

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NR listed 8/31/04

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lyell, Van, House

other names/site number AHPP# GA0717

2. Location

street & number 130 Van Lyell Terrace

not for publication

city or town Hot Springs

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Garland

code 051

zip code 71913

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for 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)

Cathie Matthews

4/8/04

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lyell, Van, House  
Name of Property

Garland County, Arkansas  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

	Contributing	Noncontributing	
	2	0	buildings
	0	0	sites
	1	0	structures
	1	0	objects
	4	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Mediterranean Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof CERAMIC TILE

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.

- 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.
[X] 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.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
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.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1931

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Granger McDaniel

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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:

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:





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### SUMMARY

Situated on a private three-acre peninsula on Lake Hamilton in Hot Springs, Arkansas, the Van Lyell House is a two-story buff brick Mediterranean influenced house. Built in 1931 at the same time construction was in progress on Carpenter Dam, this home was the first to be built on Lake Hamilton. Noteworthy features include limestone Tuscan columns and window sills, decorative ironwork, and a red Spanish tile roof. Arched porches and casement windows keep with the building's Mediterranean style.

### ELABORATION

The Van Lyell House is a two-story buff brick residence designed in the Mediterranean style. The L-shaped home is sheltered beneath an intersecting gable-roof covered in red terra-cotta tiles. The main wing of the building runs east to west with a smaller south-projecting wing is located off the southeast section of the main wing. The building is constructed of a combination of brick, concrete and steel and rests atop a continuous brick foundation. Arches and large banks of casement windows give the house a very free-flowing feel. Some arches and open patios were enclosed using glass to allow for additional space when the building was turned into a restaurant. The interior floor plan is laid out in five levels with twelve large room encompassing 10,000 square feet. A brick chimney rises up near the center of the gable-roof and another along the building's east elevation.

The grounds of the property are very impressive. One enters the front of the property between two stone piers. The circular driveway passes under the porch then around the front lawn which is encircled by a stone retaining wall. A unique feature of the driveway is a large anchor located in the center of the drive. The 3-ton anchor was originally part of the battleship USS Massachusetts, which was a part of President Teddy Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet." A tile inlaid walkway encircles the estate's porch. It continues around the perimeter of the house and leads to the flagstone gardens on the backside of the house. A gracious double walkway leads off the side of the house to the grotto on the lake. The stone grotto has a large arched-doorway that opens into a tunnel that leads up into the house. A large concrete-pad used as a boat landing is located in front of the grotto. The looming 100 year old virgin pines amid the lake shoreline cover the entire premises of the peninsula adding more appeal to the already beautiful setting.

### Front Elevation

The north elevation is asymmetrical with four Tuscan columns supporting a gable-roof tiled porte-cochere that served as the unloading area for guests arriving in automobiles. The six-panel double wood-doors are centrally located under the porte-cochere. The front entryway is flanked on each side by two six-light casement windows crowned with two-light transom. The two casements to the east of the porch are divided by a small one-story bay projection that appears to be purely ornamental. Located directly above the bay is a ribbon of four six-light casements with transoms. Two four-light stationary windows flanked by six-light casements are located directly above the porte-cochere. The second-story is then fenestrated by a ribbon of three six-light casement windows with transoms.

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Moving west along the first-floor of the building, a large bay projection constructed of limestone extends from the building and is fenestrated by a ribbon of three large casement windows in the front and an individual casement on both sides. The bay has a flat top which creates a balcony that features an iron balustrade and is accessed through an upper-level door. Five casement windows are located on both the first and second story of the house. Varying in size and pane configuration, the upper-story window matches its first-story counterpart. The door is oak with massive black hinges and a matching door knocker. Immediately to the right of the front door arch, a small 1'x2' arched leaded glass window lends balance to the façade.

The west portion of the façade is comprised of a one-story five-stall garage. It is constructed out of the same buff brick as the rest of the elevation and features a pent roof covered in tile. The top of the garage serves as a second-story patio and is surrounded with an iron balustrade. The garage area served as the kitchen for the restaurant and during that period all of the stalls were enclosed with stucco.

### West Elevation

The west elevation is made up of the end of the garage. There are two casement windows and a door which leads out to a patio atop the garage. This is the only side of the home that does not face lakefront.

### South Elevation

The south elevation faces the lake and opens out onto a large stone terrace. The terrace features a fountain, planters and other outdoor sculpture original to the home's construction. The house takes its "L" shape from the south elevation where a back wing projects from the main section of the building near the west end of the elevation. A loggia, featuring four arched openings makes up the exterior wall of the home's main wing. Two of the arches have been enclosed with wood, one of which includes a back doorway. The other two have been enclosed with large windows. A shed roof extends from the south projecting wing; it has been enclosed with glass and converted to indoor living space. A fourth arch makes up the south wall of the loggia and has also been enclosed with glass. The base of each arch is in the form of limestone Tuscan columns. Four ribbons of three eight-light casement windows crowned by two-light transoms and an individual casement window fenestrate the second-story on the primary wing of the house. The south projecting wing is fenestrated by a ribbon of three eight-light casement windows.

The south wall of the south projecting wing features a large stationary window flanked on each side by eight-light casement windows. Decorative ironwork adorns the building above the stationary window. Another small loggia with a single arch is located at the southeast corner of the building. It has been enclosed and converted to an entryway. It is sheltered under a flat roof that is encircled by a concrete balustrade.

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Located a short distance down the hillside, another large loggia leading out onto a veranda was converted into a dining area for the restaurant. A fairly large sunroom was added to the outside of the loggia concealing it from the exterior. As one enters the sunroom from the interior, you can view all of the arches and columns, which have been left in place.

### East Elevation

The east elevation affords a panoramic view of the lake. A concrete swimming pad and boat landing are located at water's edge. The home can either be reached through a tunnel located in a stone grotto, or up a double staircase leading to the concrete terrace that wraps around the three lake-facing sides of the home. The east facing elevation features an enclosed arch that was once part of a loggia on the southeast corner of the house. Approximately half of the elevation is made up of the home's south wing. A ribbon of five eight-light casement windows fenestrate the building on both the first and second stories. The wing features a centrally located door flanked by large iron lamps. Two six-light casement windows are located directly above the door. Moving north, another ribbon of five eight-light casement windows fenestrate the building on both the first and second story.

The main wing section of the east elevation is fenestrated on the first story by two pairs of eight-light casement windows. The second story is fenestrated by two pairs of eight-light casement windows crowned with two-light transoms.

