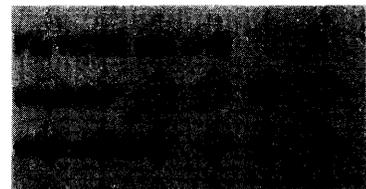


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Kildare  
and/or common McCormick House

**2. Location**

street & number 2005 Kildare Street NA not for publication  
city, town Huntsville NA vicinity of congressional district 5th  
state Alabama code 01 county Madison code 089

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name James F. Reeves  
street & number 2005 Kildare Street  
city, town Huntsville NA vicinity of state Alabama

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Probate Records Office  
street & number Madison County Courthouse  
city, town Huntsville state Alabama

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Huntsville Architectural Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date November 1976  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records City of Huntsville Planning Department  
city, town Huntsville state Alabama

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Kildare is an enormous three-story Queen Anne style house of approximately forty rooms that measures roughly 90 feet across by 70 feet deep. It was constructed in 1886-87 for Michael O'Shaughnessy as his Huntsville residence where he resided part of each year. The only additions consist of a one-story conservatory built on the south side and a porch, entered from the raised basement, that now has been enclosed. The only significant alterations to the interior consist of changing the mantels and some moldings in the ballroom and dining room.

The daylight basement and first floor exterior walls are of ashlar limestone; the second and third stories--except for the circular tower and rectangular bay--are of concrete surfaced with river pebbles and divided into panels by stickwork. The steep roof of irregular outline is covered with patterned slate and broken by dormers. The deep eaves are supported on decorative wooden T-shaped brackets. The massive brick chimneys are paneled on each face and taper to the top. The windows exhibit a great variety in size, shape and placement. Those on the first floor display stained and/or leaded transoms, while the upper sashes on the second story are edged with small square panes and those on the third story have upper sashes composed entirely of small panes. Brickwork is used as quoins and to surround the first story windows, while decorative terra cotta appears on the front porch, in the gable of the rectangular front bay, and above the rear basement service entrance.

A porte cochere, composed of battered ashlar piers and a pyramidal slate roof supported on large wooden brackets, opens onto a one-story entrance porch with flat roof. The south wall of this porch is of limestone surrounding an arched opening set in a terra cotta frame which is decorated with plant motifs and topped by an ornamental hipped roof with finial.

On the first floor interior a stairhall with fireplace runs from the front entry to the dining room on the back of the house, which is entered through a door flanked by leaded glass side and toplights. On the south of the entry hall is a ballroom that extends the full depth of the house and has a circular bay on the west end and a rectangular bay on the east end. Double parlors lie on the other side of the hall. The wing on the northwest contains a library, breakfast room, pantry, and service stairs.

The main stairway leads to a large living hall on the second floor off of which there are five bedrooms. The northwest wing contains additional bedrooms and baths and was designed as the children's wing. A separate stairway leads to the third floor which houses the billiard room, another living hall, a trunk room and additional bedrooms. A full basement contained more rooms including the kitchen (where the original coal-burning cooking stove is still occasionally used), smoking room, wine cellar, and boiler room.

The interior trim of the house is elegant and of high quality materials and workmanship. Decorative elements include leaded and stained glass, glazed art tile firebox surrounds and hearths, paneled wooden wainscot, and elaborate screens of twisted and woven wood. All of the ornamental treatments--except in the ballroom and dining room--are of natural dark woods of heavy scale but refined design, typical of the best Victorian styling. The ballroom and dining room have been redone--probably by the second owner--in white trim of delicate classical derivation.

see continuation sheet -

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Kildare/  
McCormick House ITEM NUMBER 7. PAGE 1

A reporter for the local newspaper described the completed house in 1890:

"Perhaps as fine a home as a gentleman of culture and artistic taste could desire is the home of Major M. J. O'Shaughnessy in the suburbs of Huntsville. The floors, casements, stairways, molding, and wood finishings of the house are of native wood that the Major has picked during the past eight years, and the sawings, dressings, and molding are of his own designs and under his personal supervision. In the forty rooms, each is furnished in exquisite taste in the native Alabama timber of different kind and grain....In the basement are the breakfast rooms, pantry, kitchen, boiler room, smoking room, etc.; solid oak and walnut doors, floors, ceilings, etc. On the first floor are parlors finished in ebony and gold; another room is a symphony in brown. The ceiling decorations of hand painting, the stained glass of special shades and harmony, all unite in the arrangement to add pleasure to all the senses. The upper floor is conveniently arranged in bed rooms, billiard rooms, and observatories.

