

**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 Swinney, Thomas W., House

and/or common The Swinney Homestead

**2. Location**

street & number 1424 West Jefferson Street      not for publication

city, town Fort Wayne      vicinity of      congressional district 4th

state Indiana code 018 county Allen code 003

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Fort Wayne

street & number City-County Building, 1 Main Street

city, town Fort Wayne      vicinity of      state Indiana

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Allen County Court House

street & number Main Street at Calhoun Street

city, town Fort Wayne      state Indiana

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible?      yes X no

date February 13, 1934 X federal      state      county      local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington      state District of Columbia

## 7. Description

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

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

The Swinney House is <sup>in</sup> a visually prominent location, on a knoll at the foot of Jefferson Street just before the street turns to the south. Originally a one and one half story structure, the house was later changed by the addition of the Victorian detailing then in vogue. In 1885, a new wing was added to the south side, with a two story square bay tucked into the corner between the addition and the main house.

As it stands today, the house is a two and one-half story painted brick structure with a limestone foundation and lintels. The house has five bays across the main, or east, facade, with the entrance in the center bay. The Eastlake porch has a flat roof, with a gable over the entrance. It is supported by four bracketed posts across the front, with two engaged posts against the house. A spindled balustrade surrounds the deck.

The double doors of the main entrance have a single light each, and there is a glass transom. Additional entrances are located in an enclosed porch on the west side of the wing, and in the two-story square bay on the east side of the wing. The latter has a hood on brackets.

All windows are one-over-one, doublehung sash. First-story lintels are plain and flat, whereas second-story lintels are segmentally arched, with incised scrollwork. Above the second story windows, a slightly projecting soldier course of brick forms a decorative band. Directly above this, under the eaves and in the gable ends, is vertical wood siding, the ends of the boards cut to form a zig-zag pattern. The eaves are supported by paired Eastlake-style brackets.

The roof is basically gabled, except that it is hipped on the added wing. There are two gabled dormers with three windows each, one on the center front and one on the center rear.

Inside the house, the basement contains the original cooking fireplace, the root cellar, and remnants of the wine cellar and the slate floor. On the main level, the poplar floor and the walnut and poplar woodwork are still in place, although a wall has been removed from between the dining room and parlor. The woodwork on the first floor is plain, but door frames on the second floor are fluted and scrolled.

The stairways that are in the building are not original. The main stairway, from the first to the second floor, is of walnut, and was constructed during the 1885 remodeling. A second stairway from the second floor to the attic came from another house, and was installed when this house was taken over by the Historical Society.

There are nine fireplaces in the house, all original, but none are presently operable. The two in the dining room and parlor have plain, wide boards and panels, with slightly protruding mantels. The fireplaces in the library and sitting room are of oak and marble, very ornate, late Victorian. The fireplace in the parlor of the south wing is of black cast iron. The two Victorian fireplaces upstairs are simpler, of walnut and marble.

Hardware in the house is original, including three gas light fixtures. Some of the original inside shutters are in use.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Philanthropy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** Built 1844-45  
Remodeled 1885.

**Builder/Architect**

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Swinney House is architecturally significant because it is one of the oldest homes remaining in the Fort Wayne area. Built in 1844-1845, the house was later modified by the addition of one wing, another floor, a front porch, and trim, giving it a stylish Victorian appearance. Historically, it is important because its builder and long-time owner, Thomas W. Swinney, was a prominent Fort Wayne businessman who, beginning from humble origins, rose to become one of the city's most important business leaders, and who gave the land for Swinney Park to the city.

