

Historic Overview of Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill has been, since its very inception, inextricably linked to the University of North Carolina (UNC). Chapel Hill, initially named New Hope Chapel Hill after the nearby New Hope Anglican Church, was chosen in 1792 to be the site of the state university, partly because of its location near the center of the state and partly due to generous offers of land and money by residents in the Orange County area who saw the benefit of having the university located there.

The campus was laid out at the top of the hill and was surrounded by vast fields and forestland. According to the Chapel Hill Historic District National Register nomination, the University opened in 1795 with “Old East, an unpainted president’s house, and a pile of lumber.” The University and the town grew slowly in the early decades of the nineteenth century, with houses for faculty and staff generally located north and northeast of the campus along East Franklin Street in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. Few buildings from this era remain, most of them located on the UNC campus. The houses at 501 and 504 East Franklin are representative of the more prominent Federal-style houses constructed during the era, the more modest vernacular housing having all been lost.

The Chapel Hill Historic District National Register nomination describes the town in the 1820s as dependent on the University and “correspondingly tiny, with a population consisting of these faculty families, a few tutors, and a small number of people who ran boarding houses, a blacksmith shop, and a store.” In 1836, UNC president David L. Swain described the town as having “but one store, one physician, no schools, no churches, no pastor, no lawyer.” However, the University, and subsequently the town, flourished under the leadership of Swain, who led the University from 1835-1868. The student population increased from 89 students in 1836, to 191 students by 1854, and 461 students by 1857.

By the mid-nineteenth century, additional buildings were constructed on the campus and in 1851 the town limits were expanded to the west, encompassing the Cameron-McCauley Historic District. Swain boasted that by the 1860s there were “eight or ten flourishing stores, four handsome churches, half a dozen schools, and handsome residences had spring up all over town.” Among these were the 1846 Gothic Revival-style Chapel of the Cross (304 East Franklin Street) and substantial houses constructed by new faculty and town residents, including the c.1840 house at 513 East Franklin Street, the 1856 Dr. Samuel Phillips House (407 East Franklin Street), and the c.1845 Greek Revival-style Mallette-Wilson-Maurice House (215 West Cameron Avenue). The houses were located on large lots and most properties, while not farms per se, had gardens and livestock enough to supplement the limited staples available at the stores.

It was during this period, in the years leading up to the Civil War, that efforts began to be made to beautify the campus. One of these was the introduction of stone walls to define the edge of the campus and to keep out wandering livestock. Professor Elisha Mitchell, who suggested the project in 1838, wanted to evoke the landscape of his native New England. He utilized enslaved laborers to build the walls, which were originally constructed of dry-stacked rock and required a skilled stone masons to carefully fit them into place. The higher walls that were constructed around the campus were later lowered as the town developed and the fear of wandering livestock decreased. However, examples of these original walls can be found along Raleigh Street near the Coker Arboretum and the Presidents House. Stones were plentiful in the area and the effect of the walls so pleasing to town residents that the practice of constructing walls extended throughout the town and throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Many of the later walls were constructed by African American masons, including brothers Alfred David and Willis Barbee and brothers Thomas and Lewis Booth. These walls, which were mostly built using mortar to hold the stones in place, remain a defining feature of the campus and of all three local

historic districts.

The growth and development of Chapel Hill halted during the Civil War years. The student population dwindled and the town was occupied by first the Confederate cavalry and later Federal troops. The town and campus were spared material damage during the war, but the University suffered in the following years, closing at regular intervals, and the town suffered with it.

The University reopened for good in 1875 with the state legislature providing financial support for the school, though it was 1881 before the General Assembly appropriated public funds for the maintenance of the University. Growth of both the University and the town was steady through the late-nineteenth century. However, Chapel Hill grew at a rapid pace in the early decades of the twentieth century, fueled by the success and continuous expansion of the University programs and campus, on which seventeen new buildings were constructed between 1900 and 1920. The population of the town nearly doubled during this period, increasing from 1,623 residents (including 524 students) in 1900 to 2,972 residents (including 1,483 students) in 1920.

The earliest residential areas in Chapel Hill, encompassed within the Franklin-Rosemary and Cameron-McCauley historic districts, continued to develop, their growth paralleling that of the University on which they was dependent. Both areas were laid out along a roughly rectangular grid oriented along Franklin and Columbia streets, whose intersection formed the center of the town. Near that intersection, extending for several blocks on both East and West Franklin Street was a commercial corridor made of one- and two-story, brick buildings, most constructed in the first half of the twentieth century.

East Franklin and East Rosemary streets, the earliest settled streets in Chapel Hill, initially contained houses on relatively large estates, some dating to the early 1800s, but most from the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The land west of campus, along West Cameron Avenue and McCauley Street, was owned by the University until the 1850s, when the city limits expanded to include the area and lots began to be sold off to raise revenue for the school. Both areas developed organically with the gradual subdivision of land and construction of houses, resulting in residential developments that extends primarily from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.

At the same time, new suburban developments were constructed in Chapel Hill. The earliest planned development in Chapel Hill is Cobb Terrace, located at the north end of Henderson Street at the northwest corner of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. Because of the uneven terrain, some doubted the ability of Collier Cobb, a professor of Geology at the University of North Carolina, to develop the land. However, Cobb brought in earth to partially level the site and designed a terraced development to take advantage of the steep slopes to the north and east. Within the 1915 development, Cobb erected eleven houses, including several Aladdin Homes, mail-order kit houses, as affordable rental housing for young professors.

The University expanded significantly in the 1920s, constructing twenty-four new buildings on the campus during the decade, much of it to provide dormitories for the growing student population. The campus buildings were largely constructed in the Colonial Revival style, an austere style that planner John Nolen thought would compliment the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings on the campus. The off-campus fraternity housing constructed in the 1920s and early 1930s was concentrated along South Columbia Street, West Cameron Avenue, and Fraternity Court, at the east end of the Cameron-McCauley Historic District. The movement of fraternity housing off of the main campus was a result of a 1919 fire that destroyed three of the eleven fraternity houses originally located at the northwest end of the campus. In an effort to

move the housing from campus, the University offered undeveloped land—most located near the intersection of Cameron Avenue and South Columbia Street—to the fraternities in exchange for their on-campus properties. Only the 1930 Alpha Tau Omega house was built in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District.

