

THE LUCIAN H. WALKER HOUSE



This report was written on January 2, 1989

1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the Lucian H. Walker House is located at 328 East Park Avenue, Charlotte, N.C.

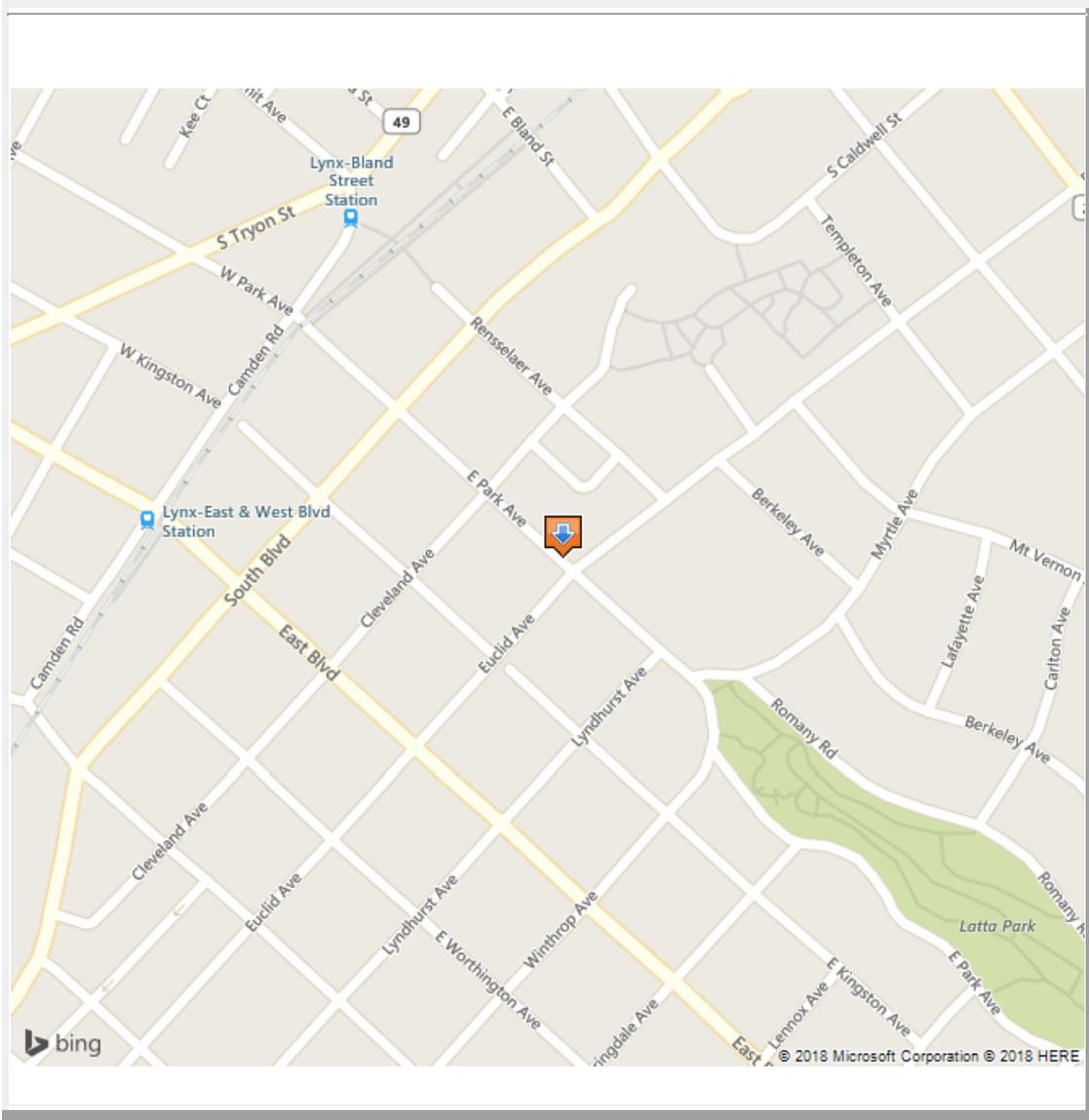
2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner of the property:
The owner of the property is:

Scott C. Lovejoy
Hedrick, Eatman, Gardner & Kincheloe
P.O. Box 30397
Charlotte, N.C., 28230

Telephone: 704/377-1511

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 which depicts the location of the property.



