

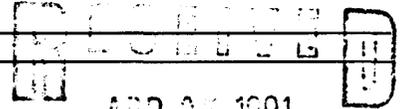
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name WILLCOXON-ARNOLD HOUSE
other names/site number HILLCREST CHAPEL



2. Location

street & number One Bullsboro Dr. (GA 34)
city, town Newnan
county Coweta code GA 077
state Georgia code GA zip code 30263

(N/A) vicinity of

(N/A) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property:

| | <u>Contributing</u> | <u>Noncontributing</u> |
|------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| buildings | 3 | 2 |
| sites | 0 | 0 |
| structures | 0 | 0 |
| objects | 0 | 0 |
| total | 3 | 2 |

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Signature of certifying official

4/1/91
Date

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

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Patrick Adams _____ 5/20/91

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

for _____
Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

Current Functions:

FUNERARY/mortuary

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

GREEK REVIVAL

Materials:

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| foundation | brick |
| walls | brick |
| roof | asphalt shingles |
| other | N/A |

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Willcoxon-Arnold House is located on the east side of Newnan, the county seat of Coweta County, on land which was originally a plantation/farm or rural area. It is adjacent to a railroad track, a major historic highway, and a residential area. The house is in the Greek Revival style, two stories high, and its plan is four-over-four with a central hall. It has full-width, two-story porticos with Doric fluted columns on the front and rear. The house is built of brick with columns and decorative trim of wood. It has a hipped roof. There is an open stairway to the attic. There are double ornate brackets under the eaves; original two-piece louvered blinds on the windows; the balcony on the west side has turned balusters, and on the east side, the balcony rail is supported by ornamental circles with slender posts.

On the interior there are plastered walls, double-paneled doors (except for later pocket doors in the parlor to the left of the entrance), simple wood millwork, plaster ceilings, and original door hardware (white porcelain knobs and key hole covers). The foundation is primarily masonry, solid brick walls extending from ground level.

The grounds around the house are spacious. The lawn contains specimen magnolias, dogwoods, and a few small boxwood plantings, and there is a recently-added formal garden area on the east side with a circular drive. There are large oaks on the edges of the property.

There are four actual outbuildings. Not included in that number is the former brick kitchen which is now attached by an infill addition to the main house. Of the four outbuildings, the two historic ones are the wooden storage barn with separate shed rooms attached on each side and the wooden smokehouse/storage house. The two non-historic

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outbuildings include the garage/sleeping quarters added after 1950 to house the personnel and vehicles associated with the funeral business and the greenhouse.

There is some archaeological potential on the seven-acre property because the locations of previous outbuildings, such as the carriage house and stable, are known from old photographs. Also, the locations of three small structures and a well are indicated on the 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of this property.

The surroundings include GA Highway 34 on the north; on the west, the former Atlanta and West Point Railroad, now CSX Railroad; and on the east and south a residential area which was developed by 1927 according to the Sanborn map.

Changes to the property date from two periods. The first, around 1900, occurred when the property changed hands in the midst of the popular Neoclassical Revival era, during which time the main stairway was changed along with some other interior features. The other major changes took place after 1950, when the property was converted to a funeral home. These latter changes included the removal of a common wall between two rooms on the first floor in order to create a chapel or meeting room and the rearrangement of the stairway landing when the adjoining doorway was widened for double doors. The second floor rooms remain virtually unchanged.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
INDUSTRY

Period of Significance:

c. 1852-1896

Significant Dates:

1852

Significant Person(s):

WILLCOXON, JOHN B.

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

unknown

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

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Willcoxon-Arnold House is significant in architecture because it is a fine example of the use of the Greek Revival style toward the end of the original revival period, late 1840s-early 1850s. The house has two full-columned Doric colonnades, a rare feature in a Georgia house, but no doubt an adaptation to its location, being seen from two sides along a major road. Being built of brick was also an unusual feature in the area and makes it one of the finest antebellum houses built in and around Newnan, and the only remaining brick one. It is also significant in industry because of the role played by the original, long-term, owner, John B. Willcoxon, in Newnan. He built a cotton yarn factory in 1866-1867, shortly after the end of the Civil War. It became a major industry in Newnan's recovery from the war. He owned the factory, with partners, for twenty years.

