HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM B. WIENER HOUSE

HABS No. LA-187

Location:

2 Longleaf Lane in the Pine Park Subdivision of the South Highlands neighborhood in Shreveport, Caddo Parish, LA. Pine Park Subdivision is north of and adjacent to the South Highlands National Register District listed in 1999.

UTM Reference: 15.430070.3592563

Latitude, Longitude: 32.468066 N, 92.255854W

Significance:

Samuel Gross Wiener Sr. and his half-brother William Benjamin Wiener Sr. were two of the earliest and most prolific American-born modernists practicing in the United States. William B. Wiener Sr. began designing buildings in the European modernist tradition in 1933 when he designed a celebrated weekend house for his parents and three siblings on Cross Lake. He continued working in this vein until after World War II when his work was mostly influenced by an Americanized form of the International Style.

The William B. Wiener house, designed by William B. Wiener Sr. (1907-1981) in 1950 for himself, his wife Babette Levy Wiener (1911-1986), son William B. (Bill) Wiener Jr. (b. 1936) and daughter Karen (Kay) Wiener (b. 1938), is an award-winning structural steel-framed house grounded in the Case-Study House Program (1945-1966) tradition which explored the nature and trajectory of post-war housing. The house was published in the November, 1952 issue of *Architectural Record* and reprinted in *A Treasury of Contemporary Houses* in 1954. The house was also featured in Jean and Don Graf's *Practical Houses for Contemporary Living* in 1953 and received an A.I.A. Gulf-States Region Award of Merit in 1952.

Description:

William B. Wiener Sr. independently or with Samuel G. Wiener Sr. designed seven unique post-war houses utilizing a modular bi-nuclear "T-shaped" planning strategy including the William B. Wiener house. In these exemplars, the "leg" of the "T" is designated for the carport and service functions and the "head" of the "T" is binuclear with private and public sides. The "T-shaped" plan was clearly influenced by the bi-nuclear designs of Marcel Breuer - the earliest built version of which dates to 1945. The Wieners' "T-shaped" planning strategy originated with the Sylvian Gamm house (1948), followed by the Dr. David Davidson house (1949), the William B. Wiener house (1950), the Dr. William B. Wiener house in Jackson, MS (1950-1951), the T. A. Wolf house (1951), the A. Jack Tullos house (1954) and ended with the James Muslow house (1954). Samuel G. Wiener Sr. and William B. Wiener Sr. share design credit on 3 of the 7 houses whereas William is credited solely for the design of the remaining 4 houses. All "T-shaped" designs utilized modular glazed curtain wall interspersed with regularly spaced wood or steel columns. The center to center structural spacing was based on a module of either 6feet, 7-feet or 8-feet to accommodate the overall plan configuration and size of each house.

The William B. Wiener house is the most planar of all the "T-shaped" plan designs produced by either Wiener brother. It has a flat horizontal roof plane and two 12" thick (nominal) Roman brick (1-5/8" X 11-5/8" X 3-5/8") fin walls on the east and west ends of the house. Additionally, a 12" thick (nominal) Roman brick fin wall defines the eastern edge of the carport and the storage/shop areas, as well as, separates the public/semi-public functions (living, dining, and kitchen) which is 28'-11" wide from the private functions (bedrooms, and bathrooms) which is 32'-11" wide. The differential widths on either side of the central fin wall are mediated by the continuous fascia at the flat-roofed shade overhang to the south.

The flat roof plane over the head of the "T" is 1'-3 1/4" thick and hides the horizontally spanning steel structure. The wearing surface of the roof is "built up" without any ballast. The interior surface is mostly plaster with some plaster or acoustical ceiling fur downs placed throughout the house to accommodate ductwork. The roof plane over the leg of the "T" is pitched slightly to a gutter running along the north end of the building. The carport / service roof is older than the roof at the main house and is ballasted.

The Roman brickwork used at the William B. Wiener house is like that seen in Frank Lloyd Wright's early prairie-school work with raked horizontal joints and flush head joints accentuating the horizontality. The head joint coursing is not symmetrical (i.e. 6", 6", 6", 6") but rather alternates (i.e. 8", 4", 8", 4") so that the coursing pattern isn't interrupted at an outside corner.

Perpendicular to the Roman brick fin walls are modular curtain walls with steel columns exposed on the interior at 8'-0" on center separating sections of aluminum glazed storefront above (in most cases) a cement plaster (stucco) wainscot base.

According to Bill Wiener Jr., the foundation was installed first followed by the columns then the steel horizontal roof structure. The roof was then installed so that the contractor could work on the interior in a protected dry environment. Next, the Roman brick fin walls were installed then a 2-3/4" thick topping slab was placed on top of the reinforced structural slab throughout the house. The top 5/8" of the topping slab is bonded terrazzo and was installed continuously before the interior wood stud partitions were constructed. The floor at the majority of the house is finished in terrazzo comprised of black and white marble chips in a grey cement matrix. The floor at the kitchen and the original breakfast room is finished in terrazzo comprised of white, dark red, yellow, and green marble chips in a pinktinted white cement matrix.

The family/servant entrance to the house occurs off the carport with a public entry adjacent to the easternmost Roman brick off the motor court. There is also an exterior connection between the motor court and rear garden passing under a pergola so visitors did not need to enter the house in order to access the rear garden.

The head of the "T" is binuclear which contains the equally important public and private functions separated by a 12" thick (nominal) wall of Roman brick. To the

east of this Roman masonry wall is the foyer, living room, dining room, and kitchen. To the west of this Roman masonry wall is the service porch, mechanical room, and bedrooms/bathrooms. The hallway leading to the bedrooms has steps (3 risers) connecting the 9'-11 3/4" ceiling height on the public side of the masonry wall to the bedrooms having an 8'-8 3/4" ceiling height. The steps in the hallway (together with the differential ceiling heights) accommodated the topography of the gently sloping site (west to east).

<u>History:</u>

Any history of the architecture of either William B. Wiener Sr. or Samuel G. Wiener Sr. must begin with the family patriarch, Sam Wiener Jr. (1864-1942) who was a businessman/owner, inventor, entrepreneur and developer – a man of many talents. Sam Jr. was the son of German immigrants Samson Wiener (1834-1899) and Caroline Forschheimer (1836-1912). At age 26, Sam Jr. co-founded the Angelina County Lumber Company in 1890 making him and his partners major land owners in east Texas and quite wealthy. Sam Jr. moved from east Texas to Monroe, LA where he married Matilda (Tillie) Loeb (1870-1897) in 1893 and with whom he had two sons – attorney Earl Loeb Wiener (1894-1946) and architect Samuel Gross Wiener Sr. (1896-1977). Tillie died tragically from tuberculosis at age 27 leaving her two sons without a mother. Sam Jr. sent the boys to live with relatives in Canton, MS while he resettled in Shreveport, LA. Fourteen years after Tillie's death, Sam Jr. married Florence Loeb Wile (1874-1967) who was Tillie's younger widowed sister and was reunited with his two sons in Shreveport. Sam Jr. and Florence had two more sons – architect William Benjamin Wiener Sr. (1907-1981) and attorney Jacques Loeb Wiener Sr. (1909-1988). By the 1930's, Sam Wiener Jr.'s wealth increased exponentially after oil was discovered on his timber-rich east Texas land. Florence and her four sons inherited a sizable fortune following Sam Jr.'s death in 1942.

The Pine Park Subdivision in the South Highlands neighborhood of Shreveport was developed in 1937 by architects Samuel G. Wiener Sr. and William B. Wiener Sr. and with the legal assistance of Sam's half-brother and William's brother Jacques L. Wiener Sr. The Wieners envisioned the subdivision as a romantic park-like landscape that was to be pedestrian-oriented. Shreveport's planning and zoning department rejected the pedestrian-oriented approach and compelled the developers to revise the plan to be vehicle-oriented. Initially, each brother selected a single lot in the subdivision where his residence would be built (one of the perks of being an owner/developer); however, each brother would ultimately purchase two lots to build upon. Samuel G. Wiener Sr. purchased lots 53 and 54 (one of the more visually prominent locations in the subdivision) on which to build his house in 1937. Jacques L. Wiener Sr. purchased lots 11 and 12 across the street from lots 53 and 54 on which to build his house in 1940 which was designed by his half-brother, Samuel G. Wiener Sr.; and finally William B. Wiener Sr. purchased lots 5 and 36 (one of the more visually secluded locations in the subdivision) on which to build his house in 1950. William B. Wiener Sr. accentuated the privacy afforded by his lot selections by planting copious amounts of *Hedge Bamboo* (described as "a living fence" by Bill Wiener Jr.) surrounding the house.

William B. Wiener Sr. purchased lots in the Pine Park Subdivision in 1949 across Longleaf Lane from the Sylvian Gamm house (1 Longleaf Lane) which was owned by a friend and client. The design for the house was completed in 1950 and construction commenced soon after when his children were 14 and 12 – the contractor was Neff Construction of Shreveport owned by Bob Neff. Soon after its completion, Wiener had his house professionally photographed by H. O. Wiseman of Shreveport and Joseph Molitor of New York in 1951 in preparation for publication. The house remained unchanged until 1967 when William B. Wiener Sr. commandeered the children's playroom area for an expansion to the owner's bathroom. About this same time (possibly earlier), Wiener had a shallow in-ground pool 12'-8 1/2" X 31'-3 1/2" X 4'-4 1/2" installed for wife Babette so she could exercise somewhat comfortably since she suffered from chronic arthritis.

William B. Wiener Sr. died in 1981 followed by his wife Babette in 1986. Bill Wiener Jr. purchased the house from his mother's estate in 1987. In 1990, Bill Wiener Jr. had his father's successor architectural firm of Morgan, O'Neal, Hill, and Sutton produce working drawings of his design for various interior modifications including a new and enlarged replacement kitchen which displaced the original breakfast room, and shop expansion. The new replacement kitchen reused the original kitchen millwork hardware to preserve the memory of the original. The scope of work also included removal of the rusticated terrazzo terrace, and a new pool enclosure (and new hot tub) that replaced an earlier enclosure that succumbed to rot. The contractor for this work was also Neff Construction of Shreveport now under the leadership of Bob Neff Jr., the original owner's son.

