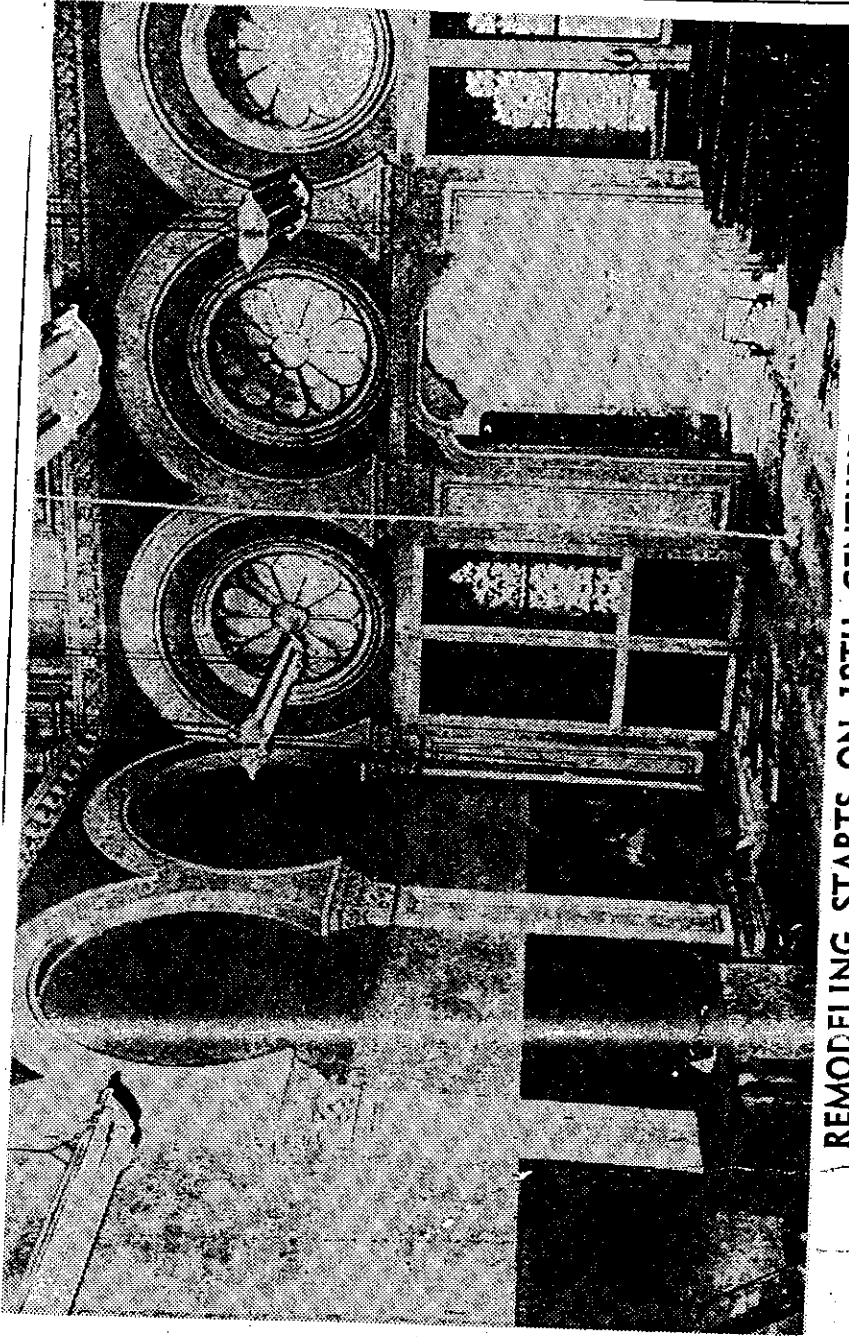


141 E. Bay



REMODELING STARTS ON 19TH CENTURY BUILDING

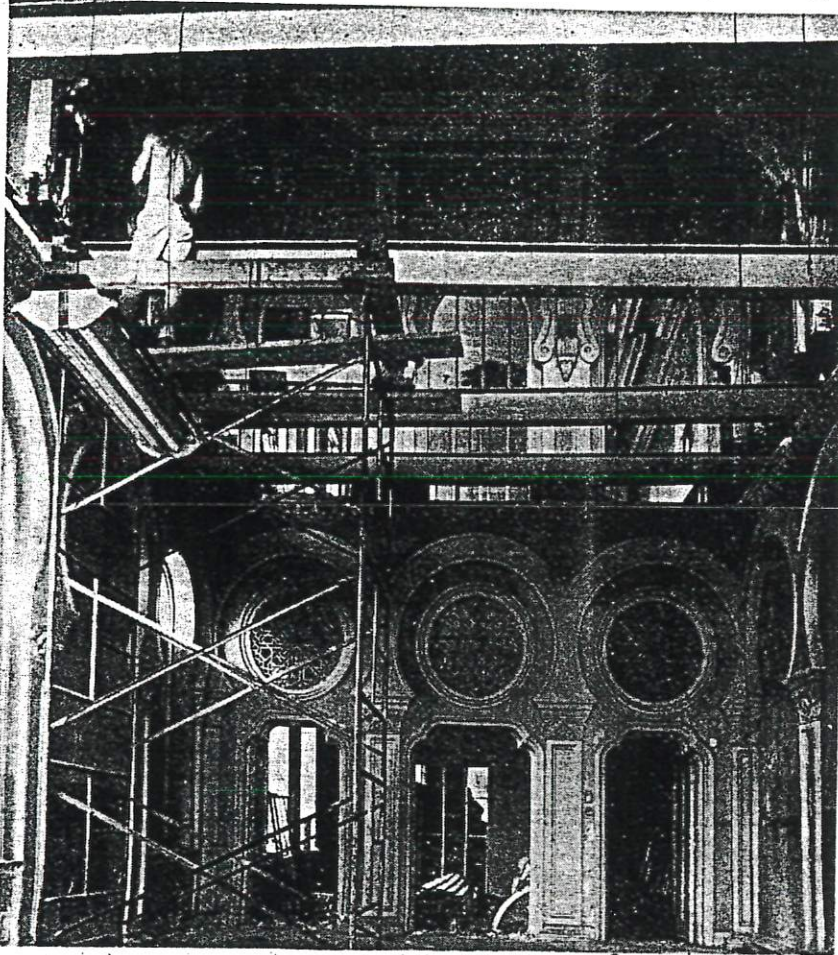
The 115-year-old Farmers and Exchange Bank building at 141 East Bay St. is being renovated into a law office by Ruscon Construction Co. Lucas and Stubbs Associates are architects for remodeling the two-story, brownstone structure purchased recently by U. S. Sen. Ernest F. Hollings. Ruscon crews began renovation late last week.

June 11,
1969

141 E. Bay St. 141 East Bay
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141 East Bay St



141 E. Bay

Restoration Of Former Bank Begins

Work is under way on renovation of the old Farmers and Exchange Bank building on East Bay Street.

Acclaimed as one of few remaining examples of Hindu Gothic architecture in the country, the building was recently acquired by Sen. Ernest F. Hollings.

