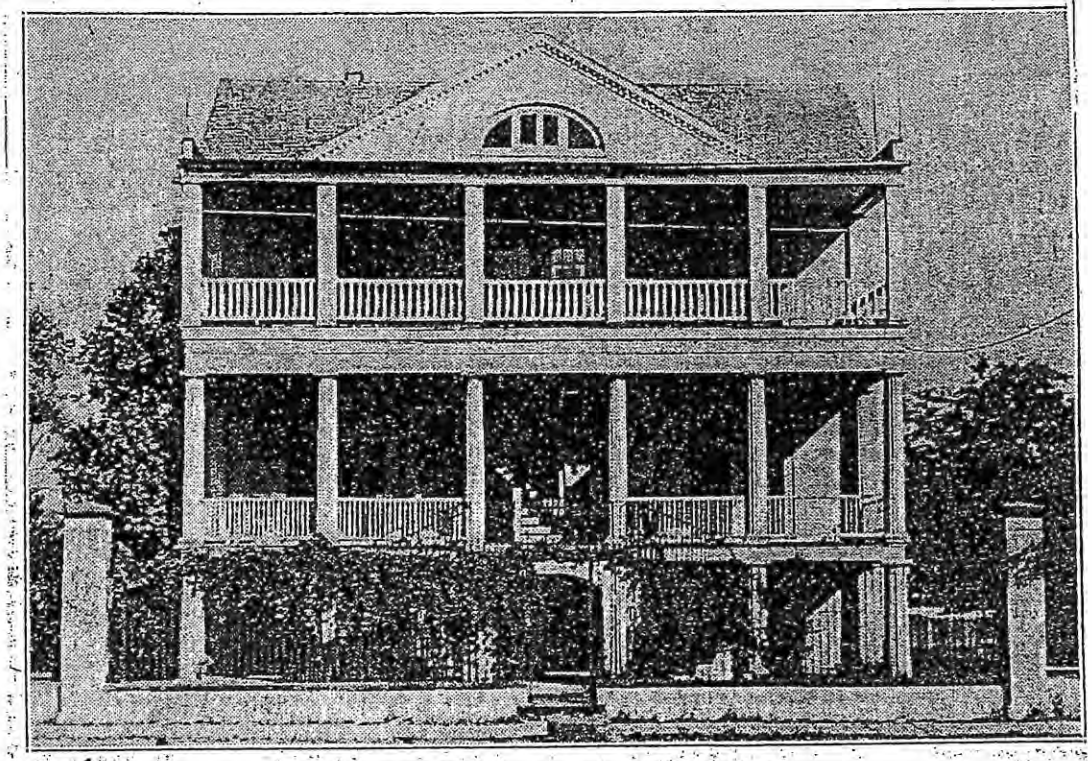
DO YOU KNOW YOUR CHARLESTON?

28 Chapel Street



Elias Vanderhorst, Rice Planter, Built House in Greek Revival Style Beyond City Limits 100 Years Ago

On the northwest corner of Chapel and Alexander streets is a fine old house, known locally as the Vanderhorst house. Built on the lines of Greek revival architecture in 1836 by Elias Vanderhorst, a rice planter and member of a prominent Charleston family, it was at that time beyond the city limits, which extended only to Calhoun street.

It is not certain whether he selected this locality because, as he himself said, he "did not want to hear his neighbors' cocks crow", or because, like many of his contemporaries with boundless faith in their home city, he visualized the day when the business expansion of a great Charleston would absorb the southern section while the better residences moved uptown.

When Mr. Vanderhorst purchased the land, in 1832, Judith street ran eastward from Governor Aiken's house until it reached the marsh, when it took a southeasterly turn, crossed the marsh, and ended at Chapel street opposite the northern end of Alexander street.

The architecture of the houses of these ante-bellum days attests the sturdy character and good taste of the men of that time. During this period ceilings attained their maximum height, paneling disappeared, and tall, narrow windows that ran from ceiling to floor became popular.

The Vanderhorst House, built on a very high basement, has a graceful double-flight of iron-railed steps which lead to the plazza of the first floor. Broad porches with massive, fluted columns, extend across the front of the building, and on the first and second floors are handsome doorways with fanlights. Admittance to the basement is gained through an arch beneath the high foot steps. The main entrance is, of course, on the first floor.