Between 1990 and 2017, Bill Jr. divided his time between Aspen, Colorado (or Santa Fe, NM after 2001) and Shreveport. In 2003 (approximately), Bill Wiener Jr. had the swimming pool and hot tub drained because the chlorine-laden humidity in the enclosed space was difficult to control.

In 2017, Bill Wiener Jr. hired the Newman, Marchive, Carlisle architectural partnership in Shreveport to produce working drawings of his design to enclose the exterior storage space north of the carport and to floor over the swimming pool and hot tub and convert the pool house into a media room. It was soon after this renovation occurred that Bill Wiener Jr. returned to Shreveport from Santa Fe permanently.

Bill Wiener Jr. plans on having the red freestanding Kohler "Birthday Bath" tub with claw feet (installed in 1990) removed in favor of a walk-in tub since he is currently 82 and has difficulty negotiating his current tub.

Bill Jr. has maintained the *Hedge Bamboo* "living fence" surrounding his house which has grown in some instances to twenty feet in height. He has allowed *Creeping Fig Ivy* to inundate many of the brick and cement plaster (stucco) exterior surfaces and in some cases has grown horizontally on the carport ceiling and cement plaster (stucco) soffits.

Historian:

Stephens M. White IV, School of Design, Louisiana Tech University; February 2019. Reviewed and edited by Guy W. Carwile, Louisiana Tech University and the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation in Baton Rouge.

Sources:

Kingsley, Karen and Guy W. Carwile. *The Modernist Architecture of Samuel G. and William B. Wiener: Shreveport, Louisiana, 1920-1960.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016.

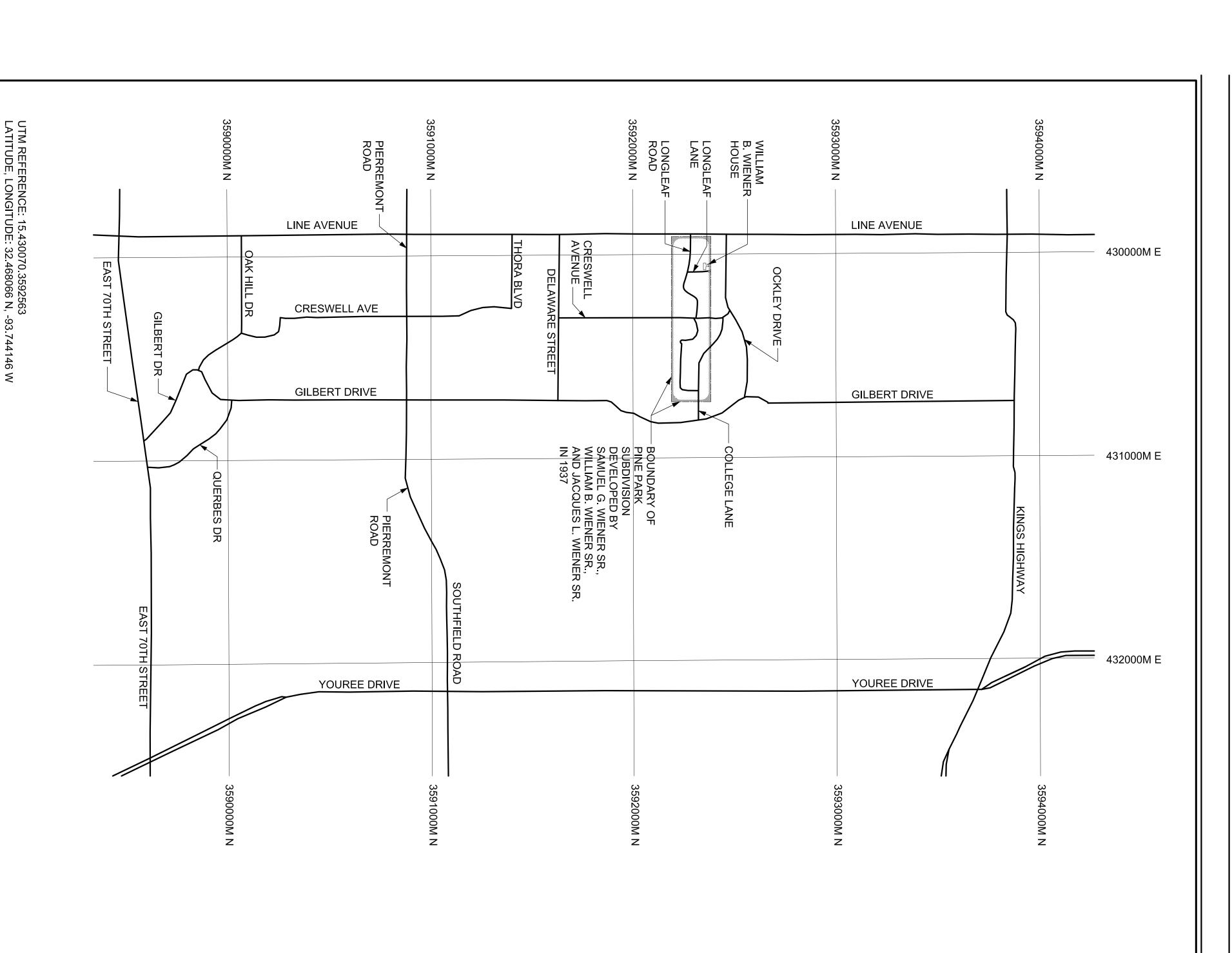
Kingsley, Karen. *Buildings of Louisiana*. Buildings of the United States, New York: Oxford University Press and the Society of Architectural Historians, 2003.

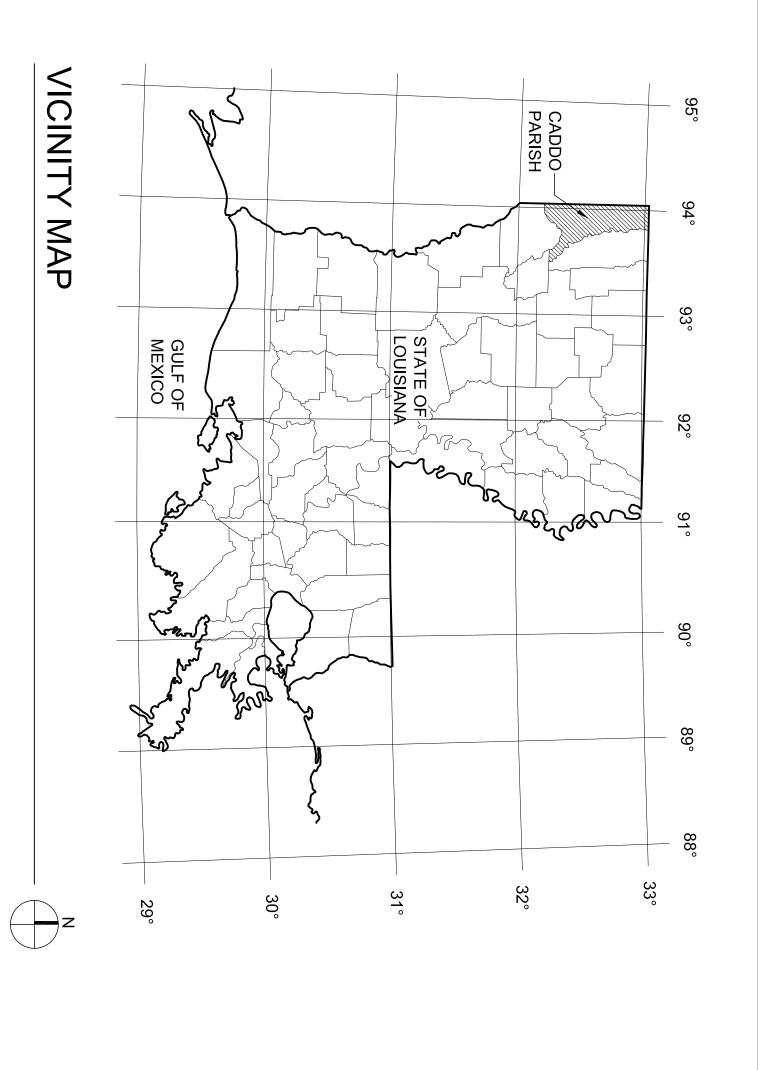
"Residence of Mr. and Mrs. William B. Wiener." *Architectural Record* 112 (November 1952): 183-87.

"Designed for Entertainment" in *A Treasury of Contemporary Houses.* New York: F. W. Dodge Corp., 1954. 153-57.

Graf, Jean, and Don Graf. *Practical Houses for Contemporary Living.* New York: F. W. Dodge Corp., 1953. [William B. Wiener House, 152-57.]

<u>Project:</u> Information: Field notes and drawings were produced as part of the Arch 403 – Project Documentation course held in the winter quarter, 2019. Ethan R. Carlisle, William H. Johnson, Edward Nieto, Cameren Trowbridge and Stephens M. White IV from the Architecture Program in the School of Design at Louisiana Tech University documented the structure under the guidance of Guy W. Carwile, Architect Emeritus and Ken Hollis College of Liberal Arts Endowed Professor. Dimensions and construction materials were recorded at the site using hand methods. Access to the house and site was graciously provided by current owner Bill Wiener Jr. who also provided additional archival information.





STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Samuel Gross Wiener Sr. and his half-brother William Benjamin Wiener Sr. were two of the earliest and most prolific American-born modernists practicing in the United States. William B. Wlener Sr. began designing buildings in the European modernist tradition in 1933 when he designed a celebrated weekend house for his parents and three siblings on Cross Lake. He continued working in this vein until after World War II when his work was mostly influenced by an Americanized form of the International Style.

The William B. Wiener house, designed by William B. Wiener Sr. (1907-1981) in 1950 for himself, his wife Babette Levy Wiener (1911-1986), son William B. (Bill) Wiener Jr. (b. 1936), and daughter Karen (Kay) Wiener (b. 1938), is an award-winning structural steel-framed house grounded in the Case-Study House Program (1945-1966) tradition which explored the nature and trajectory of post-war housing. The house was published in the November, 1952 issue of *Architectural Record* and reprinted in *A Treasury of Contemporary Houses* in 1954. The house was also featured in Jean and Don Graf's *Practical Houses for Contemporary Living* in 1953 and received an A.I.A. Gulf-States Region Award of Merit in 1952.

The William B. Wiener house resides in the Pine Park Subdivision of the South Highlands neighborhood of Shreveport and was developed in 1937 by architects Samuel G. Wiener Sr. and William B. Wiener Sr. and with the legal assistance of Sam's half-brother and William's brother Jacques L. Wiener Sr. and contains several noteworthy buildings. Pine Park Subdivision has been deemed eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District by the Louisiana State Division of Historic Preservation. The house of William's half-brother, Samuel G. Wiener Sr., was listed on the National Register of Places by the same state agency.

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The activity that is the subject of this project has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior through the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation. However, the contents and opinions incorporated into this project do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

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7.5 MINUTE SERIES

1980, REVISED

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Office of Equal Opportunity National Park Service 1849 C Street, N.W. Washington D. C. 20240

