

## **Addendum to the Survey and Research Report for Victor Shaw House**

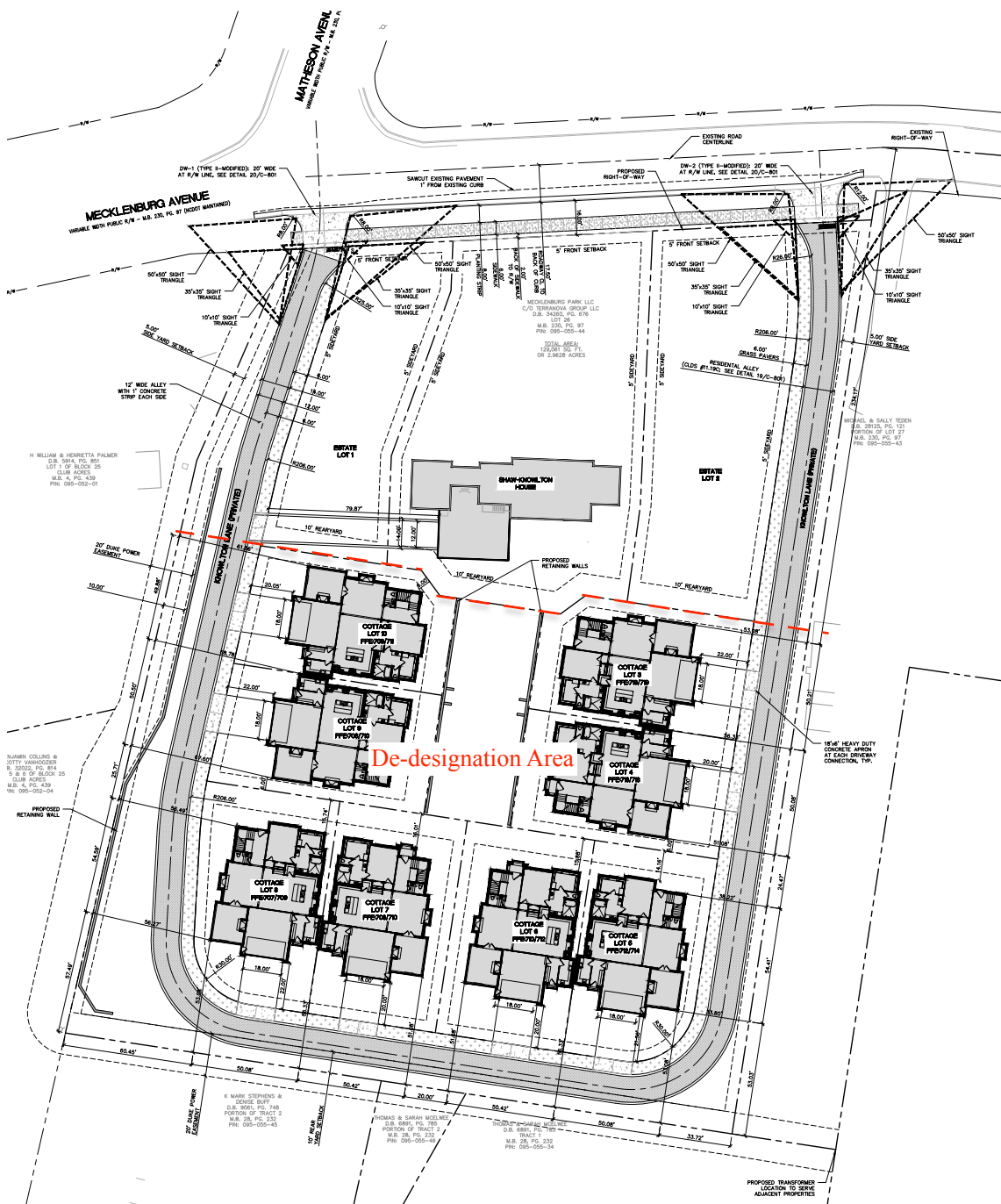
The ca. 1928 Victor Shaw House, 2400 Mecklenburg Avenue, was designated as a local historic landmark in 2004, including approximately 2.588 acres of land associated with the house. The Victor Shaw House is located within tax parcel number 09505544 as recorded in the Mecklenburg County tax office, and the owner of the property is Mecklenburg Park, LLC.

A Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the house was issued by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission in December of 2018, but its effective date was delayed for one year. The Commission actively sought a preservation solution for the property, and the demolition of the property was delayed. A new owner with plans to preserve the house bought the property in February of 2020.

Upon petition of the owner, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission approved the attached site plan, showing eight additional house sites on the property, through its Certificate of Appropriateness process. The owner is requesting that the designation be removed from the rear portion of the property as shown on the attached site plan, with the designation being retained for the historic house and its new lot and the two additional lots that border Mecklenburg Avenue. The three lots retaining the designation constitute approximately one acre in total. On December 9, 2019, the Commission voted to recommend that the historic designation be removed from the property with the exception of the three lots bordering Mecklenburg Avenue. The final dimensions of the three lots were completed through the collaborative efforts of the owner and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission staff, and are accurately represented on the attached site plan. The Commission received and assented to the attached site plan on March 8, 2021.