The style of the house is dignified and substantial, the detail of the ornamentation simple and chaste. The drawing-rooms are very large, and during the occupancy of the Vanderhorsts were exquisitely furnished, exceptionally so even in a day that boasted beautiful furniture. Here memorable entertainments were given and the gods of hospitality held sway.

The house, with its large, magnolia-shaded grounds, overlooked the marsh and the broad sweep of the Cooper river. At the front a wrought-iron fence permitted a glimpse of the garden; but to insure the privacy for domestic affairs, so dear to the hearts of our forefathers, a high, vine-draped fence enclosed the rest of the grounds.

Upon the death of Mr. Elias Vanderhorst the property descended to his son, Arnoldus, also a rice planter and owner of a plantation on the Ashepoo river. Members of his family lived in the old homestead until 1914. A short time later the place was sold to Dr. I. Ripon Wilson, of Charleston, who had it remodeled into apartments.

(The material for this article was supplied by the Federal Writers Project which is compiling the South Carolina guide.)

28 Chapel St.

Chapel St. Was Wide, Ambling

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles on Chapel Street dwellings.)

By W. H. J. THOMAS
Staff Reporter

A wide and pleasantly ambling street which led down toward the marshlands along the Cooper River, several generously proportioned dwelling houses built in the design of the later classical revival, an elegant country district where a number of distinguished Charletson families lived—this was the story of Chapel Street not too many generations ago.

Today it is marked off as a low rent area, with many of the houses now degenerated into slums and the neighborhood retaining little of its former self from the days when it was a handsome suburb beyond the city limits, which extended only to Boundary Street, that being the early name for Calhoun.

Several Chapel Street houses still give a kind of sad beauty to the soiled neighborhood. The plain, massive beauty of the Greek Revival style in which they are built cannot be hidden despite violent alterations, broken fences, wash lines strung across piazzas, or missing patches of plaster.

As typical as any is the Elias Vanderhorst House at 28 Chapel, a four-story dwelling built around 1835 by a rice planter and a member of a prominent Charleston family.

When Mr. Vanderhorst purchased the land in 1832 on which 28 Chapel stands, Judith Street ran eastward from Gov. William Aiken's mansion until it reached the marsh and then ended at Chapel opposite the northern end of Alexander Street.

It is not certain whether he selected this locality because, as he himself said, he did not want to hear his neighbor's cocks crow," or because like many of his contemporaries with boundless faith in their home city, he visualized the day when the business expansion of a great Charleston would absorb the southern section while the better residences moved slowly uptown.

Whatever his reason, Elias Vanderhorst set out to build for his family one of the most substantial and spacious houses in Charleston. The Vanderhorst family had already constructed handsome buildings in the city, including North Vanderhorst Row (destroyed in the Civil War) and South Vanderhorst Row, standing now at 76-78-80 East Bay Street.

Built in 1800 by Gen. Arnoldus Vanderhorst, the present row house shows the sense of quality the builder possessed. The builder of 28 Chapel also brought to the construction of his home an appreciation of good form and of very sound building materials.

Do You Know Your Charleston?

The architecture of this period reflected the new American spirit of the early 19th century when the young nation was rejecting what men considered to be the effeteness of European life. The delicate Adam style was going out and a plain, sturdy manner of design was being adopted. During this period, ceilings attained their maximum height, paneling disappeared, and tall narrow windows that ran from ceiling to floor became popular.

The Vanderhorst House was built on a high basement, with a graceful double flight of iron-railed steps leading up to the piazza of the first floor. Broad porches with massive, fluted columns extend across the front of the building. It appears that the top level porch was a later addition.

The great rooms have been divided in such a manner that a visitor today cannot judge their original proportions but an account of several decades ago described the drawing rooms as being "very large and during the occupancy of the Vanderhorsts were exquisitely furnished, exceptionally so even in a day that boasted beautiful furniture. Here memorable entertainments were given and the gods of hospitality held sway."

Today the wrought iron fence and gate still survive, though badly damaged. A visitor may note what remains of fanlights, the sandstone capitals on the Doric columns at the basement level or the brick dentals in the gabled roof, each showing the care the builder took in selecting material and in considering small details.

The interior of the dwelling now retains fragments of the old design. The austerity of wall surfaces are only occasionally relieved by a simple cornice, reeded door frames with corner blocks or a plain marble mantle with no carvings.

