

# CHARLESTON REGIONAL BUSINESS JOURNAL

Dec. 11 - 24, 2006

IN FOCUS: ARCHITECTURE/ENGINEERING/CONSTRUCTION

www.charlestonbusiness.com 33

## Former Navy base officers' quarters getting spruced up

PHOTO/DENNIS QUICK



The historic base commander's residence on the former Charleston Naval Base is one of the base's three historic houses being restored by South Carolina STRONG.

**BY DENNIS QUICK**

Senior Staff Writer

**A**fter years of neglect, three large, historic homes on the former Charleston Naval Base are being restored to shipshape.

The work is being done by members of South Carolina STRONG, which stands for Sustaining, Teaching, Rebuilding Our New Generation, a nonprofit organization teaching former convicts trades and other skills to help them enter the work force.

All three houses are former officers quarters on North Hobson Avenue, part of the 340 acres of Navy base property owned by the Noisette Co., which is redeveloping the base. The homes are part of the Charleston Navy Yard Officers' Quarters Historic District. Noisette is trying to get the district listed on the National Historic Register, according to Jeff Baxter, Noisette's project manager.

Two of the houses, both built in 1942 and identical, are 2,700 square feet and the third, built in 1902, is 4,000 square feet, said John Glemser, facility director for South Carolina STRONG.

The two identical houses are a duplex designed by Charleston architecture Douglass Ellington and the two sides mirror each other, Baxter said.

Work began on one of the two houses in June and has already been completed by South Carolina STRONG and is being occupied by the workers. The restoration of the second house, which is underway, will be completed this coming spring, at which time restoration of the third house will begin. The third project will most likely take a year and a half to two years to complete. Workers from South Carolina STRONG will occupy all three houses, Glemser said.

The restoration work involve woodworking, painting, flooring, plastering, restoring fireplaces to functionality, rescreening windows, replacing moldy and mildew-rotted wood, installing new kitchen appliances and other tasks.

For the first of the 2,700-square-foot homes, the four bathrooms had to be rebuilt, the roof had to be fixed, plumbing had to be replaced and the stairway needed repairing, as did the trim along the walls. The second house requires much the same work, Glemser said.

The third house, built as the base commander's residence, features spacious verandas, five bedrooms and servants quarters. It is a Southern mansion blending neo-classical and colonial revival architectural styles, according to Baxter.

"Original plans describe a cistern cover, which shows the building was constructed prior to the Navy Yard having a central potable water system," he added.

The stately houses are being restored to their original look.

"We're preserving the integrity of the homes," Glemser said.

In addition to restoring the homes, South Carolina STRONG participants are planting bushes and other shrubbery native to the Lowcountry on the properties, Glemser said.