

Structure/Site Information Form

IDENTIFICATION 1

Street Address: 22 W. 100 South
Midway, Wasatch County, Utah

UTM: 12 459980 4484340
Heber City Quad
T. 3 S R. 4 E S. 34

Name of Structure: Watkins, John and Margaret, House

Present Owner: Delvene Bronson
22 West 100 South
Owner Address: Midway, Utah 84049

Year Built (Tax Record): Effective Age: Tax #: OMI-0014-0-004-034

Legal Description: Kind of Building:
All of Lot 1 and Lot 4 Block 4 Midway Survey, except the N 85 feet of the E 100 feet of Lot 4 and the W 16.5 feet of Lot 1. Less than one acre.

STATUS/USE 2

Original Owner: John Watkins Construction Date: 1867 Demolition Date:

Original Use: Residential Present Use: Residential

Building Condition: Integrity: Preliminary Evaluation: Final Register Status:

- Excellent Site Unaltered Significant Not of the National Landmark District
- Good Ruins Minor Alterations Contributory Historic Period National Register Multi-Resource
- Deteriorated Major Alterations Not Contributory State Register Thematic

DOCUMENTATION 3

Photography: Date of Slides: 1985 Slide No.: Date of Photographs: 1985-6 Photo No.:
Views: Front Side Rear Other Views: Front Side Rear Other

Research Sources:

- Abstract of Title Sanborn Maps Newspapers U of U Library
- Plat Records/Map City Directories Utah State Historical Society BYU Library
- Tax Card & Photo Biographical Encyclopedias Personal Interviews USU Library
- Building Permit Obituary Index LDS Church Archives SLC Library
- Sewer Permit County & City Histories LDS Genealogical Society Other

Bibliographical References (books, articles, records, interviews, old photographs and maps, etc.):

Shaer, Mary A. A Brief History of the Pioneer John Watkins. Ogden, Utah: Commercial Press, 1979.

Mortimer, William James, comp. and ed. How Beautiful Upon the Mountains. Heber City, Utah: Wasatch County Chapter of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1963.

Street Address:

Site No:

Architect/Builder: John Watkins

Building Materials: stone, brick

Building Type/Style: Vernacular

Description of physical appearance & significant architectural features:

(Include additions, alterations, ancillary structures, and landscaping if applicable)

Built in 1867, the John and Margaret Watkins House is a one-story, three-room house with a gable roof and stuccoed masonry walls. The house has been altered from its original appearance, but the most significant changes were made within the historic period and do not significantly affect the historical integrity of the building. The floor plan of the house, its most significant feature, is still clearly discernible despite the alterations, and the basic form of the house is very much intact.

As originally constructed, the house consisted of three one-room apartments, one for each of John Watkins' three wives. An indented front porch, centered on the facade, allowed each apartment to have its own exterior front door (see fig. 1). There were also rear doors for each apartment along the back of the house. One description of the house contends that a long frame shed serving as the common kitchen stood along the rear or north wall,¹ although there is no evidence of that structure on the site today. That shed would have been the only interior means of passing from one apartment to another, since there were no connecting doorways between them. Three massive chimneys are visible on the ridge, evidence of the large open fireplaces that were in each of the separate apartments. The fireplaces are still visible, though they have been covered over and are no longer in use. (See Continuation Sheet)

ARCHITECTURE

5 HISTORY

Statement of Historical Significance:

Construction Date:

Constructed in 1867, the John and Margaret Watkins House is one of seven houses contained in the ARCHITECTURE OF JOHN WATKINS THEMATIC RESOURCE NOMINATION, having been designed and built by John Watkins, an accomplished early Utah builder. John Watkins' work effectively illustrates the dynamic role the professional builder played in shaping Utah's early architectural landscape. While it has been customary for historians to explain Utah architecture from the time of first settlement in 1847 up to about 1890 as the simple extension of eastern folk styles or the replication of popular pattern-book designs, John Watkins' houses suggest a more generous appraisal. Slave to neither tradition nor pattern-book, Watkins found useful ideas in both, ideas that formed the basis of essentially new if nevertheless familiar designs. From two-room cottages to elaborate Gothic Revival houses to houses intended for multi-family polygamous living, Watkins drew upon his broad building experience to create not copies of other houses, but new ones designed to meet his client's functional, aesthetic, and symbolic needs. This house, Watkins' first permanent home in Midway and the oldest identified house in the community, is significant because it shows Watkins' adapting traditional designing rules to the new multi-family housing context associated with Mormon polygamy in the nineteenth century.

