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CAROLINA ART ASSOCIATION  
GIBBES MEMORIAL ART GALLERY  
CHARLESTON, S. C.

Olmstead Report

To

Regional Planning & Advisory  
Committee.

Olmsted Report:

NOTE from Jeanette Bergeron (contract archivist who processed the collection ca. 1999):  
Several documents were bound into the same folder labeled “Olmsted Report,” and by [the time the folders were arranged in] 1999, it was difficult to distinguish the exact contents of the original report.

## CENTRAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Whatever else the Committee is concerned with it is very centrally concerned with some intangible values peculiar to Charleston, which are of much present importance and of still greater potential importance if the physical things and conditions that give rise to them can be adequately safeguarded, but which are exceedingly liable to progressive diminution and irrecoverable loss.

Though very difficult to describe they are widely, if somewhat vaguely, recognized and appreciated as summing up into a distinctive and extraordinarily charming amenity characteristic of certain physical aspects of Charleston and definitely associated with certain kinds of old physical objects and conditions (notably certain kinds and arrangements of buildings, walls, fences, gates etc. and of trees, gardens and other open-spaces etc.), which happen, through the accidents of Charleston's peculiar history, to have been inherited in various states of preservation and alteration from periods prior to 1860.

These intangible assets are primarily esthetic; directly valuable to many people of Charleston and elsewhere for the personal enjoyment derivable from them; indirectly of much economic value, present and potential, through the willingness and ability of appreciative people to pay substantial economic prices for the privilege of enjoying them under sufficiently favorable conditions, either as residents of the city or as passing visitors. Their esthetic value is due in part to the time-tested artistic excellence of some of the individual physical units. It seems, however, much more generally due to the cumulative effect of many adjacent physical units more notable for a picturesque harmoniousness and self-consistency in the pleasant impressions they produce than for any breath-taking beauty in most of the component units. This in turn seems to be due primarily to two historic facts.

In the first place, these physical units (residential and otherwise) were created, to an extent that is extraordinary considering the size of the city, to meet the practical needs and satisfy the esthetic desires of people who were for the time being very prosperous and whose preferences were directly or indirectly much influenced by some of the finer cultural traditions of England and America, at periods when the prevailing fashions happened to be such that the general run of design and construction (apart from any masterpieces) could readily be done, and was done, with a workmanlike understanding of what was attempted, so that at worst it seldom fell below

G.C. ✓

the level of a rather pleasant mediocrity and so that whatever fine qualities were attained supported and reinforced each other instead of clashing and cancelling out.

In the second place, during the unhappy period of some fifty or sixty years after 1860, in spite of much damage and outright destruction, by fire, earthquake, delapidation and otherwise, of the physical things and conditions which gave rise to the intangible values in question, and in spite of the intrusion into the gaps of much inharmonious and artistically inferior stuff (such as was characteristic of this unlovely period in most American cities), Charleston was saved by the very fact of its economic reverses and the comparative slowness of its economic recovery and physical growth from doing a great deal of deliberate destruction of good old things ~~themselves~~ merely to make way for good, bad or indifferent new ones. Because of the great shrinkage in number of the people who could afford to maintain them for anything like ~~them~~ the kinds of use for which they were created, many fine buildings and other physical units largely contributory to the characteristic charm of Charleston became vacant and delapidated. Many were put to ~~makeshift~~ other uses in a makeshift way, not infrequently for housing negroes or white people of very small means and often of low standards in other respects. A great many lost, by delapidation, nearly all but the "structural bones" of their earlier amenity. Even in localities where old houses were retained in use as residences by people who both appreciated them and were able to keep them in something like their best state, a slowly progressive increase in the demand for houses of some sort by people who could not or would not meet the cost (in taxes, interest, and even the most modest upkeep) of having gardens or yards of any considerable size, and diminution or limitation of the number of those who could and would, led to the conversion of many of the old gardens which were an important element in ~~the~~ producing the values of the old residential districts into separate house-lots, on which were ~~erected~~ crowded in additional, ~~and~~ frequently buildings. These were ~~frequently~~ often utterly incongruous with the older buildings on either side of them, being in the then current builders' mode; and as such have seriously impaired the intangible values we are discussing in localities where they would otherwise be very well preserved. But even had they been architectural gems, ~~entirely~~ ~~inxinxing~~ and quite in the manner of ~~the~~ surrounding old houses, they would still have had a serious depreciating effect through crowding out the garden-spaces which were an integral part of the earlier dwellings and delightfully characteristic elements in the urban scenery of Charleston. By these and kindred processes there has gone on a slow but cumulative "nibbling away" of the peculiar and precious intangible assets of Charleston, in-

volving an impairment of their present total effective value altogether disproportionate to the amount of actual physical destruction of fine old buildings and the like. Unfortunately such destructive processes are still continuing, though still slowly, and though the total values are still large and are coming to be more and more highly appreciated.

For, in the third place, of late years a strong and very encouraging counter-current has been gathering headway. A notable and progressive increase in the number of people, both Charlestonians and from elsewhere, greatly interested in and appreciative of these peculiar intangible ~~xxx~~ values and also willing and able to do something and spend something in pursuit of that interest, has led to the rehabilitation and refurbishing of a considerable number of fine old dwellings and the adaptation of other interesting old structures and their surviving accessories to new uses, in a manner deliberately, and for the most part successfully, aimed at obtaining a high degree of enjoyment for the new occupants of these properties (and incidentally for other people) of the very qualities which are the warp and woof of those same intangible values we are discussing. The extent of such relatively recent "rehabilitations" and the importance of their contribution toward conserving, perpetuating, and — I will not say "restoring" because the word has a pernicious connotation, but — reinvigorating the peculiar and distinctive amenity of residential Charleston is very striking to one who has seen less of the city in the last twenty-five years than he remembers from the previous twenty-five.

Now there are three things which seem very significant about these rehabilitations in relation to possible work of your committee.

First: they are for the most part undertaken and carried out not by any means as an archeologist might prepare a valued museum specimen inherited from and ~~xxx~~ ~~representative~~ illustrative of some by-gone "culture" (whether of a hundred or a thousand or ten thousand years ago); but as a process of utilizing and adapting, to meet the immanent present needs and aspirations of present-day people, certain pleasing old things which they believe can be so re-utilized and re-adapted and yet retain much if not all of the essentials of those pleasant qualities that are seen to have withstood the test of time and changing fashions. This is the same sort of normal, healthy ~~xxx~~ adaptive process, more conservative than destructive, but more progressive than static, by which families — and civilizations — of long-sustained vigor and fine accomplishment have dealt with and built upon what one generation inherits from another. Theulti-

mate results from such a process depend upon whether those who carry it on most actively are the wiser and more understanding of their own generation in such matters, or the reverse.

