

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

rorm 10-900a). Type all entries.						
. Name of Property						
istoric name Bamma Vi	ckers Lav	vson Ho	ouse			
ther names/site number 8 TR 149	/ Lawson	House	. Parris Law	son House		
. Location						
reet & number 1133 U.S. High	way l				/a	not for publication
ty, town Sebastian				n _/		violnity
ate Florida code	FL	county	Indian Rive	r code	06	1 zip code 3295
Classification						
wnership of Property	Category of		1			urces within Property
_ private	■ building	(8)		Contributing		Noncontributing
public-local	district			1		<u> </u>
public-State	site				,	sites
] public-Federal	structure	•			İ	structures
	object				ı	objects
				1		OTotal
ame of related multiple property listing) :			Number of c	ontrib	buting resources previously
n/a				listed in the	Natio	onal Register0
State/Federal Agency Certificat	1					·
Signature of certifying Micial Florida State Historic P State or Federal agency and bureau						
In my opinion, the property Imeets	does no	ot meet th	e National Hegis	ter criteria. 📖	See c	continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official						Date
State or Federal agency and bureau						
National Park Service Certificat	lon	***				
hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.	M/4	uh 2.0		ed in the nal Registe	•	7/26/1990
determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.						
determined not eligible for the National Register.			·			
removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)						
			h			
			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) Health Care: Medical business/office						
7. Description 1							
Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)						
	foundation Concrete						
Other: Frame Vernacular	walls Wood: Weatherboard						
	roof Metal: Tin						
	othern/a						
Barrier and the state of the st							

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS.

8. Statement of Significance		
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in	relation to other properties:	
Applicable National Register Criteria 🖾 A 🔲 B 🔲 C 🔲 🛭)	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	∏E ∏F ∏G	
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) Exploration/Settlement Social History	Period of Significance c1911-1940 Cultural Affiliation n/a	Significant Dates <u>c1911</u> <u>c1919</u>
Significant Person n/a	Architect/Builder Lawson, Parris Perham	
State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerat	ions, and areas and periods of significations	ance noted above.

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHE	ET
	
	SW W
Province decomposition on the (NIPO):	See continuation sheet
Previous documentation on file (NPS): preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)	Primary location of additional data:
has been requested	State historic preservation office ■
previously listed in the National Register	Other State agency
previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark	Federal agency Local government
recorded by Historic American Buildings	University
Survey #	Other
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	Specify repository:
Necord #	
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of property Iess than 1 acre	
UTM References	
A 117 5512131810 3101716141810 B	
Zone Easting Northing C D	Zone Easting Northing
	See continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description	
PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHE	ET
	•
	See continuation sheet
Boundary Justification	
The boundary encompasses the lot that has been h since c1919.	istorically associated with the property
	See continuation sheet
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Mary E. Feindt/ Barbara E. Mattick, Hist	
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation	date
street & number R.A. Gray Blq., 500 S. Bronough Strectly or town Tallahassee	et telephone <u>(904) 487-2333</u> state <u>Florida</u> zip code <u>32399-02</u> 50
21.) 21 (2111)	2iaio <u>+ 1714444</u>

9. Major Bibliographical References

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SUMMARY

The Bamma Vickers Lawson House is a modest, two story, frame vernacular building, located at 1133 U.S. Highway 1 in Sebastian, Indian River County, Florida. Constructed c1911, the house was moved to its present location c1919. It retains the integrity of its historic design, materials, location, setting, feeling, association, and workmanship.

ORIGINAL AND PRESENT SETTING

The Bamma Vickers Lawson House was originally located on Lot 18 of the Vickers Brothers Subdivision, Sebastian, Indian River County, Florida. About 1919, the house was moved 150-175 feet south to Lots 8 and 9 of the subdivision (See Map 1). The second site, on U.S. Highway 1, is less than one acre in size and faces the Indian River, which is less than one tenth of a mile to the east. A low concrete retaining wall defines the entire front (east) boundary of the property along the side walk, except for the driveway area. The site is not extensively landscaped, containing shrubbery and scattered oak and citrus trees (Photo 1). The house was one of the first homes in this residential subdivision of Sebastian, which was platted and developed from 1911-1921. There has been much infill since 1921, and the house is now part of a mixed-use urban environment.

