

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

For NPS use only

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

received JUL 27 1987

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic William E. Curtis House

and or common John F. Durack House

2. Location

street & number 808 East Curtis Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Tampa

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

code 012

county Hillsborough

code 057

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"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name John F. Durack

street & number 808 East Curtis Street

city, town Tampa

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hillsborough County Courthouse

street & number 419 Pierce Street

city, town Tampa

state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

The Man-made Environment in Tampa

title and Hillsborough County

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 (Revised 1983)

federal state county local

depository for survey records Florida Master Site File, Bureau of Archaeological Research

city, town Tallahassee

state Florida

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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

When William and Augusta Curtis purchased ten acres of land north of the growing town of Tampa in Hillsborough County in 1899, they began to develop an ornamental plant and citrus nursery in what was then a rural area of north Nebraska Avenue, the north-south corridor which linked by streetcar line the then independently incorporated community of Sulphur Springs with Tampa.¹ It is probable that the Curtises chose the property because it was located in an area still largely devoted to citrus raising but also had a ready market for floral plants and ornamental shrubs in the rapidly expanding residential subdivisions around Tampa. The rising value of residential lots led the Curtises in 1905 to plat their ten acres of land the Eureka Subdivision. In 1915, they replatted the land making some of the lots smaller. In addition to residential lots, commercial lots were established fronting on Nebraska Avenue.²

Growth in the area had been spurred in 1913 when T. Roy Young, who also developed the Beach Park Subdivision west of Tampa in the 1920s, began to sell lots in his Seminole Heights Subdivision just west of the Curtis property. Many other subdivisions were founded in the vicinity, all of which is now popularly known as Seminole Heights. It is characterized mainly by small wood frame bungalows and frame vernacular houses.³

The Curtis House is a Colonial Revival style two-story, wood frame structure with a gambrel roof. The plan of the original house was almost square with a central hall flanked by rooms of equal size (about 12 ft. X 20 ft.) on both floors. Wood shingles which originally covered the roof were replaced with composition shingles in the 1920s.⁴ The interior brick chimney is just off center to the left. The street facade is symmetrically arranged with three bays. The house rests on brick piers and is clad with drop siding. The main (south) facade features a centered, projecting one-story porch with a flat roof. The Tuscan columns which support the roof were originally spaced across the front. The main entrance is original and has sidelights (see photos #2 and #8).

The gambrel roof of the Dutch Colonial Revival style house features three dormers. The central dormer is gabled, while those flanking it are shed roofed. This arrangement offers an interesting contrast to the flat roof of the front porch and adds visual interest to the design of the facade. Photographs of the house made about 1907 show a small open porch on the east side of the house. This was enlarged in the 1920s and enclosed to make a "sun porch." The additions of the rear of the house are awkwardly proportioned and are not as well built as the original house. The kitchen was originally a lean-to which was enlarged with the addition of a breakfast room and a first floor bathroom sometime in the 1920s. A rear screened porch was constructed at about the same time. Early photographs show a large wooden water tank and a wood frame garage both of which are no longer extant. A small aluminum garden shed and an aluminum carport are the only structures other than the house now occupying the lot.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1905-1906

Builder/Architect William & Fred Curtis

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Curtis House is significant because it was one of the first residential structures erected in what is now called the Seminole Heights area of the city of Tampa, Florida. It is also associated with nurseryman William Curtis, who provided new stock to citrus growers in Hillsborough County and was one of the first major suppliers of ornamental and landscaping plants for the new subdivisions that grew up around Tampa during its building boom period. Curtis also platted one of the early subdivisions on the outskirts of Tampa. The house is also associated with Fred Curtis, the son of William Curtis, who was one of the city's major architects.

William Curtis and his wife, Augusta, purchased the property on which they were to build their house in 1899.¹ They had moved to Florida from New York state about 1890, and after their young citrus grove in Zellwood (Orange County) was destroyed by the 1895 freeze, they moved to Hillsborough County to begin again.² Tampa was a rapidly growing city whose population had been just 700 in 1880. However, the construction of the South Florida Railroad between the eastern seaboard city of Jacksonville and Tampa in 1883, and the discovery of phosphate deposits in the area began to spur interest in local real estate. Even more important to the growth of Tampa was the establishment of the cigar manufacturing centers of Ybor City (1885) and West Tampa (1894), plus the building of port facilities at Port Tampa in 1889. By 1895, Tampa had a population of nearly 10,000 persons.

