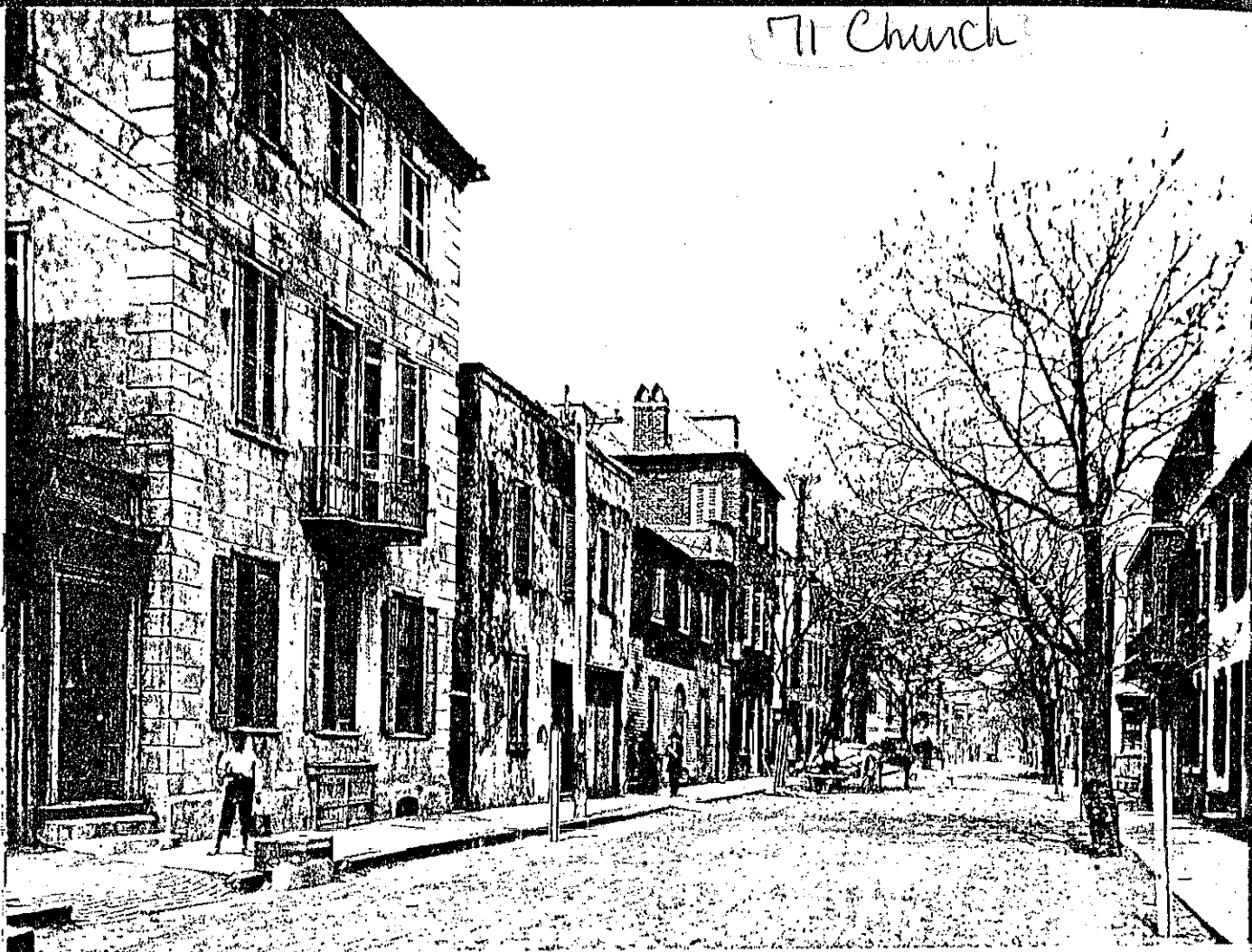


71 Church



In 1912 Church Street below Tradd showed all the signs of neglect that the city suffered following the Civil War and the earthquake. Number 71, the Colonel Robert Brewton House, circa 1730, is the earliest example of what is known in Charleston as a "single house." Brewton succeeded his father, Colonel Miles Brewton, as Powder Receiver. The entrance to the house is on the long side, giving direct access to the stair hall with a door to a reception room facing the street. Features of the exterior of the house are the "carefully executed moulded brick cornice with well defined modillions supporting the overhanging fascia under the eaves." Detroit Publishing Company photograph. Library of Congress.

