

306 King Street Part One Certification Application

Description

306 King Street is a three-story masonry building with a hipped roof clad in standing-seam metal and an enclosed piazza along the south elevation. The stuccoed east façade is scored to resemble cut stone. At the ground floor is a mid-20th century masonry-and-glass storefront with recessed center entry. The storefront extends across the original piazza entry as a brick bulkhead below a shop window. The upper levels are simply detailed, with plain window openings that are shorter at the third level. The second level windows have 9/9 sash that was relocated from secondary elevations in 1985 to replace 1/1 sash installed after the earthquake.

The upper façade of the building retains its historic configuration generally intact. The storefront has been reworked several times, and the piazza has been enclosed since the early 20th century. In 1985 a false front was removed from the second level of the piazza, and it was enlarged as three enclosed levels.

The interior of 306 King Street retains its historic mixed use: commercial ground floor with residences above. It is likely that the original plan was identical to that documented for 308 King: the front section a store entered from the street, the south alley/piazza providing access to the residence ground floor with its center stair hall. There does not seem to have been a door or window opening in the westernmost bay of the south wall. Evidence of early openings remains at the south wall, where three new cased openings were cut to combine the piazza area with the shop. Finishes at the main building and piazza first floor are modern: dropped acoustical tile ceilings, wood (main) and tile (piazza) flooring and a mix of exposed brick and gypsum board at the walls. The upper levels were reworked as small apartments in 1985. The plan and much of the historic fabric, including interesting federal-style trim at the second level front room, remain. The piazza of 306 King Street, and the rear of the property, have gone through many evolutions. The 1843 plat of John Faber's three buildings (304, 306 and 308 King Street) shows piazzas on none of them. The surveyor was depicting the property lines and eave encroachments at the north sides of all three structures, so might have ignored existing piazzas. The 1884 Sanborn map shows 306 King Street with narrow piazzas along the main building, hyphen, and rear wing. The 1886 earthquake left 306 King Street with its west wall badly cracked and in need of being anchored. Repairs were accomplished without significant exterior changes, except that the piazza was widened. By 1902 the rear piazza was gone, and the main piazza was enclosed. The 2-story rear wing was removed by 1943, and a separate one-story outbuilding erected, with a garage added at its east end. Later work at the rear has been limited to altering the 20th century outbuildings, and installing exhaust fans on the east wall.

Statement of significance

306 King Street is a very good example of an early 19th century residence over shop, very similar to the adjacent building at 308 King Street. Like its neighbor to the north, 306 King Street has been altered several times during its 200-year history, with the storefront being remodeled several times, and the piazza enlarged and infilled. Nevertheless it retains its historic size, scale, mass and material and makes a strong contribution to King Street's sense of time and place. The building was certified as an historic structure in September, 1984, and rehabilitated in 1985. That project retained the character-defining features of the historic building.

The 1973 Architectural Inventory of Peninsula Charleston included 306 King Street in Group 3, Significant. This category was defined as "Good architectural quality. Vernacular. Of less sophistication and refinement than "Excellent." Modest, appealing, curious, interesting. To be retained and protected."

Additional historical information

The Phoenix Fire Insurance Map of 1788 shows a wood building at about this location, probably on the 80' wide lot that Samuel Scottow bought in 1773. Scottow is traditionally said to have built the brick building at 308 King Street before his death in 1793; however, it seems more likely that

Scottow's residence was the wood house, and that three similar brick houses were erected by Christian Henry Faber after his 1810 purchase of the property.

Samuel Scottow's will mentions his "property consisting of a house and lot, east side King Street, No. 9." Likewise, his widow Susannah (died 1804) devised it as "my lot on east side King Street." In 1810 the parcel was sold to settle a judgment, being described as "house and lot of land." The purchaser, Christian Henry Faber, died in 1828, devising the "three three-story brick houses and lots, Nos. 296, 298, and 300 King Street" [today's 304, 306, and 308 King Street] in trust to his young son John Lewis Faber. A plat made in 1843, when John Lewis Faber mortgaged one of the buildings, shows three brick buildings of identical size, varying only at their rear wings and dependencies.

J. L. Faber sold 306 King Street to John Mood in 1851, and the Mood family occupied the upper-floor residence. By 1861, Dr. James R. Mood had his office in the ground-level commercial space. The Mood heirs sold the building to Clementine H. Bernard in 1871, and until 1918 it remained in her estate as a rental property, occupied by a series of shops and saloons, often with the proprietor's residence above.

306 King Street remained an investment property during the first decades of the twentieth century, but the upper floors were more often used as professional offices (physician J. W. Burn, dentist E. H. Kerrison, etc.) than as living space. In 1939 Second United Cities Realty Corporation of New York conveyed it to Fannie B. Mendelsohn of Charleston. It remains in the ownership of Mrs. Mendelsohn's family.