

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Vance Farmhouse

other name/site number: Meeks Farmhouse

Dean's House

Bicentennial House

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2. Location

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street & number: Bicentennial House, 1535 Mileground  
West Virginia University

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Morgantown

vicinity: x

state: WV county: Monongalia

code: 61

zip code: 26506

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: University of West Virginia Board of Regents

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
1	0 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National  
Register: none

Name of related multiple property listing: WVU Historic Properties

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Wm. J. ...  
Signature of certifying official

10/16/91  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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 and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this 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 Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
of Action

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## 6. Function or Use

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Historic: Domestic  
Current : Education

Sub: Single Dwelling  
Sub: Research Facility

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

Vernacular I-House

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Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation cut stone	roof asphalt shingle, metal
walls brick, wood shingle	other wood porch

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.   x   See continuation sheet.

General Description: The Vance Farmhouse is located at 1535 Mileground, approximately one and one-quarter mile north of Morgantown. The Mileground is also Route 119. Historically, the road has been known as the Brandonville and Fishing Creek Turnpike and Ice's Ferry Road. Because the Mileground is one of the main routes into Morgantown, the house is highly visible and is one of the few original farmhouses remaining in the area. The house is set on a corner of one of the West Virginia University farms, on a plateau high above the city of Morgantown. On this side of the Mileground, the site of the house has changed little over the past 150 years with the rolling hills still being cultivated. However, during the 1970s and early 1980s, all but one of the farm buildings associated with the house were removed or destroyed by fire, leaving the house the site's most important structure.

The house was constructed circa 1854 by Addison S. Vance on 110 acres of land Vance acquired in 1852. He sold the farm to his sons-in-law Thomas Jerome Meeks and Samuel Grove Chadwick in 1879. The property was acquired by West Virginia University (hereafter cited as WVU) in 1899 for use as the WVU Experimental Farm. The property is still owned by WVU. The original house was enlarged before WVU acquired it; other additions were made in the 1920s and 1930s.

I-House: The original part of the house will be discussed first. It is an I-house, that is, a two-rooms wide and one-room deep, two-story house with a central hall plan. This is a traditional form that was very popular in the nineteenth century from Pennsylvania to Iowa. (In fact, so many were built in Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, the house was named an "I" house.) Built on a foundation of cut sandstone, the house has a gable roof and inside end chimneys. Walls and chimneys were constructed of red bricks that were reportedly fired on

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site. The structural bond is an American or common bond. Eaves overhang all four facades with bargeboards beneath them. The whole house, including the additions, has had an asphalt shingle roof for several years, but the southwest corner of the roof of the original house was replaced following a June 1982 tornado which touched down in Morgantown.

Southeast Elevation: The front of the original house, the southeast elevation (See photograph #4), has the front door as the center bay of the first floor, with two windows flanking either side of the door. The circa 1880 photograph (Photograph #1) of the house shows these windows to be 6/6 double-hung windows. It also shows five windows on the second floor that are centered over the windows and door on the first floor. These windows have the same configuration as the windows on the first floor. The first floor windows have been replaced at least twice (see Photographs #1 & #2) and the present windows, which are taller and are 12/12 double-hung, may have been added when renovations were made to the house in the 1920s and 1930s. The second floor windows today are 8/8 double-hung and are the same size as the original windows. These windows are flanked with shutters that were added after 1900.

Porch: There seems to have been a porch on the front of the house since it was built. The circa 1880 photograph (See photograph #1) shows a small porch centered on the front of the house with wood columns, wood floor, lattice work surrounding the space under the porch floor, and three stone steps leading up to the porch. The early porch was replaced with a wrap-around porch sometime before 1900. It probably wrapped completely around the northeast facade; however the 1930s side addition has truncated part of it. (See Photograph #7) The present porch floor is concrete on a brick foundation, replacing a wood deck and lattice surround. There are seven doric columns supporting a standing seam metal roof. Poured concrete steps lead up to the porch.

Southwest Elevation: In the 1880 historic photograph (See photograph #1), the southwest facade of the original house has no windows on either first or second story. Today (See photograph #5), the first floor windows, like those at the front of the house are 12/12 double-hung and are the same height, but narrower. Evidence of exterior brick changes suggest that these windows were added during the 1920s.

Northwest Elevation: Windows at the rear of the original house that were not disturbed by additions are similar to windows on the front, directly opposite them. (Ghost images of the window placements exist on the interior northwest wall of Office No.3, opposite the existing windows.) There probably was a rear entrance into the main part of the house at the back of the front hall, which was

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enclosed when the kitchen was added or remodelled. Access to the backyard is through the back addition.

