Town of Cornelius  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Historic Landmark Designation Revised Report to SHPO

Date: 11-30-04
Cornelius Case #: HLD 01-04
Property Name: Old Methodist Parsonage
Location: 19631 South Main Street
Cornelius, Mecklenburg County, NC
Meck. Co. Tax ID: 005-151-37
Property Owner(s): Randolph Lewis and Abigail Jennings
19631 South Main Street
Cornelius, NC 28031
704-896-0362

Date of Construction: 1897

Location, Boundaries, and Justification of Proposed Designation
The subject property located on the west side of South Main Street (NC Highway 115) which is to the west of the Norfolk Southern O Line Railroad, just south of the Town Center of Cornelius. The entire property comprised of 0.578 acres and a house is included in the proposed designation. The property remains largely intact since its origination date of 1897.

Historic Background and Significance Assessment
The house was constructed in 1897 to serve as the parsonage for the Mount Zion United Methodist Church located due east beyond NC Highway 115 and the railroad. Its historic significance is tied directly to the church as the primary place of worship in Cornelius near the turn of the twentieth century. The house is also architecturally significant in that it is an excellent and rare example of Traditional Vernacular with Colonial Revival and Victorian elements in the Town of Cornelius.

Physical Description
The following physical description is taken from the 2004 Cornelius Historic Survey Update: This two-story traditional house has a side gable asphalt shingle roof and is three bays wide and one bay deep with a one story rear ell. There is a shed projection on the north elevation with five windows. Two-over-two sash windows are found throughout. There is one end chimney on the south elevation and one rear interior chimney. The original porch has been removed and replaced by a gable covered entry supported by turned posts. The entry door is flanked by sidelights and a transom. Asbestos shingles have been removed to expose the original wood siding.
The property owners have completed the *Historic Preservation Certification Application Part A-Description of Rehabilitation* and plan to seek placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

The following physical description was provided by the property owner: *Clapboard siding, two-story, two-over-two windows, 2 chimneys, 5 fireplaces with hand carved mantles, heart of pine staircases and floors throughout.*

**Integrity Evaluation**
The house is undergoing rehabilitation with roof and porch projects currently underway to be completed in December 2004. The house retains some of its original wood siding. All replacement wood siding is of like size and species. All original windows are being restored. The brick chimneys were stuccoed prior to the current owner. The original full length porch was likely removed in the 1930s and replaced by a covered stoop entry. Also, a sleeping porch was constructed on the rear second story possibly during the 1930s. The porch was later enclosed with windows. New windows were installed on the porch around 2000. A rear porch on the one story rear ell was also enclosed prior to 1940. The porch was recently renovated as a sun porch to mimic the original porch’s openness. Overall, the house retains most of its integrity and is the oldest and best preserved structure of its type and architectural style in the Town of Cornelius.

Any projects proposed to take place following local Historic Landmark designation will require review and approval by the Town of Cornelius Historic Preservation Commission.

**Assessed Value of Property**
The Mecklenburg County Tax Assessor’s Office assessed the value of the entire property including 0.578 acres of land and all structures and improvements at $54,300 on January 17, 2003.

**Other Information**
None.
Subject Property: Old Methodist Parsonage

Neighborhood Residential, Transit District Overlay
Transitional Residential District Overlay

HLD 01-04
Historic Landmark Designation
19631 South Main Street
Abigail Jennings
and Randolph Lewis
Pictorial Study of the Restoration of the Old Methodist Parsonage
19631 South Main Street
Cornelius, NC 28031

Submitted by
Randolph Lewis and Abigail Jennings, owners

November 18, 2004

For the Town of Cornelius
Historic Preservation Commission
Front of house and portico before restoration.

Note asbestos siding

After restoration

Asbestos siding removed and abated.

Front door, transom, sidelights, and siding restored.
Southwest view before restoration.

Note pre-1940’s addition and enclosure of back porch

Southwest after restoration. Enclosed back porch treated with single-light door panels to mimic original porch’s openness.
Interior of back porch/addition area before

Very dark and compartmentalized

Interior of enclosed back porch

Light, open, and porch-like

Original exterior clapboard siding along right wall
Before west and interior views of pre-1940’s two-story addition. Upper story probably originally a sleeping porch. Was enclosed prior to 1940’s with mismatched window sashes.

Note asphalt siding covered clapboards below and a bead-board band on second story.
After

Exterior and interior views of renovated addition. Functionally inefficient sleeping porch windows replaced with wood casement windows with window-lights of approximately the same proportions as required by the SHPO.
Before North view

Note electrical and telephone service above ground

After North view

Utilities buried

Upstairs window removed while original sashes are being restored
Special Significances of the Old Methodist Parsonage

Church documents attest that the parsonage was completed by the Mt. Zion Methodist Church in 1897. The parsonage is one of the oldest buildings in Cornelius with its original architectural integrity remaining intact.

Constructed during the period when the Victorian style was giving way to Colonial Revival, the parsonage is a traditional vernacular reflection of both these styles. While the gable roof and symmetry of the façade are indicative of the Colonial Revival period, the two-over-two window sashes and ornamental woodwork gracing the original front porch and five fireplace mantels represent Victorian elements.

Note: The front portico is not original to the house. Old photographs show a much larger, hip-roof front porch with columns and Victorian brackets. It is the long-range plan of the owners to re-construct the original porch.

As the setting of important community gatherings such as weddings, the parsonage played a central role in the cultural history of our town from 1897 until the church’s sale of the property in the early 1940’s. A beekeeper contracted by the owners remembered seeing his sister married in the front parlor when he was a boy in 1936. Many other Cornelius residents have also dropped by the house to share their memories of weddings and occasions at the parsonage.

Front parlor
This map is prepared for the inventory of real property within Mecklenburg County and is compiled from recorded deeds, plats, tax maps, surveys, planimetric maps, and other public records and data. Users of this map are hereby notified that the aforementioned public primary information sources should be consulted for verification. Mecklenburg County and its mapping contractors assume no legal responsibility for the information contained herein.