

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 694096  
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RECEIVED JAN 3 1979  
DATE ENTERED APR 26 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** *Asheville Historic and Architectural Multiple Resource Area* (id)  
HISTORIC: Historic Resources of Downtown Asheville (Partial Inventory:  
Historic and Architectural Properties)  
AND/OR COMMON  
*includes historic district*

**2 LOCATION**  
STREET & NUMBER: Central Business District  
CITY, TOWN: Asheville  
STATE: North Carolina  
VICINITY OF: 11th  
COUNTY: Buncombe  
CODE: 37  
CODE: 021  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multiple Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: City

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**  
NAME: Multiple ownership  
STREET & NUMBER:  
CITY, TOWN:  
VICINITY OF:  
STATE:

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**  
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Buncombe County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER:  
CITY, TOWN: Asheville  
STATE: North Carolina

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**  
TITLE: Survey of Historic Architectural Resources of Downtown Asheville conducted by staff of the Archeology & Historic Preservation Section, N. C. Division of Archives & History  
DATE: 1977-1978  
FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL   
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Survey & Planning Branch, Archeology & Historic Preservation Section  
CITY, TOWN: Raleigh  
STATE: North Carolina

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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

Asheville is located in the mountainous far western section of North Carolina in the intermontane valley of the French Broad River, just north of its confluence with the Swannanoa River. The older portion of the city, including the central business district, is wedged between the French Broad on the west and Beaucatcher Mountain on the east, part of the Blue Ridge escarpment.

The central business district is located on a series of hills and ridges interrupted by north/south valleys. The backbone of the hills runs east/west along the line of Patton Avenue, dipping slightly at its intersection with Lexington Avenue, then rising again at the foot of the Grove Arcade before sloping to the river. The high point of the area, 2238 feet, is located at the intersection of Battle Square and Page Avenue, the former location of a hill called Battery Porter. South of this elevation are north/south ridges at Church Street and west of Asheland Avenue.

A deep ravine at Valley Street, sloping to the south, cuts the central business district from the residential area at the foot of Beaucatcher Mountain. Another ravine contains S. Lexington Avenue, and the deepest ravine, partially filled, contains Coxe Avenue. On the north side of Patton Avenue the ground slopes sharply downhill to the freeway in a valley containing Broadway, and North Lexington and Rankin Avenues.

The effect of this diversity of elevations is to make possible a variety of dramatic vistas, to concentrate large buildings on high points and to produce the effect of a core of tall skyscrapers with relatively low structures. These elements, together with narrow, sometimes winding downtown streets, occasional high densities and generally even facade lines, produce an effect not unlike the entirety of European hill towns.

A variety of densities and building relationships may be found in the Multiple Resource Area. The predominant relationship is that of the traditional urban core: compactly-built blocks of medium and high-rise commercial buildings erected directly on and oriented toward the major streets. Between these structures and in the less dense fringes of the core are modern low-rise commercial buildings, used car lots and parking areas. Also at the fringes of the core are, particularly along Coxe Avenue, centripetally-designed auto showrooms, warehouses and garages, designed for dense development that never materialized. Today, the Multiple Resource Area is a mix of approximately 10 percent residential, 5 percent industrial, 15 percent institutional and religious and 70 percent commercial building uses.

To the northeast of the central core is an area that has been largely cleared through urban renewal, leaving only a few key institutions. The new buildings erected in the area have been largely low and moderate rise structures with large setbacks and in low density.

The few surviving residential clusters in the area are located in a triangle between Church Street and Ravenscroft Drive, where they have been sheltered from commercial development by the institutions along Church Street, and in the southwest corner of the area at the fringe of the residential neighborhoods beyond. Virtually all of the residential fabric that once carried right to the edge of the commercial districts has been destroyed, and in many cases replaced with prefabricated commercial

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

buildings or nothing at all. A few scattered houses remain.

The street plan of the central business district is largely ad hoc. The earliest road, Main Street, followed the route of an old Indian trail. Subsequent thoroughfares have been carried out on a grid plan considerably modified by the requirements of the uneven topography. At various times roads have been widened and extended in an attempt to deal with the problems of the street system. Today, College Street and Patton Avenue are the main east/west avenues within the downtown. Broadway and Biltmore Avenue are the principal north/south streets, although N. Lexington Avenue and Charlotte Street carry considerable traffic to the north and Valley Street and Coxe Avenue to the south of Patton Avenue.

By far the greater part of the open space in downtown is inadvertent--parking lots and empty land--but there are two small park areas within the Multiple Resource area. Pritchard Park, a small triangle of land bounded by Patton Avenue, Haywood Street and College Street was the former site of the first Federal building in Asheville and now serves as a landscaped vest-pocket park and bus stop. Because of the wall-like enclosure of the surrounding street fronts, at an important juncture, this small park area has become a significant public place. The other park area is Pack Square and the adjoining City-County Plaza. Pack Square is the oldest public space in the city, having been established as a public square and site for the county courthouse in the early nineteenth century. The square itself has gone through numerous transformations in nature and size. Since the turn of the century the non-paved portion has been steadily whittled down to the point at which it now serves mainly as a traffic island and base for the Pack Monument. Before 1903 the east end of the square was dominated by a succession of county courthouses. In that year a new courthouse was built on College Street beyond the square, opening a vista through the square completely to Market Street. In the 1920s a new city hall and county courthouse were constructed, the previous buildings torn down, and the City-County Plaza connected directly with Pack Square, although at a lower elevation.

A limited number of pre-1900 structures remain in the Multiple Resource area. Documentary prints and photographs indicate that from 1850 to 1900 the residential portion of downtown was composed largely of a mixture of brick and frame houses in Greek Revival, Cottage Gothic, eclectic Victorian and, later, Queen Anne styles. Commercial buildings were of brick in Greek Revival, Italianate and, later, Romanesque Revival and eclectic Victorian styles. A sampling of both residential and commercial architecture remains.

The oldest structure surviving in the area is the former Ravenscroft School building at 29 Ravenscroft Drive. Built as a residence, it appears in an 1851 bird's eye view of the city. While the general design of the brick house is apparently derived from a plate for "A Cottage in the Italian or Tuscan Style" printed in the 1842 edition of A. J. Downing's Cottage Residences, Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening, in

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

the more conservative atmosphere of Asheville the detailing of the house was converted to an academic Greek Doric.

Only a few, scattered late-nineteenth century residences remain in the area, chiefly the Thomas Wolfe House (early 1880s) at 48 North Spruce Street, the George Mears House (early 1880s) at 137 Biltmore Avenue, and Schoenberger Hall (1888) at 60 Ravenscroft Drive. The Wolfe House is a pleasing, two-story, white, frame Queen Anne style residence with patterned slate shingle roof, bracketed cornice and windows framed with colored glass. A piece of the late-nineteenth century Belgian block street has been preserved in front of the house. The Mears House is a large, brick Queen Anne style residence two and a half stories tall with a dormered, slate-shingled mansard roof with bracketed cornice. The house has two gabled bays, one hooded, and a broad veranda with turned supports. Schoenberger Hall, built to house the Ravenscroft training school and associated missions, is a two-story brick residence with a slate-shingled gable and mansard roof and a large veranda with Eastlake details. A greater number of late nineteenth century commercial buildings survive. These are fairly representative examples of the breadth of commercial building in the downtown in the last two decades of the century. All are brick masonry buildings, two to four stories tall, with elaborate detailing in corbelled brick, pressed sheetmetal, terra cotta, or rock-faced limestone. Stylistically, commercial structures in the 1880s and 1890s in the downtown were variants or mixtures of Italianate, Second Empire, Romanesque Revival or eclectic Victorian styles. Among the earliest of these is the Grand Central Hotel Annex (ca. 1885) at the southwest corner of Patton and South Lexington Avenues. The Grand Central Hotel stood across the street on the lot now occupied by Kress's and the two structures were joined by an iron bridge over Patton Avenue. Like the main hotel, the Second Empire Style brick Annex has a slate mansard roof, the corner of which was once topped by a truncated pyramidal tower. The <sup>hoodmoldings of the</sup> segmental-arched windows on the front elevation have ~~hoodmoldings~~ and cornice brackets expressed in a French Neo-Grec style. <sup>the</sup> <sup>are</sup>

At the other end of the block at 44 Patton Avenue is the Sondley Building (1891-ca. 1900), erected for attorney Foster A. Sondley and designed by Asheville architect A. L. Melton. <sup>1</sup> Three-story, round-arched bays on the street elevations are divided by iron mullion columns and have rich, terra cotta spandrel panels.

The finest late-nineteenth century structure in the area is the Drhumor Building at 48 Patton Avenue, on the corner opposite the Sondley Building. This four-story brick with rock-faced limestone trim commercial/office building of 1895, also designed by A. L. Milton, is perhaps the best commercial example of the Romanesque Revival in Western North Carolina. <sup>2</sup> Its most striking feature is a high-relief limestone frieze on the first floor luxuriantly carved with the British royal lion, visages of men and women, putti, angels, shells, mermaids and other natural and mythological elements. Paired columns on pedestals with Byzantine foliate carved capitals support the frieze. A compatible limestone frontispiece was added to the building in the 1920s, at which time the cylindrical corner crenellated tower was probably removed.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

The most intact group of late-nineteenth century commercial buildings in the downtown is located at the southwest corner of Pack Square. 1 Biltmore Avenue, at the corner of the square and Biltmore Avenue, is a three-story brick commercial block with a projecting corbelled brick cornice that once sported gabled parapets over the entrances on the corner and east sides. The first floor piers are rockfaced sandstone, while the corner entrance has a terra cotta Romanesque Revival door surround.

Next to 1 Biltmore Avenue is the former Western Hotel, possibly an 1880s structure renovated in the 1890s. The three-story brick structure has an elaborate eclectic sheetmetal cornice and pedimented window lintels.

The other two buildings in the row are 7 Pack Square Southwest, a four-story Romanesque Revival brick commercial building with Roman-arched windows and rock-faced string courses, and 5 Pack Square Southwest, a three-story brick Romanesque Revival commercial building with embellished terra cotta inserts and string courses. Both buildings date from the 1890s.

A single late-nineteenth century church survives in the area, the brick First Presbyterian Church at the northeast corner of Church and Aston Streets. Its 1884-85 brick Gothic Revival sanctuary and steeple have been added to several times, but the original sections retain their deep, corbelled cornices, hoodmolded windows and blind arcading at the eaves. Elements of another late-nineteenth century church, a Christian Church, may be seen across the street above the rooftop of the Swannanoa Laundry, one of a succession of laundries which have completely swallowed the building.

The other surviving late-nineteenth century institutional building in downtown is the Young Men's Institute building of 1892 at the northwest corner of South Market and Eagle Streets. The architect of the two-story brick and pebbledash Tudor Cottage style building was Richard Sharp Smith (1852-1924) an immigrant Englishman who was<sup>3</sup> serving as architect-in-residence for R. M. Hunt's office on the Biltmore mansion.

Having taken up permanent residence in Asheville, Smith became the dominant architect in the city in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Schooled in the strong engineering tradition of English architectural education, he introduced the use of reinforced concrete as a structural framework for downtown buildings as early as 1909, when the Legal Building was erected on Pack Square. Stylistically, his building designs during this period were eclectic, mainly in the manner of Renaissance Italian palazzi combined with Mission style and Tudor Cottage style elements. A number were of reinforced concrete with stuccoed skins and all had a strong emphasis on vertical and horizontal strips of windows. This was in contrast to the heavy brick Italianate and Romanesque Revival styles popular only a few years before, styles which reflected the buildings' structural reliance on brick and stone masonry.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1940	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Real Estate Development
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Asheville multiple resource area covers the urban business and institutional heart of the largest city in western North Carolina, a traditional regional focus for commerce and historically a nationally known resort community.

Asheville developed swiftly as a center for convalescence, tourism and commerce following the advent of rail connections to the rest of the state in 1880. By the turn of the century the accompanying prosperity and population were reflected in a rapid reconstruction of the downtown area. This steady growth became an explosion in the 1920s when Asheville followed Florida as a major center for real estate speculation. The resultant boom transformed the downtown almost completely, adding new hotels, skyscrapers, auto showrooms, a city hall, a county courthouse, a library and a multitude of small commercial structures to the city's streets, some of which were themselves created by massive regrading of the landscape. Before the depression of the 1930s put a rapid halt to building, the downtown acquired excellent examples of Commercial Classical, Art Deco, Neo-Gothic, Neo-Romanesque, and other structures which make up perhaps the most comprehensive collection of early twentieth century urban architecture in the state, including several structures of national importance.

## Criteria Assessment:

- A. Associated with the development of an urban center for Western North Carolina, and with the wave of speculative real estate booms which were a feature of American life in the 1920s and which contributed to the coming of the 1930s depression.
- B. Associated with the early life of, and formed the setting for, the best-known novels of one of America's most noted authors, Thomas Wolfe.
- C. Embodies in unusual quality and concentration the distinctive characteristics of American commercial and institutional architecture in the first third of the twentieth century, including a significant collection of Art Deco as well as eclectic and classical buildings.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Allen, Martha Norburn. Asheville and Land of the Sky. Charlotte: Heritage House, 1960.  
The Arcade Building. Publication of unknown origin. North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library.
- Arthur, John Preston. Western North Carolina: A History. Raleigh: Buncombe Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1914.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY See District and Survey Forms  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	35,919,3,0	3,914,015,6,0	B	1,7	35,918,8,0	3,913,817,4,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,7	35,822,8,0	3,913,817,4,0	D	1,7	35,813,2,0	3,914,015,6,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Downtown Asheville Multiple Resource District begins at the intersection of Interstate 240 and Charlotte Street. It then travels south along Charlotte Street to its intersection with Woodfin Street, then east along Woodfin Street to the northeast corner property lines of 159 Woodfin Street. It then travels south and west along the property lines of 159 Woodfin to where the line intersects with Charlotte Street. From there it follows Charlotte Street to its intersection with College Street. It follows College Street west to its intersection with Valley Street, then southwest along Valley Street

### 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: Description prepared by David R. Black, Survey & Planning Branch; Archeological component prepared by John W. Clauser, Archeology Branch; Significance prepared by Jim Sumner, Research Branch, and David R. Black, John W. Clauser

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives & History

STREET & NUMBER: 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh

DATE: [blank]

TELEPHONE: (919) 733-4763

STATE: North Carolina 27611

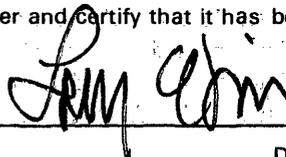
# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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



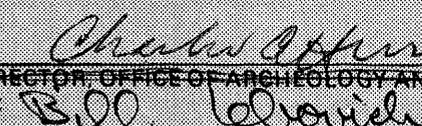
TITLE: State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE: September 14, 1978

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:   
 B.O. Clowish  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: 7-26-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: April 26, 1979