

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Mary Duke Biddle Estate**

Durham, Durham County, DH0846, Listed 1/9/2013

Nomination by Betsy Gohdes-Baten

Photographs by Betsy Gohdes-Baten, April 2009



Street façade view



Entrance façade view

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: BIDDLE, MARY DUKE, ESTATE

other names/site number COBB, JAMES O., HOUSE; PINECREST

2. Location

street & number 1044 and 1050 WEST FOREST HILLS BOULEVARD. not for publication N/A

city or town DURHAM vicinity N/A

state NORTH CAROLINA code NC county DURHAM code 063 zip code 27707

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

MARY DUKE BIDDLE ESTATE  
Name of Property

DURHAM COUNTY, NC  
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>14</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

10

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single dwelling  
Domestic Secondary structure  
Agriculture Horticultural facility  
Recreation Sports Facility  
Landscape garden

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single dwelling  
Domestic Secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TUDOR REVIVAL  
MODERN MOVEMENT  
MODERNE  
CLASSICAL REVIVAL  
FRENCH ECLECTIC

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
CONCRETE  
walls BRICK  
STUCCO  
WOOD  
roof SLATE  
other COPPER

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

MARY DUKE BIDDLE ESTATE  
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1927, 1935-1960

Significant Dates

1927

1936

1947

1950

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

BIDDLE, MARY LILLIAN DUKE

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

CARR SR., GEORGE WATTS; BOCK, KARL

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

MARY DUKE BIDDLE ESTATE  
Name of Property

DURHAM COUNTY, NC  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.562

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet) See continuation sheet.

1 17 687580 3984060  
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title BETSY GOHDES-BATEN

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date February 25, 2012

street & number 3508 WEDGEWOOD COURT telephone 434-293-5552

city or town KESWICK state VA zip code 22947

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items  
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name JAMES D. B .T. SEMANS

street & number 1415 BIVINS STREET telephone 919-493-5591

city or town DURHAM state NC zip code 27707

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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Mary Duke Biddle Estate  
Durham County, North Carolina

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**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:**

The Mary Duke Biddle Estate is located at 1044 and 1050 West Forest Hills Boulevard along the western edge of the fashionable early-twentieth-century Forest Hills subdivision in the City of Durham, North Carolina. It is one of two major residential properties in Durham owned by descendants of tobacco mogul Washington Duke (1820-1905) and is situated prominently on land that rises to a plateau above Forest Hills Park.<sup>1</sup> Comprising 8.562 of the 13.17 acres assembled during the mid 1930s and 1940s by Mrs. Biddle, the estate is an irregular parcel of land bounded by Kent Street on the west, neighboring properties on the north and south, Westwood Drive on the southeast, and Forest Hills Boulevard and Forestview Street on the east. Fences delineate roadside boundaries, and forested groves and bamboo thickets largely obscure the buildings, structures, and grounds from view.

Set back several hundred feet from Forest Hills Boulevard and Forestview Street atop an east-facing hill, "Pinecrest" the focal point of the estate, is a large and handsome Tudor Revival dwelling designed by Durham architect George Watts Carr Sr. in 1927 for Forest Hills developer James O. Cobb. From 1935 through 1958, extensive additions and interior renovations made to the dwelling for Mrs. Biddle under the direction of New York designer Karl Bock included Colonial Revival, French Eclectic, Oriental, Art Moderne, and Art Deco elements.<sup>2</sup>

Bock also made plans for Mrs. Biddle's auxiliary housing and recreational and landscaping needs. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, he designed and supervised the construction of one additional dwelling, and designed or planned for the installation of three outbuildings and nine structures that contribute to the historic character of the property.<sup>3</sup> The Cottage (5) at 1044 West Forest Hills Boulevard, constructed in the English Cottage style, compliments the original Tudor Revival style of Pinecrest. A much smaller dwelling, it has an attached garage and was constructed near the northeast boundary of the property to accommodate servants and automobiles. A gasoline pump (6) was installed adjacent to and west of the garage. A cast iron picket fence with two ornamental gates (7) was erected along West Forest Hills Boulevard.<sup>4</sup> Two large brick arches (2 & 3) were erected northwest and southwest of Pinecrest to mark the beginnings of footpaths that interconnect on the grounds of the estate. A picnic area with a stone fireplace and a nearby wading pool fed by streams that emerge from stone-lined grottoes (4) were created northwest of Pinecrest in a grove of trees. A recreational

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complex with a bathhouse (8) tennis court (9), a swimming pool (10), and a stone fireplace (11) was constructed southwest of Pinecrest near the west boundary of the estate. An extensive pergola (12), a gardener's cottage with an attached greenhouse (13) and a storage garage (14) were added west of the dwelling along Kent Street. Ornamental shrubs, small fountains, birdbaths, and statues dot the estate though an elaborate rose garden once situated west of the house no longer exists.

Two non-contributing structures, a contemporary metal storage shed installed northeast of the storage garage (15) and an early-twentieth-century playhouse recently placed in a garden northwest of Pinecrest (16) do not distract from surrounding historic resources.

Pinecrest, The Cottage, the gardener's cottage and greenhouse, the gardener's garage, the swimming pool, the bathhouse, and the tennis court are listed on the National Register as contributing within the Forest Hills Historic District (NR 2005).

**Contributing Resources:**

**1. Pinecrest, the Cobb-Biddle House:**

Large wrought iron gates border a paved drive opening from Forest Hills Boulevard that winds along a hillside among mature trees and landscaped grounds to "Pinecrest," the handsome centerpiece of the Mary Duke Biddle Estate. Pinecrest is set on the crest of the hill overlooking Forest Hills Park to the east.

**Summary Description of Original Plans:**

The dwelling now called Pinecrest was among Durham architect George Watts Carr Sr.'s most ambitious projects. Designed as a Tudor manor for James O. Cobb in 1927, Carr planned a large two-story main block and a short one-story hyphen that attached a one-story garage on the north. Drawings show a rambling frame structure on a brick-veneered concrete foundation with exterior walls of brick veneer set in a running bond. There are stucco accents on the south, east, and west elevations. The dwelling is capped with a gable roof of varying heights covered in asphalt shingles. Carr supplied a storage attic in the main block, a habitable attic over the hyphen and garage, and a small utility basement beneath the hyphen.

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Long east and west elevations give the dwelling a dominant horizontal mass relieved through the use of cross gables, semi-hexagonal bays, dormers, foyers, and porches.

Shallow cross gables at the south end and in the approximate center of the main block and a one-story garage at the north end divide these elevations visually into six sectors. From south to north, visual sectors comprise the south cross gable, the entry, the central cross gable, the north end of the main block, the hyphen, and the garage. South and north elevations are shorter with fewer embellishments and without sector divisions.

Excepting the north elevation, fenestration is asymmetrical, though windows on the east and west elevations are often organized in symmetrical segments within the various sectors. Windows are multi-paned wood-framed casements arranged as singles, pairs, in banks, and on semi-hexagonal bays. Window groups form discontinuous bands on the east and west elevations. Major entries are opposite one another on the east and west elevations, and secondary entries are located on the west and south elevations. Gable peaks display rectangular ventilators and those on the garage are embellished with pigeonholes. There are two chimneys: the larger and primary chimney has two flues topped with clay pots, and rises from the roof above the south cross gable, and the smaller chimney has a single flue and clay pot, and adjoins the north end of the main block on the west elevation. Carr's interior drawings detail spacious floor plans and bold Tudor decoration.