EXTERIOR

Construction of the Bamma Vickers Lawson House consists of a balloon wood frame, with wood sills and stringers on poured concrete piers. The exterior is covered with pine clapboard siding, and the foundation is skirted with a wood lattice. It has a side gabled roof, a secondary shed roof, and attached, shed roofed porches on three sides, all covered with 3-crimp metal sheeting. With few exceptions, windows are 2/2 double-hung wood sash with the original rolled glass.

The <u>main (east, or U.S. Highway 1) elevation</u> features a four-step, wooden stairway, with simple wooden railings, which leads to two doorways on the first story. A one story shed roofed porch supported by square posts runs across the

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front and wraps around the south side where it meets a one story kitchen ell. The porch has simple wood railings between the posts. There are two indentical, panelled, wooden, doors with single, fixed panes. On the east elevation of the kitchen ell, there is a solid, panelled, wooden door and small, single-pane window (Photo 7). One 2/2 window is located south of the doors at the first story, and two 2/2 windows flank a single paned window at the second story (Photo 2).

The <u>north elevation</u> contains an exterior, off center, brick chimney with a corbelled cap. A square air vent is centered at the top of the gable end which is detailed with sawtooth and fishscale wood shingles. Fenestration consists of paired windows at the first story, and a single window at the second story (Photo 3).

The <u>west elevation</u> (rear) of the main block of the house has a one story, shed roofed ell. The shed roof extends over an open porch on the right (south) end. There is a screen door approached by two concrete steps at the north end of the porch, and a wheelchair ramp at the south end. There are two doorways at the north end of the porch. The west elevation has three 2/2 windows and three 1/1 windows at the first story, and two 2/2 windows at the second story (Photos 4, 5 & 6).

The first story of the <u>south elevation</u> features a continuation of the one story front porch, extending west for about one half the length of the south elevation of the main block, and terminating at the kitchen ell. The kitchen is a box-shaped addition to the original house (see Alteration and Restoration Status). It has board and batten siding. There is a 2/2 window at the east end of the main block of the house, and one 2/2 window on the south wall of the kitchen ell. At the second story, a square air vent is centered at the top of the gable which has sawtooth and fishscale shingles. There is a 1/2 window centered on the second story (Photo 7).

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INTERIOR

The interior of the Bamma Vickers Lawson House is plain. Floors are pine, and both walls and ceilings have beaded sheathing throughout. The first floor includes the living room, dining room, and kitchen, plus a sitting room and bath in a rear wing. The living room and dining room have individual, glazed, wooden doors to the front porch. The two rooms are separated by a quarter turned staircase, which starts in the dining room (Photo 8). The angular space beneath the staircase contains a cedar storage closet and a built-in bookcase with glass doors (Photos 9 & 10). The entrance to the sitting room is flanked by five-foot high, built-in bookcases with leaded glass doors. A fireplace with a corbelled brick mantelpiece is on the north wall of the living room (Photo 11).

On the second floor there are two bedrooms of equal size, separated by the stairway. Additional features of the house are two built-in bookcases with wooden doors (Photo 12), and a built-in bookcase in the dining room, similar to the one under the stairwell (Photo 8).

ALTERATIONS AND RESTORATION STATUS

The house had two alterations during its historic period. First, the house was moved to its present site next to Bamma's parents c1919. The Vickers had just built their house on U.S. Highway 1, which was becoming both the main road and the most prestigious location in Sebastian. Second, the kitchen, which originally was a separate building, was attached to the main block when the house was moved.

Other than these changes during the historic period, there have been only minor alterations to the building. They consist of minor upgrading of the electrical, water, and sewer systems; and in 1989, the addition of a wheelchair ramp to the rear (west) elevation, expansion of the parking area, and the insertion of supports for the second floor.

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SUMMARY

The Bamma Vickers Lawson House is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement as the most intact building remaining from Sebastian's days of settlement in the first decades of the twentieth century, and for its association with two of the pioneer families involved in the founding and settlement of Sebastian. It is significant in the area of Social History as the site of the area's first children's library.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Sebastian

There was little effort to settle the Sebastian area until after passage of the Armed Occupation Act of 1842. Continuing conflicts with the Seminoles thwarted settlement, however, and in 1850, St. Lucie County had only 16 households and 54 soldiers with families. The Civil War did not affect this area to any large degree, except to further delay settlement.

