

Landmark Designation Report for the



Alexander-Howell House 250 Cherokee Road Charlotte, North Carolina

Prepared by:
Susan V. Mayer, Principal
March 2024

SVM
**HISTORICAL
CONSULTING**

Table of Contents

General Information.....	3
Floor Plans.....	4
Architectural Elements Included in Designation	6
Maps	7
Chain of Title.....	8
Abstract.....	9
Statement of Significance.....	9
Integrity Statement	9
Historical Background.....	11
The Alexander Family	11
Sydenham Brevard Alexander, Jr.....	13
Mary Brevard Alexander Howell	16
250 Cherokee Road	19
Vard and Two	26
African American Connections	29
Architectural Description	32
Bibliography.....	64

General Information

Historic Names of Property: Alexander-Howell House; Sydenham B. Alexander, Jr. House

Address of Property: 250 Cherokee Road, Charlotte, NC 28207

PIN: 15506261

Deed Book & Page: Mecklenburg County Deed Book 29677, Page 205

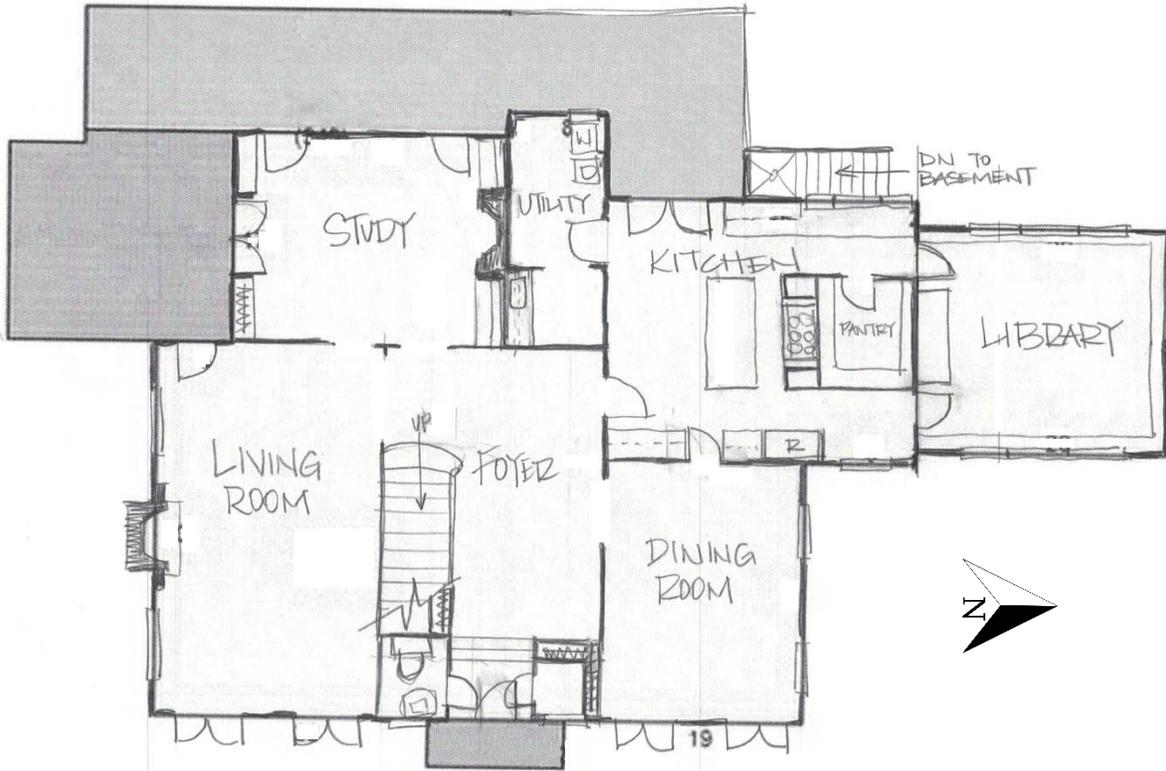
Amount of Land/Acreage to be Designated: 1.086 acres

Ad Valorem Tax Value: The 2024 assessed real estate value of the parcel encompassing the Alexander-Howell House, including land and building value, is \$5,312,000.

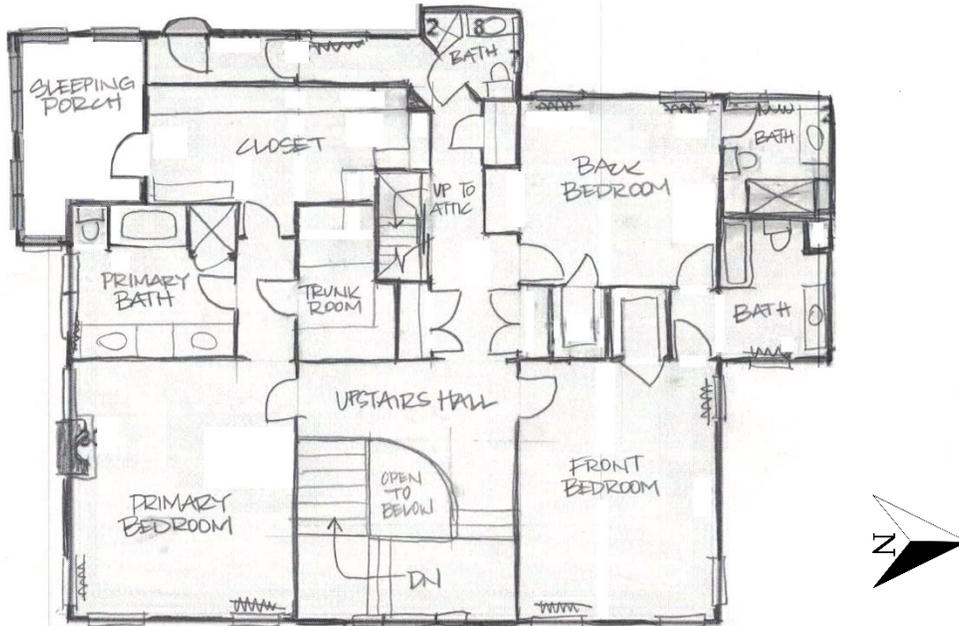
Recommendation for Designation: Exterior and interior of the Alexander-Howell House including specified architectural elements.

Name/Address of Current Property Owner: Peter A. Larkin, Jr., and Ashley Scott Larkin
250 Cherokee Road
Charlotte, NC 28207

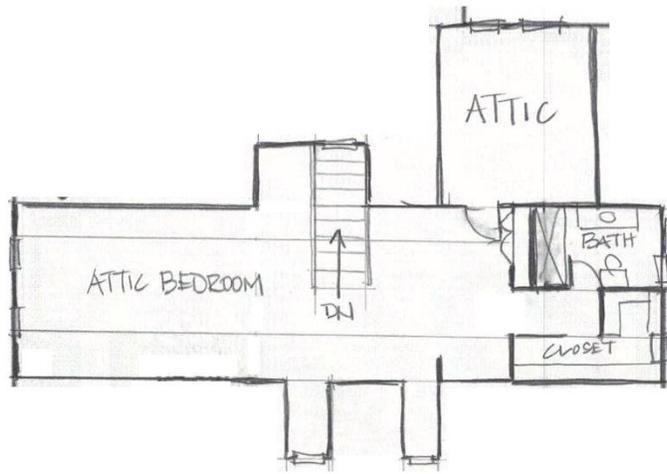
Floor Plans



First Floor (NTS)



Second Floor (NTS)



Third Floor (NTS)

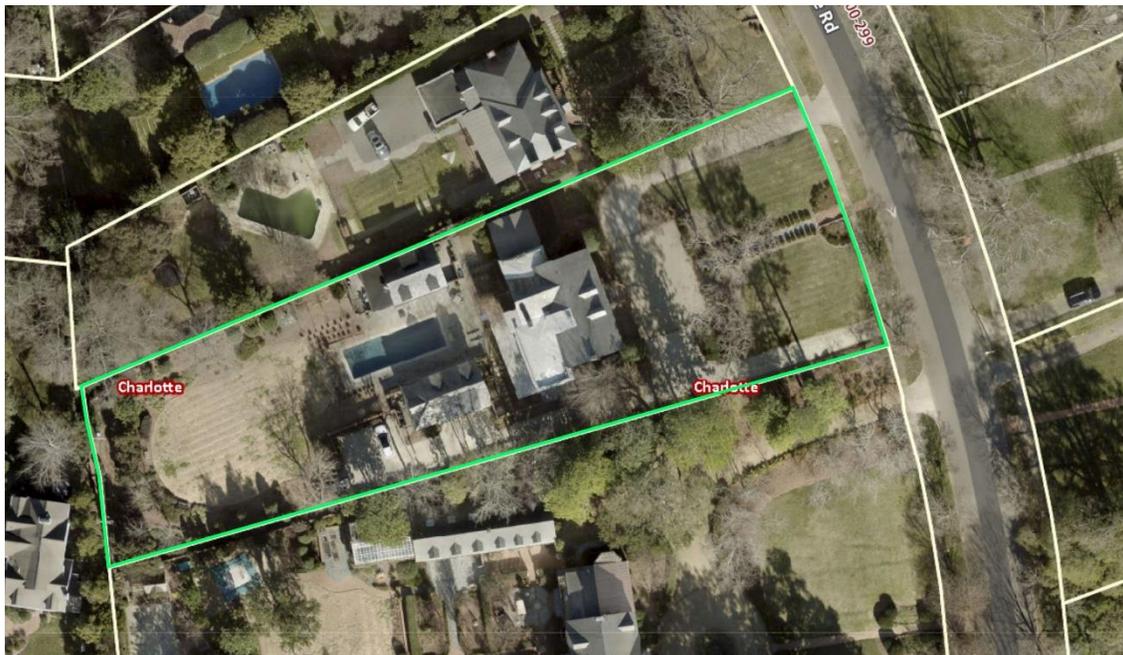
Architectural Elements Included in Designation

