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Politics and the Built Environment: Civic Structures of Eighteenth Century Williamsburg, Virginia and Charles Town, South Carolina

Paul Bartow

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POLITICS AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: CIVIC STRUCTURES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA AND CHARLES TOWN, SOUTH CAROLINA

by

Paul Bartow

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Accepted by:

Woody Holton, Director of Thesis

Carl Lounsbury, Reader

Cheryl L. Addy, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

DEDICATION

To my mother and grandfather, who helped instill in me an abiding love for the past.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study compares Williamsburg and Charles Town as colonial capital cities with attention to how their political culture was reflected through public buildings and the built environment. Drawing on traveler accounts, contemporary descriptions, government records, and maps, this thesis analyzes the character-defining features of public architecture in each city. I examine the capitol buildings, governor's residences, churches, and town plans to see how the colonists in these respective cities viewed their society, their political order, and their place within the British Empire.

I argue that due to its development in the late seventeenth century and its reliance on the architectural tastes of local craftsmen, Williamsburg as a capital city reflected earlier English building styles than Charles Town. Furthermore, Virginians created Williamsburg as a city whose primary purpose was politics. Politics was a way of life and could be easily seen through the urban planning and the built environment of its capital city. By contrast, Charlestonians built their city at the turn of the eighteenth century with the help of Atlantic craftsmen and builders. Their city was built to reflect the more recent trend of baroque architecture emanating from London. Charles Town was primarily a bustling Atlantic commercial hub and a fabulously refinement city. Political public architecture was secondary to these ends and began in earnest in 1756 with the construction of the statehouse.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The development of public buildings and capital cities were important milestones in the political, economic, and cultural development of the American colonies. As architectural historian Dr. Carl Lounsbury has stated, "the fortunes of a city were frequently measured by its public buildings."[1] During the eighteenth century, colonists in both Virginia and South Carolina sought to display their rising prosperity, gentility, established political orders, commitment to the rule of law, and identity as British subjects. One of the most important ways they did so was through the built environment. Colonists sought to bestow Williamsburg and Charles Town, their respective seats of government, with all the necessary dignity, symmetry, beauty, and authority of proper Englishmen.

On the surface, Virginia and South Carolina had many similarities. Both were slave societies by the eighteenth century, both exported profitable staples derived from plantation economies, both established the Anglican Church as the state religion, both sought to emulate English ways of life in the New World, and both created magnificent public buildings of brick and stone. There were also important differences, however. Charles Town was a truly urban environment and a bustling deep water port whereas Williamsburg was a small urban area in a colony characterized by dispersed plantations.

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[1] See Carl Lounsbury, "Ornaments of Civic Aspiration: The Public Buildings of Williamsburg," in Robert P. Maccubbin, ed., *Williamsburg, Virginia: A City Before the State, 1699-1999* (Williamsburg: Distributed by The University Press of Virginia, 2000), 25.

Though both Charles Town and Williamsburg were platted and laid out, Charles Town grew organically beyond its bounds and became the political center of the colony. Williamsburg by contrast only had a small neighborhood on the outskirts of the town that was not platted. The capital at Williamsburg was also created by legislative fiat and only drew people there primarily during the "public times" when settlers engaged in the politics of government.

By delving deeper into the development of these cities, the different political and cultural attitudes of each respective society can be uncovered. How were these cities established? What public buildings were constructed, how, at what time, and for what purposes? The answers to these questions reveal much about how these societies were organized, how they functioned, how they viewed themselves, and in what ways their cultures were reflected through the built environment.

Both colonies realized the importance of having a cultural and political center, but the fruits of their labor yielded different results. In answering these questions, it becomes clear that Virginians emphasized order, valued political leadership as the proper role of the gentry, and consciously sought to portray their home as the crown jewel of British North America. Politics in Williamsburg simply was a way of life. This was readily apparent through the urban planning and the built environment of its capital. By contrast, Charles Town was a city that developed originally as a frontier outpost but evolved into a thriving commercial hub, emerged as a fabulously wealthy city, and rapidly cultivated refined tastes. Inhabitants of Charles Town generally speaking did not place the same value on politics as Virginians but instead dedicated their urban environment to commerce, private societies, and entertainment. The urban layout, the creation of capitol

buildings and statehouses, churches, courts, and residences for their colonial governors all reflected each society's respective values.[2]

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[2] For the essential works on Williamsburg see John William Reps, *Tidewater Towns: City Planning in Colonial Virginia and Maryland*, Williamsburg Architectural Studies (Williamsburg, Va: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; distributed by the University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1972); Marcus Whiffen, *The Public Buildings of Williamsburg: Colonial Capital of Virginia*, Williamsburg Architectural Studies, v. 1 (Williamsburg, Va: Colonial Williamsburg, 1958); Graham Hood, *The Governor's Palace in Williamsburg: A Cultural Study*, Williamsburg Decorative Arts Series (Williamsburg, Va.: Chapel Hill, N.C: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation ; Distributed by University of North Carolina, 1991); William M. Kelso, *Jamestown, the Truth Revealed* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017); "The Building of Williamsburg," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1901): 73–92; Robert P. Maccubbin, ed., *Williamsburg, Virginia: A City Before the State, 1699-1999* (Williamsburg: City of Williamsburg: 2000); Carl Lounsbury, "Anglican Church Design in the Chesapeake: English Inheritances and Regional Interpretations," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 9 (2003); J. E. Morpurgo, *Their Majesties' Royall Colledge: William and Mary in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Williamsburg: College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1976); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

For works that cover both Williamsburg and Charles Town, consult Carl Lounsbury, "Seats of Government: The Public Buildings of British America," in Daniel Maudlin and Bernard L. Herman, eds., *Building the British Atlantic World: Spaces, Places, And Material Culture, 1600-1850* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); James D. Kornwolf and Georgiana Wallis Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial North America*, vol. 2, 3 vols., Creating the North American Landscape (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Robert K. Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities*, Second Edition, Planning, History and Environment Series (New York: Routledge, 2013); Richard Beale Davis, *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South, 1585-1763* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978); David S. Shields, ed., *Material Culture in Anglo-America: Regional Identity and Urbanity in the Tidewater, Lowcountry, and Caribbean*, The Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 2009); Carl Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South* (New York: Atheneum, 1980).

For works specifically on Charles Town, see Carl Lounsbury, "The Dynamics of Architectural Design in Eighteenth-Century Charles Town and the Lowcountry," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 7 (1997); Walter B. Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1998); Robert M. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History*, A History of the American Colonies (Millwood, N.Y: KTO Press, 1983); George C. Rogers, *Charles Town in the Age of the Pinckneys*, 1st ed (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969); Elizabeth J. Reitz and Martha A. Zierden, *Charles Town: An Archaeology of Life in a Coastal Community* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2016); Emma Hart, *Building Charles Town: Town and Society in the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010); Carl Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse: An Architectural History of South Carolina's Colonial Capitol and Charles Town County Courthouse*, Historic Charles Town Foundation Studies in History and Culture (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 2000); Mary C. Ferrari, "Charity, Folly, and Politics: Charles Town's Social Clubs on the Eve of the Revolution," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 112, no. 1/2 (2011): 50–83.

For contemporary travel accounts, refer to Schöpf, *Travels in the Confederation (1783-1784) from the German of Johann David Schöpf*, ed. Alfred James Morrison 2 vols. (Philadelphia: W.J. Campbell, 1911); Hugh Jones, *The Present State of Virginia: Giving a Particular and Short Account* (New York, 1865); Ebenezer Hazard, "The Journal of Ebenezer Hazard in Virginia, 1777," ed. Fred Shelley, *The Virginia*

Any Master's Thesis investigation must necessarily be limited in scope, and for this reason I have attempted to confine myself to these cities' town plans and the dominant public buildings constructed by the American Revolution. I will begin this study with a brief introductory background for these two cities. In the second chapter, I will analyze the respective town plans of both cities and the dominant "focal point" buildings in each urban landscape. My analysis then proceeds by analyzing these focal points individually for the next three chapters, beginning with the most similar and concluding with the most dissimilar. Chapter Three focuses on the Anglican churches and how these buildings reflected each colony's distinct building traditions. In Chapter Four, I examine the construction and significance of the statehouses in both Williamsburg and Charles Town in order to illuminate the political function of each city and the colonists' conception of politics. Chapter Five is dedicated to an analysis of each colony's governor's residences and how their living arrangements illuminate the role of executive authority. The sixth chapter examines trade and commerce in each colony and the Charles Town Exchange & Customs House in particular as a unique character-defining feature of the cityscape. In Chapter Seven, I discuss both advocates and obstacles for public buildings projects, and how these factors helped to shape the cityscape in both colonies. I conclude this study in Chapter Eight with some final reflections on the significance of these public buildings.

Magazine of History and Biography, 1954, 400–423; Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia, in Four Parts* (London: Printed for R. Parker, 1722); Elmer D. Johnson and Kathleen Lewis Sloan, eds., *South Carolina: A Documentary Profile of the Palmetto State*, 1st ed (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971); Josiah Quincy, "Journal of Josiah Quincy, June 1773," in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, October 1915 - June 1916*, ed. Henry Cabot Lodge et al., vol. 49 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1916); Andrew Burnaby, *Burnaby's Travels Through North America; Reprinted from the Third Edition of 1798* (New York, A. Wessels Company, 1904).

1.1 SUB-SECTION: WILLIAMSBURG

The city of Williamsburg emerged from a rural, dispersed plantation society, but its inhabitants created a city that embodied their commitment to politics, education, and a polite and learned society. Historians have argued Williamsburg was significant since it both provided an urban environment unknown in the colony and served as the centerpiece of English culture on Virginia's undeveloped landscape.[3] By the middle of the eighteenth century, Williamsburg's public architecture was an awe-inspiring testament to the colony at the center of British North America. The city plan was designed to express Virginians' social and political ideas and to articulate these ideas through construction of grand brick buildings. Williamsburg captured the larger cultural changes happening in the colony such as the rise of conspicuous consumption, the fascination with symmetry, the adoption of classical forms, and Anglicization.[4] By the 1750s, Williamsburg was not only the political capital, but also the social capital where bewigged gentlemen entertained and developed a growing interest in public life and polite society. Though a somewhat rustic looking urban space, Williamsburg was an exceptional and deliberate effort to concentrate authority in a dispersed society.

1.2 SUB-SECTION: CHARLES TOWN

Charles Town was more focused on supporting transatlantic commerce; only at the end of the colonial period did South Carolinians seek to express their political ambitions in the built environment. Many historians have described Charles Town as a

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[3] Reps, *Tidewater Towns*, 185; Wenger, Mark "Boomtown: Williamsburg in the Eighteenth Century" in Maccubbin, *Williamsburg, Virginia*, 39.

[4] Martha J. McNamara, *From Tavern to Courthouse: Architecture and Ritual in American Law, 1658-1860* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 6.

"city-state" due to its concentration of the white population, its truly urban landscape, its economic dominance as the South's main port of commerce, its robust social life, and its hegemonic concentration of political and legal authority.[5] In South Carolina, the local vestries were less developed than in Virginia and the colonists did not create functional county courts until the turn of the nineteenth century. All political and legal processes started at the top in Charles Town and filtered down through special committees appointed and funded by the legislature. Whereas Virginia was largely an English colony, Charles Town was multiethnic and included French Huguenots, Dutch, Jews, Scots, and Irish settlers.

The city's fortunes grew with the enormous profits of the rice boom after the 1730s, and the port's wealth increased due to its strategic location as the midway point for shipping between the West Indies and the northern mainland colonies. Perhaps most significantly, Charles Town was from the beginning a significant city in the life of the colony. The proprietors envisioned a colony of urban settlements, not the dispersed plantation culture of Virginia. Moreover, most rice planters lived in splendor in Charles Town; they avoided taking up residence at their "factory-in-the-field" plantations until the summer season at which time they fled the unhealthy lowcountry climate. Due to these two very different systems of political economy (Charles Town urban absentee planters and Virginia's agrarian ideal and resident planters), Charles Town developed a

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[5] For examples of historians describing Charles Town as a city-state, see Brian P. Janiskee, *Local Government in Early America: The Colonial Experience and Lessons from the Founders* (Lanham: Claremont, CA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 50, 69; Keith Krawczynski, *Daily Life in the Colonial City* (Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2013); Louis B. Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies , 1607-1763*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper, 1957), 18; Jack P. Greene, *The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in The Southern Royal Colonies, 1689-1776* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 35; Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, & Subjects: The Culture of Power in The South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), 37; Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse*, 9.

flourishing social and cultural life. Whereas Virginians' loyalties were with their locality and often their estate, the loyalties of Charles Town's inhabitants were to the city itself and to the pursuit of wealth. Everything worth doing and anyone worth knowing were in Charles Town. The city also had access to talented musicians, artisans, and inquisitive minds due to its transatlantic networks. Because Charles Town was the wealthiest urban center in the South, its built environment reflected its grandeur. The city was truly fabulous, but less politically minded. As South Carolina historian Eugene Sirmans noted, Charles Town was the capital city but it did not look like one—there were no public buildings of any kind prior to 1756. In the words of John Oldmixon, Charles Town was essentially "a Market Town."[6]

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[6] M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina: A Political History, 1663-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 233. The only buildings that had public functions but are no longer extant were the post office, a library, the Council chamber (located on the site of present Exchange), the Dock Street Theater, and the Guard House. Kornwolf and Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning*, 2:857.

CHAPTER 2

THE TOWN PLANS

The town plans of Williamsburg and Charles Town were similar in many respects. Both were conceived toward the end of the seventeenth century: 1670 for Charles Town and 1699 for Williamsburg. Both were named after monarchs: King Charles II and King William III. Both were located near the confluence of two rivers: the James and York thirty miles from Williamsburg and the Ashley and the Cooper Rivers at Charles Town. Both were also deliberately planned cities, with Charles Town being based on Ashley Cooper's Grand Model and Williamsburg based on Governor Francis Nicholson's baroque plan. Finally, both plans envisioned the construction of public buildings at the intersection of the city's main streets. Cooper's original Grand Model called for public buildings to be constructed at the intersection of the town's two principal streets, Broad and Meeting Street, while Nicholson's baroque plan for Williamsburg envisioned grand, diagonal, open vistas that would prominently display Virginia's civic architecture.

Despite these similarities, the town planning schemes of Williamsburg and Charles Town were different in several key respects. Governor Francis Nicholson's plan for Williamsburg was conceived at a time when the authorities in England sought to push Virginians into consolidated, governable urban spaces. His urban layout was a masterpiece that captured the ethos of the day—symmetry, order, and refinement. Though it was an isolated urban space in a rural colony, the town plan of Williamsburg

did situate important public buildings at the end of magnificent vistas to showcase the authority of the crown and the tidewater gentry. Williamsburg was an exceptional effort to concentrate authority in a dispersed society and one of the only successful cities to emerge in Virginia during the colonial period.

The Grand Model of Charles Town by contrast emerged out of the need for military defensibility due to its proximity to Spanish Florida. Ashley Cooper, one of the Carolina proprietors, planned the city as an urban settlement in direct opposition to Virginia's dispersed plantation model. The proprietors drew upon the experience of their forbears in Virginia and the Ulster Plantations and modified their vision accordingly. Over time, Charles Town's urban landscape would not be visually dominated by public buildings but would instead come to be characterized as a bustling place of commerce while Williamsburg was known for its central role in the colony's political life.

2.1 SUB-SECTION: ORIGINS

These urban centers were markedly different from their origins. Williamsburg emerged after eighty years of settlement in the Virginia colony. The occasion for Williamsburg's ascent was the disastrous burning of Jamestown in October of 1698—the second time the statehouse had burned.[7] The move was not unprecedented. The legislature had formerly entertained talks to remove the capital, and Governor Nicholson seized the opportunity to relocate the seat of government to Williamsburg, or Middle Plantation as it was called at the time. Middle Plantation served as the temporary capital city during Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, and construction of the College of William and

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[7] The first statehouse was constructed 1660-62. It was burned by Bacon's followers in September 1676, and the refurbished building burned again in 1698.

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Mary was already underway in the 1690s. A church, some stores, taverns, and a few homes of successful tobacco planters dotted the landscape. The capital was officially moved in 1699, ending Jamestown's reign as the capital city.

Virginia was a thoroughly rural colony with no true urban center. The colony was broadly dispersed and possessed many smaller centers of power and influence, local sources of authority, and a deep connection to the home and the plantation lifestyle. Ever since the settlers concluded it was profitable to plant tobacco, they had been spreading out from Jamestown in all directions. The establishment of tobacco as a profitable crop in the 1610s accelerated the push of settlement away from any central location. Tobacco required large tracts of land with continuous fallow periods, but so too did raising livestock. Most planters cultivated around 200 acres of land. The typical property had a small orchard, access to upwards of 150 acres of forested lands for free range livestock, a modest double room "Virginia House," and a split rail fence. To European eyes, the agricultural practices in Virginia were slovenly and the nature of settlement was unfamiliar. There were no urban centers in the colony outside of perhaps a barely distinguishable county court or tavern.[8]

To remedy this lack of a political and administrative core, the Virginia legislature attempted to consolidate settlement through various town acts beginning in the 1660s and continuing through the 1690s, most of which were short lived failures. The first such effort was a 1662 town act. Spearheaded by Governor Berkeley, the Virginia legislature passed a law calling for more than thirty, two-story houses to be constructed in

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[8] Jean Burrell Russo and J. Elliott Russo, *Planting an Empire: The Early Chesapeake in British North America*, Regional Perspectives on Early America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 103–4.

Williamsburg. Inspired by building developments in London's West End, all wooden buildings in Jamestown were to be replaced by structures made of brick. Though the act failed and all the brick buildings were destroyed in Bacon's Rebellion, the 1662 act did leave an important legacy. It encouraged the construction of the first brick statehouse in Jamestown and the construction of the first brick row houses in Virginia, both of which would be more fully realized in the construction of Williamsburg.[9]

By contrast, Charles Town was from its inception a designed urban community in direct response against Virginia. The Grand Model, or Ashley Cooper Plan, sought to make South Carolina a colony of urban settlements. The Fundamental Constitutions, written by Lord Ashley Cooper (the Earl of Shaftesbury) and his secretary John Locke, not only articulated the hierarchical system of quasi-feudal land distribution but also promoted an urban vision for Charles Town. This urban vision included eight essential characteristics:

1. Deliberate urbanization in preference to dispersed settlement
2. Land rights allocated in a combination of town, suburban, and country lots
3. Town planned and laid out in advance of settlement
4. Wide streets in geometric, usually gridiron form, usually on an area of one square mile
5. Public squares
6. Standard-sized, rectangular plots, spacious compared to British towns
7. Plots reserved for public purposes
8. Use of common land to physically distinguish between town and country[10]

Cooper studied the early settlements in the Chesapeake and concluded that dispersed agriculture was a threat to order and the welfare of the colony for several

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[9] Willie Graham et al., "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (July 1, 2007): 473–84.

