

Texas Historical Commission staff (AD), 7/10//2009
18" x 28" Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Marker with post
Fayette County (Job #09FY01) Subject RR, IN, BG (Atlas) UTM:14 683164E 3285479N
Location: Flatonia, 218 S. Market Ave.

OLLE HOTEL

THIS TWO-STORY BRICK STRUCTURE WAS BUILT BETWEEN 1896 AND 1901 BY FLATONIA PHYSICIAN G.W. ALLEN, SR. THE FIRST KNOWN USE OF THE BUILDING AS A HOTEL OCCURRED IN 1915, WHEN IT WAS PURCHASED AND OPERATED BY CARRIE SNELL. FLATONIA'S RAILROADS CREATED THE NEED FOR BOARDING HOUSES AND HOTELS TO LODGE THE MANY DRUMMERS, OR TRAVELING SALESMEN, WHO CROSSED THE COUNTRYSIDE BY RAIL. IN 1926 OTTO OLLE PURCHASED THE HOTEL, OPERATED BY HIM AND LATER HIS WIFE UNTIL HER DEATH IN 1967. THE BUILDING THEN SAT VACANT UNTIL 1999. THE COLONIAL REVIVAL STYLE BUILDING FEATURED TALL CEILINGS, DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOWS AND A COVERED VERANDA FOR VENTILATION, WITH A MAJOR EXPANSION DURING THE OLLE'S OWNERSHIP.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK – 2009
MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

**RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS:
2009 Official Texas Historical Marker
Sponsorship Application Form**

Valid October 15, 2008 to January 15, 2009 only

This form constitutes a public request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for the topic noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and therefore approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (building marker) requests only. Please see separate forms for either Historic Texas Cemeteries or subject markers.

Proposed marker topic (official title will be determined by the THC): Olle Hotel

County: Fayette

Town (nearest county town on current state highway map): Flatonia

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above: 218 S. Market Ave.

Marker Coordinates:

If you know the location coordinates of the proposed marker site, enter them in one of the formats below:

UTM Zone 14 Easting 683164 Northing 3285479

Lat: Long: (deg, min, sec or decimal degrees)

Otherwise, give a precise verbal description here (e.g. northwest corner of 3rd and Elm, or FM 1411, 2.6 miles east of McWhorter Creek): at the northwest corner of South Market and East Sixth Street

NOTE: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers must be placed at the structure being marked.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers definition: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) markers are awarded to structures deemed worthy of preservation for their historical associations and architectural significance. RTHL is a legal designation and comes with a measure of protection; it is the highest honor the state can bestow on a historic structure, and the designation is required for this type of marker. The RTHL designation becomes effective upon approval by the THC. Official Texas Historical Markers signify the RTHL designation, which comes only through application to and approval by the THC and must include public display of an Official Texas Historical Marker. Owners of RTHL-designated structures must give the THC 60 days written notice before any alterations are made to the exterior of the structure. RTHL status is a permanent designation and is not to be removed from the property in the event of a transfer of ownership. Only the THC can remove the designation or recall the marker. The marker must remain with the structure and may not be removed or displayed elsewhere until or unless the THC gives express approval in writing for such action. Once designated as RTHL, properties are subject to provisions of Texas Government Code, Section 442.006(f).

Criteria:

1. **Age:** Structures eligible for the RTHL designation and marker must be at least 50 years old.

2. **Historical significance:** Architectural significance alone is not enough to qualify a structure for the RTHL designation. It must have an equally significant historical association, and that association can come from an event that occurred at the site; through individuals who owned or lived on the property; or, in the case of bridges, industrial plants, schoolhouses and other non-residential properties, through documented significance to the larger community.
3. **Architectural significance:** Structures deemed architecturally significant are outstanding examples of architectural history through design, materials, structural type or construction methods. In all cases, eligible architectural properties must display integrity; that is, the structure should be in a good state of repair, maintain its appearance from its period of significance and be considered an exemplary model of preservation. Architectural significance is often best determined by the relevance of the property to broader contexts, including geography. Any changes over the years should be compatible with original design and reflect compliance with accepted preservation practices, e.g., the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.
4. **Good state of repair:** Structures not considered by the THC to be in a good state of repair are ineligible for RTHL designation. The THC reserves the sole right to make that determination relative to eligibility for RTHL markers.

Special National Register considerations for RTHL marker applications: If a structure has been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under either Criterion A or B and Criterion C (Architecture), the historical text compiled as part of the National Register nomination process may be submitted as part of the marker process, provided it includes the required reference notes and other documentation. Acceptance of the National Register information for the purposes of the marker process will be up to the sole determination of the THC. Listing in the NRHP does not guarantee approval for an RTHL marker. See the THC web site at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madnrcrit.html> for National Register criteria.

Check this box if the property is individually listed in the NRHP.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements and are submitted online as required can be accepted or processed by the THC (for RTHL markers, the required elements are: sponsorship application form; narrative history; documentation; legal description of the property; site plan; floorplan; historic photograph; and current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure).

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the county historical commission (CHC) in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and sent via email attachments to the THC by no later than January 15, 2008.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview, significance and documentation.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of all available resources, both primary and secondary.
- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. The fee shall be submitted to the THC within ten working days of application receipt notification.

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The duly appointed marker representative (chair or marker chair) noted below for the county historical commission will be the sole contact with the THC for this marker application. To ensure accuracy, consistency and efficiency, all information from and to the THC relative to the application—and throughout the review and production processes—will be via direct communication with the CHC representative. All other inquiries (calls, emails, letters) to the THC will be referred to the CHC representative for response. By filling out the information below and filing the application with the THC, the CHC representative is providing the THC with notice that the application and documentation have been reviewed and verified by the CHC and that the material meets all current requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker program.

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC web site. CHC members have reviewed the history and documentation for accuracy and made corrections or notes as necessary. It is the determination of the CHC that the topic, history and documentation meet criteria for eligibility.

