Davidson School

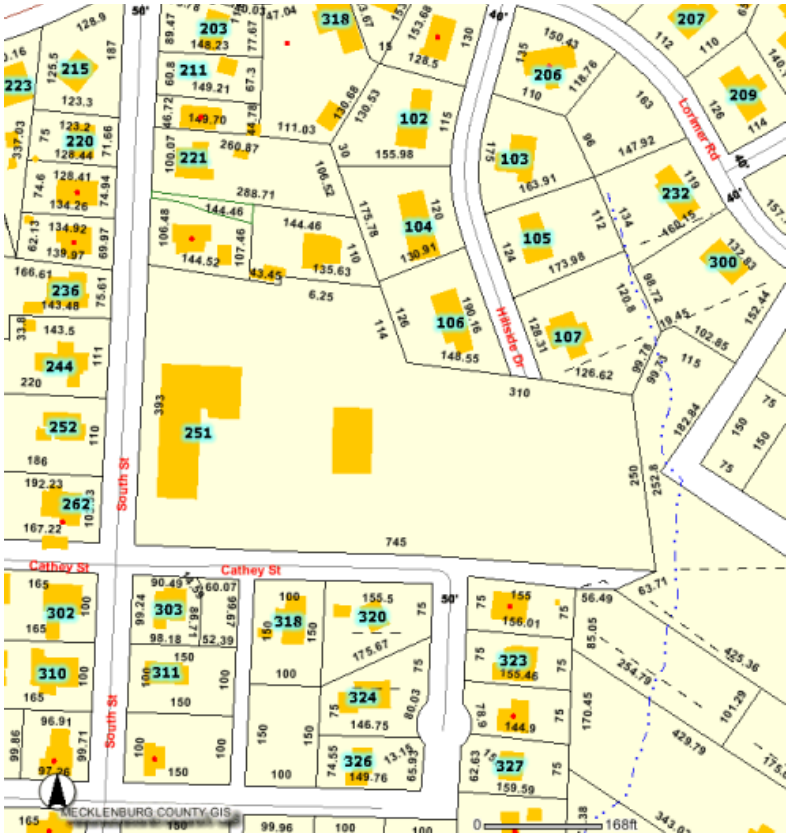
1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the Davidson School is located at 251 South Street, Davidson, North Carolina.

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

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools/Board of Education
Education Center
701 East 2nd Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

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. The Coordinates of this property are: School 35.29.45.91N. 80.50.55.76W. Gymnasium 35.29.45.54N 80.50.52.69W.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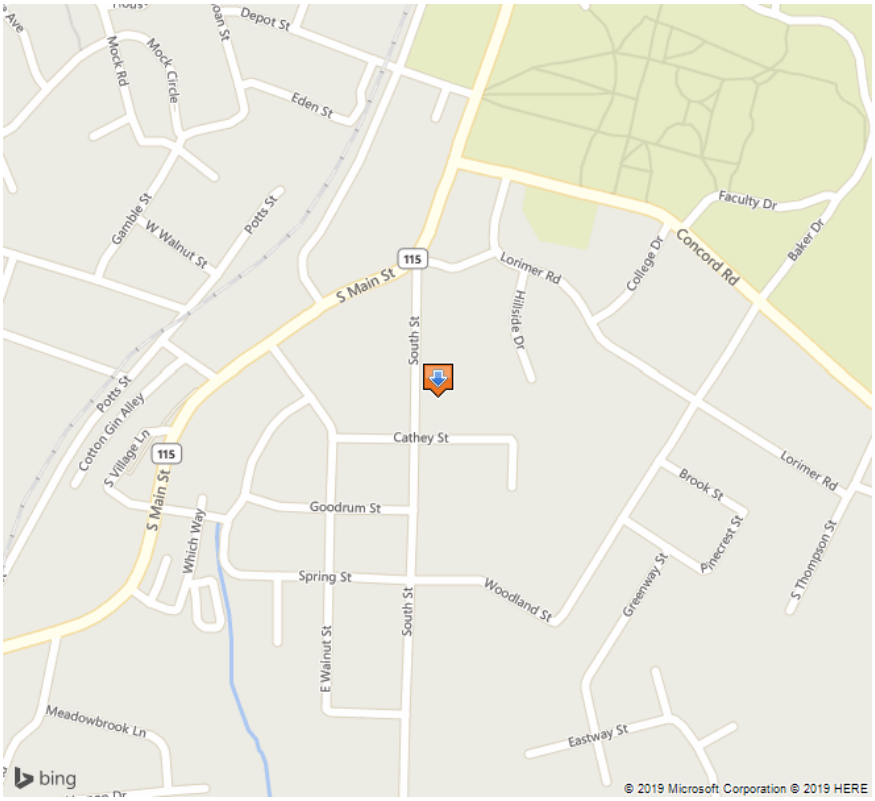
168ft


