

LANDMARK



SURVEY

IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 617 W. Main Street
 Map and Parcel: 619 W. Main Street
 32-167
 Census Tract & Block: 1-325
 Present Owner: Charles W. Hurt
 Address: 1290 Seminole Trail, City
 Present Use: Shops and Apartments
 Original Owner: Michael S. Gleason
 Original Use: Hotel

BASE DATA

Historic Name: Hotel Gleason/Albemarle Hotel,
 Imperial Cafe
 Date/Period: 1896, 1911-13
 Style: Victorian
 Height to Cornice:
 Height in Stories: 4
 Present Zoning: M-1
 Land Area (sq.ft.): 31,017
 Assessed Value (land + imp.): 137,500

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The "new" Hotel Gleason at 617 W. Main Street is Victorian Edwardian as was its predecessor at 611 W. Main Street. The building presents a three-bay, three-storey pressed-brick facade raised above the ground-floor, recessed loggia. The loggia is supported on four Corinthian columns and covers a recessed display-window front (much altered). The loggia is covered with a pressed-tin, coved ceiling. The columns of the loggia support a simple cornice from which rise the three floors above. The two flanking bays are inset one brick's depth from the plane of the central bay and the corners; and these recesses are lined with rounded brick on the sides and molded egg-and-dart bricks above the fourth floor. The central bay at second floor level consists of a portico-in-antis, with two square columns with inset panels standing on pedestals supporting an elaborately beswagged entablature of pressed tin. A smaller pressed-tin panel rests on this entablature just below the third floor windows. A wide, palladian window is located within the recess of the portico. Flanking windows on the second floor are one-over-one-light, double-hung sash with wide molded brick surrounds. Fourth-floor windows match those of the second, with the central bay being paired and slightly narrower. Third-floor fenestration follows fourth, but window heads are semi-circular rather than square. A simple boxy, overhanging cornice crowns the facade. When the Imperial Cafe was purchased in 1911 to become part of the Hotel Gleason, the original building was either extensively remodeled or completely rebuilt so that its facade conformed -- although with lateral compression because of a narrower lot -- to the hotel facade.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

executors
 In April 1896, Michael S. Gleason bought the lot immediately adjacent to his Hotel Gleason on the west from the executors of Caroline M. Hase (City DB 7-252). Gleason immediately sold the western 28 feet (frontage) of the lot to Henrietta H. Hase (DB7-117); and a June 1896 agreement with Hase (DB 7-253) to share the party wall indicates his new building under construction. 1897 tax records show new buildings on both lots: Gleason's "new" Hotel Gleason (\$12,000) and Hase's Imperial Cafe (\$3,000) - the latter described in a later reference (DB 10-350) as a new three-storey, pressed-brick-front store building. The years 1910 and 1911 saw the consolidation by J.L. Veal and George D. Smith of the Hotel Gleason (DB22-74) and the Imperial Cafe (DB22-207) into an expanded "New Hotel Gleason" (DB24-209). Improvements included on the Tax records of 1912 and 1914 note the extensive renovation of the Imperial Cafe (619 W. Main) to conform to the Hotel Gleason (617) facade and probably expansion of both buildings. In 1933 the Hotel Gleason, Inc. was sold for indebtedness (DB80-399), and in October 1934 ownership passed to the Albemarle Hotel Corp. (DB83-366). See also: 611 West Main Street.

GRAPHICS

CONDITIONS

N. Pool

SOURCES

City Records

Architectural And Historic Survey



Identification

STREET ADDRESS: 617-619 West Main Street
 MAP & PARCEL: 32-167
 CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK: 1-316
 PRESENT ZONING: B-3
 ORIGINAL OWNER: Michael S. Gleason
 ORIGINAL USE: Hotel
 PRESENT USE: Shops and Offices
 PRESENT OWNER: Charles W. Hurt
 ADDRESS: 1650 State Farm Blvd.
 Charlottesville, VA 22901

HISTORIC NAME: Hotel Gleason/Albemarle Hotel/Imperial Cafe
 DATE / PERIOD: 1896, 1911-13, 1981
 STYLE: Victorian
 HEIGHT (to cornice) OR STORIES: 4
 DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA:
 CONDITION: Rehabilitation in 1981
 SURVEYOR: Thompson/Bibb
 DATE OF SURVEY: 1977/1983
 SOURCES: City Records
 City Directories

