

## The Bagley-Mullen House



*This report was written on May 2, 1979*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Bagley-Mullen House is located at 129 N. Poplar St. in Charlotte, N.C.

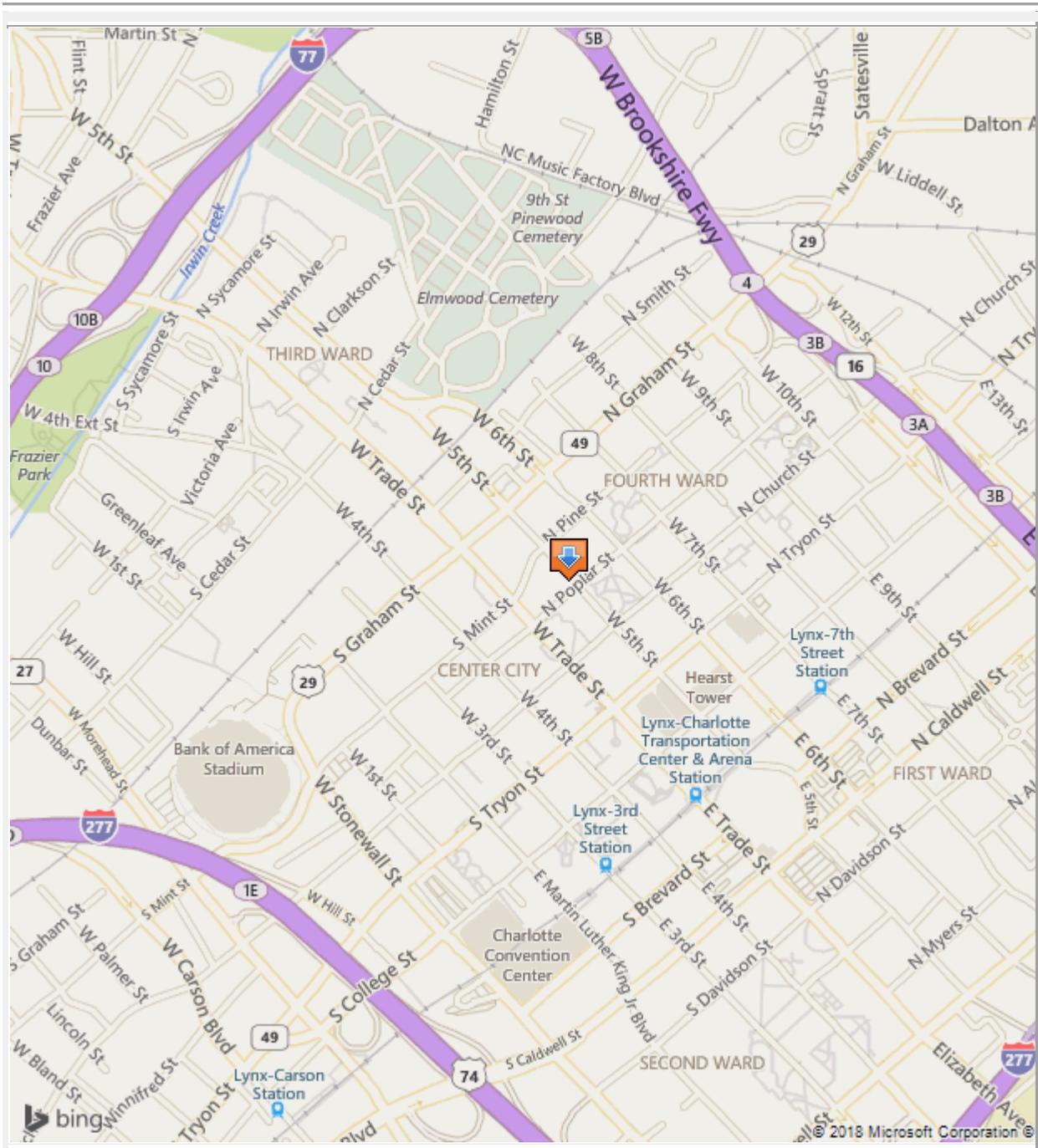
**2. Name, address, and telephone number of the present owner and occupant of the property:** The present owner and occupant of the property is:

Charles H. Litaker Insurance Co.  
129 N. Poplar St.  
Charlotte, N.C. 28201

Telephone: 334-4685

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** Representative photographs of the property included in this report.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This map contains a map depicting the location of the property.



