

Early Building May Face Demolition

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Staff Reporter

The earliest surviving dwelling houses in the area north of Calhoun Street are being considered for demolition.

A two-story frame house, located at the northwest corner of Rutledge Avenue, is a isolated survivor from the suburban development of what was known as Cannonsborough and may have been built by Daniel Cannon himself, the wealthy mill owner and master builder who gave his name to this district.

An application requesting its demolition was heard before Charleston's Board of Architectural Review in February but was deferred. It is also being offered for sale at this time.

The house stands on what was one of the few natural high points—in fact, an island in this case—in the low, marshy tract of westside land acquired by Daniel Cannon in the 1760s. It was the site of at least two large lumber mills owned by Cannon and was laid out for residential development after the Revolutionary War, the marsh area probably filled by waste from the mills.

The able Mr. Cannon, a wide-ranging entrepreneur, as mill owner is noted for having harnessed the tides to operate his mill, taking advantage of both flood and ebb to propel a water wheel about 60 feet in diameter. He is also remembered as the builder of several surviving late 18th century houses. As the partner of Thomas Bennett, he received the contract for the carpentry on the now-demolished Orphan House at Calhoun Street.

The original lot for 185 Rutledge measured approximately 118 feet on east and west lines and 380 feet on north and south, being bounded by Pinckney Street (now Ru-

tedge), Thomas Street (now Ashley), Elliot Street (now roughly Cannon) and the area which has become Bee Street.

In 1798, the aging Mr. Cannon made a gift of the property to Miss Sarah Peronneau Webb, a minor daughter of John Webb, as an expression of Cannon's love for her, according to the deed of transfer.

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The actual conveyance was made to Thomas Doughty as her trustee, at that time Webb's business partner. The precise connection between Cannon and Miss Webb has not been determined by this writer, but it appears that Webb, Cannon and Doughty had known each other since the Revolutionary War. Their three names were placed together on that list made by the British in 1782 ordering them, as zealots of the Revolution, out of the city.

It appears that at the time of conveyance there was a dwelling on the property, but to judge from details of the present building, it must have been a new house in 1798. It bears the marks of Cannon's other work, and it is interesting to observe that it is nearly identical in certain details to several houses built on Bull Street by Cannon's partner Bennett, or by Bennett's sons, soon after 1800.

The property remained in Doughty's name until his death and the death of his wife, Mary Legare Doughty, when it passed to their eldest daughter, Elizabeth Hall Doughty, along with 60 shares in the Bank of South Carolina, \$500 and a "Mulatto female slave Sukey."

Miss Doughty married the local merchant Jeremiah Con-

dy, and on April 20, 1818, conveyed the house and lot to their son, Thomas D. Condy. This gentleman, an attorney, retained the property until his death in the 1850s, at which time it became the possession of Jane W. Condy.

On April 5, 1870, it was purchased for \$4,050 by the banker and merchant prince, Charles O. Witte. In 1903, with Witte's death, his executors transferred 185 Rutledge to his daughter, Mrs. Fay Witte Ball, along with five other parcels of investment property.

Mrs. Ball sold the property on Jan. 10, 1920, to Charles B. Claussen. Following Claussen's death, it passed to Mrs. Marie Louise Claussen. On Oct. 2, 1959, it was purchased by Dr. J. Hertz Warren Jr.

As it currently stands, the house represents two periods of construction. The original plan was for an "L"-shaped dwelling, with piazzas at side and rear, forming a slightly modified single house with two principal rooms to a floor.

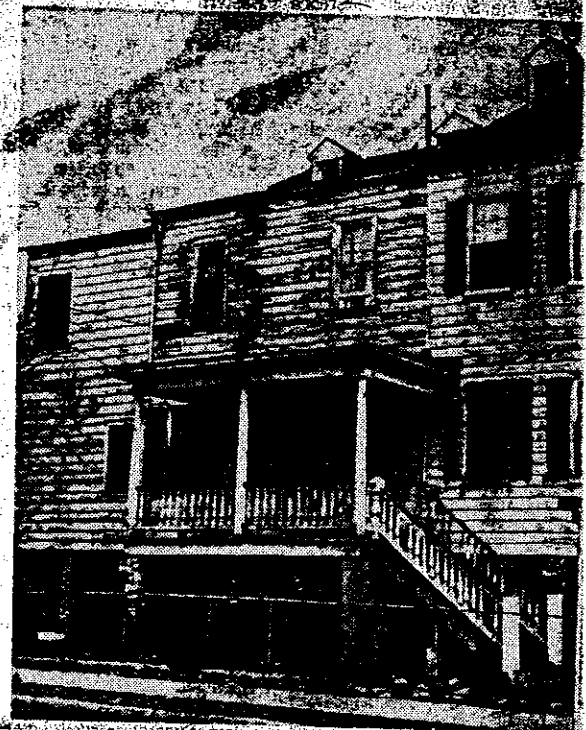
Though worn by time and now divided as two apartments, the dwelling is still very much a well-proportioned Georgian residence if one looks for what is original and attempts to ignore the post-Victorian additions. Its wide, beaded weather boarding, its blinds and solid shutters, its handsome cornice with swag design, and the bell-curve hip roof still convey the feeling of the residence as first constructed.

Renovations have been strongly felt on the entrance story, but some early features still survive. Apparently soon after 1894 (judging from an insurance map of that year showing the old outline of the house), the hallway and main rear room were brought out to be flush with the front sitting room. Also at this time the sit-

ting room in a new wing was replaced by one of Victorian origin.

The renovations were apparently conscientious attempts to improve the interior, as the early details in many cases are extended rather than abandoned.

On the second story surviving details are more abundant, and this floor may be judged as little damaged from its early time of construction. Remaining details occur often enough to allow for restoration should the dwelling find its buyer.



185 RUTLEDGE BUILT CIRCA 1799
Located on old Cannonsborough site. (Staff Photo)