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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2021

# real estate



## Exploring downtown Charleston

A walking tour of some of the most beautiful homes and neighborhoods, Page 8



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*“Charleston is one of the best built, handsomest, and most agreeable cities that I have ever seen.”*

— Marquis de Lafayette

# Exploring downtown Charleston

A walking tour of some of the most beautiful homes and neighborhoods

BY BRIGITTE SURETTE

Mid-February usually signals the beginning of Charleston’s tourist season. The Southeastern Wildlife Exposition, a traditional event that normally kicks it off, draws in over 40,000 visitors annually. The weekend-long event coincides with Presidents’ Day weekend and generates about \$50 million for the Lowcountry’s economy.

“SEWE has been very important to the historic district as a whole as I consider that event the kick off for spring season visitors, some who already know Charleston, some discovering and falling in love with the city for the first time,” said **Charles Sullivan**



Sullivan

**of Carriage Properties.** “However, more recently first-time visitors continue to seek out Charleston as a pleasant alternative to other locations.”

For the first time since SEWE’s inception in February 1983, the decision was made

to cancel the event because of COVID. But, people are still flocking to our fair city. The reason? Charleston’s real estate market.

I found that to be the case the day I went on a walking tour downtown. People were out, strolling the streets and parks. Being a tourist in my own town, I explored the neighborhoods, the homes, and the streets that make up Charleston’s architectural and historic grandeur. It was a perfect day, sunny, with temps hovering around 60 degrees.

## The French Quarter

I parked near St. Philip’s Church and headed south on foot. The church, built in 1838, has a churchyard containing tombstones dating back to the 1600s, including patriots, who signed the Declaration of Independence. Known as “Charleston’s fabled walled city,” this is the oldest French Quarter in the country.

“Charleston’s historic French Quarter is a small neighborhood on the south-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JA SURETTE

Exquisite attention to detail and stunning architectural details are prevalent throughout the historic homes in downtown Charleston.



White Point Garden, a public park, in downtown Charleston is at the tip of the peninsula and comprises over five acres.



A boater skims along the Ashley River — a common scene when viewing from The Battery’s seawall in downtown Charleston.





PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEEN EYE MARKETING

The Nathan Hart House is a masonry over brick home located in Charleston's French Quarter at 18 State St. It has three bedrooms, two-and-a-half baths and over 2,700 square feet. Completely renovated, it lists for \$2.195 million.



The kitchen at 18 State St. has upscale appliances, a wine cooler and a deep walk-in pantry. French doors open directly to a walled garden with an outdoor dining area and custom landscape lighting.

eastern corner of the peninsula with Broad, Meeting, East Bay and South Market streets acting as parameters," said Adam Edwards of The Cassina Group. "This quaint borough gets its name from the high concentration of French Huguenots that immigrated to and lived within the area."



Edwards

The borough was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and comprises several Charleston landmarks and must-sees — the French Huguenot Church, Dock Street Theatre, Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon, Charleston Market, Powder Magazine, the Old Slave Museum and the Charleston Pink House, to name a few.

Taking a right onto State Street, I noted art galleries with residences intermingled. Pastel painted homes, all dressed up in all various architectural styles including hundred-year-old Gothic Revival. Some streets and alleys, including Lodge Alley, between East Bay and State streets, are paved of granite blocks whose pattern mimics the same found in old English towns and many towns in France.

Once I crossed Unity Alley, I came to 18 State St., a pink-colored double-piazza home.

"This property was owned by the Hart family for investment purposes from 1815 to 1905," said Edwards. "It was used in various capacities over the years including use as a bakeshop and the



The spacious living room is light-filled and on the first floor of the home at 18 State Street.

home of a river pilot."

The classic masonry over brick home has turned columned side piazzas and six fireplaces. A double door with transom faces the street. A brick and black iron gate/wall provides privacy. The bricked walkway carries onto the lower piazza and a deep driveway with detached climate-controlled garage at the end allows roomy, off-street parking. Modernity mixes with historic charm inside—original heart pine floors, bright white walls, plenty of windows, built-ins and a showstopper of a kitchen.