In addition to being a nurseryman, William Curtis was a skilled carpenter and cabinetmaker, and it is likely that he was directly involved in the building of his house. The structure was probably designed by his son, Fred, an architect who had joined the family in Tampa about 1905. The Dutch Colonial Revival style of the Curtis House is not common in Tampa, there being only two other known examples in the city,⁴ but would have been more prevalent in Auburn, New York, where the Curtises had originally lived.⁵ Plans for this type of house were featured in popular publications and pattern books⁶ but it never proved popular in Florida.

At the time the Curtis House was constructed, sometime between 1895 and 1905, the surrounding area was still largely rural, most of the new development surrounding Tampa still being restricted to the Tampa Heights and Hyde Park subdivisions nearer to the downtown area. Curtis, however, must have realized the area's potential for development, for in 1905 he had the ten acres he owned platted as the Eureka Subdivision, a residential area laid out for single family dwellings. In addition to giving one of the streets the family, he named another "Emma Street," after his son's wife, and one was called "Cayuga Street" for their former home county in New York state.⁷ A section of land just west of Eureka Subdivision was developed in 1913 by T. Roy Young, who also laid out Beach Park on the shore of Old Tampa Bay about three miles west of downtown Tampa.⁸ It was not until 1923 that

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Tampa

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	3	5	16	1	6	0	3	0	9	6	5	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 17 and the West 17½ feet of Lot 18, Block 1 of the Revised Map of EUREKA SUBDIVISION, according to the map or plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, Page 43, of the Official Records of Hillsborough County

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation

date July 1, 1987

street & number R.A. Gray Building

telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee

state Florida


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



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

July 20, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

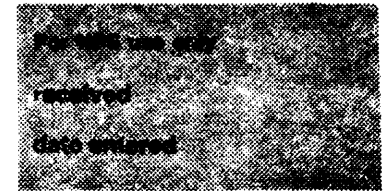
8/27/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Seminole Heights, which by then included Eureka Subdivision, became a part of the city of Tampa.⁹ The Eureka Subdivision conveniently bordered on Nebraska Avenue where a streetcar line ran between Tampa and Sulphur Springs, the location of a popular park with swimming and canoeing facilities in the mineral springs.¹⁰

Etta and Fred Curtis, the son and daughter of William and Augusta Curtis, both lived for a time in their parent's house. At some time after 1906, however, Fred built his own home nearby. That structure is no longer extant. When William Curtis died in 1916, Etta inherited the Curtis holdings in the Eureka Subdivision, including the family home.¹¹ She continued development of the subdivisions, supervising the construction of small, mainly bungalow style homes designed by her brother Fred.¹² In 1914, Fred Curtis entered into partnership with Franklin O. Adams, another prominent Tampa architect. Together they designed a number of commercial buildings in downtown Tampa and residential structures in Hyde Park. After the partnership was dissolved a number of years later, Curtis continued to practice in Tampa until his death in 1943.¹³

Etta Curtis lived in the family home, maintaining and renting houses in Eureka Subdivision until she died at the age of 71 in the same year as her brother. She left her property, including the house at 808 Curtis Street to her nephew, Fred Curtis, Jr. He continued the management of the Eureka properties and also established the Fred Curtis Construction Company, presently operated by his sons, William and Daniel Curtis.¹⁴ In 1949, the house at 808 Curtis Street was sold to John and Emily Durack who still reside there. It has been carefully maintained, and few changes have been made to affect the structural and visual integrity of the house.

NOTES

¹ Hillborough County, Official Records, Mortgage Book I-1, Page 468.

² Fred Curtis, Jr., Letter to Murray D. Laurie, June 9, 1986.

³ C.E. Bissell and Roy Dougherty, Tampa Illustrated (Tampa, 1903), p. 2.

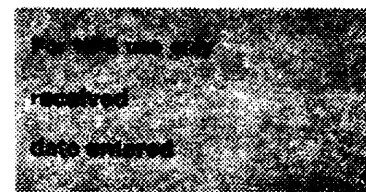
⁴ Fred Curtis, Jr.

⁵ Ibid., William Edward Curtis was born June 19, 1839 and died August 13, 1916, in Tampa. Augusta E. Curtis was born November 22, 1846, and died September 19, 1940, in Tampa. Fred M. Curtis was born November 12, 1870, and died January 13, 1943, in Tampa.