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**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent reference to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1230, Page 552. The Tax Parcel number of the property is 078-016-08.

**A brief historical sketch of the property:**

On October 5, 1892, Edgar Murchison Andrews (1850-1920), a native Charlottean and son of Ezra Hamwood Andrews and Sarah Bolton Andrews purchased property at the corner of N. Poplar St. and Fifth St. in Charlotte, N.C. <sup>1</sup> E. M. Andrews, is best remembered locally for his role in establishing the Andrews Music Co., a corporation which continues to operate in Charlotte. <sup>2</sup> In 1881 he had opened a furniture store on W. Trade St. <sup>3</sup> Soon thereafter, he had brought his brother, Frank H. Andrews, into the business for purposes of managing a music room in which pianos and organs were to be sold. <sup>4</sup> The significance of this activity notwithstanding, it was the second of his business ventures which makes E. M. Andrews a pivotal figure in the architectural history of this community. In the opinion of one observer, E. M. Andrews was "the first man in Charlotte who built nice homes on back streets." <sup>5</sup> Like the majority of towns in North Carolina, Charlotte had expanded initially along its major thoroughfares, Tryon St. and Trade St. The more imposing residences of the community were located on these two streets. <sup>6</sup> Andrews, responding to the growing demand for substantial dwellings to house the many newcomers who settled in Charlotte in the 1880's and 1890's, invested in lots on streets which intersected the major thoroughfares. Here he erected homes for sale. Edward Dilworth Latta, President of the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company and developer of Dilworth (Charlotte's initial streetcar suburb), stated that E. M. Andrews did more to make Charlotte a livable city than any ten men of his day. <sup>7</sup> E. M. Andrews moved to Greensboro, NC, c. 1905, where he died on July 13, 1920. <sup>8</sup>

E. M. Andrews erected a two and one-half story brick house at the corner of W. Fifth St. and N. Poplar St. The initial owner and resident was Andrew Joyner Bagley (1856-1931), who purchased the house in March 1895. <sup>9</sup> A native of Johnston County, N.C., he came to Charlotte from Shelby, N.C., to accept a position in the freight office of the Carolina Central Railroad. <sup>10</sup> Later he became assistant ticket agent for the Southern Railroad. <sup>11</sup> His wife, Bertha Ward Bagley, died in Charlotte on September 8, 1896. <sup>12</sup> On March 4, 1897, he sold his home and, moved out of the city. He settled in Lincolnton, N.C., where he died on February 26, 1931. <sup>13</sup>

The next owner of the house was Walter Nixon Mullen (1853-1910), Elizabeth City, N.C. He had come to Charlotte in the late 1870's and had opened a grocery store on S. Church St. By 1897 he had achieved the accolades of his neighbors, primarily because of his invention of the "**Hornet's Nest Liniment**," a widely-acclaimed medicinal brew of that day. <sup>14</sup> *The Evening Chronicle* explained that he "made a lucrative living from the much advertised and meritorious composition." <sup>15</sup> A member of Trinity Methodist Church, Walter Mullen died in the house on February 17, 1910. <sup>16</sup> "He was gentle in manner, kind in speech, unselfish, honest in heart and life, square in his dealings, in exemplary husband and father," *The Charlotte*

News proclaimed. <sup>17</sup> In the opinion of *The Evening Chronicle*, W. N. Mullen "had been one of the best known most popular citizens of this community." <sup>18</sup>

On December 30, 1946, the descendants of, Walter Mullen and his wife, Annie Beatrice Grimes Mullen (1859-1925), sold the house to the Charles H. Litaker Insurance Company. <sup>19</sup> That firm has used the structure as its corporate headquarters.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (February 13, 1938), sec. 3., p. 7. Mecklenburg County Dead Book 84, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> The Andrews Music Co. is now located in the Eastland Mall Shopping Center in suburban Charlotte, NC.

