

BLYTHEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Langford-Nord House

Exterior Historic Preservation Project 2020-2022

Funded by the Richland County Conservation Commission and Cindy Nord

Early History

The Langford-Nord House was built around 1904 for Luther and Carrie Langford. Like other homes from the same era, the house was built in the Folk Victorian style. It had a central door with sidelights and a transom as well as a front porch on the east side, which faces Main Street (Hwy 21).

When first built, the home probably just had the front section facing Main Street and a rear ell, which had secondary entrance and a porch along its south side, facing McNulty Street. The original owners had four daughters and Carrie's widowed mother living with the family by 1920, and they likely expanded the building to the west to make more bedrooms. This new section almost matched the front portion on Main Street, but it is two feet shorter. Originally, the house had a wood shingle roof. A thunderstorm in August of 1913 sent a lightning strike to this house, which splintered some of the shingles and one of the front porch columns. The metal roof may have been put on when the west addition was built, perhaps in the late 1910s.

The Langford family started using the south entrance facing McNulty Street as the main entrance to the house. They put screen on the porch, probably by the 1940s. They added another porch to the opposite side of the house around the 1950s. Luther Langford died in 1950 and his wife Carrie passed in 1957, leaving the house to the four daughters. Caroline gained full interest in the house from her three sisters and married into the Dangler family. She lived here until she sold the house in 1988 to the Nord family.



Left: Luther Langford stands in the yard facing McNulty Street. Behind him is the section that was likely added in the 1910s as the family grew .

Above: The family used this south yard as the play area and main entrance. Note the screening on the porch and the original siding.

Both images are from the private collection of James McLean.

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Big Changes

The new owners turned the house into a dress shop, and made the building appear more commercial. Some of the changes on the interior included removing a few walls and covering others with drywall.

From the 1970s through the 1990s, major exterior changes to the outside of the building included the removal of the front porch on Main Street, the enclosure of the porch on McNulty Street and the installation of doubled doors with sidelights, the enclosure of the north side porch, the addition of metal siding on the exterior, and the installation of a large window on Main Street where there had been a door and sidelights. The original windows were replaced with vinyl windows. All of these changes made the building look much different than its 1904 appearance.



The south side (McNulty Street side) of the Blythewood Historical Society and Museum in 2020, before renovations.

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Historic Preservation of the House

The Langford-Nord house was always well taken care of, but the changes to the building and the site left it looking more like a modern building rather than a historic one. The widening of Hwy 21 (Main Street) around 2005 took away a lot of the original front yard of this property, but the front porch had already been removed many years before. In 2010, Cindy Nord donated the house to the newly-formed Blythewood Historical Society and Museum. Nine years later, they created a plan to try to return the exterior to some of its original appearance, without losing any of the floor space created by the enclosure of the south and north porches. To achieve this goal, they would have to use restoration and reconstruction techniques as part of a two-year historic preservation project.

In 2020-2021, the BHSM won a grant from the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) to remove the c.1970s blue metal siding, which revealed the original German styled wood siding. This siding has a curved groove cut along the top edge and was popular in Blythewood in the early 1900s. The original color appears to have been white. Painters cleaned and scraped the siding before adding new white paint. In the spring of 2022, another RCCC grant helped the BHSM build a shallow front porch and add historic sidelights and a historic door to the Main Street side of the building. The door was donated by Harold Branham and the sidelights donated by Bill Dixon.



Top: Photo showing the removal of the 1970s metal siding to reveal the original wood siding.

Left: Main Street side after a fresh coat of paint. The large window in the center has been here for several decades, and replaced the original door and sidelights.

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Return to Historic Appearance

The grant also helped with the installation of screen and a screen door on the McNulty Street side, to mimic the c.1940s screen porch, and to apply new siding and panels on the north porch, which gives the appearance of a screen porch with siding along the bottom.

Combined, these changes helped return this historic building back to a residential appearance. The original siding and a new front porch, although very shallow, help return the building to a more historically accurate look. Although the enclosed porches on the south (McNulty Street) side and north side are still enclosed, the exterior treatments of screen and paint reference their historic appearances.

The purpose of this exterior historic rehabilitation project is to remove some older changes to the building that took away its character and to regain a more historically correct exterior. Over the years, the many changes made the building look like a mixture of styles. The Blythewood Historical Society and Museum has a goal of educating the public about local history, and the Langford-Nord House is one of the few surviving historic homes in town. They can now tell its history and show how historic preservation helps a community retain its unique charm through architecture.



Thank you to **Cindy Nord** for her generous donation for the exterior renovation of the Lanford-Nord House!

This project funded in large part by the Richland County Conservation Commission –Thank you!