Northeast Elevation: The northeast facade had two windows on the first floor, which were centered on either side of the chimney. These windows presumably matched the windows used elsewhere in the house. Today (See photograph #7), the first floor of the northeast elevation has a single 12/12 double-hung window and the second window was walled in at the time of the side addition. It is not known if these window openings are original to the house; in any case they are very early. The second floor still has no windows.

Additions: Viewing the back of the house aids one in understanding how the original house has changed and how the northwest elevation was altered with two additions: a kitchen, sunroom, and bath, with rooms overhead, and a garage with room overhead, which also changed the northwest side of the house. The back addition on the northwest elevation was built sometime between 1854 and 1899, but the actual date cannot be clearly established, and this addition has been altered at least two times. The side addition on the northeast elevation was added in the 1930s, when the house underwent more renovations. The additions to the house have been sympathetic to the original house. There have been no other additions added to the house since the 1930s.

The dating of the construction of the 1-1/2 story back addition was based on photographic evidence and an educated guess. The dates for the other changes to this addition are based on an 1928 painting work order (See Illustration #1) and information given in the 1976 brochure Monongalia County Bicentennial Committee Presents the Bicentennial House. The same is true for the side addition. This was dated using the information from this brochure. Land tax records for the time of the Vance and Meeks/Chadwick ownership are sketchy and of little use for dating the early changes. Once WVU acquired the farmstead, the property became tax exempt, and tax records could not be used to date the later changes to the house.

Back Addition: The back addition was originally 1-1/2 stories. This is clearly shown in historic photographs (Photographs #1 & #2). The southwest side of this addition had a window very similar to the windows in the front. At some later date a small porch was added; the window was moved several feet to the west and replaced with a doorway into the addition (See photograph #2). The second floor of the back addition was enlarged after 1900 and before 1928 and featured a steeply pitched gable roof with gable dormers. (The ghost of this former roof line can be seen on the rear of the original structure.) The addition has a remodeled second story, which was changed during the 1930s. The southwest facade has two pairs of 6/6 double-hung windows centered on the face of the first floor

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(See photograph #5). The second floor has two wall dormer windows slightly off-center with the lower windows. Both of these windows are 6/6 double-hung, but the right window is much smaller.

The first floor of the back of the addition (See photograph #6) has a pair of double-hung windows, which match the windows on the southwest side. There is a smaller 1/1 double-hung window, with a wood sill, that is slightly off-center to the left of the ridge line. The second floor has a pair of 6/6 double-hung windows with wood sills, centered on the ridge line. These windows are much smaller than the windows below them.

Also attached to the northwest side is a small concrete bunker, which covers the stairs exiting the basement, replacing a former bulkhead. The second floor (See photograph #6) of the northeast facade mirrors the southeast side with two dormer windows, although they are both full sized, 6/6 double-hung windows with wood sills.

The first floor has a doorway into the kitchen area. To the left of the kitchen door is a pair of 1/1 double-hung windows and to the right of this door is single 1/1 double-hung window. Attached to this addition is a small wood screened porch, with a concrete floor and shed roof. This porch was probably added in the 1920s. The first floor is constructed of red brick using a stretcher bond, and the second floor is shingled, with a gable roof. Eaves overhang all sides of the back addition.

Side Addition: The 1930s side addition is two stories high with a gable roof (See photograph #7). The side addition was constructed with a garage on the first floor and office space on the second. The first floor is red brick with Flemish bond. The second story is shingled. The appearance of this addition mirrors the older back addition. This leads to the conclusion that the older addition was changed to reflect the newer one. Eaves overhang all four sides of the side addition.

The second floor (See photograph #4) of the southeast facade (front) reflects the second floor of the back addition with two dormers and 6/6 double-hung windows. A pedestrian door into the garage is off-center and to the left of the window above it. The door has a vertical brick lintel with a cut stone keystone. To the right of this doorway is a bricked-in window, which had an arched opening with a cut stone keystone. The northeast facade of the side addition had no windows on either the first or second floor (See photograph #7). The second floor of the northwest side of the addition (back) reflects the front and includes two dormers with 6/6 double-hung windows (See photograph #6).

On the first floor to the left of the garage doors is a doorway, that is an entrance to the back staircase. This doorway has a vertical brick lintel with a cut stone keystone and a cut stone sill. A small concrete block addition (See photograph #6) with a shed roof was added to the garage sometime in the 1950s or

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1960s to give the garage more depth for more storage or longer vehicles. This extension has a doorway into the garage and, next to this entrance, two garage doors which swing out.

Interior

The Vance Farmhouse was built as a dwelling, but the house has had many other uses, and through the years, additions and changes have been made, reflecting its use as a dwelling, and more recently, office space. Bathrooms have been added in the additions. Part of the original hallway leading to the rear of the house was closed off and made into a closet. Additional closet space was added in the upstairs rooms of the original house. The original floor has been covered with red oak tongue and groove flooring. This flooring is used throughout the house, with the exception of the second floor of the side addition. The other major change was to the fireplaces, which have been altered to accept gas heaters.

