

## INGLESIDE



*This report was written on September 1, 1976*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as Ingleside is located on the Bud Henderson Rd. in the northern portion of Mecklenburg County.

**2. Name, addresses, and telephone numbers of the present owners and occupants of the property:**

The present owners of the property are:

Ralph B. Dean H. Skipper

RFD 3

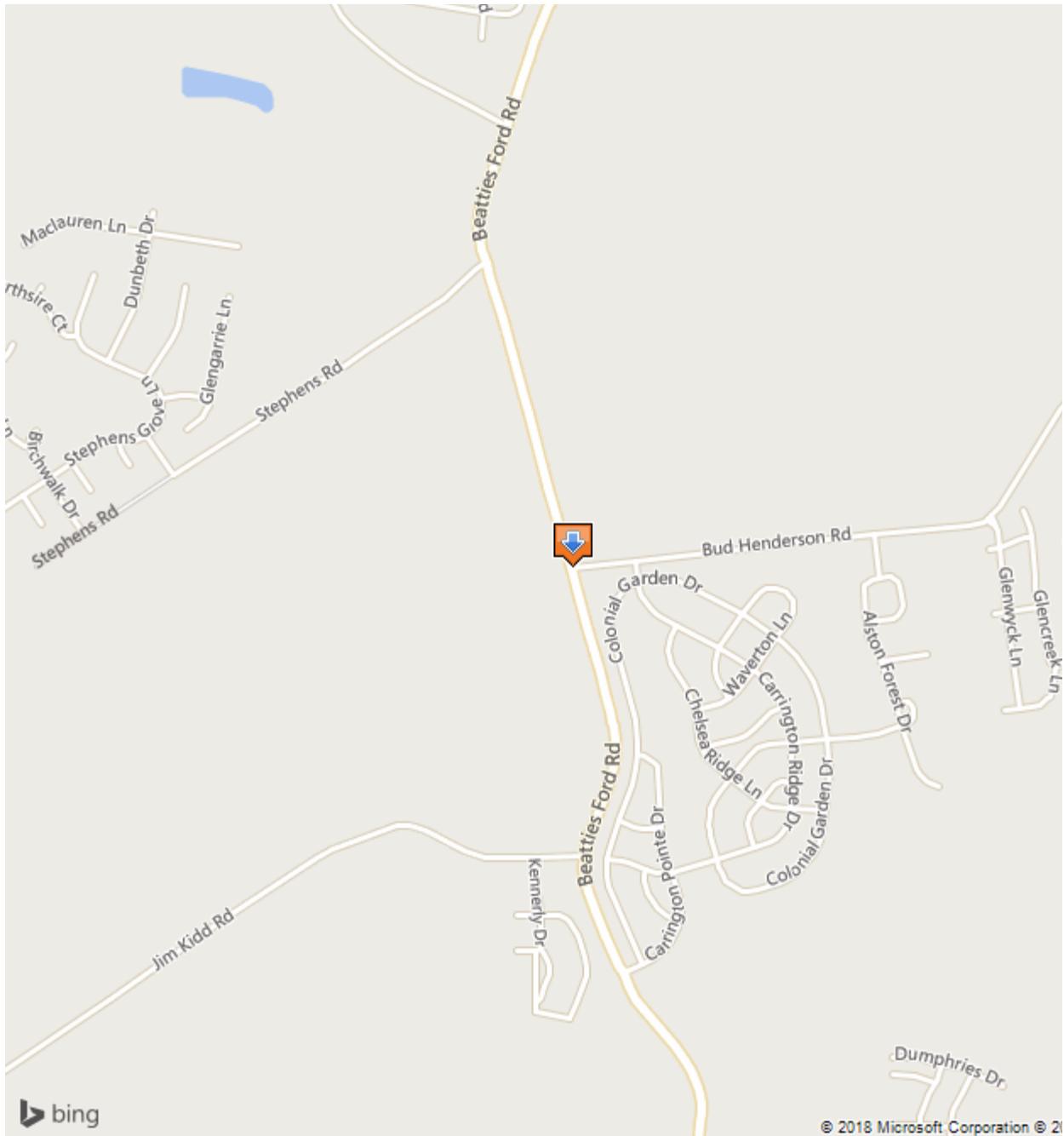
Box 41

Huntersville, NC 28078

Telephone: 875-6173

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

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



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent reference to this property is found in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3708 at page 762. The Parcel Number of the property is 015-021-18.

