

## John and Idella Mayes House



*This report was written on February 22, 1993*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the John and Idella Mayes House is located at 435 East Morehead Street, Charlotte, in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

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

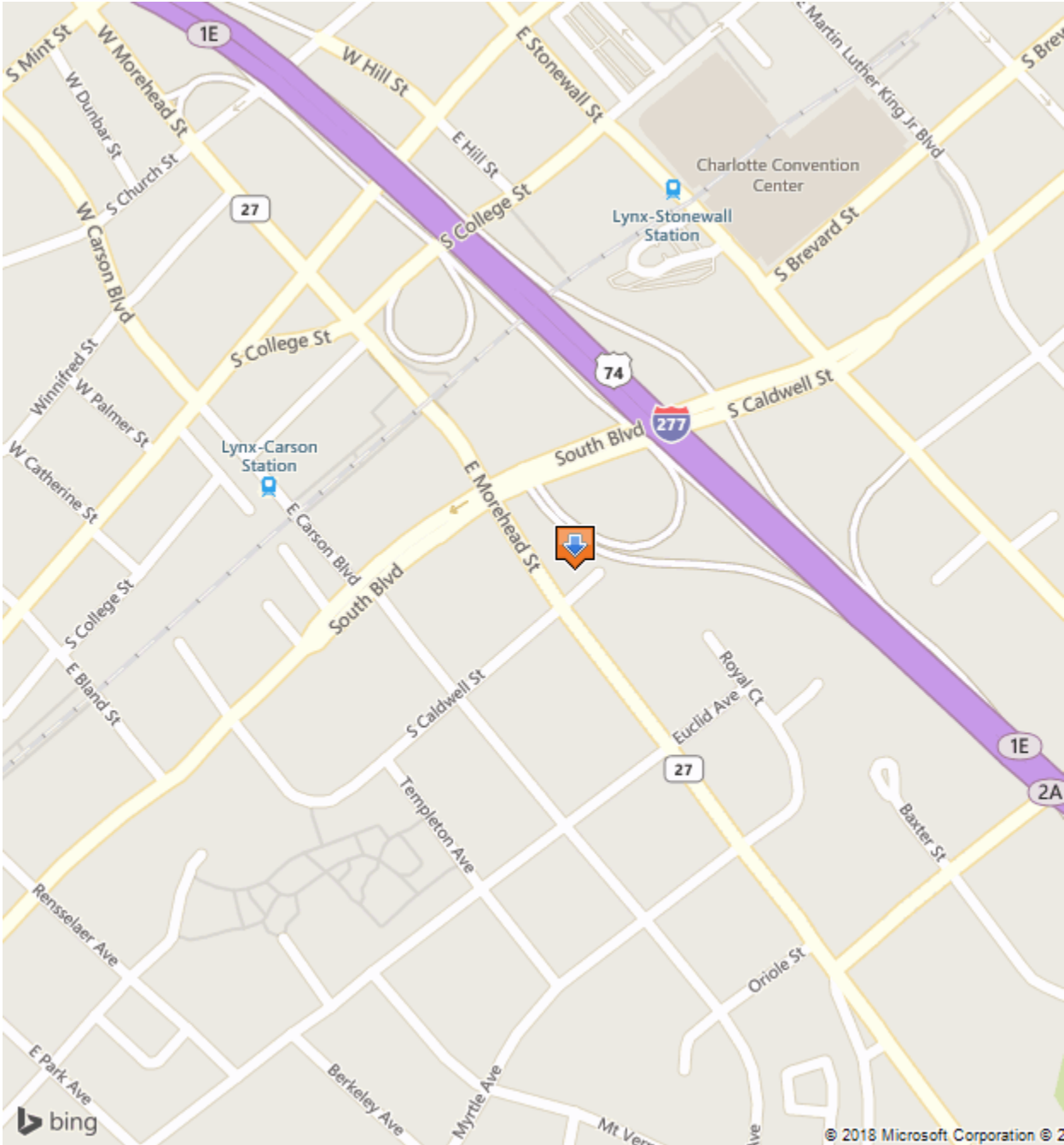
JFW Realty Incorporated  
435 East Morehead Street  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202

Telephone: (704) 331-0767

Tax Parcel Number: 125-137-04

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

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:**



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent deed to Tax Parcel Number 125-137-04 is listed in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 7199 at page 755.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. William H. Huffman.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Ms. Nora M. Black.