National Register Criteria

The Willcoxon-Arnold House meets National Register Criterion B, "associated with the lives of persons significant in our past," because of the role of John B. Willcoxon, the owner of the property from 1852 to 1896. During twenty years of his near half-century of ownership of this house, Mr. Willcoxon was the owner/manager of one of the largest industries in Newnan and thus was a major factor in the post-Civil War recovery of the town. His factory, which produced yarn, and later carpet thread and other similar products, employed many local workers and they in turn supported other local businesses.

The property also meets National Register Criterion C because it is a fine example of the Greek Revival style of architecture. The elements of the style which are so readily apparent in this building include the Doric, fluted columns on two facades, the four over four, central hall symmetrical plan, all reflecting the order and form of ancient Greece and the ideals of American Democracy based on the ancients' principles. The house also commands a magnificent setting, having two facades which face an historic, major thoroughfare leading out of the county-seat town of Newnan toward Fayetteville, another county-seat town. The road pre-dates the house.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification, if applicable)

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The period of significance runs for the duration of the ownership of this property by John B. Willcoxon who purchased it in 1852 and died in 1896 in ownership.

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

The Willcoxon-Arnold House, one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the area, is also a house whose owners for over fifty years, the Willcoxon family, were very prominent and heavily involved in the industrial, commercial, social, and political history of Newnan.

In order to understand the history of this house, it is necessary to take a look at the chain of title, or land-ownership history, of the land.

Coweta County was opened for settlement by the 1827 Land Lottery. The land lot --a full 202 1/2 acre lot upon which this house sits--was won in the lottery. It eventually was purchased in 1834 from the estate of William Salisbury by Bennett H. Conyers of Coweta County.

Bennett Hill Conyers (1800-1865), a North Carolina native, grew up in Greene County, Georgia, before coming to Coweta County at about the same time it was opened for settlement. During the same decades (the 1830s and 1840s) he was acquiring this and other property in Coweta County, he also began to purchase land along the Etowah River in Cass (later named Bartow) County, in northwest Georgia. In 1847, in Coweta, he was one of the incorporators of the Atlanta and West Point Railroad, which runs through this property. Shortly after this time, he moved his family to Cass County and remained there the rest of his life, dying at the end of the Civil War in 1865. His descendants remained active citizens of Bartow County.

Whether or not Bennett H. Conyers built this house is still in question, since he owned the entire plantation/estate for almost two decades before selling it in 1851, and could well have built the house during this period. However, no physical details in this home indicate a construction date earlier than c. 1851-1852, based on comparisons with other Coweta County structures of this and earlier dates. Other details, including the paired Italianate brackets under the eaves, suggest an 1850s construction date.

The land lot on which the house sits, included within a 1,096 surrounding acre tract, was purchased by Rev. John Q. West (1800-1863) of Wilkes County (Mr. Willcoxon's father-in-law) from Conyers for \$13,152.00 in 1851.

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All the land purchased by West was sold on April 28, 1852, to John B. Willcoxon. This transaction included land lots (at 202 and one half acres each) numbered 41, 42, 43, 46, 47, 40 in the 5th Land District, a total of 1096 1/4 acres. He sold the property to Willcoxon "for love and affection to my son-in-law and [for] \$6576.00..." This purchase price was exactly one half of the price West had paid in 1851.

Prior to the construction of the Atlanta and West Point Railroad to Newnan in September, 1851 (which passes through the Willcoxon property), there were no homes in Coweta County of this size and of brick construction. In the mid-1850s, a near replica of this home was constructed nearby on the railroad, by Dr. A. B. Calhoun, also from Wilkes County, on land on which he had lived in a simpler structure for some years. The Calhoun House was demolished in 1955.

