

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

**1. Name**

historic Carlen House

and/or common Carlen House Museum

**2. Location**

street & number 54 S. Carlen Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 1

state Alabama code 01 county Mobile code 097

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mobile County School Board (99 year lease to City of Mobile)

street & number 504 Government Street

city, town Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Alabama

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Probate Division, Mobile County Courthouse

street & number 101 Government Street

city, town Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ state Alabama

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

19th Century Mobile Architecture  
title A Landmark Survey

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1974 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records Mobile County Courthouse

city, town Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ state Alabama

## 7. Description

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

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

Originally built as the center of a small farm on the western outskirts of Mobile, the Carlen House was encompassed by the Murphy High School campus in the 1920s. The surrounding neighborhood is densely populated with structures dating primarily from the 20's and 30's when this section was laid out. The house was restored in 1970 for use as a museum for school children and is in excellent condition. It is very little altered.

It is a 1 1/2 story, braced frame cottage with a gabled roof, five bay facade and porches recessed beneath the roofline on both the front and rear. It rests on brick piers, infilled with lattice. Exterior chimneys are located on both gable ends and have sloped weatherings. The carefully mitered joints of the dovetail and mortise and tenon joints of the framing are evidence of a high level of craftsmanship.

The front elevation shows some slight Greek Revival refinements in the square columns, the entablature and the door frame - the eared architrave framing typical of the Greek Revival. Windows of the facade are simple, rather small 6/6 sash. A simple balustrade with square balusters connects the columns and continues down the flight of wooden steps. The rear elevation has a single central door with a simple transom above and a window to either side of the door. A small dormer is centered in the roof above the door.

The interior is formally arranged with a central hall flanked by a pair of rooms on each side. The two matched front rooms, originally parlors, are larger than the two back rooms. The interior trim consists of simple baseboards, plain moldings, chairrail in front parlors and simple Greek Revival type mantels. A reverse flight of stairs is located in the rear of the hall and narrow winders make a 90° turn before the main run begins.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input 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**      c. 1843                      **Builder/Architect**      unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Architecture: The Carlen House is significant as a very good example of a simple Gulf Coast or Creole Cottage and is one of the few such cottages remaining in the city of Mobile without highly refined detailing. Additionally, the house is noted for its unusually heavy and well-crafted braced framing.

Agriculture: This is one of the few remaining early farmhouses associated with the small produce farms which encircled the city and provided fresh vegetables to its inhabitants.

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In 1842, Michael Carlen bought six acres of good farmland approximately 3 miles from the city of Mobile and probably constructed this house shortly thereafter. Carlen was a small farmer, with a vegetable stall in the market place, who gradually prospered and by 1857 acquired an additional 11 acres. The house and farm remained in the Carlen family until it was sold in 1923. During the first quarter of the 20th-century, the city had expanded in the direction of the Carlen farm, and in 1923, the Carlen family sold the house and land to the Mobile County School Board. Today the house forms a part of the Murphy High School Campus and serves as a city museum. Although a nomination for the school is planned, only the house and a small lot (160' x 61') are included in this nomination.