Depot St
Mock Rd
Mock Circle
Eden St
Gamble St
W Walnut St
Potts St
S Main St
115
Lorimer Rd
College Dr
Concord Rd
Faculty Dr
Baker Dr
South St
Hillside Dr
Cathey St
Potts St
Cotton Gin Alley
S Village Ln
S Main St
Which Way
Goodrum St
Spring St
Woodland St
Brook St
Pinecrest St
Greenway St
S Thompson St
Lorimer Rd
E Walnut St
South St
Meadowbrook Ln
Eastway St
bing
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5. Current deed book reference to the property: The most recent deed to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 824 on page 576. The tax parcel number of the property is 00701319.

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

7. A brief architectural 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 the criteria for designation set forth-in N.C.G.S. 160A-399.4.:

Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance: The Commission judges that the property known as the Davidson IB Middle School possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

1) The site of the Davidson School has been associated with public education for over one hundred years.

2) The 1937 Davidson School Gymnasium is a fine example of the later New Deal public works projects that were accomplished in Mecklenburg County.

3) The 1948 Davidson School was designed by local architect Louis Asbury, and is an important example of early post-war Modernist architecture.

4) The Davidson School has an exception degree of integrity in terms of historic school buildings in Mecklenburg County.

5) The Davidson School is a significant artifact, useful in understanding the history of the Town of Davidson. The 1948 school building is one of the best preserved public buildings in the town, and it was central to the education of many of the town's residents.

9. Ad Valorem tax appraisal: The current assessed value of the property is $3,690,500.

10. Portion of property recommended for designation: The exterior and interior of the Davidson School, Gymnasium and the 5.1 acres of land associated with the tax parcel.

11. Date of Preparation of this Report: September 1, 2008

Prepared by: Stewart Gray

A Brief History of the Davidson School

The site of the Davidson School has been associated with education since 1893. A prominent Davidson family, the Sheltons, donated a lot on South Street in 1892 for a school that opened the next year and was

known as the Davidson Academy. This school operated as a hybrid private/public school. Tuition was required for the fall and spring school terms, while the winter session was free of charge. [1] It appears that the nature of the Davidson Academy changed in 1911 with the state legislature voting to add Davidson to a list of North Carolina communities with established graded schools supported by taxes. The Davidson Special Charter District included the town's white and African American schools, and was controlled by a Board of Trustees. This situation continued until October of 1932 when a committee of the Board of Trustees requested that the Mecklenburg County Board of Education take over the Davidson schools. The takeover occurred in February 1933 when a deed to the property was tendered, and five of the six acting school trustees became committeemen of the newly formed Davidson School District.[2] The Davison School at that time consisted of the two-story brick Davidson Academy building, a detached wooden cafeteria building, and a janitors house.

