

Survey And Research Report

On The Queens Terrace Apartments



1. **Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Queens Terrace Apartments is located at 1300 Queens Road in Charlotte, N.C.
2. **Name, address, and telephone number of contact for the current owners of the property:**

Mr. Harron Rudisill

Queens Towers Homeowners Association

1300 Queens Road

Charlotte, N.C. 28207

Telephone: (704) 376-5131

3. Representative photographs of the property: This report contains representative photographs of the property.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW PHOTO GALLERY](#)

4. A map depicting the location of the property: This report contains a map depicting the location of the property. The UTM coordinates of the property are 17 515981.7E 3894651N.



5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property: The most recent deeds to this property are set forth on Addendum A.

[Addendum A -- Property Owners Addendum Sheet \(All Queen's Terrace Unit Owners\)](#)

6. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. Dan L. Morrill.

7. A brief architectural and physical description of the property: This report contains a brief architectural and physical description of the property prepared by Dr. Dan L. Morrill.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S 160A-400.5.

a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture and/or cultural importance: The Commission judges that the Queens Terrace Apartments possesses special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- 1) The Queens Terrace Apartments, built in 1960-61, was designed by Louis Asbury, Jr. and Jack O. Boyte, both architects of local note.
- 2) The Queens Terrace Apartments has a high degree of integrity and is among the earliest examples of Modernist multi-family buildings in Charlotte.
- 3) The Queens Terrace Apartments is the oldest Modernist apartment building located in the prestigious Myers Park neighborhood of Charlotte.
- 4) The Queens Terrace Apartments has been singled out as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by a comprehensive survey of Charlotte's post-World War Two built environment conducted by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association: The Commission contends that the architectural and physical description prepared by Dr. Dan L. Morrill demonstrates that the Queens Terrace Apartments meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal: The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owners to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes a "historic landmark." The appraised values of the property are set forth on [Addendum A](#). The Tax Parcel Numbers of the property are 15304116 through 15304169.

10. Amount of Property Proposed for historic landmark designation. The exterior of the building, the entrance lobby, the upstairs lobbies and hallways, and the entire tax parcel except for the parking lot and the car sheds.

Date of Preparation of this Report: November 20, 2009

A Brief History Of The Queens Terrace Apartments

Dr. Dan L. Morrill



The Modernist-style Queens Terrace Apartments, now Queens Towers Condominiums, located on the south side of Queens Road just east of its intersection with Granville Road, was constructed in 1960-61 by Towers Land and Development Company as luxury apartments in the affluent Myers Park neighborhood of Charlotte, N.C. It was designed by Louis H. Asbury, Jr. (1912-1991) with Jack Orr Boyte (1920-2005) assisting.¹ The Queens Terrace Apartments was one of several large-scale apartment buildings that began to appear along this residential thoroughfare in the 1950s and 1960s. "The location of these apartments have (sic.) been a key element of their

success all along," said Boyte in a 2001 interview.²



Illustrative of the local increase in the demand for apartments in the late 1950s and early 1960s is the fact that in 1959 only three out of every 100 family units being marketed in Charlotte were apartments. In 1962, just three years later, the number had risen dramatically to twenty-six out of every 100 family units.³ The Queens Terrace Apartments appeared during this surge in Charlotte's multi-family market and during a growing demand for more intense development in neighborhoods close to the center city. Charlotte was experiencing robust suburbanization, which was induced in no small measure by inexpensive gasoline -- 31.9 cents per gallon. Such automobile-dependent neighborhoods as Windsor Park, Providence Park, Lansdowne, and Shannon Park were being actively marketed in 1959. That same year Charlotte Country Day School announced plans for a new suburban campus; and the Charlottetown Mall had its grand opening on October 28, 1959. The simultaneous growth of Charlotte's population, from 134,042 in 1950 to 201,564 in 1960, meant that developers were also anxious to acquire large single-family homes in places like Myers Park, tear them down, and replace them with apartment buildings. Such was the course of events that led to the construction of the Queens Terrace Apartments.⁴



Parcel in upper right hand corner of map shows the site of the Queens Terrace Apartments.



