

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Riggs House

Other names/site number N/A

Name of related multiple  
property listing

N/A

(Remove "N/A" if property is part of a multiple property listing and add name)

## 2. Location

Street & Number: 3496 Sulphur Springs Road

City or town: Morristown

State: Tennessee

County: Hamblen

Not For Publication: ☐ N/A

Vicinity: ☒ X

Zip: 37813

## 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 forth 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

☐

national

☐

statewide

☒

local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

☐

A

☐

B

☒

C

☐

D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official:

Date

Title:

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal  
Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 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 the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1            | 1               | buildings  |
| 0            | 0               | sites      |
| 0            | 0               | structures |
| 0            | 0               | objects    |
| 1            | 1               | Total      |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

OTHER: Tennessee I-House

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)  
Principal exterior materials of the property:

WOOD: Weatherboard; STONE: Limestone; METAL;  
BRICK

### Narrative Description

Located on Sulphur Springs Road southwest of Morristown in Hamblen County, the ca. 1820 Riggs House is an good local example of the Federal style. Significant exterior features include its two-story height, symmetrical façade, wood siding, and side gable roof. Significant interior features include the original hardwood floors, original plaster walls, original stair detailing, and original wood trim and baseboards. A Non-Contributing barn is located northwest of the house.

### SETTING AND SITE FEATURES

The house sits near the intersection of Old Hollow Road and Sulphur Springs Road. Sinking Creek is located to the south of the property. The site upon which the house sits is flat and grassy, and it is accessed by a gravel drive. To the south, across Sinking Creek, is a small ridge that is heavily forested. To the north, across Sulphur Springs Road, is a railroad. Rural fields and small single-family residences are scattered about the road near the Riggs House.

### RIGGS HOUSE (CA. 1820) – CONTRIBUTING BUILDING

The Riggs House is a two-story, side gable, timber frame building. There are two, single story additions to the rear of the house, creating the appearance of an Ell. The house is sat upon a stone foundation, is covered

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with wood weatherboard siding, and capped by a metal roof. Unless otherwise noted, any windows present are wood and do not contain any original glass panes.

*Facade (North Elevation)*

The façade is symmetrical. There are five bays on each floor. The middle bay of the first floor is occupied by an entrance filled with a six light wood door, thirteen light transom, and boarded up, five light, sidelights. The transom is missing its glass. The door is framed by a simple wood surround and accessed by two poured concrete steps.

Flanking the first floor entrance to the east are two, double hung, original, 9/9 windows. The two first floor windows to the west of the entrance are no longer present and are filled with plywood board.

The entry on the second floor is directly above the first floor entrance. It opened up onto a balcony that is no longer extant. The entrance is filled with a wood, six panel door surmounted by a thirteen light transom and flanked on each side by five light sidelights. A few of the original transom panes remain. The door is framed by a simple wood surround.

The two windows flanking the entrance on the second floor to the east are no longer present; the openings are filled with plywood board. The two windows to the west are filled with double hung, 9/9 windows.

Finally, six, vertical, wood board pilasters separate the individual bays across the façade to provide visual interest to the elevation.

*East Elevation*

A two-story, brick, exterior chimney divides the elevation. The chimney rises to the second floor before tapering to a narrower width and ending at a simple chimney cap. The first floor window to the north of the chimney retains the top part of its original nine light window; the southernmost is missing its window and is filled with plywood. Both second story windows are missing their nine light windows; the southernmost is filled with plywood.

*South Elevation (Rear)*

The south elevation is defined by its one-story porch and the additions on the western end of the house. To simplify the description of the building, the additions will be described in their own separate sections later.

There are four bays on the first floor. The westernmost bay, enclosed by the addition, is an entrance. Three bays are sheltered beneath a wood, shed roof porch supported by wood posts. The first bay, roughly centered on the elevation, is filled with a six panel wood door that opens into the central hallway. The remaining two easternmost bays are filled with double hung windows that retain the top, six light portion of their original window; the bottom is missing. Plywood has been installed behind the windows.

There are four bays on the first floor. All four are window openings. The westernmost retains the top, nine light portion of its original window; the bottom is missing. The third bay, moving west to east, also retains the top, nine light portion of its original window and is missing the bottom. The two remaining openings no longer retain their windows and are boarded up with plywood.



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*West Elevation*

An interior brick chimney is visible on the elevation. Much like the east, it features two windows on each floor. The two first floor openings are missing their windows and are filled with plywood. The northernmost second floor window retains the top, nine light portion of its original window. The southernmost retains the top of its nine light window, but it is damaged so that it presents as a six light window. Both second story windows have plywood installed to protect against vandalism.

**Interior**

Unless otherwise noted, the floor is the original hardwood floor, the walls are covered in original plaster, and the original wood baseboard and decorative wood/door trim remains.

The main entrance opens into the central hall. A wood staircase with decorative wood balusters accesses the second floor. A unique, hand carved star pattern is visible on the landing between the first and second floor. A four panel wood door accesses storage space under the staircase, and a four panel wood door on the south wall leads out to the back porch. Openings to the east and west wall lead to the Sitting Room and Dining Room, respectively.

The character defining features of the Sitting Room is the fireplace with wood mantel on the east wall, and the decorative wood window surrounds. The surrounds widen at the top to resemble a “t” with short arms. Each corner of the “t” feature a decorative square pattern that enhances the design of the surround.

The Dining Room features a door on the south wall that accesses the kitchen on the rear elevation. A covered fireplace is located on the west wall of the room. The wood window surrounds do not feature the same “t” elements as the sitting room. A decorative wood surround frames the door on the south wall.

The staircase opens to the Upper Central hall on the second floor. A door on the north wall opens out on the north elevation (façade); a door on the east wall leads to the east wing bedrooms; and a door on the west wall leads to the west wing bedrooms. The east wing door is filled with a three panel, three vertical light door that is missing its panes. The west wing door is filled with a three panel door that is missing its three vertical light panes and sashes. All doors are framed by decorative wood surrounds.

The Northeast and Southeast Bedrooms are accessed by two-panel doors on the north and south walls of the hallway, respectively. The Primary Bedroom is also accessed by a two-panel door on the east wall of the hallway. A bricked-in fireplace with wood mantel is on the east wall. The Southwest Bedroom is missing its door: the Northwest Bedroom is accessed by a two panel door on the east wall of the hallway. The Secondary Bedroom is missing its door. A fireplace is located on the west wall of the Secondary Bedroom.

*Kitchen and Summer Kitchen Addition*

The Kitchen and Summer Kitchen additions are heavily deteriorated. The floor joists and ground are visible in the Kitchen addition. Evidence of the original wood planks on the walls and ceiling are also visible. The Summer Kitchen interior was not accessible at the time of the nomination’s writing.

**BARN (CA. 1900) – NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING**

The Barn is a two-and-one-half story, gable roof, transverse crib barn. It is covered in vertical wood siding and is heavily deteriorated.

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The Barn is Non-Contributing because it does not contribute to the architectural significance of the Riggs House and falls outside the Period of Significance.

**INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

The Riggs House retains the integrity necessary to be listed in the National Register for its architectural significance. The house remains in its original location, and the area remains primarily rural with scattered agricultural and single-family residential properties, much as it was historically. As such, it retains integrity of setting and location.

The Riggs House also retains integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. There have been some changes to the property, including the removal of a small half-balcony on the second floor, the deterioration of the summer and kitchen addition, the deterioration of some portions of the staircase railing and balustrade, and some damage to the windows. However, the house retains the character defining features of the Federal style. This includes its two-story height, wood exterior cladding, symmetrical appearance, and exterior end chimney. The interior also retains many important features, including its original hardwood floor, plaster walls and ceilings, historic staircase, and original doors and division of space. Though the additions have deteriorated, they are not necessary to communicate the architectural significance of the property. As such, the Riggs House is able to communicate its significance as a locally significant example of the Federal style.

The retention of the aforementioned aspects of integrity ensure the house retains integrity of feeling and association.

