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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name HELFRICH, WILLIAM HOUSE

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1200 Plainfield Avenue

N/A not for publication

city or town Orange Park

N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Clay code 019 zip code 32073

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Janet Peltz, DSHPO 6-11-98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Edson W. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

7-15-98
Date of Action

Helfrich, William House
Name of Property

Clay Co., FL
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

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

Name of related multiple property listings
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic Architectural Resources of Orange Park, Florida

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
DOMESTIC: stable

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
DOMESTIC: garage

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Frame Vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls WOOD

roof ASPHALT
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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
- # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY SETTLEMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1882-1948

Significant Dates

1882

1920

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Helffrich, William, builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository

Helffrich, William House
Name of Property

Clay Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	3	2	0	4	0	3	3	3	8	2	6	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sidney Johnston/Robert O. Jones, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date June 1998

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Gertrude Sigman, trustee

street & number 1200 Plainfield Avenue telephone unlisted

city or town Orange Park state FL zip code 32073

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1 HELFFRICH HOUSE, ORANGE PARK, CLAY
COUNTY, FLORIDA

SUMMARY

The Helffrich House is located at 1200 Plainfield Avenue in Orange Park, Clay County, Florida. Built in 1882, the house is a frame vernacular design with Gothic Revival influences. The house, which rests on brick piers, has an irregular footprint; wooden drop siding; and a steeply pitched, complex cross-gable roof with hip extensions. One brick chimney pierces the roof. Most windows have 2/2 and 6/6, double-hung wooden sashes. One outbuilding, a carriage house, contributes to the nomination. The William Helffrich House is nominated under the Multiple Property cover "Historic Architectural Resources of Port Orange, Florida," under Property Type F.1, Residential Buildings.

SETTING

The Town of Orange Park is located 15 miles southwest of downtown Jacksonville on the west bank of the St. Johns River. The historic house is 6 blocks from the river at the intersection of Plainfield and Blake streets, and one block north of the historic Orange Park Elementary School. Residences of non-historic construction lie to the west, north, and south with several older residences scattered to the south. East/west Kingsley Avenue and north/south U.S. Highway 17 serve as primary corridors through Orange Park. Plainfield Avenue, an important secondary street, runs parallel and west of U.S. 17, intersecting with that Highway 17 near the northern limit of the town. Plainfield Avenue intersects with Kingsley Avenue six blocks south of the house. Vegetation surrounding the house is dense, with live oak trees, a variety of palm trees, azaleas, camellias, and many other small native plants. Citrus trees originally dotted the landscape, but were lost in the freezes of the 1890s. A small outbuilding is 50 feet southwest of the dwelling.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The east (main) facade fronts on Plainfield Avenue, and is set back 100 feet (Photo #1). The most distinctive feature is a steeply-pitched, side-facing gable roof with a steeply-pitched, central cross gable. A pointed, 6/6, double-hung sash is within the front gable. Three 2/2, double-hung wooden sash windows are evenly spaced across the second story.

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The first story has 4/1, double-hung sash windows flanking the front entrance. A front porch with a shed roof supported by brick piers extends across the facade.

The south elevation has a one-story hip extension. The extension's roof is integrated into the roof of the front porch (Photos #2&3). Continuous groupings of 4/1, double-hung sash windows line the walls of the first story, two 2/2 sash windows on the second story, and one 6/6, triangular pointed sash window is in the gable peak.

The west (rear) elevation has a small one-story gable and shed extension spanning it (Photo #3). The first story contains two windows, a door, and a screened area. The second story contains three windows.

The north elevation has a group of three 4/1, double-hung sashes, and a pair of 10-light casement windows. Two 2/2, sashes fill the second story windows, and a triangular pointed 6/6, double-hung sash window is within the gable (Photo #1).

Interior

The interior of the house measures approximately 2,000 square feet. The first story consists of a dining room, kitchen, laundry room, living room, restroom, sun room, and study. The floors are wood, and the walls and ceiling are plaster. Paneled wood doors, and French doors with original glass and brass hardware, separate most rooms. The ceilings are ten feet high. Doors and windows are trimmed with plain boards edged with small rectangular moldings.

