

File Copy

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
76000633
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Henry B. Tompkins House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 125 West Wesley Road, N. W.

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Georgia

___ VICINITY OF
CODE

13

5th - Andrew Young

COUNTY

Fulton

CODE

121

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. Henry B. Tompkins

STREET & NUMBER

125 West Wesley Road, N. W.

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Fulton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Pryor Street

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Survey of Historic Structures, Sites and Districts:
Atlanta Urban Design Commission

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

City Hall, Atlanta Urban Design Commission

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE		CHECK ONE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED	DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED			
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED				

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated on a knoll in one of the finer residential sections of Atlanta, the Henry B. Tompkins House is an excellent example of a Georgian manor-type house. The gardens cut into the hill to the rear of the house were also designed by the architect, Neel Reid, to complete the villa effect of the house. The Tompkins House and gardens were built in 1922 and have remained unaltered since that time.

According to Hal Hentz of the former architectural firm of Hentz, Reid & Adler, the house was adopted from a Georgian house in Chichester, England. Its exterior is built of natural limestone and its composition is basically a hipped roof, center block with flanking wings. There is little ornament on the two storied facade. A stone stringcourse defines the first from the second floor. Simple, rectangular mouldings with large manneristic keystones embellish the wing windows of the first floor and the central door to the rear of the house leading into the library. Stone strip pilasters frame the corners of the house.

The pedimented central pavilion forming the entrance is the obvious exception to the otherwise severely stark exterior. Neel Reid has purposely overscaled this entrance to make it the focal point of the house. Framed with rusticated pilasters and crowned with a broken segmental pediment and ornate cartouche, the doorway is very Italianate in style. A bracket form used as a keystone over the door completes a manneristic Italian design. The pattern of the mullions in the transom are typically Georgian Revival. Above the segmental pediment and cartouche, this central pavilion is completed by an eared frame window and an unornamented pediment rising above the house's rigid cornice. The design of the entrance is echoed in less ornate terms on the entrance to the rear of the house. Here, the large, second floor pediment remains, but below it a Palladian window opens onto a small balcony over the doorway. The first floor entrance defined by moulding and a large keystone opens from the library onto the formal garden.

The interior of the Tompkins House reveals the architect's ability to create controlled dimensions and open space within a small volume. This is seen best in the central axis of the house. Composed of a round entrance hall, rectangular stairwell, and octagonal library, this central axis forms a varied geometric plan. The entrance hall with its domed ceiling and four rounded niches alternating with its four doors repeats the geometric pattern.

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Upon entering the stairwell from the entrance hall, the space is suddenly open two full stories with, again, a geometric pattern created by the six landings and five flights of stairs which follow the rectangular shape of the well. Finally, the octagonal library placed five steps below the entrance hall and stairwell forms a completely new shape and leads directly into the formal garden composed of rectangular and curvilinear forms. The transverse axis to the central axis is made up for the most part of a living room and porch to the west and dining room and kitchen area to the east. On the second floor this space is occupied by a sleeping porch, dressing rooms, baths, and bedrooms. It is in the living room, its porch, and the dining room that Reid uses architectural motifs to give the rooms the same importance and dignity found in the exterior facade. The two flanking dining room doorways reflect the eared frame of the window and heavy pediment used in the second floor of the exterior pedimented pavilion. In the living room the gray marble mantel is framed by fluted Tuscan pilasters and an Italian Baroque overmantel. The Italian manneristic effect used on the exterior is carried into the porch opening from the living room by the use of over-scaled Tuscan columns.

As mentioned above, the formal garden on the axis with the library completes the villa style of the house. It is cut into the hill, walled with Stone Mountain granite, and paved in part with brick. The three granite walled sides of the garden and the house itself forming the fourth wall creates an intimate and private atmosphere. To the north of the garden, the architect has placed a curved flight of stone steps leading to what appears to be a classical temple. This classical portico is a facade for the garage behind it.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1922

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Hentz, Reid & Adler

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Henry B. Tompkins House and its landscaped gardens is an outstanding example of the work of Neel Reid, one of the most respected early twentieth century Atlanta architects. Totally unaltered in design and plan since its building in 1922, the house is one of the most complete remaining examples of the Reid villa. Mr. Henry B. Tompkins, the man for whom the house was built and a close friend of Neel Reid, has lived there for over fifty years. The house's design has thus been respected by the owner from the beginning.

Neel Reid, born in in 1885 in Jacksonville, Alabama, came to Atlanta in 1904 as an apprentice in the office of Atlanta architect W. F. Denny. The following year he enrolled in Columbia University's School of Architecture, and in 1906 left for Paris with Hal Hentz (later his partner) to study at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. At the Ecole he entered the atelier libre of Laloux. In 1909, Reid and Hentz formed a partnership with veteran Atlanta architect G. L. Norman who died that year. In 1913, Rudolph Adler, who also had studied at Columbia, joined the firm, which became one of the most outstanding in the city until Reid's untimely death in 1926. Reid, whose work in both quality and style reflects his experience at the Ecole, was the principal designer, and his work can be seen throughout early twentieth century Atlanta suburbs from Druid Hills on the northeastern edge of the city to Tuxedo Park and other later residential areas of the northwest section.

In the Tompkins House, it is possible to observe Reid's outstanding characteristics as an architectural designer; his mastery of scale and ability to create controlled dimensions and open space within a small volume, the freedom with which he used elements and yet maintained a consistently formal tone throughout, and the skill with which he provided for the practical needs relatively affluent and gracious suburban life style of his clients.

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The Tompkins House illustrates both Reid's unique use of style and aesthetic expression, and the way in which he provided for practical necessities within a basically formal layout. The well-handled proportions in this relatively small house, the skillfully orchestrated details, and its careful siting combine to create a stately, imposing structure. Functional needs in an era in which servants were available but air-conditioning was not, have been accommodated by sleeping and service porches, a large kitchen and abundant storage spaces. These have been integrated with the formal plan. Reid considered the practical needs of his particular clients and then created a backdrop of architectural design and formal gardens, to enclose and enhance the necessities of the home.

The Henry B. Tompkins House has been chosen to represent the most well-preserved and perhaps most carefully executed home designed by Neel Reid in Atlanta. Its significance lies in its architecture and in its unchanged state.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Anonymous, "The House of Henry B. Tompkins: Miniature Manor Fits Perfectly into an Atlanta Lot," House and Garden, 95, (March 1949) 94-97.
- Crook, L. E., Jr. and D. J. Baum, Southern Architecture Illustrated, (Atlanta, 1931.)
- Grady, James H. Architecture of Neel Reid in Georgia, (Athens, Georgia, 1973).
- ~~Kapetanakos, Stephanie A. The Architecture of Neel Reid, Thesis, University of Georgia, 1971.~~

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ~~less than one acre~~

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	7,4,1,4,10	3,7,4,6,10,7,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C				D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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 Maria King, Research Assistant and Elizabeth A. Lyon, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Dept. of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Section

DATE

March 22, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

270 Washington Street, S.W., Room 703-C

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

DAVID M. SHERMAN

DATE

TITLE Chief, Historic Preservation Section

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER