF THE PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST INN BUILDINGS

Retention of the old inn buildings, as planned, eased the transition. As the new buildings came online, the concessioners were permitted to continue their use on a temporary basis. Nearing the end of 1966, with the first use having been made of the new lodging facilities, John N. Johnson requested from the National Park Service a five-year moratorium on a decision regarding the disposition of the old buildings, with them having been “utilized to great advantage this season” – mainly for employee housing, but also for overflow guest accommodations, or when guests specifically requested to be housed there.¹⁵⁶ Although this did not align with his 1964 memorandum to Leslie Kirschner that they would be allowed to remain for only one season, Superintendent Sam Weems acceded to Johnson’s request, formalizing an extension of use until the end of the 1971 season, contingent on a list of maintenance and safety items being accomplished by May 1, 1967, including the demolition of the water tower and the cabin nearest it and the correction of electrical wiring deficiencies in all of the buildings. Weems directed that if the listed conditions were met “and some of the old buildings continue in use until October 31, 1971, it should be understood that no further consideration can be given to requests for additional extensions of time.”¹⁵⁷

Members of the public were often surprised to learn from manager Bob Wright and other staff that the old buildings were on a short timeline until their removal. Expressing an opinion shared by many, attorney Carl K. Hoffman of Miami, Florida, wrote to George B. Hartzog Jr., Director of the National Park Service, in July 1968 to share his dismay.

The old inn possessed and still possesses great charm. It is a landmark and well liked by the thousands of people who visited it before the Parkway was extended to provide easier access to the Inn. I would like to suggest for your consideration that the operators of the Inn be given sufficient time under their lease to make improvements to the Lodge so that it would be available for those visitors and guests who would prefer the “Swiss Chalet” atmosphere of the old section and its charm to the more “Holiday Inn” facilities of the new wing.¹⁵⁸

The Directors of Pisgah Inn Inc., likewise, continued to advocate for continuation of use despite Superintendent Weems’s attempt to give that possibility some finality, with an emphasis on practicality rather than sentimentality. “We are very much interested in a survey of the old Lodge at Pisgah to determine what steps may be necessary to secure approval of

¹⁵⁶ John N. Johnson, President, Pisgah Inn Inc., to Sam Weems, Superintendent, 26 Aug 1966.

¹⁵⁷ Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, to John N. Johnson, President, Pisgah Inn Inc., 16 Sep 1966.

¹⁵⁸ Carl K. Hoffman to George B. Hartzog Jr., Director, National Park Service, 2 Jul 1968.

Figure 37. Northwest corner of Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge, 1987. (Photographed by J. Weiland for NPS, HABS NC-356-21. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/nc0431.photos.212305p/>)



the Park Service for the retention of the building,” John Johnson wrote to Superintendent Granville Liles in late 1968. In addition to providing staff housing – Johnson believed that it was unrealistic that the facilities could be managed without onsite housing for their staff – the old lodge contained the

only sizeable meeting room that could serve larger groups, and the south porch provided the best vantage for guests to enjoy the view. Retention of at least the lodge was made an implied condition for planning and construction of the additional motel unit in that it would remove some uncertainty in long-term operations.¹⁵⁹ The next month, Johnson wrote to Liles expanding the request to include retention of the four cottages: Treetops, Kalmia, Chewink, and Chinquapin – with all buildings to be kept at least through 1982.¹⁶⁰



Figure 38. The lobby of Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge, 1987. (Photographed by J. Weiland for NPS, HABS NC-356-28. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/nc0431.photos.212312p/>)

Superintendent Liles arranged for an architectural inspection team to be dispatched from the Southeast Regional Office, whose report concluded that in order to extend the use of the structures for any period, an extensive maintenance and repair plan needed to be implemented including structural repairs to the exterior decks and foundations, a long list of items intended to improve fire safety needed to be addressed, and aesthetic changes were to be made to the exterior – mainly concerned with bringing the old structures into the same approved color palette as the new ones. The old lodge itself

was not to be used for guest sleeping accommodations in any scenario, and Kalmia, Chewink, and Chinquapin cottages could only be used for guests if they were unneeded for employee housing. Superintendent Liles ultimately approved the continued use of the Pisgah National Forest Inn

¹⁵⁹ John N. Johnson, President, to Granville B. Liles, Superintendent, 8 Oct 1968.

¹⁶⁰ John N. Johnson, President, to Granville B. Liles, Superintendent, 13 Nov 1968.

buildings through December 31, 1982, to align with the expiration date of the current concession contract, so long as the entire list of improvements and changes was agreed to, and that the proposed new 20-room lodge building would be completed and operational by the 1971 travel season.¹⁶¹

With that (and annual inspections by NPS resulting in more minor recurring maintenance lists), questions about the fate of the old Pisgah National Forest Inn buildings were settled for the next decade. As early as 1979, the concessioner had taken deliberate steps to have the old Lodge and cabins declared a historic site, but critical decisions could be delayed until the expiration of the current contract in 1982.¹⁶² A major building improvement plan was part of negotiations on a renewed concession contract for the site, with an advocacy campaign toward the restoration and continued use of the Pisgah National Forest Inn buildings as historic properties proceeding on a parallel course. Though they were vernacular and without obvious architectural distinction, historic preservation philosophy had broadened over the last decade from an emphasis on preserving only the most impressive architectural specimens to include an understanding of the importance of preserving structures representative of particular historical snapshots of American culture. As an advocacy paper on the preservation of the inn's main lodge argued, "With its site selection and its native log construction, the Pisgah National Forest Inn could be called a successful piece of 'folk building.' The design is rustic and perhaps naïve, but is in keeping with several other 'pine-knot' cottages in existence in Western North Carolina."¹⁶³

Although the concessioner had an interest – evident in the production of the advocacy paper – in continuing to use the old inn as part of their operations, Pisgah Inn Inc. maintained that they would be unable to fund any upgrades. The National Park Service's Southeast Regional Director, likewise, had stated that no NPS funds would be involved in any upgrades to the old structures, though he subsequently agreed in 1983 to fund a study for the reuse of the main lodge under three possible scenarios – day use, overnight use, or stabilizing and mothballing the building and allowing no use or access. Barring a cost-effective option for which funds could be raised elsewhere, demolition remained an option.¹⁶⁴ The report by the architects hired to do the assessment concluded that the building had surpassed its useful life, and that 75 to 80

¹⁶¹ John H. Davis, Assistant Superintendent, to Granville Liles, Superintendent, 13 Nov 1968; Granville B. Liles, Superintendent, to John N. Johnson, 14 Nov 1968.

¹⁶² Thomas J. O'Connell to Gary Everhardt, Superintendent, 21 Sep 1979.

¹⁶³ Page Pless, "Pisgah National Forest Inn: An Historical Review," 27 Apr 1982, 1; "Pine-knot" in this context is a reference to William West Durant's first Adirondack Great Camp, named Pine Knot.

¹⁶⁴ Richard G. Wyatt, Concessions Analyst, to Chief of Maintenance, 4 Feb 1983.

percent of the inn's structure was in need of replacement.¹⁶⁵ Five alternatives were presented; the three requested scenarios ranged in cost from \$140,000 to \$392,000, with an additional cost of \$42,000 if the east wing – otherwise anticipated to be removed in all scenarios – was also restored for reuse. Demolition, on the other hand, would have “minimal costs for all concerned.”

Complicating what might have otherwise been an obvious decision, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer recommended the old buildings for listing in the National Register in January 1986, and proposed four initiatives to be undertaken before a final decision was made: first, the office would contact the local congressional representatives to see if there was any prospect of federal assistance; second, they would explore the feasibility of forming a non-profit to raise funds for the rehabilitation; third, they would conduct a feasibility study on whether a for-profit third party could finance the rehabilitation; and fourth, they would initiate a discussion with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) to better understand NPS's legal liability for mitigation if demolition were to become necessary.¹⁶⁶ This involvement amounted to a brief stay of execution, but demolition of the old lodge was approved by Superintendent Gary Everhardt in October 1986.¹⁶⁷ To replace the lost space for staff housing, the concessioner was required to build two new staff dormitories, which were completed by the 1988 season.¹⁶⁸

Figure 39. (Left) Kalmia Cabin.
Figure 40. (Right) Chewink Cabin,
abandoned. (Both photos by The
Jaeger Company, 2002)

By 2002, only two of the other original buildings, Kalmia and Chewink Cottages, still remained, though they were in a poor state of repair.¹⁶⁹ They too have since been removed from the site.



¹⁶⁵ Jaeger, *Pisgah Inn*, 20.

¹⁶⁶ Gary Everhardt, Superintendent, to William S. Price Jr., Director, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 3 Sep 1986; Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 87.

¹⁶⁷ Quin, *Blue Ridge Parkway*, 278; Gary E. Everhardt, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, “Section 106 Case Report,” 23 Oct 1986.

¹⁶⁸ Turner, *Mt. Pisgah*, 87.

¹⁶⁹ Jaeger, *Pisgah Inn*, 20.

LATER ALTERATIONS

Manager Bob Wright died suddenly at the end of the season in 1977, and his assistant, Bob Flood, was employed as manager for the 1978 season, after which time the decision was made by the Directors of Pisgah Inn Inc. to sell the Inn. Two of the existing stockholders agreed to purchase the stock on a temporary basis, but delays in the transfer of ownership resulted in delays in annual building maintenance across the site.¹⁷⁰ An ad that the corporation placed in the *Wall Street Journal* was answered by Tom and Phyllis O'Connell. Although Phyllis was by profession a retired corporate attorney, both were also experienced hoteliers, having owned and operated the Chateau Frontenac apartment hotel in Detroit, Michigan, and the Bayshore Royal Hotel in Tampa, Florida.¹⁷¹ They joined J. Aaron Prevost to form Parkway Inn, Inc.¹⁷²



Figure 41. Phyllis O'Connell in front of the Lodge and Office Building of Pisgah Inn during the May snowstorm of 1992, which brought over three feet of snow to Mount Pisgah. (Photo courtesy of Bruce O'Connell)

An aggressive Building Improvement Plan was proposed in 1982 as part of the change in ownership and the consideration of a renewed concessions contract, which was to include renovations of all facilities built since 1963, with expansions proposed to the restaurant, construction of new employee dormitories to replace the space then being used in the old Lodge, and the construction of another 20 to 30-unit motel building to be completed by 1992.¹⁷³ Operations continued as negotiations on the lease remained unsettled, and the proposed building program was scaled back and then deferred. A

¹⁷⁰ Thomas J. O'Connell to Gary Everhardt, Superintendent, 21 Sep 1979.

¹⁷¹ Spencer, *Pisgah Inn*, 110.

¹⁷² Gary Everhardt, Superintendent, to J. Aaron Prevost, 11 May 1979.

¹⁷³ Parkway Inn, Inc., "Outline," 1982.

new 20-year concessions contract was finally awarded to Parkway Inn, Inc., in 1984 that omitted the ambitious plans that were initially proposed.

The year 1991 saw expansions to the sides and front of the gas station and camp store, as the development of a new Building and Improvement Plan was being formulated. Phase I of this plan, approved in 1994 and completed in 1995, included renovations to the food service areas and gift shop of the main building to improve accessibility. A planned expansion of the dining

room was suspended for the time being. Phase II was begun in the winter of 1996, including refurbishment or replacement of interior finishes in all of the buildings, including floors, walls, window treatments, counters, and the display cabinets in the coffee shop. The service station and camp store was updated, and an accessible ramp was added to the restaurant exterior. Bruce O'Connell, who had taken over year-round management of the inn with his mother after the death of his father in 1986, undertook an initiative to conserve energy, reduce costs, and protect the environment, which included a complete replacement of the exterior walkway lighting in 2002.¹⁷⁴

In 2004, the concession contract was extended for one season, followed by a ten-year extension. During this period, rooms were updated as needed and the shingle roofs replaced throughout, but major building operations centered around the 1971 motel building, where water infiltration

had damaged the exterior walkways along the front, making maintenance of the soffits above the first floor impossible. The walkway was largely replaced in 2008 as part of a major remodeling project that included the addition of two new exterior stair structures with prominent timber gables. The stone



Figure 42. (Top) Unit C in the early days of the 2008 renovations. (Blue Ridge Parkway)

Figure 43. (Bottom) Unit C late in the 2008 season, with the rear balcony structure repaired, the front walkways under reconstruction, and the end wall partially reclad. (Blue Ridge Parkway)

¹⁷⁴ Spencer, *Pisgah Inn*, 113-114.

veneer of the foundation was repaired. Board-on-board wood siding was replaced with battens over fiber cement paneling, with a new horizontal board added at the floor level on the gable ends to cover the panel joints.

