

SURVEY AND RESEARCH REPORT

On The

Woodlawn Avenue Duplex



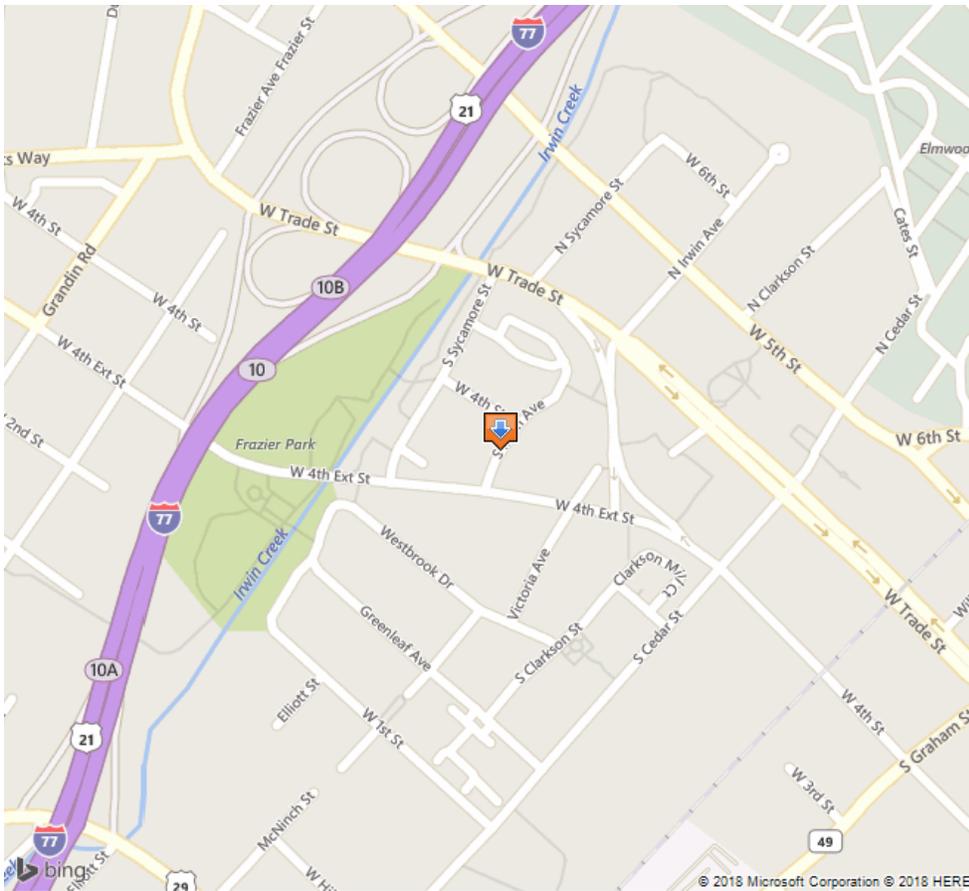
1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the Woodlawn Avenue Duplex is located at 210 South Irwin Ave, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Its UTM location is 17 513226E 3898947N

2. Name and address of the present owner of the property:

T Hardy Investment Group LLC
PO Box 621085
Charlotte, NC 28262

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

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



5. Current deed book and tax parcel information for the property:

The Tax Parcel Number of the property is 07321509. The most recent deed reference to this property is 20473-984, recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book

6. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property.

7. A brief architectural and physical description of the property: This report contains a brief architectural description of the property.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets 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 property known as the Woodlawn Avenue Duplex does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- 1) The Woodlawn Avenue Duplex is a prominent reminder of the early 20th century residential nature of Charlotte, and is thus an important artifact that

can help us understand the city's built environment which has been radically altered by both the commercial development of Charlotte after World War II, urban renewal, and the recent phenomenal commercial and residential development of the Uptown.

2) The Woodlawn Avenue Duplex is a well-preserved example of a small two-story duplex, which was once a common component of the Uptown residential landscape but is now the among the rarest of the historic building types.

3) The Woodlawn Avenue Duplex demonstrates both the diversity of residential building types and the social and economic diversity that once existed in the city neighborhoods but was not found in much of the residential development in Charlotte after World War II.

