

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Alexander, Mrs. Minnie, Cottage
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 218 Patton Avenue not for publication
city, town Asheville vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Buncombe code 021 zip code 28801

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

William S. Fair, Jr. 11/13/89
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/ TRADE/professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/"Old English" vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Pebbledash

Wood/shake

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage was built ca. 1905 as a detached single family residence, and now is used for professional offices. The house was designed by the Biltmore Estate's supervising architect, Richard Sharp Smith. It is notable as the only early 20th century single family residential structure remaining on Patton Avenue, once a primarily residential street now entirely lined with commercial buildings. Patton Avenue is a main thoroughfare extending westward from Pack Square, the historic town center, across the French Broad River and into West Asheville. The two-story house with full basement occupies an elevated and commanding corner lot facing Patton Avenue to the north. Pearl Street, a residential street, is to the west; along the rear, southern, boundary runs an alley from Pearl Street to Ann Street; and on the east side is a gravel parking lot. A three-foot high, rough-cut, regular coursed stone wall borders the front and west side of the lot, its crown roughly even with the level of the downward sloping grassy yard. The house is approached by wide concrete steps, rimmed on each side by extensions of the stone wall; a wide concrete path runs from these steps to another set of concrete steps leading to the porch. Two large oak trees shade the northwest corner of the house. There are modern foundation plantings on all sides of the building. At the rear, a modern concrete round table and benches sit on a ground cover of white gravel. As the architect prided himself on designing residences with "all modern conveniences" (Fisher n.p.), the house had no original outbuildings. A later frame garage was removed from the rear of the lot at an unknown date.

Description and analysis of this building are facilitated by the survival of Smith's original drawings drafted for Mrs. Minnie Alexander in 1904. The two-story house is rectangular in form, interrupted by projecting bays of varying shapes. The exterior walls are plastered with architectural concrete aggregate (known locally as "pebbledash" and called "roughcast" by the architect), over split lath on frame construction. There is flat board trim, a flat frieze and string course, and molded fascia. The entire

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Buncombe County, North Carolina

exterior, damaged by neglect, weather and vandalism, was lightly sandblasted in 1988. The wood was sealed and repainted; the pebbledash was patched and sealed. The original windows, still in place on the first and second floors, have 12/1 sashes in the main rooms and 9/1 in the bathrooms. The house has an asphalt shingled hip roof with deep overhanging eaves, bracketed purlins, two brick chimneys and a brick stove stack. In 1988, the functioning chimneys were rebuilt, with their own bricks when possible.

A polygonal bay projects from the right front facade of the two-bay-wide house. The engaged full facade single story porch has three square, paneled columns with simple capitals and bases, and a Stick-style balustrade in a sheaf-of-wheat motif. At each end of the porch is an engaged column. Across the top of each of the four porch openings runs a thick carved spandrel which forms brackets at the posts. The brackets are carved in a simple vernacular adaptation of flowing tracery expressive of the English influence on Smith's work. The original front door and small pane latticework sidelights, on the left of the facade, are designed as a single, T-shaped unit. The Dutch door has a latticework top and a single panel bottom section. The hardware is original, including the Dutch door latches. With the exception of the rear cellar door, all the present exterior doors have similar small pane latticework tops over a single panel. The porch floor, severely deteriorated by 1988, was relaid and coated with fiberglass to prevent water seepage into the basement and to provide safe footing on the porch.

The second story features a projecting polygonal windowed bay above the entrance. Smith's original plan called for an open balcony with carved spandrels ending in brackets. Although the balcony was enclosed prior to 1934 with multi-paned windows, the original balcony configuration and ornamental spandrels and brackets are inside the bay enclosure. The size and shape of the fixed windows complement the structure's original windows. The second story front appears as a flush wall due to the balcony enclosure.

On the right (west) elevation is a clipped northwest corner. Centered on the elevation is a polygonal first floor and basement bay topped with a decorative second story balcony. In his plans, Smith designated the southwest first floor corner as a veranda with the same posts and spandrels as the front porch. This area was enclosed prior to 1934 with painted shake shingle walls in the lower portion and banks of multi-paned fixed windows above.

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The windows are hung behind the original carved spandrels ending in brackets. One basement window was closed off in the 1988 renovation.

