

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

PART 1 - EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Property name Thayer-Lynah House NPS Project Number _____
 Property address 110 Ashley Avenue, Charleston SC 29401

5. Description of physical appearance

110 Ashley Avenue stands on the corner of Ashley Avenue and Bull Streets, with Wasbee Range (originally Bee Range), a short public alley, forming the south property line. The west-facing house extends almost to the rear property line, with its south piazza overlooking a wide side yard. The layout of the property is quite different from the typical pattern of a narrow frontage with deep back yard, and the floorplan is more complicated than Charleston's single and double houses, but in material and design the house reflects a conservative architectural tradition.

The frame building clad in weatherboard siding rests on a foundation of low brick piers, and has a shallow-pitched hipped roof with standing seam metal roofing. The principal west façade is three bays wide, and has a rounded-arched entry opening with its gabled portico hood supported by console brackets. A two-bay wide north wing is set back from the main façade.

A two-tier piazza with Tuscan columns and turned balustrades at both levels extends along the south elevation to a one-bay deep rear T-wing. Openings to the piazza are French doors. Single window openings at the other elevations have 2/2 wood sash. There are four brick interior chimneys.

The interior of 110 Ashley Avenue features a wide stair hall passage with double parlors to the south, a den or dining room in the north wing, and small parlors or workrooms in the rear extensions. Fireplaces were originally fitted with coal grates; those in the first-floor parlors have marble mantels. There are deep molded cornices and baseboards throughout, and paneled wood wainscots beneath the windows. Wall and ceiling finishes are plaster or drywall.

There have been few alterations to plan and materials. Kitchen and bathrooms have been installed in back rooms and closets.

Date of construction ca. 1881 Source of date Deeds and maps
 Date(s) of alteration(s) _____ Source of date _____
 Has building been moved? ☒ no ☐ yes, specify date _____

6. Statement of significance

110 Ashley Avenue is a good example of Charleston's late-nineteenth century residential architecture. The ca. 1881 frame building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and contributes to the significance of the Charleston Historic District.

A two-story frame outbuilding at the south side of the property seems to have been built at the same time as the house, probably as work/storage space (maybe a stable) with servant's quarters above. It was later converted into an automobile garage, and has been remodeled several times. It does not retain integrity of design or material, and is not a contributing structure to the district.

Historical background

110 Ashley Avenue was built ca. 1881 on a lot that had been part of the large parcel where Mrs. Sarah Smith built four townhouses, 101-107 Bull Street, in the mid-1850s. To access those buildings from the south, she also laid out the short alley that became known as Bee Range (today's Wasbee Range). In 1863, Wellington Stevenson, a Charleston merchant, bought the wide lot between Ashley Avenue, Bull Street, and the alley. Stevenson relocated to the Augusta/Aiken area after the Civil War, and sold the lot to Francis J. Pelzer of Charleston in 1875. Pelzer held the property for several years, then sold it to William Thayer, a 60-year old businessman and City Council member. Thayer built a spacious dwelling house for himself, his wife Eliza, and their young son Edwin.

Mrs. Thayer and Edwin remained on Ashley Avenue (then known as Lynch Street) after William Thayer's death in 1885. Edwin Thayer married in 1894, and began his career as a Baptist minister in Ridge Spring in 1895. His mother left Charleston to live with her son and his wife, and sold the house at 110 Ashley Avenue to Arthur Lynah. The Lynah family kept it as their home until after World War I.

7. Photographs and maps. Send photographs and map with application.