



**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 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 the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Signature of certifying official

11/30/89  
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer,  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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 or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

Entered in the  
National Register

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Shelous Byers 1/4/90

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC:hotel

### Current Functions:

DOMESTIC:hotel

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

OTHER:Vernacular Victorian

### Materials:

foundation	masonry
walls	wood
roof	tin
other	

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Glen-Ella Springs Hotel is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains, four miles southwest of Tallulah Falls, off U.S. 23/441, on County Road 218/Bear Gap Road, in Habersham County, Georgia.

The hotel is a U-shaped frame structure built in three phases which contains 30 rooms and has an original wooden veranda on a masonry foundation across its entire front north facade. The building is designed as a typical vernacular clapboard type structure with more than 7000 square feet of floor space. It is 150 feet long, irregular in shape, with a gabled roof and consists of three sections. The one-story portion built in 1870 was originally a residence and now serves as the west wing. In 1885, a separate three-story residence hall was added and is the east wing. The c. 1900 two-story middle section connects the two wings and contains the current dining room (photographs 1, 2).

Exterior details include a veranda with square columns across the entire front, with a wooden floor and a tongue-and-groove ceiling (photograph 3). There is also an outside stairway to the balcony where a two-story, eight foot wide breezeway exists between the three-story and two-story wings. Other features include clapboard siding, plain double-hung 6/6 sash windows with peg locks, and some original glass window panes. There are examples of four-panel, wooden doors with porcelain knobs, some exterior doors with sidelight windows, and square wood railings on the balcony and outside stairway. The interior architectural features are very simple with no ornamentation.

The original c. 1870 section of the hotel is the one-story, vernacular type house with a gabled roof clad in metal shingles. The window sills are constructed from rough-sawn wood held together by

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wooden pegs. A covered side porch extends from the front veranda to the pantry on the back corner. Rough-cut logs support the back porch. The interior originally contained the dining room with a stone fireplace, a kitchen and pantry, and a root cellar. An enlarged and modernized kitchen and lounge/reception room are now located in this area.

The three-story c. 1885 residence hall is designed with gabled dormers in front and back, and, originally, 17 unheated sleeping rooms (photograph 4). Each floor now contains various sized guest rooms (photographs 11, 12). The original servants quarters were located in the stone foundation and are now used for storage.

The two-story c. 1900 wing is separated by a breezeway between the three-story section. This wing contains additional guest rooms with new doors that open out onto the veranda (photograph 10). It also contains the dining room on the main level with stone fireplaces (photograph 9). Dirt floored storage rooms are located below.

The hotel's interior includes plain heart pine paneling throughout, six-inch pine flooring, and field stone fireplaces with stone hearths. The fireplaces in the c. 1900s addition used railroad tracks as lintels to brace the fireboxes (photograph 8). These rails came from the Tallulah Falls Railroad during its extension. The hotel's interior details are simple with plain wooden bannisters and handrails, and square grooved newel-posts. The hotel has a masonry foundation of local fieldstone with mortar of Georgia mud.

The area is landscaped with crepe myrtle, holly, roses, grape vines, walnut and white pine trees. A stone retaining wall is at each end of the building. The property also contains a large oak known as the "hanging tree" where supposedly the last hanging occurred in the county.

The property's remaining outbuildings consist of a c. 1870 unchinked, four-crib log barn with a crimped metal roof (photograph 6) and a c. 1870 smokehouse with clapboard siding and a tin roof (photograph 7). The remains of a former tenant house exist at the junction of Panther and Stillwater Creeks and include the foundation beams and fireplace stones.

The current owners have retained some of the wooden conduits which were part of the original gravity-fed spring water system. These conduits were made out of logs with holes burned through lengthwise and joined with tar. The remaining conduits are no longer used but will eventually be restored and on display at the hotel.

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The mineral spring is located in the pasture area beyond the east wing of the hotel. A bench marks the location of the springs. The early 20th century stone slab which identifies the mineral content of the water is located on the hotel porch. The hotel does not utilize the mineral water. The owners plan to eventually build a gazebo near the spring.

