

# Architectural And Historic Survey



## Identification

STREET ADDRESS: 421 West Main Street  
 MAP & PARCEL: 32-178  
 CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK: 1-308  
 PRESENT ZONING: B-3  
 ORIGINAL OWNER: E. M. Gianniny  
 ORIGINAL USE: Store and Residence  
 PRESENT USE: Taxi Office  
 PRESENT OWNER: R. L. Bunch and R. H. Pace  
 ADDRESS: 756 Belmont Avenue  
 Charlottesville, VA

HISTORIC NAME: Gianniny-Pace Building  
 DATE / PERIOD: 1890  
 STYLE: Vernacular  
 HEIGHT (to cornice) OR STORIES: 2 storeys  
 DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA: 35' x 210' (7350 sq. ft.)  
 CONDITION: Fair  
 SURVEYOR: Bibb  
 DATE OF SURVEY: Winter 1979  
 SOURCES: City/County Records Mrs. R. H. Pace  
 David Coffey & Charlie Kramer, "421-423 W. Main  
 Street., A Program for its Preservation & Re-

Utilization", 1978. Sanborn Map Co. - 1891, 1896  
 1907, 1920

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Of several buildings erected on West Main Street around the turn of the century that featured the shop owner's living quarters above, with a second-storey veranda over the storefront, this is the only one that remains essentially unaltered. It is a two-storey building on a low foundation without a basement, built of brick laid in seven-course American bond. Its low pitched gable roof is covered with standing-seam metal and has projecting eaves and verges and a boxed cornice with brackets that continues around the entire building. The gable end forms a low pediment above the veranda on the four-bay facade. The entrance to the living quarters shows that it was considered of equal importance with the store. A broad four-paneled door, with transom and sidelights over panels, in the western bay gives access to a side hall that extends the length of the building, with a single flight of open stairs leading to the second storey living quarters. The four second-storey windows on the facade are triple-sash, two-over-two-over-two light, with architrave trim. They reach to the floor and give access to the veranda. Side and rear windows are double-sash, two-over-two light, with plain trim. The pedimented gable above the veranda is supported by five Tuscan columns with a balustrade with turned balusters. All exterior woodwork is painted dark green. Below the porch floor, a cornice with smaller brackets crowns the storefront facade. Brick at that level was once painted cream. The store entrance is recessed between two display windows. The rear elevation shows the scars of the addition and removal of several frame additions. An incompatible one-storey addition, 5 feet wide, flat roofed, and devoid of architectural detail, extends from the facade two-thirds of the way back along the east side. The front half is built of brick laid in seven-course American bond, and the rear half and three courses at the top are of cinderblock, all newly painted a deep cream.

## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

In 1889, R. B. Dice, trustee for Mary Digges Wood who owned and lived in the Paxton place, gave Ella M. Gianniny (Mrs. Ruth B. Gianniny) a deed for this lot, to confirm an earlier sale (City DB 1-341). Tax records and City Directories indicate that the Gianninys waited to receive the deed before building, but by the next year they were living in the apartment above the store. They sold in 1897 to E. M. Buck (DB 8-331) who rented it first to H. H. Hawkins and later to James D. Morris, both of whom operated a grocery store there and lived above. Morris bought the building from a later owner (DB 20-429) and continued in business there until 1923 (DB 43-270). Ellis Mopsik bought the building in 1923 (DB 43-331) and operated a tailoring shop there for two years and lived above. He sold it in 1925 (DB 50-305), and since then the store and living quarters have been rented separately. Brown and Taylor, plumbers, rented it from 1931 to 1941 and made some alterations. Pace's Taxi, which had operated from the minuscule side addition since 1936, moved into the store room in 1942 and purchased the building in 1969 from Guy L. Miller, who had owned it since 1927 (DB 59-206, 141-267, 306-78). The four-room apartment has been vacant since 1969. According to the Sanborn maps, a back porch extending the width of the building was replaced between 1896 and 1907 with a two-storey frame addition which was finally removed in 1969. The front part of the tiny side addition (#419½) is probably not original, but was added by 1891. It was extended toward the rear in the early 1930's. It has housed a shoe repair shop, locksmith, taxi dispatcher, and jeweler.  
 Additional References: City DB 7-189, 20-51

# LANDMARK



# SURVEY

35'  
X 210'  
35'0  
72

## IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: *421 W. Main*  
 Map and Parcel: *32-178*  
 Census Tract & Block:  
 Present Owner: *RL Bunch & RH Pace*  
 Address: *756 Belmont Ave*  
 Present Use: *Pace's Taxi office*  
 Original Owner: *Edgar B. Giaminny*  
 Original Use: *grocery store w/ residence above*