The entrance opens into a living room which is dominated by a fireplace with a plain wooden surround and carved bracket supported mantel. The fireplace is flanked by built-in bookcases (Photo #4). A study lies to the south of the living room (Photo #5). An enclosed straight staircase extends within the west wall of the study with access from either the study, sun room, or dining room (Photo #6). The sun room extends across the south elevation of the house (Photos #2&4), and the dining room lies to the north of it, opposite the study (Photo #7). Beyond the dining room lies the kitchen, one of the largest rooms in the house (Photos #8&9). A rear porch/laundry and restroom opens to the west from the kitchen (Photo #9).

A straight wooden staircase near the center of the house provides access to the second story which is divided into two bedrooms, a restroom, and sitting and workroom (Photo #10). Doors, hardware, and trim simpler than those found on the first floor. A portion of the west wall of the

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staircase has been opened to reveal the interior framework supporting the ceiling. A stairwell, accessed from the second floor's southeast bedroom, rises to an attic storage area which contains the pointed gable windows.

ALTERATIONS

About 1920 the sun room was built onto the south side of the house, and a deteriorated front porch was replaced with the current porch with shed roof that intersects with the hip roof of the sun room. Pairs of windows that flanked the main door were replaced with groups of three sash windows. Two windows on the second story, spaced between the current three windows, were removed. About 1940 a small gable extension expanded the dining room to the west, and a rear porch with bathroom, sheltered by a shed roof was added.

CONTRIBUTING OUTBUILDING

A contributing garage is fifty feet southwest of the house (Photo #11). It has a front-facing gable roof surfaced with corrugated metal; 2/2, double-hung sash windows; and wood drop siding. It rests on a poured concrete foundation and contains an offset vehicle bay.

The outbuilding was constructed about 1920 as a stable. It originally stood 100 feet directly to the west in the same orientation to the house that it presently assumes. It was moved to its present location about 1964 when the adjacent property was bought.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 8 Page 1 **HELFFRICH HOUSE, ORANGE PARK, CLAY
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Helffrich House is nominated to the National Register for its significance on the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Architecture, and Exploration/Settlement. The house is significant as a frame vernacular dwelling with Gothic Revival influences. Measuring 2,000 square feet, it is one of Orange Park's largest nineteenth century dwellings. The design of the house links the architecture of Orange Park with Helffrich's rural region of southeastern Pennsylvania, where dwellings of this style were relatively common. The house, completed in 1882, is significant as one of the oldest documented seasonal dwellings built in Orange Park by winter visitors. It was modified with the addition of hip and shed extensions about 1920, and a gable extension about 1940.

The Helffrich House is nominated under the Multiple Property cover "Historic Architectural Resources of Port Orange, Florida," under the Historic Contexts of Founding and Early Settlement.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

William Helffrich was born in 1827 in Weisenburg, Pennsylvania, and was the third of five sons of an itinerant German Reformed Church preacher. William passed the examination of a local "collegium" in 1848, and began his ministry with his father who preached to and administered seven rural churches.

Helffrich maintained an extensive diary of his activities and travels between the 1840s and 1890s. Those notes were later published posthumously as *Lebensbild Aus Dem Pennsylvanisch-Deutschen Predigerstand: Oder Wahrheit in Licht und Schatten* in 1906 by his sons, Nevin and William. The 600-page memoir printed in German reveals much about his early training, ministry, and the culture of the times. It includes detailed descriptions of his journeys throughout Pennsylvania, and his excursions to Florida.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Nearing retirement, Helffrich visited Florida in 1878. His graphic account of leaving Philadelphia by steamer for Savannah includes references to inclement weather and an unhappy wife. The Helffrichs arrived in Orange Park in 1878, where they were greeted at the dock by Washington G. Benedict, the founder and developer of Orange Park. Helffrich became intrigued by the landscape along the St. Johns River. In April 1878, prior

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to their return north, Helffrich purchased a fifteen-acre tract from Benedict over the objections of his wife Amanda, who did not care for the isolation and jungle-like conditions.

