

Part One Application Text **34 SOCIETY**

Description of physical appearance

Built ca. 1840, 34 Society Street is a three-story masonry single house with a piazza at its west elevation and a two-story masonry kitchen house that has been attached to the north end of the main house since at least 1884. Each level of the house has two rooms of equal size at either side of the central stair hall, and a narrower room in the rear extension of the east side. The piazza wrapped around the north rear elevation to this wing. Over time, infilled bays and a connection to the kitchen house have been added to the rear elevation.

The south façade wall is extended to the west, masking the piazza, and there are double-hung windows with sidelights at the piazza upper levels above the street entry. This masked wall might be a post-earthquake alteration: the south and north walls of 34 Society Street were badly cracked, and underwent repairs in late 1886 or early 1887. The piazza screen is not toothed in to the main façade, supporting the idea that it was a later addition.

The piazza windows, and three window openings at each level of the main building, have 6/6 sash in the shorter third-floor openings and 9/9 sash below. The façade is topped by a corbeled flat cornice. Stuccoed metal bands below the floor heights of the second and third levels were added in 2006 to secure the façade to the building. The street entry with its paneled wood pilasters and shallow pent roof was added during the rehabilitation to replace the original street entry, which had been infilled ca. 1943.

In 2005, there were six apartments in the main building at 34 Society Street. The piazza was enclosed with a cementos-sided wall with a series of single, double, and triple windows, and at the ground floor was a wood deck and a gabled central entry surround. During the 2006-07 rehabilitation, the infill was removed and replaced by wood columns and balustrades at the front half of the piazza, wood-sided infill with single windows at the rear, and new French doors along the piazza. Metal firestairs were removed from the rear elevation and replaced by wood decks with balustrades to match the piazza.

The kitchen house was converted from two apartment flats to a single living unit. One of the paired entry doors was removed, along with the oversized gabled surround. At the rear, a metal balcony above French doors replaced a metal fire stair.

Despite the subdivisions and dense occupancy, the interior of 34 Society Street retains much of its historic fabric, and the essential single-house plan has been generally restored. Heart-pine flooring, molded window and door surrounds, and the existing fireplace mantels were preserved during the rehabilitation. The lower flight of the stair had been removed, but the remaining balustrades and stringer detail were retained at the upper levels. The kitchen house flooring had been replaced during an earlier remodeling, and most of the existing partition walls, typically non-historic, were removed. Existing fireboxes and mantels were retained in place.

Statement of Significance

#34 Society Street is a good example of a brick masonry single house with a masked piazza and attached masonry kitchen house. In setting, size, scale, mass and material, the building contributes to its streetscape and to the surrounding Charleston Old and Historic District. The 1973 Feiss-Wright Inventory includes 34 Society Street in Group 4 (Contributory): "Buildings of architectural value without which the character of those buildings rated in Groups 1-3 would be lessened. To be preserved and retained."

Historical background

The first house on this lot, known as "#22 on a plat of Laurens Square," was built by George Gibbs some time after he bought the property from Henry Laurens in 1804. Gibbs, a commercial baker and merchant, never occupied this investment property, and after his death it passed to his daughter Caroline. The wife of John Blackwood and then George W. Brown, she lived with each of her husbands and during her widowhood at today's 12 Montagu, a property she received from her father during her first marriage.

In June 1840, George and Caroline Brown gave a mortgage on her Society Street parcel to the Bank of the State of South Carolina, to secure a loan of \$1500. In accordance with "An Act for the Rebuilding of the City of Charleston, passed 6/1/1838, the money was to "within one year from its receipt, be expended in the erection of brick or stone buildings" on the lot. Upon completion, the building was used as a rental residence for nearly fifty years.

In 1883 Mrs. Brown conveyed the property to Anna H. Bennett, who sold it the next year to Ellen C. Bennett, who was the widow of Anna's brother Isaac S. K. Bennett. Mrs. Bennett occupied the house until the 1886 earthquake, which badly cracked the front and rear walls, toppled the chimneys, and damaged the kitchen house. Mrs. Bennett had the building repaired, but did not move back in. She held 34 Society Street as a rental house until 1893 when Joseph Dothage purchased it.