5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property: The most recent deed to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 5828, Page 269. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is: 123-076-10

6. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. William H. Huffman, Ph.D.

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

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

a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural

importance: The Commission judges that the property known as the Lucian H. Walker House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) the Lucian H. Walker House, erected in 1894, belongs to the most significant concentration of pre-1900 suburban homes in Charlotte, N.C.; 2) the Lucian H. Walker House, most likely designed by architect Charles Christian Hook (1869-1938), is one of the oldest homes in Dilworth, Charlotte's initial streetcar suburb, and exhibits architectural features, especially its overall form and massing, which are unique among the extant pre-1900 houses in Dilworth; and 3) the Lucian H. Walker House, situated on a corner lot on the southwestern quadrant of the intersection of E. Park Ave. and Euclid Ave., occupies a place of strategic importance in terms of the surrounding Dilworth streetscapes.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or

association: The Commission contends that the architectural description by Dr. Dan L. Morrill which is included in this report demonstrates that the Lucian H. Walker House meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal: The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes "historic property." The current appraised value of the improvement is \$115,650. The current appraised value of the .241 acres of land is \$30,000. The total appraised value of the property is \$145,650. The most recent tax bill on the property was \$1,827.18. The property is zoned R6-MF.

Date of Preparation of this Report: January 2, 1989

Prepared by: Dr. Dan L. Morrill
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Historical Overview

Dr. William H. Huffman

June, 1988

The Walker house, located at the southwest Corner of Park and Euclid Avenues in Dilworth, was built in 1894 by Lucian H. and Annie S. Walker, and the architect was probably C. C. Hook, one of Charlotte's outstanding practitioners of that art.

Dilworth, the city's first streetcar suburb, was a product of the growth spurred by late nineteenth-century New South industrialization based on cotton mills in and around the city. It was developed by entrepreneur Edward Dilworth Latta (1851-1925). The Princeton-educated South Carolina native opened a men's clothing store in Charlotte in 1876, and in 1883, as part of the city's industrial boom of that decade which centered around cotton mills and mill machinery suppliers, he opened a men's pants factory. In 1890, Latta formed a development firm, the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company (known locally as the 4C's) and bought 422 acres a mile or so southwest of town, and had a new subdivision laid out in a grid pattern.

Along the main boulevards and some major side streets, large houses would be built for the well-to-do, with more modest bungalows being built on most of the side streets. To draw prospective buyers out from the city, in 1891 Latta bought out the city's horse-drawn streetcar line and installed a new electric trolley system that ran from the Square out to Dilworth. Other attractions were a major amusement park (Latta Park) with boating lake, a pavilion for traveling shows, ball fields and a racetrack. Sales promotion was boosted by selling lots on easy installment terms, so that a prospective buyer could be persuaded to use the "rent money" to purchase a new home. Lucian Walker was a bookkeeper at the Mecklenburg Iron Works in 1894 when he and his wife Annie commissioned the 4C's to build a house for them on Park Avenue.² It is most likely that the architect of the house was C. C. Hook, who worked for the 4C's at the time.

Charles Christian Hook (1869-1938) was born to German immigrants in Wheeling, W. Va., and received his higher education at Washington University in St. Louis. When he came to Charlotte in 1900, his first position was as a teacher of mechanical drawing in the old South school. He began the practice of architecture by designing houses for Latta's 4C's in 1893. A contemporary newspaper article of that date elaborates: " E. D. Latta has arranged to introduce some new styles of architecture at Dilworth, and Mr. Hook will provide plans for five new style residences. The will include the "Queen Anne," "Colonial," and "Modern American" styles of architecture. All of the buildings will be built in the best manner, with slate roofs, fine interior finish and ornamental stairways."³ Hook's career eventually spanned forty-five years, during which he undertook many landmark commissions in the city and various parts of the state. At times, he was in partnership with others: Frank Sawyer. 1902-1907, Willard Rogers,