To the right of the front hall is the former parlor and to the left, the dining room; both now are offices (See first floor plan). The former parlor, now Office No. 1, has a fireplace with an oak mantelpiece, with Ionic columns supporting the mantel shelf and a red tiled hearth (See photograph #9). To the left of the mantel is a built-in bookcase.

The mantelpiece in the former dining room, now Office No. 2, is plain and unadorned, but made of mahogany shelf and surround (See photograph #10). There is a white tiled hearth. (Please note both of the mantelpieces are currently painted, but both are scheduled for restoration.) On either side of this fireplace are windows with seats.

Opposite the front door is a staircase that winds to the left and doubles back to the second floor (See photograph #11). At the landing is the entrance to the back addition. The original walnut railing is still intact. On the second floor are two former bedrooms, one now Office No. 3 (See photograph #12) and an Architectural Drafting Studio (See photograph #13), on either side of the hall (See second floor plan). Both of these rooms have fireplaces with identical painted mantelpieces; these are unadorned, with the shelves supported by brackets (See photograph #13). The studio has blue tiled hearth, and Office No. 3 has a white tiled hearth. Both rooms have heavy raised panel doors.

The first floor of the back addition is entered through the dining area, through two doors; the right doorway enters the kitchen and the left door enters the sun room. At the back of the kitchen is a short hallway leading to the sun room and a small bathroom. There is also a door to the cellar. On the second floor opposite the steps is Office No. 5; counterclockwise is a small closet, Office No. 4 (See photograph #14), a bathroom, a large closet, the steps, and a large closet.

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The side addition is a garage on the first floor and Office No. 6 (See photograph# 15) on the second floor. In the southwest corner of the office is a bathroom. Access to the main structure is gained through another bathroom adjacent to the previously mentioned bathroom into the Architectural Drafting Studio.

There is a basement area beneath the back addition which was probably added in the 1920s. There is a crawl space beneath the original house. There is no crawl space or basement beneath the side addition.

As of the summer of 1990, the interior of the Vance Farmhouse was painted and generally repaired. The exterior of the house is scheduled to be painted in the near future. The roof scheduled for replacement at some future date.



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8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,B

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Agriculture  
Education

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Period(s) of Significance: 1854-1899  
1899-1938

Significant Dates: 1854, 1879, 1899, 1915

Years of Alterations: 1860s or 1870s, 1920s and 1930s

Significant Person(s): Fromme, Frederick Denton  
Atwood, Horace  
Vance, Addison S.

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: not known

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
\_x\_ See continuation sheet.

The Vance Farmhouse, built circa 1854, is historically significant for the themes of agriculture and education. Addison Vance was a successful Morgantown businessman and farmer, who reportedly established the farm to conduct experiments in agriculture. Vance sold the farmstead to his sons-in-law Samuel Chadwick and Thomas Meeks in 1879 and they continued to operate the farm until its sale to West Virginia University in 1899. The farmhouse is associated with the national agricultural movements of the late nineteenth-century, that

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advocated agricultural education and research. Specifically, these movements were the establishment of the land-grant college system for agricultural education under the 1862 Morrill Act and the federal funding of agricultural research and development under the Hatch Act of 1887. In 1899, the Vance Farmstead and farmhouse were acquired by West Virginia University for use as the university's experimental farm. Horace Atwood and Fred Fromme, prominent persons in the forefront of these movements, were two early men to reside at the Vance Farmhouse. Fromme, dean of the College of Agriculture and later head of the West Virginia University Agricultural Extension Service lived in the house from 1915 to 1938. Fromme left the university to become the head of the United States Department of Agriculture's Office of the Experiment Stations, the office overseeing the experiment station system. The house has had many uses since it was first acquired by the university. In addition to being used as faculty housing, the house was used as the Dairy Farm manager's residence, for farm storage and as the office of the West Virginia University Mining Extension Service. Presently, the farmhouse is the headquarters and offices of the West Virginia University Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archeology.

The Addison Vance Farmhouse was built circa 1854 as a farmhouse for a working agricultural farm. Vance purchased the 110-acre property in 1852 from Joel Ridgeway for the sum of \$3,500<sup>1</sup>. Reportedly, Vance purchased the land for use as an experimental farm<sup>2</sup>, however, no details are available about the agricultural experiments that supposedly took place here. Census records for the 1860s and 1870s indicate that Addison Vance was a farmer. Vance had a very interesting career. He came to Morgantown from Winchester, Virginia, in 1835 and began making hats. In later life, Vance was a delegate to the Wheeling Convention in May 1861, School Commissioner, began mail service in Morgantown about 1850, operated the National Hotel in Morgantown and ran for Congress in 1853.<sup>3</sup> Vance's daughter Sabra married George C. Sturgiss, a leading

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<sup>1</sup> Deed Book Old Series No. 20, Monongalia County, West Virginia, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard L. Butcher, Genealogical and Personal History of the Upper Monongahela Valley, West Virginia, Vol. II (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978), p. 1282.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel T. Wiley, History of Monongalia County West Virginia From Its First Settlements to the Present Time; With Numerous Biographical and Family Sketches (Kingwood, W.Va.: Preston Publishing Co., 1883), pp. 144, 363, 586, 602, 768.

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early-twentieth-century Morgantown industrialist; the town of Sabraton, West Virginia was named for her after her death.<sup>4</sup>

The Agricultural Census for 1860 indicates that the Vance Farm consisted of horses, milk cows, cattle, swine, and oxen and that Vance grew corn and oats (grains typically grown in Monongalia County at that time), probably for use as animal fodder. The Vance Farm was successful in comparison to other farms of the same size in the census. The value listed for Vance's farm equipment was much greater than any of his neighbors, indicating success and wealth.<sup>5</sup>

Vance sold the property to his sons-in-law Samuel G. Chadwick and Thomas J. Meeks in 1879 for the sum of \$8,000<sup>6</sup>. Census records for 1880 list both of these men's families as residing at the house; the men were listed as farmers. Thomas Meeks was later a storekeeper<sup>7</sup> and the 1900 census lists him as a coal operator. Samuel Chadwick was active in the state grange, and in 1877, he was elected mayor of Morgantown.<sup>8</sup>

West Virginia University (known as West Virginia Agricultural College until 1868) was established in 1867 as a land-grant institution under the administration of the amended 1862 Morrill Act. The act was the result of the pressure by agricultural societies to establish institutions to teach agricultural sciences. The act was amended in 1864 to allow land grants for states admitted to the union after 1862. Western lands were granted to states with the profits from these sales to be used for the establishment of state universities. Land-grant institutions under the Morrill Act were required to offer course work in the mechanical arts and agriculture. Therefore, part of West Virginia University's mission was (and is) to provide an agricultural science curriculum and degree programs in agriculture. West Virginia University's agriculture program was slowly established, and it was not until the 1890s that a degree in agriculture was actually conferred. Part of the reason for this long delay was the fact that the university's mission focused more on agricultural research than teaching.

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<sup>4</sup> Earl L. Core, The Monongalia Story, A Bicentennial History, Vol. IV: Industrialization (Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Co., 1982), p. 561.

<sup>5</sup> Agricultural Census of 1860, Productions of Agriculture, Monongalia County, West Virginia, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Deed Book No. 14, Monongalia County, West Virginia, pp. 79-80.

<sup>7</sup> Core, The Mon Story, Vol IV, p. 437.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 603.

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The Hatch Act of 1887 provided the first federal funding of research for the improvement of crops and livestock through the experiment station system. Like the land-grant system, the experiment station system legislation was the result of the pressure of the Grange, a populist farmers organization advocating farmers' rights and increased agricultural research. These experiment stations were established at colleges with departments of agriculture, in particular at the land-grant institutions. The experiment station's role was to be a research institution, for example, to develop and test seeds for better crop yields or soil improvement through improved fertilizers or the breeding of livestock. Thus, there was a need for working farms to actually plant crops or raise livestock and measure the results. The results of these experiments were made public in the form of bulletins.

West Virginia University Experiment Station was established in 1888, using Hatch Act funds; the station was located on the main campus. In 1894, the university purchased a farm near the present intersection of Protzman and VanGilder Streets in Morgantown for use as the experimental farm, but this first farm proved unsatisfactory, and the Vance Farmstead was purchased in 1899 as the replacement. The farm property cost \$5,500<sup>9</sup>, for approximately ninety acres and included the Vance Farmhouse. The new experimental farm was laid out in plots for growing grains and animal forage, and experiments were begun in animal husbandry, with the feeding of poultry and sheep.

Experiment Station leadership was critical to its success, and from the beginning, the station began attracting many outstanding scientists to fill this need. One of these was Horace Atwood, who became the first university person to dwell at the Vance Farmhouse following its purchase as the experimental farm. Atwood served the experiment station for over thirty years, becoming a leading national authority in the field of poultry husbandry.<sup>10</sup> Later in 1912, Atwood became the head of Poultry Husbandry at the Experiment Station.<sup>11</sup>

The Vance Farmhouse became known as the Dean's House after a succession of deans of the College of Agriculture lived there. Fred Denton Fromme was the first dean to reside in the house, living there from 1915 to 1938. Fromme came to the Experiment Station in 1915 as a plant pathologist. From 1928 to 1933, he was the dean of the College of Agriculture and director of the Experiment

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<sup>9</sup> Deed Book No. 50, Monongalia County, West Virginia, p. 457.