[10] See Robert K. Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities*, Second Edition, Planning, History and Environment Series (New York: Routledge, 2013), 10.

reasons. First, Cooper believed dispersed settlement turned Englishmen into barbarians. He wrote that "wee find by the experience of both Virginia and Maryland that men will expose themselves to the inconvenience and Barbarisme of scattered Dwellings in unknown Countreyes." Second, Virginia's large and dispersed plantations reduced opportunities for authentic communal life and prevented the cultivation of civic virtue. The proprietors' plan by contrast was intended to nurture civic culture, civility, and create a "neareness of the Neighborhood." Third, Cooper's design forced colonists to settle in towns instead of "stragling and distant Habitations" since concentrating settlement in an urban center would allow the hereditary aristocracy to thwart the emergence of a democracy. The proprietors specifically sought to prevent a rejection of the central governing authority as happened in Virginia during Bacon's Rebellion. Fourth, concentrated settlement would enable the proprietors to harness the colonists' profit motives for the benefit of Carolina as a collective enterprise based around an urban center. Finally, dispersed settlement caused avoidable territorial conflicts with Indians and made maintaining and extending political authority more difficult over an increasingly large area.[11]

Both urban plans of Williamsburg and Charles Town were inspired by proposed plans to rebuild London after the Great Fire of 1666 but the resulting designs were distinct. Governor Nicholson's plan for Williamsburg drew upon Christopher Wren's proposed design for London, including diagonal streets and *ronds-points,* or circles. This axial design was derived from ancient Rome, and Williamsburg incorporated both the major east-west axial street, or *decumanus* as well as the main north-south axial street, or

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[11] S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), 11, 22, 36–37; Home, *Of Planting and Planning*, 22.

cardo, after 1706 when the Palace Green was established. These urban elements were also present in Louis XIV's France and became typical of the Baroque age.[12]

The urban plan of Williamsburg also hearkened back to antiquity. The legislature's act directing construction designated that a state house be erected and "called and knowne by the Name of the Capitoll." This was the first appearance of the word "capitol" in the colonies. According to Robert Beverley, Nicholson "flatter'd himself with the fond Imagination, of being the Founder of a new City." Many Virginians were also familiar with Basil Kennett's *Romaei Antiquae Notitia.* This book was dedicated to the Duke of Gloucester, after whom the Duke of Gloucester Street in Williamsburg was named, and described the ideal capitol building as occupying four acres—the Capitol in Williamsburg covered five. The Roman parallels in Williamsburg were striking. This was truly an attempt to create a new, orderly, and majestic public city while combining elements from Rome, England, and the Baroque period.[13]

The urban plan of Williamsburg also divided the city into separate zones akin to Renaissance town planning. These zones, the eastern and western sections of the city, were mathematically related. The western portion of the city was half a mile on each side and served as the residential community. Bruton Church was located at its center and the college stood at its western boundary. The eastern portion was half the size and included the governmental and administrative buildings as well as the shops, taverns, and inns. The link between these two sections would be the market square, roughly in the middle of the city. Market Square, developed slightly later in the 1710s and 1720s, and Capitol

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[12] Whiffen, *Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 8-9.

[13] Reps, *Tidewater Towns,* 143-148; Whiffen, *Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 10-11.

Square were intended to reflect the classical public square that was a prominent feature of Renaissance town planning.[14]

The town plan adopted in Charles Town, though also inspired by the Great Fire of 1666, had a much different character. Ashley Cooper's plan for Charles Town was much more regular, featuring a checkerboard layout of regular rows of streets, church squares, and rectangular plots. The two main streets were each seventy feet wide, secondary streets were fifty feet wide, and tertiary streets were thirty feet wide. Cooper followed the gridiron design typical of the Ulster plantations in the early seventeenth century. This gridiron plan became a prominent feature of London's aristocratic estates in the 1630s such as the Bedford Estate at Covent Garden. It later became popular in colonial towns such as Savannah and Philadelphia. Charles Town was the first city in colonial North America to adopt such a design.[15]

The Ashley Cooper Plan went into temporary abeyance due to the lack of colonists but still continued to shape settlement in Charles Town. Most white colonists continued to live in Charles Town—as many as half of the colony's white population by 1700. Moreover, the emerging plantation system in South Carolina diffused from Charles Town, but these settlements never completely separated from the port city's influence. Historian S. Max Edelson has described three zones of expansion emanating away from Charles Town in concentric circles: the core zone, the secondary zone, and the frontier zone.[16] Though the Grand Model and the proprietors' vision of an urban colony were

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[14] Reps, *Tidewater Towns*, 151, 163.

[15] Whiffen, *Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 8; Home, *Of Planting and Planning*, 22–23.

[16] The Charles Town core zone was characterized mostly by smaller grants, material refinement, and production for the urban marketplace. The secondary transition zone was ten to fifteen miles wide and

defeated with the overthrow of proprietary government in 1719, the plan left an indelible mark on the colony through the establishment of Charles Town. This would have enormous effect on the colony's political development as a "city-state" in which political power, trade, social life, and wealth was concentrated in an urban core that only reluctantly surrendered its hegemony to the rest of the colony.[17]

2.2 SUB-SECTION: EXPLANATION FOR PLAN DIFFERENCES

The difference in the urban layouts of these cities can be best explained by their envisioned functions. Williamsburg was created during a time of peace following Bacon's Rebellion, increasing consolidation of the planter-elite, and a low level of Indian conflict. It was also designed to embody the existing ecclesiastical, scholarly, and political sources of authority in the colony. The situation in Charles Town was rather different. The newly planted colony was situated dangerously close to the Spanish settlement at St. Augustine in Florida, the French in Louisiana, and Native American tribes to the west; thus the proprietors needed to consider military defensibility in their urban plan. It is no surprise that Nicholson chose to embellish Williamsburg with elegant, decorative baroque features while Ashley Cooper's plan featured military regularity.[18]

Nicholson's urban plan of Williamsburg was intended to highlight the city's importance as a cultural, political, educational, and ecclesiastical capital. In whatever

marked by inland rice plantations that experienced intermittent flooding from the rivers. The frontier zone was comprised of huge "factory in the fields" plantations, an impoverished material culture, and produced most of the profitable staples for absentee planters who lived in Charles Town.

[17] Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina*, 41, 126–65.

[18] Home, *Of Planting and Planning*, 22–23.

colony he governed, Nicholson sought to promote tighter bonds between the colony and England through public buildings projects. These structures were designed to demonstrate the authority of the imperial government and the Church of England. Having just completed his design for the capital at Annapolis in Maryland, Nicholson came to Virginia to create another imperial center in the Chesapeake. Williamsburg was a powerful symbol not only of colonial governance, but also of liberal education and the power of the Anglican Church, demonstrating the grand coming together of these institutions. Nicholson's plan highlighted what would become the capitol building, the College of William and Mary, and Bruton Parish Church, all of which stood as pillars of the colony's political and religious order.[19]

Furthermore, the legislature passed a bill that clearly highlighted the political purpose of the city. The bill specified that Williamsburg's plan should aim "for the convenient Sitting and Holding of the Generall Assemblyes and Courts at a healthy proper & comodius Place." It would also need to consider the bustle of public activity that would take place here. The city should be "suitable for the Reception of a considerable Number and Concourse of People that of Necessity must resort to the Place where the Generall Assemblys will be convened and where the Council and Supream Courts of Justice" will be kept. The design for the city was political from its beginnings.[20]

The naming of streets in both cities reflects Williamsburg's political purposes. Williamsburg's streets were named to pay homage to royal figures. The city itself was

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[19] Home, *Of Planting and Planning*, 20; Whiffen, *The Public Buildings of Williamsburg,* 8-9, 14; Maccubbin, *Williamsburg, Virginia,* 31. For more on Nicholson's contributions to public architecture, see Chapter 7.

[20] Reps, *Tidewater Towns,* 143, 146, 148; Whiffen, *The Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 10, 11.

named in honor of King William. Duke of Gloucester Street, the main street in the city, was named in honor of the Queen's eldest son and was flanked on both sides by Francis Street and Nicholson Street, named after the governor who in all probability designed the original town plan. By contrast, Charles Town's streets were predominately functional in nature. Meeting Street (so named after the Quaker meeting house nearby), Bay Street, Broad Street, and Church Street easily situated residents and travelers in space.

2.3 SUB-SECTION: FOCAL POINTS

Though Williamsburg and Charles Town's city plans were designed to showcase specific, prominently featured public buildings, the structures of focus were markedly different. Williamsburg's visual termini were situated at the ends of long, clear vistas to optimize their visibility. This would concentrate the attention of visitors by placing these public buildings at the ends of each major street, highlighting them with magnificent open vistas and unique architectural elements, and maximizing their visibility. These buildings included the College of William and Mary, the Capitol, the Governor's Mansion, and Bruton Parish Church. Taken together, these elements represented Williamsburg as the cosmopolitan center of learning, the seat of His Majesty's royal government, the center of executive power, and the symbol of the ecclesiastical authority. The Governor's Mansion was particularly ornate, while the architectural style of Bruton Parish was intentionally neat and plain, the new aesthetic that would govern building practices in Virginia from the 1710s through the 1770s.

Charles Town's focal points were spread out over several locations and developed after the period of original settlement. There were three focal points in total: the

intersection of the Broad and Meeting Streets at the city's center; the northern terminus of Church Street at St. Philip's Church; and the intersection of Broad Street and East Bay at the water's edge. Ashley Cooper designed the intersection of Broad and Meeting Streets to feature the most important public buildings and the city market at the western-most end of the walled city. Charles Town's public buildings projects would not begin until the 1750s with the construction of the State House followed by St. Michael's and then the Exchange & Customs House. The governor's house was also not an important place in the cityscape—a noticeable omission when compared to Williamsburg.[21]

St. Philip's Church, much like Bruton Parish in Williamsburg, was the first public building in the cityscape; in Charles Town, it was also the only public building present before the mid eighteenth century. St. Philip's was located on Church Street to the north. In contrast to neat and plain aesthetic of Bruton Parish, both St. Philip's and St. Michael's churches were elaborately designed.

The intersection of Broad and Meeting became the site of most of the city's public buildings by the 1760s when the colonists built the colonial Treasury, St. Michael's Church, the State House, and the Beef Market (see figure 2.8). However, this intersection was situated at the far western end of the original walled city and did not occupy a prominent, central place in the cityscape until the mid eighteenth century. Since there were four buildings located at the same intersection, none of them could command a viewer's attention like the Exchange Building and St. Philip's could due to their positioning at the terminus of a street.

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[21] See Krawczynski, *Daily Life in the Colonial City*, 21; Kornwolf and Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning*, 2:851–53; Home, *Of Planting and Planning*, 23.

The most visually dominant building in Charles Town was the Exchange Building and Custom House. Situated prominently at the end of Broad Street, the Exchange Building served as the focal point both by land as one walked down Broad Street and by sea as the incoming ships arrived at port, as evidenced by Thomas Leitch's 1771 oil painting of Charles Town (see figure 2.9).

There are various explanations for these differences in the respective plans of these cities. Williamsburg had several advantages that allowed its residents to construct an elegant city emphasizing politics, learning, and order. First, the colony had already been settled for almost a century and therefore had the opportunity to find a staple crop, grow increasingly wealthy, and develop stable political institutions. Second, Williamsburg was not confronted with a direct threat to its defenses since the conclusion of Bacon's Rebellion and could afford to plant a permanent and elaborate city. Williamsburg was also not located near hostile European powers and the threat of a Spanish invasion up the coast was minimized by the city's distance. Lastly, Williamsburg's planning benefitted from Nicholson's emphasis on public buildings projects.

By contrast, Charles Town was always a city concerned first with the necessity of defense, then of commerce, and only towards the end of the colonial period did the residents construct public buildings. Of the structures that regularly appear in the early maps of the city, most were either for defensive or commercial purposes such as the Half-Moon Battery, the Magazine, the various waterfront markets, and the customs house. The city's lack of civic architecture was noticeable. After twenty years of royal government in 1739, Charles Town still lacked a state house as the assembly met in local taverns. There

was also no governor's residence; the Council met above the guard house, and the court house and exchange building shared a home on the corner of Tradd and East Bay. Ultimately, the built environments of these cities reflected different cultural attitudes. Charles Town was very much like London in its single minded dedication to commerce whereas Williamsburg was more of a classically inspired "polis" dedicated to politics.

Figure 2.1. Christopher Wren. *Plan for the Rebuilding of the City of London, following the Great Fire of 1666.*
The diagonal avenues and *ronds-points* in this plan show many similarities to Williamsburg's layout.
Source: Royal Institute of British Architects.

REFERENCES

1 Temple Bar
2 Fleet Conduit
3 St. Dunstans in the West
4 Seargeants Inn
5 The New Channel
6 The College of Physicians
7 Doctors Commons
8 St. Pauls
9.10 Houses of the two Sheriffs
11 Mercers Chapel
12 Bow Church
13 The Fountain in Grace-church Street
14 St. Dunstans in the East
15 Guild Hall
16 Christs Hospital and Church
17 The Lord Mayor's House
18 The Royal Exchange
19 The Trinity House
20 The Custom House & Admiralty Court
21 The Navy Office
22 Billings-Gate
23 The Fish Market
24 Queen Hithe
25 Pauls Wharf
26 The Sluce
27 { Sessions House, Newgate Prison
    Publick Work-House & Bridewell.
28 The Church Yards
29 The Key
30 Black Friers Church & Watling Street
31 The Tower
32 New-Gate
33 Alders-Gate
34 Cripple-Gate
35 Moor-Gate
36 Bishops-Gate
37 Ald-Gate
38 Charles-Gate
+ The several Parish Churches
* The Halls of the 12 Antient Companies
○ The Publick Fountains.

Sir John Evelyn's Plan for Rebuilding the City of London after the Great Fire in 1666.

Figure 2.2. John Evelyn. *Proposed Plan for the Rebuilding of the City of London after the Great Fire in 1666*.
The diagonal avenues and *ronds-points* in this plan likewise may have inspired Williamsburg's baroque layout.
Source: Royal Institute of British Architects.
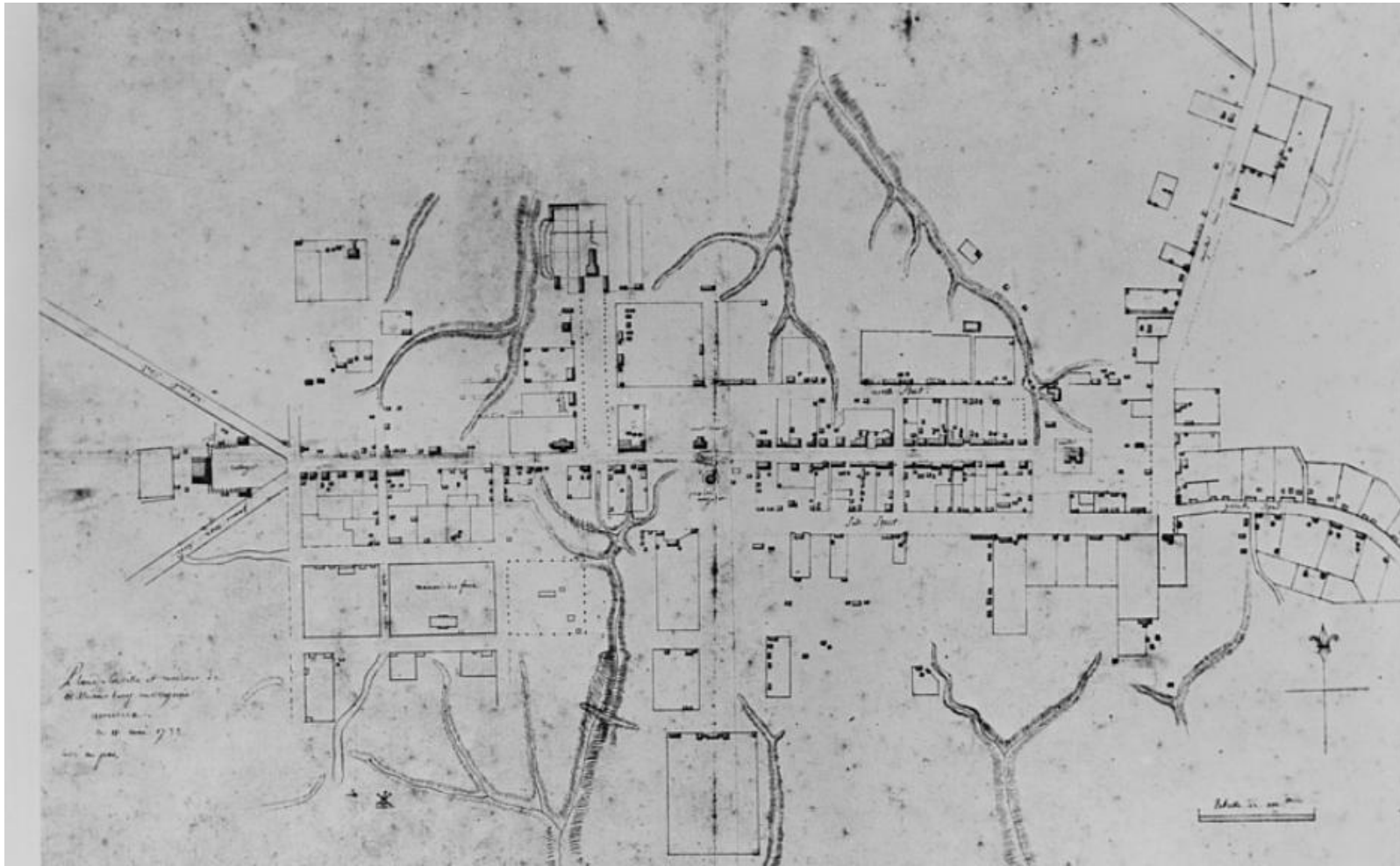
Figure 2.3. *"Frenchman's" Map of Williamsburg,* 1782.
Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Office of War Information Photograph Collection.
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8e01157/.
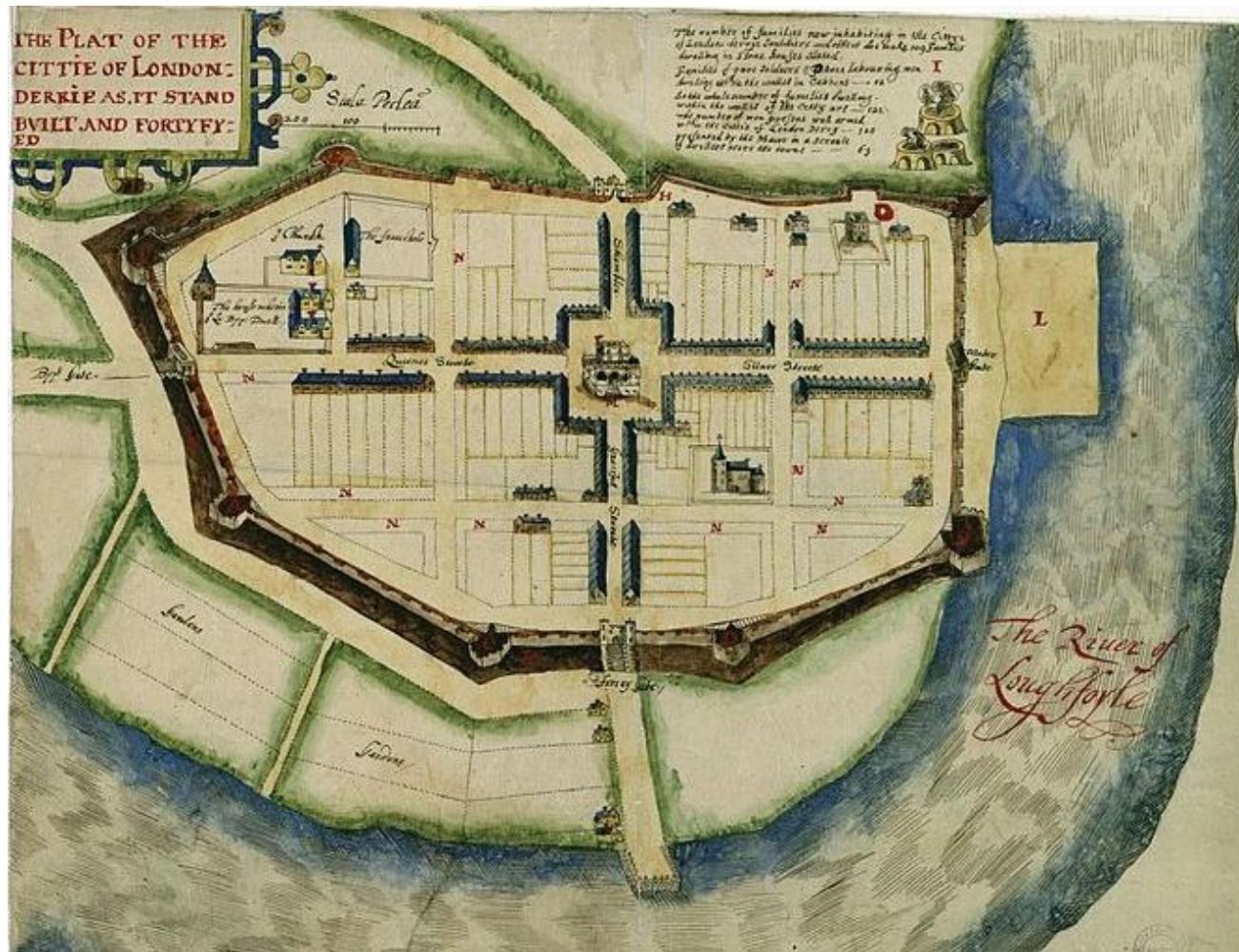
Figure 2.4. Sir Thomas Philips. *Plat of the Cittie of Londonderrie as it Stands Built and Fortified*. The fortified city features a grid layout and central square. It likely influenced Charles Town's layout. *Source:* Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Set 72157669782603576, ID 27114684854.