Thomas W. Swinney was a pioneer settler of early Allen County. Born in Piketown, Ohio, in 1803, he emigrated to Indiana sometime between 1818 and 1822. In 1823, he settled in Fort Wayne and one year later married Lucy Taber, daughter of a federal official with extensive landholdings acquired before the local land office had opened. During the ensuing years, Swinney was highly successful in farming, livestock breeding, construction, and land speculation. He erected Swinney Block on East Main Street, opposite the courthouse, one of the earliest three-story buildings in the city. In 1830, Indiana Governor Ray appointed him to the staff of the state militia. A social and political reward as much as military position, the much-coveted appointment conferred the title "Colonel" on the young man. He also served as treasurer of Allen County in 1834 and 1837.

Swinney's residences changed with his fortunes. About 1826, he built a log house outside the old fort, about seventy-five feet from the river. His family, including five daughters, lived in the cabin until 1845. Evidence suggests that the Swinney's entertained often while living in their original home. Of the recorded events held on the estate, perhaps the most notable was the gathering that celebrated the opening of the Wabash and Erie Canal on July 4, 1843. It was the coming of the canal that established Fort Wayne as a major trade center and provided easier access for settlers traveling west.

In about 1844-1845, Swinney had the original portion of the present house constructed on his property. This consisted of a one and one-half story building built of native limestone and brick. In 1885, the structure was enlarged and other changes made by Swinney's daughters. The roof was raised to create a two and one-half story structure; a new east wing, front porch, and wood detailing gave the house a Victorian appearance. A beautiful walnut staircase of the period replaced the original stairs.

In the 1860's, the major portion of Swinney's land was leased to the Agricultural society for a fairground. The leasehold on the fairgrounds was vacated in 1889, and arrangements were immediately made by the newly created Park Board to renew it upon the same terms, and proceed to the development of the tract as a park in accordance with the will of Thomas Swinney. Swinney provided in his will that when his direct line of issue should be extinct, the entire tract should pass to the city of Fort Wayne, for use as a playground of the people. It was the first gift of land for public park purposes that was ever made in Fort Wayne.

Swinney died in January, 1895. Possession of the house and park passed to Fort Wayne in 1922, when his last daughter died. Until recently the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society used the building as a museum. It is now used by the Old Fort Settlers for their education program in folk crafts.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Taylor; S.R. & Potterf, Rex M. The Swinney Homestead. Bulletin of the Allen County-Fort Wayne Hist. Soc., Dec. 1931.  
 Reihel, Daniel Changing Faces of the Swinney Homestead. Bulletin of the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society, February 1964.

\*SEE CONTINUATION SHEET\*

# 10. Geographical Data

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**  
**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreege of nominated property Less than one acre  
 Quadrangle name Fort Wayne West, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A	1 6	6 5 4 7 9 0	4 5 4 8 3 2 5	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary line runs parallel to and twenty feet from the westernmost northernmost, and easternmost walls of the house, and six feet from the southernmost wall.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Raon Meitz, Betty McDermott, Lois Snouffer, Helen Robinson

organization Old Fort Settlers Society, Inc. date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number 3333 River Forest Drive telephone 219/483-4176

city or town Fort Wayne state Indiana 46805

# 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 *Janet M. Riderow*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 5, 1981

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	Entered in the National Register date <u>4/27/81</u>
<u><i>Delores Byers</i></u> Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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

