

LANDMARK



SURVEY

IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 240-242 Court Square
 Map and Parcel: 105 & 106 combined to 105
 Census Track & Block: 1-113
 Present Owner: Richmond & Fishburne
 Address: 240 Court Square, City
 Present Use: Offices
 Original Owner: Opie Norris & John C. Ragland
 Original Use: Merchantile Duplex

BASE DATA

Historic Name: Number Nothing
 Date/Period: cir. 1820
 Style: Federal
 Height to Cornice: 29.24
 Height in Stories: 2
 Present Zoning: B-1
 Land Area (sq.ft.): 18 x 63
 Assessed Value (land + imp.): 5280 + 8760 = 14,040

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The most prominent and handsomely proportioned building on Court Square is the merchantile duplex known as Number Nothing. Set with its gable end towards the Court House in a very Neo-Classical manner, the simple two story, four bay building retains much of its original exterior fabric including door and window architraves, window sashes, doors, and shutters. The Flemish bond brickwork is as fine as any in town with its crisp mortar joints. Originally the building was divided into two separate shops with their own entrance, staircase, and chimneys, and were separately owned and conveyed. Recently, both halves were secured by Richmond and Fishburne and converted into one large office. Little of the interior fabric remains save door and window architraves and some doors. Such merchantile duplexes or row structures sharing a common facade like Number Nothing, McKee's Row, razed for Jackson Park, and 222-224 Court Square were once common in the Court Square area, but now have all but disappeared. This area was the major merchantile area of the city until about 1840 when businesses began to locate on Main Street.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

The lot was purchased by Opie Norris and John C. Ragland from Edmund Anderson in 1829 (ACDB 22-334). In the 1818 addition plat of the town this lot was to remain open as a horse lot or street right of way. When it was sold in 1820, the surrounding lots had been numbered in sequence, and the only alternative was to assign this lot 0. The property appears to have remained in the Norris family for quite awhile. Tradition associates the southern half of the building with the slave trade. A stone block on the curb near the southeast corner of Number Nothing was believed to be the auction block for the selling of slaves. "H. BENSON & BRO. AUCTION ROOMS" was once painted, and is now barely visible, on the southern wall opposite the block. As the Bensons were for many years the town auctions of all sorts, this may well have been the auction block. The building has been in continuous use as law offices since about 1890.

GRAPHICS

CONDITIONS

Excellent

SOURCES

City/County Records
Alexander, Recollections, p. 19.