⁶ Charles Frances Osborner, ed., Country Homes and Gardens of Moderate Cost (Philadelphia, 1907), p. 64.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

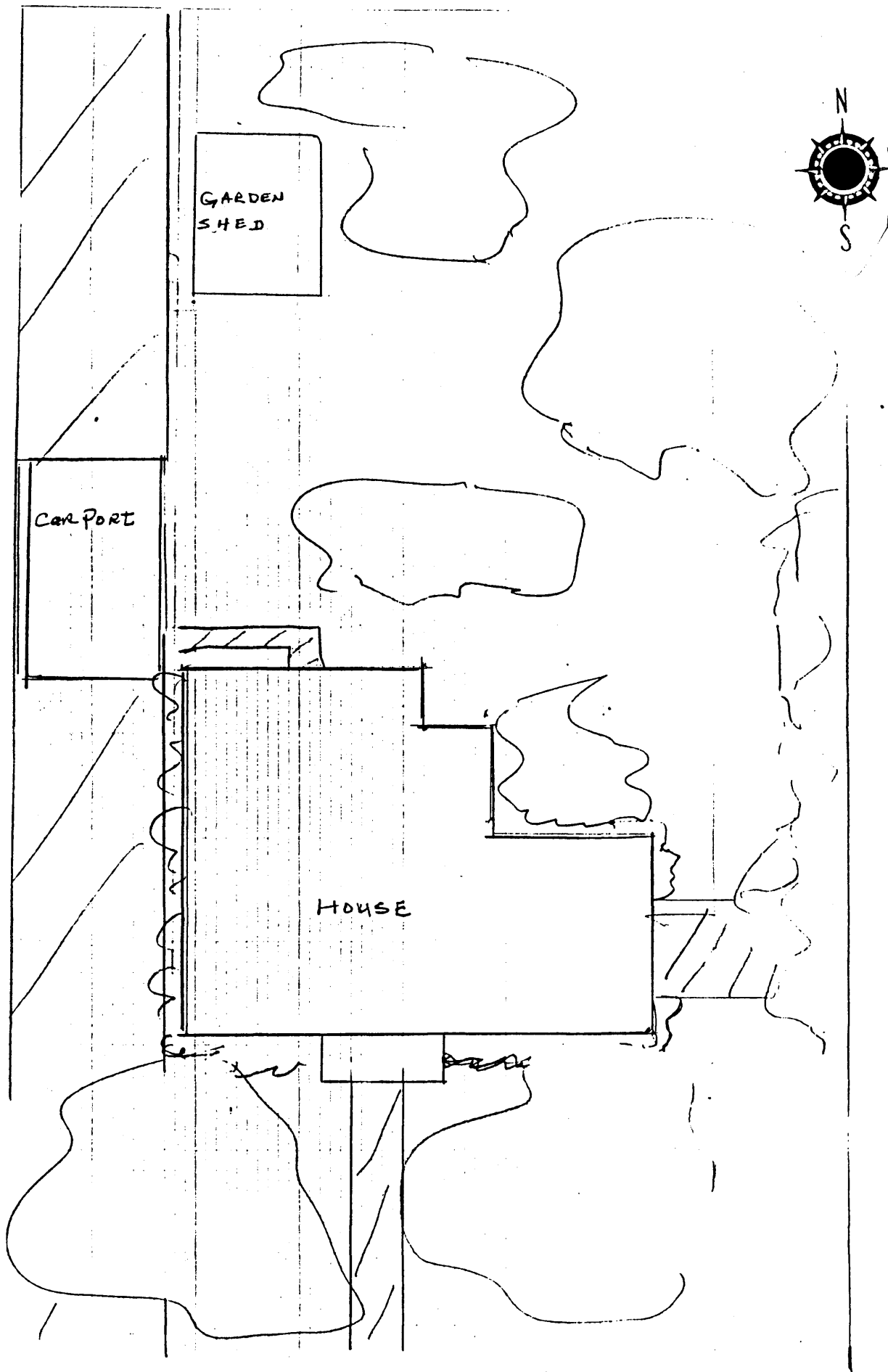
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Continuation sheet Bibliography Item number 9 Page 1

