

610

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Dr. Victor McBrayer House

AND/OR COMMON  
Owen House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
507 North Morgan Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Shelby  
STATE

— VICINITY OF  
CODE

North Carolina

37

COUNTY

CODE

Cleveland

045

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Mrs. Penry Owen

STREET & NUMBER  
507 North Morgan Street

CITY, TOWN  
Shelby

— VICINITY OF

STATE  
North Carolina 28150

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC  
Cleveland County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Shelby

STATE

North Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Dr. Victor McBrayer House is one of the most elaborate and best preserved late nineteenth century dwellings surviving in the town of Shelby. The small frame structure exhibits a rich array of sawn and turned ornament and has seen virtually no material exterior or interior alteration since its construction to the point of retaining much of its original furnishings. The house is located on a lot about 100 feet wide and 200 feet deep on a shady avenue occupied primarily by modest houses of early to mid-twentieth century origin, none of which match the McBrayer House in character or sophistication. Though to date it has remained a private residence, much of the street is now zoned commercial, and the structures on either side of the McBrayer House now have commercial uses.

Stylistically the house exhibits the irregular massing and profusion of ornament typical of late nineteenth century eclecticism, with elements borrowed from the Italianate, Gothic Revival, and Queen Anne styles of domestic architecture. The structure is one-and-one-half stories high, though the dormers set in the roof to form the additional half story are not glazed, but serve as ventilators for an unfinished attic. As shown in an early undated photograph, the house was originally built on a modified T-plan, with a porch wrapping around the stem of the T on the streetside (east) facade, and a semi-octagonal bay window placed in the streetside end gable of the north transverse section of the T. The stem of the T was under a complex roof, hipped on the front southeast corner and rear northwest corner and gabled on the southwest and northeast corners, with a flat roof connecting the parallel ridge poles. Two dormer windows were set on the east slope and one on the south slope of the front hipped portion of the roof. Shortly after the completion of this main block, shown in the photograph, the southern gable end section of the roof was extended to cover an additional room, and a gable roof ell was set transversely to this extension on the west side. The front porch was extended across the east side of this addition and a dormer window set on the east slope of the roof. All details of this addition are nearly identical to those of the original block and there is little indication of any break in the construction. At about the same time a gable roof kitchen extension was added on the west gable end of the transverse section of the original T, and a latticed porch added across the rear facade connecting these additions on the north and south. The resulting total mass is a modified U-plan with the base of the U presented to the street in three stages stepping back progressively from north to south; with a porch fronting the two southernmost stages of this facade and curving back gracefully at the southwest corner of the middle stage.

The porch is supported by chamfered posts with lambs tongue moldings that rest on square-in-section bases with paneled faces. The bases are connected by a molded handrail supported by turned balusters alternating with turned drop pendants set under the handrail. The posts terminate near the top with wide molded caps; above this on the front of each post is a heavy curvilinear sawn bracket supporting the overhanging eaves of the porch roof. Narrow sawn brackets are set perpendicular to these on either side of the posts under the lintel, and curvilinear sawnwork ornaments the underside of the lintel between the posts.

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Window and door openings have a segmental-arch heads and are set in wide shouldered surrounds with molded segmental-arch hoods. The main entrance, set on the right corner of the middle stage of the facade, is a double door with glazed panels having semi-circular arch heads in each leaf. A second glazed double French door, each leaf with ten lights, is placed on the south exterior wall of this middle stage. A single door enters on the porch from the east wall of the southernmost stage of the facade. A pair of floor length four-over-four sash windows are placed in the east wall of the middle stage to the left of the main entrance; a single window of this type is placed to the right of the door on the southernmost section. All windows retain their original segmental-arch louvered blinds.

The tympanum of the gable above the bay window is finished with board and batten sheathing; the boards are scalloped along their lower ends. A three-part louvered ventilator, each section with a semi-circular arch head, is centered on the tympanum. The louvers are sawn in a curvilinear pattern. The eaves of the gable are trimmed with sawn bargeboard, and a sawn kingpost-type ornamental insert with drop pendant is placed at the peak of the gable.

