

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0686450

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 1 1978
DATE ENTERED DEC 8 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Presqu'ile

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2 Amherst Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#1

STATE

South Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE

045

COUNTY

Charleston

CODE

019

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Arthur Ravenel, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

#5 Allegheny Street

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

VICINITY OF

STATE
South Carolina 29407

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of Mesne Conveyance

STREET & NUMBER

Meeting Street

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

STATE
South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1964

- FEDERAL
- STATE
- COUNTY
- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D. C.

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Presqu'ile is a three-story stucco-over-brick structure, probably constructed between 1802 and 1808. Circa 1840, a large three-story wing was added to its northeast corner.

EXTERIOR: The original portion of the structure features a two-story piazza extending along three facades. On the ground level, simple stucco-over-brick columns rest on a piazza paved with flagstone. The columns on the second (main floor) are smaller and wooden. The second-story piazza also features a wooden balustrade. An off-centered single door with a four-light transom opens onto both piazzas.

The gable roof is covered by tin and features a pediment with lunette. The gable ends of the roof have wood siding and dentil molding. The eastern (right) gable also features a Palladian window.

Attached to the rear (north) facade is a rounded projection containing a spiral staircase. Arched windows, located on the northern side of this projection, illuminate the staircase. A doorway with fanlight, with smaller arched windows above, is located on the western side of the projection.

Windows on the first floor are 6/6 with paneled shutters. Second and third story windows are 9/9.

The large northeastern wing is three-stories high, stucco-over-brick, and features a flat roof. This wing is basically simple in design, being adorned by string courses (which delineate levels) and a simple cornice molding. The eastern facade of this wing has two decorative grills located in its frieze. The windows of this addition are 9/9.

INTERIOR: The majority of the interior is in the federal style of architecture. The original portion of the first two floors consists of one room. The third floor differs from the first two in that it has two rooms. The ground and main floors retain elaborate woodwork: Adam style mantels, paneled wainscoting with carved chair rails, paneled doors with elaborate architraves. Windows feature interior shutters, walls are plaster, and floors are original. The ground floor has an intricately carved cornice molding; the cornice molding of the main floor was placed in storage several years ago and has been misplaced. The third floor features simpler woodwork. Its mantel is notable, however, having pilasters and central panel with a carved design.

The stairway extends in a continuous spiral from the first floor to the attic story. It features carved brackets and simple wooden balusters. It is illuminated by arched windows with carved pilasters. In order to reveal the construction of the rounded projection which houses the spiral staircase, the present owners have left the bricks and wood exposed. (Originally, the walls were plastered.)

The interior of the 1840s wing is simple in comparison to the original portion of the house. Each floor in this wing contains one large room with a fireplace at the northern end. The western portion of this wing originally contained a staircase. This area has been altered to house modern conveniences: a small kitchen and bath on the ground floor, a small kitchen and bath on the main floor; and two baths on the third floor. The woodwork is simple and typically Greek Revival, except on the third floor

continued.....

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES _____ BUILDER/ARCHITECT _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Presqu'ile is among Charleston's finest examples of Adam style architecture, featuring a distinct floor plan, and notable interior details. Additional significance is derived from its associations with several prominent South Carolinians.

It is believed that Presqu'ile was constructed between 1802 and 1808 by Jacob Belser (1782-1833). A lawyer and planter, Belser also represented the Parish of St. James, Goose Creek in the South Carolina Senate between 1812 and 1815.

Following Belser's possession, the property changed ownership several times. In 1831, it was purchased by Joshua John Ward, a wealthy planter who has been called "the king of the rice planters in Georgetown District."¹ A few years later, Samuel Porcher, another noted planter, acquired the house. In 1840, Presqu'ile became the property of Henry Grimke (1801-1852), a prominent attorney. Henry Grimke was the brother of Sarah Moore and Angelina Grimke, prominent abolitionists and women's rights advocates. Henry Grimke was the father of Archibald Henry Grimke, a prominent black lawyer, author and publicist. Presqu'ile remained in the Grimke family for approximately 65 years. In 1962, the Historic Charleston Foundation purchased the property, "believing it to be one of the finest houses in the upper boroughs of Charleston."² It was stabilized, and in 1973, sold to Arthur Ravenel who has restored it.

