

**Designation Report  
On The  
William H. Peeps House**

1. **Name and Location of the Property.** The property known as the William H. Peeps House is located at 831 East Worthington Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28203-5351.
2. **Name, Address, And Telephone Number Of The Present Owner And Occupant Of The Property.**  
Steven & Polly Menaker  
831 East Worthington Avenue  
Charlotte, NC 28203-5351
3. **Representative Photographs Of The Property**  
This report contains representative photographs of the property.
4. **A Map Depicting The Location Of The Property.**
5. **Current Deed Book Reference To The Property.** The current deed to the property is recorded in Deed Book 32037 Page 131. The tax parcel number of the property is 12108208.
6. **A Brief Historical Sketch Of The Property.** The report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by John C. Blythe, Jr.
7. **A Brief Physical Description Of The Property.** The report contains a brief physical description of the property prepared by Allen L. Brooks.
8. **Documentation of Why And In What Ways The Property Meets The 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 William H. Peeps House, built 1918-1919, is historically significant for its association with prominent architect William H. Peeps, who designed many landmark buildings in Charlotte and the surrounding region. In addition, it is architecturally significant as the only surviving house know to be designed and occupied by the architect currently listed as a Charlotte-Mecklenburg local historic property.
    - 1) William H. Peeps was the architect and resident of the house currently addressed at 831 East Worthington Avenue, Charlotte. The property has had other street addresses but the house built and lived in by William H. Peeps and family, remains today.
    - 2) William H. Peeps is a noted regional architect obtaining license #27 in 1915. He was also member of the North Carolina Chapter, American Institute of Architects, (cited in book by same name, copyright 1998), since 1920 and president in 1924-1925. He was cited by peers “as a leader in the construction industry”.

3) This structure is the only surviving house known to be designed and occupied by the architect currently listed as a Charlotte-Mecklenburg local historic property. Other similar properties include: a) W. G. Rogers House, circa 1902, at 524 East Boulevard, Charlotte, referenced that the probable designer of the house was the architect, as a partner of C. C. Hook; b) Earle Sumner Draper House, circa 1923, at 1621 Queens Road, Charlotte, residence of a noted regional landscape architect and land planner, however, the house was designed by a noted local architect, Franklin Gordon; c) George Stephens House, circa 1915, at 871 Harvard Place, Charlotte, residence of noted local developer, however, the house was designed by a noted architect L. L. Hunter.

4) Although this structure has been modified, it maintains original integrity with virtually all the exterior building mass, configuration and materials with limited exception, and primarily its interior spaces with some reconfiguring while maintaining substantial material finishes or similar matching materials. The house was lived in and maintained by the architect and his family from 1919 until sold in 1990, and under the auspice of the local Historic District of Dilworth since then.

5) Although a very talented, capable and sought-after architect, he did not limit his attention exclusively to architecture and the architectural profession. He was an active participant in citizenry associated with the Fez, Masons, as grand master and grand commander of such host of social events with Mrs. Peeps. Other philanthropic gestures of note as maker of a sizable and intricate diorama cited in a newspaper article by Sally Smith in 1966.

**b. Integrity of Design, Setting, Workmanship, Materials, Feeling, And/Or Association:**

**Design:** Original drawings verify the architect's design exemplary of his architectural philosophy shown in his work for other clients and the house substantively retains the design.

**Setting:** The house remains on its original location at the corner of East Worthington Avenue and Park Road (formerly known as Avondale Avenue) and is situated within a neighborhood of houses he designed for his employer (the 4 Cs) and personal clients.

**Workmanship:** The house in context is similar to other houses in Dilworth, although does vary in some aspects and design features that show influences of his trade and that remain.

**Materials:** The structure exhibits conventional wood frame construction, brick masonry foundations, wood shingle exterior, lath & plaster interior, and milled wood trim. Although some detailing of elements of chimneys, porch columns, and formal living room are a departure with architectural design intent, those materials remain.

**Feeling:** The form and mass evoke a particular feeling of specialness sited on a corner lot with side street entry.

**Association:** The home designed & built with a “studio” is indicative of a special nature for his & his family’s needs.

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 that becomes a designated “historic landmark.”
10. **Portion of the Property Recommended for Designation.** The exterior and interior of the 1919 residence and all of Lot 13, Block 82, of Dilworth subdivision, as shown on the attached map.
11. **Proposed Boundary Justification.** The proposed boundary contains the historic residence and all of Lot 13, Block 82, of Dilworth subdivision, and would provide an appropriate setting for the historic property.

**Date Of The Preparation of This Report:** December 14, 2020

**Prepared By:** John C. Blythe, Jr., and Allen L. Brooks  
(Revised by Stewart Gray)

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The William H. Peeps House at 831 East Worthington Avenue in the Dilworth neighborhood of Charlotte, North Carolina, is significant for its association with regionally prominent architect William H. Peeps. Peeps designed and occupied the house as his personal residence from its construction in 1919 until his death in 1950. Other examples of Peeps’s work in Charlotte and elsewhere have been well-documented and recognized for their historical and/or architectural significance. This relatively modest but cleverly-designed dwelling is noteworthy as the place the architect chose to be his home for the last three decades of his life, during which time he accomplished many of his most significant commissions.