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## 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.
- ☒ 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:

N/A

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

ca. 1820

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Unknown

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### **Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Riggs House is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for its significance in Architecture as a locally important example of the Federal style. Finished circa 1820 by Samuel Riggs, local historians indicate the house was used as a stagecoach inn, funeral parlor, and general store. The Riggs House retains many of the character defining features of the Federal style. This includes its rectangular, two-story construction, exterior end chimneys, minimal ornamentation, and symmetrical fenestration. The interior also embodies the style through its center aisle plan and simple adornment. When compared to other examples of the style in the Morristown area, the Riggs House stands apart as an early, intact example of Federal architecture as applied in a rural area. The Period of Significance is circa 1820, the year the house was constructed.<sup>1</sup>

### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

#### **HAMBLÉN COUNTY AND MORRISTOWN CONTEXT**

The Riggs House is located southeast of Morristown in Hamblen County. The third smallest county in Tennessee, Hamblen is situated between the Holston and Nolichucky Rivers in the eastern portion of the Volunteer State. The presence of the rivers, fertile fields, and tracts of forested land attracted settlers and farmers alike. Agriculture played an important role in the county historically. Farms produced beef, dairy, vegetables, and tobacco, the latter of which fueled much of the agricultural revenue of the county.<sup>2</sup>

Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creeks, and Shawnees called the county home before the arrival of European settlers. Robert McFarland and Alexander Outlaw arrived from Virginia in 1783. They were followed later by brothers Gideon Morris, Daniel Morris, and Absalom Morris, who collectively founded Morristown. In 1870, the Tennessee General Assembly created Hamblen County from portions of Jefferson, Grainger, and Hawkins County. It was named in honor of local lawyer Hezekiah Hamblen. Morristown, which had already been incorporated in 1855, was named the county seat. Other notable settlements in the county include Panther Springs, Whitesburg, and Springvale.<sup>3</sup>

Gideon and his brothers chose their location because it sat at a transportation crossroads. There the Kentucky Road, which led to the Cumberland Gap in the Carolinas, intersected with a State Route stretching from Abingdon, Virginia to Knoxville, Tennessee. The city grew rapidly into a transportation and commercial hub throughout the nineteenth century. Morristown benefited greatly from the arrival of the railroads in the mid-1850s, which further solidified it as the preeminent settlement in the region.<sup>4</sup>

The arrival of the Civil War put a brief stop to the area's growth. Morristown and its environs were pro-Confederate in a section of the state known for its pro-Union leanings. Though a skirmish broke out near

<sup>1</sup> Though the kitchen and summer addition are recognized as historically significant additions to Federal style homes, the lack of integrity for both means they no longer communicate that significance history. As such the Period of Significance is restricted to ca. 1820, the year the house was finished.

<sup>2</sup> Burwin Haun, "Hamblen County," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/hamblen-county>, accessed 6/3/2026.

<sup>3</sup> Haun, "Hamblen County," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*. For more information on the other settlements in the area, please see Haun's article on Hamblen County, cited in this footnote.

<sup>4</sup> Haun, "Hamblen County," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*; "Visitor Guide: Morristown," East Tennessee Visitor's Guide, <https://easttennessevisitorsguide.com/visitor-guide-morristown/>, accessed 6/3/2026; Ben Wilkerson, "A History of Morristown—Hamblen County," <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/33c464d38ba44d8bb01376f998c368c8>, accessed 6/3/2026.

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Morristown, it was spared the worst of the war's damage. A surge of industrial growth took place immediately after the war. Textile, furniture, and other factories opened near Morristown, including the JFG Coffee Company in 1890. From the late 1800s to the early 1920s, Morristown was recognized nationally as the "chicken city" for its role as a leading shipper and producer of poultry.<sup>5</sup>

The history of Morristown and Hamblen County in the twentieth century is defined by the onset of the Great Depression and the arrival of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The stock market crash severely affected the industrial wealth and output of the region. Additionally, many farmers also found themselves on hard times as overfertilized and heavily eroded land failed to reach agricultural production levels of the past. In response, New Deal programs targeted the city and county to help alleviate issues of unemployment, poor land, and lack of modern amenities. The construction of the Cherokee Dam and Reservoir in the 1940s employed many in the county, even as it displaced families who had lived in the area for generations. Panther Creek State Park was founded in 1959 to take advantage of the recreational opportunities provided by the dam. The state took ownership in 1967, and the park boasts a total of 1,444 acres.<sup>6</sup>

Local residents also took an active role in steering Morristown into the future. In an effort to modernize their downtown area and encourage commercial growth, city officials okayed the construction of the "Skymart" (NR Listed 03/22/2016) in the 1960s. The Skymart was a series of two-story concrete paths and bridges that allowed people to shop downtown without worrying about car traffic. It also allowed two-story commercial buildings to construct entrances on their second floor, since the Skymart allowed customers to directly access the floor. The Skymart was so innovative that it made national news. Dolly Parton and Porter Wagoner were on hand to celebrate the Skymart's dedication ceremony. The combination of the Skymart, recreational opportunities, and the rise of healthcare and education industries position Morristown and Hamblen County to grow in the future.<sup>7</sup>

#### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RIGGS HOUSE

According to local historians, the Riggs House was constructed circa 1820 by Samuel Riggs. Riggs was born on April 4, 1760 in New Jersey. He served in the Revolutionary War as a Private and later a Lieutenant. He married Mary Morris, the daughter of Gideon Morris, one of the three founders of the town.<sup>8</sup> The land upon which he built the house was given to him as a land grant for his service. According to local historians, the house was used as a stagecoach inn and stop for travelers prior to the Civil War. Some accounts state it was used as an improvised field hospital during the Civil War. Later, it served as funeral parlor and general store

<sup>5</sup> Haun, "Hamblen County," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*; "Visitor Guide: Morristown," East Tennessee Visitor's Guide, <https://easttennessevisitorsguide.com/visitor-guide-morristown/>, accessed 6/3/2026. Civil War skirmishes include the Battle of Bean Station and the Battle of Morristown.

<sup>6</sup> Haun, "Hamblen County," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*; "Visitor Guide: Morristown," East Tennessee Visitor's Guide, <https://easttennessevisitorsguide.com/visitor-guide-morristown/>, accessed 6/3/2026. Civil War skirmishes include the Battle of Bean Station and the Battle of Morristown.

<sup>7</sup> Haun, "Hamblen County," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*; "Visitor Guide: Morristown," East Tennessee Visitor's Guide, <https://easttennessevisitorsguide.com/visitor-guide-morristown/>, accessed 6/3/2026; Ben Wilkerson, "A History of Morristown—Hamblen County," <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/33c464d38ba44d8bb01376f998c368c8>, accessed 6/3/2026.

<sup>8</sup> "Revolutionary War Private Reuben and Samuel Riggs of Morris County, New Jersey and Tennessee," <https://www.tngenweb.org/revwar/records/r/riggs.html>, accessed 6/9/2026.

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before remaining as a private residence throughout most of the twentieth century. The current owners purchased the property with the intention of preserving the house and honoring its history.<sup>9</sup>

#### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

When colonists arrived in America, they brought with them many of the prevailing architectural styles and traditions of their homelands.<sup>10</sup> In the end, English colonies on the eastern seaboard had the greatest impact on the built environment during the Colonial period. Perhaps the most popular style in the early eighteenth century was the Georgian style. The style was influenced by the Renaissance and incorporate neo-Palladian design. Georgian architecture dominated both residential and government buildings in the early American colonies.<sup>11</sup>

In 1776, Robert Adam and his brother created a new architectural style in Scotland. Named the “Adamesque” style, it incorporated features of the French rococo and the classical architecture of Greece and Rome. Robert was inspired to create the style after studying architecture in Italy. There he learned the intricacies of Roman architecture and design. Urns, swags, sheaths of wheat, garlands, another decorative patterns worked their way into Robert’s architectural drawings. The study of interior spaces in Roman architecture also influenced his work. Robert found freedom and flexibility in the interiors he studied. Hexagonal, oval, and circular forms stood in stark contrast to the traditional box forms so prevalent in Georgian and other contemporary architecture.<sup>12</sup>

Several factors in the late-eighteenth century were responsible for the widespread popularity of the Adamesque style in the American colonies. The development of printing presses and easily accessible architectural publications, such as *The Country Builder Assistant: Containing a Collection of New Designs of Carpentry and Architecture* (1796), allowed the Adams brother’s drawing to reach a large audience of readers, architects, and builders.<sup>13</sup> However, it was the successful American Revolution and the American desire for an architectural style symbolic of a new nation that elevated the Adamesque style to true dominance in the United States. The Adamesque style, which focused on restraint, delicacy, and symmetry, was in many ways the opposite of the then-dominant Georgian style. It quickly became the choice of style for the United States, first appearing on the Eastern seaboard before radiating outward to the rest of the

<sup>9</sup> “Jessica McDaniel Art,” <https://www.jessicamcdanielart.com/blogs/history-of-abandoned-places/riggs-house-tennessee>, accessed 6/3/2026; “The Riggs House, Morristown Tennessee Exploration and History,” The Old History Project, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abr-U7Et9sE&t=300s>, accessed 6/3/2026.