<sup>3</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (February 13 1938), sec. 3., p. 7. Charlotte City Directory, 1893-94, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> "Frank H. Andrews" a Folder in the Files of the Carolina Room in the Charlotte- Mecklenburg Public Library.

<sup>5</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (February 13, 1938). sec. 3, p 7.

<sup>6</sup> See Beers Map, 1877.

<sup>7</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (February 13, 1938). sec. 3, p. 7. <sup>8</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (July 14, 1920) p. 1. *The Charlotte News* (July 14, 1920) p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> Burial Records of Elmwood Cemetery, Charlotte, N.C. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1125 p. 107.

<sup>10</sup> Burial Records of Elmwood Cemetery, Charlotte, N.C. *Charlotte Daily Observer* (January 10, 1895), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Charlotte City-Directory*, 1896-97, p. 56.

<sup>12</sup> Burial Records of Elmwood Cemetery, Charlotte, N.C. Bagley was a music teacher and operated a boarding house in her residence (*Charlotte City Directory*, 1896-97, p. 56 ).

<sup>13</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 116, p. 539. Burial Records of Elmwood Cemetery, Charlotte, N.C.

<sup>14</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (February 18, 1910), p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *The Evening Chronicle* (February 17, 1910), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (February 18, 1910), p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *The Charlotte News* (February 17, 1910), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> *The Evening Chronicle* (February 17, 1910), p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1230, p. 552. Burial Records of Elmwood Cemetery, Charlotte, N.C., *Charlotte News* (February 17, 1910), p. 12.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains an architectural description of the property.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-399.4:**

**a. Historical and cultural significance:** The historical and cultural significance of the property known as the Bagley-Mullen House rests upon three factors. First, the structure was built by E. M. Andrews, a founder of the Andrews Music Company and, even more importantly, a pivotal figure in the architectural history of Charlotte, N.C. Second, the house served as the abode of Walter N. Mullen, a leading entrepreneur of the community. Third, the structure is the only local example of the Chateaufresque style of architecture.

**b. Suitability for preservation and restoration:** The overall exterior integrity of the structure survives. The interior has been substantially altered, but many of the details on the interior are extant. On balance, the structure is suitable for preservation and/or restoration.

**c. Educational value:** The Bagley-Mullen House has educational value because of the historical and cultural significance of the property.

**d. Cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance or repair:** At present, the Commission has no intention of purchasing the fee simple or any lesser included interest in this property. The Commission presently assumes that all costs associated with restoring and preserving the structure will be paid by the owner or subsequent owner of the structure.

**e. Possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property:** Obviously, the property is highly suited for adaptive use. Indeed, it has been the headquarters of an insurance company for over thirty years. Worth noting in this regard is the fact that the property is zoned B3.

**f. Appraised value:** The current tax appraisal value of the .139 acres of land is \$18,150. The current tax appraisal value of the improvements on the property is \$10,690. The most recent tax bill on the land and improvements was \$490.28. The Commission is aware that the owner could apply annually for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on those portions of the property which are designated as "historic property."

**g. The administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs:** As stated earlier, the Commission presently has no intention of purchasing the fee simple or any lesser included interest in this property. Furthermore, the Commission presently assumes that all costs associated with the property will be paid by the present or subsequent owner of the property.

**9. Documentation of and in what ways the property meets the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places:** The Commission judges that the property known as the Bagley-Mullen House does meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Basic to the Commission's judgment is its knowledge that the National Register of Historic Places, established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, represents the decision of the Federal Government to expand its recognition of historic properties to include those of local, regional and state significance. The Commission believes that the investigation of the Bagley-Mullen House contained herein demonstrates that the property is of local historic importance. Consequently, the Commission judges that the property known as the Bagley-Mullen House does meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Specifically, the Commission judges that the property known as the Bagley-Mullen House does meet the criterion that properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places must "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction."