#### HISTORICAL ESSAY

A biographical sketch, written by James Vaseff and updated by Catherine W. Bishir for “North Carolina Architects & Builders: A Biographical Directory” describes Peeps as “a key figure in Charlotte’s early 20<sup>th</sup>-century development into a regional business hub and center of

architectural activity. Working in a variety of styles and with an elegant and restrained touch, Peeps designed some of the city's finest downtown buildings as well as numerous residences and other buildings in Charlotte and a few other towns. ... Whether Peeps received any formal architectural training is not known, but his background in design stood him in good stead in an era where the definition of the architectural profession was still open and fluid.”<sup>1</sup> The writers go on to describe Peeps's influence and significance thus:

Although not as prolific or wide-ranging as some of his contemporaries in Charlotte, Peeps found a strong clientele among the Queen City's civic and business leaders and established a long-lived practice that included some of the city's most distinguished buildings, especially those of the 1910s and 1920s. He captured local attention with his reputation-making [Latta Arcade and Brevard Court](#), built in 1914 for Edward Dilworth Latta's 4C's development company that created the Dilworth suburb and spurred Charlotte's growth of the era. The skylit arcade with stylized classical details was described by the local newspaper as “a departure in all particulars from the usual style of office buildings.” One of his most prestigious downtown commissions was the elegant [J. B. Ivey Department Store](#), a 5-story building clad in Gothic Revival style terra cotta, a landmark in Charlotte's downtown regional shopping mecca of flagship department stores. Although his practice focused on Charlotte, Peeps also had commissions in nearby communities such as Gastonia, Concord, and Salisbury and a few mountain towns. His oeuvre encompassed commercial buildings, hospitals, and clubhouses, and especially, handsome residences, including several in Charlotte's stylish young suburbs of Dilworth and Myers Park.

Known for the high quality of his designs, Peeps was like others of his generation a nimble eclectic, working confidently in all the popular styles of the day, including Renaissance Revival, Colonial Revival, Shingle style, Tudor and Gothic modes, and even a Moorish motif in the small, romantically picturesque commercial façade of Charlotte's [Ratcliffe Flower Shop](#). Like other architects in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000517>

Charlotte, he excelled at the Tudor Revival residential style which was highly popular in the city; among his works in that style are the [Lethco House](#) in Charlotte's Myers Park, the [E. T. Cannon House](#) built for a Concord textile executive, and the [Hanford House](#) in Saisbury. He was equally adept in variations on the Colonial Revival and Federal Revival styles, including the [W. W. Flowe House](#) in Concord and many others.

A leader in the state's architectural profession, he became a national AIA member in 1921 and was active in the North Carolina chapter as vice president and as president in 1924 and 1925. In his address to the NCAIA meeting in Charlotte in 1925, Peeps encouraged the chapter members to expand the organization and encourage recognition of the profession.<sup>2</sup>

#### Construction of the House:

This section of the Dilworth neighborhood was undergoing development in the 1910s, and Peeps had lived at 802 Worthington Avenue before purchasing this corner lot and house.<sup>3</sup> At that time, Park Road was known as Avondale Avenue. The original address of the house was 815 East Worthington, but Peeps preferred the side orientation, and the 1921 City Directory showed the address as 1810 Avondale. By 1933, the number had changed to 1826, and eventually it became 1826 Park Road. Despite the multiple address changes, the house itself retains a high degree of architectural integrity from the period of the Peeps family occupancy.

On 20 September 1918, Fred D. Blake received a building permit to construct a 2-story, frame residence for the 4Cs Company at 813 Worthington.<sup>4</sup> The Architect was identified as "Peeps," and the estimated cost was \$4000. It appears that Peeps designed this house with the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000517>

<sup>3</sup> "Worthington Avenue Home Sold for \$6,800," Charlotte Observer, 12 April 1918, page 5.

<sup>4</sup> This street number was probably intended to be 815. On 21 March 1919, J. A. Williamson received a building permit to construct four, one-story frame residences for the 4Cs Company at 701, 703, 809, and 813 Worthington. By that date, the 1½-story Peeps House was already built. The architect for these four houses was identified as "Bonfoey."

intention of making it his home. In April of 1918, he had sold his home at 802 Worthington and was shown in the City Directory of that year living at 223 Avondale.

The Charlotte Observer reported on 5 February 1919 that, “Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Peeps have moved into their attractive new cottage on Avondale avenue, Dilworth. They formerly lived on Worthington avenue, but sold their home there and rebuilt.”<sup>5</sup> Just a month later, the Observer reported that, “Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Peeps received last evening at their new home on Avondale avenue . . . in honor of the Mispah Chapter, No. 36 Order of the Eastern Star, of which Mrs. Peeps is worthy matron. . . . A diversion furnished the young folk was dancing in the attractive dance hall Mr. and Mrs. Peeps have had fitted out on the second floor of their home.”<sup>6</sup> This was the first of many social occasions hosted by the couple in their home and reported by the newspaper. In 1921, Mrs. Peeps hosted the St. Elizabeth guild of the Church of the Holy Comforter “at her home on the corner of Worthington and Avondale avenues.”<sup>7</sup> In April of that year, the Liberty Hall chapter of the D. A. R. met “with Mrs. W. H. Peeps, 815 Worthington avenue.”<sup>8</sup>

### Peeps’s Early Life:

William Henry Peeps was born 1868 in Islington, London, England, to Hannah Boer and James Abraham Peeps.<sup>9</sup> The 1871 census shows the family living at 8 Liverpool Street, St. Mary’s Parish, Islington. James A. Peeps was listed as a wood carver, age 39, born in Lynn,

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<sup>5</sup> “Mr. and Mrs. Peeps Move,” Charlotte Observer, 5 February 1919, page 11.

<sup>6</sup> “Mr. and Mrs. Peeps At Home To Eastern Star,” Charlotte Observer, 4 March 1919, page 5.

<sup>7</sup> Charlotte Observer, 9 January 1921, page 8.

<sup>8</sup> “D. A. R. Chapters To Meet Thursday, Charlotte News, 10 April 1921, page 6.

