

504-506 EAST HALL LANE (House)
Savannah
Chatham County
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2375

HABS
GA 2375

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Southeast Region
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

504-506 EAST HALL LANE (House)

HABS No. GA-2375

Location: 504-506 East Hall Lane
Savannah
Chatham County
Georgia

U.S.G.S. Savannah 7.5' Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: N752,990;
E833,500

Present Owner: S.N.A.P. IV
National Housing Partnership
1225 Eye Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005

Present Use: Vacant; To be demolished in late 1990.

Significance: The structure at 504-506 East Hall Lane is located within the Beach Institute Historic Neighborhood. Once a part of the Fairlawn Plantation, the area has been a significant part of the black community since before the Civil War.

PART I: PHYSICAL CONTEXT

The structure at 504-506 East Hall Lane is set in Mercer Ward, a district located within the Beach Institute Historic Neighborhood which is that part of the Savannah Historic District located between Liberty Street on the north, Price Street on the west, East Gwinnett Street on the south, and East Broad Street on the east.

PART II: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The area known as the Beach Institute Historic Neighborhood was originally part of a parcel of land owned by Thomas Gibbons. In 1785, Gibbons, then a young, wealthy entrepreneur from Savannah, purchased more than 350 acres for a sum of 352 pounds. Over the next few years, Gibbons continued to purchase additional parcels of land until the early 1800s when he converted his rather large landholdings into a rice plantation. He gave his new plantation the name, "Fairlawn". A composite map from 1842 shows that Gibbons built several structures on the grounds of Fairlawn: a stately lodge surrounded by a grove of large oaks, an overseer's cottage and several rows of slave quarters.

Gibbons moved his family north to New Jersey in the early 1830s giving charge of Fairlawn and his personal affairs to a Colonel Maxwell. Gibbons and his family would visit the plantation often, enjoying prolonged vacations during the summer months.

The outbreak of the Civil War brought a cessation to agricultural activities all along the Savannah River, and Fairlawn Plantation was no exception. Gibbons joined the Confederate Army and while he was away his slaves abandoned their work and set ablaze the great structures and rice fields of Fairlawn. Nothing remained but the salvage cottages, the overseer's mansion, and Whitefall lodge.

Following Lee's surrender to Grant, Gibbons not only freed his slaves, but granted 40 acres and a mule to each family. By the early 1870s the plantation lands were subdivided by streets and the area became a fashionable residential community for middle class Negro families.

PART III: SITE DESCRIPTION

The houses in the Beach Institute Historic Neighborhood are architecturally significant as they represent the types of dwellings which existed as early as the 1820s. Many lane cottages were built along the dirt lanes to utilize the long, narrow lots to the fullest extent. Although no record of the original construction of 504-506 East Hall Lane exists, it was most likely built in the late 1890s.

The property the dwelling is located on has quite an interesting history. An individual by the name of George Anderson purchased several lots in the Beach Institute Historic Neighborhood in 1870, including the lot now containing 504-506 East Hall Lane. He divided the large portion of land he purchased into five equal parts, one for each of his children. His children then drew lots, and the property containing 504-506 East Hall Lane fell to his daughter Eliza Nicoll. Today, a street one block to the north of 504-506 East Hall Lane bears the name "Nicoll Street".

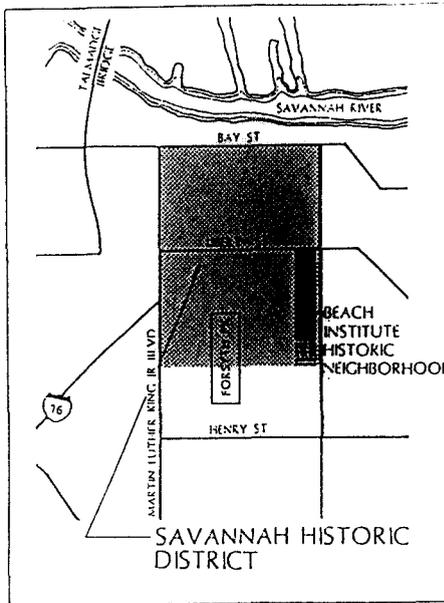
The structure at 504-506 East Hall Lane is a duplex with clapboard siding and a small roof over each landing supported by two turned posts. Each unit is a mirror plan of the other and is entered through the living room in front with the kitchen near the rear and a bathroom beyond. There are two bedrooms in each unit, one off of the living room and one off of the kitchen. The architectural details of the house have been irreparably damaged by weather and vandalism. These details include wainscoting throughout, Bulls-eye Rosette moulding, and fireplaces in both the kitchens and living rooms.