1912-1916, and with his son, W. W. Hook, 1924-1938. Among his best-known designs in Charlotte are the old Charlotte City Hall, the Charlotte Women's Club, the J. B. Duke mansion, the Belk Department Store Trade Street facade of 1927, and the William Henry Belk mansion. Statewide, they include the west wing of the state capital in Raleigh, the Richmond County courthouse, Phillips Hall at UNC-Chapel Hill, the Science Hall at Davidson College, and the State Hospital in Morganton.⁴

In September, 1894, the *Charlotte Observer*, in its "Dilworth Dots" column, reported that "The McDowell, Walter, Harrill and Jones houses at Dilworth are in various stages of completion. Each would be an ornament to the city."⁵ The following month, the reporter assigned to the Dilworth beat noted, "Wonder what color Mr. Walker is to paint the lower part of his house, as he is painting the roof yellow," the *Observer* has often heard asked. The combination will be white, yellow and green - new and effective." The Harrill, Walker, McDowell, and Jones houses are all handsome additions to Dilworth.⁶

In December, "Dilworth Dots" recorded the completion of the Walker's new home, after a note on some amenities in the new suburb: The people living in Dilworth will have almost as many conveniences as the people living in the city. Sewer pipes are now being laid along the boulevard. With this the houses can easily connect. Mr. and Mrs. Lucian Walker will be on the move early this morning.⁷ By 1902, the Charlotte City Directory records that Lucian Walker was a teller at the Charlotte National Bank, and lived on East Avenue. Annie Walker was shown as the Principal of the Primary Department of the Presbyterian College for Women (a forerunner of Queens College that was built on College Street in 1900-01).⁸ The following year the Walkers no longer appear in the Directories, and it seems probable that they moved from the city. From 1905 to 1912, the house was owned by Mrs. N. H. Bispham, a widow, who sold it to George M. Rose, Jr., and Mary Crow Rose, in which family it remained until 1965.⁹ It subsequently passed through a number of owners as Dilworth has re-emerged as a vibrant, revitalized neighborhood and Historic District.

As a representative of the early houses in Dilworth and the early work of C. C. Hook, the Walker house is an important part of that community's historic fabric.

Notes

¹ Dan L. Morrill, "Edward Dilworth Latta and the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company (1890-1925): Builders of a New South City," *The North Carolina Historical Record* 62(1985).293-316.

² Charlotte City Directory, 1896/7, p. 86.

³ *Charlotte Observer*, June 4, 1893, p.6.

⁴ Information on file at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission office

⁵ *Charlotte Observer*. September 15, 1894, p. 3.

⁶ *Charlotte Observer*. October 13, 1894, p.4.

⁷ *Charlotte Observer*. December 4, 1894, p.6.

⁸ Charlotte City Directory. 1902, p. 463

⁹ Mecklenburg County Deed Books 198, p. 388; 291, p.634; 2653, p.537. Rose was a cotton broker with Rose-Webb & Co.: Charlotte City Directory. 1912, p. 368.

Architectural Description

The Lucian H. Walker House is a two story, frame dwelling with a brick pier foundation with subsequent brick in-fill, two off-center, interior brick chimneys, a large, wraparound columned porch with balustrade, shed dormers, and a gable roof and cross gables. Erected in 1894 on the southwestern quadrant of the intersection of Euclid Avenue and East Park Avenue in Dilworth, Charlotte's initial streetcar suburb, it belongs to an assemblage of suburban houses that occupies a place of seminal influence in the architectural history of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. "Dilworth's noteworthy residential architecture today includes not only some of the city's few surviving Victorian houses, but also Charlotte's first experiments with the Colonial Revival," writes architectural historian Thomas W. Hanchett.¹