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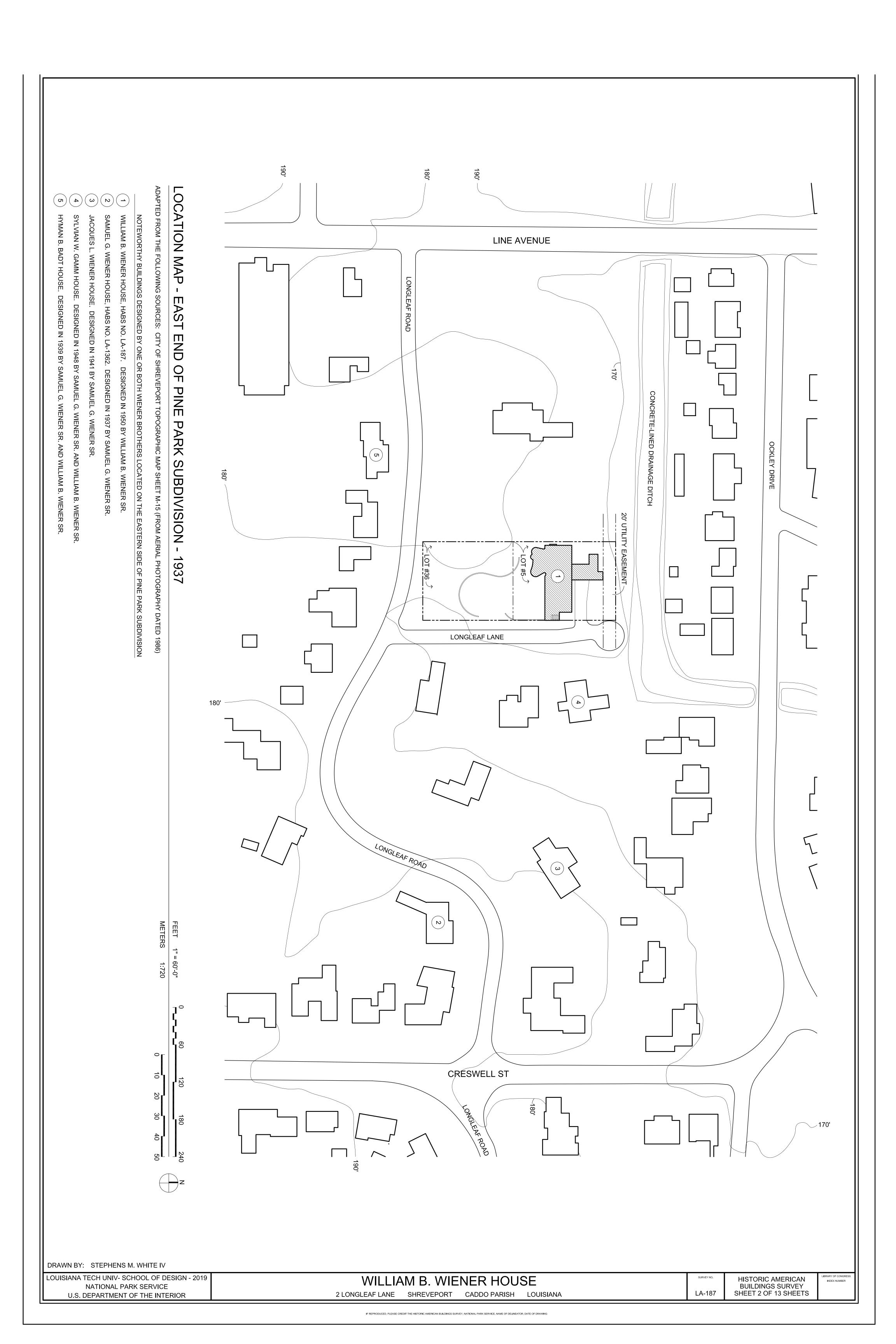
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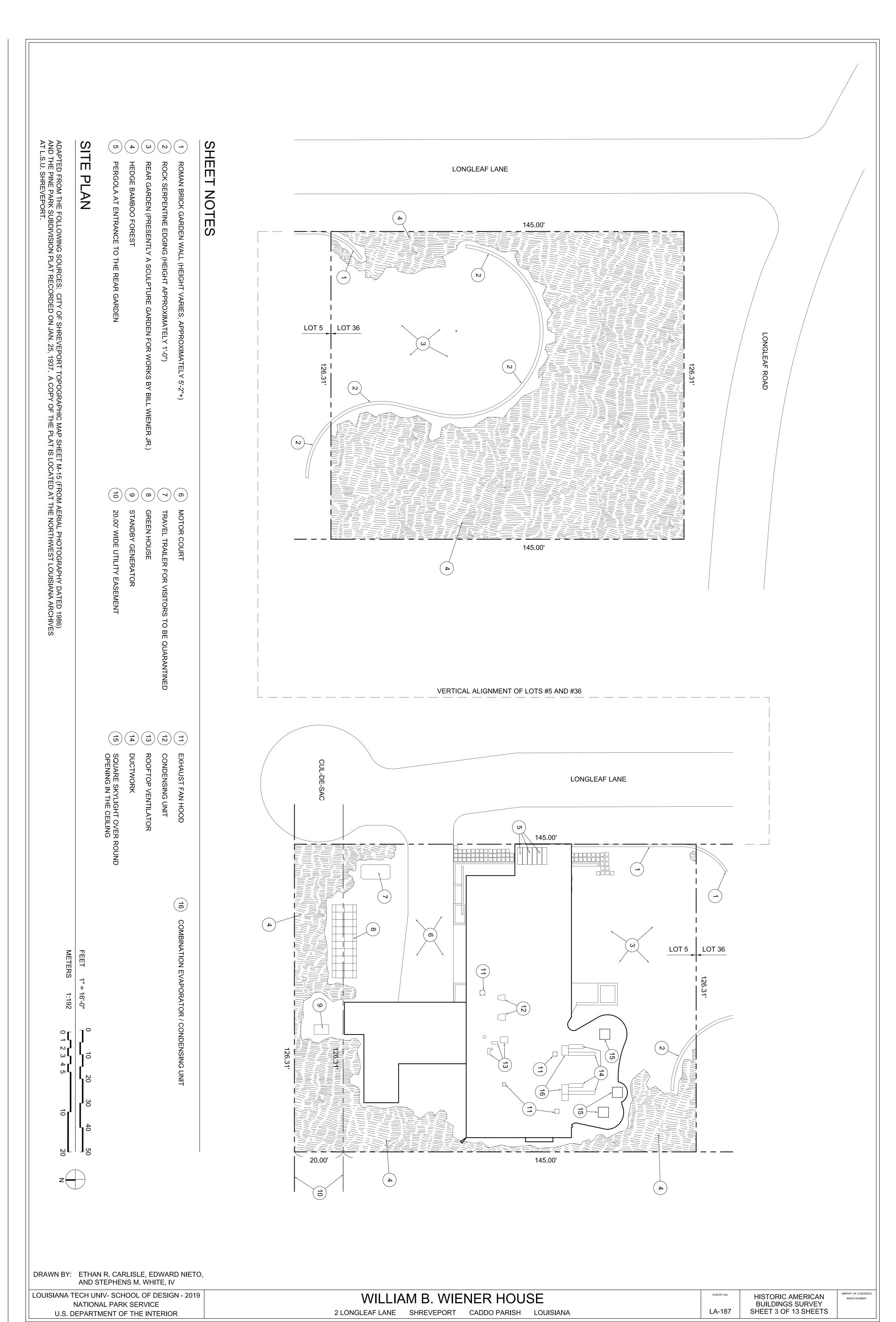
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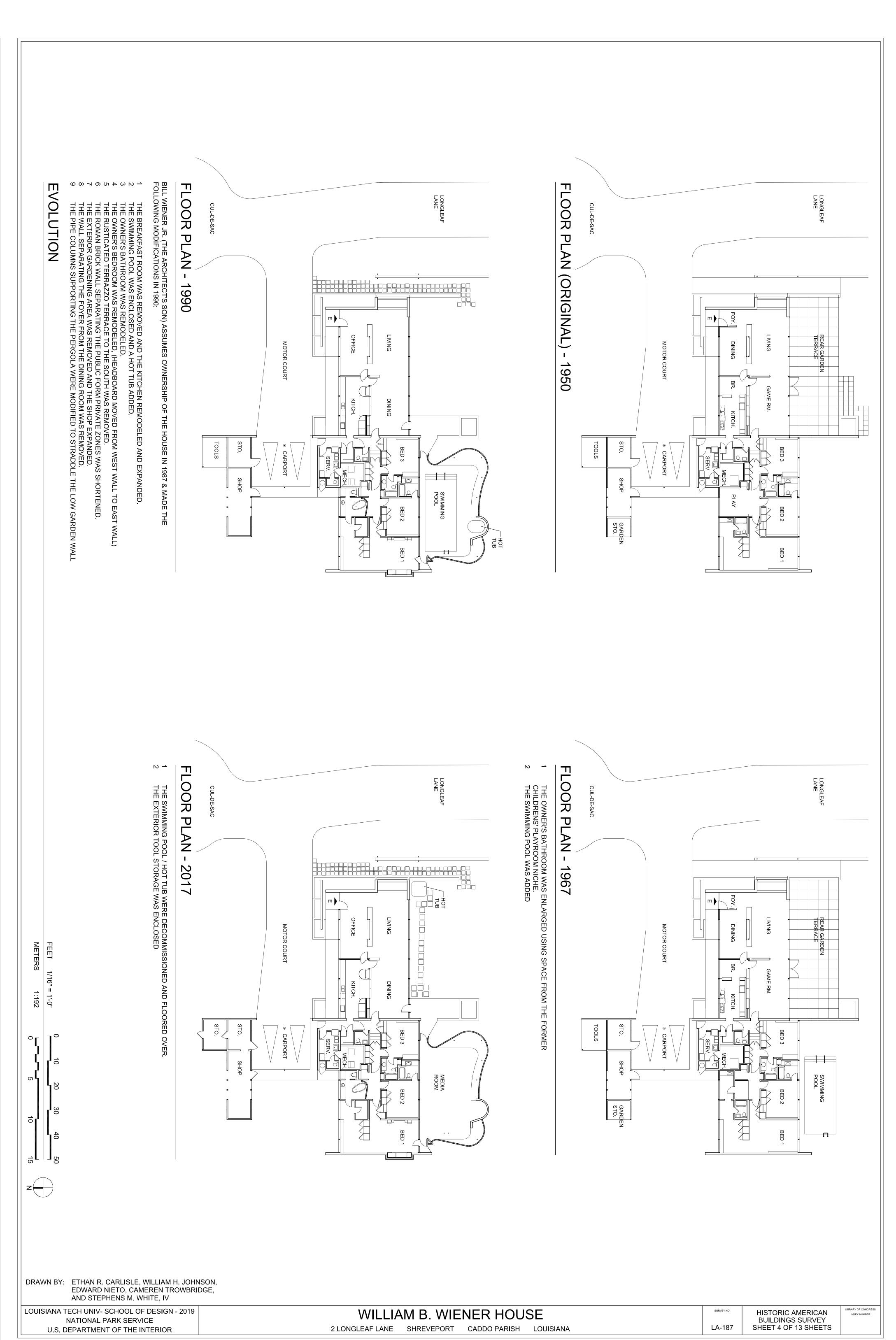
