



## The Reid House



*This report was written on June 3, 1987*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Reid House is located at 134 W. John Street in Matthews, North Carolina.

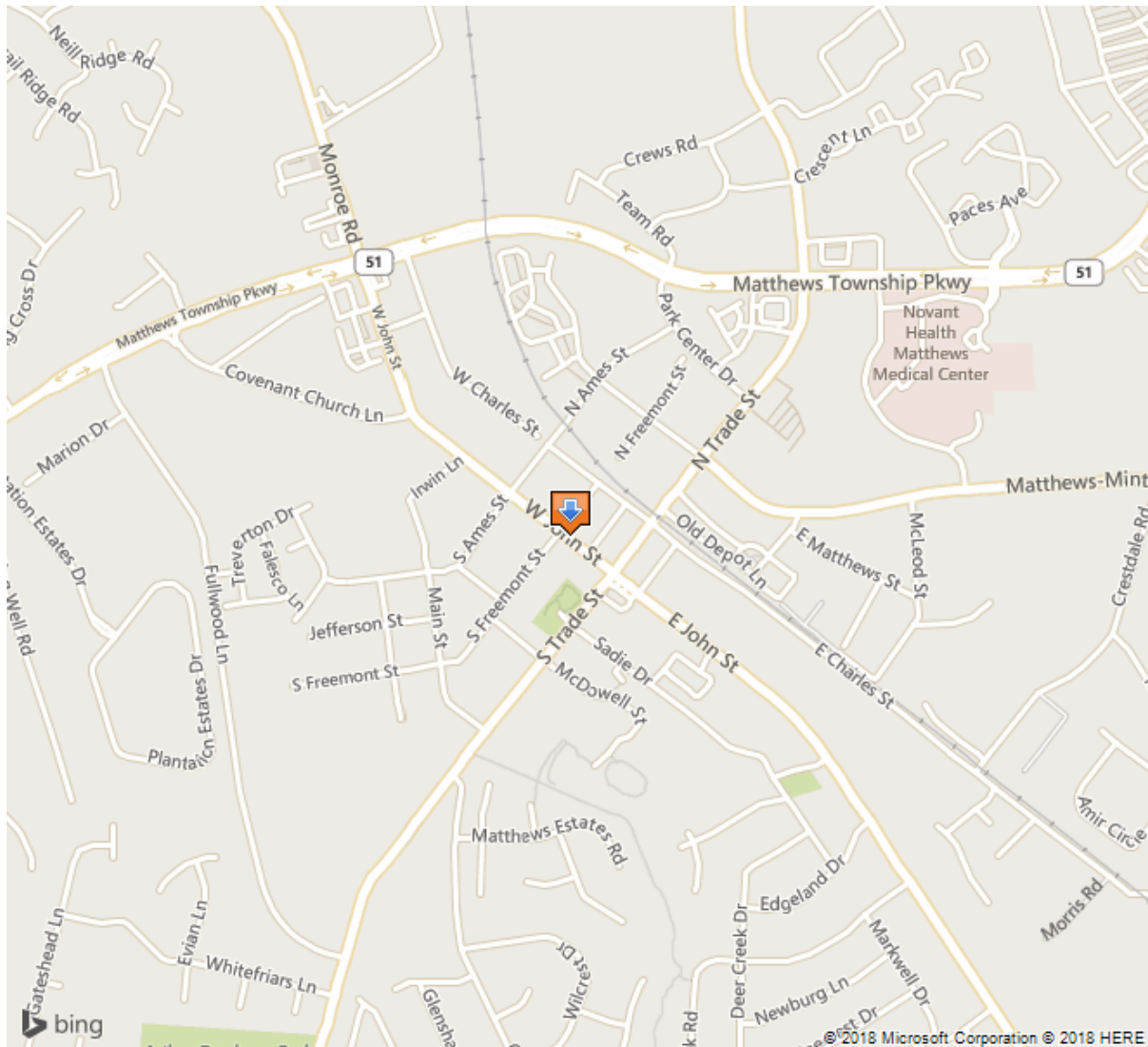
**2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner of the property:** The owner of the property is:

Mrs. Sarah Carter Redd  
400 Edisto Ave.  
Columbia, S.C. 29205

Telephone: 803/799-2502

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map which depicts the location of the property.