Jack O. Boyte



Louis H. Asbury, Jr.

Architectural historians Sherry Joines Wyatt and Sarah Woodard in their study of Charlotte's post-World War Two built environment note that the late 1940's brought renewed optimism and prosperity to the country. Expansion of the middle class in turn gave rise to "suburban expansion, transportation improvements and accessibility, and a renewed interest in Modernist ideas about architecture." "These three national trends" Wyatt and Woodard assert, "created the three local contexts of community planning, transportation, and architecture in which Charlotte's post-war Modernist architecture developed."⁵

Louis H. Asbury, Jr., the architect of record for the Queens Terrace Apartments, joined his father's architectural firm, Louis H. Asbury & Son, soon after graduating from North Carolina State College in 1939. Like his father, Asbury was trained in the revivalist tradition and accordingly fashioned buildings which harkened to the past, such as his design of the St. Paul United Methodist Church on Dorchester Drive in Charlotte's Sedgefield neighborhood. Louis H. Asbury, who retired in 1956, and Louis H. Asbury, Jr. understood that they needed to bring someone into their firm who had formal training in Modernist design. Accordingly, in 1952 Louis H. Asbury & Son hired Boyte, who had earned a B. S. Degree in architecture from the Georgia Institute of Technology the previous year. A native of Charlotte and graduate of Charlotte Central High School, Boyte served as an apprentice under Louis Asbury and Louis Asbury, Jr., from 1952 until 1959.⁶

The College of Architecture at Georgia Tech was deeply committed to Modernism and the design philosophy of the Bauhaus. Especially influential in this regard was Harvard-trained architect Paul M. Heffernan, who joined the Georgia Tech faculty in 1938. One can reasonably assume that Boyte imbibed the design philosophy that Heffernan and others emphasized.⁷ In his 2001 interview Boyte commented that he was taught "no traditional architecture at all." "Matter of fact" he continued, "they had a minimum curriculum on the history of architecture."⁸



Paul Heffernan on left

According to Boyte, the Queens Towers Apartments was always intended to be "a contemporary building" and was a "radical departure" from multi-family design in Charlotte. "... when I came into the Asbury firm I was just very reluctant to even attempt a traditional building," Boyte explained. "I did a great deal of modern work for them when I first came into the office." "... my modern period kind of ended ... during the ... the 60s," said Boyte. "Well, ... , when I worked on that design with Louis Jr. I guess I designed" the Queen Terrace Apartments.⁹ Wyatt and Woodard explain that Modernism "emphasized function and utility; abstract beauty, sculptural form, and symbolism; honesty in materials; and the use of modern materials and technology as well as an emphasis on the use of natural materials."¹⁰ All of these attributes are evident in the Queens Terrace Apartments.

The Queens Terrace Apartments differs substantially from the multi-family housing units that had appeared earlier in Myers Park. Four extant examples will suffice to demonstrate this truth -- the apartments at 500 Queens Rd., 1500 Queens Rd., 1610 Queens Rd, and the apartment at Granville Rd. and Hopedale Ave., all of which harken to the past. The Queens Terrace Apartments, on the other hand, is a strikingly bold design for its day and is only one of two Modernist multi-family buildings in Charlotte that have been declared eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.¹¹



500 Queens Road



1500 Queens Road



1610 Queens Road



Granville Rd. & Hopedale Ave.

An Architectural And Physical Description Of The Queens Terrace Apartments

Dr. Dan L. Morrill

The Queens Terrace Apartments is a virtual textbook of Modernist functionalism. As one would expect in buildings of this architectural genre, the structure is supported by piers and has non-load-bearing walls with no protruding decoration. The framing is steel. Alternating elongated vertical bands of windows and brick accentuate the building's height. The windows provide even illumination and are large rectangles framed in aluminum with a single casement, which in combination with the supporting piers raise the building's architectural volume, strengthen its connectivity to the land, and evoke a sense of lightness or floating in the architecture itself. Again, as expected,

the roof is flat, the eaves are broad, and sliding glass doors provide access to the terraces, some of which have been enclosed.



