

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

5

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 Gilmour B. and Edith Craig MacDonald House
other names/site number none

2. Location

street & number 517 Ash Street not for publication
city, towns/site number Ames vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Story code 169 zip code 50010

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Conservation Movement in Iowa MPS Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

David [Signature] 3/16/92
Signature of certifying official Date

State Historical Society of Iowa
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this 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.
 removed for the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

Beth Boland 5/6/92

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Same

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stucco; wood shingle

roof wood shingle

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

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nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Conservation
Education

Period of Significance

c.1916- 1941

Significant Dates

c.1916

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

Gilmour Beyers MacDonald (1883-1960)

Architect/Builder

Robert G. McDowell
G. B. MacDonald

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Iowa Bureau of Historic Preservation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	5
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4	4	6	6	4	5
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4	6	5	1	5	8	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

B

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

legal property boundaries

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Conard
 organization PHR Associates date June 19, 1991
 street & number 275 Crescent Park Drive telephone 712/657-3347
 city or town Lake View state Iowa zip code 51450

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Section 7: Physical Description

The Gilmour B. and Edith Craig MacDonald House is a two-story bungalow with a full basement, measuring approximately 35' wide by 50' deep. From the exterior, the size is masked by a complex floor plan and multiple roof planes. The first floor plan consists of a 28'x50' rectangle set on an east-west axis. A low-pitched side gable roof covers this portion of the house. From the rear southwest corner, a solarium extends approximately 7' to the south. Adjacent to this projection, a pergola supported by cobblestone piers extends approximately 12'. A side entrance is located under the pergola. The solarium extension is covered by a separate gable roof, the line of which echoes the main roof. A smaller second story is covered by an intersecting front gable roof. All the roofs have broad overhangs with exposed rafters and triangle braces. The exterior walls are covered with stucco on the lower story, wood shingles on the upper. An open front porch extends approximately 17' along the east front, supported on the southeast corner by one large, tapered cobblestone pier. Broad, flattened arches open the porch to the street and the south side. The support pier is balanced by a shorter cobblestone pier at the landing of concrete steps located center front east. A sizable cobblestone exterior chimney is also located on the south side. Fenestration consists of wood sash windows in various sizes, generally with multiplied transoms or upper sashes, often occurring in banks, and always set off with plain, wide-board surrounds which cross at the corners.

The house probably was completed in 1916. The MacDonald children recall that after their parents moved to Ames in 1910, they lived in a rented house for a short time, then purchased the lot at 517 Ash. A two-story building was built on the back of the lot first. This served as temporary housing while the main house was under construction. Plans for the house indicate that it was designed by Robert McDowell of Des Moines, but no date appears on the drawings. Since the house, as built, varies somewhat from the plans, it is possible that the MacDonalds purchased standardized plans and adapted them to suit their own needs and tastes. For instance, according to family members, an "unexcavated" area of the basement, as shown on the plans, actually contained a door for receiving coal. In addition, there was no toilet in the basement, but the "closet" off the second floor sleeping porch was plumbed and furnished for use as a toilet. The exterior walls were covered with stucco rather than Kellastone, and stone appears wherever the plans call for klinker brick. MacDonald built the house himself with the help of a carpenter friend, Phil Coy.

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In 1962, Helen and Keith McRoberts, the current owners, purchased the house from the MacDonald family. They altered the house in 1969 in order to provide additional living space on the second story and to reconfigure some interior partitions. The building modifications, however, are highly compatible with the original design. Architect Phil H. Feddersen, Helen McRoberts's brother, designed the alterations. The most substantial change was the expansion of the second level to the west rear, and the major visual evidence of this is that the second-story gable roof has been changed almost to a flat pitch on the back rake in order to accommodate room additions. Other changes include replacement of the original wood casement windows in the solarium (now used as a dining room) with more modern style wood casement windows, and the addition of a sliding patio door on the west facade, which provides access to a wooden deck constructed off the dining room. The window replacements in the solarium/dining room are noticeable from the exterior mainly because they have single lights, whereas the originals had multipane transoms which matched fenestration elsewhere on the house. Nonetheless, the size of the openings was maintained, and the style and materials are compatible with the historic fabric. The south side entry was also modified in 1969. The original French doors were replaced with a solid wood door, and two full-length, ten-pane sidelights were reduced in size to six-light windows.

The interior of the house holds several noteworthy architectural features, chief among them a massive cobblestone fireplace with a segmentally arched firebox opening, which was designed by G.B. MacDonald. Exterior window ornamentation is echoed on the interior, where wide, flat surrounds cross at the corners. Ceiling beams are exposed in the living room to give a coffered effect. Stippled metal wall sconces, another original feature, remain in several places.

The two-story, side-gable building which served as a temporary residence for the MacDonald family is still located at the rear of the property. It is constructed of hollow tile, and the exterior walls are stuccoed. Fenestration is minimal, with multipane wood-sash windows on the east and west ends of the building only. After the MacDonalds acquired their first car, one-half of the ground floor was converted to a garage. The original sliding garage doors have been replaced with overhead doors, and the entire lower story is now used as a garage. Otherwise, the building appears much as it did when the MacDonalds lived on the property.

