

The Pink House

38 Alexander Street, Charleston, SC 29403

Luxury Simplified Group

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Part I

a.) Brief History/Background of the Building

The “Pink House”, a building constructed around November of 1817 is located at 38 Alexander Street, directly adjacent to the Gadsden House (329 East Bay) (Fig 1).¹ The land is part of the original Gadsden Estate owned by Revolutionary War icon, General Christopher Gadsden.² In 1779, the lot was sold by General Gadsden to Robert P. Saunders who then sold it to Captain William Hall.³ The Pink House and the Gadsden House are both located in the Charleston Historic District.⁴ The Pink House is the only surviving building on Alexander Street built when it was formerly known as Middle Street.⁵ Its original address was 12 Middle Street.⁶ However, during the 1960s, Charleston underwent a major urban revitalization in its historic district and the street was renamed Alexander Street (Fig 2-5).⁷

The house is a brick building which has been clay-tiled and stuccoed a bright pink color, hence the nickname “Pink House”.⁸ It borders the Gadsden House whose wrought iron gates depict the coiled rattlesnake from the “Don’t Tread On Me” flag, designed by General Gadsden for the colonial navy in 1775.⁹ Samuel Gaillard Stoney, a local Charleston architectural historian, and Phillip Simmons, a Charleston ironworker, designed and built the gates in 1961.¹⁰ Originally the Pink House was built to serve as servants’ quarters to the Gadsden House.¹¹ It has undergone rehabilitation work throughout the years as well as repairs from earthquake damage. It has also been used as offices and a residential house up to the present time. The Pink House is in excellent condition today and Luxury Simplified Group plans on preserving the building while turning the Gadsden House at 329 East Bay into an event space.

b.) Chain of Title/Residences who Occupied the Building

Henry Clifford built the Pink House around November 1817.¹² He was a prominent Charleston shipping agent who worked at Gadsden's Wharf.¹³ Clifford bought the property from Captain William Hall around the same time he built the house.¹⁴ Clifford is first mentioned in the Charleston City Directory as living in the Pink House in 1822 until about 1845 when he sold the property to another shipping agent, William Patton.¹⁵ According to the City directories, Henry Clifford is documented as living in Charleston from 1809 to 1841.¹⁶ After that, there is no mention of him in the directories.¹⁷

The Pink House property was surrounded on the north and on the east by a property owned by Dr. Benjamin Bonneau Simons, one of the most renowned doctors in Antebellum America, from 1823-1844.¹⁸ Dr. Simons was a Huguenot descendent living in Charleston who studied medicine in Edinburgh Scotland, which was a popular place to study medicine at that time.¹⁹ He was one of the first doctors in the United States to develop a vaccination against smallpox.²⁰ Dr. Joseph Waring, author of *History of Medicine of South Carolina 1670-1825*, called Dr. Simons "the leading surgeon of the South."²¹ Dr. Simons lived in the Gadsden House next door and had his main office directly behind the Gadsden House at 14 Middle Street, adjacent to the Pink House.²² It is believed that the Pink House served as Dr. Simon's office at one time, but there is no substantial supporting evidence of this theory.²³ However, the Pink House is the only remaining building to preserve the integrity of the neighborhood as it existed during Dr. Simons' life.²⁴ The land that the Pink House is currently sitting on includes a strip between Dr. Simons' residence and his office, a part of his original estate.²⁵ During the

twenty years he was a practicing doctor next door, it is known that Dr. Simons was occasionally summoned to the Pink House.²⁶ The Pink House, because of this distinctive historic association, was chosen to become a museum devoted to the medical history of Antebellum and Colonial Charleston.²⁷ It would be appropriate to assimilate the Pink House contextually with Dr. Simons' residence at the Gadsden House because of the exclusive neighborhood association.²⁸ During renovations in the millennium at the Pink House, old preserved medicine bottles were excavated (Fig 6).²⁹ Some of these bottles are stamped with the date 1756 and have "By The King's Royal Patent" engraved on them; these are now displayed in the entrance hallway of the Gadsden House.³⁰

