

Survey And Research Report On

Restormel

829 Concord Road

Davidson, North Carolina



1. **Name and location of the property:** The property known as Restormel is located at 829 Concord Road in Davidson, North Carolina.
2. **Name and address of the current owner:** The current owners of the property are

David and Jamie Dunn

PO Box 1791

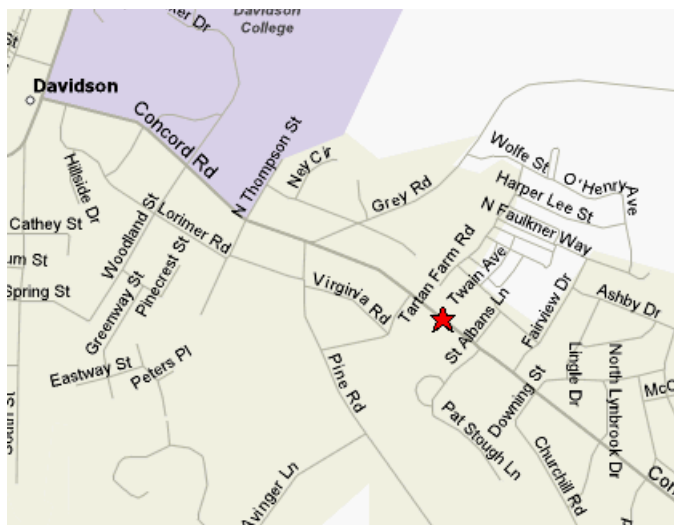
Davidson, North Carolina 28036

3. **Representative photographs of the property:**

This report contains representative photographs of the property.

4. **Map depicting the location of the property:**

The following map depicts the location of Restormel.



5. **Current deed book reference to the property:** The most recent deed to this property is located in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 9931 on page 508. The tax parcel number of the property is 00315130.
6. **A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property.
7. **A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property by Stewart Gray.
8. **Documentation of how and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in NCGS 160A-400.5:** The Commission judges that the property known as Restormel does possess special historic significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:
 - a. **Special significance in terms of its historical, architectural, or cultural importance:**
 1. Restormel was designed and occupied by Dr. Fraser Hood, who came to Davidson as a direct result of the growth of Davidson College in the first quarter of the twentieth century.
 2. The retaining wall on the south elevation of the property facing Concord Road was constructed from some of the foundation stones from the original Chambers Building on the campus of Davidson College, which burned in 1921.
 3. Restormel contains the only known example in Mecklenburg County of a Rustic Revival log building that is a secondary structure of a private residence.
 - b. **Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association:** The Commission contends that the physical and architectural description which is included in this report demonstrates that Restormel meets this criterion.
9. **Ad Valorem tax appraisal:** The current appraised value of the 2.2 acres on which this property sits is \$187,400. The structures on the property are valued at \$455,300. Features on the property are valued at \$2,100. The total value of the property is \$644,800.

Date of Preparation of this report: 25 April, 2006

Prepared by: Kimberly Tweedy and revised by Jennifer Payne

Summary Statement of Significance:

Restormel, erected in 1929, possesses special historic significance in Davidson as an illustration of the symbiotic relationship between the Town of Davidson and Davidson College. The home was built during a period of expansion for the College in which the faculty population quadrupled, and this increase in the number of professors led directly to the evolution of Concord Road and the construction of faculty homes such as Restormel. In addition, Dr. Frasier Hood was intimately associated with the drive to expand the curriculum of Davidson College which led to the school's accreditation. The property contains two architectural elements besides the main house that are architecturally and historically significant. The first, the retaining wall which lines the southern border of the lot, was constructed from foundation stones taken from the Old Chambers Building on the campus of Davidson College. The second, a log structure that sits near the northwest corner of the property, is the only identified example of a secondary log structure at the site of a private residence in Mecklenburg County.

