

THOMAS BALL HOUSE
13 Church Street
before 1800
Rainsford Residence

2009

This Charleston single house of wood construction stands on land owned in the early 18th century by Landgrave Thomas Smith, one of the most powerful figures in colonial Charleston.

Although located originally outside the early walled city, development of high land along Church Street began in the mid 18th century and continued into the early 19th century. The construction date of the house could be as early as the 1770s. There have been additions made to the rear in the 20th century.

Recent exterior repairs indicate cedar shales covered the original gambrel roof. These were exposed when work was being done on the existing metal roof.

Early owners have included Thomas Ball, the Robert Chisholm family, owners of extensive plantations and rice mills, and by the 1830s, the Thomas Gadsden family, who were leading public figures of the Revolutionary War period.

The house follows the famous Charleston "Single House" plan, the gable end facing the street and large piazzas rising on the southern façade. The house has an unusual roof line that possibly dates from original construction but may have been a later adaptation to provide more living space on the upper levels.

ENTRANCE HALL

The house is a work in progress. The owner has lived here for less than a year and the uncovering of small fragments of the original structure of the house has made the task of getting it in order an intriguing puzzle.

The wallpaper is hand blocked and hand printed. The stairway newel post and construction give clues to the early date of the house.

The powder room under the stairs has faux/mural scene done by Charleston artist, Karl Beckwith Smith III

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LIVING ROOM

The mantels throughout the house are later additions, perhaps replaced in the early 19th century. Most of the furnishings were found in England.

Secretary-bookcase, of American origin, 18th century
Porcelain, Chinese exportware, in secretary/bookcase
Pair of mirrors, one on either side of the fireplace., English
Andirons, Charleston made

SECOND FLOOR - HALL - *Close door may be open to show small remnants of original wood*

BEDROOM - *ribboned off*

Chest-on-chest, English,
Other period furnishings

FRONT FAMILY ROOM

Both the elaborate neoclassical mantel ornamentation with its cast plaster plaque filled with delicate marine creatures and the molded trim on the walls indicate this was the important room in the house. In today's world it is a relaxing hideaway for the family. The contemporary seat furniture meshes well with the period wood pieces.

Drop leaf table, Southern American piece
Card table, English
Linen press, English
Andirons, English
Painting, Oil, magnolias, Douglas Ballentine, contemporary Charleston artist.

FIRST FLOOR - DINING ROOM

This room echoes the ornamentation of the living room with its moldings and mantel design in the Georgian style.

Dining table, English, double pedestal
Set of saber leg side chairs
Sideboard, Charleston made, c. 1800-1810, Neoclassical design. The fine quality of workmanship available in the community is indicated in the construction of this piece.
Serving side table, Charleston-made.
Porcelain bowl, large, Chinese export, on side table, resided in Charleston long ago and was elsewhere for many years before it was returned here recently
Mirror, English with giltwood frame

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DINING ROOM - (Continued)

Portrait, 18th c. English, unknown lady.

Bust of Diana on hearth, Italian marble

Andirons, Charleston made

Paintings, set of 4 watercolors, hens and chickens seem appropriate for the dining room

Chandelier, Waterford.

Rugs, contemporary but woven with vegetable dyed yarns

Exit by way of rear door in kitchen eating area. This area was added by a previous owner to accommodate a modern kitchen and breakfast area.

KITCHEN HOUSE

It has not yet been restored and will provide a fascinating presentation to the visitors of a true work in progress.