A Plan of the *TOWN & HARBOUR* of CHARLES-TOWN

A S H L E Y — R I V E R

COOPER — RIVER

Johnsons Fort

Hog Island Creek

Explaination
A Granville Baſtion
B Craven Baſtion
C Carteret Baſtion
D Colleton Baſtion
E Aſhley Baſtion
F Blakes Baſtion
G The Half Moon
H the Draw Bridge iṅ ỹ Line
I Iohnsons cover'd Half Moon
K the Draw Bridg in ỹ Half Moon
L the Pallisades
M the Creek on both ſides
N Lt. Coll Rhetts Bridg
O Another Bridge or Rea Lan Smith
P the Miniſters Houſe
Q the Engliſh Church
R the French Church
S the Presbyterian Meeting Houſe
T the Ana Baptiſt Meeting Houſe
V the Quakers Meeting Houſe
W the Court of Guard
1 Faſquero & Garrets Houſe
2 Land ſack
3 Iñ. Croſkeys
4 Chevcliers
5 George Loggan
6 Poinſet
7 Starling
8 Elicot
9 Mr. Boon
10 Nat. Law
11 Tread
12 Coll Rhetts
13 Langraive Smith
14 Ben Skenking
15 Sindery

A Scale of 80 Perches or 2 Furlongs

Figure 2.5. Edward Crisp. Detail of *A Compleat Description of the Province of Carolina in 3 Parts*, 1711.
This early map of Charles Town shows a fortified city built on a grid layout similar to the Ulster city settlements.
Source: Library of Congress Geography and Map Division.
https://lccn.loc.gov/2004626926.

Figure 2.6. Hubert Gravelot. *Ichnography of Charles-Town at High Water*, 1739.
Source: South Caroliniana Library Map Collection.

Figure 2.7. A View of St. Philip's.
Source: Photo taken by author, October 2017.

Figure 2.8. Charles Fraser. *View of Meeting and Broad*, ca. 1800
The statehouse is to the left, St. Michael's is to the right, and the Pitt statue stands in the center of the intersection. This became the central intersection of public architecture in Charles Town by the late colonial period.
Source: Carolina Art Association. Image from Louis P. Nelson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism & Architecture in Colonial South Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 289.

Figure 2.9. Thomas Leitch. Detail of *View of Charles-Town, the Capital of South Carolina*. Oil Painting, 1774. Engraved by Samuel Smith, 1774.

This painting, completed at the height of Charles Town's prosperity, captures the view visitors would have of Charles Town when arriving by sea. Dominating the cityscape are the steeple of St. Michael's Church (left), the Exchange & Customs House (center), and the steeple of St. Philip's Church (right).

Source: Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

CHAPTER 3

THE ANGLICAN CHURCHES

The Anglican Church buildings in Williamsburg and Charles Town, Bruton Parish Church and St. Philip's Church respectively, were prominent aspects of the cityscape. Both were among the first public buildings in each capital, both were the first Anglican churches in their respective cities, both were the seat of the commissary in the colony, both occupied conspicuous positions within the urban layout, and both were heavily influenced by English architectural forms. Most importantly, these churches expressed the social, economic, ecclesiastical, and political power of their respective colonies. There were also notable differences between these parishes. Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg drew upon small, rural, post-Reformation English churches for inspiration whereas St. Philip's Church was influenced by baroque and neoclassical architectural developments of late seventeenth and early eighteenth century London. By the time the present Bruton Church was built, Virginia had nearly a century of being left alone in terms of church design and developed a style that responded to local precedents; by contrast, South Carolina Anglicans looked to more recent trends in church design and were more closely inspired by contemporary fashions.

Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg and St. Philip's Church in Charles Town were among the first public buildings in their respective cities. The origins of Bruton Parish date as far back as 1632 when Middle Plantation was laid out and a parish of the same name was created. After combining with two other nearby parishes by 1674, the

parish changed the name to Bruton Parish in honor of the wealthy Ludwell family and Governor Sir William Berkeley, both of whose ancestral homes were located at Bruton in County Somerset, England.[22] The vestry also authorized the construction of a new brick church in November of 1677 that served as the precursor to the current Bruton Parish Church. This decision to construct a new brick church reflected an emerging trend in the 1670s and 1680s in Virginia—a time when James City Parish and Newport Parish Church in Isle of Wight County constructed their own brick churches as a sign of maturing local institutions and wealth. The church was completed on November 29, 1683.[23] Likewise, St. Philip's in Charles Town was established in 1680 shortly after English settlement. The colonists built the original church sometime between 1681 and 1692. It was located on the southeast corner of Broad and Meeting Street, where St. Michael's Church currently stands, and was built of black cypress wood on a brick foundation.[24]

Both Bruton Parish and St. Philip's were replaced shortly after their initial construction. By the first decade of the eighteenth century, the original Bruton Parish Church building was inadequate. The College of William and Mary was founded in 1693 and Williamsburg became the capital city in 1699, bringing in an influx of young

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[22] The church at Middle Plantation united with nearby Middle Parish in 1658 to form Middletown Parish, and the parishioners built a new wooden church around 1659-1660. This newly created Middletown Parish later combined with nearby Marston Parish in 1674 to form what would become the first Bruton Parish.

[23] Colonel John Page donated a plot of land 144 feet by 180 feet and £20 sterling for building a brick church. Captain Francis Page was given the contract in 1681 to construct the church for £150 and "sixty pounds of good, sound, merchantable, sweet-scented tobacco." The original structure stood fifty feet northwest of the present church and was oriented on east-west axis following Anglican tradition. See Lyon Gardiner Tyler, *Williamsburg, the Old Colonial Capital* (Richmond, Va. : Whittet & Shepperson, 1907), 93–96; Carl Lounsbury, *Bruton Parish Church: An Architectural History* (Williamsburg, VA: Bruton Parish Church, 2011), 2–9.

[24] Suzanne Cameron Linder, *Anglican Churches in Colonial South Carolina: Their History and Architecture* (Charles Town, S.C: Wyrick & Co, 2000), vii.

students, the governor and his entourage, the legislature, and the townspeople. By 1710, the vestry petitioned the legislature, complained that the church had grown "ruinous," and asked for appropriations to build a new church that could accommodate visitors from the legislature, the courts, and the councils. Both Speaker of the House, John Holloway, and Governor Spotswood supported the petition and the General Assembly made funds available to build pews for the governor, council, and burgesses—the construction of the second brick church was underway by 1713. Similarly, construction for a new, brick church for St. Philip's Parish began in 1711. The legislature empowered a commission to oversee construction, design, and location.[25]

The religious climate in which Bruton Parish Church and St. Philip's Church were constructed could not have been more different. Whereas the colonists in Tidewater Virginia were staunchly Anglican and established their church from the colony's inception, the settlers of the South Carolina Lowcountry were highly pluralistic and had no official church-state relations in the early years of settlement. The Lords Proprietors of Carolina founded the colony in 1670 on the principle of religious toleration for all Christians except Catholics. Though the colonists refused to ratify the proprietors' Fundamental Constitutions, the settlers still enjoyed de facto religious toleration. As a result, Carolina was a religiously diverse society in its early years, and there were sizable minorities of French Huguenots, Baptists, Quakers, and Jews. One study of confessional

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[25] Lounsbury, *Bruton Parish Church*, 1–26.

backgrounds in the colony found that in 1710, the colony was roughly 45% Presbyterian, 10% Baptist, and only 40% Anglican.[26]

These religious realities greatly influenced the construction of churches in Williamsburg and Charles Town. In Williamsburg, the parishioners and the legislature sought to create a brick church that could suitably house the parishioners, the governor and provincial officials, the legislature, the student body of the nearby College of William and Mary, and the influx of visitors and travelers who would come when the government was in session. Bruton Parish would serve as the unquestioned symbol of ecclesiastical authority next to the other symbols of power such as the Capitol, the county courthouse, and the governor's residence. Charles Town's Anglicans, by contrast, faced a bitterly contested climate. By 1706, there was an emerging and powerful Anglican Party. The legislature under Governor Nathaniel Johnston officially established the Church of England in 1706, making public funds available to construct a new, brick church for St. Philip's Parish. The Anglicans thus sought to assert their authority in a disputed landscape by constructing a conspicuous and fantastic brick church in the urban center.[27]

These two churches were even built at roughly the same time: construction of Bruton Parish Church lasted from 1713 to1715 while the construction of St. Philip's ran from 1711 to 1733. Both legislatures also helped finance construction through liquor taxes: the Virginia legislature granted ₤200 financed from the sale of liquor and slaves

[26] Louis P. Nelson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism & Architecture in Colonial South Carolina*, The Richard Hampton Jenrette Series in Architecture and the Decorative Arts (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 4–5, 286.

[27] Nelson, "The Diversity of Countries: Anglican Churches in Virginia, South Carolina, and Jamaica" in David S. Shields, ed., *Material Culture in Anglo-America: Regional Identity and Urbanity in the Tidewater, Lowcountry, and Caribbean*, The Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 84–88. The 1711 act empowered the builders to construct a church "complete with a tower or steeple." The tower and steeple at Bruton Church were not erected until 1771.

that accounted for nearly one-third of the total cost of construction and the South Carolina Commons House passed a rum tax to support the construction of St. Philip's. The work on St. Philip's church was delayed due to the outbreak of the Yamasee War that diverted funds and required workmen to reconstruct forts. Though the church was not yet completed, services began at St. Philip's in 1723.[28]

The designs of Bruton Church and St. Philip's were radically different and reflected the colonies' respective historical experiences. By the time the present Bruton Church was built, Virginia had nearly a century of being left alone in terms of church design and the building responded to local precedent and design ideas. Specifically, the church reflected the "neat and plain" style and the Virginians' preferences for simplicity and order. Virginians absorbed an earlier Anglican tradition than their counterparts in South Carolina, and they followed this plan that was thoroughly ingrained in local building customs. The elites in Virginia frequently used this style to build structures testifying to their sociopolitical status such as churches, public buildings, and even their private homes. These design preferences were firmly established in Virginia by the 1660s, supported by local precedent, and endured unchanged for over a century. The neat and plain style generally featured geometrically and mathematically disposed plans, proportioned sash windows, simple rubbed bricks, and regularly positioned walls of Flemish bond masonry. This style also favored symmetry, proportion, and balance over ornament. The preference of a simple and symmetrical approach originated in part from the religious disposition of the colonists. Most Virginians had conservative tastes and

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[28] Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 17–18.

rejected metropolitan church design forms that originated in the late seventeenth century and took root in most other colonies.[29]

By contrast, St. Philip's Church reflected the elegant, ornate neo-classical and baroque style of the early eighteenth century. The design of St. Philip's was unmatched in the colonies. Unlike the Virginians who developed their own local Anglican building customs, South Carolinians underwent more thorough Anglicization and looked to more recent trends in church design for inspiration. The elegance of St. Philip's church was a tribute to the inhabitants' refined and elegant architectural tastes. The church was unparalleled in the colonies for its classical inspiration, including its three Tuscan porticos, which were entirely original in contemporary design and its striking western façade. This made St. Philip's easily the tallest building in the city, and the steeple dominated the cityscape. St. Philip's was also the largest building in Charles Town at the time, measuring110 by 62 feet with its five-by-three bays. Unlike Bruton Parish, St. Philip's Church featured stucco over the brick to resemble stone. The craftsmanship was done so well that it even deceived several visitors. A visitor to Charles Town in 1774 wrote that St. Philip's and St. Michael's churches were "plaistered over so well on the outside to imitate stone that I really took them all for stone buildings at first." Pelatiah Webster was actually fooled—in 1765, he wrote that these churches were "Large *Stone* Buildings with Portico's with large pillars and steeples."[30]

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[29] Nelson, "The Diversity of Countries," 77–82; Carl Lounsbury, "Anglican Church Design in the Chesapeake: English Inheritances and Regional Interpretations," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* (2003): 22–36.

[30] H. Roy Merrens, ed., *The Colonial South Carolina Scene: Contemporary Views, 1697-1774*, 1st ed, Tricentennial Edition; No. 7 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 282; Pelatiah Webster, *Journal of a Voyage to Charlestown in South Carolina by Pelatiah Webster in 1765*, ed. Thomas Perrin Harrison (Charles Town: South Carolina Historical Society, 1898), 4.

The interior of St. Philip's Church was just as magnificent, featuring fourteen Doric columns, Corinthian pilasters and a Corinthian cornice, and aisles paved with red and black checkerboard tiles. The church featured eighty-five box pews on the ground floor, and in 1732 the parish installed sixty additional pews in the upstairs galleries. As in Williamsburg, the powerful members of society enjoyed privileged seating in the church. The pews near the pulpit were reserved for the governor, the king's officers, major planters, and masters of merchant ships. Both St. Philip's and Bruton Parish Church were symbols of the ecclesiastical as well as the political hierarchy in a world where these two sources of authority were inextricably linked.[31]

These radically dissimilar designs were the result of two very different architectural influences. Bruton Parish's Georgian style and its "neat and plain" features were inspired by eighteenth century English building customs. This building tradition was popular in England at the time when most colonists were departing for Virginia, and they likely brought the style with them to the New World. This style is best displayed by two English parishes: Buntingford in Hertfordshire (1626) and All Saints Church in Farley, Wiltshire (1690) (see figures 3.1 and 3.2).[32]

St. Philip's Church was informed by a much more recent baroque and neo-classical architectural development in London. These influences came to South Carolina through Gideon Johnston, who visited London from 1713 to 1715. Johnston, the first Commissary to South Carolina, arrived in Charles Town in 1708 and set out to build a

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[31] Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 19–22, 32, 287.

[32] Nelson, "The Diversity of Countries," 77–82; Tyler, *Williamsburg, the Old Colonial Capital*, 99; Lounsbury, "Ornaments of Civic Aspiration: The Public Buildings of Williamsburg" in Maccubbin, *Williamsburg, Virginia*, 27; Whiffen, *The Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 83.

"grand church, resembling one of the new Churches in London."[33] His trip to London provided him with many new ideas to apply in Charles Town. In 1711, Queen Anne spearheaded an initiative to build fifty new churches. Though only fourteen were built, the churches that were completed featured extensive masonry work, steeples, and porticoes, all of which could be clearly seen in the final design of St. Philip's. While in London, Johnston would have encountered the design of Christopher Wren, who recommended that churches should "lie most open in view" and "should be adorned with porticos, both for beauty and convenience; which, together with spires, or lanterns...may be of sufficient ornament to the town." St. Philip's also reflected the architectural advice of John Vanbrugh, who recommended that churches should be isolated on their site in order to instill reverence and provide security from fire. Additionally, Vanbrugh advocated for architects to situate churches on a site so that they might be viewed "to the best Advantage, as at the ends of Large and Strait Streets, or in the Sides of Squares and Other open places." St. Philip's very clearly demonstrated these recommendations. The church featured not one, but three porticoes, had its own lot, and was situated at the visual terminus of the city's major north-south axis.[34]

In addition to Johnson's visit to London, the vestry of St. Philip's also emulated contemporary English building practices through transatlantic architectural literature. The vestry almost certainly drew upon Colin Campbell's design book, *Vitruvius Brittanicus* (1715). In this book, Campbell included a plan and elevation for St. Philip's Church in

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[33]Apparently Johnston succeeded—an English traveler later noted that St. Philip's and St. Michael's provided an ambiance that looked "so exactly like the English metropolitan churches...that it was difficult not to imagine one's-self in London." Linder, *Anglican Churches in Colonial South Carolina,* 9; Kornwolf and Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning*, 2:863.

[34] Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 16, 22–29.

Birmingham, built 1709-1725 (see figure 3.3). The St. Philip's in Charles Town and Birmingham had the same name and strikingly similar designs (see figures 3.4 and 3.5). The Charles Town church also probably was influenced by St. Alphege's Church in Greenwhich, built 1714 (see figure 3.6). The similarities are especially evident when comparing the churches' facades. Charles Woodmason identified another surprising source of inspiration: the "Jesuit church in Antwerp" now known as St. Carolus Borromeus Church. Apparently, South Carolina's Anglicans did not share Virginia's bias against elaborate churches or even Catholic influence as they set about to construct their stunning house of worship.[35]

Though both Bruton Parish Church and St. Philip's Church were situated at prominent locations, the rationale for selecting sites was unique in each city. Governor Nicholson incorporated Bruton Parish seamlessly into his city plan despite the fact that the church was built earlier in 1715, and he used it to anchor the western end of the Duke of Gloucester Street. Bruton Parish was located near the College of William and Mary at the intersection of the Duke of Gloucester Street, the main avenue in the city, and the street that led to the Governor's Palace. The church was at the opposite end of town from the Capitol and served as one of the principal public buildings located within the axial plan. Whereas Nicholson incorporated Bruton Parish into his baroque design, St. Philip's very intentionally disturbed the gridiron layout of Charles Town. It was the only building that interrupted the city's grid plan, and it was situated at the highest point within the walled city. The message was clear—the Protestant dissenters in South Carolina could no longer challenge the centrality of the Anglican Church. St. Philip's was built on the major

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[35] Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness,* 28–30.

north-south avenue at what later became Church Street. As in Williamsburg, the church was also visually featured as a focal point at a main terminus in the city. One observer noted that the church had "a very advantageous situation, at the upper end of a broad and extensive street." The church was also far superior in style and scale to its surrounding wooden small shops and houses. St. Philip's visually dominated the urban landscape of Charles Town as can be readily seen in *An Exact Prospect of Charlestown* (see figure 3.7).[36]

In addition to their ecclesiastical role in colonial life, the Anglican churches in Williamsburg and Charles Town also both served important civil functions. Both Bruton Parish Church and St. Philip's exemplified the close relationship between the provincial government and the ecclesiastical authorities through the financial assistance the legislature allocated toward construction expenses. Because the Anglican Church was the established church in both colonies, the parish vestries also took a very active role in society including poor relief and welfare. The vestries could even levy taxes from their congregations for poor relief. Bruton Parish Church essentially served as the "court" church: the Virginia Burgesses, Council, and Governor all had assigned seats and privileged positions within the church itself. In Charles Town, the church was even more essential in daily life. It served as the repository for births, burials, and marriages after 1706, the organizational unit for school districts, the election district, and the only unit of local government outside of ad hoc commissions. All elections after 1706 were conducted at the parish church itself, and voting was done by secret ballot. Additionally, due to the lack of local offices and county courts, service as a vestryman or churchwarden

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[36] Nelson, "The Diversity of Countries," 84–88; Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 13, 282.

was the first and usually only testing ground for young gentlemen who aspired for political office in the Commons House. Virginia, by contrast, had a well established network of secular local offices such as constable, sheriff, and justice of the peace.

