

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 25 1979
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Josiah Smith Tennent House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 729 East Bay Street

CITY, TOWN Charleston

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1

STATE South Carolina

VICINITY OF
CODE 045

COUNTY Charleston

CODE 019

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: unoccupied

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME City of Charleston

STREET & NUMBER City Hall, 80 Broad Street

CITY, TOWN Charleston

VICINITY OF

STATE South Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Registry of Mesne Conveyance

STREET & NUMBER 2 Court House Square

CITY, TOWN Charleston

STATE South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE 1973 (update) FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN Columbia

STATE South Carolina

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

Located within the city limits of Charleston, South Carolina, the Josiah Smith Tennent House is believed to have been constructed by Josiah Smith and Mary Ramsay Tennent circa 1859. The Tennent House is a modified, detached Charleston single house which also reflects the Greek Revival influence.

Exemplary of the detached Charleston single house, the Tennent House stands with its gable-end to the street. The long north-south side facades orient the piazzas and room arrangements south towards the ocean breezes and protect the house from exposure to the midday sun. However, as a mid-nineteenth century townhouse plan, the Tennent House illustrates modifications to the eighteenth and early nineteenth century single house form. No longer does one enter the house from the street onto the southern piazza. Rather, as designed, entry to the house is from the front (east) facade. Circulation as entry, stairway, and hall are all pulled to the northern wall. As a result, the structure's T-shaped plan provides maximum exposure and ventilation to the principle rooms on the south (seaside) facade while providing protection from the winter elements on the north. This arrangement eliminates the use of the piazza as a public entryway, and affords the principle rooms the advantage of being situated in a suite.

Asymmetrical in form, the Josiah Smith Tennent House presently consists of the original four-story main block and of a circa 1950 two-story addition to the west. The original section of the house was T-shaped in form, with piazzas on three sides which made the overall configuration rectangular; the removal of the SW, south and SE piazzas circa 1950 resulted in the current appearance. Both the original portion of the house and the later addition are comprised of load-bearing brick walls. Brickwork is American common bond on all facades except the front (east), which features Flemish bond.

Set on a raised and enclosed basement, the original portion of the structure features a significant high hipped roof with flared eaves and early slate tiles still in place. A wide boxed cornice with plain frieze extends unbroken around the roofline of the original portion of the house. Four tall chimneys are located on the perimeter of the roofline. Although some of the window and door openings have been infilled with brick, the original window configuration, regular, symmetrical and arranged in bays throughout, is still visible.

Following the 1886 Charleston earthquake, steel bolts were inserted through the walls to strengthen the house. An in-depth structural survey is planned for the near future, although commissioned preliminary study has indicated that both the original house and the later addition are structurally sound and in need of only minor repair.

Extensive architectural evaluation based on historic evidence has determined that the proposed restoration of the exterior will consist of the reconstruction of both the front entrance and the SW, south, and SE piazzas. The two-story Greek Revival piazzas will again feature a flat-topped roof, columns with entasis and balustrades with heavy, turned balusters. In addition, the walls beneath the overhang of the piazzas will be stuccoed and scored, as they were originally. The front entrance on the east facade will again be comprised of a straight flight of stairs rising parallel to the street, leading to a massive, square, Greek Revival portico with flat-topped roof, full entablature and, Corinthian columns and pilasters. In addition, restoration plans also call for: the refitting of the window openings with 6/6 windows, except beneath the overhang of the piazzas, where French doors will be installed as originally featured;

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Josiah Smith Tennent House, located within the city limits of Charleston, South Carolina, is believed to have been built by Josiah Smith and Mary Ramsay Tennent circa 1859. The house is architecturally significant as a modified, detached Charleston single house exemplary of the Greek Revival influence and is historically significant both for its associations with locally prominent individuals and for its commercial use.

Stylistic analysis and historic evidence indicate that Josiah Smith and Mary Ramsay Tennent constructed the house circa 1859 on property which had been conveyed to them in 1856 by her father, Dr. John Hyrne Tucker. A member of a prominent Charleston family, Tennent was a wealthy businessman and planter. He was a brick factor and was associated with the Planters' and Mechanics' Bank. In addition, he owned numerous tracts of land, including a plantation in St. James Parish, Goose Creek. An early volunteer for Confederate Service during the Civil War, Tennent served in Company A, Twenty-Seventh South Carolina Regiment (Gaillard's Regiment) until his death in 1864. Mrs. Tennent continued to reside in the house until 1870.

Shortly thereafter, the Tennent House was purchased by Carsten Wulbern, a German emigrant who played a significant role in local commercial, religious and civic affairs. Following his return from Confederate Service during the Civil War as an officer in Company A, German Artillery, Wulbern entered the wholesale grocery business. He prospered and soon established his own firm, Wulbern and Pieper. In addition, Wulbern served as a director of both the Home Insurance Company and the Germania Savings Bank. He was an original pewholder of St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church and served as president of the congregation. A prominent civic leader, Wulbern served on the Charleston City Council as Alderman from Ward 9 from 1883 to 1887. He was also a member of the city Board of Equalization and a longtime representative to the city Department of Charities, serving as a commissioner of both the Alms House and the Colonial Common and Ashley River Embankment.