Both the Gadsden House and the Pink House are in common ownership.³¹ The Old Codger's Address Book lists individuals who lived at specific properties in downtown Charleston through the 1900s. This book lists three residents who have lived in the Pink House. In 1940, John J. Latorre, a white male is listed as living at the house.³² Henry L. Gaillard was listed as the resident of the Pink House in 1950 and Ellis McCray was listed as the resident in 1960.³³ According to the Charleston County Government website, the City Council of Charleston bought the property on February 21, 1995 for \$53,922.00.³⁴ The Pink House and the first floor of the Gadsden House became a medical museum and offices for Biopharm in 1995 and was used by Dr. Roy Sawyer, who owned the property.³⁵ The Pink House was later rented out for other office spaces for multiple businesses. LoopNet's tenet history shows East West Partners, a small development and real estate company, occupied the Pink House in 2012.³⁶ In 2013, it was the office of Mary J. Murray, Attorney at Law.³⁷ One Vendue Range, a distilled water company, is

shown as occupying the Pink House on February 4, 2014.³⁸ The Pink House was purchased on November 7, 2014 by Gadsden House, LC for \$620,000.³⁹

Part II

a.) Overview of Architectural Materials Used

The Pink House is a two-story brick, stuccoed building, located adjacent to the Gadsden House on Alexander Street, consisting of approximately 420 square feet.⁴⁰ The interior of the building has been altered throughout its lifespan, originally designed as slave quarters and then converted to residential and then to business spaces. The exterior has been well preserved and is in good condition. The roof is made up of clay tiles that have been preserved and reused during a large rehabilitation of the building in the mid 1990s (Fig 7).⁴¹ The Pink House has a total of seven, double-hung, six panel windows. All windows have board-and-batten shutters that have been painted forest green (Fig 8). There are three exterior doors, two on the north façade and one on the west façade. All the doors are batten style slabs that have also been painted forest green. The door on the west façade is “unusable” and leads straight out into a small raised garden and faces a parking lot. There is an iron spiral staircase and balcony on the north façade that leads up to the second floor entryway. This is one of building’s most notable features; it was added in to the house in 1996.⁴² A brick walkway leads up from the parking lot along Alexander Street to a small entranceway onto the property. The south brick/stuccoed wall on the south façade at one time was connected to the west wall, but a rehabilitation in the mid 1990s opened that wall along the Pink House north façade and the bricks were reused for the raised garden with over compacted soil on the west façade (Fig 9).⁴³

Before being purchased by Luxury Simplified Group, the Pink House was being used as a one-person apartment. The first floor has a heart pine floor that is laid over treated wood sleepers.⁴⁴ The first floor walls are gypsum board walls over treated wood furring on top of a concrete slab foundation.⁴⁵ They are finished with a 1x6 beaded baseboard for trim.⁴⁶ The stairs on the first floor leading up to the second floor are made of 5/4" antique heart pine treads.⁴⁷ The steps for the stair were taken from an old brewery on East Bay Street and reused in the house (Fig 10).⁴⁸ The balusters, round stair rail, and the newel post are also made of heart pine.⁴⁹ The second floor walls are exposed brick with 1x6 beaded board trim and the ceiling is gypsum board.⁵⁰ The floors on the second floor are also made of heart wood pine.⁵¹ There is one bathroom with one shower on the second floor with water resistant gypsum board and 1x4 beaded board trim.⁵²⁵³

b.) Historical and Contemporary Records of Aesthetic or Structural Alterations Over Time, Including Rehabilitation & The Impact of Natural Events

The Pink House has been well preserved and it currently in excellent condition. Alexander Street itself has changed overtime, with the large urban development movement that occurred in Charleston. Christopher Gadsden established Alexander Street, formally known as Middle Street, in the middle of his Village of Middlesex.⁵⁴ The street was established in 1772 and developed though 1790-1820.⁵⁵ The street was renamed in 1903 to relate to the street that continues to the north from Calhoun Street.⁵⁶ It was blocked off in the late 1960s because of the construction of the Gaillard Municipal Auditorium across the street.⁵⁷ Alexander Street allowed the people of Charleston to see the scale of Middlesex throughout its development in the post-Revolutionary period, with its smaller houses that belonged to Charleston's working class.⁵⁸