**Summary Description of Renovations and Additions:**

Mary Duke Biddle purchased the Cobb dwelling in 1935, soon giving Pinecrest its distinguishing name, and making arrangements for elaborate additions and renovations with New York designer Karl Bock.<sup>5</sup> Knowing his client's preferences, many of Bock's changes resembled those he had previously conceived for Linden Court, Mrs. Biddle's home in Irvington, New York.<sup>6</sup> Between 1936 and 1940, Pinecrest was transformed as large glass-walled Moderne rooms were constructed on the south and east elevations, the garage became a kitchen, and extensive decorative modifications were made to the north and west elevations and on the interior. When completed, the dwelling included 8,935 square feet.



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The exterior of the Pinecrest was painted pink and the original asphalt shingle roofing was replaced with multi-colored slates. With few exceptions, six-by-six and eight-by-eight frame windows were replaced, most with one-by-one metal-framed casements having a single-pane transom, and in several locations, with copper-roofed oriels. Many windows were flanked with wood-panel shutters having cast iron shutter dogs styled as clusters of grapes, and on the south and west elevations, a number of second story windows were accented with planter boxes having leaf-shaped metal bracket supports. Iron railings and other metal accents installed around the house featured a grapevine motif.

During this period, Bock also implemented major interior changes. A spacious kitchen was created in what had been the garage, and the original kitchen was reconfigured to include a laundry room. Decorative details, too, received attention. In the living room, dining room, library, and other rooms, Tudor features were stripped away and replaced with opulent fabric and leather wall coverings, paneling, and printed wallpapers. Antique doors, oriental fretwork, marble mantels, and elaborate chandeliers graced the newly refurbished interiors.

Later years brought additional renovations. In 1947, an imaginative pink-themed master bedroom suite was created. In 1950, a long porte cochere was constructed to enhance the front entry and a bathroom was added in the servants' quarters. In 1955, an elevator was installed north of the main stair halls with operating mechanisms concealed in a rooftop addition. Finally, in 1958, a festive dressing room was added on the south elevation.<sup>7</sup>

**East Elevation:**

**Original Plan:**

Carr intended the east elevation, overlooking Forest Hills Park from the crest of the hill, to be the front of the dwelling. He organized fenestration in nine bays on the first floor and eight on the second, and utilized cross gables, multiple roof levels, and varied wall planes to create six visual sectors.

At the south end of the east elevation a shallow cross gable extends several feet from the main block with windows organized on a central two-story, semi-hexagonal bay surmounted by a rectangular ventilator on the gable peak. Adjoining the south cross gable, the entry sector is

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capped by the dwelling's highest roof that slopes down over the second story to engage a shallow entry porch with chamfered and braced wooden supports. A window and a massive batten door with metal strap hinges on the first floor are surmounted by a shed dormer with stucco walls and three windows off-center on the second floor. North of the entry sector, a central cross gable has symmetrical fenestration with a one-story semi-hexagonal bay surmounted by two windows on the second floor, and a rectangular ventilator on the gable peak. Recessed from other sectors of the main block, the north end of the main block has a shed-roofed extension that spans the first floor and symmetrical windows in two bays on both floors. Its roof, lowest of the two-story sectors, terminates in a clipped gable facing north. A narrow one-story hyphen connects a one-story garage to the main block at the north end of the east elevation.

**Renovations and Additions:**

In 1937, the east elevation was radically remodeled, and became the rear of the dwelling. The south semi-hexagonal bay, and the entry foyer and porch were demolished, and a new porch, curving around from the south elevation, was abutted to a Moderne one-story music room constructed of glass section walls for Mrs. Biddle's piano. The music room's walls formed a prominent half-oval south of the entry and continued in a straight line paralleling the house across the entry to abut the central cross gable. At this time, the entry was modified to accommodate an arched double-leaf walnut door with prominent bulls-eye center panels.

At the north and south ends of the music room, double-leaf glass-panel doors blended with the walls and opened onto an east terrace. Decorative cast iron inserts with grapevine motifs were set at regular intervals among the glass panels. A shallow overhang extending from the roof of the music room featured cast iron supports and spandrels that continued the grapevine theme and anchored an awning that could be spread over the terrace. On the west wall of the music room, a large rectangular opening, created when the south bay was removed, led into the living room.

Above the music room on the second floor, the dormer was removed and a brick wall constructed to close the gap between the south and central cross gables. A metal-framed, double-leaf glass door surrounded by sidelights and a transom was installed to serve a new roof terrace above the music room. A cast iron railing along the extremities of the terrace

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repeated the grapevine motif. Two metal-framed casement windows, placed at regular intervals, lighted the master bedroom and a guest bedroom. Concurrently, the bay on the central cross gable was modified with metal-framed casement windows, and the dwelling was expanded on the north end sector of the main block to include a glass-walled breakfast room with the grapevine-motif cast iron supports and spandrels and copper-clad flared roof. A roof terrace with grapevine railing was created above the breakfast room.

In 1955, a rectangular Tudor-styled addition was constructed on the roof of the north end of the main block to conceal the operating mechanism of an elevator installed on the interior. Stucco half-timbered walls facing east display a double-leaf door with six-by-six lights in each panel and a flanking pair of eight-by-eight windows above a half-oval balcony with grapevine railing. Set along the roof of the central cross gable, a brick tower containing the elevator machinery resembles a massive chimney and is ornamented with a large script "B."

The east elevation of the main block showcases Karl Bock's innovative designs while the east elevations of the hyphen and garage are much as George Watts Carr Sr. designed them. The hyphen retains an original wood-framed, six-by-six casement window offset north of center that is changed only by later-added shutters, and the garage retains an original pair of six-by-six casement windows on the first floor and a large wooden birdhouse with pigeonholes arranged in a triangular pattern on the gable peak. A replacement metal casement window serves the attic of the garage.

**North Elevation:**

**Original Plan:**

Carr's north elevation is the eaves end of the garage, and is shown on his drawing with shallow profiles of cross gables on the east and west elevations. Fenestration on the north elevation of the garage is symmetrical; windows are organized in two bays with a pair at each end of the first floor, and in three bays with singles spaced evenly across a large gable-roofed wall dormer centered on the attic.

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**Renovations and Additions:**

In 1936, and first among his many renovations to Pinecrest, Karl Bock created a large kitchen in the space that had been the garage. At about the same time, an elaborate ornamental chimney was constructed in the center of the north elevation and decorated with a four-tiered scalloped fountain along a stepped base. The chimney rises two stories to surround and define the center window in the attic dormer and extends a tall stack above the gable peak. Windows remain in their original locations but all are replacements. Copper-roofed oriel windows now flank the chimney on the first floor, and one-over-one double-hung sash windows on the dormer are fitted with air conditioners and have paneled shutters on east and west ends.

**West Elevation:**

**Original Plan:**

Carr's west elevation was to be the rear of the dwelling and less elaborate than the east elevation. He retained sector divisions and heights of the east elevation, but varied cross gable projections by several feet and arranged fenestration differently. On the west elevation, fenestration is irregular with seven bays inclusive of two garage doors on the first floor, six bays on the second floor, and a large two-story semi-hexagonal bay with windows spanning both floors on the central cross gable.

