



## **Wood-Platt House**

*This report was written on October 30, 1978*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Wood-Platt House is located at 313-315 Hawthorne Ln. in Charlotte, N.C.

**2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner and occupant of the property:**

The property is presently unoccupied.

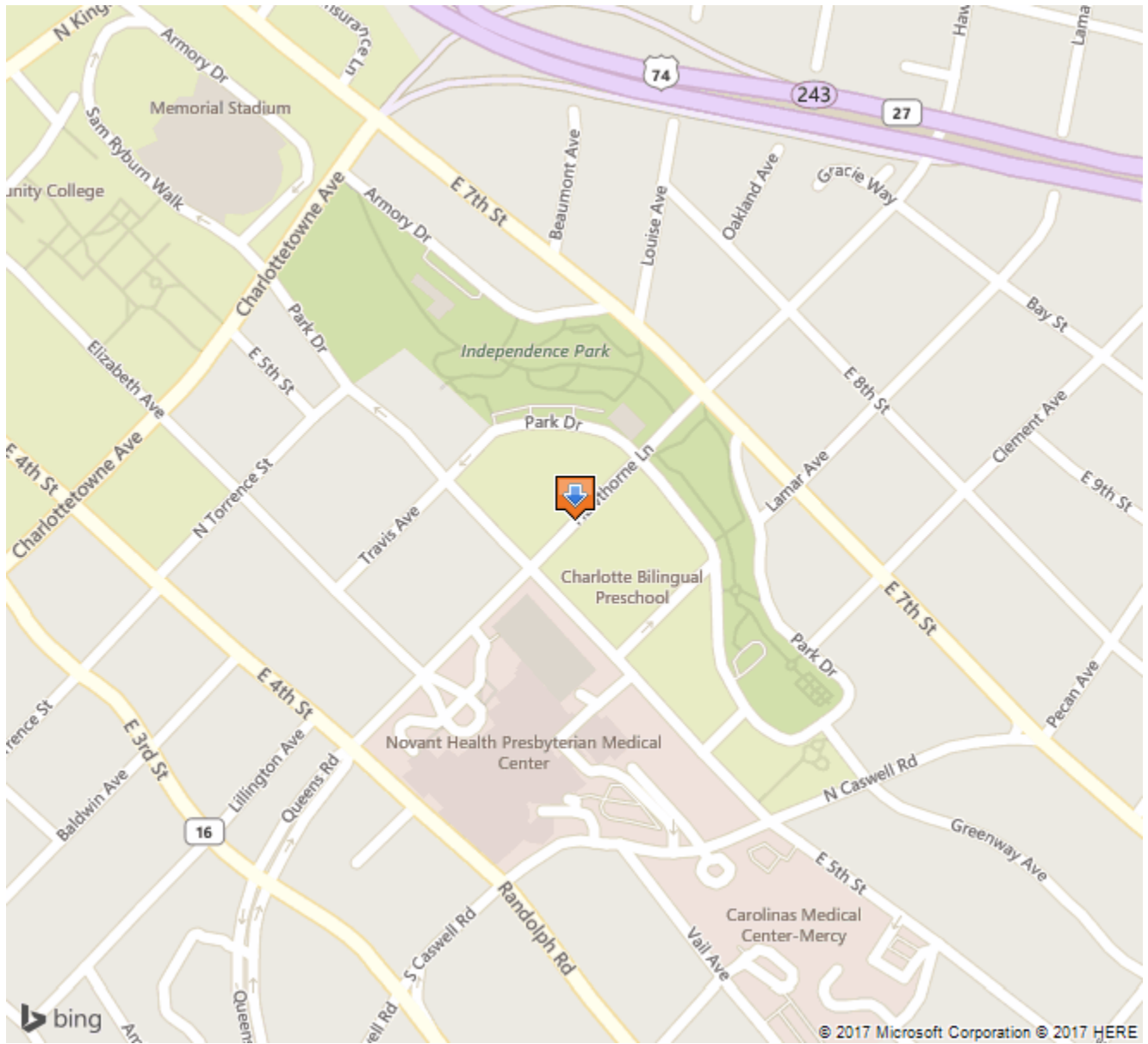
The present owner of the property is:

Dr. Rutherford Douglas Neal & Wife, Zaida  
2532 Hampton Ave.  
Charlotte, N.C. 28207

Telephone: 334-6721

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

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map depicting the location of the property.



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent reference to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1864 at Page 261. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is 08019806.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:**

On December 13, 1902, the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company or Four C's opened a new [streetcar](#) line which extended approximately three-fourths of a mile from the intersection of East Ave. (now E. Trade St.) and McDowell St. to a point three hundred feet west of the main building of Elizabeth College, now the location of

Presbyterian Hospital. <sup>1</sup> This development allowed the Highland Park Co. to initiate the sale of home lots on the tract of land which it owned along and in the vicinity of this new transportation facility. Among the streets of Charlotte's newest streetcar suburb was Kingston Ave., later to be renamed Hawthorne Ln. <sup>2</sup>

On March 3, 1910, Word H. Wood purchased a lot on Kingston Ave. and erected an imposing home which he and his family occupied in late 1910 or early 1911. <sup>3</sup> Word H. Wood (1873-1951), a native of Elkin, N.C. and graduate of Eaton & Burnett Business College in Baltimore, Maryland, moved from Winston, N.C., to Charlotte in 1901, where he and a boyhood friend, George Stephens, were instrumental in establishing the American Trust Company, a leading financial institution of the city. Indeed, Mr. Wood was the secretary-treasurer of that organization when it opened for business on July 15, 1901, where he and a boyhood friend, George Stephens, were instrumental in establishing the American Trust Company. He continued to serve in that capacity until 1918; in that year he became the president of the American Trust Co., a position which he occupied until 1943. Thereafter, he became honorary chairman of the board, having relinquished the presidency to Torrence E. Hobby. During his career, Word H. Wood achieved the reputation of being "a leader in the financial and industrial development of Charlotte and the Carolinas." <sup>4</sup> *The Charlotte News* characterized him as a "nationally known banker." <sup>5</sup> The depth and scope of Mr. Wood's accomplishments suggest that the local newspapers were justified in speaking in such superlative terms about his career. He was the initial Commissioner of Banks for North Carolina, appointed to that position by Gov. O. Max Gardner. He was president of the North Carolina Railroad Co. for 13 years. He was chairman of the Loan Board of the National Credit Association for North Carolina. Of more local interest, he was the chairman of the committee which supervised the construction of Charlotte Memorial Hospital, president of the company which built the [Hotel Charlotte](#) (most recently the White House Inn) on W. Trade St., a charter member of the Charlotte Country Club and the leader in bringing a branch of the [Federal Reserve Bank](#) to Charlotte. <sup>6</sup>

Word P. Wood resided in the house which he erected on Kingston Ave. or Hawthorne Ln. for less than three years. On April 18, 1913, he sold his home to Caroline Smythe Platt, wife of Charles Edmund Platt. <sup>7</sup> Mr. Wood moved to [Myers Park](#), where he maintained his domicile until his death on December 26, 1951. <sup>8</sup> The new owners of the structure, however, continued the tradition of community involvement which W. H. Wood had begun. Charles Edmund Platt (1866-1932), a native of Graniteville, S.C., had come to Charlotte in 1907. *The Charlotte News* characterized him as a "prominent resident of the city and reported that he was well known throughout this section" as an inspector for the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Co. <sup>9</sup> Mr. Platt was also a member of the Vestry of St. Martin's Episcopal Church. <sup>10</sup> The civic activities

of Mrs. Platt were more impressive than those of her husband, however. A native of Spartanburg, S.C., Caroline Smythe Platt spent her childhood in Charleston, S.C. and Summerville, S.C. *The Charlotte Observer* stated that Mrs. Platt "had been one of Charlotte's best known and most loved leaders in numerous civic, patriotic, church, and humanitarian organizations in the city, county, and State." She served as the president of an impressive array of organizations, including the [Charlotte Woman's Club](#), the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, the woman's auxiliary of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, the Stonewall Jackson Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Board of Trustees of [St. Peter's Hospital](#). Moreover, Mrs. Platt was a member of the Mecklenburg Tuberculosis Sanatorium Board, which oversaw the construction of the sanatorium at Huntersville. Also worth noting is the fact that she contributed articles on a regular basis for over twenty-five years to *The Charlotte News*.<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Platt lived in the house on Hawthorne Ln. until her death on February 11, 1948.<sup>12</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Platt had no children. No doubt this fact contributed to their decision to convert the house into a duplex, an operation which was completed at least as early as 1929 and most probably several years prior to that date.<sup>13</sup> The practice of multiple occupancy use continued by Bettie B. Randall, who purchased the house on November 23, 1948, and operated it as the Charlotte Nursing Home.<sup>14</sup> Dr. R. Douglas Neal and his wife, Zaida K. Neal, purchased the property on October 11, 1956.<sup>15</sup> Until recently, they operated it as a rooming house. The structure is currently unoccupied.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *The Charlotte Daily Observer* (December 13, 1902), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 168, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 256, p. 483. Charlotte City Directory 1911, p. 428.

<sup>4</sup> *The Charlotte Observer* (December 27, 1951), pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> *The Charlotte News* (December 27, 1951), Sec. 2., p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *The Charlotte Observer* (December 27, 1951), pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 314, p. 80.

<sup>8</sup> Charlotte City Directory 1914, p. 519. *The Charlotte Observer* (December 27, 1951), pp. 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> *The Charlotte News* (June 12, 1932), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *The Charlotte Observer* (June 12, 1932), p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> *The Charlotte Observer* (February 12, 1948), p. 6-B.

<sup>12</sup> Death Certificate in the Mecklenburg County Health Department. Directory 1947, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> Sanborn Insurance Map 1929, Vol. 1., p. 65.

<sup>14</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1348, p. 86. Charlotte City Directory 1951, p. 117. Charlotte City Directory 1955, p. 143.

<sup>15</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1864, p. 261.

<sup>16</sup> Interview of Mrs. Zaida Neal by Dr. Dan L. Morrill (October 23, 1978).

## **7. A brief architectural description of the property:**

The Wood-Platt House is a two-story, frame edifice three bays wide and seven bays deep to which a large, two-story rear addition was erected c. 1948. The dominant and most imposing architectural feature of the structure is the two-story, pedimented portico enclosing a rarely seen second, balconied portico, which adorns the front or eastern end of the house. Four fluted columns with Roman **Ionic** capitals rise from molded bases to a wide, amply detailed entablature. Above this is an expansive high pitched **gable** pedimented with unadorned projecting cornices. The gable surface is square edged clapboard and features a carefully detailed small Palladian window lunette. Two fluted pilasters with Roman Ionic capitals occur at the juncture of the portico roof where it joins the body of the house and balance the scale of the corner portico columns. The one-story, balconied portico is supported by four fluted columns (one is not extant) with **Doric** capitals and is surmounted by a balustrade of sturdy turned wood balusters with a heavy molded rail which extends across the entire width of the portico, creating thereby a double-tiered effect for the overall arrangement of the front porticoes. A crude stairway, erected c. 1948 when the structure was converted into a nursing home, provides access from ground level to the top of the one-story portico.

The front entrance is located at the center of the eastern facade and consists of oak double doors with raised panels below and a beveled glass panel above, [side lights](#) and a [transom light](#). Until recently, the side lights and transom light contained leaded stain glass reflecting late-Victorian detailing, as did the transom lights above the windows on the flanking bays of the front facade. The entry doors provide access to a projecting foyer from which separate two-panel oak doors with beveled glass upper lights lead to the divided interior of the house. The floor of the foyer is composed of patterned, small ceramic tile. A pair of single-lighted, unembellished wooden doors with a single side light (these are not original) lead from the top of the one-story portico to a center hallway on the second floor of the structure. Four brick chimneys with simple corbeled cornices protrude above the gable and [cross-gable](#), slate roof which surmounts the house.

The four rooms at the front of the first floor of the structure are relatively undisturbed and manifest influences from the various architectural styles of the late nineteenth century, rather than the classical shapes of earlier precedents. The two original projections or porches on the right side of the house have been substantially altered, and the porch on the rear of the structure was destroyed when the large addition was erected c. 1948. The house has little noteworthy paneling or molding. The doorway surrounds, window casings and much of the other interior trim are oak and feature fluted pilasters typical of the period. An elaborate and relatively heavy coffered ceiling of oak cased beams -- now painted but originally stained -- adorns the first two rooms on the right side of the first floor of the house. The hallways on the innermost walls of both sides of the first floor contain a pair of wooden half-columns supported by sizable but unembellished bases. An original [stairway](#) at the center rear of the original portion of the house provides access to the second story.

The [balusters](#) and [newel posts](#) reinforce the essential simplicity of the interior decor. The most imposing features of the interior of the house are the three fireplaces on the first floor. Located on the side walls of the two front rooms are fireplaces with richly-decorated, metal surrounds and unembellished, wooden mantelpieces. Even more impressive, however, is the fireplace in the second room on the left side of the house. Two Doric columns support a broad mantel highlighted by recessed panels. An imposing and richly-decorated, metal fireplace cover conceals the fireplace opening.

While the exterior of the house reflects strong [Colonial Revival](#) influences, particularly in the front portico detailing, there is a distinctive late Victorian character evident. The windows, for example, are double hung, yet the upper sash show a series of narrow elongated vertical lights which terminate in pointed triangles forming diamond lights - all of beveled glass. Then in the lower sash is one large beveled glass insert with no muntins. The overall character of the Wood-Platt House is transitional. While the impressive double-tiered front portico is distinctly Colonial Revival and

reflects influences of this popular turn of the century mode, there are many carry-over details from the Victorian period. Likely designed by a local architect, the house is a significant example of the blend often found in fine homes in the early 1900's. The Wood-Platt House is an important reminder of residential design and construction found in Elizabeth, Dilworth, Myers Park and other developing suburbs of early twentieth century Charlotte.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria set forth in NCGS 160A-399.4:**

**a. Historical and cultural significance:** The historical and cultural significance of the property known as the Wood-Platt House rests upon three factors. First, the structure has architectural significance as one of the finer examples of transitional style domestic architecture which survives in Charlotte, N.C. Second, the structure is one of the earlier houses of Elizabeth, one of Charlotte's initial streetcar suburbs. Third, the structure has associative ties with individuals of local and regional importance.

**b. Suitability for preservation and restoration:** The overall condition of the structure is fair to good. Indeed, the front of the house could be easily restored to an approximation of its original appearance. The interior of the house has been substantially modified, especially in the rear.

**c. Educational value:** The Wood-Platt House has educational value because of the historical and cultural significance of the property.

**d. Cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance or repair:** At present, the Commission has no intention of securing the fee simple or any lesser included interest in this property. The Commission presently assumes that all costs associated with restoring and maintaining the property will be paid by the owner or subsequent owner of the property.

**e. Possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property:** The Wood-Platt House is currently zoned 06. The Commission believes that the structure could be adapted to a variety of purposes.

**f. Appraised value:** The current tax appraisal of the improvements on the property is \$2,630. The current tax appraisal of the .288 acres of land is \$37,640. The most recent annual tax bill on the property was \$674.53. The Commission is aware that

designation would allow the owner to apply for a deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes "historic property."

**g. The administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs:** As stated earlier, the Commission presently has no intention of purchasing the fee simple or any lesser included interest in this property. Furthermore, the Commission presently assumes that all costs associated with the property will be paid by the present or subsequent owners of the property.

**9. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria established for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places:** The Commission Judges that the property known as the Wood-Platt House does meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Basic to the Commission's judgment is its knowledge that the National Register of Historic Places, established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, represents the decision of the Federal Government to expand its recognition of historic properties to include those of local, regional and State significance. The Commission believes that its investigation of the property known as the Wood-Platt House demonstrates that the property possesses local historical and cultural importance. Consequently, the Commission judges that the property known as the Wood-Platt House does meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places.

**10. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historical importance to Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County:** The property known as the Wood-Platt House is historically important to Charlotte and Mecklenburg County for three reasons: First, the structure has architectural significance as one of the finer examples of transitional style domestic architecture which survives in Charlotte, N.C. Second, the structure is one of the earlier houses of Elizabeth, one of Charlotte's initial streetcar suburbs. Third, the structure has associative ties with individuals of local and regional importance.

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Chain of Title

1. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1864, Page 261 (October 11, 1956).  
Grantors Bettie B. Yandell (widow)  
Grantees R. Douglas Neal & Wife, Zaida I. Neal



2. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1348, Page 86 (November 23, 1948).  
Grantors James B. Craighill, Commissioner  
Grantees Bettie B. Randall
3. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1257, Page 521 (July 3, 1947).  
Grantors Carrie S. Platt (widow)  
Grantees Chase, Brenizer, H. C. Dockery & J. M. Shannonhouse, Trustees for Home Federal Savings and Loan Association (Deed of Trust).
4. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 314, Page 80 (April 18, 1913 ).  
Grantors W. H. Wood & Wife, Louisiana G. Wood  
Grantees Carrie S. Platt
5. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 256, Page 483 (March 3, 1910).  
Grantors Mrs. Luisa D. Duls & Husband, C. H. Duls  
Grantees Word H. Wood

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#### Bibliography

An Inventory of Buildings In Mecklenburg County And Charlotte For The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission.

Charlotte City Directory 1911.

Charlotte City Directory 1914.

Charlotte City Directory 1947.

Charlotte City Directory 1951.

Charlotte City Directory 1955.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Health Department.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office.

Sanborn Insurance Map 1929.

*The Charlotte Daily Observer.*

*The Charlotte News.*

*The Charlotte Observer.*

Vital Statistics of Mecklenburg County .

**Date of Preparation of this report:** October 30, 1978

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Director  
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