

1430  
AUG 13 1990  
OMB No. 1024-0018

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM**  
**NATIONAL REGISTER**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name George R. Sims House  
other names/site number Sims-Brown-Harrison House;  
Windemere Plantation

**2. Location**

street & number 1851 Collinsworth Road  
city, town Palmetto (X) vicinity of  
county Coweta code GA 077  
state Georgia code GA zip code 30268

(n/a) not for publication

**3. Classification**

**Ownership of Property:**

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

**Category of Property**

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property:**

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	2	2
sites	0	0
structures	1	0
objects	0	0
total	3	2

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Signature of certifying official

8/7/90  
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer,  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- (x) entered in the National Register Amy Federman 9/27/90
- ( ) determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) see continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Keeper of the National Register      Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC:single dwelling  
AGRICULTURAL:agricultural field/outbuilding

### Current Functions:

DOMESTIC:single dwelling

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

MID-19TH CENTURY:Greek Revival

### Materials:

foundation	brick
walls	wood
roof	asphalt
other	

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The George R. Sims House is located approximately four miles east of Palmetto, in a rural area of Coweta County, in central Georgia. The building consists of a two-story, wood-framed Greek Revival house built around 1850. The design of the house is a modified Georgian plan. This plan resulted in the combination of a projecting front gable and a two-story, L-shaped columned portico (photograph 1). The portico consists of two-story fluted Doric columns supporting a plain entablature (photograph 4). The house's exterior is covered with weatherboarding, and flush boards cover the area under the front portico and rear porch (photographs 2,3,5). The original one-story, L-shaped rear porch has been enclosed (photograph 6). The main entrance is surrounded by transom and sidelights and recessed between pilasters supporting a large entablature. On the interior, the floor plan has a central hallway on each floor with two rooms on either side shifted to modify the Georgian plan. The interior's original Greek Revival character is evident in the moldings, mantels, doors, and other features that remain intact. A c. 1940 renovation of the house added some Neoclassical Revival mantels, and moldings downstairs, as well as a kitchen and baths.

The front L-shaped portico illustrates an unusual interpretation of the Greek Revival style. The porch features five fluted Doric columns, flush wood siding, and paneled soffits. The main entrance is classically detailed with transom and sidelights, bull's-eye patterned details above the door, and paneled double doors flanked with pilasters and Greek key frets (photograph 3). Additional features of the house are clapboard siding, 6/6 windows, and a triangular pediment on the front gable end. Greek key fret work is also found in an attic window surround located in the front gable. The building's rear

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facade at one time featured a one-story L-shaped porch. This was modified in a c. 1940 renovation and enclosed.

Interior arrangements feature a central hall with stairs and eight rooms. The basic plan is laid out in a modified Z-design with an office bay (photograph 11) on the front of house and the original dining room at the rear. Walnut is used for window and door facings, and for baseboards in the parlor, dining room (photograph 10), and one bedroom. Heart-pine floors are throughout the house. Hand-planed wood ceilings are used in all rooms except the dining room which is plaster. Interior craftsmanship includes the original, classically designed mantelpieces upstairs (photographs 14, 15), and dog-eared cornice moldings around several doors and windows (photograph 12). The stairway follows a dogleg pattern featuring turned balusters, decorative brackets and newel posts (photograph 13). The five-paneled double front doors are bordered by built-in closets on either side (photograph 9).

The Sims House is built with heart-pine, mortise-and-tenon construction and hand-hewn sills. The house is situated upon a knoll surrounded by terraced pastures, nut trees, cedars, magnolias, and foundation plantings (photograph 7).

In the early 1940s, the Sims House underwent a major renovation. The changes include the addition of a continuous brick foundation, removal of a second stairway, and the addition of a kitchen and bathrooms.

The property contains a c. 1850, frame carriage house with a later addition, and a 1939 elevated water tank (photograph 8). A moved and altered tenant house (photograph 16), and a severely deteriorated barn constitute the noncontributing resources.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:**

nationally     statewide     locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A     B     C     D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**     N/A

A     B     C     D     E     F     G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

Architecture

**Period of Significance:**

c. 1850

**Significant Dates:**

c. 1850, c. 1940

**Significant Person(s):**

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation:**

n/a

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

n/a

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Section 8

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**Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:**

**Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The George R. Sims House is significant as a very intact Greek Revival house with an unusual modified Georgian plan built around 1850.