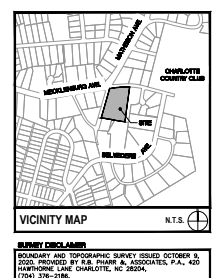
With the removal of the historic designation from the area shown on the attached plan, the approved development would not appreciably impact the remaining designated property's historic association with Victor Shaw. Nor would it detract from the house and remaining designated grounds as a prominent historic architectural feature of the Club Acres section of Plaza-Midwood neighborhood in Charlotte. The proposed development is limited to the rear of the property, beyond the public's historic viewshed from Mecklenburg Avenue. As the house and grounds retaining the designation lie between the limited public vantage points and the development, the historic property offers an approximately one-acre buffer that mitigates the risk of compromised integrity of setting or feeling. Retaining the designation of the two lots adjacent to the historic house (constituting all of the three lots that border Mecklenburg Avenue) would also ensure that the Commission would have design review control over the development of those three lots.

Prepared by Stewart Gray and Tommy Warlick  
April 2021



- ### STAKING AND MATERIALS NOTES
1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO BACK OF CURB, FACE OF BUILDING, OR CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
  2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE AT 90 DEGREES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
  3. ALL BACK OF CURB RADI AT PARKING LOT ISLANDS ARE 4.5- FEET UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
  4. PARKING STALL DIMENSIONS ARE 18.0' (TO FACE OF CURB) X 9.0' WIDE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
  5. ALL BACK OF CURB RADI AT ROADWAY INTERSECTIONS SHALL BE 20- FEET UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
  6. REFER TO ARCHITECTURAL PLANS FOR ACTUAL BUILDING DIMENSIONS.
  7. ANY DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS AND ACTUAL FIELD CONDITIONS SHALL BE CALLED TO THE ATTENTION OF THE OWNER AND ENGINEER PRIOR TO PROCEEDING WITH THE WORK.
  8. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL CONTACT ALL OWNERS OF UTILITIES, EASEMENTS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, PRIOR TO WORKING IN THESE AREAS.
  9. ALL ASPHALT PAVING SHALL CONFORM TO THE APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE CDOT STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR BRACKS AND STRUCTURES, LATEST EDITION.
  10. CONTRACTOR SHALL FURNISH AND INSTALL ALL PAVEMENT MARKINGS AS SHOWN ON THE PLANS.
  11. ALL SIGNS, PAVEMENT MARKINGS, AND OTHER TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES SHALL CONFORM TO THE LATEST EDITION OF THE MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES (MUTCD).
  12. ALL PARKING STALL STRIPS SHALL BE 4- INCH WHITE LINES, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
  13. STOP SIGNS SHALL BE 81-1, 30"x30".
  14. SIGN TRIANGLES SHOWN ARE THE MINIMUM REQUIRE.
  15. NO DEMOLITION UNLESS ALLOWED ON SITE.

- ### PAVEMENT REPAIR NOTES
1. CONTRACTOR SHALL PERFORM THE FOLLOWING REPAIR WORK AT THE EXISTING ASPHALT SURFACES.
    - 1.a. SAW-CUT AND REMOVE AREAS OF STRUCTURALLY-DEFICIENT PAVEMENT. RE-COMPACT SUB-GRADE AND INSTALL FULL DEPTH ASPHALT PATCH (MIL 2" 58.56)
    - 1.b. CLEAN ALL LONGITUDINAL AND TRANSVERSE CRACKS GREATER THAN 1/4" WIDE AND LESS THAN 1" WIDE AND FILL WITH A HOT FOUR RUBBER ASPHALT JOINT SEALER MEETING MOST SPECIFICATIONS.
    - 1.c. CLEAN AND FILL ALL CRACKS GREATER THAN 1" WIDE WITH A HOT, DENSE-GRADED, ASPHALT PATCH.
    - 1.d. CLEAN ALL SURFACES AND APPLY TWO COATS OF A COAL-TAR EMULSION SEAL COAT AT A MINIMUM RATE OF 0.5 GALLONS/SY.



### LEGEND

SYMBOL	DETAIL
[Symbol]	PROPOSED SIDEWALK 23 & 24/C-801
[Symbol]	PROPOSED STOP SIGN -/-
[Symbol]	HEAVY DUTY CONCRETE 27/C-802
[Symbol]	LIGHT DUTY BUTYRIOUS CONCRETE 19/C-801
[Symbol]	GRASS PAVERS 25/C-802
[Symbol]	PROPOSED 2'-4" CURB & GUTTER 21 & 22/C-801
[Symbol]	PROPOSED 1' CONCRETE STRIP 19/C-801
[Symbol]	PROPOSED LIGHTING -/-

**ColeJenest & Stone**  
 Shaping the Environment  
 Realizing the Possibilities  
 Land Planning  
 Landscape Architecture  
 Civil Engineering  
 Urban Design  
 200 South Tryon Street, Suite 1400  
 Charlotte, North Carolina 28202  
 p+ 704 376 1555 f+ 704 376 7851  
 url+ www.colejeneststone.com

**TERRANOVA GROUP, LLC.**  
 93 CLEVELAND STREET  
 GREENVILLE, SC 29601

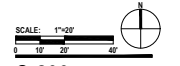
**MECKLENBURG PARK**  
 2408 MECKLENBURG AVE  
 CHARLOTTE, NC 28205

## DIMENSION CONTROL PLAN

Project No. 4696.00  
 Issued 10/19/21

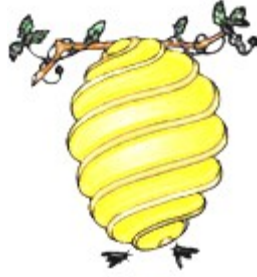
## CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

Revised



**C-200**  
 The drawings, the project manual and the design shown thereon are unamended by ColeJenest & Stone, P.A. or its predecessor or unamended use of the documents without consent of ColeJenest & Stone, P.A. or its predecessor.  
 © ColeJenest & Stone, P.A. 2021

1. CONTRACTOR IS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTACTING APPROPRIATE PARTIES AND ENSURING THAT ALL EXISTING UTILITIES ARE LOCATED PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION.
2. CONTRACTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PLACING BARRIAGES, USING FLAG MEN, ETC., AS NECESSARY TO INSURE THE SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC.
3. ALL PAVEMENT CUTS, CONCRETE OR ASPHALT, ARE TO BE REPLACED ACCORDING TO THE STANDARDS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION. THE LOCAL JURISDICTION SUPERVISOR IS SOLE DETERMINER.
4. SHIRING SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH OSHA TRENCHING STANDARDS, 29 CFR, PART 1926, SUBPART P, OR AS AMENDS.