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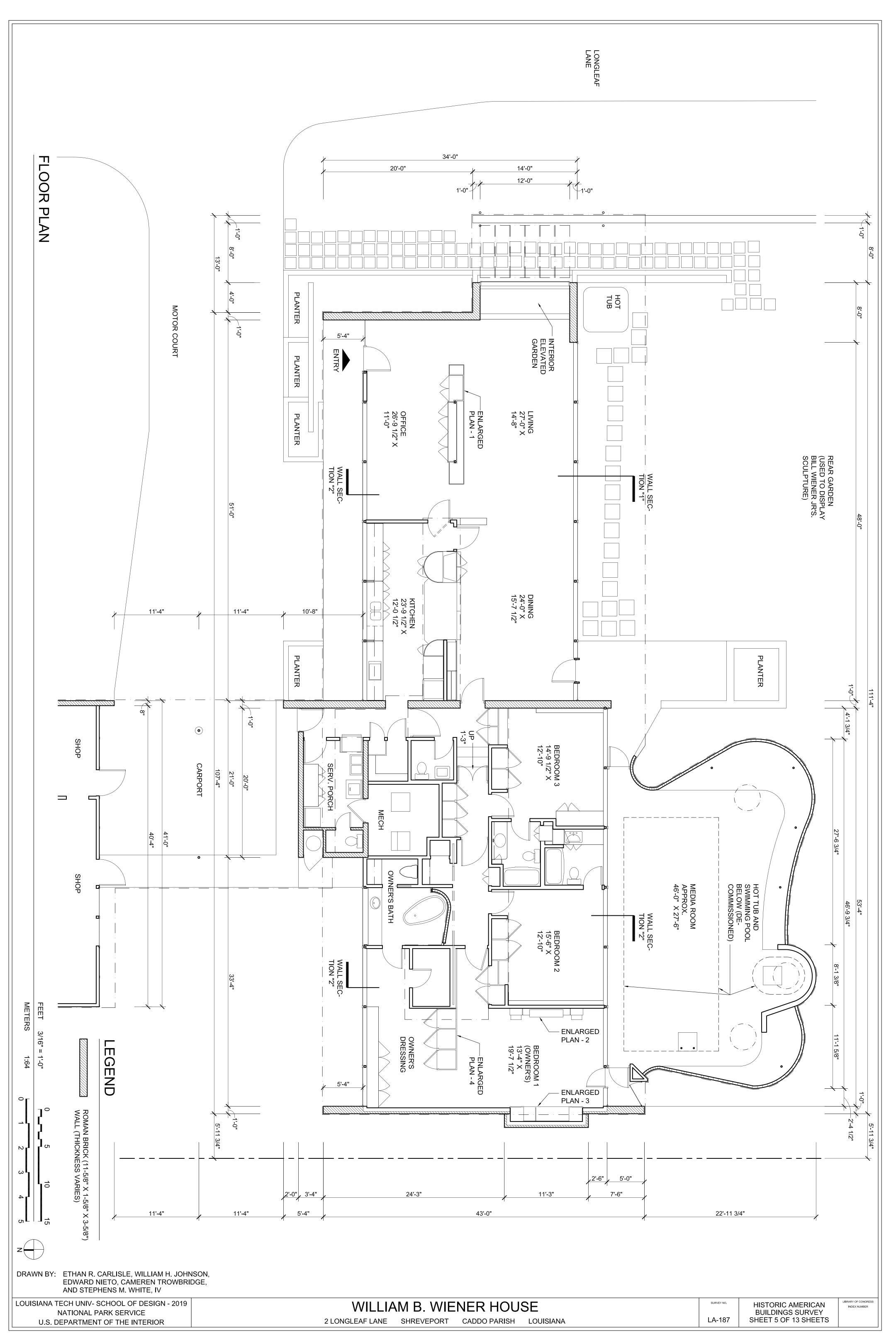
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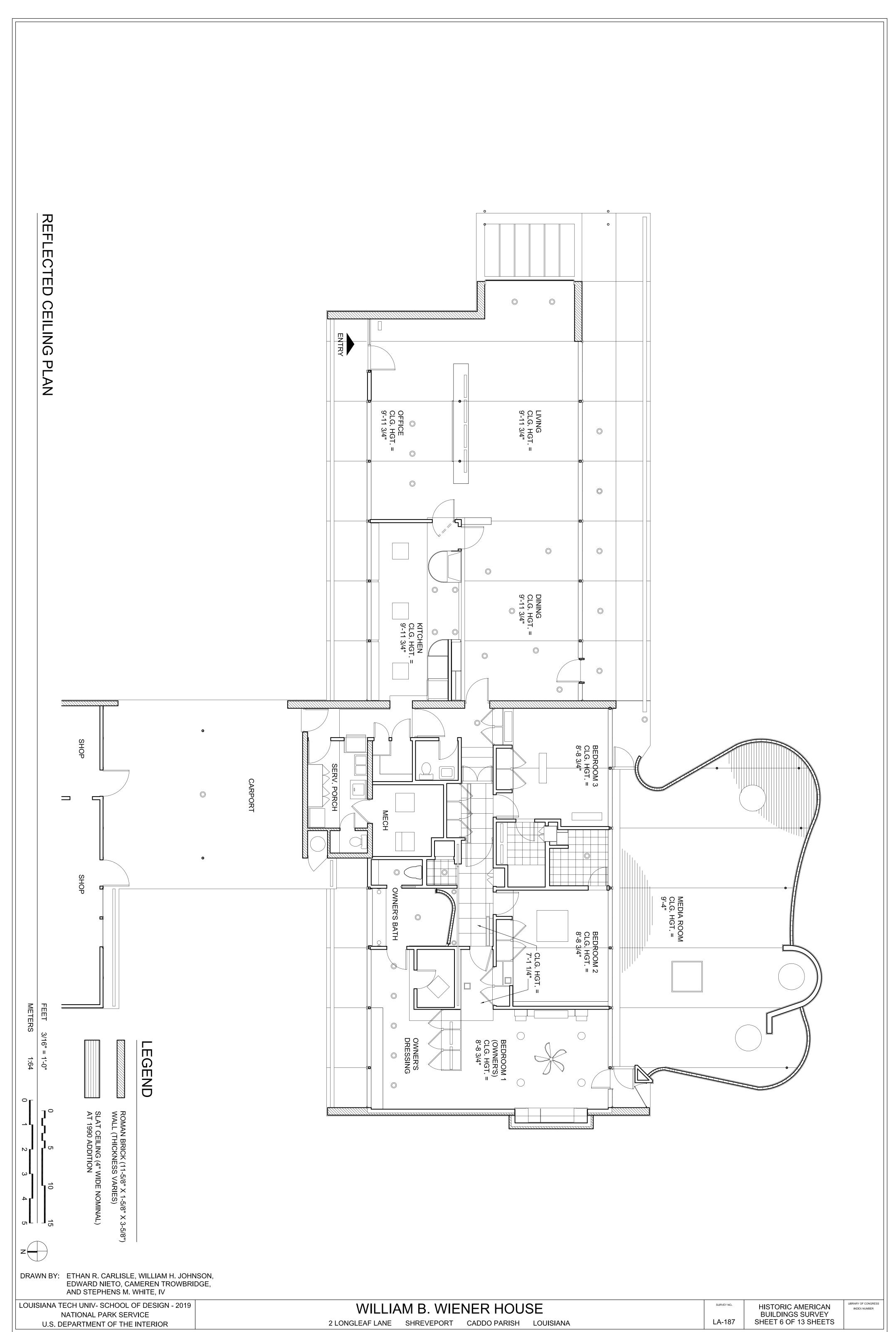
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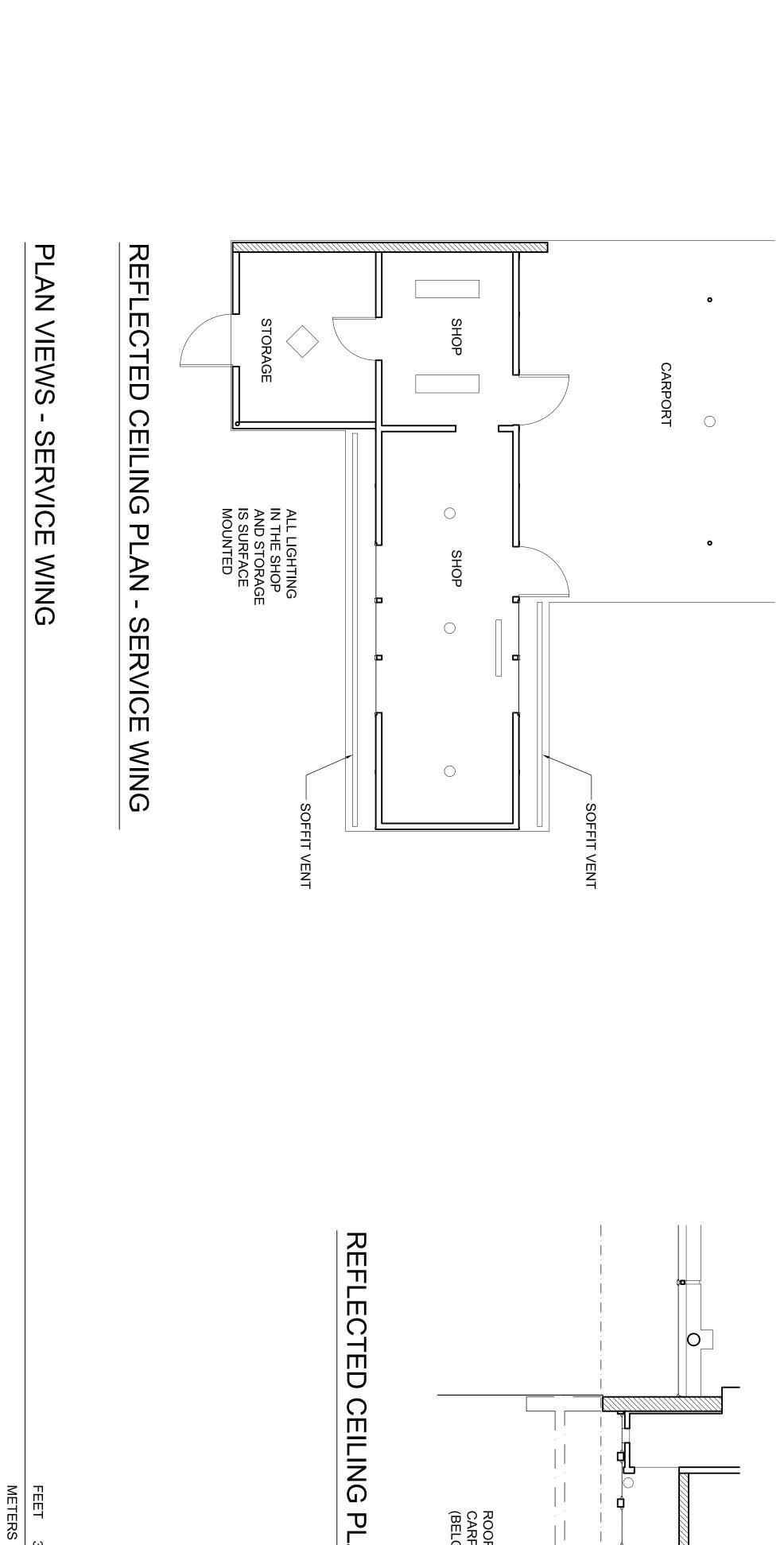








