

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Mecklenburg	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Philanthropic Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Davidson College Campus

CITY OR TOWN:  
Davidson (Ninth Congressional District, The Hon. Charles R. Jonas)

STATE North Carolina	CODE 37	COUNTY: Mecklenburg	CODE 119
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Davidson College

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Main Street

CITY OR TOWN: Davidson	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Mecklenburg County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Charlotte	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1934  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:  
East Capitol and Independence Avenue S.E.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D.C.	CODE 11
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)			(Check One)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Like the companion structure it faces (Eumenean Hall), Philanthropic Hall is a small but strikingly monumental two-story rectangular brick building three bays wide and three bays long, with the second level expressed as a piano nobile. A handsome prostyle tetrastyle portico dominates the main (northwest) facade. The brick walls are laid in both Flemish and common bonds, with Flemish bond employed on the sides and upper section of the main facade, and common on the rear and the lower portion of the facade.

At the first level, the main facade is divided by four plain, heavy stuccoed brick piers that rise from slightly projecting bases, and support the Doric columns above. The two flanking bays at the first level are filled with a brick screen wall above a high stuccoed water table. The central bay is of brick recently covered with stucco and features a large, open round-headed arched entrance accented only by a plain keystone, inscribed "Philanthropic Hall, 1837." This entrance provides access to the concealed stair that rises on each side behind the brick screen walls in two flights to a central entrance landing on the floor above.

At the second level, which is separated from the first by a granite stringer, a massive column rises above each of the four piers. Corresponding full-height corner pilasters with simple molded caps occur at each end of the facade. The tympanum of the well-proportioned pediment is covered with horizontal flush weatherboards. The main central entrance, located at this level, consists of a double door, each leaf marked by a long flat panel, flanked by ten-pane sidelights above small flat panels. A large fanlight extends over the door and sidelights. The entire entrance is framed by wide fluted pilaster strips with roundel corner blocks supporting a lintel marked by a central rectangular panel containing a Greek fret pattern. Flanking the entrance are large windows containing six-over-nine sash and featuring stone sills and wooden lintels surmounted by a row of headers. They are fitted with louvered blinds.

The sides of the building are divided into three bays by full-height stuccoed pilasters that repeat the design of the corner pilasters. The head of an iron tie rod running through the building is visible in each pilaster. Each bay is marked at both levels by windows like those flanking the main entrance. In the northeast side is a central basement entrance with a two-light transom and a granite stoop. The rear of the building is not pedimented, but the cornice returns slightly. Dominating this facade is a fine Palladian window at the main level. The two narrow windows in the basement have been bricked up, and an entrance has been added. The roof at the rear is pierced by two interior brick chimneys that flank the Palladian window.

The main floor of Philanthropic Hall houses one large hall, which is ornamented with fine classical trim. It is bounded by a wide molded baseboard and a delicate plaster cornice. A large plaster medallion containing concentric rings of acanthus, rosebud and palmette motifs, located in the center of the ceiling, reappears in quarter sections in the corners of the room. The outer acanthus ring of the quarter section carries around the room in front of the molded cornice. Suspended from the medallion is a

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crystal chandelier, made in France and exhibited in the New York Crystal Palace in 1853. The plain chimney breasts project slightly into the room on either side of the Palladian window, which is framed, like the other windows, with a simple molded architrave.

During its 1956 conversion to office use, the basement interior was apparently complete renovated. The present Greek Revival mantel and baseboard adorned with tiny dentils are not original.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering          | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry             |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention            | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature           |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

From the earliest days of Davidson College until the turn of the twentieth century, student life and government centered around two debating groups, the Eumenean and Philanthropic societies.

The Concord Presbytery voted to establish an institution of higher learning in western North Carolina on March 12, 1835; on August 25 the presbytery resolved to purchase two tracts of land in Mecklenburg County from William L. Davidson; and on the following day they voted to name the school Davidson College in honor of Davidson's father, William Davidson, a revolutionary war hero. The college began exercises March 1, 1837, and by the end of that year a number of buildings had been constructed on the new campus.

Less than four months after the college opened, Philanthropic (familarly called "Phi") Society held its first meeting (June 22), and within the first year had enrolled thirty members. For many years most meetings of the organization were held in a room in the Chapel. The two societies, secret and formal in nature, were primarily debating organizations, but they had a much more important influence than their avowed purpose might suggest. Society rules were very strict about the behavior of their members, imposing fines for fighting, swearing, intoxication, or "lying to the faculty." There were "vigilance committees" for reporting offenses. Since nearly all students were members of one society or the other, "student government really dates from the beginning," with the regulation of behavior coming from the two societies. It is said that "around the two halls centered college loyalty and affection." They provided excellent libraries and financed almost all the annual commencement activities.