**ARCHITECTURE**

In the area of architecture, the house is significant as an example of the unusual use of a Georgian plan with projecting rooms that resulted in the combination of a front-gabled wing and two-story, L-shaped, columned portico. Only a small number of houses in Georgia are known to have utilized similar plans. The house is an excellent example of the Greek Revival style. The L-shaped portico dominates the front facade with its five, two-story, fluted Doric columns. Sidelights and transom, Greek key pilasters, and a large entablature highlight the main double paneled door entrance. Interior features also reflect Greek Revival detailing in the original moldings, doors, and mantels. Many of the door and window surrounds feature the dog-eared style of enframingent. Heart-pine floors are throughout the house. The interior side of the front entrance includes decorative cornice molding, bull's eye details above the door, and two side closets. The building's craftsmanship is also evident in the wooden dogleg stairway with turned balusters, brackets, and newel posts. The house is significant for its retention of a majority of its Greek Revival features and for the c. 1940 renovation that added several Neoclassical Revival features including several fireplace mantels and door moldings. The house is an excellent example of the type of plantation house used by a large landowner and an unusual example of the Greek Revival style that was popular during the mid-19th century. The c. 1850 wood frame carriage house and 1939 watertower also contribute to the historic resources, because they are characteristic of the kinds of outbuildings and auxiliary structures that comprised a historic farm setting.

**National Register Criteria**

The George R. Sims House meets Criteria C as an excellent example of a Greek Revival style house with a modified Georgian plan. Built in a prominent location on a high knoll, the building and surrounding pastureland represent the distinctive characteristics of a successful plantation. The house was built in a Z-shaped, modified Georgian plan that resulted in a front gabled wing and L-shaped portico. The house represents an unusual interpretation of the Greek Revival style with wide entablatures, pedimented gable ends, Doric columns, rectangular

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**Section 8**

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transom with sidelights and Greek key frets. The structure embodies many fine characteristics of American antebellum craftsmanship from its plan to its detailing including several original mantels, the stairway, dog-eared door and window moldings, and bull's-eye block ornamentation. The c. 1940 restoration retained many of the original features and added further classical detailing. While the original builder cannot be verified, it is assumed because of the quality of work and wealth of the Sims family, that a master craftsman was employed.

**Period of significance (justification, if applicable)**

- c. 1850 - construction of Sims house
- c. 1940 - major renovation of Sims house

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources**

Note: The modern gazebo is too small in scale to be included in the resource count.

Contributing

- 2 buildings (main house, carriage house)
- 1 structure (water tower)

Noncontributing

- 2 buildings (altered tenant house, deteriorated barn)

**Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)**

The Sims House sits on land originally occupied by Lower Creek Indians. In c. 1850, George Redding Sims built his home on land lot 145 at the corner of the 6th and 7th districts, in Coweta County.

George R. Sims (1822-1876) was the son of John Sims of Oglethorpe County, who was the son of James Sims of Athens, Clarke County, originally from Virginia. In 1848, G. R. Sims married Mary Elizabeth Arnold (1830-1905) from Madras, Coweta County. The couple had eleven children. Shortly after their marriage, construction began on their 2 1/2 story Greek Revival house. Reportedly, there was a competition between G. R. Sims and his wife's cousin, Bill Arnold of Grantville, as to who could built the most handsome house.

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Sims situated his house four miles east of Palmetto, Georgia, on the road leading to Fayetteville. He chose one of the highest elevations in Coweta County, in spite of the difficulty of obtaining water, as was the typical practice of siting 19th-century plantation houses in Georgia. Finding a good source of water was an ongoing problem for the Sims family and for subsequent owners.

G. R. Sims was one of the largest antebellum land owners in the county. According to the 1850 Agricultural Census, Sims owned over 1,000 acres of land while most families owned around 200 acres. The cash value of G. R. Sims' farm in 1850 was \$12,000. Few Coweta County landowners produced more bales of cotton than Sims in that decade. The 1854 Tax Digest showed that G. R. Sims owned 25 slaves and 855 acres of land in Coweta County, 469 acres in Fayette County, and 490 in Appling County. The Sims' estate was valued at \$35,643.

