



STATE OF ALABAMA



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
725 MONROE STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130
PHONE: 832-6621

ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE
Nomination Form

COUNTY Baldwin

NAME: Present (None) Mc Nair House Historic Sunnyside Hotel

LOCATION: Street and Number Northwest corner of Oak and Jessamine Streets

Town (Give directions if rural) Magnolia Springs, Alabama 36555

\*A MAP WITH THE LANDMARK MARKED MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM\*

CATEGORY: Building (x) Structure ( ) Object ( ) Site ( ) District ( )

USE: Present Private residence Historic Hotel

OWNERSHIP: Public ( ) Private (x)

Owner's Name Donald W. and Rita H. McNair

Mailing Address Box 173

Magnolia Springs, Alabama 36555

INTEGRITY: Original Site (X) Moved ( ) When?

From where? (Give details in significance.)

CONDITIONS: Excellent (x) Good ( ) Fair ( ) Ruins ( )

THREATS: No (x) Yes ( ) By What?

RESTORATION WORK: Being considered ( ) Underway ( ) Completed (x) Not planned ( )

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Open land ( ) Woodland (x) Scattered buildings (x)
High building density ( ) Commercial ( ) Industrial ( )
Residential (X) Rural ( )

Acreage Less than one

For all categories other than a district and object give a site plan with a North arrow. Show related buildings.

For a district give a verbal boundary description and attach a sketch map of the district.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Why is this landmark significant? (X) associated with events, persons, or movements  
Local (X) State ( ) National ( )  
(X) a good example of a type or style of structure  
( ) other

Explain: (Briefly state why the above is true)

Land developers of the Magnolia Springs area housed prospective buyers here. Good hunting, healthy mineral waters from the springs, and beautiful surroundings attracted many wealthy vacationers at the turn of the century and after; many who vacationed at the Sunnyside stayed to become permanent residents of the Springs. (See photocopy of Magnolia Plaza sales brochure of 1925.)

Date of Construction or Period of major importance.

Local historians date at 1897 or 1898.

Architect or Builder (Give name and biographies, if known)

Not Known

Give a complete but concise history of the Landmark. Include information on important people and events associated with the landmark. (USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY)

The property is first recorded in 1894 as Lot 5 of the O.S. Lyman subdivision. Christopher McLennan purchased property 7/31/1897; sold to Edwin A. Bemis 11/21/1900. Local historians and newspaper articles date house as being built in 1897 or 1898. W.H. Harding purchased property for \$3500 on 11/14/13 and on 11/15/13 title was conveyed to Frank H. Brunell who financed the property. The Hardings ran the Sunnyside Hotel for many years. Mr. Brunell developed most of Magnolia Springs in the '20's and 30's and used the Sunnyside as lodgings for prospective property buyers. Sometime during this period, the property was deeded to the Hardings, either as a gift or in lieu of salary. At their death it passed to the Cowan's (she was Mrs. Hardings sister) who had come to help them run the Hotel in the summer of 1920. They continued to board guests and serve meals until the 40's. Mr. G. Bernard tells us that during the 20's he served as a guide for a group of wealthy Chicago sportsmen who stayed for 3 months

State sources of information, giving full bibliographical data: (continued) IN SCRAPHE FILE

Real Estate Records - Judge of Probate, Baldwin County, AL.; Magnolia Plaza sales brochure of 1925; Photos, writings and Post Cards of local historians; Minutes of Magnolia Springs Community Association; Interviews with local residents (we had an Open House after restoration and everyone came and recalled past times.) Has appeared in many newspaper articles over the years.

DESCRIPTION: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LANDMARK MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM.

Complete as directed below for each category.

BUILDING:

Number of stories 2 Foundation Brick Basement \_\_\_\_\_

Wall Material: (Note changes from one floor or wing to another)  
(clapboard, brick, stone, wood shingle, board and batton, stucco over wood or brick, metal, logs)

Clapboard of heart of yellow pine.

Structural System: (If known)

Wood frame (X) Load-bearing masonry ( ) Iron or Steel ( )

## HISTORY OF THE LANDMARK (Continued)

each winter, bringing their own whiskey in a wagon load of trunks. He tells us that by then, guests traveled as far as Foley by train and came the rest of the way by wagon. In the early 1900's guests arrived by boat (the dock is at the foot of Jessamine St.).

