

The Morehead Inn

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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February 25, 1985

The extremely successful Charlotte entrepreneur Charles Campbell Coddington hired local architect William Peeps to design a home pattern after Mrs. Coddington's family residence in Western Pennsylvania. The resulting two-story clapboard home with green tiled roof has graced the northwest corner of East Morehead Street and Berkeley Avenue since 1917. Built with colonial revival detailing and symmetrical H-shaped plan, the Coddington House still stands as an excellent example of early twentieth-century architecture. The house and its out building have recently been renovated and are being used as a country inn named "The Morehead Inn".

The original front facade faced East Morehead Street and today looks very much as it did in the early twentieth-century. The design's strongest feature is its symmetry, emphasized by the two gabled wings flanking a spacious terrace. The roof of each wing is contained within the second story and a large chimney is centered within the end of each wing. Located between the first and second stories, connecting the wings is a short sloping roof, which shelters the entrance door and the two large flanking windows and with a slight extension, designated the doorway. The windows of the facade, as well as the original ones vary in size, but are characterized by many small rectangular panes, wooden frames, and delicate decorative shutters.

In 1980, a 3,000 square foot addition was built onto the back of the original house to create more room for an insurance company. This addition extends the length of the house and fills in the rear of the H-shape. The addition is also of the Colonial Revival style and easily blends in with the original design without copying it. According to a plan drawing filed in "William Peeps Papers" in the Special Collections of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Library, the addition replaced a first story terrace similar to the one in front of the house, a second story balcony and a two story porch on the western corner of the home.

Although symmetry is an overall theme in Peeps' design, the side facades are not identical. Both have gable ends and two first story windows in their front wings; however, the rest of the openings and architectural elements are varied to accommodate interior planning. The southeast facade, that faces Berkeley Avenue has a side door flanked by two windows and a sloping overhang supported by two simple, delicate round columns in the middle of its main section. Directly above this portico is a triple window. A small window is located higher and to the front of it. On the back wing of this facade, the first story contains two large casement windows. Above these windows is one typical window. All of these opening appear to be original. The last bay on this side is part of the addition. It contains a first story door and one second story window.

The main section of the northwest façade has a first story double window and two typical second story windows. The back wing has a simple, thin chimney near the main section plus a first and second story window near the rear. The last bay, which contains only one-second story window, is part of the addition. The original interior plan and architectural features reflect the exterior colonial revival design. However, while the first floor plan follows the concept of symmetry closely, the second floor deviates slightly from true symmetry. Many early architectural elements are still in good condition. Most of the original architectural elements appear to be intact, including the staircase and its ornamentation, flooring, woodwork, mantles paneling, wainscoting, and molding. Most of the original doors and frames still exist within the home. In the sleeping suites, however, fire panels have been applied to the back of each door to meet fire code requirements. A Czechoslovakian chandelier has hung in the Great Room since the early 1940's. The 1980 addition's interior does not detract

from the 1917 design. It presently houses various suites, a first floor conference room and a second floor sitting room.

The Great Room is located on the first floor in the center of the house and is presently similar to the original room, with no apparent structural alterations over the years. It has direct access to all the first floor living spaces, both interior and exterior, except the pantry. The southeast side entrance was probably the main entrance, and is still used as such. The entrance hall gives an impressive view of the large Great Room as one enters the inn. The grand U-shape stair is located in this area so that it may present an elegant view to those in the Great Room. As one enters the house, a half-bath was once located underneath the stairs to the left and a closet to the right. Today, the half bath is located to the right, with the left door closed and that area used as a private bath.

The Library, which is located on the first floor of the east wing, also has been altered only slightly at all. It is still being used as a Library. The north wing contained the Dining room, and still does, again without major alterations. According to Peeps' plan, the chimney on this side of the house was fake, built only to complete symmetry in the exterior design. Also on the first floor, the sun parlor, know as the Solarium room today located in the south wing, is now being used as bedroom suite. Only a few minor alterations have been made in this room. The original kitchen was located in the west wing of the first floor. This area now contains private bath and a laundry room. The servants' stair, which is still in use, was located next to the kitchen. The original pantry, located between the Dining Room and the Kitchen, has been converted into a modern kitchen. However, all openings seem to be original.

The second floor originally consisted of four bedrooms, three bathrooms, two sleeping porches, a balcony and a hallway. The original baths have been renovated and four new bathrooms have been created. Two balcony suites, a new balcony, a new upstairs parlor, a new sunroom, a new bedroom suite, and another hallway have been formed. All the heating units on the second floor have been moved to the attic to allow space for bathrooms. At the end and to the right of the hallway an original cedar closet with sliding shelves and drawers is an interesting architectural detail still being used today. Today, two outbuildings exist on "The Morehead Property". A gazebo house built near the back addition, away from Berkeley Avenue in 1980. It is now being used for storage and outdoor entertaining. Next to the gazebo house is a building constructed in 1920 as a three-car garage apartment. It was converted and expanded into a 2,200 square foot private residence in 1976. Today, the upstairs has two bedroom suites for rent along with a full bathroom. The first floor has a kitchen, dining area along with a den type living room with a stone fireplace. Besides the apartment, there are also two bedrooms to the back of the house. One of them has a king size antique brass bed, along with French doors leading out into a private fenced in area. The other is a smaller room decorated in antique golf motif.

It is difficult to discern how much of the surrounding site has changed since 1917. Many trees and shrubs, however, seem to be quite mature and most probably existed early in the twentieth century. The early driveway was probably entered from Berkeley Avenue, then called Coddington Avenue. This driveway was expanded in 1980 to create several small parking areas scattered through out the back and Berkeley Avenue side of the home.

The Coddington House, which totals 9,300 square feet, sits in the historic Dilworth area. Today, modern commercial buildings with little if any architectural or aesthetic value threaten East Morehead's early architecture. Along with many other fine residences, the home built next to the Coddington House, which was built by one of Mr. Coddington's friends and also designed by William H. Peeps, has already been destroyed. The Coddington House is an example of an older building being used successfully in our modern society without losing its historic ambiance.