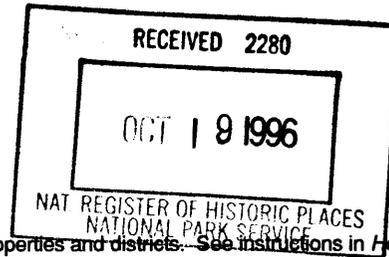


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sperry-Smith House
other names/site number Sperry, Thomas L., House; Smith, William T., House; Cheek House

2. Location

street & number 121 Maple Street N/A not for publication
city or town Sparta N/A vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county White code 185 zip code 38583

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Herbert L. Hays 10/3/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 from the National Register
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 11-15-96
Entered in the National Register

Sperry-Smith House
Name of Property

White County, TN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

2

buildings
sites
structures
objects

1

2

Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Italianate with Colonial Revival Elements

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls brick; VINYL SIDING

roof tin

other CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 year of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1880, circa 1905

Significant Dates

1880, circa 1905

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Sperry, Thomas L., builder and UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

MTSU - Center for Historic Preservation

Sperry-Smith House
Name of Property

White County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 2 acres

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Sparta, TN 332NW

1 16 698840 3976440
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher J. Hetzel
organization MTSU-Center for Historic Preservation date December 6, 1995
street & number 1421 East Main Street telephone (615) 898-2947
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37130

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Ernest and Carolyn Cheek
street & number 121 Maple Street telephone (615)836-2877
city or town Sparta state TN zip code 38583

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

SECTION 7: Description

The Sperry-Smith House at 121 Maple Street in Sparta, White County, Tennessee is an unique blending of the Italianate and Colonial Revival styles. Built by Thomas Lowry Sperry in 1880, the Sperry-Smith House was originally constructed in the Italianate style. Later owners, altered the house's physical appearance and added various Colonial Revival style elements circa 1905. It is locally significant because it is one of the few houses in Sparta, Tennessee to exhibit this transformation of architectural form.

Popular between 1840 and 1885, Italianate style residences were characterized by low-pitched roofs, widely overhanging eaves with decorative bracket work, and by tall, narrow windows. Windows were typically arched or curved at the top and had elaborate crowns. Many Italianate style houses also possessed square cupolas or towers. The Sperry-Smith House exhibits several of these characteristics. The house has a low-pitched roof, tall, narrow windows with segmented arches, paired eave brackets, and five-sided bay windows.

Thomas L. Sperry originally constructed the house with a plain, three bay front facade and a simple, one-story portico. Later, a square, three-story, projecting brick tower was built in the center of the north (front) facade. The date of this alteration is unknown. Italianate in style, the tower contained a pair of tall, one-over-one, double-hung sash windows with segmented arches in the front, east, and west elevations of the second and third floors and had a truncated hipped roof. The tower's roof was decorated with a balustrade and had paired brackets supported by a brick belt course under the eaves. A recessed entry porch existed on the tower's first story, and a small, single-story porch wrapped around the tower's base. Square posts supported the porch's flat roof. The tower was removed and replaced by the existing full-length, two-story Colonial Revival style porch, circa 1905. The house's metal roof cresting, dormers, and revival style entrances also date to this period.

The Sperry-Smith house is a two-story, red brick, I-house form with a rear-facing T-plan. It has a stone foundation and was

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

erected using English common bond. The house has a cross gable roof sheathed with pressed metal shingles, and the house's wooden elements are painted in combinations of light and dark green with yellow trim. Metal cresting decorates the house's roof ridge lines, and all the house's windows are original. The present owner installed the existing gutter system in 1985. The house sits on approximately two acres and faces north. Located on a high ridge, it overlooks the eastern portion of downtown Sparta.

The house has a symmetrical, three-bay north facade with single-centered doors on both the first and second stories and a full-length, two-story Colonial Revival style front porch. A flight of stairs and a sidewalk made of stone slabs lead from the street to this porch. A stone retaining wall and stone slab sidewalk also parallel the street. It is unknown exactly when the stone wall and sidewalks were constructed, but they are probably original features of the house.

The front porch is made of wood, with a brick foundation and a flat roof. The height of the first-story level is slightly higher than the second, and both the porch's first and second levels have wood ceilings and wood floors. A thin layer of green-painted concrete covers the wood floor on the lower level. The porch's first floor is supported by sixteen Tuscan columns resting on brick pedestals. At the porch's outer corners these columns are in groups of three. Two groups of three columns also delineate the central bay of the porch's first-level, which projects slightly outward. The columns' placement is the same on the porch's second story. However, the center bay is supported by two pairs of columns rather than three. A closed pediment exists above the porch's center bay. It is decorated with a Colonial Revival style motif and modillions and has a finial. The porch's other ornamental elements include a simple cornice with modillions on both the first and second-levels and a decorative railing on the second. White-painted aluminum downspouts exist on either side of the porch near the facade's east and west edges. The porch roof originally possessed a built-in drainage system, but this system was replaced in 1985 due to deterioration.