Several major churches were constructed in the 1920s including University Baptist Church (100 South Columbia Street) in 1922-23, a new sanctuary for the Chapel of the Cross (304 East Franklin Street) in 1925, and University United Methodist Church (150 East Franklin) in 1925-26. Other improvement included the paving of principal roads in the 1920s, starting with Franklin Street, though most streets and sidewalks remained dirt or gravel into the 1930s. New water and sewer lines were constructed and lights and telephone service installed in the 1920s. The downtown was largely rebuilt with brick buildings replacing the earlier frame structures. Most of the 100-block of East Franklin Street was entirely rebuilt between 1923 and 1927.

Suburban development also began in earnest in the 1920s. The Gimghoul Historic District and the Laurel Hill development to its south, were developed in the 1920s to house the growing number of professors and professionals associated with the University. Both were developed utilizing the dominant residential design principals of the time, which favored curvilinear streets, mature trees, and large lawns. Gimghoul was constructed on a portion of Battle Park that was purchased by the Order of the Gimghoul and subdivided into approximately fifty lots in 1924.

The Depression caused construction projects to temporarily cease both on campus and throughout the town as the University, the town's largest employer, was forced to cut salaries. However, several fraternity houses and single-family homes were constructed in the early 1930s, perhaps representing funds that had already been allocated before the stock market crash. By the late 1930s, the University, having been consolidated with other universities to form the UNC system in 1935, began construction anew using New Deal funds to erect thirteen new buildings on the campus between 1935 and 1941. The town used New Deal funds to pave all of the major streets and to construct the 1938 United States Post Office (179 East Franklin Street). A new town hall, located on North Columbia Street, and an expansion of the town airport were also completed with New Deal funds. The World War II era brought few physical changes to the town, though the influx of residents was significant and would continue to impact the town throughout the 1950s.

Commercial development in Chapel Hill was influenced both by the campus architecture and by national trends. The popularity of Colonial Williamsburg and the visual impact of the well-designed UNC campus that abutted the Franklin Street commercial corridor led community leaders to push for a more cohesive commercial corridor. In 1941, the Town of Chapel Hill created a planning commission, largely as a response to unchecked development prompted by a steadily growing demand for housing and to the birth of the urban planning movement in the mid-twentieth century. However, the commission also influenced the development and appearance of the downtown commercial area. The commission hired Durham architect Archie Davis to create plans and renderings to show how commercial buildings on East Franklin Street could be renovated in the Colonial Revival style. The commission showed the plans to property owners, but with little result. The c.1940 building at 202 East Rosemary Street was among the only new buildings to be constructed in the style in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District, though several existing buildings were renovated with Colonial Revival-style storefronts. The 300- and 400-blocks of West Franklin Street, north of the Cameron-McCauley Historic District, retain the largest collection of Colonial Revival-style commercial buildings that were constructed during this era.

The post-World War II era saw significant growth for both the University and the town with the population reaching 9,177 (6,864 of them students) in 1950 and rising steadily thereafter. In 1947, the legislature agreed to fund a four-year medical school on the Chapel Hill campus, including new schools of dentistry and nursing, as well as the construction of a 400-bed teaching hospital and medical center, which would be the beginning of the current medical complex on the south end of the campus. Both the campus and the town grew, predominantly to the south and east, the west side of town having been already largely developed and abutting the adjacent town of Carrboro. The town annexed land in 1945, 1950, 1951, and in every decade of the late twentieth century.

The areas encompassed by the Franklin-Rosemary, Cameron-McCauley, and Gimghoul historic districts were largely built out by the mid-1950s, with the exception of the Coker property at the north end of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. While residential development continued on low-lying lands at the edges of the Franklin-Rosemary and Cameron-McCauley districts, most residential development in the town was taking place south and east of the University. Planned developments on both sides of Fordham Boulevard (US Hwy 15) were platted from the 1940s through the 1960s, some with smaller lots and speculatively built houses and others with large lots arranged along winding streets and containing both traditional and modernist-style houses.

The 1962 Governor's Commission for Education Beyond High School (also known as the Carlyle Commission) recommended the re-admission of women to the University (women had been relegated to the UNC-Greensboro campus after the formation of the UNC system in 1935). As the female student population of the University grew in the following decades, a need for sorority housing close to the campus arose. However, with few vacant properties on which to construct new buildings, many sororities modified and expanded existing single-family houses, predominantly in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District, to serve their members.

The University remained a primary employer for Chapel Hill residents throughout the twentieth century. However, by the 1960s, the town also began to attract medium- and high-salaried executives working at the nearby Research Triangle Park, which had six companies in place by 1965 and sixteen more by 1970. While the impacts of the University on the town over the last two hundred years have been largely positive, the continued growth of the University has caused increased development pressure on the town and the historic neighborhoods that abut the campus.

The Town of Chapel Hill has established three local historic districts encompassing a combined total of more than five hundred properties. The three districts are the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District (1976), the Cameron-McCauley Historic District (1990), and the Gimghoul Historic District (1990). Each district borders a different edge of the UNC campus and, although primarily residential in character, each includes institutional buildings as well. Essays noting the significant design characteristics of each district are included.

**Sidebar: The Town and Gown Architecture of Chapel Hill, North Carolina: 1795-1975 is an exceptional resource that provides historic and architectural context for Chapel Hill.

Franklin-Rosemary Historic District

The long history and development of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District is closely tied to the growth of the University of North Carolina (UNC) and parallels the development of the town as a whole. Thus, in many ways, the historic overview on the preceding pages is the history of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. Named for the primary east-west streets that extend through the district, the gridded residential area just north of the UNC campus includes a wide variety of residential resources, the earliest dating to the 1810s, but most dating from the mid-1800s through

the mid-1900s. The houses were largely constructed for the faculty and employees of the university, many of them sharing names with prominent buildings on the UNC campus.