There are a few later deeds as Mr. Willcoxon trimmed down the amount of the land associated with the house by selling sections to various family members. These are:

John B. (his son) to J. W. Willcoxon - April 16, 1879 - LL 41, 42, 43, 56, 57 - 5th Land District - 557 1/8 acres - (\$5700.00)
J. W. Willcoxon to John B. Willcoxon - Nov. 3, 1887 - LL 41, 42, 43 - 5th Land District - 250 acres - (\$3000.00)
John B. Willcoxon to Thomas W. Powell - Dec. 23, 1886 - LL 41; 56, 57 - 5th Land District - 303 1/8 acres

Despite these sales of the land to his children and others, the core of the property remained in his ownership until, in ill health, he sold to his wife, Harriet, on Feb 10, 1896, the core of the property: part of land lots 40 and 41 in the 5th Land District, 152 1/2 acres. This put the house and then-surrounding land in her hands prior to his death and thus outside of his estate. When he died on or about March 27th, 1896, his funeral cortege left from this house.

John B. Willcoxon (1823-1896), who was to become one of Coweta's most successful businessmen, came to Newnan from his father's farm in the county in 1843 to practice law. Willcoxon, a Georgia native, had moved to the fledgling county around 1830 with his parents and grandparents. A single attorney in 1850, he married shortly thereafter.

Whether the house had already been built by 1850-1851 and was for some legal or financial reason still in his absentee-owner father-in-law's name is not known. More than likely, whether the land was technically owned by his father-in-law and waiting for Willcoxon to

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pay him off in an unrecorded mortgage or what, it is presumed or probable that the house was built c. 1852 by John B. Willcoxon.

In 1857, Willcoxon's first wife, the former Mary West (1830-1857), died. The following year he was elected state senator, serving only for 1858.

Willcoxon served with distinction through the Civil War, heading a company of cavalry from Coweta. Both before and after the war he managed a large plantation from this property, even though it eventually was included within the city limits of Newnan.

In 1867, with Captain Harrison Sargent and his brother, George Sargent, Colonel Willcoxon built a "...factory of stone and brick, four stories high 50 x 80 feet, with fireproof picker room separate, on Wahoo Creek, for \$60,000.00. One overshot wheel thirty-three feet in diameter developing fifty horsepower furnished the power for the operation of twenty-one hundred and fifty two spindles for spinning and 352 for twisting. With 50 operatives turning out 200 bunches of cotton yarn a day."

The factory was extraordinarily successful, winning premiums on its yarns in 1871 at the Cincinnati Exposition. In 1877, the Willcoxon Manufacturing Company added the making of carpet warp, bagging twine, knitting and sewing threads to their products. In 1888, the factory was sold and became the Wahoo Manufacturing Company. Later it became the Arnall Mills, and is still in operation today as a division of the Bibb Manufacturing Company.

Willcoxon married again in 1861, to Harriet Cleveland, born in 1831, who was also from Wilkes County, a daughter of Aaron A. Cleveland, whose home still survives in Washington, Georgia. Harriet was an active citizen and a proper match for her influential husband. In 1868, she organized the local Ladies' Memorial Association for the purpose of perpetuating the memory of the men who died defending the honor of the South during the War Between the States (Civil War). She served as president of this active organization for many years and began the fund drive in 1879 to build a monument to the Confederate dead of the county.

This monument, originally placed at the intersection of Jefferson and Washington Streets, now stands on the east side of the courthouse. The inscription reads, "It is not in mortals to command success, but they did more deserve it."

Colonel Willcoxon, who served as a member of the House of Representatives from 1875-1876 and was described in 1895 as "one of

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Coweta County's best and wealthiest citizens", died in 1896. After Mrs. Harriet Willcoxon's death or removal from the property, it was occupied by several different families/concerns until her children/step-children sold it to the Arnold family.

