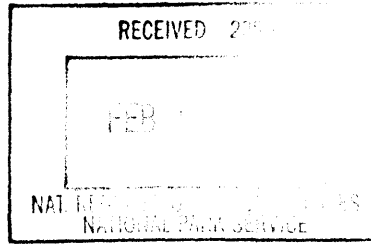


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



11212

1. Name of Property

historic name: Sillers, Walter, Sr., House  
other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: 307 Levee Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication  
city or town: Rosedale \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity  
state Mississippi code MS county Bolivar code 011 zip code 38769

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 forth 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.)

Kenneth H. P. Park FEB. 12, 1997  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
3/21/97

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Name of Property

Bolivar County, Mississippi  
County and State

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property: private

**Number of Resources within Property:**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Category of Property: building

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling  
DOMESTIC secondary structure.

Current Functions: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling  
DOMESTIC secondary structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:**

Queen Anne  
Colonial Revival

Other Description: N/A

**Materials**

foundation BRICK  
roof ASPHALT  
walls WOOD/ weatherboard  
other METAL/ cast iron

**Narrative Description**

See continuation sheets.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register Of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

Section number 7 Page 1

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

Located at the extreme western edge of the City of Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi, the Walter Sillers, Sr. House is an important landmark in this town of 2,595 citizens (1990 Census). The Sillers House stands in the shadow of the massive Mississippi River Levee located immediately to its west across Levee Street, a man-made topographic feature that forms a dominant edge in every Mississippi River-side city and town in the Delta region of Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana.

The Sillers House is located near the northwestern corner of the roughly-gridded street pattern within the pre-World War Two limits of Rosedale. The traditional commercial core of the city lies several blocks to the south, while its residential areas surround the Sillers House and stretch to the east and southeast. The Sillers House occupies a low rise within the flat terrain of the area, reported to be the highest ground in the city limits. The house was built facing west, approximately one hundred feet from Levee Street; originally occupying a full block site defined by Levee Street on the west, Scott Street on the south, Pearl Street on the east, and an alley and its extension as the property's existing northern boundary. The current property occupies an irregularly-shaped parcel of approximately three acres, comprising approximately two-thirds of the original block. The site for the house is densely landscaped with major trees, including magnolias, red oaks, pecans, cedars, and dogwoods.

The Walter Sillers, Sr. House is a two-story, six-bay, frame, front-gabled L-plan house with a three-story square tower at the front corner of the L, built in 1889 in the Queen Anne style. The origin of its design is not known, though its plan and detailing suggest derivation from period architectural stylebooks. In ca. 1910-11, the Sillers family modified the design of the building to "update" the design and livability of the house, making it an evolved structure that reflects important stages in the lives of the Sillers family.

The original 1889 plan of the house was L-shaped, with the short side of the L facing Levee Street. A two-story polygonal bay extends from the north facade on the longitudinal axis; a one-story, polygonal bay extends from the projecting western gable end on its latitudinal axis. A three-story tower containing the entrance to the house is located in the interior corner of the L-shaped plan. The tower is square in plan and is capped with a Mansard-type roof. A flat and hipped roof porch filled the remainder of the facade, supported by turned posts and detailed with scroll-sawn brackets and a geometrical Stick-style balustrade.

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Continuation Sheet**

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

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The original appearance of the house included a number of characteristic Queen Anne and Italianate details, many of which survive today. The complex hip and gable roof features bargeboard, bracketed box cornices with cornice returns, a frieze, and scroll-sawn and patterned gable drapery. The gable ends are covered with banded patterns of shingle work in square, scalloped and hexagonal shapes. Ceiling and floor lines are accentuated on the exterior with simple horizontal bands that separate large expanses of the varietal shiplap siding. The original 2/2 double hung sashes remain in place throughout most of the building. The tower also has a flared cornice and cast iron cresting on its roof, which also features a triangular *chien assis* attic ventilator on each plane.