Church Street south from Tradd, circa 1900-1910. Detroit Publishing Company photograph. Library of Congress.

Marion - Chas. Story

In February, when James arrived, he was greeted by Owen Wister, the novelist, who became his guide in Charleston. Wister, author of *The Virginian* and the forthcoming Charleston novel *Lady Baltimore*, was the young friend whom James described as "My companion, a Northerner of Southern descent . . . , knew his South in general and his Carolina of that ilk in particular, with an intimacy He held up for me his bright critical candle, which even in the intrinsic Charleston vividness made its gay flicker, and it was under this aid that, to my extreme convenience, I was able to 'feel' the place."

In Charleston James "found the good society still alive, even if greatly diminished in quantity and activity and even if already becoming tainted in some places by 'the rude Northern contagion.'" He sensed the city's "insidious charm" and in it "the suggestion of a social shrinkage and an economic blight unrepaired." There was "a deficiency of life," a "beauty . . . of other days." The women he saw as "rare, discreet, flitting figures that brushed the garden walls with noiseless skirts in the little melancholy streets of interspaced, over-tangled abodes— . . . clad in a rigour of mourning that was like the garb of a conspiracy."



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC The Robert Brewton House

AND/OR COMMON

The Robert Brewton House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 71 Church Street

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

South Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE

45

COUNTY

Charleston

CODE

019

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☐ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☒ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. Saul Krawcheck

STREET & NUMBER

71 Church Street

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

STATE

South Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

(RMC) Registrar of Mesnes and Conveyances

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 726

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

STATE

South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Building Survey

DATE

Photo's and data 1958

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Robert Brewton House is the earliest accurately dated example of an architectural type known in Charleston as the "single house". It was Built in 1730. Strictly defined, the early single houses were just one room wide, with the narrow end of the building towards the street, thereby exposing three sides to the cooling breezes. Entrance was through a hall at the center of the side, where one then found a room to either side, usually a living room and a dining room. Upstairs, was usually found a formal drawing room on the street side, with another room at the other side of the stair. If there was another storey, it would be used for bedrooms. The most important entertainment room was the formal second storey street-front room where the breezes were greatest, since cross ventilation occurred.

It must be remembered that the climatological consideration was an important one in the evolution of the style. Not only was it likely imported wholesale from the West Indies where a similar heat oppressed the Anglo-Saxon immigrants, but the South Carolina plantation owners came to Charleston in the Summer specifically to escape the heat and the malaria. Charleston had been settled by Englishmen, French Huguenots, some Dutch, and by Europeans who had previously settled as planters in the West Indies. In short, it was settled by people unaccustomed to a tryingly hot and humid climate, and they consciously set about alleviating the effects of the problem. The narrow, one room houses they built to get maximum cross-ventilation, clearly shows this intention.

More broadly defined, the single-house calls to mind the general form described above, plus a piazza (porch) along the side of the building---another device for cooling the house. Entrance to the piazza was made from the street, and then entrance to the hall of the house from the middle of the piazza. They were usually of two, and sometimes of three, storeys. In fact, however, the development of the piazza on the single-house, which is identified almost universally as an element of the style, was a process which only came about gradually through the eighteenth century.

While the Robert Brewton House then, which is without a piazza, may at first appear to be lacking an important single-house element, its early date argues that it represents a "pre-piazza" phase of building. The house did acquire side wooden porches, first one storey, and then two, but they are no longer in place.

The ground floor streetfront room was, in some houses, used as a shop, but there is no evidence that this was ever the case at The Robert Brewton House. The long side of the typical single house penetrates into a shady green garden, where one might find a detached kitchen, an old carriage house, and the servants' quarters. This was exactly the case at The Robert Brewton House.