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent reference to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Will 86-E-1863. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is: 193-262-01.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. William H. Huffman, Ph.D.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Laura A. W. Phillips.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-399.4:**

**a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:** The Commission judges that the property known as the Reid House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) the Reid House, erected in 1890, has been continuously owned by members of the same family since its construction; 2) the Reid House was the home for over fifty years of Dr. Thomas Neely Reid (1868-1946), a prominent physician in Matthews and its environs; 3) Nancy Alexander Reid (1898-1986), a schoolteacher and community leader, was born and continued to reside in the Reid House until her death; and 4) the Reid House is a distinctive local example of a late Victorian Queen Anne style cottage.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association:** The Commission contends that the architectural description included in this report demonstrates that the Reid House meets this criterion.

**9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes "historic property." The current appraised value of the improvement is \$47,540. The current appraised value of the 116 by 200 foot lot is \$4,640. The total appraised value of the property is \$52,180. The property is zoned R20.

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** June 3, 1987

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill  
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1225 S. Caldwell St.  
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## *Historical Overview*

*Dr. William H. Huffman*

*May, 1987* The Reid House is an oasis of charm and grace in the center of the business district of Matthews. Built in 1890 by Edward Soloman Reid, it is a splendid and rare example of architectural creation from the late nineteenth century. For many years, accompanied by its huge magnolia tree, it has been a distinctive landmark that has been known far beyond the confines of the town.

Edward Soloman Reid (1864- 1934) was born in Providence Township of Mecklenburg County, the son of J. Soloman Reid, a prominent poetical figure who served in county offices as well as the state legislature, and Mary Grier Reid, also of Providence Township. Educated at the Bryant and Stratton Business College in Baltimore, Maryland, E. S. Reid lived in Matthews for a time, then moved to Charlotte, where he engaged in the cotton and yarn brokerage business. His first marriage was to Nancy (Nannie) J. Alexander, the daughter of John O. Alexander, with whom he had four children. The first Mrs. Reid died at the age of thirty-three of tuberculosis in 1898. E. S. Reid was married again to Junius P. Woodall of Charlotte in 1914. In Charlotte, he was quite active in civic affairs, and served as an alderman and member of the school board. <sup>1</sup>

From the deed records, it appears that in November, 1889, E. S. and Nancy Reid were given a 200' by 200' lot (which now encompasses the house and the Matthews Branch of the Public Library) on John Street by W. W. and M. M. Grier, grandparents of E. S. Reid, upon which they were to build their house, and in January, 1890, sold the property to John O. and Jane E. Alexander (Nancy Reid's parents), who gave the house and an 89' by 200' lot back to the couple as a gift two months later. <sup>2</sup>

About 1893, the house (and in 1895, the adjoining lot) were sold to E. S. Reid's sister, Ellen (Ellie) E. Reid (1867- 1917). <sup>3</sup> Ellen Reid was married to Dr. J. Van Bell of Matthews in 1886, who died in 1890. She subsequently married Dr. Thomas Neely Reid (1868- 1946) of Matthews in 1893. <sup>4</sup> Dr. T. N Reid was born in Sharon Township of Mecklenburg County, the son of Eliza Alexander and Hugh Kirkpatrick Reid. He attended Davidson College and the University of Virginia, then completed his medical studies at the University of the City of New York. <sup>5</sup> For over fifty years, Dr. Reid practiced medicine from the Queen Anne house, and covered a wide area that encompassed parts of Mecklenburg, Union and Cabarrus Counties and parts of South Carolina, originally with horse and buggy. As reported by Louise Matthews,

...when the automobile made its advent he was one of the first in the county to purchase an International Harvester-Runabout. Older residents of the town recall when the sound of his auto was heard children and chickens scattered, and disgruntled farmers had to dismount from their wagons to hold the bridles of their frightened horses.

