

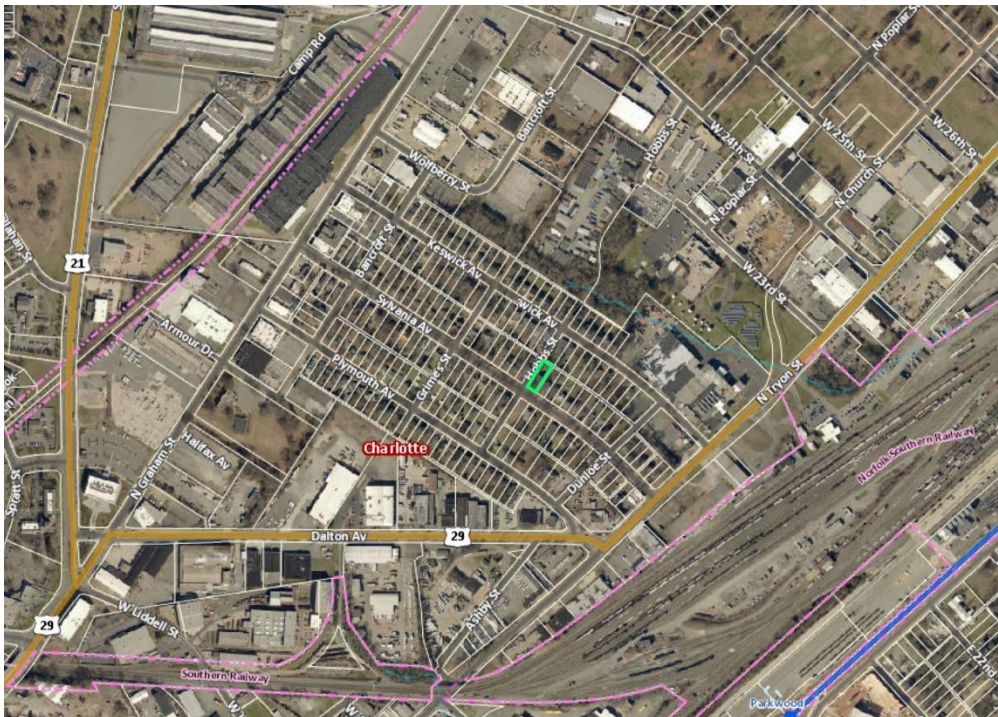
Designation Report on the Butler House



1. **Name and location of property:** The property known as the Butler House is located at 240 Sylvania Avenue, Charlotte, North Carolina.
2. **Name, address, and telephone number of the current owner of the property:**

E-FIX HOUSING SOLUTIONS LLC
PO BOX 35601
CHARLOTTE NC 28235
3. **Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.

4. A map depicting the location of the property:



5. **Current Tax Parcel Reference and Deed to the property:** The tax parcel number is 07910501. The most recent deed to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 29160, Page 302. UTM coordinates are 515646.59 E and 3899888.93 N.
6. **A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Susan V. Mayer.
7. **A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description prepared by Susan V. Mayer.
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.**

Special significance in terms of its history, architecture and/or cultural importance:

- 1) The Butler House is one of the best and most substantial extant examples of the Craftsman bungalow in the Lockwood neighborhood, originally developed as Locke Wood in 1915.
- 2) The Butler House is part of the second wave of development in the Lockwood neighborhood, which was initiated when the Ford Motor Company announced plans for a plant nearby on Statesville Avenue.
- 3) The Butler House is representative of the history of the Lockwood neighborhood, an early twentieth-century north Charlotte development impacted by 1930s redlining policies that slowly shifted demographically from a majority-white to a majority-black neighborhood following Urban Renewal in the 1960s and 1970s.
- 4) The Butler House is a good example of a late period Craftsman-style bungalow built in Charlotte during the 1920s. The Butler House has maintained its integrity over the years despite alterations due to being converted to a duplex and back to a single-family home, changes which mirror those of the Lockwood neighborhood over the years.

Integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:

- 1) Location: The Butler House retains a high quality of integrity in reference to its location, as the house has remained at its original site of construction.
- 2) Design: The Butler House retains a good amount of its design integrity. The house has been modified over the years dating back to the 1940s, when the house was first converted to a duplex. The most recent modification occurred in

2015, when the current owner restored the house to a single-family dwelling and finished the upstairs portion. These changes are reflective of the history of the Lockwood neighborhood, which had many homes converted from single-family to multi-family dwellings and from owner-occupied to rental properties.

- 3) **Setting:** The Butler House is located at the corner of Sylvania Avenue and Hobbs Street in Lockwood, the location where it was constructed in 1925. Due to the neighborhood's location on the north side of uptown, it was considered less desirable than its contemporaries on the southern and eastern sides. However, Lockwood's historic infrastructure and collection of architectural styles and periods of construction are better intact. Thus, the Butler House retains a high quality of integrity in references to its setting.
- 4) **Workmanship:** The Butler House was built in 1925 and retains elements of the Craftsman Bungalow style in which it was constructed. This is most evident on the exterior, as indicated by the gabled engaged front porch, grouped mixed-configuration multi-light windows, and decorative eave brackets.
- 5) **Materials:** The Butler House retains a high degree of exterior material integrity and much of its interior material integrity. Retained exterior material elements include the wood siding, original windows, and brick foundations. Features which have been changed include the front gable, where wood siding was replaced with cedar shake shingles, and the single window has been augmented with smaller flanking windows original to the house. The original brick porch columns, removed due to poor condition, have been replaced with tapered wood columns set up brick piers evocative of the original columns. On the interior, the original wood floors, living room mantle, and doors have also been retained, while another fireplace in a bedroom has been removed. Despite these changes, the Butler House remains a good example of the Craftsman Bungalow in the Lockwood neighborhood.
- 6) **Feeling:** The Butler House retains a high degree of historic feeling of a 1920s Bungalow. Its neighborhood setting has changed little in density, with single-family and duplexes immediately surrounding the house.
- 7) **Association:** The Butler House does not claim historic relevance based on its association with Arthur C. Butler, master mechanic at the Ford Manufacturing Plant, who built the house, though his story is interesting. However, the Butler House was part of the second wave of development in Lockwood, which occurred around the construction of the nearby Ford plant in the mid-1920s.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:

- 10. Portion of the Property Recommended for Designation:** The interior and exterior of the house and the property associated with the tax parcel are recommended for historic designation.

Date of preparation of this report: September 11, 2019 **(revised 1-15-2020, 6-8-2020)**

Prepared by: Susan V. Mayer, SVM Historical Consulting

Abstract

The Butler House is one of the best and most substantial extant examples of the Craftsman bungalow in the Lockwood neighborhood, originally developed as Locke Wood in 1915. As part of the second wave of development in the Lockwood neighborhood, which was initiated when the Ford Motor Company announced in the early 1920s plans for a plant nearby on Statesville Avenue, the Butler House is representative of the history of the Lockwood neighborhood, an early twentieth-century north Charlotte development impacted by 1930s redlining policies that slowly shifted demographically from a majority-white to a majority-black neighborhood following Urban Renewal in the 1960s and 1970s. The Butler House is a good example of a late-period Craftsman-style bungalow built in Charlotte during the 1920s and has maintained its integrity over the years despite alterations due to being converted to a duplex and back to a single-family home, changes which mirror those of the Lockwood neighborhood over the years.

Architectural Context of the Butler House



Figure 1 A selection of extant Craftsman-style houses in Lockwood on Sylvania Avenue. From top left clockwise: 221 Sylvania (1924), 222 Sylvania (1920), 201 Sylvania (1911), and 309 Sylvania (1926).

At the time of Lockwood's development in the mid-1910s, the Craftsman style of architecture was a popular choice of middle-class homeowners seeking more modern aesthetics. The architecture firm of Greene and Greene in Pasadena, California, was best known for honing and popularizing the style, which vigorously swept across the country through extensive publicity and copycat plan books. Craftsman bungalows were found in many Charlotte neighborhoods predating Lockwood, including Dilworth, Elizabeth, and Chatham Estates (now part of Plaza Midwood).



Figure 2 Date of construction of houses along Sylvania Avenue. A majority of the residences constructed after World War II were multi-family properties.

