

CARRERE ROBERTSON HOUSE
91 Ashley Avenue
c. 1898

OLD

Mrs. Frances Carrere Robertson bought the site of the house from in 1898 and the City Ward Books (tax lists) show a doubling of the value of the property shortly afterwards indicating that a house was built. She and her husband James, the president of an insurance company, lived there until he died in 1934 and she sold the property only to return as a tenant in her final years.

The house is a frame two story Queen Anne style of Victorian architecture. The exterior faced with the type of weatherboading called German siding.

Charleston housebuilding tradition placed the piazzas on the south side while the house entrance is on the opposite side of the main bay and is shaded by a small portico with fluted square posts, a dentiled cornice and shingled pediment.

Multiple windows give the dwelling an airy look and the large rooms reflect the Victorian love of space.

House Slips Into Decay

By ROBERT P. STOCKTON

Built as the home of an upper middle class family, the house at 91 Ashley Ave. has become a spectre of its former handsomeness.

Inhabited until a few years ago, the house is now vacant. Its doors are open, its Victorian mantelpieces have been removed and the entire structure is slipping into decay.

Ironically, the degeneration of the house has taken place while the neighborhood around it, part of historic Harleston Village, has been experiencing regeneration.

Mrs. Frances Carrere Robertson bought the site of the house from Henry B. Jennings for \$1,675 on Feb. 26, 1898. City Ward Books (tax lists) show a doubling of the value of the property during the period 1898-1902, indicating that a house was built on the lot shortly after Mrs. Robertson's purchase.

Mrs. Robertson's house is two stories of frame, the exterior faced with the type of weatherboarding called German siding, which first appeared in use in the 1890s.

Charleston housebuilding tradition was followed in placing piazzas on the south side of the house, but the house entrance is on the opposite side of the main bay, and

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shaded by a small portico with fluted square posts, a dentiled cornice and shingled pediment.

The dentiling continues across the main bay to match the dentiling of the lower side piazza. The upper piazza has a cornice of modillions, which continues across the front of the main bay on that level.

Continuity is also provided by a false porch on the second level of the main bay, with pilasters and split balusters mirroring the fluted posts and turned balusters of the real piazzas.

In the interior, the front door gives access to a spacious reception hall, to the rear of which is the stairhall, with its stockily built staircase, with large elaborately turned newel posts and balusters.

To the south of the reception hall and stairhall are large double parlors, with a wide doorway between them, corner fireplaces and floor-length windows opening onto the piazza.

The broad high roof of the house is studded with shingle-faced gables and dormer windows with shingled pediments.

Multiple windows give the dwelling an airy look and the large rooms reflect the Victorian love of space which contemporary families are again finding desirable.

The original owner of the house, Mrs. Robertson, was the wife of James Robertson, a Broad Street realtor and insurance company president.

The Robertsons continued to live in the house until 1934, when James Robertson died and his widow conveyed the property to Mrs. Adeline E. Messervy.

Mrs. Robertson later returned to the house as a tenant, however, and spent her last years there, dying in 1950.

Mrs. Messervy died in 1941 and the property passed by her will to her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Essie L. Messervy. She sold it in 1951 to Mrs. Mary C. Gianatos.

Mrs. Gianatos sold the house in 1971 to Palmer College, and the property was conveyed to the State of South Carolina's Division of General Services in 1973, when the college became part of the state comprehensive education system.



(Staff Photo)

91 Ashley Ave.

91 Ashley Ave. -- Mrs. Frances Carrere Robertson built, c. 1898,
this two and one-half story wooden house in the Queen
Anne style. She was the wife of James Robertson, a
Broad Street realtor and insurance company president.
The property remained in the family until 1934. (Stock-
ton, DYKYG, Jan. 19, 1976.)