

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received JAN 20 1982

date entered FEB 19 1982

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic _____

and/or common Phelps-Jones House

2. Location

street & number 6112 Pulaski Pike _____ not for publication

city, town Huntsville _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 5th

state Alabama code 01 county Madison code 089

3. Classification

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Walter B. Jones (née Hazel Phelps) tel. 205-852-4813

street & number 6112 Pulaski Pike

city, town Huntsville _____ vicinity of _____ state AL 35810

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Probate Office, Madison County Courthouse

street & number Court Square

city, town Huntsville _____ state AL 35810

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title TARCOG Historical-Architectural Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 1974 regional federal state county local

depository for survey records TARCOG Office, 350 Central Bank Building

city, town Huntsville _____ state AL 35810

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" 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 Phelps-Jones house is situated on the north side of the historic Pulaski Pike, facing the lower slopes of Drake Mountain. Behind the house, the land falls away into a small cove which gradually merges southeastward into a broad valley. Originally located some six miles northwest of Huntsville's courthouse square, the Phelps-Jones house now lies within the western suburbs of the city. Despite the proximity of tract housing, a pastoral air still hovers about the dwelling, which is heavily screened by trees and shrubs.

The main block of the house rises two stories above an ashlar foundation. To the north-east rear, there is a one-and-a-half story ell. The symmetrical, five-bay facade is fifty feet long and is laid in Flemish bond. Common bond and a lower grade of brick is employed at the sides and rear. A single exterior chimney with stepped weatherings and corbeled cap terminates each gable end, while a similar chimney abuts the rear wall of the ell. A small gabled porch shelters a doorway the opening of which, while retaining its original dimensions, is filled with a much later transom. The porch itself has been rebuilt, although the original pediment and the upper part of the chamfered wooden supports were retained above a modern concrete floor and masonry coping.

Inside, a short axial hallway upstairs and down is flanked by a single room to each side roughly 18 by 18 feet in dimension. From the northwest corner of the main hall, an L-shaped balustraded stair with scrolled volute rises in reverse flight to the second floor. A doorway at the front of the steps opens onto the now-enclosed back gallery, occupying the reentrant angle between the ell and the main block. A large rectangular dining room occupies the ell. In the southeast corner of the dining room, there is an enclosed secondary stair. Directly beneath the stairway, another descends to a basement room which may once have served for dining. Its brick floor is laid in a herringbone pattern, and there is a segmentally arched stone fireplace opening. Between this room and the excavated cellar directly behind -- running beneath the front portion of the house -- is a wide battened door with chamfered crosspieces and wrought-iron strap hinges.

Woodwork throughout the first and second stories is of a provincial Federal character: molded chairrails and narrow molded architraves with cyma backbanding; Christian doors with panels variously beaded or fielded; and mantelpieces with slender pilasters, break-front cornices, and decorative reeding. Floors are ash downstairs; poplar on the second floor. Sills are of cedar. Much early hardware -- hinges and locks, as well as slide-bolts -- also remains. The half-story chamber over the dining room preserves a mantel-piece still painted its original black.

Behind the ell, an open passage formerly separated the house from a gabled kitchen dependency -- unusual for Alabama in its stone construction. A loft area, now brick-veneered, was once built of heavy timber framing with batten sheathing. A massive chimney at the east gable end is stone at the base, with a brick stack and haunches.

About 1956, the passage between the ell and the stone dependency was enclosed to create the present kitchen. Enclosed at the same time were the porches at the rear and along the east side. It was at this time that the frame superstructure of the stone dependency was rebuilt in brick. Interior doors and mantels were also stripped and varnished. No further changes of note have occurred since the early 20th century.

