

Preservation PROGRESS

FOR THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF CHARLESTON



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THE EVOLUTION OF ARCHITECTURAL PAINT ANALYSIS

Berkeley County's Historic Pompion Hill Chapel of Ease, c. 1757

P r e s e r v i n g t h e P a s t f o r t h e F u t u r e



Cynthia Cole Jenkins

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The preservation community and the City of Charleston are about to embark on an important study vital to the future of our community – the development of a new Historic Preservation Plan that will establish the framework for preservation planning in the coming years. The firm chosen to perform this task is Page & Turnbull, a company specializing in preservation and strategic urban planning headquartered in San Francisco, California.

This new Historic Preservation Plan will provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of preservation in our city, identify new and emerging preservation issues, develop a consensus of goals and strategies for the future, and even extend this view to evolving portions of the City (outside the lower peninsula) that have not yet been analyzed in a preservation context.

It has been 32 years since the current Historic Preservation Plan was adopted. Clearly the issues facing the preservation community, the laws affecting historic preservation, and the type and pace of development have all changed drastically since the present plan was drafted in 1974. Since then we have been challenged constantly by the tremendous growth that a booming economy and tourism have brought to our fragile built environment.

The urban environment is constantly changing; our historic city is dynamic and should address that values in preservation evolve over time – just as do architectural styles and trends. Planning is crucial to the process of keeping our preservation legislation timely and effective. Indeed, planning has been part of the preservation movement's history from the very beginning.

On October 19, 1931, Charleston City Council ratified the first Historic Zoning Ordinance in America. By the November 1, 1931 issue of the New York Times Magazine, our landmark ordinance had found a national audience. Their article entitled "The City That Lives As a Monument" said in part:

"While other American cities have zoning laws designed to conserve light, air, and the public health and comfort, and to preserve residential sections from the invasion of businesses Charleston has just set up a zoning arrangement designed to preserve that distinctive quality in the old South Carolina city which is its historic heritage and which is now recognized as one of the principal assets of the town."

Since 1932, scores of other American cities adopted for themselves the identical preservation plan or very similar protections using as their model what became known as "the Charleston ordinance" or the "Charleston Plan."

It is significant to note how important the role of planning was in Charleston's adoption of this landmark ordinance. As early as 1925, Susan Pringle Frost urged Mayor Thomas P. Stoney to develop safeguards to protect the city's architectural fabric.

It's worth noting that the city recognized the need for professional help and in 1930 engaged the Morris Knowles firm of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to draft a comprehensive zoning ordinance. The cost was \$10,000, a staggering amount of money for the city to commit at the depth of The Great Depression.

In 1940, Robert N. S. Whitelaw, Director of the Carolina Art Association, formulated the idea of a comprehensive survey and inventory of Charleston's historic buildings. He did this because – groundbreaking as it was – the 1931 Ordinance concerned only one small section of Charleston and the Board of Architectural Review (it created) had no power to regulate in any way the growth of the surrounding city. This was insightful recognition that an evolving city needed continuous planning.

Nationally recognized planner, Fredrick Law Olmsted, Jr. agreed to consider the planning issues facing the city but he did not feel he could take on the painstaking detail work of the actual survey. Whitelaw's guiding advice to Olmsted was that no one in Charleston was seeking to establish a "museum piece" and that the city was not to be "a Williamsburg."

The survey was carried out by a local steering committee using guidelines furnished in Mr. Olmsted's report. Samuel Stoney, Albert Simons, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith, and Helen McCormack comprised the "survey team"

Director's Letter continues on page 5.



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The Preservation Society of Charleston was founded in 1920 with its purpose being to cultivate and encourage interest in the preservation of buildings, sites and structures of historical or aesthetic significance and to take whatever steps may be necessary and feasible to prevent the destruction or defacement of any such building, site or structure, such purposes being solely eleemosynary and not for profit.

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The Preservation Society of Charleston
 Post Office Box 521, Charleston, South Carolina 29402

Phone: (843) 722-4630 Fax: (843) 723-4381

Email: preserve@preservationsociety.org

Website: www.preservationsociety.org



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LINING HOUSE FINDS NEW ROLE

It's always gratifying when a much-loved child ventures out from under the protective cover of hearth and home and makes good in the big, bad, "outside" world. It's not so very different, really, when an historic restoration finds a new and practical role to play in the contemporary community now surrounding it. Such is the story of the (c.1715) Lining House, 106 Broad Street, which was heroically rescued by the Preservation Society in the early 1960s. The two and a half story, wood-framed house, considered by many to be the oldest frame structure of its kind in Charleston, has played many roles in the almost 300 years since it was built. As one of the oldest buildings in Charleston, the Lining House has always presented a commanding architectural presence along one of the oldest, most historic streets in America.

Earliest records still in existence which make reference to the house indicate a 1715 transfer of title to a Wm. Harvey who had apparently been renting the property prior to its sale. Later records show that shortly afterwards, 106 Broad Street was owned by the Hill family, of nearby Hillsborough Plantation. Their ownership continued for the next twenty years.

Dr. John Lining, a young physician who immigrated to Charleston from Scotland in 1730, was married to Sarah Hill in 1739. It is not known if the couple actually set up housekeeping in the town house of the bride's family or not, but it is John Lining's name that will forever be associated with the house. Here's why:

About the time of his marriage, Dr. Lining was frustrated by his inability to offer any medical remedy for the terrible epidemics of smallpox, whooping cough, and yellow fever which frequently swept through the colony with deadly consequences for many sufferers.

As a man interested in science, he was convinced that a logical connection existed between South Carolina's semi-tropical weather and these bouts of dreaded disease. Thus, he began to record scientific observations of the local climate from a make-shift "laboratory" in the house at 106 Broad Street. In particular, he was concerned with measuring the affects of the elements on the human body. He shared his meticulous findings through regular correspondence with a fellow scientist in Philadelphia – the young Benjamin Franklin. Eventually, the impressive weather observations he measured and recorded were published in England. The studies appeared in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (of London) in 1742-43. Dr. Lining's work at 106 Broad Street was one of the important steps forward in the 18th century's "Age of Reason" – contributing to the growing body of knowledge that would eventually save countless lives not only in Charleston but



The (c. 1715) Lining House as it appeared in 1960 prior to the Society's comprehensive restoration.

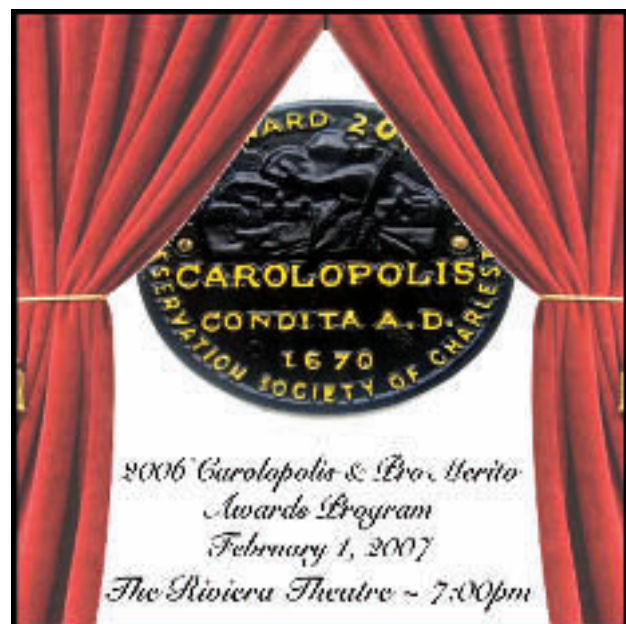
around the world,

For the decade between 1783 and 1793 the Lining House was the home of *The Gazette* of the State of South Carolina, one of America's earliest newspapers. Its publisher was Mrs. Ann Timothy. Much of the news relating to the building of Charleston and South Carolina's statehood was first set in type for public dissemination (and recorded for posterity) within the Lining House walls. Later, it housed the apothecary shop of Dr. Andrew Turnbull, the first of several owners who dispensed medicinal drugs and health-related supplies from this convenient location. Charlestonians of a certain age may recall the house during the years before its restoration when it served as a corner drug store with a "modernized" facade of large glass windows and a jumble of gaudy advertising signs.

