

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Horner Houses (Earl Horner House and Charles Horner House)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 304 and 308 North Fisher Street not for publication

city, town Burlington vicinity of

state North Carolina code 37 county Alamance code 01

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Earl B. Horner, Jr. / Evelyn Paul

street & number 908 Fugate Avenue / 308 North Fisher Street

city, town Charlotte /Burlington vicinity of state North Carolina

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alamance County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Graham state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architectural Inventory of Burlington has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981-82 federal state county local

depository for survey records N.C. Division of Archives and History

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina

7. Description

BOTH HOUSES

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Although each of these houses has its own lot today, the single large tract upon which the Earl Horner and Charles Horner houses were constructed continues to remain evident in the uniform terrain and landscaping of the two lots. Both houses are set back far from the busy street on level ground that is the second of two terraces that gently recede from the sidewalk. Flights of concrete steps ascend from the sidewalk to each of the houses. Four very large hardwoods enframe the Earl Horner House at its corners, and both houses have a moderate amount of foundation planting, concentrated in both cases at front corners of the houses. At the southwest corner of the Earl Horner House lot, a curbed driveway leads from North Fisher Street, curving around the back of the two houses to re-connect with the street at the southeast corner of the Charles Horner House lot; each house has a subsidiary loop or parking area for turning around and a four-car garage at the rear of the property between the two houses is shared by the occupants. Together, these aspects of the site enhance the individual architectural values of the Earl Horner and Charles Horner houses, each of which is a handsome example of a style popular in the 1920s.

The two-story Earl Horner House is readily identified as a bungalow in its overall horizontal emphasis enhanced by the characteristic deep overhang of the eaves. Resting on a brick foundation above a partial basement, the house exhibits an irregular configuration with numerous short gabled wings projecting from the south and west elevations. This multiple gabled roofline, which includes on the main elevation a first story gable taller than the rest, is the most distinctive exterior feature of the house, due in part to the upward flair of the peak of each gable. The other distinctive aspect of the roofline is the separate gable front roof covering the second story which is a simple rectangular form, much smaller than the first story, projecting above the lower level like a monitor. All of the roofs are covered with asphalt shingles. Most of the gables feature two simple triangular brackets at the sides and a molded beam projecting at the bottom edge of the peak.

Two chimneys also project from the roofline. One is a rectangular stack near the rear of the house that projects from the interior of the first story to run along the exterior of the second story and pierce the overhang to end with a single decorative band of brick. The other chimney is an exterior double-shouldered type on a wing of the west elevation. This, too, pierces the overhang, in this instance at the peak. With the exception of these brick chimneys, all of the elevations are sheathed in the molded boards known as German siding. Every facade of the house is broken by windows--single and double, and in banks of three and four--totalling approximately forty-five.

The focal point of the main facade is the attached gable-roofed porch with the typical bungalow elements of tapered box posts on brick piers and a railing with simple rectangular balusters in between. Here, the most decorative aspect of the exterior is found in the treatment of the gable: In the absence of a flat porch ceiling, the beams on the underside of the gable roof take on an ornamental character with their slightly projecting, bevelled ends, and the open gable is filled with a sort of Oriental-looking lattice of smaller horizontal and vertical beams that also are bevelled at the end. Between the two short wings on the west elevation, there is another porch, with identical railings between the brick piers but without a roof.

Unlike many bungalows which often feature Colonial Revival detailing on the interior, the Earl Horner House is a full-blown example of the mode inside as well as out. Again, the orientation is horizontal, with low ceilings and, in the communal rooms on the first floor, an open, flowing plan. Continuing the Craftsman theme of the front porch, the living room and dining room ceilings are covered with encased intersecting beams. These two rooms are separated only by two approximately five-foot-tall partitions that project a few feet from each wall to leave a wide passageway in between. At the top corners of each partition, a squat tapered box post helps support a heavy architrave.

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The partitions actually are cabinets with leaded glass doors. Larger built-in cabinets, also with leaded glass doors and reaching almost to the ceiling, are located in the dining room and the study. The doorway to the study, off the living room, is wide, with pocket doors. The fireplace, in the living room opposite the pocket doors, is entirely tapestry brick with corbelled pendants supporting a heavy wooden shelf. Tall wainscoting with recessed vertical panels and a heavy molded chair rail runs throughout the living room, dining room and study. Throughout the interior, the baseboards are tall and plain and the door and window surrounds are simple posts and lintels with a single band of molding across the top.

