

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received MAR 26 1986

date entered

MAY 2 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Birdwood

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number Millpond Road at Pinetree Boulevard

N/A not for publication

city, town Thomasville N/A vicinity of

state GA code 013 county Thomas code 275

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

H. D. Meyers, President
name Thomas College

street & number Route 5, Millpond at Pinetree

city, town Thomasville N/A vicinity of state GA 31792

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Thomas County Courthouse

city, town Thomasville state GA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Structures Field Survey:
title Thomas County, Georgia has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta state GA 30334

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

The historic Birdwood estate sits on a broad expanse of open and wooded land in the southeastern section of Thomasville. The main house is constructed in the American Georgian Revival style which was popular in the early part of the twentieth century. This two-story, brick-veneered mansion, built in 1932, was originally in the center of a 48-acre tract at the corner of the Boulevard (later Pine Tree Boulevard) and Linton Mill Road (later Millpond Road). Now on a reduced acreage, the main house still retains its open frontage on the main road with a large lawn, and behind it, the property remains heavily wooded. The effect is much the same as it was in the 1930s.

The Birdwood mansion is designed in a modified U-shape plan with a separate service building to the rear. These are connected on both the ground and second floors by a two-story "colonnade." Both buildings' frame construction is brick veneered in stretcher bond with wooden millwork for trim and porch structure, and both have hipped clay tile roofs with copper ridges, gutters, and flashing. The wooden "colonnade" connecting the two buildings has a flat roof of tar and gravel. Inside the U-shape of the main house is a brick courtyard, within which is a granolithic cement swimming pool with a brick edge that has been filled with dirt and serves as a planter. Typical of the Georgian Revival style, the house is symmetrical on the exterior, with a projecting pedimented pavilion centered on the front elevation. This is dressed-up with four Ionic (fluted) pilasters separating its three bays. On either side is a one-story veranda with Doric columns and a balustrade above. There are 6/6 double-hung sash windows throughout for optimum light and ventilation. Five sets of French doors are located on the first floor, some of which served in lieu of a formal main entry.

(NOTE: All room usages cited below are those of their original use as marked on the enclosed floor plan.)

The first floor of Birdwood mansion centers on a large living room between two wings. The east wing contains the main entrance hall and stairway to the second floor, a large coast room, toilet, and a library in the rear. The west wing contains a large billiard room with a toilet and walk-in closet. The west wing contains the master bedroom (called a dormitory in the original plans) with a toilet and bath. A long corridor above the living room and east wing connects six bedrooms, or "chambers," and four baths. The service wing is connected to the main house by a two-story colonnade. Its first floor contains the main dining room, serving room, kitchen, and laundry. The second floor contains one large and six small bedrooms and one common bath. A partial cellar, where the boiler is located, is under the service wing. All walls and ceilings in Birdwood are lath and plaster with the exception of the living room, library, and billiard room, where they are covered with full length pine paneling. All floors are also of pine as are the doors and double hung sash window frames. All millwork in the house is either plain or has a very slight bevel or ridge. All baseboards, cornice moldings, and mantels in the house are wooden with little or no ornamentation. Mantels have a frieze and cornice which hold up a shelf with no overmantle. Ceilings in the living room, library, and billiard room are furred down.

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Birdwood is a frame, brick veneer structure on a concrete foundation. 2x6 studs are used throughout the house. Electric lights have been installed in the building since its construction. Heat was provided by a boiler in the cellar and distributed by radiators. An elevator was added to the house at an undetermined date, and was enclosed in shiplap siding in a corner of the colonnade. The elevator equipment is now removed but an identification plate indicates that it was a Sedgewick and made in New York.

The Birdwood estate was extensively landscaped according to a plan devised by the firm of Stiles and Van Kleek, Landscape Architects of Boston, Mass. A sketch of the plan shows trees lining the winding drive with woods to the east. West of the drive was a broad open lawn sloping down to the two main roads. Pecan trees were planted along Millpond Road between the drive and Blackshear Street, screening a regulation polo field and a practice field beyond. A tract of 27 acres north of the main house was sold in 1982 by the college and is now being developed as a subdivision. This area takes in most of the two polo field, although part of one exists on the nominated property. A historical tennis court is located on the lawn to the west of the main house, and a Japanese garden was planted in the edge of the woods to the north. There were originally stables and a garage facing the drive to the southeast. Presently the garage still exists but a number of small, intrusive classroom buildings stand in the vicinity of the stables. Three small frame classroom buildings sit on the edge of the front lawn but will be removed when a classroom-library complex is completed in the edge of the woods. A non-historic chapel was moved onto the campus during the days of Birdwood Primitive Baptist College. Located across the drive north of the main house, this will probably be removed in the future. Changes to the main house include the covering of some features with modern paneling and the addition of partitions in several rooms.

