

*Do not use any kind of tape  
to tape runners to the floor,  
to other runners or to  
anything else.*



## HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION

### GEORGE CHISOLM HOUSE

2003

24 Church Street

c.1801

**Residence of Mr. Thomas Ravenel**

*This property is being preserved through a protective easement.*

This property was noted on the Grand Modell, a 1680 city plan of Charles Town. Early tenements constructed on it for lease by Edward Fenwick were destroyed either by the fires of 1740 and 1778 or other means. George Chisolm, a factor operating on Vanderhost's Wharf acquired the land in 1801, built this house and one year later, was listed in the 1802 City Directory as living here.

The Federal style house, four full stories, was built in brick with a stuccoed finish and enhanced with Adamesque ornamentation very much in vogue in the early 19<sup>TH</sup> century. There has been little alteration to the essential footprint of the house. The only change occurred around 1923 when the original entrance door opening directly on Church Street was moved to its present location. A stone slab under the center window of the front interior room marks its earlier location.

The previous owners renovated the house in 1996. They attached the rear kitchen house to the front building with a connecting "hyphen" containing a stairway to the second floor media room/exercise room above the newly created kitchen. It's a splendid example of refitting a period dependency for contemporary living in a comfortable manner without infringing on the integrity of the structure.

### STAIRHALL

The stairway connects all four floors. The balusters reflect the Adam style with their slender, straight shape. The robust newel post probably replaced the original one whose more delicate outline is barely discernible on the floor. The wainscoting and ceiling cornices as well as window and door surrounds throughout the first floor are original to the building and reflect typical Adam style decor.

## **GEORGE CHISOLM HOUSE**

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#### **FRONT ROOM**

Note the gracious room proportions and window spacing which define the beauty of the Federal period. The fireplace mantel with its shallow classical ornaments, gougework trim in ceiling cornice and finely done wood paneled wainscotting are all typical of this age. The floors are the original heart pine. The furnishings are a collection of pieces congenial to the design of the house and to the hospitality and comfort in today's world.

Gentleman's clothing press, a family piece, given to the owner by his father, it originally belonged to an ancestor, William Ravenel  
Mantel mirror, or chimney glass, carved giltwood, of the period

#### **DINING ROOM**

This room is quite similar in size and design to front room. The garden door may have led to a piazza. There are indications of an unusual two-story L-shaped piazza at the rear of the house. The fireplaces have all been taken back to their original openings. They had been filled with coal burning grates in the intervening years.

Oval table, 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hepplewhite style, a family piece. The owner has had additional boards made to extend the length of the table  
Wine cooler, in corner, hexagonal, belonged also to William Ravenel

#### **WATCH THE STEP**

#### **BUTLER'S PANTRY**

This was formerly the "modern" kitchen. Note the creative architectural design which makes use of every light possibility. The windows face the brick wall of the next house and let in a little southern sun at the top.

#### **HALL**

Family photos, arranged in hall and in stairwell  
Engraving, of the family plantation, done before the 1886 earthquake

**GEORGE CHISOLM HOUSE**  
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**KITCHEN**

The period ambiance of this Charleston kitchen house meshes effectively with a totally hi-tech collection of 20th century cooking conveniences. The original floor was probably a hard packed earthen one. It has been replaced with limestone paving. Two doorways were cut into the stair hall for entrance to the front part of the house. (This was the exterior wall of the kitchen house.) Both fireplaces are original as well as the wooden beams and brickwork. The school house lights hang over the center work area.

Trestle table appropriate for this "kitchen house" kitchen  
Painting, of Strawberry Chapel, by West Fraser. The family has strong ties to the chapel.

**GARDEN**

A back portion of kitchen house (sitting area) may have served as a storage shed with a large door opening in rear. Tools and possibly, a family carriage could have been stored there.

The plantings are a collection of blooming shrubs and trees that are indigenous to the Lowcountry.

## 24 Church Street

From @ 1860s to 1902, the property with its 3 brick buildings and dimensions of 31' x 180' was owned by Mrs. Eliza Cheeseborough. From 1902 into at least the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the property was owned by the estate of Eliza Cheeseborough.

Purchased in 1852 by John Cheeseborough, trustee, from Mary W. Motte, the property at this date, was known as #18 Church Street and had 3 brick buildings.

In March of 1816, Mary Motte per trustee, et al, purchased the property from George Chisolm, a factor, for \$6,400. This deed of conveyance (R8 p.70) only describes the lot here measuring 25' 6" along Church Street and on the "North Line 145' on an alley or passageway of 10' in width until it meets said parcel wherein the stables are erected, which said piece of ground was purchased by George Chisolm from representatives of late Colonel William J. Kining."

Chisolm purchased the house and lot in 1800 for 1500 pounds sterling from Archibald Murdock's estate. Murdock had been in possession of the property for only four years, having purchased it in 1796 from Ralph Izard the Younger and his wife Mary.

The property came into the Izard Family @ 1785. The property had been owned by Edward Fenwick, Esq. since at least the 1770s. He devised the property (with its buildings thereon) to his daughter Mary through his will of 1775. After his death Mary married Mr. Walter Izard, "Gentleman" and at her death it became solely Izard's property.

REVIEW SHEET  
Historic Preservation Certification Application--Significance

Property: Murdock-Cheeseborough House, 24 Church Street Project No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Historic District: Charleston Historic District

3/08/99 date initial application received by State \_\_\_\_\_ date(s) additional information requested by State  
3/08/99 date complete information received by State \_\_\_\_\_  
3/26/99 date of this transmittal to NPS \_\_\_\_\_  
inspection of property by State staff: x no    yes date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

  x   There is adequate documentation enclosed to evaluate the historic character and integrity of this property.  
   There is insufficient documentation to evaluate the property adequately. The application is missing the following items:

Reasonable efforts have been made to obtain this information. Copies of the information requests are enclosed.

This property involves:

NUMBER

1

<u>  </u> Extensive loss of historic fabric	<u>  </u> Obscured or covered elevation(s)
<u>  </u> Substantial alterations over time	<u>  </u> Moved property
<u>  </u> Preliminary determination of listing	<u>  </u> State recommendation inconsistent with NR
<u>  </u> <u>  </u> for district	<u>  </u> documentation
<u>  </u> <u>  </u> for individual property	<u>  </u> Recommendation different from the applicant's request
<u>  </u> Significance less than 50 years old	

NUMBER

2

Complete item(s) below as appropriate.

- (1) The documentation on file with the National Register cites the period(s) of significance of this historic district as 1700 - 1941
- (2) The property x contributes    does not contribute to the historic significance of this registered historic district in:  
x location x design x setting x materials x workmanship x feeling x association  
   Property is mentioned in the NR or State or local district documentation in Section   , page   .
- (3) For properties less than 50 years old:  
   the historical merits of the district (the periods and areas of significance) are documented in the National Register form or district documentation on file as less than 50 years old, justifying the certification of this property's contribution.  
   the exceptional historical architectural significance of this property as described in the National Register form or district documentation of file justifies its certification as contributing.  
   there is insufficient justification to consider this property as contributing to the district for its individual exceptional architectural or historic significance of the significance of the district does not extend to the last 50 years.
- (4) For preliminary determinations:  
A. The status of the nomination for the property/historic district:  
   Nomination has already been submitted to the State review board, and nomination will be forwarded to the NPS within    months. (Draft nomination is enclosed.)  
   Nomination was submitted to NPS on     
   Nomination will be submitted to the State review board within twelve months.  
   Nomination process likely will be completed within thirty months.  
   Other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Evaluation of the property:  
   Property is individually eligible and meets National Register Criteria for Evaluation.  
   Property is located within a potential registered district that meets National Register Criteria for Evaluation:    A    B    C    D  
Criteria Considerations:    A    B    C    D    E    F    G
- (5) The property is located in a registered district, is outside the period(s) or area(s) of significance as documented in the NR form and:  
   appears to contribute to the expanded significance of the district. Enclosed is the revised nomination documentation.  
   does not appear to contribute to the period(s) or area(s) of significance of the district.

NUMBER

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Describe and evaluate the physical characteristics of the property, its integrity, and its significance within the context of the historic district (or individually for preliminary determinations of individual listings.)

The Murdock-Cheeseborough House, at 24 Church Street, in the city of Charleston, is a three-and-one-half story stuccoed brick single house built in the Federal style. It features a hip roof, gable dormers, large chimneys which rise along the south wall, immediately abutting 22 Church Street, and a Tuscan columned, gabled and paneled arched entrance with traceried sunburst transom. A two-story brick hyphen connects to a stuccoed brick dependency by way of a modern wood and glass stair tower. Constructed between 1796 and 1800 by Archibald Murdock, the house passed through George Chisolm and Mary Motte to John Cheeseborough, who acquired it in 1852. His family retained it until well into the twentieth century. For further information on the property's physical characteristics, both on the exterior and interior, as well as historic significance, refer to the attached Part 1 application. The house, a remarkable Federal style survivor in Charleston, unquestionably contributes to the historic and architectural character of the Charleston Historic District.

NUMBER

4

State Official Recommendation:

This application for the above-named property has been reviewed by Andrew W. Chandler  
a professionally qualified architect, architectural historian, or historian on my staff.

- ☐ The property is included within the boundaries of a registered historic district, contributes to the significance of the district, and is a "certified historic structure" for the purpose of rehabilitation.
- ☒ The property is included within the boundaries of a registered historic district, contributes to the significance of the district, and is a "certified historic structure" for a charitable contribution for conservation purposes in accordance with the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980.
- ☐ The property does not contribute to the significance of the above-named district.
- ☐ The property appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be nominated.
- ☐ The property does not appear to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will not be nominated.
- ☐ The property appears to contribute to the significance of a:
- ☐ potential historic district which appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be nominated.
  - ☐ registered historic district but is outside the period(s) or areas of significance as documented in the National Register nomination or district documentation on file with the NPS. Revised nomination or district documentation is enclosed.
- ☐ The property should be denied a preliminary determination that it could qualify as a certified historic structure.
- ☐ Insufficient documentation has been provided to evaluate the structure.

☐ Detailed NPS review recommended ☐ Precedent-setting case ☐ Forwarded without recommendation.

Date

State Official Signature

☐ See attachments:

NPS Comments:

Date

NPS Reviewer

## Statement of Significance (?)

The house at 24 Church Street is an excellent example of a late 18<sup>th</sup> century Federal style Charleston single house. It stands on a site of colonial period tenements built by Edward Fenwick, of Fenwick Hall Plantation. Most of the tenements burned in 1785 leaving only the kitchen houses. The earliest of these houses to be built was that of Daniel Brown of 22 Church, closely followed thereafter by Murdock's house at 24 Church. Fenwick's daughter sold the property to the north at 26 Church to James Watts who completed its shell. The property passed from Edward Fenwick's estate to his daughter, Mary, and her husband Walter Izard. The Izard's sold the property initially to Archibald Murdock. Murdock in turn sold the property to factor George Chisolm for 1,500 pounds sterling in 1800 at a price that would indicate a building on the site. Mary Motte purchased 24 Church Street with its three brick buildings in March 1816 held as per trustee. The next sale occurred in 1852 at which time the house was purchased by John Cheeseborough. It remained in his family until the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Murdock- Cheeseborough house is a remarkable survival of a Charleston Federal dwelling built on the site of earlier tenement structures. It remained in the hands of a relatively small number of owners until the recent 20<sup>th</sup> century. It incorporates a kitchen which with its substantial brick fireplace openings and original hewn timber framing, could date from before the fire of 1785. It has been subject of excellent restoration in recent years and a sensitive contemporary infill addition.

## Description of Physical Appearance

This is a three and one half story Charleston single house built of brick and covered with stucco. It has three bays on the front Meeting Street elevation with a division between the first and second bay of a belt course with detailing of simple interspersed squares. The house has five bays along the principal north elevation and a restored Federal-style doorway leads directly into the central stairhall through a six panel door surrounded by a semicircular fan light. At the rear an old brick hyphen runs to the east with French doors on the first floor. This leads into a modern contemporary hyphen housing a secondary staircase and thus connects to the original kitchen dependency.

On the interior, the house boasts much of its original Federal or neoclassical detailing. The hallway, however, has a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century staircase with a simple Greek revival style balustrade and newel. The front first floor drawing room features an early Federal neoclassical mantel piece with applied decoration that has been stripped to reveal its original detailing in its natural finish. It is inset with two slips of King of Prussia marble. This room has simple cornice and frieze and

wainscoting. The rear room on the first floor, is the dining room, has similar detailing. On the second story a neoclassical mantel survives in the front drawing room and the room has similar neoclassical detailing. The rear room on the second floor has a much simpler cornice and retains wainscoting and six panel doors with an inset "sticking" panels. The third story also retains such simple late 18<sup>th</sup> century woodwork as on the other two floors. The rear dependency retains its two original brick fireplaces and has been appropriately used as a large single room kitchen. The ceiling of this room boasts the original exposed framing. Also on the second story, a simple room with a stuccoed fireplace opening probably originally served as slave quarters and has been reused as the guest room.