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Section 8 Statement of Significance

Summary Significance Statement

The G.B. and Edith Craig MacDonald House is significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with G.B. MacDonald, one of the leading figures in the Conservation Movement in Iowa from the time he joined the faculty at Iowa State College (now Iowa State University) in 1910 until his death in 1960. MacDonald was the leading spokesperson for forestry and soil conservation in the prior to World War II. In Section E, his contributions are discussed in the contexts of "Forestry Conservation" (Subsection III), "Parks" (Subsection IV), and "Soil Conservation" (Subsection VI). The MacDonald House is also significant under Criterion C as an outstanding example of Craftsman architecture in Ames.

Criterion B

After earning a bachelor's degree in forestry from the University of Nebraska in 1907, MacDonald worked for a time as a forester in Montana and Idaho and at the U.S.D.A. Department of Forest Extension in Washington, D.C. In 1910, he took his master's degree from the University of Nebraska and joined the department of horticulture and forestry at Iowa State College in Ames. At the time, he was the sole member of the forestry half of the department. Believing that more instructors were needed in order to train students for careers as professional foresters, he convinced the department to add instructors. By the late 1930s, the Forestry Department, of which he was chairman, had eight full-time faculty members. MacDonald also helped to launch *The Ames Forester* in 1913, a publication focusing attention on major resource conservation activities throughout the state, forestry as well as wildlife conservation and state parks. MacDonald came to Iowa several years after the Iowa Park and Forestry Association had been organized, though it did not take him long to become active in the organization and its successors, the Iowa Forestry and Conservation Association and the Iowa Conservation Association; and he served as the organization's secretary for many years.

From 1918 to 1935 he served as Deputy State Forester under the Iowa Department of Agriculture. In this capacity he worked closely with the State Board of Conservation through the 1920s, helping to regenerate woodlands on newly set aside parks and preserves. When forestry was subsumed under the new State Conservation Commission in 1935, he became State

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Forester, a position he held until 1957. MacDonald also planned and developed the State Forest Nursery at Ames.

MacDonald's role in forestry conservation cannot be overstated, for he was the person most responsible for leading the state from a policy focused on tree planting to a policy focused on reforestation and forest management. During the early 1930s he directed the first systematic statewide survey of tree species and soil conditions for forestry. The survey, known as the forest and wasteland survey, was used to develop plans for federal forest reserve purchases and reforestation. MacDonald's plan, funded by the Civil Works Administration in cooperation with the State Planning Board, of which he was a member, was completed in 1934. During the same period, he served as an advisor to the consultants preparing Iowa's *Twenty-Five Year Plan for Conservation* (1933), which incorporated the early findings of his forestry survey. MacDonald also contributed to the recommendations for forestry and soil conservation embodied in the state plan. The forest and wasteland survey, however, was largely directed at federal involvement. After the state passed the National Forest Enabling Act in December of 1933, which authorized land acquisition for the purpose of establishing national forests in Iowa, the U.S. Forest Service began a modest program of land purchases. Although the federal government purchased a few thousand acres, the program eventually was turned over to the state. By the early 1940s, enough land had been acquired to establish three state forests in Iowa.

The forest and wasteland survey attracted attention among Robert Fechner's staff at Civilian Conservation Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C., particularly because MacDonald saw the relation of forestry to soil erosion and farming. New Dealers snatched it up as tailor-made for the mission of the CCC. As a result, MacDonald was asked to serve as the state director of the Emergency Conservation Work program, a position which he accepted and held until 1938. As Iowa ECW director, he had jurisdiction over all Civilian Conservation Corps camps established in the state. Because of his special concerns for forestry and soil conservation, most of the CCC camps operated in Iowa were, at one time or another, assigned to reforestation or soil erosion control work. Although he never left his faculty post, the flurry of conservation work during the 1930s took much of his time.

In 1947, the University of Nebraska awarded him an honorary doctorate in agriculture in recognition of his leadership in forestry and his devotion to teaching and public service. After he retired as head of the forestry department in 1948, he was appointed to the National Forest

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Advisory Council, serving until 1954. From then until 1958, he assisted the U.S. Forest Service on a project to determine access road locations. He served on the Executive Council of the Society of American Foresters for many years, and in 1948 the society elected him as a Fellow. In 1954, students and graduates of the forestry department at Iowa State College purchased a 7.5 acre tract of woodlands along the Skunk River near Ames and dedicated it to him as MacDonald Woods. The American Forestry Association honored him with an Award for Distinguished Service in Education in 1955. Iowa State College conferred a similar honor in 1958. When he died in 1960, MacDonald was remembered for his "extraordinary capacity to get things done." Although he was not a contemplative scholar, during his career he nonetheless published forty-four articles focused on the scientific management of renewable resources.

