

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 2 1985

date entered MAY 2 1985

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

1. Name

historic William T. Gentry House

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 132 East Lake Drive, SE

N/A not for publication

city, town Atlanta

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia

013 code

county

DeKalb

code 089

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

4. Owner of Property

name Ms. JoAnn McClinton

street & number 132 East Lake Drive, SE

city, town Atlanta

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia 30317

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number DeKalb County Courthouse

city, town Decatur

state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See Continuation Sheet

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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

The William T. Gentry House is a large, two-story, yellow-brick house, with a basement, built in the Neoclassical style. It features a full-width, pedimented front portico supported by four wooden Doric columns. The house also has a gabled roof covered in metal which has been painted silver.

The house is situated atop a slight hill, thus adding to its imposing nature. The front facade contains three bays separated by pilasters corresponding to the columns. The portico floor is red, white, and black hexagonal ceramic tile and the ceiling is coffered. On the first floor, centered in the three bays, are French doors with simple detailing.

The house is essentially a three-story rectangle, 44' by 56', off of which are several irregular projections including a solarium off the dining room with stained glass windows, and a two-story, rear projection which was originally a screened porch and kitchen.

The house is entered from the portico through the French doors. The interior has a central hall with two rooms off each side on each floor. The main floors are heart pine with mahogany inlay. On the first floor there is a great room and dining room (with solarium) on the right and a parlor/study/library and bedroom on the left. Pocket doors connect the dining room and great room and give access to the hall. The original radiators still operate.

The second floor contains four bedrooms, two on each side of the hall. Due to apartment conversions, they each have their own bathrooms and closets.

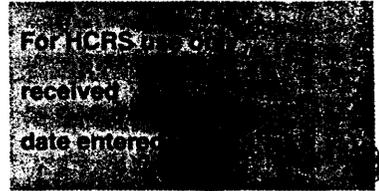
To the rear of the four main rooms on the first floor is a kitchen. The basement has a central hallway which runs the length of the house. It also contains four rooms. At the right rear is the furnace room, the smallest of the four. The remainder of the right side is a shop. The left side has two rooms connected with the service shaft.

Interior details include original plaster walls and ceilings with newer drywalls added. Floors are heart pine with mahogany inlay. Doors and stair banister are dark oak. There is dark oak paneling in the dining room and great room. Fireplaces contain original glazed brick facings and dark oak mantels.

The house faces a main city street. There are magnolia and other large trees on either side of the lawn. The yard once contained a greenhouse (now only a foundation) and formal gardens. There is a two-story, brick carriage house immediately behind the main house. It was converted into apartments in the 1960s. Other outbuildings, which also have been altered, include an old kitchen, barn, and furnace house. The house sits amidst the once-fashionable suburb of East Lake which remains mostly a residential area. Changes to the house resulted from its being converted into eight apartments during the 1960s.

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Continuation sheet      Representation in Existing Surveys      Item number      6      Page      2

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6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Structures Field Survey: DeKalb County, Georgia  
Date: 1975      State

Depository: Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department  
of Natural Resources

Atlanta Historic Resources Workbook  
Date: 1981      Local (city)

Depository: Atlanta Urban Design Commission, City of Atlanta  
Atlanta, Georgia

## 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 type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input 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 checked="" 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** 1913-1914 **Builder/Architect** P. Thornton Marye

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In architecture, the William T. Gentry House is significant as a fine example of a house built in the Neoclassical era as an almost exact replica of an antebellum Greek Revival mansion. It is significant also as a work of P. Thornton Marye (1872 - 1935), a Virginia born and trained architect who came to Atlanta in 1904 to design Terminal Station. His firm did major work in Atlanta and Birmingham and is best known for the Fox Theater. He was also architect for the Art-Deco-style Southern Bell Telephone Company. The house is significant in communications for having been built for William T. Gentry (1854-1925). Also a Virginia native, Gentry entered the communications world in 1870 and at the time he built this house was president of the Southern Bell Telephone Company. He lived here until his retirement in 1919-1920. In community planning, the house is significant for the role it played in encouraging people to move and build in the East Lake neighborhood. Pictures of the Gentry House were used in the newspaper in 1914 to promote development of the area.

These areas of significance support the property's eligibility under National Register Criteria B and C.

### Historical Narrative

The William T. Gentry House was built between 1913 and 1914 in the newly developed East Lake community, at the time a separate town, now a part of Atlanta. The East Lake Land Company began in 1892. In 1908 the Town of East Lake was chartered, and in 1928 it was annexed by the City of Atlanta. East Lake was considered an upper middle-class suburb of both Decatur and Atlanta, and Mr. Gentry's house was one of first fashionable homes in the area. His move to the area was considered a major drawing point in the attempt to attract other businessmen to the area. The Gentry House was used in publicity about the neighborhood.

William Thomas Gentry (1854-1925) came to Atlanta in 1884 from Virginia where he had first become involved with several telegraph companies and then later telephone companies. In Atlanta he was manager of the local telephone exchange. He worked his way up through the company to become president of Southern Bell Telephone in 1909. At that time it covered seven states and employed 6,000 people. He stressed public-relations for the firm. He was also simultaneously president of several other telephone companies in North Carolina and Virginia. Gentry was a member of Atlanta's most prestigious social clubs and was president of the Capital City Club in 1914 at the time he built this house. Tradition has it that Mr. Gentry entertained Alexander Graham Bell at his home in 1916.

W. T. Gentry was also an inventor and owned the patents to several items including the automatic coin device on the pay telephone.

(Continued)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Eskew, C. Richard T. "William T. Gentry Home" Historic Property Information Form:  
March 15, 1982. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department  
of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia (Prepared as a Student Project at the  
(Continued)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 6.33 acres

Quadrangle name Southeast Atlanta, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	7	5	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	7	3	1	7	3	1	2	1	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

The nominated property is all that the current owner owns at this location and all that remains associated with the house. It is marked on the enclosed tax map.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian  
Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date 3/4/85

street & number 270 Washington St., SW telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia 30334

## 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

*Elizabeth A. Lyon*

Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 3/14/85

### For NPS use only

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

*John Selous Byers*  
Entered in the  
National Register

date

5/2/85

Keeper of the National Register

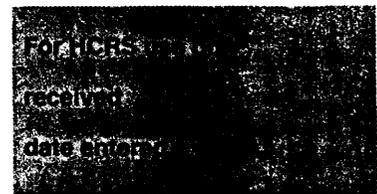
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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8. Significance

Historical Narrative

In 1875, Gentry married Nina Mann from his same hometown in Virginia. They had six children.

After he retired from the telephone company in 1919, he moved to a house in Ansley Park, Atlanta, and died there in 1925.

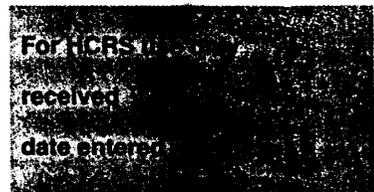
From 1920 until 1925 when the Gentry estate sold the house and surrounding 10 acres, the house was possibly lived in by members of the Gentry family. In 1925, the property was purchased by John M. Nowell of Atlanta and Walton County, Georgia. He in turn sold it within the same year to Mr. and Mrs. Howard G. Graves of Atlanta. Graves was an officer of the Acme Advertising Company of Atlanta. After only a few years ownership, Graves lost the property in 1927 back to Nowell for non-payment of the loan. The Graves later lived at 199 East Lake Drive.

In 1927, Charles Edward Jarvis, Jr. bought the house and 10 acres from Nowell. He and his wife, the former Hilda S. Harrington, made it their permanent residence. Mr. Jarvis, who had previously lived in the Peachtree Hills section of Atlanta, was president of Salary Investment Company. Due to financial needs, Jarvis began subdividing the property in 1938. Mrs. Jarvis was active in the East Lake Garden Club. By 1953, Jarvis was an agent for the American Bankers Insurance Company. In 1959, Jarvis sold the Gentry house and remaining seven acres, having lived there over thirty years. Alton B. King, a realtor, and his wife, Helen Clark King, were the new owners. They too altered the interior of the house for apartments. The main house was subdivided into eight apartments by 1965.

In 1976, the house and seven acres were purchased by Mrs. JoAnn McClinton and family. They are restoring the house back to a single-family residence.

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Continuation sheet      Major Bibliographical References      Item number      9      Page      2

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9. Major Bibliographical References

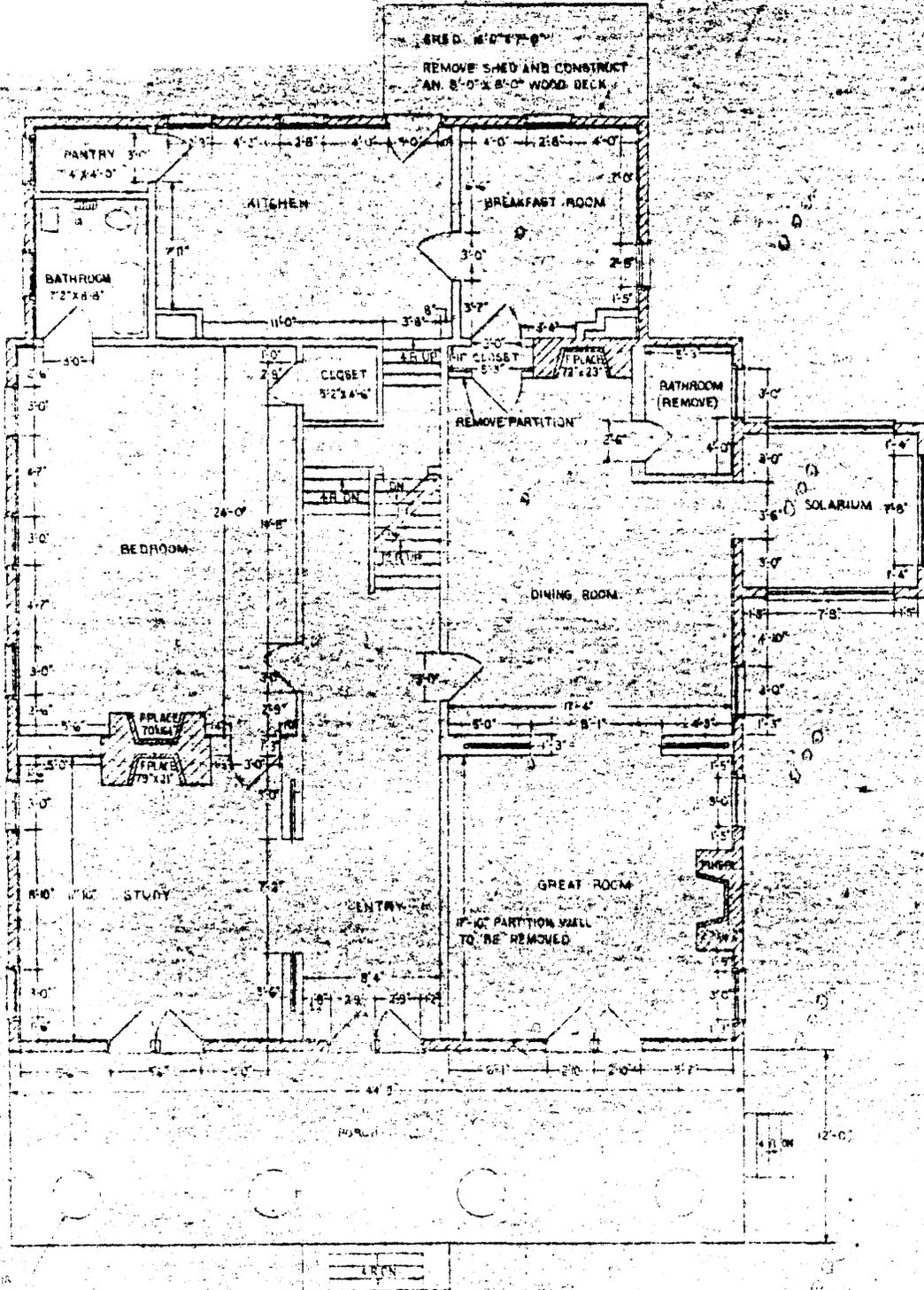
Georgia Institute of Technology)

Knight, Lucian L., ed. A Standard History of Georgia and Georgians Vol. 6.  
Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1917. (Contains biographical sketch of  
W. T. Gentry.)

"Col. W.T. Gentry...is Dead." The Atlanta (Georgia) Constitution, January 12,  
1925.