Over time, the changing tides of fortune effectively blurred the significance of the Lining House as an architectural icon. Its basic maintenance was long neglected and too often completely ignored. By the early 1960s, the Lining House was nearly razed to create additional parking spaces for King and Broad Street businesses. Its restoration to its 18th century appearance was one of the most ambitious projects ever attempted by the Society. This was one of the projects that led the Society to redirect its focus from reactive "bricks and mortar" rescues to one of preservation education and broad-based preservation advocacy.

The Society's direct involvement with the Lining House ended with its being sold in the early 1970s to Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Simons to serve as a private home. But like a cherished child raised and disciplined through a rigorous education and maturation process, we have watched the house closely in recent years as, once more, changing times bring new challenges. We're gratified to know the house has been passed on to new owners who will use it responsibly for a new and different purpose. It is now the law offices of Howell Linkhous & Nettles Inc., a small law firm dealing in the function and structure of town and county governments.

The Society's Executive Director Cynthia Cole Jenkins said, "It is a 300 year-old house that has retained much of its architectural integrity despite numerous changes in use and ownership. The current use as a law firm is a low-impact adaptive use. We are pleased that the new owners are excited to have the opportunity to work in this important historic environment and I know they will be good stewards of the property." ■



The Preservation Ethic Wants to Go for a Ride

Once Upon a Time, two local preservationists (by the name of Coker) were traveling in New England visiting other like-minded preservationists when the one named Cynthia encountered a cheeky bumper sticker sponsored by our friends at the Nantucket (Massachusetts) Preservation Trust. It seems the group was mounting an awareness campaign ideally suited for a coastal town with more than a little "attitude" as to the importance of preserving historic interiors. Their well-turned phrase seemed too good not to share with a place called The Holy City, another coastal town (with attitude) a little farther down the Atlantic shore to the South.

So we extend gratitude to Mrs. Coker and the Nantucket Preservation Trust for their permission to use their slogan. The Preservation Society of Charleston now has the bumper sticker for sale in our Book & Gift Shop at 147 King Street that sums up our preservation ethic rather succinctly.

One of these bumper stickers was included in the mailing of the Society's Annual Report, but you will find more for sharing at our shop (\$1 each). Why not be proud and take your preservation ethic with you "on the road." It might enjoy the ride. ■



And Now a Word From Our Interns



Gordon McLeod at
4 Logan Street

Gordon McLeod is a senior at the College of Charleston majoring in Historic Preservation, with a minor in Applied History. This Columbia native spent the summer of 2006 with the Society researching the history of 4 Logan Street – the result of which is a 64-page document with rare, historic photographs, interviews, biographical information, floor plans and interpretation from previously archived architectural surveys.

"Interning at the Preservation Society of Charleston has clearly opened doors for my continued studies in preservation, architecture, and history. I have learned a great deal

about researching and writing on the subject of architecture – specifically its close relationship with history. My report on the (1854) Judge Edward Frost House at 4 Logan Street is a project of which I am very proud. It required a lot of intense and diligent work. The fascinating treat for me was learning so much about the Frost family, especially Susan Pringle Frost, who was the forerunner of preservation in Charleston. Her founding of the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings, now the Preservation Society, was the impetus for the preservation movement not only here, but all over the country. For this reason, she continues to be the focus of much study. Both Robert Gurley and Cynthia Jenkins have been very kind in their direction of my research and writing. I can truly say they both greatly enhanced my work during my tenure here."



Kate Joseph at the
Carolina Day Parade

Kate Joseph is currently a second year student in the Clemson and College of Charleston's Master of Science in Historic Preservation Program here in Charleston. A native of Danville, Kentucky, Ms. Joseph received a Bachelor of Arts in History from Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina in 2003. She spent the summer of 2006 with the Society assisting in the coordination of the Society's 30th Annual Fall Candlelight Tours of Homes and Gardens.

"This internship has been an incredible learning experience not only in furthering my studies in the historic preservation field

but also in having a greater understanding of the tourism industry in such a historic city. In studying numerous historic properties throughout the city, the internship gave me the opportunity to improve my research and writing skills in architectural and historical documentation. I have learned a great deal about working for a non-profit organization and fundraising and have seen first hand how much time and effort is put into planning such an important event. It has been incredible to see the hard work of employees and volunteers and the tremendous involvement and support of the public in the preservation effort. I feel so fortunate to have had this opportunity and this experience has only furthered my desire to pursue a career in historic preservation." ■



FOR HOMES THAT MADE HISTORY...Thank you.

From the Battery to the Beaches, to the Old Village of Mount Pleasant, the perseverance and pass on of the Preservation Society of Charleston are what keep our city alive and vibrant while insuring the history of our city and its buildings are kept intact. We, at Daniel Ravenel Real Estate, support the Preservation Society and highly commend them on their hard work and success in honoring the Lowcountry's material and cultural heritage. We thank you for helping Charleston, our great city, continue to be one of the most historical and preserved cities in the United States.



From The Battery to The Beaches.

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BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT:

Sally Smith



Preservation Society Board member Sally Smith explains she grew up in Westport, Connecticut, and although she spent much of her adult life living and working in the North, she's quick to add – she was born in South Carolina. That means she's “legally” a southerner. She fondly recalls enjoying delightful summers in the Columbia home of her grandparents.

Her undergraduate college days found her majoring in American Studies at the University of Delaware. She earned her Masters degree from Penn State and a Ph.D.A.B.D. from the University of Maryland, also in American Studies.

“For about a dozen years,” she says, “I lived in New York City and Philadelphia where I worked in a number of different art museums and galleries. For eighteen years, I was Executive Director of an historic house museum in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the James Buchanan home called ‘Wheatland,’ a wonderful example of America’s Federal period (1790-1820) architecture.”

In 1995, Sally moved back to South Carolina (Georgetown, specifically) having inherited historic Mansfield Plantation from her parents. Mansfield, one of the area’s most productive 18th-century rice plantations, has origins dating back to 1718, and it still includes some of the most remarkably well-preserved plantation outbuildings in the state. While living there, she converted the handsome (c. 1760) plantation house into a charming bed and breakfast country inn.

In early 2002, Sally relocated to downtown Charleston, which she describes as “a place I absolutely adore.” She and her husband, Mr. Eugene Byers, intend to spend the rest of their lives here. “I have always loved American history, art, architecture, and old buildings,” she adds. “I especially enjoy old houses as well as historic churches, jails, libraries, and even cemeteries. Working with the Preservation Society of Charleston is right up my alley and something I enjoy very much.” ■

Director's Letter continued from inside front cover.

that produced the classic 1942 edition of *This is Charleston*, published by the Carolina Art Association. For a generation or more, this book served as the principal inventory of Charleston’s architectural resources.