Second: the process tends to be economically self-sustaining. That is to say there appears to be a persistent and increasing "effective demand" for living and other quarters in old properties rehabilitated with a conscious intention of perpetuating, emphasizing and "realizing on" these intangible values distinctive of Old Charleston, at prices which encourage further investments of a similar sort. This promises well as to the quantity of such rehabilitation work that may become possible through private initiative in the near future. But there is inherent in this situation a very serious danger. For it tends to stimulate a widespread uncritical notion that, somehow or other, by hook or by crook, alluring money profits can be made by exploiting this attractiveness for people with money to spend, which so evidently attaches to "Old Charleston" in some vaguely conceived way. This is the sort of notion out of which grow speculative manias of mercenary exploitation, often involving ignorant, short-sighted and recklessly selfish enterprizes of a catch-penny sort, progressively destructive of the values they try to exploit. Such a speculative mania, if it got out of hand, might do more damage to the really important intangible values of Old Charleston than all the physical destructions and delapidations of a long period of neglect.

Third. The notable achievements in rehabilitating individual old buildings owe their success to a high degree of skill in design and execution, exercised by people who have a keen appreciation of the esthetic qualities of the old work which they are trying to perpetuate, who also frankly accept the necessity of meeting requirements of modern life that were not provided for or dreamed of when the buildings were erected, and who are able to carry out as good a solution of this difficult adjustment of conflicting desiderata as their skill permits because the entire property is under control of a single owner. It is difficult enough, at that, in adapting a typical fine dwelling of (say) the 18th century to 20th century uses, to keep unspoiled those qualities of it which are as admirable to-day as they were when it was built while adequately meeting certain indispensable practical requirements of to-day — such, for example, as modern bath-rooms. But the adaptation of whole urban districts of fine quality, dating from past centuries, to the conditions of 20th century life involves much more complex problems of a parallel kind, which are beyond possibility of successful solution through any individualistic process of piecemeal adaptations, lot by lot. Parallel with the individual's problem of incorporating modern bath-

rooms into a single 18th century house is the community problem of (say) providing adequately for the indispensable circulation and parking of multitudinous automobiles in an extensive urban district the characteristic charm of which is bound up with, and largely dependent on, the narrowness, smallness of scale, and related esthetic qualities of streets and alleys which antedate even the "horse-and-buggy era". The combined esthetic and functional problem is inherently no less difficult to solve well, and the obstacles to successful solution are enormously increased by partition of responsibilities and powers of control among diverse lot-owners and the municipal authorities in control of streets. With this division, the line of least resistance as vehicular congestion grows intolerable is apt to lie in the direction of spasmodic and often ill-considered street-widenings. That is the most obvious way to "do something" about it, and is entirely within the power of a single agency, the municipal government, which is peculiarly susceptible to sudden, transitory political pressures. It is horrid to think of the irreparable esthetic ~~injury~~ losses to Charleston that could result from the ramming through of a few such street-widenings. To find a less destructive means of relief that will really meet the need will require patient and skillful study and co-operative action.

It may prove that the most generally applicable solution of this particular problem is to use the old narrow streets, without substantial physical change or alteration of their ancient charm, up to somewhere near their maximum potential capacity for moving traffic, by means of suitable traffic regulation and by providing off-street parking spaces for standing vehicles in localities where such spaces can be provided at the least cost in money and in esthetic values — perhaps even with ~~some~~ some gains in esthetic values, since these new open-spaces walled and bordered by trees, could re-create something ~~maximizes~~ in general effect not unlike some of the old gardens that have been destroyed.

Be that as it may, the major point remains clear: if extensive old districts of great inherent charm are to be successfully adapted to a living community's changing needs, something more is required than skillful rehabilitations of successive units on individual initiative. There is need for carefully considered community planning and community effort.

The central problem of your Committee, then, might be stated as a search for any promising and suitable means toward conserving and bringing to renewed fruition certain precious and highly vulnerable intangible values peculiar to Charleston, chiefly through per-

petuating and utilizing the old physical things and conditions on which those values now depend as functioning integral parts of a live and ever-changing contemporary community with its fave to the future.

Various lines of inquiry suggest themselves as worth exploring in the early stages of that search. Among these the most immediately important, perhaps, is a sort of comprehensive stock-taking or inventory of the existing things and conditions that definitely appear to contribute in some considerable degree to the values in question.

## INVENTORY.

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A preliminary inventory of the physical units in the City of Charleston which are judged to be of any considerable importance, immediate or potential, as contributing to the peculiar group of intangible values previously discussed seems to be one of the first things for the Committee to press forward with. There are several partial listings of such units, published and unpublished, in many cases giving very complete data in regard to each unit included (measured drawings, photographs, historical and critical notes, etc.) What is now most needed is a single systematic inventory much more completely inclusive than any of these but, in its first preparation at least, very much more summary and brief in the information it includes as to each unit listed, and also more systematically critical in its classification and rating of the qualities in each listed unit which led to its inclusion in the inventory. The methods of making the inventory and recording the information assembled ought, of course, to be such as to facilitate later elaboration by the inclusion of additional data in regard to any or all of the units listed, or the inclusion of additional units, without ~~change~~ radical revision of the system of records; but the first consideration at present is to get a sufficiently inclusive inventory completed within a reasonably short time, and within the resources presently available, that will fairly dependable and fairly self-consistent in ~~the~~ its critical judgements upon relative Values of different

the usefulness

classes of units listed. The ~~value~~ of such an inventory, in its preliminary form, will be ~~the~~ much more dependent upon the quality of critical judgement exercised in assigning items to one class or another of different kinds of values than upon any amount of laboriousness in recording the kind of factual data which immature assistants can be trained to gather and tabulate.

My brief experience in traversing a good many miles of Charleston streets, very rapidly, with Mr. Stoney, Mr. Howells and Mr. Simons, observing and very briefly commenting on the things we saw of interest in this connection, leads me to believe, first, that any two of the four of us, with the aid of a car and driver and an intelligent clerical recorder, could record the essential facts and judgements for such a preliminary comprehensive inventory on a rather surprisingly large mileage of the streets of Charleston, on the average, in a single afternoon; and second, that if the inventory were to be made initially by some such method (that is to say by a pair, or more than one pair, of people of comparably mature judgement and background) it could be brought to satisfactory com-

pletion in its preliminary form without any more burden on their time and energy, and probably with less, than if they ~~were~~ attempted to direct, supervise, ~~and~~ review and accept final responsibility for an inventory more elaborately organized and relying on a staff of relatively immature assistants for the initial field-work.