4) The Woodlawn Avenue Duplex is one of the few surviving buildings that were part of Woodlawn, an early streetcar suburb.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association: The Commission contends that the physical and architectural description which is included in this report demonstrates that the Woodlawn Avenue Duplex in Charlotte, N.C. 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 designated as a "historic landmark."

Date of preparation of this report: December 2006

Prepared by: Stewart Gray

Historical Context Statement for the Woodlawn Avenue Duplex

Residential Housing in the Center City

Once largely residential, Charlotte's urban core now contains a much-reduced collection of historic residential buildings. Due to Urban Renewal during the 1960s and 1970s, entire residential neighborhoods near the city's urban core have been obliterated. Second Ward, which consisted of roughly a quarter of the city in the 19th century, now contains only housing in modern apartment buildings currently being constructed. The Brooklyn neighborhood occupied much of Second Ward and was once arguably the cultural center of the city's African-American community. Today only a school gymnasium, one commercial building, and a church survive. Blandville, an African-American neighborhood that existed to the south of Morehead Street, was also negatively impacted by Urban Renewal. The building of a new expressway, warehouses, shops, and factories contributed to the conversion of the Blandville

neighborhood into a strictly industrial/commercial area. Of the hundreds of homes that once populated Blandville, only one house with integrity still exists.



House on Dunbar Street in Blandville

This phenomenon of neighborhood eradication in Charlotte was not limited to black neighborhoods. In the 19th Century, the homes of the city's wealthiest and most influential citizens lined its two dominant streets, Trade and Tryon. Many of these homes survived into the middle years of the 20th century. None now exists. A collection of historic homes dating from the late nineteenth century has survived in the Fourth Ward and are part of the locally designated Fourth Ward Historic District. But outside Fourth Ward, historic residential buildings in the Urban Core are rare. The William Bratton House was built around 1923 in Charlotte's First Ward. The home of a Duke Power engineer, it was situated amid a streetscape of single-family houses and duplexes built for middle and upper-middle class whites. Today, it is the only surviving residential building along North Brevard Street. The house, now an office, faces east on a flat lot, bordered by vacant lots and parking lots. Only one other pre-World War II home has survived in the Ward, which once featured hundreds of homes.



William Bratton House, ca. 1923

631 North Brevard Street

The near-complete loss of historic residential buildings in the Center City makes it difficult for the public to understand the pre-World War II history of Charlotte based on the current built environment. This scarcity of historic resources endows the surviving neighborhoods and exceptional individual buildings in those neighborhoods with special significance if they have retained their integrity.

Woodlawn Neighborhood

The development of the Woodlawn Neighborhood was part of the phenomenal growth that Charlotte experienced in the early years of the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1910, the city's population grew 82%, from 18,091 to 34,014. In response, the city expanded physically, with its boundaries moving outward to incorporate former farmland. From 1885 to 1907, the city's area grew 570%. This incredible growth continued with the city's population reaching 82,675 by 1930. ^[1] To accommodate the new citizens, real estate developers such as F. C. Abbott, George Stephens and B. D. Heath built neighborhoods that were linked to the city by the expanding streetcar systems. ^[2] Some of these neighborhoods, such as Myers Park, Wilmore, and Washington Heights, have survived. Others, such as Oakhurst (now in Plaza Midwood), Piedmont Park (now part of Elizabeth), and Woodlawn (now considered part of Irwin Park or Third Ward) were absorbed into larger neighborhoods and have lost their distinct historic identities.

Woodlawn resulted from a decision by the Continental Manufacturing Company to develop its surplus land in Charlotte's Third Ward into a residential neighborhood. Development began around 1907. Although located inside one of the City's original four wards, the neighborhood was promoted as a suburb, perhaps due to the developing success of Charlotte's first true streetcar suburb, Dilworth. Streetcar lines radiated out from the center of the city, and along these lines neighborhoods called "streetcar suburbs" sprang up. Woodlawn was one of these neighborhoods, and it was served by the West Trade Street streetcar line. The close-in nature of the neighborhood may have been one of its selling points. A 1911 advertisement proclaimed "Woodlawn is the nearest suburb to the business part of the city, yet NONE is prettier." ^[3]