### Interior

The home was built in five levels. The first level encompassed a stone grotto with an entrance to a tunnel leading 70 feet underground into the second level. The second level was historically composed of a private bar, patio area, boiler room and bathroom, for those guests coming in from swimming. The patio was enclosed and became a sunroom that served as a dining area for the restaurant. Climbing up a short staircase, the third level consists of a dining room and small balcony area overlooking the front entrance. Spanish tile from Mexico covers the floor. A vaulted ceiling with molded plaster encompasses this secluded dining room.

The fourth level includes the main living room and sun rooms/sitting rooms. The main living room features beautiful checkerboard marble-flooring and hand plastered cove ceiling lights. A large fireplace is detailed with hand molded ceramic tile. A 14 foot tall mirror over the mantel was a wedding gift of the Lyell's. Jazz plaster, a concept where plaster and paint were applied in one step, dominate the walls throughout the house. The cathedral ceiling is complimented by large arched windows facing the lake. A small room located adjacent to the living room served as Mr. Lyell's study. A quaint fireplace and french doors grace the room. The adjoining room is a sun room with large iron-framed windows facing the lake.

A beautiful staircase located in the foyer leads up to the fifth level. Three bedrooms, a sitting room, and a quiet room, used as a nursery, are located on this level. A master bedroom and sitting room with a balcony



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are located to the left at the top of the stairs. The bath has green Carrara glass tile imported from Mexico, and is accentuated by a beautiful etched picture over the bathtub.

Other interesting interior items include a 300 year old Viennese chandelier in the main living room. It was acquired in San Francisco and had been located in the Bertelli Mansion. The Bertelli family founded the Bank of California during the Gold Rush. Numerous other antiques from Mrs. Jacquelin Smith's private collection decorate the house. Other items include a six foot long full sounding music box, originally made for Queen Victoria, and a lovely statue named the Venus de Medicini from Carrara, Italy, was sculpted in 1870. All of the original bedroom furniture and furnishings are being installed back into the home.

### Outbuildings

The Lyell's had installed an amazing water system that pumped water from the lake thru an underground pipe system that is still in use today. A stone well house served as a wash room and pump house for water purification and irrigation. It features casement windows and a tile roof. It is a contributing resource.

A large boathouse was built on the property after the house was constructed. It was built in the same style as the house and was used to build Coast Guard boats during WWII. The boathouse had an entire house added onto it in the 1970s. It is no longer under the same ownership as the house and is not included in the nomination, yet it deserves mentioning.

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## Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

The Van Lyell House was built in 1931 at the same time construction was in progress on Carpenter Dam, and was the first home to be built on Lake Hamilton. It is **locally significant** under **Criterion C** by virtue of being the best example of the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture in its area of Hot Springs. Located in an area dominated by modern condominiums, it survives as one of the few historic homes in its general area of Lake Hamilton.

### ELABORATION

Mr. Van Lyell and his wife, Frances, formerly of Ziegfeld Follies, moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas, from New York in 1927. Upon their arrival he purchased the Coca-Cola franchise in Hot Springs. At the time, a franchise area was established by how far a horse-drawn wagon full of cola could be drawn in one direction and come back in one day. This turned out to be a ten-mile diameter.

By 1929 Mr. Lyell had acquired vast holdings of property in Hot Springs. At the time Carpenter Dam was being built Mr. Lyell decided to build an estate fashioned after a Mediterranean Villa on the soon to be created Lake Hamilton. As the house rose and Carpenter Dam began to hold back water the hill on which the home was being built quickly became a three-acre peninsula. He used the house as a lake getaway for business, personal recreation, and entertaining. It is rumored that even gangsters frequented the retreat.

The home was not built on the simplest of sites. The foundation was cut out by a team of mules with a cutting sled. Laborers were rounded up in the city each day to do the more physically demanding work. It was built in five levels up the side of the hill from Lake Hamilton. In WWII, the Coast Guard used a boathouse that was at that time part of the property to construct boats.

The house remained in the family until 1971 when Dr. William Smith and his wife Jacquelin purchased the home and named it Hamilton House. It served as a fine dining establishment until September 2003 when it closed its doors. The house was recently transferred over to their daughter, Dr. Marion Smith, who plans to restore the home to its original decor. She plans to open the house as a bed and breakfast later this year.

Located in an area dominated by modern condominiums, the Van Lyell House survives as one of the few historic homes in its general area of Lake Hamilton. This unique property is a vital link to the history of Hot Springs as the first home constructed on Lake Hamilton. Looking across the lake today, one finds it hard to fathom that less than seventy-five years ago only one house stood on its shores, the Van Lyell House.

### Statement of Significance

Built in 1931 at the same time construction was in progress on Carpenter Dam, the Van Lyell House was the first to be built on Lake Hamilton. It is **locally significant** under **Criterion C** by virtue of being the best example of the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture in its area of Hot Springs. Located in an area dominated by modern condominiums, it survives as one of the few historic homes in its general area of Lake Hamilton.

Lyell, Van. House

Name of Property

Garland County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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### Bibliography

Correspondence from Jacquelin Smith to Frances Lyell.

Lyell family records.