Nineteenth century development was centered along East Franklin and East Rosemary streets, nearest the UNC campus. The early district was distinctly rural with early landowners typically holding larger acreage than what is represented by current lot sizes and keeping gardens and sometimes livestock on their properties. With the rapid growth of the university in the early twentieth-century, the demand for additional housing led to the subdivision of the larger properties along East Franklin Street, East Rosemary Street, and Battle Lane. Additional houses were constructed along these main streets, interspersed with the nineteenth-century development, with the majority of construction on these streets completed by the mid-1920s.

Architectural historian Ruth Little notes that, “by the mid-1920s, most of the building lots located within walking distance of the university had been built up and...people had begun to buy automobiles.” The rise of the automobile changed the district in several ways, first by the modification of existing barns, sheds, or carriage houses to serve as garages or the construction of small, single-car frame garages at the rear of the properties. Houses constructed in the 1920s and later often had contemporary garages, mostly one-story, front-gabled buildings with materials and detailing that referenced the house.

Perhaps more notable than the construction of garages was the shift in residential development to new suburbs at the edge of the district, which was at that time, the edge of the town. Platted in 1915 by professor of Geology Collier Cobb, Cobb Terrace at the northwest corner of the district is the first planned residential development in Chapel Hill and includes eleven houses, constructed by 1927, that are arranged along a single curving street and provided affordable rental housing for young professors. At the northeast corner of the district, through largely outside of the district boundary, is Tenney Circle. The 1922 development, constructed on the former Tenney Farm, contains twenty-two lots arranged around a single loop road. Houses were constructed at a significantly lower density than Cobb Terrace—more typical of suburban 1920s developments like Gimghoul—with large lots, more privacy, and a park-like setting.

While upper-middle-class and upper-class residents were constructing houses in these newly-platted subdivisions, the continuously increasing student and faculty populations in the 1910s, 1920s, and in the post-World War II era led to additional construction and changes within the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. The 400 to 600 blocks of North Street were developed with modest single-family houses, predominantly built from the 1910s through the 1930s, as well as collections of smaller houses and apartments. In the 500 block of North Street, the c.1920 North Street Apartments includes four Colonial Revival-style frame buildings, each with at least two apartments. Cottage, Spring, and Friendly lanes represent smaller streets that were platted, extending the street grid north from Rosemary Street into areas with irregular topography. These areas, as well as residential construction along Hopper Lane, were built up from the 1920s through the 1950s with small, modest houses.

The University itself constructed a group of small faculty housing in the 1920s. The Park Place development, located on the north side of Battle Park and the east side of Park Place Lane, originally consisted of ten two-room houses. Constructed for young families, the area was known as “Baby Hollow” because the professors that lived there averaged three children each. The houses were gradually removed over the years with the last four houses being moved outside of the district in 2019.

Other changes to the district included: the additional subdivision of larger lots, the construction of secondary cottages on some sites, and the conversion of some larger houses into apartments. While Chapel Hill residents had a long history of taking in boarders, the subdivision of larger houses into multiple apartments became more common in the twentieth century. The introduction of sororities that came with the re-admission of women to the University in the 1960s also impacted the district as many sororities modified and expanded existing single-family houses in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District.

The latest development to occur in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District is the residential development along North Boundary Street, north of North Street. This area was part of the sixty-five-acre William C. Coker property. Coker came to UNC in 1902 as an associate professor of botany. He chaired the University's Building and Grounds committee for 30 years and his impact on the landscape of the campus is immeasurable. In 1903, Coker began developing a five-acre boggy pasture on the southeast side of the UNC campus into an outdoor classroom for the study of trees, shrubs and native plants. He would continue to develop the area, which was later named Coker Arboretum, throughout his tenure at UNC. In 1906, he purchased a sixty-five-acre tract of land north of the campus and constructed the house at 609 North Street. Located on a hill behind a dramatic outcropping, he named the house "The Rocks." The vast property was landscaped with orchards and gardens featuring native plant and exotic trees, serving as an extension of the campus arboretum. The property had been reduced to about fifty acres by the time of Coker's death in 1953, and was, in its undeveloped state, included with the designation of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District in 1976. After the death of his wife, Louise Venable Coker, in 1983, a portion of the property was subdivided and houses were constructed on the north part of the site, accessed by an extension of North Boundary Street. However the Coker house and its immediate landscaping remains on a large 2.8-acre parcel on the north side of North Street.

The district is roughly bounded by the properties on the west side of Henderson Street and the Cobb Terrace development on the west and northwest respectively. The north boundary includes those properties on Spring, Friendly, and Cottage lanes as well as properties on both sides of Hillsborough Street through the 400 block. A portion of North Boundary Street, Campbell Lane, and Rose Lane, extending from East Rosemary Street were included in the district prior to their development, resulting in a boundary that does not follow modern parcel lines in this area. The east boundary includes properties on the east side of Glenburnie Street, the 700 block of East Rosemary Street, and bisects the 700 block of East Franklin Street. Battle Park and the UNC campus form the southern boundary of the district. In addition to the residential resources, the district also includes a number of religious buildings and part of the downtown commercial area that developed along East Franklin Street.

Streetscape and Landscape Characteristics

The lengthy period of development—with buildings and site features constructed from the late 1700s through the late 1900s—of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District has resulted in buildings of many sizes, ages, and styles. However, buildings within the large and diverse district maintain continuity of siting and distinctive landscape characteristics that visually unify the district and its individual streetscapes.

Significant features within the district include the network of gravel paths, brick sidewalks, low stone walls, and tree-lined streets. Like most upper-middle-class urban residential areas developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the district is characterized by a relatively dense collection of houses set back from the street shaded by a dominating tree canopy. The mature hardwood trees that line the streets shade pedestrians and houses from the sun, insulate them from the noise and pollution of automobile traffic, and in some cases, lessen the

visual presence of existing overhead power and utility lines. The north and northeast parts of the district have a more organic tree canopy, reflecting its later development on land that was historically more wooded.