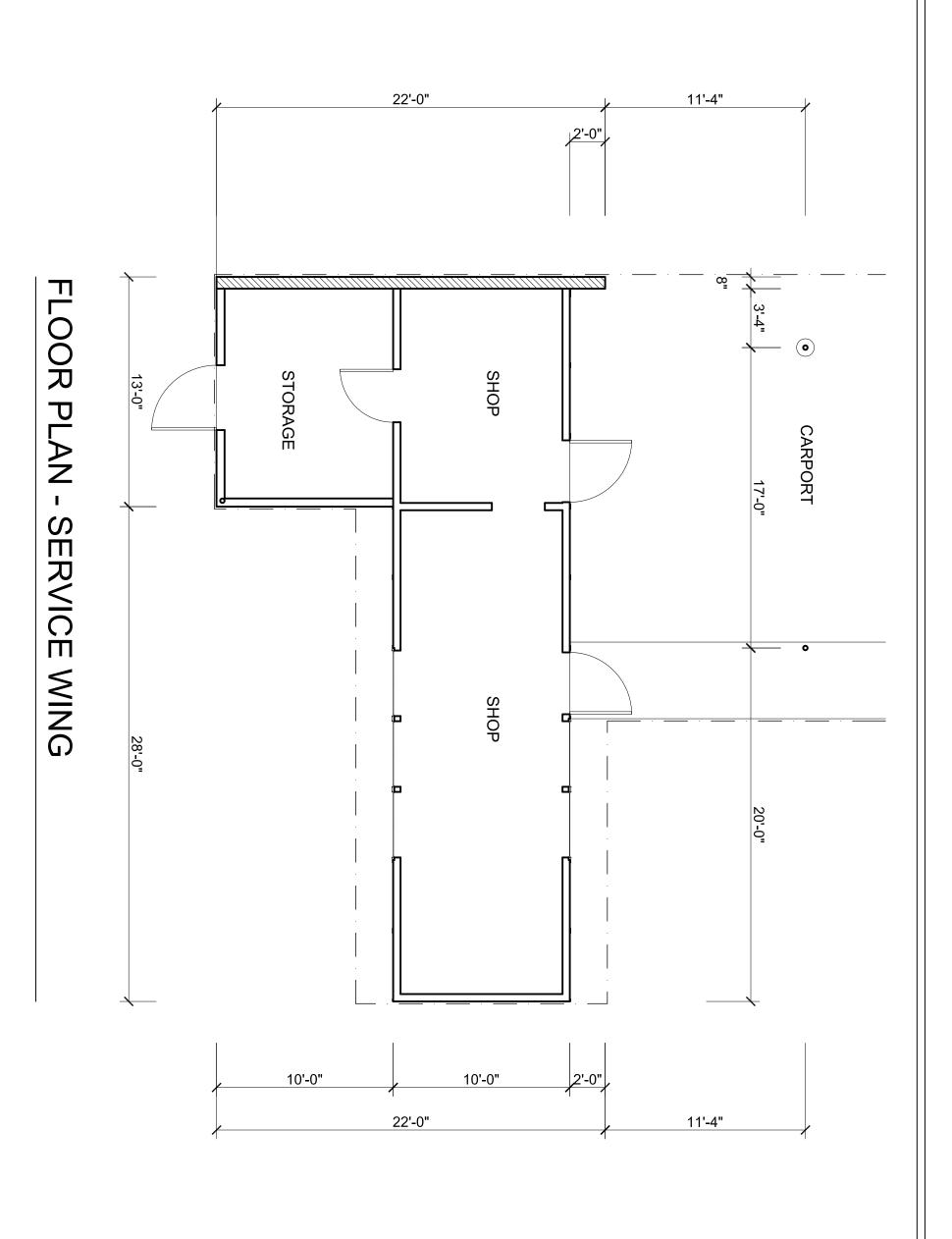


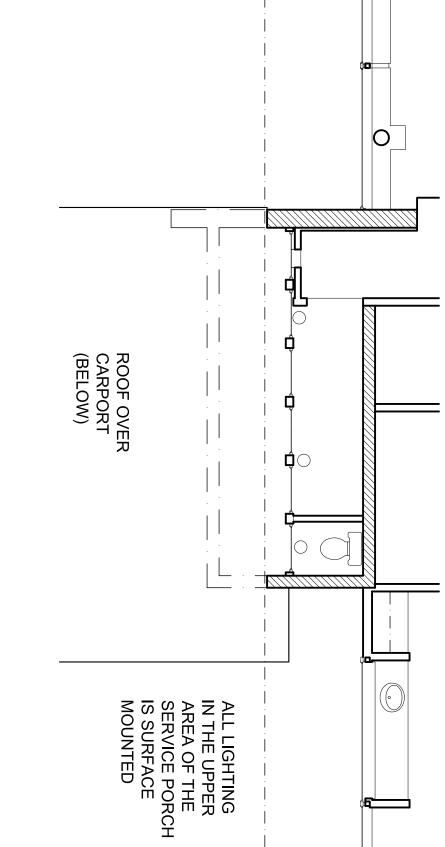


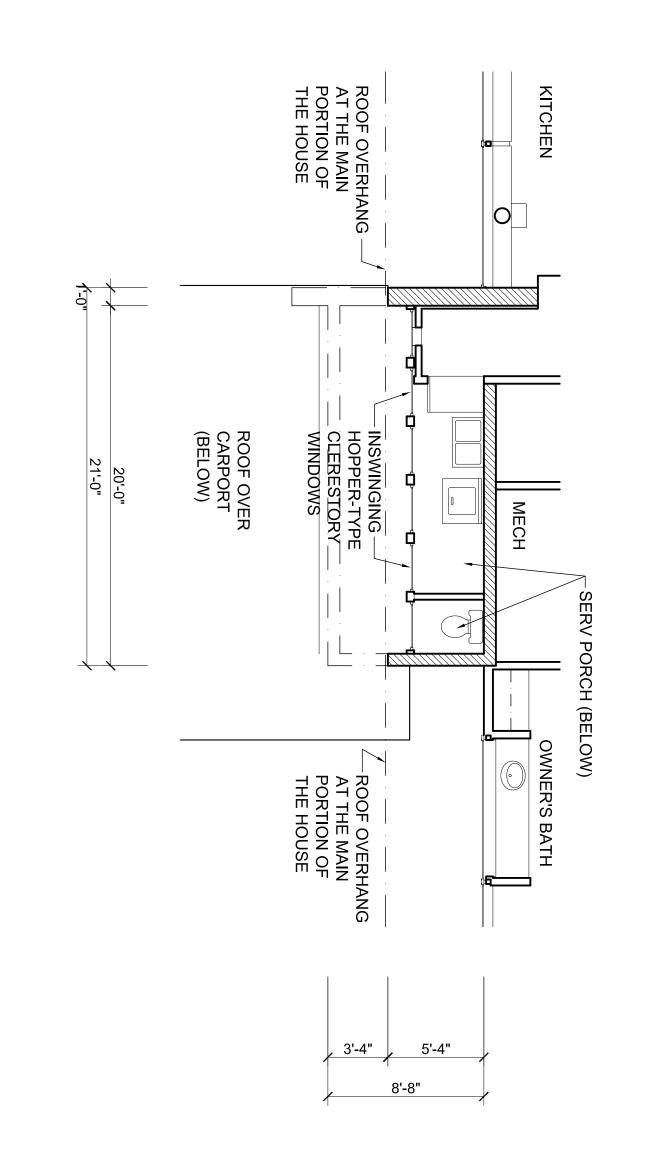
PLAN -

RVICE

PORCH







FLOOR PLAN -

SERVICE PORCH

3/16" = 1'-0"

