

TOTAL P.01



copy to Barry Gumb  
1 of 1

September 20, 2001

Mr. Michael Dingman  
C/O Fisher Scientific  
1 Liberty Lane  
Hampton, NH 03842

Dear Mr. Dingman:

First, I must congratulate you for the excellent progress on the restoration at the historic Sword Gate House property. Historic Charleston Foundation is proud to be associated with you through our easement interest in a portion of the Sword Gate property in this exciting project of reassembling the two sections of the house, as well as the carriagehouse property.

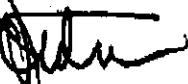
We are very concerned by reports that you may be planning to remove the early mirrors from the ballroom/drawing room in the masonry section of the house. As you know Historic Charleston Foundation has an easement on the architectural details of this room. We would regret to see any alteration to it especially the removal of the mirrors and chandelier. As far as we have determined, the chandelier and mirrors have been in the room since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are reflective of Charleston taste during this period and add tremendous integrity to the room. I know you have been receiving advice from individuals about English decoration of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century period. To alter this American room to reflect decoration that may or may not have been in Charleston would be in our view a tremendous mistake. We are particularly concerned that Charleston has lost so many of its original or early rooms through very recent renovations, such that are few spaces in the city now with furnishings that can be called original or early. We would also remind you that the style of these mirrors albeit rococo have definite Regency overtones, especially since Charleston and the rest of America received English decoration somewhat late. There is a quality to these mirrors that is not out of keeping with the Regency period of the very early 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially as expressed late in George IV's reign in the interiors of the Carlton House and elsewhere. The Foundation has always stated that George Hopley added these mirrors to the space, while British consul after 1849. The mirrors further reflect a certain eclecticism in the room, historically important for understanding the context of the Sword Gate property. They especially seem made for the room and go very well with the chimneypiece and simply cannot be lost from this space. Their removal would be particularly tragic and the potential of their being lost in the future, not by you but by some successor, would be great. They simply will not fit into any other space and storage, in our long experience, leads to decay and almost certain loss.

We urge you to please save these mirrors and if possible, the chandelier in this room so that we may continue to say that this room has some meaning to Charleston and its historic preservation.

I would be very interested in talking with you about how Historic Charleston Foundation can help assist you in this matter.

With best regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

  
Jonathan H. Poston  
Director of Museums and Preservation Initiatives

for MDD

Post Office Box 1120 • Charleston, South Carolina 29402 • (843) 723-1623 • FAX (843) 577-2067 • [www.historiccharleston.org](http://www.historiccharleston.org)  
10/10'd

NEWTON

SEP-24-2001 13:29

**MICHAEL D. DINGMAN**  
SHIPSTON HOUSE LYFORD CAY  
POST OFFICE BOX N7776  
NASSAU, NP THE BAHAMAS

TELEPHONE: 242.362.7150 FAX: 242.362.4971  
e-mail: mdd@swordgate.com

17 October 2001

Via Facsimile

Ms. Katharine S. Robinson  
Executive Director  
Historic Charleston Foundation  
40 East Bay Street  
Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Dear Kitty,

Based on our discussions, we removed and stored carefully the mirrors from Sword Gate.

Not knowing the system, do I need a letter authorizing this? or is it acceptable just to do it? I am perfectly happy either way.

We are in the process of moving in and things are coming along just fine - can't wait to show you the house. We appreciate your help and counsel.

Your friend,



*Agj*  
copy to Harold Pratt-Thomas

**MICHAEL D. DINGMAN**  
SHIPSTON HOUSE LYFORD CAY  
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e-mail: mddsgl@msn.com

25 September 2001

Via Facsimile

Mr. Jonathan H. Poston  
Director of Museums and Preservation Initiatives  
Historic Charleston Foundation  
Post Office Box 1120  
Charleston, South Carolina 29402

Dear Mr. Poston:

We received your letter of 20 September 2001 and appreciate the effort you have taken to express your views.

My wife decided to purchase, restore and consolidate the substantial property and structures that we now collectively refer to as Swordgate. As you are well aware, this has taken much time, thoughtful counsel, very devoted craftsman and the usual frustrations of a major restoration.