The Charles Horner House next door both contrasts to and compliments the Earl Horner House in its Spanish Colonial styling which incorporates certain elements of the bungalow mode with the boxy, more compact form typical of the Colonial style. This two-story house resting on a brick foundation above a full basement is similar to the Earl Horner House in its solid construction and fine workmanship exhibited in its detailing. The Charles Horner House, of platform frame construction sheathed in rough-cast stucco, is a large cubical form, with a shallow two-story, three-sided bay on the main facade and a single, one-story porch extending from each elevation. A low hipped roof rises above the second story, and the front and side porches are flat-roofed with a permanent, hipped awning. At all rooflines, the deep eaves with dozens of exposed rafter ends, often bungalow features, here take on a somewhat exotic flavor in combination with the more distinctly Spanish stuccoed walls and red terra cotta tile on the roof. There are two tall and plain stuccoed chimneys--an interior one toward the rear of the house and an interior end chimney rising from the east elevation.

Similar to the Earl Horner House, the Charles Horner House also is characterized by a plethora of windows-- sixty-six in all. With few exceptions, the windows are double-hung sashes, with five or eight narrow vertical panes above a single pane. The three principal porches feature plain piers supporting shallow arches, all stuccoed, with a wooden railing and simple rectangular balusters in between. The east porch, originally screened, has been enclosed as a sun porch. The front and west porches, which remain open, are joined by a common terra cotta tiled floor that wraps around a corner of the house; their plaster ceilings are carefully finished with coved crown molding and circular modillions from which brass and glass lamps are hung. The front door is flanked by single-paned sidelights. Semi-circular steps lead to the door to the rear porch, originally open and now enclosed.

The finishing of the front and west porches forms a prelude to the extremely fine detailing of the spacious and elegant interior. All of the rooms are high-ceilinged, with plaster walls, coved crown molding, three-part door and window surrounds, and circular ceiling modillions in the principal rooms. Again, a few traditional bungalow elements, such as the tapestry brick fireplace in the living room, contrasts to the more typically Colonial Revival detailing throughout most of the house.

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The two-room-deep house is in a modified center hall plan. At the front of the house, enormous living and dining rooms flank the wide center hall. Wide doorways between rooms tend to open up the plan. A partition, similar to the one in the Earl Horner House with its tapered box posts and cabinets with leaded glass doors, separates the living room and center hall. A doorway with double french doors leads from the hall to the dining room. French doors, either double or single, also lead to the side porches and appear at the rear of the center hall and between the den and living room. All of the panes in these doors are bevelled. Behind the center hall there is a cross hall with a three-run staircase to the second floor. Beyond the stairhall there is a third, smaller hall with access to the den and to the kitchen, behind the dining room and the breakfast room. Efficient circulation is created by this succession of halls.

8. Significance

BOTH HOUSES

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

(304) (308)

Specific dates c. 1921; 1924 Builder/Architect 308: Leila Ross Wilburn

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Charles Horner House and Earl Horner House, built side by side on a single large tract, are apt reflections in their respective period revival and bungalow styling of personal achievements that epitomized Burlington's great strides between the 1910s and 1930. The Charles Horner House is Burlington's only example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, and the Earl Horner House is an unusual example of the full-blown bungalow mode in its interesting form and detail and ample size. These houses complement and enhance each other by their placement on a terraced tract. More importantly, the two brothers for whom they were built were leaders of Burlington during its most progressive period, in addition to operating a successful manufacturing company. Charles Horner was an active member of the Burlington School Board from 1923 to 1937, and Earl Horner was Burlington's mayor from 1919 until his death in 1944. Mayor Horner engineered Burlington's development with numerous projects, including reservoir and sewer construction and street and sidewalk paving.

Criteria Assessment

- B. The Horner Houses were built for two brothers: Charles Horner was the directing force of the Pearson Remedy Company and an active member of the Burlington School Board from 1923 to 1938. As Burlington's mayor from 1919 until 1944, Earl Horner guided the city in its most impressive period of development with such essential projects as the construction of sewer lines and street paving.
- C. The Horner Houses are very fine examples of the full-blown bungalow mode and the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

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Historical Background

As distinctive examples of popular styles erected for two brothers prominent in local business and civic affairs, the Horner Houses are notable reflections of Burlington's early twentieth century prosperity. Built in the 1920s for Earl and Charles Horner, these houses represent the rapid growth and development between the mid-1910s and 1930 that yielded a sizeable increase in Burlington's housing stock. The full-blown bungalow and handsome Spanish Colonial Revival style house built side by side on a spacious tract were fitting dwellings for the two brothers who not only established a successful manufacturing business, but also played vital roles in the city's government and school system.

