

City Hall
Charleston, Charleston County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-76

HABS
SC
10-CHAR,
108-

**ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...**

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of South Carolina

Historic American Buildings Survey
Prepared at Survey Headquarters for
Samuel Iapham, Jr., District Officer
42 Broad Street, Charleston, South Carolina

10/17/45 HCB

(Bank of United States), City Hall
N.E. corner Broad and Meeting Streets
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

Historical Data:

The Bank of the United States now City Hall was built
about 1802 and bought by the city in 1818.

Bibliography:

South Carolina Writers Project

Picturesque Charleston

Chughart

TCW 6/27/4

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Office of Discount and Deposit of the United States

HABS No. SC-76

Bank of United States Bank Branch (City Hall)

80 Broad Street

Charleston

Charleston County

South Carolina

HABS
SC,
10-CHAR,
108-

Addendum to

Bank of United States (Charleston City Hall)

80 Broad Street

Charleston

Charleston County

South Carolina

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HABS
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AMERICA'S CITY HALLS

Entry from Charleston, South Carolina

Prepared by Margaretta P. Childs
City Historian

August 26, 1981

Name: 1. Office of Discount and Deposit of the United States Bank or United States Bank Branch, 1801-1811

 2. State Bank of South Carolina, 1812-1818

 3. City Hall, 1818-1865

 4. Provost Guard House, 1865-1868

 5. City Hall, 1868-

Location: 80 Broad Street, northeast corner of Broad and Meeting Streets
Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina

Present Owner, Present Occupant: City of Charleston

Present Use: City Hall

Significance:

Charleston's City Hall is significant for many reasons. First, it is important for its original, graceful architectural design and its perfect execution of detail. It fits nobly into a highly distinguished group of early American public buildings. The United States Banks in Philadelphia, designed respectively by Samuel Blodgett and William Strickland, the Branch Banks, notably Bulfinch's work in Boston, William Jay's in Savannah, and Martin Thompson's in New York, make a splendid company.¹ They were, and in their time so recognized, highly successful examples of architectural erudition, good design and scale suitable to the thriving cities of the new republic.

If, as is generally believed, Gabriel Manigault (1758-1809) was responsible for the plan, the attribution enhances the importance of

the structure. Although twentieth century development has obliterated much of his work including his masterpiece, the Orphan House Chapel, the grace, the elegance and integrity of the three remaining structures suffice to place Manigault in the first rank of Charleston architects.²

In summing up his work a noted architectural historian has commented on his perfectionism: "Manigault's exquisite taste and his delicate sensitive invention are apparent ... in the United States Bank and City Hall. In his work there are traces of Adam and Paine, and of Louix XVI detail; but he made of these a new synthesis quite personal in its restraint and unlike the work of his contemporaries elsewhere. It set a standard so high that Charleston builders who followed it found little temptation to seek new forms."³

Other professional architects, architectural historians and city planners support Hamlin's evaluation. City Hall is included in the pioneering survey establishing an archive of American architecture, the Historic American Buildings Survey of 1941. It is rated as "Nationally Important" and "Exceptional," the highest categories in the two most complete and professional surveys of Charleston architecture.⁴

A third point significant in architectural and preservation history was the conversion of the banking house to a city hall. It must be one of the earliest large scale examples of adaptive reuse occurring in the United States.

In addition to its aesthetic and architectural importance, the building is important in economic history. Sequentially, the Branch and the State Bank of South Carolina from 1801-1816 supported and stimulated the financial growth of the area. The shapely structure with its elaborate marble trim is a reminder that in the first decades of the last century

Charleston was a major commercial center where wealth accumulated to finance the growing and export of the great staple crop, rice. Moreover, by definition a city hall is the seat of municipal government. As such, it provides a forum for discussion where decisions are reached and crystallized into ordinances, and often, as a result of petition, sent to the legislature where they are embodied into state codes. As the parliamentary setting where early and influential ordinances regulating slave life were framed, this City Hall probably witnessed legislation fraught with greater tragic import than any other in the country.⁵ Since at present (1981) six individuals (one-half of the body) from the minority group share in government as members of City Council, all citizens can now feel pride in Charleston's City Hall. Along with the other corners of the crossing, one occupied by St. Michael's (1754), another by the solid Victorian Federal Court (1896), and the fourth by the courthouse of the state's Ninth Judicial District (1792), City Hall is pointed out as one of the "four corners of the law." The building stands as a symbol of Charleston to her people and to her visitors as a historic, beautiful artifact. With its façade of ageless beauty, City Hall continues to provide a background of antiquity, dignity and grace for civic ceremonies.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection

The building now Charleston's City Hall was intended for and served as one of the branches of the first Bank of the United States, the national institution founded in 1791 by Alexander Hamilton.⁶ The site, the old Beef Market, was communal property since the early colonial period.⁷ The conveyance of the lot, 113 x 86, by City Council to the trustees, stipulated that the structure should be "an elegant edifice," and that if the incorporators should cease to use it for a public purpose, the land and improvements should revert to the city. The newspaper notice of May 1800, offering a premium for the winning plan, specified a "Banking House that shall unite convenience and ornament ... to be so constructed as to admit a free circulation of air and to have none of the offices underground."⁸ After the laying of the cornerstone in November of the same year an enthusiastic witness reported that "the Bank when completed can not fail to prove one of the chief ornaments of Charleston."⁹ The building was completed in 1801.