In December 1881, the Helffrichs returned to Florida, bringing several of their sons. Benedict greeted them at the dock, as he had in 1878, and pointed out cottages for rent, one of which they secured along Kingsley Avenue. Benedict recommended they inquire about expenses to build their own cottage. Helffrich was encouraged by the low cost of building materials in Jacksonville, when compared to costs in Pennsylvania. Ready-made doors sold for \$1.00, and windows with frames were \$2.00. Wholesalers in Jacksonville quoted him prices of \$12.00 per 1,000 feet for siding and framing lumber. Back home, where he regularly helped members of his congregation build homes, barns, and churches, lumber merchants charged \$50.00 per 1,000 yard for siding and framing materials. Initially, he had planned to build a small one-story cottage, but on finding inexpensive building materials, he expanded the project into a 30' x 24' two story residence, similar to those he had helped parishioners build in Pennsylvania. His diary records that he assisted in the construction of barns and homes. He sketched plans, and in January 1882 traveled to Jacksonville, where he placed an order for the materials necessary to assemble the house. The materials arrived at the wharf at the foot of Kingsley Avenue about one week later. With the help of his sons and several black laborers, they cleared the lot and erected the house, which was completed in March 1882. They also planted citrus trees around the dwelling.

According to Helffrich, the house stood on the highest ground beside Plainfield Avenue. The landscape east of Plainfield Avenue was sprinkled with pine trees but relatively clear of undergrowth, so that from the front porch Helffrich could watch the passing steam and sail boats, which often numbered between thirty and fifty daily. He wrote in his diary many experiences of the family during the period. In late 1882, typhus broke out in Orange Park, and John Helffrich, a physician and one of William's sons, assisted the sick. The Helffrich's permitted the ill to convalesce on the front porch and parlor. The family traveled by boat to Green Cove Springs and Palatka on sight-seeing excursions. In March 1883, after nearly two years of residing in Orange Park, the Helffrichs returned to Pennsylvania. William's health began to fail and in 1894 he died in Fogelsville, Pennsylvania. He referred to Orange Park as "a beautiful, precious place," but neither Amanda, who disliked Florida, nor any family members ever returned.

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In 1909, after sitting vacant for nearly twenty-five years, the house and property were bought by Stanley D. Morgan, an Orange Park merchant. Born in Ohio, Morgan had moved as a child to Orange Park, where his father, a carpenter, served as one of the first town aldermen in 1879. Stanley established a general store on Kingsley Avenue and the railroad tracks. He built a small stable (Photo #11) 100 feet behind the house to quarter a horse and wagon he used to deliver supplies to customers. He entered local politics, serving as a commissioner, town clerk, and assessor in 1913. By 1918, he had gained a reputation as a prominent merchant, extending credit to customers and loaning money to residents. He also acquired property and speculated in real estate, opening in 1921 Morgan's subdivision, which consisted of fourteen lots located east of his Plainfield Avenue home. Twenty years later, he and T.V. Rust, another Orange Park merchant, opened the Rusmor subdivision with twenty-five lots south of Morgan's earlier development. Both subdivisions experienced moderate land sales, but few buildings were constructed on them.

Morgan and his wife Nellie enlarged their house. Nellie cultivated gardens around the home. About 1920, they constructed a sun room on the south elevation (Photo #2). They reconfigured the front porch, which had deteriorated, into a shed roof with a hip roof, coupling it to the roof of the sun room. Pairs of double-hung sashes that bracketed the entrance were replaced with tripartite ribbons of 4/1, double-hung sash windows, and casement windows replaced sashes in the kitchen. A storm damaged the roof and front facade in the late 1920s, and during the repairs two original double-hung sash windows were removed from the second-story facade and the openings were covered with wood siding. About 1940, a small gable extension was built to enlarge the dining room and a rear porch and bathroom were added.