CHC comments or concerns about this application, if any:

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair):

Mailing address: **City, Zip:**

Daytime phone (with area code): **Email address** (required):

PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Property owner: Kathleen and Steven Collins

Address: P.O. Box 451 (218 S. Market St.) **City, state, zip:** Flatonia, TX 78941

Phone: 512/922-4746 **Email address:** kathy.collins@digi.com

Legal Description of the property (metes and bounds, lot and block, etc.): lots 33 and 34 of block 36, City of Flatonia

Upon receipt of the application, the THC will provide the owner with a letter that outlines the legal responsibility of ownership under the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark statute. The letter must be signed by the owner and returned to the THC before the evaluation can be completed.

NOTE: The property owner will not receive any additional copies of correspondence from the THC. All other correspondence—notice of receipt, request for additional information, payment notice, inscription, shipping notice, etc.—will be sent via email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary. Given the large volume of applications processed annually and the need for centralized communication, all inquiries about applications in process will be referred to the CHC for response. The CHC is the sole liaison to the THC on all marker application matters.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and must be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to

delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.

- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors or property owners through marker text, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): Kathryn Geesaman

Contact person (if applicable): same

Mailing address: 815 Scott School Road **City, zip:** Flatonia, Texas 78941

Email address (required): Kathryn@ollehotel.com **Phone:** 361/772-0310

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Name: Kathryn Geesaman

Street address: 815 Scott School Road **City, zip:** Flatonia, Texas 78941

Daytime phone (required): Kathryn@ollehotel.com **Email** (required): 361/772-0310

TYPE AND SIZE OF RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS

As part of its review process, the THC will determine the appropriate size marker and provide options, if any, for the approved topic based on its own review criteria, including, but not exclusive of, historical significance, replication of information in other THC markers, relevance to the Statewide Preservation Plan and the amount of available documented information provided in the application narrative. In making its determination, however, the THC will also take into account the preference of the CHC, as noted below.

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- 27" x 42" RTHL marker with post (\$1500)
- 27" X 42" RTHL marker without post* (\$1500)
- X 18" x 28" RTHL marker with post (\$1000)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker without post* (\$1000)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque with post (\$750)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque without post* (\$750)

*For an RTHL marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

- wood
- masonry
- metal
- other (specify)

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION (via email required)

When the CHC has determined the application is complete, the history has been verified and the topic meets the requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, the materials should be forwarded to the THC via email at the following address: markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us.

- The CHC or marker chair should send an email containing the following attachments (see attachment function under file menu or toolbox on your computer):
 - This application form
 - The narrative history (including documentation)
 - Legal description of the property
 - Detailed floor plan for each floor of the structure
 - Detailed site plan of the property
 - At least one historic photograph
 - Current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC: The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, see the Markers page on the THC web site (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madmark.html>).

Narrative History
Olle Hotel, Flatonia, Fayette County
for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Application

I. CONTEXT

The town of Flatonia was established in 1874 in the southwest portion of Fayette County along tracks laid by the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway. Company president T.W. Pierce acquired half interest in the new town site from early settler William Alexander Faries.¹ Residents of old Flatonia, located one mile southeast, and Oso, three miles northeast, promptly moved to the new community,² which was incorporated in 1875 and named for merchant F.W. Flato.³

Flatonia's population, which in 1878 totaled 800, steadily grew as numerous German and Czech immigrants arrived in Fayette County in the 1880s, joining the established Anglo settlers and African Americans.⁴ The new settlers acquired small farms when many of the original Anglo-operated plantations on this Blackland prairie were divided and sold following the abolition of slavery. Cotton and corn were the leading cash crops in Fayette County the late 19th century, and among Texas counties, Fayette County was a top producer.^{5,6}

The San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway completed a north-south route through Flatonia in the mid-1880s. This initially appeared to be a boon for the community, but the town lost residents as some moved to the new towns of Muldoon and Moulton that formed nearby to the north and south, respectively, along the new route.⁷ The Sanborn fire insurance map of Flatonia in 1885 identified four businesses providing lodging⁸ and by 1890, six hotels and boarding houses in Flatonia advertised in that year's *Official Hotel Red Book and Directory*.⁹

Flatonia lost about 200 residents between 1890 and 1900, but the community survived.¹⁰ In 1900, its population of 1,950 had a Methodist and a Baptist church

and seven fraternal lodges, including the Knights of Pythias, Woodmen of the World, Woodmen Circle (ladies), and Hermann Sons.¹¹ Businesses in 1900 included a hospital, the St. Louis Hotel on North Railroad (Main) Street, and the Leicester Hotel and the Central Hotel, both on South Railroad (Main) Street.^{12, 13, 14}

The original portion of the two-story brick building currently at 218 South Market Street (on lots 33 and 34 of block 36), where the Olle Hotel operates today, was constructed shortly before the turn of the 20th century¹⁵ and is thought to have become a hotel by at least 1915.¹⁶ As early as 1885, a boarding house was identified as operating on this same property.¹⁷

II. OVERVIEW

The Olle Hotel property, which is at 215 Market Street (the northwest corner of Market and East Sixth streets) on lots 33 and 34, of block 36 in Flatonia, has a history of lodging travelers that dates to 1885. On the Sanborn fire insurance map of Flatonia drawn that year, an overlay covers this property. But a notation on the map points to where the lots are under the overlay and states that there is as two-story boarding house at the location.¹⁸

Abnus Bailey Kerr owned the property in 1885, the year it was first identified as having a boarding house. Kerr was a large landholder in Fayette County and one of the area's most prominent businessmen and civic leaders. Deed records show that in 1883, Kerr bought lot 34 for \$1,000 from merchant Charles H. Flato, one of the town's pioneers and the person for whom Flatonia was named.¹⁹ (No records could be found for the purchase of lot 33 at that time.)

