

From: Scala, Mary Joy
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 12:46 PM
To: Creasy, Missy
Subject: BAR ACTION - Jan 20, 2015 - 610 Ridge Street

January 22, 2015

The BAR, at its meeting on January 20, 2015, unanimously (7-0) recommended to City Council that the proposed plan to acquire this blighted property, to repair it and to offer it for sale, is appropriate, and the BAR recommends the proposed plan, with the usual BAR review and approval of any future proposed exterior changes to the building or property.

Mary Joy Scala, AICP
Preservation and Design Planner
City of Charlottesville
Department of Neighborhood Development Services
City Hall – 610 East Market Street
P.O. Box 911
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Ph 434.970.3130 FAX 434.970.3359
scala@charlottesville.org

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
January 20, 2015**



Blighted Property

610 Ridge Street

Tax parcel 290263000

L Juanita and Ruth L Jones, Owner

Request for BAR comment

Background

610 Ridge Street, built c. 1894, is a contributing property in the Ridge Street ADC District and in the Ridge Street National Register District. (Historic survey attached)

Application

A preliminary determination has been made by the Director of NDS that 610 Ridge Street is a "blighted property." There is a process for the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing and make the findings listed below, to be followed by a determination made by City Council. The BAR is being asked to comment on the director's proposed plan for the City to acquire the property, repair it, and offer it for sale. (Report of the Director to Planning Commission is attached)

Sec. 5-195. - Report of planning commission.

(a) Following a public hearing, the planning commission shall make specific findings as to whether:

- (1) The property is a blighted property, as defined within City Code [section 5-192](#)
- (2) The owner has failed to cure the blight or to present a reasonable plan to do so;
- (3) The property is occupied for personal residential purposes,
- (4) The property has been condemned for human habitation for more than one (1) year;
- (5) The director's plan for the repair or other disposition of the property is reasonable and in accordance with the city's adopted comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances, and other applicable land use regulations;

(6) The property is located within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In the event of such a determination, then the planning commission shall consult with the board of architectural review regarding the director's proposed plan for repair or other disposition of the property.

(b) The planning commission shall report its findings and recommendations concerning the repair or other disposition of the blighted property to the city council.

Discussion and Recommendations

The proposed plan seems reasonable. Any future proposed changes to the exterior would be subject to BAR review.

Suggested Motion

I move to find that the proposed plan for City acquisition from the owner of 610 Ridge Street, a "blighted property," and subsequent repair and disposition of the property, is appropriate, and the BAR recommends the proposed plan, with the usual BAR review and approval of any future proposed exterior changes to the building or property.

**Report of the Director of Neighborhood Development Services
To The Planning Commission
Repair or Disposition of Blighted Property (City Code 5-194)
December 15, 2014**

Subject Property: 610 Ridge Street
Tax Map: 29-263
Zoning: Residential, Historic Overlay District (Ridge Street)
Owner: Juanita L. Jones and Ruth L. Jones (together, "owner")
10902 Oakwood Street, Silver Springs, MD 20901
Local Agent: None

Background

On October 27, 2014 I rendered a preliminary determination that the above referenced property is a "blighted property" as that term is used within City Code §5-191 et seq. Upon making that determination, I notified the owner of the property. A copy of my preliminary determination letter is attached.

At this time, pursuant to §5-193 of the City Code, I request that the planning commission conduct a public hearing and make findings and recommendations concerning the repair or other disposition of this property. Following a public hearing, the planning commission will be required to make specific findings and a recommendation to Council. The remaining portion of this report sets forth my analysis, and pertinent factual information, as to the matters on which the Commission is required to make findings.

Background

Virginia's Housing Code provides a procedure for abatement of properties that constitute spot blight. The enabling legislation is found in Virginia Code §36-49.1:1 (spot blight abatement authorized; procedure). In 2001 the City Council enacted an ordinance incorporating the spot blight procedures into our local code, set forth within §§50-191 through 5-197 of the City Code.