**10. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historical importance to Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County:** The property known as the Bagley-Mullen House is historically important to Charlotte for three reasons. First, the structure was built by Edgar Murchison Andrews, a founder of the Andrews Music Co., and even more importantly, a pivotal figure in the architectural history of Charlotte, N.C. Second, the house served as the abode of Walter N. Mullen, a leading entrepreneur of the community. Third, the structure is the only local example of the Chateaufort style of architecture.

#### Chain of Title

1. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1230, Page 552 (December 30, 1946).  
Grantor: J. R. & M. R. Mullen, B. F. & C. D. Mullen, Ann S. Mullen, Jessie M. Barbour.  
Grantee: Charles H. Litaker Insurance, Inc.

2. Mecklenburg County Will Book Z, Page 418 (1939).  
Devisor: E. G. Mullen.  
Devisee: Jessie Mullen Barbour.
3. Mecklenburg County Will Book T. Page 154 (September 2, 1925).  
Devisor: A. G. Mullen.  
Devisee: E. G. Mullen.
4. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 228, Page 504 (February 17, 1908).  
Grantor: Walter N. Mullen.  
Grantee: A. G. Mullen.
5. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 116, Page 539 (March 4, 1897).  
Grantor: A. G. Bagley.  
Grantee: Walter N. Mullen.
6. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 112, Page 107 (January 10, 1895)  
Grantor: E. M. Andrews.  
Grantee: A. G. Bagley.
7. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 84, Page 142 (October 5. 1892).  
Grantor: J. R. Collett, agent for Walter Brem.  
Grantee: E. M. Andrews.

## Bibliography

*An Inventory Of Older Buildings In Mecklenburg County And Charlotte For The Historic Properties Commission.*

Beers Map, 1877.

Burial Records of Elmwood Cemetery, Charlotte, N.C.

Charlotte City Directory, 1893-94.

Charlotte City Directory, 1896-97. Estate Records of Mecklenburg County.

"Frank H. Andrews," a Folder in the Files of the Carolina Room in the Charlotte- Mecklenburg Public Library.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office.

Sanborn Insurance Maps of Charlotte, N.C.

*Charlotte Daily Observer.*

*Charlotte News.*

*Charlotte Observer.*

Vital Statistics of Mecklenburg County.

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** May 29 1979.

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Director  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission  
139 Middleton Dr.  
Charlotte, N.C. 28207

Telephone: (704) 332-2726

### *Architectural Description*

*by Dr. Dan L. Morrill*

The Bagley- Mullen House (1895) is the only structure in Charlotte, N.C., which is predominantly, French Chateau or Chateausque in architectural style. Designs of this fashion appeared initially in France in the second quarter of the nineteenth century and were inspired by the architecture of the reign of Francis I (1515-1547). The most imposing edifice of this genre in the United States was designed for George Washington Vanderbilt by Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895) and erected in Asheville, N.C. between 1890 and 1895. It is reasonable to infer that Edgar Murchison Andrews, who built the Bagley-Mullen House for speculative purposes, selected the Chateausque style because of its association with the Biltmore House, which was under construction at the same time. Admittedly, however, the Bagley-Mullen House is a modest and somewhat unsophisticated example of this architectural motif. The Chateausque style is massive and irregular in silhouette. It is characterized by steeply pitched [hip](#) or [gable roofs](#) with dormers, towers, and tall, elaborately decorated chimneys with corbled caps. While incorporating these elements on the exterior the Bagley-Mullen House exhibits interior features, especially the one surviving mantel on the first floor, which draw their inspiration from Neo-Classical designs. Consequently, like the majority of substantial dwellings erected in Charlotte in the late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Bagley-Mullen House can be classified as a transitional structure in terms of architectural style.

The Bagley-Mullen House is significant also because of its role in the development of the residential patterns of the built environment or townscape of this community. This was not the first edifice to occupy this site. Previously, three tenement houses, known as Fox's Row had been situated on this and two adjoining lots. The construction of the Bagley-Mullen House by E. M. Andrews illustrates the introduction of more imposing homes on to the back streets of Charlotte, a process which was occurring during the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century in response to the commercial and industrial expansion of the community.