It would take a good many afternoons to finish the job. How many it is hard to guess until it is tried. And the methods will have to be worked out by trial ~~in~~ in the field by those who do it. In the hope, based on what was said at our last conference in Charleston, that Mr. Howells and Mr. Stoney will do some experimenting with the method I will offer some suggestions as to how I would start experimenting with it if I were to be one the pair first trying it out.

(1) Mapping, and Numbering of Items Inventoried.

I would divide the city into districts, probably not more than nine, varying greatly in size according to the expected frequency of items to be listed hoping to keep the final number of items in each district of about the same order of magnitude, and assign a number to each district, (or a letter?). Items listed in any district would be numbered consecutively as noted, beginning with "1", and the numbers entered at the proper places on the district map. The identifying number of any item and of any data subsequently assembled about it would then

~~be~~ be the number of its district followed by its location number in the district. The boundaries between districts probably ought to be streets, but since some items will be compositions including both sides of a street it would be well to have a convention that such items along boundary streets belong to the ~~southwest~~ district south or west of the street.

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(2) Classification of items according to kind.

a. The majority of items will be individual buildings, with or without accessories directly associated with ~~them~~ ~~each~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~normal~~ ~~unit~~ ~~is~~ ~~designated~~ ~~by~~ ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ each, and the normal kind of unit can probably best be defined, for the sake of simplicity and ease of identification, as a specified building together with anything else (of interest from the point of view of the inventory) which is on the same lot as that building. In case of two or more buildings on the same lot calling for separate annotation (and ultimately files of additional data relating to each) they would all bear the same ~~same~~ ~~one~~ unit-number but could be distinguished by subscript letters (as: 14a, 14b, etc.). In regard to each such unit the essential points to be noted in the first rapid cursory survey of the whole city would be covered by simple yes-or-no answers to a very limited number of

routine questions, such as I will suggest below, which can be ticked off on a card bearing the number of the unit as fast as the observers can say "yes" or "no", leaving them ready to go on to the next unit that draws their attention as worthy of recording by a number on the district map and a new file-card.

b. A second kind of unit, equally simple of definition, is a lot, or parcel of land, without any building on it but making some definite and considerable contribution to the special intangible values of Charleston which are the subject of the inventory — such as certain burial grounds, squares, parks, etc., and perhaps some old garden-spaces or lots formerly attached to buildings but now without buildings. The essential points to be noted about each unit of this kind are naturally different, and it may be convenient to have a different set of cards for recording them. These points also will be discussed below.

c. A third, and somewhat miscellaneous, kind of "units" about which it will be found important to make notes from time to time but the boundaries of which are necessarily vaguer, and which may often overlap with or include several units of the normal kinds "a" and "b" above mentioned, may be called "scenic units" or "neighborhood units", each embracing a number of different parcels of property in whole or in part and often parts of streets, and each having certain distinctive qualities when considered as a whole that contribute something important to the intangible values in question over and above ~~anything mentioned~~ ~~the~~ the individual values of the component parts of this more inclusive "scenic unit". Units of this kind will be more fully discussed below. The points to be noted here ~~in these~~ are, first, that in making records about the easily defined (cadastrally defined) units of kinds "a" and "b" it may be necessary at times to make cross-references to notes about one of these more inclusive units of kind "c", and second, that it is out of the question to attempt anything like a complete or logically consistent listing of units of kind "c" because the number of such essentially pictorial compositions, overlapping with each other as well as with the spatially definite units of kinds "a" and "b", is practically infinite. Only ~~these~~ such units of this "c" kind should be noted as (1) give significance for the purposes of this inventory to objects or pieces of property not otherwise worth noting because of their individual qualities or (2) give added significance and value to properties listed under "a" or "b" through their contribution to the effectiveness of these ~~larger~~ more inclusive pictorial compositions.

(3) Essential points to be noted about units of kind "a".

1. Location. The approximate location of each unit will be indicated quickly by ~~mark~~ the observer's penciling its number on the district map when starting to comment on it. (The clerical recorder will at the same time enter the number on a card, together with the name of the building or its street number or other note suf-

ficient, with the approximately located pencil number on the map, for him to identify the property definitely so that he can subsequently add to the card or to a supplementary file under the same number any desirable items of information obtainable from existing records.)

2. General Rating. The mere assignment of a number to a unit is a record of the observer's judgement that the unit, taken as a whole, is of some definite value as contributing to the characteristic amenities of Charleston. It is certainly desirable to distinguish two, and probably three, degrees in the importance attached by the observers (however tentatively and subject to later reconsideration) to the value of that contribution, whatever its special nature may be: corresponding, let us say, with the familiar Baedeker ratings, "worthy of mention", "starred" and "double starred".

3. Exterior of Building, Rating. Here two distinct kinds of questions need to be answered in each case. First: regardless of whether it is good, bad or indifferent as an example of architecture of its own kind, are its characteristics such that (a) it contributes positively in some degree to the historically characteristic (and generally agreeable) aspects of Charleston, or (b) definitely detracts therefrom (as in the case of a few ~~modern~~ structures interpolated into properties otherwise notably worthy)? Second: is it, in addition to being locally characteristic and as such worthy of note in this inventory, a distinguished example of architecture ~~mixt~~ in its own right, such as would be worth considerable effort to preserve wherever found and regardless of historical or other associations?

(4. Interior of Building, Rating. A space on the card for notes as to the ~~interior~~ should be provided, but no time should be taken during the preliminary survey for answering questions on this score except where the observers happen to be so familiar with the facts in advance that they can answer the questions off-hand with confidence. The questions would be parallel with those under 3 above.) (Similarly for dates, both of exteriors and of interiors, spaces should be provided on the cards for such entries, but no time should be taken by the observers during the preliminary survey for entering them, ~~xxxx~~ approximately or precisely. So far as obtainable from reliable publications they can be subsequently entered by the clerical recorder.)

5. Type of building. (Church, residence, slave-quarters, stable, warehouse, etc., and predominant exterior material) With their intimate knowledge of most of the material the observers can doubtless devise and agree upon ~~x~~ sub-classes of several of these main types, especially of residences, into which most of the buildings will readily fall and which are sufficiently significant as to the general appearance of the buildings and their respective importance historically and ~~materially~~ as component parts of the urban scenery to make such sub-classification worth noting systematically.

6. Apparent condition of building. (As to dilapidation and/or alterations injurious to its value for the purposes of this inventory.) Perhaps the only very important point to note is whether there appears to be immi-

inent risk of serious loss of value for the purposes of this inventory in the absence of protective measures in the near future.