Proposed Plan

For the reasons analyzed below, it is my opinion that any further attempt to elicit the property owner's cooperation and follow-through with a plan for the repair and rehabilitation of this property would be futile. At this time, I believe that the only course of action that will achieve the repair of this property for beneficial residential use will be for the City to acquire the property as authorized by Virginia Code §36-49.1:1(A). Therefore, my recommendation is that the Planning Commission should confirm my finding that this is a blighted property, and should recommend to City Council that it take all steps necessary to acquire the property from the owner and repair it.

Analysis – Findings Required of the Planning Commission

- (1) **Is this a Blighted Property?** The City Code, §5-192 et seq. defines a blighted property as follows:

“any property with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, deleterious land use, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, or welfare of the community.”

For more than a decade, this property has remained vacant. The house currently has no working facilities for heat or water. The exterior of the house has deteriorated, and there is evidence that the owner's long-term neglect is also having an impact on the interior. Frequently, City Housing Inspectors find it necessary to board the first-floor windows and doors in an attempt to secure the house from public entry. Other than City personnel, no person(s) regularly remove trash and debris, or mow weeds and grass, on the property. In this condition, the property is attractive to trespassers and is having an adverse impact on surrounding properties within the Ridge Street Architectural Design Control District. In my opinion, these circumstances cause the property to fit within the definition of “blighted property”.

In October 2006, the Planning Commission issued a determination that this was a blighted property. At the City Council meeting the Council decided against a blight finding based on the promise of the owner to begin repair to the property. The owner subsequently began those repairs but has since ceased repairs.

- (2) **Has the Owner, after reasonable notice, failed to cure the blight, or to present a reasonable plan to do so?** Since the date on which my preliminary determination was issued, the owner has failed to cure the blight or to present a reasonable plan to do so. My determination was mailed, as required by law, to the owner at her address specified in the City's real estate records, which is also the last known address available to us.

Since at least 1989 the City's Housing Inspectors have cited the property owner(s) with approximately fifty (50) violations of City or state property maintenance codes. The City routinely mows the grass, cuts and removes weeds, shrubbery and damaged trees, removes accumulations of garbage, rubbish, and shopping carts, and paints and repairs exterior wood surfaces, and boards first-floor windows and doors to secure the house against public entry. With each violation, the City has provided the property owner with notice of the violation, as required by law, and the property owner has either ignored or failed to respond to the notice. As allowed by law, the City then performs the necessary work and charges the cost back to the property owner as a lien on the real property. The property regularly pays off the accumulated lien(s). Our Property Maintenance Official, Patricia Carrington, has unsuccessfully attempted on numerous occasions to communicate with the owner, or someone authorized to act on her behalf. The owner has a brother who lives in Crozet who, for at least a time, undertook a level of

responsibility for the property. However, subsequent to 1995, when the City initiated a building code enforcement action in Circuit Court, the brother has not been provided with the legal authority or financial ability to make the necessary repairs. He has no ownership interest in the property.

In 1998 the property owner entered into an agreement with the City, allowing the City's Building Official to remove a building located at 818 Page Street. This property, which was uninhabited at the time, had been allowed to deteriorate to the point of presenting a danger to the public. The owner authorized a demolition of the structure by the City, at a total cost of \$2,600.00, and granted to the City a lien in that amount recoverable upon the sale of the property. The property remains in the same ownership, and is currently a vacant lot with an assessed value of approximately \$166,000

As a result of the foregoing history, it was not unexpected that the property owner would fail to respond to my October 27, 2014 notice of determination of blight, and fail to submit a plan for rehabilitating the property. The owner is elderly; however, our staff is without information as to her financial resources. All that we can say is that, when the City has placed lines against the property for work performed to abate housing code violations, those amounts are routinely paid off along with the real estate taxes.

(3) Is this property currently occupied for residential purposes? What is/are the other current land uses?

This property is not currently occupied by any persons for residential purposes. It is vacant.

(4) Has this property been condemned for human habitation? What is the status of any outstanding Building Code Violations?

On several occasions, our Building Maintenance official and inspectors have acted under the building code to board the property against public entry. This process involves posting a notice that "THIS STRUCTURE IS UNFIT FOR HABITATION AND ITS USE OR OCCUPANCY HAS BEEN PROHIBITED BY THE CODE OFFICIAL". According to the Building Maintenance Official, the property has been without proper heat or water facilities since 1993 and therefore cannot be lawfully inhabited. The City's Building Code official has issued about fifty (50) notices of property maintenance code violations to this property since 1989.

(5) Is the Director's Plan reasonable, and is it in accordance with the requirements of the City's comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and other applicable City ordinances or regulations?

In my opinion, the proposal for the City to acquire the property is the minimum necessary course of action to permanently remedy the conditions that are the basis of my blight determination.

- a. The comprehensive plan contains the following language, relevant to the desired use(s) and proportion of this property: Ridge Street is an urban residential neighborhood with a small mix of detached dwelling and cottages and suburban style single-family detached dwelling. It remains an important residential area in the City African-American community.
- b. If acquisition of the property is recommended as the desired course of action to remedy this blighted property, subsequent repair and disposition of the property would be conducted in accordance with applicable City ordinances, including consultation with the BAR regarding any necessary alterations, and consistent with the purposes set forth within Title 36 (Housing) of the Virginia Code.

The City Attorney's Office has been given an opportunity to review my proposal in advance of this report and agrees that (i) the property is a blighted property, and (ii) acquisition of the property by the City appears to be the only option that will be likely to remedy the blight.

(6) Is this property listed on the National Register, or locally designated a protected property?

This property is a contributing structure in a National Register Historic District.

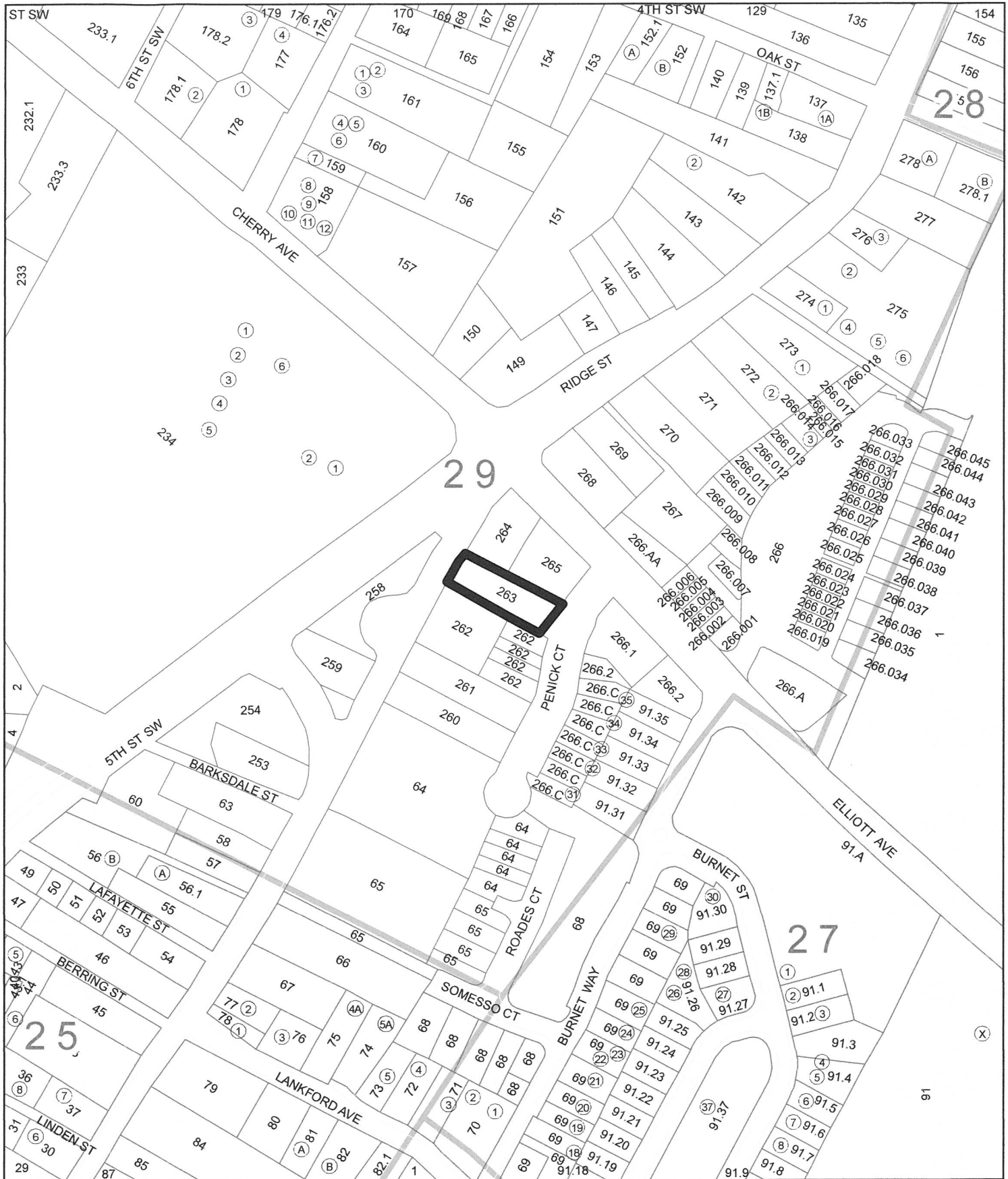
The property is situated within the Ridge Street Architectural Design Control District, and it is a contributing property under §34-272(3) of the City's zoning ordinance.