The house and remaining acreage was purchased in 1913 by the children of Samuel James Arnold (1841-1908) and Monterrey Houston Arnold. During the time the house was owned by the Arnold children it was known as Shadow Lawn, as it appeared in the 1928 history of Coweta County. The Arnold children owned the house for nearly 40 years, just a few years less than Mr. Willcoxon himself, hence their name is attached to the house.

During the Arnold ownership, the house was the residence of four unmarried sisters, most of whom were school teachers. The eldest, Mell (1869-1954), ran the household. The others were Maude (1870-1929), Bessie (1874-1955), and Ethel (1881-1937). The youngest sister, Fannie Lou (1884-1971), was married in the house in 1921 to Sam L. Cook.

The home and seven remaining acres were sold by the two surviving unmarried sisters, Mell and Bessie, to Daniel B. Blalock, Sr. (1887-1979) in 1950. A funeral home was opened in the house in 1953. The Blalock family continues to own the property, now known as Hillcrest Chapel.

POINT OF INFORMATION:

The recent History of Coweta County, Georgia (1988) names William Yarbrough as the architect/builder of this house due to stylistic similarities to other houses in Coweta and Meriwether Counties as well as some hearsay information from the Yarbrough family. This nomination makes no such claim, since no proof has yet surfaced and the biographical facts of his life do not confirm that he was in Coweta County c. 1850-1952.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Shapiro, Georgia. "Willcoxon-Arnold Home." Historic Property Information Form, January ?, 1988. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia along with additional/supplemental research submitted December 20, 1988.

Memoirs of Georgia... Vol. I (Atlanta: The Southern Historical Assoc., 1895), p. 560, biographical sketch of John B. Wilcoxon (sic).

Cunyus, Lucy J. The History of Bartow County formerly Cass (1933) for sketch of Bennett H. Conyers on pages 52-53.

[Obituary of John B. Willcoxon], The Herald and Advertiser (Newnan, Georgia), March 27, 1896, p. 3, column 5; and April 24, 1896, p. 3, column 1.

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

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. seven acres.

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 705300 Northing 3695620

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of the entire city block upon which the property rests. It is marked on the enclosed tax map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is all that remains associated with the house and all the owner owns at this location.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian.
organization Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone 404-656-2840 **date** March 29, 1991

(HPS form version 3-30-90)

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Photographs

Name of Property: WILLCOXON-ARNOLD HOUSE
City or Vicinity: Newnan
County: Coweta
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: June/July 1990

Description of Photograph(s):

1 of 15: West Facade with original detached kitchen to the right; photographer facing southeast.

2 of 15: West Facade showing balcony, and entrance doorways; photographer facing east.

3 of 15: South end, reflecting west facade on the left, original detached kitchen in foreground; photographer facing north.

4 of 15: East Facade, with original kitchen on the left; photographer facing west.

5 of 15: First floor, as entered from the west facade, parlor doors and main stairway (blocked off); photographer facing northeast.

6 of 15: First floor, parlor, on left of west facade entrance; photographer facing north.

7 of 15: First floor, stateroom no. 2 behind parlor on left; photographer facing northeast.

8 of 15: First floor, stairway temporarily blocked off, doorway at edge of photograph leads to room shown in no. 7; photographer facing northwest.

9 of 15: Second floor landing, with doors leading to west facade balcony; photographer facing northwest.

10 of 15: Second floor, selection room no. 1 above the parlor; photographer facing north.

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Photographs

11 of 15: Second floor, selection room no. 2; photographer facing northeast.