John Watkins was born in 1834 in Maidstone, Kent, England. His father was a house builder and it was this trade that John learned as a youth, working first with his father in the vicinity of Maidstone and later on his own in London. He converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormons, in 1852 and emigrated to Utah in 1856. Settling first in Provo, Watkins helped supervise the building of the first Provo Tabernacle (1856-1867) and designed the Cluff House, Provo's first opera house, as well as many stores and houses in the city. In 1865 Watkins moved to the upper
180 1 YAK (See Continuation Sheet)

John and Margaret Watkins House
Description continued:

Over the years several major changes have taken place in the appearance of the house. First, the recessed porch wall was knocked out and a new brick one inserted in a line even with the main front wall.² This not only enlarged the center room, but also provided an interior connection between the formerly separate rooms, the front doors of the side apartments now serving as interior doorways. That may have been done soon after two of the three wives moved out of the house in 1869, leaving the house to one wife and her family who would have no longer needed to maintain the separate apartment arrangement. The rafters for this section of the house clearly show that they were originally supported by a recessed porch wall and have been adapted to conform to the removal of that wall. The fenestration of the original porch wall--a central door with flanking windows--was retained on the new brick section.

The second major alteration to the house was the plastering of the exterior walls. This was undoubtedly done to hide the different building materials of the front wall where the brick section, described above, was joined to the original rock walls. It was probably done at the same time the brick wall was inserted. The local "pot rock" which was used in the construction of this house is a relatively soft, porous rock that tends to weather easily. Many of the "pot rock" buildings in Midway have been stuccoed over the years to protect them from weather damage and possibly for aesthetic reasons as well.

The third alteration of note was the enlargement of the windows in the east front room. This probably dates from the 1940s or '50s. Other alterations include the addition of the small gable roof porch at the entrance (date unknown) and the replacement of wood shingles with the corrugated metal roofing that is now on the house. Despite these changes, the house retains the basic form, fenestration and floor plan that constitute its historical integrity.

Also located on the property is a small frame garage that currently serves as a storage shed. It is located to the immediate west of the house. Judging from its appearance it was probably built in the 1930s or later. Since it was neither built nor used by John Watkins it is not considered to be a contributing building on the property.

Total number of contributing buildings: 1
Total number of non-contributing buildings: 1

¹Mary A. Shaer, A Brief History of the Pioneer John Watkins, (Ogden, Utah: Commercial Press (printer), 1979), p. 66.

²Ibid.

