

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 08 1979
DATE ENTERED JAN 8 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

The Crescent / (Colonel William S. West ^{House} Home)

AND/OR COMMON

The Crescent

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

904 N. Patterson Street

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Valdosta

--- VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second - Dawson Mathis

STATE

Georgia

CODE

013

COUNTY

Lowndes

CODE

185

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

---DISTRICT

---PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

---AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

---UNOCCUPIED

---COMMERCIAL

---PARK

---STRUCTURE

---BOTH

---WORK IN PROGRESS

---EDUCATIONAL

---PRIVATE RESIDENCE

---SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

---RELIGIOUS

---OBJECT

---IN PROCESS

---YES: RESTRICTED

---GOVERNMENT

---SCIENTIFIC

---BEING CONSIDERED

---YES: UNRESTRICTED

---INDUSTRIAL

---TRANSPORTATION

---NO

---MILITARY

OTHER: Garden Club

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Valdosta Garden Center, Inc.; Mrs. Chauncey S. Elkins, president

STREET & NUMBER

904 N. Patterson Street

CITY, TOWN

Valdosta

--- VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia 31601

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Superior Court

STREET & NUMBER

Lowndes County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Valdosta

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

---FEDERAL ---STATE ---COUNTY ---LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

4

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

General Description

The Crescent is a large, turn-of-the-century, Neoclassical house set on a landscaped city lot along a once-fashionable residential street in Valdosta.

The Crescent is three stories high and polygonally shaped. It features a monumental two-story, semi-circular front portico. Neoclassical detailing is extensive and includes one- and two-story Ionic columns and pilasters, Palladian windows and doorways, first-floor window lintels supported by ancones, a projecting second-floor balustraded balcony supported by consoles, dentilled and plain cornices, paneling and pressed tin on the underside of the front-entry canopy, and painted terracotta in pediment tympanums. Clear, bevel-edged, leaded-glass fills many of the windows.

The interior of the Crescent features a spacious, centrally-located stair and entry hall, polygonal and rectangular rooms, wide doorways, and generally open, free-flowing spaces. The interior is elaborately detailed with Neoclassical wood and plasterwork, including Ionic columns and pilasters, paneled wainscoting, dentilled cornices and lintels, and paneled and beamed ceilings. Fireplaces and mantels are all different, but generally include a framed mirrored overmantel and exposed glazed firebricks. Walls and ceilings are for the most part smoothly plastered, with the exception of the stair and entry hall and the dining room which have beamed and molded ceilings and paneled wainscoting. The stairway itself is paneled and balustraded, as are its upper and lower landings. Bathrooms are tiled or finished in ceramic brick.

The third floor of the Crescent contains a large banquet and ballroom with attendant rooms for the orchestra, chaperones, and coats. An enormous fireplace with a Neoclassical mantel is centrally located on the north wall.

The rear of the Crescent is essentially utilitarian. A one-story ell contains the remodeled kitchen, a bathroom, and storage rooms. A three-story stair tower rises between the kitchen and the back wall of the main house.

The Crescent is constructed with a balloon frame sheathed in weatherboards. Foundations consist of hard, pressed brick and cut stone. The roof is surfaced with channeled sheet metal. All lumber used in the house for structural and decorative purposes is knot-free heart pine, with the exception of the curly-pine paneling in the dining room. The portico is cantilevered from the structural framework of the main house; the columns, made of sheet metal with terra cotta capitals, are non-loadbearing. When built, the house was equipped with the most modern plumbing fixtures and electrical service available. Reminders of these utilities can be seen in some of the

[continued]

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1898-1900

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Bleckley and Tyler

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Crescent is significant primarily in terms of the architectural history of Valdosta, Georgia, and the nation as an exceptionally fine and well-preserved turn-of-the-century Neoclassical house. The Crescent is also significant as the home of Colonel William Stanley West, a lawyer, educator, businessman, and politician.

