

PH050073 DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 12 1977

DATE ENTERED JAN 9 1978

**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

Elley Villa (Aylesford)

AND/OR COMMON

Same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

320 Linden Walk

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

06

STATE

Kentucky

VICINITY OF

CODE

021

COUNTY

Fayette

CODE

067

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Miss Iva Dagley

STREET &amp; NUMBER

320 Linden Walk

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

STATE

Kentucky

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Fayette County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

West Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

STATE

Kentucky

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historical Survey and Plan for Lexington and Fayette County, Kentucky

DATE

1970

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

City-County Planning Commission, 227 North Upper Street

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

STATE

Kentucky

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Elley Villa (or Aylesford) is situated on the eastern side of Linden walk in Lexington. Its location is one-half mile southwest of the City Hall and one-half mile northeast of the University of Kentucky campus. When erected in the early 1850s, this spacious two-story Gothic Revival residence of brick construction was surrounded by an eight-acre estate, but through the years, the site has been reduced to a 165 x 150 feet city lot. John McMurtry (1812-90), a native of Lexington, was the architect involved. However, he obviously borrowed from two designs in A. J. Downing's 1850 The Architecture of Country Houses for the house's plans. The front elevation of Elley Villa more closely follows Design XXXI, "A Villa in the Pointed Style," while the arrangement of rooms is strikingly similar to XXVI, "A Country House in the Pointed Style" (see Appendices). As constructed, this residence, like XXXI, is less heavy than XXVI and its effect is one of airiness.

derived from higher eaves resulting from taller walls, with small gables in the front to right and left of the central pavillion; the subordinate rakings break the horizontal cornice and permit a raised center light to the tripartite windows, accented by a hood-mold [see photo 6]... Instead of the squat  [as in XXVI; taller in XXXI] round or octagonal columns with capitals, on which the porch arches are set in the publication, there are eight-sided piers at Aylesford, with bases, but without capitals [see photo 4], the arches springing gracefully from simple brackets affixed to the straight shafts [see photo 3]. [Following those shown in XXVI] ...the triple chimney-stacks have four sides [see photo 7]... [and the]... verge-boards of the main gables [see photo 5] have been faithfully carved from the original figure [of the same design].<sup>1</sup>

McMurtry also faithfully copied from Design XXVI the verandah entrance with pierced openings above an arch and a flat hood-mold. In addition to the piers, other front elevation deviations from both proposals of the Downing book include the sash windows of the first level, the trefoils in the gables, and the brackets in the smaller gables.

Generally, Elley Villa's floor-plan is much like that of Design XXVI. Clay Lancaster, a noted historian of Kentucky's architecture, has written the following on this matter:

Drawn to the same scale, one cruciform plan could be superimposed upon the other without conspicuous singularities.... Downing stressed the center

<sup>1</sup>Clay Lancaster, "Three Gothic Revival Houses at Lexington," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. VI, (January - June, 1947) p. 20.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

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SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1850-55

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John McMurtry

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Elley Villa, later known as Aylesford, was originally located on the outskirts of downtown Lexington, on an ample and picturesquely landscaped estate that at one time included a race track. Although little is known about the man for whom it was built, William R. Elley, the later ownership includes several prominent local figures and families. The structure also served as a hospital and as a fraternity house for the nearby University of Kentucky. Architecturally, the house is an early, influential example of the adaptation of the Gothic Revival style as promoted by A. J. Downing and others in their pattern-books. The architect, John McMurtry, who had direct experience working with A. J. Davis, Downing's architect colleague, in the construction of another Lexington Gothic house, took many creative liberties in designing and executing Elley Villa, in fact combining two of Downing's designs. The house is also important as transitional between the two great "Castellated" mansions of Lexington and the other, more reasonably scaled, Gothic houses of the Bluegrass area.

History

William R. Elley, of whom practically nothing is known, bought the lot in 1850 and employed John McMurtry to build the house. Elley and his wife, Louise E., "of Washington County, Mississippi," sold the house in 1856 to John L. Barclay for \$10,000.<sup>1</sup>

"Barclay in his will (April, 1860) directed that his 'partner and friend, John B. Tilford,' after settling up the business of Tilford and Barclay, as bankers and merchants, sell 'my residence and purchase another for my wife to suit her when and where she may wish, of less value.' He also directed that sale be made of 'my furniture, horses,

<sup>1</sup> C. Frank Dunn, "Old Houses of Lexington," Vol. I (unpublished), p. 28.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Downing, A. J. The Architecture of Country Houses, New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1850.

Dunn, C. Frank. Old Houses of Lexington. Unpublished, p. 28-29.

(continued)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .55 acre

UTM REFERENCES

690

A	1   6	7   1   9	7   2   0	4, 2   1, 2   8, 1, 0
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C				

B				
ZONE	EASTING			
D				

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard S. DeCamp, Executive Director

W. E. Langsam, K. H. C.

DATE

ORGANIZATION

Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission

Sept. 1, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

187 Market Street

(606) 255-8312

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Lexington

Kentucky

## 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 *Cedric W. Meltzer*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

*July 5 1977*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*1-9-78*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION      KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
ATTEST: *Wm. S. Meltzer* DATE *7-6-77*

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	JUL 12 1977
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DATE ENTERED	JAN 9 1978

Elley Villa (Aylesford)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 2

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Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky  
1971 State  
Kentucky Heritage Commission  
Frankfort, Kentucky

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
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DATE ENTERED JAN 9 1978	

Elley Villa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

motif of the plan: 'the entrance-hall being unoccupied by stairs, becomes a fine apartment, and being connected with a library of equal size, by large sliding doors [at Aylesford these were folding doors, however] the effect of this suite of 44 feet, when thrown into one, will be very agreeable on entering the house. This will be heightened by the position of the large bay-window [see photos 8 and 12] at the end of the library' (Country Houses, p. 306). It was suggested that there might be larger doorways between the dining room and hall and the parlor and hall to further the illusion of spaciousness. At Aylesford, twin parlors were put to the right of the hall, instead of a parlor and bedroom, and wide openings between these, flanking the chimney, gave the desired effect of space to this part of the interior. The conservatory of the Lexington house was not made large enough to balance the kitchen wing in size; but being mostly of glass, visually it could not do this anyway.

The upstairs arrangements of the two houses agree as readily as the downstairs. Each has five bedrooms accessible from a square central 'entry' which expands on the left into a stairhall affording descent or ascent to the principal or attic story. A window on the landing admits light to the irregular hall. The stairway [see photo 15] in all of its parts is typically classic, akin to Ingleside [another McMurtry residence]. Downing had placed a dressing room and bath back of the stairway, corresponding to the pantry and china closet on the ground floor -- one of them, however, also had a door to the rear bedroom and the other had a door to the stair landing; the discrepancy in levels would have made this at least awkward, if not impossible. The bath in McMurtry's house was entered through the dressing room only, which, in turn, was reached from both the chamber and hall. Another dissimilarity is that there is but one closet apiece to the five bedrooms of the house that was built, whereas the plan from the book shows more...<sup>2</sup>

Lancaster summarizes that "there is a plastic feeling about the interior; and the avoidance of strict symmetry inside furnishes a feeling of spaciousness to a house

<sup>2</sup>Lancaster, "Three Gothic Revival Houses," pp. 19-20.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	JUL 12 1977
JAN 9 1978	
DATE ENTERED	

Elley Villa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

of moderate size that is in proper accordance with Downing's claim for a scheme."<sup>3</sup>

Frosted glass etched with floral motifs fill the transom and sidelights of the main entrance (see photo 10), while the bay window at the opposite end of the house (see photo 12) contains bright stained glass like that found at Ingleside, previously mentioned as a residence for which McMurtry was also responsible. Both the ceilings of the hall and library boast a rectangular center-piece of anthemion motifs surrounded by rinceaux and gamopetalous flowers (see photos 10 and 11). Of the grained marble mantels of the first floor, Lancaster calls that of the dining room "quite an original interpretation of the Gothic idiom" (see photo 14).<sup>4</sup>

Despite its numerous uses and owners, this structure has seen relatively little architectural change. The major one in appearance has been the addition of a garage off the front of the conservatory, which necessitated the removal of its bay window. Other first-floor alterations have included replacing the mantel of the rear parlor, the installation of new flooring over most of the original, the conversion of the two pantries into a small kitchen and powder room, and the conversion of the kitchen wing into an apartment which included the addition of a room on its east end. The second floor has seen the installation of later mantels and new flooring, and the bathroom here has been modernized. Two dormers have been placed in the roof at the rear, and a single window has been added under the gable of this side.

