

Landmark Designation Report for the



Thompson-Anderson House 858 Concord Road Davidson, North Carolina

Prepared by:
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November 2023

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General Information

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|---|--|
| Historic Names of Property: | Thompson-Anderson House |
| Address of Property: | 858 Concord Road, Davidson, North Carolina 28036 |
| PIN: | 00729301 |
| Deed Book & Page: | Mecklenburg County Deed Book 36359, Page 234 |
| Amount of Land/Acreage to be Designated: | 0.535 Acres |
| Ad Valorem Tax Value: | The 2023 Real Estate Assessed Value of parcel 00729301 which includes Thompson-Anderson House is \$949,700 |
| Recommendation for Designation: | Interior and exterior designation of the house and all the property within Mecklenburg County parcel 00729301. |
| Name/Address of Current Property Owner: | Kirk A. Steffensen Leslie Nunez Steffensen 858 Concord Road Davidson, North Carolina 28036 |

Chain of Title

| Grantor | Grantee | Date | Deed Book/Page | Notes |
|---|---|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Joseph L. Sharp and spouse Pamela Sharp | Kirk and Leslie Steffensen | July 30, 2021 | 36359/234 | 0.535 acres |
| Nathan W. Worsley III and wife Holliday Seymour Worsley | Joseph L. Sharp and wife Pamela L. Sharp | August 26, 2004 | 17657/886 | 0.535 acres |
| Wallace Gamble (aka Wallace Melvin Gamble) | Nathan W. Worsley III and wife Holliday Seymour Worsley | September 4, 2001 | 12632/813 | 0.535 acres |
| Sadie B. Anderson | Wallace Gamble | June 11, 1987 | 5523/194 | lot of land 24,400 square feet |
| Wilburn A. Thompson and wife Mildred Hartness Thompson | Sadie B. Anderson | July 22, 1943 | 1100/300 | lot of land 24,400 square feet |
| Robert Irwin [sic] Johnston and wife Sarah D. Johnston | Wilburn A. Thompson | December 26, 1933 | 842/295 | lot of land 24,400 square feet |
| <i>Source: Register of Deeds Office, Mecklenburg County</i> | | | | |