Upon the death of Elias Vanderhorst, the property passed to his son Arnoldus, also a rice planter and owner of a plantation on the Ashepoo River. After his death, his widow, Mrs. Adele A. Vanderhorst lived at 28 Chapel St. until her death in January of 1915. Those persons managing her estate sold the house for $6,000 in 1928 to Dr. I. Ripon Wilson who had it remodeled into apartments.

DeWitt W. King Jr. bought the property in 1961 but sold it shortly after to the Ida-Mor Corporation.

28 Chapel

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Chapel Street restoration

Construction crew hard at work on neglected and decaying Vanderhorst Mansion

Staff Photo by Tom Spain

28 Chapel built in the early 1840s

By MARSHA WHITE
Post-Courier Reporter

At the edge of the city's Old and Historic District, a construction crew is tearing out walls and clearing debris from what was once the mansion of a wealthy rice planter at 28 Chapel St.

The three-story structure was built by Elias Vanderhorst in the early 1840s.

Federal investment tax credits, interest rate subsidies and rent subsidies for future tenants are being used to make the expensive project feasible. Along with the government funding goes about $400,000 in private investment.

"I feel like this is going to have a very healthy effect on the neighborhood," said Lynn Hanlin, one of five partners in the project to restore not only the Vanderhorst mansion, but also a smaller single house at 30 Chapel St. and a newer building at the corner of Chapel and Alexander. The three buildings will contain a total of 14 apartments.

The Vanderhorst mansion is a stand-out in the Wraggsborough neighborhood because of its large size. And unfortunately, it has stood out for years because of neglect and decay, Ms. Hanlin said. When the partnership purchased the property earlier this year, the porch upstairs was no longer safe.

But the rent for the tenants was low, even if living conditions were poor. Restoration projects often have led to higher rents and displacement of people who have lived in the neighborhood for years. But that problem should be solved in the Chapel Street renovation, Ms. Hanlin said.

Federal rent subsidies will be available through the city of Charleston to new and former tenants who qualify for the program. Under that program, the tenant will pay rent based on 30 percent of his income and the city will use the federal money to pay the remainder up to a fair market level.

Russell Blackburn, director of the city's Community Development Block Grant program, said that 10 of the rent subsidies will be available for the Chapel Street project. But the rent subsidies are not the only city program that will aid the restoration project.

In addition to $400,000 in private investments, the partners have received a $200,000 bank loan with a 12 percent interest rate. That rate was reduced further to 8 percent for the first seven years of the loan through the city of Charleston's rental property rehabilitation program, Blackburn said.

The Chapel Street renovation is by far the largest program to be funded under the rehabilitation program, Blackburn said. Federal Community Development grants are used to finance the interest rate subsidies.

Another federal program, this one direct to the five private partners, also has been a factor in developing the restoration project, Ms. Hanlin said.

"We're working most diligently right now on 28 and 30 Chapel St. because of the investment tax credits," Ms. Hanlin said. Under the investment tax credit program, the five investors will receive up to 25 percent in federal income tax credits for their restoration of the two historic Chapel Street structures.

The restoration must meet the guidelines of the Department of the Interior. And to qualify for the credits this year, the restoration must be complete by Dec. 31, a goal the partnership has set.

(Staff Photo by Brad Nettles)

Vanderhorst Mansion at 28 Chapel St.

New Owner Hopes To Restore Mansion To Original Condition

By KERRI MORGAN
Post-Courier Reporter

A new owner is planning to restore the Elias Vanderhorst Mansion at 28 Chapel St., a Greek revival style house built about 1835 and rated as excellent in the city's historical architectural inventory.

Charlestonian Perry B. Woodside bought the house Dec. 28 from Chapel Street Properties, a local partnership that renovated it through the city's East Side rental housing rehabilitation program in 1983-84.

Lynn Hanlin, an owner of Chapel Street Properties, said Woodside paid $229,000 for the mansion. He plans to live on its three main floors and retain two ground floor apartments. Woodside could not be reached to discuss his plans.

The house has been divided into apartments since the early part of the century and was in a horribly decayed condition in 1983, when Chapel Street Properties bought and restored it, Ms. Hanlin said. Her company restored the rooms, which had been partitioned, to their original size and created six apartments. The original stairway, removed in the early part of this century, was replaced with a utilitarian staircase.

Woodside said he plans to put in a copy of the original staircase and restore the house to its original configuration. "I am so thrilled, I cannot tell you," Ms. Hanlin said. "Mr. Woodside is taking this the final step by restoring the house to its original configuration and condition. It was our hope from the beginning that it would eventually convert to a single-family house."

Chapel Street Properties sold the house because the partnership had renovated it for tax reasons and always had intended to sell it at the end of the holding period, which is up, Ms. Hanlin said. She said the partnership was one of the first to use federal reinvestment tax credits to renovate property in the Wraggborough area. Other owners of Chapel Street Properties are Julian V. Brandt III, Thayer Boswell, Chester Marshall and Harold Tyner.

The house was built by Elias Vanderhorst, a wealthy rice planter and member of a promiment Charleston family, when Chapel Street was a wide, ambling street that led down toward the marshlands by the Cooper River. The area, now in the Wraggborough neighborhood, was then an elegant country district with several generously proportioned houses.

Upon Vanderhorst's death, the mansion was passed to his son, Arnoldus. His widow, Adele, lived there until her death in 1915. The managers of her estate then sold it for $6,000 to Dr. I. Ripon Wilson, who had it remodeled into apartments.

DeWitt W. King Jr. bought it in 1961, but sold it shortly after to the Ida-Mor Corp. During the 1960s and 1970s, the house and others in the area generally deteriorated and were widely considered slum property.

After Chapel Street Properties bought the house, the city provided the catalyst for renovation by agreeing to provide a $27,000 a year, seven-year interest subsidy.

Two adjacent buildings, 26 and 30 Chapel St., also were included in Chapel Street Properties' $557,000 rehabilitation project. Those properties contain four apartments each and they will be retained, Ms. Hanlin said.

"At 26 Chapel St., also 133 Alexander St., we had some Section 8 (federally subsidized) renters and that in no way has been disturbed. The new owners just moved into a vacant apartment," she said.

Vanderhorst Mansion To Be Restored

BY [redacted]ERRI MORGAN
Post-Courier Reporter

The Elias Vanderhorst Mansion at 28 Chapel St., a Greek revival style house built about 1835 and rated as excellent in the city's historical architectural inventory, soon will be restored to its original condition.

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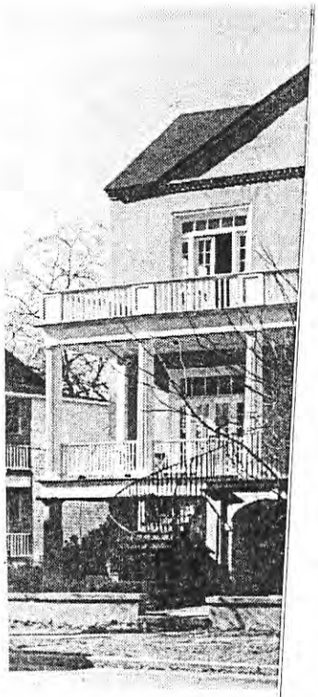

The Vanderhorst M[a]

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Jan. 5, 1989 News & Cour[ier]

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Mansion Is Reopened As Apartment Building

Charleston

28 and 30 Chapel St.

By SANDRA BENNETT
Post-Courier Reporter

After extensive restoration, the Elias Vanderhorst Mansion at 28 Chapel St. on Charleston's East Side has reopened as an apartment house.

City officials, the developers and prospective tenants witnessed the grand opening Monday of the former plantation house and adjacent buildings at 26 and 30 Chapel St. before touring the restored mansion.

The mansion and companion buildings were renovated by Chapel Street Properties under the city's rental housing rehabilitation program, which focuses on the East Side homes.

The three renovated buildings contain 14 apartments that are expected to be rented as federally subsidized housing units.

The Vanderhorst Mansion, circa 1832, and 30 Chapel St. are certified historical structures.

