NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

NAME
HISTORIC
Lowndes Grove
AND/OR COMMON
The Grove, The Grove Farm

LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
260 St. Margaret Street
CITY, TOWN
Charleston
STATE
South Carolina

CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
X BUILDING(S)
OWNERSHIP
PUBLIC
PRIVATE
STRUCTURE
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
SITE
IN PROCESS
OBJECT
BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS
X OCCUPIED
UNOCCUPIED
WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
YES: RESTRICTED
YES: UNRESTRICTED
NO

PRESENT USE
AGRI
COMMERCIAL
EDUCATIONAL
ENTERTAINMENT
GOVERNMENT
INDUSTRIAL
MILITARY
PRIVATE RESIDENCE
RECREATION
RELIGIOUS
SCIENTIFIC
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
Joseph L. Goodman, M.D.
STREET & NUMBER
260 St. Margaret Street
CITY, TOWN
Charleston
STATE
South Carolina

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC
Register of Mesne Conveyance
STREET & NUMBER
2 Courthouse Square
CITY, TOWN
Charleston
STATE
South Carolina

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina
DATE
1973 (update)
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
South Carolina Department of Archives and History
CITY, TOWN
Columbia
STATE
South Carolina
Built ca. 1786, Lowndes Grove is a one and one-half story frame structure set upon a raised stucco-over-brick basement. Probably originally built in the Georgian mode, the structure has been altered through the years. Despite these alterations, however, the structure is valuable architecturally, chronicling various changes in architectural design.

Although the original appearance of the front facade is not definitely known, the structure probably featured a double portico. This portico appears to have been altered ca. 1830 into the present five-bayed piazza which features Doric columns and balustrades with turned balusters. The central three bays are extended slightly forward and support a pediment with oculus surrounded by keystone and voussoirs. The lower level of the portico features five Gothic-style bays which were glazed ca. 1900.

An entablature surrounds the house and pediment with dentil and modillion blocks. The side facades feature 9/9 windows on both levels. During the 1830s the house was enlarged to the rear. This addition was sensitively handled, however, and siding and moldings were reproduced.

Two dormer windows pierce the roofline on both sides of the structure, while there are three dormers at the rear. The hipped roof was covered with terra cotta tiles ca. 1920 and features two interior chimneys with corbeled caps.

Interior: The floor plan is basically the typical four rooms divided into pairs by a central hall. (This plan has been slightly modified by the rear addition.) Walls and ceilings are plastered and floors are original. Most of the major rooms have elaborate cornices, ceiling medallions, mantels and other decorations, primarily in the Adamesque style. These decorations were probably added during William Lowndes’ ownership of the structure in the early 19th Century. Regency style decorations appear in the first and second story northwest rooms which were enlarged ca. 1831. The northeast room on the first floor was damaged by fire (20th Century) and has been modernized into a kitchen, hall, and library. The third story (garret) contains two Georgian style mantels and one mantel which is Greek Revival.

A spiral staircase connects each floor and features a circular skylight. Its balustrade and hand rail are continuous.

Surroundings: The structure is located on a bluff overlooking the Ashley River. Surrounding the house is a lawn with large trees and a winding drive. Located to the rear of the property is an outbuilding, probably built ca. 1920. (Also included within the property is a smaller outbuilding of an undetermined age.)

Extending to the west of the house, toward the river, are approximately 10.8 acres. This acreage contains numerous large oak trees as well as marshland.
SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD
PREHISTORIC
1400-1499
1500-1599
1600-1699
1700-1799
1800-1899
1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW
ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC
AGRICULTURE
ARCHITECTURE
ART
COMMERCE
COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNITY PLANNING
CONSERVATION
ECONOMICS
EDUCATION
ENGINEERING
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
INDUSTRY
INVENTION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
LAW
LITERATURE
MILITARY
MUSIC
PHILOSOPHY
POLITICAL/GOVERNMENT
RELIGION
SCIENCE
SCULPTURE
SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
THEATER
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Probably constructed ca. 1786, Lowndes Grove chronicles various periods of architectural design. At one time the home of William Lowndes, United States Congressman, it later played an important role in the South Carolina Interstate and West Indies Exposition of 1901-02. Located on the banks of the Ashley River, it is landscaped with live oaks.

According to tradition, the history of this plantation begins prior to the Revolution when John Gibbes resided near Charleston, his residence being known as "the Grove." According to one source, this structure was burned during the Revolution.

Sometime soon thereafter (ca. 1786), George Abbot Hall acquired the tract of land known as the Grove. Hall apparently built the present structure, as the 1791 inventory of his estate lists the various items in his residence at the Grove. After his death, ownership of the plantation changed several times. In 1803 the plantation was acquired by William Lowndes, who served in the South Carolina House of Representatives and in 1810 was elected to the United States Congress. There he served as chairman of both the Ways and Means Committee and the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Suffering from poor health, Lowndes resigned his Congressional seat in 1822 and died within the year.

Following Lowndes' death, ownership of the plantation changed several times, Lowndes Grove eventually becoming the property of Captain F. W. Wagener, a prominent businessman. Wagener was also president of the South Carolina Interstate and West Indies Exposition which was held in Charleston in 1901-02. This was a large exposition, involving the erection of several buildings, a visit from President Theodore Roosevelt, and the display of the Liberty Bell. During the exposition, Lowndes Grove was used as the Woman's Building, housing artistic and historical displays.

During the 1920s, Lowndes Grove became the home of James Sottile, Jr., a successful developer. Today it is the home of a physician.

Architecture: Lowndes Grove is valuable architecturally, chronicling various periods in architectural design. Notable exterior features include the front portico with projecting pediment with oculus, refined entablature with both dentil and modillion motifs, Gothic-style arcade, 9/9 windows with moulded jambs, and beaded siding.

The interior features architectural details that range from the Georgian period to the Regency period. These include Georgian mantels in the garret, elaborate Adamesque ceiling medallions, cornices and mantels; and Regency decorations in the ca. 1831 addition. Especially notable is the spiral staircase which connects each floor and culminates in a circular skylight.
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 14.27 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A [1,7] 59 69 6 8 0 [3 6 2 9 6 8 0] B [1,7] 59 69 6 8 0 [3 6 2 9 4 4 0]

C [1,7] 59 69 6 4 0 [3 6 2 9 4 4 0] D [1,7] 59 69 6 4 0 [3 6 2 9 6 8 0]

VERBAL BORDER DESCRIPTION

The property is bounded on the south by St. Margaret Street, west by the Ashley River, north by 3rd Street (not opened), and on the east by 6th Street.
This land is integrally related to the integrity of the site and if destroyed much of the visual and historic character of Lowndes Grove would be destroyed. Preliminary plans have been made by the South Carolina Highway Department to build a freeway parallel to the river on the edge of the property.


South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Charleston Inventories, D, pp. 80-82.

Information provided by Elias Bull, Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Historic Preservation Planner, July 1976.