The Sunnyside also served as Magnolia Springs major meeting place and eating spot. Mrs. Challenor, daughter of the late Dr. Howe, states that he attended many a dinner in the dining room during the early 1900's. As the areas only doctor he was a dignitary on everyones list. It continued to be a popular spot for Sunday dinner for local residents until sometime in the late 40's or early 50's. Local Creole families have told us the Sunnyside was known for good fish and purchased a good portion of their catch. We have talked to several Creoles who worked here and they all tell us the meals were served at one very long table that ran the length of the 31 foot dining room. The 2 sides of the fireplace in the dining room kept it warm on cool days. It, the Great Hall and the porches, they tell us, were the hub of relaxing and visiting for the guests.



DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Roof Type: (Gable, Gambrel, Mansard, Flat, Hipped, Combination)

Roof Covering: (Wood shingle, Asphalt, Tile, Metal, Slate)

Roof Trim: (Cornices, bargeboard, brackets, etc.)

Porches: Front (type and description) Roof slant matches gable roof of house; porch extends across front and east side. All materials are heart pine, including (8) 12 foot turned posts, the turned balusters and rails in between, newell posts, flooring and beaded ceiling.

Rear (type and description) This porch is one year old. It is of deck type and replaces a concrete stoop (original type of steps unknown). Iron inserts in the rail are from the Old Wells Street Bridge in Chicago.

Side (type and description) Same as front.

Doors: Main entrance (location, description) Large heart pine glass-paned door with transom above, flanked with large windows which form surround, opens to Great Hall.

Other entrances (location, description) 1) opens to dining room from front porch; 2) door opens into kitchen from side porch; 3) door with stained glass surround opens between breakfast/sun room and back porch.

Windows: Types and number of each floor of facade Front: 3 on lower level, 2 dormers above. East side: 5 lower level, 4 above. Back: 3 windows, 2 stained glass windows plus stained glass surround ~~on lower level~~ ~~on upper level~~ ~~on side~~ ~~on rear~~ West side: 5 lower level, 2 above. Majority are original and are heart pine, but some have been replaced.

Interior: Describe mantels, stairways, wainscoting, plasterwork and any unusual features. Walls and ceilings are beaded heart yellow pine in all rooms except dining room, kitchen, first floor back bedroom and bath and master bedroom, where they are plaster and wallpaper. All wood has been restored to original finish except in Family Room where it is painted. Floors tongue and groove heart pine. Most woodwork is rare curly pine. Leaded glass French doors in Great Hall. 3-sided fireplace has original curly pine mantle in Great Hall. Doors are solid heart pine with transoms. The ceilings are 13 feet on the first floor, and 10 feet on the second. Two stairwells lead to separate sections of second floor. Most of the gas light piping still remains in walls and ceilings. One of the dining room fireplaces has a rare hand-carved cherry mantle (not original).

Other: Use this space to describe any additions, alterations, outbuildings or other features of the structure and its surroundings. See Site Plan for dimensions. Pump house is on original site but water tower has been removed. Carriage house, on original site, is in the final stages of restoration by owner. Only addition to the house was done in the early 20's (kitchen and back bedroom on first floor and master bedroom area). In areas where house had been "modernized", owners have restored with authentic period pieces -- cherry mantle, stained glass, ceiling fans, lighting fixtures, etc. Extensive termite damage in rear of house was corrected with pine custom milled for breakfast/sun room and back wall of family room (see photo) was corrected with pine custom milled to match original wood. Salvaged wood was used in porch restoration.

On an additional sheet make a sketch of the floor plan of the building, showing dimensions if possible.

THIS IS NOT REQUIRED!

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

- STRUCTURE: On a separate sheet of paper give a complete as possible verbal description of the structure. (See examples)
- OBJECT: On a separate sheet of paper give a complete as possible verbal description of the object. (See examples)
- SITE: On a separate sheet of paper give the present description of the site and how the site is believed to have looked during its period of importance.
- DISTRICT: On a separate sheet of paper give a general description of the district. Also needed is a numbered list of the structures in the district corresponding to the sketch map. This listing should include a name for the structure, a date of construction, a brief description, a statement of why the structure is significant, if it is.

\*A MAP WITH THE LANDMARK MARKED AND PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM\*

Map: A U.S. Geological Survey Map is preferred, but if you are unable to obtain one a county highway map may be used.

Photographs: Black and white, glossy finish, 5 x 7, or 8 x 10, is preferred.