The hotel is situated in a valley surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains, providing a magnificent view (photograph 13). There are several historic outbuildings near the hotel and a new residence for the owners (photograph 5). Changes to the property arose from the rehabilitation of the structure into a modern, viable hotel. The major changes include the addition of bathrooms for each guest room, the addition of porches on three levels of the three-story portion, and a swimming pool. The original dining room now serves as a lounge and the main level of the middle section is the new dining room. Two wells were covered for safety reasons. Where possible the original "ripply" window glass, wooden peg window closures, and door hardware were retained. The pine flooring and paneling were restored throughout the hotel. The one noncontributing building is the new home for the present owners. The noncontributing structure is the swimming pool and the noncontributing object is the wishing well.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally     statewide     locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A     B     C     D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**     N/A

A     B     C     D     E     F     G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

architecture  
commerce  
entertainment/recreation

**Period of Significance:**

c. 1870-1939

**Significant Dates:**

c. 1870  
c. 1885  
c. 1900

**Significant Person(s):**

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation:**

n/a

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

n/a

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**Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:**

**Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Glen-Ella Springs Hotel represents a North Georgia mountain resort operation that was active from 1885 to 1939.

The Glen-Ella Springs Hotel is significant in architecture because it is a rare surviving example of the once prolific, multi-storied, gabled roof, springs-oriented hotels built during the 19th century in Georgia. The structure represents the growth of the establishment in three stages, and the use of simple, economic, wood-framed construction for summer use, since heat was not originally provided. The hotel is a U-shaped frame Victorian era inn built in three phases between the periods of 1870-1900. The additions all reflect a similar functional design and contain the same building materials and frame construction. Materials include pine for the floors, ceiling, and paneling, fieldstone for the foundations and chimneys, and metal roof shingles. The design is in keeping with that of similar type hotels built during the late 19th century. The interior features reflect the simple room arrangement for guest rooms, a dining room, and kitchen. Building details include plain wooden bannisters and handrails, and square grooved newel posts. Window sills are of rough cut lumber held together by wooden pegs. The lack of ornamentation and luxuries reflected the purity of mind and health one was to gain from staying at a mineral springs. The property also contains two c. 1870 historic outbuildings: a log barn and a smokehouse. These vernacular structures illustrate the type of building commonly used on southern farms. Glen-Ella Springs Hotel is a good example of a resort hotel commonly found in the North Georgia mountains during the turn-of-the-century.

The hotel is significant in commerce and entertainment/recreation because it was a viable, seasonal hotel that drew tourists to the North Georgia mountains and helped boost the economy of the area. Bottled water from the mineral springs may also have been sold by the owners. The Glen-Ella operated as a hotel from the time the residence hall was built in 1885 until the 1920s. The hotel is a good example of an inn from Habersham County's "resort era." Visitors would come from South Georgia to escape the summer heat. The heyday of the hotel came during the turn-of-the-century with the increased tourist trade from the Tallulah Falls Railroad. During the summer, there were two trains daily and five on Sundays. The hotel was located four miles from Tallulah Falls and guests would be met by mule drawn surrey at the Turnerville rail stop, located approximately three miles from the hotel. At this time, the entire mountain region experienced the

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resort era and inns became fairly common. Guests at Glen-Ella had the advantage of seeing the spectacular Tallulah waterfall and staying at a mineral springs hotel. Rates at the hotel were either by the day, week, or month. Mail was delivered every day except Sunday and the owner's farm supplied fruit, vegetables, and milk. The hotel advertised as having "pure air, ice cold mountain water, and home cooking." At times there were as many as 75 to 100 guests staying in the hotel's 27 guest rooms. However, in 1918, the falls were harnessed for electrical power and tourism declined. The railroad also became less traveled because of highway development. Most inns, particularly around Tallulah Falls, were either demolished or destroyed during a 1920s fire. The Glen-Ella Springs Hotel continued to operate until the late 1920s. At this time, the Davidson's daughter had been operating the inn and it became known as the Rocky Bottom Farm. The building was used by former hotel patrons and rented for special functions. It continued in this commercial manner until the 1940s. The hotel complex represents a rural adaptation of city inns and is one of the few remaining examples of a family owned and operated inn commonly found in North Georgia during the late 19th century.

**National Register Criteria**

These areas of significance support the property's eligibility under National Register Criteria A and C.

This property meets Criteria A--the broad patterns of American history--because it reflects the importance of the hotel's role played in North Georgia's resort era of the late 19th century. The Glen-Ella Springs Hotel began as a pre-railroad resort popular for the fresh mountain air and the medicinal value of the sulphur springs. Later, the railroad would bring tourists to the nearby Tallulah Falls and guests would be transported to the Glen-Ella Hotel. The hotel is important not only to the history of Habersham County but to the entire state. In addition to serving the local area, it also attracted tourists, who traveled there to escape the summer heat. The hotel is also one of the last known examples in Georgia of the many mineral springs hotels which prospered in the area during the late 19th century.

The hotel meets Criteria C for its design characteristics. It is a typical, frame, gabled roof, multi-storied structure with a design commonly used for inns during the Victorian era. The building reflects the use of local building products with heart pine lumber, fieldstone foundations and fireplaces, and even the use of steel railroad tracks for the fireplace lintels. The lack of ornamentation and simplicity reflected the basic concept of a mineral springs

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hotel--purity of mind and health--which were to be gained by staying at such a resort. The property also contains a log four-crib barn and a clapboard smokehouse. These vernacular type buildings were commonly found on southern farms during the 19th century. They were an important asset to the hotel's operation since milk, produce, and meats were provided for the guests. The Glen-Ella Springs Hotel is one of the few remaining examples of a clapboard type inn commonly built during the late 19th century.

**Period of significance (justification, if applicable)**

- c. 1870 - construction of the original residence which later became the west wing of the hotel, and the two outbuildings.
- c. 1885 - construction of the hotel's three-story east wing.
- c. 1900 - construction of the hotel's two-story middle section.
- 1939 - 50 year cut-off period (continuous hotel operation).

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources**

**Contributing:**

- 3 buildings - hotel, barn, smokehouse
- 2 sites - mineral springs, former tenant house foundation
- 1 object - stone tablet indicating the mineral water contents

**Noncontributing:**

- 1 building - owner's residence
- 1 structure - swimming pool
- 1 object - wishing well

**Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)**

The c. 1870 Glen-Ella Springs Hotel stands on land which was part of the 625 acres owned by Solomon Davidson at the time of his death in 1859. His son Walton, a.k.a. Glen W., who was executor of his will, was eventually the developer of the hotel.

As recorded in the 1870 Census of Population, Walton G. Davidson was a 29-year old farmer with two children presumably living in the original wing of what later became the Glen-Ella Springs Hotel. His wife, Sarah, whom he had married in 1865, was not recorded in the 1870 Census; however, she was enumerated in 1880 along with her husband and their eight children. Three teenage children were reported with Glen W. and Sarah E. (for Ella) Davidson in the 1900 Census; apparently none of the other eight children were living at home in 1900. Davidson is believed to have prospered enough to own some 1,000 acres

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before his death in 1913. Although his wife lived until 1924, it was his eldest daughter Mary (b. 1868, d. 1945) who took over operation of the hotel.

In c. 1885, the Davidsons began operating the Glen-Ella Springs Hotel when they built a separate two-story residence hall for summer boarders. It was frequented by "flat-land folk running from the heat" according to an article printed about 1946 in the Elberton Star, Elberton, Georgia. Some of these folks were planters from South Georgia, who left their farms under the charge of overseers, sometimes bringing the whole family for the entire summer to escape the heat, mosquitoes, and perhaps even yellow fever. As the guest list grew, the residence hall was expanded by the addition of a third floor and another wing which connected it to the original homeplace, thus providing a dining room and lounge as well as several upstairs sleeping rooms with fireplaces.

To accommodate guests coming by rail from Atlanta, Augusta, and even Savannah, Davidson met the train in Turnerville, approximately three miles away, with a mule drawn surrey. The railroad had reached Tallulah Falls in 1882, and by 1904, extended to Clayton, Georgia. By 1907, the line reached its final destination of Franklin, North Carolina, another tourist spot.

The Glen-Ella Hotel was located near the Glen-Ella mineral springs. A 1913 Geological Survey of Georgia, Bulletin #20, described the spring: "This spring is in the northern part of Habersham County, about four miles west of Tallulah Falls. The mineral nature of this water is said to have been discovered a few years ago while being used in a steam boiler. From a description given by its owner it seems to be a fair size spring favorably located for a resort. The only improvement mentioned is a large boarding house. One characteristic given of the water is that a yellowish color is left by it upon vessels." The article also listed an analysis of the spring water. This analysis is still located on a stone tablet at the hotel. Local sources indicate that at one time the mineral spring water was bottled and sold.