Davidson Academy in 1923 with new addition being built

The addition of the Davidson School to the larger Mecklenburg County system was part of a process that moved the education of young people from a strictly local affair in the late 19th century, to a system that by 1934 became dependent on Federal money. It appears that even before the merger of the Davidson School into the larger Mecklenburg Board of Education, the "Davidson School Board" had applied to the Civil Works

Administration for funding for a Gym/Community House. In February 1934 the Mecklenburg Board of Education decided to pursue this funding. [3]

The construction of the nearby 1934 Long Creek School Gymnasium was typical of early New Deal public projects. That project required the participation of the local rural community in the form of money, labor, and materials. And it appears that the "Davidson School Gym/Community House" was conceived of in a similar way.[4]

Interior of the 1934 Long Creek Gymnasium

At the Davidson School, the CWA and the local community were to provide labor and material. It was estimated that the building would cost the board $9,000, with $5,500 coming from the town of Davidson. Perhaps the building's dual use as a community center was agreed upon to ensure more local funding. [5]

However, the CWA program ended in the March 1934, and in just a few years the nature of public works projects in Mecklenburg County had changed significantly. Planning for the gymnasium continued, but gone

was the reference to a "Community House." Also gone were any mention of local labor and material. In 1936 the cost for the Davidson gym, estimated at $17,000, was bundled with county-wide school building needs that totaled $268,000. The Board of Education applied to a different agency, the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (FEA) for funding of 45% of the cost. [6] In 1937, four years after the funding for the gymnasium was first requested from the Federal government, construction planning for the building began in earnest.

1937 Davidson School Gymnasium

The Davidson gymnasium may have been envisioned as a grassroots or community-based project, but the construction of the Davidson School Gymnasium was accomplished in a more standard fashion, relying on an architect to design the building and manage a general contractor during the construction process. However, the New Deal's philosophy of invigorating the economy by putting as many people to work as possible can still be seen in the construction of the Davidson School Gymnasium. It appears that in 1937 the Board of Education was involved in putting nearly all of Charlotte's architects to work. Under the guidance of William H. Peeps, the "secretary of the Charlotte Architects Associated (sic.)" work on school projects was divided up among a virtual "Who's Who" of Charlotte architects including: Peeps, Willard G. Rogers, Martin Boyer, Charles Connelly, Lucian Dale, M. R. Marsh,

Walter Hook, and C. C. Hook.[7] With the notable exception of Louis Asbury who closed his office from 1935-1939, this list included nearly every prominent architect in Charlotte. It appears that the "make-work" philosophy associated with the earlier New Deal programs had trickled-up to the professional class. Regardless of how this was perceived or transpired, the Davidson School Gymnasium was part of a major Federally-supported building program taking place in the Mecklenburg school system in 1937.

Peeps assigned the Davidson gymnasium project to Willard G. Rogers (1863-1947). Rogers was a native of Cincinnati. He moved to Charlotte about 1900, where he was employed as an architect for industrialist Stewart W. Cramer. In 1910 he partnered with leading Charlotte architect C. C. Hook. This partnership led to Roger's most significant commission, the 1914 Charlotte Masonic Temple. When the Temple burned, Rogers was again hired to rebuild the building which re-opened in 1938. Rogers started his own practice in 1916 and went on to design many prominent commercial and institutional buildings, including the 1918 Gastonia First Baptist Church, the 1924 Catawba County Courthouse, and the 1926 Addison apartments in Charlotte.[8]

The Davidson Gymnasium was one of three projects assigned to Rogers in northern Mecklenburg in 1937. He was also responsible for designing and supervising the construction of a new building for the Davidson Colored School (now the Ada Jenkins Center) and a new 12-room school building for Cornelius. For the Davidson School Rogers designed a classically-inspired gymnasium building with arched windows and solid masonry walls, large enough for basketball, the main floor surrounded on three sides with built-in wooden bleachers. Rogers had two sets of plans for the gymnasium, Plan 1 and Plan 2. We do not know the difference in the plans except that if budget allowed, the more expensive Plan 1 would be built. At their March 10, 1937 meeting the Board of Education instructed all of the architects to get their plans approved by all of the agencies in Raleigh (perhaps that is where the FEA money was administered) so that bids could be procured. Bids for the Davidson Gymnasium and for most of the other projects being considered came in

too high.[9] To help control costs, and because there were so many projects commencing at the same time, the members of the Board of Education were individually assigned projects to help oversee. Mr. Potts was assigned the Davidson projects as well as work at the Cornelius, Huntersville, and Long Creek Schools. [10] Measurers were taken to reduce the costs of the Davidson Gymnasium. Common bricks replaced glazed brick; a proposed furnace was canceled; and plans for a new principal's house were abandoned. Other projects also suffered through cost-cutting. [11] A proposed auditorium at the new Davidson Colored School building was canceled; but when these savings were realized, the canceled furnace at the Davidson Gymnasium was put back into the project. [12] It appears that the building went into service during the 1937-1938 school year.