Abstract

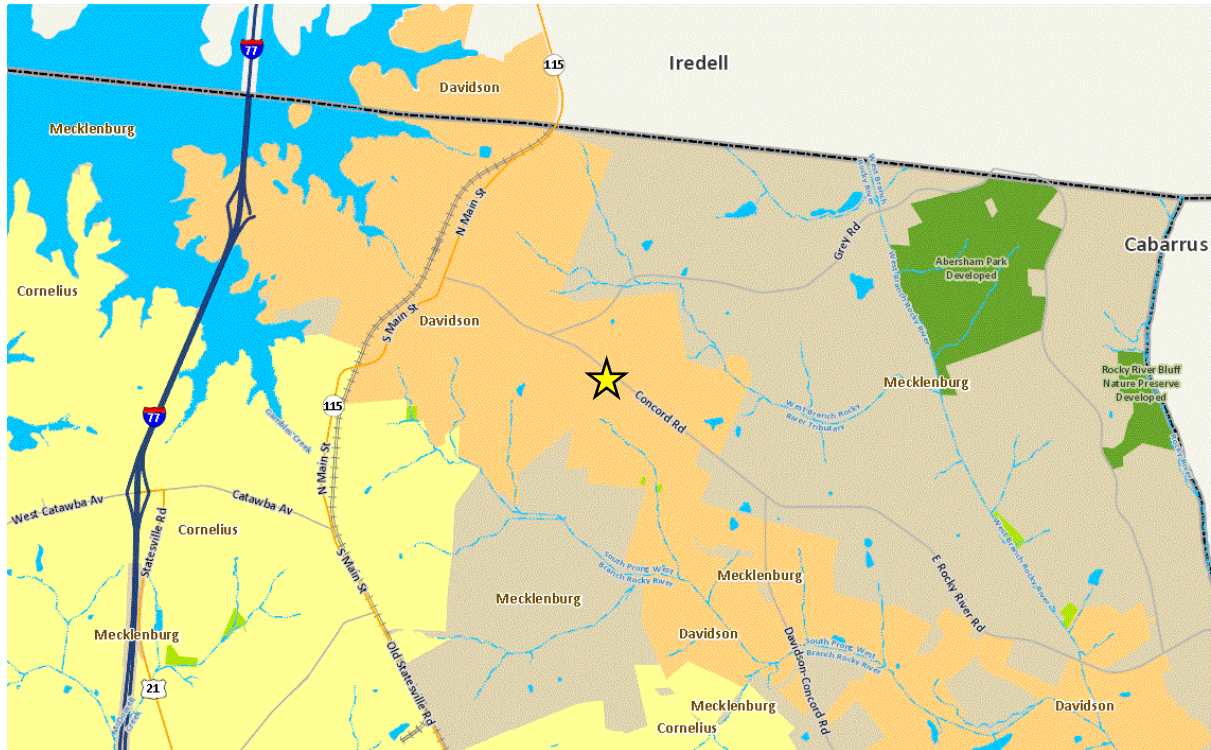
Statement of Significance

The Thompson-Anderson House at 858 Concord Road is historically significant for its Tudor Revival architecture and also for its association with several prominent members of the Davidson community who owned and resided at the property. Wilburn A. “Wib” Thompson built the home in 1936 when Concord Road was a rural route. Tudor Revival was among the most popular architectural styles in the area in this period, and the Thompson-Anderson House uniquely represented this derivative of English architecture. The second owners, Sadie and John Anderson, owned and operated one of Davidson’s grocery stores, known as Anderson’s Food Store. Well preserved by its past and recent owners, the Thompson-Anderson House is a site that bears testimony to Davidson’s history.

Integrity Statement

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Location | The Thompson-Anderson House is located at its original site of construction. |
| Design | The Thompson-Anderson House is the best example and one of the few remaining structures of Tudor Revival architecture in Davidson. |
| Setting | The Thompson-Anderson House is located on Concord Road, which at the time of construction was outside the town limits of Davidson. The rural setting in which the house was constructed is now part of the town and is surrounded by infill developments. |
| Materials | The Thompson-Anderson House retains materials that are original to the home’s date of construction, including exterior brick, plaster in the owner’s suite and living room, and wood floors throughout. |
| Workmanship | The Thompson-Anderson House is typical of the workmanship seen during the 1930s in Mecklenburg County. |
| Feeling | Though a major addition was made to the rear of the Thompson-Anderson House, it was thoughtfully designed to minimize its impact upon the streetscape and view of the house from Concord Road. |
| Association | The Thompson-Anderson House is historically significant for its association with the growth and activity of Davidson. Wilburn A. Thompson, whose family had resided in the town for generations, was representative of many men of the town who were natives, had attended Davidson College, and entered the civic and professional ranks of the community. John and Sadie Anderson operated Anderson’s Food Store, one of the small independent grocers that was common and necessary in towns such as Davidson before supermarkets entered the market in the post-WWII period. |

Maps



Source: Polaris (2023)



Source: Polaris (2023)

Historical Background

Written by Nick Linville

The Thompson-Anderson House at 858 Concord Road is historically significant for its Tudor Revival architecture and also for its association with several prominent members of the Davidson community who owned and resided at the property. Wilburn A. Thompson built the home in 1936 when Concord Road was a rural route. Tudor Revival was among the most popular architectural styles in the area in this period, and the Thompson-Anderson House uniquely represented this derivative of English architecture. Thompson was a native of Davidson and, at the time, in management at Southern Cotton Oil Company's local mill. The second owners, Sadie and John Anderson, owned and operated one of Davidson's early grocery stores, known as Anderson's Food Store. Well preserved by its past and recent owners, the Thompson-Anderson House is a site that bears testimony to Davidson's history.

Residential Development of Concord Road

Constructed in 1936, the Thompson-Anderson House at 858 Concord Road appeared during a period of residential expansion in the Town of Davidson. The historical nexus of the town was Davidson College, founded in 1837. After the disruption of the Civil War, the College began to flourish, leading to the growth of the campus and an adjacent district of businesses that catered to the student and faculty population. The Town of Davidson College, known after 1891 as the Town of Davidson, was incorporated in 1879. As commercial and residential development consumed the area adjacent to the campus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, new development spread along Concord Road, which previously had been a rural route connecting the Town of Davidson with Concord.¹

Davidson's local economy centered on the College until the 1890s when Linden Cotton and Southern Cotton Oil built factories in Davidson. The Delburg Cotton Mill Company followed their lead in 1908. The factories created new jobs, leading to population growth as both black and white workers settled in the community. Residential development continued to creep down Concord Road where upper- and middle-class white families associated with the College, mill management, and other local businesses built new homes. In 1920s Concord Road leading away from Davidson College was a one-lane macadam road. Despite the onset of the Great Depression, new residences continued to appear along Concord Road such as the home at 858 Concord Road.²

¹ Mary D. Beaty, *Davidson: A History of the Town from 1835 to 1937* (Davidson, North Carolina: Warren Publishing, 1979), 3–48, 113.

² Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "Survey and Research Report on the Davidson Cotton Mill," 2004; Beaty, *Davidson*, 67–68, 120–122.



1938 Mecklenburg County Time Machine



1951 Mecklenburg County Time Machine



1978 Mecklenburg County Time Machine

The Thompsons

Wilburn Arthur “Wib” Thompson was born May 17, 1903, likely in the family home at 532 North Main Street. His father Walter Henry Thompson (1868–1937) was a prominent banker who served as clerk and treasurer of the Town of Davidson. Historian Mary Beaty called him “practically a permanent member of the council.”³ W. H. married Cynthia Louisa Armour (1874-1912), whose family had been

³ Mary D. Beaty, *Davidson: A History of the Town from 1835 to 1937* (Davidson, North Carolina: Warren Publishing, 1979), 123.

established in the area since the 1820s and owned much of the land along North Main Street above the cemetery. They had eleven children, of which Wib was the middle child.⁴

Like the sons of many prominent local families, Wib attended Davidson College. He studied at the college for at least one year, entering as a freshman in fall term 1921. Wib began his professional life in 1923 at the age of twenty as a cashier at Southern Cotton Oil Company. He also participated in the civic affairs of Davidson, joining the town's first volunteer firefighting department in 1927.⁵ Wib remained a bachelor living in the family home until meeting Mildred Hartness of Mooresville. An outgoing and active woman, Mildred had been the leading scorer on the Mooresville High School state champion basketball team and had attended the North Carolina College for Women in Greensboro. Marrying in 1934, the newlyweds remained in Mooresville "pending the completion of their new home in Davidson," according to their marriage announcement in the Charlotte newspaper.⁶

The previous year, Wib had acquired an undeveloped lot of land along Concord Road in 1933 from Robert Irvin Johnston (1900–1983) and his wife Sarah (1907–1965).⁷ The Thompsons completed the home in 1936. Built in the Tudor Revival style, the home featured a prominent chimney on its façade and other hallmarks of the cottage-like aesthetic—brick exterior, high gabled roof, and rounded windows. Tudor Revival, one of several styles influenced by English architecture, began to appear in North Carolina during the late nineteenth century. The Biltmore Estate in Asheville was an early and grand example of Tudor Revival when it was completed in 1895. By the 1920s and 1930s, the widely popular style regularly appeared in residential construction. Tudor Revival was very popular in Charlotte in the 1920s and 1930s, and it took root in Davidson by 1926 when the Arbuckle House at 838 Concord Road, two doors north of the Thompson-Anderson House, was completed. In 1945 another Tudor home was completed next door at 850 Concord Road, though it is no longer extant. The architectural style faded in Davidson and across the country before the decade ended.⁸

⁴ "Death Claims W.H. Thompson," obituary, *Charlotte Observer*, July 1, 1937. 2:11; "Cynthia Louise Armour," *FamilySearch*, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/LK4N-T7G>, accessed July 26, 2023; Beaty, 15.

⁵ Beaty, 177; "Davidson Plant Manager to Head Columbia Mill," *Charlotte Observer*, September 3, 1938, 13; Beaty, 154.

⁶ "Miss Hartness Becomes a Bride," *The Charlotte News*, December 24, 1934, 13.

⁷ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 842, Page 295.