The original floor plan for the house is a variation of the typical plan for a front gable, L-plan house, due in part to the treatment of the spaces in the tower element. The entrance for the house is located at the base of the tower and opens to a small foyer. The foyer opens directly east to a large parlor/stair hall, although the foyer was originally closed off from this room with doors that have since been removed. Immediately to the left (north) of the foyer is the original parlor, converted for use as a bedroom, probably in ca. 1910-11. The stair in the parlor/stair hall faces away from the front door and foyer and is detailed with a Queen Anne, square newel with corner turnings, a robust handrail and turned balusters. To the right (south) is a formal sitting room; to the left (north) lies the dining room with a polygonal bay window. Leading from the dining room to the east is a short hall with an original pantry to the north side.

The second floor of the Sillers House generally repeats the first floor plan. The stair leads to a square hall, from which doorways open to each of the four upstairs bedrooms. A nursery room in the tower is connected to the hall and the west bedroom. The east bedroom connects with two small rooms to its east, either original closets or a closet and bathroom. A small room on the east side, behind the stair to the attic, was perhaps originally a servant's room or a child's bedroom. The south bedroom has had a bathroom added in its northeast corner. A stair to the attic and the upper room of the tower is located in the southeast corner of the hall. All of the original door and window trim on the first and second floors is made up of bull's eye corner blocks and casings composed of a center bead flanked by cyma and cyma reversa profiles.

The original design of the house had significant modifications in one other historical period. In ca. 1910-11, a two-story, polygonal bay was added to the northern facade of the house at its western corner to provide two bathrooms, one on each floor, for the house. This addition is clad in radius-edged weatherboard and has 1/1 double hung sashes. The interior of this addition has Queen Anne trim around windows and doors, made up of a carved, star-burst corner block, and casings composed of a center double-bead flanked by cyma and cyma reversa profiles.

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## National Register Of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

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At that time the original porch was removed and replaced with a flat-roofed porch and *porte cochère* supported by fluted columns with Roman Corinthian capitals. The roof treatment of the front bay window was also altered at this time to match the lines and the detailing of the rooftop balustrade of the porch. Physical evidence is not clear as to whether the kitchen ell was original or added to the house at this time, either through new construction or by moving a formerly detached kitchen into this place. The kitchen ell is attached to the east wall of the house, originally separated by a now enclosed breezeway. A porch also ran along the south wall of the kitchen wall; it too, is now enclosed with window walls, and is used for a breakfast room and sun porch. Interior modifications included the replacement of all original mantels with Colonial Revival ones, and the replacement of the front door and some of the interior double doors or sliding doors with multi-light double doors.

The original full-block site of the Sillers house has had a number of subdivisions over time, leaving approximately three acres directly associated with the residence. A small one-story, frame, two-bay garage remains as the only outbuilding on the property. The garage was built in ca. 1910-11 and has a hip roof covered with asphalt shingles; its walls are clad with weatherboard siding. The bay doors for the garage are finished with bead boards over a cross-buck frame.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

**Areas of Significance**

- 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.

ARCHITECTURE  
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

**Period of Significance**

1889 to 1931

**Significant Dates**

1889, ca. 1910-11

**Criteria Considerations**

Property is: N/A

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

**Significant Persons**

Walter Sillers, Sr. (1852-1931)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Various, unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

See continuation sheets.

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

**Bibliography**

See continuation sheet.

**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:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register Of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

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### NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Walter Sillers, Sr. House is being nominated under criterion B for its association with the life of Walter Sillers, Sr., a prominent planter, levee advocate and figure in local and statewide politics in Mississippi. The property is also nominated under criterion C in the area of architecture as an important local example of the Queen Anne style, modified over time.

As a historic figure, Walter Sillers, Sr. (1852-1931) was significant in the economic, agricultural, and political culture of the Mississippi Delta for his contributions in the Mississippi Delta Region as a major planter; as an advocate for the establishment of crop control policies for the South through the development of planter's cooperatives; as an advocate for innovations in the location, design and construction of the levee system throughout the lower Mississippi River valley; and, as a key figure in the organization of the Mississippi Democratic Party on the local and state-wide levels.

As a historic building, the Walter Sillers, Sr. House is a significant local example of the Queen Anne style and stands today as one of the very few nineteenth century buildings in the City of Rosedale today. The scale and quality of detail evident in this property are reflective of Sillers' prominence in the Rosedale community. The house was built at the height of the Delta's prominence as an agricultural region, before the decline of cotton-based agriculture with the onset of the cotton boll weevil infestations of the twentieth century. The evolution of this structure during two periods of the early twentieth century coincide with important stages in the life of Sillers and his family, thus serving as a physical document of Sillers' career.

