

# Architectural And Historic Survey



## Identification

**STREET ADDRESS:** 518 Seventeenth Street, NW  
**MAP & PARCEL:** 5-66

**CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK:**

**PRESENT ZONING:** R-3

**ORIGINAL OWNER:** Randolph M. Balthis

**ORIGINAL USE:** Residence

**PRESENT USE:** Rental Property (Residence)

**PRESENT OWNER:** Thomas E. Spicer, Jr., & David S. Spicer  
**ADDRESS:** Cismont, Virginia 22928

**HISTORIC NAME:** R. M. Balthis House

**DATE / PERIOD:** 1900

**STYLE:** Victorian

**HEIGHT (to cornice) OR STORIES:** 2 storeys

**DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA:** 104' x 150' (15,600 sq. ft.)

**CONDITION:** Good

**SURVEYOR:** Bibb

**DATE OF SURVEY:** Winter 1982

**SOURCES:** City/County Records  
Thomas E. Spicer, Jr.  
Sanborn Map Co. - 1920, 1929

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Although altered in appearance when the original weatherboarding was covered with asbestos shingles, this remains a handsome house nicely adapted to its large corner lot. Set on a high brick foundation, it is 2½ storeys tall, three bays wide, and double pile. Its steep hip roof has pedimented gables over the south half of the facade (west), over the west half of the north elevation, and over a projecting pavillion in the center of the south elevation. The roof is covered with slate and has projecting eaves and verges, boxed cornice, and plain frieze. There are two interior capped brick chimneys, one with inset panels. The tall and narrow windows are double-sash, 2-over-2 light, with architrave trim and black louvered shutters. They are the same height at both levels. There is a pair of small, double-sash, multi-light attic windows in each gable, those in the smallest south gable being the largest. A broad one-storey veranda wraps around the northwest corner of the house, covering half of each elevation and serving to orient the house toward both Seventeenth Street and Grady Avenue. The western section of the veranda is recessed into the facade as well as projecting from it. It has a medium-pitched hip roof with a simple entablature, coupled Tuscan columns set on wooden pedestals with inset panels, and a Colonial Revival balustrade. The wooden floor remains, but the front steps on the west facade have been replaced with cinderblock ones, and those on the north side have been removed and the gaps in the balustrade boarded over. The paired entrance doors in the north bay of the west facade have one large oval light above a decorated panel. There is a 3-light rectangular transom. There is a 2-storey back porch at the rear of the south side of the house, beyond the projecting bay. It has plain square piers, and the turned balustrade remains only at the second level.

## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

Randolph M. Balthis bought 2 lots in Preston Heights in 1899 (ACDB 114-456) and, according to tax records, built this house the next year. It faces west, toward 17th Street; instead of north, toward Grady Avenue almost opposite Wyndhurst, the Preston House. The walls were covered with asbestos shingles in 1953, while Mrs. Balthis still occupied the house. (Mr. Balthis died in 1925). Thomas E. and Camille S. Spicer bought it in 1963, the year after her death and deeded it to their sons Thomas E. Spicer, Jr. and David S. Spicer in 1975 (City DB 237-26, 370-335). It is used as rental property and has been occupied by Alpha Omega, a religious community, for some time.

Additional References: City WB 9-192

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION APPLICATION  
PART 1 - EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

NPS Office Use Only

Project Number:

Instructions: Read the instructions carefully before completing application. No certification will be made unless a completed application form has been received. Use typewriter or print clearly in black ink. If additional space is needed, use continuation sheets or attach blank sheets.

1. Name of property: R. M. Balthis House ADPI

Address of property: 518 Seventeenth St., NW

City Charlottesville County N/A State VA Zip Code 22903

Name of historic district: Rugby Road-University Corner Historic District

National Register district  certified state or local district  potential historic district

2. Check nature of request:

- certification that the building contributes to the significance of the above-named historic district for the purpose of rehabilitation.
- certification that the structure or building and, where appropriate, the land area on which such a structure or building is located contributes to the significance of the above-named historic district for a charitable contribution for conservation purposes.
- certification that the building does not contribute to the significance of the above-named district.
- preliminary determination for individual listing in the National Register.
- preliminary determination that a building located within a potential historic district contributes to the significance of the district.
- preliminary determination that a building outside the period or area of significance contributes to the significance of the district.

3. Authorized project contact:

Name Paula Williams, Historic Renovation Corp. Title Project Manager

Street P.O. Box 9012 City Charlottesville

State Virginia Zip 22906 Telephone Number (during day): 804/924-0995

4. Owner:

Name Historic Renovation Corporation for Alpha Omicron Pi Renovation Limited Partnership

Street P. O. Box 9012 City Charlottesville

State Virginia Zip 22906 Telephone Number (during day): (804)924-4465

I hereby attest that the information I have provided is, to the best of my knowledge, correct, and that I own the above-named property.

Owner's Signature Paula Williams for HRC, Asst Treasurer Date April 7, 1986

Social Security Number or Taxpayer Identification Number Applied for

NPS Office Use Only

The National Park Service has reviewed the "Historic Preservation Certification Application - Part 1" for the above-named property and hereby determines that the property:

- contributes to the significance of the above-named district and is a "certified historic structure" for the purpose of rehabilitation.
- contributes to the significance of the above-named district and is a "certified historic structure" for a charitable contribution for conservation purposes in accordance with the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980.
- does not contribute to the significance of the above-named district.

Preliminary Determinations:

- appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer according to the procedures set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
- does not appear to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely not be listed in the National Register.
- appears to contribute to the significance of a potential historic district, which will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer.
- appears to contribute to the significance of a registered historic district but is outside the period or area of significance as documented in the National Register nomination or district documentation on file with the NPS.
- does not appear to qualify as a certified historic structure.

R. M. Balthis House

Property Name

HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
CERTIFICATION APPLICATION—  
PART 1

5 Office Use Only

518 17th St., NW, Charlottesville, VA  
Property Address

Project Number:

Owner Name/Social Security or Taxpayer ID Number

5. Description of physical appearance:

Although altered in appearance when the original weatherboarding was covered with asbestos shingles, the R.M. Balthis House remains a handsome structure nicely adapted to its large corner lot. Set on a high brick foundation, it is 2 1/2 stories tall, three bays wide and double pile. Its steep hip roof has pedimented gables. The roof is covered with slate and has projecting eaves and verges, boxed cornice, and plain frieze. The tall and narrow windows are double-sash 2-over-2, with architrave trim and black louvered shutters. They are the same height at both levels. A broad one-story veranda wraps around the northwest corner of the house. The paired entrance doors in the north bay of the west facade have one large oval light above a decorated panel. There is a two-story back porch in the rear.

Date of Construction: 1900 Source of Date: City deed records

Date(s) of Alteration(s): 1953 (asbestos shingles)

Has building been moved?  yes  no. If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Statement of significance:

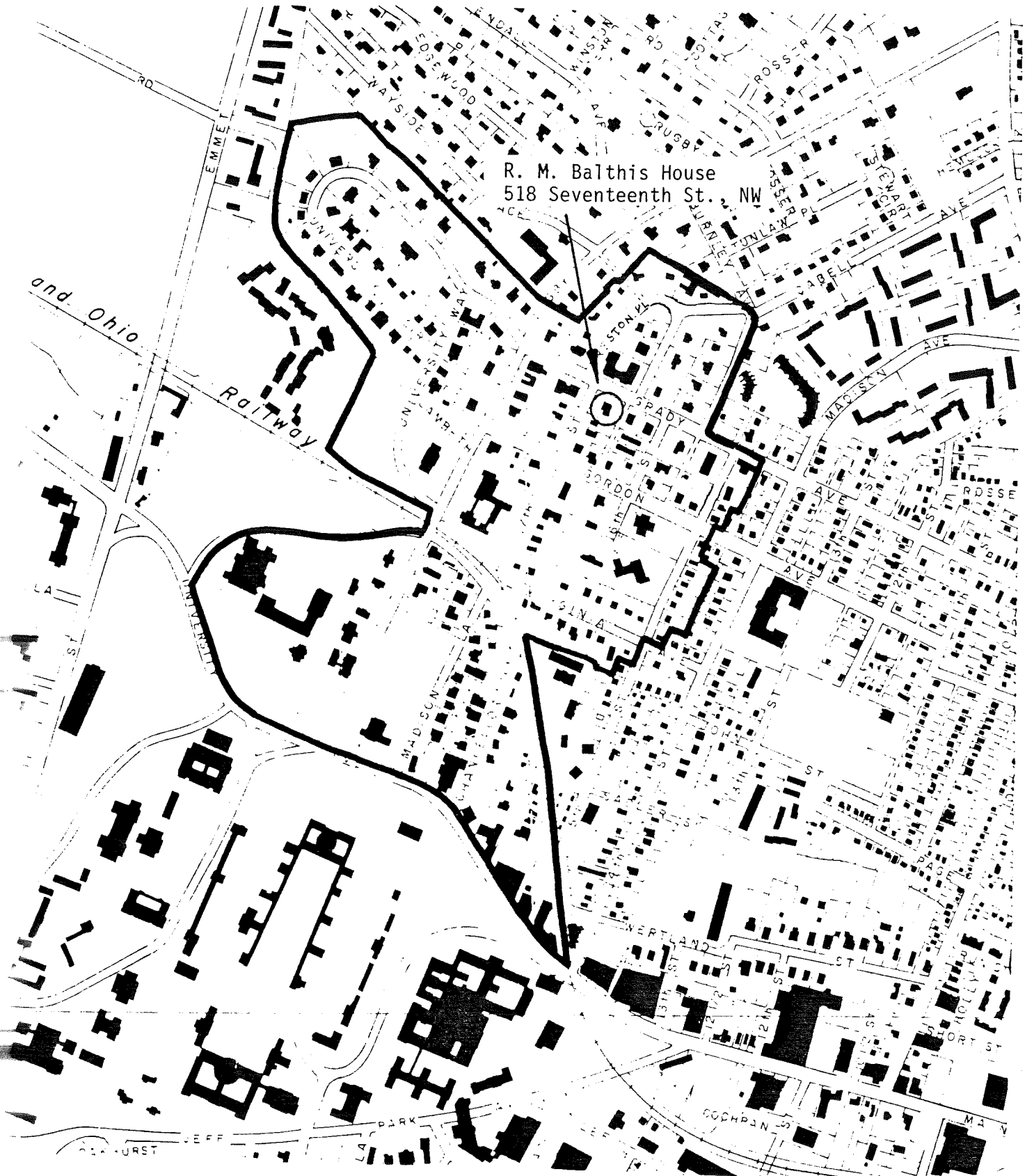
On of the many reasons the Rugby Road-University Corner Historic District is significant is because of its mix of buildings that have associations with university life. The R. M. Balthis house is a good example. One of the first houses built in the Preston Heights subdivision, it was the home of R. M. Balthis. Mr. Balthis was manager of Anderson Brothers Bookstore, one of the oldest businesses still operating in Charlottesville, and a popular source of books for students at the University of Virginia. After his death, his widow lived in the house for many years and rented a number of its rooms to students. Since 1963, it has been used entirely as a rental property, most recently occupied by a religious fraternity, Alpha Omega.

7. Photographs and maps.

Attach photographs and maps to application.

Continuation sheets attached:  yes  no

RUGBY ROAD - UNIVERSITY CORNER  
HISTORIC DISTRICT



R. M. Balthis House  
518 Seventeenth St. NW

Scale 1"=600'

DCD  
Revised 9/27/83



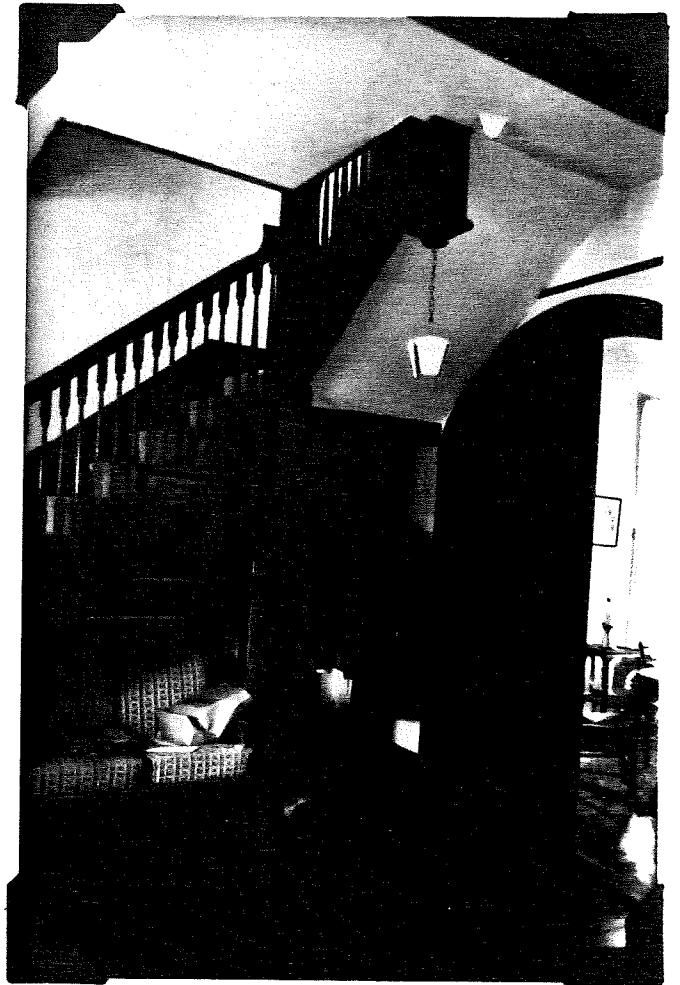
**R. M. Balthis House**  
518 Seventeenth St., NW  
Charlottesville, Virginia



No Scale

Numbered arrows show location  
where photographs were taken









# VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

File No. 104-130  
Negative no(s). 7215

## HISTORIC DISTRICT SURVEY FORM

Page 1 of 2 (see also attached City survey sheet)

Street address 517 17th St.  
Town/City Charlottesville

Historic name R.M. Balthis House

Common name

- Material**
- wood frame (siding:  weatherboard,  shingle,  aluminum,  bricktex,  asbestos shingles)  
 brick (bond:  Flemish,  stretcher,  -course American,  \_\_\_\_\_)  
 stone ( random rubble,  random ashlar,  coursed ashlar,  \_\_\_\_\_)  
 log (siding:  weatherboard,  shingle,  aluminum,  bricktex,  \_\_\_\_\_)  
 stucco  cast iron  
 concrete block  terra cotta  
 enameled steel  glass and metal  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Stories	Roof Type	Roof Material
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 1/2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 1/2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> shed <input type="checkbox"/> mansard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> gable <input type="checkbox"/> gambrel <input type="checkbox"/> pediment <input type="checkbox"/> parapet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> hipped <input type="checkbox"/> flat <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> slate <input type="checkbox"/> tile <input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle <input type="checkbox"/> pressed tin <input type="checkbox"/> composition <input type="checkbox"/> not visible <input type="checkbox"/> standing seam metal <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Dormers	Number of bays — Main facade
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> shed <input type="checkbox"/> hipped <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> gable <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> pedimented	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <i>asymmetrical</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> _____

Porch	Stories	Bays	General description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (center) <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 (side) <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Wraparound veranda with paired quasi-Tuscan posts.

Building type			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> detached house	<input type="checkbox"/> garage	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
<input type="checkbox"/> detached town house	<input type="checkbox"/> farmhouse	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial (office)	<input type="checkbox"/> school
<input type="checkbox"/> row house	<input type="checkbox"/> apartment building	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial (store)	<input type="checkbox"/> church
<input type="checkbox"/> double house	<input type="checkbox"/> gas station	<input type="checkbox"/> railroad	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Style/period Colonial Revival/Queen Anne Date 1960 Architect/builder

Location and description of entrance Plain entry on 17th St.



Miscellaneous descriptive information (plan, exterior and interior decoration, cornice/eave type, window type and trim, chimneys, additions, alterations)

This house achieves visual interest by its complex roofline with multiple gables and its handsome wraparound veranda.

Historical information  
See attached City survey sheet, 1982.

Source  
Surveyed by Jeff O'Dell, VHLC Date 4-83; 8-83

5-66 ✓

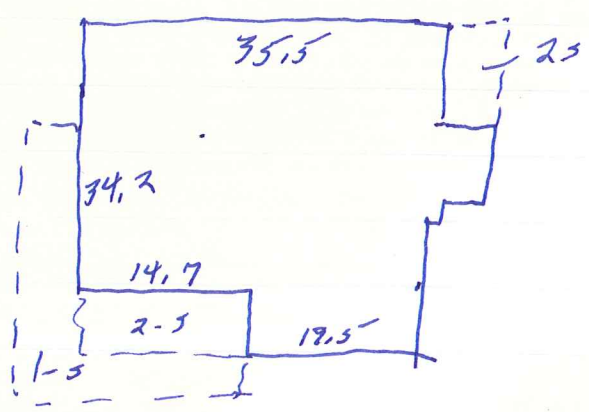
R-3  
104x150  
(15,600)

518 17th NW (of Brady)

370-335	Ther Ege & David J Jener	<sup>Diamond</sup>	1945	gift	
237-26	" " - & Camille J "		1963	\$23,500	plat A CDB 97-347
WB 9-192	R M Ballhis est				
114-456	" "				

2 1/2 - 5, 0 basement?, 7 rooms, 3 baths  
 - CB found, asb shingle, slate hie  
 fireplaces sealed off  
 built 1900, we comb  
 A R home stone c. 1960s  
 1953 asbestos shingles, stair remodeled

R.M. Ballhis house  
1900



City Dir

1953  
1970

Lily L. Balthis (wid. Randolph), furnished room, 516 17th NW  
vacant

1967

Thos E & Camille S Spicer - Stranwork Rd / 1970, 81 (room)  
Wayne Ave

"

" Spicer Jr - Willard Dr / 1970, 81  
Cosmont

" 70, 81

David S " - Shelby Dr /

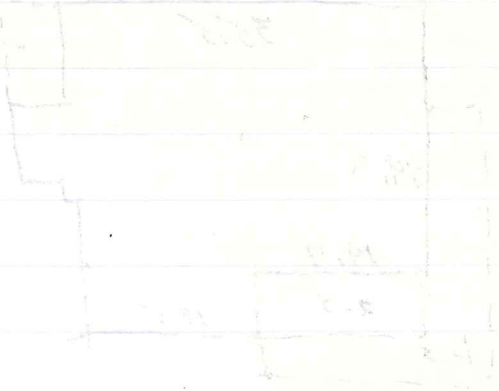
1910-11

RH Balthis (clerk Anderson Bros)

~~Telephone~~

call 5-5000 ~~Mon~~ <sup>Mon</sup> 12:30-2:00  
~~before 11:00~~

wb under asbestos shingles  
fa lived there several years  
religious group there, lots of Bibles around  
other house too, girls there



17th & Brady

237-26  
~~114-456~~

same as ACDB 114-456, 8/3/1899,

John E. Anderson → R.M. Balthus

R.M. Balthus dec 1925 (DB 3-111)

wife Lily Louise Balthus dec 1962 (WB 9-192)

ACDB John R Anderson (S) → R.M. Balthus #650

114-456 2 lots (#7 & 8 in Block 13 of Preston Hgts plat ACDB 97-346)

8/3/1899 Lot 7 = ACDB 114-452, 6/3/1890, fr Ch' & West End Land Co #310

" 8 = " 106-294, 9/26/1896, fr FA Maurice

100' on First St x 150' on Brady

Tax

1800	J R Anderson	28 B 13 PH	$60 + 0 = 60$	
1900	R M Ballis	27 B 13 PH	$10^{40} + 0 = 40$	for L 000
1901	" "	" "	$100 + " = 100$	
"	" "	28 "	$150 + 2500 = 2650$	

3-bay?

4

17th & Brady

2 1/2 - 5, 3 - bay, double - pile

high ~~red~~ brick found

white ash shingled walls, white trim

high hip roof, slate, proj eaves & verges, bored cornice, pl frieze; red gable over proj pav 3 side & rot of center on N & W facade

back porches in extreme SE corner - pl sq pier, turned bal 2nd, lattice & screen framing 1st

2 int chim, sm caps, inset panels on 1

windows 2/2 tall & narrow, wch, trim, same ht; black lowered shutters

N & W gables: pr small multi-l, double-sash attic windows w/ plain trim; S gable seems to be smaller & have larger windows

veranda set into & proj fr <sup>N</sup> 1/2 W & <sup>W</sup> 3/4 N

med hip slate roof, bored cornice, simple entab, coupled Tuscan columns on pedestals w/ inset panels, Col Rev bal; wooden fl, W 6 steps (6); N steps removed

ent in N bay W; pr doors w/ 1 large oval l over dec panel, 3-l rect transom

remains of iron fence