A 1914 advertisement described the hotel as "four miles from Tallulah Falls, Georgia, surrounded by Blue Ridge Mountains, three miles from railroad station. Mail every day at the hotel but Sunday; has farm to supply its own fruit and vegetables, with milk supply from own dairy cows. Rates, by week, \$8 to \$10; by month, \$25 to \$30; by day, \$1.50. Eighteen hundred feet above sea level. Pure air, ice cold mountain water, and home cooking." At times there were as many as 75 to 100 guests staying in the hotel's 27 guest rooms. All rooms had wash stands, most of which were marble-topped. However, only a

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few of the sleeping rooms were heated against the cold mountain nights and those only by fireplaces.

There were many ghost stories about the hotel, some of which were recounted in the Elberton Star article cited above, possibly told by unfriendly neighbors trying to discourage guests and perhaps inspired by the "hanging tree" which stands across the road from the hotel's barn at the edge of the driveway. Glen Davidson's grandson, Doug, claims that the last man hung in Habersham County was from this tree.

During the late 1920s, the resort ceased to function as a hotel and became known as the Rocky Bottom Farm. It was still patronized by some long-time guests of the hotel and was often used for local social events such as square dancing.

When Mary died in 1945, most of the hotel's furnishings were sold at auction. At that time, her sister, Naomi (b. 1873, d. 1963) came back to live alone in a few rooms of the newest part of the building. In 1962, she sold the property to Reverend A. A. Phillips who had been the family's pastor until his retirement in 1940. He operated the place as a boys' school known as Boys Mountain Ranch between 1962 and 1965. During this time, Reverend Phillips installed running water, a stone septic tank, and a wood-burning heating system. He also installed individual space heaters donated by the Georgia Power Company to heat the boys' sleeping rooms. Until her death in 1963, Naomi continued to live in the hotel.

In 1965, J. C. Thompson bought the property for a summer place. During the years he owned Glen-Ella Springs Hotel, Thompson replaced 186 broken window panes. He also painted the front of the building; but, before he could finish, his scaffolding was stolen and the back of the hotel was never painted.

Don Newsom bought the property in 1985 and sold it the next year to its present owners. Barrie and Bobby Aycok have rehabilitated the old hotel to serve the area as a modern 18-room inn with a public dining room. The hotel opened in 1987.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Beynon, Elam and Harris, Jan. "Historic Property Information Form - Glen-Ella Springs Hotel." 1987. On file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): ( ) N/A

- 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:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** 11.8 acres

**UTM References**

- A) Zone 17 Easting 275720 Northing 3844740
- B) Zone 17 Easting 275590 Northing 3844600
- C) Zone 17 Easting 275890 Northing 3844310
- D) Zone 17 Easting 276010 Northing 3844450

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is marked with a heavy black line on the enclosed plat map.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes all the land remaining associated with the hotel, the two historic outbuildings and two historic sites--a former tenant house and the mineral springs.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**name/title** Lisa Raflo, National Register Researcher  
**organization** Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of  
Natural Resources  
**street & number** 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334  
**telephone** 404-656-2840 **date** 11/28/89