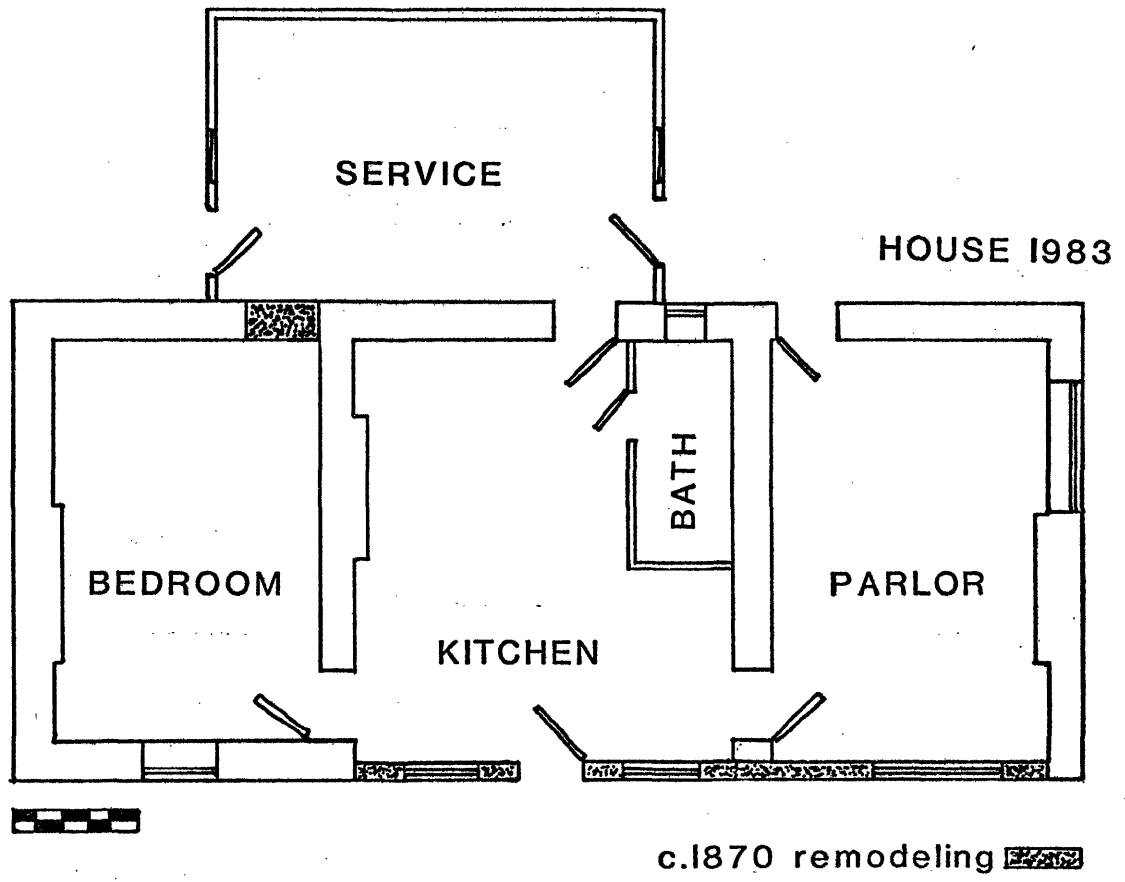
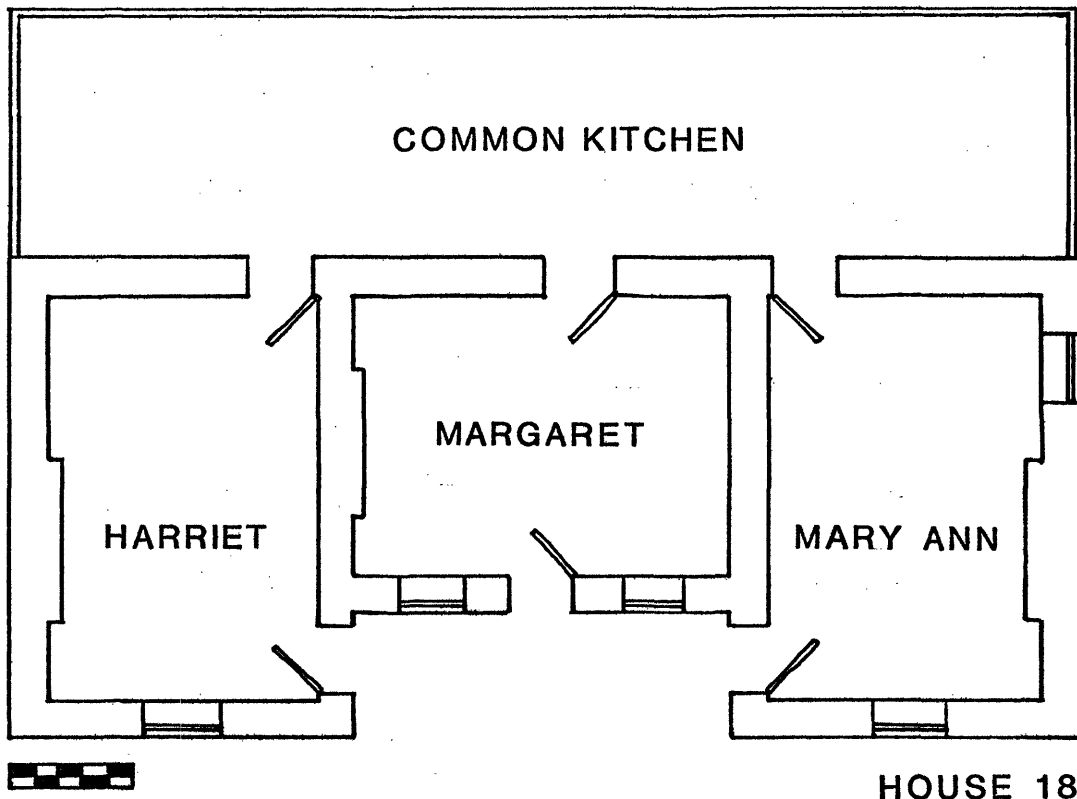
John and Margaret Watkins House History continued:

Provo River Valley and was among the first settlers of the town of Midway. Here his skills as a builder were quickly recognized and during the 1860s-'80s he designed and built many houses and other buildings in the community. During his later years, Watkins turned from architecture to the lumber business, operating a sawmill in the nearby mountains.

Watkins was also involved in local civic and religious affairs. He served as a selectman for Wasatch County, first president of the Midway Water Works Company, branch president for the Mormon congregation in the nearby community of Charleston (1869-76), councilor to the bishop (ecclesiastical leader) of the Midway Ward (1877-93), and bishop of the Midway Ward from 1893 until his death in 1902.

Soon after the Black Hawk Indian War came to a close in the summer of 1867, John Watkins began the construction of this three-room stone house on the block just south of Fort Midway. Seventy-five families, including the Watkins, had spent over a year living in Fort Midway in order to protect themselves from Indian depredations. The fort, which was established midway between two earlier settlements at the time Indian conflicts broke out, was later dismantled and no evidence of it remains. This house and others constructed in the vicinity of the fort after the restoration of peace were the first permanent houses built in Midway. This is the only of those early houses that has been clearly identified.

In keeping with the Mormon practice of polygamy at that time, John Watkins had three wives, and he built this three-room house to provide equal accommodations for each wife. The indented front porch allowed a separate entrance to each wife's one-room "apartment" (see fig. 1). Across the back of the house was a frame, lean-to kitchen (now demolished) which was shared by all three wives and their families. The three wives lived together in this house only until John completed the large Gothic Revival house one block away in 1869. (That house, the Watkins-Coleman House, was listed in the National Register in 1971.) The new house was occupied by Watkins and his second and third wives, Harriet Steel Watkins and Mary Ann Sawyer Watkins. Margaret Ackhurst Watkins, John's first wife, continued to live in the old house until her death in 1905. Mary Watkins Andrews, one of Margaret's eight children, and her husband, Nicholas, owned the house from 1905 until her death in 1925. At that time the house was sold to Vernon Frank and Beryl Elizabeth Speir. Beginning in 1929, they leased it to Millie, Casper and Amanda Sulser. In 1950 the house was purchased by the Bronsons, the current owners.



