

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 89001219

Date Listed: 09/18/89

President's House, Naval War College  
Property Name

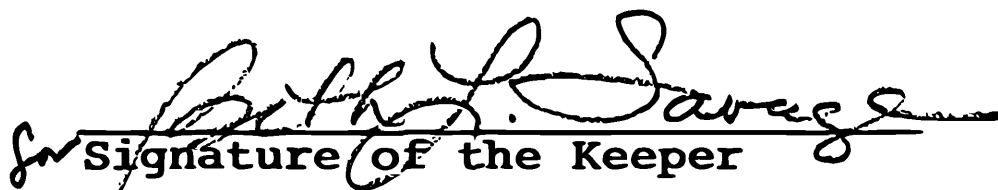
Newport  
County

RI  
State

N/A

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

9-18-89  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

**Section 3: Classification**

Number of Resources within the Property: The house is classified as 1 contributing building; the outbuildings are classified as 1 contributing building (laundry) and 1 noncontributing building (garage).

**Section 8: Period of Significance**

The termination date for the period of significance is 1939. The arbitrary cutoff at the fifty year date is justified since no other logical date suffices because the significant function of the property continues to the present.

This information was confirmed with Andrea Wohlfeld, Department of the Navy, by telephone.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

1219

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **AUG 04 1989**

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
President's House, Naval War College

AND/OR COMMON  
Quarters AA

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Naval Education and Training Center

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Newport

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Rhode Island

CODE  
44

COUNTY  
Newport

CODE  
005

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

Naval Education and Training Center, Department of the Navy

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Newport

VICINITY OF

Rhode Island

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Public Works Center

STREET & NUMBER

Naval Education and Training Center

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Newport

Rhode Island

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE An Historical Survey of the United States  
Navy Property in Rhode Island

DATE

August 1974

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Providence

Rhode Island

**ENCLOSURE**

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The President's House is an imposing two-story, wood frame, Colonial Revival structure, situated on a knoll that commands an impressive view of Narragansett Bay. The south (front) elevation is divided into five bays horizontally; on the first and second floors, 2/2 double-hung windows with shutters articulate the facade. Above the built-up wood cornice and colossal order pilasters, four gable pedimented dormers with 6/6 double-hung sash flank a similarly sized central swans-neck pedimented dormer, two on each side. The gable roof provides a one-foot overhang on each end and along the ridge, two brick chimneys are symmetrically positioned between the two pairs of gable pedimented dormers.

The first floor of the President's House is a variation of a double pile center stair hall plan with a kitchen ell on the north side, a closed-in porch on the west side, an enclosed entranceway on the south side, and a large glazed conservatory on the east side. When the building was constructed in 1896, the front entrance was open but covered with a pedimented porch supported with two wood Doric columns; the porch on the west side was also open. In addition, there was no conservatory on the east side; the dining room and east parlour each had a bay window on the east elevation and an opening to the east of the existing fireplaces linked them. The two-story bathroom addition, a wood frame, clapboarded volume, was installed onto the north elevation of the house in 1909. Within the next three years a glass-walled, gable-roofed palm room was added to the east side of the east parlour; it projected toward the south and included a semi-circular balcony on the south end. At the same time, the south half of the west porch was glass-enclosed and the openings from the west parlour modified into French doors.

In 1927, the palm room was extended northward to encompass the entire east facade of the building; to provide for a choreographed traffic flow, the east wall and bay window of the dining room were removed and the opening between the dining room and east parlour was closed. In addition, the south wall of this new reception room was extended to enclose the semi-circular balcony. At the same time, the west porch was renovated to become one large interior glass-enclosed space. The enclosure of the stairs on the south (front) elevation with glass and a second, smaller portico were also added at this time. A porte cochere was added to the main entrance in 1956.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 1

