

Drawing Room Wing of House at 32 Legare Street;
now a separate property, known as "Swordgate
House," whose address is 109 Tradd Street
109 Tradd Street
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-271

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DRAWING ROOM WING OF HOUSE AT 32 LEGARE STREET;
NOW A SEPARATE PROPERTY, KNOWN AS "SWORDGATE HOUSE,"
WHOSE ADDRESS IS 109 TRADD STREET

178-

Street Address: 109 Tradd Street, Charleston, Charleston County,
South Carolina

Present Owner
and Occupant: Henry T. Gaud, 109 Tradd Street, Charleston,
South Carolina

Present Use: Residence and motel

Brief Statement
of Significance: An early nineteenth-century house with outstanding
architectural details on the interior.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Original and subsequent owners: Original owners of house unknown, but may have been Jacob Everhard, Auguste Steinmetz, and Paul Emile Lorent. [Interview with Henry T. Gaud.] These three men bought the property in several parcels from 1803 to 1808 and sold to James Miller in 1818. The house stands on land belonging to Solomon Legare as early as 1740, but it is believed to be a later building than his. From James Miller, the property was sold to Andrew Talvande, 1819; Anthony Barbot, 1825; back to Talvande, 1826; inherited by his widow, Ann M. Talvande, who sold it to George A. Hopley, 1849. It was sold to William Adger, 1853; assigned to Ellison A. Smyth, 1879; sold to Ella Simonton, 1879, and to Mary W. Parsons, 1929. [Abstract of Title to Property on Legare Street and Tradd Street, Charleston, S. C., prepared for Mrs. Jessie Lincoln Randolph, typescript, copy belonging to Mr. Henry T. Gaud, 109 Tradd Street.]
- B. Date of erection: Frame house, shortly after 1803; brick house by 1818. [Opinion of Mr. Gaud.]
- C. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Unknown.
- D. Notes on alterations and additions: The frame house was added to by a brick wing by 1819 [shown on plat in possession of Mr. Gaud] and by large frame room at back about 1849, and minor changes took place at a later date. [Interview with Mr. Gaud.] The Sword Gates were made by Christopher Werner, ironmaker, in or about 1838, for a city guardhouse. [Beatrice St. J. Ravenel, Architects of Charleston (Carolina Art Association, Charleston, 1945), page 178.]

Prepared by Beatrice St. J. Ravenel
Architectural Historian
Charleston, South Carolina
July 1958

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General statement:

1. Architectural character: This wing contains a drawing room of generous proportions with unusually rich finish, well preserved.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical description of exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This wing is about 28' x 64'; two stories over a high basement, six bays in length.
2. Wall construction: Brick covered with stucco, marked with simulated stone jointing.
3. Stoop: On the north elevation, at the west end, is a high stoop leading to the entrance. There are 13 sandstone steps supported on a brick and stucco quadrant arch, and a simple iron railing on either side, with two square bars to each tread.
4. Chimneys: One brick chimney is centered on the east end, and another on the north side, one bay west of center. Both are flush with the wall and have hoods.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorway: The entrance has a pedimented wooden hood with ornamental brackets; it appears to be a later addition, possibly circa 1850.

Five modern openings, each with a pent hood, are located in the north wall of the basement story.

- b. Windows: Openings have wood architrave trim and wood sills. The sash are double hung, nine lights over nine lights. Shutters are paneled on the main story, louvered on the top story; they are hung with strap hinges on pintles, with hold-backs--all of iron. There are two bays on each end; on the east end the wall is blank except for the top story.

6. Roof: The hip roof is covered with slate. The cornice is of stucco, apparently over three projecting brick courses, with a modern sheet-metal gutter hung from it. There are three pedimented dormers along the north side and one on the west end; each has a heavy rusticated torus molding around it.

C. Technical description of interiors:

1. Floor plan: On the main story a drawing room occupies the east half of the wing (three bays); west of it is a smaller

room (two bays), and at the west end is an entrance and stair hall (one bay). All occupy the entire depth of the wing, from north to south.