**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 John and Idella Mayes House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- 1) the John and Idella Mayes House was built ca. 1902;
- 2) the John and Idella Mayes House is one of the last vestiges of the grand residential boulevard that formed the northern boundary of Dilworth;
- 3) the career of John H. Mayes was intertwined with that of Stuart W. Cramer, also a Morehead Street neighbor;
- 4) John H. Mayes, with Cramer and three other men, organized the Mayes Manufacturing Company in 1906 with Mayes as president;
- 5) the group built a cotton mill and the mill village of Mayesworth in 1907;
- 6) in 1922, Mayes Manufacturing was absorbed into Cramerton Mills, Incorporated, and the name of the mill village, Mayesworth, was changed to Cramerton;
- 7) the John and Idella Mayes House has survived through the years with most exterior appointments, such as the slate roof and leaded glass windows, intact and in very good condition;
- 8) the John and Idella Mayes House has survived with most interior appointments, such as wood paneling, embossed wallcoverings and wooden pocket doors, intact and in very good condition; and
- 9) the John and Idella Mayes House is architecturally significant as one of the finest examples of the Shingle Style house to be found in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association:** The Commission contends that the architectural description by Nora M. Black included in this report demonstrates that the John and Idella Mayes 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 \$68,160. The current appraised value of Tax Parcel 125-137-04 (0.28 acres) is \$245,680. The total appraised value of the property is \$313,840. The property is zoned B1.

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** February 22, 1993

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill & Nora M. Black, Associate A.I.A.  
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### *Historical Overview*

*Dr. William H. Huffman*

The Mayes House is the only surviving turn of the century house remaining in Charlotte's old Second Ward; one of the few remaining fine houses built on the once-fashionable Morehead Street; and a rare intact example of the Shingle Style in Charlotte. Built about 1902 by John Henry and Idella Green Mayes, the house features an asymmetrical form dominated by a cross-gambrel roof, shingle upper elevations, brick first story and raised basement. The interior is equally distinctive, highlighted by fashionable late Victorian elements which include a large living hall with a massive fireplace; a prominent staircase with steps cascading into the living hall; and a tripartite stained glass window lighting the landing. John H. Mayes ( 1856-1947) came to Charlotte around the turn of the century, and spent most of his career as a textile machinery agent and mill executive and designer, while his wife, Idella Green Mayes (c.1869-1939), raised their three children and participated in the social life of early twentieth-century Charlotte. They built their stately Shingle Style house, which they occupied for twenty-four years, in an upscale section of East Morehead Street at the edge of the city's first suburb, Dilworth: their immediate neighbors included Stewart W. Cramer, a major New South textile entrepreneur, and William States Lee, who became the president of Duke Power Company and the Piedmont and Northern Railroad.

John H. Mayes was born in Luftborough, England, the son of John and Mary Ainsworth Mayes, and came to the United States at the age of fourteen. As a young man, he entered the textile industry, most likely in Massachusetts, where his oldest daughter was born. When he came to Charlotte around the turn of the century, Mayes was a traveling salesman for Stewart W. Cramer, a New South entrepreneur who is credited with designing and equipping about one-third of all the cotton mills in the South prior to World War II. For much of the first two decades of this century while Mayes occupied the East Morehead Street house, his career and that of Stewart Cramer were intertwined. Cramer (1868-1940) was a native of Thomasville, NC and a graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy and Columbia University School of Mines. After

graduation in 1889, he came to Charlotte and was in charge of the United States Assay office until 1893, when he went to work for Daniel Augustus Tompkins, a pioneer New South industrialist who also designed and supplied equipment for hundreds of mills throughout the South. In 1895, Cramer went into business for himself as the Southern agent for three Massachusetts manufacturers of cotton mill equipment in competition with Tompkins, and eventually acquired sixty patents for the improvement of textile mill machinery and mill air-conditioning. Cramer designed and equipped hundreds of mills in the South, developed an international reputation, and served on many state and national boards. His four-volume work on the design and equipment for cotton mills, *Useful Information for Cotton Manufacturers* (2nd edition, 1909) became a standard reference work for many years, and he is also known for organizing the Cramerton Mills and the mill town of Cramerton in Gaston County, NC.<sup>1</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that Mayes came to Charlotte around the turn of the century to work for Cramer through the Massachusetts textile machinery connection. Although few details of his career are available, it appears that the relationship with Cramer proved to be an initially prosperous one, for he purchased land for a new house on the same block as Cramer's mansion in 1901, and built a grand house the following year. In 1906, Mayes, Cramer and three others organized the Mayes Manufacturing Company, with J. H. Mayes as president, and built a cotton mill and village, Mayesworth, designed by Cramer, in Gaston County in 1907.<sup>2</sup> The company maintained its offices in Charlotte, and Mayes continued to be a sales agent for Cramer. By 1910, however, Mayes no longer appeared as president of Mayes Manufacturing, and had apparently set himself up as an independent manufacturers agent for cotton mill machinery in Charlotte.<sup>3</sup> In 1915, Stewart Cramer took over control of Mayes Manufacturing, changed the name to Mayes Mills, Inc. and began to greatly expand its capacity by adding a second plant.<sup>4</sup> On December 9, 1922, Mayes Mills, Inc. was absorbed into the newly chartered Cramerton Mills, Inc., and the name of the mill village was changed to Cramerton. J. H. Mayes was one of the directors of the new company. In 1924, Cramerton Mills added a weave plant, which bore the name "Mayflower."<sup>5</sup>

