

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 19 1986  
date entered MAR 20 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name** C. Z. Culver House

historic C. Z. Culver House

and/or common same

**2. Location**

street & number 205 E. Palmyra N/A not for publication

city, town Orange N/A vicinity of

state California code 06 county Orange code 059

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Norman L. and Barbara Towne Fast

street & number 205 E. Palmyra Avenue

city, town Orange N/A vicinity of state California 92666

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Orange County Hall of Records

street & number 630 N. Broadway

city, town Santa Ana state California 92702

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Orange Historic Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date June 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Planning Department, Orange City Hall

city, town Orange state California

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Culver House is a fine example of 1880s architecture. Built in a simplified Queen Anne style, the house is asymmetrical in shape and features a five-gabled roof, a wrap-around porch, a balcony, two square bays, and turned posts. Large and substantial, it contains 13 rooms and approximately 2,400 square feet. The interior retains much of its integrity and will be restored in a manner appropriate to the time and period. A large lawn, specimen-size camphor trees, and the wide sidewalks and parking strip exemplify the typical small town setting that has always made this type of neighborhood so appealing. The condition of the house is very good, and it retains most of its 1880s integrity. The most significant alteration, the asbestos siding, has been removed recently and the house will be painted the appropriate colors.

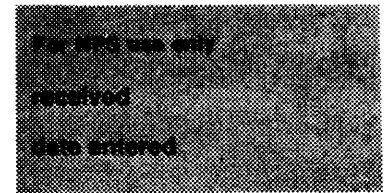
The house has many features typical of the 1880s home. The wide porch, which reaches clear across the front facade (south) and along the front half of the east facade, is crowned by a gable above the entrance. The turned posts, which support the porch roof, are ornamented with simple carved brackets. The original railing has been replaced with plain balusters. Two of the five gables which form the roof face the front. Rosettes trim the bottom edge of each bargeboard. The balcony is topped by a smaller gable which shades the tiny porch. Carved posts support the roof and an intricate railing, featuring a row of cutouts at the top, runs between the posts. An arched door leads to a room in the attic. A console, constructed of carsiding, and a pair of large carved brackets accent the underside of the balcony. Trim boards, leading from the bottom of the brackets, flank the centered double-hung window in the second story below. The wide shiplap siding remained under the asbestos siding and provides additional texture to the house.

A pair of double-hung windows is centered in the second story below the large front gable. The windows are shaded by a shed-style hood accented by three carved brackets. The large porch, with its gabled entrance, shelters the entire front of the house and continues halfway down the east side. The original turned posts are accented by carved brackets with cutouts. The frieze below the eaves tapers up to the center of each section and is centered with a rosette. The original balustrade has been replaced by one containing plain balusters. A slanted bay window, featuring four tall, narrow double-hung windows occupies the space to the east of the front door. Recessed carsiding panels trim the area below each window. The original front door is a remarkable piece of Victorian carpentry. An arched window in the top half is framed by carved molding. Matching molding frames the panels below. The foundations of the porches are covered with vertical boards, but the original brick can be seen on the main foundation of the house.

A square bay, topped by a low hip roof, extends from the first floor of a shallow projecting 2-story bay on the west side. A bracketed cornice, narrow frieze, and molding accent the single-story bay; three windows form the front of the bay with a window facing each side. Recessed panels, constructed of diagonally placed carsiding, accent the area below the window sills. A shed-style roof forms a hood over the pair of double-hung windows in the center of the shallow projecting bay on the second story. Three brackets decorate the bottom of the hood. The original side porch, which leads off of the west-facing kitchen, runs from the back of the square bay to the northwest corner of the house. The turned posts and brackets appear to be original. The balusters each are chamfered near the top and bottom. The balustrade has been replaced with a plain rail and balusters.

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The eastern side of the house also features a two-story square bay, topped with a large gable. Rosettes trim the ends of the bargeboard of the gable. A set of double-hung windows is placed in the center of the first and second stories. A shed-style hood, accented by three carved brackets, shelters the second-story windows. Other windows in this side are double-hung, wood-sashed.