In a 1928 collection of biographies, Charles M. and Earl B. Horner are described as members of a well known family of businessmen and manufacturers in Burlington.¹ Born in Orange County, North Carolina in 1875 and raised in Person County, Charles Horner was the first of seven brothers to establish himself as a Burlington businessman. In 1903, after working in the timber business for several years, he opened a general merchandise store which he operated in a frame building at the corner of Webb Avenue and Tucker Street until 1914.² In 1902, Charles' younger brother Earl B. Horner, born in 1882, moved from Person County to Burlington where he worked for seven years as a laborer for the Virginia Bridge & Iron Company. During this time, he completed a correspondence course in civil engineering. From 1909 to 1912, Earl was chief draftsman for the Carolina Engineering Company, and then southern representative and general sales manager of the Joliet Bridge Company until the 1920s, when he resigned to devote full attention to his mayoral duties.³

One year prior to leaving his general merchandise business, Charles Horner had spearheaded the establishment of the Pearson Remedy Company in Burlington. With his brothers Earl and Edward, he had founded the patent medicine company in a frame building near the tract upon which the Horner Houses later would be built. The company's two most popular products were Baseball Liniment and Indian Blood Purifier.⁴

The business quickly expanded and within a few years, operations were moved into the two-story brick building that remains standing behind the two houses. (The property upon which this building sits originally was part of the large tract that Charles and Earl purchased and later sub-divided after they built their houses.⁵) Charles continued to be the most active director of the Pearson Remedy Company as its general manager, secretary and treasurer; Earl and Edward were president and vice president, respectively. By the late 1920s, the company's products were being sold in ten states by more than 1,000 representatives.⁶ In the early 1940s, Charles bought his brothers' interests in the firm. After his health began to fail around 1944, his daughter Eleanor carried on his duties. Charles Horner died in 1951 and his family sold the Pearson Remedy Company to an out-of-state firm in 1956.⁷

In the midst of their active business careers, Charles and Earl Horner became prominent in local politics. Although Charles Horner never ran for office, he maintained a keen interest in Burlington's political affairs and served for a while as a member of the Alamance County Board of Elections.⁸ Stronger than his interest in politics was his abiding civic concern for education. During Charles Horner's service on the Burlington School Board from 1923 to 1938, three schools were constructed in the city. The extent of his interest in education is perhaps most evident in his sending of his three daughters to college at a time when higher education for women was still relatively uncommon in Burlington.⁹

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Earl Horner's civic activities were more widely known than those of his brother. On June 15, 1919, Earl Horner was first elected mayor of Burlington, an office that he held for twenty five years, through five re-elections. Winning his first election as a "dark Horse" (an "unknown") candidate, Earl Horner succeeded in leading Burlington's government "during the most progressive era in the town's history."¹⁰ His effective leadership reflected in minimal opposition in his re-election campaigns, has been hailed as a major factor in Burlington's development.¹¹ He guided Burlington's growth (including the expansion of the corporate limits which almost doubled the town's population) by engineering such projects as construction of a much-needed large reservoir, laying twenty miles of sewer lines, and the paving of streets and sidewalks. One of the best-known stories about his accomplishments concerns the extension north of the railroad tracks of Main Street: The City's fight with Southern Railway was resolved one night when a mysterious explosion blasted a pathway for the extension.¹² Earl Horner's abilities were recognized by two of North Carolina's governors: In 1931, Gov. Max O. Gardner appointed him a member of the State Tobacco Commission and of the North Carolina Local Government Commission, and in 1933 Gov. J.C.B. Ehringhaus continued the latter appointment.¹³

Shortly after Earl Horner married in 1920, he selected the plans for his large bungalow. Although his bungalow is unique in Burlington for its size, form and detailing, the existence of an identical house in Greensboro, North Carolina, appears to confirm the assumption that Earl Horner turned to stock plans for the design.¹⁴ By the 1910s, bungalows had achieved widespread popularity throughout the country. Bungalows originated in the craftsman ideals formulated in the second half of the nineteenth century and were widely publicized beginning around 1900 with New Yorker Gustav Stickley's periodical, The Craftsman. Most generally characterized as a low, gabled house with bracketed eaves, the bungalow was versatile due to its informal plan, elevation and detail. It could be readily adapted to a simple laborer's house or a roomy, finely crafted and carefully detailed house for a prosperous businessman and aspiring civic leader, as in the case of Earl Horner's house. Within a few years, the bungalow became "an omnipresent builders' house," promoted by hundreds of articles, builders' books and advertising.¹⁵ It is likely that Earl Horner selected his house from a magazine or a builders' guide, to which he may have been directed by his contractor.