But by time of the construction of the Butler House in 1925, the Craftsman style was beginning to fade in favor of Colonial Revival. While this more formal style of architecture had emerged in the late 1800s as a favorable residential architectural form, its smaller more casual iteration did not become so widespread until around 1910. After this date through around 1930, around 40 percent of homes built were Colonial Revival, trickling down from large mansions in Myers Park to middle class neighborhoods like Lockwood. Of the houses built along Sylvania Avenue between 1924 and 1931, nine of the sixteen were

Craftsmen while six were Colonial Revival; however, all extant houses on Sylvania Avenue built before 1924 are Craftsmen-style residences.¹

After the Great Depression and World War II, in which home building in Charlotte sharply declined, Colonial Revival was replaced by small minimal traditional houses. Single-family homes were typically 1,000 square feet in size, but were also built as duplexes and even quadplexes. This style of home filled the remaining unbuilt lots in Lockwood. Until around 2000, little new construction occurred along Sylvania Avenue. But with the reemergent popularity of the Craftsman style of architecture, and Lockwood's convenient location near Charlotte's downtown district, the neighborhood has found itself threatened with gentrification. Many of the smaller old homes have been demolished in favor of lot-filling neo-revival homes.



Figure 3 A Craftsman bungalow at 237 Sylvania Avenue (now 1618 Hobbs Street), across from the Butler House, was torn down and replaced with a minimalistic house of less quality than the extant structures. The Craftsman bungalows of Lockwood are in danger of either being completely torn down or renovated into much larger structures that destroy the original integrity of both the house as well as the context of the neighborhood of modest homes.

¹ Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 414.

Historical Essay

The story of the Butler House, located at 240 Sylvania Avenue in the Lockwood neighborhood just north of uptown Charlotte, is the story of its locality. Lockwood was developed in 1915 as a middle-class suburb of single-family homes. The Butler House is named for its first owner, Arthur C. Butler, a Charlotte native known for his mechanical skill and employed for nearly two decades as the master mechanic of the Ford Motor Company branch manufacturing plant. Lockwood slowly declined due to the impacts of redlining in the 1940s and Urban Renewal in the 1960s. By 2010 the neighborhood had been declared one of the twenty-five most dangerous in the nation. But the efforts of neighborhood activists, reflected in the salvaging and restoration of the Butler House, are working to restore Lockwood to its former glory while avoiding the gentrification pushing out lower-income residents from older urban neighborhoods.

The Butler House stands as a foremost example of the Craftsman-style homes built in during the later period of that style in the 1920s. Over its years of ownership, it served as both a single-family and multi-family home, having been converted to a duplex during the 1940s and again in the 1960s. The Butler House's evolution is reflective of that of Lockwood, a neighborhood that has swung on a pendulum of economic fortunes from lucrative to downtrodden and back toward prosperity.

Development of Lockwood

The history of the Lockwood neighborhood reaches back into the annals of Charlotte. "Squire" David Parks was one of Charlotte's wealthiest citizens when he died in 1873 at age 76. His grandson David Parks Hutchison (1853-1922) lived with his grandparents after the death of his mother, and Squire Parks sent him to college at

Davidson. Referred to in Parks's will as his "beloved grandson," Hutchinson inherited 250 acres of land north of the Southern Railway tracks. Parks also explicitly granted Hutchison authority to sell the "Brick House place" and the "Silas Orr tract" portions of the estate. The success of suburban growth around Charlotte starting with Dilworth in 1891 made the Parks land, located a short walk from the Square, a good candidate for development.²


In 1915 along with Charles F. Dalton (Hutchison's son-in-law), E. O. Anderson, and E. C. Griffith, Hutchison formed the Parks Land Company to develop 25 acres of land between the Salisbury road (North Tryon Street), the Derita road (North Graham Street), and the Statesville road (Statesville Avenue). Hutchison named the company in honor of his grandfather and its first neighborhood development for his grandmother Ann Locke Parks. The first mention of "Locke Wood" was in the *Charlotte News* in the May 12, 1915 issue. Initial plans called for over 100 lots with houses "up-to-date in conveniences and modern improvement."³ Lots became available for purchase on July 1, 1915.

² Mecklenburg County Will Book K, Pages 125-127.

³ "Parks Land Company Formed," *Charlotte News*, May 12, 1915.

“LOCKE WOOD”

Owned by Parks Land Company
FIFTEEN MINUTES WALK INDEPENDENCE SQUARE




“LOCKE WOOD” is, and is to be, a model real estate development.

“LOCKE WOOD” has distinctive features tending to make it a most desirable home section for people of moderate means.

“LOCKE WOOD” is elevated above the city; well drained and healthful.

“LOCKE WOOD” is provided with water, sewer, gas, electricity, sidewalks and trees in abundance.

Phone 877



The Parks Land Company wants to build a home for you in “LOCKE WOOD.”

We will build just the home you have wanted, complying with your ideas of arrangements and cost, or

We will sell you a lot Now at a large discount and build you a home anytime within one year.

Our terms for either a home or a lot are 10 per cent cash and 1 per cent monthly.

E. C. GRIFFITH, Agent **223 South Tryon St.**

Figure 4 *Charlotte News*, December 5, 1915.

The first advertisement for Lockwood ran in both the *Charlotte Observer* and the *Charlotte News* in the December 5, 1915 issue. E. C. Griffith, a partner in the Parks Land Company, was the selling agent. Lockwood was described as “a model real estate development” with “distinctive features tending to make it a most desirable home section for people of moderate means.”⁴ Sylvania Avenue was to be the great white way of Lockwood, a wide boulevard “splendidly lighted with electric lights.”⁵ Lots were initially purchased in small groups by builders who erected houses and sold these to homebuyers, a common practice at the time. R. L. Goode erected the first five houses in the neighborhood in early 1916. The Conrad Realty Company purchased two lots for \$750 each to construct two houses. Parks Land Company had a house built by S. L. Vaughan at a cost of \$4,200 in February 1917, and in May the company built two more houses on Sylvania Avenue at a

⁴ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, December 5, 1915; *Charlotte News*, December 5, 1915.

⁵ *Charlotte News*, February 21, 1916.

cost of \$2,600 each.⁶ While early lot sales were promising, Lockwood still had many vacant homesites. In an attempt to spur sales, on October 23, 1917, American Land Company of Greensboro auctioned 25 lots to the public. An advertisement that ran in the October 22, 1917 *Charlotte News* promoted the “World’s Original Twin Auctioneers,” the Penny Brothers, as conducting the sale. The agents also offered prizes, a band concert, and free transportation from the Square.⁷ A follow-up article noted that the event was “highly gratifying,” and by mid-November approximately \$15,000 in lots had been sold.⁸

FOR A LIMITED TIME WE ARE OFFERING
50 Choice Ready to Build Upon Lots in
LOCKWOOD
 “ONE MILE FROM THE SQUARE”

NO DOWN PAYMENT

I divide the purchase price into 48 monthly payments, in advance, making a total of four years in which to pay. You get a Warranty Deed when you buy the lot. If you have some cash we will allow 3 per cent discount for any amount applied on the lot, or 5 per cent discount for all cash. **FOUR YEARS IN WHICH TO PAY**

BE YOUR OWN SALESMAN

You will find each lot clearly staked at all four corners. With a red tag on front giving price, lot and block number. Take the red tag off the lot you want and bring to office.

Offers you this wonderful opportunity to own your own home in a beautiful residential section of Charlotte, and to earn the increase in value that is sure to come in this growing community. Lockwood is situated in the Northern part of the city, just beyond Fourth Ward, between North Graham Street Extension (or Hutchison Avenue) and North Tryon Street. Lockwood lots are fully improved with sanitary sewers, large water mains to furnish adequate fire protection, paved streets, sidewalks, electric lights and telephones. Keswick Avenue is paved and paid for—no assessments. Sylvania Avenue is being paved by the city.

THIS IS NOT AN AUCTION

COSBY-SAMONDS COMPANY
 REALTORS-SELLING AGENTS
 PARKS LAND COMPANY (Owners)
 SALESMEN—W. G. CONRAD, L. A. BROWN, A. H. KIRKS

6 N. Tryon St. Phone 4208

Figure 5 *Charlotte Observer*, October 5, 1924.

A second offering of 50 lots in Lockwood was made in 1924, since Ford Motor Company was constructing a new branch manufacturing facility nearby at the intersection of Statesville and Derita roads. Buyers were encouraged to “be your own salesman,” with each lot staked at the corners and a red tag at the front with the price, block, and lot

⁶ *Charlotte News*, February 21, 1916; *Charlotte News*, January 25, 1917; *Charlotte News*, February 20, 1917; *Charlotte News*, May 25, 1917.

⁷ *Charlotte News*, October 22, 1917.

