

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gulfview Hotel Historic District

other names/site number Gulfview Hotel/ 80k652

2. Location

street & number 12 Miracle Strip Parkway, SE n/a  not for publication

city or town Fort Walton Beach n/a  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Okaloosa code 091 zip code 32548

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne P. Walker, Deputy SHPO, 9/15/92  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida, Dept. of State, Division of Historical Resources  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Melrose Byers

~~Entered in the~~  
**National Register**

Date of Action

10/22/92

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
14	2	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
14	2	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Hotel

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Commerce/Trade: Restaurant

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Domestic: Single Dwelling

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**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

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Commerce/Trade: Restaurant

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Domestic: Single Dwelling

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Frame Vernacular

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Masonry Vernacular

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**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Wood

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walls Wood: Weatherboard

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Stucco

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roof Asphalt

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other \_\_\_\_\_

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

Social History

**Period of Significance**

1906-1942

**Significant Dates**

1906

1913

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown/Goodrich, E.B.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Bureau of Historic Preservation

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Approximately 2 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	116	5372110	3136131710
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Dovie Kirk/ Barbara E. Mattick, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date September 1992

street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**SUMMARY**

The Gulfview Hotel Historic District is located at 12 Miracle Strip Parkway, SE in Fort Walton Beach, Okaloosa County, Florida. The district includes the Gulfview Hotel, constructed as a fishing and hunting lodge in 1906 and operated as a hotel from 1913-1986, and fifteen ancillary buildings. Thirteen of the ancillary buildings are contributing resources and include: the Gerlach House, a gabled, two story residence (1914); a wash house/electrical power building (1913); a small rental house (1930s); the Staff Restaurant (1920); and nine guest cottages (1942). The two noncontributing resources are a boat house (1945) and a non-historic triplex (c1948). All of the contributing buildings are frame vernacular with asphalt shingled roofs, except for the wash house which is masonry vernacular, and the Staff Restaurant, which is masonry vernacular covered with board and batten and has a metal roof.

**SETTING**

The Gulfview property is sited on approximately two acres between Miracle Strip Parkway (U. S. Highway 98) on the north, and Santa Rosa Sound on the south; Santa Rosa Island and the Gulf of Mexico are in the distance on the south side. Magnolia trees and water oaks are located on the grounds immediately surrounding the hotel. In 1914, there was a picket fence along the waterfront.

From the 1910s to the 1940s, the area around the Gulfview remained much the same, with only a few houses and stores. After World War II, however, the community grew steadily, and many of the old buildings were torn down. Today, Highway 98, the Miracle Strip Parkway, is dominated by modern buildings such as fast food restaurants and motels.

The property is in a defined zone of archaeological sensitivity (see Archaeological Map), and the potential for the identification of important archaeological resources on the property is high. That aspect of the district's significance, however, is not addressed in this nomination.

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### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

#### Gulfview Hotel - Exterior:

The Gulfview Hotel is a 1906, two story, L-shaped, frame vernacular building resting on wood and brick piers (Photos 1 & 2). The building is approximately 88 feet wide and 64 feet deep. (See Floor Plan). The roof is side gabled, except at the south end where it is hipped. The roof is covered with diamond-patterned asphalt shingles over original wood shingles. Two brick chimneys and two triangular eyebrow dormers pierce the roof on the west side. A broad, wooden, two-story, incised verandah, supported by rectangular columns and with a stick balustrade at the second story, wraps around the south and west elevations. The first story columns on the main (W) elevation are fluted. All columns at the second story have supporting brackets. Fenestration is wood, 2/2, double hung sash with large mullions. The exterior is covered with horizontal, heart of pine, simple drop siding and stucco.

#### Gulfview Hotel - Interior:

The long leg of the "L" on the first floor contains kitchen, service, office and lobby spaces, while the short leg contains three guest rooms and the main stair to the second floor, which is devoted to guest rooms (See Floor Plans). Interior walls are plastered.

The main entrance opens into the lobby (Photo 3), which has parquet floors and a coffered ceiling. At the south end of the lobby is a fireplace with a glazed brick front with decorative metal grills, a hewn wood mantel, and a marble hearth. The room is trimmed with tall, decorative wood baseboards. North of the lobby are a small service room and dining room. A kitchen with adjoining pantry and linen rooms are at the north end of the first floor. A rear porch east of the dining room and service room is enclosed.

The fourteen guest rooms on the first and second floors are designed to take advantage of cross ventilation. The entrances have a small door on spring hinges, which provides visual privacy when the full-size door is open, but allows air to circulate above and below the door. A transom above the door allows cross ventilation when the full-size door is closed (Photo 4). All of

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the guest rooms have 2/2 double hung, sash windows and doors which open onto either the verandah or a separate porch. Rooms have small steam radiators, which were heated by a boiler located in the partial basement beneath the kitchen addition (Photo 5). All guest rooms are equipped with their own full bath. The second floor also contains a suite at the north end and an enclosed porch on the east side, located over the enclosed porch on the first floor.

**Gulfview Hotel - Historic Alterations:**

Over the years, the Gulfview Hotel has had some additions and alterations. The most significant changes occurred in response to the introduction of the automobile in Camp Walton. When U. S. Highway 98 was paved in 1934, water travel ceased to be the primary mode of local transportation. Consequently, the front door of the hotel was reoriented from the south to the west elevation to accommodate the increasing number of visitors who arrived via automobile.

In the reorientation process, the wooden deck which originally surrounded the first floor of the hotel was replaced with a concrete slab on grade with brick steps at the entries, and similar brick piers at the base of each column (Photo 6). To articulate the new entrance, a girder beam was constructed on the verandah, allowing a column in front of the door to be eliminated. Then a marquis was cantilevered out from the girder to provide protection for guests arriving by automobile during inclement weather (Photo 1).

Probably occurring at the same period, in the mid 1930s, the kitchen on the north end of the building was enlarged, resulting in the addition of another bay to the verandah on the west side. The addition, along with the wood siding on the entire lower west elevation, was covered with a smooth stucco finish (Photo 7). The hotel lobby, which originally extended east into the "L" was converted into additional guest rooms at this time also.

Early photographs indicate that there were originally single hip roofed dormers located on the south and east elevations (Photos 8 & 9). Presently, there are three dormers, two on the west elevation and one on the east. Other noticeable additions are the 45-degree braces which branch off the columns on the upper level of the verandah (Photo 1). These alterations probably also occurred in the 1930s.

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### Gulfview Hotel - Non-historic Alterations

In the late 1980s, porches that extend from guest rooms and the second floor corridor on the east (rear) elevation were enclosed (Photo 7). The same type of siding used on the original building was used on these enclosures.

### OTHER CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

#### Gerlach House (Family Residence)

To the west of the hotel stands a two-story, frame vernacular house (Photo 10). The Gerlach family built the house in 1914, a year after they and the Staff family purchased the Gulfview Hotel. The house, like the hotel, is oriented with its longitudinal axis perpendicular to the water, thus allowing cross ventilation through the width of the entire building. The main entrance to the house, on the east side, is directly opposite the staff entrance to the hotel. Like the hotel, the exterior is clad with whitewashed simple drop siding, and has tall, narrow, double hung sash windows. The building rests on a raised, solid foundation. The east elevation is also similar to the hotel with an exterior brick chimney, and decorative wood columns and wood railing at two portico entrances.

When first constructed, the south elevation of the building had a two-story verandah, and a hipped roof similar to that of the hotel. The hipped roof has been replaced by a series of gables, covered with a light colored asphalt shingle roofing, and the verandahs have been enclosed. All of these alterations took place before 1942 to provide more space as the family grew.

#### Wash House

A wash house immediately northwest of the hotel was built by the Gerlachs soon after they purchased the hotel in 1913 (Photo 11). It is 32 feet wide and 14 feet deep. The building contains two rooms separated by a cement wall. The exterior of the building is cement block covered with rusticated cast cement; the interior walls and floor are cement. The roof is covered with rolled asphalt. A Delco electrical system was also located in this room. The building's chimney, on the west elevation, was for a furnace which heated the hotel before radiators were steam heated from a boiler installed in the basement of the hotel in

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1980. The washing area was in the south end of the building where laundry was done by hand before the installation of electricity and washing machines in the late 1920s.

### Guest Cottages

South of the hotel are nine frame vernacular guest cottages with front gabled, asphalt shingled roofs; attached, hip roofed, open porches; simple drop siding; and roof vents similar to those on the hotel (Photos 12, 13, & 14). Built in 1942, they are all one or two-room cottages with kitchen and bath facilities, except for one. Only two of these cottages are presently maintained for rental.

### Rental House

A small frame vernacular rental house sits approximately 50 feet east of the hotel (Photo 15). Originally a part of the hotel's kitchen, it was moved to its present location during the remodeling of the north elevation of the hotel in the mid-1930s, and an addition was made to include a bathroom. It is similar to the hotel and Gerlach house, having the same type of novelty siding, an asphalt shingle roof, and a bracketed, gabled entry canopy.

### Staff Restaurant

The Staff Restaurant is situated just north of the Gulfview Hotel on the edge of Highway 98 (Photo 16). It was founded and is still operated by the Gerlach-Staff family. Constructed in 1920 to house the first automobiles of guests staying at the hotel, in 1921 it became the first automobile agency in Ft. Walton (Photo 17), and ten years later it became a restaurant (Photo 18). It remains the oldest restaurant in Ft. Walton Beach.

Designed by Frank Henderlong, a lumberman from Crown Point, Indiana, the building still retains the original arched, metal sheathed, bowstring truss roof of the early garage. The building was constructed of rusticated concrete blocks, hand-made by the Gerlach family. Historical changes include the replacement of the original garage doors with wide, multi-paned windows when the garage/car dealership was made into a restaurant in the early 1930s (Photos 17 & 18).

