

The William Gibbs House, located at 64 South Battery, may look somewhat out of place today. Though unusual in appearance because of the absence of verandas, the house was designed to be viewed from the water. With the 20th-century construction of Murray Boulevard, the Gibbs House and South Battery now find themselves one street off the waterfront.

William Gibbs was a wealthy ship owner and merchant. He constructed his home in 1772 behind his wharf that extended 300 ft. to the Ashley River. When Gibbs constructed his Charleston "double house," it was the most westerly home on South Bay, now known as South Battery, facing the Ashley River and James Island. Eight years after the construction of his large home, Charleston was under siege and fell to the British army. Like many Charlestonians, Gibbs was taken prisoner and sent to St. Augustine where he was jailed as a traitor. His family was evicted from its fine home, and the British converted this South Bay mansion to a hospital for British troops. The family regained control of the home after the British evacuated Charleston in 1782.

Gibbes died in 1789, and the home was sold by his estate to a widow, Sarah Moore Smith, in 1794. Smith descendants occupied the home for four generations, significantly altering its interior. In 1928, Cornelia Roebing, a native of South Carolina returning from New York, purchased the Gibbs house and made significant alterations and improvements. She also had the gardens restored and expanded by noted Charleston landscape architect Loutrel Briggs.



SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*William Gibbs House*



Pink House may be Charleston's oldest surviving house. Built between 1694 and 1712, this small structure is located at 17 Chalmers Street, one of the few cobblestones streets left in Charleston. The building is two stories tall with a small attic and only one room to a floor.

The house gets its name from the pinkish color of the Bermuda stone used in the construction of the building. As this coral limestone is exposed to air, it becomes stronger and turns gray in color. The durability of the stone is the biggest factor in the long life of this historic structure.

In 1752, Pink House was owned by Thomas Coker, a taverner who operated a "groggery" catering to sailors in Charles Towne's red light district. One resident described this part of town in the early 19th century as, "inhabited by courtesans, thieves and cutthroats of the vilest character, which rendered it a dangerous undertaking to traverse there after nightfall." After the bordellos were run out of this part of town, it's likely the tavern ceased to operate as well.

Pink House was restored in the 1930s. Today, this building is home to Pink House Gallery, displaying the works of four lowcountry artists.



∞ Pink House Tavern ∞