Colonial Revivalism, which emphasizes classical ornamentation, geometric massing and, at least in North Carolina, simplicity of detail in comparison with the more adventuresome specimens of this motif found in the major cities of the North and Midwest, was probably the most popular example of historic eclecticism which emerged in the late 1800's and early 1900's in the United States, including the South. This widespread acclaim was in no small part due to the fact that Colonial Revivalism provided compelling images which enabled wealthy suburbanites to satisfy their "search for order" and their desire to live in an "idyllic escape from the overcrowding, crime, and ethnic strife identified with the city."³

It is true that Charlotte's residential architecture began to undergo a fundamental but gradual transformation away from Vernacular and Victorian motifs and toward so-called "period house" styles, especially Colonial Revivalism, when Edward Dilworth Latta and his Charlotte Consolidated Construction company began selling lots and erecting suburban homes for affluent and middle class residents of Dilworth.³ "Early Dilworth was a curious concoction because its conception was more European than anything in America at the time," contends historian David R. Goldfield. "Unlike most American suburbs but similar to most European neighborhoods," he continues, "Dilworth presented a mixture of elite and middle-class residences." According to Goldfield, this socio-economic heterogeneity gave rise to a "mixture of architectural styles" in Dilworth.⁴

Goldfield's excessive claims for Dilworth's uniqueness in American suburbanization notwithstanding, the neighborhood does contain a rich variety of architectural styles. Not surprisingly, most of the first houses were built on corner lots, where the owners could gain greater separation from their neighbors, at least on one side. Among them are the Harrill-Porter House, a Vernacular style Victorian house similar in its austere simplicity to many houses once found in the center city, including the back streets of Fourth Ward, and, even more significantly, the Mallonee-Jones House and the Robert J. Walker House, two Queen Anne style residences designed by Charles Christian Hook (1869-1938), a native of Wheeling, W. Va, graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., and an architect of local and regional importance.⁵

On June 4, 1893, the *Charlotte Observer* announced that: Mr. E. D. Latta has arranged to introduce some new styles of architecture at Dilworth, and Mr. Hook will provide plans for five new-style residences. They will include the "Queen Anne," "Colonial," and "Modern American" styles of architecture. All of the buildings will be built in the best manner, with slate roofs, fine interior finish and ornamental stairways.⁶

C. C. Hook was especially interested in ushering Colonial Revivalism into the local built environment. Commenting upon Hook's intentions, the *Charlotte Observer* exclaimed in September, 1894, that Hook planned to erect a:

genuine, 'ye olden time' house . . . after the style of the typical Southern home, with four large columns, two full stories high, surmounted by a classical pediment. Mr. Hook . . . will make the plans after the true classical style of architecture, which at one time predominated in the South and is being revived. The most striking feature of the house will be its simplicity of design and convenience of arrangement. The so-called 'filigree' ornamentation will not consideration, and only the true design wit carried out and thus give Charlotte another style . . .⁷

The earliest Colonial Revival style residence in Dilworth which is definitively attributable to C. C. Hook is the Gautier-Gilchrist House at 320 East Park Avenue.⁸ Its symmetrical facade, large gable roof with dormers, and modillion cornice stand in

sharp contrast with the essentially asymmetrical massing and ornate decorative detail of Hook's Mallonee-Jones House at 400 East Kingston Avenue and his Robert J. Walker House at 329 East Park Avenue.⁹ The Jones-Garibaldi House at 228 East Park Avenue, erected in 1894, is an even earlier example of Colonial Revivalism in Dilworth; it was probably designed by C. C. Hook, as, most likely, was the Lucian H. Walker House.¹⁰

The Lucian H. Walker House is difficult to classify in terms of architectural style. Its symmetrical massing, unadorned molded eaves, Palladian-like tripartite window arrangement near the top of the large, front pediment, and the wraparound porch which is bordered by a balustrade and attenuated, wooden Roman Doric columns with annulets, place the house within the traditions of classical design. Other features of the Lucian H. Walker House, however, most especially the off-center placement of the front entrance, which has sidelights and a transom, and the less than completely balanced fenestration (the majority of the windows are 1/1 sash), suggest that the house does not conform to Colonial Revivalism, such as one clearly encounters with the Jones-Garibaldi House, which was built in the same year, or the Villalonga-Alexander House, which C. C. Hook definitely designed.¹¹ Perhaps the Lucian H. Walker House is an example of what the *Charlotte Observer* called the "Modern American" style.¹²