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Hotel Gleason/Albemarle Hotel building presents a three-bay, three story pressed-brick facade raised above the ground-floor, recessed loggia. The loggia is supported on four Corinthian columns and covers a recessed display-window front (much altered). The loggia is covered with a pressed-tin, coved ceiling. The columns of the loggia support a simple cornice from which rise the three floors above. The two flanking bays are inset one-brick's depth from the plane of the central bay and the corners; and these recesses are lined with rounded brick on the sides and molded egg-and-dart bricks above the fourth floor. The central bay at second floor level consists of a portico-in-antis, with two square columns with inset panels standing on pedestals supporting an elaborately beswagged entablature of pressed tin. A smaller pressed-tin panel rests on this entablature just below the third floor window. A wide, palladian window is located within the recess of the portico. Flanking windows on the second floor are one-over-one light, double-hung sash with wide molded brick surrounds. Fourth floor windows match those of the second, with the central bay's being paired and slightly narrower. Third floor fenestration follows fourth, but window heads are semi-circular rather than square. A simple boxy, overhanging cornice crowns the facade. When the Imperial Cafe was purchased in 1911 to become part of the Hotel Gleason, the original building was either extensively remodeled or completely rebuilt so that its facade conformed -- although with lateral compression because of a narrower lot -- to the hotel facade.

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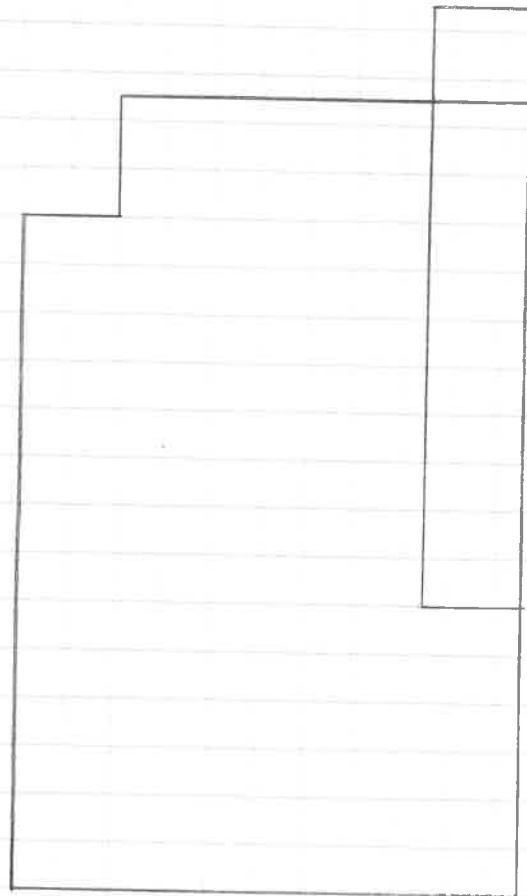
SIGNIFICANCE

Following the route of the old Three-Notched Road, West Main Street has been a major thoroughfare since Colonial days, as well as being the link between Charlottesville and University of Virginia since the early 19th century. The coming of the railroads made it the transportation hub of this part of Virginia when, in 1885, the C & O Railroad, Charlottesville and Rapidan Railroad and Virginia Midland Railway built Union Station in the 700 and 800 blocks of West Main St. at the intersection of their lines. The Hotel Gleason opened ten years later, the first large, modern hotel in the City. It proved to be one of the most successful, operating for three-quarters of a century and sustaining its popularity after the automobile had replaced the railroad as the principal means of travel and all the other West Main Street hotels had closed. Although replaced as the City's "best" hotel in 1926 by the Monticello Hotel on Court Square, it maintained its high standards and kept its #2 position until the 1950's, when motels began to draw increasingly on its clientele. It continued operation, mainly as a residential hotel, until the late 1970's.

UTM: 17/720370/4212050

HOTEL GLEASON/ALBEMARLE HOTEL/IMPERIAL CAFE
617-619 WEST MAIN ST.

VDHR FILE NO. 104-2



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N

West Main St.