In sum, Bruton Parish Church and St. Philip's Church were significant for a variety of reasons. They were among the earliest public buildings and the earliest brick buildings erected in both colonies. Both churches served as the symbol of ecclesiastical authority. Both Bruton Parish and St. Philip's demonstrated the interconnected nature of political and ecclesiastical authority. Both parishes held prominent places within the social and political lives of their communities through the administration of poor relief, educating children how to read and write, reporting evildoers, and levying taxes. English architectural customs heavily influenced the design of both churches. Finally, both churches were situated at prominent locations within the city in order to emphasize the symbolic power of the church in colonial life and the importance of the building itself.

There were significant differences between the two structures that reveal two different cultural attitudes. Bruton Parish was notable for its integration within the urban plan whereas St. Philip's was set apart from most of the other buildings and was the only building that interrupted the gridiron layout. The stylistic differences were also evident. Whereas Bruton Parish exemplified the "neat and plain" style and was constructed out of brick, St. Philip's was ornate, influenced by the grandiosity of European baroque architecture, and featured stucco over the brick to give the appearance of stone construction. These differences show that Charlestonians sought to showcase their splendor, wealth, and metropolitan tastes, the inhabitants of Williamsburg emphasized symmetry, proportion, and understatement. The "neat and plain" of Virginia developed in

the early eighteenth century after the exuberance of the artisan mannerist style of curved gables, strapwork, and other playful use of classical detailing (as seen at St. Philip's Church) went out of fashion. Virginia builders eschewed fancy decorative work and excessive carving for a cleaner, plainer form. The only decoration on brick buildings was modulation of brick colors in rubbed and gauged work and classical frontispieces. Charlestonians continued to use the baroque vocabulary or artisan mannerism through the late colonial period. Ultimately, both Bruton Parish and St. Philip's were key pillars of the built environment in both cities.

Figure 3.1: All Saints Church, Farley, Wiltshire.
The design elements of this church have clear similarities to Bruton Parish Church, including the round window in the protruding wing, the tower, and the overall layout.
Source: Image © Acabashi, Creative Commons CC-BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 3.2: Bruton Parish Church.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

The East Prospect of S.ᵗ PHILIP'S CHURCH at BIRMINGHAM in WARWICKSHYRE Invented by The Archer Esq.ʳ

Elevation Oriental Del E.SGLISE Da. S.ᵗ PHILIP a BIRMINGHAM dans La COMTÉ de WARWICK.

This plate is most humbly inscrib'd to the Hon.ᵇˡᵉ William Pulteney Esq.ʳ Principall Secretary of War &.ᶜ
C.n Campbell Delin.ᵗ
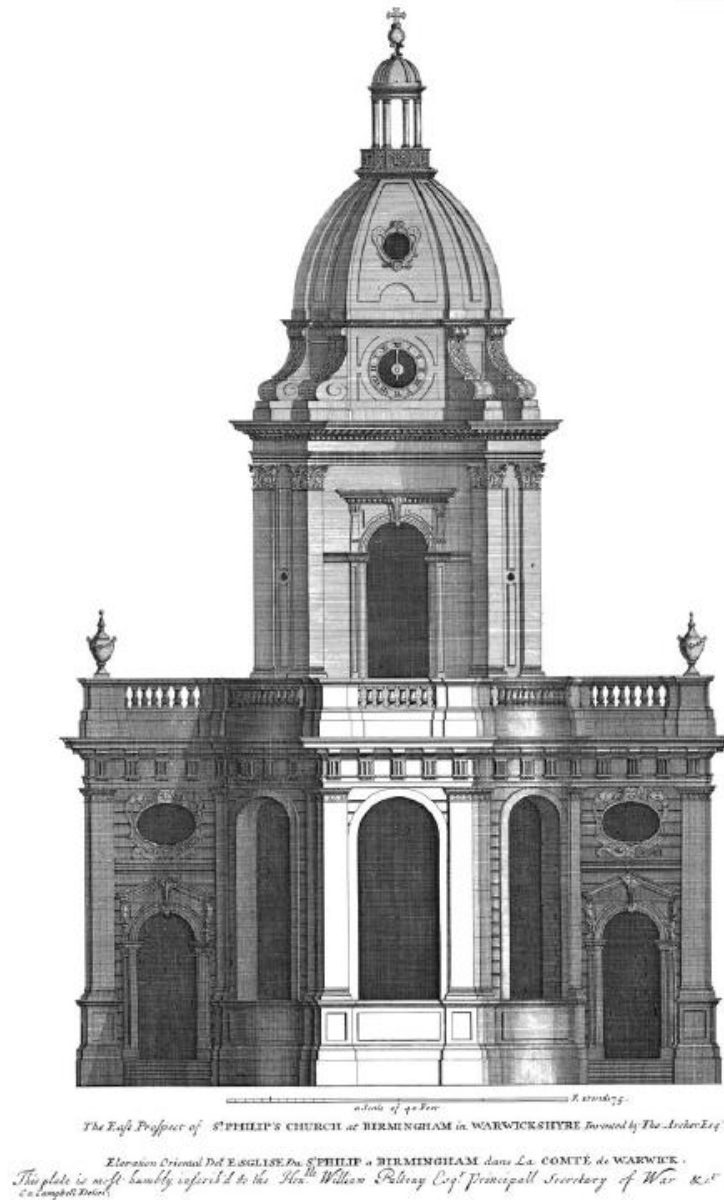
Figure 3.3: Thomas Archer. *St. Philip's, Birmingham*, 1708–15.
West elevation as published in Colin Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, 1715.
Source: Special Collections, University of Virginia Library. Image from
Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism & Architecture in Colonial
South Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 29.

Figure 3.4: *St. Philip's Church in Charles Town, South Carolina.*
Source: Gentleman's Magazine, June 1753. Image from Nelson,
*Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism & Architecture in Colonial South
Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 14.

Figure 3.5 *St. Philip's Church* (1723-1835). Attributed to Thomas You, circa 1766.
Pencil on paper.
Source: South Carolina Historical Society
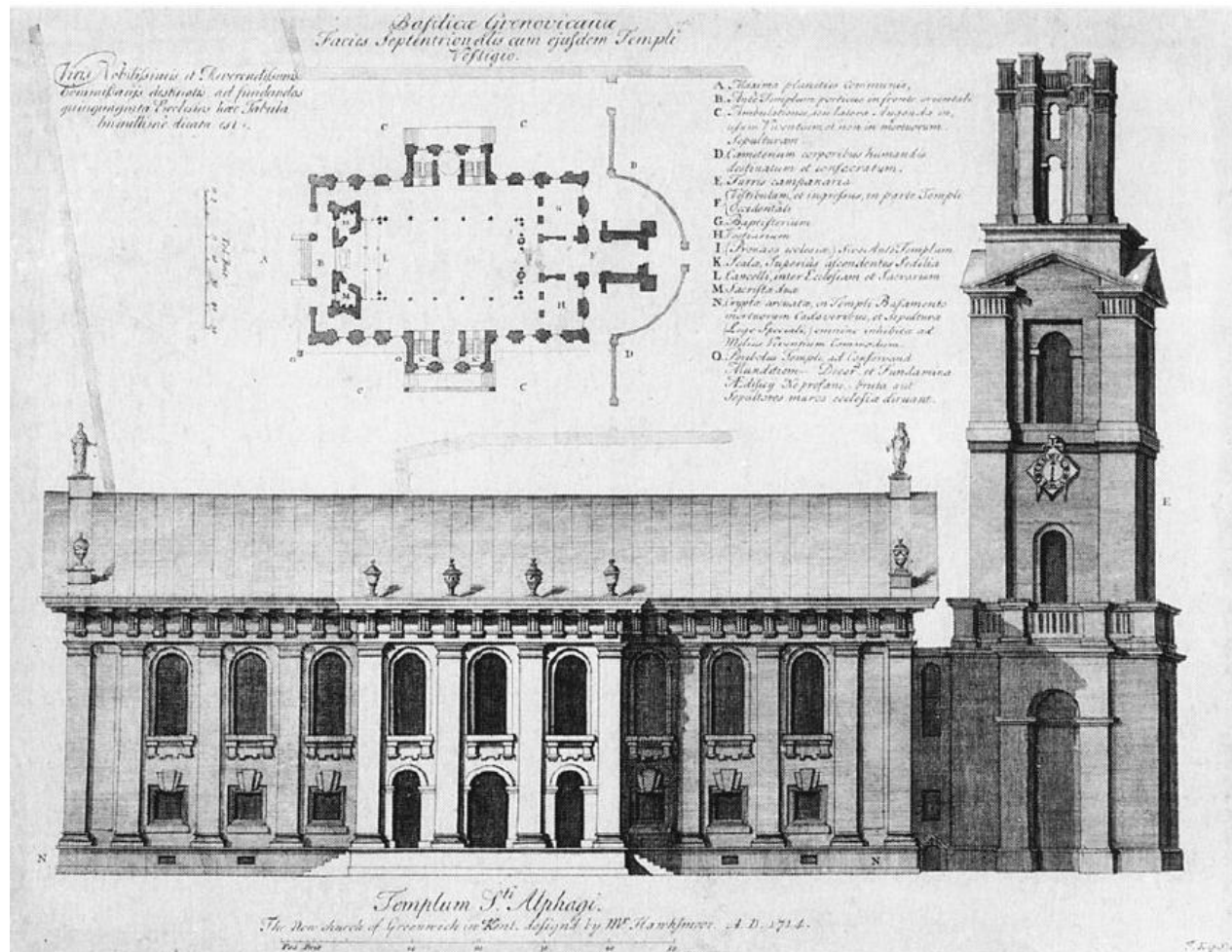
 Figure 3.6: Nicholas Hawksmoor. *St. Alphege's Greenwich*, 1714.
Source: from Louis P. Nelson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism & Architecture in Colonial South Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 23.
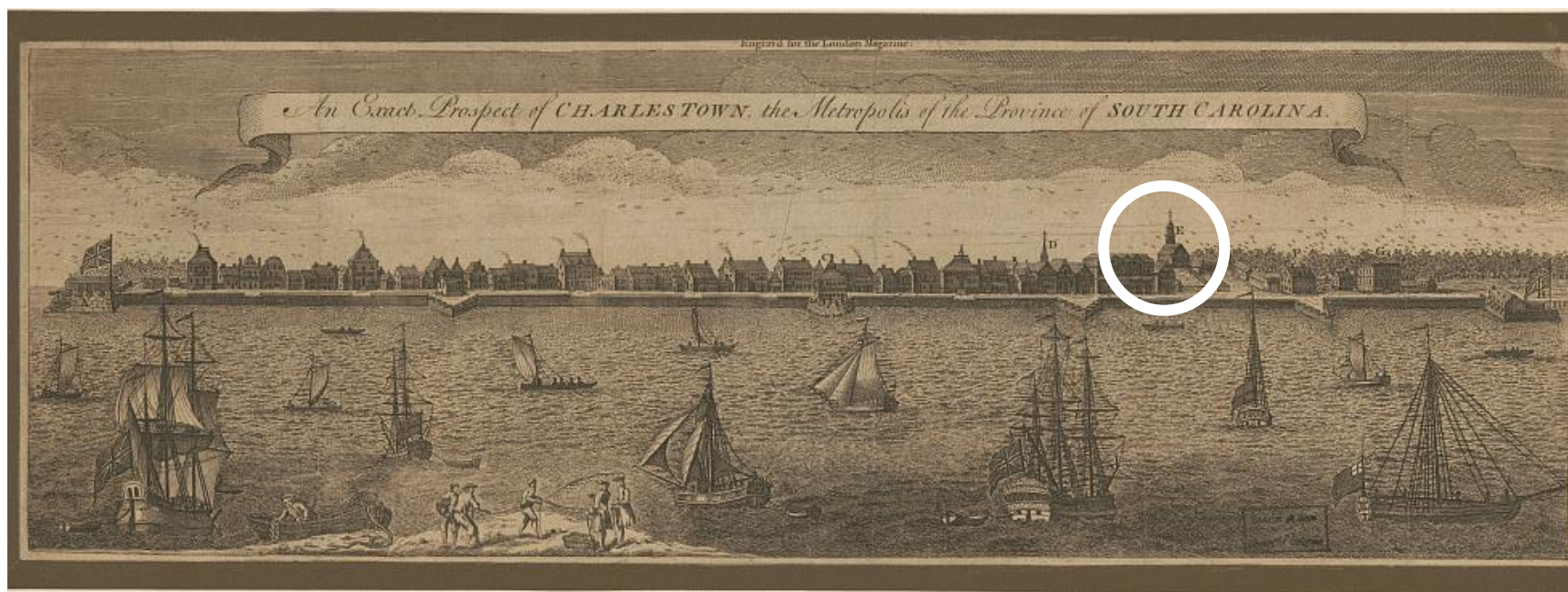
Figure 3.7: Detail of *An Exact Prospect of Charlestown, the Metropolis of the Province of South Carolina*, 1762. Etching and Engraving. White call-out added by author.
Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, https://lccn.loc.gov/2012647508.

CHAPTER 4

THE STATEHOUSES

The statehouses were among of the most significant elements of civic architecture in both Williamsburg and Charles Town. The construction of a distinct building in which to draft laws, debate legislation, house the highest courts in the colony, and transact the business of government was a clear sign that a city had developed a stable political order. In stark contrast to the uncertainty of the early years of settlement when most official business was conducted either in private residences, taverns, or whatever accommodations were available, statehouses stood as proof of a colony's wealth, dignity, and prestige.

The statehouses were significant for several reasons. Both revealed two societies that sought to remove their legislative meetings and provincial offices from taverns and endow them with a permanent, respectable, and elegant public building. Though both the inhabitants of Williamsburg and Charles Town built statehouses during the colonial period, Virginia's first capitol at Williamsburg (built 1701-1705) was much earlier than South Carolina's statehouse (groundbreaking in 1753). The Virginia capitol building was the central reason for the relocation of the capital city to Williamsburg. By contrast, Charles Town's capitol building, finished in 1756, was the first symbol of public architecture and political authority that emerged from an urban landscape almost entirely dedicated to commerce. Both were architecturally significant symbols of a maturing society. Likewise, both structures occupied commanding positions of honor in the

city's layout and were created to grant dignity, permanence, and authority to their respective governments.

The construction of the Capitol at Williamsburg was part of a larger effort to enhance the authority of the crown and to reflect the grandeur of Virginia's place within the empire. These changes began in around 1660 and coincided with the restoration of the monarchy after the English Civil War. Before the capital city was relocated from Jamestown, the General Court and Assembly of Virginia met in taverns until the 1660s and paid tavern keepers for these privileges. By the 1660s, Virginians became increasingly embarrassed at conducting official colony business in such accommodations. The House of Burgesses considered "whether or not it would be more profitable to purchase a statehouse than to pay annual rent, & dishonor themselves by sitting in ale houses." To address this situation, Governor Sir William Berkeley spearheaded the effort to build a statehouse in the mid 1660s.[37]

Governor Glen of South Carolina made similar complaints about the disgraceful buildings in which public business was conducted. Interestingly, it was the governor and not the Board of Trade or the legislature that complained about the colony's lack of a statehouse. On November 22, 1750, Governor Glen gave a speech to the Commons House and reflected on the "inconvenient Places" in which both the Council and Commons House met. Glen also lamented the fact "that the Courts are kept in Taverns, and the Prisons in private Houses." He considered the lack of public buildings in the city to be inconsistent with the dignity of their station, especially considering that the colony

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[37] Carl Lounsbury, *The Courthouses of Early Virginia: An Architectural History*, Colonial Williamsburg Studies in Chesapeake History and Culture (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 60, 82; William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619* (Richmond: Samuel Pleasants, 1809), 204.

was "in a flourishing condition in Peace." In his mind, there was no reason for the legislature to delay any longer, and his initiative was instrumental in the creation of public buildings in colonial Charles Town.[38]

The foundations of the Capitol building in Williamsburg were laid in 1701, just two years after the capital city relocated from Jamestown to Williamsburg. The design was probably drafted by legislative committeemen, local craftsmen, and Governor Nicholson. On November 9, 1699, a legislative committee received a petition from Henry Cary requesting to be employed to oversee the construction. The committee agreed the next day and empowered Cary to hire any capable person of his choosing to make 500,000 bricks for the Capitol. Cary assembled a team, including three bricklayers and three carpenters from England. The building was not finished until November 30, 1705; before this time, the legislature met in the College of William and Mary but became impatient and moved into the Capitol in 1704, a year before its completion. The total cost of construction for the Capitol was £3,822. The completed building housed the biannual sessions of the General Court and the sessions of the General Assembly.[39]

Like their counterparts in Williamsburg, the residents of Charles Town sought to create an elegant Statehouse at the center of their city. Described by historian Carl Lounsbury as "perhaps the most ambitious civic structure erected in the colonies" in the eighteenth century, South Carolina's colonial statehouse was constructed at the northwest

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[38] R. Nicholas Olsberg., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 23 April 1750 - 31 August 1751*, (Columbia: Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1974), 188.

[39] Whiffen, *Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 34, 41, 44; "The Building of Williamsburg," 79.

corner of Broad and Meeting Streets to serve as a source of civic pride and to provide a sense of community and political identity.[40]

The development of a proper statehouse was similarly delayed in Charles Town, though not for lack of legislation. Throughout most of South Carolina's history, the provincial courts, the Council, the Secretary's Office, and the Commons House all met in taverns. The provincial court held sessions in a tavern at the intersection of Church and Broad Streets while the Commons House rented a dwelling on Church Street. By the eighteenth century, the government officials of South Carolina decided these accommodations commanded little respect, and they attempted multiple times to raise funds to construct an elegant statehouse. The legislature attempted the first act as early as 1712 during the Proprietary Period and a mere forty years after the initial settlement in the colony. The act appropriated ₤1,500 "for building a house for holding the General Assemblies, Courts of Justice, and for other the like publick occasions." In this act, the legislature provided the basic template for the Statehouse: there should be a building that housed all the essential government functions of the colony in one location, the most splendid room in the building should be the Council Chambers where the Governor and his council deliberated, and the court and public records office should be housed here as well. After the ratification of this act in 1712, there is no evidence that the Statehouse was built but the aim was unambiguous—South Carolina needed a majestic public building from which to conduct the business of government.[41]

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[40] Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse*, 1-7. This structure witnessed many historical events. It was the site where the Commons House challenged imperial authority, the Declaration of Independence was first read here, and the federal Constitution was ratified here.

[41] Thomas Cooper and David James McCord, *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, 10 vols. (Columbia, S. C.: Printed by A. S. Johnston, 1837), 2:378-379. Cooper and McCord list that the original act could not to be found. They drew upon Nicholas Trott's Laws of South Carolina, pg 209.

The legislature passed a second law for construction of the statehouse in 1718. The law directed the Proprietors to use the money received from rents and land purchases to finance "the building of a Publick State House" with "convenient apartments" for the Governor and Council; the "other house of Assembly" comes across almost as an afterthought. These measures were almost certainly never executed since colonists toppled the proprietary government the following year. A short time later, Governor Robert Johnson wrote to an unknown gentleman in England asking whether quitrents should be applied to public works projects such as the Statehouse. There is no evidence that this letter was answered, and further action regarding construction of the Statehouse experienced a lull from 1718 until the 1750s. What is most puzzling is that despite attempts in 1712 and 1718, the establishment and construction of the South Carolina statehouse was delayed until the legislature returned to the issue in the 1750s at the prodding of Governor Glen. One possible explanation for the delay is that the colonists preferred to postpone a massive building project until the transition from proprietary rule to royal administration was complete.[42]

The construction of the South Carolina statehouse finally began after the legislature passed an act on June 14, 1751 that involved considerable expense and finally fulfilled the expectation of creating a public square at the intersection of Broad and Meeting Streets. Governor Glen signed two bills on the same day, one authorizing the construction of St. Michael's Church and another to erect a new statehouse. The timing was not coincidental—the governor and legislature assumed that these two buildings

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[42] Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large,* 3:47. The 1718 act also sought to use these public revenues to build a prison. Governor Johnson's letter of 19 December 1729 can be found in the *Transcripts of Records in the British Public Records Office Relating to South Carolina, 1663-1782,* 13:422-423.

would be two pillars of a new civic space designed to serve as the political center of the city by the mid eighteenth century.[43] The act appropriated £25,000 for construction and also included an annual appropriation from the legislature of £2,500. The assembly also appropriated £12,500 more in 1757 after the committee found the initial funds to be "near expended…[and] insufficient for finishing and compleating" the project. The costs continued to rise, but the committee continually agreed to carry on with construction and poured more money into the project. Significantly, this building was less expensive than both the Exchange & Customs House (£41, 470) and St. Michael's Church (£60,000), perhaps revealing the legislature's hierarchy of public architecture.[44]

This committee featured some of the most prominent men in the colony, including Charles Pinckney, whose own home, an architectural masterpiece that showcased the English Palladian style, provided features which the Statehouse imitated-.[45] Pinckney and the other committeemen were tasked with planning the design, the size, and the construction materials in consultation with the builder. After securing a generous allocation by taxing imported slaves, liquor, exports, and imports from other British colonies, the commissioners hired master craftsmen and undertook the first public building project in their capital. Using the advantages of their port city, Charlestonians

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[43] Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 289. The other buildings that stood at this intersection were the guard house, the beef market, and the treasury.

