



WENTWORTH MANSION®

History

In 1881, a wealthy cotton merchant named Francis Silas Rodgers set out to build an elegant home in Charleston, S.C., worthy of his family of 13. Upon its completion in 1886, his vision was realized in this magnificent home, described upon his death as the finest in Charleston, a city known for its architectural treasures. To build his home, Rodgers hired only the finest of artisans. Daniel G. Wayne served as the architect for the nearly 24,000-square-foot, four-story home, creating what is today the best example of Second Empire Style, characterized by its mansard roof, in Charleston.

While on a trip to Europe, Rodgers commissioned two grand matching chandeliers, which still hang today, and is said to have brought back their maker to ensure proper installation. A noted marble and stone worker and sculptor of the day, Emile T. Viett, carved the elegant marble mantle pieces found in the home's double parlors. Other noted features include Lewis Comfort Tiffany glass panels, Philadelphia pressed brick and a rooftop cupola with panoramic views of the historic city.

Shortly after its completion, the home survived the great earthquake of August 1886, though there was some damage which was repaired. Rodgers and his heirs lived in the home until 1920 when the Scottish Rite Cathedral Association purchased it. They later sold it in 1940 to the Atlantic Coast Life Insurance Company.

Richard Widman, the current and fourth owner, purchased the house in 1997, recognizing that it had all the ingredients to become the finest luxury hotel in Charleston. Amazingly, the building still retained many of its original architectural features down to the custom-built louvered window treatments with original Victorian hardware installed in 1886.

After a careful, 18-month restoration, Widman, architect Joe Schmidt of Evans and Schmidt, and interior designer Pam Plowden of Pulliam Morris Interiors in Columbia, S.C., transformed this once gracious home into an upscale hotel, blending elements of the past and present. The team kept the original rooms intact and creatively designed other rooms to add a more comfortable, yet sumptuous décor.

In 2000, Widman converted the carriage house behind the home, which once housed the stables and carriages, into Circa 1886, today a AAA Four Diamond, Forbes Four Star award-winning restaurant.

In 2004, the structure that was originally used as the stable for the Mansion was renovated to house the Spa at Wentworth Mansion. The 1,000 square foot spa offers patrons a full range of treatments.