## BASE DATA

Historic Name: *Giaminny - ~~Hotel~~ bldg*  
 Date/Period: *1890*  
 Style: *Vernacular*  
 Height to Cornice:  
 Height in Stories: *2*  
 Present Zoning: *B-3*  
 Land Area (sq.ft.): *35' X 210'*  
 Assessed Value (land + imp.):

210  
X 35  
1050  
630  
7350

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

## GRAPHICS

## CONDITIONS

*fair*

## SOURCES

*City Records*  
*Mr. RH Pace*  
*Sanborn*  
*Coffey & Weaver, 421-423 W Main*



## Searching For Clues

From left, state arson investigator George Graham, city fire department Capt. Bernard Maupin and state arson investigator Percy Click Friday searched the rubble for clues to the origin of Tuesday's fire that destroyed one Main Street building and damaged three others. The destroyed building was the former site of Pace's Taxi and was being renovated for office space; also damaged were a private home, Rice's Jewelers and the Centel building. City Fire Chief Julian Taliaferro said the cause of the fire is still unknown.

Progress Photo by John Atkins







## West Main Building Demolished by Fire

By RICHARD PRIOR  
of The Progress Staff

A fire of undetermined origin that began shortly after midnight this morning demolished one building on Main Street and damaged three surrounding structures.

According to city fire chief Julian Taliaferro, the fire began in the former Pace's Taxi building at 421 W. Main St. and had totally consumed the structure by the time firemen arrived.

The building, which belonged to James Caravati and was being renovated for use as office space, was a total loss, he said.

Taliaferro also said a house on the west side of the blaze received minor damage, primarily in the attic, and Rice's Jewelers, located to the east, also sustained some damage but "seemed to have survived it pretty well, as best we could tell from the initial look."

Even farther down the block, Taliaferro said, damage was done to the Central Telephone Co. of Virginia, "which, because of the distance from the fire, may not seem likely, but there was extreme heat generated and the wind was blowing in that direction."

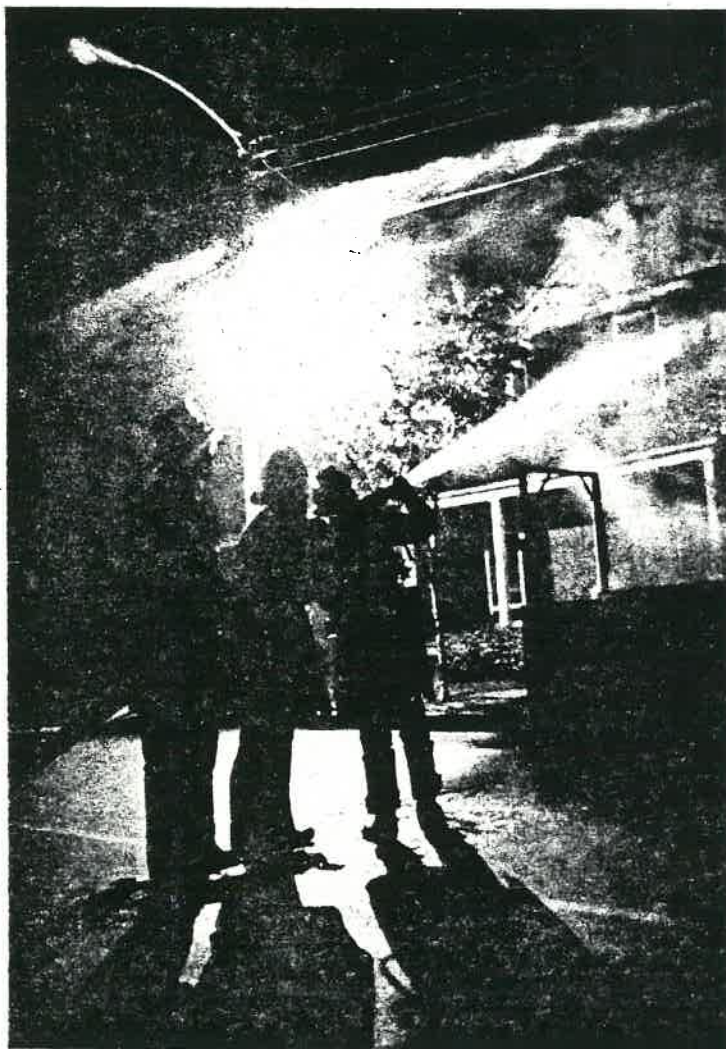
"The flames were going across the alley when we got there, and it caused some windows to crack on Centel's second floor."