Following his education at the University of Mississippi, Walter Sillers, Sr. returned to Bolivar County and began a sixty year career practicing law in Bolivar County. His life-long interest in state and local politics began in 1876 when Sillers organized the first Democratic Club of Bolivar County in opposition to Reconstruction rule. Sillers rose to prominence in the state-wide organization of the Democratic Party, serving for many years on its State Executive Committee. In spite of his interest and influence in political circles, Sillers held elected office only once, as a state representative in 1886.

As a parallel to his law career, Sillers also managed to devote a great deal of his attention to his family's plantations in Bolivar County. As a boy of thirteen, Sillers was suddenly placed in the position of having to help his mother to rebuild their agricultural enterprise following the Civil War, Sillers' father having died while a prisoner of war at Vicksburg in the early months of 1865.

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Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

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Later, Sillers was an early champion of state-legislated crop control, as a means of increasing cotton prices by reducing its supply. He was also an early advocate for the organization of planters cooperatives and was a charter member of the Staple Cotton Cooperative Association of Greenwood, one of the first "co-ops" to be established in the region.

It may be argued that Sillers greatest contribution to Mississippi was through his interest in the development and maintenance of the region's protective levee system. Sillers' experience with levees began as a young man on the family's plantation at Lake Beulah, where he served as a levee guard and inspector during the spring flood seasons. For the rest of his life, Sillers studied the levees and the causes for their failures and advocated changes in the methods, materials and soil types used in their construction. Sillers, along with Leroy Percy and B. G. Humphreys, believed that flood control was an economic development issue; they were major advocates for obtaining Congressional approval for the separation of flood control from the provisions of the Rivers and Harbors Act.

Sillers also was responsible for advocating significant changes in flood control projects before the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, including the construction of cutoffs and the channeling around "bottle necks"; the creation of the Ashbrook impoundment area near Greenville; the reopening of the Brunswick gap as an outlet for the Coldwater, Sunflower and Yazoo rivers; and the construction of the Eudora Spillway through Cypress Creek, and the Atchafalaya and Red Rivers. In recognition of his interests and expertise, Sillers was appointed as the attorney for the Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners from 1896 to 1904. He was appointed to the Board by Governor Earl Brewer in 1915 and was elected its president. He was again appointed to the Board of Levee Commissioners during the administration of Governors Henry Whitfield and Dennis Murphree beginning in 1924, a position he held until his death in 1931.

Walter Sillers, Sr. built his large Rosedale house in 1889, at a time when his prominence in political and professional circles was already established. Sillers moved his home and his office to Rosedale from Beulah Lake in 1884, in the year following the death of his first wife, Ida Gayden, and the death of his infant son, Walter. Sillers remarried in April of 1887 to Florence Carson Warfield of Bolivar County. Construction of their new house began soon after the birth of their first son, Walter Sillers, Jr., in April of 1888. Five more children were born to the couple, of whom four grew to adulthood.

The scale and floor plan of the Sillers' house reflect the position of the family in the life of Bolivar County. The Sillers' house was one of the largest residences in Rosedale at the time of its construction, and its scale makes a clear statement of the family's importance in its



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## National Register Of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

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community. The selection of the Queen Anne style for the primary architectural design of the house was a distinctive and prominent break with the Greek Revival and Italianate traditions of the times in rural Mississippi. Furthermore, the Sillers' selection of a house plan featuring large, "public" rooms on the first floor suggests that the family expected their home to have a role as a place for gatherings and entertainment of guests.

According to family tradition, a major effort to update the appearance of the house was undertaken in ca. 1910-11, apparently at the time of or soon after the marriage of Walter Sillers, Jr. to Lena Roberts in November of 1911. The newlywed couple took up residence in the home of the elder Sillers; it was at this time that the front parlor was converted for use as their bedroom, and the polygonal bay containing a new bathroom core was added to the north side of the house to serve the former parlor and the master bedroom above it. Also, the original Queen Anne front porch was demolished and replaced with the existing Classical Revival porch and *porte cochère*, and modifications were made to the front bay window to give it a roof line balustrade matching that of the front porch. The appearance of the interior of the house suggests that most, if not all of the fireplace mantels were replaced with Colonial Revival mantels.

The construction activities carried out in ca. 1910-11 can be said to have occurred at the time when Walter Sillers, Sr. had arrived at the pinnacle of his prominence in statewide political circles, as well as at the point when his son, Walter, Jr., was just beginning his rise to power and influence on the statewide level. The younger Sillers was to be elected to his first term in the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1916, which would prove to be the first year in a career of a half century of service in the state legislature. Walter Sillers, Jr. and his wife, Lena Roberts, continued to live in the elder Sillers home until 1930. At this time, Walter Sillers, Jr. and his wife moved into their own new home in Rosedale, located at the southwestern corner of Scott and Levee streets, within sight of his boyhood home. Though the home of Walter Sillers, Sr. is also closely associated with the life and career with Walter Sillers, Jr., this property is not being nominated for its association with the younger man. The home occupied by Walter Sillers, Jr. after 1930 is the more appropriate property to represent his significance to state history. Walter Sillers, Sr. died on January 3 in 1931, ending his long and distinguished career in service to the interests of the Delta Region and Bolivar County in particular. The home was inherited by one of his daughters, Evelyn, and is now occupied by the family of Sillers' grandson, John L. Pearson.

The Walter Sillers, Sr. House stands as an important reminder of the contributions made to the Delta Region and the State of Mississippi by the elder Sillers during his long and noteworthy career. The house also stands as a significant architectural landmark, in the original sense of the term, in defining one of the architectural characteristics of Rosedale and as a centerpiece for community interaction.

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## National Register Of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

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### GEOGRAPHIC DATA

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property in nomination is an irregularly-shaped parcel located on Block 23 and labeled as parcel 83.02 on the attached portion of the Property Tax Map 132J for Bolivar County, Mississippi, as delineated in a heavy dashed line.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The property in nomination contains all of the original land still associated by ownership with the Walter Sillers, Sr. House, and is the one property remaining in Bolivar County, Mississippi that best represents the life and work of Walter Sillers, Sr.

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Name of Property

Bolivar County, Mississippi  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property: approximately 3 acres

USGS Quad Map Name: Rosedale

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	682185	3748125	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description:** See continuation sheet.

**Boundary Justification:** See continuation sheet.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title: John Linn Hopkins & Marsha R. Oates  
organization: Hopkins & Associates date: November 1, 1996  
street & number: 974 Philadelphia Street telephone: (901) 278-5186  
city or town: Memphis state: TN zip code: 38104

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**Property Owner**

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name: John L. Pearson  
street & number: 307 Levee Street telephone: (601)759-3732  
city or town: Rosedale state: MS zip code: 38769

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## National Register Of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

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### MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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Pearson, Mr. and Mrs. John L. Interview. October 1996.

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Sillers, Florence Warfield, compiler. *History of Bolivar County, Mississippi*. Jackson, MS: Hederman Brothers, 1948.

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**National Register Of Historic Places  
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Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

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Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
307 Levee Street

Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

Date: October 21, 1996

Photographer: John Linn Hopkins, Hopkins & Associates

Negatives: Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Photo 1 of 15 View of the front (west) facade, facing generally northeast.

Photo 2 of 15 View of the front (west) facade, facing generally southeast.

Photo 3 of 15 View of the side (north) facade, facing generally southeast. The polygonal bay at left is part of the original 1889 construction; the bay at right is an addition from ca. 1910-11.

Photo 4 of 15 View of the rear (east) facade and kitchen wing, facing generally southwest.

Photo 5 of 15 View of the side (south) facade and kitchen wing, facing generally northwest.

Photo 6 of 15 View from the living room looking to the foyer and front doorway.

Photo 7 of 15 View from the living room looking through the rear door to the former rear porch, now a breakfast room.

Photo 8 of 15 View of the original front parlor, converted to a bedroom in ca. 1910-11.

Photo 9 of 15 Detail of the trim installed in the polygonal bay added in ca. 1910-11.

Photo 10 of 15 View from the living room to the dining room.

Photo 11 of 15 View from the living room to the sitting room.

Photo 12 of 15 View of the stair leading up from the living room.

