

William Stewart House
232 Point Street
Saltsburg
Indiana County
Pennsylvania

HABS NO. PA-5416

HABS
PA,
32 SALT,
21-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historical American Building Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM STEWART HOUSE

HABS No. PA-5416

HABS
PA,
32-SALT,
21-

Location: 232 Point St., Saltsburg, Conemaugh Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Savings and Trust Company of Indiana.

Present Use: Vacant; the structure had been scheduled for demolition until Historic Saltsburg Inc. persuaded the bank to halt the action. As of June 27, 1988, demolition action was suspended; the building is being relocated and a parking lot will be built on the site.

Significance: The structure is a typical, mid-nineteenth-century vernacular dwelling representative of those occupied by Saltsburgers associated with the commerce introduced to the town by the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal in 1828.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1828-49, according to tax records.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Deeds referenced are located in the Recorder of Deeds Office, Indiana County Courthouse, Indiana, Pennsylvania.

1827 Deed December 11, 1827, in Volume 9, Page 58.

Amos Lawrence

TO

William Stewart (\$50, no buildings mentioned)

1849 Deed August 25, 1849, in Volume 16, Page 196.

William and Rachel (Robinson) Stewart

TO

Samuel Moore (for \$700, "with all and singular the buildings improvements")

- 1854 Deed April 27, 1854, Volume 20, Page 173.
Samuel Moore
TO
Jane (Robinson) Moore
- 1884 Will Book (citation not given)
Jane Moore (died 1/13/1884)
TO
Rachel Moore (daughter)
- 1918 Deed May 18, 1918, Volume 164, Page 161.
Rachel Moore
TO
M.L. Thounhurst
- 1919 Deed August 14, 1919, Volume 180, Page 89.
M.L. Thounhurst
TO
Pearl Katherine Thounhurst
- 1926 Deed September 3, 1926, Volume 239, Page 18.
Pearl Katherine Thounhurst
TO
Anna B. Robinson
- 1937 Deed July 14, 1937, Volume 288, Page 62.
Grantors Ernest S. Kelly and John E. Johnston, executor for Anna
B. Robinson (died 9/19/1936)
TO
Carrie Fink
- 1958 Deed March 22, 1958, Volume 470, Page 62.
Grantor Dora Fink, administratrix for Carrie Fink (died 12/11/1957)
TO
Rose A. Fink
- 1967 Deed July 29, 1967, Volume 567, Page 478.
Rose A. Fink
TO
Harry E. Hess

1974 Deed July 29, 1974, Volume 667, Page 374.

Harry E. Hess

TO

Harry E. and W. Patty Hess

1985 Deed November 15, 1985, Volume 884, Page 851.

Harry E. and W. Patty Hess

TO

Harry E. Hess

198- Deed citation not given

Harry E. Hess

TO

Savings and Trust Company of Indiana

3. Original plans and construction: No original drawings or plans have been located. The floor plan on the interior has been greatly altered, however, while the exterior gable-front, rectangular form retained its original form prior to the aborted demolition.
4. Alterations and additions: The rear addition telescopes out, slightly narrower than the main block; constructed between 1871 and 1886, it was originally a single story. The bracketed front porch, which was removed during the initial stages of demolition, appears to have been constructed during this period.

Between 1903 and 1909, a second story was appended to the rear addition. The three-part bay (by definition, this feature is an oriel, because it is suspended from the structure of the main block without benefit of a foundation; its form, however, is consistent with that of a bay) on the first floor of the west side wall was probably also installed at this time. A rectangular three-part bay was added to the second floor approximately above it, indicating the likely installation of a bathroom at this time (Sanborns). This may be the period in which the house was divided into a two-family dwelling. The pantry appears to have been built ca. 1909-27 (Sanborns, Beers).

Interior alterations identified in the floor plan and other sections of this report are based only on physical evidence and were not documented with any written resources, existing drawings, plans, or other visual material.

Interior and exterior alterations due to the immediate demolition are apparent in the accompanying photographs.

- B. Historical context: A construction date between 1828 and 1849 places the building during the period of dominance in Saltsburg of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal, and perhaps concurrent with its opening. The canal was completed through the town in 1828, and with it came a boom in industry and commerce throughout the Conemaugh Valley region.

