

Closing Notes

Colonial cabinetmaker's Tradd St. home filled with thoughtful beauty

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By Charleston
Mercury Staff

The stores and workshops of colonial Charleston would have boasted a wide array of professions — cobblers and chandlers, printers and tailors — but few jobs of the 18th century are as celebrated in our 21st century as the era's cabinetmakers. Men like Thomas Elfe, cutting and carving and fitting works of great use and great beauty here in the Holy City, are still dear those who love Early American fine woodworking.

Another such prominent colonial cabinetmaker was Mr. Charles Warham, born in London in 1701 and briefly a resident of Boston, came

to Charleston sometime before 1733 and prospered in the Holy City until his passing in 1779. Historian Milby Burton, a knowledgeable source as their ever may be on Charleston cabinetmakers, supposed he apprenticed in London. Soon after his arrival in Charleston, he advertised his ability to make "... tables, chests, chest-of-drawers, desks, bookcases, et. cetera," and (as Burton found so intriguing) "... Coffins of the newest fashion, never as yet made in Charlestown."

Whatever these cutting-edge coffins might have been, Charlestonians must have taken to him and his other fine goods. He was soon able to purchase three lots on Tradd St.; he amassed so much land out-of-town

he advertised the sale of 5000 acres of it in the fall of 1776. Surviving business records show he worked with Solomon Legare, noted silversmith, and sold a riding chair and harness to the aforementioned Thomas Elfe. He joined the South Carolina Society and served in a number of positions of civic duty.

It's worth mentioning a less-joyous part of the Warham's family legacy. Charles was lifelong member of the Circular Congregational Church; his tombstone is still there, as are a number of markers for family members — while two of the three children the Warhams had in Boston survived

Continued on page 17.



IMAGE COURTESY HANDSOME PROPERTIES

17 Tradd's charming garden.

Closing notes, cont.

Continued from page 13

infancy, none of the eight they had in Charleston were so fortunaté. Multiple family members have graves likely carved by John Bull of Rhode Island, a well-known marker maker of the time whose “signature” pattern was a scythe

cutting an hourglass.

A larger and more pleasant remnant of Charles Warham’s life is the house commonly bearing his name, located at 17 Tradd. Currently on offer with Joni Hazelton of Handsome Properties, the Warham House dates to 1754. The home boasts five fireplaces, including one

in the master suite. In addition to its comely cornices and moldings, the charming paneling in the living and dining room is attributed to Thomas Pinckney. Built-in display cabinets with a reversed shell pattern flank the entry to the dining room: truly, the home’s Georgian good looks

are as handsome as its namesake’s fine cabinetry.

While protected — as such an important pre-Revolutionary home should be — with conservation easements both interior and exterior, things are ready for modern living, too. The master suite is large, with his-and-

her vanities are in the master bath. Professional-grade appliances are in the kitchen; just beyond, through three French doors a beautiful Shelia Wertimer-designed garden beckons. Detached guest quarters have their own kitchenette and a sitting room centered under a grand skylight.

Further — perhaps most desirably — the home includes the lot 0 Longitude Lane, which offers access to two off-street parking spots. For any prospective buyers, it’s a home with rich local history offering the promise a future full of colonial charm.



IMAGE COURTESY HANDSOME PROPERTIES

The home's entry hall.



IMAGE COURTESY HANDSOME PROPERTIES

The kitchen and sitting area.