Photo 13 of 15 View of the south bedroom on the second floor.

Photo of 14 of 15 View of the west (master) bedroom on the second floor.

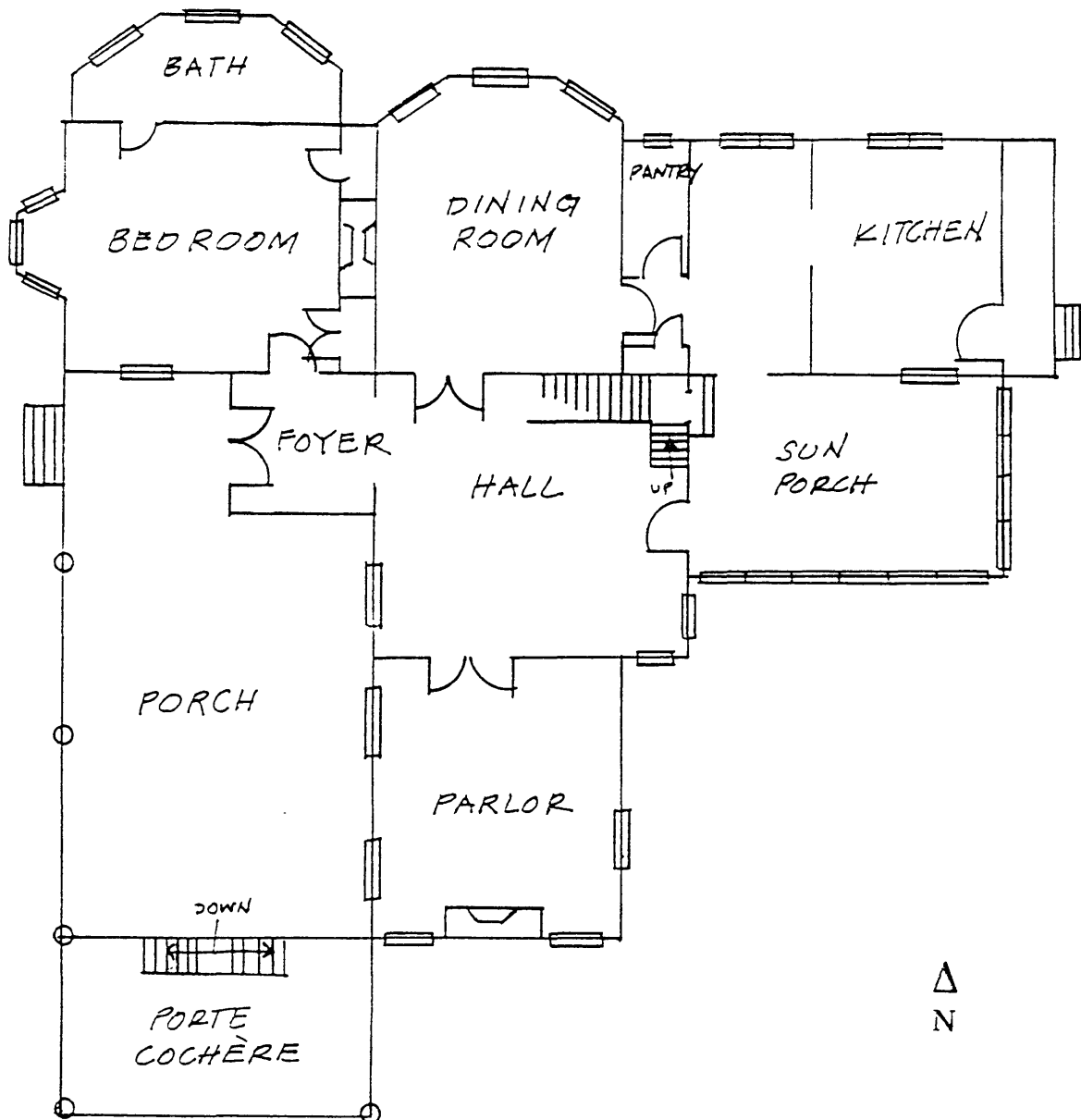
Photo 15 of 15 View of the garage associated with the property.

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National Park Service

# National Register Of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Walter Sillers, Sr. House  
Rosedale, Bolivar County, Mississippi

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