2. Identity of the Architect

The identity of the architect is not a matter of absolute certainty.¹⁰ The only contemporary reference, that in the City Gazette account of the cornerstone laying, mentions as architects for the bank Edward Magrath and Joseph Nicholson. The other candidate put forward is Gabriel Manigault, rice planter. Son and grandson of rice planters active in the public, commercial and social life of the eighteenth century colony,

Manigault as a boy had access to several architectural classics. As a youth he had lived in Peter Harrison's Newport, Geneva, Paris and London. A well read, well travelled "gentleman architect," Manigault was not only familiar with masterpieces of transplanted English Georgian, but also with sophisticated urban public buildings and mansions of the Old World.¹¹

The tradition that Manigault was the designer of the plan for the bank is based on a statement by his grandsons, Louis and Gabriel E. Manigault, in which they list all of Manigault's buildings.¹² None of the other attributions has been disputed. Writing in about 1890, the compilers said that none of their facts were founded on hearsay. Since that date the documents available to the architect's grandsons have been lost. Those discounting the Gazette reference to Magrath and Nicholson point out that the term architect in this period was still loosely defined.¹³ He often served as a builder and contractor and so builders would be called architects. Moreover, it was apparently the custom of Manigault as an amateur who had not served an apprenticeship, nor made of his practice a livelihood, to avoid public notice for his architectural work. The author of the classic work on the history of Charleston architecture makes the point that the building with its French influence, use of curves and certain stylistic details, all to be found in the accepted Manigault canon, speaks for itself as the work of the same master.¹⁴

3. Builder, contractor, suppliers

Andrew Gordon, the builder recently arrived from Scotland, was already an experienced brickmaker and mason. Referred to in the account of the cornerstone ceremonies as builder, he was the master bricklayer

who supervised the mixing of the 20,000 bushels of lime and the laying of the 600,000 bricks stipulated in the "contract wanted" in September 1800.¹⁵ The probabilities are that the brick was of local origin as by the end of the eighteenth century brick was being made in city brickyards and on many plantations. The marble trim used lavishly on the exterior for accent and ornament does not appear among the materials recorded in the "contract wanted." According to tradition it was an order imported from Italy for a Philadelphia house never built.

4. Original plans and construction

As far as known there are no plans or early contracts extant. Later contracts will be noted under "5 — Alterations and Additions" as appropriate. Fortunately a master architect has left a fairly complete description of the appearance of the building and its inner spatial arrangements.

The facade of the city hall presents a double order of pilasters and columns, dividing off the whole front; each order carrying its own entablature. The first (the Roman Ionic) is raised on a high marble basement, and ornaments the principal story. The second order (the composite) decorates the second story, and rises to the eaves of the roof. The intercolumniations of these pilasters are pierced with apertures as windows, which descend to the floor. This series of windows goes round the whole building: those in the rear below however, do not descend to the floor, though they do above.

All the pilasters, columns, architraves, rustics, bands, and main cornices (which are richly worked and encircle the building) are of white marble. The double flight of circular steps in front, leading to the principal floor, are composed of this material also.

Entering the building, you come immediately into a spacious and lofty hall, reaching the whole height of the two stories, and extending the entire front of the building; surrounded on a level with the second floor by a narrow gallery. The floor of this hall is paved with marble flags. Here the city, or recorder's court is held. On the other side of the hall at each end, a door leads into the city treasurer's, tax collector's, city sheriff's, and city clerk's offices.

The Grand Staircase

Between these rooms a large Venetian door leads into the grand staircase, which ascending, lands you on the second floor; the right hand door here conducts into the council chamber, the left into the city commissioner's room; and the one in front into the gallery surrounding the great hall. Every part of the finish of the interior of this building corresponds with that of the exterior. The whole is executed in the best manner.¹⁶

5. Alterations and Additions

City Hall has undergone many alterations, two of them drastic. The first major change occurred in 1839 during the term of Mayor Henry L. Pinckney when the increase of City business led to changes in the interior design. Adding a ceiling to make a second floor and partitioning to make more offices unquestionably destroyed the pleasing symmetry of the original interior design and its effect of lofty, open space. The flooring over in 1839 also initiated the gradual blocking of the free circulation of air in the building. The architect chosen was the fashionable Charles F. Reichardt who had shown his talents in his other works, the Guard House, the Charleston Hotel and the grand stand at the Washington Race Track.¹⁷ The mayor's statement that "The alteration in the opinion of tasteful architects, will rather benefit than impair the interior appearance of the building"¹⁸ seems dubious according to the aesthetic canons of a later century.

A brief description of the unchanged exterior, written some years later, is relevant: "Outside view, square massive, unpretending." In detailing the functions of the rooms the pamphlet gives a general idea of the floor plans in the antebellum period:

The vaults in the basement are used as offices for the detective police, and dungeons for their prisoners. A large hall, the whole length and two-thirds the width of the first

floor, is the City Court room, the rest of the floor being devoted to the offices of City Treasurer and the City Assessor. The upper floor is devoted to the Council Chamber, Mayor's room, and other offices. Council Chamber is quite a luxurious apartment. A rich Brussels carpet covers the floor; the desks, table, sofas, chairs, etc., are plain but substantial, while the window curtains and the gas fixtures are of the most elegant description. Around the walls are hung, in handsome gilt frames, full length portraits of Washington, Calhoun, Andrew Jackson, and a half-length portrait of Zachary Taylor. 19

Another treasure mentioned by the 1870 observer is the Fraser miniature of Lafayette stolen by a Federal officer in the last months of the Confederate War and mysteriously returned by post several months later. It is clearly implied in the pamphlet that the Municipal Art Collection had been highly prized throughout the antebellum period for its high artistic quality and its evidence of the city's share in the formative periods of colonial and national history.

