

Education, training still mainstay of Wakelon School

By MARY BETH NEWHART
Record staff writer

The echo of footsteps in the hallway are now muffled by the new carpeting on the floor.

The chalkboards and the desks in this particular room have been replaced by computers and conference tables with comfortable chairs.

Its appearance has been modified, but the purpose of this first room just off the hallway has not changed. Education was once its mainstay — the education of the children of Zebulon and Wakefield, but now the old Wakelon School Building (and the rooms within it) are going to be used to educate and train Glaxo employees.

The scaffolding was removed from the exterior weeks ago signaling the end of Glaxo's restoration of the exterior and the renovation of 10,000-square-feet of the first floor.

Few people have yet to be witness to the changes set forth by Glaxo. The classrooms now will be used for business courses and career development.

"Rooms that were old classrooms are still classrooms," explained Joy Hagwood, a community affairs associate with Glaxo. "As a lifelong resident of Zebulon, and one who attended school here as a child, I don't think it could have worked out any better."

Even though a number of changes have taken place, aspects of the old Wakelon school still remain. Most of the old built-in brick bookcases are still intact. Workers found the

'A lot of things on the outside had to be custom made. ... You can't just go out and buy some of that old brick. If we couldn't find it, we had to make it.'

— Joy Hagwood

school's bell in a room at the top of the building. It was refinished and now stands guard in the reception area just inside the double doors. The plaque declaring the school a historical landmark is mounted just under the bell.

"We actually pulled this (the bell) from the top of the building," Ms. Hagwood explained. "It will always be here as a reminder of what the school stands for."

The building itself was constructed in 1909 in response to a 1907 act of the General Assembly that authorized and funded the construction of high schools across the state. Between 1900 and 1910, nearly 3,000 schoolhouses were built.

Locating the school in Zebulon was a result of a compromise between the communities of Wakefield and Zebulon — hence the name Wakelon — the first four letters of Wakefield and the last three letters of Zebulon.

Wakefield was a small rural community incorporated in 1899.

Zebulon Mayor Frank Wall and Cliff Disbrow, senior vice president for technical operations at Glaxo (above) recently unveiled the refinished school bell. The bell was found in one of the upper rooms of the old Wakelon School. It was mounted, along with the plaque declaring the building a historic landmark.



Contributed photo

When its citizens failed to sell land for the railroad right-of-way, the railroad was located a short distance south. Around the railroad grew the town of Zebulon, which was incorporated in 1907.

Chairing the board of directors for Wakelon School was Dr. G.M. Bell, the man who donated the 10-acre site to be used for the construction of what later (in 1931) was named the largest rural school in Wake County.

During the school's first academic year, which ran from Oct. 6 to May 21, faculty included R.C. Holton as principal and a number of women in charge of high school, intermediate, and primary and secondary grades. The school also had a music department.

Tuition for Wake County students was free. For those outside the county, there was a fee of \$3 per month. The first full school year, 1910-1911, had an average of 221 students and eight teachers.

In 1913-1914, the building of the rear portion doubled the Wakelon site. A 1916-1917 school catalog shows a photograph of the school and the 30-room dormitory built to house students. The main building was described as having 23 rooms, including four laboratories to teach agriculture, botany, chemistry, physics, carpentry and home economics. There were 15 faculty members and 416 students.

In 1931, enrollment had jumped to 971 and the faculty consisted of 28 teachers.

The increasing student body necessitated the construction of a new high school and Wakelon was converted to an elementary school. In 1974, it was announced that the building would be replaced. Plans to renovate the site were changed the following year and no preservation work was started until Glaxo purchased the building in 1987.

Most of the documented history of the Wakelon School was gathered by Zebulon's Edith Tippet when she and the Zebulon Bicentennial Commission in 1975 applied to have the site declared a historical landmark.

"With some research, we got enough information together to make a proposal to get it on the national register," Mrs. Tippet recently explained. "I thought it would be good to have a sponsor and that is where the bicentennial commission came into play. You apply through the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources Division of Archives and History. They are the ones

who approve (the application). If you can get it approved at the state level, it's pretty much guaranteed at the national level."

The Wakelon site was placed on the national register on May 13, 1976.

"I'm delighted that they (Glaxo) chose to restore the building," Mrs. Tippet said. "It's a real tribute to the community and it's obvious that they've taken the time and care to restore it to its original state."

Mrs. Tippet is a 1946 graduate of Wakelon. "From its beginning, the school had an outstanding reputation as an educational institution," she said. "Those standards were maintained for many years

even after there were no more boarding students. (Wakelon) had some dynamic teachers and students."

Mrs. Tippet remembered that the campus was "almost like a junior college."

Restoring the structure to its original state was not easy for Yonkers Industries of the Southeast Inc. — the construction firm — or for Douglas Perry Associates of Raleigh — the architectural and engineering contractor.

"A lot of things on the outside had to be custom made," Ms. Hagwood explained. "You can't just go out and buy some of that old brick. If we couldn't find it, we had to make it.

"It was good that Glaxo took

on this project," she continued. "It shows their commitment to Zebulon in a most sincere way. Restoring the cosmetic appearance of the building became so important to us because it was so important to the town."

Renovating the first floor and restoring the exterior of the building took about 11 months to complete.

"It looks a lot better now," Ms. Hagwood said. "It was old when I went to school there and that was between 1966 and 1972. I can walk into a room and say 'This is where such and such a class was.' It is still very much the same building."

Although she would not reveal the total cost of the renovations, Ms. Hagwood did explain that the restoration had been a major project for Glaxo.

"The Wakelon building provides the needed space for our long-term training requirements at the Zebulon site," said Cliff Disbrow, senior vice president for technical operations in a recent press release. "In addition, we appreciate the unique opportunity to preserve an important historic building, to both maintain its historic significance and to prolong the structure's useful life."



Contributed photo

... and the past

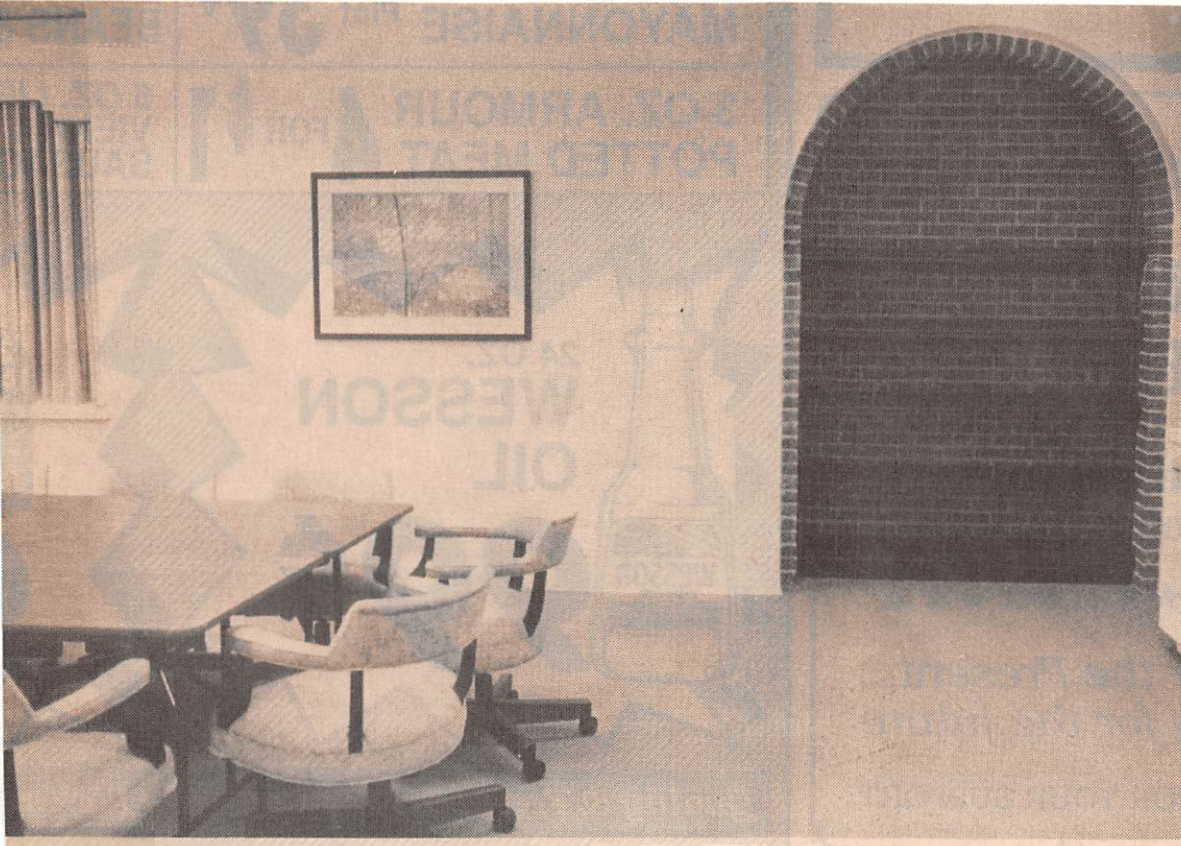
The Wakelon School was once a thriving educational institution. This photo was taken sometime around 1915. In later years, (1931) the school was known as the largest rural school in Wake County.



Photo by Mary Beth Newhart

The present ...

The exterior of the Wakelon School is now sporting a refinished look. Glaxo recently completed the renovation of the first floor. The building will now be used for the education and training of Glaxo employees.



One of the renovated classrooms (left) still sports the original brick bookshelf put in place when the school was built in 1909.

Photo by Mary Beth Newhart

Wakelon 46th reunion held

WAKELON,
WAKE CO, NC ↑

ERNESTINE
CORBETT

NED MOSS
KAY BAKER

WILLA BOLTON

Ernestine Corbett Chamblee called the roll of Wakelon High School class of '52, and 31 classmates answered "present." These 31 classmates, spouses and honored guests met for their 46th year reunion on Sept. 26 with a social hour and dinner at The Meeting Place in Wendell.

The evening began with a social hour and "Taking a Trip Down Memory Lane" — visiting, sharing memories, hearing about children and grandchildren, and visiting the memorabilia table filled with pictures from the '50s, old annuals and other Wakelon High mementos. This table was decorated with an arrangement of Moon Pies and RC Colas. There was also a memorial table with pictures and white roses for each classmate who has passed away. The table arrangements were given by Ned Moss in memory of his wife, Kay Baker Moss.

Ned Moss was master of ceremonies. A program of school and class songs and poems opened the program.

After a dinner (with a touch of '50s music), Tim Tippet, son of Jack and Betty Jean Tippet, played guitar and sang.

Norma Bridgers McGee presented a memorial service in honor of classmates who have passed away. Classmates remembered were Jean Robertson Lambert, Elton Chamblee, Bobby T. McGee, Pattie Pearce Perry, Ronald Fowler, Bobby Murray, Charles Brooks Finch, Shirley Faulkner Wilder and class mascot Johnny Hendricks.

Also remembered with a silent prayer were spouses of classmates who passed away in 1998: Ulysses Johnson, husband of Linda Bridgers Johnson; Kenneth Leggett, husband of Anne Allman Leggett; and Kay Baker Moss, wife of Ned Moss.

Donald and Hilda Fowler treated guests to door prizes, including the table arrangements.

Special guests were teachers Marie Smithwick Parker and her husband, Roy, Melba Strickland Hales, and Ed Ellington and his wife, Dorothy; and mascot Cheryl Gay Lanier and her mother, Hilda Gay. Guests were given corsages and boutonnieres.

Willa Bolton Dean presented each guest with an updated year-

book she created, featuring current pictures of classmates. The yearbook contained a color collage of current pictures, and addresses and telephone numbers of the classmates. Socializing and candid pictures followed "till curfew."

On Sunday morning, several classmates and families attended church and had a buffet lunch afterward at The Meeting Place.

