

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: South Carolina	
COUNTY: Charleston	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	AUG 30 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: *Nicholson, James, House*
Ashley Hall School
AND/OR HISTORIC:
James Nicholson House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
172 Rutledge Avenue
CITY OR TOWN:
Charleston
STATE
South Carolina

CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
045	Charleston	019

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Ashley Hall School
STREET AND NUMBER:
172 Rutledge Avenue
CITY OR TOWN:
Charleston

STATE:	CODE
South Carolina	045

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Charleston County Courthouse
STREET AND NUMBER:
Courthouse Square
CITY OR TOWN:
Charleston

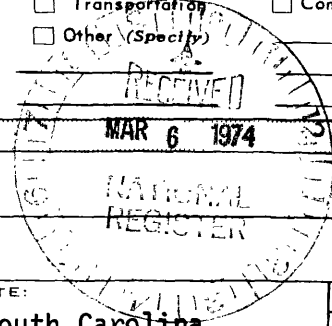
STATE:	CODE
South Carolina	045

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina
DATE OF SURVEY: 1973
 Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
South Carolina Department of Archives and History
STREET AND NUMBER:
1430 Senate Street
CITY OR TOWN:
Columbia

STATE:	CODE
South Carolina	045

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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	AUG 30 1974	
COUNTY:	FOR NPS USE ONLY	

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (arches glazed) Unaltered			<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Exterior: This building was constructed of stuccoed brick painted white; it is two stories over a high basement with rusticated masonry. The portico is supported by four giant-order unfluted Ionic columns with Renaissance capitals in Palladian stance upon balustraded pedestals. The pediment is denticulated and has in it triptych Gothic windows.

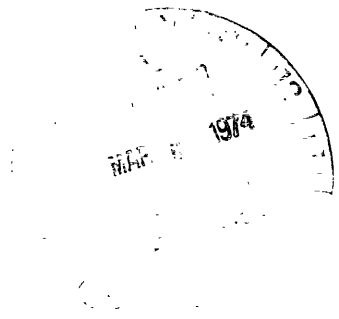
The basement's front elevation has a central segmented arch flanked to either side by a semicircular arch. Originally open, the arches have been glazed. The portico facade is a deeply-convex apse with second-story balconies and wrought-iron railings.

The windows under the portico on the main floor are triple sash, while the second floor has balconies; to either side of the portico are Gothic flanking windows. The watertable is sandstone.

Interior: The house has a ballroom and an elaborate drawing room and parlor on the main floor; the main upper-story rooms are bedrooms. The ceilings of the ballroom, drawing room, and parlor are of worked plaster, and the rooms have carved marble mantels; the original wood floors and plastered walls remain throughout the house. An impressive feature of the house, a flying staircase, extends from ground level to the attic, rising four stories.

The interior, although quite original and imaginative, lacks repose from its excessive elaboration; one is given to believe that much of the interior decor was carried out at later periods by successive owners. (Albert Simons, FAIA)

Surroundings: The house is now an administration and recreation building surrounded by other school buildings on the Ashley Hall School campus. Large hardwood trees shade the lot and the approaches are banked with well-kept shrubbery.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) ca. 1816

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed ca. 1816, Ashley Hall was once the home of wealthy Charleston merchants. Distinctive architecturally, it now serves as a private school for girls.

Architecture: Although Ashley Hall has been attributed to William Jay, the exuberance of the structure is foreign to the classic restraint of that architect. The structure's attribution to Jay was based upon the high elevation of the main floor above the ground and the height of the principal rooms; in addition, the unusual expression of triptych Gothic windows in the otherwise classic revival pediment are indicative of Jay's designs.

The portico is carried by four giant-order unfluted Ionic columns with Scamozzi capitals placed in a Palladian stance. Behind the portico is a deeply convex apse with second-story balconies with wrought-iron railings.

The interior curved walls echo the apsidal niche of the portico and the extruded semicircular balconies to either side of the building.

The entire house rests upon a high basement with arcade, the arches of which echo the stance of the columns of the portico.

In the architectural survey of Charleston, a jury composed of Dr. William Murtagh, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, Professor Bernard Lemann, Tulane University School of Architecture, Mr. Carl Feiss and Mr. Russell Wright, consultants to the city, noted this structure as exceptional. The notation indicates that the building is of the highest architectural design quality, well-proportioned, and architecturally sophisticated. Windows, classical orders or other period designs, chimneys, verandas, massing, materials, textures, refined detail, and craftsmanship are all elegant and innovative. The structure is to be preserved and protected in situ at all costs.

Commerce and Politics: In 1838 James R. Pringle bought the house. Pringle was a prominent Unionist during the Nullification controversy and a member of the state legislature from 1808 to 1818. At the time he bought the house, Pringle was the collector of customs for the port of Charleston.

Pringle sold the house to George A. Trenholm in 1845. Trenholm was a

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McClure, Harlan, et al. South Carolina Architecture 1670-1970. Columbia: Tricentennial Commission, 1970.
 McKee, Henry J. (ed.) Historic American Building Survey -- South Carolina Catalog. Washington: H.A.B.S. Commission, 1972.
 Simons, Albert, and W.H.J. Thomas. An Architectural Guide to Charleston, South Carolina: 1700-1900 (unpublished manuscript). Charleston: Historic Charleston Foundation, 1972.
 Charleston Deeds, T-vol.11, p. 315; P-vol.10, p.465; T-vol.10, p. 274; T-vol. 11, p. 310; F-vol.18, p.2; L-vol.25, p. 245.
 Charleston City Directories

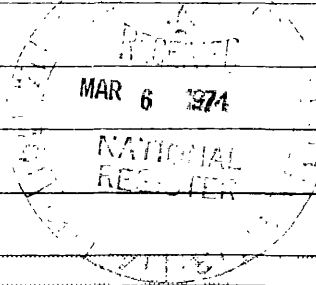
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		°	'	"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		32	47	12
SE	° ' "	° ' "		79	56	44
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **5 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Staff -- Historic Preservation Division

ORGANIZATION: **South Carolina Department of Archives and History** DATE: **Jan. 21, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:
1430 Senate Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Columbia** STATE: **South Carolina** CODE: **045**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Charles E. Lee
 Title: South Carolina Historic Preservation Officer
 Date: January 28, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

A. R. W. [Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 2/30/74

ATTEST:
Charles [Signature]
 Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date: 8-29-74

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE South Carolina	
COUNTY Charleston	
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	AUG 30 1974

(Number all entries)

8. Significance (continued) Ashley Hall

wealthy merchant and financier who became Secretary of the Confederate Treasury in 1864. He was president of the John Fraser trading house, which had a branch in Liverpool. This company, known as Fraser, Trenholm, and Company acted on behalf of the Confederate States of America in purchasing European goods. Trenholm also controlled a fleet of blockade runners that carried cotton through the Federal naval blockades.

Education: In 1909 Mary Vardrine McBee founded Ashley Hall, a preparatory school for girls.

Charleston Deeds lists Patrick Duncan as acquiring ownership of this property in 1798. In 1802 the Charleston City Directory gave the address of Duncan as being "over Cannon's Bridge" which includes the area that is today Rutledge Avenue. Although land ownership is dated as early as the turn of the century, architecturally the house appears to have been constructed ca. 1816.

The historic name of this structure refers to James Nicholson, who owned the house from 1829 to 1838.