<sup>10</sup> The context for Federal style architecture in this nomination is based on the context presented in the “Smith-Kefauver House” nomination, which was listed in the National Register on 1/16/2026 and was completed by the same author as this nomination.

<sup>11</sup> Virginia McAlester et al., *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America’s Domestic Architecture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2021), pg. 156.

<sup>12</sup> John C. Poppeliers, et. al., *What Style Is It?: A Guide to American Architecture* (Fredericksburg: Bookcrafter, Inc., 1983) pgs. 30-31.

<sup>13</sup> Lester Walker, *American Houses: The Landmark Illustrated Encyclopedia of Domestic Architecture* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 1996), pgs. 96-97; McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, pg. 156. McAlester noted that in 1740, there were less than a handful of architectural plan books in the English colonies. By 1776, that number had increased to over one hundred titles in circulation.



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country.<sup>14</sup> Because of the style's popularity in the United States and its strong association with American independence, the Adamesque style became known as the Federal style, which would remain the most dominant architectural style in the nation from circa 1780 to roughly 1840.<sup>15</sup>

The character defining features and subtypes of the Federal style can vary considerably depending on the location of the building and the year it was constructed. Federal style houses tend to be either square or rectangular, are two to three rooms deep, symmetrical, and capped by a side gable roof. Hip roofs can also be common and are recorded with both two-story and three-story examples. However, these configurations are generally reserved for statement buildings or high style examples.<sup>16</sup> All roof types are generally low pitched to make them unobtrusive to the viewer.<sup>17</sup> The type of covering used on a Federal building varied according to its location. According to architectural historian Virginia McAlester, northern builders preferred frames houses with clapboard siding while southern buildings preferred brick construction. Southerners also retained the traditional gable end chimney configuration for their buildings.<sup>18</sup>

Federal residential exteriors generally feature few elaborations and are recognizable for their overall symmetry and restraint. Symmetrical windows pierce flat and shadowless wall surfaces. Most windows are double hung, six-over-six, and constructed of wood. Decorative friezes may be located above. Federal houses constructed of brick generally feature flat lintels, keystone lintels, or keystones without lintels set above each window. The lintels are generally of stone construction.<sup>19</sup> Federal entrances are generous in size, feature multipaned sidelights, and are generally surmounted by elliptical or arched fanlights. Some doorways may feature delicate columns on either side of the entrance.<sup>20</sup> Other common exterior features include quoins, two-story pilasters, belt courses, dentils, and entry porches.<sup>21</sup> Interior spaces feature graceful wood or plaster ornamentation with swags, garlands, rosettes, and other geometric patterns. Circular, oval, or octagonal rooms are also common in Federal houses.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the presence of some general characteristics, as mentioned earlier, the Federal style varied regionally, even locally, in how it was executed. In Tennessee, Federal architecture evolved much differently than it did on the eastern seaboard. Because Tennessee was on the western border of a growing nation, the Federal style did not gain popularity in the Volunteer state until about 1815, its popularity waning by 1840. As such, Federal style examples in Tennessee featured even less ornamentation than comparables on the east coast. Architectural historian James Patrick argued that the simplified and restrained nature of the Federal style was a perfect fit for builders and carpenters in Tennessee who "were usually ignorant of architectural

<sup>14</sup> Poppliers, *What Style is It?*, pg. 31; Walker, *American House*, pgs. 96-97. Poppeliers notes that isolated examples of the Adamesque/Federal style existed before 1776 but that they were rare. One example was the dining room ceiling at Mount Vernon, finished in 1775.

<sup>15</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, pg. 217.

<sup>16</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, pg. 217; Poppeliers, *What Style Is It?*, pg. 31.

<sup>17</sup> Ernest Burden, *Illustrated Dictionary of Architecture*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 2012) pg. 193; Shirley Maxwell and James C. Massey, "Classics in America," *Old House Journal* (September/October, 1997), pg. 49.

<sup>18</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, pg. 218-220.

<sup>19</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, pg. 221; Poppeliers, *What Style is It?*, pg. 31; Maxwell and Massey, "Classics in America," pg. 49.

<sup>20</sup> Maxwell and Massey, "Classics in American," pg. 49.

<sup>21</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, pg. 220.

<sup>22</sup> Poppliers, *What Style is It?*, pg. 31.

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theories but thoroughly competent with planes, gouges, and chisels.”<sup>23</sup> Many of the best examples of the Federal style can be seen in East Tennessee, though Middle Tennessee is also home to great Federal style architecture, particularly near Nashville. Patrick also noted that even in Tennessee, Federal design could vary according to region. The result are buildings that are “not even decisively Federal,” and include “a wide range of stylistic focus and technical competency, as well as themes belonging to more than one phase of post-Renaissance classicism.”<sup>24</sup>

Rear ell additions are recognized as an important evolution of the Federal style in Tennessee and across the nation. These additions could be both one or two-stories in height and were generally constructed of the same materials as the rest of the house. Rear ells served an important function. They housed the kitchen, utility rooms, and additional bedrooms and storage space. Because they were secondary spaces, they did not feature the same level of design and architectural flourish as the original construction.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, it is important to note that vernacular building types in Tennessee often had Federal or Greek Revival-style embellishments added to them after their initial construction, like the Riggs House. Most of Tennessee’s residences were not designed or constructed by master craftsmen or architects, nor were they designed with one singular architectural style in mind. As such, they are considered “vernacular,” a term used to describe housing that include true folk architecture, houses that imitate academic styles, and house produced by cultural standardization. One of the most important types of Tennessee vernacular architecture is the central hall plan, or “I House.” **(Figure One)** One to two-stories tall, the central hall plan is composed of a center hall flanked by a single room on each side. Unlike modern entrance hallways, the central hall was a wide space that could also serve as a reception area or living space for the family. One of the two rooms functioned as a public parlor, and the other housed a room dedicated for family use. Because of its rectangular shape, two-story height, and generally symmetrical fenestration, central hall plans were great candidates for the application of Federal-style detailing. Central hall houses were popular from the early nineteenth century well into the 1900s.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> James Patrick, *Architecture in Tennessee: 1768-1897* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1981) pg. 81.

<sup>24</sup> James Patrick, *Architecture in Tennessee*, pg. 83.

<sup>25</sup> Claudette Stager, “Vernacular Domestic Architecture,” *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, Tennessee Historical Society, October 8, 2017; “Architecture of the Rear Ell,” The Lincoln Homestead, <https://lincolnhomesteadva.com/architecture-of-the-rear-ell/>, accessed 6/12/2026.

<sup>26</sup> Stager, “Vernacular Domestic Architecture.”



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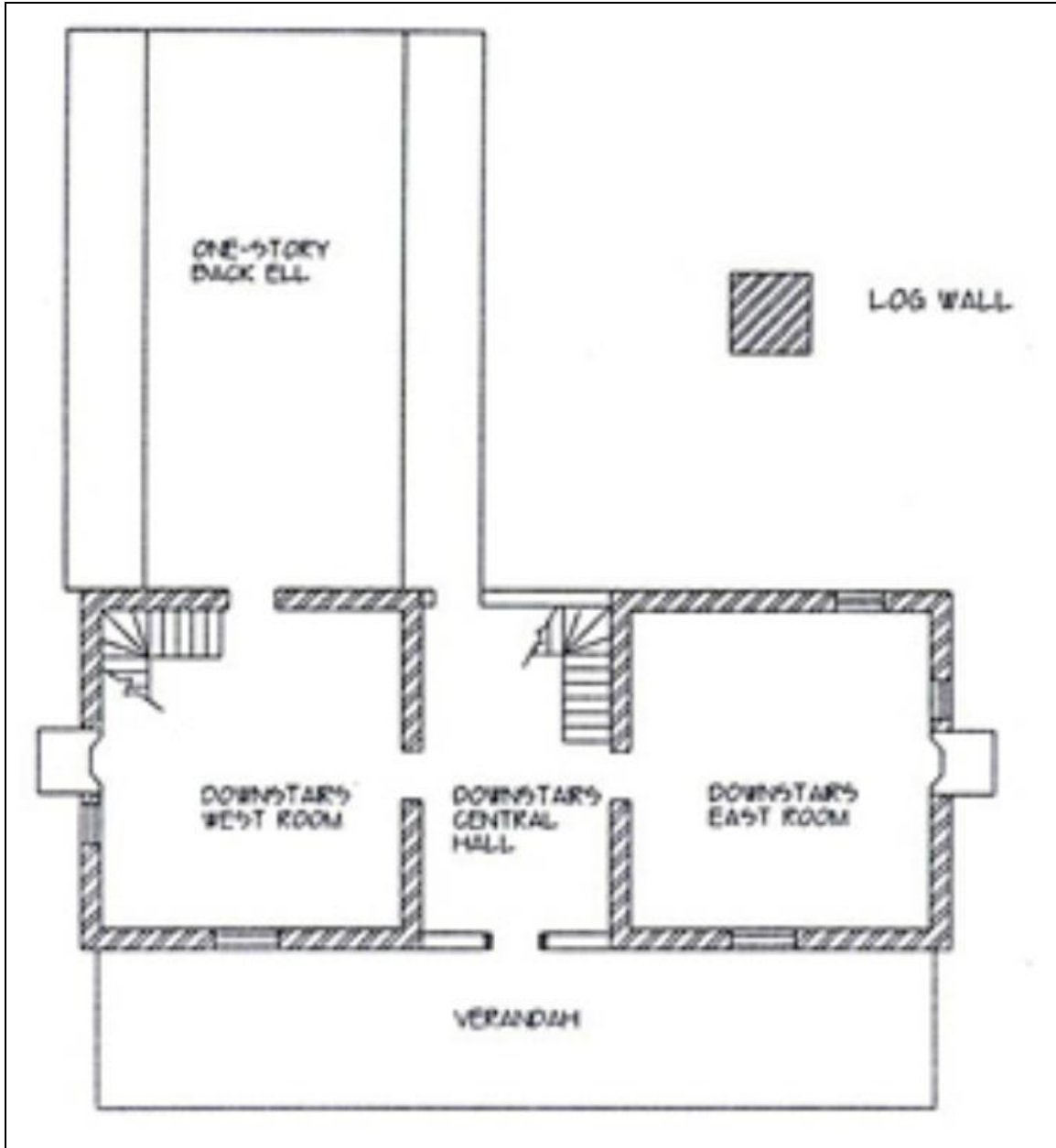


Figure 1: A floor plan drawing demonstrating an I House. Courtesy of Leslie Draper Stalcup, Center for Historic Preservation, Middle Tennessee State University.

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The Riggs House embodies the character defining features of the Federal style. Finished in 1820, the construction date of the Riggs House aligns closely with the years that the style was popular in Tennessee and the United States. The house retains the rectangular design, two-story height, and symmetrical façade synonymous with the Federal style. Its central hall design and single room depth are also representative of the central hall vernacular type. The extant windows are six-over-six, double hung, and wood, and the entrance itself featured sidelights and a multi-light transom. The presence of chimneys on either end, one external and one internal, also closely align with Federal style architecture. Though it is no longer present, the centered entrance on the second floor demonstrates the presence of a front gable, two-story portico, another common trait of Federal style houses. The presence of what appears to be four, evenly spaced, vertical wood boards mimic pilasters in design and are unique to the Riggs House. Important interior features include original plaster wall and ceilings, fireplace mantels, wood entrance surrounds, and the overall central hall plan.

A survey of other similar houses in the Morristown and the surrounding area demonstrates the Riggs House is an important example of the Federal style.<sup>27</sup> The survey identified 1800 Kidwell Ridge Road, 785 Morelock Road, 1010 East Main Street, and 313 East 3<sup>rd</sup> North Street as important comparables. 1800 Kidwell Ridge Road (**Figure 2**), northwest of Morristown, is a two-story, rectangular, side-gable, log building with a full length, two-story, shed roof porch and balcony. The symmetrical façade features a centered entrance on both the first and second stories, though no windows are located on the gable ends of the building. A single-story ell addition is located on the back of the house. Though the house does not exhibit the traditional hallmarks of the Federal style, it is an important comparable because it appears to be a good example of another central hall plan in the area. When comparing it with the nominated property, the Riggs House frame construction allowed for more windows and overall flexibility in space.

Also outside of Morristown is 785 Morelock Road (**Figure 3**). It is a two-story, wood frame, side gable, house covered in wood siding. It features a symmetrical façade with a full length, one-story, shed roof porch supported by four-by-four wood posts. A centered, front gable projection on the second floor extends outwards, and a single-story, gable roof addition is located on back. The main house also appears to be a single-room deep. When compared with the Riggs House, it shares the same height, symmetry, ell addition placement, and single room depth. However, 785 Morelock Road lacks the decorative elements associated with the Federal style that are present on the Riggs House.

The next two examples, 1010 East Main Street (**Figure 4**) and 313 East 3<sup>rd</sup> North Street (**Figure 5**), are located in Morristown's city limits and are good examples of the Federal style in the county seat. 1010 East Main Street embodies the Federal style as expressed with wood frame construction. Two stories in height, side gable, symmetrical façade, eave returns, and wood covering are all character defining features of the style. A two-story, front gable portico and two-story rear addition also ties the house closer to the traditional Federal style appearance in Tennessee. However, the new, hip roof, wrap around porch is a departure from overall Federal design. In contrast, the house at 313 East 3<sup>rd</sup> North Street is an example of high style Federal

<sup>27</sup> This survey was completed by the author using a United States Geological Survey map, Google Earth, and Google Maps. It was not an exhaustive survey, as several properties were obscured by long driveways. There is a possibility that other examples of the Federal style exist in the area.

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Figure 2: 1800 Kidwell Ridge Road. Image courtesy of Google Maps, 2026.



Figure 3: 785 Morelock Road. Image courtesy of Google Maps, 2026.



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Figure 4:1010 East Main Street. Image courtesy of Google Maps, 2026.



Figure 5:313 East 3rd North Street. Image courtesy of Google Maps, 2026 .

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architecture. It is two stories in height, of brick construction, symmetrical in appearance, and features two interior brick chimneys. A two-story, front gable, Classically-inspired portico shelters entrances on both stories flanked by sidelights and transoms encased in decorative wood door surrounds. A full length, one-story shed roof porch with Classical columns shelters the main entrance and windows. The house is also greater than one room deep, and the windows are six-over-six, double hung, wood windows set upon stone sills and surmounted by stone lintels.

When taken together, it is apparent that the Riggs House is a good example of Federal style architecture as applied to earlier buildings in the rural parts of Morristown and Hamblen County. The only earlier house similar in design to the Riggs House is of log construction and does not reflect the Federal style, beyond the overall rectangular design and symmetrical façade. 785 Morelock Road, the other rural example identified, also does not possess the same Federal embellishments present on the Riggs House. The remaining two comparables, 1010 East Main Street and 313 East 3<sup>rd</sup> North Street, are high style examples when compared to the Riggs House. Their locations on prime streets in the historic part of Morristown speak to the design and vision of the builders to create high style examples of the Federal style within a growing city. This reinforces the significance of the Riggs House as an excellent example of the style as it was applied in the rural areas of Hamblen County, surrounding Morristown. This, combined with the property's retention of integrity, make it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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| Previous documentation on file (NPS):               |                                                                                | Primary location of additional data: |                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                 | preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested) | X                                    | State Historic Preservation Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                            | previously listed in the National Register                                     | <input type="checkbox"/>             | Other State agency                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                            | previously determined eligible by the National Register                        | <input type="checkbox"/>             | Federal agency                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                            | designated a National Historic Landmark                                        | <input type="checkbox"/>             | Local government                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                            | recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #                               | <input type="checkbox"/>             | University                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                            | recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #                             | <input type="checkbox"/>             | Other                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                            | recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #                               | Name of repository:                  |                                    |
| Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A |                                                                                |                                      |                                    |



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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7.18 USGS Quadrangle Morristown 163 NE

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates** (These coordinates should correspond to the corners of the property boundary. Add additional coordinates if necessary. Enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.168338  | Longitude: -83.293068 |
| 2. Latitude: 36.167813  | Longitude: -83.292235 |
| 3. Latitude: 36.167759  | Longitude: -83.292308 |
| 4. Latitude: 36.167683  | Longitude: -83.292367 |
| 5. Latitude: 36.167397  | Longitude: -83.292357 |
| 6. Latitude: 36.166677  | Longitude: -83.292093 |
| 7. Latitude: 36.166436  | Longitude: -83.292099 |
| 8. Latitude: 36.166277  | Longitude: -83.292176 |
| 9. Latitude: 36.166554  | Longitude: -83.292539 |
| 10. Latitude: 36.166271 | Longitude: -83.293045 |
| 11. Latitude: 36.166611 | Longitude: -83.293042 |
| 12. Latitude: 36.167401 | Longitude: -83.295372 |
| 13. Latitude: 36.168397 | Longitude: -83.293978 |
| 14. Latitude: 36.168281 | Longitude: -83.293098 |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries correspond with the attached boundary map and Parcel ID: 050 053.00.