Woodlawn was never a large neighborhood. Originally platted along just four streets, it appears that soon after the small neighborhood was built it began to lose its original identity. The 1911 Sanborn Maps show the small neighborhood labeled as Woodlawn. Virginia Woolard, who grew up in the neighborhood on Grove Street in the 1940s, does not recall that her neighborhood ever had a name. ^[4] Instead one would simply refer to the street name to identify where they lived. Still, the original identity of the neighborhood was retained to some extent with the name of its principal street, Woodlawn Avenue. This final link to the historic name of the neighborhood was lost when the curving Woodlawn Avenue was renamed. A short street, Woodlawn Avenue never contained more than 22 buildings. In 1953 a new road named Woodlawn Road appeared in the city directory. It also contained around 20 homes. But this new road was located to the south of the city where suburban development exploded after World War II. By 1959, hundreds of new homes lined Woodlawn Road, which became a major

thoroughfare feeding the city's new suburban residential, and commercial development. The two blocks that had been labeled Woodlawn Avenue were renamed Irwin Avenue South, to avoid confusion with the robust roadway to the south.

Duplexes

The Woodlawn Avenue Apartments is a duplex with distinct upstairs and downstairs units. While some good examples of early-twentieth-century duplexes survive in the outlying suburbs of Elizabeth, Dilworth, and Plaza Midwood, the story in the city's historic core is quite different. A survey of Charlotte's Center City conducted by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission in 2004 identified fifty-two individual properties that could potentially be designated as historic landmarks. Of these, only two were duplexes: the Woodlawn Avenue Apartments, and the North Myers Street Duplex. This low number is especially dramatic when a review of Sanborn Maps shows that duplexes, as well as quadraplexes, were a common feature in the Center City. Identified in the 2004 survey, the North Myers Street Duplex is an important reminder of the historic residential nature of First Ward. Unfortunately, the historical context of the building has been lost, as it is now the sole survivor of a residential neighborhood and is now, like the William Bratton House, surrounded by vacant lots, parking lots, and sprawling late 20th- and 21st-century commercial buildings. In contrast, the Woodlawn Apartments is located amidst a small collection of surviving single-family homes. The remnant of the Woodlawn neighborhood around the Woodlawn Apartments concretely demonstrates what the old directories and fire insurance maps indicate that duplexes and other multi-family residential buildings were commonly intermingled with single-family homes in early twentieth-century neighborhoods.



Myers Street Duplex



Woodlawn Avenue Duplex

Sanborn maps from 1953 indicate that duplexes were still a common building type in the Center City landscape at least until the middle years of the 20th century. In First Ward the block formed by 8th and 9th Streets and North Brevard and Caldwell streets contained twenty-seven closely spaced residential buildings. Of those, at least 15 appear to have been duplexes. Not all residential sections contained such a high

percentage of duplexes. In the city's Fourth Ward, the block surrounded by 9th and 8th streets, Graham and Smith Streets contained 21 residential buildings with five of those being duplexes. A review of the Sanborn maps clearly indicates that nearly every single block of residential buildings in the four wards once contained duplexes.

In Charlotte, this historic housing pattern was largely abandoned after World War II when the new suburban neighborhoods were strictly segregated into either single-family or multi-family groups.

Woodlawn Avenue Duplex

Built between 1926 and 1929^[5], the Woodlawn Avenue Duplex was very much part of the "everyday" architecture of Charlotte's urban core before World War II. Blue-collar and lower level white-collar workers lived there for much of the 20th Century. In 1934, 208 Woodlawn, the upper unit of the duplex, was occupied by Harry and Mary Fine. Harry was listed as a clerk with the Southern Public Utilities Company, which later became Duke Power. Downstairs in 210 Woodlawn lived William and Frances Craig. William's occupation is listed as Traveling Salesman. The Fines and the Craigs lived in a neighborhood principally of singles-family houses. The only other multi-family buildings in the small Woodlawn Neighborhood were the quadraplex next door and the four-unit Woodlawn Terrace Apartments. More transitory than their neighbors who generally owned their own homes^[6], the tenants in the duplex were different by 1942. That year "credit manager" James Strawn lived in 208 Woodlawn and machinist Herbert Crouch and his wife Diamond lived in 210.