In addition to his professional life, MacDonald was also active in community affairs. He served as a lifetime elder in the Collegiate Presbyterian Church at Ames. In 1930 he received the Silver Beaver Award for his work with the Boy Scouts of America. For twenty-eight years he served on the Ames City Council, and he supported the College Y.M.C.A. throughout his life. His wife, Edith, was equally involved in community affairs. Tributes to "Professor Mac," as he was called by his students and colleagues, inevitably mention the community service he and his wife gave to Ames. As their daughter, Mary Janet, sums up these contributions -- "they were marvelous parents and community leaders."

Criterion C

The G.B. and Edith MacDonald House is an outstanding example of Craftsman architecture. Little is known about the architect, Robert G. McDowell, except that he located his practice in Des Moines between 1915 and 1933. The house, however, could not have been more suitably designed for a forester and his family. Set back on the lot and nestled behind an abundance of mature trees, it is the epitome of "urban woodsy." Banks of windows in the solarium and along the southern exposure flood the house with as much natural light as possible, and the massive stone fireplace in the living room seems to bring the outdoors in. Alterations made in 1969 were designed with great sensitivity toward the original design and materials, and they do not compromise the integrity of the historic fabric or design.

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Section 9: Bibliography

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Dunlap, Mary Janet [MacDonald]. Letter to Rebecca Conard May 30, 1991.

Getty, Russell, George B. Hartman, and J.A. Larsen. "Professor G.B. MacDonald." *Iowa State College Journal of Science* 22 (July 1948):319-321 [entire issue dedicated to MacDonald in recognition of his service to the Department of Forestry, 1910-1948].

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Henrickson, Einar L. "The C.C.C. in Iowa." *The Ames Forester* 22 (1934):23-26.

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McDowell, Robert. Architectural Plans for G.B. and Edith MacDonald House, undated. The original drawings are in the possession of Helen and Keith McRoberts.

McRoberts, Helen. Personal conversation with Rebecca Conard, January 7, 1991.

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Widner, Ralph R., ed. "Iowa: Forestry on the Farm." In *Forests and Forestry in the American States: A Reference Anthology*, 380-388. Missoula, Montana: Association of State Foresters, 1968.

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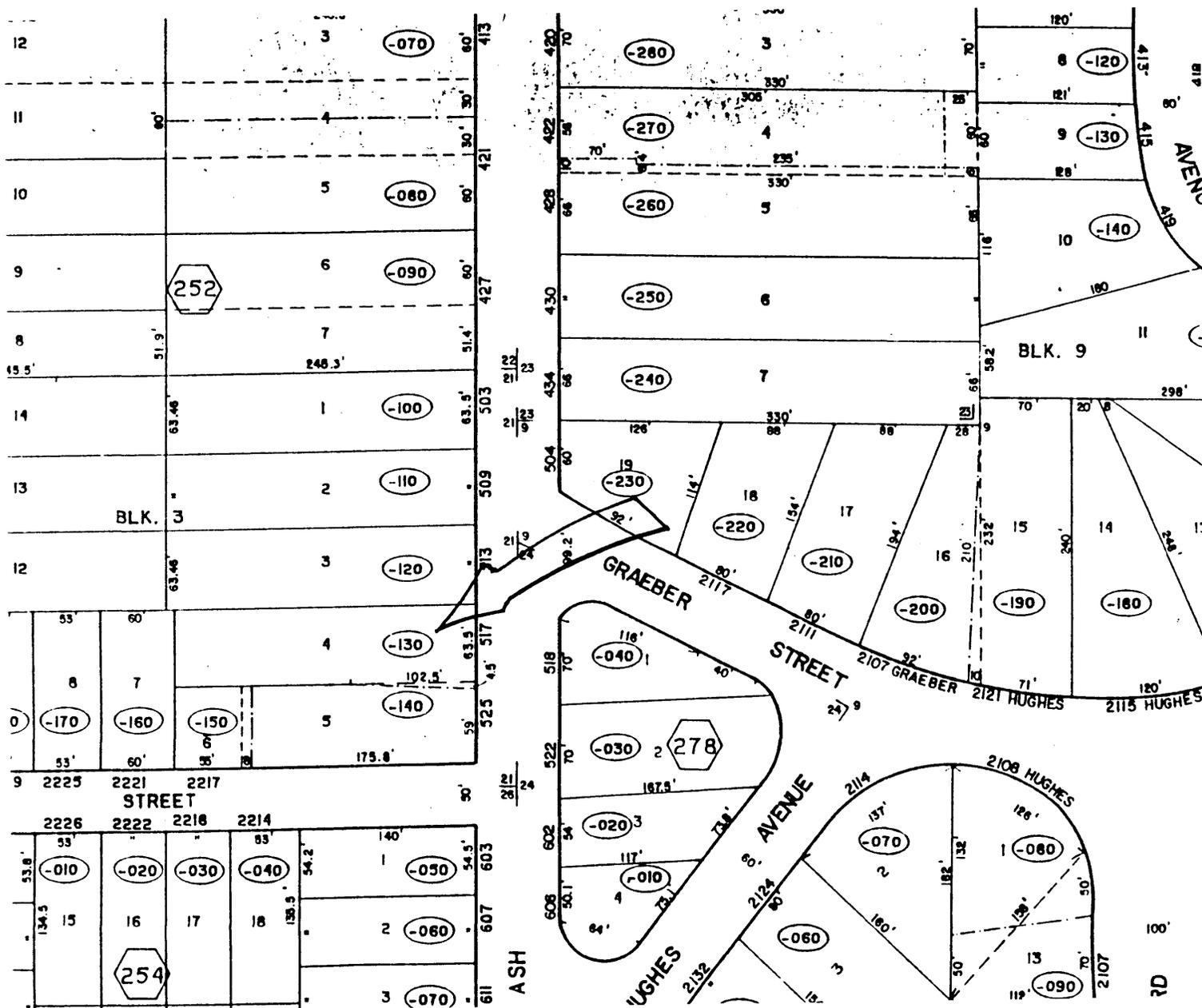
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Section 10: Geographical Data