The building at 232 Point St. has historically always served as a dwelling. William Stewart was the first owner of the property, and the builder of the house. He was one of the investing founders of the Saltsburg Academy (Arms and White, 384), and was a partner in Stewart, Robinson & Co., a general store on Point Street (Stewart, 505). Stewart married Rachel Robinson, a member of the prolific Robinson family of Saltsburg. In 1849, Stewart sold the property for \$700 to local businessman Samuel Moore.

Moore was the first tinsmith and stove merchant in Saltsburg in 1846, a business that he maintained until at least 1880 (Arms and White, 382). Moore also owned a shop on Salt Street where he sold confectioneries, fruits, nuts, and cooking and parlor stoves (Beers, business notices). In 1854 his daughter-in-law, Jane (Robinson) Moore who married his son William, purchased the house. William apparently apprenticed under his father and likewise operated a stove and tin business. When William's son, James Moore, became a partner in 1875, the shop was expanded to include a supply of hardware (Wiley, 227) and was renamed. The new William Moore and Son shop was described as "one of the largest and most successful business houses in Saltsburg." James Moore took over management of the business upon his father's death in 1892 (Stewart, 642). When Jane Moore died on January 1, 1884, she left the house to her daughter, Rachel Moore, who sold it out of the family in 1918.

The property then fell to a half-dozen later owners. The Fink family occupied it for forty years, followed by the Hess family from 1967 until it was taken into the possession of the Savings and Trust Company of Indiana.

For additional context, twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg may be consulted, as well as overview histories of the town of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438) and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666). See also, Sara Amy Leach, ed., Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg (Washington, DC: Historica American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The structure is a three-bay, two and one-half story, gable-front, frame dwelling whose vernacular styling is limited to such modest Greek Revival features such as a side-hall plan, raked cornice, a pedimental attic vent, and simple framing of doors (with transom) and windows.
2. Condition of fabric: The overall condition of the building is poor, based on observation and the results of recent demolition efforts. The exterior clapboards are in good condition but the roof requires repairs. Foundation bricks need to be replaced.

The interior has been altered considerably, and wallboard has been used throughout the house. Only one fireplace remains exposed and it was largely removed during the demolition; the mantel and fireplace surround are intact.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The main rectangular block is 18' x 32'; a narrower rectangular addition on the rear measures 14' x 16'.
2. Foundation: The foundation of the north facade is brick laid in five-course American bond, with a cut-stone footing. The foundation throughout the rest of the structure is random-sized stone. It is slightly banked.
3. Walls: The wood-framed walls are covered with various widths of clapboards; some original, while others relate to various stages of remodeling. The weatherboards on the front/north facade are exposed 5-3/4"; the east facade are exposed 7-1/2".
4. Structural systems, framing: The studs of the wood-frame building--exposed when the front porch was removed--possess reciprocating saw marks. A ridge pole is found in the roof of the main block. The gable roof of the rear lacks a ridgepole.
5. Porches: The porch on the main facade was removed prior to its

documentation, but a photograph taken of the building shows a full, raised, one-story porch with bracketed cornice and a Victorian balustrade in which the ballusters were cut with a jig saw.

6. Chimneys: There are two chimneys; the first is nearly mid-point on the ridge of the main block, constructed of brick, and built on a stone base. This chimney mass may contain four flues, but only one fireplace is currently exposed. The second chimney is located inside the south wall of the addition, and appears to have at one time been connected to a stovepipe.

The hearths on the first floor are supported by planks planed using power machinery, that flank the chimney mass, and are held in place with large, wooden pegs. Currently, only the fireplace in the front room remains unobstructed; the mantel and chimney surround were removed during the initial stages of demolition.

7. Openings: At the first-floor level there were originally no exterior openings on either the east or west walls due to the proximity of the surrounding buildings. The only sources of natural light and circulation were likely at the front and rear of the house.
 - a. Doorways and doors: Both front and rear doorways in the main block contain transoms and are located in the westernmost bay on axis with each other. The transom in the former was removed during the initial demolition; the one above the latter was boarded up long ago. The front entrance contains a door with fixed, single-light glazing on the top half, with two panels on the lower half.