Birdwood's surroundings have retained their integrity through the years with minimal intrusion. A row of large, well landscaped houses have been built across Millpond Road, while Millpond Plantation and Glen Arven Golf Course to the south and east both remain much as they did in the 1930s. The subdivision now being developed to the north will be similar to the development across Millpond Road.

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 type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) recreation

Specific dates 1932 **Builder/Architect** Shepard and Stearns, Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Birdwood is significant in architecture as an example of the restrained use of the then-popular Georgian Revival style for the main house on an early 20th-century estate. It is also significant as a work of the Boston-based architectural firm of Shepard and Stearns, perhaps their only work in Georgia. The architectural firm of Shepard and Stearns was in business from 1910 to 1951 in Boston, Massachusetts. The principals were George F. Shepard and Frederick B. Stearns (1874-1959). Shepard was from Milton, Massachusetts, the same hometown of Mr. Forbes. Stearns designed a variety of different types of buildings including schools, commercial, hospitals, fraternity houses and other club houses, and private homes. He was not related to the Boston firm of Peabody and Stearns which flourished until 1917. The landscaping was done by Stiles and Van Kleek of Boston and St. Petersburg, Florida. Birdwood is significant in politics/government because it was built as a winter home for W. Cameron Forbes (1870-1959) of Massachusetts, who served as Governor General of the Philippines from 1909 to 1913 and continued to be involved with the islands for many years. From 1930 to 1932, when Birdwood was built, he was U. S. Ambassador to Japan. He continued various activities in foreign affairs thereafter, and authored a book on the Philippines. He sold the property in 1950. The estate is significant in recreation because of the introduction of polo to Georgia by Forbes at this location, the grounds of which were designed with polo playing in mind and once included both regulation and playing fields. Forbes also authored a book on polo. These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register Criteria A, B, and C.

Historical Narrative

Birdwood was built in 1931-32 for William Cameron Forbes of Boston, Massachusetts, as a seasonal residence and a place to practice and play polo in the winter. A grandson of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Forbes was a member of a wealthy and influential family, and performed public diplomatic service for the United States in several capacities.

William Cameron Forbes (1870-1959) was a native of Milton, Massachusetts. In 1902 he was asked to work with the building of the Panama Canal by President Theodore Roosevelt, but, before it was arranged, a vacancy occurred on the Philippine Commission. In filling that vacancy in 1904, he became the secretary of commerce and police in the Philippines in addition to holding a seat on the commission. In 1908 he became vice-governor there, and President William H. Taft, also a Republican, appointed him governor general in 1909. Forbes opposed Filipino independence and worked hard to develop the islands' economy. He also concentrated on its infra-structure by improving transportation, working with its problems in disease control and promoting foreign investment in the islands. Politically, Forbes began to lose favor in the Philippines because of his opposition to independence. With the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat, as president in 1913, he was asked to resign. Returning to business, he served as a consultant and director to many companies, and was receiver of the Brazil Railway Company between 1914 and 1919. Never losing interest in the Philippines, in 1921 he was chosen by President Warren G. Harding to serve with General Leonard Wood to investigate the American administration of the islands during

9. Major Bibliographical References

Montgomery, Erick D. "Birdwood." Historic Property Information Form, July 10, 1984 with supplemental research on the architects, the original owner, and various maps, etc. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 17.2

Quadrangle name Thomasville, GA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7
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2	1	6	1	5	0
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3	4	1	2	8	6	0
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B

1	7
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2	1	6	5	3	0
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3	4	1	2	8	1	0
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C

1	7
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2	1	6	5	3	0
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3	4	1	2	4	9	0
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D

1	7
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2	1	6	3	3	0
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3	4	1	2	5	5	0
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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property includes all that land presently owned by the owner and includes the remaining historic acreage associated with the property. It is marked on the enclosed property map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian

organization Historic Preservation Section
Department of Natural Resources

date February 10, 1986

street & number 270 Washington Street

telephone 404-656-2840

city or town Atlanta

state GA 30334

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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 Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 3/17/86

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Clay Schaezel
Keeper of the National Register

date 5/2/86

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Wilson's presidency. In 1928 he published a book entitled The Philippine Islands which was a political and developmental history of the American period.

In 1930 Forbes was appointed by President Herbert Hoover to head a commission for studying conditions in Haiti. Pleased with the results, Hoover appointed him Ambassador to Japan, a position he held between June 1930 and April 1932. It was during this period that he planned his estate in Thomasville, Georgia. Forbes only agreed to remain in Japan for a year and a half, and at the end of that time Secretary of State Stinson gladly accepted his resignation due to differences in opinion regarding American policy in Japan.