⁸ “May Buy Lots in Locke-Wood,” *Charlotte News*, October 25, 1917; “Revival in Real Estate Trading,” *Charlotte Observer*, November 18, 1917.

number affixed. Simply take the tag to the sales office, and the lot was yours. The advertisement, which featured a map pointing a large black arrow at the nearby Ford plant, mentions that Keswick Avenue was paved and paid for, while Sylvania Avenue was being paved by the city.⁹ Many employees of the plant moved to Lockwood to be closer to their work, including the master mechanic at the plant, Arthur C. Butler.

Arthur C. Butler



Figure 6 Arthur C. Butler. "Rheims Cathedral Replica is Birthday Gift to Henry Ford," *Charlotte Observer*, July 30, 1921.

Arthur C. Butler was born October 2, 1862 in Charlotte, the son of Irish immigrant John T. Butler (1834-1890) and native Charlottean Mary Elizabeth Cruse Butler (1841-1923). His father arrived in Charlotte in 1855 and operated a watch and jewelry store near the Square. Butler, nicknamed "Bum" by his friends, apprenticed as a watchmaker in his father's shop. However, he was not interested in the trade, electing to pursue engineering instead.

For unknown reasons, John T. Butler was unhappy with his son's decisions. When he died in 1890, Butler received only \$5 from his father's estate with explicit instructions that "it is my will that he shall not receive any other benefit from any part of my estate, real or personal or of any nature." The estate was bequeathed to Butler's mother, some family in San Francisco, and St. Peter's Catholic Church, of which John was a devout member.¹⁰

Known for his mechanical skill, Butler spent his lifetime crafting various intricate machines as a hobby. In 1891 he built a typewriter in a day and a half using parts from

⁹ *Charlotte Observer*, October 5, 1924.

¹⁰ *Charlotte Observer*, December 16, 1890; "Mr. Butler's Will," *Charlotte News*, December 18, 1890, Mecklenburg County Will Book L, Pages 510-514.

other typewriters in his design. His machine, about which “experts say it is one of the most perfect they have ever seen,” was displayed at McAden’s drug store.¹¹ While Butler had chosen not to pursue watchmaking as a career, he did build clocks in his spare time. In 1921 Butler, who was employed at the Ford plant on Statesville Avenue, sent an intricate clock he had made in a replica of Reims Cathedral to an unknown recipient, later revealed

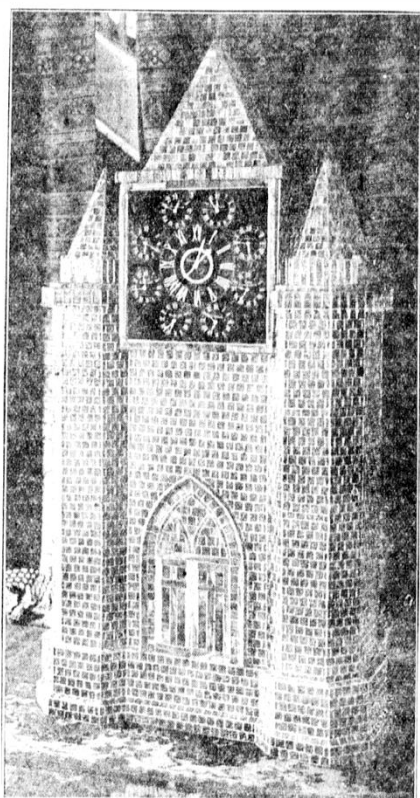


Figure 7 The clock model of Reims Cathedral built by Arthur C. Butler. Whereabouts of the clock are unknown, or if it even still exists. “Rheims Cathedral Replica is Birthday Gift to Henry Ford,” *Charlotte Observer*, July 30, 1921.

to be a birthday gift for his employer Henry Ford. The clock, which displayed the time in eight countries along with the United States, was 64 inches tall, 30 inches wide, and 12 inches tall and weighed 255 pounds. Butler had spent four and a half years handmaking nearly all the components, including cutting the 3,000 pieces of glass. His wife Cora said, “I’m glad it’s finished, for often he would not eat or sleep for hours in his interest in that clock.” When asked if he should patent the clock, Butler replied, “There’s probably not

another man in the world fool enough to undertake such a thing.”¹² However, Ford, who had a standing policy of not accepting gifts from

employees, declined the clock and returned it to Charlotte. The clock was displayed at the local Fordson Tractor Show and Exposition in September 1922.¹³ Butler later gave the

¹¹ “A Homemade Typewriter,” *Charlotte News*, April 21, 1891.

¹² “Wonderful Replica of Rheims Cathedral Made by Local Man,” *Charlotte Observer*, July 21, 1921.

¹³ *Charlotte Observer*, July 30, 1921; *Charlotte Observer*, September 22, 1935; *Charlotte News*, September 5, 1922.

clock as a gift to Clarence O. Kuester, Sr., who donated the clock to the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce for display in their offices. For his generous contribution, Butler was made a life member of the Chamber of Commerce.¹⁴

Butler crafted a career in engineering and mechanics, with his work taking him across the state. When the Thomson-Houston company opened the first electric light plant in the state in 1885, he was hired as the engineer in charge at its 116 East Fifth Street location.¹⁵ Butler was employed to reconstruct a damaged telephone exchange in Raleigh in 1891, and he supervised the installation of lighting in the New Hanover County Courthouse in Wilmington in 1892. The Kings Mountain Manufacturing Company hired him to repair an armature in 1895. From 1896 to around 1900, Butler oversaw installation and supervised the electrical works and powerhouse for the Southern Pines street railway.¹⁶ He returned to Charlotte after 1900, working for Carolina Plumbing and Heating Company and A. H. Washburn, who sold cotton mill machinery and supplies.¹⁷

Sometime between 1915 and 1916, Butler was hired at the new Ford Motor Company branch plant at 210 East Sixth Street as a mechanic, quickly rising to the position of master mechanic overseeing machinery acquisition and maintenance for the plant. Ford had opened its first Charlotte manufacturing facility at 222 North Tryon Street in 1914 and moved to larger facilities on East Sixth Street two years later. The popularity of the Model

¹⁴ "Clock Given Kuester Is Mounted at Office," *Charlotte Sunday Observer*, January 26, 1930; "Chamber Honors Butler," *Charlotte Observer*, February 7, 1932.

¹⁵ "First Light Plant in N. C. Under Axe," *Charlotte Observer*, August 29, 1937. The plant powered 25 arc lights downtown, but with the installation of new equipment the following year coverage expanded to three blocks near the Square at Trade and Tryon streets. General Electric purchased the plant (along with those in Raleigh and Asheville) in 1888. E. D. Latta bought the plant in 1890 and moved it to South Boulevard to power the horse-pulled streetcars.

¹⁶ "Subscribers to Telephone Exchange," *State Chronicle*, September 3, 1891; "Lighting the New Court House," *Wilmington Morning Star*, October 23, 1892; *Charlotte Observer*, May 12, 1895; *Charlotte Observer*, April 18, 1896; June 13, 1896; *Pinehurst Outlook*, March 18, 1898.

¹⁷ *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1904-1905), 215; (1905-1906), 210; (1910), 193; (1911), 144.

T led to the company needing even more manufacturing capacity. A new Albert Kahn-designed factory was constructed on the former Parks land at the intersection of the Statesville and Derita roads in 1924. Closely located to Lockwood, it was only logical for Arthur Butler and his wife Cora to live in the neighborhood. They had never owned their own home, either renting various houses and apartments around Charlotte or living with Butler's mother at 607 South Tryon Street.¹⁸

Butler first purchased property in Lockwood in 1923, acquiring two lots from H. B. Farrington for \$2,000.¹⁹ He and his wife Cora had also purchased Lot 11, Block 5 at the corner of Sylvania and Hanover avenues (today Hobbs Street) in March 1924 from Dr. J. C. Reid for \$1,500.²⁰ On December 15, 1924, a permit was issued by the city allowing the construction of a five-room frame house at an estimated cost of \$6,000 on the lot. The building contractor was W. C. Turner. The house was built with modern conveniences—wiring was installed throughout for electricity, and water connections were included.²¹ Arthur and Cora Butler obtained a mortgage from Raleigh Banking and Trust in March 1925, with \$120 due each April and October of each year through April 1941.²² The Butlers

¹⁸ *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1916), 149; Ryan Sumner, "Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant/Quartermaster Depot/Charlotte Army Missile Plant," Survey and Research Report, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, May 30, 2002.