Survey and Research Report  
on the  
**Victor Shaw House**



1. **Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Victor Shaw House is located at 2400 Mecklenburg Avenue in Charlotte, North Carolina.

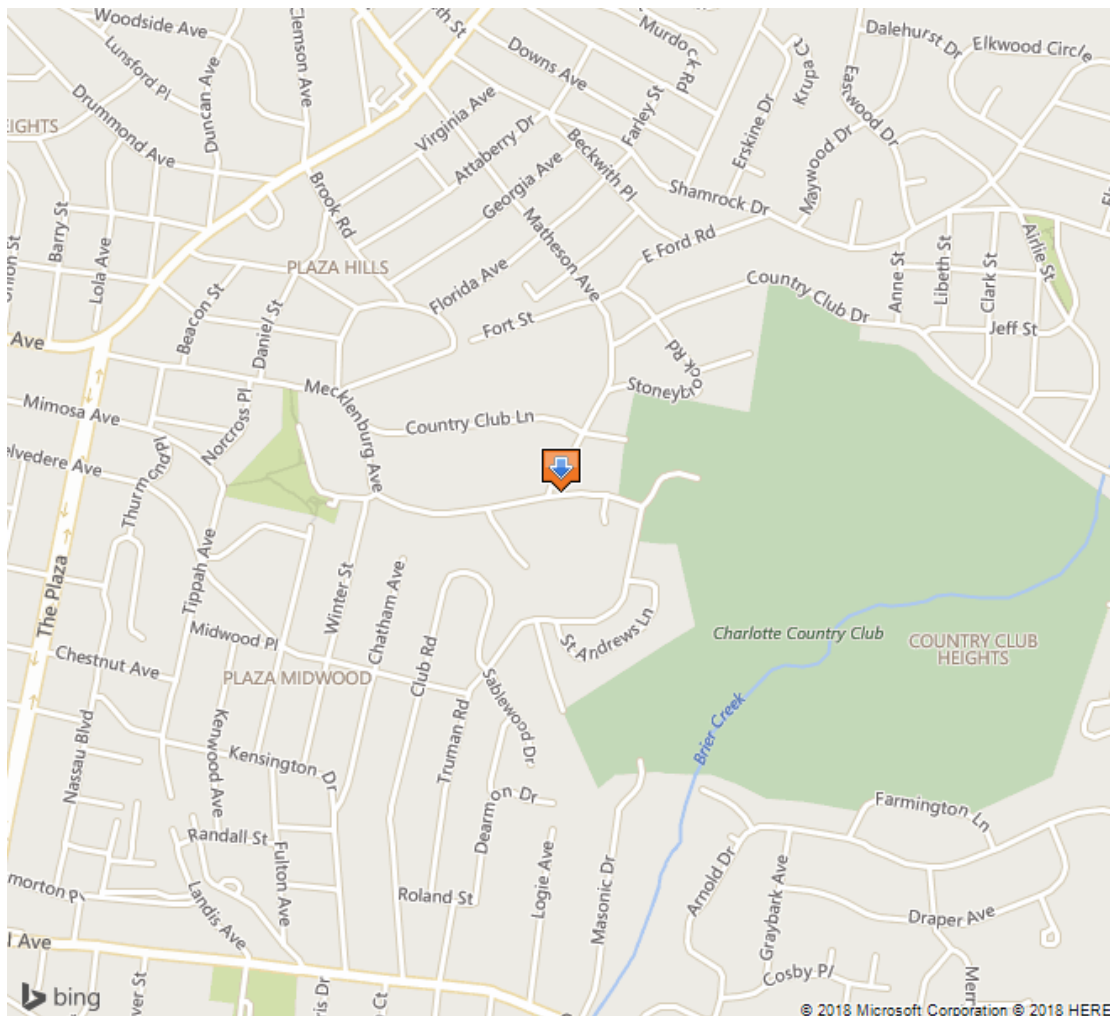
**2. Name and address of the current owner(s) of the property:**

The current owner of the Victor Shaw House is:

Annette Mauney Randall, Ph.D.  
2400 Mecklenburg Avenue  
Charlotte, NC 28205

**3. Representative photographs of the property**

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map depicting the location of the property. The UTM coordinate for the property is: **17 518553E 3898472N**



**5. Current deed book reference to the property:** The most recent deed to the Victor Shaw House can be found in Mecklenburg County Deed

Book 4947, page 688. The Tax Identification Number for the property is 095-05-544.