Smith family records.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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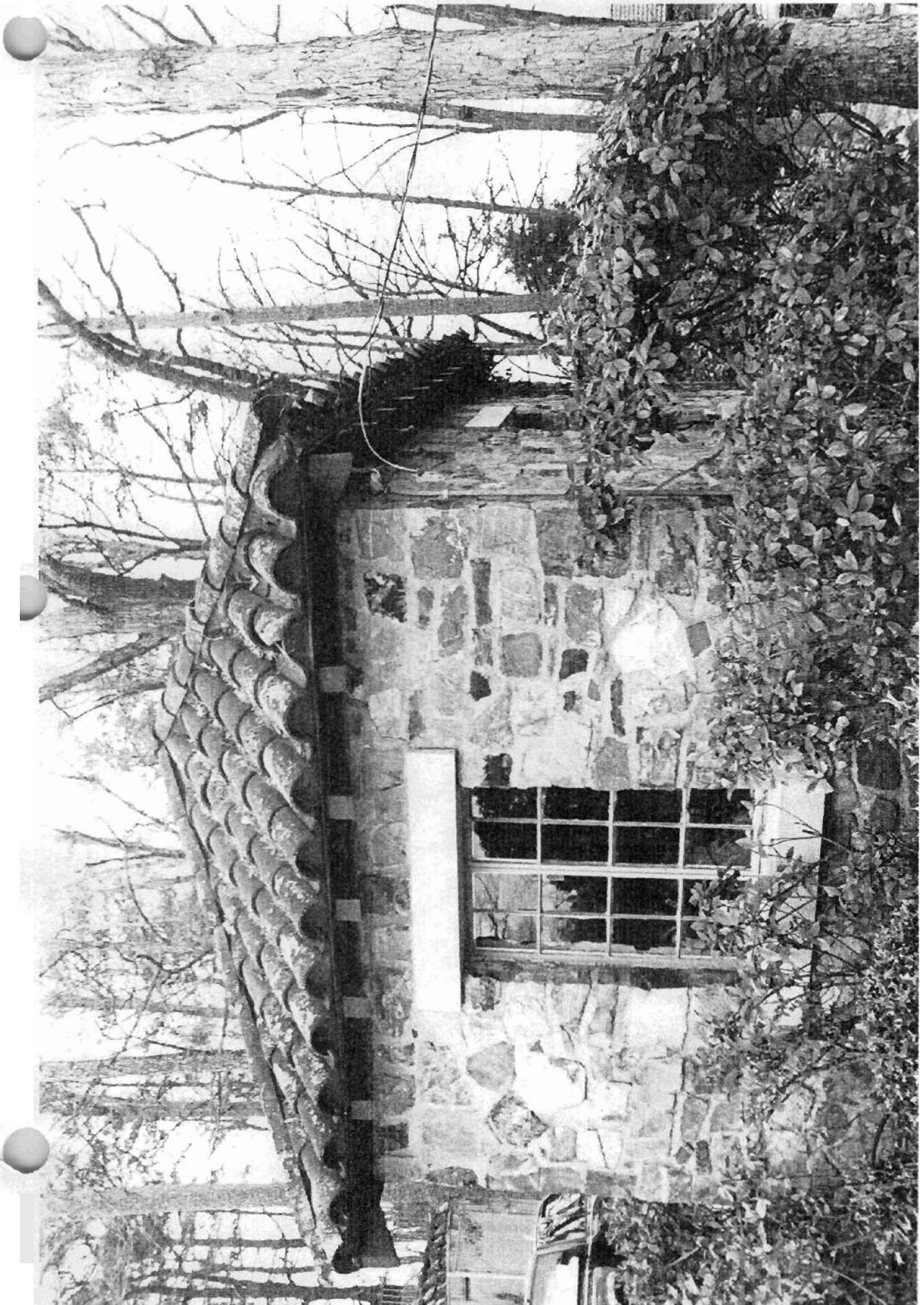
Section number 10 Page 1