It appears that John Mayes followed Stewart Cramer's lead of branching out from manufacturer's agent to mill designer and executive. When Cramer took control of Mayes Manufacturing in 1915, Mayes was chosen to be the "architect-engineer" (a term used at the time for a mill designer and outfitter) of a mill for the newly-organized Rex Spinning Company in Ranlo, Gaston County, NC and became its first president.<sup>6</sup> Exactly how long he remained president of this company is unclear.<sup>7</sup> In 1920, the 63-year-old Mayes was also the architect-engineer for another mill in Ranlo, the Pricilla Spinning Company. He was one of the organizers of the company and its first president, but his interests were bought out in 1921.<sup>8</sup>

Sometime in the late 1800s, John Mayes and Cora Idella Green, of Margaretsville, Nova Scotia, were married; they subsequently had three daughters and one son.<sup>9</sup> One of their daughters, Idella, was born in Massachusetts in 1894.<sup>10</sup> Exactly when the family moved to Charlotte is not clear, but they appear in the Charlotte City Directory of 1899/1900 as residing on West Vance Street.

In August, 1901, John and Idella Mayes bought a house lot on Morehead Street for \$2,000 from W. B. Ryder; Ryder had originally purchased a larger tract that included the lot from the City of

Charlotte in May, 1897.<sup>12</sup> The best available records suggest that the house was built in 1902 and that the Mayes family occupied it in the latter part of the year.<sup>13</sup> S. W. Cramer built his own large house at the west end of the same block about 1896.<sup>14</sup>

The Mayes family lived in the Morehead Street house from 1902 until 1926, while John H. Mayes pursued his career as a mill machinery manufacturer's agent, mill designer and textile executive and Idella Green Mayes raised their children and participated in Charlotte's social life. It appears that in 1926, at the age of 70, John Mayes decided to retire and no longer needed or desired to live in such a large house. Thus in 1926, the Mayes family sold the house to J. W. Barber, a vice-president of the Cathey Lumber Company.<sup>15</sup> John and Idella Mayes moved to 307 E. Kingston in Dilworth, and in the Thirties went to live with their daughter and son-in-law, Idella Mayes and Frank Hunter at 1815 S. Boulevard, where they lived out the rest of their days.<sup>16</sup>

In 1939, the Home Owner's Loan Corporation took over the house from the Barbers, and sold it to A. J. and Nannie Willoughby that same year.<sup>17</sup> By 1942, the HOLC had again taken back the house, and the following year sold it to J. H. and Ada E. Bennett. John Bennett, who died in 1962, was a real estate agent. The house was conveyed by the Bennett heirs to Robert M. and Trudi N. Glenn in 1979, who also acquired the adjoining .126 acre tract in 1986.<sup>19</sup> In 1989, the property was sold twice: first to Euram, Inc. a North Carolina Corporation, then to Walter H. Fox.<sup>20</sup> The property is now owned by attorney James F. Wyatt III, who intends to rehabilitate the house as a law office.<sup>21</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Robert Allison Ragan, *Leading Textile Mills in Gaston County. N. C.. 1904 to the Present* (Charlotte: Privately Published, 1975) unpaginated typescript, Carolina Room, Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library]; *Biographical History of North Carolina* (Greensboro, N.C.: Van Noppen, 1908), VII, 82-87.

<sup>2</sup> Ragan, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte City Directories. 1908-1910.

<sup>4</sup> Ragan, note 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> The Charlotte city directories do not mention this or subsequent mill activities in Gaston County related to John Mayes and no other sources of information have been uncovered to date.

<sup>8</sup> Ragan, note 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Charlotte Observer*. December 18, 1947, Section Two, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Mecklenburg County Certificate of Death, Record #893.

<sup>11</sup> Charlotte City Directories 1899/1900 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Books 139, p.139, 15 May 1897; 161, p.258, 22 August 1901.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 154, p. 354, 10 December 1901; Book 175, p.82, 28 August 1902 (Deeds of Trust); Charlotte City Directory. 1902 and 1903.

<sup>14</sup> Charlotte City Directory.1902; Sanborn Insurance Map, 1905.

