

Architectural Guide to Charleston

[by Albert Simons]

ST. JOHANNES LUTHERAN CHURCH
c. 1841-1842
48 Hasell Street
ANSONBOROUGH

The congregation of St. John's Lutheran Church, built in 1815-1818, had been mainly of German birth or descent and by 1840, the number of persons of this persuasion and background had increased to such an extent as to require another Lutheran Church.

"November 26, 1840, a group of men interested in forming a German Church met in the Lecture Room on Clifford Street."

The first motion made and carried was: "To build a German Evangelical Church" x x x

"December 3, with 50 present, the constitution was adopted and the church founded. John Andreas Wagner, an outstanding citizen, later a General in the Civil War and one of the city's finest mayors was elected the first President." x x x

"Within a year (1841) 263 men had signified their intention of becoming members." x x x

x x x "the young congregation x x x purchased Col. Bryan's lot at Hasell and Anson Streets for \$3,000.00 and started the erection of a church to cost \$8,000.00" x x x
"The church was completed June 15, 1842, and dedicated June 22nd, with elaborate ceremonies." The foregoing is quoted from St. Matthews Evangelical Lutheran Church, 125 Years of Christian Service. 1967.

St. Johannes Lutheran Church is the work of Edward Brickell White and unlike his Second Baptist Church, 1842, (now Centenary M. E. Church) and the Huguenot Church, 1844-1845, it is neither Greek nor Gothic Revival, but an almost academic exercise in the Tuscan Order as formulated by Vignola. Its unpretentious integrity harmonizes well with the character of the domestic architecture of Ansonborough which surrounds it.

A.S.

ST. JOHANNES LUTHERAN CHURCH, 1840-1841, 48 Hasell Street

In her study, The Architects of Charleston, Miss Beatrice Ravenel shows that this impressively handsome building in the Tuscar type of classic Doric was designed by Edward Brickell White, one of Charleston's most notable and versatile architects. Inheriting artistic ability from both of his parents, trained in construction at West Point and in the U.S. Engineer Corps, he surveyed for pioneering railroads then returned to his native city to practice architecture in the very varied styles of the Eclectic period about the time that the fire of 1838 cleared this site. A survey of his works show that he touched nothing that he did not ornament.

An interesting detail of the robust columns of the portice that does so much to add dignity to this comparatively small structure is White's use of double entasis. To escape heaviness he has diminished the columns not only upward through two-thirds of their height in the conventional fashion, but downward from that point aswell.

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Handsome use of Classic Tuscan in the Eclectic period by a distinguished architect.

[Samuel Gorillard Stoney]

Information for Guides

a suite of three rooms. This plan is more typical of New Orleans than of Charleston; however, the typical Charleston piazza is present.

(Thomas, DYKYC, Oct. 19, 1970.)

45 Hasell St. -- Charles W. Seignious built this large brick store and residence c. 1852.

(Stockton, unpub. notes.)

48 Hasell St. -- St. Johannes Evangelical Lutheran Church.

This Tuscan-columned church was built in 1841-42 and designed by architect Edward Brickell White. The interior has great simplicity of design with galleries having balustered fronts like local piazza railings. The building was first occupied by St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, which was organized in 1840 by German-speaking Lutherans. When that congregation moved to King Street in 1872, the Salem Baptist Church, a black congregation, purchased the building. In 1878, it was bought by St. Johannes Evangelical Lutheran Church, which congregation was organized in 1878 and first met in a chapel on Hasell Street near Meeting. Services continued to be conducted in the German language until 1924. The parish building was dedicated in 1890, and a new parish building was built in 1927.

(Legerton, Historic Churches, 40, 36-37. Ravenel, Architects, 186, 189, 196. History of the Lutheran Church, 696-698, 730-731. Stoney, This is Charleston, 56.)

50 Hasell St. -- Built by Joel Smith, a planter in Abbeville District, after 1846, this two and one-half story brick house has a Palladian window in the pediment. It was purchased for use as St. Johannes' rectory in 1920.

(Thomas, DYKYC, Oct. 27, 1970.)



48 Hassell St. ca. 1960

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ARP

This was one of the first seven houses purchased by Historic Charleston Foundation in 1959. It was the first resold by them. Mr. and Mrs. Peter Manigault then made it their residence and have lived here with their children for the past five years. In their restorations they removed no less than five rundown apartments from the interesting "T Plan" house and its tail of offices stretching down the north side of the very deep yard.

As the north line of the fire of 1838 came only to St. Stephen's Church, this house and a number on Laurens Street, older than their neighbors to the south, have the elaborate and delicate decoration of the Adam period, so admirably executed in Charleston.

An outstanding ornament of the house is Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Mr. Manigault's collateral ancestor, Gabriel Manigault. One of Charleston's most distinguished amateur architects, he designed his own fine mansion that used to stand across lots from the home of the descendants at the corner of George and Meeting Streets.

48 HASELL STREET

The disastrous fire that swept Ansonborough in 1838 was followed almost immediately by extensive rebuilding in the area. In 1841, the same year that E. B. White was designing the High School of Charleston, he was commissioned by the German Evangelical Lutheran Church to design a new building for them. On October 11, 1841, officers of the church contracted with John Dawson, a builder, to erect a church on the northwest corner of Hasell and Anson Streets. The new sanctuary was completed and dedicated on June 22, 1842.

The building, outwardly, is Tuscan in design, with its massive columns. In the interior the galleries with ballustrated fronts, like piazza railings, give it a Charleston touch.

In 1872, thirty years after the church was dedicated, the congregation, now known as St. Matthew's Church, moved into its new and larger building on Marion Square. Upon this occasion some 3,000 people marched in procession from the Hasell Street church to the new building.

On April 11, 1878, a group of 53 Lutherans joined together and organized a congregation to be known as The German Evangelical Lutheran St. Johannes Church. In June of 1878, St. Matthew's offered and sold to St. Johannes the Hasell Street property for \$4,500. Through the years, the congregation has diligently maintained and added to the original property so that now, according to its pastor, its conservative estimated value is \$200,000. This fine small church has not only served for over a century as an important part of the city's religious life, but is also one of our outstanding landmarks.

In the Ansonborough area are several other fine churches including St. Andrew's Lutheran Church at 43 Wentworth Street, St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church at 34 Wentworth Street, and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church at 67 Anson Street, which was completed in 1836 and so predates the fire. A fine Regency work, it was built and probably designed by members of the Horlbeck family, once so notable in the annals of Charleston's architecture.



1 Anson



71 Anson



48 Hasell