Kerr was born in Virginia in 1834²⁰ and moved to Fayette County with his wife, Mary Mercer, in 1855.²¹ After the Civil War, Kerr bought large tracts of land in the county and accumulated considerable property.²² Kerr married Bettie Ragsdale in 1870 after his first wife died in 1868.²³

He served as a Texas state senator in the 25th and 26th legislatures, was justice of the peace in Fayette County from 1870-1875, a county commissioner

from 1870-1874 and around the turn of the century, because of his extensive property holdings was considered the county's largest taxpayer.²⁴

A biographical sketch published in 1897 while Kerr was a state senator representing Texas' 18th Senate district states that among his many business endeavors he was president of the Rockdale Mining and Manufacturing Company at Rockdale. He also operated a large coal and wood yard at San Antonio, owned a controlling interest in rock quarries at Muldoon (which furnished rock to the jetties at Galveston, Velasco and Aransas Pass, and building rock to Texas towns), owned a general merchandise store (A.B. Kerr & Sons) with his sons in Muldoon, had 4,000 acres under cultivation, and owned 50,000 acres of land across Texas and 50,000 acres in Coahuila, Mexico.²⁵ Kerr had left Fayette County for San Antonio by 1907.²⁶

In 1889, Kerr sold lots 33 and 34 of block 36, to Flatonian physician G.W. Allen, Sr.²⁷ Allen was born in Georgia in 1849.²⁸ He was raised in Fayette County and after receiving his medical training in Galveston, Kentucky and New York, lived in Flatonia off an on until he returned there in 1889 to set up his medical practice.²⁹ In 1896-97 he erected a brick hospital and drugstore on South Main Street (Railroad). The Flatonia City Hospital operated until shortly after 1910, when it became the Opera House of Flatonia.^{30, 31}

On the 1891 Sanborn map, a two-story frame building labeled as vacant is shown at the corner of lot 34 and the same building appears in the 1896 map, this time labeled as a saloon.³²

In 1901, the Sanborn map shows an L-shaped, two-story brick building as a dwelling on lots 33 and 34.³³ This structure makes up the original portion of the Olle Hotel today. In considering the changes reflected on the Sanborn maps from 1896 to 1901, the brick building must have been constructed sometime between 1896 and 1901 while Allen owned it. In 1904, Allen sold the property back to Kerr.³⁴

The brick building is also identified as a dwelling on the 1906, and 1912 Sanborn maps.³⁵

In 1910, Mrs. Elizabeth A. Kerr (Abnus's widow) sold the property to Susan Cook.³⁶ Susan Cook, born in 1853 in Tennessee, was a widow at the time.³⁷ A record of Susan Cook's date of death could not be found, but she probably died in 1913 or 1914. Her estate paid the taxes on the property in 1914 and in 1915, Mrs. Cook's son, O.L. Cook, acting on behalf of his mother's estate, sold the building and two lots at 215 Market to Carrie Snell for \$1,825.³⁸

Carrie Snell grew up in the hotel business. She ran a hotel in Flatonia before she bought this property in 1915 and turned the former dwelling into a hotel.³⁹ Born in 1861 at sea,⁴⁰ Carrie was the daughter of Leticia M. Snell and Roussos S. Snell.⁴¹

Her mother Leticia was the proprietor of the St. Louis Hotel on North Railroad Street (Main) in Flatonia.⁴² The St. Louis was one of a number of railroad hotels and boarding houses that served traveling salesman and other lodgers, many of whom arrived in town by rail from the time of Flatonia's incorporation into at least the 1930s. Notations on Sanborn maps identify the St. Louis Hotel building among these from 1885 through at least 1906.⁴³

The *Official Hotel Red Book and Directory* identifies "L.M. Snell" as the proprietor of the St. Louis from 1890 through 1896.⁴⁴ The 1900 U.S. Census records show Leticia Snell as a widow and a "hotel keeper" and her daughter Carrie, age 38 at the time, as living with her mother.⁴⁵

Prior to purchasing the property at 215 Market Street, Carrie Snell ran Flatonia's Central Hotel. According to the 1907 *Official Hotel Red Book and Directory* of the same year "Miss C. Snell" was proprietor of the Central Hotel in 1907, 1908, 1909 and 1910.⁴⁶ The 1910 U.S. Census lists Carrie Snell as a hotel proprietor and records her as residing on Main Street (Railroad). The Central Hotel was on South Main Street (Railroad).⁴⁷

Carrie Snell's death notice, which appeared in the *Flatonia Argus* on Jan. 8, 1918, the day of her death, stated: "Miss Snell has been a familiar figure in this city for lo! these many years. She has been in the hotel business since childhood when she assisted her mother in the old St. Louis Hotel. Her quick repartee, the

philosophical view of life's worries and trails made her a general favorite with old and young."⁴⁸

Fayette County deed records of 1919 show the property was purchased from Carrie Snell's estate by Joseph and Marie (Fillip) Jurajda⁴⁹ who bought the two lots and building. The Argus reported the couple purchased "the hotel property of Miss Carrie Snell estate, and intend to conduct a first class rooming and boarding house."⁵⁰

Joseph Jurajda and Marie Fillip were both born in Austria and immigrated to the United States in 1906 and 1904, respectively.⁵¹ The two married in 1908 in Fayette County.⁵² Joseph died Feb. 16, 1951.⁵³ No records were found of Marie Jurajda's death.

In 1926, the Jurajdas sold the property to Otto Olle for \$3,000.⁵⁴

Otto Olle was born in Fayette County Feb. 28, 1873. His wife, Agnes (Wotipka) Olle, was born May 29, 1879, in Fayette County.⁵⁶ They married on Dec. 13, 1896⁵⁷ and had two sons, Alfred and Edwin, a daughter, Emmie, and were living in Flatonia as early as 1900.⁵⁸ Census records list Otto's business in 1900 as a saloon.⁵⁹ Ads in the Flatonia Argus from 1912 show Otto as the proprietor of the town's Central Saloon.⁶⁰ When Otto Olle died in 1938 Agnes continued to run the hotel on her own.⁶¹

The Olle's expanded the building by adding a two-story brick addition.⁶² The Olle Hotel's customers were often drummers, or traveling salesmen, who traveled the countryside by rail, and visited businesses such as grocery and hardware stores, lumber yards and livery stables hawking their wares.⁶³

Hotel patrons received breakfast, dinner and a room for \$1 a day, and for \$1.50 they shared a community bath. After the evening meal, guests frequently relaxed in chairs and a swing on the hotel's front porch.⁶⁴

By the 1950s, hotel borders slept in 21 rooms under quilts handmade by Agnes Olle.⁶⁵ The eye-hooks, from which hung the quilt she was working on suspended in its frame, are still embedded today in the ceiling of the hotel's guest room number one.