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

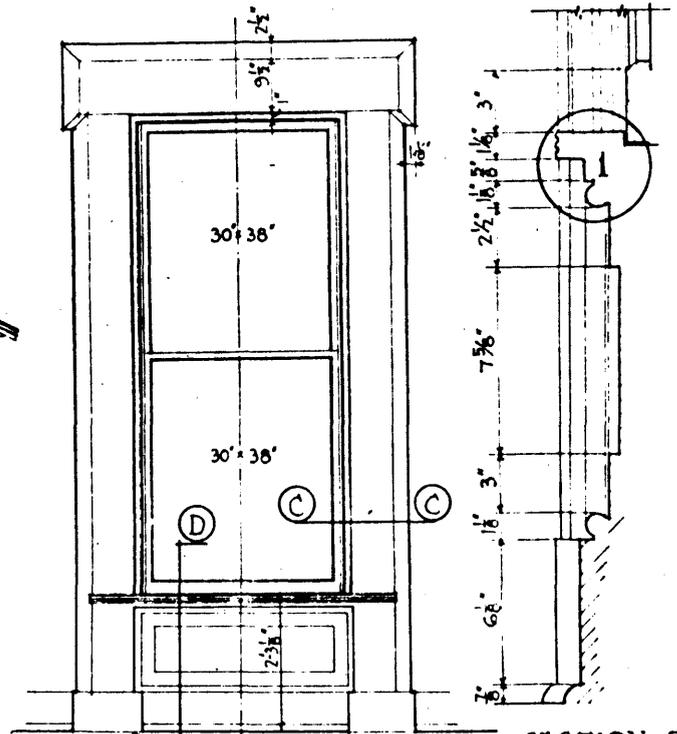
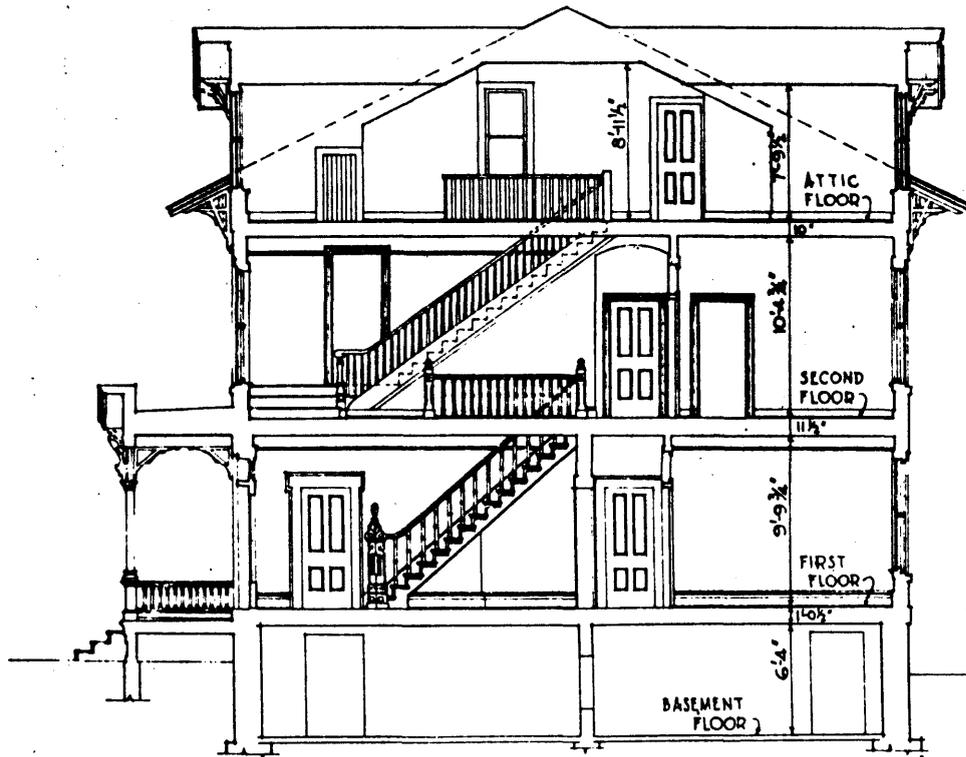
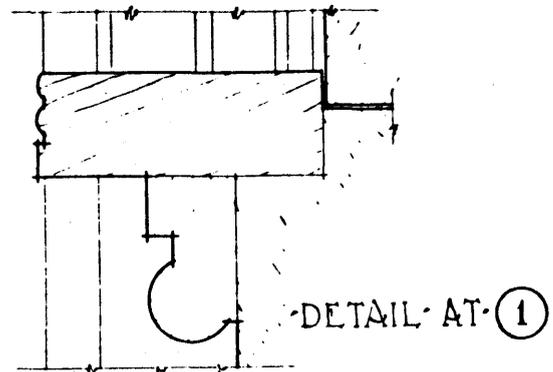
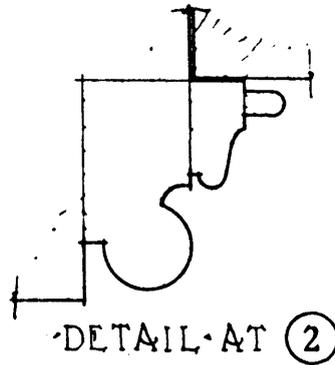
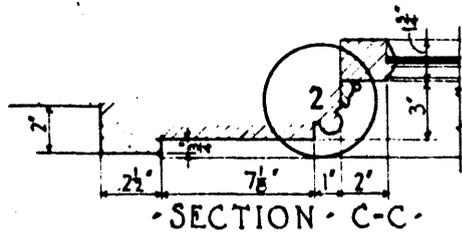
For HCRS use only  
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date entered [illegible] 1981