Common Interior Elements	Oak Floors Wood Mouldings at Floor, Ceilings, Windows, and Doors Interior Wood Doors and Hardware Radiators Wood Double-Hung Windows with Hardware
Foyer	Marble Checkerboard Floor and Base Trim Exterior Wood Entry Door, Hardware, and Fanlight Transom Monumental Staircase with Tiger Oak Treads and Wrought Iron Balusters and Newel Post
Dining Room	Exterior Wood French Doors and Hardware
Living Room	Marble Fireplace Mantle and Hearth Exterior Wood French Doors and Hardware
Study	Marble Fireplace Mantle and Hearth Exterior Wood French Doors and Hardware
Primary Bedroom	Wood Mantle and Brick Fireplace and Hearth
Front Bathroom	Bathtub
Attic	Wood Stair Treads and Wrought Iron Balusters
Basement	Kernerator In-Chimney Incinerator Access Panel
Common Exterior Elements	Wood Shutters, Wrought Iron Railings and Balconies, Cast Stone Elements, Copper Balustrades
Entry Porch	Copper Mail Slot
South Porch	Exterior Wood Screen Doors

Maps



Source: POLARIS



Source: POLARIS

Chain of Title

Grantor	Grantee	Date	Deed Book/Page*	Notes
Alexander B. Waugh (unmarried) and Paige M. Waugh (unmarried)	Peter A. Larkin, Jr. and spouse, Ashley Scott Larkin	January 6, 2015	29677/205	
Billy Shaw Howell, Jr. and spouse, Bobbye Jo Hubbard Howell	Alexander B. Waugh and spouse, Paige M. Waugh	September 30, 1993	852/853	
E. C. Griffith Company	Mary R. Alexander	March 12, 1929	728/140	"That certain strip of land approximately 10 feet in width lying in the rear and adjoining Lot No. 8 in Block No. 4"
E. C. Griffith Company	Mrs. Mary R. Alexander	October 6, 1927	679/146	

*Mecklenburg County Deed Books

Abstract

Statement of Significance

The Alexander-Howell House is significant for its design by Charlotte architect Franklin Gordon, who was known for his Tudor Revival and Georgian Revival residences. The house at 250 Cherokee Road is a sterling example of the grandiose homes constructed for Charlotte's upper class in the fashionable suburb of Eastover, developed in 1927 by E. C. Griffith as the first autocentric neighborhood in the city. In its setting, scale, and sophisticated architecture, the Alexander House exemplifies the large, Georgian Revival residences on spacious lots that characterized some of the earliest platted sections of Eastover. The house remains well-preserved, and the setting of the house on a large, formally landscaped parcel continues to illustrate wealthy suburban development in the early twentieth century. Grand, Georgian-style houses are extant along Cherokee Road. However, as one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods, Eastover's historic houses are being torn down for new construction at an alarming rate. Consequently, intact examples of the earliest residences, executed by the city's most important architects of the period, are now increasingly rare.

The Alexander-Howell House at 250 Cherokee Road in the Eastover neighborhood is named for the father-daughter duo of Sydenham Brevard Alexander, Jr., and Mary Brevard Alexander Howell. A descendant of Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence signer John McKnitt Alexander, Syd Alexander was a noted businessman in the first decades of the twentieth century. He was the southern representative for Massachusetts-based Crompton & Knowles Loom Works, a textile machinery manufacturer, and was known across the region as an expert within the textile industry until his sudden death in 1935. His only daughter Mary Brevard, colloquially known as Vard, was equally notable in the social and philanthropic community in Charlotte. Among her accomplishments were holding national offices for the Junior League in the 1930s, supporting the establishment and long-term feasibility of the Mint Museum of Art, and serving on the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library board of trustees for thirty years.

Integrity Statement

Location - HIGH

The Alexander-Howell House is located at 250 Cherokee Road in the Eastover neighborhood of Charlotte, its original site of construction.

Design - HIGH

The Alexander-Howell House was designed by Charlotte architect Franklin Gordon, who was noted for his Tudor Revival and Classical Revival residential designs. A minimum of changes has occurred to the Alexander-Howell House, with the most substantial visible from Cherokee Road being the enclosure and expansion of the north porch into the present-day library.

Setting - HIGH

The Alexander-Howell House is located on Cherokee Road in the Eastover neighborhood. Eastover was the first development in Charlotte which

focused on automobiles as the primary method of transportation of its residents. Cherokee Road is wide and sweeping, with large lots of at least an acre and homes set back substantially from the street.

Materials - HIGH

The Alexander-Howell House has a high degree of integrity of original materials. Bathrooms and the kitchen have been renovated, but throughout the house are original materials including wood floors, wood doors and hardware, double-hung windows and hardware, and radiators.

Workmanship - HIGH

The Alexander-Howell House has a high degree of integrity of workmanship. Especially notable is the wrought-iron balusters of the monumental foyer staircase.

Feeling - HIGH

The Alexander-Howell House evokes a high degree of integrity of feeling. The primary public spaces where the Alexanders and Howells entertained—foyer, dining room, and living room—are intact, providing a feeling of the grand spaces in which they would receive guests and hold events.

Association - HIGH

The Alexander-Howell House is historically significant for its association with Sydenham Brevard Alexander, Jr., a notable textile businessman who was actively involved in the promotion and growth of Charlotte, and Mary Brevard Alexander Howell, who was an active member of the philanthropic and social community. The house was designed by noted Charlotte architect Franklin Gordon, who was known for his Tudor- and Georgian Revival residences in upper class neighborhoods.

Historical Background

The Alexander-Howell House at 250 Cherokee Road in the Eastover neighborhood is historically relevant for its association with the father-daughter duo of Sydenham Brevard Alexander, Jr., and Mary Brevard Alexander Howell. A descendant of Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence signer John McKnitt Alexander, Syd Alexander was a noted businessman in the first decades of the twentieth century. He was the southern representative for Massachusetts-based Crompton & Knowles Loom Works, a textile machinery manufacturer, and was known across the region as an expert within the textile industry until his sudden death in 1935. His only daughter Mary Brevard, colloquially known as Vard, was equally notable in the social and philanthropic community in Charlotte. Among her accomplishments were holding national offices for the Junior League in the 1930s, supporting the establishment and long-term feasibility of the Mint Museum of Art, and serving on the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library board of trustees for thirty years.

The Alexander-Howell House is equally significant for its design by Charlotte architect Franklin Gordon, who was known for his Tudor Revival and Georgian Revival residences. The house at 250 Cherokee Road is a sterling example of the grandiose homes constructed for Charlotte's upper class in the fashionable suburb of Eastover, developed in 1927 by E. C. Griffith as the first autocentric neighborhood in the city.

The Alexander Family

The surname Alexander has the deepest roots in Charlotte, with the oldest house extant in Mecklenburg County being the ca. 1774 two-story rock house of Hezekiah Alexander (1728-1801). Both Hezekiah and his younger brother John McKnitt Alexander (1733-1817) were signers of the disputed Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775. From these brothers and their siblings, the Alexander family prospered due to their extensive landholdings. Joseph McKnitt Alexander and Moses Winslow Alexander, son and grandson of John, were doctors. His great-grandson Sydenham Benoni Alexander, Sr., carried forward the rich legacy of the Alexander name through his leadership in the political and civic sphere of North Carolina.



Figure 1 S. B. Alexander in front of his house at 400 West Trade Street, no date. From Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Sydenham Benoni Alexander was born in 1840 at Rosedale Plantation north of Charlotte, the son of Dr. Moses Winslow Alexander and Violet Wilson Winslow Graham Alexander. In addition to his rich Alexander ancestry, his mother was a member of the Graham family of Lincoln County—Violet was the daughter of Revolutionary War General Joseph Graham and sister of Governor William A. Graham. S. B. enjoyed the typical childhood of the North Carolina planter class. He was educated at Rocky River Academy, a preparatory school, in Cabarrus County, and the Wadesboro Institute in Anson County before entering the University of North Carolina in 1856. Shortly after graduating, the Civil War broke out, and S. B. enlisted in Company B, 1st NC Infantry as a private. He rose to the rank of captain of Company K, 42nd NC Infantry, a title which followed him the remainder of his life, and in 1864 he detached from his unit to serve as Inspector General on the staff of Confederate General R. F. Hoke.¹

Following the war, S. B. returned to Mecklenburg County. A contemporary of L. L. Polk, the first state Commissioner of Agriculture, S. B. served as Master of the State Grange and *ex officio* member of the State Board of Agriculture. In 1878 he was elected to his first of many terms in the state

¹ Mrs. Sam Presson, "Reminiscences of Charlotte, Capt. Sydenham B. Alexander," *Charlotte Observer*, October 20, 1929; *Charlotte Democrat*, December 25, 1891.

senate, where he was a major proponent of agricultural innovation and improving farm-to-market roads. According to a local legend, the good roads movement started not with the administration of Governor Cameron Morrison, but “when a young S. B. Alexander tried to get home one day from Charlotte and his wagons got stuck in the mud.”² When the Farmers’ Alliance was organized in North Carolina in 1887, S. B. served as its first president. He also represented the Sixth District of North Carolina in the House of Representatives from 1890-1894. S. B. married Emma Pauline Nicholson of Halifax County in 1872. They had six children: Violet Graham Alexander (1871-1961), Pattie Thorne Alexander (1873-1893), Julia McGehee Alexander (1876-1957), Sydenham Brevard Alexander (1877-1935), Thomas Willis Alexander (1879-1950), and Emory Graham Alexander (1880-1930). Emma died two weeks after the birth of their youngest child.