¹⁹ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 506, Page 266; *Charlotte Observer*, October 7, 1923. This transaction was for 232 Sylvania Avenue (Lot 9, Block 5) and 236-238 Sylvania Avenue (Lot 10, Block 5). He sold 232 Sylvania Avenue to his stepdaughter Ila Elizabeth Harris Hansill and her husband James Franklin Hansill in 1926 for "Love and affection and one dollar" in 1926 then rebought the property from the Hansills in 1927 for \$6,500. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 617, Page 444; *Charlotte Observer*, February 8, 1927.

²⁰ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 525, Page 492; *Charlotte Observer*, March 12, 1924.

²¹ City of Charlotte Application for Building Permit No. 5723, December 15, 1924; "Building Permits Issued for \$25,000 of Dwellings," *Charlotte Observer*, December 16, 1924. W. C. Turner and his wife Adelene Turner only lived in Charlotte for a short time, as they were only listed in the 1925 Charlotte city directory. However, they purchased lots in Crescent Heights, the Westminster Place and Briarcliff Drive sections of Myers Park, Chantilly, and Parkston off Statesville Avenue, presumably to develop. They abruptly moved from Charlotte between 1925 and 1926, residing near Americus, Georgia.

²² Mecklenburg County Deed Book 567, Page 234.

were first listed as living at 242 Sylvania Avenue in the 1926 Charlotte city directory; the 1925 directory was published in February before the house was completed.²³

Application for Building Permit

Charlotte, N. C. 12-15 1924

TO THE BUILDING INSPECTOR
OF THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE:

The undersigned hereby make application to construct (or repair) a building to be located and finished by plans and specifications submitted herewith, and agree to conform to all the City Ordinances and laws of the State of North Carolina, regulating the construction of the same.

Name of Street Sylvania Avenue No. 242 Ward No. 11
 Owners Ch. Butler Address 1525 East 5th
 Architect P. P. Builders Address 601 Crescent Ave
 No. of Buildings One Dimension of ground plan 32 x 48
 Dimension of lot 55 x 180 No. of stories One No. rooms 5
 Material in walls and thickness Brick - 4" storm shed
 Building to be erected on solid or filled land? solid
 Material and thickness of foundations? Brick 48"
 Depth of foundation below surface? 1
 Height of building from sidewalk level? _____
 Openings in the walls? _____
 Chimneys None No. Flues _____
 Thickness of Chimneys? 4"
 Are they to be lined? yes
 Material in flue lining? fire clay
 Material in roof Wood Shingles
 Material in cornice wood
 If girders or sills to be used, to carry floor, state size 4 x 10
 Longest span of floor joists 14
 Size of floor joists 2 x 10 each floor
 What projections, if any, over sidewalk? none
 Building inside fire limits? no
 Number of fire escapes? _____
 State for what purpose to be used dwelling No. families one
 Is building to be wired for electric lights? yes Conduit _____ K. & T. _____
 Water connection? yes Surface closet? _____
 Estimated cost? 6000. Kind of heat radiant
 REMARKS: _____

Approved and granted
12-15 1924
 Inspector _____

NAME W. C. Turner
 ADDRESS 601 Crescent Ave,
 PERMIT NO. 5723
 PERMIT FEE 12 W. C. TURNER

Figure 8 Original building permit for the Butler House.

²³ Hill's *Charlotte City Directory* (1926), 218. The address of the house at this time was 234 Sylvania Avenue. The City of Charlotte Engineering Department revised the house numbering system in late 1930, and notices were sent to property owners in January 1931. "House Numbers Being Revised," *Charlotte Observer*, December 28, 1930. With the revision, the house was designated 242 Sylvania Avenue.

While their new house was located conveniently to Arthur Butler's work, the Butlers' residence in Lockwood was an unfortunate time for the couple. Uncertainty in the release of new automobile designs and intense national competition with General Motors led to the Ford plant closing between April 1927 and May 1928. Butler still listed himself as a master mechanic at the plant during this period, indicating that either he retained his position or optimistically hoped his job would resume.²⁴ Cora died at their home on August 22, 1929, from the effects of multiple sclerosis.²⁵ A few months later, the stock market crash led to decreased consumer buying power. Production at the Ford plant plummeted from over 40,000 units in 1929 to just under 6,000 in 1932, and the plant closed.²⁶ Butler defaulted on his mortgage, and Wachovia Bank and Trust auctioned the house on December 21, 1931. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company purchased the property with a bid of \$2,500 dollars. Presumably, the company rented the house to Butler, who continued to reside there until his death on August 8, 1936.²⁷ He was buried alongside Cora in Elmwood Cemetery. Though he had married more than once, he had no children.²⁸

The following month, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company rented the house to H. R. Fogg, who had just moved to Charlotte from Florence, South Carolina. Martin Helms, a

²⁴ "To Turn Out More Fords Here," *Charlotte Observer*, March 30, 1928; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1928), 199.

²⁵ Mrs. Cora Butler, Death Certificate, August 24, 1929, no. 35000009, Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds.

²⁶ Ryan L. Sumner, "Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant/Quartermaster Depot/Charlotte Army Missile Plant," Survey and Research Report, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, May 30, 2002.

²⁷ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 858, Page 77.

²⁸ Arthur C. Butler, Death Certificate, August 8, 1936, no. 49000218, Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds. Arthur first married L. L. Wilson in Charlotte on April 1, 1886, according to the *Charlotte Observer*, April 2, 1886. No further information has been found about her. His second marriage was reported in the *Fayetteville Observer* in June 1896, stating that "Mr. A. C. Butler...returned from Charlotte yesterday, bringing with him one of Charlotte's fair daughters as his bride." No name was given for his wife, though the 1900 U. S. Census lists a Cara Butler as his wife, born November 1869 with two children. I believe she was Cora Belle Myers Harris, born November 12, 1869 in Davidson County, North Carolina. A Guilford County marriage book lists Arthur and Cora as being married on May 2, 1908 in High Point, with witnesses being Cora's sister and brother-in-law Emma and James Bangle.

stockman at the Ford plant, and his wife Mamie lived in the house through at least 1939.²⁹ While it was logical that the company would rent the property, this action foreshadowed events which would impact the long-term status of Lockwood as a neighborhood of single-family residences.

The Impact of Redlining

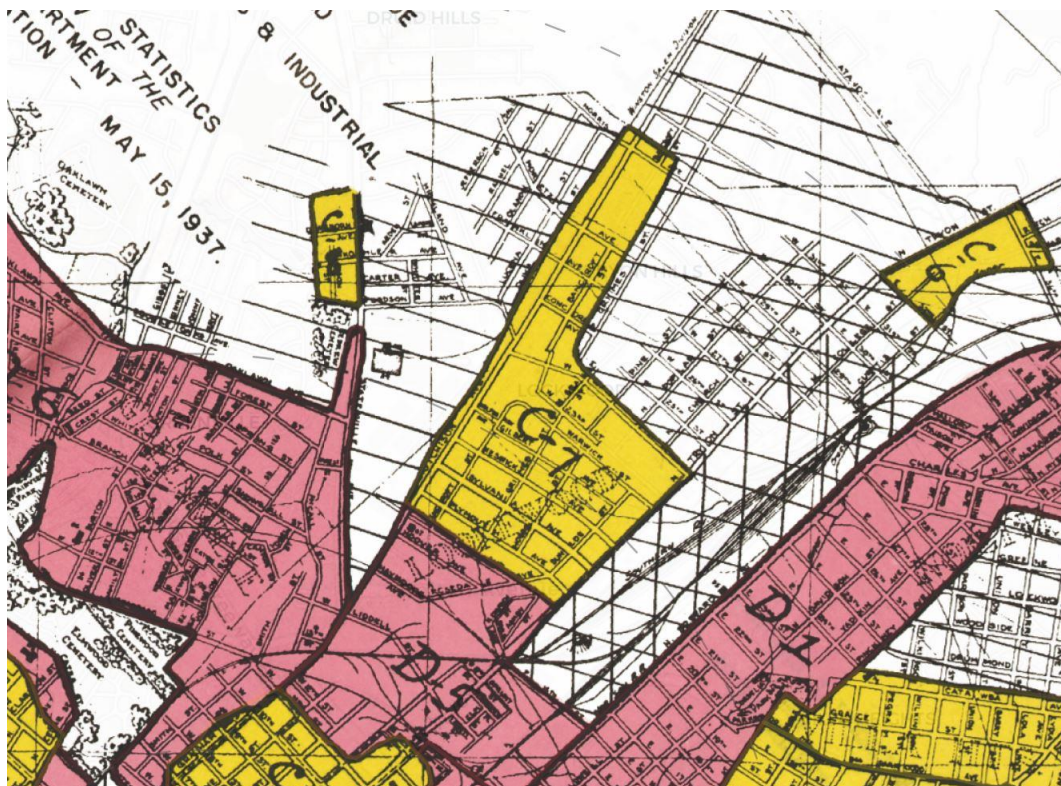


Figure 9 This excerpt from the 1937 HOLC map of Charlotte shows Lockwood and surrounding neighborhoods were rated poorly. *Charlotte's Inequality Mapping Tool (Beta)*, City of Charlotte Planning, Design, and Development Department, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=ecca6c2081634b85a3ea5ce37f136fe8>, accessed February 27, 2019.

In the years since Arthur and Cora had built the house on Sylvania Avenue, outside influences had impacted the growth and socioeconomic makeup of Lockwood. The early homeowners in the neighborhood were almost entirely married couples, with the husband the sole breadwinner typically working a blue-collar job with the Southern Railway or the Ford plant. Analysis of Sylvania Avenue residents in 1936, between the period when the

²⁹ *Charlotte Observer*, September 13, 1936; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1937), 296; (1938), 302.

Ford plant closed in 1932 and the facility reopened as a U. S. Army quartermaster depot in May 1941, depicts a decidedly blue-collar area. Most households were occupied by married couples with families, although a few multi-family properties had been constructed.

The practice of redlining indelibly altered the trajectory of many Charlotte neighborhoods. With the collapse of housing prices and a looming foreclosure crisis during the Great Depression, the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt created a series of agencies with the ultimate goal of stabilizing the housing market. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation was established in 1933 to issue bonds to buy and refinance residential mortgages and rate properties based on neighborhood characteristics. Appraisers sent by the HOLC arrived in Charlotte in 1937. After researching records and surveying the city, they produced a map which determined the likelihood of prospective homebuyers receiving loans for specific areas. A and B ratings were given to white upper- and middle-class neighborhoods, while C and D ratings typically went to white blue-collar and black neighborhoods. Lockwood was primarily occupied by a mix of middle- and working-class white households and closely bordered by industrial areas, earning the neighborhood a C "Definitely Declining" rating. Neighborhoods with similar socioeconomic profiles in Charlotte, such as Wilmore and Fourth Ward, received the same rating.³⁰

³⁰ Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 229-230.



Figure 10 Date of construction of houses along Sylvania Avenue. A majority of the residences constructed after World War II were multi-family properties.

The C rating had a noticeable effect on Lockwood, with many residential properties constructed after World War II being multi-family residences. Four-plexes were constructed in the 100-block of Sylvania Avenue, and a small garden apartment complex was added in the 300-block. Several duplexes popped up in long-vacant lots. Most single-family residences built during this period were small minimal-traditional houses around 1,000 square feet in size. The new construction sharply contrasted with the larger bungalows built in the 1920s and 1930s, and many of these older homes later would be converted into duplexes, including the Butler House.

After a few years as a rental, the Sylvania Avenue house was sold to Stacy Augustus and Margaret Maryellen Mock Grey in 1940. The Greys previously rented 205 Sylvania

Avenue and 509 Plymouth Avenue in Lockwood. Stacy Grey (1906-1973) operated Queen City Service Station at 424 North Church Street, and Margaret (1906-1976) tended their sons Donald (born 1934) and George (born 1936). Before moving into the house, Grey had repairs made and the walls repainted, since several years of renters and an absentee owner led to the house being a bit worse for wear.³¹

Donald Grey was around four years old when his family moved to the house at the corner of Sylvania Avenue and Hobbs Street. He remembered Lockwood being an ideal place to grow up and recalled many fond memories of both the house and the neighborhood. He noted that the back of the house originally had two screened porches on either corner. In the first few years they lived in the house, his father added a door exiting from the front bedroom to the wrap-around front porch and converted the right side of the house into a separate rental space. A kitchen was added to the back bedroom. Renters during this time included Reid W. and Evelyn Brown (1941-1943) and Tracy and Margaret Stafford (1944).³²

On the left side, the Grey family used the dining room, which at that time had French doors separating it from the living room, as their bedroom. The two boys slept on a trundle bed kept under their parents' bed. As the boys grew older, and Stacy Grey's father moved in with the family, the house was converted back to a single-family residence. Grey also excavated a basement area under the house for the installation of a gravity-flow heating system. The property included what Donald remembered as a nice big garage. Grey built a chicken coop with a concrete floor for his father to raise chickens. In the back yard, fruit

³¹ Susan V. Mayer Interview with Donald D. Grey, March 1, 2019.

³² Grey interview, March 1, 2019; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1941), 116; (1942), 124; (1943), 117; (1944), 705.

trees produced plums, apples, cherries, and pears. The Greys also purchased Donald a pony one year, and an enclosure was built in the back yard.³³

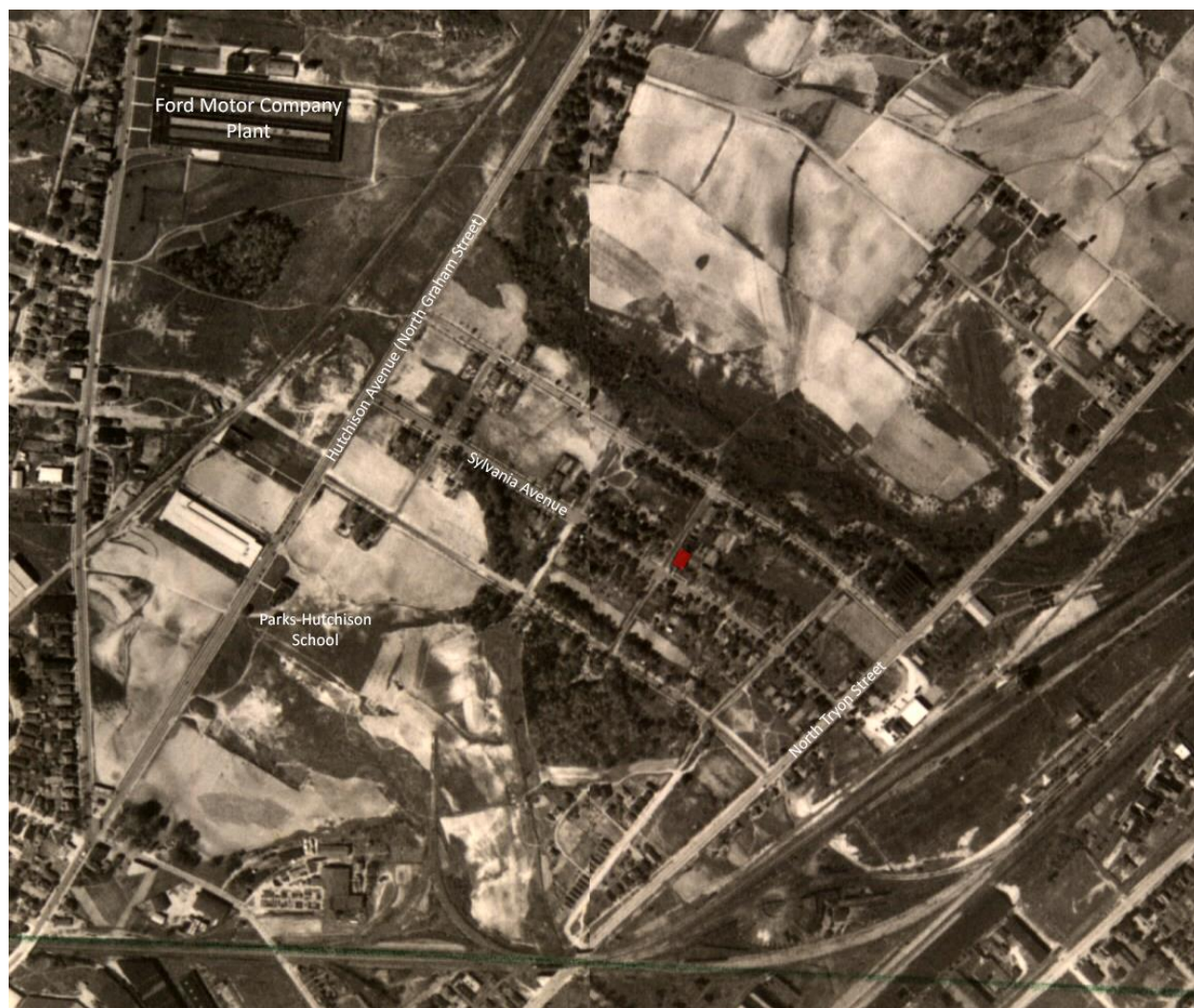


Figure 11 Lockwood in April 1938. The red square is the Butler House. The western portion of the neighborhood was undeveloped. U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1938 Flight of Mecklenburg County.