Dr. Reid's death in 1946 signified the end of an era when doctors were more than professionals. They were trusted friends and family counselors as well. Possibly the busiest time of his long career occurred during World War I when the extremely cold weather and disastrous flu epidemic caused widespread suffering. Often he would come home at daybreak after ministering to patients all night, exhausted and with his moustache frozen. Many entire families were stricken. In such cases he built up the fires, fed and watered the stock, and even cut wood before leaving. With only skimpy hospital facilities available in nearby Charlotte, his services were demanded at the old Camp Greene where many of the thousands of recruits in training for overseas duty fell victim to the dreaded influenza. <sup>6</sup>

In addition to raising a daughter from Mrs. Reid's first marriage, Mary (Mrs. James Adderton of Lexington), two more daughters were born and raised in the house, Lida Ellen Reid (Mrs. Nash Spenser) Cochran ( 1894-1958), and Nancy Alexander Reid ( 1898-1986). Lida Reid Cochran was a graduate of Flora Macdonald College and a musician of some talent. She won the North Carolina Woman's Club award for Musical Composition, and for more than forty years was the organist at the Matthews Presbyterian Church. <sup>7</sup> Nancy Alexander Reid was a lifelong resident of the house who retired as a teacher from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system after a twenty-eight year career. She died in 1986 at the age of eighty-eight. <sup>8</sup> In 1980, she wrote some her recollections as a brief "History of the Reid House":

Prior to 1890, my uncle, Mr. Edward S. Reid, who was also Rosalyn Reid Harris' grandfather, and Alice Reid Digilio's grandfather, hired Mr. Howe and his son Clarence to build him a house in Matthews. Uncle Ed, as I called him, had heart pine lumber shipped from the Eastern part of North Carolina to build the house. He, his wife and then one child, who was born in North Carolina, lived in the louse a few years. My mother who had previously married Dr. J. S. Bell, had two daughters; Mary, who was three years old and Jessie who was 9 months when he (sic) died, was at that time about to marry Dr. T. N. Reid. They bought the house from Uncle Ed, who moved to Charlotte, and moved in. My sister Lida Reid Cochran and I were born in the house.

There were three bedrooms on the left hand side of the house. On the right was a living room, dining room, kitchen and pantry. A hall separated the bedrooms from the rest of the house. The house was surrounded by a white picket fence which separated the front yard from the backyard. On the other side of the picket fence was a vegetable garden which was enclosed by a larger, taller picket fence. That fence was one of my favorite walking places. My mother and father planted the magnolia tree in the front yard shortly after they moved in.

The house originally had a red metallic roof, but I loved to hear the rain come down on that roof. It made such a noise, it put me to sleep. In the backyard was a well-house with running water, where Mama kept her milk and butter in a stone trough. When I was very young, Mama and Papa rolled the well house over to the house and made it into a kitchen and pantry. This is the room where Elnora [Elnora Stitt, Nancy Reid 's housekeeper -companion] now stays. The original dining room was where the kitchen is now. The dining room was Mama's and Papa's bedroom. The rest of us girls stayed on the other side of the house. Bathrooms were later added, as was the now screened back porch.<sup>9</sup>

The Reid House has been a distinctive landmark in the Town of Matthews for nearly a century. By virtue of its architecture, long association with the Reid family, and with the town itself, its historical significance is clearly evident, and its preservation is manifestly of great importance.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Charlotte Observer* September 11, 1934, Section 2, p. 1; City of Charlotte Cemetery Records, Elmwood Cemetery.

<sup>2</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 68, p.386,23 November 1889; Book 70, p. 441, 18 January 1890;Book 71,p.499,7 March 1890.

<sup>3</sup> Deed to house lot not in records; for adjoining lot: Deed Book 116, p.66, 15 August 1895; in 1950 the latter was sold for a public library.

<sup>4</sup> *Charlotte Observer*. October 12, 1917, p. 10; Mecklenburg County Marriage Register, 1889-1898.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*. November 30, 1946, p. 7A.

<sup>6</sup> Louise B. Matthews, 'A Charming Reminder of a Gracious Era: Mathews Loves The Victorian Home of the Old Doctor,' undated typescript, kindly furnished by Sarah (Mrs. Carter) Redd of Columbia, SC, the heir to the house.

<sup>7</sup> *Charlotte Observer*. March 11, 1958, p. 9A.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, July 27, 1986, p. 29A.