Wulbern occupied the Tennent House until 1889, when he sold it to the Charleston Cotton Mills, a textile firm. (Established as the Charleston Manufacturing Company in 1880, the cotton mill went bankrupt in 1888 and was reorganized under the new name that same year.) The complex of buildings associated with the mill covered several city blocks, bounded roughly by Drake Street on the north, Columbus Street on the south, American Street on the west, and East Bay Street on the east. A part of this complex, the Tennent House itself served as a residence for the superintendent, and, it is believed, as the company offices. By 1896, the Charleston Cotton Mills was the only cotton manufacturing firm in the city, employing 645 people and having an annual product valued at \$700,000. The mill was unable, however, to escape the general economic depression which affected Charleston's commercial and industrial interests in that year; it closed in June and by 1899 had ceased to exist.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Charleston Quadrangle

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,7 5,9,9,7,1,0 3,6,2,9,2,8,0

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the western corner of the intersection of East Bay and Blake Streets; the proceeding SW along the NW boundary of the right of way of Blake Street until reaching the property of Southco Homes Inc.; then proceeding NW along the side

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Staff
Historic Preservation Division

Margaretta Childs
William D. Evans
City of Charleston

ORGANIZATION South Carolina Department of Archives and History

DATE July 16, 1979

STREET & NUMBER Post Office Box 11669, Capitol Station

TELEPHONE (803) 758-5816

CITY OR TOWN Columbia

STATE South Carolina

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

TITLE

Charles T. Lopez

DATE

7/17/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11-27-79

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

11/5/79

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and, the reconstruction of the upper portion of the chimney tops and caps as they originally appeared above the roofline.

Interior: Entering from the east, the original portion of the house is asymmetrical in plan, with a suite of two rooms at left (south) and a stair hall at right (north) on each floor. Modern alterations to this section of the house have consisted of the removal of the floor and interior walls between the basement and main floor levels circa 1950 to create one large two-story space. Also at that time, a two-story addition, comprised of one, large, open interior space, was added to the rear (west) facade of the original house.

The third and fourth floors of the house retain original fabric throughout, including wide board floors, wide baseboards, bull's-eye door and window architraves and all eight mantels. Also extant is the staircase at the third and fourth floor levels, with original banister, balusters and stringers.

Surroundings: The Josiah Smith Tennent House is located on the Charleston peninsula in what was historically the suburb of Hampstead and is now part of the downtown area. It is one of the key focal structures on entering the city from the expressway. The upper east side of the city, including the neighborhood in which the house is located, has recently become a target area for community development funds. Private investors have also begun to contribute to revitalization efforts in the vicinity. Residential, commercial, and civic/cultural functions have begun to replace the deteriorated rental housing and heavy industry which previously dominated the neighborhood. The city of Charleston has recently completed a feasibility study for the house, funded in part by a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. As an outgrowth of this study, plans to restore the Tennent House and adapt it for use as an archives and research center have been developed.

Situated on a corner lot, the Tennent House faces East Bay Street. Flanking the house across Blake Street and to the right is a large collection of buildings which formerly housed a cigar factory and is currently being converted for reuse as business offices. Multi-unit housing is located to the right rear of the house and individual dwellings, included in the community development project, are situated to the extreme rear. Flanking the house to the left and left rear is the municipal incinerator. It covers approximately one-half of the city block on which the house is located, and has been adapted for use as the East Side Community Center. No structures other than the Tennent House are located within the nominated acreage.

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The Tennent House was subsequently purchased by the city of Charleston to be used as a storage facility for the municipal incinerator, located on the adjacent property. Unoccupied at present, the house continues to be owned by the city of Charleston.

Architecture: The architectural significance of the Josiah Smith Tennent House derives in part from its survival as one of only several remaining antebellum townhouses in this vicinity of downtown Charleston and in part from its architectural form, which typifies the development of the modified, detached, Charleston single house. Notable architectural features presently extant include the floor plan with rooms grouped to the south and circulation arranged to the north and the detailing of the rooms and staircase at the third and fourth floor levels; following proposed restoration of the exterior, architectural features of note will once again include the south facade two story Greek Revival piazzas and the east facade Greek Revival front entrance portico.

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property line of Southco Homes Inc. until reaching the property of the East Side Community Center; then proceeding NE along the side property line of the East Side Community Center until reaching the NW boundary of the right of way of East Bay Street; thence proceeding SE along the NW boundary of the right of way of East Bay Street until reaching the NW boundary of the right of way of Blake Street, the point of origin.