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National Park Service

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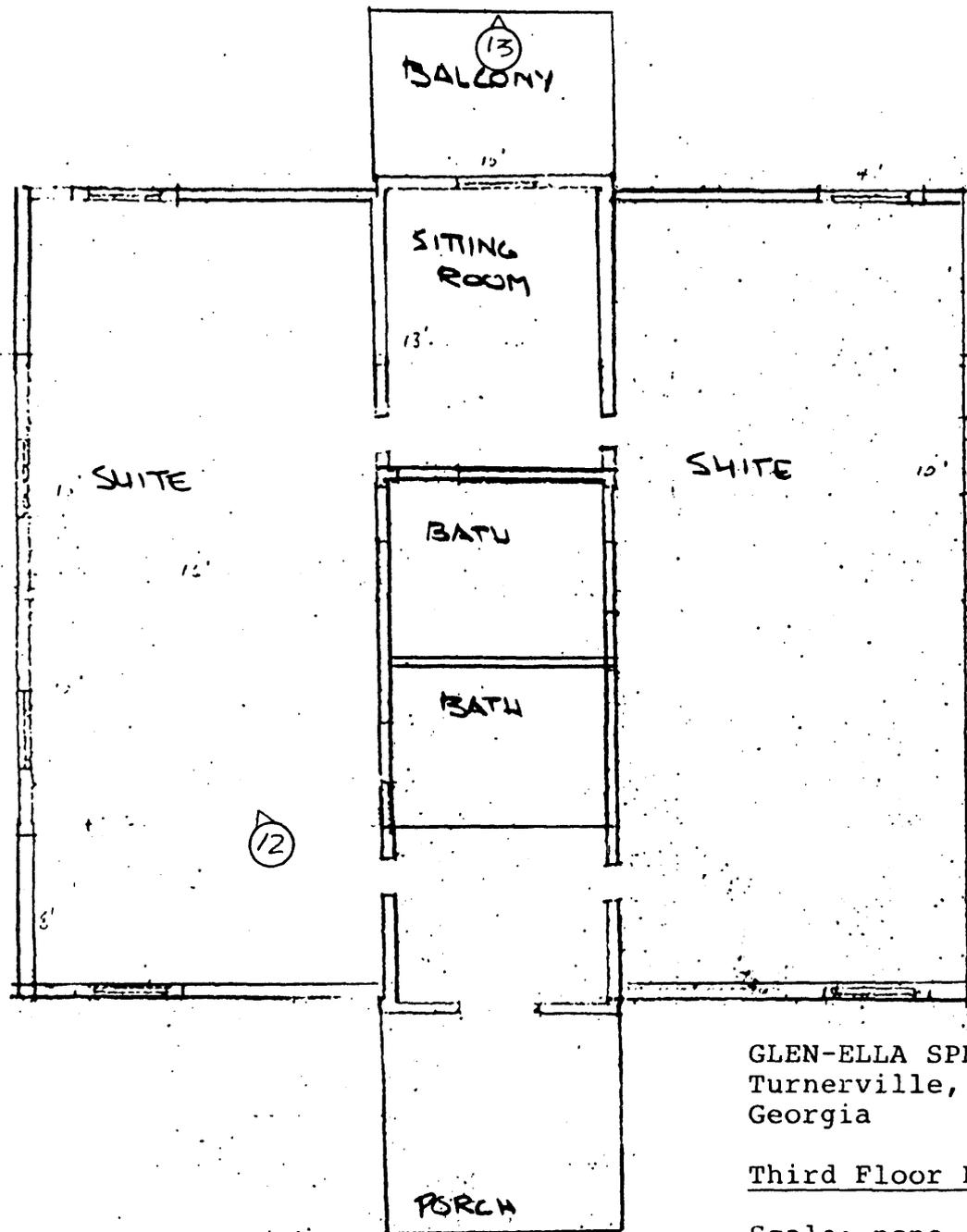
Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs 1  
Page \_\_\_\_\_

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Glen-Ella Springs Hotel  
Clarkesville, Habersham County, Georgia  
Photographer: James R. Lockhart  
Negative: Filed with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
Date photographed: April 1989

Description:

- 1 of 13: View of Glen-Ella Springs Hotel; photographer facing northeast.
- 2 of 13: View of original residence and c.1900 addition, new residence in background; photographer facing north.
- 3 of 13: View of the northeast facade and wishing well; photographer facing south.
- 4 of 13: View of c. 1885 addition; photographer facing west.
- 5 of 13: View of new residence and guest parking lot, hotel in background; photographer facing south.
- 6 of 13: Log four-crib barn, next to the parking lot; photographer facing north.
- 7 of 13: Clapboard smokehouse, next to the hotel; photographer facing south.
- 8 of 13: First floor of middle addition, lobby area; photographer facing southeast.
- 9 of 13: First floor of middle addition, dining room; photographer facing south.
- 10 of 13: Second floor of middle addition, balcony area; photographer facing southeast.
- 11 of 13: Second floor of middle addition, guest room; photographer facing east.
- 12 of 13: Third floor of the east wing, guest bedroom; photographer facing south.
- 13 of 13: Third floor of the east wing, view from guest room balcony; photographer facing southwest.