ANN HUPPERT
CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
SUSAN E. SMEAD
PRESERVATION ASSOCIATES OF VIRGINIA

JANUARY 1994

HOTEL GLEASON/ALBEMARLE HOTEL/IMPERIAL CAFE



STREET ADDRESS:	617-619 West Main Street
MAP & PARCEL:	32-167
VDHR FILE NUMBER:	104-220
CITY FILE NUMBER:	183
PRESENT ZONING:	B-5
ORIGINAL OWNER:	Michael S. Gleason
ORIGINAL USE:	Hotel
PRESENT USE:	Educational Services
PRESENT OWNER:	Albemarle Hotel Limited Partnership
ADDRESS:	P.O. Box 8147 Charlottesville, VA 22906

HISTORIC NAME:	Hotel Gleason/Albemarle Hotel/Imperial Cafe
DATE/PERIOD:	1896, 1911-13, 1981
STYLE:	Victorian
HEIGHT IN STORIES:	4 storeys
DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA:	9207 sq. ft.
CONDITION:	Good
SURVEYOR:	Thomsen/Bibb
DATE OF SURVEY:	1977/1983
SOURCES:	City Records City Directories

HOTEL GLEASON/ALBEMARLE HOTEL/IMPERIAL CAFE

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Hotel Gleason/Albemarle Hotel building presents a three-bay, three-storey, pressed-brick facade raised above the ground-floor recessed loggia. The loggia is supported on four Corinthian columns and covers a recessed display-window front (much altered). The loggia is covered with a pressed-tin, cove ceiling. The columns of the loggia support a simple cornice from which rise three upper floors. The two flanking bays are inset one-brick's depth from the plane of the central bay and the corners; and these recesses are lined with rounded brick on the sides and molded egg-and-dart bricks above the fourth floor. The central bay at second-floor level consists of a distyle-in-antis portico. The columns supporting the portico are square in cross-section and possess inset panels. They rest on pedestals and support an elaborately beswagged entablature of pressed tin. A smaller pressed-tin panel rests on this entablature just before the third-floor window. A wide, Palladian window is located within the recess of the portico. Flanking windows on the second floor are one-over-one light, double-hung sash with wide, molded brick surrounds. Fourth-floor windows match those of the second, with the central bay being paired and slightly narrower. Third-floor fenestration is similar to that on the fourth floor, but window heads are semi-circular rather than square. A simple boxy, overhanging cornice crowns the facade. When the Imperial Cafe was purchased in 1911 to become part of the Hotel Gleason, the original building was either extensively remodeled or completely rebuilt so that its facade conformed -- although with lateral compression because of a narrow lot -- to the hotel facade.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This four-storey brick hotel exhibits many Victorian details, quite a number of which are not found on any other building in the City. Its highly articulated facade features arched and grouped windows, brick pilasters, a recessed loggia with cast-iron Corinthian columns, and a small second-storey portico-in-antis with an elaborate pressed-metal entablature. The hotel is listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Charlottesville Multiple Resource Area.

Following the route of the old Three-Notched Road, West Main Street has been a major thoroughfare since Colonial days, as well as being the link between Charlottesville and the University of Virginia since the early 19th century. The opening of the Union Station at the intersection of the railroad lines in 1885 made it the transportation hub of this part of the state. The Hotel Gleason opened in 1896, the first large, modern hotel in the City. It proved to be one of the most successful, operating for three-quarters of a century - first as the Hotel Gleason and later as the Albemarle Hotel - and sustaining its popularity after the automobile had replaced

HOTEL GLEASON/ALBEMARLE HOTEL/IMPERIAL CAFE

the railroads as the principal means of travel and all of the other West Main Street hotels had closed. Although replaced as the City's "best" hotel, it maintained its high standards and kept its number two position until the 1950's. It continued operation, mainly as a residential hotel, until the late 1970's.

Despite some alternations and the loss of its annex when it was renovated in 1981, the Hotel retains enough original fabric to be a splendid example of the Victorian style. It remains a prominent landmark on West Main Street where it recalls an earlier era of transportation and lodging. It would be one of the most important buildings in a West Main Street Historic District, and it is surely worthy of preservation.



(13) Albemarle Hotel

Built in 1890 by Michael S. Gleason, the Albemarle was originally called the Gleason Hotel. It was situated to take advantage of the increased rail traffic on the Southern line, as well as those passengers from the C & O line using Union Station. Although there were other hotels in the general area, the Gleason was clearly larger and more ornate than its contemporaries, boasting a fine porch and neo-classical details. It was quite popular for dining and attracted travellers from great distances. Around 1915 the hotel changed hands, an addition was added to the rear and the name changed to Albemarle. Shortly thereafter, with the move from trains to automobiles, business declined, although the hotel remained quite popular with salesmen. In operation until April 1972, the Albemarle Hotel was still known for its excellent dining room long after its accommodations had fallen into disrepair.

