

WILLIAM VANDERHORST HOUSE

*Built 1740
54 Tradd Street*

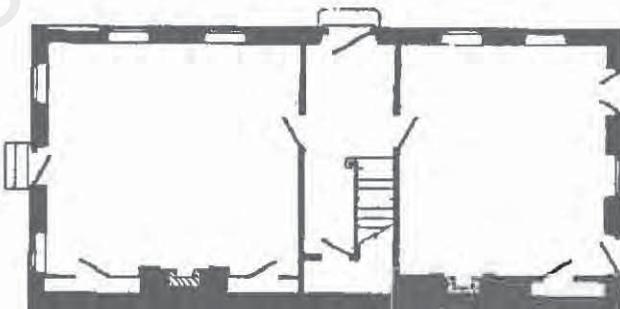
This three story masonry structure covered with stucco is a fine example of early single house construction and is important in understanding the development of the single house which is Charleston's most unique and notable building type. The house retains its original floor plan, the prototype for single house construction. The William Vander Horst House is notable in that it retains its public entrance on the street facade. This entrance would have opened into a public room, typically a business office. A separate passage to the side of the house led to the family quarters which were entered through the central stair passage. Another important feature is the absence of a piazza, a development in the evolution of the single house.

The dwelling at 54 Tradd Street is attributed to William Vander Horst (This spelling appears in most of the earliest documents). The lot was inherited by Vander Horst's wife, whose grandfather owned nearly two-thirds of this block of Tradd Street. Constructed circa 1740, the house is believed to be one of the earliest examples of single house construction in Charleston.

A study of the 1796 plat at which time William Robertson owned the property, reveals that the house was covered with a tile roof. A modest assemblage of outbuildings filled the rear yard back to Rope's Alley but, oddly, the property was only accessible through a passage to Tradd Street instead of having a second access through the alley. The early introduction of piazzas to the city is evidenced on the house of Mr. John McIver, next door at 56 Tradd.

William Vander Horst's house had a series of distinguished and notable tenants. Mr. Thomas W. Bacot, Charleston's fifth Postmaster, rented the house and tradition holds that the Post Office was located in the front room. This would make the house one of the nation's earliest postal facilities. Bacot was appointed to the Postmaster position by Thomas Pickering, Postmaster General under President George Washington.

Abram Sasportas, a sephardic Jew from Bourdeaux, France was one of Charleston's leading merchants. During the Revolution, Sasportas fled the city to Philadelphia. Upon returning to Charleston, Sasportas quickly resumed his mercantile trade by operating as a privateer during the Napoleonic Wars in Europe. In 1796, Sasportas purchased 54 Tradd from William Robertson.



*First floor plan, 54 Tradd Street, Measured by
MWC, CWF, HCF drawn by Mark Wenger, CWF
, HCF, and MWC*