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In early 1950, additions were made to the rear of the building to enlarge the kitchen and bar. A second story was also added over the new addition for a private party room, kitchen, office, and two rest rooms. The addition is compatible, yet distinct from the original building and does not detract from the style of the original building. In recent years the original building has been covered with a board and batten siding. A chimney on the east side was removed and the entrance was changed slightly, probably at the same time. The siding can be removed. The original concrete blocks, some of which are visible at a rear corner of the building, remain intact under the siding.

Most of the lower level of the original structure is devoted to the main dining room. Original plastered interior walls remain under modern paneling. A room extending the length of the west elevation, once used for office space, now stores historic photographs, and other memorabilia.

### NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

#### Boat House

The Boat House, currently the vacation home of E.A. Staff, one of the owners of the Gulfview Hotel, was constructed in 1945 (Photo 19). The Boat House is a single story, frame vernacular house with painted wood siding, a cross gabled roof, and a gable roofed dormer in the attic. A hip roofed porch with square posts and a stick balustrade is attached on the west side. The house is similar in scale to the adjoining cottages. The building is on a dock over the pilings of an early period boat house that was adjacent to the Gerlach Mercantile Store c1915. The original docks were replaced after severe storm damage in earlier years. The Boat House is consistent with the architecture, feeling and association of the rest of the district.

#### Triplex

An architecturally incompatible triplex constructed in 1948 is located in the northwest corner of the district (Photo 20).

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1 Gulfview Hotel Historic District, Okaloosa Co., FL**SUMMARY**

The Gulfview Hotel Historic District is significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce as the last remaining hotel in Fort Walton Beach which represents the city's early years as a resort. Built as a hunting and fishing lodge in 1906, it was operated as a hotel from 1913-1986. The Staff Restaurant, which was closely associated with the hotel, is the oldest restaurant in Ft. Walton Beach. The Gulfview Hotel is significant in the area of Social History as an early center of community cultural events, and as the site of the first Roman Catholic services in Fort Walton Beach, which led to the construction of the first church of any kind in the community.

The Gulfview Hotel Historic District is also significant under Criterion C because it is representative of the frame and masonry vernacular construction techniques that were typical of resorts on the north Florida Gulf Coast in the first half of the twentieth century.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

Although the Ft. Walton Beach area was the site of human occupation in prehistoric times, and was visited by Spanish explorers in the 16th century, modern human activity dates from the mid-19th century. At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, a site in the present downtown area of Ft. Walton Beach was used as a Confederate encampment occupied by a group of county volunteers called the Walton Guards. Their duty was to guard Santa Rosa Sound and the East Pass from the Union forces which controlled Pensacola. Because of their activities, the area became known as Camp Walton.

Camp Walton remained isolated after the Civil War, and the area's first permanent settler, John Thomas Brooks, did not arrive until around 1885. Brooks constructed a home on the north shore of Santa Rosa Sound. In the following years, Brooks Landing, as he called it, gradually became known as a hunting and fishing paradise. Consequently, in 1902, to accommodate the increasing number of visitors to the area, who arrived primarily by steamboat from Pensacola, Brooks expanded his waterfront homestead into a twenty room boarding house and called it the Brooks House, marking the birth of tourism in the community.

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This type of tourism was not unusual along the Gulf Coast. After the Civil War, resorts developed on the Florida Gulf Coast to accommodate the recreational needs of those who could not afford to go to the fashionable springs and resorts in the North. The new resorts were decidedly more rustic than their northern counterparts, featuring fine beaches and excellent fishing. Examples just south of Tallahassee, Florida, were at Panacea, St. Theresa's Island, and Lanark. Three such hotels existed in Fort Walton Beach in the early twentieth century: Brooks House (1902), the Gulfview Hotel (built as a hunting and fishing lodge in 1906), and the Indianola Hotel (1912). These resorts were in sharp contrast to the opulent hotels, such as the Alcazar and Royal Poinciana built by Henry Flagler on Florida's east coast, and the Tampa Bay Hotel built by Henry Plant on Florida's west coast.

By the early 1900s, the permanent resident population of Camp Walton averaged about 30 people; there was only one telephone in the remote area. Stern-wheel boats ran three times a week out of Pensacola, providing Camp Walton's only productive mode of transportation. Because the delivery of all supplies, mail, and tourists depended on the steamboats' arrival, the growing resort community evolved around the first boat landings. The area's first road, Brooks Street, linked Camp Walton's three hotels together, defining the community's original downtown. In 1915, when Okaloosa County was formed from parts of Santa Rosa and Walton Counties, not a single paved road existed in the county, and in Camp Walton, the waterfront still served as the main street of the community.

In comparison with the previous decades, Camp Walton grew rapidly during the 1910s. Homes were constructed along Sound Drive and expanded north to Shell Street in the 1920s. Two stores, Spivey's and Buck's Stores, and a post office were built on the waterfront, and the one room Camp Walton School was built in 1912 to accommodate a growing number of students. Protestant services were held in the school on Sunday. In 1914, a Roman Catholic Church was constructed.

During Prohibition in the 1920s, the limited overland accessibility of Camp Walton and the relative obscurity of Destin's East Pass spurred local growth, for the isolated community of Camp Walton flourished as the East Pass became an avenue to bring smuggled whiskey into the United States. At the same time, real estate agents advertised the Camp Walton area as

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the "Riviera of America", and attracted many of the Northerners who migrated there during the Florida Land Boom.

In 1927, Thomas E. Brooks, the grandson of John Thomas Brooks, developed the first property on Santa Rosa Island. Brooks first built several beachfront cottages and, because of their success, a casino and dance pavilion were soon added. Since there was no bridge linking the mainland with Santa Rosa Island, boats were used to ferry tourists back and forth across the Sound.

The 1930s brought great changes to Camp Walton. In 1932, to reflect a more progressive image, the community was officially renamed Fort Walton. In 1934, as a result of the Great Depression, money from the federal government's Work Projects Administration was used to build a bridge to link Fort Walton and Santa Rosa Island. Another WPA project was the paving of U. S. Highway 98, which conveniently linked Fort Walton with the rest of the Gulf Coast via automobile.

One of the most important changes of the 1930s was the creation of Eglin Field in 1937. In addition to its contributions to national security, Eglin Air Force Base, as it is now called, had tremendous economic and aesthetic impact on Fort Walton Beach. In the 1940s, World War II brought many people to the area as military personnel came for training at Eglin, often accompanied by their families. Further development of the tourist industry in the Fort Walton Beach area was made possible by the post-World War II prosperity and continued growth of Eglin Air Force Base. In 1953, Fort Walton's name was again changed, this time to Fort Walton Beach to better reflect the town's resort identity. Eglin Air Force Base, from its establishment in 1937 until the late seventies, was the dominant economic contributor in the local community. Tourism surpassed it in the 1980s, however, and remains the primary source of income in the community.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Gulfview Hotel was originally built as a hunting and fishing lodge in 1906, and was owned by Louis I. Smith, a retired businessman from DeFuniak Springs. In 1913, Adam J. Gerlach, his daughter Agnes, and Theo Staff, his son-in-law, purchased the lodge.

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Adam Gerlach, a native of Crown Point, Indiana, was unable to endure the severe winters in the north. In his quest for a warmer climate, he had moved to Medina, Mexico, taking part of his family with him. The family spent five years in Mexico, raising pineapples and bananas on a plantation. Raiding guerilla bandits connected with the Mexican Revolution forced their departure, and they lost the plantation. Gerlach learned from a friend that Smith's hunting and fishing lodge was for sale, and the family headed for Camp Walton. With Gerlach's backing, Theo Staff and his wife's sister, Agnes Gerlach, purchased the lodge jointly, and ran it as a hotel. A 1914 promotional pamphlet described the three hotels in Camp Walton, and said of the Gulfview: "The 'Gulf View,' conducted by Miss Agnes Gerlach, is particularly modern, having bath-rooms and all up-to-date plumbing, and is directly on the water."

The Gerlachs and Staffs continued to develop the Gulfview grounds, with a frame home constructed immediately west of the Gulfview in 1914, and a store built on pylons near the water in 1915. A garage for the growing number of automobiles belonging to guests and members of the community was built just north of the hotel by the family in 1920.

The hotel drew patrons from all over the country. It was so popular, that when all rooms were booked, tents were pitched around the hotel. A typical visit to the Gulfview Hotel during the Camp Walton era was characterized by excellent game fishing, surf bathing in the Gulf, shore dancing and relaxation. Fishermen could rent boats for a dollar a day or purchase guide service for fifty cents an hour. Every morning and afternoon, hotel guests were ferried across the Sound to Okaloosa Island where they swam in the Gulf or sunbathed on secluded beaches. During the summer months, musicians played nightly at a large pavilion on the waterfront.

The Gulfview Hotel and its owners had a strong impact on the recreational and social life of the community, for the hotel was an entertainment center for the community. Annual May Day Festivals and May Pole Dances were held on the Gulfview grounds. The Staff children, encouraged by Theo Staff and directed by Agnes Gerlach, performed Sunday night recitals which were attended by hotel guests and members of the community. Adam Gerlach was instrumental in bringing a Roman Catholic Church to Camp Walton. A priest from Pensacola, which was six hours away by boat, made frequent trips to say Mass in the lobby of the

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Gulfview Hotel. When the lobby became too small to accommodate all of those who attended, they used the local school until Gerlach took steps to petition for the establishment of a Catholic church in the community. The resulting St. Mary's Catholic Church, built in 1914, was the first church building constructed in Ft. Walton Beach and the only one until 1934.

The Gulfview Hotel also played an important role in meeting the demands created by the influx of military personnel and their families during World War II. Included among guests at the hotel were General Jimmy Doolittle and his crew who led the raid over Tokyo in 1942. At times the Gerlach store provided sleeping quarters during an overflow of guests, until, in 1942, the Gulfview cottages were constructed around the hotel to meet increasing lodging demands.

The Gulfview Hotel closed in 1986 when the original owners, then quite elderly, were no longer physically able to operate and maintain the facility. It was used as a photo studio until 1988, and has been vacant since that time.