Centel spokesman Gary Moffat said approximately 25 persons had to be evacuated from the building while firemen fought the blaze.

"There were about 15 operators in there along with five to 10 contractors doing some work for us, plus some security people," said Moffat, who added that no operator service was available for about half an hour as a result.

"There are three large windows that were cracked, and some smoke got in the building, but we're not in bad shape," he said. "I'm not sure how much damage there is, but we could have some dirty contacts, which will cause some maintenance problems for a while."

Taliaferro said that by the time firemen left the scene, around 4 a.m., the cause of the fire had not been determined. He said the investigation would continue today.



Progress Photos by Jim Carpenter

# West Main Fire Laid To Arson

By RICHARD PRIOR  
of The Progress Staff

Fire investigators have determined that arson was the cause of a fire that leveled a building on West Main Street last week and caused extensive damage to a home next door, according to the Charlottesville Fire Department.

Capt. Bernard Maupin said investigators from his department, the city police and the Virginia State Police have been working at the site, the former location of Pace's Taxi Co. at 421 West Main St., for the past week. Investigators decided Monday the fire had been purposely set, he said.

A reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest or indictment of whoever was responsible for setting the fire, Maupin said, adding that the amount of the reward would be determined "by the value of the information received."

The building, owned by James Caravati, was being renovated for use as office space when the fire broke out shortly after midnight on June 9. By the time firemen arrived at the two-alarm blaze, the building was "totally involved" and quickly was reduced to smoldering rubble, city fire chief Julian Taliaferro said.

A building just down the block, belonging to the Central Telephone Co. of Virginia, also received some damage, and

about 25 people had to be evacuated while firemen fought the blaze.

A Centel spokesman said three large windows were cracked as a result of the intense heat and some equipment received smoke damage that would cause the company some temporary maintenance problems.

Fire officials reported minor damage to a house next to the burned-out building, but its owner said Monday that as a result of the fire and demolition work, the structure may have to be torn down.

"It's just incredible," said C.B. Maddox Jr., who was living in and running his business out of the building but was not home when the fire broke out. "First, I lost almost everything I had in the fire."

Matters only got worse Monday, Maddox said, when a demolition crew was working on the building and caused a wall to collapse onto the side of his home, resulting in extensive structural damage.

"They broke all the windows and window frames on that side and caused the wall to bow in about 15 inches," he said. "That house was over 100 years old and had been nominated for the national register (of historic homes) earlier this year."

"Now it'll probably be condemned, and we'll have to tear it down and start from scratch."

421 W. Main

306-78 R.L. Bunch & R.H. Pace 3/13/69 \$35,000 plat 141-267  
VNB Tr (Guy Miller) 1963  
141-267 Peoples Nat Bank " "

apt & commercial  
brick & metal gable roof (1962)  
built 19-- "old"  
7 rooms,  $1\frac{3}{2}$  baths, 0 basement

1962 - re-roofing  
1969 - bath & alteration

jewelry store, taxi office & garage, apt upstairs

30' x 52'

16' x 24' frame

6' x 36' CB (1-story)

$$\frac{36}{52} = \frac{9}{13} \quad 13 \overline{) 69.000}$$
$$\begin{array}{r} 69.000 \\ 13 \overline{) 69.000} \\ \underline{78} \phantom{00} \\ 120 \end{array}$$

? - 1897 = 10 yrs Banning

1927 - 1969 = 42 yrs Miller (rental)

built 1868-1896?



Hand-drawn sketch of a carriage painting. The sketch shows a rectangular frame with a central opening. Dimensions are noted: 18 ft for the top width, 24 ft for the left height, 38 ft for the right height, 14 ft for the bottom width, and 1 ft for the bottom height. A label '(you)' points to the central opening, and 'carriage painting' is written next to it. Below the sketch, the text 'brick 1st porch 2nd' is written. At the bottom left, the numbers '419 1/2 421' are written.

porch 2nd

419 1/2 - 421

1929+ map;  
2-storey frame wing  
& frame extn of side piece  
> 1929

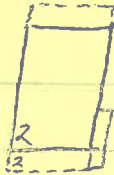
There is 10 am office  
Pace & Break

late 1800s

asp store  
Wood  
grocery store <sup>longer time</sup> ~~and~~ , Mopsiks  
<sup>we know</sup> plumber once  
a long time  
we unfamiliar,  
one (Mopsiks) was tailor

arch student report at home  
have an arch list

1896 Sanborn - 419 W. Main  
Grocer



419½ i 1929 } - shoe repair  
1931 }

1945 -

1953 -

1962--

1970-

1945 City Dir - Pace's Taxi

Guy L. Miller - Miller's Drug Store

Present owners are Pace's Taxi

Marguerite

when built?

by whom?

built as <sup>residence</sup> ~~new~~ store?

apt novo?

