

The Progress

Morrisville & Preston

Center replacing old farm

By Ron Page

At least 16 stores and businesses will soon cover the seven-and-a-half-acre field at the northeast corner of High House and Maynard Roads, replacing what for years had been a family farm with bountiful 300-foot rows of corn, beans, tomatoes and other garden vegetables.

Owners Jesse and Donna Sorrell of Cary remember well how it used to be. Sorrell, who is developing Waterford shopping center, says the variety of businesses will be developed on what was fertile farmland planted by his family after his grandfather took ownership of the land in the early 1960s. It is opposite Maynard Crossings, the new shopping center anchored by a Kroger Superstore.

Sorrell is in the property management business today, and while his plans for the land include a drug store, restaurant, medical facilities, dry cleaners, battery and auto lube businesses among others, he will always remember working in the fields when his grandfather, Harold Hopkins, owned the property and built a 2,000-square-foot ranch as the new family home.

"My grandparents lived on Urban Drive in Raleigh, and he worked with the railroad and was a carpenter," Sorrell explains. "He built the ranch on the corner of Maynard and High House with his own hands, including a full basement, but when it was finished, his wife said: 'I'm not moving way out in the country. I want to be with my friends here in Raleigh.'"

So Sorrell said his grandfather rented the place. "If you recall, that is the ranch which has been moved across the road to another location on High House," he explained.

Today the site is marked by a simple green and white sign noting the work is being done by Oaks Construction of Preston. Max Oaks, company president, says four freestanding buildings will be erected, floor pads for which have been finished. Two already have vertical walls in place.

Sorrell says the project is one in which he holds a special interest. He recalls working in the fields, planting and weeding the rows of vegetables, and fishing in the acre-and-a-half pond that used to be on the site. "It was stocked with some of the best fish around," Sorrell says, "especially bass. The total area was originally 8 1/2 acres, but the road right-of-way cut it down to 7 1/2."

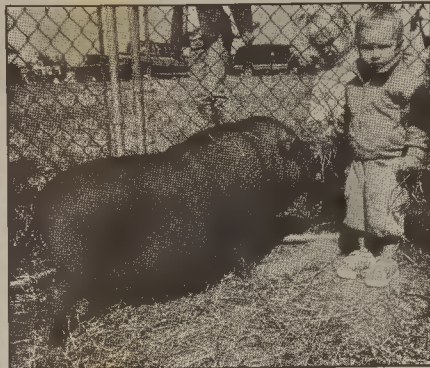
"It was not farmed to sell the vegetables," he says. "They were not for sale, but were grown for family members to use, to put in the freezer for winter. One thing I did sell, though, was okra. Used to put them in paper bags and sell them for 50 cents."

When his grandfather died about ten years ago, Sorrell bought the

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OLE TIMEY FUN

Carpenter rolls out the hay, hosts Harvest Day. Antique tractors, farm animals amuse visitors - all to raise money for a scholarly cause.



A BIT OF HISTORY—David Brower of Wake Forest, and son, Mark, age 8, were among the exhibitors at Harvest Day. Brower used the miniature steam-driven hay baler he constructed last year to demonstrate hay baling as it was done at

the turn of the century. A pot belly pig in a petting zoo attracted the attention of 20-month-old Paige Pfannenstiel of Holly Springs. And James Powers, one of the event's organizers, cooked up a pot of spicy jambalaya.

By Ron Page

With food like steaming homemade jambalaya, barbecue, beans, hot dogs and homemade biscuits, and a setting nestled by a pond among rolling farm fields along Carpenter-Morrisville Road, the first Carpenter Ole Time Harvest Day attracted more than 500 visitors and made one thing bright and clear as the day itself.

"This will be an annual event," said Bruce Pease, a

member of the board of directors of the Carpenter Ruritan Club which sponsored the day-long event on Oct. 12.