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date entered JUN 12 1981

Continuation sheet

Item number

10

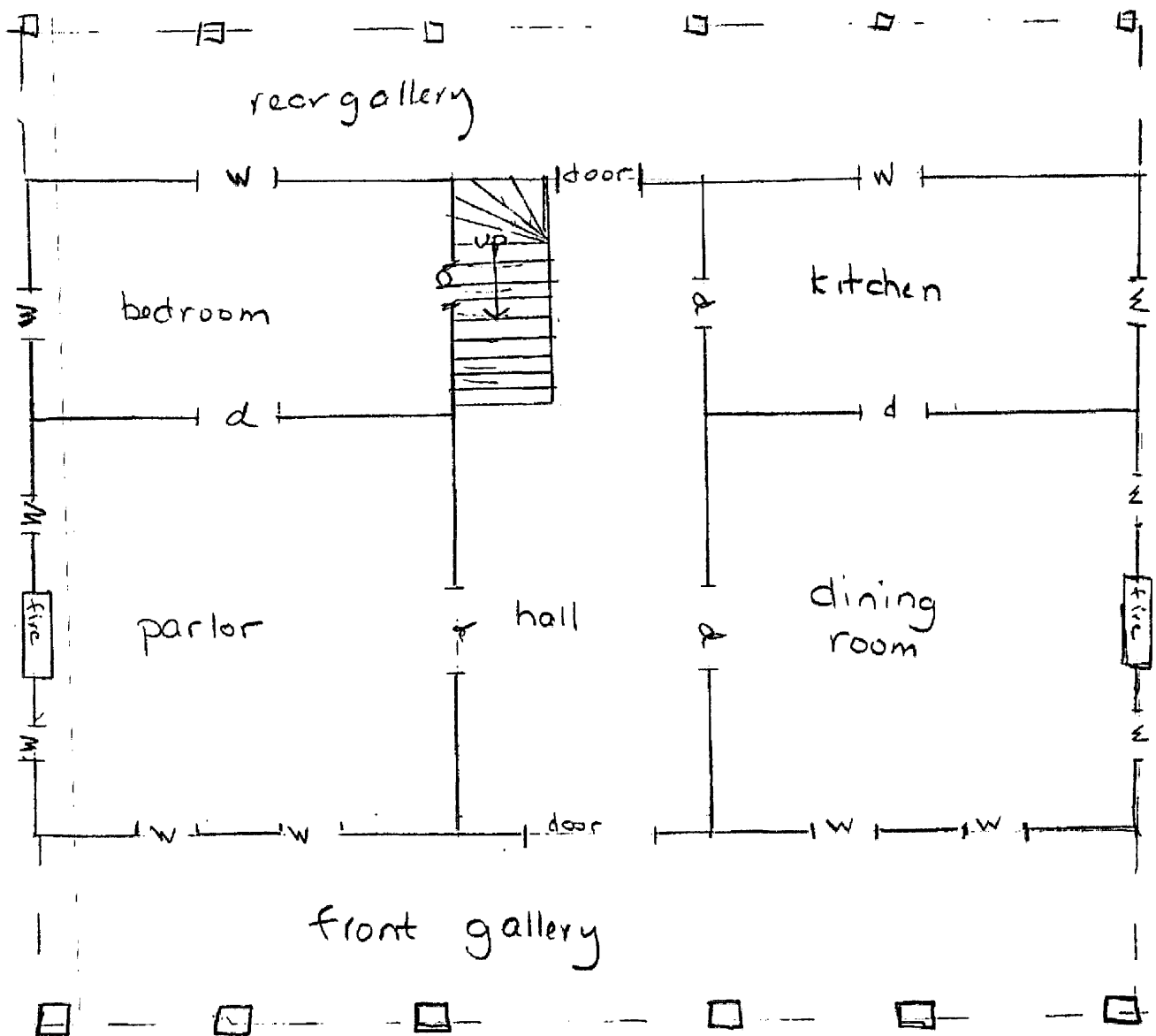
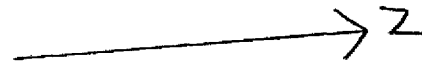
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The building on the campus of Murphy High School in the City and County of Mobile and State of Alabama, commonly known as the Carlen House and the vicinage thereof, described in metes and bounds as follows:

Beginning at the southwest intersection of Carlen Street and High School Drive, run westwardly along the south line of High School Drive a distance of 287.5 feet more or less to the point of beginning of the property herein described, thence continue westwardly along the south line of High School Drive, a distance of 182.0 feet, more or less, thence run southwardly at right angle to the south line of High School Drive, a distance of 56.0 feet, more or less to a point, thence run eastwardly parallel or nearly so to the south line of High School Drive, a distance of 169.5 feet more or less to a point that is 61.5 feet, more or less south of the south line of High School Drive, thence run northwardly a distance of 61.5 feet, more or less to the point of beginning of the property herein described....being portion of Murphy High School campus.

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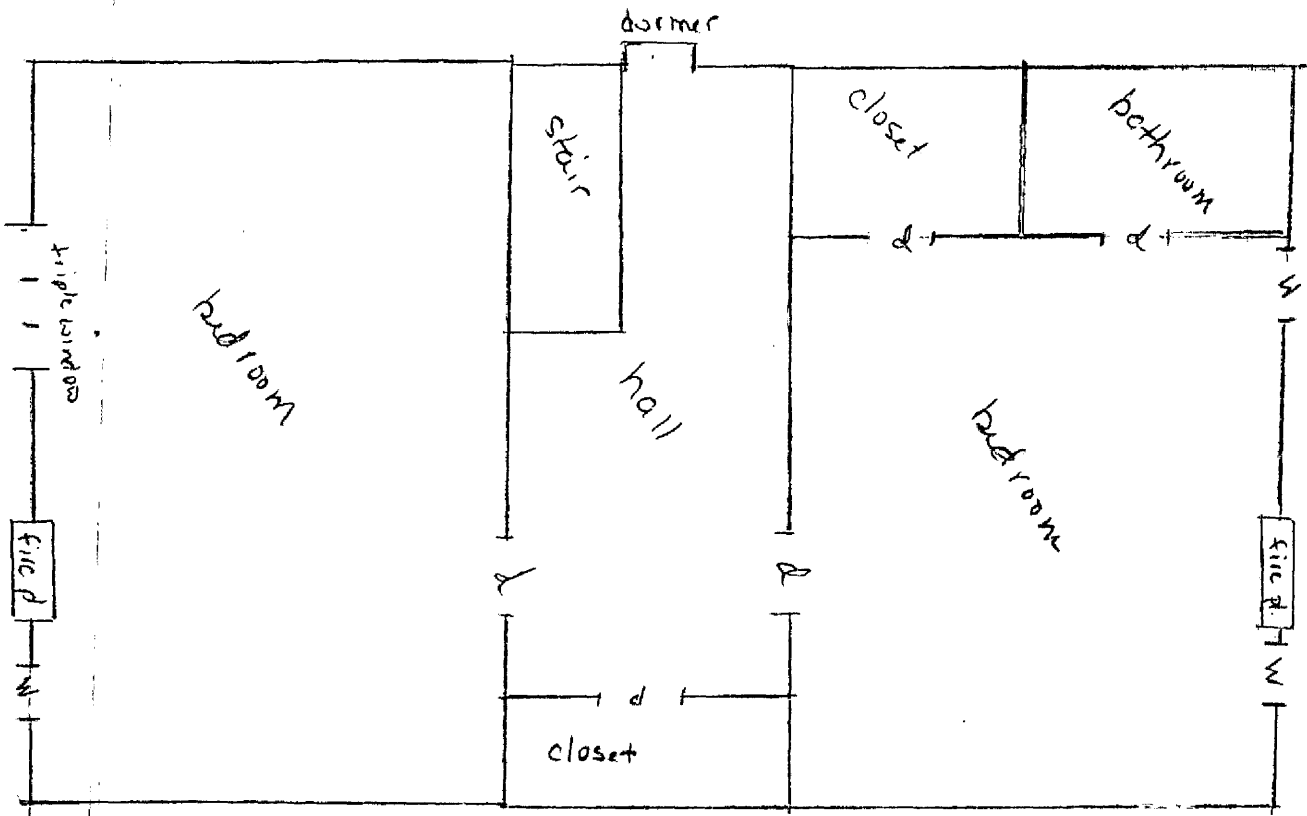
JUN 12 1981



first floor Carlen House, Mobile, AL.

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Second floor  
Carlen House  
Mobile, AL.