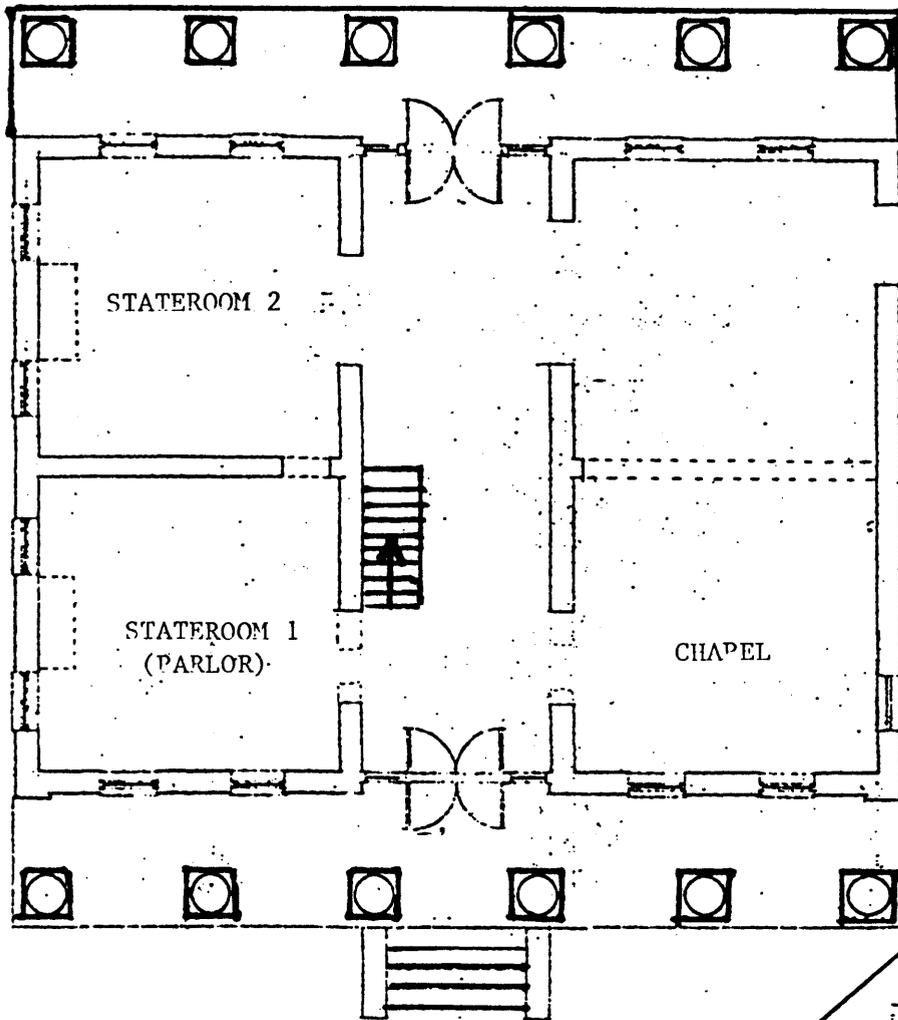
12 of 15: Second floor, selection room no. 3; photographer facing southwest.

13 of 15: Second floor, selection room no. 3, on plan; photographer facing west.