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DRAWN BY: EDWARD NIETO

LOUISIANA TECH UNIV- SCHOOL OF DESIGN - 2019

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

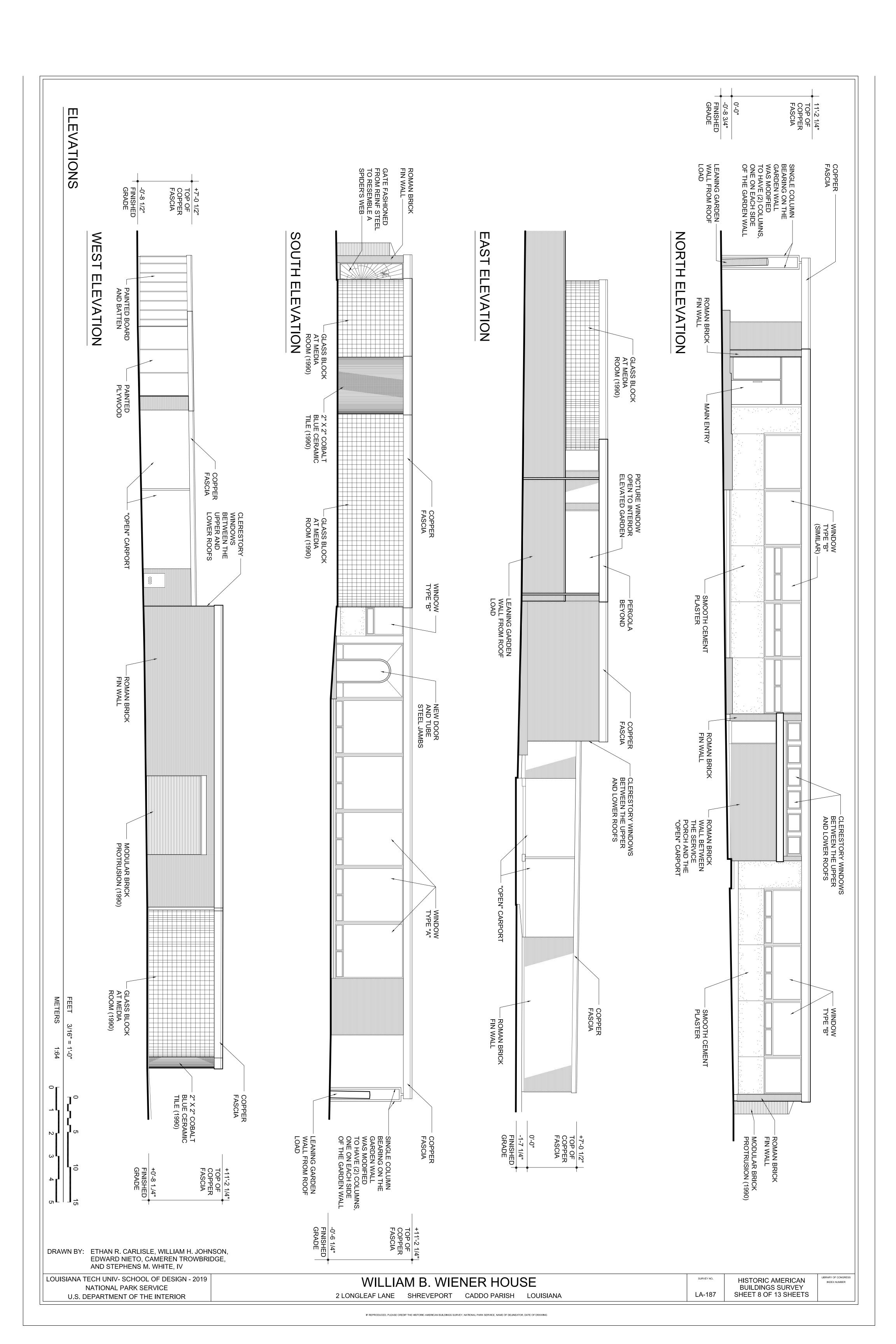
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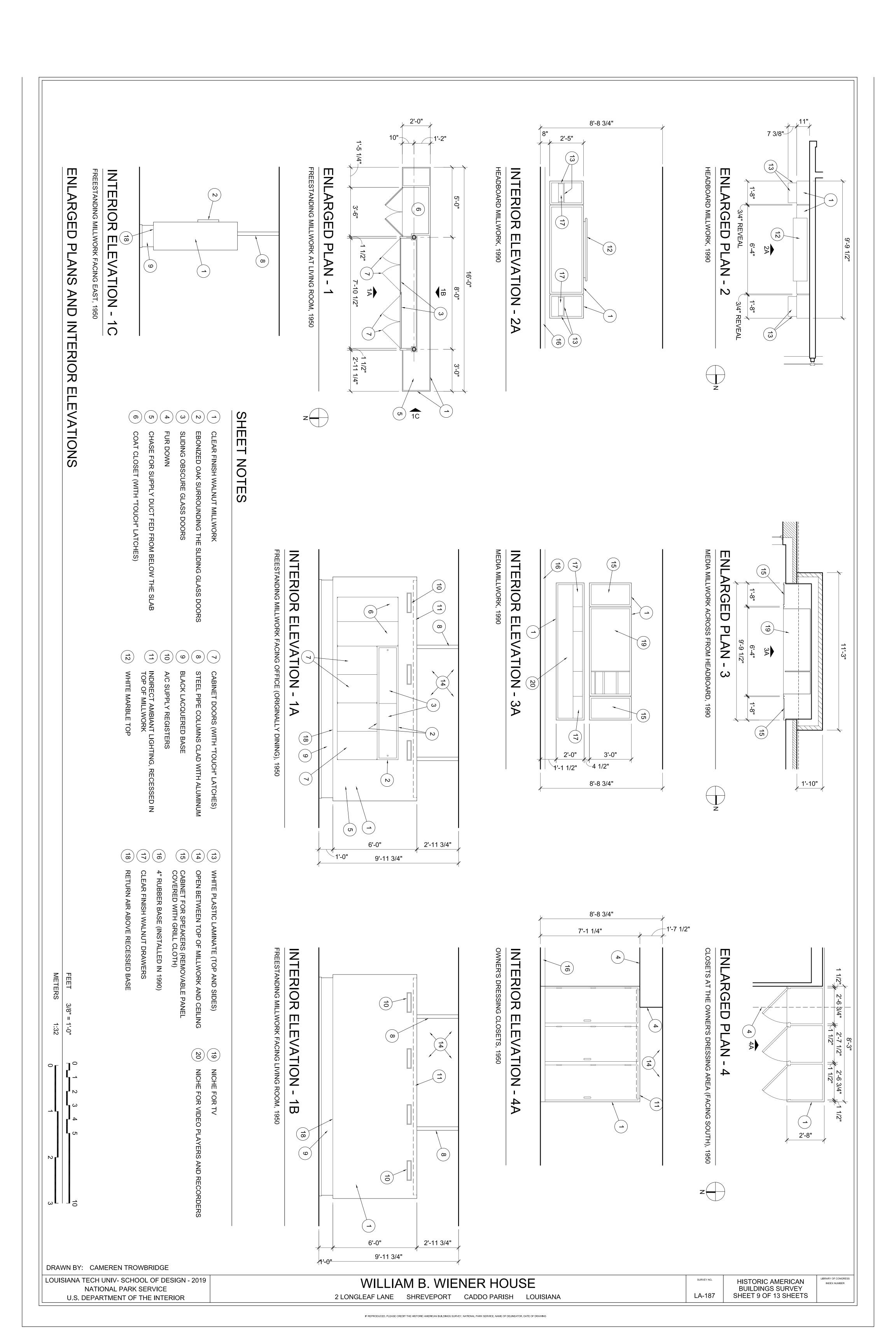
WILLIAM B. WIENER HOUSE
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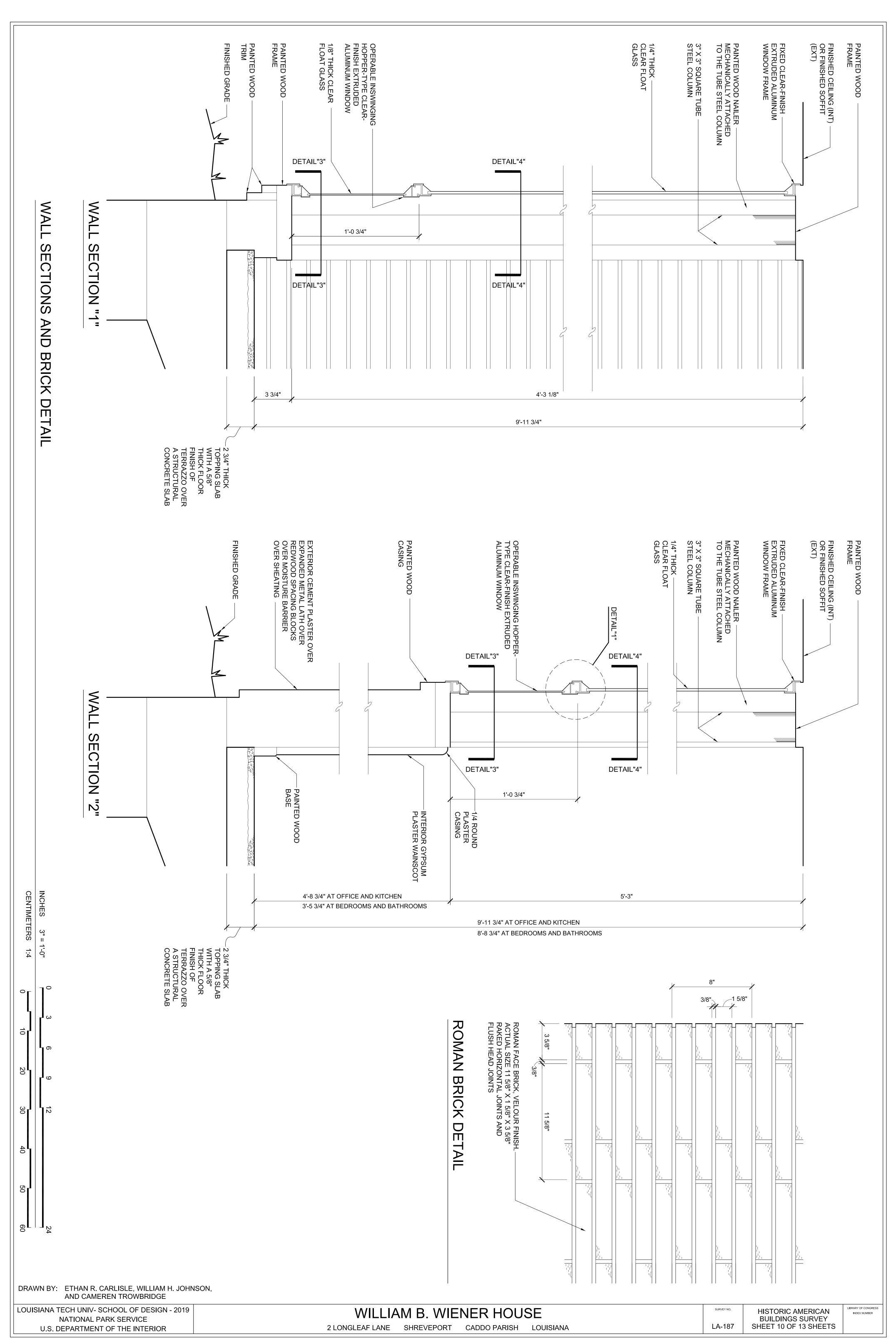
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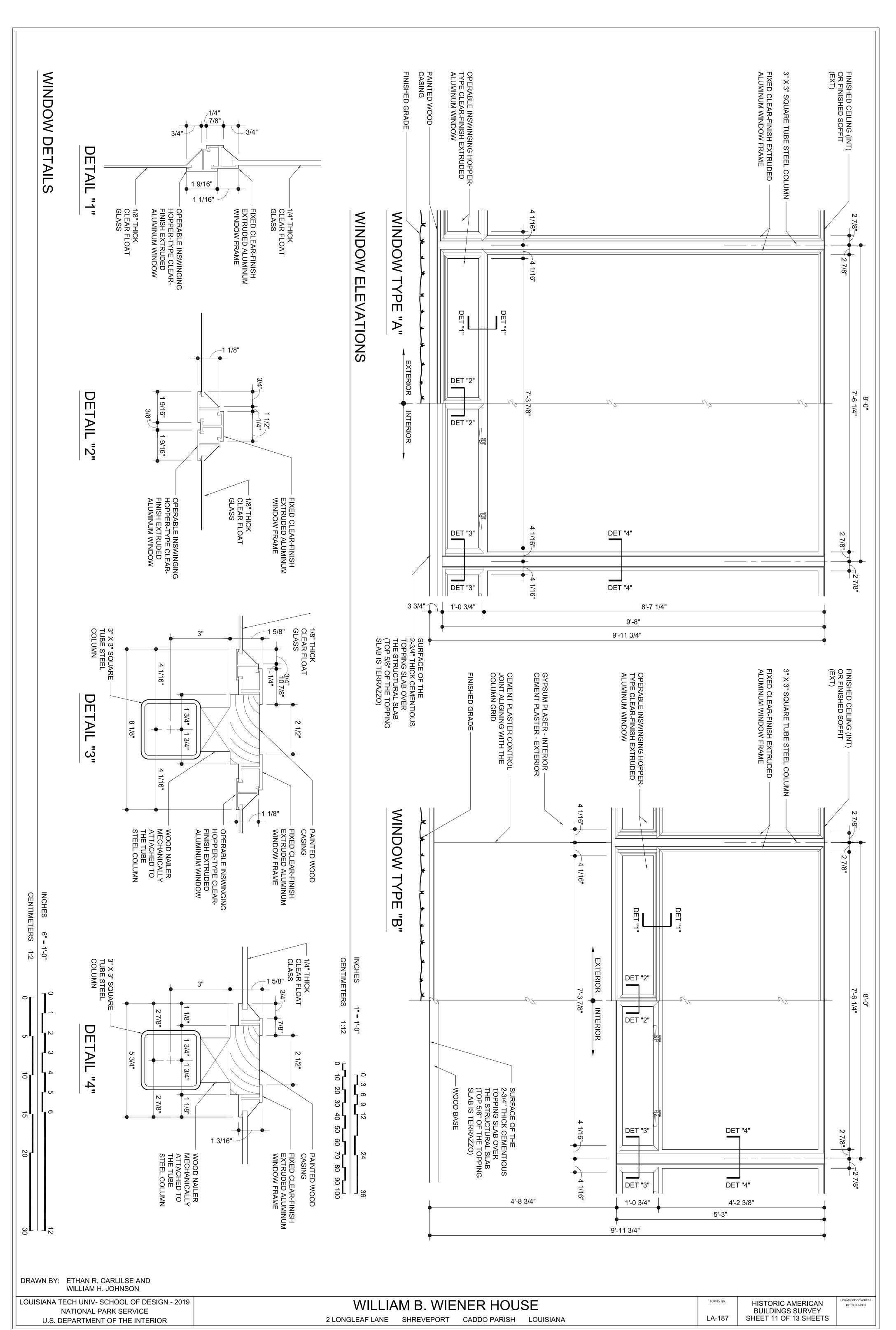
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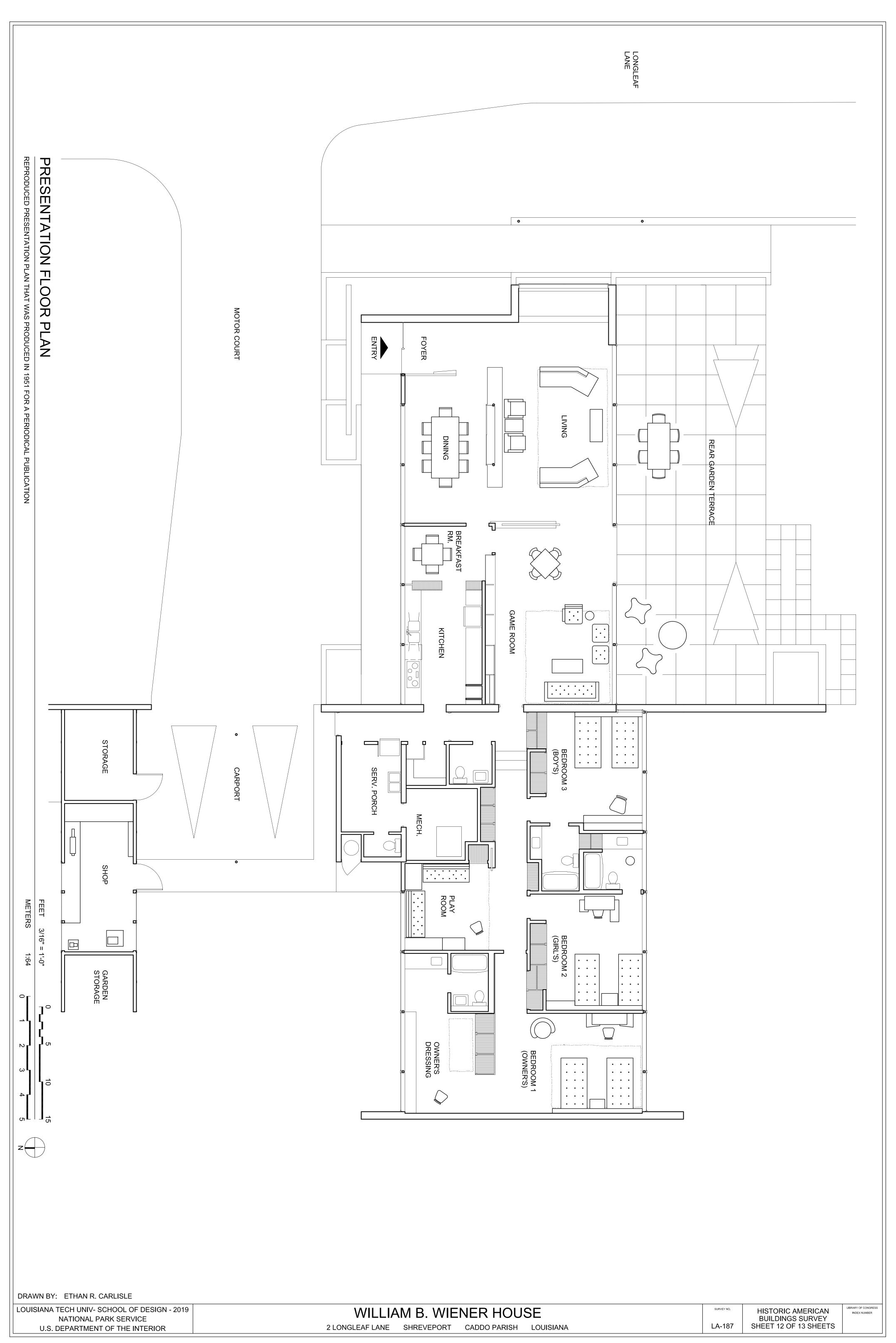
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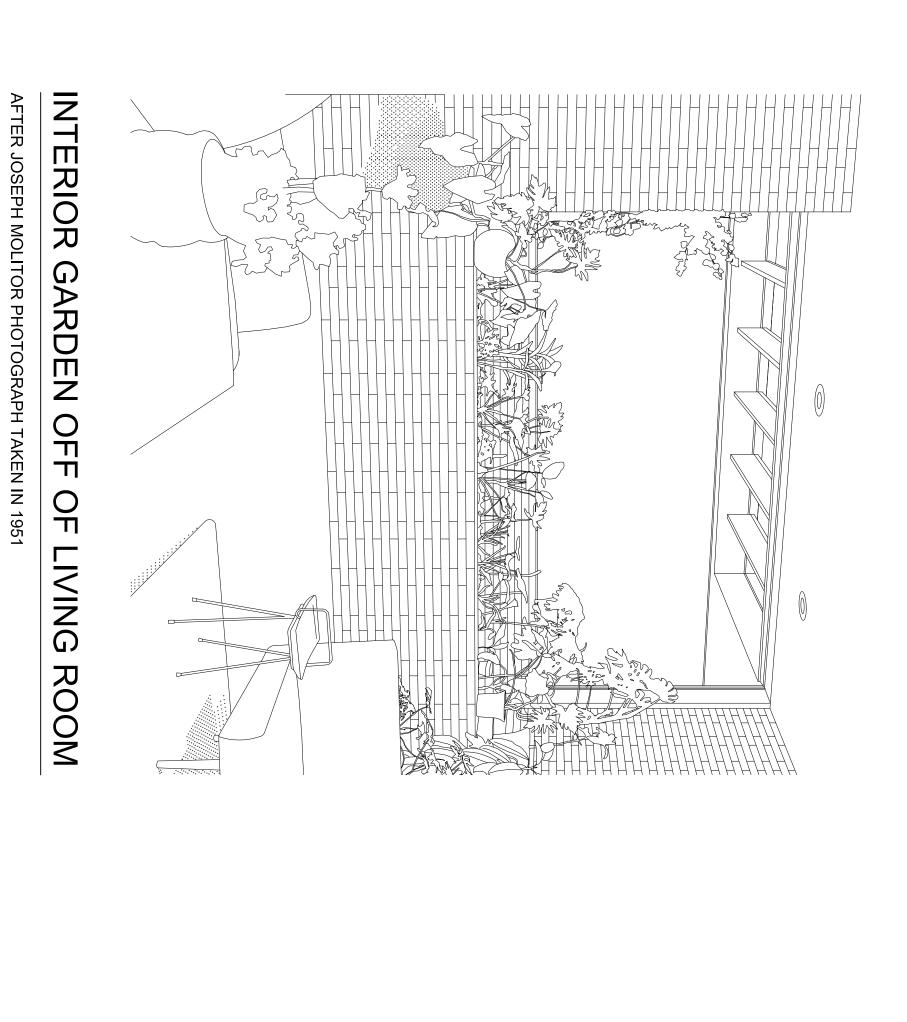