HIST

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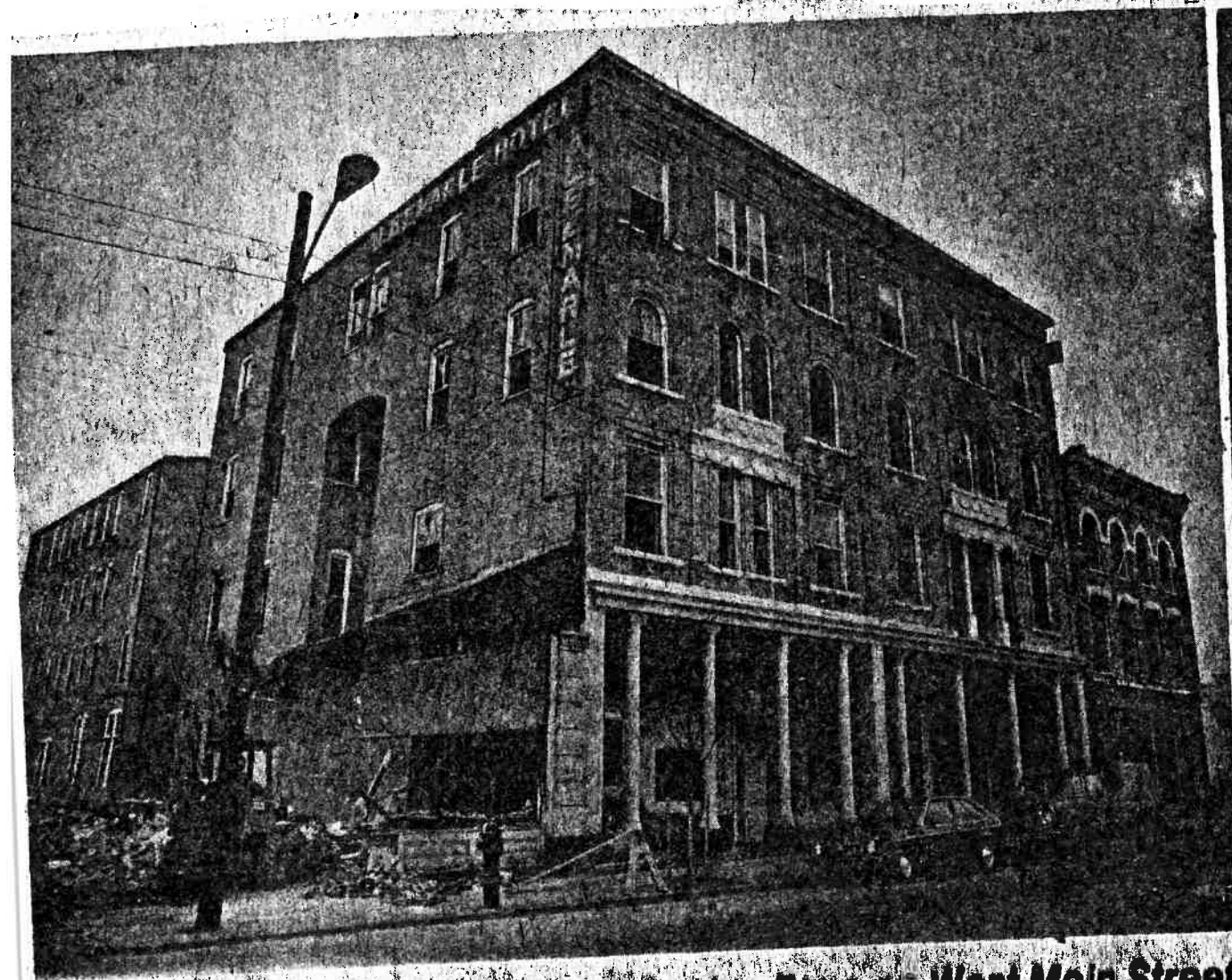
Sources: CITY RECORDS

When the Imperial Cafe was purchased in 1911 to become part of the Hotel Gleason, the original building was either extensively remodeled or completely rebuilt so that its facade conformed - although with lateral compression because of a narrower lot - nearly exactly to that next door.

