The
PRESERVATION
of
CHARLESTON
Photography by N. Jane Iseley • Text by Harlan Greene & William P. Baldwin

WILLIAM C. GATEWOOD HOUSE

This ca. 1843 house combines elements of both Classical and Greek revival design. There is brownstone detailing on the ground floor, with marble on the second; the massive piazzas are masked by a fenestrated wall on the south that balances the entrance wall on the north. Also masked are the mansion's pool and garden. The residence was built by Col. E. B. White for William Gatewood, who was in the lottery business that mandated entertaining lavishly. His enslaved cook, Nat Fuller, was the most famous caterer in the antebellum city. Gatewood used the first floor for business, and, restored, it remains unchanged. The house was bought in 2003, and a classically trained architect, Gil Schafer, oversaw the five years of work. Already serious antique collectors, the owners realized that they'd need Greek Revival–era furniture to complement the architecture.

What looks like a London townhouse is instead pure Lowcountry (above). *Piazzas behind the masking wall face south to take advantage of any breeze coming up the street.*
The hand-carved staircase starts off with a flourish of a graceful newel post, almost lyre shaped (right)*; note the wide floorboards, original to the house.*

On the second floor, a double drawing room looks out onto the piazza (left). Features include pocket doors, acanthus leaves for the ceiling, an Italian black marble mantel and triple sash windows. The chairs are 1815 Klismos New York, and while usually tucked under the Deming and Buckley center table, are out for a cocktail party. **T***he antiqued scenic wall paper (right), by de Gournay, called "Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique," is a typical one of the period, and might, in its depictions of lush flora, pass for an early Carolina scene. The dining room chairs match those in the front parlor, these at an 1830 Boston table. The marble-topped sideboard of mounted bronze and mahogany is attributed to Duncan Phyfe.*

A *pool and piazzas* (above). *The presence of such a private space could never be guessed from the formal façade presented to the street.*
T*he lovely marble-topped server, attributed to Holmes and Haines of New York* (right), *is along the wall colored "Rhett pumpkin," a Historic Charleston color of the period. There were too many layers of paint on these walls to find the original shade; the attempt had to be abandoned. The gilt wood pier mirror reflects the ascending staircase.*

Detail of the double drawing room. The neo-classical woodwork is carved, not molded in plaster; the gold color on the wall is one favored in England. The architect insisted it be brushed on and not rolled.