In contrast to the bungalow, the Charles Horner House is more evocative of a specific style in its blocky symmetry and its detailing. At the same time that bungalows were gaining popularity, taste was growing for the period revival styles, which also were promoted through many magazines and builders' guides. The period revival styles, however, in their particular detailing based upon study of earlier established styles, were considered to be more academic or correct, having been established with designs by such nationally known architects as McKim, Mead and White. By the 1910s, period revival style houses generally were becoming eclectic, referring to various styles in their configuration and applied ornament. With its symmetrical neo-classical form, stuccoed walls and tile roof reminiscent of Spanish architecture, and introduction of Craftsman details on the interior, the Charles Horner House is an excellent example of this development.

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More is known about the construction of Charles Horner's house than of his brother's next door. The blueprints for the house, in the possession of its current owner, are labelled "Leila Ross Wilburn, Architect, 304-5 Peters Building, Atlanta, Georgia--#97," indicating that they were stock plans ordered by mail.¹⁶ According to Charles Horner's daughter, Earl saw the plans and encouraged his brother to build the house so that he could accommodate his expanding family in style. In early 1924, Charles Horner hired Burlington carpenter D. Edward Clapp to build the house, which was occupied in January, 1925. Charles Horner selected the best materials for his house, such as seasoned lumber shipped by rail. Painstaking attention was paid to the construction, including hand finishing of all of the hardwood floors by Ralph Kirkpatrick.¹⁷

In addition to the distinctiveness of its Spanish Colonial Revival style, the Charles Horner House also was notable at the time of its construction for its advanced technology. Among other features, pipes were run through a refrigerator on the back porch so that children could drink ice water from the outside spigot. Both of the Horner Houses also were ahead of their time in the placement of their telephone lines underground.

Earl Horner's house remains in the possession of his children, who rent it to one of their cousins. In 1955, Charles Horner's widow and children sold their house to Mrs. Evelyn Paul, who continues to reside there today. Neither house has been significantly altered by its later occupants.¹⁸

NOTES

(Some of the data on these buildings was compiled by Allison Harris, who conducted the architectural inventory of Burlington.)

1 North Carolina: Rebuilding an Ancient Commonwealth, Volume III (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1928), pp. 485-86 and 544.

2. Ibid., p. 544; and interview with Mrs. DeWitt Vaughan, daughter of Charles Horner, by Claudia P. Roberts in Burlington, N.C., February 1983.

3 North Carolina, p. 485.

4 Interview with Mrs. Dewitt Vaughan.

5 Ibid.

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6 North Carolina, p. 544.

7 Interview with Mrs. DeWitt Vaughan.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 North Carolina, pp. 485-85; and "Mayor Horner Dies Here Following Heart Stroke; Veteran Carved Course for Bigger, Better City," Burlington Daily News, 1944.

11 "Mayor Horner Dies Here..."

12 Ibid.; and Staley A. Cook, "Earl B. Horner: A Brief Sketch of the Man," privately printed in 1931, pp. 13-14.

13 "Men of Affairs" in the Public-Industrial Life of Burlington and North Carolina (Burlington: D.C. Johnson, 1941), p. 7.

14 Interview with Mrs. DeWitt Vaughan.

15 William H. Jordy, Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Twentieth Century, Vol. 3 of American Buildings and Their Architects (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1972), p. 225.

16 Interview with Mrs. Evelyn Paul by Claudia P. Roberts in Burlington, N.C., February, 1983.

17 Interview with Mrs. DeWitt Vaughan.

18 Ibid.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property each is less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Burlington, N.C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7					
6	4	0	7	4	0	
3	9	9	5	9	4	0

 (304)

B

1	7					
6	4	0	7	6	0	
3	9	9	5	9	8	0

 (308)

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

304: Block 86, Lot 50 - Burlington Tax Maps, Map #26

308: Block 86, Lot 72 - Burlington Tax Maps, Map #26

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claudia P. Roberts

organization Consultant to the City of Burlington

date March 15, 1983

street & number 425 South Lexington Avenue

telephone (919) 227-3603 Ext. 79

city or town Burlington

state North Carolina

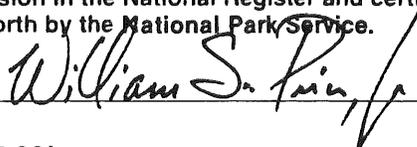
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date November 16, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



