# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

AUG 0.7 1989

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 Coving	ton House		
other names/site number Schend	el House/ 8Le719		
2. Location			
street & number 328 Cortez	Street	n/a	not for publication
city, town Tallahassee		n/a l	vicinity
state Florida code	FL county Leon	<b>code</b> 07	3 <b>zip code</b> 32301
3. Classification			
Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resou	rces within Property
x private	■ building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
public-local	district	4	buildings
public-State	site	_1	sites
public-Federal	structure		structures
	object	1	objects
		6	O Total
Name of related multiple property lis	ting:	Number of contril	outing resources previously
n/a	_		onal Register0
4. State/Federal Agency Certifi	cation		
Signature of cedifying official  Florida State Historic  State or Federal agency and bureau	Preservation Officer		Dayle /
In my opinion, the property me	eets does not meet the National I	Register criteria. See c	ontinuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other office	cial		Date
State or Federal agency and bureau			
5. National Park Service Certifi	cation		
I, Mereby, certify that this property is			
entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  determined eligible for the Nation Register.  See continuation sheet  determined not eligible for the National Register.		Entered in t National Reg	21 1 2 1 1 2 .
removed from the National Regis other, (explain:)	ter		
	Signature	of the Keeper	Date of Action

6. Function or Use		
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Fun	ctions (enter categories from instructions
Domestic: Single Dwelling	Domestic	: Single Dwelling
Social: Clubhouse		
7. Description		
Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (e	nter categories from instructions)
	foundation _	Concrete
French Renaissance: French Eclectic	walls	Stacco
	roof	Asbestos Shingle
	other	N/A
Describe present and historic physical appearance.		

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED CONTINUATION SHEETS

8. Statement of Significance		
Certifying official has considered the significance of this prope	rty in relation to other properties: statewide 🗵 locally	
Applicable National Register Criteria 🗓 A 🖫 B 🖫 C	□D	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	□D □E □F □G	
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  Community Planning & Development  Architecture	Period of Significance 1927-1939	Significant Dates 1927
	Cultural Affiliation n/a	
Significant Person Covington, Blanche	Architect/Builder Edwards, William A./Unknow	n
State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria consi	derations, and areas and periods of significa	nce noted above.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED CONTINUATION SHEETS

9. Major Bibliographical References		

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED CONTINUATION SHEETS.

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 #	Primary location of additional data:  State historic preservation office  Other State agency  Federal agency  Local government  University  Other  Specify repository:
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of property Approximately one acre	
UTM References  A   1.6     7   6   1   6   5   0     3   3   7   2   9   2   0    Zone Easting Northing  C	B
Verbal Boundary Description	
Lots 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 or 336/537 of Block	ck F, Tallahassee, Florida.
	See continuation sheet
Boundary Justification	
The boundary includes the entire city lots the with the property.	at have historically been associated
	See continuation sheet
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Vicki Welcher and Barbara E. Mattick/ organization Bureau of Historic Preservation street & number R.A. Gray Bldq., 500 S. Bronough S city or townTallahassee	dateJuly 1989

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_7 Page \_\_1 Covington House

### Summary:

The Covington House, at 328 Cortez Street, is a one and a half story, stuccoed, hollow clay tile house, located in the Los Robles Subdivision in Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida. It is French Eclectic in style, but displays some features associated with the Mediterranean Revival style. In addition to the main house, the property includes three other buildings: a garage/servants quarters, stable, and gazebo; one site, a small formal garden; and one object, a small, stone garden bench.

### Original Setting:

The Covington House was one of four original houses constructed in the Los Robles Subdivision in Tallahassee in 1927. At the time of construction, the property included that portion of the subdivision on which the majority of the live oaks, for which the subdivision was named, was located. Because only one house was built in Los Robles prior to 1927, and only eight houses had been constructed by 1930, the house contributed greatly to the built environment of the development.

### Present Setting:

The Covington House stands slightly to the left of the center of its lot, facing Cortez Street. The front yard is dominated by two massive, 350-year-old oaks, and across the street is the Los Robles Park. Surrounding the property are houses constructed from 1927 through 1952 in various styles, including Tudor Revival, French Eclectic, and Colonial Revival. The subdivision itself lies between Meridian and Thomasville Roads, two major thoroughfares, creating a small residential enclave in what is now a primarily commercial area.

#### Present Appearance:

MAIN HOUSE

#### Exterior

The main house is constructed of hollow clay tile with a smooth stuccoed finish. It has an irregular plan with

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hipped roofs covered with asbestos shingles. There are nine segmental dormers. The two on the main facade have heavy cornices and cornice returns and nine-light arched windows. The remaining seven on the other elevations are plain, with jalousie windows. The foundation is concrete, with oversized supporting structures of pine and oak.

The main facade (south elevation) has a central porch with four massive, square columns. Articulated blocks located above each column support a turned post, roofline balustrade. There are two, nine-light dormers with cornice returns over the porch. The first floor entrance facade is slightly recessed. To the east of the porch is an ell that extends one half bay from the front of the main block. A similar projection to the west of the porch forms a loggia leading to an attached porte cochere which also has square columns (Photo 1). The main entrance in the center of the main facade, has twelve fixed lights, and is surmounted by a five-light transom. Six over six, double hung sash windows flank the entrance. There is a similar door on the west side of the half-bay ell. Fenestration on the first level is 6/6 and 6/4 double hung, wood sash (Photo 2).

The east elevation is divided into three sections of varying depths. The south section, closest to the main facade, contains an asymmetrical exterior chimney. In the center of the elevation is the side or butler's entrance (Photo 3). It is a raised, canted entrance, approached by four semicircular brick steps. All sections contain 6/6 or 4/4 double hung wood sash on the first level. There are three dormers over the central and northern sections. The rear (north) elevation contains a rectangular screened, three-quarter length porch. Two segmental roof dormers are the only distinctive features. The west elevation's configuration is similar to that of the east elevation. It has three sections, one dormer, and 6/6 double hung wood sash (Photo 4).

### Interior

All flooring in the house is of heart of pine or oily pine. Closet spaces and shelving are cedar; the french doors and transoms are oak. Entryways in the central hallway are arched. Each of the first floor rooms has a different coving, molding, or cornice. Windows are vertical

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and reach to the top of transoms, or are flush with cornice moldings/covings.

The Covington House has a central hall plan. A rectangular entry hall provides access to the central hallway as well as the living room. Three sets of french doors with louvered, six-light transoms lead from the living room to the front porch, entry hall, and dining room, respectively (Photo 5). An asymmetrical fireplace and mantle of smooth Georgian limestone dominates the living room. It has a reverse pattern, with the pattern to the left inverted and repeated on the right (Photo 6). The windows on the north and south walls provide maximum lighting. Two original mammoth clam shell chandeliers, imported from the Mediterranean by Mrs. Covington, hang from the living room ceiling.

The dining room is accessed from three areas: living room, hallway, and breakfast room. The door to the breakfast room has a five-light transom. The breakfast room to the rear of the dining room contains a built-in ice box which has a side spout for ice water. It was converted to electricity in the 1930s, and remains in use. The tile countertop adjacent to the ice box contains a geometric pattern, considered state-of-the-art during the 1920s (Photo 7). The breakfast room also includes a built-in, fold-down desk and glazed cabinets flush with the top of the transoms. The butler's entrance is in the center of the east wall.

The kitchen, located in the northeast corner of the house, gives access to a rear screened porch where there is a trap door leading to a small cellar. A central doorway on the north elevation enters into the central hallway and den.

The east side of the house includes the den as well as two bedrooms and two baths in an alternating pattern. The bathroom to the rear contains a shower closet, a prototype of the modern shower, with six shower heads at varying heights, and the original porcelain fixtures. On the other side of the master bedroom is a walk-in closet with a small cupboard built to conceal bootleg liquor.

The central hallway features a small, arched telephone alcove and a large, double-doored, cedar linen closet,

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containing two caches for valuables. At the end of the hallway is a half bath (Photo 8).

Across from the linen closet is a sectioned stairway leading to the partially completed half story (Photo 9). The rear of the upper story contains a small bedroom and bath. Decoration is minimal, achieved through the natural angles created by the house's hipped roof and dormers (Photo 10). The front half of the upper level is an attic used as a laundry room, where there are a large cedar closet and built-in cedar chest.

### GARAGE/SERVANTS QUARTERS

The garage/servants quarters is located on axis to the rear elevation of the main house. Constructed in a rectangular plan, the one and a half story structure is wood framed with a smooth stuccoed exterior. The steeply pitched, mansard roof is covered in asphalt shingles and contains a flat roof dormer with a 6/6 double hung sash at each elevation (Photo 11). An exterior stairway on the south elevation leads to the second level apartment which has two rooms, a small bath, and a kitchenette. At the west elevation of the building are the original wood garage doors which open to the side on a curved track at the top. An attached covered shelter was constructed in the 1930s as a small greenhouse on the north elevation.

#### STABLE

The stable is a rectangular, framed building with a smooth stuccoed exterior. The low pitched, hipped roof with flared eaves, is covered in asphalt shingle (Photo 12). The original stable doors are intact, as is the pedestrian door. Recent renovations have restored the stable to its original appearance.

#### GARDENS AND GAZEBO

A wood lattice and rock fence is located between the northeast corner of the garage and the rear of the main house. Intended to separate the formal and informal gardens, it also served as a privacy fence. A small semicircular, low, rock wall, with a built-in bench and large urn, is located to the east of the garage, and is also used

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to separate areas of the formal garden (Photo 13). To the north, or rear of this wall is located the formal English garden with cultivated bushes, roses, and pomegranate trees (Photo 14).

On the east side of the house is a rough paved patio. At one time, the rear formal gardens extended to the butler's entrance. When the Covingtons owned the residence, the gardener continuously altered the plans. Portions of the original configuration are still intact, however, including the plumbing for the waterfall and wading pool (Photo 3).

The gazebo, part of the original landscaping plan, mimics the house with square columns, square "dormers", and a hipped roof with flared eaves (Photo 15).

### Alterations:

The house itself has been altered minimally; the original sash windows in the side and rear dormers have been replaced with jalousies. Some components of the formal garden have also been altered. After Blanche Covington's death, the new owners of the property were unable to maintain the gardens. In the 1960s, they dismantled the waterfall and much of the garden, and covered over the wading pool. The plumbing for the pool remains intact, and that feature could be restored. A shed on the north side of the garage has been removed; a kitchenette has been added to the servants quarters, which are now used as an apartment.

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### Summary:

The Covington House, located at 328 Cortez Street in the Los Robles Subdivision of Tallahassee, Florida, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development as one of the first houses built within one of Tallahassee's earliest planned subdivisions in 1927. It is significant under Criterion B as the home of Blanche Covington, one of Florida's most well known horticulturalists; and under Criterion C as one of the few known residential designs by William Edwards, a prominent architect in the Southeast in the 1920s and 1930s.

### Historic Contexts:

LOS ROBLES AND TALLAHASSEE IN THE 1920S AND 1930S

During the 1920s, Tallahassee experienced a major increase in population, from 5,637 in 1920 to 10,700 in 1930. Like the rest of Florida, it was greatly affected by the Florida Land Boom, and the national feeling of prosperity. This is reflected in the establishment of the city's first planned subdivision, Los Robles, and in the efforts of local civic leaders in the beautification of the city parks and other public areas.

In an attempt to copy the successful Mediterranean Revival styled, planned communities of South Florida, two local businessmen formed Los Robles, Inc. Early in 1926, Leon F. Lonnbladh and Albert E. Thornton purchased 37 acres of farmland between Thomasville and Meridian Roads, just northeast of the Tallahassee city limits. Noting the many massive live oaks on the land, they chose the Spanish word for oaks, "Los Robles", for the name of their development. Located outside the city limits and one mile from the downtown area, the venture reflected the feeling of prosperity, as well as confidence in the automobile and the Good Roads Movement. At a time when many areas of the town did not have paved roads or sidewalks, Los Robles was planned with the most modern conveniences then available.

Thornton, acting as sales agent for Los Robles, employed the local real estate agency, MacIntosh and Dawe, to market the subdivision. Daily advertisements for Los Robles began to appear in the local newspapers the week of

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February 19, 1926. In addition, the agency published an illustrated brochure with the marketing phrase: "Los Robles is to Tallahassee what Coral Gables is to Miami."

An original farmhouse was moved from the center of the acreage (current site of the Covington House) to a lot at the rear of the subdivision. Lots and streets were laid out. In keeping with the general Mediterranean theme, the streets were given Spanish names: Cortez Street, Cristobal Drive, DeSoto Street, Fernando Drive, Isabel Court, and Ponce Street. The theme was further carried out with the Mediterranean Revival styled Los Robles Gate, constructed at the main entrance to the subdivision.

The massive oaks for which Los Robles was named were located near the center of the 37 acre purchase. Cortez Street was cut through a portion of this area, separating three of the oaks. When the sidewalks were installed, they were constructed around the bases of the trees so as to limit disturbance to the root systems as much as possible.

Despite the developers' intent, however, architecture in the Los Robles subdivision failed to conform to the Mediterranean Revival theme, and pre-World War II construction resulted in a number of well designed homes in a variety of architectural styles. The Covington House, completed in 1927, was among them, a rare example of French Eclectic influenced designs in the area.

Other parts of Tallahassee were also developed in the 1920s and 1930s, as the city continued to grow to a 1940 population of 16,240. Some of this growth was the result of concerted efforts by the community groups to enhance Tallahassee's attractiveness as a residential community. In the 1930s, the Tallahassee Garden Club participated with aggressive beautification programs.

#### THE COVINGTONS

Wade Hampton Covington was born in Richmond County, North Carolina c1876, and received his early education there. Blanche Capel Covington was born Alberta Blanche Capel, at Capel's Mills, North Carolina, on April 28, 1881. She was graduated from Greensboro Female College in 1898, and married Wade Covington three years later, on December

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26, 1901. The couple lived briefly in Carrabelle and Panama City, Florida, before moving to Tallahassee c1904. They lived in town in a house on Calhoun Street. Wade had a lumber and turpentine business in the Gulf Coast area which took him out of town for extended periods of time. As an example, in 1910, he boarded with a family in Washington County, in the Florida panhandle, while managing a turpentine farm.

Covington made a small fortune with his business, and retired in the early 1920s. In 1926, he and his wife purchased six lots in the new Los Robles Subdivision. A family friend and well known architect, William A. Edwards, designed the house for them.

The house was completed in 1927, and both Covingtons resided there until Wade's death on October 26, 1930. He died from a heart attack in Kinderbrook, New York, where he had gone to consult a heart specialist. From that time until her own death, Blanche Covington cared for the house and gardens and was active in the community, particularly with the Tallahassee Garden Club. From this house her energies went forth to beautify the City of Tallahassee and the State of Florida. After her death in Troy, North Carolina, on April 26, 1958, the house stood vacant until 1960, when it was purchased by an elderly couple.

#### Historic Significance:

Blanche Covington became an active leader in Tallahassee's community affairs after her husband retired and they had built their home in Los Robles, one of the first in the subdivision. She was an influential member of the Tallahassee Woman's Club and the Woman's Society of Christian Service at Trinity Methodist Church. Her greatest fame, however, was derived from her local and statewide horticultural activities. Her love of gardening led her to become one of the founders of the Tallahassee Garden Club. Begun as a small Los Robles garden club and women's social group in 1926, it expanded in the 1930s to encompass all of the areas of the city.

The Garden Club has played a large role in the cultural enhancement of Tallahassee since its founding. Many of its most innovative projects bear the mark of Blanche Covington.

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In 1931, the club sponsored the first Plant Exchange, whereby citizens could trade plants with each other. Many newcomers or new homeowners obtained foliage for their homes this way. In 1935, Mrs. Covington attracted more attention for the program by using an ox-drawn cart to carry plants to designated points throughout Tallahassee. It would stay in one place for about an hour before moving on to the next point. In 1934, the Club had been given representation on the City Park Board; Blanche Covington was its representative from 1936-1937. One of its main projects was the development of a city arboretum, Lafayette Park, which is now one of Tallahassee's most beautiful city parks.

In 1937, Mrs. Covington was named president of the Garden Club, and remained in office through 1939. During her tenure the club initiated several innovative projects. The Covington House was opened to the general public as the first "Christmas Home" in 1937. It was a community event, with music provided by local high school, college, and church choirs, and indoor and outdoor lighting provided by local electricians. The next year, the State Forestry Service donated 1000 pine seedlings for the festivities.

Although the Garden Club had been founded in 1926, it did not have its own Garden Center until 1954. In February 1938, Mrs. Covington opened the back part of her garage as a Garden Center where a small library was established, and club members attended workshops and potted plants for distribution throughout the city. It was this proliferation of trees and other vegetation that formed the basis for the flowering foliage for which Tallahassee has become widely known.

The Club continued to work closely with the City Government to enhance the beauty of Tallahassee. During Mrs. Covington's tenure from 1937 to 1939, at the request of the Garden Club, the city permanently named the small parks along Park Avenue, one of the original and most distinctive streets in downtown Tallahassee. Also during her term, through the influence of the Park Board, three ordinances promoted by the Club were passed by the City Commission: the first clearly defined the duties of the Park Board, the second addressed zoning, and the third strengthened the protection of Tallahassee's trees, still a major concern to Tallahasseans.

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Blanche Covington, who had been so instrumental in the beautification of Tallahassee in the 1930s, was also active in the statewide endeavors of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs. Her work in the statewide organization was later recognized by her election as its president from 1941-45. She was given further recognition when the Meade Botanical Garden Club named a new orchid in her honor, "The Blanche Covington". She had organized the state Garden Club's Nature Study Course, an annual training school held in state parks for leaders of young people. The Florida Federation of Garden Clubs still holds this annual workshop, now renamed the "Blanche Covington Workshop" in her honor.

### Architectural Significance:

The Covington House was designed by William A. Edwards, a prominent architect in the Southeast in the 1920s and 1930s, who was born in Darlington, South Carolina on December 8, 1866. After receiving a Mechanical Engineering degree form the University of South Carolina, he worked for the architectural office of C. C. Wilson in Columbia, South Carolina. He founded his own firm of Edwards & Walter in Columbia in 1907, and moved the firm to Atlanta in 1908. From 1912 until his death in 1939, he was joint partner with William J. Sayward in the firm, Edwards & Sayward. The firm became known for a wide variety of buildings, specifically collegiate architecture. In Tallahassee, Edwards designed the administration building, library and dormitories at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University; and seven buildings on the Florida State University campus, including: Old Demonstration Building, 1926; Dodd Hall, addition, 1929; Arthur Williams Building, 1925-1927; Practice House, 1927; Jennie Murphree Hall, 1922, 1924; and Montgomery Gym, 1930. Most of these buildings are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Edwards designed other collegiate buildings on campuses in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. His works include buildings at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine, and the Law Building at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. He also designed the Union National Bank Building in Columbia; the Kershaw County Courthouse in Camden, South Carolina; and the first housing

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project of the Works Progress Administration at the University of Atlanta in 1933.

According to oral tradition and the complete set of original blueprints, Mrs. Covington had wanted the house to be designed in the Mediterranean Revival style. Edwards, however, was inclined to more Northern European styles, as reflected in his collegiate designs. The resulting Covington House shows a compromise between the two influences. The French Eclectic style, brought to the United States by soldiers returning from France after World War I, is most strongly displayed through the steeply pitched, hipped roof with arched dormers and flared eaves. Edwards addressed Mrs. Covington's desire for a Mediterranean Revival style by using a stucco exterior and a loggia on the main facade. Edwards' works were almost exclusively institutional; the Covington House is architecturally significant, therefore, as one of the few private residences he is known to have designed.

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 Covington House

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  <u>Dictionary of American Architects</u>. Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956.

#### Periodicals:

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- "Beyond the Sunset: Mrs. W.H. Covington," The Florida Gardener, Fall 1958.
- "Covington is Claimed by Death in New York," <u>Daily Democrat</u> (Tallahassee), October 27, 1930.
- "Los Robles," Tallahassee Democrat, May 11, 1986.
- "Mrs. W.H. Covington Dies in Troy, N.C.," <u>Tallahassee</u> <u>Democrat</u>, April 28, 1958.
- "Schendel Home Stately, Striking," <u>Tallahassee Democrat</u>, August 31, 1973.

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"State Garden Club Leader Dies at 76 in N.C. Hospital,"

Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville, Fla.), April 28,

1958.

### Maps:

Sanborn Maps, 1926 and 1930.

#### **DOCUMENTS**

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Leon County. Land Title Record 253/537, October 30, 1968.

Leon County. Tax Rolls.

### **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

	Dhotomanha		•		
Section number	Photographs Page _	1	Covington House		

- 1) Covington House, 328 Cortez Street 1 2) Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida
  - 3) Vicki Welcher
  - 4) 1987
  - 5) Vicki Welcher
  - 6) Main facade, camera facing NE
  - 7) 1 of 15

Items 1-5 for the remaining photographs are the same as for Photograph #1.

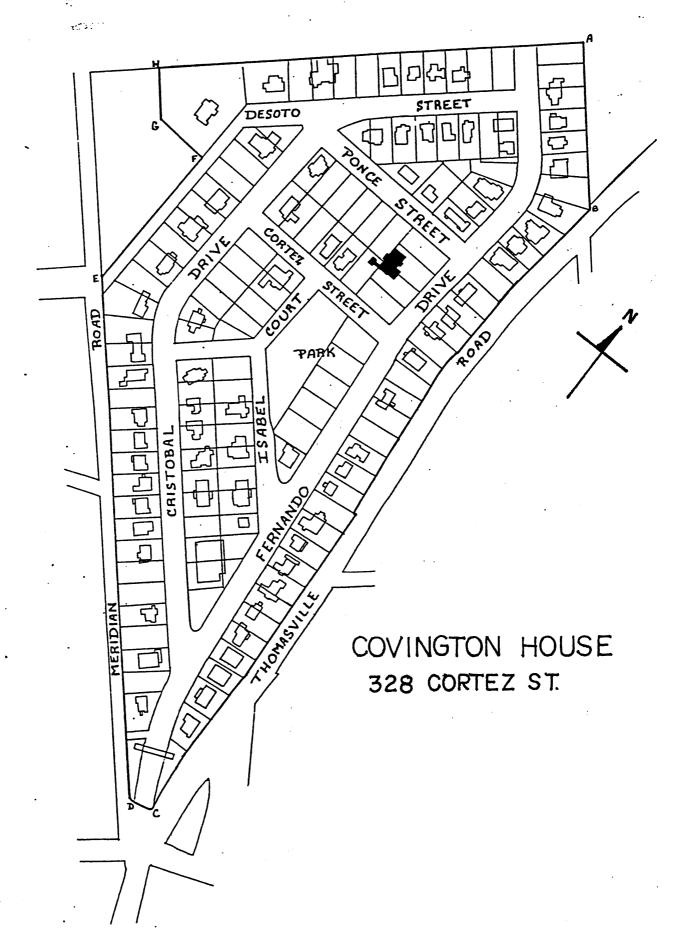
- 2 6) Main entrance on S elevation, camera facing N
  - 7) 2 of 15
- 6) Butler's entrance on E elevation, camera facing W 3
  - 7) 3 of 15
- 4 6) N and W elevations, camera facing SE
  - 7) 4 of 15
- 6) Entrances to entry hall and dining room from 5 living room, camera facing NW
  - 7) 5 of 15
- 6) Fireplace on E wall of living room, camera facing E 6
  - 7) 6 of 15
- 7 6) Icebox with side spout, in Breakfast Room, camera facing W
  - 7) 7 of 15
- 6) Central hall, camera facing S
  - 7) 8 of 15
- 6) Central hall and stairway, camera facing N
  - 7) 9 of 15
- 6) Ceiling in second story bedroom, camera facing NW 10
  - 7) 10 of 15
- 6) Garage/Servants Quarters, camera facing NE 11
  - 7) 11 of 15
- 6) Stable, camera facing NW 12
  - 7) 12 of 15

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Photographs
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- 13 6) Garden bench and urn, camera facing N
  - 7) 13 od 15
- 14 6) Formal gardens, camera facing SW
  - 7) 14 of 15
- 15 6) Gazebo, camera facing W
  - 7) 15 of 15

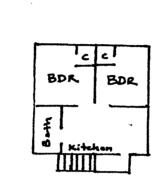
LOS ROBLES



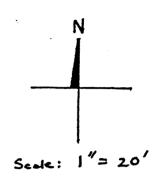
## COVINGTON HOUSE

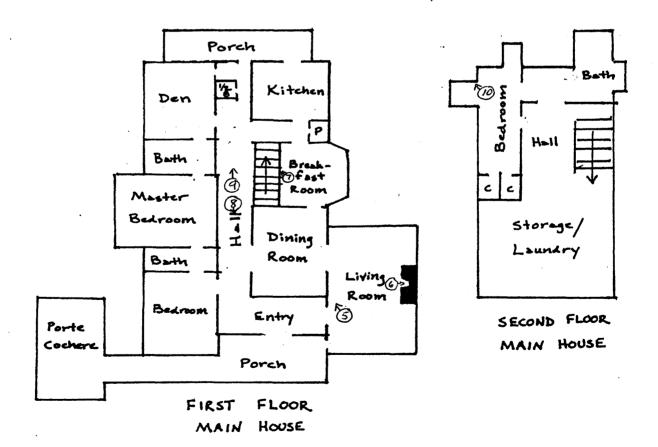
100

FLOOR PLANS



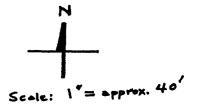
GARAGE APARTMENT, SECOND LEVEL





## COVINGTON HOUSE

SITE PLAN



PONCE STREET Form-1 Gordons <u>/+</u> Stable House Gazebo TIS Ô 328

CORTEZ STREET

