

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0678473

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 19 1979
DATE ENTERED MAY 8 1979

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

Albin P. Dearing House

AND/OR COMMON

Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority House, University of Georgia

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

338 South Milledge Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Athens

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Tenth

STATE

Georgia

CODE

COUNTY

Clarke

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Gamma Delta House Chapter Corporation of Kappa Alpha Theta ✓

STREET & NUMBER

338 South Milledge Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Athens

VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clarke County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Washington Street

CITY, TOWN

Athens

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Survey of Clarke County (1)
Historic American Building Survey (2)

DATE 1975 (1)

1936, 1940 (2)

(2) FEDERAL (1) STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Preservation Section, Dept. of Natural Resources (1)
Library of Congress (2)

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta (1)
Washington, D.C. (2)

STATE

Georgia (1)

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Albin P. Dearing House is one of Athens' most imposing Greek Revival residences. The house is a two-story, red-brick, main block, surrounded on three of its four sides by a white peristyle. The peristyle is composed of twelve columns in a giant Greek Doric order. The fluted Doric columns are placed symmetrically around the main entrance axis. The spacing of the columns creates an appearance of three pairs of columns on the front facade. This variation in column spacing is common in later Greek Revival houses where the strict academic formulas were modified to meet current tastes. The main entrance is framed between the two central columns of the peristyle and accents the entrance bay of the three-bay-wide facade.

The proportionately wide spacing of the bays to the entire side of the entrance bay is most probably a response to a conflict between the interior plan space requirements and the concept of a symmetrical enveloping peristyle. If the columns of the peristyle had been symmetrically spaced across the front facade, and the house size held constant, their placement would have interfered with the view from the interior windows as well as disrupted the bay-to-column relationship of the exterior. The existing column arrangement allows for the framing of the entranceway from the approach walks and an unobstructed outward view from the main rooms of the house within an ordered column framework.

The two-story, main block of the house is three bays wide across the front and four bays deep. The three formal facades of the house under the Doric peristyle are of stretcher-bond brick. This creates an unpatterned, yet extremely regular and planar appearance. The other exterior walls of the original house are laid up in a rougher brick, in American bond.

The main entrance is typical of the Greek Revival period. It has rectangular side lights framed in pilasters on either side of the doorway and transoms. The main door surround is composed of rectangular pilasters, with low-relief Greek fretwork panels which support simple moulded capitals, a plain frieze, and a box cornice.

The large triple-sash windows in the primary rooms on the main floor, which face on the peristyle, are eight-over-eight and extend from floor to ceiling. The windows on the second level under the peristyle are eight-over-eight sash windows. All the window surrounds are recessed into the exterior brick walls and have simple mouldings. The windows have flat, brick, jack arches.

The exterior and interior walls of the house are 16" thick and were constructed of load-bearing masonry with large wooden timbers spanning the

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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1856-57

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Albin Pasteur Dearing House (Kappa Alpha Theta House) is significant both architecturally and historically. In the former category, it is a perfect example of the full Greek Revival temple form, the ideal of the antebellum South. Historically, it was the home built late in the antebellum period by the scion of one of the city's and county's wealthiest families. In its shining example of all that stood for the "Romantic South," A.P. Dearing's home was a masterpiece reflecting (through the use of his inheritance) his own choice of what best suited him -- a home that typifies what generations after him felt was the essence of the antebellum South.

Motivation for the construction of this classic, monumental Greek Revival-style house should be credited more to William Dearing, the father of the man who actually had it built. The elder Dearing made a fortune in Athens during the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s, and in so doing introduced his son Albin to the wealth and status symbolized by this structure. "Reared in wealth," one source suggests, Albin Dearing "lived in affluence, in the enjoyment of an elegant home, fine horses, blooded cattle, and the things which wealth supplies." With such an upbringing, it then becomes obvious why the younger Dearing built a home of such grandeur.