While this is the earliest of the remaining Charleston single houses(1730), it is much more difficult to say that it was in any way a prototype, that people learned from it or used it as a model for the subsequent proliferation of the

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

☐ PREHISTORIC
☐ 1400-1499
☐ 1500-1599
☐ 1600-1699
☒ 1700-1799
☐ 1800-1899
☐ 1900-

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
☐ AGRICULTURE
☒ ARCHITECTURE
☐ ART
☐ COMMERCE
☐ COMMUNICATIONS

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING
☐ CONSERVATION
☐ ECONOMICS
☐ EDUCATION
☐ ENGINEERING
☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
☐ INDUSTRY
☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
☐ LAW
☐ LITERATURE
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSIC
☐ PHILOSOPHY
☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION
☐ SCIENCE
☐ SCULPTURE
☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ THEATER
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

1730

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Standing three storeys high at #71 Church Street, The Robert Brewton House is a classic example of the early Charleston "single-house". It has its narrow side to the street, its entrance at the side, is just one room across the street front and just one room to either side of the hall on all three floors, has no basement below ground, and extends into a long narrow garden at the rear, containing kitchen, carriage-house, and servants quarters. The Robert Brewton House is the earliest accurately datable Charleston single-house remaining. It was built in 1730.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER

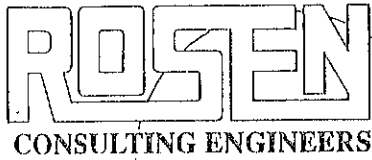
7

PAGE 2

type. Firstly, earlier but lost examples may have served that role, and secondly, it would seem more likely that the hot and sunny climate of Charleston and the West Indies had more to do with this very practical and adaptive type than anything else. It must be said however that this house, built by the prominent and influential Miles Brewton for his son Robert, may thereby have been looked to as a fashion-setter. This is the same Miles Brewton who built one of Charleston's, and indeed this country's, greatest houses, the one at 27 King St. which bears his name.

At the exterior of The Robert Brewton House, we should notice the low basement, with crawl-space entrance at the street front, the French doors from the drawing room at the second storey, the scaling of the facade through smaller third storey windows, and the sparse detailing of stucco, pretty much limited to a keystone-like element over each window and the quoining of the corners. The iron-grilled balcony of the drawing room is a later addition, as well as the three storey porch tucked into the corner formed by the rear end of the side and the kitchen. A carved flat door lintel and a cornice with small consoles are the two chief carved ornaments at the exterior. The interior contains interesting and skilled carved mantelpieces, some from a later period, and Georgian chairrails, wainscoting, and cornices.

The Robert Brewton House is currently owned by Saul Krawcheck, a Charleston furniture dealer, and the house is not open to the public. It is used by Krawcheck as a private residence. Some restoration work, particularly in the second storey drawing room, is now under way.



AND
ASSOCIATES,
INC.

- CIVIL/STRUCTURAL DESIGN
- CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT/INSPECTION
- FACILITY ASSESSMENT

65 BROAD STREET, CHARLESTON, SC 29401-2989
(843) 577-4300 FAX: (843) 577-0007
Email: Roseneng@aol.com

July 17, 2001

Mrs. Mary Cutler
c/o William Means Company
41 Broad Street
Charleston, SC 29401

In re 71 Church Street
Partial Inspection

Dear Mary,

Confirming my conversations with you and Harper Finucan at the time of my partial inspection of 71 Church Street, June 25, 2001.

Crawl Space

The conditions reported in the crawl space are not unusual. Mr. Finucan and I have worked on similar situations before, and he is aware of the types of alterations and repairs that I would like to see done.

Some of the wood post supports, although not to today's standards, are evidently holding up well and, in my opinion, are satisfactory.

However, in addition to some minor pier repair work, the floor joists themselves need to be checked to verify repairs, etc. go from bearing to bearing.

The work needed at the rear crawl space is more significant than that at the front. However, as stated before, these repairs are the type of work that Mr. Finucan is familiar with.

In conclusion, I do not believe that Mr. Finucan will need much direction from me with regards to the crawl space repairs.