The Pink House has gone through many alterations and repairs. The City of Charleston Executive Relief Committee Book of Vouchers for work done during the 1886 Earthquake and the Record of Earthquake Damages Book, available at the South Carolina Room at the Charleston County Public Library, lists 38 Alexander Street as a significantly affected property for this natural disaster. The Record of Earthquake Damages show that J.F. Kirkland was the owner at the time and the house was used as a store and a dwelling.⁵⁹ The house was cracked badly on the north and west walls.⁶⁰ The south wall was listed as "slightly cracked" and the east wall was listed as "cracked".⁶¹ The 1886 Earthquake caused \$1150 worth of damage, which is a large sum of money for

the time, and the building had to undergo extensive repairs.⁶² This book also lists the roof material as tin instead of the now clay tile.⁶³ A Voucher for \$1000 was given to Kirkland on October 19 1886 and was accepted under resolution on November 19th 1886.⁶⁴ Alterations to the Pink House were extremely well documented throughout the 1990s. Work is first documented in December of 1994, when the house was in the early stages of roof repairs.⁶⁵ (Fig 11). It is also photographically documented that during this time a large sign was hung on the west façade of the building reading “American Sightseeing” (Fig 12).⁶⁶ This occurred shortly before the building was used as Roy Sawyer’s office/museum for Biopharm, but it is undetermined whether or not the sign is related to the museum.

There are well-documented photos, dated October of 1995 that show the condition of the building as well as historic evidence of architectural features that were once part of the Pink House. The house, like many other houses in Charleston, suffered from significant termite damage.⁶⁷ It is also documented that there was once a fireplace on the first floor, located in the middle of the east wall (Fig 13).⁶⁸ Smoke stains are clearly shown on the wall running up from the first floor, through the floor of the second where the chimney would have been (Fig 14 and 15).⁶⁹ There is also evidence of an earlier doorway located on the first floor west wall, towards the north side (Fig 16).⁷⁰ Another photograph documents that there was also a doorway located on the west wall, towards the south side (Fig 17).⁷¹ New stairs are currently located in the same location as the original historic stairway and the original slope of the historic stairway is visible (Fig 18).⁷² Back in 1995 the stairs were leading to the second floor facing the west wall, as documented by photographic evidence (Fig 19).⁷³ On the north wall of the first floor, the

window was originally placed much lower than it is today (Fig 20).⁷⁴ The clay tiles from the roof were stripped off in October 1995 and preserved to be put back on the roof after the addition of new collar ties (Fig 21).⁷⁵

c.) *Craftsman Based Research of Individuals who have Worked on Structure*

Glenn Keyes Architects rehabilitated the house in 1996 as well as modified the west wall, which connected to the south wall and ran across the Pink House at the time.⁷⁶ Rehabilitation is the process of making possible a well-matched use for a property through alterations, additions, and repairs while preserving features that displayed a building's architectural, cultural and historic values.⁷⁷ Keyes' scope of work for the west wall included applying new stucco to the existing masonry and to build out a stucco water table.⁷⁸ Keyes also added new concrete footings below the new piers of the wall.⁷⁹ The new piers were brick covered in stucco and the new brick caps on the existing wall were covered in stucco as well.⁸⁰ New, slightly larger brick piers, uncovered, were added to accommodate a new opening in the middle of the west wall (Fig 22).⁸¹ On the south wall, Keyes rebuilt the existing wall and modified the arch running into the Pink House to accommodate a new doorway and new iron spiral staircase.⁸² The line of the existing brick that connected the south and west walls was removed and reused for a new cap and new piers at the garden wall.⁸³ Keyes removed the existing concrete patio and steps on the west façade of the Pink House and created a new garden with over compacted soil and shrubbery.⁸⁴

The exterior was given a new fresh coat of "pink" stucco.⁸⁵ The doors on the first and second floor were both cut out and added to the north façade.⁸⁶ New windows were

put into the existing window openings and the mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems were all updated.⁸⁷ The new brick walkway and gate that exists today were added during this rehabilitation as well.⁸⁸ The interior was completely gutted and rehabbed into its current state.⁸⁹ This included heart wood pine floors, new gypsum board walls and ceilings, new trim, and a new interior floating stair located where the original, historic stairs were first placed (Fig 23).⁹⁰ A new bathroom and shower were also added on the second floor.⁹¹

Part III: Conclusion

a) Discuss Potential for Historic Conservation and Preservation

Glenn Keyes Architects did an excellent job with the rehabilitation at the Pink House. Some things that the firm did particularly well included stripping all the roof tile, and preserving them and reinstalling them after repairing the roof structure underneath.⁹² The firm also used existing historic brick in the south wall to create a new brick garden wall on the west façade.⁹³ On the interior, Keyes salvaged old stair boards from a brewery on East Bay street and reused them for the stairs, and made the effort to place the stairs in their historic location after doing research.⁹⁴ Rehabilitation projects have the broadest range of treatments out of the other three preservation practices affecting an existing building.⁹⁵ The Pink House is in excellent condition today and the correct treatments were chosen and executed so that this building was properly preserved.

The National Park Service has multiple briefs on its website that provide guidance and the best treatments for a preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration project. These briefs are broken down into treatments for repairing or cleaning different materials of a building. One particular brief that would be helpful in preserving the Pink House would be how to preserve and repair historic stucco. Stucco is a type of exterior plaster applied in two or three coats directly onto masonry, wood or metal lath to a log or wood frame structure.⁹⁶ Stucco is particularly vulnerable to water damage and repair of the materials requires the expertise of a professional plasterer.⁹⁷ According to the brief, the appearance

of stucco is usually determined by the color of the sand or burnt clay used in the mix as well as tinted by natural pigments and also surface whitewashed or color-washed after the application was completed.⁹⁸ One or more of these give the Pink House its historic, nickname worthy bright pick color. Regular maintenance of stucco is very important. Stucco should be whitewashed annually because the whitewash helps to harden the stucco coats and fill hairline cracks before they can become larger and let moisture into the building.⁹⁹ Oil mastics and paraffin, a type of wax, were also used to help improve the water repellency of stucco structures.¹⁰⁰ Today, the stucco coat on the Pink House is in good condition with minor cracks (Fig 24). It should be cleaned regularly and monitored.

The iron spiral staircase is one of the Pink House's most notable elements. Structural failures, broken joints, badly rusted elements and impact damage are all typical issues with iron construction.¹⁰¹ Regular inspections, that ideally take place biannually in the fall and spring, should preclude any major or minor problems.¹⁰² One of the most important preservation efforts with respect to iron is to control corrosion and note rusting as soon as possible to take proper action.¹⁰³ Before selecting a cleaning method or paint removal method, test panels should be done on the iron to determine the effectiveness of the technique used.¹⁰⁴ Cleaning techniques are most likely to reveal additional corrosion, cracks, and coating defects that would not have been obvious before.¹⁰⁵ The most common and least expensive methods of removing paint and light rust from iron are wire brushing, hand scrapping, and chipping.¹⁰⁶ Newly cleaned iron should be painted right away with a corrosion-inhibiting primer before new rust can start to form.¹⁰⁷ The iron staircase at the Pink House is in good condition today, but should be monitored for regular cleaning and maintenance (Fig 25).

Another notable feature of the Pink House is its clay tile roof. Clay tiles are one of the most decorative and distinctive historic roofing materials because they vary greatly in textures, patterns, profiles, colors, and shapes.¹⁰⁸ Even though clay tiles have one of the longest lifespans among historic roof materials, typically one hundred to several hundred years, a regularly scheduled maintenance program is essential to prolong the life of any roof system.¹⁰⁹ When the roof support structure has failed or if the fastening system has weakened, clay tiles can be removed quite easily, the required repairs can be made, and the historic tiles can be re-laid with new corrosion-resistant nails or hooks, similar to Keyes' 1996 rehabilitation.¹¹⁰ Regular cleaning of the gutters and downspouts can also prolong the life of tile roofs.¹¹¹ Periodic checking of the underside of the roof from the attic can also be helpful in revealing early stages of damage and taking the right steps to prevent issues before they escalate.¹¹²

The Pink House is one of the three diverse structures on the same land as the Gadsden House. To quote one of our many incredible preservation groups, the Historic Charleston Foundation's website on why we preserve, "Great cities are like tapestries—their history, character and individuality are the fabric from which they are woven."¹¹³ The Pink House is part of that fabric that makes Charleston's architectural history one of a kind.

¹ *Pink House*. 1960. 38 Alexander Street, Charleston, SC Charleston Historic District. Historic Charleston Foundation Archives, Charleston.

² *Pink House*. 1960.

³ *Pink House*. 1960.

⁴ *Pink House*. 1960.

⁵ *Pink House*. 1960.

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⁴⁶ Keyes. June 1996.