As development accelerates, so does the need to accelerate the urban planning process to ensure our preservation legislation keeps pace with the evolving city. We must always think of planning as an ongoing project. Just as each generation of the twentieth century faced their own challenges toward protecting our rich historic, cultural and architectural environment – we must now accept the responsibility to plan for Charleston’s future as the new millennium gets under way.

We are overdue in reestablishing guidelines and adopting contemporary planning tools to set the tone and direction of Charleston’s preservation future on a proactive basis. This is so much more desirable and effective than reactive preservation. Get involved. Attend meetings. Become participants in this important preservation opportunity.

Prior to the publication of *This is Charleston* the Carolina Art Association unveiled to the public preliminary results of their architectural survey in a fascinating photo exhibit mounted at the Gibbes Museum of Art. As patrons viewing the exhibit left the Meeting Street building, they walked past a mirror on a wall inscribed with a key question, “Who is responsible for Charleston’s future?” The unspoken answer was then, as it is now, an obvious; “We are.”

Cynthia Cole Jenkins
Executive Director

SOCIETY OFFICERS SLATED FOR THE COMING YEAR

The Nominating Committee of the Preservation Society of Charleston presents the following candidates to serve as the Society’s officers and Board of Directors for 2007. The slate will be voted upon at the Society’s Annual Meeting and Carolopolis Awards on February 1st at the Charleston Place Riviera Theatre, 227 King Street, at 7:00 p.m.

Returning Executive* Committee and Board of Directors Nominees

- * President – Mr. Steven E. Craig
- * First Vice President (Planned Giving) – Mr. Robert Prioleau
- * Second Vice President (Property) – Mrs. Lois Lane
- * Treasurer – Mr. Derrick D. DeMay
- * Recording Secretary – Mrs. Shay Evans
- * Immediate Past President – Mr. Glenn F. Keyes

Special thanks go to the members of the Society’s Nominating Committee; Chairman, Glenn Keyes; Mrs. Lynn Hanlin; Mrs. Caroline Poston; Mrs. Jane Waring; and Mrs. Janelle Othersen.

2007 Board of Directors

- Planning & Zoning – Mrs. Caroline Poston
- Fall Tours – Mr. Kevin Eberle
- Publications – Mr. Will Cook
- Membership – Mrs. Jane Locke
- Book/Gift shop – Mrs. Diane McCall
- Special Events – Mrs. Susan G. Dickson
- Markers & Awards – Mr. Jim Wigley
- At Large – Mr. Steve Dopp, Mrs. Sally Smith, and Mrs. Connie Wyrick

New nominees proposed for next year’s Board of Directors include Ms. Debbie Bordeaux, Mrs. Rebecca Gilbreth Herres, Mr. George Smythe and Mr. Steven Stewart.

Directors Emeritus

Mr. Wilson Fullbright, Mr. Norman Haft, Mrs. Jane Thornhill and Mrs. Elizabeth Jenkins Young

Additional gratitude is extended to the following members who will be retiring from the Board in January 2007: Mr. Fleetwood Hassell and Mrs. Sarah Horton.

Charles Towne Landing:

A BIRTHPLACE REBORN

By J. Michael McLaughlin

An important part of the Charleston story – its very beginning – came back into focus on August 17th with the reopening of the state historical park known as Charles Towne Landing.

We in Charleston are justifiably proud of the way we interpret our heritage to our children and visitors to the Lowcountry. But in recent years one element of Charleston's earliest days (the actual site where our founding took place) has been obscured and even made unavailable to the public. The tragedy of this is that so few historic founding sites are still accessible and ours lent such marvelous credence to our story. But after an \$8 million expenditure by the State of South Carolina (with a commitment to spend \$11 million more), Charles Towne Landing – literally Charleston's and South Carolina's birthplace – has been reborn.

Not only is the 664-acre park redesigned to enrich the educational experience for visitors of all ages, the physical contrast of today's park with the one first created more than 35 years ago dramatically shows the changes made in historic interpretation during the intervening years.

Members will recall how avant garde "Charles Towne Landing 1670" seemed when it first opened in 1970 as part of South Carolina's official Tricentennial celebration. How startlingly different it was compared to the Charleston Museum, still housed at the time in the old Thompson Auditorium built in 1899 for the Confederate Veterans' Reunion of that year. The unconventional Tricentennial park was built on the grounds of Old Town Plantation which had evolved on the same West Ashley land originally chosen by the colony's first settlers as their "permanent" Carolina home. Intended to serve as the centerpiece of the state's year-long Tricentennial celebration, the park attempted to portray the colony as it existed in the first few years of the settlement, but it also highlighted all of South Carolina's accomplishments over the intervening 300 years. This somewhat muted its colonial era focus.

One of the more successful features of the park, however, was a short film entitled, "Carolina," produced in 1969 by Carlos Romers shown in a free-standing theatre building located on the grounds. The film included a score of classical music performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra while it showed viewers grim evidence of the complexities of English life in the 1670s. Then, by sharp contrast, it illustrated the rude awakening that awaited settlers who chose to relocate here in Carolina. Filmed entirely without the use of on-screen actors, the film captured the primitive flora, fauna, and native American culture encountered here and ended with the colony's ultimate victory – retracing the line and form of Charles Towne's eventual mastery of art, law, religious expression and architecture.

The park included a small zoo featuring the native animals first encountered by the colonists and a reconstructed "settler's area" intended to portray the difficult lifestyle of the early settlement. A typical 17th century workboat, the "Adventure," allowed visitors to board a trading vessel like those used by the settlers to move goods through the Lowcountry waters. While these popular exhibits had historical merit, they required on-going staffing for maintenance and interpretation to the public – the funding for which was often inadequate or completely lacking.



A new entrance sculpture greets visitors to the park.

Less popular, perhaps, among the public spaces in the 1970s park was an odd geodesic dome cast in "mod" colors and a concession stand/gift shop – all freestanding buildings connected by trails or walkways. A noisy tram shuttled visitors from one area of the park to another while a staff driver struggled to tell the park's history above the roar of the tractor's engine.

At center stage in the Tricentennial park was a large, futuristic Pavilion sheltering abstractions of Charleston's foremost architectural icons. Among these were a miniature version of St. Michael's steeple, a colonial-era church pulpit with sounding board, a genuine Lowcountry joggling board and a huge representation of wrought iron gates opening to nowhere.

In the "hidden" basement museum under the Pavilion was an air-conditioned summary of South Carolina history entered via a spiral ramp. There, amazing interactive exhibits awaited those who found it – illuminating the many agricultural, industrial and intellectual accomplishments that sprang from these settler's first cultural seed. The Lowcountry's vast rice culture, the growing of indigo and Sea Island cotton, even the upcountry's later textile boom were there to review.

Of particular interest in this contemporary museum were the large, oval-shaped, Lucite cylinders dropping out of the ceiling like ersatz Star Trek transponders. When one stepped under each of these select "zones" hidden speakers would play looped recordings for the careful listener. One played the voices of Gullah-speaking storytellers, another played a jaunty version of "The Charleston" dance music and yet another piped in excerpts from George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess." The effect was spellbinding – when they were functioning. But alas, the basic concept of an underground museum in the swampy Lowcountry was ill

advised, and the facility proved to be leaky, prone to destructive mildew and frequent mechanical failures. Finally, the ravages of Hurricane Hugo in 1989 served to close the Pavilion permanently and afterwards the park never seemed to regain its direction and public following.

