



PRESERVATION SOCIETY *of* CHARLESTON

—FOUNDED 1920—

79 Alexander Street
c. 1951-1952
Residence of Gene Brown
Guides: 6

Revised 2012 BVL

House History

A younger Charleston building, the pavilioned one-story cinderblock structure at 79 Alexander Street was constructed in 1951-52 on the site of a much earlier structure. The now single family residence features a three bay street façade and a hipped roof with center pediment added in the 1990s. Renovated in the Georgian Revival style, acanthus leaves flank the ends of the pediment and a dentiled door surround with pilasters surrounded the entry below.

Maps of the area indicate that a two-story wooden structure was constructed on this lot after 1872 and by 1902, a carriage repair shop occupied the property. Although no buildings survived on this lot by 1941, a brick foundation remains along the perimeter of the property.

Constructed by the Junior League of Charleston, the current building originally housed the Charleston Speech and Hearing Clinic. Following its use as a clinic, the building was purchased by the Southeastern Film and School Supplies Company. Converting the building into a warehouse, the company gutted the interior and removed all windows. Other than minor updates to the plumbing and mechanical systems, the building experienced little renovation until it was purchased by its current owner in 1984.

The present owner performed an extensive exterior and interior renovation of the structure in a Georgian Revival style. Exterior changes included the construction of a new hipped roof over the existing flat roof, the addition of a central pediment, and the installation new windows. The interior was majorly altered as it was converted to a single-family residence.

The Living Room

Much of the interior woodwork recalls a Georgian design in the style of the English architect William Kent. These details include pediments over the doorways, shell niche bookcases, wainscoting, pilasters, and columns.

- Leather Chinese Chippendale style sofa
- Military Painting by Gericault over sofa
- Gilt brackets each side of painting with English urns
- Miniature watercolor portrait on ivory below each bracket
- Sheraton drop-leaf breakfast table, to the right of the sofa.
- Oil painting “The Smoker” by German artist J. Cruen over breakfast table
- Oil painting “The Vision” by French artist Jean Baptiste Isabey over “The Smoker”
- Variegated marble mantle, from New York City brownstone
- Oil painting “British Sailing Vessels” by Maitland over mantle
- Pair French soft paste porcelain vases
- Paris Bronze-dore clock 18th C
- American Regency style table with claw feet between mantle and window
- Imiri Porcelain lamps on tables either side of mantle
- Empire marble and mahogany round table with gilt bronze mounts
- Gold wash boulllette lamp on table
- French flutes in leather
- Pair Empire bergeres (chairs)
- Chippendale style sofa-ball and claw feet
- English painting by Harrington
- English gilt wooden eagle brackets each side of portrait/ Porcelain vases
- American Empire card table c. 1840, to right of sofa
- Bronze-marble urns c. 1815 on card table
- Paris Porcelian lamps on tables either side of sofa
- English mahogany Sheraton secretary-bookcase 18th C.
- Inside secretary – “Marshals of Napoleons Army” by Royal Crown Porcelain
- Inside secretary – Napoleonic memorabilia
- Oil painting “Elegant lady with lamb” by English artist Hathaway, to the right of secretary
- French Empire chairs each side of secretary.

Dining Room

- Pair gilt English Georgian eagle consoles
- Pair Chinese porcelain urns c. 1840 on consoles
- Mahogany breakfront-bookcase
- Inside breakfront:
 - Center:
 - Missen urns
 - Chelsea dessert cooler
 - Chelsea vase
 - 4 Georgian silver/gilt salts
 - Centerpiece old Paris Porcelain
 - English silver coffee/tea service
 - Side

- Old Paris Vases
- Pair Sevres cobalt blue vases
- Chinese porcelain vases w/ gilt bronze mounts
- French Empire rouge marble topped console between windows
- Marble/Bronze clock
- Regency commode with black marble and gilt bronze mounts
- Empire bronze-dore candelabra on commode with centerpiece
- Painting “Whippet” 1978 by Charleston artist John Carroll Doyle (feature artist at the 2005 Southeastern Wildlife Exhibition) over commode
- English mahogany banquet table
- Silver epergne and candle sticks mirrored plateau on table
- Chinese brackets, Royal Crown Derby vases
- Regency style chairs
- Empire chandelier and sconces of bronze – dore and crystal, French c. 1830.
- Empire style rug by “Stark”

Cross Hall

- Oil painting “Glorious Bountiful Day”
- Wood and metal Federal candle sconce
- Mahogany Charleston silver chest and stand by Monty Bentz of Charleston below sconce
- Gilded wooden Federal eagle bracket
- Empire mirror c. 1840 over bracket
- Oil painting “Mary Magdalene at the Cross” Italian 18th century over table
- Watercolors of Moscow & St. Petersburg, Russia
- Inlaid demilune table
- Chinese urn of blue porcelain fitted with bronze mounts

Study

- Empire Chandelier
- Pair empire bergers
- Pair empire dolphin chairs
- French bronze-dore clock in bookcase

Left Bedroom

- English George III, canopy bed
- Tapestry drape of Coat of Arms over headboard
- Pair of Empire mahogany round tables with gilt bronze mounts c. 1820
- American Empire chest c.1840
- Bronze and marble clock c. 1830 on chest
- Chinese porcelain Imari urns w/ bronze mounts
- Gilt bronze wall sconces each side of breakfront
- Mahogany Breakfront-bookcase
 - Center

- Cobolt blue & gold sevres plates and urn
- Cobolt blue & gold glasses, St Petersburg, Russia
- Crystal Faberge eggs, St Petersburg, Russia
- Yellow & black creel Tureen and plates
- Missen ram-head vases
- Armoral tureen
- Side
 - Yellow & gold plates Bavaria
 - Woster vases

Right Bedroom

- Reproduction “Wheat” bed
- French Empire arm chair, c. 1810
- English mahogany chest
- French bronze-dore clock
- Pair empire bronze Dore candelabra
- Wooden brackets with Italian Blue & White urns

Great Room

- Fireplace wall
 - White marble mantle
 - French bronze dore and marble clock
 - Chinese celadon porcelain urns with bronze mounts
 - Gold convex eagle mirror
 - Above each window oil paintings by James Renfro
- Back wall
 - Boulle marquetry ebony cabinet w/ bronze mounts
 - French metal clock
 - Bronze figures 18th C on chest
 - Oil paintings copy of Canaletto “The Molo” by Maffei
- Sofa wall
 - Chinese Chippendale mirror
 - Wildlife poster 2007
- Right
 - Middleton Plantation hunt
 - Charleston harbor
- Left
 - Etching ‘Chatsworth House’
 - Wildlife poster 2001
 - 1st Wildlife poster 1983, re-mark