Each of the gable dormers has overhanging eaves with returns and sawnwork bargeboard. The sides of the dormers are covered with board and batten siding, as are the tympanums of their gables, though the lower ends of the boards here are scalloped. The face of each dormer is treated with an unusual ventilator composed of five vertical rows of scalloped openings resulting in a diagonal fishscale pattern.

The north and south gable ends are treated similarly to the east gable on the facade, though on each the bay window is replaced by pairs of floor-length two-over-two sash windows giving on to a small balcony with a balustrade identical to that of the porch. This is covered by an ogee roof supported by brackets and trimmed with ornamental sawnwork.

As indicated by the exterior configuration, the interior follows a complex, asymmetrical plan. The main entrance opens into a wide entrance hall running the width of the house to a door opening on the back porch; this hall is divided by a transverse arch with a multi-pane colored glass tympanum beneath which are set louvered doors. Along the north wall of the hall doors open into three rooms running east to west in what is the transverse section of the original main block. The westernmost of these three rooms is the dining room, to which is attached the kitchen ell. On the south wall of the hall doors open into front and rear parlors around a central chimney that occupy the east (front) and west (rear) halves of the long portion of the original block. These rooms are lighted by the floor length double windows opening on to the front and rear porches, respectively. The south end of the front parlor opens onto the porch through the French doors. A door on the south wall of the rear parlor opens into a narrow hall that runs parallel to the main hall. This hall is divided by a flat transverse arch supported by circular-in-section detached posts. The east end of the hall opens onto the porch, and the

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west is enclosed with a small bathroom; on the south are two rooms of what was the early addition to the house.

A simple molded baseboard runs throughout the interior. Doors are of four panels with wide applied moldings and are set in simple surrounds trimmed with mitered molding strips along the outside edge. Mantels vary in form, the simplest being variations on the post-and-lintel theme with panels and shaped pilasters and frieze boards. The most elaborate mantels are in the front parlor and the front room of the transverse section of the original T block; these are fitted with overmantels and mirrors and adorned with spindle work.

At the end of the rear porch of the kitchen is a small enclosed area that was originally the well house, now serving as the furnace room. Behind the house are a small frame shed-roof milk house, a gable-roof frame potato house, and a frame, two-room gable-roof structure that was originally a small dwelling in another part of Shelby and moved to this location at an undetermined time; it now serves as a storage room. Behind this complex of buildings the vegetable garden occupies the remainder of the lot.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

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SPECIFIC DATES      1893

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1893 for a prominent young physician of Shelby, the Dr. Victor McBrayer House survives as one of the most important late nineteenth century remnants of the town. Though the house is relatively small in scale, its complex massing and profusion of ornament, almost all of which remains in a remarkable state of preservation, distinguishes the house as a prominent example of the eclecticism in domestic architectural tastes of the period.

### Criteria assessment:

C. The house embodies the spirit of late nineteenth century eclecticism in the domestic architecture of the middle class, with a wealth of ornament drawn from the Gothic and Italianate Revivals and the Queen Anne Style.

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Cleveland County's Dr. McBrayer House was built, according to family tradition, in 1893 in the county seat of Shelby, at a time when the town was undergoing a period of significant growth. Its builder was Victor McBrayer, a prominent Shelby doctor.

Victor McBrayer<sup>1</sup> was born in 1853, one of four children of Reuben H. McBrayer, a Mooresboro farmer. He attended medical school in New York and graduated in 1875.<sup>2</sup> On April 28, 1880 he married Esther Suttle, also of Shelby, at the bride's home.<sup>3</sup> The 1880 census, taken later in the year, reveals that McBrayer and his wife were living with her mother. By this time the twenty-six year old McBrayer was one of Cleveland County's few practicing physicians.<sup>4</sup> McBrayer purchased land from the Suttles as early as 1885, twenty-four acres in January,<sup>5</sup> and two lots in April. The second transaction makes reference to "where the said Victor McBrayer now lives," implying that the McBrayer-Owens House was built near an older house. McBrayer paid \$300 for this land.<sup>6</sup> McBrayer augmented his holdings with other purchases in 1896 and 1897.<sup>7</sup>