The basement story has been divided into modern motel rooms.

2. Drawing room:

- a. Over-all design: This room is about 25' x 32', with a 13' ceiling. It has three windows along each long side. At the center of the east end is a projecting chimney breast, with fireplace. Two doorways are located on the west wall.
- b. Flooring: Longleaf yellow pine boards about 5" wide extend in the long direction of the room.
- c. Wall and ceiling finish: There is a wooden wainscot, above which the walls are plastered. The ceiling is plastered, with a plaster cornice and ornamental centerpiece.
- d. Ornamental plaster cornice: At the bottom of the frieze is a small band of acanthus leaves. The frieze carries an arabesque motive incorporating palmettes, in low relief. Above the frieze is a cavetto molding ornamented with acanthus leaves in low relief. The cornice has modillions ornamented with acanthus leaves on the bottom; on the soffit between modillions is an elongated rosette in each space. Above this is a narrow fascia, a beaded band, and a cavetto molding with acanthus leaves. This adjoins a narrow plain band on the ceiling, on the other side of which is a delicate rinceau band terminating the whole.

This cornice retains what is thought to be its original coloring--light blue-gray picked out with gold leaf.

- e. Ceiling centerpiece: Twelve large "wind-blown" acanthus leaves radiate from a leafy central pendant; there is a raised oak leaf band of circular form enclosing the whole. It appears to date from the mid-century.
- f. Chandelier: This was found in a box in the house and is thought to date from the 1850's; it was fitted with electricity and suspended from the centerpiece. There is a central stem, from which six leafy metal "chains" hang, and six lights on curved brackets; crystal pendants hang in three rows from the center.
- g. Window openings: The reveals extend to the floor and are paneled in wood. The architrave trim is of wood, reeded, and ornamented with gold leaf on some of the narrow bands; it rests on a plinth. The wainscot paneling continues under the window stools, being interrupted by the architrave moldings.

- h. Doorways: There are two, placed symmetrically on the west wall. Doors are single, eight-paneled, but simulate double leaves. Each is hung on two large butts. Each doorway has reeded wood pilasters and entablature, of a very ornamental character. The pilasters have pierced decoration near the outer edges.

The entablature breaks over the pilasters. The architrave is narrow and is decorated with gouge work. The frieze is entirely ornamented with gouge work, each block over the pilasters bearing a round rosette, and the raised center block bearing a horizontal elliptical rosette. Between these on each side is a gouge work panel with small quadrant fans at each corner. The cornice consists of dentils, a small rope molding, modillions, a narrow fascia, and cavetto.

The whole retains its original paint, being light blue-gray picked out with gold leaf.

- i. Wainscot: This is paneled and has a gouge work dado rail. Some of the moldings are picked out with gold leaf.
- j. Form of paneling: Panels of the wainscot, doors, and window openings are of the same form. They are raised and fielded, the corners of the raised centers being concave.
- k. Mantel: This is of light gray (off-white) marble. An entablature is carried on two male caryatids; each has a capital above the head, and the pedestal portion is ornamented with a vine motive in low relief. The architrave consists of two fascias and an echinus molding. There is a block in the frieze over each caryatid, ornamented with a U-shaped acanthus leaf carving in relief. A central block in the frieze has a face, with grapes and leaves, carved in relief; the remainder of the frieze is filled out with a honeysuckle motive. There is a small cyma reversa bed molding under a simple mantel shelf of slight projection. In the fireplace opening is a fire frame of rococo style.
- D. Site: This wing forms part of a complex house group, now divided. The immediate area around this wing is now adapted to motel purposes. The neighborhood is residential, in the older part of the city.

ADDENDUM TO:
SWORDGATE HOUSE
(32 Legare Street (House, Drawing Room Wing))
109 Tradd St. (moved from 32 Legare St.)
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240