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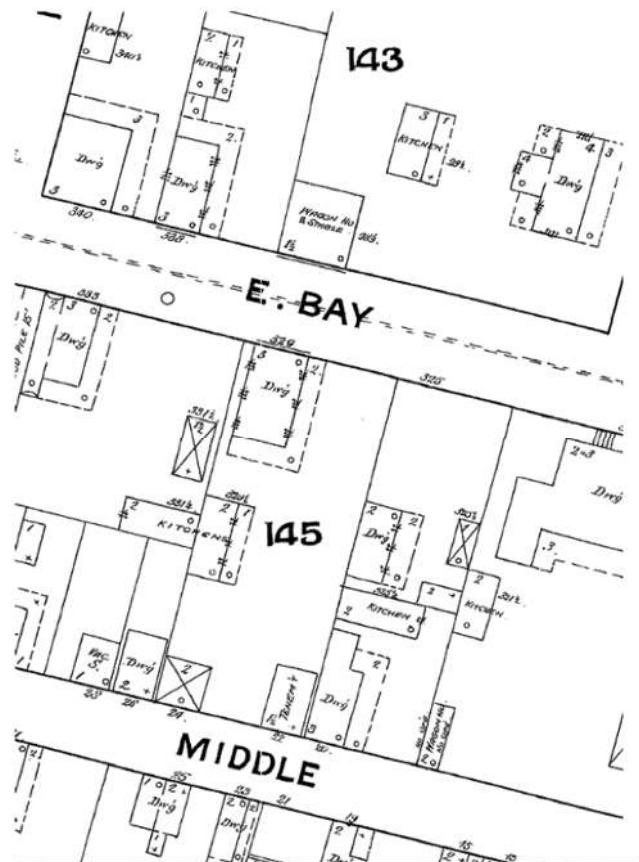
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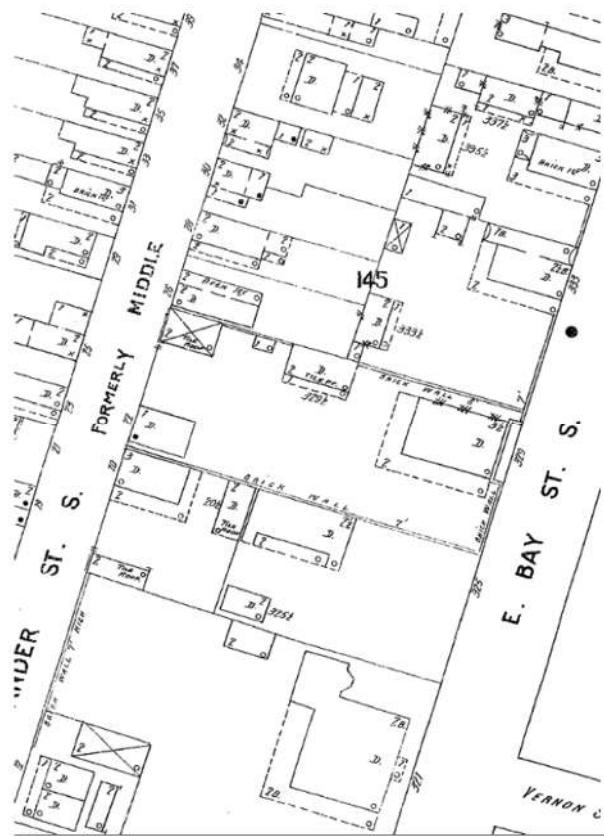
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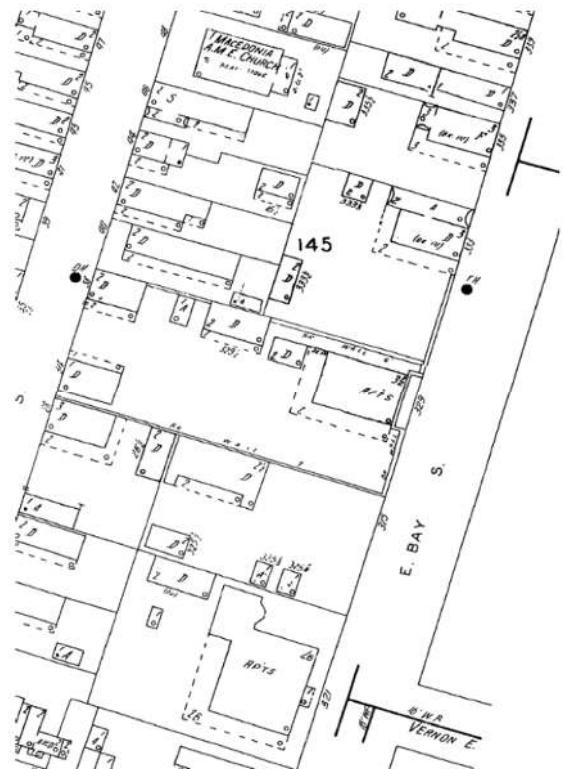
(Figure 1) The Pink House, West Façade. April 3, 1997.