Relatives recount that Agnes Olle was well known for her kindness and hospitality.^{66,67} She kept an extra canned goods and freely supplied neighbors who ran out when area grocery stores were closed in the evenings and on Sundays.⁶⁸

When Agnes Olle died July 26, 1967,⁶⁹ the hotel closed. It was purchased in 1973 from the Olle estate by Dan R. Beck and Leslie J. Greive.⁷⁰ They in turn sold it to Malcom D. Funk the next year.⁷¹ Houstonites Funk and his wife Rosie came to Flatonia on weekends to repair the hotel with plans to reopen it.⁷²

From 1967 to 1994, the hotel primarily sat empty, deteriorated, and became a town eyesore. In 1994, Richard and Wilma Schaefer of San Antonio purchased the property from Funk and Walker.⁷³ After four and a-half years of extensive repairs and renovations, the Schaefer's reopened the business as the Schaefer Haus Bed and Breakfast.⁷⁴ The extensive work they completed on the hotel included refinishing the long leaf pine floors, repairing the roof, installing all new plumbing, electrical, and air conditioning, and adding several new bathrooms.

In 2004, the Schaefer's sold the hotel to Steven and Kathleen L. Collins,⁷⁵ who moved to Flatonia from Austin the same year. After stripping wallpaper, painting, and installing more private bathrooms for guests, they reopened the business in 2005 and re-named it the Olle Hotel. They donated the original painted black and white Olle Hotel sign to Flatonia's E.A. Arnim Archives and Museum and created a new sign that matches the old. It hangs in front of the hotel today. The Olle Hotel has 10 guest rooms and serves business travelers, tourists and relatives of area residents visiting Fayette County and the surrounding area. The hotel is managed by Kathryn Geesaman, Kathleen Collins' mother, who also runs Goose's Roost Ranch and Bed and Breakfast outside Flatonia.

Architectural Details

The Olle Hotel is a free-standing, two-story tan brick structure located at the corner of Market Street and East Sixth Street one block off South Main Street in Flatonia, Texas. The original building was built sometime between 1896 and 1901, according to Sanborn fire insurance maps, and contains many elements of the Colonial Revival Style of early Texas architecture. The original building was

L-shaped with wide load-bearing masonry walls with wood framed floors and hipped roof. A balcony that served as a covered porch ran the length of the front or east elevation along Market Street and a covered veranda protected the entrances to the rooms along the south side facing East Sixth Street.

The front elevation on Market Street with its symmetrical, tall, double-hung wooden windows and centrally located doors is typical of the Georgian Style, one of several components of Colonial Revival buildings. The balcony over the front porch with square wood columns on brick pedestals, the six-course jack arches above the windows, the transom over the front door, and the black wood shutters are other references to Colonial Revival Architecture.

The original building is two stories with approximately 1,100 square feet per floor. The front portion of the building has two main rooms separated by an entry with stairs to the second floor. This formal design with 12-foot ceilings is also very representative of the Colonial Revival Style. The back portion of the first floor and the second floor had perhaps six guest rooms, two downstairs and four upstairs. The original brick walls can be seen on the interior in Room 10 and at the top of the stairs at the second floor hallway.

Sometime after 1926, when the Olles purchased the hotel, a major addition of approximately 3,150 square feet was added to the hotel bringing it to its current size of approximately 5,350 square feet. The addition used a similar brick and window treatment. The two-story addition on the west end matched the 12-foot ceilings on the first floor with eight-and-one-half-foot ceilings on the second floor. The one-story addition on the south side became a hallway with 12-foot ceilings and is today a kitchen and dining area with 9-foot ceilings.

As it changed hands several times since Mrs. Olle's death it has undergone several repairs and modifications. The balcony on the east side was removed and a single sloped composition shingle roof now covers the front porch of the hotel. The brick pedestals on the front columns were also removed and replaced with simple square wood columns.

The current owners added private living quarters upstairs and private guest bathrooms. The hotel now has 10 guest rooms, five upstairs and five downstairs,

with living, dining, and sitting rooms and an office on the first floor. (See attached floor plans). The interior has been restored with early Texas décor and furnishings and is a fine example of the historic hotels in Central Texas.

III. SIGNIFICANCE

Like many Texas towns incorporated after the Civil War, the railroad was responsible for Flatonia's birth in 1874 and helped to sustain it through the first part of the 20th century before highways replaced railways as the major transporter of people and freight.

With the arrival of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio and the San Antonio and Aransas Pass railways, ranchers and farmers around Flatonia had a cheaper and quicker means to transport their cattle, poultry, and crops to market.⁷⁶ In addition, goods and building materials could be more easily obtained by settlers. Salesmen traveling by rail could easily make Flatonia a regular stop on their way to or from the larger cities of Waco, Corpus, San Antonio or Houston.⁷⁷ To meet the need for lodging brought about by this commerce, hotels and boarding houses were established in Flatonia, as they were in other towns with railway lines across Texas and the United States. In fact, this lodging was almost as important in the west as the railroads themselves.⁷⁸

Flatonia had its share of railroad hotels (also called drummers' hotels) and boarding houses to serve these travelers. In 1885, records show it had at least three railroad hotels and one boarding house -- the latter was in a frame building on one of the lots where the brick Olle Hotel now stands.⁷⁹ Later records show that by 1890 Flatonia had at least three railroad hotels and three boarding houses⁸⁰ and in 1912 there were at least three railroad hotels operating in Flatonia.⁸¹ The building at 215 Market that is home to the Olle Hotel today provided accommodations at least from 1915, when it was purchased by Carrie Snell, who earlier ran Flatonia's Central Hotel and was the daughter of a Flatonia hotel keeper.^{82,83}

The Olle Hotel is Flatonia's only railroad hotel that remains in operation. It provides a tangible link to the community's early days of significance – when

Flatonia was a destination for railway travelers, a shipping point for the area's farmers and ranchers, and a bustling economy that once supported at least half a dozen hotels and boarding houses.