Today's visitor to Charles Towne Landing will find the old Pavilion is gone. So is the geodesic dome. In its place is a highly-styled, new Visitors Center with a clear and concise focus on the park's mission for the new millennium. Instead of dominating the landscape, the building sits at a quiet edge of the cypress swamp nestled in the foliage of the natural landscape. Its design defers to the fact that much of the original site is still pristine – today looking much like the settler's first saw it.



The old Pavilion loomed over the park like an arriving intergalactic vehicle.*

Inside the new Visitors Center are a dozen rooms recounting different aspects of the Charles Towne story ranging from the actual founding to the colony's relocation a decade later to the nearby peninsula (today's site between the Ashley and Cooper rivers). Many of the exhibits are interactive and are constructed to be accessible to children at "hands-on" level. You meet the Lords Proprietors who used the Caribbean island of Barbados (with its slave labor/plantation economy) as their model for the new colony. You view the manifest of the ships with each of the settlers' names, and you can examine their provisions for the arduous journey of several months. You even get an idea of what these people expected of this risky endeavor, and what kind of life they actually found here. You leave with a renewed respect for the many legacies the settlers left behind which are part of life in Charleston today, as well as an understanding of the problems they left for future generations to resolve. Today's interpretation is detailed enough for serious study, and yet it is enjoyable enough for children of all ages. It's all new, fresh, clean and attractive.

Best of all – Charles Towne Landing continues to be a work in progress. Archaeology is ongoing and still revealing 330-year-old mysteries awaiting discovery and analysis, telling us more about the founders, slaves, and Native Americans who lived here. Indeed, one of the best exhibits allows children to perform "digital archaeology." With a wave of their hands above an electronic representation of a "dig" site, layers of soil are progressively removed revealing artifacts left by the settlers.

The old zoo has been updated as an Animal Forest Trail of nearly a mile and displays in natural habitats the awe-inspiring bears, pumas, bison, otters and other strange wildlife encountered by the European settlers. The self-guided history trail ambles for almost a mile and a half through various sites including a typical colonial crop garden, the protective palisades rebuilt at their original locations and interpretive waysides set up for rest and reflection. As in the past, visitors to the park also enjoy the nearly 80-acres of suburban gardens preserved as part of the legacy of the Waring family, local preservationists, owners and guardians of Old Town Plantation long before a public park was ever envisioned. Their sale of this historic land to the State of South Carolina, along with the c.1840 Legare-Waring House prior to the Tricentennial, is largely why the story of South Carolina's settlement is accessible to us today.



The old wrought iron exhibit suggested the Lords Proprietors, settlers and native Americans who once lived here.*




Today's new Interpretive Center blends into the landscape while it welcomes visitors to innovative exhibits inside.

Maybe the happiest part of the reborn Charles Towne Landing is the promise of what lies ahead. It has reclaimed its focus on the story of the first decade of the settlement – allowing unborn generations of South Carolinians and new visitors from all over the world to discover even more of Charleston's founding experience as that story continues to be revealed. And in time Charles Towne Landing will take its rightful place along with living museum experiences such as Jamestown and even Colonial Williamsburg in telling the story of America's colonial adventure begun in the late 17th century.

For more on Charles Towne Landing, visit www.SouthCarolinaParks.com or write 1500 Old Towne Road, Charleston, SC 29407. For hours and admission fees, call (843) 852-4200. ■

* Archival photos of Charles Towne Landing 1670 courtesy of S.C. Dept. of Parks, Recreation & Tourism. Photo of Interpretive Center courtesy of Jay White, Liollio Architecture.




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THE EVOLUTION OF ARCHITECTURAL PAINT ANALYSIS

By Susan L. Buck, Ph.D., Conservator and Paint Analyst



The return of the exterior finish of the Aiken-Rhett House to its 1858 palette is part of an ambitious re-interpretation for this fascinating property.

Editor's Note: The feature article in this issue of Preservation Progress was written by Susan L. Buck, featured speaker at the Society's November 9th Membership Meeting at The Charleston Museum. Ms. Buck has a private practice specializing in the analysis and conservation of painted surfaces on wooden objects and architectural materials. She has a B.A. degree with concentration in studio art from Williams College and an MBA degree from Boston University. Her study of the architectural paints at Charleston's Aiken-Rhett House was awarded the University of Delaware's Wilbur Owen Sypherd Prize for Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation in the Humanities for 2003. She is currently serving as Conservator of Painted Surfaces and Architectural Materials at the University of Delaware.

Paint analysis techniques have advanced remarkably from the first concerted paint research efforts in the United States conducted by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in the late 1920s. In 1989 the conference "Paint in America: A Symposium on Architectural and Decorative Paints" was sponsored by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. It was the first public forum in this country for the discussion and presentation of methods for architectural paint analysis. The seminal book *Paint in America: The Color of Historic Buildings* edited by Roger W. Moss came out of that conference and remains an important reference for traditional paint and varnish materials and craft practices, as well as analytical approaches for identifying historic coatings.

The dialogue about architectural paint analysis has continued in two international conferences in London in 2000 and in Copenhagen in 2005, and a third conference at Columbia University in New York City is planned for January 2008. But, there is no general agreement about the most effective ways to analyze and document historic finishes. Some institutions still rely primarily on scraping or sanding tests that mechanically remove accumulated paint layers *in situ*. These scraping tests, or “reveals”, can often be found behind doors and on protected areas of wainscoting in many historic house museums. However, the field has progressed dramatically from this basic methodology.

Analytical procedures adapted from art conservation are perfectly applicable to analysis of architectural coatings. And, although the samples can be as small as a pinhead, building sites generally offer more opportunities for unobtrusive sampling and slightly larger samples.

The great advances in the field of architectural paint analysis since 1989 include: the routine use of cast cross-section samples to identify and photograph paint stratigraphies; the use of reflected ultraviolet light, in addition to reflected visible light, to identify coatings by their characteristic autofluorescence colors; analysis of wallpapers in context with woodwork paints; identification of pigments and binders using light microscopy techniques; color measurement and matching based on quantifiable color systems, as well as other materials analysis techniques. Film or digital photographs of the cross-section images allow for accurate paint archaeology to compare the layers on original elements with later replacements and alterations. By photographing the build-up of paint layers from bottom to top the analyst also creates a record of precisely what has been found, leaving a clear trail for future analysts with further developed techniques.

