

CAPTAIN FRANCIS BAKER HOUSE, c. 1747
77 King Street
Home of Mr. and Mrs. Saul Krawcheck

This charming colonial dwelling and its kitchen dependency were built in the 1740's by Captain Francis Baker, a Charleston merchant and colonial office holder. Baker is identified in early documents as a "Captain" -- however, no records survive to indicate that he served in the colonial militia or English Navy. It is known that he served at one point as the city executioner and it may be that a "title" came with this dubious position.

Recent research indicates that Baker also built the adjoining house at 75 King Street and it is possible that he used one for his dwelling and used the "twin" or companion building as a shoppe or as service dependencies. The pair share numerous architectural similarities in construction and in design. These houses conform to the specifications laid down by the French Protestant Church for houses built on their lands. At the beginning of the 18th century, the French Protestant Church held the entire east side of this block and leased each lot or part of a lot for 50 years to individual lessee. The church required that the lessee or his heir build a "good firm and substantial brick residence, fifteen feet in front, not less than 27 feet in depth, of at least one story in height with garrets in the roof and with two chimneys." The owners of this lot would not have been obligated to follow these specifications, but this dwelling and the companion at 75 King are very much in step with their Huguenot neighbors. It gives this entire street an architectural and visual interest that is often missing in urban areas.

This portion of King Street lapsed into slum conditions in the early 20th century. Renovation of individual properties began in the 1930's and continues today.

ENTRANCE HALL

On the English Hepplewhite card table c. 1790, is an interesting cylindrical hurricane shade c. 1800, from Mr. Krawcheck's family.

Framed bird drawing: J.J. Audubon of the Carolina Parrot, a chromolithograph done by the American, J. Bien, c. 1848.

*Do not use any kind of tape
to tape runners to the floor,
to other runners or to
anything else.*



FRANCIS BAKER HOUSE

77 King Street

c. 1747

Residence of Mrs. Thomas Ragsdale

1997

This property is being preserved through a protective easement.

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This portion of King Street lapsed into slum conditions in the early 20th century. Renovation of individual properties began in the 1930's and continues today. Much of the interior has been changed to transform the space into a comfortable 20th century house. All interior ornamentation was added when the property was renovated.

A baking oven was discovered in the basement during recent repairs which indicated that a cooking area may have been here. This lot is situated on a very high spine of land which would make a basement usable, a rarity in Charleston. During the last hurricane the house did not flood because of its choice location.

ENTRANCE / DINING ROOM

High chest, Georgian

Side chairs, reproductions by NC craftsman

Small buffet, English, reproduction, from old wood

Cellaret, rectangular on stand, period piece

Wine cooler, new reproduction

Two bird wood carvings, Charleston artist, Jim Palmer, childhood friend of owner

Two Audubons, American Flamingo by Havell, 1838 and Red headed woodpecker

Portrait of Mrs. Ragsdale "best friend" Cavalier King Charles breed

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LIVING ROOM

The pair of living room French doors will probably be open. And the courtyard garden will be lighted so viewing is possible.

Secretary bookcase, bottom is period slant front desk paired with a new upper cabinet

Coffee table, painted leather chest, brass trim, made in Orient, and purchased in Peru

Round card table with simple lines, period Georgian piece

Mirror, wood gilt trimmed frame, reproduction

Painting, View of St. Philips, by W. Lester Stevens, artist from Northeast brought his pupils to Charleston for classes in 1940s

Bird carving, by Jim Palmer, on mantel shelf

GARDEN-COURTYARD

This charming green area is filled with typical lowcountry plantings. You might point out the large tree on the south. This is a banana tree which took quite a battering from the recent hurricane. If you could break a leaf and smell it, you would notice a fruity aroma.

Other plantings: holly fern, camellia sasanqua, acuba, fatsia, pittosporum.

Visitors will exit using the front entrance way.

CAPTAIN FRANCIS BAKER'S DEPENDENCY
77-1/2 King Street
Guest House

1996

GUEST HOUSE

Throughout the 18th and 19th century, this part of King Street was lined with homes of merchants, artisans and tradesmen who often combined households and shops in the same building. It is believed that this small building may have been used as a shop as early as the 1750's and as late as the 1920's, this was a grocery store. With the 1981 renovation, the building was converted to a garage and the interiors lost all of their original woodwork and panelling.

Since then, the building has been stabilized and new mechanical systems have been installed. The owner had to completely redesign the interior, rebuild the fireplace and certain French windows to provide additional lighting. The garage door was replaced with a bay window. The contemporary stairs were added to provide access to the second floor. This is an excellent example of good architectural planning and a very stylish use of color and fabric.

The painted wall mural of Lowcountry flowers and shrubs hides a fuse box (behind birdcage) and a closet (behind arbor). The Irish artist came to Charleston in the 1970s to restore the period decorations in the 1853 brownstone bank building at 1 Broad Street.

Painting, over the mantel, was a different artist friend