

SOME SINGLE HOUSES IN CHURCH STREET

71 Church - 1730, 94 Church - 1759,

90 Church - 1760, and 92 Church - 1807

No. 7

No. 71 Church was the home of Colonel Robert Brewton who succeeded his father Colonel Miles Brewton as Powder Receiver, an office of considerable responsibility. This dwelling is the earliest example of what is known locally as a "single house". Its entrance is on the long side giving direct access to the stair hall with a door to a reception room facing the street. Directly opposite is the door into the dining room over looking the garden. The same basic arrangement of rooms with the stair hall between is repeated on the second and third floors. From the street the profile seems tall and narrow.

The distinctive feature of this house is the carefully executed moulded brick cornice with well defined modillions supporting the over hanging fascia under the eaves. The roof is covered with pan tiles and there are no dormers. The wrought iron balcony under the central window on the second floor adds an impressive accent at this focus.

All of these features are related to London precedents. Sir John Summerson in Georgian London gives us several significant instances of London building practices which we find repeated on this side of the Atlantic. He states "The insistant verticality of the London house is idiomatic. The French learnt at an early date to live horizontally and most, if not all, continental capitals followed the French lead". x x x "Continued fear of conflagrations prompted a Statute of 1707 which abolished the prominent wooden eaves-cornices which were such a stricking feature of the streets and squares of the Restoration". x x x "Two years later in 1709, another attack was made on exposed woodwork, this time in the window-openings. The frames instead of being nearly in the same plane as the brick face, were to be set back 4 in. leaving an exposed reveal of brickwork and incidentally giving a sense of solidity to the walls". Earlier regulations stated that "the larger types of houses were required to have a balcony at first floor level" x x x "In England as in France the "first floor" is that above the ground floor. The house of Colonel Robert Brewton conforms to all of these

London requirements except that the window frames are not recessed. Charles-Town lagged in following this fire precaution though it was finally accepted. The Heyward-Washington House, 87 Church Street, which was built in 1770, has the window frames flush with the face of the brick wall throughout except on the second and third floor windows facing the street which are recessed. This was an early and apparently reluctant compliance. Later this precaution was adopted generally.

No. 94 Church Street was built about 1730, by Thomas Bee. Its former coating of stucco has been carefully removed from the street front disclosing a facade of brick laid in Flemish bond. The cornice under the eaves consists of crown and bead mouldings of moulded brick with a dentil course between of alternate projecting and receding row lock brick. The window frames are of solid timbers set almost flush with the brickwork. At the window heads on the first and second floors there are segmental relieving arches of row lock brick with the spandrel between arch and window frame filled in with brick clipped to fill the space. On the first and second floors the window sash are glazed with nine lights over nine and on the third floor the sash are six over six lights. On the second floor under the central window a wrought iron balcony has been added and the window extended to the floor and the guillotine sash replaced by a French window with large panes of glass, disturbing the scale established by the smaller panes.

Although this is the oldest of these three neighboring houses its piazzas on the first and second floors are the latest to be added, evidently in Greek Revival times in the eighteen forties. The roof is of slate with clay tile over the hips and ridges. There is one dormer on the east slope of the roof.

This building is important historically which is explained on the tablet facing the street.

No. 90 Church Street built some thirty years later by Thomas Legare is a further development of the single house. Here the original entrance was from the street into the front room occupied as a real estate and financial office. This door was later converted to a window but its former presence is still evident in the greater width of the flat arch over the opening. There is a family entrance to the stair hall on the south side. Dormer windows appear on the roof

providing much needed ventilation. The roof is covered with slate. When in 1926 this building underwent considerable repairs it was found that each slate was attached to the purlins by small wooden pegs worn through to mere threads by the movement of the slates under wind pressure. Probably the original roof covering was of hand split cypress shingles for it was not until 1765 that Lord Penrhyn began to develop the export trade from his Welsh quarries. However, the agreement of the commissioners with the Horlbeck brothers in 1767 for the Exchange Building specifies "Welsh Slate" for the roofing. Soon slate superceded pan tiles for roofing as a much tighter roof could be obtained thereby. Welsh slate can be readily identified by its purplish color and much of it is still to be seen on the roofs of old buildings. As ships entering the port brought comparatively light manufactured items and sailed back with heavy cargoes of deer skins, lumber and rice it was necessary for the ships on the outward bound voyage to carry considerable ballast and Welsh slate proved more profitable than cobble stones and bricks.

The eaves cornice of Thomas Legare's house is not as sophisticated as that of Robert Brewton, and is contrived with projecting courses of ordinary brick. Below the top stretchers is a row lock course of alternating projecting and recessed brick giving the effect of a denticulated cornice. This translation of a classic cornice into brick soon became standard for brick houses.

No. 92 Church, next door, has been for many years the rectory of St. Phillip's Church. It follows the general scheme of its older neighbor except that the second floor is given a loftier ceiling adding considerably to the over all height of the building.

The native merchants of Charles-Town had been wiped out financially by the disasters of the Revolution and as the commerce of the port revived a new merchant class arose composed of such men as William Blacklock from England and Nathaniel Russell from Rhode Island. These men brought new ideas, one of which was to enliven the severity of the facades of "Carolina Gray" brick with the contrast of red brick as noted at the Bishop Robert Smith House, 6 Glebe Street, 1770. Red brick appear on this building in the flat arches over the windows, in belt courses and in the