Edith Cashion, who attended the Davidson School from 1937-1948, remembers using the gymnasium. She remembers that it was cold and that the community held square dances in the building. But most importantly, the gymnasium hosted the basketball games. With no football team, the boy's and girl's basketball teams were very important to the school. Cashion remembers that Davidson's teams were very good. Cashion and schoolmate Martha Fulcher Montgomery both attended classes in the old Davidson Academy building. They remember wooden desks and dark, oiled wooden floors. In addition to the new gymnasium, the campus at that time included a wooden-framed cafeteria building run by a Mrs. Griffith, and a frame Boy Scout Hut. Also on the property was a house for the janitor. This arrangement of buildings served the school through the Second World War. [13]

"Wartime" conditions with shortages in material and labor had made it impossible to keep Mecklenburg schools in repair. A report to the Board of Education stated that its schools were "now in very bad condition." [14] To address this circumstance, in February 1946, the Mecklenburg Board of Education requested the substantial sum of 5.972 million dollars in a bond package to fund city and county schools. At the same time the school superintendent was authorized to increase fire insurance by 25% or so that buildings would be insured for

90% of their value. However, budget restraints must have been too great. On April 8, 1946, the B.O.E. decided not to alter its present coverage for the 1946-1947 school year or seek more money for insurance premiums, even though it was aware that the school's buildings were "not insured for more than 50% of the present value…" This would prove to be a bad decision. On July 15, 1946, during an electrical storm, the 1893 Davidson Academy building, the principal building of the Davidson School, burned severely.

It appears that nearly everyone who lived in Davidson saw the 1893 Davidson Academy building burn or at least saw the smoke. [15] Martha Fulcher Montgomery and Edith Cashion are alumni who had classes in the old building. Neither was surprised that the structure burned, noting that the interior of the two-story building was largely dark, dirty, oiled wood, and was full of wooden desks and chairs. Some of the solid brick exterior walls had survived the fire, and on July 19, 1946, the Board of Education decided to completely demolish the rear of the building and to try to stabilize the remainder of the building, with the idea that it could be rebuilt, possibly as a temporary way to house the students. In the meantime, it was decided to partition the gymnasium into classrooms. However, it soon became apparent that none of the 1893 Davidson Academy building could be saved. The surviving material would be sold as salvage. Attention turned to the problem of housing students for the upcoming school year. Two thousand dollars was spent adding toilet facilities to the gymnasium and to "one of the society halls" on the Davidson College campus. [16] Edith Cashion recalls that the older students were taught in the first-story rooms of both the Eumenean Hall and its counterpart the Philanthropic Hall on the college campus but that the Davidson School students were not allowed on the second stories which feature fine furniture, chandeliers, and decorative woodworking. The basement of the nearby Davidson College Presbyterian Church was also used. Where there had been a cafeteria available at the old school site, Martha Fulcher Montgomery remembers Davidson School students going home for lunch. Elaine Caldwell McArn recalls students in the seventh and eight grades using the nearby Methodist Church for classes. [17]

In October 1946, a delegation from Davidson with spokesman J.C. Bailey urged the Board of Education to: build a new building on the same site, open the new school building by 1947, purchase more land for the new building, and be sure that the new building would be large enough to accommodate the present and future needs. [18] The Board responded by directing the school superintendent to hire architect Louis Asbury for the project, to pursue the purchase of adjoining land, and to seek Federal Works Administration (FWA) funds for the cost of the architect. The project did not proceed quickly.