<sup>9</sup> Vol. 1b, page 305, Births registered in January, February, and March 1868, cited in England & Wales, Birth Index, 1837-2005, page 362. Sources vary as to the precise date. On his death certificate and in his obituary, the date is reported to be March 3. His tombstone is inscribed with the date March 20. A photograph of the grave marker can be seen at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/59703125/william-h-peeps>

Norfolk. Hannah, age 41, was born in Burnham Sutton, Norfolk, and their three sons – George M., age 12; Charles, age 9; and William H., age 3 – each was listed as “Scholar” born in Islington, Middlesex.<sup>10</sup>

The following year, Hannah Peeps, age 42, traveling in Steerage on the S. S. Denmark, arrived in New York, along with Walter, age 18, Sailor; Amelia, age 16; George, age 11; Chas., age 7; and Wm., age 4.<sup>11</sup>

By 1880, the family was settled in Grand Rapids, Kent County, Michigan. James A. Peeps was a 48-year-old wood carver living at 46 Coit Avenue with his wife Hannah, age 50, and sons Charles, age 19, and William, age 12. Charles was also identified as a wood carver, and William was “at school.”<sup>12</sup>

The Vaseff/Bisher biographical sketch reports that “Probably learning his craft from his father and brother, William apprenticed in furniture design and architecture and in 1888 went to Chicago, where he worked for architect Frederick W. Perkins.”<sup>13</sup> A Chicago City Directory for 1889 shows William H. Peeps, draughtsman, boarding at 270 Chicago Avenue.

In October 1890, the Evening Leader of Grand Rapids reported that, “Mr. William H. Peeps, head designer of the Ketcham Furniture company of Toledo, will be married next Tuesday evening to Miss Nellie Blakesley (sic: Blakeslee) of Grand avenue. Mr. Peeps formerly lived here, and is a brother of Mr. George Peeps, secretary of the Carvers’ union.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> 1871 England & Wales Census. County: London-Middlesex; City: Finsbury; Page 19; Family 207; Lines 14-18.

<sup>11</sup> Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M237, roll 362); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

<sup>12</sup> "United States Census, 1880," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MWSK-XQF> : 26 August 2017), William Peeps in household of James A Peeps, Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district ED 142, sheet 389A, NARA microfilm publication T9 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), FHL microfilm 1,254,588.

<sup>13</sup> <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000517>

<sup>14</sup> The Evening Leader, Grand Rapids, MI, Friday 10 October 1890, page 4.

In 1900, William and Nellie Peeps were living in Atlanta, Georgia. His occupation was listed as “Designer Wood Work.” Living with them were Nellie’s 14-year-old sister Norma Blakeslee and William’s widowed father James. While in Atlanta, William helped to organize and was elected Treasurer of the Atlanta T Square Club, whose purpose was “to train its members in the different lines of architectural work and to accomplish this end it is intended to have regular monthly competitions and exhibitions of work from competitors.”<sup>15</sup>

By December of 1902, Peeps had relocated to Denver, Colorado, and opened a studio for interior design.<sup>16</sup> In March of 1904, the Denver Post wrote about a church that was to be reopened after “having been decorated throughout ... under the personal direction of William H. Peeps of New York.”<sup>17</sup> In July of that year, the newspaper published a rendering of “R. Stewart’s New Residence (Designed by Architect William H. Peeps).”<sup>18</sup>

#### First Appearance in Charlotte:

Peeps first came to public notice in Charlotte In 1907 as architect for the Power House built In Dilworth for the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, known locally as the 4Cs. An item in the Charlotte Observer of 29 June 1907 reported:

“Within about 60 days the power house of the 4C’s at Dilworth will be ready for occupancy. Mr. William H. Peeps, the architect, reconstructed the plant after the collapse of the walls sometime ago and has directed the erection of the new building, which is of steel construction throughout. The walls carry no weight at all. Most of the new machinery is on the ground, ready to be installed. The roof of the building will be put on next week.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Atlanta Constitution, 5 September 1900, page 10.

<sup>16</sup> “How to Keep Hubby Home,,” Denver Post, 30 December 1902, Section 2, page 2.

<sup>17</sup> “First Reformed Church To Show Its Fine Clothes, Denver Post, 13 March 1904, Section 2, page 6.

<sup>18</sup> “Academy of Medicine To Erect Home of Its Own,” Denver Post, 10 July 1904, Section 2, page 11.

<sup>19</sup> “Power House Will Soon Be Ready,” Charlotte Observer, 29 June 1907, page 6.



At the same time, Peeps was busy with other projects for the 4Cs. He was selected to design an office and depot for the Inter-urban streetcar line to be built on the “Carson lot” at the corner of South Tryon and First Streets.<sup>20</sup> Another project envisioned by the 4Cs was a park and hotel on a 1300-acre tract at the point where the inter-urban line was projected to cross the Catawba River. The paper reported that, “Mr. [Edward Dilworth] Latta’s plans at present are to build on this place a 100-room hotel with wide shady verandas and having an immense dining room. ... It is also planned to sell off plots of ground here for rustic lodges and small summer homes ...” With regard to this project, W. H. Peeps was identified as “of the architectural department of the 4C’s.”<sup>21</sup>

Despite his busy workload at the 4Cs, it appears that Peeps also sought work from the general public. He placed a simple advertisement in the local papers, thus:

William H. Peeps  
ARCHITECT.  
Suite 10 4C’s Building  
Charlotte, N. C.  
Telephone 265.<sup>22</sup>

Denver, Grand Rapids, and Elsewhere:

A month later, without explanation, the newspaper announced Peepses’ departure from Charlotte: “Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Peeps and Miss Blakeley (sic), who are with Mrs. J. P. Woodall, will leave about the 15<sup>th</sup> of October for their home in Denver, Col.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Charlotte Observer, 30 June 1907, page 7.