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

Local tradition holds that the house known as Ingleside, Scottish for "fireside," was erected during the years immediately following the Civil War. It was the home of Dr. William Speight McLean Davidson (1817-1873) prominent physician and planter of northern Mecklenburg, who

was a grandson of Major John Davidson, the 18th century industrialist and planter who had constructed the magnificent plantation house at Rural Hill on the Catawba River. One of ten children born to John Davidson and Sarah Harper Brevard Davidson, Dr. William S. M. Davidson received his B.A. from Davidson College in 1840 as a member of the first graduating class of that institution. Having acquired his M.D. from the Medical College of South Carolina at Charleston in 1842, he returned to Mecklenburg County and established a medical practice which extended from Long Creek to the Iredell County Line. His first wife was Jane Torrence. Dr. Davidson's only child, James Torrance Davidson, was born to this union and died in young adulthood. Following the death of his first wife, Dr. Davidson married Rebecca Reed, a native of Alabama, whom he also outlived. His third wife was Mary Johnston. Dr. Davidson died in 1873 and was buried in the graveyard at Hopewell Presbyterian Church. He was remembered as a resourceful and energetic citizen of his community. His widow moved to Charlotte soon after her husband's death. She died in 1896. Since then the house has passed through several hands and has recently been refurbished by Mr. Ralph E. Skipper.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains an architectural description prepared by Jack O. Boyte, A.I.A.

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

**a. historical and cultural significance:** The historical and cultural significance of the property known as Ingleside rests upon two factors. First, it has strong associative ties with a family of local and regional prominence. Second, it has architectural significance as the finest example of the Italianate Style in Mecklenburg County.

**b. Suitability for preservation and restoration:** Ingleside retains much of its original integrity and therefore is suitable for preservation and restoration.

**c. Educational value:** Ingleside has educational value as the finest example of the Italianate Style in Mecklenburg County and as a structure which has strong associative ties with a family of local and regional prominence.

**d. Cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance, or repair:** The Commission has no intention of purchasing this property nor is it aware of any intention of the owner to sell. The Commission assumes that all costs associated with renovating and maintaining the property will be paid by the owner or subsequent owners of the property.

**e. Possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property:** The Commission concurs with the present owner's intention to maintain the house as a viable residential structure. The house could be transformed into a house-museum.

**f. Appraised value:** The current tax appraisal value of the land and house is \$26,600. The Commission is aware that designation of the property would allow the owner to apply for a special classification for purposes of Ad Valorem taxation.

**g. The administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs:** As indicated earlier, the Commission has no intention of purchasing this property. Furthermore, the Commission assumes that all costs associated with the property will be paid by whatever party now owns or will subsequently own the property. Clearly, the present owner has demonstrated the capacity to pay the expenses associated with maintaining the structure.

**9. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria established for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places:** The Commission judges that the property known as Ingleside does meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Basic to the Commission's judgment is its knowledge of the fact that the National Register of Historic Places functions to identify properties of local and state historic significance. The Commission believes that the property known as Ingleside is of local historic significance and thereby meets the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places.

**10. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historic importance to Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County:** As noted earlier, the property known as Ingleside is of local historical significance for two reasons. First, it has strong associative ties with a family of local and regional prominence. Dr. Davidson, a grandson of Major John Davidson, was among the earliest graduates of Davidson College. He was one of the earliest professionally-trained physicians in Mecklenburg County. Second, the house has architectural value as the finest example of the Italianate Style in Mecklenburg County.

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#### Bibliography

John Brevard Alexander, *Biographical Sketches of the Early Settlers of Hopewell Community*.

*An Inventory of Older Buildings In Mecklenburg County and Charlotte for the Historic Properties Commission.*

Chalmers Gaston Davidson, *Major John Davidson of Rural Hill. Mecklenburg County. NC Pioneer, Industrialist, Planter.*

Chalmers Gaston Davidson, *The Plantation World Around Davidson.*

Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office.

*The Semi-Centennial Catalogue of Davidson College.*

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** September 1, 1976

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Director  
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### *Architectural Description*

Typical of many of the old country lanes in Northern Mecklenburg County is the narrow, winding Bud Henderson Road, which turns off Gilead Road a few miles west of Interstate 77. Originally a dirt wagon path between several plantations and connecting to the Salisbury Post Road, this lane probably dates from the early 1700s.