"The massiveness of the house resembles an ancient castle, and from its windows at any point is presented a pleasing landscape."<sup>1</sup>

Michael O'Shaughnessy originally purchased 71 acres north of Huntsville and erected his house as the center of a large estate. The only outbuilding still extant is a small double caretaker's cottage just north of the house. O'Shaughnessy sold the property in 1900 to Mary Virginia McCormick for \$36,000, and she too only used it as a part-time residence. In 1932 her brother Cyrus McCormick, Jr., subdivided the land and sold the plot containing the house (four acres) for almost \$12,000; that year it was opened briefly as Kildare Hotel. Since then the property has changed hands frequently and has been put to many uses, some fairly disreputable. In 1975 it was bought by the present owner who has been restoring it while residing there and operating it as an antique business. Although many changes were made by various owners, most were of a temporary nature and these have now been corrected.

<sup>1</sup> The Independent, May 2, 1890, p.1

# 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 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates 1886-87 Builder/Architect Uncertain

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

### Industry/Commerce:

Kildare is associated with significant historical events in Huntsville through its first two owners. Its builder Michael O'Shaughnessy was a northern capitalist who, with his brother James, was looking for investment and development situations in the South during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They settled on Huntsville, a town of 5,000 persons that had never revived following the Civil War, where they built and purchased homes and began buying large tracts of land and buildings. It was through the O'Shaughnessy's influence that additional wealthy outsiders were attracted to Huntsville as a town with great development potential. It was this group of northern investors and self-styled "town builders," associated with prominent local businessmen, that provided the money, the connections, and the know-how to package and sell Huntsville as an industrial and resort site. Before the O'Shaughnessys moved on, they were chiefly responsible for the creation of Dallas Manufacturing Company (National Register) and of East Huntsville Addition (a major suburb), the construction of the resort facility called Monte Sano Hotel, the refurbishing of the Huntsville Hotel, and the establishment of a large cotton seed oil plant, which is still in operation. However, many of their colleagues remained in Huntsville and continued to establish or attract additional cotton textile mills and various other smaller industries, which created the economic basis for the town's postbellum recovery.

### SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN:

The second owner of Kildare, Mary Virginia McCormick, was the daughter of Cyrus Hall McCormick of reaper fame. Although she spent only a few months in Huntsville each year, if at all, she was responsible for much philanthropic work in the town. She took a particular interest in the living conditions of the several mill villages that had grown up around the town (as a result of the O'Shaughnessy's initial efforts) and coerced the mill directors into providing better health care and recreation facilities for the operatives by offering matching funds for settlement houses and YMCA's.

### ARCHITECTURE:

Kildare itself is architecturally significant for its imposing scale, the high quality of its materials and workmanship, for being one of the finest examples of Queen Anne style domestic architecture in the state, and for its excellent state of preservation.

Dorothea Snow\*, who grew up in Huntsville\* in the early days\* of the twentieth\* century, reminisced in 1980 about her childhood and wrote:

"Another of our diversions was walking out into the country, now the corner of Oakwood and Meridian, and gazing in awe through the iron fence that surrounded the fabled and fabulous McCormick mansion and the deer that cavorted on its lush green grounds. To us, it was like gazing upon a real life fairyland castle and we never tired of it. We never, however, laid our eyes on its princess, Miss Virginia McCormick, descendant of the agricultural implement magnate Cyrus McCormick." 2

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

NA

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.16

Quadrangle name Huntsville

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UMT References

A 

1	6	5	3	7	9	7	5	3	8	4	5	1	7	5
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

see continuation sheet -

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Bayer, Planner

organization Huntsville Planning Department date 19 March 1982

street & number P. O. Box 308 telephone 205-532-7353

city or town Huntsville state Alabama

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *[Signature]*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date June 11, 1982