610 Ridge Street was constructed in 1894 by John Gleason and represents an example of a late 19 C. vernacular house with the irregular form and gabled projecting bays associated with the Queen Anne style. It is akin in form and scale to other house of that period in the Ridge Street district and stands in a prominent location near the intersection of Ridge Street, Fifth Street, Cherry Avenue, and Elliott Avenue.

Final Process

Following the public hearing, the commission is required to report its findings and recommendations concerning the repair or other disposition of the blighted property to the City Council. Upon receipt of findings and recommendations from the Planning Commission, the City Council may affirm, modify or reject the Planning Commission's findings and recommendations. If the repair or other disposition of the property is approved, the City may carry out the approved plan in accordance with the approved plan and applicable law.

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

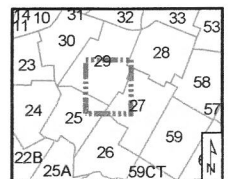


TAX MAP

**610 Ridge Street
TMP 290263000**

This map is for display only.
Distances shown are from plats
and may not measure accurately.
These maps have been updated
as of December 2014.

1 inch = 200 feet



GLEASON-RHODES HOUSE



STREET ADDRESS:	610 Ridge Street
MAP & PARCEL:	29-263
VDHR FILE NUMBER:	104-25-34
CITY FILE NUMBER:	680
PRESENT ZONING:	R-3
ORIGINAL OWNER:	John J. Gleason
ORIGINAL USE:	Rental Property (Residence)
PRESENT USE:	Rental Property (Residence)
PRESENT OWNER:	L. Juanita Jones and Ruth L. Jones
ADDRESS:	c/o Wesley Jones 524 Ridge Street Charlottesville, VA
HISTORIC NAME:	Gleason-Rhodes House
DATE/PERIOD:	c. 1894
STYLE:	Vernacular
HEIGHT IN STORIES:	two stories
DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA:	60' x 170' (10,200 sq. ft.)
CONDITION:	Good
SURVEYOR:	Bibb/Pres. Assoc. of VA (Smead)
DATE OF SURVEY:	1993
SOURCES:	City/County Records Sanborn Map Co. - 1920 Charlottesville City Directories

GLEASON-RHODES HOUSE

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This 2-story, 2-bay, stucco vernacular house has a gable roof covered with standing-seam metal, with projecting gabled bays at the northeast end of the front facade, and at the rear or southeast end of the northeast wall. The house appears to have a side passage configuration, with a transomed entrance in the front facade's southwest bay. There is a one-story, gabled rear ell, with a shed-roofed section on its northeast side that was originally a porch. The windows are two-over-two double-hung sash, except for a six-light metal-frame casement window in the rear ell's shed-roofed section, and eight adjoining one-over-one double-hung wood sash windows in the southeast corner of the second floor, lighting what appears to be a sleeping porch. The house has a boxed cornice with enclosed gutters, creating a level lip at the roof's edges. There are frieze boards below the cornice, and small, round decorative vents in the gables. A one-story, three-bay, hip-roofed porch fronts the house, which has slightly tapered square wood posts with caps, and a railing with square wood balusters. There is a large interior chimney of brick with a corbelled cap. The house stands on a small, sloped lot and has a raised rear foundation that is stuccoed. A small, one-story, flat-roofed concrete block structure stands in the backyard northeast of the house.

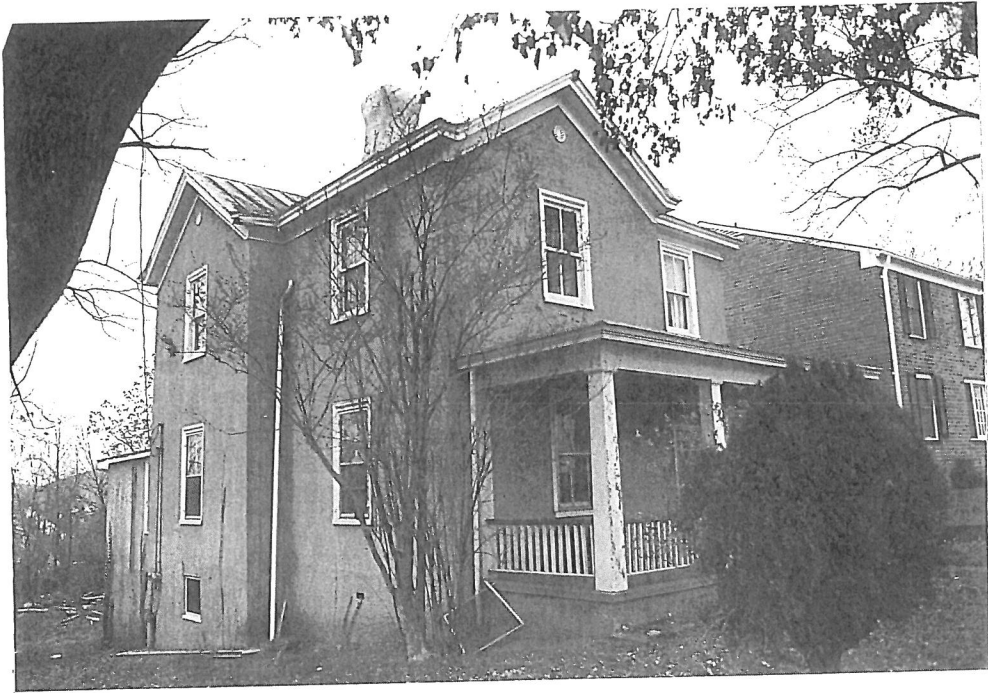
HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

This house was built by John J. Gleason, who lived in the Fitch-Gleason House at 528 Ridge Street. It stands at the southern edge of that 9 2/3-acre tract, which he had purchased in 1880 (ACDB 83-100). Tax records indicate that this house was probably built c. 1894. Just before his death in 1907, Gleason sold this house to his daughter Mattie Gleason Matthews (City DB 18-227). The following year, she and her husband J. C. Matthews bought the Bibb-Wolfe House at 505 Ridge Street and sold this house to Charles T. Rhodes, et al, who owned it until 1943 (DB 20-9, 22-335, 46-341, 49-110, 113-231). The house was divided into two apartments many years ago and has been used as rental property over much of the last century. The back porch was enclosed in 1955. Tax records suggest that the walls were originally weatherboarded and were covered with stucco sometime about mid-century.

Additional Records: City DB 199-285; WB 9-232, 10-179; DB 260-308.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gleason-Rhodes House represents an example of a late-nineteenth-century vernacular house, with the irregular form and gabled projecting bays associated with the Queen Anne style. In form and scale it is akin to other houses of the period in the District, and it stands in a prominent location near the intersection of Ridge Street, Fifth Street, Cherry Avenue, and Elliot Avenue.



