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Rachel Wilson
Prepared for HP8090
Katherine Pemberton
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28 Hasell Street

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	3
Architectural Description Current Building.....	4
Ansonborough: The First Suburb.....	6
What’s in a Name?.....	8
Laurens Family	10
John McNellage, Edward Laurens & John Harleston Read Jr., 1846-1863.....	19
The Byrns, 1863-1884	22
The Johanns, the Simmons, and the Earthquake of 1886	24
Age of the Corner Store, 1906 to 1996	29
Leo Chiagkouris and Charles Rolfe: A New Era, 1996 to 2018	35
Conclusion	37
Appendix B—Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps	43
Appendix C—Board of Architectural Review Files	50
Appendix D—Current Photographs of 28 Hasell Street	54
Bibliography	55

Purpose

This paper sets out to uncover and document the history behind the property known as 28 Hasell Street. 28 Hasell Street sits at the corner of East Bay and Hasell Streets in northern Ansonborough. I hope to not only develop the history of the land, neighborhood, and the building that currently sits there but also bring to life the people that lived and worked there.

Most remarkable about 28 Hasell Street is its beginnings as part of the Continental Congressman's Henry Laurens' collection of land acquisitions; the most famous of those being the Laurens Land, in present day northern Ansonborough. However, 28 Hasell Street was not part of the original Laurens Land, it started as a small part of another collection of land that was owned by the renowned trader in the southern portion of Ansonborough previously known as Rhettisbury. All of present day Ansonborough started as smaller suburbs and plantations that were bought, sold, and traded over the years.¹ All of Laurens' land was bought with profits from his large-scale trading company.

From the division of the Laurens' Land through marriage settlements the parcel known as 28 Hasell Street has had a house built on it, switched hands fourteen times, and was developed into a corner store with living apartments in the upper stories in the mid-nineteenth century. This corner store quickly became a defining feature of the property. Since its first reference in 1884, on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the corner store has become various retail and service operations but has never faltered; 28 Hasell Street has offered everything from tobacco products, candy, blueprint services, antiques, and groceries since its construction in the early 1840's.

The dual functions of the building—retail on bottom, living on top—prevail even today as the building has been altered into several condominiums. The typical storefront, a 45-degree cut into the

¹ Historic Charleston Foundation, *The City of Charleston Tour Guide Training Manual* (Charleston: Historic Charleston Foundation, 2011), 265, 269, 271.

corner walls with a column to support the overhanging roof, has stayed the same with some adjustments to the shop windows to increase their size.

The house at 28 Hasell Street has had a fairly stable lifetime since John McNellage built it in the 1840's.² From the first mention of it in an 1863 deed, the “brick dwelling and kitchen house” has stayed mostly the same.³ With the usual addition of a hyphen to connect the main house and the kitchen house, 28 Hasell Street has developed in the traditional Charleston manner; that is to say, it has been enlarged but in a respectful and quickly identifiable way. Extensions have been added to the back of the house, the interior subdivided into condominiums, and the piazza has been enclosed then reopened in the 1990's.

A note on the language

The language of many of the deeds describes the parcel as being on the “Northwest corner of East Bay and Hasell streets.” The official address, 28 Hasell Street, came about between 1884 and 1888—the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps list the property as number 28 on Hasell Street on the 1888 map and 572 on the 1884 map.⁴ The first time the deeds change their language and mention the sale of “28 Hasell Street” starts with the conveyance from Dora R. Witt to Vincent D. Adams in 1959. Perhaps, due to the ephemeral nature of street addresses prior to 1888, the county clerks, for the sake of consistency, simply noted the lot by its most distinct feature: that it lies on the northwest corner of East Bay and Hasell Streets. For brevity's sake, I will refer to the parcel of land as 28 Hasell Street, though I will occasionally quote directly from the deeds in original parlance.

Architectural Description Current Building

As it stands today the circa 1840's house at 28 Hasell Street is a pale yellow, stuccoed, two and half story house.⁵ The stucco has been etched to look like masonry blocks. It is three bays wide along

² Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 442.

³ Charleston County, Records of the Register Mensne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, S.C. Deed Book Y18, 281.

⁴ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Charleston, 1888, Charleston County Public Library; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Charleston, 1884, Charleston County Public Library.

⁵ Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston*, 442.

Hasell Street by nine bays deep along East Bay Street. It was built in the typical Charleston singlehouse manner with a side hall to the west, two story piazza to the west of the side hall, and two parlors, one right behind the other to the east of the side hall. The main house and the kitchen house have been connected with a hyphen. To the north of that addition is a one story square addition with a flat roof presumably from the late twentieth century.

The main house's gable roof is covered in standing seam metal painted tinner's red. There are three gabled-roofed dormers on each side of the main house roof. The hyphen and the kitchen house have a flat roof with a deck on top. All the trim, window headers, and sills are painted a dark green, with the exception of the pedimented piazza screen door hood, which is painted black.

Front facade, South Side

On the front facade, the south side, there is a stepped parapet on the gable front end with the inscription "J.C. Witt 1914" in the middle of it surrounded by a flat frame. Right below the inscription, in the upper half story, is a bipartite window with double hung two-over-two sashes. This window is topped with a flat header. Below the window's stone sill is a dark green belt course that wraps around the corners of the house to form the cornice under the gable roof on the east and west sides. To separate the second story from the upper half story there is a three-tiered projecting belt course about three feet below the bipartite window. This three-tier belt course has end pilasters rising to meet the belt course above it.

On the second story there are three two-over-two windows: a central bipartite window with single windows flanking it on either side. These windows have pedimented headers and stone sills. To separate the first and second stories there is a large projecting wooden entablature that wraps around to the east side and terminates one bay over in an scroll-style bracket.

The first floor is the corner store front and has the traditional 45-degree corner cutaway, into which the French-style front door is set, with the upper story supported by a slender, fluted column. There are two large plate glass store windows to the west of the door. They are separated by a thick mullion.

Below the store windows are recessed panels; above are filled in spaces for transom windows. The French-style door has sidelights and a single pane transom.

To the west of the side hall is the piazza screen. The door to the piazza has a pedimented hood and lanterns on either side. The open piazza is seen above. It has slender Tuscan columns and a picketed balustrade. A wooden parapet obscures the piazza's probable shed roof.

The East Facade

The only other visible side, the east side, is nine bays wide. The first six bays are under the main house and the remaining three are under the flat roofed addition to the main house: the hyphen and kitchen house. To the north of the hyphen and kitchen house is a one story square addition with a flat roof. Between the first and second floor and the second floor and the roofline run iron tie rods with circular patris plates.

The cornice is a continuation of the upper half story belt course and runs the length of the gable roof. The gutter mostly obscures the cornice. There are nine windows on the second story with the same two-over-two sashes, pedimented headers and stone sills.

The openings on the first story run as follows, south to north: three two-over-two windows, a paneled French door with a pedimented hood that matches the piazza screen, two more two-over-two windows, a glazed door, and finally one more two-over-two window.

For a visual accompaniment see Appendix D.

Ansonborough: The First Suburb

Ansonborough developed as one of Charleston's original suburbs. The land was acquired by Captain George Anson in 1726; rumor has it he won the sixty-four acre tract in a card game against Thomas Gadsen.⁶ During Ansonborough's development, Captain Anson named a few of the street for his

⁶ Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston*, 411.

ships and named two after himself, George Street and Anson Street. The streets he named for his ships, the *Centurion*, *Scarborough*, and *Squirrel* have since become parts of Meeting, Anson, and Society Streets.⁷ The original boundaries of the Ansonborough land ran to Calhoun Street on the north, to the Cooper River to the east, to Society Street on the south, and to King Street on the west.⁸ Presently Ansonborough is an amalgam of old Ansonborough, Henry Laurens' Laurens Land, Thomas Gadsen's lands, and William Rhett's land, Rhett'sbury. It stretches from North Market to Calhoun Streets, East Bay to Meeting Streets.⁹

In 1838 tragedy befell the city and the suburb when a fire broke out and swept northeast toward the Cooper River. It was devastating burning down the majority of the houses the neighborhood. It was to that date the most disastrous fire in the city's history. The fire claimed about 1,000 buildings and created swift changes to the building codes of the city. Frame buildings were outlawed except under extreme necessity, brick and masonry took off and created the distinctive feel that Ansonborough still retains today.¹⁰

Like many cities after the Civil War years Ansonborough suffered a depressed economy. The neighborhood lost its status and slowly turned into a slum.¹¹ It was no longer the prosperous neighborhood of merchants it was during the nineteenth century.¹² In 1958, Historic Charleston Foundation stepped in with a plan to turn the slum back into the thriving neighborhood it once was. Historic Charleston Foundation started the Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project funded by the nation's first revolving fund.¹³ The goal of this enormous project was to buy and rehabilitate the neglected houses

⁷ Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston*, 411.

⁸ Historic Charleston Foundation, *The City of Charleston Tour Guide Training Manual*, 264.

⁹ Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston*, 413.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 412.

¹¹ Historic Charleston Foundation, *The City of Charleston Tour Guide Training Manual*, 264.

¹² Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston*, 412.

¹³ Historic Charleston Foundation, collection abstract, "Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project", Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project, Historic Charleston Foundation. <https://charleston.pastperfectonline.com/archive/> [Accessed November 11, 2018].

and sell them back to new preservation-minded owners. Over twelve years Historic Charleston Foundation saved one hundred houses and brought life back to the neighborhood.¹⁴ Present day Ansonborough is flourishing. Its pride can be felt in its a combination of well-tended residential buildings, small and large shops, and the iconic Ansonborough Inn—across the street from 28 Hasell Street.

What's in a Name?

Hasell Street derived its name from William Rhett's granddaughters' husband, John Hasell Jr. in the mid eighteenth century.¹⁵ William Rhett was gifted land in southern Ansonborough in 1714.¹⁶ The land was willed to his wife Sarah Rhett at the time of his death in 1722.¹⁷ She maintained control of the land after she married Chief Justice Nicolas Trott; on occasion Rhettsbury will be referred to as Trott's Point.¹⁸ Sarah Rhett then passed the land down to her daughter Mary Rhett, in trust for Mary Rhett's union with Richard Wright. The couple died young and their land was left to their young daughter, Sarah Wright.¹⁹ In 1750 Sarah Wright married James Hasell Jr. from North Carolina. The



Map from *Between the Tracks* showing the spread of suburbs above the Grand Model (shaded area), page 11.

¹⁴ Historic Charleston Foundation, *The City of Charleston Tour Guide Training Manual*, 264.

¹⁵ Historic Charleston Foundation, *The City of Charleston Tour Guide Training Manual*, 383.

¹⁶ Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston*, 413.

¹⁷ Nicholas Butler, "Remembering Rhettsbury," Charleston Time Machine, Recorded February 16, 2018. Transcription, Charleston County Public Library, <https://www.ccpl.org/charleston-time-machine/remembering-rhettsbury> [Accessed November 10, 2018].

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

two had two daughters, Mary and Susannah who would come to inherit the land.²⁰

When Susannah and Mary Hasell married Parker Quince and John Ancrum, respectively, and inherited the land it was subdivided into lots and sold in 1773. Mary Hasell Ancrum and Susannah Hasell Quince hired Rigby Naylor, a noted Charleston Architect and Surveyor, to survey the land and officially designate the new plots to be sold.²¹ Along with new subdivisions came new streets: Hasell Street, Maiden Lane, Trott Street, Quince Street, and Ancrum Street. Hasell street and Maiden Lane are the only surviving streets today.²²



Plat of Hasell Street and East Bay Street as it may have looked after the 1773 creation of Hasell Street. McCrady Plat Collection, Charleston, S.C. Plat no. 3606, undated, [microfilm] Charleston County RMC.

²⁰ Nicholas Butler, "Remembering Rhetttsbury."

²¹ Nicholas Butler, "Remembering Rhetttsbury."

²² Historic Charleston Foundation, "About 1790", Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project, Historic Charleston Foundation, <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:93661> [Accessed November 11, 2018].