<sup>15</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 618, p.660, 17 September 1926. Barber assumed the balance of the \$15,000 mortgage Mayes had taken out on the house the year before (Book 591, p. 31). Mayes in turn bought a house from Barber on Greenway in the Elizabeth neighborhood (Book 618, p.670), but did not live there.

<sup>16</sup> *Charlotte Observer*. July 7, 1939, p.8; *ibid.*, December 18, 1947, Section Two, p. 1; Charlotte City Directories.1926-1950.

<sup>17</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 976, p.529, 1 June 1939; *ibid.*, 986, p.266, 15 September 1939.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 1078, p.505, 1 August 1942; *ibid.*, 1084, p. 436, 16 January 1943.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 4216, p. 828, 1 August 1979; *ibid.*, 5181, p. 411, 26 February 1986.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 6061, p. 493, 29 June 1989; *ibid.*, 6061, p.488, 29 June 1989.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 February 1993 [JFW Realty, Inc.].

## *Architectural Description*

*Ms. Nora M. Black*

The John and Idella Mayes House is an excellent example of a late Shingle Style house. Few intact Shingle Style houses have been identified in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, making this a unique and remarkable house both in quality of construction and preservation of character of the Shingle Style. The Shingle Style house is considered by many architectural authorities to be the first truly American style of house. Vincent Scully, who has written extensively on the Shingle Style, dates the era of Shingle Style houses from 1874 to the end of the First World War.<sup>1</sup> The plan and massing of the Shingle Style house remove it from the realm of vernacular housing. In fact, *Old-House Journal* reports, "Although some view it as a wooden version of the masonry Romanesque Revival, the Shingle style actually helped to move American architecture several light-years away from traditional European forms...."<sup>2</sup> It has long been considered an architect's style of building with an intricate floor plan, irregular roofline, and classical details. Unlike the Stick Style (which emphasized the skeleton or structure of the building), the Shingle Style presented a unified exterior surface with no evidence of the framing beneath.

The Shingle Style actually had its beginnings in the seaside resorts of New England. Early examples range from the Low House at Bristol, Rhode Island (1886-87) to the C. J. Morrill House at Mount Desert, Maine (1879). In fact, Henry-Russell Hitchcock calls the C. J. Morrill House, designed by William Ralph Emerson "one of the first mature examples of the Shingle Style...[where] rooms of varied shape and size are loosely grouped about the hall and open freely into one another."<sup>3</sup> Emerson also designed the Church of St. Sylvia in Mount Desert, Maine, showing that the Shingle Style could be used for structures other than houses. Both Newport, Rhode Island and Southampton, Long Island, have many early examples of luxurious Shingle Style houses. Scully remarks that the Shingle Style houses "...were a product of American culture's first long, warm summertime after the Civil War."<sup>4</sup>

Virginia and Lee McAlester say of the Shingle Style: "The Shingle style, like the Stick and spindlework Queen Anne, was a uniquely American adaptation of other traditions. Its roots are threefold: (1) From the Queen Anne it borrowed wide porches, shingled surfaces, and asymmetrical forms. (2) From the Colonial Revival it adapted gambrel roofs, rambling lean-to additions, classical columns, and Palladian windows. (3) From the contemporaneous Richardsonian Romanesque it borrowed an emphasis on irregular, sculpted shapes, Romanesque arches, and in some examples, stone lower stories..."<sup>5</sup>

Among the most obvious attributes of the Shingle Style, the John and Idella Mayes House has shingled upper story surfaces, a masonry lower story, asymmetrical forms, recessed openings with curved shingles, and a roof with gambreled cross gables and dormers. The use of the gambrel roof is seen in about 25 percent of Shingle Style houses.<sup>6</sup>

The John and Idella Mayes House is located on the northeast side of East Morehead Street at the intersection of South Caldwell Street. The front or southwest facade of the house faces East



Morehead Street; the rear or northeast facade overlooks the skyline of Charlotte's modern center city. The house is located on a triangular-shaped tract of 0.28 acres. A brick retaining wall with a brownstone coping runs along the southeast side of the tract. Purchased in February, 1993, by JFW Realty Incorporated, the former residence will be adapted for use as offices.

The ground plan of the John and Idella Mayes House is a compound plan with irregular room-sized projections from the principal mass. The house presents an asymmetrical elevation to East Morehead Street. The front-view is dominated by the arched windows that enclose half of the front porch. A brick half-wall encloses the balance of the front porch. The shingled surface of the second and third story gambrel roof end recedes behind the balustrade at the edge of the porch roof.