In November, 1842, Eumenean members decided to erect a hall of their own, and in January of the following year members of the "Phi," also wishing to construct their own building, met with them to confer about the design of the two buildings. Despite long rivalry between the two societies, a spirit of cooperation accompanied the planning and construction of the halls. It was decided that "each Society should act independently, but that the halls should be 'alike in size, material, and magnificence,' and cost \$1,500 apiece." Sites were selected December 14, 1848, and construction began soon afterward. The two halls were designed to complete the original open-ended quadrangle plan of the campus. Eumenean on the west and Philanthropic on the east are two-story pavilions with tetrastyle pedimented porticos. Their

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design as well as their position at the end of the quadrangle, with one-story dormitory "rows" between them and the axial Chapel, gave the campus an appearance similar to the more elaborate quadrangle at the University of Virginia, designed by Thomas Jefferson.

Philanthropic Hall was dedicated on February 16, 1850, with an address by the Reverend W. W. Pharr. Once the building was completed, considerable efforts and money were expended to furnish it suitably. A local innkeeper, Mr. H. P. Helper, was dispatched to New York to purchase furniture for the Philanthropic Hall, and he was instructed "not to get red curtains in any shape or form." On April 8, 1854, a "committee of correspondence" was asked to write to Columbia and request a Mr. Standly "to purches for us a chandelier suitable for this hall." On June 3, the society minutes recorded that the money for the chandelier was being sent to Columbia, and two weeks later a bill to a Mr. McNeely "for putting up our chandelier" was to be paid. It is said that the chandelier was made in France, a duplicate of the one under which Napoleon III was married to Eugenie de Montigi in 1853. According to an 1876 account, the duplicate was "exhibited at the Royal Palace [probably the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace] in London in 1851, and afterwards sent to New York and exhibited there in the Crystal Palace in 1853." This latter exhibition failed, and the chandelier (which still hangs in "Phi" Hall) was one of the items sold to pay off debts.

The two societies continued to dominate student life, although the Civil War brought a lengthy "adjournment sine die." The post-war difficulties of the University of North Carolina led to its students being dispersed all over the state. Some came to Davidson in the fall of 1868, and a number of them joined the Philanthropic Society and "at once set about its rehabilitation, with a new and ampler constitution and laws modeled after those of the Dialectic Society to which they had belonged at the University. The Society at once took on new life and influence in the student-body."

The revitalized societies flourished after the war but toward the end of the century their dominance of the student body began to wane somewhat. The colors of the two societies--pink (Eumenean) and blue (Philanthropic)--had always combined to make the school colors, but in 1895 the students voted to adopt crimson and black as Davidson's official colors. Debating had long been the exclusive territory of the societies, but in 1907 Davidson students began taking part in intercollegiate debating. During the nineteenth century nearly all students had belonged to one of the societies, but by 1920 the members of the two societies included only thirty-five per cent of the students. In the twentieth century, a wider variety of organizations have given student life a greater diversity. The two societies no longer run campus affairs, but they continue to use their original halls as literary societies. In 1956 Philanthropic Hall was restored and remodeled.

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Philanthropic Hall is one of the primary landmarks of the Davidson College campus. Built by a society that played a dominant role in the college from its founding, the structure has been used continuously for its original purpose. The wisdom of the early building committee in stipulating that there be a degree of freedom in the details of the two halls but that they be "alike in size and magnificence" is displayed in the pleasing relationship of the two facing buildings that complete the original quadrangle. Like its companion structure, Philanthropic Hall exhibits the subtle play of simple, massive, classically-derived forms that characterize the best of the Greek Revival style. In size and basic configuration it is like Eumenean Hall, but differences in detail introduce a satisfying degree of variation.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Boyer, Mary. "Philanthropic Hall," 1971. An unpublished report in the (Survey) files of the State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Mecklenburg County Records, Mecklenburg County Courthouse, Charlotte, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Mecklenburg County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		35°	29'	57"
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "		80°	50'	47"
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 3/4 Acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Survey and Planning Unit Staff, John B. Wells, III, Supervisor

ORGANIZATION: State Department of Archives and History DATE: 29 November 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:  
109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name H. G. Jones

