

The Home of Mrs. Hansford Sams, Senior

Martha Brown

The Home of Mrs. Hansford Sams, Senior

There is a house located at 312 South Candler Road about which I am asking three questions: what was the original setting in which the house appeared, what is the architecture of the home, and how does it fit in with its present surroundings.

One of the sources I used for my project was a map made in the 1830's. At this time the home was owned by the architect, Mr. Bucher Scott. Bucher Scott was the only son, and one of four children, of Col. George Washington Scott who founded Agnes Scott College. Col. Scott was the owner of a great deal of property in Decatur at this time. There were several homes scattered around the area; however, there were never any business buildings on this particular road. Across the street were a few homes, but they became incorporated within the Agnes Scott boundaries. These boundaries were McDonough Street, Dougherty Street, Railroad Avenue (College Ave.), and Candler Road. Now there are a few privately-owned homes immediately across the street and in the direction of the Square.¹

The owner now is Mrs. Hansford Sams, Senior. She is the daughter of George Bucher Scott. The home was built by her father in 1875, and he lived there until he died in 1919. He was the head of Scottdale Mills. Additionally, he owned a farm of approximately hundred and seventy acres on which this home was built. The land extended back to the front of what is now the Methodist Children's Home on Columbia Drive - it was Flat Shoals Road. Mr. Scott

Scott had married a Winn, and in 1910, a road was laid out, in dirt form only, and he named it Winnona Drive.

At this time there were no water lines, so a large pump house was built behind the house enclosing the spring.

When water became available, the pump house was converted into a home for the old negro man who helped work the farm. He is still living, and is ninety-seven years old.

Next door was a large greenhouse. Next to this greenhouse, Wilton A. Candler built his home in 1876. In

1896, Lloyd Parkes of Parkes-Chambers built a home ~~for~~ a

later bought by
Chas W.
Mr. McKinney, Sr.

1
The house is made of wood and painted white with dark, green shutters and now has a slate roof. It consists of three stories, one of which is now used for storage. This does not include the bottom story which contains garages and a tool shed. As you walk in the door, there is a large entrance hall at the end of which is a large stairway. On the immediate left is a sitting room similar in size to the one across the hall. All the rooms on the first floor have fifteen or eighteen foot ceilings. On the upper floors, the rooms are smaller in height. The back part of the first floor consists of a dining room and the kitchen. I wasn't informed about the arrangement upstairs other than that there were bedrooms.3

On the exterior, on the right hand side as you face the house is an eight to ten foot veranda that stretches from the front door all the way around the side. Around

this porch is a balustrade almost two feet in height. The whole house is elevated from the ground by a three foot brick foundation. On the right there is a break from the total frame of the house by the formation of a rounded, extended corner of the veranda. It is also at this point that the colonnaded portion of the porch ends. The colonnaded frame appears again on the rear, right side of the home.

On the left hand side of the front door is a convex series of three windows. On the left hand side, the first floor level is stamped with many windows including one which is oval in shape and one double set of windows framed with columns and a balcony. To the rear of the house is a screened-in porch.

The second floor of the house is easily confused with the third floor. On the front, you would assume there are only two floors. The two sides of the facade are outstandingly framed under miniature gambrel rooves. Again the windows on the left side are a convex series of three. In between these two sides is a small, slender, gabled window. The upper levels of the house on the sides are not clearly set off one from another. Different levels jut out for an approximate five foot stretch and end, but these are asymmetrical and not regular in formation. Gabled windows appear sporadically. Also on the left hand side of the home, one will note that the framed balcony of the windows on the first floor is repeated immediately above it and that this double formation is

arranged under a roofing similar to that appearing on the front of the home. That to which I refer is the gambrel roof.