7. Garden or grounds.

- a. General Rating. Do the grounds, apart from the building or buildings, make a notable contribution to the values in question? (No, Yes, or Yes starred.)
- b. If yes, is the mere open space they provide a large element in the value contributed?
- c. Do they make important contributions of a more positive sort:
  - (1) By the presence of important trees or other conspicuous foliage?
  - (2) By gates, walls, fences, or other structural accessories?
  - (3) By the general quality of their design?
- (d. It may be worth while to note systematically those cases in which the grounds present that highly characteristic Charlestonian arrangement of a side-garden of considerable width on the southerly or westerly side of a house close to the street, overlooking the garden from porches and well-separated from the next house by the side-garden; and also to note the cases where that arrangement formerly existed but has been destroyed by the building of a new house in the garden.)

(4) Essential Points to be noted about units of kind "b".

Practically same as about (3) 7. a., b., and c. above.

(5) Supplementary items of information, to be gathered by clerical assistants if and when convenient, in regard to units of kinds "a" and "b", for which convenient spaces might well be provided on the cards:

Frontage width and area, of lot.

Assessed valuation.

(The following, for units of kind "a" only, is desirable not only for its significance as to existing conditions but as an indication of the probable effective influence of the present Zoning Ordinance against crowding in of new structures.)

Actual present facts.	Permissible under Zoning Ordinance.
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% of lot occupied by buildings. . . . . (Max.)

Width of side yard, S. or W. side. . . . . (Min.)

Width of side yard, N. or E. side. . . . . (Min.)

Total width of side yards, both. . . . . (Min.)

Usual identifying name of property.

Street and street number.

References to available detailed information about the unit, published or unpublished: specifically, (a) measured drawings, (b) photographs, (c) critical evaluation, (d) historical data.

(6) Miscellaneous Units (kind "c").

Random notes supplementing remarks under "(2) c" above. In the course of exploration for units of the ~~ininitely~~ ~~definable~~ kinds "a" and "b" ~~extending~~ ~~indefinable~~ ~~drawn~~ having easily definable boundaries, attention will inevitably be drawn to compositions, such as certain "street vistas", and certain groupings of buildings, trees, and whatnot, or more broadly certain arrangements of solids and voids, which contribute something of importance — sometimes of very great importance — to the intangible values under investigation, over and above the contributions ~~maxim~~ attributable to any of the units of kinds "a" and "b" as such. Some of these compositions or "scenic units" are rather definitely determinable pictorial compositions, seen at their best from one ~~particular~~ ~~particular~~ particular spot, and recordable for purposes of identification by means of a photograph taken from that spot. Most of them would be very inadequately and misleadingly represented by any one photograph or drawing or painting, because each of these more complex "units" presents to an observer as he moves about a whole series of widely differing pictorial compositions which he nevertheless recognizes as merely different aspects of ~~maxim~~ ~~maxim~~ a single esthetic and spacial unit, recognizably distinct from other such units even though its spacial boundaries may be vague and may overlap with the boundaries of other such units.

altogether

We certainly cannot afford to ignore units of this kind, however elusive of precise ~~definition~~ identification and delimitation; because some of the most important of the values we are considering arise only from units of this kind, and because these units include some ~~not~~ physical objects (buildings and otherwise) and some voids which are of very real importance to the purposes of this inventory solely because of their inclusion in such units and which would otherwise not be worthy of note. And yet, as I have said before, it would be an absolutely hopeless task to attempt a complete, or even a logically systematic, cataloguing of units of this protean sort. As a practical procedure I suggest trying something like the following.

Carry a separate map for notes relating to units of this kind "c", and, when values of notable importance are observed which clearly attach to a unit of this "c" kind and cannot be accounted for by the qualities of any one unit of the "a" or "b" kinds, roughly mark around with pencil an area with which those values seem to be associated and which seems off-hand to have a reasonable degree of visual unity, without stopping for any careful analysis as to whether it should be more or less inclusive but generally favoring the more inclusive, and mark

it with a letter as a locality deserving further study at a future time for qualities not recorded or recordable as peculiar to any of the units of kinds "a" or "b" which it may include in whole or in part. Sometimes a catch-word or a few catch-words might be jotted down under a corresponding letter as a reminder of what it was that led to marking the locality on the map; or perhaps on the map itself a dot and arrow or arrows as a reminder of the place from which the observer noticed a pictorial composition inclusive of more than one "property unit" and of sufficient importance to suggest the making of a note about a "c" unit. The areas thus roughly indicated on the map might overlap one on another, or a larger one include a smaller one; they and the accompanying notes might be wholly unintelligible to anyone but the maker; their purpose would be simply to remind the observers, when they came to review the map and tabulation of definite units of kinds "a" and "b" that there was something in each of the noted localities calling for further analysis and record before the Inventory can be regarded as representing all the important facts. What form the record of those supplementary facts should take can be far better determined after the ground has been given the "once-over" in the process of noting individual properties of definite interest in themselves than it possibly can be in advance.

If by any chance there is available an aerial photographic map of Charleston on a tolerably large scale, large enough to make individual buildings recognizably distinct, its use in the field would greatly facilitate such a survey as is above discussed.

CERTAIN FINANCIAL FACTORS BEARING ON LOSS AND PROTECTION OF THE VALUES IN QUESTION.

It is clear that some of the physical changes that have been most seriously injurious to the peculiar esthetic qualities of Charleston have been motivated largely by the pressure of financial burdens, or of opportunities for financial gain, on property owners who in the absence of such pressures would have been glad enough not to make these esthetically injurious changes — as notably in the case of sacrificing spacious side-gardens of old houses in order to squeeze in additional houses for a cash return.

Moreover it seems probable that many opportunities have been lost, and are liable to be lost in the future, for rehabilitating old properties in a manner highly desirable for the perpetuation and enhancement of these community values, and at the same time economically justifiable, simply through the inability of the property owners to finance such desirable undertakings on a reasonably favorable basis by mortgages obtainable through ordinary commercial channels. In some such cases the result is to leave old properties of inherently fine qualities in a state of disrepair, subject to further delapidation, and bringing in small returns in direct usefulness or in money to the owners. In other cases it is to induce alterations that are positively and seriously injurious to esthetic values of real importance to the community; simply because those happen to be the alterations which offer the most obvious, if not the only, prospect of a fair return to property owners who have to rely for much of their financing on the ordinarily available mortgage market. Lenders in that market, as a matter of habit and routine, prefer to loan on improvements of a familiar, conventional, commonplace sort; are not apt to make it either easy or economical ~~to~~ borrow for improvements of a different sort, such as <sup>are</sup> usually involved in ~~taxationizing~~ adapting a fine old building to new uses with a nice regard for its esthetic and historic values, even if a patient and thorough analysis would show them to be an equally sound investment; and of course they cannot normally make any allowance for the fact that one way of improving an old property would benefit and another way would damage such an intangible thing as your committee is concerned with protecting.