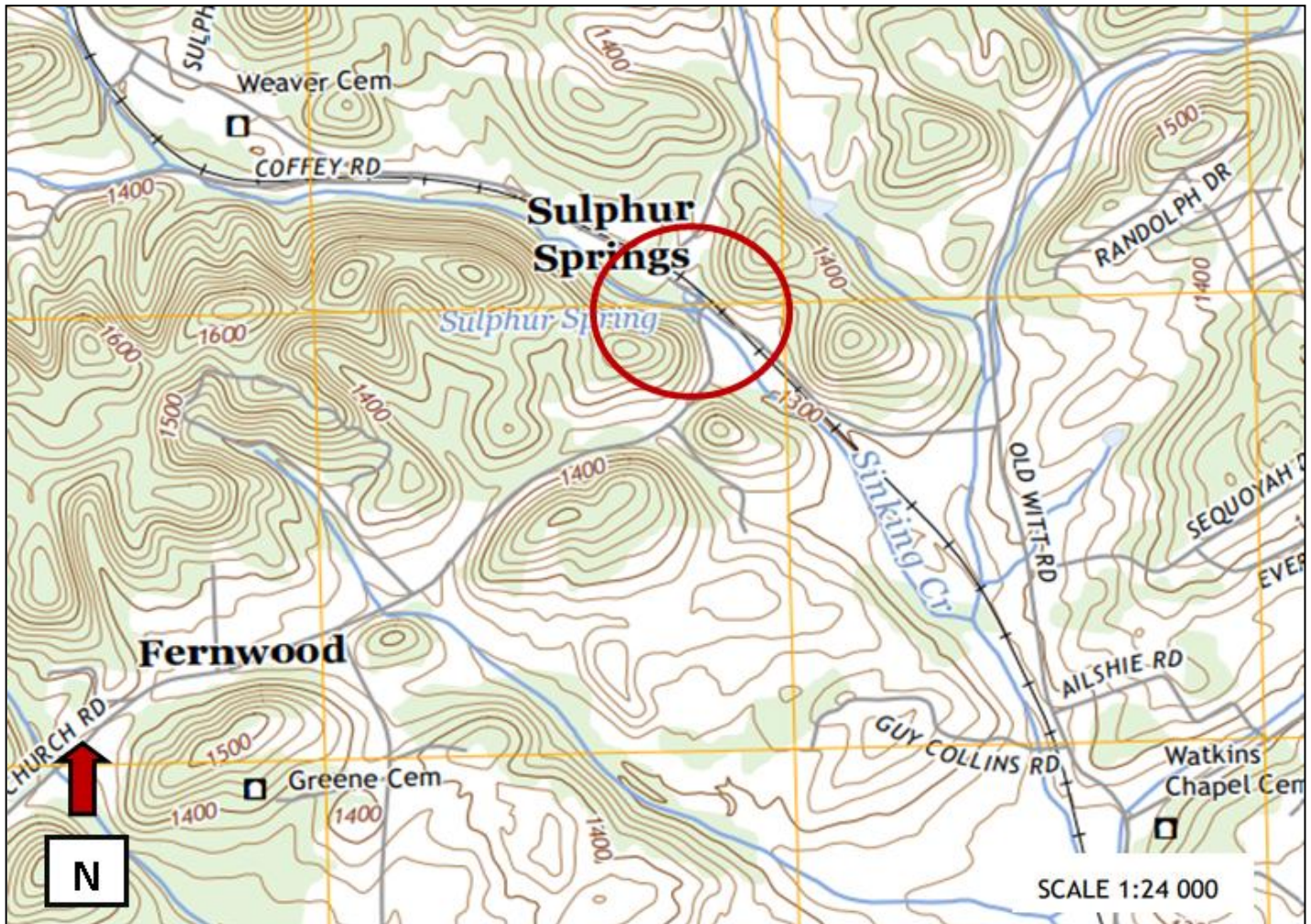
**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries contain all the land and resources historically associated with the property.

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USGS Topographic Map

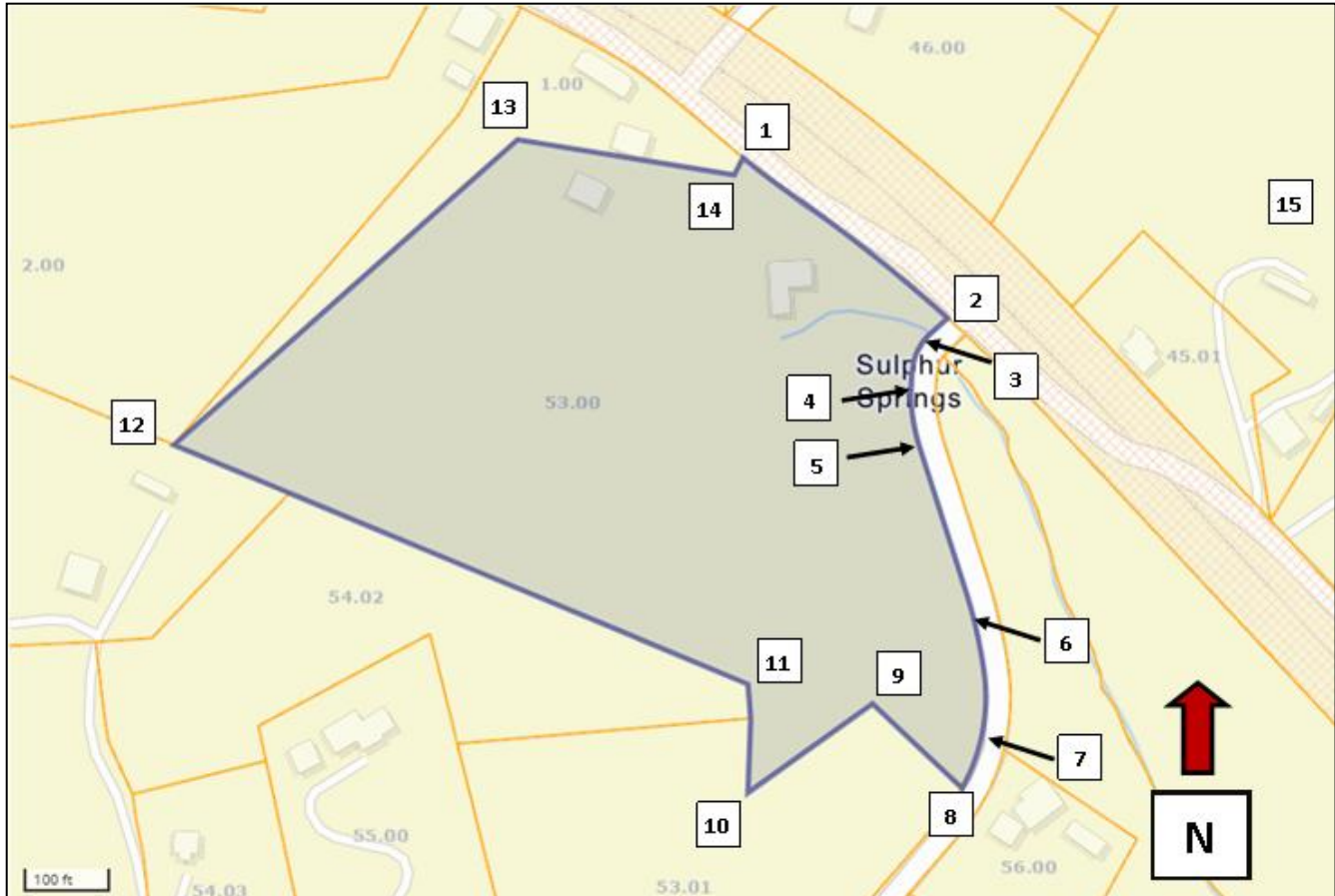


Red circle indicates location of property. Map courtesy of the United States Geological Survey.

