

Preliminary Consultation:

10600 River Road #29/7, MacDonald House

William Conway  
(202) 274-2951 (0)

For  
June 21  
meeting

St Prelm. case - 6/21

Conway Case

Sue -

Please notice:-

① Bill & Diana Conway  
10201 Meredith Avenue  
Silver Spring, Md. 20910  
(301) 589-6453 (H)

② Thomas Manion, AIA  
Lock 9 Architects, P.C.  
7357 Mac Arthur Blvd.  
Suite 213  
Bethesda, Md. 20816  
(301) 229-7000

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Address: 10600 River Road	Meeting Date: 06/21/95
Resource: <u>Master Plan</u> Site #29/7, the John MacDonald House	Preliminary Consultation
Case Number: N/A	Tax Credit: None
Public Notice: 6/07/95	Report Date: 06/14/95
Applicant: Mr. & Mrs. Conway	Staff: Patricia Parker
PROPOSAL: Construct new front gable form & dormers at roof; Enlarge front porch; Remove bow window at rear; install new window	RECOMMEND: Further study

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The applicants submit this proposal for preliminary discussion with the HPC to receive comment before proceeding to file a formal HAWP. The proposal involves change to Master Plan Site #29/7, the John MacDonald House in Potomac, Md. The HPC has reviewed other proposals concerning this property in the past.

The MacDonald House is a nineteenth century two-and-one-half story ell-shaped farmhouse. The environmental setting, at approximately 2 acres, includes several outbuildings with a long approach and several trees. However, the surrounding property has been subdivided into two acre lots.

During the early part of the twentieth century the residential character of Potomac had been firmly established. In more recent years, the rural nature of the countryside surrounding the village has given way to extensive suburban developments. Captain MacDonald was influential in changing the name of the small village from Offutt's Crossroads to Potomac. This property, located in Potomac, has changed ownership several times.

This proposal includes significant change proposed to the principal facade. Such changes include enlarging the porch and adding a front gable and dormers at the roof line. At the rear the applicant proposes to eliminate a bow window at the second level. The replacement of the window is the subject of three alternative schemes presented for discussion.

In this proposal, change is proposed to the north and south elevations only. There are no changes proposed for the horse barn (particularly noteworthy), guest house, pool and outlying shelters. There are also no changes included which involve the landscape.

## STAFF DISCUSSION

**Principal Facade:** The applicant proposes to add a front gable and enlarge the porch. Staff feels that the only reason for approving such a major change to the front facade would be that the applicant would show evidence that this was in fact an I-house form with front gable that was removed in the 20th century. However, staff needs documentation in order to suggest that such change be approved by the HPC.

Completed research in our files indicate that the original structure was built on this property between 1820 and 1829 (See attached pages 20-28). In 1873, the house was completely destroyed by fire and rebuilt afterward. The house has experienced several additions over the years, but the two and one-half story L-plan structure is still apparent today. Staff is **not convinced** that a front gable would have been extant on a house constructed in this style.

The five-bay Federal-style wood clapboard farmhouse is built on fieldstone foundation. The porch on the northeast elevation has brick foundation and a shed roof supported by three narrow square posts. On the southeast elevation there is a two-story screened porch. There are two external chimneys on the northwest and southeast elevations.

As noted above, the proposed gable is a major change in architectural style. The two dormers, indicated at the upper level are also confusing in style. The dormers would be consistent with Colonial Revival and inconsistent with the I-house form. In summary, staff feels that unless there is adequate documentation, the HPC should **not** approve the addition of a front gable or dormers.

Change to the porch is possible; the existing porch is clearly not original. Staff feels that if the porch is to be enlarged, then the applicant should consider a broader form to extend across the five bays - an element which does appear as part of the Federal style.

**Rear Facade:** The applicant proposes to remove a recent bow window which is inconsistent with the style of the historic house. In its place, the applicant offers three alternative schemes. Scheme One shows an opening with two 6/6 windows with shutters. The existing transom over the french doors at the first level would be removed and a pair of french doors fully sized for the opening would be installed. Staff feels that these changes could meet HPC approval.

Scheme Two indicates a proposed modification at the roof line and a square bay window with transom. The opening at the first floor with french doors is unchanged.

Scheme Three indicates a bay window with its roofline below the existing roof and a widening of the opening on the first level. The new opening would include two sidelights and a pair of french doors. Although at the rear of the house, staff feels that Scheme Two and Scheme Three are less successful and more inconsistent with the style of the historic house. Staff recommends that the HPC approve Scheme One.

But staff is pleased that the applicant has chosen to work within the existing envelope of the historic house and contain most changes to the interior.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation require that:

Historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

Staff suggests that the applicant provide additional information as to whether the front gable was extant. Staff applauds the applicant for their decision to reverse earlier incompatible change to the rear window opening.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is pleased that the applicants propose to renovate the historic site as a residence. Also, the applicants have confined a majority of the change to the interior of the farmhouse. Staff feels that change to the historic house is possible if confined to the rear, unless clear and substantial documentation is present.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve Scheme One for proposed change to the rear bow window. After this preliminary consultation with the HPC, the applicant submit a revised set of reduced and dimensioned drawings as part of subsequent submissions.