Architectural Significance

The Crescent is an exceptionally fine turn-of-the-century Neoclassical house. Salient features of its design include compact, regular massing, the front portico with side porte-cochere, an interior organized around a central stair hall, and period detailing ranging from the monumental Ionic columns of the portico to tiny bead-and-reel moldings around doorways and windows. What makes the Crescent exceptional in terms of its design is its sheer size, the range, scale, and elaborateness of its detailing, and the combination of awesome formality and contemporary informality in its exterior arrangement and interior layout. Three-story houses of twenty to thirty rooms are relatively rare in Georgia and the Southeast. Equally unusual are houses as stylishly designed and elaborately ornamented, and having as careful attention to scale and proportion, as the Crescent. Perhaps the successful combination of formality and informality is the greatest achievement of the Crescent's design, however, for here are reconciled two great tendencies in turn-of-the-century American architecture: the traditional formality of the Classical styles and the informality of more contemporary residential designs. Manifestations of this reconciliation include the regular, formal portico and the irregular massing of the main body of the house, the unusual irregularly shaped rooms with typical Neoclassical detailing, the informally open interior spaces organized around the traditional central stair hall, and to some extent the portico itself, a traditional Classical feature given an unusually large semicircular form. The design of the Crescent is clearly neither a stiff academic exercise nor the work of an amateur but rather the result of an understanding patron and a skillful architect.

The materials and craftsmanship of the Crescent are also exceptional. The principal building material in the house, used for structure, finish and

[continued]

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Candler, Allen D., and Clement A. Eyns. Cyclopedia of Georgia (Georgia), V. III. Atlanta: State Historical Association, 1906.

Cracklings of Valdosta High School, M.D. Pitts, advisor. Draft National Register nomination form, Jan. 29, 1979. [continued]

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.7

QUADRANGLE NAME Valdosta, Ga.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 7 | 2, 8, 1, 5, 7, 0 | 3, 4, 1, 3, 8, 5, 0

B | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | |

D | |

E | |

F | |

G | |

H | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boundary is described by a heavy black line on the attached "Sketch Map"; this boundary corresponds to the current legal description of the property.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Amy Pass, student intern; and Richard Cloues, architectural historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Preservation Sec., Ga. Dept. of Natural Resources

September, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

270 Washington Street, S.W.

(404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Atlanta

Georgia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

TITLE

Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

10/31/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Sally G. Olds
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
Just A. Smith
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

1/8/89 7

DATE

12/31/79

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED	8

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

bathroom facilities and in the electric-light fixtures (and some bulbs) set in the plaster frieze of the dining room and in the sloped ceilings of the ballroom.

The Crescent is generally in good condition. The structure is sound, and both the interior and exterior have been largely restored and/or carefully maintained by the current owner. Only the third-floor ballroom and some of the bathrooms and closets remain to be rehabilitated. Few changes have been made to the Crescent since the turn of the century. The kitchen has been remodeled, the stairway has apparently been altered slightly, and an open porch above the porte-cochere has been enclosed. During the 1930s, the house was subdivided into apartments by flimsy wallboard partitions, but these were so installed as to do little or no damage to the original fabric of the building, and they have been completely removed, leaving hardly a trace of their existence.

The grounds around the Crescent retain some of the original turn-of-the-century landscaping. The front (east) yard consists of a broad, level lawn and several large live oak trees draped with Spanish moss. The front walk, centered on the front door, is laid with polygonal paving blocks between stone curbs. Originally, there were more live oak trees, and they were planted in a semi-circular pattern radiating from the columns of the portico; several, however, have succumbed to the ravages of time and weather. A stone-and-iron fence once surrounded the front yard. The south-side yard was once landscaped like the front yard, but with driveways giving access from East Gordon Street to the porte-cochere. The area is now used as a parking lot for the Garden Center. The north-side yard remains an extension of the front yard; toward the rear has been built recently a one-story, concrete-block, gable-roofed assembly hall for the Garden Center. The rear (west) yard is now a formal garden maintained by the Garden Center. A small wood-framed outbuilding in the northwest corner (possibly the original washhouse), now being renovated for use as a chapel, and an arbor and fountain, are the only structures in the back yard, although originally this area was occupied by a stable and carriage barn, a laundry house, a chicken coop, grape arbors, fig trees, and flower and vegetable gardens. The lot on which the Crescent was built and still stands originally extended further north, but this property was lost in a gambling game and is now occupied by an early-twentieth-century house.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED	NOV 08 1979
DATE ENTERED	8

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

The surroundings of the Crescent have changed considerably over the years. North Patterson Street at the turn of the century was a fashionable residential avenue with many fine houses and large landscaped lots. During the 1930s, many of these large houses were subdivided into apartments. After World War II, the street developed into a largely commercial corridor, with new office and commercial buildings replacing many of the earlier residences. Today, it remains a commercial area, although a few houses from the turn of the century have survived.