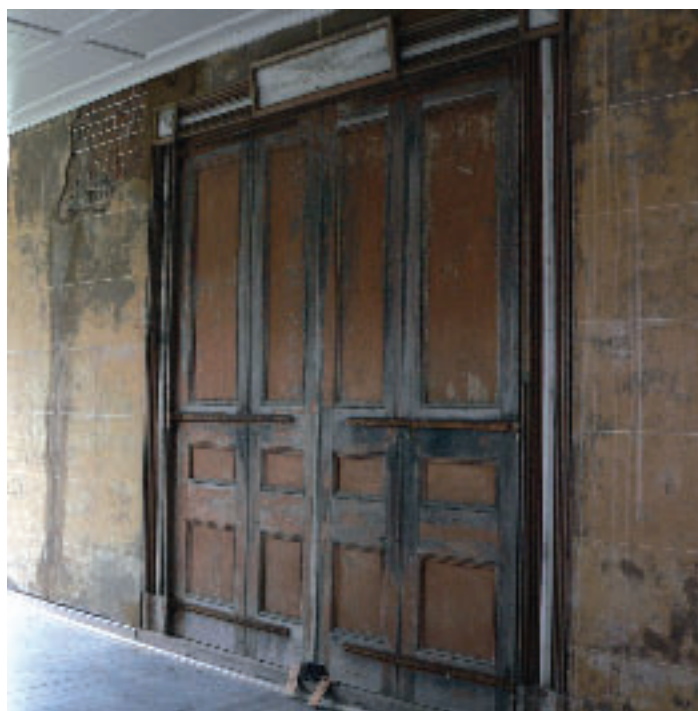
The recent repainting of the c. 1818 Aiken-Rhett House by Historic Charleston Foundation reproduced the bold palette of the building as it was in 1858, when the art gallery addition to the north was completed. This new scheme was based on compelling physical evidence – from analysis of tiny samples and from careful examination of large protected areas of surviving yellow limewash with simulated painted mortar joints. The paint study incorporated the most advanced analytical methods available and the cross-section samples clearly showed the intact yellow-pigmented limewash and bright verdigris-based green shutter paints dating to 1858. This information was available because the Aiken-Rhett House has fortunately not been stripped of its early paints.

Similar analytical methods have been used to more fully understand the original paints and later coatings at many Charleston sites, including the Aiken-Rhett House, the Nathaniel Russell House, the Edmondston-Alston House, Drayton Hall, 14 Legare Street, and Pompion Hill Chapel in Berkeley County. The results of this analysis work are most dramatically visible at the 1808 Nathaniel Russell House with its restored *trompe l’oeil* distemper wall decorations, grain-painted doors and white exterior ironwork, all based on extensive and thorough analysis. Less obvious are the results of the interior investigation at the Aiken-Rhett House and its outbuildings which established key relationships between datable layers of paint in the main house and in the kitchen/laundry building, and the discovery of antebellum decorative painting and brilliant limewash colors in the second-floor bedchambers in the kitchen/laundry building – probably choices of the enslaved inhabitants. Paint analysis work at the Aiken-Rhett House and at Drayton Hall has produced the information necessary to develop appropriate conservation approaches for stabilizing, securing and protecting the precious, fragile early paints.

Perhaps the most surprising recent findings came out of paint research conducted at Pompion Hill Chapel. The restoration project at this c. 1757 gem-like building has been undertaken by Glenn Keyes Architects and Tommy Graham Restorations. Paint analysis has played a critical role in understanding the original appearance of the interior and the surprising exterior, as well as identifying alterations.

Cross-section analysis and pigment identification of samples from the exterior of the building confirmed that it was originally painted in a two-tone scheme of dark gray (almost black) and off-white. This scheme picked out the

Continues on next page



The key to discerning the mid-19th century color was found in a protected corner of the east piazza least exposed to the elements



The completed top floor includes light scoring to simulate mortar between faux stone blocks. Second floor work (in progress) shows marked color contrast to the first floor as yet unrestored.



The c. 1757 Chapel of Ease known as Pompion Hill is the oldest Church of England edifice outside of Charleston.

chamfered moldings of the shutters and doors in dark gray and gave the cornice and window pediment a peculiar striped appearance that was perhaps intended as stylized shading. The solid evidence for the original dark gray and off-white exterior palette of the wood trim on Pompion Hill Chapel is a reminder of how much we still have to learn about mid eighteenth-century paint treatments. The dark gray was an inexpensive paint in the period as it is composed of white lead, calcium carbonate, lampblack and charcoal black, all readily available and relatively inexpensive pigments. The off-white paint is composed primarily of white lead, with calcium carbonate and a few iron oxide pigments, which also would have been a comparatively inexpensive exterior coating.

The evidence of eroded surfaces, accumulated grime, deep fissures and the penetration of later white paint layers show that the original deep gray paint was allowed to almost weather completely away in some locations before being repainted. This is somewhat surprising as the samples were taken from protected locations, but it suggests that the first deep gray and off-white paint scheme was left in place for many decades. There are only five generations of paint on the exterior trim elements, and although it is difficult to precisely date most paint layers, the first two generations of heavily weathered paints could have each have been in place for up to 50 years each. The cross-section image shows this erosion and weathering evidence very clearly.

Color matching for the earliest interior and exterior paints at Pompion Hill Chapel was conducted with the help of a colorimeter/microscope which can measure surviving areas of intact early paint from samples as small as 0.3mm. This instrument makes it possible to quantify each color and to calculate how close a possible color match in a commercially-produced paint system paint actually is. This instrument does not entirely replace visual matching, as both approaches are employed to make sure that the instrument readings are consistent with the more subjective observation of each color under a color-controlled light source at 30X magnification.

A remarkable amount of paint evidence also remains on the interior of the Chapel, and the intact paint stratigraphies on most of the architectural elements are stable and well-adhered. Comparative cross-section analysis shows that the woodwork in the apse area was painted with two generations of deep red-brown paint. The same two coarsely ground deep red paints were found as the earliest coatings on the pew benches, which confirms the benches are contemporary with the woodwork in the apse area, not later additions to the Church, as had been speculated. The interior of the Chapel was repainted as infrequently as the exterior. There are seven generations

of paint on the interior, and only the first four are consistent with early hand-ground paints.

Off-white paint was the first paint layer on the north and south wall window architraves. Interestingly, the comparative paint evidence shows the cedar paneling in front of the pulpit was not originally painted, and the white paint was a twentieth-century addition. Although the impressive carved and decorated pulpit was aggressively stripped of most of its early coatings, remnants of a clear plant resin varnish still remain trapped in the wood fibers below the most recent glossy shellac finish.

Architectural paint analysis is an exciting and growing field. There is increasing communication among paint researchers on national and international levels. Architectural paint analysis



The distinctive detailing of the shutters and exterior trim on Pompion Hill Chapel revealed a subtle sophistication heretofore unknown.

methods are being taught at selected art and architectural conservation graduate programs, including the collaborative College of Charleston and Clemson Historic Preservation Program and the Winterthur/University of Delaware Graduate Program in Art Conservation.

As the field matures we will develop greater ability to document coating histories more accurately while limiting the intrusion into original woodwork, stucco and plaster. It will be possible to build a database of historic paint evidence accessible for general research, and we will develop a better understanding of traditional paint making practices, materials, and methods of application which will contribute to more accurate replications as well as how best to preserve this fragile and rapidly disappearing paint and finish evidence.

Evolution of Paint Analysis continues on page 11.



Figure 1 This cross-section image at 100X magnification of an area of painted stucco on the exterior of the Aiken-Rhett House shows that the first coating on top of the brown stucco was an unpigmented limewash, followed by the yellow limewash related to the art gallery period of expansion. Patches of the degraded remnants of the most recent pinkish sandy coating were discernible on the house before it was repainted. The notations identify the paint generations.



Figure 2 This 200X magnification cross-section image shows that there were six generations of green paint of varying intensity on the shutters before they were eventually repainted red-brown. All six green paints contain the brilliant green pigment verdigris which degrades to almost black as a result of weathering. The grayish-blue layer at the bottom of the cross-section image is the primer applied to the shutters before they were painted green.