It is the 1882 "restoration" of Mayor William A. Courtenay's administration that transformed the exterior fabric and the interior design of the structure to those we know today.²⁰ The dangerous condition of the roof and the moist, porous state of the brick gave the energetic, innovative executive the opportunity to change and rearrange the old fabric under the guise of renovating and restoring. The rich red brick, Flemish bond, was covered over with white stucco, thus losing the effect of the white marble accenting the brick. The muntined windows appropriate for the Federal style were replaced with large panes scaled to a different façade. The interior was gutted, only the four walls being left. A new trussed roof was designed to allow the raising of the ceiling five feet to shield a new ventilator. On the main floor the old City Court room which, according to Courtenay, "could not have been worse in arrangements, appointments or in shabby aspect," was remodeled

for the Street Department and the Engineer's Office. The west front of the storey had space for the Board of Health, the City Registrar and a room for meetings of boards and committees. The Treasury Department, the Assessor and the City Sheriff occupied the whole north end of the building. The circular staircase formerly fitting into the northern bow was removed and replaced with a heavy Victorian double staircase with low, wide treads, walnut balusters and balustrade, and on each newel post "graceful bronze figure holding chandeliers to illuminate the stairways." The Council Chamber occupied the middle portion of the south side. Walled with white plaster, its salient features were the handsome double gas chandeliers with eighteen lights. Three of the upper walls supported elaborate wrought iron visitors' balcony copied from that in the much admired Academy of Music (1869). The Municipal Art Collection was at this time enriched by two marbles, Edward Valentine's Robert Y. Hayne and A. E. Harnisch's James L. Petigru.

At the rededication of City Hall, the Mayor spoke of the abiding need to keep in good order our venerable public buildings as symbols of continuity and vitality:

City Council deemed it expedient that the building itself, as the centre of municipal official business, should be thoroughly cleansed, refurbished and a fresh robe put on. It should be a matter of common public pride and interest to have our corporate building not only in good repair, but, in our modest way, in pleasant attire. It is true we have no means now, nor will we have in the near future, for the costly emulation of the civic pride and public spirit of the great municipalities.... There is something we can do, and that is to preserve our public buildings, rich as they are in memories of the city and state, and keep them in such garb as becomes the enlivened and active community of which they now stand as the outward speaking symbols.

We do not envy our sister cities their costly halls, and only aim to imitate them in neatness and genteel business appointments for ours. So we preserve our old building, not because of the bare physical fact of its age of fourscore of years, but for its historic association, its strength and its exterior beauty,

and so with modernizing its interior we have secured an excellent Council Chamber and twelve well appointed offices, in fact all the City Hall accommodation we shall need for many years, on an outlay of \$20,000.²¹

Within four years of Courtenay's alterations, the earthquake of 1886 seriously damaged the building.²² The plaster walls of the Council Chamber were fissured, and in 1887 replaced with narrow panels of ash stained russet.²³ A wide break in the northeast corner necessitated refacing the masonry. In 1890, more cracks seriously threatened the structural security of the exterior walls, particularly in the southwest corner. The mortar between the bricks had crumbled to a dangerous degree. The city fathers began to talk of the need for a new city hall, one mayor actually calling it a "discreditable sight."²⁴ Major repairs and modernizing of the plumbing and lighting systems were undertaken in 1898.²⁵

When the tornado of September 1938 struck Charleston, City Hall lost its roof and all of its window panes. The masonry of the upper floors on the northeast corner caved in. Much of the furniture was damaged as the high winds pounded it around the building. Miraculously, according to the official account, "Trumbull's Washington and most of the other paintings remained inviolate except for minor scratches, though the Healy portrait of Calhoun, the Vanderlyn portrait of Andrew Jackson, and some of the others suffered cuts and tears."²⁶

In reaction to the tornado damage there was much discussion of how to repair City Hall and at the same time to enlarge and improve it as a work space for a constantly growing office force. Some wanted to add on a storey and widen the east pavilion. Others, having as spokesman the defender of old Charleston, Samuel G. Stoney, thought it a heaven sent

opportunity to replace the muntined panes of the original windows, to remove the stucco, to paint and weatherproof the original brick. The first course of action did not seem feasible because of opposition from preservation and civic groups. Nor could the City or any other agency fund such a costly reconstruction. Thanks to help offered by Harry Hopkins of the WPA, the building was given necessary repairs and meticulous cleaning.²⁸ Mayor Maybank estimated that just in the recovering and care of the papers scattered for blocks the WPA aid saved the City at least \$10,000.²⁹

For some years the trend has been to move some City functions to other buildings. Even so, with the expansion of City services, the building has been strained to provide space for the activities and staffs of the Mayor's Office, Clerk of Council, Personnel, the Treasurer's Office, and Administrative Services. The present administration is showing concern for City Hall and its other historic properties by organizing a design review committee whose purpose it is to prevent inappropriate changes and, where possible, to remove or alter errors of the past.

B. Historical Context

In its first decade when the building was functioning as "the Branch," its directors included prominent citizens, Arnoldus Vanderhorst, Revolutionary leader, twice intendant of the newly incorporated city and governor, and Nathaniel Russell, great merchant, active in the social and public life of the City as founder of the New England Society, Commissioner of the Charleston Orphan House, director of the Santee Canal, and state legislator.³⁰ These gentlemen, with their fellow director,

William Blacklock, were at this time erecting sturdy brick dwellings, today among the City's most cherished monuments of the Federal period.³¹ After the failure of Congress in 1811 to renew the charter of the United States Bank, the Branch was liquidated. A private commercial bank, chartered in 1802, the State Bank of South Carolina, then occupied and presumably took title to the premises, holding them until February 1818.³² The directorate of this bank included prominent Charlestonians, Daniel E. Huger, lawyer, Elias Horry, a large contributor to the College of Charleston, and Robert J. Turnbull, later author of the Crisis papers urging nullification.³³ The president of the State Bank in 1812 and for many years after was Thomas Lee.³⁴ Grandson of the colonial artist, Jeremiah Theus, he had as a young man led a company of militia in the Revolution, studied law and was serving as state comptroller during Henry Middleton's governorship when elected president of the State Bank. Later as federal judge of the South Carolina District, he ruled against nullifiers for the collection of excise and tariff. Though for many years a leading member of the Congregationalist Church, he was of the group who seceded with the pastor, Anthony Forster, to found the Unitarian Church, the first in the South.