The original approach to Elley Villa was at the intersection of Rose and Maxwell Streets (Linden Walk was non-existent at the time). This approach was "in keeping with the idea that a drive should begin at the most distinguishable spot on the boundary and should approach a house at an angle, rather than from the front."<sup>5</sup> In addition, white pines, as advocated by Downing, were duly planted. Only one remains on the property in its reduced size, but others are to be found on neighboring lots.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>Bettye Lee Mastin, "Aylesford House, Now Encircled by Lexington, Designed as Country Villa on Eight Acre Plot," The Lexington Herald-Leader, July 10, 1960, p. 52.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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RECEIVED	JUL 12 1977
DATE ENTERED	JAN 9 1978

Elley Villa (Aylesford)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

carriage and all personal property to my residence, as my wife shall direct.<sup>2</sup>  
Under Barclay's ownership the property was enlarged slightly when in 1859 he purchased a strip of land from the trustees of the Kentucky Trotting Association. The Association's land, which contained their race course, was adjacent to the Elley Villa land.  
(See maps 3 and 4.)

William Cassius Goodloe purchased the residence in 1864 from the Barclay heirs. Goodloe was a member of a prominent Kentucky family and started the practice of law in Lexington the same year he acquired Elley Villa. In 1861 he accompanied his uncle, Cassius Marcellus Clay, to St. Petersburg, Russia, where his uncle was United States Ambassador (see the National Register form for White Hall, the Clay House, near Richmond, Madison County, Kentucky, listed March 11, 1971). Young Goodloe acted as Secretary of Legation for him there until the summer of 1862 when he returned to the United States and joined the Union Army. He was appointed Assistant Adjutant General of Volunteers by President Lincoln. After the war he published the Kentucky Statesman. He was a member of the Kentucky Legislature and later a State Senator. From 1877-1881 he served as minister to Belgium under President Hayes.

In 1870 W. C. Goodloe purchased Loudoun House, which had been designed by New York architect Alexander Jackson Davis in 1850 and constructed by John McMurtry for Francis Key Hunt; and according to the Kentucky Gazette of September 4, 1870, he sold Elley Villa to Colonel W. T. Withers of Jackson, Mississippi, for \$17,500 cash. Withers' name, however, is more closely associated with Fairlawn, a large estate on the Paris Pike which he purchased and moved into in 1875.

From 1875 until 1878 Withers leased the villa to the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, the present operators of St. Joseph Hospital in Lexington. They started their charity hospital in Elley Villa where the main building housed the sisters, their helpers and six patients: five charity, one paying. "A small two-story frame building once quarters for servants was used for Negro patients and some women of disreputable character."<sup>3</sup> (The latter structure no longer exists.)

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Bettye Lee Mastin. "Aylesford House, Now Encircled by Lexington, Designed as Country Villa on Eight Acre Plot," The Lexington Herald-Leader, July 10, 1960, p. 52.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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JUL 12 1977

JAN 9 1978

DATE ENTERED

Elley Villa (Aylesford)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

In 1885 the residence was sold to Oliver Perry Alford who named it "Aylesford." "Under his ownership it was to see its greatest glory," according to the 1938 Leader story. The article stated that the "glamor of the beautiful and expensive estate seems to have been in the day of O. P. Alford's ownership." According to that story, the grounds once included 400 acres and bordered Maxwell Place, now home of the president of the University of Kentucky.

The "glamor" did not last long. In the January 26, 1897, issue of The Lexington Herald it was reported that Alford had "made assignment for the benefit of creditors" of "all his real estate and personal property." Aylesford was evaluated at \$11,000 but there was a \$20,000 first mortgage.

"While Mr. Alford's interests are known to have been affected by the degeneration of the horse industry, his embarrassment will be a surprise," the newspaper stated, adding that Alford's Lexington Stock Farms "occupy the site of the old fairgrounds at the corner of Rose and Maxwell Streets. The tract comprises many acres of land and has very fine improvements including a very excellent trotting track." Alford had purchased the tract from the heirs of Robert Aitcheson Alexander, one-time owner of the great thoroughbred Lexington.<sup>4</sup>

In 1925 "Aylesford" became the home of the Kappa Alpha fraternity at the University of Kentucky, who occupied it until World War II. After being vacant for several years, the house returned to private hands in 1944.

Architecture

Although Lexington was early known as "The Athens of the West" and the image of the surrounding Bluegrass region is usually associated with the white columns of the Greek Revival farm-mansion, that area of Kentucky is in fact also unusually rich in mid-19th-century Gothic Revival architecture, largely residential.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 12 1977
DATE ENTERED	JAN 9 1978

Elley Villa (Aylesford)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 4

"Rococo Gothick" romantic elements, such as "switchline tracery" and attenuated clustered colonnettes flanking entranceways, have recently been seen in some Kentucky Federal architecture by Patrick Snadon in his comprehensive study of Gothic Revival residences in the Bluegrass region.

More explicit early use of Gothic style is found in religious architecture: the precocious St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church near Bardstown of 1815, no doubt inspired by Maximilien Godefroi's St. Mary Seminary Chapel in Baltimore (see the National Register form for St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church and Howard-Flaget House, Nelson County, listed July 12, 1976); at least two large churches, Presbyterian and Episcopal, in Louisville (both demolished), designed by North Carolinian John Stirewalt, a former draftsman with the prestigious New York firm of Ithiel Town and A. J. Davis; Christ Church Episcopal in Lexington, designed by Thomas Lewinski and built in 1864, using castiron as well as masonry elements (see the National Register form approved on October 21, 1976); and at least two cemetery gates designed by John McMurtry: the original entrance to the Lexington Cemetery (the cemetery, including the 1890 gatehouse that replaced McMurtry's, was listed on the Register on July 12, 1976) and a similar surviving crenellated portal in nearby Paris, Bourbon County.

It was McMurtry (1812-1890), a native of Lexington, active as both builder and architect, who was evidently responsible for the introduction and acclimatization of the fully developed residential Gothic Revival forms of Alexander Jackson Davis and his mentor and popularizer, Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-52), to central Kentucky. (It is interesting that Downing was made an honorary member of the Maxwell Springs Fair Association of Lexington in 1850; see also the National Register form for Floral Hall, Fayette County, approved at the State level on June 15, 1976.) McMurtry, as Clay Lancaster and more recently Patrick Snadon have shown, had the benefit not only of the latest pattern books of such romantic propagandists as Downing, but also executed in 1850 a major commission designed "through correspondence" by Davis himself.

Loudoun House (listed on the National Register on February 6, 1973, and currently undergoing partial restoration) was built for wealthy Lexington attorney Francis K. Hunt in a parklike estate north of downtown Lexington. It is a full-scale example of Davis' ambitious "crenellated" Early English (or sometimes "collegiate") Gothic manner.

(continued)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED JAN 9 1978

Elley Villa (Aylesford)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

Not only did Davis supply a series of versions of the elevation and plan of Loudoun, but also several detail studies for features such as the cornice, an oriel, window tracery, mantels, and mirrors, some of which (of the highest quality) were imported directly from New York. Many of these became models for other Gothic commissions in Kentucky, naturally often attributed to McMurtry. McMurtry was solely responsible for the other huge crenellated villa in Lexington, Ingleside, erected in 1855 for Harry Boone Ingels, son-in-law of the founder of the famous Bruen Iron Foundry (later owned by McMurtry); it was probably Ingels who was responsible for the use of oversized castiron pinnacles as well as shaped lintels on the house (demolished in 1965, although the gatehouse still stands).

Elley Villa is the next largest and most elaborate mid-19th-century Gothic Revival residence in central Kentucky, and most securely in the Downing-Davis tradition, although it partakes as much of the "Cottage" as the "Villa," being a combination of Downing's Design XXXI and his Design XXVI from The Architecture of Country Houses (1850). Elley Villa is not towered, crenellated, and irregularly composed like Loudoun and Ingleside, evoking an English medieval castle or even fortress (partially inspired by the romantic historical novels of Sir Walter Scott), but relies for effect on soaring clustered chimneys, lavish wooden bargeboards, oriels and bay windows, and generous verandas or "umbrages." It was these features as well as interior trappings like traceried colored glass windows, octagonal moldings, occasionally crenellated cornices, "Tudor" mantels and mirrors, and sometimes surprisingly open spatial effects and vistas, that formed the distinguishing features of the Gothic Revival in Kentucky, whether superimposed--as was usually the case--on an essentially Greek Revival (or even belated Georgian) symmetrical central-hall plan; or realized in frame rather than brick construction and with primitive, if often charming, "Carpenter's Gothic" transformation of details.

There were a few houses very similar to Elley Villa in scale and authenticity, such as "Hidaway" in Paris and Canehurst (Iconatus) in Mercer County; the latter, based on Downing's Design XXIX, "A Rural Gothic Villa," and burned long ago, was considerably more irregular in composition. There is also a series of only slightly smaller brick houses in Danville which share many of Elley Villa's distinctive features in a variety of presentations (these are also being nominated to the National Register at this time)

(continued)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Elley Villa (Aylesford)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 6

and several elsewhere in the outer Bluegrass. All of them bear a strong family resemblance that may or may not be owing to John McMurtry's direct involvement in their design and construction.