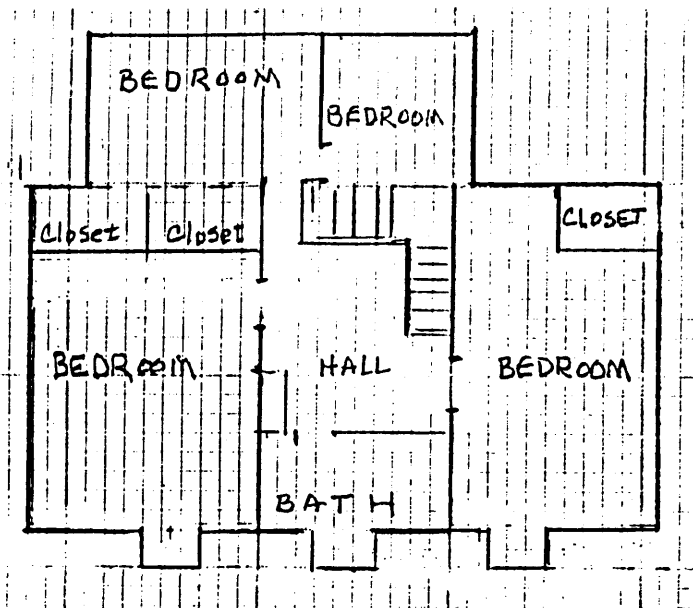
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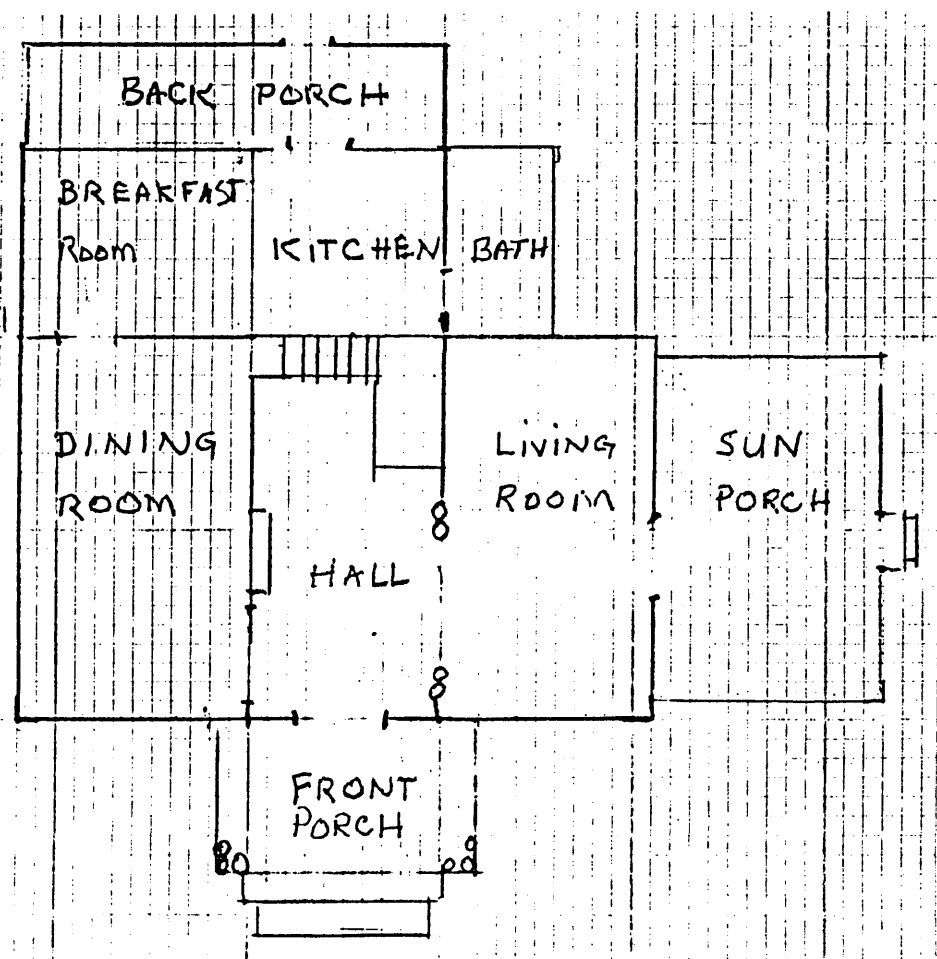