According to the 1860 Agricultural Census, Sims continued to produce cotton and Indian corn. In addition, he constructed cotton gins throughout the area. According to the Slave Census of 1860, Sims owned 35 slaves, 19 of whom were 15 years or younger. In the Tax Digest of 1861, G. R. Sims owned 37 slaves valued at \$22,400, and 905 acres of land in Coweta, 436 in Fayette, and 490 in Appling County.

The 1864 Tax Digest indicates that G. R. Sims owned 1,900 acres of land in Coweta County and 48 slaves valued at \$115,000. The dramatic increase in value was due to war-time inflation. While Sims was a large land owner who owned many slaves, he was not the largest slave owner in the county.

According to his great-granddaughter, Ella Richmond, Sims built the Methodist Church in Palmetto for his wife. He, on the other hand, was a Baptist and attended the Ramah Baptist Church, where both he and his wife are buried.

In addition to being a farmer, Sims also owned a dry goods store in Palmetto. The store's contents were listed in the 1876 Inventory of Estate. At the time of his death, he owned stock in several railroads, and is said to have been responsible for bringing the railroad through Madras, a nearby community. Sims' estate inventory was 14 pages long.

Mary Elizabeth Sims, his wife, lived in the house until 1881 and her sons managed the estate until her death in 1905. Upon her death, the house and approximately 190 acres were sold to L. O. McElwaney. The McElwaney family were prominent local dairy farmers, and continued to grow cotton on the land. In 1925, the house along with 91 acres of land were given to Jack McElwaney's daughter, Janie May and her



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husband, R. I. Swanson as a wedding present. The Swansons lived in the house until the Depression when it was occupied by sharecroppers. The house declined as chickens lived throughout the house. At this time, many of the outbuildings also deteriorated and were removed.

In December of 1939, Gene Brown, a senior pilot for Eastern Airlines, bought the house after spotting it from his airplane. The Browns began renovation of the Sims house and documented their work through black and white photos. An extensive landscape plan was also created for the grounds. The plan included a curving drive lined with crepe myrtles and cedars, foundation plantings, fruit trees, and a cutting garden to the rear of the house. At that time, they also leveled a parcel of land east of the house for a tennis court. A two-story kitchen, twice burned, was moved northeast of the house along the drive and was used as a tenant house. The Browns acquired a total of 165 acres and lived in the house until 1948.

At this time the house was acquired by Bill and Julie Rumley. They lived there for 14 years and changed the wood floor of the back porch to concrete.

In 1960, the house was purchased as an investment by Dr. Lamar Glass, a dentist from Marietta. Dr. Glass sold the house to L. E. Sport and his wife in 1962. Mr. Sport was employed by Delta Airlines and lived in the house until 1978. A Mr. Hitchcock purchased the house and 10.4 acres of land in 1978 and sold it to the current owners, Robert and Vivian Harrison, in 1979. The Harrisons have maintained the original integrity of the house, while adding central heat and air, renovating the kitchen, wallpapering, and painting. The current owners also acquired 6 additional acres of land.

In 1985, the Georgia Department of Transportation widened Collinsworth Road, taking away 20 feet off the front of the Harrison's property.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Van Buren, Maurie. "Historic Property Information Form - George R. Sims House." 1988. On file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

- ( ) preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ( ) previously listed in the National Register
- ( ) previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ( ) designated a National Historic Landmark
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- (x) State historic preservation office
- ( ) Other State Agency
- ( ) Federal agency
- ( ) Local government
- ( ) University
- ( ) Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** 16

**UTM References**

- A) Zone 16 Easting 721080 Northing 3708030
- B) Zone 16 Easting 721260 Northing 3707970
- C) Zone 16 Easting 721350 Northing 3708350
- D) Zone 16 Easting 721180 Northing 3708410

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The National Register property includes the house, garage, barn, former tenant house, and the pastureland surrounding them. The property is marked on the enclosed sketch map.

**Boundary Justification**

The proposed boundary encompasses the intact historic acreage that remains with the property. It also constitutes a representation of the rural high-ground setting historically associated with the house.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**name/title** Lisa Raflo, National Register Researcher  
**organization** Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334  
**telephone** 404-656-2840 **date** 7/29/90

(HPS form version 3-30-90)

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**Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

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**Name of Property:** George R. Sims House  
**City or Vicinity:** Palmetto  
**County:** Coweta  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** April, 1990

**Description of Photograph(s):**

- 1 of 16: Front facade of house; photographer facing south.
- 2 of 16: East and front facade views; photographer facing southeast.
- 3 of 16: Front entrance, close-up view of portico columns; photographer facing southeast.
- 4 of 16: View of paneled soffits, Doric columns; photographer facing southeast.
- 5 of 16: West facade view; photographer facing southeast.
- 6 of 16: Rear facade and east facade view, with c. 1940 porch alterations; photographer facing northwest.
- 7 of 16: Rear facade and backyard view; photographer facing northwest.
- 8 of 16: View of watertower, carriage house, and gazebo; photographer facing south.
- 9 of 16: View of central hallway, main entrance; photographer facing north.
- 10 of 16: View of dining room; photographer facing southwest.
- 11 of 16: View of parlor; photographer facing southwest.
- 12 of 16: View of central hallway and stairs; photographer facing south.
- 13 of 16: View of stairway, wood paneling; photographer facing east.

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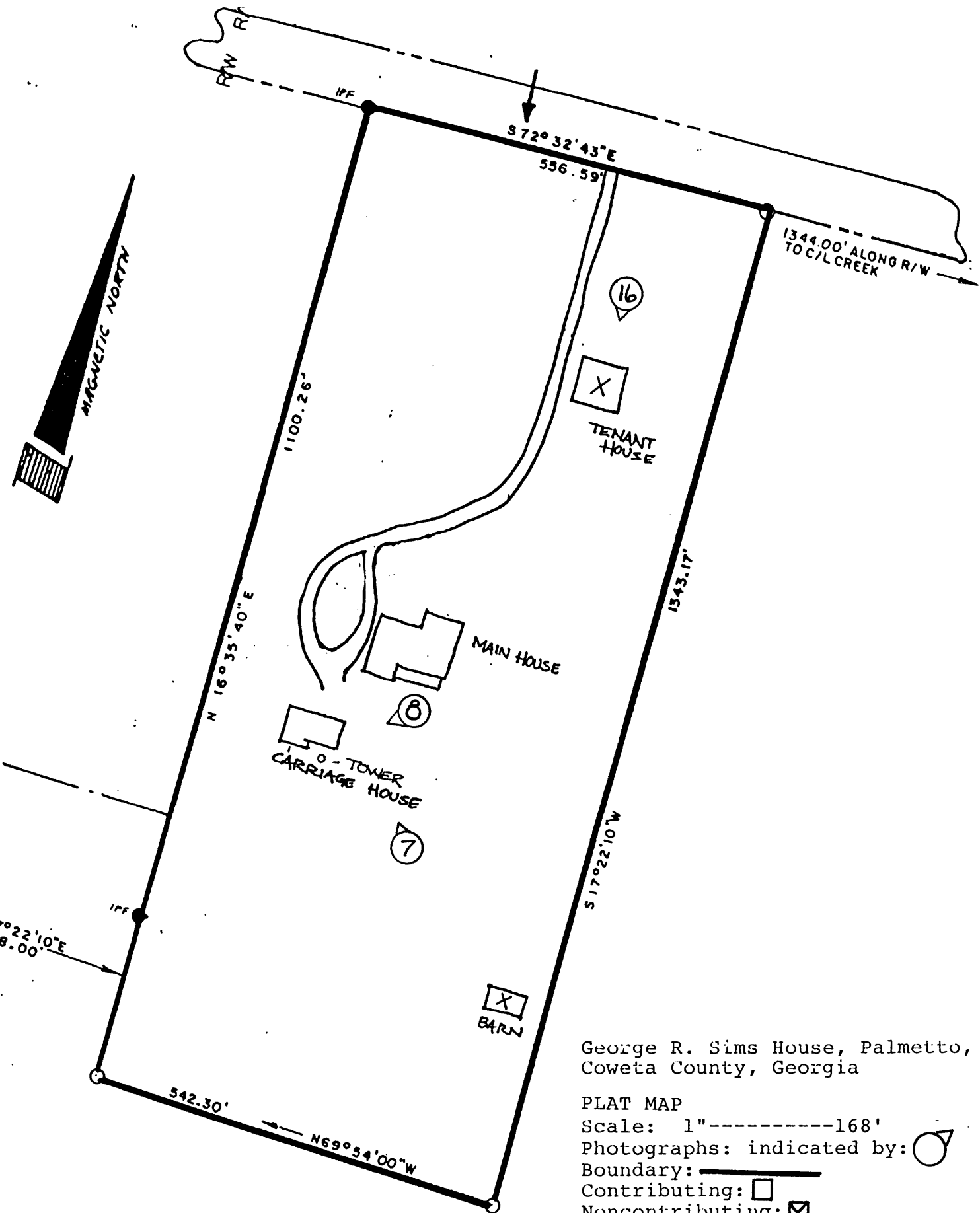
**Photographs**