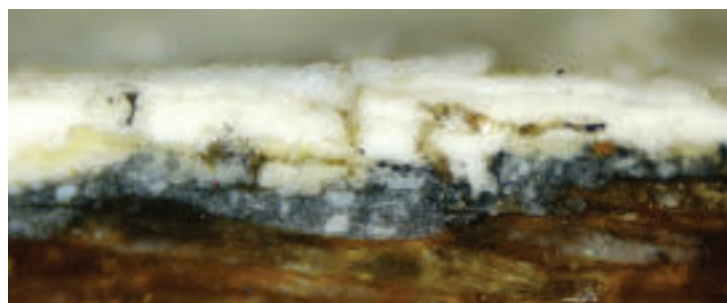


Figure 3 This cross-section sample of the exterior trim paint from Pompion Hill Chapel photographed in cross-section at 200X in reflected visible light shows an extremely degraded, coarsely ground, dark gray paint layer directly on top of wood fibers, followed by later off-white paints.



Figure 4 The cross-section sample from a protected area of carving on a Corinthian capital shows there is a degraded plant resin varnish trapped in the wood fibers (distinguished by a whitish autofluorescence color) with two more recent shellac layers on top of it (orange autofluorescent layers). The sample was photographed in reflected ultraviolet light at 200X.

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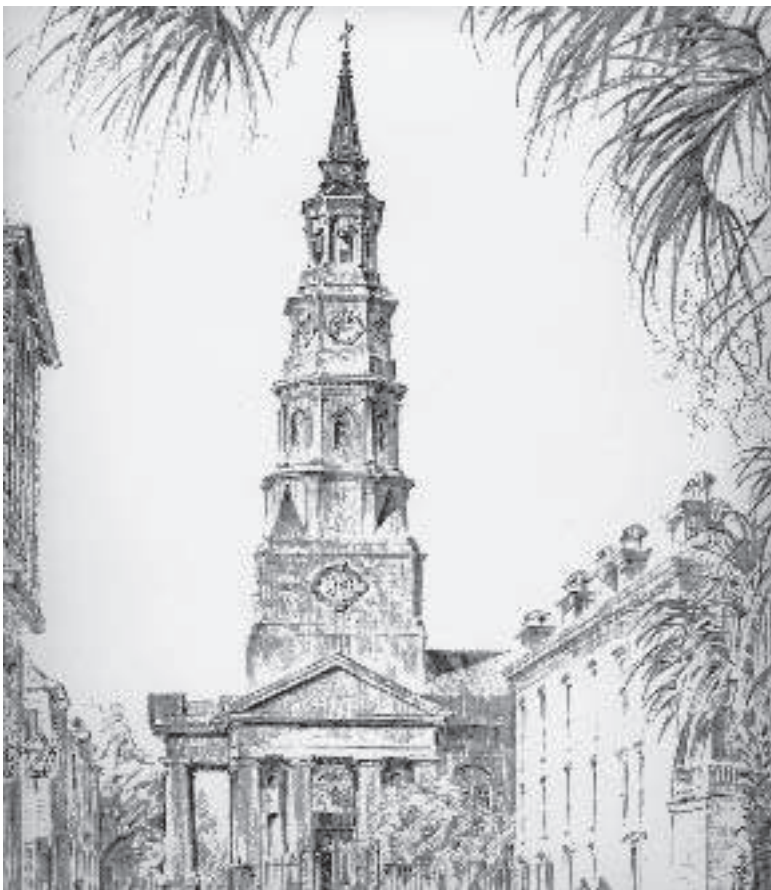
PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST: JULIA HOMER WILSON

Editor's Note: *It is autumn in Charleston. As this is written, visitors to the Holy City are streaming into the Society's Book & Gift Shop to pick up their tickets for the Annual Fall Candlelight Tour of Homes and Gardens (Sept 21st – Oct. 28th) now in its 30th year. In addition to their tour tickets, they find in our retail store many fine books, gifts and other Charleston memorabilia to purchase and take home as reminders of their visit. Among the most popular of keepsakes they choose are the prints of local artist Julia Homer Wilson. The following is a profile of this remarkable lady whose enduring images of our city have found their way into the homes and hearts of visitors from all over the world.*

To describe the quest of an artist to capture the city of Charleston – what brushstroke or line of ink best defines it at any given time – is to struggle with the definition of “art” itself. No single answer seems to achieve that goal. What is clear and evident is that many talented individuals have embarked on such a journey, but relatively few have actually arrived at the destination to the public's satisfaction. Time has a tendency to decide who takes a seat of honor in this rare pantheon and who does not. One artist who did successfully capture the quintessential Charleston was Julia Homer Wilson (1910-2001).

Miss Wilson was born in Griffin, Georgia, and spent her childhood there. Following the death of her father, she and her mother moved to Charleston in the 1940s. Her formal art training was impressive. She attended the Cochran School of Art in Washington, D. C., and the Slade School of Art in London. She also studied under Oskar Kokoschka in Salzburg, Austria. Kokoschka, born in 1886, was one of the most important painters and print makers of the Expressionists era. He died in 1980. She also studied at the Academy of Fine Art in Perugia, Italy. Later, she trained with Robert Brackman (1898–1980), a noted portraitist and teacher who instructed Ms. Wilson at the Madison Connecticut Art School in New England.

Here in Charleston, she exhibited many times with the Carolina Art Association, with the Guild of South Carolina Artists, the South Carolina Seaports Exhibition and in numerous other shows at the Dock Street Theatre as well as the Footlight Players Workshop on Queen Street. In the early 1970s, she took a sabbatical from Charleston and traveled to Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) as a volunteer assistant to Dr. Birch Rambo at his medical mission there.



“St. Philip's Church” is only one of Julia Homer Wilson's views of The Holy City.



Julia Homer Wilson compares one of her sketches to the subject.

Her many friends in Charleston recall that Miss Wilson was rarely seen without her familiar sketchbook and she clearly enjoyed depicting the city's architectural environment. She sketched many at-risk and doomed buildings shortly before they vanished. In 1970, she was quoted as saying, "Each of these homes has its own personality. Because it's been lived in, (each house) takes on a strong character all its own." She worked mostly in pencil, but she also enjoyed the media of water colors, oils, etching, and drypoint.

Julia Homer Wilson was 91 at the time of her death in 2001. She spent her later years in Yuba City, California, near her niece and nephew living there. Miss Wilson's artwork has been sold through the Society's Book & Gift Shop for many years and while it is also available through other venues, her prints are especially popular with our customers as take-home reminders of their enjoyable wanderings through the streets of our city. Through the generosity of Miss Wilson's heirs, Mary Virginia McAfee and William Bruce Matthews, the total revenue from the sale of Miss Wilson's existing prints now benefits the Society's programs and goals.

"We carry a wide selection of her pen and ink prints as well as hand-tinted pastels, both framed and unframed," explained Cynthia Setnicka, the Society's Retail Shop Manager. "The prints make eloquent statements individually and when hung in groupings they're really quite stunning." Images include St. Michael's, St. Philip's, First Baptist, and the French Huguenot churches, Ashley Hall School, Randolph Hall at the College of Charleston, the Dock Street and Queen Street theatres, as well as additional street scenes in the Historic District.