An adjoining lot containing the home of J. M. Potts was sought to expand the school site. In January 1947 the Board of Education had authorized spending up to $10,000 for the property, but after long negotiations, no agreement could be reached. In March 1947 the Board approved a contract with Asbury that paid the architect 6% of the construction costs for designing the building, supervising construction, and representing the Board of Education's interest. Gaining the additional land continued to be problematic, and in April the Board directed Asbury to move ahead with plans for just the existing school property. In May, frustration with the slow pace of the project was demonstrated when a large delegation from the town requested the "immediate erection of a 'fire proof' building." [19] Negotiations with Mr. Potts continued until June, 1947, when Mr. Potts agreed to sell his lot for $7,980 and move his house to a nearby parcel. With all of the impediments cleared, the Board of Education met in special session on July 8, 1947, nearly one year after the 1893 Davidson Academy building had burned, to approve spending $245,690 on the new building.

Two photos taken of Louis Asbury during his forty-eight year career

Born in Charlotte in 1877, Louis Asbury was arguably the most important local architect of his time. Educated at Trinity College and M.I.T, Asbury studied architecture in Europe and then returned to Charlotte and became the first North Carolina member of the American Institute of Architects. He practiced in North Carolina from 1908 until his retirement in 1956. Asbury designed a wide array of buildings including homes, commercial buildings, and government and other institutional buildings. Among his notable surviving designs are the 20-story First National Bank Building (1927), the Mecklenburg County Courthouse (1928), and the Myers Park United Methodist Church (1929). [20]

Asbury, who partnered with his son in 1939, designed an L-shaped, two-story, 32,000 square-foot building for the Davidson School. Asbury's design surely addressed the citizens' desire for a fireproof building. Solid masonry walls supported steel trusses, and concrete floors replaced the oiled wooden floors of the old building. In terms of public education buildings, the new Davidson School was surely a showplace. Little non-military building of any type was constructed

during the War, and the contrast in style and construction between the new school building and school's gymnasium, built just one decade earlier, was dramatic. Whereas the gymnasium featured a restrained classically influenced style that had been employed in institutional buildings for at least half a century, the new building featured a Modernist design that highlighted simple functional lines and industrially produced building materials, most especially the large prominent ribbons of aluminum windows across the façade and rear elevation. Functionally the new building offered large classrooms well lit with natural sunlight and rows of modern fluorescent lighting, wide halls and stairwells, dedicated offices for the staff, a large auditorium, and a modern cafeteria in the basement. Asbury may have faced some limitations in producing a modernist designed due the availability of material. In contrast to the metal ribbon windows, tall traditional triple-hung wooden sash were used on the auditorium. While many Modernist slab doors were used in the design, including some with round porthole windows, many secondary doors were frame-and-panel doors that would have been typical on most early-twentieth-century school buildings. But despite these compromises, the Davidson School represented a definite break with the past. Like the later Second Ward Gymnasium (1949), and the radical Dr. Elmer Garinger High School (1958), both built in Charlotte and both designed by Modernist architect A.G. Odell, the Davidson School served as a demonstration of progressive school design.

In June 1948 the Board of Education expressed its appreciation to Davidson College, Davidson College Presbyterian Church, and the Davidson United Methodist Church for the use of classroom space and agreed to paint and renovate the rooms that were used. In anticipation of the new school opening, the old frame cafeteria, the "scout hut", and a janitor's house were moved off of the property. [21]

On September 15, 1948, the Board of Education met in the new Davidson School to inspect and approve the building. The building was approved with the understanding that the plumbing and lighting would be finished, and that some issues involving painting, doors, and drawers would be addressed. The opening of the school was unfortunately delayed due to a polio outbreak. When it finally opened around the first of October, many elements of the school were still not finished including the lighting and the seats for the auditorium. Money for library books was not approved until January 1949. Despite these delays, students enjoyed the new school building. Martha Fulcher Montgomery remembers the new building as modern and luxurious, with high ceilings and nice bathrooms. Edith Cashion remembers the building as "new, modern, and clean."

The building served grades 1-12. Alumni remember that the auditorium was used for choral concerts, plays, and weekly assemblies. While the Presbyterian church was being re-built, services were held in the auditorium, including a wedding. The cafeteria was the site of an annual Halloween carnival hosted by the fire department. High school students moved to the new North Mecklenburg High School in Huntersville when it opened in 1951. John M. Alexander Junior High School opened in 1960, and after a few transitional years, the Davidson School became the

Davidson Elementary School. In 1994 a new elementary school was built farther south on South Street. The 1948 building now serves as an magnet middle school.