FORM PREPARED BY

Name Donald W. and Rita H. McNair Date December 28, 1981  
Address Box 173 Telephone 205-965-7839  
Town Magnolia Springs  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_

For Alabama Historical Commission use only

STAFF COMMENTS:

MAP REFERENCE: MAP \_\_\_\_\_

U. T. M. Reference      Zone      Easting      Northing

Thematic Category \_\_\_\_\_

Added to ALABAMA REGISTER \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER Potential

## STRUCTURE DESCRIPTION

(See Site Plans for dimensions)

The structure is a raised Gulf Coast Cottage, though it is considerably larger than most other structures of this type in the area. It is constructed of materials native to the area at the time. Wood is all yellow heart pine. Walls and floors are two and three layers of pine thickness. Brick is of red found in other early brick of the area and brick mason says it was probably made close to the site. It has a sand base mortar.

The exterior walls are all painted clapboard. During restoration, clapboard was removed from rear of house which had suffered extensive damage. The salvagable wood was used to repair deteriorating spots in the front and on the sides. New clapboard was selected to match the original for the rear. The roof was originally hand-hewn wood shake shingles -- some were uncovered during restoration. The porch extends across the front of the house and down the east side. The ceilings are beaded pine and the flooring heart pine. All posts, balusters, rails and newell posts are original.

The exterior has been restored as authentically as owners could ascertain using photos dating to the early 1900's. A notable example is the front porch roof which had been flattened to look "modern" by a previous owner. Photos were used to measure the pitch and restore to original dimensions.

The house sits approximate 600 feet from the Magnolia River, which can be seen from the porch. It is surrounded by large old live oak trees. It is situated at the beginning of Magnolia Springs well-known arch of Oaks which extend past the structure and down Oak Street.



NORTH

# SITE PLAN



GATES AVENUE 50' R.O.W.

LEAVE OVER HANGS  
PROPERTY LINE  
0.5'

OVERHEAD  
POWER LINE

1PS 0.6' EAST  
OF FENCE  
FENCE WEST  
OF LINE FOR  
27' SOUTH OF  
1PS



5



OLD FENCE  
ON LINE

300 S22°50'E

300 N22°50'W

JESSAMINE STREET 50' R.O.W.

OAK AVENUE 60' R.O.W.

60.77'

MAGNOLIA RIVER  
1 Block

FIRST FLOOR

DECK TOUCH (NEW)

TRIPPLE DOOR WITH 3 PANELED GLASS SURROUND

BATH (5x7)

BED ROOM (ADDED)

FAMILY ROOM (ORIGINALLY THE KITCHEN -) 11'4" x 14'6"

BREAKFAST - SUN ROOM

KITCHEN (ADDED) 12'8" x 10'

BUTLER'S PANTRY 4'7" x 5'8"

LEADED GLASS TOUCH DOORS

UP

COOK'S ROOM

(ROOM USED AS UTILITY) 7'4" x 10'1/2"

BATH (6' x 14')

