

JOEL SMITH'S HOUSE
c. 1843
50 HASELL STREET
REV. & MRS. GARY C. SAFRIT

At this house talk about the overall project rather than furnishings etc.

Hasell Street was much the most stable street in Ansonborough when the Foundation's project originated, but was slipping fast. Since 1959, seven houses have been extensively improved in this block, six or seven in the block to the east. This is due to the overall effects of the project, for the Foundation has owned only two houses on the street: 5 Maiden Lane, bought and sold two years ago (immediately across the street), and the Lucky Dollar Store on the corner of Anson which is still for sale.

The William Rhett House was restored in the early 1940's and stood a lonely jewel in the desert. Evidently this one restoration - so well done and so extensive - was not sufficient to turn the tide of the declining area. The latest significant restoration is the complete rehabilitation of this building the parsonage of St. Johannes Church at 50 Hasell. It had been discarded as the parsonage many years ago. Among other "niceties" a furnace was installed. In 1959 there may have been as many as four central heating systems at the most in the entire six blocks.

JOEL SMITH'S HOUSE, c. 1843
50 Hasell Street

The elaborate filigree screen in cast iron at entrance makes this handsome house a landmark on the street. The iron work is among the most elaborate in the neighborhood. This type of iron seems to have been made in Philadelphia and New York for shipment south and was, of course, widely used in the Gulf cities (New Orleans, Mobile). Later, around 1840's, it began to be made in great quantities in Charleston and among the important factories here, one was located on Wentworth Street in Ansonborough before the great fire of 1838. The craft of iron founding continued up until World War II here, using the same patterns of a century earlier. Much survives in Charleston today (Battery Benches) and many handsome examples throughout Ansonborough.

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.)

50 Hasell St. Has Served As Rectory For Church

(Editor's Note: Fourth in a series of articles on recent restorations in the Ansonborough area. The fifth will appear in this column next Monday.)

By W. H. J. THOMAS

The three-story brick residence at 50 Hasell St., the rectory of St. Johannes Lutheran Church for more than 50 years, was built about 1846 by an Abbeville district planter named Joel Smith. Along with the church itself, the dwelling has been part of an extensive restoration project during the last two years.

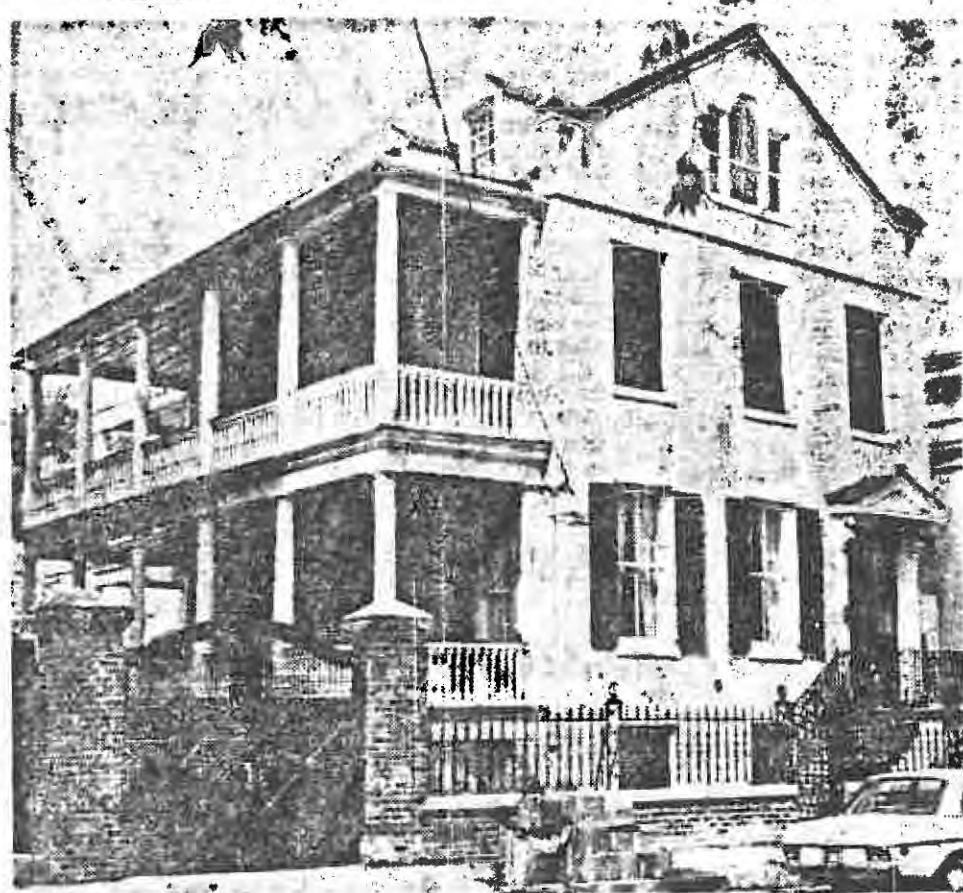
Joel Smith's house stands in a group of large-scale homes on Hasell which were constructed with great attention to detail and fashion after 1840, when the neighborhood was attempting to recover from the disastrous mid-town fire of a few years before.