NORTH ELEVATION



SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

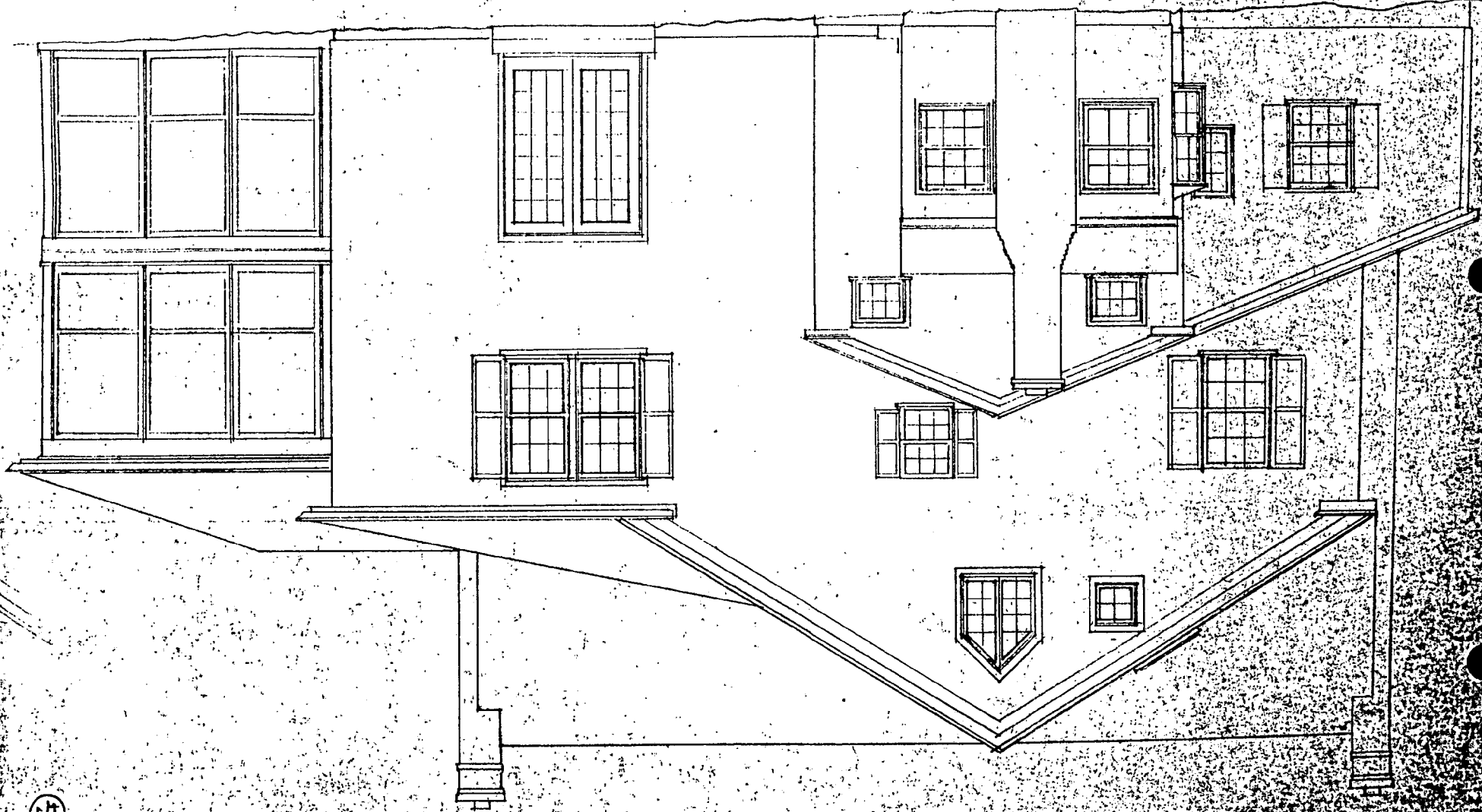
A





SCHEMTE I. EAST/WEST

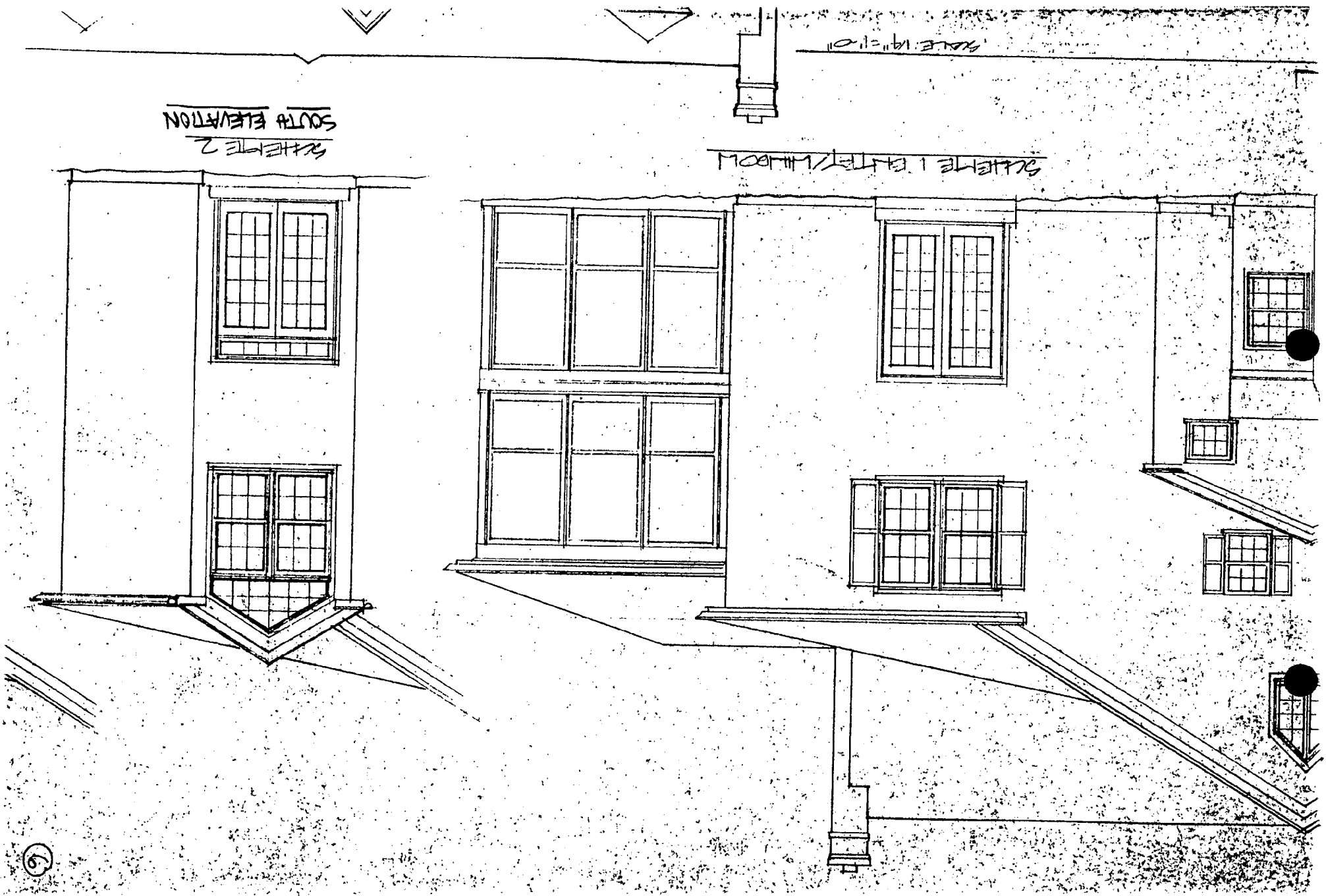
SOUTH ELEVATION



5

SCHEME 2  
SOUTH ELEVATION

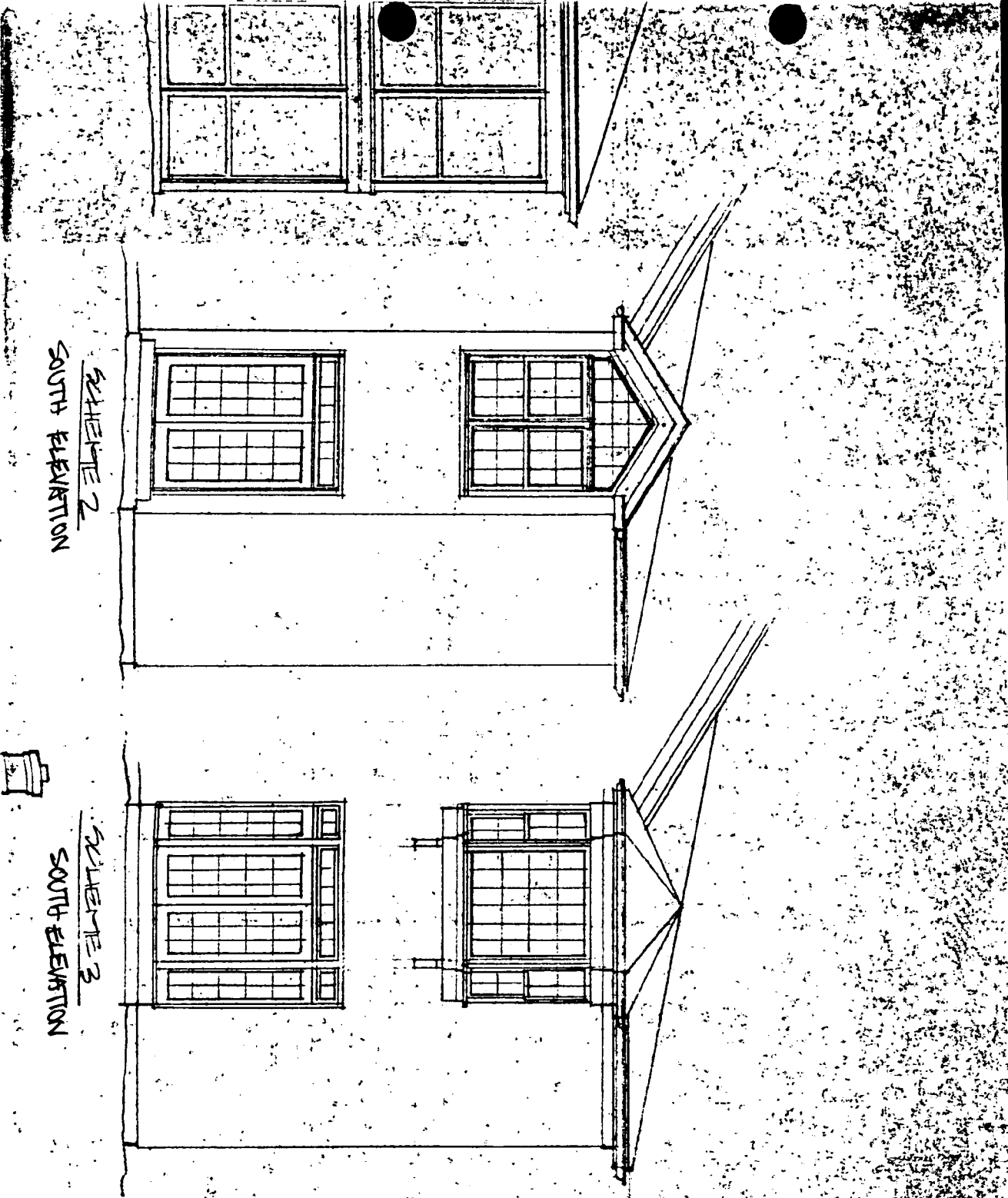
SCHEME 1  
EAST/WEST



6

SKETCH 2  
SOUTH ELEVATION

SKETCH 3  
SOUTH ELEVATION