"There is a Wolf gas range, Sub-Zero

refrigerator, Bosch dishwasher, additional wall oven, wine cooler and walk-in pantry," Edwards said. "French doors open to a walled garden lend great connectivity between the indoor and outdoor living spaces."

The three-bedroom home, which lists for \$2.195 million, has over 2,700 square feet and was built in 1815. Its primary suite has a fireplace, large windows and ensuite bath with glassed shower and free-standing tub. From the upper piazza, one can take in views of the neighborhood and Charleston's skyline.

"One of the many benefits of living in



An intimate, private garden area is off the kitchen at 18 State St.

## Online



To view more photos, visit [www.postandcourier.com/real\\_estate](http://www.postandcourier.com/real_estate).

the French Quarter is the proximity to several Charleston's landmarks," Edwards noted. "The Waterfront Park and Washington Square are nearby, along with renowned restaurants including Oak Steakhouse, SNOB, Magnolias, 82 Queen and many more, plus you can walk to numerous boutiques and art galleries."

## South of Broad

Next, I took a right on Broad Street. Merchants and craftspeople occupied this area in the 1700s, and the "Four Corners of the Law" are here. Named



## mainstory

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“Broad” for being one of the city’s widest streets, it is a blend of businesses, boutiques and smatterings of residences, plus pubs and law firms. Church Street crosses Broad and I took a left and headed south.

The tony South of Broad (SOB) location is quiet and refined, world-renowned for Rainbow Row, White Point Gardens, historic landmarks and exclusive residential, tree-lined streets. A few art galleries are here. Walking past “Goat, Sheep, Cow,” a wine and cheese shop, the sign on the doorway (and a sign of the times) read: “No mask, no cheese.” I could hear the muffled clang of church bells. Quiet blanketed the street.

Coming to a home at 103 Church St. at the corner of Church and St. Michael’s Alley, I was struck by its stately exterior and the 40-foot Italian cypresses that lined the side of it along St. Michael’s Alley.

“The location of this property is excellent, right in the middle of eighteenth-century Charleston, which means on a high elevation in the shadow of St. Michael’s iconic steeple, one block south of Dock Street Theatre, one block north of Tradd, and the Heyward Washington House,” said Sullivan. “It sits south facing the corner of St. Michael’s Alley and Church Street, allowing for well-lit rooms.”

Sullivan said the pristine property, listed for \$2.495 million, has a 200-plus year history. The lot was originally owned by Ambassador Joel Poinsett, who introduced and discovered the Poinsettia plant we decorate our homes with every holiday season. Later in the nineteenth century, Nat Fuller, an African American entrepreneur and chef, operated his restaurant, “Bachelor’s Retreat,” which, at the time, was known as the finest in Charleston.

“One of his noteworthy events occurred as Fuller celebrated the end of the Civil War with a grand feast inviting diners of all racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds to sit down together,” Sullivan said. “Nat Fuller and his legacy on this site was honored in 2015 through a Spoleto project honoring locations important to the city’s Gullah culture and history.”

The home was converted from a five-unit mixed use building into three luxury condo properties. Sullivan said he recently contracted and closed the second-floor space, and the third is not yet on the market. His current listing is Unit A, and it’s the only one of the three offering a private garden and a private entrance from St. Michael’s Alley. It’s herringbone brick and covered piazza provides additional space for entertain-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARRIAGE PROPERTIES

**The South of Broad garden level luxury Unit A of the historic 103 Church St. residence has marble baths and a beautifully-chic kitchen. Eleven-foot ceilings and a private-use garden terrace with off-street parking is rare for this type of property. List price: \$2.495 million.**



**The ground level home of 103 Church St. (Unit A) underwent extensive renovations while preserving the historic elements of the home. It has over 2,100 square feet.**

ing or relaxing.

“A condo offering with its own private garden and space is rare,” he said. “Everyone involved in the renovation process was very careful to retain and respect the historic fabric of the build-

ing—from the exterior architecture to the original floors, trim and moldings.”

