



## IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 500 Ridge Street  
 Map and Parcel: 29-278  
 Census Tract & Block: 4-341  
 Present Owner: Ralph O. and Irene A. Allen  
 Address: 204 Tenth Street, N.W.  
 Present Use: Rental Property (residence and day nursery)  
 Original Owner: Alexander C. Brechin  
 Original Use: Residence

## BASE DATA

Historic Name: Brechin-Smith House  
 Date/Period: 1881  
 Style: *Vic* Vernacular Gothic Revival  
 Height to Cornice:  
 Height in Stories: 2  
 Present Zoning: R-3  
 Land Area (sq.ft.): 92' x 90' (*8280*)  
 Assessed Value (land + imp.):

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This is a small two-storey brick house on an English basement. It is three bays wide and single-pile with a projecting side bay on the facade. Its low roofline, steep gable roof, and balconied wall dormer are characteristic of the Gothic cottage style, but the interpretation here is vernacular. The brick is laid in seven-course American bond. The steeply-pitched gable roof is covered with standing-seam *tin*. It has projecting eaves and verges, a boxed cornice with brackets only in the gable ends, and a wide cornice board. Only the slope over the facade is bellcast; the rear slope and the gable over the projecting bay are not. The small central chimney is corbelled out over the roof. The windows on the main level are very tall, double-sash, four-over-four light. Those on the second level are shorter and located only in the gable ends, four-over-four on the facade and six-over-six on the ends of the house. All have wooden sills and plain surrounds. There is a single wall dormer on the facade; it has a steep gable roof with bracketed boxed cornice and a low sawn balcony balustrade. Single-storey, weather-boarded, shed-roofed additions cover the rear of the house. The veranda is two bays wide with a low bellcast hip roof of standing seam *tin* with a boxed cornice. It has square posts with sawn brackets and sawn balustrade. The entrance bay of the veranda projects slightly and is topped by a bellcast gable. The two-paneled double entrance doors have a three-light rectangular transom. There are two rooms on each of three levels without a central hall. An open-well three-flight staircase with winders is set in the projecting bay, an arrangement typical of a Gothic

cottage.

## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

In 1871 Alexander C. Brechin, who had a bookstore on Main Street, purchased a half-acre lot from H.A. Darrow who lived at 510 Ridge Street (ACDB 66-420). According to tax records, he built one house almost immediately and another next door in 1881. This house at 500 Ridge Street, where Brechin lived in the early 1900's, was probably the second house. In 1924 he deeded both houses to his son Andrew M. Brechin, who lived in the *earlier* house at 506 Ridge Street (City DB 46-142). Andrew Brechin sold 500 Ridge Street in 1936 to J. Emmett Gleason, who sold it the same year to Margaret M. Smith (DB 88-246, 88-493). After living there for 23 years, she sold it in 1959 to the present owners, who use it as rental property (DB 215-146).

## GRAPHICS

## CONDITIONS

Fair

## SOURCES

City/County Records  
 Mrs. Ralph O. Allen

*1877 Ch'v map*

## BRECHIN-SMITH HOUSE



**STREET ADDRESS:** 500 Ridge Street  
**MAP & PARCEL:** 29-278  
**VDHR FILE NUMBER:** 104-25-15  
**CITY FILE NUMBER:** 213  
**PRESENT ZONING:** R-3  
**ORIGINAL OWNER:** Alexander C. Brechin  
**ORIGINAL USE:** Residence  
**PRESENT USE:** Rental Property (residence and day nursery)  
**PRESENT OWNER:** Irene W. Allen  
**ADDRESS:** 2516 36th PL SE  
Washington, DC 20020

**HISTORIC NAME:** Brechin-Smith House  
**DATE/PERIOD:** c. 1872-1881  
**STYLE:** Vernacular  
**HEIGHT IN STORIES:** 2  
**DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA:** 92' x 90' (8,280 sq. ft.)  
**CONDITION:** Fair  
**SURVEYOR:** Bibb  
**DATE OF SURVEY:** Spring 1978, Revised 1993  
**SOURCES:** City/County Records  
Mrs. Ralph O. Allen  
1877 Charlottesville Map