John and Margaret Watkins House
 Midway, Wasatch County, Utah
 1986

Figure 5: The Components of Cross-wing Design

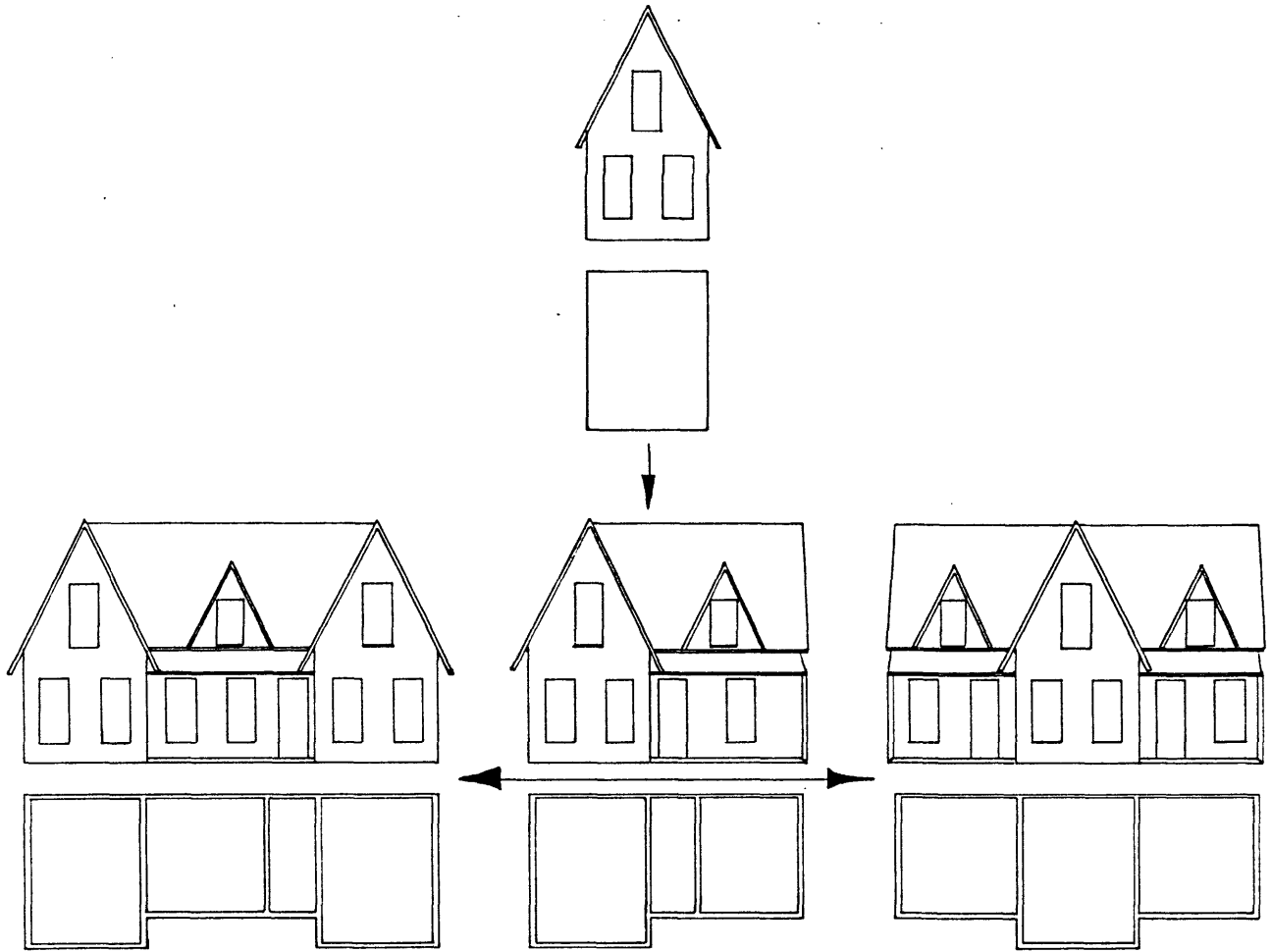


Figure 1: Conjectural Reconstruction of Watkins' Provo House

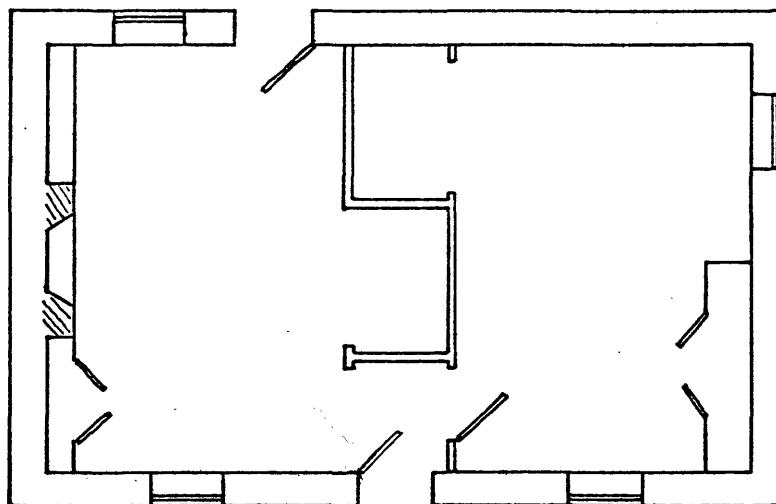


Figure 2: Watkins-Coleman House, 5 E. Main, Midway, Utah.



Figure 3: Wooton-McCarrell House, 93 W. Main, Midway, Utah.

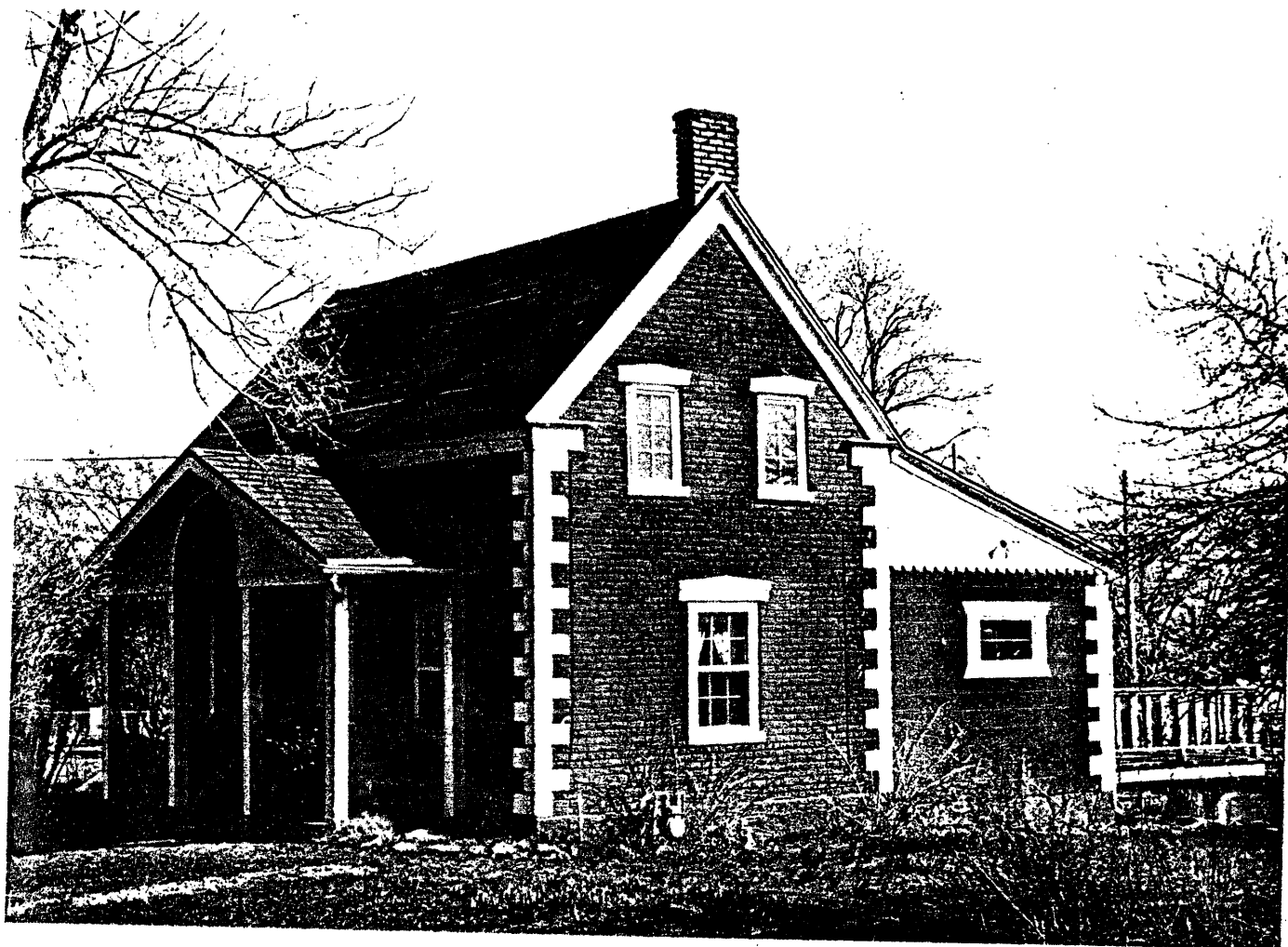


Figure 4: Wheeler's "Plain Timber Cottage-Villa"