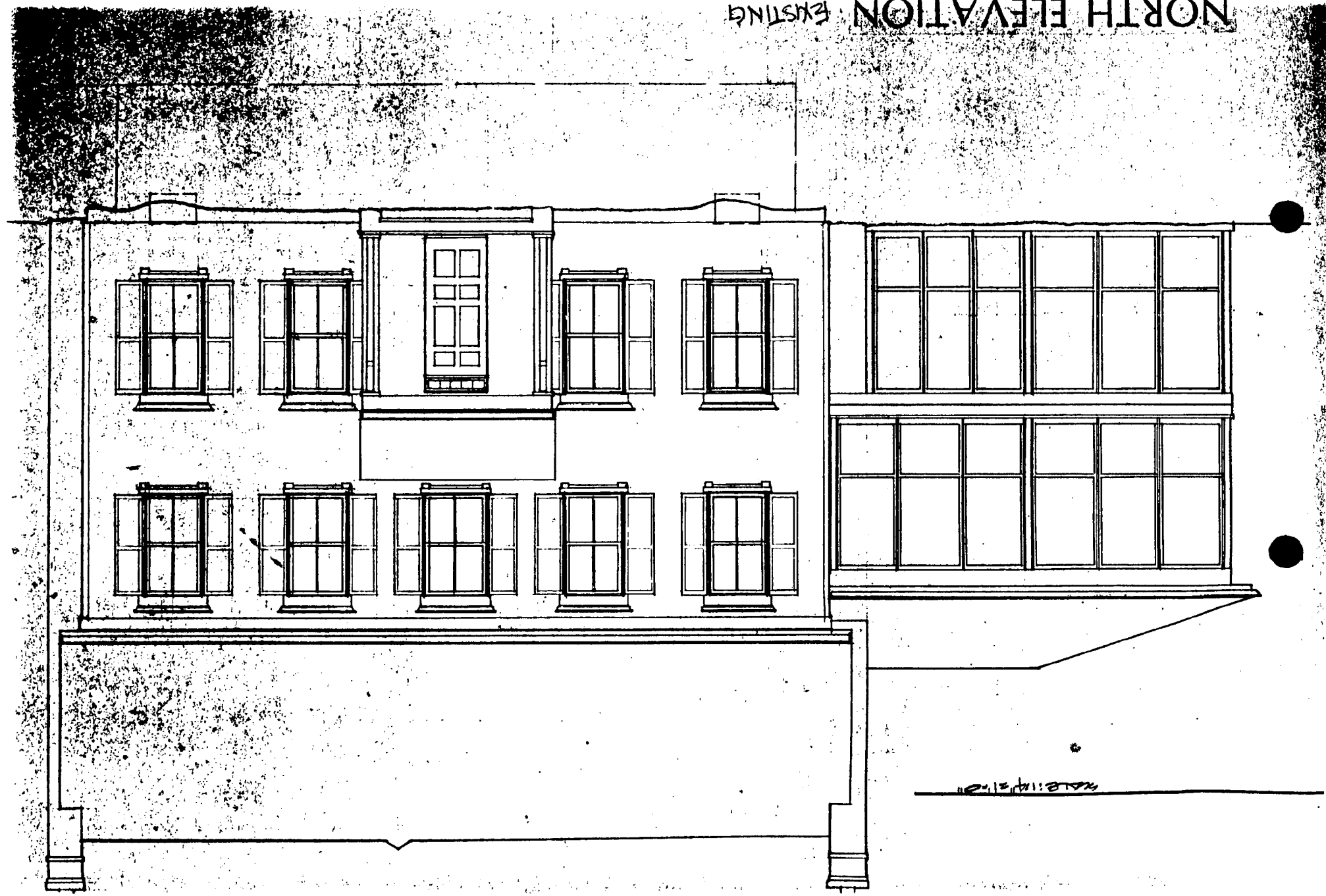


71

CONWAY RESIDENCE  
500 RIVER ROAD, POTOMAC, MD. 20854



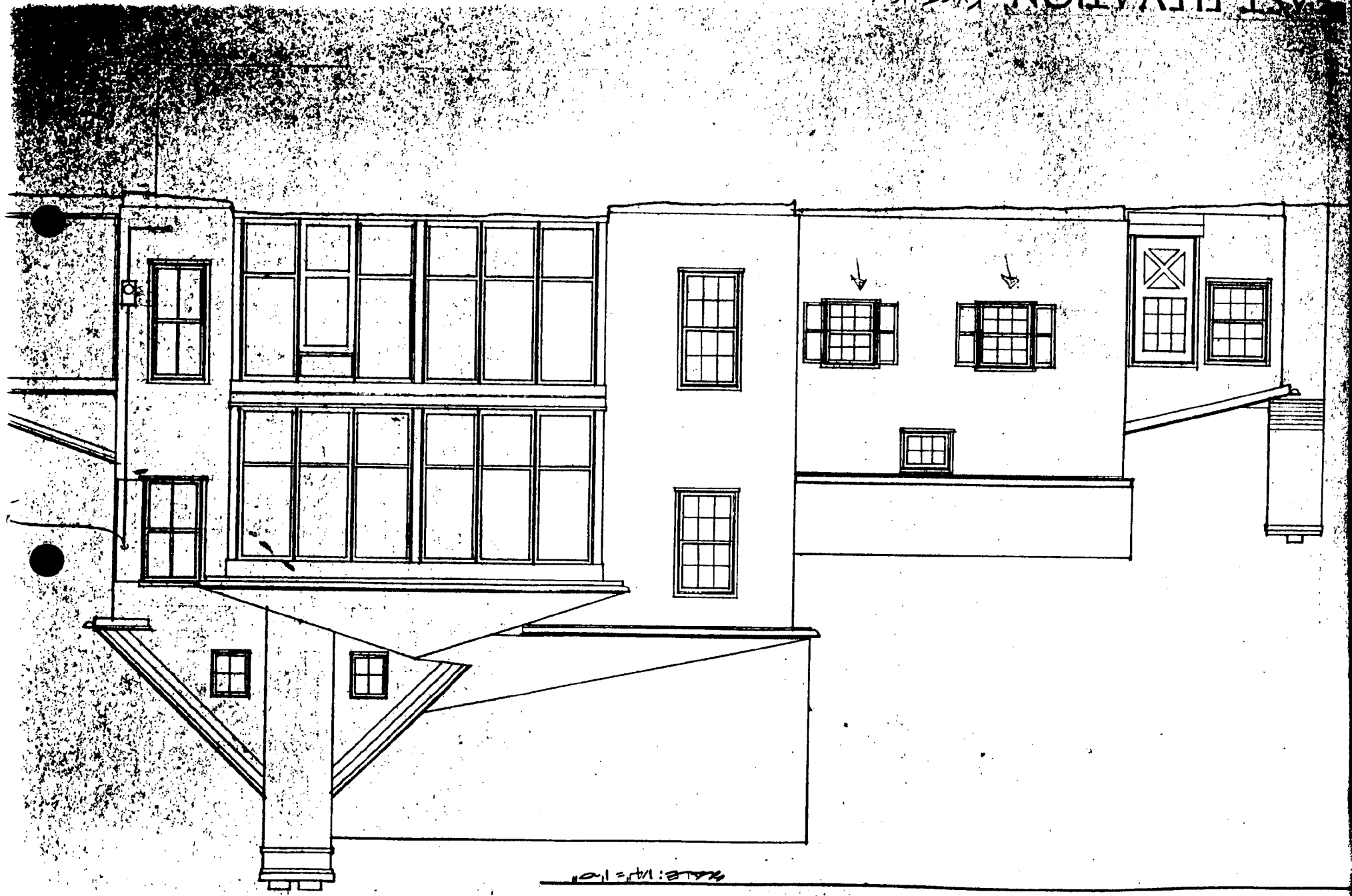
NORTH ELEVATION EXISTING



SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

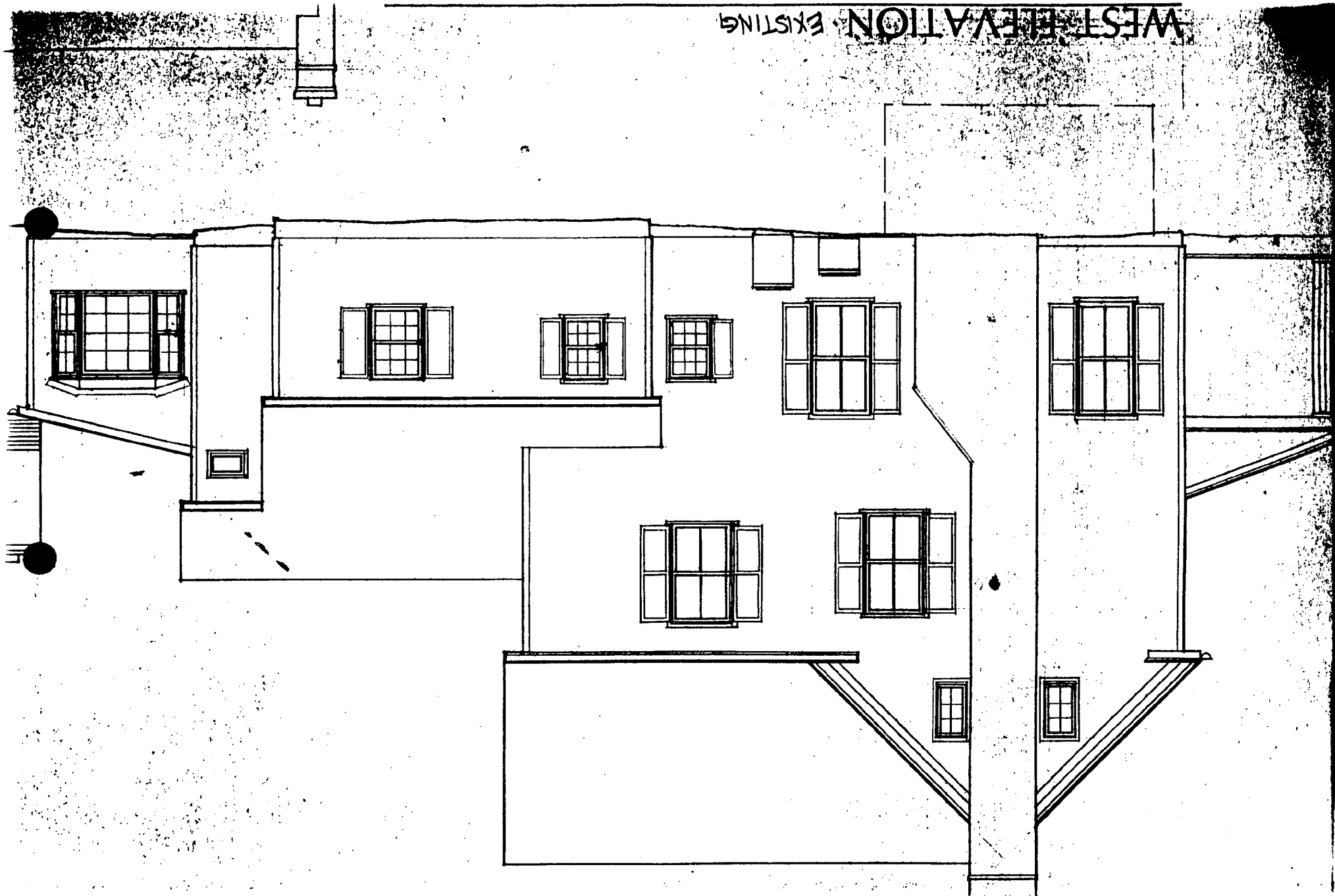


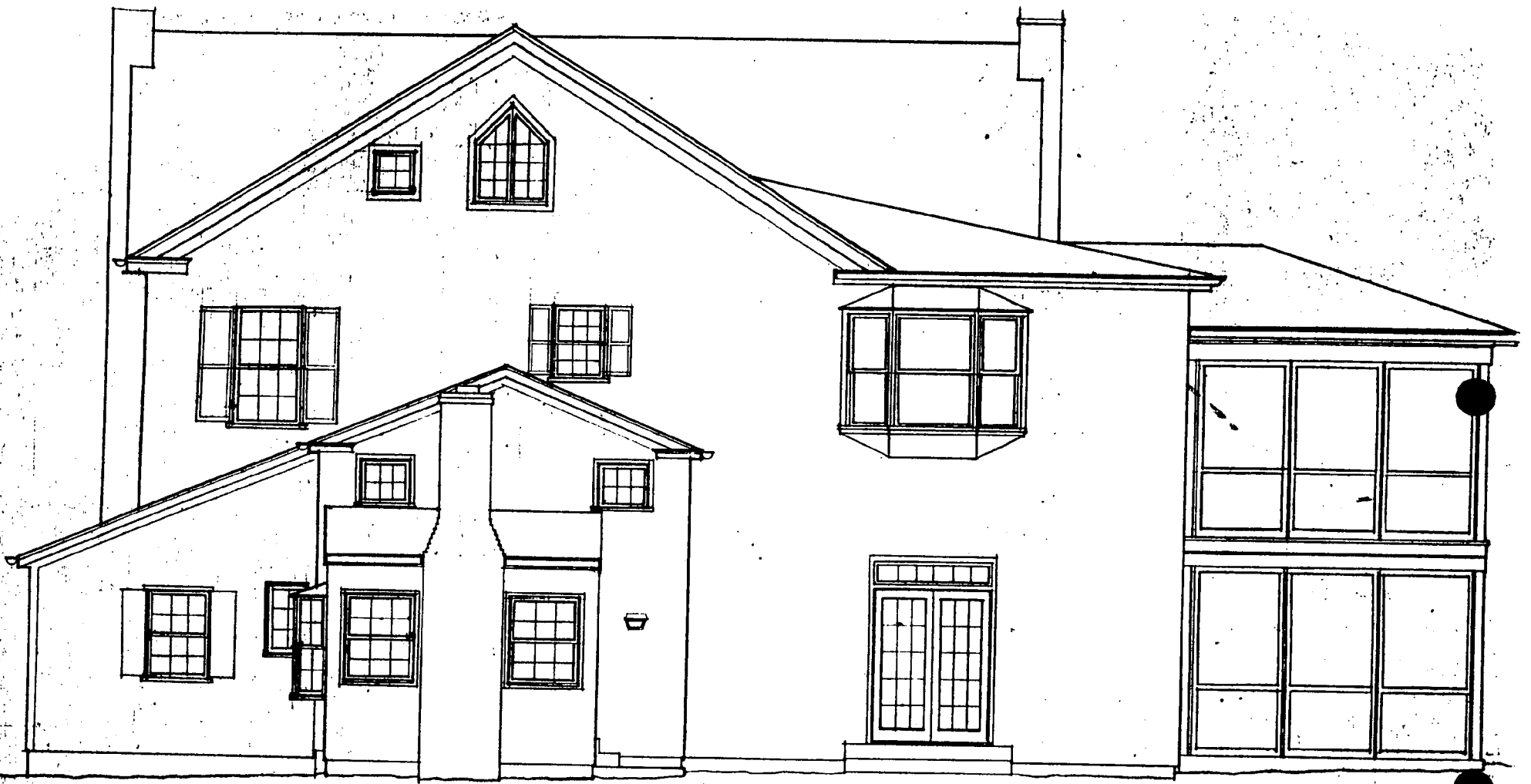
PAST ELEVATION EXISTING



SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