16 (b) Site Plan

Lot Size 82.5 X 140



Second Floor



First Floor

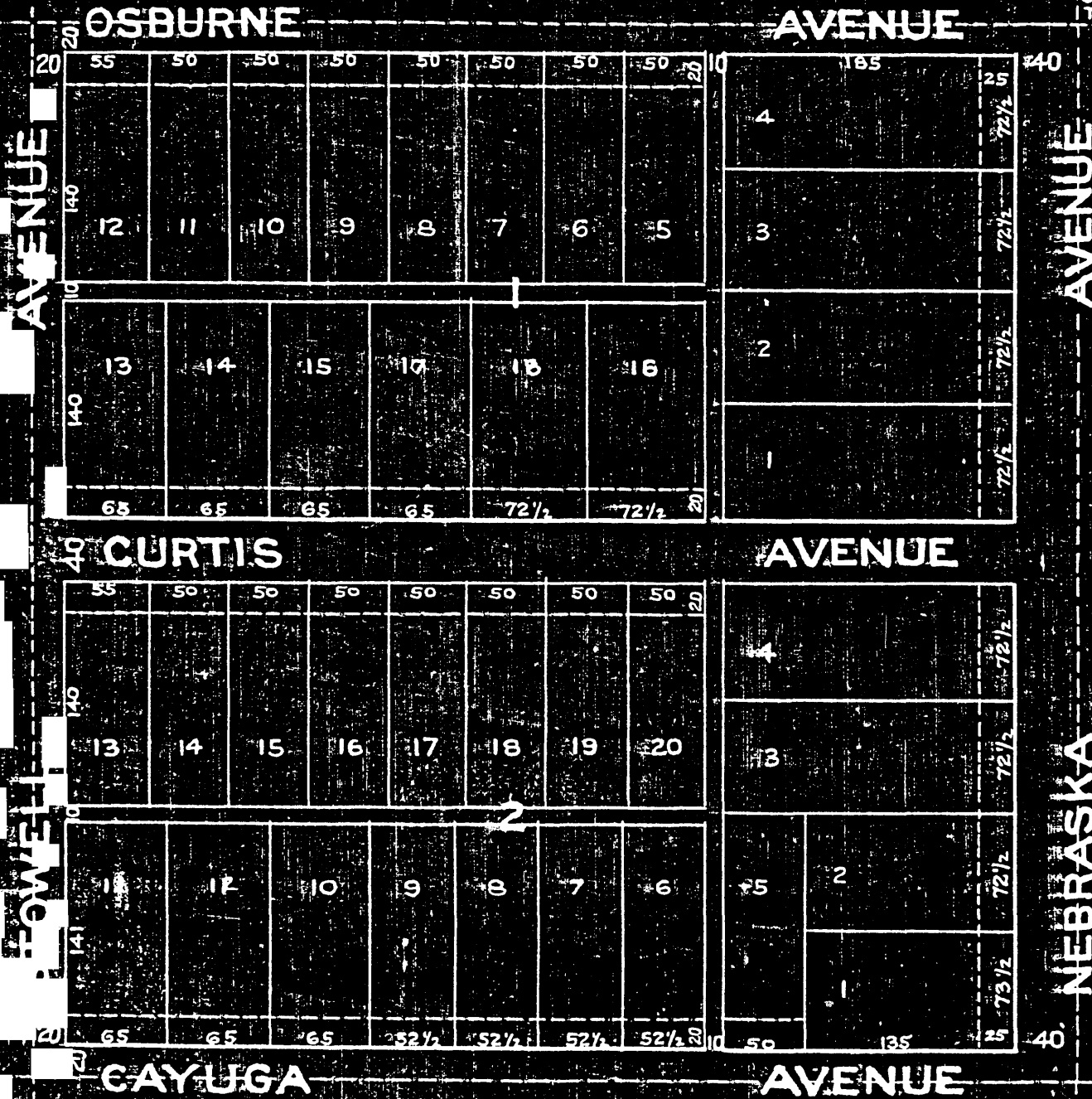
SCALE: 1 Square = 1 foot

THE N.E. 1/4 OF THE N.E. 1/4 OF THE S3E 1/4
SEC. 1 TOWNSHIP 29 S. RANGE 18 E.

Sub. and Del. March 9th 1905
By J. R. Swingley, C.E.
Restaked Jan. 1915
Scale - 1/4 inch = 100 feet

RECORDED Jan. 25th 1915 Book 8 Page 43

N.E. COR. Q.
1/4 OF SEC. 1
T. 29 S. R. 18 E.



Checked by CHARLTON