To Donald, Lockwood was a friendly middle-class neighborhood. When the family first moved into the house on Sylvania Avenue, he recalled a neighbor telling his mother, “Once you live in Lockwood, you’re always a Lockwooder.” The Grey boys walked to classes at Parks-Hutchison School nearby. Alleys ran through the back of the lots in Lockwood, and Donald recalled riding his bicycle or pony to North Tryon Street to pick up a

³³ Grey interview, March 1, 2019.

loaf of bread for his mother from a local store. Donald and his brother built model airplanes and, tying them with long pieces of string, pulled them along with their bicycles. Many lots, including the one next door to the Sylvania Avenue house, were empty, so neighborhood kids used them as extensions of their own yards. In addition, the north side of Keswick Avenue was wooded, providing another area for play and exploration. One year, Donald recalled, the Clyde Beatty Circus set up their tents on the land. After World War II, the land was cleared for the erection of prefabricated houses. Overall, Donald noted that the years he lived in Lockwood were a “happy childhood time.”³⁴

In 1948, Stacy Grey took a job with a friend in Fayetteville to be the service manager of a Tucker Corporation dealership. The Greys sold the house and moved to Fayetteville. However, the Tucker 48 was an epic failure, and the job never materialized. After a year, the Greys moved back to Charlotte and purchased a house at 1910 Thomas Avenue in Plaza Midwood. Donald regretted that his family was unable to move back to their Lockwood house.³⁵

The buyer of the house on Sylvania Avenue was Susan Clara Rivers Locke (1888-1956), a native of Chesterfield, South Carolina, who lived in Rock Hill. Her daughter Corrine Locke Smith and son-in-law Charles M. Smith lived in Lockwood at 222 Sylvania Avenue. Locke never lived in the house, according to the Charlotte city directory, but instead rented the property. Perhaps Charles and Corrine convinced Locke that the house would be a profitable enterprise. The first tenants were John Joseph and Evelyn

³⁴ Grey interview, March 1, 2019. The Clyde Beatty Circus visited Charlotte many times with shows held on the old circus grounds on Tremont Street. The circus ran afoul of nearby property owners in 1945, and the following year they held their performances near West 24th Street and Hutchison Avenue (now North Graham Street). “Clyde Beatty Circus Set for Charlotte Showings,” *Charlotte Observer*, October 7, 1946.

³⁵ Grey interview, March 1, 2019.

Fiumefreddo O'Hara, who rented the house from 1948 through 1950. After the O'Haras moved out, Locke advertised for new tenants in January 1951, with rent set for the unfurnished house at \$100 per month. But within three days, she listed the property for sale for \$9,000. James O. and Elizabeth L. Butler purchased the house on April 17, 1951.³⁶

The Butlers only lived in the house at Sylvania Avenue and Hobbs Street for about eighteen months. James Ohio Butler, Sr. (1895-1976) and Elizabeth Foster Butler (1900-1972), both natives of Oklahoma, moved to Charlotte around 1941. A captain in the U. S. Army, Butler was transferred presumably to the new Quartermaster Depot that had been established by the Army at the former Ford plant. He retired from service around the time they purchased the house and was self-employed as an independent contractor. The Butlers took out a mortgage of \$8,250 at 4% interest with Monumental Life Insurance Company, with monthly payments of \$61.05 for fifteen years, using James's G. I. Bill benefits. After a decade of residence in Lockwood, they sold the house to Albert C. Harrill on October 18, 1952, and moved to an apartment at 1009 West Sixth Street, next door to where they had rented before purchasing the Lockwood house.³⁷

Albert Cleveland Harrill (1910-1984) was a native of Rutherford County and local business owner known as "Tab." Soon after moving to Charlotte in 1949, he opened the Chick-R-Pig barbeque restaurant at the corner of East Morehead Street and Kings Drive, serving chicken, pork hams and shoulders, and spare ribs. In August 1952 Harrill married Swiss-born Martha "Marty" Weyermann. She joined him in operating the restaurant, preparing pies and other desserts. In 1955 he built a new location at 1025 Kings Drive and

³⁶ They were not related to Arthur C. Butler. *Charlotte Observer*, January 16, 1951; *Charlotte Observer*, January 19, 1951; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1491, Page 121; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1952), 158.

³⁷ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1589, Page 253; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1504, Page 17; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1953), 96.

renamed it Harrill's Bar-B-Q, which operated for another 17 years. The Harrills and their two children Albert William and Barbara moved into the house on Sylvania Avenue. Since he was also a veteran of World War II, having served in the Army Reserve Signal Corps, Harrill was able to assume the Butlers' veteran-friendly mortgage. The Harrill family resided on Sylvania Avenue through 1960, when they moved to 1100 Old Lawyers Road. Albert and Marty Harrill divorced not long afterwards, and he remarried June Styron in 1963.³⁸

Harrill retained the Sylvania Avenue house as a rental property, and he listed it for rent in August 1960 at \$80.00 per month furnished, adults only, highlighting Lockwood's location near the Nike plant.³⁹ This was a decrease of twenty percent from when the house was last for rent in 1951 at \$100 per month. Many previously single-family homes in the neighborhood were being converted to duplexes during this time, increasing the diversity of housing types and reflecting the impact of redlining's C rating on home loans in Lockwood. Gabor J. Sqiloggi, an employee of Douglas Aircraft, lived in the house in 1961 and 1962. He moved out at the end of March 1962, and the house was listed for rent on April 5 before an unknown tenant moved in. Rental ads ran in January 1963 for three days, then again in April, with rent raised to \$85.00 per month.⁴⁰ During this time, the house was split once again into a duplex. Joseph C. and Kay H. Royal occupied the 240 unit from 1963

³⁸ "On Kings Drive, New Gas Station, Drive-In Planned," *Charlotte Observer*, November 2, 1954; "On King's Drive, Harrill's Bar-B-Q in New Quarters," *Charlotte Observer*, March 23, 1955; *Charlotte Observer*, March 4, 1984.

³⁹ *Charlotte Observer*, August 27, 1960. The former Ford plant and U. S. Army Quartermaster Depot was chosen to manufacture the Army's Nike guided missile in December 1954. Employing 1,500 workers, the first missiles were completed in July 1956. The plant produced missiles until May 1965, and all work ceased in 1967. Sumner, "Ford Plant."

⁴⁰ *Charlotte Observer*, January 25, 1963; *Charlotte Observer*, September 5, 1963.

through 1965. He was employed as an agent for Coastal Plain Life Insurance Company.⁴¹ Harold L. Cole, a data processing supervisor with the city, and his wife Sylvia lived in the 242 unit during this time. The house continued to be rented through 1966, with the monthly rate set at \$75.00. While the house had been occupied as a duplex for several years, Harrill had the units separately wired and heated in July 1968. Soon, local government activity would impact the neighborhood demographics of Lockwood, which had only been occupied by white homeowners and renters during its history.⁴²

Urban Renewal and Demographic Shifts

In 1951 the North Carolina General Assembly passed a law authorizing the establishment of redevelopment commissions in the state. Following the appointment of the Urban Redevelopment Commission by Charlotte City Council in 1957, the staff of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission made a study “to determine the location and extent of blighted areas in the community.”⁴³ The *Brooklyn Area Blight Study*, published in March 1958, focused on one of the oldest black neighborhoods in the city. The report described the neighborhood and its residences:

The pattern of land subdivision clearly reflects the planning (or lack thereof) of another time. Today’s standards and practices call for building sites large enough to provide yards and open spaces about structures. The pattern of land subdivision in the Brooklyn Area precludes this possibility in many instances. Structures throughout the area are crowded together on the land. Street traffic presses hard against their front doors and neighboring structures press hard against their side windows. In many instances lack of space between frame buildings presents the possibility of the rapid spread of fire from one structure to the next. Inadequate or faulty heating devices are recognized as a frequent source of fire and fire hazard in the district.

⁴¹ *Hill’s Charlotte City Directory* (1961), 674; (1962), 892; *Charlotte Observer*, April 5, 1962; *Hill’s Charlotte City Directory* (1963), 870, s332.

⁴² City of Charlotte Electrical Building Permit No. CID5244, July 5, 1968; City of Charlotte Mechanical Building Permit No. CID5814, July 12, 1968.

⁴³ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, *Brooklyn Area Blight Study* (March 1958), 1.