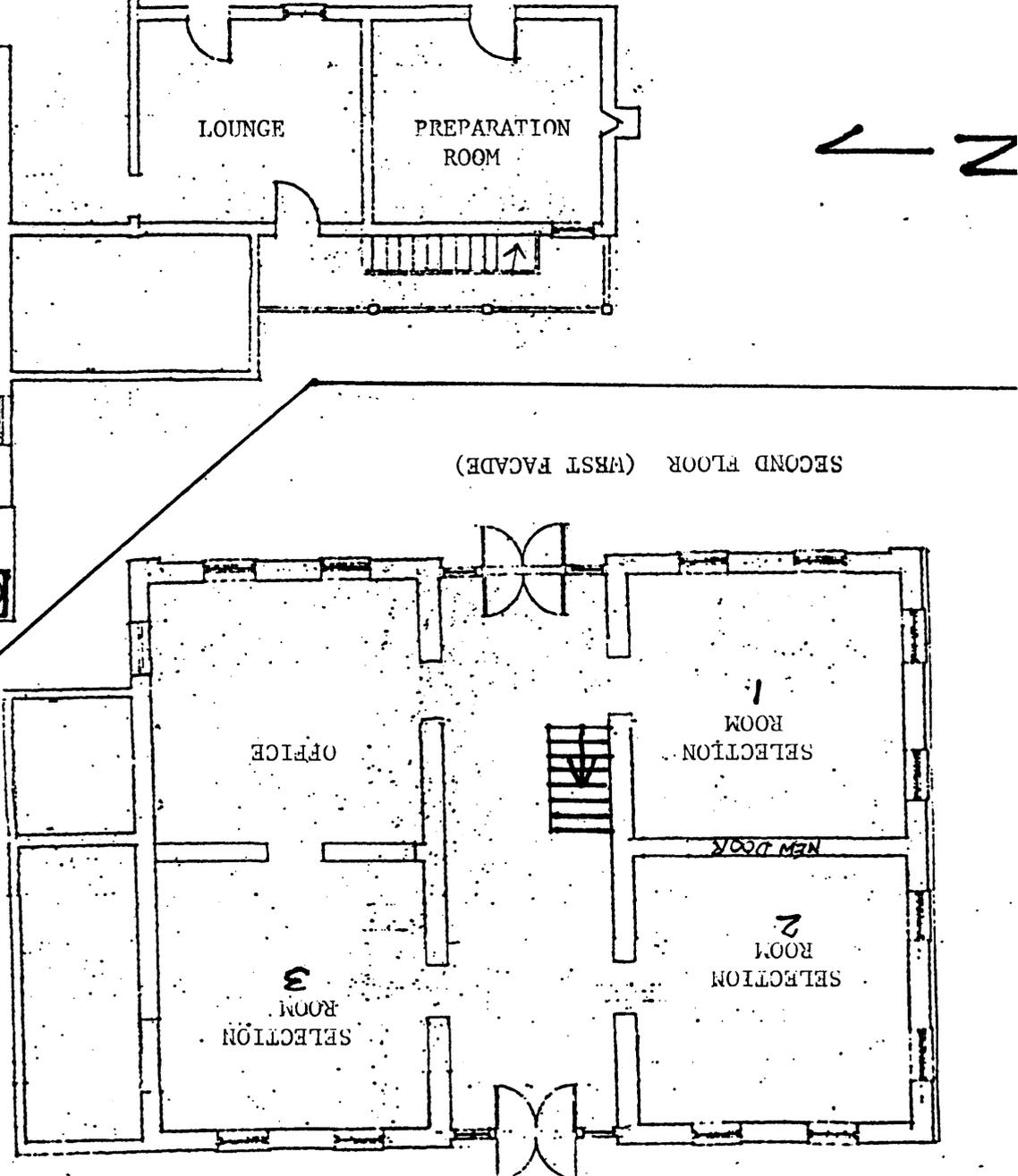
14 of 15: Outbuildings, barn on left, smokehouse on right; photographer facing east.

15 of 15: Outbuildings, garage/sleeping quarters; photographer facing northeast.

Floor Plans
Willcoxon-Arnold House
Newnan, Coweta County, Georgia
Scale: Not to scale
Source: unknown
Date: c. 1988
Key: Room was labelled on the plan.



FIRST FLOOR
(WEST FACADE)