8. 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates ca. 1818-20 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Phelps-Jones house is one of the oldest buildings in Alabama that can be said to possess the lineaments of academic "style." In a strictly chronological sense, the house belongs to the Federal period. Its exterior finish thus reflects in much-modified form the Adamesque motifs of that era. But its general form and character exude a stolid Georgian quality that still belongs to the 18th century. The house bears witness to a conservative building tradition that long persisted away from the wellsprings of shifting architectural taste, a conservatism that was translated westward with the advancing frontier by country builders from the Atlantic states. Certain features of the house -- the heavy muntins of window-sashing set into molded box frames, the subtle diminution of window openings themselves from the first to the second story, Flemish-bond brickwork that is relieved by gauged and rubbed lintels, the box cornice with multiple runs of cyma molding beneath, the lamb's tongue chamfer that embellishes the porch supports -- belong to a tradition of craftsmanship that had changed little since the Revolution. Relatively unaltered over the course of a century and a half, the Phelps-Jones house stands at the very root of Alabama's formal architectural development, linking it to broader currents of North American practice.

* * * * *

The earliest history of the house is obscure. The site itself is part of a tract acquired by John Fletcher, a Virginian, in 1810 at the Federal land sales for Madison County. Another Virginian, James Browning, bought the land in 1818, and an increase in its tax valuation soon afterward suggests that the house may have been constructed by Browning about that time. Smitten with "Texas fever," Browning left Alabama for the Southwest in 1836. The house changed hands several times until in 1857 it became the property of John E. Laughinghouse. Throughout this period and into the 20th century, the surrounding acreage remained in cultivation. Charles E. Phelps, grandfather of the present owner, purchased the property in 1900. In spite of necessary modifications since that time, the historic character of the house has been, for the most part, maintained.

The Phelps-Jones house has no exact counterpart in the area. But its basic demeanor and certain details seem to link it to a handful of other brick structures in Huntsville surviving from the territorial and early statehood period: the Leroy Pope house of circa 1814 (as it originally stood), and the Weeden and Bassett houses. Conceivably, all of these undertakings could have utilized many of the same craftsmen. No other domestic ensemble of comparable vintage and, at the same time, of comparable quality exists anywhere in the state today.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Gamble, Robert S. Architectural notes and photographs,
Jones, Harvie P. Architectural notes, photographs, and drawings (Alabama Historical Commission files).
Stubno, William. Historical notes from Madison County court records.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 4.132

Quadrangle name Meridianville

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UMT References

A 16 534800 3850800
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the intersection of Pulaski Pike & Cedar Point Dr., thence NW along N side of said Pike app. 200' to the True Point of Beginning; thence due N 700' to a pt.; thence due W 400' to a pt.; thence due S app. 250' or to the N side of Pulaski Pike; thence SE along said Pike to the True Pt. of beginning. Includes hse., grounds.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert S. Gamble, Architectural Historian
 (for) Alabama Historical Commission date Dec. 1980
 organization Alabama Historical Commission
 street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 205-832-6621
 city or town Montgomery state AL 36130