A local developer had applied to the Board of Architectural Review to demolish the building to create a parking lot, when the Historic Charleston Foundation protested.

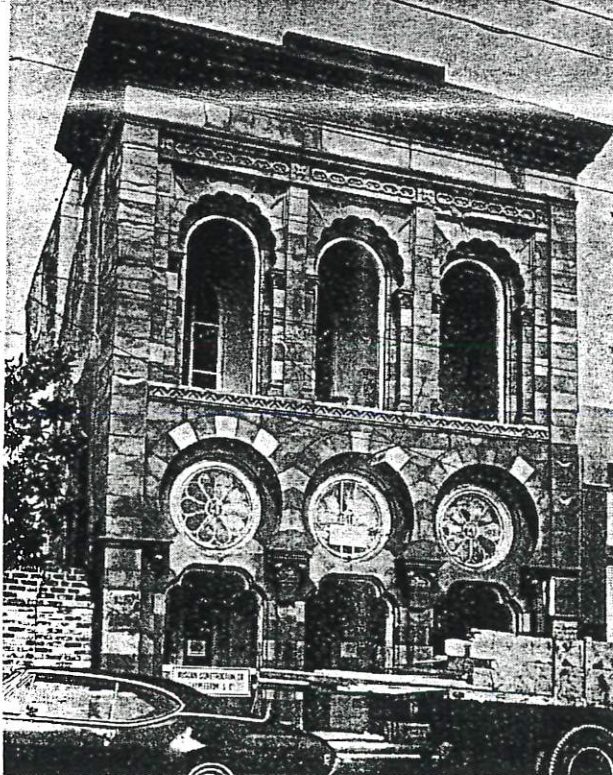
It was then that Hollings offered to buy the building and restore it as office space of his law firm.

Workmen removed a small one-story shed at the rear of the building and will construct a two-story, fire-proof storage room and an office suite in its place.

Lucas and Stubbs and Associates are architects for the project. They said they will preserve the building's exterior appearance as nearly as possible.

Plans call for a stenographic pool and office space for five lawyers on the first floor. In addition to the office suite, the second floor will house a large conference room and library.