The rear (north) elevation contains a large gable which matches the others, a two-story bay, a hooded window, and a back stairway. The stairway is an addition and is not visible from the front. A back porch has been enclosed, and an enclosed porch with a shed-style roof has been added on the second floor.

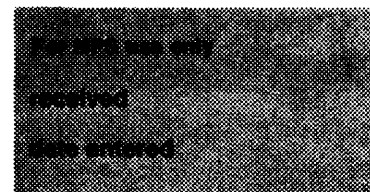
The interior of the house is in good condition and retains much of its original fabric. The high ceilings and some of the original medallions add an air of elegance. The original staircase balustrade and newel post are located in a small hall in the southwest corner of the house, with the parlours located on the east side. A large slanted bay window and an original metal fireplace front add interest to the front parlour. The fireplace front is painted to look like marble. Large pocket doors lead to the second parlour. The dining room, on the west side of the house, features another metal fireplace front and the square bay window. The kitchen, behind the dining room, has been modernized, but retains its original walls, ceiling, windows, and doors. The second floor contains four bedrooms and a bath. A metal fireplace front in the master bedroom is placed on the diagonal and is original. A closed stairway leads to the attic. This room is partially finished and has a door to the small balcony facing the front.

The architecture of the house resembles the architecture of its now-demolished relative, the Palmyra Hotel (see significance). The gabled roof is of the same style and pitch. The windows are of the same style and size. A pediment is used above the main porch entrance on both buildings. The posts and brackets on the porch are very similar. This house serves as a visual reminder of the Palmyra Hotel and 1880s Victorian architecture.

The owners plan to restore the house as closely as is feasible to its original character. The asbestos siding has been removed from the exterior and the house will be painted in appropriate colors. A garage to the east of the front yard will be demolished. It is not original, and impacts the view of the front of the house. The interior will be restored using all of the 1880s fabric which remains. Several original fireplaces are of cast metal with faux marble graining. Most of the woodwork, the front door, and all other interior doors and the staircase are original. The original floors have been refinished. The Culver House will once again be a historical landmark which will remind others of the marvelous days of the "Boom of the Eighties".

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The owners of this house have removed all of the asbestos siding and are preparing to repair, clean, and repaint the house. This will include the replacement of all of the parts removed when the asbestos shingles were applied. A list of the elements discovered under the asbestos follows:

Fish scale shingles cover the faces of all of the gables.

The small balcony on the front facade was surrounded by a circular piece of molding and fish scale shingles.

All corners were clad in trim boards.

The area on each side of the window directly below the balcony is clad in diagonal carsiding.

All of the siding is wide shiplap.

The area above the windows in the square bay (west side) is clad in vertical siding, with framed sections of vertical siding below each window.

The house appears to have been a straightforward design. By using a palette of four Victorian colors, the owners plan to bring out the special architectural elements which give the house its charm and character.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" 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** Constructed 1887      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Culver House is the last remaining piece of physical evidence connected with Charles Z. Culver, the Palmyra Hotel, and the real estate boom of the 1880s. The Palmyra Hotel was the large Victorian-style "Boom Hotel" built by Mr. Culver in 1887 in the City of Orange. Culver was active in Southern California real estate and the hotel was the culmination of his dream. He was an enthusiastic booster of Orange and an expert in the raisin grape industry. While he was constructing the hotel, he built this fine house for himself on a lot across the corner from the back of the hotel. Culver and Palmyra Streets were named for Mr. Culver and his hotel. Culver worked to accomplish the incorporation of Orange in 1888 and served on its first city council. A prominent local merchant who lived in the house was E. T. Lee. He and his family owned the house for 46 years and owned Lee's Grocery Company in downtown Orange from 1889 to 1923. The house retains most of its original features and is one of the city's finest and oldest examples of 1880s architecture.