Drawings show the garage extending at the north end of the west elevation with two large panel and glass automobile doors surrounded by heavy timber framing and surmounted by a window in the attic and pigeonholes on the gable peak. The hyphen is set back several feet from the garage and features a paneled and screened entry door off center toward the north flanked by narrow screened windows with arched lentils. The smaller of the dwelling's two chimneys rises from the roof of the hyphen and adjoins the north end of the main block. In the same wall plane as the hyphen, the north end of the main block has windows on both floors offset to the south; these are organized as a three-window bank on the first floor and in two bays, each with a single window, on the second floor. The central cross gable extends several feet beyond the north end sector, ornamented by a two-story semi-hexagonal bay above which a ventilator is centered on the gable peak. Recessed between the central and south cross gables, the west entry sector displays a small one-story shed-roofed foyer and porch offset to

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the north and with chamfered, braced, wooden supports. Curvilinear niches in the brickwork flank a heavy batten door identical to that of the east elevation. Other fenestration is irregular; on the first floor, a small window is south of the foyer, and on the second floor, a pair of windows overlies the foyer, and a single window overlies the first floor window. At the south end of the west elevation, the south cross gable extends several feet from the main block. Here a pair of windows is centered on both floors and a rectangular ventilator is above on the gable peak. As on the east elevation, the roof of the south cross gable flares over the south-facing porch, but the porch is set back several feet from the gable end.

**Renovations and Additions:**

The west elevation became the front of the dwelling in 1936-37, and Karl Bock's alterations were chiefly focused on the garage, the roof of north end of the main block, and the entry.

In 1936 as a kitchen was created in what had been the garage, Bock removed the automobile doors. Timber framing around the periphery of both openings was retained as the lower half of each doorway was filled with brick and the upper half with a bank of five six-light casement windows. The attic window was replaced and most of the birdhouse was demolished to permit installation of a large rectangular ventilator on the gable peak.

A heavy plank door having decorative strap hinges on the hyphen is original but glass was installed in windows flanking the door, and to give the entry more emphasis, a flared sheet copper roof was added overhead.

Between the hyphen and the central cross gable, the rooftop addition housing the elevator mechanism spans the north end of the main block. On the west elevation, it forms a shed dormer with a central oriel window and stucco half-timbered walls behind which the elevator tower stands off center toward the south. Elsewhere on the north end sector, windows were replaced and flanked with shutters, and on the first floor, covered with a broad awning.

Carr's design is preserved on the central cross gable that, on the west, extends a few feet beyond the north end sector and is ornamented with a dramatic two-story semi-hexagonal bay. Beneath a metal roof, stucco panels crown four-light transoms set over tall casement windows with lights in double rows that descend in increasing lengths across the bay from north to south. On the north side of the bay, an eight-light casement is set at an oblique angle

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to three central casements that progress from ten to fourteen lights and are set at an oblique angle to a sixteen-light casement on the south side of the bay. An original ventilator surmounts the bay on the gable peak.

The entry sector, in contrast, is much changed. Ca. 1937, the doorway was reconfigured with an arched double-leaf walnut door like that on the east elevation, and single-pane windows were installed to replace the niches. Other windows on the entry sector were replaced, on the first floor by an oriel with a copper roof and on the second floor by metal-framed casements with shutters. In 1940, a one-story vestibule framed with heavy timbers was extended across two-thirds of the entry sector sheltering the door and niche windows. Spaces between the timbers were filled with glass block and plate glass panels, and inside walls were lined in a composite ashlar block with shell inlays.

In 1950, a circular fountain in front of the entry that had been an earlier Bock-designed installation was demolished, and a long porte cochere with braced timber supports and a colored-slate roof that matched the roof of the house was extended from the vestibule over a then-realigned driveway west of the dwelling. The underside of the roof featured light-colored stucco panels spaced at regular intervals between heavy exposed timber framing and trusses.

The west face of the south cross gable is little altered except that windows have been replaced with metal-framed casements and enhanced with shutters. An awning extends over windows on the first floor and a planter box has been installed beneath the windows on the second floor. The west facade of the Hawaiian room, added on the south elevation in 1937, abuts the southwest corner.

**South Elevation:**

**Original Plan:**

Shown on his plans together with shallow profiles of features on the east and west elevations, Carr's south elevation comprises the eaves end of the south cross gable. Here the roof flares over an engaged one-story porch having chamfered and braced timber supports that spans all but a narrow section of the wall. Above the porch and set back on the roof, there is a large stucco gable dormer. Fenestration is irregular; there are three bays inclusive of two entry



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doors on the first floor, four bays on the second floor, and a rectangular ventilator on the gable peak.

**Renovations and Additions:**

In 1937, the south elevation was renovated extensively. The porch posts were removed, the porch roof was modified, and a Moderne Hawaiian theme room was constructed. As an elongated rectangle spanning the first floor, it featured glass panel walls and rounded glass-panel corners. At the east and west ends of the Hawaiian room, double-leaf entry doors of glass accented by glass block walls on the north mirror one another. A one-story porch having cast iron supports, spandrels, and copper gutters, all with grapevine motifs, was extended from the Hawaiian room around the southeast corner of the dwelling and over part of a newly-enlarged flagstone terrace on the east.

A fanciful dressing room was built out from the gable dormer above the Hawaiian Room in 1958. Glass and metal panel walls of increasing heights were stepped out from the gable face atop the roof of, and partially cantilevered over, the Hawaiian room. Oblique angled glass-panels made clipped corners to compliment the rounded corners of the Hawaiian room below. Planter boxes with decorative raised circles were placed beneath the front and corner walls of the dressing room, and a large louvered triangular ventilator was installed on the gable peak.

West of the dressing room, a small portion of the original wall remains on the second story, though ca. 1937, the window in that location was replaced with a metal-framed casement.

Today, the south elevation is just as Karl Bock designed it except that an automobile accident ca. 1950 required that the rounded glass-panel at the southwest corner of the Hawaiian room be replaced. Short straight panels of glass were installed to affect the appearance of a curve when a duplicate of the original window was not available.<sup>8</sup>

**Original Floor Plans and Interiors:**

George Watts Carr Sr.'s floor plans show rooms organized along an irregular T-shaped hall on the first and second floors. On the first floor, a spacious east-west center hall divides a large

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living room and a powder room from a dining room and a grand stair hall. A narrower intersecting hall connects the library at the south end of the house with the kitchen and garage at the north end. The dining room adjoins a serving pantry on the north and a service porch in the hyphen contains an incinerator and connects the kitchen and the garage. Opposite the service porch on the east side of the hyphen, an ironing room adjoins but does not open into the pantry. At the north end of the dwelling, the two-car garage has closets and storage space along the east wall.

On the second floor the east-west hall divides a large master suite of two bedrooms, a shared bath, and a dressing room from a guest room and stair halls that serve the attic and the first floor. The intersecting hall provides access to a small bath and a fourth bedroom on the north with access to servants' quarters of two bedrooms, storage closets, a bathroom, and a stair to the kitchen and service porch.

Interior detail elevations show round-arched entries to the living room, dining room, and library, and paneled walls and wainscoting in these rooms. Heavy paneled cabinetry was planned for the kitchen.

**Interior Additions and Renovations:**

Major interior renovations on the first floor were made between 1936 and 1940. In 1936, a kitchen was created in the space that had been the garage, and a bath and storage closet added along its east wall. The original kitchen became a laundry room, and the pantry was expanded into the ironing room and furnished with French country cabinetry.