On the right side of the rear (south) elevation, the second story overhangs the first in the English manner that so heavily influenced Smith's work. The utility porch off the kitchen on the southeast corner was enclosed with sheets of tempered plate glass in 1988. The glass, placed behind the carved spandrels ending in brackets, is a sensitive accommodation to the needs of the current occupants and the needs of preservation. The door in the glass wall is the original back door to the kitchen. Beside the door is a wooden panel covering an original window, closed off in 1988. The same year an unpainted wood landing and stairway were built to replace a deteriorated second floor decorative balcony and railing and provide second floor egress required by building codes. The door at the top of the stairway replaces a window, and this door was once on the first floor veranda. The stairs join a landing outside the kitchen utility porch and another short set of stairs continues to the ground, replacing deteriorated kitchen steps. The full size 5-panel cellar door behind the kitchen stairway was not in Smith's design, but may have been an alteration in his plan. A basement window was sealed up and concrete applied over the opening.

Due to the close proximity of another house that once stood to the east, which obscured sight of the east elevation, decoration has been omitted on this wall, except for the carved spandrels on the front and rear porches. There is a two story shallow rectangular bay housing the main stairway, and on the second floor six windows of varying sizes. On the first floor, a kitchen window was closed off and pebbledash applied in 1988. Three of five windows in the stone basement wall of this elevation were removed at the same time and cement facings fill the original window holes. One window, torn out by vagrants, was enlarged and replaced with glass blocks, providing light to basement office space.

The building is two rooms wide and three rooms deep, and laid out with public and private rooms surrounding short lengthwise hallways. (See floor plan: 7.6). The interior is a coherent whole, with five panel doors throughout; 10 foot high ceilings downstairs, 9 foot high on the second floor; and oak floors. There are six fireplaces incorporating such materials as mottled glazed tiles, marble or tiled surrounds, beveled mirrors,

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and carved woodwork, in varying styles and degrees of ornamentation. Textured plaster hides cracks in the original plaster ceilings in all rooms and old plaster walls have been retained and papered. All the original ceiling lighting fixtures, removed by vandals during the years the building stood empty, have been replaced with compatible modern fixtures. Original ornamented brass hardware remains throughout. The picture rails are original, and chair rails were installed in 1988. There is simple architrave door and window trim and robust corner beading.

The front door opens into a hall with a stairway in the back left portion. The design of the paneled front porch columns is repeated in the full height newel post of the front stairway. This stairway has a double stage landing, a turned turning newel and turned balusters. On the right wall, a fireplace is flanked by pocket doors leading to the octagonal parlor and the dining room. These rooms are also joined by a pocket door. A wedge-shaped china cabinet with latticework panes is built into a corner behind one of the eight sides of the parlor wall. The enclosed veranda and the original storeroom and pantry were adapted to office use in 1988. The kitchen was modernized at the same time. A window, shown in Smith's plans between the veranda (now enclosed) and the pantry, was replaced (possibly ca. 1924) by a shallow cabinet. Some original storeroom and kitchen cabinets remain. A bathroom was installed in the mid-1930s between the first floor and the basement by removing the lower section of the basement stairway and installing a floor and plumbing about halfway down the original stairway. A closet under the front stairs was removed to make way for new stairs to the basement.

The second story floor plan is similar to the first floor, with larger rooms across the front, including an octagonal room above the parlor. All rooms open onto the hallway, which is somewhat longer than that on the first floor.

The basement, once earth floored, was finished in a major renovation in 1988. Installed were acoustical ceiling, modern flush lighting, floor tile and carpet over concrete flooring. What was storeroom area is now office space. Two freestanding supporting beams have been faced with uncoursed roughcut stone and the original brick fireplace base remains. The basement is reached by a section of wooden staircase leading to a metal spiral staircase located in front of the glass-brick window. The coal bin with a concrete floor and two windows sealed off, now houses a modern furnace and serves as a utility entrance.

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Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage
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The original plans called for a lavatory in the basement and a built-in seat in the front hall. It appears that neither was installed when the house was built.

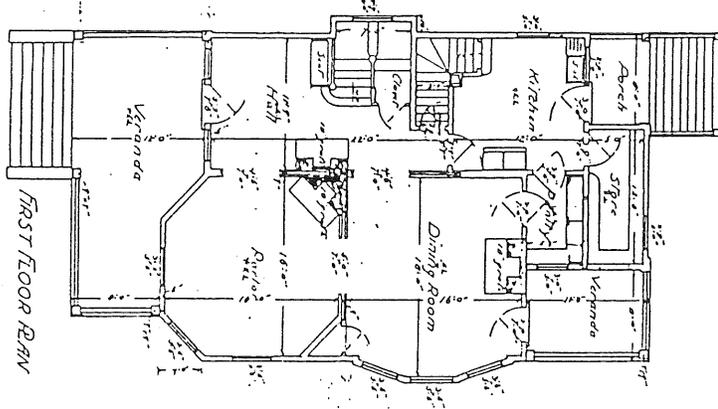
Despite alterations, the overall integrity of the building has been maintained by the preservation of as much of the original structural material as possible; by retaining the original floor plan and decorative elements; and by making alterations in keeping with the Smith styling, while at the same time converting the building to modern office space so as to meet local building codes.