### **Exterior**

The John and Idella Mayes Houses has four types of siding: brick, wood shingles, horizontal board siding, and asbestos shingles. The first floor of the front (southwest) facade has brick laid in common bond with sixth course headers.<sup>7</sup>The second and third floor gambrel roof end has shingles laid in a coursed pattern. Like the front, the northwest facade has a first floor of brick laid in common bond with sixth course headers; however, the shingles in the gambrel roof end are asbestos shingles that appear to be of 1950s or 1960s vintage. This is logical since the original shingles on the northwest end of the house would receive much weather damage. Plans for adaptation include replacing the asbestos shingles with a product that will resemble the other original wooden sidewall shingles. The rear or northeast facade has a basement wall of brick, a first floor clad in horizontal board siding, and shingles in the gambrel roof end and the dormer end. The southeast facade (facing South Caldwell Street) has a first floor of brick laid in common bond with sixth course headers with the exception of the portion of the wall near the rear of the house. That portion is clad in horizontal board siding similar to the first floor of the rear of the house. Most of the siding appears to be original; the only exception appears to be the asbestos shingles mentioned above. The entire house had been painted light gray; the gray paint was peeling in many places. The paint obscured the masonry base and first floor of the house. The color visible where the paint has flaked off the house and on the brick retaining wall is a rich red brown.

Work, begun in March 1993, includes hand-scraping the gray paint from the shingled surfaces. Other plans include wirebrushing all masonry surfaces by hand, repainting the mortar joints with compatible mortar, and repainting the masonry surfaces a color as near to the original as possible. Trim is to be painted compatible, although contrasting, colors. The gambrel roof is deceptive; it is high enough to hold a full second story and three large attic rooms used for servants' quarters. The original slate roof is laid in a simple, coursed pattern. The gables have a narrow overhang; the narrow, ledge-like eave is boxed.

Many of the windows in the John and Idella Mayes House contain the original leaded glass; most are double hung wooden sash. The wooden sash has an upper portion with three vertical mullions and triangular panes at the top and bottom; the lower portion of the sash is a single large pane of glass. Some broken windows have been replaced with new glass; a glaring example is a 12/1 second floor replacement on the northwest side. Original windows found in

the basement may be reused if it is feasible to rebuild them (March 1993). The second floor window surrounds are wide boards and not elaborate. The first floor, with its brick walls, has brick jack arches over the windows; the window sills are stone. The half-moon basement windows have Roman arches with two header courses of brick and stone sills. Stained glass windows will be discussed in the section, "Interior."

The front elevation is divided into four asymmetrical bays. Two windows and a double door face the front porch. To the southeast of the double door, a single door opens to a glass-enclosed area of the porch that wraps around part of the southeast facade. The front-facing gambrel roof end has two windows with triangular panes as described above. In the peak of the gambrel roof end, there is a vent with shingles curving into the recessed opening.

The entry porch on the front facade is a one-story flat-roofed porch partially enclosed with double hung wooden sash with 6/6 panes. Above the 6/6 windows are elliptical arches with multi-pane fixed sash. The roof of the porch is supported by rectangular brick columns with rounded corners. A wooden balustrade surrounds the porch roof; wide wooden half-columns (over porch columns and at corners) give definition and substance. The porch is floored with quarry tiles. It has a ceiling of beaded board. Seven brownstone steps lead to the porch. The enclosed portion of the porch on the southeast corner has 10/10 movable wooden sash and elliptical arches above with multi-pane fixed sash. Additionally, there are two radiators, two hanging light fixtures, and carpet. This portion of the porch does not have a door that gives direct access to the interior of the John and Idella Mayes House.

The main or front entry, as seen from the front porch is unassuming. Two screen doors, their frames decorated with scrollwork, are painted dark gray. There are two white, two-panel wooden doors behind the screen doors. A jack arch tops the stained glass transom light.

A molded, semi-circular roof provides an elegant cover for the side entry. The flat roofed porch on the southeast facade opens to a side passage of the main stair hall. Because of the lay of the lot, the porch is one-story above South Caldwell Street and is approached by a U-shaped set of stairs running parallel to the side of the house. Walls of the staircase are made of the same brick used for the first floor. Arched openings at the top of the stairs admit light to the porch and stairs. A balustrade like the one described in a previous paragraph decorates the flat-roof of the porch.

A porch on the back or northeast facade is approached by a single flight of steps running parallel to the back of the house. The southeast half of the porch has a flat roof; the balance of the porch is engaged beneath a rear-facing gambrel roof end. The porch has a sense of enclosure caused by the wide supports covered by horizontal wooden siding pierced by large flattened arches. The back porch has wooden flooring that has been painted dark gray. It also has a balustrade at the edge of the roof as previously described. Two doors open onto the back porch. One door opens directly into the kitchen; the other door gives access to the back part of the main hall. Plans include the installation of compatible windows to turn this porch into an enclosed break area for tenants.