The topography of the district varies significantly with the main thoroughfares of East Franklin and East Rosemary streets located on a relatively flat plain along which the street grid is oriented. However, the land immediately adjacent, including the 600- to 700-blocks of East Franklin Street and the land north of East Rosemary Street, is lower in elevation and features rolling, and in some cases steep, hills, the very terrain for which the town of Chapel Hill is named. While streets typically extend the grid pattern, some at the periphery of the district, along East Franklin and Hillsborough streets, specifically, curve to follow the topography of the land as they extend toward Durham and Hillsborough, respectively. Additionally, Cobb Terrace and the Coker property at the north end of North Boundary Street were developed with curvilinear streets to follow the topography of the land and to allow for more interesting views.

The presence and material of sidewalks, walls, and driveways vary throughout the district. Concrete sidewalks exist primarily in the commercial corridor while brick-paved sidewalks extend along East Franklin Street as well as along portions of East Rosemary Street, the west side of Hillsborough Street, and the west side of North Boundary Street. Other sidewalks along East Rosemary and North streets are surfaced with "Chapel Hill gravel," a fine-grained gravel that looks like sand, and smaller streets and later developments, including Glenburnie Street; Spring, Friendly, and Cottage lanes; and Cobb Terrace do not have sidewalks at all. Streets within the district are generally paved, the paving having been completed by the town in the 1920s and 1930s. Driveways are common in the residential sections of the district, typically with gravel, concrete, or asphalt paving.

The town's trademark low fieldstone walls, often ivy-covered, also remain intact throughout the district. The origin of the walls date to an 1838 project when UNC President Swain, together with science professor Elisha Mitchell, launched the building of stone walls on campus to replace the rail fences which kept out wandering livestock. The visual effect of the walls, some of which were considerably higher than they are today, was pleasing and the supply of rock plentiful so villagers soon began to follow suit by building stone walls on their own property. The walls were originally constructed of dry-stacked rock, carefully fit into place by skilled stone masons, many of them enslaved black men. However, later walls, including most of the walls extant today, were built using mortar to hold the stones in place. The walls mark the property boundaries at the sidewalk and sometimes serve as retaining walls, especially at the periphery of the district where the topography varies more significantly and houses are not necessarily located at street level.

Despite variation in residential lot sizes, building size, and building style throughout the district, the result of the gradual development of the town over time, the district maintains consistent building sizes and setbacks within specific streets and blocks. The exceptions to this are the commercial buildings on East Franklin Street that directly abut the sidewalk and the churches in the district, which are generally set back beyond the setback line of nearby houses, allowing for more gracious front lawns and better visibility of the prominent facades. The largest building lots remain on East Franklin Street, East Rosemary Street, and Battle Lane where the earliest houses in the district stand. However, many of the large lots were subdivided in the early twentieth century to allow for more construction in the blocks closest to the university.

Lots in the Cobb Terrace development and the late-twentieth century development on the north end of North Boundary Street are irregular, following both the curvilinear streets and the uneven topography of the area. Smaller lots with shallower, but consistent, setbacks are located along

Spring, Friendly, and Cottage lanes. Several “flag lots” exist at the north end of these lanes—allowing access without extending the street any further—as well as along the west side of Hillsborough Street. Lots on the west side of Hillsborough Street were much deeper than most lots in the district, extending from the late eighteenth century road to Hillsborough, down toward a creek. The subdivision of these deep lots allowed for the construction additional housing behind the main house on the site.

It should also be noted that the original plan for Cobb Terrace called for a loop street around the development with all of the houses facing outward. It is not clear whether the north part of the loop was ever constructed, but by the time the streets were paved, the change in topography was too significant and the north part of the loop street was never paved. Instead a narrow road that was meant to bisect the block became the primary road, addressing the rear of the houses on the north side of the development. As a result, many of the houses have been reoriented over time to face the road as it was constructed.

Architectural Characteristics

The Franklin-Rosemary Historic District includes a large and intact collection of single-family homes, multi-family and fraternal residences, and institutional buildings that together represent a broad complement of architectural styles spanning more than two centuries. While the vast majority of houses in the district are of frame construction, many with deep and wide front porches, several brick and stucco buildings are also present. The earliest houses, located along East Franklin Streets, include turn of the nineteenth century Federal-style houses (501 and 504 East Franklin), mid-nineteenth century Victorian-style houses (407 and 513 East Franklin), and the 1846 Gothic Revival-style Chapel of the Cross.

However, the majority of the construction in the district dates from the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth century with the styles typically illustrative of nationally popular styles for the period in which they were constructed. These include late nineteenth century Queen Anne- and Italianate-style buildings and vernacular farmhouses. Early twentieth century styles varied greatly and included houses constructed in the Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Shingle, and Tudor Revival styles houses, as well as standard brick commercial buildings.

**Add Sidebar that references the Architectural Styles section.

Churches within the district and the UNC President’s House, tended to be both larger and more architecturally distinctive than most single-family houses. The 1907 President’s House is an impressively detailed Neoclassical-style house and the 1925 sanctuary for the Chapel of the Cross (304 East Franklin Street) is a noteworthy example of the Gothic Revival style. The 1930 Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity House, among the only fraternity houses in the Franklin-Rosemary district, is among the best examples of Tudor Revival-style architecture in the district.

The acceleration of the town's population that began in the 1920s resulted not only in the subdivision of building lots for single-family homes, but also in the construction of several apartment buildings and small complexes in the district. The c.1920 North Street Apartments utilized the Colonial Revival style that was so popular at the time and resemble a collection of single-family homes arranged around a central driveway and parking area. The three-story, c.1940 Village Apartments on East Franklin Street are more urban in character with continuous facades and Colonial Revival-style detailing.

By the 1930s the core of the district was largely built out, the result of a significant period of growth in Chapel Hill in the early decades of the century. However, construction continued on smaller lots, especially at the periphery of the district. These included Period Cottages with pared

down Colonial Revival or Craftsman detailing. In the 1940s, lots were developed with post-World War II Minimal Traditional-style houses and later with mid-twentieth-century Ranch houses. By the 1960s, when women were once again admitted to the University, there was little vacant land within walking distance of the campus on which sorority housing could be built. Instead, sororities purchased large, single-family houses in the district and both modified and enlarged them to house their female populations. The result is substantial additions to the houses, sometimes more than doubling the size of the original structure, as well as modifications for life and fire safety, including the installation of ramps and fire escapes. Site modifications in the way of increased parking and outdoor living spaces were also common.