CRAW FOOT TUB  
ELEPHANT TRUNK WATER  
CLOSET

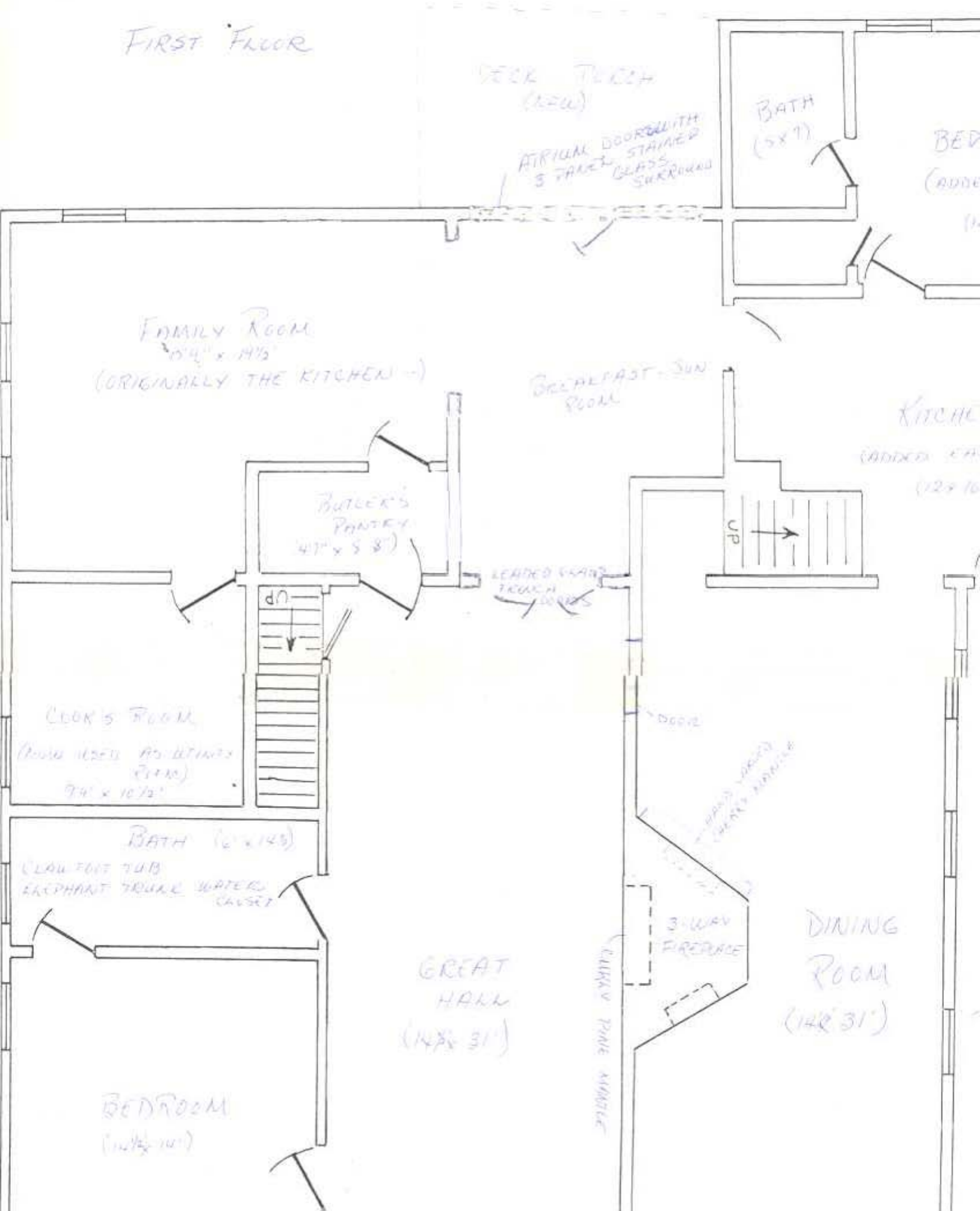
GREAT HALL (14'8" x 31')

CLASSY PINE MANTLE

3 WAY FIREPLACE

DINING ROOM (14'8" x 31')

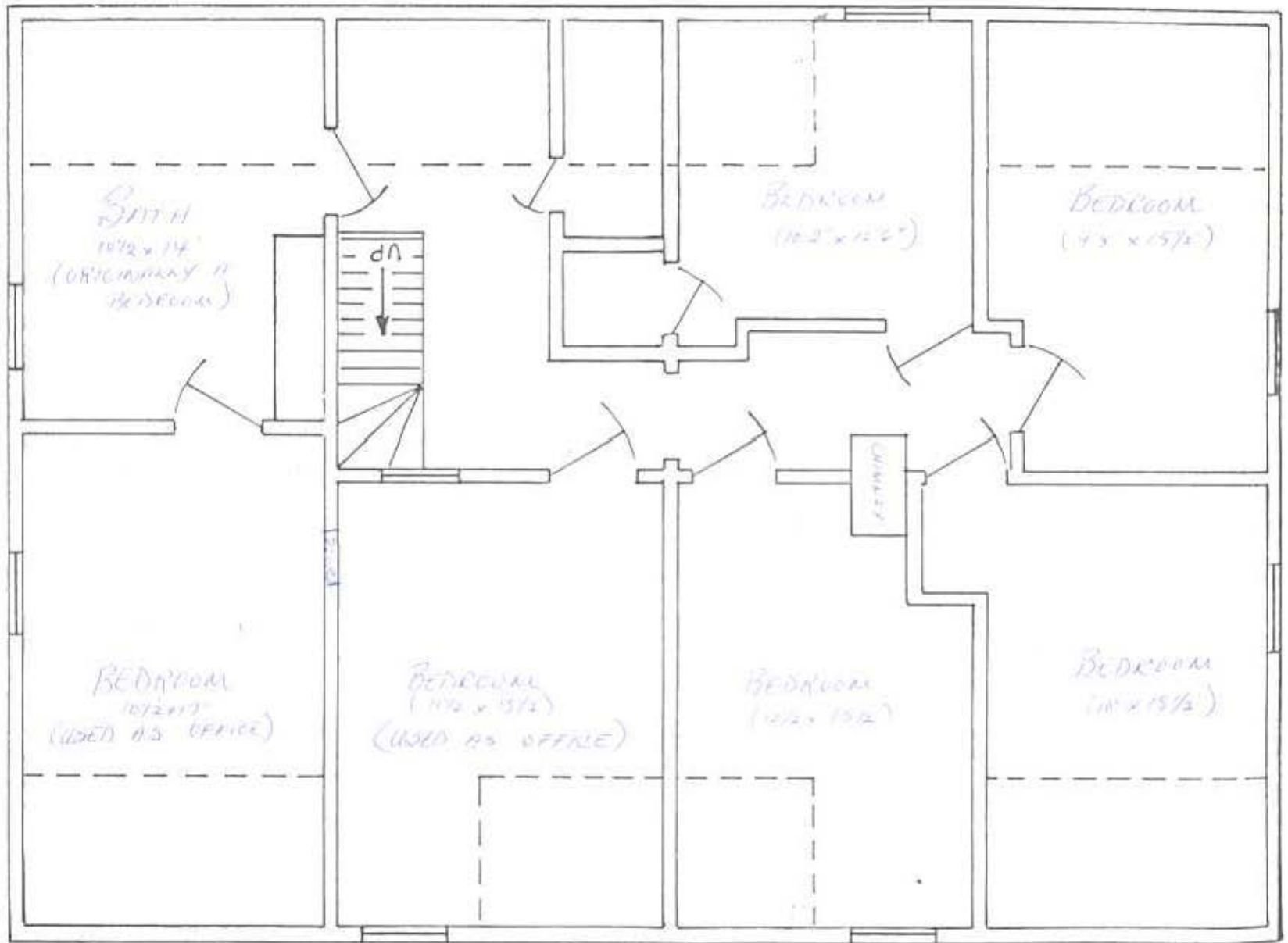
BEDROOM (11'4" x 14'6")