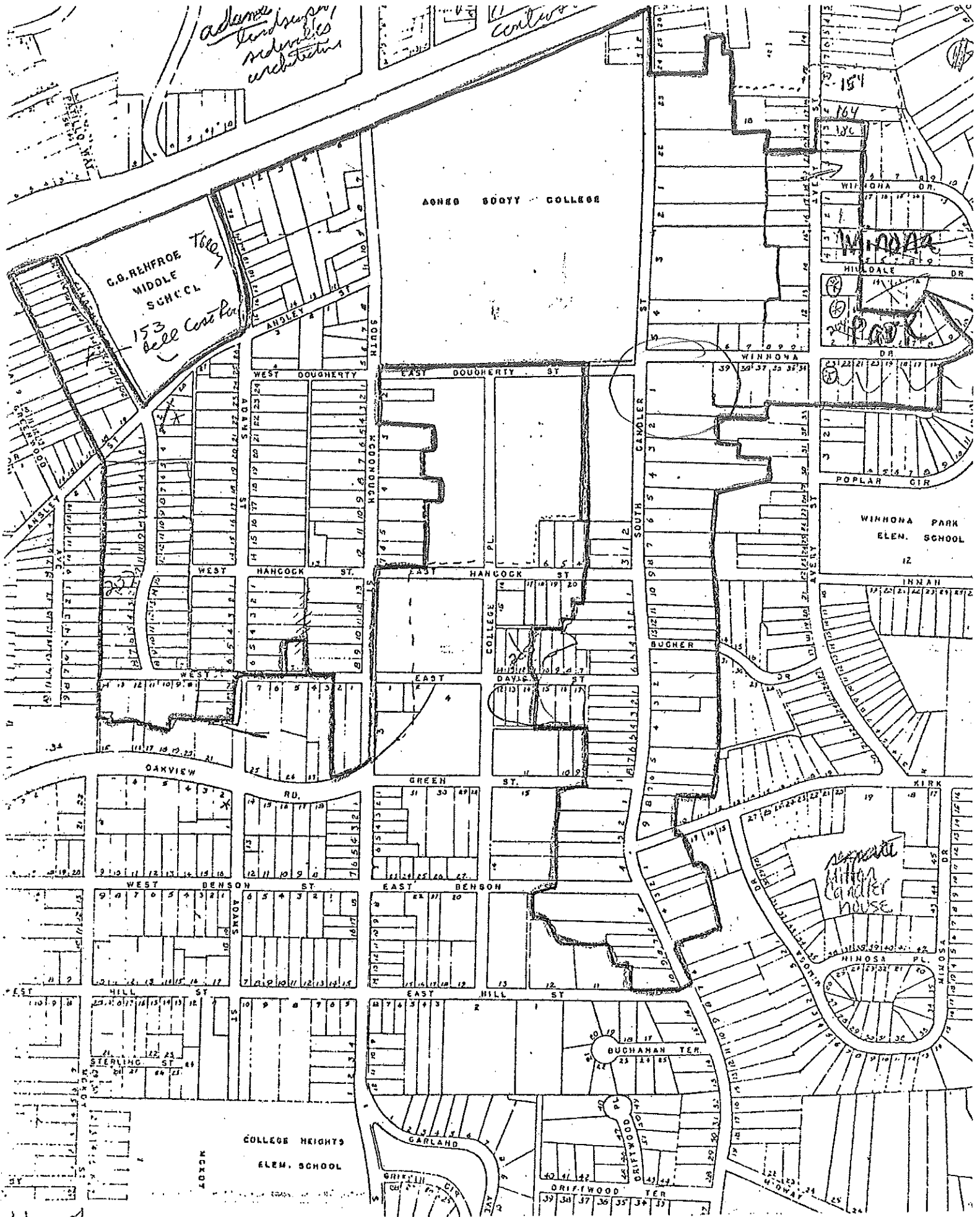
The detailing of the house is of particular interest. According to the great granddaughter of the architect, the house is a combination of Gingerbread and Queen Anne architectures. Queen Anne architecture in its original and purest form consisted of a uniting of free composition and classic detail.⁴ In general, one may find a mixing and matching of styles so prevalent here in Georgia from the 1850's to the 1880's.⁵ The dormer and gabled windows and the gambrels themselves all contain a small pediment. Within each of these pediments is a highly decorative fleur-de-lis. Much of the surface has been embellished with the Gingerbread characteristics. These include the frilly, additional touches that would cause one to judge the house a combination of Queen Anne and Gingerbread architectures. Even the front door is modestly decorated with a frosted glass covering the upper half of the door. It is framed by pilasters and a rounded arch. The capitals of the columns are also highly decorated, but it is not the decoration of a Corinthian column. Rather it is a decoration placed at the meeting of the four sides of capital consisting of a scroll of flowers. The overall or prevailing impression one gets when viewing the house is that it is a good example of picturesque eclecticism.

The homes in the surrounding area are for the most

part very old. This house is among, if not the, oldest in the neighborhood. The only ones which may be older are the two or three which are next door, as you go in the direction leading away from the Square. The other homes were built generally around the twenties. Of course some of the homes are ones which have gone up after tearing down the original homes. There are still no businesses in the immediate vicinity. The closest one is "Pizza by Candlelight," on the corner of College Avenue and Candler Road. The McKinney home is still there. Moreover, the original greenhouse was bricked up and Scott Candler, Junior lived there until two years ago.⁶ The whole area around Agnes Scott College is worth investigating inasmuch as it is a vast area of Decatur history.

References

1. "History of Doocatur" - a file in the Bethel Historical Society.
2. Mr. Scott Candler, Senior supplied me with this information by way of the help of Mr. Walter McCurdy, Junior on February 22, 1970.
3. Mrs. Hansford Sams daughter told me this much about the house on January 26, 1970.
4. Shaylor, Montgomery, American Architecture. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961. pp. 452-487.
5. Mrs. Lyon.
6. Mr. Scott Candler, loc. cit.



Map 1

→ proposed historic district

JUNE 1973