<sup>21</sup> “A Gem of Nature Is Car Line Terminal,” Charlotte News, 24 July 1907, page 5.

<sup>22</sup> Charlotte News, 24 August 1907, page 7.

<sup>23</sup> Charlotte Observer, 27 September 1907, page 5.

A item dated 6 February 1908 in the Evening Bulletin of Providence, Rhode Island, reveals another connection to Charlotte: “Mr. and Mrs. William Henry Peeps of Denver, Col., have sent out cards announcing the marriage of their sister, Miss Norma B. Blakeslee, to Mr. Herbert R. Lockwood, formerly of Edgewood, on Wednesday evening, Jan. 29. Mr. and Mrs. Lockwood will be at home after March 1, in Charlotte, N. C., where Mr. Lockwood is connected with the South Atlantic Waste Company.”<sup>24</sup>

A little more than a year after Will and Nellie Peeps left Charlotte, a notice in the Rocky Mountain News announced that he had established a corporation known as the W. H. Peeps Fixture company in Denver.<sup>25</sup> A glowing testimonial published a few months later provides an early indication of Peeps’s talent for interior design, an attribute for which he would be widely recognized in his later work in Charlotte:

“The Peeps company utilizes mahogany and all the choice varieties of American hardwoods. A specialty is made of fine interior finishings and furniture for homes, hotels, bars and other places of assembly or resort. The company employs only skilled workmen who are competent to execute all kinds of fixtures with the highest degree of workmanship. Among the corps of workmen are artists in ornamental woodwork who are in the front rank. In addition to doing a large share of the fixture work in Denver it has installed fixtures in many other cities. W. H. Peeps is president and general manager of the company.”<sup>26</sup>

By 1910, William and Nellie were back in Grand Rapids, living at 347 Jefferson Avenue. His occupation was listed as Furniture Designer.<sup>27</sup>

### Return to Charlotte:

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<sup>24</sup> The Evening Bulletin, Providence, RI, 6 February 1908, page 7.

<sup>25</sup> The Rocky Mountain News, Denver, CO, 11 December 1908, page 7.

<sup>26</sup> The Rocky Mountain News, Denver, CO, 23 April 1909, unpaginated [frame 67].

<sup>27</sup> 1910 Census of Population, Grand Rapids, Kent County, MI.

The following year Nellie paid a visit to her sister in Charlotte,<sup>28</sup> and by December 1912, it is clear that the Peepses had relocated to Charlotte, this time on a permanent basis.<sup>29</sup> A Charlotte City Directory for that year placed them at 17 North McDowell Street. What prompted their decision is not certain, but anecdotal information indicates a close bond between Nellie and her sister Norma, who had already settled in Charlotte and begun a family.<sup>30</sup>

In addition, William's previous work for the 4Cs must have been mutually beneficial, for he was soon working for the company in other projects. The Vaseff/Bishir sketch notes that Peeps "was among the first men certified to practice architecture in North Carolina, obtaining license 27 in 1915 along with other architects who were licensed in that year based on being in practice prior to 1915."<sup>31</sup>

In 1920, the Peepses were living in their new home, 1810 Avondale Avenue, along with a roomer, 31-year-old Eugene F. Redding of Georgia.<sup>32</sup> In 1930, they were living alone at the same address.<sup>33</sup> In each enumeration, William's occupation is listed as Architect. By 1940, the address had changed to 1826 Avondale, and Nellie's nephew Adolphus Cook, age 14, was living

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<sup>28</sup> The Evening Chronicle, Charlotte, NC, 15 March 1911, page 6.

<sup>29</sup> "Shrine Meeting Was Great - The New Fez Wearers," Charlotte News, 6 December 1912, page 2. Among the names in the list of Candidates is "W. H. Peeps, Charlotte."

<sup>30</sup> Their mother, Martha Cramer Blakeslee, had died in 1889 (the year before Nellie's marriage to William Peeps) when Norma was about three or four years old. Multiple records show Norma living with William and Nellie during the period 1900-1908, and it was the Peepses (not the bride's father) who announced Norma's marriage. Norma's children were listed by name as survivors in William Peeps's obituary, though other nieces and nephews were not. The two sisters are buried in the same double-row plot in Elmwood Cemetery, Charlotte, sharing a headstone with "Peeps" on one side and "Lockwood / Cook" on the other. Taken together, these facts suggest that William and Nellie may have served as surrogate parents for Norma, or at the minimum as her guardian. Both William and Nellie had other siblings, but the connection with Norma seems to have been especially close.

<sup>31</sup> <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000517>

<sup>32</sup> 1920 Census of Population.

<sup>33</sup> 1930 Census of Population.

with them.<sup>34</sup> He was the only son of Norma Blakeslee and her second husband, Adolphus Alexander Cook, both of whom had died on 10 September 1938,<sup>35</sup> leaving the boy an orphan.

On 29 August 1940, Nellie Peeps died at home as a result of a cerebral hemorrhage she had suffered in April.<sup>36</sup> She was buried in the family plot at Elmwood Cemetery in Charlotte. Her grave maker shows her formal name, Ellen Jane B. Peeps, as well as a familiar term of endearment, “Aunt Nellie.”<sup>37</sup>

The following April, William Peeps remarried, to Mrs. Margaret Linehan Berry, at Belmont Abbey Cathedral in Gaston County, NC.<sup>38</sup> She was a widow with an 18-year-old son, Jack Berry.

