

The W. D. Beaty House



This report was written on 28 February 1990

1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the W. D. Beaty House is located at 2400 Park Lane in Charlotte, N. C.

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

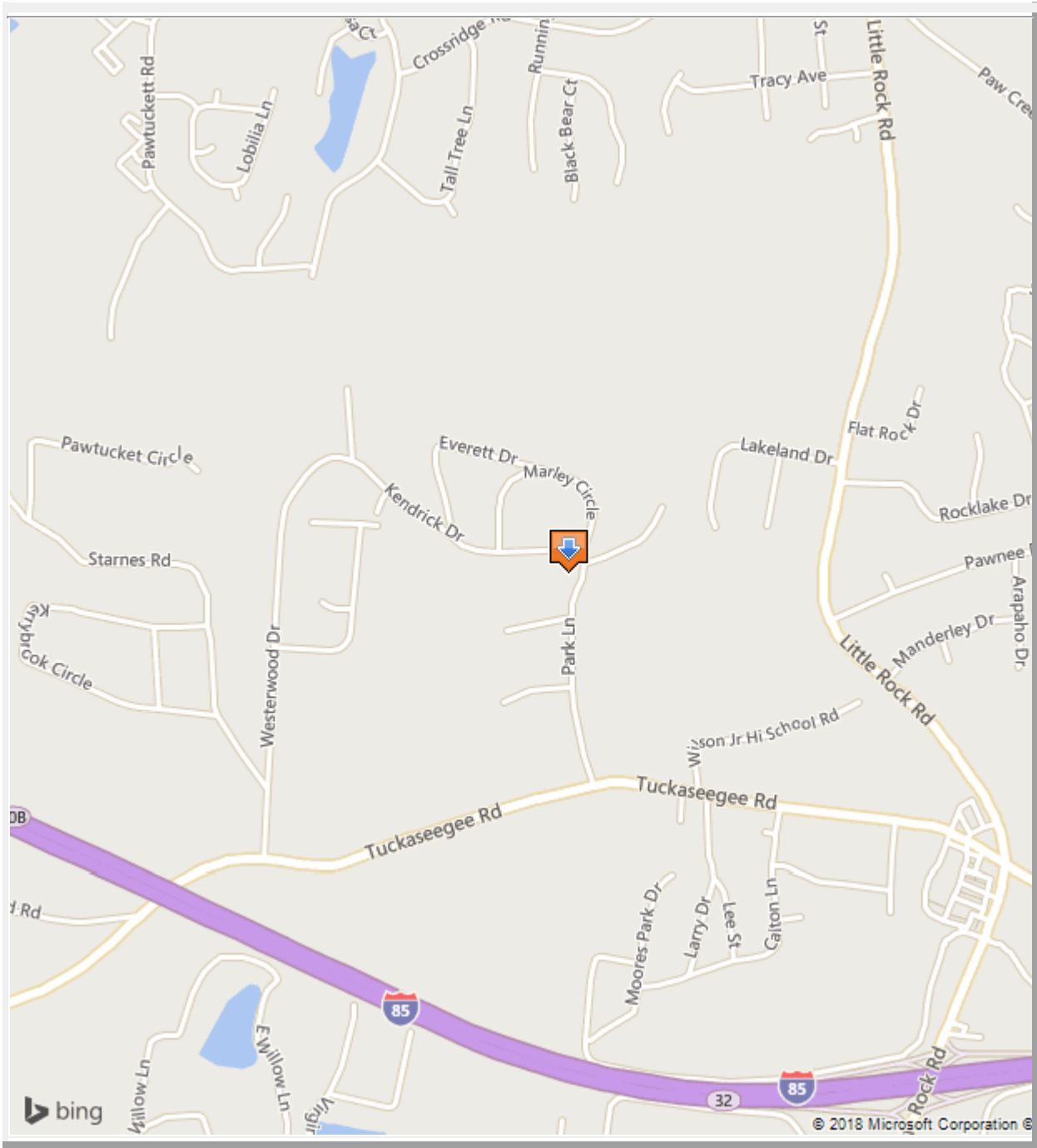
Mrs. Mary B. Kelly
2716 Dellinger Circle
Charlotte, North Carolina 28213

Telephone: (704)596-5747

Tax Parcel Number: 055-294-06

3. Representative photographs of the property: This report contains representative photographs of the property.

4. A map depicting the location of the property: This report contains maps which depict the location of the property.



5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property: The most recent deed to this property is listed in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 6061 at page 689. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is 055-294-06.

6. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Ms. Mary Beth Gatza.

7. A brief architectural description of the property: This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Ms. Mary Beth Gatza.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400.5:

a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture and /or cultural importance: The Commission judges that the property known as the W. D. Beaty House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following consideration: 1) the W. D. Beaty House was owned by the second son of James M. Beaty, early 19th century Mecklenburg County landowner; 2) the ca. 1880 W. D. Beaty house is architecturally significant as representing a late 19th century interpretation of the National Folk (post-railroad) house form; 3) the two story I-house has elaborate Folk Victorian details such as cornice returns, brackets, and flat, jigsaw cut trim; 4) interior details such as the curved stair are examples of a high level of local craftsmanship; and 5) the property is of similar construction to 1880's houses in Gaston County by Lawson Henderson Stowe, builder.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association: The Commission contends that the architectural description by Ms. Mary Beth Gatza which is included in this report demonstrates that the W. D. Beaty House meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal: The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes a designated "historic landmark." The current appraised value of the improvements is \$35,640. The current appraised value of the 2.19 acres is \$21,600. The total appraised value of the property is \$57,240. The property is zoned R-12.

Date of Preparation of this Report: 28 February 1990

Prepared by: Dr. Dan L. Morrill in conjunction with Nora M. Black
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission
1225 South Caldwell Street, Box D
Charlotte, North Carolina 28203

Telephone: 704/376-9115

Historical Overview

M. B. Gatza
September, 1989

William D. Beaty (1838-1905) was the second son of landowner, James M. Beaty (1800-1889).¹ James M. Beaty owned 632 acres, on three separate tracts, and no less than three dwelling houses when he died in 1889.² As his share of the estate, W. D. Beaty received a 64 1/2 acre tract along the Catawba River, which included a house, but he may never have resided there. W. D. Beaty married Mary E. Kinkaide in 1869, and together they had at least six children.³

W. D. Beaty purchased 98 1/2 acres in 1891 from J. W. S. and Martha Todd for \$1500, and this house was most likely standing on it at the time. The deed of 1891 has a clause which reads (in part):

"...the said Martha I. Todd ...doth... release... unto the party of the second part... all her right of dower and of the homestead in the above described land..."

Evidently, she was a widow, and probably acquired this property through her husband. The property could have transferred to her automatically upon his death, and therefore, no deed was recorded. Her maiden name and previous married name are unknown. They were living alone together by 1870, and in 1880, they were housing three boarders and one servant (a cook).⁴

In 1905, W. D. Beaty passed away, leaving a will which mentions, among other things, the house. He bequeathed to his

"wife, M. E. Beaty ... all my land (98 acres) on which I now live, all my household and kitchen furnishings, horses, mules, cattle of all kinds, all notes and any money..."

He further stipulates,

" at the death of my beloved wife, my son J. C. Beaty [is to receive] 65 acres of land of off [sic] the South end of my place, the same to include the dwelling in which I now live and outbuildings at his death to be divided among his children."

The remaining 34 acres was to go to his daughter, Mrs. Fanny B. Ridnehour, with instructions to sell the mineral rights, if she should ever be offered a good price. One-half interest in the mineral rights on Fanny's tract was to belong to James C.⁴ Family tradition tells of a former mine on the property, however, it is not known if gold or any other mineral was ever extracted from the site.⁵

After the death of Mary Beaty, James C. Beaty did take possession of the residence and 98 1/2 acres. He married Margaret Harris ("Hattie") McConnell in 1897, and together they had twelve

children, at least eight of whom lived to maturity.⁶ James C. Beaty was a farmer, and grew cotton, corn and other crops on the land. In his later years, he ran a telephone switchboard out of the house, presumably serving the Paw Creek and Berryhill areas. He died in 1923, at the age of 53, of Bright's Disease.

Hattie Beaty continued living in the house for about seven years. Around 1930, she traveled to Michigan to be with a daughter, Isabell, who was residing there with her husband, Lawrence Otis Dawley. While in Michigan, Hattie met and married Joseph F. Forrest in 1931. She returned a few years later, without her husband, and resumed occupancy at the homeplace. During the 1920s and 1930s, a son, James Fredrick Beaty is known to have resided in the house. At least two of his six children were born in the house (in 1926 and 1932), however, he never held title to it.⁷

When Hattie died in 1942, she left the property to her children and the only son of her daughter Isabell, Otis Dawley. Several of the heirs sold off their portions of the land, which has resulted in a small subdivision surrounding the house. Mr. Dawley still resides in the house, which is now being restored by a daughter of James Fredrick Beaty.