Due to poor transportation facilities, the settlement of the Indian River region proceeded at a slow pace. The only road was a dirt track along the coast, and even steamboats provided only erratic transportation because of the shallowness of the river. Like many Florida communities, Sebastian did not begin to prosper until the coming of the railroad. In December 1893, the Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Indian River Railroad came through Sebastian. The railroad became part of the Florida East Coast Railroad system in September 1895. The Sebastian and Cincinnatus Railroad, built in 1896, ran between Sebastian and Fellsmere.

In spite of the economic opportunities made possible by the railroads, growth continued at a slow pace, for the local economy had a narrow base, dependent on agriculture and fishing. The 1905 population of St. Lucie County was less than 1000, and by 1910, the population was still only 1,039. With 323 people, Sebastian was the largest community in the county.

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Prospects for economic and population growth brightened considerably after World War I. In 1920, U.S. Highway 1 was constructed through the center of Sebastian along the route of the Dixie Highway, which had been built in 1914. The old dirt road was replaced with one of oyster shell. This improved road system opened the area to large numbers of middle class tourists, improved access to markets, and increased settlement, thus contributing to a rapid economic expansion of Sebastian during the 1920s. A direct result of this expansion was the creation of Indian River County from St. Lucie County in 1925, the incorporation of Sebastian as a town on December 16, 1927, and its reincorporation as a city on May 14, 1933.

Little growth took place in Indian River County during World War II, but rapid expansion occurred with the end of hostilities. Highway 1 was four-laned through Sebastian in 1957. The City of Sebastian now covers 19.3 square miles and has a population of approximately 2,831 supported by tourism, citrus, and light industry. Like so many other Florida communities which developed rapidly after World War II, little of Sebastian's original historic fabric remains intact.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Parris Perham Lawson, the son of Ivey and Amanda Lawson of Hahira, Georgia, was born in 1877. In 1888, the Lawsons decided to move to Florida, and in December they sent Parris, then twelve years old, and two friends to Sebastian in advance. The boys drove a wagon loaded with the family's possessions. The rest of the family traveled to Sebastian down the St. Johns River via steamboat. Once settled in Sebastian, Ivey Lawson became a citrus grower and a supplier of wood to the railroad and the Indian River steamboats. Amanda helped found the first Methodist Church of Sebastian.

Bamma (Balmar) Vickers Lawson was born on June 22, 1882 in Hahira, Georgia, the daughter of Stephen and Sara Vickers. In 1903, two of Bamma's brothers, George F. and Frank C., moved to Sebastian and became farmers and retail store owners while building a house for the family. The

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Vickers Family became some of Sebastian's leading citizens. Beginning in 1911, George and Frank developed the Vickers Brothers Subdivision in what is now downtown Sebastian. George later became Sebastian's first marshall after the incorporation of the town. Another brother, Everett W. Vickers, served as city clerk, councilman, and mayor.

Five years after George and Frank Vickers moved to Sebastian, Bamma's parents moved the remainder of the family south, arriving at the Florida East Coast Railway station in Sebastian in January 1908. On July 15, Bamma married Parris Perham Lawson, whom she had known in Georgia. At the time of their marriage, she was 26 and he was 31.

In 1911, Parris and Bamma moved into a house in the new Vickers Brothers Subdivision. The house, built by Parris for Bamma who was then expecting their first child, was located on Lot 18. The house faced the railroad. Sometime between 1919 and 1922, Bamma and Parris decided to move the house to a site next door to Bamma's parents, who had built a house on South Central Avenue (U.S. 1). The Bamma Vickers Lawson House is, therefore, now located on Lots 8 and 9 of the Vickers Brothers Subdivision, is 150-175 feet southeast of its original site. The house was moved to the new site without changing its orientation. As a result, the back of the house faced U.S. 1. Parris renovated the house to make the front face the highway.

To support themselves after their marriage, Bamma and Parris engaged in a variety of activities. In 1911, Bamma opened a dressmaking and millinery shop in the living room of her house. She also worked at times as a packer in the local vegetable and citrus packing houses. Parris worked as a carpenter, farm laborer, and jack-of-all-trades. He also had some farmland of his own, and planted a citrus grove. The Lawsons boarded teachers from schools in the Sebastian area.

In a town as small and with as few public entertainments as Sebastian, the social and recreational life of the citizens revolved around non-commercial activities. These included such activities as involvement

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in civic affairs, religious meetings, and public gatherings such as picnics, political rallies, and plays.