William H. Peeps died at Charlotte Memorial Hospital on 10 September 1950<sup>39</sup> and was buried by his wife Nellie in the family plot at Elmwood. Both the Charlotte Observer and the Charlotte News treated his death as a major local news item, reporting it the following day on the front page of the local news section. As was a common practice at the time, the funeral home brought Peeps’s body to the residence to remain until an hour before the funeral service at the Little Church on the Lane.<sup>40</sup> On the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Observer published the following editorial:

Charlotte and North Carolina lost a good and useful citizen in the death of WILLIAM H. PEEPS, native of London but a resident of this community

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<sup>34</sup> 1940 Census of Population.

<sup>35</sup> “Mrs. Norma Cook Follows Her Husband In Death in Few Hours,” Charlotte News, 10 September 1938, page 1.

<sup>36</sup> Certificate of Death for Ellen Jane Peeps, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Registration Dist. No. 60-95, Certificate No. 231.

<sup>37</sup> A photograph of the grave marker is at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/59703144/ellen-jane-peeps>

<sup>38</sup> Marriage License Application and Certificate for William H. Peeps and Mrs. Margaret Linehan Berry, Office of Register of Deeds, Gaston County, NC.

<sup>39</sup> Certificate of Death for William H. Peeps, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Registration District No. 60-95, Certificate No. 20955.

<sup>40</sup> “William Peeps Is Dead At 82,” Charlotte Observer, 11 September 1950, Section 2, page 1.

the last 45 years, during which period he has been widely recognized in the field of architecture. Many buildings in Charlotte and other Carolina communities were designed by him.

He was also widely known, popular, and highly esteemed in Masonic circles. He was past illustrious grand master of the North Carolina Grand Council of Royal and Select Masons and also past grand commander of the Grand Commandery of North Carolina.

Mr. PEEPS was a man of high and worthy ideals and was actively interested in church and civic organizations and in public affairs.<sup>41</sup>

Peeps left a handwritten will that stated simply, “That I do hereby bequeth [sic] all my personal and real property to my wife.” It was dated 23 April 1919, while he was married to Nellie, but since he did not identify her by name, it was admitted to probate, and Margaret inherited.<sup>42</sup>

Margaret was still residing at 1826 Avondale Avenue when she died at Charlotte Memorial Hospital on 13 September 1951, at the age of 54.<sup>43</sup> In her will, she left the house to her son, John D. Berry.<sup>44</sup> It remained in the family until John D. and wife Wilma B. Berry sold the property to Daniel L. and wife Kathy O. Roebuck on 21 August 1990.<sup>45</sup> It passed through the hands of several owners until it was purchased on 11 August 2017 by the current owners, Steven and Polly Menaker.<sup>46</sup>

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

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<sup>41</sup> “William H. Peeps,” *Charlotte Observer*, 13 September 1950, page 10-A.

<sup>42</sup> William Henry Peeps, Last Will and Testament, filed 18 September 1950, recorded in Mecklenburg County, NC, Will Book 8, page 139.

<sup>43</sup> Certificate of Death for Margaret Linehan Peeps, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Registration District No. 60-95, Certificate No. 21393.

<sup>44</sup> Margaret L. Berry Peeps, Last Will and Testament, Mecklenburg County, NC, Will Book 9, pages 3-6.

<sup>45</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 6336, pages 1004-1005.

<sup>46</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 32037, pages 131-132.

## PREFACE & DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:

(This following section is offered as a speculative examination of analysis of his work and his home by a practicing architect that was the architect for the circa 2019 renovation of this house)

An architect as noteworthy as evidenced within *such articles as “The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Story, Library, Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room Image Collection, William Peeps (1868-1950)” and “North Carolina Architect & builders, a biographical Dictionary, Peeps, William H. (1868-1950)”* designs his own home. What does the design of his house reveal about the man? Is it to showcase his life’s work? Is it to secure a financial benefit within his trade? Or is it simply the house he wants? Or it could be a little bit of each, done his way.

The house constructed by 1919 at the corner of East Worthington Avenue and Park Road is no more imposing as the other neighboring single family dwellings. Although upon closer observation it is different than the others. Some of the elements of his house are present in imposing houses he designed for others as evidence of his apparent design philosophy. The number of rooms is quite small, but the volume of the interior spaces is quite large and the circulation with hallways and connections is very efficient. Moreover, it is obvious that he was building the house for his specific needs having the two formal rooms of living and dining, kitchen and bath for function, two bedrooms of master and guest for accommodation, and a studio for occupation and large gatherings.

The house is fairly conventional in form and materials, and the style. Although not faithful to any style, the image does appear somewhat gothic with the steep 12/12 roof pitch with clipped hip or Jerkin-head with exposed rafter-tail eaves. The second floor shed dormer features an uninterrupted bank of seven multi-pane casement windows. Formal rooms have continuous

vertical trim from floor to ceiling at windows and doors. Some other feature elements of the house such as the fireplace mantle are classical. Other details are mainstream or even modest.

Whether by preference or happenstance, the house is on a corner lot. Many other very significant and imposing houses he designed were at corner lots or lots not constrained to the typical narrow street frontage and elongated depth lots, such as listed local historic properties of the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission*, *the Craig House located at 900 Ardsley Road, Charlotte, circa 1915*, in a report written on July 1996; or *the C. C. Coddington House located at 1122 East Morehead Street, Charlotte, circa 1917*, written March 1985.

