



**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.

Mark R. Edwards 11/03/98  
Signature of certifying official Date

Mark R. Edwards  
State Historic Preservation Officer

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:

entered in the National Register

Edson A. Beall 12/10/98

( ) determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) see continuation sheet

Bar \_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of the National Register Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/boarding house

### Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Neoclassical Revival  
OTHER/Georgian House

### Materials:

<b>foundation</b>	brick piers
<b>walls</b>	wood
<b>roof</b>	asphalt
<b>other</b>	metal

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Ritch-Carter-Martin House is located just east of the center of Odum, a small railroad town, in Wayne County. The large two-story house is located on the southeastern corner of Tillman Street and U.S. Highway 341/Georgia State Route 27, the latter being the major street through Odum. The house was historically associated with five lots, however, four lots remain intact (see National Register Map). Historically, the lots extended north towards the railroad tracks and Main Street, which runs parallel to the railroad on the north. Several feet were sold as right-of-way for the completion of U.S. Highway 341/Georgia State Route 27 in 1926.

The Ritch-Carter-Martin House is located on lot 1, the lot adjacent to the corner of U.S. Highway 341/Georgia State Route 27 and Tillman Street. The two-story wood-framed house, constructed c.1915, represents the Georgian House type built in the Neoclassical Revival style. The house features a rear kitchen addition; the original freestanding kitchen was added to the house during the historic period. Other additions and alterations include a rear porch enclosure during the historic period to serve as a bathroom, another rear porch enclosed in 1982, and a metal carport added c.1968. The two-story house features a full-height entry porch with lower full-width porch. The lower full-width porch is supported by one-story columns on piers. Unlike most Neoclassical

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### Section 7--Description

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Revival-style residences, the full-height entry porch is supported by one-story, round, slender columns with Tuscan capitals instead of large colossal columns. Other exterior architectural features include a hipped roof, one interior chimney, decorative shingle design in the pediment, trabeated first- and second-story entrances, one-over-one double-hung windows, and brick pier foundation.

The interior floor plan represents the Georgian House type, a two-story house featuring a central hallway with two rooms located on either side. The Georgian House floor plan remains intact on the second story. On the first floor, a wall and chimney/fireplaces between the front and rear east rooms have been removed. The rest of the first floor conveys the Georgian House-type floor plan with an intact central hallway with a staircase and two equal-sized rooms on the west side of the hallway. The interior features include 10-foot ceilings made of plaster and bead board, plaster walls, bead-board wainscoting, wood floors, classically-influenced mantels, and 5-panel doors with transoms.

The landscaping surrounding the Ritch-Carter-Martin House consists of large mature oak and pecan trees and foundation plantings. Many of the large trees were planted from the mid-1910s to the 1940s. The property also historically featured several outbuildings (see National Register Map/Site Plan). The property historically encompassed a privy, smoke house, mule barn, buggy shed, well, Delco light plant, and commissary (store). The remaining outbuildings include the smokehouse, now a laundry/utility building, and the commissary, now a shed/workshop.

The Carter-Martin-House remains a very visible and important building in Odum. The house has retained much of its historic setting and is the last surviving example of a two-story Neoclassical Revival-style residence in Odum.

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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  
COMMERCE

**Period of Significance:** c.1915 to 1948.

**Significant Dates:**

c.1915      Construction of the Ritch-Carter-Martin House  
1930      Opening of the boarding house.

**Significant Person(s):**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

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

Paul Edward McCall - builder.

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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

The Ritch-Carter-Martin House was built c.1915 for James Colquitt Ritch (1869-1944), a wealthy farmer and businessman. The Ritch-Carter-Martin House is a rare surviving two-story house in the town of Odum and significant in the areas of architecture and commerce.

The property is significant in the area of architecture as an excellent example of a Georgian House-type residence built in the Neoclassical Revival style. The character-defining features of the Georgian House type include the two-story height, square-plan shape, hipped roof, and remaining interior chimney. The significant interior features include the intact Georgian House-type floor plan, a central hallway with two rooms on either side, on the second floor; the intact first-floor central hallway with staircase and two equal-sized rooms on the west side of the hallway; the remaining interior chimney with classically-inspired mantels; plaster and bead-board ceilings; plaster walls with bead-board wainscoting; wood floors; and five-panel interior doors with transoms. Even though a wall was removed between the front and rear east rooms on the first floor, the sense of original two rooms is still conveyed through the original intact two doors along the central hallway providing access into the room. The Georgian House type was popular in Georgia from the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most examples of the type, however, were built in the periods 1850-1860 and 1900-1930, chiefly in the larger towns and cities.