The back or northeast facade is the only one that has a gambrel roofed dormer incorporated into the roof. This dormer is large enough to have a full-sized window in its back wall. It might be more appropriately termed a small gambrel roofed room.

## **Interior**

To understand the interior of a Shingle Style house, one should study the plan. In Victorian houses and I-houses seen frequently in Mecklenburg County, the front door opens into a wide, long hallway. Rooms opened to each side of the hallway, but the hallways themselves did not provide living space for the family. The Shingle Style house sought to develop the spatial characteristics of a "living hall" integral to the life of the house. Additionally, the object was to have the rooms flow into each other rather than to remain separate entities.

Fortunately, the interior has not been changed or modernized to any great degree. Aside from some carpet laid over the wood floors and some repair of the kitchen floor, most of the historic fabric is not only intact but visible. The rooms have original moldings. Original hardware for the six panel wooden interior doors and the windows is still in place throughout much of the house. Walls are plaster; finishes include embossed wallcoverings, wallpaper, wood paneling, and paint.

A person entering the house at the two simple white panel doors on the front porch would step into a small vestibule. Immediately, the idea of simplicity is thrown to the wind. The upper walls and ceiling of the vestibule are covered with an embossed cardboard wallcovering.<sup>8</sup> The wallcovering is embossed to represent square, "raised wooden panels set in a checkerboard pattern between a lattice work of vegetation. Below the chair rail, the wainscot is wooden paneling. All of the embossed wallcovering, the wainscot, the woodwork, and the doors are stained a very dark brown. A single unshielded bulb lights the vestibule; the protective globe or fixture is missing. Above the double door, the transom light of stained glass which appears dull from the outside) takes on brilliance as the sunlight filters through. The border of opalescent glass is streaked with copper and white; the interior squares are lavender. The central design is that of laurel branches tied with blue ribbon surrounding yellow stained glass with a central white star motif. (Laurel is used as a symbol for triumph, eternity, and chastity). The floor of the vestibule is a design of mosaic tile. The tile border is a stylized rendering of the anthemion and palmetto motif that is common in Greek and Roman architectures. The center of the floor is composed of a shell and palmetto motif. The wooden door between the vestibule and the hall is finished in the same dark brown stain as the walls and ceiling. There are two rectangular panels above a middle panel of beveled glass. Below the lock rail, which appears to have the original doorknob and other hardware, there are two rows of bottom panels. The top row has three square panels while the bottom row has three rectangular panels. Above the door, there is a large movable transom light with working hardware.

The door of the vestibule opens to a large hall with the open staircase to the second floor straight ahead. The staircase literally cascades into the hall from a landing at waist height. From that landing, each step up becomes a smaller square with rounded corners reaching into the hall. The square newel resembles a short column. It has a molded capital with dentils, a shaft with wood panels surrounded by a bead motif, a rope motif on the corners, and a sturdy square base.

Topping the newel is a tall brass candlestick lamp; the wiring for the lamp is concealed inside the newel.

To the left when standing in the door to the vestibule is the "living hall" that is an attribute of the Shingle Style house. It is approximately 23'6" by 14' with a ceiling height of eleven feet. The dado of embossed wallcovering has a motif of circles of vegetation with a many-petaled flower in the center of each circle. The circles are connected to one another by flowing vegetation and flowers. The ceiling is coffered with beams and trim stained a very dark brown. Two windows overlook East Morehead Street. Over each window, there is a fixed stained glass transom light with a laurel wreath motif. A radiator under each window provides heat. The focal point of the living hall is the massive fireplace. The fire surround is constructed entirely of pressed bricks and glazed bricks with the exception of the two wood shelves. Fluted pilasters on each side of the fireplace support a high wooden shelf. The cornice motif beneath the shelf is a single row of pressed brick in egg-and-dart design. Another wooden shelf is set in a wide recess. It is supported by three rows of egg-and-dart design corbeled out from the face of the fire surround. The fireplace opening has a massive jack arch. From the living hall, one could follow the hallway to the back of the house, climb the stairs to the second floor, or enter the dining room.

To enter the dining room, a person passed through a massive pocket door from the living hall. The dining room is approximately 14'6" by 18' not counting the three window bay. The windows are 1/1 double hung wooden sash with beveled glass. A heavy crown molding, stained very dark brown, encircles the room. The dining room dado is a repeating rising sun motif. The fireplace occupies the southeast corner of the room to share a chimney with the living hall fireplace. The tall fire surround is flanked by Ionic columns. Three carved panels decorate the fire surround. Variegated beige tiles surround the fireplace opening. The cast iron covering for the fireplace opening is typical of a sort mass-produced; however, the torch motif is used in some of the stained glass in the house.