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

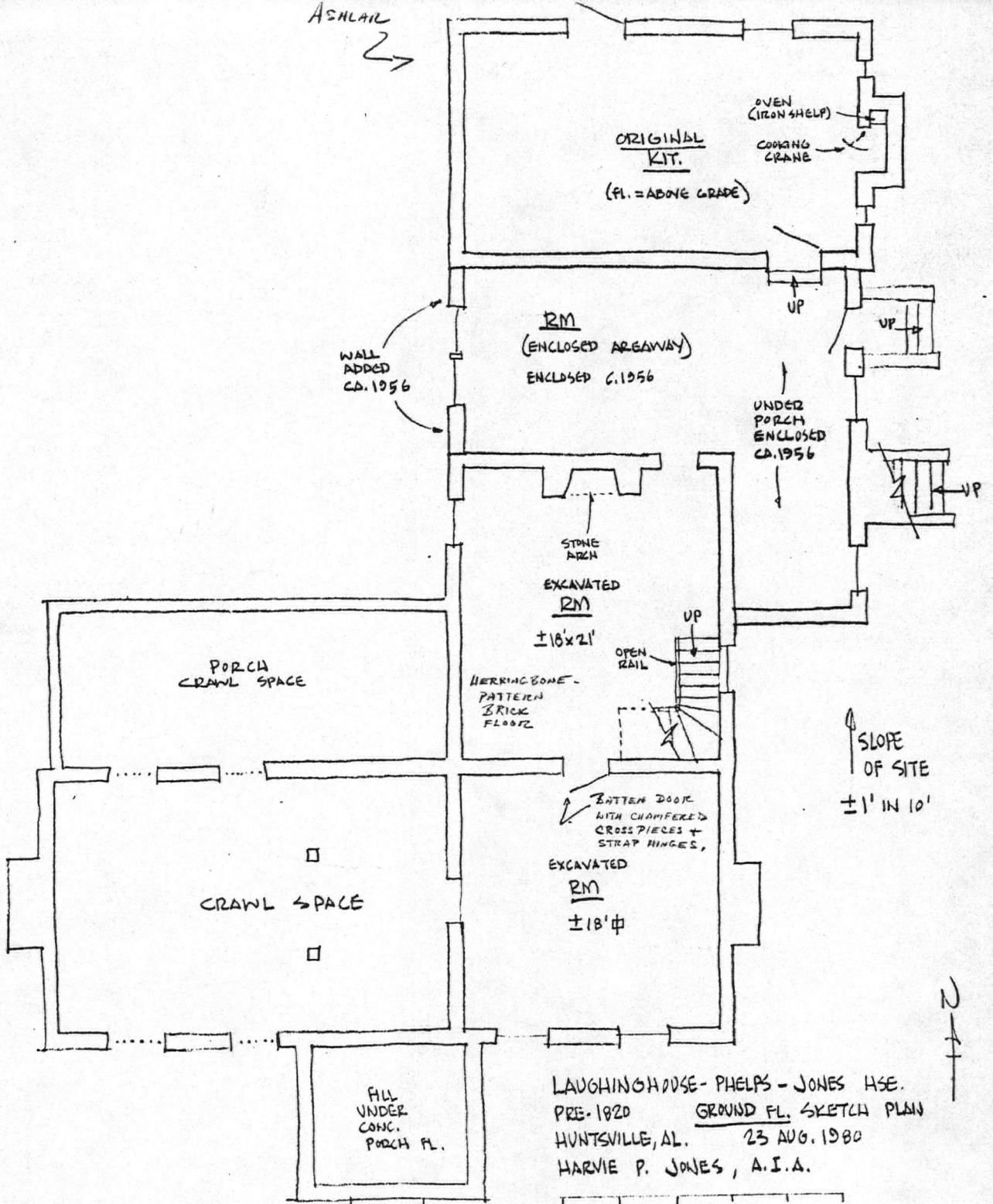
national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 1-6-82

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Entered in the National Register
 date 2/19/82
 Keeper of the National Register [Signature]
 Attest: date
 Chief of Registration