Boundary Description: The property is located on Block 252, Lot 130 of the City of Ames, a parcel measuring 63'6" as it fronts on Ash Street and 102'6" deep.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries are the legal property limits.



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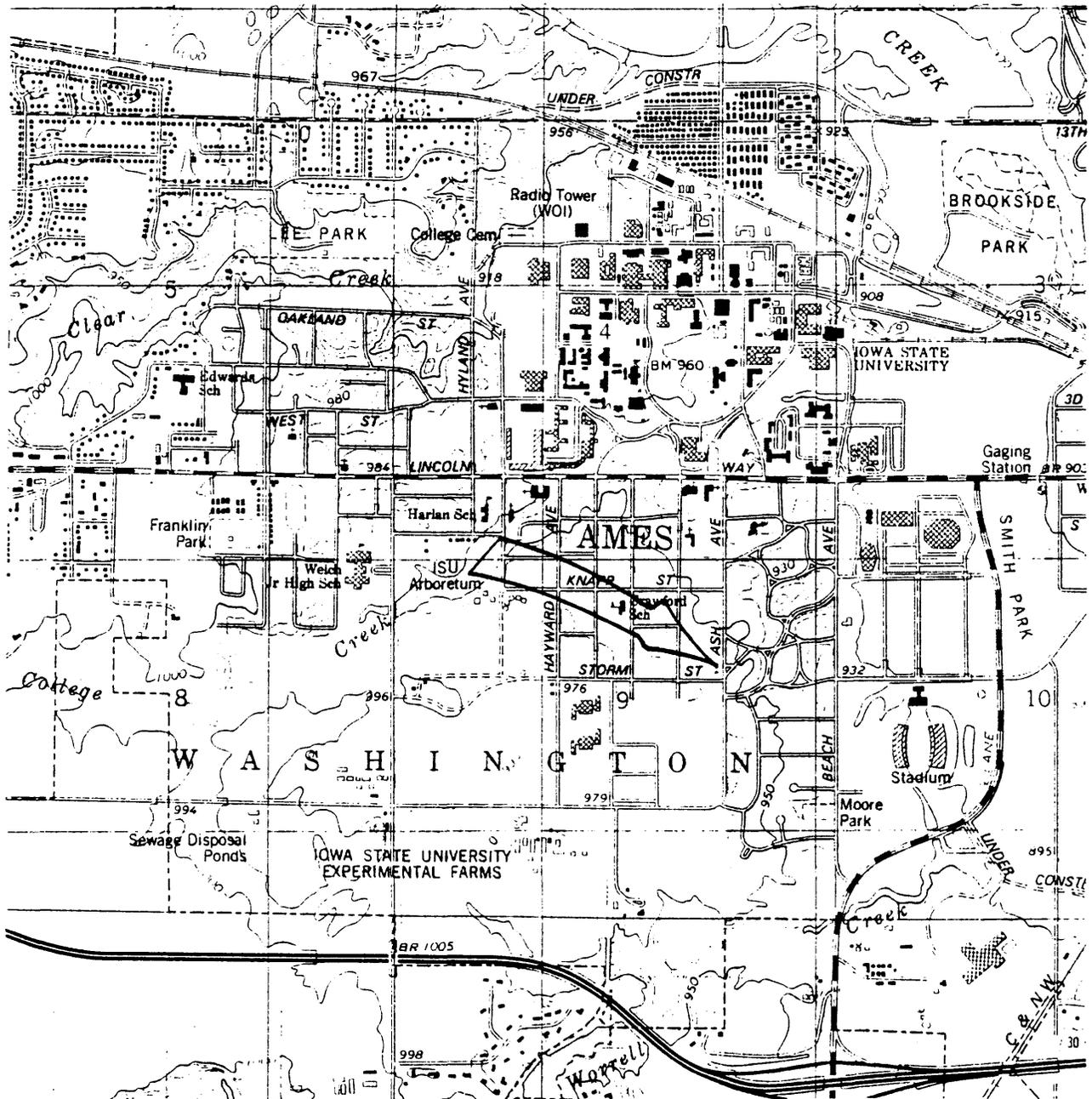
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Vicinity Map