In the 1960s, the Morgans sold a large section of their holdings behind their house to developers who platted several residential subdivisions. In 1964, following Nellie Morgan's death, the property was acquired by Trudy Sigman, an immigrant from Austria. Sigman moved the stable/garage to its present site, preserving it from demolition by developers. She provided valuable assistance translating Helffrich's book, conducting oral history interviews with long-time Orange Park residents, and gathering deed references. A master gardener from the University of Florida, she takes pride in cultivating native flora on the property.

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Section number 8 Page 4 **HELFFRICH HOUSE, ORANGE PARK, CLAY
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The Helffrich House is a good example of frame vernacular construction incorporating Gothic style elements, and embodying arrangements and building skills learned and used by Helffrich in Pennsylvania between the 1850s and 1880s.

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Section number 9,10 Page 1 **HELFFRICH HOUSE, ORANGE PARK, CLAY
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Public Records

Bureau of the Census, 13th Census, 1910.

_____, 14th Census, 1920.

Clay County, Corporation, Deed, Plat Books, Tax Rolls

Books

Helffrich, William A. *Lebensbild Aus Dem Pennsylvanisch-Deutschen
Predigerstand: Order Wahrheit in Licht und Schatten.*
Allentown, Pennsylvania: N.W.A. and W.U. Helffrich, 1906.

Jakle, John, Robert Bastian, and Douglas Meyer. *Common Houses in
America's Small Towns: The Atlantic Seaboard to the
Mississippi Valley.* Athens and London: University of Georgia
Press, 1989.

Polk, R.L. *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory.*
Jacksonville: R.L. Polk & Company, 1918.

Upton, Dell and John Vlach. *Common Places: Readings in American
Vernacular Architecture.* Athens and London: University of
Georgia Press, 1983.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1 & 2 section 3 of Orange Park as recorded in OR 81, p. 498 & 1567, p.
177.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encloses the property historically associated with the
Helffrich House.

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Section number Photos Page 1 **HELFFRICH HOUSE, ORANGE PARK, CLAY
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST

1. Helffrich House, 1200 Plainfield Avenue, Orange Park
2. Clay County, Florida
3. Sidney Johnston
4. 1996
5. Historic Property Associates, Inc., St. Augustine, Florida
6. East (Main) facade and north elevation, facing southeast
7. Photo #1 of 11
- 8.

Numbers 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

6. South elevation, facing north
7. Photo #2 of 11

6. West (rear) and south elevations, facing northeast
7. Photo #3 of 11

6. Living room, facing north
7. Photo #4 of 11

6. Study and sunroom, facing south
7. Photo #5 of 11

6. Staircase, facing north
7. Photo #6 of 11

6. Dining room, facing southeast
7. Photo #7 of 11

6. Dining room and kitchen, facing north
7. Photo #8 of 11

6. Kitchen and rear porch, facing west
7. Photo #9 of 11

6. Second floor sitting and work room, facing northeast
7. Photo #10 of 11

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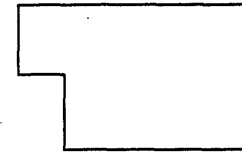
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 2