[44] Olsberg, *Journals of the Commons House, 1750-1751,* 222.

[45] The committee for the Statehouse plans also included William Middleton, Charles Pinckney, William Bull Jr., James Graeme, Andrew Rutledge, John Dart, Othniel Beale, Benjamin Smith, and Isaac Mazyck, among others. See Olsberg, *Journals of the Commons House of Assembly 1750-1751,* 222.

had access to architectural design books, skilled tradesmen, and imported materials, all of which they used to construct the Statehouse.[46]

The groundbreaking ceremony for the South Carolina Statehouse took place on June 22, 1753 and Governor James Glen personally laid the cornerstone—a fitting privilege considering his role in the building's creation. Officials moved into the Statehouse in 1756 though construction would continue into the 1760s. This structure served as the center of politics in Charles Town for a brief thirty-five years through the Imperial Crisis and Revolution until the legislature relocated to Columbia in 1786 and the old Charles Town Statehouse burned in 1788. Following Virginia's example of relocating the capital from the coast to the upstate, the South Carolina legislature also moved its own capital from Charles Town to Columbia.[47]

Both statehouses were also architecturally significant and showcased expert craftsmanship, careful design, and deliberate use of space. In Williamsburg, the semicircular wings of the first Capitol were the most important element. This had no precedent in the colonies or in England. The building was constructed in the shape of an "H," reflecting the division of government between the lower and upper houses. The House of Burgesses sat in the east room on the first floor while the Council chambers were literally the "upper house," sitting above them on the west end of the second floor. Hugh Jones observed that the room for the House of Burgesses was similar to the House of Commons and that the Governor and Council occupied an elegant Council Chamber

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[46] Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, 3:750, 753, 4:38-39; Lipscomb, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, November 14, 1751 - October 7, 1752.*, 144, 153, 198-199; Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse*, 12, 23, 25, 39.

[47] Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse*, 1–7. The legislature also adjourned to the City Tavern. See Thomas Pinckney, "Thomas Pinckney to Harriott Pinckney Horry," February 6, 1788.

"in Imitation of the King and Council, or the Lord Chancellor and House of Lords." The joint sessions of the legislature came together on the second floor in the conference room, or the center part of the "H," located over the piazza. This structure literally formed a bridge between the two wings of the building. Interestingly enough, the House of Burgesses chose their location as the literal lower house after the Governor asked if they wanted to sit in the on the first or second floor whereas in Jamestown, the Burgesses sat upstairs.[48]

As Lounsbury has shown, colonial statehouses like the Virginia Capitol were hybrid forms that emulated English forms and English Parliamentary practices. Virginia's legislature included a chair for the Speaker of the House, similar seating arrangements to their English counterparts, balustrated gates, and liveried doorkeepers. These statehouses also contained the highest provincial courts and the governor's councils and were thus replete with ornaments of authority such as the royal coat of arms, portraits of the monarchs, exquisite paneled woodwork, and elegant upholstered furnishings. All of these elements were present in the Virginia Capitol and created a stately venue in which to conduct the most important political and administrative business in the colony.[49]

The South Carolina Statehouse was also architecturally significant. Though not outstanding by English standards, it served as one of the finest examples of public architecture in the colonies. It also brought a new dramatic focus to the city and emulated the English public building tradition. No buildings in the American colonies rivaled the

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[48] See figure 10 and figure 11 for the plan of the first and second floor in Whiffen, *The Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 44–45; For the conflict between the upper house and the Burgesses, see Emory G. Evans, *A "Topping People": The Rise and Decline of Virginia's Old Political Elite, 1680-1790* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Greene, *The Quest for Power*; Jones, *Present State of Virginia*, 29.

[49] Lounsbury, "Seats of Government: The Public Buildings of British America," 66.

Statehouse's Palladian classicism, and only the Pennsylvania Statehouse rivaled it in scale. The building was two stories tall and included nine-by-five bays. Like the Capitol at Williamsburg, the South Carolina statehouse was constructed of brick.[50] The English Palladian design also matched the political and cultural ambitions of a wealthy, cosmopolitan society. The lobby provided a space for legislators, lawyers, and spectators to gather to participate or witness the proceedings of government and was probably paved with imported stones. The open, accessible courtroom followed the English county hall practice in yet another example of Anglicization. There were two separate flights of stairs, one leading to the Council chambers and the other to the Commons House chambers. The two legislative chambers were of equal size but of unequal importance. The Commons House held the real legislative power in the colony, but the Council chambers were still more elaborate and ornately furnished throughout the 1750s and 1760s. Governors read the King's proclamations in the Council chambers among the armorial bearings of the monarch and sixteen wooden Corinthian pilasters. This room featured a balcony that accentuated its symbolic role. The magnificence of the Statehouse's architectural elements was a clear sign that Charlestonians sought to lead the American colonies in public architecture.[51]

Both the Capitol at Williamsburg and the Charles Town Statehouse were located on prime spots in the city. The Virginia Capitol building anchored the eastern end of the Duke of Gloucester Street and was easily visible from nearly any point in the city.

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[50] Only later was the Statehouse finished with stucco to give the appearance of stone. The rubbed and gauged brick jack arches and the finish mortar joints testify that it was originally built to have the brickwork exposed.

[51] Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse*, 27–39; Maudlin *Building the British Atlantic World*, 73; Kornwolf and Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning*, 2:865.

Enclosed within a brick perimeter wall, it was also centrally situated at the heart of the city's eastern section that included the governmental and administrative buildings, shops, taverns, and inns. The Capitol building occupied such a central space in Williamsburg since it was ultimately the reason that Williamsburg became the seat of government in Virginia. Likewise, the Statehouse in South Carolina was deliberately conceived as a civic center and the hub of provincial authority. Its location at one of the central intersections in the urban landscape was conspicuous as was its proximity to St. Michael's Church. This was not a coincidence, as the urban planners sought to situate the provincial and ecclesiastical authority near one another, just as in Williamsburg. Church and state authority were prominently featured as an integrated whole in a dramatic new way.[52]

Both colonial capitol buildings served important ceremonial functions for the province. In Williamsburg, every new governor was greeted by a delegation upon his arrival and conveyed directly to the Capitol for a swearing in ceremony to the king's commission. This procedure was inspired by the official ceremonies that ushered in the opening of Parliament. Such a spectacle occurred to welcome Lord Botetourt as governor of Virginia. Botetourt was conveyed down the Duke of Gloucester Street by a gilded state coach drawn by six matching gray horses. In Charles Town, the statehouse likewise served as a gathering place and as the ceremonial center. Formal processions and the opening of the provincial court began here. Though there were other places at which to assemble in the city, the statehouse provided unique space for people to gather, converse, and participate in the political and judicial processes of the city.

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[52] Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse*, 15–18.

Both the Charles Town Statehouse and the Williamsburg Capitol building consolidated the essential provincial offices under one roof, serving as the political, judicial, and administrative heart. In Charles Town, the consolidation of auxiliary offices reflected the highly centralized administration of the colony. From the colony's inception, all official government business, court hearings, and land claims needed to be conducted in Charles Town. For nearly the entire colonial period, there were no courts outside of Charles Town. When the courts were in session in February, May, August, and November, the Statehouse would have come alive with travelers from all over the colony seeking to recover debts or sue in court. This concentration in judicial authority also had implications for South Carolina's political culture. The path to power in South Carolina was not through local office at the county level, but rather in provincial offices or in commissions appointed by the Commons House. Therefore, the colonial Statehouse housed all the major offices for colonial officials—a significant difference from Virginia's system of local officials dispersed throughout county offices.[53]

In sum, though these colonial statehouses were both key components of public architecture in their respective cities, there were still significant differences between them. The Virginia Capitol was the primary reason for the relocation of the capital city to Williamsburg, it was highlighted by a wide open vista at the eastern terminus of the Duke of Gloucester Street, and it also served as the essential building in a city dedicated to politics. By contrast, the South Carolina Statehouse was constructed as the first secular public building in a capital city that previously had no public architecture. After the construction of the statehouse in 1756, Charles Town finally began to look like a colonial

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[53] Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse*, 19, 30, 35.

capital city with public buildings that appropriately reflected the colony's astounding

wealth.

CHAPTER 5

THE GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCES

The accommodations for the colonial governors of Virginia and South Carolina were among the more dissimilar aspects of the cityscape. Whereas in Williamsburg, the governors lived in an impressive mansion specifically designed for the exclusive use of the governors and placed at a conspicuous spot in the urban layout, the South Carolina governors' residences were not officially established. Some South Carolina governors lived at their own private country estates outside of the city, some rented accommodations from prominent Charlestonians, and some resided in the house that served briefly as the official governor's residence.

The different housing arrangements for the governors of these two colonies stemmed in part from one key difference—the selection of governors. In South Carolina, many provincial men served as governors of the colony, whereas in Virginia, the governor was almost always a British official and an outsider. Accordingly, the Virginia governor's house was a prominently featured element of the urban landscape suitable for English nobility. In South Carolina, though there was an effort to construct a house for the exclusive use of the governor in 1712, the plan ultimately failed. Because most governors were local until the mid-eighteenth century and lived either at their own private estates nearby or at rented quarters in Charles Town, there was no pressing need to create a spectacular home for the chief executive. By the time South Carolina's governors were consistently either English or Scottish appointees, the American

Revolution erupted and removed any need for a governor's house appropriate for British appointees.

Consequently, the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg was more significant to the urban landscape of Williamsburg than the governors' residences in Charles Town. Virginia's home for the chief executive expressed the economic power, social superiority, and cultural ambition of the colony's gentry. It stood as the glittering center of the social and political life of Williamsburg before the Revolution as it hosted balls, assemblies, and visitors on official business. The house also served as architectural inspiration for later brick plantation homes. The legislature constructed the elegant house despite the expense and the appropriation of continuous funds was in large part due to the deference that the legislature paid to the royal instructions, but mostly due to the fact that the legislature recognized the governor needed a proper, not a rented, structure appropriate with the dignity of his office.

The accommodations for governors in both Virginia and South Carolina in the early period were unsettled. The first of South Carolina's governor's residences was constructed on the Ashley River just south of Albemarle Point and served as the first residence for the colony's executives.[54] The structure was a simple frame house surrounded by an experimental garden as the colonists attempted to find profitable staples crops for export on Atlantic markets. The home was protected by a palisade and four cannons intended to thwart a potential native or Spanish assault. After the 1680s, governors typically lived in their own home in Charles Town or at their country seat in

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[54] William Sayle lived there until his death in 1671. Joseph West and later Sir John Yeamans also lived in the home into the 1680s.

the outlying region.[55] Other governors prior to 1712 followed the same pattern of living on their own estates.[56]

Likewise, there were numerous governors' residences in Jamestown before construction of the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg. Recent archaeological excavations at Jamestown have uncovered two building sites within the Jamestown fort that appear to be frame row houses, the northernmost of which was probably the governor's. The first Virginia settlers built these homes as part of Lord De La Warre's urban-renewal campaign and the Virginia Company's efforts to transform Jamestown from a military trading post to a permanent English town. Sir Thomas Gates resided at this frame row house between 1611 and 1614, and Governor Samuel Argall expanded it by adding another room in 1617, making the house larger and more formal. There was also a brick house that the assembly sold in 1660 that was probably destroyed in 1676 during Bacon's Rebellion. Governor Sir William Berkeley of Virginia lived in his own house at Green Spring. After he left in 1677, subsequent governors rented quarters under an allowance of £150 annually.[57]

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[55]Landgrave Thomas Smith (1693-1694) lived at his Medway plantation on the eastern Branch of the Cooper River. Landgrave Joseph Blake (1694-1695) dwelt at Newington in the Cypress Swamp at the headwaters of the Ashley River. Governor James Moore Sr. (1700 – 1703) rented a house on Point Plantation just outside Charles Town. Sir Nathaniel Johnson (1703-1709) resided at his Silk Hope Plantation around two and a half miles west of present day Huger. See Ann Darlington Edwards, ed., *The Governor's Mansion of the Palmetto State*, First edition (Columbia, S.C: State Printing Co, 1978), 3–4; Hoke P. Kimball and Bruce Henson, *Governor's Houses and State Houses of British Colonial America, 1607-1783: An Historical, Architectural and Archaeological Survey* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2017), 304.

[56]Governor Gibbes (1710-1712) lived at his Peaceful Retreat plantation on the Stono River in John's Island. See Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses and State Houses*, 307–10.

[57] Whiffen, *Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 53; William M. Kelso, *Jamestown, the Truth Revealed* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 101–6, 246–48.

Colonists in both Virginia and South Carolina were pressured to construct residences suitable for a governor. Though the Virginia governors briefly rented their quarters, the British ministers saw this arrangement as inappropriate and sent instructions to build a governor's house decades before the capital relocated to Williamsburg. The Board of Trade even threatened Nicholson in 1698, stating that although it had "ordered a convenient house to be built for the Governor," governors still received £150 a year for rent and no advance had been made towards constructing a suitable residence. The Board then "intimated to the Governor that he must not expect a continuance of the house-rent if by his neglect the house remains unbuilt." Similarly, the South Carolina Commons House passed an act in 1712 to purchase land on which to construct a house for the province's governors. The Commons House passed the act in part because it aimed to give the governor "that very particular deference and respect, which is so justly due to [his] birth and merit."[58] Though both colonies constructed official residences for their governors, the impetus came externally in Virginia through the Board of Trade and internally in South Carolina by an act of the Commons House of Assembly.

Construction for the governor's residences of both colonies was delayed. In 1699, the Virginia House of Burgesses concluded that due to various other public debts and the construction of the Capitol, "the Country is not in a capacity to undertake so great a work at this time." The Burgesses finally passed legislation in June 1706 to establish a

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[58] J.W Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers: Preserved in the State Paper Department of Her Majesty's Record Office. Colonial Series*, vol. 16 (H.M. Stationery Office, 1905), 401; Virginia. General Assembly. House of Burgesses et al., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia 1695-1696, 1696-1697, 1698, 1699, 1700-1702* (Richmond, VA, Library Board, Virginia State Library, 1619), 175, 188; Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, 2:380. The act was called "An Act for Purchasing Land and Building a House for the Use of the Right Honourable the Governor, and the Succeeding Governours of This Province"; Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses and State Houses*, 307; See *Transcripts of Records in the British Public Records Office Relating to South Carolina, 1663-1782*, 11:10.

residence and unanimously appropriated £3,000 for construction of the house, perhaps because Governor Nott left construction entirely under their control. The act specified the location of the house, the materials of construction (many of which were from England), the dimensions, the outbuildings, and named Henry Cary, who oversaw the building of the Capitol, as the supervisor of construction.[59]

When Alexander Spotswood took over as governor of Virginia in 1710, the work was still not completed and expenses were mounting. He spearheaded two acts in 1710 and 1713 to complete the project. The legislative journals urged Henry Cary to limit the costs of construction since his expenses were "extravagantly chargable and expensive"[60] So much money had been appropriated by 1718 that the burgesses issued a remonstrance to the king denouncing the governor and his habit of "[lavishing] away the Country's money contrary to the intent of the Law." The public began to refer derogatorily to the house as "the Palace" due to its exorbitant costs. In a letter to the Board of Trade in 1719, Spotswood defended his conduct by arguing that he directed no other work than what the original acts called for and he ensured that men and materials were duly employed. Cries of exorbitant expense largely emerged as an effort to have William Byrd replace Spotswood as governor. The Board of Trade refused Byrd's credentials and the plot failed. Upon Byrd's return, reconciliation followed and the Governor's Palace was finally

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[59] J.W Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers: Preserved in the State Paper Department of Her Majesty's Record Office. Colonial Series*, vol. 16 (H.M. Stationery Office, 1905), 401; H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia 1695-1696, 1696-1697, 1698, 1699, 1700-1702* (Richmond, VA: Virginia State Library, 1913), 175, 188; The act was entitled "An act directing the building an house for the governor of this Colony and Dominion" and was financed by "An act for laying an imposition upon liquors and slaves." H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1702/ 3-1705, 1705-1706, 1710-1712* (Richmond, VA, The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co., 1912), xxx, 180, 211–12, 269.

[60] Cary was dismissed for fraudulently maintaining his whole family at the public charge and was replaced by John Tyler.

completed in 1722 ironically, by the spendthrift Henry Cary, Jr. after Spotswood had been dismissed from his post.[61]

The construction of the South Carolina governor's house experienced similar setbacks. The 1712 act instructed that the house was to be built of brick "with other conveniences," the cost of construction was not to exceed £1,000, and the property was to be between one hundred to three hundred acres. The legislature also intended to situate the governor nearer to the seat of government in order to reduce travel, indicating that the governors lived on their plantation homes outside of town at that time. The act stipulated that the land the legislature was to purchase should be within six miles of Charles Town, a distance presumably not too prohibitive for travel.[62] The house was standing by 1716 on a 144 acre property on Oyster Point Neck, but all the arrangements may not have been finalized properly by 1724. That year, the Board of Trade requested a meeting with Governor Johnson about the Governor's House. The letter stated that Johnson and a Mr. Shelton wanted further time to speak with the Lords Proprietors about the act, but the extent of this conversation is unknown.[63]

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[61] The 1710 Act was entitled "An Act for Finishing a House for the Governor of this Colony and Dominion."

Virginia., H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1712-1714, 1715, 1718, 1720-1722, 1723-1726* (Richmond, VA: The Colonial press, E. Waddey Co., 1912), 230; The first appearance of the Governor's "Palace" in the official records happens on December 18, 1714 in H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Legislative Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (Richmond, VA: The Colonial Press, Everett Waddey Co., 1918), 1:586; H. R. McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (Richmond : Davis Bottom, 1925), 272–73, 293.

[62] Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, 2:380. The act was called "An Act for Purchasing Land and Building a House for the Use of the Right Honourable the Governor, and the Succeeding Governours of This Province"; Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses and State Houses*, 307; See *Transcripts of Records in the British Public Records Office Relating to South Carolina, 1663-1782,* 11:10.

[63] See *Transcripts of Records in the British Public Records Office Relating to South Carolina, 1663-1782,* 11:10.

Most of South Carolina's governors chose not to live in the Governor's House but instead preferred to live on their own estates. Among this number were Robert Daniel (1716-17), James Moore Jr. (1719 -21), Robert Johnson (1717-19 and 1730-35), Arthur Middleton (1725-30), Thomas Broughton (1735-37), and William Bull (1737-43).[64] These men were all residents of South Carolina or recent immigrants. They all owned land in the region near Charles Town, therefore not requiring special accommodations. It seems likely that since the official governor's house was not within the city limits of Charles Town, these early governors preferred to live on their own plantations. Why bother removing one's family and belongings to another country seat when their own plantations were just as convenient to Charles Town? The official residence was at most 300 acres, a landholding figure that these men likely all exceeded.

