

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUL 6 1987  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Miller Brothers Farm

and or common "Kensington" "Big House"

2. Location

street & number S.R. 912 N/A not for publication

city, town Kensington N/A vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Walker code 295

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name 1. George Blackwell Smith, Jr.  
2. Upshur Smith Puckette

street & number 1. 507 Pine Avenue  
2. Morgan Steep Road

city, town 1. Lookout Mountain 1. Tennessee  
2. Sewanee N/A vicinity of state 2. Tennessee

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk of the Superior Court

street & number Walker County Courthouse

city, town LaFayette state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Walker County Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1975  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta state Georgia

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

#### Description

The Miller Brothers Farm is located in extreme northeast Georgia, with the main house, the only surviving building, located at the crest of a small hill. The house, originally designed and built to serve as a hotel, is a massive frame structure with columned verandahs on its two principal elevations. The generous scale of the first floor rooms reflects its original purpose, later adapted for residential use by a single family.

The Miller Brothers Farm, often called Kensington today, is located in Walker County in extreme northwest Georgia. The main residence, the sole surviving building on the property, is sited atop the crest of a small hill with commanding views of the nearby valley. The house is a massive frame structure, two stories set above a full brick-walled basement. The main elevation of the house faces east, with the secondary elevation facing south. Both of these principal elevations feature verandahs framed by giant order Tuscan columns. The east elevation is approached by a T-shaped staircase leading to the verandah, while a simpler straight stair leads to the south verandah. Access from the verandahs into the house is provided by a series of large french doors with glazed upper sections. Three of these doorways open onto the east verandah, with two opening onto the south verandah. The house is L-planned in shape, with the corner formed by the "L" facing the northwest. This elevation of the house features a screened sleeping porch on the main level, supported by turned wood columns which rise from the ground to the flooring of the porch. Set underneath the broad overhangs of the two verandahs are large balconies supported by oversized console brackets. The house is covered with a very low pitched hip roof, which is covered in composition shingles. The exterior walls are clad in weatherboards, with a broad band of decorative wood shingles forming a band between the first and second floors of the house, as well as a narrow band just beneath the eaves of the roofline.

The interior of the house reflects both its original use as a hotel as well as its conversion to a large private residence. The basement is divided into a series of large rooms which were used for storage as well as one and a half bathrooms, presumably for the use of the staff of the hotel, and later, the servants employed by the Miller family. The space beneath the south verandah serves as a garage. The first, or main floor of the house is dominated by two very large rooms. The living room, which opens onto the east verandah, is approximately twenty five feet wide by fifty four feet in length. The dining room and parlor, situated at the south end of the main hall, measure approximately twenty seven feet in width and forty feet in length. This smaller space opens onto the south verandah. Adjacent to the dining room, located in the L, are a breakfast room and the kitchen. Other rooms on the main floor serve as bedrooms, with the game room situated just to the north of the living room at the opposite end of the main hall from the dining room. The main staircase is set along the center line which divides the living room into equal halves. The broad opening in the internal wall of the living room exposes the stair immediately to view as one enters the living room. The second floor of the house is devoted to a series of nine bedrooms and five bathrooms, with the bathrooms retaining their early 20th-century fixtures.

The only other improvement on the property is the swimming pool which is situated approximately two hundred feet to the southwest from the rear of the house. The pool, which measures twenty feet in width by sixty feet in length, was built in 1915.

While the original hotel building was significantly altered during the 1915-1917 remodeling, there have been virtually no major changes to the structure since that date.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1890, 1915-1917      **Builder/Architect** not known (architect)  
 Whittice and Pressley (Contractors)

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Significance

The Miller Brothers Farm is significant in the areas of architecture and community planning. These areas of significance support National Register eligibility in terms of National Register Criteria "C".

In the area of architecture, the farm is of significance as a rather remarkable transformation from one distinct building type to another. The house is the product of one of the most dramatic renovations in all of Georgia architecture, as the building was originally constructed as a hotel. Erected in 1890, the hotel was named the Kensington, and was to stand as a dominant feature of the new town which was to be developed around it. The hotel reflected the traditional fashions for large-scale frame resort hotels of the period, with an elaborate roofscape and a verandah running across the main elevation. The hotel was three-and-a-half stories high set on a full basement. When the hotel property was acquired by Gustavus Hindman Miller and Frank L. Miller in 1915, it was their plan to convert the structure into a residence which would serve their two families as well as guests on special occasions. The large scale of the hotel building exceeded their needs, and it was decided to reduce the mass of the building by somewhat drastic means. The upper one-and-a-half stories were removed, along with all of the turrets associated with the original structure. The original long front verandah was also removed, and approximately fifteen feet of the building were removed from the north and south ends of the east elevation. The Miller brothers evidently were intent on transforming the structure into a "southern" plantation house, even though the physical form of the reduced building would not permit an accurate replica. The final product of their remodeling must be said to represent a compromise between the ideal and what was feasible given the building in question. The exterior had been stripped of all references to the Queen Anne style of the original hotel building, with the exception of some bands of decorative wood shingles. The original verandah on the east elevation had been replaced with a monumental two-story verandah supported by Tuscan columns. A matching verandah was built on the south elevation, resulting in a more formal appearance for the house. While it is difficult to be as specific concerning the changes made to the interior of the structure, it is apparent that the great majority of the small bedrooms found in the hotel design were done away with in order to produce the large bedrooms on the second floor, especially the three room suite that opens onto the balcony on the east elevation of the house. Significantly, while walls were reorganized, the finish work of the hotel, the original door and window frames, were reused in new locations. The house that resulted from this extraordinary remodeling sat at the center of a 1,600 acre dairy farm, and is one of the largest specimens of Classical Revival domestic architecture in Georgia, albeit in a less than pure form.

In the area of community planning, the farm is significant as the sole extant remnant of the resort town of Kensington. The town was planned by a group of investors from Philadelphia, who chose the name in honor of the suburb of that city. Curiously, the plan for the town was prepared by the Chicago engineering firm of A. Zeese & Co. Organized on a conventional grid plan, the town plan included land for the development

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Historic Property Information Form. Filed at Historic Preservation Section,  
Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 40  
Quadrangle name Durham and Kensington, GA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	6	4	8	9	0	0	3	8	4	9	2	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B 

1	6	6	4	8	9	0	0	3	8	4	8	6	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C 

1	6	6	4	8	3	6	0	3	8	4	8	6	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D 

1	6	6	4	8	3	6	0	3	8	4	8	9	8	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundary conforms to current legal description of 40 acre site. Site includes all the significant landscape features associated with the structure, and property held by descendants of Miller brothers. See sketch map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John C. Ferguson, Architectural Historian

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date May 22, 1987

street & number 205 Butler Street S.E. telephone (404) 656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 6/23/87

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John A. Brown National Register Keeper of the National Register date 8/6/87

