



HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION

GARDEN OF THE JOSIAH SMITH HOUSE
7 Meeting Street
c. 1783
Residence of Mr. and Mrs. L.R. Burtschy

2008

The original owner of this home provided leadership for the very first Chamber of Commerce in the country. The house is one of the few large double houses built in Charleston immediately after the Revolutionary War.

The large garden sits behind Creeping Fig (*Ficus pumila*) covered walls. It is a formal garden in that the largest axis is entirely symmetrical. Entering through the wooden gate, the visitor immediately sees a large circular fountain surrounded by four small matching beds. On either side of the walk to the center, two large Cocus Palms reside in beds filled with Scaevola and bordered with a small leaved Boxwood (*Buxus*). To the right an old Pittosporum grows, while to the left, a line of 18 foot tall Burford Holly (*Ilex*) trees creates a verdant wall. All beds are edged in the small Boxwood, and the double set approaching the fountain contain white Azaleas as well as the Pentas. Four huge hanging baskets of Ferns decorate the piazza openings. Entering through two pillars with planted urns on top, the viewer sees four small island beds surrounding the fountain and containing the Victoria Blue Salvia, with a cone-shaped Boxwood plant as a center. Opposite, a bench invites repose and is placed between two Sago Palms, with matching Holly bushes behind.

An enormous arch set in a low latticed brick wall opens up to the pool area. Stepping up on the bluestone hardscape, one is struck by the continuing symmetry beginning with two Crepe Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) and white Camellia japonica at the entrance. A series of Cocus or Pindo Palms accentuates the geometric shape of the wet edge pool with its ongoing water movement. The crossways axis of the garden is emphasized in the seating areas placed exactly opposite one another. Two enormous and shallow urns containing plant material accent the corners of each of these rest areas. In this pool area, the tall Burford Holly south wall gives way to equally tall Japanese Yew which continues round the perimeter. White Camellia and lots of variegated Pittosporum shrubs are planted throughout the pool surround and add a lightening effect; throughout, Pentas, Scaevola Euphorra – Diamond Frost. Two old Magnolia trees (*Magnolia grandiflora*) stand tall and add even more verticality.

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The right side of the yard contains the back steps with various trees accenting beneath – a large cone-shaped Burford Holly, a Saucer Magnolia (*Magnolia soulangeana*), a Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) and a Star Magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*). An inviting bench is placed here by two small grass parterres where a metal frog sculpture sits contentedly reading. The carriage house, situated under a massive Live Oak Tree (*Quercus virginiana*) looks out upon this scene. Fascinating garden chairs flank the carriage house entrance which is near a wild Cherry tree (*Prunus campanulata*) and Fatsia japonica, Holly Fern (*Cyrtomium falcatum*) and Azaleas add to the greenery.

Stepping through the wrought iron gate and pillars to the parking area, one looks up to see some antique appearing iron urns on top. This brick area has beds planted with Heavenly Bamboo (*Nandina*), Ligustrum and Azalea surrounding it, and Japanese Yew coats the walls of the long driveway. Burford Holly, Gardenia, Magnolia, Holly Fern, Japanese Yew and a Windmill Palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) continue the attention to detail which marks this garden as a very special place. Large trees from the neighboring landscape add another dimension to this area.

This wonderful garden is most effective in its repetition of the same plants such as the continued use of the dwarf Japanese Boxwood and bedding contents, the magnificent Burford Hollies and the contrast of old and new plant material. It reaches all the visitor's senses – from the gentle burbling of the pool, the fragrance of blossoms, the differences of textures in green material and the visual impact of order.

The garden was designed by Robert Chestnut and is serviced by Botany Bay Landscape Company.