

Berry's on Main

1217 Taylor Street



▲ Berry's On Main Department Store in the early 1960s before any major renovations occurred.
Photograph courtesy of the South Caroliniana Library.



▲ The building in 1950, occupied by such businesses as Berry's On Main and Beck's Shoe Store.
Photograph by Russell Maxey.



▲ The department store in 1979 with its significantly altered exterior. The business would close permanently three years later.
Photograph by Russell Maxey.



▲ A limestone nameplate bearing the original name of the building.
Image courtesy of Capitol Places.



▲ The department store stands in the background of a Fire Prevention Parade down Main Street during the 1940s.
Photograph courtesy of Richland County Public Library.

“**B**erry's On Main” has played a significant role in the development of the city of Columbia, particularly the commercial district. In 1912 architect James B. Urquhart built the Manson Building. At the time of its construction, the building was

praised as an addition to the business district of Main Street. The Manson Building housed many small businesses through World War I.

In 1920 the Bon Marche Department Store moved into the upper levels of the building. The addition of the store was hailed as a milestone for the progress of Columbia as a commercial center. By 1933 Bon Marche closed, greatly affected by the Depression Era economy.

Several significant businesses occupied offices and retail space in the building during the 1930s and '40s. The Works Progress Administration held offices on the third floor, as did the American Red Cross. Businesses such as A.S. Beck Shoes, the Cotton Shop Clothes, and Reyner, Inc. Jewelers moved into the storefronts along Main Street during this time. During the 1940s the street level storefronts were remodeled and significant alternations occurred, namely with the addition of the marble expanses, plate glass windows and aluminum window casings.

In 1940 Joe B. Berry founded the department store Berry's On Main. The department store was described as one of the largest women's clothing stores in the state, with its slogan “If it's new, it's at Berry's On Main.” At the time of its grand opening, Berry's On Main occupied only the first floor of the Manson Building. The store later expanded to the second and third stories and eventually opened branches in the Richland Mall and Dutch Square. The downtown location, however, remained the premier shopping center of the company and was considered a Columbia institution.

In the early 1970s Berry's On Main remodeled the building by removing its cantilevered cornice and more significantly applying a stucco veneer directly to the exterior, thus covering the original brick and limestone features and windows of the Manson Building. Berry's On Main went out of business in 1982, citing the poor national economy as its reason for closure. The closing of the store coincided with the relocation of other Main Street retail businesses to suburban shopping malls.

In 1999, Capitol Places purchased the old department store. Working with hand tools, the stucco façade was removed from the building, thus exposing the original 1912 brickwork. With the removal of the veneer, other architectural features were revealed, such as limestone patterns and a limestone nameplate bearing the name “Manson.” The original brickwork was also preserved throughout the interior. The storefront level of the structure still maintains the alterations that occurred in the 1940s. The building now stands as an example of early twentieth century commercial architecture in the city.

Capitol Places II opened for residency in 2001. Apartments now occupy the second and third stories of the original Manson Building, now known locally as “Berry's On Main.”



▲ The building as it stands today, with the original 1912 brickwork and limestone details.
Image courtesy of Capitol Places.



▲ Opening in 1940, the Berry's On Main Department Store became one of the largest women's retailers in South Carolina.
Image courtesy of the South Caroliniana Library.

BON MARCHÉ

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▲ A 1929 advertisement for the Bon Marché Department Store.
Image courtesy of the South Caroliniana Library.

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When Capitol Places purchased the building in 1999, the exterior was still covered by a stucco veneer, which was later removed during renovation.
Image courtesy of Capitol Places.

BERRY'S FEMININE APPAREL

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shoes	hose	lingerie
bags	gloves	play togs
		jewelry

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▲ By 1963 Berry's On Main had followed its customers to the suburbs by adding a second branch at the Richland Mall. *Image courtesy of the South Caroliniana Library.*