Pace's how long?

when porch enclosed?

 $419\frac{1}{2}$

~~420-438~~

421

~~422-524~~ West Main

- 141-267 Guy L. Miller Sr → Jc & Peoples Bank, Trustees  
4/16/1948 (1) Leterman Apts at 305-313 E. Jefferson  
(2) 421 & 419½ West Main  
same as 59-206
- 59-206 RA & Sadie B Watson → Guy L. Miller \$13,600  
12/15/1937 419½ & 421 West Main, 35' x 210' to common  
same as 50-305
- 50-305 Ellis & Bessie Mopsick → RA & Sadie B Watson \$11,500  
5/5/1925 419½-421 West Main w/ store furniture & fixtures,  
west of R F Harris's est  
same as 43-331
- 43-331 RA & Sadie B. Watson → Ellis & Bessie Mopsick - \$11,500  
5/1/1923 same as 43-270
- 43-270 Helen L & J D Morris → RA & Sadie B Watson \$10,000  
4/11/1923 35' x 210'  
same as 20-429
- 20-429 J F & Annie L. Cassell → Helen L Morris \$4,600  
8/14/1909 same as 20-51, 1908, EM Bank → J F Cassell  
8-331, 1897, EB Banning → EM Bank
- 8-331 Edgar B & Ella M. Banning → EM Bank  
11/12/1897 swap for 140 ac of Birdwood tract  
lot w/ bldg adj R F Harris est, 35' Univ Ave, & 200' back  
same as 7-189
- 7-189 EM → Edgar B  
3/27/1896 "B... lot... of the buildings that have been erected thereon  
... on N side Univ Ave 35' ...  
same as 1-341



1-341

RB Dixie, trustee for Mary W. Digger Wood (Mrs John C)

6/4/1889

→ E M Blanning (Mrs EB)

\$1000

part of tract ACDB 63-529, 1868, DDM Digger → RB Dixie, Tr  
(deed confirms sale some time earlier) before orig land paid off)

35' x

8-332  
1897

1888 1st section 123" for 100' Common 88 2500 = 3500  
1889 2nd section 123" for 100' 3000 = 4000

1890 3rd section 123" for 100' 12200 = 4000

Beginning at 100' 123" for 100' 12200 = 4000  
1891 4th section 123" for 100' + 800 = 2000  
1892 5th section 123" for 100' + 1000 = 2000  
Beginning at 100'

1893 6th section 123" for 100' + 2500 = 3500  
1894 7th section 123" for 100' + 800 = 1500 for RD Dine Trench  
1895 8th section 123" for 100' + 2500 = 4000 for wood

1889 2nd W D wheelon 123" " " " side main + 2500 = 4000 for wood

## Tapes on Paxton Place

1851	John D. Paxton	3 ac 10 p	+ 1000 = 1175	
1855	"	"	"	"
	Melinda Diggs	1 1/2 ac	" = 1200	
1863	"	"	" = 1500	
1868	"	"	" = 2250	
1869	RB Dice for Mary W. Wood	40 p	" = 2000	1/4 ac x \$250 off to R F Harvey
1872-78	"	"	1 1/4 ac	+ 2200 = 4000
1882-84	"	"	"	"
1885-89	"	"		1000 + 2500 = 3500 less land?

Ginning m l thru 1888  
Wheeler " ~~the~~ here

1889-93	<del>Wheeler</del>		1000 + 2500 = 3500 or 4000	
1894-99	"		1500 + 5500 = 7000	
1901	"	#425	400 + 1500 = 1900	#425
		#427	400 + 1500 = 1900	#5012
		#429	400 + 2000 = 2400	Paxton?
	Little Com.	1200	5000 = 6200	
		300 + -	= 300	
	lot	1000 + -	= 1000	
		2500 + 5000	= 7500	

1890	Ginning	123	n side Main	700 + 800 = 1500
------	---------	-----	-------------	---------------------



~~100-1078~~  
3/25

wood siding apart

421 W Main

2-storey

brick 7-c. dur

4-bay facade

1st storey to st, porch above

brackets in pediment line

low-pitched gable roof, <sup>bellcast 55 ft</sup> gable end to st forming low  
pediment; projecting eaves eage, bracketed base cornice;  
vertical siding in pediment (heavy large brackets all around)

2/2/2 triple sash windows to floor, arch, trim

Tuscan porch columns, turned balustrade, all trim green

<sup>non-matching</sup> brackets below porch floor - cornice, frieze

entrance to living area in west bay;