One question that seems worth investigating, in connection with gardens of old dwellings, is how far the burden of ~~taxationizing~~ taxes on real estate has been, or is likely to be, an important element in discouraging people from keeping such gardens and other old open spaces on private land permanently free from buildings.

If it is found to be a seriously important factor in the financial pressure tending toward the progressive elimination of these open spaces, so eminently characteristic of Old Charleston and contributing so much to its charm, then serious study may well be given to the possibility of inducing the City to adopt the policy of allowing a substantial measure of tax-exemption to the owners of such ancient open spaces of interest to the whole community, so long as they are maintained. If this should be found desirable and at all within the range of "practical politics" the method of applying the principle would have to be very carefully worked out. Not improbably it would be wise to provide for keeping a running account for each parcel on which such tax-exemption was allowed, showing the cumulative total of the exemptions to date, with interest, and to provide that ~~is~~ if at any time the open space in question ceases to be kept open and to serve the public interest which justified the exemption then the entire amount of exempted taxes with interest to date shall become immediately payable and constitute a tax-lien on the property. ~~such~~

Whether this tax-exemption idea is worth enough to justify the amount of work that would certainly be required before it could be put into effect, or not; the mortgage-financing situation certainly deserves careful and thorough study in relation to many of the properties which will be listed in the Inventory. The following random notes will suggest lines of investigation some of which were touched on in our discussions at Charleston.

A. Even without any large capital resources of its own, a suitably organized permanent agency could provide a very valuable service of information, advice and assistance for people of good-will owning properties such as are being listed in the Inventory:-

- (1) In regard to methods and sources through which to raise capital for financing proposed rehabilitations of such properties and their adaptation to new uses in so far as the contemplated investments would be definitely beneficial to the community values with which the Inventory is concerned. This central information service should be able to acquire a much more complete understanding than individual property owners are apt to have of the technical ins and outs of this complicated business. (E.g. What help, if any, is obtainable and how from Federal sources, Housing Administration or otherwise, in the way of mortgage guarantees and/or in other ways? What outside sources of mortgage money, if any, can be tapped on more favorable rates than are available in the local market? Etc.)
- (2) In regard to methods of devising and presenting definite plans, physical and financial, for the alterations contemplated in a given property, so as to make them satisfactory both from the community's interest in ~~the~~ historic and esthetic values and from the point of view of economic

return on the investment. Far short of furnishing complete professional services below cost and in competition with architects and other professional people in private practice, a great deal of valuable guidance could be given. To mention only one thing, there appear to be certain rather definite types of problems in architectural adaptation of old Charleston buildings to modern conditions, of rather urgent importance from the point of view of your committee, for which satisfactory solutions have not yet been devised by anybody so far as I could learn, nor are likely to be without the application of an amount of concentrated and laborious study and ingenuity quite disproportionate to the compensation received by an architect for planning a small job of alterations undertaken "on spec" by a house-owner. For instance, there is the recurrent problem of adapting a fine, typical old Charleston single-family dwelling of large size, in a locality where there is no present or immediately prospective demand for single-family houses of that size, for use as an apartment house, or for other use that meets a real need of the time and the place, without ruining its characteristic charming qualities, as by incongruous outside stairs. A joint attack on some of these typical problems, as a community enterprise, might well be organized by an agency of the kind indicated, the results thereof being pooled and made available without cost to individual owners and architects who show a disposition to co-operate with the agency in furthering its community objectives.

(3) A valuable service could probably be rendered by systematically searching for specific favorable opportunities for rehabilitating and re-adapting old properties included in the Inventory in a desirable manner with reasonable prospects of a fair return on the investment, and then actively stimulating the owners or other investors to undertake the work with the guidance and help of the agency in both of the ways above mentioned.

B. If such an agency, or some other agency working in co-operation with it, could be provided with a sufficiently large block of capital for use as a long-term revolving fund without expectation of earning commercially attractive profits, direct mortgage loans at less than minimum market rates could, in special cases, permit the financing of peculiarly desirable rehabilitations of old properties which appeared to be too close to the line of not being self-liquidating to be otherwise possible.

The question of outright cash subsidies for rehabilitations of an exceptionally desirable sort, but definitely not more than partly self-liquidating, is quite another subject.

## OTHER LINES OF INVESTIGATION

The Inventory above discussed, although of great importance as a guide toward intelligent constructive action, will be of little practical use except as such action is taken along specific lines calculated (a) definitely to prevent or minimize specific threatened physical injuries of a serious sort to the things on which the intangible values in question depend, or (b) definitely to stimulate specific physical changes in those things, or in their environment, clearly desirable for conserving or enhancing the values in question, or both. Concurrently with work on the inventory it is desirable to make preliminary exploration of several possible lines of action that offer some promise of practical results in one or both of the ways above mentioned. It is hardly necessary to say that, as part of the action to be taken along any of these specific lines that are found worth persistent effort, and as underlying them all, there will be need for systematic educational propaganda as to the nature and importance of the intangible values at stake, aimed at and adapted to particular groups and individuals as well as the public at large; the technique of such propaganda will not here be discussed. Some of the possible specialized lines of activity that seem worth careful preliminary exploration will be outlined below, without much regard to their relative importance.

### PROTECTIVE POSSIBILITIES OF "ZONING", OR MORE BROADLY, OF THE USE OF THE " POLICE POWER".

As a means of preventing actions by individuals unreasonably injurious to the interests of a community, public opinion, when sufficiently strong, wide-spread and persistent, can be implemented by resort to compulsion under the police power. The Charleston Zoning Ordinance is an attempt of that sort directly bearing on the objectives of the Committee in two ways.

(1) By provisions of a type common to all zoning ordinances and based on principles the validity of which is fully recognized by the Courts (subject to proper application in detail) limitations are established for each district (a) as to the kinds of uses to which private property may be put and (b) as to the bulk of building permissible on any given lot and the minimum permissible amounts of open spaces on the same lots, and as to the positions thereof.

