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HISTORIC CHARLESTON FINISHES STUDY

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

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Mazyck House

32 Charlotte Street

The Mazyck House is a Federal style example of the Charleston single house with a construction date of ca. 1820. The architectural millwork is well-executed, under the influence of the Adam style, with details of both the piazzas and interior rooms proportioned to the scale of the structure. As a whole, the house is intact. A major Victorian period alteration occurred at approximately the turn of the century when a rear, two-story addition was constructed. The earlier sash and exterior doors were also replaced at this time.

The present condition of the exterior finishes suggests that the house has been painted but a few times. However, upon examination, one finds a long history of periodic repainting extending through the early 20th century. It has been only during the last few decades that the house has been neglected. Analysis of the painting history was greatly aided by the accumulated dirt layers between each repainting. Many of the adjacent paint layers are nearly indistinguishable in color and texture. The original color of the piazza columns, entablatures and balustrades, the door and window surrounds, and the piazza entry was a cream/tan (Munsell 10YR 8/1). The only surviving exterior Federal door, opening into the enclosed bathroom on the second floor piazza, was originally grained to imitate mahogany. The base coat was a light rose color (Munsell 7.5R 4/4). The glaze coat, being translucent, cannot be matched exactly to opaque Munsell standards, but it can be described as a dark red.

Blinds and shutters on the piazzas appear to be original to the house. Stylistically, they are correct, their hardware is of the same period, and they appear to have been painted about the same number of times as the other Federal elements. The original color of the first floor shutters is a near-white (Munsell 5Y 9/0.5). Blinds on the second floor of the piazzas were originally painted a yellow/green (Munsell 10GY 4/4). The next several repaintings for both elements were in colors similar to the original. There can be little doubt that these are the original colors, but it is not known if these colors were applied to the shutters and blinds of the other elevations. The use of the same near-white color on the panelled ceilings of the piazzas as the original finish does support the evidence that these elements are contemporary.

At the time of the Victorian addition, all of the woodwork of the Mazyck House was painted white (Munsell N 9.5). The sash were painted a red (Munsell 10R 2/6), with a similar red glaze being applied to all exterior doors. The shutters and blinds appear to have been painted a light grey (Munsell N 7.5). The piazza ceilings were painted a light blue (Munsell 5B 9/2). It is probably at the time of this late Victorian remodelling that the originally-exposed masonry piazza walls were coated with a white lime wash.

Color Schedules

Ca. 1820

Piazza columns, entablatures and balustrades, window and door surrounds, piazza entry: cream/tan (Munsell 10YR 8/1)

Doors: mahogany grained (basecoat Munsell 7.5R 4/4, glazecoat dark red)

Piazza ceilings: white (Munsell 5Y 9/0.5)

Shutters of first floor piazza: white (Munsell 5Y 9/0.5)

Blinds of second floor piazza: yellow/green (Munsell 10GY 4/4)

Ca. 1900

Victorian beaded siding, all trim: white (Munsell N 9.5)

Sash: red (Munsell 10R 2/6)

Doors: glazed red (basecoat Munsell N 9.5, glazecoat medium red)

Shutters and blinds: grey (Munsell N 7.5)

Piazza ceilings: light blue (Munsell 5B 9/2)



Mazyck House, 32 Charlotte St.--55