The residential development at the north end of the district, on the former Coker property, is different in architectural style and setting than the earlier development in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. The houses located along North Boundary Street, Campbell Lane, and Rose Lane are a combination of traditional, typically Colonial Revival-style, houses and modernist-style houses designed by local architects. These houses have a unique character and, as was typical for modernist designs, are sited to take full advantage of both the views and privacy that these wooded lots allow.

Accessory buildings are common in the district, with garages, the most common type of accessory building, constructed as early as the 1910s and 1920s. Most were one-story, front-gabled, frame garages—often too small to even house the automobiles that were popular in the town by the 1920s—though a number of brick garages also survive. Garages are an important element of the district fabric and were frequently constructed with stylistic details that referenced the house. Tenant and guest houses were also present, though far less common than garages. Typically tucked behind the main house, most date to the mid-twentieth century, constructed to house a growing population of students in Chapel Hill. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, combination garages with guest houses or studio apartments above became more common.

The Franklin-Rosemary Historic District was created by the Chapel Hill Town Council in 1976. The Chapel Hill Historic District, which encompasses a similar area, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 and its boundary increased in 2015. The district has undergone a number of changes since 1976 including the demolition and relocation of several historic resources, the construction of new buildings, and the renovation and enlargement of countless buildings in the district. The number of rehabilitation projects of both single-family and multi-family houses has continued to increase each year.

Cameron-McCauley Historic District

The Cameron-McCauley Historic District, like the Franklin-Rosemary District to its northeast, is inextricably linked to the development of the University of North Carolina (UNC) and its history parallels that of the town as a whole. The large, gridded residential area, located just west of the campus, is centered on and named for the two primary east-west streets. The streets themselves were named for Paul Carrington Cameron, a wealthy plantation owner who was instrumental in reviving the University after the Civil War, and David McCauley, who purchased land in the area from families impoverished by the Civil War, and laid out the central portion of the neighborhood.

The early district was distinctly rural with early landowners typically holding larger acreage than what is represented by current lot sizes and keeping gardens and sometimes livestock on their properties. Several mid-nineteenth century houses remain in the district including the c.1845

Greek Revival-style Mallette-Wilson-Maurice House (215 West Cameron Avenue), the c.1860 Scott-Smith-Gattis House (400 West Cameron Avenue), and the c.1860 Mason-Lloyd-Wiley House (412 West Cameron Avenue). Further, the extant stone well and brick-and-frame smokehouse located to the rear of the Mason-Lloyd-Wiley House are indicative of the types of outbuildings that contributed to the rural district in the nineteenth century.

Most development in the district occurred after the town limits were expanded in 1851 to include the area and after the University and town resumed growth in the decades following the Civil War. The late nineteenth-century development of the district was centered on West Cameron Avenue and Mallette Street, oriented more toward the small commercial district than to the campus. In the 1870s, David McCauley purchased land south of West Cameron Avenue and eventually laid out McCauley, Ransom, and Vance streets to extend the grid formed by those earlier streets.

Construction continued steadily through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries providing housing for many employees and faculty at the rapidly growing university and by 1915, there was substantial residential development along Cameron Avenue, McCauley Street, and Mallette Street, with a few houses sparsely scattered along Ransom Street. Lots along West Cameron Avenue and McCauley Street were fairly spacious and the houses widely spaced, while along Mallette Street development was more dense and the houses situated closer to the street.

The explosive growth of the University in the 1920s resulted in significant changes to the Cameron-McCauley Historic District, including the construction of University-related buildings west of South Columbia Street. A 1919 fire that destroyed three of the eleven on-campus fraternity houses led the University to purchase and offer undeveloped land, west of the campus, to the fraternities in exchange for their on-campus houses. The exchange of land led to the construction of Fraternity Court, which features five Colonial Revival-style brick buildings built between 1923 and 1928 by local contractor Brodie Thompson. "Little Fraternity Court," located around the corner on West Cameron Avenue feature three fraternity houses built between 1929 and 1932 and arranged around a grassy lawn. At least three... other individual fraternity houses were built during this period as well, including the impressive 1929 Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House (114 South Columbia Street) and the c.1930 Chi Psi Fraternity House (321 West Cameron Avenue).

During the 1920s, residential development in the district included the construction of additional houses along Wilson Street, on undeveloped lots on the north side of McCauley Street, and along Vance Street near the south end of the district. The subdivision of many of larger lots within the district to accommodate additional houses constructed along the main streets resulted in early-twentieth century houses interspersed with the limited nineteenth-century development. By 1932, the majority of development on Cameron, McCauley, Mallette, Ransom, and Vance was completed. Thus, as early as the mid-1920s, new construction was taking place to the west of the original neighborhood with smaller houses being constructed on the uneven terrain that extended west toward the rail lines, the University Laundry Department (later the University heating plant), and nearby Carrboro. By 1925, Patterson Place, a short east-west road between West Cameron Avenue and McCauley Street, was completed and along it were built closely spaced bungalows.

Like in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District, the rising popularity of the automobile in the 1920s changed the Cameron-McCauley Historic District in several ways, first by the modification of existing barns, sheds, or carriage houses to serve as garages. In other instances, homeowners constructed small, single-car frame garages at the rear of their properties. Further, houses constructed in the 1920s and later often had contemporary garages, mostly one-story, front-gabled buildings with materials and detailing that referenced the house.

The automobile also prompted new planned residential developments south of the Cameron-McCauley Historic District. Isaac W. Pritchard, who came to Chapel Hill with his brother William in the 1880s, purchased land south of McCauley's that was laid out as the Westwood development in 1928. The Forest Hills development (centered on Dogwood Drive) was platted in 1925, though was not largely developed until after World War II. Both developments feature lots arranged around a single loop road. Houses were constructed at a significantly lower density than those in the core of the historic district—more typical of suburban 1920s developments like Gimghoul—with large lots, more privacy, and a park-like setting. Both of these areas are just outside of the Cameron-McCauley Historic District, but represent the next stage of development in West Chapel Hill.

