NAME: Biltmore Avenue Cluster: George A. Mears House

LOCATION: 137 Biltmore Avenue

OWNER: Martha W. Physioc Heirs
137 Biltmore Avenue
Asheville, NC 28801

DESCRIPTION: The Mears House is a two-and-a-half-story common bond brick residence located on a rise above Biltmore Avenue. The house is basically cubical in plan, with two, two-story bays on the front elevation, one semi-octagonal, one rectangular with a semi-octagonal bay on the first level. There is also a semi-octagonal one-story bay on the south elevation. A veranda wraps around the southeast corner of the house from the north front bay to the bay on the south elevation. This veranda is ornamented with turned posts and a spindled balustrade. The house is topped with a patterned, slate-shingled mansard roof. There are two gables in the front elevation of the house over the bays. The southeast one is larger and contains a semi-octagonal hood supported by turned posts. The other gable is smaller and more steeply-pitched. The tympanum of this gable is covered with fishscale shingles of wood and has a cutout gable insert. On the front and side elevations of the house are large, gable-roofed dormers. Each of these dormers is topped by a sheetmetal finial. There are two large, panelled chimneys on the house, both in poor condition. Maps indicate that there was also a carriage house to the southwest of the house which has disappeared.

SIGNIFICANCE: The George Mears House at 137 Biltmore Avenue is the finest surviving residential building in downtown Asheville and one of the city's finer Queen Anne style structures. The house was built about 1885 for George A. Mears, an Asheville merchant who was in business between 1870 and 1910 on South Main Street, principally with his Mears Daylight Store, which burned in the 1920s (the building was so named because of its large expanses of glass). Particularly notable is the house's elaborate slate-shingled mansard roof with prominent gables and gable-roofed dormers with finials. The Mears house is the last relatively-intact remnant of what was once an avenue of upper class residences stretching south from the Patton House. (over)
Bibliography

Sanborn-Perrin Insurance Maps of Asheville, 1891 on.
Asheville City Directories.
Biographical files of the North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library.