The character-defining features of the Neoclassical Revival style include overall symmetry and architectural features such as the full-height entry porch with lower full-width porch, decorative shingle design in the pediment; one-and two-story trabeated doorways; one-over-one double-hung windows, and slender round columns with Tuscan capitals. This example of the full-height entry porch with lower full-width porch subtype of the Neoclassical Revival style is rare and significant since most examples feature two-story colossal columns; however, this house features two tiers of one-story, slender, round columns. The Neoclassical Revival style was very popular in Georgia. The style was built in Georgia's rural areas, cities, and small towns from the 1890s through the 1930s. In Odum, the Ritch-Carter-Martin House is the last surviving example of a two-story Neoclassical Revival-style historic residence.

The property is significant in the area of commerce for its use as a boarding house beginning in the 1930s. H.C. Carter and his wife, Essie Moody Carter, purchased the property in 1925. Following her husband's death in 1928, Essie Moody Carter used the second-story rooms as boarding rooms. Boarders included teachers, highway department workers, newlyweds, and others. The second-story of the house functioned as a "boarding house" until the 1970s. Historically, Odum featured two

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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other boarding houses besides the Ritch-Carter-Martin House. The O'Quinn-Campbell Boarding House/Hotel, recently razed, was located across Tillman Street from the Ritch-Carter-Martin House. Miss Jo Odumn's Boarding House, located near the center of town, was destroyed in the 1950s. Boarding houses like these were once common in small Georgia cities and towns and represented significant historic business opportunities for women. The Ritch-Cater-Martin House is the last property remaining in Odum associated with boarding houses.

#### National Register Criteria

The Ritch-Carter-Martin House is eligible under National Register Criterion A for its significance as a boarding house and under National Register Criterion C for its architectural significance.

#### Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

#### Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Ritch-Carter-Martin House begins with the construction of the house c.1915 and ends in 1948 with the continuous use of the boarding house during the historic period.

#### Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The four contributing resources encompass three historic buildings and overall landscape. The one noncontributing resource consists of a modern carport.

#### Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

**\*\*Note: The following history was prepared by Hazel Dean Overstreet and Robin Brown Nail, "Ritch-Carter-Martin House," Historic Property Information Form, January 1996. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

Originally known as "Haslam," the town of Odum dates from the 1860s. It began as a sawmill town and railroad stop, where most people engaged in farming and/or turpentine. As the town grew, Odum became an important trading and shipping point for the western part of Wayne County.

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James Colquitt Ritch, a prominent farmer and businessman who lived on a farm about two miles south of Odum, built the large two-story frame house known as the Ritch-Carter-Martin House about 1915. Ritch was born in 1869 and descended from the area's early pioneer families. His parents were Green B. and Lucinda Ritch. His father had the distinction of simultaneously representing Appling and Wayne counties in the state legislature. This was due to the 1870s boundary change between the two counties in which lands in eastern Appling County, including Odum, became part of Wayne County. He married Tilla I. Crosby (1870-1921), the daughter of B.T. Crosby who gave the land for the Screven Methodist Church and Cemetery, on January 9, 1890. They had five children: Dr. Thomas Green Ritch (1890-1951); Katie Elvira Ritch (1892-1897); Lilla Agnes Ritch Harris (1893-?); Sulah Ritch Abbott (1895-1963); and Dr. Colquitt Otis Ritch (1897-1991). Their oldest child, Dr. Thomas Ritch, became a prominent Wayne County physician and co-owner of the local hospital in Jesup. Dr. Ritch's daughter, Dr. Una Ritch Yeomans (1915-1954), was one of the South's leading women doctors in the 1940s. The youngest of James Colquitt Ritch's children, Dr. Otis Ritch practiced medicine in Chicago for his entire career.

