

5 ALEXANDER STREET

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In 1965, Historic Charleston Foundation bought 5 Alexander Street as part of its Ansonborough neighborhood initiative, and quickly resold it. Despite its architectural quality, the building's location presented a significant barrier to renovation. In the late 1960s, the blocks of Ansonborough between Laurens, East Bay, Anson, and Calhoun streets were being devastated by the Gaillard Auditorium "urban renewal" project. Only fragments of Wall Street and Alexander (formerly Middle) streets remain as cul-de-sacs accessible from Laurens Street. Otherwise, both streets were completely eradicated. An extension of George Street was laid north-south through the blocks between Anson and East Bay street, replacing Minority Street, which now lies beneath the auditorium complex.

5 Alexander Street was heavily vandalized in 1968, and sold twice more by 1970. Finally, in that year Mr. and Mrs. Roy Cole renovated the kitchen house as their own residence. Sandy and Donna Logan bought the property in 1975, and completed the rehabilitation of the main house.

NOTES, 5 ALEXANDER STREET

This is Charleston p. 115 "Worthy of Mention." Feiss-Wright Group 3 "Significant" Buildings of Charleston p. 415 ca. 1813 Simon Jude Chancognie, "excellent Federal woodwork"

1720 grant to Isaac Mazyck. Christopher Gadsden bought 40 acres high land and marsh, divided as Middlesex, 197 lots. 5 Alexander is on Lot 41.¹

1807 Lot 41 sold to Joseph Yates²

3/1811 Yates sold Lot 41 to Simon Jude Chancognie, \$2000³

2/1813 Chancognie sold to Keating Simons (1753-1834), \$4000, as "wooden dwelling house and lot of land with the outbuildings thereon."⁴

¹ W. H. J. Thomas, "Lot was part of Large Grant" DYKYC in *News & Courier* 12/7/1970. See Purcell's 1806 plat of Middlesex, copied by Clara Langley, Plat Book C, p. 3

² *News & Courier* 12/7/1970.

³ *News & Courier* 12/7/1970.

⁴ *News & Courier* 12/7/1970.

1813-1816 no Elfe on Middle Street. 1819, 1822 John P. Elfe, accountant, and Thomas Elfe, lumber measurer, 23 Wall Street
 1816, 1819, 1822, 1825 Maurice Simons, factor, 1 Middle Street
 1822-1827 Edward P. Simons owned 48 Laurens Street⁵
 1830 Maurice Simons, RMC, res. 1 Middle Street.
 1/1835 Simons' executors to his son Maurice Simons (1786-1845), husband of Rachel Elfe.⁶
 1835-36 W. Simonson [sic], planter, 1 Middle. 1837-1850 no Simons or Elfe on Middle Street
 1840-41 Mrs. Morris Simons Jr. and Mrs. Edward P. Simons, both 9 Laurens Street
 1861 owner/occupant Miss Marie Elfe.⁷
 1872 sheriff's sale, ref. debts of Estate George Elfe, to George Lamb Buist, \$1370. 4/1875 Buist to John Conroy, \$1950.⁸
 1870s-1880s renovations, east façade replaced. 1880s third floor added, new roof⁹
 1886 no significant earthquake damage.¹⁰
 11/1923 heirs of Mary Conroy to Benjamin W. Donnell, \$5000. 4/1945 Donnell to George W. Seignious, \$4000. 1/1946 Seignious to Louis Lucas, \$4500.¹¹
 8/1965 to HCF, resold to Richard H. Jenrette; 12/1968 to Patricia Bowie O'Keefe, 6/1970 to Roy Cole Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Cole "restored" and moved into two-story kitchen house.¹²
 4/1970 to Roy F. Cole Jr. 1975 to Logans. HCF did no work on this building.¹³
 1975 purchase, Sandy & Donna Logan, Main House "shambles." Rear porch enclosure was two small rooms, they reworked as kitchen.¹⁴