Continuation sheet

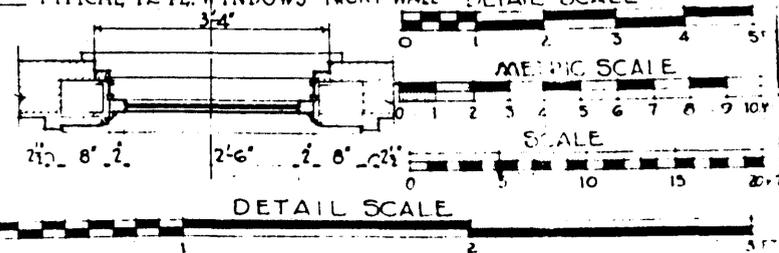
Item number 9

Page 1

Ernest, Gary G. Graceful Plutocracy, The Swinney Family in Fort Wayne. Special  
Publication, Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society, 1977.



INTERIOR ELEVATION - SECTION D-D  
TYPICAL 1 1/2 FL. WINDOWS - FRONT WALL



CROSS SECTION  
ON CENTER LINE OF STAIR HALLS

MAR 19 1881

APR 27 1881

Otto A. Wolf - Del.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS  
BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

NAME OF STRUCTURE

WINNEY HOMESTEAD

SURVEY NO.  
24-6  
FEB 15-1934

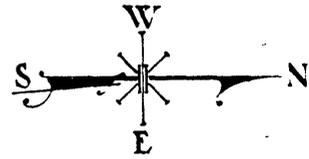
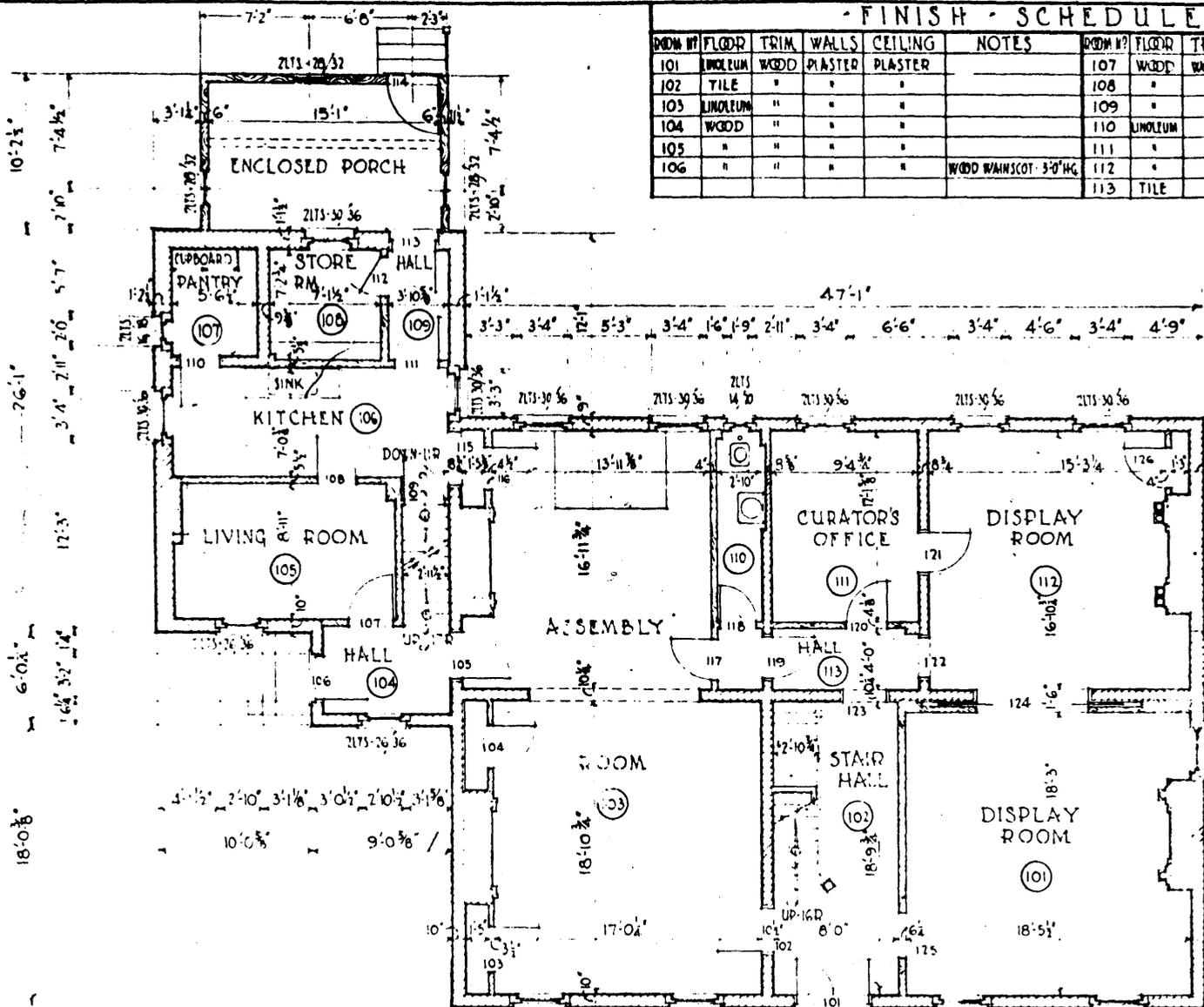
HISTORIC AMERICAN  
BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SHEET 8 OF 10 SHEETS