Floor Plan

WILLIAM T. GENTRY HOUSE  
 Atlanta, DeKalb County, Georgia  
 Scale: 1" = 10'  
 Source: Drawn by Jamie Carr  
 Date: 1976  
 Key: First Floor Plan



FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
 SCALE: 1" = 10'

Floor Plan

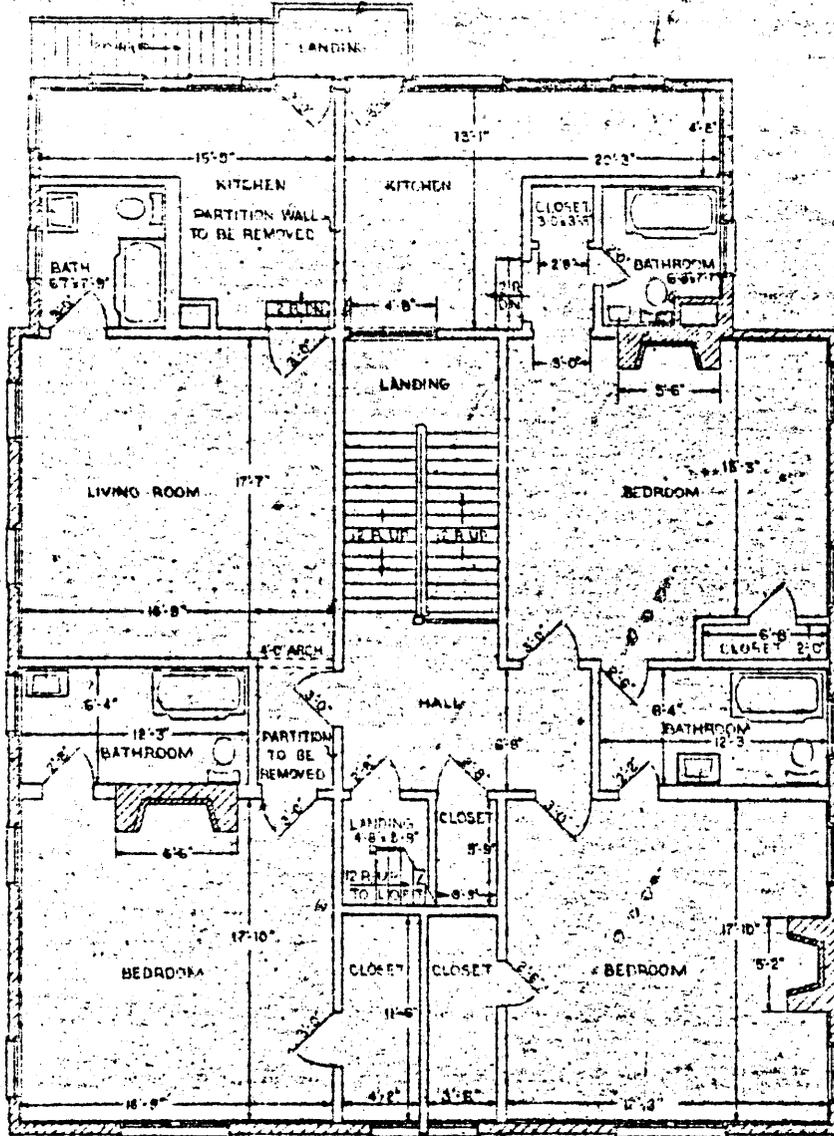
WILLIAM T. GENTRY HOUSE  
Atlanta, DeKalb County, Georgia

Scale: 1" = 10'

Source: Drawn by Jamie Carr

Date: 1976

Key: Second Floor Plan



GENERAL NOTES  
 KITCHENS TO BE CONVERTED INTO ONE  
 SCREENED PORCH  
 SECOND FLOOR DECKING - 10'-8"  
 [Symbol] - BRICKS ADDED CONSTRUCTION WORK  
 [Symbol] - BRICK - ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION

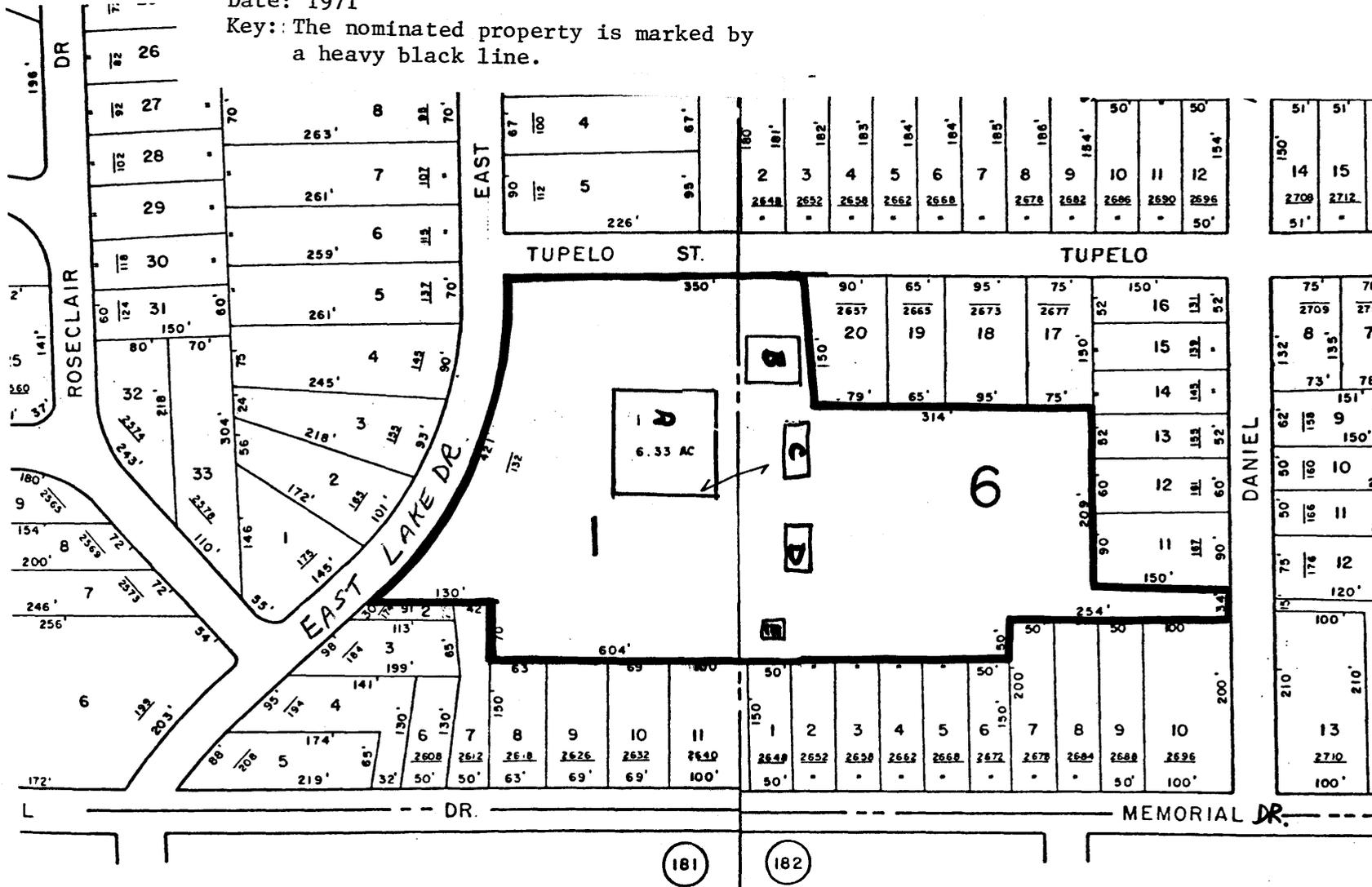
SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Tax Map  
 WILLIAM T. GENTRY HOUSE  
 Atlanta, DeKalb County, Georgia  
 Scale 1" = 200'

Source: DeKalb County Tax Assessors Office  
 Tax Map No. A15-203D & A15-204D  
 Block One, Parcel One. (15-204D-1-1)

- A = Main House
- B = Carriage House
- C = Original Kitchen
- D = Barn
- E = Furnace House

Date: 1971  
 Key: The nominated property is marked by  
 a heavy black line.



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