

Completed In February 1916

Building At 302 King Was A Bank

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Special Writer

Designed by architect John D. Newcomer of Charleston, the building at 302 King St. was constructed by the Charleston Building and Investment Co. for the Title Guarantee and Deposit Co. in 1915-16.

Originally a bank and office, the building subsequently has been remodeled to house a retail store on the first floor and an artist's studio on the second.

The Charleston Building and Investment Co. (T.S. Wilbur, president, R.B. Gilchrist, secretary) purchased the site on July 8, 1915, from the Peerless Securities Co.

There was on the lot at the time a three-story brick building that The News and Courier of Aug. 15, 1915, reported was being razed in preparation for new construction.

The new building was completed in early February 1916 and occupied by the Title Guarantee & Deposit Co. (T.S. Wilbur, president; T. Allen Legare, vice president; R.B. Gilchrist, cashier).

The property was sold in 1918 to the Liberty Bank, which in 1922 became insolvent. The property was purchased at auction in 1922 by the Exchange Banking and Trust Co.

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The Exchange Banking and Trust Co. subsequently became the Exchange National Bank of Charleston, which in 1925 merged with The Bank of Charleston, National Banking Association, which then acquired title to the property.

The Bank of Charleston, NBA, thereafter changed its name to The South Carolina National Bank of Charleston, which in 1936 sold the property to the Wentworth Realty Co.

Wentworth Realty merged in 1976 with Pastime Amusement Co., conveying all its real estate to Pastime, the current owner of 302 King.

The Title Guarantee and Deposit Co., for which the building was constructed, was chartered in 1912 with \$50,000 in capital. The bank was located at 15 Broad St. before moving to 302 King.

In 1916 the bank claimed resources of more than \$500,000. Its mottoes were "Greater Safety — More Interest," and "The Bank That Builds Your Bank Account."

The structure at 302 King has two high stories of brick, with a

limestone facade. The estimated cost of the building was \$10,000, with interior fixtures and furnishings bringing the total to \$15,000, according to the contractor, Palmer & Spivey of Charleston and Augusta, Ga.

The upper part of the facade remains essentially as it was designed by Newcomer, but the lower part has been changed drastically.

The upper part retains the original roof parapet with a balustrade of urn-shaped balusters, and the entablature consisting of a projecting cornice with modillions and dentils, deep frieze with space for the name of the bank in Roman letters, and fascias.

A round-headed opening, set into a keystone arch, contains paired windows. The arch is slightly recessed, with large rosettes in the spandrels. Recessed single windows with sunk panels above them, flank the arched opening.

Below the arch is a rectangular, horizontal sunk panel, with fascias below it.

The lower part of the facade originally contained a large central recessed porch, with a grilled window on either side. In the recessed porch, a large plate-glass window extended across the full

width, enclosed with a bronze sash resting on a marble base.

On either side of the recessed porch were single doors with plate-glass panels, the one on the left leading into the bank, the one on the right leading into a stair-hall giving access to the second floor offices.

In the 1930s the recessed porch was filled with a shop window, and the windows on either side of the facade became doors. In 1964 the storefront was remodeled with a recessed store entrance and display windows of aluminum framed glass.

The interior of the building contained, on the ground floor, the banking rooms, president's office and directors' room, and on the second floor, six offices.

Walls and ceilings of the banking rooms had ornamental plaster panels, cornices and "centre-pieces." Ceilings were 16 feet high.

Banking room and vestibule floors were tiled with blocks of Eureka marble, with Champlain and black marble borders. Walls had a wainscot of green-veined cream statuary and tavenelle venato marbles. The marble floor and wainscot survive in the vestibule on the right (south) side of the building.



Staff Photo by Bill Jordan

Remodeled in 1964 for retail store.

302 King Street