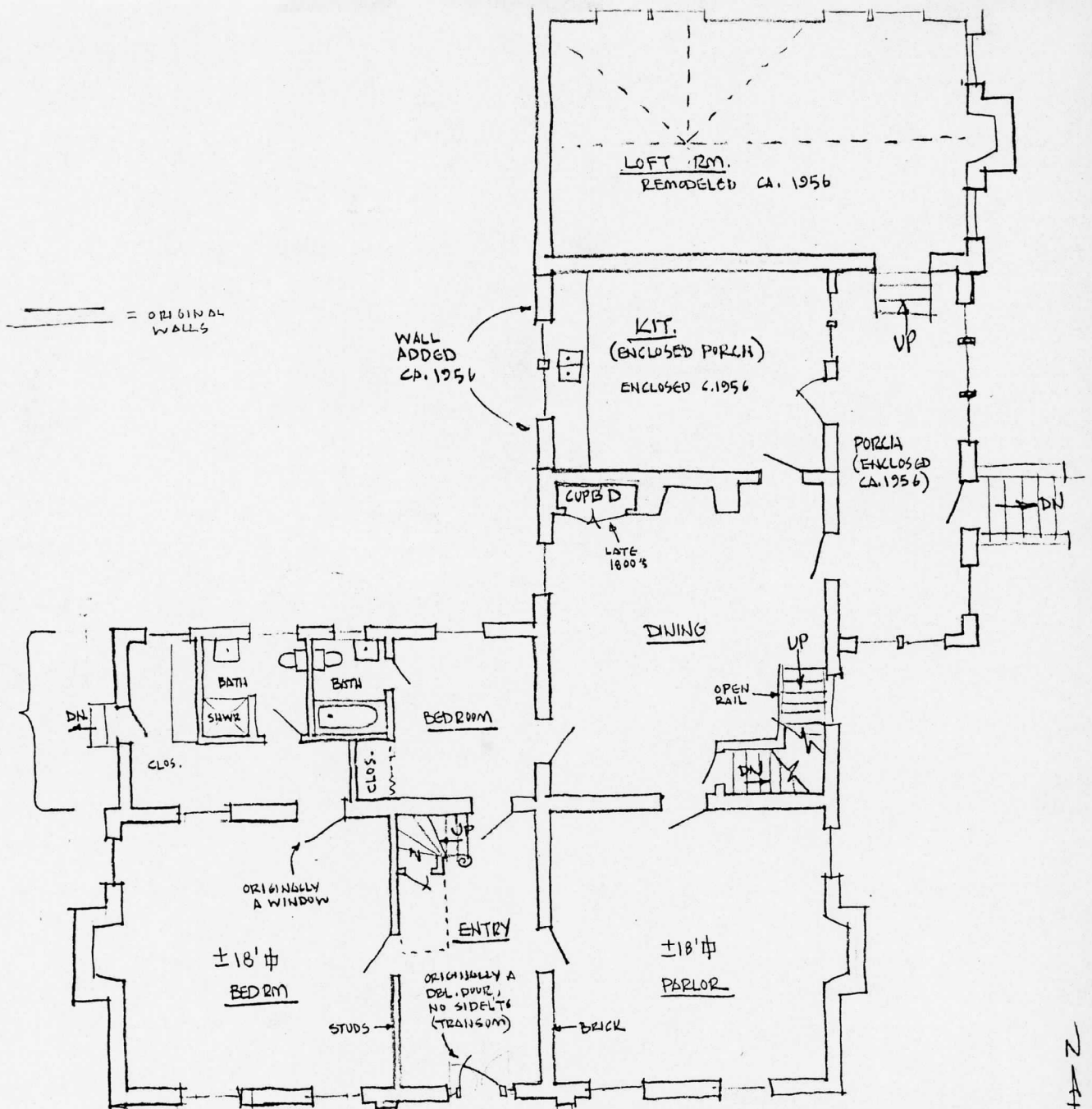
LAUGHINGHOUSE-PHELPS-JONES HSE.
 PRE-1820 GROUND FL. SKETCH PLAN
 HUNTSVILLE, AL. 23 AUG. 1980
 HARVIE P. JONES, A.I.A.

0 4 8 12 16 20 FT.
 APPROX. SCALE

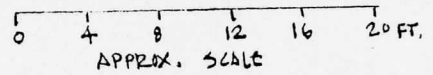
ADDITIONAL NOTES BY ROBERT GAMBLE
 DEC. 1980



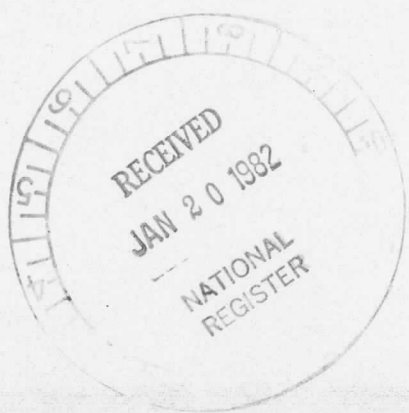
FEB 19 1982



LAUGHINGHOUSE-PHELPS-JONES HSE.
 PRE 1820 MAIN FL. SKETCH PLAN
 HUNTSVILLE, AL. 23 AUG. 1980
 HARVE P. JONES, A.I.A.