### **Detailed Description**

The Bagley-Mullen House is a two and one-half story brick structure four bays wide and five bays deep with a one-story component across the rear. The main roof is a gabled hip. A pyramidal roof with metal cresting is atop the corner tower on the right front. A cross-gable is on the right. A gable roof is at the right rear and a hip roof surmounts the one-story rear component. All are slate. Originally, the house had a wrap-around porch on the front, a rear porch and a second-story porch on the left rear. None are extant. The brickwork is predominantly American or Common Bond and exhibits considerable corbeling. Shouldered segmental arches surmount the majority of windows and are connected to one another by belt courses. A corbel table below the second story window above the main front entrance assumes the appearance of a bracketed window sill. The house has three chimneys, two on the left and one on the right. They also possess considerable corbeling. The remnant of a chimney is located on the one story rear component. The most typical window is a two-over-two double hung sash with large rectangular lights or panes. An oculus window with four granite keystones or voussoirs is situated on the corner tower, as are three pseudo-dormers with flared eaves. There are five entrances to the structure (two on the front, one on the left rear, one at the center rear and a second-story entrance on the right). The main front entrance is the most imposing. It consists of double doors, each having a large light in the upper half and four rectangular panels with raised molded surrounds below. Fluted pilasters with Bull's eye corner blocks and a large pedestal-like base flank the front entrance and surmount an arched two-light transom. The metal stairway to the second story is not original. The metal balustrades on both sides of the two front entrances are replacements also.

The interior of the first story has been changed substantially from the original. The stairway to the second story has been removed. An archway to the immediate left of the main front entrance has been enclosed. The three doorways on the left of the center hall are later additions. All but one of the fireplaces have been eliminated. The two bathrooms are not original in terms of scale and fixtures. The floors have been covered with linoleum. The most imposing original features are the Neoclassical mantel in the room on the left front the double doors which connect the front and the middle room on the left. Also noteworthy are the metal fireplace cover in the room on the front left and the wainscoting, composed of bands of vertical reeding posed by plain flush boards which adorns the center hall and several of the rooms. The ceilings on the first story are not original.

The second story retains its essential integrity, except for the removal of the stairway. Especially striking are the symmetrically molded doorway surrounds with corner blocks punctuated with roundels and cap with sawn molding. Also, the bathroom retains its original fixtures. Unfortunately, one of the two mantels on the second story has been removed.



**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Litaker Insurance Building is located at 127 N. Poplar St., Charlotte, N.C. 28231.

**2. Name, addresses, and telephone numbers of the present owners and occupants of the property:** The present owner of the property is:

Charles B. Litaker, Inc. 127 N. Poplar St.  
Charlotte, N.C. 28231

Telephone 334-4685

The present occupant of the property is:

Charles H. Litaker Mutual Ins.  
127 N. Poplar St.  
Charlotte, N.C. 28231

Telephone 334-4685

Mr. Charles H. Litaker, Jr.  
RFD 1  
Matthews, N.C.

Telephone 366-2682

Mr. Dan H. Litaker  
RFD 1  
Matthews, N.C.

Telephone 366-7090

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** Representative photographs of the property are included in this report.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** A map depicting the location of the property, is included in this report.

**5. Current Deed Book Reference of the property:** The current deed to this property is stated in Deed Book 1230, page 552. The property is also listed in Map Book 4, page 227, and in Tax Book 78, pg 16, lot 8.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:**

The site on which the property, known as the Litaker Insurance Building now stands was given to Charles J. Fox by his father Stephen Fox, according to the latter's will probated in 1843 and recorded in Mecklenburg County Will Book C, page 87. The 1877 Beers Map of Charlotte indicates that the site comprised lots #157 and #158 in square #20.