The rear door contains two upper glazed panels and two lower wood panels. A sheltered entranceway exists in the southeast corner of the structure; here the second floor projects over the rear door, a second door in north wall of the rear addition features four panels, and a set of stairs leading to the ground.
 - b. Windows: The predominant window type is two-over-two-light double-hung wood sash. The exceptions on the first floor are the front facade, where a picture window was installed in the two easternmost bays, and a floor-to-ceiling bay on the east facade (installed between 1903 and 1909) of the rear room of the main block. The only windows that appear to be intact are in the east

wall of the kitchen on the second floor, and in the south wall of the basement in the addition, near the southeast corner. These are six-over-six-light sash with wood-pegged frames. Their construction may indicate that the second-story portion of the kitchen predates the window changes in the first half of the twentieth century.

An opening for a small pantry located on the rear addition corresponds with the basement storage area, located on the west wall near the southwest corner. The pantry is equipped with a window.

8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable with asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornice: The wood cornice and raked eaves are unembellished.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. Cellar: The floor plan is composed of a large rectangular main space with a smaller rectangular addition on the rear. The basement area is open, for the most part, except for the base of the chimney mass located centrally in the main block.
 - b. First floor: The main block is divided into two rooms of approximately the same size; the front space located in the two western bays separated from the stair by a wall, and the rear room comprising the full width of the building. Doorways exist between the rooms in the main block and the single space in the rear addition. The rear addition is slightly narrower than the main block and telescopes out from it.

The original chimney mass is nearly centered in the main mass. Beyond the main entrance lies a stairwell and what was probably a side hall leading to the rear of the building; the hall currently terminates at the rear of the staircase.

A small, three-sided enclosure is attached to the exterior of the west foundation wall of the addition. This enclosure is not

accessible from the interior and was apparently constructed as a storage space of some sort.

- c. Second Floor: The second floor has been most affected by reorganization alterations to accommodate two living units. In perimeter, the plan reflects the first-floor arrangement of front room, back room and rear addition. The original side-hall plan along the east wall of the main block, although somewhat modified, is largely retained as the front-to-back passage through the building. It appears that the inner wall of the hall was pushed west toward the center of the building to convert the building into a two-family unit. A later partition was erected at the head of the stairs, which forced a visitor to turn 90-degrees at the top step to enter the hall. When the interior hall wall was moved, the room entrances may have changed, which accounts for the irregular angle of the door to the front room at the head of the stairs; a closet has been constructed adjacent to it, perhaps in an attempt to disguise this awkward intersection. Directly behind the stair partition, a small rectangular room was created using space from on top of the first-floor bay; a bathroom was installed utilizing a portion of the hall, as does a small kitchen. The door to the hall was moved so close to that of the rear room that the molding was sawn, width-wise, nearly in half to butt against the undisturbed door.

There are various storage spaces in each room. One is directly above the main entrance and another is in the rear room adjacent to the chimney mass. The last closet was built on the rear (south) wall of the addition in the southwest corner.

- d. Third floor/attic: The space is open except for the chimney mass.
2. Stairways: An exterior staircase leading from the basement up to the first story is located in the southeast corner, partially against a small section of the foundation wall of the main block; it contains 10 risers. The front stairs from the first to the second floor (SW corner) contain fourteen, 7" treads with a landing at the top and a one-step turn into the hallway. The rear stairway between these two floors has twelve risers. The rear staircase that leads from the second floor to the attic has ten risers. A narrow, enclosed staircase leading to the second floor is located on the west wall of the addition where it intersects with the main block.

3. **Flooring:** The rooms in the main block of the house are floored with 6-1/2" to 7" wood flooring, except the bathroom and the former kitchen on the second floor, which are covered with tile and linoleum, respectively. Square-headed nails can be seen in the floor on the first story. The flooring in the addition is less regular, ranging in widths of 3-1/2" to 5-1/2", and kitchen carpeting covers the floor of the pantry. The attic is partially floored with wood boards. Floorboards throughout the structure run in a north-south direction and are largely painted brown.

The saw marks in the basement of the main block were made using power machinery; bridging is located between the floor joists to reduce movement and noise.

4. **Wall and ceiling finishes:** The walls are generally covered with contemporary wood wallboard. The exceptions include: the kitchen walls in the rear addition, which are plastered; the stairwell in the rear addition, which is covered with vertical matchboard; the fireplace walls in both first-floor rooms of the main block, which are covered with what appears to be the original plaster; and the walls of the second-floor bathroom, which are covered with a stained plywood. The walls in the pantry are covered with beadboard, and the exterior wall in the main stairwell is covered with cardboard; the wall surfaces behind these substances are unknown.