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<i>[Signature]</i>	Entered in the National Register date <u>7/15/82</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

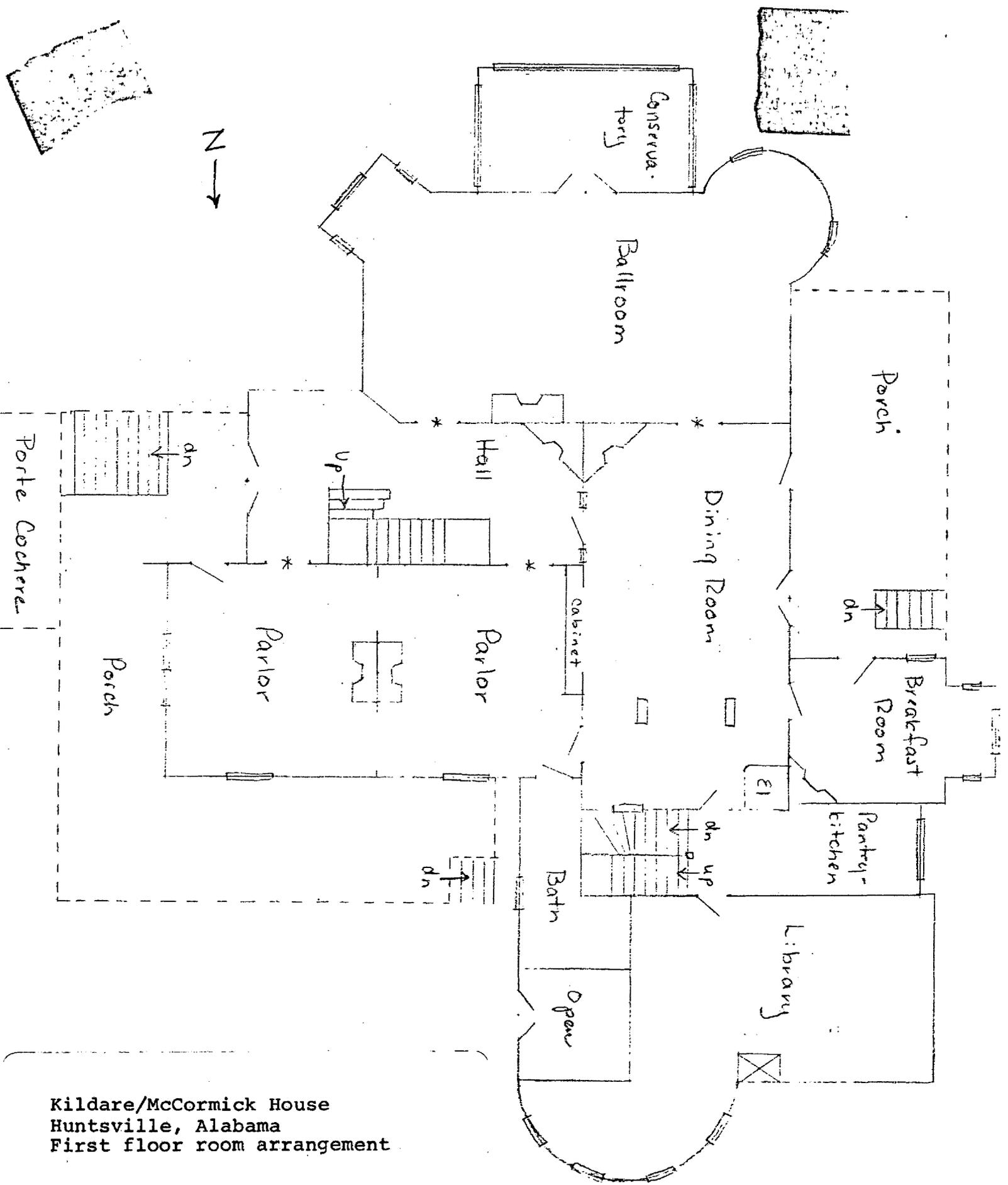
Kildare/

CONTINUATION SHEET McCormick House ITEM NUMBER 10. PAGE 1

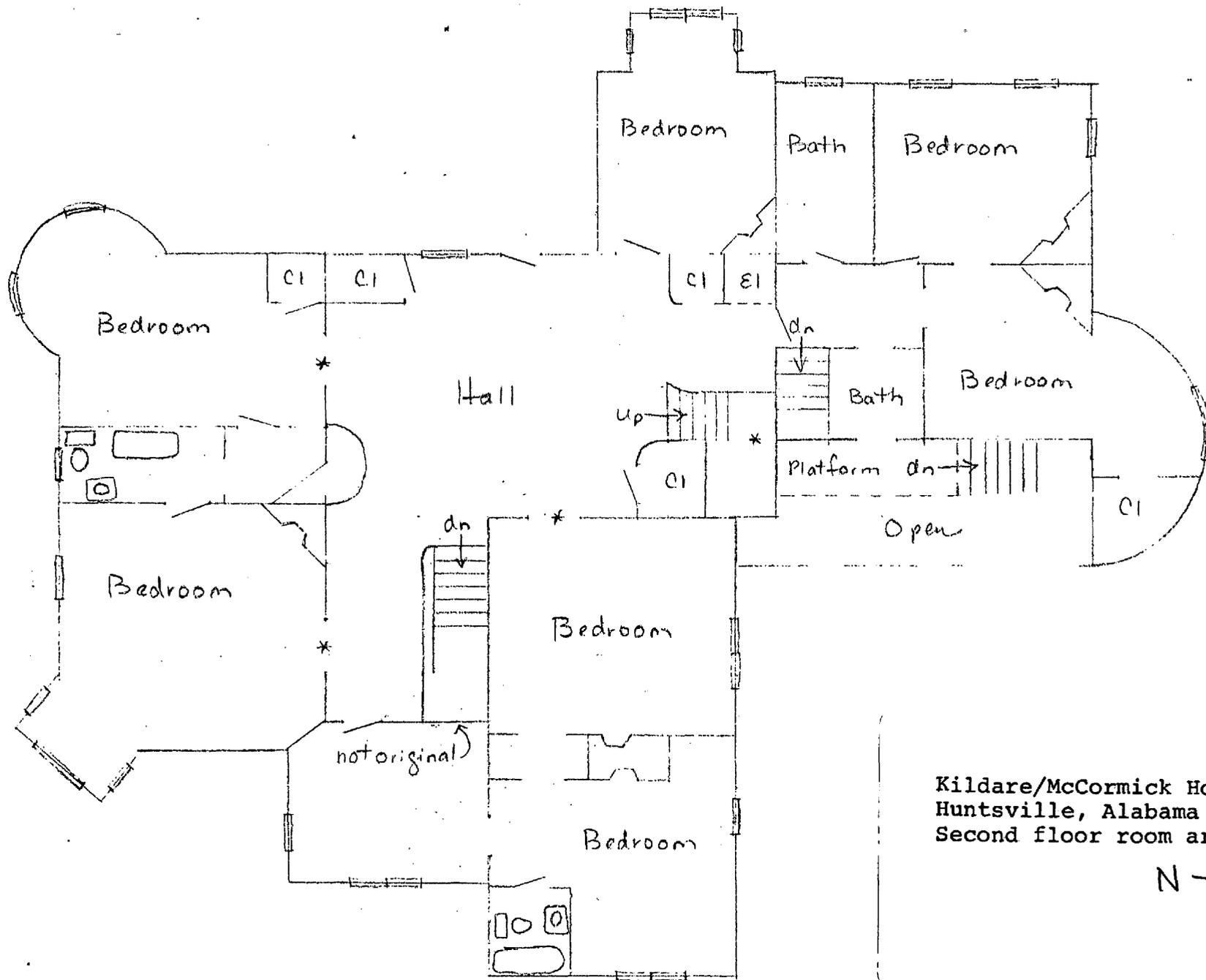
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Begin on the west margin of Kildare Street 150' north of the intersection of Kildare with Oakwood Avenue, thence west 101', thence south 25', thence west 164', thence north 201', thence east 265' to Kildare Street, thence south along Kildare 176' to the point of beginning. This represents the house and lot.