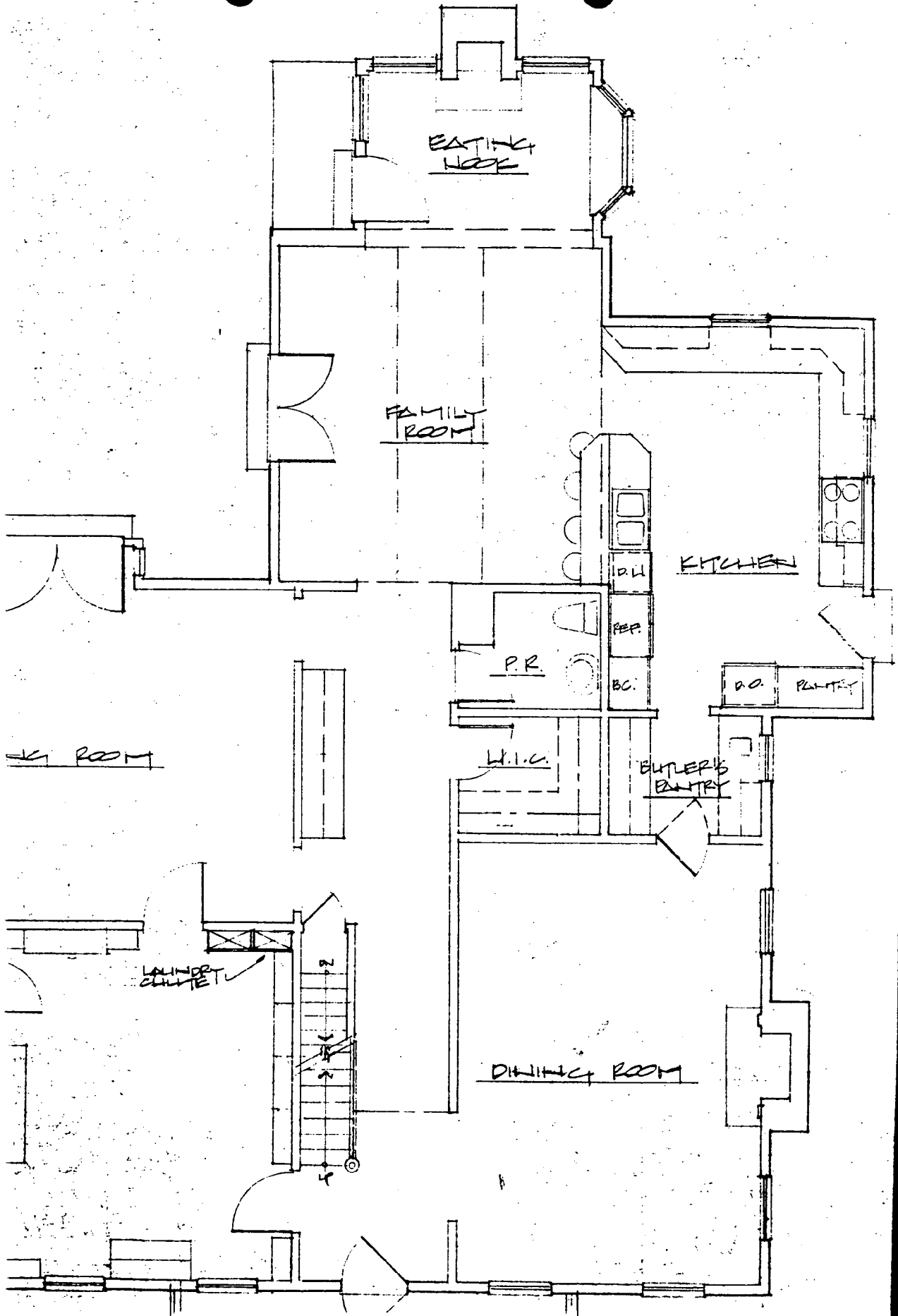
WEST ELEVATION - EXISTING





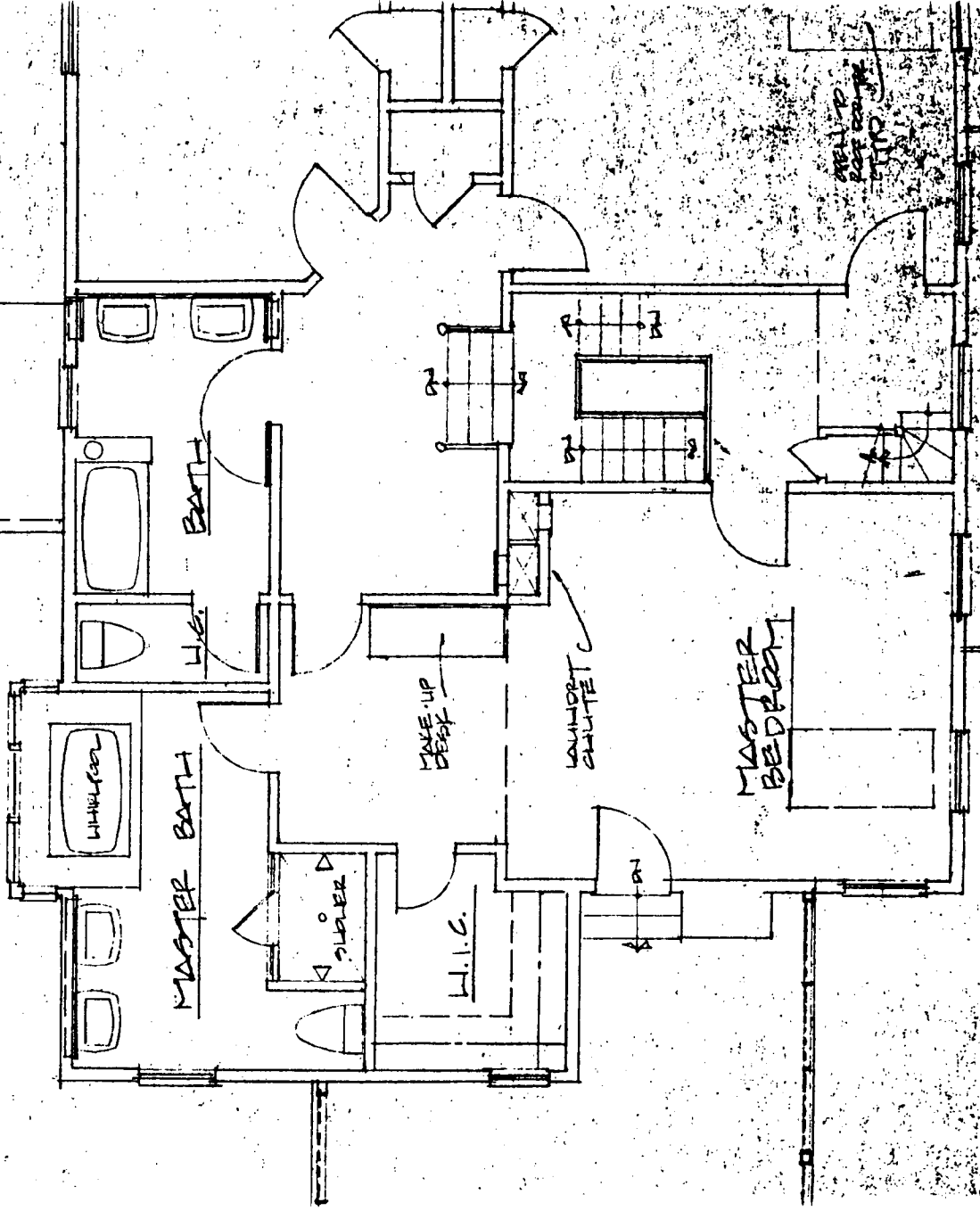
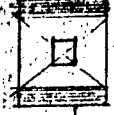
SOUTH ELEVATION - EXISTING

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



FIRST FLOOR PLAN- SCHEME 1





MASTER BATH

WALKER

SLIPPER

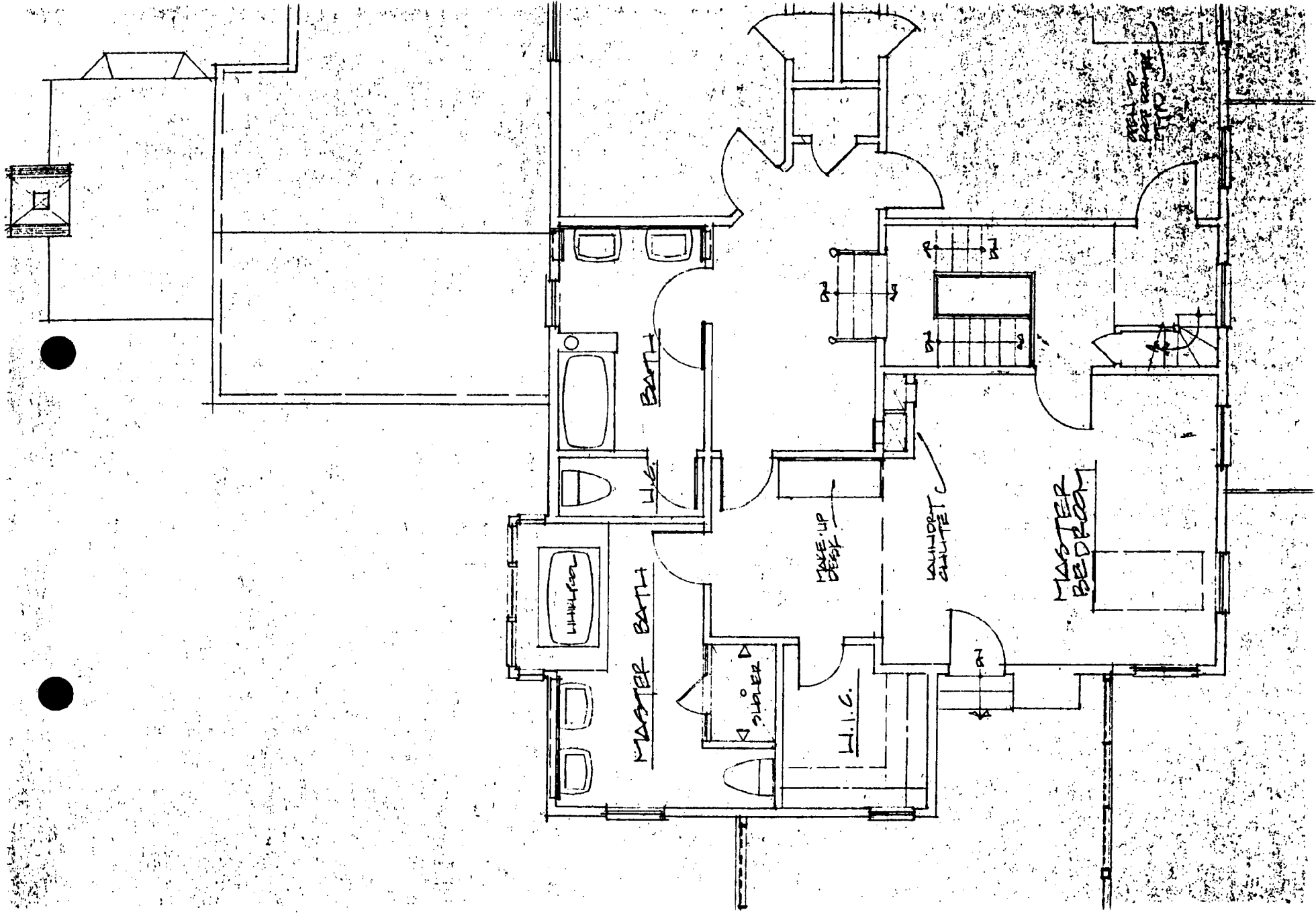
MAKE UP DESK

H.I.C.