The ceilings are, for the most part, covered with wallboard. The exceptions include: the kitchen ceiling, which is covered with plaster; the first-floor bathroom, which is drywall; and the second-floor bathroom ceiling, which is covered with square panels. The machine-cut lath was exposed in a section of the ceiling in rear room of the main block.

The basement in the main block is unfinished. The walls and ceiling in the basement of the rear addition are covered with tongue- and-groove matchboard. The attic ceiling is unfinished.

5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** Most of the doors on the first floor have been removed, except the trio of four-paneled doors in the addition that lead to the basement stairwell, the stairwell leading

to the second floor, and the door leading to the pantry.

The doors on the second floor are mostly four paneled. The doorways in the hall that define the kitchen are empty, as is the doorway leading to the back bedroom from the hall. The most notable example is a pegged, six-panel, cross-and-bible-style door. It leans against the fireplace wall in the rear room of the main block, and had been at one time pieced to fit an unknown, larger opening.

Trim on the windows and doors can be divided into three categories: Greek Revival (profile B), Victorian (profile A), and later additions with no dominant profile. The Greek Revival trim, which is probably the original, is found on the first floor on the front door, on the doorway between the front room and the rear room of the main block (molding is intact and surrounds both sides of the opening); on the second floor in the closet in the rear room of the main block; and on the door leading from the remodeled hall into the rear addition.

The Victorian trim that was probably added during one of the remodelings is found on the doorways of the following first-floor rooms: outside of the bathroom doorway, and the three doors in the rear addition, except the stairwell door. On the second floor, it is used on the door between the rear room in the main block and the hallway, and on the doorway between the rear room and the addition. The remaining doorways either possess no trim or trim that can be categorized as miscellaneous.

The south foundation wall of the main block contains a door slightly west of center that leads into the basement of the addition; in the basement of the addition there is an exterior door nearly centered on the east wall.

- b. Windows: The window trim--like the door trim--may be categorized as Greek Revival (profile B), Victorian (profile A), and miscellaneous. There is Greek Revival trim on the second floor surrounding the original window in the kitchen and two windows on the exterior wall in the rear room of the main block.

On the first floor the Victorian window trim is on the three-part bay and on the windows in the addition. The second-floor

windows featuring this trim are in the front room and on the west window of the rear addition near the southwest corner. The remaining windows possess no trim or miscellaneous trim from later renovations.

The south wall of the foundation in the main block contains a window near the southwest corner of the structure; in the addition basement there's a window on the south wall near the southeast corner.

6. **Decorative features:** There is a curve at the top of both sides of the interior stairhall wall. The fireplace in the first-floor front room was converted to a coal hearth sometime in the late nineteenth century. At this time the incised, stone fireplace surround may have been added, along with the decorative colorful, tiled hearth. The surround and mantel, although disassembled, were not removed from the house during the initial stages of demolition. A built-in, floor-to-ceiling cupboard remains in the fireplace wall of the rear room of the main block near the doorway leading to the front room. The doors in the cupboard are paneled and possess simple latches. A section of baseboard that appears to be contemporary with the Victorian door and window trim (profile A), was located in the rear room of the main block. A section of early baseboard is located in the former kitchen.
7. **Hardware:** The three doors on the staircases in the rear addition are equipped with early latches that feature a decorative plate, a small moveable bar, and a small inverted, U-shaped latch. On the other side of the door, a simple handle with a thumb latch lifts the bar and opens the door.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
 - a. **Heating, air-conditioning, ventilation:** Originally the structure was heated with wood fireplaces, which were at some point modified to burn coal. Apparently a stove was added in the rear addition. The structure is currently heated with an oil furnace.
 - b. **Lighting fixtures:** The two most notable light fixtures are in the rooms on the first floor of the main block. They are chandeliers with a center "hub" and five sockets on arms radiating from the center. Decorative trim with classical motifs are strung between each socket.