6. **A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Lara Ramsey.
7. **A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Lara Ramsey.
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 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission judges that the Victor Shaw House possesses special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:
    1. The Victor Shaw House was the residence of Victor Shaw, who was mayor of the city of Charlotte from 1949 to 1953. Victor Shaw and family moved into the house at 2400 Mecklenburg Avenue in 1944, just a few years before Shaw became mayor, and lived there during his two terms of office.
    2. Shaw campaigned on a platform that stressed progress and development (appropriate themes for a booming post-war Charlotte), and his administration saw the completion of Independence Boulevard, construction of a new central administration building at Morris Field and, most importantly, plans for a new municipal auditorium and civic center.
    3. Within the first year of his first term, Shaw had secured a \$3 million bond to finance the Charlotte Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium. Shaw also assembled the Coliseum Committee, which was headed by J. B. Ivey Co. Vice-President David Ovens. With Shaw's backing, the Committee chose a site along the newly-completed Independence Boulevard, selecting A.G. Odell Associates

to design both buildings. Although the coliseum and auditorium would not be completed until two years after he left office, Victor Shaw was able during his administration to procure the money and the plans for the complex.

**b. Integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.**

The Commission contends that the architectural description prepared by Lara Ramsey demonstrates that the Victor Shaw House meets this criterion.

- 9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property that becomes a designated “historic landmark.” The current appraised value of the Victor Shaw House is \$671,300.00—\$318,800.00 for the building, \$352,400 for the land, and \$100.00 for additional features.

**Date of preparation of this report:** March 8, 2004

**Prepared by:** Lara Ramsey  
2436 North Albany Avenue, Apt. 1  
Chicago, IL 60647

## Statement of Significance



### Summary

The Victor Shaw House, constructed c.1928, is a property that possesses local historic significance as the home of Victor Shaw, mayor of the city of Charlotte from 1949 to 1953. When Shaw was sworn in as mayor in early 1949, the city was undergoing a period of rapid economic and physical expansion. Charlotte's government had been attempting in the years after World War II to deal with the city's ever-increasing demand for housing, infrastructure for new suburban neighborhoods, and an improved and expanded system of roads. In his two terms as mayor, Shaw helped to continue programs begun by his predecessor, H. Herbert Baxter, that were designed to address these issues. Shaw continued with plans to extend the newly-opened Independence Boulevard west and pushed forward with the construction of a new administration building at Morris Field. In addition to continuing the work begun by Baxter's administration, Shaw also developed several of his own programs, including a \$10,000 beautification project for Old Settlers' Cemetery.

By far the most important tasks undertaken during Victor Shaw's administration was funding and planning for the Charlotte Coliseum (now Cricket Arena) and Ovens Auditorium. Shaw had his sights on building a

municipal auditorium—a project that Herbert Baxter had tried and failed to get off the ground—from the first day of his campaign for mayor. Shaw appointed a special commission to oversee the selection of a design and site for the coliseum and auditorium, and succeeded in pushing through a \$3 million bond referendum to fund the construction of the complex. Although, due to a series of complications, the buildings were not completed until two years after Shaw had left office, his administration was credited with getting the ball rolling on the project.

During his two terms as mayor of Charlotte, Victor Shaw and his family called the brick Colonial Revival residence at 2400 Mecklenburg Avenue home. Located on a spacious lot in the Club Acres section of Plaza-Midwood, the house was constructed c. 1928 by Duke Power engineer James W. Knowlton. The simple but impressive house is typical of the types of houses built for upper class Charlotteans who were just beginning to move into the neighborhood in the 1920s and 1930s. With its sweeping, two-and-one-half-acre lot (one of the few not to be further subdivided into smaller plots), simple detailing, elaborate entrances and elegant public rooms for entertaining, the house was an ideal residence for Mayor Shaw, who owned the property from 1944 to 1954.

### **Historical Background Statement**

#### **Victor Shaw**

The years following World War II were filled with rapid economic and physical expansion in Charlotte and other cities across the United States. The challenges facing Charlotte's city government in the post-war era generally revolved around the ever-increasing demand for housing, and the emergence of the automobile as the dominant form of transportation within the city and across the country. The tasks of providing the infrastructure for the expanding neighborhoods and improving and adding to the system of roads within the city were complex, and for the first time, Charlotte's government began to address seriously how to control and direct the city's growth. In addition to dealing with housing and transportation problems, city officials were also pushing for a number of civic projects aimed to build Charlotte's reputation as a modern urban center.

When Victor Shaw was inaugurated as mayor of Charlotte in April 1949, all of these issues were at the forefront of the city's politics. Independence Boulevard, begun under the administration of Shaw's predecessor Herbert Baxter, was partially opened in the same month the new mayor took



office.<sup>[1]</sup> The city had just completed a ten-square-mile annexation in January (the first in a line of annexations that would push the limits of the city ever outward and sharply increase its population). The Charlotte Planning Board's recently completed *Master Plan Outline for Charlotte, North Carolina*, the second master plan of the city's history, recommended extending municipal water and sewer lines into the newly annexed area, as well as widening and extending the city's roads and creating more parking options. The plan also called for a series of civic projects that "aimed at enhancing the current growth" of the city, including a new administration building at Morris Field (Douglas Airport) and a civic auditorium.<sup>[2]</sup>

Victor Shaw had never held an elected office before becoming Charlotte's mayor. Although a relative newcomer to the city's political arena, Shaw was no stranger to the city itself, or to its people. A third generation Charlottean, Shaw was born January 20, 1888, in a small house on East 7<sup>th</sup> Street. His grandfather, Robert Shaw, moved to Charlotte from New Jersey and worked as a tanner and saddler. Robert's son William was born in the city in 1848, and joined the Charlotte Artillery Company at the beginning of the Civil War, at the tender age of 13.<sup>[3]</sup> In 1869, William married Mary Elizabeth Presson, and the couple had ten children, one of which was Victor Shaw.<sup>[4]</sup>