During the 1930s, Forbes was chairman of the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Institute of Washington. In 1935 he headed the American Economic Mission to the Far East, a study group sponsored by the National Foreign Trade Council.

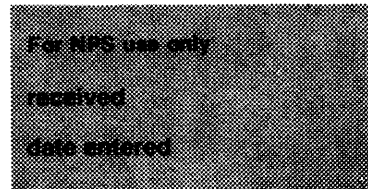
During his years in the Philippines, Forbes became acquainted with Robb and Placidia White. Mr. White was a clergyman in the Protestant Episcopal Church and Mrs. White was an avid polo player. It was this shared enthusiasm for polo which apparently cultivated their friendship. In 1922, White became rector of Saint Thomas Episcopal Church in Thomasville. Forbes' visit there led to his choice of Thomasville for his seasonal residence. He introduced polo to Thomasville. He imported some players but also used some local ones. Some teams came from colleges and military bases. After he left Thomasville, polo died out as an activity.

Forbes was a polo player of international caliber. He had written a manual in 1911 entitled As to Polo which by 1950 had sold 6,000 copies and was considered the authoritative guide to the game. Forbes' Thomasville estate included both a regulation field and a practice field. Stables housed his ponies and a pony hospital was erected across Pinetree Boulevard off the nominated property. It is now destroyed. The main house had six guest rooms to accommodate a polo team or other visitors while in Thomasville. Forbes also purchased 1,617 acres in southern Thomas County on Nine Mile Post Road (several miles from here) which was partially used to raise cattle and feed for his ponies. This land was known as Mayhaw Plantation. It had no house, but was used to shoot birds. Forbes stayed at Birdwood, his permanent seasonal home, during late fall and winter, often from October through March. During the rest of the year he lived in Massachusetts. While he was not in residence, Birdwood was left with caretakers who also looked after the pecan grove. Forbes' Birdwood was just one example - a late one - of Thomasville's long history as a resort community for wealthy northerners. There are many other remaining estates that derive from similar activities.

Birdwood was designed by the architectural firm of Shepard and Stearns of Boston, Massachusetts. The plans were drawn in 1930 but were not implemented until 1932 when Forbes was planning to return from Japan. The landscape architectural firm of Stiles and Van Kleek of Boston and St. Petersburg, which had done the adjacent Glen Arden Country Club in 1930, planned the grounds which included woods, open space, and the polo area. In 1946 Forbes deeded 6.21 acres on the north end of his property to Placidia White and sold Mayhaw Plantation to Parker and Elisabeth Ireland Poe. In 1950 he sold his remaining 45.8 acres at Birdwood, which included the main house and polo grounds, to Greene W. Alday. B. L. Brewton bought the property in the same year with intentions of developing the land into a subdivision.

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The progressive Primitive Baptist Church had been planning the establishment of a denominational college since 1947. By 1950 the plans had progressed to the point of securing a site. Macon, Columbus, and Waycross were all considered, but Thomasville was finally selected due to the availability of the Birdwood estate which was deemed adaptable to the needs of the college. J. Harley Chapman, S. A. Chastain, and James F. Pettigrew, all of Thomas County, signed a security deed for the property in November, 1950 and the establishment of Birdwood College proceeded. Although they hoped to open for enrollment as early as 1951, the college did not begin classes until the fall of 1954.

Birdwood College struggled from the beginning. It had limited support from the Primitive Baptist Church, and though community support from the citizens of Thomasville was strong when it began, it started to wane by the 1970s. Lack of accreditation was one factor that contributed to its struggle through the years. In January, 1976 the State Board of Education certified "that Birdwood Junior College had met the standard requirements prescribed by regulation of the State Board of Education for Georgia colleges issuing diplomas and conferring degrees of Associate in Liberal Arts, General Education, Business Administration and Future Teachers in this State . . ."