In February 1818, City Council in accordance with the deed of 1800 resumed title to the old public square and building, "the general government" receiving as payment the Old Exchange at the foot of Broad Street, to be used as a post office. The Clerk of Council was installed in May 1818, in this new office in the northeast corner of the main floor.³⁵ The federal eagle of the United States Bank was dismantled from its pediment,³⁶ though no reference has yet been found to the modelling of the marble seal and fitting it into its stone circle. The following year

Monroe, with Secretary of War Calhoun, Governor Thomas Pinckney, the presidents of the charitable societies and foreign consuls were guests at one of the earliest state dinners served at City Hall.³⁷

As long as Charleston was a city-state and in some respects the cultural capital of the South, the history of its hall was only pleasantly eventful. Visits from Marquis de LaFayette (1825) and Senator Robert Y. Hayne (1830)³⁸ were again occasions for public pomp, speeches from the tesselated stoop and fine dining in the great hall. The appearance of these notables at City Hall was to be permanently commemorated by the portrait of Monroe by S. F. B. Morse, the miniature of LaFayette by Charles Fraser and the bust of Hayne, one of Charleston's most gifted sons and first to hold the title of mayor rather than intendant. These, with the Trumbull portrait of Washington acquired in 1791, and Vanderlyn's Jackson to be commissioned in 1824 formed the nucleus of a municipal art collection outstanding for historic and aesthetic reasons.³⁹

During the Confederate War years, City Hall suffered from heavy shelling. The guns of the Union ships in Cooper River and the harbor replacements at Haddrill's Point and on James Island all had the range to cover St. Michael's steeple, a Confederate lookout, and its neighbor, City Hall. In the spring of 1863, Mayor Charles Macbeth moved City offices away from Broad Street to the Charleston Orphan House. There followed two years of neglect, looting and vandalism south of Calhoun Street.⁴⁰

By July 1866, "The time-honored edifice [had] recently undergone a thorough repair and renovation and again [presented] its former handsome and imposing presence." With General W. W. Burns acting as mayor the

building served as headquarters for the occupying army.⁴¹ The city inevitably went through a period of unrest and major readjustments in race relations in the aftermath of the long Civil War. Recollecting his boyhood (1866-1876) spent in the Broad Street house adjacent to City Hall Park, Frank R. Frost later set down for his children some of his memories:

Our house was in as noisy a spot as was in Charleston. Broad Street was paved in cobblestone, and the drays drawing cotton over them all day long made a great racket.... The streetcars, drawn by horses with bells, passed by the house. The Police Station was where the Post Office now is, and frequently there was a noisy diversion in that neighborhood. Every parade passed down Meeting and Broad. The City Hall steps formed a platform for political orators, and often at night I have heard the black orators tell the Negro crowds whom they should vote for. I remember them as always describing themselves as 'South Carolina Gentlemen.'... Political feeling ran high in those days. Frequently we would be startled by the crack of a pistol in the neighborhood.⁴²

One of the many diversions Frost recalled may have been the Broad Street riot of November 1876. The long summer had been marked by violence, in many instances provoked or tolerated by state officials or troops. Much of the black population in Charleston as elsewhere was in a state of rage and despair.⁴³ When the news of the Democratic victory at the polls, now generally accepted as fraudulent, reached Charleston, the Negro tenement dwellers centered in lower King Street, increased by Negro members of the police force from the Guard House on the southwest corner of Broad and Meeting, gathered to march down Broad Street to the News and Courier. The sidewalk in front of City Hall served as a staging area. Within the building at least one militant used the folding shutters as a place of ambush and hurled rocks at passersby.⁴⁴

In the last century and a quarter no threats of violence have

threatened "the four corners of the law." Rather, City Hall has sought to enlarge itself to meet varying needs of the people. At the time of the severe earthquake in 1886, the Mayor and the Executive Relief Committee under Joseph W. Barnwell worked tirelessly for days and nights to collect and organize aid for the distraught populace. Washington Park (City Hall), like others, became a "tent city."⁴⁵ Again, when the disastrous tornado ripped through the city in September 1938, killing over thirty people and making hundreds homeless, City Hall rapidly at eight o'clock in the morning transformed itself into a highly effective communications center, its staff under the pro tem mayor and Clerk of Council alerting the city's police, fire and public services and coordinating the aid from outside agencies.⁴⁶

The tiled platform surmounting the curving marble stairway continues to accord well with formal civic occasions when the Mayor delivers an inaugural address or for days of public rejoicing as in the victory parade of 1919 when the Mayor and many fellow citizens watched the parade of the troops returning from war abroad.

With cramped offices fitted into every closet and corner, with the basement corridor lined with job applicants, with crowds of tourists climbing the steps to see the Council Chamber and art collections, City Hall is earning its keep, perhaps more than its keep. Yet the venerable structure still brings to us a particular view of grace, order and proportion. It provides a link between an era of chaos and crumbling values to a period when to a certain extent the nation and the city felt themselves like the eagles of the pediment, keen of sight, strong of wing, able to fly far and high.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of Exterior

City Hall itself indicates that, whatever his identity, the designer possessed more than a basic knowledge of the interpretation of eighteenth century architectural motifs. In particular, he had studied the work of the Adam brothers. The hall is a rectangle 75' 9" on the east-west axis and 60' 0" on the north-south. The exterior as originally built was of local red brick laid in Flemish bond and lavishly trimmed in white marble. The effect must have been quite colorful, but unfortunately was lost in 1882 when the entire walling was stuccoed to overcome structural and cosmetic defects occasioned by the deterioration of the mortar and shelling during the Confederate War. The principal or south façade was an exercise in Palladianism with influences of the Adam brothers as expressed by its American successor, the Federal style. Upon a marble basement rise two storeys of five bays, the central three of which project about six inches and are crowned by a pediment. The first storey bays are divided by the Ionic order with fluted pilasters on the end bays and smooth shaft engaged columns on the center three, all with angular volutes, with a full modified entablature containing a flat in lieu of a swelled frieze heightened at the expense of the architrave, and a typical cornice with egg and dart ovolo only in the center three bays. The second floor is of the Composite order with the same features as in the first floor order including the entablature, except the ovolo moulding is replaced by a cyma reversa. The cornice of this second floor order continues entirely around the building. The pediment over the central bays contained an eagle, symbolic of the Federal bank, the building's

first occupant.⁴⁷ When the City acquired the building it dismantled the bird and replaced it with a beautiful marble sculpture of the City seal.