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

A flat wall dormer is visible on the facade above the front porch. It was added to the house circa 1905. It contains a central one-over-one, single-hung casement window. This window is flanked by two slightly smaller, one-over-one, double-hung sash windows. The windows are delineated by small, attached Doric columns. There are four columns total. The dormer walls are sheathed with pressed-tin shingles and modillions decorate their cornices. A small, centered arch breaks the plane of the dormer's otherwise flat roof and extends from the central window to the roof's main ridge line. Metal roof cresting decorates the dormer's upper edges.

Also visible on the north facade, the roof's ridge line becomes higher in the area immediately behind the wall dormer. From the facade, the roof's original pitch is maintained. However, in the rear it forms a semi-hipped roof and two roof dormers. These dormers are visible on the house's east and west elevations in the inner corners of the house's rear-ell. They are oblique to the roof's perpendicular, T-orientation, and each contain a single fixed window. Above the windows, a decorative trim adorns the dormer roofs' corners, and modillions decorate its cornice. Presumably, these dormers were built with the other circa 1905 additions. Combined with the facade's wall dormer, the two roof dormers form the interior space of an attic room.

The front entrance of the Sperry-Smith House, and a similar one entering the house from the porch's second level, were also constructed circa 1905 and reflect the Classical Revival style. The first-floor doorway has a broken transom light and a simple wood entablature. The wood door is glazed with a large, single-pane and is flanked by two wooden doric pilasters and two fixed sidelights. The glazing in the transom, sidelights, and door all possess an etched decorative treatment. Brick work surrounding the first-story entrance reveals the outline of a lintel and door frame that no longer exist. These elements are probably remnants of the house's form prior to the circa 1905 alterations. This door leads into the first floor, central hall.

The second-story doorway has a broken transom light and a simple, wood lintel. The lintel abuts the porch's second-level ceiling. The door is glazed with two, vertical panes, and is flanked by

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

two Doric pilasters and two fixed sidelights. The center transom light consists of two glass panes. In 1980, all the side lights on the door's east and the door's lower west sides were boarded over when the present owner constructed a bathroom in the upstairs hall. The door opens into that room.

Two, two-story, brick pilasters flank the facade's two doorways. The circa 1905 front porch was constructed over these pilasters. Flanking the pilasters on the porch's first level are two equally sized, one-over-one, double-hung sash windows. These tall windows have segmented arches and full size, two-panel, non-working wood shutters. Two, two-over-two, double-hung sash windows flank the brick pilasters on the porch's second level. These windows are equal in size and shape to the first story windows and have identical shutters.

The Sperry-Smith House's west elevation includes the facade's west gable end and the two-story, west elevation of the rear ell. The gable end is dominated by a two-story, five-sided bay with windows occupying the three central bays of each story. The first-story possesses three one-over-one, double-hung sash windows. The second story has a two-over-two, double-hung sash window in the central bay, and a one-over-one, double-hung sash window in each outer bay. The center bay windows are slightly wider than the outer windows. All the windows have segmented arches. The two-story bay extends from the ground to the cornice, where it is topped by paired brackets and a hipped roof. Above the two-story bay, a metal, circular vent decorates the gable with a floral motif. The gable has paired brackets under the eaves and a discontinuous band of trim. Two, two-story, brick pilasters border the gable-end. It also possesses two brick belt courses. One belt course supports the paired roof brackets and extends to the rear ell, while the other visually delineates the gable-end's first and second stories. A small, square metal vent is centered at the gable-end's base.

The west elevation of the rear ell is three-bays wide and has a one-story, hip-roofed porch running the full length of its first story. The porch has three Tuscan columns, a wood floor, and a brick foundation. Originally open, its west bay was enclosed and converted to a bathroom. The date of this alteration is unknown.

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

This addition was sheathed with light green vinyl siding circa 1990 and has a centered, one-over-one, double-hung sash window with a white casing. The porch's center bay contains a one-over-one, double-hung sash window with a wood lintel and sill. The window's upper pane is stained glass. Its north edge abuts the enclosed addition. The porch's south bay contains a doorway leading into the kitchen. The wood door is glazed with two panels, and has an enclosed transom.

The second-story of the rear ell's west side has three equally sized two-over-two, double-hung sash windows. They have segmented arches and exist in each of the three bays. Two white-painted aluminum downspouts extend from the eaves and the porch roof, and a single, brick chimney protrudes from the center of the rear-T extension's ridge line. Another brick chimney protrudes from the south (rear) facade roof, near the oblique roof dormer.

The Sperry-Smith House's south elevation includes the rear ell's two-story, gable end and the south elevation of an enclosed porch and frame addition, extending from the house's east elevation. The south side of the west elevation's porch is also visible from this perspective. A small opening with a two-panel wood door provides access to the area under this porch.