Arch

at 617 W. Main St.

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Progress Photo By John Arlino

Saving Face on West Main Street

Workers carry out the partial demolition of the 69-year-old Hotel Albemarle, a landmark dating to West Main Street's fashionable era. The facade and most of the original portion of the old hotel, which has been closed for

years, will be saved and remodeled for commercial and office space under the latest plans formulated by city officials and private interests. The building's future is de-

pendent on the soundness of the structure and the issuance of a loan under a new city program directed at inner city rehabilitation.

E1 The Daily Progress
Sunday, June 15, 1975

LIFESTYLES

Albemarle Hotel Houses Long History

By ELIZABETH RESPESS
of The Progress Staff

No one would be likely to mistake it for the Ritz, nor would anyone be prompted to call it a luxury hotel. But after 85 years of service, the Albemarle Hotel deserves some recognition.

The Albemarle Hotel, or Gleason Hotel as it was called until 1935, was constructed in 1890 by the Gleason family and has been in operation since that time. Until 1925 and the completion of the Monticello Hotel, the Gleason was the largest continuously operating hotel in Charlottesville.

The hotel, located in the 600 block of West Main Street, is presently owned by Charlottesville attorney Don Burch. He maintains it as an investment. He has no specific plans for its renovation. The hotel rooms are rented for weekly or monthly periods.

The present structure can on-

ly hint at what the hotel once looked like. Approximately three major additions have been added to the original 1890 building. Each of the owners has renovated the interior of the building and changed the furnishings.

The Pentecostal Assembly Church and the Liberty Taxi Company now use the space which once housed the popular tea room and Gianninni's Grocery Store.

Rumors of prostitution and frequent weekend brawls in the area have made many Charlottesville residents wary of the building. It might be hard for many to imagine the hotel as a respectable establishment.

As least one Charlottesville native, however, remembers the hotel when it was at its operating prime. Mrs. P. T. Yowell knew the hotel as a home and as a business from the period 1903-1935. She and

her husband and family managed the hotel from approximately 1914-1935.

Mrs. Yowell's father, J. L. Veal and his business partner George D. Smith bought the hotel in 1907. They paid cash for the purchase, according to Mrs. Yowell, but she can not remember the amount. Mr. Smith had married one of the Gleason daughters who had inherited part interest in the hotel. Veal and Smith were responsible for the three major additions and the installation of indoor plumbing.

Although the building has changed with the years and many of its former occupants have moved, Mrs. Yowell still clearly remembers her stay there.

"Some people would call me crazy, but when we came to Charlottesville in 1903 there were 21 saloons from the C and O Station to the University,"

she said. "Main Street was dirt and there were stepping stones in the street to walk on."

Drinking was discouraged under the Veal and Yowell management. Mrs. Yowell still suspects, however, that men would buy whisky in Gianninni's Grocery and use the back door of the grocery to sneak back into the hotel.

The Hotel Gleason had little competition until the Monticello Hotel was completed in 1925. "They found out that the Hotel Gleason was making money, so they decided to try it," Mrs. Yowell said. She welcomed the competition since she felt there was a need for another hotel in Charlottesville. "We were most always full in those days," she said.

The kitchen in the Hotel Gleason flourished during those years despite the lack of refrigeration. According to Mrs. Yowell, breakfast and dinner were served for 50 cents and 75 cents with Sunday dinner being the most popular.

Mrs. Yowell is still proud of the way in which her family managed the hotel. "We ran it as a family and didn't have to rely on hired help," she said. "If there was someone there we didn't like, then we asked them to leave. It was never the same place after we sold it in 1935."

The Hotel Gleason became

the familiar Albemarle Hotel in 1935 when Mrs. Yowell sold her late father's property to John L. Livers who later passed it to his son J. Logan Livers. Upon his death, it was passed to his wife who owned it until 1958.

Mrs. Livers regarded the hotel as a liability and was glad to sell it to Dr. Charles Hurt in 1958. "One would have to have a great deal of foresight to manage the Albemarle Hotel," Mrs. Livers said.

Mrs. Ann Crute and her husband managed the hotel for Dr. Hurt from 1961 until 1973. Dr. Hurt renovated the inside of the building during this period. He purchased entire floors of furniture from old hotels in Washington to redecorate the hotel. The excess furniture formed the "Albemarle Galleries" located in the ballroom of the hotel.