Source: Ames West Quadrangle, 7.5', 1975



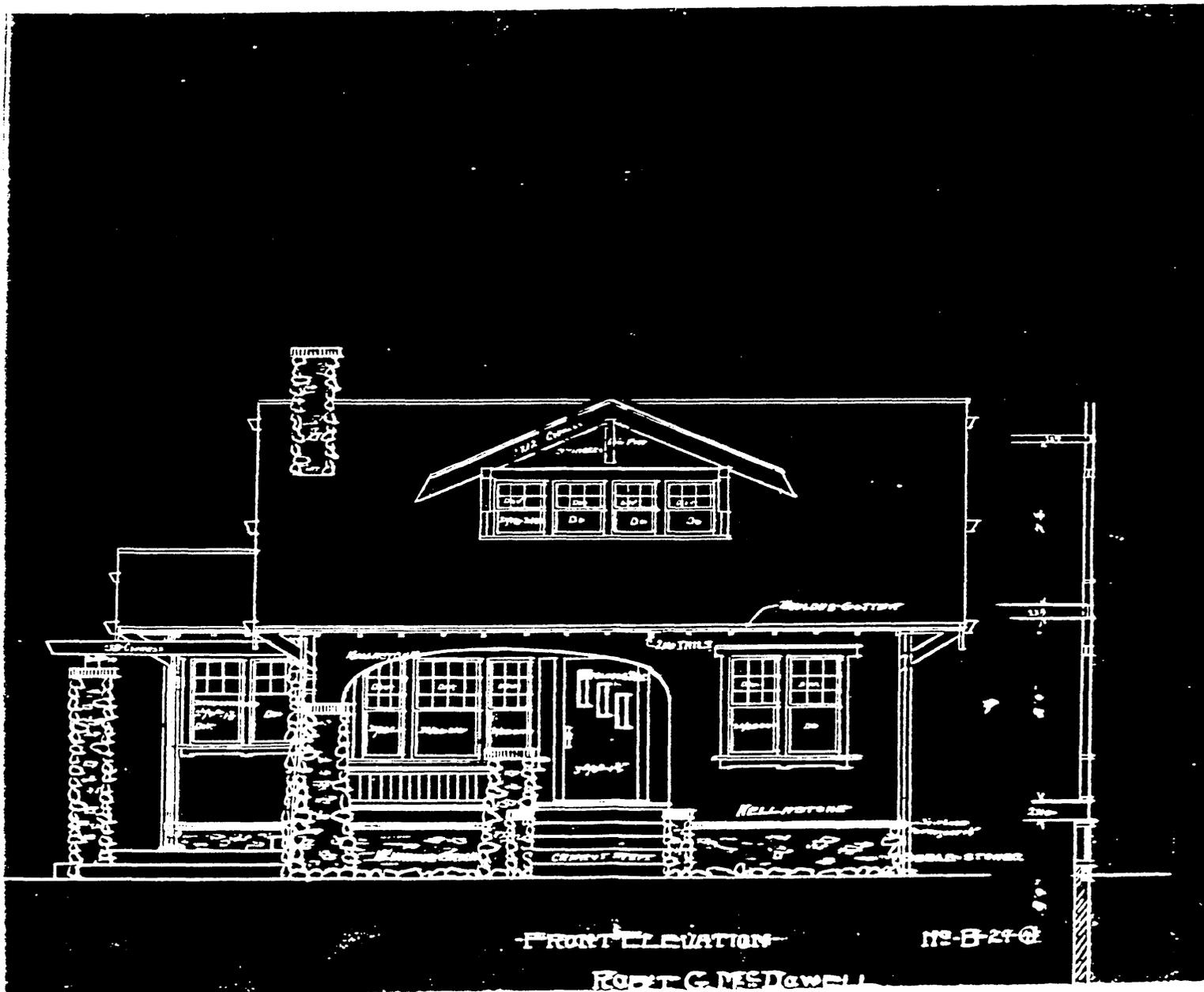
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G.B. and Edith MacDonald House, Front Elevation
Robert G. McDowell, architect (no date)



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*G.B. and Edith MacDonaid House, South Elevation
Robert G. McDowell, architect (no date)*



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*G.B. and Edith MacDonald House, North Elevation
Robert G. McDowell, architect (no date)*



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G.B. and Edith MacDonald House, Rear Elevation
Robert G. McDowell, architect (no date)



-REAR-ELEVATION-

Nº B-29 ©

ROBT G. M^{CD} DOWELL
ARCHITECT

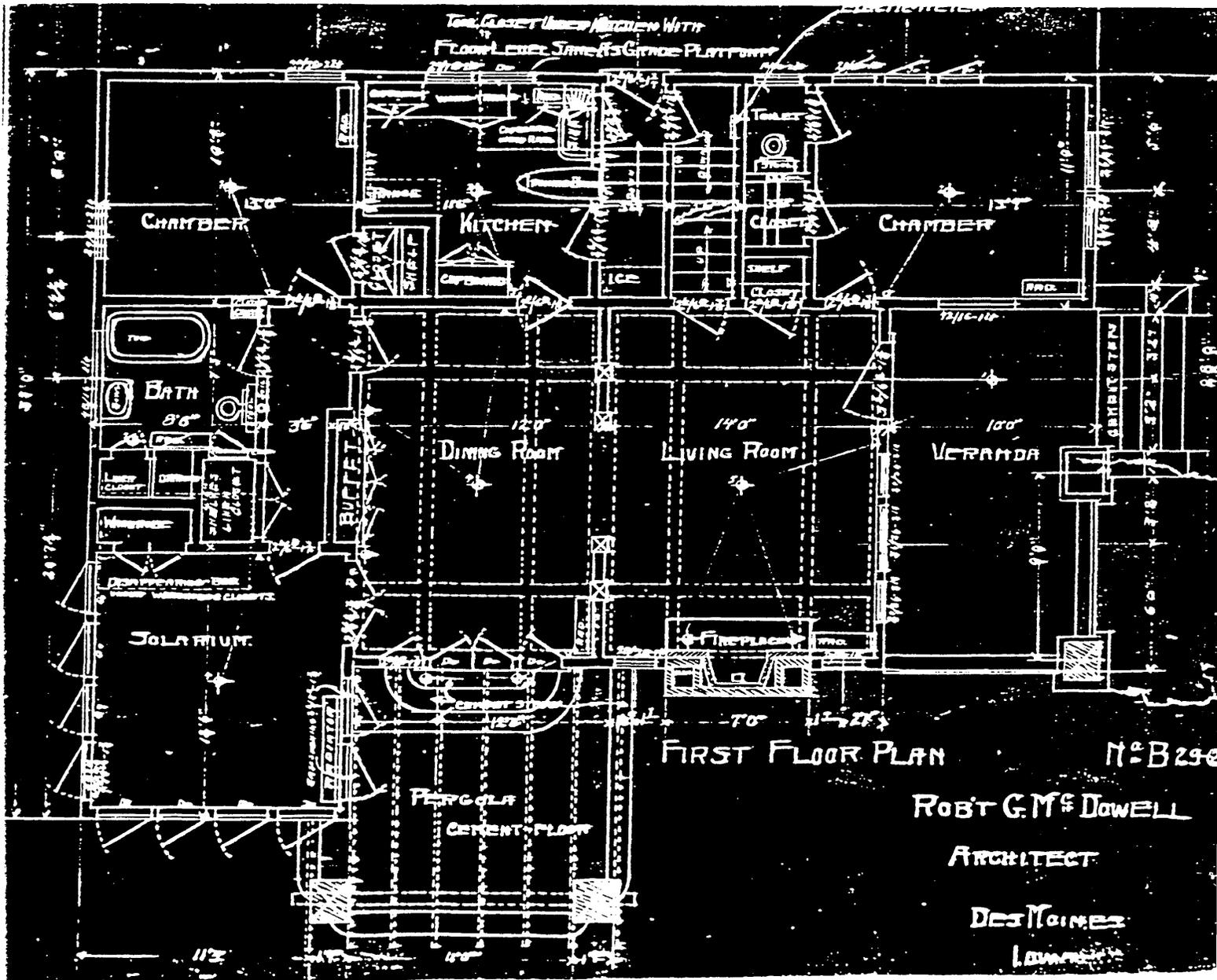
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*G.B. and Edith MacDonaid House, First Floor Plan
Robert G. McDowell, architect (no date)*

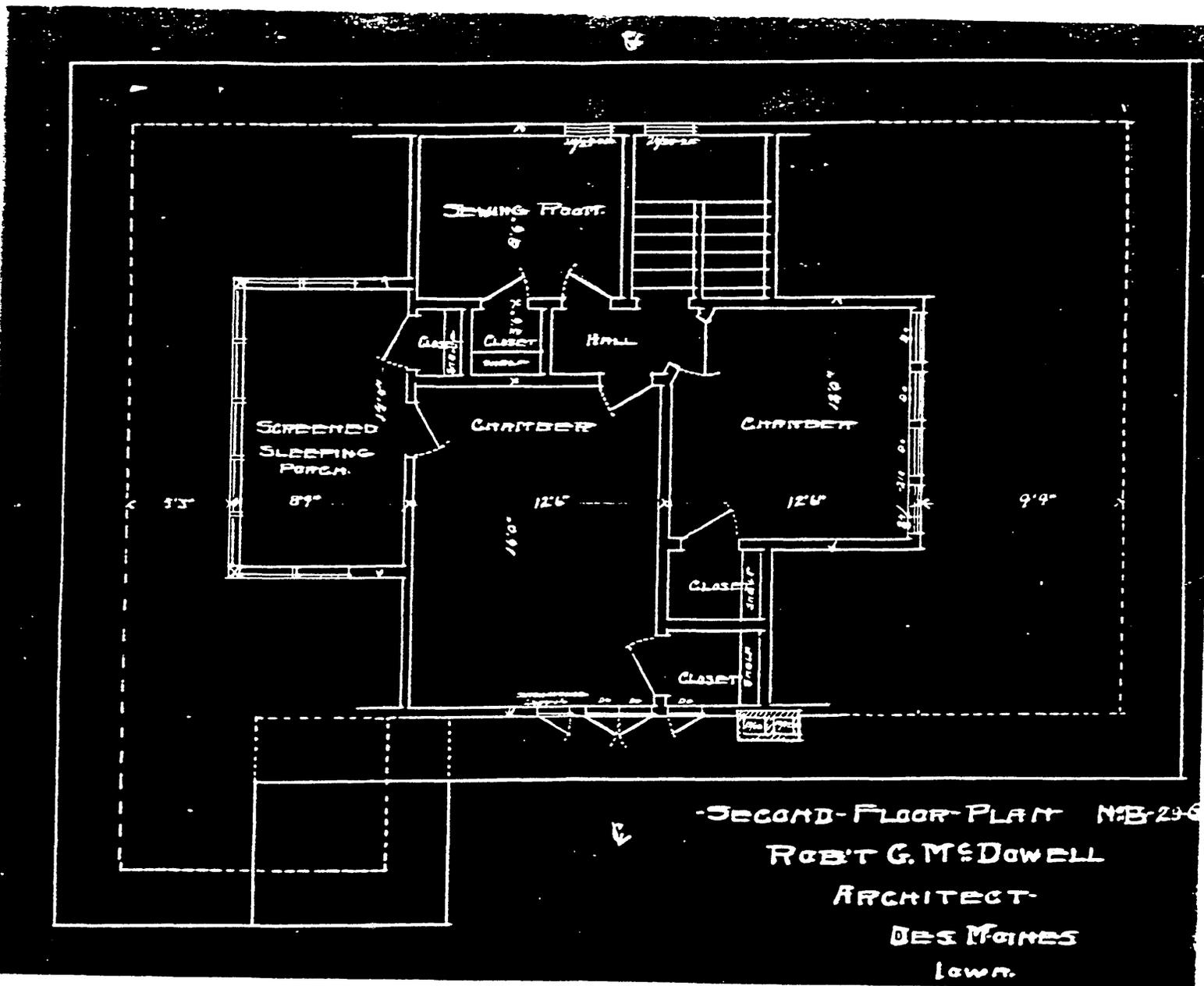


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*G.B. and Edith MacDonaid House. Second Floor Plan
Robert G. McDowell, architect (no date)*



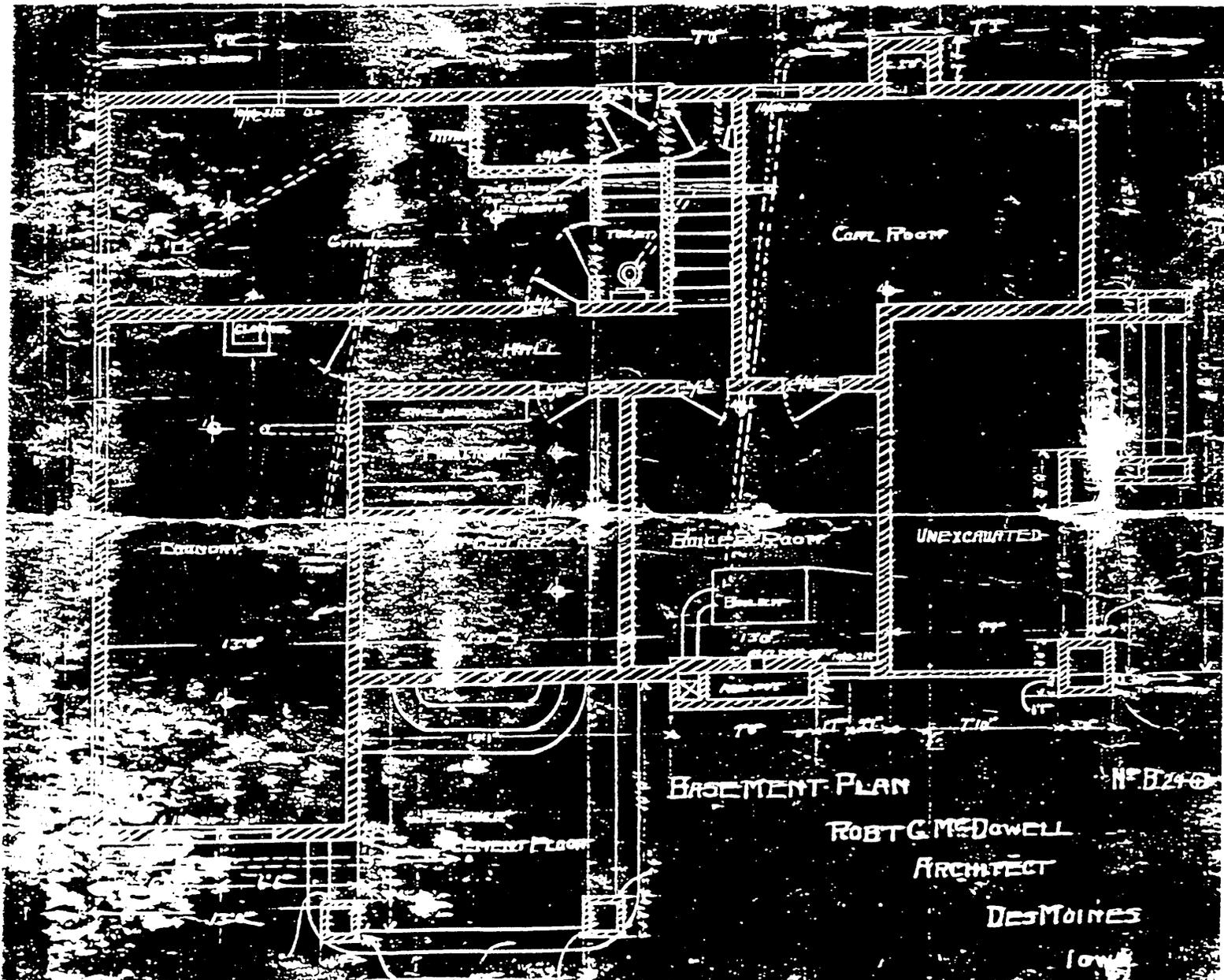
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*G.B. and Edith MacDonald House, Basement Plan
Robert G. McDowell, architect (no date)*



