

Do You Know Your Charleston?

46 King Street



THE HOUSE AT 46 KING STREET, residence of Mrs. George Huntington, was remodeled down an automobile ran into it and smashed a hole in the brick. The owner decided to make the left from a window, and make a window where the front door used to be. (Staff Photo)

Automobile That Smashed into Old House Helped Plan Remodeling of Ground Floor—Guest House is in Rear

Twice as large as it looks from the street and possessing a guest house and a lovely garden, the old two-story brick dwelling at 46 King street has been remodeled twice in the last eleven years.

The house, built of Charleston gray brick with a sawtooth cornice under the eaves of its slate roof, attracted the attention of Mrs. George Huntington, who bought it in 1930 and transformed it into a charming winter home, without, however, greatly changing the interior plan. The ground floor in particular remained much as it had been.

Here the front of the house was occupied by two small rooms divided by a narrow hall, into which the street door opened. These rooms were found to be rather cramped, but they might have been left as they were a while longer, had it not been for an unforeseen event which occurred last year.

A motor car ran over the sidewalk and crashed into the house, demolishing part of the brickwork. When repairs were being made, Mrs. Huntington had the happy idea of changing the plan, so as to have one large convenient room instead of two contracted ones.

Accordingly, the hall was made part of the southern room, to form a charming dining room, while the room on the north became the hall. This necessitated changing the street door into a window, and a window into the door. By examining the brickwork carefully, the passer-by can see where these changes were made.

On entering the house, the visitor is struck by the harmony of the building and the furnishings. The wallpaper in the hall is a copy of one at Williamsburg, Va. It is a subdued pink, with small medallions in playful, mock-oriental style of elephants, pavilions, and a fisherman in a boat. An antique highboy with bright brass handles stands opposite the door. On the north wall hangs a portrait of a dignified old gentleman with a quill pen and inkstand. He was an ancestor of Mrs. Huntington's, as was also the younger man shown in the portrait by Ames which is over the mantelpiece in the dining room.

Here the walls have been painted pale blue. A deeper, richer blue is found on the Lowestoft dinner set glimpsed behind the three round-headed windows of the white china closet. A set of beautiful old glass is etched with a grape design.

The mahogany dinner table has broad leaves. A long mirror in a carved wooden frame, gilded and surmounted by an American eagle, is one of the prize pieces in the house. The oriental rug has a light background.

From the dining room, one steps

out on the flagstones of the garden. *Pettisporum*, English laurel, yellow forsythia, and camellias edge the lawn, on each side are brick walls, the southern one with a gracefully curved top. The lively black poodle which sampers around this lawn has a French name which sounds somewhat like Tuffy so that as Tuffy he is often known.

The garden twice has been featured in magazines. *Coastal Topics* once used a photograph of a vine clambering against the house on its cover. *Arts and Decoration* for November, 1939, published an article with illustrations of the garden and guest house.

The latter contains garages downstairs which open into Price's alley, but these do not show from the garden. Instead, one sees a brick facade painted pink, near the top of which are set ornamental iron grilles. Under these, a row of bricks form a sawtooth course, harmonizing with the sawtooth cornice of the main house. The entrance is on the second story, under an iron verandah with a grape design, which is reached from the garden by an outside stair with an iron railing.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt was a recent overnight guest at 46 King street when she came to see the gardens.

The guest house was designed by Albert Simons, Charleston architect, and the garden by Mrs. Beverly Mikell.

Before the middle of the last century, the property belonged to Robert Limehouse, member of the family from whom Limehouse street takes its name. His heirs and executors sold it in 1851 to Walter Webb, a florist, who lived here for years. Besides selling seeds and flowers, he laid out gardens, among others that of Theodore D. Jervoy in George street. This no longer exists, its site now being part of the Y. W. C. A. property, but it is remembered as having had curly-cued Victorian flowerbeds.

For the gardens he designed, Webb furnished plants, setting out masses of white Roman hyacinths, standard and climbing roses, old-fashioned pinks, camellias, and the strong-scented single Palma violets with long stems, such as ladies pinned in a bunch at the waist to wear to church.

In 1885, Webb conveyed the house and lot to Mary Ann Webb, who as Mary Ann Grey died in 1919, willing them to Mary L. Buckley. By her the property was left to Mary Josephine Cantwell, who sold it in 1927 to Mary B. P. Means. Mrs. Means sold it to Mrs. Victor Morawetz of New York and Fenwick Hall, John's island, in 1929, and a year later, it was purchased by Mrs. Huntington.

K. R.