The Dothage family occupied the house for years, and by 1930 Miss A. J. Coogan had begun keeping a small private school on the premises. In about 1943, when World War II was creating a population explosion in Charleston, the main house and kitchen wing were remodeled as apartments. The piazza was infilled to provide kitchens and baths for three units in the main house. By 1970 there were six apartments in 34 Society Street, with two more in the kitchen wing. Between 2006 and 2007 the building was rehabilitated as three condominium apartments, two in the main residence and one in the kitchen wing.

5/4/1804 Henry Laurens of St. John Parish, planter, to George Gibbes of Charleston, \$1840.98, release. Lot #22 in a plat of Laurens Square. 50' on Centurion Street, 145'6" on one line, 146'10" on the opposite line. RD Mrs. Eliza Laurens. (RMC Deed Book L7, p. 287) [Centurion was an early name for part of Society Street, named for one of Lord Anson's ships – Stockton *Tourguide Notes*]

-George Gibbs is most often shown as Gibbs, seems to be a separate family from the Gibbes family

City directories: 1802, 1813 George Gibbs, baker, Elliott Street; 1816 Geo. Gibbs & Sons, bakers. 1819, 1822: G&J Gibbs bakers, Elliott Street; George Gibbs res. State Street. 1825 George Gibbs Counting House, Gibbs Wharf, res. State Street. 1829 he is wharf owner. 1830 C&J Gibbs, merchants, Vendue Range, Paul C. Gibbs, merchant Gibbs Wharf, res. Meeting Street; 1835-1840 Charlotte Gibbs widow, State Street

1/1823 Major John Blackwood married Miss Caroline L., daughter of George Gibbs Esq. (Holcomb, *Mercury*, p. 16)

1822-1825 city directories show John Blackwood merchant, King Street Road then Napier's Range, then Chisolm's Wharf. Residence 1825: 92 Wentworth; 1829 & 1830 10 Montagu Street. 12 Montagu Street: ca. 1827 to George Gibbs, for use of his daughter, Mrs. Caroline Blackwood. Her husband's father owned adjoining land to north – his Pitt Street residence property extended through to Montagu. She remained in the house until her 1882 death; her children sold it 1894 (DYKYC, *News & Courier*, 11/8/1971)

16 Montagu: evidently built as investment or residence by Mrs. Caroline Blackwood, owner of 12 Montagu. She acquired the parcel, today's 12, 14, and 16 Montagu, from her father in 1827. Built 16 Montagu soon after 1830 then transferred to her husband George W. Brown who sold it 1848. (DYKYC, *News & Courier*, 12/6/1971)

ca. 1829 death of George Gibbs

Will of George Gibbs of Charleston, gentleman. Brother John Gibbs, sisters Sarah Bush, Hannah Potter, Mary Tompkins; stepsons Nathaniel and Hamilton Slawson. My house or southern tenement in State Street in which myself and family reside, my house on Sullivans Island; my beloved wife Charlotte Gibbs; children George Gibbs JR., James Gibbs, Paul Cartwright Gibbs, Caroline Blackwood. Wife's portion, including home and island house, divide among children & stepchildren after her death. Residue, including my north tenement in State Street to be equally divided among my children. Arranges trust for Caroline's portion. My undivided third share of Gibbs (sic) Wharf. Written 8/23/1827, proved 12/1/1829 (Will Book 38, p. 660)

Ca. 1830 Inventory, real and personal estate of George Gibbs. Seven buildings: store on Crafts South Wharf, occupied by S. Davenport & Co (\$1500); house on Elliott Street occ by Bourne (\$3000); house on Elliott Street occ by Gaylord (\$1800); house on State Street occ by Dibble (\$3000); house on East Bay Street occ by Picault (\$3500); house on Society Street occ by Barnard (\$1800); house on Vendue Range occ by Sires & Mowry (\$2200). 1/3 part of Gibbs Wharf, in accordance with his will, \$17,000. Personal estate: notes, rent due, bonds, cash; 2 negro fellows (\$300 & \$150), one horse & Chaise (\$50), chest containing 47 volumes Rees Cyclopedias (\$125), gold watch & chain (\$60). (RMC Book Z9, p. 420)