The Curtailment of old open spaces on lots by erecting buildings therein, and the adaptation of old properties to new uses by esthetically injurious alterations or by demolition of old buildings to make way for new, have been major causes of impairment in the intangible values peculiar to Charlestpn; and it is well worth while to scrutinize each "unit" listed in the inventory, lot by lot, to determine just what practical effect, if any of importance, the above mentioned limitations of the present Zoning Ordinance are likely to have in each case; if firmly enforced in guarding against otherwise probable losses of value of the same kind; and to determine whether that protective effect could be substantially increased by any reasonable modifications in detail of the Ordinance, either by adjustments of District boundaries or by amendments of the text or both.

It should be noted in this connection that the side-yard requirements of the present Ordinance may have, in special cases, a much more considerable protective effect of this sort than is suggested by the rather meager minimum dimensions for side-yards as required by the ordinance; provided that the "teeth" for enforcement of the requirements are not extracted from the Ordinance by administrative leniency -- for which unlimited excuses are provided in the loose discretionary powers granted to the Board of Adjustment. For instance, in 4th, 5th, and 6th H & A districts (covering most of the "Old Historic Charleston" area) the Ordinance requires side-yards only 18 feet in total width, of which as little as 12 feet may be left on the southern or western (or "garden") side. The characteristic widths of side-yard gardens of Old Charleston are much greater than 12 feet, and the curtailment of one of them to 12 feet would in most cases involve a serious loss of intangible values for the community; but where an existing building has a side-yard (say) 45 feet wide on its southern or western side the Ordinance makes it illegal to erect a new and separate dwelling on that space, unless it is confined to the generally impractical width of 15 feet, OR unless the old building is first torn down, OR unless the Board of Adjustment leniently waives the requirement. Almost every lot worthy of listing in the Inventory is likely to present a special case for interpretation of the protective effect of the Ordinance and systematic scrutiny of these cases is likely to call attention to a number of situations worth careful watching and positive action at the appropriate time.

(2) Article X of the Zoning Ordinance directly attempts to protect the intangible values characteristic of "Old and Historic Charleston" by requiring, as a condition for the issuance of a building permit or a certificate of occupancy, approval of exterior architectural features, by a Board of Architectural Review. Wise, skillful, and energetic use of the principles involved in this article could in theory, and might in practice, accomplish all the protection to the intangible values in question that can possibly be given by resort to the police power. And that is great deal of protection.

Procedure under this article, if sufficiently vigorous and compulsive to accomplish anything of importance that could not be accomplished by unofficial persuasion, involves skating on very thin ice from the point of view of constitutionality. About this something will be said below. But it is important to keep in mind that a great deal can be accomplished by tactful and judicious use of the mechanism set up by this article, short of litigation that would bring questions of constitutionality before the Courts for decision, because of the reluctance of most people to undertake costly and laborious litigation over doubtful constitutional issues where the money values at stake for them are not correspondingly large. What is most needed for making the Zoning Ordinance effective towards protecting the intangible values under discussion is persistent, alert, unflinching use toward that end of the mechanism provided by the Ordinance, tempered by tactfulness and legal caution, but not pusilanimously side-stepped through indifference or laziness, or through fear of calling influential people to account, or through mere complaisant amiability. Incidents related to me by members of the committee strongly suggest administrative weakness of some of the latter kinds, that call for persistent follow-up and prodding and perhaps for changes of personnel.

A thorough and dependable discussion of the constitutional questions involved in Article X is beyond my ability; but I feel bound to call attention to certain points that have impressed themselves on me in following, as a deeply interested non-lawyer, the trend of judicial decisions in such matters. This Article X, like the Shipstead Act applying to the District of Columbia, and a few other pieces of legislation of recent years, attempts to go further in the protection of the community's interest in certain values of a primarily esthetic sort, by direct and unevasive resort to the police powers, than any legislation which has, so far as I know, been sanctioned as constitutional by the United States Supreme Court, and no less far than some older pieces of legislation formerly invalidated by Courts as injustifiable invasions of those private liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. For many years, in response to changing conditions and especially to the increasingly complicated interdependence of people in American communities, there has been a marked trend of public opinion and of Court decisions in support of increasingly far-reaching restraints on the liberty of individuals to act for their private interests in ways ~~which~~ clearly and seriously injurious to the public interest in values of many kinds which would not formerly have been considered proper subjects for such interference. This has been true to a considerable degree with respect to the public interest in values of an essentially esthetic sort; but the Courts have been much more cautious and reluctant about going beyond established precedents to protect esthetic values for the public; than in the case of values more certainly measurable in economic terms. Their legalistic rationalizing of this reluctance may have been artificial, and unconvincing from a social standpoint in many cases; but there is something behind this reluctance that is of real and enduring validity and social importance. It is something which, except under definitely tyrannical governments, will permanently limit the extent of which individuals may be compelled, by ~~force~~ ~~the~~ forcible use of the police power, to act against their own will and preference in matters of esthetic choice at the dictation of government officials. I believe that our Courts will continue, as they have been doing, to recognize more and more the legitimacy of definite protection of intangible values of an esthetic sort important to community welfare, by restraining hasty, inconsiderate, selfish actions by private individuals unreasonably destructive of such values. I believe they will, more and more be inclined to approve and support what may be called suspensory veto OF PRIVATE ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE CLAIMED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE public to be of that nature; so as to allow time for free discussion for persuasion and education of the parties concerned, and for seeking mutually acceptable solutions or tolerant and reasonable compromises of conflicting interests. But in cases where there proves to be an irreconcilable, and not manifestly unreasonable, difference of opinion concerning esthetic values, I believe our Courts will continue unwilling to force a private citizen against his will and without compensation to obey the fiat of government officials based simply on esthetic preferences no matter how respectable.

The forcible suppression, by people who for the time being control the machinery of government, of personal preferences contrary to their own, in matters of esthetics just as truly as in matters specifically mentioned in the Bill of Rights -- freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of the press -- is fundamentally destructive of the finest and most precious qualities of civilized life; and a general awakening, now beginning to show itself in America, to the dangers ~~of~~ to civilization implicit in the current world-wide recrudescence of govern-

mental coercion in such matters may be expected, in the long run, to stiffen the resistance of our Courts to all such arbitrary encroachments on personal liberty.

To get back to our buttons: the Zoning Ordinance (with or without modifications in detail which may be suggested by careful study of its provisions in relation to specific units listed in the Inventory) can be very helpful in protecting the intangible values peculiar to Charleston if persistently and wisely administered toward that end, with a combination of firmness and tact, primarily as a means of education and persuasion. It can be used effectively to stave off some kinds of proposed alterations, demolitions and new constructions that would be seriously damaging to those values, at least long enough to give opportunity for educating the proponents as to the nature and seriousness of the damage, helping them to find if possible methods of substantially accomplishing their legitimate objectives without doing such damage, or perhaps persuading them to forego some personal advantage, financial or otherwise, out of regard for the general good of the community. And in cases where none of those happy solutions can be reached, where the threatened damage to community interests can not be avoided without a really burdensome sacrifice which the property-owner cannot reasonably be expected to assume, it may offer opportunity to make that unavoidable burden acceptable by means of financial aid from community sources. Such aid might take various forms to be discussed elsewhere.

But if attempts are made to force property-owners, after reasonable delay for discussion, to assume such burdens against their will under the terms of Article X, I should expect adverse Court decisions which might destroy the practical usefulness of the Article.

### Aim of Survey

*to find means to*

to preserve the "intangible values" through the preservation of physical units (buildings, gardens, churches, vistas, etc.) which in combination make up a "distinctive and charming amenity"

*of Charleston*

### Elements contributing to the loss of this amenity

- A. Deliberate destruction of old things to make way for new.
- B. Inadvertant destruction through financial pressure, resulting in :
  - 1. delapidation
  - 2. multiple housing for low rent tenants in buildings designed for single dwellings
  - 3. ill-advised alterations for multiple-housing
  - 4. destruction of gardens for new and cheap buildings for quick financial return

### Elements contributing to the preservation of this amenity

- A. Counter-current of appreciation tending to encourage preservation and rehabilitation of old buildings and adaptation to new uses.
- B. Realization of economic value of the old.

### Features of the present trend of preservation

- A. Undertaken by individuals according to individual taste and whim.  
Danger: lack of understanding of what constitutes the real value.
- B. Economically self-sustaining  
Danger: exploitation of age and charm in the creation of pseudo-"old Charleston" effects
- C. Rehabilitation of individual buildings only attempted  
Danger: leaves communal and neighborhood problems unsolved; rehabilitation of one good unit possibly ruined by bad handling of another neighboring unit.

### The Inventory

As a basis for any plan of preservation it is necessary to make a critical inventory of all the tangible esthetic assets, buildings, gardens, parks, etc.

#### 1. Mapping:

Locate by number on a map divided into districts all items houses, churches, etc. of value.

#### 2. Classification:

By building, park, garden, vista, of group composition.

#### 3. Rating

By quality and value for preservation, condition, etc.

#### 4. Supplementary information,

Size, assessed value, references, etc.

### Zoning

Prevent action of individuals detrimental to the intangible values of the whole by a firm application of the zoning law and by public opinion.

### Legal Aspects

The present judicial trend is toward the protection of the "good of the whole", and restraint of the liberties of the individual when detrimental to the good of the whole, ~~though not strictly illegal.~~

This trend, however, is less pronounced when only esthetic values are involved.

*Further*

### Financial Aspects of Preservation

It is clear that the loss, change, and destruction of the fine and old are inextricably mixed with financial problems.

#### Cause

1. Delapidation permitted, unfavorable alterations allowed because of financial pressure

2. Gardens and open spaces broken up for cheap low rent houses

#### Suggested Remedy

to check ~~and~~ a ~~clap~~ - a System of mortgage-financing, permitting alterations done with regard to historic and aesthetic value, even <sup>though these alterations are</sup> ~~more~~ <sup>more</sup> expensive and ~~returns~~ <sup>may be</sup> more gradual.

Tax reduction for maintaining open spaces with cumulative accounts to become effective if space ever built upon.

#### More suggested remedies :

Create a permanent agency to give information about:

1. Methods of raising capital for rehabilitation if the rehabilitation is of value to the community. Possible sources of capital: Federal funds, Housing administration funds, outside sources.

2. Methods of physical ~~improving~~ alterations and financing satisfactory to the community and to the individual. This not to be competition with architects but to give suggestions and guidance. For instance: the problem of adapting a large house to apartments without resorting to disfiguring outside stairs.

3. Suggestions about favourable opportunities for rehabilitation and stimulations of owners and investors.

B. Create a revolving fund, not necessarily with commercial profits, for rehabilitations ~~that are~~ desirable but not apparently self liquidating.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE  
CIVIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

BY

FREDERICK LAW OLMFSTEAD

MAY, 1940

Whatever else the Committee is concerned with it is very centrally concerned with some intangible values peculiar to Charleston, which are of much present and still greater potential importance if the physical things and conditions that give rise to them can be adequately safeguarded, but which are exceedingly liable to progressive diminution and irrecoverable loss.

Though very difficult to describe they are widely, if somewhat vaguely, recognized and appreciated as summing up into a distinctive and extraordinarily charming amenity characteristic of certain physical aspects of Charleston and definitely associated with certain kinds of old physical objects and conditions (notably certain kinds and arrangements of buildings, walls, fences, gates etc. and of trees, gardens and other open-spaces etc.), which happen, through the accidents of Charleston's peculiar history, to have been inherited in various states of preservation and alteration from periods prior to 1860.

These intangible assets are primarily esthetic; directly valuable to many people of Charleston and elsewhere for the personal enjoyment derivable from them; indirectly of much economic value, present and potential, through the willingness and ability of appreciative people to pay substantial economic

prices for the privilege of enjoying them under sufficiently favorable conditions, either as residents of the city or as passing visitors. Their esthetic value is due in part to the time-tested artistic excellence of some of the individual physical units. It seems, however, much more generally due to the cumulative effect of many adjacent physical units more notable for a picturesque harmoniousness and self-consistency in the pleasant impressions they produce than for any breathtaking beauty in most of the component units. This in turn seems to be due primarily to two historic facts.

In the first place, these physical units were created, to an extent that is extraordinary considering the size of the city, to meet the practical needs and satisfy the esthetic desires of people who were for the time being very prosperous and whose preferences were directly or indirectly much influenced by some of the finer cultural traditions of England and America, at periods when the prevailing fashions happened to be such that the general run of design and construction (apart from any masterpieces) could readily be done, and was done, with a workmanlike understanding of what was attempted.