NOTES

¹ *Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: North Carolina* (Washington: National Archives Microfilm Publications), Mecklenburg County.; Interview with Mary Frances Kelly, Charlotte, North Carolina, August 1989; Robert H. Swain, "Descendants of James Morris Beaty of Paw Creek, N. C." Charlotte, N. C., 1987. (Typewritten).

² "Petition for Partition," Mecklenburg County "Orders and Decrees" Book 4, p. 1.

³ Interview with Mary Frances Kelly; *Tenth Census: 1880*.

⁴ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 77, page 254; *Population Schedules of the Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: North Carolina* (Washington, National Archives Microfilm Publications), Mecklenburg County; *Population Schedules of the Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: North Carolina* (Washington, National Archives Microfilm Publications), Mecklenburg County.

⁴ Will Book O, p. 346, Mecklenburg County.

⁵ Interview with Mary Frances Kelly.

⁶ The eight adult children of James C. and Hattie Beaty were: William Harvey (b. 1898), Robert Lee (b. 1900), Nellie Jane (b. 1902), James Fredrick (b. 1903), Mary Isabell (b. 1905), Agnes,

James C., Jr., and Calvin McConnell Beaty. One boy and two twin girls, Catherine and Cathleen, died in infancy.

⁷ Interview with Mary Frances Beaty.

Architectural Description

M. B. Gatza
September, 1989

The W. D. Beaty House faces east, now toward Park Lane, on a very suburban street. At the time it was built, around 1880, it would have been at the end of a long dirt drive and overlooked fields or woodlands. The closest thoroughfare is Tuckaseegee Road, about a quarter of a mile away.

The house stands two stories tall and three bays across, with two exterior end chimneys and a two-story rear ell. The side-gabled roof is of moderate pitch. The exterior end chimneys are laid up in five-course common bondbrick and have corbelled bases (now concealed beneath stucco) and freestanding stacks. Two, four-light, fixed-sash windows are found in the attic level astride each chimney. Six-over-six double-hung sash windows are found elsewhere throughout the house. The splayed front door surround features a glazed transom and sidelights. The individual lights in the door surround have clipped corners, and from a distance give the impression of being curved. Originally weatherboarded, the house was sheathed in asbestos shingle during the middle years of the twentieth century. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The house retains much (if not all) of its elaborate trim. A wide frieze runs the length of the cornice on both the main block and rear ell, and holds scroll brackets. The brackets are repeated on the front porch, and are supplemented there with sawn corner brackets. Delicate, chamfered posts support the hipped porch roof.

On the interior, the most striking feature is the graceful curved stair. Thin balusters climb the length of the stair, leading from a bold, turned newel post. The stair ends, however, are plain. The door and window surrounds are simple, and consists of a plain, two-part molding. A narrow door decorated with wood graining was found in a room upstairs, but is thought to have originally been located on the first floor. Two exterior doors, also wood-grained, were found hanging on an outbuilding. One was obviously the front door, as the applied molding echoes the pattern of the glazing on the door surround. The interior wall surfaces are of plaster applied over sawn laths.

There are side porches on both the north and south elevations of the rear ell. The one to the north is L-shaped and shields the ell and also the rear elevation of the house. Neither porch is original

to the house, although they have probably replaced earlier porches in the same configuration. Both porches consist of concrete bases, plain wooden posts and hipped roofs.

Based on physical evidence, it is thought that the house dates from c. 1880. While the attic-level windows and curved stair would suggest an earlier date of construction, examples of both features dating from the 1880s have been found in neighboring Gaston County. There are a handful of houses in southeast Gaston County known to be the work of a local builder which share some distinguishing features with the Beaty House .¹ It is entirely possible that this builder, Lawson Henderson Stowe, also worked in Mecklenburg and constructed this house as well.

NOTES

¹ Namely, the curved staircase, two-story rear ell, bracketed cornice and elaborate porch trim. Of the four houses in Gaston County attributed to Stowe, at least two contain a curved stair, two have a two-story rear ell, and all have a bracketed cornice with a clearly-defined frieze. While none of these features by themselves constitute sound evidence, the combination suggests that this house dates from the same decade as the Gaston County examples, and is probably of the same hand.