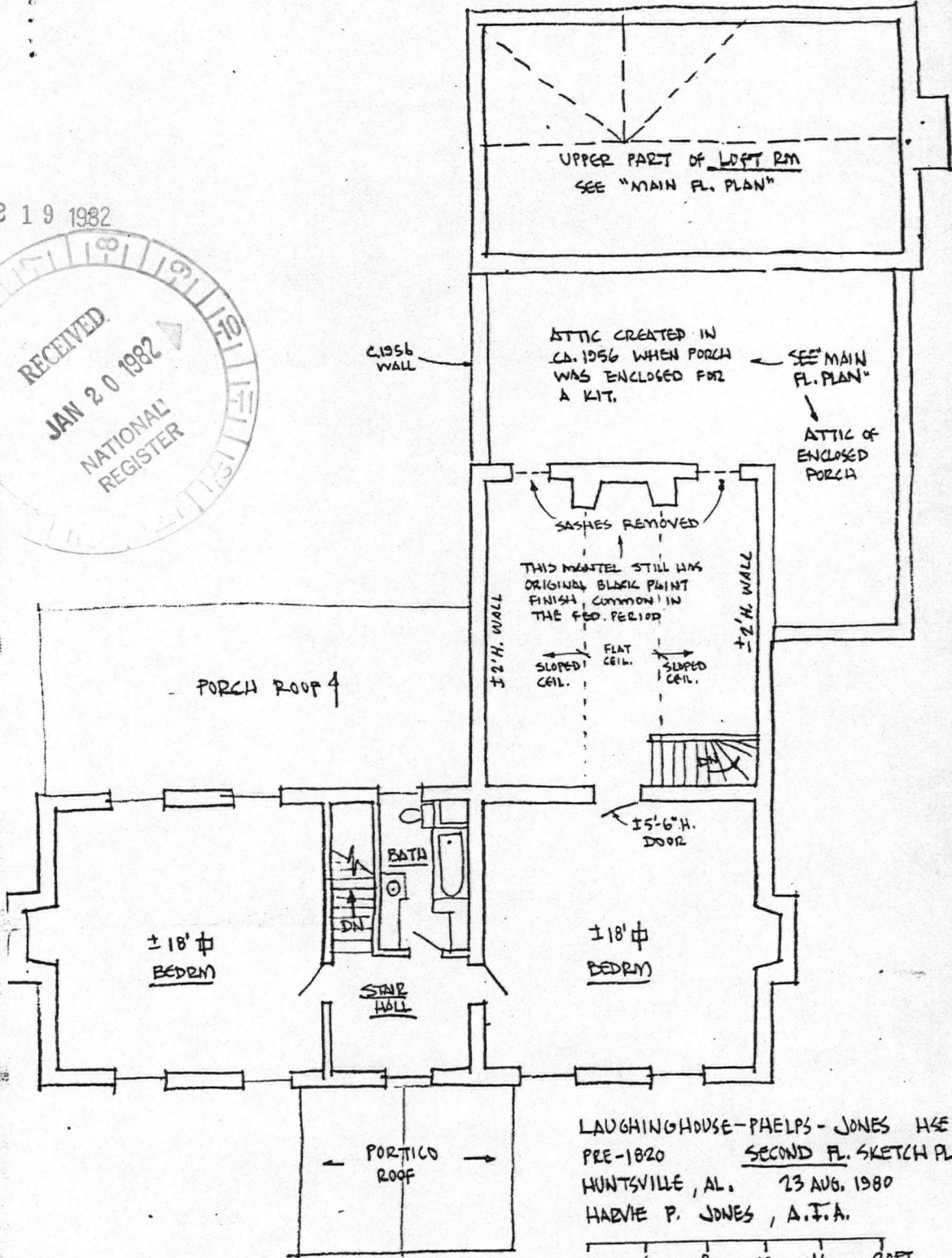
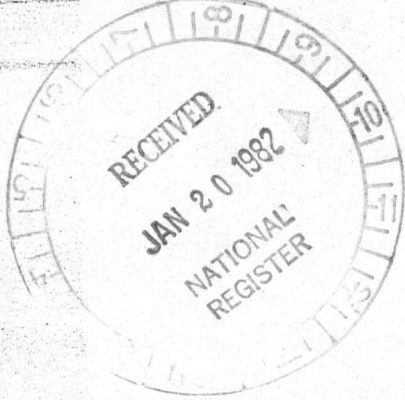


ADDITIONAL NOTES BY ROBERT GAMBLE
 DEC. 1980



FEB 19 1982

FEB 19 1982



LAUGHINGHOUSE-PHELPS-JONES HSE.
PRE-1920 SECOND FL. SKETCH PLAN
HUNTSVILLE, AL. 23 AUG. 1980
HARVE P. JONES, A.I.A.