⁸ Clay Griffith, National Register Nomination: Charles E. Orr House (Transylvania County, North Carolina), North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, electronic document, <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/TV0299.pdf>, accessed August 2, 2023; James Vaseff and Catherine W. Bishir, "William H. Peeps," *North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Biographical Directory*, electronic document, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000517>, accessed August 2, 2023.

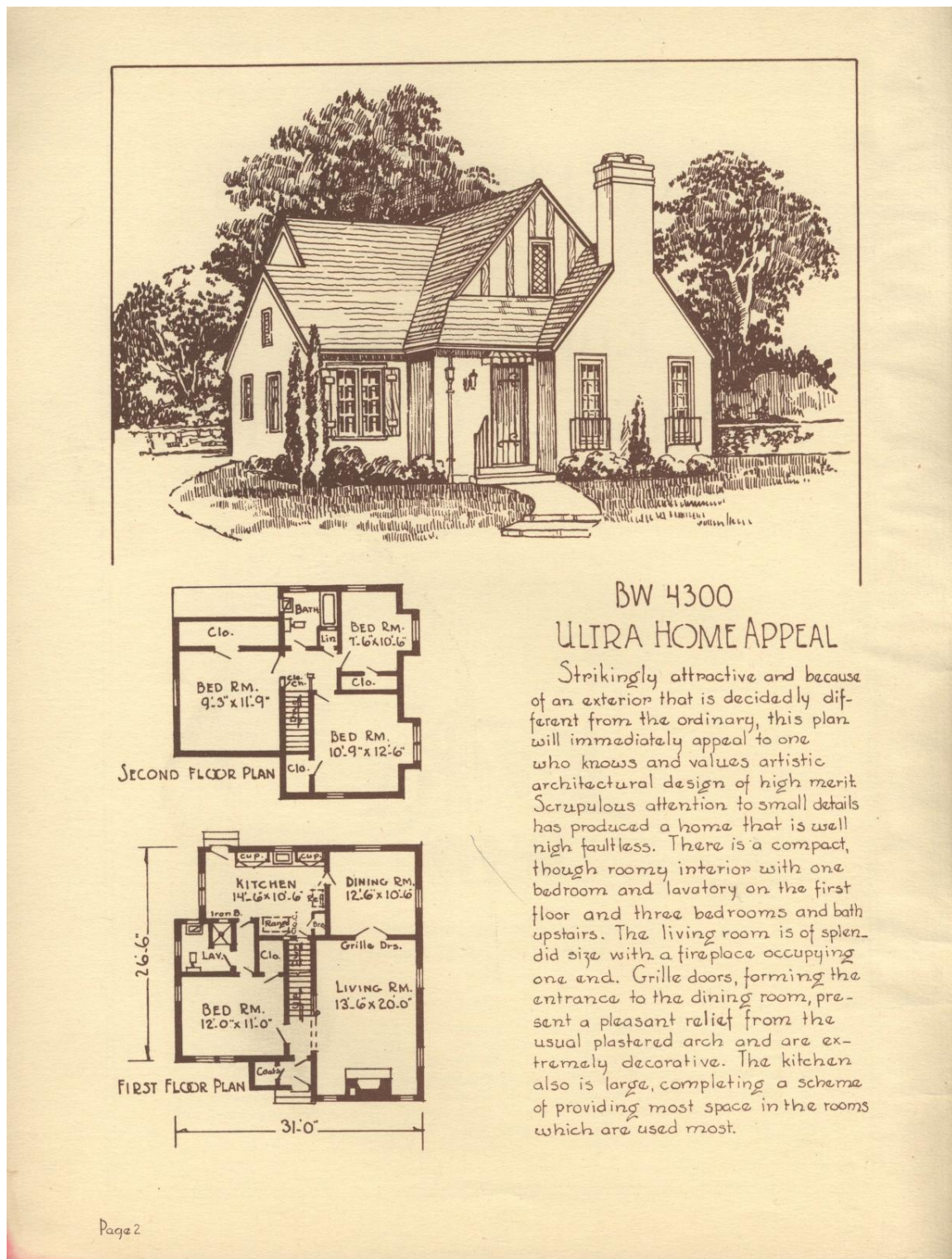


Figure 1 The Thompsons likely drew inspiration for their home from a plan book. This plan was featured in a catalogue offered by a Minnesota company, though it was common for national businesses to provide plan books for local lumber companies to provide or sell to potential new construction homeowners. Carr-Cullen Co., *New and Original House Designs: Supplement No. 1 to Edition 42, Homes of Comfort* (1933), 2.

While the Great Depression loomed large in Davidson, Wib Thompson managed to succeed. In 1938 he was promoted to manager at Southern Cotton. He served the Board of Elections as one of several registrars in Davidson in 1940, a role he held for many years. During World War II, Wib was chairman of the Rationing Board of northern Mecklenburg County. In addition, Wib and Mildred welcomed their son William in 1941.⁹

W. H. Thompson died in 1937, and the Thompsons moved into the house on North Main Street. After selling their Concord Road home in 1943, the Thompsons continued to reside in Davidson where Wib held prominent roles in the community. From 1945 to 1973, he served as a Director and Member of the Executive Committee of Piedmont Bank and Trust Company. Wilburn also was Treasurer of the Davidson College Presbyterian Church from about 1950 until his death. He retired from Southern Cotton in 1959 as Manager. He left retirement to serve as Accountant for the Town of Davidson from 1960 to 1969. In 1981, Davidson College presented him with the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award for his years of support of the college. He died in 1984 at his home on North Main Street.¹⁰

The Andersons

Sadie B. Anderson purchased the Tudor house at 858 Concord Road from Wib Thompson in 1943. Born Sadie Beatrice Hood in Burke County in 1901, she married John Lee Anderson, Jr. (1899–1975), in 1928. Sadie and John settled in Davidson by 1940, when they appeared in the census, where they opened a grocery store on Depot Street.¹¹



Figure 2 Advertisement for Anderson's Food Store. *Charlotte Observer*, September 18, 1943.

Small independent grocery stores like Anderson's were important parts of small towns like Davidson. They had their roots in the general stores of the late nineteenth and early centuries, like B. Dewitt

⁹ "Davidson Plant Manager to Head Columbia Mill," *Charlotte Observer*, September 3, 1938, 13; 1940 U.S. census, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, pop. sch., Deweese Township, ED 60-99, sheet 5-B, household 84, Wilburn Thompson; "Polling Places, Registrars, and Judges are Announced by Board," *The Charlotte News*, April 7, 1940, page 2B.

¹⁰ "Mr. Wilburn A. 'Wib' Thompson," obituary, *Charlotte Observer*, April 1, 1984, page 8H; Harold Warren, "W. Thompson, Davidson Leader, Dies," *Charlotte Observer*, April 1, 1984, page 22A.

¹¹ Anderson's Food Store appears in Charlotte newspaper advertisements in 1943 and ends around 1960. "John Lee Anderson," obituary, *Charlotte Observer*, November 23, 1975, page G1; 1940 U.S. census, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, pop. sch., Davidson, ED 60-98, sheet 18-B, household 370, John L. Anderson; "Beatrice Hood Anderson," obituary, *Charlotte Observer*, June 18, 1992, page 19.

Funderburk's dry goods store and Capt. Thomas Jefferson Renfrow's general store, both of which opened in Matthews in 1900. Entrepreneur D.A. Tompkins began selling groceries in the Dilworth suburb of Charlotte about 1903.¹² Farmer William Bradford opened a general store on his farmland on Davidson-Concord Road in the Huntersville area in 1911. Bradford sold groceries, and, also, livestock, cloth, farming equipment to residents of the Ramah community before closing as a small gas station after World War II.¹³ In Davidson, Irvin Johnson, from whom Wib Thompson had purchased the land for his home, and his brother Houston ran a grocery store at 106 South Main Street. The fresh produce in the Anderson's store was locally grown on land south of their house in what is today the Cabin Creek neighborhood while they acquired dry goods from elsewhere.¹³

The rise of supermarkets in North Carolina signaled the demise of Anderson's Food Store and others like it in small towns across North Carolina. Grocery store chains began to appear in the City of Charlotte in the 1920s when A&P established several stores, and they soon spread to Concord and other outlying towns.¹⁴ Davidson was one of the last to receive a grocery store chain. When Sadler Square was developed at Griffith and Watson Streets in 1979, the anchor was Lowe's Food Store, a rising supermarket chain with more than 60 stores in North Carolina and Virginia at the time. Food Lion purchased the property three years later. Town residents and college students were grateful to have a supermarket in the middle of town. In 1987, however, Food Lion closed the location after building a new, modern supermarket three miles away in Cornelius. Davidson did not have a supermarket again until the opening of the Harris Teeter in Davidson Commons in 2000.¹⁵ The Andersons continued in business until about 1975, the year John died. Sadie sold the property in 1987 to Walter Gamble.¹⁶