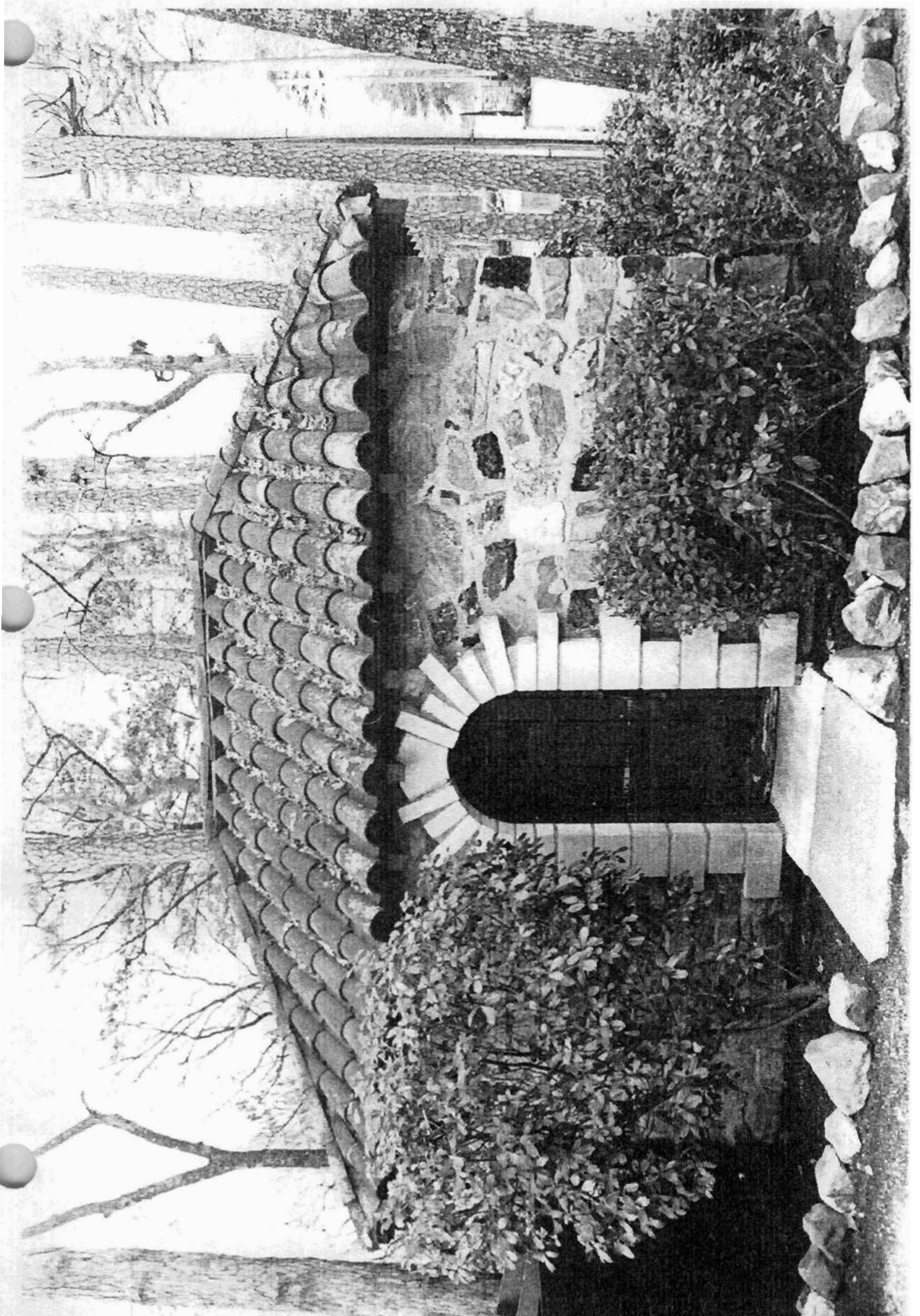
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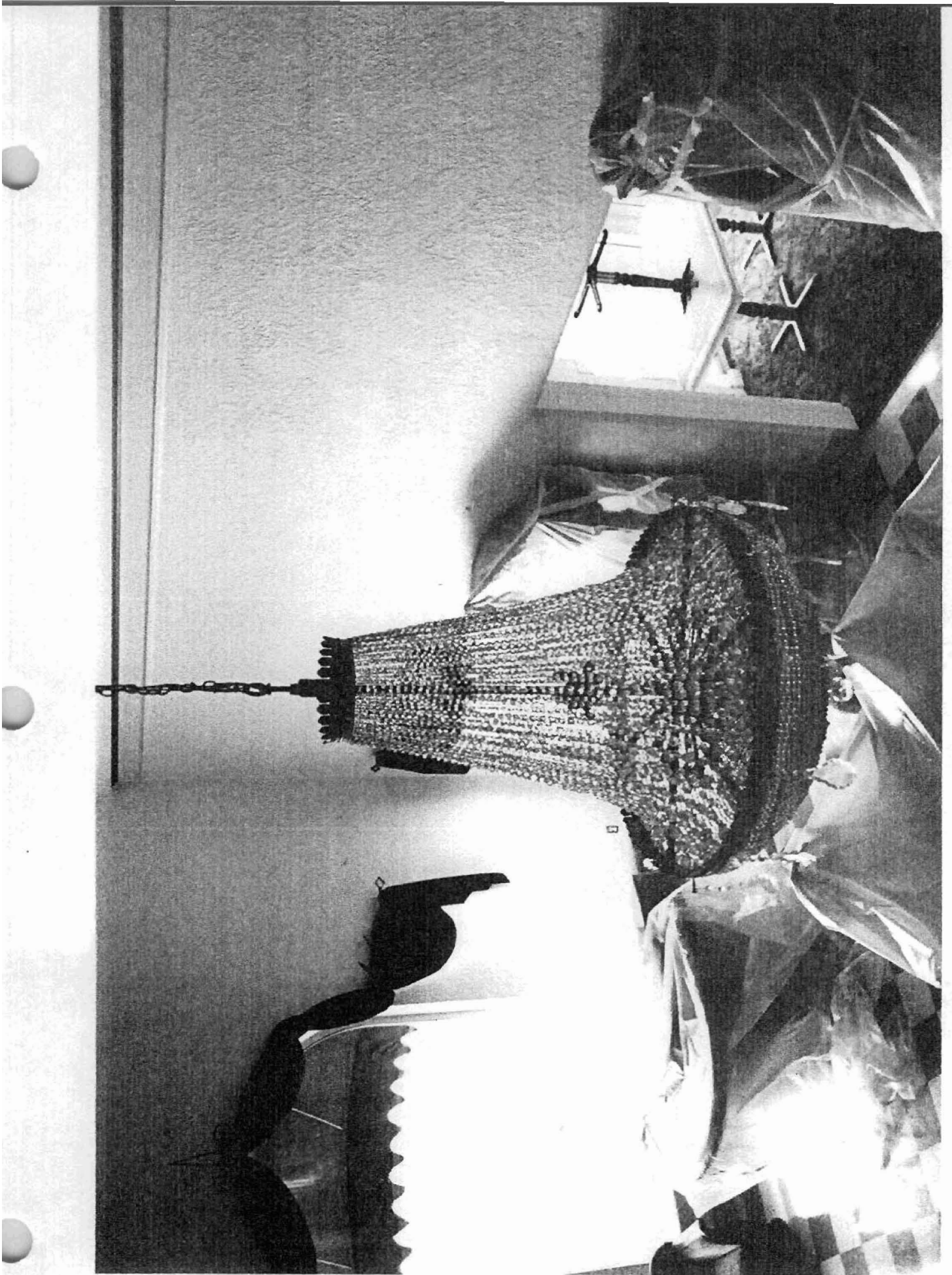
PART OF THE SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  OF SECTION 30, TOWNSHIP 3S, RANGE 19W, GARLAND COUNTY, ARKANSAS. BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENSING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; RUN THENCE NORTH 00°00'00" EAST (RELATIVE TO ARKANSAS STATE PLANE GRID, SOUTH ZONE) 576.01 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 90°00'00" EAST 876.36 FEET TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE TRACT OF LAND CONVEYED TO STEPHEN DESALVO BY THE WARRANTY DEED RECORDED IN BOOK 1151 PAGE 784 OF THE RECORDS OF DEEDS AND MORTGAGES OF GARLAND COUNTY, ARKANSAS (FOUND  $\frac{3}{4}$  INCH PIPE); THENCE NORTH 88°21'49" EAST 100.00 FEET TO A #5 REBAR SET AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID DESALVO TRACT AND TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE NORTH 03°54'49" EAST 103.77 FEET TO A 1 INCH PIPE FOUND ON THE EAST LINE OF SAID DESALVO TRACT AT OR NEAR THE NORTHEAST CORNER THEREOF; THENCE CONTINUE NORTH 03°54'49" EAST 19.99 FEET TO THE 195-FOOT ELEVATION CONTOUR OF LAKE HAMILTON; THENCE FOLLOWING SAID 395-FOOT CONTOUR EASTERLY, SOUTHERLY, AND WESTERLY FOR A DISTANCE OF 830 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A POINT 8.21 FEET SOUTH 07°48'07" EAST OF THE END OF A WROUGHT IRON FENCE AT A SEAWALL; THENCE NORTH 07°48'07" WEST 54.00 FEET TO A SET #5 REBAR & CAP (SPURLIN PLS #1023); THENCE NORTH 53°36'03" WEST 188.62 FEET TO A SET #5 REBAR & CAP (SPURLIN PLS #1023); THENCE NORTH 88°54'08" WEST 64.96 FEET TO A SET #5 REBAR AND CAP (SPURLIN PLS #1023) THENCE SOUTH 07°39'43" WEST 43.68 FEET TO A SET #5 REBAR & CAP (SPURLIN PLS #1023); THENCE NORTH 86°59'03" WEST 69.86 FEET TO A SET #5 REBAR & CAP (SPURLIN PLS #1023) SET AT A CHAIN-LINK FENCE; THENCE NORTH 02°45'43" EAST 115.40 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. CONTAINING 2.706 ACRES, MORE OR LESS.