Sydenham Brevard Alexander, Jr.



Figure 2 Syd Alexander, undated. From Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Eldest son Sydenham Brevard Alexander was born on October 14, 1877. While he did not exactly share his father’s name, Syd was known as S. B. Alexander, Jr. throughout his life. Syd and his brother Thomas attended Horner Military School in Oxford, graduating in 1894, and together entered the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (today North Carolina State University). Syd was a star athlete at State, most notably football, and he and Thomas were charter members of the Beta Tau chapter of Sigma Nu Fraternity. After graduation in 1896, Syd returned to

² T. M. Pridgen, “Dozen Years Changed State’s Road System,” *Charlotte News*, March 18, 1934.

his hometown where he entered the textile industry under H. S. Chadwick, known as the father of cotton mills in Charlotte.³

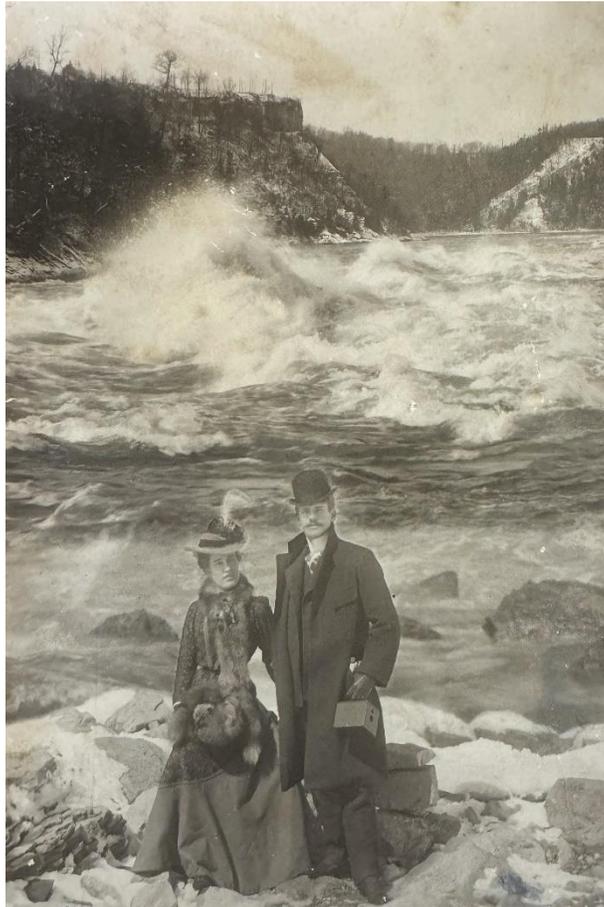


Figure 3 Two and Syd at Niagara Falls, 1899. From Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

On March 15, 1899, Syd married Mary Watson Robertson in Charlotte. Nicknamed “Two” as her mother was also named Mary, she was the daughter of dentist Dr. James Faison Robertson. After an extensive honeymoon trip which included time at Niagara Falls, the Alexanders settled down in Charlotte. Their only child Mary Brevard Alexander was born on August 29, 1901.⁴ Syd struck out on his own with backing from his father-in-law to form the S. B. Alexander, Jr. Company, which dealt in electrical components. In 1904 he partnered with Edward T. Garsed as the southern representatives of the Crompton & Knowles Loom Works, a textile machinery manufacturer based in Worcester, Massachusetts. Garsed retired in 1924.⁵ By this time, Syd was recognized as a leader in the textile industry, highlighted by a 1927 profile in the *Observer’s* Piedmont Textile special

³ “To Hold Rites Today for S. B. Alexander,” *Charlotte Observer*, May 7, 1935; “Our History,” Sigma Nu, Beta Beta Tau Chapter, <https://www.sigmanubetatau.com/students>, accessed March 8, 2024; “Alexander Represents Crompton and Knowles Loom Works in South,” *Charlotte Observer*, May 31, 1927.

⁴ “Mrs. S. B. Alexander, Prominent Charlottean,” *Charlotte Observer*, October 9, 1969.

⁵ “Garsed Rites This Morning,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 9, 1937; “Pays \$55,000 for Land at Third-Cedar Sts.,” *Charlotte Observer*, April 24, 1924.

section. Syd, they noted, “eats looms, sleeps looms, talks looms, and knows looms.”⁶ As a member of the board of Crompton & Knowles, he was able to influence the textile production of the south, as his territory swept from West Virginia to Oklahoma:

Through watching his business, Mr. Alexander gains a keen insight into the trend of southern manufacturers. The fact that the three different types of looms used in the south in 1906 has increased to some over 30 at the present time is an indication that finer fabrics are being made in the section than ever before. The three types used in 1906 were a plain gingham loom, a sheeting loom, and a duck loom.⁷

Syd was also heavily involved in education in North Carolina. When Horner Military School was forced to relocate from Oxford, he was instrumental in securing its new home in Myers Park. According to Dr. John Hill Tucker in a correction to the *News*, “I feel it due to Sid Alexander and his immediate associates...who met the business men of Charlotte and made it possible for this school to come to Charlotte.”⁸ He also served on the board of trustees for North Carolina State University, and after its merger into the University of North Carolina System on that board as well. A graduate of the textile school and intimately knowledgeable of Charlotte’s importance within the industry, he advocated for a branch of the textile school to be established in the city, though these efforts were unsuccessful.⁹

After the death S. B. Alexander, Sr. in 1921, Syd and his siblings controlled the large tracts of land west of Charlotte that had encompassed Enderly, the farm operated by his father. The farmhouse had been donated to the U. S. Army for use as part of Camp Greene, and portions of the land had been cleared for a landing strip. Since the potential Charlotte Airport was located on Alexander family land, Syd had an unusual amount of control of Charlotte’s aviation industry. In February 1927, Charlotte was proposed as an air mail delivery site along the New York-Atlanta route. Syd offered a free lease of forty acres of land at the former Camp Greene landing field. However, the city had made little to no progress on sitework and facilities to make the airport functional for commercial use.¹⁰ In September 1935 the airport property was sold to his estate for \$45,000 and was to be “leased to responsible persons or to the city for such time as it is needed to provide landing facilities for Charlotte.”¹¹

⁶ “Alexander Represents Crompton and Knowles Loom Works in South,” *Charlotte Observer*, May 31, 1927.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ “Dr. Tucker Says ‘Keep History Straight’—S. B. Alexan-,” *Charlotte News*, December 15, 1913; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horner_Military_Academy.

⁹ “Plans for Opening of Textile School Here Are Being Made,” *Charlotte Observer*, May 28, 1930.

¹⁰ “Air Mail Seen for Charlotte,” *Charlotte Observer*, February 26, 1927; “Offer Aid for Landing Field,” *Charlotte Observer*, January 20, 1928.

¹¹ “Airport Sold Under Hammer,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 17, 1935.

Mary Brevard Alexander Howell



Figure 4 Vard eating watermelon while her father watches at the Alexander house at 400 West Trade Street, ca. 1904-1905. From Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Mary Brevard Alexander Howell was born on August 29, 1901, likely at her family's home in Charlotte. Known colloquially as Vard, the only child of Syd and Two Alexander enjoyed a happy and privileged childhood. She was known as a vivacious, outgoing girl who aspired to change the world—her aunt Julia Alexander was one of the first women attorneys in the state who later unsuccessfully ran for mayor in 1925, so strong female role models were a constant in her life. From a young age, Vard exhibited many qualities of leadership, including inspiring action in those around her. She gave a four-minute speech about the Red Cross on May 16, and the following day the students and faculty of the Dilworth school devised a plan to raise money for the cause. Since the janitor had recently quit, they would instead take on the responsibilities and donate the \$50 monthly salary to the Red Cross.¹² Vard graduated from Charlotte High School in May 1919, where she was editor of the yearbook, played basketball, and was active in numerous clubs. In the yearbook, Vard's response to the question, "What in the future we hope to be" was indicative of her ambition: "To have my name go down in history."¹³ Though she considered attending Bryn Mawr College, and may have for a short period, Vard graduated from Gunston Hall School, a girls' school in Washington, D. C. that offered post-graduate and college courses.

¹² "Do Janitor's Work to Raise Red Cross Money," *Charlotte Observer*, May 17, 1918.

¹³ *Snips and Cuts*, Charlotte High School, 1919.



Figure 5 Bridal portrait of Mary Brevard Alexander Howell, 1922. From Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Though attending school in Washington, Vard routinely returned home to Charlotte where she began seeing Billy Shaw Howell. Billy had graduated from Charlotte University High School and attended Davidson College, where left early to enlist in the Army Air Corps during World War I. The son of John Herbert Shaw and nephew of future mayor Victor Shaw, Billy worked in the family businesses upon his return from France. Vard wrote numerous letters to Billy which are preserved in her papers in possession of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. On November 1, 1922, Vard and Billy were married at First Presbyterian Church. They had two children, Sydenham Alexander Howell in 1923 and Billy Shaw Howell, Jr., known as Wool, in 1930. Initially, the Howells lived next door to Vard's parents, but they moved to a home designed by Martin Boyer on East Morehead Street in 1924.¹⁴

Vard launched herself into the social and civic community of Charlotte as a married upper-class woman. She joined the Junior League, a new organization that boasted among its members many of Charlotte's elite women. The first major project of the Junior League, which embraced social services as its philanthropy, was the establishment of a home for orphaned or displaced babies in

¹⁴ "Engagement of Miss Mary Brevard Alexander and Billy Shaw Howell Announced," *Charlotte News and Evening Chronicle*, September 3, 1922; "Permits for Building Total Nearly \$25,000," *Charlotte Observer*, February 20, 1924.