<sup>10</sup> Earnest J. Nesius, The First Hundred Years: A History of the West Virginia Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station (Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Co., 1988), pp. 37-38.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

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Station. In 1933, Fromme became the acting head of the West Virginia Agricultural Extension Service. After leaving West Virginia, Fromme became the head of the United States Department of Agriculture's Office of the Experiment Stations, the federal department overseeing the experiment station system.<sup>12</sup>

Two more deans resided in the house. Dean Clayton R. Orton lived there from 1938 to 1949. Dean Orton was succeeded by Dean Harry Ross Varney, who lived in the house from 1950 to 1957. Dean Varney was the last dean to reside in the house.

From 1957 to 1962 the house was unoccupied. From 1962 to 1967, the Vance Farmhouse was used as the residence of the manager of the university Dairy Farm. By the mid-1970s, the house was being used for farm storage. The Vance Farmhouse was renamed the Bicentennial House for the celebration of America's Bicentennial in 1976 and was used as a showcase for exhibits on Monongalia County history. During that time, it became a well-known house in the county, one that the community has prized highly and has pressured the university to save. Following the Bicentennial, the house was used as the office of West Virginia University Mining Extension Service. Since September 1990 it has been used as the headquarters and offices for the West Virginia University Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archeology. The Institute's purpose is to aid projects in the fields of the history of technology, industrial archeology and the preservation of engineering works within West Virginia and the Appalachian Region.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pp. 68-69.

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Approximately 4/10 of one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A 17 591230 4388110 B    —    —    —

C    —    —    —    D    —    —    —

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: — See continuation sheet.

Beginning at the southeast corner of the concrete wall fronting the Vance Farmhouse (paralleling Route 119) and running northeasterly for 115 feet to the northeast corner of said wall; thence running northwesterly for 154 feet; thence running southwesterly for 106 feet; and thence running southeasterly for 149 feet back to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: — See continuation sheet.

The boundary for the Vance Farmhouse property is defined by the running dimensions of the existing concrete wall and hedgerows, which bound the lot.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Lee R. Maddex, Project Manager, National Register of  
Historic Places Nominations

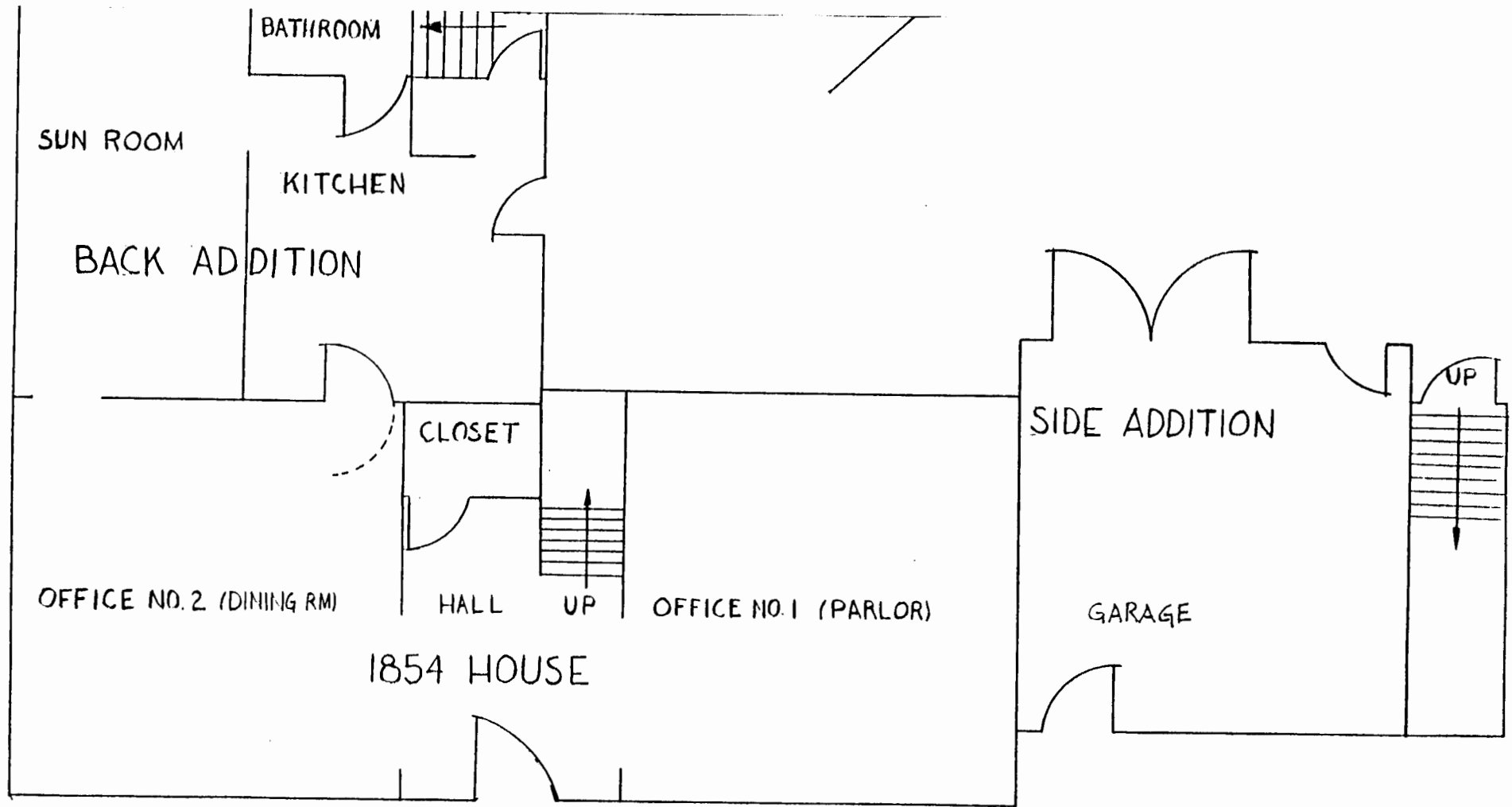
Organization: Institute for the History of Technology    Date: January 4, 1991  
and Industrial Archeology

Street & Number: Bicentennial House, 1535 Mileground    Telephone: 293-2513  
West Virginia University

City or Town: Morgantown

State: WV    ZIP: 26506

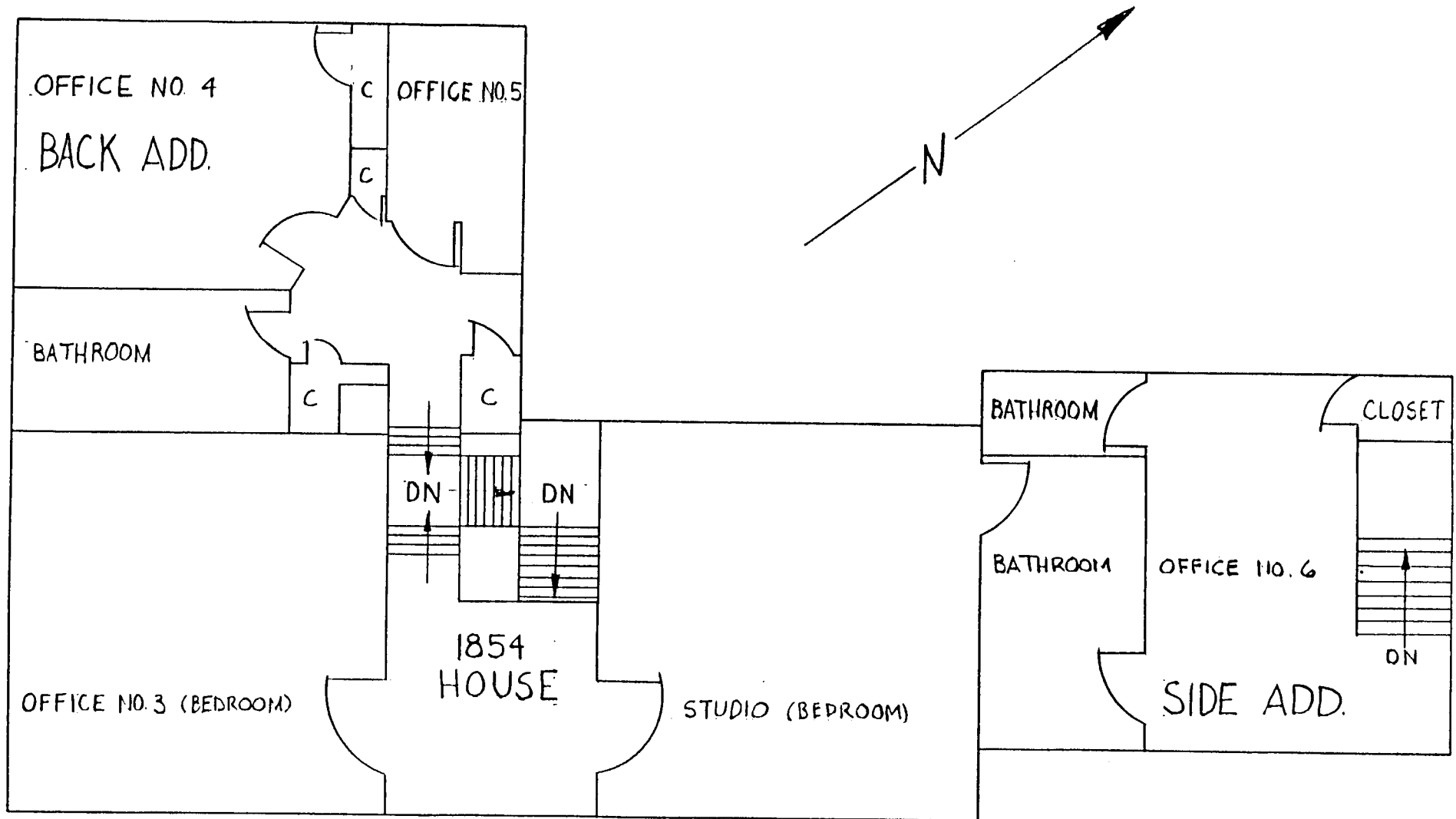
CASTLE No 1



FIRST FLOOR.

