

**GARDEN OF THE MILLER-FULLERTON HOUSE**

**39 Meeting Street**

**c. 1767**

**Home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward E. Crawford**

**1992**

This garden is situated along the southern edge and in the rear yard of 39 Meeting Street. The configuration of this pre-Revolutionary brick Charleston single house, c. 1767, reflects the standard lot plan for early Charlestowm. Probably the rear garden served as the work yard where many small structures stood to serve the daily needs of the family.

The house was constructed as the first rectory of St. Michael's Church. The vestry minutes tell the story of the house's erection by Miller and Fullerton, partners, who were premier builders in the community at that time.

The current owners purchased the house a few years ago and completely renovated the interior to meet the needs of 20th century living. The garden has been created since the Hurricane in 1989. Its plan is an English garden design variation in that the area is divided into three green "rooms." The first at the end of the drive, the second, the White Garden, is "furnished" with a handsome table, fountain, and other ornamentation. And the third is the rear "room" now under construction. The garden house, a re-creation of one in the 18th century style, will serve as a greenhouse for the wintering of fragile plants and as a storage depot for tools and utensils. This portion of the garden has not yet been planted and the house, obviously, is under construction. When completed this area will be divided into four quadrant-shaped parterres with a pool in the center. The pond and flower beds will be separated by grass paths.

The beds are bursting with a wonderful melange of greenery and blooms. Contrast the rather formal structure of the beds with the rather informal massing of planting material. This follows the philosophy of Vita Sackville-West and her husband who developed the famous English garden, Sissinghurst.

Mary Zahl, Charleston garden designer and plantswoman, helped the Crawfords with this garden. She has made great contributions to horticulture in many private gardens locally.

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There are over 300 species of plants in this garden. Below is a partial listing of plant material.

Front yard: Gordonia tree, "Okarne" Cherry tree, Sago Palm, Salvia, Veronica, Tea Olive, Viburnum tinus, Rosemary, Azalea, Nandina

Driveway borders: Holly Fern, Red-tipped Photinia, Maidenhair Fern, Gardenia, espaliered Camellia, Nandina, Baby Lucia pansy, Strawberry Begonia, Sedge, Illicium floridanum, Tea Olive hedge, espaliered Podocarpus gracilis

Rear gardens: Budlea, Oleander (bought from home in Philadelphia where it wintered in a greenhouse), Honeysuckle, Yew, American grasses, Mahonia, Fatsia, Hydrangea, Ligustrum (privet), Holly (looks like boxwood), Pyracantha, Liriope, Peach trees (Sam Houston) espaliered, Kiwi vine around window of kitchen house and Confederate jasmine around door. Rose is Louis Phillippe variety.

Herb garden: Marie Pavia rose and two Ilex "Will Fleming" (Yaupons), hardy Geraniums, green fennel. Mint collection along kitchen house bed contains five varieties. Plumbago grows up the pair of Crepe Myrtle (Potomac) trees. Tulip variety: Angelique.

White garden: Illicium anisatum next to fountain along with potato vine, two dozen white and pink Asiatic lilies planted.

FIRST RECTORY OF ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, c. 1767

39 Meeting Street

HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION

51 MEETING STREET

CHARLESTON, S. C. 29401

This house was built in 1767 as the first rectory of St. Michael's Church. It was built for the Rev. Cooper, who had been the church's minister for a number of years. However, by June 1776, the church dismissed Mr. Cooper, who had turned out to be a Tory! When asked to leave the rectory, he refused, thereby causing a great deal of consternation. Despite repeated directives from the vestry, Mr. Cooper remained until early in 1777, when he fled under cover of darkness to a British warship that had appeared in the harbor. (Later, he had the audacity to return during the British occupation of Charleston, and served as minister of St. Philips Church from 1781 to 1783.)

The house was ~~xxxi~~ used as a rectory for a period less than ten years. (In fact, St. Michael's Church did not provide a rectory for their ministers until 1900!) When the vestry regained control of the house in 1777, they rented it to various private individuals. In 1825 the house was sold to a Dr. Read, a rice planter, who used it as his town house. It has been a private residence ever since, and the present owners have been here for over 40 years.

Built by Miller and Fullerton, Charleston's master builders of the day, this typical "single" house features an unusually handsome compass window on the stair landing. (Miller and Fullerton later built many grander houses including 117 Broad Street, the residence of Edward Rutledge, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.)

The vestry also had its trouble with Miller and Fullerton. Upon their inspection of the new rectory, they found the exterior painting "done in a most scandalous and unworkmanlike manner,"  $\frac{1}{2}$  three windows and ten shutters lacking, and "the windows on the stairs want the compass heads agreed for." The vestry refused the keys until the matter was settled.

39 Meeting St.

Designed + installed by M. Z. March, 1990  
+ September, 1990. Owners requested "simple  
lines with profuse, English-style planting."

Over 200 plant species here, all of which  
are at home in lowcountry climate.

NOTES ON INSPECTION AT 39 MEETING STREET

39 MEETING STREET

On the morning of August 16, I inspected the premises at 39 Meeting Street. The purpose of this inspection was to advise Mr. Edward Crawford of my findings with regard to the structural characteristics of the house.

Also present for the inspection were Joe DeStefano and Lavinia Grimsball.

The house is approximately 220 years old. According to the plaque at the street it was built as a rectory for St. Michael's Church. Ms. Grimsball explained that it has only been in the hands of six families throughout its history.

The masonry work appears to be satisfactory at this time. The mortar used in the brickwork is of a better than normal quality for Charleston houses. It seems to have some lime content.

I find that there are three areas that need to be mentioned for the structural report:

Report by Russell A. Rosen, Engineer

The roof framing has had some type of insect infestation, possibly old house borers. If work is undertaken in the attic, installation of air conditioning equipment, etc., I would suggest additional bracing at the roof framing to provide more of a truss type effect to the rafter and ceiling joist configuration. Also, at the roof exterior several of the terra cotta cap pieces at the hip on the north west side are missing. I was unable to view the three other hip surfaces. I could see daylight through the roof in several places. I believe that only minor roof work is necessary. The roof is of slate construction and several knowledgeable roofing contractors are available in town to make these repairs. The cornice work at the front of the house is of a sheet metal type. This is one of the reasons for the rust stains at the front.

My second area of concern is in the present kitchen. At the north window header I see insect damage. Mr. DeStefano advises me that the entire kitchen will be remodeled. My understanding is that wall and cabinetry

will be removed and replaced with contemporary materials and this infestation is not a factor of the purchase of the house.

My third area of concern is in the stairwell. The walls at the stairwell are not bearing walls. The irregularity in the first floor appears to be simply from the weight of those walls over the years. The house is framed with floor joists running side to side. In the event that the owner finds the hump in the first floor objectionable, this could be easily corrected by adding additional piers underneath the house and simply jacking the floor to the desired position. However, this operation may create cracks in the two walls at the stairwell and the adjoining rooms. If this is undertaken, it should definitely done prior to any plaster repair. I also found rather peculiar that the joist on the north are on a sill; the joist on the south are bearing in pockets in the brickwall, which is normal for this type of house.

In conclusion, repairing and temporary at the road.

Otherwise, my opinion is that the house is in a very poor condition.



Russell A. Rosen, P.E.

August 16, 1966