Another House of his design was for the Charlotte Pound and Moore business owner, *the Ralston and Frances Pound House located at 1529 Dilworth Road, circa 1925*. This house is similar in design configuration as Peeps home of six years earlier. It features a side street entry, a full balustrade front porch, an elongated living room with end fireplace, perpendicular staircase with mid-landing switchback with paired windows with basement stair below, a Jerkin-head steep pitch roof with exposed rafter tails, main central block with cross gable; but, in two story with clinker brick veneer. This author architect was also the renovation architect for this house in 1991 and was featured on the Dilworth Home Tour in a following year just as was the subject home of this report. It would not be a stretch to image that the architect used his home with studio as a source of “port folio” in relations with potential clients. This author has done the same. An article about this house was written by yet another Charlotte architect, Jack Boyte (1920-2005), for an “Insight” article in the Charlotte News, 14 March 1983. It describes the bond of the two couples as architect and client, citing that the house was “designed to mirror the scale and texture of country houses of his native land”.

One of his recognizable hallmark design philosophies appear to be the “public” side entry into the middle of the length of the structure that allows the open “front” porch to be private in nature. This may explain his respect for porch privacy or just the frugality of maximizing the interior space usage with arrival and circulation at the midpoint thereby eliminating the wasteful convention of the center hall plan.

The doors and windows often give a clue to intent of style or inventiveness of an architect. The public entry door at Avondale most likely was a pair of multi-pane glass wood leafs. The private street porch door is wood paneled with round top glass panes in the upper third of leaf. The interior doors are typical six horizontal panel wood with plain casing board in miter with moulded back-band. The predominant windows are double hung with the imagery of the Prairie style configuration but not the patent narrow widths of the feature panes.

He did insert some custom design elements for his home. The street porch balustrade as well as the interior balustrade, is heavy but plain in its execution. The first exit step is recessed within the wood porch structure. The corner columns are articulated with a complex rectangular cross section somewhat of a pilaster configuration and with paired brackets above the capital at the beam band below the closed eave. The brick base at the corner columns is detailed to accept the column in configuration. The rear chimney masonry has indented corners with a rowlock cap. The front chimney has a different straight profile with a projecting cap, but the upper brickwork appears to be a different bonding appearance from that below as evidence that it may have been reworked.

There are drawings of the house done by Peeps, *labeled Residence of Mr. William H. Peeps, William H Peeps, Architect housed at the Archives Collection at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte*, for the extant structure; however, one never knows exactly what was built



especially with a probability of the architect there to make improvements or tweaks during the construction, undetectable changes or complete alterations. There are obvious changes made through the years with photographs and records *such as those in the National Register of Historic Places Report for Dilworth in Charlotte of circa 1986* that show those changes. The interior dining room features a window bay in the corner with three casements on the rear wall; however, as cryptically sketched over Peep's hard lined drawings and as the foundations suggest, a full sunroom bay with a pair of casements on each the rear and side walls was built originally.

#### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

(This following architectural description will attempt to portray Four different periods that trace the evolution of the house)

- I) The original recorded design by Peeps; circa 1919
- II) Apparent changes that occurred up to the National Register nomination; circa 1986
- III) Changes w/ HDC COA from 1990 up to current rehabilitation
- IV) Changes of Rehabilitation; circa 2019

Also of note; 1) Avondale Avenue and Park Road refer to the same street. The name Avondale was changed at some time in the 1940's after Latta Park Lake was drained and the parameter was developed with more lots. It seems rational that Park Avenue was linked south to Avondale, called Park Road, that would usher vehicular connection from the center city to, a planned alleged first shopping center in the state, "Park Road Shopping Center" passing by the Avondale Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter, 2701 Park Road that was relocated from South Boulevard at the relative time period. 2) The address of the house and considered the front was facing Avondale, but it was changed. For purposes of eliminating confusion, the front of the

house will refer to East Worthington Avenue, the side street to Park Road. 3) The public entry door will refer to the door facing Park Road and the private porch door will refer to East Worthington for original design period.

I) ORIGINAL DESIGN:

Peeps's design is a one and one half story structure with the main block with front short end facing Worthington (Northwest) and the long side facing Avondale, Park (Southeast). The rear (Northeast) quarter portion of house reduces in width but with the same roof plane at the side (Northwest). The eave is at the one story level with a 12/12 pitch. At the front end and rear end are clipped hip or Jerkin head gables. With the reduction in width of the house at the rear, the roof allows two clipped hips to the rear at different heights. Over the public entry door and stoop facing Avondale, there is a hip roof that may have been but as a gable roof with flanking flat rain diverters in alignment of the soffit. Perhaps this is a detail to lower the roof ridge also. A clipped hip one story roof over the projecting guest bedroom bay at Northwest side. A long shed dormer of the second story is centered over the stoop roof. Another short shed dormer is on the opposite Northwest side over the front bedroom. There is an intermediate height shed dormer at the stairwell. The full facade front porch has a shallow pitch hip roof that engages at the closed eave in alignment with the steeper pitch main block with exposed rafter tails.

A front masonry chimney in running bond exposed one brick depth visible at the porch transitions to the chimney stack above the porch roof offset to the right of the clipped hip. Another masonry chimney also in running bond is at the rear block transition centered on the main ridge. The foundation is in brick.

The entire house is sided in square coursed wood shingles without corner boards. Eaves are consistently two feet wide, closed at the front porch and plumb. The other eaves are exposed

sloping rafter tails with plump cut open with v-groove board. Shingle mould is at the barge board at the rake and face boards for guttering at the eave overhang.