NO SCALE

# VANCE FARIVHOUSE

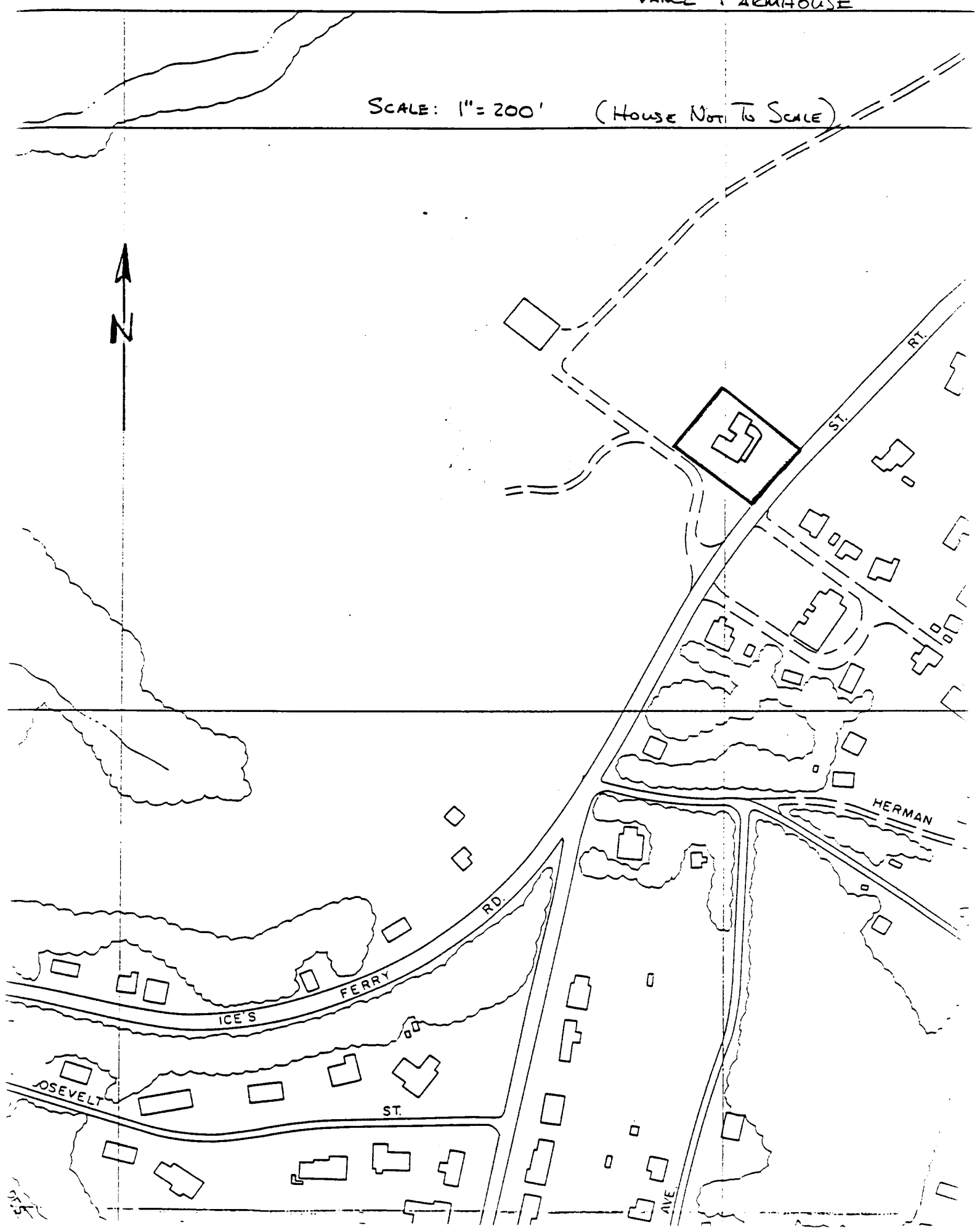


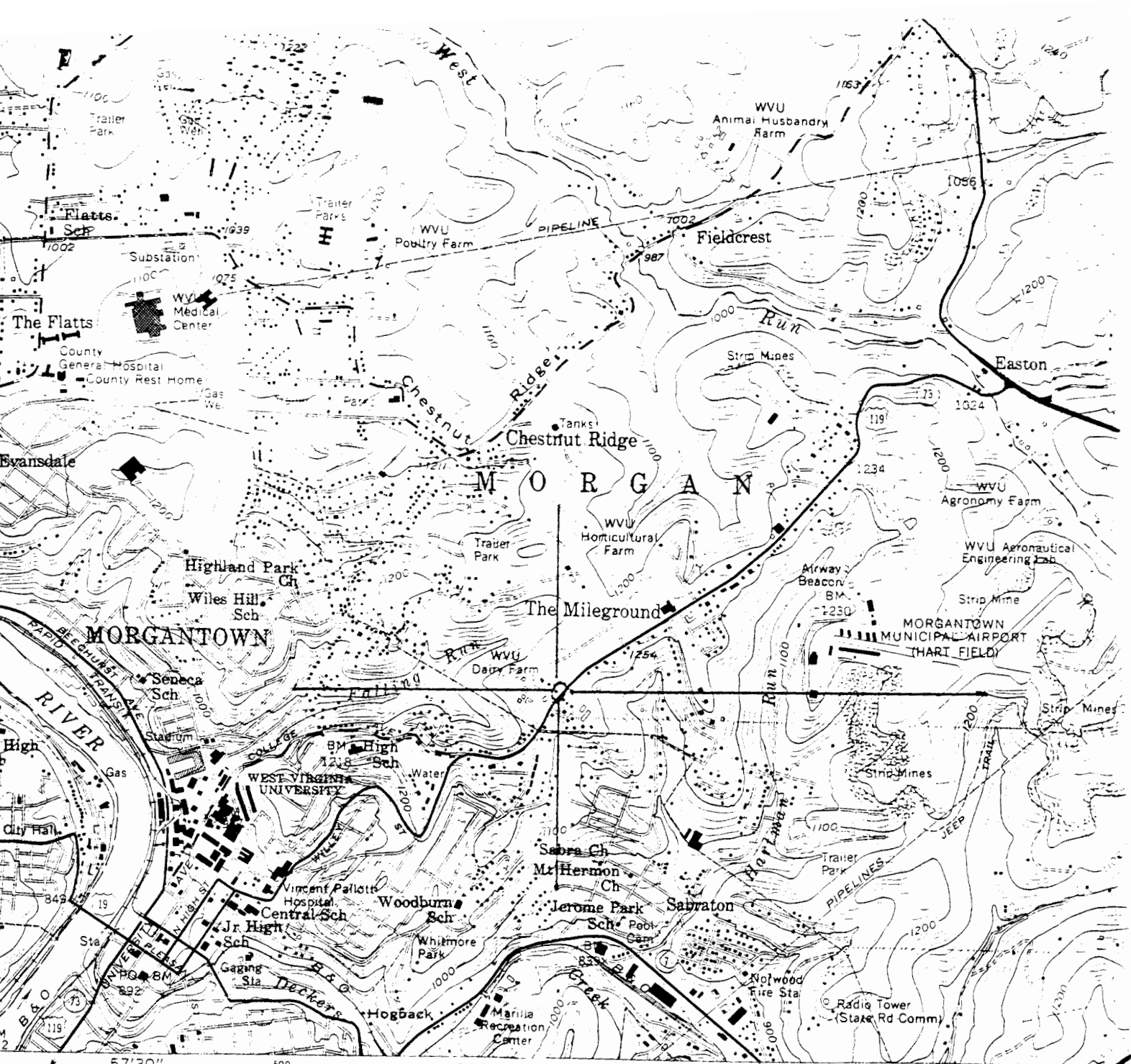
SECOND FLOOR



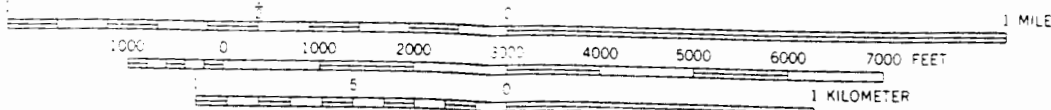
# VANCE FARMHOUSE

SCALE: 1" = 200' (House Not To Scale)





SCALE 1:24000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

41' MAGNETIC NORTH  
OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple contour lines taken 1976. This information