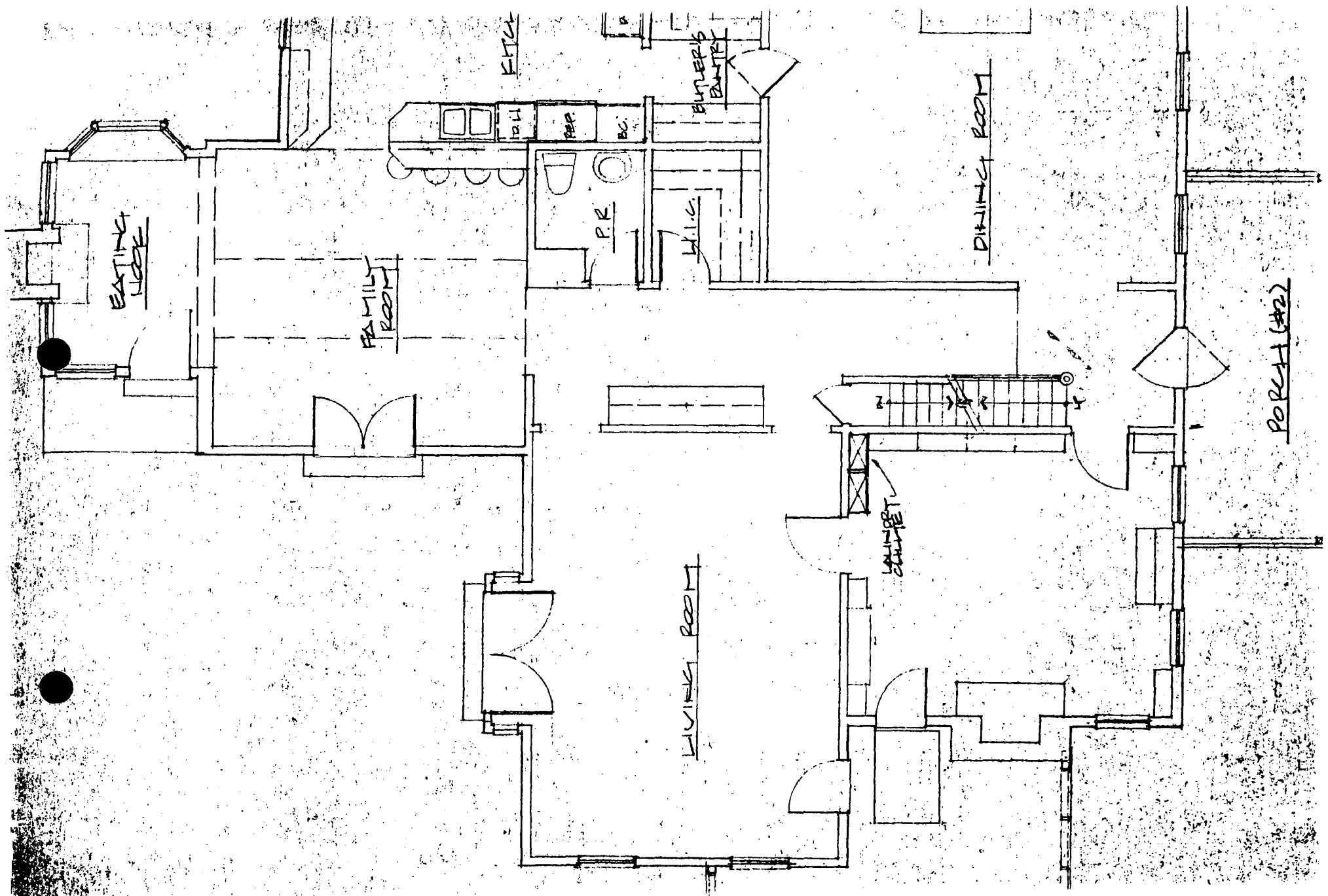
LAUNDRY CHUTE

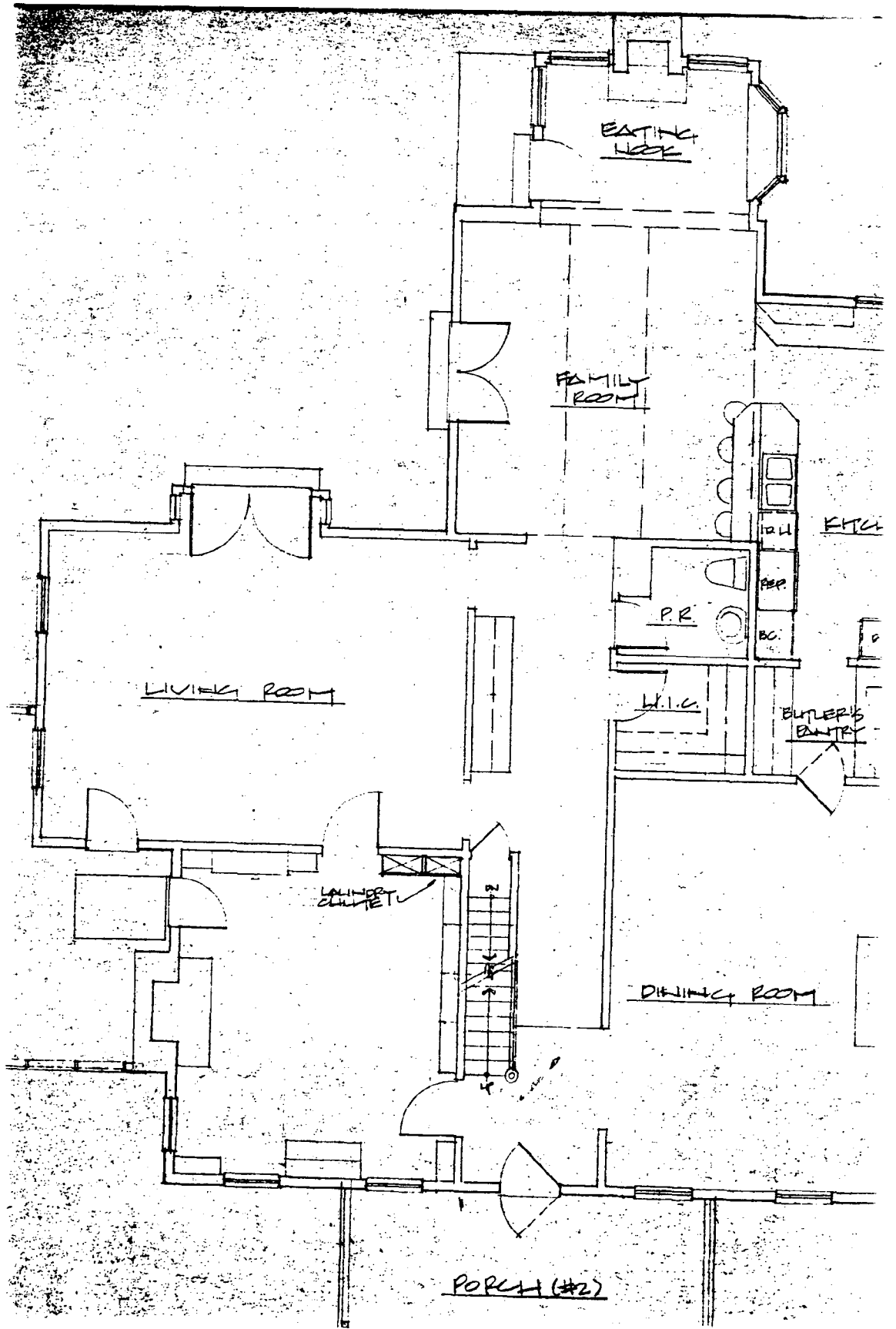
MASTER BEDROOM

AREA OF PART COATING STIP

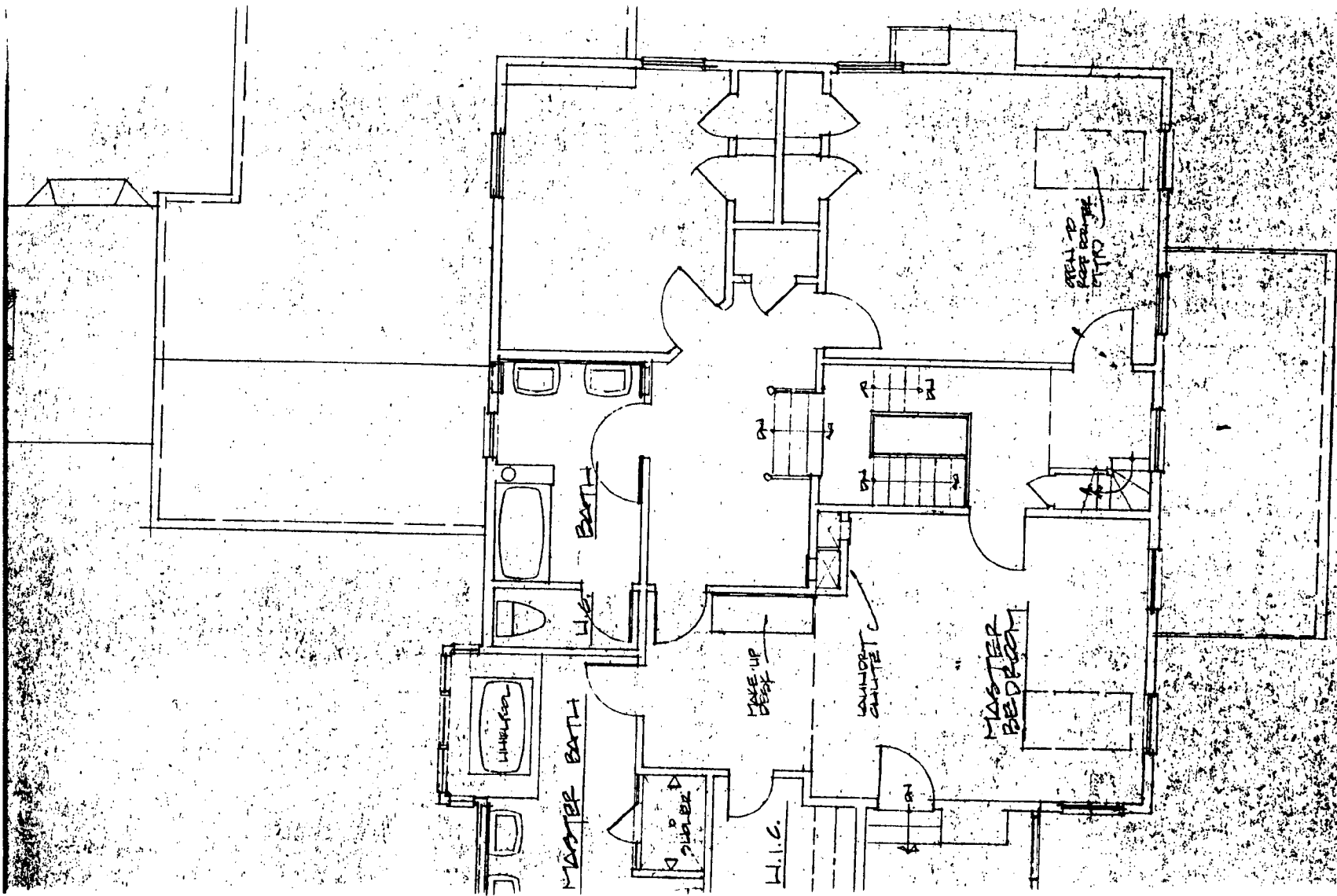


SECOND FLOOR PLAN - SCHEME 1

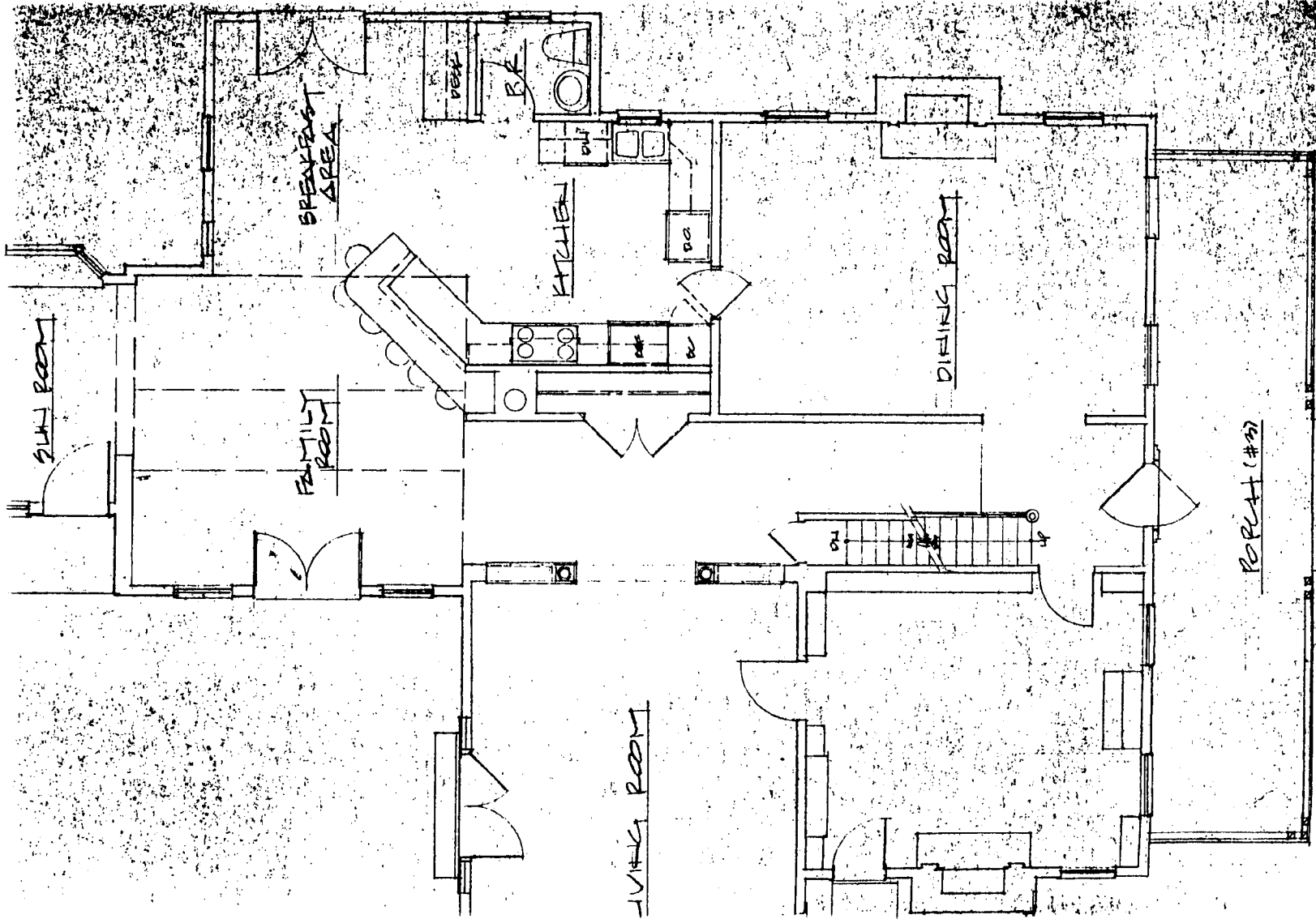




FIRST FLOOR PLAN. SCHEME 2



SECOND FLOOR PLAN - SCHEME 2



FIRST FLOOR PLAN - SCHEMATIC 3

PORCH (#2)