Restormel

The special historic significance of Restormel, a Colonial Revival style house located at 829 Concord Road, is best understood in terms of the evolution of the Town of Davidson. Davidson College, which was established in 1835 to educate young men according to the values of the school's Presbyterian founders, has provided the impetus for the evolution and development of the Town of Davidson. From 1835 to 1874, the town was a relatively isolated college community; and its growth was almost exclusively linked to the increasing number of students and faculty who attended or taught at Davidson College.



Davidson became a center of commerce and industry in Northern Mecklenburg County when the railroad was reactivated in 1874. The construction of a downtown commercial corridor and two mills followed, but Davidson College continued to be a major contributing factor to the growth of the town throughout the first half of the twentieth century.^[1]

Dr. William J. Martin, a President of Davidson College, was primarily responsible for much of the twentieth century growth of the College. During his tenure as president, which lasted from 1912 until 1929, he increased the size of the faculty from twelve to forty members.^[2] Much of the cause of this growth was based on an expansion of the Davidson College curriculum from one based in classical studies to one that more broadly embraced new disciplines in the social sciences. While the College gained accreditation from the Association of American Colleges, as well as other bodies which regulate academic quality at the secondary level, the growth of the curriculum necessitated the expansion of the school's faculty as well.^[3]

One of the new professors hired by Dr. Martin during this growth period was Dr. Fraser Hood, who arrived at Davidson College in 1920. Dr. Hood, who had been trained in psychology at Yale University, was tapped to lead the new department of psychology. Dr. Hood and his family initially lived in a faculty residence on North Main Street, as did many of the other faculty members. However, the growth of the faculty soon outstripped the available houses on North Main, and by the late 1920s the family was enticed to build a private residence on Concord Road which they named "Restormel" after an English castle. Unlike the growth of Main Street which mirrored the early

growth of the College, Concord Road remained relatively untouched until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the College began to sell lots to faculty members and faculty families.^[4] Restormel was the only house built past Thompson Street in the early part of the century, and its occupants were able to take advantage of both the bucolic setting and the convenience of being close to campus.^[5]

Restormel property also contains two other significant pieces of the built environment of Davidson. The first is the retaining wall that borders the southern perimeter of the lot, and which was constructed from foundation stones from the Old Chambers Building. The Old Chambers building was designed by renowned architect Alexander J. Davis in 1858, and was well-known for its grandeur.^[6] The building, which was comparable to the length of a football field, was “almost unrivalled in the country” for its design, and it reportedly brought visitors from Davidson from far and wide.^[7]

This piece of the monumental Old Chambers Building stands in contrast to the much smaller, although equally significant, secondary log structure that stands on the northwest of Restormel lot. Rustic Revival log cabins were made popular in the early twentieth century by a movement that identified such structures with the frontier past of the country, and was made popular through such outlets as the architecture of Henry Bacon in Linville, North Carolina, and through the mass advertising of log structures. In such advertisements, the log structure represented not only a frontier past, but also the American ideals of hard work and dedication in order to achieve one’s goals.^[8] The Historic Landmarks Commission has put forth the thesis that Dr. Hood, who is remembered as “a disciple of joyous living,” as well as a “genial and gracious man,” may have built the log structure on the Hood property as a place to entertain guests, as evidenced by the remains of a shuffleboard which can still be seen in front of the structure.

Therefore, Restormel retains many connections with the growth of Davidson in the early part of the twentieth century. It was built as a direct response to the growth of Davidson College under the tenure of William J. Martin, and thus illustrates the impact of the growth of the College on the built environment of the Town of Davidson. The retaining wall and log structure on the property serve not only to add character to the property, but also retain connections with important pieces of local and national history.

^[1] Much of the information in this report was taken from a Survey and Research Report prepared by Kimberly Tweedy in December, 2005, and from Jennifer Payne and Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "The Evolution of the Built Environment of Davidson, NC," available online at <http://www.cmhpf.org/surveydavidsonpayne.htm>.

^[2] Mary D. Beaty, *A History of Davidson College*, (Davidson: Briarpatch Press, 1988), 239.