Residential development within the boundaries of the Cameron-McCauley Historic District extended through the early 1950s with modest single-family homes being constructed along the west side of Basnight Street, the 400-block of West Cameron Avenue, the west end of McCauley Street, and the west end of Patterson Place. The late nineteenth century also saw the construction of several apartment buildings and the subdivision of larger, early twentieth century houses to accommodate the growing student and faculty populations.

The district is roughly bounded by South Columbia Street and Pittsboro Street on the east and the properties on the south side of University Drive on the south. Properties on the west side of Ransom Street form the southwest boundary. The west side of the district is bounded by the University heating plant, the west end of West Patterson Place, and the west side of Basnight Street. The north ends of the residential development on Kenan and Mallette streets as well as the properties on the north side of West Cameron Avenue form the north boundary. Streets are laid out in a grid with the development of the neighborhood generally spreading from north to south beginning at the edge of the central business district and from east to west beginning at the west side of the UNC campus.

Streetscape and Landscape Characteristics

The lengthy period of development—with buildings and site features constructed from the late mid-1800s through the mid-1900s—of the Cameron-McCauley Historic District has resulted in a large and diverse neighborhood with a wide variety of building styles and sizes. Yet, despite the variation in building size and style, there is continuity of siting and landscape features, as well as consistent building sizes and setbacks within specific streets and blocks.

The landscape and development significance of the Cameron-McCauley Historic District is manifested in elegant streetscapes characterized by a consistent network of gravel paths, brick sidewalks, low stone walls, and tree-lined streets. As was typical of many upper-middle-class urban residential settings in the country at that time, the neighborhood streetscape was, and remains, characterized by a relatively dense collection of houses set back from the street shaded by a dominating tree canopy. The major thoroughfares of West Cameron Avenue and McCauley Street are framed with mature hardwood trees insulating pedestrians from passing traffic. Along the heavily traveled Pittsboro and South Columbia Streets, at the eastern edge of the district, large trees soften the presence of adjacent newer university construction. The south and west parts of the district have a more organic tree canopy, reflecting its later development on land that was historically more wooded. Trees also lessen the visual presence of existing overhead power and utility lines.

Sidewalks and various types of fences, hedges, and walls contribute to the orderly character of the neighborhood. Portions of early sidewalks are surfaced with "Chapel Hill gravel," a fine-grained

gravel that looks like sand. However, the sidewalks in the district have historically been, and remain, heavily traveled. Thus, sidewalks throughout the district, on at least one side of every road, have been paved with brick. Sidewalks parallel all streets in the district except Patterson Place, Wilson Street, and the portions of McCauley and Vance Streets and University Drive that extend west of Ransom Street.

Within the district, fieldstone walls are especially prominent along University Drive and Vance, Pittsboro, and South Columbia streets. Stone and brick walls along West Cameron Avenue are primarily limited to the front and side yards of the fraternity houses. Built of stacked and mortared stone, the walls mark the property boundaries at the sidewalk and sometimes serve as retaining walls, especially at the periphery of the district where the topography varies more significantly. The walls continue a pattern of stone wall construction that began on the UNC campus in 1838. Other delineating material such as the occasional mature boxwood hedgerows, wrought-iron and wood picket fencing, and low brick walls further define property lines and gardens. In the early 1920s, the 1882 “University Railroad” located at the western edge of the town was connected to the campus via a railroad spur built to deliver building materials for the many construction projects on the campus. While the railroad spur no longer exists there is a wide green space marking its location, extending east-west between West Cameron Avenue and McCauley Street.

The urbanized residential character of the district is typical of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century residential developments that developed gradually along narrow grid-pattern streets. Lots range in size from the gracious lots along West Cameron Avenue, McCauley Street, and South Columbia Street to the relatively small lots of the 1930s and 1940s development along Basnight Lane and the south side of Vance Street, the latter having been developed during a period of both tremendous growth for the University and scarcity of resources and materials because of the Depression and World War II. Thus, although lot sizes and setbacks vary, they tend to be consistent within a given block.

In contrast to the very regular arrangement of single-family houses facing the street with consistent setbacks are the collections of fraternity houses near the intersection of South Columbia Street and West Cameron Avenue. These are generally grouped with the fraternity houses facing each other across a grassy lawn or parking area, instead of facing the road. Their siting is derivative of the dormitory complexes, arranged around central quadrangles, built on the campus in the 1920s. Individual fraternity houses in the district, churches, and the Carolina Inn also have deeper setbacks and wider lots than most single-family houses in the district.

Architectural Characteristics

Architecturally, the Cameron-McCauley Historic District represents an intact collection of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, middle- and upper-middle class housing styles. Houses were constructed of both brick and frame and, for the most part, architectural styles illustrate nationally popular styles for the period in which they were constructed. The earliest, mid-nineteenth-century houses, located along West Cameron Avenue and Mallette Street, are vernacular I-house forms—two stories, three bays wide, and one room deep—with Greek Revival-style detailing. By the late 1800s and through about 1905, residents in the area constructed one- and two-story Queen Anne-style houses, mostly along McCauley Street.

**Add Sidebar that references the Architectural Styles section.

The majority of housing within the district was constructed between 1915 and 1932, during a period of significant growth in Chapel Hill. These include one- and two-story Colonial Revival-style houses, Craftsman-style bungalows, and in smaller numbers, Tudor Revival-style houses. In

rare instances, houses were designed by architects. Instead, as was typical in early-twentieth century middle- and upper-middle-class neighborhoods, most were designed by an owner-builder or ordered from a Sears catalog. Chapel Hill had a number of prominent builders—including Brodie Thompson—though the documentation of their work has largely been limited to their buildings on the UNC campus.

Institutional buildings, including fraternity houses and churches, were both larger and more architecturally distinctive than most single-family houses in the district, most having been designed by prominent architects of the time. The Arthur C. Nash-designed 1923 Carolina Inn stands prominently at the southwest corner of Cameron Avenue and South Columbia Street, its sweeping lawn allowing for a full view of the wide, Colonial Revival-style façade. Like the buildings constructed on the campus in the 1920s, the fraternity houses—many constructed by local contractor Brodie Thompson—were constructed almost entirely in the Colonial Revival style featuring symmetrical facades and classical entrances. The c.1930 Chi Psi Fraternity House (321 West Cameron Avenue) is the exception, a rare example of the Norman Revival style. The 1922-23, Classical Revival-style University Baptist Church (100 South Columbia Street), was designed by Frank P. Milburn who also designed six buildings on campus in the 1910s with the same characteristic tan brick.

