

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001127

Date Listed: 8/2/90

Waite-Davis House
Property Name

Orange
County

FL
State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Perry Federman
Signature of the Keeper

8/2/90
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

The acreage for the property includes ¹ less than acre.

Discussed and concurred in by the Florida SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

RECEIVED JUN 25 1990

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 Waite-Davis House other names/site number Leslie P. Waite House 8OR 2230

2. Location

street & number 5 South Central Avenue N/A not for publication city, town Apopka N/A vicinity state Florida code FL county Orange code 095 zip code 32703

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private, [] public-local, [] public-State, [] public-Federal. Category of Property: [X] building(s), [] district, [] site, [] structure, [] object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 1 buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total 1.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 6/18/90 State Historic Preservation Officer, Bureau of Historic Preservation State or Federal agency and bureau

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 and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: [X] entered in the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined not eligible for the National Register. [] removed from the National Register. [] other, (explain:). Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style: Wood Frame Vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick Piers

walls Wood/Drop Siding

roof Asphalt/Singles

other Wood/Porch

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

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) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1886-1915

Significant Dates

1886
1890
1906

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Davis, Frank H.

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property _____

UTM References

A

1	7
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4	5	0	0	4	0
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3	1	7	2	1	8	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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N/A See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The north 130 feet of lot 55 and the west 25 feet of the north 130 feet of lot 56, block B, Davis & Mitchell's Addition to Apopka, Plat Book A, Page 89; section 9, township 21, range 28, Orange County, Florida.

N/A See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary represents the historical limits of the property as platted and used by the persons occupying it from the past to the present time. No known changes have been made in the property lines or the use of the land since 1886.

N/A See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date June 13, 1990
 street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

Description

Summary Description

The Waite-Davis House is a 1-1/2 story wood frame vernacular house constructed in 1886 that occupies a lot at the corner of Central Avenue and Orange Street in the old section of the city of Apopka, just one block west of State Road 435 and four blocks north of U.S. Highway 441. The gable roof building stands on a foundation of brick piers and has exterior walls sheathed in drop siding. A one-story veranda, with a gazebo at the southwest corner, embraces the north, west, and south elevations of the residence. The gazebo and west side of the veranda are screened. The major windows of the structure are 2/2 light double hung sashes, and the exterior of the house features several decorative elements typical of late nineteenth century domestic architecture, including wood shingles and vergeboards in the gables, and scroll brackets and pendants flanking the columns of the veranda. The interior of the house also contains a number of features typical of late nineteenth and early twentieth century construction, some of which display a greater refinement than indicated by the plain appearance of the building's exterior.

Supporting Narrative

The main (west) facade of the Waite-Davis House overlooks Central Avenue, a brick street paved by the City of Apopka in 1921. Orange Street, which runs along the north side of the property was paved with brick approximately six years earlier, and was once part of the western route of the Dixie Highway. The surrounding area is mainly a single family neighborhood with homes of varying ages on large lots. Some lots have remained historically vacant. The Waite-Davis house remains on its original site and is in very good condition. The lot on which the house stand features a number of large trees, including cedar, oak, camphor, and Florida cherry. A small wood frame barn, or storage shed, stands about twenty feet southwest of the house. This structure is one story high, with a gable roof, and is sheathed with drop siding. The shed is in poor condition and suffers from extensive termite damage and rot.

The exterior of the Waite-Davis house experienced some modifications between 1886 and 1915, and today its appearance is essentially the same as it was in 1915. The roof of the house is now covered with composition shingles instead of its original wood shakes. Also, the balustrade (Photo 36) that once

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Description

surrounded the small deck above the veranda in the center of the facade has been lost, as has the cresting that once stood on the ridge of gable roof. In all other major respects, however, the exterior of the house has essentially retained or been restored to its 1915 appearance.

When the neighborhood surrounding the Waite-Davis House was first subdivided, the area was dominated by stands of pine trees. Today these have been largely replaced by oaks and camphor trees. What was once undeveloped pine forest in the immediate vicinity is now a built up urban area undergoing rapid development. The main business district of Apopka stretches along U.S. Highway 441, located just three blocks to the south and west of the Waite-Davis house. Commercial development is also taking place along State Road 435, just one block east. The area immediately north of the Waite-Davis House is still devoted to single family dwellings.

Not counting the porch, the Waite-Davis House is approximately 35 feet wide across the main facade. The front section has a depth of 15 feet 4 inches. Adding the porch on both sides increases the total width to almost 56 feet. The rearward extension measures approximately 34 feet by 14-1/2 half feet. The residence is basically a balloon frame I-House with a side gable roof and a rear ell. The structural material, including the exterior horizontal siding, is primarily heart pine lumber. The veranda almost completely encloses three sides of the house. The front elevation of the house has a centered cross gable flanked by gable dormers.

The main facade is essentially three bays wide on both the first story and the half-story above, the gabled wall dormers of the upper story rising above the eaves of the main roof. Two outer windows on the upper story of the facade are centered 20 inches further apart than the first story windows. The second story windows found at the rear of the main block of the house and in the rear ell are set in wall dormers with shed roofs.

The house rests on a foundation of brick piers, the spaces between which are screened with wood lattices. The south section of the veranda, which was added by Frank Davis after 1906, is screened and includes a pavilion roofed, hexagonal gazebo projecting from its southwest corner. The remainder of the veranda is open, and its roof is supported by chamfered columns flanked by scroll brackets. The veranda also features pendants

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

Description

that hang from the soffit about midway between each column and has an Eastern Stick style balustrade.

The centered gable on the facade, the side gables of the main roof, and the gabled dormers are all surfaced with variegated shingles. While most of the window surrounds are very simple, there are triangular architraves designed to imitate pediments over the ground story windows of the main facade. The window in the center of the facade gable is sheltered by a shed-roofed console supported by brackets. With the exception of the stained glass window over the stairs, the windows throughout the house are double hung wood sashes with 2/2 lights. Both the gable and shed dormers are flanked by scroll brackets found at the point where the sidewalls of each dormer meet the dormer roof. Each of the three gables of the main roof and its dormers has a decorative vergeboard, those of the main roof being larger and more elaborate in their scrollwork cutouts.

The rafters of the main roof and rear ell have been enclosed, whereas those of the veranda remain exposed, and the junction between the wall and roof has been delineated with a frieze board. The joint between the frieze board and soffit is covered by crown molding, and all the corners of the house are covered by corner boards. When the house was constructed in 1886, it had only a one-bay entrance porch with a flat roof on the main facade. Two years later this was replaced by a hip roof veranda that extended the full width of the facade and continued around the north elevation. By 1913 the screened porch and gazebo had been added to the south elevation. At that time eight foot addition was also made to the second story of the south elevation, extending it out over the screened porch.

Sometime in the 1920s a room was added to the rear of the house, either by enclosing an existing small porch or extending the rear ell. At about this same period, or perhaps later in the 1930s, a bathroom was added to the second floor by extending an addition over the roof of the south side of the veranda. A portion of the screened porch was also enclosed to create a small room to the side of the dining room. Sometime later, probably in the 1950s, an exterior stairway linking the first and second floors was installed in the rear of the house, joined to the room that had been added in the 1920s. Also, another bathroom was constructed on the first floor.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4

Description

Work began in 1976 to return the house to essentially its 1915 appearance. The changes made were based on the evidence of historic photographs and a structural examination of the house. Post-1915 elements such as the exterior stairs, partitions subdividing the screened porch, and a hip roof constructed on the second story of the rear ell were removed. This hip roof was replaced with a gable roof that matched as closely as possible the historical appearance of the house. Furthermore, the aluminum awning windows in the rear addition were removed and replaced with 2/2 light double hung windows. To restore that portion of the screened porch that had been enclosed to its original appearance, the later south wall was removed and replaced by a set of three 1/1 light double hung windows and a door leading to the exterior of the building. This was rebuilt to match the style of the screen porch as it had been in 1915, except that fixed panes of smoked glass were used where the screen wire had been. These alterations were largely complete by the end of 1977.

The front door of the Waite-Davis house now leads directly into the living room. This was not always the case. When it was first constructed in 1886, the house had an entrance hall with the stairs located on the right side of the hall. In 1890 or 1891 the wall between the hall and the living room was removed, and the stairs moved to the opposite wall, thereby increasing the size of the living room. A door in the wall at the foot of the stairs now leads to a room used as a study. The existing stairway features an ornate newel post that extends from floor to ceiling. The mantel of the fireplace on the east wall of the living room is two-tiered structure made of tiger oak with a beveled glass mirror in the top tier. In the south wall of the living room is an unusual set of French doors that lead to the screened porch. Each of the tall, thin door leaves has 51 glass panes set in an oak frame. Both the living room and the study have picture moldings running about twelve inches below the ceiling. Both rooms also have their original electric light fixtures.

In 1975, upon entering the rearward extension the first room encountered was the dining room. East of the dining room was the kitchen, and beyond the kitchen was a storage room. Portions of the porch on the north side of the rear ell had been closed in at some point in the past to create two storage rooms and a bathroom. Another room that had been created on the south side by enclosing a portion of the screened porch was connected to the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 5

Description

dining room by an eight feet wide opening and had been used as a family or television room.

In 1976-1977 the storage room beyond the kitchen was converted into a laundry room and a small mechanical room. The former kitchen became the new family room while the family room was made the new dining room. The original light fixtures found in the dining room (former family room), probably dating from the 1920s, were retained. The wall between the former kitchen and dining room was removed, and a new kitchen and three-quarter bath constructed in the area where the dining room had been. The chimney which had at one time served a wood stove in the kitchen remains in place. The bathroom and storage rooms on the north porch were removed to restore the original architectural lines of the house.

During the same period closets were added to all of the second floor bedrooms. In addition, the first room on the second floor of the rear ell was converted into two bathrooms. The earlier bathroom over the veranda was removed. At the top of the stairs, the south wall of the landing was moved two feet to allow direct access to the rear hall. Prior to this change, the access to this section of the house could be gained only through old bathroom, which was removed, or by going through a bedroom. Original light fixtures were retained at the top of the stairs, in the bedroom to the north of the stairs, and in the dressing area of the master bedroom. The plaster walls have also been preserved in the two second floor bedrooms in the front section of the house.

The barn, located southeast of the house, is considered a non-contributing resource. No historic photographs showing this structure on the property have yet been located. The poor condition of the structure also prevents it from being considered a contributing resource. The building may have been built from materials salvaged from the main house during alterations made to it circa 1891. The rafters of the barn roof include rough sawn 2 X 3 inch timbers which had at one time been inside a plastered wall. These may have come from the wall between the entry hall and living room that was removed in either 1890 or 1891. A small room with a shed roof was added to the rear of the barn at an unknown date. This room has board and batten siding, while the main part of the barn has horizontal siding.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Photographs

Photograph Information

Note: The information on items 1 through 5 are the same for photographs No. 1 through No. 34 and, therefore, is not repeated after the first listing. The information for the remaining photos (35-42) is given as appropriate.

1. Waite-Davis House
2. 5 South Central Ave., Apopka (Orange County), FL
3. David T. Hardin
4. 1989
5. David T. Hardin
6. Main (West) Facade, Looking East
7. Photo No. 1 of 42

6. North Elevation, Looking South
7. Photo No. 2 of 42

6. East Elevation, Looking West
7. Photo No. 3 of 42

6. South Elevation, Looking North
7. Photo No. 4 of 42

6. Vergeboard on North Gable, Looking South
7. Photo No. 5 of 42

6. Dormer on West Facade, Looking East
7. Photo No. 6 of 42

6. Detail of West Facade Gable, Looking East
7. Photo No. 7 of 42

6. Window in West Facade Gable, Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 8 of 42

6. Column of North Elevation, Looking South
7. Photo No. 9 of 42

6. Detail of Column Bracket, Looking South
7. Photo No. 10 of 42

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 7

Photographs

- 6. Window on First Story Facade, Looking East
- 7. Photo No. 11 of 42

- 6. Stained Glass Window, East Elevation, Looking West
- 7. Photo No. 12 of 42

- 6. South Elevation, Detail of Screened Porch, Looking North
- 7. Photo No. 13 of 42

- 6. Panels on Gazebo, Looking Northeast
- 7. Photo No. 14 of 42

- 6. Gazebo, Looking North
- 7. Photo No. 15 of 42

- 6. Entrance to Screened Porch, Looking South
- 7. Photo No. 16 of 42

- 6. Shed Dormer, South Elevation, Looking North
- 7. Photo No. 17 of 42

- 6. Noncontributing Shed, Looking South
- 7. Photo No. 18 of 42

- 6. Front Screened Door, Looking East
- 7. Photo No. 19 of 42

- 6. Front Entrance, Looking East
- 7. Photo No. 20 of 42

- 6. Detail of Front Door, Looking East
- 7. Photo No. 21 of 42

- 6. Stairs in Living Room, Looking Northeast
- 7. Photo No. 22 of 42

- 6. Detail of Newel Post, Looking Northeast
- 7. Photo No. 23 of 42

- 6. Living Room Mantel, Looking East
- 7. Photo No. 24 of 42

- 6. French Doors in Living Room, Looking South
- 7. Photo No. 25 of 42

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 8

Photographs

6. Light Fixture in Living Room, Looking South
7. Photo No. 26 of 42

6. View from Window Looking West
7. Photo No. 27 of 42

6. Picture Molding in Living Room, Looking Southeast
7. Photo No. 28 of 42

6. Wall Fixture in Study, Looking North
7. Photo No. 29 of 42

6. Door Detail, Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 30 of 42

6. Light Fixture, Master Bedroom, Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 31 of 42

6. Fixture at Top of Stairs, Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 32 of 42

6. Typical Door, Looking East
7. Photo No. 33 of 42

6. Dining Room Fireplace, Looking East
7. Photo No. 34 of 42

3. Unknown
4. ca. 1915 (Copy)
5. David T. Hardin
6. View Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 35 of 42

3. Unknown
4. ca. 1915 (Copy)
5. David T. Hardin
6. View Looking Southeast
7. Photo No. 36 of 42

3. Unknown
4. ca. 1915 (Copy)
5. David T. Hardin
6. View Looking East
7. Photo No. 37 of 42

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 9

Photographs

3. Unknown
4. ca. 1910
5. David T. Hardin
6. South Elevation Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 38 of 42

3. Unknown
4. Ca. 1910
5. David T. Hardin
6. Living Room, Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 39 of 42

3. David T. Hardin
4. 1975
5. David T. Hardin
6. North Elevation, Looking South
7. Photo No. 40 of 42

3. David T. Hardin
4. 1975
5. David T. Hardin
6. East Elevation, Looking West
7. Photo No. 41 of 42

3. David T. Hardin
4. 1975
5. David T. Hardin
6. South Elevation, Looking North
7. Photo No. 42 of 42

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

Significance

Summary

The Waite-Davis House is significant under criterion A in the area of Exploration and Settlement for its association with the founding and early development of the City of Apopka in Orange County. The house is representative of the kind of residential construction that took place in the community in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and is one of only about a dozen pre-1900 residences still surviving in the city. The house is also significant under criterion B as having been the prime residence Frank H. Davis one of Apopka's early residents who played an important role in the early physical and economic development of the city. Davis served as mayor of Apopka from 1914 to 1916.

Historical Context

For Central Florida, the decade of the 1880s was a time of optimism and self-confidence, of town building, railroad construction and land development. An intense advertising campaign touted the attractions of the area to prospective visitors and settlers. These promotional efforts were to have a dramatic effect on the establishment and growth of the city of Apopka. In 1871 there was only one house at what would become Apopka. Just three years later the settlement still had only nine houses, but new residents began to arrive in the community in a steady, if somewhat slow, pace. In August of 1882 the village newspaper, the Apopka Citizen carried a notice that all residents should meet at the Masonic lodge on September 2, to organize a municipal government. The populace voted to incorporate the Town of Apopka, the thirty-one voters at the same time electing a mayor and other officials, and establishing the town limits.

Citrus farming and lumber production formed the basis of the early economy of Apopka. Four saw mills were operating in the area by 1885. These produced dressed lumber, boxes, and crates for packing citrus. With the seemingly daily establishment of new groves, a prosperous lumber business, and a boom in real estate sales, the general outlook for the continued growth of Apopka was bright in 1885. The crowning success was provided by the arrival of the railroad, the construction of which had been

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

Significance

anticipated since the 1870s. The completion of the Tavares, Orlando and Atlantic Railroad in 1885, and the Midland Railroad a short time later, precipitated rapid expansion of the business district along Central Avenue. The Bank of Apopka, capitalized at \$25,000, opened the year the railroad arrived and furnished loans to back the development of business enterprises related to citrus and lumber production, and the establishment of retail trade.

By 1886 Apopka boasted twelve stores, four churches, a school, two hotels and a variety of shops and suppliers of various goods and services. The expansion of the town had been accompanied by a remarkable improvement in its appearance. The scattering of nondescript buildings described by a visitor in 1880 had been replaced by handsome two-story business buildings and distinguished residences. Additions to the original town plat were made as the community grew, increasing in number and size as the decade of the 1880s waned. The real estate boom, however, had reached its zenith shortly after the arrival of the railroad, and an unmistakable economic decline set in the late 1880s and continued afterward. An early blow to the continued expansion of the economy was the hard freeze of January 1886 which lasted several days and included the first snowstorm in the area ever witnessed even by the oldest of the town's residents.

More bad weather followed in 1888, and a yellow fever epidemic caused many settlers to flee the area until the danger had past and discouraged new settlers from locating in the area. The situation grew so serious that on August 14, 1888, the mayor of Apopka felt compelled to quarantine the community against all visitors. Local businessmen and county officials were enraged at the mayor's proclamation and forced him to rescind it, but the damage had already been done to the prospects of attracting new settlers to the community. Some grove owners and businessmen were finding it hard to remain solvent by 1888, and a number of firms were forced to liquidate their assets to satisfy outstanding debts. In 1889 a large number of real estate parcels were sold at auction to satisfy unpaid 1887 taxes.

Further economic reverses were brought on by the national depression that followed the Panic of 1893. Even greater disasters were to follow in the train of periodic

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3 Significance

winter freezes that devastated the citrus industry. On December 29, 1894, the temperature dropped below freezing for several hours, ruining ripening oranges and damaging many trees. Warm weather in January made recovery of the trees seem promising, but on February 7, 1895, the temperature dropped precipitously and thousands of trees were destroyed. Orange production in Central Florida was reduced by 85 percent between 1895 and 1896.

The effect of the freezes, coming as they did at a time when Apopka's economy was already in decline, was a crushing blow. However, some residents were determined to remain in Apopka and economic conditions did start to improve with the beginning of the new century. The town, however, had a long way to go. From a population of nearly 1,500 in the mid-1880s, the town had dropped to just 350 permanent residents by 1905. Outside investors once more began to show an interest in real estate and business ventures in Apopka, and the formation of the Apopka Board of Trade in 1912 signaled the beginning of a new era of economic growth. The Apopka State Bank opened for business in the same year, replacing the one that had failed in 1894.

The board of trade actively sought to have new businesses locate in Apopka. It offered a free building site with railroad facilities and a five-year tax exemption to anyone who would establish a job producing enterprise and encouraged private firms to construct facilities such as hotels, citrus packing houses, or other suitable concerns. In 1914 the city's voters approved two bond issues: one to build a city hall and another for the construction of an electric power plant. During the same period, a municipal water tower was constructed to provide drinking water and fire protection for the community at large.

By 1914 Apopka had generally recovered from its long economic depression, and there was optimism for continued growth both physically and economically. Lumber mills, citrus packing houses, and a large machine shop offered employment for many of the town's citizens, who in turn supported the livelihood of local suppliers of goods and professional services. The expansion of Apopka's economy continued through most of the remainder of the decade, fueled in part by the war in Europe, which increased the demand for lumber, naval stores, and other raw materials

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4

Significance

found in the area. The gains made by the community during this period were countered, however, by a tornado that struck the town on the evening of January 11, 1918. The powerful windstorm ripped the center of Apopka, completely destroying 25 buildings and seriously damaging others.

The period immediately following World War I was for Florida and much of the rest of the nation one of unbridled optimism and enthusiasm for social experimentation and economic risk-taking. The accumulation of surplus capital during the war, and a campaign of advertising Florida as a winter resort wonderland afterward, precipitated a land rush known as the "Florida Boom." Land prices in coastal areas were pushed beyond imaginable limits, but then began to fall dramatically when it became clear that speculators were unable repay loans used to acquire large tracts of land and defaulted on the payment of mortgages. A hurricane that struck the lower east coast of the peninsula in 1926 hasten the collapse of the boom, thrusting Florida into depression several years before the rest of the nation.

While Apopka continued to be a rural community, it was influenced indirectly by the rapid growth being experienced by the state's coastal cities. Wishing to make their town attractive to new settlers and investors, the town government borrowed against future revenues that growth would bring to upgrade and expand municipal services in order to encourage new residents and businesses to locate in Apopka. New brick streets were laid and a new pumping truck purchased for the fire department. The city's water system was improved, and plans were made to construct a canal between Lake Apopka and Lake Marshall, thereby connecting the community with a navigable waterway to the Atlantic.

Apopka experienced a modest increase in tourism and real estate activity as the 1920s began. By 1923 Apopka ranked third in growth in the county, having grown to 1,200 people from 708 in 1913. A local realtors association was formed in 1924, and large tracts of land were sold at auction over the next year. Potential bidders were attracted by promises of drawings for cash prizes and automobiles, given absolutely free. The terms of payment for property were 20 percent down and the balance in "easy installment."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5

Significance

The end of the Florida Boom in 1926 brought and end to feverish real estate speculation in Apopka. The depression that gripped the lower east coast of Florida spread to northwest Orange County, and by 1930 new development ceased, forcing Apopka to join the rest of the nation in the Great Depression.

