

NOTE: The home was recently examined by Mr. Robert Bamble and Ms. Kim Weaver of the Alabama Historical Commission. A copy of the letter outlining their findings is attached.

Alabama Register Property Information

RECEIVED



MAR 23 1992

1. Name

historic SAMUEL COOKE HOME

and/or common TOMBERLIN, ROBERT DR, HOUSE

2. Location

street & number 910 MONTGOMERY AVENUE

city, town SHEFFIELD — vicinity of

state ALABAMA county COLBERT

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>NEITHER</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name DR ROBERT C. TOMBERLIN / RONALD D. TOMBERLIN

street & number 1000 N. MONTGOMERY AVE. / P.O. BOX 210068

city, town SHEFFIELD, AL 35660 / MONTGOMERY, AL 36121

5. Please use space below to sketch floor plan/site plan.

Send Certificate
416-4343 ex 4389

SEE ATTACHED SHEETS

- Alterations are discussed elsewhere in the form.

6. Description

Condition
 excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one
 unaltered
 altered

Check one
 original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- The house has 2 stories.
- Height above ground is approximately 31.6 feet, front to back.
- The interior structural system is wood frame.
- The exterior wall is the original wood wall.
- The house has cornice indentations with bold wooden brackets.
- There are 22 bays on the first level of the house.
- There is a "wrap around" porch on the left front and left side of the house with very ornate ginghamed trim (see pictures).
- The pitch of the roof is 60°-70°. The covering is metal.
- Unable to describe roof trim but it is clearly visible in the enclosed photography.
- The house has 3 brick chimneys, one exterior on the south side of the house, 2 interior; one in the center & one on the left side with two fire places on each level.
- The main front entrance is centered and is oak with a single glass pane (not original) and four (?) panels, fairly non-descript. A second front entrance is on the left side of the house - it has a single, beveled pane & 4 panels.
- There are 3 double hung, single pane windows in the front of the house. There are a total of 38 double hung, single pane windows in the house, most of which have the original glass.
- The house has 8 mantels, the 4 downstairs are oak (2 with mirrors), and the 4 in the upstairs bedrooms are marbleized cast iron with marbleized slate. One has brass decorative rods.
- The interior doors (2 pocket doors) are quarter-sawn oak and are either four or five panels. all the doors and windows in the home have oak facings.
- The floors are oak.
- The interior doors have decorative brass hardware.
- The stair case is quarter-sawn oak in the Eastlake style. It is a reverse flight staircase with a 2nd 90° turn at the bottom.
- The house faces west and three of the original oak trees in the front are still alive. No out buildings.

7. 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/
<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 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 1897-1900 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This residence at 910 Montgomery Ave, Sheffield, AL is one of only a few remaining late Victorian homes built in the 1890s by one of the original merchants during the first decade of Sheffield's official existence. It is the only house of this period in the city with concave entablatures accented with wooden brackets, and possibly the only remaining example of this cornice treatment in the state.

The house was constructed between 1895-1900, with the exact date not yet known. Research is continuing to determine the exact date of construction and the builder. The original owner was Samuel Cooke, a local dry goods dealer in Sheffield, and later in life a person active in various civic affairs of the city. The house was converted into "upstairs-downstairs" apartments in the 1950's. Bathrooms were added, ceilings were lowered in some rooms and the reverse flight staircase with a second 90° turn at the bottom was enclosed behind a new wall and second hand floor during the conversion to apartments. The staircase is quarter-sawn oak in the Eastlake style and is the center piece of the living hall.

The present owners are presently seeking buyers to undertake a restoration of the home. Unless a suitable buyer can be found, the house is slated for demolition later this year.

8. Major Bibliographical References

Interview: Mrs. Elizabeth Bunk, Local Historian, Sheffield, AL
Colbert County Census Records, 1900.

9. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property 100' x 200'

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots numbered 1 and 2, in Block numbered 17.
100' x 200'

10. Form Prepared By

name/title

RONALD D. TOMBERLIN

organization

date

MARCH 23, 1992

street & number

P.O. Box 210068

telephone

(205) 260-0513

city or town

MONTGOMERY

state

AL 36121

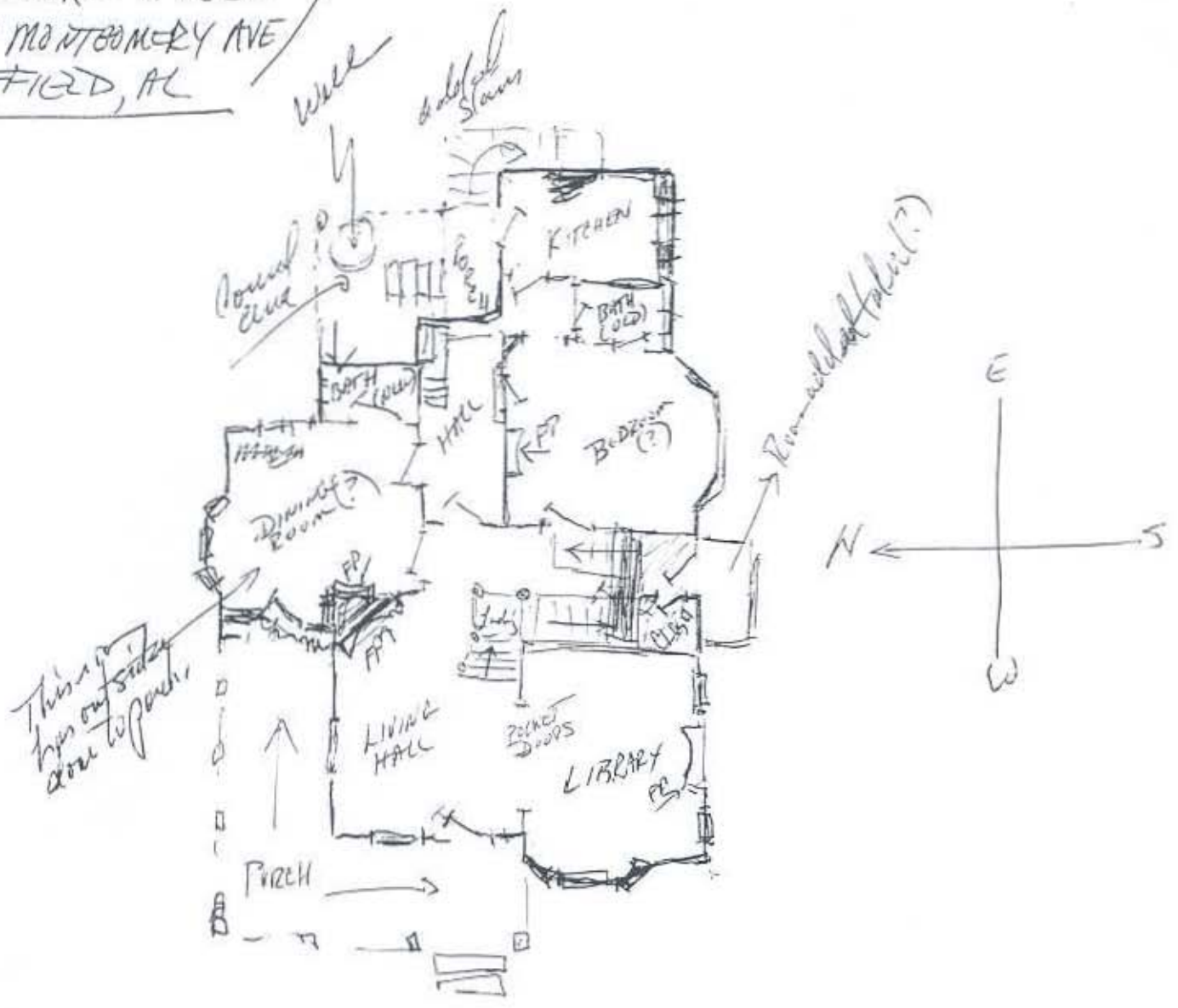
11. Please submit color slides of the property with this form.

COLOR PRINTS SUBSTITUTED AS PER MELANIE.