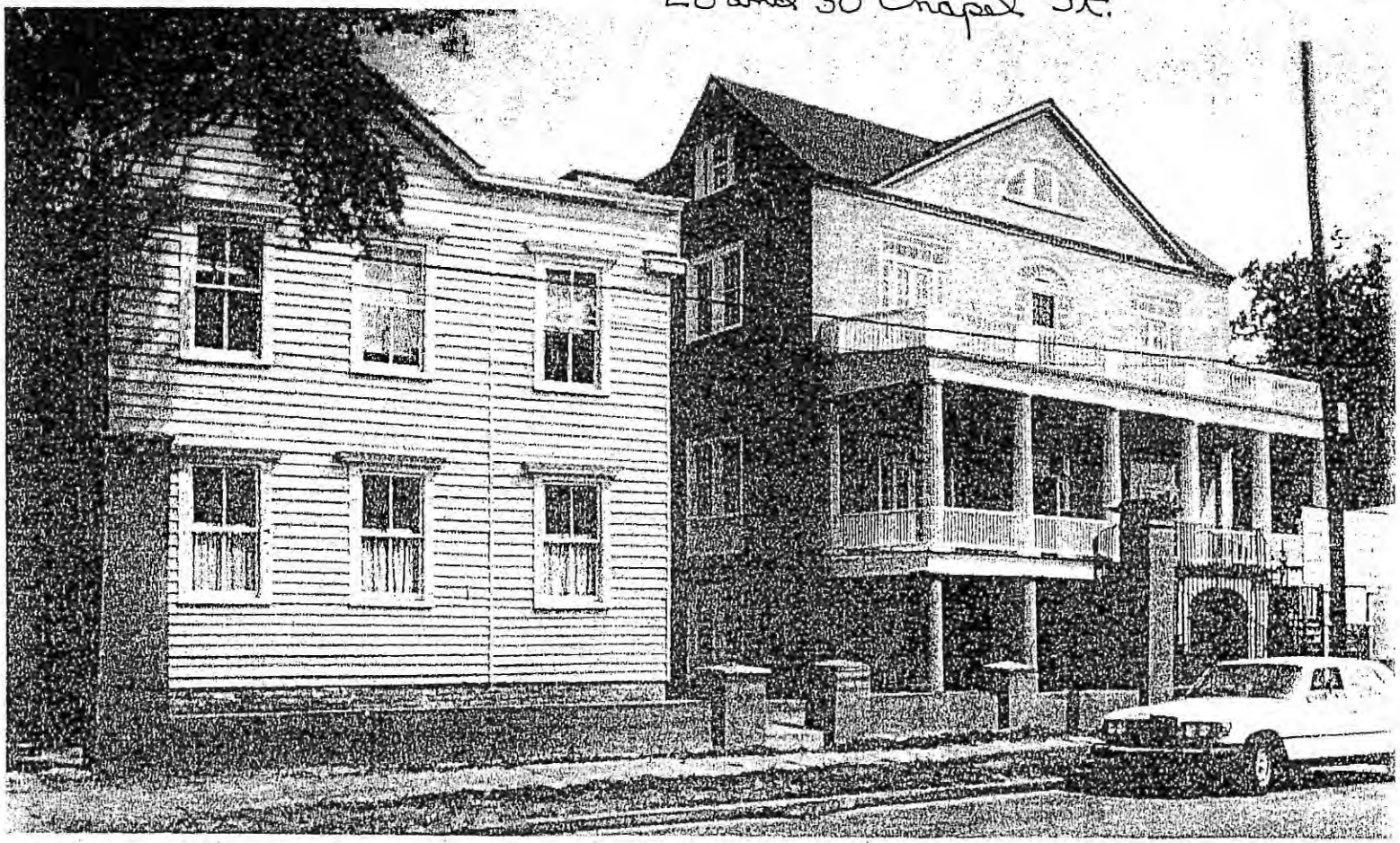
At least three of the tenants who previously lived in the once badly deteriorated buildings are expected to return now that the restoration is complete, said Lynn Hanlin, an owner of Chapel Street Properties.

The city provided a catalyst for the renovation project by giving the developers a $27,000, seven-year interest subsidy, according to Russ Blackburn, city community development administrator. Four similiar rehabilitation projects are either under way or planned for homes on the East Side, he said.

Chapel Street Properties, also owner of the houses, rehabilitated the buildings at a total cost of $557,000, said Ms. Hanlin.

The aim of the restoration, which began last August, was not to transform the structures into totally modern units, but to maintain as many of the original features as possible, she explained.

Other owners of Chapel Street Properties are Julian V. Brandt III, Thayer Boswell, Chester Marshall and Harold Tyner, a limited partner. Tyner, a real estate developer, was a major investor. Gertrude Dillings was the architect, and Charles Marshall was the contractor.



(Staff Photo by Brad Nettles)

The renovated Vanderhorst Mansion (right) and restored 30 Chapel St. apartments.