Laurens Family

Henry Laurens

28 Hasell Street's story begins with the lands collected by the famous Henry Laurens, of the Laurens Family of Charleston, South Carolina. Though a prominent historic character--he served as president of the Continental Congress in 1777 to 1780-- there has been little written about the man.²³ Much of what is known comes from his 1915 biography by David Duncan Wallace and a vast collection of personal papers, letters, and account ledgers. Henry Laurens was born to John Laurens (occasionally spelled Jean Laurent) and Esther Grosset in New York City on March 6th, 1724.²⁴ Henry was the eldest of five children.²⁵ His father, John Laurens, was born to French Huguenots, Andre and Marie Laurens, who fled France due to religious persecution and settled in New York in 1690.²⁶ Henry's parents defied their French Huguenot ancestry by moving to Charleston in May of 1716 and raising their children at St. Phillip's Episcopal Church.²⁷ They spurned the ways of their parents and raised their family with contemporary American ideals; ideals which would have a profound impact on young Henry Laurens' life.²⁸

²³ The United States Senate, "Henry Laurens," The United States Senate, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art/artifact/Painting_31_00010.htm [Accessed October 30, 2018].

²⁴ Charlton deSaussure, *Lowcountry Carolina Genealogies*, (Greenville: Southern Historical Press, 1997), 496.

²⁵ deSaussure, *Lowcountry Carolina Genealogies*, 495.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 495.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 496.; David Duncan Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens, With a Sketch of the Life of Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens*, (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1915), 2-7.

²⁸ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 2-7.

By all
accounts John
Laurens was a man
of great-reputation,
shrewd business and
leadership skills, and
possessed a keen eye
for real estate,
evidenced by his
name being scattered
throughout county
conveyance
records.²⁹ His
involvement
extended from the
business world to the
leadership positions
in Charleston. He

was elected warden of St. Phillips in 1733 and also elected to a position of a city fire master in 1742.³⁰ He
continued to serve his community until his death in 1747.³¹



Portrait of Henry Laurens, done in 1782 by John Singleton Copley. *Courtesy of The National Portrait Gallery*

²⁹ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 10.

³⁰ South Carolina Gazette April 24-may 1st, 1742, quoted in Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 11.

³¹ "Henry Laurens," Ancestry, https://www.ancestry.com/genealogy/records/jean-samuel-laurens_23370424 [Accessed November 2, 2018].

and Accot Sale / N^o 128 / Charges & Net Proceed of 139 new Negro Slaves
 Imported of the Snow Africa Thomas Hinde Commander from Senaon, put into
 our hands by said Comm^t on Accot of M^{rs} Robert & John Thomson VC^o
 owners of said Snow Merchants in Lancaster. Vint.

Purchasers	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Terms of Payment	Amot
Isaac Rippon	1				paid £100.15/- rem ^t in Jan ^y next	£250
William Harrison			1		in January next	100
Sam. Pascoe		2			ditto	150
William Roper	3				ditto	780

A page from Austin & Laurens trading company's account books from April 170-December 1758, page 12. This page details the sale of slaves. Courtesy of Beinecke Library at Yale.

John Laurens passed that self-determination, work ethic, and family pride to Henry Laurens.

Little is known of his childhood but it could be reasonably guessed that he was an upstanding, precocious youth well primed for his destiny as a merchant and future leader of the Continental Congress from 1777 to 1780.³² In 1744, as a young man of twenty, he was sent off to England to receive training from noted Charleston merchant James Crockatt.³³ This training, originally promised to end in partnership, continued on for three years until 1747 when unknown circumstances caused Henry to board *The Neptune* bound for Charleston on April 8th.³⁴ Just days prior to his boarding his father passed away. At just twenty-three he had become the executor of his father's estate.³⁵

After another failed chance at co-partnership with Crockatt in London, Henry Laurens came back to Charleston to work for George Austin, another Prominent Charlestonian merchant, in 1747.³⁶ Together

³² The United States Senate, "Henry Laurens." He was elected a delegate to the first provincial congress and later became its president. He served in the Continental Congress from 1777 to 1780 and succeeded John Hancock as the president.

³³ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 15. It is also worth mentioning that Crockatt was running in the same fire insurance circles as Henry's father John Laurens. They were both a part of the first fire insurance company in the United States. This may have helped explain why Henry sought apprenticeship with Crockatt.

³⁴ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 16.

³⁵ Letter to James Crockatt from Henry Laurens, June 3, 1747, quoted in footnote 2 Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 12.

³⁶ C. James Taylor, "Henry Laurens," South Carolina Encyclopedia, <http://www.sceyclopedia.org/sce/entries/laurens-henry/> [Accessed October 24, 2018].

they operated Austin & Laurens until George Appleby joined the duo in 1759.³⁷ They traded in in diverse goods like casks of muscovado sugar, broadcloth, and buttons but were more widely known (today at least) as slaves traders.³⁸ Their company account books keep track of the sale of goods and slaves, often on the same page.

In 1762 Henry started to trade on his own.³⁹ He set his ships sailing to Europe and the West Indies and returning with coveted spices, rum, sugar, and slaves.⁴⁰ By 1764 the weight of the business and the resulting pressure proved to be too much for Henry. He contracted out the bulk of businesses operations to Price, Hest, & Head, a Charleston trading company. Then in the mid months of 1770 he closed his business operations to supervise the lives and educations of his newly motherless children.⁴¹

Amid his flourishing business dealings Henry Laurens took Eleanor Delamere Ball as his wife on the sixth of June in 1750.⁴² The union between Eleanor and Henry brought together two aristocratic Charleston families. Eleanor Ball, daughter of Charleston aristocracy, was descended from the Ball family.

Her father, Elias Ball (1676-1751) is best known as part of the most prolific slave trading families in the South. In the time between 1698-1865 the Ball family enslaved and imported almost 4,000 Africans.⁴³ Though the marriage was undoubtedly “love at first sight” it cannot be denied that the unification of the Laurens family and Ball family concentrated much of the slave trading wealth within two families--the very definition of a power couple in the 18th century.⁴⁴

³⁷ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 17.

³⁸ George Austin and Henry Laurens, *April 1750-December 1758 Accounts Book*, Yale University Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library, 2, 8, 10. The pages cited refer to the digital page numbers Yale University’s archives have assigned the account books. In some cases, they do match the handwritten page numbers in the upper corners of the actual text.

³⁹ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 70.

⁴⁰ C. James Taylor, “Henry Laurens,” South Carolina Encyclopedia.

⁴¹ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 70.

⁴² deSaussure, *Lowcountry Carolina Genealogy*, 496.

⁴³ Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998), 7.

⁴⁴ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 57.

Plantations & land acquisitions

His business was prosperous, in no small part due the demand of goods and slaves in the colonies and the work ethic he inherited from his father. Like the wealthy merchant class of his day, Laurens collected real estate. Laurens' assemblages included plantations and large tracts in South Carolina and Georgia.⁴⁵ Among his collection of lands, he bought an area in the northern boundaries of present-day Ansonborough. These lands came to be known as Laurens Land.



A portion of the Halsey Map showing the scope of the Laurens Land in 1789. Courtesy of the Preservation Society.

Laurens Land derived from land originally owned by Captain Anson. Captain Anson conveyed a forty-acre tract of highland and lowland west of the Cooper River to John Rattray in 1757. In turn John Rattray left this land to his wife, Helen Rattray, in his will. Helen Rattray conveyed the same parcel to Reverend Phillip Morison on February 13, 1762. Morison and his wife Helen Morison sold about four acres of that land to Henry Laurens seven months later in September of 1762. The four-acre tract he bought was bounded on the north by present-day Laurens Street, on the east by East Bay Street, south by Society Street, and on the west by Anson Street.⁴⁶ Laurens dubbed this land Laurens Land which would later become Laurens Square.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 21.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁷ Historic Charleston Foundation, "History of Ownership of Ansonborough Property from 1696 to 1904," Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project Collection, Historic Charleston Foundation, 2, <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:93686> [Accessed November 11, 2018].

Laurens Land while large did not originally overlap with 28 Hasell Street. That land was originally part of Rhetttsbury, a suburb that was divided into lots and sold in 1773.⁴⁸ While it is not known exactly when the parcel that would become 28 Hasell Street entered into Henry Laurens' collection, the land was passed down from him to his son, grandson, and finally to his great-granddaughter where it was divided up and sold.⁴⁹

As Laurens' riches grew so too did his family. He and Eleanor had ten or twelve children though very few of them reached maturity.⁵⁰ Prior to 1764 the family lived south of Broad Street in St. Michael's parish but in spring of 1764 moved to Ansonborough to the corner of East Bay Street and Laurens Street.⁵¹ They moved into a "fine new house with a wall all upon the front of [the] garden."⁵² The garden on the four-acre lot was a point of pride for Eleanor Laurens. She has such an ardor for horticulture that Henry Laurens brought an English Gardner John Watson over from England to help tend and cultivate whatever Eleanor Laurens desired.⁵³ Though the couple had developed a strong and happy marriage it was tragically cut short when Eleanor perished from complications due to childbirth. She left Henry with five children.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Historic Charleston Foundation, *The City of Charleston Tour Guide Training Manual*, 270.

⁴⁹ RMC, Deed Book H11, 485-492.

⁵⁰ The variation in numbers arises from two conflicting sources, the first, Wallace's autobiography, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, page 58, gives the number as 12 and the second source deSaussure's book *Lowcountry Carolina Genealogy*, page 496, lists 10 children born to Henry and Eleanor. The discrepancy may have come from a few still born infants or children whose births did not make the official records.

⁵¹ There is quite the detailed description of Henry Lauren's home in Wallace's *The Life Henry Laurens*. Pages 62-64 walk you the house that was demolished a year after the book was released. Wallace describes on page 62 the house as, "by no means so imposing, convenient, or beautiful either inside or out."

⁵² As mentioned in a letter from Laurens to John Edwin, March 13, 1764, referenced in Wallace's *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 62.

⁵³ Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston*, 414. The home Henry had built was a magnificent looking Jerkin-head two and half story wood frame structure. The house was torn down in 1916 to make way for the developing railroad industry along the coast of the Cooper River. The land known as Laurens Square was subdivided in the 1804. According to Poston the garden included such variety as olives, capers, apples, pears, raspberries, and grapes to just name a few. Eleanor Laurens really did have quite the green thumb.

⁵⁴ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 70.

Henry Laurens Jr.

Henry Laurens Jr. (1763-1821) was to have the finest education his father could afford. Henry Sr., deeply concerned about the quality of education in Charleston, sent the young lad, age seven, to England in April of 1771. Under the care and direction of a Reverend. Richard Clark of London, young Laurens Jr. was to receive an education.⁵⁵ Such was the value of education to the elder Henry that he even wrote a letter to the captain of the vessel he sent his son on, the *Indian King*, imploring the captain to remind young Henry Laurens to read his books and practice his writing.⁵⁶

Returning from England a very well educated young man, Laurens Jr. married Eliza Rutledge in May of 1792. The pair had nine children though, like Laurens Jr.'s siblings, very few survived to adulthood.⁵⁷

John Ball Laurens & Caroline Olivia Ball

John Ball Laurens, born 1799 to Henry Laurens Jr. and Eliza Laurens, married his wife Caroline Olivia Ball on October 23, 1832.⁵⁸ The couple lived at Mepkin Plantation, originally bought by his grandfather Henry Laurens Sr. before moving to Cedar Hill Plantation in Berkeley County also originally purchased by Henry Laurens Sr.⁵⁹ As part of their marriage settlement the couple was given land that had belonged to John Ball Laurens' grandfather. A portion of this land would eventually become 28 Hasell Street.⁶⁰ Caroline Ball and John Laurens had two children, the first, John Ball Laurens Jr. born in 1824, and the second, Caroline Ball Laurens, born in 1826. The siblings were soon left orphans after the untimely passing of the father in November of 1827 and the mother a little more than a year later on

⁵⁵ Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens*, 182.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁵⁷ deSaussure, *Lowcountry Carolina Genealogy*, 498.

⁵⁸ deSaussure, *Lowcountry Carolina Genealogy*, 498.

⁵⁹ "John Ball Laurens," Collections, Museum of Southern Decorative Arts, <http://mesda.org/item/collections/john-ball-> [Accessed October 30, 2018]; National Register of Historic Places, Cooper River Historic District, Moncks Corner, Berkeley, South Carolina, National Register # 02000571. Under "Blessings Plantation" page 14.

⁶⁰ RMC, Deed Book H11, 486-487.