Although both Designs XXVI, "A Country-House in the Pointed Style" (see Appendix I), presumably designed by Downing himself, and XXXI, "A Villa in the Pointed Style" (see Appendix II), by A. J. Davis, from Downing's The Architecture of Country Houses have been discussed in relation to houses in Kentucky by Lancaster and Snadon, it has apparently not hitherto been noticed that the Elley Villa design consists of the superimposition of compositional features of Design XXXI or Design XXVI. The plan, including the horizontal extensions of greenhouse and kitchen wing, is almost identical to XXVI, as is the treatment of the exterior of the first floor. Yet the general proportions of the second story and the overall massing of the roof are much more similar to that of XXXI, with subsidiary gables over three-part stepped windows. On the other hand, the third-story central gable of Elley Villa reverts to the bargeboard of XXVI rather than the parapet of XXXI, although it has the latter's ventilator opening. Thus, the "Country-House" is given the amplitude of a villa upstairs. This is all the more curious because Elley Villa retains the almost secreted staircase of Design XXVI, even though it leads to five huge full-height bedrooms and an extensive attic; presumably the Country-House bedrooms would have had lowered or slanted ceilings in the original. It is the increased height and boxiness, however, that particularly related Elley Villa to the three "barnlike" brick villas in Danville mentioned above; a feature all of them share with most of the other large Gothic houses in the Bluegrass, along with the symmetrical central hall plan and in some cases even Grecian detail, that characterize the earlier and contemporary Georgian, Federal, or Greek Revival house.

Downing's extensive descriptive text for Design XXVI almost serves as a description of Elley Villa, with a few differences, and is only reinforced by several comments relating to Design XXXI as the desired site, "architectural" character, and bolder composition. Both descriptions stress the suitability of these adaptations of foreign (essentially Tudor English) forms to the mid-American life style and climate, particularly those of the Northern States.

The basic difference between Elley Villa and Design XXXI, aside from the plan, is that the house was executed in brick, like even the larger Loudoun and Ingleside.

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DATE ENTERED

JAN 9 1978

Elley Villa (Aylesford)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 7

The more modest Design XXVI, however, allows for construction of "brick afterwards colored," as was actually the case in all three major Lexington houses, and presumably in others elsewhere in Kentucky. The effect preferred was "a pale stone color, nearly white" (p. 187), also described as "cream" colored. The trim, whether of local stone as at Loudoun, of iron at Ingleside, or wood as generally elsewhere, was originally of a somewhat darker hue than the walls.

McMurtry did not, of course, simply combine two designs from Downing's pattern-book. Aside from applying his experience in executing Davis' design at Loudoun, and utilizing features derived directly from Davis' drawings and correspondence there, he made a number of his improvements of his own in the Elley House, both external and internal. And, as Clay Lancaster pointed out in his Back Streets and Pine Trees, The Work of John McMurtry (1957), Downing's books did not include elevations drawn to scale, so that the ingenuity of the builder had to be exercised in making one of Downing's designs a three-dimensional--as well as structural and functional--reality.

For instance, on the exterior McMurtry in general simplified design features. As Lancaster points out, "instead of the squat round or octagonal columns on which the porch arches are set in the publication, there are eight-sided piers at Aylesford, with bases but without capitals, the arches springing gracefully from simple brackets affixed to the straight shafts."

This considerably clarifies the rectangular geometry of the veranda. McMurtry also substituted his typical pointed trefoil for the miniature rose-window in the main gable of Downing's Design XXXI and rounded triangular openings for the heraldic shields in the subsidiary gables, which are bracketted. The chimney-stacks are square rather than octagonal. Although roof-creasing appears on the 1857 view, other textural features of Design XXXI, such as the chevron pattern of the standing-seam metal roof, the "battlements" and crockets along the edge of the roof, and the "Tudor-flower" parapet of the veranda. Nevertheless, the bargeboard (or vergeboard) of the main gable is a careful--and for the Bluegrass unusually three-dimensional--realization of that recommended by Downing for his Design XXVI (Figure 137). McMurtry also built a smaller conservatory--essentially an extended bay window off the front parlor--

(continued)

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Elley Villa (Aylesford)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 8

than Downing's perspective for Design XXVI had shown, yet the one at Elley Villa creates a balanced terminal for the veranda. He also probably conformed to Downing's strictures against the use of shutters.

It is in the interior changes, however, that McMurtry took the most significant liberties. As Lancaster put it, "Inside he closely followed the original design but substituted a second parlor, rather than a proposed bedroom [presumably having gained additional accommodations for sleeping in the raised second floor and perhaps larger attic resulting from Design XXXI], behind the front parlor, connecting the two parlors with wide openings flanking the chimney." The latter feature, which also occurs in at least one of the Danville villas, provides an open insulation of space that is quite "modern" in effect. In the choice of certain details, as Snadon has suggested, McMurtry may also have relied on other pattern-books known to have been in the possession of his friend and presumed mentor, Major Thomas Lewinski. The interesting double-ogee marble in the left parlor evokes some of Batty Langley's "Gothick" designs, just as the elder Pugin's Specimens appears to have been the source of the bosses of the veranda.

Thus, in many respects John McMurtry played an active and creative role in adapting the new fashion to the needs of his patron, in the process providing still further precedents for the development of the Gothic Revival residence in Kentucky.

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Elley Villa (Aylesford)

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ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

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Lancaster, Clay. Ante Bellum Houses of the Bluegrass. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961, pp. 126-131.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Three Gothic Revival Houses at Lexington." Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. VI. (January-June, 1947), p. 20.

Bettye Lee Mastin, "Aylesford House, Now Encircled by Lexington, Designed as Country Villa on Eight Acre Plot." The Lexington Herald-Leader, July 10, 1960, p. 52.

Elley Villa (Aylesford)  
Lexington  
Fayette County  
Kentucky

Appendix I. Design XXVI from A.  
J. Downing, The Architecture of  
Country Houses (New York: D.  
Appleton & Co., 1850; reprinted

by Dover Publications, 1969).

JAN 9 1978

JUL 12 1977

**DESIGN XXVI.—*A Country-House in the Pointed Style.***

A SENSIBLE, solid, unpretending country house, with an air of substantial comfort and refinement, not overpowered by architectural style, but indicating intelligent, domestic life in the country,—such is the character we have endeavored to express in the exterior and interior of this design. The *symmetry* and *proportion* which characterize the exterior express the love of balance, while the solidity of all the ornamental parts denotes the love of the substantial, etc., which belong to the sensible mind.

It will be seen at a glance, by the connoisseur, that though this design is in the domestic Gothic or pointed manner, yet it is no copy of any foreign cottage in this style. On the contrary, every feature is suggested by the country life of

DESIGN XXVI

A COUNTRY HOUSE IN THE POINTED STYLE

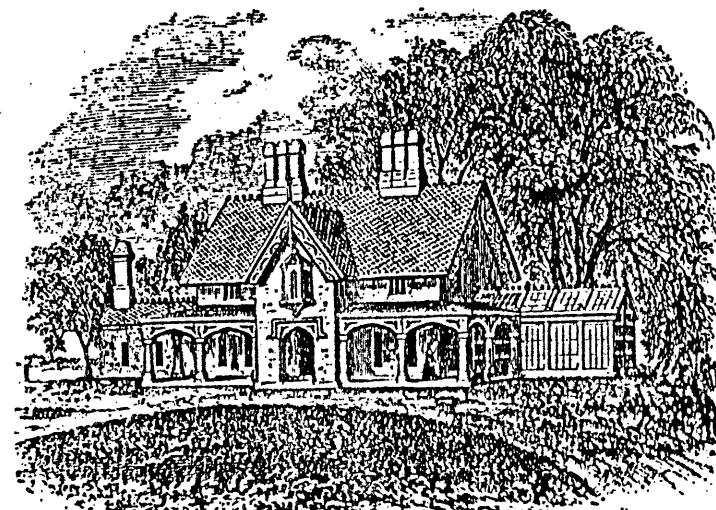


Fig. 133

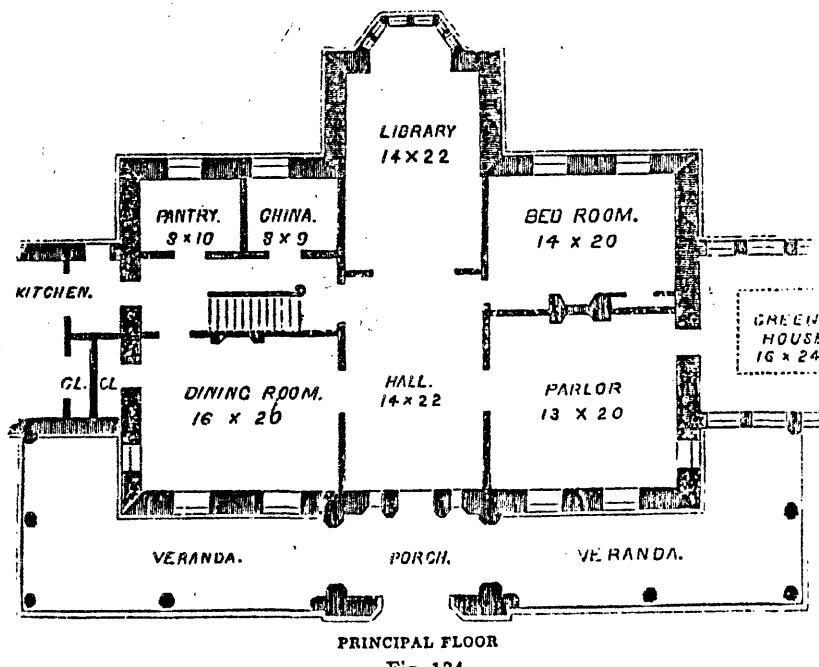


Fig. 134

those who live in residences of this size in the Middle United States. The broad and massive veranda—the full second story, overshadowed by the overhanging eaves—the steep roof, to shed the snow and afford a well-ventilated attic, and the tasteful or convenient appendages of conservatory for plants on one side and kitchen offices on the other,—these are all expressive of the comparatively modest but cultivated tastes and life of substantial country residents in the older parts of the Northern States.

In a cottage or villa of this style in England, the veranda would be useless, for the damp climate, so unlike ours, demands sun and air rather than shelter and shade. The front, therefore, would be filled with broad and large windows, and the roof with small picturesque gables, lighting bed-rooms immediately under the roof. The building would take a more irregular and picturesque form, but would lose the simple, earnest, and local expression which this has, as a country house for the Northern States.

In the Gothic villa abroad, the window is made wholly to court the sunshine. Hence, its exterior is ornamented with tracery, and made beautiful with carving. In this country house, the windows, in accordance with the acquirements of our climate, are plain box-frames, with rising sashes and outside blind shutters, as the latter give us the power of regulating the light and coolness of our apartments in summer more perfectly than any other contrivance. To put shutter-blinds on the outside of windows with Gothic tracery would be quite inappropriate, since they would hide precisely that which the architect labors to render attractive. Hence, in a simple country house in the pointed style, we prefer to adapt the window openings

at once to the climate, by making them plain, and covering them with shutter-blinds. We would, however, take away the ordinary *Venetian* expression of common shutter-blinds, by making the slats much wider and bolder than usual, and staining or painting the entire shutter of a rich brown or dark oak-color.

**ACCOMMODATION.** The arrangement of this house, Fig. 134, suggests the occupancy of a family, in which the intellectual and social nature are equally cultivated, and where there is also a love of beauty, but where all is kept under the dominion of strong common sense. Instead of very large apartments, devoted to any special purpose of display or social enjoyment, the rooms are well apportioned for the enjoyment of all the faculties—with a certain order and symmetry pervading the whole. There is, for example, ample accommodation for the master and mistress of the house without going above the first story, since their bed-room is on the principal floor, where also are placed the kitchen offices, pantry, dining-room, etc.

Though mainly arranged for comfort, this plan is not without elegance. Thus, the entrance-hall being unoccupied by stairs, becomes a fine apartment, and being connected with a library, of equal size, by large sliding doors, the effect of this suite of 44 feet, when thrown into one, will be very agreeable on entering the house. This will be heightened by the position of the large bay-window at the end of the library. By this window the library will be lighted more agreeably than if the walls on each side were pierced with two smaller windows, while the walls themselves, being left entire, an unbroken space is afforded on both sides for books.\*

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\* We have supposed this house to be heated by one of Chilson's excellent furnaces,

If it were desired to add still more to the effect of the rooms on this first floor, it could be easily done by making sliding doors between the hall and the two rooms (parlor and dining-room) on each side of it; these, when thrown open, would connect these three apartments, so that a person standing in the centre of the hall would look down the hall and library, 44 feet, and across the parlor and dining-room, 48 feet. But most families would prefer to connect the hall with these two rooms by doors of the ordinary size, as it would give the rooms the more entirely domestic and quiet expression of every-day life.

The staircase in this house is placed in a side hall or entry, 7 feet wide, which connects with the kitchen, etc.; a very good mode where there is but one staircase in a country house, as, by shutting the door between the main hall and the entry, the stairs are rendered private, or are put out of sight. This entry is lighted by an end window on the second floor.

The green-house communicates directly with the parlor, and is supposed to have a south aspect—though an east or west exposure is found to answer perfectly well in this climate. It will be easily heated by the same furnace which heats the house—a 10 inch hot-air pipe and a large register, running through the basement, and entering by the floor or side of the green-house. There should be a large door at the outer end of the green-house, for taking in the plants, and a cistern beneath it, to collect water from the roof for watering them.

As the other wing, we have the kitchen, with its closets, and back-kitchen or scullery, etc. This may be extended more

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placed in the centre of the basement, under the hall, and have not therefore placed any chimneys in the hall or library.

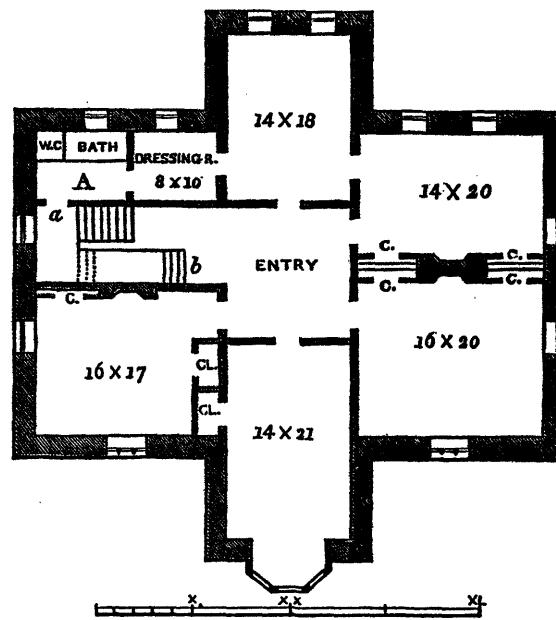
than 24 feet (the length of the green-house), if desirable—and, indeed, to twice that size, if necessary,—with an inclosed kitchen yard, clothes drying-ground, etc., concealed by trees.

The porch of this house, which projects 12 feet, breaks up (see elevation) the otherwise too long horizontal line of the veranda roof—and the novice will bear in mind, that as the spirit of the Gothic or pointed style lies in the prevalence of vertical or upward lines, so all long, unbroken, horizontal lines of roof should be avoided.

This porch, being pierced with arches on each side, opens on a continuous veranda, 10 feet wide and 80 feet long, which affords a fine promenade at all seasons—terminating on one side with the green-house; and there are few greater luxuries in a country house in an American summer, such as it is in this latitude, than such a cool and airy veranda—especially if it looks out upon our fine river or lake scenery.\*

The second floor of this house, Fig. 135, gives five excellent bed-rooms, with closets (marked C). The bed-room over the library, 14 by 18 feet, has attached to it a dressing-room, 8 by 10 feet, which communicates with a bath-room, A, containing a water-closet. This bath-room is also entered by the door *a*, from the landing or the stair, and can therefore be also used by any of the occupants of the second story. The bed-room over the hall is lighted by a fine oriel-window, projecting over the front door. Both this and the bed-room over the library are heated by registers and hot-air pipes from the furnace in the

\* Any one living on the Hudson inevitably gets to look upon river scenery as an indispensable part of country landscape. This will account for the manner in which glimpses of river scenery creep into so many of these sketches of houses—often, as in this design, on the wrong side of the house.

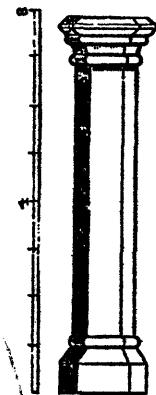


[Fig. 135. Second Floor.]

basement; and if registers are also provided for the other bed-rooms in this story, the expense of building fireplaces may be avoided.

At *b*, in the entry, is a flight of stairs, leading to servants' rooms in the attic.

**CONSTRUCTION.** This design demands solid walls, either of stone, brick afterwards colored, or brick and cement. It could be built as cheaply here of good hard brick (at \$4 to \$5 per 1000), laid up in hollow walls (see page 60), as of wood, and if colored with the durable cement-wash described in page 187, it would have a very satisfactory appearance. The projection of the eaves ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet), sheltering the walls so completely, renders this also one of the most suitable houses for

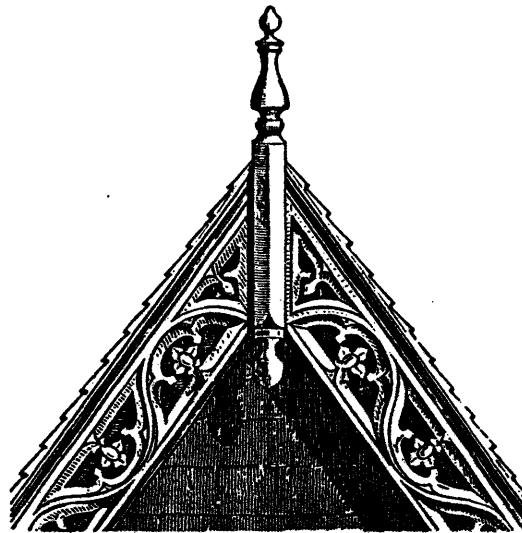


[Fig. 136 Veranda Column.]

outside stucco, as the walls will be preserved from all the perpendicular drip or leakage so injurious to cemented walls.

