

## **Learning to Appreciate Architecture and the Need for Preservation through the Gorgas House**

**Lesson Plan Grade Levels:** Adaptable for grades 10-12

### **Introduction:**

The chances that students have heard the Gorgas name are high. However, they may not realize the connections to certain buildings on The University of Alabama Campus. This lesson will help the students visually explore, analyze, and appreciate the Gorgas House, its architecture, and the need for historic preservation.

In 1879, University President Josiah Gorgas resigned his post and moved into a new position and into what would become known as the Gorgas House on the University Campus. Before the house became known as the Gorgas House it served as a dining hall, hotel, and faculty housing. The house has served in many roles and remains an important architectural structure on the University of Alabama Campus.

This lesson plan will take a look at the house and its' many roles and explore why historic preservation is important. The lesson plan is not abundant in worksheets. The goal is to allow students to use their H.O.T. (higher order thinking) skills and discover not only the answers to the fundamental questions but discover more on their own.

### **Guiding Questions:**

What is the architectural style of the Gorgas House?

Who was William Nichols?

What roles have the Gorgas House played?

How has the house been structurally modified for those roles?

Why is historic preservation important?

What are the Alabama Codes and under which code would preservation of this house fall?

### **Learning Objectives:**

Students will learn about the styles of architecture, particular the Federal style.

Students will become aware of architecture as both an indicator of time period and culture.

Students will learn that styles are an expression of the taste, creativity and values of a society in a particular period of time.

Students will learn about the architect William Nichols and his influence on The University of Alabama.

Students will gain an understanding regarding the importance of the Gorgas House to The University of Alabama.

Students will make connections to the architecture and buildings of their community.

Students will gain an understanding of the governmental role in historic preservation.

Students will participate and work as a team.

### **Alabama Course of Study Objectives:**

[U.S. History Objective 11.\)](#) Contrast congressional and presidential reconstruction plans, including African-American political participation.

- Tracing economic changes in the post-Civil War period for whites and African Americans in the North and the South, including the effectiveness of the Freedmen's Bureau
- Describing the social restructuring of the South
- Describing the Compromise of 1877
- Identifying post-Civil War Constitutional amendments
- Discussing causes for the impeachment of Andrew Johnson

[U.S. Government Objective 4.\)](#) Describe specific functions, organization, and purposes of state and local governments.

Examples: functions-providing educational funding, ensuring personal security, regulating transportation

- Analyzing the 1901 Constitution of Alabama to determine its impact on local funding and campaign reform
- Describing the influence of special interest groups on state government

### **Background or Useful Links:**

Architectural Styles: <http://architecturestyles.org/>

The Gorgas House: <http://gorgashouse.ua.edu/>

Tuscaloosa Living – Gorgas Upgrade

<http://www2.alabamas13.com/lifestyles/2012/feb/11/gorgas-upgrade-24152-vi-120878/>

Code of Alabama: <http://www.legislature.state.al.us/codeofAlabama/1975/41-9-220.htm>

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: <http://www.achp.gov/index.html>

National Trust for Historic Preservation: <http://www.preservationnation.org/>

National Historic Preservation Act: <http://www.nps.gov/archeology/tools/Laws/nhpa.htm>

Gorgas-Manly Historic District: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorgas-Manly\\_Historic\\_District](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorgas-Manly_Historic_District)

The Historical Marker Database: <http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=29301>

William Nichols: <http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000026>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Nichols\\_\(architect\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Nichols_(architect))

Library of Congress collections: <http://www.loc.gov/search/?q=Gorgas+House>

Note: Many resources may be found by searching The University of Alabama [library](#) records and databases.

### **Lesson Preparation Instructions:**

The teacher should become familiar with the Federal style of architecture, architect William Nichols, the history of the [Gorgas House](#) and the efforts to continue historic preservation.

The teacher should make the appropriate number of copies of the attached documents that would allow the students to be grouped by fours. The teacher should also reserve the computer lab for the proper time to complete the lesson.

### **Lesson Activities:**

Pre-Activity – Watch the [NBC 13 video](#) for the background on the Gorgas House.

- Complete a 3-2-1 activity sheet from the video.

Activity 1 – Look and Think – What architectural style is the Gorgas House? (*Federal*)

- Download for examination the pictures of the Gorgas House from the [Library of Congress](#) or the [Hoole Special Collection Library](#).
- Complete the Historical Architectural Design Worksheet.

Activity 2 – Who was William Nichols? Why was he important to Alabama? Why is he a noted architect?

- Allow students to use the links to answer this question.

Activity 3 – What was the roles played by the Gorgas House and how has it changed over the years?

- Examine the architectural plans (enclosed) and have an open discussion regarding what can be learned from them.

Activity 4 – Why is historic preservation important? What roles do state or local governments play in historic preservation?

- Students will perform their own research in order to answer these questions.
- The idea behind this activity is that students perform the research to become knowledgeable on the subject in order to hold an open class discussion and make the connections to preservation and the culture and history that result from preservation.

### **Extending the lesson:**

Gorgas, A. G. (1978). *Amelia Gayle Gorgas: A biography*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama.

Oliver-Miles, Z. (2005). *Amelia Gayle Gorgas: First woman of position*. Birmingham, AL: Seacoast Publishing.

Peatross, C. F. & Mellow, R. O. (1979) *William Nichols, architect*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama.

The University of Alabama (1980). *Gorgas House: on the campus of The University of Alabama*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama.

Tyler, N., Ligibel, T., & Tyler, I. R. (2009). *Historic preservation, an introduction to its history, principles, and practice*. (2nd ed. ed.). New York City, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Wiggins, S.W. (2005). *Love and Duty Amelia and Josiah Gorgas*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

**Time Required:** 2-3 90+ minute classes or 3-4 45+ minute classes.

**Subject Areas:** U.S. History, Architecture, State and Local Government

### **Skills:**

- Critical thinking
- Critical analysis
- Collaboration
- Discussion
- Historical and visual analysis
- Synthesis
- Using primary sources

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## **3-2-1**

Purposes: (1) self-monitor comprehension, (2) identify important details in the content, (3) make connections to content, and (4) identify areas in the content where understanding is uncertain.

Procedure:

1. After reading a portion of text, viewing a portion of a video, or listening to a portion of a lecture: students working alone, with a partner, or in small groups fill out a 3-2-1 chart.
  - 3 Important Details
  - 2 Connections
  - 1 Question I Still Have
2. Students repeat the procedure until the entire content has been completed.
3. Students can use the important details from their 3-2-1 charts to summarize the entire lesson.

## Historical Architectural Design Worksheet

After examining the pictures of the Gorgas House and reviewing the different architectural styles, answer each of the following questions regarding the style of the house.

Architectural Style: \_\_\_\_\_

1.) Historical Background:

Fact #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Fact #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Fact #3 \_\_\_\_\_

2.) Architectural Features:

Fact #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Fact #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Fact #3 \_\_\_\_\_

3.) Architectural Design Elements that were identified/described:

Roof: \_\_\_\_\_

Walls/Siding: \_\_\_\_\_

Door: \_\_\_\_\_

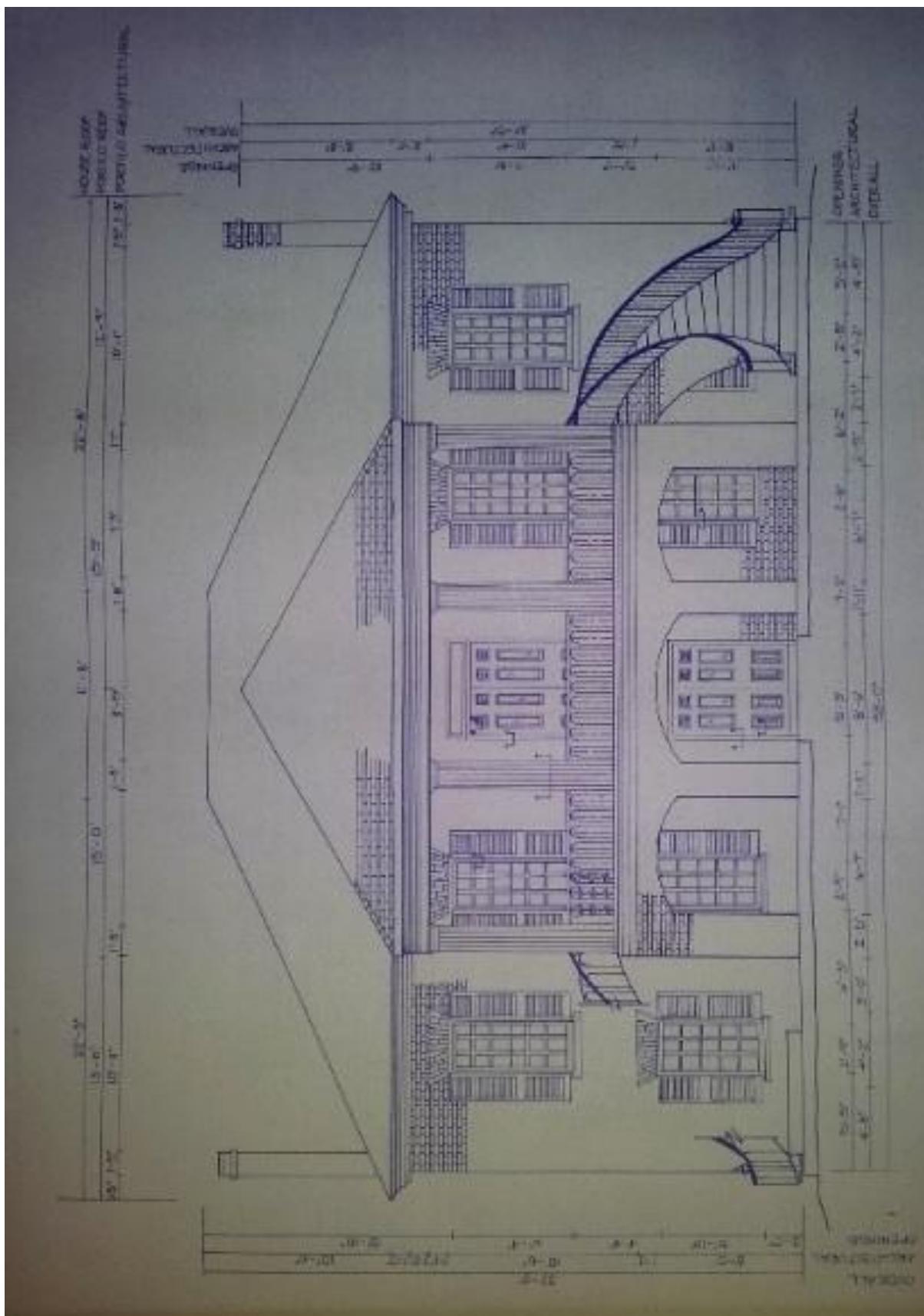
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