While construction slowed in the 1930s, by the 1940s, the core of the district was largely built out and lots at the west and northwest parts of the district were developed with post-World War II Minimal Traditional-style houses and later with mid-twentieth-century Ranch houses. In some cases, collections of Minimal Traditional-style housing, like that on the west side of Basnight Lane, may have been speculatively built by a single developer, then sold or rented. For the most part, however, individual houses in these styles were constructed on the few remaining undeveloped lots scattered throughout the district.

Despite Chapel Hill's rich tradition of Modernist-style, architect-designed houses, the Modernist-style houses in West Chapel Hill are located west and south of the Cameron-McCauley Historic District. However, the 1974 State Employees Credit Union, designed by Don Stewart, stands prominently on the west side of Pittsboro Street, facing the UNC campus.

Apartment buildings have always been a part of the Cameron-McCauley streetscape. Property owners in this area had traditionally boarded students in their homes, but by the 1920s, separate apartment buildings had begun to be constructed. Thought to be the first apartment building in Chapel Hill, the Paulsen Apartment House (405 Ransom Street) was built in 1924 and contained four apartments concealed behind a symmetrical, Colonial Revival-style façade. In 1928, a Richmond, Virginia developer named Carter Simpson constructed the first large apartment complex in Chapel Hill. Graham Court Apartments (333-335 McCauley Street) consists of a pair of two-and-a-half-story brick buildings that face each other across a narrow courtyard, reflecting the siting of the fraternity houses in the district, but with a more frugal approach to land use. Smaller apartment buildings throughout the district, like the two-story, 1940s building at 200 McCauley Street, were designed, scaled, and sited to align with the adjacent single-family houses. Several vernacular, front-gabled frame duplexes at 400 ½ and 402 McCauley were built in the late 1940s or early 1950s, representative of the Minimal Traditional-style houses of the era. Finally, a one-story, brick apartment building at 416 West Cameron Avenue illustrates the application of a Ranch form to a multi-unit building.

Accessory buildings are common in the district, with many dating as early as the 1910s and 1920s. Garages are the most common type of accessory building in the district. Although the first automobile arrived in Chapel Hill in 1901, the first dealership was not founded until 1914 and

most garages were not constructed until after that time. The resulting one-story, front-gabled, frame garages are an important element of the district fabric as an indication of the advance of the automobile during the prosperous 1920s. The garages were frequently constructed with stylistic details that referenced the house and several 1930s and 1940s garages were even constructed of brick to reference the brick Colonial Revival main house. Another type of secondary building that alludes to the neighborhood's development history is that of tenant or guest houses to the rear of street-facing houses. Far less common than garages, most tenant/guest houses are one-story, frame buildings that are tucked behind the main house, constructed in the mid-twentieth century to house a growing population of students in Chapel Hill.

The acceleration of the town's population that began in the 1920s continued with the striking growth of the UNC campus and its enrollment beginning in the 1950s. The increase in students led to significant increases in the town's population in the 1960s, which in turn created a greater demand for rental housing than had previously existed. The few remaining vacant lots in the district were developed by the 1970s with single-family houses or small apartment complexes. Also common in the late twentieth century was the conversion of single-family houses to student apartments. While far less common than in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District, several early-twentieth century houses in the Cameron-McCauley Historic District were altered and enlarged for use by sororities in the late twentieth century.

The Cameron-McCauley Historic District was created by the Chapel Hill Town Council in 1990. The West Chapel Hill Historic District, with a similar boundary, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1998 and its boundary increased in 2019. The district has undergone a number of changes since 1990 including the conversion of single-family homes to student housing or institutional use; the reversal of that practice, returning houses to single-family occupancy; and the renovation and enlargement of countless buildings in the district.

Gimghoul Historic District

The Gimghoul Historic District, located east of the University of North Carolina campus, is a small subdivision of well-tended houses, developed in the 1920s and 1930s to provide needed housing for university families. It is significant as the first suburban housing development in Chapel Hill, located away from the city center and existing residential neighborhoods. The faculty subdivision was the entrepreneurial project of the secret Order of the Gimghoul, a fraternal society of male undergraduates, faculty, and alumni of the University of North Carolina. The Order of the Gimghoul, organized in 1889, purchased ninety-four acres southeast of the campus and including Prospect Point, a bluff near the present-day Gimghoul Castle that overlooked a large flat plain. The bluff was well known even in the early days of the town with an 1797 map of the town showing the main east-west route through campus as Piney (Point) Prospect Avenue. The east end of this path, which later became Cameron Avenue as it extended through campus, may have aligned with the present-day Gimghoul Road.

In the early 1920s, Gimghoul member and prominent real estate developer George Stephens of Charlotte supervised the development of a neighborhood on an approximately thirty-five-acre portion of the property. The neighborhood is centered on Gimghoul Road, which was laid out along a ridge that extends from the campus east to Prospect Point. The land slopes gradually down to the north and south before dropping off significantly to the north of Glandon Drive and east of the Gimghoul Castle and Prospect Point. This relatively flat plain is thought to have been used as a farm in the nineteenth century with loose-stacked stone walls in some parts of the district remnants of that early use. In 1923, the Order of the Gimghoul employed member T. Felix

Hickerson, an engineering professor at UNC and well-known road designer, to draw the plat for the neighborhood. The group sold lots in the new subdivision in order to finance the construction of their stone Gothic Revival-style castle, completed in 1927. The castle stands just beyond the east end of the Gimghoul Road, at the highest point on the property.

The Gimghoul Historic District is bordered by the UNC campus to the west. The dense forest of Battle Park forms the northern and eastern boundaries of the district. The south side is bounded by institutional property along Raleigh Road (NC 54). The street plan consists of two main streets, Gimghoul Road and Glandon Drive. Gimghoul Road extends along a level ridge, in a straight line from Country Club Road east to Gimghoul Castle. By contrast, Glandon Drive curves along the side of the hill that slopes down into Battle Park. Ridge Lane extends north from Gimghoul Road accessing the rear of properties on Glandon Drive. Evergreen Lane extends east-west between Gimghoul Road and Glandon Drive.