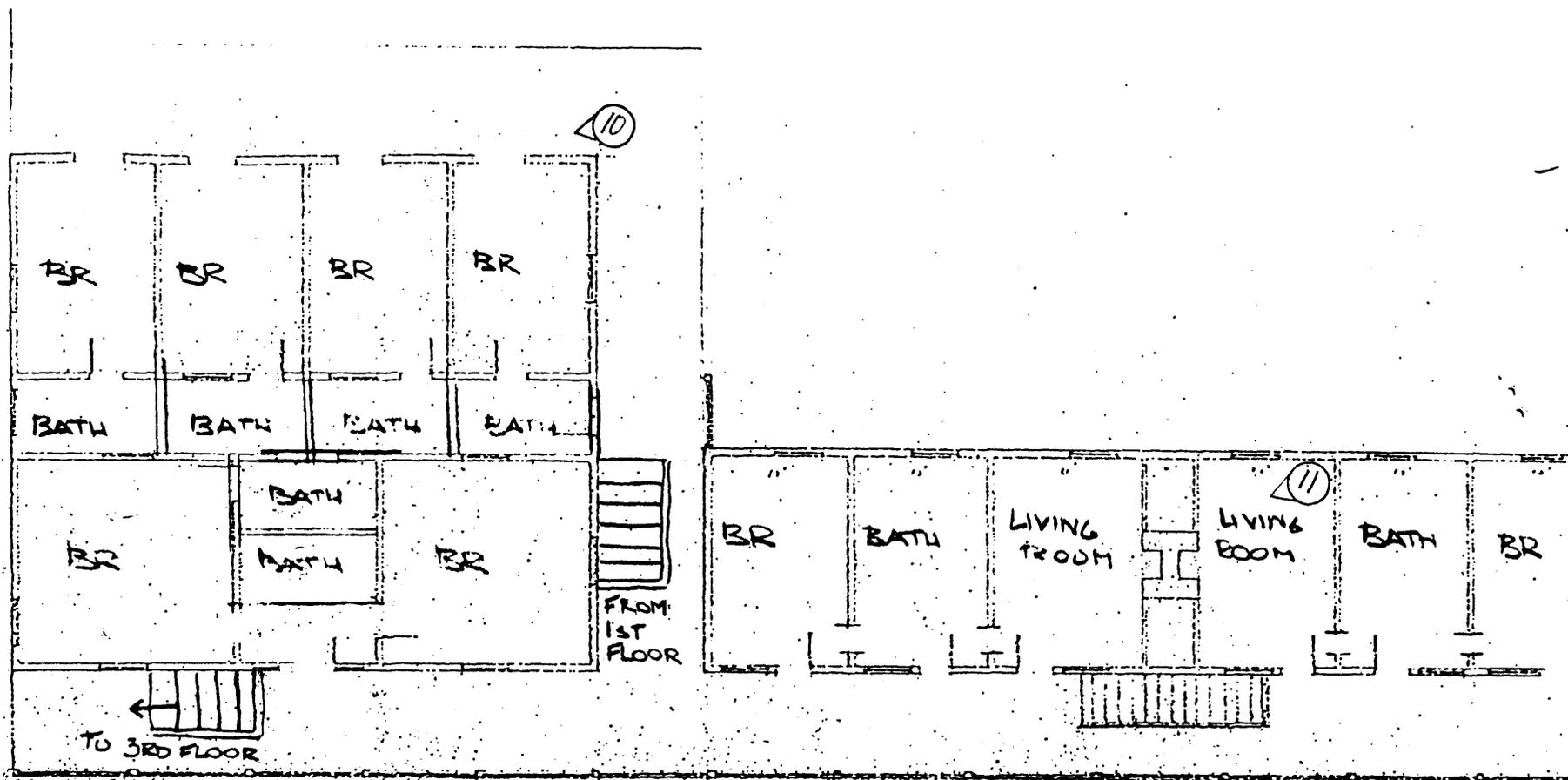


GLEN-ELLA SPRINGS HOTEL,  
Turnerville, Habersham County,  
Georgia

Third Floor Plan

Scale: none

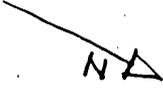
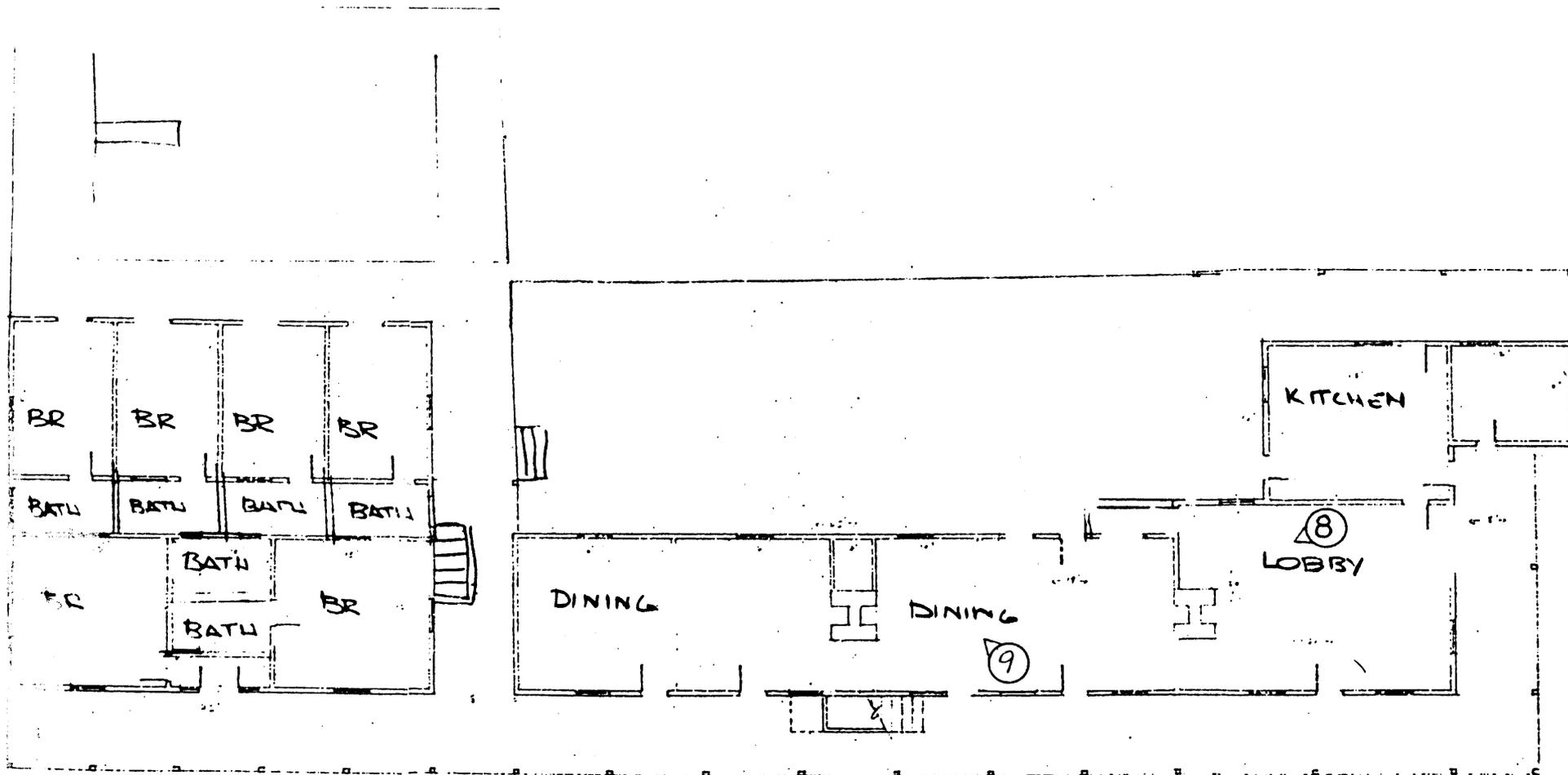
Photographs: indicated by (3) with a triangle symbol



GLEN-ELLA SPRINGS HOTEL,  
Turnerville, Habersham County,  
Georgia

Second Floor Plan

Scale: none  
Photographs: indicated by (3)



GLEN-ELLA SPRINGS HOTEL,  
 Turnerville, Habersham County,  
 Georgia  
First Floor Plan

Scale: none  
 Photographs: indicated by ③