Whereas the Governors rented quarters only for a brief period in Virginia's history before the Governor's Palace was built, renting was common in Charles Town beginning in the 1740s with the administration of Governor James Glen. Interestingly, the royal government did not demand that South Carolinians build a governor's residence in Charles Town even after the official 1712 governor's house became a private residence.

Following a succession of governors who preferred to live at their own private estates, Governor Glen's (1743-56) rental arrangements were unusual. Fortunately for the

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[64]Governor Robert Daniell (1716-17) resided on 972 acres between the Cooper and Wando Rivers where he farmed cotton, indigo, timber, and even made bricks. Governor James Moore Jr. (1719 -21) lived at Boochawee Hall until his death and may have used the Governor's house briefly considering that his plantation was ten miles away from Charles Town. Robert Johnson (1717-19 and 1730-35) inherited his father's Silk Hope Plantation but also probably lived for a time at the Governor's House. Governor Arthur Middleton (1725-30) lived on his 1,600 acre plantation on Goose Creek called Oaks Plantation, but also had a town house in Charles Town that was probably the Governor's House. Governor Thomas Broughton (1735-37) lived at his Mulberry Plantation. Governor William Bull (1737-43) inherited Ashley Plantation on the Ashley River and resided there. He also built a house on 35 Meeting Street in Charles Town by 1720. See Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses and State Houses*, 307–18.

governor, he still had the privilege of residing in some of Charles Town's finest town houses. Glen rented both the Charles Pinckney Mansion on East Bay Street for £200 per year while the Pinckney family went to England from 1753-8 as well as the William Harvey-Ralph Izard House at 110 Broad Street.[65] The Pinckney Mansion occupied an entire square from Market to Guignard Streets and faced east toward the water. The house was built of dark local brick with stone copings and the layout included two stories and a basement as well as a wide central hall with four large rooms, a library, and a house-keeper's room. Governor Glen's house rent can be seen in the Pinckney family rent roll of 24 January 1753. The governor paid £100 to the Pinckney family on February 15 for "a Large Brick House & outhouses at the North End of the Bay." His payments were scheduled every six months to the family in London.[66]

Though Glen rented some of the finest houses in town, his living situation became a point of tension in the 1750s during his struggles with the Commons House. Having received instructions from the Board of Trade to support the governor's prerogative more vigorously, Glen vetoed several popular bills including the incorporation of the Charles Town Library Society, a jury bill, and a bill to divide St. Philip's Parish. The Commons House attempted to coerce the governor to approve these bills by withholding his house rent from the annual tax bill, causing Glen to exclaim that "I shall be ever ready to sacrifice Self-Ends and private Considerations to the Interest of the Province and to the

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[65] Other governors that also lived at the Pinckney Mansion included William Henry Lyttleton (1756-1760) and Governor Thomas Boone (1761-1764). William Bull II (1760-1761 and 1764-1766) would have lived at his own residence at 35 Meeting Street. See Edwards, *The Governor's Mansion of the Palmetto State*, 6; Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses and State Houses*, 323.

[66] Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses and State Houses*, 318, 324; Edwards, *Governor's Mansion of the Palmetto State*, 5; Charles Pinckney, "Charles Pinckney, (1699-1758), Rent Roll, 24 January 1753" January 24, 1753, The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition, http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/PinckneyHorry/ELP1228.

public Utility." Although Glen was the longest tenured governor of South Carolina and the first in a series of several British-native governors, he was confined to renting his accommodations. This dependence on the Commons House for rent had a profound effect in weakening the power and prestige of the royal governor's office.[67]

Governor Charles Grenville Montagu (1766-68, 1768-69, 1771-73) was explicit in his dissatisfaction with his housing arrangements as royal governor. Montagu also lived in the Charles Pinckney Mansion, renting the home from 1766-69 until Charles Cotesworth Pinckney returned home from his studies in London. Montagu was clearly displeased when forced to move. He complained that the lodgings available in Charles Town were not suitable for His Majesty's Royal Governor and decided to relocate his residence to Fort Johnson. No other South Carolina governor had lived in the fort, but Montagu perhaps sought to emulate the New York governors who lived in mansions within the fort's walls since the founding of Dutch New Amsterdam. Rumors floated around Charles Town that Montagu sought to build a castle at the fort with the assistance of the British Parliament, but no such structure was ever built.[68]

It was uncommon for colonial governors to rent accommodations, even among the colonies with capital cities in major metropolises. Of the major capitals (Charles Town, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York), only in Charles Town and Philadelphia did the governors live in private or rented quarters. In Boston for instance, the Province House was a seventeenth-century mansion on old Marlborough Street. Built in 1679 as a private home, after 1716 it became the official residence of eight royal governors and three

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[67] Jonathan Mercantini, *Who Shall Rule at Home?: The Evolution of South Carolina Political Culture, 1748-1776* (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 44-5.

[68] Edwards, *Governor's Mansion of the Palmetto State*, 6–7; Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses and State Houses*, 324.

acting governors of Massachusetts Bay.[69] In New York, the English colonists tore down the original Dutch governor's house and built their own out of brick within Fort Amsterdam on the same site. Most of the colony's governors took up residence here until the house burned in 1773.[70] Likewise in Philadelphia, the proprietors and lieutenant governors resided in private homes which were sometimes referred to as governor's residences. Edward Shippen lived in his own house during his time as acting governor (1703-4). Other governors rented the Shippen House, including William Keith (1717-26) and William Denny (1756-59) and the home became colloquially known as the "governor's house."[71]

Curiously, there are no extant demands from the British Board of Trade mandating the creation of a governor's house in South Carolina even after the 1712 house reverted to private hands or after the Commons House coerced Glen by withholding his house rent. As has previously been shown, the British ministry insisted that Virginia have a house specifically for the governor. Why would the British ministry take seemingly different approaches for these two colonies? One possible explanation is that in Virginia, there were few suitable vacant residences available for rent in a thoroughly rural colony. Williamsburg was a new city, sparsely populated, and with mostly wooden houses. By contrast, Charles Town was a true metropolitan city with plenty of stately brick houses from which the governor could choose to live in comfort and dignity commensurate with

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[69]Governor Thomas Hutchinson did not live at the Province House, but he was a notable exception. Unlike his predecessors, he preferred to live in his own stately home on Garden Court Street. See Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses and State Houses*, 119-123. The Province House of Massachusetts is no longer extant. It was destroyed in 1922 and replaced by a movie theater.

[70] Kimball and Henson, 283–85.

[71] Kimball and Henson, 338-347. Sadly, this house was also demolished in 1790.

his office. Most of South Carolina's governors were also drawn from gentlemen residents and property owners from the colony until the administration of Governor Glen. Consequently, they already owned plantations with relatively easy access to Charles Town and did not need a residence exclusively for their administrative use.

By contrast, the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg not only occupied a privileged position in the city, but it was also finely ornamented and reflected royal authority. As one of the largest brick buildings in the entire colony, the house was fifty-four by forty-eight feet with sash windows, vaulted spaces, a cellar, a slate roof, and detached kitchens and stable. It included a parterred garden and wrought-iron gates of English manufacture. The Governor's Palace also featured an elegant approach at the end of the long Palace Green and was the focal element at the end of Palace Street at the northern end of the city.

The home prominently displayed the symbols of royal authority such as George II's coat of arms on the supper room wall and both the English lion and the Scottish unicorn chiseled in stone above the iron gate at the entrance. The house was designed according to the formal Georgian plan with orderly elements and proportions. The interior reflected the axial symmetry that so characterized Williamsburg and the main house was divided into repeated squares that emphasized order and control. At the center of the house was a great hall and most visitors were directed to this room. The hall was an essential meeting place in Georgian homes and was the most important room in what would emerge as the Virginia House style. This room was designed to impress and separate visitors according to their rank and purpose of visiting. The governor's hall was

certainly impressive as it featured hundreds of muskets and swords, encapsulating the governor's military authority.[72]

The "palace" was both a home and a public building. The governor used his house as a base both for his ceremonial functions as head of state and as a convening space for his duties as the head of the colonial government. In colonial Virginia, the governors were intimately involved in the daily operations of government and served as the personal representative of the crown. Governors corresponded with the Board of Trade and the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, served as the final authority in civil, judicial, and fiscal matters, and influenced military operations. One of the most important functions of the governor's house was receiving official visitors of the state. Members of the House of Burgesses and the Council frequently met with the governor at his home, lawyers arrived for official business, clergy consulted the governor on religious matters, and various other visitors regularly appeared such as Indian agents, petitioners, and military officials. Because of the diverse character of his visitors, the governor needed to entertain them in rooms appropriate to their purpose and their social status. In addition to the Great Hall, more important guests could be taken either to the first floor front parlor or to the upstairs "middle room." This was one of the most formal and lavishly furnished rooms in the house and overlooked the Palace Green and the center of the town. It was in this room that Governor Botetourt kept the official seal of the colony, and the room was magnificently adorned with leather wall hangings, gilt frames, and

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[72] Lounsbury, "Ornaments of Civic Aspiration: The Public Buildings of Williamsburg" in Robert P. Maccubbin, ed., *Williamsburg, Virginia: A City Before the State, 1699-1999* (Williamsburg, Va: City of Williamsburg ; Distributed by The University Press of Virginia, 2000), 33; Whiffen, *The Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 61, 94; Graham Hood, *The Governor's Palace in Williamsburg: A Cultural Study*, Williamsburg Decorative Arts Series (Williamsburg, Va. : Chapel Hill, N.C: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation ; Distributed by University of North Carolina, 1991), 43

crimson damask. Aside from perhaps the governor's library, all the remaining rooms on the second floor were all private bedchambers reserved for the private use of the governor and his family.[73]

The governor's residence also served as the gathering spot for high society in Williamsburg. Hugh Jones recorded that at "Birth-Nights, and at Balls and Assemblies, I have seen as fine an Appearance, as good Diversion, and as splendid Entertainments in Governor Spotswood's Time, as I have seen anywhere else." There was also a notice in the *Virginia Gazette* in 1736 of a celebration of King George's birthday. The Governor's Palace hosted a ball featuring elegantly dressed ladies, cannons and guns were fired, and the town was illuminated by the lantern in the cupola of the house. These ceremonies took place in the governor's great hall and later in the ballroom and supper room after they were constructed in 1751. The house hosted important events such as coronations, royal birthdays, peace treaties, and large evening parties. Governor Spotswood sought to create weekly social gatherings in the fall and spring seasons in the capital and the Governor's Palace evolved into the colonial equivalent of the royal court. By the time of the Revolution, Virginia governors used their home as the place at which they could entertain in a manner characteristic of public buildings in England.[74]

The Governor's Palace also set an important architectural precedent: it inspired what would emerge as the typical plantation house in Virginia. The wealthiest Virginia gentry dotted the landscape with large, elegant, brick homes in the Georgian style patterned after the governor's residence. After the 1720s, no wealthy planter could

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[73] Hood, *Governor's Palace in Williamsburg*, 49.

[74] Jones, *Present State of Virginia,* 31; *Williamsburg, the Old Colonial Capital* (Richmond, VA : Whittet & Shepperson, 1907), 216; Hood, *Governor's Palace in Williamsburg*, 168, 172, 176.

maintain his status without a spacious, genteel home and spacious pleasure gardens. The Virginia plantation became the planter's center of his universe, his home office, his place to entertain visitors, and his private study. The Governor's Palace set a cultural tone for eighteenth century Virginia plantation homes as planters adapted its scheme and room layout to their own personal needs. Among the earliest examples of its influence was Berkeley in Charles City County. Berkeley was constructed in 1726 following the completion of the governor's residence.[75]

Most visitors who viewed the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg were impressed by the magnificent brick structure and with good reason. This residence housed the chief executive of British North America's most populous and, at the time, wealthiest colony. The architectural elements, the gardens, the supporting buildings, and the numerous and lavishly decorated rooms were all designed to reflect the prestige and authority of the king's deputy in Virginia. Hugh Jones described it as "a magnificent structure…finished and beautified with Gates, fine Gardens, Offices, Walks, a fine Canal, Orchards, &c." Governor Spotswood furnished the residence's lobby entrance "With a great Number of the best Arms nicely posited." The symbolism of authority and strength was not lost upon him. William Grove observed that the Governor's Palace was "a Very Elegant Structure with a Cupula" and Andrew Burnaby remarked that the residence was "one of the best upon the continent."[76]

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[75] Hood, *Governor's Palace in Williamsburg*, 46; Lounsbury, "Ornaments of Civic Aspiration: The Public Buildings of Williamsburg" in Maccubbin, *Williamsburg, Virginia*, 34; Whiffen, *Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, 65; Cary Carson and Carl Lounsbury, eds., *The Chesapeake House: Architectural Investigation by Colonial Williamsburg* (Chapel Hill, NC: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 70.

[76] Jones, *Present State of Virginia*, 31; William Hugh Grove, "Virginia in 1732: The Travel Journal of William Hugh Grove," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 1977, 24; Burnaby, *Burnaby's Travels*, 34.

Though historians know more about the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg than the governor's residences in South Carolina, the governors of South Carolina also lived in high style. This can be best demonstrated by the inventory of Lord William Campbell, the last royal governor of South Carolina. Campbell was forced to flee his splendid house in 1775 as the tensions of the Imperial Crisis escalated. The governor left behind £5,000 worth of personal possessions, including silver, glass, chinaware, a five hundred volume library including the latest works of the Enlightenment, a cellar fully stocked with wine and beer, and a coach and chariot. Though they may not have had a governor's mansion in South Carolina, if the colony's chief executives lived on a scale similar to Governor Campbell, they enjoyed lives of luxury.[77]

In short, the presence of a governor's house in Williamsburg and its absence in Charles Town reveals the political situation of these respective colonies. The Governor's Palace in Williamsburg was a luxurious home that set an architectural precedent for the Chesapeake region and was conspicuously featured as one of the focal points of the city. The decision to make such a prominent building to royal authority not only supported Williamsburg's essence as a political city, but also was necessary in a colony where most of the governors were English and Scottish appointees of the crown. By contrast, the governors of South Carolina were mostly local men until the latter decades of the colonial era. Most of them owned sizable estates within relatively easy reach of the city. Perhaps because most governors were local, the British ministry did not place the same pressure on South Carolina to build a magnificent structure for the royal governor in Charles Town, and the city lacked a pronounced symbol of royal authority.

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[77] Edwards, *The Governor's Mansion of the Palmetto State*, 7.

CHAPTER 6

TRADE AND COMMERCE

The differences between Williamsburg and Charles Town are most readily apparent when considering the role that trade and commerce played in each respective city. This chapter compares the amount of political spaces to the amount of commercial spaces in the built environment of each city. The Virginia capital was dedicated to politics first and commerce second whereas the South Carolina capital was primarily a commercial city and only secondarily a political one.

Williamsburg was conceived for political purposes with only enough commerce to support the residents and travelers attending the various provincial and county political processes. The residents of Williamsburg struggled to establish profitable systems of trade due to the city's small population and easy access to nearby plantations for provisions. The colonists in Williamsburg also erected no significant public edifice dedicated to commerce. Williamsburg had no export market—the city's residents did import goods and sold them in the many stores that lined the Duke of Gloucester Street and through them fancy goods made their way to the back country.

By contrast, because Charles Town was a more populous city with fewer people who had access to growing their own crops, the inhabitants of that city had a much greater dependency on produce markets, hence the appearance of specialized ones such as the beef market and many more around town than Williamsburg. Charles Town was predominately a commercial city replete with buildings to conduct trade but struggled to

construct governmental buildings until the 1750s. Charles Town's civic structures were erected only after the colony's incredible profits from transatlantic trade. The city nestled between the Ashley and the Cooper Rivers was a bustling port that highlighted their most prominent waterfront vista with a magnificent brick Exchange & Customs House. The Exchange became the primary focal point of the city both by land and by sea.

Since the colony's inception, Virginians had struggled to consolidate trade. This persistent problem dated back as far as the early town acts. English officials tried to encourage urban settlement and the construction of brick homes in Virginia in 1662. The officials tried again in 1679 and 1691, but these efforts failed. In 1679, the British ministry instructed the Virginia governor to encourage planters to build towns on every great river. These towns would be granted exclusive port privileges and were intended to monopolize the shipment of tobacco. The first town act called for the creation of no less than twenty new towns. This legislation encountered its first obstacle when the commissioners of customs criticized the act as coercing trade. They lamented that "trade is to be courted not forced…there are no warehouses or accommodation for receiving goods, nor, indeed, any inhabitants." Governor Nicholson helped pass the 1691 act, but this act failed within two years.[78]

After Williamsburg was settled, the major area in the city dedicated to commerce was Market Square, but this was confined to internal trade within Virginia, not transatlantic maritime trade. Market Square, located just south of the Palace Green between the Duke of Gloucester and Francis streets and at the midway point between the College of William and Mary and the Capitol building, was the busiest section in town

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[78]Reps, *Tidewater Towns*, 65–67, 75–76, 86–87.

outside of the various political zones. Though Williamsburg's Market Square was a bustling center of activity for the small city, the commodities that were bought and sold here were mostly small transactions for household items such as meat, cheese, eggs, vegetables, and butter.[79]

Whereas Charles Town's Atlantic seaport was the center of life in the city, Williamsburg's trade at Market Square served a subordinate role to politics. Market Square was conceived in large part to provision the flood of visitors who inundated the city during public times. In 1710, Governor Spotswood informed the Council that the people of Williamsburg were inconvenienced without a market for provisions especially when the population of the city swelled on "publick Occasions." Spotswood was therefore "inclined to appoint Weekly Markets to be held" in Williamsburg in order to meet the everyday needs of the people lodging in the city during sessions of the legislature and courts. This is a key point: though the provincial officials hoped that the market would succeed and make Williamsburg more urban, the priority was ensuring that it at least supported the political life of the city.[80]

The development of the Williamsburg Market proceeded unsuccessfully and very slowly. In 1713, Governor Spotswood proposed that a market house be built, but this proposal went nowhere. The inhabitants of Williamsburg did not build a market house until 1757, and the structure was probably a simple wooden building on a brick foundation. Until then, all transactions took place in these makeshift wooden stalls.

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[79] Unlike Charles Town's various waterfront markets and wharves where rice, slaves, indigo, and other staples were sold, Williamsburg's Market Square was not the principal point of sale for tobacco. Though some tobacco was transported to Williamsburg for sale, these sales were conducted at "rolling houses" or warehouses near the public landings at the creeks outside of Williamsburg. These rolling houses were so named because the hogsheads of tobacco were rolled to market. For an early law, see Hening's *Statutes at Large of Virginia*, 4:32.

[80] McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, 3: 251.

However, the legislature did pass an act of incorporation in 1722 that established the frequency and function of Williamsburg's markets. The charter established that there were to be two weekly markets "in some convenient place" in the city every Wednesday and Saturday as well as two fairs each year, one held on the Feast of St. George (April 23) and the other on December 12. The markets and fairs were established for the purposes of selling "all manner of Cattle, Victuals, provisions, goods, wares and merchandizes, whatsoever." These markets were open from sunrise to midmorning.[81] Ten years later, the market still failed to meet expectations. Hugh Grove noted in 1732 that "There is a Charter for a Market and 2 yearly fairs and a very spatious square Laid out for a Market place, but neither take." As late as 1768, someone going by the pseudonym of Timothy Telltruth penned a complaint in the *Virginia Gazette* about the lamentable state of the market. He sarcastically noted that residents of "the good town of Williamsburg, metropolis of Virginia" had inadequate provisions at the market. The meat sometimes hung for hours and was "not fit to eat and sometimes spoiled." Prices were exorbitant especially during public times when vendors took advantage of their customers.[82]

The difficulty in establishing a regular market in Williamsburg was due to the city's small population and its easy access to the surrounding farmland. Urban markets selling meat and vegetables usually emerged when a critical mass of the population could not produce its own foodstuffs and lacked direct access to farms. This was not the case in

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[81] "The Building of Williamsburg," 89.