The interior plan divides the main block nearly in half from front to back. The wider formal side faces Avondale with the deeper front room as the living including the public entry door and the shallower dining to the rear. A wide and tall cased opening separates the otherwise elongated room. The public front entry door along the living room wall is entered from the open but roof and side walled covered stoop. Directly across is the door entering into the hallway to the private quarters. The fireplace is centered on the front wall of the living with the private porch entry door on the left and a window on the right. Triple double hung windows front onto Avondale from living and dining either side of stoop. A Window bay feature is at the east corner of the dining room. The triple elongated casement windows are two over two with square panes at the top similar in configuration to the double hung square panes in their upper sash. The walls and ceiling are in plaster and floor in oak. The flat casing of windows and doors run vertically from the flat board ceiling band to the floor interrupting the flush baseboard. At the ceiling there is also a flat trim board with intersecting small crown. Picture mould below the ceiling band and a moulded cap and shoe mould at the floor base. (This treatment most likely extended into the dining room, but later removed. The fireplace in living projects with full wall into the room. The shelf mantle has a stock classical appearance. Paneled pilasters with base trim have appliqués at the architrave face plate with a panel at the center with also an appliqué. The firebox surround is in buff color glazing with rectangular tile set in running bond as is the flush floor hearth.

The dining room connects to the kitchen through a butler's pantry with by-pass doors. All flooring, beyond formal rooms throughout house, is in pine. In the pantry wood cabinetry flanks the northwest side. Below counter is a bank of drawers and a pair of flush wood doors. Above

are full glass pane cupboards supported by large scroll brackets. Projecting above are triple sliding storage doors supported by small scroll brackets. The interior treatment is vertical v-groove paneling. There is a separate corner unit recessed in the wall with upper and lower glass pane doors matching the design of the pantry.

The kitchen in the rear is the larger half of the of the rear block. A double hung window is at the northeast rear wall. A door leads to an enclosed rear porch with screened or latticed door to rear. A servants toilet compartment is within porch with a small window at side exterior wall. Forward of the porch on the northwest side entered from the center hallway there is the bathroom with lavatory, toilet and aproned tub with the one exposed corner curved. A finished closed stairwell connects to basement with an exterior door and window at the landing. The staircase to the upstairs ascends beside the door to the basement run. A rather discrete closed stringer staircase ascends over the basement run. There is a double hung window at the landing. The balustrade is noticeably simple and sturdy like the private porch balustrade. The handrail is an eased edged 2 x 4 with proportional rectangular thin pickets with moderate spacing.

Continuing down the hallway from rear to front, a guest bedroom is centered on the northwest wall that projects allowing perpendicular double hung windows in both corners. At the end of the hallway toward the front is the “master” bedroom. Closets are between the bedrooms. A pair of double hung windows front onto the porch and a single near the corner at the northwest wall.

Ascending the stairs, there is an upper landing with a closet across at southeast side, a door to attic to the left and a door to the studio on the right. The studio has a bank of seven casement windows at the southeast, a bank of three casements at the northwest and a pair of double hung over the front porch avail the studio space with abundant lighting and a sense of

openness. The walls trace the confines of an optimized enlarged attic-like space with some sloped ceilings, and are uninterrupted except for a door to attic at northwest wall.

## II) NATIONAL REGISTER PERIOD:

The changes that occurred at this point are evident from the nomination report entry of three exterior photographs and one interior, all taken in 1986.

- 1) The private porch exhibits the original design with full balustrade at front and right side with left side inset steps.
- 2) The side street stoop exhibits a gable roof with flanking side roof extension. It is an exception to the original design shown as a hip roof. It could have been a field change during construction though or a marking by a former resident correcting the plans.
- 3) Toward the rear corner off the dining room is a sunroom extension with a flat roof also an exception to the original design that shows a similar but much smaller bay with triple casement windows. The foundations of this space appear to be integrated with the wall of house main body. There are two elongated prairie style casements facing Park Road and two facing rear along with interior upper and lower glass cabinets recessed into the wall facing Park Road.
- 4) From the photograph, the entry sequence from sidewalk of Park Road to side door is obscured by hedges, but it is detectable that there were dual steps from sidewalk, either side symmetrical about the entry stoop. Railing is barely detectable in photograph with both flanking steps to stoop and the accompanying balustrade across the street facing edge. Again, this could be in conflict with Peep's depiction on the drawing depicting the center steps leading to grade.

- 5) The rear clipped gable shows an attic vent such as would have been in original with attic space.
- 6) The rear porch appears to be now enclosed with a door and a six pane elongated casement window.
- 7) A left rear shed addition appears with a rear facing fixed or short casement window of prairie style. It may portray that the shed simply became part of the interior space and with an added floor as evidenced with joist pockets. Apparently salvaged windows were implanted on the walls at unknown periods of time.
- 8) The kitchen rear window partially obscured by shrub appears to be a typical full size prairie style double hung.
- 9) The rear chimney is of natural brick.
- 10) The one interior photograph indicates that the wide portal was mostly infilled with flanking tall book and display cases for greater separation between living and dining rooms.

### III) HISTORIC DISTRICT PHASE:

These changes are probably from two conversions, one about 1990 that oriented the house toward East Worthington by eradicating the Park Road entry, and another by a subsequent owner that updated the house prior to being a featured house on the “Dilworth Home Tour” circa 2014.