IV. DOCUMENTATION

¹ Troxell, Richard K., *Texas Trains*, Plano: Wordware Publishing, 2002, p. 239.

² Lotto, F., *Fayette County, Her History and Her People*, Schulenburg, 1902, p. 351.

³ Troxell, p 239.

⁴ Handbook of Texas Online, Flatonia, website accessed Sept. 25, 2007, www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/index.html.

⁵ Handbook of Texas Online, Fayette County, website accessed Sept. 25, 2007, www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/index.html.

⁶ Sitton, Thad & Utle, Dan K., *From Can See to Can't: Texas Cotton Farmers on the Sothern Prairies*, Austin: UT Press, 1997, p. 32-33.

⁷ Troxell, p. 239.

⁸ Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance map, New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., Ltd., 1885.

⁹ *Official Hotel Red Book and Directory*, New York: the American Hotel Association Directory Corporation, 1890, p. 579.

¹⁰ Lotto, pp. 352-353.

¹¹ Lotto, pp. 354.

¹² Cecil, Mrs. William Whitten, "Flatonia City Hospital," unpublished manuscript. Registered Texas Historic Landmark application file, Texas Historical Commission Library, 1982, p. 5.

¹³ *Official Hotel Red Book and Directory*, 1890, p 579.

¹⁴ Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance maps, 1896, 1901.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ *Flatonia Argus*, Jan. 9, 1919.

¹⁷ Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance map, 1885.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Deed records: Vol. 24, pp 411-412, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.

²⁰ U.S. Census, Flatonia, Fayette County, 1900.

²¹ *A Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas*, Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., vol. 2, 1907, pp. 408.

²² *Memorial and Genealogical Record of Southwest Texas*, Chicago: Goodspeed Brothers, Publishers, 1984, p. 496-500.

²³ Ibid, p. 499.

²⁴ Lotto, pp. 261-262.

²⁵ Loughery, E.H. *Texas State Government*. Austin: McLeod & Jackson, Printers, 1897, p. 31-34.

²⁶ *A Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas*, p. 406.

²⁷ Deed records: Vol. 78, pp. 40-41, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.

²⁸ U.S. Census, Flatonia, Fayette County, 1900.

²⁹ *Memorial and Genealogical Record of Southwest Texas*, p. 190.

³⁰ *A Twentieth Century History of Southwest Texas*, pp. 496-497.

³¹ Cecil, p. 3.

³² Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance maps, 1891, 1896.

³³ Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance map, 1901.

³⁴ Deed records: Vol. 78, pp. 40-41, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.

³⁵ Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance maps, 1906, 1912.

³⁶ Deed records: Vol. 87, p. 435, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.

³⁷ U.S. Census, Flatonia, Fayette County, 1910.

³⁸ Deed records: Vol. 99, pp. 569-570, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.

³⁹ *Flatonia Argus*, Jan. 9, 1919.

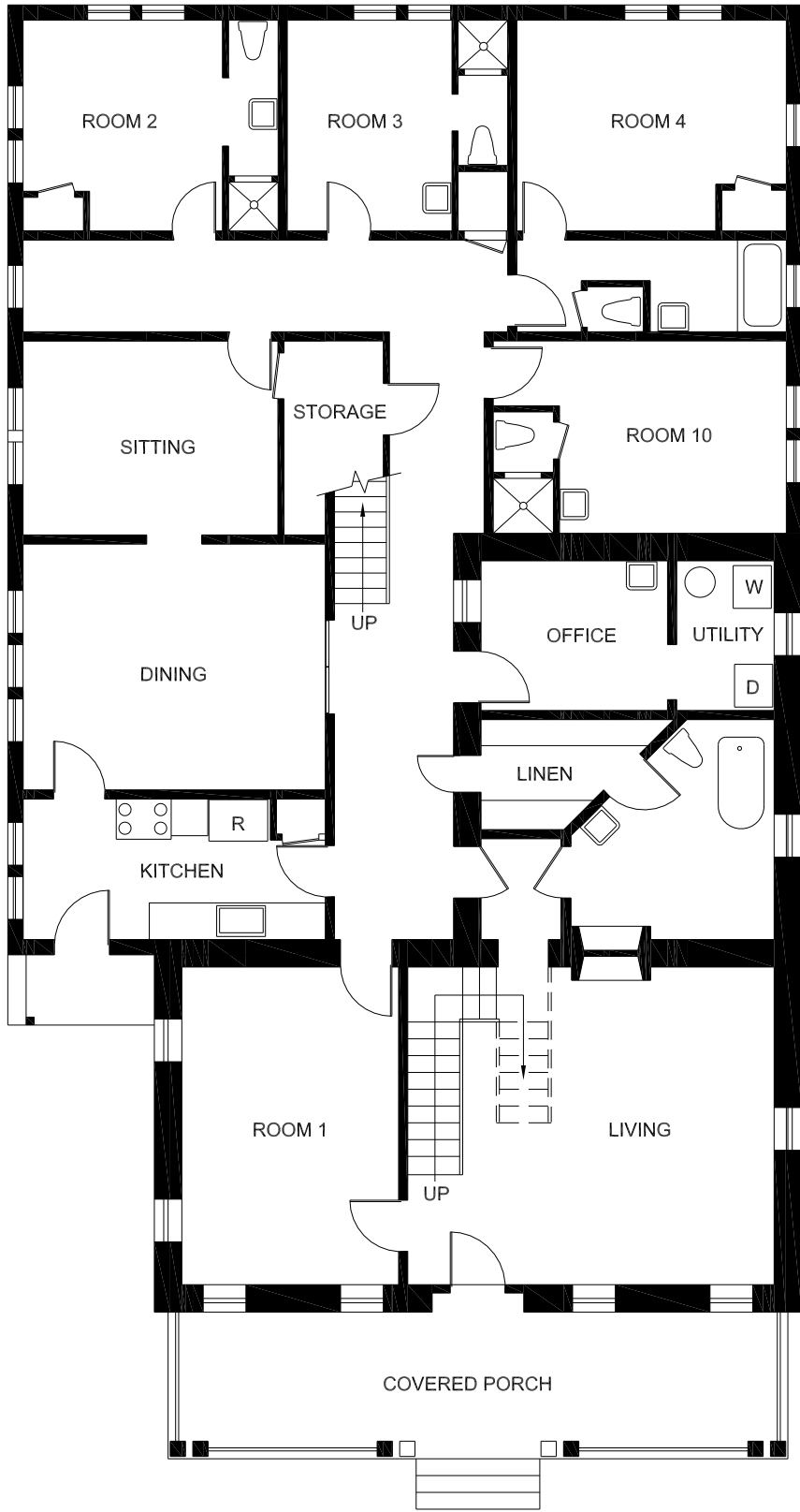
⁴⁰ U.S. Census, Flatonia, Fayette County, 1900.