Later Owners

Wallace Melvin Gamble acquired the Thompson-Anderson House in 1987 and owned it until 2001. The son of Joseph and Connie Gamble, Wallace was born in Davidson in 1922. He attended the local high school and graduated from Davidson College in 1943. He then joined the Navy, serving as a Second Lieutenant in Asia and Europe during World War II.¹⁷ After his return, he worked for Burlington Industries in Mooresville, retiring from the company as an Administrative Supervisor.

¹² Charlotte Landmarks Commission, "The Leeper and Wyatt Store Building," 1988.

¹³ Charlotte Landmarks Commission, "Survey and Research Report on the Bradford Farm and Store," 2002; Charlotte Landmarks Commission, "Survey and Research Report on the Renfrow Hardware Store," 1991.

¹⁴ David Gwynn, "US--North Carolina," Groceteria, electronic document, <https://www.groceteria.com/place/north-carolina/>, accessed September 15, 2023.

¹⁵ Clark, Regina. "Davidson Residents Now Have to Drive For Chow." *Charlotte Observer* 4 November 1987, 2; Jan Blodgett, "Grocery Tales." *Around the D: The Davidson College Archives and Special Collections Blog*, electronic document, <https://davidsonarchivesandspecialcollections.org/aroundthed/grocery-tales/>, accessed September 15, 2023; Carolyn Sanford, "Davidson Soon to Have its First Shopping Center." *The Charlotte News* 3 October 1979, 17A.

¹⁶ Pam Sharp email to Leslie Steffensen, July 24, 2023; Beaty, *Davidson*, 144–145; "Beatrice Hood Anderson," obituary, *Charlotte Observer*, June 18, 1992, page 8.

¹⁷ "Wallace M. Gamble," obituary, *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, North Carolina), 2 September 2010, 4B.

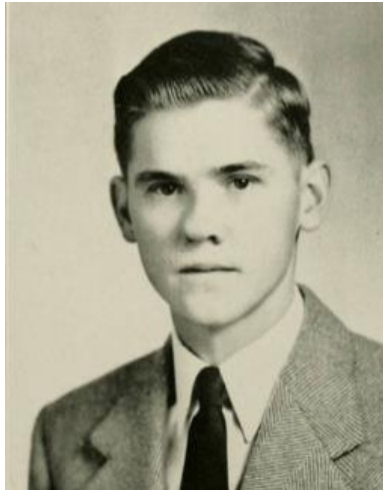


Figure 3 Wallace Gamble in the 1943 Davidson yearbook.

Walter held a variety of roles in local civic and religious organizations. During the mid-to-late 1960s, Walter was a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission.¹⁸ He served as treasurer and president of the Davidson Lions Club and was a deacon and an elder at Davidson College Presbyterian Church.¹⁹ Walter previously had lived in the Gamble family home across the street from the Thompson-Anderson House. His family owned the surrounding land which became the site of St. Alban's Episcopal Church and The Pines, a senior living community where streets are named for him and his sister Mary.²⁰

During the period of Gamble's ownership, the relatively rural nature of the surroundings began to change. Southeast along Concord Road, developers laid out new residential subdivisions in the 1990s. Southwest of the property, the Stough Family, in 1992, developed the Cabin Creek subdivision, a 24-acre residential development on what was once their farmland. The community would feature 29 lots off Concord Road and four on Pine Road.²¹ Based in a chapel on Lorimer Street since 1955, St. Alban's Episcopal Church acquired their current site on Caldwell Street, across from 858 Concord Road, in 2000 after their congregation tripled.²² The townhouses adjacent to St. Albans were completed two years later.