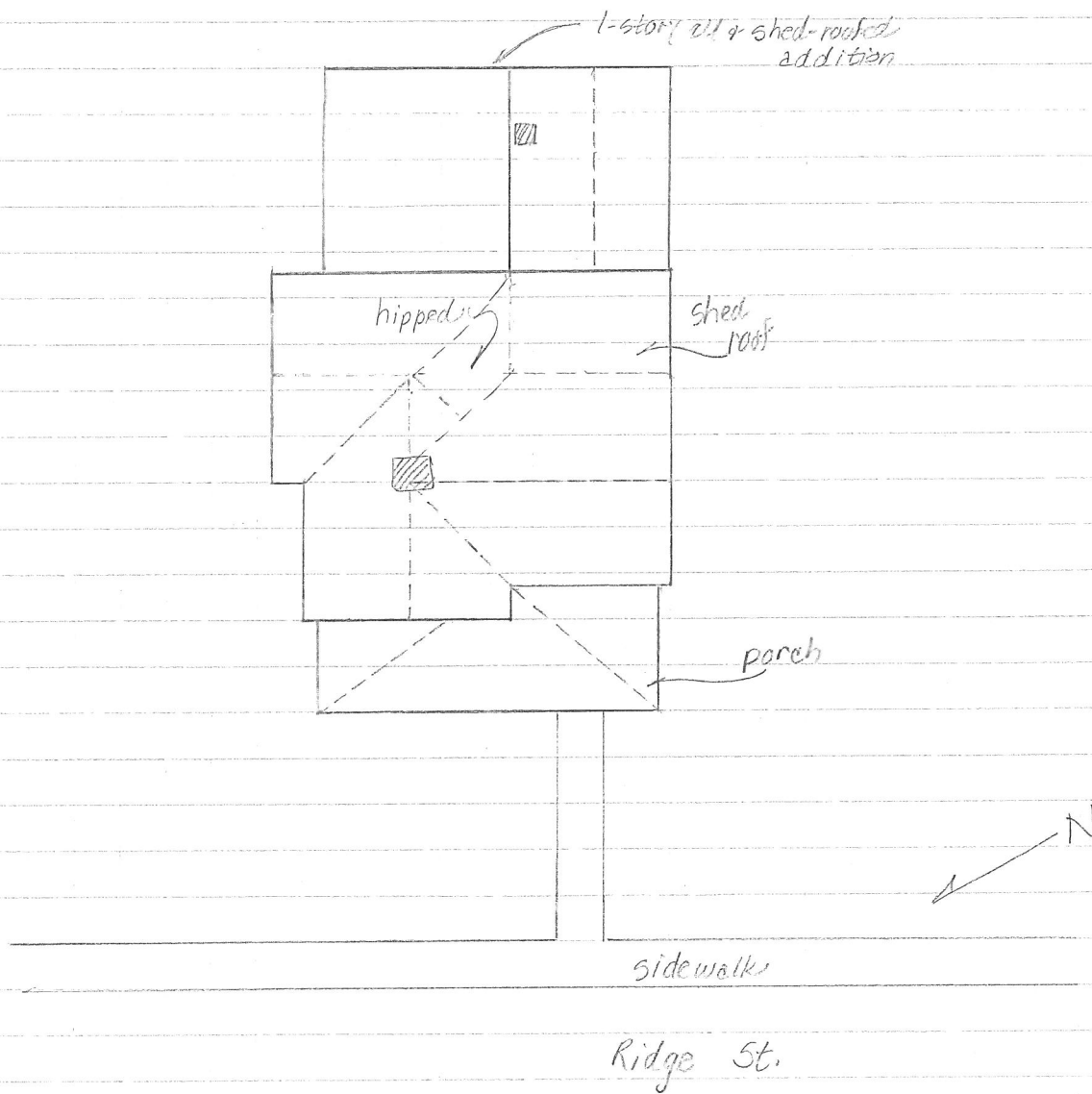


Date 11/26/93 File No. 104-25-34
Name Gleason-Rhodes House, 610 Ridge St.
Town City of Charlottesville
County _____
Photographer Susan E. Smead
Contents 2 exteriors - house
1 exterior - house & concrete block
outbuilding; 1 exterior - shed



GLEASON-RHODES HOUSE
610 RIDGE ST.

VDHR FILE NO. 104-25-34



SUSAN E. SMEAD
PRESERVATION ASSOCIATES
OF VIRGINIA

JANUARY 1994

VDHR Reconnaissance Survey Form

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
PROPERTY SURVEY FORM
RECONNAISSANCE LEVEL

IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

VDHR File # 104-0025-034

Property Name: Historic Gleason-Rhodes House

NR Property Category: Building
Wuzit: House

Tax Code: Section Parcel
29 263

County/City: Charlottesville (City)

USGS Map: USGS Quad: Charlottesville East

ADDRESS/LOCATION INFORMATION

Address: 610 Ridge Street

Location:

Vicinity of: Municipality: ZIP: 22901

PROPERTY CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

Property Boundaries:
Ownership: Private

RESOURCE COUNT -

#	Category	Contributing?		
1	Building	Contributing	TOTAL:	1
			Contrib:	1
			Non-Contrib:	0

WUZIT COUNT -

#	Wuzit	Contributing?		
1	House	Contributing	TOTAL:	1
			Contrib:	1
			Non-Contrib:	0

RESOURCE - GENERAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Resource Level:
 Estimated Construction Date: 1894 ca
 Source of Date: Tax Records
 Physical Status: Existing
 Condition: Good
 Threat: None Known
 Degree of Historic Integrity:
 Association:
 Design:
 Feeling:
 Location:
 Materials:
 Setting:
 Workmanship:

PRIMARY RESOURCE RECONNAISSANCE DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style/Derivative: Vernacular

of Stories: 2.0 # of Bays Wide: 2 # of Bays Deep: 3
 Arch Config: Geo Config:
 Footprint:

Component	#	Form/Treatment	Material	Matr'l Treatment
Chimneys		Interior	Brick	Corbelled cap
Foundation		raised rear	Stucco	
Porch		Front	Wood	Vern. Col. Rev.
Roof		Gable	Metal	Standing seam
Windows		sash	Wood	2/2 Double-hung

Brief Architectural Description of Primary Resource:

This two-story, two-bay, stucco vernacular house has a gable roof covered with standing seam metal, with projecting gabled bays at the northeast end of the front facade, and at the rear or southeast end of the northeast wall. The house appears to have a side passage configuration, with a transomed entrance in the front facade's southwest bay. There is a one-story, gabled rear ell, with a shed-roofed section on its northeast side that was originally a porch. The windows are two-over-two double-hung sash, except for a six-light metal-frame casement window in the rear ell's shed-roofed section, and eight adjoining one-over-one double-hung wood sash windows in the southeast corner of the second floor, lighting what appears to be a sleeping porch. The house has a boxed cornice with enclosed gutters, creating a level lip at the roof's edges. There are frieze boards below the cornice, and small, round decorative vents in the gables. A one-story, three-bay, hip-roofed porch fronts the house, which has slightly tapered square wood posts with caps, and a railing with square wood spindles. There is a large interior chimney of brick with a corbelled

cap. The house stands on a small, sloped lot and has a raised rear foundation that is stuccoed.

Brief Architectural Description of Additions and Alterations
Back porch enclosed, 1955; the house has also been divided into two apartments. Tax records indicate that the house was apparently originally weatherboard-clad, and was stuccoed around mid-century.

Brief Architectural Description of Secondary Resources:

Potentially Contributes to Historic District:

Ridge Street Historic District

Potentially Associated with NR Multiple Property:

Architectural and Historical Summary:

This house was built by John J. Gleason, who lived in the Fitch-Gleason House at 528 Ridge Street. It stands at the southern edge of that 9 2/3-acre tract, which he had purchased in 1880 (ACDB 83-100). Tax records indicate that this house was probably built c. 1894. Just before his death in 1907, Gleason sold this house to his daughter Mattie Gleason Matthews (City DB 18-227). The following year, she and her husband J. C. Matthews bought the Bibb-Wolfe House at 505 Ridge Street and sold this house to Charles T. Rhodes, et al, who owned it until 1943 (DB 20-9, 22-335, 46-341, 49-110, 113-231). The house was divided into two apartments many years ago and has been used as rental property over much of the last century. The back porch was enclosed in 1955. Tax records suggest that the walls were originally weatherboarded and were covered with stucco sometime about mid-century. Additional Records: City DB 199-285; WB 9-232, 10-179; DB 260-308. The Gleason-Rhodes House represents an example of a late-nineteenth-century vernacular house, with the irregular form and gabled projecting bays associated with the Queen Anne Style. In form and scale it is akin to other houses of the period in the District, and it stands in a prominent location near the intersection of Ridge Street, Fifth Street, Cherry Avenue, and Elliot Avenue.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Type of Record	Citation
----------------	----------

City Records
Charlottesville City Deed Books and Will Books

County Records
Albemarle County Deed Books

Map
Sanborn Map Company

City Directory
Charlottesville City Directory

PHOTOGRAPHIC/DRAWINGS DOCUMENTATION

MISSING DATA ELEMENT

Media	VDHR Neg #	Frames	Date
B&W 35mm photos	13467	12 - 13	11/26/1993

CRM MANAGEMENT EVENTS

MISSING DATA ELEMENT

CRM Event	Agency/Organization	Date
Reconnaissance Survey	Smead, Susan and Bibb, Eugenia	11/26/1993

RESOLUTION
OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
REPORTING FINDINGS AS TO PROPERTY BLIGHT
AT 610 RIDGE STREET

BE IT RESOLVED by the Charlottesville Planning Commission, following a public hearing conducted on January 13, 2015 to consider the condition of property located at 610 Ridge Street ("Property") which is the subject of a preliminary determination of blight pursuant to City Code Sec. 5-193, THAT:

- (1) The property is a blighted property, as defined within City Code [section 5-192](#)
- (2) The owner has failed to cure the blight or to present a reasonable plan to do so;
- (3) The property is **not occupied** for personal residential purposes,
- (4) The property has **not been condemned for human habitation** for more than one (1) year;
- (5) The director's plan for the repair or other disposition of the property is reasonable and in accordance with the city's adopted comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances, and other applicable land use regulations; and
- (6) The property **is not located within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places**. In the event of such a determination, then the planning commission shall consult with the board of architectural review regarding the director's proposed plan for repair or other disposition of the property; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Planning Commission hereby directs staff to transmit these findings to City Council, with a recommendation that City Council should affirm these findings and take all necessary action to abate the blight on this Property.

Approved: _____, 2015



preservationpiedmont

P.O. Box 2803 | Charlottesville, VA | 22902

January 19, 2015

Dear members of the Board of Architectural Review,

The board of Preservation Piedmont would like to share with you the following letter which was sent to Mayor Huja, the Councilors and Commissioners of the City of Charlottesville on January 12, 2015.

Preservation Piedmont commends the City as it undertakes a plan to improve the conditions of the blighted property at 610 Ridge Street. Neighborhood Development Services has been attentive to the deterioration of this important historic home by visiting it on a number of occasions and sending numerous letters to the owners requesting that they attend to necessary upkeep. It is our understanding that the City aims to purchase the property and make needed repairs to restore the building so that it can be sold to homeowners that will maintain the residence. We are very much in support of this plan.

This historic home at 610 Ridge Street is a significant structure in the Ridge Street National Register Historic District. This street was designated as a local Architectural Design Control District in 1995. According to the Charlottesville Historic Preservation Plan, one of the city's goals is to provide the fullest protection to the historic resources in the City. 610 Ridge Street, known as the Gleason-Rhodes house, was built c. 1894 by John C. Gleason who was part of a prominent family that contributed to the City's commerce and vitality. According to a city survey, this home is an example of a late 19th century vernacular house with architectural features associated with the Queen Anne style.

Situated on a prominent elevated spot near the intersection of Ridge and Cherry/Elliott, this home contributes to the rich social history of Charlottesville and is an essential part of an historic streetscape. The City lost eleven Ridge Street homes in 1973 due to the realignment of Ridge and 5th Streets. It would be especially detrimental to this historic avenue of homes to lose another significant structure that can be successfully preserved. Preservation Piedmont supports and encourages the City to move forward on this effort to purchase and restore the Gleason-Rhodes House.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Spengler, President
Preservation Piedmont