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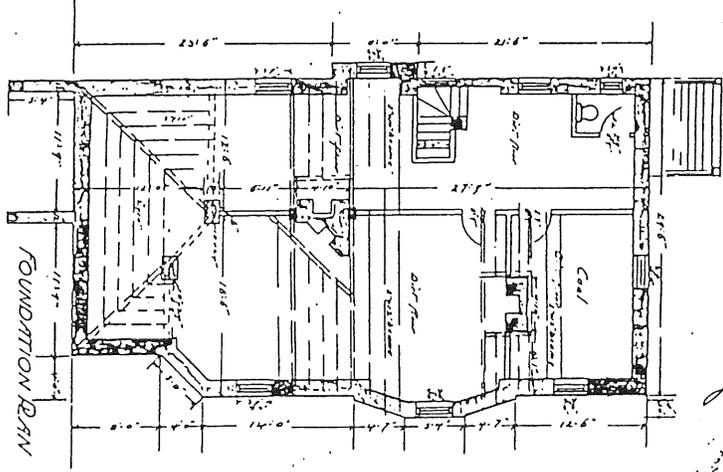
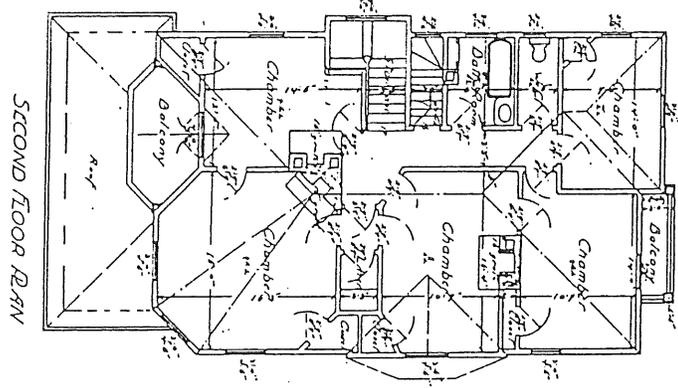
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The Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage
Buncombe County, North Carolina



COTTAGE FOR MRS. MINNIE ALEXANDER.
 PATTON AVE. ASHEVILLE, N.C.
 R. Smith, Architect
 Asheville, N.C.
 June 1904
 Drawing No. 1 - Scale 3/8" = 1'-0"



J. R. Jones

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The Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage
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COTTAGE FOR Mrs MINNIE ALEXANDER.
PATTON AVE, ASHEVILLE N. C.

R.S. Smith Archt.
Asheville, N. C.
June, 1904.

-Drawing N°2- Scale 1/2"=one foot.

R. S. Smith



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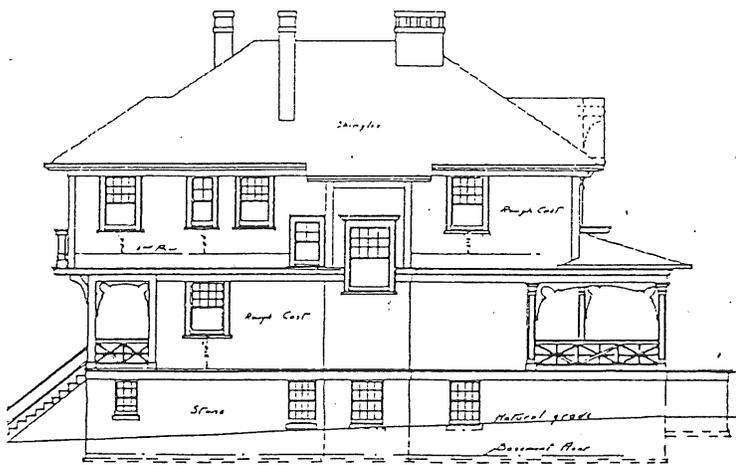
The Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage
Buncombe County, North Carolina