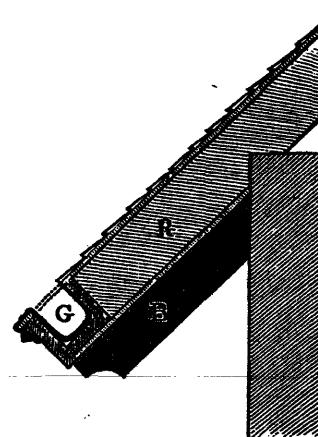
The veranda should be constructed in a heavy and solid manner, either of cut-stone, brick, or of solid wood, painted and sanded, to agree with the walls of the house. The columns should be 16 inches in diameter, and formed in the simple manner represented in the elevation, belonging to the early pointed style, or with the octagonal shafts shown in Fig. 136.

There should be no labels over the windows or doors, except as shown over the front door—but the window frames should have plain, splayed jambs, and should be set back a couple of inches from the outside face of the wall, with outside shutter-blinds made to fit them.



[Fig. 137. Verge-Board.]

Fig. 137 shows part of the verge-board of the gable over the porch,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to a foot. This should be carved out of well-seasoned 3-inch plank.



[Fig. 138. Gutter in Projecting Eaves.]

lined with copper, and B, the rafter bracket.

The height of the rooms in the first story is 13 feet, and that in the second story 9 feet. The partitions are 8-inch brick walls, and the floors are all deafened. If built with hollow walls, the house will need no furring, and thus, if the roof is tile or slate, will be in a great measure fire-proof—that is, if a fire breaks out in one apartment, it will not easily spread to another, as there are no wooden partitions and no hollow furring to extend the combustion rapidly from one part of the building to another.

*Estimate.* The cost of this house, finished in a simple and appropriate manner, would be between \$6000 and \$7000.

Elley Villa (Aylesford)

Lexington

Fayette County

Kentucky

JUL 12 1977

Appendix II. Design XXXI from  
A. J. Downing, The Architecture  
of Country Houses (New York:  
D. Appleton and Co., 1850;

reprinted by Dover Publications,  
1969).

JAN 9 1978

DESIGN XXXI.—*A Villa in the Pointed Style.*

This design, which is an excellent example of the adaptation of the latest or perpendicular Gothic to the wants of our villa life, we owe to the kindness of Alexander J. Davis, Esq., of New York, whose works are so well known in all parts of the country as to require no commendation at our hands.

The elevation shown in Design XXXI. unites, in no ordinary degree, symmetry and fine proportion with an expression of dignity and elegance. The greater height to which the roof of

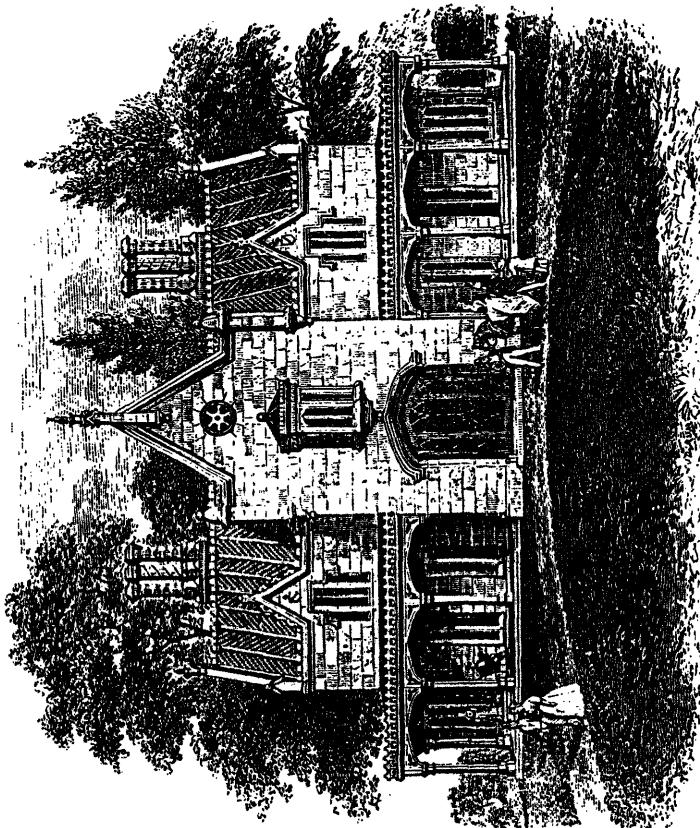
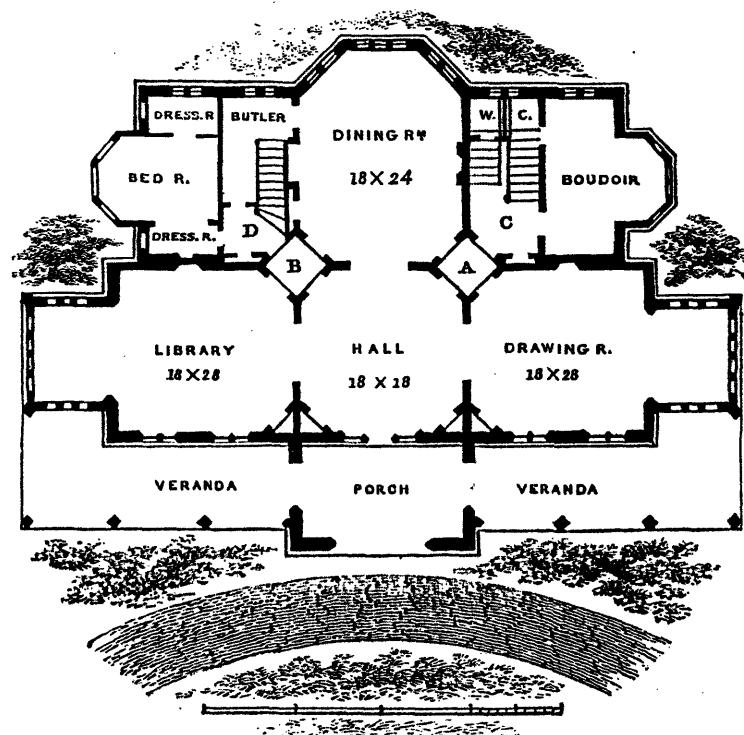


FIG. 160

the central part of the building is carried, gives boldness and picturesqueness to the design, which would appear more fully in a perspective view than in an elevation.

The exterior is strongly marked in style, and is therefore likely to please those who value accurate and elaborate artistic



[Fig. 161. Principal Floor.]

effect. Thus, the cornice is decorated with battlements (imperfectly shown in the engraving), the small gables with crockets, and the parapet of the veranda with the Tudor-flower.

In this veranda, and in the arrangement of the principal

floor, the architect has wisely departed from all foreign examples, and has adapted the style to our climate, which requires shade and abundant ventilation, rather than apartments seeking to catch every ray of sun by their wide windows and externally uncovered walls.

A villa like this should have no common-place, contracted, or mean site. It should stand on a commanding locality, backed by fine wood, and overlooking a fine reach of picturesque but cultivated landscape. We say cultivated—for the highly architectural character of the exterior would be in better keeping with well-kept park or pleasure-ground scenery than with wild and rude landscape.

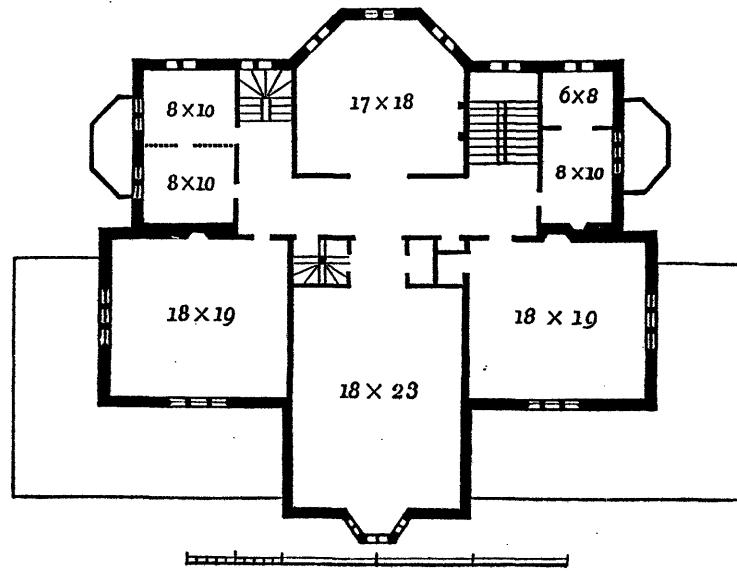
**ACCOMMODATION.** The interior of this villa, looking at the plan of the principal floor, Fig. 161, is not less remarkable for elegance of effect than the exterior. Indeed, standing in the middle of the hall, almost the whole of this floor may be seen at a glance, by throwing open the large sliding doors which connect it with the three principal apartments—an arrangement as agreeable and satisfactory to those who entertain much and are fond of society in their country homes, as it would be displeasing and unsatisfactory to those who prefer a retired and quiet life.

