

57 ½ LAURENS STREET
(Kitchen house/servants' quarters)
c. 1836
Home of J. Michael McLaughlin

1992

KITCHEN -- ENTRANCE

Welcome. This stucco-covered, three-story, brick kitchen house is thought to have been built at the same time (about 1836) as the main house fronting on Laurens Street.

Remarkably, the building was in its original form and completely unrestored until 1976 when Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Walker, (who live in the main house) converted it into an apartment with the help of local architect Sandy Logan. Today, the house is a wonderful example of what preservationists call "Adaptive Re-use," of the conversion of an obsolete building to a useful, attractive one. For the past six years, this has been the home of a Charleston based free lance writer, J. Michael McLaughlin.

Originally, food prepared here on this giant hearth would have fed both those living in the main house and the servants (slaves) living in the two floors above this room. The room was separated from the rest of the house and only accessible by the one door. Today's passage way into the dining room was once bricked in with huge baking ovens. They were removed during the 1976 redesigning the house--to provide access to the dining room.

DINING ROOM

The small but intimate dining room features the coal grate on the back side of the larger kitchen fireplace. The central chimney is, in fact, the architectural "signature" of the building, and as you go on upstairs you'll see how the architect utilized it in the open, great-room concept for the living room/study upstairs.

The unusual carved mantel is late Victorian and English in origin. It was salvaged from an old beach house in Brighton and features a sea motif with fish, eels, shells, and seaweed. The woodcarver signed the work with his initials in the left hand corner and the initials of the master of the house are on the right.

The German china in the cupboard is called Royal Berlin and was the official state china of Kaiser Wilhelm before W.W.I

UPSTAIRS, LIVING ROOM/STUDY

This level of the house was once partitioned into three smaller rooms; two of them probably sleeping rooms, the other a long, dark hallway. By opening the entire floor into one great-room, there's now a much more open feeling--showcasing the central chimney and making a practical living room/study for Mr. McLaughlin's writing.

Although the top floor is not open tonight, there are two bedrooms and a bath on the third floor.

PLEASE WATCH YOUR STEP AND USE THE HANDRAIL AS YOU GO DOWNSTAIRS. And thank you very much.