Charles Z. Culver figured prominently in Orange's early history. Mr. Culver arrived in Orange from Palmyra, New York in 1882. Orange had been laid out 12 years before by A. B. Chapman and Andrew Glassell and was originally called Richland. Because the center of local real estate activity was in Los Angeles, 31 miles to the northwest, Culver opened a land sales office there in 1885. As one of the persons who believed strongly in the future of Orange, he was particularly enthusiastic about the prospects for the local raisin industry. He owned several acres of new young vines himself. His articles in the publication Orange, Cal and Its Surroundings, Illustrated and Described were entitled Wine and Brandy and The Grape Industry. Published in 1886, this small book sold for 25 cents a copy and was a promotional product. The 1,000 copies were printed by W. W. Elliott, Lithographers of San Francisco, and extolled the virtues of the young city of Orange and its agricultural future. The booklet contributed to the subsequent land boom, which was accelerated by the impending arrival of the railroad. A bird's eye view (1886) of Orange from the same book shows the land Culver would build his hotel and residence upon as filled with rows of young grapevines, but no buildings. Orange, along with its adjacent farms, was becoming the raisin capital of the world. In 1886, approximately 100,000 of the total U.S. production of 350,000 boxes came from Orange. Within two years tragedy struck however; all of the grape vines died of Anaheim's Disease.

In December of 1886, Culver began work on his hotel on the southeast corner of Glassell and Palmyra. He persuaded a group of newly-transplanted Easterners from Palmyra, New York to invest in his hotel. Southern California real estate was on the verge of an explosion, and a bright future was predicted on the strength of the coming of the railroad.

The Hotel Palmyra opened on July 28, 1887, with Culver hosting a banquet for the local press. Enthusiastic notices appeared in the newspapers. The Santa Ana Herald had kind words for Culver as well, "...we hope our friend Culver will be bountifully rewarded for his enterprise."

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see attached.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .14394

Quadrangle name Orange

Quadrangle scale 1: 24000

### UTM References

A 

1	1	4	2	2	2	0	3	1	7	3	1	8	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Boundaries encompass the building and its historic lot. The property is located on the corner of Orange and Palmyra streets and includes the whole parcel. Starting from the corner, go 57 feet east, 110 feet north, 57 feet west, and 110 feet south to reach the starting point.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diann Marsh, Preservation Consultant, with assistance of Phillip Brigandi, Historian

organization N/A date June 5, 1984

street & number 321 N. Philadelphia Street telephone (714) 635-9249

city or town Anaheim state California 92805

## 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 Kathryn Swalter

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 2/10/86

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

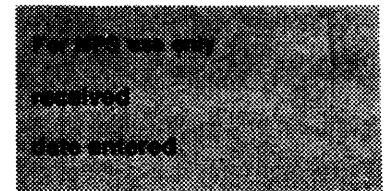
Jayne M. McPherson Keeper of the National Register 3/20/86

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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In 1887, the year the house and hotel were built, Orange consisted of a central plaza, a few brick buildings, and several wooden stores along Chapman Avenue, a row of false front wooden buildings on each side of Glassell north of the plaza, five wooden churches, two hotels, a flour mill, fruit packing house, and about 25 residences. Farm houses dotted the countryside amid fruit trees and grape vines. There were shade and fruit trees, but, curiously, no palm trees. Little remains today of the Orange of the 1880s.

Mr. Culver was riding the tide of success. Active in local politics, he campaigned for and successfully gained a seat on Orange's first city council. He served only a short time; however, as he was in deep financial trouble. The "Boom of 1886-88" had gone bust. In May of 1888, Culver assigned all of his assets to N. H. Adams, who worked earnestly to satisfy Culver's many creditors. Culver disappeared forever from Orange. Local historian Don Meadows supplies information that Culver married a Mexican girl and was last seen in Guadalajara. The Palmyra Hotel survived until 1970.

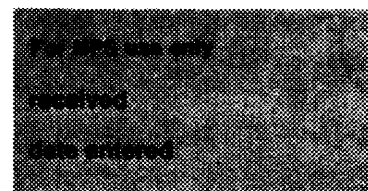
After Culver left Orange, the house was acquired by Mrs. R. H. Bagley of Rochester, New York. It still had ties to the Palmyra Hotel in the 1890s. The house was rented to the new owner of the hotel, W. H. Pfeiffer. Mr. Pfeiffer had purchased the hotel in October 1892. He rented the Culver House to handle the overflow from the hotel. As Eugenie Lee's mother described it, they would take their surrey down to meet the train, the guests would be taken to the hotel for dinner, and then to the house to sleep. There are still numbers on the doors of the upstairs bedrooms.