1926. Vard served as the chair of the adoption committee. In 1929-1930, she was fifth among Charlotte Junior League women in service hours with 251 hours volunteered and was nominated for Region IV Director. Hazel Martin Tillett, president of the chapter, vigorously campaigned for her friend, though Vard was not elected.¹⁵ However, Vard was elected president of the Charlotte Junior League in April 1931. Close friend and *News* society columnist Dorothy Knox provided a summation of league activities during Vard's tenure:

1931. Baby hospital work and Well Baby clinic assistance continued; the Rolling library was established at the Presbyterian hospital; 24 members of the league were actively engaged in the United Relief drive; Tony Sarg's Marionettes were brought here; children's play was given; and a welfare survey was made of the League by the national field secretary of welfare. Mrs. Billy Shaw Howell, president.¹⁶

Vard joined the national board of the Association of Junior Leagues of America in 1934 when she was elected Region V Director, which encompassed Junior Leagues in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. In addition to this role, she had been elected secretary of the board of the Little Theater the previous year—most likely recruited by her friend and board president Hazel Martin Tillett.¹⁷ While she certainly had hired help as well as her mother to assist, Vard was an active mother. Dorothy Knox recounted an exchange with her friend at the Charlotte Country Club pool:

I managed to run Vard down at the Country club pool along about sunset yesterday afternoon. I climbed over the balustrade, sat on a bench wet by dripping suits of the swimmers, and shouted my questions at Vard above the whoops of the children splashing gallons of water around my feet. Every now and then she had to dash in and save Wully from drowning, and then she had to go in and dress him, and then she had to dress herself and by then it was time to go home for supper. That and the fact I'm not up on Court Etiquette (sic) may make the following a little hazy.¹⁸

The following year, Vard stood for election for national Vice President of the Junior League. Dorothy Knox called her achievement, "the highest honor that has ever come to the Charlotte Junior league."¹⁹ She recounted a conversation with Hazel Martin Tillett in her "I Believe Everything" column in the *News*,

Hazel Tillett and I were talking yesterday and Hazel said, "I don't believe the people in Charlotte, or even the girls in the Junior league, half realize the honor that has come to VARD HOWELL in being nominated vice-president of the National Junior League." "I know they don't," I said, "and I have been racking my brains to figure out how to bring it to their attention. It sounds so darn common to say most of the wealthiest and most socially

¹⁵ Penelope Currie, "Junior League Sets Impressive Record," *Charlotte Observer*, February 11, 1951; "Junior League Crier," *Charlotte News*, January 19, 1930.

¹⁶ Dorothy Knox, "Life of a Junior Leaguer," *Charlotte News*, May 19, 1935.

¹⁷ "Mrs. 'Vard' Howell," *Charlotte News*, November 15, 1935.

¹⁸ Dorothy Knox, "I Believe Everything," *Charlotte News*, June 12, 1934.

¹⁹ Dorothy Knox, "Life of a Junior Leaguer," *Charlotte News*, May 19, 1935.

prominent girls in America would give their eye teeth to be in Vard's shoes, but there just isn't any other way to express it!²⁰

Dorothy also pointed out that Hazel had "hounded Vard into running for regional director and flatly refused to let her pooh pooh the idea. And now look at the gal! And as all of us do, Hazel is getting a huge kick out of having her judgment vindicated."²¹

250 Cherokee Road

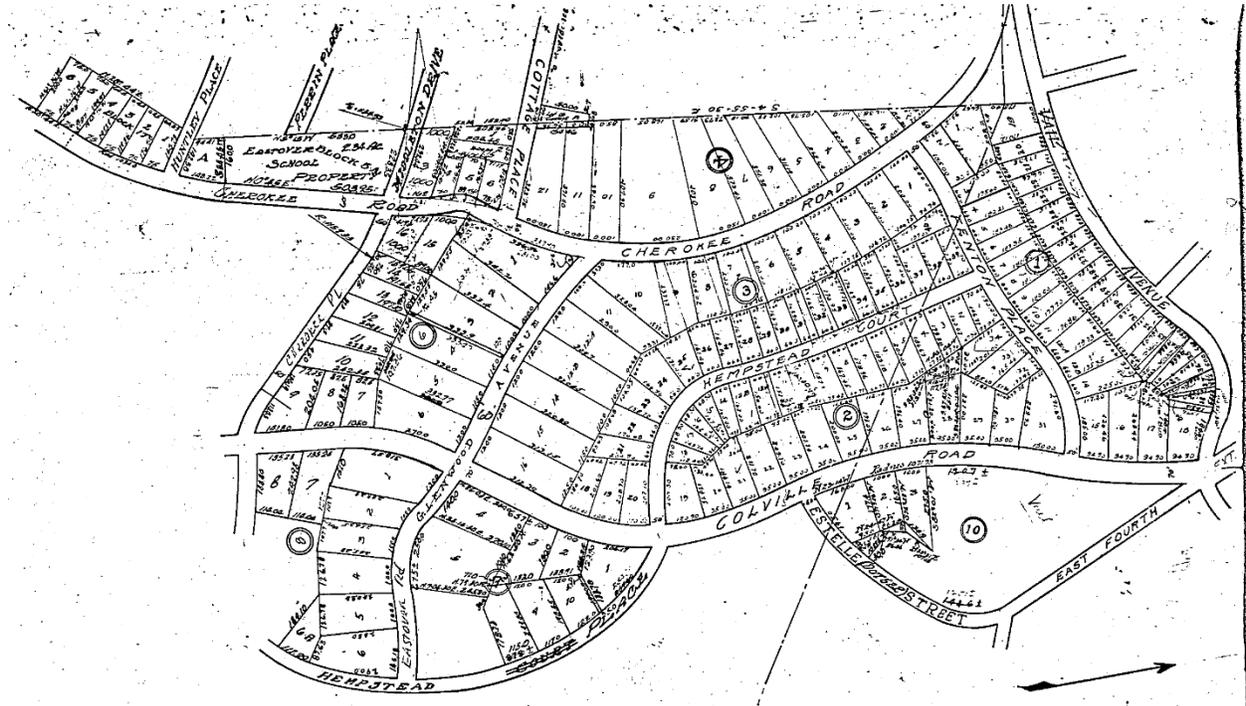


Figure 6 Plat of Eastover, February 1927. Mecklenburg County Map Book 3, Page 317.

In October 1928, Two Alexander purchased Lots 8 of Block 4 in Eastover, a new development established in 1927 by E. C. Griffith. Eastover represented the culmination of the gradual shift among the city's wealthier residents from the center city to the southeast environs. With the coming of the electric streetcar to Charlotte in 1891, upper- and middle-class citizens began relocating from downtown addresses to the new suburbs of Dilworth, Elizabeth, Myers Parks, Chatham Estates along The Plaza, and Club Acres around the Charlotte Country Club. Providence Road, which forms the west side of Eastover, had been fashionable even before the development of posh Myers Park in 1912, though in the early twentieth century, the road was still considered too far from downtown for easy commuting. Griffith envisioned Eastover as a rival to Myers Park both in social status and landscape design. He contracted with the noted landscape architect and planner Earle Sumner Draper to create the Eastover plan. Draper had designed portions of Myers Parks, notably Queens Road West with its long sweeping radius and lush landscaping. Likewise, the major streets of Eastover, Cherokee and Colville, are winding, embowered avenues lined with grand houses sited well back on large parcels. But in direct contrast to Myers Park and the other early

²⁰ Dorothy Knox, "I Believe Everything," *Charlotte News*, May 3, 1935.

²¹ *Ibid.*

suburbs geared to streetcar travel, Eastover developed as the city's first exclusive automobile subdivision. Although trolleys were still quite active in 1927, the residents of the new suburb were expected to have automobiles. The nearest streetcar stops were on Queens Road, many blocks from the Eastover entrance gates.²²

The first house completed in Eastover was the residence of U. S. Army Major Alexander James and his wife Viola at 260 Cherokee Road, which today is next door to the Alexander-Howell House. Construction on the Georgian Revival house designed by Martin Boyer began in spring 1927, shortly after E. C. Griffith began lot sales. By May 1928 another 22 homes had been completed.²³



Figure 7 Franklin Gordon, labeled no. 2, attends the 19th annual meeting of the North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects, held in Charlotte in October 1929. From C. David Jackson and Charlotte V. Brown, *History of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects 1913-1998* (Tabor City, NC: Atlantic Printing Company, 1998), 25.

²² Richard Mattson and Frances Alexander, Survey and Research Report for the Sydenham B. Alexander, Jr. House, Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 2007, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Alexander-Sydenham-B-Hse-SR.pdf>, accessed March 11, 2024.

²³ "Great Progress Since First Home Was Built in Eastover," *Charlotte Observer*, May 6, 1928.