"At first we used the ballroom for dances but some of the people didn't want to leave when the music had to stop," Mrs. Crute said. "So we put something a little quieter back there—and that was furniture."

Under the Crute management the occupancy rate rose from 35 per cent to 75 per cent. "At that point (1961) there weren't many hotel rooms in Charlottesville," Mrs. Crute said. "There were no Holiday Inns or Ramada Inn

and the Quality Court Motel had not been added to."

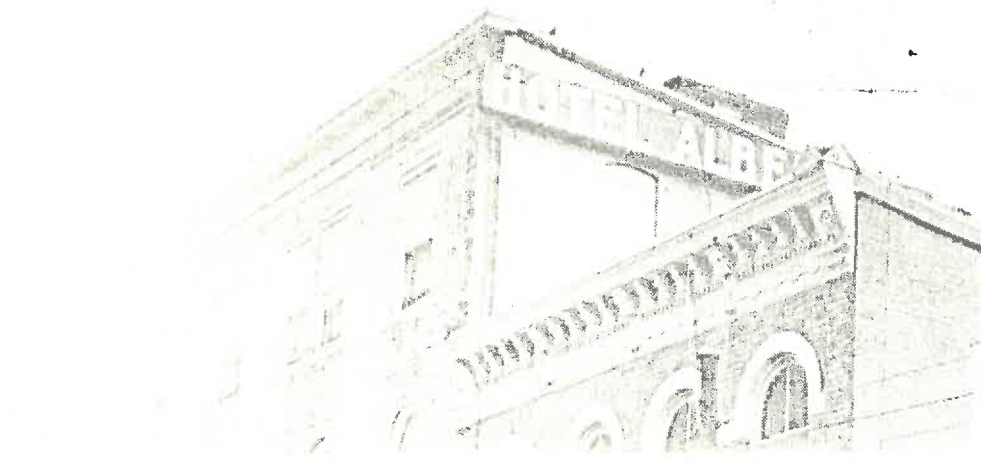
Many of the occupants were either permanent residents or salesmen. In the early 70's Mrs. Crute encouraged students to live in the hotel by remodeling the first and second floors. Filipino nurses occupied rooms on the fourth floor.

The uncertainties of managing the Albemarle Hotel caused the Crutes to retire as managers. "We didn't know what the future was for the Hotel Albemarle so we decided to get out of the business," Mrs. Crute said.

The hotel's future is still undetermined. Owner Burch's associate Jeffrey Ferrill, who manages the Albemarle Hotel file, says there are no plans to tear down the building. "We hear rumors all the time that the hotel is going to be torn down; that the wrecking crews are ready, but these rumors aren't true," Ferrill said. "The building is in good shape for its age and there are no plans to destroy it."

Obtaining insurance for the building has not been as much of a problem for the Albemarle Hotel as it has been for other old hotels. A sprinkling system runs throughout the building for fire protection.