Following in the family tradition, William Shaw opened his own tannery just north of where Brookshire Boulevard rises over North Tryon Street today. Victor grew up helping his father shape the leather for saddles and horse collars. He attended Major Baird's School for boys on N. College Street through the sixth grade, and received no further formal education.<sup>[5]</sup> During World War I, Shaw served as an Air Corps lieutenant in France; by the time he returned to Charlotte, his father had switched from selling saddles for horses to selling tires for automobiles. Victor settled into working at Shaw Tire, then located at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and College Streets, helping to build the company into one of the largest tire distributors in the city.<sup>[6]</sup> In 1920, Shaw married Elsie Aileene Babbitt, a young nurse from Franklinville, N.Y. who had come to teach nursing at Presbyterian Hospital. The couple had two children, Victor, Jr. and Elsie Babbitt.<sup>[7]</sup>

Victor Shaw was not only a native to Charlotte and a successful businessman; he was also an active citizen within the city. Soon after he returned from World War I, Shaw became the second commander of Charlotte's American Legion Post 9. In 1938, he was appointed chairman of the Mecklenburg Civil Service Commission by State Supreme Court Justice William H. Bobbitt, who was resident judge of the county Superior Court at the time. Shaw held the

post for two years. Shaw was also an active member of several fraternal organizations in Charlotte.<sup>[8]</sup>

Even with his family history and business acumen, Shaw was a surprising opponent for veteran politician and three-term incumbent mayor Herbert H. Baxter. Shaw ran on a platform of continued progress for Charlotte—in a statement made at the beginning of his campaign, Shaw claimed that “the next two years will be of paramount importance to the advancement of Charlotte and the well-being of its citizenry,” and stressed that “our forward progress must be maintained.”<sup>[9]</sup> This platform was not markedly different from Baxter’s; yet Shaw racked up over twice the number of votes cast for Baxter in the city’s primary. With Shaw as the only mayoral candidate on the municipal ballot, the official election was only a formality.<sup>[10]</sup>

The new mayor was an interesting character, known for his distinguished but slightly unusual manner of dress and his efficient manner of speaking. Shaw, in his early 60s during his term as mayor, struck a handsome figure, with his head of thick, wavy, white hair and immaculate suits. Dick Young, a journalist at the *CharlotteNews* and a longtime friend of Shaw’s, recalled “He looked like a million dollars, always.”<sup>[11]</sup> Shaw always wore custom-tailored suits with checked vests and brightly colored bow ties. He was also known to wear gray spats to the office every day.<sup>[12]</sup> Although generally gregarious and quite fond of telling anecdotes, Shaw was also known for the brevity of his speeches as mayor. His inaugural speech was, the *Charlotte News* noted “the shortest on record.”<sup>[13]</sup> Dick Young recalled “He wasn’t really much of a speaker when he became mayor, but . . . it wasn’t long before he became very effective—and people remembered him because he told good stories and sat down.”<sup>[14]</sup>

As mayor, Shaw continued or expanded upon many programs that had been set forth by Baxter’s administration. Most of these government projects were long-term and ongoing, and many would later be passed on to succeeding administrations. In February 1950, the full length of Independence Boulevard (from Monroe Road to East Morehead Street) was opened to traffic; within weeks of the opening of this new cross-town boulevard, surveys began on possible routes for a southwest extension that would link up to Wilkinson Boulevard.<sup>[15]</sup> The building of Independence was just the biggest and most impressive of a number of programs—large and small—designed to improve Charlotte’s system of roads. During Shaw’s time as mayor, the city put a significant amount of money toward paving and repaving streets, putting in sidewalks, increasing parking, and widening some existing roads.<sup>[16]</sup> Another issue at the top of the City Council’s list was extending water and sewer lines into the newly-annexed portions of the city. Mayor Shaw also continued the

development of Morris Field, a former World War Two airfield, which had been returned to the city through Baxter's efforts.<sup>[17]</sup> During Shaw's tenure as mayor, construction of a new administration building for the fledgling airport was begun.

In addition to these grander schemes, Mayor Shaw also had a few smaller pet projects that he worked—with varying degrees of success—to realize. Shaw took a personal interest in the Old Settlers' Cemetery downtown, which was beginning to show signs of neglect. As Dr. Dan Morrill recounts in the Survey and Research Report for the property, "The first order of business was to determine ownership of the property, which was discovered to be that of the city. Mayor Shaw then persuaded the City Council to spend over \$10,000 to do landscaping, lay cement walkways, install electric lights and put in a fountain. The beautification project was completed in early 1953 . . ."<sup>[18]</sup> Shaw, who had a fascination with elephants, also tried to convince the council of the pressing need for a municipal zoo. Shaw was never able to sway the council on the idea, and the closest the mayor got to getting his elephant was the elephant's ear that an amused citizen sent to him. The mayor kept the ear in his office at City Hall for the rest of his term.<sup>[19]</sup>

### The Charlotte Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium



By far the most important tasks undertaken by Victor Shaw during his time as mayor were the funding and planning of the Charlotte Coliseum (now Cricket Arena) and Ovens Auditorium. In a way, this project was also a continuation of the Baxter administration. In 1947, a proposal for a municipal auditorium and coliseum was put before the City Council, and a \$2.5 million bond referendum was set for October 28th. Baxter argued that the construction of these buildings was essential for the future growth of Charlotte. The mayor had very specific ideas about how the project should play out. He asserted that two buildings—one for sports events, the other for cultural events—were necessary, and that a single multi-purpose structure would prove inadequate. Baxter was also convinced that the buildings should be constructed as a complex, on a site that would provide parking and easy access.<sup>[20]</sup> Unfortunately, Baxter had no plans or even a location to show to the citizens of Charlotte before the referendum. There seemed to be too much uncertainty surrounding the project, and the bond issue was defeated.