During the next four years, Tudor detailing was removed from the house as interior remodeling progressed, and Colonial Revival, Oriental, French Eclectic, Moderne, and Art Deco elements were combined in an elegant décor. Elliptical arched entrances to the living room and dining room and library from the hall were fitted with Oriental fretwork and antique doors having Oriental motifs and floral paintings. The living room received a light tone-on-tone silk wall covering, glass chandeliers, and an antique French mantel of carved white marble flanked by floor-to-ceiling fluted wooden pilasters. Carved Oriental fretwork enhanced the entrance to the music room. The dining room was given an Art Deco motif as fabric and leather wall coverings and concave corner cabinets of the Biedermeier style were

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installed. Several of the cabinets were constructed to conceal heating units in their bases. In the library, pine paneling was installed and then replaced in the 1950s with intricate wallpaper taken from a notable New York residence.<sup>9</sup> A marble mantel similar to the one in the living room was placed in the library. The main stairwell was accented with a Moderne aluminum railing made by the P. A. Fiebiger Company of New York.<sup>10</sup> A large antique Dutch warming stove at the foot of the stairs and a floral-carved marble mantel at the head of the stairs made notable decorative accents.<sup>11</sup>

The Moderne glass-walled additions were variously decorated, the music room conservatively, but the Hawaiian room and the breakfast room with bold imaginative details. The Hawaiian room featured a Bruce laminate tile floor,<sup>12</sup> a decorative frieze with large circles and squares in relief, lumaline lighting on the periphery of a lattice-paneled ceiling, and a large plastic tube with an aluminum door that opened onto a circular staircase leading to the master bedroom. Two original exterior doorways, now on the north interior wall of the Hawaiian room, were modified; the entry to the library was enlarged and fitted with double-leaf glass doors, and the entry to the living room was reconfigured as an elliptical arch having four-glass-panel folding doors. The breakfast room was made festive and colorful; interior walls were covered with mirrors and bright floral wallpaper and the floor paved with Bruce laminate tiles.

Second floor interiors were renovated over a longer period. In 1947, the east bedroom became the sole master bedroom and was enlarged to include what had been the dressing room.<sup>13</sup> An adjoining bath at the east end of the hall became a closet. The décor emphasized Mrs. Biddle's favorite themes and colors; bold scenic wallpaper was installed and pink-tinted glass mirrors were placed on the doors of closets constructed along the west wall. Chandeliers of purple and yellow crystal grape clusters interspersed with dangling crystal pendants and glass finials were hung from the ceiling. A fireplace was installed and accented with a modern glass-block hearth and a fluted aluminum mantel. The bathroom, originally shared by the east and west bedrooms, was refurbished with pink floral wallpaper, pink fixtures, and blue tile, and was closed on the west to serve the master bedroom alone. The bedroom received national attention when it was featured in *Interior Design Magazine* in 1960.<sup>14</sup>

The west bedroom was also modified in 1947. The fireplace was closed off as closets were installed on the east wall and a bath was created in the space formerly occupied by closets on

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the west wall. Lastly, doorways leading into the hall and stair hall were accentuated with fluted pilasters and arched louvered transoms.<sup>15</sup>

In 1950, a second bath was added to the servants' quarters replacing closets at the head of the kitchen stairs.<sup>16</sup> In 1955, the laundry room and a bedroom north of the stair hall on the second floor were partitioned and an elevator was installed. Frame walls placed opposite the elevator on both floors made narrow hallways joining the laundry room and stair hall downstairs and the stair hall and what became a sitting room upstairs.<sup>17</sup>

The final addition was made in 1958 as the glass-walled dressing room was added over the Hawaiian room, and its ceiling painted in vibrant pink and white stripes to resemble the interior of a carnival tent.<sup>18</sup>

**Integrity statement:**

In 1960, Mrs. Biddle's daughter, Mrs. Mary Semans (1920-2012), inherited Pinecrest. Mrs. Semans and her son, James, the current owner, have carefully preserved the dwelling as Karl Bock designed it; all of its architectural features are intact and most of its furniture and works of art are as Mrs. Biddle left them.

**Other contributing resources are:**

**Near Pinecrest:**

**2. Northwest Brick Archway:** Constructed between 1936 and 1940, a tall ornamental brick archway bordered by brick pilasters frames the northern entry to paths that interconnect among the estate's lawns, gardens, and forested groves. A concrete cap and block-lined entry are visible though the archway is largely covered with an overgrowth of vines.

**3. Southwest Brick Archway:** Constructed between 1936 and 1940, a brick archway identical to #2 is entirely obscured by vines and marks the entrance to the recreational complex southwest of Pinecrest.

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**North of Pinecrest:**

**4. Grottoes and Picnic Fireplace:** Constructed between 1936 and 1940, Karl Bock designed a secluded picnic area in a grove of trees where two fieldstone-lined grottoes channel the waters of a spring into a small wading pond near a flagstone terrace that contains a large fieldstone fireplace with a central chimney stack flanked by grills. An overgrowth of vegetation now largely obscures the grottoes and pond.

**Northeast of Pinecrest:**

**5. The Cottage:** A second gated entrance off West Forest Hills Boulevard serves a caretaker's house constructed in 1935-36 that is called "The Cottage." Designed by Karl Bock, it is a one-and-a-half story English cottage of 2,160 square feet with a one-story three-bay garage of 936 square feet attached on the west elevation.<sup>19</sup> The Cottage is frame, covered by a brick veneer laid in a running bond, and capped by a side gable roof of multi-colored slates. A tall brick chimney with a terra cotta cap rises from the roof at the juncture of the main block and the garage. Like Pinecrest, The Cottage is painted pink. The dominant facade of The Cottage is the south or front elevation of its main block where fenestration is arranged in four even bays. Three casement windows flanked by shutters and an entry door surmounted by a canopy form a line from east to west on the first floor. Directly above these, four wall dormers rise over the eaves, each with a window similar to the ones below. The adjoining garage is set back from the front of the main block and a shallow ell extends at the rear or north elevation of the dwelling.

Inside, The Cottage is divided into four rooms on the first floor and seven on the second. Except that repairs to the first floor ceiling were necessary in the mid-1970s, the interior has been little altered and original components are in place. In 1976, The Cottage served as the Durham Junior Women's Club's Designer Show House, and during the mid 1970s, the garage housed studios for the Duke University Art Department. The Cottage has been well preserved and was awarded the Historic Preservation Society of Durham's 1983 prize for adaptive reuse. It presently houses family offices and the headquarters of the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation.

**6. Gasoline Pump:** Next to the west wall of The Cottage's garage, a gasoline pump of late 1930s vintage has been preserved with original dials and hoses intact. To match the adjacent

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dwelling, it has been painted pink.

**7. Boundary Fence and Ornamental Gates:** In 1936, Karl Bock commissioned a tall wrought iron picket fence and gates from the P.A. Fiebiger Company of New York to define the estate's eastern boundary.<sup>20</sup> The fence comprises sections of alternating twisted and square pickets that are secured by upper and lower rails and anchored by square posts. All are capped with pointed finials and set atop a low stepped brick wall having a concrete cap. The fence follows Forest Hills Boulevard for 30 feet where stately gates ornamented with double scroll design elements and anchored by high brick pilasters topped with lanterns flank the drive to Pinecrest. The fence continues along Forest Hills Boulevard for 75 feet where identical gates mark the entrance to The Cottage, and then extends along Forest Hills Boulevard and Fairview Street for 445 feet. The overall length of the fence, including the two sets of gates, is 590 feet.

**Southwest of Pinecrest:**

Low stonewalls, latticed fences, and gardens line a recreational complex southwest of Pinecrest designed by Karl Bock in the early 1940s. Here a bathhouse built against a concrete and stone retaining wall faces east and opens onto a large in-ground swimming pool surrounded by a wide brick patio that is bordered by gardens on the north and south and a sand-filled area creating a beach on the east. Above the bathhouse, a tennis court protected by a high woven wire fence is accessed by stone stairs built into the retaining wall on either side of the bathhouse. A fieldstone fireplace adjoins the patio southeast of the bathhouse. Contributing Resources in this area are:

**8. Bathhouse:** A one-story frame Bathhouse of 390 square feet constructed in the early 1940s, is set into a retaining wall west of and behind it. It is capped with a flat roof of brick that serves as a terrace overlooking the swimming pool and that is bordered by a simple cast-iron railing. A notable concrete and brick sundial is set into the terrace. The east or front elevation

of the Bathhouse is asymmetrical with two six-light windows, an entry door, a space, a single-light window, and a six-light window arranged in a row from south to north. A full-facade frame porch with four cast-iron supports having grapevine themes spans the front of the bathhouse and is covered with a striped awning. North and south elevations are plain; fenestration consists of one window on the south elevation and a window and a door on the



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north elevation. The Bathhouse has been covered with aluminum siding on the east, south, and north elevations.

**9. Tennis Court:** An asphalt tennis court measuring 60 feet x 120 feet is west of and level with the roof of the bathhouse.

**10. Swimming Pool:** A large rectangular in-ground swimming pool of poured concrete and measuring 22 feet x 60 feet is east of the bathhouse, surrounded by brick patio laid in a herringbone pattern that measures 15 feet all around and is bordered on the north and south by low stone retaining walls.

**11. Fieldstone Fireplace:** A large fireplace constructed of fieldstone and flanked by fieldstone grills is south of the swimming pool along the patio. The chimney is ornamented with the cursive metal initials "M D B."

**West of Pinecrest:**

**12. Pergola:** In the early 1940s, Karl Bock designed a long frame pergola with a flagstone walkway beneath that was constructed along the western border of the estate and across a broad lawn from Pinecrest. The pergola, now covered with wisteria, measures 200 feet x 6 feet. Six antique statues depicting Roman and Greek deities are placed at approximately even intervals east of the pergola on the lawn.

**Northwest of Pinecrest:**

**13. Gardener's Cottage and Greenhouse:** Built according to Karl Bock's design in the early 1940s, the gardener's cottage is a one-story, frame, gable-front building of 365 square feet that is constructed over a concrete foundation and capped with an asphalt shingle roof. A rock chimney rises from the west side of the roof near the back of the cottage, and fenestration around the structure is regular. The entry faces north and a full-facade hip-roofed porch supported by simple posts shelters a six-panel double leaf door flanked by six-over-six double hung windows. Two eight-over-eight double hung windows mirror one another on the east and west elevations. Inside, the gardener's cottage contains a knotty pine-paneled groundskeeper's office and a bathroom.

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A one-story greenhouse of 210 square feet that is made of glass panel walls set over a high concrete foundation and topped with a modern transparent acrylic roof is attached to the gardener's cottage on the south elevation. Roland Alston, who served as Mrs. Biddle's gardener for many years, was noted for his neat arrangements of tools. The Duke Garden's staff visited on occasion to admire Alston's organization.<sup>21</sup>

**14. Gardener's Garage:** A frame, two-bay, eaves-front garage with a shed extension on the north elevation, constructed in the early 1940s, is topped with an asphalt shingle roof. Facing south across a drive north of the gardener's cottage, the garage includes 460 square feet and serves as a storage facility for lawn tractors and related implements. Its sliding double doors have been replaced with frame doors like the originals.

**There are two Non-Contributing Resources:**

**15. Metal Storage Shed:** East of the Gardener's Garage, a modern metal storage shed is unobtrusive.

**16. Dollhouse:** A large one-story frame dollhouse of 150 square feet having a front gable metal roof was assembled from 1926 catalogue kit and belonged to Mrs. Mary Semans as a child. Brought from New York in 1993 and placed in a garden northwest of Pinecrest, it is noncontributing because it was relocated relatively recently.

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**Summary Statement of Significance:**

The Mary Duke Biddle Estate is individually eligible for the National Register with local significance to the City and County of Durham, North Carolina, under Criterion B for social history as the home of philanthropist Mary Lillian Duke Biddle (1887-1960) from 1935 to 1960, during which time she made generous and important financial and material contributions to organizations and institutions in the area. Mrs. Biddle's grandfather Washington Duke, her father, Benjamin Newton Duke (1855-1929), and her uncle, James Buchanan Duke (1856 -1925) founded the American Tobacco Company, the world's largest tobacco company that would make North Carolina the center of an international tobacco empire. Profits were invested in land and industries and used for humanitarian causes.<sup>22</sup> Mrs. Biddle's father, Benjamin N. Duke, instigated many of the family's charitable activities, and Mrs. Biddle, in turn, became a generous and enthusiastic financial supporter of various causes that included Duke University, the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, and arts, educational, and social organizations in Durham and elsewhere in North Carolina, and in New York.<sup>23</sup> Toward the end of her life in 1956, she created the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, now headquartered on the subject property, to continue her philanthropic activities. The Cobb-Biddle house called "Pinecrest," a rambling, two-story, Tudor Revival-style dwelling with a combination of eclectic and Art Moderne renovations is also eligible for the National Register with local significance under Criterion C for architecture. Durham architect George Watts Carr Sr. (1893-1975) designed an elaborate Tudor Revival house for developer James O. Cobb in 1927, and New York designer Karl Bock (1887-1975) enlarged and renovated the dwelling for Mrs. Biddle between 1936 and 1958.<sup>24</sup> Bock's interior renovations reflect the influence of noted New York decorator Elsie DeWolfe who espoused combining European antiques with modern furnishings and using light-colored, fresh wall treatments in her landmark 1913 book *The House in Good Taste*.<sup>25</sup>

**Social History and Philanthropy Context:**

The town of Durham, established in 1869 and spurred by the development of the tobacco, and later, the cotton industry, quickly became one of North Carolina's most important commercial centers in the years following the Civil War. Booming businesses attracted numerous entrepreneurs, and a new industrial and commercial elite emerged in the town. While this group attracted much attention with lavish lifestyles and extravagant social functions, they also generously funded church facilities, social Durham County, NC organizations, and

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improvements in medical care. Washington Duke and his sons, Benjamin N. and James B. were among the town's most munificent donors.<sup>26</sup> Of great significance to Durham, in 1887, the faculty of Trinity College, a small Methodist-affiliated institution in Randolph County, announced its decision to relocate there after unprecedented generosity from the town's industrial leaders.<sup>27</sup> Most financial support for the move and operations for years afterward came from the Dukes.<sup>28</sup> In particular, Benjamin N. Duke served on the Board of Trustees, and supported the school financially, guiding its development as a leading liberal arts college. Then in 1923, with family ventures expanded to include cotton mills and the production of electric power, James B. Duke provided an extraordinary endowment for Trinity College after which it became Duke University.<sup>29</sup>

Mary Lillian Duke, born in 1887, the year that the faculty of Trinity College made its decision to come to Durham, was the daughter of Benjamin Duke and Sarah Pearson Angier Duke (1856-1936). She grew up in Durham, attended public and private secondary schools in the city, and was graduated from Trinity College there in 1907. She and her brother Angier Buchanan Duke (1884-1923) would be the first of the family to graduate from the college that would later take the Duke name. Studies in music and English gave her an early appreciation for literature and the arts that would later influence her philanthropic interests.<sup>30</sup>

In 1916, Mary Lillian Duke married Anthony J. Drexel Biddle Jr. (1897-1961), the brother of Angier's wife, Cordelia (1898-1984). The couple established homes in New York City and Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, (now destroyed) but after the births of a daughter, Mary (1920), and a son, Nicholas (nee Anthony) (1921-2004) they divorced in 1931.<sup>31</sup> Following the divorce, Mrs. Biddle suffered a long depressive illness. Dr. Frederic M. Hanes (1883-1946) of Duke University Medical School helped her to obtain medical care in New York City, and her daughter, Mary, then a student at Duke University, encouraged Mrs. Biddle to return to Durham.<sup>32</sup>

Mrs. Biddle purchased the James O. Cobb house in 1935. In years that followed, she accumulated adjoining properties, made improvements to the house and grounds, and began to spend more time in Durham. By 1950, she often remained up to six months a year, dividing the remainder of her time between residences in New York<sup>33</sup> and Florida.<sup>34</sup>

Interested in continuing philanthropies in health care and church activities that her grandfather, uncle, and father had begun, Mrs. Biddle made generous gifts to Durham

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institutions. She considered it "a moral family responsibility" to support Lincoln Hospital, the health-care center for African Americans that her father and uncle had been instrumental in raising funds to construct.<sup>35</sup> To reward her generosity, the outpatient clinic there was named in her honor. The Duke Memorial Methodist Church, an institution that began in 1885 as a Sunday school for workers at the W. Duke Sons Company, also received significant donations. Elsewhere, she made sizeable donations to several churches in New York.<sup>36</sup>

It was to Duke University, however, that Mrs. Biddle gave most generously. Before returning to Durham, she had already made substantial gifts to the University. In 1922, she and her brother, Angier, made a large bequest for the War Memorial Gymnasium constructed in memory of Trinity College students who lost their lives during World War I. With her mother, Sarah, in 1931, she purchased the 146-acre Durham County farm where the family's tobacco business had begun, and expressed pleasure in placing her "grandfather's old farm in the hands of the beautiful University that bears his name."<sup>37</sup> The Duke Homestead (NR 1966, NHL 1966) is now a North Carolina State Historic Site.

Dr. Hanes enlisted Mrs. Biddle's aid in completing a seven-acre iris garden on the West Campus that her mother had begun in 1935 before her death the following year. Mrs. Biddle expanded the project in 1937, establishing the magnificent Sarah P. Duke Gardens in memory of her mother, and providing an important educational and aesthetic asset at Duke.<sup>38</sup>

More gifts to Duke University followed. In 1937 and 1938, Mrs. Biddle commissioned Karl Bock to decorate the Alumnae and Victorian Rooms in the East Duke Building. She donated elegant Louis XV and XVI style furnishings to create ornate meeting spaces for University functions, and gave notable oil paintings to embellish the East Campus Library. In 1938, she presented "Four Acres," her parents' twenty-room Chateausque Durham home, and in 1939 its furnishings, to the University. Renamed "University House," the dwelling became a guesthouse for distinguished University visitors, and a gracious meeting place for University organizations until it was sold in 1960 and razed to make way for the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Building.

Having focused her gifts primarily toward adding to Duke University's facilities enriching its aesthetics, Mrs. Biddle made a sizable donation in 1946 that enabled a major addition to and renovation of the West Campus library. Not only was the library nearly doubled in size, but also a Rare Book Room handsomely decorated by Karl Bock was added. Other facilities such

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as the Manuscript and Newspaper Departments, the Graduate Reading Room, the Staff Lounge, and the Bibliography and Map Rooms were given newly created quarters. At first insisting on anonymity, Mrs. Biddle was revealed as the donor during the dedication ceremonies in 1949.<sup>39</sup>

In 1956, Mrs. Biddle created the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, now headquartered in The Cottage on the subject property, to continue her philanthropic activities. During the next four years, she annually increased the capital of the Foundation, and helped direct its contributions to Duke University, the arts, and educational, religious, and socially conscious organizations in North Carolina and New York.<sup>40</sup> At her death in 1960, she endowed a permanent philanthropic institution that to date has awarded grants totaling more than thirty-six million dollars, and made a special bequest of a portion of the French period furniture, paintings, tapestries, and porcelains that she had collected during her lifetime to Duke University.<sup>41</sup>

**Architectural Context:**

The City of Durham's Forest Hills subdivision was conceived in 1917 by the New Hope Land Company on 242 acres southwest of the central business district. Headed by W. J. Griswold, the company employed landscape architect Earle S. Draper, who had designed Charlotte's stylish Myers Park subdivision, to make plans for spacious lots, curvilinear streets, and central parks. Despite an impressive beginning, within several years the developers were bankrupt, and the First National Trust Company foreclosed on the Forest Hills project in 1922.<sup>42</sup> The following year, the subdivision was scaled back to 160 acres and under the direction of James O. Cobb and Fuller Glass, the Winston-Salem firm of Northrup and O'Brien completed its planning. Northrup and O'Brien opened a Durham office staffed by architect George Watts Carr Sr., who provided designs for paved streets and the installation of city water and sewer lines, and amenities that included a golf course, and a clubhouse with a swimming pool. The subdivision soon attracted buyers of lots from Durham's growing business and professional communities.<sup>43</sup>

Carr additionally selected and modified mail-order plans for speculative houses in Forest Hills, and in the late 1920s, established his own architectural firm in Durham. He quickly took a prominent role in designing the Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and English Cottage dwellings now found throughout Forest Hills. The most elaborate of these was the Tudor Revival dwelling constructed for developer Cobb in 1927 on a large lot that overlooked the



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park. Cobb was to enjoy his new home very briefly, for in 1929, the Depression forced the Forest Hills project into bankruptcy once again.<sup>44</sup>

The Tudor Revival style, first seen in America during the late nineteenth century, grew in popularity with suburban development during the 1920s. Dwellings were loosely based on late Medieval English prototypes and displayed more or less elaborate combinations of half-timbering, stucco or masonry veneered walls, steeply pitched roofs, and cross-gabled plans.<sup>45</sup> In Durham, the Tudor Revival style was among the most popular building idioms in Forest Hills, but no other example was as large or elaborate as the home George Watts Carr Sr. designed for James O. Cobb in 1927. Less ornate and nearby is the rambling Parks Alexander House (24 Oak Drive, Forest Hills Historic District, NR 2005) also designed by Carr, that is partially built of brick and capped by a roof of varying heights with decorative peaked gables. Also comparable to Pinecrest, the W. P. Budd House (903 S. Duke Street, Morehead Hill Historic District, NR, 1985) is a brick dwelling with half-timbered stucco details, a slate roof of multiple heights, and pairs and banks of casement windows. The best comparable to the Cobb house, however, is the Erwin Cameron House (2822 Chelsea Circle, Hope Valley Historic District, NR 2009). Designed by Carr in the late 1920s and rebuilt ca. 1930 following a fire with few alterations from the original plan, it is a large rambling residence accented by shallow perpendicular gables, flared eaves, corbelled polygonal chimney pots, and a slate roof of differing heights.<sup>46</sup>

In 1935, Mary Duke Biddle purchased the Cobb dwelling, and according to plans prepared by New York designer Karl Bock, began a protracted series of additions and renovations to Pinecrest. Mrs. Biddle's records show payment of \$47,000 to Durham attorney Marshall Spears on November 13 for "purchase price, new residence, Durham, NC," and within the week, advance payment of \$10,000 to Karl Bock for "work in Durham."<sup>47</sup>

Mrs. Biddle had no doubt become acquainted with Karl Bock through her father, for Benjamin N. Duke was among his early patrons, and had first commissioned Bock's services in 1920. Born in Stuttgart, Germany, Bock entered the design profession as an employee of the prestigious Potter-Stymes firm of New York City in 1913.<sup>48</sup> Four years later, he established his own business and he worked extensively with New York architect Julian Clarence Levi.<sup>49</sup> Bock is said to have been inspired by Elsie de Wolfe (1865-1950), a groundbreaking decorator known for her combinations of period and modern furnishings,<sup>50</sup> and he encouraged clients to furnish their homes with a mixture of European antiques and contemporary elements.<sup>51</sup>

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Elsie de Wolfe, called the “Lady who banished Victorian gloom,” became a professional decorator in 1905, and in same year was commissioned by a group of influential New York women to decorate the exclusive Colony Club, New York City’s first club for socially prominent women. Stanford White designed the Colony’s handsome headquarters at Madison and Thirty-first Street, and when the club opened in 1907, its interiors established Ms. de Wolfe’s reputation. She subsequently obtained lucrative commissions across the country, and in 1913, published *The House in Good Taste*, a book still considered a classic in the field of interior decoration.<sup>52</sup>

As Ms. de Wolfe had before him, Bock often combined modernism with a mixture of foreign and regional decorative elements that created a blend of styles drawing inspiration from various time periods and cultures.<sup>53</sup> He largely adhered to Ms. de Wolfe’s principles of design: simplicity, airiness through the use of mirrors and light hues of paint and fabric, and visual rather than stylistic unity. A keen knowledge of materials and design together with his versatility soon earned him a prominent following, and in 1947, Bock reconstructed rooms from Colonial Williamsburg’s Raleigh Tavern and George Wythe House for the F. Schumacher Company at the National Republican Club in New York. These important displays showcased Williamsburg reproduction fabrics and wall coverings for design professionals.<sup>54</sup>

At the top of his profession from the early- to mid-twentieth century, Karl Bock kept an office and showroom at 1390 Lexington Avenue in New York City.<sup>55</sup> He served as president of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Decorators (1946-1948), National President (1948-1951), and Chairman of the Board of Directors (1951-1953).<sup>56</sup> Plans for his more important commissions are housed in the archives at Columbia University.<sup>57</sup> In Durham, Bock’s expertise and influence was not limited to his work for Mrs. Biddle; he is said to have taught his design methodology to Claude M. May who worked with him extensively as an apprentice and became the City’s preeminent interior designer during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>58</sup>

Bock began renovations to Mrs. Biddle’s house during the Depression era when Art Moderne, a new aspect in architectural design, replaced the zig-zags, chevrons, sharp curves of the Art Deco style with smoother aerodynamic curves.<sup>59</sup> Modern influences prevailed during the sober economic times, and in 1933, the Homes of Tomorrow Exposition at Chicago World's Fair presented the Florida Tropical House (NR 1986) with its bold pink exterior among others with

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modern designs and inventive building materials and techniques.<sup>60</sup>

In Durham, however, only three houses with modernist elements were erected in the city prior to 1940. Like the Hawaiian Room, the Music Room, and the entry vestibule at Pinecrest, the 1935 Howard Gamble House in Duke Park (1307 North Mangum Street, NR 1979) utilized glass block and the 1937 Eli Evans House (1021 Dacian Avenue, Trinity Park Historic District, NR 1986) and the 1937 Paull F. Baum House (112 Pinecrest Road, First Phase, Duke Forest) featured extensive glass walls and glass block windows.<sup>61</sup>

French Eclectic design elements were utilized at Pinecrest as well. Fashionable from the 1920s through the 1940s, the French Eclectic style mimicked the design of small manor houses and farmhouses of northwest France but was used very infrequently in Durham. Like Pinecrest, the Wiley and Elizabeth Forbus House (NR 2004, and Hope Valley Historic District, NR 2005) has asymmetrical massing, varied eave heights, overhanging eaves, chimneys with decorative clay pots, gabled wall dormers, and a patio across the rear elevation of the dwelling.<sup>62</sup>

At Pinecrest, Bock proceeded with the idea foremost in mind that Mrs. Biddle should be comfortable among furnishings that she loved.<sup>63</sup> Under his direction, Carr's Tudor Revival manor became a light-filled dwelling with glass-walled additions and individually decorated rooms that eventually displayed an extensive collection of art, antiques, family heirlooms, and modern furniture.

Most comparable to Pinecrest is Les Terrasses (Forest Hills Historic District, NR 2005) a rambling two-story Colonial Revival house built in the early-twentieth century, and purchased by Mrs. Biddle's daughter, Mrs. Mary Duke Biddle Trent (later Mrs. Semans) and her husband Dr. Josiah Trent (1914-1948) in the late 1940s. The dwelling was enlarged and remodeled according to designs by Karl Bock in the 1950s and the rear west elevation became the front façade. As at Pinecrest, he added a modern glass-walled sunroom with decorative cast iron posts and a roof terrace above on the east, the garage was incorporated into the main block, and wrought iron gates with grapevine motifs from the Fiebiger Company were placed at either side of the entry drive. At Les Terrasses, Bock also designed a polygonal library that was added to the east elevation.

When Mrs. Biddle passed away in 1960, her estate was bequeathed to Mrs. Semans, who, with some modifications to the gardens, carefully preserved the property and its contributing

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resources just as her mother left them. Pinecrest, with architectural and decorative features as Karl Bock designed them and most of its furnishings and artwork where Karl Bock placed them, has been a family guesthouse.<sup>64</sup> Very slight damage was sustained in the dining room during a 1970 break in and a bullet fired at a night watchman remains embedded in the wall.<sup>65</sup> In 1976, Pinecrest and a portion of the estate were deeded to Mrs. Semans' son, James D. B. T. Semans (1957- ).<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The other, Les Terraces (SL, 2001) is owned by the estate of Mrs. Mary D. B. T. Semans. Other historic Duke homes in Durham no longer in family ownership are the Duke Homestead, (NR, 1966) and Greystone, (NR, 1982). Other notable family homes, Fairview and Four Acres, have been demolished.

<sup>2</sup> All information about renovations and additions at Pinecrest was supplied by Mary D. B. T. Semans, Iver Iverson (a historic preservationist who helped the Semans family reconfigure the Duke- Semans Mansion, a 20,000-square-foot Beaux-Arts residence at 1009 Fifth Avenue, into three apartments in the 1990's and overhaul the house's plumbing and heating systems), and James Semans, personal interviews 4 & 5 September 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>4</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews. Prominent metal fabricator P.A. Fiebiger, Inc., of New York made the gates. Among other notable commissions, this firm repaired the Bow Bridge in Central Park in 1947.

<sup>5</sup> Biddle, Mary Duke, unpublished voucher records concerning "Pinecrest," 1935.

<sup>6</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews. Linden Court was destroyed during a mid-twentieth-century fire.

<sup>7</sup> Semans and Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>8</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>9</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews. The wallpaper came from the residence of Mrs. King, also a client of Karl Bock, whose New York home was demolished in the mid-twentieth century.

<sup>10</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>11</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>12</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews. Bruce tiles contain wood chips in a vinyl binder. They were among the earliest vinyl flooring, developed before World War II and featured in Sweet's Catalogues from 1937 to 1945.

<sup>13</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>14</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>15</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>16</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>17</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>18</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>19</sup> Biddle, Mary Duke, unpublished voucher records, December 6, 1935 payment to John H. Gibson "nearly \$7000 on account" and "for extra work done on Servant's Cottage."

<sup>20</sup> Biddle, Mary Duke, unpublished voucher records, July 16, 1936 payment of \$5391 to Karl Bock "for iron work at driveways, etc."

