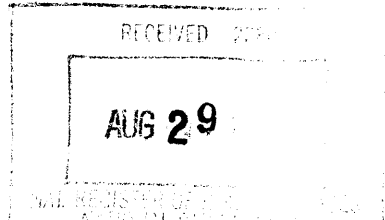


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1013

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 any 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 Gardner, Isaac Sr., House

other names/site number Gardner Family House/HI3675

2. Location

street & number 209 West Palm Avenue n/a not for publication

city or town Tampa n/a vicinity

state Florida code FL county Hillsborough code 057 zip code 33602-2025

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.)

Janet Snyder Matthews 8/26/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or 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
 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

10/13/03
Date of Action

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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(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: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure/Garage Apartment

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure/Garage Apartment

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial

Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood: Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other

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 36) 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)

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1924-1945

Significant Dates

1924-1945

Significant Person

Gardner, Isaac Sr.

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Architect: Gambier, R.B.

Builder: Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Gardner, Isaac Sr., House
Name of Property

Hillsborough County, Florida
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	5	6	1	0	0	3	0	9	3	9	1	0
	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 Charlette Hein, Urban Planner II; Annie Hart, Adm, City of Tampa; & Gary V. Goodwin, Preservation Planner

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date August 2003

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

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 Robert Gardner, Sr.

street & number 209 West Palm Avenue telephone (813) 229-2858

city or town Tampa state FL zip code 33602

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 amend 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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**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida**

SUMMARY

The Isaac Gardner, Sr. House is a two-story Colonial Revival style house located at 209 West Palm Avenue, Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida. Designed by R. B. Gambier (1875–1962) for Isaac Gardner (1880–1945) and constructed in 1924, the rectangular building has weatherboard horizontal siding and rests on a brick pier foundation. The main fenestration pattern is composed of a combination of 7/1 light wood double hung sash windows with wooden screens. A full-length front porch has a half hip roof that extends eastward to form a Porte cochere. Roofing materials are asphalt shingles. The house is typical of the Colonial Revival style popular in the early twentieth century and is in very good condition. A contributing wood frame garage/apartment sits at the northeast corner of the property.

SETTING

The City of Tampa is located in Hillsborough County on Florida's west coast, at the northern end of Tampa Bay. The Isaac Gardner, Sr. House is found in the southwest section of the Tampa Heights neighborhood immediately north of the Central Business District. The house faces south and occupies most of the 0.24 acres that make up the lot. A contributing detached two-story garage with apartment is located to the northeast of the main house. The site is bounded to the east and west by a six foot, white wooden fence, to the north by a chain link fence, and to the south by West Palm Avenue. To the east of the house is a tavern, to the north another residential property, and to the west a vacant lot.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The Isaac Gardner, Sr. House is a two-story wood framed building, roughly rectangular in plan (Photo #1). The brick pier foundation rises anywhere from six inches to one foot above ground. There are regularly spaced openings in the foundation to allow for ventilation. The wood framing is sheathed in white weatherboard. There are two pilasters on the main façade, one at the eastern edge of the house and one at the western edge. There is a full-width, one-story porch with a raised brick foundation on the southern (main) elevation (Photos #8 & #9). Four Roman Doric columns fashioned in wood and painted white support the porch. The hipped roof is covered with asphalt shingles. There is an attached porte cochere on the east elevation (Photo #23). The hipped roof continues the line of the eaves from the main house and is supported by two Roman Doric columns atop a short brick wall.

There are two exterior end chimneys servicing the house (Photos #3 & #12). One is located in the middle of the east elevation, the other on the north elevation at the northeastern corner of the house. They are

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**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida**

both laid in stretcher bond brick. The chimney cap for the eastern chimney is a stringcourse, four rows of brick from the top of the chimney. A slanting concrete coping creates the cap for the western chimney.

The main entrance to the house is centered on the south elevation, forming its third bay. The sash door, framed with wood, has a seven light window: four small rectangular lights at the top, two longer rectangular lights that continue down from the two outermost small rectangles, and a larger rectangular light in the middle. The transom is made of a long rectangular pane of glass (Photo #2). The rectangular sidelights flanking the door are fashioned of three lights, two smaller rectangles at the top and a larger one at the bottom. The south elevation displays a balanced pattern of fenestration. The first story has ribbon windows (three windows in width) forming its first and third bays. The second story has a ribbon window (again, three windows in width) centered on the elevation, forming its third bay. There are also four evenly spaced (2 on either side of the ribbon window) double-hung sash windows framed in wood on the second story.

There are six bays given over to windows on the east elevation: three on the first story and three on the second story. There is a set of paired windows on either side of the chimney on both the first and second stories (Photos #3 & 10). The northeastern corner room of the first story was designed as a sunroom; a relatively large percentage of its exterior wall space is taken up by glass (Photo #11). Additionally, there is no room above it on the second story. On the eastern wall is a fixed sash ribbon window, framed in wood, four windows in width. The exterior wall that forms the northern third of the eastern elevation on the second story is located above the western interior wall of the sunroom. This wall has a single double-hung sash window framed in wood. There is also a paired window on the eastern wall of the north addition. The windows are one-over-one, double-hung sash windows framed with metal.

The north elevation has five window bays: two on the first story and three on the second. The northern wall of the one story sunroom has a fixed sash ribbon window, framed in wood, seven windows in width. There is a modern window, framed in metal, on the north side of the north addition. On the second story, there is a pair of double-hung sash windows framed in wood, centered on the wall above the sunroom. There is also a double-hung sash window framed in wood centered on the north elevation. The third window bay on the second story, located directly east of the chimney, is another pair of double-hung sash windows framed in wood (photo #3).

The west elevation has eleven windows. There is a modern window framed in metal on the western side of the north addition. On the main house, there are four windows on the first floor and six on the second. The four windows on the first story are all double-hung sash windows framed in wood and are equal in size. One is centered on the portion of the wall north of the small, projecting bay. Another is placed on the projecting bay and is located south of the bay's center (Photo #4). The remaining two are evenly spaced on the wall south of the projecting bay. On the second story, there are double-hung sash windows framed in wood placed directly

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**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
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over those first story windows not located on the projecting bay. There are three windows, narrower and shorter than the others on the elevation, evenly spaced along the projecting bay.

All of the windows on the house, with the exception of the windows in the sunroom and on the modern addition, demonstrate the same glaze pattern and are screened (Photo #10). The upper sash has a horizontal muntin a quarter of the sash's length from the top of the sash. It has three vertical muntins: one dividing the sash in half, beginning at the top but ending at the horizontal muntin, and two which run the entire length of the sash and divide the two halves into quarters. The bottom sash is one pane of glass. The second story windows on the south elevation and the southernmost second story windows on the east and west elevations have awnings attached to the window frame by metal fasteners. The windows in the sunroom are all glazed in the same pattern as well: a horizontal muntin is placed a third of the sash's length from the top of the sash, and two vertical muntins divide the window into thirds ending at the horizontal muntin.

The main house, sunroom and carport all have hipped roofs of asphalt shingles, and largely overhanging boxed eaves. The eaves have regularly placed vents on their underside, framed in wood and covered by wire mesh.

Alterations

A small addition was added to the north (rear) elevation in 1961 (Photo #5). The rectangular, one story room is covered in vinyl siding in imitation of the wooden siding that covers the rest of the house. The north addition has a rolled composition shed roof. There is an additional door at the back of the house, located at the southeastern corner of the addition. It is a sliding plate glass door framed with metal.

Interior

The interior consists of twelve primary spaces, including bedrooms, bathrooms, living room, dining room, den, sewing room, kitchen and pantry. Throughout the house, the walls and ceilings are finished and painted with plaster molding in the living room, den and dining room areas. The floors are mostly finished oak wood, with linoleum in the kitchen and pantry, and tile in the bathrooms.

The main (south) entrance opens into a reception hall with openings to the living room, den, and dining room areas. A twenty-light French door leads to the large living room with a fireplace along the east wall. The mantle is finished with carved brackets and a tile face (Photos #13-#15). Across the reception hall, a matching twenty-light French door leads to the dining room (Photo #16). The kitchen (Photo #17) is linked to the dining room by the pantry (Photo #18), which is also used as a breakfast nook.

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**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
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The stairs consists of two landings with a short flight between them and newel posts connecting a handrail and balustrade (Photos #19 & 20). The upper floor contains four bedrooms, bathroom, and sewing room (Photos #21 & #22).

GARAGE/APARTMENT

A two-story wood frame garage/apartment sits at the northeast corner of the property (Photos #6 & #7). Exterior features include a hip roof, single vehicle bay, wood siding, and one-over-one light double hung sash windows. The upstairs apartment, accessed by a straight stairway on the west elevation, contains a living room, two bedrooms, bathroom and kitchen.

CONCLUSION

The Isaac Gardner, Sr. House has been classified as Colonial Revival; an English version of the Classical Renaissance styles brought to the United States after the Georgian and Adam styles. The style has enjoyed a lengthy popularity in American building. Traditionally, emphasis is placed on the front door, paneled with a fanlight or transom with sidelights and pilasters and a small porch. The Gardner House uses these traditional elements to suit the Southern climate. The pilasters are pushed to the end of the full-length front porch, and the usual pediment or full entablature element becomes a half-hip roof, thus providing shelter from the southern exposure and expanding the perceived living space to the outside. This is a welcomed tradition in Florida for buildings prior to the advent of air conditioning. In addition, the porte cochere, a common solution to vehicle shelter, extends directly from the east elevation off the porch. Tight fenestration pattern and hip roof are consistent with the Colonial Revival. Also, there is a relationship to the Greek Revival style quite popular years earlier in terms of its relationship to stability and wealth that has carried over to the Colonial Revival. Isaac Gardner, Sr. was a very successful businessman in the community and this style was befitting for a person of his standing. The house contributes to the sense of time, place, and historical development of Tampa, Florida, particularly in its African-American community through its location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida

SUMMARY

The Gardner House, located at 209 West Palm Avenue in Tampa, Florida, is significant at the **local** level under **Criterion B** in the areas of **Ethnic Heritage: Black** for its association with the Gardner family, and their contributions to the development of Tampa, particularly in its African-American community. It is a classic example of the Colonial Revival style of housing popular in 1920s Tampa, and remains in excellent condition. Built by R.B. Gambier for Isaac Gardner, Sr. in 1924, it continues to be owned and occupied by his son Robert Gardner and members of the Gardner family as their private residence. The Gardners were "well-livers," prosperous blacks who mirrored the lifestyle of the well-to-do white community. The Gardners' descendants remain a prominent African-American family well known in the business and education community. Robert Gardner is a retired Superintendent of Teacher Placement and Personnel for the Hillsborough County School District.

The Gardners played a prominent role in the establishment of Tampa's African-American community. Isaac Gardner, Sr. was one of the founders of the Central Life Insurance Company, as well as several neighborhood businesses. Their house represents one of the few remaining historic single family residences located in this section of what was once a thriving neighborhood and center of the middle-class African American population in Tampa. The significance of 209 West Palm Avenue is augmented by the alarming rate of redevelopment of this area and the disquieting loss of much of the physical evidence of Tampa's rich African-American heritage. The Gardner House is listed as a contributing structure in the Tampa Heights Local Historic District, but is located outside the boundary of the Tampa Heights National Register Historic District.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Tampa is located in the western part of central Florida and lies at the mouth of the Hillsborough River that empties into Old Tampa Bay, an inlet to the Gulf of Mexico. It occupies the entire Hillsborough peninsula, spreading north and west from the edge of Tampa Bay. Tampa is the seat of Hillsborough County and a major seaport. It is a financial center in the state and light manufacturing plays an important role in the local economy, as do tourism and sports. Cigar manufacturing, which once employed thousands of workers, no longer contributes significantly to the economic life of the city. The industry, however, has left its mark on the population with the high percentage of residents of Latin background, the majority of which are of Cuban origin. Tampa is a city of approximately 300,000 residents and part of a metropolitan area in west Florida having a population of about 2,000,000. The nearby beaches and other attractions, the sporting facilities, and the climate bring thousands of tourists to the area each year adding to the economic vitality of the area.

Florida officially became a United States territory in 1821 after being acquired from Spain through the 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty. Florida initially contained only two counties, Escambia and St. Johns. Whites did not settle in the area until the U.S. Army established Fort Brooke at the mouth of the Hillsborough River in

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1824. A series of subdivisions led to the creation of new counties. Hillsborough County was created in 1834¹ That same year, the trading post and small settlement that sprang up near the fort became Tampa, but the settlement remained no more than a wilderness village for more than half a century. Although the population consisted mainly of military personnel during the Second (1838-1842) and Third (1855-1858) Seminole Wars, by 1858 Tampa had about 1000 inhabitants, and the town was dotted with houses, churches and businesses. By the end of the Civil War in 1865, Fort Brooke was deactivated and the population of Tampa began to decline. By 1880, the population stood at only 720 residents.² Several events launched Tampa on its course to becoming a large modern city.

In 1883, the old Fort Brooke military reservation was opened to civilian settlement, causing a flurry of real estate speculation.³ The same year saw the completion of the South Florida Railroad linking Tampa with Jacksonville and the discovery of phosphate in the vicinity. The mining of this essential ingredient in commercial fertilizer would bring a wave of new settlement to Central Florida and transform Tampa into a major port from which the mineral was shipped all over the world.⁴

However, the migration of Vicente Martinez-Ybor and other major cigar manufacturers to Tampa was far more important to the rapid and spectacular growth of Tampa after 1885. Martinez-Ybor was a Spanish citizen who had begun manufacturing cigars in Cuba in 1856. At the outbreak of the "Ten Year War" rebellion against Spanish rule in 1868, Martinez-Ybor was forced to flee Cuba because he was suspected of disloyalty to Spain. He reestablished his cigar operations in Key West, Florida, and persuaded other Cuban and American cigar manufacturers to join him. Labor was readily available among the thousands of refugees who had fled the conflict in their homeland.

After more than 15 years in Key West, Ybor decided to seek a more favorable place to operate his business. Shipping traffic between Key West and major ports was irregular and unreliable, hindering access to raw materials and markets. The conflict between Spanish and Cuban workers over the fate of Cuba also caused constant labor problems, resulting in costly strikes. After examining other locations, Ybor decided in 1885 to relocate to Tampa. His decision was heavily influenced by the availability of transportation and incentives offered by Tampa businessmen who provided him a large tract of land northwest of town on which to build factories and houses for cigar workers. Within a year "Ybor City" had become an incorporated community standing almost in the shadow of downtown Tampa. Its independence, however, was short-lived. In 1887, Tampa annexed Ybor City, creating a community with a population of 5,000.⁵ Tampa's population increased

¹ Tebeau, Charlton W., *A History of Florida*, Coral Gables, 1971, pp. 114-115.

² Long, Durwood, "The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLV, p. 9.

³ Grismer, Karl Hiram, *Tampa, A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida*, St. Petersburg Print Company, 1950, p. 169.

⁴ Dunn, Hampton, *Yesterday's Tampa*, Miami: E. A. Seemann Publishing Inc., 1972, p. 18.

⁵ Long, pp. 38-39.

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dramatically over the next several decades, especially after a second cigar-producing center was established at West Tampa on the western side of the Hillsborough River.

By the end of the 19th century, Tampa was becoming a city with numerous new residential neighborhoods spawned by the wealth of the cigar industry and connected to the heart of town by electric trolleys. Hyde Park, and Tampa Heights offered the city's middle and upper income residents a peaceful setting made attractive by well-built houses, schools, and churches.

Tampa Heights developed rapidly and was home to many of Tampa's important businessmen and other prominent citizens. Its location was convenient to Ybor City and the financial and port districts of Downtown Tampa. Its distance from the marshy, low-lying areas of the city was also thought to protect residents from the yellow fever epidemics that struck the city annually in the nineteenth century.

The first subdivision in the Tampa Heights neighborhood was Orange Grove Estates, created in the 1870s from the old homestead of Joseph Robles who settled in the Tampa area in 1857. Between 1889 and 1907, at least 23 new subdivision plats were recorded within the neighborhood. By 1900, the area had acquired the name "Tampa Heights." By 1910, a Tampa Heights address was among the most fashionable in the city, especially the southern section of the neighborhood, which was marked by large, two-story frame dwellings. During this time, some of Tampa's wealthier citizens were building large, new homes in Hyde Park, an area that had opened west of the Hillsborough River. Hyde Park began to take on the aura of a more "aristocratic" address, surpassing Tampa Heights in stature. Although some larger houses were still built in Tampa Heights during the teens and twenties, the neighborhood became more middle class and ethnically mixed. During this period of community development, the Gardner House was built.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The southeast corner of the Tampa Heights neighborhood, located close to Ybor City and Tampa's Central Business District, became the African-American Business District. These African-American businesses, like many others in Tampa, enjoyed great prosperity as a result of the Florida Boom of the 1920s. Those businesses that had been founded earlier in the century saw increased productivity and entrepreneurs were able to successfully establish themselves within the business community. The majority of these enterprises were grouped in a district whose heart was located at the intersection of Central Avenue and Scott Street, near downtown Tampa. Businesses such as the Central Theatre, the Palace Drug Store and Tampa Bulletin Publishing Company lined the streets; none of them is extant today. Owners of these businesses may have been members of the National Negro Business League. The organization, founded under the leadership of Booker T. Washington and such national black business leaders as Jacksonville, Florida's A. L. Lewis, supported one of Washington's major tenets—racial uplift through economics. The Florida Negro Business League was founded in Jacksonville in May 1906. The Florida League sponsored a major speaking tour for

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Washington in March 1912; he spoke in Tampa on March 4.⁶ The Tampa Heights neighborhood, which includes both a National Register and Local Historic District, grew up around this business district and was prosperous throughout the 1940s. A mixture of Colonial Revival, Folk Victorian, Bungalow, and Craftsman residences lined the streets, creating a vital neighborhood.

The development of Tampa Heights represented a striking mix of racial and ethnic groups. As a fashionable neighborhood in the 1910s, it attracted prominent citizens and wealthy businessmen. However, development soon turned elsewhere as the wealthier residents of the city began focusing their attention west of the Hillsborough River, building homes in Hyde Park. This left houses in Tampa Heights open to ownership by those of lower economic standing, but increased diversity in their age and ethnicity. The Polk *Tampa City Directories* from this period indicate that houses owned by both white and black citizens were mixed within the neighborhood, creating a remarkably close-knit community important to the development of the greater Tampa area.

The area began to deteriorate in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Federal Interstate System ripped through both the business district and the neighborhood surrounding it. Conditions worsened as the African-American population doubled in the 1950s, forcing residents into crowded, substandard housing. Existing houses were modified to accommodate a larger number of inhabitants and were repaired with whatever materials were currently available. This served to severely compromise the historic integrity of the neighborhood. The final blow came with the demolition of a large number of these homes in the 1950s to allow for the construction of several housing projects by the City of Tampa. What few historic houses remained after this demolition quickly fell into disrepair and were torn down. The southeastern corner of the Tampa Heights neighborhood, where this business area once thrived, now lies outside the current Local and National Historic Districts. The freeway cuts it off from the rest of the Tampa Heights neighborhood. What was once a thriving business district is now an unidentified, inhospitable area of housing projects west of Ybor City between Nebraska Avenue and the interstate highway.

The southwestern section of the Tampa Heights neighborhood has fared marginally better; there has been a tremendous loss of historic fabric in the area. This is the section of the neighborhood where many middle-class African Americans and business owners had their personal residences.

The Gardner House located at 209 West Palm Avenue not only escaped destruction, but remains in excellent condition as a result of the Gardner family's careful attention and respect for the building's history. The house's significance stems from its connection to the Gardners and their involvement with the formation of

⁶ David H. Jackson, Jr., "Booker T. Washington's Tour of the Sunshine State, March 1912," *Florida Historical Quarterly* Vol. 81, no. 3 (Winter 2003):261-262.

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**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida**

a dynamic African-American community in the early twentieth century, as well as its role as one of the few residences remaining which reflect the history of the greater Tampa community.

ISAAC GARDNER, SR.

Born in Jefferson County in north Florida⁷ on February 20, 1880, Isaac Gardner, Sr. came to Tampa in 1905 at the age of 25. Gardner worked as a laborer in town until 1921. By 1915, Central Avenue had grown into a thriving center for African-American business and Gardner was ready to start his business career as sole proprietor with the opening of the Manhattan Café, located at 1010 E. Scott Street, just off Central Avenue.

One year later, Gardner opened the Palace Drug Store, again as sole proprietor, at the corner of Scott Street and Central Avenue, and it soon became the hub of activity for pharmaceutical needs as well as a social gathering spot for Tampa's tight-knit African-American community. Of significant impact to the black community was the founding of the Central Industrial Insurance Company, later the Central Life Insurance Company. Isaac Gardner and a group of local businessmen pooled \$10,000 and established the insurance company. Among this group were African-Americans such as W. D. Potter, the editor and owner of the *Tampa Bulletin*; George S. Middleton, Tampa's only African-American postal clerk; physicians L. A. Howell, T. L. Lowrie, and S. J. Johnson; dentist C. H. Norton, who served as President; and Mary McLeod Bethune. By 1935, this company was doing business in almost every Florida city and employed over 300 men and women.⁸

In 1923, Gardner's Scott Street Poolroom opened and his businesses were thriving. The Horseshoe Bar, the Georgette Hotel, named for his wife, and the Royal Palm Lounge and Restaurant followed along with an increasing portfolio of investment property, all owned by Isaac Gardner over a period of years. The Pyramid Hotel, the anchor of Central Avenue at Harrison Street, began with the Pyramid Investment Company. Gardner was part of that group that was led by Lee Davis, another prominent African-American entrepreneur. Other investors associated with the Pyramid Company were Dewey Richardson, Minnie Rogers, Dr. R. R. Williams, Early Shields, and Dr. Martin Silas, all active in Tampa's black civic, social and business worlds.⁹

In 1924, Gardner reinforced his commitment to the neighborhood by building his elegant home and raising his family at 209 Palm Avenue. He had R. B. Gambier design and build the house that remains in the family. Gambier, a native of France, was an architectural engineer who came to Tampa in 1920 and lived at 302 East Amelia Street,¹⁰ a few blocks from the Gardner residence.

⁷ Personal Interview with Robert Gardner, Sr., son of Isaac Gardner on 1-16-03.

⁸ Jones, Maxine and McCarthy Kevin, *African Americans in Florida*, p. 68.

⁹ Brady, Rowena, *Things Remembered*, University of Tampa Press, 1997, p. 142.

¹⁰ *Tampa Tribune*, obits, September 21, 1962.

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**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida**

Gardner was one of the most successful businessmen to grace Central Avenue in his time, contributing to the variety and success of the business district, all without the benefit of a formal higher education. Isaac Gardner married Georgette Lucille Mattox (April 9, 1901 – February 21, 1982) from Lake City, Florida (date unknown) and brought to the marriage a daughter, Irma (April 13, 1911 -) whose mother was Alberta Wilson. In addition, Isaac and Georgette had four other children: Isaac, Jr. (October 20, 1922 -) a Philadelphia podiatrist; Robert (September 28, 1924 -), an educator; and twins, Billy (April 7, 1927 – August 26, 1975) and Jackie (April 7, 1927 -). Billy worked in Tampa in the restaurant business and later in New York City in the banking industry, where he died in an accident, and Jackie is a physician in Brooklyn, New York. Isaac Gardner, Sr. passed away August 4, 1945.¹¹

While Isaac Gardner flourished as an entrepreneur, his wife, Georgette Lucille Mattox served the community as well. She earned her undergraduate degree in Education from Florida A&M College in Tallahassee during the 1920s, and a Masters in Education from Columbia University in New York during the 1940s. Mrs. Gardner turned her attention to the educational system as well as contributing to civic and religious initiatives within her community. Professionally, her entire career was spent in the Hillsborough County School System, first as a teacher and later, in 1956, she became principal at Lomax School located at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and North 26th Street in East Tampa. During the 1930s and prior to Mrs. Gardner's time there, Lomax was the largest African-American school in the county with an enrollment of 900 students.¹² Before becoming a principal, Mrs. Gardner had held the position of Coordinator of Negro Education for the Hillsborough County School System beginning in 1949.¹³ This position served as liaison between the School Board and the African-American school administration in order to promote and advance education in the then-segregated school system. Additionally, she served on the Stewardess Board of St. Paul AME Church in Tampa, and was a member of the National Council of Negro Women, the Urban League, and the Rose of Sharon Spiritual Center.

¹¹ Gardner Interview, 1/22/03.

¹² Personal Interview with Dan Valdez, 1/24/03.

¹³ Personal Interview with Doris Ross Reddick, 1/24/03.

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**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida**

DOCUMENTS

Original blueprints for 209 West Palm Avenue in Tampa, Florida. Collection of the Gardner Family, 209, West Palm Avenue, Tampa, Florida.

Sanborn Fire Maps, 1915, 1925, 1931, 1953.

INTERVIEWS

Personal interview with Robert Gardner, Sr., 10/09/02, 1/13/03, 1/22/03

Personal interview with Doris Ross Reddick, Hillsborough County School Board member, 1/24/03

Personal interview with Dan Valdez, Hillsborough County School System, 1/24/03

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**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property connected with 209 West Palm Avenue, located in Tampa, Florida has as its legal boundaries: HIGHLAND PARK 1ST ADDITION E ½ OF LOT 8 AND W ½ OF LOT 9 BLOCK 13.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The 0.24-acre site is bounded to the east and west by a white wooden fence six feet in height, to the north by a chain link fence, and to the south by West Palm Avenue. This is the property, which has been historically associated with the house since its construction in 1924 for Isaac Gardner.

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Section number PHOTOS Page 1

**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida**

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Isaac Gardner, Sr., House
2. 209 West Palm Avenue, Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida
3. February, 2003
4. Dennis Fernandez, City of Tampa Historic Preservation
5. City of Tampa Historic Preservation Commission
6. South and East Facade—Looking Northwest from Palm Avenue
7. Photo #1 of 23

Items 1 – 5 are the same for the following photographs:

6. Main Entry—Looking North from Palm Avenue
7. Photo #2 of 23

6. North and East Facade—Looking Southwest from Guesthouse
7. Photo #3 of 23

6. West Facade—Looking East from Ola Avenue
7. Photo #4 of 23

6. North Facade—Looking South from Backyard
7. Photo #5 of 23

6. South Facade of Guesthouse—Looking North from Palm Avenue
7. Photo #6 of 23

6. West and North Facade of Guesthouse—Looking Southeast from Backyard
7. Photo #7 of 23

6. Front Porch—Looking West from Driveway
7. Photo #8 of 23

6. Brick Steps from Porch Detail—Looking North from Front Sidewalk
7. Photo #9 of 23

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Section number PHOTOS Page 2

**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida**

-
- 6. Upper Window Detail—Looking West from Driveway
 - 7. Photo #10 of 23

 - 6. Lower Window Detail—Looking West from Driveway
 - 7. Photo #11 of 23

 - 6. Ash trap at Fireplace base—Looking West from Driveway
 - 7. Photo #12 of 23

 - 6. Living Room—Looking North
 - 7. Photo #13 of 23

 - 6. Living Room—Looking South
 - 7. Photo #14 of 23

 - 6. Living Room—Looking East
 - 7. Photo #15 of 23

 - 6. Dining Room—Looking West
 - 7. Photo #16 of 23

 - 6. Kitchen—Looking West
 - 7. Photo #17 of 23

 - 6. Breakfast Nook—Looking South
 - 7. Photo #18 of 23

 - 6. Stairway—Looking Northwest
 - 7. Photo #19 of 23

 - 6. Top of Stairway—Looking East
 - 7. Photo #20 of 23

 - 6. Upstairs Bathroom—Looking Northeast
 - 7. Photo #21 of 23

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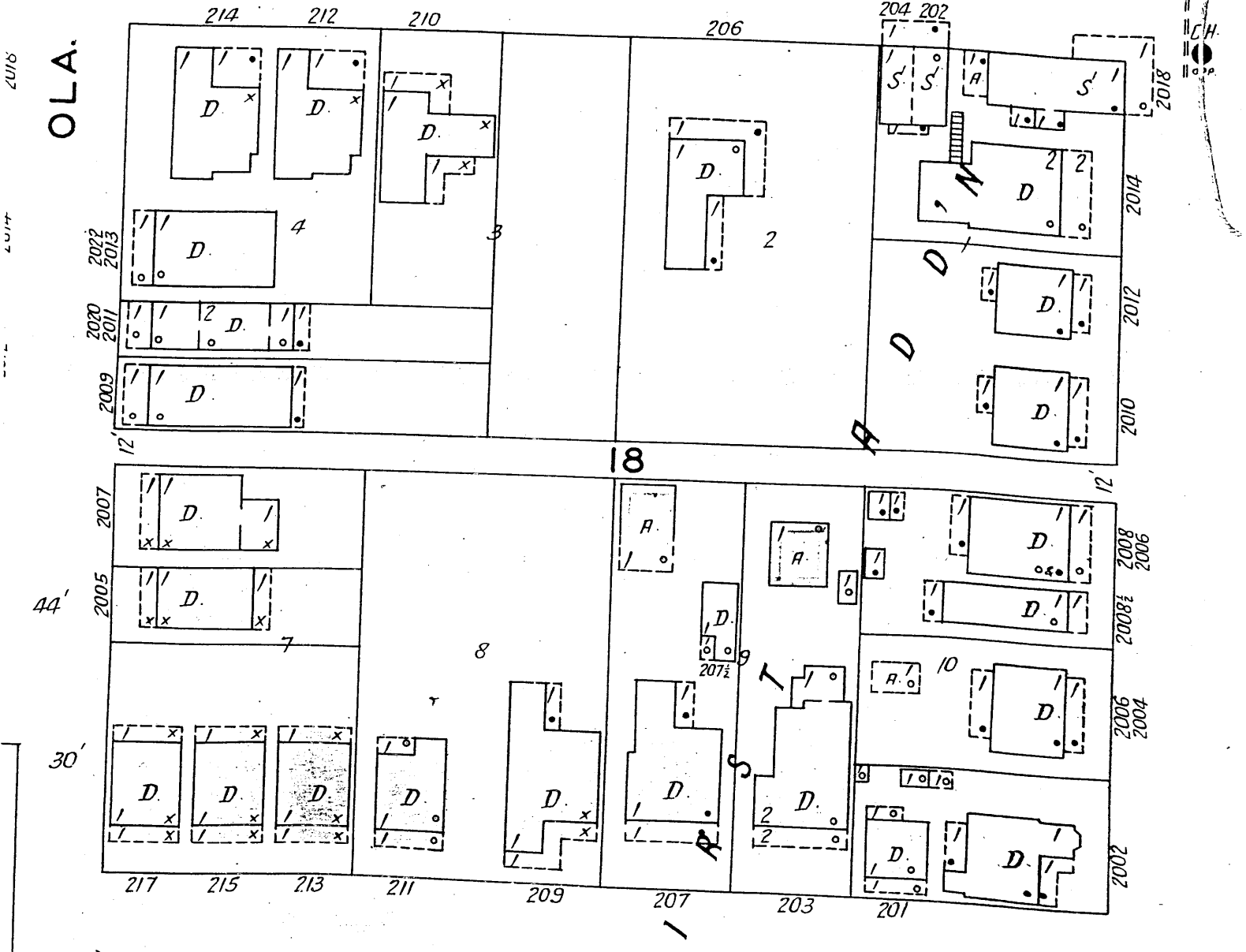
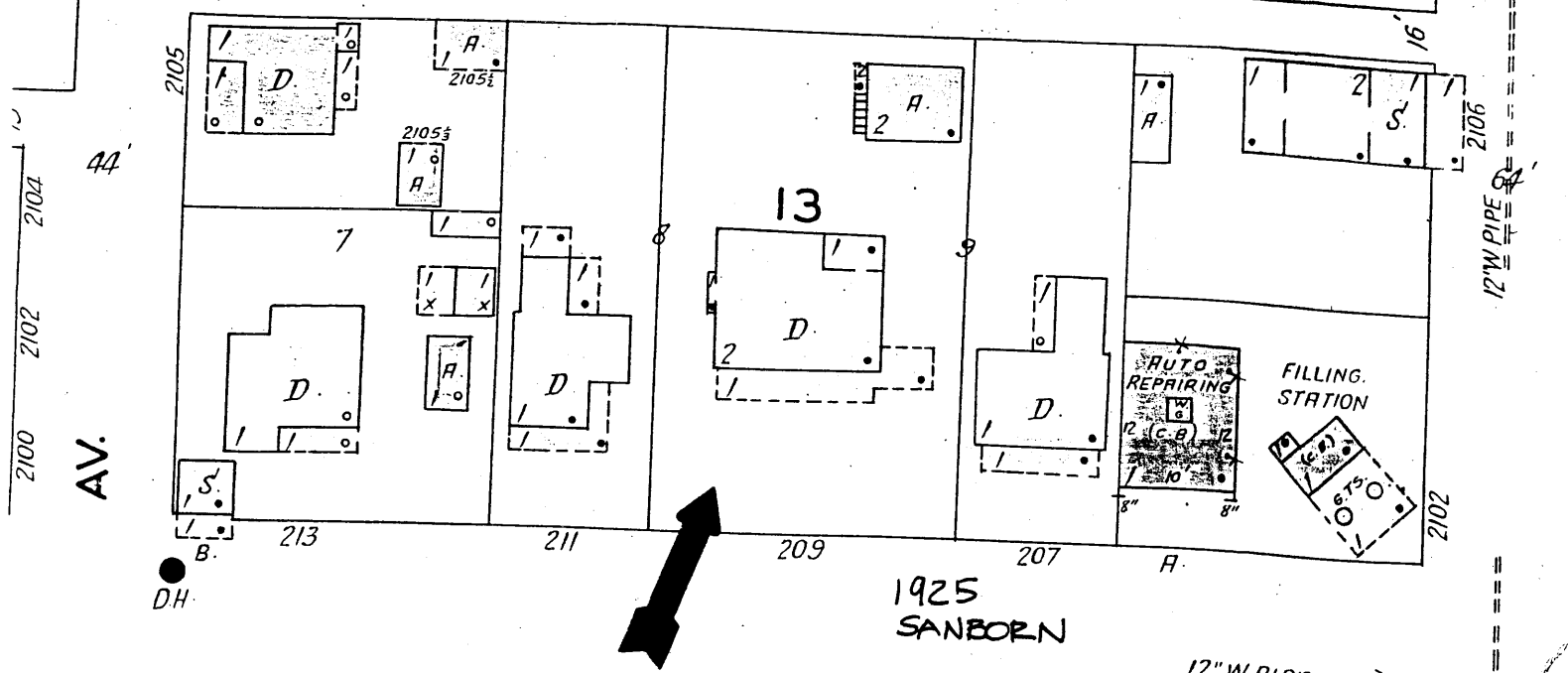
Section number PHOTOS Page 3

**GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida**

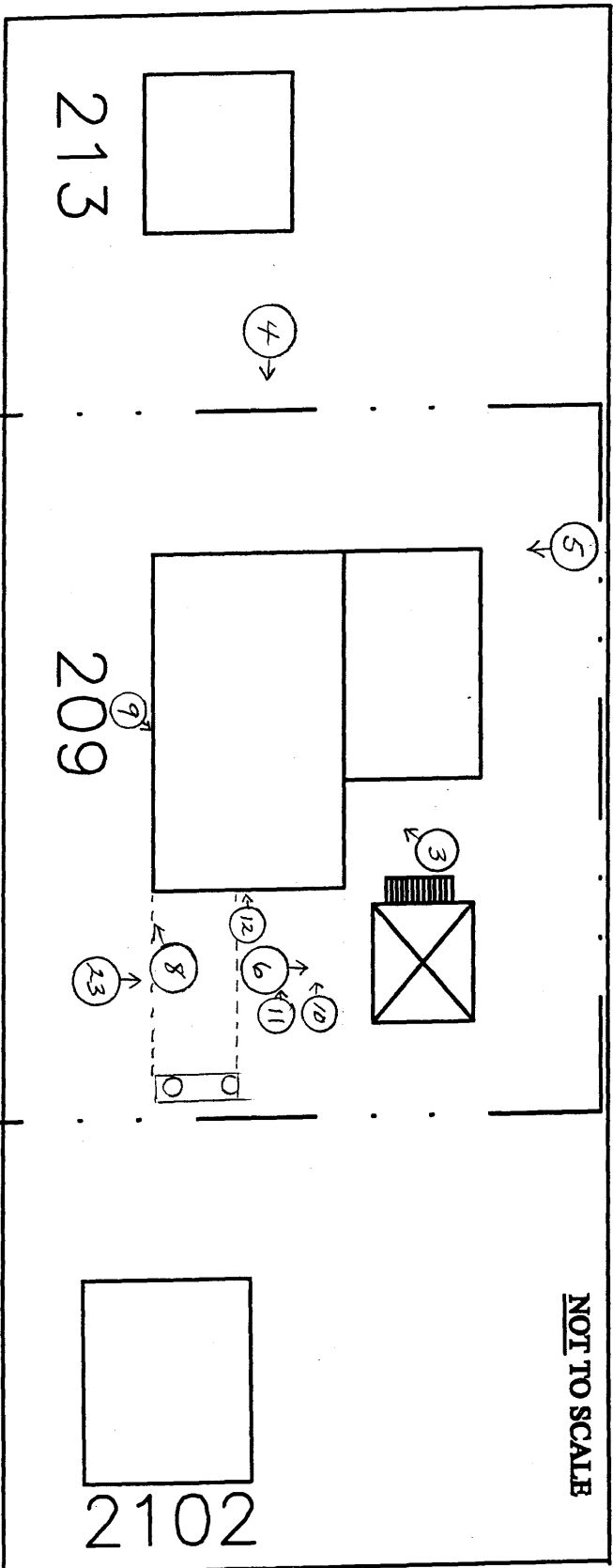
- 6. Upstairs Door—Looking East
- 7. Photo #22 of 23

- 6. Porte Cochere—Looking North from Palm Avenue
- 7. Photo #23 of 23

GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida



OLA AVENUE



THE GARDNER HOUSE
209 W. PALM AVENUE
TAMPA, FLORIDA



→ Photo

NOT TO SCALE

HIGHLAND AVENUE

PALM AVENUE

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209

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ALLEY

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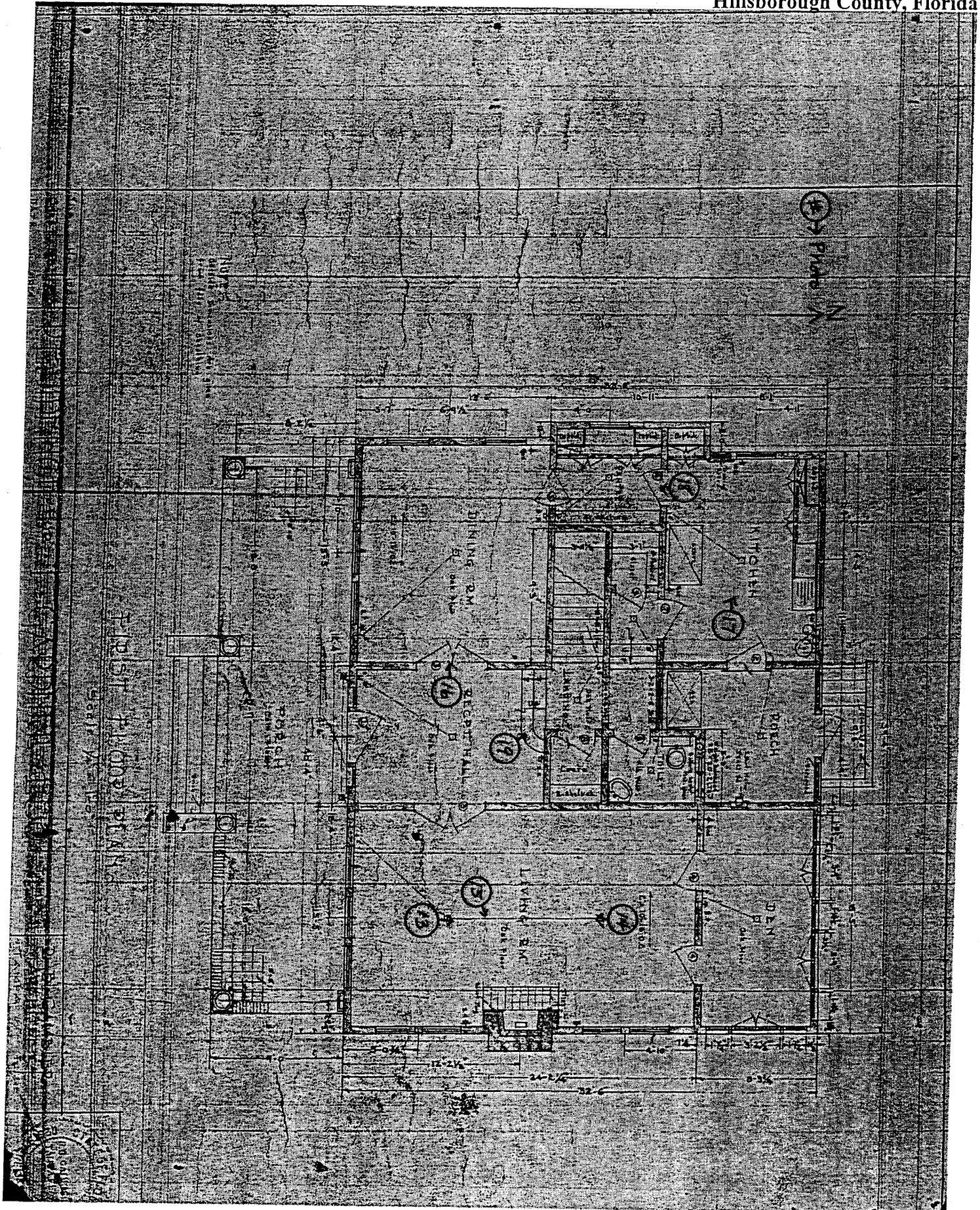
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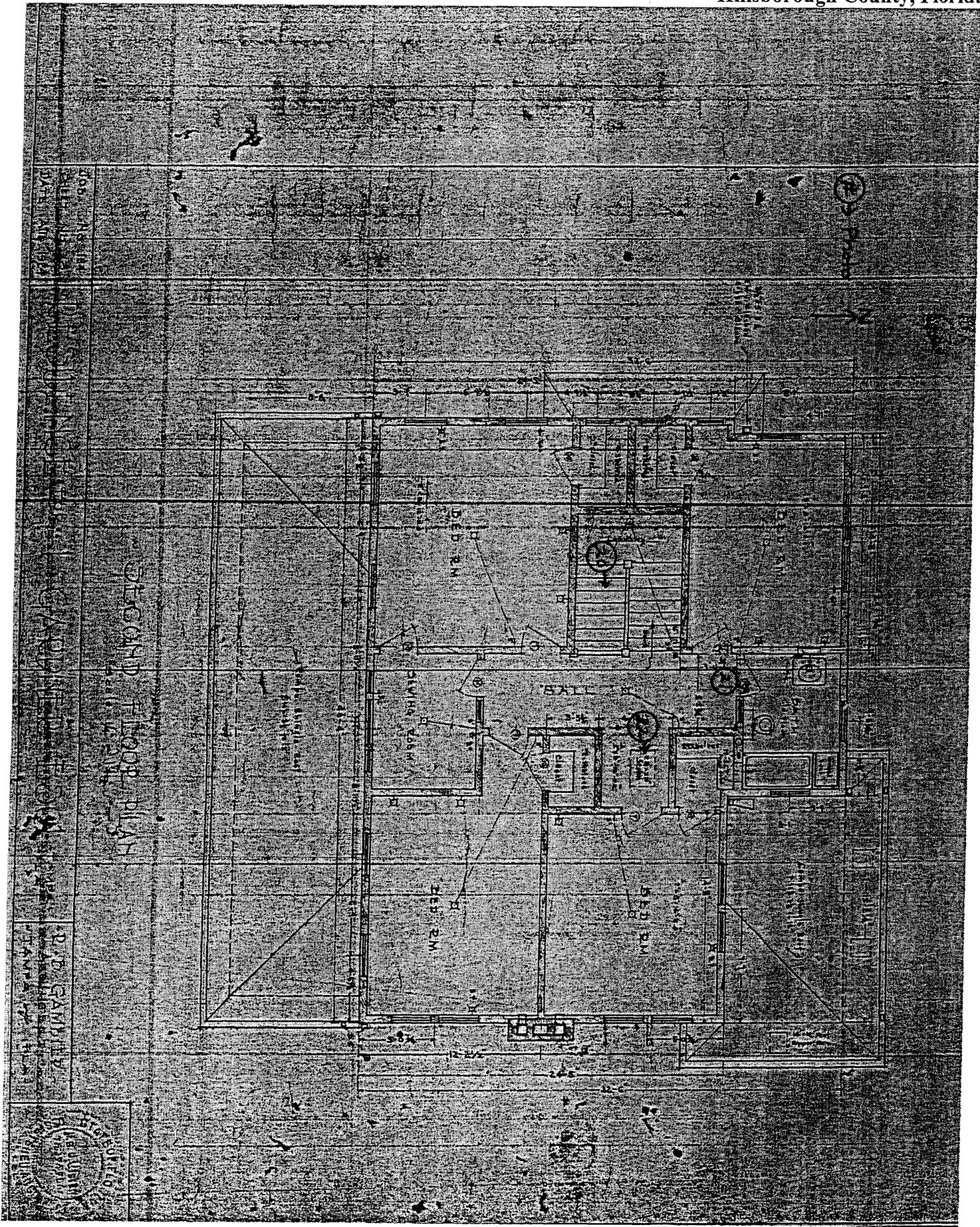
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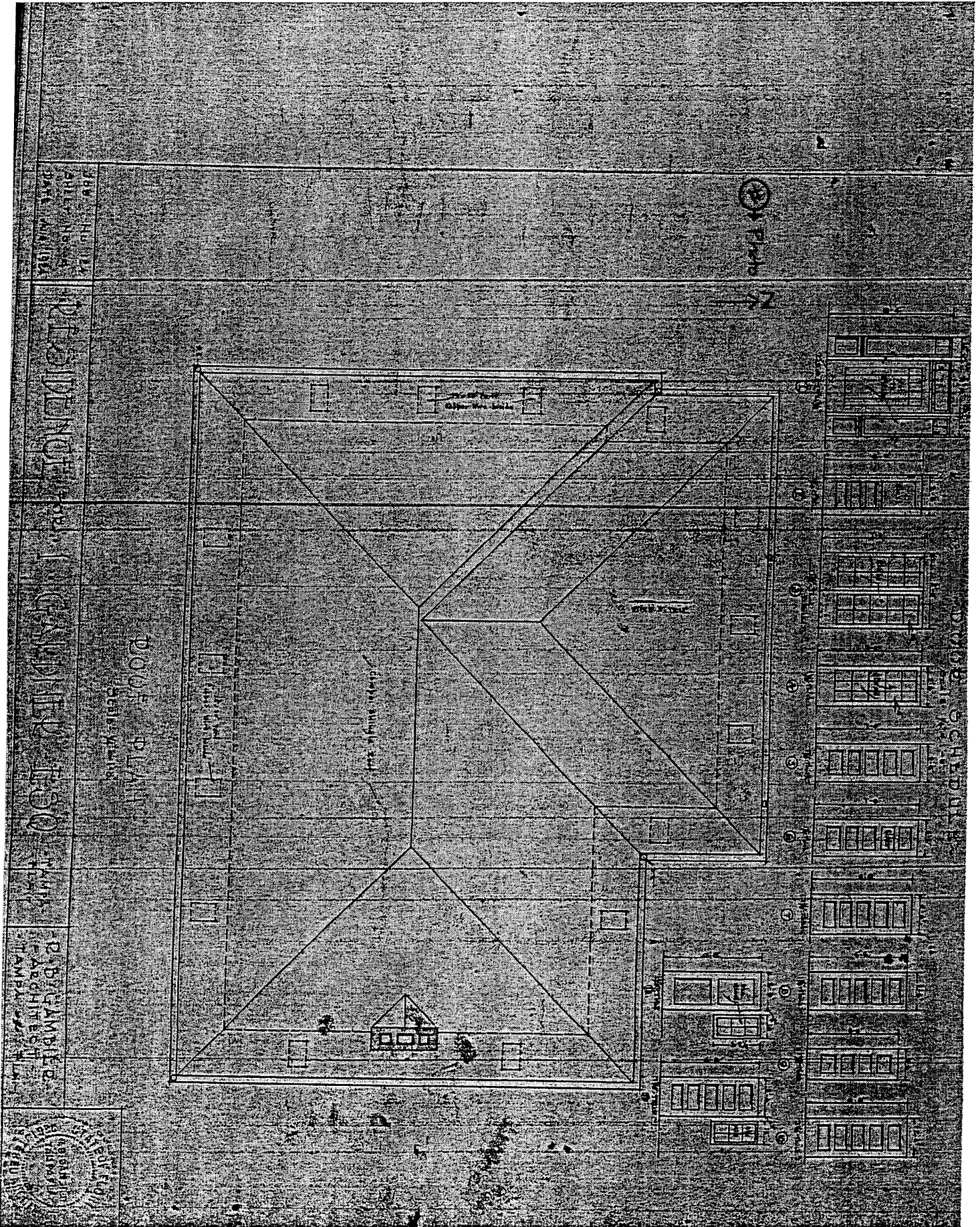
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Hillsborough County, Florida



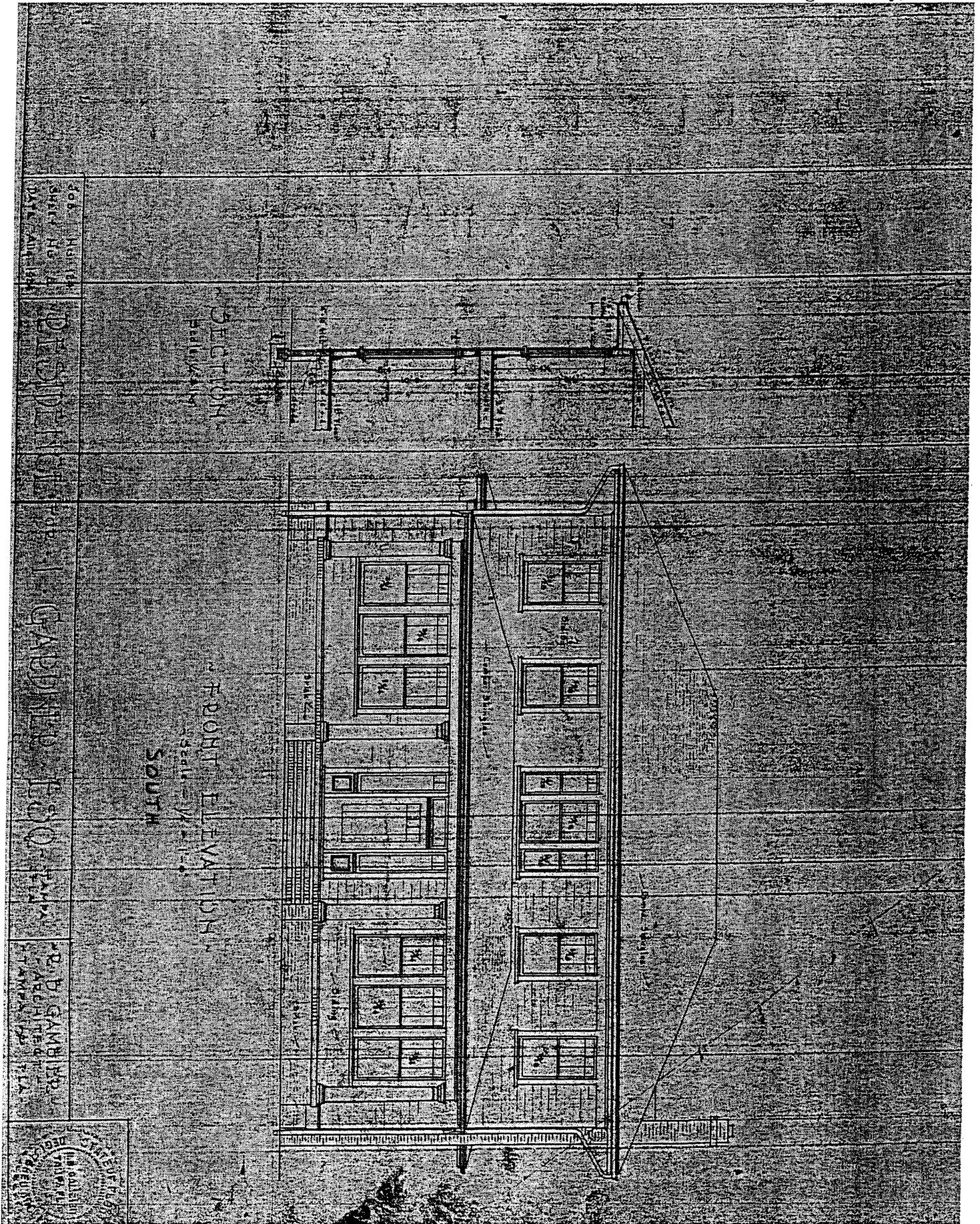
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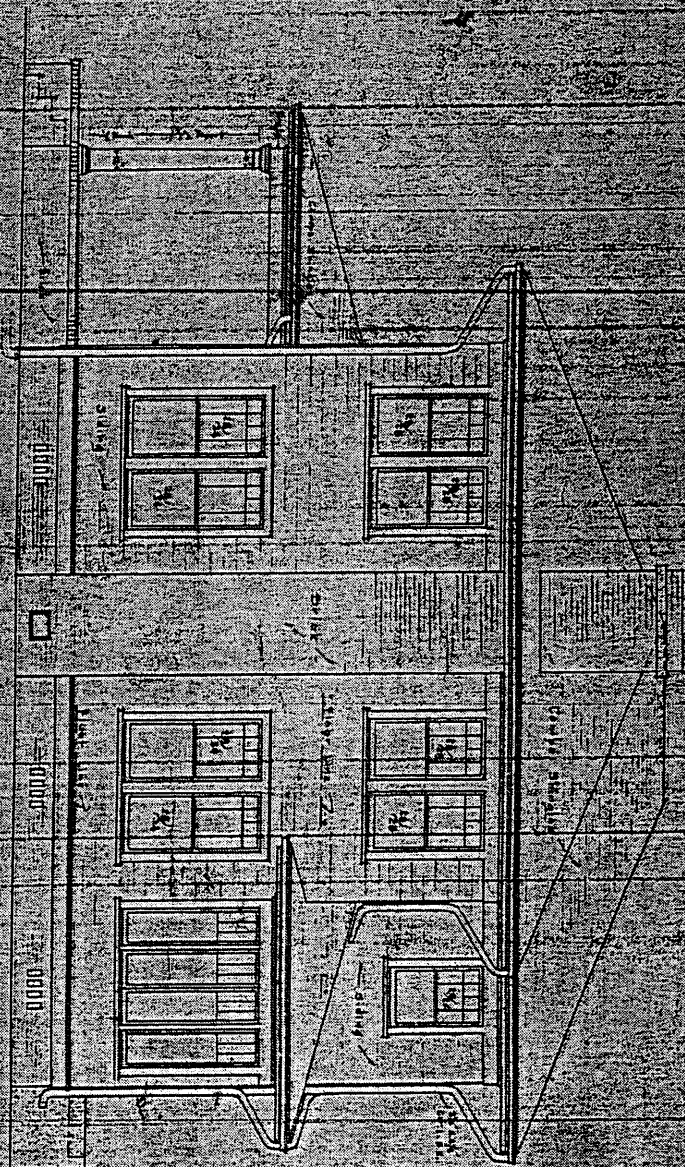


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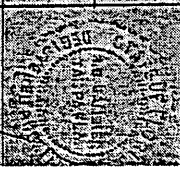


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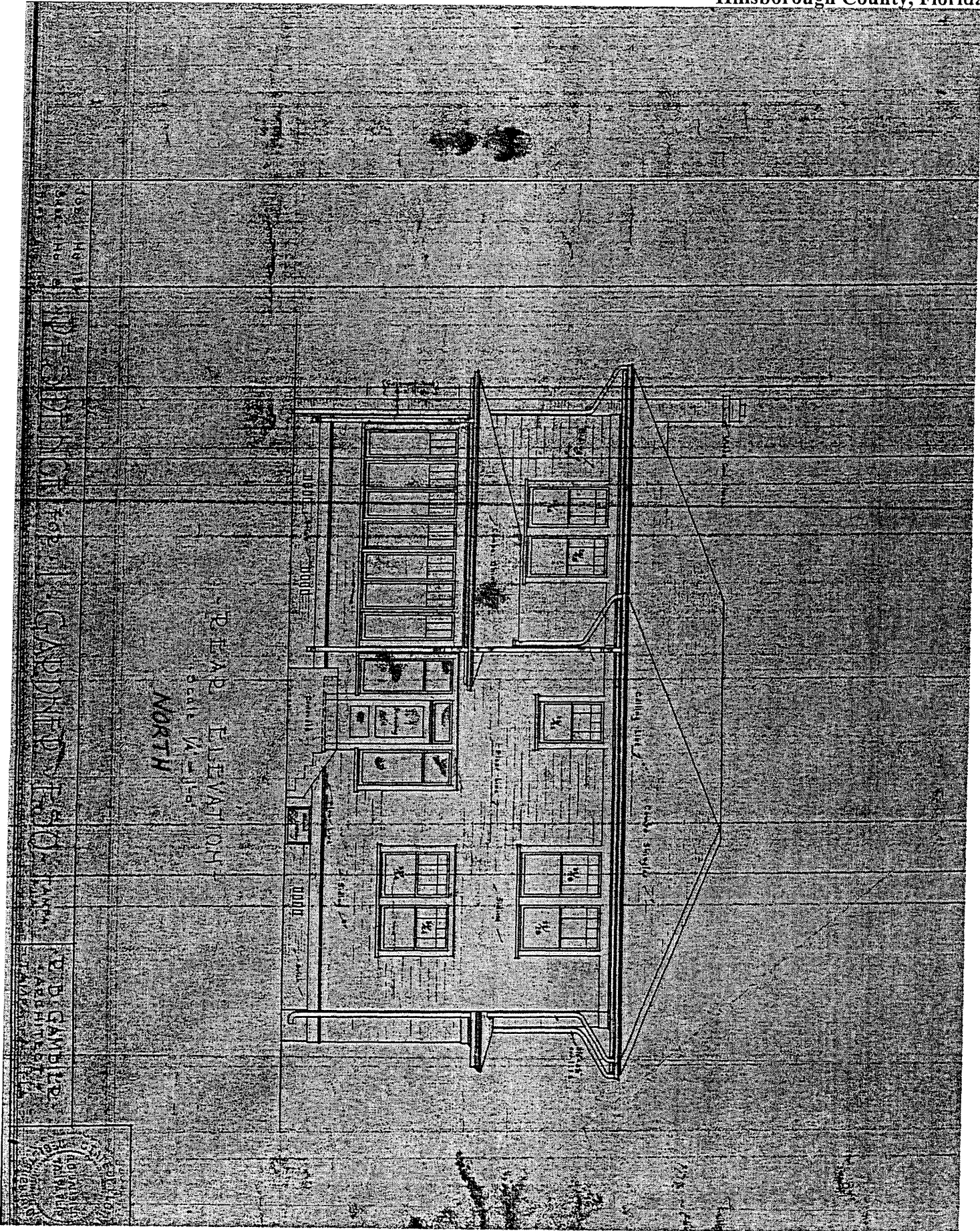
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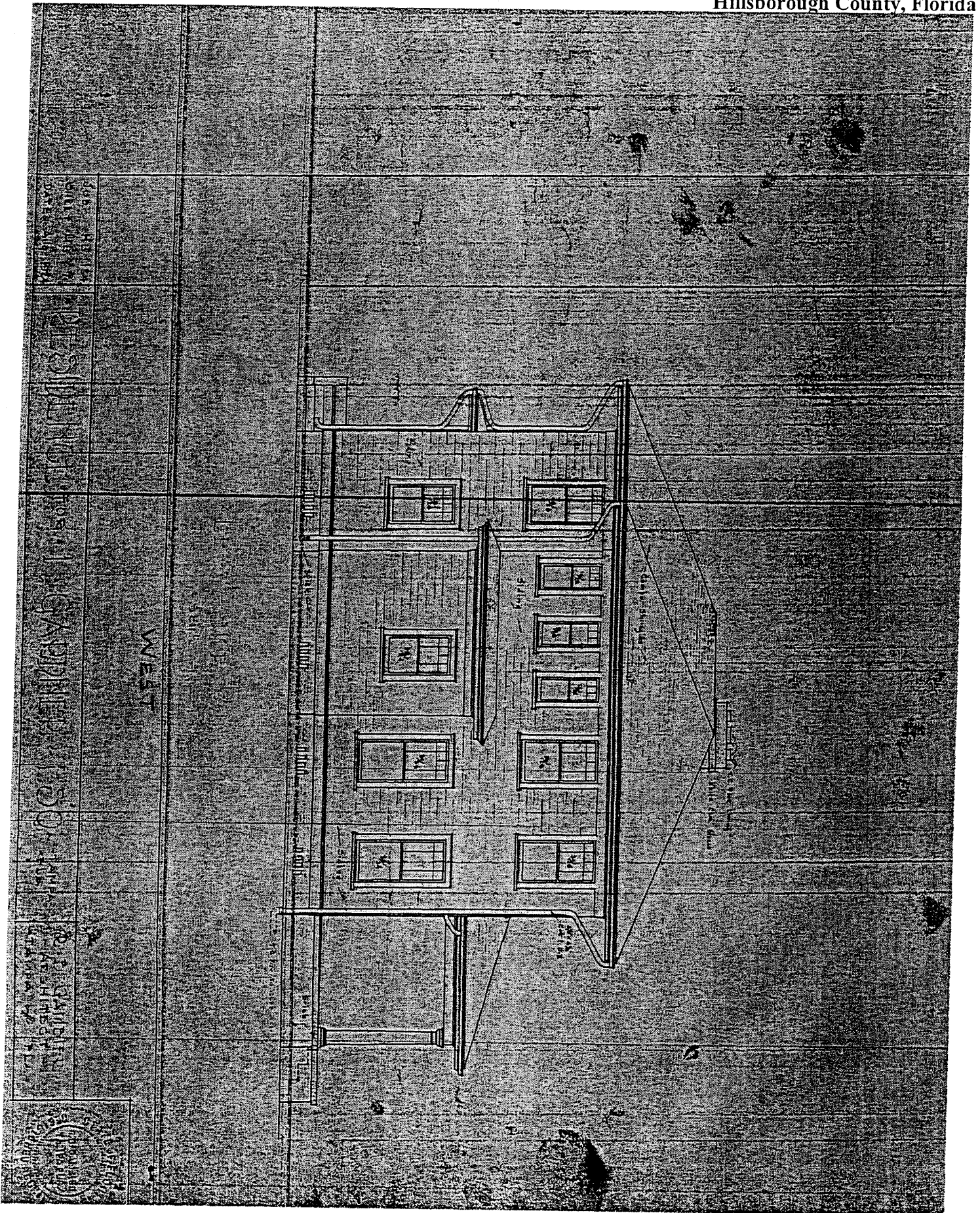
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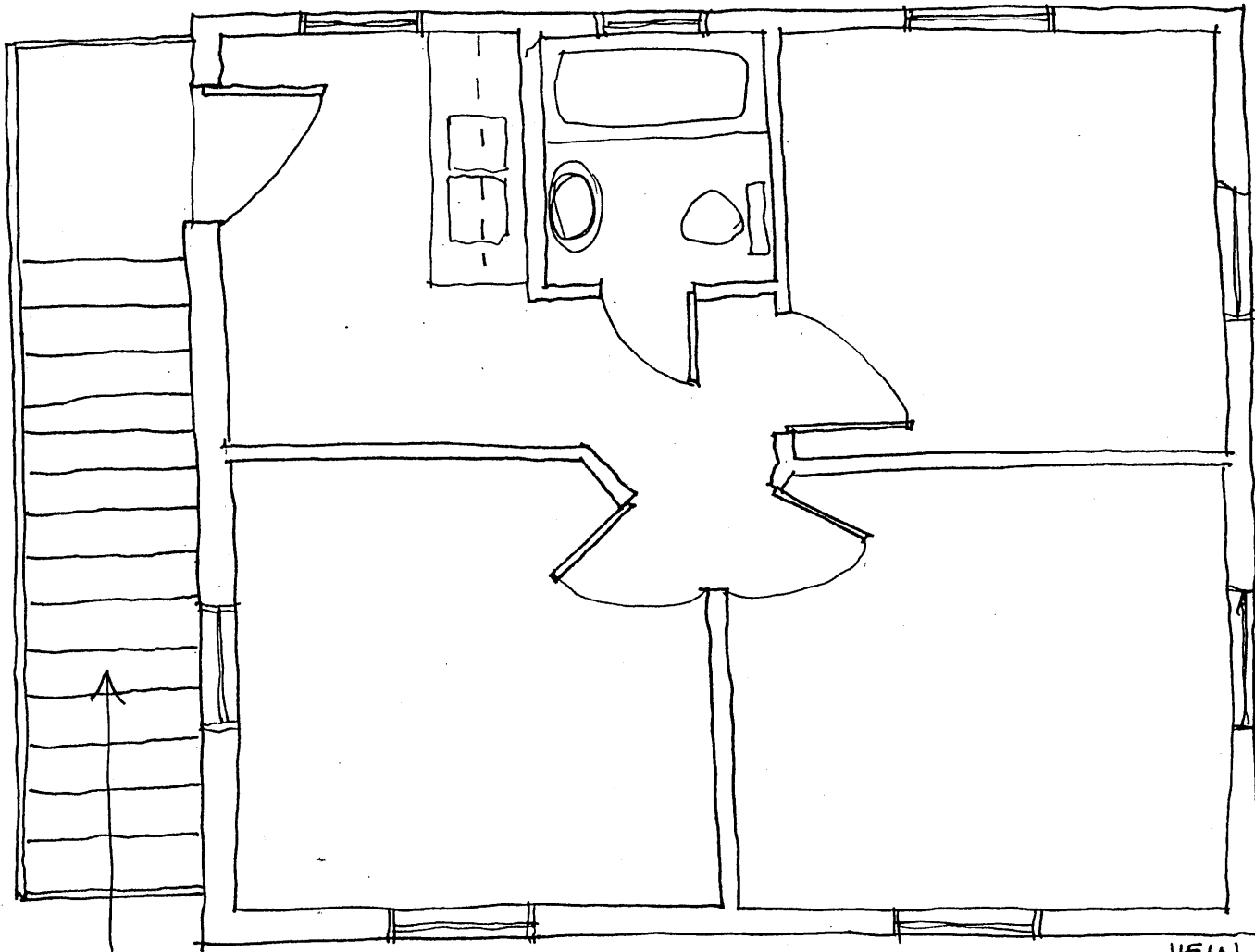


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Hillsborough County, Florida



GARDNER, ISAAC SR., HOUSE
Hillsborough County, Florida





HEIN '03

ISAAC GARDNER SR HOUSE
209 W PALM AV, TAMPA
GARAGE APT
1/4" = 1'0"