Ferrill blamed the vandalism



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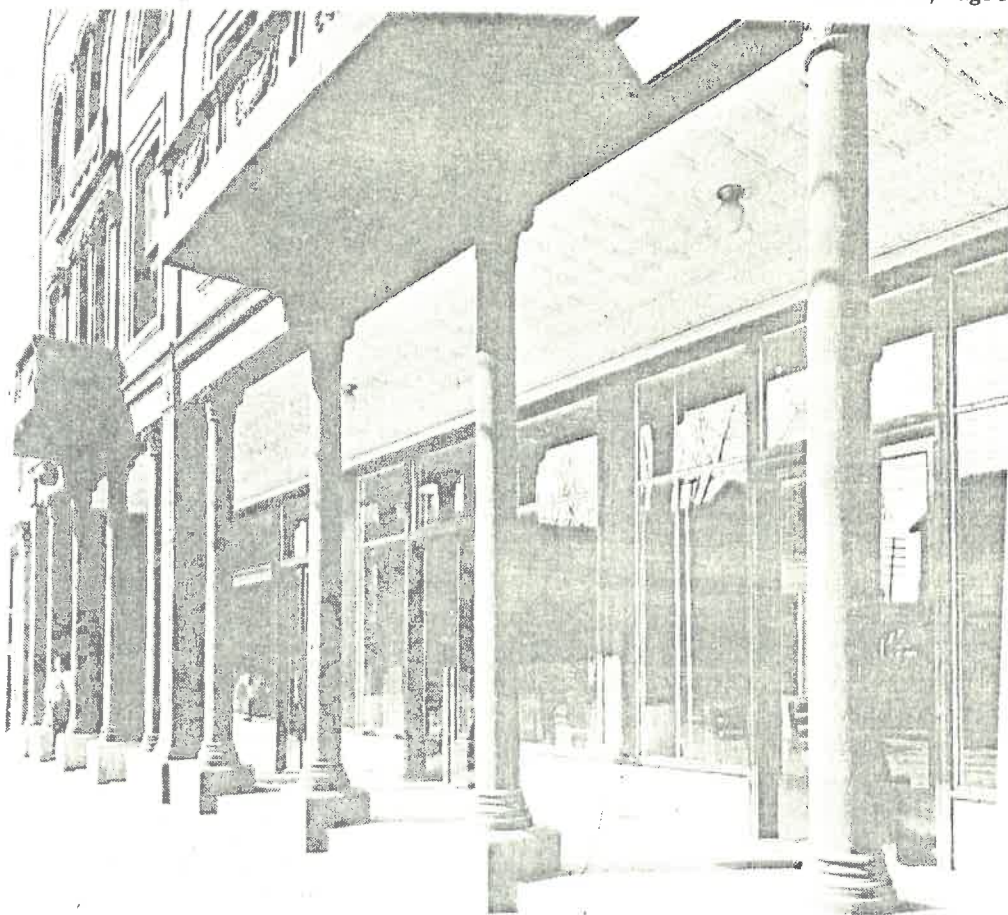
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See HOTEL, Page 10



in the area surrounding the hotel for the hotel's decline in recent years. "The residents who live there now have to carry three keys just to get to their rooms," Ferrill said.

Ferrill mentioned the possibility of converting the hotel into low-cost condominiums. "It's possible that with the completion of the downtown mall that the city will become interested in fixing up the area between the downtown and the University," Ferrill said. "In that case, it is possible that the hotel will be renovated."







13468-9

1/94

Hotel Gleason / Albemarle Hotel / Imperial Cafe

104-220

617-619 West Main Street

ALBEMARLE HOTEL.







Date JAN 1994 File No. 104-220

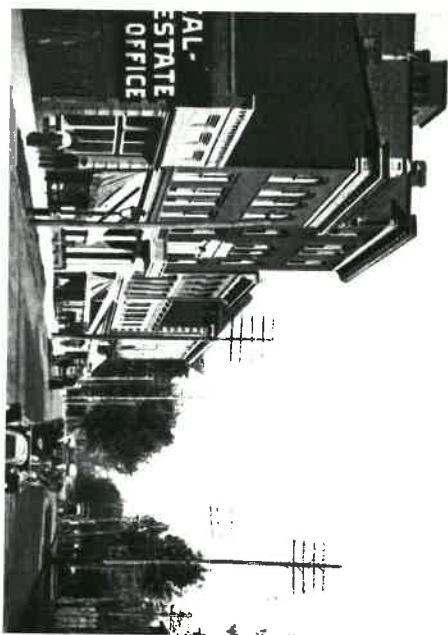
Name HOTEL GLEASON / ALBEMARLE HOTEL / IMPERIAL CAFE
617-619 WEST MAIN STREET

Town CHARLOTTESVILLE

County _____

Photographer ANN C. HUPPERT

Contents 4 EXT. VIEWS



617 W. MAIN #183

13468.12

1/94

104-220

Hotel Gleason/Albemarle Hotel/Imperial Cafe
617-619 West Main Street

104-220

104-220 front elev. balcony

Date JAN 1994 File No. 104-220

Name HOTEL GLEASON/AUBEMARLE HOTEL/IMPERIAL CAFE
617-619 WEST MAIN STREET

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Contents 4 EXT. VIEWS



183
617 W. MAIN

Albemarle Hotel May 1980

13468-10
1/94 Hotel Gleason / Albemarle Hotel / Imperial Cafe
104-220 617-619 West Main Street

14631
S. 6
104-~~220~~ 220

13468-11
1/94 Hotel Gleason / Albemarle Hotel / Imperial Cafe
104-220 617-619 West Main Street