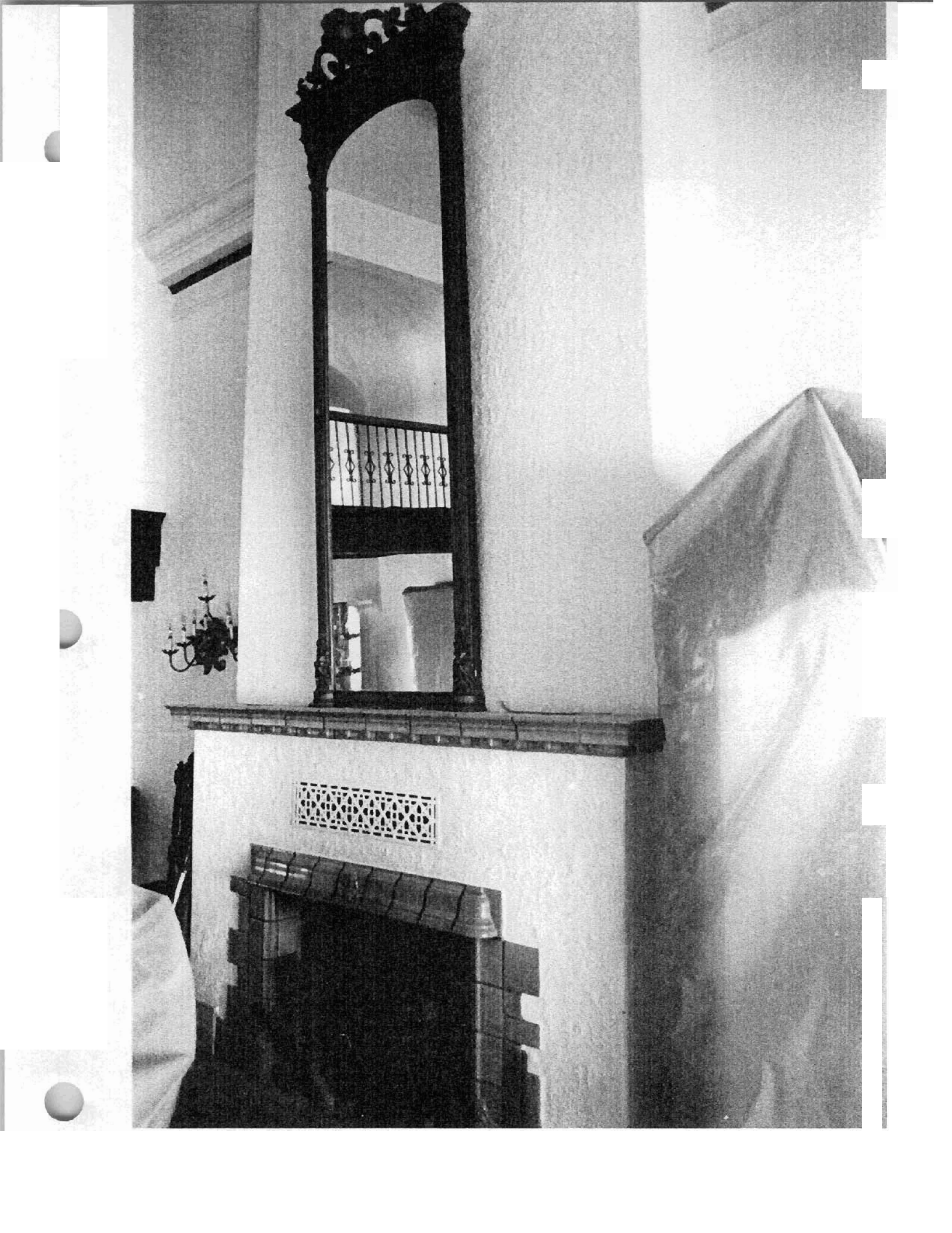
### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all resources historically associated with the residence that retain integrity and that are still included as part of the deed to the property.