- c. Plumbing: The structure is fitted with running water and up-to-date bathroom facilities.
9. Original furnishings: Wallpaper samples can be examined behind the fireplace surround in the front room on the first floor, and on the pantry wall. On the first floor the ceilings of the original block are covered with an embossed wallpaper that has been painted. A thin band of molding, similar to sections found in the attic, remains in place at the base of the curve on the interior wall of the entrance hall. A number of decorative floor grates located throughout the house may have originated in the stores of owners Samuel or William Moore.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The William Stewart House faces roughly north on to Point Street. Originally the Central Hotel stood directly east of it; when the First National Bank (now the Savings and Trust Company of Indiana) was constructed on the hotel site in 1927, the emphasis was changed to face on to Salt Street. The streetscape, which had previously consisted of a number of two-story residences constructed in proximity both to each other and the street, was somewhat changed by the loss of the hotel. The house at 232 Point St. is somewhat unusual because, unlike its neighbors, its street facade is raised above the ground by a 4 1/2'-high brick foundation. Traveling east on Point Street, the thoroughfare gradually slopes downward until it reaches the level of the Conemaugh River, which winds past the town.
2. Historic landscape: The structure was built on a narrow urban lot. Landscaping was restricted due to the proximity of other houses, for a lone conifer grows on the southwest corner of the lot.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Old Views and maps:

The collection of the Saltsburg Branch, Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County, Stone House Museum, contains numerous historical images.

Beers, F.W. Atlas of Indiana County. New York: F.W. Beers and Co., 1871.

Johnson, George B., and Palmer, Ann. Saltsburg--The Way It Was--An Appreciation. Indiana, Pa.: A.G. Halldin Publishing Co., 1986.

Peelor, David, and Barker, W. "Map of Indiana County, Pennsylvania." North Hector, New York: 1856.

"Saltsburg, Pa." New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co. Ltd., February 1886; New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd., October 1891, January 1897, July 1903; New York: Sanborn Map Company, April 1909, February 1927.

B. Primary and unpublished sources:

Indiana County, Pennsylvania, deed books and tax records.

C. Secondary and published sources:

Arms, C.T., and White, E. 1745-1880, History of Indiana County, Pennsylvania. Newark, Ohio: J. A. Caldwell, 1880.

Berringer, Gloria, ed. Canal Days Sesquicentennial: 1838-1988. No publisher, 1988.

Biographical and Historical Cyclopeda of Indiana and Armstrong Counties. Philadelphia: John M. Gresham and Co., 1891; reprinted 1982.

Johnson, George. Saltsburg and the Pennsylvania Canal. Historic Saltsburg, 1984.

McCullough, Robert, and Leuba, Walter. The Pennsylvania Main Line Canal. York, Pa.: American Canal and Transportation Center, 1973.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory, "Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal: Indiana and Westmoreland Counties." 1979/82.

Stewart, J.T. Indiana County, Pennsylvania: Her People, Past and Present. Chicago: F.W. Beers and Co., 1913.

Wallner, Peter A. "Politics and Public Works: A Study of the Pennsylvania Canal System, 1825-1857." Ph.D diss., Pennsylvania State University, June 1973.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record in cooperation with the America's Industrial Heritage Project under the directorship of Randy Cooley; AIHP is an undertaking of the National Park Service, based in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Recorded under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, the project was completed during summer 1988 at the HABS field office in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Project leader was Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian; field supervisor was Dorothy Burlingame, University of Vermont; project historian, Kristin Belz, University of Virginia. Large-format photography is by David Ames. Editing of the final report was done by Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

This report was completed as part of a larger project documenting two canal towns--Saltsburg, on the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, and Alexandria, on the Juniata Division--flanking the Allegheny Divide. Twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg, an overview history of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438), and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666) are part of the HABS/HAER collection. Twenty-two reports on buildings in Alexandria (Huntingdon County) and an overview history of Alexandria (HABS No. PA-5407) are also available. Results of the project were published as Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg, Sara Amy Leach, editor (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).