The charming drawings of Julia Homer Wilson are a living legacy of her affection for Charleston and her life-long support of its continuing preservation. ■

Archival photographs courtesy of the Post and Courier.



Miss Wilson's "Meeting Street Houses" revisits the era of Charleston's street vendors.

Love where you live...



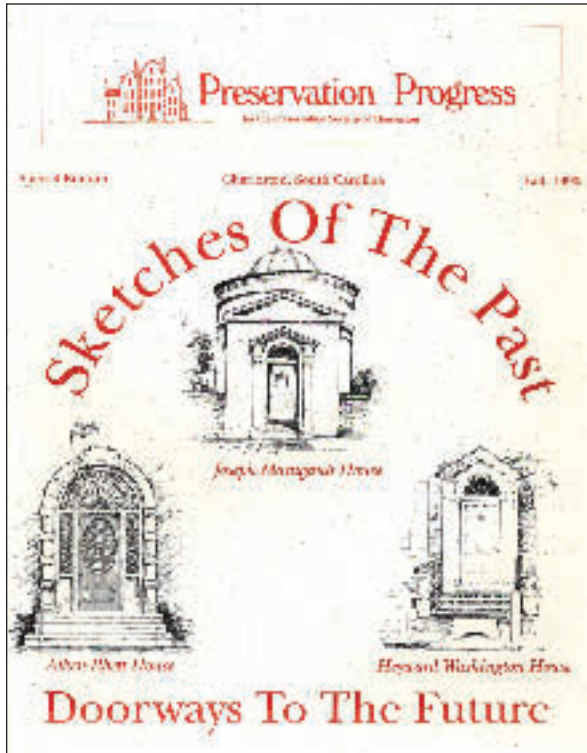
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Looking Forward/Looking Back

Preservation Progress:

The First 50 Years... Part III: The 1990s and On...



Editor's Note: "Looking Forward / Looking Back," a regular feature in *Preservation Progress* has been examining our archives from the perspective of its 50th year of publication. In our Spring 2006 issue, we revisited the origins of the newsletter starting in 1956 continuing through the 1960s. In those days, it was a single mimeographed sheet, hand-typed and without photos. Our Summer 2006 issue dealt with the 1970s and '80s – a period when the growth of Charleston tourism was shining new light on our preservation values while introducing new challenges. The end of the '80s was dramatically punctuated by the impact of Hurricane Hugo on Charleston's fragile historic fabric. But with the 90s recovery, discussed in Part III, there came a time for introspection and rededication to our mission and core beliefs.

The decade of the 1990s was a time of change and experimentation for *Preservation Progress*. It was decided that the Society would present one, large, "Special Edition" per year (featuring different guest editors) and supplement the quarterly publication schedule with more economical issues produced internally via "desk-top publishing." Although this experiment was eventually abandoned, the concept resulted in the publication of several important issues of our newsletter that have become "classics."

"Sketches of the Past," was the first of these Special Editions (Fall, 1990) which featured the intimate background stories of three house museums (then) owned by The Charleston Museum: the Joseph Manigault House, the Aiken-Rhett House and the Heyward-Washington House. Told by those who were actually participants in the saving of these house museums and/or their initial presentations to the public – these fascinating and colorful accounts are priceless and forever part of Charleston's preservation lore.

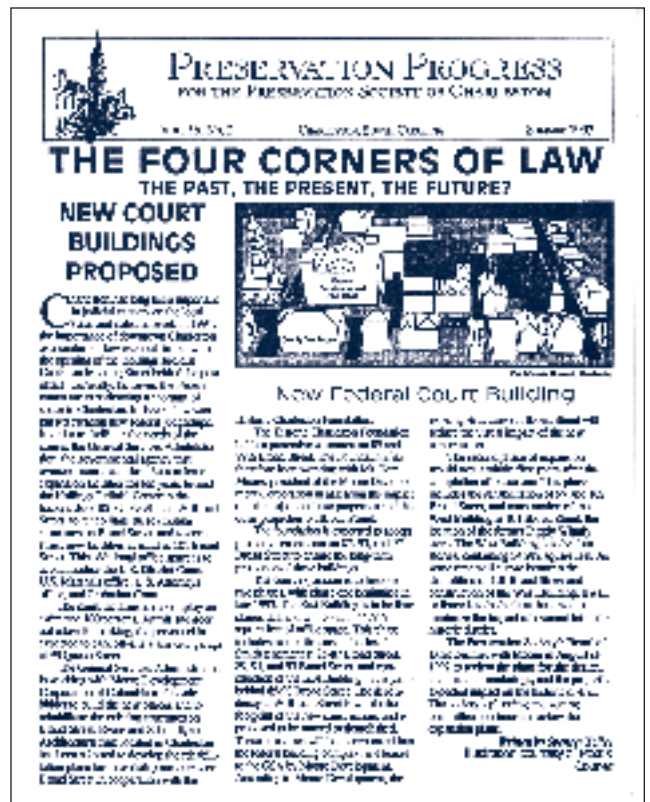
While the annual Carolopolis Awards and the on-going tradition of the Society's Fall Candlelight Tours of Homes and Gardens continued to be staple subjects for *Preservation Progress*, another topic dominated the publication for awhile. In 1990, The National Trust for Historic Preservation chose Charleston as the location for its annual conference bringing more than 2,000 influential preservationists from all over the country to our midst. Indirectly, this

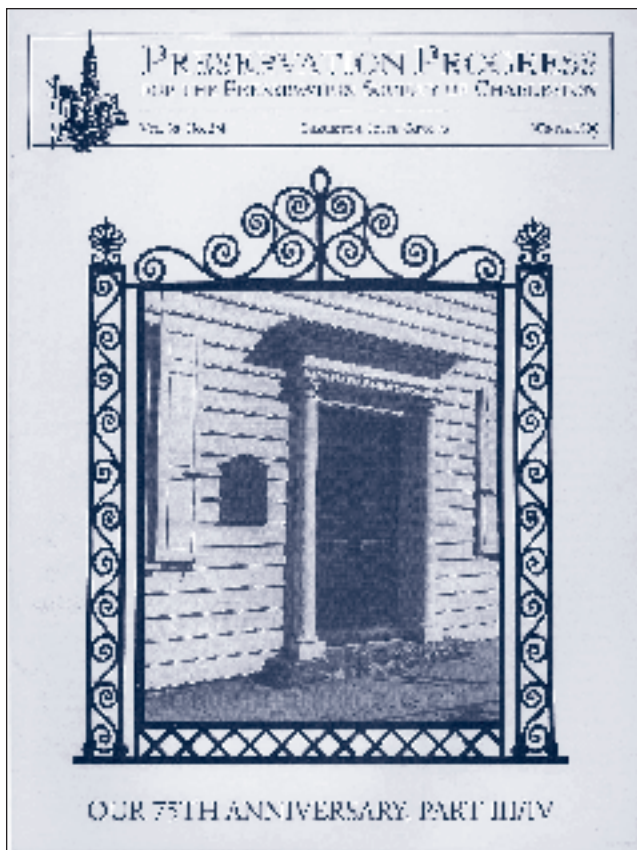
was a much-appreciated gesture of confidence in us – proving to a watchful nation that not even Hurricane Hugo could derail Charleston from our hard-won, time-proven, preservation values.