McBrayer died intestate in September of 1897 at the age of forty-five; he was eulogized as the "beloved physician" of his community who had "gone in and out of the houses of suffering here and in the surrounding country without a break."<sup>8</sup> In November of that year his widow, Esther McBrayer, was appointed by the court to be administrator of the estate. Mrs. McBrayer was given a life estate, with the property reverting to their five children, Alma, Pollen, Willis, Elizabeth, and George, upon her death. After the death of Esther McBrayer on August 20, 1932,<sup>9</sup> the property remained in the hands of the four children until April of 1950 when Willis McBrayer and Pollen McBrayer Mull and her husband B. M. Mull sold their interest in the land to Alma McBrayer Webb and to Penry Owen and wife, Elizabeth McBrayer Owen.<sup>10</sup> Alma McBrayer Webb died in the early 1970s, leaving the property in the hands of her sister, who continues to own it.

The house built for Dr. McBrayer is an important example in the western Piedmont of North Carolina of the eclecticism and elaboration of ornament in the domestic architecture of the middle class--even in houses of small scale--that reached its zenith at the end of the nineteenth century. The garden and the collection of outbuildings behind the house express the independence and near self-sufficiency of the family units in residential areas of small towns in Piedmont North Carolina, and reflect the transition of these families from a totally rural existence to life in the growing towns of the region.

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FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Population Schedule, Cleveland County, North Carolina; Cleveland County Will Book 2, p. 521; Levi Branson (ed.) North Carolina Business Directory for 1877-1878 (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1878), 80.

<sup>2</sup>Cleveland Star (Shelby), September 20, 1897.

<sup>3</sup>Cleveland County Marriage Register, 1870-1894.

<sup>4</sup>Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Population Schedule, Cleveland County, North Carolina; Lee B. Weathers, The Living Past of Cleveland County (Shelby: Star Publishing Company, 1956), 168. The North Carolina Business Directory for 1877-1878 lists only twelve doctors in Cleveland County in 1878, just before McBrayer began his practice.

<sup>5</sup>Cleveland County Deed Book O, 557.

<sup>6</sup>Cleveland County Deed Book T, 113.

<sup>7</sup>Cleveland County Deed Book FF, 160 and 456.

<sup>8</sup>Cleveland Star (Shelby), September 20, 1897.

<sup>9</sup>Cleveland County Index to Births and Deaths.

<sup>10</sup>Cleveland County Deed Book H, 507. The fifth child, George, is not represented in this transaction.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Branson, Levi (ed.). North Carolina Business Directory for 1877-1878. Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1878.

Cleveland County Deed Books, Index to Births and Deaths, Marriage Index, Record of Administrators, Will Books, Microfilm copy. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.5 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	4,5,0,7,5,0	3,9,0,5,3,7,5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property includes the entire 100' x 200' lot occupied by the house and its associated outbuildings and garden.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE	Architectural Description by Michael Southern, Survey Specialist; Statement of Significance by Jim Sumner, Researcher; Title Search by		
ORGANIZATION	Walter Best, Researcher	DATE	March 8, 1979
	Archeology and Historic Preservation Section,	TELEPHONE	919-733-4763
STREET & NUMBER	N. C. Division of Archives and History 109 East Jones Street	STATE	N. C. 27611
CITY OR TOWN	Raleigh,		

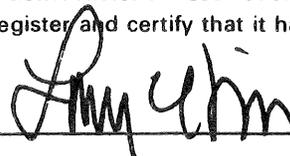
## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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United States Census Office. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Population Schedule, Cleveland County, North Carolina. Microfilm copy, Raleigh, Division of Archives and History.

Weathers, Lee B. The Living Past of Cleveland County. Shelby: Star Publishing Company, 1956.

DR. VICTOR McLEFFAYER  
HOUSE  
507 N. MORGAN ST.  
SHELEY, N.C.  
CLEVELAND COUNTY  
MARCH 1979

0 125'  
APPROXIMATE SCALE