Presently, the house is intact and resplendent in its Colonial Revival detailing. The center stair hall, with its scalloped elliptical transomed and side-lit main opening, contains a matching elliptical arch opening in the center that separates the entry area from the stair area. The stairs themselves are a "C" shaped winding course with stained treads, painted risers, and straight painted balusters set into a sweeping rail with built-up stained newels. The east and west parlours are similar in design with wide openings and pocket doors separating each of them from the center stair hall; the north walls of both rooms contain fireplaces with wood mantels that typify Revivalist design themes with their fluted pilasters and dentilled mantel shelves. The dining room and its fireplace are similar in their design to the two parlours, except that a lighting valance was recently installed near the ceiling. In all four of these public rooms, the light-stained oak flooring is embellished with a geometrized, dark-stained inlay border. The baseboards and mouldings complement each other and the inlay. The baseboards are built-up of 1 x 8 boards with quarter round and ogee bottoms and tops, respectively; and the mouldings are beaded 1 x 6 boards with decorative edge strips.

The reception room and west porch remain unchanged, with their plentiful 6/6 double-hung windows and matching light-stained floors (without inlay). The ceiling of the reception room contains a built-up wood cornice that provides a visual spring for the shallow barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling; the west porch, however, contains a flat, painted, panelled ceiling with relief strips that articulate the panel joints.

The north ell, which contains the kitchen and servant-related spaces (including the back stair), is largely unchanged since its construction. The appliances, of course, have been upgraded and the dumbwaiter was removed at the first floor; however, all of the plain board cabinets for china, linens and silver remain intact and are in full use. In 1933, a small one-story clapboarded "modern" kitchen wing was added to the north ell, and the kitchen, formerly in the basement, was moved upstairs. This area was renovated in 1958, and serves contemporary day-to-day, non-ceremonial uses. The second floor and attic contain the private bedrooms and studies for the residents of the building; these spaces, which have undergone very few modifications, are more restrained than the public rooms, although the mouldings and baseboards are similar.

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National Park Service**

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

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Continuation sheet 2

Item number 7

Page 2

The site is distinctly visible from every direction, and allows the building to assert an architectural reminder to all who see it of the prominence of its primary resident. The site presently also contains a small original wood frame laundry building and a concrete block two-car garage that was installed in 1959. Along the highly manicured north edge of the property, a row of wood greenhouses were built with the residence. They were damaged in the 1939 hurricane and subsequently rebuilt; however, severe budgetary constraints after World War II necessitated their removal. At present, the area is planted with a tall row of arborvitae.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Creighton Withers

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The President's House is significant under Criterion A, association with "broad patterns of our history." As the official residence of a series of senior naval officers assigned to commands historically present at the Naval Station at Newport, the ceremonial architectural style, formal interiors, and imposing setting on a knoll overlooking Narragansett Bay and at the head of a row of officers' quarters along Bainbridge Road symbolically express the importance of both the officers who have occupied these quarters and the relative significance of these commands. Since 1906, the residence has been reserved for the Presidents of the Naval War College, the country's premier institution for the advanced training of its senior personnel and a pivotal institution in the twentieth-century development of the United States Navy.

The permanent presence of the U.S. Navy in Newport dates to 1869, when an experimental torpedo station was erected on Goat Island. In 1884, the Naval War College, the oldest center for the advanced study of warfare in the nation, was established in what had been the Newport Asylum. It was moved to Luce Hall (Building 1) in 1894. The college constituted the prototype for similar institutions of advanced military education, introducing, for example, the concept of war games, which had been pioneered in Europe. Graduates since World War I have achieved the most senior positions in the Navy, and over the course of the twentieth century, the college has exercised great influence with regard to the development of strategy, tactics, and philosophy.

A year after the Naval War College moved into Luce Hall, specifications were issued for labor and materials for the "Commandant's Quarters" and the contract awarded to Creighton Withers, a local architect who appears in the Newport Directory from 1895 to 1906, when he left for San Francisco. The quarters were built in 1896 at a cost of \$16,226.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3/4 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 9	3, 05, 72, 5	4, 59, 75, 4, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Amy Friedlander, Ph.D., Senior Historian and John R. Bowie. AIA

ORGANIZATION

Cultural Resource Group  
Louis Berger & Associates, Inc.