Architectural Description

The 1948 Davidson School is an L-shaped, two-story, solid masonry building that faces west and sits close to the sidewalk. The five acre site slopes to the rear, with a small parking lot to the north of the principal building, and a larger paved parking lot to the rear of the building. A 1937 gymnasium sits toward the rear of the site. The most prominent feature of the façade is the projecting portion of the auditorium wing. Much of this elevation is a simple brick wall laid in common Flemish bond. One large single large bay is centered in the elevation, and is composed of three smaller tall and narrow bays, each containing original double panel doors. Each panel door is divided into three sections with solid lower panels and a single light at the top. The doors are surrounded by moulded cast-stone trim and are topped with large cast-stone panels with a shield emblem in the center. Each of the panels are topped with paired twelve-light metal sash windows. In each of the narrow bays, continuous moulded stone architrace trim

surround the doorways, panels, and windows. The only other architectural element on this elevation is a three-part cast concrete flagpole bracket set high on the wall. Replacement metal covers the top of the low, flat parapet wall. Concrete steps bordered by massive curved concrete cheek walls lead to the three auditorium entrances.

The primary entrance to the Davidson School is adjacent to the projecting auditorium wing, and is further recessed in a shallow porch. Concrete steps with pipe handrails lead to the porch which is defined by a simple cast-stone lintel. The doorway contains two panel doors, each with a single tall light. The doors are topped with a five-light transom. Moulded cast-stone architrave surrounds the doorway.

The cast-stone lintel above the entrance continues on across the façade as a horizontal band. Four such bands run the width of the façade, and define sections of the façade where windows pierce the elevation. The bands that run above the windows are wider than those that run at the sill level. A defining feature of

the Modernist Style is the ribbon window. Four sets of ribbon windows pierce the façade.

Centered on the façade, on both stories, are ribbons of seven twenty-four-light windows ganged together. The effect is a continuous bank of windows with little in terms of support members separating them. Other configurations of windows pierce the façade including single twenty-four-light windows, paired windows, and small four-over-four double-hungs. All of the windows are original metal sash windows, some of which contain window air conditioning units.

A secondary entrance is located in the southernmost bay of the façade. Set at grade level, the doorway contain replacement double-doors topped with an original five-light transom. The doorway is bordered by narrow glass-brick sidelights that are set in the brickwork and feature small cast-stone sills. The doorway is sheltered by a cast-concrete slab-awning, supported by adjustable metal rods anchored above the awning.

Details of the south elevation

The cast-stone bands that run across the facade return for a short distance on the south side elevation. The elevation features a replacement slab door sheltered by a concrete awning. Large glazed openings with replacement glass illuminate a stairwell. Four double-hung windows also pierce the elevation.

The rear elevation features six banks of ribbon windows. Unlike the facade, there is no cast-stone trim on the rear elevation. The basement level is fully exposed on the rear, and the basement cafeteria is illuminated by eight eight-over-eight metal double-hung windows. A set of replacement slab doors sheltered by a concrete awning give access to the basement. Tall gutter pipes drain scupper holes at the parapet. A galvanized exhaust pipe is attached to wall and runs from the basement to the roof. The rear elevation affords the best view of the schools simple square interior chimney.

A rear wing contains a portion of the auditorium as well classrooms on the first and second stories. The classrooms are illuminated by ribbon windows that pierce the south elevation of the rear wing. A recess between the rear wing and the principal rear elevation contains an entrance. Double replacement doors are sheltered by a concrete slab awning.

The rear elevation of the auditorium wing is mostly a large expanse of uninterrupted brick wall. An entrance at grade level is sheltered by a concrete awning. The doorway contains replacement slab doors and is topped with an original five-light transom. Three widely spaced windows illuminate the backstage area of the auditorium. The center window is a large twelve-over-twelve metal double-hung. The others are four-over-four units. The parapet steps down one step to the south.