**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

Early twentieth century resorts on the north coast of the Gulf of Mexico, sometimes called "camp resorts", usually employed vernacular architecture and shared a common type of design. Vernacular architecture is the common wood frame or masonry construction techniques of lay or self-taught builders. This type of construction is the product of the builder's experience, available resources, responses to the environment, and the owner's tastes. All "camp resorts" had a central hotel; in addition, some had private cottages. The hotels were usually two story, frame vernacular buildings with wide verandahs and guest rooms with numerous windows. Such features were designed to take advantage of the breezes coming off the Gulf.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Gulfview Hotel Historic District is an excellent example of a "camp resort" of the North Florida Gulf Coast from early twentieth century. The Gulfview Hotel building is a two-story wood structure constructed with the Florida climate in mind. Located several hundred feet from the Santa Rosa Sound, the building is oriented with its longitudinal axis perpendicular to the water. The south and west elevations are protected by deep,

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two-story verandahs which help catch cooling breezes and protect against the hot Florida sun. Doors and tall, narrow 2/2, double hung sash windows open onto the verandahs, and each guest room has direct access to the exterior. One of the more unusual features which reflect the need to take advantage of the Gulf breezes are the small, swinging doors in the guest rooms, which provided privacy, but allow air to circulate (Photo 4). In 1942, individual cottages, another typical feature, were added to the grounds (Photo 12). The arched roof design with a bowstring truss of the Staff Restaurant reflects the building's original use as a garage and is a local landmark on Highway 98 (Photo 16).

**CONCLUSION**

The Gulfview Hotel is significant in the area of Commerce as the only hotel in Fort Walton Beach which remains from the community's early days as a tourist destination. It is one of the few "camp resorts" remaining on Florida's north Gulf Coast, and reflects a brand of tourism that was quite different from that associated with the coastal areas of Florida's peninsula which developed during the same period. As a "camp resort", its architecture was simple and vernacular, accommodating the environmental conditions of the Gulf Coast and providing a rustic atmosphere. The Gulfview is also significant in Social History as a community center where cultural events took place, and as the site of the first Roman Catholic services conducted in Fort Walton, which resulted in the construction of the community's first church in 1914.

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Letter, A.J. Gerlach, Camp Walton, Fla. to Rt. Rev. Bishop  
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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1 Gulfview Hotel Historic District, Okaloosa Co., FL

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary is shown as the heavy black line on the accompanying map entitled, "Gulfview Hotel Historic District".

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encloses the property which has historically been associated with the Gulfview Hotel and its ancillary buildings.

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation Sheet

Photographs 1 Gulfview Hotel Historic District, Okaloosa Co., FL

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

- 
1. 1) Gulfview Hotel Historic District, 12 Miracle Strip  
Parkway SE
  - 2) Fort Walton Beach, Okaloosa Co., Florida
  - 3) Joe Myers
  - 4) February 1992
  - 5) Historic Preservation Society Files, 44 Bishop Ave, NW,  
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
  - 6) W (main) elevation of Gulfview Hotel, camera facing E
  - 7) 1 of 20

Items 1 - 5 are the same for the remaining photographs, unless  
otherwise noted

2. 6) Gulfview Hotel, S elevation, camera facing N
- 7) 2 of 20
3. 6) Gulfview Hotel, Lobby, camera facing S
- 7) 3 of 20
4. 6) Gulfview Hotel, Guest Room #16, showing doors, camera  
facing E
- 7) 4 of 20
5. 6) Gulfview Hotel, Guest Room #6, showing radiator and  
window, camera facing N
- 7) 5 of 20
6. 6) Gulfview Hotel, porch at main entrance, camera facing S
- 7) 6 of 20
7. 6) Gulfview Hotel, N & E elevations showing 1934 addition  
to kitchen and enclosed rear porches, camera facing  
SW
- 7) 7 of 20
8. 3) Photographer unknown
- 4) c1913
- 6) Gulfview Hotel, S elevation, camera facing N
- 7) 8 of 20
9. 3) Photographer unknown
- 4) c1913
- 6) Gulfview Hotel, S & W elevations, camera facing NE
- 7) 9 of 20

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs 2 Gulfview Hotel Historic District, Okaloosa Co., FL

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- 10. 6) Gerlach-Staff Residence, NE elevation, camera facing SW  
7) 10 of 20
  - 11. 6) Wash House/Storage Room, W & S elevations, camera  
facing NE  
7) 11 of 20
  - 12. 6) Six Vacation Cottages, S & E elevations, camera facing  
NW  
7) 12 of 20
  - 13. 6) Single Cottage located E of hotel, S elevation, camera  
facing NE  
7) 13 of 20
  - 14. 6) Rental cottages, N & W elevations, camera facing SE  
7) 14 of 20
  - 15. 6) Rental House, N elevation, camera facing S  
7) 15 of 20
  - 16. 6) Staff Restaurant, main facade and E elevation, camera  
facing SW  
7) 16 of 20
  - 17. 3) Photographer unknown  
4) C1920  
6) Staff Garage, N elevation, camera facing SW  
7) 17 of 20
  - 18. 3) Unknown  
4) c1945  
6) Staff Cafe, N & E elevations, camera facing SW  
7) 18 of 20
  - 19. 6) Boat House (NC), W elevation, camera facing E  
7) 19 of 20
  - 20. 6) Triplex (NC), E elevation, camera facing W  
7) 20 of 20

# MIRACLE STRIP PKWY.

HIGHWAY 98

## GULFVIEW HOTEL HISTORIC DISTRICT

STAFF RESTAURANT

NON-CONTRIBUTING APARTMENT COMPLEX

WASH HOUSE

FAMILY RESIDENCE

GULFVIEW HOTEL

RENTAL HOUSE

SHELL AVE.

COTTAGE COTTAGE COTTAGE COTTAGE

COTTAGE COTTAGE

COTTAGE

COTTAGE

BOAT HOUSE

C. 1945

□ CONTRIBUTING

■ NONCONTRIBUTING

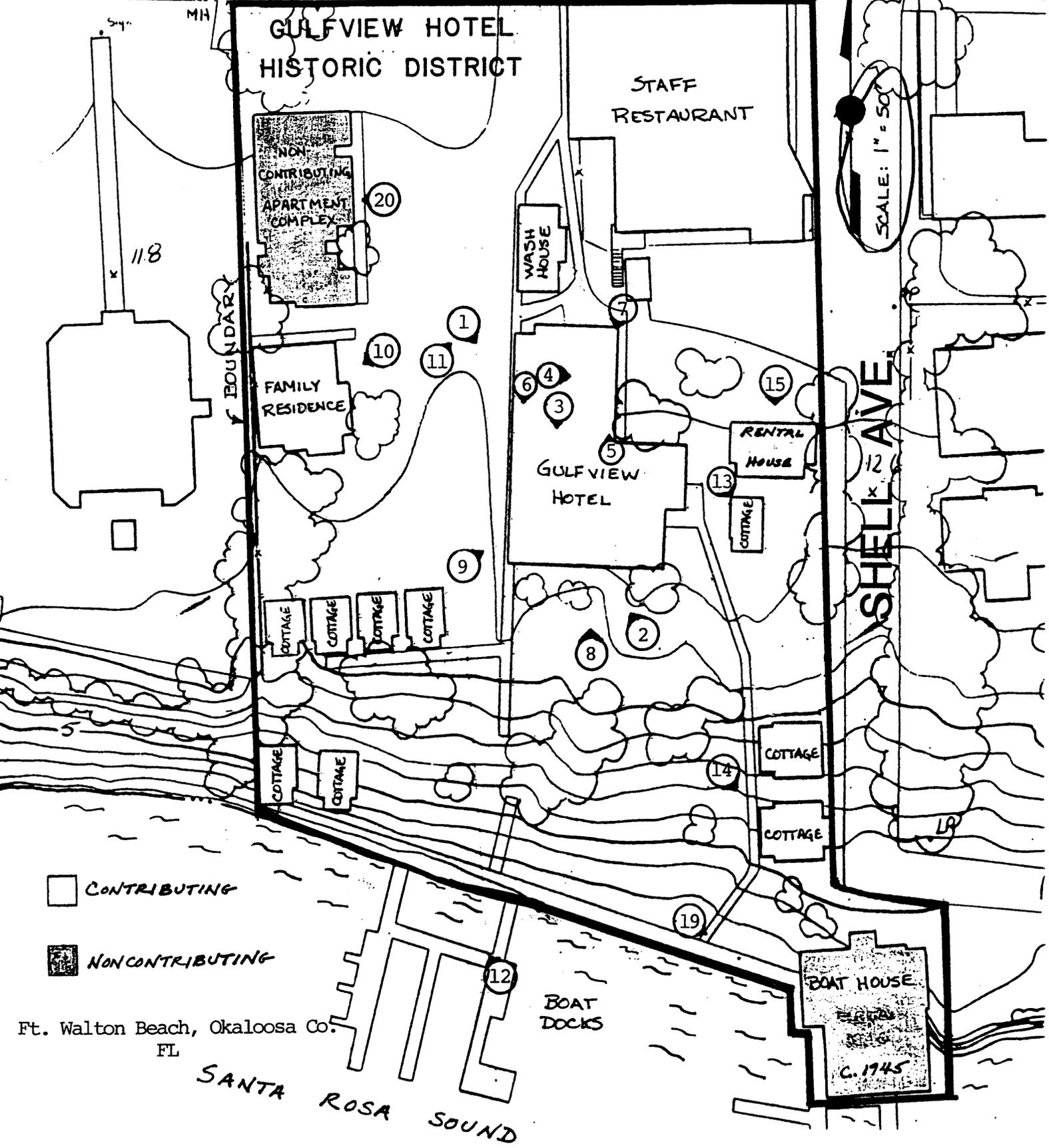
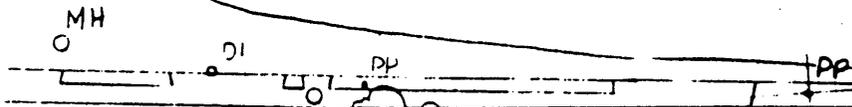
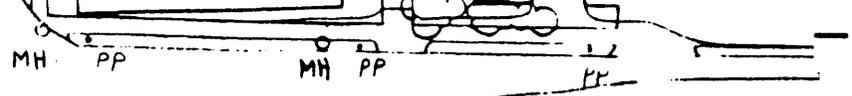
Ft. Walton Beach, Okaloosa Co. FL