No one, however, can deny that a spacious and striking effect is produced by the arrangement of the rooms. The large and deep bays at the end of the library and drawing-room would, perhaps, give too powerful a light, were it not that the front windows are wholly, and the bays in part, shaded by the veranda.

The little spaces, A, B, between the rooms, are small passages, serving as private communications from one apart-

ment to the other. They should be finished with arched openings or doorways, which may be hung with heavy curtains instead of doors, and would have a very pretty effect.

In the dining-room there is a recess opposite the fireplace, for the sideboard. D, is the passage for the back stair, behind which is the butler's pantry. C, is the principal staircase. Adjoining this is a boudoir. A water-closet is placed in the space at the rear of the stairs, marked W. C.



[Fig. 162. Second Floor.]

The small bed-room on the left of D has two dressing-rooms attached to it; the fireplace being placed in the dressing-room instead of the bed-room, which is by far the better place for it—since it leaves the air of the bed-room cool and fresh, and the servant who lights the fire in the morning is not obliged to enter the bed-room.

The kitchen and its offices are all placed in the basement story of this villa—a mode which, perhaps, adds to its elegance and economy, but detracts from its comfort and convenience.

The second-story arrangement, Fig. 162, is shown in the annexed plan.

There is space for four servants' rooms in the attic.

**CONSTRUCTION.** This villa would have the best effect, if built of the light-colored sand-stone of New Jersey. Next to this, we should prefer brick, with sand-stone dressings, and next to this, brick and stucco. The veranda and oriel window over

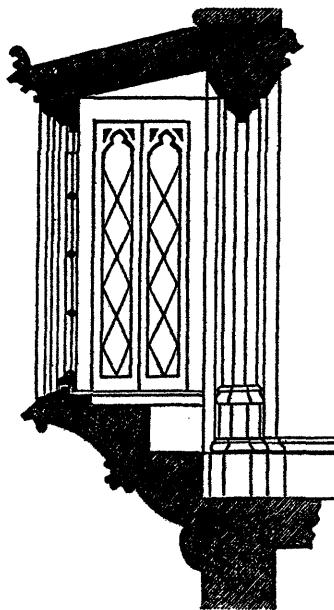
the front door may be constructed of wood, colored, to harmonize with the walls. The roof may be covered with zinc, laid on a ribbed sheathing, without soldering, so as to allow it to expand and contract without detriment.

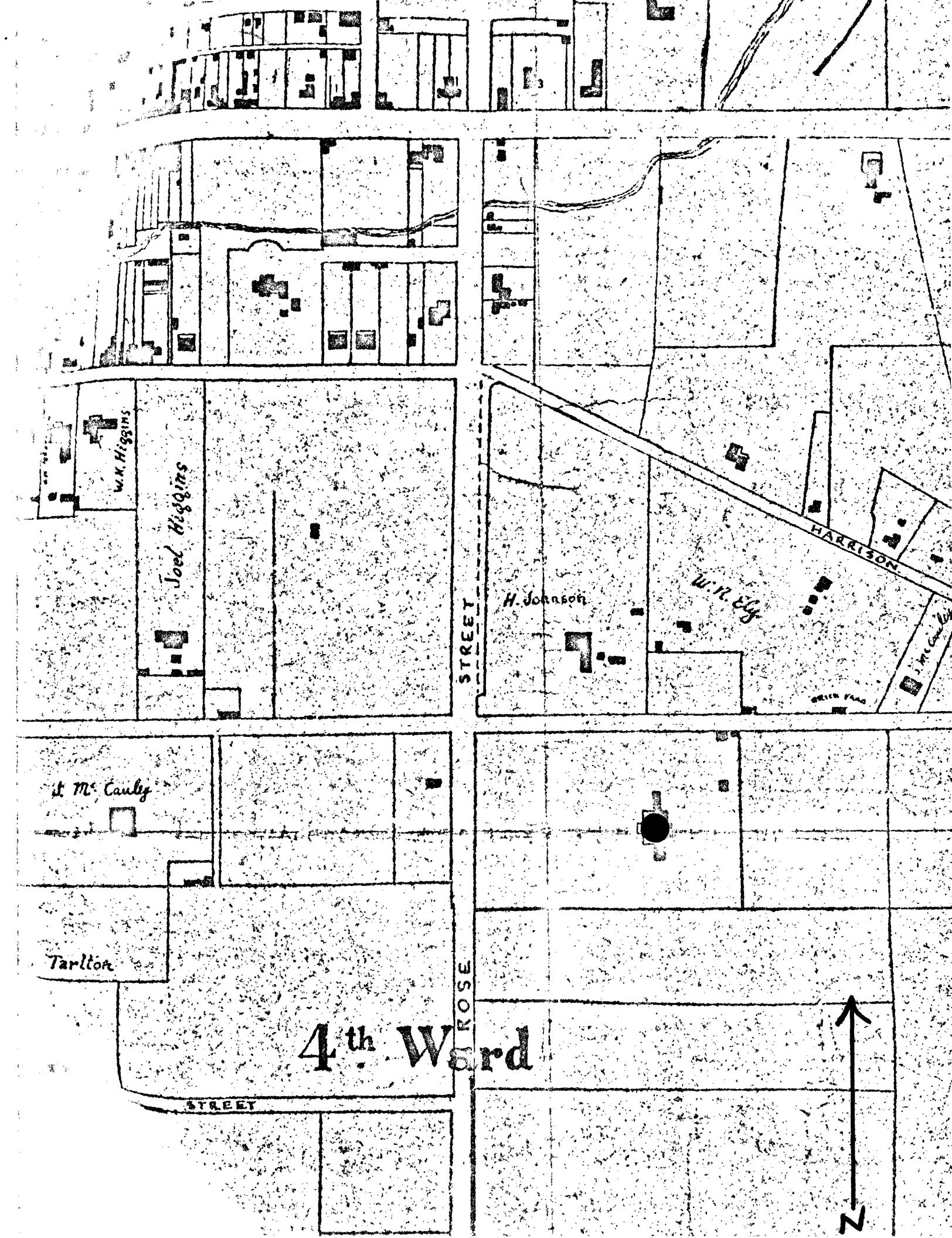
Fig. 163 is a section of the oriel window over the front door.

To build this design satisfactorily, working drawings would, of course, be required from the architect for all its most important details.

[Fig. 163.]

**Estimate.** The cost of this villa, on the Hudson, built of brick, with red sand-stone dressings, and finished throughout in a consistent manner, would be about \$10,000.