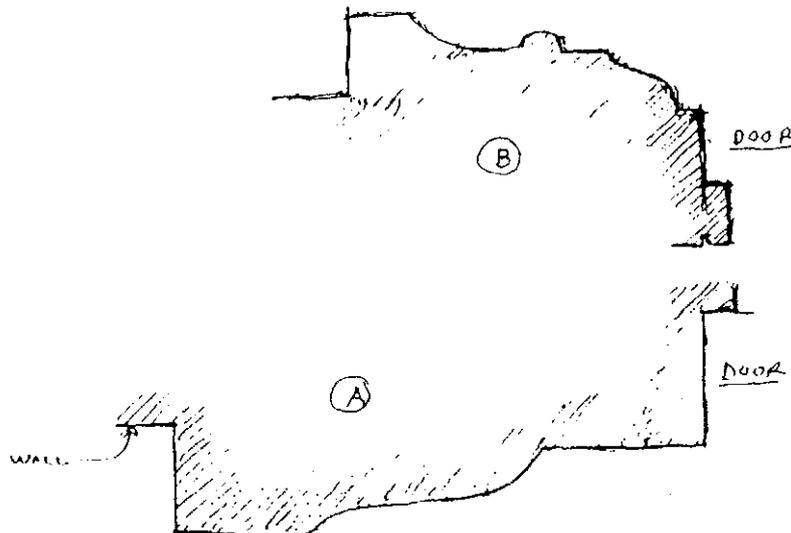


Figure 4.5a. Jamb profiles.

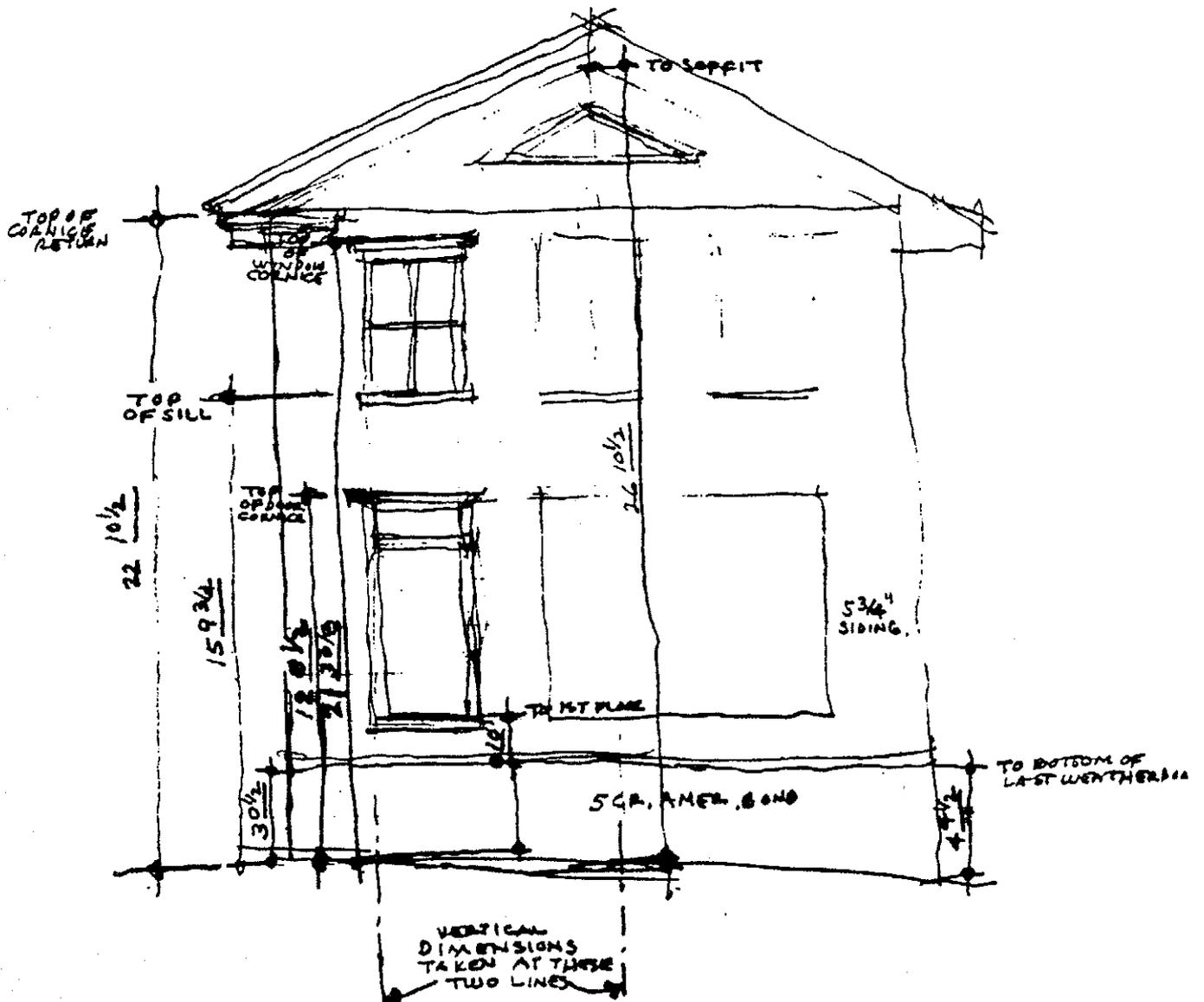


Figure 4.5b. Front elevation.