Syd and Two commissioned architect Franklin Gordon to design their suburban residence. A native of either Maine or New York—Gordon’s provenance is murky—he came to Charlotte in September 1905 to serve as supervising architect of the Selwyn Hotel. After construction was complete, he established his own firm. Gordon was one of 36 North Carolina architects who attended the first meeting of the North Carolina Architects Association at Wilmington and Wrightsville Beach in July 1906. He was elected secretary-treasurer, and fellow Charlottean C. C. Hook was voted to be president. Gordon submitted a design for the proposed Independence Building, the state’s first skyscraper, in 1907 and was chosen as a finalist.²⁴ The following year, he joined with L. L. Hunter to form Hunter & Gordon, a partnership that lasted for nearly a decade. Among their commissions were Chalmers Memorial A. R. P. Church in Dilworth (1910), the Carnegie Library at Biddle University (1911-1912), and Mercy Hospital in Elizabeth (1916). They brought the Tudor Revival architectural style to Charlotte in a residence for E. C. Marshall, vice president of Duke Power Company, built in 1915 on Hermitage Road. Hunter & Gordon had also designed a house for Dr. J. F. and Mary Robertson, Two’s parents, on West Hill Street in 1909. It could be that the Alexanders were familiar with Gordon’s work—Hunter died in 1925—and made their choice of architect based on this earlier relationship.²⁵

²⁴ “Personal Mention,” *American Architect and Buildings News*, Vol. 89, No. 1577 (March 17, 1906), 5; “The Selwyn Opens It’s (sic) Doors in Brilliant Reception to Friends,” *Charlotte News*, February 6, 1907; “New Architect Firm,” *Charlotte News*, March 16, 1908; “To Supervise Hotel Plans,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 30, 1905; “State Architects Organize,” *Wilmington Messenger*, July 8, 1906; “Architect Milburn’s Design Is Accepted,” *Charlotte News*, May 28, 1907.

²⁵ Gordon, Franklin (ca. 1870-1930), North Carolina Architects and Builders, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000245>, accessed March 11, 2024.; “Dr. Robertson’s New Home,” *Charlotte Daily Observer*, October 12, 1909.



Figure 8 Colorized photo of the Alexander-Howell House, ca. 1930s. From Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Unlike many of his contemporaries such as Louis Asbury and Martin Boyer, Franklin Gordon did not actively promote his work. There are few mentions of Gordon projects in Charlotte newspapers or trade publications like *Manufacturers Record*. However, in June 1928 it was noted that plasterer J. D. Love had recently completed work using Red Top plaster over Rocklath on “the Alexander job in Eastover” with Blythe-Isenhour as general contractor.²⁶ While no article mentions the news of the Alexanders moving into their new home, by March 1929 Two had hosted a meeting of the Mecklenburg Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution at 250 Cherokee Road.²⁷ The Alexander-Howell House was likely one of the last projects completed by Gordon. He died on September 24, 1930, at Mercy Hospital, a year after his wife Agnes had suddenly passed while on vacation in Blowing Rock.

While the Alexander and Howell families seemed to weather the economic impacts of the 1929 stock market crash and resultant depression, tragedy struck in the 1930s. First, Syd Alexander tragically died of a heart attack at home on May 6, 1935. Though his health had suffered for several months, he kept busy and had attended a textile convention in Augusta, Georgia, the preceding week. Vard had recently left Charlotte, heading west to the national meeting of the Junior League in San Francisco. News reached her at Knoxville of her father’s passing, and she immediately turned

²⁶ *Charlotte Observer*, June 6, 1928.

²⁷ “Women’s Activities,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 13, 1929.

back. Syd's funeral was held in the house, and he was interred at Elmwood Cemetery.²⁸ Alexander Residence Hall at N. C. State was named for Syd in recognition of his service on the UNC Board of Trustees.²⁹



Figure 9 Vard Howell, ca. 1934. From Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Despite her absence from the Junior League convention, Vard was elected national Vice President; her biggest cheerleader and Region V Director Hazel Martin Tillet attended in her stead and stood for Vard in her nomination.³⁰ Ever the workhorse, Vard continued her work despite her grief. The national board met twice a year in New York, and she traveled to many different leagues around the region. According to Kate Whitner McKay, "Vard says it is very hard work, requiring much concentration and quick thinking. As a result of such mental exercise, she claims that she is a complete wreck for at least a week following."³¹ But she enjoyed the task, saying of the national board:

²⁸ "S. B. Alexander Dies at His Home in City," *Charlotte News*, May 6, 1935; "To Attend League Meet," *Charlotte News*, May 8, 1935; "S. B. Alexander Dies at His Home in City," *Charlotte News*, May 6, 1935.

²⁹ "Constitution Oath Ordered at U. N. C.," *Wilmington Morning Star*, June 8, 1941; "Alexander Residence Hall," NC State Facilities, <https://facilities.ofa.ncsu.edu/building/aex/>, accessed March 11, 2024.

³⁰ "To Attend League Meet," *Charlotte News*, May 8, 1935; "S. B. Alexander Dies at His Home in City," *Charlotte News*, May 6, 1935.

³¹ Kate Whitner McKay, "Mrs. 'Vard' Howell National Official," *Charlotte News*, November 15, 1935.

There is every type of personality on the board which represents a cross section of the country. The officers are from New York, Pennsylvania, Arkansas and North Carolina. We the officers, are so trained by league ideals, that we usually come to the same definite conclusion, even though we may argue at length. Each officer is required to visit every league in her region sometime during her two years' service. This gives her a better understanding of individual leagues and their problems, and the conclusions reached are presented to the board in written reports.³²

After her term as national Vice President had ended, Vard resumed her philanthropic work in Charlotte. She joined the board of the Mint Museum of Arts Association, of which her father had been the first president in 1933. Her aunts Julia Alexander and Violet Alexander were also charter members. According to a later report, it was due to Syd's efforts that the eagle emblem was restored and rehung on the building once completed. Julia had found the eagle tucked away in the building, located across the street from the Alexander house at 400 West Trade Street, when it was due to be demolished for a new post office.³³ In September 1937, Vard accepted the chair of the women's division of the Community Chest campaign, the forerunner to Safe Alliance. She was a voracious advocate, leading a meeting of over 600 women volunteers for canvassing on October 29.³⁴ She spoke at the meeting of the Charlotte Woman's Club on November 4, where it was reported that she "presented the cause in a forceful way and asked for the support of the club."³⁵ When results of the campaign were announced on November 9, Vard's team was the top fundraiser with over \$17,000, 135% of their goal of \$12,500.³⁶

³² Kate Whitner McKay, "Mrs. 'Vard' Howell National Official," *Charlotte News*, November 15, 1935.

³³ "Honor To Whom It is Due," *Charlotte Observer*, October 24, 1936.

³⁴ Our Values & History, Safe Alliance, <https://www.safealliance.org/about-us/history/>, accessed March 11, 2024; "Mrs. Billy Shaw Howell Directs Women's Group," *Charlotte Observer*, September 22, 1937; "600 Chest Workers Meet This Morning," *Charlotte Observer*, October 29, 1937.

³⁵ "Charlotte Woman's Club Holds Monthly Meeting," *Charlotte Observer*, November 4, 1937.

³⁶ "Chest Drive Gets \$107,326," *Charlotte Observer*, November 9, 1937.

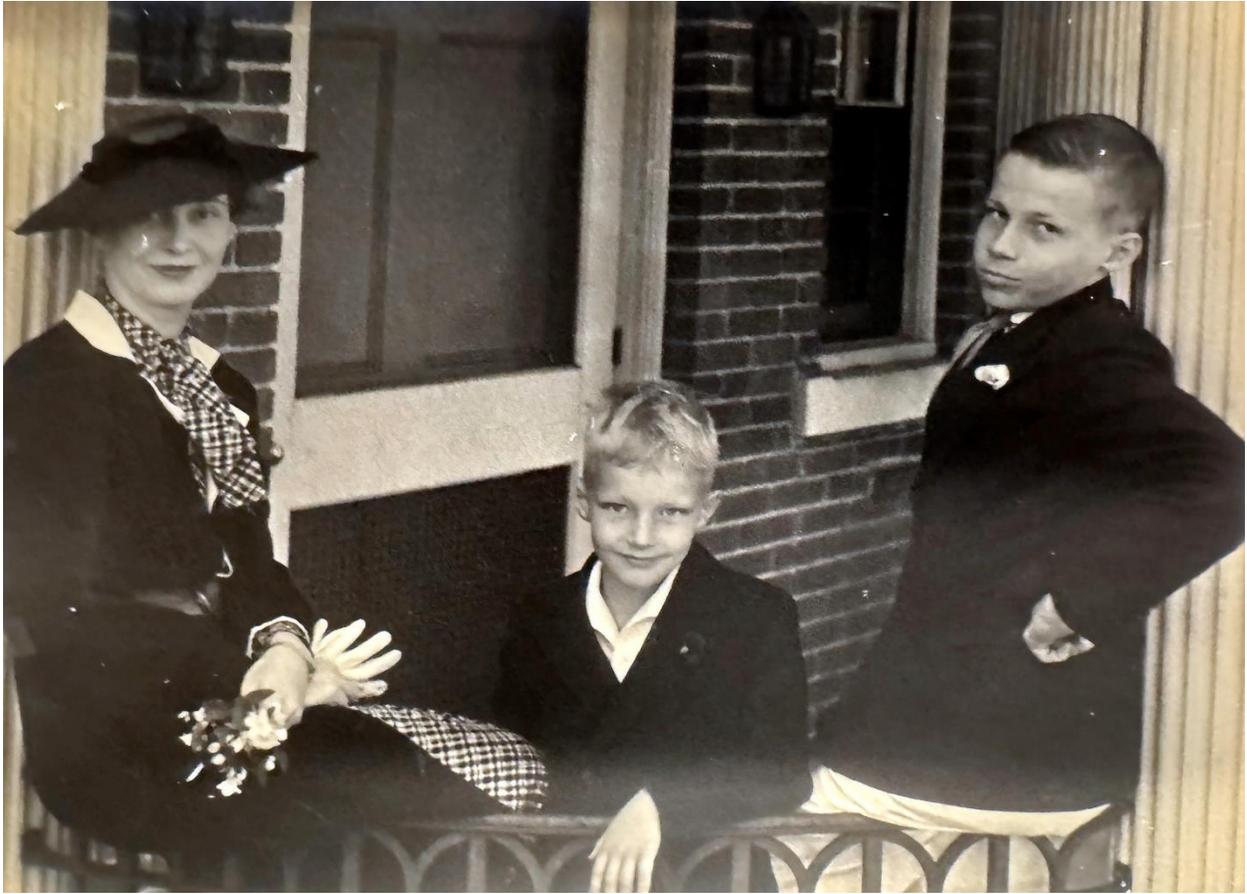


Figure 10 Vard, Wool, and Syd on the front porch of 250 Cherokee Road, ca. 1935. From Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