Nathan W. "Bill" Worsley II and his wife Holliday purchased the Thompson-Anderson House in 2001. Both were graduates of UNC-Chapel Hill. Bill was a founding partner of Blue Heel Development, a residential land and construction development firm based in Davidson. The company's focus was active adult and townhome communities.²³ In 2004 Joseph L. Sharp and his wife Pamela acquired the Thompson-Anderson House. They made extensive additions to the house in 2014. The Sharps sold the house in 2021 to current residents Kirk and Leslie Steffensen.

¹⁸ "CAF Homemaking Project Trimmed," *The Charlotte News* (Charlotte, North Carolina), August 21, 1967, B:1.

¹⁹ Yolanda Gilliam, "Wallace M. Gamble '43," Davidson College Alumni & Friends Obituaries, electronic document, <https://inmemoriam.davidson.edu/2010/08/wallace-m-gamble-43-2/>, accessed July 27, 2023.

²⁰ "9 Homes That Save Energy to be on Tour," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, North Carolina), September 5, 1982, G1; Pam Sharp email to Leslie Steffensen, July 24, 2023.

²¹ "Davidson Takes in 64 Acres," *Charlotte Observer*, 15 March 1992, 3.

²² "St Alban's History," St. Alban's Episcopal Church, electronic document, <https://www.saintalbansdavidson.org/history>, accessed September 15, 2023.

²³ "Our Team," Holliday Homes, electronic document, <https://hollidayhomes.com/ourteam/>, accessed September 18, 2023.

Architectural Description

Written by Susan V. Mayer

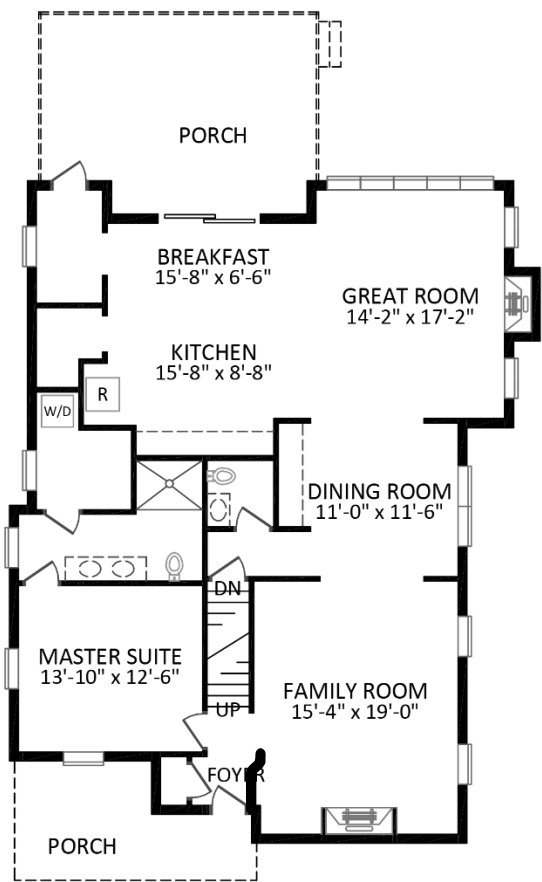


Built in 1936, the Thompson-Anderson House at 858 Concord Road is the best example of Tudor Revival architecture in Davidson. The Thompson-Anderson House has many common elements which are original to its construction. These include 1.5" wide hardwood floors, plaster walls, decorative moldings, crystal doorknobs and other door hardware, and solid wood single-panel interior doors.

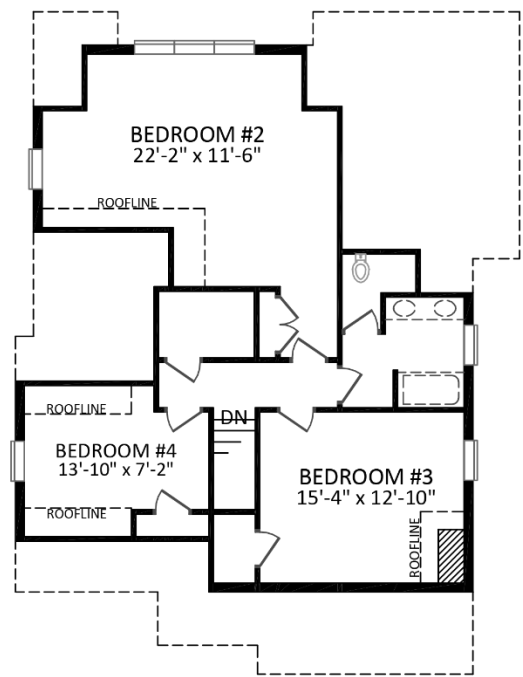
An extensive renovation was made to the Thompson-Anderson House in 2014, consisting of a large addition to the rear which doubled the square footage. Looking at the house from the street, however, the addition is minimal in its appearance, speaking to the consideration displayed by the owners and architect to preserve the historic character of the Concord Road streetscape.