12. Please return ALABAMA REGISTER form to:

ALABAMA REGISTER COORDINATOR
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
725 MONROE STREET
MONTGOMERY ALABAMA 36130

THE COOKE HOUSE
 910 MONTGOMERY AVE
 SHEFFIELD, AL

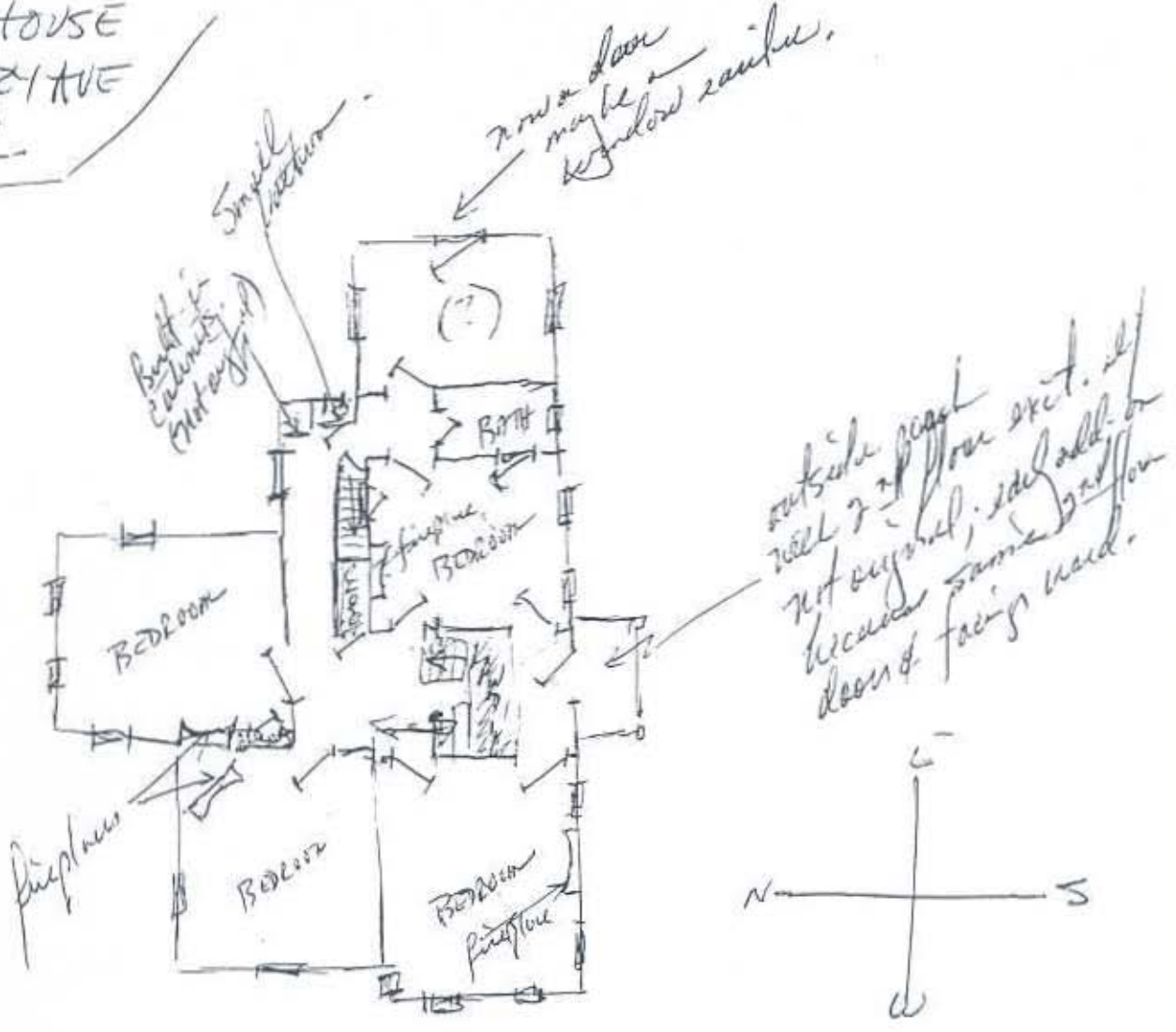


FIRST FLOOR

NOTES:

- (1) There are stairs down to the party that have been sealed up.
- (2) Steps have been added to the back & south side of the home to give outside access to second floor. Occurred in the 50's when house converted to upstairs/downstairs apartments.
- (3) 4 downstairs fireplaces.

