

Glen R. Gardner Landscape Architect, LLC  
Garden Design • Land Planning - Historic Landscape Restoration

**Historic Landscape Observation and Investigation Report  
For the Historic Charleston Foundation**

**The Charles Magwood House, ca. 1824-1825  
61-63 Smith Street, Harleston Village  
Charleston, South Carolina**

**March 17, 2008**

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# Glen R. Gardner Landscape Architect, LLC

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## Historic Landscape Observation and Investigation Report 61-63 Smith Street, Harleston Village Charleston, South Carolina

February-March 2008

### Property Information:

The residence at 63 Smith Street was constructed by Charles Magwood ca. 1824-1825. The house sits on what may be considered a substantially-sized double lot, currently the second-largest lot on the block bounded on the east and west by Smith Street and Rutledge Avenue, and on the north and south by Bull and Montagu Streets.

### General Observations:

Generally there are few to no signs of evidence pointing to an established garden on the property. Most likely contributing factors would be the property's location in Harleston Village neighborhood, which was not heavily touched by the garden renaissance of the 1920s to present, and the fact that at a rather early date this once single family residence was divided into a multiple-family residence. The neighborhood does exhibit several pattern gardens pre-dating the construction of 63 Smith Street, but a rather low number of later post-Civil war gardens. With multiple residences on site, there would have most likely been a larger number of animals, buggies, and even automobiles in more recent days to occupy the premises.

Any obvious evidence of a working garden or work yard from single-family era have not been found. There is a small amount of bluestone, granite, English brick, and river stone or ballast stone around the property. The front (east) of the property is contained front the street and sidewalk by a neglected cast-iron fence and gate.

Vegetation on the property is limited in variety to many volunteer ligustrums, hackberry trees, a young live oak, one pecan tree, several large pittosporum, one diseased American holly, volunteer loquats and cherry laurels, one mulberry, and one camellia and one large oleander at the southeast corner of the piazza. Of the vegetation present, only the pittosporum, holly, camellia, sago palm, and oleander appear to have been planted intentionally, along with a few ferns and other hardy garden plants. Much of the volunteer vegetation has sprouted along fence lines dividing the yard for various tenants of the multi-family home. A number of volunteer trees have sprouted in close proximity to the structure and should be removed.

Valuable vegetation on the property is very limited; in fact there appear to be no specimen plants on-site with exception of the camellia near the southeast piazza corner. Evidence is present showing the rotted stump of one very large pecan tree near the southwest property corner. This tree is estimated to have died or been brought down approximately twenty years ago(1988). A large

pecan is very typical in downtown Charleston gardens and many exist in the neighborhoods especially north of Broad Street. Pecans were planted in early gardens for their valuable nuts.

The property does have city storm drains on-site, most likely draining to the Smith Street storm sewers. Drains exist on the north, west, and south sides of the structure.

#### Recommended Actions:

A general initial cleaning and gentle-handed clearing of the property is recommended at this time. Removal of invasive and non-healthy species is also recommended, and all vegetation recommended for immediate removal has been flagged on site. Removal of the oleander at the southeast piazza corner is also recommended as its proximity to the house would obstruct preservation work, and the oleander's size is beginning to affect the iron fencing as well.

The iron fencing along Smith Street should be properly repaired, primed, and painted for preservation of this feature. Other wire and wood fencing on-site is not noteworthy and is not suggested for retainiage.

All stone and brick on site should be collected, inventoried, palleted and stored for use on the property at a later date. Additional pieces from those currently visible will most likely be found during the presumed restoration of the structure. The particularly nice carved brownstone carriage step at the street should also be stored for safe keeping and should be reset in place after restoration of the structure.

Most importantly, this very large open lot should be preserved by means of legal restrictions from future development, with allowances made for a practical garden in the open space if the future owner so desires a garden. Great historic and cultural value should be placed on this exceptionally large property and it should remain an open space with strictly limited or no further development. Specific care should be taken during the presumed impending structural restoration to minimize compaction to the garden area, with limited access given for construction-related traffic. Barricades should be placed around the camellia, holly, and pittosporum plantings on site.

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**61-63 Smith Street**

Photographic Documentation for Historic Charleston Foundation

March 8, 2008



Entry on Smith Street, cast-iron posts and wrought iron gate and fence with masonry coping wall



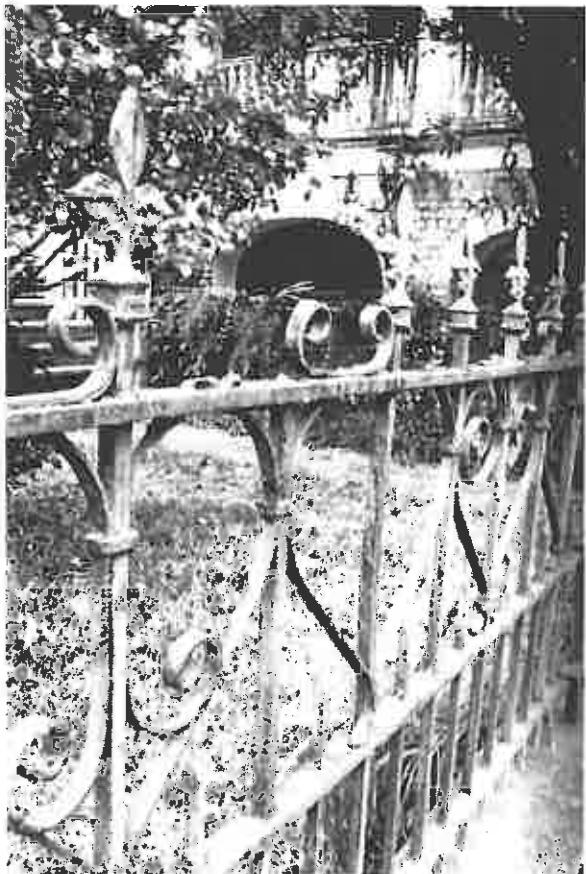
Brownstone step at Smith Street curb, doorway beyond



Garden and house from Smith Street, looking north-west



Garden space and deteriorated iron fence (cast finials) looking north-west from Smith Street sidewalk



Deteriorated fencing looking north-west from Smith Street sidewalk



City storm drain on northwest corner of kitchen house, looking east down driveway



Brick and stone on site, behind kitchen house



Existing fence lines and vegetation, looking east (toward Smith Street) from back of property