There is now a parapet wall entirely around the building, containing balusters on the south façade and recessed marble panelled piers over the pilasters. On the other three sides are only masonry panels between the marble insert piers. The early 19th century description of the building says, "The second order (the Composite) decorates the second storey and rises to the eaves of the roof."⁴⁸ This would lead one to believe that the wall terminated at the cornice, there being no mention of a parapet wall. This in turn confirms the 1882 description in which the walls are said to be raised five feet, the approximate height of the parapet wall above the cornice. The top of the parapet is not enriched with classical mouldings but with square projecting marble cap pieces which may have been an economy measure in 1882. If there had been a pierced parapet wall in the original building, then the raising of the wall five feet in 1882 could only mean that the parapet was thickened in order to bear the weight of the new hipped roof. Until further evidence is uncovered the question of the parapet and the raised wall remains moot.

The central three bays on the ground floor project to form an entrance stoop to the first floor, reached on each side by quadrant marble stairs, both with simple wrought iron railings. Entrance to the ground floor is through a doorway enframed by two engaged smooth marble modified Tuscan columns with egg and dart ovolo, foreshortened entablature and base. The top of the column base is now level with the sidewalk, indicating a raising of the grade over the years as do the two steps leading down to the ground floor level inside the entry. On each side of the door and in the two end bays are large circular windows with moulded marble archi-

volts, plain marble keystones at the quarter points and wrought iron guards. The entry to the first floor is through double doors flanked by smooth engaged columns whose Composite capitals have had their detail eroded but appear as if they are companion pieces to the second floor columns. Above their entablature is a cove arch ornamented with fabric swags and drops, Tudor roses centered at the top of each swag. The four first floor windows are plain round head while those of the second floor are flat head with one piece splayed marble lintels divided into a central keystone with three stones on each side by an encised "V" cut. The second floor keystones are moulded, with the three in the central bay enriched by a string of beads down the center. All windows throughout the building have marble sills. On the south and west façades the windows are recessed in relieving arches. The south façade arches have moulded marble archivolts and imposts. In addition the arches of the central projecting bay have moulded marble keystones with a string of beads in the center. The piers formed between the relieving arches on both façades spring from marble bases the height of the pilaster base. To enframe all façades, the four corners of the building are trimmed with marble quoins. The ground floor is defined by a slightly projecting marble belt course at the first floor line.

The treatment of the west façade is plainer, the architectural orders being omitted and the walling, originally red brick in Flemish bond, now all stucco. The ground floor is pierced with two circular windows framed as in the south façade. The wall above is divided into six bays, windows and relieving arches (without archivolts but with moulded and beaded keystones in the arches and lintels) as in the south façade, with moulded marble impost bands connecting the windows. At the second

floor line is a marble string course enriched with fluted fans centered on the piers, a band of five vertical flutes centered on the windows with a recessed circle banded by a rope moulding and centered with a Tudor rose between each fan and flutes.

The north façade of five bays is dominated by a semicircular central bay with imposing Venetian windows on the first and second floors. The ground floor has one round head window with flat marble keystones and imposts on each side of the central bay. The Venetian windows are trimmed with marble entablatures, columns and sills, while the center round arch is of a brownstone, a curious departure of material due either to the marble being too difficult for the local mason to carve in two circular planes, or as a replacement for damaged original marble arches. The four first floor windows contain marble sills, flat keystones and imposts. The second floor windows have sills and lintels as in the west elevation.

The east façade was of a plainness to match the north. The ground floor contains three circular windows with flat combed marble archivolt and quarter point keystones. The wall above is divided into six bays on each floor trimmed as their counterparts on the north façade.

All of the circular windows on the ground floor have the same wrought iron guards of undetermined origin and date. Surrounding City Hall or Washington Park is a wrought iron fence with both double and single gates. There is no record of whether carriages ever used the Park but because of the presence of the double gate, presumably they did, but not for many years. The iron work is a very good example of Charleston iron, being erected between 1822 and 1824. Not everyone approved of the layout of the fence for on November 18, 1824, architect Frederick Wesner wrote a letter to the editor complaining about the fence running to the corners (southeast and northwest) of the building in lieu of completely surrounding it.

B. Description of Interior

The key dates that affect the interior configuration are:

- 1801 - Building built as a United States Branch Bank. Interior features a "spacious and lofty," two storey hall, along the entrance front of the building, a grand staircase to a second floor and a narrow balcony for the hall. Offices located at the northeast and northwest corners of the first and second floors. Only record of the interior is that the "interior finish corresponds to the exterior."
- 1818 - Building becomes City Hall.
- 1839 - Second floor added and partitioned to create more offices.
- 1882 - Building gutted to four walls, circular stair removed, replaced with double Victorian stair with walnut balustrades. Council Chamber installed with white plaster walls, 18 light gas chandeliers and iron visitor balconies on three walls (North, West, East).
- 1886 - Council Chamber plaster walls covered with vertical narrow ash paneling due to extensive earthquake damage.
- 1898 - Major modernization and repairs to building. "Modern" plumbing and lighting installed.
- 1938 - Tornado damage repaired in context of renovation to date City Archives Records show work being done on windows and doors.
- 1955 - Lighting and wiring of Council Chamber. Air conditioning installed.
- 1956 - Elevator installed, third floor expanded to increase useable rooms.
- 1957 - Basement renovated.
- 1965 - Add balconies to Controller's Office (first floor).

Today the interior presents a mosaic of styles, testimony, in some small or large part, to the events in its 180 year existence. The base-

ment exhibits a terrazo floor and simple plaster walls which cover and give evidence to the brick structured vaults which support the building. The basement houses administrative offices, mail and copy services, the heat plant and toilets, tucked into the original thick walled plan.