After a new concessions contract was awarded to Parkway Inn, Inc., in 2015 the guest rooms were remodeled. By 2017, balcony doors on the 1966 buildings were replaced with sliding glass doors, and a large viewing and dining deck was added off of the restaurant building's gift shop.

CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS

At this point, the youngest of the “new” Pisgah Inn buildings has passed the 50-year threshold requiring its consideration as a historic property under the National Historic Preservation Act. National Park Service Mission 66 resources were contextualized in a Multiple Property Documentation Form for the National Register in August 2015, though that step is intended only to provide background and analysis for future individual nominations. The Pisgah Inn buildings have never been individually listed, and although they largely have been treated respectfully, small changes since their construction have generally not been made in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.¹⁷⁵ They are representative of the adaptive stewardship practiced by concessionaires tasked with managing remote, aging facilities under layered federal oversight that encourages ambitious building improvement programs for the benefit of park visitors on one hand while imposing treatment standards that restrict changes with the other.

With the designation of the Blue Ridge Parkway as a National Historic Landmark in December 2024, all of the Mission 66-era structures at Pisgah Inn were included as contributing resources, compelling a reassessment of regulatory requirements for ongoing changes.¹⁷⁶ In 2025, the buildings are nearing the age that the Pisgah National Forest Inn’s Lodge was when it was demolished – a strong predictor that substantial building projects will be necessary in coming years to keep the structures functional for the visitor services they were intended to fulfill.

¹⁷⁵ Ethan Carr, et al., “National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources,” (Santa Fe: National Park Service Intermountain Regional Office), 2015.

¹⁷⁶ Olausen, et al., *National Historic Landmark Nomination*.

CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT AND USE

INTRODUCTION

The current historic buildings that comprise Pisgah Inn were built between 1965 and 1971.¹⁷⁷ Initially, they joined the older structures on the site that had belonged to the Pisgah National Forest Inn, originally constructed beginning in 1919 as part of a concession with the U.S. Forest Service. All of these earlier buildings have since been removed from the site.

The planning and completion of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the immediate vicinity of the inn changed the site's character from that of an isolated mountain retreat to that of a support node for automobile tourist traffic. Beginning in the 1950s, a series of master plans were developed by the National Park Service to address this node, Mount Pisgah Recreation Area, and the anticipated needs that it would meet. The announcement by NPS in 1955 of its Mission 66 initiative set a timeline for the development of the site, meeting the visitor use and resource protection obligations of the National Park Service.

Unlike the development of roadways and parking lots, utility infrastructure, visitor centers, campgrounds, and other park-developed facilities, developments at the Pisgah Inn site were intended from the initial planning to be built and managed by concessioners. The developers were local businesspeople who chose their own local architects. Stylistically, these buildings were a departure from the "rustic" aesthetic preferred in earlier years of the Park Service, and this more modern approach was promoted by design approval authorities within NPS, with an eye toward economy and ease of future maintenance – shared goals of the Mission 66 program.

The extant structures have been in continuous seasonal use since their completion, and various maintenance and modernization projects have been undertaken on them as necessary to maintain functionality and to respond to changing needs. Not until recent years has there been any special consideration of them as "historic structures" – as they had not yet met the standard 50-year minimum age for consideration. In 2021, however, the youngest of the buildings met this mark. In December 2024, the entirety of the Blue Ridge Parkway was designated as a National Historic Landmark, with the Pisgah Inn buildings all identified as contributing to its historical significance.

¹⁷⁷ The employee dormitories, built in two phases following the demolition of the Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge in 1986, are nonhistoric and non-contributing to the Blue Ridge Parkway National Historic Landmark District.

TIMELINE NOTES

Dates provided in this timeline are based on historical research, construction and maintenance records of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the records contained within NPS's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment System (PEPC). PEPC is by design not an archival system, instead intended to assist and document project compliance with an assortment of cultural resource and environmental laws and considerations. The existence of a project record within this system, therefore, does not necessarily mean that the proposed project was executed. Where questions existed, projects were cross-referenced in an October 2024 interview with Bruce O'Connell, who has been involved in the management of the inn since 1978, and with the Parkway's concessions and resource staff.

The National Park Service's Cultural Resource Inventory System, Blue Ridge Parkway's building inventory system, and the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office's survey database are inconsistent in the names given to each structure. For the purposes of this timeline, the Restaurant building and the adjoining Lodge and Office (Unit A), designed, approved, and built in one campaign, are considered together. The separate 26-room lodging building, also part of the first phase of development, because it had a different approval and occupancy timeline, is considered separately, and is described as "Unit B." The current Country Store, originally built as a gas station and camp store as part of the same initial phase, is described as "Store." "Unit C" refers to the 20-room lodging building completed in 1971.

PISGAH INN TIMELINE

1889	George W. Vanderbilt began purchasing land in the vicinity of Mount Pisgah for his Pisgah Forest Estate.
1895-1897	Vanderbilt purchased from Thomas Lanier Clingman a 300-acre parcel on Mount Pisgah and constructed Buck Spring Lodge after designs by Richard Morris Hunt and his son Richard Howland Hunt.
1917	Edith Vanderbilt, George W. Vanderbilt's widow, sold 80,248 acres of property around Mt. Pisgah to the National Forest Commission, reserving a 472-acre tract around Buck Spring Lodge.
1919-1920	George F. Weston approached the U.S. Forest Service about securing a concession for the construction of a lodge on Pisgah Ridge, and he was allowed 2.91 acres on a 30-year lease on which he built a main lodge and surrounding cabins, named Pisgah National Forest Inn.
1933	Department of the Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes approved the concept of a national parkway along the Blue Ridge.
1935-1936	Following the approval of the general route, North Carolina and Virginia began acquiring the property necessary for the Blue Ridge Parkway as road sections were designed.
1937	Pisgah National Forest Inn was sold to H. H. Nash and Harold Moon.
1948	After a decline in visitation around World War II, Nash and Moon sold the inn to Marine Hess and Bess Cameron, who were able to renew the concessions lease.
1955	Pisgah National Forest Inn was purchased by Leslie G. and Leda Kirschner.

1956	Mission 66, a program for modernizing national parks to meet the needs of visitors, was announced by NPS Director Conrad L. Wirth.
1959	Following Edith Vanderbilt Gerry's death, her grandson George Cecil sold the family's Buck Spring tract to the State of North Carolina to be transferred to the federal government.
1961	The Master Plan for Mount Pisgah Recreation Area included a new restaurant, a new motel of 50 to 75 rooms, and a gas station and camp store, all to be built by concessioners.
Oct. 1961	The Kirschners' concession contract for Pisgah National Forest Inn expired, but they were allowed to continue operations as details that would allow their continued operation were ironed out.
1962	NPS acquired from North Carolina and the U.S. Forest Service the property needed to complete the sections of the Parkway at Mt. Pisgah.
June-July 1962	Pisgah Inn Inc. was formed, with the Kirschners partnering with four businessmen from Waynesville, North Carolina. The group submitted a proposal to NPS for the development of the planned facilities at Mt. Pisgah Recreation Area.
1963	Vanderbilt's Buck Spring Lodge buildings were demolished.
Feb. 1964	Preliminary drawings for the Restaurant and Lodge and Unit B, the 26-room lodge, were approved by NPS.
1965	Construction began on the Restaurant and Lodge, Unit B, and the Store. Unit B and the Store were completed this year. Construction of Section 2-T of the Parkway in the area was completed.
May 1966	Construction was completed on the Restaurant building. Leslie and Leda Kirschner sold their stake in Pisgah Inn Inc. to the other Directors.

Feb. 1969	Preliminary plans for Unit C, a 20-room motel building, were approved by NPS.
July 1971	Unit C was completed.
1978	The Directors of Pisgah Inn Inc. sold the corporation to Parkway Inn, Inc., a new corporation made up of previous Director J. Aaron Prevost and Tom and Phyllis O'Connell.
1983	An architectural assessment of the old Pisgah National Forest Inn's main lodge, funded by NPS, found that the building was greatly deteriorated, had surpassed its useful life, and that 75 to 80 percent of the structure would need to be replaced for it to remain in use for any purpose.
1984	A 20-year concessions contract was signed with Parkway Inn, Inc.
Jan. 1986	The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer recommended the old buildings of Pisgah National Forest Inn for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
Oct. 1986	Following the failure of several initiatives exploring the funding for rehabilitation of the old lodge, it was demolished.
1991	Expansion of the Store to both sides and the front.
1994-1995	Completion of a Building & Improvement Plan including renovations to the food service areas of the restaurant and the gift shop in the Restaurant building.
1996	The coffee shop in the Restaurant building was modified into an overflow dining and meeting room.
1996-1997	Completion of the second phase of the Building & Improvement Plan, including replacement or refurbishment of interior finishes and furnishings in the Restaurant building and the addition of an exterior site ramp, lodging room renovations in all buildings, and renovations to the Store.

2002	Replacement of outdoor site lighting.
2004	Concession contract was extended for the season, followed by a 10-year contract with Bruce O'Connell and Phyllis Prevost, Parkway Inn, Inc. Gasoline pumps were removed from the Store.
2007	Renovation of office areas in the Lodge. New shingle roofs for all buildings.
2008	Extensive renovations to Unit C, including major repairs and replacement of the exterior walkways and the construction of new exterior stairs to the front of the building. Repair to stone veneer at foundations. Replacement of original board siding with fiber cement, battens over panels. Exterior modifications to the end bay on the rear. Sprinkler system added.
2015	Remodeling of guest rooms and public restrooms. Gutters replaced on Lodge and Unit B. Replacement of exterior building lighting. Replacement of sliding glass balcony doors on the Lodge. 10-year concession contract with Parkway Inn, Inc.
2016	Deck added behind restaurant and gift shop. Balcony doors replaced with sliding glass doors at Lodge and Unit B. Store remodeled. Installation of sprinklers in the Lodge and Unit B.
2019	Replacement of fire suppression system in Restaurant building.
2020	Exterior lighting replaced at Store. Stair treads and railings replaced at Lodge and Unit B.
2021	Gutters and fascias replaced on the Store.
2022	Wood column covers replaced on the Lodge.
2023	Front doors replaced on the Lodge and Unit B. Rear windows replaced on the Lodge and Unit B.

2024 Double doors at the Restaurant and the Lodge office replaced. Front doors replaced on the Lodge, Unit B, Unit C, and the Store (in-kind). Previously installed solar panels removed from the roof of Unit C and not replaced. Repairs to window at gift shop in Restaurant building. Replacement of rusted stair nosings at Unit C.

PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

DOCUMENTATION METHODOLOGY

Because many minor changes were made to the buildings of Pisgah Inn in the years before the buildings qualified as historic structures, deviations from the original construction drawings can easily be identified, and not all these differences have complete documentation within the administrative record. With the structures now determined to be contributing to the Blue Ridge Parkway National Historic Landmark District, it is necessary to establish a foundation on which ongoing management decisions and documentation of those decisions can be based.

To this end, field photography of the site was undertaken October 23, 2024, by Secretary of the Interior-qualified NPS staff. Documentation began with the Mt. Pisgah Country Store (CRIS ID 1173054) and proceeded south and west with Pisgah Inn Unit C (CRIS ID 1173053), Pisgah Inn Unit B (CRIS ID 1173052), Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office (CRIS ID 1173051), and Pisgah Inn Restaurant (CRIS ID 1173050). To the extent possible, photographic formats and coverage followed the guidelines contained in the National Park Service's *National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program Consolidated and Updated Photograph Policy, 2024*. Because this photographic documentation is also intended to satisfy baseline conditions documentation requests of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, their preferred photo naming conventions are used in lieu of the National Register conventions.

Key plans are included for reference points and orientation of these photographs. Image sheets are included after the Photo Log, though these should be understood to be contact prints of the digital images. The digital files themselves have been provided to both the Park and to the North Carolina SHPO separately from this document.

PHOTOGRAPHIC LIMITATIONS

All reasonable efforts were made to record the principal facades and setting of the contributing buildings of Pisgah Inn, including general views of significant interiors, to accurately reflect the integrity of the property. Additions and alterations were deliberately documented. Because of the slope of the land to the southeast, mature landscaping, and the relative length of most of the buildings to this constrained landscape, full “elevation” views were not possible to capture in many cases.