**HELFFRICH HOUSE, ORANGE PARK, CLAY
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

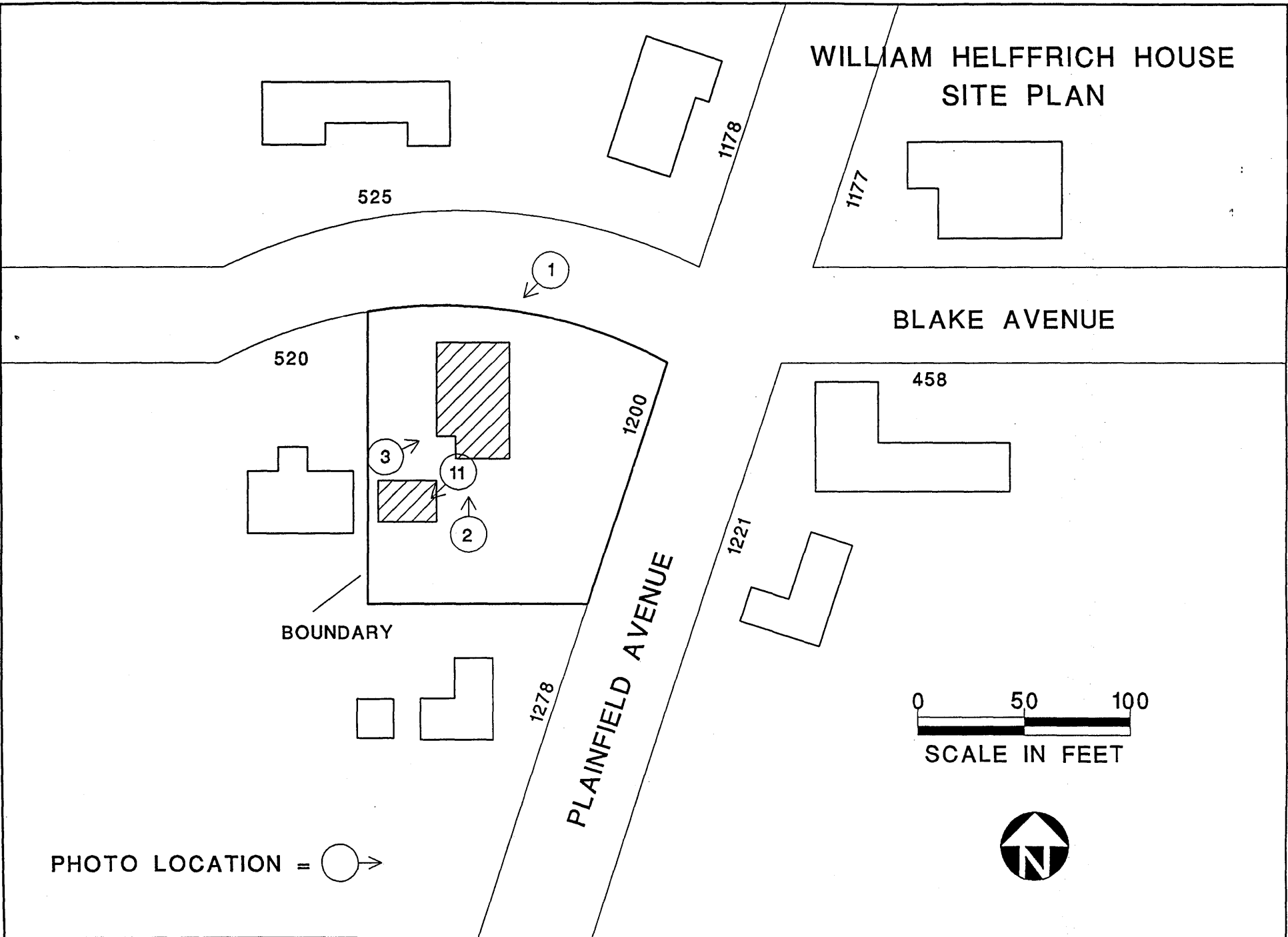
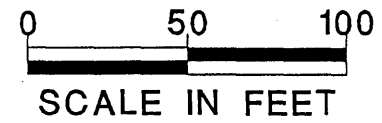
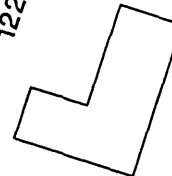
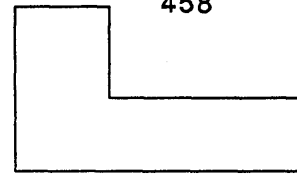
-
6. Outbuilding, facing southwest
 7. Photo #11 of 11