In October of 1990, the entire dwelling was in a state of grave disrepair. It was to be demolished in late 1990 and replaced by a new unit as part of a revitalization project of the Mercer Ward area, providing quality housing for low-income families.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

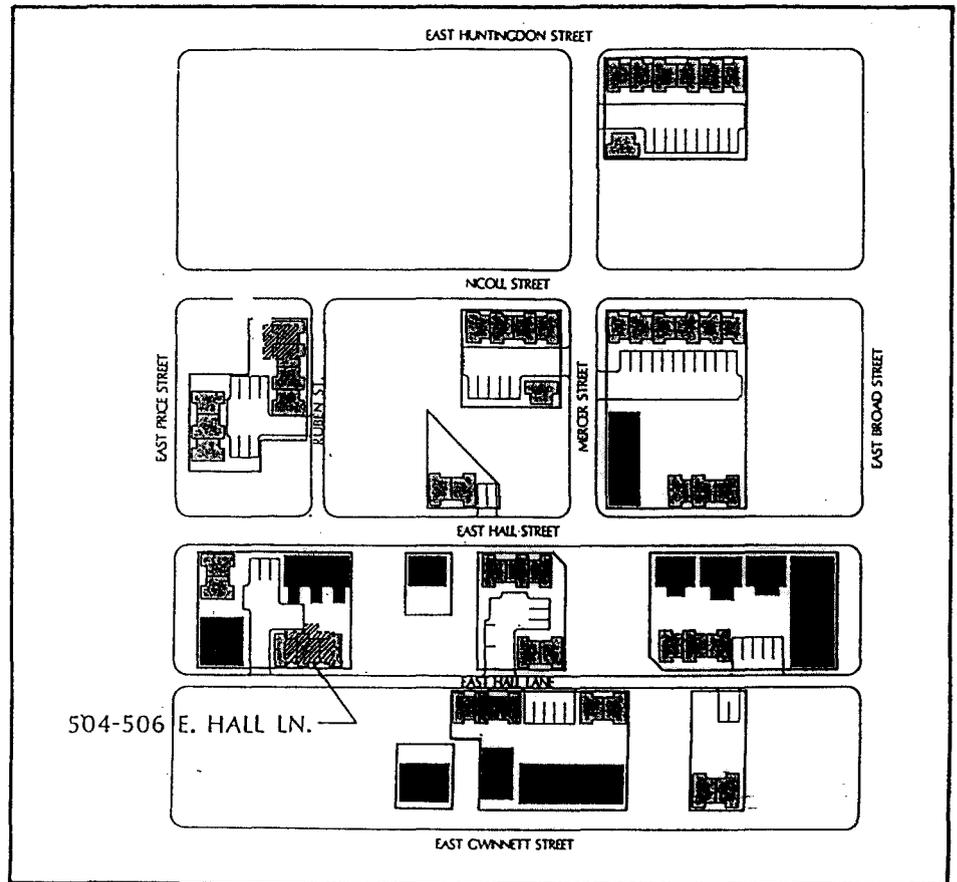
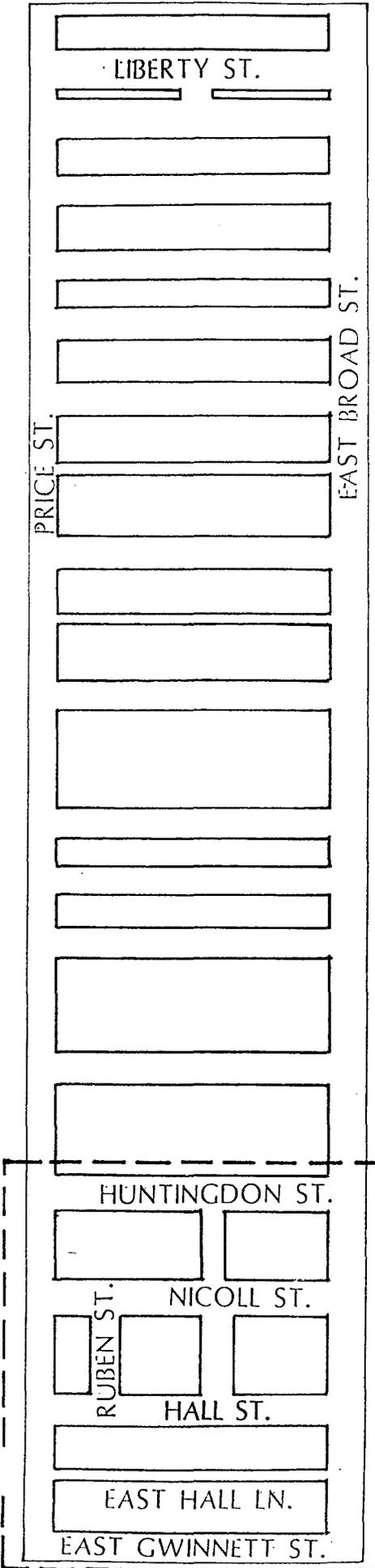
SAVANNAH RIVER PLANTATIONS; (Original Print)
Savannah Historical Society, 1947. (2nd Print)
Reprint Co., Spartenburg, SC 1972