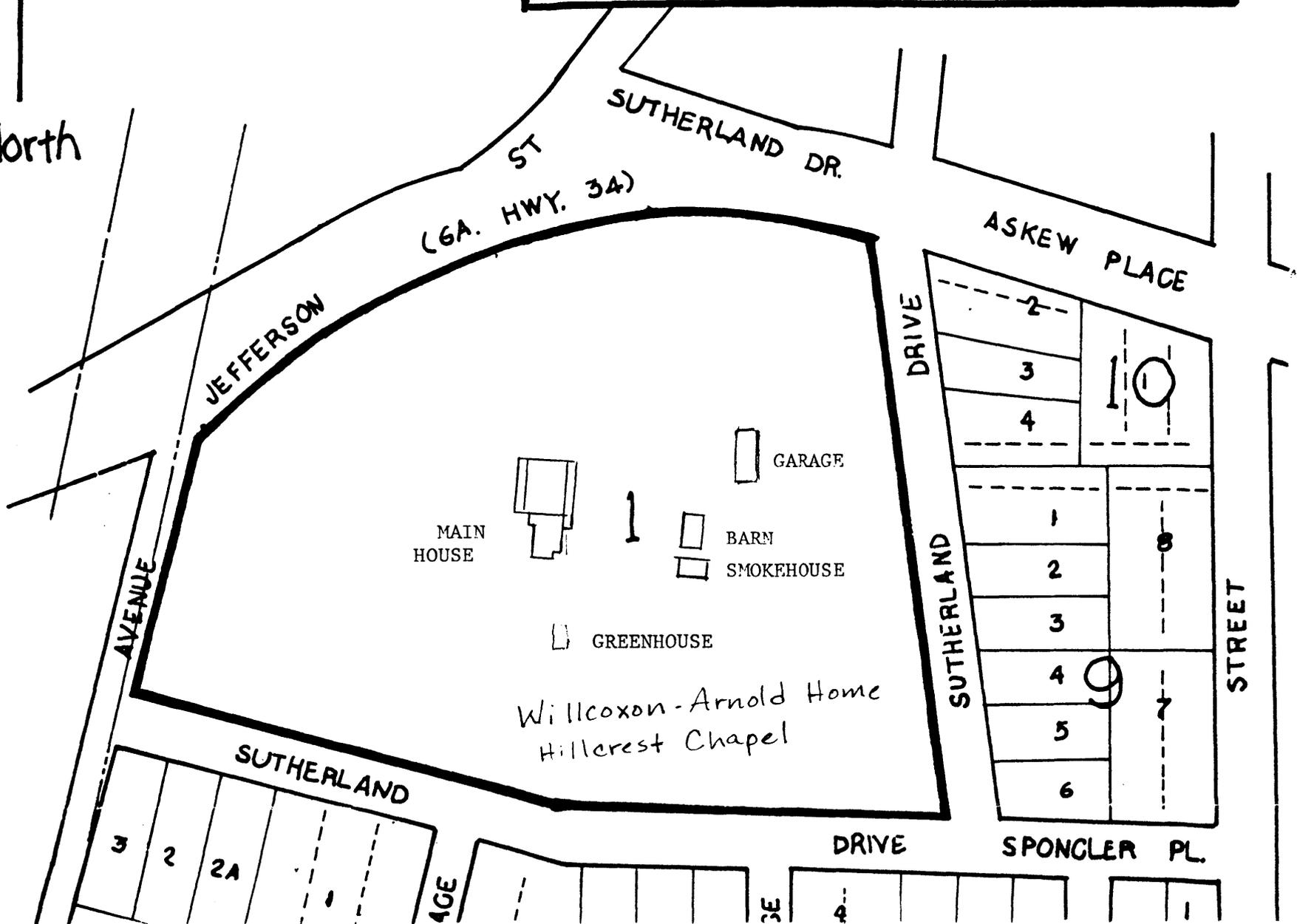
SECOND FLOOR (WEST FACADE)

↖

Sketch Map/Tax Map
 Willcoxon-Arnold House
 Newnan, Coweta County, Georgia
 Scale: 1" = 135'
 Source: Coweta County Tax Assessors Office
 Date: 1988
 Key: The nominated property is block 1 and is marked by a heavy black line. Other features are marked directly on the map.



North



AVENUE

JEFFERSON

(GA. HWY. 34)

SUTHERLAND DR.

ASKEW PLACE

DRIVE

SUTHERLAND

STREET

MAIN HOUSE

GARAGE

BARN

SMOKEHOUSE

GREENHOUSE

Willcoxon-Arnold Home
 Hillcrest Chapel

SUTHERLAND

DRIVE

SPONCLER PL.

3

2

2A

AGE

3E

4

6

1