Well into the 1990s, the rigors of recovery from 1989's Hurricane Hugo remained very much on the Society's agenda. But amongst the continuing reconstruction and repair, a new topic dawned on the horizon of Charleston's growth and development. Dynamic real estate values and soaring rental rates on lower King Street resulted in a renewed interest in the blocks north of Calhoun Street (referred to as "Upper King"). A thriving business district in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, upper King Street had fared badly with the advent of post World War II suburban shopping centers. Many of these buildings had fallen into serious decay. New light needed to be shown on Upper King Street and a review of the applicable preservation policies and practices was long overdue. Toward that end, the pages of *Preservation Progress* made an unofficial survey of some of the area's current blight and in so doing underscored the area's true potential. The catch phrase on everyone's lips used to describe the area's pressing situation was "demolition by neglect."

Close on the heels of the Upper King Street focus came another look at an area of concern. A 1992 article entitled "The West Side Survey" was actually the byproduct of an intern's summer research project. It included grass-roots interviews with neighborhood residents and underscored the importance of a closer working relationship between city planners, area residents and property owners.

Early in 1993, the Society embarked on a long-overdue program to publicly acknowledge some of Charleston's extraordinary pioneers of preservation. Named in honor of the Society's founder, the first Susan Pringle Frost Award was presented to Mrs. Dorothy Haskell Porcher Legge. In addition to being one of the founding members of our Society and Historic Charleston Foundation, Mrs. Legge was instrumental in accomplishing numerous restorations throughout the city of Charleston and elsewhere in the Lowcountry. Perhaps best known among her many remarkable achievements was her spearheading (along with her late husband, the Hon. Lionel K. Legge) the restoration of Charleston's now-famous Rainbow Row.





Another Special Edition of *Preservation Progress* which proved to be a keeper was the Spring 1993 issue entitled "Charleston and the Board of Architectural Review." To this day, students of urban planning and historic preservation seek out this edition of *Preservation Progress* for its definitive history of our organization's leadership in what is now a national (even international) preservation milestone.

Unlikely as it may seem today, there was much discussion in the early 1990s of moving Charleston's Federal courts away from downtown. Some felt the recently expanded legal system had outgrown the traditional area known as "The Four Corners of Law." It was feared that adding new Federal office space would curtail tourism and conflict with the area's traditional appeal. The Society was tireless in its efforts to find a compromise protecting the traditional FUNCTION of the area as well as the historic architecture housing it. *Preservation Progress* followed these issues closely as the impact of new construction was eventually minimized by adaptively and creatively utilizing existing buildings.

The headlines in the *News and Courier* on March 13, 1993 shouted, "A direct Hit!" This signaled the beginning of the end for the old Charleston Navy Base – as generations of local military families had known it. Although the economic impact of the base closure turned out to be less dire than first feared, *Preservation Progress* published a survey of the historic structures at the shipyard and kept Society members updated on the Navy's Historical Resources Program for protecting the 99 structures on the base designated as "historic." The following year a feather came to our cap when The Confederation of South Carolina Local Historical Societies presented *Preservation Progress* with an award as "an outstanding periodical publication."

Another of the Special Issues appeared in 1996 as part of the Society's 75th anniversary celebration presenting chronology of the organization's history from 1961 to 1995. This issue, like the others in this series, underlined the Society's key role in saving Charleston from unbridled development and commercialization.

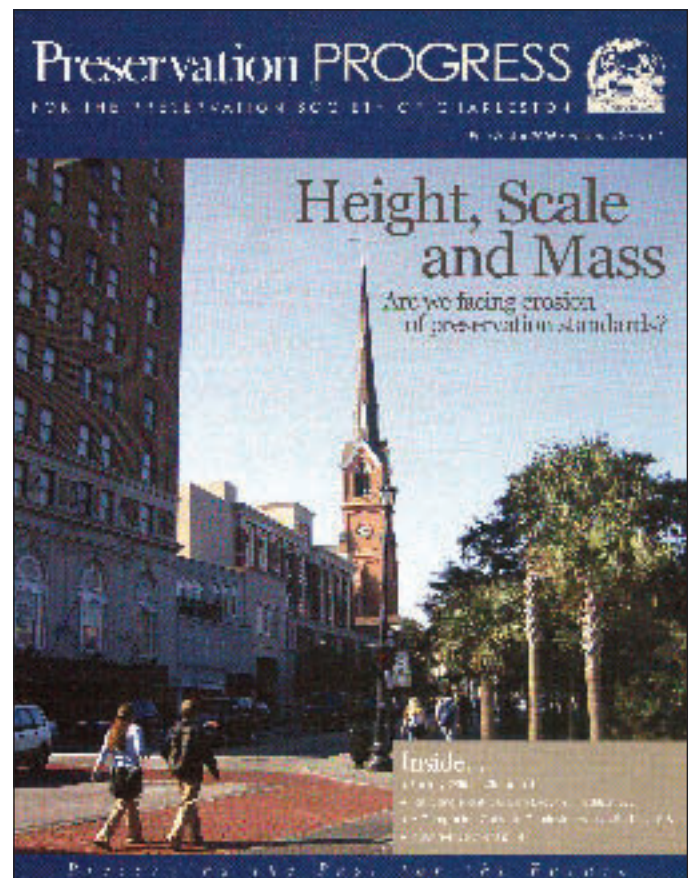
As the decade of the 90s came to a close, key issues facing the Society and aired in *Preservation Progress* included the restoration of the historic County Courthouse and annex (at the Four Corners of Law), completion of the Market Hall restoration and the completion and adoption of a strategic planning program known as "The Charleston Downtown Plan" (formally issued in October, 1999). Also that year, the Society introduced the Pro Merito Awards to augment the Carolopolis Awards Program which was introduced 46 years earlier. Pro Merito recognized properties that "had undergone second renovations or had exhibited excellence in sustained preservation." The first recipients of Pro Merito Awards were announced at the first Carolopolis ceremonies of the new millennium.

In the fall of 2000, *Preservation Progress* took on an unlikely foe with an article citing the "Implications for Historic Preservation" due to the ubiquitous Formosan Termite (*Coptotermes Formosanus Shiraki*). The article forewarned (and thus forearmed) members about this tiny pest – no less a threat to our fragile historic buildings "than the most irresponsible plans of developers, government agencies, industry, unenlightened property-owners and (even) the Supreme Court!"

The summer of 2003 was significant in that this was the date of *Preservation Progress*' most recent metamorphosis. This time, its "new look" included a full-color cover and more sophisticated, professionally-designed graphics both inside and out. Several features still with us today were formally introduced with this issue – "President's Message, Volunteer Spotlight," and "Looking Forward/Looking back" among them. Rick Corrigan, then chairman of the Publications Committee, said of the upgrade, "(Our goal is) to update the look, improve readability, and try to stay up with the rapid advance of technology. After all, 'Progress' is our last name."

Since then, educational articles have appeared like the one on "Height, Scale and Mass" which sought to illuminate the working language of preservation used in the forums where today's preservation decisions are being debated. Our mandate to educate a new generation of preservationists has been served by "macro" backgrounders on the Carolopolis Awards Program, the Charleston Single House and the city's legendary landscape architect Loutrel Briggs. And we've explored the "micro" side of preservation in this issue's revealing essay on the history of paint analysis.

After half a century as the voice of the Preservation Society of Charleston, the possibilities open to *Preservation Progress* remain virtually unlimited. It seems we've only just begun... ■





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