The Queens Terrace Apartments has only three residential floors, thereby respecting the tree canopy of the neighborhood, unlike the nearby Carlton Condominiums. The building pays homage to the principles of the Garden City espoused by such notable Modernist architects as the Swissman Le Corbusier. According to Corbusier, structures should function like machines, where land, people, and building work together with maximum efficiency. A swimming pool with a broad carpeted surround is situated in a courtyard to the immediate right rear of the building fronting on Queens Road. Yard sculpture and tropical plants are distributed on the property. None is original. There are, however original concrete benches on the front lawn. A large lawn with mature trees runs the entire length of the property between the building and Queens Road as well as along the border with Granville Road. Unfortunately from a design perspective, the parking area beneath the building from the outset was filled with crushed stone and used as a place of assemblage, even having a sand-filled bocce court; and a large, unsightly paved parking lot has been built at the rear of the lot with intrusive metal car sheds.





The lobby is small but distinctive in its Modernist style features. The side walls are glass with glass doors providing access to the interior. The predominant interior wall is composed of glazed marble panels and is punctuated with a single, solid elevator door. A replacement circular metal clock of contemporary design adorns the marble wall, and an elevator control box with buttons is to the immediate right of the elevator door. The floor of the lobby is dark terrazzo. The north wall of the lobby is drywall painted beige. Replacement circular overhead light fixtures are in keeping with the lobby's understated, restrained feel. A door leads from the lobby to a paneled room originally inhabited by a building manager. It is now used as a mail room and a meeting room. Each of the residential floors has an elevator lobby with carpeted hallways leading to the various living units. The overhead protruding lights are original as are the solid entrance doors for each condominium.









Mail Room/Meeting Room



Upstairs Elevator Lobby



Upstairs Corridor

Not surprisingly, many of the original apartment units have undergone major renovations, thereby compromising their historic integrity.

[Addendum A -- Property Owners Addendum Sheet \(All Queen's Terrace Unit Owners\)](#)

1. Demolition Permit No. 10964 was issued on November 13, 1959, to Suggs Wrecking Company to demolish the single family home that stood on the parcel where the Queens Towers Apartments was to be built. Building Permit No. 11584 was issued to Towers Land and Development Company on February 17, 1960, to erect the Queens Towers Apartments. Louis Asbury is listed as the architect of record, and the construction contract was awarded to Blythe and Isenhour. Jack Boyte, interviewed by Jane Starnes in 2001, states that he played a major role in designing the building (see "October 2001 Jack Boyte's ["B"] Selwyn Avenue Charlotte N. C. home; interviewed by Jane E. Starnes ["J"], Queens Tower homeowner," an unpublished manuscript supplied by Starnes to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, hereafter cited as *Boyte Interview*. Phone interview with Louis Asbury, IV (September 24, 2009). Among the early tenants of the Queens Terrace Apartments were Isadore Blumenthal, president of the Radiator Specialty Company and Thomas Tisdale, president and general manager of the Shaw Manufacturing Company (see *Charlotte City Directory* 1963).

2. *Boyte Interview*.

3. "Apartments," a file in the vertical files of the Robinson Spangler Room of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library.

4. *Charlotte Observer* (October 10, 28,29, November 1,3,8,13, 1959; October 8, 1960; January 1, 1961). Sherry Joines Wyatt and Sarah Woodard for David E. Gall Architects, "Final Report: Post World War Two Survey: Sherry Joines Wyatt & Sarah Woodard for David E. Gall Architects," Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission (n.d.). Hereinafter cited as *Wyatt and Woodard*. See post [Post World War Two Survey](#).

5. *Wyatt and Woodard*.

6. "Survey and Research Report on the Solomon and Shirley Levine House (December 3, 2007), a report produced by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. Hereinafter cited as *Levine House*. See [Levine House](#).

7. *Levine House*.

8. *Boyte Interview*. At least two of the houses Boyte designed while working for Louis Asbury and Louis Asbury, Jr. survive. They are:



Levine House



Nieman House

9. Ibid.

10. *Wyatt and Woodard.*

11. Ibid. The other Modernist apartment building in Charlotte eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is the Kimberlee Apartments adjacent to the Park Road Shopping Center.

