

*Wright, Cox, and Smith*

PRELIMINARY ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OVERVIEW  
OF THE THREE BLOCKS OF OREGON HILL CONTAINED  
BY BELVIDERE, CUMBERLAND, S. CHERRY AND CARY STREET

We have visited the three block area of the Oregon Hill neighborhood bounded by Belvidere Street on the east, Cumberland Street on the south, Cherry Street on the west and Cary Street on the north. As you requested we have walked the area to evaluate the existing structures for their architectural significance. In making the evaluation it should be noted that Oregon Hill's architectural significance is based more on the sociological factors of its origin and existence. The structures as individual pieces of architecture with some exceptions are not of architectural significance - however, as an example of housing developed for the workers of the tredegar iron works between approximately 1838 and 1850 the entire Oregon Hill neighborhood is significant.

This particular three block area has been severed from the main area of Oregon Hill by the downtown expressway. It is on the northern edge of the original neighborhood and contains some structures which in general are of a different character and vintage than most of Oregon Hill. Many houses in this three block area have over the years been lost to parking lots and commercial endeavors.

The residences that remain are varied in quality and in construction materials and are in varying degrees of repair. Some have been or are being renovated and some are in complete disrepair.

Some interesting elements of these three blocks are the mixture of brick masonry buildings similar to some fan district houses and the wood structures which may be of more significance in the framework of the typical Oregon Hill residence. The wood scroll work and iron work on some of the existing porches are examples of the craftsmanship of the era.

Cary Street is in the most part made up of commercial establishments in structures which are not my view typical of the rest of Oregon Hill. The evaluation of Cary Street must be different from the rest of the area. On Cary Street houses or structures should be judged by the architectural or historic significance of individual structures rather than their relationship to the whole of Oregon Hill.

In summary the architecture of this three block area is, with a few exceptions, not significant. However, the structures which we can identify as significant and the details of other structures should be recognized in any development of this area for any other purpose.

The following is a block by block review of the structures for architectural character. No structural evaluation has been made. The numbers refer to the photographs of the block faces contained in this preliminary overview.

Block I - The block contained by Belvidere, Cumberland, S. Pine and Cary Street

- A. Belvidere - This block face has no architecturally significant structures.
- B. Cumberland - (See S. Pine Street).
- C. S. Pine Street - The structures which should be reviewed in more detail are the pair of houses at the South end of the Street. (1) and four houses mid block (wood detail) (2).
- D. Cary Street - Two residential scale structures remain on Cary Street. Both structures are substantial. One has a double gallery porch the other has ornate wood brackets on the porch (3).

Block II - The block contained by S. Pine, Cumberland, S. Laurel and Cary Street

- A. S. Pine Street - Two wood frame houses at the south end of Pine should be in the evaluated for significance as housing typical of Oregon Hill. (4) and (5).
- B. Cumberland - See both S. Pine and S. Laurel.
- C. S. Laurel Street - A pair of brick townhouses at the south end of Laurel Street which have very nice iron porches (6) a pair of wood frame houses mid block should be further investigated as typical residences of Oregon Hill (7).
- D. Cary Street - One house adjacent to the commercial structures at the east end of the block has a very nice iron porch (8).

Block III - The block contained by S. Laurel, Cumberland, S. Cherry and Cary Street.

- A. S. Laurel - One house mid block while not typical of the neighborhood has very nice proportions this structure is free standing and has parking lots on both the north and south side (9). Four wood frame houses at the south end of the street should be evaluated as typical structures of the Oregon Hill neighborhood (10).
- B. Cumberland - See S. Laurel.
- C. S. Cherry - The character of the wood-work on the porches of a number of these houses is very interesting the houses themselves are quite plain and ordinary (11) (12) (13) (14).
- D. Cary Street - One house has an interesting wood porch (15).





