The most notable feature of the north elevation of the auditorium wing is the group of five tall triple-hung windows. The nine-over-nine-over-nine sash are bordered on each side by three-light sidelights. The choice of wooden windows for this elevation is curious, but may have been due to the availability of window units in this configuration. Original wide panel doors are located in the sixth bay from the facade, under a shortened triple-hung.

Like the exterior, the interior of the Davidson School has a high degree of integrity and features architectural elements typical of the post-war Modernist Style.

The building's two stairwells once featured un-glazed wall openings, that have been filled with fixed glazing. The fire-proof nature of the building is well demonstrated in the poured-in-place concrete stairways. A partial-height concrete handrail-wall borders the concrete steps, and curves in a tight radius where the stairs switchback. A curved metal-pipe handrail follows the curve of the wall.

Hallways feature terrazzo floors and glazed tile running up the wall to a height of approximately four feet. Doorways are bordered by simple wooden trim, and contain a mixture of slab and panel doors. The most notable doors are slab doors with a round "porthole" window. The current student lockers are not original.

Classrooms are lit by original florescent light fixtures and by the large ribbon windows. that light is shared with the hallways via traditional wooden six-light hopper window set high in the classroom walls. The classrooms also feature built-in cabinets that enclose radiators and feature drawers and shelves. The floors in the classrooms are covered with linoleum floor tiles.

The auditorium features original metal and bent-plywood theater seats. The same linoleum tile found in the classrooms was used on the auditorium floor. The floor of the auditorium slopes down to the stage, and stairs with simple pipe handrails give access to both the hallway and the stage. The high stage opening is surrounded by deep stepped plaster trim that meets at mitered corners. The stage floor is original hardwood. Widely spaced beams in the ceiling and piers in the walls are reflected in the plasterwork. Hanging light fixtures featuring concentric metal circular bands may be original. A narrow lobby in front of the auditorium features original slab doors and a terrazzo floor. Stair lead to a balcony that has been closed-off from the auditorium space.

The schools basement cafeteria features an original wooden refrigeration unit. The Modernist porthole doors found elsewhere contrast with the traditional panel doors found in the storage and workroom in the cafeteria/basement level. The cafeteria floor has been replaced with a new tile floor.

Davidson School Gymnasium

The Davidson School Gymnasium is a two-story side-gabled building. The building faces west and is set back about 200' from the principal school building. The gymnasium's style draws from the Classical Revival movement which was widely applied to commercial and institutional buildings throughout Mecklenburg County during the first half of the twentieth century. The building is frame construction with a brick veneer laid in a running bond. The moderately pitched roof is covered with fiberglass shingles. Typical of the Classical Revival Style, the gymnasium exhibits strict symmetry, and it features two hipped-roof wings projecting from the side elevations.

The façade of the principal section is five bays wide. The building's most notable exterior feature is the group of half-round arched window openings in the central three bays. The arches feature stone imposts and keystones, and simple brick voussoirs. The window openings contain original large double-hung windows with a twelve-light sash topped with a fourteen-light curved-top sash. All of the windows rest on simple angled-brick sills. The outer two bays contain smaller window openings that are topped with lintels composed of angled brick voussoirs. The windows contain original six-over-nine windows. Five roughly square windows pierce the façade on the second story. These six-light hinged awning windows are centered above the larger windows of the first story, and are topped with brick lintels composed of angled brick voussoirs. The wall is topped with a simple deep frieze with a moulded edge. The frieze is topped with crown

moulding. Along the base of the façade are three brick wells with cast concrete caps that ventilate the building's crawlspace.

The two main entrances to the school are located in the front elevations of the side wings. Modern slab doors have replace the original double doors. Half-round arch transoms sit above the doors, and are now filled with plywood panels. The half-round arches mimic those found above the center windows. The entrances are below grade. The site slopes and the northern entrance is farther below grade. Brick and concrete steps lead down to the entrances and are bordered by brick cheek walls topped with cast blocks. Metal awnings have been added above both entrances.

Top photograph shows the south side elevation. Below, the north side elevation is relatively obscured by the grade and trees.

