

Information for guides of historic
Charleston

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138 Wentworth St. -- This two story stuccoed brick dwelling house, in the Greek Revival style, was built c. 1842 by Edwin L. Kerrison, a founder of the dry goods business that evolved into the present Kerrison's department store. Kerrison advertised it for rent in 1842, stating it had been "recently built." It has been speculated that the house was designed by architect Russell Warren of Rhode Island. The Tower of the Winds columns of the portico, the row of heavy dentils under the roof and window details are similar to such features in the Shepard House in Providence, R.I., which was designed by Warren c. 1840. The front door is copied from Minard LeFevre's book on Greek Revival architecture. Water from the cistern was piped to various buildings; this was an early use of plumbing in Charleston, although it was common by the 1850s. The octagonal bathhouse in the rear is mentioned in the 1842 advertisement. From 1947 to 1970, the house was the headquarters of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina. Since 1970 it has been a private residence.

(Ravenel, Architects, 154-157. Thomas, DYKYC, March 21, 1970.)

144 Wentworth St. -- This two and one-half story frame house on a high brick basement is post-Revolutionary, with simple but good Adamesque interior details. For many years it was the home of the Fleming family, from whom descended Mary Jane Ross, who in 1922 placed the property in trust to a board of commissioners, to be used for charitable purposes and as a memorial to the services of Charleston women during World War I and the influenza epidemic of 1918.

(Thomas, DYKYC, June 24, 1968. DYKYC, Oct. 17, 1932. Stoney, This is Charleston, 111.)

City of Charleston Tour Guide Training Manual

purchased the property from Black in 1838. It was sold from her estate in 1847.

138 Wentworth Street

Edwin L. Kerrison House

Constructed c. 1838; restored 1970s

Russell Warren, architect

This two-story, stuccoed brick dwelling house in the Greek Revival style was built by Edwin L. Kerrison, a founder of the dry goods business that evolved into Kerrison's Department Store. Kerrison advertised it for rent in 1842, stating it has been "recently built." It has been speculated that the house was designed by architect Russell Warren of Rhode Island. The Tower of the Winds columns, the row of heavy dentils under the roof, and window details are similar to features in the Shepard House in Providence, R.I., which was designed by Warren c. 1840. The front door is copied from Minard LeFevre's book on Greek Revival architecture. Water from the cistern was piped to various buildings; this was an early use of plumbing in Charleston, although it was common by the 1850s. The octagonal bathhouse in the rear is mentioned in the 1842 advertisement.

From 1947 to 1970, the house was the headquarters of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina. In 1970 it became a private residence and has remained so.

144 Wentworth Street

Fleming-Ross House

Constructed c. 1800; restored late 1980s

This two-and-a-half story frame house on a high brick basement is post-Revolutionary, with simple Adamesque interior details. For many years, it was the home of the Fleming family, from who descended Mary Jane Ross. In 1922 Miss Ross placed the property in trust to a board of commissioners to be used for charitable purposes and as a memorial to the services of Charleston women during World War I and the influenza epidemic of 1918.

For many years, the American Red Cross was headquartered here, as recalled by the Red Cross logos still painted on the property's stuccoed

garden walls. Today it is again a private residence.

149 Wentworth Street

Francis Silas Rodgers Mansion

Constructed 1885-87

Daniel G. Wayne, architect

Charleston's best example of the Second Empire style was built in 1885-87 by Francis Silas Rodgers, a wealthy cotton factor, phosphate manufacturer and shipper. The Second Empire style, named for the reign of Emperor Napoleon III of France during which the mansard roof (a 16th century invention) was revived, was popular in the United States from the 1850s to the '90s. The interior is elaborately finished in mahogany, oak and walnut, with tile floors and ornate plasterwork, hand-carved marble fireplaces and mantels, Tiffany stained glass windows, and crystal chandeliers that were designed for the house. Cotton, a major source of his wealth, is memorialized in the bas-relief cornice over the front bay window, which depicts cotton plants.

Rodgers, a member of City Council and Chairman of the Board of Firemasters for 31 years, organized the city's first paid professional fire department. He liked to watch for fires from the cupola of his house and attended every fire in the city until shortly before his death. Rodgers and his heirs lived in the home until 1920 when the Scottish Rite Cathedral Association purchased it. The star of that order is set into the sidewalk at the front gate. They sold it in 1940 to the Atlantic Coast Life Insurance Company, serving as its headquarters until 1996.

In 1997 the property was purchased by the current and fourth owner, who spent 18 months restoring and rehabilitating it to become an up-scale hotel, the Wentworth Mansion. The mansion has retained many of its original architectural features down to the custom-built louvered window treatments with the original Victorian hardware installed in 1886.

In 2000, the carriage house, which once housed the stables and carriages, was converted into