

## The Red Hill Mansion

Red Hill has been described as "standing tall with its four chimneys, its classic pediment and white-columned entrance."

The house was built with a wide center hall, in excess of thirteen feet, with two rooms approximately twenty feet by twenty on each side, tho no two rooms in the house are exactly the same. At the rear of the center hall, to the left, a graceful, curving stairway sweeps to the second floor. The stairway thus reduces the size of the two back rooms on the left, as the stair is set into the side.

The floor plan of the basement is similar to that of the main house and apparently in the early times a kitchen was contemplated here, tho in the memory of living people the kitchen was in a frame building attached at the north end of the house. The brick partitions of each room start on the footings of the basement and carry all the way to the attic, where the roof structure is supported by giant beams, apparently hewn and matched on the ground, as the Roman numerals at each joint are matched.

All of the original mantels are still intact, varying in style from the simple to the ornate in the north living rooms, the more elaborate mantels being in the Adam design with familiar tobacco leaf motif.

The ornamental motif of the stairs is Georgian, with the rail being mahogany veneer and the trim being generally mahogany.

Tradition has it that the large brick of the mansion were baked in the field adjoining the house, where the traces of an excavated area still show and where there are a large number of brick fragments even now. The house is approximately 42 feet wide and 55 feet long, with fourteen foot ceilings downstairs and those upstairs only slightly lower, and the style is probably most-accurately described as late Georgian. (The portico, front door, and a Victorian back porch all the way across--these are the only non-original features that are known.) It is believed that originally there was a quadrangle with four brick dependencies on each corner, but now only a twelve by twenty-four servants' house remains of these.

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At this date it is not possible to authenticate a date for construction of the mansion, tho it is certain that a house was at least begun on this site in 1754, as is attested by the letter of one of the grandchildren ~~mentioned~~ born ~~here~~ here later. In 1760 Mr. Charles Ellis devised "the house wherein I now dwell" to his son Josiah. In 1769 when Ellis' widow had ~~remarried~~ John Bickley, the Court reference is to the "mansion house," but apparently that term was used in early times to describe the residence of the planter at times when the dwelling was somewhat modest.

However, Red Hill is "monumental" in style, or built in the size and style of the true mansion. It is possible that it was built in its present form, or at least completed, in the life of the great Josiah, son of the founder. He was the man who possessed ample wealth to build such a mansion, and who personally combined the practical know-how of the frontier planter with the ambition, dress, manners, and fine tastes of the Williamsburg gentleman.