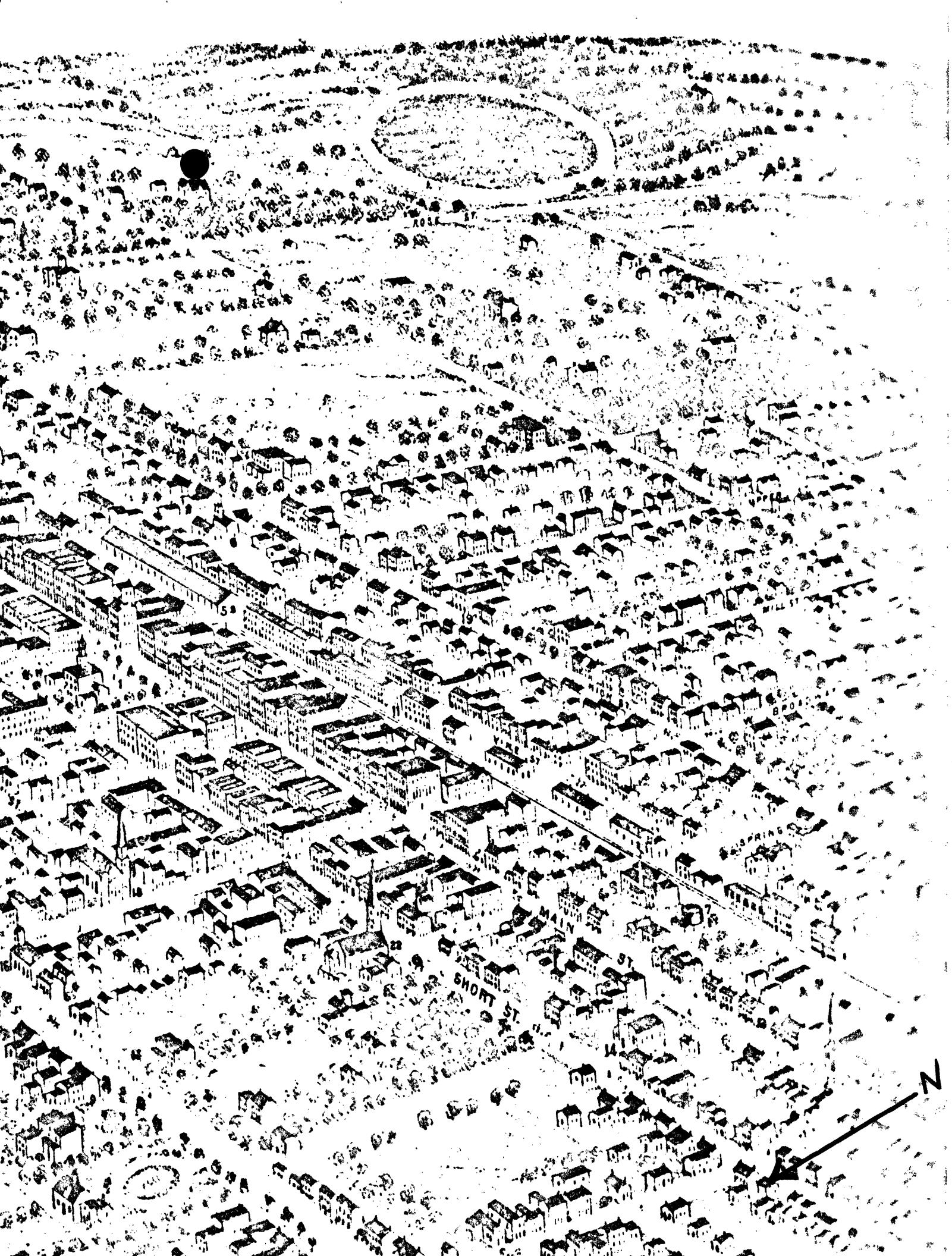
Elley Villa (Aylesford)  
Lexington  
Fayette County  
Kentucky

JUL 12 1977

JAN 9 1978 Map 2.

Hart and Mapother City of  
Lexington, Fayette County, Ky.  
Map, Lexington-Fayette County  
Historic Commission, 1855.

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

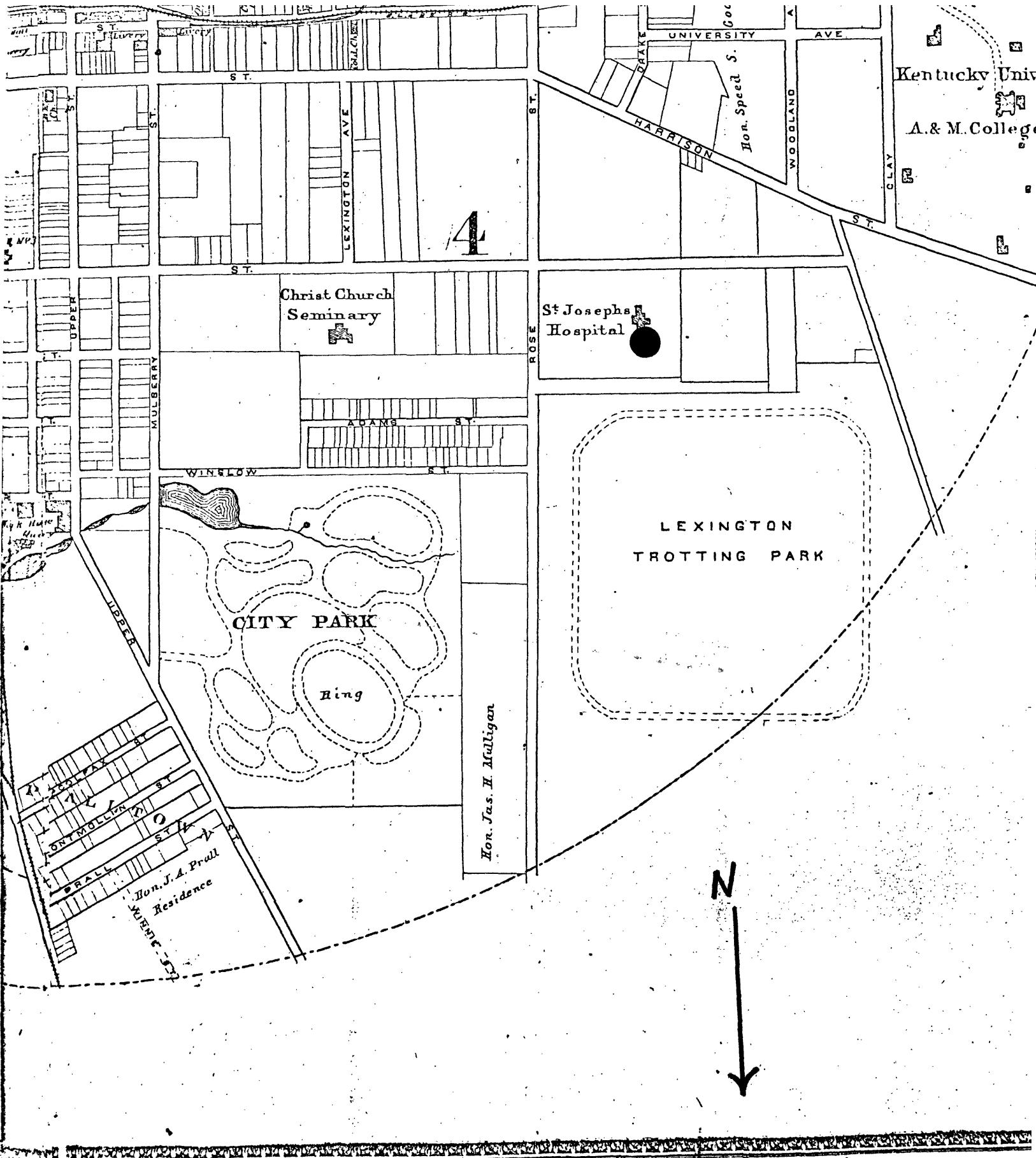


Elley Villa (Aylesford)  
Lexington JUL 12 1977  
Fayette County  
Kentucky Map 3.

Birds Eye View of the City of  
Lexington, Lexington-Fayette Co.  
Historic Commission, 1871.

JAN 9 1978

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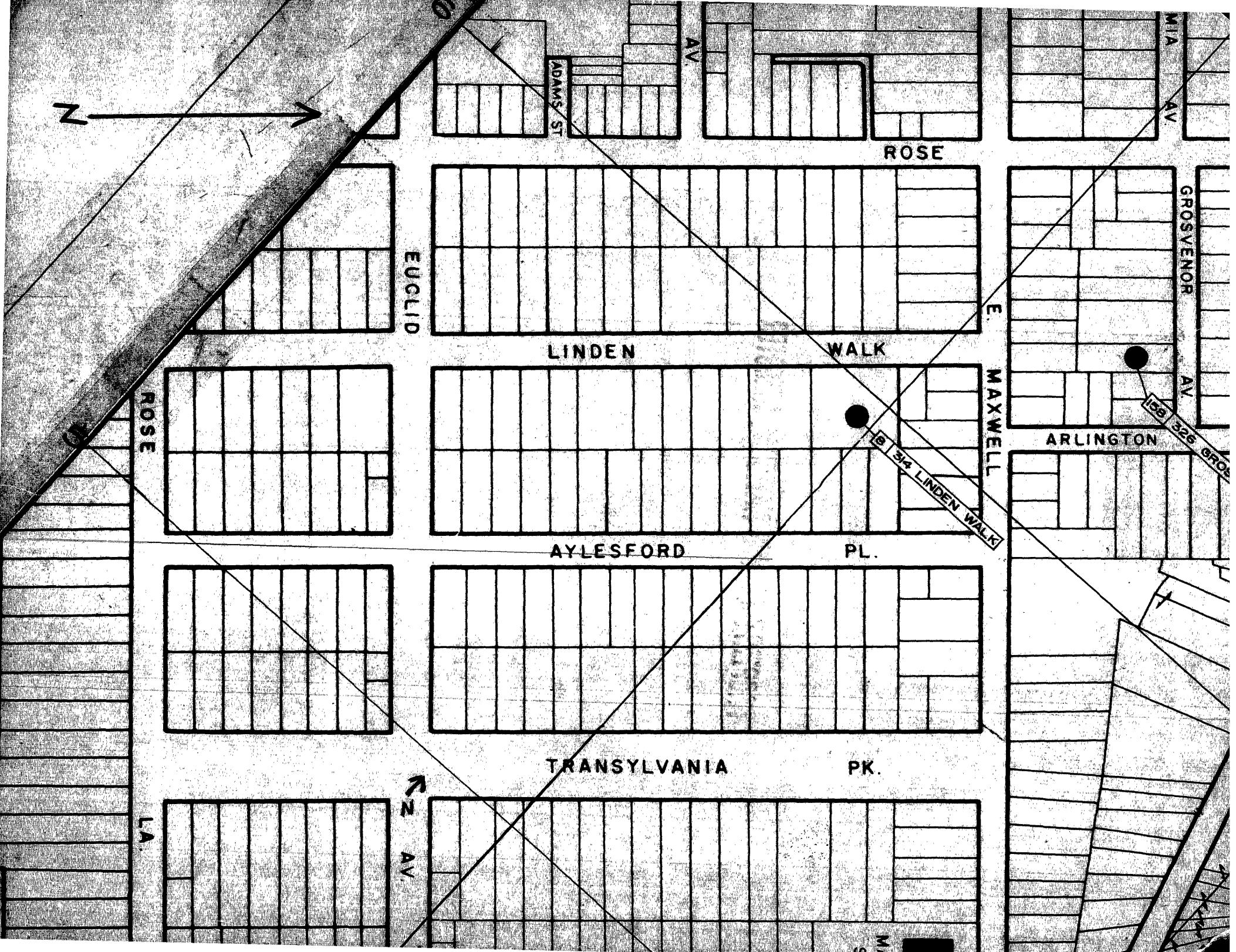


Elley Villa (Aylesford)  
Lexington  
Fayette County      JAN 9 1978  
Kentucky                  Map 4.