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FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 08 1979
DATE ENTERED	8

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

detailing, is heart-pine wood. This strong, durable, dry, knot-free lumber was selected under the personal direction of Colonel West, and it is found in the redundantly reinforced balloon frame, the weatherboarding, the floors, wainscoting, interior columns and pilasters, fireplace mantels, and ceiling beams. Rare curly pine was used to panel the dining room; Colonel West originally intended to make much greater use of this unusual wood, but a fire destroyed most of his stockpile just before construction. Another important construction material used in building the Crescent is plaster, applied smoothly over lath on the walls and molded into decorative patterns on frieze panels and ceilings. As with the lumber, Colonel West was personally concerned with the plaster and ordered that it be allowed to cure for nearly a year before the house was occupied. The Crescent rests on a full foundation -- unusual in a part of the country where most houses are built on piers -- and the foundation walls consist of pressed brick laid on rough-cut stone. Marble, tile, terra cotta, and pressed metal were also used for structural and decorative purposes in the Crescent, filling in the schedule of period materials. Of special interest is the fact that the front portico is not free-standing but rather cantilevered out from the main structure of the house.

Over and above its intrinsic architectural merits, the Crescent is significant as an exemplar of an important type of house in Georgia. Neoclassical houses were built in nearly every community and almost always they were built by men of means and prestige. Just as the Greek Revival plantation house is a symbol of antebellum Georgia, so the Neoclassical house is a symbol representing the post-Reconstruction New South. The Crescent is one of the earliest, largest, and most impressive Neoclassical houses in Georgia. Because of its date, its design, and the publicity attending its construction and the parties and receptions subsequently held there, the Crescent must be considered as a precedent-setting house in the history of Georgia architecture.

The Crescent is also architecturally significant because of its association with the Atlanta architectural partnership of Bleckley and Tyler. Of the two partners, Haralson Bleckley is the better known and was one of Atlanta's foremost turn-of-the-century architects. He began his architectural studies in 1892 in the office of E.G. Lind. Lind, one of the founding fellows of the A.I.A. in 1857, had moved from Baltimore to Atlanta in 1881 and

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 08 1979
DATE ENTERED	8

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

became one of the city's first professional architects. Internships, such as Bleckley's, were the usual means by which many of the region's architects received their professional training in the late-nineteenth century. In 1895, Bleckley formed a partnership with Harry N. Tyler. The decade of the 1890s saw a "steady increase in the number of permanent resident architects" in Atlanta, according to Thomas H. Morgan, and Bleckley and Tyler were among them. It was during this period, of course, that the Crescent was designed. In 1899, the partnership was dissolved. Tyler secured permanent employment with the local telephone company, and Bleckley went to New York City, where he worked for a short time in the firm of Frank Freeman and Israels & Harder before spending a year studying architecture in Paris. After a tour of the Eastern United States, Bleckley returned to professional practice in Atlanta. In 1904 alone, his work was cited seven times in the Southern Architect and Building News, and in 1906, he was a founding non-Institute member of the Atlanta Chapter of the A.I.A. During these years, Bleckley began his most ambitious and famous undertaking -- the designing of "Bleckley Plaza." A report on the 1907 annual chapter meeting provides details: Bleckley Plaza was essentially a grand Beaux-Arts plan to build over the railroad tracks in the middle of the city with viaducts, promenades, and parks. Within and around the plaza was to be a civic center incorporating state, county, and city office buildings, hotels, and a consolidated railroad depot. Drawings for Bleckley Plaza were completed by 1910, and they were presented to numerous civic groups and public agencies. Lack of cooperation on the part of the railroads and the state government prevented the plans from being fully realized. Only the viaducts were built, with their subsequent (and unintentional) creation of the "underground" Atlanta district. At the same time Bleckley completed his plans for the Plaza, he became a full member in the A.I.A., and in 1912, he was elected president of the Atlanta chapter. In 1910, as well, Bleckley served as the founding president of the Architectural Arts League of Atlanta, a short-lived City Beautiful organization devoted to promoting architecture and the allied arts of painting and sculpture. Bleckley continued to practice architecture in Atlanta until his death in 1933.

