

GRIMKE-FRASER HOUSE

Constructed mid-18th-century; Renovations and additions mid-19th-century
102 Tradd Street

The site of the Grimke-Fraser House was acquired in 1743 by merchant and planter, Frederick Grimke. Following the death of Frederick Grimke in 1778, the property descended to his daughter Mary Grimke Fraser. The house and land remained in possession of Fraser women until the mid 1800's when it passed out of the family. Today the Grimke-Fraser House, located at 102 Tradd Street, reflects two major periods of architectural activity.

Built as a two-story, hipped-roof structure in the mid 1700's, the Grimke-Fraser House originally stood at right angles to its present position and occupied the very corner of the lot at Tradd and Orange streets. The actual plan of the house in this early period appears to have been close to its present arrangement. A piazza (most likely a single story height) wrapped around the east and north sides of the building. Access into the house was from the piazza directly into the principle first floor living spaces—a front parlor and back dining room. Behind the two principle rooms, the house contained a stair passage with an original unheated "closet" at either end. On the interior, only elements of the stair reflect the first period of interior finish. The mantels and other federal period woodwork, added around 1800, made the house more fashionable but did not alter its earlier formal character. The overall 18th-century arrangement of the town house produced an unusual plan which characterized the vast majority of the city's 18th-century dwellings. Associated with the house were a brick kitchen building and a large rear yard surrounded by wooden fence.

In the mid 1800s, the Grimke-Fraser House was significantly remodeled after Dr. Hopson Pinckney, an assistant teller at the State Bank on Broad Street, purchased the house in 1847 from the Fraser descendants. Pinckney purchased a property that required significant work as indicated in an 1846 description: "the old yellow house," wrote Charles Fraser, "is very old, as you know and ruinous." Pinckney began his renovations by moving the house back from Tradd Street, turning it ninety degrees, inserting new under pinnings, making extensive sill repairs, adding new front and rear piazzas, and inserting Greek Revival detailing including pocket doors between the principle rooms and double doors onto the piazzas.

BLH after Robert P. Stockton

102 Tradd Street, first floorplan, Measured by Bernard Herman, Michael Robertson, and Steven Bauer; drawn by Steven Bauer