SANTA ROSA SOUND

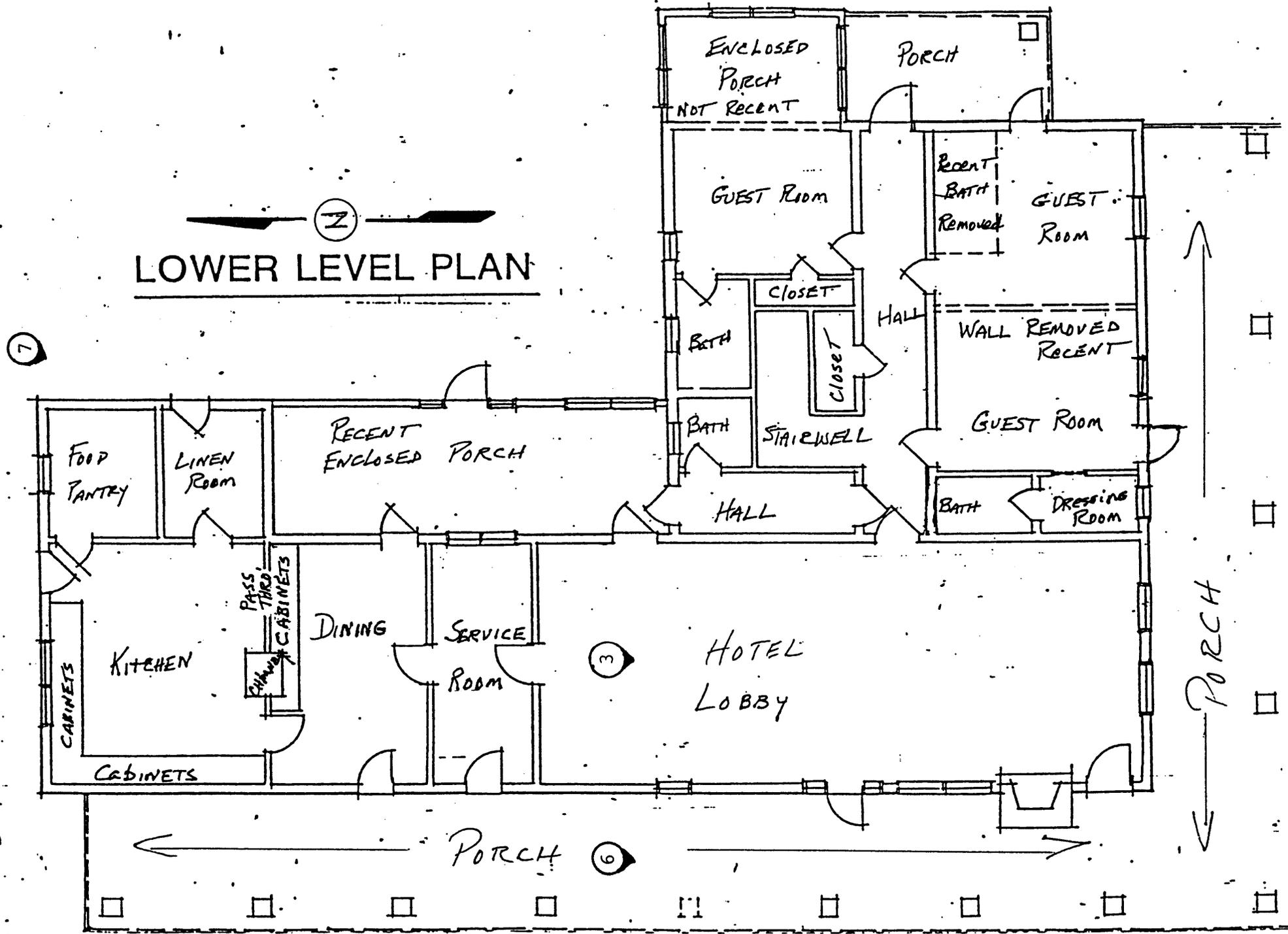
BOAT DOCKS



SCALE: 1" = 50'