PHOTO LOG

Name of Property:	Pisgah Inn
City or Vicinity:	Canton vicinity
County:	Transylvania and Haywood
State:	North Carolina
Photographer:	Arin Streeter
Date Photographed:	October 23, 2024

KEY PLANS

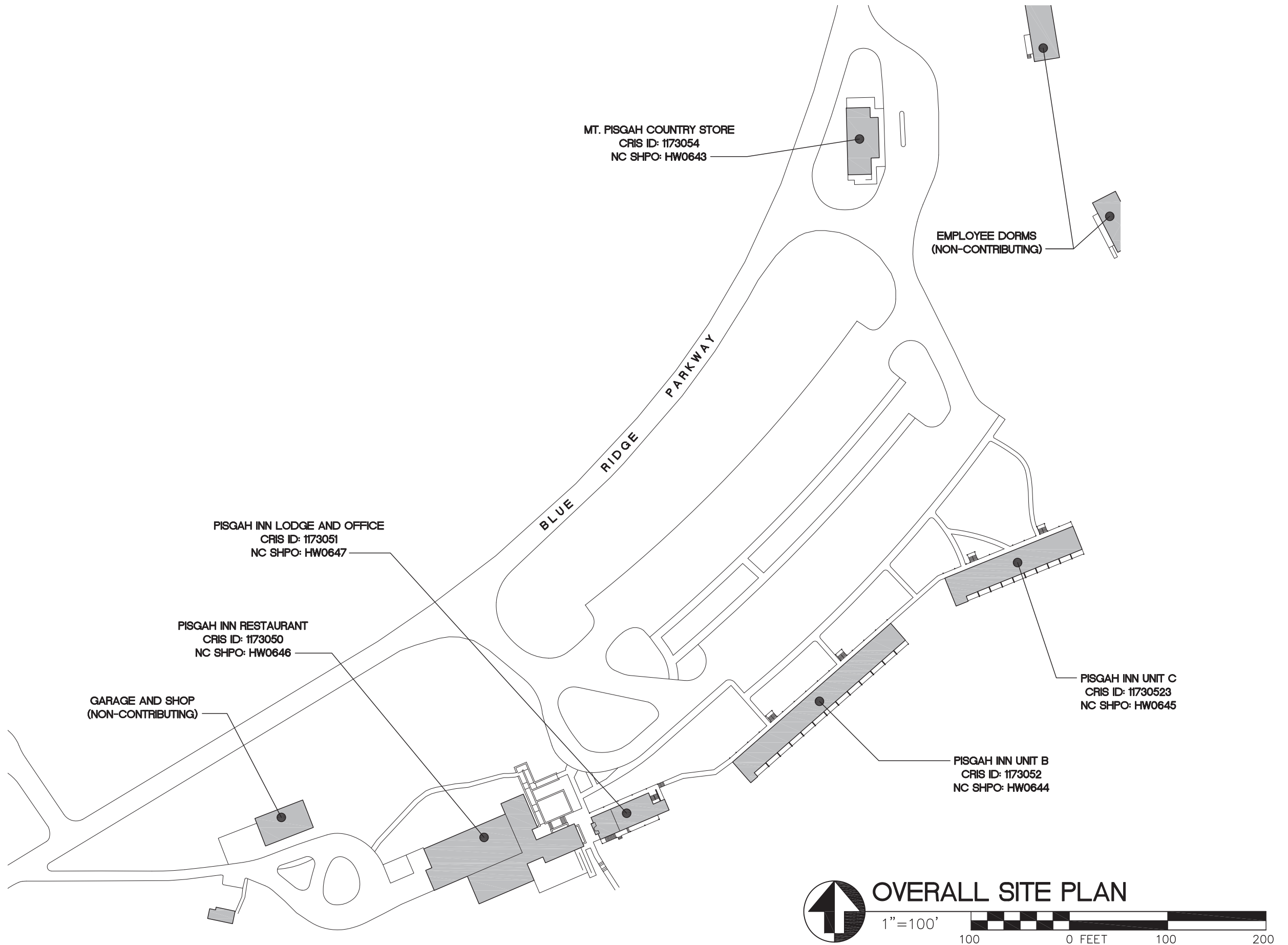


NORTH CAROLINA

PISGAH INN
MILEPOST 408.5

HAYWOOD AND
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTIES

BLUE RIDGE
PARKWAY



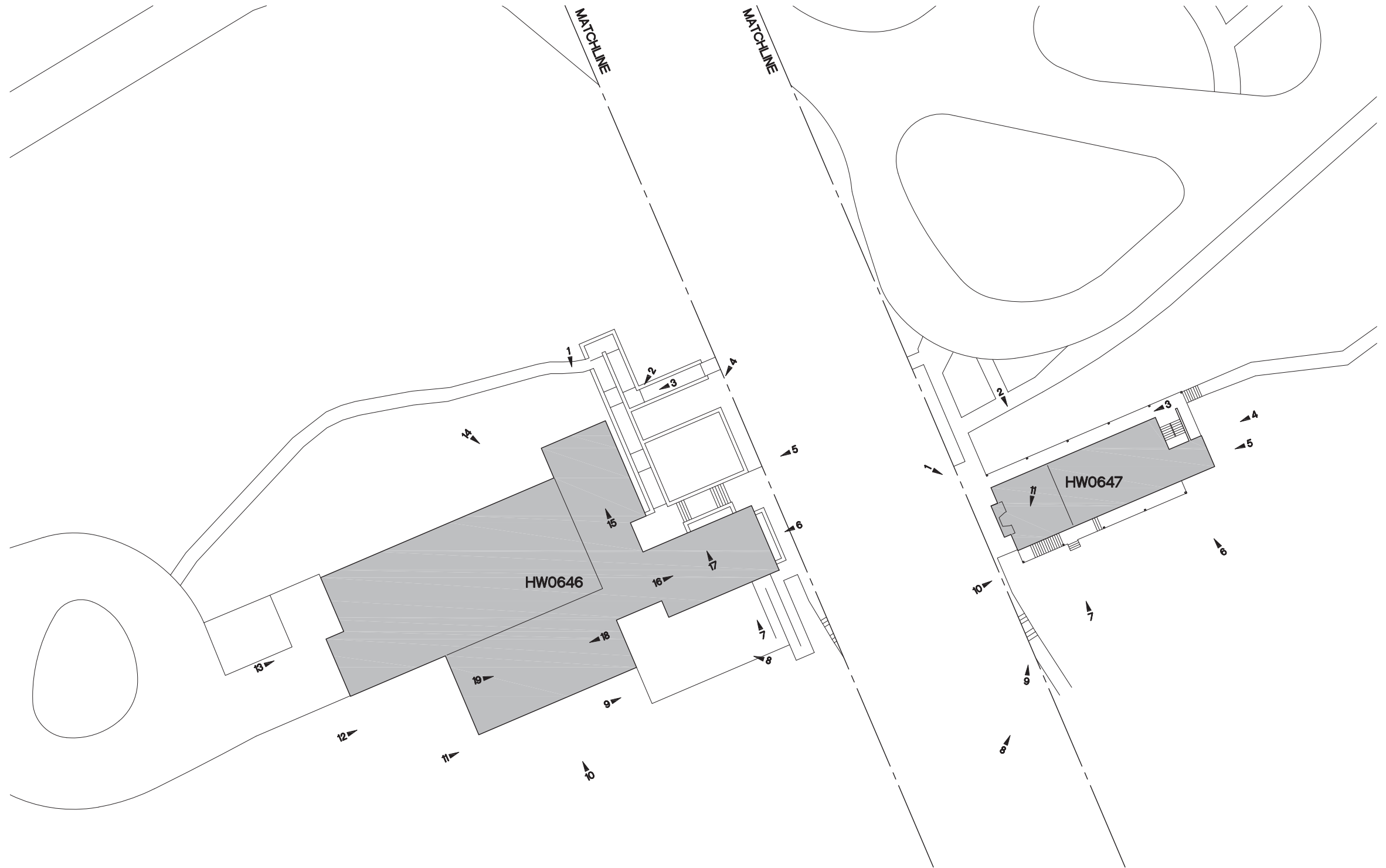


NORTH CAROLINA

PISGAH INN
MILEPOST 408.5

HAYWOOD AND
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTIES

BLUE RIDGE
PARKWAY



RESTAURANT AND LODGE

1"=40'



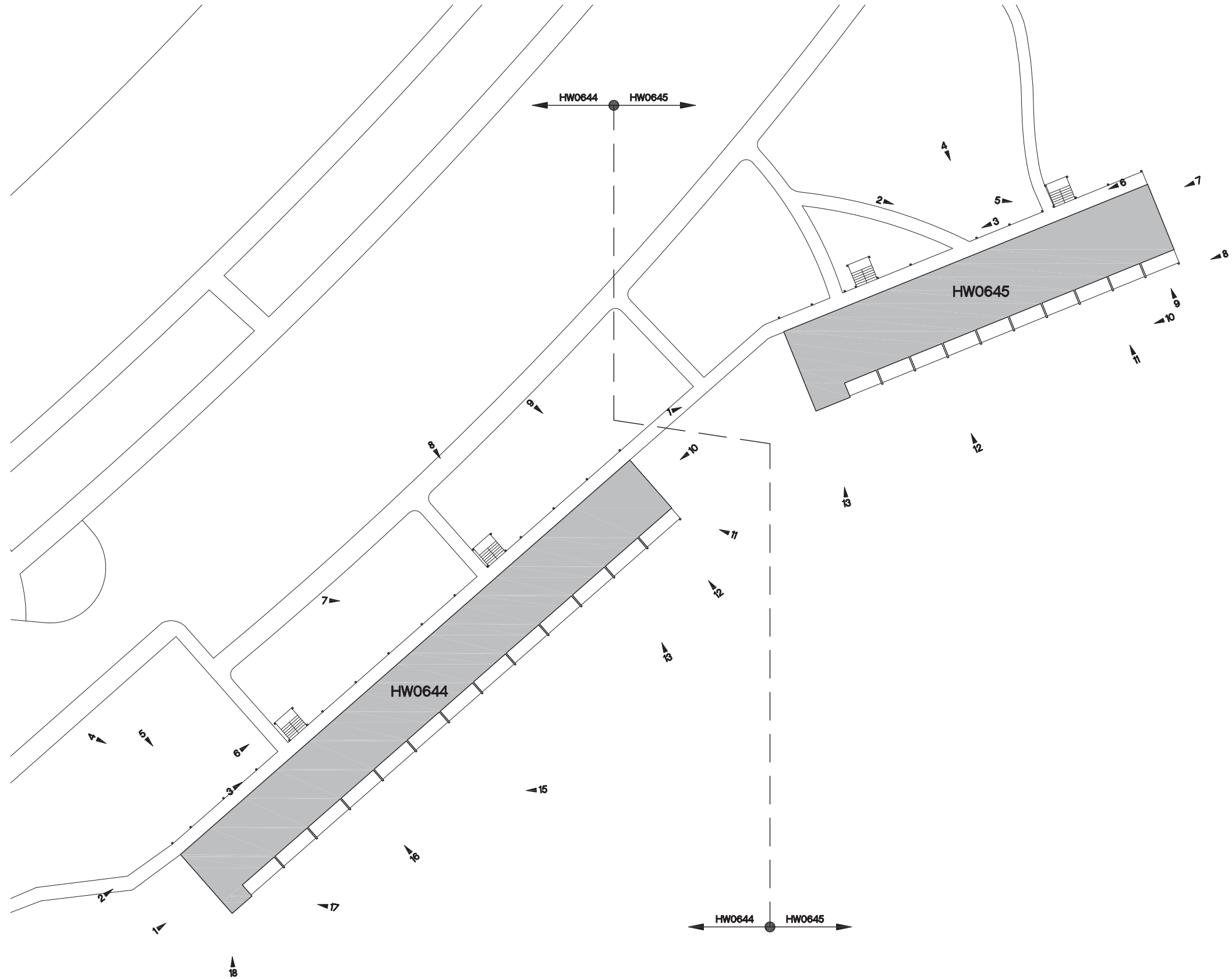


NORTH CAROLINA

PISGAH INN
MILEPOST 408.5

HAYWOOD AND
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTIES

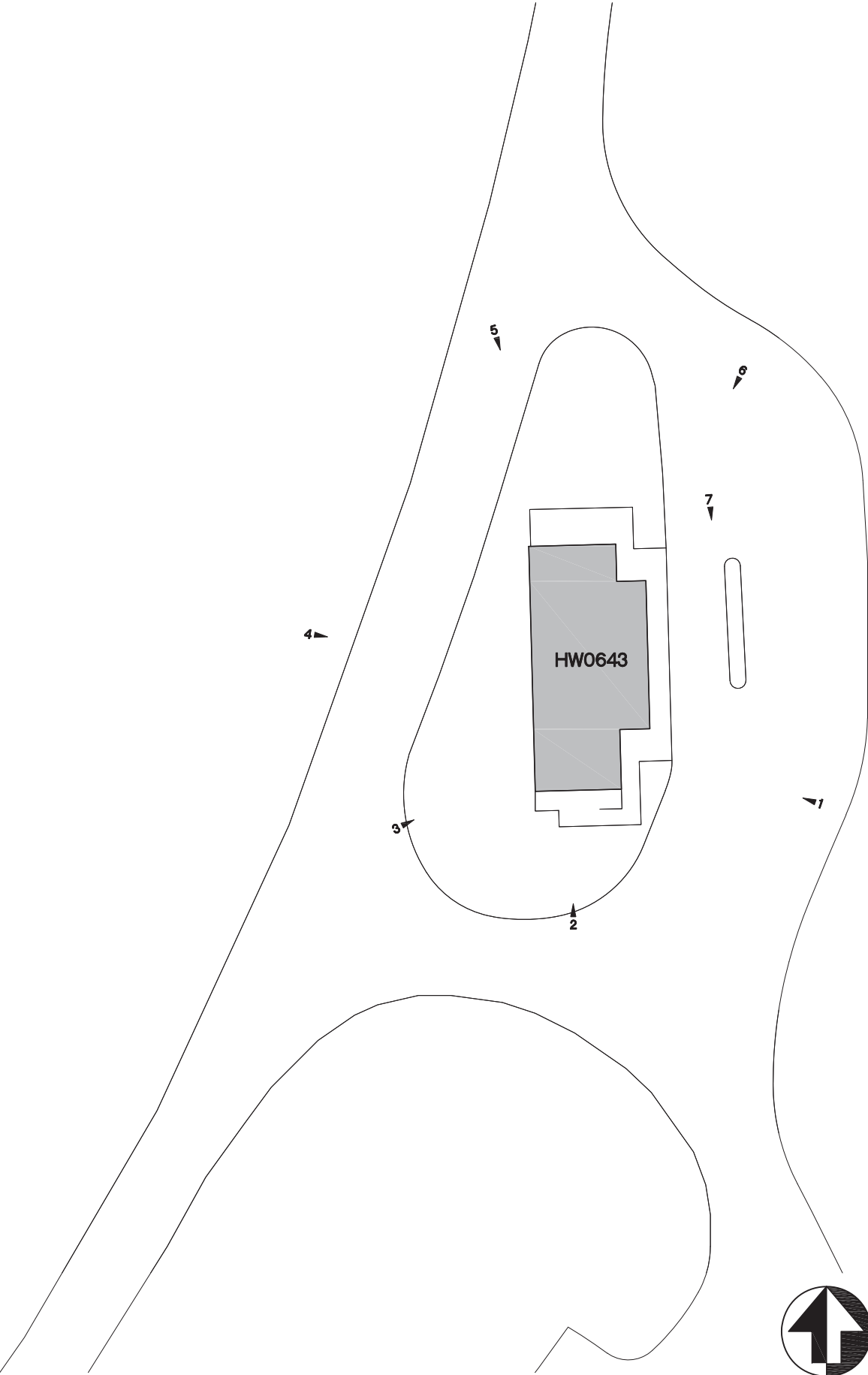
BLUE RIDGE
PARKWAY



MOTEL UNITS B AND C

1"=40'





COUNTRY STORE

1"=40'



PHOTOGRAPH NUMBERS AND DESCRIPTIONS:

Pisgah Inn Restaurant (CRIS ID 1173050)

1 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_01)

View up ramp toward main entrance, northwest façade, facing south.

2 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_02)

Side view of original coffee shop while approaching main entrance, northeast façade, facing southwest.

3 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_03)

View of northeast façade of original coffee shop from bottom of ramp, facing southwest.

4 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_04)

View of ramp and courtyard, showing relationship to Lodge and northern facades, facing south.

5 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_05)

Partial view of northeast façade of gift shop and steps to main entrance, facing southwest.

6 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_06)

Northeast façade of gift shop, facing southwest.

7 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_07)

Southeast façade of gift shop from modern deck, facing northwest.

8 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_08)

Southeast façade of gift shop and dining room from modern deck, facing west.

9 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_09)

Detail view of west end of modern deck with gift shop and Lodge beyond, facing northeast.

10 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_10)

Southeast façade of dining room from below, facing north.

11 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_11)

View along southeast wall of dining room, facing northeast.

12 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_12)

Southwest façade of dining room with kitchen to the north, facing northeast.

13 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_13)

Service area at west end of building, facing east.

14 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_14)

Partial view of northwest façade at joint between kitchen and coffee shop, facing southeast.

15 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_15)

Interior view of original coffee shop, facing northwest.

16 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_16)

Interior view of gift shop, facing northeast.

17 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_17)

Interior view of northwest wall of gift shop, looking to ramp and coffee shop beyond, facing northwest.

18 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_18)

Interior view of dining room, facing southwest.

19 of 19 (HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_19)

Interior view of dining room with gift shop beyond, facing northeast.

Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office (CRIS ID 1173051)

1 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_01)

View of west corner, facing east.

2 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_02)

Western portion of northwest façade, showing relationship with Restaurant to the west, facing southeast.

3 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_03)

View along walkway toward Restaurant, facing southwest.

4 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_04)

Northeast façade, facing southwest.

5 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_05)

Detail of south corner of northeast façade, facing southwest.

6 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_06)

Southeast front, facing northwest.

7 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_07)

Detail of modified bays at west end of southeast front, facing northwest.

8 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_08)

Southeast façade from walkway between Lodge and Restaurant,
illustration relationship to Units B and C, facing north.

9 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_09)

Corner view of southeast and southwest facades, facing north.

10 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_10)

Detail view of south corner of southwest façade, facing northeast.

11 of 11 (HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_11)

Interior view of fireplace in office, facing south.

Pisgah Inn Unit B (CRIS ID 1173052)

1 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_01)

Southwest façade, facing northeast.

2 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_02)

Southwest façade and view along northwest façade, facing northeast.

3 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_03)

View inside entrance walkway at lower level, facing northeast.

4 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_04)

West end of northwest façade, facing southeast.

5 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_05)

Detail view of western three bays of northwest façade, facing southeast.

6 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_06)

View along northwest façade, facing northeast.

7 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_07)

Partial view of northwest façade, facing east.

8 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_08)

View centered on north stair tower of northwest façade, facing south.

9 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_09)

East end of northwest façade, facing east.

10 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_10)

Northeast façade, facing southwest.

11 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_11)

East corner, showing northeast and southeast facades, facing west.

12 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_12)

Detail view of terminal bay of southeast front, facing northwest.

13 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_13)

Easternmost portion of southeast front, facing north.

14 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_14)

Detail view of center bay of southeast front, facing northwest.

15 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_15)

View along southeast front, facing west.

16 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_16)

Detail view of typical bay at western end of building, southeast front, facing northwest.

17 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_17)

View of south corner of southeast front, facing west.

18 of 18 (HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_18)

View of south corner, facing north.

Pisgah Inn Unit C (CRIS ID 1173053) (NC State Inventory ID HW0645)

1 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_01)

Southwest façade from Unit B, facing northeast.

2 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_02)

View along northwest façade, facing east.

3 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_03)

View along northwest façade, facing southwest.

4 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_04)

Typical interior bay of northwest façade, facing southeast.

5 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_05)

View toward stair tower and north corner along northwest façade, facing east.

6 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_06)

View along upper walkway from north end, facing southwest.

7 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_07)

Northeast façade, facing southwest.

8 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_08)

View along southeast façade from east corner, facing southwest toward Unit B.

9 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_09)

Detail view of eastern terminal bay, lower level, facing northwest.

10 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_10)

Site relationship between Units C and B, viewed along southeast front, facing southwest.

11 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_11)

Eastern portion of southeast façade, facing north.

12 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_12)

Western portion of southeast façade, facing northwest.

13 of 13 (HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_13)

Corner view of southeast and southwest facades, facing north.

Mt. Pisgah Country Store (CRIS ID 1173054)

1 of 7 (HW0643_Mount Pisgah Country Store_10-24_ars_01)

View of east façade, facing northwest.

2 of 7 (HW0643_Mount Pisgah Country Store_10-24_ars_02)

View of south façade, facing north.

3 of 7 (HW0643_Mount Pisgah Country Store_10-24_ars_03)

Corner view from Parkway entrance, facing northeast.

4 of 7 (HW0643_Mount Pisgah Country Store_10-24_ars_04)

West façade from Parkway, facing east.

5 of 7 (HW0643_Mount Pisgah Country Store_10-24_ars_05)

Northwest corner view from Parkway, facing southeast.

6 of 7 (HW0643_Mount Pisgah Country Store_10-24_ars_06)

Northeast corner view from parking lot, facing southwest.

7 of 7 (HW0643_Mount Pisgah Country Store_10-24_ars_07)

Site relationship between Country Store and Units B and C, facing south.

PISGAH INN RESTAURANT (CRIS ID 1173050)



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_01



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_02



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_03



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_04



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_05



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_06

PISGAH INN RESTAURANT (CRIS ID 1173050)



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_07



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_08



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_09



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_10



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_11



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_12

PISGAH INN RESTAURANT (CRIS ID 1173050)



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_13



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_14



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_15



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_16



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_17



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_18

PISGAH INN RESTAURANT (CRIS ID 1173050)



HW0646_Mount Pisgah Inn Restaurant_10-24_ars_19

PISGAH INN LODGE AND OFFICE (CRIS ID 1173051)



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_01



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_02



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_03



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_04



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_05



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_06

PISGAH INN LODGE AND OFFICE (CRIS ID 1173051)



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_07



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_08



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_09



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_10



HW0647_Mount Pisgah Inn Lodge and Office_10-24_ars_11

PISGAH INN UNIT B (CRIS ID 1173052)



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_01



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_02



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_03



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_04



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_05



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_06

PISGAH INN UNIT B (CRIS ID 1173052)



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_07



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_08



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_09



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_10



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_11



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_12

PISGAH INN UNIT B (CRIS ID 1173052)



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_13



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_14



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_15



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_16



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_17



HW0644_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit B_10-24_ars_18

PISGAH INN UNIT C (CRIS ID 1173053)



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_01



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_02



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_03



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_04



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_05



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_06

PISGAH INN UNIT C (CRIS ID 1173053)



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_07



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_08



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_09



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_10



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_11



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_12

PISGAH INN UNIT C (CRIS ID 1173053)



HW0645_Mount Pisgah Inn Motel Unit C_10-24_ars_13

MT. PISGAH COUNTRY STORE (CRIS ID 1173054)



HW0643_Mount Pisgah Inn Country Store_10-24_ars_01



HW0643_Mount Pisgah Inn Country Store_10-24_ars_02



HW0643_Mount Pisgah Inn Country Store_10-24_ars_03



HW0643_Mount Pisgah Inn Country Store_10-24_ars_04



HW0643_Mount Pisgah Inn Country Store_10-24_ars_05



HW0643_Mount Pisgah Inn Country Store_10-24_ars_06

MT. PISGAH COUNTRY STORE (CRIS ID 1173054)



HW0643_Mount Pisgah Inn Country Store_10-24_ars_07

DEVIATIONS FROM ORIGINAL DESIGN

The physical attributes of cultural resources are, with few exceptions, nonrenewable. Once the historic fabric of a monument is gone, nothing can bring back its authenticity; once the objects in an archeological site are disturbed, nothing can recover the information that might have been gained through analysis of their spatial relationships. The primary concern of cultural resource management, therefore, is to minimize the loss or degradation of culturally significant material.¹⁷⁸

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, a partnership was established between the federal government and state, tribal, and local governments to define responsible management practices for preservation activities on historic properties in which federal funding is involved. The National Park Service developed a series of guidelines for the various levels of action, and these evolved by 1992 into the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, which established four “treatment” standards: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Further updates have expanded the information contained in the accompanying advisory *Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* to include additional building materials – some of which have become “historic” since the earliest publication – especially relevant to Modernist architecture such as the wealth of Mission 66 Era structures that are part of the National Park Service portfolio.

Determining the appropriate treatment standard for any specific historic NPS building, site, structure, object, or district is a decision based on the integrity of the resource, its relative significance, and a number of operational considerations. By default, the Management Category assigned to historic resources within NPS is “Preservation.” This treatment approach allows and enables properties to be maintained in their current states through ongoing repair and stabilization of deterioration, and it allows careful upgrades to the hidden infrastructure necessary for buildings to remain functional.

“Rehabilitation” and “Restoration,” because they include further allowances for changes to be made to the existing conditions of a property – in the first case alterations to allow new uses, and in the second alterations to accurately

¹⁷⁸ NPS-28: *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1998), 19.

depict a property as it existed in an earlier period – require a higher level of documentary justification and deliberate NPS administrative approval. Existing material, once removed and discarded, is unrecoverable, so a robust process to determine character-defining attributes of a property and the appropriate treatments of these individual elements is a prerequisite for more involved undertakings. The results of this process are generally codified within a Historic Structure Report as *Part II: Treatment and Work Recommendations*, which, in combination with the *Part I: Developmental History*, becomes a management document upon recommendation of the park superintendent and the regional directorate and approval by the Regional Director, recording consensus on an ideal management path.

A primary concern in the management of cultural resources is unnecessary loss of historic material such that the historic property sustains a fatal loss of integrity – that is, its continued ability to convey its significance. Of course, materials do deteriorate over time and functional needs change, and buildings and structures are updated to accommodate those changing needs. The National Register criteria for evaluation provide a framework for assessing the historical integrity of properties, which most often exhibit at least some changes from their original conditions. These seven aspects of integrity – location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association – also provide a basis for continued stewardship and decision-making.¹⁷⁹ All updates should be evaluated for whether they may result in a diminution of integrity.

DEFINITIONS

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project. However, new exterior additions are not within the scope of this intervention strategy. The Standards for Preservation require retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric along with the building's historic form.

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions

¹⁷⁹ Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 60.

while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. The Rehabilitation Standards acknowledge the need to alter or add to a historic building to meet continued or new uses while retaining the building's historic character.

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project. The Restoration Standards allow for the depiction of a building at a particular time in its history by preserving materials, features, finishes, and spaces from its period of significance and removing those from other periods.

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location. The Reconstruction Standards establish a limited framework for recreating a vanished or non-surviving building with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.

MISSION 66 CONTEXT

The Mission 66 program, intended to modernize the National Park system in time for the National Park Service's fiftieth anniversary in 1966, included a massive building campaign to improve visitor services, update infrastructure, and standardize the public's national park experience through the provision of new visitor centers, campgrounds, picnic shelters, comfort stations, roads and trails, staff housing and administrative buildings, and park maintenance facilities. Because the resulting buildings, structures, and landscapes were developed by and for the National Park Service, good records generally exist of these developments, including master plans, correspondence, and original construction documents. This documentation exists for the major building projects at Mt. Pisgah Recreation Area, composing an excellent record of original configurations, materials, and colors.

The ACHP has issued regulations, codified at 36 CFR Part 800, setting forth the processes through which Federal agencies comply with the

requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Under Section 800.14(e) of these regulations, agencies may request a “Program Comment” from the ACHP regarding a particular category of undertakings in lieu of the individual project reviews otherwise required. Recognizing the breadth of maintenance projects that the National Park Service anticipates across its system on the more than 20,000 park facilities dating from its intensive Mission 66 era of development, the National Park Service sought a Program Comment to simplify the Section 106 compliance associated with the continued use and preservation of these facilities.

The resulting “Program Comment on Stewardship and Management of National Park Service Mission 66-Era Facilities (1945-1972)” went into effect in November 2024. Its goal is to streamline compliance and support NPS efforts to use Mission 66-era historic properties to meet mission needs while improving visitor experience and accessibility, address deferred maintenance, improve conditions for staff, and promote ongoing stewardship efforts, while concurrently reducing the external reviews required under Section 106 of the NHPA.

Critically for Pisgah Inn, however, the Program Comment is specifically not applicable where there is a potential to affect National Historic Landmarks. With all of the historic structures at Pisgah Inn having been identified as contributing to the Blue Ridge Parkway National Historic Landmark District, the Program Comment is not a viable compliance pathway. Standard consultation processes are still obligatory, though the shared concern of the ACHP over the continued use and maintenance of the National Park Service’s Mission 66-era resources should be understood.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CONTEXT

The Blue Ridge Parkway was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in December 2024 in recognition of its significance as the pinnacle achievement of the American parkway movement of the early 1900s and as a masterwork of transportation engineering and landscape architecture (NRIS #NL100011353). The latter of these falls under the National Historic Landmark program’s Criterion 4 for national significance:

Properties that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style, or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Under this Criterion, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts – so it is the ensemble of resources comprising the district that conveys its significance. In the case of the Blue Ridge Parkway, this ensemble was designed as a landscape in which the placement of structures and their massing, texture, and consistent use of a color palette reflective of the local vernacular collectively contribute to an overall unified effect. Stanley Abbott described the architectural intent of Parkway structures in 1943 as “simply an adaptation of the general forms, lines, and materials of the local sheds, barns, and dwellings.”¹⁸⁰ The plain, inexpensive buildings that emerged from the Parkway’s design guidelines were not universally loved – much of the public preferred the character of the earlier “rustic” park structures, while the architects of the National Park Service’s EODC advocated for more modern architectural ideas not tied to the character of local barns.

At Pisgah Inn, no drastic changes to the buildings have been undertaken in the years since they were originally constructed, though numerous differences from the early records are evident. The lack of design distinction of the individual buildings, however, means that these changes – which mainly do not affect building placement and massing and only minimally affect texture and color – have not been fatal to the historic integrity of the site, which is notably consistent with the original Master Plans that directed its development. In this context, even Unit C and the Country Store, the most modified of the original structures, still contribute to the collective significance of the National Historic Landmark District.

This designation should be considered in any development of treatment recommendations for the Pisgah Inn buildings, but in the absence of specific guidance the management of these resources is subject to the heightened protection that the NHPA provides to National Historic Landmarks through Section 110(f) and the Section 106 regulations, which require that any Federal agency undertaking an action “that may directly and adversely affect any Historic Landmark . . . shall to the maximum extent possible undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm.” Additionally, the agency is required to allow the ACHP reasonable opportunity to comment on any such undertakings.

¹⁸⁰ Stanley W. Abbott, “Confidential Memorandum for Regional Director Taylor,” 3 December 1943, 11.

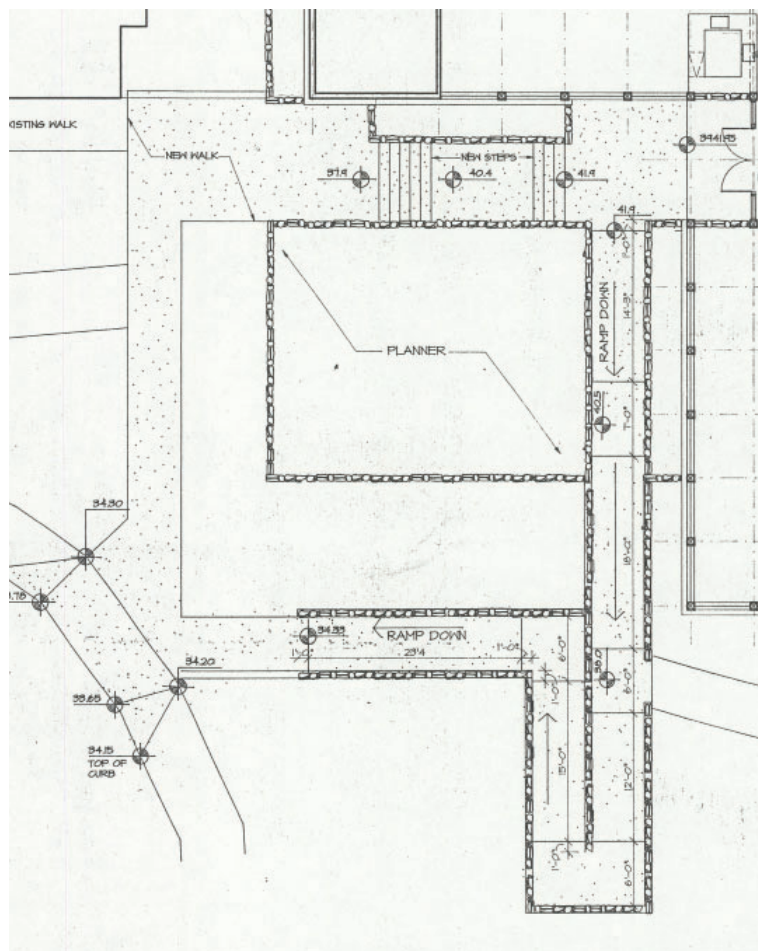
OBSERVABLE MODIFICATIONS

The following pages illustrate the most noticeable differences between the construction documents and the original conditions of the historic buildings of Pisgah Inn, and alterations made since the buildings' completion.

PISGAH INN RESTAURANT AND LODGE (CRIS ID 1173050 AND 1173051)**Differences between construction documents and original construction:**

- The construction of the overlook shown between the Restaurant and Lodge in the approved construction drawings was approved by Superintendent Sam P. Weems to be deferred until a couple of years after the new buildings were in operation. It was never added.
- There is no evidence that the second entrance off of the plaza to the gift shop was ever installed; this bay has a window matching the others to the left.
- It was anticipated by the architects that there would need to be a small deck for the emergency exit from the far end of the dining room; site grading brought the exterior ground up to the level of the door, obviating its need.

Figure 44. Ramp and planter addition to the Restaurant building's main entrance. Plans also included an addition to the dining room, but this change was not made. Foy, Lee, and Moody Assoc., 1994. (NPS TIC #BLRI-193733)



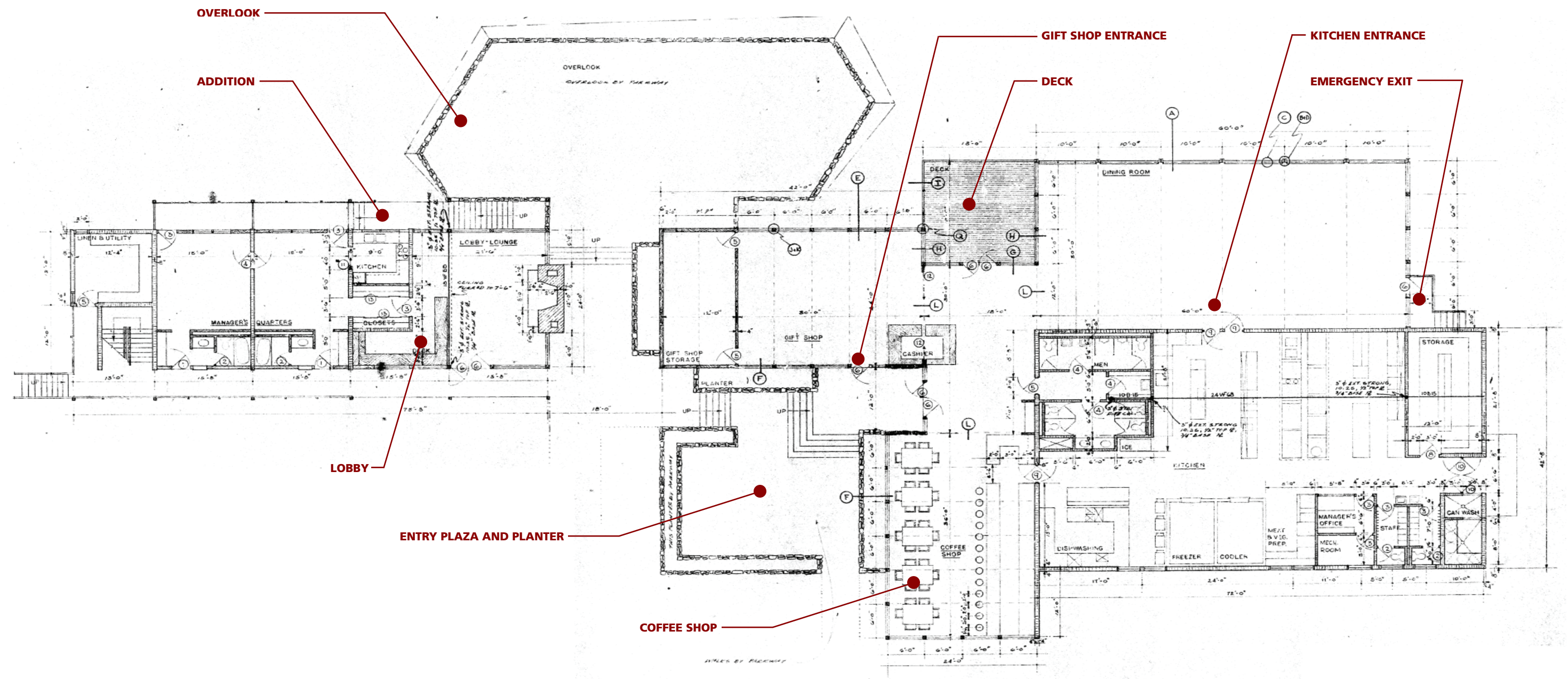


Figure 46. Plan of Restaurant and Lodge buildings, with areas of changes to character-defining spaces and features noted. Originals by Foy & Lee Architects, May 1964. (NPS TIC #BLRI-8001-B-Z3)