A collaboration between Charleston building and design professionals, Vanderking Properties, architect Julia Martin, interior designer Lauren San-



**The stunning primary bath has dual vanities, a soaking tub and a large, glassed-in shower.**



**The modern kitchen at 103 Church St. lets in tons of natural light. The home faces south and sits on the corner of St. Michael’s Alley and Church Street.**

chez and general contractor Southeastern Construction Company, resulted in a cohesive blend of turnkey meets traditional/transitional. Eleven-foot ceilings, abundant natural light and symmetry that speaks to its nearby neighbors, Sullivan said, were important to the restoration.

“Most of these homes date from the 1700s to the present and this particular architectural period dates from the 1790s to the 1820s, heavily influenced by new arrivals to Charleston from England and France,” he explained. “These two or three-block areas surrounding 103 Church Street is where Charleston began.”





PHOTOGRAPHS BY HANDSOME PROPERTIES

The grand home at 44 South Battery has seven bedrooms and six-and-a-half baths, with over 7,500 square feet. It has three piazzas, with park and harbor views. A block from White Point Garden, it lists for \$6.95 million.

## Magnificent mansions

Continuing on Church Street, past Charleston singles and Georgian-style homes with broad porches, I walked by Catfish Row. A beautiful example of 18th century architecture, it is two homes connected by a central passageway. Formerly known as Cabbage Row because families of freed African American slaves sold cabbage from their windowsills, the name was changed when the book, "Porgy," was published in 1925. Charlestonian Debose Heyward novel's setting was here and in it, he referred to it as Catfish Row. Porgy was the inspiration for the opera, "Porgy and Bess."

This stretch of Church is reminiscent of Rainbow Row, with its pastel-hued homes and gaslight lanterns flanking doorways. The Heyward Washington House, built in 1772, was named for its owner Thomas Heyward, Jr., one signer of the Declaration of Independence, and for a famous week-long resident, George Washington in 1791. It now stands as a museum where one can view priceless antiques and formal gardens.

As I crossed over Atlantic Street, I could see the Charleston Harbor and peeks of the park, noting bricked roads, flowering window boxes and doorways decorated for spring. Taking a right onto South Battery, I faced White Point Garden. People strolled along the harbor's seawalls and walked their dogs. A boater skimmed the harbor.

South Battery is lined with mansions, each one as grand as the next. Lined up like stately soldiers, I crossed Meeting and came to 44 South Battery, known as the Johnston House built in 1835 and



The kitchen house of the home at 44 South Battery has been renovated, like the main home and includes a grandfathered bed and breakfast license, allowing for nightly rentals. It can be used as a guest house, an extension of the main house or rented long term.

one block from White Point Garden.

**Debbie Fisher of Handsome Properties**, who lists the property, said: "This home was built by two sisters, Anne and Catharine Johnston who inherited their lots from their grandfather, and it was later owned by the senior major-general of the South Carolina troops who was also a South Carolina attorney and a state representative."

The seven-bedroom, six bath home lists for \$6.95 million and has been extensively renovated. It has over 7,500 square feet and according to Fisher, it has most of its historic integrity intact, including the original privy from 1835. Architect Glenn Keyes and landscape architect Sheila Wertimer had a hand in



Fisher



The sunny chef's kitchen of the home at 44 South Battery has 13-foot ceilings, original moldings, and exquisite ceiling medallions.



The formal living room and dining room include walk through windows opening to the grand piazza at the front of the home. The spectacular renovation was designed by Glenn Keyes with many original details carefully preserved. The home includes 10 fireplaces, all of which have been re-lined.

bringing this beauty to its full modern-day glory. The historic inns, Battery Inn and 2 Meeting Street, are within two blocks.

"This home is a traditional double house, which is rare and difficult to find in Charleston," Fisher said. "Most of our homes are built as single homes, which is one room wide. The double house is two rooms wide, with the home's entrance being the midpoint. This home has been completely renovated while preserving the original woodwork and moldings. The rooms are grand and all the fireplaces are original and have been rebuilt to function well."

Three piazzas are spread across its

front, offering gorgeous views of White Point Garden and the Ashley River. Rooms are grand and spacious, with the second floor housing the primary suite with fireplace, dual closets and a spa-like bath with double vanity, oversized shower and clawfoot tub. A separate kitchen home is over 1,900 square feet and can be used as a guest house or legally rented nightly. Fisher said the 1,358 square foot ground floor could be converted into a one-of-a-kind wine cellar, artist studio or workout room. It includes a half-bath.

"This is a turnkey property with significant history and it lives beautifully," Fisher added.



## mainstory

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### Haute homes with pretty patinas

Continuing west on South Battery, I came to Legare Street where I took a right. This SOB area is off-the-charts charming. Bucolic yet sophisticated. Walking north, a horse-drawn carriage with a few patrons passed. I crossed over Gibbs Street and came to the Simmons Edwards House, a National Landmark and neo-classical Charleston single home that was built for Francis Simmons, a Johns Island planter in the 1800s. Behind tall wrought-iron gates, with pineapples atop its columns, is one of Charleston's most beautiful formal gardens, Shamrock Garden, restored by The Thornton family in the late 1990s.

A woman out taking her daily afternoon walk said to me, "This is my favorite part of Charleston."

Crossing Tradd, I came to 53 Legare, a four-bedroom home built in 1810. This home has a stop-you-in-your-tracks patina. Pinks, taupes and creamy ivory blend and taper out along the stucco exterior. A Charleston single, it is a Category 2 home, meaning a home of "excellent high style regional architecture, fine Charleston style," and "irreplaceable importance, to be preserved in situ at all costs" according to Charleston's Board of Architectural Review.



Turner

"The exterior is original," said **Leslie Turner of Maison Real Estate** who lists the home for \$2.995 million. "The area has cobblestone

streets, slate sidewalks, church bells ringing on the hour and the smell of salt air from the Charleston harbor mixed with luxurious jasmine."

Turner said that many homes in this area were built by wealthy merchants and often feature Georgian-Palladian architectural details and styles. Famous for lush gardens and detailed iron gate-work, South of Broad homes are historically and aesthetically some of the finest homes in Charleston.

"The sellers spared no expense on the complete renovation of the house," said Turner. "The renovation combines the best modern features while retaining the historic charm."

Renovation included adding steel beams in the kitchen and living room for an open flow and removal of a rear staircase to expand the openings between rooms and let in light. Five fireplaces were converted to gas, with all mechanical, electrical and plumbing brought up to modern-day standards.

Palladian French doors from the kitchen and family room open onto the garden. The stunning kitchen has Viking



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELLIS CREEK PHOTOGRAPHY

**The historic home at 53 Legare St. was built in 1810 and has been extensively renovated. With four bedrooms, three-and-a-half baths, a striking stucco exterior, and front and back gardens, it lists for \$2.995 million.**



**The backyard of the home at 53 Legare has a historic oval lawn. A large brick terrace off the kitchen and family room has a gas fire pit and seating walls.**

appliances and is made for entertaining with two sinks, two dishwashers, tons of storage and stainless-steel and quartz countertops. Original floors, redone, run throughout the home. Upstairs comprises a front guest room with bath and the primary bedroom has dual vanities, an oversized shower and soaking tub in front of a fireplace. The suite overlooks the back garden. The third floor has two bedrooms with a shared bath.

Outside is one of those iconic Charleston gardens everyone loves to catch a glimpse of—this one, designed by Elizabeth Pope and installed by Bill Kent. The front garden has a wrought-iron gate with bluestone and brick pathway and foundation. Another tall, artisan made wrought-iron gates leads to the backyard

oasis. Here, a large brick terrace, gas firepit, seating walls and an oval lawn lead to a heated pool, surrounded by bluestone and a brick. A stone wall makes this special area private.

"The market for downtown luxury homes is fast and furious," Turner said. "This past year of COVID have made selling seasons less defined as more and more people make the move to Charleston."

### At the end of the day

After walking through nearly three miles of Charleston's neighborhoods and streets, it's understandable why this city is a world-class destination and now, a place where many homebuyers are looking to settle. It's wondrous when



**The kitchen of the home at 53 Legare has a Viking gas range, two Viking dishwashers, integrated Viking refrigerator, and warming drawer. Countertops are stainless steel and quartz, and there is abundant storage.**



**The pool at 53 Legare is heated and has a swim-against-the-current feature, along with lights, new pool equipment, and a bluestone and brick surround.**



**53 Legare's primary bath includes dual vanities, oversized shower with 2 shower heads, soaking tub in front of a fireplace, shiplap accent wall, and exposed original beams overhead.**

you stop and think about it—seeing evidence of how a grand city began. The craftsmanship of Charleston homes is second to none, and the neighborhoods that surround them appear as picturesque European villages.

"A client of mine who recently made the decision to purchase a home in the historic district said to me, 'Charleston offers everything I enjoyed in my big city neighborhood with a small-town charm.' That's the draw," said Sullivan.

At the very least, it's a marvelous way to spend the day.

Contact **Brigitte Surette** at [bsurette@postandcourier.com](mailto:bsurette@postandcourier.com).



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realnews

## Carolina One

Will Jenkinson, Broker-in-charge of Carolina One New Homes provided the latest new home market facts, as of Feb 11, 2021.

“The Charleston market is white hot,” he said. “I’ve never seen it like this.”

### Overall Charleston real estate market:

■ 1,855 active homes in MLS (down 2,732 from May 5, 2020) – 55 percent + down in 9 months.

■ 1,325 resales and 530 new – 29 percent are new

**Pending sales:** 3,913 (up 901 from May 5, 2020) – 2,058 more pending than active.

■ 2,289 resales and 1,560, new – 41 percent are new.

**New home sales** accounted for 20 percent of all homes closings: REIS NHR DEC 20

■ **Charleston:** 13%; **Berkeley:** 33%; **Dorchester:** 22% (% of new v/s resale); REIS NHR DEC 20

4,758 new homes closed in last 12 months: REIS NHR DEC 20

Historic high – 7,100 in 2006 and low – 2,100 in 2009

**ASP for New Homes:** \$361,943 (Overall); REIS NHR DEC 20

■ **Charleston:** \$436,607; **Berkeley:** \$339,872; **Dorchester:** \$300,063

**Denise Runza**, a sales associate with the Isle of Palms office of Carolina One Real Estate, has been awarded the Resort and Second-Home Property Specialist (RSPS) certification, awarded by the National Association of Realtors. She is also a Real Estate Negotiation Expert (RENE).

She joins 4,000 other real estate professionals who specialize in buying, selling, or managing homes in a resort, recreational and/or vacation destination and properties for investment, development or retirement.

Runza has lived in Charleston for 28 years, and has been a Realtor® since 2018. Prior to that, she was employed for 13 years by UBS Paine Webber and as a teacher at the East Cooper Montessori Charter School in Mount Pleasant.

Her community involvement includes serving on the board of the East Cooper Montessori Charter School and is a volunteer at HALOS of Charleston, the only service provider in the tri-county area solely dedicated to assisting kinship care families. She and her family live on the Isle of Palms. Call her 843.478.9574.

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## Daniel Ravenel Sotheby's International Realty

Daniel Ravenel Sotheby's International Realty released their inaugural 2021 Luxu-

ry Outlook report which examines global, high-end residential markets in the wake of the pandemic. The comprehensive report provides insight into the world's top primary and secondary markets and the anticipated wealth trends that will drive discretionary investment in the coming months.

Principle and Broker-in-charge, **Dan Ravenel**, notes that, “The Charleston area has always been popular as a second home and investment market, but since the second quarter of 2020, our firm has tracked a noteworthy increase in sophisticated luxury buyers purchasing primary residences here in the Lowcountry. It appears that the Millennial buyer set has arrived in the marketplace in a big way, discovering why our area has remained popular for savvy homebuyers over the last decade.”

Key findings featured in their report include:

■ 63 percent of respondents said they expected luxury home prices to rise over the next three years.

■ Trophy home buyers remain heavily concentrated in the U.S. and China.

■ By August 2020, high-net-worth individuals' collective wealth had grown 37 percent from March 2020, according to a study by Wealth-X.

■ The most important amenities for luxury buyers today are private outdoor space or nearby parks and additional square footage for remote work and education.

■ By 2025, millennials could account for 45 percent of luxury goods sales

Their report was compiled by surveying Sotheby's International Realty agents who transact in the US \$10M+ price category around the world. This information was complemented by gathering supporting data from other leading industry experts, including Credit Suisse, the Luxury Institute, and the National Wellness Institute, in addition to art and luxury experts at Sotheby's, the famed auction house.

Property listings from Daniel Ravenel Sotheby's International Realty are marketed on the SothebysRealty.com global web sites, as well as on the firm's local website, Daniel-RavenelSIR.com. Call the Charleston location at 843.723.1750.

## William Means

**Yvonne Turner**, a Realtor with an extensive sales background, has joined the team at William Means Real Estate. She brings her past experience with several top Fortune 500 companies, including her

most recent position as Vice President with Philips Healthcare, to her real estate role in Charleston.

As a native of South Florida, Turner spent several years in South Carolina while attending Clemson University. She grew to appreciate Charleston's small-town feel with a big city allure having previously lived in some of the largest cities in the United States. She combines her knowledge of the Charleston area with a background in business and sales to deliver a highly professional experience for clients.

Turner and her family live in Isle of Palms' Wild Dunes neighborhood. She is a member of the Wild Dunes Club Activity and Communications Committee and participates in Charleston's Clemson Alumni Club.

“I have always felt a strong connection with the Charleston area and so my family and I are thrilled to establish roots here,” said Turner.

Contact her at 310.780.9879.

## The Real Buyer's Agent

**David Kent**, Broker in Charge of The Real Buyer's Agent, was awarded the Omega Tau Rho Award by the South Carolina Association of Realtors.

Membership in this honorary fraternity is represented by the Medallion of Service which symbolizes the recognition and appreciation accorded inductees for their contribution to the National Association of Realtors, its affiliated Institutes, Societies and Councils.

Kent has held various professional positions including President of the South Carolina Association of Realtors in 2016 and Chair of the South Carolina Community Alliance 2018. He is currently serving as the Chair of the RPAC Trustees Federal Disbursement Committee, as a Director of the National Association of REALTORS® as well on the Real Estate Buyer's Agent Council Advisory Board.

Kent is active in his community having served on the Mount Pleasant Rotary Club and the Charleston Planning Commission. He also was named Honorary Commander of the 437th Mission Support Squadron.

## The Cassina Group

A custom oceanfront home on Sullivan's Island at 2411 Atlantic Avenue sold for \$6,850,000. **Robertson Allen**, a founding partner of The Cassina Group, represented both the sellers and the buyers in the transaction. The property was listed in early October 2020 and was under contract in fewer than 90 days.

The 4,600-square-foot home was designed and built by Dufford and Young Architects, Sheppard Construction and



THE CASSINA GROUP

**2411 Atlantic Ave. sold for \$6.85 million, the most expensive Sullivan Island property sold to date in 2021.**



Allen

Wertimer & Cline.

The Atlantic Avenue home is the most expensive property sold on Sullivan's Island so far in 2021 and is the third highest residential sale ever recorded on the island, per Charleston MLS.

For more information on The Cassina Group, visit [www.TheCassinaGroup.com](http://www.TheCassinaGroup.com).



PROVIDED

**Julie Rogers and Lawrence Greenspon**

## Charleston Home Showcase

The 30-minute show, Charleston Home Showcase celebrates its third season. The launch of season three was celebrated with the addition of News 2 WCBD to the broadcast lineup. The show airs on News 2 at 11:30 a.m. on Sundays and on Live 5 WCSC on Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.

Executive Producer **Lawrence Greenspon** and Host **Julie Rogers** said that the show's four-minute storytelling format hits home with viewers and businesses.

“Viewers enjoy the stories about businesses that are building the Lowcountry and businesses enjoy the return on their investment,” Rogers said.

For more information, visit [www.charlestonhomeshowcase.com](http://www.charlestonhomeshowcase.com).

—Brigitte Surette