*COTTAGE FOR Mrs MINNIE ALEXANDER.
DATTON AVE., ASHEVILLE, N. C.*

*R. S. Smith Archt
Asheville, N. C.
June 1904*

-Drawing 1193 Scale 1/8 in. = one foot

J. K. J. Cline



SIDE ELEVATION



REAR

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

Ca. 1905

Significant Dates

1904-5

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, Richard Sharp

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

The Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for architecture as the work of a master, Richard Sharp Smith, a prolific designer of residential and commercial buildings. This cottage is an intact example of his hallmark residential architectural style. Designed in 1904 and built soon after, the two-story house of pebbledash with heavy timber embellishments conveys the popular and identifiable "Old English" vernacular style developed by Smith during his association with the Biltmore Estate Village in Asheville, North Carolina.

One of a number of Smith houses surviving in the Asheville area, the Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage is distinguished as a robust, confident, and mature example of his work, and a distinctive amalgamation of the English architectural influences of his youth with features drawn from contemporaneous American domestic architecture.

Historic Context

Richard Sharp Smith was born in Keighley, Yorkshire, England, on July 7, 1852, attended the Kensington Art Schools in London, and emigrated to Chicago, Illinois, about 1872, (White, 1977). He then moved to New York, where he was employed by the architectural firm of Hunt and Hunt, also of New York. As a member of that firm he came to Asheville in 1889 as the supervising architect to execute Richard Morris Hunt's design for the Biltmore estate mansion (NHL) for George Washington Vanderbilt. That splendid chateau-like residence was completed in 1896. That same year Smith set up his own architectural practice in Asheville with draftsman Heath Carrier, who later became a partner in Smith and Carrier (City Directories). The firm

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The Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage
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designed numerous commercial, governmental, religious, and educational buildings in Buncombe County and other western North Carolina counties, including the courthouses of Henderson, Madison and Jackson Counties, and Smith was a pervasive force in the residential design field. He designed some Colonial Revival style residences, (My Sketch Book, n.p.), perhaps the most outstanding survivor being the retirement home of William Jennings Bryan, in Asheville's Grove Park neighborhood, but his main contribution to local residential architecture was the development of an English-influenced vernacular style of architecture featuring pebbledash finishes (an architectural concrete aggregate that Smith called "rough cast"), half timbering, flat board trims, gabled and dormered hip roofs, porch brackets, and the dense rows of square-cut sawn balusters that today are almost a signature of a Smith house. The porch balustrade at 218 Patton Avenue presents a singular, notable exception to this styling, perhaps owing more to the Stick influence. Smith, the businessman, tended to give his clients freedom to specify details of their buildings (Letter to Wadley Raoul, 1899), and this may have lead to the sheaf-of-wheat styling of the balustrade. Smith's houses were constructed throughout Asheville and environs, particularly in Biltmore Village, and the Montford and Chestnut Hill neighborhoods (all listed in the National Register). Between 1901 and 1907, he designed at least a dozen, and probably more, of the pebbledash rental cottages of Biltmore Village in South Asheville for the village owner, George Washington Vanderbilt. The Alexander Cottage is a dignified, large and substantial elaboration of these Biltmore Village designs, and serves as a bridge between the simple charm of the Village's working men's cottages and his more elaborate Colonial Revival and Queen Anne influenced designs. The original drawings for the Alexander Cottage survive and show that it was built, in the main, as planned, except possibly for the enclosed front second story balcony, altered at an undetermined date.

Smith died in Asheville, North Carolina, on February 7, 1924, at age 72.

Historical Background

In February, 1898, F.M. Weaver sold to Minnie Alexander, wife of jeweler Gustave Alexander, lot number 5 on the corner of Patton

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~~The Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage
Runcombe County, North Carolina~~

Avenue and Pearl Street, in the subdivision of Nellie Park, which had been platted the previous October. This lot measured 30 feet wide by 115 feet deep. In May of 1900, Mrs. Alexander also purchased a strip 10 feet by 115 feet from the adjoining lot 6, owned by George S. and Alice B. Powell. In June of 1904 R.S. Smith produced the floor plans and elevations for a "cottage" to be built for Mrs. Alexander (Original drawings). By ca. 1905 the Alexanders were residing in the house at 216 Patton Avenue, recently built next door on Lot 6, and by 1906 were at home at 218 Patton Avenue (City Directory, 1906). The property had three other owners until its purchase by physician Christopher Grimshawe in 1924. It remained in the hands of Grimshawe's heirs and descendants until its purchase by the present owners in 1987.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Asheville Historic Resources
Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately .1 acre