Historical Significance

The Crescent is historically significant as the home of Colonel William Stanley West (1849-1914), a South Georgia lawyer, businessman, and politician, and a strong supporter of public education. The Crescent is the

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 08 1979
DATE ENTERED	8

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

principal property associated with the life of Colonel West.

William Stanley West was born on August 23, 1849, in Marion County, Georgia. He died December 22, 1914, at his home in Valdosta. In the late-1860s, West's family moved to that part of Lowndes County now incorporated in Brooks County, where West worked for a time at an uncle's sawmill. Largely through his own efforts, West received an education at Mercer University in Macon, graduating in 1882 at the age of 33. He then moved to Valdosta, where he taught at a public school and commenced the practice of law. On November 15, 1888, West married Ora Lee Cranford.

During the 1880s, West entered into the lumber business. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, he acquired extensive tracts of timber in South Georgia and North Florida, and he owned and operated a sawmill and lumberyard in Iverness, Florida. Largely through the lumber business, West "amassed a fortune," in the words of a biographer. It was from the stockpile of lumber at his sawmill in Iverness that West selected the building materials for his house, the Crescent. West also ran a farm twelve miles south of Valdosta, although this farm was apparently more of an avocation than a vocation.

West's political career began in 1892 and continued until his death in 1914. From 1892 to 1897, West served in the lower house of the state legislature. From 1898 to 1899, he sat in the state senate. In 1900, he declined public office, but between 1902 and 1904, he returned to the lower house, and from 1905 to 1906, he returned to the state senate. In 1908, West served as a delegate-at-large representing Georgia at the National Democratic Convention in Denver, Colorado. Several months before his death, West was appointed to the United States Senate. West's political achievements are largely related to education. In 1892, during his first term in the state legislature, West introduced a bill to establish a uniform system of textbooks in the public schools of Georgia. Not meeting with immediate success, West reintroduced this bill at subsequent sessions of the legislature, and finally in 1903, it passed both houses of the state legislature and was signed into law. West also supported a bill to establish an agricultural, industry, and normal college in South Georgia which passed the Senate in 1905 and the House in 1906. West then donated land in Valdosta for establishing the South Georgia Normal College, now the Valdosta State College.

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12

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 08 1979
DATE ENTERED	3

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

Archeology

No formal archeology has been done at the Crescent. It is known, however, that at one time the back (west) yard contained a stable and carriage barn, a laundry house, a chicken coop, grape arbors, trees, and flower and vegetable gardens. This back yard was also somewhat larger as well [see section 7]. A surviving outbuilding, now being renovated as a chapel, is possibly the laundry house, but it has been moved. The back yard itself has been landscaped with formal gardens starting in 1951. The extent of ground disturbance is unknown, as is its effect, if any, on the archeological resources. However, it may be inferred from the knowledge of these no-longer-existing outbuildings that significant historical archeological potential is present in the back yard, which, if realized, would contribute to our understanding of this turn-of-the-century estate.