The second tragedy struck in 1938. After graduating from Alexander Graham Junior High School, Sydenham Alexander Howell—also called Syd—had begun his first year at Darlington School, a boys' boarding school in Rome, Georgia, in fall 1937. But in early May 1938, Syd became ill from an infected boil on his arm. His parents and Two quickly traveled to Rome, where specialists from Atlanta and Thomas Sparrow, a Charlotte doctor, were treating the boy, whose wound had turned septic. While his grandmother Clara Shaw Howell reported that Syd seemed better on May 6, he took a turn for the worst and died the morning of May 9 at the age of fourteen. He was buried in Elmwood Cemetery. A newly constructed building at Darlington School was named Sydenham Hall in honor of Syd thanks to a gift from Vard and Billy the following year.³⁷

³⁷ "Young Howell Is Critically Ill," *Charlotte News*, May 6, 1938; "Boil Is Fatal to Howell Boy," *Charlotte Observer*, May 10, 1938; "Darlington Dedicates Memorial Building," *Atlanta Journal*, February 8, 1939; Sydenham Hall, Darlington School, <https://www.darlingtonschool.org/ExploreDarlington/OurCampus/4602224>, accessed March 11, 2024.

Vard and Two



Figure 11 Two and Vard work in the yard at 250 Cherokee Road, 1939. From Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Mother and daughter were close throughout their lives. A few weeks after her father's death in May 1935, Vard and her family moved into 250 Cherokee Road with Two. As reported by the *News*, "Mrs. and Mrs. Billy Shaw Howell and family, who have been making their home on East Morehead street, are now residing with Mrs. S. B. Alexander, mother of Mrs. Howell, at her home on Cherokee road, Eastover."³⁸ The following year, Two had a staircase removed and new wiring and plumbing installed, possibly to better accommodate her daughter's family. The Howells sold their house on East Morehead Street in 1938, making the move permanent.³⁹ By 1949, only Two and Vard were residents of 250 Cherokee Road. Billy Shaw Howell, Sr. died on April 23, 1949, after an emergency operation at Memorial Hospital. Wool was attending Darlington School in Georgia; he would enlist

³⁸ "Mr. and Mrs. Howell and Family Move," *Charlotte News*, May 23, 1935.

³⁹ "Issue Permits for Residences," *Charlotte Observer*, November 15, 1936; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 964, Page 82.

in the U. S. Navy in 1951 then attend the University of North Carolina, graduating in 1955.⁴⁰ They lived together until Two's death on October 9, 1969.⁴¹



Figure 12 Two with one of the many dogs residing at the Alexander-Howell House over the years, 1935. From the Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Vard's close friend and fellow Junior Leaguer Dorothy Knox was a frequent visitor to 250 Cherokee Road. She wrote in her column in 1944 that one of her favorite spaces was "Mrs. S. B. Alexander's library."⁴² But at the time, the library was a mess—they had gotten a puppy, a cocker spaniel they named Niffcompoop or Niffy for short. Two and Vard loved dogs and added many small family members over the years. In 1938 they brought home Jock, an eight-week-old Cairn Terrier.⁴³

The Alexanders had vacationed in Blowing Rock since Vard was a girl, and those annual trips to the mountains to escape the summer heat were noted in newspaper mentions. Trips to the beach were also common vacations—an early photo of Vard and her father was taken in the surf at Wrightsville Beach in 1902. In her later years, Vard found an affinity for Pawleys Island, South Carolina. Dorothy Knox noted that, rain or shine, Vard enjoyed a walk on the beach each morning. Two and Vard were world travelers, either together or separately with friends and family. In February 1938 Two traveled with Mrs. C. P. Moody to Mexico City, where they lunched with then Ambassador Josephus

⁴⁰ "Billy S. Howell Funeral Service This Afternoon," *Charlotte Observer*, April 24, 1949; "Seven Enlist in Navy Here," *Charlotte Observer*, February 15, 1951.

⁴¹ "Mrs. S. B. Alexander, Prominent Charlottean," *Charlotte Observer*, October 9, 1969.

⁴² Dorothy Knox, "I Believe Everything," *Charlotte News*, March 17, 1944.

⁴³ Jane Morrison Moore, "Chatterettes," *Charlotte News*, March 6, 1938.

Daniels. Vard and Wool traveled there in 1946. In spring 1953, Vard made a tour of Europe, including a stop in London where she was present for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. She would visit the continent several times, including a month-long sojourn in 1970 which included stops in Yugoslavia and Greece. She and first cousin Alice Alexander Conner visited Brussels in 1972, the latter on a buying trip for a Belmont antique shop.⁴⁴



Figure 13 Vard holding a cake in celebration of the First Presbyterian Church library being named for her, ca. 1970s. From the Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

If anything was a constant in Charlotte, it was Vard's vigorous volunteer service. In July 1941 she was appointed to a term of four years on the board of trustees of the Charlotte Public Library. Vard served for three decades, after which she requested the county commission not reappoint her. A conference room in the Odell-designed main public library, which opened in 1956, was named for her. She and Two donated land, part of the extensive holdings once owned by S. B. Alexander, Sr., on

⁴⁴ Dorothy Knox, "How to Make Best of Rain at Beach," *Charlotte Observer*, June 16, 1968; *Charlotte News*, February 27, 1938; "Charlotteans Plan Tours This Summer," *Charlotte News*, June 8, 1946; Marie McK. Adams, "Chatter Box," *Charlotte News*, May 4, 1953; Grace Hamrick, "People in the News," *Charlotte Observer*, October 8, 1970; Grace Hamrick, "People in the News," *Charlotte Observer*, January 22, 1972.

Freedom Drive for the west branch library in 1960.⁴⁵ She served as president of the Mint Museum of Art and on the boards of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, the Little Theater of Charlotte, United Community Services, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Alexander Children’s Home, the Florence Crittendon Home, the Barium Springs Children’s Home, and numerous other entities. Vard was a lifelong member of First Presbyterian Church, where she taught Sunday school, and in 1971 the church library was named for her.⁴⁶ In 1958 Vard finally joined the Daughters of the American Revolution, an organization Two had been active with for years.⁴⁷

Mary Brevard Alexander Howell died at home on September 17, 1988, a few weeks after her 87th birthday. Son Billy inherited the property, and in 1993 he sold it to Alexander and Paige Waugh. The Waughs renovated the kitchen, enclosed and expanded the porch off the kitchen into a library, and divided the attic space into bedrooms. A pool was added ca. 2005, and the original garage/quarters was converted into a pool house. In 2015 the home was purchased by Charlotte native Peter Larkin and his wife Ashley Scott Larkin, who sought to restore the home as close to Franklin Gordon’s original design. The house was rewired, including the removal of any remaining knob and tube wiring. A dual heating system incorporating modern HVAC along with boiler furnace utilizes the original radiators. Plumbing concerns were corrected, and bathroom renovations—unfortunately, previous renovations had damaged the extant original materials—used green hexagonal and white subway tile which likely closely matched the material specified by Gordon. A modern detached garage/office was added, mirroring the historic garage/pool house with slate roofing tiles sourced to match the original roofing used on the property.⁴⁸

African American Connections

During the period when the Alexanders and Howells lived at 250 Cherokee Road, it was common for upper-class families to employ cooks, drivers, and other staff who were typically African American. Research has uncovered some people who worked for or were associated with the Alexander and Howell families over the years.

⁴⁵ “Library Will View System at Newark,” *Charlotte Observer*, July 22, 1941; Helen Parks, “New Library Will Be Open to All Citizens,” *Charlotte News*, September 6, 1955; “West Branch Library OKd,” *Charlotte News*, December 19, 1960; “Coulwood Area Sewer System Considered,” *Charlotte Observer*, January 5, 1972.

⁴⁶ “Mrs. Mary Brevard Alexander Howell,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 19, 1988.

⁴⁷ “Dr. Graham Speaks to DAR Chapter,” *Charlotte News*, October 9, 1958.

⁴⁸ Susan V. Mayer interview with Ashley Scott Larkin, March 2, 2024.



Vard pictured with a nanny at the S. B. Alexander house at 400 West Trade Street, ca. 1902.



Vard (far right) and other children at Enderly, ca. 1904-1905.



Vard and Albert pose with the Alexander family's Cadillac, likely in front of the house at 1000 South

Tryon Street, ca. 1915-1919. Unfortunately, Albert's last name is unknown.



Sydenham Alexander Howell and unnamed woman, ca. 1920s.