1833 Will of John Blackwood of Charleston. Entire estate to wife and children to be divided equally. Executors include my brother Thomas Blackwood, my friend George Gibbs. Written 11/29/1833; codicil makes legacies to brothers, sisters, and mother in Ireland. Proved 12/5/1833. (Will Book 39, p. 1235)

1835 Caroline Blackwood, widow, res. 18 Montagu

1837 George W. Brown Livery Stables, 102 Church Street.

3/1838 Mrs. C. L. Blackwood, daughter of late George Gibbs Esq., married Col. G. W. Brown of Nicholasville KY (Holcomb, *Observer*, p. 136)

1840 G. W. Brown merchant Gibbs Wharf, res. 10 Montagu.

[date?] James Gibbes to G. W. Brown, lease of wharves and two negro slaves, Tom and Pompey, wharfhands (J11, 330)

6/27/1840 Mortgage, lot on Society Street, George W. Brown and Caroline L. Brown his wife, who is trustee under will of George Gibbes. Securing bond of \$1500 for loan by Bank of the State of South Carolina per "An Act for the Rebuilding of the City of Charleston, passed 6/1/1838. Funds to "within one year from its receipt, be expended in the erection of brick or stone buildings." (B11, 217)

1849-1855 GW Brown, commercial merchant Brown's Wharf, res. 8 Montagu

1861 City Census, north side society Street Ward 3 (available online)

#	Type	Owner	Occu
2	Br	Gabriel B. Browne	Gabriel B. Browne
4	Br	George W. Brown	Alexander Robertson
6	Br	R. W. Hare	H. L. Pinckney
8	Br	TrEst L. M. Hatch & Wife	unoccupied
10	Br	Mrs. Julia Dupre	Silas Wyatt
12	Br	Mrs. Julia Dupre	Mrs. John Minahan

Will of George W. Brown of the City of Charleston. Divide estate into two moieties: one to my wife Caroline L. Brown, the other to the children of my late brother Thomas Jefferson Brown of Nicholasville KY. Written 7/1852, proved 9/26/1862 (Will Book 49, p. 1030)

6/6/1883 Caroline L. Brown individually and as Trustee to Anna H. Bennett, \$3250. Ref.

2/22/1882 filing in Common Pleas for permission to sell certain real estate including this lot for changing investment; 3/1883 hearing, permission to sell in her judgment as to best terms for the trust estate. Lot on Society Street, description as in 1804 (U18, 749) 3/5/1893 died at 12 Montagu, Mrs. Caroline L. Brown, age 89 (Death card)

1882 Ellen C. Bennett, widow of ISK Bennett, and Miss Anna H. Bennett (her husband's sister) live at 12 Glebe Street; 1883 both at 21 Meeting Street; 1884 Anna not found in City Directory, Ellen lives at 4 Society Street. 1886 Ellen Bennett at 34 Society Street; H. M. Bennett (Ellen's son), clerk, is there too. 1887 Ellen not found; 1888-89 H. M. Bennett lives on Rutledge Avenue

BENNETT, Anna Hayes (1818-1897) Daughter of Isaac Stockton Keith Bennett & Catherine Elizabeth Faber; BENNETT, Isaac Stockton Keith (1822-1878) son of Isaac Stockton Keith Bennett & Catherine Elizabeth Faber. Married Ellen Cox Murray; BENNETT, H.M. Son of Isaac Stockton Keith BENNETT and Ellen Cox MURRAY (<http://www.swintonfamilysociety.org/>)

4/8/1884 Anna H. Bennett to Ellen C. Bennett, \$5725, description as above (B20, 248)

Earthquake: Mrs. E. Bennett owner. North wall: end must come down. South: badly cracked. Chimneys down. "Rebuild chimneys, rebuild top part of north wall and cracked parts of south wall. Anchor north wall of kitchen back to timbers."

