

Closing Notes

12 Meeting Street:

Showing Home Is Where the Heart Is



The facade of 12 Meeting Street looks peacefully over a quiet South of Broad neighborhood.

BY MEGAN ABIGAIL CHANDLER

You can practically hear the laughter in the walls. Not sure if it was



Surely the home of many sweet dreams, the bedroom of a happy daughter is perfect for such heavenly resting.



Handpainted wallpaper sets the elegant foyer apart from the architectural contemporaries around our Lowcountry.

the cheery yellow flowers juxtaposed by a masculine dark wooden door and marble steps or the delightful French handpainted wallpaper highlighting the foyer. Peased into the John Lewis House on a muggy Monday afternoon expecting to see everything I've seen a hundred times before. Exquisitely molded mantels, raving ceiling medallions, stairwells prepared to announce kings and queens, a breathtaking facade—a shell as much as it can be expected from historic Charleston architecture. However, though the home standing at 12 Meeting Street does boast all of these outstanding elements, it possesses something different, some-

thing that sets it apart from the slew of homes in the Lowcountry. It has the flavor of an active family, almost something akin to a breathing lifeline.

John C. Lewis, a cartoon factor, who purchased the land from Charles Pinckney, built the construct between 1817 and 1822. This home is quintessentially different from the typical Charleston single home in that the predominate facade faces the street with a bay sitting off of the southern most wing of the home, an architectural style reflecting Charleston's interpretation of the Federal style. The mantels, like so many Charleston mantels, are in the Adam style, yet they retain individuality in scene and ornamentation. The library, drawing room and entryway boast ornately carved wooden cornices. In the early part of the 20th century, a series of renovations was made to the home, including major improvements to the kitchen joining it to the main rest deck.

Of course, having the Calhoun Mansion as a neighbor could dwarf any home, but 12 Meeting Street accepts the challenge knowing its interior contains something more special than an ordinary celebrity status and history. According to the State Review Sheet from the National Park Service, "the building makes a very positive contribution to the character of the historic district, which, 'to me, is a very formal way of saying—the house is awesome.'"

The family room in the back of the entryway calls to everyone's attention, be over-looked that the two rooms on either side flanking the center of the home are exquisite and aesthetically beautiful. The master back family room is delightful and functional, a temperate front-facing yellow headboard and a panoramic view of the garden, which in the spring displays the most lovely pink cherry blossoms and azaleas, and in the winter is filled with a thick bunch of camellias. This room is the true heart of the house. The kitchen is a cozy nook off of

the family room, the sage will lure to all sorts of Thanksgiving aromas and summertime cookouts where laughter was not in short supply. Throughout the home, you do not even need sunlight, as the natural light shining through the abundant windows, even on a cloudy day, provides a glow to guide the way.

The John Lewis House is equipped with two stairways, one to sneak upstairs from the kitchen and one to charge upstairs from the front door. The upstairs rooms are full of opportunities for dreamy-eyed games surely to take place in the playroom, meadows of dress-up in the sweetly decorated bedrooms, and frequently taken relaxing bubble baths for everyone, as each bedroom has its own bathroom. Today, 12 Meeting Street is home to Marion and Bart Proctor, mother and father to Abby, Hannah and Kennedy who fill this residence with such a spirit that it is hard to shake it from the character of the home. Each room is full of personality, surely reflective of its inhabitant. One room is adjacent to the master bedroom, and two rooms are quietly situated off of a long and well-lit corridor, with large windows showing the way. It's clear that peace is well at work in this household, uniting each room and each hallway, every window with a better view than the next.

Marion tells me that once upon a time they were all beach bums until the girls started attending Ashley Hall, and they found it easier to walk to church, everyday than make a 30-minute drive. "Our life was downtown," she explains. They thought their home should be as well, and nothing could have worked out better for their family. As they now prepare to send their girls off to college one at a time, they realize it is time for a new blossoming family to make their life part of this home. She tells me that each facet of the home contributes to making a smoothly run household, every piece of the puzzle provides something, and "for livability, that's important."

Bill Thompson of Beiser Thompson real estate, shows the home, saying that it is a "fine downtown home for a family." From the rotunda walls of the family room to the carriage house sitting unobtrusively off of the main residence, to the courtyard which begs for a family Christmas picture or a happy birthday, this home is truly one that wants a family. It doesn't just stand on people, providing nothing but walls and windows. This home is one with an actual spirit to it.

This may sound nonsensical to many, but in reality, a home is as alive as the family in it. Soon those walls and windows start to take on memories from the grown-up chart on the bathroom wall to the wedding dress making

the attic as home to the kitchen, where the perfect meal was staged for the best time, a home is so often more than what you thought you purchased in the beginning. What makes 12 Meeting Street alive is not this time or making it into a piece of art, but the family that it attracts, the challenge with a vibrant life in the past.

showing each new owner the joy that each previous owner got out of the handmade interior wooden floors and the tinkling of the outdoor fountain at happy and mark South of Broad, the John Lewis House will be home to many more families. From past to present, nothing can unearth something quite so simple.



A cozy kitchen is the home of memories ignited by aromatic scents and recipes for good times.



The majestic stained drawing room is the picture of many celebratory holidays now and in years to come.



The master bedroom seems fit for royalty.