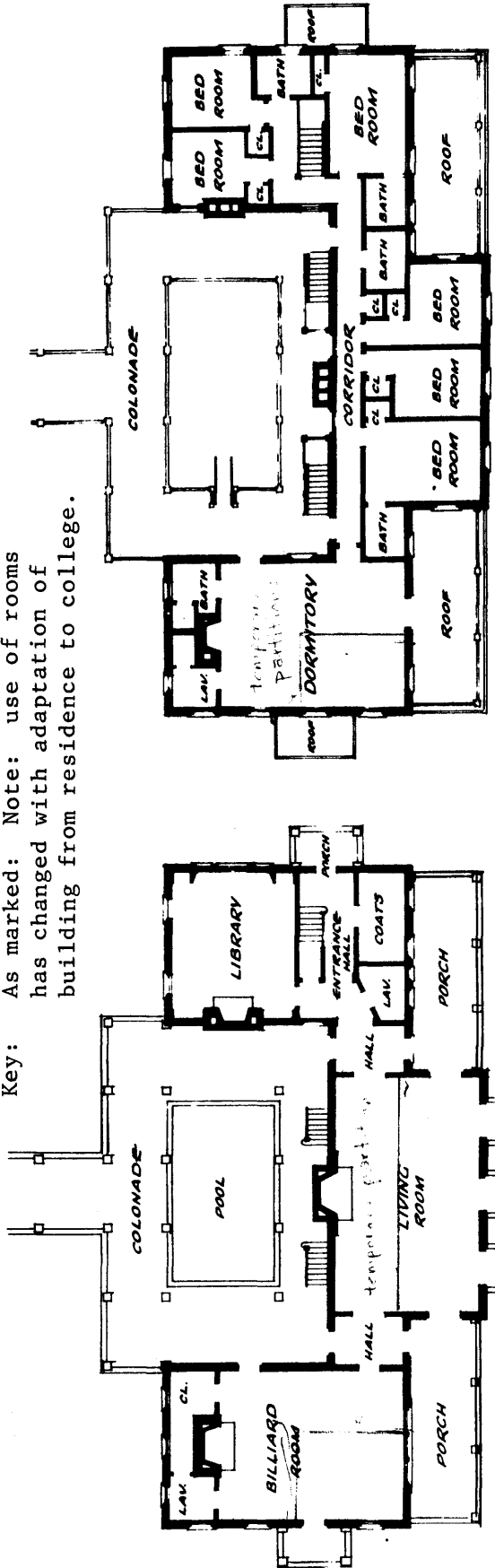
By the 1970s, sentiment in the community began leaning toward the establishment of a state operated junior college in Thomasville. Late in 1973 a bond issue to support such an institution was presented to the voters of Thomas County, but failed 3,066 to 3,159. The state junior college subsequently was placed in Bainbridge.

The officials of Birdwood, realizing that they needed community-wide support in order to survive, made the decision to convert the institution into a community college. This meant gradually giving up ties with its Primitive Baptist beginnings. One of the first steps toward this end was changing the name in August, 1976 to Thomas County Community College, Inc.

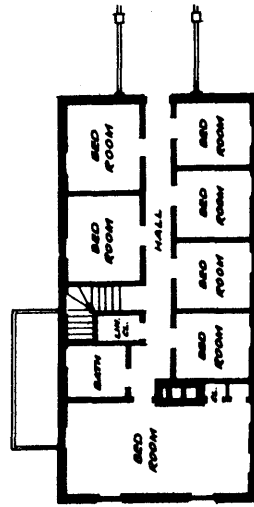
Since 1976 the college has made the transition from a denominational school to a private two year college. The physical campus is relatively intact from the days of Cameron Forbes. The main house serves as the administration building. The garage has been expanded and serves as the library. The stables are gone and five small buildings which serve as classrooms, labs, and faculty offices stand on their site. Three small classroom buildings were also moved onto the open lawn to the west of the drive and serve as classrooms, lab and the student center. Future plans call for removing all eight small buildings when a new classroom-library complex is completed in the woods to the rear of the old garage. The main house will be restored and continue to function as the administration building, while the old garage (the present library) will be converted to a student services center.

Floor Plan

Birdwood
 Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia
 Scale: unknown
 Source: 1930s Real Estate Brochure
 Date: Original, 1930s, with 1984 annotations.
 Key: As marked: Note: use of rooms
 has changed with adaptation of
 building from residence to college.



Second Floor



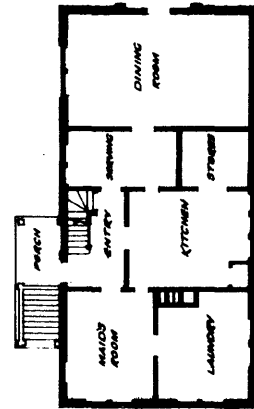
RESIDENCE

First Floor

Second Floor

SERVICE BUILDING

First Floor



Tax Map

Birdwood
Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia
Scale: 1" = approximately 650'
Source: Thomas Co., Ga. Tax Assessors
Office, Tax Map No. 66, Parcel
TH-8.

Date:

1984.

The nominated property is marked by

a heavy black line.