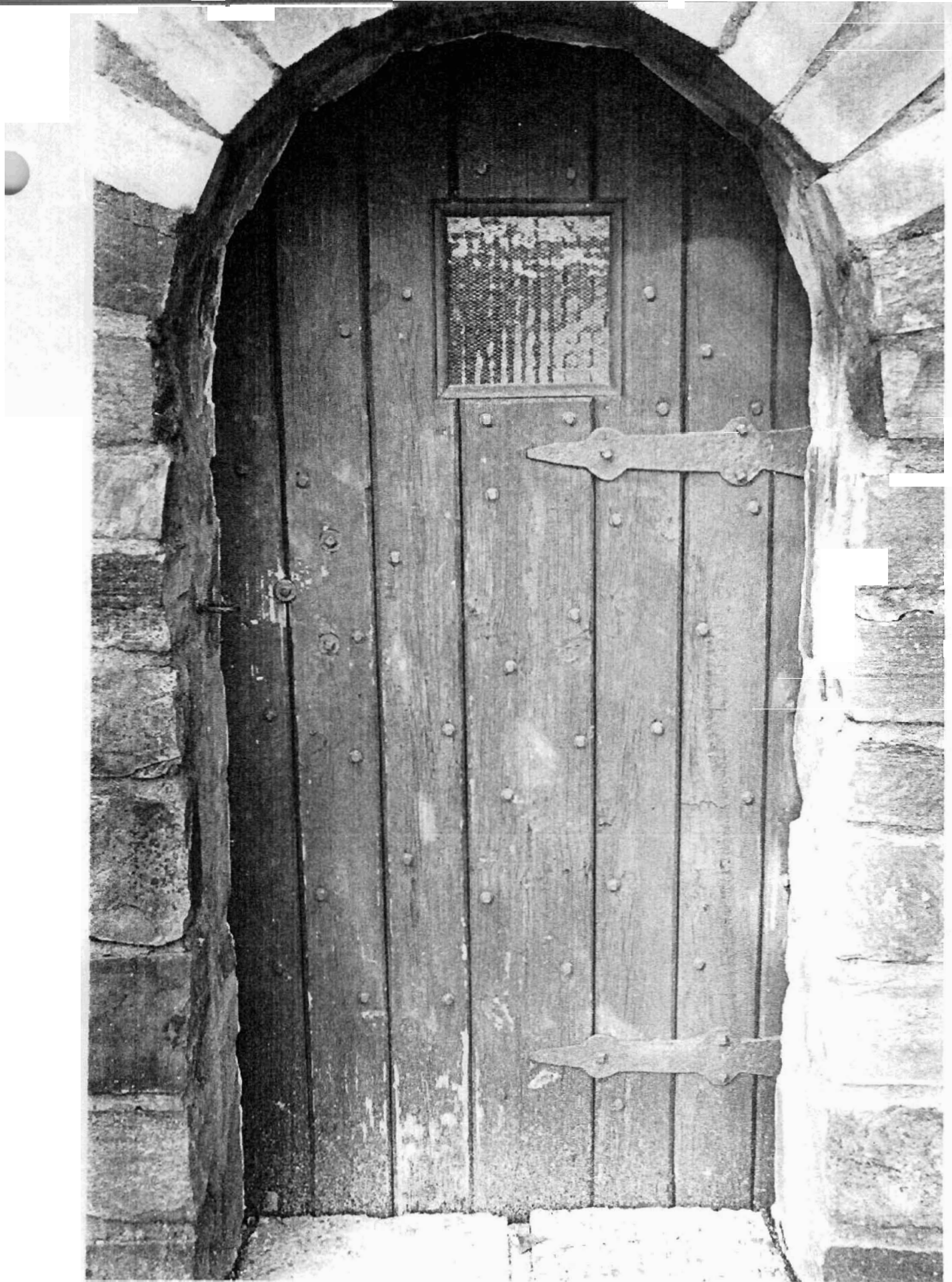


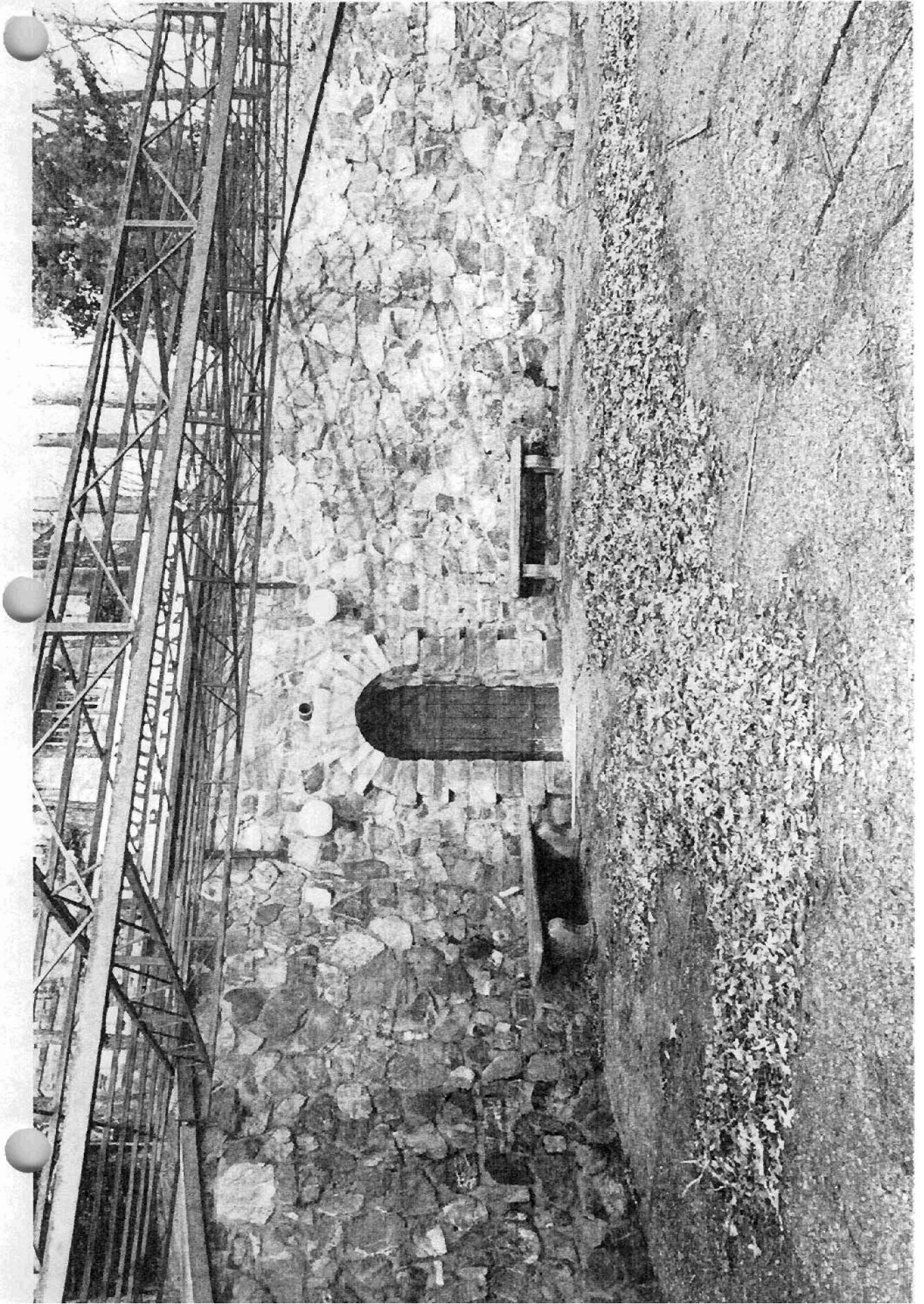


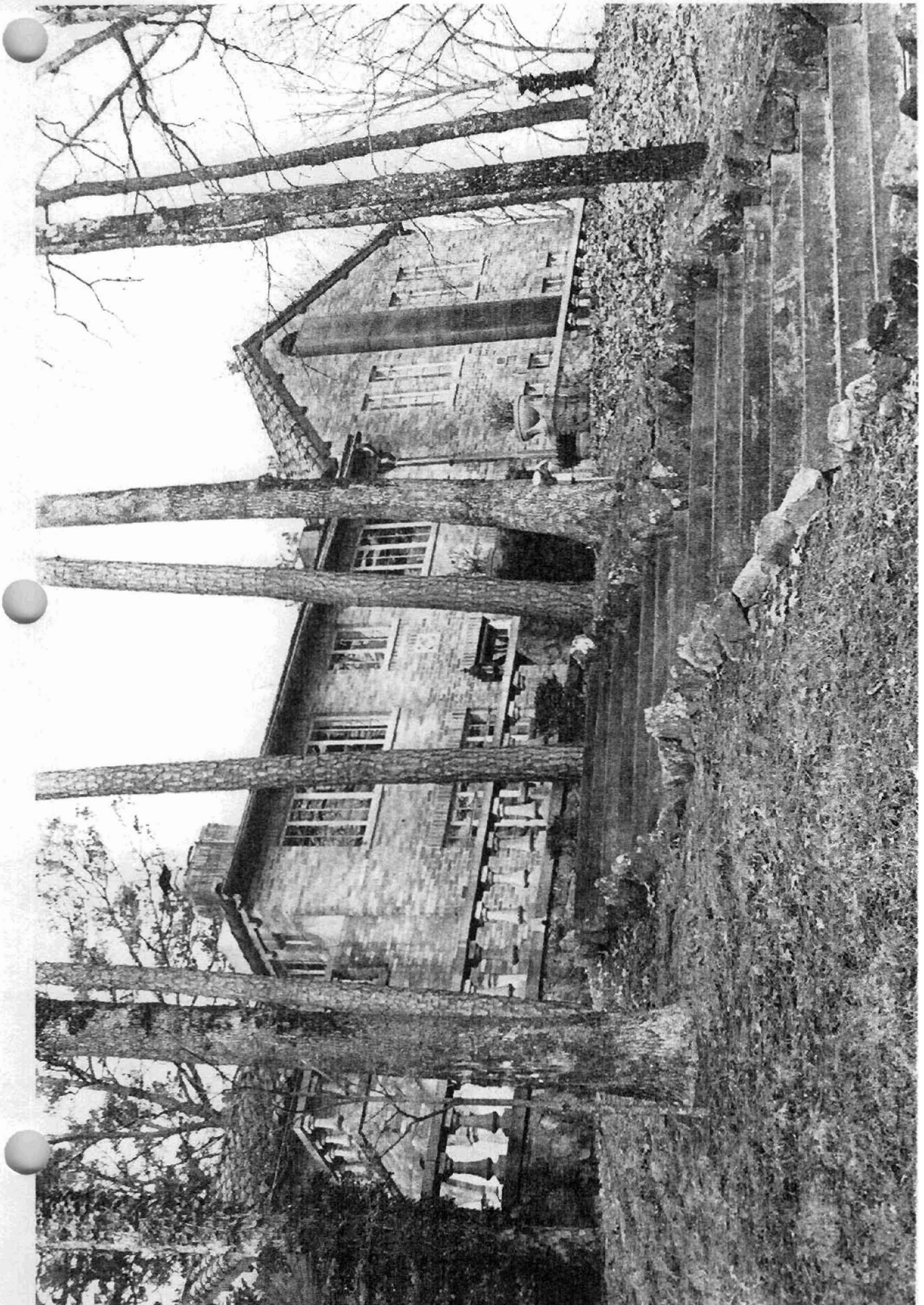


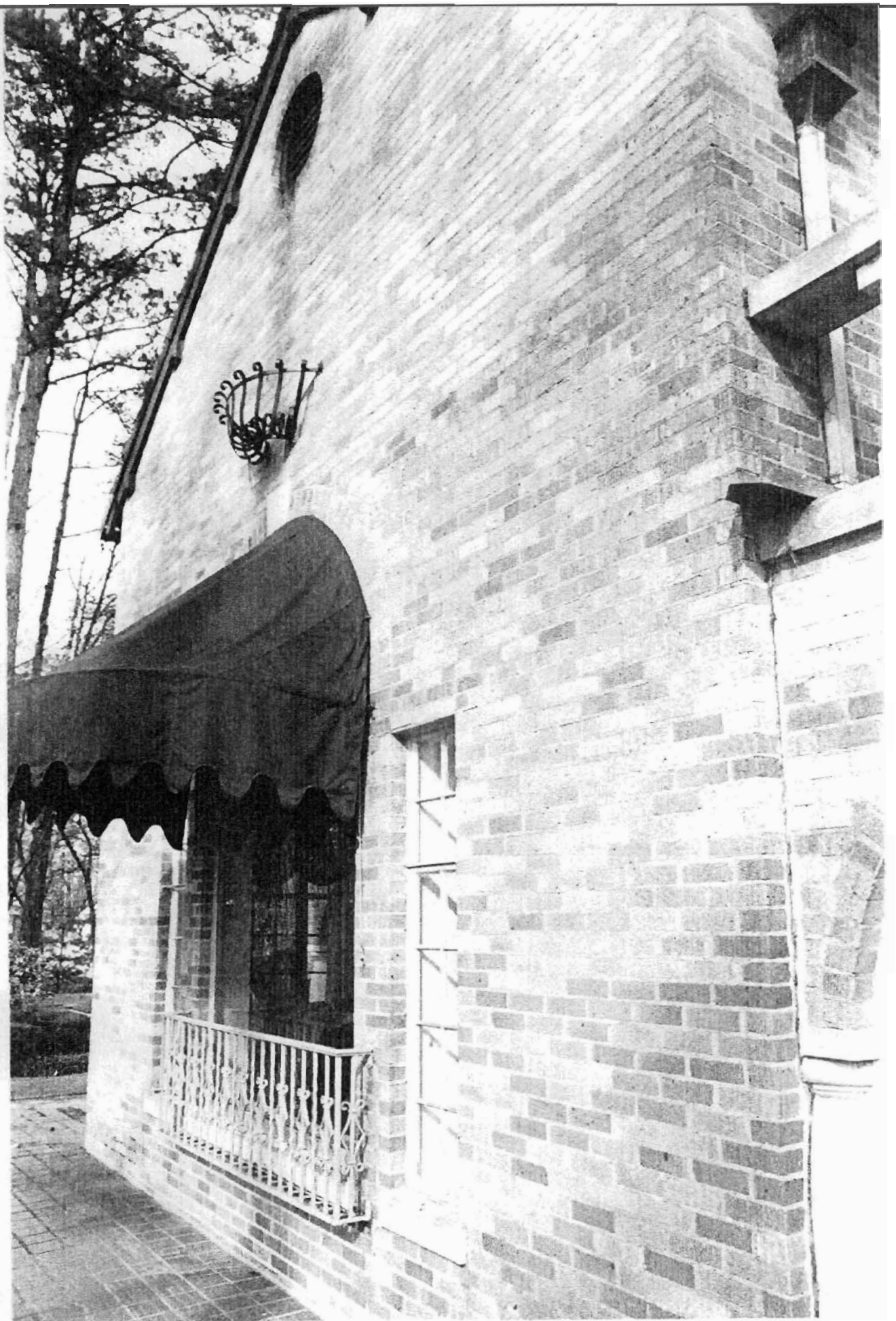


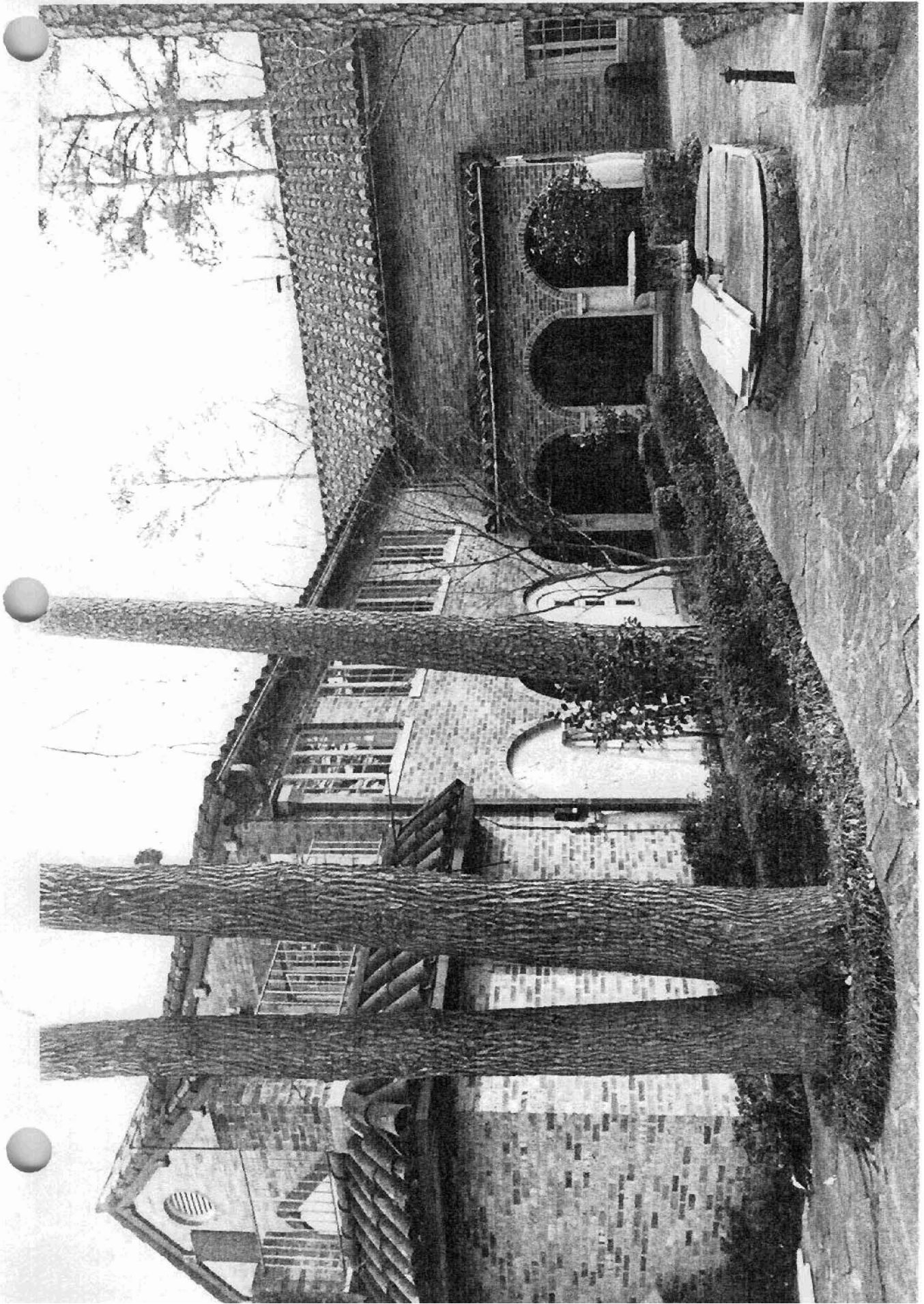




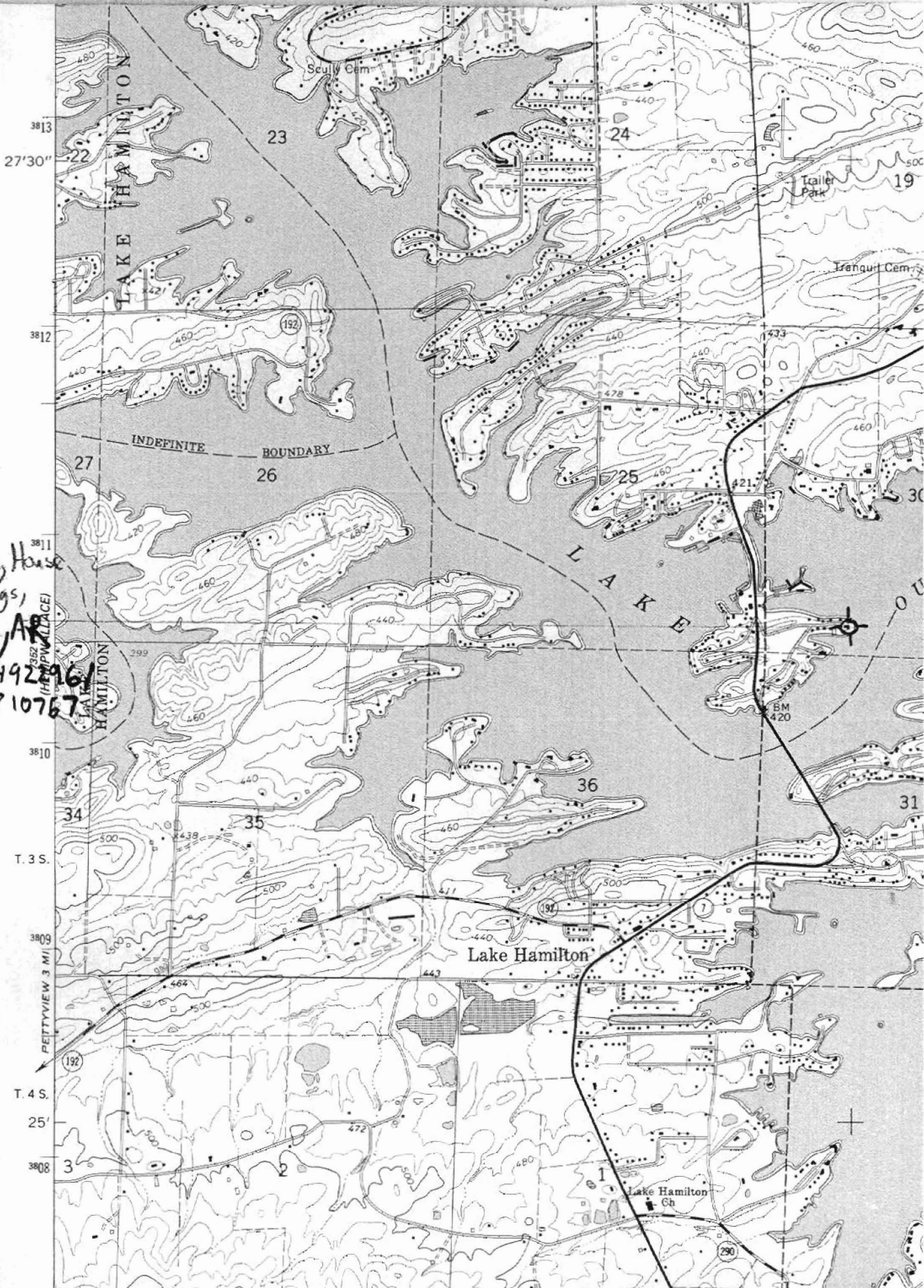












Lyell, Van, House  
Hot Springs,  
General Co, AR  
UTM: 15/492196  
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