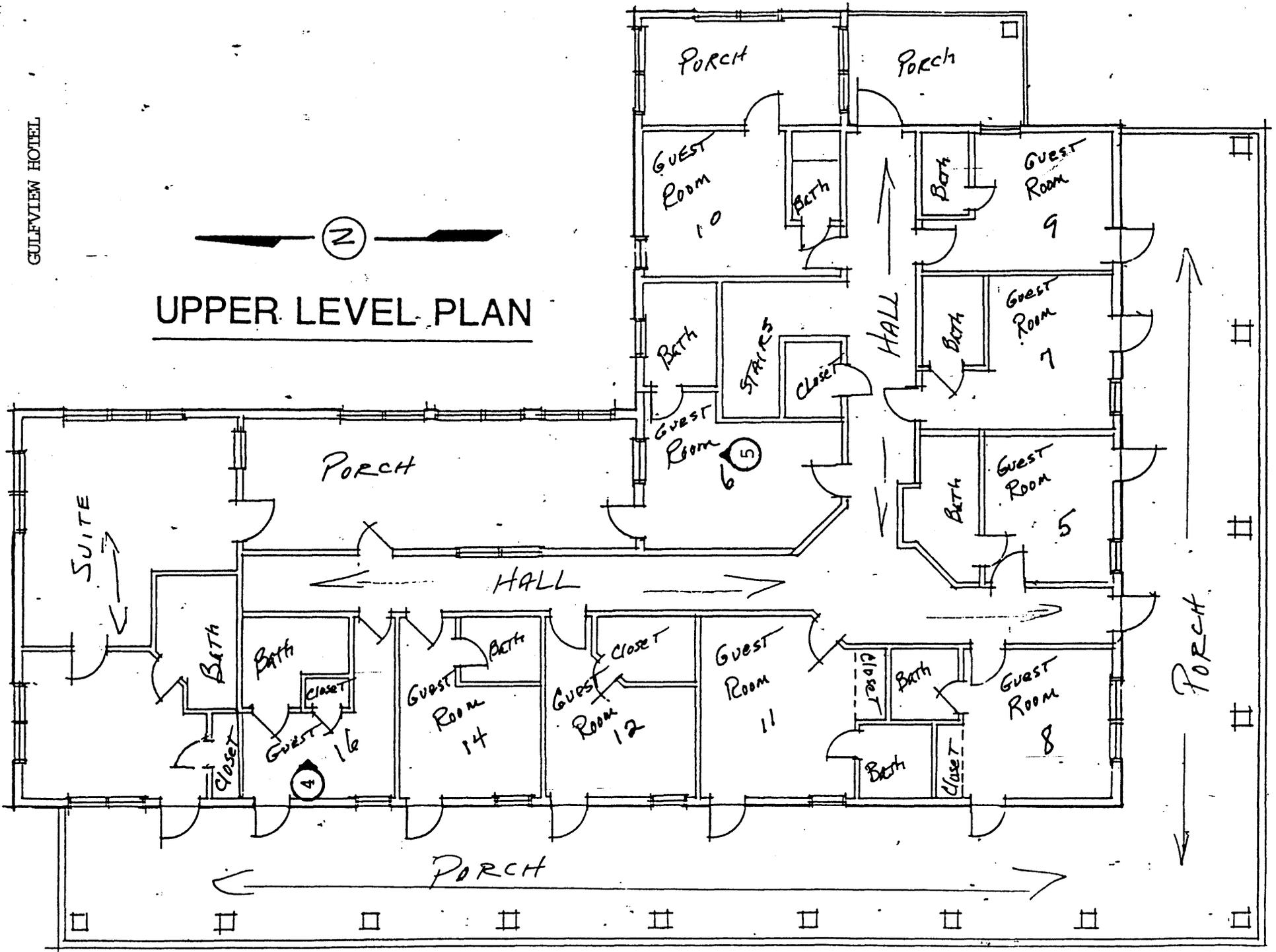


# LOWER LEVEL PLAN



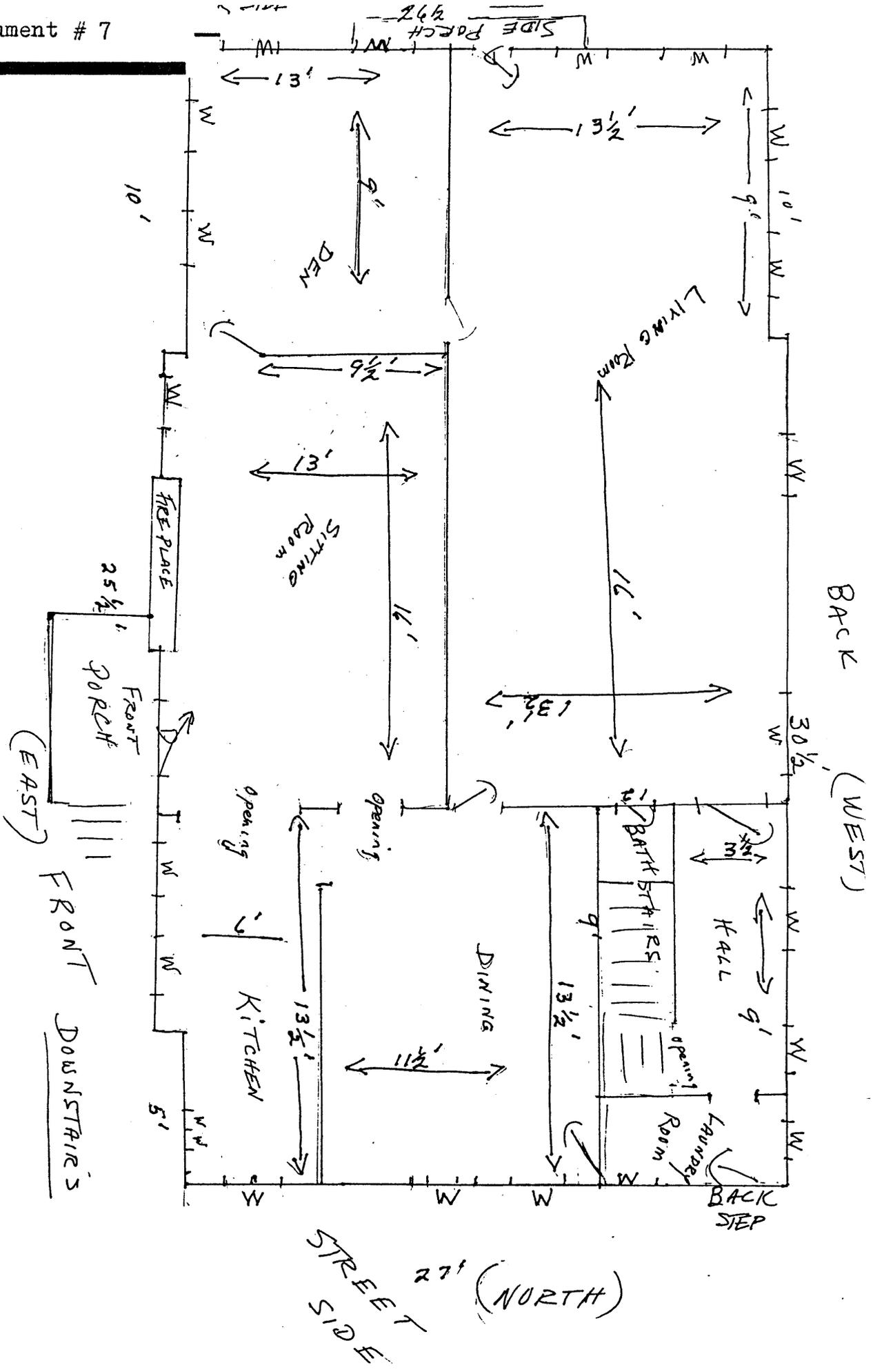


# UPPER LEVEL PLAN



Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

GERLACH HOUSE

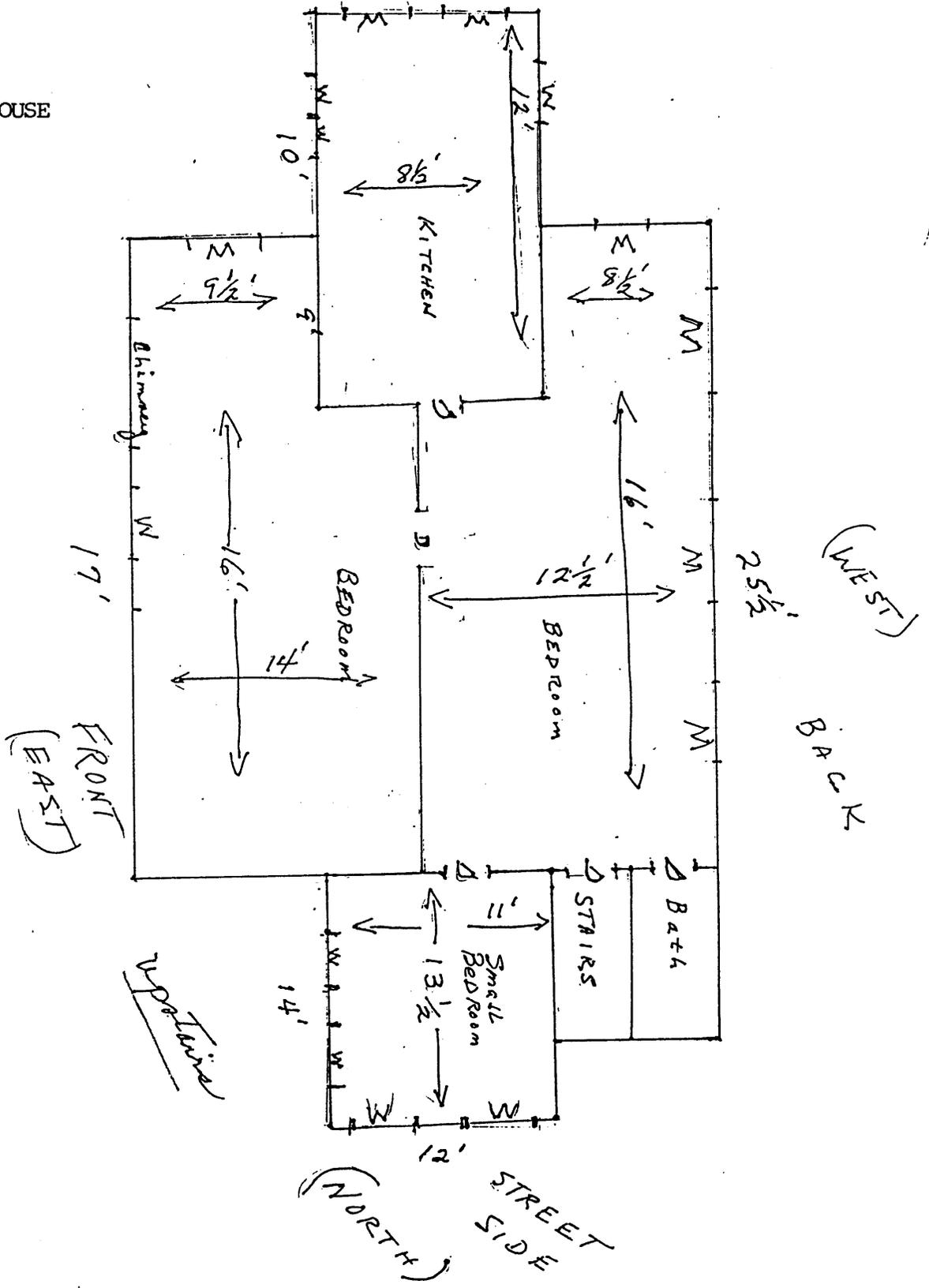


SCALE: APPROXIMATELY 1"=50'



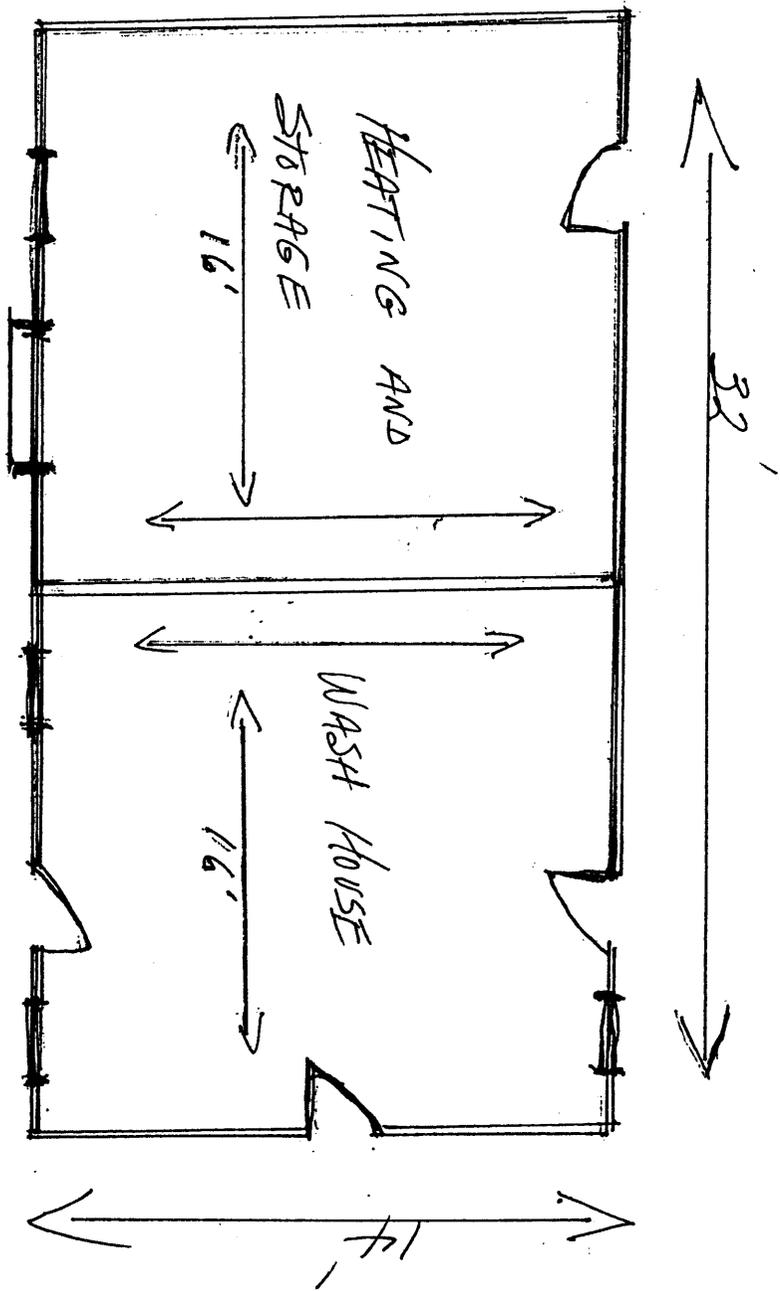
GERLACH HOUSE

WATER SIDE  
(SOUTH)  
9'