DATE

November 1986

STREET & NUMBER

100 Halsted Street

TELEPHONE

201-678-1960

CITY OR TOWN

East Orange

STATE

New Jersey

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES  NO

NONE

*Frank C. Williamson*  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is  National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

F. S. STERNS

TITLE

Director, Installations & Facilities  
Assistant Secretary of the Navy (S&L)

DATE

7-21-89

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Boyd L. Swager*  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

9-18-89

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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National Park Service**

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

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Continuation sheet 3

Item number 8

Page 1

The structure was built and has always been used as the official residence of a commanding officer, although it has not been exclusively assigned to the Naval War College. Indeed, during the first 17 years of its existence, jurisdiction over the property vacillated between the Bureau of Navigation and the Bureau of Yards and Docks. The earliest known occupant of the quarters was Captain John McGowan, Commanding Officer, Naval Station, in 1899. It remained the residence of the commander of the Naval Station through 1904, although from June to November 1903 Captain W. W. Meade, then the occupant, was simultaneously the President of the War College and the Commandant, 2nd Naval District. From 1904 to 1905, Rear Admiral Charles M. Thomas, Commandant, Naval Training Station and 2nd Naval District, was in residence, followed by Captain A. C. Dillingham, Superintendant, Naval Training Service, from 1905 to 1906. In May of 1906, Captain John P. Merrill, President, Naval War College, moved into the quarters. From that time to the present, the building has been occupied by the successive Presidents of the War College except for the tenure of Captain Albert Gleaves, Commandant, Training Station and 2nd Naval District, from November 1911 to December 1913.

As observed elsewhere (Section #7), the site of the structure symbolizes the prominence of its occupant, and the dual function of the structure as both the official quarters of a commanding officer and the residence for himself and his family is expressed by the treatment of the interior spaces. The second floor and attic containing the private spaces for the family are furnished in a more restrained fashion than the public rooms on the first floor, although the floor plan is consistent with the architectural style of the building, and the mouldings and baseboards echo the more elaborate decorative details found in the main rooms on the first floor. The six principal rooms on the first floor (West Porch, Library, West Parlor, East Parlor, Dining Room, Reception Room) respond to the formal entertainment hosted at the residence. The expanse, elaborate decorative details, and traffic flow permitting use, if necessary, of the entire floor (except for the rear kitchen areas), including the center hall with its sweeping staircase, all contribute to the sense of occasion associated with events at this dwelling.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet 4

Item number 9

Page 1

Kennedy, Gerald. Coasters Harbor Island, Newport, Rhode Island, U.S. Naval War College, 1884 - . Manuscript on file at the Naval War College Naval Historical Collection, Newport. n.d.

Newport Directory. Sampson, Murdock & Co., Newport, Rhode Island. 1895-1906.

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. An Historical Survey of United States Navy Property in Rhode Island. 1974.

U.S. Naval Station, Newport, Rhode Island, Public Works Center, Quarters AA, Building Files, Correspondence, Record Plans, and Sketches, 1909-1965.

U.S. Naval Station, Newport, Rhode Island, Record Group 39, Manuscript Collection, Naval War College Historical Collection, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Individual Items:

- Inventory of and Receipt for Furniture, October 4, 1909
- Inventory of and Receipt for Furniture, April 29, 1912
- Inventory of and Receipt for Furniture, May 10, 1912
- List of Occupants, President's House - Naval War College [ca. 1972]
- Memorandum as to Building No. 19, April 20, 1908
- Memorandum for Files, typescript, February 23, 1954
- Memorandum to Chief of Bureau of Yards and Docks, August 3, 1926
- Memorandum to Chief of Bureau of Yards and Docks, May 12, 1936
- Memorandum to Chief of Bureau of Yards and Docks, January 29, 1959
- Naval War College Military Construction Program since 1890, n.d.
- Plans and elevations, 1909, 1958-1965
- Specifications for Labor and Material for Commandant's Quarters, August 1895
- Survey of Furniture in Quarters B [redesignated AA], April 5, 1926