On June 18, 1915, J.C. Ritch purchased one half acre town lot in Odum known as the "E.C. Carter Store House Lot" from W.H. Aspinwall for \$475. It was a corner lot located across the road from the Odum Depot and adjacent to land which Ritch already owned (former Odum Lumber Company property). The previous structure on the site is said to have been moved. Ritch engaged a local carpenter/builder named Paul Edward McCall to construct the residence. McCall was known as one of the area's foremost builders, having built houses in Jesup, as well as the two-story Daniel residence in nearby Brentwood. The Ritch-Carter-Martin House is said to resemble the Daniel House, which burned years ago. This is possible given that Ritch had business dealings with its owner, Fillmore Daniel, and may have seen or visited the house. It is also recalled that Ritch had hand selected (no knots) yellow/heart pine cut from his large land holdings and kiln dried for a year prior to beginning construction. The house was built on a cost plus basis with \$10,000 worth of materials required up front.

A grandson of J.C. Ritch, Phillip Harris, has fond memories of visiting his grandparents in their new house, which was built when he was around four years old. He remembers his grandmother cautioning him not to put his dirty hands on the clean, new walls, and that she baked "the best egg custard pies in the world." Harris also recalls his younger sister, Launius (born in 1915) crawling around the new house and his Aunt Sulah's wedding to Cleveland Abbott, which was held at the house in December, 1916.

There were originally a number of outbuildings on the grounds. These included a mule barn and lot,



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a buggy shed (later became a two car garage), a Delco light plant, a commissary, a smokehouse, and a privy. The four large pecan trees near the house are said to have been planted by a black man shortly after the residence was completed. The road in front of the Ritch-Carter-Martin House (now present-day U.S. 341) was not built until about 1926, at which time eight feet had to be cut off the buggy shed to accommodate the new road.

Ritch's farming and business interests were extensive. Among them, he owned a turpentine still, sawmill, commissary, and quarters (where the workers lived) located south of Odum. He is said to have bought mules by the train car load from north Georgia and Tennessee to sell. A plat surveyed in August, 1925 shows that Ritch owned several thousand acres in Odum. He also built at least two brick commercial buildings in Odum. One was an office for his son, Dr. Thomas G. Ritch, and the other was a store which housed the post office and later Nat Clary's drugstore and Dr. Emory Moody's office. In addition, Ritch was a director of the local bank.

Following the death of his first wife in 1921, Ritch married a Miss Agnes Middleton, who was a teacher from Hortense, Georgia. On February 1, 1922, Ritch traded some of his Odum property to John A. Manget of Fulton County, Georgia. This appears to have included the town lot and house, along with 14 additional town lots and 115 acres in two tracts. According to family stories, Ritch traded some of his land for apartments in Atlanta. Perhaps this was the transaction recalled. Sometime afterward, Ritch moved to the Albany/Dougherty County area of Georgia where it is believed he remained until his death on August 5, 1944.

H.C. Carter ("Big H"), a large landowner and turpentine operator, purchased five city lots in Odum, including the Ritch-Carter-Martin House, from F.S. Hall of Fulton County, Georgia on August 12, 1925 for \$1,000. It is unknown how Hall obtained the property, but both Hall and Manget, the last known property owner, were residents of Fulton County. After H.C. Carter's death, his sons Belton and Harold Carter purchased the five lots before the Pierce County Courthouse door in Blackshear. They paid \$3,000 for the property (each to receive one-half interest) in March, 1928. Less than two years later, the then widow of Harold (Sonny) Carter and administratrix of his estate, Essie Moody Carter, purchased her late husband's one-half interest in the property for \$1,200 before the Pierce County Courthouse in January, 1930.

"Miss Essie," as she is called by everyone who knows her, has lived in the house for about 65 years. She managed to make major repairs and improvements to the house soon after acquisition even though it was during the Great Depression. Miss Essie recalls that she spent \$6,000 repairing broken windows and generally making the house comfortable for herself and her two young

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daughters, Harolyn and June. Miss Essie began renting upstairs rooms to local teachers, highway department personnel, newlyweds, and others in the 1930s. Teachers boarded at the house for more than 40 years. In addition to providing room and board for numerous temporary and some long-term boarders through the years, Miss Essie entertained extensively at her home. The large front porch was a gathering place for the young people of Odum, with numerous parties and ice cream suppers held there. Many also learned to dance at Miss Essie's as there was no community recreation center in those early days.