Statement of Significance

In 1876, Frank H. Davis, a native of Manchester, New Hampshire, moved to the Apopka area where he set out orange groves and began investing in real estate. In 1885 he opened a real estate office with R.M. Mitchell and filed a plat for Davis and Mitchell's Addition to Apopka, one of the first major subdivisions added to the original town plan. The newly platted area was intended for new residential construction made necessary by the growth of the town's population after the completion earlier in the year of the rail line linking Apopka with the state's expanding railroad network. Davis was among the early leading citizens of Apopka responsible for promoting the town's early development. He was a member of a number of civic organizations and helped found the local Congregational Church 1886. In 1886, he was made chairman of the Town Improvement Association, which was formed to deal with the emergency brought on the freezes of December 1894 and February 1895. In 1912 Davis was active in organizing the Apopka Board of Trade and served as its first president. He also served many terms as a city councilman before being elected mayor of Apopka in 1914. He died in office August 27, 1916.

Another Manchester native, Edward B. Waite, arrived in Apopka with his wife at about 1885. On January 30, 1886, Waite purchased lots 55 and 67 in Block B of the new subdivision and had a house constructed for himself and his family. The neighborhood around the house was called "Yankee Town" because of the large number of New Englanders who settled there and to distinguish it from "Old Town", which was the area around the Masonic Lodge. Edward Waite died in 1906, and his widow married Frank Davis. Davis made the house on Central Avenue his home from about 1906 until his death in 1916.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6

Significance

His wife, Abbie Waite Davis was also active in civic affairs. She was a leader of the reorganization of the Women's Improvement Club into the Apopka Women's Civic League on October 1, 1913. The club raised money in various ways for use in civic projects. Her son, Leslie P. Waite lived in the Waite-Davis House all his life, having been born there in 1892. He was a leader in city government and economic development for over thirty years, from 1916 until 1947. His first businesses were a dry goods store and a real estate office.

In 1925 he was one of the organizers of the Central Savings and Loan Association of Apopka. Also in the 1920's, Waite started growing ferns and played a major role in development of the foliage industry which is still such a major part of Apopka's economy today. By the mid 1920's he was one of the largest industrial fern growers in the region. Throughout the last half of the decade he aggressively sought to develop cooperative marketing efforts. In 1928 he helped form the Orange County Fern Clearing House Association. This organization for a while controlled 95 percent of fern production in Florida.

Like his stepfather, Ted Waite served several terms as a City Councilman. He was elected Mayor in 1940 and served for six years from 1941 through 1946, during which time he led the citizens of Apopka in supporting the war effort.

Today, the Waite-Davis House is one of the oldest remaining residences in the Apopka area. Its Folk Victorian I-House style of architecture is typical of houses built in Apopka between 1880 and 1900. Out of fourteen homes still surviving from Apopka's earlier years in 1976, eight were I-Houses with rearward extensions. Only the Waite-Davis House, however, retains most of its original gingerbread trim. At least some of the lumber used in construction of the building cut and planed in Apopka mills.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