Eugene T. Lee purchased the house for his family on March 27, 1894, for \$1,700. He and his family had arrived in Orange in December of 1888. The next year he opened Lee's Grocery Company in downtown Orange. Lee's market offered a full line of groceries, as well as fuel and feed. He handled much of his business on credit and often bartered with local ranchers for eggs or produce. For customers in the outlying areas, Lee's son, John, made twice weekly trips by wagon, delivering orders. The Lee Grocery Company remained in business until 1923 when Mr. Lee died at the age of 78. His obituary in the Orange Daily News remarked about the fact that he had often been urged to take public office, but did so only once. He served as a city councilman in 1891-1892. He was known for his reliability, integrity, helpfulness, and friendliness.

In June of 1894, the Orange Post reported that "E. T. Lee and family have been gradually moving into their pleasant new home and expect to be permanently settled there by Monday (June 18th) at the latest." The family continued to live in the house until 1930. John and Josephine Lee and their daughter, Eugenie, moved in with E. T. Lee's widow, Stella, in 1923 and remained until 1930. At that time, the house was rented out. Several families lived in the house as renters between 1930 and 1960. For a while in the 1930s, A. G. Crowell operated a music studio in the house. Mr. Crowell was also the assistant manager of the Orange Theater. The Durham family occupied the house from 1949 until 1959, and for a time ran a boarding house there. In 1960, Mr. and Mrs. Lamber B. Craemer purchased the house. Mrs. Craemer was a teacher in Cypress and Mr. Craemer was an engineer in Long Beach. They continued to occupy the house until the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Fast, purchased the house in early 1984.

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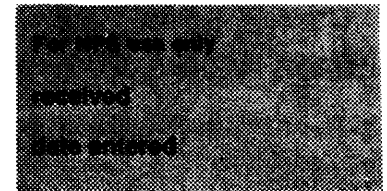
The Culver House is significant to the history of Orange in several ways: as one of the oldest and finest remaining examples of Victorian architecture in Orange from the 1880s; as a notable example of Queen Anne styling, of which less than a dozen houses remain in the city; for its connection with the "Boom of the 1880s" and the Palmyra Hotel; for the contribution of C. Z. Culver as a builder, City Father, promoter of the raisin industry, and pioneer; for its connection with Eugene T. Lee and Lee Grocery Company. The house contributes significantly to the streetscape and atmosphere of present-day Orange.

J-3438H



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Continuation sheet

Bibliography

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Page 2

Orange Cal, Illustrated and Described - 1886 W. W. Elliott, Lithographers

History of Orange County California - 1911 Samuel Armor

History and Statistics of the City of Orange - 1967 Dorothy Spidell

Phil Brigandi did much of the research on C. Z. Culver and the families who lived in the house. His sources were:

Anaheim Gazette - 3-7-1885

Orange Tribune - 1885 12-18-86, 12-29-88

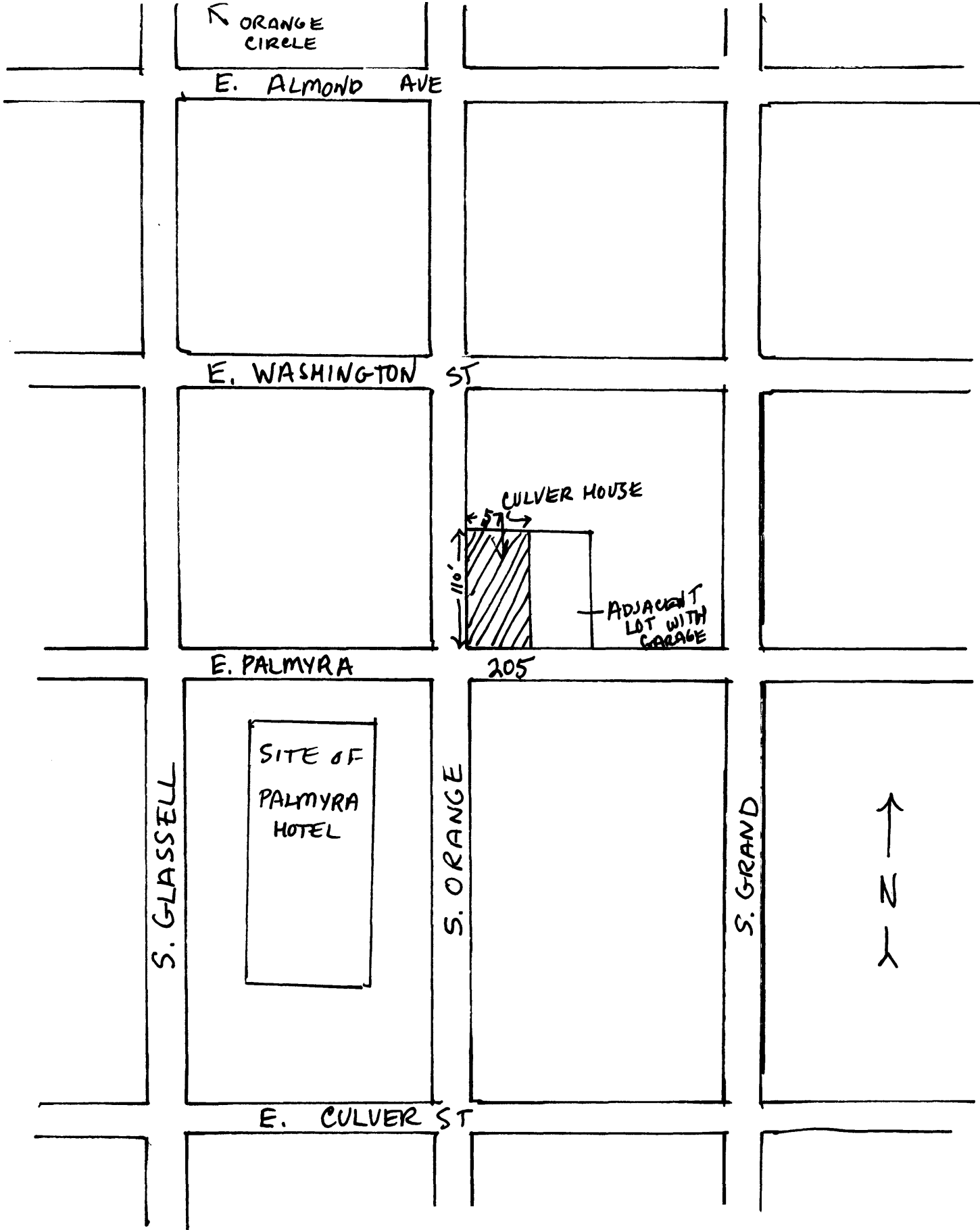
Orange Post - 6-16-1894

Orange Daily News - 9-9-1923

Orange City Directories - 1889-1923

Interview with Eugenie Lee.

J-3438H



ORANGE  
CIRCLE

E. ALMOND AVE

E. WASHINGTON ST

E. PALMYRA

205

SITE OF  
PALMYRA  
HOTEL

S. ORANGE

S. GRAND

E. CULVER ST



Sketch Map  
 C. Z. Culver House  
 205 E. Palmyra  
 Orange, CA 92666  
 Orange County  
 Not to scale



C. Z. Culver House  
205 E. Palmyra  
Orange County  
Orange, CA 92666

Rendering of house with  
siding removed



north elev.



east elev.