<sup>9</sup> Nancy A. Reid, 'History of the Reid House,' manuscript dated June 27, 1980, kindly furnished by Sarah Redd.

### *Architectural Description*

*Laura A. W. Phillips*

*February 29, 1980 (based on field work of January 10, 1980)*

The Reid House is a late Victorian Queen Anne style cottage situated on a spacious lot at the northeast corner of W. John and Freemont Streets in Matthews, North Carolina. Located adjacent to the commercial center of town, the Reid House commands a prominent site in Matthews. Built in 1890 by Edward Solomon Reid, the house was purchased several years later by Thomas Neely Alexander Reid and his wife, and is still occupied and carefully maintained by their daughter, Nancy Reid, who was born in the house in 1898.

Though the Reid House is not large, it displays a wealth of fanciful details typical of the period during which it was built. On the exterior, these details are concentrated on the main facade. The one-story frame house is sheathed in weatherboarding, except for the area of the front porch, which is covered with very narrow molded siding, and the corner tower which is sheathed with scalloped shingles. This tower and the porch are, in fact, the primary exterior decorative features of the house.

Curving around the southwest corner of the house, the rounded shape of the tower contrasts sharply with the angularity of the rest of the house. The tiny tower is topped by a polygonal roof which boasts a decorative ironwork weather vane. Serving as a visual counterbalance to the tower, the southeast corner of the house projects forward as a large three-sided bay.

The front porch extends across only a portion of the facade, encompassing the entranceway and the flanking windows. In keeping with the irregular form of the Reid House, the porch projects outward in front of the entrance. The porch is a visual treat with its fluted chamfered posts, curvilinear sawnwork brackets with pinwheel design, frieze with sawnwork panels and turned pendants, and fluted balustrade vaguely related to the Chinese Chippendale style. The front entrance features a door with two narrow glazed upper panels set above two wooden panels. The panels themselves have fluted surrounds with bulls-eye corner blocks, while the door as a whole has a surround detailed by fluted bands.

Other details are somewhat more subtle. The cross gables which project on the front and left side of the house are sheathed in the same narrow molded boarding as found on the porch, only this time placed on the diagonal, forming a chevron pattern. A vertical board and rectangular louvered vent serve as the dividing line for this diagonal boarding. On the original portion of the house the windows are 2/2 sash with wood louvered shutters. Interior chimneys with simple corbeled caps project from the tripped and gabled roof. The roof is edged by a slightly overhanging cornice with boxed eaves and wide frieze board underneath. The house originally rested on a brick pier foundation, though now the spaces between the piers have been infilled with brick.

Noticeable alterations to the exterior of the house include replacement brick front steps with ironwork handrails, a small bathroom nestled between the corner tower and the side projecting wing behind it, and several additions on the rear of the house. The additions have been handled in a manner sympathetic to the original design of the house, and do not significantly detract from the overall architectural integrity.

The interior of the Reid House features a center hall plan with rooms of irregular size and configuration on either side. All interior decorative detailing is late Victorian in style. The center hall itself (visually divided into a front hall and a rear hall) is decorated with a beaded board wainscot. To right and left of the front hall, doors lead to a parlor and sitting room. (The doorway to the room on the right has been enlarged.) While the room on the right angles outward to reflect the projecting bay, the room on the left bows outward at the corner reflecting the rounded tower. Behind the two front rooms, and sharing chimneys with them, are the dining room on the right and the primary bedroom on the left. To the rear of these is an assemblage of other rooms, largely additions, including kitchen and sunroom.

Although all the mantels in the house are fairly similar with paneled pilasters, paneled frieze and molded mantel shelf, each differs from the others in detailing, especially in the type of paneling used. The mantel in the tower room to the left of the hall is



especially fanciful with its lozenge-shaped raised panels on frieze and pilasters and with the scalloped edge which runs along the underside of the frieze.

Other interior details of note include pine floors, baseboards with beaded upper edge, and four-panel doors with fluted-band surrounds (matching those of the front door), some of which still extend upward and outward beyond the upper corners of the doorway.

Northwest of the house is a one-story outbuilding, probably dating from the second quarter of the twentieth century, which appears to have been utilized as a storage building and possibly as servants quarters.