Attending the Wakelon class of '52 reunion were Carlton Blackley, Mary Spivey Moss, Ernestine Corbett Chamblee, Patsy Brantley Pott, Jean Baker Johnson, Willa Bolton Dean, Virginia Pearce Wheless, Rena Moody Narron, Ned Moss, Donald Fowler, Linda Bridgers Johnson, Henry Kitchings, Gloria Dean Pearce Hodge, Anne Allman Legett, George Crowder, Margaret Oakley White, Inez Pearce Perry, Lawrence Liles, Jean Richardson Liles, Ruth Edwards Taylor, Pauline Baker Cunningham, Betty Bunn Blackley, Kat Baker Bryant, Joyce Young Alford, Doris Duke Champion, Rose Edwards Holland, Margaret Honeycutt Hinton, Bobby Perry, Norma Bridgers McGee, Eva Pulley Sam and Betty Jean Phillips Tippet.



Wakelon class of 1952 reunion attendees

WAKELON HIGH SCHOOL 1936
WAKE CO, NC

The Zebulon Record 20 MAR 1986 Zebulon, NC



Old friends

LINE

- 1 Members of the Wakelon High School graduating class of 1936 will have a reunion Saturday, March 29, at
- 2 the Rotary-Woman's Club building in Zebulon. Shown in their senior picture are: from left — sitting, Richard
- 3 Hoyle; first row, Catherine Rhodes, L.T. Williams Jr., Frances Williams, Meryl Massey, Anna B. Pearce, Ralph
- 4 House, Christine Perry, Hubert Watson; seated, John Ruffin Moore; second row, Lola Ray, Ollie Mae Pearce,
- 5 Ruth Green, Dorothy Winstead, Eunice Outlaw, Grace Stallings, Sexton Johnson; third row, Lucille Perry,
- 6 Juliette Cunningham, Lucy Newell, Elizabeth Broughton, Mary Frances White, Sara Eddins, Inez Horner,
- 7 Percival Gay; fourth row, Iredell Gay, Pair Lee Bobbitt, Rachel Liles, Innies Perry, Mildred Lee, Alvin Murray;
- 8 fifth row, Sybil Pearce, Earl Harris, Frankie Hall, Marshall Strickland, Leroy Mason, C.H. Underhill; sixth
- 9 row, Principal E.H. Moser, Henry K. Baker, Graham Chamblee, James Alford, Jesse Young, Leonard Perry,
- 10 Graham Bunn.

LINE 2 - A

LINE 3 - A + A + A + A + A + A

LINE 4 - A + A + A + A + A

LINE 5 - A + A + A + A + A + A

LINE 6 - A + A + A + A + A + A

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LINE 8 - A + A + A + A + A + A

LINE 9 - A + A + A + A + A + A

LINE 10 - A

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○ The Zebulon Record THUR 24 NOV 1988 Zebulon, NC