Title Director, State Department of Archives and History

Date 29 November 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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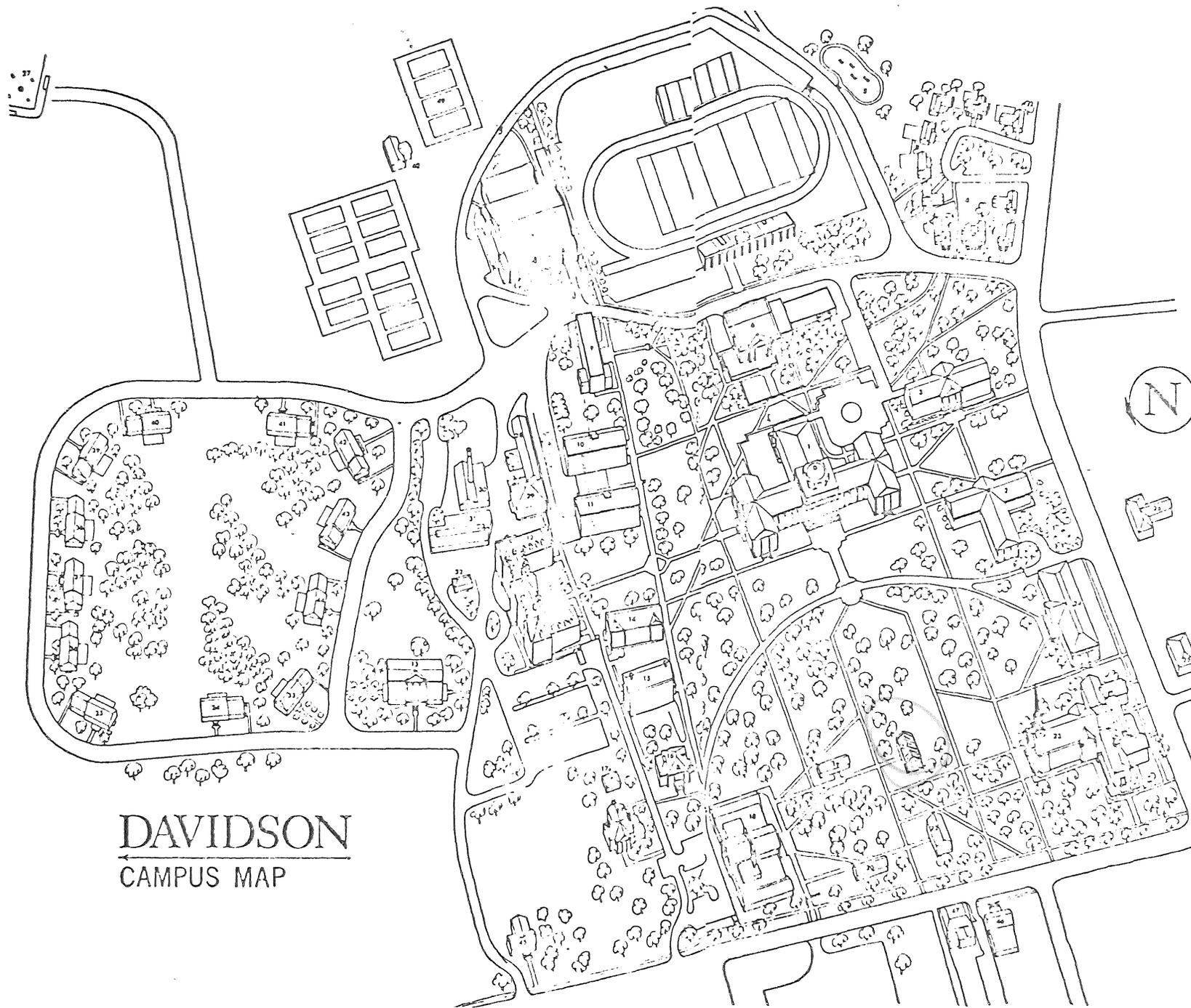
(Continuation Sheet)