Streetscape and Landscape Characteristics

The chief design significance of the Gimghoul Historic District lies in the quiet harmony of the suburban streetscapes and the uniquely picturesque landscape setting. In addition to vistas of the adjoining dense forest to the north, the proximity of Gimghoul Castle at the east end of Gimghoul Road adds to the distinctive, romantic character of the district setting. The natural, rugged topography of Battle Park is reflected in the curvilinear plan of Glandon Drive, which winds over the hilly terrain. The district also retains a dense tree canopy, fieldstone retaining walls, and Chapel Hill gravel sidewalks.

The natural characteristics are set against the regular lot sizes—approximately one-half acre—and equally spaced houses. Some of the consistency of siting within the Gimghoul Historic District can be attributed to the restrictive deed covenants placed upon the lots at the time of the development and later modified, most recently in 1984. These restrictions require that building setbacks be a minimum of forty feet from the street and restrict the subdivision of lots by requiring that all lots have a minimum frontage of 100 feet and a minimum depth of 150 feet. Together with a concentrated period of development, these covenants contribute to a continuity of siting, design, and use that is not present in Chapel Hill's other local historic districts.

****Sidebar: Deed Covenants for the Gimghoul Historic District do not supercede current zoning regulations. Owners should consult both documents to ensure compliance.**

Gimghoul Road, the widest street in the district, is paved, curbed, and guttered. The sidewalks along each side of the road are surfaced with "Chapel Hill gravel," a fine-grained gravel that looks like sand. Rectangular lots with manicured lawns with lush landscaping flank this road. In contrast, Glandon Drive is quite narrow and though paved is without curb and gutter. Lots on Glandon Drive are typically wooded and irregularly shaped with houses set high above the street overlooking Battle Park. In contrast to the manicured lawns along Gimghoul Road, yards along Glandon Drive have naturalistic landscaping with ivy and natural ground cover. Ridge and Evergreen lanes are also narrow. With only four lots oriented to face the intersection of these two streets, their function is largely to serve as alleys or service roads accessing the rear of the lots on Gimghoul Road and Glandon Drive. Both lanes are paved but without curb, gutter, or sidewalks.

Throughout the district, lining the street frontages of almost every property are walls made of natural fieldstone. Some of the earliest, loosely piled stones may predate the neighborhood. The remaining mortared walls are said to have been built by local African American stone masons James Blacknell and Jesse Jones. The stone walls are a Chapel Hill tradition that began on the campus itself in 1838. They were so visually appealing to residents and fieldstones were so

plentiful in the area that stone walls were constructed throughout the town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The walls both unify the neighborhood and are characteristic of Chapel Hill as a whole.

Architectural Characteristics

Buildings within the Gimghoul Historic District are entirely residential, with the exception of Gimghoul Castle, and were constructed primarily from 1924 to the late 1930s. The earliest houses—those from the 1920s—are more eclectic in style and form. They include one-story and one-and-a-half-story Craftsman-style cottages and several larger, two-story, Colonial Revival-style houses. By the 1930s however, the design of houses was much more standardized in both form and style. Thus, the remaining lots were filled primarily with two-story, brick-veneered, Colonial Revival-style houses with standardized three-bay-wide facades. In addition to the consistent forms, the Colonial Revival detailing is more strictly authentic in the 1930s buildings than the looser revival interpretations of the 1920s. This was due in part to the success of Colonial Williamsburg in the 1930s.

In general, the early twentieth century suburban houses in the Gimghoul Historic District are modest, reflecting faculty incomes, in comparison to the more pretentious houses built at the same time by industrial executives in Durham's suburbs, such as Hope Valley. One of the earliest houses, the frame Dutch Colonial style house at 734 Gimghoul Road, is said to be a Sears & Roebuck house. However, most houses in Gimghoul were built from popular plans and constructed by area contractors, including Mr. Barber (Barbour), from Chatham County; Charlie Brooks, an African American from Chapel Hill; Charles Martindale, who was the general contractor for Gimghoul Castle; and contractors Tillman and Horner of Chapel Hill. Much of the brick masonry on the early houses was done by local African American brothers and masons Lewis and Tom Booth. A small number of the houses are architect-designed, though they tend to represent standard variations on the dominant Colonial Revival style and thus, blend easily into the streetscape. The only house that breaks with the traditional Colonial Revival-style precedent is 260 Glandon Drive, a c.1977 house with Modernist detailing including a low-pitched roof, deep eaves, and dark wood exterior that help the house to blend with its natural surroundings.

The subdivision is typical of 1920s developments and reflects the growing popularity of the automobile, both in the prevalence of garages in the district and in the location of the neighborhood away from the city center, necessitating an automobile for travel even within the town. Some of the houses have original detached garages while others have had attached garages added later. Most were one-story, front-gabled, frame or brick garages, frequently constructed with stylistic details that referenced the house. Garages constructed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are more likely to be attached to the house either directly or via a covered walkway or breezeway.

A number of small stone-veneer cottages were built on rear lots in the 1930s or early 1940s and served as “studies” for the university professors that lived there. However, only one of these, located adjacent to Evergreen Lane, remains. The restrictive covenants for the development limit development to one single-family home per lot, allowing only for a “light housekeeping apartment.” While written to allow for an on-site housekeeper in the upper-class development, the growth of the University through the mid- and late-twentieth centuries has led to the conversion of these small apartments, and the construction of additional apartments, to student housing. The restrictive covenants define a housekeeping apartment as “a room or group of rooms forming a separate habitable unit used or intended to be used for living and sleeping purposes by one family with or without independent kitchen facilities,” thus allowing for this unintentional use. Most of these apartment units are located within a rear wing or attached to a garage.

The Gimghoul Historic District was created by the Chapel Hill Town Council in 1990. The same district was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1993. The district has undergone a number of changes since 1990 including the demolition of several resources (including the Chapel of St. Thomas More and the house at 704 Gimghoul), the construction of new buildings on those two sites, and the renovation and enlargement of countless buildings in the district.