<sup>21</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>22</sup> Duke Homestead Website, 3/16/ 2009

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- <sup>23</sup> Trustees of the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Annual Report for 2007, p. 5.
- <sup>24</sup> Biddle, Mary Duke, Unpublished voucher records concerning "Pinecrest," 1935.
- <sup>25</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.
- <sup>26</sup> Anderson, Jean Bradley, *Durham County*, 1990, Durham, Duke University Press, p. 145-46.
- <sup>27</sup> Anderson, p. 199-200.
- <sup>28</sup> Anderson, p. 200.
- <sup>29</sup> Various Authors, *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, 1966, Biddle, Mary Duke, page 250.
- <sup>30</sup> King, William E., *If Gargoyles Could Talk*, 1997, Carolina Academic Press, Durham, p. 74-76.
- <sup>31</sup> Anderson, p. 31.
- <sup>32</sup> King, William, "Mary Duke Biddle Carried On Family Giving," *Duke Dialogue*, 4 November 1994, page 12.
- <sup>33</sup> Gray, Christopher, "Luxury Rental Units in a Fifth Avenue Mansion" The ebullient Beaux-Arts house at the southeast corner of Fifth Avenue and 82d Street is still in the hands of the descendants of its original owner, tobacco magnate Benjamin N. Duke. New York Times, 5 February, 1995.
- <sup>34</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.
- <sup>35</sup> Lincoln Hospital of Durham, North Carolina, A Short History, Website, 12/3/2008. When Lincoln Hospital had outgrown the original structure (which suffered a fire in 1922,) a community-wide effort to fund the construction of a new Lincoln Hospital was undertaken. James B. Duke and Ben Duke offered to match \$75,000 of contributions from other members of the community.
- <sup>36</sup> *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, page 250.
- <sup>37</sup> Duke University Library Notes, April 1961, Number 35, p. 4. Used for several decades to house experimental animals, the Duke Homestead is presently a tobacco museum and an NC State Historic Site.
- <sup>38</sup> Dr. Hanes possessed a special love for gardening and was determined to convert the debris-filled ravine, by which he walked daily, into a garden of his favorite flower, the iris. He persuaded his friend, Sarah P. Duke, widow of one of the university's founders, Benjamin N. Duke, to give \$20,000 to finance a garden that would bear her name. In 1935, more than 100 flower beds were in glorious bloom, with 40,000 irises, 25,000 daffodils, 10,000 small bulbs, and assorted annuals. Alas, all were washed away in heavy summer rains and a flooding stream. By the time of Sarah P. Duke's death in 1936, the original gardens were destroyed. Dr. Hanes convinced her daughter, Mary Duke Biddle, to construct a new garden on higher ground, as a fitting memorial to her mother. Ellen Shipman (1869-1950), a pioneer in American landscape design, was selected to do the plans for both the construction and the plantings for the new gardens.
- <sup>39</sup> Library Notes, p. 4.
- <sup>40</sup> Mary Duke Biddle Foundation Annual Report for 2007, p. 5.
- <sup>41</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.
- <sup>42</sup> Roberts Claudia, and Dianne Lea, *The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory*, 1982, Historic Preservation Society of Durham, p. 283-84.
- <sup>43</sup> Roberts and Lea, p. 284.
- <sup>44</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.
- <sup>45</sup> McAlester, Virginia and Lee, *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, New York, Alfred A, Knopf, p 358.
- <sup>46</sup> De Miranda, Cynthia, and Jennifer Martin, "Hope Valley Historic District" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2009.
- <sup>47</sup> MDB vouchers, 1935.

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<sup>48</sup> Editors of Interior Design, "Karl Bock, Portrait of an Interior Designer," *Interior Design Magazine*, December 1963, p. 72-79.

<sup>49</sup> Editors of Interior Design, p. 72-79.

<sup>50</sup> Munhall, Edgar, "Elsie de Wolfe, The American Pioneer who Vanquished Victorian Gloom," *Architectural Digest*, January 2000, posted online 27 October 2011. A former actress from a socially prominent New York family that had fallen on hard times, Elsie DeWolfe entered the design profession, and is credited with being the woman who invented modern decorating. She replaced Victorian fussiness with clean, simple lines and light-colored rooms. Noted for combining styles and periods to achieve the look she was after, DeWolfe's style innovations extended beyond the home. She came up with the Pink Lady cocktail as well as the notion of blue rinses for gray hair, and liked to stand on her head for exercise. The rich were about the only people who could afford DeWolfe's services, although her theories did reach the masses via her Good Housekeeping decorating columns. She later authored *The House In Good Taste*, a book considered to be a classic in the Interior Decoration field.

<sup>51</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>52</sup> Munhall, "Elsie de Wolfe, The American Pioneer who Vanquished Victorian Gloom"

<sup>53</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>54</sup> Slavin, Richard E., *Opulent Textiles*, The Schumacher Collection, 1992, Crown Publishers, p. 36.

<sup>55</sup> Interior Design, p. 72-79.

<sup>56</sup> Interior Design, p. 72-79.

<sup>57</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>58</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>59</sup> McAlester, p. 465.

<sup>60</sup> Ward, Jandl, H., *Yesterday's Houses of Tomorrow*, 1991, Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, p 101-111.

<sup>61</sup> Roberts and Lea, pp. 204, 274, & 302.

<sup>62</sup> Roberts and Lea, p. 295.

<sup>63</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>64</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

<sup>65</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews. A burglar broke into Pinecrest in 1970, and stabbed Lloyd Hopkins, the night watchman. A bullet fired at Hopkins during this incident remains lodged in the dining room wall.

<sup>66</sup> Semans, Iverson, and Semans, interviews.

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*Duke University Library Notes*, April 1961, Number 35.

*Duke Dialogue*, 4 November 1994

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Trustees of the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Annual Report for 2007.

**Interviews:**

Semans, Mary D. B. T., Iver Iverson, and James D. B. T. Semans personal interviews, 4 and 5 September, 2001.

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**10. Geographical Data:**

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The Mary Duke Biddle Estate includes 8.562 acres and boundaries are shown on the enclosed maps. The estate consists of parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 as outlined on the 1977 survey prepared by Creole Engineering of Durham. In 2004, parcel 7 was eliminated and parcels 8 and 6 (an adjoining family property that is not part of the estate) were enlarged. All deeds and surveys are recorded in the Durham County Land Records filed with the Register of Deeds Office in Durham, North Carolina as follows:

Volume 234 page 433, Volume 130 page 475, Volume 226, page 623, Volume 130 page 579, Volume 137 page 143, Volume 117 page 192, Volume, Volume 117, page 192, Volume 132 page 77, Volume 129 page 104, Volume 129 page 278, Volume 171 page 529, Volume 977 page 475, Volume 997 page 1022, Volume 231 page 451, and parcels 7 and 8 as combined in Volume 95 page 63.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundary is drawn to include the historic resources and acreage associated with the Mary Duke Biddle Estate.



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**Photographs:**

**The following applies to all of the photographs:**

Name: Mary Duke Biddle Estate

Location: 1050 and 1044 West Forest Hills Blvd., Durham, NC

Photographer's Name: Betsy Gohdes-Baten

Date of Photographs: April 3, 2009

Location of originals: NC SHPO

**Description of View:**

1. Pinecrest, east elevation looking west
2. Pinecrest, east elevation detail showing Music Room, looking northwest
3. Pinecrest, east elevation detail showing Music Room and Roof Terrace, looking southwest
4. Pinecrest, east elevation detail showing Elevator Tower, looking west
5. Pinecrest, north elevation, looking south
6. Pinecrest, west elevation looking southeast
7. Pinecrest, south elevation, looking north
8. Southwest Brick Archway, looking northeast
9. Grottoes, looking south
10. Picnic Fireplace, looking northeast
11. The Cottage, south elevation, looking north
12. The Cottage, north elevation, looking south
13. Gas Pump, looking north
14. Wrought Iron Fence, looking southwest
15. Wrought Iron Gate, looking northeast
16. Fireplace on Swimming Pool Terrace, looking south
17. Pergola, looking northwest
18. Gardener's Cottage and Greenhouse, looking northwest
19. Gardener's Garage, looking north
20. Doll House, looking northeast

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21. New Storage Shed, looking north
22. Pinecrest Interior, Living Room, looking southwest
23. Pinecrest Interior, Dining Room, looking northeast
24. Pinecrest Interior, Stair Hall, looking northwest
25. Pinecrest Interior, Mrs Biddle's Bedroom, looking northwest
26. Gardener's Cottage, looking southwest