- ⁴¹ Leticia L. Lucas, ID record I07987, rootsweb.com website accessed Feb. 28, 2008.
- ⁴² U.S. Census, Flatonia, Fayette County, 1980, 1900.
- ⁴³ Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance maps, 1885, 1891, 1896, 1901, 1906, 1901, 1922, 1930.
- ⁴⁴ *Official Hotel Red Book and Directory*: 1890, p. 579; 1891, p. 650; 1992, p. 671; 1984, p. 571; 1895, p. 559; 1896, p. 532.
- ⁴⁵ U.S. Census, Flatonia, Fayette County, 1900.
- ⁴⁶ *Official Hotel Redbook*, 1907, p. 578; 1908, p. 579; 1909, p. 601; 1910, p. 595.
- ⁴⁷ Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance map, 1906.
- ⁴⁸ *Flatonia Argus*, August 8, 1918.
- ⁴⁹ Deed records: Vol. 109, p. 157, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.
- ⁵⁰ *Flatonia Argus*, Jan. 9, 1919.
- ⁵¹ U.S. Census, Flatonia, Fayette County, 1920.
- ⁵² Marriage records: Vol. 12, p. 82, certificate #5316, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.
- ⁵³ Death records: Vol. 9, p. 587, certificate #7993.
- ⁵⁴ Deed records: Vol. 127, p. 340, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.
- ⁵⁵ Birth records: Book O, p. 229, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.
- ⁵⁶ U.S. Social Security records, www.ancestry.com website accessed Nov. 2007.
- ⁵⁷ Marriage records: vol. 8 p. 80, certificate #1568, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.
- ⁵⁸ U.S. Census, Flatonia, Fayette County, 1900.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ *Flatonia Argus*, Feb. 15 and Aug. 15, 1912.
- ⁶¹ Scates, Janene Olle (Agnes Olle's second cousin), unpublished manuscript from interview, unknown date.

- ⁶² Statement by Jim Vogt (grandson of Otto and Agnes Olle) to Liz Carmack Dec. 21, 2006.
- ⁶³ Scates, Janene Olle.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Vogt, Jim.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ Scates, Janene Olle.
- ⁶⁸ Vogt, Jim.
- ⁶⁹ U.S. Social Security records, www.ancestry.com website accessed Nov., 2007
- ⁷⁰ Tax records: 1973, County Assessors Abstract of City and Town Lots, Block 36, lots 33, 34, Fayette County Courthouse.
- ⁷¹ Tax records: 1974, County Assessors Abstract of City and Town Lots, Block 36, lots 33, 34, Fayette County Courthouse.
- ⁷² Hill, Gary K. "Flatonia or Bust," *Houston Chronicle*, Texas Magazine, Sept. 7, 1975, pp 30-34.
- ⁷³ Deed records: Vol. 922, p. 243, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.
- ⁷⁴ Statement from Wilma Schaefer to Liz Carmack Feb. 28, 2008.
- ⁷⁵ Deed records: Vol. 1268, p. 361, Office of the County Clerk, Fayette County, La Grange.
- ⁷⁶ Freytag, Walter P., Fayette County Historical Survey Committee, La Grange, Texas, unpublished manuscript, Flatonia Registered Texas Historic Landmark application file, Texas Historic Commission Library, Austin, 1973.
- ⁷⁷ Flatonia Argus, Feb. 29, 1912.
- ⁷⁸ Van Orman, Richard A., *A Room for the Night: Hotels of the Old West*, Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1966, p. 125.
- ⁷⁹ Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance map, 1885.
- ⁸⁰ *Official Hotel Red Book and Directory*, 1890, p. 579.
- ⁸¹ Flatonia, Sanborn fire insurance map, 1912.
- ⁸² Flatonia Argus, Jan. 9, 1919.

⁸³ *Official Hotel Red Book and Directory*: 1890, p. 579; 1891, p. 650; 1992, p. 671; 1984,p. 571; 1895, p. 559; 1896, p. 532.