In the second place, during the unhappy period of some fifty or sixty years after 1860, in spite of much damage and outright destruction, by fire, earthquake, delapidation and otherwise of the physical things and conditions which gave rise to the intangible values in question, and in spite of the intrusion into the gaps of much inharmonious and ~~and~~ artistically inferior stuff, Charleston was saved by the very fact of its economic reverses and the comparative slowness of

its economic recovery and physical growth from deliberate destruction of good old things merely to make way for good, bad or indifferent new ones. Because of the great shrinkage in number of the people who could afford to maintain them for anything like the kinds of use for which they were created, many fine buildings and other physical units contributory to the characteristic charm of Charleston became vacant and delapidated. Many were put to other uses in a makeshift way, not infrequently for housing people of very small means and often of low standards in other respects. Even in localities where old houses were retained in use as residences by people who both appreciated them and were able to keep them in something like their best state, a slowly progressive increase in the demand for houses of some sort by people who could not or would not meet the cost (in taxes, interest, and even the most modest upkeep) of having gardens or yards of any considerable size, and diminution or limitation of the number of those who could and would, led to the conversion of many of the old gardens which were an important element in producing the values of the old residential districts into separate houselots, on which were crowded in additional buildings. These were often incongruous with the older buildings on either side of them and have seriously impaired the intangible values we are discussing in localities where they would otherwise by very well preserved. But even had they been quite in the manner of the surrounding old houses, they would still have had a serious depreciating effect

through crowding out the garden-spaces which were an integral part of the earlier dwellings and delightfully characteristic elements in the urban scenery of Charleston. By these and kindred processes there has gone on a slow but cumulative "nibbling away" of the peculiar and precious intangible assets of Charleston, involving an impairment of their present total effective value altogether disproportionate to the amount of actual physical destruction of fine old buildings and the like. Unfortunately such destructive processes are still continuing though the total values are still large and are coming to be more and more highly appreciated.

For, in the third place, of late years a strong and very encouraging counter-current has been gathering headway. A notable and progressive increase in the number of people, both Charlestonians and from elsewhere, greatly appreciative of these peculiar intangible values and also willing and able to do something and spend something in pursuit of that interest, has led to the rehabilitation of a considerable number of fine old dwellings and the adaptation of other interesting old structures to new uses, in a manner deliberately, and for the most part successfully, aimed at obtaining a high degree of enjoyment for the new occupants of these properties (and incidentally for other people) of the very qualities which are the warp and woof of those same intangible values we are discussing. The extent of such relatively recent "rehabilitations" and the importance of their contribution toward conserving, perpetuating, and -- I will not say "restoring"

because the word has a pernicious connotation, but -- reinvigorating the peculiar and distinctive amenity of residential Charleston is very striking to one who has seen less of the city in the last twenty-five years than he remembers from the previous twenty-five.

Now there are three things which seem very significant about these rehabilitations in relation to possible work of your committee.

First: they are for the most part undertaken and carried out not by any means as an archeologist might prepare a valued museum specimen inherited from and illustrative of some by-gone "culture"; but as a process of utilizing and adapting, to meet the immanent present needs and aspirations of present-day people. This is the same sort of normal, healthy adaptive process, more conservative than destructive, but more progressive than static, by which families -- and civilizations -- of long-sustained vigor and fine accomplishments have dealt with and built upon what one generation inherits from another.

Second: the process tends to be economically self-sustaining. That is to say there appears to be a persistent and increasing "effective demand" for living and other quarters in old properties rehabilitated with a conscious intention of perpetuating, emphasizing and "realizing on" these intangible values distinctive of Old Charleston. This promises well as to the quantity of such rehabilitation work. But there is inherent in this situation a very serious danger. For it tends to stimulate a widespread uncritical notion that, somehow or other, by hook or by crook, alluring money profits can be

made by exploiting this attractiveness for people with money to spend, which so evidently attaches to "Old Charleston" in some vaguely conceived way. This is the sort of notion out of which grow speculative manias of mercenary exploitation, often involving ignorant, short-sighted and recklessly selfish enterprizes of a catch-penny sort, progressively destructive of the values they try to exploit. Such a speculative mania, if it got out of hand, might do more damage to the really important intangible values of Old Charleston than all the physical destructions and delapidations of a long period of neglect.

Third: The notable achievements in rehabilitating individual old buildings owe their success to a high degree of skill in design and execution, exercised by people who have a keen appreciation of the esthetic qualities of the old work which they are trying to perpetuate, who also frankly accept the necessity of meeting requirements of modern life that were not dreamed of when the buildings were erected, and who are able to carry out as good a solution of this difficult adjustment of conflicting desiderata as their skill permits because the entire property is under control of a single owner. It is difficult enough, at that, in adapting a typical fine dwelling of the 18th century to 20th century uses, to keep unspoiled those qualities of it which are as admirable to-day as they were when it was built while adequately meeting certain indispensable practical requirements of to-day. But the adaptation of whole urban districts of

fine quality, dating from past centuries, to the conditions of 20th century life involves much more complex problems of a parallel kind, which are beyond possibility of successful solution through any individualistic process of piecemeal adaptations, lot by lot. Parallel with the individual's problem of incorporating modern bathrooms into a single 18th century house is the community problem of providing adequately for the indispensable circulation and parking of multitudinous automobiles in an extensive urban district the characteristic charm of which is bound up with, and largely dependent on, the narrowness, smallness of scale, and related esthetic qualities of streets and alleys which antedate even the "horse-and-buggy era". The combined esthetic and functional problem is inherently no less difficult to solve well, and the obstacles to successful solution are enormously increased by partition of responsibilities and powers of control among diverse lot owners and the municipal authorities in control of streets. With this division, the line of least resistance as vehicular congestion grows intolerable is apt to lie in the direction of spasmodic and often ill-considered street-widenings. It is horrid to think of the irreparable esthetic losses to Charleston that could result from the ramming through of a few such street widenings. To find a less destructive means of relief that will really meet the need will require patient and skillful study and co-operative action.

It may prove that the most generally applicable solution of this particular problem is to use the old narrow streets,

without substantial physical change or alteration of their ancient charm, up to somewhere near their maximum potential capacity for moving traffic, by means of suitable traffic regulation and by providing off-street parking spaces for standing vehicles in localities where such spaces can be provided at the least cost in money and in esthetic values -- perhaps even with some gains in esthetic values, since these new open-spaces walled and bordered by trees, could recreate something in general effect not unlike some of the old gardens that have been destroyed.

Be that as it may, the major point remains clear: if extensive old districts of great inherent charm are to be successfully adapted to a living community's changing needs, something more is required than skillful rehabilitations of successive units on individual initiative. There is need for carefully considered community planning and community effort.

The central problem of your Committee, then might be stated as a search for any promising and suitable means toward conserving and bringing to renewed fruition certain precious and highly vulnerable intangible values peculiar to Charleston, chiefly through perpetuating and utilizing the old physical things and conditions on which those values now depend as functioning integral parts of a live and ever-changing contemporary community with its face to the future.

Various lines of inquiry suggest themselves as worth exploring in the early stages of that search. Among these the most immediately important, perhaps, is a sort of comprehensive stock-taking or inventory of the existing things and conditions that definitely appear to contribute in some

considerable degree to the values of the question.

Historic Charleston Foundation