

# Carnegie evolves into Guest House

By PAT HICKERT  
Staff Writer

"It sure isn't like any of the other residences on campus" one might say upon wandering into Carnegie Guest House; and, if someone is expecting anything the likes of the old temporary union he is really in for a surprise.

The recently renovated building is now brightly lit, gaily colored, and beautifully furnished. Much of the furniture is from the Horton estate, including a large eight fold chinese decorated screen displayed in the foyer. Done in the 18th century, the laquer screen portrays a group of people standing in a pavilion.

Also from the Horton collection is a stately (90" tall) oriental style desk, dating from the early 18th century. It is placed in the lounge on the first floor.

Many other magnificent antiques from the Horton collection are arranged throughout the house including several valuable Chippendale pieces.

Janie French, guest house manager, has her office in the Marcia Bell Mitchell room, which has been furnished with pieces from the Mitchell estate. Upstairs are the bedrooms, all of which have separate bathrooms. The plumbing for the bathrooms and the ductwork for the air conditioning/heating system required the first floor ceiling to be lowered.

Aside from this lowering and the installation of a fireproof stairway, the floorplan and structure remains essentially the same as when the Union occupied this building. Most of the work involved restoring, refinishing and updating the structure.

The exterior looks basically the same as when it was built in 1910. The basement of Carnegie was remodeled

to accomodate twelve upperclass women in six rooms.

The prices here are quite reasonable, especially considering the luxurious surroundings. Most of the rooms are \$12 a night for a single, and \$15 a night for a double, and business has been for the most part quite good. During homecoming weekend the Guest House hosted two large receptions and all the rooms were rented.

French suggested that reservations be made in advance, especially since there is no staff on duty at night. Reservations may be made during regular office hours 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday.

Carnegie Guest House is intended to be a showcase for Davidson College so the college spared no expense. According to Robert Currie, business manager, the cost of renovating the guest house was approximately 200,000.

The present grandeur of Carnegie Guest House was far beyond even the wildest expectations of the 150 or so people that gathered on the evening of Sept. 12, 1910 to dedicate the first library building at Davidson College, Carnegie Library. According to an article in the Charlotte Observer the affair "was by far and away the most elaborate ever seen here."

The entire building was built with \$20,000 donated by Mr. Andrew Carnegie in 1909. It is amazing when one compares the cost of building the library to the cost of remodeling it, and it is also interesting to note that during that time span, the overdue book fine of five cents a day has remained stable.

The building served Davidson as a library for 30 years, until 1921, when Old Chambers burned to the ground; then the offices of the college were housed in the basement of Carnegie.



THE ANDREW CARNEGIE LIBRARY, built in 1910, has resumed its status as the college Guest House.

-Steve Lewis

By 1941, Davidson had outgrown the library. The president of the college at the time, Dr. John Cunningham, wanted a place to entertain potential benefactors of Davidson, so he had the library remodeled into a guest house, which was quite fancy for the time. Apparently his plan worked because during his tenure as president, Dr. Cunningham increased the endowment of Davidson from 3 million dollars to 9 million dollars.

The guest house was also the headquarters for the Davidson College YMCA and since the college was without a union, the YMCA hosted many functions in the Carnegie building. The YMCA stayed in the guest house until 1952, when it moved

to the student union.

By 1972 the guest house was showing signs of wear, so the college decided to convert the building into a temporary student union, since the old union was being torn down to make room for The E.H. Little Library. During the three years Carnegie served as the Union Davidson recognized its need for a guest house so as soon as the union moved into its new headquarters in the summer of 1975 renovation began.

Durnig 1976 commencement, some sixty-seven years after the first brick was laid, and after serving the college as a library, college office, guest house, YMCA headquarters, and student union Carnegie again opened its door as The College Guest House.

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