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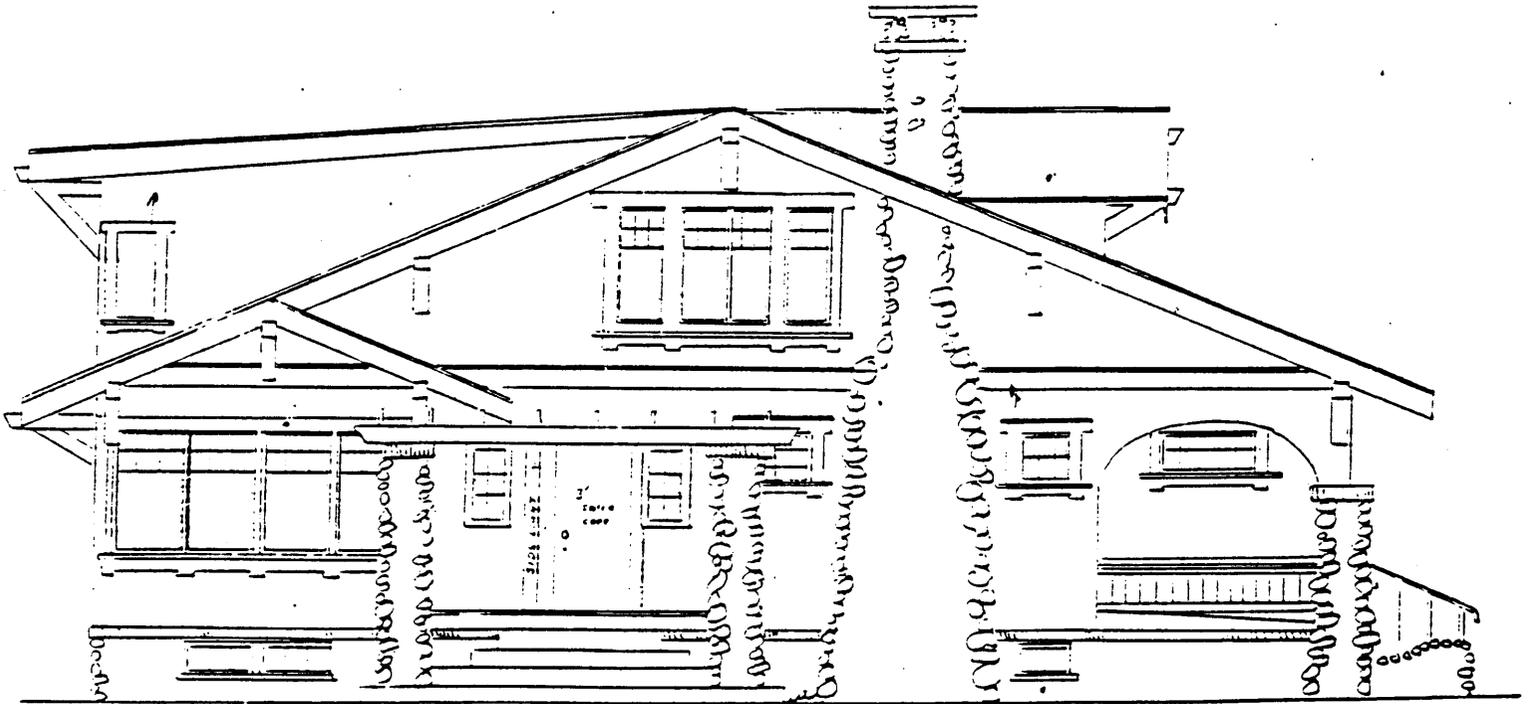
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*G.B. and Edith MacDonald House, South Elevation
1969 Sketch for Alterations, KLM [Keith McRoberts]*



SOUTH ELEVATION

7/22/69
KLM