



GEMS IN A CROWN

A PICTORIAL OF
PRESERVATION AT THE
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

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The Knox-Lesesne House 14 Green Way circa 1846

Timely intervention by preservation-minded people often results in the saving of unique architectural treasures. Thus with the Knox-Lesesne House, which, notwithstanding College of Charleston intervention in 1964, would have been razed to make way for a parking lot. The house is a rare Charleston example of the Italianate architectural style in vogue in many U. S. cities in the 1840's-50's. Charleston, however, never adopted the style with widespread enthusiasm.

The dwelling at 14 Green is a Charleston single house, and looks larger than it is due to the masked piazzas, which lend an Italianate cube effect. The house is built of cypress siding with hard pine sills and studs; the slate roof is topped by an unusual octagonal cupola, both graced by Italianate cornices. The charming cast iron grillwork crosses the piazzas in lacy floral patterns, while the piked front fence was probably cast some years later. Years ago a hurricane blew a tree onto the piazza, damaging some of the grillwork; repairs were opportunely made at that time.

Walter Knox, a house carpenter, bought the 14 Green Street lot from the College of Charleston in 1817; after his death his widow, Mrs. Catherine Knox, apparently replaced their previous dwelling with the house of "Tuscan Villa" style. Mrs. Knox, left comfortably situated by her husband, maintained her residence at 14 Green until her death. From 1870-1881 Albert Oseola Jones and his wife Estella lived there. Jones was a black Reconstruction politician and was clerk of the S. C. House of Representatives from 1868-1877. To settle a debt, the house was sold in 1881; the dwelling changed hands several times until 1918 when Willie James Lesesne bought the house for \$6,000. The Lesesne family kept the house until its sale in 1961.

The College of Charleston acquired the Knox-Lesesne House, along with the Sottile House, from Mrs. Alberta S. Long in 1964. Renovation occurred immediately, and the Horizon House was located there for some years. In the early 1970's the house was further restored and is now a women's residence.



The Knox-Lesesne House in the 1960's. Green Street, now a brick-paved path bordered by tasteful shrubbery arrangements, is called Green Way.



14 Green Way in use as a girls' dormitory. Note the chimneys and the octagonal cupola.