THE COOKE HOUSE
 910 MONTGOMERY AVE
 SHEFFIELD, A.C.



SECOND FLOOR

NOTES:

- (1) Floor 4' wide between two south side bedrooms. Outside exit here. Originally had rail (stair-type) between rooms.
- (2) 2nd stair landing, 3' below floor level.
- (3) Had short rail at 2nd floor level at top of stairs.
- (4) Closet under attic stairs in 2nd floor foyer.
- (5) Small bedroom closet next to attic stairs also.
- (6) 4 up stairs pierpluss.



F. LAWRENCE OAKS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF ALABAMA
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

725 MONROE STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-5101



TELEPHONE NUMBER
242-3184

7 March 1992

Dr. Roger Tomberlin
1000 N. Montgomery Avenue
Sheffield, AL 35660

Mr. Ronald D. Tomberlin
P.O. Box 21068
Montgomery, AL 36121

Gentlemen:

It was a pleasure to meet with you recently concerning the old Samuel Cook house in Sheffield. Thank you for allowing us such a thorough examination of this intriguing residence.

Based on our attic-to-basement investigation, we feel the house is essentially sound from the structural standpoint. Even the damage to the porch and side bay-window areas, which looks so serious from the outside, is by no means as extensive as we first suspected. In fact, the soundness of the main members (the basic framework) throughout the house is quite remarkable considering so many years of neglect.

We were equally impressed by the remarkably fine quality of the interior. Normally, decoration in homes of this period tends to be concentrated in the entrance/stair hall (the Victorians would have called this the "living hall") and adjacent formal rooms. Compared to these areas, the bedrooms and other secondary spaces were oftentimes plain and devoid of interest. Not so in the Cook house. As we toured the second floor, we were struck by the consistently high quality of the mantelpieces and wood trim throughout -- not to mention a layout which is considerably more sophisticated in its circulation pattern than the typical Alabama "big house" of the 1880-1900 period. In fact, all in all the house possesses one of the most intact Late Victorian interiors we have come across in the state.

As to distinguishing exterior features, the porch woodwork is unusually intricate and, except for the supporting sills, seems to be in pretty sound condition. And as we commented during our visit, the cornice treatment is very novel, with its bold, concave entablature accented by vigorous wooden brackets which -- in themselves -- reflect an attitude toward craftsmanship that America has sadly lost.

Dr. Roger Tomberlin
March 12, 1992
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In short, the Cook house is an extraordinary mirror of genteel Victorian taste and domestic arrangement. To lose the house would be a tragedy not only for Sheffield but for the region. Over the last half century, the attrition rate for houses of this kind has been enormous -- indeed, so high that most of the best are already gone. For this reason we feel that every effort should be made to save those that remain. As a phase of American cultural development, such houses are like three-dimensional textbooks of history and design once we learn to "read" them.


Then there is the matter of the value of the house to the neighborhood. We feel that this portion of Montgomery Avenue, with its park-like atmosphere of vintage residences and tall old trees, has enough historical importance and has retained enough physical integrity to be a potential candidate for a National Register historic district. Were a neighborhood association to be formed, this would certainly be a goal worth pursuing with assistance from our office.

With your permission, we would also like to put the word out through our statewide network that the house may be available to purchase for restoration.

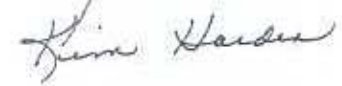
For your general information, please find enclosed some material on tax credits which are available for the rehabilitation of historic structures. Certainly, the Cook house is a good candidate for such credits should you or any future owner wish to stabilize and rehabilitate the house for any kind of income-producing purposes.

Please stay in touch with us about this matter. Meanwhile, thanks again for allowing us to investigate the house.

Sincerely,



Robert Gamble
Historian



Kim Harden
Historical Architect

RSG/jf

f: GC & Colbert Co.