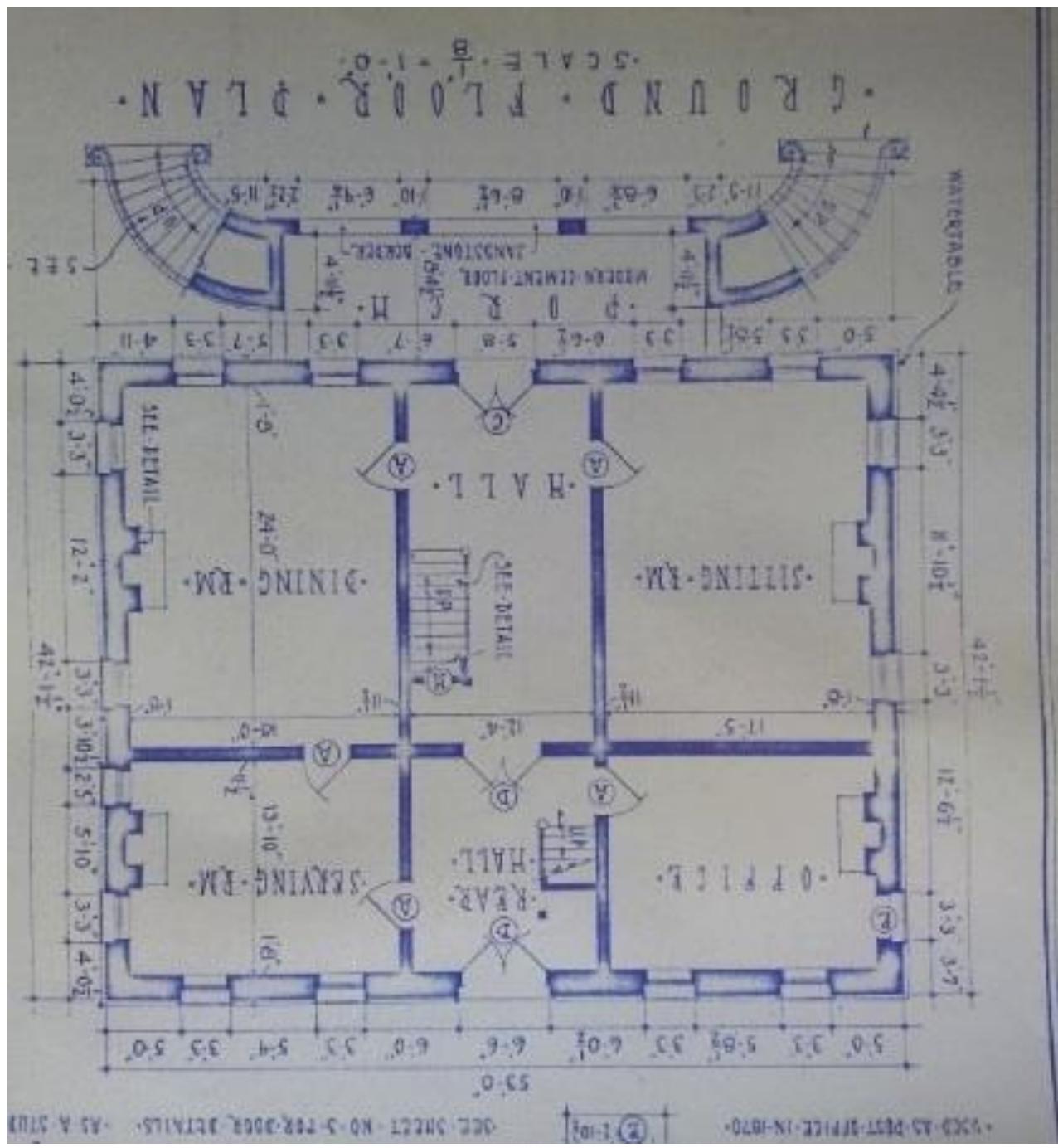
Porch: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Details: \_\_\_\_\_