The dining room has a doorway leading to a butler's pantry. The built-in cabinet with shelves and drawers is still in place. The butler's pantry has one window, a 1/1 double hung wooden sash, on the northwest wall. A smaller storage pantry is located to the rear of the butler's pantry. Also to the rear of the butler's pantry is the kitchen. The kitchen was renovated many years ago. In March 1993, the 1950s fixtures were removed to allow the kitchen to be adapted to serve the offices. The kitchen does have an original door with movable transom light leading to the back porch. The floors in the butler's pantry, the storage pantry, and the kitchen have been covered with vinyl flooring of recent vintage. All three rooms have a molded chair rail and beaded board wainscot.

From the front door, a person could continue down the hallway past the staircase to a large room on the right hand or southeast side of the house. This room could have served as a parlor or a music room. The room is approximately 16' by 14' and has an additional alcove of 8' by 9' in the northeast corner. The alcove has a stained glass window with a motif consisting of two torches crossed over a laurel wreath. Three colored spun glass "roundels" or "bull's-eyes" are set in the bottom border of the window. The fire surround is an elegant white mantelpiece with a light, classical feel. Ivory tiles surrounding the fireplace opening have decorations of torches, laurel wreaths, and swags. Rectangular white tiles, set flush with the floor, form the hearth. A cast iron

fireplace insert has a torch motif. This room has a parquet floor with hand set nails and a border pattern.

The last room to the right of the hallway is a bathroom. Located at the rear of the house, it has a 1/1 double hung wood sash with figured glass. The figured glass provides privacy from the adjacent back porch while providing light. The high sided sink is typical of the era. It has a single leg pedestal. The pedestal is much narrower at the base than at the connection to the sink. This bathroom has a radiator and a chair rail with beaded board wainscot. The floor has been covered with vinyl flooring of recent vintage.

The first floor hall is T-shaped with the top of the T running from the front door to the back door. There is a narrow, winding stair near the rear of the hall. Although this stair was meant to be used by family and servants, it has some of the same touches as the grand front staircase. The back stair is narrow and steep, but it has curved nosing and risers on the lower treads similar to that of the front staircase. The simple turned balusters support a winding handrail. The square newel post has an urn on top for decoration. Tucked beside the back stair is the door to an even narrower, steeper stair to the basement. The back portion of this hallway has a door that separates it from the grander front hallway.

The upright of the T-shaped, first floor hallway forms a side hall running parallel to the main staircase to give access to the door to South Caldwell Street. The dado that surrounds the living hall is continued in the side hall as well as the coffered ceiling with dark brown-stained beams. The side of the stair above the dado is covered with dark wood paneling.

The grand front staircase climbs to a landing floored with oak boards. The landing is open to both the first and second floors. Light from the tall stained glass window fills the staircase. The stained glass window has three fixed lower panels with the torch and laurel wreath motif. The three movable transom lights have a top border with a stylized flower motif. The balustrade has balusters turned in a rope motif. The newels at each landing are similar to the newel at the first floor although they are smaller and lighter in character without the built-in candlestick lamp. All of the woodwork of the staircase and the landing is stained a very dark brown.

To the left of the main staircase is the largest bedroom overlooking East Morehead Street. This was the room occupied by the most important people in the household, a fact made obvious by the annunciator panel. The eight pearl-covered buttons of the panel (the most of any room in the house) could summon a servant from any quarter of the house. Unlike the elaborate fireplaces of the more public first floor, the bedroom fireplace has a simple, classical wooden fire surround with a mirrored overmantel. The white paint is in sharp contrast to the dark fire tiles and cast iron fireplace insert. The bathroom adjacent to this bedroom has a roll-top tub set on a pedestal base. A high-sided sink is tucked into the corner between the door to the bedroom and the door to the closet (which opens into the bathroom). The walls are covered to shoulder height in rectangular white tiles while the floor is covered with six-sided white mosaic tiles.

A second bedroom has a crown molding with a design based on vegetation. The fire surround is identical to that of the first bedroom except that the tiles are variegated white and tan in color. A large dressing room with a window to provide natural light is located on the southwest side of

this room. The wood flooring of the dressing room is pocked with the marks left by a lady's high heels. A closet tucked under the gambrel roof is adjacent to the dressing room.

The third bedroom is just to the right of the main staircase. It has two windows that overlook South Caldwell Street; however, the most interesting view is from the window located in the alcove of the gambrel roofed dormer - the view of the Charlotte skyline. The room has a fire surround similar to that of the other two bedrooms. There is a closet on each side of the alcove. One of the closets opens into the fourth bedroom.

