UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  

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  
STATE  
South Carolina  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION  
CATEGORY  
X DISTRICT  
X BUILDING(S)  
__ STRUCTURE  
__ SITE  
__ OBJECT  
OWNERSHIP  
X PUBLIC  
__ PRIVATE  
__ BOTH  
PUBLIC ACQUISITION  
in process  
being considered

STATUS  
X OCCUPIED  
X UNOCCUPIED  
__ WORK IN PROGRESS  
ACCESSIBLE  
YES: RESTRICTED  
YES: UNRESTRICTED  
__ NO  
PRESENT USE  
X AGRICULTURE  
__ COMMERCIAL  
__ EDUCATIONAL  
__ ENTERTAINMENT  
__ GOVERNMENT  
__ INDUSTRIAL  
__ MILITARY  
X OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY  
NAME  
City of Charleston  
STREET & NUMBER  
City Hall, 80 Broad Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Charleston  
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
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;
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 Hyrme 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, Columbia 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.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approximately 1 acre
QUADRANGLE NAME: Charleston Quadrangle

QUAD 1: UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A 1,7 [5] 9, 9 7, 1 0
B
C
D
E
F
G
H

QUADRANGLE SCALE: 1:24,000

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE: Staff Historic Preservation Division
ORGANIZATION: South Carolina Department of Archives and History
STREET & NUMBER: Post Office Box 11669, Capitol Station
CITY OR TOWN: Columbia

DATE: July 16, 1979

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.

STAGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER: DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION: DATE
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 doors 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.
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.


Charleston County Death Records, June, 1854-June, 1866. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Charleston County Direct Index to Conveyances and Miscellaneous Deeds, Roll 8: 1891-1898, pp. 122, 434. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Charleston County Direct Index to Deeds, Roll 5: 1800-1881, p. 332. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Charleston County Inventories, Appraisals and Settlements, Volume F: 1860-1864. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Charleston County Revised Direct Index to Deeds, Roll 4: 1800-1881, pp. 413-414. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

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Confederate Roll of Honor 1861-1865. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Confederate Service Records, Roll 360. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Confederate Soldiers Memory Index Card File. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Consolidated Index to Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Roll 472. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.


List of Taxpayers for the City of Charleston for 1860. College of Charleston Library, Charleston, S.C.


Records of Mesne Conveyance, Deed Book E-14, p. 95. Charleston County Clerk of Court, Charleston, S.C.


Rolls of South Carolina Volunteers in the Confederate States Provisional Army, Volume 3, Infantry, p. 257. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

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<td>Tennent Family Papers. Manuscript Collection, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.</td>
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<td>Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell,</td>
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<td>Yearbook City of Charleston 1899. p. x.</td>
<td>Charleston, S.C.: Lucas and Richardson, 1899,</td>
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<td>Yearbook City of Charleston 1901.</td>
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<td>p. xi.</td>
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<td>1941, p. 58.</td>
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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.