[82] Grove, "Virginia in 1732," 26; McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, 251; Gregory Brown and David Muraca, "Archaeological Investigations at Market Square, Williamsburg, Virginia," Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1991); *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie, 9/7/1768) quoted in Carl Lounsbury, "The Williamsburg Market House: Where's the Beef?" Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, 1990).

Williamsburg, where the more rural character of the city and the surrounding area made it easy to obtain these goods. Moreover, there was only a sufficient population to support a regular market during Williamsburg's public times when travelers and legislators thronged to the city to attend court, file petitions, and participate in provincial government.[83]

Unlike Williamsburg, trade in Charles Town was never forced by legislative fiat. Charles Town was blessed geographically by its deep water port, its location at the confluence of the Ashley and the Cooper rivers, and its defensibility. The city was a thriving port featuring wharves, shops, and markets where deerskins, rice, indigo, slaves, and agricultural products were shipped across all corners of the British Empire by an enterprising local merchant class. Charles Town was also strategically located at the halfway point between northern ports in New England and the British West Indies. The prevailing trade winds and Gulf Stream currents made Charles Town a natural stop for transatlantic shipping. Charles Town's large population of 11,000 inhabitants made it the fourth largest colonial port after Boston, New York, and Philadelphia by 1770 and it was by far the wealthiest city per capita in colonial America. Charles Town was the center of all economic life in the colony and served as the central port of export for all agricultural staples from the upcountry settlements. The city was the center of political, cultural, and social life in South Carolina but all of these were contingent upon the dominant influence of commerce in the life of the colony.[84]

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[83] Carl Lounsbury, "The Williamsburg Market House: Where's the Beef?" Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, 1990); Brown and Muraca, "Archaeological Investigations at Market Square."

[84] Half of Charles Town's population was enslaved. For a comparison of Charles Town's wealth relative to the other colonies, see Alice Hanson Jones, *Wealth of a Nation to Be: The American Colonies on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 357.

Charles Town was the colony's main center for commerce from the colony's beginnings. Some of the earliest English colonists established Charles Town as a major port for deerskins and captured Indian slaves in the 1670s. This set the pattern for later years when rice and indigo funneled into Charles Town from the back settlements by river and overland transportation where they were sold on the Atlantic marketplace. Unlike in Virginia, Charles Town had its own domestic merchant class and did not rely on the consignment system with London trading firms. Instead, South Carolina planters sold their crops to a Charles Town merchant for immediate returns. Though some middling planters sold their crops to country factors, even these factors resold the crop to the Charles Town merchants. The colonial merchant was responsible for purchasing, shipping, and selling these goods to British merchants who would reimburse them for the costs and also pay a commission. This economic pattern gave rise to what would become a very wealthy merchant class in Charles Town. Goods were traded in personal encounters between planter and merchant in storehouses, countinghouses, and wharves clustered on the eastern Cooper River side of the peninsula where there were separate wharves for fish and produce. More than two hundred mercantile firms traded in Charles Town throughout the eighteenth century. These close, face-to-face business interactions created a robust local market that prevented residents of Charles Town from believing they suffered from abstract, invisible Atlantic market forces.[85]

Charles Town emerged as one of the premier economic hubs of colonial America around the 1740s. The city was a prominent commercial center with the arrival of traders and goods and its participation in the British Atlantic "empire of goods." In addition to

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[85] Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina*, 31, 176–79; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 227.

East Bay Street where the largest merchant firms were located, Charles Town attracted artisan shops, auctioneers, small retailers, and assorted manufactures including the production of coaches, wigs, silverware, jewelry, woodcarving, and tin ware. The city thrived as a port and regional service center. It also capitalized on the resale market of British imports as well as the coast wide trade. Moreover, the city served as the central exporter of South Carolina's own produce and shipped lumber, corn, and leather to the West Indies and Northern colonies. The urban architecture of Charles Town was a complex system of layered marketplaces, auctions, and wharves. It not only dominated the South Carolina economy but also absorbed trade from North Carolina even exercised significant influence over the market in Savannah, Georgia. The influence of Charles Town as a "city-state' encompassing the surrounding hinterland was immense and affected life in the colonial south more than any other city.[86]

An English traveler visited Charles Town in 1774 and remarked on the numerous wharves and shops that dotted the landscape. He noted after landing at Bay Street that the road was nearly a mile in length and dotted by "many good wharves fit for large ships of any burthen to haul along side of." The wharves were usually marked by warehouses where merchants received assorted goods. The traveler was also in awe of the Charles Town Harbor where "Ships of 500 tons burthen" entered and exited safely. In the 1780s, Johann Schöpf visited one of Charles Town's markets but was disappointed at the inferior "quality of provisions." He disliked the Carolina meat that was "neither fat, nor of a good taste" because Carolina cattle was too lean.[87]

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[86] Hart, *Building Charles Town*, 39–57.

[87] Merrens, *Colonial South Carolina Scene*, 281; Schöpf, *Travels in the Confederation (1783-1784) from the German of Johann David Schöpf*, 2:189.

As commerce expanded, the demand for bridges and wharves rose to meet increased economic activity. This began as early as 1711 with Smith's Bridge and Rhett's Bridge, the only two wharves on the Crisp Map of 1711 (see figure 6.1). The trend was particularly evident by 1739 when a map entitled "The Ichonography of Charles-Town at High Water" documented numerous bridges (see figure 6.2). Brewton's Bridge, Loyd's Bridge, Pinckney's Bridge, Motte's Bridge, and Elliot's Bridge were among those that protruded into the river to capture Atlantic commerce. In the first decades of Charles Town's existence, captains of ocean-going vessels used lighters to carry their goods to the town docks. This began to change by the 1690s when areas along the shoreline deep enough for large vessels were converted to wharves. Charles Town's prominent merchants sought to capture this opportunity. The wharves were also convenient for commerce within the colony. Ships coming down the Ashley or Cooper Rivers to Charles Town from the interior could make a convenient landing at these wharves, bringing lumber, naval stores, and other commodities to the port city. Planters also brought cattle and livestock down to the port.[88]

Charles Town residents were permitted to construct buildings on these wharves to receive and process incoming goods. Most wharves included storehouses where goods were inventoried, purchased, shipped, and kept dry. The Commons House regulated the buildings constructed on the wharves as early as 1725 after dismissing the previous precedent of prohibiting their construction. The legislature now allowed "Persons having right to any of the Lots to the Eastward of the Front Wall" to build cranes, crane houses,

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[88] Nicholas Butler et al., "Archaeology at South Adger's Wharf: A Study of the Redan at Tradd Street" (The Charles Town Museum, 2012), 157.

and warehouses not exceeding ten feet in height. This law was modified 1736 when the legislature raised the height of permitted structures from ten to sixteen feet.[89]

The construction of wharves undermined colony's military defensibility but were undertaken anyway—a significant development epitomizing how commerce replaced defense as the city's primary architectural feature. The wharves extended beyond the town's fortifications made the port more susceptible to attack by French or Spanish forces that could now more easily enter the city by sea. The ultimate triumph of wharves and commerce over walls, fortifications, and military infrastructure marked a noticeable shift in priorities and attitudes. Governor James Glen was noticeably worried by this development in 1752 and feared that the city's defenses were compromised. Glen advocated that sheds and crane houses should be turned into block houses or detached forts so they could supply some element of defense and also recommended that these bridge owners be required to have Gabions (sand filled baskets to protect artillery from enemy fire) at the ready. The legislature disregarded the governor's recommendations. The city was well underway in the process of transitioning from a frontier outpost to a bustling center of Atlantic commerce.[90]

The clamor of market activity could be heard almost everywhere in colonial Charles Town. The 1739 "Ichnography of Charles-Town at High Water" map shows a "New Market" at the corner of Broad and Meeting Streets as well as "The Bay Markets" south of Middle Street near the center of the waterfront. Andrew Allen's Market was situated at the east end of Tradd Street but was destroyed by fire in 1740. The principal

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[89] Butler et al., "Archaeology at South Adger's Wharf: A Study of the Redan at Tradd Street," 162.

[90] Butler et al., 28.

market in the first half of the eighteenth century was located at the corner of Meeting and Broad Street and more markets were added after 1750 to accommodate increased activity. In 1760, a new market was built at Broad and Meeting streets and renamed the Beef Market. A traveler disapprovingly described this structure as "only a low dirty looking brick market house for beef." Due to its central location in the city, the legislature prohibited butchers from slaughtering their livestock on-site. The October 4, 1783 issue of the *South Carolina Weekly Gazette* addressed violation of this stipulation, reminding readers that butchering livestock "within the city limits" was unlawful. In 1770, a Fish Market was constructed on Queen Street just east of Bay Street. This location was conducive for fishermen to deliver their catch by boat and facilitated the cleaning and preparation of fish for sale with easy waterfront access for disposing waste. The same was true for Lower Market, which in 1744 was bustling with activity of "creatures killed and sold." The Lower Market was located at the foot of the Cooper River at the end of Broad Street where the old Exchange building once stood.[91]

By the mid eighteenth century, Charles Town was a lively port city. The predominance of wharves, storehouses, markets, and mercantile firms helped shift the urban architecture of the city toward commerce and economic vitality and away from defensive measures. Though the threat of the Spanish and French attack by sea was still possible, colonists no longer viewed it as imminent. Georgia served as the new buffer state between the southern British colonies and the Spanish, relieving South Carolina of the brunt of the defensive burden. The immense profits of transatlantic trade proved too attractive to resist in Charles Town, and the hum of trade replaced the din of defensive mobilization. Charles Town became a strategic stop in transatlantic trade and a thriving

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[91] Butler et al., 23–24.

port. On any given day, one could smell the recent catch of oysters at the market, see the masts of ships bobbing in the bay, purchase rum, rice, spices, or salt from the latest shipment, and hear merchants shouting orders to their crewmen as they tried to maintain the integrity of their account books.

It was amid this busy mercantile environment that the legislature decided in 1767 to build the Exchange House at the intersection of Broad Street and East Bay Street—the most commanding vista in the city and proof of the central role of commerce in Charles Town. Placing the Exchange at this strategic intersection meant that it would command the view both by land and by sea. The steady hum of commercial activity in Charles Town required more markets, more space, and more grandeur for an emerging, wealthy colony. The Exchange building was conceived to serve that purpose while also providing the city's grand, formal entrance. In a 1774 painting of the town, it was the Exchange, not the Statehouse or other governmental buildings that dominated. Situating the Exchange at the central vista of the city speaks to the colonies top priority—commerce.[92]

The construction of the Exchange Building incorporated both elite influence and the skill of middling artisans and craftsmen. A Commons House committee was appointed in June of 1766 to build the Exchange, setting in motion what would become one of Charles Town's grandest structures. The committee was composed of elites who heavily influenced both the Exchange Building's location and chose William Rigby Naylor's design. It included some of the most notable individuals in South Carolina politics, including Peter Manigault (Speaker of the House and the wealthiest man in British North America), Thomas Lynch, Henry Laurens, Miles Brewton, John Rutledge,

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[92] Kornwolf and Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning*, 2:866.

and Charles Pinckney. These elite legislators did not have hegemonic control over the outcome, however. The construction was delegated to Peter and John Horlbeck, two German master craftsmen. Their influence over the finished structure served as testament to Charles Town's ability to recruit skilled craftsmen from across the world due to their city's transatlantic networks. These networks were leveraged to import a massive quantity of stone and slate from Great Britain as well—sixty tons of stone landed at the port of Charles Town in November of 1769 for the construction of the Exchange.[93]

The Commons House spared no expense in their efforts to erect a monument to their commercial prowess. The legislature allocated £60,000 to build the Exchange and levied taxes on wine, rum, white biscuit, middling biscuit, brown biscuit, and flour to raise sufficient funds. They must have been very pleased when the final cost of construction came in under budget at £41,470, making this building slightly more expensive than the £37,000 in expenditures for the statehouse.[94]

Upon its completion in 1771 after five years of construction, the Exchange Building served multiple civic and economic purposes. Its central purpose was processing Charles Town's immense shipping industry. The Exchange served as the assembly place for anyone involved in trade and commerce. The ground floor was an open area for commercial and financial transactions similar to modern stock exchange, but the newspapers made it clear that "no goods whatever are to be exposed there" for private or public sale. The Great Hall on the upper level housed a large meeting room for customs

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[93] Hart, *Building Charles Town*, 164–66; Lounsbury, *From Statehouse to Courthouse*, 22; The committee also included Benjamin Smith, James Parsons, and Benjamin Dart. See Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, 4:257.

[94] Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, 4:259; Lyman P. Powell, *Historic Towns of the Southern States* (New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 286.

officials who would have an excellent vantage point from which to monitor the Charles Town harbor. The basement served both as the prison and as a large storage area for "fuel and other office necessaries" which could be rented to the public. It also served a political function as the location for the offices of the customs collector, the naval office, and as a meeting site for the town's inhabitants. This was a multi-purpose structure that stood elegant and prominently featured in the cityscape.[95]

The architectural style of the Exchange Building was clearly influenced by the statehouse that preceded it. The Exchange was slightly smaller than the statehouse, built with seven bays as opposed to the Statehouse's nine. The Exchange was also more Palladian in its inspiration and featured one of the finest colonial architectural facades.

The Exchange and Customs House reveals that the Charlestonians sought to portray their city as the economic epicenter of the South. The physical structure of the Exchange, constructed from brick and imported stone from Britain, closely resembled similar structures in London, Bristol, and Liverpool. This massive and elegant building was simply one of the finest examples of civic architecture in British North America and was prominently featured in the geographic center of the city—a clear sign that the heart of Charles Town was economic might, not political power. The Exchange and Customs House was dedicated to managing and coordinating the bustling economic life of the thriving city. Commissioned by some of the most notable names in South Carolina

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[95] Unlike Williamsburg, Charles Town had no separate prison. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina*, 248; Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, 4:260; Ruth M. Miller and Ann Taylor Andrus, *Charles Town's Old Exchange Building: A Witness to American History*, (Charles Town, SC: History Press, 2005), 21. The inhabitants of Charles Town used the Great Hall to consider their response to the Tea Act in 1773 and locked up 256 chests of tea in the cellar of the Exchange. The basement was also used as a jail during the British occupation as well as the storage site for gunpowder, which the British never discovered.. "Charles Town April 13, 1767," *The South Carolina Gazette*, April 13, 1767; "Charles-Town, April 27, 1767.," *The South Carolina Gazette*, April 27, 1767; Kornwolf and Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning*, 2:866.

politics, the finished structure was an extension of the gentry's authority and superiority and stood as one of the chief symbols of the power of the colonial elite. No doubt many shared the sympathies of Josiah Quincy who noted that "the town struck me very agreeably; but the New Exchange which fronted the place of my landing made a most noble appearance." The Exchange was the focal point of colonial Charles Town—it was prominently featured and easily visible both from the center of the city and from approach by sea. This structure let one know that they were in a fabulously wealthy city dedicated to commerce and the pursuit of wealth.[96]

The different role of commerce in Williamsburg and Charles Town were easily apparent and reveal the relationship of politics to commerce. Williamsburg's trade mainly served a supporting role by provisioning the many visitors to the city during public times. The goods exchanged were also at a much smaller scale, typically confined to the internal trade within Virginia of household wares. The colonists conducted their trade in temporary wooden stalls and a wooden frame building by the 1750s. Compared to the many public and governmental buildings in Williamsburg, the space dedicated to trade was minimal. In stark contrast, Charles Town was a city dedicated to transatlantic commerce. Hundreds of ships landed at the port, the city was dotted by many wharves and markets, and the colonists erected a stately Palladian building of brick and stone in which to process this lucrative trade. The Charles Town Exchange symbolized the commerce that was at the heart of the city, and it appropriately stood at the most visible position from both land and sea.

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[96] Weir, *Colonial South Carolina*, 248; Hart, *Building Charles Town*, 157; Quincy, "Journal of Josiah Quincy, June 1773," 441.

Figure 6.1: Edward Crisp. Detail of *A Compleat Description of the Province of Carolina*, 1711 showing two wharves. *Source*: Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. https://lccn.loc.gov/2004626926.
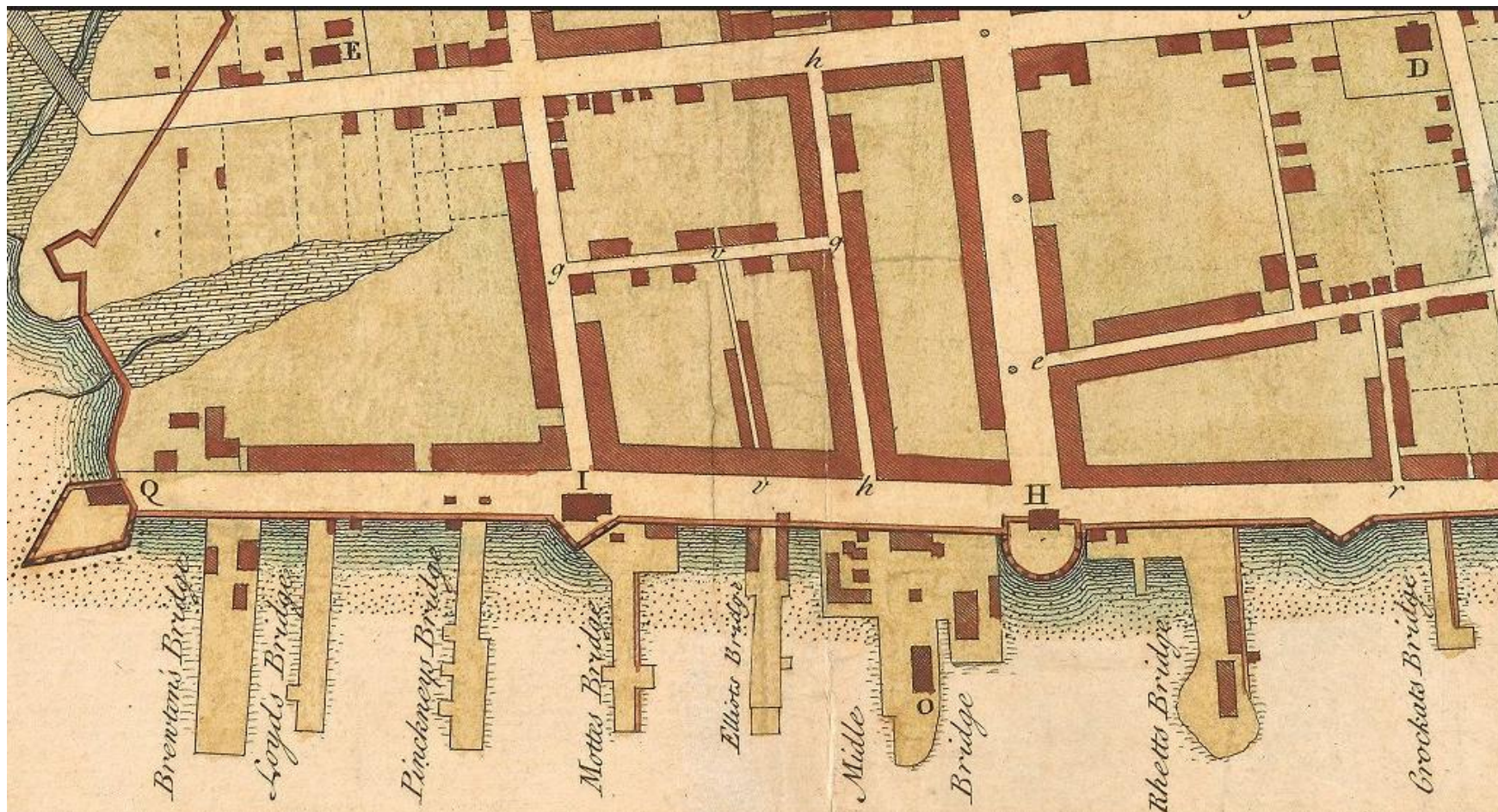
Figure 6.2: Hubert Gravelot. Detail of *Ichnography of Charles-Town at High Water*, 1739. Detail shows the wharves extending into the Cooper River.
Source: South Caroliniana Library Map Collection

CHAPTER 7

ADVOCATES AND OBSTACLES

One of the most important influences in the creation of public architecture in both cities was a particularly influential governor—Francis Nicholson. His efforts are easily recognizable elements of both colonial capitals. He contributed to numerous projects in Williamsburg, including the axial design, the College of William and Mary, the Governor's Palace, and numerous churches in the Chesapeake region. His influence was almost equally significant in South Carolina during his short tenure as governor; he incorporated the city of Charles Town, attempted to create a network of county courts, advocated for the construction of a statehouse, donated money to St. Philip's Church, and repaired Fort Johnson. In all of these projects, Nicholson sought to provide these colonies with public buildings appropriate for conducting governance and supporting the British imperial order. Simply stated, Nicholson was the patron saint of public architecture in the southern colonies.