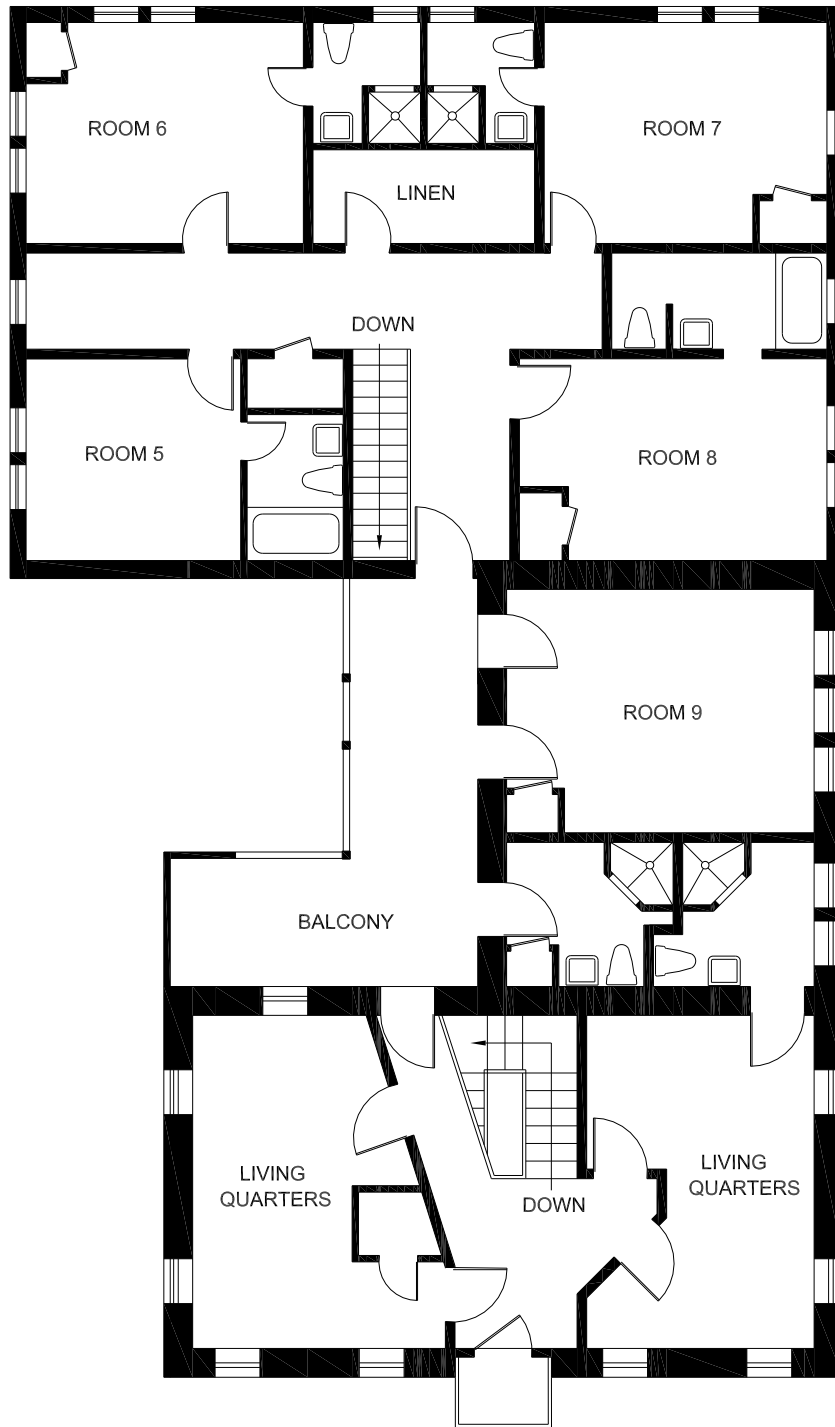
DRAFT



1ST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 10'- 0"