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Boundary Map



The boundaries of the nominated property correlate with the latitude and longitude points listed earlier. The shaded area includes the land and resources being nominated. Map courtesy of the Tennessee Property Assessor, 2025.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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|                 |                                                              |           |                   |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Name            | J. Ethan Holden                                              |           |                   |
| Organization    | Tennessee Historical Commission                              |           |                   |
| Street & Number | 2941 Lebanon Pike                                            | Date      | 6/12/2026         |
| City or Town    | Nashville                                                    | Telephone |                   |
| E-mail          | <a href="mailto:Ethan.holden@tn.gov">Ethan.holden@tn.gov</a> | State     | TN Zip Code 37214 |

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints. Photos should be submitted separately in a JPEG or TIFF format. Do not embed these photographs into the form)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. can be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps. They can also be embedded in the Section 7 or 8 narratives)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



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**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Riggs House

City or Vicinity: Morristown

County: Hamblen

State: Tennessee

Photographer: Rebecca Schmitt

Date Photographed: October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 33 Façade (North Elevation). Photographer facing southeast

2 of 33 East Elevation. Photographer facing west

3 of 33 South and East Elevation. Photographer facing northwest

4 of 33 Porch Detail. Photographer facing northwest

5 of 33 Rear Ell. Photographer facing west

6 of 33 Rear Ell. Photographer facing northeast

7 of 33 West Elevation and Rear Ell . Photographer facing northeast

8 of 33 West Elevation. Photographer facing east

9 of 33 Lower Central Hall. Photographer facing south

10 of 33 Lower Central Hall. Photographer facing north

11 of 33 View Towards Sitting Room. Photographer facing southeast

12 of 33 Sitting Room. Photographer facing northeast

13 of 33 Sitting Room. Photographer facing southeast

14 of 33 Sitting Room. Photographer facing southwest

15 of 33 View Towards Dining Room. Photographer facing southwest

16 of 33 Dining Room. Photographer facing southwest

17 of 33 Dining Room. Photographer facing southeast

18 of 33 Dining Room. Photographer facing east

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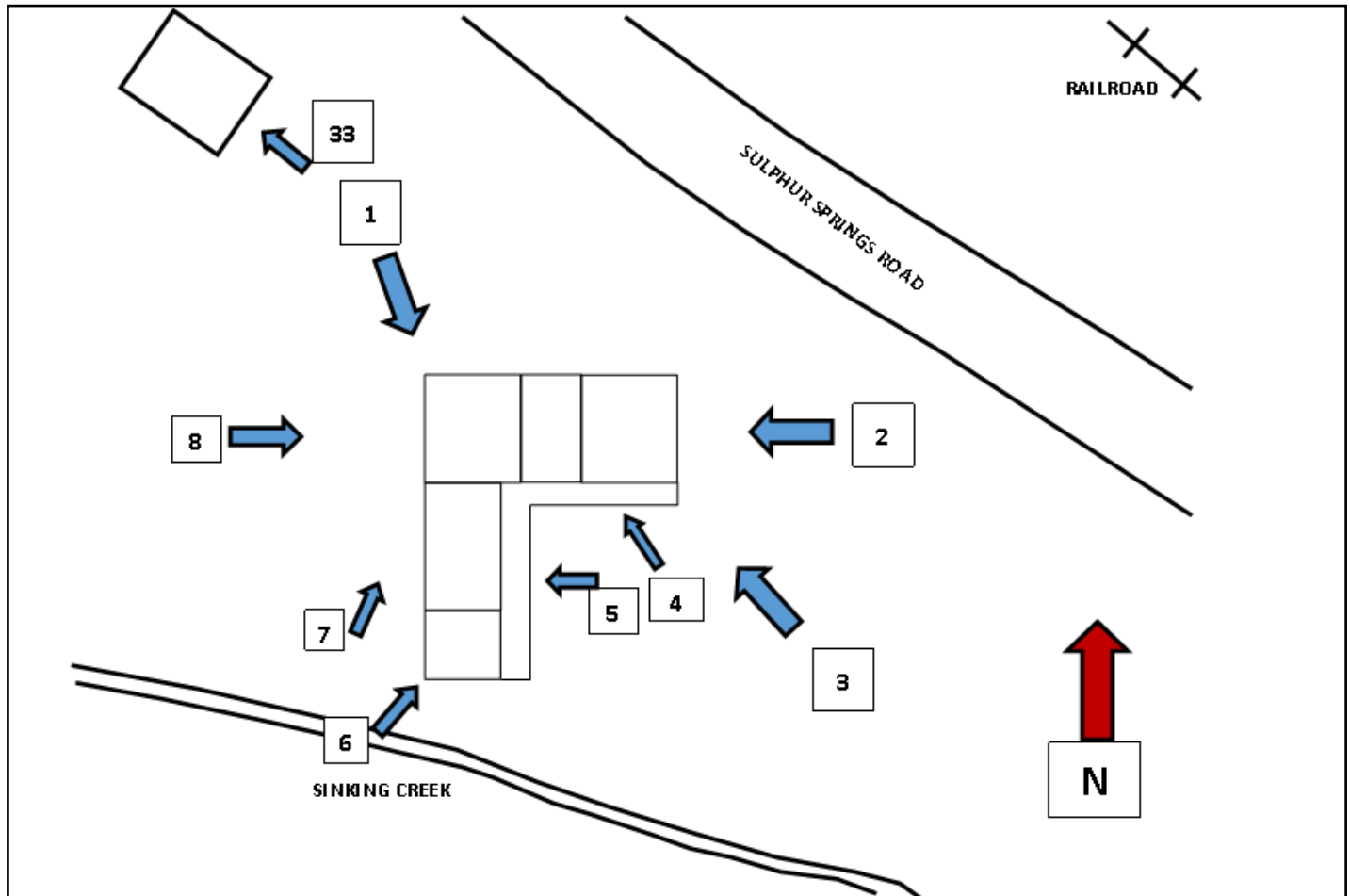
- 
- 19 of 33 Kitchen. Photographer facing northwest
- 20 of 33 Kitchen. Photographer facing southwest
- 21 of 33 Upper Central Hall. Photographer facing north
- 22 of 33 Balcony Detail. Photographer facing north
- 23 of 33 Upper East Hall. Photographer facing east
- 24 of 33 Northeast Bedroom. Photographer facing northeast
- 25 of 33 Southeast Bedroom. Photographer facing southwest
- 26 of 33 Primary Bedroom. Photographer facing southeast
- 27 of 33 Primary Bedroom. Photographer facing southwest
- 28 of 33 Upper West Hall. Photographer facing west
- 29 of 33 Upper Southwest Bedroom. Photographer facing southeast
- 30 of 33 Northwest Bedroom. Photographer facing north
- 31 of 33 Secondary Bedroom. Photographer facing southwest
- 32 of 33 Secondary Bedroom. Photographer facing northwest
- 33 of 33 Barn. Photographer facing northwest