Almost two years later, Victor Shaw picked up the call for a municipal auditorium and coliseum during his campaign for mayor. In fact, the project became one of the most important issues on his platform. An article in the April 4, 1949, edition of the *Charlotte Observer* listed answers of the three mayoral candidates to questions about issues ranging from rent control to slum clearance. Shaw replied only to the questions concerning a bond referendum for a municipal auditorium.<sup>[21]</sup> Almost immediately after his inauguration, Shaw began weighing the options for the auditorium. Initially, Shaw—a longtime Shriner—entered into negotiations with the organization to place a 3500-seat auditorium within its Oasis Temple on South Tryon Street. The plan was fraught with problems—the city would have to provide elevators, utilities and maintenance of the entire building, and would be forced to hand over title to the building if they failed to do so. When the story broke in September 1949, many Charlotteans were justifiably upset, and Shaw quickly abandoned the plan.<sup>[22]</sup>

Shaw switched tactics, asking the City Council to appoint a special commission to select an appropriate location, as well as the architect and designs for the buildings. Shaw appointed David Ovens, Vice-President and General manager of J. B. Ivey Co. and President of the Charlotte Community Concert Association, to head the committee. The group went to work searching for an appropriate location and designer for the complex. In May 1950, the committee selected A.G. Odell and Associates to design the two buildings.<sup>[23]</sup> With mayor Shaw's support, the committee finally found an ideal parcel with 1000 feet of frontage along the newly-constructed Independence

Boulevard. The lot was large enough for both buildings, with room left over for parking. Its position along the eastern end of Independence also assured that traffic congestion would not be a problem.<sup>[24]</sup>

With both an architect and a location, the City Council set a \$3 million bond referendum (approximately \$2.5 million of which would go toward building the coliseum and auditorium) for October 14th. This time the bond issue passed; and the council moved forward, purchasing the parcel on Independence and appointing a Coliseum Authority to oversee the construction and (eventual) running of the facilities.<sup>[25]</sup> Unfortunately, the project soon encountered several snags, including several delays in construction due to steel shortages and a subsequent federal ban on amusement buildings. By the time these restrictions were lifted, the City Council discovered that estimates for the project far exceeded the amount of money available from the first bond referendum. By the time a second bond for \$1 million was proposed for June 1953, Victor Shaw had left office.<sup>[26]</sup> Construction began soon after the second bond passed, and the complex opened to the public in 1955.

Although the Charlotte Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium were completed a full two years after Victor Shaw's term as mayor ended, plans for the complex solidified under his administration. The \$3 million bond passed during Shaw's first term ensured that the project would eventually be realized. The selection of a site along Independence Boulevard, on the outskirts of the city, helped to draw business and people out of the center city along the new cross-town road, and the designs developed by A.G. Odell would help to put Charlotte on the map as a truly modern city. The planning of the coliseum and auditorium established Victor Shaw as a progressive leader of post-war Charlotte.

### **The Victor Shaw House**

During his two terms as mayor, Victor Shaw and his family called the two-story Georgian Revival house at 2400 Mecklenburg Avenue home. The house stands in the Club Acres section of Plaza-Midwood, near the Charlotte Country Club. Organized by a group of prominent Charlotte businessmen in 1910, the country club was the city's first golf course. Hoping to capitalize on the new club, F. M. Laxton (one of the shareholders in the country club), developer Paul Chatham, banker Word Wood, and Duke Executive W. S. Lee formed the Mecklenburg Realty Company and began laying out Club acres, a new subdivision just to the west of the golf course.<sup>[27]</sup> Mecklenburg, Matheson, and Belvedere Avenues were quickly platted within the subdivision, but buyers were few and far between. The reasons for Club Acres's glacial development were shared by the other subdivisions that made up Plaza-

Midwood—the neighborhood was far from downtown; it was further hemmed in by the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, which ran at grade along Central Avenue and caused frequent delays for commuters; and its small trolley line was separate from the Southern Public Utilities Company line that ran downtown, requiring passengers to transfer between the two lines in order to get to and from the center city.<sup>[28]</sup>

In order to attract buyers, the Mecklenburg Realty Company was forced in 1919 to rescind the original deed restriction for the subdivision that stipulated lots were to be no smaller than one acre—developers in other Plaza-Midwood subdivisions used similar measure to help sell lots.<sup>[29]</sup>

With the arrival of the automobile, the problems of distance and trolley lines that had plagued Club Acres and the rest of Plaza-Midwood in their early years became largely irrelevant. During the 1920s and 30s, the neighborhood began to attract members of the upper class, who could afford the latest form of transportation. As historian Thomas Hanchett observes in his history of Plaza-Midwood,

In the late 1920s and 1930s Mecklenburg and Belvedere avenues belatedly began to attract members of the city's leadership circle. Among them were cotton processor A. L. Boyle who built a Colonial Revival house designed by William Peeps at 2415 Mecklenburg (1928), Carolina Trust Company vice-president Benjamin J. Smith at 2448 Mecklenburg (1928), lawyer Robert E. Wellons at 2300 Mecklenburg (1932), WBT radio program director Charles Crutchfield at 2331 Mecklenburg (1943), and real estate leader William Tate at 2826 Belvedere (1939).<sup>[30]</sup>