UTM References

A

1	7
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3	5	8	5	8	0
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3	9	3	9	7	1	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is located on the southeast corner of the junction of Patton Avenue and Pearl Street, with a frontage of approximately 42 feet on Patton Avenue and a depth of approximately 115 feet, according to the accompanying Buncombe County tax map for Ward 4, Sheet 2, Lot 65.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

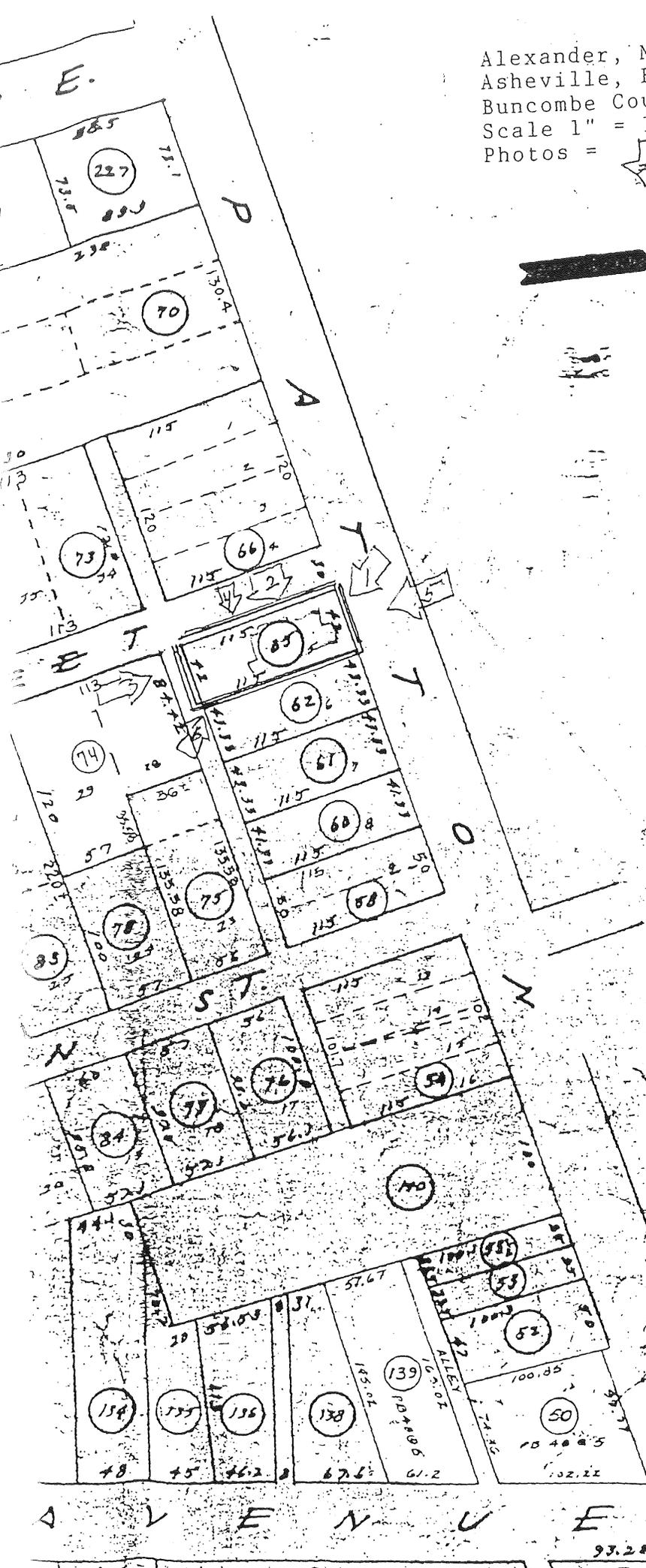
The boundary line encompasses the original lot no. 5, plat recorded in 1897, and the additional portion of lot no. 6 along the eastern boundary, purchased in 1900 by Minnie Alexander, and historically part of the lot designated as Lot 65 on the Buncombe County tax rolls.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary J. Hooper, Preservation Consultant date May 17, 1989
 organization _____ telephone 704/274-3988
 street & number 102 Shady Oak Drive city or town Asheville state NC zip code 28803

Alexander, Mrs. Minnie, Cottage
Asheville, Buncombe Co., NC
Buncombe County Tax Map, Ward 4, Map 2 (Portion)
Scale 1" = 100'
Photos = 



WD.3
14