# BRECHIN-SMITH HOUSE

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This is a small two-storey brick house on an English basement. L-shaped, it is three bays wide and single-pile with a projecting end bay on the facade. Its low roofline, steep gable roof, and balconied dormer are characteristic of the Gothic Revival cottage style, but the interpretation here is vernacular. The brick is laid in seven-course American bond. The roof is covered with standing-seam metal. It has projecting eaves and verges, a boxed cornice with brackets in the gable ends, and a wide cornice board. The small central chimney is corbelled out over the roof. The windows at the main level are tall, double-sash, four-over-four light. Those at the second level are shorter and located only in the gable ends, four-over-four on the facade and six-over-six on the north and south ends of the house. All have wooden sills and plain surrounds. There is a single wall dormer on the facade; it has a steep gable roof with bracketed boxed cornice. The dormer has square posts and a low decoratively sawn balcony balustrade. Single-storey, weatherboarded, shed-roofed additions cover the rear of the house. The verandah is two bays wide with a low bellcast-hip roof covered with standing-seam metal with a boxed cornice. It has square posts with sawn brackets and sawn balustrade. The entrance bay of the verandah projects slightly and is topped by a bellcast gable. The two-paneled double entrance doors have a three-light rectangular transom. There are two rooms on each of the three levels without a central hall. An open-well three-flight stair with winders is set in the projecting bay.

## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

In 1871 Alexander C. Brechin, who had a bookstore on Main Street, purchased a half-acre lot from H.A. Darrow who lived at 510 Ridge Street (ACDB 66-420). According to tax records, he built two houses, number 500 almost immediately and another next door now at 506 in 1881. Brechin lived at 500 Ridge Street in the early 1900's. In 1924 he deeded both houses to his son Andrew M. Brechin, who lived in the other house at 506 Ridge Street (City DB 46-142). Andrew Brechin sold 500 Ridge Street in 1936 to J. Emmet Gleason, who sold it the same year to Margaret M. Smith (DB 88-246, 88-493). After living there for 23 years, she sold it in 1959 to the present owners, who use it as rental property (DB 215-146).

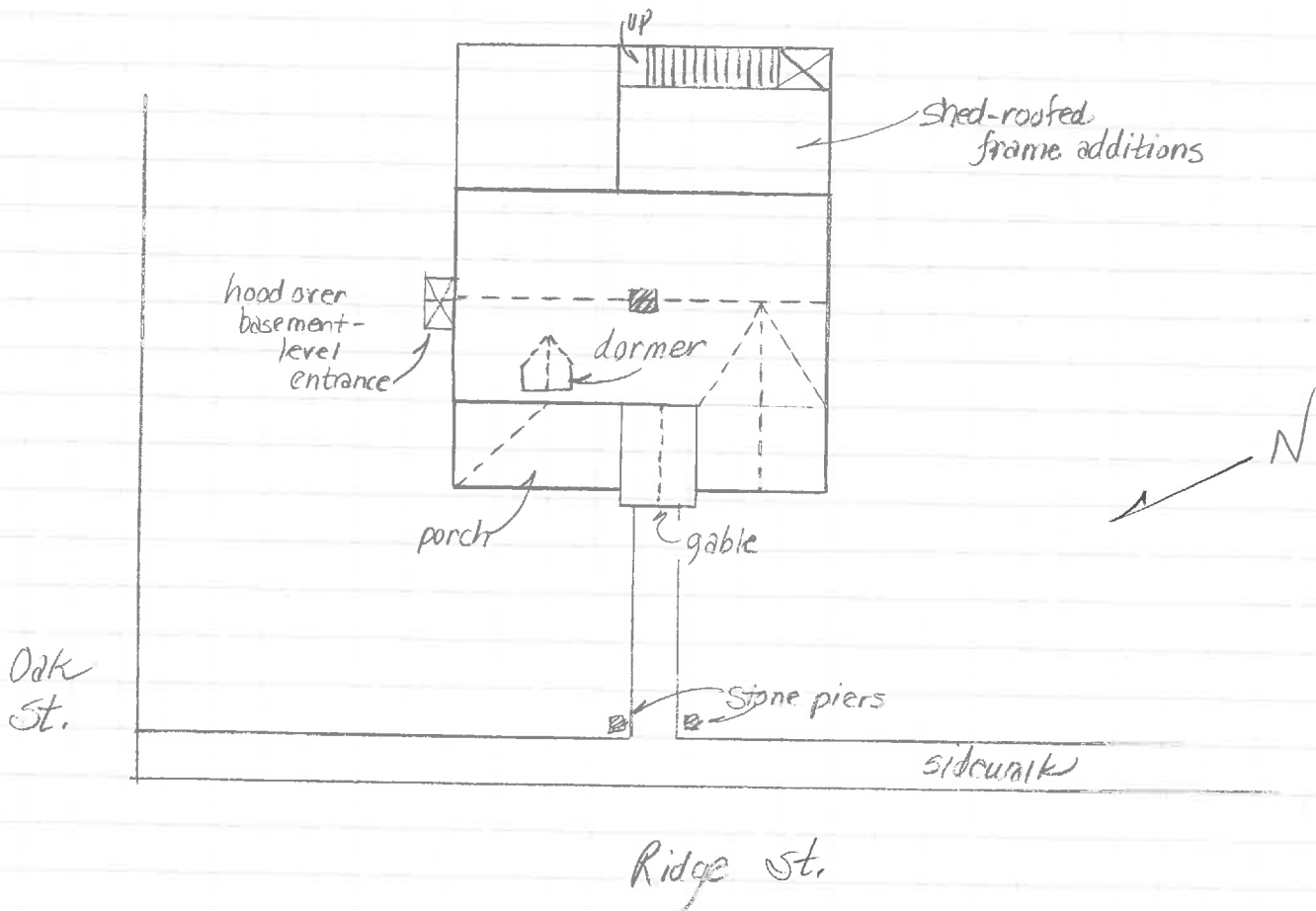
## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This intricately detailed cottage, with its steep gables, balconied wall dormer, and sawnwork, is one of the most picturesque buildings on the street.