Sometime before 1877 three large tenement houses were constructed on lot # 157. These structures are depicted on Beers Map of 1877. In a deed dated March 14, 1891, and recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 78, page 162, both lots were transferred from Julia Fox, widow of Charles J. Fox, to S.R. Collett of Burke County. The three large tenement houses, known as Fox Row, were demolished or removed at some date prior to 1892. Mr. E.M. Andrews, a furniture and piano merchant and an undertaker, purchased the site on September 26, 1892. This transaction is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 84, page 142. In a Deed of Trust of January 10, 1895, recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 99, page 410, Mr. Andrews secured a loan of \$4,000.00 from Mr. A. B. Davidson and wife Cornelia C. Davidson by conveying the lot of land situated at the intersection of Poplar and Fifth Streets, being parts of lots #157 and #158 in square #20, "upon which is now being erected a two story building." This is the structure which is now known as the Litaker Insurance Building. In other words, the building was erected in 1895.

In March 1895 Mr. Andrews sold the property to Mr. A.J. Bagley for \$6,000.00. This transaction is recorded in the Mecklenburg County Deed Book 112, page 127. The Charlotte City Directory of 1896-97 reveals that Mr. Bagley was the assistant ticket agent for the Southern Railroad.

In 1897, as recorded in the Mecklenburg County Deed Book 116, page 539, Mr. Bagley sold the property to Mr. Walter N. Mullen for \$5,500.00. Mr. Mullen was the grandfather of Mr. T.G. Barbour, who now resides on Roswell Ave. Mr. Barbour grew up in the house.

Charles H. Litaker purchased the property in 1946. Sometime before this transaction --which is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1230, page 552 --the structure had been converted into an apartment house. Since the purchase of the property by Charles Litaker, Inc., the building has housed the Charles H. Litaker Mutual Ins. Agency. The heirs of Mr. Walter N. Mullen sold the property to Charles H. Litaker, Inc.

The Litaker Insurance Building is a brick structure of complex exterior configuration. To say the least, consistency is not among its characteristics. The roof arrangement is a case in point. From the front (east) and the left (south) facades the roof is a gabled hip design with a small pyramid roof on the Chateausque tower (see appended photograph #1). From the right (north) and rear (west) facades, however, the roof arrangement is entirely different (see appended photograph #2). A gable roof extends northward from the center of the structure; a smaller gable roof thrusts westward toward the rear of the building. Finally, a hip roof adorns a single story protrusion at the back of the structure. The roof arrangement possesses only one consistent element. In all instances the roofing material is patterned slate.

The brick work is equally complex. To a level of approximately eight courses above ground for the full circumference of the building, the bricks which protrude slightly from each facade, are rendered in American Bond. Indeed the brickwork on the west and south facades is entirely American Bond. The brickwork on the north and east facades is stretcher bond. Adding to the complexity of the brickwork is the fact that considerable corbeling adorns the building. The structure has several corbel courses. The east facade, consisting of three distinct sections (see appended photograph #1), has one corbel course which sweeps across the entire surface and forms the cornice of the segmented brick arches above all the second floor windows except the oculus window on the tower.

The tower, including its small wall which protrudes from the center section of the east has four corbel courses (see appended photograph #3). The topmost corbel course moves beneath the window in the pseudo dormer; the next two move above and below the oculus window. The bottom corbel course stretches above the segmented brick arch atop the sash window on the ground floor of the tower. Finally the east facade has extensive corbeling below the two lighted window of the second floor above the front door. The corbeling here forms a corbel table which assumes the appearance of a bracketed window sill.

The north facade also possesses extensive corbeling. All the corbel courses on the front of the tower, except the one immediately below the oculus window, sweep across the northern and western facades of the tower (see appended photograph #4). The center section of the north facade has no corbeling. The rear section of the north facade, however, has two corbel courses sweeping from one side to the other. Here again, they form the cornices of the segmented brick arches above the ground floor and second story windows. The same corbeling pattern appears on the south facade (see appended photograph #1). In both instances, however, the single story extension in the rear has corbeling only over the segmented brick arches over the

windows and, in the case of the south facade, over the door. The west facade has corbeling over the segmented brick arches atop the two windows. And corbeling comprises the sills for both windows (see appended photograph #2). The four-lighted small sash window in the dormer on the south facade has extensive corbeling near the top. This corbeling forms three indentations on both sides of both chimneys (see appended photograph #1).