"It was great," said one man, whose son rode one of the ponies as well as a miniature steam tractor. "The kids loved it and the machinery is really fascinating," said Clyde Granger of Garner. "This is a beautiful place to hold it. I hope they do it again next year."

Proceeds from the \$3 admission fees will go toward the club's scholarship program,

which offers two scholarships to local students. The club sponsors various community service activities, including two fish fries during the year, but this was the first time the Ole Time Harvest Day was held. The setting was on land owned by Betty Lou Ferrell and her son, David, who is known for his refurbished tractors which he displays at other such events around the country.

While antique and miniature machinery, including a wide ar-

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Homes greeted eagerly

Industrial zoning turning residential

By Ron Page

A landscape characterized by trucking terminals and industrial and office complexes is on the verge of a dramatic change in Morrisville.

New residential neighborhoods, ranging from affordable single- and multi-family dwellings to upscale houses are either being built or proposed for various sections of the community. Necessary zoning changes are being met with positive rulings by the town's Planning and Zoning Board, among them the recent approval for rezoning of some 248 acres north of Koppers Road and west of Davis Drive from industrial management to residential. The property owners indicate plans for a mix of affordable housing, single family property to townhouses and/or apartments.

"We have people interested in developing the property already," said Tim Clancy, whose firm, Clancy & Theys Construction Co. of Raleigh, is part owner of the property.

Meanwhile, work is progressing at the sites of two new residential neighborhoods along Crabtree Crossing Parkway in Morrisville. Homes will be priced at \$240,000 and up.

The new neighborhoods, to be known as Hampton at Preston and Preston Grande, will offer a total of 117 wooded homesites near Morrisville Parkway, in the proximity of Prestonwood Country Club's fairways. The land for each development was purchased from the Preston Development Company.

A spring opening is targeted for the smaller development, Hampton at Preston, a horseshoe-styled cluster of 18 homes set on 7,000- and 10,000-square-foot lots. It is being developed by Impact Design/Building of Cary, a company headed by Colen E. Davidson Jr. Final approval of the Hampton site plans has been given by Morrisville Commissioners.

Meanwhile, ground is being cleared for Preston Grande, a few hundred yards further along Crabtree Crossing Parkway toward Morrisville Parkway, where 99 upscale homes are planned for completion starting in the summer of 1997.

Sales Manager Tina Bernhardt said the Hampton houses will be in the range of 2,200 to 2,500 square feet, and will include a ranch style as well as 1 1/2 story residences with prices starting at \$240,000. The area, which is currently being cleared and sighted for lot sizes, will be in the shape of a horseshoe, with four homes in the center and 14 others in a semi-circle separated by an interior road to be known as

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Glimpse a goblin, a ghost, a witch, too at Pittard's farm

By Ron Page

The signs along the road call it the Ghost House, and every year at this time, it's a place to visit for things that smack of Halloween. That includes the white ghost hanging from a tree over a yard full of pumpkins, a witch by the barn full of dried corn and stalks, a mannequin witch sitting in an old chair in the yard, and all the colorful things from the garden you'd expect to decorate with for the fall season.

The place is the quaint 100-year-old farm and 100 peaceful acres along Good Hope Church Road in Carpenter which was been the lifelong home of Bob Pittard as well as a place kids in the neighborhood and friends and visitors just stop by to enjoy, especially at this time of the year.

"I may not be here at the time you visit, but people know they can walk around the farm, look at the plants and whatever else is growing, the grape arbors, the fields, and wander down to the pond out in the back," Pittard says.

Pittard is sort of retired, at least from his profession as a high school science teacher and basketball and track coach. But he still manages to plant a variety of vegetables and items such as different types of pumpkins, gourds, corn

and cornstalks for decorations.

"People have been coming back for years," he says. "One couple stopped by the other day with their eight-year-old daughter to show me a series of pictures they had taken

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ALL FOR FALL—Bob Pittard has been growing fall vegetables on his Carpenter farm for years.

The 100-year-old homestead has become a sort of fall pilgrimage for area residents.

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