Preservation

It may be said that historic preservation in Valdosta began with the Crescent. In 1951, the house was slated for demolition to make way for an automobile facility. The Garden Club of Valdosta, founded in 1915, determined to purchase the property and restore it. Using funds raised from the city, the county, and the general public, the Garden Club was able to provide an initial fund for its restoration. Since then, the Garden Club has worked steadily toward full restoration of the house. The Garden Club also maintains the grounds. The house is opened to visitors on a regular basis and is used extensively for social affairs such as weddings, receptions, and parties. The house appears on the cover of numerous tourist brochures, travel guides, and other promotional literature published privately and by the city, the county, the region and the state.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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DATE ENTERED

8

CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

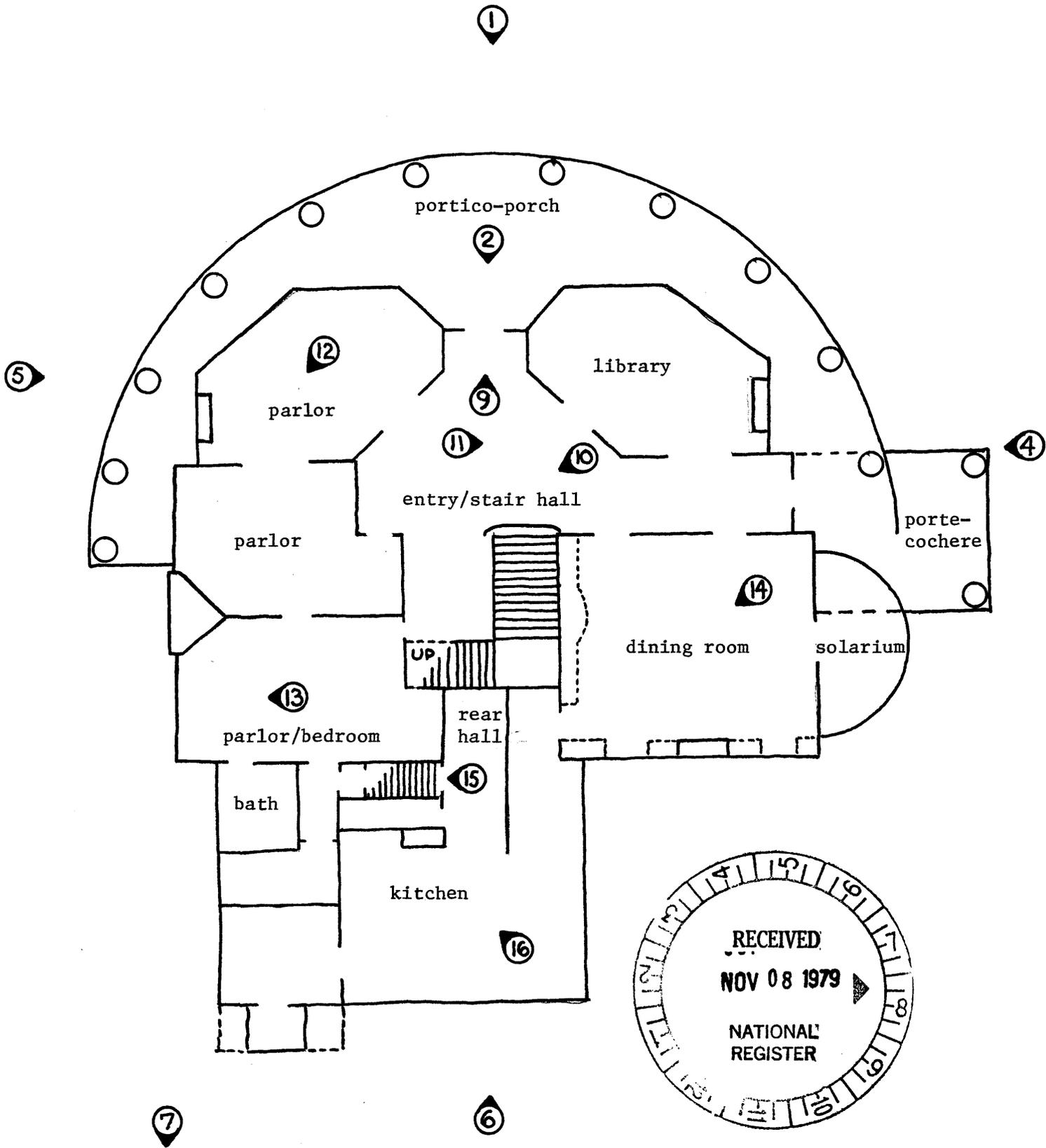
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The Crescent
 Valdosta, Lowndes County, Georgia