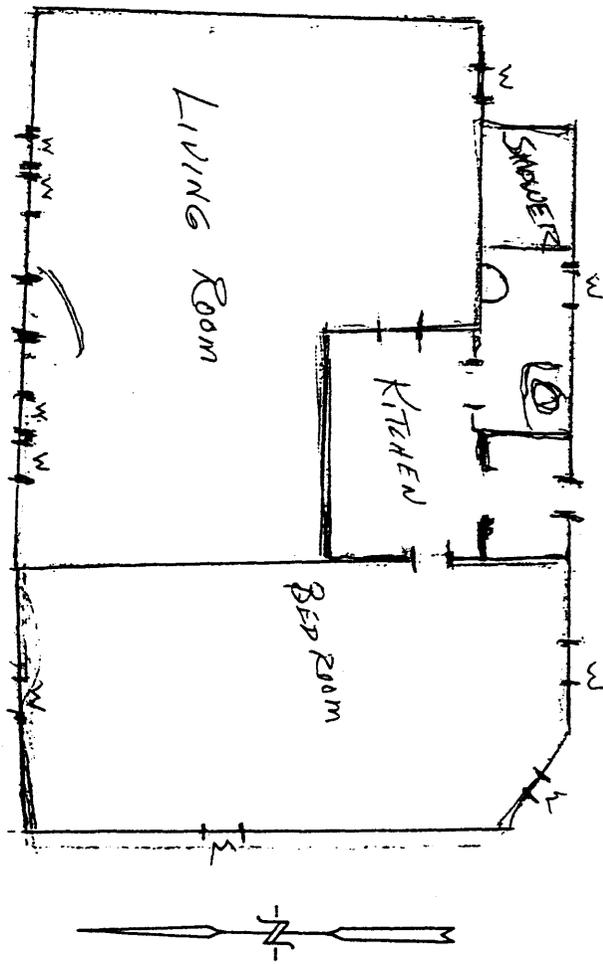
SCALE: APPROXIMATELY 1" = 50'

WASH HOUSE



NOT TO SCALE

SCALE: 1" = 5' ±

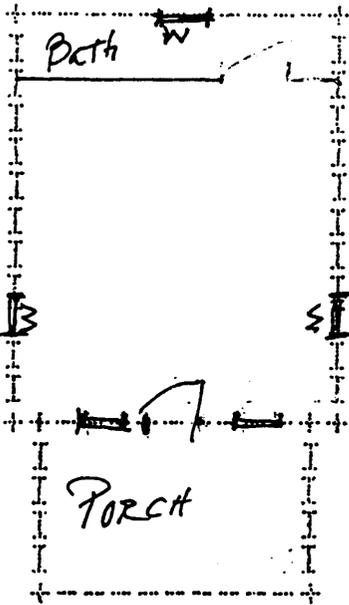
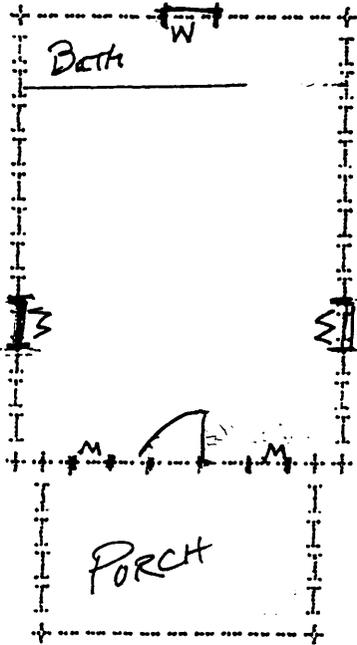


NOT TO SCALE

SMALL RENTAL HOUSE  
GULFVIEW HOTEL HISTORIC DISTRICT

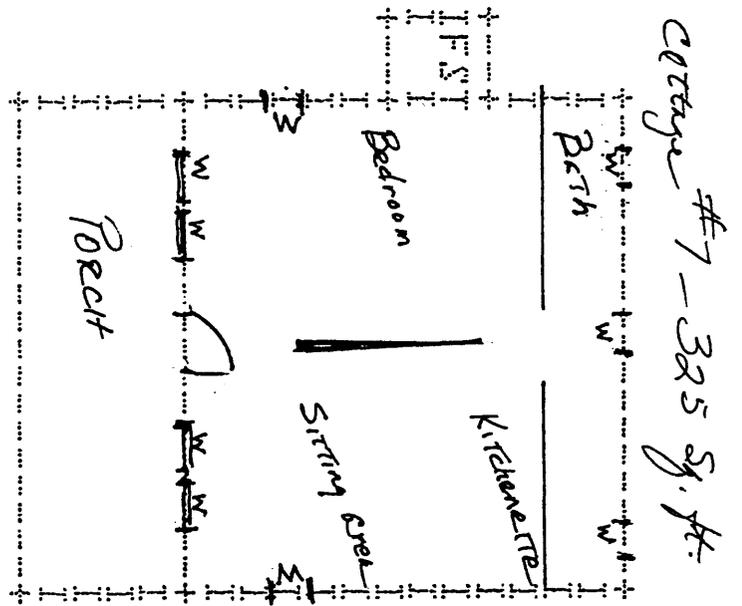
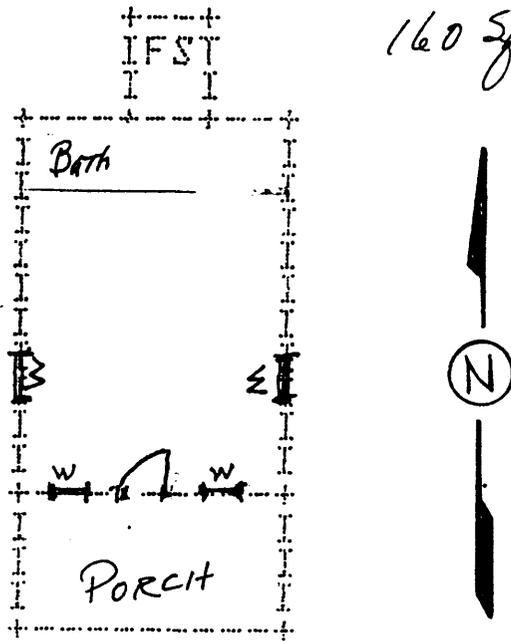
COTTAGES

This sketch represents cottages #1, 2, 3, + 4 - 210 Sq ft each

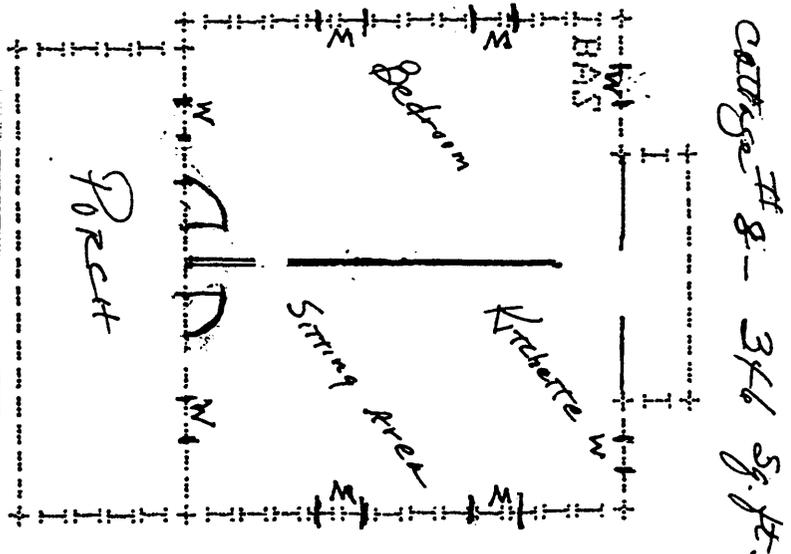


Two cottages this size - #5 + 6 - each 198 Sq. ft.

Cottage #9 - 160 Sq. ft.