It has also involved significant compromise on our part to keep and replace many of the historical details that were removed long ago and destroyed which we have brought back to make this house what it was in the beginning; I am sure Glenn and Moby can acquaint you with the magnitude of the restorations of things long gone.

Betsy has carefully set the tone by trying to keep the property tied to the early Georgian style of the original two houses but this is not reflected in the ballroom except by the windows, wainscoting and flooring. For better or worse, my wife is anything but "eclectic" but, rather, a disciplined guardian of consistency and beauty as you will note when you have an opportunity to visit the project.

Unfortunately, the eclectic look of the ballroom (no matter how historically significant) does not represent the entire project in a consistent way. Her lack of enthusiasm in no way reflects your point, it simply does not work for us. However, we are restoring this home for future generations and don't want to fight the very reason we are in Charleston in the first place.

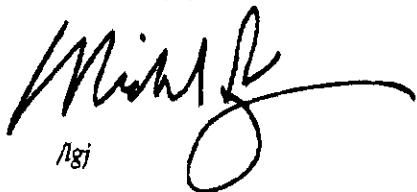
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Mr. Jonathan H. Poston  
25 September 2001  
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Therefore, she will restore the mirrors to your view and to what you want, paint the room and just shut it off from the rest of the house with the appropriate historical light fixture. She has no intention of furnishing it or doing anything with it other than leaving it for you on that one day of the year that you are entitled to come and look -- we will open the door so you can be assured that it is as it once was, but not in the beginning.

I would be most appreciative if you would go over to the property and visit with Voytek who has been there for months, carefully restoring the mirrors. Please tell him exactly how you want them finished and we will see to it that it is done. After that, the floors will be sanded, the walls will be painted and it will remain in that state, carefully tended for future generations to view.

Sincerely yours,

  
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan H. Poston". Below the signature, the initials "AJP" are handwritten.



October 25, 2001

Via Fax 242.362.4971

Michael D. Dingman  
Shipston House Lyford Cay  
Post Office Box N7776  
Nassau, NP The Bahamas

Dear Mike,

Thank you so much for your inquiry regarding the mirrors from the Sword Gate House. Although you do not need a letter of authorization from us, the Foundation would appreciate a letter from you giving a description of the mirrors (size, date, etc.) and the information about where they are being stored. We really would appreciate this information for our records.

I certainly look forward to seeing your house, and, as you know, we are very eager for you to take a tour of the Missroon House.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lilly".

Katharine S. Robinson  
Executive Director

KSR:bg  
CC Harold Pratt-Thomas

MICHAEL D. DINGMAN  
SHIPSTON HOUSE LYFORD CAY  
POST OFFICE BOX N7776  
NASSAU, NP THE BAHAMAS

TELEPHONE 242.362.7150 FAX 242.362.4971  
e-mail: mdd@swordgate.com

01 November 2001

Via Facsimile

Ms. Katharine S. Robinson  
Executive Director  
Historic Charleston Foundation  
Post Office Box 1120  
Charleston, South Carolina 49204

Dear Kitty,

In accordance with the request in your letter of 25 October 2001 regarding the mirrors from Sword Gate House, here is the information.

There are five pieces that are now packed and stored in our secured warehouse in North Charleston, 3265-B Ashley Phosphate Road. If and when we move them to a different location, we will let you know.

In each case, the packaging adds approximately 8" on each side of the actual piece. All pieces are secured with screws and bracing by a backing and protective covering then stored inside a custom-made plywood crate which was then filled with packing materials as a further cushion for each piece.

#1 tall mirror from the Ballroom

crate size: 13' 4" high x 7' 4" wide x 2' 4" deep

#2 bench that sat under the above mirror in the Ballroom, has matching ornamentation  
crate size: 2' 0" high x 6' 4" wide x 2' 0" deep

#3 mirror from the Ballroom that was over the fireplace  
crate size: 9' 4" high x 7' 4" wide x 2' 4" deep

#4 mirror from the Dining Room that was over the fireplace  
crate size: 6' 4" high x 7' 4" wide x 2' 0" deep

#5 mirror from the second floor guest room that was over the fireplace  
crate size: 6' 4" high x 6' 4" wide x 1' 8" deep

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to a tour of the Missroon House at a mutually convenient time.

Your friend,