The Victor Shaw House was constructed on lot #26, located at the intersection of Matheson and Mecklenburg Avenues and one of the original parcels offered by Mecklenburg Realty Company. George Stephens, an early developer of Myers Park, and his wife Sophie, originally owned the lot. In 1928, the lot was sold to James W. Knowlton, a Duke Power engineer, and his wife Marie Wheeler.<sup>[31]</sup> The Knowltons were quite familiar with the neighborhood—the family had been living just down the street at 2320 Mecklenburg Avenue. Their modest frame house had been built in 1918, and was among the first houses in the subdivision.<sup>[32]</sup> According to a long-time resident of Club Acres, Knowlton hired the J.A. Jones Construction Company to build the two-story, brick, Colonial Revival residence.<sup>[33]</sup>

Victor Shaw purchased the house from James Knowlton in August 1944.<sup>[34]</sup> The stately residence, set back far from the street on its

sprawling lot, was an ideal home for Shaw, his wife, and their two children. The family stayed in the home through Shaw's two mayoral terms, and sold the house to real estate attorney Robert A. Wellons and his wife in 1954, one year after Shaw left office. The house had three subsequent owners before being sold to its current owner, Annette Mauney Randall (and her husband John Dainotto) in early 1985.<sup>[35]</sup>

## **Physical Description**

### **Site Description**

The Victor Shaw House is located at 2400 Mecklenburg Avenue in the Plaza-Midwood Neighborhood of Charlotte. The house sits on a 2.588-acre lot on the south side of Mecklenburg Avenue, facing north onto the street. Set approximately in the middle of the lot, the house is reached by a gravel drive that runs along the western side of the property, curving around to the rear double garage. The parcel is relatively flat, with a slight downward slope running southwest along the east edge of the back yard. A small fishpond is located in the backyard, on the eastern edge of the property near the house. The pond dates back to the construction of the house.

### **Architectural Description**

Colonial Revival residences abound in Plaza-Midwood and other Charlotte neighborhoods—the style was popular across the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—and the Victor Shaw house is a typical example of the kinds of Colonial Revival houses built in the 1920s and 30s. The house consists of a side-gable main building flanked by two smaller, side-gable wings. The main section of the house is two stories tall and approximately three bays wide. The one-story wing on the west side of this center section is approximately one bay wide, while the corresponding east wing is one-and-one-half stories tall and approximately two bays wide. These east and west sections are roughly one bay deep, and the center section of the house is approximately two bays deep. The resulting footprint for the entire structure is narrow and irregular. To the west of the house sits a one-and-one-half story garage. The front-gable structure is clad in the same brick used on the house, and is joined to it by a one-story connector sheathed in siding. Two paneled garage doors take up most of the south wall of the garage; a small apartment occupies the attic space above.

The exterior walls and some load-bearing interior walls of the house are constructed of 17" structural clay tiles. These tiles, while commonly used in

early twentieth century commercial construction, are rarely found in Charlotte's residences. The exterior of the house is clad in red face brick laid in common bond, with a simple soldier stringcourse running along the north and south elevations of the main section and east wing of the house. Grey slate tiles cover the roof of the house and the garage. A corbelled brick chimney rises from the east gable of the main section of the house, matched by a false chimney on the west gable to give an appearance of symmetry. On the façade (north elevation) of the main section of the house, a simple cornice ornamented with a row of dentils runs underneath the roofline.

Windows in a variety of shapes and sizes regularly punctuate the exterior elevations of the house. The majority are six-over-six, double hung windows covered with exterior storms. Most of these windows are unadorned, with only simple brick soldier-courses serving as decorative lintels. On the main house, the windows are regularly and symmetrically placed along the first and second floors of the north and south elevations; the windows on the first floor of the east and west wings are surrounded with large, rounded arches. The walls between the arch and the window are covered with stucco. These rounded arch surrounds are an unusual feature, and one not seen on most Colonial Revival designs. The first floor window on the north elevation of the garage and the large second-floor window on the south elevation of the main house are more conventional examples of rounded arch windows. The attic levels on the east and west elevations of the main house are marked with quarter-circle windows on each side of the chimneys, and half-circle, louvered windows are located under the gables of the east and west wings. Gabled dormer windows pierce the roofline on the north and south elevations of the west wing, the north elevation of the east wing, and the center bay of the center section's south elevation.

Large, elaborately ornamented entrances dominate both the north (façade) and south elevations of the main house. Each entrance is centered along the first floor of the elevation. The entrance on the façade is slightly more ornate, with its swan's neck pediment and rounded finial. Small wood pendants accent the dentiled cornice just below the pediment. Two fluted pilasters flank the doorway, rising to simply molded columns. The paneled wood door is protected by a simple screen door, and topped with a leaded glass transom. Two glass lanterns sit on either side of the entrance. The south elevation entrance features a fan light with radiating panes set under a basket weave arch. The doorway is centered underneath the fanlight, and has the same paneled wood door seen on the façade entrance. Flanking the doorway are sidelights, each with four glass panes.



Both the north and south entrances open into the main stair hall of the house. The half-turn staircase dominated the narrow room, with the first run of the stair hugging the east wall. The curtail step at the base of the staircase supports the curved newel post. Below the simple wood handrail, twisted wrought iron balusters alternate with smooth iron rails marked with a center diamond. A chair rail located approximately three feet from floor runs along the walls of the room, and wide dentil moldings mark the meeting of walls and ceiling. A small arched doorway located at the north end of the west wall of the stair hall leads through a short hall and into a small, unadorned breakfast room. Passing through a doorway on the west wall of the breakfast room, one enters into the kitchen. Located in the small west wing of the house, the kitchen features a secondary staircase that runs behind the north wall of the room. A simple wood door separates the stairwell from the kitchen. A doorway on the south wall of the breakfast room leads into the dining room, which can also be reached through a wide entrance located at the south end of the stair hall's west wall. The room features the same chair rail and dentil molding seen in the hall. Wide oak boards cover the floor of the dining room.

To the east of the stair hall is the large parlor, which stretches from the front (north) to back (south) wall of the main house. Again, the oak flooring, dentil molding, and chair rail are present in the room, and simple rectangular panels outlined with simple molding mark the walls above the chair rail. One of the two fireplaces in the house is centered along the east wall of the room; a wood mantel, simply decorated with low-relief festoons and urns, surrounds the firebox. At the north end of this same wall, a doorway leads into a small study, which takes up the east wing of the house. The second fireplace is located in the southwest corner of this room.

The second run of the main staircase leads to the second floor of the house. A carpeted center hallway runs east to west along center of this floor, with a series of bedrooms leading off from the hall. The east end of the floor, which takes up the upper story of the east wing, houses the master bedroom and bathroom. A second bedroom and bathroom are located on the north side of the hall, in the center of the main house. Another bedroom is across the hall, on the south side of the house. The door to the kitchen staircase is located at the west end of the hall, along its north wall. The hallway terminates at the west side of the house with a small room located in the attic of the east wing. These rooms generally lack the elaborate detailing seen in the public rooms on the first floor of the house.

Another flight of stairs leads up to the expansive attic space of the main portion of the house. A wood door pierced by fifteen rectangular glass panes

leads into the unfinished attic space. From this space, one can see the structural clay tiles that make up the exterior walls of the house.

The Shaw House has changed only slightly since its construction in the early 1920s. The most substantial alteration to the house occurred in 1960, when Joseph Wright (its third owner) added onto the rear of the east wing in order to extend the study (referred to as a “den” in the building permit) and make room for the master bathroom.<sup>[36]</sup> A one-story, screened in porch was also added to the back of the east wing. A set of sliding glass doors was installed along the south wall of the master bedroom to provide access to the flat roof of the porch. Despite these changes, the Victor Shaw House has retained its architectural integrity, and appears much as it did over 80 years ago.

---

<sup>[1]</sup> Dr. Dan Morrill, “The Road that Split Charlotte,” *Parade*, 2 May 1982, p. 19.

<sup>[2]</sup> Sherry Joines Wyatt and Sarah Woodard, *Final Report: Post World War II Survey*.

<sup>[3]</sup> Dr. Annette Randall, “A Brief Family History of Victor Bryson Shaw (b. January 20, 1888/d. August 11, 1966), Mayor of Charlotte, 1949-1953,” (unpublished paper), 1.

<sup>[4]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[5]</sup> “Colorful Victor Shaw, Ex-Mayor, Dies at 77,” *Charlotte Observer*, 12 August 1966.

<sup>[6]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[7]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[8]</sup> “Ex-Mayor Shaw Dies Here at 78,” *Charlotte News*, 12 August 1966 (no page number—given to author by Dr. Annette Randall).

<sup>[9]</sup> Ibid.

[10] Legette Blythe, "Shaw Wins Mayor's Race," *Charlotte Observer*, 26 April 1949, section 1 page 1.

[11] *Charlotte News*, 12 August 1966.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Dick Young, "New Administration Takes Helm at City Hall," *Charlotte News*, 9 May 1949 (no page number—given to author by Dr. Annette Randall).

[14] *Charlotte News*, 12 August 1966.

[15] "Independence Boulevard Now Officially Opened," *Charlotte Observer*, 2 February 1950, Section 2/Page 1.

[16] Hal Tribble, "City to Rush \$3 Million Bond Election Plans," *Charlotte Observer*, 25 May 1950, Section 2/Page 1.

[17] "City Officials Work to Speed \$500,000 Job," *Charlotte Observer*, 4 February 1950, Section 2/Page 1.

[18] Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Survey and Research Report on Old Settlers' Cemetery," prepared 3 January 1984.

[19] *Charlotte Observer*, 12 August 1966.

[20] Paula M. Stathakis, "The Ovens Auditorium and Charlotte Coliseum (Original): Historical Essay," (part of the Survey and Research Report on Ovens Auditorium and Charlotte Coliseum, prepared 30 July 1990).

[21] "Candidates Give Mayoral Views," *Charlotte Observer*, 9 April 1949, Section 2/Page 1.

[22] Stathakis.

[23] Hal Tribble, "Contract will be Submitted to Governing Heads Today," *Charlotte Observer* 12 May 1950 (no page number—taken from clipping file at Special Collections, J. Murray Atkins Library).

[24] Stathakis.

[\[25\]](#) Ibid.

[\[26\]](#) Ibid.

[\[27\]](#) Thomas W. Hanchett, "Plaza-Midwood."

[\[28\]](#) Ibid.

[\[29\]](#) Ibid.

[\[30\]](#) Ibid

[\[31\]](#) Mecklenburg County Deed Book 687, Page 186.

[\[32\]](#) Hanchett

[\[33\]](#) Notes by Dr. Annette Randall on conversations with H. G. Glasgow.

[\[34\]](#) Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1129, Page 177.

[\[35\]](#) Mecklenburg County Deed Book 4947, Page 688.

[\[36\]](#) Charlotte Building Permit for 2400 Mecklenburg Avenue, 17 August 1960.

## Victor Shaw House, 1928



Front elevation - the two-bay-wide addition on the east side of the house was added in 1960



**Detail of front entrance**



**Original light fixtures**



**Rear elevation**





**The landscaping of the house is significant, and has retained features such as this fishpond**



**The interior of the house has retained most of the original architectural features**



**Bath with original fixtures**



**Original woodwork has been preserved**