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

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

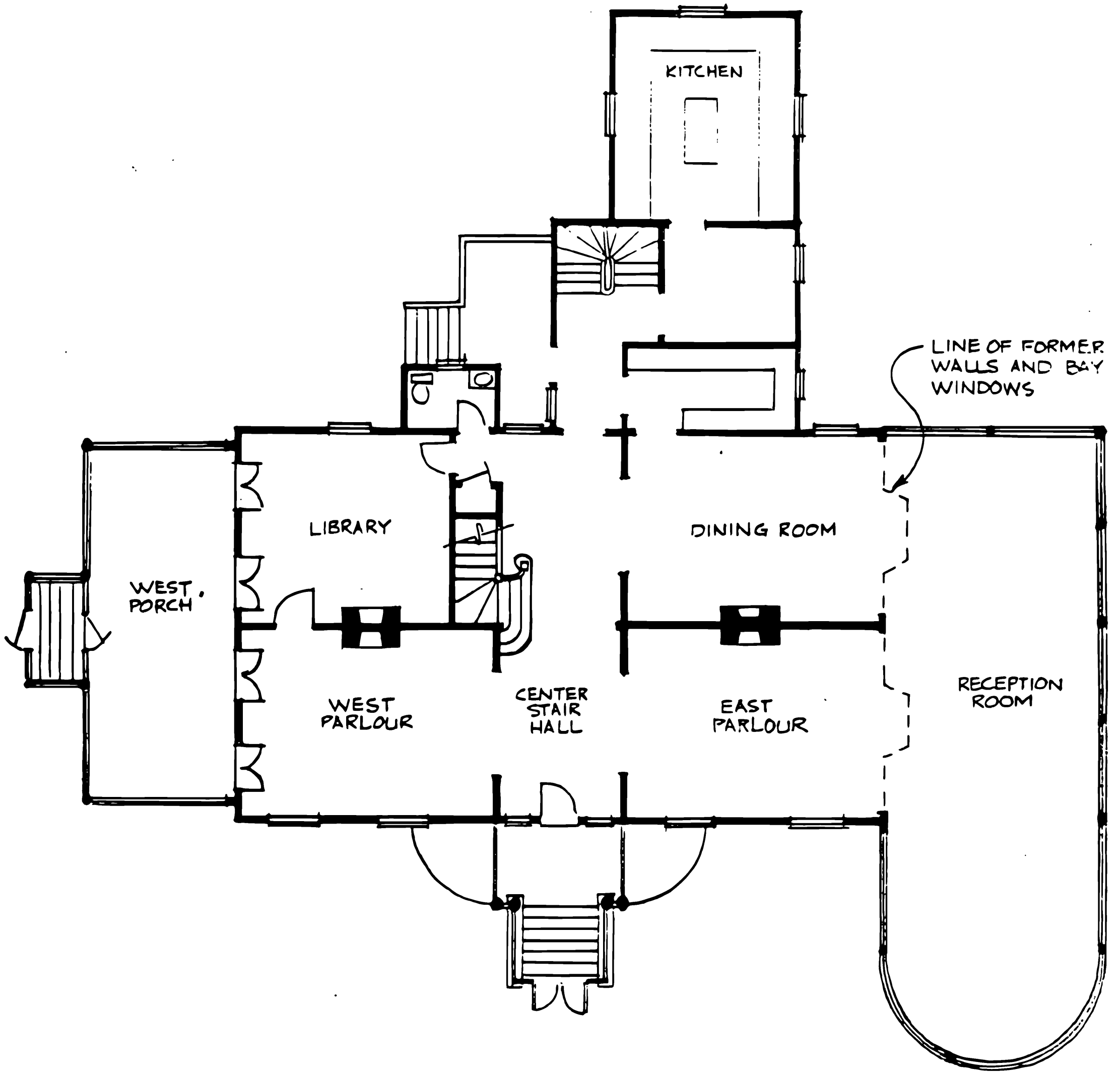
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Continuation sheet 5