Thomas County, Georgia
Tax Assessors Office
Tax Map 66, parcel TH-8

21-3

21-4

21-5

87

20-1

19-1

SEE '67-

THOMASVILLE

BLVD

TH-53
12.4 AC.

TH-6
18.7 AC

TH-9
234.0 AC
GLEN ARVEN

LL-53
LL-52

LL-86
LL-87

SOUTH

BROAD

ST

↑ N

PINE

TH-7
27.7 AC.

TH-8
17.2 AC

MILL POND

500'

820'

1160'

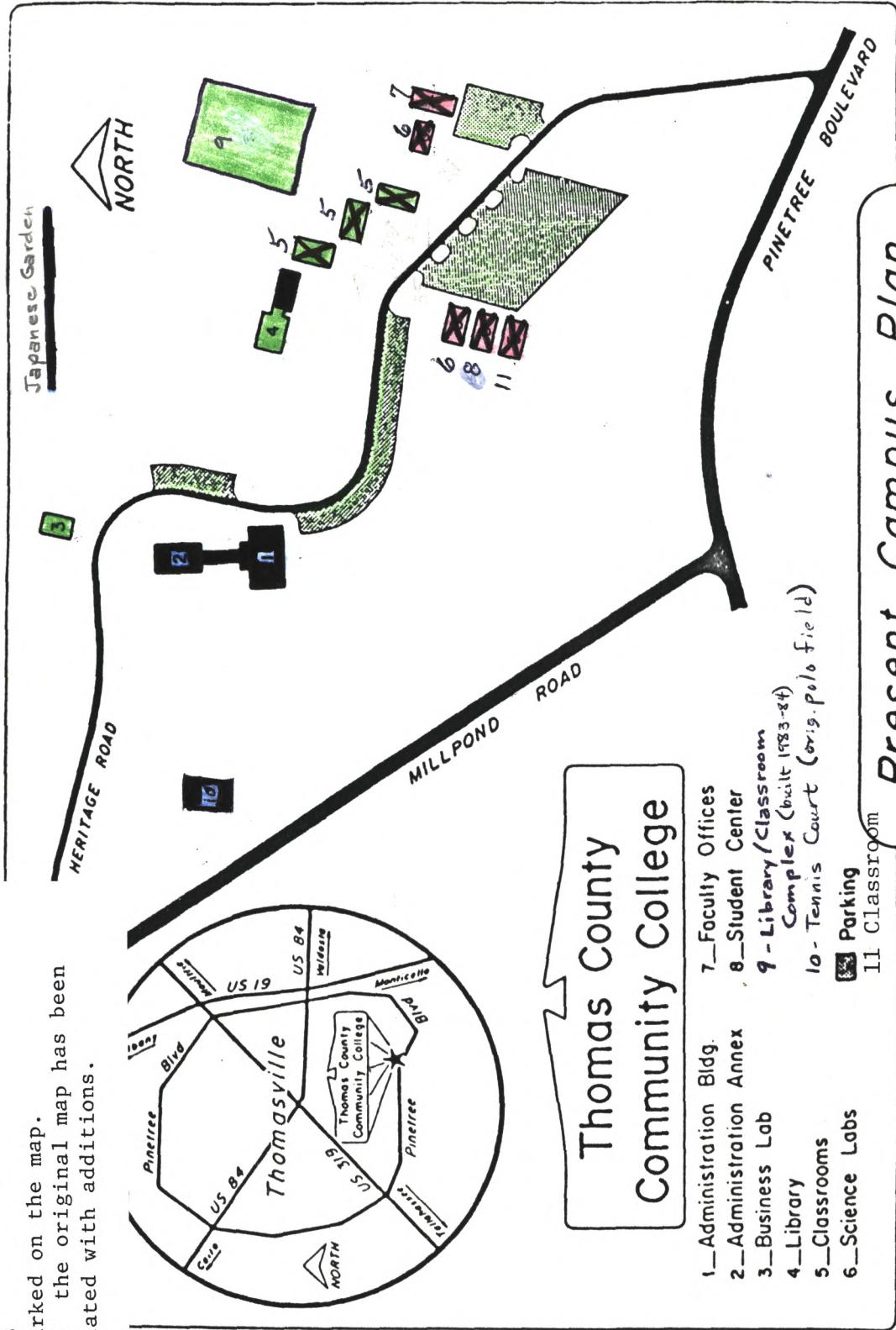
1235'

580'

Sketch Map

Birdwood
 Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia
 Scale: None
 Source: Thomas College
 Date: 1983
 Key: As marked on the map.

Note: the original map has been annotated with additions.



Map drawn by: Stephen Burke