The overall window treatment is also quite varied. The two large sash windows on the second floor of the east facade, the sash window on the first floor of the front of the tower, the six sash windows on the two story portion of the south facade below the dormer, the two large sash windows on the north facades of the tower, and the six sash windows on the first and second floors of the rear section of the north facade, all are treated similarly. A large sand-colored stone is placed horizontally beneath the window, thereby highlighting the sill. A single course of stretchers is placed vertically above the window in the segmented arch, with a double corbel course serving as the cornice of the arch. The architrave is composed of a simple cavetto molding. The mullions are wooden and divide the window into four large lights. The three pseudo dormer windows on the tower have four somewhat, smaller lights separated by the same type of mullion as used elsewhere. Here again, the architrave is composed of a simple cavetto molding. The true dormer window on the south facade (see appended photograph #1) is treated similarly. The cornice of the gabled pediment above all four of these windows is adorned with a simple cavetto molding.

The oculus window is treated in the traditional manner. A single course of stretchers is placed perpendicular to the curve of the circle. Sand-colored and wedge-shaped keystones are placed at either end of the vertical and horizontal diameters of the circle (see appended photograph #3).

The Litaker Insurance Building has five doors. The double doors in the center section of the east facade are especially noteworthy. The doors themselves are made of oak. The bottom portion of each has four recessed panels with a small raised panel in the center. The recessed panels are surrounded by a simply-reeled bolection moulding. The doors contain a large single light in the upper portion. These lights are encased by a refined Queen Anne frame, consisting of small half columns on the side. The columns have annulets above and below a series of small blocks which contain an "X" with dots placed in each of the four angles of the "X." The top of the frame contains a simple plant design with the branches extending over a slightly raised panel. The pilasters on either side of the door and the cornice of the bow arch over a two-lighted transom above the doors are rendered in a style typical of the Eastlake period. Simple fluting moves between a series of blocks containing bulla-eye indentations. The doors are revealed. A series of rectangular panels are placed on the revealed sides and top, each of which is surrounded by a simple molding.

The interior of the Litaker Insurance Building is highlighted by a dado rail. The dado itself is covered with a paneling composed of alternating vertical boards, one of which is needed (see photograph #5). The molding at the cornices of the walls on the first floor is a simple cavetto molding. The window architraves are the same design as that of the pilasters on either side of the front doors, except the surface is flat throughout (see photograph #6).

Several of the corners formed by the meeting of two interior walls are ordained with a simple column which possess a finial (see photograph #5).

The room on the southeast corner of the house has fireplace and mantel. Twin-reeded pilasters support a console with a leaf pattern (see photograph #7). Two in fireplaces survive on the second floor. Turned pilasters in a spindle fashion support a simple shelf.

Th double doors between the room on the southeast corner and the room immediately behind are handsome. On balance, the structure has Queen Anne roof massing. The detail has Queen Anne, Italianate, and Chateausque features. The building is constructed of dark red brick.

**7. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-399.4:**

**a. Historical and cultural significance:** The structure would seem to meet this criterion on the basis of the place it occupies in the overall architectural fabric of the inner-city of Charlotte. The building is one of the ever-dwindling number of residences left in what was once Charlotte's finest residential neighborhood. It is also one of the few late-Victorian brick houses still standing; it is the only we know of that has earthquake bolts for protection from tremors. Its first resident was the assistant ticket agent for Southern Railroad. The railroad was important to the growth of Charlotte as an industrial center; and it was fitting as well as indicative of the railroad's importance, that the assistant ticket agent of the Southern Railroad lived in a fine house in the best section of town.

**b. Suitability for preservation and restoration:** The owners have indicated that they would like to preserve and maintain the structure as their business office. It would take little or no restoration.

**c. Educational value:** The structure is a good working example of adaptive preservation and could be used to encourage other individual preservation efforts.

**d. Cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance, operation or repair:** The Commission has no intention of acquiring this property. The owners will continue to meet on-going expenses associated with the structure.

**e. Possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property:** The structure is currently being used adaptively as an insurance office.

**f. Appraised value:** The 1975 appraised value for the house and property is \$28,840.00. \$18,150 for the property. \$10,690 for improvements.