The importance Nicholson placed on constructing proper public buildings is evident from comments he delivered to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1704. He recommended that the burgesses continue to erect public building "which I think will tend to Gods Glory, his Majesties Service, and the welfare and Prosperity of your County in Generall." Nicholson was heavily influential in the axial town plan at Williamsburg and in placing the most significant elements of the city at the ends of long, prominent vistas. This included the Capitol, Bruton Parish Church, and the College of William and

Mary. In this plan, all the component parts of the city were mathematically related and the urban layout comprised one beautiful, harmonious unit. Likewise, Nicholson in 1690 signed the formal proposal for the College of William and Mary the first institution of higher education in the southern colonies. In addition to these achievements, Nicholson also commissioned and patronized the creation of the Governor's Palace and the Palace Green and contributed a total of £395 of his personal money to twelve Anglican churches in Maryland and Virginia. In short, Nicholson planned or contributed to four of the ten major public buildings in Williamsburg.[97]

Nicholson's impressive patronage of public buildings continued into his time as governor of South Carolina. Though his first early attempts met with failure, they demonstrated his consistent commitment to public building projects. One of his first acts as governor was to grant a charter of incorporation to Charles Town in 1722. Under this plan, Nicholson granted nineteen men the authority to govern the city and to choose their own successors, a system already in place in New York and Philadelphia. Likewise, Nicholson sought to extend the institutions of local public office throughout the colony in his 1721 county court act. The governor considered the lack of local courts and institutions to be the most serious defect in the colony's administration and sought to rectify the error by making South Carolina's court system more similar to Virginia's.

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[97] Nicholson quoted in Charles Campbell, *History of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia* (Philadelphia J.B. Lippincott, 1860), 365; James D. Kornwolf, "'Doing Good to Posterity': Francis Nicholson, First Patron of Architecture, Landscape Design, and Town Planning in Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina, 1688-1725," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 101, no. 3 (1993): 355, 371, 373–74.

Though this act failed, it would have required the construction of numerous county courts in the back settlements that would serve as architectural symbols of authority.[98]

The governor succeeded with public building projects in later attempts during his time in South Carolina. Before 1756, there were no public buildings of an exclusively administrative nature in Charles Town—though the city was the capital, its built environment certainly did not reflect that reality. Accordingly, Nicholson advocated for the construction of a statehouse in Charles Town. Though the statehouse was not built until 1756, Nicholson's efforts in the 1720s set the precedent by making this need known. Similarly, Nicholson repaired Fort Johnson which defended the Charles Town harbor, he reactivated the Charles Town Free School in 1722 by encouraging the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to send over a schoolmaster, and he contributed a large sum of his own money toward the construction of St. Philip's. The parish's minister and vestry thanked him for his "bountiful donation towards the new Church," prominently displayed his coat of arms and motto over the central arch of the north nave arcade, and gave Nicholson his own pew. Wherever Nicholson went, he left an indelible footprint on the public architecture of the colonial capitals he helped develop.[99]

Francis Nicholson was an advocate for public projects in many important ways, but builders in both Virginia and South Carolina also confronted many barriers. These can be classified into several categories: chronological, ecological, political, and economic. In most of these categories, the residents of Williamsburg enjoyed a significant advantage over their counterparts in Charles Town.

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[98] Weir, *Colonial South Carolina*, 107-108. Charles Town was briefly incorporated in 1722 and reincorporated in 1783. ; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 142; Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, 7:211.

[99] Kornwolf, "Doing Good to Posterity," 357, 369.

The first challenge to constructing magnificent public edifices was the time it took a city to develop. It took a period of many years for colonies to stabilize sufficiently to construct permanent public buildings. For all of the British North American colonies, the seventeenth century was dominated by the struggle to survive and to transplant and adapt English institutions and ways of life to the new environments in which colonists found themselves. No colonies in British North America had discernible public buildings in these early years. Before colonists could contemplate public building projects, they needed to develop self-sustaining and self-governing settlements with well established borders.[100]

The second factor was ecological, and it was here where Charles Town suffered most. Charles Town had a long history of hurricanes that could have prevented any serious consideration of constructing rigid brick buildings near the coast. Located directly on the coast, Charles Town was particularly susceptible to such storms. Five major hurricanes struck the Carolina coast near Charles Town by the mid eighteenth century when the colonists began to construct public buildings: 1700, 1713, 1722, 1728, and 1752. The 1700 hurricane was among the most powerful, destroying the rice right before harvest, toppling thousands of trees and dozens of buildings, wrecking ships in the harbor, and even washing some houses into the river. The worst hurricane by far made landfall September 13-15, 1752. This hurricane was the worst storm ever to hit Charles

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[100] Carl Lounsbury, "Seats of Government: The Public Buildings of British America," *University of North Carolina Press*, 2016, 53–77.

Town and caused at least ninety-five deaths as well as significant damage to crops, houses as far as forty miles away, and Charles Town's walls and fortifications.[101]

Williamsburg also experienced several hurricanes during the colonial period, but to a much lesser degree than Charles Town. Hurricanes that did make landfall on the Virginia coast were much more likely to strike at either modern day Virginia Beach or Hampton thirty miles away from Williamsburg. Four hurricanes struck near Williamsburg in the eighteenth-century: 1724, 1747, 1749, and 1769. Though the 1769 hurricane was the worst, none had the same detrimental effect as the Charles Town hurricanes. The *Virginia Gazette* only reported the 1769 hurricane, noting that "the damage done in the country must be inconceivable." The corn, wheat, and tobacco crops were destroyed or ruined. The newspaper also reported widespread property damage: "There was not a dry house in town that day, many old houses were blown down." This storm seems to have been exceptional, however, whereas Charles Town was struck more regularly.[102]

Surprisingly, the colonists in South Carolina made few architectural changes to accommodate the hurricane conditions despite the prevalence of tropical storms. Charlestonians modified their architectural forms less than English residents of the Caribbean. Several factors in South Carolina mitigated the influence of tropical storms

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[101] These hurricanes mostly occurred during August and September. The dates were September 3, 1700, September 1-17, 1713, September 19-21, 1722, August 13-14, 1728, and September 13-15, 1752. The 1713 hurricane caused at least 70 deaths, the 1722 hurricane caused significant flooding, and the 1728 hurricane damaged shipping and crops. See David M. Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes, 1492-1870*, The History of American Weather, no. 1 (Boston: American Meteorological Society, 1963); Jeanne A. Calhoun, *The Scourging Wrath of God: Early Hurricanes in Charles Town, 1700-1804*, Charles Town Museum Leaflet, no. 29 (Charles Town, S.C: The Charles Town Museum, 1983); Jonathan Mercantini, "The Great Carolina Hurricane of 1752," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 103, no. 4 (2002): 351–65; and The National Weather Service's "Tropical Cyclone History for Southeast South Carolina and Northern Portions of Southeast Georgia," https://www.weather.gov/chs/TChistory.

[102] *Virginia Gazette,* September 14, 1769. Most pre-1760 issues of the *Gazette* do not survive.

over colonial architecture, including the colonists' experience with other disasters, the immigration of colonists with no hurricane experience, and the desire to emulate metropolitan fashions. Other factors also contributed to why hurricanes had little impact on Carolina architecture. Many believed that storms were not as strong in Carolina as they were in the Caribbean. Another factor was the greater extremes of heat and cold, making a sturdy structure essential to trap heat in the winter and allow air to circulate in summer. Unlike the Spanish settlers in the Caribbean who noticed that hurricanes caused the most solidly built buildings to tumble and therefore loosely constructed structures of thatched roofs to allow pressure to equalize, the Carolina settlers insisted on lofty homes and public structures built according to English models. All of the principal buildings in Charles Town were built of brick. Though brick was ineffective against hurricanes, it did prevent the spread of fire.[103]

Fires were another problem for any urban settlement in the eighteenth century. Living areas were constructed closely together, increasing the risk that an isolated fire could spread to numerous properties and engulf entire neighborhoods. Though fires occurred in both cities, Charles Town's were much more serious and caused extensive damage to large portions of the city due to the concentration of neighborhoods and businesses. Charles Town experienced two significant fires in the eighteenth century: 1731 and 1740. The November 8, 1740 fire was the most serious, and it raged from 2:00-8:00pm. The fire destroyed the most valuable parts of town including the shops and warehouse district, and damage to merchandise alone was calculated at £200,000. Driven

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[103] Matthew Mulcahy, "Building for Disaster: Hurricanes and the Built Environments in South Carolina and the British West Indies" in David S. Shields, ed., *Material Culture in Anglo-America: Regional Identity and Urbanity in the Tidewater, Lowcountry, and Caribbean*, The Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 29-48.

by a northwest wind, the flames consumed nearly everything in its path from Broad Street and Church Street to Granville's Bastion and all the buildings on the west side of Church Street, from Broad Street to Tradd Street (see figure 7.1). Williamsburg's fires by contrast were mostly confined to particular public buildings or to individual private homes or businesses, and it is likely that the larger lots in Williamsburg helped prevent the spread of fire. Though they were both constructed of brick, the Wren Building at the College of William and Mary burned in 1705 and the first Capitol at Williamsburg burned in 1747. There were other isolated incidents in Williamsburg such as the burning of Palmer's storehouse (1754), Peter Hay's apothecary (1756), and Dr. William Carter's stable (1767). For the most part, however, it appears that Williamsburg benefitted from its large, distant town lots.[104]

A third barrier to public building projects was political. The construction of public buildings was a long and very contentious process often delayed by disagreements over where to build as well as the reluctance of legislators to increase taxes. These projects were usually financed by taxes on the staple crops such as rice, indigo, and tobacco as well as on rum and slaves. None of these taxes would have been popular at a time when the South Carolina Commons House struggled with Governor Glen over the state's finances or in the few years before Virginians would lead the colonies in their opposition to British taxation. The Governor's Palace in Williamsburg elicited criticism due to its high cost, so much so that Governor Spotswood was forced to defend the project and the expenses to the Board of Trade. Fiscal conservatism was a prominent feature of political life in the mid eighteenth century, and the ability of colonists in Williamsburg and

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[104] Kenneth Scott, "Sufferers in the Charles Town Fire of 1740," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 64, no. 4 (1963): 203–11. See also Daniel J. Crooks, *Charles Town Is Burning! Two Centuries of Fire and Flames* (Charles Town, SC: The History Press, 2009).

Charles Town to appropriate money for public buildings projects was a significant achievement.[105]

The threat of attack was another political consideration that often prohibited the construction of public buildings. The residents of Williamsburg had a significant advantage over their counterparts in Charles Town in this category as well. The Virginia colony was entering its peaceful golden age by the eighteenth century. The internal strife of Bacon's Rebellion was over, the hostile Native American tribes had been subdued, and the city was relatively safe from hostile European powers. Accordingly, the residents of Williamsburg saw no need to erect palisades or defensive architecture around the city and could concentrate their efforts on other projects.

Charles Town, by contrast, occupied a very dangerous place as the southern frontier of English settlement in North America. Unlike Williamsburg but like Jamestown, Virginia, Charles Town was conceived as a fortified, frontier outpost situated on a peninsula for the purposes of military defensibility. It was situated as the southern frontier of British North America and was viewed by the Spanish as an encroachment on their claims in Florida. The Spanish unsuccessfully sought to dislodge the English from Carolina in the 1680s, and a joint Spanish-French force attacked Fort Johnson in 1706. The Carolina settlers also needed to defend themselves from hostile natives and pirates.

To address these threats, the Carolina settlers erected fortifications and made Charles Town the only walled city in British North America during Carolina's proprietary period (1670-1719). These walls were constructed of earthen materials and wooden palisades. In addition to the city walls, Charles Town was surrounded by moats

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[105] Carl Lounsbury, "Seats of Government: The Public Buildings of British America," *University of North Carolina Press*, 2016, 54.

and drawbridges. There were only two ways into the city: through the drawbridge at the corner of Meeting and Broad Streets or through the Half-Moon Battery, located roughly where the Exchange Building currently stands near the corner of Broad and East Bay Streets. The South Carolina legislature passed multiple provisions for the city's defenses beginning in 1703 and continuing into 1768. The emphasis on defense and fortifications demanded funds that could have been applied to public buildings projects, but the need for safety usually trumps the desire for ornament.[106]

The fourth and final barrier to the construction of public architecture was economic considerations. In order to undertake massive building projects, coordinate labor, hire master craftsmen, create bricks, dig foundations, and lay stucco, a colony would need a sufficiently wealthy population with disposable income. These projects also required immense resources in terms of labor and materials. Here again, Virginians enjoyed an advantage over their counterparts in South Carolina. Because the colony was older and had a longer time to mature, Virginians had time to develop tobacco as their staple crop and to create trade networks in the eighty years following their initial settlement. This made their colony the most profitable colony in North America by the early eighteenth century when the colonists planned the city of Williamsburg. The colonists in South Carolina, however, had just established their colony in 1670 and took sixty years to finally direct their economic attention toward the production of rice. Following this rice boom of the 1730s and in conjunction with planting indigo, the Carolina colonists became the wealthiest colonists per capita by the mid eighteenth century. The per capita income averaged six times that of Philadelphia, seven times that

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[106] For the best work on South Carolina's fortifications, see Larry E. Ivers, *Colonial Forts of South Carolina, 1670-1775*, 1st ed, Tricentennial Booklet No. 3 (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1970).

of Boston, and eight times that of New York. The Carolina lowcountry was also four times wealthier than the Chesapeake planters.[107]

Because of their enormous wealth extracted from plantation agriculture, the residents of both Williamsburg and Charles Town could afford to build fine public structures by the mid eighteenth century. The residents of Charles Town had a much higher tax base due to the slave trade and the Atlantic shipping industry. They also had more connections to London from which they imported the ornate and expensive baroque and neo-classical architectural tastes that came to characterize the urban landscape. The economic power of Charles Town in its heyday contributed to what would emerge as the finest city in the southern colonies.

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[107] Walter B. Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 162.

Figure 7.1: *Fire Areas.* Detail of the fires in Charleston.
Source: Samuel Gaillard Stoney, *This Is Charleston: A Survey of the Architectural Heritage of a Unique American City*, (Charleston, S.C: Carolina Art Association, 1976), 133.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Since the fortunes of a city were indeed measured by its public buildings, Williamsburg's establishment at the turn of the eighteenth century and Charles Town's development of public structures in the 1760s reveal when these fortunes were obtained and how they were displayed. By examining how these buildings were constructed, at what time, and for what purpose, this study reveals much about how these societies were organized, how they functioned, how they viewed themselves, and in what ways their culture was reflected through the built environment. Such an analysis allows historians to catch a glimpse of what the inhabitants of these colonial cities valued, how they conceived of politics, and what role the capital played in their economic, social, and political lives.

The public buildings chosen in this study are limited in scope but indicative of the relationship between public architecture, politics, and trade. The urban plans, churches, statehouses, governor's residences, and commercial buildings illuminate the spaces in which ordinary colonists experienced their colony's political life. These buildings also reveal how elites in both cities wished to construct spaces suitable to conduct the official business within the colony. Both Virginians and South Carolinians sought to display their rising prosperity, solidified political orders, gentility and refined taste, and their identity as British subjects, but these materialized in public architecture in different ways.

Politics in Williamsburg simply was a way of life, and it dominated the urban landscape. Any commercial activity at the marketplace was small-scale, local trade intended to provision the residents and travelers who came to participate in the province's political processes. The visually dominant buildings in this city were all symbols of the colony's established order, situated at the end of long, open approaches, and commanded the respect of the viewer. These fine Georgian structures included the College of William and Mary, Bruton Parish church, the Governor's Palace, and the Capitol Building. These buildings symbolized the pillars of Virginia society: liberal education, the Church of England, British executive authority, and the colonial legislature.

Williamsburg was from its inception conceived as a political city. As the ashes smoldered at Jamestown, the colonists envisioned a new, stately, brick Capitol as the centerpiece of the cityscape. This city between the James and York Rivers hearkened back to the ancient Greek *polis*—a city for politics, education, and interaction among citizens. Walking through the city, an eighteenth-century visitor would view a city that showcased the grandeur of royal government and an established, dignified political order. The Governor's Palace and the Capitol building would command the visitor's attention. One would also hear the clamor of printing presses cranking out the latest news as well as the din of heated political conversation emanating from the coffeehouses. The visitor would see finely dressed and bewigged gentlemen heading toward the Capitol, ready to pore over a new piece of legislation.

The fine public buildings of Williamsburg were an impressive achievement for Virginians. The city was a remarkably successful attempt to create a refined urban environment in a dispersed, rural colony. Serving as the architectural, political, and social

cultural hearth, the city's influence in the colony's culture was disproportionately large compared to size. The built environment reflected the "neat and plain" building style originally imported from post-Reformation England, but modified by local influences and established for over a century by local precedent. Though the Virginians wanted to be Englishmen, they adapted building forms to suit their needs in the new world they confronted.

In stark contrast, Charles Town was a city first and foremost not of politics, but of commerce. Charles Town was a city that developed naturally, not by legislative fiat, and it did not need public times to swell the number of occupants in the city. Charles Town's inhabitants did not place the same value on politics as Virginians but instead dedicated their urban environment to commerce, private societies, and entertainment. The city bustled with life and the daily commotion of transatlantic business. Walking through the city, one would see the masts of ships bobbing in the bay behind the Exchange and Customs House. On any of Charles Town's many wharves one could walk past the latest goods from a transatlantic economy in the market including rum, rice, spices, salt, and slaves. The orderly gridiron urban layout of the city made transporting goods easy, and the most prominent building in the cityscape was the Exchange and Customs House.

The profit motive was deeply embedded in the built environment of Charles Town and was derived from the culture of its earliest settlers. Originally located at the dangerous southern frontier near Spain, France, and hostile Native Americans, the colony and Charles Town in particular would emerge the most prosperous areas in all of British America. This transformation was set into motion by the Goose Creek men, some of the earliest settlers in the colony and transplants from Barbados. These were enterprising,

self-reliant, confident men who harbored a deep distrust of authority and who were primarily concerned with making their own fortunes. This emphasis on profit and distrust of political authority was made manifest in the public architecture of Charles Town well into the eighteenth century. Though Charles Town was the colony's capital city, it did not have public buildings to attest to that fact until the 1760s. The first brick public building was not built until construction began on the statehouse in 1756.

Architecturally, the residents of Charles Town constructed buildings based on their refined baroque and neo-classical tastes. These preferences were imported from England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century and characterized the various public buildings throughout the city. These elaborate designs required master craftsmen and fabulous wealth, both made possible by the colony's prosperity and Atlantic shipping networks. Unlike their counterparts in the Chesapeake, South Carolinians did not have a century of local architectural precedent standing in their way of adopting and repurposing the latest English fashions into their own designs.

In short, the built environment of both Williamsburg and Charles Town exemplified the political, social, and economic character of the colony to which it belonged. These urban landscapes were both southern capital cities but they adopted different building practices and visually emphasized different buildings. The respective public buildings analyzed in this study were some of these cities' most prominent character-defining features, and these features reveal valuable insights into the public life in each respective colony.

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