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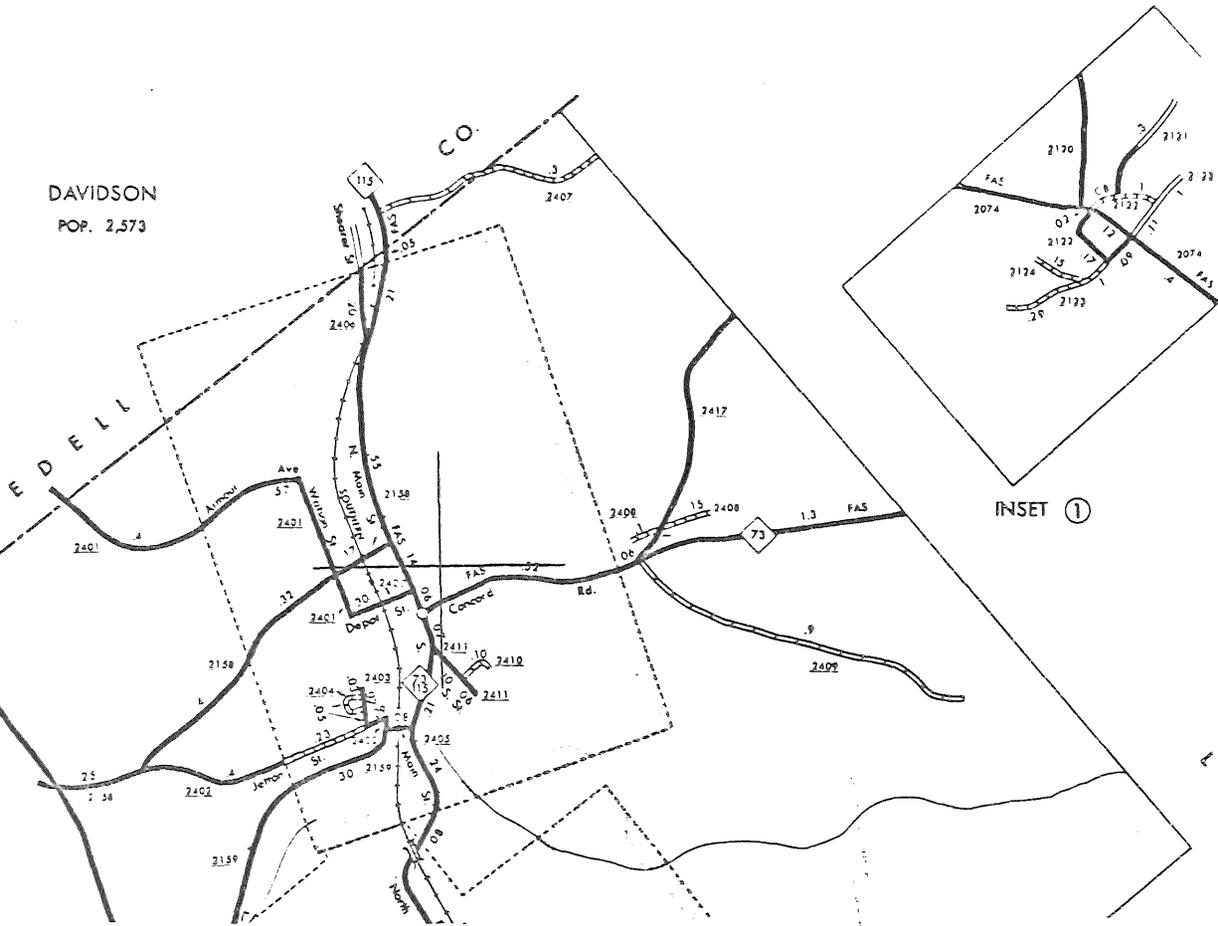
Shaw, Cornelia Rebekah. Davidson College. New York: Fleming H. Revell Press,  
1923.



- 1 Chambers Building
- 2 Grey Memorial Library
- 3 Martin Science Building
- 4 F. L. Jackson Court
- 5 Hobart Park
- 6 David Owens College Union
- 7 Richardson Field
- 8 Johnston Gymnasium
- 9 Duke Residence Hall
- 10 East Residence Hall
- 11 J. Archie Cannon Residence Hall
- 12 W. H. Barr Residence Hall
- 13 Richardson Residence Hall
- 14 Watts Residence Hall
- 15 E. H. Little Residence Hall
- 16 Guest Home
- 17 President's Home
- 17A Carriage
- 18 J. R. Gresham Music and Fine Arts Building
- 19 Elm Row
- 20 Oak Row
- 21 Richardson Hall
- 22 Humanities Hall
- 23 College Presbyterian Church
- 24 Dana Science Laboratories
- 25 Old Medical College
- 26 Preyer Infirmary
- 27 Baseball Diamond
- 28 Shop (mechanical)
- 29 Shop (carpentry)
- 30 Steam Plant
- 31 Laundry
- 32 Security Office
- 33 Pi Kappa Alpha
- 34 Sigma Nu
- 35 Kappa Sigma
- 36 Phi Delta Theta
- 37 Sigma Alpha Epsilon
- 38 Alpha Tau Omega
- 39 Pi Kappa Phi
- 40 Sigma Chi
- 41 Beta Theta Pi
- 42 Kappa Alpha
- 43 Sigma Phi Epsilon
- 44 Phi Gamma Delta
- 45 Martin Manor
- 46 Davidson Post Office
- 47 Carolina Inn
- 48 Stowe Tennis House
- 49 Tennis Courts

DAVIDSON  
← CAMPUS MAP

DAVIDSON  
POP. 2,573

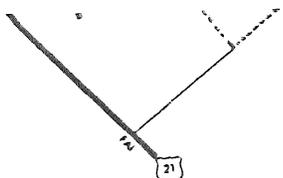


Philanthropic Hall  
Davidson College Campus  
Davidson, North Carolina

*MK 17* *Mecklenburg Co*

State Highway Commission Map of Mecklenburg County  
Scale: County: 1/2" / 1 mile; Enlarged Municipal Areas: 2" / 1 mile  
January, 1961

Latitude	degrees		minutes	seconds	Longitude	degrees		minutes	seconds
	35°	29'	57"		80°	50'	47"		



CORNELIUS  
POP. 1,444