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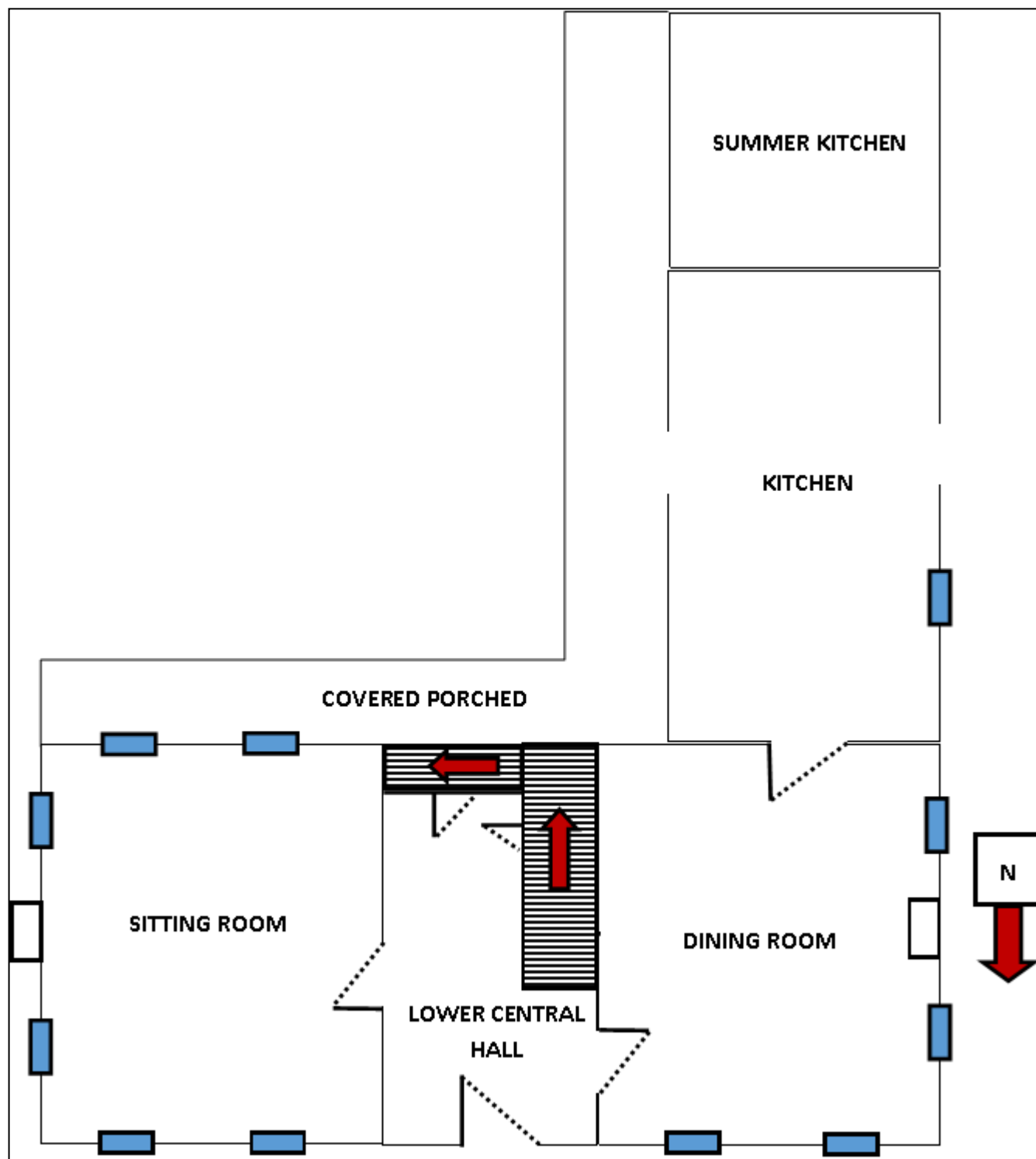
Site Plan, Keyed (Not to Scale)



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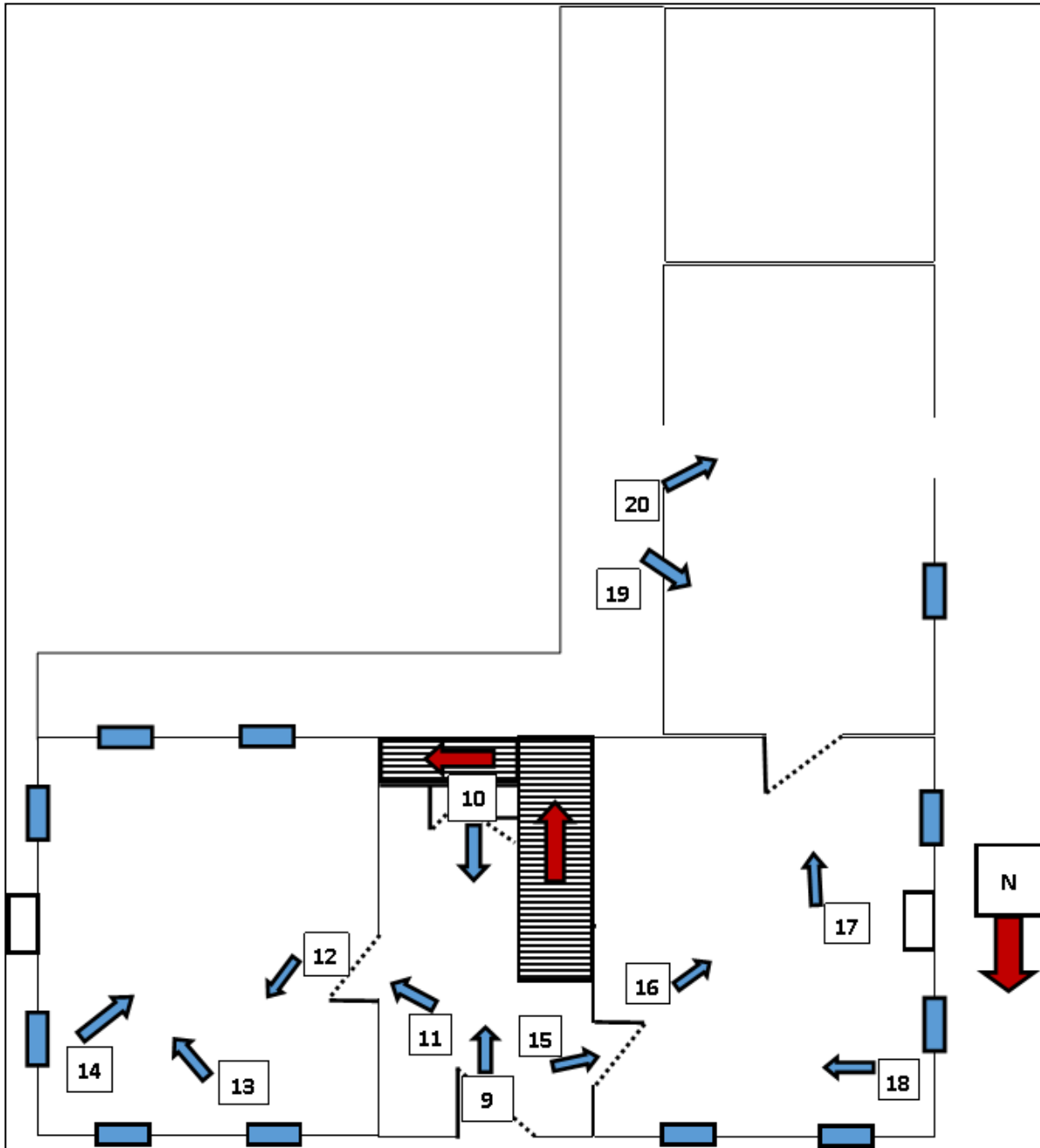
**Floor Plan, Not to Scale (First Floor)**



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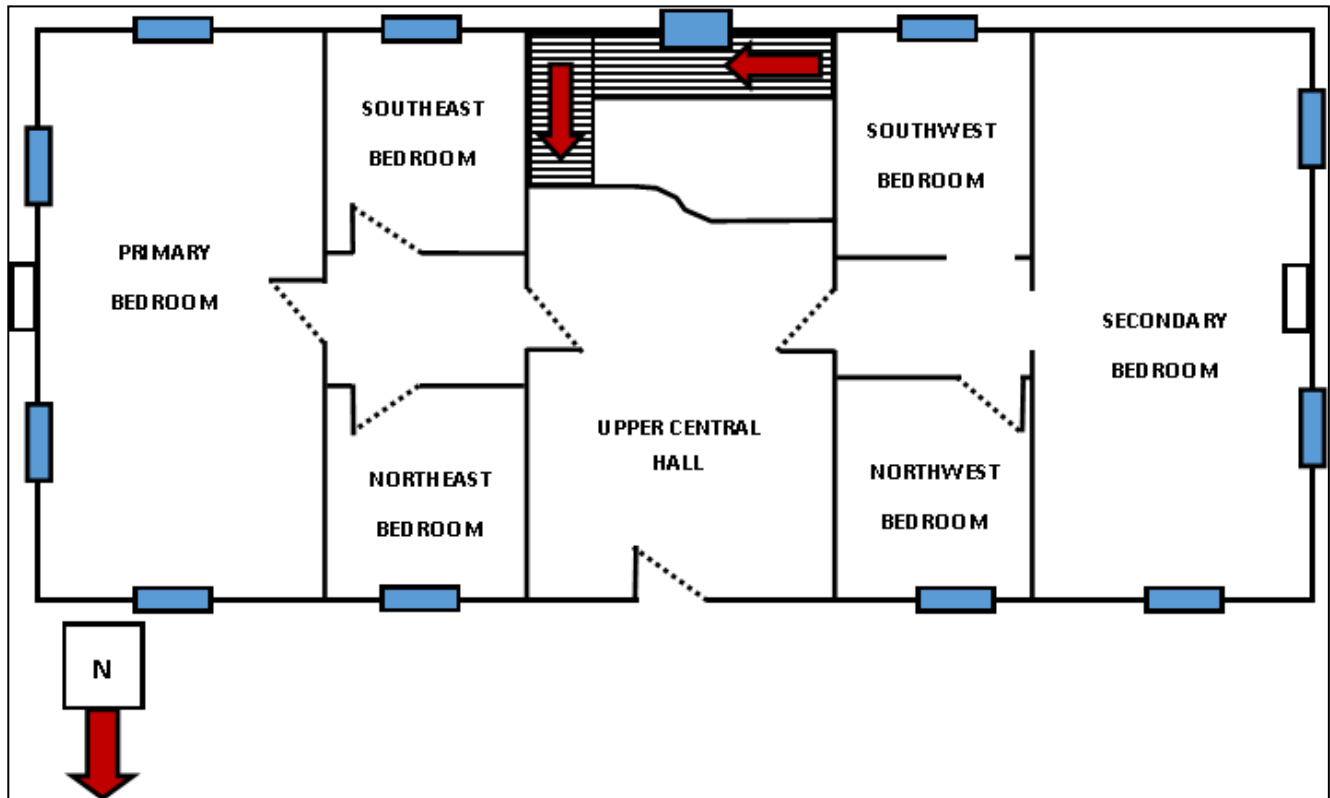
Floor Plan, Not to Scale, Keyed (First Floor)