Albin Pasteur Dearing (1821-1885) obtained the land in 1857 for this house from the trustees of the University of Georgia, who began selling lots in this area in the late 1850s. Dearing bought a number of lots, including the lot this house is on, Number 52, as well as those across the street (to the east), on which a similar home, of frame construction, was built. The deed records in the county reflect no significant real estate purchases by the younger Dearing until after his father's death in 1853 at age 68. The son had married Eugenia Emily Hamilton (1826-1912), a daughter of Dr. Thomas N. Hamilton, in 1844. Her father's home remains today as the Phi Mu Sorority House, and her brother's as the Alpha Delta Pi House, all built in the late 1850s at the height of the family fortunes.

The house symbolized as much William Dearing's wealth and power in the community as his son's. Nearly 30 years before the A.P. Dearing House was built, William Dearing came to Athens from Charleston, South Carolina. In

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 [continued]

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.37

QUADRANGLE NAME Athens West

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 2179350 37159180
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION All that property designated parcel A-7 on Tax Map of Clarke County, Ga., numbered 12-2-D-2. Beginning at a point and running south 150' on S. Milledge St., thence 372.5' westerly to a point, thence 163' north to a point, thence 373' easterly to S. Milledge St., the point of beginning.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Howard L. Preston, Historian, and Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Preservation Section, Dept. of Natural Resources

July 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

270 Washington Street, S.W.

(404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Atlanta

Georgia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

Elizabeth A. Lyon

TITLE Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 3/13/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 5-8-79

ATTEST: *B.O. Bohovich*

DATE May 3, 1979

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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distance between the exterior walls and the walls forming the central halls. All interior surfaces of the house are made of either plaster or masonry.

The interior design of the house is a symmetrical four-over-four floor plan, with a central hall and stair. The most striking aspect of the interior is the fourteen-foot ceiling height in all the downstairs rooms. These are accompanied by monumental doorways and doors which stand almost ten feet high and vary in width from four to a full six feet for each of the double doors that separate the front parlor on the left from the dining room to the rear. These massive, paneled, double doors are made of fruitwood and are finished naturally. The remaining doors of the house are four-panel doors with "eared" undecorated surrounds.

The height of the base moulding, chair moulding, and door sizes emphasize the monumental scale of the interior space of this house.

Before modification by the sorority, which purchased the house in 1938, the downstairs plan of the house included two parlors on either side of the central hall on the front. To the rear on the right (north) was a bedroom, and to the rear on the left (south) was the dining room. After the sorority moved in, the wall separating the downstairs bedroom and the right parlor was removed. The parlor now extends along the entire northern side of the main block.

Two pairs of end chimneys -- not visible from the street -- once serviced each of the four upstairs and downstairs rooms. Presently, all the fireplaces but one (the right or northeast, front parlor manteled fireplace remains) have been blocked, plastered over, and the mantels removed. These removed mantel pieces are reported to be in the hands of the Dearing family.

In the central-hall stair, the original stair, railing, newel post, and landing over the rear door have been retained.

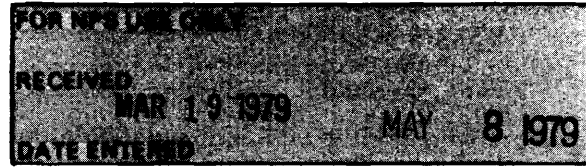
The second floor of the Dearing house was not accessible, but it is reported to be unchanged except for the addition of closet space and the construction of a bath at the front of the upstairs hall.

A dormitory wing has been added to the rear of the house; however, this addition is not visible from the road.

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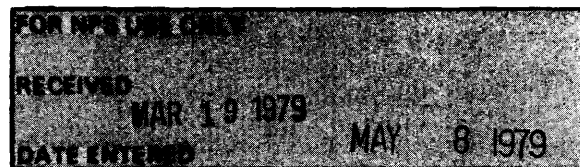


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At present, the house is preserved in an excellent state. No immediate preservation problems are anticipated. The original design and styling of the house have been maintained, and the structure has retained much of its original character.

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1830, Dearing and John Nisbet built Athens' first textile mill, the Athens Factory. According to one source, this mill was the first hydro-powered mill built in the state. Dearing could be classified, therefore, as one of Georgia's earliest textile industrialists.

Textile manufacturing in the South prior to the American Civil War had advanced greatly, and by 1860, the South was producing one-third of the nation's output of yarn. Cotton manufacturing in Georgia exceeded that of any other Southern state. Contrary to popular opinion, then, the antebellum South had a well-established industrialization in the textile field, only to be undermined by the Civil War and its aftermath.

William Dearing was also instrumental in the establishment of Georgia's first chartered railroad company, the Georgia Railroad. Realizing that for Athens and Clarke County to grow and prosper a railroad link to the rest of the state, region and nation was necessary, Dearing worked as secretary/treasurer of a group of Athens businessmen who studied and promoted the construction of a railroad through Athens.

The establishment of the railroad and the construction of three cotton textile factories -- all of which were in operation by the 1830s -- helped to stimulate new business opportunities in Athens, and this activity eventually led to the opening of a branch of the State Bank of Georgia in Athens in 1834.

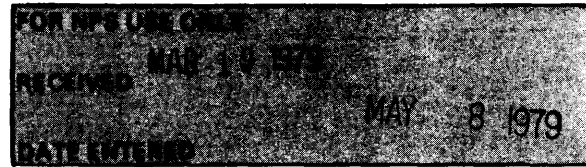
Through these two endeavors -- the cotton textile manufacturing business and the railroad business -- William Dearing made his fortune. By 1850, Dearing had retired, but the Clarke County deeds reflect his uncommon wealth in page after page of taxable real estate. William Dearing was indeed a member of the South's urban class that historian Clement Eaton has described as follows: "At the apex of [the South's] urban society was a small group of retired or non-resident planters who had moved to town [and there] built imposing mansions of the Greek Revival-style."

A.P. Dearing and his wife and their four children moved into this home less than four years before the Civil War. It was the Dearing family home at the time of A.P. Dearing's death in 1885. A native of Wilkes County, Dearing had moved to Athens at age six, and at his death, the local newspaper called

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him a "gentleman of the old Southern school" with a "courtly manner, pleasant words and kindly deed for all he encountered."

The widow, Eugenia (Hamilton) Dearing lived there until her death in 1912. Along with her were her son, Thomas Hamilton Dearing (1848-1890); his wife, Edith Goodwin (1850-1928); and their children. After Thomas died in 1890, his widow married his brother, A.P. Dearing, Jr. (1855-1933), about 1894.

After his mother's death, A.P. Dearing, Jr., bought the house as his share of her estate. He ran a hardware store in Athens from which he retired before his death in 1933.

In the division and sale of Albin, Jr's estate, his stepdaughter/niece, Katherine (Dearing) Goodwin, then of New York City, purchased the home (as had been his wish) herself, at the public auction held March 2, 1938, for \$4,000. She then sold it on June 7th to the Gamma Delta Chapter House Corporation (representing the Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority) for \$5,800. Although family members continued to live there shortly before it was sold, Mrs. Goodwin was forced to sell due to high taxes and cost of upkeep. The house has remained a sorority house ever since, having had a dormitory wing added to the rear and other changes to make it more functional as a place for meetings, as well as a dormitory.

From a purely architectural point of view, the A.P. Dearing House is significant because of its monumental Greek Revival style and the use of excellent building materials in its construction. The house represents the height of the Greek Revival period in Athens.

The primary importance of the Dearing House is its monumentality. This massive, overpowering scale becomes more evident on the interior. When viewed from Milledge Avenue, the passerby has no scale relation to the true size of the structure, but from a closer distance, human scale is diminished by the overpowering size of the building.

The use of materials and craftsmanship in the construction of the house are also notable. The solidarity and massiveness of the house convey a sense

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of stability and security, an image which Albin Dearing, the banker and financier, wanted to promote openly.

Dearing, using a great deal of his recent inheritance, built this home not only as a domicile, but as a monument to all that he and his family stood for at the peak of the antebellum period. In only a few short years, his world changed drastically, however, and his house-monument was forever a reminder of how it had been, both to him, his family, and to the community. It remains today as such a symbol.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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