December 4, 1828.⁶¹ Both the parents were buried at the Laurens' family cemetery in Moncks Corner, South Carolina.⁶²

Caroline Ball Laurens & James Withers Read

The orphaned Laurens sibling may have been raised by their uncle, John Ball Laurens' brother, Edward R. Laurens.⁶³ What is known for certain is that upon the death of their parents the siblings inherited an extensive amount of family property, including land passed down from their great-grandfather, Henry Laurens Sr., a collection slaves, and silver plate.⁶⁴ This property came into question during the marriage settlement of Caroline and her husband, James Withers Read.

Marriage in the middle years of 19th century was much more than a unification of two lovers, it served a legal role. Gone were the identities of a separate man and a separate woman, by marrying the two entered into legal contracts with one another. Even before marriage the couple would be familiar with the social roles they were expected to fill as newly minted husband and wife. He was to run the business and make the money; she was to play housekeeper and raise the children.⁶⁵ These roles, which can still be seen today, applied to the wealthy, elite white families of the United States.

So Caroline Laurens, upon her marriage to James Read, did just what many independent women before her did, she placed her inherited estate in a male family member's name to retain ownership of the parcel. In May of 1842 she conveyed a parcel of land "eighty-two feet front on East Bay street and one hundred forty-five feet on Hasell street" to her paternal uncle, Edward R. Laurens, and John Harleston

⁶¹ deSaussure, *Lowcountry Carolina Genealogy*, 498.

⁶² "John Ball Laurens," Museum of Southern Decorative Arts.

⁶³ deSaussure, *Lowcountry Carolina Genealogy*, 498.

⁶⁴ RMC, Deed Book H11, 485-492. This section is the marriage settlement between Caroline Ball Laurens and her soon-to-be husband James Withers Read.

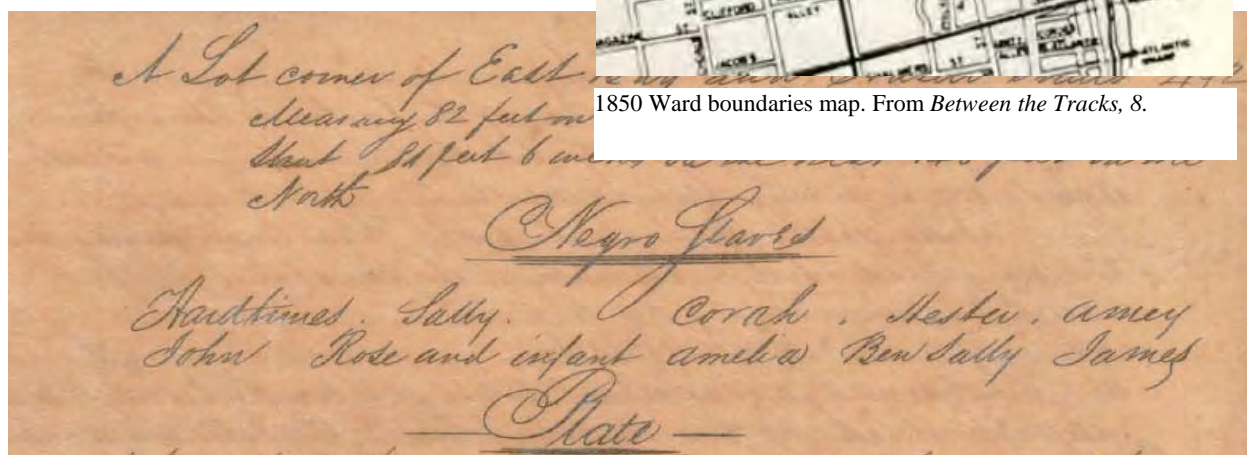
⁶⁵ Hendrik A. Hartog, "Marital Exits and Marital Expectations in Nineteenth Century America," Lecture, Georgetown University Law Center, 1991, 97,102,104.
<https://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=hartlecture> [Accessed November 5, 2018].

Read, James W. Read's father, for the sum of \$1.⁶⁶ Furthermore, she placed in trust "all her undivided moiety [a portion] of property and estate" and "certain marsh lands of Henry Laurens" that run between Lauren Street on the north, Thomas Bennett's Rice Mill on the south, to the Cooper River on the east, and to East Bay Street on the west.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ RMC, Deed Book H11, 485-492.; "John Harleston Read, Jr.," Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/33655629/john-harleston-read> [Accessed November 18, 2018].

⁶⁷ RMC, Deed Book H11, 487.

In addition to her real estate, the H-11 Charleston Deed Book drew out a schedule of dispersal of the personal inherited estate of Caroline Laurens among Edward R. Laurens and John Harleston Read. Among items to be dispersed are shares in the Santee River Canal, shares in the Bank of Charleston, an undivided marsh lot on East Bay, the lot on the northwest



Snippet from Caroline Ball Laurens and James W. Read's marriage settlement detailing the dispersal of land, slaves, and silver plate. *RMC, Deed Book H11, 492.*

corner of East Bay Street and Hasell Street, family silver, and, being of an aristocratic family, slaves.

Caroline Laurens inherited “Hardtimes, Sally, Corah, Hester, Amey, John [,] Rose and infant Amelia [,] Ben [,] Sally [,] James[.]”⁶⁸ All of the above-mentioned property and estate was placed in trust and her uncle, Edward R. Laurens, was to manage it and act upon her request.

John McNellage, Edward Laurens & John Harleston Read Jr., 1846-1863

Four years after Caroline Laurens’ marriage settlement and upon her bidding on December 8, 1846 Edward R. Laurens and John Harleston Read sold the lot on corner of East Bay Street and Hasell

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 491-492.

house and to help prevent cooking fires from spreading. The singlehouse is a vernacular building tradition in Charleston that aims to take advantage of the narrow lots and the breezes in the summer. The plan is one room wide, two rooms deep with a side stairhall normally to the west—this arrangement allows the flow of air through the house when the windows are open.⁸¹ Eventually a hyphen would connect the main house and the kitchen house. The Bridgens and Allen Map of 1852 shows the separate structures but all the Sanborn Maps depicted the building with its hyphen—setting the date range for the hyphen somewhere between 1872 and 1884.⁸²

For a second time, in 1861, a fire threatened the neighborhood. This time it started much closer; it began at the foot of Hasell Street. On Wednesday, December 11, 1861 a window sash and blind company, Russell's Sash and Blind, caught fire and spread in a southwesterly direction along Tradd Street and swept toward the Ashley River.⁸³ This time, the fire cut a path a "quarter of a mile in width and fully a mile in length, through the very heart and oldest quarter of the city."⁸⁴ 28 Hasell Street turned out to be quite lucky, even though the fire started about one block to the east the fire narrowly avoided hitting the house. The sweep of the fire can be traced on the Halsey Map



The Byrns, 1863-1884

Of the few houses McNellage owned on Hasell Street he conveyed 28 Hasell Street to Garrett Byrns on April 28, 1863.⁸⁵ This is the first and only time 28 Hasell Street boundaries

our Guide Training Manual, 106.

f Charleston, Hayden brothers and Co., 1852. Map,

City of Charleston, 306-307.

⁸⁴ "The Condition of Charleston; Ruins of the Great Fire-Old Landmarks Swept Away Sufferings of the People The View of 28 Hasell Street looking westward, C. N. Drie, Bird's-Eye View of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, 1872, Map, Retrieved from the Insurance Losses & Co., New York Times Archives, December 29, 1861, <https://www.nytimes.com/1861/12/29/archives/the-condition-of-charleston-ruins-of-the-great-fire-old-landmarks.html> [Accessed November 14, 2018].

⁸⁵ RMC, Deed Book R14, 320.

because the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of 1884 marks 572 Hasell (one of 28 Hasell Street's addresses) as a "Gro." or grocery.⁸⁸

Perhaps Garrett Joseph Byrns did not relish running the family business or found a better opportunity somewhere else because he sold the property just a year later (the second shortest run of any owner in 28 Hasell Street's history). On May 10, 1884 Garrett Joseph Byrns sold the parcel, house, and store to Meta M. Johanns.

The Johanns, the Simmons, and the Earthquake of 1886

During her brief three-year ownership of 28 Hasell Street, it appears that Meta M. Johanns kept the bottom floor of the brick house operating as store. It is unclear whether or not she kept the grocery store running but by indication of the 1888 Sanborn Map there was a store being operated in 28 Hasell Street (see Appendix B).

Just before Meta Johanns transferred the property to her husband's name, Joseph Frederick Johanns, in 1887, the great Charleston earthquake of 1886 ravaged the peninsula. During the night of August 31st Charleston and Summerville residents experienced their houses trembling beneath their feet and ground outside giving way. In thirty seconds the earthquake had managed to bring down and destroy more than a hundred years of history.⁸⁹ Houses were gone, monuments fractured, and warehouses leveled. It must have seemed like a cursed place to live, only a year before, the 1885 cyclone swept over the city and brought destruction to more than two million dollars' worth of property.⁹⁰ Summerville, twenty miles to the north, felt a precursor to the tremors that racked Charleston a day earlier on the 27th. It was pure chance that the main tremors in Charleston happened at night when the majority of the population was tucked safely into their beds and houses. Were the tremors to have struck during the business hours of the

⁸⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Charleston, 1884.

⁸⁹ Alex M. Cochran, introductory text to *The Charleston Earthquake, 1886*, Accompanying photographs of the 1886 Earthquake, 1. <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:26710?page=lcdl:26711> [Accessed November 15, 2018].

⁹⁰ Ibid., 2. Just for comparison \$2 million in 1885 is equivalent to about \$50,000,000 today--according to the inflation statistics from the SmartAssest website for investing.

day that casualties would have been much higher. The ninety-two reported deaths were of those roaming the streets in addition to a few that had fled their houses in terror and were subsequently crushed by falling debris. Those who weathered the earthquake in their homes did not meet the same fate, though there are records of buildings collapsing around them.⁹¹

More than 6,000 buildings were damaged and rumor has it that “not a single plastered interior in the city is said to have escaped uninjured.” At conservative estimates the city suffered over \$5,000,000 in property loss.⁹² The panic was not confined to just August 31st but crept into the days, months, and years afterwards as reconstruction was addressed. But, just like after the fires and cyclones in the decades prior, Charleston courageously rebuilt, revamped building codes, and began to flourish again. But that did not come without a high cost. As the laws of supply and demand dictate, the price of labor skyrocketed. Masons, bricklayers, and plasterers were charging \$5-10 per day.⁹³ To aid in the reconstruction, the city of Charleston assessed the property damage and issued money vouchers to the citizens.⁹⁴ The vouchers note the earthquake damage to 28 Hasell Street to be not insignificant. The house needed wall repairs, roof repairs, chimney mitigation, and the addition or repair of iron rods.⁹⁵ The iron rods known as tie rods are usually accompanied by external anchor plates. Though this building technology is often been linked

Name	Address	Voucher #	Amount	Date	Notes
Jervey, Maurice S.	Romney St., 055, between Meeting St. and S.C.R.R. track	1339	\$50	Nov. 09, 1886	Accepted under Resolution 19 Nov. 1886; objections: piers of piazza in wrong portions and too few. Masonry of chimney and all other work very badly done. Jervey resided at 34, corner of Reid and America Sts.
Jervey, Susan M.	Ashley Ave., 078	1029	\$80	Oct. 28, 1886	Chimneys, \$40; Foundation, \$40
Johannes, John F.	Hasell St., 028	0303	\$275	Oct. 11, 1886	Walls, \$180, Roof, \$15; Chimneys, \$50; Iron rods, \$30
Johnson, Alfred H.	Comine St. 150	0308	\$35	Oct. 11, 1886	Accepted under Resolution 19 Nov. 1886; objections:

Voucher for work given by the city. From *The City of Charleston's Executive Relief Committee for the Earthquake of 1886: Money Vouchers for Work Done, September 1886 through June 1887*, 47.

assume many school children who also had “earthquake drills,” learned is to stand under a doorway—the idea being that the door frame will stay put while the walls around it fail. I cannot say for sure if that is sounds advice but if you must I would suggest finding an arched doorway if at all possible—arches are stronger in comparison to flat architraves.

⁹² Cochran, *The Charleston Earthquake, 1886*, 2.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Nicholas Butler, ed., *The City of Charleston's Executive Relief Committee for the Earthquake of 1886: Money Vouchers for Work Done, September 1886 through June 1887*, (Charleston: Charleston County Public Library, 2007), 47.

⁹⁵ Ibid. While informative, the recorders of the earthquake damage were not prone to excessive detail or even detail in their notes, so much is left to be inferred by the reader.

with the 1886 earthquake records research has proven their existence in Charleston as early as the eighteenth century.⁹⁶ The rods ran transversely through structures and are secured on the outside with iron plates and bolts. This form of intervention was one of the earliest known and least invasive ways of reinforcing failed structures.⁹⁷ The idea was to strengthen the frame of the house enough to withstand seismic action. The iron rods repaired or added in 1887 are still visible today on the east and west elevations of the house running between the first and second stories and above the second story windows. See Appendix D for photographs.

After the earthquake construction and unlike Caroline Ball Laurens, Meta Johannis transferred her property and the store to her husband's name under the covenants of nineteenth-century marriage.⁹⁸ Even though the transfer occurred in 1887 the earthquake vouchers the family was issued for their building's repair were in her husband's name, Joseph F. Frederick indicating that they were married before the house was officially transferred to Joseph F. Johannis.

Joseph F. Johannis to Benjamin F. Simmons

After the repairs, the Johannis quickly relinquished their house and grocery business to Benjamin F. Simmons in 1888. Simmons bought 28 Hasell Street for \$4200. As stated before, the dimensions of 28 Hasell Street do not change. The lot runs thirty-six feet on Hasell Street and ninety-eight feet on East Bay Street.⁹⁹ The dimensions of the house, as sold to the Simmons, are forty-five feet long, twenty feet wide, and thirty-five feet high.¹⁰⁰ Much smaller than the house that appears there today. Another point to note is the language used to describe the plot in the deed. By the time Joseph F. Johannis sold the land to Benjamin F. Simmons the plot was officially designated as "28 Hasell Street" and many of the modern

⁹⁶ Jamie Lynne Wiedman, "Ties That Bind: Emergence of Iron Tie Rod Reinforcement in Load Bearing Masonry Buildings of Charleston, S.C." (masters' thesis 2012), https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/all_theses/1340/ [Accessed November 15, 2018].

⁹⁷ Wiedman, "Ties That Bind", 4.

⁹⁸ RMC, Deed Book G19, 281. The nominal fee of \$5 noted by the deed is an indicator of a familial transfer.

⁹⁹ RMC, Deed Book H19, 260.

¹⁰⁰ *Record of Earthquake Damage*, 1888. On microfiche, Historic Charleston Foundation.

house numbers in Charleston had been set.¹⁰¹ Despite that, the deed that documents the sale between Johanns and Simmons refers to the property as “the Northwest corner of East Bay and Hasell streets,” a trend that continues until 1959.

Benjamin F. Simmons to Benjamin I. Simmons

As seen frequently in Charleston, houses are passed down through families. Not for the first time in the house’s history it was conveyed from father to son, the prior transaction being from Garrett Byrns to Garret J. Byrns. Keeping property in the family was a way to hold onto tangible family assets, a practice still widely used today. Aside from selling the property to a son or daughter for a nominal fee another popular way to ensure the transfer of family land was to put it into a trust for future descendants. That was exactly what the elder Benjamin Simmons had in mind when he conveyed 28 Hasell Street to his son, Benjamin I. Simmons in 1894.

Written into the deed was a provision that placed 28 Hasell Street into trust for Benjamin F. Simmons’ daughter, Mary Georgiana Phillips, as well as conveying the land to Benjamin I. Simmons for \$5. The house was placed in trust for Mary to use during her life as well as the lives of her children.¹⁰²

This trust provision proved to be a point of contention between the siblings. At an indeterminate point there was an argument between Simmons and his sister Mary Philip about what to do with the property. In the event of such disputes it was very common to hire a Master of Equity, a city-appointed official in charge of selling the property. Masters in Equity frequently handled real estate matters like foreclosures and contested conveyances.¹⁰³ G.H. Sass was appointed the Master in Equity in the dispute between the Simmons siblings.

Documented Changes

¹⁰¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1888. The 1884 Sanborn map lists 28 Hasell Street as number 572, 1888 map lists it as 28.

¹⁰² RMC, Deed Book Q22, 82.

¹⁰³ South Carolina Judicial Department, “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in South Carolina Master-in-Equity Court”, South Carolina Judicial Department ,1, <https://www.sccourts.org/selfhelp/FAQMIE.pdf> [Accessed November 9, 2018].

From 1884 to 1888, under the ownerships of the Johanns, Benjamin F. Simmons, and Benjamin I. Simmons the singlehouse underwent its first documented changes. Comparisons between the 1884 Sanborn Map completed in May and the 1888 Sanborn Map show expansions and additions. Though it is hard to know when the changes happened in that time frame and who incited them, the Sanborn Maps nevertheless provide a clue into the life of the building. While the brick foundation and framing and the wooden piazzas retain their general shapes, they have both been manipulated to provide more usable space.

Piazzas, a Charleston vernacular trademark, rose on the architectural horizon starting around the mid to late eighteenth century. They are long, narrow porches along the south or west sides of singlehouses designed to be an extension of the indoor living space. Originally used to as part of a cooling system to weather the hot, humid summer, the piazza was de rigueur by the time McNellage had his house built on 28 Hasell Street in the 1840's.¹⁰⁴

By 1888 either the Johanns or the Simmonses had taken off the stairs at the north end of the piazza, moved them to the northwest corner of the piazza, and claimed the wrap around portion on the lower level for more livable or working space as well as constructing a new brick addition in its place. They also expanded the upstairs apartment and added a bathroom in the hyphen between the main house and the kitchen building.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Robert Behre, "Looking for the Typical Charleston Piazza? New research says there's no such thing," *Post and Courier*, May 13, 2017.

¹⁰⁵ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Charleston, 1888.

	1805-1806	1810-1813	1815-1818	1821-1825	1829-1830	1832-1835	1836-1840	1842-1845	1845-1850	1851-1855	1859-1860
Indeterminate	15.6	17.79	22.85	17.77	21.51	17.54	20.22	11.86	18.6	8.93	11.5
King St.	4.87	8.58	16.07	21.38	24.47	23.5	24.15	26.11	30.23	36.42	36.57
Wharves	22.40	20.24	17.14	13.61	7.17	9.27	12.92	18.1	11.96	13.94	8.84
East Bay	13.27	19.01	21.78	21.94	17.71	22.51	19.1	17.5	16.27	16.15	15.92
Meeting St.	2.4	4.9	2.5	2.5	2.1	2.64	2.52	3.56	3.98	6.87	8.84
Broad St.	13.7	12.26	9.26	9.72	8.01	5.62	4.49	5.63	2.65	2.74	4.12
Church St.	5.36	4.29	1.78	2.5	2.95	3.31	2.80	.59	0.0	1.09	.29
Queen St.	5.36	3.68	1.78	1.94	2.95	2.64	1.68	0.0	1.99	.68	0.0
Troad St.	7.31	3.06	1.07	0.0	0.0	.33	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Market St.	0.0	1.22	0.0	2.5	1.68	3.31	1.68	1.48	2.32	2.06	4.42
Vendue Range	0.0	1.22	1.42	3.3	4.2	4.3	5.05	3.56	2.99	3.09	2.65
State St.	0.0	0.0	.71	0.0	.42	1.32	0.0	1.48	0.0	0.0	0.0
Elliot St.	5.82	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hayne St.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.12	2.37	2.65	4.46	3.53
Others	3.5	3.75	3.6	2.8	6.8	3.7	4.25	7.75	5.30	3.5	3.3
Total #	205	163	280.	360	237	302	356	337	301	291	339

(Calhoun and Zierden 1984)

Table of Relative Percentages of the Location of Retailers. *From Between the Tracks*, 18.

Age of the Corner Store, 1906 to 1996

Paramount to any thriving suburb is access to shopping, be it groceries, hardware, clothing, or home goods. Just as they are today small, locally owned stores were vital to the Charleston's economy and community in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Starting in 1805 the growth of retail stores in relation to certain streets has been charted. Unsurprisingly the street with the strongest upward growth pattern is King Street, followed closely by Meeting Street and East Bay Street who do falter in some years but show overall growth trends.¹⁰⁶ These offices brought money into Charleston and kept it circulating, promoting growth in the city. A comparison can be drawn from Charleston's corner stores to today's bodegas in larger cities. In similar fashion to the bodegas, the Charleston corner stores set out to serve local clientele, were family owned, and tended to sell a small varieties of groceries, liquor, and house hold goods.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ "Relative Percentages of the Location of Retailers", *Between the Tracks*, 18.

¹⁰⁷ *Between the Tracks*, 17.

The retailers in the above table were convenient to many of those that still lived within the original boundaries of the walled city but for those living in the suburb something else was needed. Even before Ansonborough was consumed into Charleston Proper it was already teaming with merchants of all types. Many of these small-scale, neighborhood-specific merchants operated out of corner stores—so appropriately called given their locations on corner plots of land.¹⁰⁸ In 1821, the city



Picture of the Parapet inscription that presumably went up in 1914.
Photo by author.

passed Act No. 2266, an “act to invest the City Council of Charleston with the powers to grant Licenses to retail grocers, and persons retailing on the wharves of Charleston.”¹⁰⁹ This act signaled a change in Charleston’s retailing and commerce. The growing city simply needed more access to goods outside of the King Street district and the unassuming corner store was just the shop to supply them.

¹⁰⁸ *Between The Tracks*, 17.

¹⁰⁹ David J. McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, vol. 6, (Columbia: A.S. Johnston, 1839), 166.

John C. Witt

Though 28 Hasell Street had operated as a corner store since the mid-19th century, usually a grocery store, there is little written about it before 1906. Much of the information prior to 1906 comes from the Sanborn Maps that note the type of store as “gro.” for grocery, or even more vaguely “S.” for store. That changes with the sale of 28 Hasell Street on November 17, 1906. On the behalf of Benjamin Simmons and Mary Phillips, G.H. Sass, Master in Equity, sells 28 Hasell Street to John C. Witt, for \$2500.¹¹⁰ John Witt and his wife Dora

Witt, sought repairs for their property in 1914 for \$1000; this coincides with the inscription on the building’s parapet that reads, “John C. Witt, 1914.”¹¹¹

The Witts owned and operated a store out of the first floor of 28 Hasell Street since they bought the property in 1906. The type of store is unknown since the 1929 Sanborn maps only label 28 Hasell Street as “S.” for store. The first indication of the kind of store came after John C. Witt’s death in 1930.¹¹² After his



Advertisement for W.R. Patrick. *Charleston News and Courier* December 16, 1945, 8B.

¹¹⁰ RMC, Deed Book W23, 110.

¹¹¹ “Real Estate Transfers”, *Charleston News and Courier*, August 2, 1914, 15.

¹¹² “Creditors Notice,” *The Charleston Evening Post*, July 16, 1930, 8.

death, his wife, Dora Witt, is willed the property and becomes the official homeowner.¹¹³ It is after John Witt's death that the Washington R. Patrick candy wholesale company first appeared in Charleston newspapers.

W. R. Patrick, as the company was known was one of three confectionary wholesalers in Charleston at the end of the 1930's. The two other were I Ginsberg Inc. at 226 Meeting Street and H.D. Rambke Inc. at 160 Church Street.¹¹⁴ W.R. Patrick sold sweets like candy and fruit cakes as well as tobacco. W.R. Patrick continued operating until Dora Witt sold the property in 1959.

As was common in many shops, there was living space for rent available in the upper floors. Renting an apartment was a convenient way to decrease the living expenses and help with the cost of

FOR RENT—Two nice bright front rooms, furnished for light house keeping, electric lights, hot water and bath, very reasonable to couple without children. 28 Hasell.

Charleston Evening Post, March 10, 1917, 12.

running the business. The Witts lived right in the back but there was a small apartment for rent right above the retail space.¹¹⁵ The apartment was "two nice bright front rooms furnished for light housekeeping, electric lights, hot water and bath, [for a] couple without children."¹¹⁶ The Witt's spare apartment continued to be let out until they sold the property. In the mid-1930's Dora Witt's brother moved in. Rudolph Stelling, her brother continued to live in the apartment until his

Blueprint Firm Moves To New, Larger Quarters

The Charleston Blueprint and Supply Company has opened new and larger quarters at East Bay and Hasell Streets.

The firm was formerly located on King Street. Vincent D. Adams, founder and owner, said the rapid growth of the company's business plus added services necessitated the enlargement.

The company features all blueprint and whiteprint services as well as photostatic copy work. In addition, they stock drafting supplies for professionals and students and surveying equipment. Added services in their new quarters will include offset lithography.

Charleston blueprint and Supply finds a bigger space at East Bay and Hasell. *Charleston Evening Post, January 25, 1960, 8-A.*

¹¹³ The City of Charleston Probate Court, Case 686 no. 12.

¹¹⁴ Charleston City Directory, 1938, 849.

¹¹⁵ Advertisement, *The Sunday News, Charleston, S.C.*, August 22, 1915, 3.

¹¹⁶ Advertisement, *The Charleston Evening Post*, March 10, 1917, 12.

death in 1937.¹¹⁷ After they sold 28 Hasell Street the apartments continued to be rented out and are still apartments today.¹¹⁸

Vincent D. Adams

Local entrepreneur, Vincent D. Adams, took over 28 Hasell Street on November 18, 1959. He bought the property from Dora Witt for \$ 12,000.¹¹⁹ Adams already owned a successful store Charleston Blue Print and Supply Company.¹²⁰ Charleston Blue Print and Supply Co. was operating out of a small space at 142 King Street.¹²¹ Adams promptly moved his business into the larger, corner space he acquired from Dora Witt. Though he moved his business into the space Adams followed the tradition

of 28 Hasell and rented out the upper apartments while residing in Mt. Pleasant.¹²²

Adams was a Citadel graduate and a savvy businessman. He started several successful businesses in his lifetime: Adams Family Land Group, Charleston Yacht Sales, and the Charleston Blue Print and Supply Company to name a few. He started Charleston Blue Print Supply in 1953. Adams, his wife, Mary Adams, and his partner Richard B. Condon operated Charleston Blueprint and Supply Co.. Two years after Adams



28 Hasell Street in 1960, note the Charleston Blueprint and Supply window banner. ©Historic Charleston Foundation.

917, 7.

¹¹⁸ "Club Rolls," *News and Courier*, August 3, 1918, 7.

¹¹⁹ RMC, Deed Book U68, 240.

¹²⁰ Photograph of 28 Hasell Street, 1960, Historic Charleston Foundation. The photograph shows the Charleston Blue Print and Supply Co. logo on the store front windows.

¹²¹ Advertisement, *The Charleston Evening Post*, September 7, 1959, 13.

¹²² Charleston City Directory Name Index, 1961, 123. This directory has Adams and his wife listed as homeowners of 723 Collete Drive in Mt. Pleasant.

bought 28 Hasell Street *The Charleston Evening Post* published a piece in 1961 praising the quick growth of Charleston Blue Print and Supply Co.; Adams had managed to increase his business' growth seven times over in eight years. That popularity allowed Charleston Blue Print and Supply Co. to host the Southeastern Blue Print Men Convention in 1961. From there, the business continued to grow and place bids on jobs, frequently winning government contracts. Adams had a knack for creating successful, long living businesses. Charleston Blue Print and Supply Co. operated out of the corner store for thirty-two years until an antiques store moved into the space in May of 1993.¹²³

Richard B. Condon

Condon was appointed to Sales Manager of Charleston Blueprint and Supply Co. in 1959 and continued to work alongside his business partner until 1971.¹²⁴ He bought the property for \$30,000 from his Vincent Adams in 1971 on November 18.¹²⁵ It is unclear when he bought the company from Vincent Adams. He served as President of the business at least until 1992 while his wife, Mary Condon, acted as vice president and comptroller.¹²⁶ Charleston Blue Print and Supply Co. continued to grow in scale, so thirty-two years after Vincent Adams bought 28 Hasell Street to house the company Condon bought a parcel on land at 999 Morrison Drive to move Charleston Blue Print and Supply Co. into in 1991.¹²⁷ In addition to



Picture of Richard Condon from an interview in *The Post and Courier*, February 20, 1992.

¹²³ Advertisement, *Charleston Post and Courier*, May 15, 1993, 43.

¹²⁴ "Charleston Firm Names Condon to Sales Position," *The Post and Courier*, June 14, 1959, 33.

¹²⁵ RMC, Deed Book F96, 204.

¹²⁶ "Do you Know? Richard B. Condon," *The Post and Courier*, February 20, 1992.; "Death Summary," *The Post and Courier*, August 10, 2102, 4.

¹²⁷ "City of Charleston," *The Charleston News and Courier*, April 12, 1991, 88. This brief article details that Condon bought one parcel of land on Morrison drive for \$450,000. The address, 999 Morrison Drive—sometime given as 90 Brigade Street, is corroborated in later newspaper articles and the company's old website, <http://realpages.com/sites/cbc/>

running a successful business, Condon was active in Charleston's social scene. He was elected Master of the Masons Pythagorean Lodge 21 in December of 1966.¹²⁸ Condon continued to be active in the Charleston community until his death in 2010 at 79.¹²⁹

After Condon had moved Charleston Blueprint Supply Co. out of the store at 28 Hasell Street a new store moved in and the upper story piazza was reopened.¹³⁰ East Bay Antiques moved into the space for a few years and by the time Condon sold the building in 1996 to another local entrepreneur, Leo Chiagkouris, Ali's Antiques was operating out of 28 Hasell Street.¹³¹

Leo Chiagkouris and Charles Rolfe: A New Era, 1996 to 2018

From 1990 onward the availability of physical descriptions and alterations of the house at 28 Hasell has greatly expanded. The majority of these descriptions, transactions, and photographs are contained in the 28 Hasell Street file at the Board of Architectural Review's (BAR) office. Since their establishment in 1931 the BAR has required homeowners to seek approval for exterior changes to their houses and businesses.¹³² The BAR's goal is to provide guidance and approval to retain the significant visual characteristics of Charleston's architecture. This approval process requires detailed documentation of all potential projects homeowners wish to undertake.

A few years after Condon had moved Charleston Blueprint and Supply Co. into its new location at 999 Morrison he sold the space at 28 Hasell Street. In 1996, Condon sold 28 Hasell street to Leo Chiagkouris for \$310,000. Prior to his sale to Chiagkouris, Condon had opened up the piazza in 1992.¹³³ See Appendix C for a complete list of improvements made to 28 Hasell Street. Chiagkouris continued to

¹²⁸ "Pythagorean Masons Elect Condon Head, *The News and Courier*, December 3, 1966, 22.

¹²⁹ "Deaths Summary," *The Post and Courier*, August 20, 2010, B4.

¹³⁰ Photograph of 28 Hasell Street, November 1996, 28 Hasell Street Vertical file, Located at the Board of Architectural Review Office, Charleston, S.C.

¹³¹ Dates are probable guesses based on the photographs in the 28 Hasell Street file from the Board of Architectural Review collection. See the photos in the Appendix's Additional Pictures section.

¹³² "Board of Architectural Review", *Charleston South Carolina*, <https://www.charleston-sc.gov/index.aspx?NID=293> [Accessed November 19, 2018].

¹³³ List of Improvements to 28 Hasell, 1990-1997, Located in the 28 Hasell Street file at the Board of Architectural Review, Charleston, S.C.

rent out the first floor of his property for retail use. Under his short ownership 28 Hasell Street was home to Ali's Antiques, Roberta Ketchin Interiors, and Merrill Benfield Interiors.¹³⁴

While operating the first floor as retail, Chiagkouris rented out the other two and a half stories. The subsequent remodeling and changes Chiagkouris made to raise the value of his apartments led to trouble with the BAR. Chiagkouris was reprimanded for his unpermitted roof deck. Courtenay McDowell, President of the Historic Ansonborough Association at the time sent a formal letter to the BAR to indicate that although Chiagkouris was denied permission to construct the roof deck he did so anyway during late June in 1997.¹³⁵ Chiagkouris' trouble with the BAR did not stop there he was cited for various building projects until he sold the property. Chiagkouris was responsible for the colors seen on the building today. Photographs in the BAR's files show prior to his ownership, during the time Condon owned 28 Hasell Street, the exterior stucco was painted a cream color and had light blue trim along the top half story and the parapet. Presently the stucco is a light yellow and the details and trim are a dark green.

Charles Rolfe

After finishing his remodeling, Chiagkouris parted ways with 28 Hasell Street. On February 21, 2001 Charles Rolfe bought the property from Chiagkouris for



The roof deck in question. *From a formal letter form Courtenay McDowell, President of the Historic Ansonborough Association, located in the Board of Architectural Review Collections.*

¹³⁴ 28 Hasell Street file, Located in the 28 Hasell Street file at the Board of Architectural Review, Charleston, S.C.

¹³⁵ Unpublished letter, Courtenay McDowell, Located in the Board of Architectural Review Collections, Charleston, S.C.

\$940,000.¹³⁶ Since Rolfe bought the property it has continued to be rented out and sold as condominiums. In 2017, 28 Pitt LLC bought the 2,824 square foot first floor retail office space from Hire Quest LLC.¹³⁷

Conclusion

Though 28 Hasell Street's lifespan has been short in comparison to older properties in the walled city it has proven to be significant. From starting off as part of Henry Lauren's land acquisitions to being conveyed to John McNellage, who built the brick house still standing today in the early 1840's, to its long line of business owners into the twenty-first century, 28 Hasell Street has been a part of Ansonborough's development into a self-sustaining suburb.

28 Hasell Street's development into a corner store has allowed the property and its owners to serve their neighbors and the city. The kinds of businesses have hinted at the needs of the neighborhood in the early years and have helped develop a pattern of commerce in the city. From starting off providing local neighbors groceries and home goods to serving the whole peninsula and outlying suburbs with all their Blueprinting and Antiquing needs this one property kept up with growing trends of Charleston's sprawl. It would be wonderful to get inside the house and explore more about the interior changes of the space. Those would yield many clues to the changing needs of the shop owners since the mid-nineteenth century.

What has been uncovered through here is by no means a conclusive history of the 28 Hasell Street parcel. It should serve as a starting point for more in depth research into the property or the Ansonborough neighborhood. It could also be viewed as a brief survey into one particular corner store in Charleston. Delving more into the development and changing identities of corner stores in the neighborhoods of Charleston would certainly yield meaningful data to those interested in the growth and sprawl of Charleston since its beginnings as a walled city.

¹³⁶ RMC, Deed Book S364, 193.

¹³⁷ "Hot Properties for July 24, 2017," *Charleston Regional Business Journal*, <https://charlestonbusiness.com/news/real-estate-commercial/72578/> [Accessed November 20, 2018].

Appendix A—Chain of Title

Chain of Title

Date: May 1842

Grantor: Caroline Ball Laurens and James Withers Read

Grantee: Edward R. Laurens, And John Harleston Read Jr.

Book & Page: H 11, 485-491

Type: Marriage settlement between Caroline Ball Laurens and James Withers Read

Lot Dimensions: 82 feet on East Bay and 145 feet on Hasell streets

Address: “North west corner of East Bay street and Hasell street”

Sold for: nothing, marriage settlement

This marriage settle was written and executed for the marriage between Caroline Laurens and James Withers Read. The settlement ensures that Caroline Laurens’ inherited lands and other goods are kept in trust during her marriage. This was a common way to keep family land in the family during marriages when the woman would normally sign her land over to her husband. This settlement expressly mentions a plot on the corner of East Bay and Hasell streets which Edward R. Laurens, Caroline Lauren’s uncle, and John Harleston Read Jr. are to keep in trust for her.

Date: December 8, 1846

Grantor: Carolina Read, James W. Read, John Laurens, Edward R. Laurens and John Harleston Read Jr.

Grantee: John McNellage

Book & Page: X 11, page 324-325

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: “82 feet on East Bay and 145 feet on Hasell streets”

Address: “North west corner of East Bay street and Hasell Street”

Sold for: \$3000

This deed sums up the sale of a large corner plot on East Bay and Hasell streets that was originally given to Edward R. Laurens and John Harleston Read Jr. as part of Caroline Read’s marriage settlement with James W. Read.

Date: April 28, 1863

Grantor: John McNellage

Grantee: Garret Byrns

Book & Page: R 14, page 320

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36' x 98'

Address: "northwest corner of East Bay and Hasell Streets"

Sold for: \$9850

John McNellage sold Garret Byrns the land and the "two and half brick story dwelling and kitchen house" to him for \$9850. During this transaction the property changed in size. It went shrank along Hasell Street running from 145 feet to 36 feet and grew on the East Bay Street side from 82 feet to 96 feet. This corresponds to the four houses McNellage had constructed along Hasell street starting at the corner.¹³⁸

Date: May 5, 1883

Grantor: Garret Byrns

Grantee: Garret Joseph Byrns

Book & Page: Y 18, page 281

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36' x 98'

Address: "North West Cor East Bay and Hasell sts."

Sold for: \$4500

A Garrett Byrns sells the "Northwest Cor. of East Bay and Hasell sts." to a Garret Joseph Byrns. Unclear on whether this is father and son or the same man. Regardless, the lot sold is 36' x 98' and said to contain a "two and half story brick dwelling and kitchen."

Date: May 10, 1884

Grantor: Garret Joseph Byrns

Grantee: Meta M Johannis

Book & page: B 20, 288

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36' x 98'

Address: "North West cor. East Bay and Hasell sts."

Sold for: \$5000

¹³⁸ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 442.

Garret Joseph Byrns sold the corner of East Bay and Hasell to Meta M Johanns. The plot he sold describes a “two and half story brick dwelling with a kitchen,” with the same dimensions as the plot he bought, 36’ “Front and rear,” by 98’ “East and to the back.”

Date: March 4, 1887

Grantor: Meta M Johanns

Grantee: J. Frederick Johanns

Book & page: G 19, 281

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36’ x 98’

Address: “Cor. of East Bay and Hasell sts”

Sold for: \$5, most likely a transfer of property to her husband

This conveyance is most likely a wife, Meta M. Johanns, transferring her property to her husband, J. Frederick Johanns given the small \$5 payment. The property transferred retains the same dimensions as when she bought it, 36’ “to the front and the rear” by 98’ “to East and back” and still has the “two and half story brick dwelling with kitchen.”

Date: February 25, 1888

Grantor: J. Frederick Johanns

Grantee: Benjamin F. Simmons

Book & page: H 19,260

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36’ x 98’

Address: “North West corn. Of East Bay and Hasell sts.”

Sold for: \$4,200

J. Frederick Johanns sold Benjamin F. Simmons the corner of East Bay and Hasell streets for \$4,200. The property still retains the same “two and a half story brick dwelling with kitchen,” ad the same dimensions when bought.

Date: December 14, 1894

Grantor: Benjamin F. Simmons (father)

Grantee: Benjamin I. Simmons (son)

Book & page: Q 22, 82

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36’ x 98’

Address: “North West Cor. East Bay and Hasell sts.”

Sold for: \$5 (family transfer most likely)

The father, Benjamin F. Simmons, sold to his son, Benjamin I. Simmons, for \$5 the property with the “two and half brick dwelling with kitchen” at the “North West [c]or. Of East Bay and Hasell sts.” The property was put in a trust by the elder Benjamin for his daughter, Mary G. Phillips:

In trust nevertheless for the use of my daughter Mary Georgiana Phillips for and during the term of her [...] life and upon her death in the further trust to convey the said premise in [...] unto the child or children of the said Mary Georgiana Phillips living at her death, the issue of any deceased child to [...] and take their share which such deceased child would take if they were alive.

In the next deed conveyance, a Master in Equity, G.H. Sass, was appointed because there was a complaint made by Benjamin I. Simmons against a Mary G. Phillips (“Marie” in deed book W 23, page 110), presumably because there was conflict between the siblings Benjamin and Mary about the trust their father placed the property in.

Date: November 17, 1906

Grantor: G.H. Sass, Master in Equity (on behalf of “Benjamin I. Simmons Trustee and other”)

Grantee: John C. Witt

Book & page: w 23, 110

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36’ x 98’

Address: “northwest corner of East Bay and Hasell streets”

Sold for: \$2500 (value is going down with each sale)

G.H. Sass, Master in Equity appointed by the court, sold the “northwest corner of East Bay and Hasell street” complete with the “two and half story brick dwelling and kitchen” to John C. Witt on November 17, 1906.

Date: circa 1930-1931

Grantor: John C. Witt

Grantee: Dora R. Witt

Book & page: Case 686 no. 12 in Probate Court

Type: Willed

Lot Dimensions: 36’ x 98’

Address: Northwest Corner of East Bay and Hasell streets

Sold For: nothing, willed to widow

Between his death in 1930 and July 1931 John C. Witt willed the estate known as “Northwest corner of East Bay Hasell streets” to his widow Dora R. Witt. These dates were decided upon based on a newspaper article, “Creditors Notice,” in *The Charleston Evening Post* dated July 16, 1930 on page 8, that mentioned Dora R. Witt’s ownership of the property.

Date: November 18, 1959

Grantor: Dora R. Witt

Grantee: Vincent D. Adams

Book & page: U 68, page 240

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36' x 98'

Address: 28 Hasell (first mention)

Sold For: \$12,000

Dora R. Witt sold Vincent D. Adams the plot on the north west corner of East Bay and Hasell streets now officially known as 28 Hasell for \$12,000. It still retains the same dimensions, 36' x 98', but the deed did not include the "two story brick dwelling and kitchen building" that the previous deeds have mentioned.

Date: March 23, 1971

Grantor: Vincent D. Adams

Grantee: Richard B. Condon

Book & Page: F 96, 204

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36' x 98'

Address: 28 Hasell street

Sold For: \$ 30,000

Vincent D. Adams sold 28 Hasell to Richard B. Condon for \$30,000; two and a half times what he paid for Dora R Witt for the lot. The dimensions remain the same.

Date: December 9, 1996

Grantor: Richard B. Condon

Grantee: Leo Chiagkouris

Book & Page: L 277, page 831

Type: conveyance

Lot Dimensions: 36' x 98'

Address: 28 Hasell

Sold for: \$310,000

Condon sold Chiagkouris the 28 Hasell property for a staggering \$310,000 with the same dimensions, 36' x 98'. This was probably the beginning of condo-ification of the lot.

Date: February 26, 2001

Grantor: Leo Chiagkouris

Grantee: Charles Rolfe

Book & Page: S 364, page 193

Type: conveyance

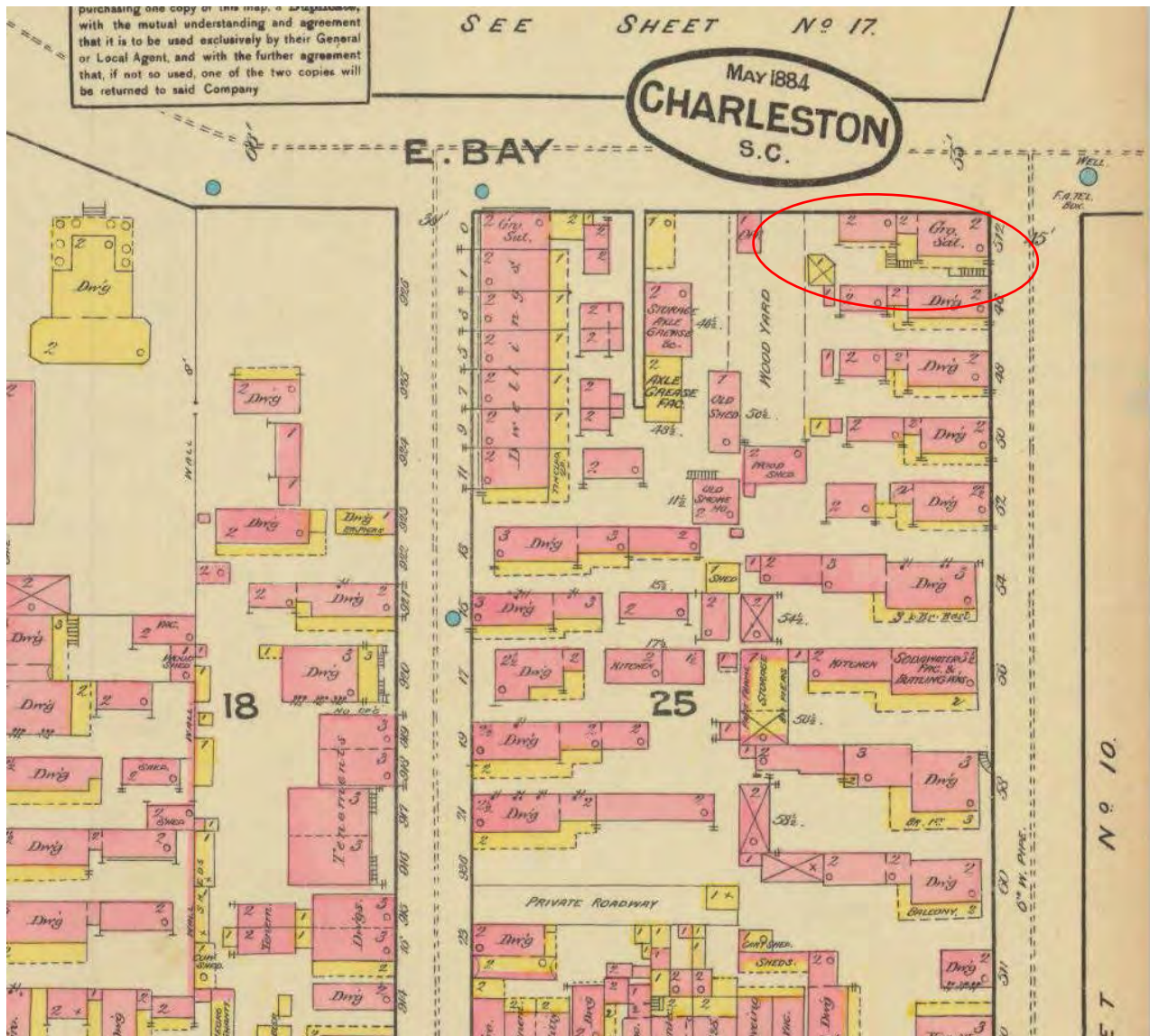
Lot Dimensions: 36' x 98'

Address: 28 Hasell street

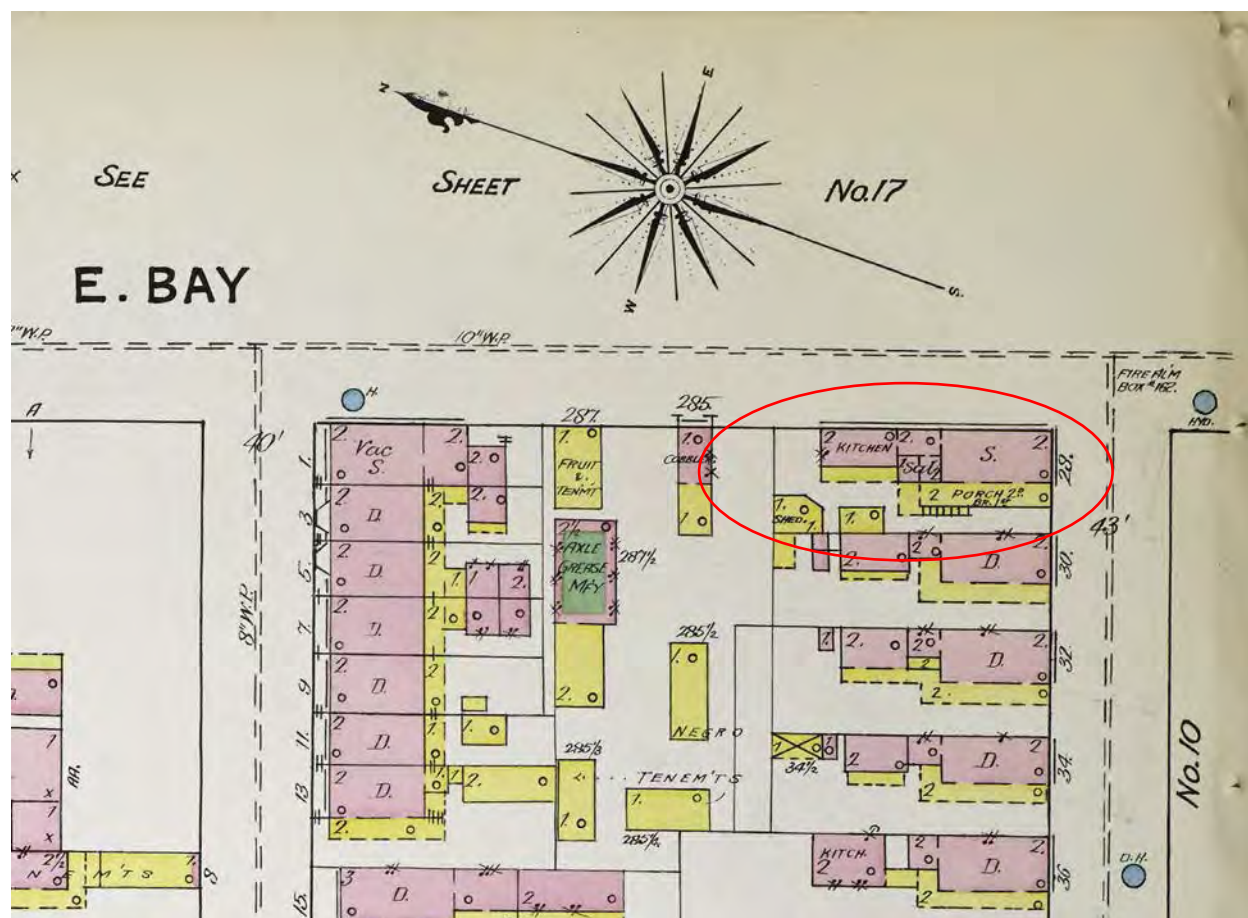
Sold For: \$940,000

Chiagkouris sold 28 Hasell to Charles Rolfe for \$940,000.

Appendix B—Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps



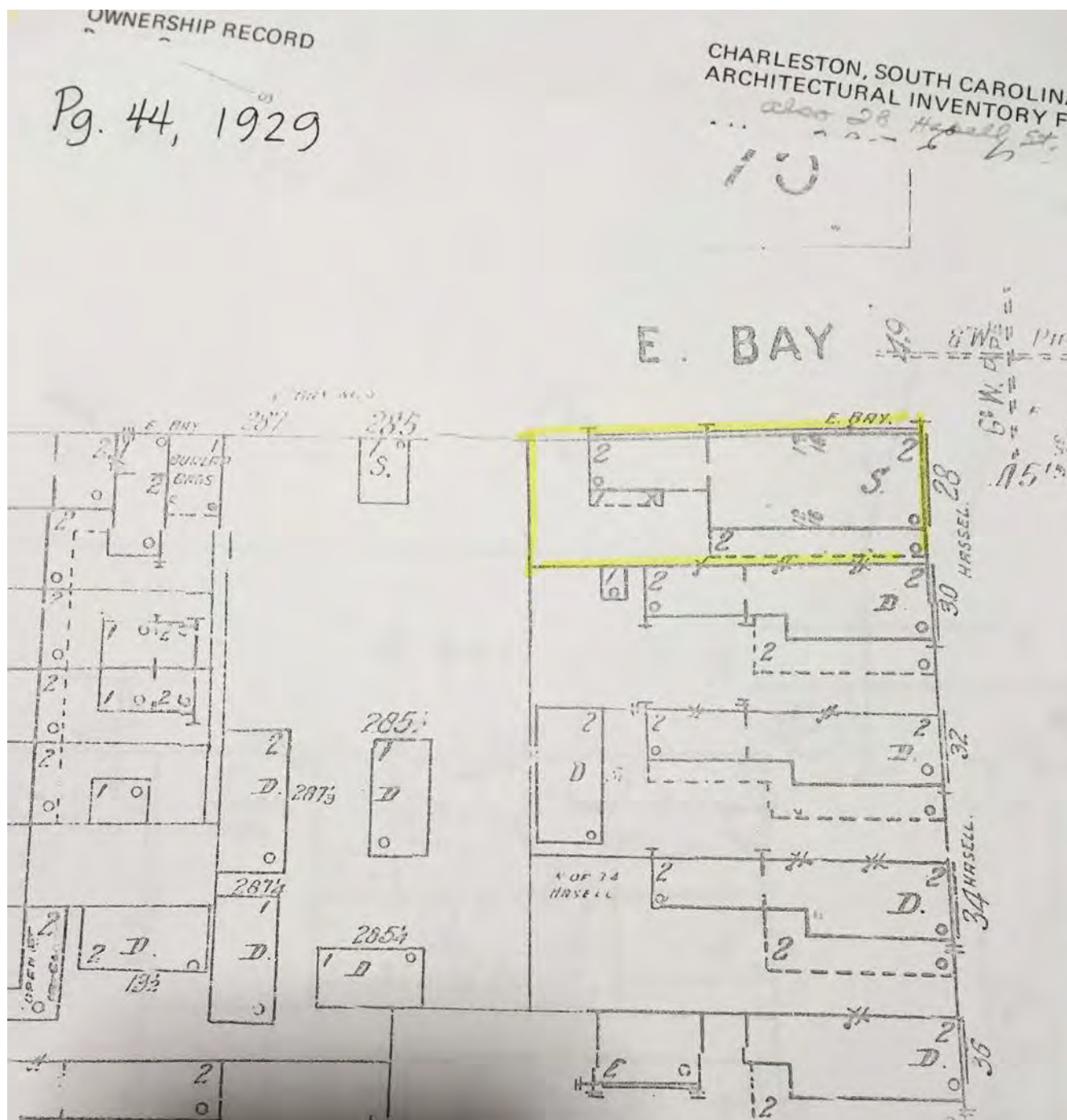
1884 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Courtesy of the Charleston County Public Library.

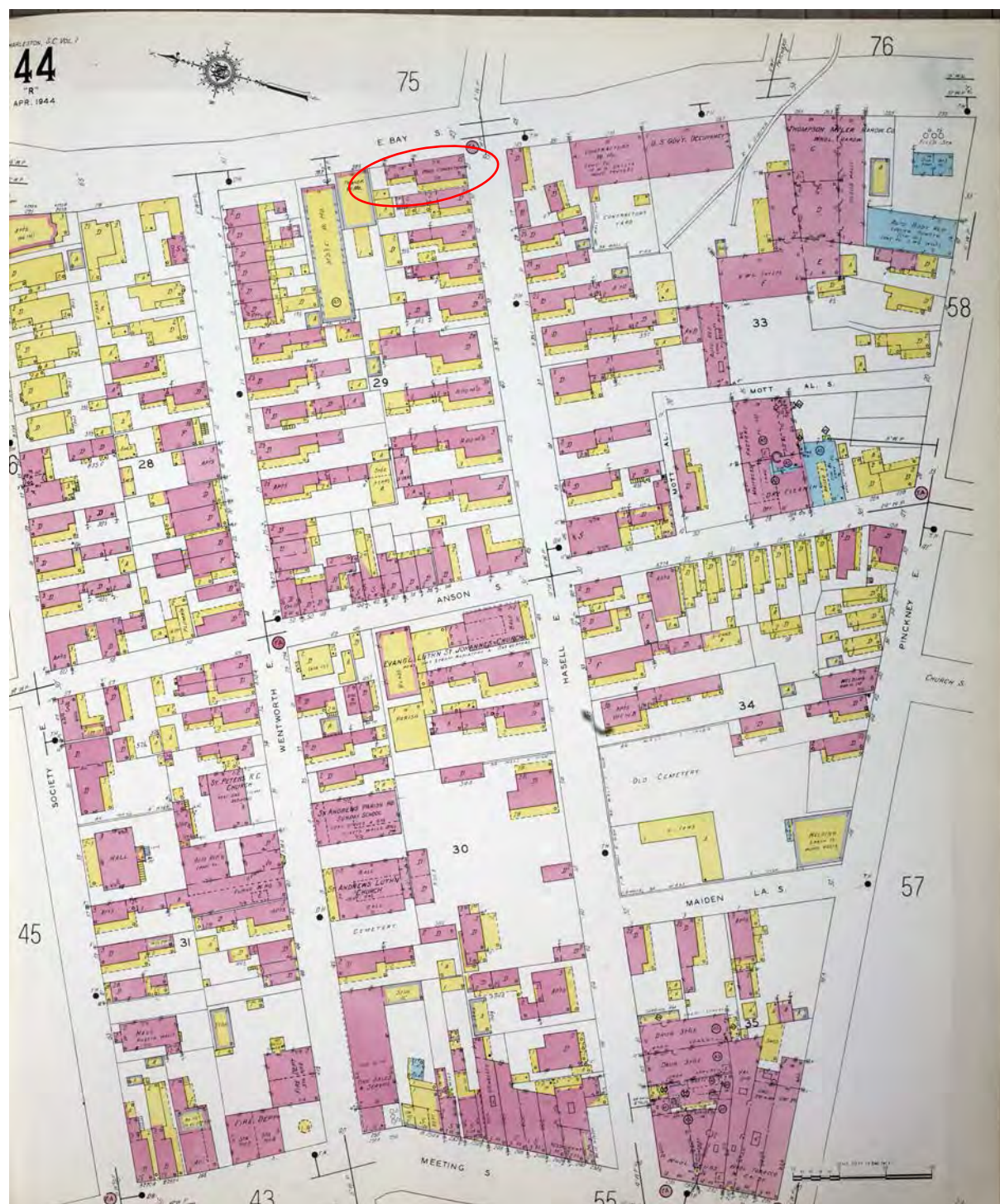


1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Courtesy of the Charleston County Public Library.



1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Courtesy of the Charleston County Public Library.

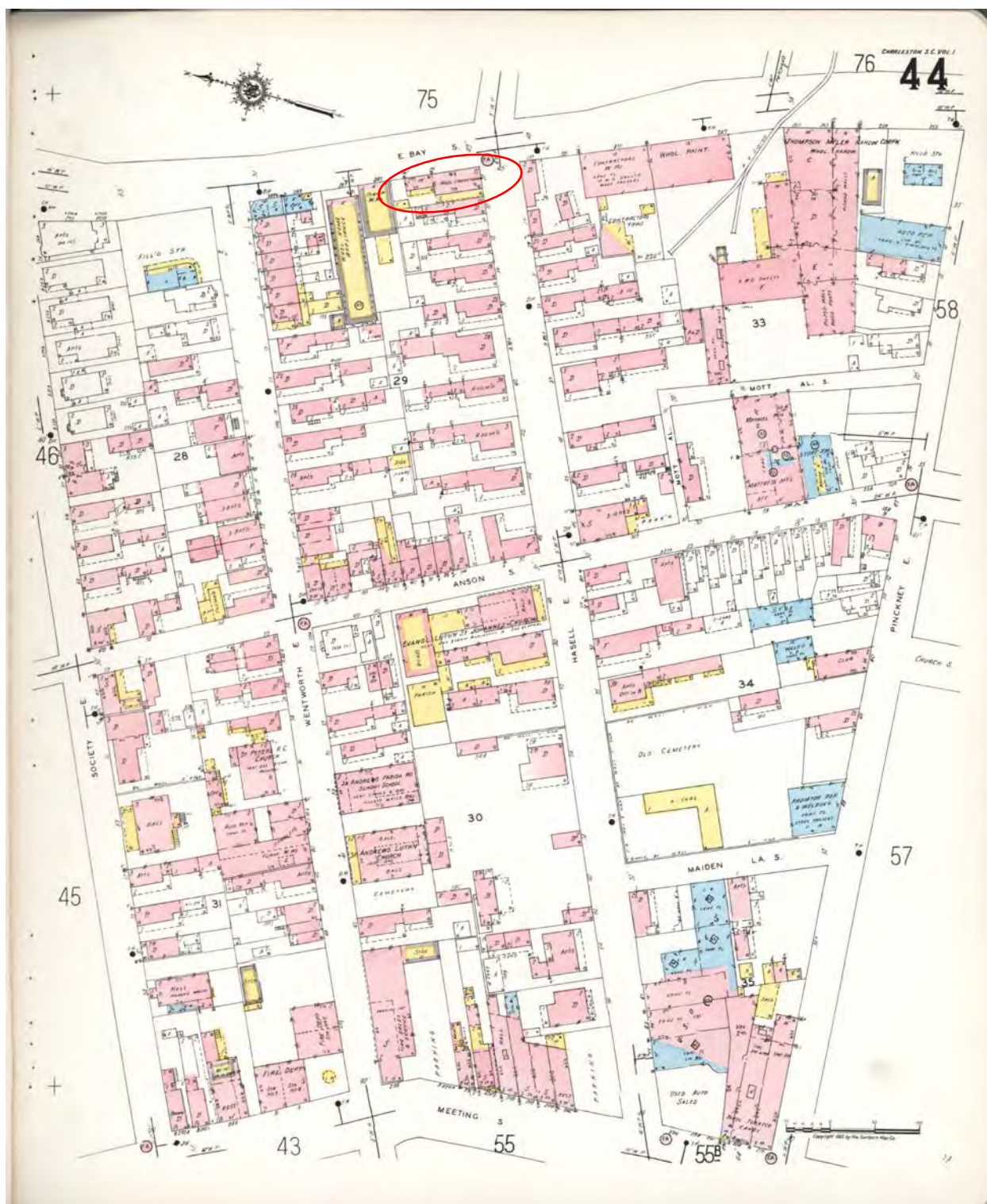




1944 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. *Courtesy of the Charleston County Public Library.*




1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Courtesy of the Charleston County Public Library.



1955 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Courtesy of the Charleston County Public Library.

Appendix C—Board of Architectural Review Files


 CITY OF CHARLESTON

Street Address 28 Hasell St Tax Map Number 458.05.01.031

☒ Old & Historic District ☐ Old City District ☐ North of Line Street / South of Mt. Pleasant Street


Architectural Rating 3 ☐ Not Surveyed (North of Line Street) Date(s) of Construction _____

Zone District GB Height District _____ Flood Zone _____ Easement/Covenant _____

Date	Work Requested	Approval Received
11/19/90	Paint color change	Staff - FIA
9/2/92	Signage + open piazza	Staff - FIA w/ conditions
6/6/96	Exterior repairs - no changes	Staff - FIA
9/25/96	Ext. repainting - no changes	Staff - FIA
11/25/96	Paint Samples for review	Staff - w/ conditions
11/25/96	Interior work	Not needed
12/18/96	memo to Rk regarding roof deck being built w/o approval	
2/3/97	Letter from HCF appealing "approval" of roof deck.	
1/30/97	Plans for roof deck received in office - no App + no approvals	
2/5/97	Letter from HANA opposing roof deck + variances	
2/11/97	Memo to B.I. regarding permits for roof deck etc.	
3/12/97	FIA ext. alterations (Screen mech units, remove masonry wall west of piazza screen, replace columns + HR on rear piazza)	FIA details to Staff (Board)
8/20/97	details for HVAC screening + placement	FIA - Staff
3/28/97	Plans for deck (roof) Submitted - no Application + no approvals	
3/28/97	Submittal for max HVAC - no Approvals	
6/22/97	Letter from HANA regarding completed roof deck	
6/3/97	Letter to owner - electricity being turned off	

List of improvements to 28 Hasell Street. From the 28 Hasell Street file located at the Board of Architectural Review office in Charleston, S.C.

Monday 10-8 - East Bay - Sunday 1-6


Auction Company
 (803) 577-3621

Mark Freeman
 Owner
 803-786-1069

280 East Bay Street
 Charleston, SC 29401
 SCAL # 2290

STAFF REVIEW
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
 CHARLESTON

Staff Review Number: SR - 92 - 482

The applicant listed below hereby requests a review by the Preservation Officer for the following:

☒ Repairs / Alterations
☐ New Construction
☐ Demolition of non-visible feature or accessory structure

as described below:

Applicant: PENNY BOUVETTE 577-3621
 Street Address 28 HASSELL ST Tax Map Number - - -
 Zone District W Old & Historic District ☐ Old City District
 Architectural Rating 3 Height District - Flood Zone -

Request: approval for signage & to reopen piazza as shown

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

To the Board of Architectural Review: Date 9/2/92

The Preservation Officer has reviewed SR -92-482 for the above referenced property. Findings are as follows:

☒ Approved ☐ Disapproved ☐ Deferred

☒ with the following conditions: 1) R/A sign to be between sill of top window & peak of bottom window;
2) piazza alterations approved subject to staff's approval of details as work commences

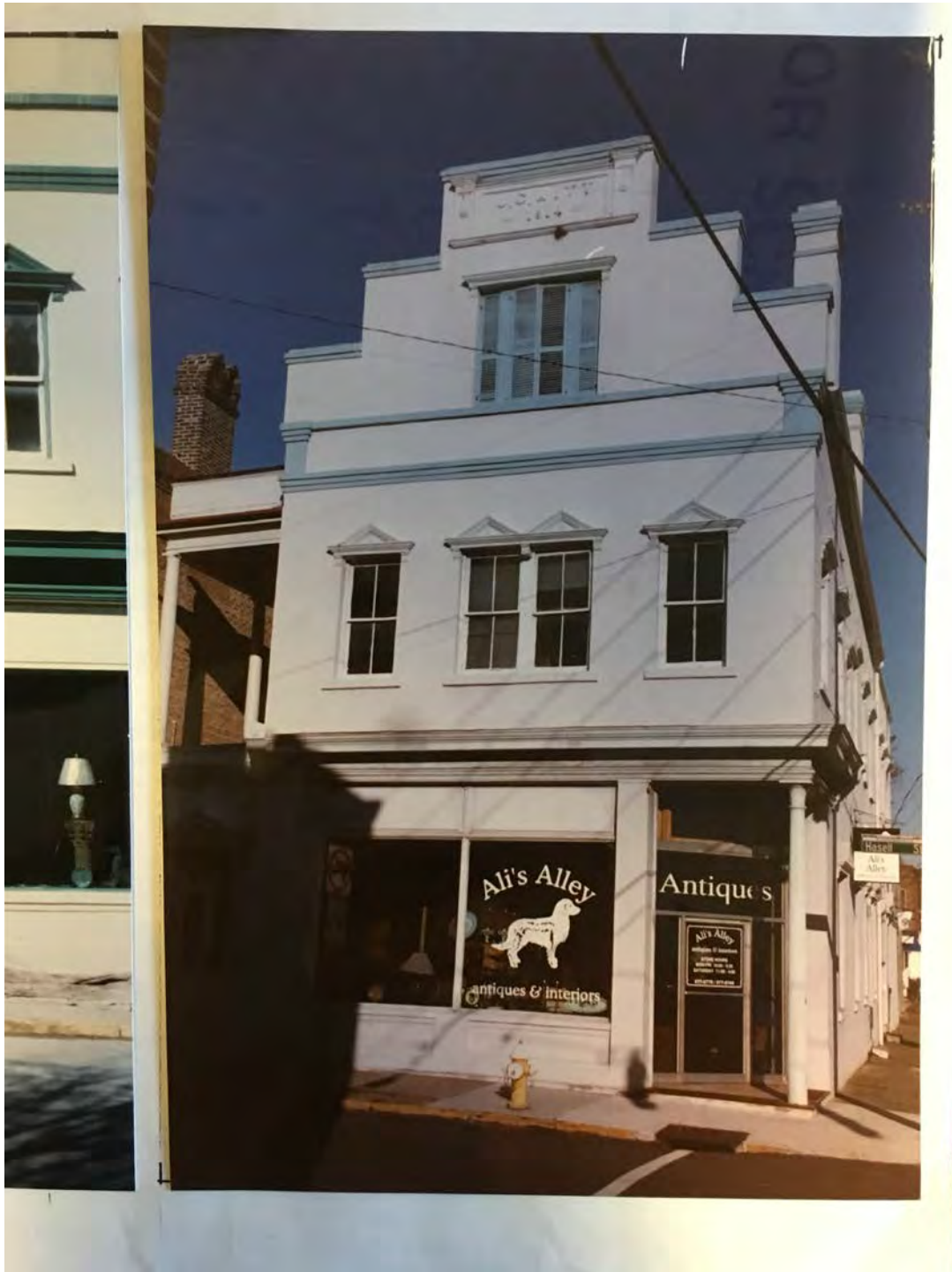
☐ Further Action / Final Approval Requires Board Hearing(s);
☒ A permit has been authorized for the aforementioned.

Debra L Rhoads
 Preservation Officer

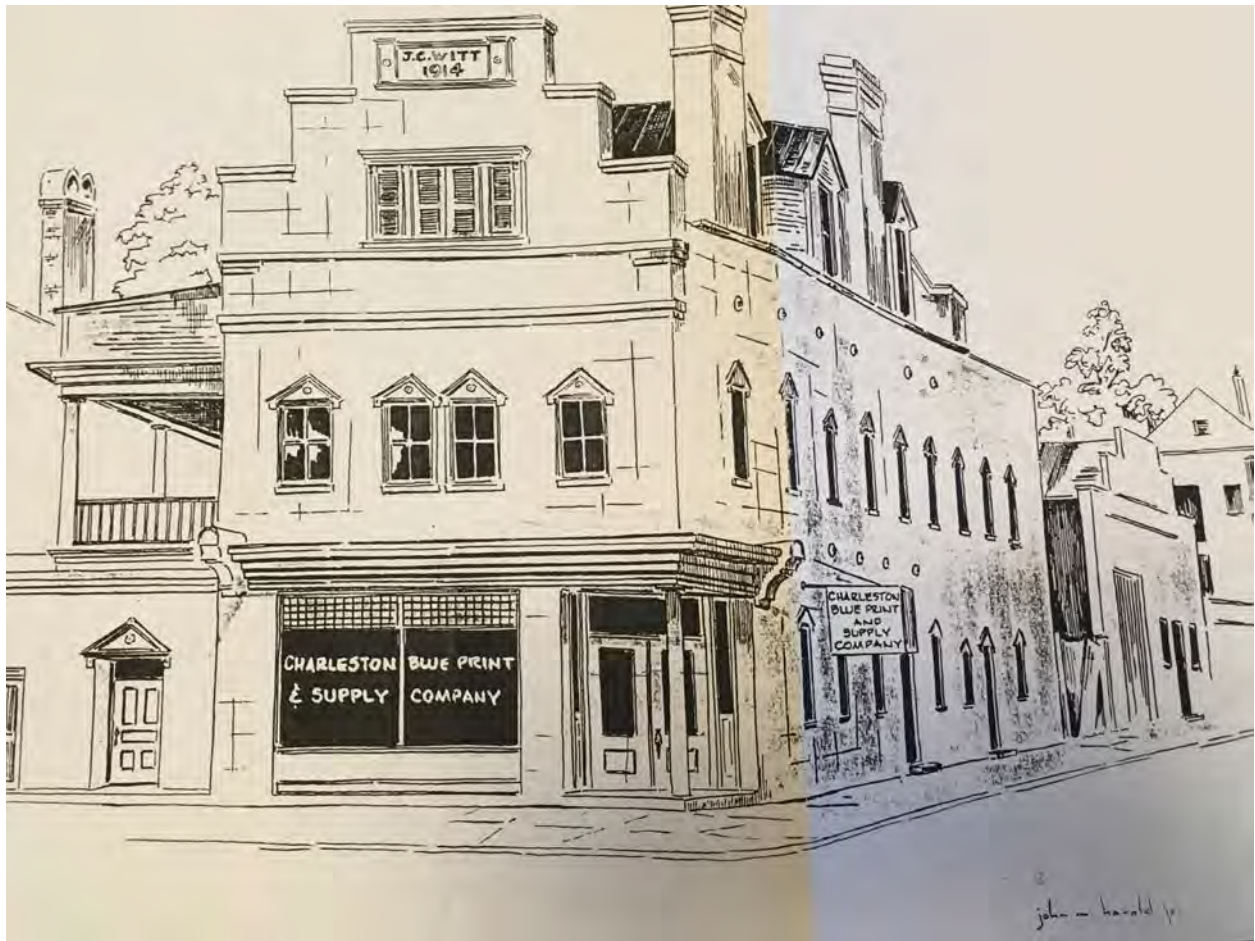
Note: All plans and specifications must be submitted and a permit received from the Building Inspection Division. A Building Permit must be obtained and posted.

Persons licensed by the Board of Architectural Review shall adhere to the standards for professional services as established by the Standard Building Code (as adopted by the City of Charleston) and Professional Registration Codes of the State of South Carolina.

Application requesting to open the piazza. 1992. From the Board of Architectural Review Files.



Photograph showing the Ali's Antiques logo, dated November 1996. *From the Board of Architectural Review files*



Sketch of 28 Hasell Street, undated. Most likely from the early 90's. *From the Board of Architectural Review's files.*

Appendix D—Current Photographs of 28 Hasell Street

All photographs taken by the author in October 2018.



28 Hasell Street facing Northwest.



28 Hasell Street's inscribed parapet.

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