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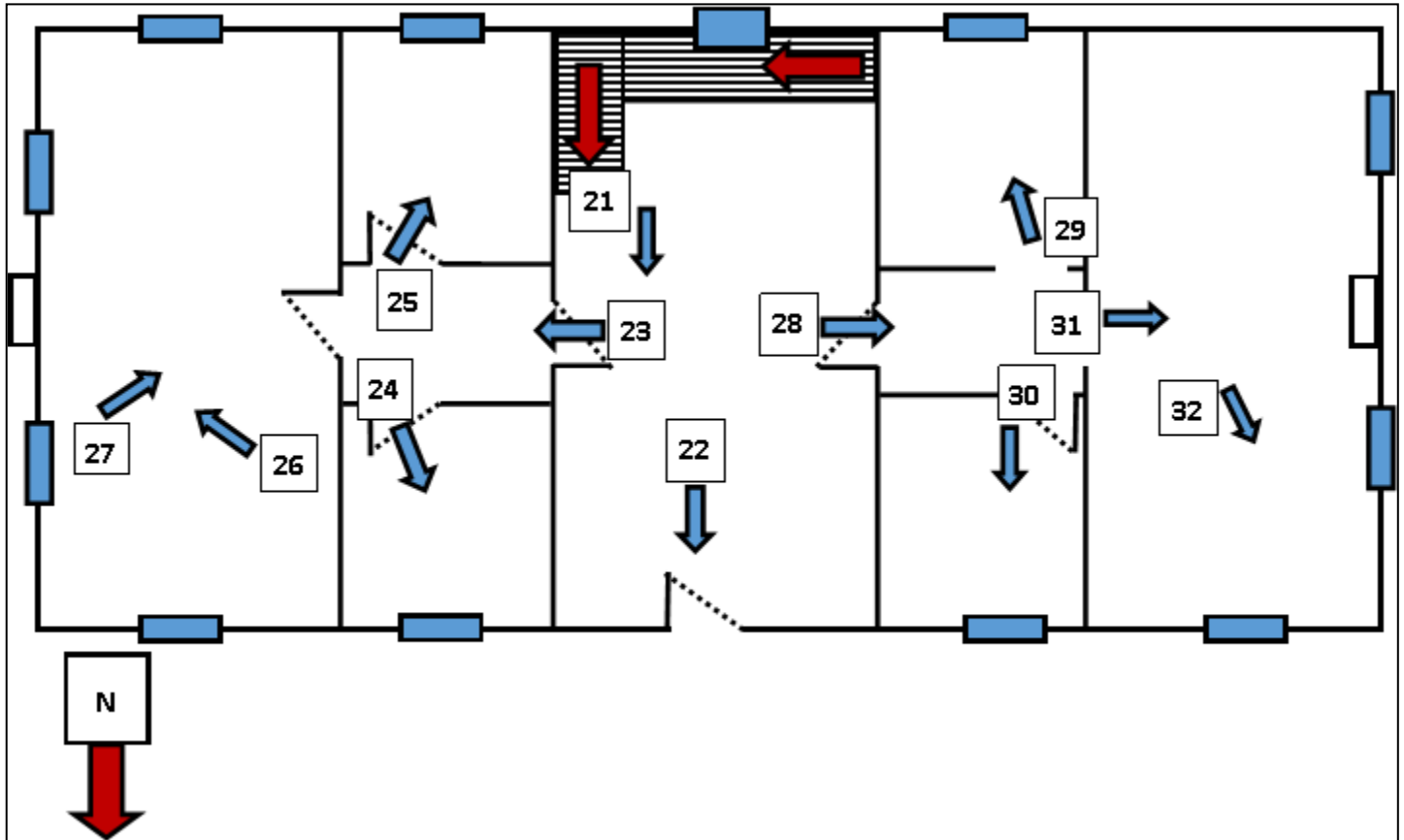
Floor Plan, Not to Scale, (Second Floor)



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Floor Plan, Not to Scale, Keyed (Second Floor)



**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

|                                          |
|------------------------------------------|
| Riggs House                              |
| -----                                    |
| Name of Property                         |
| Hamblen County, Tennessee                |
| -----                                    |
| County and State                         |
| N/A                                      |
| -----                                    |
| Name of multiple listing (if applicable) |

Section number \_\_\_\_ Page 31

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The N.R. Continuation Sheet should be used for additional supporting documentation such as historic photographs, maps, and addendum documentation. You may also embed supporting documentation and/or images within the text of Sections 7 and 8.



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**Property Owner(s):**

(This information will not be submitted to the National Park Service, but will remain on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission)

---

Name

**Albert Scholtens**

Street &

Number

**3496 Sulphur Springs Road**

Telephone

City or Town

**Morristown**

State/Zip

Tennessee, 37813



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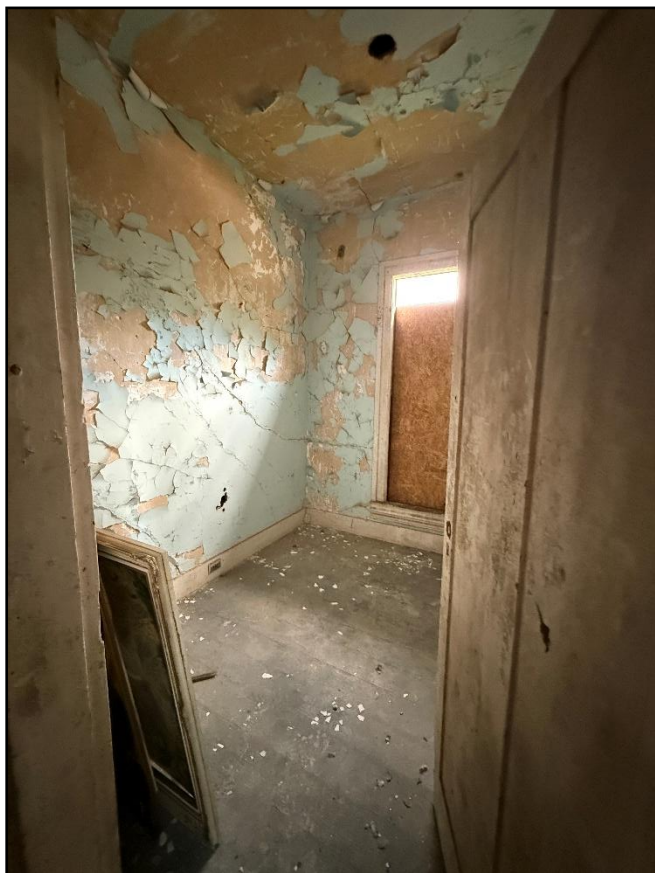
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