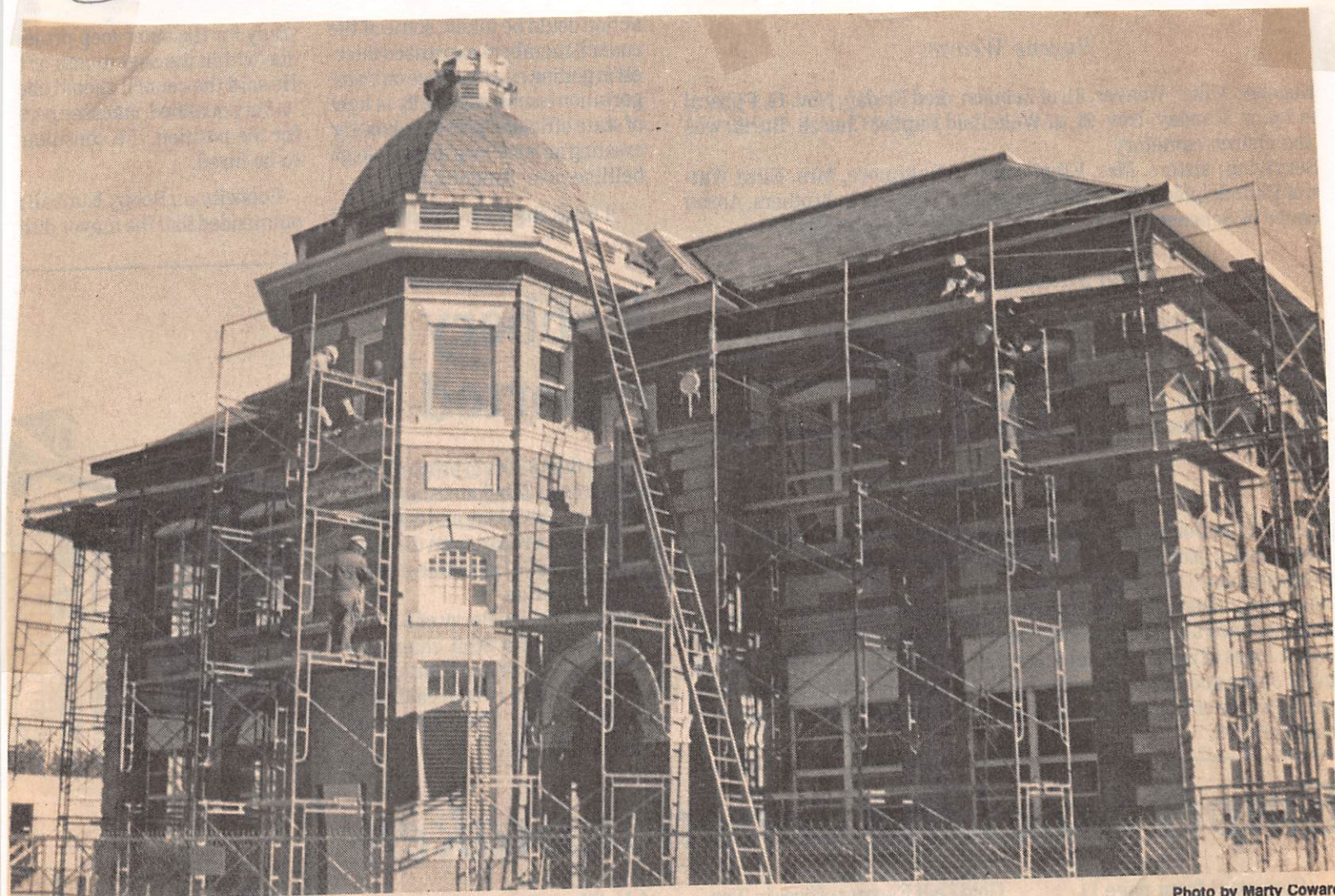


Photo by Marty Coward

Fresh look for an old building

Workers on scaffolds replace the broken brick and old wood trim on the exterior of the former Wakelon High School, constructed in

1909. Refurbishing of the main building is expected to be completed by June of 1989.

Wakelon building getting a face-lift

By MARTY COWARD
Record editor

The tenants of Zebulon's most modern structure are initiating an effort to preserve one of the town's oldest.

Glaxo Inc. is restoring and renovating the main building of the old Wakelon High School, which is nearly 80 years old. Work began in late October and is expected to be completed in June of next year.

Once the face-lift is finished, Glaxo plans to use the building as a central location for all training activities needed for support operations at its local manufacturing facility. Approximately 10,000 square feet of the former school building, now owned by Glaxo, is being refurbished.