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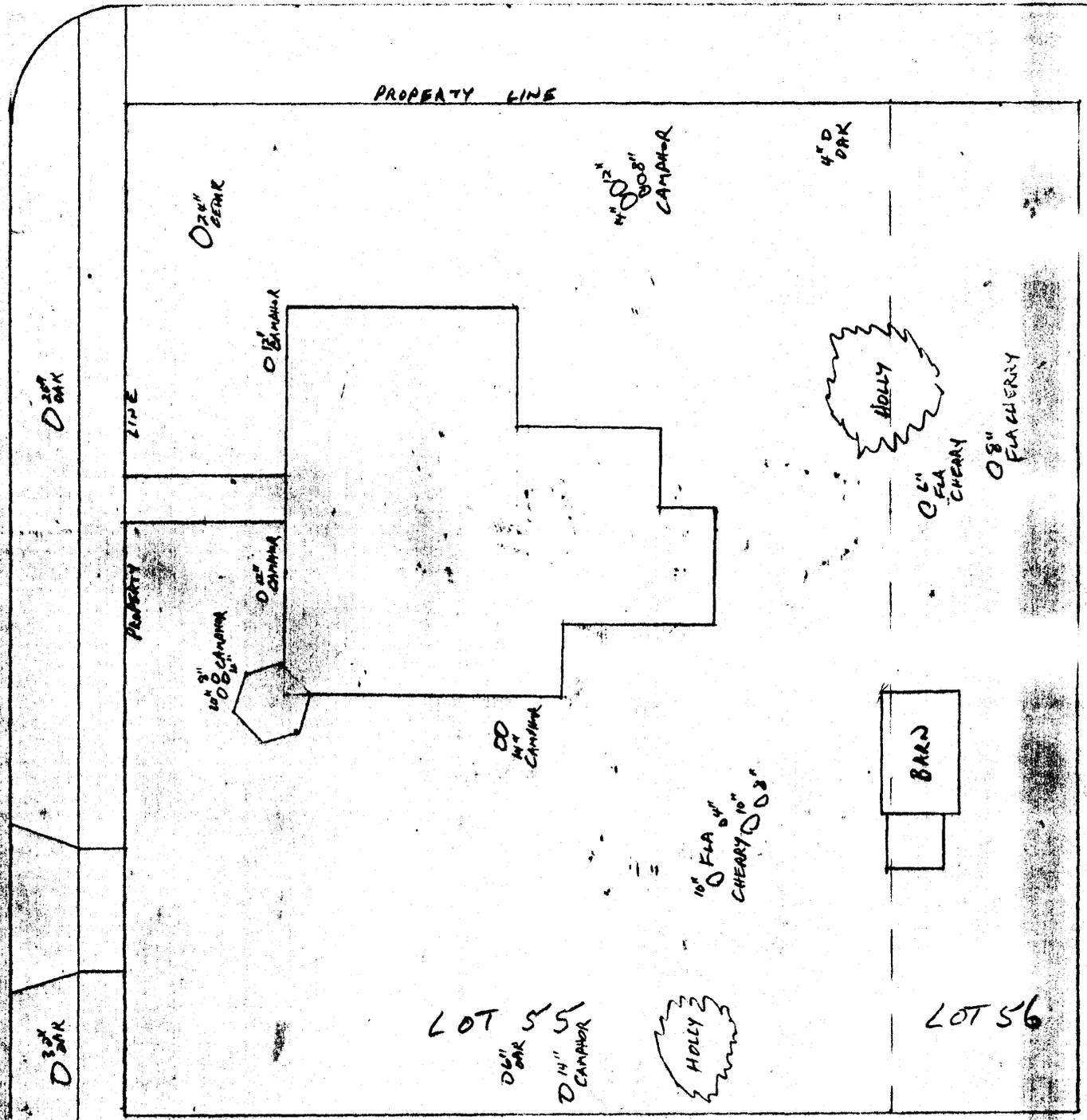
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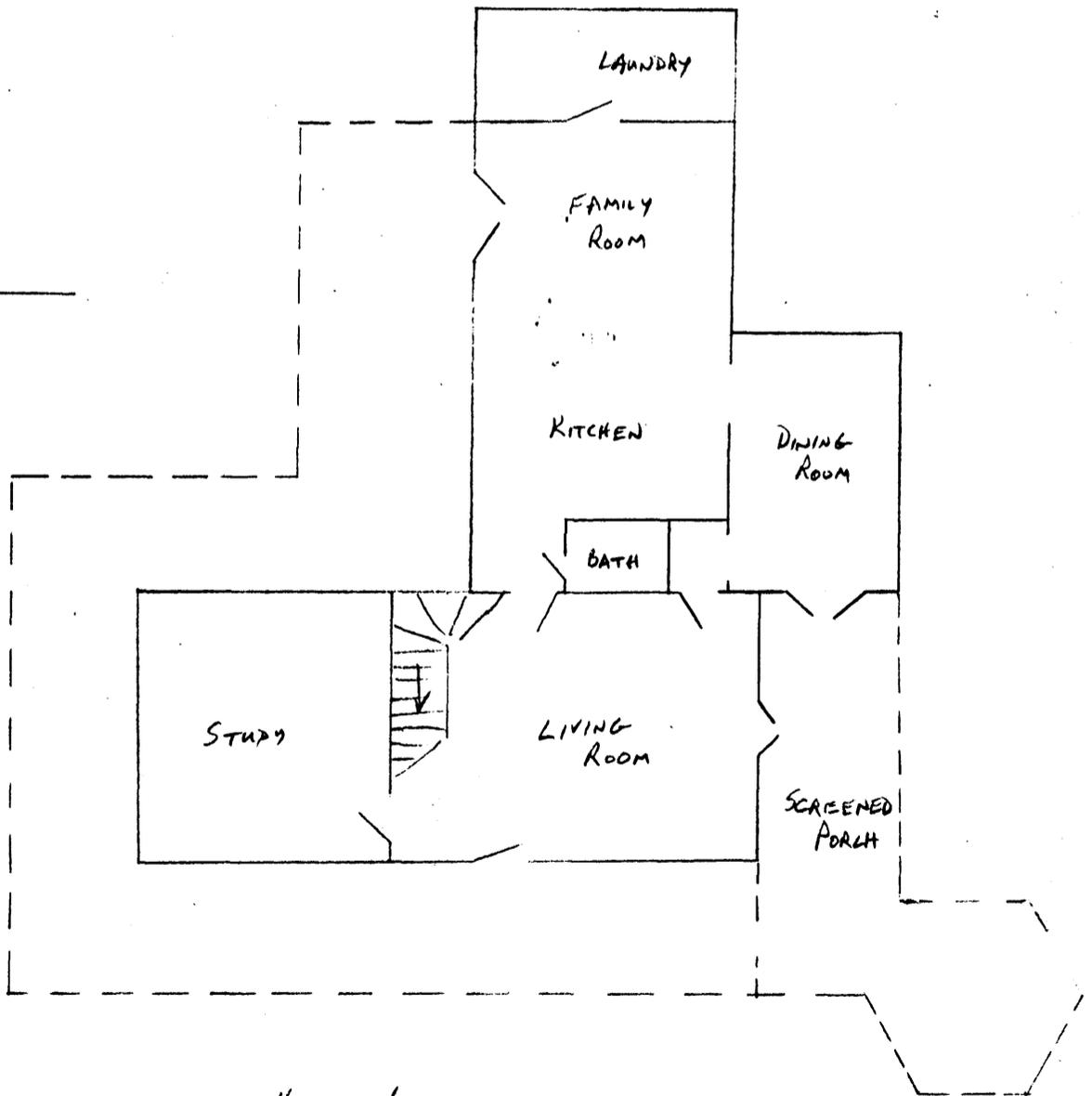
