

Asheville Multiple Resource Area  
Buncombe County

Survey and Planning Branch, Archeology and  
Historic Preservation Section, N. C. Division  
of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC 27611

NAME: Biltmore Avenue Cluster: George A. Mears House

#1

LOCATION: 137 Biltmore Avenue

OWNER: Martha W. Physioc Heirs  
137 Biltmore Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28801

DESCRIPTION: The Mears House is a two-and-a-half-story common bond brick residence located on a rise above Biltmore Avenue. The house is basically cubical in plan, with two, two-story bays on the front elevation, one semi-octagonal, one rectangular with a semi-octagonal bay on the first level. There is also a semi-octagonal one-story bay on the south elevation. A veranda wraps around the southeast corner of the house from the north front bay to the bay on the south elevation. This veranda is ornamented with turned posts and a spindled balustrade. The house is topped with a patterned, slate-shingled mansard roof. There are two gables in the front elevation of the house over the bays. The southeast one is larger and contains a semi-octagonal hood supported by turned posts. The other gable is smaller and more steeply-pitched. The tympanum of this gable is covered with fishscale shingles of wood and has a cutout gable insert. On the front and side elevations of the house are large, gable-roofed dormers. Each of these dormers is topped by a sheetmetal finial. There are two large, panelled chimneys on the house, both in poor condition. Maps indicate that there was also a carriage house to the southwest of the house which has disappeared.

SIGNIFICANCE: The George Mears House at 137 Biltmore Avenue is the finest surviving residential building in downtown Asheville and one of the city's finer Queen Anne style structures. The house was built about 1885 for George A. Mears, an Asheville merchant who was in business between 1870 and 1910 on South Main Street, principally with his Mears Daylight Store, which burned in the 1920s (the building was so named because of its large expanses of glass). Particularly notable is the houses' elaborate slate-shingled mansard roof with prominent gables and gable-roofed dormers with finials. The Mears house is the last relatively-intact remnant of what was once an avenue of upper class residences stretching south from the Patton House. (over)

DATE: Ca. 1885

PHOTO NO.: N.78-2--793

UTM: 17 — 359480/3939420

ACREAGE: Less than 1 acre

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: See Plat Map, Ward 4, Lot 149

DATE RECORDED:

BY:

## Bibliography

Sanborn-Perrin Insurance Maps of Asheville, 1891 on.

Asheville City Directories.

Biographical files of the North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library.



