(N/A) NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SOUTH CAROLINA INVENTORY FORM FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES IN A MULTIPLE PROPERTY SUBMISSION

NAME OF MULTIPLE PROPERTY SUBMISSION: City of Laurens Multiple Resource Area

PREFERRED NAME OF PROPERTY: Charles H. Duckett House

HISTORIC NAME(s) OF PROPERTY: Charles H. Duckett House

COMMON NAMES(s) OF PROPERTY: Duckett House

LOCATION: 105 Downs Street

CLASSIFICATION: Building

OWNER: Lucy S. Dial Habenicht
806 West Main Street
Laurens, S. C. 29360

DESCRIPTION

The Charles H. Duckett House is a vernacular, one-story, frame residence with a partial basement. Built ca. 1892, the L-shaped house has a low-pitch, hip roof of standing seam metal and a boxed cornice. The exterior is sheathed in beaded weatherboarding, accented by corner pilasters and a water table. Window openings appear to be original, but the sash date from ca. 1930. The foundation is of brick piers. A two-room basement is enclosed by stuccoed brick and board-and-batten walls. The facade (east elevation) is three bays wide, with a projecting ell forming the northernmost bay. A hip-roof porch extends across the remainder of the facade and along the south elevation. The porch is characterized by sawn and pierced supports and balustrade. The main entrance has a single door of Eastlake design and a transom. Another door with transom provides access between the porch and the front ell. The interior has a central hall and five rooms on the main floor; the dining room and kitchen are located in the basement. The hall has plaster walls, wainscoting, and a paneled ceiling. Other rooms have plaster walls, carved mantels, and picture mouldings. Some windows and doors have carved surrounds with corner blocks. The southeast room has a mantel with bull's-eye medallion, mirror, and chamfered posts; paneled ceiling; and wainscoting. A sun porch has been added to the rear. A steep, narrow staircase in the hall leads to the kitchen and dining room. The dining room has a built-in china cabinet; simple, Greek revival mantel; and paneled ceiling. The Duckett House is located off West Main Street in a residential neighborhood which has been associated with the black community of

Laurens since its development. The front yard is enclosed by an ornamental, rock wall with curved entrance. Because of the sloping lot, the basement appears as a full story in the rear. A three-car, frame garage is located in the back yard. The Charles H. Duckett House has had few alterations and retains integrity from the time of Mr. Duckett's residence.

SIGNIFICANCE

AREA(s) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Black History, Commerce

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: L (for office use only)

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Charles H. Duckett House is significant to the areas of architecture, black history, and commerce for its association with Charlie Duckett (1860-1947), a prominent black Laurens businessman. Mr. Duckett built the house ca. 1892 as his private residence and continued to live there for the rest of his life. He was a carpenter, contractor, and lumber dealer in Laurens during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was highly respected by citizens of both races. Local residents recall that Mr. Duckett owned the only lumber yard in the city for a long time, and an obituary stated that, "for many years he was credited with being the only Negro in the southern states who operated a retail lumber business." In addition to the lumber yard, Mr. Duckett operated a funeral home. He took an active part in the civic affairs of Laurens and in the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The local newspaper published a lengthy obituary on its editorial page at the time of his death, in which he was called, "the city's most outstanding colored citizen."[1] The Duckett House is architecturally outstanding in the local black community for its level of ornamentation. Distinctive features include sawn and perforated porch details, paneled ceilings, ornate mantels, wainscoting, carved door and window surrounds, and Eastlake front door. The house remained in the Duckett family until 1975, when it was purchased by the present owner[2]. It has since been used for rental purposes. Charles H. Duckett's productive life extended from the 1880s into the 1940s, but because sufficient time has elapsed to assess his early contributions to the local business community and the black community, the fifty-year exclusion should not apply in this case. In addition, the building is worthy of recognition for its architectural significance.

ACREAGE: Less than one acre.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The boundary of the Charles H. Duckett House nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying City of Laurens zoning map, which is drawn at a scale of 800 feet to the inch. The nominated property includes the historic house and garage, and the lot on which they are situated.

QUAD NAME: Laurens South

QUAD SCALE: 1:24000

UTM REFERENCE POINT(s): 17/405578/3817455

OTHER INFORMATION: N/A

FOOTNOTES

[1]Interview with W. R. (Bob) McCuen, Jr., Laurens, S. C., 18 July 1984; Interview with Mrs. Darling A. (Ethel) McDaniel, Laurens, S. C., 1 November 1979; Laurens Advertiser, 3 April 1947.

[2]Book 208, p. 412, Laurens County Deeds, Laurens County Courthouse, Laurens, S. C.