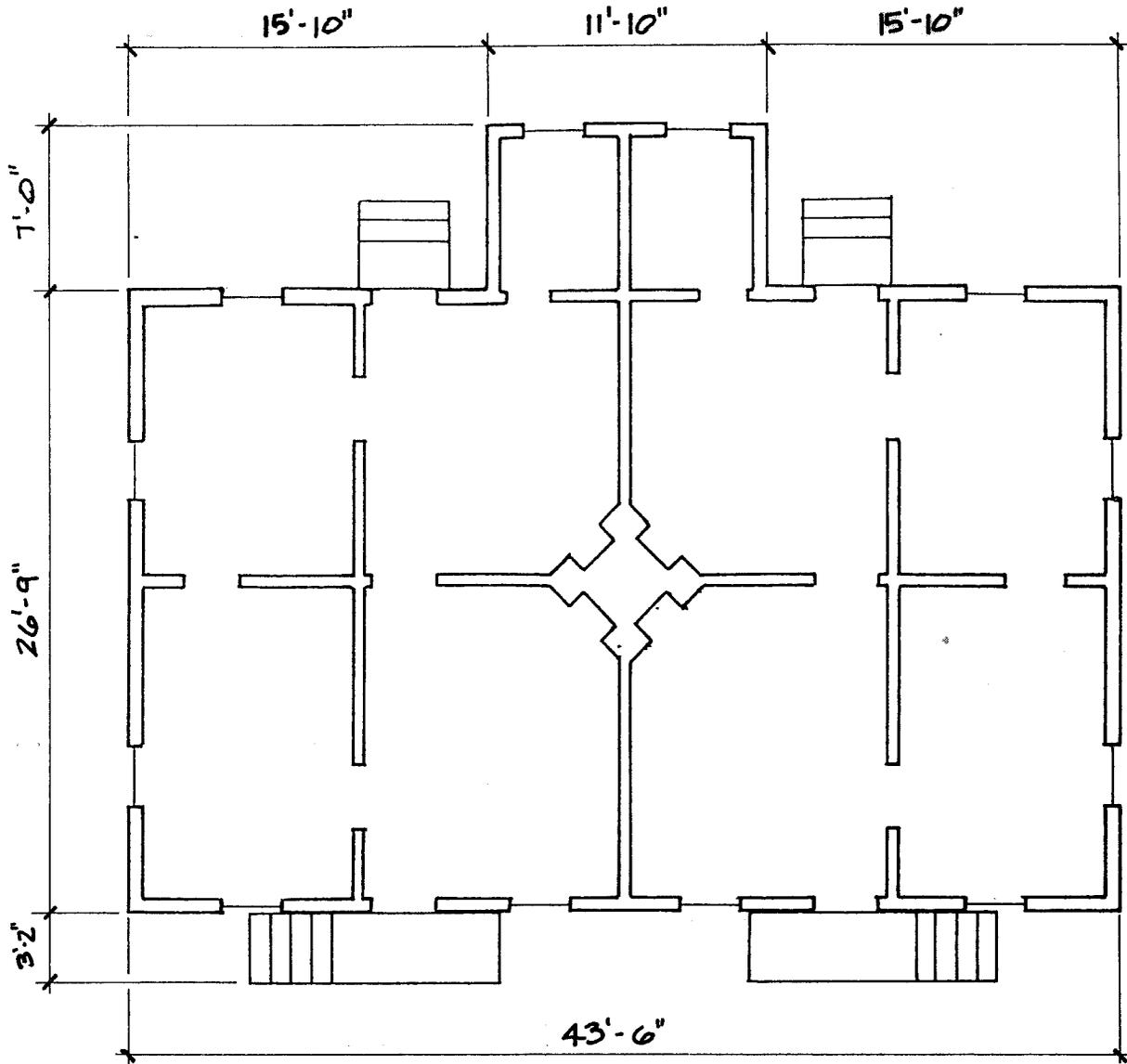
NOTE: Measured drawings and physical description of structure provided by Hansen Architects, P.C., 300 Bull Street, Suite 607, Savannah, Georgia 31401 (October 1990)



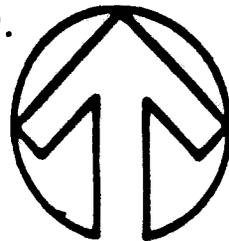
BEACH INSTITUTE HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD

504-506 EAST HALL LANE
CHATHAM CO.
SAVANNAH
GEORGIA





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HANSEN ARCHITECTS

10/04/90