The Brechin-Smith House has been individually designated as a local historic landmark, and it is one of the most important buildings in the Ridge Street Historic District.

BRECHIN-SMITH HOUSE  
500 RIDGE ST.

VDHR FILE NO. 104-25-15



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 # 104-0025-015

Property Name: Historic Brechin-Smith House

NR Property Category: Building  
Wuzit: House

Tax Code: Section Parcel  
=====

29 278

County/City: Charlottesville (City)

USGS Map: USGS Quad: Charlottesville East

ADDRESS/LOCATION INFORMATION

Address: 500 Ridge Street

Location:

Vicinity of: Municipality: ZIP: 22901

PROPERTY CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

Property Boundaries:  
Ownership: Private

RESOURCE COUNT -

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

WUZIT COUNT -

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

RESOURCE - GENERAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Resource Level:  
 Estimated Construction Date: 1872 -81  
 Source of Date: Tax Records  
 Physical Status: Existing  
 Condition: Fair  
 Threat: None Known  
 Degree of Historic Integrity:  
     Association:  
     Design:  
     Feeling:  
     Location:  
     Materials:  
     Setting:  
     Workmanship:

PRIMARY RESOURCE RECONNAISSANCE DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style/Derivative: Victorian Vernacular

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

Component	#	Form/Treatment	Material	Matr'l Treatment
Chimneys		Central	Brick	Corbelled cap
Foundation		raised rear	Brick	
Porch		Front	Wood	1-story, 2-bay
Roof		Gable	Metal	Standing seam
Windows		double-hung sash	Wood	6/6, 4/4

Brief Architectural Description of Primary Resource:

This is a small two-storey brick house on an English basement. It is three bays wide and single-pile with a projecting side bay on the facade. Its low roofline, steep gable roof, and balconied wall dormer are characteristic of the Gothic cottage style, but the interpretation here is vernacular. The brick is laid in seven-course American bond. The steeply-pitched gable roof is covered with standing-seam metal. It has projecting eaves and verges, a boxed cornice with brackets only in the gable ends, and a wide cornice board. The small central chimney is corbelled out over the roof. The windows at the main level are very tall, double-sash, four-over-four light. Those at the second level are shorter and located only in the gable ends, four-over-four on the facade and six-over-six on the ends of the house. All have wooden sills and plain surrounds. There is a single wall dormer on the facade; it has a steep gable roof with bracketed boxed cornice. It has square posts and a low sawn balcony balustrade. Single-storey, weatherboarded, shed-roofed additions cover the rear of the house. The verandah is two bays wide with a low bellcast

hip roof covered with standing-seam metal with a boxed cornice. It has square posts with sawn brackets and sawn balustrade. The entrance bay of the verandah projects slightly and is topped by a bellcast gable. The two-paneled double entrance doors have a three-light rectangular transom. There are two rooms on each of the three levels without a central hall. An open-well three-flight stair with winders is set in the projecting bay, an arrangement typical of Gothic cottages.

Brief Architectural Description of Additions and Alterations  
N/A

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:

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

In 1871 Alexander C. Brechin, who had a bookstore on Main Street, purchased a half-acre lot from H. A. Darrow who lived at 510 Ridge Street (ACDB 66-420). According to tax records, he built one house almost immediately and another next door in 1881. Brechin lived in this house in the early 1900s. In 1924 he deeded both houses to his son Andrew M. Brechin, who lived in the other house at 506 Ridge Street (City DB 46-142). Andrew Brechin sold 500 Ridge Street in 1936 to J. Emmet Gleason, who sold it the same year to Margaret M. Smith (DB 88-246, 88-493). After living there for 23 years, she sold it in 1959 to the present owners, who use it as rental property (DB 215-146).