ARCHITECTURE: Probably built between 1802 and 1808, the structure features fine Adam style woodwork, including mantels, cornice moldings and wainscoting. The structure also features a distinctive floor plan with one room on each of the first two floors (apparently designed for cross-ventilation). The circular staircase is also notable and has been described as "one of the most beautiful in Charleston."³

The structure is listed as valuable in This is Charleston by Samuel Gaillard Stoney; and as exceptional (the highest rating), "to be preserved and protected in situ at all costs," in the 1974 Historic Architecture Inventory of the Peninsula City.

¹George C. Rogers, The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), p. 259.

²Mrs. S. Henry Edmunds, Director, Historic Charleston Foundation, to Mr. Charles E. Lee, 2 December 1977.

³Beatrice St. Julien Ravenel, Architects of Charleston (Charleston: Carolina Art Association, 1964), p. 62.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Adam-Style Dwelling to Undergo Restoration." Charleston News and Courier,
18 October 1973, 8-B.

"Amherst Street House Being Restored." Charleston Evening Post, 20 October 1973, 1-B.

continued.....

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 73' x 75' (less than one acre)

QUADRANGLE NAME Charleston QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 7 | 5, 9, 9 | 8, 8, 0 | 3, 6 | 2, 8 | 9, 2, 0

B | | | | |

C | | | | |

D | | | | |

E | | | | |

F | | | | |

G | | | | |

H | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All that certain piece, parcel or lot of ~~land~~ land, together with the improvements thereon, situate, lying and being on the northwestern corner of East Bay Street and Amherst

continued.....

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kappy McNulty, Mrs. Arthur Ravenel

ORGANIZATION

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

DATE

June 19, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

Post Office Box 11,669, Capitol Station

TELEPHONE

(803) 758-5816

CITY OR TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Charles E. Lee 10/10/78

TITLE

Charles E. Lee
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles E. Lee

DATE

12-8-78

ATTENT: *James H. Givens*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

12/8/78

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

where moldings and an Adam style mantel have been added.

SURROUNDINGS: Presqu'ile is located on the northwest corner of Amherst and East Bay, a well-trafficked road. Although it and several neighboring structures have been restored/rehabilitated, there are other architecturally important structures nearby which are in need of renovation.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

- "Committee to Handle Sale of Baptist Goodwill Center." Charleston News and Courier,
22 June 1962.
- "Do You Know Your Charleston." Charleston News and Courier, 29 December 1941.
- "Archibald Henry Grimke," "Sarah Moore and Angelina Emily Grimke." Dictionary of
American Biography, Vol. IV. New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1932, pp. 632-635.
- Edmunds, Mrs. S. Henry, Director, Historic Charleston Foundation, to Mr. Charles E. Lee,
2 December 1977.
- "Mr. Samuel G. Stoney Tells Story of Old House at No. 2 Amherst." Charleston News and
Courier. Undated clipping.
- O'Neill, John Belton. Biographical Sketches of the Bench and Bar of South Carolina,
Vol. II. Charleston: S. G. Courtenay, 1859, pp. 542-543.
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State of South Carolina, 1776-1964. Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department,
1964, pp. 34-35, 179.
- Rogers, George C. The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina. Columbia:
University of South Carolina Press, 1970, p. 259.
- South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Charleston Deeds (microfilm)
C-8, pp. 328-329; M-7, pp. 364-365; H-9, p. 112; A-10, pp. 408-409; L-10, p. 309;
Y-10, p. 239.
- Stoney, Samuel Gaillard. This is Charleston. Charleston: Carolina Art Association,
1960, p. 1.
- Wright, Russell, Carl Feiss and Robert Anderson Associates. Historic Architecture,
Inventory of the Peninsula City, Charleston, S.C., 1974.

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ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 3

Street, known and designated as 2 Amherst Street, in the City of Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina, and having the following boundaries and measurements, to wit:

On the Northeastern side of East Bay Street whereon it measures 73 feet; on the Southeastern side of Amherst Street whereon it measures 75 feet; on the Southwestern side by property of Lucille Capers, known and designated as 4 Amherst Street, whereon it measures 73 feet; and on the Northwestern side by a certain other lot, formerly known as 69 East Bay Street and now known and designated as 643 East Bay Street, whereon it measures 75 feet. All measurements being a little more or less.