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14 of 16: View of upstairs front bedroom with original mantelpiece; photographer facing southeast.

15 of 16: View of upstairs rear bedroom with original mantelpiece; photographer facing northwest.

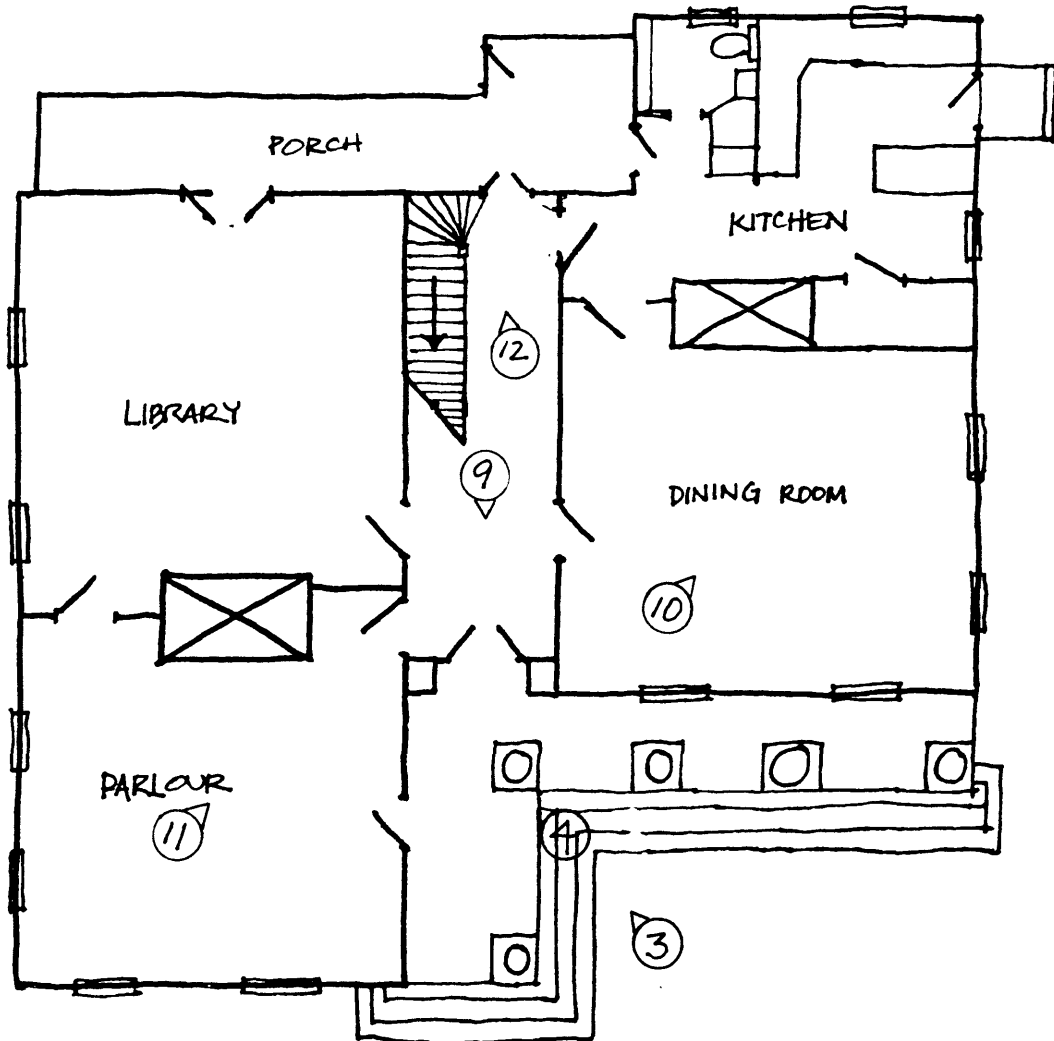
16 of 16: Front facade view of former tenant house; photographer facing south.