0 4 8 12 16 20 FT.
APPROX. SCALE



Phelps-Jones House
Huntsville, Madison County
Alabama

E. Mertins, 1978
Alabama Historical Commission

Facade; photographer faces north

Photo #1/5

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Phelps-Jones House
Huntsville, Madison County

E. Mertins, 1978
Alabama Historical Commission

3/4 view of facade and east
elevation

Photo #2/5

FEB 19 1982

JAN 20 1982



Phelps-Jones House
Huntsville, Madison County
Alabama

E. Mertins, 1978
Alabama Historical Commission

East wall of original kitchen

Photo # 3/5

FEB 19 1982

JAN 20 1982



Phelps-Jones House
Huntsville, Madison County
Alabama

E. Mertins, 1978
Alabama Historical Commission

View toward southeast showing,
ell, rear porch and enclosed
porch

Photo #4/5

FEB 19 1982 JAN 20 1982



Phelps-Jones House
Huntsville, Madison County
Alabama

E. Mertins, 1978
Alabama Historical Commission

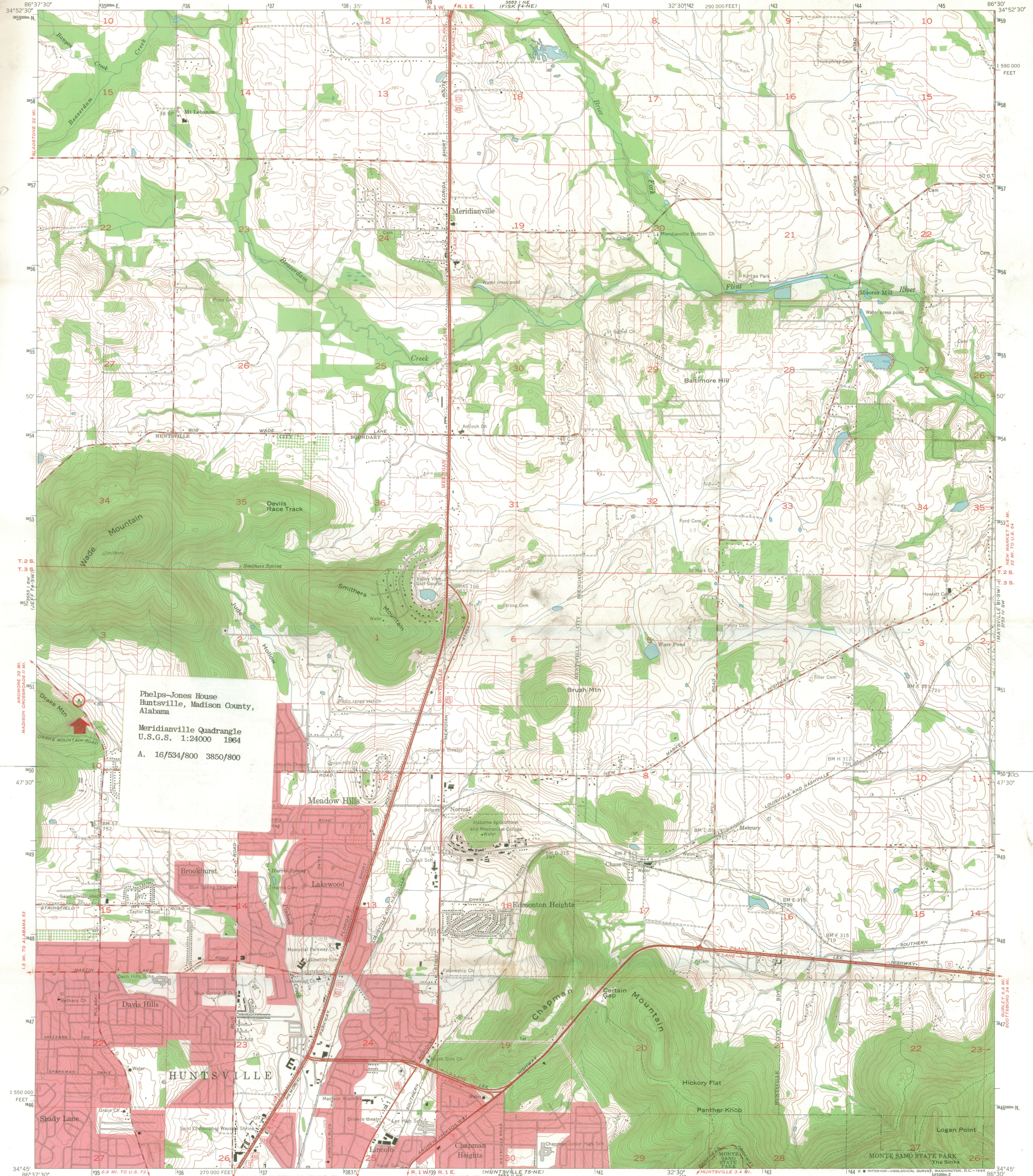
Detail, front entrance, note
narrow sidelights