- 1) The house was reoriented to a Worthington front entry. Door was relocated from right front corner to left front corner of living room. It had an architrave with fluted casing surround. The right middle porch column was repositioned (ghost marks are visible) such that it would be symmetrical about the new front door with

- corresponding brick steps and sidewalk added to connect to public sidewalk with reworking the porch and railing. All East Worthington facing sashes were replaced with aluminum ones, and with a stock prairie style pattern that did not match the original distinctive original wider one.
- 2) Both front and rear chimneys were painted.
  - 3) The Park Road masonry stoop has wood flooring, fully enclosed interior space, storage cabinetry on each side, removed door, retained opening and with an assemblage of salvaged smaller window sashes installed as a fixed unit facing Park Road. The exterior masonry landing and or steps are removed. Also the roof had become clipped hip without any flanking side treatment.
  - 4) At the rear elevation, the kitchen window opening was widened with a pair of single pane casements. This would indicate a major renovation of the kitchen.
  - 5) The rear door upgraded to half glass paneled door with transom above and the six pane window to right removed and the far right window replaced with an exterior door. This would indicate a change to the rear porch to be converted to become part of the kitchen, and the shed to become a separate exterior space.
  - 6) The rear attic louvered vent was replaced with a window indicating renovation into a habitable upstairs room.
  - 7) The front bedroom was opened to the living room with a wide cased opening.
  - 8) The house cross axis door opening into the hallway is infilled and a new opening into hallway from the left rear side of dining room.
  - 9) Dual leaf glass pane doors are at the rear wall of dining room that open to the sunroom extension. These double doors are the exact size of the opening at the former

- stoop, and there are ghost marking for hinges at either side of the jamb opening. The doors are of a exterior thickness and the bottom rail shows a “dutchman” repair. And of note, the Worthington front door pedimented surround fits the exact measurement of the dual leaf doors.
- 10) The pantry cabinetry (originally symmetrical but altered) still in place, dining room door is walled and kitchen bypass door removed.
  - 11) The kitchen is open to full rear width and with all modern cabinetry and finishes. The wall at the bathroom is offset now making the bathroom smaller and the kitchen bigger by removing the tub. There is oak flooring over all the rear spaces that hump at the hallway as evidenced a direct overlay over the original pine flooring at the informal original spaces. Sliding doors added to hall closet for widening.
  - 12) The middle “guest” bedroom is configured for a master suite by commandeering most of the hallway for a bathroom and combining of the two closets into one with sliding doors.
  - 13) Upstairs the closet has become a bathroom and up-fitted with the corner tub removed from downstairs, a laundry closet infilled at a corner of the upper floor landing.
  - 14) The open studio has been infilled with walls for a master suite with a lavish bathroom while maintaining all Park Road side windows.
  - 15) The left middle original attic appears to have been altered by simply raising the side clipped gable roof over the “guest” bedroom below. It is a cedar lined dressing room.

#### IV) CURRENT REHABILITATION:



The intent of this rehabilitation contracted in August 2017 was to rethink and rework the modernizations that have occurred in the past; but with intent to recapture Peeps original design by homage or literal reversion. This restoration-renovation project was at the discretion of the current owners, Steven and Polly Menaker. They expressed that they wanted to live in an historic house, to be in an historic neighborhood, and generally liked the house in and of itself, but did not fully realize the historic nature of the house or the complication of the inherent task. Many envisioned “must haves” yielded in compromise for restoring the house with the original architects vision in mind and at financial cost. Fortunately, the State Historic Preservation Office granted approval for tax credit program, and they are supportive and pleased to receive local historic designation.

- 1) The front porch is now returned to a full front balustrade and the steps returned to the side; however, they are on the right and not on the left with a concrete walk leading to East Worthington. The original left concrete walk leading to brick step to rear, still in place.
- 2) The front door is returned to the right corner; but without the architrave surround, and a window is returned where it was originally depicted on Peeps plan drawing.
- 3) All modern aluminum windows are replaced with the original wood sashes. (They were salvaged by previous owner and stored in basement.)
- 4) The Park Road side entry was restored, but still enclosed with closets to either side and an eight pane three-quarter glass door. The masonry stoop was returned but with a single side steps entry to the left with a concrete walk and steps to the street sidewalk.

- 5) At the rear elevation, the kitchen windows are replaced with a triple unit of eight pane casements. A clipped hip horizontal bracketed canopy is added over the door and brick steps.
- 6) At the left side basement landing exterior door, a simple shed canopy roof is added to protect the water infiltration at the grade rested entry. There was evidence of a previous similar attempt.
- 7) At the formal living and dining rooms, the dividing bookshelves are removed. The modern trim work also removed to return the unique trim work still present in the living room.
- 8) The suspected original side street entry glass pane dual leaf doors are repositioned at the original location of the by-pass door to pantry. The left side corner door to hallway to remain from pervious alteration.
- 9) Pantry cabinetry was removed along with walls of closet to exposed the free standing kitchen chimney (a “shadow box with exposed brick faces the hallway side). An original pantry cabinet unit still in place that is recessed into the exterior Park Road wall.
- 10) Kitchen is with new cabinetry and finishes, now displaying the original rear porch toilet room window now facing into the shed storage room. Beams above define the original walls removed and the ceiling treatment in wood recapitulates the wood ceiling of the rear porch utilitarian space.
- 11) The converted downstairs bedroom (original guest bedroom) becomes the master with removal of the original hallway wall (that was converted to a bathroom). The closet-hall area and half of the original front master bedroom is now bathroom, and the

- remaining front half is a dressing room with all three original windows remaining, but all converted back to the salvaged original wood ones.
- 12) The stairwell remains, but a few reworking of the upper landing with recessed bookshelves and salvaged historic cabinetry unit to supplant the previous laundry closet.
  - 13) The rear converted attic bedroom remains, but the chimney is exposed to recapitulate what would have been there as an attic space.
  - 14) All of the imposed previous upper floor master bedroom suite was removed from the original open studio. An open multi-use den space now features the bank of original southeast Park Road side casement windows. The front East Worthington pair of windows are now within a front guest bedroom, and the northwest facing triple casement windows are now within the en-suite bathroom. In theme, a portion of the front chimney is exposed that shows where a flue had been that undoubtedly heated by a stove for the studio space. A corner new gas fireplace appliance was removed from that location. New oak flooring covers the entire space as the original pine was non-recoverable, but used for salvage repairs elsewhere.