Living quarters for staff were located above the garage, and city directories and census records list the following people either living there or working at 250 Cherokee Road:

- Hawkins Chisholm was butler and chauffeur for Syd Alexander between 1931 and 1934. After Syd died in 1935, he was listed as a chauffeur for James J. Harris of 1830 Queens Road.
- Annie Lee Beaver Walton was a maid for the Alexander-Howells in 1935. She was also listed in the city directory as a maid between 1933-1936, though no employer was listed. She lived at 712 South Myers Street in Second Ward, which she and her husband Edward purchased in 1924, until it was purchased by the Charlotte Redevelopment Commission in 1967.⁴⁹
- Between 1937 and at least 1957, Stella Reid Mann Dixon (1912-1972) worked as a maid and cook for Two and the Howells. She first married Sylvester Mann in 1925 and Lee A. Dixon later. Stella and Lee purchased a house in University Park in 1960.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 533, Page 312; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 2917, Page 37.

⁵⁰ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 2147, Page 138;

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/149967505/stella_dixon.

Architectural Description

Written by Richard Mattson and Frances Alexander (2007) with additions and photos by Susan V. Mayer (2024)

Built in 1928-1929, the Alexander-Howell House was one of the earlier dwellings in Eastover. The first house was a similarly grand Georgian Revival mansion designed by Martin E. Boyer, Jr. for Alexander L. and Viola James in 1927. Numerous brick and weatherboarded versions of the Georgian style followed, including the 1930 A. Lloyd Goode House at 165 Cherokee Road and the 1931 John Paul Lucas, Jr. House at 265 Cherokee Road. While these houses and others remained substantially intact at the time of the 2007 Landmark Designation Report authored by Mattson and Alexander, as did other grand Georgian Revival dwellings along portions of Cherokee Road, Eastover Road, Colville Road, and Hempstead Place, many contemporary residences have been extensively renovated or even demolished. The James House was designated a local landmark in 1994, but that status was revoked in 2009 due to inappropriate alterations made to the property.⁵¹



Figure 14 Looking northwest from the end of the south driveway.

The Alexander-Howell House is situated in the Eastover neighborhood of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Eastover is located on the east side of Providence Road, a major artery

⁵¹ Meeting Minutes, Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, September 14, 2009.

leading southeast from the center city. The Alexander-Howell House occupies an approximately one acre site on the west side of Cherokee Road, a curvilinear street that has access to Providence Road at either end. The Alexander-Howell House is sited in the center of the large parcel along Cherokee Road. A concrete circle drive is located in front of the house, leading to a pea gravel parking area. The south driveway extends to the rear of the house and the garage. The house faces onto a lawn bisected by a brick walkway. In addition to the house, there is a former garage/servant's quarters (now a pool house), a new garage/office, and a modern swimming pool in the backyard.

The Alexander-Howell House is an excellent example of formal Georgian-style domestic architecture of the pre-World War II period. The house is two-and-a-half stories tall with red brick veneer laid in a common bond. The original massing survives substantially unchanged, consisting of a side-gable slate roof over the main block, and two-story wings on the north and south elevations. A modillion cornice defines the roofline. Unless otherwise noted, wood windows have six-over-six sash and cast-stone sills and lintels with decorative keystones. Matching cast-stone lintels with keystones also cap the original French doors on the side and rear elevations. The house has tall, brick chimney stacks, including an exterior chimney on the south gable end embellished with cast-stone trim in the shoulder.



Figure 15 Façade/East Elevation looking west

The balanced, five-bay façade features a center entry bay with a curved classical portico. This portico has Doric columns, a modillion cornice, and a decorative iron railing, repeated in the portico's roof balustrade. A fanlight tops the doorway, which is flanked by small double-hung sash windows; the north window has an original copper mail slot set in the brick wall. The six-panel wood door is original. The first story includes four French doors with decorative iron railings that open into the two principal front rooms. On the second story, a Palladian-inspired window consisting of four casements topped by a central lunette fills the center bay. Allowing natural light into the upper half story are two gabled dormers with pilasters, lunettes, and replacement eight-over-eight windows. There are two small attic windows with replacement sash in each of the two gable ends. On the south side, these windows also have replacement cast-stone sills and lintels with keystones, while the sills and lintels on the north attic windows are original.



Figure 16 South Elevation looking northwest



Figure 17 North Elevation looking southwest

The two-story wings on the north and south sides have copper parapets. The original, recessed, first-story porch on the south side has arched openings, slender, wooden porch posts, and a slate floor. Screening was added by the current owners. The original sleeping porch on the second story has replacement one-over-one window sash, though the transoms are original. The principal exterior modifications include the enclosure and expansion of the north porch, a new kitchen window in the original body of the house, and a rear French doorway. These changes are executed in designs and materials that are sympathetic to the original and do not detract from the architectural integrity of the house.

The interior of the house has the original, symmetrical center-hall plan and Georgian Revival finish. There are plaster walls and ceilings, hardwood floors, paneled doors, and molded window and door surrounds throughout. The principal floor rooms have crown molding with picture railing. All the mantels, which vary in classical treatment, are intact. The marble mantel in the living room includes pilasters with molded caps and a center medallion. There is also a marble mantel in the study. The simpler wooden mantel in the upstairs master bedroom has decorative molding along the pilasters, frieze, and shelf. The main stairway in the spacious center hall rises in two flights from the rear of the hall. It has slender iron balusters and a wooden railing that curves gently as it rises to the second floor.

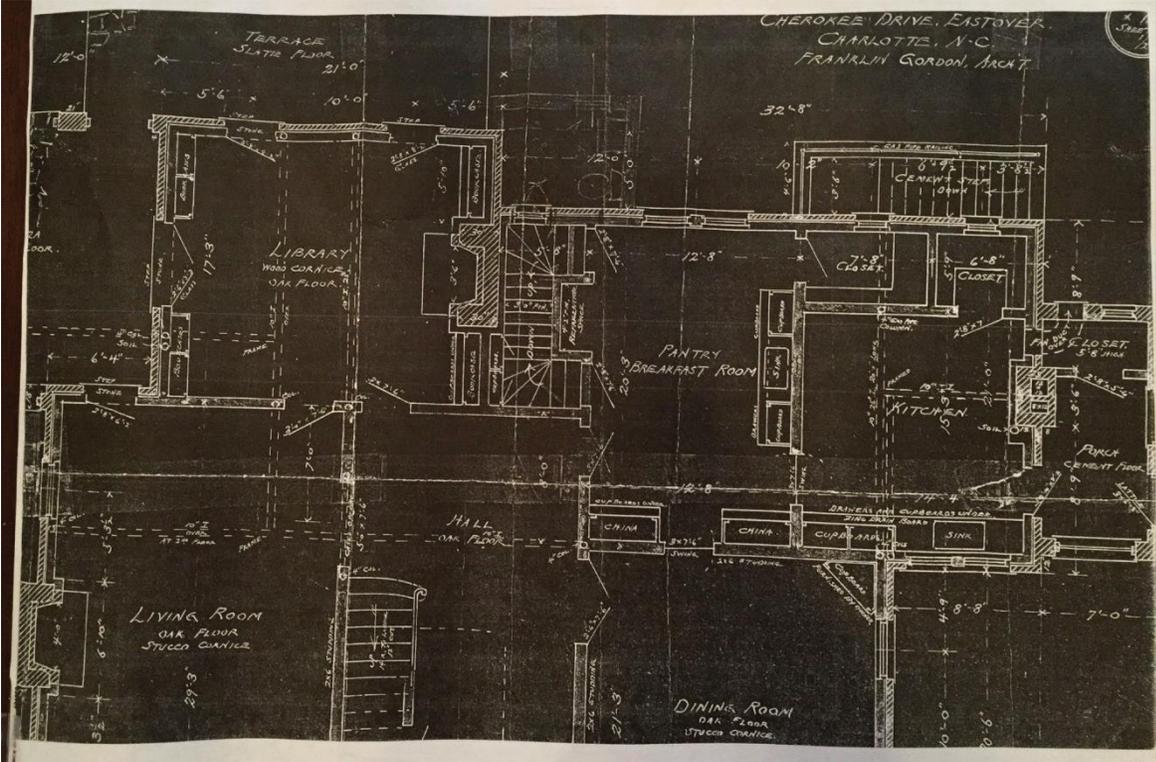
Major changes to the interior occurred in the 1990s under the ownership of the Waughs, namely the modernization and expansion of the kitchen at the rear of the house, and the remodeling of the attic into bedrooms. A modern rear attic staircase, including wainscoting and a balustrade that echoes the balustrade along the principal stairway, was also installed during the attic renovation. The Larkins have made some changes as well, primarily focused on remodeling bathrooms and the kitchen to modern standards while maintaining period materials. For instance, lighting fixtures dating to the 1920s and 1930s are installed throughout.