Bamma was active in such community activities. She was a founding member of the Sebastian Woman's Club. The oldest woman's club in Indian River County, it was organized in late spring 1914. Among the club's accomplishments were the placing of concrete gravestones on unmarked graves in Sebastian, and the sending of needy children to out of town hospitals for surgery. As an individual, Bamma was a member and Sunday School teacher at the Sebastian Methodist Church, participated in community plays held in City Hall, and began the tradition of erecting a Christmas tree in the city park at U.S. Highway 1 and Main Street.

Parris served Sebastian over the years as city clerk, election clerk, and city councilman. As a carpenter, he was involved in the construction of most of Sebastian's turn of the century buildings, and helped build the Sebastian Woman's Club in 1927 and Sunday School rooms at the Sebastian Methodist Church.

One of the most significant contributions Parris and Bamma Lawson made to Sebastian was a children's library they provided free of charge out of their home in the 1920s and 1930s. Concerted efforts to provide free public libraries in Florida were not made until the 1930s. In 1935, there was no such facility in Indian River County, or the surrounding counties. There were subscription libraries in Fellsmere, Vero Beach, and Ft. Pierce, but subscription libraries did not address the needs of children. In fact, even as late as 1945-46, only 24% of Florida's school aged children had access to any kind of library designed to meet their needs. A public library was not established in Sebastian until 1983. The children's library at the Bamma Vickers Lawson House, therefore, was an unusual and valuable resource for Sebastian, and promoted the welfare of the community's young people.

Bamma continued to play an active part in the community throughout her life. After Parris' death on January 16, 1962, she continued to live in the house. Bamma was the oldest citizen and a revered figure in Sebastian. The City

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Council proclaimed June 22, 1982, the date of her one hundredth birthday, as "Bamma Lawson Day". In addition to the proclamation, a reception was held in her honor, a banner was draped above the highway in front of her home, and the Sebastian United Methodist Church rang the church bell one hundred times. Bamma Lawson died June 16, 1985, one week before her one hundred third birthday.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

DOCUMENTS

- Deed. July 29, 1911, Public Records of St. Lucie County.
- Deed. January 14, 1914, Public Records of St. Lucie County.
- Deed. September 24, 1924, Public Records of St. Lucie County.

PUBLISHED

- Mason, Pamela Russell. <u>A History of Public Library</u>
 <u>Development in Florida</u>. M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1968.
- Richards, J. Noble. <u>Florida's Hibiscus City, Vero Beach</u>. Melbourne, FL: Brevard Graphics, 1968.
- Stelle, Helen Virginia. <u>Florida Library Survey</u>, 1935. Florida Library Association, 1937.

UNPUBLISHED

- "A History Notebook of Sebastian, Roseland, Fellsmere, and Sebastian Inlet," Collection of newspaper articles.
- "Historic Properties Survey of Indian River County, Florida," Historic Property Associates, Inc., April 1989.
- Rosalie Hume, Written testimonial sent to Mary Feindt, 1234 N.W. 66th Ave., Margate, FL.
- Maggie M. James, Written testimonial sent to Mary Feindt, 1234 N.W. 66th Ave., Margate, FL.
- Jack Vickers, Written testimonial sent to Mary Feindt, 1234 N.W. 66th Ave., Margate, FL.
- Ramona Vickers, Written testimonial sent to Mary Feindt, 1234 N.W. 66th Ave., Margate, FL.

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ORAL INTERVIEWS

Pat Flood, Interview by Mary E. Feindt, May 1989.

Betty Foster, Interview by Mary E. Feindt, May 1989.

Rodney Kroegel, Interview by Mary E. Feindt, May 1989.

Clarence Rich, Interview by Mary E. Feindt, May 1989.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 8 and 9 of Vickers Brothers Subdivision, according to the Plat filed in Plat Book 3, Page 9, Public Records of St. Lucie County, Florida; now lying and being in Indian River County, Florida. Less and excepting therefrom the East 37.66 feet of said Lots 8 and 9, which has heretofore been conveyed to the State of Florida by Deed recorded in Deed Book 110, Page 364, Public Records of Indian River County, Florida