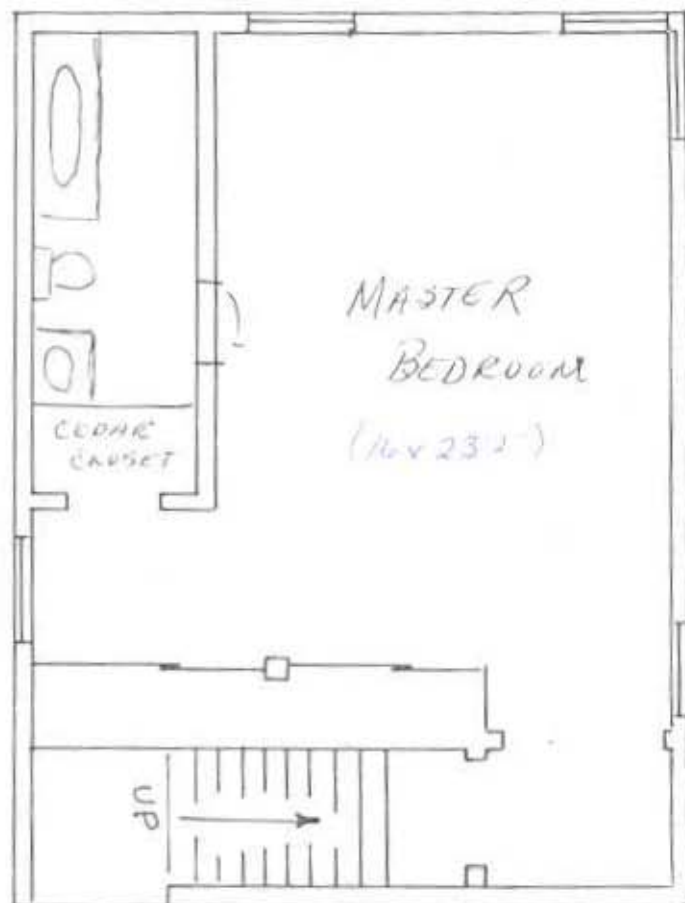
ALL WALLS AND CEILING  
BEADED HEART OF YELLOW PINE  
FLOORING IS TONGUE AND GROOVE  
HEART PINE.

## SECOND FLOOR



# SECOND FLOOR

(ABOVE KITCHEN AND BACK  
BEDROOM. THIS ADDITION  
WAS ADDED IN THE EARLY  
1920'S AND DOES NOT  
CONNECT TO THE OTHER  
SECOND FLOOR).









Replaced wood wall in family room



South end of dining room



Restored bathroom





Front First Floor Bedroom



Curly pine woodwork



North end of Great Hall





South end of Great Hall



Breakfast/Sun Room features stained glass surround. Walls are custom milled pine.