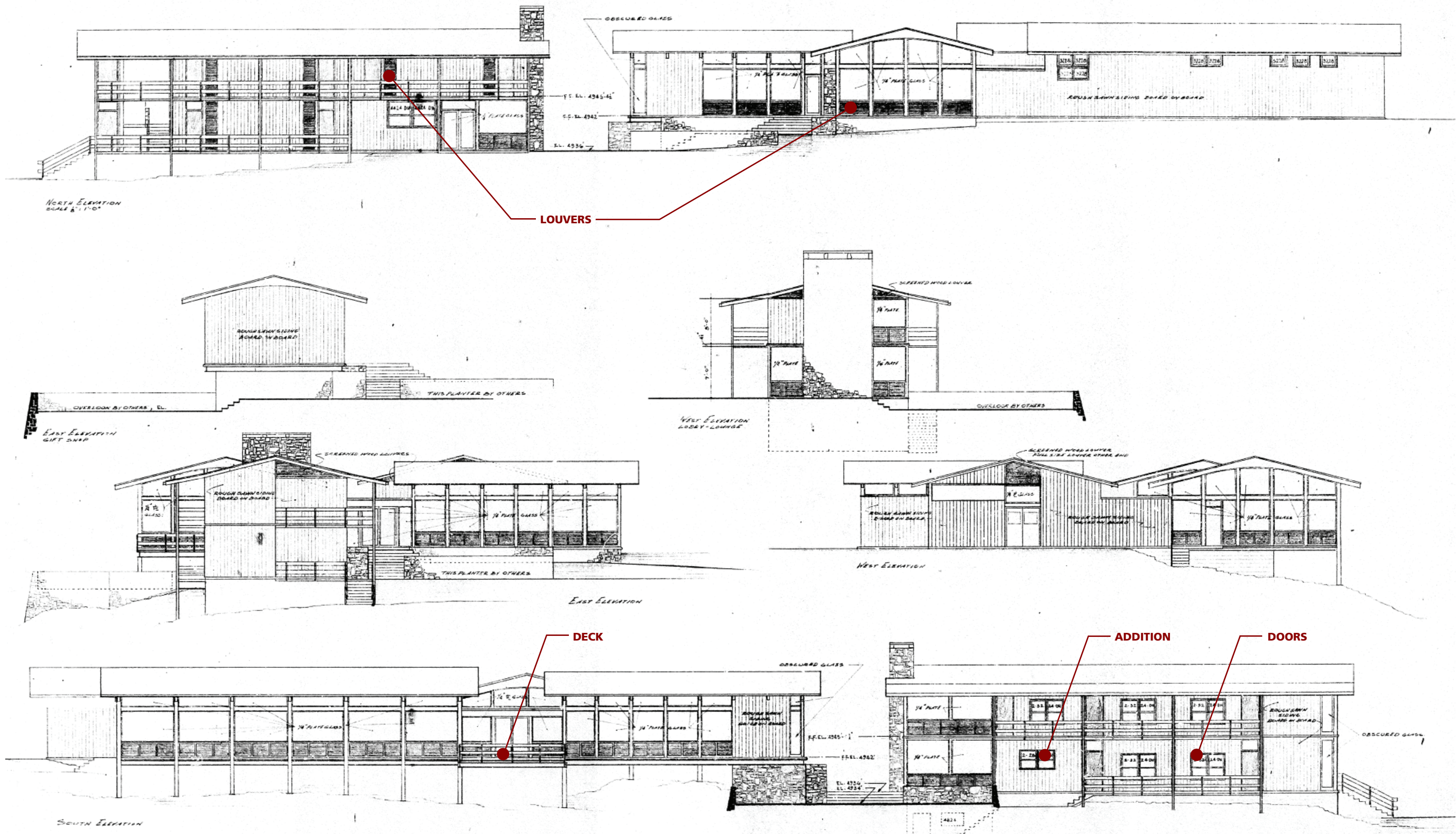


Figure 47. Elevations of Restaurant and Lodge buildings, with areas of changes to character-defining spaces and features noted. Originals by Foy & Lee Architects, May 1964. (NPS TIC #BLRI-8001-B-Z3)

- The original small observation deck off the dining room and gift shop was replaced with a large deck structure in 2016 (Figure 48).
- A small addition was made to the kitchen area of the manager's quarters on the lower level of the Lodge, within the area of the balcony recess at that bay (Figure 49).

Figure 48. (Left) The large deck constructed off the rear of the gift shop in 2016. (NPS)

Figure 49. (Right) Rear view of the Lodge showing the rear addition and changes to the fenestration patterns from original construction. (NPS)



- The original built-ins of the lobby have been removed and the room squared off.
- Rear fenestration patterns of the Lodge building have generally been revised. Original guest room doors and windows have been changed to three-leaf sliding glass doors. Large fixed windows of the original suite above the lobby have been changed to smaller punched openings and a sliding glass door (Figure 49).
- Original louvers have been removed at all locations at both the Restaurant and Lodge buildings. The Restaurant's louvers have generally been replaced with metal-clad windows; the Lodge's louver areas are now fixed panels and small sliding metal-framed windows (Figures 50 and 51).

Figure 50. (Left) Typical bay at rear of gift shop. Low ventilating windows were originally fixed wooden louvers with operable panels at interior. (NPS)

Figure 51. (Right) Typical guest door at Lodge. Fixed wooden louvers originally occupied the space to the right of the door, with operable panels inside. (NPS)



PISGAH INN UNIT B (CRIS ID 1173052)



Figure 52. Building enclosure at utility rooms at south corner of motel Unit B. (NPS)

Differences between construction documents and original construction:

- The utility rooms at the south corner appear to have been built as part of the original construction, enclosing part of the wider balconies for the southernmost rooms that were indicated in the drawings.

Alterations to character-defining features and spaces:

- Wooden louvers to the sides of the entry doors to each guest room have been replaced by fixed panels and a sliding metal-framed window (Figure 55).
- Guest room entry doors have been replaced, though with similar flush doors.
- On the entry side, column covers at the wall of the building have been replaced with thin stone on the upper level (Figure 55).
- At the balcony side of the building, the typical fenestration pattern has

Figure 53. (Left) Enlarged elevation of typical bay, north side of Unit B. Foy & Lee Architects, May 1964. (NPS TIC #BLRI-8001-B-Z3)

Figure 54. (Right) Enlarged elevation of typical bay, south side of Unit B. Foy & Lee Architects, May 1964. (NPS TIC #BLRI-8001-B-Z3)

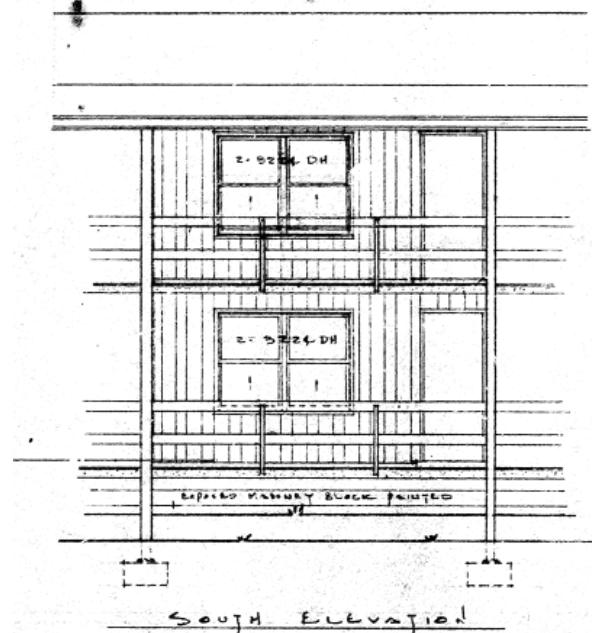
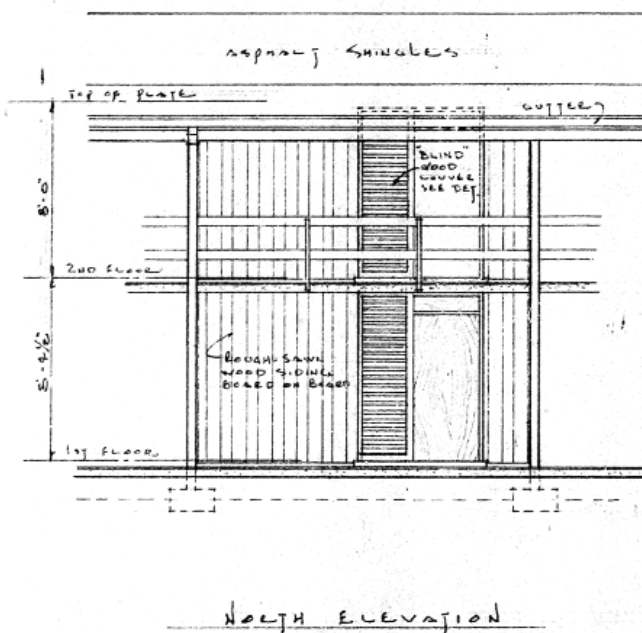




Figure 55. (Left) Typical bay at north side of Unit B. (NPS)

Figure 56. (Right) Most bays on the south side of Unit B still essentially match the original design, but the center bays of the lower level have been modified with large sliding glass doors. (NPS)

been replaced with three-leaf sliding glass doors at the center bays of the lower level (Figure 56).

- It was noted early on in the buildings' use that the wide top railing boards of the balconies interfered with views when in a seated position. These were modified (Figure 57).
- The June 1965 color proposal by Foy & Lee Architects was specifically for use on motel Unit B, but the same colors likely were also used on the Restaurant and Lodge buildings. Original approved colors: main body color - light gray; wood louver panels - light brown; the center six doors on each level - dark olive; the remaining doors - light olive; gutter, fascia, steel columns, and deck supports - charcoal; wood railings - tan (see Figure 35). In 2024, the only extant color that approximates the original design is the light gray body color.



Figure 57. Modifications to top rails at the balcony side of Unit B. (NPS)

PISGAH INN UNIT C (CRIS ID 1173053)

Differences between construction documents and original construction:

- The construction documents indicate a 26-room motel building, to match the size of Unit B. Before construction began, the room count was reduced to 20 and the length of the building reduced accordingly.

Alterations to character-defining features and spaces:

- The building was largely gutted and renovated in 2008, work that included rebuilding the front walkways, replacement of all exterior doors and windows, replacement of exterior cladding, and replacement of balcony and walkway railings. The essential form and structure of the building remained mostly unchanged.