Item number 10

Page 1

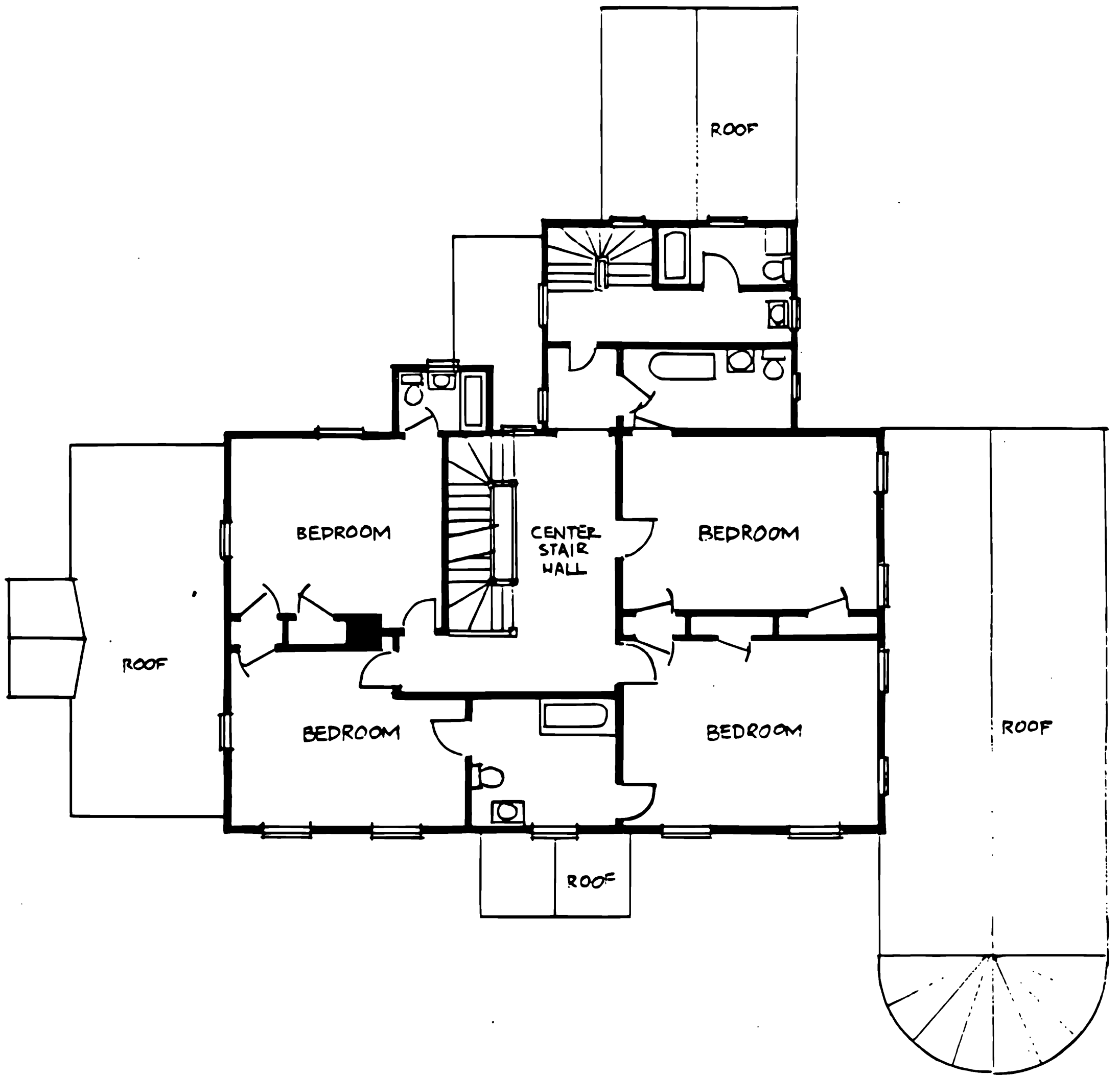
The property is bounded by Luce Avenue on the south, Bainbridge Road on the west, and tall hedges on the north and east. Contained in this area are the dwelling, formal circular drive leading to the main and side entrances, dependencies, and the yard area historically laid out in formal gardens, according to a surviving, circa 1950s aerial photograph from the Building Files, Quarters AA, in the Public Works Office, U.S. Naval Station, Newport.



EXISTING CONDITION  
 • FIRST FLOOR PLAN •  
 PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

0 1 5 10  
 APPROX. SCALE FT

N



EXISTING CONDITION  
 SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
 PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