Much of the land along the road was originally acquired by land grant to pioneer Scotch Irish settler Samuel Wilson. On the site of Wilson's original house his descendant, Dr. William Speight McClean Davidson, started to build a magnificent new manor house in the 1850s. Today stands this remarkably preserved Tuscan Revival house called Ingleside (Scottish for 'fireside') said to have been finished after the Civil War.

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century the popularity of classical design exemplified by Greek Revival architecture was waning. A more flexible style from the domestic architecture of the Italian Campagna was growing in favor. Featuring a simple cubic block, this design lacked projections or recessions in the main mass. Columns, if present, were confined to porches or verandas. A massive cornice (called *cornicione* in Tuscany) was the crowning feature of the style. Roofs were low and exterior facades symmetrical. Wall surfaces were usually smooth and often the ground story rusticated. These influences are clearly evident at Ingleside.

With a classic center hall plan, the house is three stories high, including a full cellar recessed half below grade. Wide low roofed verandas span the full width at the front and rear. The three bay front and rear facades feature double panelled entrance doors with transom windows and narrow side lights. Windows on these walls are doubled, with two four light sash in each unit. Original wood louvered blinds showing typical pegged mortise and tenoned connections are stored on the place. Fortunately the original iron strap hinges and drive pintles remain. Each side facade

consists of two bays on each of the three floors. Single four light over four light windows open to second and third floor rooms. In the cellar walls are smaller balancing four light windows.

The front veranda floor rests on four square brick columns rising some five feet above grade. Above this are round brick stuccoed columns with simple Doric capitals supporting the veranda roof. With a plain boxed cornice, the moderate veranda overhang is simply finished and has no console brackets as found in the main roof cornice. Originally the veranda columns were connected by a low rounded railing supported by small square fluted pickets. This original balustrade has been salvaged and will be restored.

In the cellar area, where there were large service rooms originally, the two massive interior chimneys provided large fireplaces. There has been extensive remodeling in this part of the house, and much of the original work is concealed. However, there is abundant evidence to indicate that servant quarters were here originally. It is also probable that in this area were storage rooms and possibly an original winter kitchen.

The cellar walls are solid brick faced on the exterior with cement stucco scored to simulate ashlar stone. Above this are walls faced with narrow square edged lap siding extending up to a wide panelled frieze above the second floor windows. With panels molded to match the second floor window placement, this frieze includes repeated scroll brackets supporting a wide molded overhang, which dominates the exterior facade. Roof surfaces are low pitched and tin covered.

Through the tall double entrance doors one enters a wide front hall area which forms an expansive foyer. This foyer is set off by a rounded arch placed in the front third of the hall. Behind this a broad stair rises some eight feet to an intermediate landing at the rear. Then in a second run the stair rises another seven feet to the second floor. Above the second floor the stair continues to rise in two runs to a low garret landing. In a graceful continuous run a simple rounded rail follows the stair through each run to the garret landing. Supporting this fine rail are two small turned balusters set in the open end of each stair treabalustersd. At the first floor a heavy, rounded, tapered newel starts the balustrade.

From the wide center hall high six panel doors open to two rooms at each side. At the right the two rooms are joined by a small pair of alcove doors where built-in cupboards with narrow shelves occur in the alcove side walls. Traditionally these cabinets were used by the original builder, Dr. William Davidson, to store his medicines. The two large rooms on this side were likely waiting and treatment rooms for visiting patients.

Between these rooms there is a massive interior chimney from which large fireplaces open to the front and rear rooms on both floors. The woodwork in these rooms, and throughout the first floor, is relatively simple. On all walls a wide two piece wood base is applied to plaster surfaces. Above this a small molded chair rail occurs on all walls. At the ceiling in each room is an elaborate cornice molding. Floors are wide pine planks. The fireplace mantels in each of the four large first floor rooms are simple heavy wood members showing no classical ornamentation, and with no overmantel.

On the second floor one finds a broad simply furnished center hall with two large bed chambers at each side. Centered in the interior partition between these rooms are mantels much like those on the first floor. Floors are, again, wide pine boards.

From the double run garret stair one enters a loft area with low head room which was floored for storage only. In the garret are heavy rafters, some of which show typical vertical marks of water-sawn lumber. There are a number of hand hewn members also visible. Wooden pegs as well as early manufactured spikes were used for joining these framing members.

Ingleside is a unique house in Mecklenburg County. Built at a time when the economy was poor, the house is one of few structures remaining from the middle of the nineteenth century, and probably the only Italianate building remaining from that period.