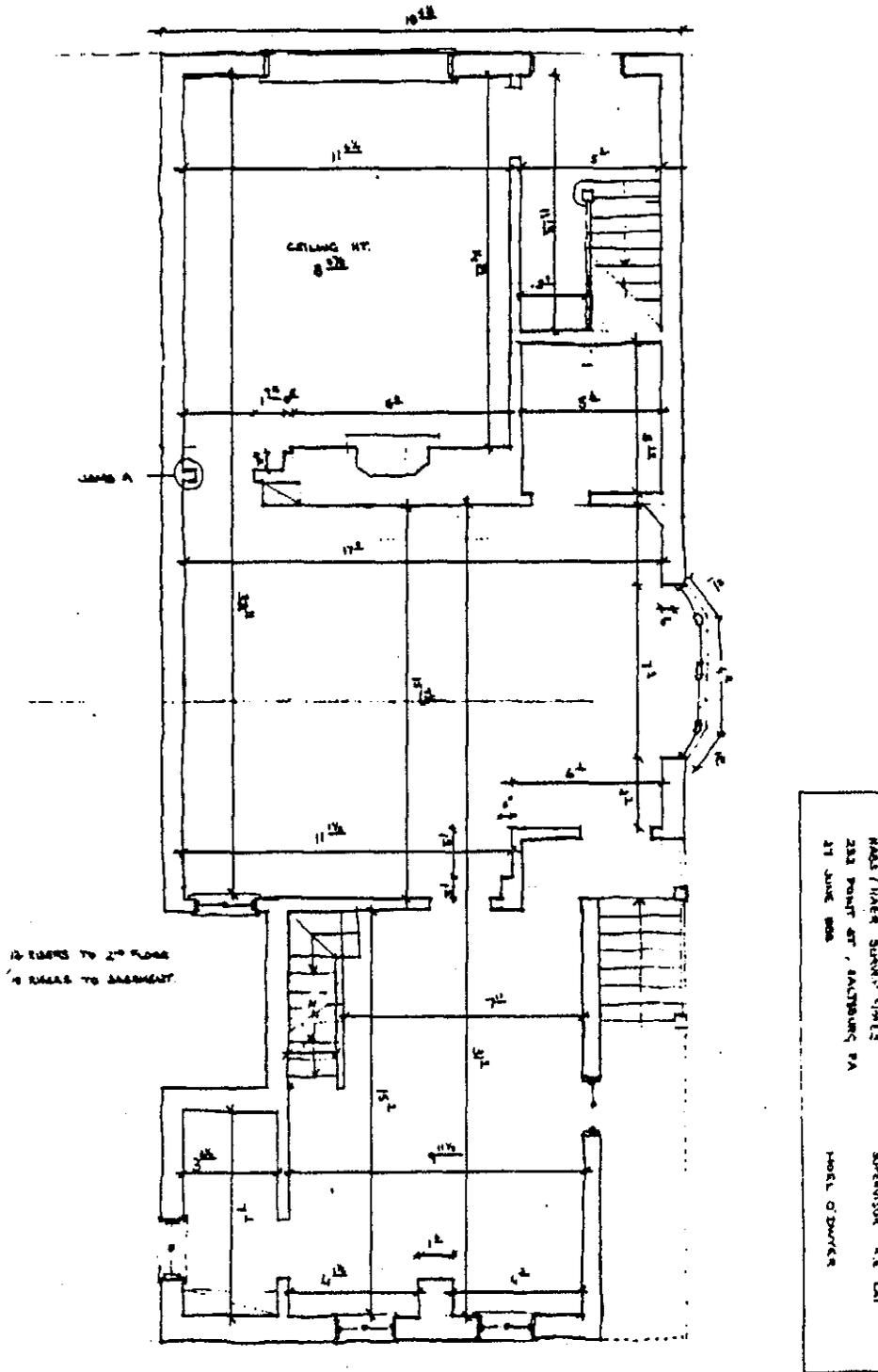


Figure 4.5d. First-floor plan.