Figure 58. Enlarged elevations of typical south and north bays at Unit C. Foy & Lee Architects, April 1969. (NPS TIC #BLRI-70000-A)

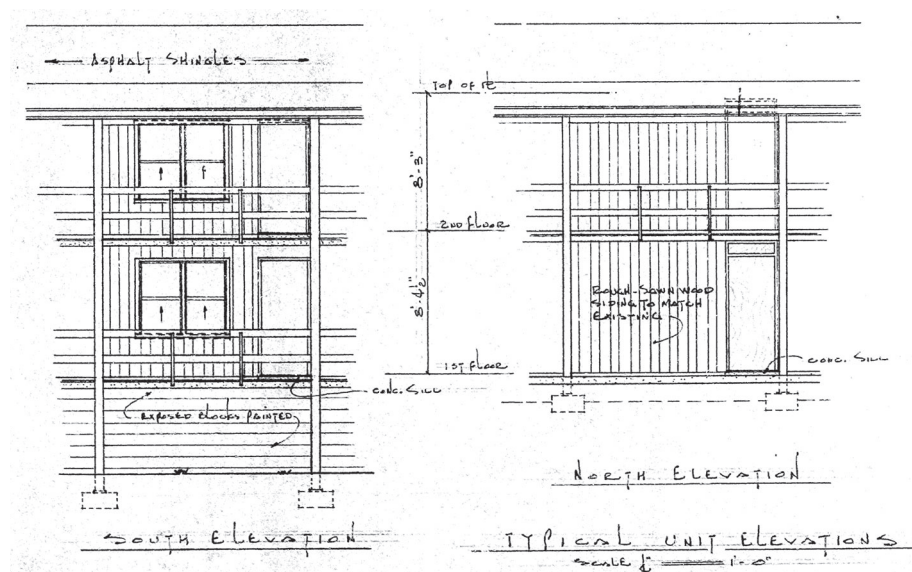
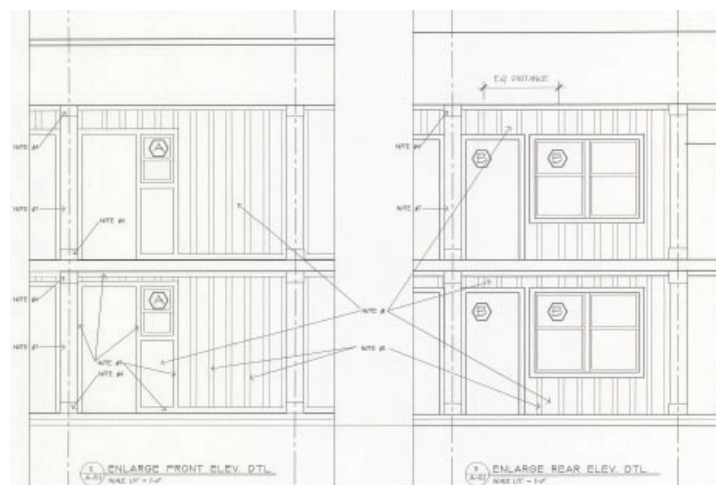


Figure 59. Enlarged elevations of typical north and south bays at Unit C as renovated. Mountain Design, Architects-Planners, March 2008. (Blue Ridge Parkway)



- The most notable exterior change to Unit C that was made during the 2008 renovations was the reconstruction of the stairs on the front of the building, which gained new timber gabled roofs (Figure 60).



Figure 60. (Left) One of two replacement stairs at motel Unit C. (NPS)

Figure 61. (Right) Typical guest entrance configuration after the 2008 renovations. (NPS)

- Motel Unit C did not feature wood ventilating wood louvers in its original design as the other buildings did (see Figure 58). The renovated guest room entrances added a small double-hung window beside each door, and the original flush doors were replaced with metal six-panel doors (Figure 61).
- The replaced railings do not replicate the original design (Figure 62).



Figure 62. The replaced railings at Unit C are weather-resistant unpainted wood (Brazilian walnut) and stainless steel cable, as shown in this image of a typical bay on the balcony side of the building. (NPS)

MT. PISGAH COUNTRY STORE (CRIS ID 1173054)

Differences between construction documents and original construction:

Figure 63. (Top) Floor plan of Country Store renovations, with building additions shaded red. Foy & Lee Architects, October 1990. (NPS TIC #BLRI-70017)

Figure 64. (Bottom) Elevations of Country Store renovations, showing how little of the original exterior remained unchanged. Foy & Lee Architects, October 1990. (NPS TIC #BLRI-70017)

- Original construction documents have not been located.

Alterations to character-defining features and spaces:

- More than the other buildings, the Country Store, originally built as a gas station, met the goal of being as inconspicuous on its site as possible. Renovations in 1991 expanded the building on three sides, but retained the same overall massing, roof form, finish materials, and colors.

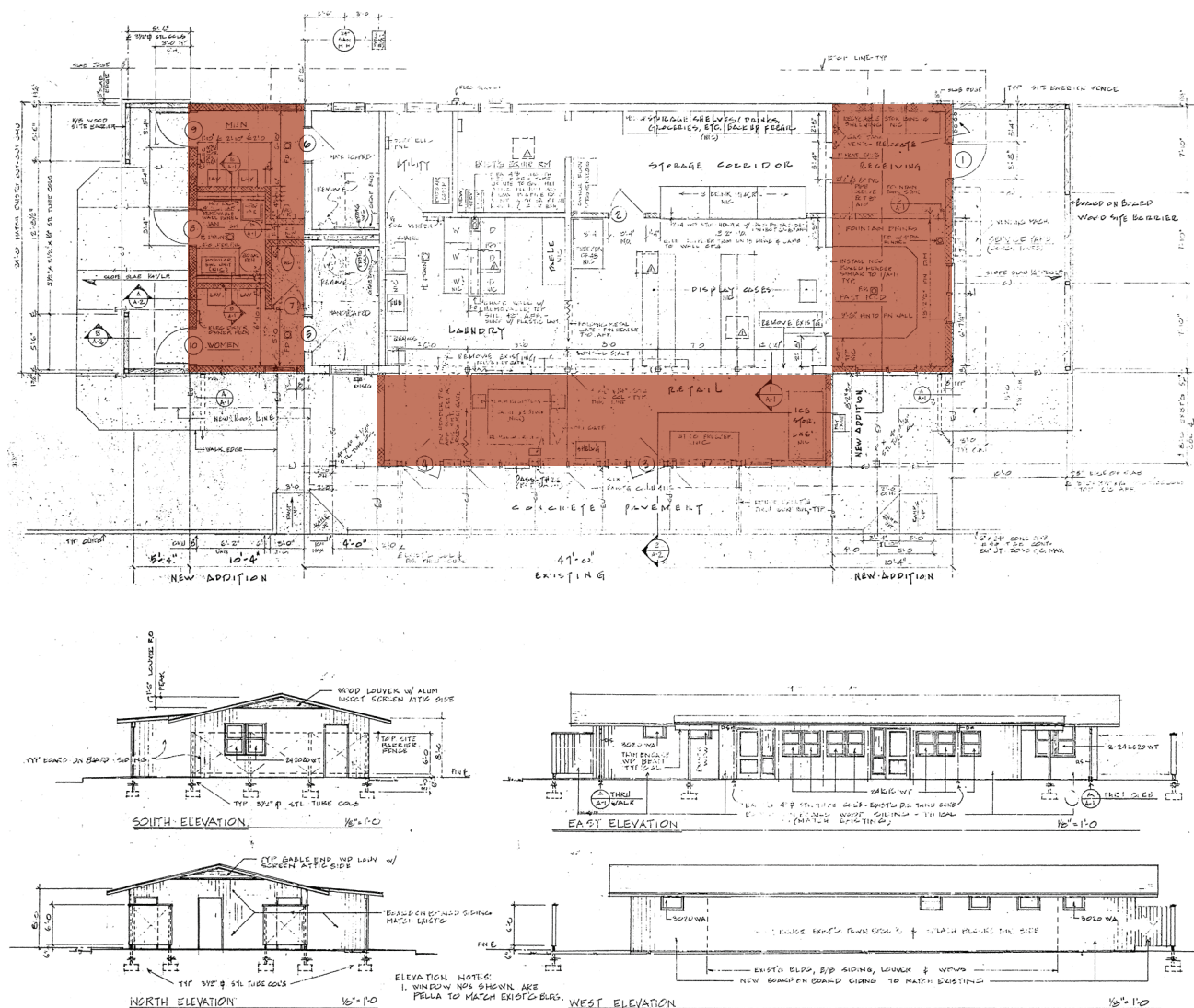




Figure 65. View from the northeast of Mt. Pisgah Gas Station in its original configuration, August 1974. Photographed by C. E. Westveer. (Blue Ridge Parkway Museum Collection, BLRI 11464, negative #3609)



Figure 66. View from the southeast of Mt. Pisgah Country Store, May 2004. At the time of the 2024 photography, the site was being closed for the season and this building was already boarded up. This view shows its normal appearance in season. (Blue Ridge Parkway)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SOURCES

“\$50,000 Being Raised to Promote Plans to Secure Smoky Mountain National Park.” *Appalachian Journal* 18, no. 6-7 (June-July 1925).

Aandahl, Fred G. to Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. Washington, DC, Department of the Interior, 26 October 1956. RG 3, Series 9, Box 111, Folder 2
“Correspondence/History/Memorandum 1944, 1952, 1956, 1960, 1963, 1979, 1986.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Abbott, Stanley W. “Annual Report of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Roanoke, Virginia, to the Director, National Park Service.” National Park Service, 30 June 1940.

Abbott, Stanley W. “Appalachian National Parkway from Shenandoah National Park to Great Smoky Mountains National Park: Report on Recreation and Service Areas, Type and Scope of Development Proposed.” Salem, VA: National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design, 15 December 1934.

Abbott, Stanley W. “The Blue Ridge Parkway.” *The Regional Review* 3, No. 1 (July 1939), 3-6.

Abbott, Stanley W. “Blue Ridge Parkway: Historical Report to the Chief Architect, Branch of Plans and Design, for the Years 1934, 1935, and 1936 by the Resident Landscape Architect, Roanoke, Virginia.” Salem, VA: National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design, 10 January 1937.

Abbott, Stanley W. “Confidential Memorandum for Regional Director Taylor,” 3 December, 1943. RG 5, Series 38, Box 48, Folder 5. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Abbott, Stanley W. “Memorandum for Project and Camp Superintendents,” 16 April 1940. RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 23. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Abbott, Stanley W. Oral History Interview by S. Herbert Evison, Summer 1958. Audio, Tape No. 55. Transcribed by S. Herbert Evison, 1974. NPS Harpers Ferry Center, NPS Oral History Collection (HFCA 1817).

Abbuehl, Edward H. "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway." Paper prepared for the Ranger's Conference, 1948.

Abbuehl, Edward H. "Fifty Years Under Construction." Typed manuscript, 1985. RG 5, Series 38, Box 1, Folder 14. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Abbuehl, Edward H. "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Blue Ridge Parkway, Volume 1, Chapter 5, Design Analysis, Mount Pisgah," May 1961. RG 79, NPS Southeast Region, Richmond VA, Box 9 "Master Plans 1957-1961," Folder "BLRI Master Plan 1960-61." NARA Mid-Atlantic Region, Philadelphia.

Abbuehl, Edward H. "A Road Built for Pleasure," *Landscape Architecture* 51, No. 4, July 1961, 232-237.

Abbuehl, Edward H. Ed Abbuehl to Bruce Gregory, 20 December 1963. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1963." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Allen, William C. *The Annals of Haywood County, North Carolina, 1808-1935*. Spartanburg, SC: Reprint Company Publishers, 1977.

Bass, Jacqueline, Susan Cianci Salvatore, and Ian Firth. "National Historic Landmark Nomination for Blue Ridge Parkway Historic District." Washington, DC: National Park Service National Historic Landmarks Program, 2017.

Bayliss, Dudley C. "Parkway Development Under the National Park Service." *Parks and Recreation* XX (February 1937), 255-259.

Bayliss, Dudley C. *Planning Our National Park Roads and Our National Parkways*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1957.

Bridger, Beverly. *Great Camp Sagamore*. Charleston: The History Press, 2012.