1890 Mrs. Elizabeth Grace occ

3/1893 Mrs. Ellen C. Bennett to Joseph Dothage of Charleston, lot with buildings, description as above (W21, p. 64)

1909 Joseph Dothage occ (City Directory)

9/5/1912 Joseph Dothage died at 34 Society Street, age 89 (death card)

1930-38 Miss J. M. Dothage; Miss A. J. Coogan private school

1942 Miss Coogan Private School

1944 3 apts in building, 1 in rear

1948 Parkwood Apartments -seems to be 3 apartments

1970-1993 8 apts

SOCIETY RECORD

Present Owner
 Mailing Address
 Original Owner

Assessor Map #45711.1.3 / 34 Society

Approximate Lot Size .56 X 19.7
 or Acres

Property Currently Zoned

Assessment: Land
 Improvements
 TOTAL

Physical Condition:	Good	Fair	Poor
Structure	✓
Grounds	✓
Neighborhood	✓

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Facade Material Stucco, Clapboard
 Foundation
 Roof Form flat
 Porch or Veranda / Height

Building Height in stories

Roof Dormers

Chimneys .. Where

Facade Emphasis

Window Sash: 1st 2nd 3rd

Entrance: Fan Lintel Trans

Sidelights undecorated

INTERIOR DETAILS

Mantels Overmantels

Staircase Wainscoting

Interior Doors of Period

Door and Window Frames

Other Panelling

Ceiling Cornices

Chair Rails Base Molds

Wallcoverings of Period

Hardware

Ceiling medallions

Original Floors

Other

Significant Outbuildings

Landscaping

Address 34 Society St.
 Area

Architect/Builder

Date of Construction

Source of Date

Architectural Style

Present Use Residence

Original Use

Incidence in Area

Importance to its neighborhood:

Great Moderate Minor

Accessible to the Public

Historic Notes:

Architectural Significance

National Valuable to City

Valuable Notable Worthy of

Mention Other

Significance of Interiors .. None

Significance of Landscaping

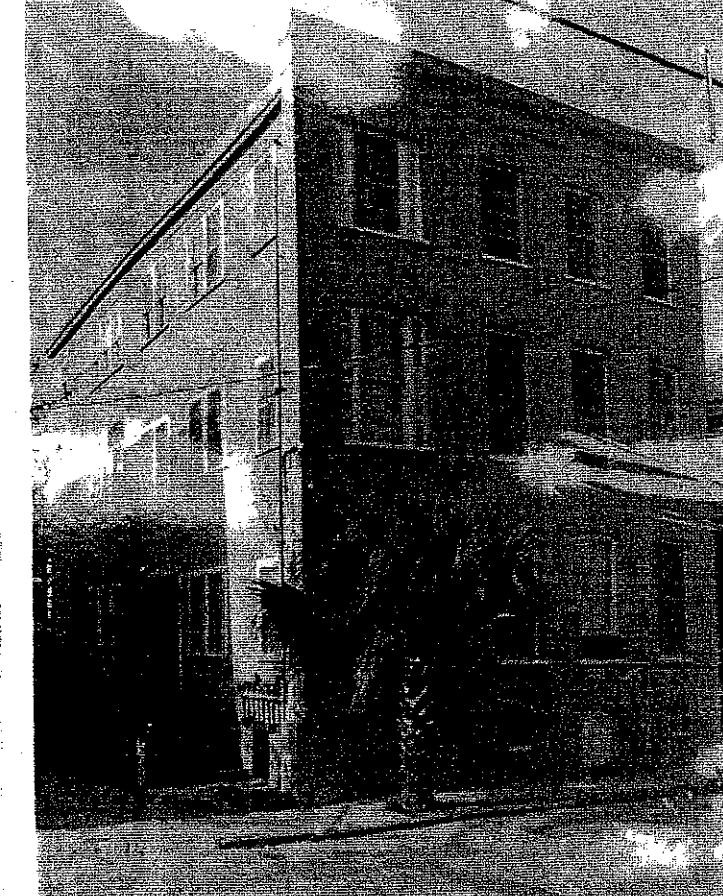
Historic Significance

Representation in Other Surveys in this chart

This is Charleston (page 110)

National Register

State Survey



1973 34 SOCIETY

SHEET

Na 98 x

ANSON

A. 1905