The first floor reflects the major changes of the 1882 renovation. The floor is a matt finished clay tile, of the period, consisting of primarily 4½" square sand colored background tiles, set 45 degrees to the building. A 16 inch border, along all walls, is of a twisted ribbon pattern, incorporating 1, 2, and 3 inch tiles of black, tan, terra cotton, dark red, dark brown and white, also set 45 degrees to the building. An intricate emblem, of turquoise, pumpkin, white, black and tan, appears in the entrance vestibule and at the axis of the entrance hall and double stair. A brass electrified gas lantern of gothic design hangs in the entrance hall from an ornamental plaster ceiling medallion, roughly three feet in diameter. The mouldings are relatively plain, although scaled appropriately to the high ceilings. A 4 foot wainscoting, of narrow vertical beaded board, sits on top of a 12 inch base of plain design. The 5' wide double stair on an east-west axis, perpendicular to the entrance hall, exhibits three foot high metal gladiators bearing 9 light electrified gas fixtures, at the newell post. A 60 inch diameter cast iron spiral stair connects the first floor with the basement. A handsome brass rail guards the first floor opening.

The first floor contains the treasurer's office and related activities. A row of tellers' cages are "protected" by an elaborate series of twisted iron grilles, topped with tendril-like designs to lighten the effect. A series of Victorian brackets support the writing surface in front of the cages. These guard the rear offices and two safes, massive iron

structures of classical design with modified acanthus borders. A whimsical note, located in the stylized pediment over the safe doors, is a sculpted dog's head, in full relief, with its tongue sticking out. The first floor windows exhibit what is perhaps the only remaining architectural element from the original design. The mouldings contain a simple egg and dart design which correspond to those of the exterior, as was noted in an early observation. The southeast office contains a pressed tin ceiling, which also appears on the third floor corridor.

The second floor contains the Council Chamber, mayor's office and staff offices. The floor consists of narrow hardwood. The plastered walls exhibit a simple cove moulding, narrow beaded wainscoting similar to the first floor, and simple base moulding.

The mayor's office incorporates a palladian window, set in the northern apse, formerly the location of the grand circular stair connecting the first and second levels. Heavy, broken pediments of recent design top the doors and built in bookcases. The mayor's office opens to the corridor through large paneled double doors.

The Council Chamber, directly across from the mayor's office, was enlarged in 1882. Two storeys high, the walls are made of narrow, vertical beaded, russet-stained ash paneling, added in 1887 to cover the cracks caused by the earthquake. The paneling acts as the backdrop for the Chamber's many excellent works of art, including Trumbull's portrait of George Washington. The room contains two massive electrified gas brass chandeliers with eighteen frosted glass shades. These are hung from a medium green tin ceiling, separated into rectangular panels and accented with gold leaf designs. Added illumination was subsequently provided by a row of bare electric bulbs, set against a mirrored reflector, installed around the

perimeter of the room. An iron balcony for visitors is located on the north wall of the Chamber and is accessible from the third floor. A pair of paneled, double pocket doors connect the Chamber to rooms in the southeast and southwest corners of the building. The third floor, approached by the continued double stair, was primarily for access to the balcony. In 1956, the third floor was extended over the hall of the second floor, creating badly needed space. The third floor, with simple plaster walls, wood floors and pressed tin ceiling, contains a meeting room, the telephone control room and toilets.

The mechanical systems throughout the building have been revised, abandoned, repaired and replaced as needed. Many capped gas lines are still in place. The steam heat necessitates a system of pipes and cast iron radiators. The air conditioning is handled mainly by window units, although the mayor's suite is serviced by a roof top unit. Waterlines and electrical conduits, mainly surface mounted, feed various areas as changes are made in spatial arrangements.

The evolution of tastes, program changes, mechanical and space demands, and a series of natural disasters have all contributed to the extraordinary tapestry of architectural elements exhibited by the Charleston City Hall. This juxtaposition of nearly 200 years of history breathes life into what was from the beginning described as "an ornament to the city."

C. The Site

From 1673 the future site of the United States Branch Bank and the park to its north and east consisted of lots never built on and of common lands gradually recognized as a public square.⁴⁹ A public market was established as early as 1692, reconfirmed in 1710 and 1736.⁵⁰ A lot just north of the public market, within the area of the later square, belonged in 1698 to one of the most remarkable women in the history of Charleston, Mary Fisher Crosse. A citizen of property held in good opinion by her fellows, Mother Crosse was also a widely travelled Quaker leader, respected throughout the sect in England, the British West Indies and mainland colonies.⁵¹

By 1739 a plat shows on the southwest corner of the square a large brick structure labelled the "New Market."⁵² By 1796, when fire destroyed the "Old beef market," the quarter had changed character with the impressive additions of St. Michael's Episcopal Church (1756) on the southeast corner of the crossing of Broad and Meeting Streets and of the State House (1752-1788) on the northwest.⁵³ The locale had become more urban, or at least more townlike, as was suitable for the juncture of two of the principal streets of a city no longer a settlement needing the protection of a wall. After 1802 Bank Square superseded Market Place as the name.⁵⁴

Shortly after the City's resumption of title and conversion of the bank building to municipal use in 1818, council advertised for bids to "enclose the Square with an iron palisade fence four and a half feet wide on a brick and stone wall, fourteen inches, with two large iron gates."⁵⁵ The ground was ready for militia parades within the year.⁵⁶ In his report of 1839, Mayor Pinckney wrote: "In the City Hall Square,

the railings and the walls have been repaired and painted, and the gardens put in order.... Brick and stone pavements have been replaced."⁵⁷

In the Courtenay Renaissance of the early 1800's, the Mayor deplored the park as "a dismal and unsightly prospect," and transformed it with "new and bright garments," including a large ornamental cast iron fountain comparable to that now on Marion Square.⁵⁸

Ever mindful of his city's intimate association with the grander themes of the nation's history, Courtenay recovered from its seclusion on the Orphan House grounds Wilton's famous statue of William Pitt, which had originally stood in the center of the Broad and Meeting intersection. He encouraged the raising of the obelisk to the Washington Light Infantry, one of the most illustrious units in three wars.⁵⁹ Almost from the beginning it had been planned to put up a statue to Washington.⁶⁰ Courtenay did officially name the park Washington Square. So far no one has yet sought to add statues to Chatham and Timrod, though memorial tablets are showing a tendency to multiply on the walls and grass.