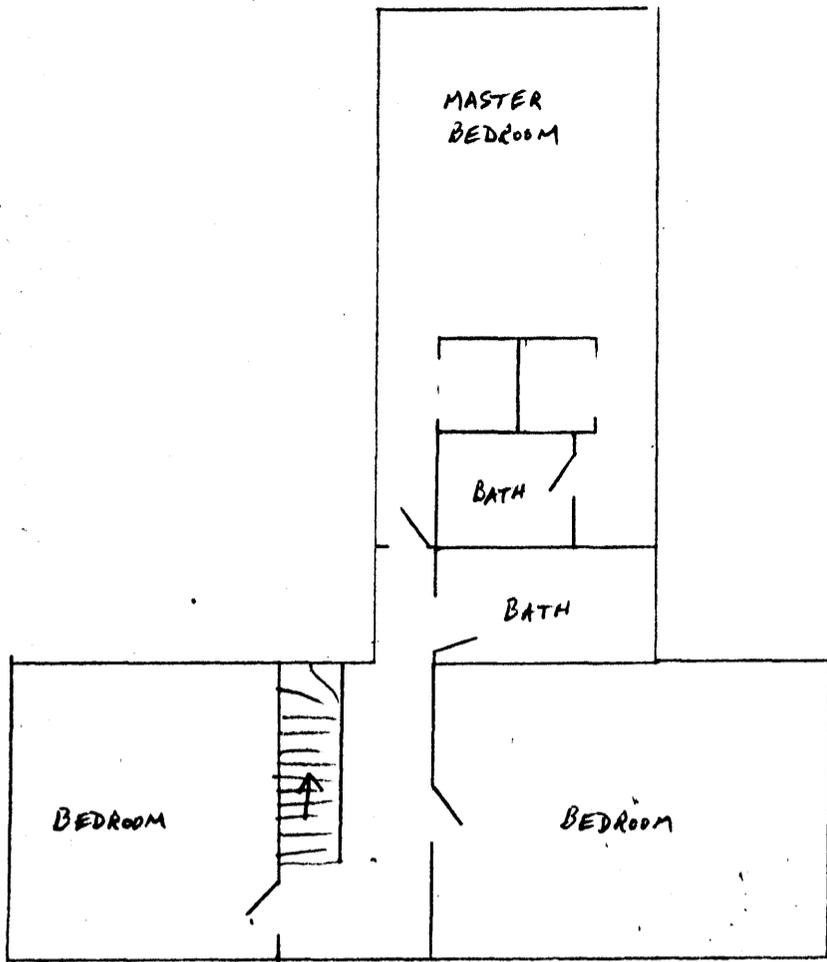
SCALE 1"=20'

ORANGE STREET

CENTRAL AVE



WATTE-DAVIS HOUSE
 5 SOUTH CENTRAL AVE
 APOKA, FLORIDA



1" = 10'

Waite-Davis House
Apopka, Florida