George R. Sims House, Palmetto,  
Coweta County, Georgia

PLAT MAP  
 Scale: 1"-----168'  
 Photographs: indicated by:   
 Boundary:   
 Contributing:   
 Noncontributing: 


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GROUND FLOOR  
EXISTING PLAN

George R. Sims House, Palmetto,  
Coweta County, Georgia

Sketch Map

Scale: none  
Photographs: indicated by 

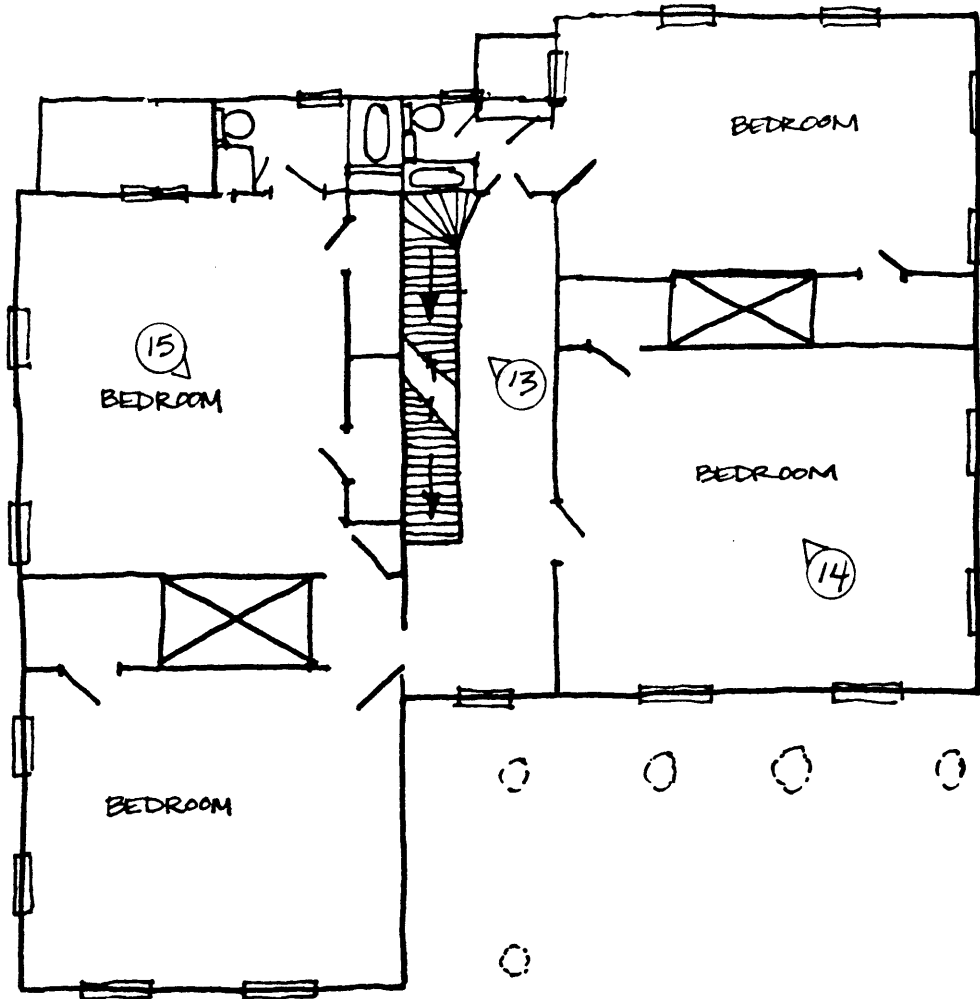
-NOT DRAWN TO SCALE-



1

2

5




SECOND FLOOR  
EXISTING PLAN

George R. Sims House, Palmetto,  
Coweta County, Georgia

Sketch Map

Scale: none

Photographs: indicated by 



-NOT DRAWN TO SCALE-