Photo #5/5

FEB 19 1982

JAN 20 1982

FAYETTEVILLE 19 MI. HAZEL GREEN 4.0 MI. R. 1. E. 3653 1 (FISK 74-NE)

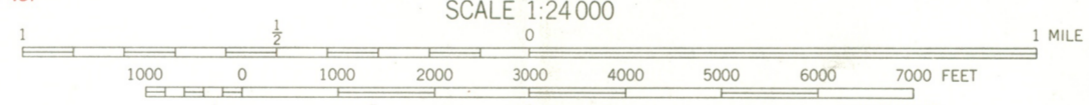
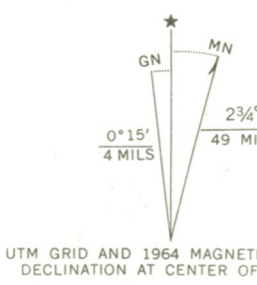


Phelps-Jones House
Huntsville, Madison County,
Alabama
Meridianville Quadrangle
U.S.G.S. 1:24000 1964
A. 16/534/800 3850/800

Mapped and edited by Tennessee Valley Authority
Published by the Geological Survey

Control by USC&GS, USGS, and TVA
Revised by TVA in 1964 by photogrammetric methods using
aerial photographs taken 1961 and by reference to TVA-USGS
quadrangle dated 1951. Map field checked by TVA, 1964

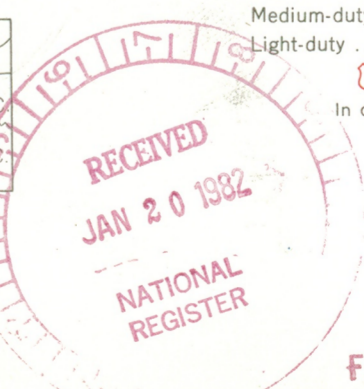
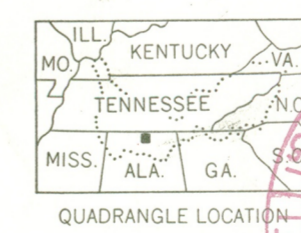
Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Alabama (East)
rectangular coordinate systems
1000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator Grid ticks,
Zone 16, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines
visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DASHED LINES REPRESENT HALF-INTERVAL CONTOURS
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON 25, D.C.
AND BY U.S. TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY, CHATTANOOGA OR KNOXVILLE, TENN.
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Heavy-duty | Poor motor road |
| Medium-duty | Wagon and jeep track |
| Light-duty | Foot trail |
| U.S. Route | State Route |

In developed areas, only through roads are classified

MERIDIANVILLE, ALA.
N3445-W8630/7.5

1964

AMS 3653 1 SE-SERIES V844

FEB 19 1982

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

STATE ALABAMA

Date Entered FEB. 19, 1982

Name

Location

✓ Phelps-Jones House

Huntsville
Madison County

Notified

Honorable Jeremiah Denton
Honorable Howell T. Heflin
Honorable Ronnie G. Flippo
✓ Southeast Regional Office, NPS

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. F. Lawrence Oaks
Executive Director, Alabama Historical
Commission
725 Monroe Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

✓ KJR