**g. The administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs:** As mentioned earlier, the owners have indicated their willingness to maintain the structure for their business purposes.



**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria established for inclusion on the National Register:** The Commission recognizes that it has no authority to recommend properties for inclusion on the National Register. It is required, however, by State Statute to measure properties which it recommends for local designation against the criteria for the National Register.

The Commission believes that the Litaker Insurance Building would not qualify on the basis of its own architectural merit. The structure would also not qualify on the basis or the historical events associated with the building itself. The strongest case for the inclusion of the Litaker Insurance Building on the National Register own be made on the basis of its proximity to the First Presbyterian Church and to the Old Settlers Cemetery.

The Old Settlers Cemetery would most certainly qualify for the National Register, especially if one accepts the authenticity of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. The criteria for the National Register explicitly state that the following would qualify: "a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events." At another point the criteria state that "properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria." Consequently, the Litaker Insurance Building would qualify if it is an integral part of an historic district formed by the cemetery.

The fact that the structure is immediately across the street from First Presbyterian Church should also be taken into account. The Litaker Insurance Building was erected in the same

decade in which the last major renovations were made to the First Presbyterian Church. It therefore provides some historical continuity to the area.

**9. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historical importance to Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County:** No claim will be made that this structure is a great work of architectural art. It isn't. Moreover, the building has been modified substantially. Canopies or porticos on the east and south facades have been removed. Both original stairways to the second floor have been demolished. The doorway on the left side of the east facade is probably not original. The staircase on the exterior of the north facade has been added. The interior wall arrangement has been modified.

No claim will be made that this structure housed a famous person. It didn't. However, America's history is the history of the ordinary person, of the dirt farmer, the grocer, the tailor, people like you and me. We are the ones who made America that it is, and our history should be recorded along with that of the Washingtons, Lees, Roosevelts, and the Kennedys.

The structure at 127 N. Poplar St. is a late Victorian house built and lived in by ordinary people. It probably is of no great artistic value, except that it tells us how some structures looked in 1895, and how some people thought then, their fears, likes, and dislikes.

The Victorian era made America what it is today. It was during this period that America changed from a largely agricultural country into an industrial power. It was an exciting, flamboyant period filled with frenetic activity. Most of the modern conveniences we have in our homes today were introduced during the Nineteenth Century. Central heat, cook stoves, lighting, and indoor plumbing--all could be had in the Victorian home. The 127 N. Poplar Street structure is an example of a time when architecture was filled with imagination and color.

The house was built by E.M. Andrews whose companies have been a part of Charlotte's business scene for almost a century. The music company that bears his name operated for many years uptown and still transacts business from a new location on South Boulevard. Walter Mullen, whose family lived in the house for forty-nine years, owned and operated a grocery store on South Church Street. T.G. Barbour, Mr. Mullen's grandson who was reared in the house, was an officer at Mechanics Perpetual Building and Loan Association. It has housed the families of merchants and businessmen, of people on whom America's foundation has been built.

While America's foundation seems strong and unshakable, the foundations of some of our earlier structures were not so solid. The great quake that shook Charleston, SC, in 1886 was also felt in Charlotte. That prompted some builders to add earthquake bolts to hold the walls of their structures more firmly. The Litaker Insurance Building has these bolts. Their decorative endpieces can be seen marching down the side of the structure. To our knowledge, it is the only house still standing in uptown Charlotte that has these bolts. The interior and exterior of the building are "of period" and blend together to create a pleasing

sight to the eye. They reveal to us what some people thought was beautiful and modern in 1895.

On balance the Litaker Insurance Building is important to the history of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County because it housed people who made, as you and I are today, Charlotte-Mecklenburg history. They were the railroad ticket agent in the heyday of railroading, the neighborhood grocer before the days of the supermarket, and the bank official who loaned the money to build other houses to shelter those who would continue to live and produce the history of our area.

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Notes

assisted by Mrs. Max Forsburg

other information offered by Mrs. Miles Boyer and Mr. William F. Corbett

architectural description compiled by Dr. Dan Morrill