SKETCH PLAN--FIRST FLOOR

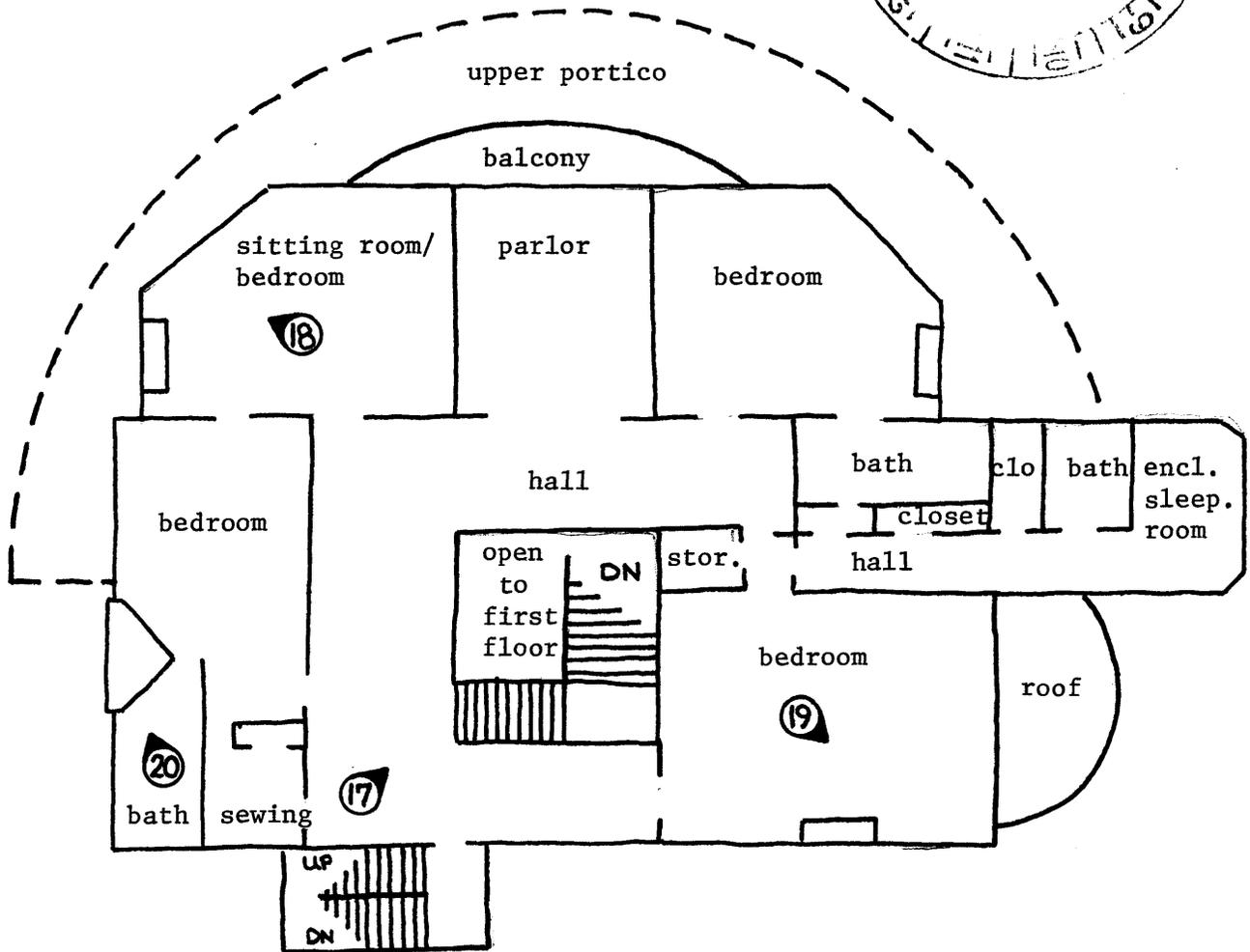
not to scale

north ←

photograph and direction of view
 September 1979



19



The Crescent
Valdosta, Lowndes County, Georgia

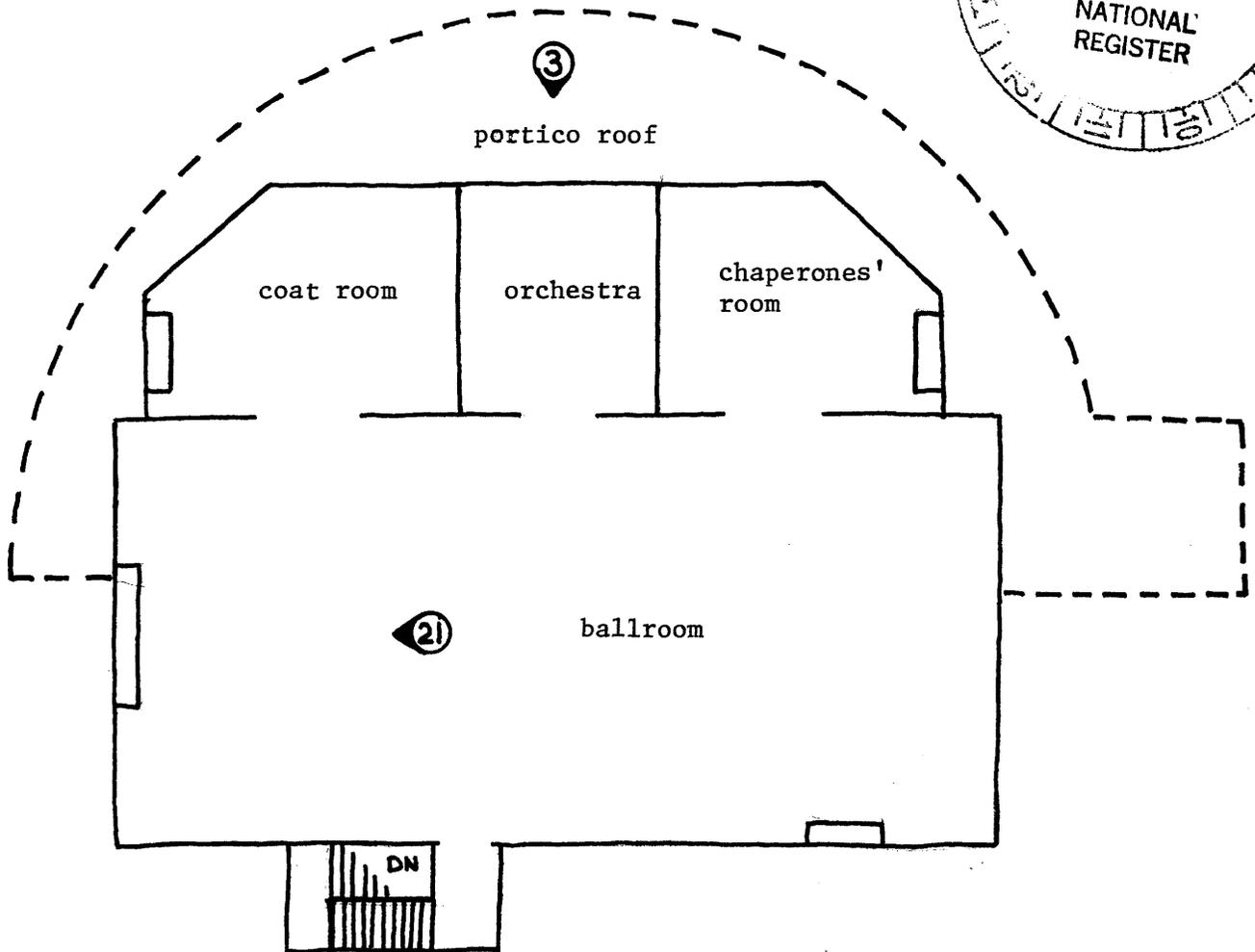
SKETCH PLAN--SECOND FLOOR

not to scale

north ←

photograph and direction of view 
September 1979

20



The Crescent
Valdosta, Lowndes County, Georgia

SKETCH PLAN--THIRD FLOOR

not to scale

north ←

photograph and direction of view 

September 1979

21