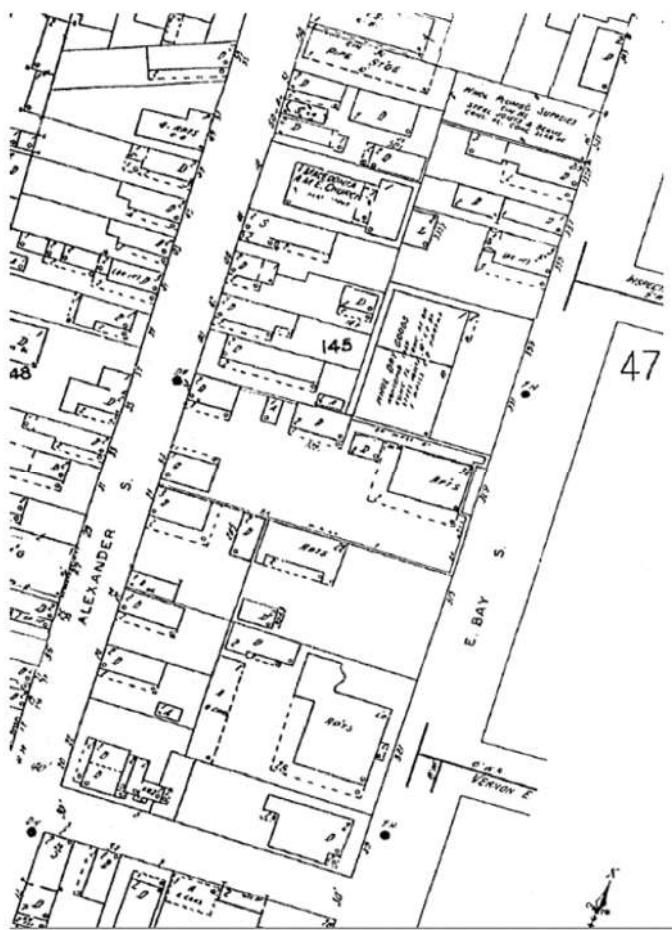
(Figure 2) Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 329 East Bay. June 1888.



(Figure 3) Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 329 East Bay. 1902.



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(Figure 5) Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 329 East Bay. 1955 Refurbished.



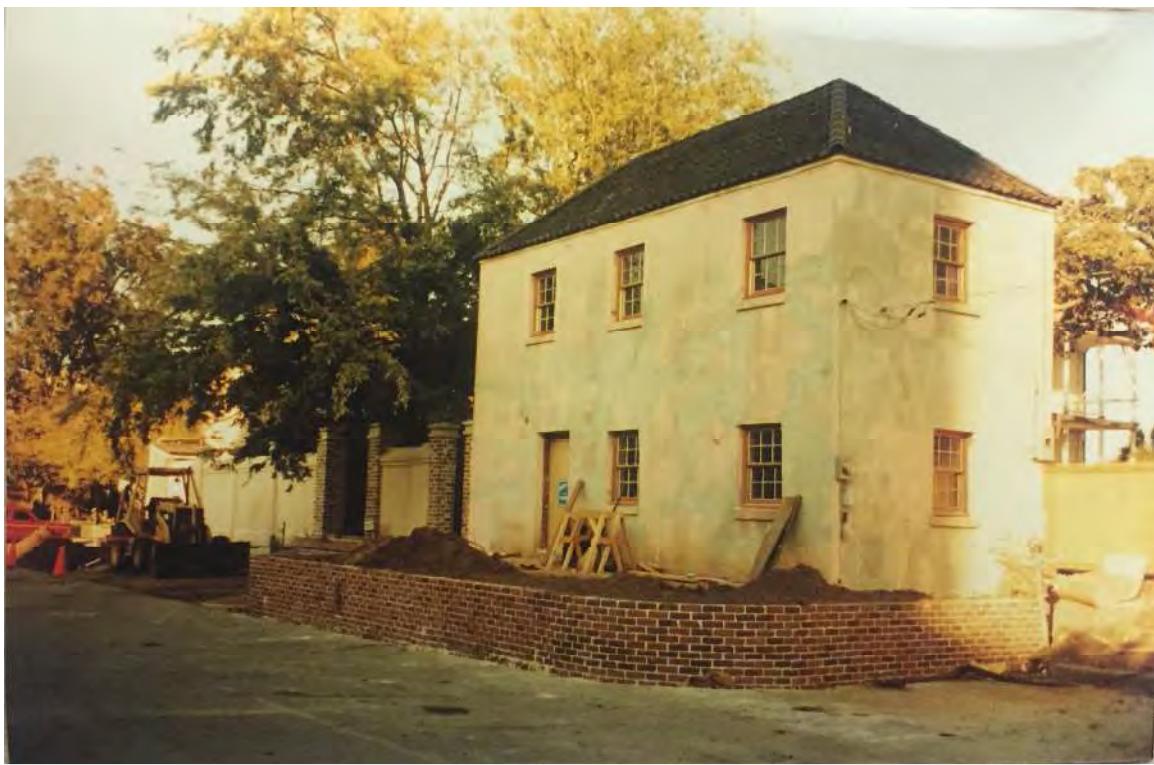
(Figure 6) Preserved medicine bottles excavated from underneath the Pink House