^[3] Ibid., 239-240.

^[4] Mary D. Beaty, *Davidson: A History of the Town from 1835 to 1937* (Davidson, Briarpatch Press, 1979), 106-110.

^[5] Beaty, *A History of the Town*, 120.

^[6] Ibid., 22.

^[7] Ibid.

^[8] Stewart Gray, "Log Building Construction in Mecklenburg County from 1920 to 1945," available online at <http://www.cmhpf.org/SurveyLogHouses.htm>.

Architectural Essay

Restormel commands a prominent position in the historic landscape of Davidson. The house is notable for its size and for the significant visual impact of the house and grounds, being located on a low rise on the north side of Concord Road. In contrast to the many low-slung Craftsman Style houses built in Davidson during the early years of the twentieth century, the Colonial Revival Style Restormel signaled a dramatic shift in domestic architecture in the town. The house is located at what would have been the eastern edge of the town when the house was built in 1929. Since the house was built, the town has expanded greatly to the east, and now neighborhood development surrounds the house. A retaining wall built of native round stones borders the front of the large two-acre lot.



Restormel is a solid brick two-story, side-gabled house. The house appears to be of solid brick construction with the brick laid in a modified common-bond with five rows of stretchers laid between rows composed of alternating stretchers and headers. The principal section of the house is three bays wide and features a strict symmetry broken only by the different proportions of the two interior chimneys. The three-bay-wide façade features a prominent centered entrance accessed by low stone steps. The doorway is topped with a broken pediment typical of the Colonial Revival Style. The pediment is decorated with dentil moulding and is supported with fluted pilasters. The entrance is recessed slightly, and topped with a four-light transom. Flush with the exterior is a substantial screen door, which has also been topped with a transom. The entrance is flanked with small four-over-one windows with brick sills and soldier-course headers. Located to either side of the entrance are obtuse-angled window bays. These windows bays are composed of low brick

walls topped with continuous corbelled sills that support three six-over-one windows topped with a copper bell-cast roof.



Second-floor fenestration is composed of three wall dormers aligned with the first-story fenestration. Each dormer contains a single eight-over-one window topped with a soldier-course header. The gables are pierced with four vent holes in a cross pattern. The eaves feature deep mouldings, and the soffits are decorated with modillions. The shallow eaves feature copper gutters with prominent downspouts. Perched on the steeply sloped roof are two gabled dormers, even spaced between the between the lower fenestration. The gabled dormers each contain a single four-over-four window (replacement?) The prominent west elevation is pierced by two eight-over-one windows on the second floor. The large brick gable features a small round-arched window containing a single six-light sash topped with a four-light fan.



The east elevation features a two-story wing that once may have been a porch or sunroom. The second-story room overhangs the lower room on all three sides. A flat roof with an iron railing tops the wing. In contrast to the rest of the house, the wing is clad in German siding. The window openings are filled with replacement eight-light sash on the first story, and six-light sash topped with two-light transoms on the second story. The cantilevered overhang is decorated with curved brackets.



East Elevation



Rear Elevation

Unlike the façade, the asymmetrical fenestration of the rear elevation features a mixture of window sizes and door openings. The same elements of dormers, modillions, and wall dormers appear to have been aligned to reflect the interior room layout. The westernmost bay on the rear is a doorway sheltered by a small gabled roof supported by brackets.

A detached garage is located to the rear of the house. Brickwork indicates that the one-story side-gabled garage may be an original feature of Restormel. A substantial wing extends from the rear of the garage, and may have served as servant quarters. The east elevation is sheltered by a shed-roofed screen porch. The second story is of frame construction.



Garage Apartment



Log Cabin

A log cabin is located in the northwestern corner of the large lot. This side-gabled log cabin is the only identified example of a secondary log residential building. The building features round logs with saddle notches, log gables, exposed rafter ends and board-and-batten door. The windows, four-light sliding windows, are notably short.