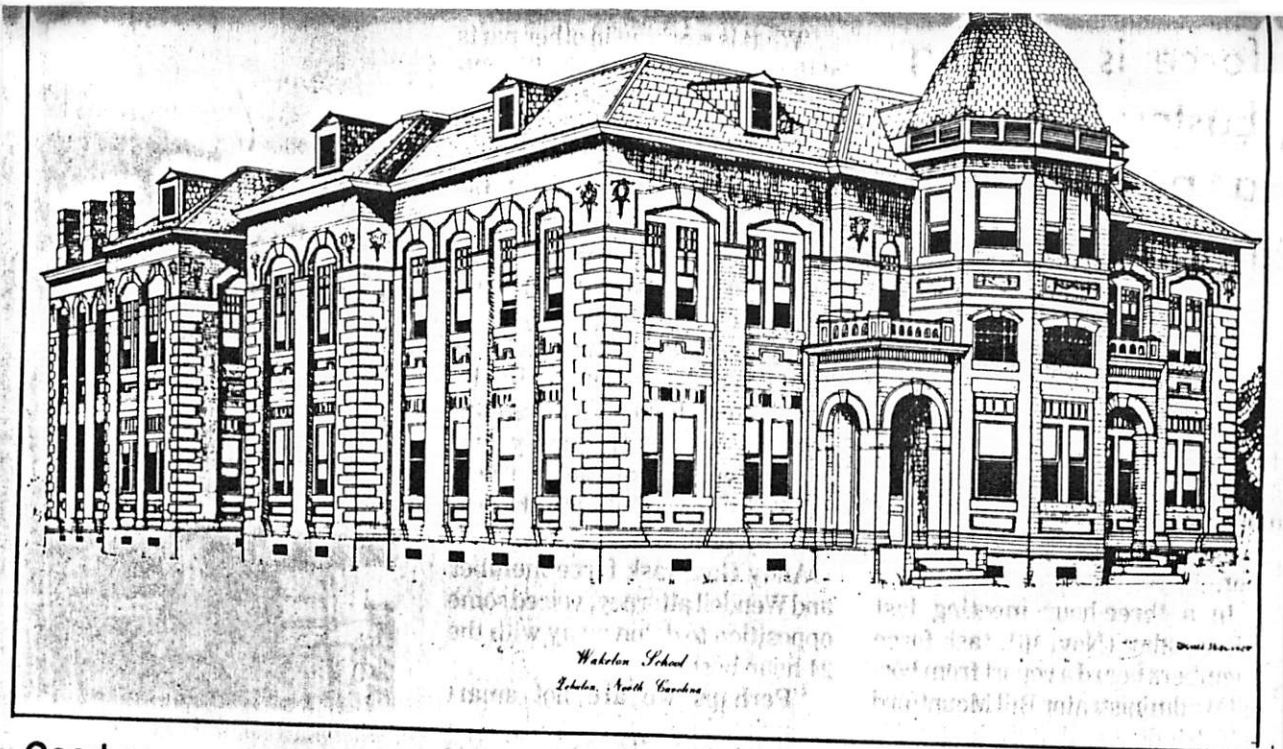
The project entails a total overhaul of the exterior which includes replacing broken brick, patching

the slate roof and remilling the building's wood trim. In addition, double-glazed glass will be placed in each window and door.

The contract for construction management of these time-consuming tasks has been awarded to Yonkers Industries of the Southeast Inc., located in Zebulon. The architectural and engineering contracts have been given to Douglas Y. Perry Associates, P.A. of Raleigh.

"We're going to totally renovate the exterior and take the building back as close as we can to its original appearance," said Jim Yonkers of Yonkers Industries. He explained that updated building codes prevent the identical restoration of the structure to its 1909 state.

"Glaxo has made a commitment



Good as new

This artist's rendering depicts the projected appearance of Wakelon High School's main building following the renovations currently under way. Architects are using old photographs of the structure to restore it to the way it looked in 1909.

Glaxo restoring Wakelon building

(Continued from page 1)

to restoring the building to its original appearance as much as possible," Yonkers said. "We're very excited. We feel this is a great program for the entire community."

He added that plans also call for "lots of landscaping and a total beautification of the grounds."

According to a released statement, workers are using old photographs of the building as guidelines in replicating the initial design. Cliff Disbrow, Glaxo's senior vice president of technical operations, said the project will benefit Glaxo as well

as posterity.

"This development of the former Wakelon School provides the needed space for our long-term training requirements on the Zebulon campus," Disbrow explained. "In addition, we have a unique opportunity to preserve an important historic building and restore it not only to maintain its historic significance but also to prolong the structure's useful life for decades to come."

Zebulon Mayor Frank Wall indicated in a press release that the undertaking is typical of Glaxo's efforts within the community as he praised the international phar-

maceutical company as "one of the best corporate citizens anybody could ever have."

"We are real thrilled about the situation," said Wall. "I was a graduate of that school and so was my father. In fact, when he was a boy, he helped haul lumber to build it."

"Many commissioners and countless citizens have long histories associated with that school. The citizens of Zebulon are real impressed that Glaxo is going to refurbish Wakelon and make it look like it did many years ago," he added. "This community has such a love for that building."