INCHES TO

APR 27 1981

MAR 19 1981

FINISH SCHEDULE											
ROOM #	FLOOR	TRIM	WALLS	CEILING	NOTES	ROOM #	FLOOR	TRIM	WALLS	CEILING	NOTES
101	LINOLEUM	WOOD	PLASTER	PLASTER		107	WOOD	WOOD	PLASTER	PLASTER	
102	TILE	"	"	"		108	"	"	"	"	
103	LINOLEUM	"	"	"		109	"	"	"	"	
104	WOOD	"	"	"		110	LINOLEUM	"	"	"	
105	"	"	"	"		111	"	"	"	"	
106	"	"	"	"	WOOD WAINSCOT 3'-0" HG.	112	"	"	"	"	
						113	TILE	"	"	"	



KEY TO MATERIALS  
 [Symbol] WOOD PLASTER  
 [Symbol] BRICK & PLASTER

DOOR SCHEDULE					
NUMBER	LOCATION	REMARKS	NUMBER	LOCATION	REMARKS
101	4-8	WOOD	110	2-10	WOOD
102	2-10	WOOD	111	3-8	WOOD
103	2-10	WOOD	112	2-10	WOOD
104	2-10	WOOD	113	2-10	WOOD
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191	2-10	WOOD	200	2-10	WOOD

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