- “Brief Description of the Recreation Areas Adjacent to the Parkway, to Accompany the Master Plan Thereof, Drawn June 3, 1936.” Salem, VA: National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design, 1936.
- Cabot, John B. “Architecture in Parks, Only Changes in Expression.” *Parks and Recreation* 42, No. 4, April 1959.
- Cabot, John B. Bill Cabot to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, “WASO Directive, Blue Ridge Architecture,” 8 February 1960. RG 79, Box 2, Folder C, “General Correspondence, EODC, 1954-62.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Carr, Ethan, Elaine Jackson-Retondo, Len Warner, Rodd L. Wheaton, John D. Feinberg, and Carly M. Piccarello, ed. “National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources.” Santa Fe: National Park Service Intermountain Regional Office, 2015.
- Chief of Design and Construction. Chief of Design and Construction, EODC, to Director, NPS, 1 November 1954. “Memo: Blue Ridge Parkway Concession Development.” RG 3, Series 12, Box 28, Folder 3. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Chief of Concessions. Chief of Concessions, NPS Southeast Region, to Regional Director, NPS Southeast Region, 1 July 1962. RG3, Series 12, Box 28, “Contracts & Permits – General, 1962.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Connell, A.J. A. J. Connell to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 24 January 1964. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, “Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1964.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Cox, Elbert. Elbert Cox, Regional Director, to Director, National Park Service, 20 February 1964. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, “Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1964.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Davis, Hattie Caldwell. *Reflections of Cataloochee Valley and its Vanished People in the Great Smoky Mountains*. Maggie Valley, NC: Self-published, 1999.

- Davis, John H. John H. Davis, Assistant Superintendent, to Granville Liles, Superintendent, 13 November 1968. RG 3, Series 12, Box 59, "Contracts and Permits – Pisgah Inn, 1968." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Demaray, A. E. A. E. Demaray to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, "Rockfish Valley Contact Station, Section 1B, Blue Ridge," 8 December 1950. RG 5, Series 29, Box 35, Folder 6. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Downer, Jay and Gilmore D. Clarke. "Notes on Shenandoah – Blue Ridge – Great Smoky Mountain Parkway." Salem, VA: National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design, 27 August 1940.
- Duls, Louisa DeSaussure. *The Story of Little Switzerland*. Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1982.
- Eden, James M. James M. Eden, Acting Superintendent, "Annual Narrative Report for Fiscal Year 1966 of Blue Ridge Parkway Activities for Director, NPS," 14 June 1966. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Eden, James M. James M. Eden, Acting Superintendent, to W. T. Doggett, Foy and Lee Associates, 17 June 1965. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1965-1967. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Elliott, William. *Speech of Hon. William Elliott of South Carolina in the House of Representatives, May 14, 1902*. Washington, DC: Southern Appalachian Forest Reserve, 1902.
- Esperdy, Gabrielle. *Merritt Parkway: HAER Report No. CT-63*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, Historic American Engineering Record, 1992.
- Everhardt, Gary E. Gary E. Everhardt, Superintendent, to J. Aaron Prevost, 11 May 1979. RG 3, Series 8, Box 23, "Concessions Administration, 1979." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Everhardt, Gary E. Gary E. Everhardt, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, "Section 106 Case Report," 23 October 1986. RG 3, Series 9, Box 111, Folder 2. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Everhardt, Gary E. Gary Everhardt, Superintendent, to William S. Price Jr., Director, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 3 September 1986. RG 3, Series 9, Box 111, Folder 2. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Evison, S. Herbert. Introduction to 1958 oral history interview with Stanley W. Abbott, 1974.

“‘Father of Parkway’ Weems Dies.” *The Roanoke Times* (7 May 1993).

Firth, Ian. “Historical Significance of the Blue Ridge Parkway.” Appalachian Cultural Resources Workshop Papers. National Park Service, n.d. https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/sero/appalachian/sec2.htm.

Forest History Society. “Passing the Weeks Act.” Accessed 8 November 2024. <https://foresthistor.org/research-explore/us-forest-service-history/policy-and-law/the-weeks-act/passing-weeks-act/>.

Frome, Michael. *Strangers in High Places*. New York: Doubleday, 1966.

Fuller, Raymond. “Old-Time American Stock.” *The Mentor* (Springfield, OH), August 1928, 7.

Givens, Peter Shelburne. “Cataloochee and the Establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.” PhD diss., Western Carolina University, 1978.

Hall, Robert G. Robert G. Hall, Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge, 20 September 1963. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, “Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1963.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Hoffman, Carl K. Carl K. Hoffman to George B. Hartzog Jr., Director, National Park Service, 2 July 1968. RG 3, Series 12, Box 96, “Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1968.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

The Jaeger Company. *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Mount Pisgah, Blue Ridge Parkway – Pisgah District*. Atlanta: National Park Service, 1998.

The Jaeger Company. *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Pisgah Inn, Blue Ridge Parkway – Pisgah District*. Atlanta: National Park Service, 2002.

Johnson, John N. “Detailed Outline of the Proposed Financing of Pisgah Inn, Inc.,” 28 Jul 1962. RG 3, Series 16, Box 97, “Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1976-1977.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Johnson, John N. John N. Johnson, President, to Granville B. Liles, Superintendent, 8 October 1968. RG 3, Series 12, Box 59, “Contracts and Permits – Pisgah Inn, 1968.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Johnson, John N. John N. Johnson to Granville Liles, Superintendent, 6 July 1970. RG 3 Series 16, Box 97, “Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1970.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Johnson, John N. John N. Johnson, President, Pisgah Inn Inc., to Sam Weems, Superintendent, 26 August 1966. RG 3, Series 12, Box 59, “Contracts and Permits – Pisgah Inn, 1966.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Jolley, Harley E. *The Blue Ridge Parkway*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969.

Kephart, Horace. *Our Southern Highlanders*. New York: Outing Publishing Co., 1913.

Lambert, Darwin. *Administrative History, Shenandoah National Park, 1924-1976*. Luray, VA: National Park Service, 1976.

Lee, Tai Y. Tai Y. Lee to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, “Re: Pisgah Inn,” 23 December 1963. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, “Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1963.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Liles, Granville B. Granville B. Liles, Superintendent, to Director, Eastern Service Center, 16 September 1970. RG 3, Series 16, Box 97, “Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1970.” Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Liles, Granville B. Granville B. Liles, Superintendent, to John N. Johnson, 14 November 1968. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1968." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

MacDonald, Thomas A. and A. E. Demaray. "Parkways of the Future: A Radio Discussion between Mr. MacDonald, Chief of the United States Bureau of Public Roads, and Mr. Demaray, Associate Director of the National Park Service." Transcript of an NBC radio broadcast, 13 April 1935. In *Parkways: A Manual of the Revised Requirements, Instructions and Information Relating to National Parkways for Use in the National Park Service*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1938.

Marshall, Charles S. Acting Regional Director, Southeast Region, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge, 11 February 1969. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1969." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

McLeod, Scott. "Foy's Influence Will Endure." *Smoky Mountain News*, 18 December 2007.

Medford, W. Clark. *The Middle History of Haywood County*. Asheville: Miller Printing Co., 1968.

Morgan, Joe L. "Vanderbilt, George Washington," in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, ed. William S. Powell. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

National Parks Association. *Picture News of Recreational America*. October 1924. Pamphlet. Western Carolina University, Southern Appalachian Digital Collections.

National Park Service. "The Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia and North Carolina, Developed Areas." June 1952. RG 7, Series 58, Box 85, Sheet 39: Drawing no. PKY-BR GEN-2386 C. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission. "Report on the Question of Construction of Concession Facilities on the Blue Ridge Parkway." 1957. RG 1, Series 28, Box 23, Folder 11. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

North Carolina Parks Commission. *Great Smoky Mountains*.

Asheville, 1925. Pamphlet. Western Carolina University,
Southern Appalachian Digital Collections.

O'Connell, Thomas J. Thomas J. O'Connell to Gary Everhardt, Superintendent,
21 September 1979. RG 3, Series 16, Box 97, "Buildings and Other
Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1979." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Olausen, Stephen, Melissa J. Andrade, Jill Miller, Jill Chin, Jacqueline
Bass, Susan Cianci Salvatore, and Ian Firth. *National Historic
Landmark Nomination: Blue Ridge Parkway*. National Park
Service, National Historic Landmarks Program, 2024.

Our Heritage: A Plan for Its Protection and Use – Mission 66.
Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1956.

Parkway Inn, Inc. "Outline," 1982. RG 3, Series 12, Box 62, "Contracts and
Permits – Pisgah Inn, 1982." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Pless, Page. "Pisgah National Forest Inn: An Historical Review."
Typed manuscript, 27 April 1982. RG 3, Series 16,
Box 97, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn,
1982. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL). *Great Smoky Mountains National
Park Historic Resource Study*. Atlanta: National Park Service, 2015.

Public Law No. 848. 74th Congress, Sess. II, Chs. 883, 884. 30 June 1936.

Quin, Richard. *Blue Ridge Parkway: HAER Report No. NC-42*. Washington, DC:
National Park Service, Historic American Engineering Record, 1997.

"SBA Form 529." RG 3, Series 12, Box 58, "Contracts & Permits – Pisgah
Inn, 1965." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Smith, Robert E. Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction,
to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 8 January 1964. RG
3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah
Inn, 1963." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Spencer, Marci. *Pisgah Inn*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2020.

- Starnes, Richard D. "Tourism, Landscape, and History in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park," in *Destination Dixie: Tourism and Southern History*, ed. Karen L. Cox. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012.
- Stricklin, Howard B. Howard B. Stricklin, Acting Superintendent, to Regional Director, Region One, "Master Plan, Mount Pisgah Development, Blue Ridge Parkway," 5 July 1961. RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 22. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Suzanne Turner Associates. *Mt. Pisgah, Blue Ridge Parkway: A Cultural Landscape Report*. Atlanta: National Park Service, 2017.
- Tolson, Hillory A. Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director, National Park Service, to Byrd, 28 June 1946. RG 79, Central Classified Files, National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway File, National Archives.
- Tooman, L. Alex. "The Evolving Economic Impact of Tourism on the Greater Smoky Mountain Region of East Tennessee and Western North Carolina." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 1995.
- U.S. Department of the Interior. "Final Report of the Southern Appalachian National Park Commission to the Secretary of the Interior." Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 30 June 1931.
- U.S. Department of the Interior. "Memorandum for the Press," 12 November 1934. Getty Browning Collection, Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- U.S. Department of the Interior. "Parkways Defined." Memorandum from U.S. Department of the Interior to the National Park Service, 1 March 1944.
- Vint, Thomas C. Thomas C. Vint to Director, National Park Service, 8 June 1934. In "Blue Ridge Parkway Routing and Correspondence Reports," 1933 ff, Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Warner, Charles Dudley. *On Horseback: A Tour of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1888.

Weems, Sam P. "1961 Annual Report of the Blue Ridge Parkway Activities, for Director, National Park Service." Roanoke: Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Weems, Sam P. "Superintendent's Annual Report." Roanoke: Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service, 1956.

Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, "Master Plan for Mount Pisgah – Blue Ridge Parkway," 27 January 1959. RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 18. Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to John N. Johnson, 14 August 1964. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1964." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to John N. Johnson, President, Pisgah Inn Inc., 13 September 1966. RG 3, Series 12, Box 59, "Contracts and Permits – Pisgah Inn, 1966." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to John N. Johnson, President, Pisgah Inn Inc., 16 September 1966. RG 3, Series 12, Box 59, "Contracts and Permits – Pisgah Inn, 1966." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Leslie Kirschner, Pisgah Inn Inc. 1 April 1963. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1963." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 3 December 1963. RG 3, Series 12, Box 28, "Contracts and Permits – General, 1963." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 7 January 1964. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1963." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.

- Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 17 February 1964. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1964." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 1 August 1966. RG 3, Series 12, Box 59, "Contracts and Permits – Pisgah Inn, 1966." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Robert G. Hall, Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, 15 August 1963. RG 3, Series 16, Box 96, "Buildings and Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1963." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Weems, Sam P. Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Thomas F. Flynn, Chief, Division of Concessions Management, 8 March 1965. RG 3, Series 12, Box 58, "Contracts & Permits – Pisgah Inn, 1965." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Wells Funeral Home. "Obituary: Henry Foy III." Accessed 23 October 2024. <https://wellsfuneralhome.com/obituaries/henry-foyii>.
- Wirth, Conrad L. *Parks, Politics and the People*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980.
- Wright, F. Robert. F. R. Wright to Granville B. Liles, 16 July 1971. RG 3, Series 16, Box 97, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1971-1972." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives, Asheville.
- Wyatt, Richard G. Richard G. Wyatt, Concessions Analyst, to Chief of Maintenance, 4 February 1983. RG 3, Series 16, Box 97, "Buildings and Other Facilities – Pisgah Inn, 1983." Blue Ridge Parkway Archives. Asheville.