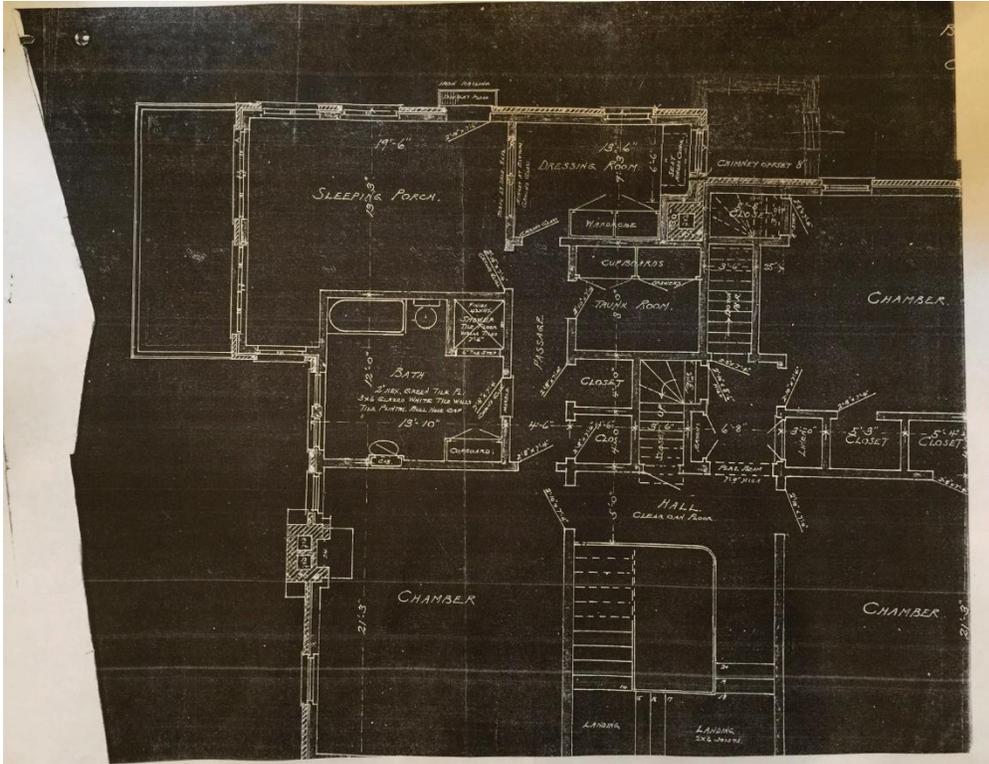
Figure 18 West Elevation looking east from rear of property

Bordered by trees and shrubbery, the backyard contains a modern swimming pool and the original garage/servant's quarters, which has been converted to the pool house, and a new garage mimicking the former building. Reflecting the style of the main residence, the poolhouse has a story-and-a-half, rectangular form with a red-brick veneer, a slate, side-gable roof, and two dormers. The original garage door bays have been replaced with modern French doors and the interior has been modernized. The new garage is similarly arranged but with a hip roof and shed dormer on its north elevation.

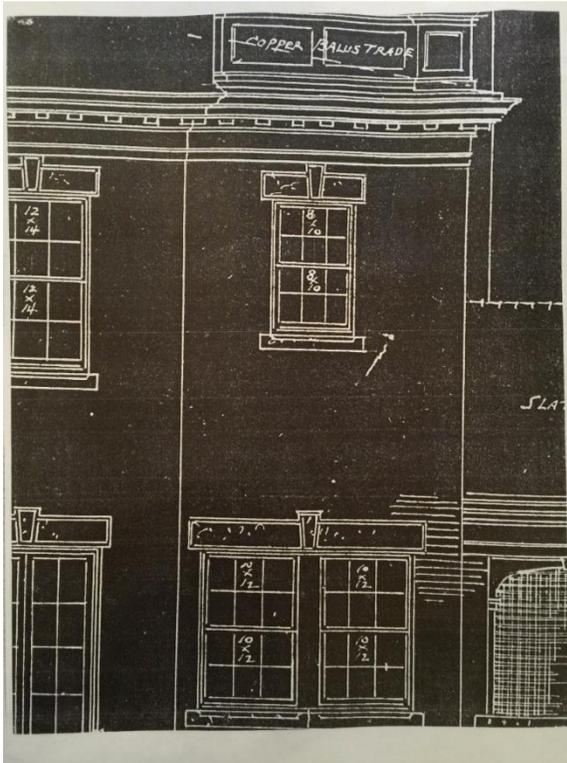
The original floor plans of the Alexander-Howell House have unfortunately been lost; however, copies of portions of the plans are in possession of the current owners. They provide valuable information about the original configuration of rooms.



First Floor



Second Floor



East Façade Elevation showing two-story north wing

Foyer and staircase looking east (top) and west (bottom)



Typical radiator and cabinet



Details of wrought iron balusters on foyer staircase



Dining Room looking northeast (top) and northwest (bottom)



Living Room looking east (top) and west (bottom)



Marble mantle, fireplace, and hearth in living room on south wall are the same as in this ca. 1940s photograph of Vard.



Study looking southwest (top) and northeast (bottom). The bookcases on the south wall were altered by later owners from their original arched appearance.





These photos of Vard and Billy in the study show the original configuration of the bookcases on the south wall.

South Porch looking south (top) and north (bottom)



Utility Room looking west (top) and Kitchen looking north (bottom)



Library/former north porch looking northwest (top) and southeast (bottom)



Staircase and Upstairs Hall looking west from landing (top) and south (bottom)



Primary Bedroom looking southeast (top) and wood mantle and brick hearth on south wall (bottom)



Trunk Room and Primary Closet looking west (top) and primary bathroom looking south (bottom). This area of the house was reconfigured from its original design by a previous owner.



Sleeping Porch looking southeast (top) and north (bottom)



Hallway behind the Primary Closet with French door to Juliet balcony on west wall (top left), looking south toward Sleeping Porch (top right), Bathroom in addition (bottom left), and hallway looking west from Upstairs Hall (bottom right)



Front Bedroom looking northeast (top) and northwest (bottom)



Front Bath looking north



Original bathtub in the Front Bath (top); Billy Shaw Howell, Jr. in the same tub in 1938 (bottom)



Back Bedroom looking north (top) and south (bottom)



Back Bathroom



Stairs to Attic looking east



Attic Bedroom looking south (top) and north (bottom)



Exterior stairs to Basement located along North Elevation outside of Kitchen, looking east (top), door to Kernerator chimney waste incinerator in Basement



The Kernerator was a household incinerator. According to a 1919 catalogue,

The Kernerator is built into an enlarged base of the kitchen chimney wherein is placed an arrangement of grates designed with a by-pass, which permits the draft to pass over and around as well as through the material to be burned. *No fuel is required* as our system is founded upon the demonstrated fact that in a normal household there is more than enough combustible material in the form of waste paper, rags and the like, to dry out the moisture from any ordinary supply of garbage. Garbage itself is thoroughly combustible when dried and requires only sufficient heat to evaporate the moisture in order to render it combustible.⁵²



The advertisement features a cartoon at the top showing a woman holding a newspaper that says "GARBAGE STRIKE DECLARED". Below the cartoon, the headline reads "Let 'em Strike" and "—say the Kernerator Owners —and Kernerator Owners mean just what they say". The text continues: "GARBAGE strikes hold no terrors for them or their households. While others protest, their only concern is one of sympathy for those whose homes were built before their own—before the Kernerator was invented and procurable. —but garbage strikes only emphasize the day-in-and-day-out need for the Kernerator. The garbage-can mania is ever present, strike or no strike. Ending the strike doesn't end those tiresome trips to garbage can or rubbish pile (often necessary to make in disagreeable weather). Nor protect you against uncertain collection. Nor help dispose of daily waste such as old papers, sweepings, etc."

Only One Sure and Easy Way to Banish Garbage

That way is the Kernerator way, which makes the disposal of household refuse and garbage the easiest task in the kitchen. It is the method endorsed by authorities everywhere. Thousands of Kernerators in use in residences, apartments, hospitals and institutions from coast to coast. See the Kernerator handy hopper door, in the above illustration. Notice how conveniently it is located in the kitchen. Now then, just think of simply dropping all waste—such as sweepings, garbage, papers, wilted flowers, tin cans, broken glassware—through this door, and then forgetting about it. Could anything be more convenient? This handy hopper door opens into the regular chimney, at the base of which is the Kernerator combustion chamber. Here all waste is air-dried as rapidly as it accumulates.

Waste Itself is Only Fuel Required

No coal, wood, oil or gas is used with the Kernerator—just an occasional match to light the refuse. Everything combustible is burned completely, while non-combustibles (metallic objects, etc.) are flame-sterilized for removal with the ash.

Existing Buildings Cannot Have It

When you plan your new home, include the Kernerator. The cost is moderate—very moderate—but it must be built in when building is being erected. Consult your architect—he knows and recommends the Kernerator. Write us for descriptive literature explaining further advantages or phone for appointment and ask us to show you some of the many Kernerator installations already made in the city.

W. Fred Casey & Co.
205 W. First St. Phone 5014
KERNER INCINERATOR CO., Mfrs., MILWAUKEE, WIS.

KERNERATOR
Built-in-the-Chimney

Illustration of the Kernerator from the 1919 catalogue (left), advertisement for the appliance, *Charlotte Observer*, May 31, 1925.

⁵² *The Kernerator Built-in-Chimney* catalogue (Milwaukee, WI, 1919).

Garage/Pool House downstairs looking northwest (top) and upstairs looking east (bottom)



Typical original glass knob and door hardware



Bibliography

Selected Newspaper Articles:

Charlotte News.

Dorothy Knox, "I Believe Everything," May 3, 1935.

Kate Whitner McKay, "Mrs. 'Vard' Howell National Official," November 15, 1935. "Mrs. 'Vard' Howell," November 15, 1935.

"S. B. Alexander Dies at His Home in City," May 6, 1935.

Charlotte Observer.

"Alexander Represents Crompton and Knowles Loom Works in South," May 31, 1927.

"Great Progress Since First Home Was Built in Eastover," May 6, 1928.

"Mrs. Mary Brevard Alexander Howell," September 19, 1988.

"Mrs. S. B. Alexander, Prominent Charlottean," October 9, 1969.

"To Hold Rites Today for S. B. Alexander," May 7, 1935.

Books, Articles, and Other Documents:

Mary Brevard Alexander Howell Papers. Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.