The side wings obscure most of the side elevations of the principal section of the gymnasium, with the notable exception of the tall gable. The gables are stuccoed and each features a tall half-round-arched louvered vent. The frieze and cornice of the façade return on the side walls, and the rake features similar trim. The brick

veneer of the façade also wraps the corner, with the stucco being set back slightly. The stuccoed gables made it unnecessary to install lintels to carry the heavy load of brick above the hipped roofs of the side wings. The wings are six bays wide with six unusual three-over-six windows set high in the wall. The brickwork on the sides is simpler that that found on the façade, with simple soldier courses accenting the lintels above the window openings. Seven openings pierce the elevation at the basement level. Six window openings have been filled with plywood panels, and the original door opening contains a replacement metal door. A soldier course of brick at the level of the window sills notes the transition from the solid brick foundation to the brick veneer. The wings are nearly identical with the exception of the brick flues. The square flue adjacent to the rear of the building on the south side elevation is much larger that the flue at the same location on the north elevation.

Like the façade, the rear elevation is five bays wide. However, few of the architectural elements found on the front of the building were applied to the rear. The site slopes steeply down behind the gymnasium. Three doorways with replacement slab double-doors set in replacement metal frames open out onto brick and concrete steps with metal pipe handrails. The southernmost doorway is sheltered with a modern metal awning. Below the soldier-course water table vent

were cut into the wall to ventilate the crawl space. A crawlspace door reveals the wooden-girder and wooden -floor joist framing system. Five wide window openings are topped with angled brick lintels and contain metal-framed and metal-sash windows with wire glass. The units each contain two awning sash. The windows above the doors are shorter and contain forty-eight lights. The two larger windows contain fifty-four lights.

Interior

The interior of the Davidson School Gymnasium is overwhelmingly wood, with tongue-and-groove boards covering the walls and wooden decking exposed on the ceiling. The interior is principally one large room, with the side wing containing wooden bleachers that overlook the court. Wooden posts set into the wall framing carry the load of six metal trusses that span the depth of the building. The trusses support steel purlins that carry the roof deck. Brick walls that enclose the entrance foyers support a steel I-beam, that in turn supports a seating gallery that runs along the front wall. The wooden seating as well as the maple court flooring appear to be original. Bathrooms/locker-rooms are located in the basement.

1. Beaty, Mary D. Davidson a History of the Town from 1834-1937. Davidson, North Carolina: The Briarpatch Press. 1979 (p. 63-64).

2. Mecklenburg County Board of Education Minutes, 2-6-33. Davidson School District Trustees in 1933 included: JR Withers, JJ Withers, A Currie, JM Douglas, RD Mooney, and JM McConnell. All continued as school district committeemen except for Douglas.

3. Mecklenburg County Board of Education Minutes, 2-6-34

4. See the Survey and Research Report for the Long Creek School Gymnasium: http://landmarkscommission.org/surveys&rlongcreekgym.htm

5. BOE Minutes, 2-6-34

6. BOE Minutes, 7-8-36

7. BOE Minutes, 3-10-37

8. Information on Willard Rogers can be found on the following documents produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission: www.cmhpf.org/surveys&rrogershouse.htm; www.cmhpf.org/surveys&rmasonic.htm;http://www.cmhpf.org/surveys&rwalkerLucien.htm;

9. BOE Minutes, 5-14-37

10. BOE Minutes 5-21-37

11. BOE Minutes 6-23-07

12. BOE Minutes 10-05-37

13. Interviews with Edith Cashion and Martha Fulcher Montgomery were conducted in the summer of 2008.

14. BOE Minutes 6-28-46

15. Everyone interviewed for this report either saw the smoke, came to the site, or were out of town when the building burned.

16. BOE Minutes 9-17-46

17. Interviews with Elaine Caldwell McArn were conducted in the summer of 2008.

18. BOE Minutes 10-22-46

19. BOE Minutes 5-5-47

20. See the Survey and Research Report First National Bank Building, http://landmarkscommission.org/surveys&rFirstNatl.htm;

21. BOE Minutes 6-28-48