



## Built Environmental Characteristics Report

# Cameron Village

### Background

In May 2019, residents of the Cameron Village neighborhood submitted a petition to City Council requesting consideration for a neighborhood built environmental characteristics study. This analysis is the first step in the potential creation of a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCOD). NCODs are an extra layer of zoning that are used to alter the dimensional standards of existing zoning in a particular neighborhood. Planning staff has completed an analysis of the built characteristics requested by the Cameron Village NCOD petition which include lot size, lot width, building setback, building height, and distance between buildings.

To conduct this analysis staff performed deed research including the review of the original subdivision maps that created the Cameron Village neighborhood in the 1950s. This research revealed that the Cameron Village neighborhood comprises 200 recorded lots, the dimensional boundaries of real property. In most instances, the recorded lot configuration is different than the deeded property, which is the extent of property that an individual owns. Deeded property is the basis for tax parcels, which is the parcel displayed in iMaps and is likely the how most owners identify their property. Most of the deeded property in the study area include multiple recorded lots.

The results of the built environmental characteristics study reflect the dimensional measurements of recorded lots. Zoning regulates the dimensional standards of recorded lots, not deeded tax parcels.



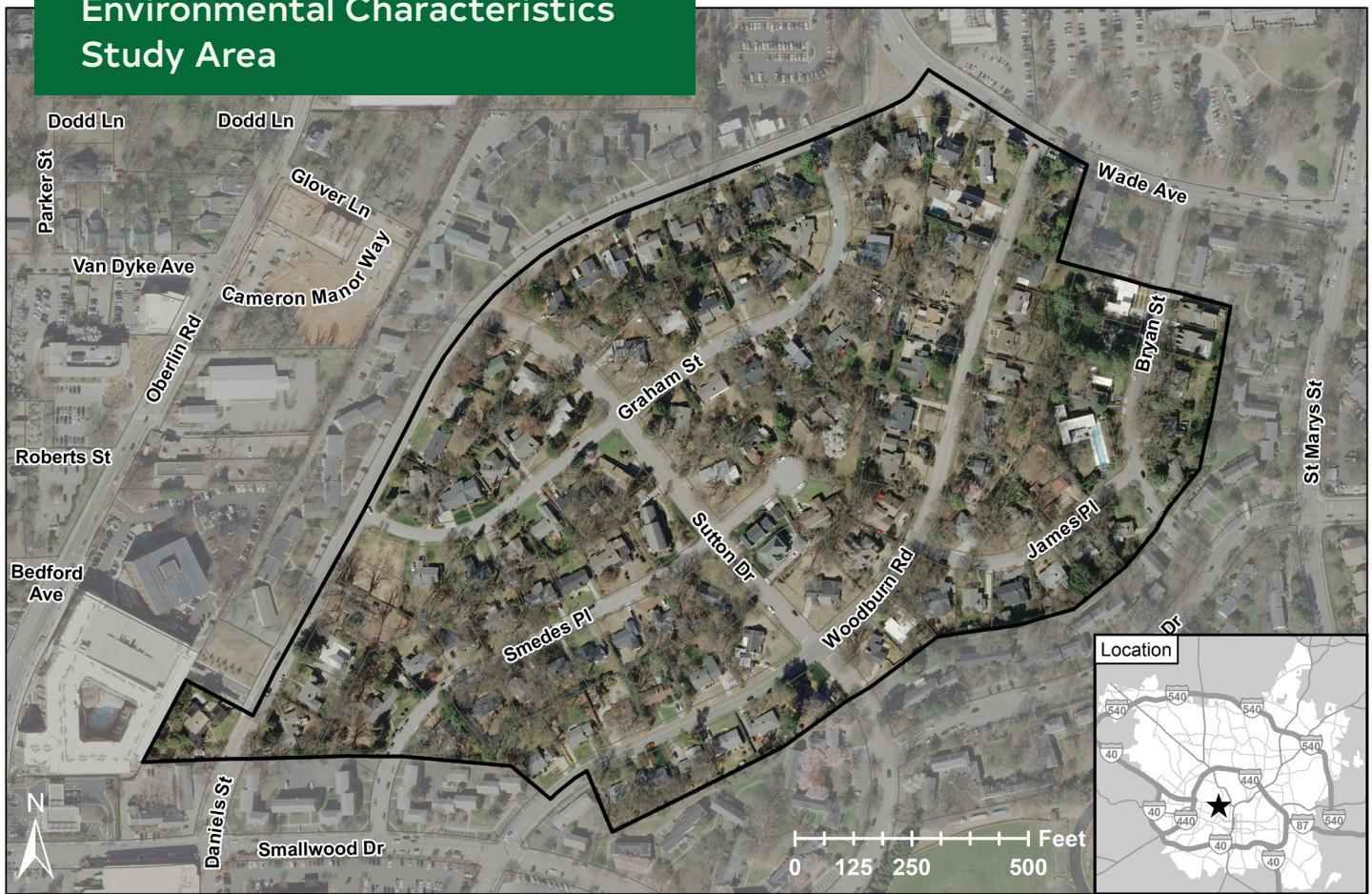
## Study Area Overview

The larger Cameron Village area is located inside the I-440 Beltline in an area bounded by Wade Avenue to the north, St Mary's Street to the east, Clark Avenue to the South, and Oberlin Road to the west. The area comprises a mix of residential and commercial uses including apartments and condominiums, offices, restaurants and the Cameron Village shopping center. The area for the Cameron Village built environmental characteristics study as identified in the petition to City Council is a smaller subsection of Cameron Village: a 45-acre neighborhood comprising 120 detached houses. The only use in the study area is residential and all but 15 of the detached houses were constructed during the 1950s and 60s. There are no vacant properties within the study area.

The properties in the study area front on the following streets (see Figure 1):

- Bryan Street
- Daniels Street
- Graham Street
- James Place
- Smedes Place
- Sutton Drive
- Wade Avenue
- Woodburn Road

**Figure 1, Cameron Village Built Environmental Characteristics Study Area**



## Analysis

City code directs staff to assess recorded lots within the study area for each of the built characteristics requested by the petitioner. Specifically, the code looks to identify the "specific built environmental characteristics and regulations that reflect the predominant representation of the lots within the neighborhood study area." In this context, the code defines "predominant" as the 75th percentile, or the metric for each characteristic that can be met by 75 percent of lots in the study area.

Using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping tools and recorded subdivision maps, staff calculated the specific characteristics—lot size, lot width, building setback, and distance between buildings—that were requested in the petition.

Staff also conducted a physical survey of building height using a laser guided Rangefinder. Figure 2 summarizes the predominant values for these built characteristics and provides other relevant quantifiable information.

Given the difference between the recorded lot areas and the deeded property areas, the predominant character for both have been provided below. While creating an NCOD based on the predominant character of the deeded property is not possible, understanding the values together is helpful in recognizing the difference between how the Cameron Village neighborhood physically appears and how the lots in the neighborhood are recorded.

**Figure 2. Built Environmental Characteristics Summary**

Characteristic	75th Percentile of 200 Recorded Lots	75th Percentile of 120 Deeded Properties	Average	Median	Smallest Value	Largest Value
<b>Lot Size Square</b> Feet Acres	5,159 0.12	10,543 0.24	7,942 0.18	5,982 0.14	4,003 0.06	35,672 0.82
<b>Lot Width (ft)</b> Interior Corner	40 113.5	78 112	53.2 124	40 124.15	40 65	158 191
<b>Front Setback (ft)</b>	28.7	28.7	34.8	33	10.7	112.6
<b>Side Setback (ft)</b>	9	9	16.4	14	0	104.8
<b>Sum of Side Setback (ft)</b>	20.8	20	32.8	28	7	115
<b>Rear Setback (ft)</b>	29.5	25.6	44	41	0	92.6
<b>Building Height (ft)</b>	18	18	18.2	17	11	37
<b>Building Separation (ft)</b>	18	18	26	23	10	111

## Impacts

The configuration of recorded lots in the neighborhood has impacted the results of the study significantly. Zoning regulations provide standards for lot dimensions and building setbacks based on the boundaries of recorded lots, not deeded property. The boundaries of the recorded lots can only be changed if they are legally recombined and recorded with Wake County. In the case of the Cameron Village Neighborhood, while there are 120 detached houses built today, the study

area comprises 200 recorded lots. Most of these recorded lots are 40 feet wide. The zoning designation for the neighborhood is Residential-6 (R-6), which has a minimum lot width of 60 feet. Most of the recorded lots within the Cameron Village neighborhood are considered nonconforming lots of record because they are substandard to the existing R-6 zoning in terms of lot width. This relationship is also true of lot size.

The Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) recognizes the right to build a detached house on a recorded lot of record in UDO Section 10.3.5. Nonconforming Lots of Record. This section states that in any zoning district where a detached house is permitted, a detached house may be built on a nonconforming recorded lot so long as the lot was conforming when it was created and that new structures conform with the dimensional standards of zoning except lot width and lot size.

Deed research conducted for the potential Cameron Village NCOD included review of the protective covenants for the neighborhood originally recorded in February 1950 and revised in January 1951. Article 3 of the protective covenants state that a "building site" for a house in the Cameron Village neighborhood must comprise at least two 40-foot wide recorded lots, or some combination of recorded lots that yields at least an 80-feet of width. While the UDO recognizes the recorded lots of 40-foot width as buildable, the privately recorded covenants do not. The covenant standards are more restrictive than the UDO regulation enforced by the city and can only be enforced by private parties – the property owners of the Cameron Village neighborhood.

Creating any new zoning regulation or NCOD that conflicts with UDO Section 10.3.5. Nonconforming Lots of Record is undesirable and rendering a recorded lot of record unbuildable is not in the public interest. The characteristics identified by petition for the neighborhood study that would create conflict are lot size, lot width, side setback, and building separation. These characteristics cannot be regulated by an NCOD for the Cameron Village neighborhood.

However, NCODs can regulate other built characteristics that may address neighborhood concern. The remaining characteristics – building height, front setback, and rear setback - analyzed in the study otherwise typify the built character of the Cameron Village neighborhood. While the range of building height, front setback, and rear setback is large, the fact that the predominant character, average, and median values have a small range signifies that these characteristics contribute to the cohesion of the built character of the neighborhood.

Considering the predominant built character of the neighborhood differs from the minimum standards under the existing Residential-6 (R-6) zoning district, there is an opportunity for a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District that would reinforce the built character of the neighborhood (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Characteristics to be considered for NCOD**

Characteristic	Existing R-6 Zoning minimums	Predominant Character 75th Percentile	Average	Median	Smallest Value	Largest Value
Front Setback (ft)	10	28.7	34.8	33	10.7	112.6
Rear Setback (ft)	20	29.5	44	41	0	92.6
Building Height (ft)	40 maximum	18	18.2	17	11	37

## Next Steps

Following the neighborhood meeting on July 25, 2019, city staff will present the results of the study and neighborhood meeting summary to City Council. Council will then decide whether to authorize a text change to the UDO to create a new Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District for the Cameron Village neighborhood.

This text change should only include characteristics that do not create internal conflict in the UDO: building height, front setback, and rear setback. If the text change is approved, property owners will then be able to petition for a rezoning to apply NCOD to the Cameron Village neighborhood.