(Figure 7) Close-Up of Clay Tiles from Roof. 1995.



(Figure 8) Pink House board-n-batten shutters. 2014.



(Figure 9) Construction of new garden. November 1996.



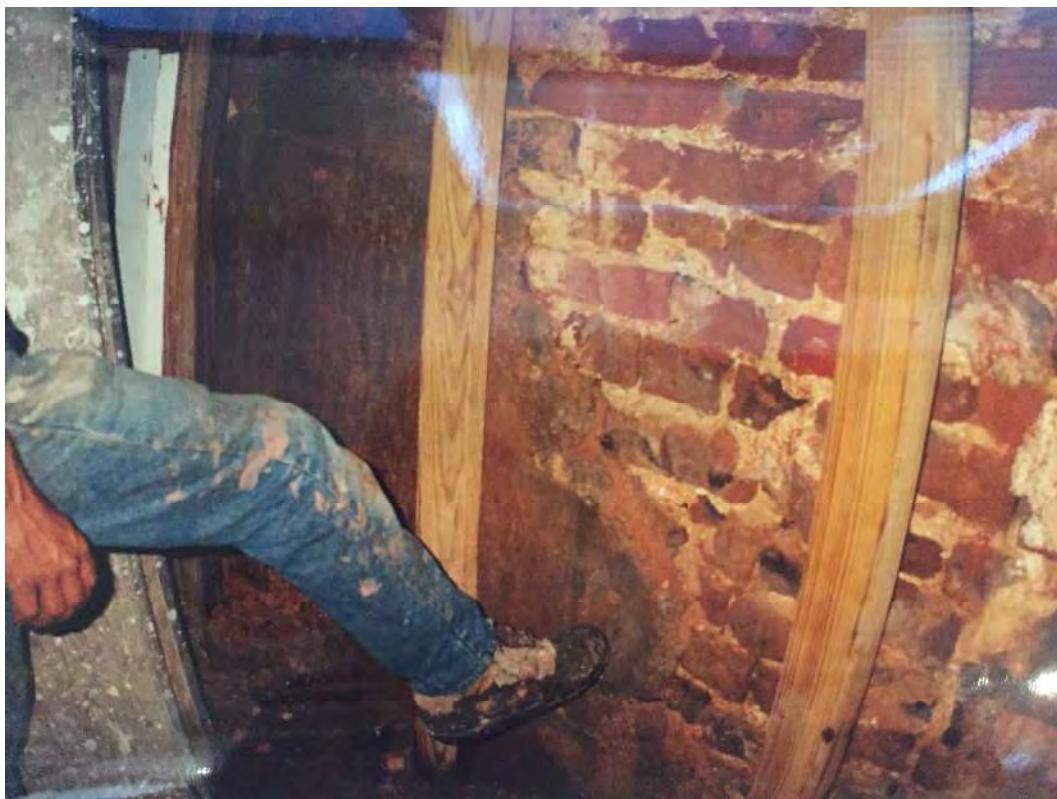
(Figure 10) New, Reused Steps for Stairs from Brewery on East Bay Street. 1996.



(Figure 11) Roof Repairs. 1994.



(Figure 12) "American Sightseeing" Sign. 1994.