Floor Plan

Steel Time Measuring



1ST FLOOR



2ND FLOOR

| |
|---------------------|
| HEATED LIVING SPACE |
| 1st FLOOR - 1619 |
| 2nd FLOOR - 920 |
| TOTAL HEATED - 2539 |

All measurements are rounded to nearest inch. This floorplan is intended for marketing brochures so window/door placements, and room dimensions are for representation only.

858 CONCORD ROAD



The foyer of the house is a compact vestibule with a coat closet. It has a cased opening to a small circulation area leading to the owner's suite, upstairs, and the living room.



The owner's suite of the Thompson-Anderson House retains much of its original finishes—plaster walls, hardwood floors, and picture-rail trim at the ceiling. The attached full bathroom, while an original feature, was remodeled and expanded in the 2014 renovation. A walk-in closet with washer and dryer was also added to the space. Finishes in the renovated bathroom were chosen to complement the historic character of the house.



The living room is also original to the house. Its focal point is the centered fireplace with recessed built-in bookcases at either side. On the left side is a porthole window. The opening from the living

room to the foyer once had a door, but it has been removed. A wide cased opening leads to the dining room.



The dining room is the last of the original rooms on the ground floor of the Thompson-Anderson House. Some modifications were made to the space in the 2014 renovation. The opening to the former kitchen has been replaced with a built-in butler's pantry.



A vestibule off from the dining room, also part of the former kitchen, provides access to a powder room and the stairs to the basement.



The addition off the back of the original portion of the Thompson-Anderson House is accessed through the wide cased opening at the dining room. You enter into the family room, which has a pyramidal cathedral ceiling featuring beveled wood planking and faux wood beams. A window wall is located on the rear elevation and includes a dormer with rounded window matching that on the front elevation.



Fully open to the family room is the kitchen, which features a large island with butcher block countertop. A walk-in pantry with sliding barn door and mudroom are located on the opposite side of the space. The mudroom exits to a screened porch at the rear of the house.



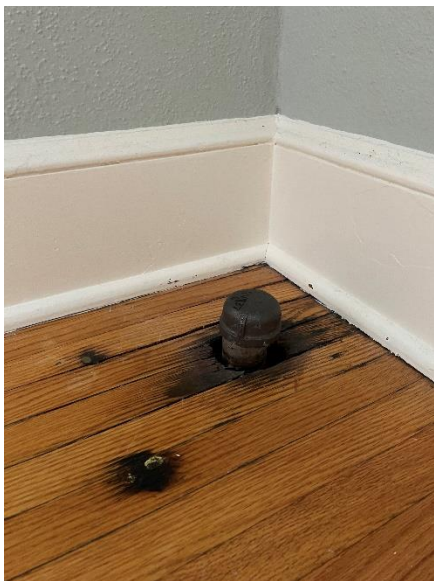
The second level of the Thompson-Anderson House is accessed from the straight run stairs at the foyer. The landing at the top opens to three bedrooms and a full bathroom. Original features in this landing area include built-in drawers and a small door to an attic closet.



A bedroom is located to the left of the stairs at the northeast corner of the house. It has sloped ceilings and a closet not original to the home.



A second bedroom is located to the right of the stairs at the northwest corner of the house. It has a small sloped section of ceiling under which a pipe that once serviced a radiator is extant through the floor.





A full bathroom was created from a bedroom in the 2014 renovation. A third bedroom was added as the upstairs portion of the rear addition.



The full-size basement is accessed by stairs at the vestibule by the dining room. The original coal chute is extant at the east side of the space. A double-door hatch opens at the west elevation of the house.



Bibliography

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