4-paneled door w/ sidelights <sup>over panels</sup> & transom, 0 surrounds

display windows, recessed ent 3rd bay  
brick painted cream at 1st-storey level

flat-roofed jewelry add'n, flush w/ facade

side wind 3/2, plain trim  
6/6 1/2

jeweler wing: front half (on Sanborn since 1886) brick

back " C.B. frame on

→ does brick match? 7-cam added

flat roof

BR 3 rooms C.B. above bench

printed upl

2 int chin res, capped

den - Keller

421-423 West Main St

A Program for the Preservation & Re-Utilization  
1978, David Coffey & Charlie Kramer

pp 12-15  
11-15  
(from deeds  
& City Directories)

35' x 210' orig lot fr Wood

Ella B & Edgar B Bismimpy

bought 1889 - "The following yr... had assumed occupancy of  
bldg they had erected"

1890 prob. date: 1889 deed mentioned no bldg

1888-89, lists <sup>city dir.</sup> no <sup>and</sup> address

1890-91 "" " Bismimpy at 423 W Main

agent for Robt Porter Beer Co, prob conducted business fr main  
fl & lived above

Buck - travelling salesman

rented to H H Hawkins 1897-1902 - grocery store on ground floor,  
lived in apt above

James D Moonie - grocery store  $\leq 1902$  - <sup>1925</sup> bought 1909  
"Moonie's Grocery", "West End Bargain House"

Cassells also grocers, but not there

Walton - pres. Citizen's Real Est & Ins Agency

VP Peo Nat Bank

see Michie Wholesale Grocery

~~(Michie's?)~~

Mopsick - tailor <sup>& lived above</sup> shop, moved shop to 220 1/2 W Main  
& home to 13th St NW

apt rented sep 1925 on, vacant since 1967

Norman S Fickling - antique shop - 1925-27

Brown & Taylor, ~~plumber~~ plumber - 1931-41



1931-41

cinderblock garage built on shop

rear frame addition (or earlier)

enlarged ~~shop~~ <sup>display</sup> window?

remodeled interior - narrow flooring, wainscoting to hide  
pipes for plumbing displays

one 1-story ext add 1931-34 5' x

for Wm S Suddarth, locksmith

Pace's Taxi 1936 → main bldg 1942

bought 1969 to prevent telephone co fr demolishing

pgs 4-8

essentially unaltered, except for jewelry shop  
rear addition later removed 1969

2nd storey columned loggia landmark on W Main  
3 changes in facade since 1890;

metal awning (instead of canvas?)

jewelry shop, blocks passage to rear  
store-front changes

stair hall run length 1st floor

suggest sandwich & ice cream shop for 1st floor

4-room apt - suggest office space

suggest rental units be built on Commerce

pgs 16-21

### condition

seepage in brick, mortar deteriorating, some is poor quality brick

1962 tin roof

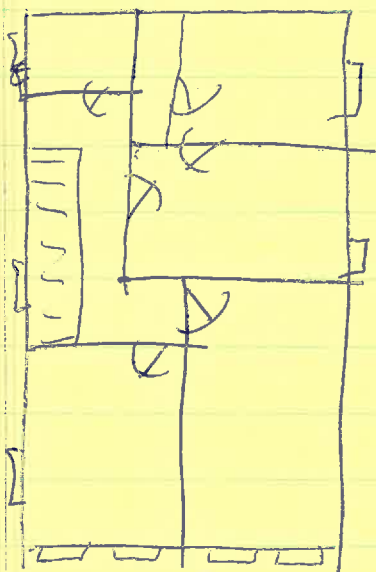
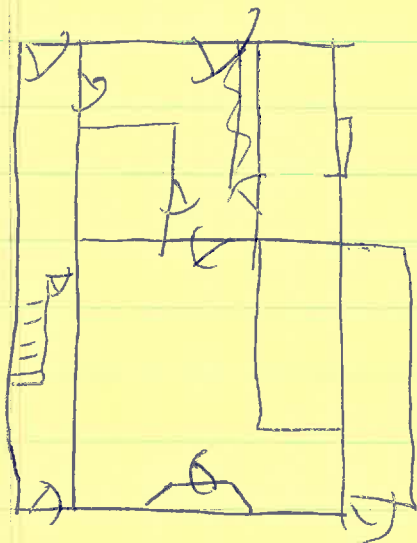
wooden eaves disintegrated & lot soffit rot

2 chim, need repair, one has turned, stove upstair

unappealing  
stucco patching

pp 26-27

interior condition  
attic + basement of  
problems mostly minor



dark green paint may be orig color