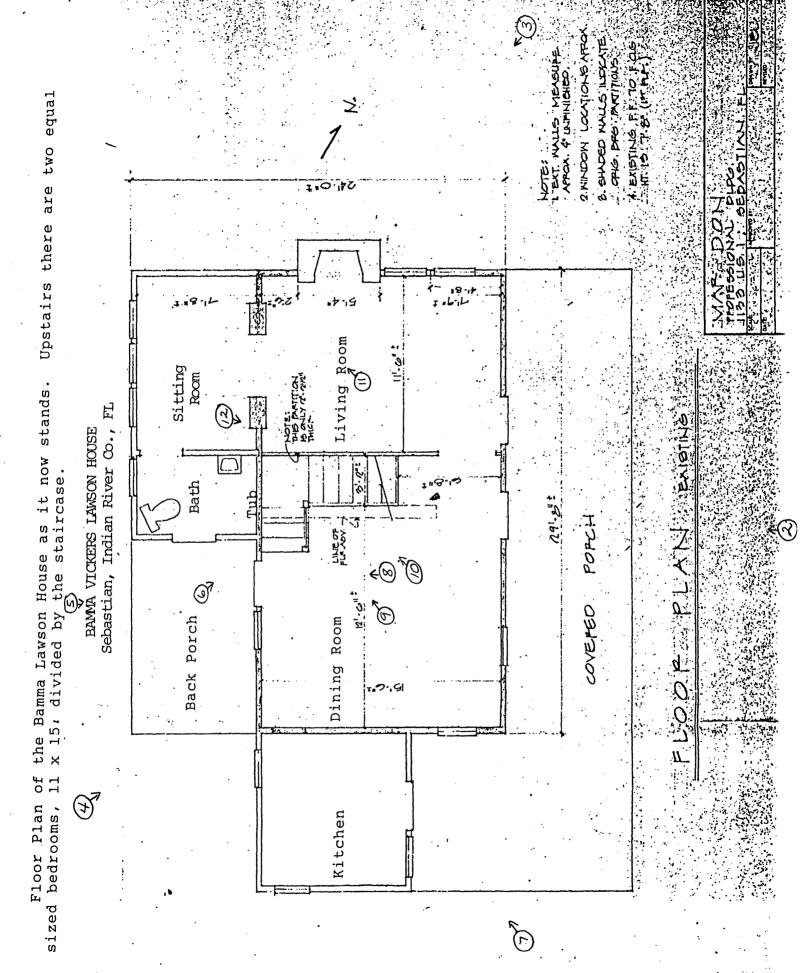
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	tographs 1 Bamma Vickers Lawson House, Sebastian, FL Page
1	1) Bamma Vickers Lawson House 2) Sebastian, Indian River County, Florida 3) Mary E. Feindt 4) May 1989 5) Mary E. Feindt 6) Streetscape of U.S. Highway 1, camera facing NW 7) 1 of 12
2	 Bamma Vickers Lawson House Sebastian, Indian River County, Florida Vicki Welcher March 1990 Bureau of Historic Preservation, Tallahassee, FL Main (E) elevation, camera facing SW 2 of 12
3	 1-5) Same as for Photo 2 6) N elevation, camera facing S 7) 3 of 12
4	 1-5) Same as for Photo 1 6) Rear (W) and S elevations, camera facing N 7) 4 of 12
5	 1-5) Same as for Photo 2 6) Rear (W) elevation, camera facing NE 7) 5 of 12
6	1-5) Same as for Photo 26) Entrances from rear porch, camera facing N7) 6 of 12
7	 1-5) Same as for Photo 2 6) Front entrance to kitchen ell and S elevation, camera facing W 7) 7 of 12
8	1-5) Same as for Photo 26) W wall of Dining Room, camera facing SW7) 8 of 12