The district is rife with rude and primitive housing that, as originally constructed, provided minimum enclosures for human habitation. The ravages of time, use, abuse and meagre attention to maintenance have reduced many of these primitive structures to a state that affords scant protection from the elements. Broken, decayed or missing siding, sagging windows and gaping doors leave the inhabitants vulnerable to wind and water. The floors and roofs of other buildings sag or roll over uneven foundations. Dilapidation and deterioration of structures in varying degrees is a common characteristic of the area. Many structures have clearly passed the point of no return to restoration as acceptable housing in the 20th Century, while others could undoubtedly be restored to contemporary living standards.⁴⁴

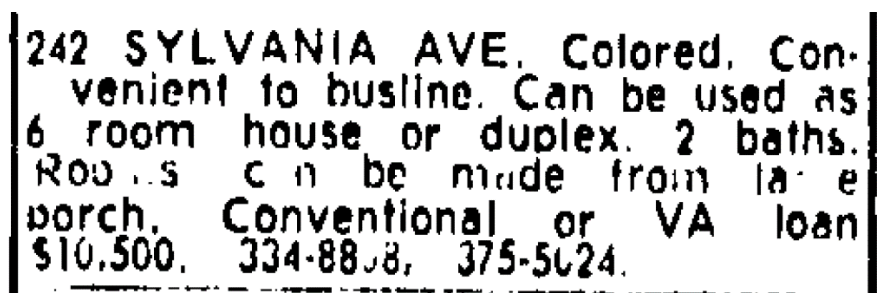
The report concluded that over three-quarters of the buildings in Brooklyn were considered blighted, and in January 1960 City Council voted to enact Urban Renewal in the area. The portion of Brooklyn visible from Mayor Stanford Brookshire's office in City Hall was the first to be razed, with the remainder of the neighborhood demolished over the next decade.

Pleased with their perceived success in eliminating blight, another study in 1962 by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission expanded the evaluation of blighted properties and neighborhoods across the city, finding that nearly 20 percent of Charlotte residents lived in what was considered blighted housing. Lockwood was considered mostly to have sound housing with a few properties (including the Sylvania Avenue house) needing minor improvements.⁴⁵ In June 1966 the Urban Renewal Committee of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Inter-Governmental Task Force recommended the immediate implementation of Urban Renewal to four neighborhoods: First Ward, Greenville, Dilworth, and Downtown. The committee claimed that nearly 2,000 families and 346 individuals would be moved out of slums, though plans for where these people would find new homes

⁴⁴ *Brooklyn Area Blight Study*, 2-3.

⁴⁵ Minor improvements included broken sidewalks, chipped paint and siding, broken windows, and any other visible exterior wear. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, *Residential Blight in Charlotte* (September 1962), 70.

had received little study in comparison to the demolition plans.⁴⁶ So where would these people find homes?



242 SYLVANIA AVE. Colored. Convenient to busline. Can be used as 6 room house or duplex. 2 baths. Rooms can be made from large porch. Conventional or VA loan \$10,500. 334-8808, 375-5024.

Figure 12 The Butler House was advertised as available to black renters in August 1967. *Charlotte Observer*, August 8, 1967.

Many black Charlotteans displaced by Urban Renewal relocated in black neighborhoods along the Beatties Ford Road and Wilkinson Boulevard corridors. White residents of nearby areas, alarmed by their new neighbors, moved elsewhere. Lockwood was one of the formerly white neighborhoods that transitioned to an all-black community in the 1970s. Albert Harrill listed the Sylvania Avenue house, now a duplex, for rent in August 1967 specifically targeting black tenants. The following year, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 would make such race-based advertising illegal. William M. “Willie” McLendon (1916-1991) and Margaret Bellamy Davis (ca. 1932-1998) moved into the 240 and 242 units of Sylvania Avenue respectively between 1968 and 1969, the first black residents in the house. In July 1970 McLendon purchased the house from David Kinney Real Estate Company, which had acquired the property from Harrill the previous month.⁴⁷

By the 1970s, the twin impacts of redlining and Urban Renewal had made a noticeable impact on Lockwood. A 1976 report by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission staff analyzed the 1970 U. S. Census results for the city. Lockwood was grouped in census tract 52 along with the Tryon Hills neighborhood, developed as a lower

⁴⁶ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Inter-Governmental Task Force, *Urban Renewal for Charlotte: A Report by the Urban Renewal Committee* (June 1966), 2-3.

⁴⁷ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3202, Page 12; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3111, 232.

middle-class neighborhood with a mix of single-family and multi-family properties in the late 1940s, to the north. Both the socioeconomic and physical quality of the area was considered low. The racial shift from a majority-white to majority-black neighborhood was nearly complete, with an 217.8% increase in the black population and a 78.6% decrease in the white population since 1960. Tryon Hills and Lockwood were now 81.1% percent black, whereas in 1960 the area had been approximately 67% white.⁴⁸

The first black owner of the Sylvania Avenue house, Willie McLendon was born in Anson County, the son of Marshall and Fannie Crump McLendon. He served in the U. S.



Figure 13 Willie McLendon works in his garden on Keswick Avenue in Lockwood. *Charlotte Observer*, July 3, 1975.

Army during World War II and moved to Charlotte after the war, living in Brooklyn and Third Ward. Around 1950 McLendon married, and he and his new wife Evelyn lived at 1018 North Smith Street in the Greenville neighborhood. They divorced in the mid-1960s, and Willie continued to live on North Smith Street until moving into the right unit of the Sylvania Avenue house sometime during 1969. Willie worked as a gas attendant at Associated Transport, where he remained until retiring in 1979 after over twenty years with the company.⁴⁹

Life for McLendon in Lockwood had its ups and

⁴⁸ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, *Neighborhoods in Charlotte* (1976), 60-1; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, *Residential Blight in Charlotte* (September 1962), 70.

⁴⁹ *Charlotte Observer*, May 16, 1989; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1965), 631; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1969), 722; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory* (1980), 437.

downs. He kept a garden on a lot on Keswick Avenue. He had also purchased 232 Sylvania Avenue in 1974, but unfortunately, he defaulted on the loan three years later, and it was foreclosed on by the U. S. Department of Veteran Affairs. His brother James Paul McLendon lived with Willie for a while. James struggled with alcoholism, and he died of a heart attack at age 47 at the Seventh Street Center, a “drying-out facility” for alcoholics in late 1977. McLendon also almost lost the house in 1984 to foreclosure.⁵⁰ Willie McLendon died on June 7, 1991 at Mercy Hospital in Charlotte. He was buried in Polkton Cemetery in Anson County. McLendon willed his house to the children of Margaret Bellamy Davis, and they sold the house to their mother on May 11, 1992.⁵¹

Margaret Davis had moved into 242 unit of Sylvania Avenue around the same time Willie began renting the adjacent unit. Born in South Carolina and growing up in Horry County, she was the daughter of Samuel and Essie Bellamy. Margaret was not listed as employed in the Charlotte City Directory until 1980, when she began working for Green Janitorial Service. In 1983 she moved to Better Cleaning Janitorial Service, for which she worked for seven years. She then worked as a caregiver for the elderly until being hired as a housekeeper for William C. and Judith H. Westbrook in the Lansdowne neighborhood of south Charlotte. Margaret continued in this position until she died on February 4, 1998. She was buried at Sharon Memorial Park.⁵²

⁵⁰ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3705, Page 126; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 4025, Page 655; “Death at Center for Alcoholics Was Caused by A Heart Attack,” *Charlotte Observer*, December 29, 1977; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 4818, Page 264.

⁵¹ “Mecklenburg County Deaths,” *Charlotte Observer*, June 9, 1991; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 6873, Page 587.

⁵² 1980 *Charlotte City Directory*, 165; 1983 *Charlotte City Directory*, Vol. 1, 147; 1990 *Charlotte City Directory*, Vol. 1, 130; 1995 *Charlotte City Directory*, 170; *Charlotte Observer*, February 5, 1998.



Figure 14 The Butler House in 2014. From Polaris 3G, <http://polaris3g.mecklenburgcountync.gov/>.

After Margaret Davis's death, her daughter Regina Harrison continued to reside in the house. Gina was known in the neighborhood as a caring woman who offered homeless or destitute persons a place to stay. However, she did little to curb any illicit activity by her houseguests, and the Sylvania Avenue house fell into disrepair. Harrison died in 2014, at which time Christopher Dennis, a resident of Lockwood and activist who sought to revitalize the neighborhood, purchased the property. Dennis restored the house, remaking it as a single-family home to serve as a community center for the neighborhood. But by this point, Lockwood had gained a negative reputation both locally and nationally. A ranking by NeighborhoodScout.com named the 28206 area code, which including Lockwood and Tryon Hills, the 11th-most dangerous neighborhood in the country. This claim, however, was disputed by both neighborhood residents and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police

Department.⁵³ Today, Lockwood is a neighborhood in transition, with concerns of the gentrification that has occurred in other neighborhoods close to Uptown pushing out longtime residents.