The Odum telephone exchange was located in the Ritch-Martin House for more than 30 years from the mid 1930s to 1965. Miss Essie bought the Odum telephone exchange from the Jacksons of Darien, who had purchased it from the Parkers of Hinesville. Mr. Lonnie Parker first brought telephone service to Odum around 1912. Miss Essie's brother, Carl Moody, operated the exchange for his sister for about a year. He had served in World War I and was shell-shocked, but he knew Morse Code and understood electronics. The telephone switchboard and other equipment were located in one of the rear downstairs rooms of the Ritch-Martin House. It was through the telephone business that Miss Essie met Joe Martin, a telephone linesman for his brother-in-law, Lonnie Parker. After their marriage in 1937, the Martins continued to operate the exchange and built lines covering a large rural area. Lines ran to Screven and Madray Springs (15 miles southwest and 10 miles northeast of Odum, respectively), as well as to Friendship, O'Quinn, Ritch, Redland, Oglethorpe, Empire, New Hope, Old River Road, Bennett Mill Pond, Nine Run Road, Collins Loop, Lanes Bridge, Bear Island Road, Cherokee Lake, and other communities. The Martins maintained several hundred miles of telephone lines in all. Joe Martin served as general manager and linesman for the Odum Telephone Exchange from 1937 to 1965. During this time, the Martins installed dial systems, first in Screven and then in Odum. Both were in place before the county seat of Jesup had a dial system. Miss Essie recalls that she delivered many a death message in the "dead" of night to those who had no telephone. In addition to family members, a number of friends helped operate the exchange throughout the years.

The Martins have made a number of other important contributions to the Odum community as well. Joe Martin served two terms as mayor from 1971 to 1975. Miss Essie is the oldest living member of the 100 year old Odum Methodist Church, where she taught Sunday School, participated in the United Methodist Women, and played the piano for both Sunday School and church services. Due to failing eyesight, Miss Essie has had to give up her piano playing, although she occasionally will play some of the old familiar hymns from memory much to the congregation's delight. Miss Essie is truly a legend in Odum. She entertained extensively and befriended many a person over the years. Miss Essie was known for being able to do almost anything, ranging from making draperies to baking

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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**Section 8--Statement of Significance**

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the best pound cake this side of heaven!

Since its construction c.1915, the Ritch-Carter-Martin House has been the home of generations of Wayne Countians, including six generations of Miss Essie's family alone, who have made significant contributions to the local community. Joe and Essie Martin continue to live in their home surrounded by loving family and friends.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings. Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. 1991.

Nail, Robin Brown and Hazel Dean Overstreet. "Ritch-Carter-Martin House," Historic Property Information Form. January 1996. On file at the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental information.

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

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued  
date issued:
- 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:**

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

**Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** Wayne County Survey F-18

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreeage of Property**                      Approximately 1.8 acres

**UTM References**

A)    Zone 17    Easting 402770    Northing 3503440

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The National Register boundary is marked on the attached tax map with a heavy black line.

**Boundary Justification**

The National Register boundary encompasses the Ritch-Carter-Martin House and the remaining four city lots associated with the property.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**State Historic Preservation Office**

**name/title** Amy Pallante/National Register Specialist  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** November 1998

**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)**                      ( ) not applicable

**name/title** Hazel Dean Overstreet and Robin Nail  
**organization** Wayne County Historical Society/Historic Preservation Planner of the Altamaha  
Georgia Southern Regional Development Center  
**street & number** 5175 Odum Highway  
**city or town** Odum **state** Georgia **zip code** 31555  
**telephone** (912) 586-6634 **date** January 1996

( ) **consultant**  
(x) **regional development center preservation planner**  
(x) **other: Wayne County Historical Society**

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

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**Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

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**Name of Property:** Ritch-Carter-Martin House  
**City or Vicinity:** Odum  
**County:** Wayne  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** May 1997

**Description of Photograph(s):**

- 1 of 13 View of the Ritch-Carter-Martin House; photographer facing south.
- 2 of 13 Detail of front façade; photographer facing south.
- 3 of 13 View of rear façade; photographer facing north.
- 4 of 13 View of east elevation; photographer facing northwest.
- 5 of 13 Detail of main entrance; photographer facing southwest.
- 6 of 13 Detail view of front porch; photographer facing east

\*Note: Photos 7-11 were taken by the property owners and then electronically scanned onto archival paper.

- 7 of 13 View of staircase in first-floor central hallway; photographer facing southwest.
- 8 of 13 Detail view of mantel located in first-floor, front, west room; photographer facing south.
- 9 of 13 Detail view of mantel located in first-floor, back, west room; photographer facing north.
- 10 of 13 View of second-floor central hallway with staircase; photographer facing south.
- 11 of 13 Detail view of interior five-panel door and plaster wall with wainscoting.