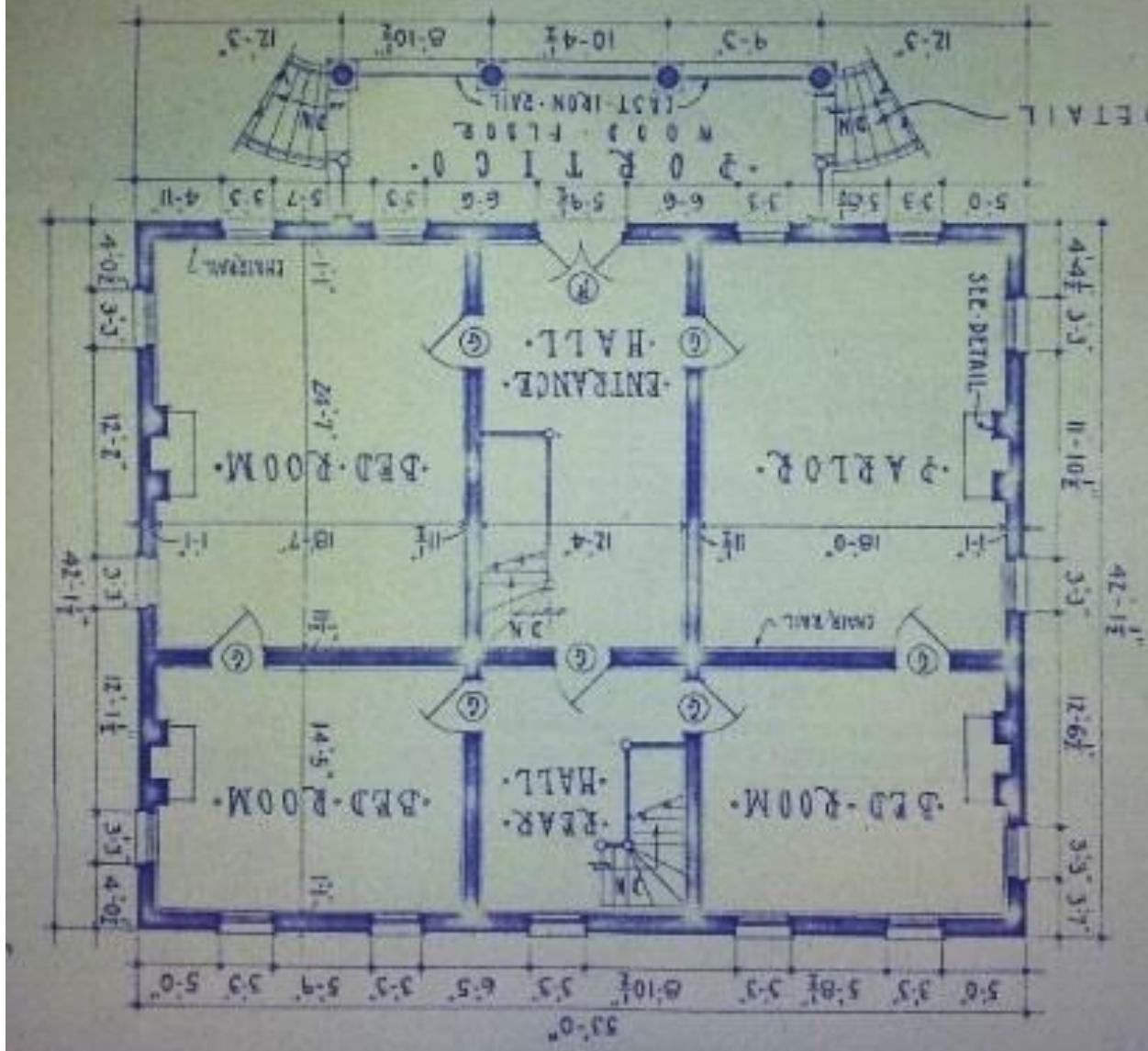
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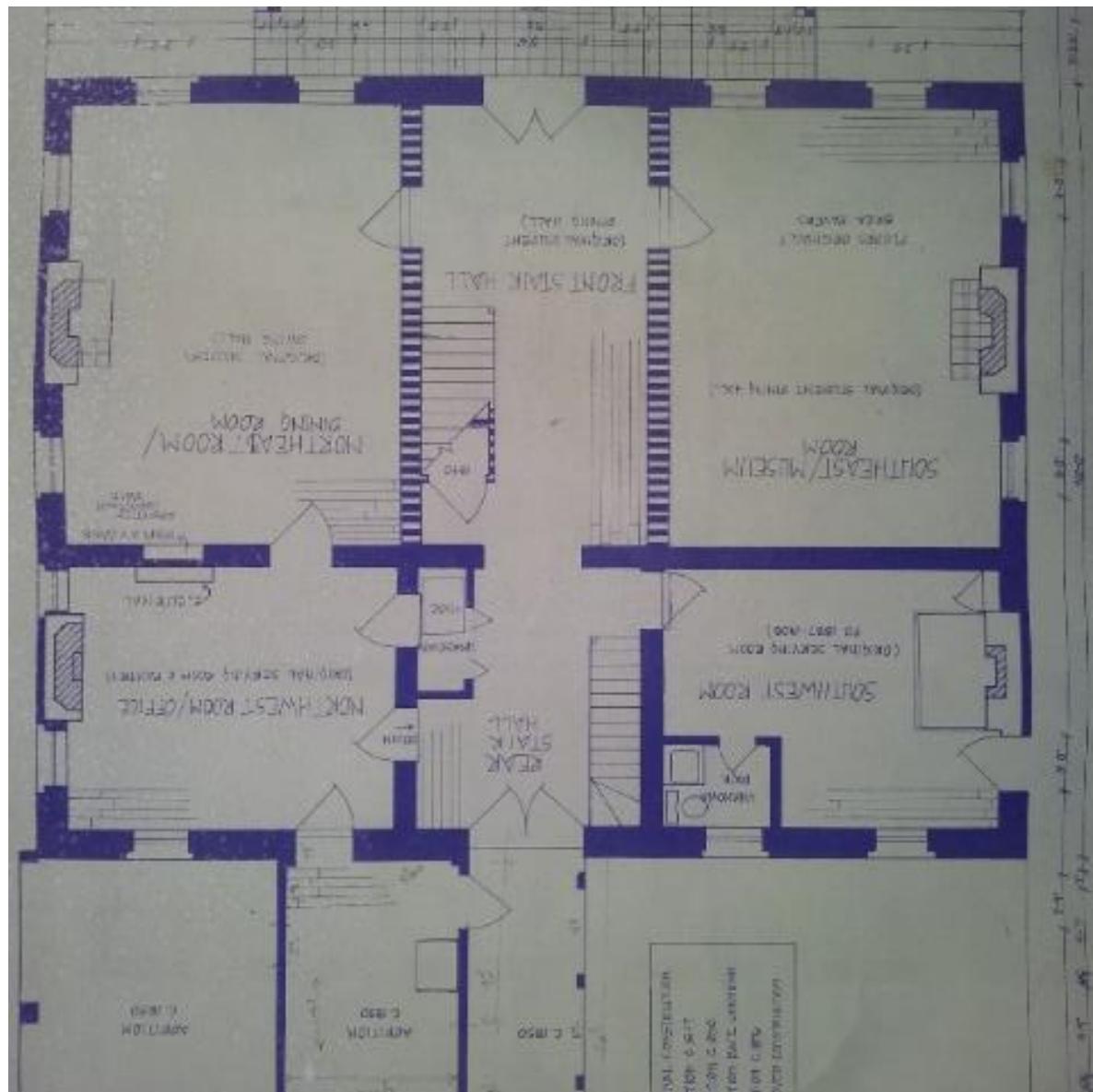