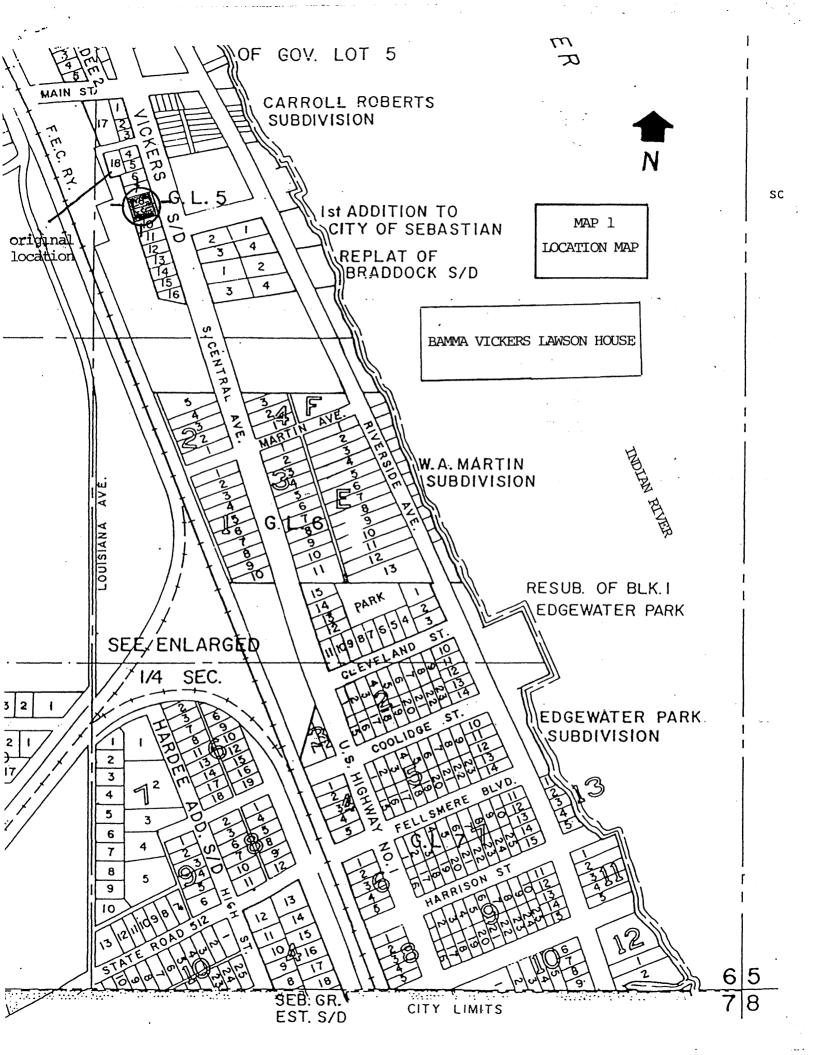
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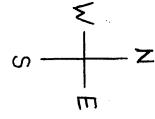
- 9 1-5) Same as for Photo 1
 - 6) Stairway in Dining Room, showing bookcase under stairs, camera facing W
 - 7) 9 of 12
- 10 1-5) Same as for Photo 2
 - 6) Stairway in Dining Room, showing closet beneath stairs, camera facing W
 - 7) 10 of 12
- 11 1-5) Same as for Photo 1
 - 6) Living Room and Sitting Room, showing fireplace and bookcases, camera facing NW
 - 7) 11 of 12
- 12 1-5) Same as for Photo 2
 - 6) Bookcase with wooden door in Sitting Room, camera facing E
 - 7) 12 of 12

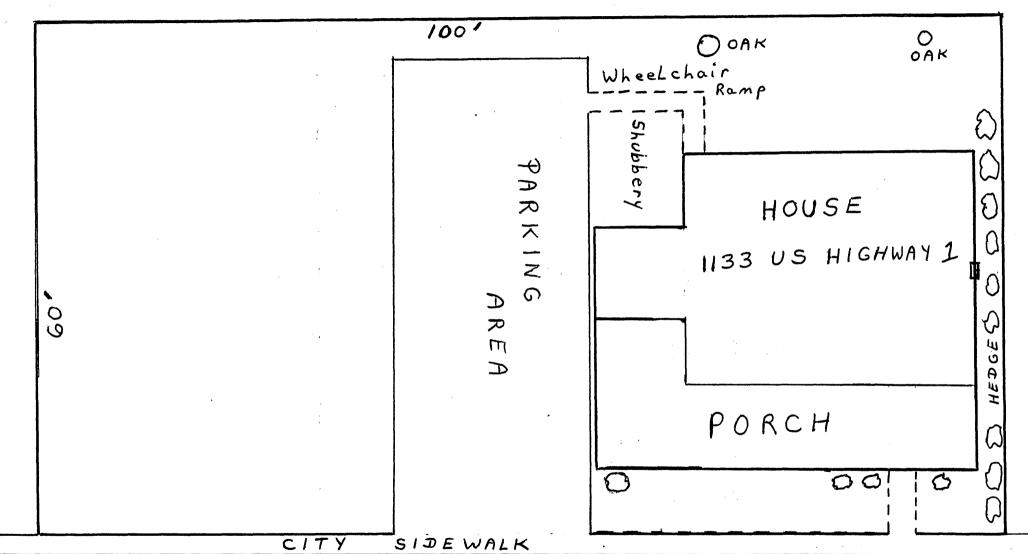


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SITE PLAN
Scale: 1" = 10'





US HIGHWAY 1

