

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

the cheery yellow flowers juxtaposed by a masculine dark wooden door and marble steps or the delightful French handpainted wallpaper highlighting the foyer. I eased into the John Lewis House on a happy Monday afternoon expecting to see everything I've seen a hundred times before. Exquisitely molded cornices, ravishing ceiling medallions, star-wells prepared to announce kings and queens, a breathtaking facade — a treat as much can be expected from history.

Charleston architecture. However, though the home standing at 12 Meeting Street does boast all of these outstanding elements, it possesses something different, something

Surely the home of many sweet dreams, this bedroom of a Proctor daughter is perfectly heavenly resting.

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

The family room in the back of the entryway calls to guests to enter the over-flowing room. The two rooms, one above the other, flank the central hall. Home to a young and friendly bunch of teenagers, or that back family room, a quiet and comfortable retreat from the outside world. Head board and foot board are the primary view of the doorway, which, in the spring months, is the most lovely pink cherry blossoms and, in the winter, is adorned with a lush green of camellias. This room is the metaphorical center of the house. The kitchen is a cozy nook off of

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

John C. Lewis, a cotton 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 pre-dominant 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 house joining it to the main residence.

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the family room, the cage walls sure to tell stories of Thanksgiving turkeys and summertime cookouts where hamster was not in short supply. Throughout the home, you do not even need lamp light, 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 graced with two stairways, one to break distance from the kitchen and one to change upstairs from the front door. The upstairs rooms are full of opportunities for dream-come-games surely to take place in the playroom, memories 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 Barb Proctor, mother and daughter 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 five large windows showing the way. It is clear that peace is well at work in this household, unifying each room and each hallway, every window of 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. "Off 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, they are still retaining their beach-bum roots, a new blossoming family to find their life path in 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 viability, that's important.

Bill Thompson, of Beiser Thompson real estate, shows the house, saying that it is "the downtown home to a family." From the formal walls of the family room to the carriage house sitting independently off of the main residence, to the corner room, which begs for a family Christmas picture or a birthday party, this home is truly one that wants to stand on its own, providing nothing but walls and windows. This home is one with an actual split to it.

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

the arcs in home to the kitchen, where the perfect meal was cooked for the last time, where it is often said that what you thought you purchased in the beginning, was not made 12.

Meeting Street adheres to this trend, as it is a place to create, to live, to love, to family, to start accepting the challenges with a vibration to the past.

showing each new owner the joy that each previous owner got out of the handmade inlay wooden floors and the rocking at the outdoor fountain, a happy landmark. Youth of broad, the John Lewis House will be home to many more families. From past to present, nothing can unearth anything quite so simple.



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



The massive library/drawing room is the picture of many celebrations past and to come.



The master bathroom seems fit for royalty.