The fourth bedroom has two windows that overlook the Charlotte skyline. It is smaller than the other bedrooms and has a closet running along the northwest wall. A bathtub in the closet appears to have come from the upstairs hall bath. If possible, that bathtub will be moved back to its original location.

The upstairs hall bath is a large room located on the northwest corner of the second floor. It is approached by passing the back staircase to the third floor/attic. A modern tub and shower arrangement is to the left inside the bathroom door. The original sink and toilet are still in place. The high-backed sink, unlike the pedestal sinks of the other bathrooms, has two legs. The embossed pedestal of the toilet has a classically inspired design. The floor has been covered with vinyl flooring of recent vintage.

The staircase to the third floor/attic climbs steeply to a door opening to a landing in the attic. The three rooms of the attic reflect the shape of the gambrel roof. Each room has one opening on an outside wall. The openings are now covered with louvers to form vents, but the diamond-paned windows that once filled the openings are nearby. The windows could be installed again to provide light in the attic. Several doors are also stored in the attic. The three rooms have plaster in the gambrel roof area. The waist high walls and the gambrel roof ends have horizontal, flush painted boards. Small waist-high doors at floor level give access to storage space under the steep portion of the gambrel roof. Five panel doors afforded privacy for those living in the attic rooms. The bells, activated by the buttons of the annunciator panels, are still in place in the attic rooms.

The basement of the John and Idella Mayes House was obviously a working support area for the household. A steep winding staircase, beginning in the back hall, lands in the laundry area of the basement. It is difficult to imagine carrying a laundry basket down this very narrow passage. The three laundry sinks, set on pedestals, and the round washing machine still await the family's dirty laundry. Closets for storage of foodstuffs and canned goods are located in the southeast corner of the basement. Brick columns support the floor above and the massive base of the chimney for the central core fireplaces covers a large area at the center of the basement. A separate room houses an oil-fired boiler to serve the radiators. Early electrical wires are strung from the floor joists. The basement is somewhat dark now since most of the openings have been covered to prevent break-ins. In the early part of the 20th century, the half-moon windows and the windowed doors would have provided much light. Plans to install a security system over the windows will allow the plywood to be removed so that light may enter again. Even today, the basement is remarkably dry.

## Conclusion

The John and Idella Mayes House is the most intact Shingle Style house yet identified from the first part of the 20th century in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. The Shingle Style is considered uncommon except in coastal New England. That fact alone increases the architectural significance of the house and, when combined with the superior details found in the original historic fabric, makes it one of the most important early 20th century houses left standing in Charlotte. It can provide insight into the ways that early Charlotte residents used the hard earned wealth accumulated from textiles during the rise of the New South. The house cries out for an adaptive use that will respect its uniqueness and style while allowing the house to return to a place of importance near the center of Charlotte. To paraphrase the Vincent Scully quote, the John and Idella Mayes House could become the useful product of Charlotte's first long, warm summertime after surviving the ravages of the bulldozers during urban redevelopment.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Vincent Scully, *The Architecture of the American Summer: The Flowering of the Shingle Style* (New York, 1989), 5, 10.

<sup>2</sup> James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell, "The Shingle Style," *Old-House Journal*, Vol. XVII, No.5 (September/October 1989),41-46.

<sup>3</sup> Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York, 1987), 365.

<sup>4</sup> Scully, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, 1986), 290.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>7</sup> A header is a brick laid such that the small end only appears on the face of the wall. A stretcher is a brick laid such that the long, narrow side only appears on the face of the wall. Brick laid in "common bond with sixth course headers" would have five rows of stretchers, one row of headers, five rows of stretchers, one row of headers, etc.

<sup>8</sup> Telephone interview with Mr. Larkin Mayo, co-owner of Victorian Interiors, San Francisco, California, 27 September 1991. Embossed wallcoverings occur in several rooms of the John and Idella Mayes House. Two things lead Mr. Mayo to conclude that the wallcoverings are embossed cardboard: 1) the thickness of the material as seen in a damaged section in the dining room; and 2) the tan color of the base or backing material seen in the damaged section.

<sup>9</sup> A wainscot, or wainscoting, usually refers to a wooden lining of the lower three or four feet of an interior wall when finished differently from the rest of the wall.

<sup>10</sup> John Fleming, Hugh Honour, and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture* (New York, 1982), 15, 236. Anthemion is ornament based on the honeysuckle flower and leaves. Palmette is a fan-shaped ornament composed of narrow divisions like a palm leaf. The two types of ornament frequently alternate in border designs with Greek or Roman origins.

<sup>11</sup> A dado, in modern terms, is the decorative finishing of the lower part of an interior wall; it ranges from floor to waist height. The term dado is not confined to wood but embraces many decorative wall coverings.