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes are given here in abbreviated form. Bibliographic information is given in the Bibliography, Part III, C.

¹Howard Kirker, Bulfinch's Boston, 1787-1817, pl. 19; John Mead Howell, Lost Examples of Colonial Architecture, pl. 2 (Savannah); Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America, pl. 20 (Philadelphia); pl. 34 (New York)

²Beatrice St. Julien Ravenel, Architects of Charleston, p. 55-62.

³Hamlin, p. 196-197.

⁴United States Department of the Interior. National Park Service, Historic American Buildings Survey: Records of Buildings in Charleston and the South Carolina Lowcountry, p. [2]; Samuel G. Stoney, This is Charleston, p. 14; Carl Feiss, Russell Wright et al, Charleston, South Carolina, Historic Preservation Plan, map p. [7]

⁵For regulation relating to slaves and their effect on daily life, see Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston ... collected by Alexander Edwards (1802) p. 398-419; Howell M. Henry, The Police Control of the Slaves in South Carolina, Richard M. Wade, Slavery in the Cities, 1820-1860, p. 95, 96, 106 and Kenneth Stampp, The Peculiar Institution, p. 206.

⁶Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War, p. 115, 116, 126.

⁷Charleston Mesne Conveyance Records (hereafter cited as RMC), BK B7, p. 317, 318.

⁸City Gazette, May 24, 1800, cited by Ravenel, p. 68.

⁹Ibid., Nov. 8, 1800, cited by Ravenel, p. 69.

¹⁰At the request of Mary Sparkman, secretary of the Historical Commission of Charleston, Albert Simons, local architect and historian, and A. S. Salley, Secretary of the State Historical Commission, studied the question of the identity of the architect. Basing their judgment on the loose construction and various meanings the public and many journalists even in the present century give to the term architect, on the very strong local tradition of Manigault as designer, and on the generally unpretentious and otherwise accurate family history of the grandsons, Simons and Salley concluded that Gabriel Manigault was responsible for the design. According to Simons: "Gabriel Manigault was not a professional architect in the modern sense, but a gifted amateur with a broad cultural background and taste for architecture. It would seem to us quite probable that Gabriel Manigault may have laid out the general plan for this building and interested himself in its general appearance, leaving the technical details of its less interesting and

more exacting execution to a more practical and experienced builder. Thus it would be fair to consider both Manigault and McGraw [sic] and Nicholson as the architects for this building," Albert Simons to Mary Sparkman, April 23, 1940, Charleston City Archives, General Files Box 5, City of Charleston.

¹¹Ravenel, p. 56.

¹²Louis and Gabriel E. Manigault, The Manigault Family (Transactions of the Huguenot Society, No. 4), p. 83.

¹³A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, s. v., A. L. R. Huger Smith, The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, p. 355-356.

¹⁴Ravenel, p. 61.

¹⁵City Gazette, cited by Ravenel, p. 69.

¹⁶Robert Mills, Statistics of South Carolina, p. 406, 407, 410.

¹⁷Courier, March 19, 1839, Ravenel, p. 178-180.

¹⁸Charleston, Mayor's Annual Report, 1839, p. 57.

¹⁹"City Hall" in South Carolina Institute ... Fair of 1870, p. 53 typed copy in Charleston City Archives, General Files, Box 5, City of Charleston. [See Part III E. Supplemental Materials]

²⁰"Mayor Courtenay's Annual Review - Public Buildings" Charleston Year Book, 1882, p. 205-208; "The Remodeled Building" [1881] a room by room description appearing in the Courier, Nov. 15, 1882, p. 4. [See Supplemental Materials]

²¹Year Book, 1882, p. 207.

²²Carl McKinley, "The Story of the Earthquake," Year Book 1886, p. 414-415. [See Part III E. Supplemental Materials]

²³Contract, Aug. 2, 1887, Charleston City Archives, General Files, City of Charleston, Box 5.

²⁴City Council Proceedings, (1895-1899), January 12, 1897, p. 148-149.

²⁵Contracts, Sept. 13, 15, 1898, Charleston City Archives, ibid.

²⁶A. J. Tamsberg, "The Tornadoes of 1938," Year Book 1938, p. 184. [See Supplemental Materials]

²⁷News and Courier, October 6, 14, 22, 29, and Nov. 3, 1938.

²⁸WPA Correspondence, 1939, Charleston City Archives, ibid.

²⁹News and Courier, Nov. 1, 1938.

³⁰For Vanderhorst, see Biographical Dictionary of the South Carolina House of Representatives, 2:686-688. For Russell, ibid., p. 624-626.

³¹Arnoldus Vanderhorst, Vanderhorst Row, 1800; William Blacklock, 18 Bull, 1800; Nathaniel Russell, 51 Meeting St., 1811.

³²Washington A. Clark, The History of the Banking Institutions Organized in South Carolina, prior to 1860, p. 44. No conveyance from the Branch to the State Bank has been located. The conveyance from the State Bank to the city is recorded RMC, BK W8, p. 437-438. Clark mentions the State Bank as occupant of 80 Broad St., 1812-1818, (p. 96).

³³For Daniel E. Huger, see Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas of the Nineteenth Century, 1:254-256, for Robert J. Turnbull, DAB, s. v.

³⁴DAB, s. v., Elias Bull, Founders and Pew Renters of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, 1817-1874.

³⁵Charleston Courier, May 22, 1818, p. 1.