SIGNIFICANCE & RELATION TO EVALUATION CRITERIA

This intricately detailed cottage, with its steep gables, balconied wall dormer, and sawnwork, is one of the most picturesque buildings on the street. The Brechin-Smith House has been individually designated as a local historic landmark, and it is one of the most important buildings in the Ridge Street Historic District.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

=====  
Type of Record                      Citation  
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City Records  
Charlottesville City Deed Book

County Records  
Albemarle County Deed Books

Interview  
Mrs. Ralph O. Allen

Map  
1877 Charlottesville Map

PHOTOGRAPHIC/DRAWINGS DOCUMENTATION

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MISSING DATA ELEMENT

Media	VDHR Neg #	Frames	Date
B&W 35mm photos	13470	10 - 12	1/ /1994

CRM MANAGEMENT EVENTS

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MISSING DATA ELEMENT

CRM Event	Agency/Organization	Date
Survey	PAVA/Smead and City/Bibb	/ /1978

IPS data entry-PAVA (Smead)



~~Smith~~  
City Tax Records

Brechin-Smith ~~Old~~ house

# 213

500 Ridge

plat

~~229-493~~

1/2/62

redivided

229-433

215-146  
493

Ralph D & Irene A. Allen

9/4/59

49450

88-177

Margaret M. Smith

1936

2800

~~215~~

88-493

cheap concrete

old

6 rooms, 2 baths

brick; metal gable

softwood & plaster

see diagram in file

Smith 1936-1959 = 23 yrs

Allen 1959-21978 = 219 "

City Dir

1942

Smith

1953

Marg. M. Smith (wid E. Curtis), tel opr. VE Plo, 502 Ridge St

1962, '70

" " " " - 600 Watson Ave

1959

Ralph & Irene Allen ml

1962, '70

Ralph D (Jan Daily Prog) & Irene & Allen - 505 Ridge St

→ see deed & tax records with 506 Ridge St ←



Which house first?

Which would have been centered on orig. lot? It was 162'  
on Ridge St. 506 = 70' 500 = 92' - how do houses sit?  
*Metter is really centered; must have been planned for two.*  
Ask Mrs Gleason, Brechins,  
(her husband bought 500)

Brechins held onto 506 longer <sup>or it doesn't, but does show opps</sup>  
1877 maps; definitely shows house at bend in road, <sup>505 or a shade west</sup> = 506  
tax records very clear that 500 is also  $\leq 1890$ , so should be on list  
Projecting side bay on 500 is a later style

Allen 6-7323

+ ~~to~~ Abraham Johnson upstairs

Mrs Gray downstairs

not know age; heard Brechins built both

5.00-

3-light 2  
2-paneled 2  
✓ pl surrounds

bay

He built one house immed & a 2nd one by  
time of the 1881 tax re-assessment  
Tax records do not show, however,  
which house was built first, & there  
seems to be no one left who <sup>knows</sup> remembers

surround of brackets on gable  
boards & verges; wide board

catcher, dec above window,  
long balustrade  
taller; plain trim; wooden side  
rails upstairs  
plain surrounds

ornate or pediment?  
bellcast gable w/ brackets  
iron brackets  
balustrade

Brechin-Smith House  
500 Ridge Street

# 213





# Survey

## Identification

<b>STREET ADDRESS:</b> 500 Ridge Street	<b>HISTORIC NAME:</b> Brechin-Smith House
<b>MAP &amp; PARCEL:</b> 29-278	<b>DATE / PERIOD:</b> 1872 or 1881
<b>CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK:</b> 4-341	<b>STYLE:</b> Victorian Vernacular
<b>PRESENT ZONING:</b> R-3	<b>HEIGHT (to cornice) OR STORIES:</b> 2 storeys
<b>ORIGINAL OWNER:</b> Alexander C. Brechin	<b>DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA:</b> 92' x 90' (8,280 sq. ft.)
<b>ORIGINAL USE:</b> Residence	<b>CONDITION:</b> Fair
<b>PRESENT USE:</b> Rental Property (residence and day nursery)	<b>SURVEYOR:</b> Bibb
<b>PRESENT OWNER:</b> Ralph O. & Irene A. Allen	<b>DATE OF SURVEY:</b> Spring 1978
<b>ADDRESS:</b> 204 Tenth Street, N.W. Charlottesville, Virginia	<b>SOURCES:</b> City/County Records Mrs. Ralph O. Allen 1877 Charlottesville Map

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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500 Ridge Street







Date JAN 1994 File No. 104-25-15

Name BRECHIN-SMITH HOUSE - 500 KIDDE ST

Town CHARLOTTESVILLE

County \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer ANN C. HUPPERT

Contents 3 EXT. VIEWS

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