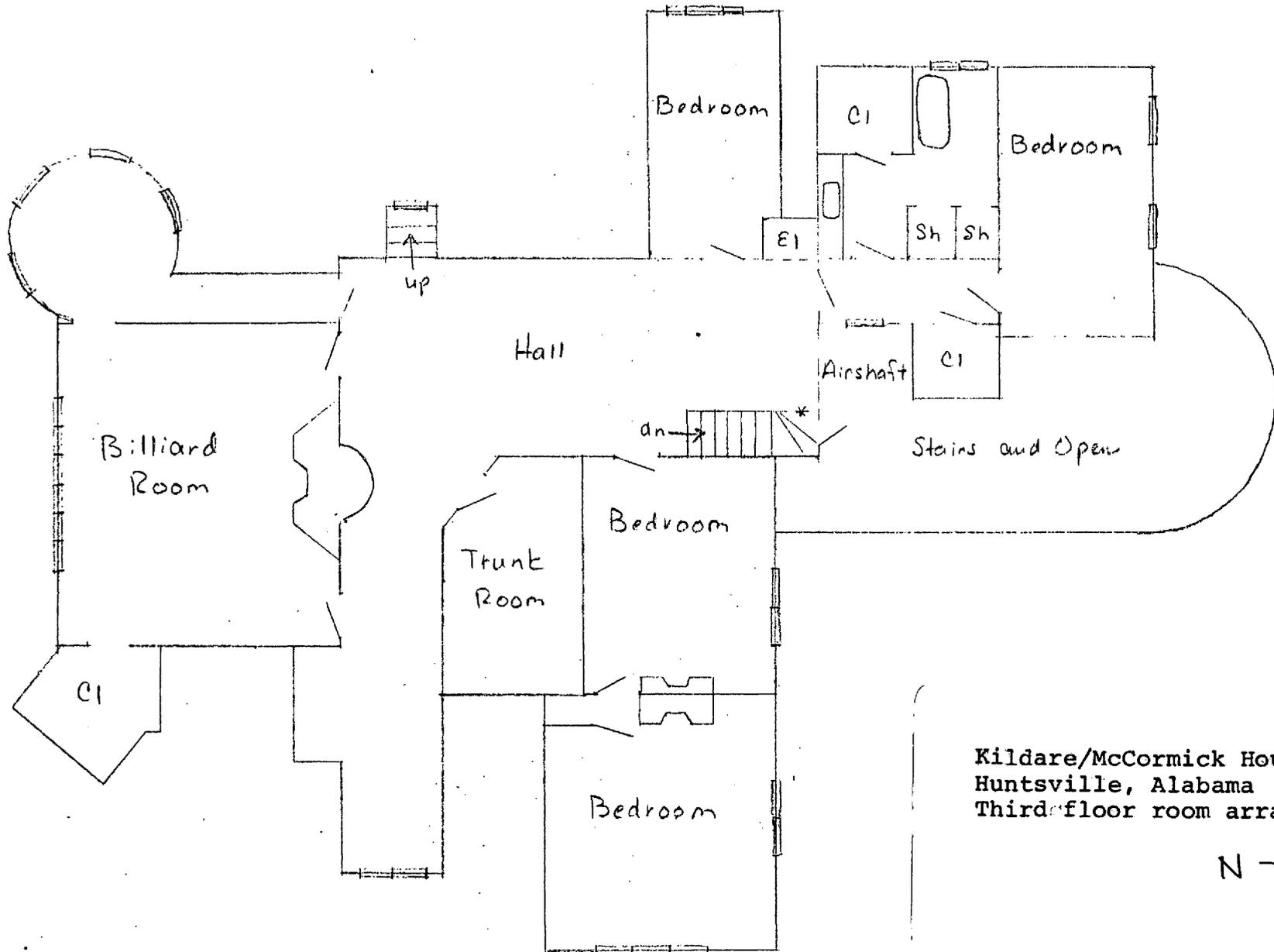


Kildare/McCormick House  
 Huntsville, Alabama  
 First floor room arrangement



Kildare/McCormick House  
 Huntsville, Alabama  
 Second floor room arrangement





Kildare/McCormick House  
 Huntsville, Alabama  
 Third floor room arrangement

N →