The Butler House serves as a physical representation of the history of the Lockwood neighborhood. It originated as a modest residence built by a blue-collar worker in an affordable neighborhood near his place of work. The practice of redlining in the 1930s led to the slow transition of Lockwood from primarily single-family residences to duplexes and other multi-family properties, with the Butler House first being converted to a duplex in the 1940s. When Urban Renewal destroyed the Brooklyn neighborhood in the 1960s, displaced black residents found homes in areas such as Lockwood. Fear and prejudice resulted in white flight, and the formerly all-white neighborhoods along North Tryon Street became majority black within a decade.

⁵³ “Charlotte neighborhood makes ’25 Most Dangerous in U.S.’ list,” WBTV, <https://www.wbtv.com/story/13267801/charlotte-neighborhood-makes-25-most-dangerous-in-us-list/>.

Architectural Description



The Butler House is a 1.5-story Craftsman bungalow located at the corner of Sylvania Avenue and Hobbs Street in the Lockwood neighborhood. Built in 1924-1925, the house was condemned after years of neglect when the previous owner died in 2014. The current owner rehabilitated the house near its original condition. While some changes were made in layout, fenestration, and architectural details, the overall character and integrity of the house remain intact. Features which have been changed include the front gable, where wood siding was replaced with cedar shake shingles, and the single window has been augmented with smaller flanking windows original to the house. The original brick porch columns, removed due to poor condition, have been replaced with tapered wood columns set upon brick piers evocative of the original columns. Despite these changes, the Butler House remains a substantial example of the Craftsman bungalow in Lockwood.

The house is built on brick piers with solid brick walls punctured with vents at regular intervals. The exterior of the house is wood sided, and the front gable features cedar shake shingles. Original double-hung wood windows have been retained throughout the house, though some new windows have been added. The standard size and configuration of the windows in the Butler House are two square sashes, the top sash having four vertical panes and the lower sash with a grid of 2-over-2 lights. The eaves of the house are an extension of the roof decking, with the side elevations showing exposed rafter tails.

The front elevation of the Butler House faces southwest toward the Uptown area of Charlotte. The front porch extends the entire width of the elevation and wraps around the right elevation, extending out along both elevations with a gabled roof. The cedar-shake front gable has three grouped windows, with the original middle window larger than the two new flanking windows. It should be noted that these windows were placed here by the current owner in this configuration, with the original fenestration being a single small rectangular window. Wood triangular knee braces are placed at regular intervals under the gable eave. The front porch has tapered wood columns on brick piers with wood railing with square pickets in between. The columns are new, with the piers being the remainder of the original brick columns that supported the structure. The ceiling of the porch is a wide wood beadboard, and its floor is wood tongue-and-groove. The four bays of the front elevation under the porch, from left to right, feature grouped windows, the front door, another set of grouped windows, and the wrap-around section of the porch. The grouped windows on the front elevation have two narrower windows flanking a larger

window. The front door, with three upper lights set over three vertical panels, is new but reflects the Craftsman style of the house.



Right elevation. This side of the house sits close to the bushy property line and was difficult to photograph.

The right elevation of the Butler House is four bays wide. It faces a neighboring property and is located close to an overgrown fence line, making photography difficult. Moving from left to right, the first bay features the gable-roof wrap-around porch. This gable has wood siding instead of the cedar shake of the front elevation. Under the porch is a six-panel door leading to a bedroom. The second bay has a pair of windows with another window to their right. The third bay has another pair of windows, and the final bay was formerly a porch that was enclosed in by a previous owner.



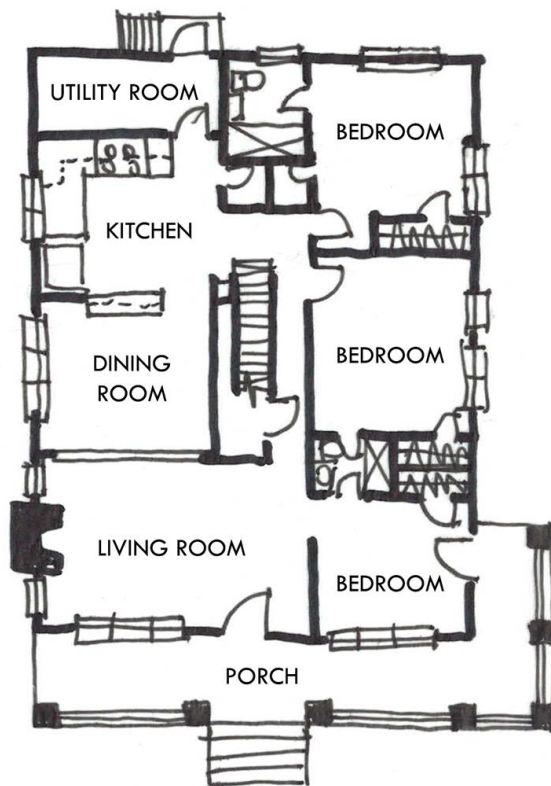
Rear elevation. The backyard slopes down toward the back of the property.

The back elevation of the Butler House is three bays wide. The left bay has a small horizontal four-light window high in the wall. The middle bay has a single window, and the right bay has a six-panel door opening onto stairs leading to the backyard. The gable has a horizontal group of three small four-light windows. The backyard had a garage at the back of the property line, but it was demolished due to its poor condition.

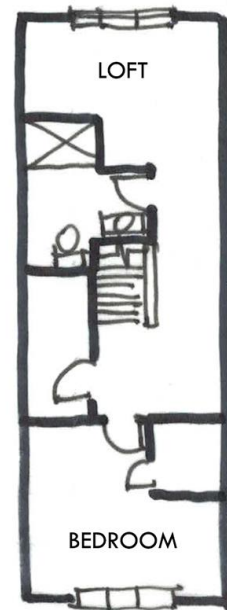


Left elevation from Hobbs Street.

The left elevation of the Butler House is four bays wide and faces Hobbs Street. The first bay at the left has a pair of windows, smaller in height but having the same pane configuration as other windows. The second bay features a group of three windows, much like those on the front elevation, with a standard window flanked by two narrower windows. The third bay has two windows flanking the brick chimney, which tapers up near the eaves and is topped with an arched chimney cap. This is the only remaining chimney of the three originally built. The fourth bay is the side elevation of the front porch.



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

BUTLER HOUSE - NTS

The interior of the Butler House, though renovated, retains its original character. Major changes are the removal of a window wall with French doors between the living and dining rooms and new cabinets and tile floor in the kitchen. However, these changes do not negatively impact the character of the house, especially considering the house has had many changes over the years by various owners. Wood floors throughout the house were retained except in the rear bedroom; these floors were used to repair damage throughout the house, and new wood floors coordinating with the original were installed.

The configuration of the main level of the Butler House has the living space on the left side and bedrooms and bathrooms on the right. The front door enters into the open

living space, with a small hallway to the right leading to the bedrooms. The stairs leading to the upstairs run from rear to front, creating a walled separation between the living and private spaces. A half wall separates the dining room from the kitchen. A door leads to the laundry/utility room at the back with an exit to the backyard.



Living and dining rooms viewed from the kitchen.

The three bedrooms of the Butler House are aligned on the right side, with a hallway leading to each. The rear bedroom has its own separate bathroom, whereas the middle and front bedrooms share a Jack-and-Jill bathroom. A fireplace was originally in the middle bedroom, but it was removed by the current owner due to its condition and to better configure the bedroom.



Front bedroom with an exit to the front porch.



A fireplace was located here in the middle bedroom, but it was removed due to poor structural condition.



In the rear bedroom, a small bump out in the wall shows the former location of a porch, enclosed ca. 1940. The original wood floors in this room were used to repair damaged floors in the living areas.

The upstairs portion of the Butler House has been finished and divided into a bedroom with a walk-in closet at the front elevation of the house, an open loft space at the rear, a bathroom near the loft space, and a utility/storage room in the middle near where the stairs emerge. The ceiling is sloped due to the roof structure above. This space was incorporated into the house by a later owner in the 1950s or after.



The stairs leading up to the half story were added by a later owner.



Upstairs bedroom, looking toward the front elevation of the house.



Looking from the top of the stairs to the loft space. The bathroom door is to the left.

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