6-17-69 141 East Bay St. SC#5



(Staff Photos by Jordan)



Rare Moorish-style building - Post and Courier, The (Charleston, SC) - February 2, 2021 - page 001
February 2, 2021 | Post and Courier, The (Charleston, SC) | Warren L. Wise ww@postandcourier.com | Page 001

A long-vacant Moorish-style former bank building in downtown Charleston that escaped the wrecking ball in 1969 when the late U.S. Sen. Ernest F. "Fritz" Hollings purchased it for his law office will soon see new life.

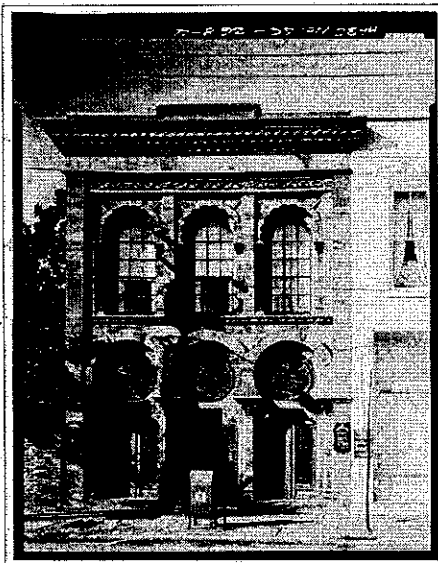
Donna Moeckel, whose family owns the structure as well as Anson's Restaurant a few blocks away, plans to convert the building at 141 East Bay St., built in the decade before the Civil War, into a private event space. [caption for photo not featured here]

Her family bought the property, once home to the Farmers and Exchange Bank, in 2002 for \$1.25 million.

"The main thing we want is to restore the building," Moeckel said. "In the years that we have owned it, we talked mainly about using it for a restaurant. I don't want it to be a restaurant. It's such a jewel. I want it to be something exclusive for private events."

While the facade, currently undergoing an overhaul and obscured by scaffolding, is striking with its unusual architectural elements, Moeckel called the interior "the most beautiful part" of the building. [continues on p. 2]

Historic downtown 'jewel' will serve new purpose



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS/PROVIDED

This updated photo shows the building at 141 East Bay St. in downtown Charleston. Built around 1853-1854, the building once served as the Farmers and Exchange Bank and, in the latter part of the past century, as a restaurant and bar. The owner is converting it now to a private event space.

BUILDING, from B1

"It has soaring ceilings with natural light," she said as she walked through the structure and around work crews.

The two-story structure was designed by eclectic architect Francis D. Lee, whose work included several examples of Gothic, Moorish, Egyptian and Classical Revival buildings throughout the city. Most recently, it housed Saracen, a high-end restaurant, and Charlie's Little Bar, both of which closed more than a decade ago.

The unique structure, cited for its rare Middle Eastern and Indian motifs, survived an attempt to tear it down so the prospective buyer could build a parking lot. Preservationists protested its demolition, and Hollings stepped

in and bought the building along with a property behind it at 10 State St. for \$50,000.

The property at 10 State last sold for \$1.2 million in 2008 when it became Old South Barber Spa.

At the time Hollings bought the building in 1969, he was lauded for saving a rare architectural structure in the city.

"The real fine part of this is that not only will it be restored but put back into active use, and Charleston again becomes a living city and not just a museum," said Thomas C. Stevenson, then-president of the Historic Charleston Foundation in a 1969 News and Courier report.

The architectural style of the building has been referred to as Hindu Gothic and Moorish Revival, the latter style popu-

larized by "Tales of the Alhambra," by Washington Irving, who stayed for a while in the Alhambra, a Moorish palace in Granada in Spain.

The original structure included a large open two-story space with a skylight, but Hollings decided to divide the space into two floors with a large reception room on the ground level and a library upstairs.

The skylight was rebuilt and fitted with electric lights, and a circular stairway near the entrance connected the foyer to the upstairs library. He also built a two-story addition in the rear of the building that included a fire-proof storage room and office suite.

Some of the ornate architectural elements on the second



WARREN L. WISE/STAFF

Scaffolding shrouds the ornate facade of the building.

floor were lost during renovation for the law office, but the building has retained its origi-

nal character for the most part. The upper floor for the library installed by Hollings

has since been removed, showing the building's skylight and interior architectural features from the first floor.

Renovation work is underway, starting on the roof and then the exterior. Moeckel expects it will take about a year to get the site ready for private parties and receptions.

She has decided not to use the upstairs as part of the event space because the old staircase in the back part of the building doesn't meet building codes for the public to use and she doesn't want to tear it out.

"I don't want to modify the building inside," she said, "it's such a beautiful structure."

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