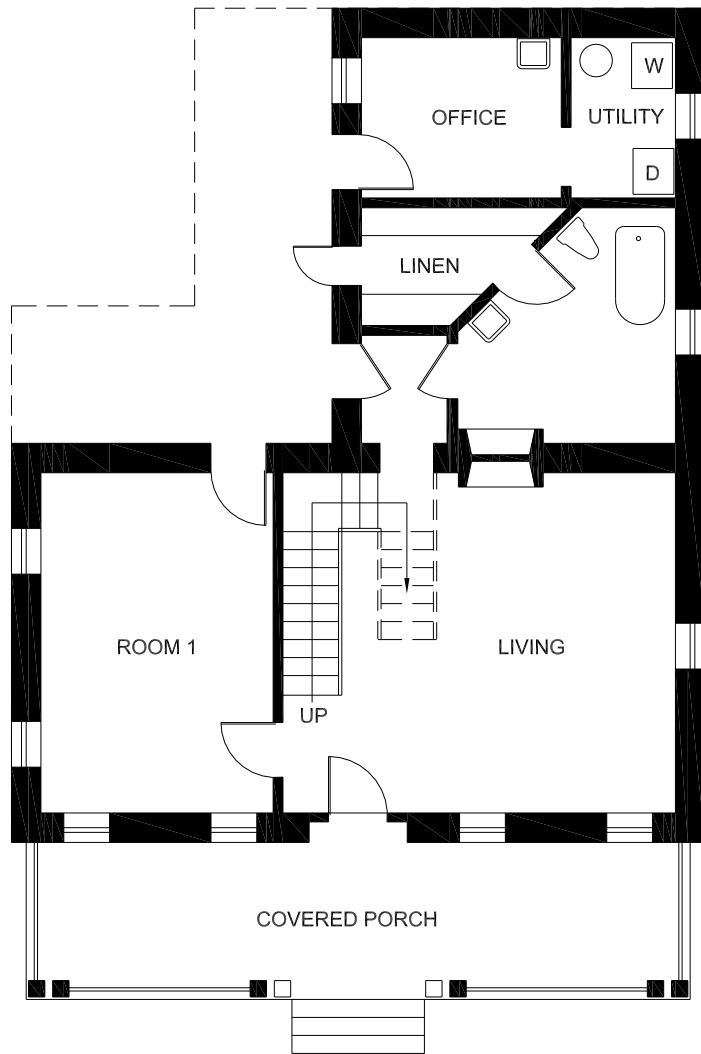
CURRENT BUILDING
WITH OLLE ADDITION



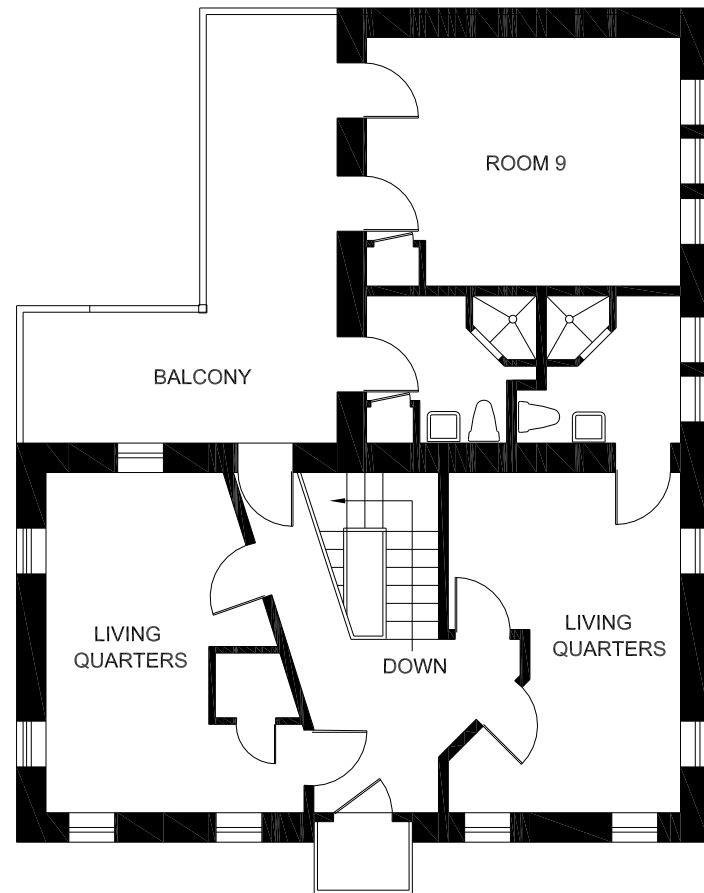
2ND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

CURRENT BUILDING
WITH OLLE ADDITION

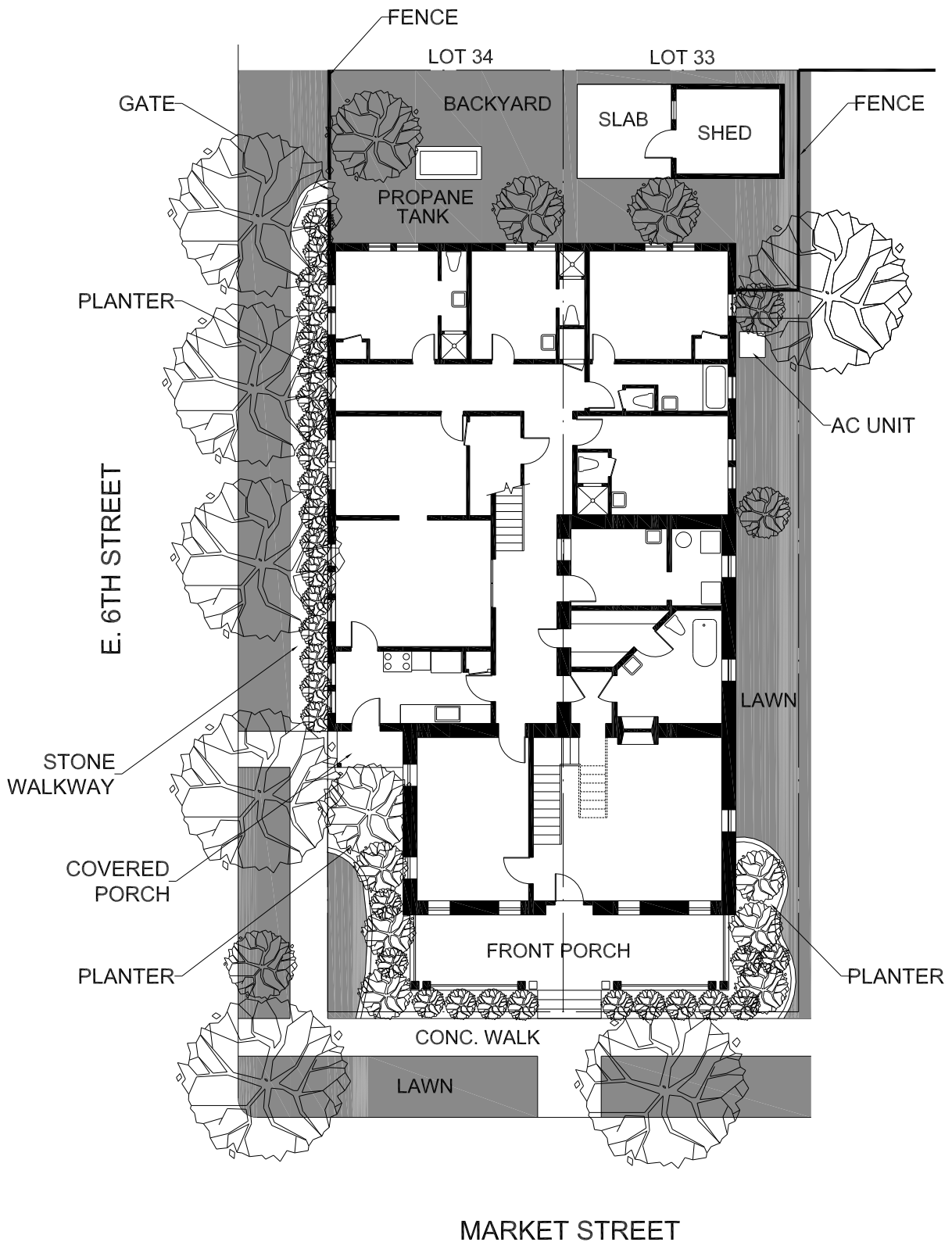


1ST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"



2ND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

ORIGINAL BUILDING
BUILT AROUND 1900



SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

**CURRENT BUILDING
 LOTS 33 AND 34
 2 AT 25' X 100'**

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