Simon Jude Chancognie

6/1803 marriage between Simon Jude Chancognie, "Commissary of the Commercial Relations of the French Republic" and Miss Maria Susannah Delaire, daughter of James Delaire, formerly of St. Domingo.¹⁵
 Chancognie built his residence at 48 Laurens Street, a lot he bought 1807 and sold 1/1817¹⁶
 1807 Simon Jude Chancognie, merchant, res. 13 Laurens [48 Laurens Street]
 1809 SJ Chancognie, French Consul, 15 Laurens
 1813 SJ Chancognie, 16 Laurens
 See City Gazette, 7/23/1819, auction sale of 16 Laurens Street to be 8/3/1819, "late the residence of S. J. Chancognie, Esq." Henry Bryce had bought the property from Chancognie 1/1817, Bryce sold it 12/1819.¹⁷
 1816 Chancognie not in City Directory
 5/1816 S. J. Chancognie, store and counting room, 5 Fitzsimons Wharf. Import merchant. 5/1819 Messrs. Chancognie & Co. are declining business, goods to be sold at auction.¹⁸

⁵ Barnwell, Whaley & Stevenson letter to HCF, 10/1959

⁶ *News & Courier* 12/7/1970.

⁷ 1861 Census of the City of Charleston

⁸ *News & Courier* 12/7/1970.

⁹ *News & Courier* 12/7/1970. Source of information?

¹⁰ Earthquake Damage Report Submitted to City Council 10/1886

¹¹ *News & Courier* 12/7/1970.

¹² *News & Courier* 12/7/1970.

¹³ HCF Ansonborough files

¹⁴ HCF festival tour guide notes

¹⁵ Holcomb, *Marriage & Death Notices from the Times*, p. 66

¹⁶ "140 year old home at 48 Laurens Street is sold to Doctor" *News & Courier* 3/3/1961; Barnwell, Whaley & Stevenson letter to HCF, 10/1959

¹⁷ Barnwell, Whaley & Stevenson letter to HCF, 10/1959

¹⁸ ads, various dates *City Gazette*

PART ONE APPLICATION TEXT

Description

Built ca. 1812, 5 Alexander Street is a frame Charleston single house, three stories in height, with a narrow rear wing extending the north elevation. The main gabled roof has pedimented ends, and the rear wing has a plain gable. A two-tier piazza with hipped roof extends along the south elevation and wraps around the rear of the main house. A separate two and one-half story frame kitchen house is attached to the rear hyphen by a one-story connector added in 1970.

The south elevation within the porch has beaded weatherboard siding, while the east façade is clad in plain weatherboards, leading to the speculation that the façade was rebuilt in the later 19th century. The piazza screen wall has flushboard siding, and the entry surround has a dentiled cornice above fluted pilasters. Both levels of the piazza have Tuscan columns and turned balustrades. Window openings have 9/9 sash, and the single entry doors have simple transoms. The house has a low foundation of brick piers and newer brick infill.

The kitchen house has 6/6 sash in the short window openings, a center entry, and two gabled dormers at the south elevation. It retains two large brick chimneys, and a short stairhall window at the north elevation. The interior of 5 Alexander Street retains its historic plan and much of the historic wood trim: dentiled cornices, shallow mantel shelves with dentil work and reeded paneling, simple door and window surrounds. Few alterations resulted from the ca. 1975 rehabilitation. Missing stair rails and newels were replaced, the east stairhall window was infilled, and the ground floor piazza enclosure was reworked as a breakfast room.

The kitchen house was rehabilitated as a separate residence in 1970. Existing flooring was replaced with salvaged historic flooring, and most interior partitions and openings were rebuilt. The early stair with its treads, newels, and pickets was preserved, and all four fireboxes were retained with exposed brick finishes. The entry surround is a later addition.

Statement of Significance

#5 Alexander Street is a very good example of an early nineteenth century frame Charleston single house with attached dependency. In setting, size, scale, mass and material, the building contributes to the surrounding Charleston Historic District. It was rated as Category 3: Significant in the 1973 Feiss-Wright Inventory of Charleston. Category 3 is described as "Good architectural quality. Vernacular. Of less sophistication and refinement than "Excellent." Modest, appealing, curious, interesting. To be retained and protected."

Historical background

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