Attest: Chief of Registration date

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

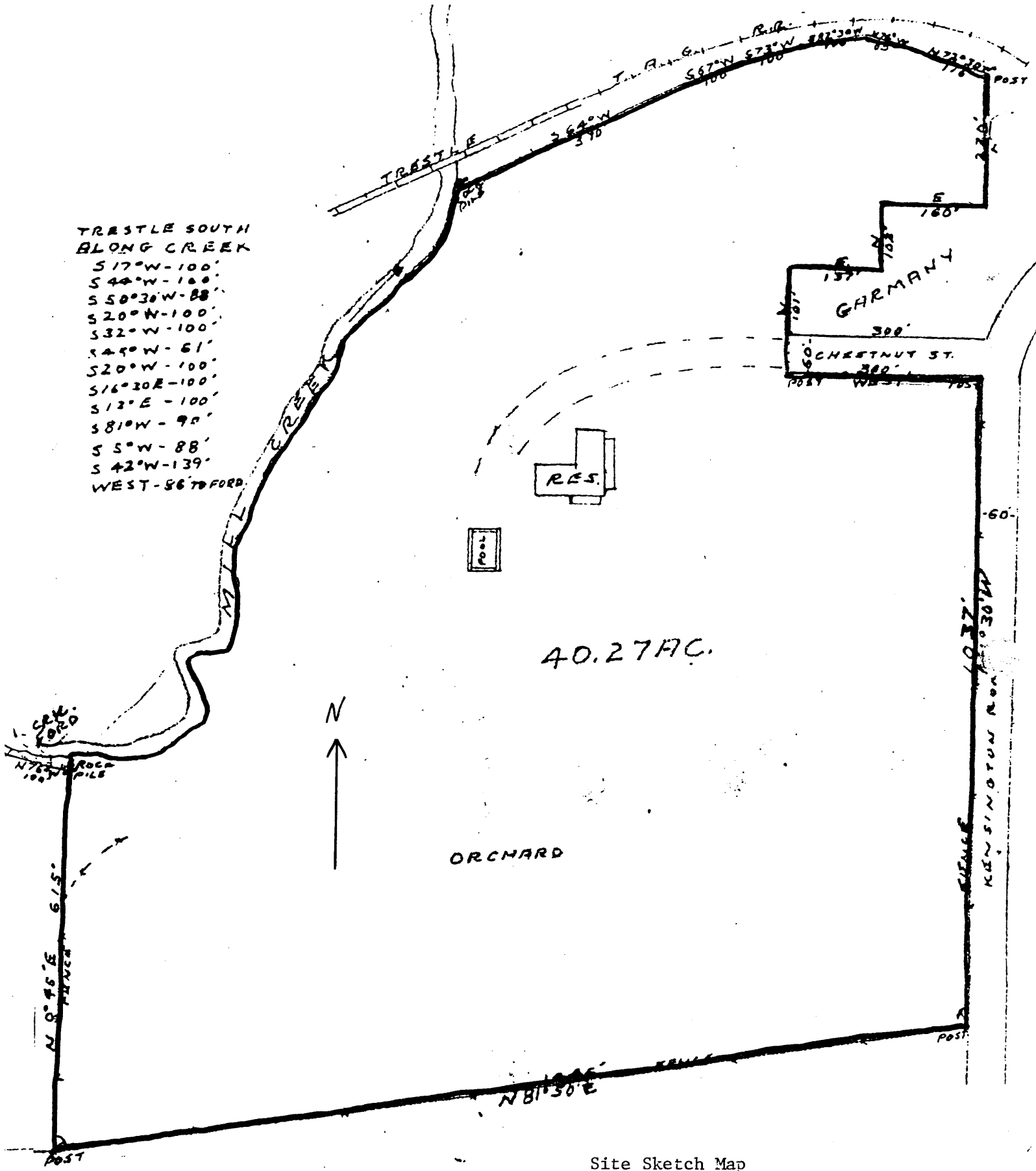
Section number 8 Page 2

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of manufacturing alongside the tracks of the Chattanooga Southern Railroad. The Kensington Hotel was sited on what would have been the highest land in the town, approached by what appears to be the only curvilinear street in town. The town of Kensington did begin to develop, but that growth seemed to come to a halt after a fire in 1892 which destroyed one of the mills and the gaslight plant. This, coupled with the economic depression of 1893, seemed to seal the fate of the town, and there appeared to be little new settlement activity or further development. The Kensington Hotel did continue to operate, but was evidently not a significant success as a hotel or a resort. No trace remains of the streets which might have been laid out for the town, and none of the forty odd cottages which were actually built have been identified as surviving.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources

1 contributing building



TRUSTEE SOUTH  
ALONG CREEK

- S 17° W - 100'
- S 44° W - 100'
- S 58° 30' W - 88'
- S 20° W - 100'
- S 32° W - 100'
- S 45° W - 61'
- S 20° W - 100'
- S 16° 30' E - 100'
- S 12° E - 100'
- S 81° W - 90'
- S 5° W - 88'
- S 42° W - 139'
- WEST - 86 TO FORD.

RES.

GARMENT

CHESTNUT ST.

40.27 AC.

ORCHARD



0-----200 feet

Site Sketch Map  
Miller Brothers Farm  
Kensington, Walker County, Georgia

PROPERTY MAP

Drawn by: H.L. Campbell-Walker Co. S.

Oct. 12, 1960

Lafayette, GA



PART OF KENSINGTON FARMS  
PART OF LAND LOTS 197 & 200  
11th DISTRICT - 4th RE...