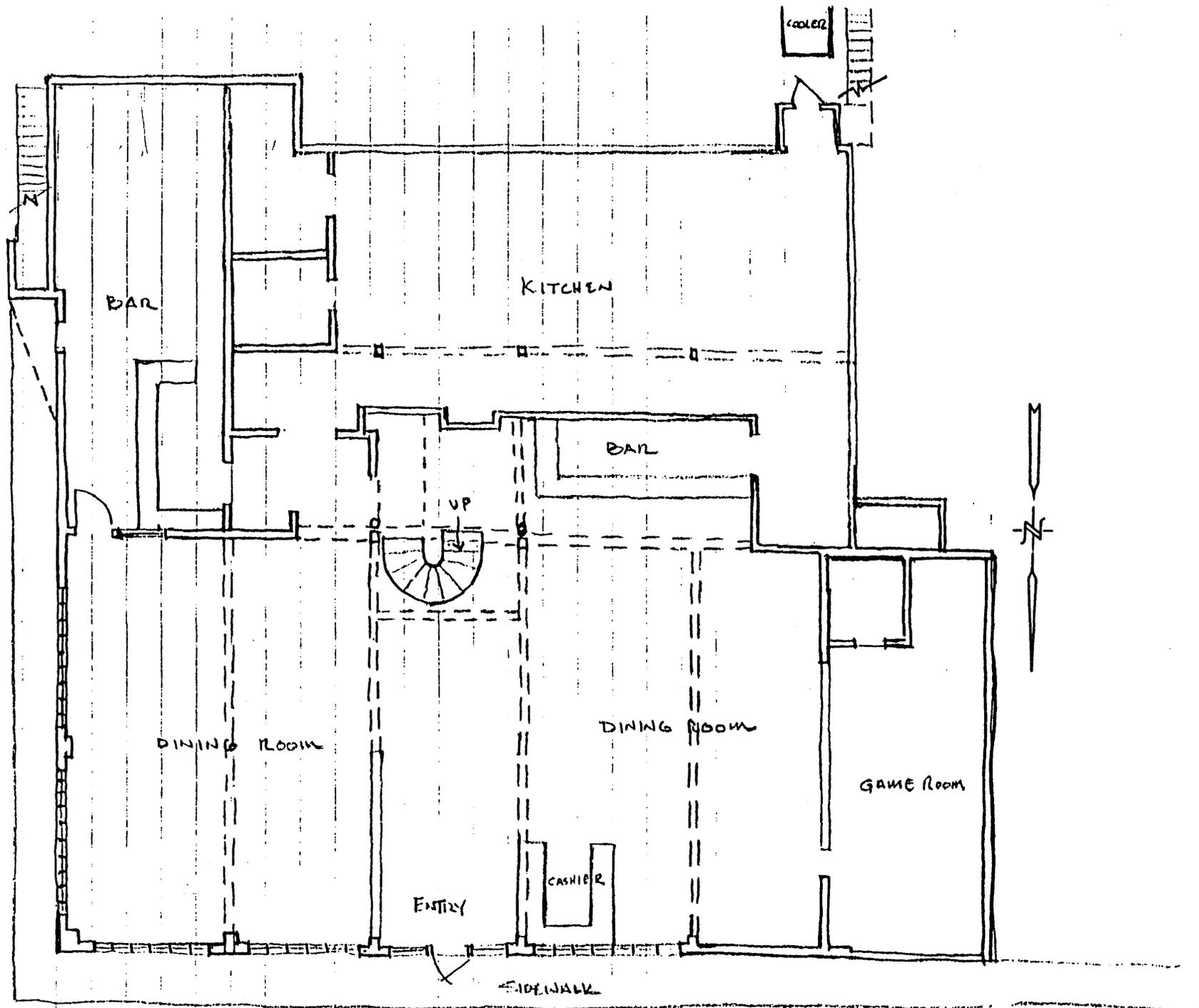


Cottage #7 - 325 Sq. ft.



Cottage #8 - 346 Sq. ft.

Sketch Plan, Staff Restaurant  
(24)