Atlas of Bourbon, Clark, Fayette,  
Jessamine and Woodford Counties,  
Kentucky. D. G. Beers and Co.,  
Fayette County Public Library.

1" = 425'  
1877                    JUL 12 1977

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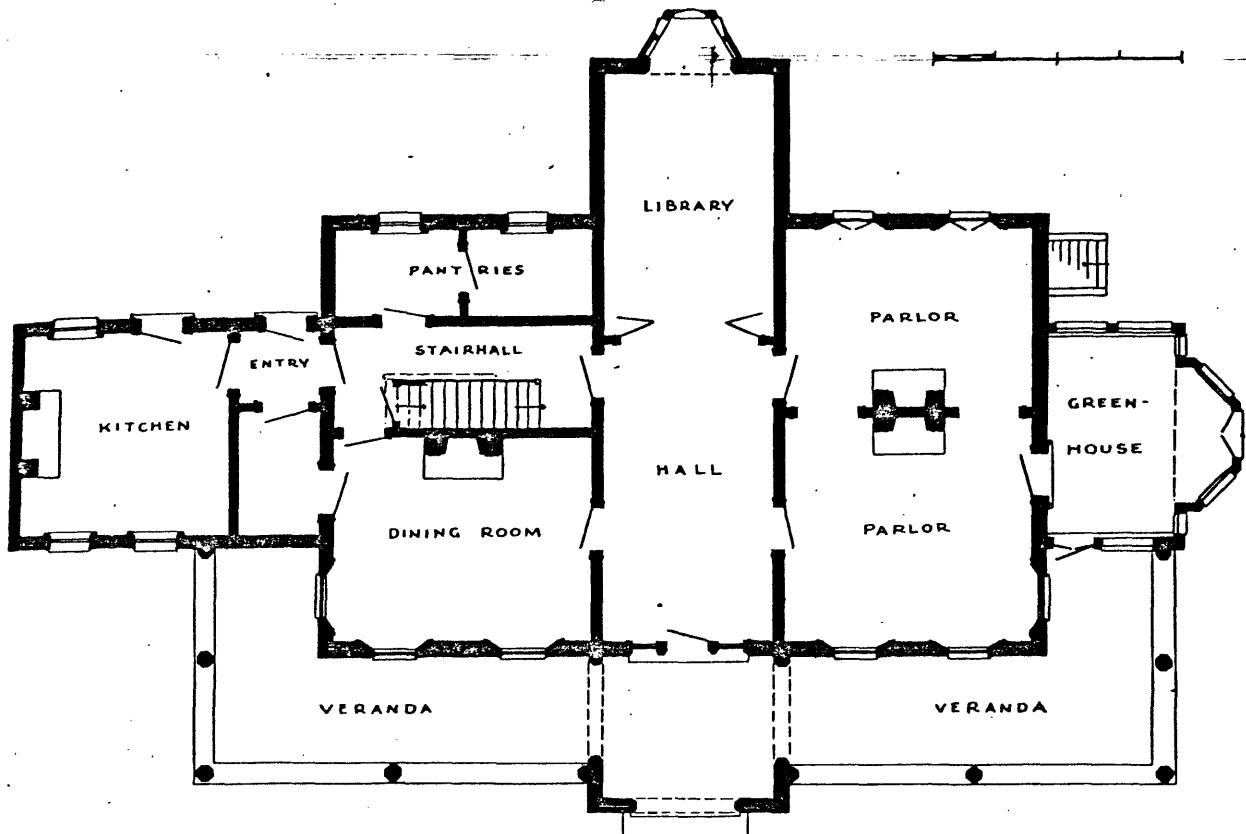


Elley Villa (Aylesford)  
Lexington  
Fayette County      JUL 12 1977  
Kentucky

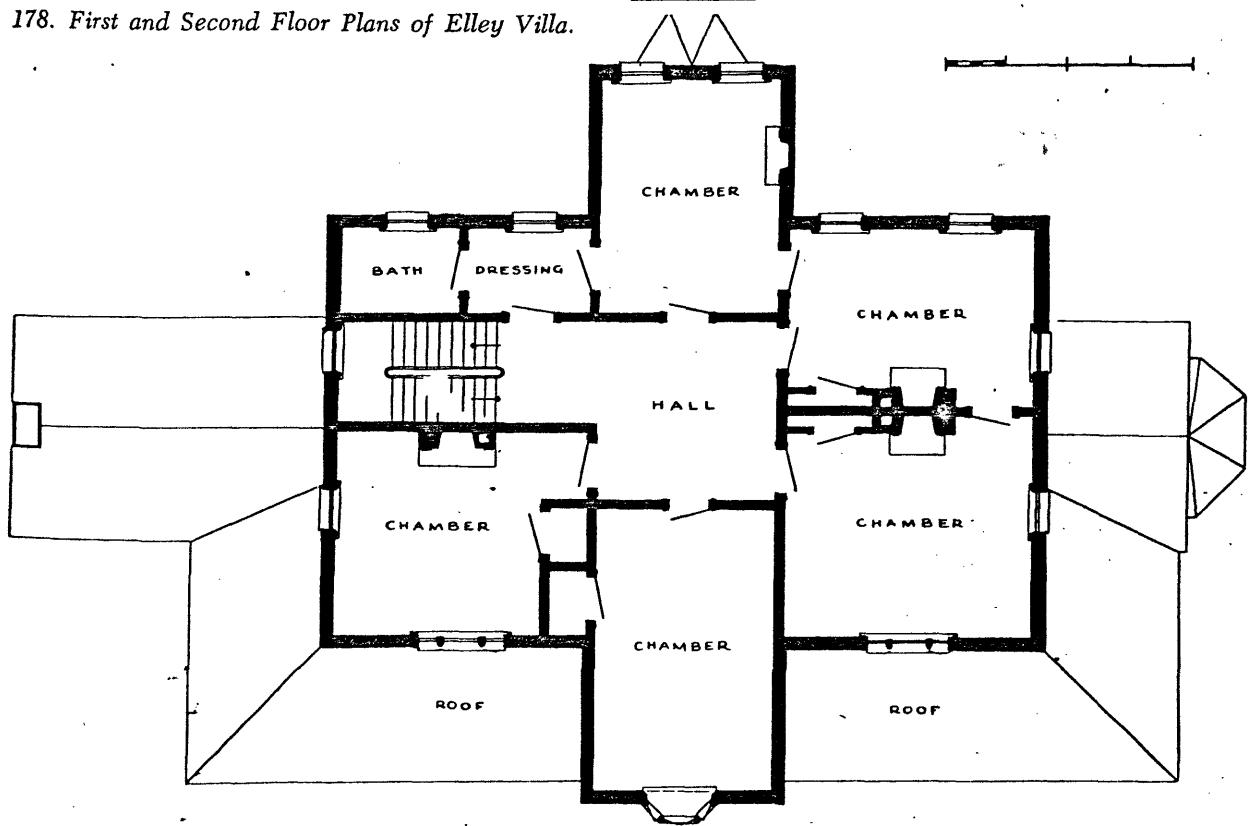
Historic Properties Atlas, Urban-  
County Planning Commission, 227  
North Upper Street, Lexington.  
1" = 200' Updated June 1969.  
JAN 9 1978      Map 5 a.

**PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

Historic Properties  
Atlas  
6/69  
1" - 200'



178. First and Second Floor Plans of Elley Villa.



Elley Villa (Aylesford)  
Lexington  
Fayette County  
Kentucky

JAN 9 1978

Drawing by Clay Lancaster from  
Ante Bellum Houses of the  
Bluegrass (Lexington 1966).

JUL 12 1977

Map 6. First and second story  
plans. (Compare plan of Downing's  
Design XXVI, Figures 134 and 135.

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