DINING ROOM

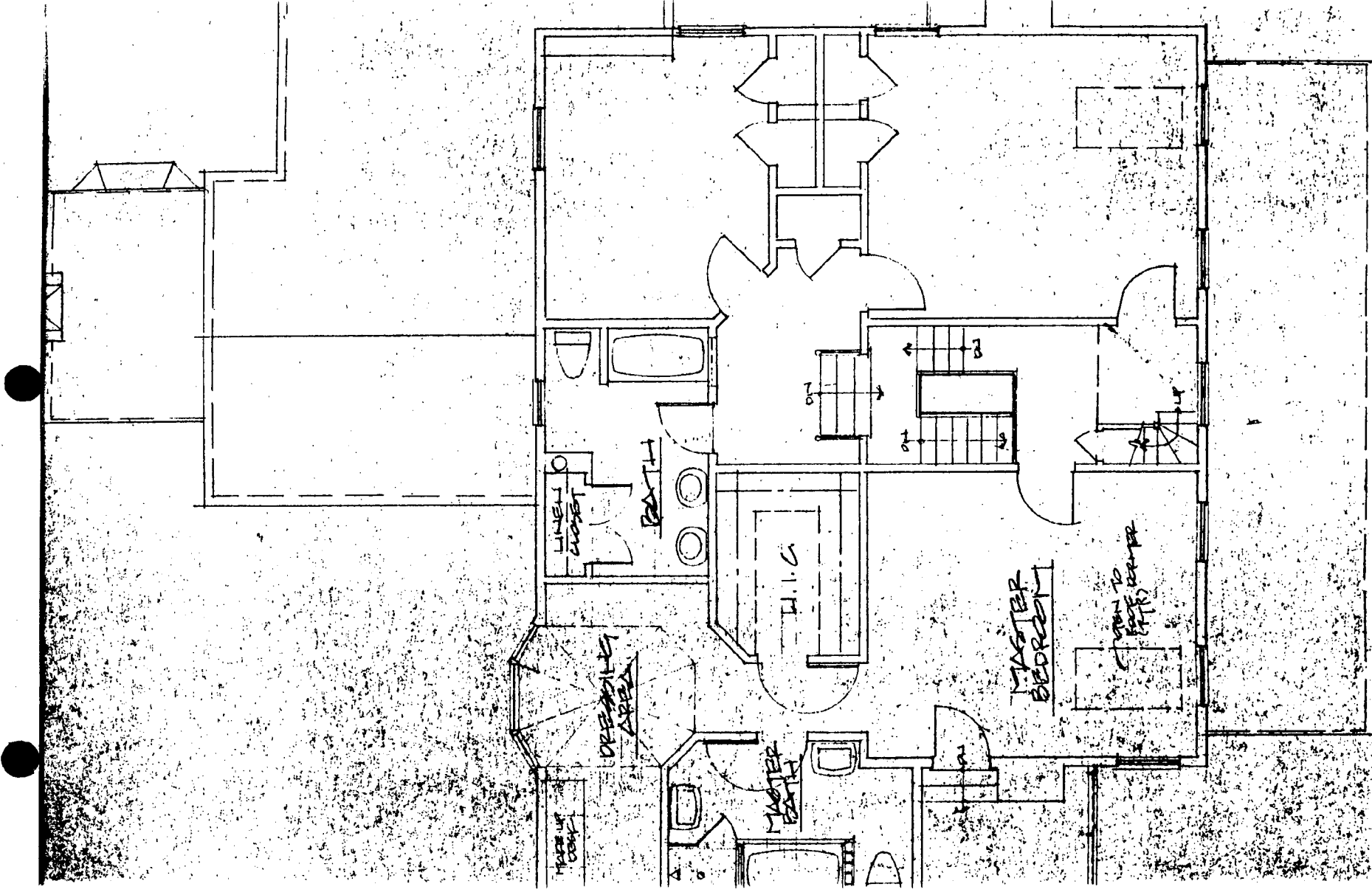
KITCHEN

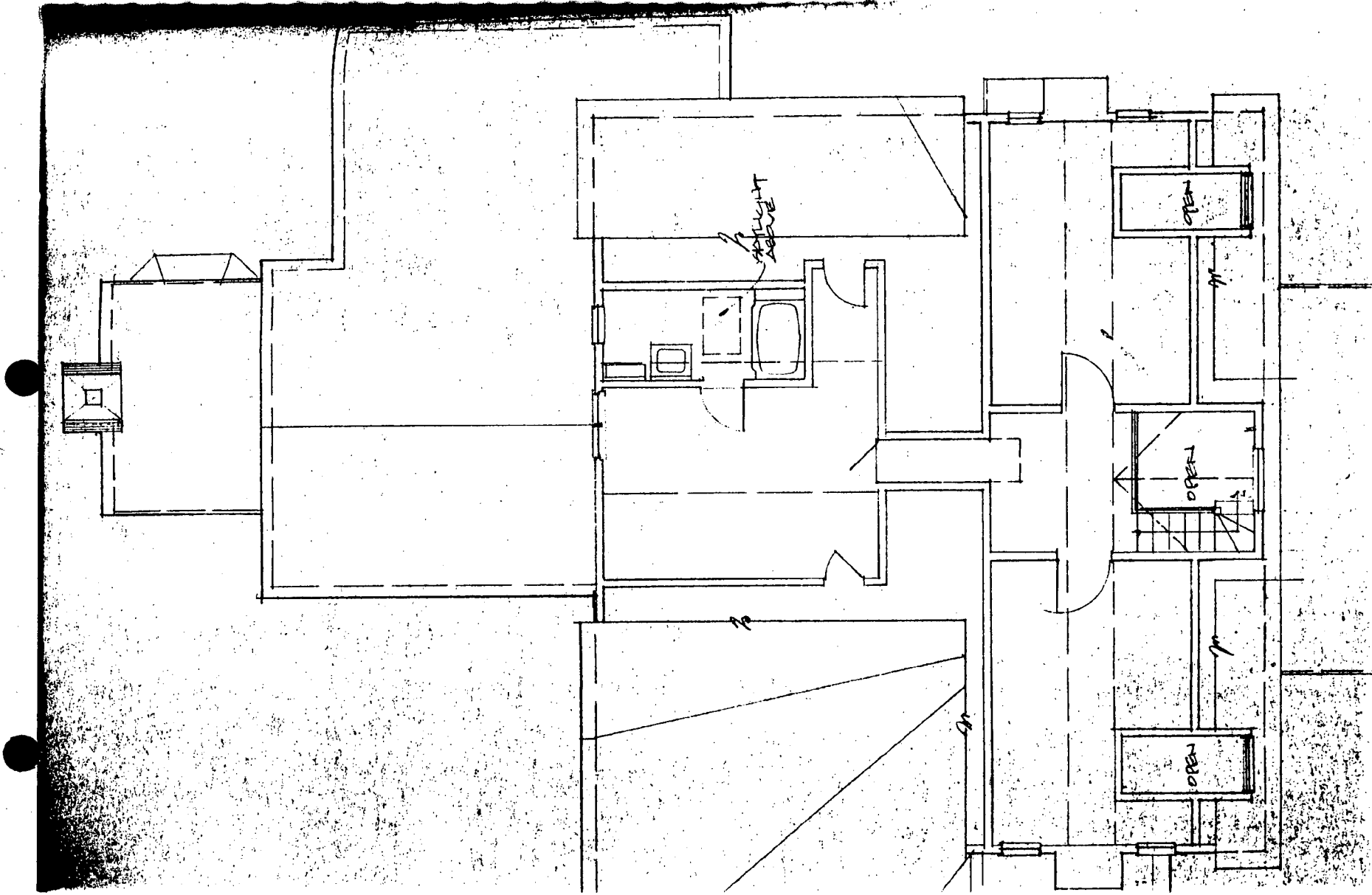
BREAK ROOM

FAMILY ROOM

SUN ROOM

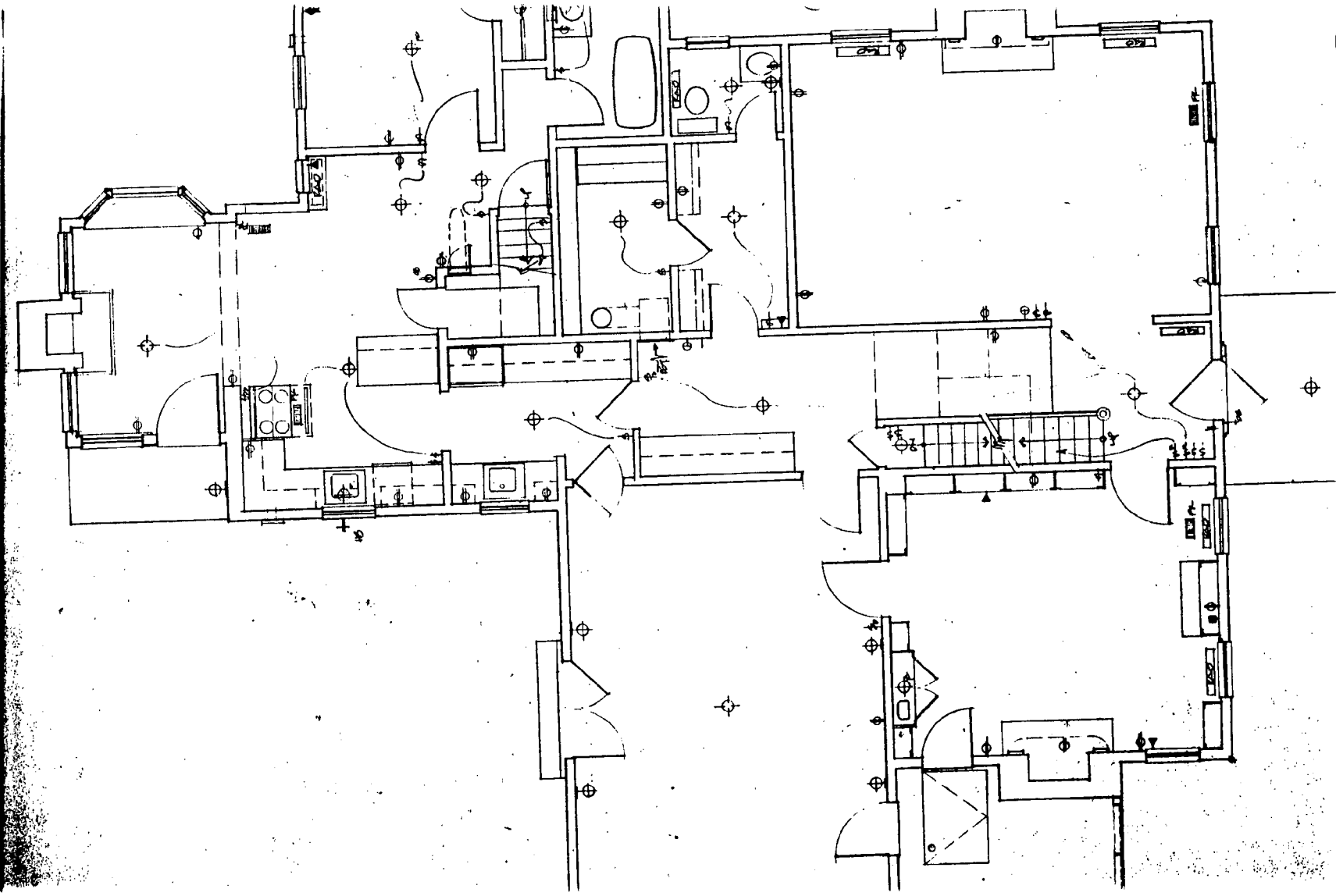
LIVING ROOM

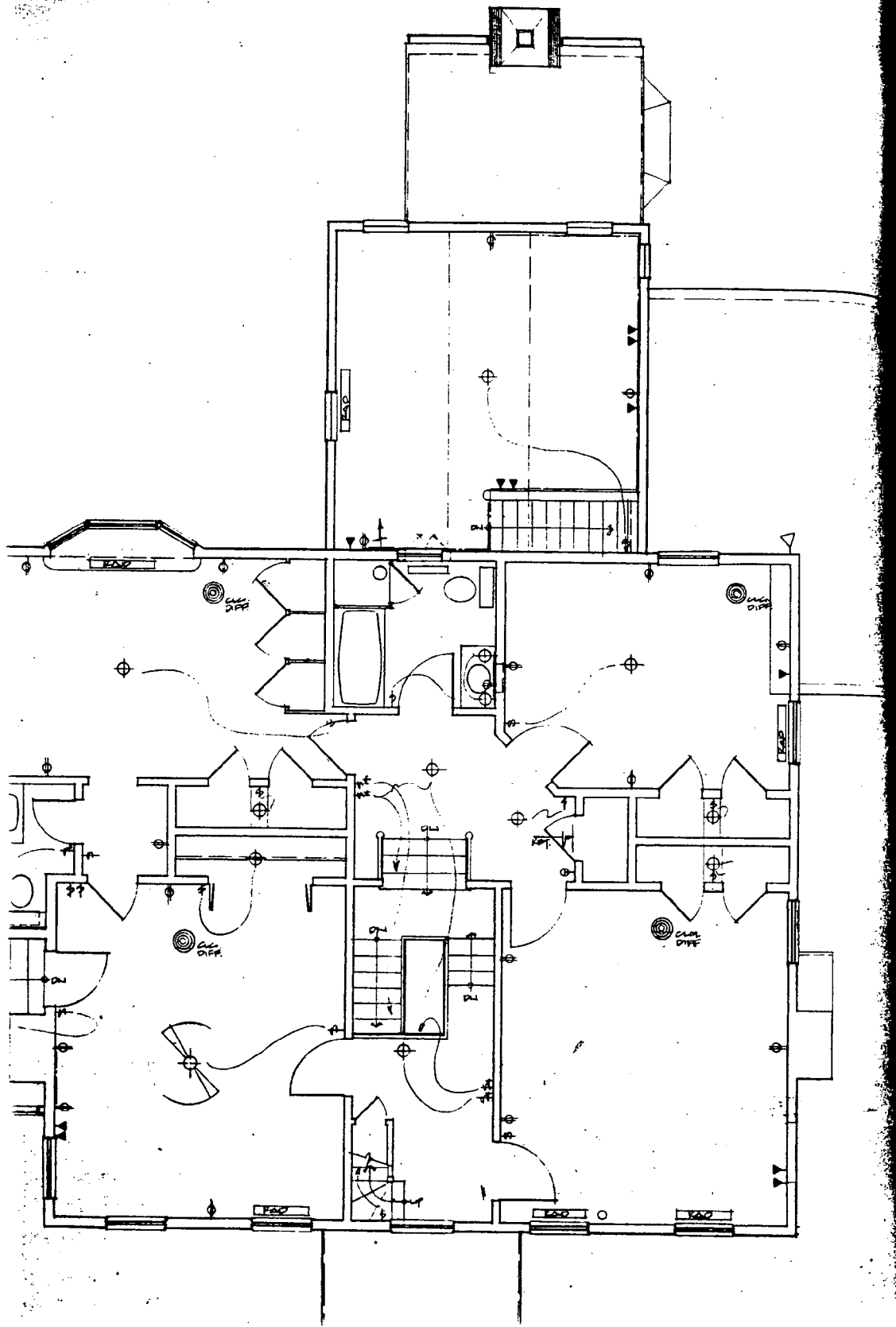




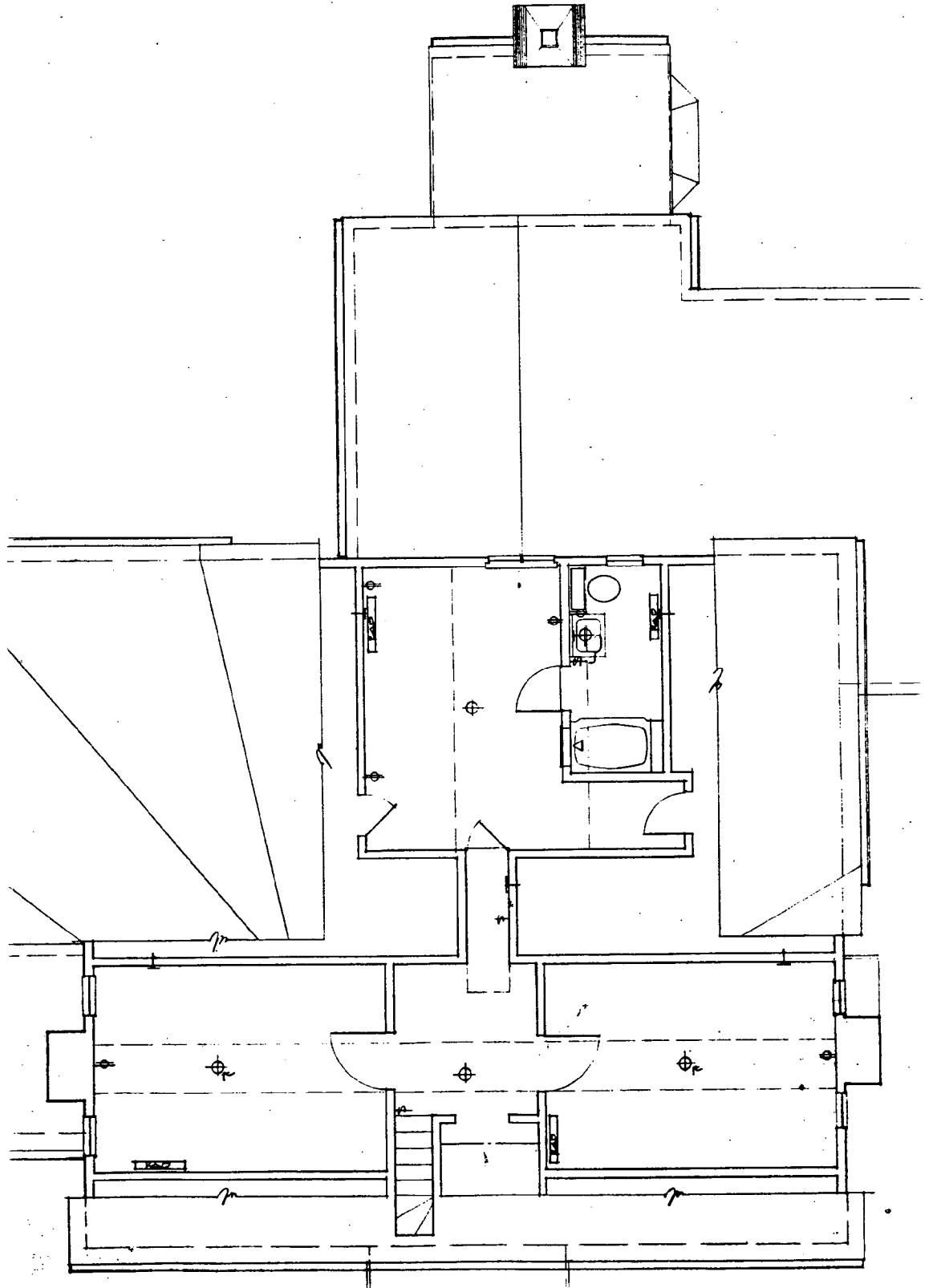
ATTIC FLOOR PLAN







SECOND FLOOR PLAN EXISTING



ATTIC PLAN - EXISTING

ACHS SUMMARY FORM

1. Name: John McDonald house
2. Planning Area/Site Number: 29/7
3. M-NCPPC Atlas Reference: Map 19  
Coordinate J-4
4. Address: 10600 River Road  
Potomac, Md.
5. Classification Summary
- |                    |                                       |                           |  |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Category           | <u>building</u>                       | Previous Survey Recording | <u>MNCPPC</u>  |
| Ownership          | <u>private</u>                        | Title and Date:           | <u>Historic Sites Inventor</u>   |
| Public Acquisition | <u>NA</u>                             |                           | <u>1976</u>  |
| Status             | <u>occupied</u>                       |                           |  |
| Accessible         | <u>no</u>                             | Federal                   | <u>State</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>County</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Local</u> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Present use        | <u>agriculture; private residence</u> |                           |  |

6. Date: 1873

7. Original Owner: John McDonald

8. Apparent Condition

a. excellent b. altered c. original site

9. Description: This five bay, two and a half story, frame house has been enlarged over the years; it faces northeast. There is grey novelty siding on the northeast elevation and regular clapboarding on the remaining sides. The northeast porch has a shed roof supported by three narrow square posts set at right angles to each other by two panels of jigsawed filigree. There is a two story screen porch on the southeast elevation. There are two-over-two double-hung windows flanked by louvered wooden shutters. The gable roof has asbestos shingle covering. The house is surrounded by lawn and large maples, oaks, and pines. There is a one story barn and a swimming pool southwest of the house. Nearby are the ruins of a brick barn and a stone springhouse, and the owners recently found Thomas Offutt's tombstone in the back yard.

10. Significance: This house is significant as the dwelling for many years of Captain John McDonald, the first Republican Congressman from the Sixth District of Maryland. McDonald came to Montgomery County about 1870 to retire to the 250 acre farm his wife's family had purchased from the heirs of Thomas M. Offutt. Offutt and his father, Thomas Levi Offutt, had lived on this property since the 1820s, also owning land in "Offutt's Crossroad" later Potomac Village.

Born in Ireland, McDonald had fought in Indian campaigns and in the Civil War. Soon after retiring to his farm, the original house was completely destroyed by fire; it was rebuilt soon after, in 1873. McDonald was active in the Grange movement, the County Agricultural Society, the GAR, and the Rockville Episcopal Church. He was elected to the State Legislature in 1882, as State Comptroller in 1891, and to Congress in 1891. He was influential in changing the name of the small village near his home.

McDonald died in 1917, and the property remained in the family until 1941. Owned by Newbold Noyes, editor of the Evening Star, from 1949 to 1972, it was purchased by the present owners at that time.

11. Researcher and date researched: Carey Miller/Eileen McGuckian - 7/79  
Candy Reed - Arch. Description
12. Compiler: Eileen McGuckian
13. Date Compiled: 9/79
14. Designation Approval: \_\_\_\_\_
15. Acreage: 20 acres

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**NAME**

HISTORIC

John McDonald House

AND/OR COMMON

Trespassers W. Farm

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

10600 River Road

CITY, TOWN

Potomac