WILLIAM HELFFRICH HOUSE SITE PLAN



BLAKE AVENUE

458



525

1178

1177

1

520

1200

3

11

2

BOUNDARY

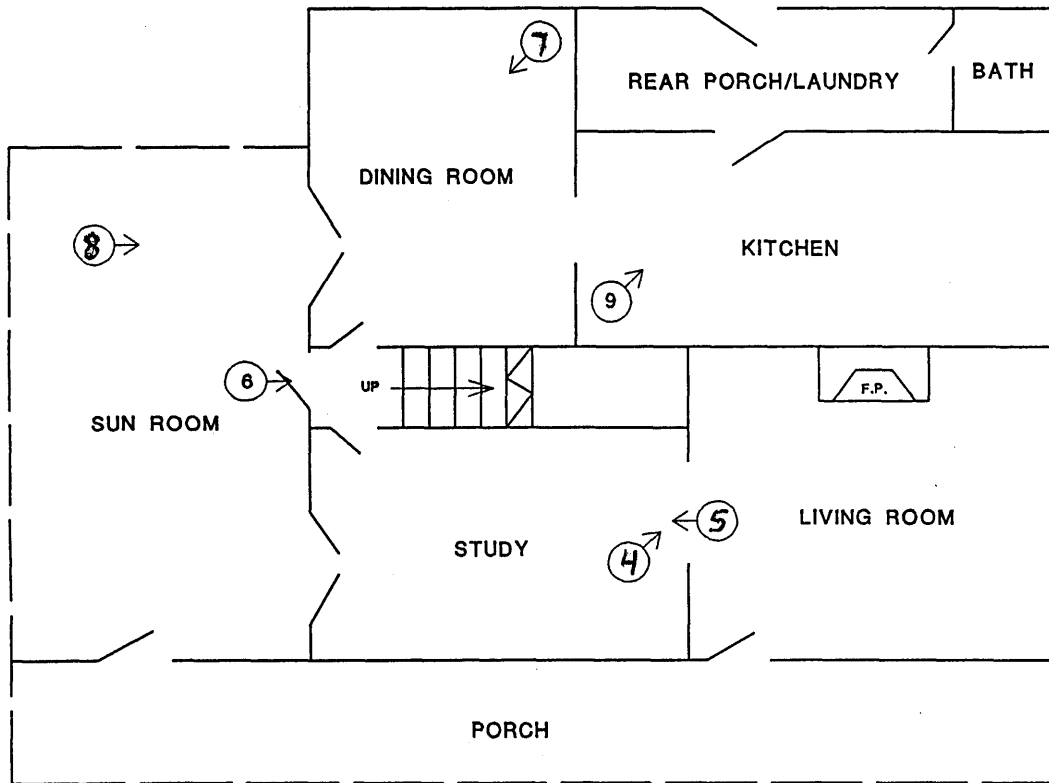
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PLAINFIELD AVENUE

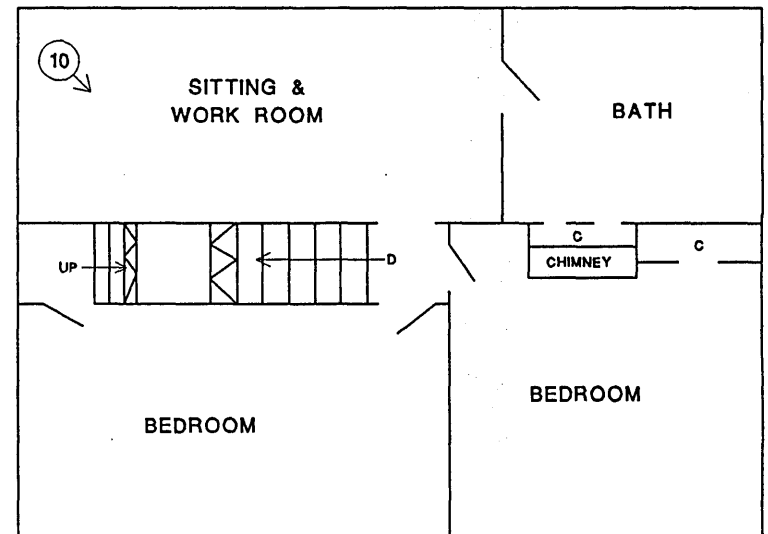
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PHOTO LOCATION = 

WILLIAM HELFFRICH HOUSE FLOOR PLANS



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR