

# Architectural and Historic Survey



## Identification

STREET ADDRESS: 418 Second Street, N.E.

MAP & PARCEL: 33-81

CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK: 3-503

PRESENT ZONING: R-3

ORIGINAL OWNER: C. B. Stevens

ORIGINAL USE: Residence

PRESENT USE: Residence

PRESENT OWNER: Mitchell & Elizabeth F. VanYahres

ADDRESS: 418 Second Street, N.E.  
Charlottesville, VA

HISTORIC NAME: Stevens-Peyton House

DATE / PERIOD: 1892

STYLE: Victorian Vernacular

HEIGHT (to cornice) OR STORIES: 2 storeys

DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA: 50' x 104' (5,200 sq. ft.)

CONDITION: Good

SURVEYOR: Bibb

DATE OF SURVEY: Summer 1979

SOURCES: City Records

The Daily Progress

Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell Van Yahres

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This house has been modernized and its weatherboarded walls stuccoed, but it still closely resembles its near mirror image next door. It is two storeys tall, two bays wide, double-pile, and set on a high foundation which has also been stuccoed. It is painted greenish tan with leaf green trim. It has a high-pitched hip roof covered with standing-seam metal with shaped rafter ends. These are steep wooden-shingled gables with plain bargeboards over projecting bays on the facade and south side, each with a pair of small casement windows. A new attic balcony is set into the rear plane of the roof. The projection on the facade is very shallow. The southwest front corner of the house is chamfered and has a narrow window at each level. The projecting bay on the south side is semi-octagonal. Brackets with pendants support the overhanging corners of the roof above this bay and also above the chamfered corner. A wooden shingled pent roof between the first and second storeys extends across the facade and south elevation. There are two interior chimneys and a small exterior end chimney. The wide windows are double-sash with plain trim, 1-over-1 light on the facade and 2-over-2 light elsewhere. Those at the first level of the semi-octagonal bay have been replaced with 1-light fixed-sash windows, and sliding glass patio doors replace one rear window. On the north side of the house there is a multi-light fixed-sash window at the second level, above the stair hall. A one-storey entrance porch, reached by a flight of eight concrete steps, covers the northern bay and continues as an open deck across the rest of the facade. It has a medium-pitched shed roof covered with standing-seam metal with a central gable and boxed cornice, supported by square posts. A stuccoed balustrade encloses the entire porch and continues down the stair. There is a 1-light rectangular transom above the 10-light double entrance doors. Tall and narrow 1-over-1 light windows flank the entrance. There is a small hip-roofed kitchen wing, possibly original, centered on the rear elevation.

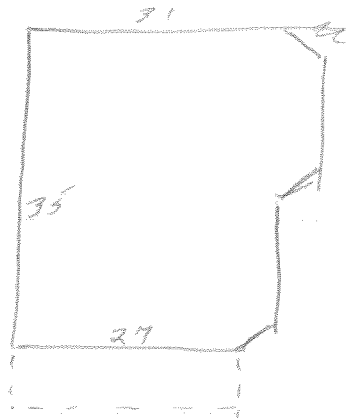
## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

Susan E. Lipop deeded this lot, in the side yard of her home, to her son-in-law C. B. Stevens in 1892 (City DB 3-266), and tax records show that he built the house the same year. After his wife's death, he sold it to Thomas P. Peyton in 1908 (DB 19-422). The National Bank acquired it in 1926 (DB 53-336), but the Peytons continued to live there until the 1930's. It was probably H. T. and Effic M. Ferron, who bought it from the bank in 1942 (DB 112-104), who stuccoed the walls and extended the porch. The Catholic Diocese of Richmond purchased the house in 1953 and used it as a convent for several years (DB 170-364). Josie Wright bought it from the Church in 1960 (DB 222-116). Grace M. Newman bought it from her estate in 1970 (DB 315-220) and sold it in 1973 to Paul G. Martick (DB 344-578). He completely renovated the house and sold it to the present owners in 1977 (DB 385-417). Additional References: City DB 169-421; WB 10-403.

385-417	Mitchell & Ely F. Van Yahraes	1947	* 60,000	plat 65-375
344-578	Paul B. Martick	1943	17,000	"
315-220	Grace M. Newman	1940	7,700	65-374
WB10-403	Josie Wright est	1965		
222-116	" "	1960	13,160	"
170- <del>116</del> <sup>364</sup>	John S. Russell, D.D. Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Richmond, Va.			"

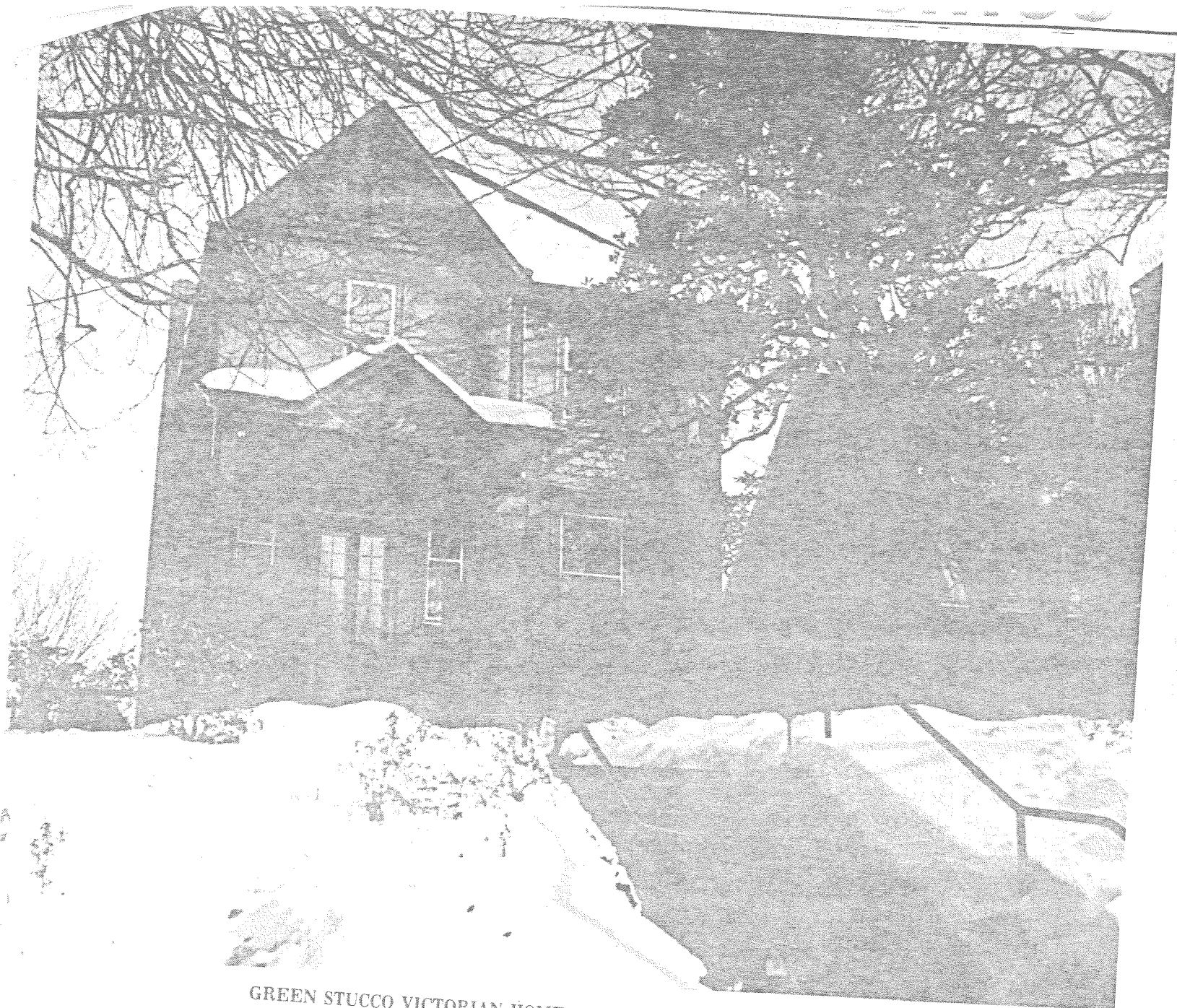
corn found, stucco, metal gable <sup>or hip</sup> roof  
 plaster, paneled halls, acoustical tile  
 0 fireplaces  
 good construction.  
 7 room, 1 bath, 25% basement

"from non-tax 1960"



Stevens 1892 - 1908 = 16 yrs  
~~Pepton~~  
 Church 1953 - 1960 = 7 yrs

Pepton 1908 - 1926 = 18 yrs (lived there, still in 1931  
 after lost home to bank)  
 Fovon 1942 - 1953  
 Wright 1960 - (lived there)



GREEN STUCCO VICTORIAN HOME OF MITCH AND BETTY VAN YAHRES  
 Built in 1890s, It Was Restored by a UVa Art Professor  
 Progress Photos by Roger Creager



UPSTAIRS BEDROOM SEEMS TO NESTLE INTO TREETOPS  
 Light Colored Walls Give Rooms a Spacious Feeling

Back-to-City' Movement Alive in Charlottesville



...primarily to the high ceiling, tall windows with original glass, and the light color of the walls and furnishings. Each room there seems to rest comfortably in the em-

...the couple's commitment to downtown is contagious — son Mike, a landscape architect in his own right, is joining other young adults in the Woolen Mills community renovating homes there on the Rivanna River.

And, just recently, the Van Yahres and another couple.



# Back-to-City' Movement Alive in Charlottesville

By Lenny Granger  
of The Progress Staff

Realtor's Review" calls it the "quiet surprise of the seven-

ing couples across the nation, many of them childless, see the only affordable housing today.

"Back-to-the-city" movement — a norm in European — has crossed the Atlantic. Today, people of all ages are going to the core of the metropolis. They're tired of commuting and want to be close to business, theaters, restaurants and universities.

Even in a city the size of Charlottesville, that same phenomenon has become commonplace. Whether looking to buy or rent, people seem willing to invest more than just shrinking assets and "sweat equity" — personal labor that turns an aging town house into a comfortable, livable home.

Most of the Charlottesville residents who have spearheaded the movement concentrated on the North First Street neighborhood, spurred by art and architecture professors at the University of Virginia and soon followed by young professionals and couples with families.

One, like Mitch and Betty Van Yahres, have lived most their lives in Charlottesville. Others are on their way "somewhere else," likely to carry a commitment to urban revitalization with them wherever they go.

It was a "big move" for the Van Yahres when they bought their house at 481 Second St. N.E. a year-and-a-half ago. They had lived on Kensington Avenue near the University all their married life. Mrs. Van Yahres had lived in an older house as a child in Pennsylvania and wanted to do so again.

Most of the renovation of the roomy green stucco Victorian had been done by the previous owner — Paul Martick, a local art professor.

Van Yahres today attributes the home's congenial frame to the family's informal active lifestyle to his knack for united living and the new. Martick's work was at once a restoration and adaptation — the latter a characteristic of Victorian architecture. The unpredictability and asymmetry of Victorian architecture always made them highly adaptive to new uses, and architects who specialize in restorations, and this is the case with Charlottesville clothier C.B. Stevens in the 1890s,

and the openness of room design in vintage Victorian architecture inappropriate for lifestyles that demand privacy. That design was symptomatic of the formalism of the 19th century, when men made a gallant effort to keep their homes open.

The openness that endears the visitor and resi-

dent alike to the house on Second Street. As one steps into the entrance hall — replete with stained glass window atop the front door and high wooden ceilings that look like narrow flooring — he is struck by a feeling of movement.

Visual cues from the heart of the house tease his fancy and draw him into a series of discoveries. Each step into its depths reveals one more feature that surprises, pleases and quickly moves him onto another.

The "real conversation piece" at the heart of the first floor actually has nothing to do with Victorian architecture. The wallpaper on the bathroom immediately gives you the sense of the imagination and humor of the former owner. For it is one giant eyeball in black and white which scrutinizes the visitor before he steps across the threshold, giving him the once-over in the mirror. Mrs. Van Yahres considered having the blatant observer removed, but just couldn't. The elemental surprise factor is too unusual to eliminate.

From the hallway, a comfortable library with wall-to-ceiling bookshelves framing a comfortable fireplace is lit with unobtrusive spotlights once aimed at Martick's paintings. By day, the family enjoys much more daylight than you'd expect to find in a city house planted firmly between two large houses.

The reason is simple: diagonal wall spaces on the corner of the house have windows that therefore face more than usual directions, allowing rays of the sun to filter in taking advantage of more of the sun's path throughout the day.

The library opens directly into a comfortable parlor whose boxed windows lift the air of informality of the room a bit. That room in turn leads into another family-type room with a dining table and sliding door to the back yard that gives them the feeling of a townhouse.

Not having a dining room per se is no problem. Mrs. Van Yahres stores most of her dishes, silver and table linens in a massive fruitwood cupboard dubbed "Big Louis" after Louis XIII. They didn't have room for it in their former home so it now sits proudly in the parlor.

There, too, you'll find an old woodstove. Although it radiates heat throughout the house, "we hope to put in a Casablanca fan to help radiate the heat later," Mrs. Van Yahres said.

The upstairs bedrooms have the same airy, uplifting feeling about them, due primarily to the high ceilings, tall windows with original glass, and the light color of the walls and furnishings. Each room there seems to rest comfortably in the em-

brace of tall trees, through which one has a fine view of the streets of Charlottesville.

Mrs. Van Yahres said that having fewer rooms than before has forced the family to use every one of them. And that is something she said has become more important to her as the family grows older.

Still, the house's restoration isn't completed yet. "In an old house, you're never finished," she said realistically, pointing to the back yard they hope to tackle, come spring, outlining plans to prune back some of the plantings around the structure to lower the house a bit.

The restoration of the attic is still in the early stages. Right now, standing in the spacious high reaches of the house is like being inside a quilted witch's hat. The odd angles of the roof are almost completely insulated now, thanks to the weekend hours put in by Van Yahres, a tree arborist and former mayor of Charlottesville.

From the top balcony at the back of the attic, one can literally see for miles — peering over the shoulder of Third Street to Hedge, then to Park street and the mountains beyond. They hope to make the balcony into a greenhouse.

Flooring throughout the house is old, yellow pine, a feature Martick preferred hidden under a hemp like carpeting in the first-floor rooms.

The house was once a convent for Holy Comforter Church, Mrs. Van Yahres said. The nuns taught young children and laid linoleum tiles on the floor because "at that time, they didn't have polyurethane so that a wood floor that got wet was ruined," she surmised.

Mrs. Van Yahres is profuse in her praise of downtown living. The fact that they are surrounded by neighbors of all ages and economic classes is important to her "and I think it's been good for our children," two girls still at home, another in and out while he studies at the University. Two other sons are grown and live on their own.

The presence of so many different types of people is refreshing to the family, quite a change from the endless series of households with "2.5 children," she said.

The couple's commitment to downtown is contagious — their son Mike, a landscape architect in his own right, is joining other young adults in the Woolen Mills community renovating homes there on the Rivanna River.

And, just recently, the Van Yahres and another couple, Bill

and Mary Ann Elwood, have just bought Joe the Motorist on the mall, a turn-of-the-century retail building they hope will contain a retail business on the first floor and condominiums upstairs.

Calling it a "milestone," the endeavor has the enthusiastic blessing of Satyendra S. Huja, Charlottesville's community development director.

"Where there are people, there is action," he exclaimed. "The success of the Mall depends on people living in the downtown area."

His office has made a study available to realtors, and others interested in vacant spaces on the Mall and on West Main Street and their potential for reuse.

It was common for retail merchants and others to live above their establishments in cities. And the renewed interest in such living addresses much larger issues plaguing cities across the nation, Huja said.

"It provides a solution to more than the downtown problem," he said, because the need for a car is minimized, slicing right through transportation, congestion and energy problems with one stroke.

The spirit of returning to the cities is not new, but it is alive and well in Charlottesville. "I know a lot of people who want to live downtown," Mrs. Van Yahres said, adding that houses tend to be sold before they are even officially listed on the market.

As for her own house, it seems to grow and thrive just like the family members it shelters. "It's a very very comfortable house," she said, "easy to live in."

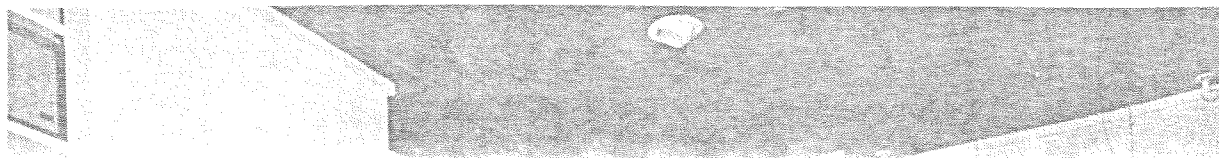
And sometimes, the sign of affection for a person or thing comes when you acclimate yourself to characteristics that could stand to be changed. That's true of the home's dark green exterior.

"The more I live here, the more I think he was right," she said of Martick's choice of color. "It blends."

That, too, seems to be the unspoken goal of sweat equity — a commitment not only to restoring a bit of the architectural landscape in our cities, but to restoring human endeavor to their centers around the clock.

## Architect Says

# U.S. Housing Industry Needs Single Voice







418 NE 2nd St