³⁶"Viator" to the Editor, Courier, June 20, 1818, [See Supplemental Materials]

³⁷Courtenay, "The Centennial Address," Year Book, 1883, p. 514.

³⁸After the Confederate War an elderly states righter set down a nostalgic reminiscence of "the magnificent affair" in City Hall when six hundred supporters offered a banquet to Senator Robert Y. Hayne on his return from the tariff debates with Webster. Frederick A. Porcher, "Memoirs," South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, 46 (1945): 35-36.

³⁹Anna W. Rutledge, "Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Charleston, South Carolina," Year Book 1943.

⁴⁰Mark Abbott and Elmer Puryear, eds., "Beleaguered Charleston: Letters from the City, 1860-1864," SCHM 61 (1962):164-172; Edgar Lee Pennington, "The Confederate Episcopal Church in 1863," ibid., 52 (1935): 10; Francis B. Simkins, South Carolina during Reconstruction, p. 5-6.

⁴¹Editorial, Courier, July 15, 1866, copy in Charleston City Archives.

⁴²Frank R. Frost, Some Memories or Last Summer's Clouds, 1922, p. 35-36 (unpub.).

⁴³See Simkins, p. 485-489, and Joel Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina during Reconstruction, p. 267-273.

44 "The Broad St. Riot of 1876," a collection of clippings from the Charleston Courier, November-December, 1876, by Edward Willis.

45 Carl McKinley, "A Descriptive Narrative of the Earthquake of August 31, 1886," Year Book 1886, p. 349-362. [See Supplemental Materials]

46 Tamsberg, Year Book 1938, p. 184-188.

47 Francis W. Bilodeau, Art in South Carolina, 1670-1970, p. 123; "Viator" to editor, Courier, June 20, 1818.

48 Mills, p. 406.

49 Helen G. McCormack, "A Catalogue of Maps," Year Book 1944 p. 185-186; Alice R. Huger Smith, The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, South Carolina, p. 38.

50 Statues at Large of South Carolina, 2:73, 351; 3:458, 516.

51 For Mary Crosse see A. S. Salley, Jr.: "Abstracts from the records of the Court of the Ordinary of the Province of South Carolina 1700-1712," SCHGM, 12:70-71 and St. Julien R. Childs, "Quaker Roots Deep Here" News and Courier, Feb. 27, 1961. A tablet on the fence of a government parking garage commemorates the dauntless spirit who in person denounced the colleges at Cambridge as "nests of unclean birds" and travelled to the Porte to convert "the Grand Turke."

52 McCormack, p. 189-190; G. H. and W. H. Toms, "The Ichnography of Charles-Town at High Water, 1739," copy in Charleston City Archives.

53 Stoney, p. 78.

54 Conveyances to City Council, RMC &8, 128, 238, 307; W8, 437.

55 "Contract Wanted," Courier, Nov. 3, 1819, p. 2, col. 5.

56 Ibid., Nov. 23, 1819.

57 Charleston. Mayor's [Henry Laurens Pinckney] Annual Report ... 1839, p. 35.

58 Courtenay, "Annual Review," Year Book 1882, p. 206-207; Dutton, picture opp. p. 216.

59 Gail M. Morrison, "'I shall not pass this way again'; Contributions of William Ashmead Courtenay" in Art in the Lives of South Carolinians in the Nineteenth Century.

60 Mills, p. 410.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

SEE FIELD RECORDS

- A. Architectural Drawings - unpagged
- B. Early Views - unpagged
- C. Bibliography - p. 31-33 (HABS numbering pp. 32-34)
- D. Likely Sources ... p. 34-35 (HABS numbering pp. 35-36)
- E. Supplemental Material - unpagged
(A, B and E in separate folders)

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D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Problems to be solved.

— The uncertainty of the identity of the architect —

This question should be pursued further. One possible source would be the correspondence of the Office of the Secretary of the Treasury, 1789-1912, mentioned in the Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Department of the Treasury. Entries in the register for the years 1800-1802 might make mention of the Charleston Branch in the planning and building stages. Other contemporary papers of Hamilton's might be helpful. Correspondence of the Izards and other Charleston families resident in Philadelphia during the years 1800-1809 might mention Manigault as a designer, as might any public or private mention made at the time of his death in Philadelphia.

A question related to the above and one which might lead to many of the same sources is the provenance of the marble trim. A study of the Philadelphia newspapers (Prime stops at 1800) and the few magazines interested in architectural subjects such as the Analecta might be rewarding, or a really thorough search for recent writings on the building technology of the time. If there is any truth in the local tradition that the marble of the exterior was the same or in anyway connected with Robert Morris' uncompleted mansion, some evidence might be found in the Morris bankruptcy records in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Robert Morris Collections, Pennsylvania State Library, Harrisburg. According to a librarian in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, the Historian, Independence National Historical Park has compiled "a large history note card file" about the Morris house. I have not inquired here for information relevant to the erection

of the Charleston Branch Bank.

Another~~y~~ mystery that teases concerns the seal in the pediment. Who adapted and elaborated the design? Who cut the stone? Where did the marble come from? Almost the only reasonably certain facts are that it is eighteen or twenty years younger than the building and that from ground level it is the work of a skillful craftsman. An appropriate step, even long overdue, would be to have a qualified art critic and historian examine the work at close range. Such an individual might be able to make fruitful suggestions based on his knowledge of stonecutting and the kind of marble used. The local City Gazette, more complete on city affairs than the Courier, should be rechecked from July 1818 for at least two years, although it is hard to believe that two such thorough scholars as Rutledge and Ravenel would have missed any mention of the City's Seal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Addendum to
Office of Discount and Deposit of the
United States Bank (United States Bank)
(City Hall) (First Bank of the United
States)
80 Broad Street
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-76

HABS
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Charleston County
South Carolina

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Washington, DC 20240

BANK OF THE UNITED STATES
(Charleston City Hall)
(State Bank of South Carolina)
(Office of Discount & Deposit of U. S. Bank)
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