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Herbert J. & Carey K. Miller

Telephone #: 299-9472

STREET & NUMBER

10600 River Road

CITY, TOWN

Potomac

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 20854

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 4235

Folio #: 269

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

MNCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites

DATE

1976

—FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Park Historian's Office

CITY, TOWN

Derwood

STATE

Maryland 20855

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 Captain John McDonald House has been added to considerably over the years, but the two and a half story L-plan structure is still apparen

Built on fieldstone foundations, this wooden frame farmhouse faces northeast and is five bays across. There is gray novelty siding on the northeast elevation and regular clapboarding on the remaining sides. There is a porch on the northeast elevation which has brick foundations and a shed roof supported by three narrow square posts which are set at right angles to each other by two panels of jigsawed filigree. On the southeast side of the house there is a two story screened porch. There are two outside end chimneys: at the northwest and southeast elevations.

The front door is centered on the northeast elevation. It is a wood paneled door with a brass knocker and is surmounted by a five light transom. There are two-over-two light double-hung windows with wooden sills and lintels, flanked by louvered wooden shutters throughout the house. At the northwest and southeast gable ends, flanking the chimney stacks are small casement windows: at the northwest end they each have six lights and at the southeast end they have four lights. On the southwest elevation at the second story there is a three-sided bay window, probably a recent addition. The gable roof has asbestos covering.

The house is surrounded by lawns and large maples, oaks, and pines. There is a one story barn and a swimming pool southwest of the house. Nearby are the ruins of a brick barn and a stone springhouse, and the owners recently found Thomas Offutt's tombstone in the back yard.

The northeast door opens into a central hallway. An open string double run stairway ascends along the southeast hall wall. Northwest of the front door is the living room and to the southeast is the study. To the northwest of the hall and southwest of the living room is a cloak room and powder room. Southeast of the hall is the dining room and at the southwest end of the hall is the L-shaped kitchen/utilities area.

There are random width floor boards in the study, living room and northeast end of the central hall. There are plaster over lath walls and ceilings. The living room has crown molding and both the living room and hall have chair rails. There are built in bookcases in the study and at the southwest end of the hall against the southeast wall. There is a butler's pantry. There are simple molded door frames and wooden paneled doors with brass knobs. Double wooden paneled doors open from the hall into the living room. The basement is directly under the two northeast rooms. In this basement is the original kitchen with its large fieldstone fireplace.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) <b>Local History</b>
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1873

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A house was built on this property by Thomas Levi Offutt (1785-1855), possibly between 1820 and 1829. Offutt willed his plantation on River Road to his wife, Sarah B., some property at the crossroads to his daughter-in-law Louise Unis Offutt, \$1 to his son Thomas M., and the remainder of his property to his grandchildren.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Marshall Offutt, son of Thomas Levi Offutt, had a store at the intersection of River and Falls Roads, in the village of Offutt's Crossroads. He married Lois Unis Fisher and lived on the southwest corner of Falls and River Roads, near the store. In 1855 he was convicted by a Montgomery County Circuit Court of shooting at Oratio Clagett with intent to kill; Offutt escaped and was at large for two years, with a \$300 reward for his capture. He was apprehended at Offutt's Crossroads<sup>2</sup> and died several years later. Lois Unis Offutt later remarried John Collins, who lived in the house next to Offutt's store. Her children brought suit against her regarding this particular property because Thomas Levi had willed it to her only if she remained unmarried after Thomas Marshall died.