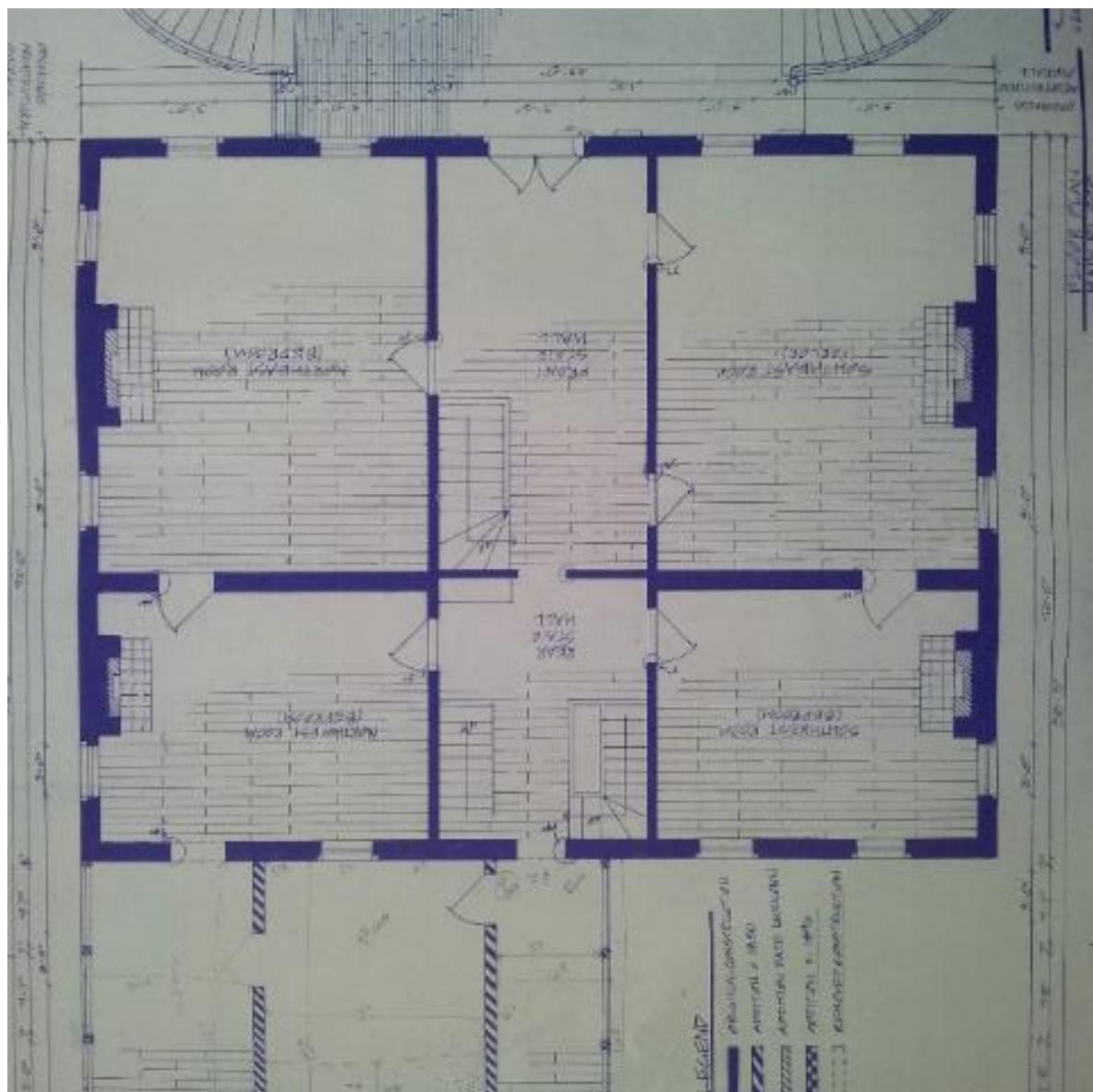
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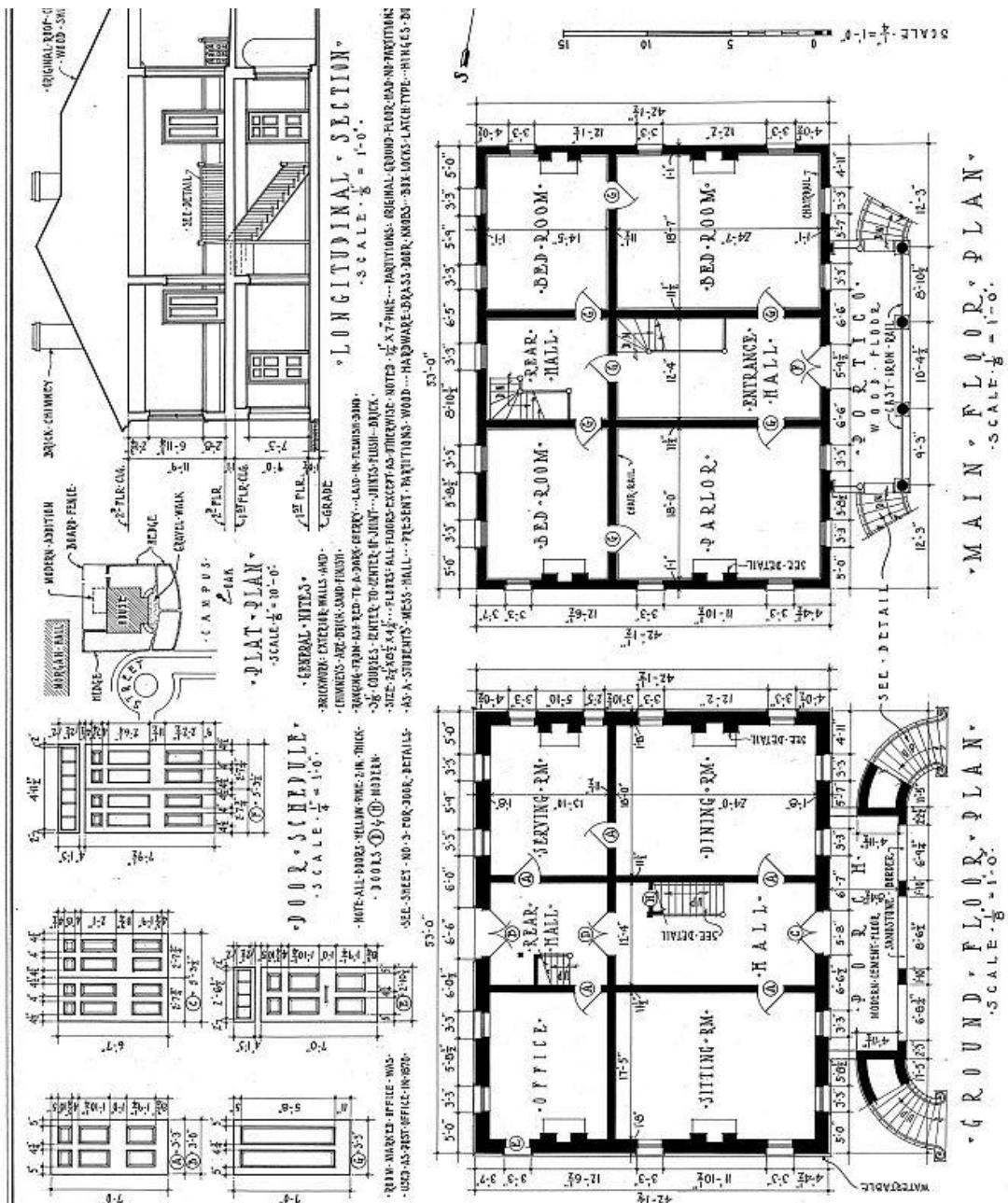