The rear ell's gable end has a single, two-over-two, double-hung sash window centered on each story. The windows possess segmented arches. The gable has paired brackets under the eaves and a discontinuous band of trim. An exterior brick chimney exists on the gable-end's left side, and a white-painted, aluminum downspout attaches to the eaves on the right. At the gable end's base, the house's stone foundation is visible. To the foundation's right side, there is a small, wood door with a stone lintel leading to a basement room. The room exists under the kitchen and has stone walls and a concrete floor.

A second basement room exists under the east elevation's enclosed porch and frame addition. It has stone walls and a concrete floor and is accessed through a small, centered wood door in the stone foundation of the enclosed porch's south elevation. The present owner enclosed the porch and sheathed it with light green

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

vinyl siding circa 1990. It has a hipped roof and now contains a closet/pantry. The enclosed porch is attached to the south elevation of a slightly taller, one-story frame addition. It, too, has a hipped roof and is sheathed with the same light green vinyl siding.

The Sperry-Smith House's east elevation contains the rear ell's east elevation and the facade's east gable end. On the rear ell's first story, the east elevations of the vinyl sheathed enclosed porch and frame addition are visible. Built circa 1905, the frame addition was initially a breakfast room. Its original appearance is unknown, but identical 7'8" x 5'9" fixed sash windows with white casings pierce both its east and north elevations. In addition, a wood door with louvered glazing and white casings flanks the north window's west side.

A one-story, shed roofed porch occupies the rest of the rear ell's east elevation. It has a wood floor and a brick foundation and has four turned porch supports with decorative spandrels, two of which are attached to the abutting walls. Constructed circa 1965, a carport extends out from the shed roofed porch. It has exposed framing, is sheathed with a clear "Lexon" plastic roof, and rests upon decorative iron supports. The carport is paved with brick and extends to an asphalt driveway. Formed by a large terrace, the driveway leads to the street along the house's east side. It originally led to a garage located on the house's east side. The garage's construction date is unknown. The garage was removed and brick retaining walls were erected around the carport and driveway circa 1965.

Concrete steps and a concrete sidewalk run under the carport along the south facade and connect the driveway with the east elevation's shed roofed porch. This sidewalk leads directly to a doorway in the porch's far right bay. Identical to the kitchen door, this wood door has a single, fixed window, two panels, and an enclosed transom. It leads to the stairway hall. A large, one-over-one, double-hung sash window exists between the doorway and the frame addition. It has an upper pane of stained glass and is identical to the window opposite it on the west elevation.

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

The second story of the rear ell's east elevation contains two, two-over-two double-hung sash windows. They exist in the center and right bays. There is no window in the left bay. The windows have segmented arches and non-working shutters similar to those on the front facade. Paired brackets and a brick belt course exist under the eaves, and another brick chimney protrudes from the south facade, near the oblique roof dormer.

The facade's east gable end is identical to the gable end on the west elevation. It has a two-story, five-sided bay with windows occupying the three central bays of each story, two belt courses, and is bordered by two, two-story brick pilasters. The gable also has paired brackets, a decorative vent, and discontinuous trim.

The Sperry-Smith House's interior forms a two-story, one room deep, central-hall plan with a two-story, three room deep rear ell. The house has ten inch thick walls, 11'3/4" ceilings, and all the house's original doorways have transoms. The house's fireplaces are all coal burning, except the fireplace in the first floor's west chamber. The present owner converted it to burn wood. A steam heating system was added to the house in 1940, and electricity was extended to the second floor in 1970. Central air conditioning was installed on the second floor in 1990 and on the first floor in 1995.

The house's main entrance in the north facade opens into the first floor central hallway. This room has twelve inch baseboards, a wood plank floor, and a twelve inch molded cornice. In the room's northwest corner, this molding juts out from the wall to accommodate water pipes leading to an upstairs bathroom. The present owners added the bathroom in 1980. A radiator sits in the room's northwest corner along the east wall. There are also doorways with painted transoms and six inch wood casings centered in the east, west, and south walls. Respectively, these doorways lead to an east chamber, a west chamber, and a stairway hall. None of these openings have doors, and only the east doorway retains its original hinges. The east and west doorways have bevelled moldings below their transoms. However, these moldings are not repeated on the opposite sides. This

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

configuration suggests the original importance of the central hall's appearance to visitors.

In the east chamber, a window is centered in the north wall, and a five-sided bay exists in the east wall with windows in the three center bays. A screen with decorative woodwork and stained glass is located in the bay above the windows. The south wall contains a centered, iron fireplace with flanking columns and a tile surround. The room also has twelve inch bevelled baseboards and radiators under the north and the central bay windows. The present owners use this room as a parlor/living room.

The west chamber has a molded cornice and a wood strip molding runs around the room approximately eighteen inches below the ceiling. A window is centered in the north wall, and a five-sided bay exists in the west wall with windows in the three central bays. A brick bottomed fireplace exists in the south wall, and farther left, a wood door with a painted transom opens into the stairway hall. Radiators exist under the north window and the central bay window, and water pipes flank the north window, extending from floor to ceiling. A box closet exists in the room's southwest corner and has double doors on its east side. This closet was built circa 1965 when the room was used as a bedroom. The room is now a den.

The stairway hall is a long, narrow rectangular room and is situated in the first floor of the rear ell. Doors leading from the first floor central hall and the east chamber penetrate the center and west side of the room's north wall. A door in the room's east wall enters the room from the east porch and carport. There is a large staircase on the room's south wall. The staircase progresses upward from west to east and ends with a small landing. A second flight of stairs continues back along the north wall to the second floor. The staircase has a newel post, turned spindles, and a scroll-sawn balustrade. It also has a small closet underneath. To the right of the staircase on the south wall, an open doorway leads to the dining room. A doorway in the west wall enters a bathroom.

Located off the stairway hall, a small bathroom exists within the enclosed portion of the west porch. It has a toilet and shower

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

on the south wall and a small window and sink on the room's west wall.

The dining room has a molded cornice with dentils and eight and one-half inch baseboards. Identical windows with bevelled casings are centered in the east and west walls. They are both covered with decorative metal screens and have panes of stained glass. Radiators exist under each window. A fireplace projects slightly from the south wall, and a chair rail circles the room. On the ceiling, a crystal chandelier hangs from an ornate medallion. There is a second door with a painted transom in the right side of the south wall. This door leads to the kitchen.

The kitchen has vertical wood paneling, a tile floor, six inch baseboards, and strip molding approximately three feet below the ceiling. There is a door with a filled-in transom centered in the west wall. It leads outside to the west porch. A radiator exists on the door's right side. The room's south wall contains a single, centered window, and a closet is built into the room's southeast corner. It has a single wood door. A doorway in the east wall leads into a frame addition. It has no transom.

Built circa 1905 as a breakfast room, the frame addition has a tile floor, and strip molding runs around the room. The room's east and north walls are dominated by two large picture windows. The left side of the north wall also contains a door opening out to the east porch. The south wall is entirely covered by a large walk-in pantry dating circa 1965. It is accessed through two doorways located on its far left and right sides. After entering the walk-in pantry, another doorway on the south wall's right side provides access to an enclosed porch. This doorway is now open, but was boarded-up when the walk-in closet was constructed. The enclosed porch is now used for storage. The house's brick outer wall and a wood plank floor are visible in this room.

The second-story floor plan of the Sperry-Smith House is similar to that on the first. The entry on the north facade's second story porch opens into a small bathroom. The house's present owners constructed this room in 1980 by subdividing the second floor central hall. The bathroom contains a double sink on the east wall and a toilet and shower on the west wall. On the

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

bathroom's north wall, a doorway leads to the second floor central hall.

The second floor central hall has a chair rail and six inch baseboards. An enclosed stairway exists on the room's east wall. Accessed via three steps and a wooden door in the room's southeast corner, this stairway leads to a third floor attic room. The staircase was enclosed circa 1905, and a small closet exists underneath. In addition to the bathroom door, there are three other doorways leading off the second floor central hall. These doors open into the second floor's east and west chambers and the second floor stairway hall. Each doorway possesses a wood door and a painted transom.

The east chamber on the second floor has strip molding approximately eighteen inches from the ceiling, six inch baseboards and a chair rail. There is a slightly projecting fireplace in the south wall and a single window centered in the north wall. The west wall contains a segmented arch that leads to a five-sided bay with windows in each of the three center bays. Radiators exist below the window in the north wall and under the central bay window. A box closet is situated in the room's southwest corner. The closet has a wood door and higher, wood hatch located on its east side.

The west chamber on the second floor is characterized by a large walk-in closet on the south wall. This closet contains two sets of double doors and covers the location of a central fireplace. A segmented arch in the west wall leads into a five-sided bay with windows in the three central bays. The north wall contains a single centered window. Radiators exist below this window and under the central bay window. The room also possesses strip molding eighteen inches below the ceiling, six inch baseboards, and a chair rail.

On the second floor, the stairway hallway consists of a an L-shaped landing. There are single windows in both the east and west walls. These windows have segmented arches and are representative of those found throughout the house. These windows measure seven feet high by three feet ten inches wide. In addition, this room has eleven inch baseboards, acoustical

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

tiles on the ceiling, and a radiator located left of the door leading into the second floor central hall.

A second door penetrates the right side of the staircase hall's south wall and leads into a partitioned bedroom. This second floor bedroom is divided into two separate spaces by a thin panel partition with an open, decorative transom. The partition is pierced with a single wood doorway that provides access to the rest of the room. This room was once the bedroom of Henry Smith, son of the house's sixth owner. According to Ernest Cheek, Henry's parents got tired of walking through their teenage son's bedroom to get to their own bedroom in the next room. To resolve this situation, Henry's parents erected the existing partition. This alteration occurred between 1905 and 1919. Across from the partition door, a single window is centered in the room's west wall. A radiator exists to the window's right. Within the partition, an iron covered, projecting fireplace rests in the south wall, and a second radiator sits to its left. A single window pierces the east wall, and a small box closet was built in the room's north wall next to the partition. The room also has six inch base boards and still retains its original wood plank floors.

Outside the partition, a doorway in the south wall with an enclosed transom leads to a second partitioned bedroom. A third of this bedroom's east side was partitioned off to form a box closet and a bathroom. The box closet exists in the room's northeast corner and the bathroom is immediately adjacent. An open doorway pierces the partition's right side. Similar to the partition in Henry Smith's bedroom, these partitions are thin and made of vertical wood panels. They do not extend to the ceiling. Within the partitioned room a bathtub sits against the east wall and a sink on the south wall. An oriental style painting exists on the wall above the bathtub. Outside the partition, there is a single window in the room's south wall and another single window centered in the room's west wall. Radiators are located to the right of each window.

The third floor attic room is accessed via the enclosed staircase in the second floor center hallway. The staircase emerges slightly east of the room's center and is surrounded by a wood

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

SECTION 8: Statement of Significance

The Sperry-Smith House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a significant example of architecture in Sparta, White County, Tennessee. It is an unique blending of the Italianate and Colonial Revival styles and exemplifies cultural and stylistic transformations that affected American architecture around the turn of the nineteenth century. Originally a purely Italianate style residence, the Sperry-Smith House underwent significant stylistic alterations because of the changing fashionability of contemporary styles and their meanings to local residents.

Thomas L. Sperry constructed the house at 121 Maple Street (then Squabble Street) in 1880. The previous year on 5 December 1879, he and his wife, Mary Jane Sperry, purchased the property on which they built. The lot originally included five and one-half acres. Sperry fashioned the house in the Italianate style. It was characterized by its low-pitched roof, tall, narrow windows with segmented arches, paired eave brackets, and five-sided bays. At some time later, Thomas Sperry, or a subsequent owner, also constructed a square, three-story Italianate tower on the north (front) facade. The Sperry-Smith House is one of the few residences in Sparta, Tennessee that exhibits the Italianate style.

First popularized through architectural pattern books by Andrew Jackson Downing, the Italianate was one of several contemporary, picturesque styles that reflected America's tremendous commercial growth in the mid nineteenth century. It appealed to many people because it contrasted with older, more traditional classical styles of architecture and was associated with classical Italy and medieval christianity. Thomas L. Sperry, however, probably chose to build his home in the Italianate style because it distinguished him as an important and wealthy man in the community.

Thomas L. Sperry was born October 21, 1827 in Indianapolis, Indiana. He moved to Sparta, Tennessee with his father circa 1850 and married Mary Jane Greene in 1857. They had six children. Sperry subsequently became a prominent merchant in

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

Sparta in the mid nineteenth century. During this period, the town flourished because of trade between Knoxville and Nashville on what is now Highway 70. Sperry owned a warehouse on Sparta's courthouse square and specialized in dry goods. According to one deed of trust, he carried merchandise ranging from clothing and hardware to groceries. Sperry was also a well known land speculator and skilled builder. He speculated on land throughout White County and constructed several buildings within Sparta. In addition to his own home, Sperry built the original Mayberry-Hull building (destroyed and rebuilt in 1901), a brick storehouse once occupied by the Wakeman & Hodges Saloon, a frame store house that belonged to the Magnees & Crowder Company, and the residence of Mrs. Mary Young (possibly 131 North Church Street).

Because he was involved in much speculation and commerce, Sperry was adversely affected by the economic depression of the early 1890s. Mounting debts caused the Sperrys to issue a deed of trust on their house and property to Jesse D. Goff, a prominent lawyer in Sparta and county clerk in 1890. Unable to resolve their financial difficulties, the Sperrys eventually sold the house and property to W. L. Dibrell for \$3,250 on March 31, 1891. Dibrell paid \$357.17 in cash and issued three promissory notes for the remainder of the balance. The Sperrys immediately used these notes to pay their outstanding debts. They lived in Sparta until April of 1891, and then moved to Mertens, Texas to live with their youngest son. Thomas L. Sperry died on August 6, 1891 shortly after the move.

W. L. Dibrell did not fair any better in the economic depression of the 1890s. According to the Sparta Expositor, he failed to pay his taxes in 1892 and 1893. Dibrell subsequently sold the Sperry-Smith House to Jesse D. Goff on February 15, 1893. A lien was again placed on the house and property.

In December 1894, Mary J. Sperry, W. L. Dibrell, and Jesse D. Goff were sued for failure to pay the promissory notes first issued to Thomas L. Sperry in 1891. Both the Chancery Court in Sparta and the Tennessee State Court of Errors and Appeals heard the case. After two years of litigation, the courts finally settled the disputes in December 1896. They divided ownership of the Sperry-Smith House among Sperry's creditors. Lizzie Leach,

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Mary Taylor, the Nashville Trust Company, and the firm of Pendleton J. Thomas & Company all gained interest in the property. Lizzie Leach was an acquaintance of Mary J. Sperry's in Texas and the Nashville Trust Company was administrator of the J. B. Spurlock estate.

In April 1897, soon after she acquired legal ownership of the property, Lizzie Leach sold her interest back to Mary J. Sperry. Sperry subsequently purchased the other interests in 1898 and 1907. In 1905, Mary J. Sperry sold the Sperry-Smith House to William Templeton Smith.

The son of William Gooch Smith and Amanda Templeton Smith, William T. Smith was born in White County, Tennessee on February 14, 1858. He received his education in Sparta at Burritt College and at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. In 1879, he was admitted to the Tennessee state bar. He married Jo-Ann Boyd in 1882 and had two children--Henry and Hassie.

From 1879 to 1893, Smith practiced law in Sparta. Initially, he handled land litigations in partnership with D. L. Snodgrass and, later, H.C. Snodgrass. In 1890, he established a separate law firm with his father and brother. He remained with this firm until 1894, when he became Judge of the Fifth Circuit Court in Sparta.

During this period, William Smith instructed Cordull Hull in law. Per Smith's recommendation, Hull replaced Smith as Circuit Court Judge in 1902. Smith resigned his position to become counsel for the Bon Air Coal and Iron Company, then in distress over land titles. Hull eventually became Secretary of State under president Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

William Smith is also responsible for altering the Sperry-Smith House's original appearance. He removed the three-story Italianate tower and replaced it with a two-story, full-length Colonial Revival porch. According to local legend, Smith thought the Italianate tower made the house look too much like a church. Smith also added two Classical Revival style entrances and an unusual wall dormer to the north facade. These types of

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alterations were typical of the period and reflected contemporary trends in American society and culture.

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, proponents of society and culture emphasized restraint and discipline in American architecture. They specifically encouraged builders to pursue dignity and professionalism in their artistic expression. These ideas reflected an emerging sense of American nationalism and a qualitative response to Victorian era architecture. No longer satisfied with existing architectural forms, Americans sought new styles that expressed their own prosperity and positions as well as the nation's solidarity. These cultural trends consequently led to the resurrection of colonial forms as expressions of an ideal and distinct American identity. Revival architecture styles, for example, reinforced these ideas. They confirmed upper class claims to superiority and visually separated the wealthy from the rest of society. Revival style residences during this period also appeared as forms of public architecture providing character and prestige to the towns in which they stood.

The addition of Colonial Revival elements to the Sperry-Smith House proved that William T. Smith was dignified, properly cultured, and aware of the latest fashions. The alterations also distinguished Smith as an important and wealthy individual. Similarly, the house itself became an important symbol of community progress. Even today, people consider the Sperry-Smith House to be one of Sparta's more significant landmarks.

William T. Smith died in 1919 and his son, Henry, and daughter, Hassie inherited the house and property. Henry Smith was cashier at the First National Bank in Sparta from 1922 to 1954. He and his wife lived in the Sperry-Smith House until Henry's death circa 1965. After her husband's death, Henry's widow purchased Hassie Smith West's share of the house.

Mrs. Henry Smith made several changes to the house during this time, circa 1965. She removed an exterior garage and replaced it with the existing carport. Living by herself, she also converted the first-floor west chamber into a bedroom and had someone construct the first-floor bathroom. Ernest and Carolyn Cheek,

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

the present owners, purchased the Sperry-Smith House from Mrs. Henry Smith in 1970.

Between 1880 and 1979, the Sperry-Smith House underwent several significant changes in architectural style and form. The most significant of these was its adaptation to the Colonial Revival style circa 1905. Because the Italianate style appeared outdated, the house's owners remade the front facade in the Colonial Revival style. These physical changes reflected cultural transformations and had expressed social meanings in American society. The Sperry-Smith House is significant because it represents this phenomena in a local context.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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SECTION 10: Geographical Data

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Sperry-Smith House consists of the house and approximately two acres of surrounding property, including two outbuildings: a barn (NC) and a shed (NC) as identified in the marked Parcel 75 on the attached White County Tax Map 59-B.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property contains all the extant historical property associated with the Sperry-Smith House.

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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Sperry-Smith House

Sparta, White Co., TN

Photos by: Carroll Van West

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: January 1996

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

2941 Lebanon Road

Nashville, TN 37243

North (front) facade and east elevation, facing southwest
1 of 34

North facade and east elevation, facing southwest
2 of 34

North facade, facing south
3 of 34

North facade, detail of front entrance, facing south
4 of 34

West elevation, facing east
5 of 34

West elevation, detail of gable end, facing east
6 of 34

West elevation and south elevation, facing northeast
7 of 34

South elevation, facing north
8 of 34

East elevation, facing west
9 of 34

East elevation and south elevation, facing northwest
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Sperry-Smith House, Sparta, White Co., TN

East elevation, detail of gable end, facing west
11 of 34

Central hall, first floor, facing south
12 of 34

West chamber, first floor, facing southeast
13 of 34

East chamber, first floor, facing west
14 of 34

East chamber, first floor, facing southwest
15 of 34

Stairway hall, first floor, facing east
16 of 34

Bathroom, first floor, facing west
17 of 34

Dining room, first floor, facing southeast
18 of 34

Dining room first floor, detail of chandelier, facing northeast
19 of 34

Kitchen, first floor, facing northeast
20 of 34

Frame addition, first floor, facing southwest
21 of 34

Stairway hall, second floor, facing northwest
22 of 34

Central hall, second floor, facing south
23 of 34

East chamber, second floor, facing east
24 of 34

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East chamber, second floor, facing west
25 of 34

Bathroom, second floor, facing north
26 of 34

West chamber, second floor, facing west
27 of 34

West chamber, second floor, facing east
28 of 34

Partitioned bedroom, second floor, facing west
29 of 34

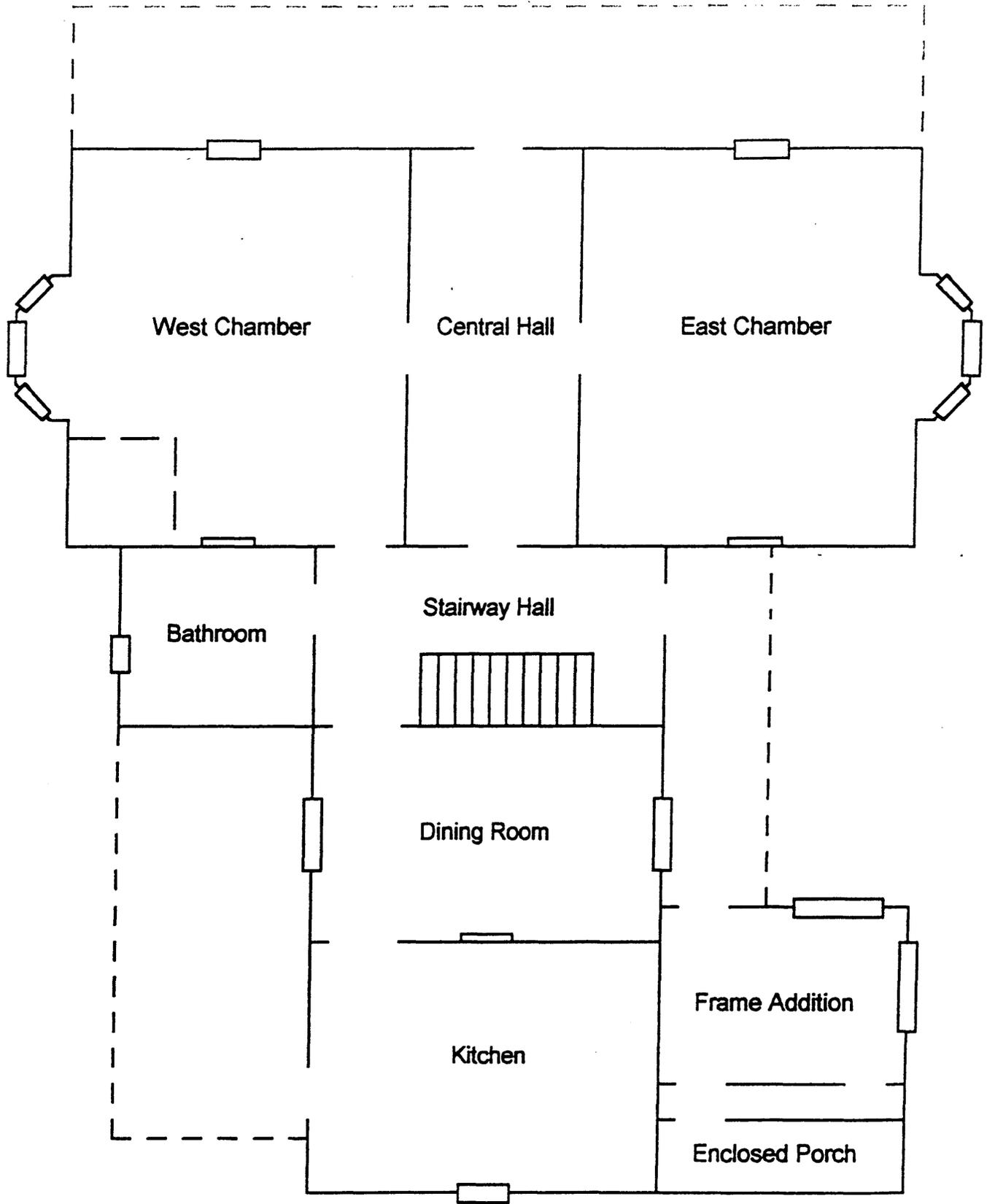
Partitioned bedroom, second floor, facing south
30 of 34

Bedroom, second floor, facing east
31 of 34

Stairway, third floor, facing south
32 of 34

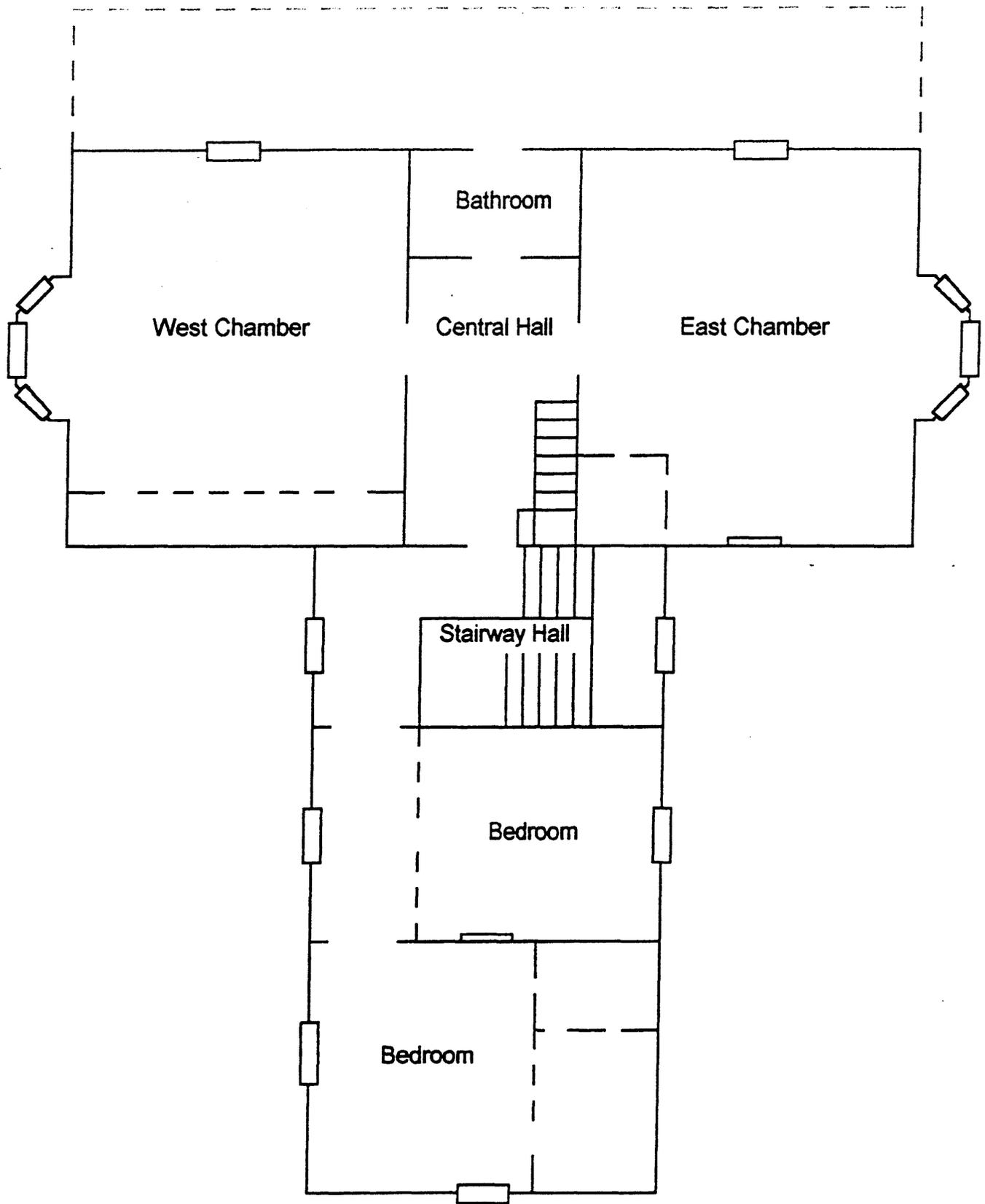
Attic room, third floor, facing south
33 of 34

Attic room, third floor, facing northwest
34 of 34



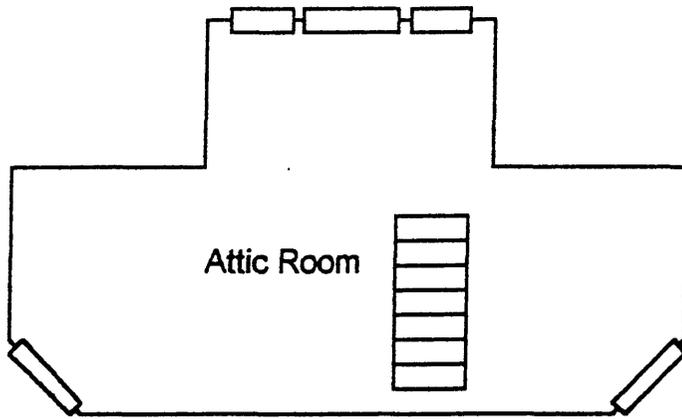
↑
N
Not to Scale

Thomas L.
Sperry
House: First
Floor Plan



↑
 N
 Not to Scale

Thomas L.
 Sperry
 House:
 Second Floor
 Plan



Thomas L.
Sperry
House: Third
Floor Plan

Not to Scale