(Figure 13) "Downstairs, east wall, middle, concrete where fireplace was"



(Figure 14) "Upstairs chimney/east wall, note fire smoke stains"



(Figure 15) “downstairs, east wall, middle, where chimney does to 2nd floor”



(Figure 16) “downstairs, west wall, north end, showing existence of earlier doorway”



(Figure 17) "West wall, south window, showing that there was originally a doorway"



(Figure 18) "Downstairs, east wall, s. side, note original stairway"



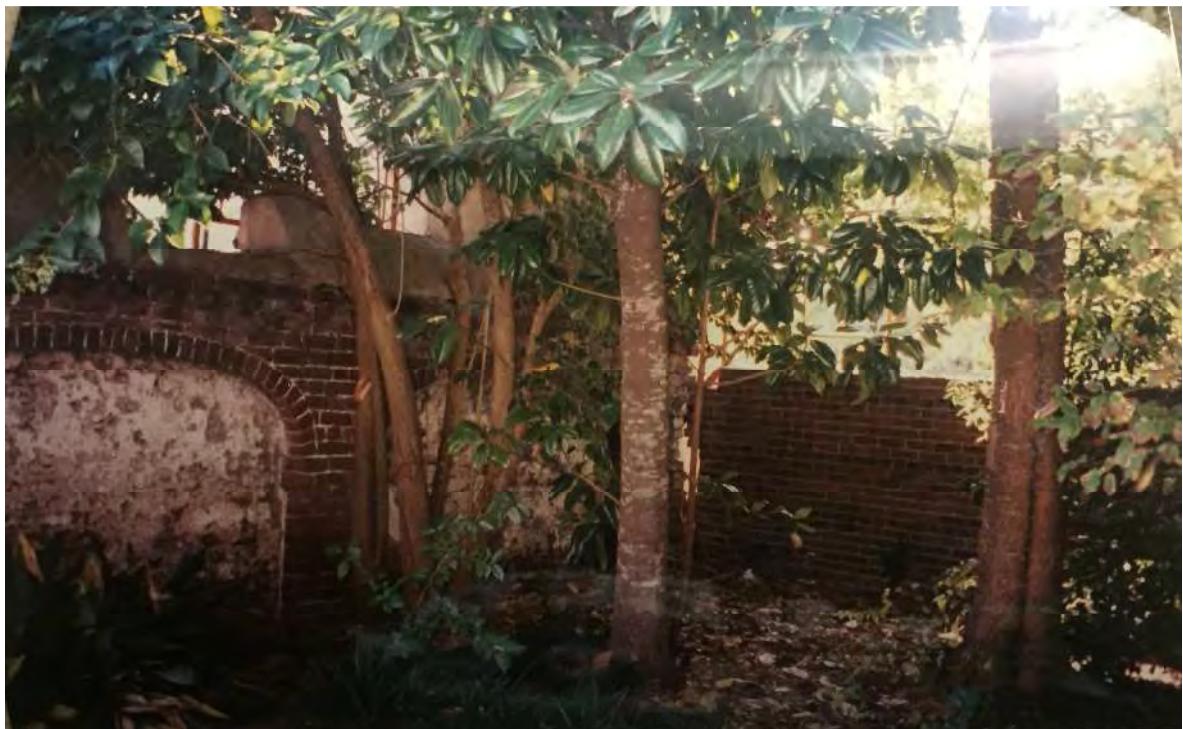
(Figure 19) "1/2 upstairs looking at west wall"



(Figure 20) "Downstairs, north wall, note window was originally much lower"



(Figure 21) "Outside/preserved tiles from roof"



(Figure 22) Stucco/Masonry South Wall before removed for spiral stair.



(Figure 23) First Floor Completed. 1997.



(Figure 24) Stucco On Pink House with Small Crack. 2014.



(Figure 25) Iron Spiral Staircase, North Façade. 2014

Picture Index Citations

1. Figure 1: *The Pink House*. 1997. The Gadsden House, Charleston.
2. Figure 2-5: *City of Charleston Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, June 1888-1995, Refurbished*. 1888-1955. The South Carolina Room. Charleston County Public Library, Charleston.
3. Figure 6: *Preserved Medicine Bottles*. 1996. The Gadsden House, Charleston.
4. Figure 7: *Close-Up of Clay Tiles from Roof*. 1995. The Gadsden House, Charleston.
5. Figure 8: Pink House board-n-batten shutters, Charleston. Personal photograph by author. 2014.
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9. Figure 12: “*American Sightseeing*” Sign. 1994. The Gadsden House, Charleston.
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19. Figure 22: *Stucco/Masonry South Wall before removed for spiral stair*. 1995. The Gadsden House, Charleston.
20. Figure 23: *First Floor Completed*. 1997. The Gadsden House, Charleston.
21. Figure 24: Stucco on Pink House, Charleston. Personal photograph by author. 2014.
22. Figure 25: Iron Spiral Staircase, North Façade, Charleston. Personal photograph by author. 2014.