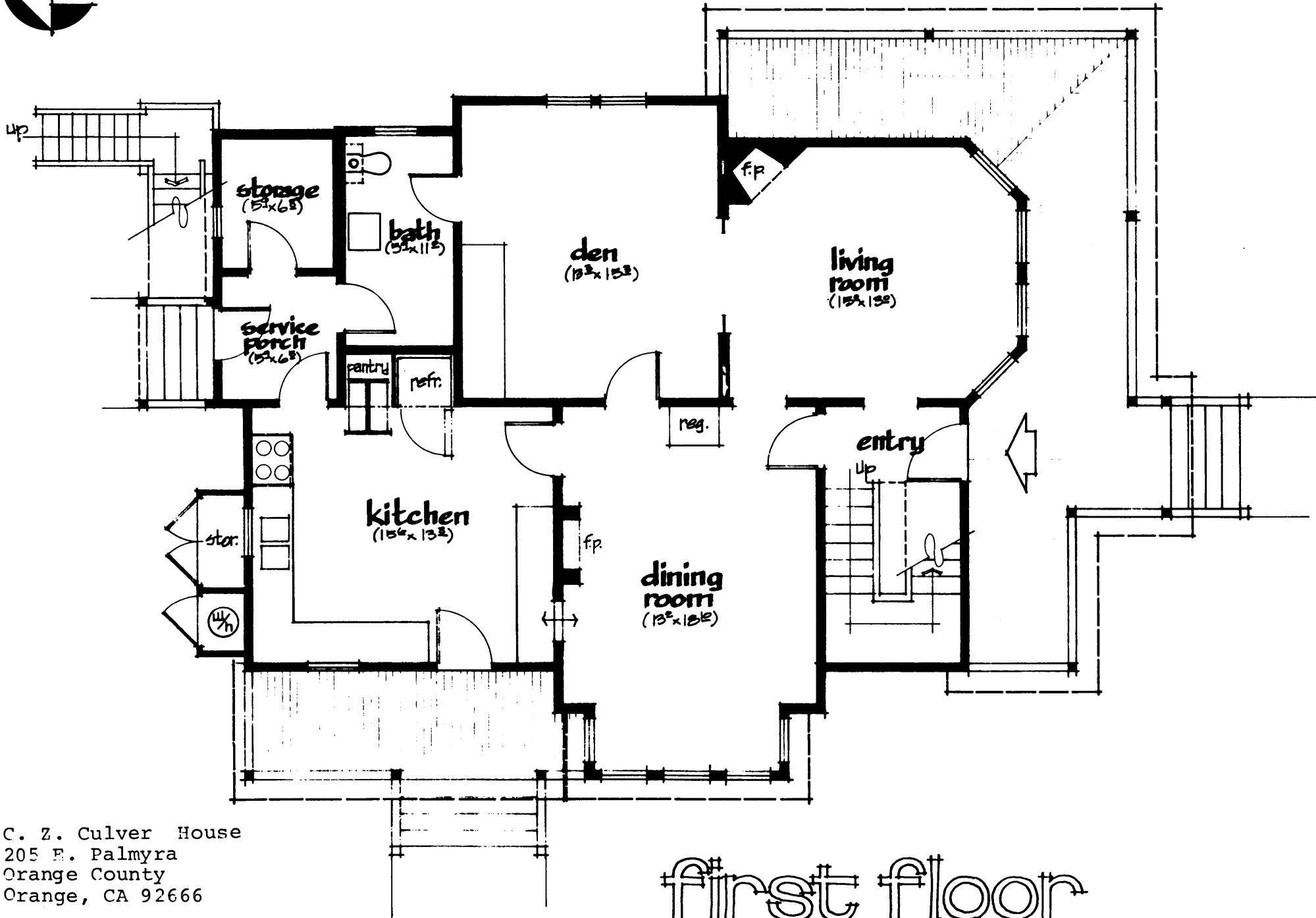
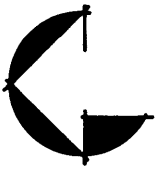
west elev.



south elev.  
 (typ) scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

C. Z. Culver House  
 205 E. Palmyra  
 Orange County  
 Orange, CA 92666

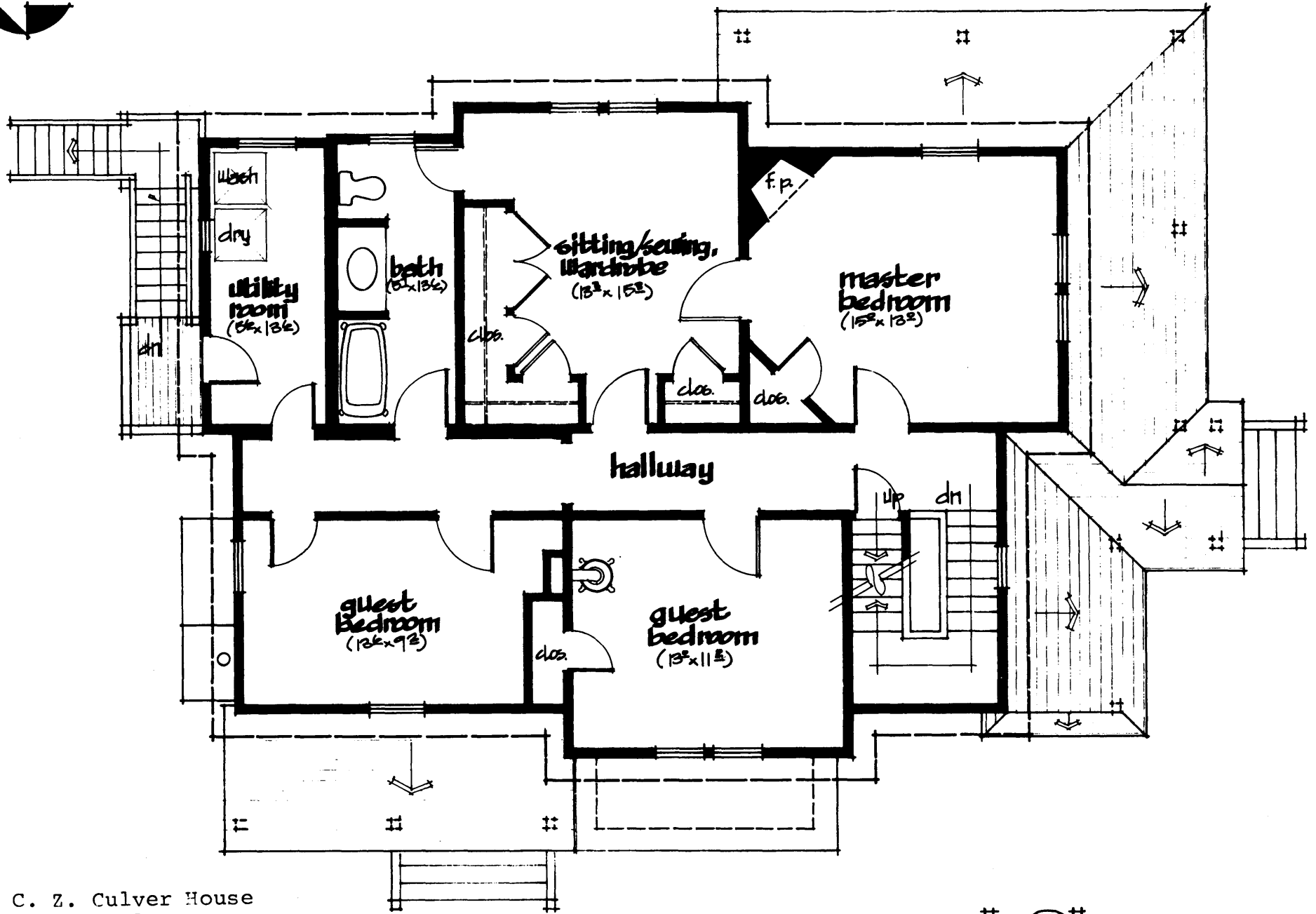
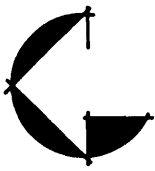
Elevations of house



C. Z. Culver House  
205 E. Palmyra  
Orange County  
Orange, CA 92666

First floor plan

first floor  
scale: 1" = 5'



C. Z. Culver House  
205 E. Palmyra  
Orange County  
Orange, CA 92666

Second floor plan

second floor  
scale: 0 5 10 15 20