The rear of the Lucian H. Walker House has experienced considerable modifications, including the interior rooms. Otherwise, the interior of the house retains its essential integrity. A somewhat clumsily-placed, center hallway bisects the first floor, with the parlor and its replacement mantel to the left front. The other mantels in the house are original, as are the ceramic tile fireplace surrounds and hearths. Base moldings, picture moldings, and crown moldings are typical of those found in other homes in the oldest section of Dilworth.

The most dramatic interior feature is an L-shaped stairway and balustrade which leads from the room on the right front to the second floor. On balance, however, the most significant architectural feature of the Lucian H. Walker House is its role in documenting the evolution of Charlotte's suburban built environment in the late nineteenth century.

Footnotes

¹ For a detailed analysis of the architecture of North Carolina's early twentieth century suburbs, see Catherine W. Bishir and Lawrence S. Early, *Early Twentieth-Century Suburbs in North Carolina: Essays on History, Architecture and Planning* (Raleigh: Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1985), hereinafter cited as *Suburbs*. Thomas W. Hanchett, "Charlotte: Suburban Development in the Textile and Trade Center of the Carolinas." In *Suburbs*, p. 72. The Colonial Revival style arose in the

1880's and is attributed to the architectural firm McKim, Mead and White (Charles Fallen McKim, W. R. Mead, Stanford White). For additional information, see Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp.159-165.

² David R. Goldfield, "North Carolina's Early Twentieth-Century Suburbs and the Urbanizing South", *Suburbs*, p. 9. Margaret Supplee Smith, "The American Idyll in North Carolina's First Suburbs: Landscape and Architecture", *Suburbs*, p. 23.

³ For a comprehensive history of Dilworth, see Dan L. Morrill, "Edward Dilworth Latta and the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company (1890-1925): Builders of a New South City" *The North Carolina Historical Review* (July, 1985), pp. 293-316.

⁴ David R. Goldfield, "North Carolina's Early Twentieth-Century Suburbs and the Urbanizing South", *Suburbs*, p. 9. For an explanation of the term "period house", see John Poppeliers, S. Allen Chambers, and Nancy B. Schwartz, "What Style Is It? Part Four." *Historic Preservation* (January-March, 1977), pp. 14-23.

⁵ Dr. Dan L. Morrill and Caroline Mesrobian, "Survey and Research Report On The Mallonee-Jones House" (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, January 2, 1980). Hereinafter cited as Mallonee-Jones. Dr. Dan L. Morrill and Thomas W. Hanchett, "Survey and Research Report On The Harrill-Porter House" (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, January 6, 1982). Dr. Dan L. Morrill and Caroline Mesrobian, "Survey and Research Report On The Robert J. Walker House" (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, November 5, 1980). Hereinafter cited as Robert J. Walker.

⁶ *Charlotte Observer*, June 4, 1893.

⁷ *Charlotte Observer*, September 19, 1894. Hook's earliest Colonial Revival design was for a house which no longer stands.

⁸ Dr. Dan L. Morrill and Caroline Mesrobian, "Survey and Research Report On The Gautier-Gilchrist House" (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, January 7, 1981).

⁹ Mallonee-Jones. Robert Walker.

¹⁰ Dr. William H. Huffman and Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Survey and Research Report On The Jones-Garibaldi House" (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, February 5, 1986). Hereinafter cited as Jones-Garibaldi.

¹¹ Jones-Garibaldi. Dr. Dan L. Morrill and Ruth Little-Stokes, "Survey and Research Report On The Villalonga-Alexander House (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic

Properties Commission, June 4, 1978). The Villalonga-Alexander House was substantially damaged by fire on March 14, 1948.

¹² *Charlotte Observer*, September 19, 1894.