Most of these homes show variations on the designs popular in this period when the Greek Revival was beginning to mellow but when the furnishings of houses were becoming increasingly lavish in colors, carving and in numbers of objects per room. The result was the simplification of interior details, where painted ceilings, brass and sanded glass, and rich colors in draperies and furniture carried the weight which would previously have been carried by mantles and ceilings decorated in putty details and by a plaster entablature.

Joel Smith built for himself a home of Charleston "gray" brick raised on a full-story basement and topped by a spacious usable attic level. On the entrance floor, the home consisted of two large parlors, opening into each other, with a sizeable dining room to the rear. Both a principal staircase and a wide service stairway (the latter now removed) were included. The plan was such that all rooms on first and second floor open to the piazza.

Because there is an additional support wall visible in the basement and because a precise seam may be seen on the exterior east wall (plus breaks in the moulding along the same line inside), it is likely that portions of this rear section of dining room were an addition. But the work is so consistent with that of the brick and mortaring of the original house that it was possibly a job taken on by Smith not long after his initial effort.

Restoration work took in no real structural changes in the 124 year old dwelling. The walls were covered in paper, a heating and air control system installed and one plaster cornice



50 HASELL CONSTRUCTED AFTER 1846
House served as rectory for 50 years. (Staff Photo by Murton)

was replaced by a wooden copy, but most features were retained including later additions in the form of Victorian mantles on the second story.

Work is still continuing on the garden area but the features of the exterior were kept, as was the quite fine cast iron fence and entrance stair rails.

The lot on which 50 Hasell now stands was part of a large parcel owned prior to 1779 by John Dutarque. Following his death in that year, his executors, Alexander Chovin and

Six months later, Bryan, described as a planter of St. Thomas Parish, assigned to Daniel Elliott Huger Jr. the Hasell Street property, his three plantations, "all his Negro slaves, furniture, plantation utensils, horses, mules & stock of every kind" to hold in trust of Bryan's wife and daughters.

It was in February of 1843 that Huger sold the vacant lot to Mrs. Rachel Lazarus for \$1,500. Mrs. Lazarus did no apparent building here but sold it to Otis J. Chafee, a wine merchant, for \$1,725. On July 14, 1846, Chafee conveyed the still - vacant lot to Joel Smith of Abbeville district for \$1,800.

Smith kept the property seven years, constructed the present residence on it during that period but continued to keep his association with Abbeville during this time, as he was consistently listed through these years as an Abbeville planter.

On June 25, 1853, he sold his dwelling and lot to James S. Bowie for \$6,530. Bowie operated a prosperous dry goods business (he paid taxes on \$77,000 worth of "stock of goods" in 1860) here for many years with a Langdon Bowie. He apparently died in August of 1861. His widow Susan died in 1862, and, for purpose of partition among heirs, the property was sold on Jan. 3, 1871, by

James A. Bowie of New York, Alexander Bowie of Memphis and Eliza A. Bowie of Floyd County, Ga., to J. Spencer Terry, a local merchant ("Terry & Nolan, fish and game"), for \$6,000.

After Terry's death, the house was sold at auction on Oct. 31, 1893, being purchased by John H. E. Meyer for \$5,525. From Meyer's estate, it was sold on Jan. 26, 1920, to St. Johannes German Evangelical Lutheran Church as its rectory.

It is now the home of the Rev. and Mrs. Gary L. Safrit.

Do You Know Your Charleston?

Isaac DuBose, released this property (a dwelling was then standing here) to the Rev. J. F. Warren for a fee of 312,000 pounds currency (showing the apparent inflation of the Revolutionary War). One month later, Warren released it back to DuBose for 350,000 pounds currency.

On Feb. 2, 1790, DuBose conveyed the house and lot to John Ball for 1,300 pounds sterling. Mrs. Lydia Bryan purchased it from Ball for \$13,000 on Aug. 6, 1810, but had her house destroyed by fire in 1838. She conveyed the vacant lot for \$1 to her son, John Bryan, on Aug. 31, 1842.



50 Hasell St. ca 1960

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