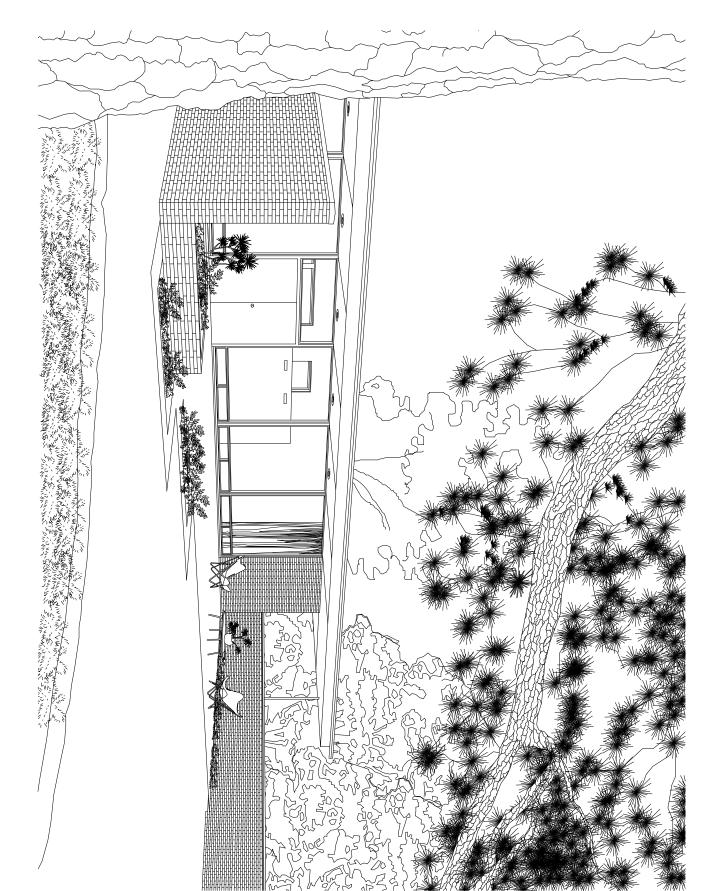






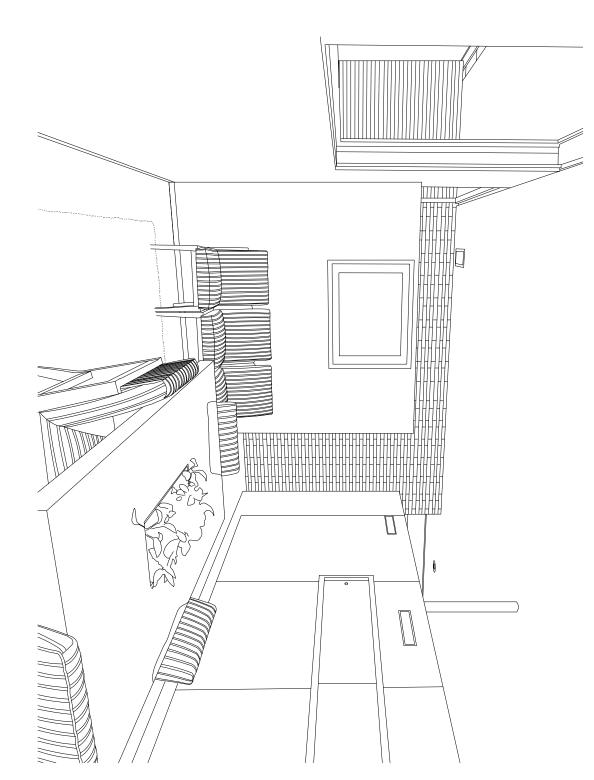
REAR GARDEN

AFTER JOSEPH MOLITOR PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1951



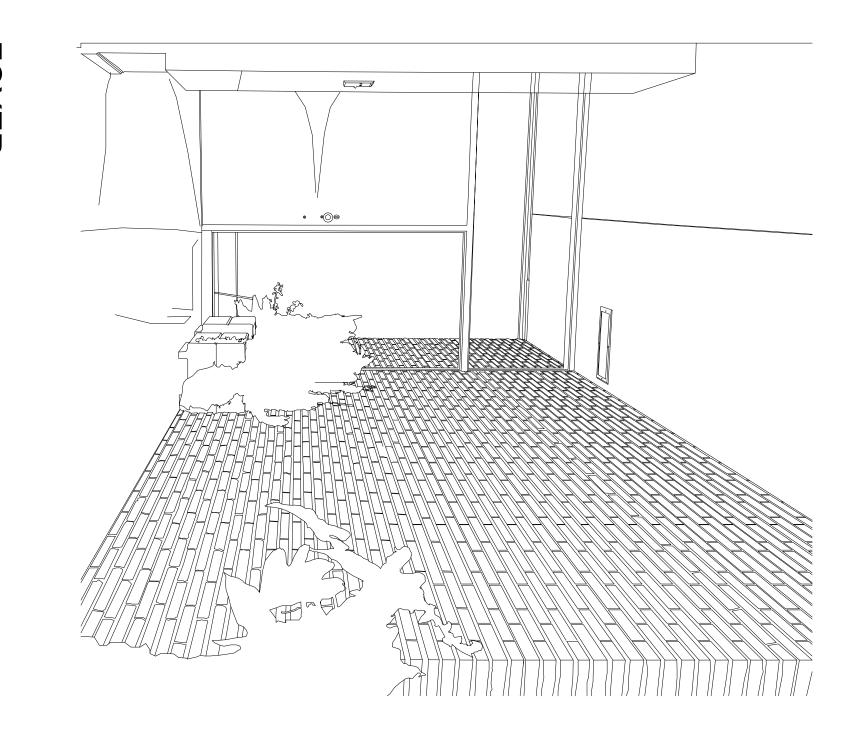
DINING ROOM

AFTER JOSEPH MOLITOR PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1951





OYER



DRAWN BY: ETHAN R. CARLISLE, WILLIAM H. JOHNSON, EDWARD NIETO, CAMEREN TROWBRIDGE, STEPHENS M. WHITE, IV

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