Sarah, Thomas Levi's wife, died in 1859. In her will,<sup>4</sup> she gave her grandchildren (Thomas M. was the only child) her plantation on River Road. Sarah B. Offutt also willed some land, known locally as "The Pines" (behind the Potomac Place shopping center), to some of her slaves that she freed in her will; a black community still exists nearby.

About 1870, Captain John McDonald retired to this 250-acre farm which he had purchased from his wife's family.<sup>5</sup> McDonald was born in 1837 in Ireland, coming to the United States at age 18. He enlisted in the Army in 1857, and served in Indian campaigns in Arizona and California. He fought for the Union during the Civil War, receiving wounds and honors, and was commissioned Captain. After his retirement to Montgomery County, he became active in the Grange movement, the County Agricultural Society, the Grand Army of the Republic, and the Rockville Protestant Episcopal Church.<sup>6</sup> McDonald was living at the farm on April 9, 1873, when the house was completely destroyed by fire; it was rebuilt soon after.<sup>7</sup>

Captain McDonald was elected to the State Legislature in 1882, and a State Comptroller in 1891, defeating Blair Lee for the post. He became the first Republican Congressman from the Sixth District of Maryland in 1896. McDonald was influential in changing the name of the small village from Offutt's Crossroads to Potomac. He died in 1917.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued on Attachment Sheet A)

Attachment Sheet A  
John McDonald House

M: 29/7  
Magi #

The property remained in the McDonald family until 1941, when the house and 20 acres were sold to Franklin and Margaret Lane.<sup>8</sup> From 1949<sup>9</sup> to 1972 it was the home of Newbold Noyes, editor of the Evening Star. The present owner, Herbert J. Miller, Jr., in 1970 lost a bid for state-wide office to Blair Lee III, descendant of the Blair Lee Captain McDonald defeated in 1891.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Will Records, WT of R 2/203 (1855).
- 2 Montgomery County Sentinel, October 2, 1857.
- 3 Montgomery County Equity Records, Judgment EBP 2/277-86 (1868).
- 4 Wills, op. cit., JWS 1/37 (1859).
- 5 Land Records of Montgomery County, EBP 7/215 (January 27, 1870).
- 6 Portrait & Biographical Record of the 6th Cong. District (1898)., p. 215-17.
- 7 Sentinel, op. cit., April 11, 1873.
- 8 Land Records, op. cit., 843/153 (July 30, 1941).
- 9 Ibid., 1238/426 (March 15, 1949).



**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:**

L., Will, Assessment, and Judgment Records of Montgomery County, Md.

Montgomery County Sentinels

Maps: Martenet & Bond, 1865; Hopkins Atlas, 1879

Portrait & Biographical Record of the 6th Congressional District (1898).

Boyd, T.H.S., History of Montgomery County, Md. (Regional Publishing Co., Baltimore 1973) (originally pub. Clarksburg, 1879).

Historical & Biographical Sketch of the Offutt Family

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 20 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Carey K. Miller/Ellen McGuckian

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

STREET & NUMBER

Box 87

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

Candy Reed-arch. Desc.

DATE

July 1979

TELEPHONE

926-4510

STATE

Maryland 20753

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: ~~Maryland Historical Trust~~  
~~The Shaw-House, 21 State Circle~~  
~~Annapolis, Maryland 21401~~  
~~(301) 267-1438~~

SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS  
Box 87, Stronghold  
Dickerson, Md. 20753  
(301) 926-4510