The Woodlawn Avenue Duplex continued to function as a duplex through the 1960s even as the nature of the neighborhood changed. Like most of Third Ward, the Woodlawn neighborhood saw an outflow of white residents as the suburbs of the city expanded. Facing a dwindling supply of housing in the city's Urban Core, black Charlotteans moved into the once segregated Woodlawn neighborhood.

While many of the original neighborhood homes have survived, the Woodlawn Duplex is the only multi-family residential building in the neighborhood to have survived with a good degree of integrity. The neighboring quadraplex has been significantly altered, and the Woodlawn Terrace Apartments have been lost. A wider survey of Third Ward indicates that the Woodlawn Duplex is the only surviving duplex in the entire ward.

In the context of a vastly changed city, the Woodlawn Duplex is an important artifact that can help us understand the early 20th century residential nature of Charlotte. It is a prominent relic of a reduced neighborhood whose original identity has been lost. It is helpful in understanding the many small neighborhoods that were absorbed into larger

ones. It is representative of a once-common housing type that that has disappeared completely from Charlotte's center city neighborhoods.



Woodlawn Avenue Duplex

Before 2005 Renovation

Architectural Description

The Woodlawn Duplex is a two-story brick-veneered building. Although detailing is restrained, the ca. 1928 duplex appears to be a late, vernacular example of the Mission Style, with the shaped parapet and arched porch being the most distinguishing elements. The exposed rafter ends of the duplex's porch roofs fit with the style and would have been a feature familiar to Charlotte's builders who, up until World War II, continued to utilize elements of the Craftsman Style. Another link with the local tenacity of the Craftsman Style is the duplex's bracketed shed-roof over the entrance. This is an element found on several Craftsman Style duplexes and quadraplexes in the fairly intact Charlotte suburbs of Dilworth and Elizabeth.



The building faces east and is four bays wide with a two-story porch centered on the façade. The lower story of the porch features two brick posts connected with segmental-arches that appear to be supported by curved boxed-in wooden lintels. In contrast to the masonry lower porch, the upper story features square wooden posts that support a built-up exposed beam that in turn supports the shed roof's rafters. The rafter ends are fancifully sawn with double curves. The porch ceiling and in-fill walls are covered with original tongue-and-groove narrow boards.





The façade is veneered with wire-cut brick. A watertable is delineated with a soldier-course of brick resting on a solid brick foundation that has been stuccoed smooth. All exterior doors and windows have been replaced. Wall openings on the second story are aligned with those on the first. On both stories the southernmost bay contains double metal casement windows that replaced original metal casements. The windows feature simple brick sills, and soldier-courses delineate the lintels. On both stories, the porch shelters a door opening and another double-window opening. The northernmost bay contains the main entrance to the duplex. A shed roof shelters the door and is supported by two large brackets with curved braces. The rafter ends are also sawn with a single curve. The door was originally bordered with multi-pane sidelights, which have been replaced with single-light sidelights. This doorway was originally only the entrance to the upper apartment of the duplex. The original entrance to the lower apartment was accessed through the porch. Metal railing now blocks this entrance, and both apartments share a single entrance. Above the doorway is a single metal casement.



The façade features a parapet with flat and curvilinear coping. The raised center section of the parapet is highlighted with a cross pattern in the brickwork.



The side elevations lack the architectural features of the façade. The south elevation is pierced by four window openings. The north elevation is pierced by a small window opening set between the upper and lower stories that lights the stairwell.



A narrow alley runs behind the building. Sanborn maps indicate that the duplex originally had automobile parking in the basement. The bays for the auto parking are now obscured with stucco. Unlike on the other elevations, the fenestration on the rear of the building has been somewhat altered. An original short window has been infilled, and one double-window opening has been reduced to the size of a single window opening.

^[1] Dan Morrill "Center City Housing"
<http://landmarkscommission.org/uptownsurveyhistoryhousing.htm>

^[2] Tom Hanchett "The Growth of Charlotte: A History" <http://www.cmhpf.org/educhargrowth.htm>

^[3] Ibid

^[4] Conversation with Virginia Woolard, October 2006. Notes on file with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission.

[\[5\]](#) The building is not listed in the 1926 City Directory, but does appear in the 1929 Sanborn Maps.

[\[6\]](#) Home ownership indicated in 1942 City Directory.