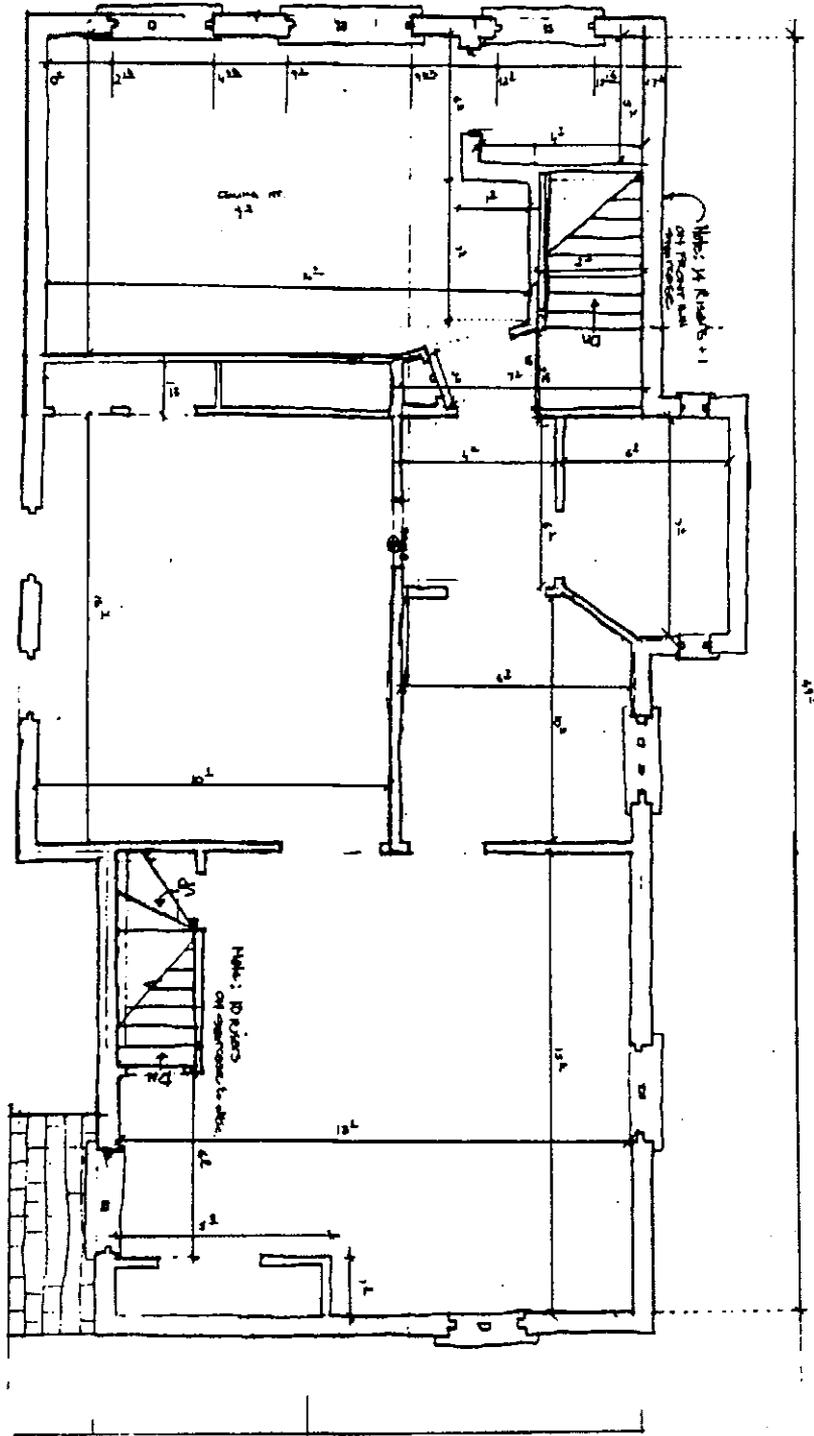


Figure 4.5e. Second-floor plan.