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LEGEND

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	ADDITION C. 1850
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	ADDITION C. 1896
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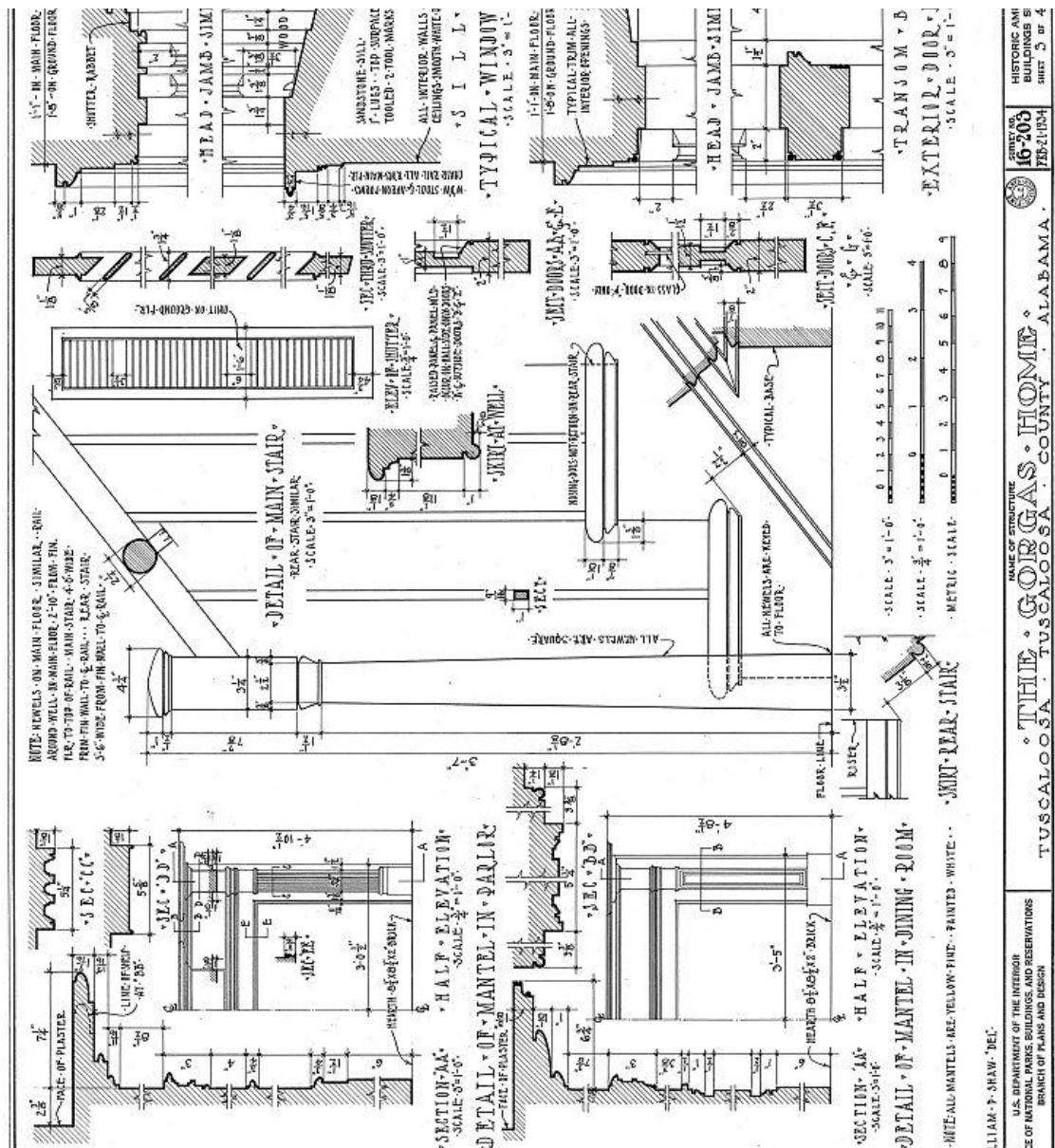
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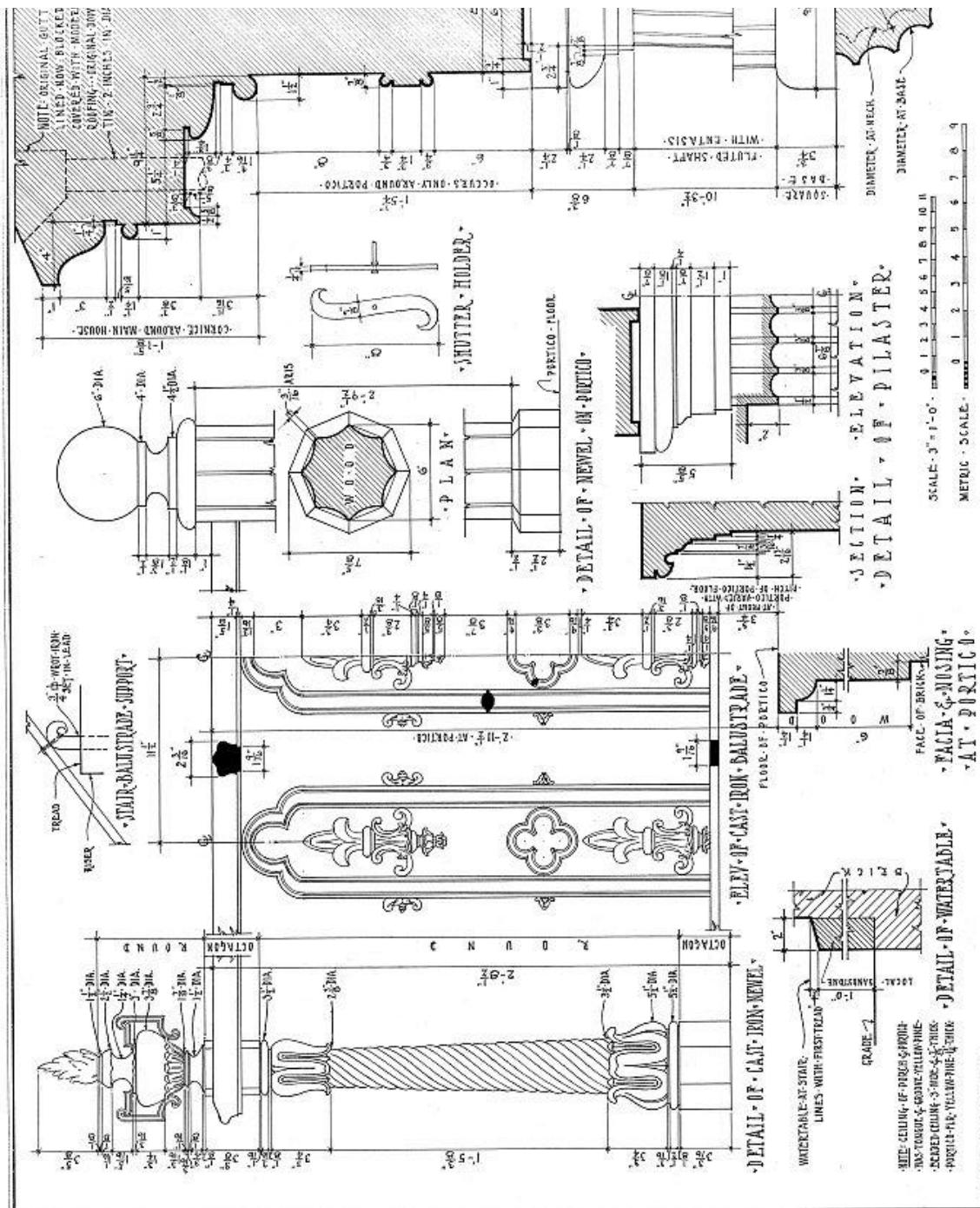
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