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Continuation Sheet**

**Photographs**

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- 12 of 13      Detail view of the smokehouse; photographer facing south.
- 13 of 13      Detail view of the commissary; photographer facing southwest.





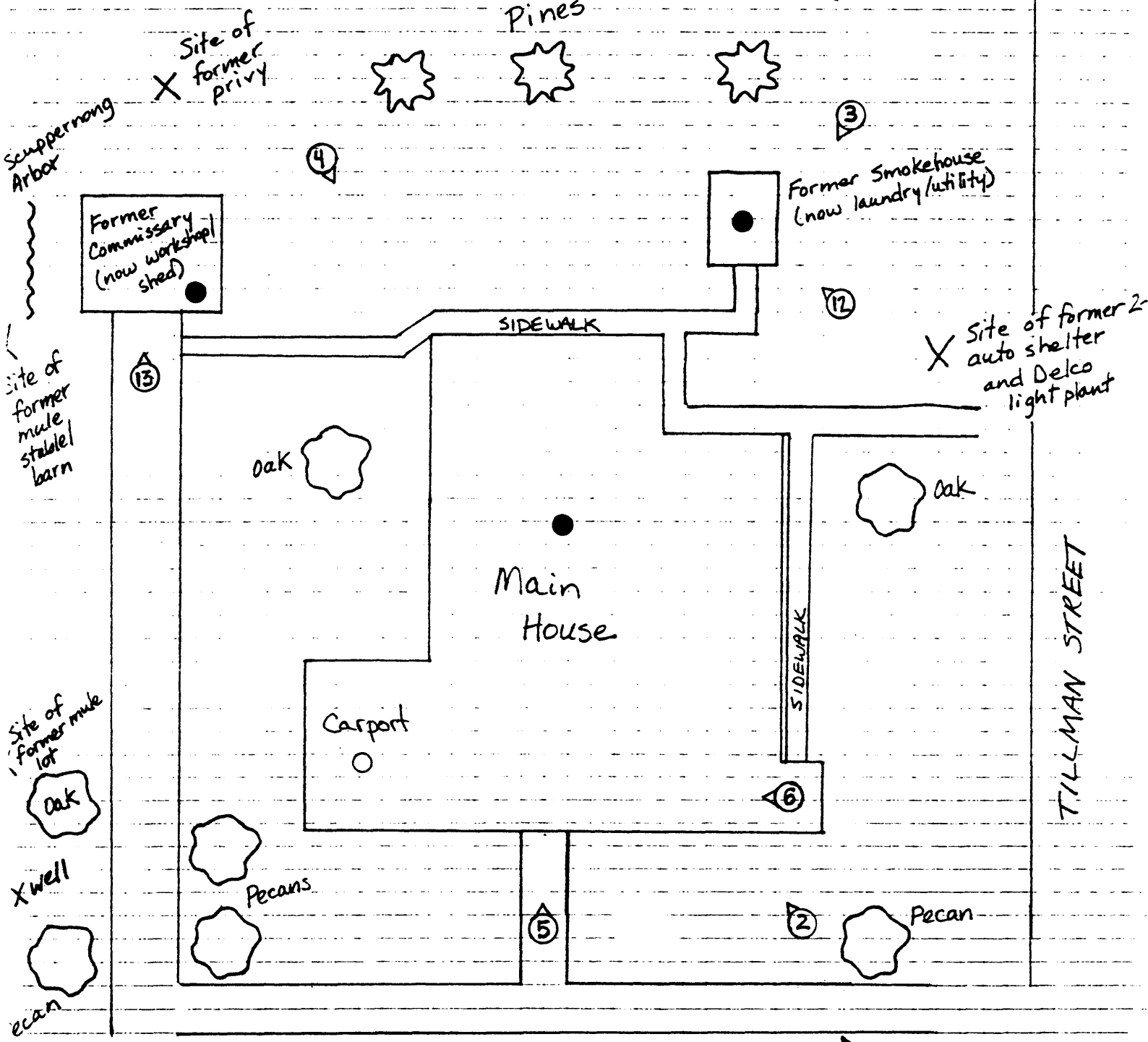
National Register Map/Site Plan

Ritch-Carter-Martin House

Odum, Wayne County, Georgia

Scale: Not drawn to scale

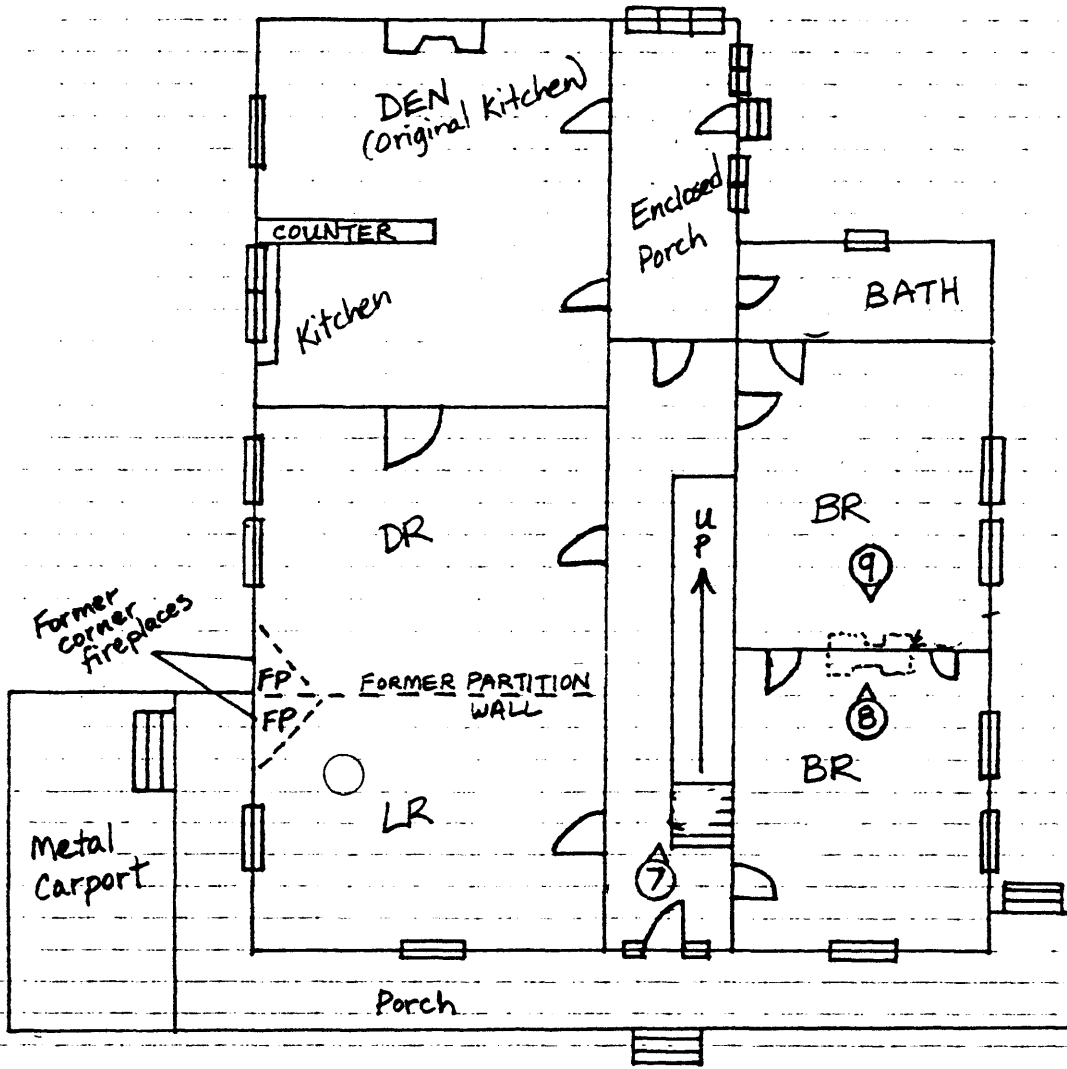
- = Contributing resource
- = Noncontributing resource
- ⊙ = Photo direction and number



U.S. 341/GA 27

National Register Map/1<sup>st</sup> Floor Plan  
Ritch-Carter-Martin House  
Odum, Wayne County, Georgia  
Scale: Not drawn to scale

○ = Photo direction and number



**National Register Map/2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Plan**  
Ritch-Carter-Martin House  
Odum, Wayne County, Georgia  
Scale: Not drawn to scale

⊙ = Photo direction and number