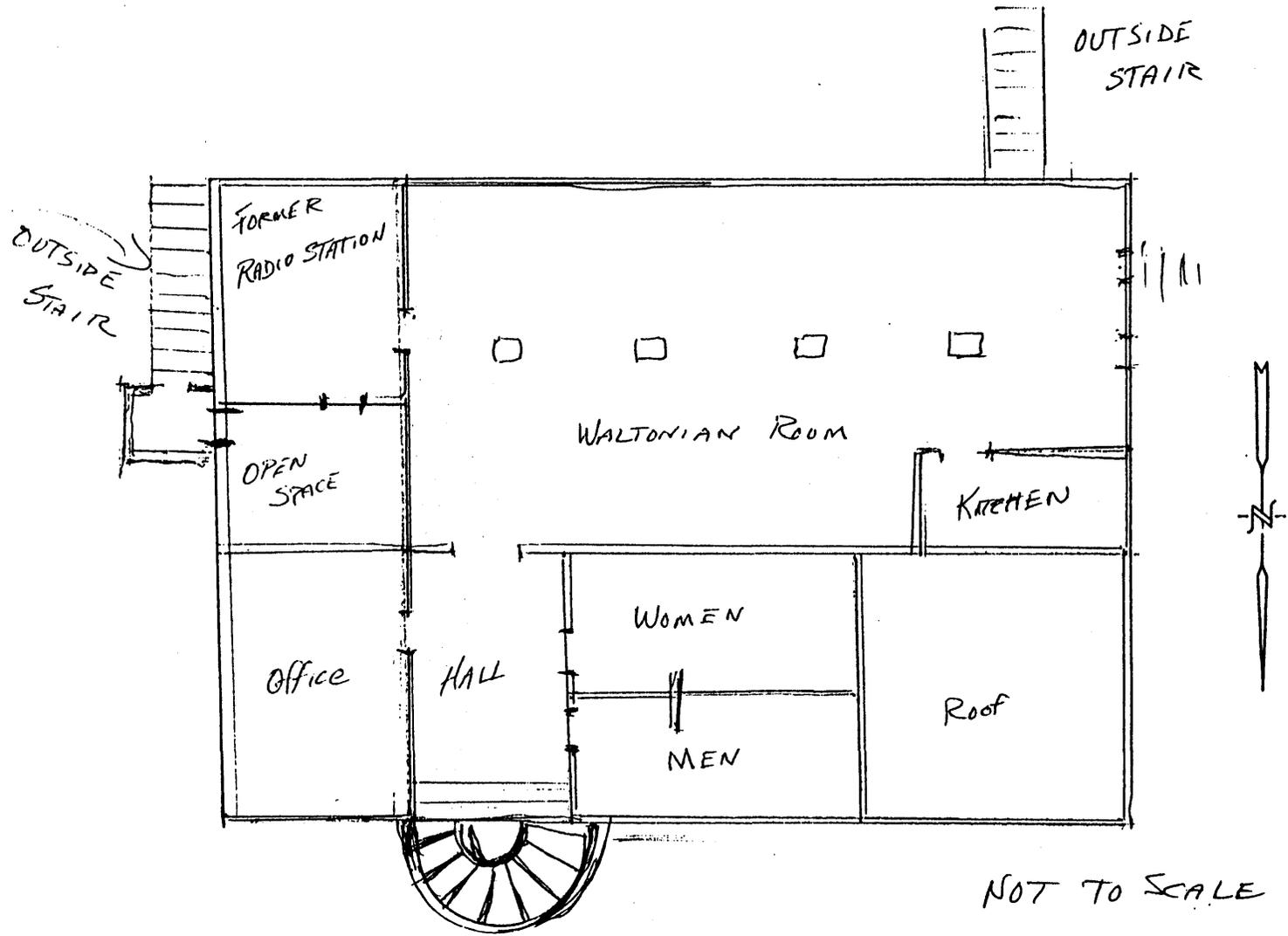


1ST FLOOR PLAN - STAFF'S RESTAURANT  
11/20/54

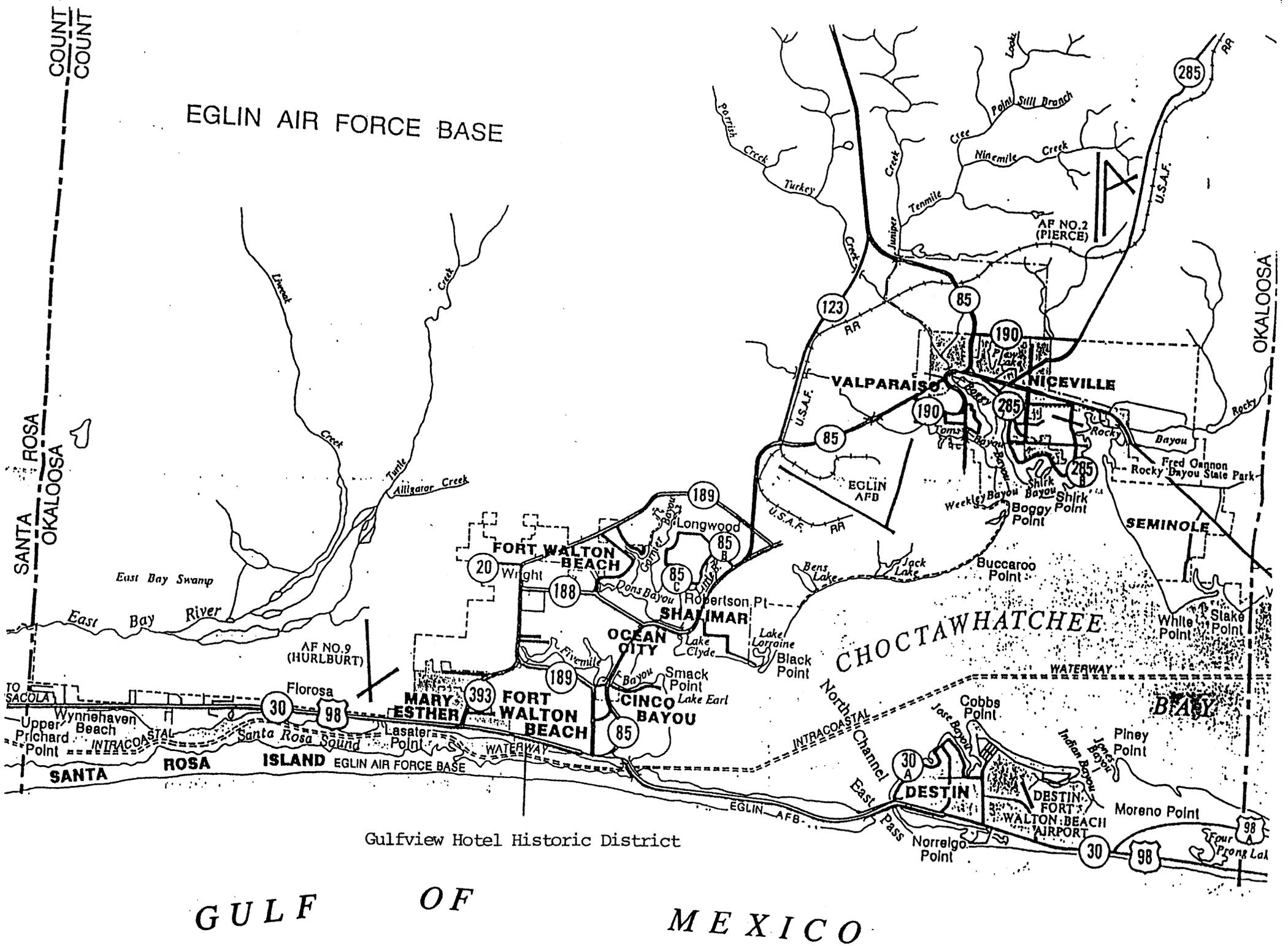
CONTRIBUTING



cont 24



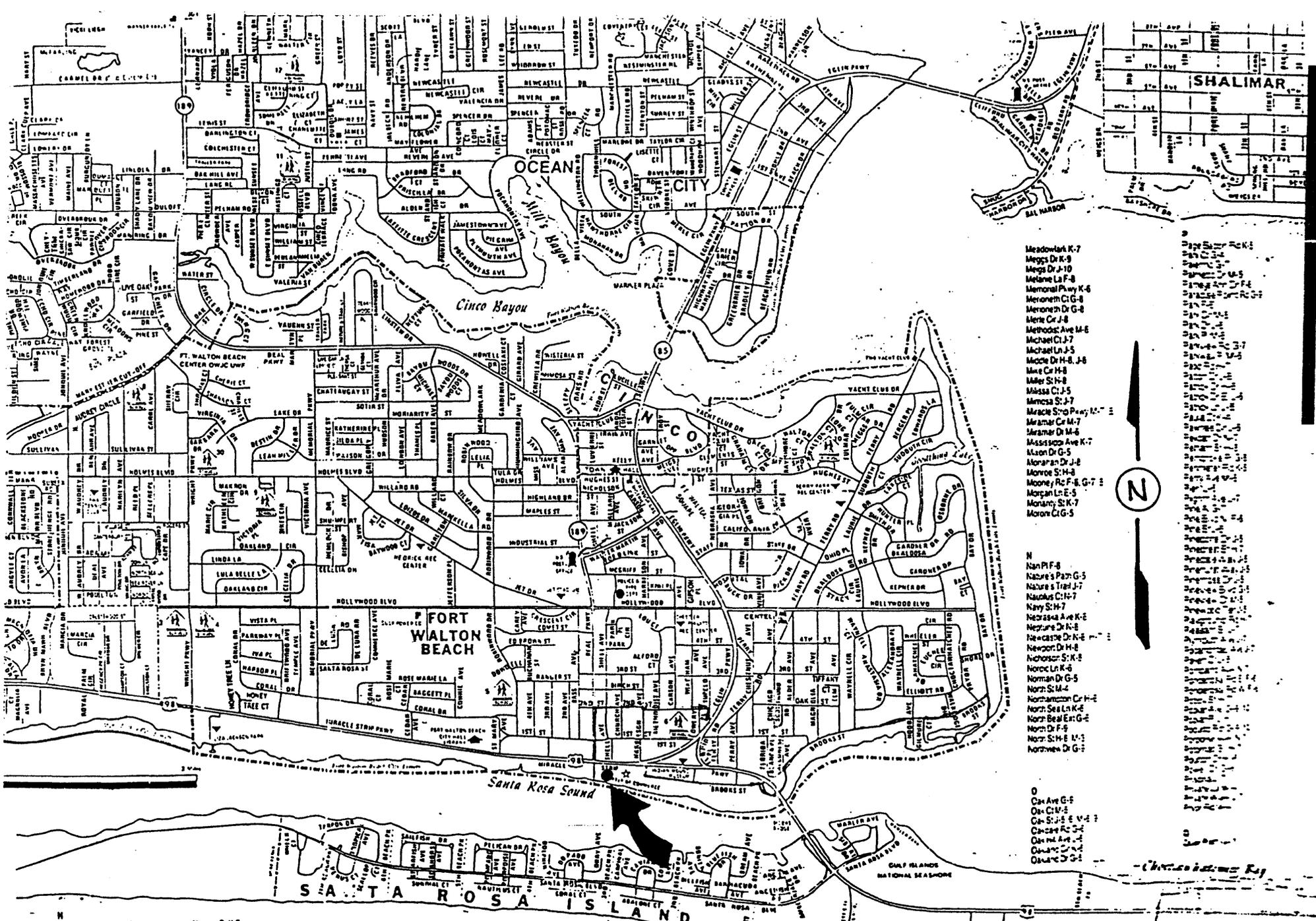
UPPER FLOOR



EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE

GULF OF MEXICO

Gulfview Hotel Historic District



- Meadowlark K-7
- Mega Dr J-10
- Melanie La F-8
- Memorial Pkwy K-6
- Merometh Ct G-8
- Merometh Dr G-8
- Merle Cr J-8
- Methodist Ave M-6
- Michael Ct J-7
- Michael Ln J-5
- Middle Dr H-8, J-8
- Mike Cr H-8
- Miller St H-8
- Missia Ct J-7
- Mimsa St J-7
- Miracle Spg Pkwy M-7
- Miramar Cr M-7
- Miramar Dr M-7
- Mississippi Ave K-7
- Mixon Dr G-5
- Moran Dr J-8
- Morris St H-8
- Mooney Rf E-6, G-7
- Morgan Ln E-5
- Morales St K-7
- Moran Ct G-5

- Nan Pl F-8
- Nature's Path G-5
- Nature's Trail J-7
- Naukus Ct H-7
- Navy St H-7
- Nedra Ave K-6
- Negure Dr K-6
- Nedra Dr K-6
- Newport Dr H-6
- Nicholson St K-6
- Nordic Ln K-6
- Norman Dr G-5
- North St M-4
- Northampton Cr H-6
- North Sea Ln K-6
- North Seal Est G-6
- North Dr F-9
- North St H-6 M-4
- Northwest Dr G-5

- Oak Ave G-6
- Oak Ct G-6
- Oak St J-6
- Oakwood Pl G-6
- Oakwood Dr G-6
- Oakwood Ct G-6

- Horseshoe Ave A-2 M-4
- Horse Ln H-7
- Horse Pl M-6
- Horse Dr H-9
- Horse St H-9

- Hudson Dr K-7
- Hughes St K-8
- Humphreys Ave A-2
- Hunter Pl K-8
- Hunter Dr H-9
- Hunter Farm Dr

- Island Ct
- Island St
- Island Dr
- Island Ave
- Island Pl
- Island Ct
- Island St
- Island Dr
- Island Ave
- Island Pl

# LOCATION MAP

- Island Ct
- Island St
- Island Dr
- Island Ave
- Island Pl
- Island Ct
- Island St
- Island Dr
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- Island Pl

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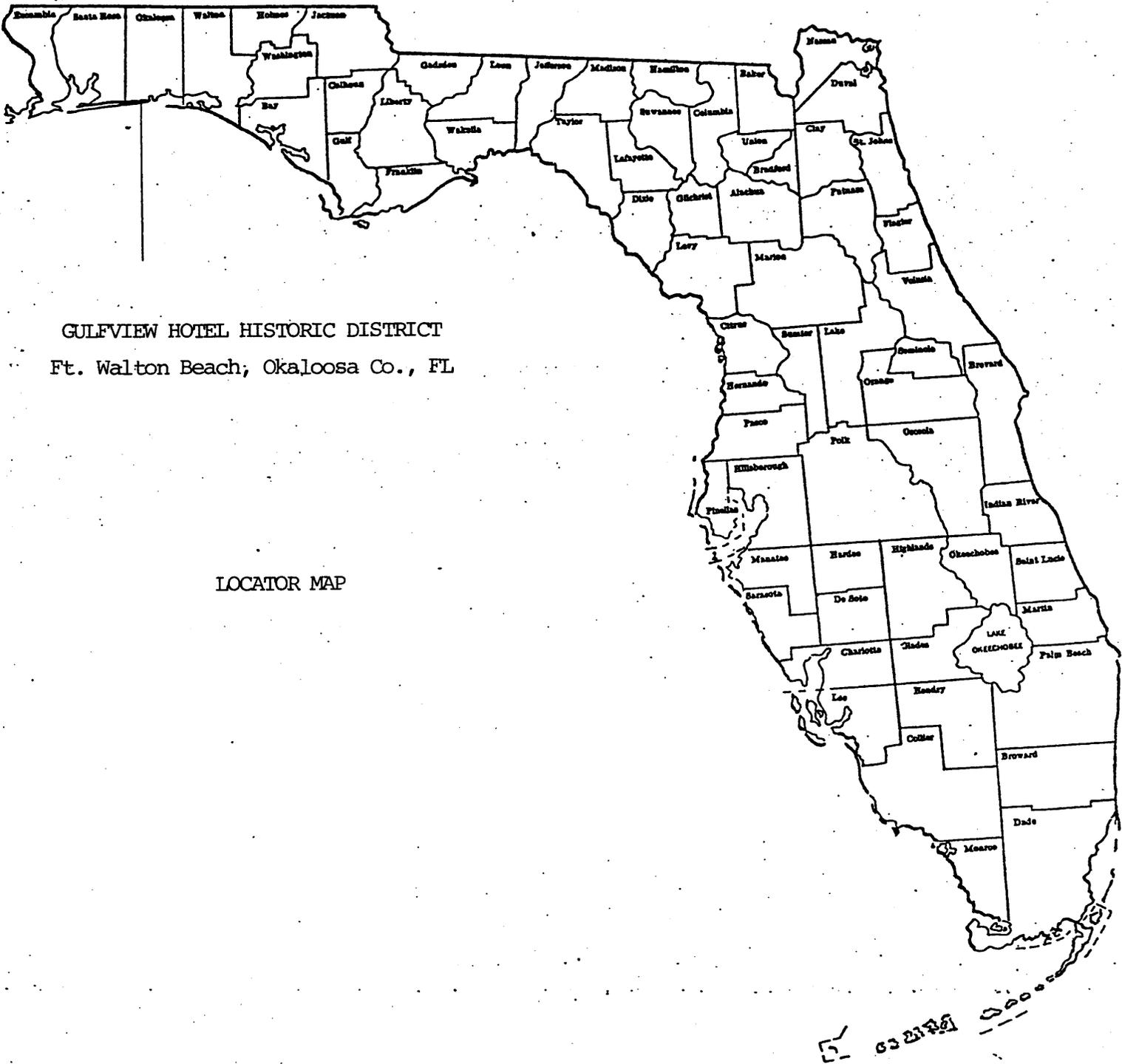
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- Island Dr
- Island Ave
- Island Pl
- Island Ct
- Island St
- Island Dr
- Island Ave
- Island Pl

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Gulf of Mexico

Gulf of Mexico





GULFVIEW HOTEL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ft. Walton Beach, Okaloosa Co., FL

LOCATOR MAP