

Raleigh Department of City Planning
One Exchange Plaza
3rd floor
Raleigh, NC 27602
919-516-2626

www.raleighnc.gov/planning

Fee	_____
Amt Paid	_____
Check #	_____
Rec'd Date:	_____
Rec'd By:	_____
Completion Date:	_____

(Processing Fee: \$266.00 - valid until June 30, 2011 - Checks payable to the City of Raleigh.)

RALEIGH HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION

This application initiates consideration of a property for designation as a Raleigh Historic Landmark by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission (RHDC) and the Raleigh City Council. It enables evaluation of the resource to determine if it qualifies for designation. The evaluation is made by the Research Committee of the RHDC, which makes its recommendation to the full commission which in turn makes its recommendation to the City Council. Procedures for administration by the RHDC are outlined in the Raleigh City Code, Section 10-1053.

Please type if possible. Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper for supporting documentation and if additional space is needed. All materials submitted become the property of the RHDC and cannot be returned. Return completed application to the RHDC office at One Exchange Plaza, Suite 300, Raleigh or mail to:

Raleigh Historic Districts Commission
PO Box 829 Century Station
Raleigh, NC 27602

1. Name of Property (if historic name is unknown, give current name or street address):

Historic Name: House at 1322 Mordecai Drive

Current Name: Mordecai Whitehall

2. Location:

Street 1322 Mordecai Drive

Address: _____

NC PIN No.: 1704956436

3. Legal Owner of Property (If more than one, list primary contact):

Name: Margaret and Paul Fyfe (contact information provided for Margaret)

Address: 1322 Mordecai Drive

City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27604

Telephone No: (202) (997)-(0583) Fax No. () () -()

E-Mail: mms9t@virginia.edu

4. Applicant/Contact Person (If other than owner):

Name: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Address: PO Box 6049

City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27628

Telephone No: (919) (828)-(1905) Fax No. () ()-()
E-Mail: maryruffin@hanburypreservation.com

5. General Data/Site Information:

Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: 1925, 2007, 2019

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: N/A

Approximate lot size or acreage: .17 acre

Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason: Sears Roebuck and Company; Virginia Nowell

Original Use: single family dwelling

Present Use: single family dwelling

6. Classification:

A. Category (check all that apply):

Building(s) ☒ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐

B. Ownership

Private ☒ Public ☐ Local ☐ State ☐ Federal ☐

C. Number of contributing and non-contributing resources on the property:

	Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings	1	0
Structures	0	0
Objects	0	0

D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom): WA3002 block face of houses 1300 black Mordecai Drive (evens) surveyed 1990

E. National Register of Historic Places Status: N/A

Check One:

Entered <input type="checkbox"/> Date:	Nominated <input type="checkbox"/>
Determined Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:	Determined Not Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:

Nomination Not Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Significant changes in integrity since listing should be noted in section 10.C. below.	

7. Reason for Request: owners statement "We are requesting this landmark designation to help preserve the historic character of the home, the Mordecai neighborhood, and downtown Raleigh. The house has special interest as a Sears kit home and we would like to see it protected into the future, especially amid rapid redevelopment of downtown neighborhoods like Mordecai. We also appreciate the city's tax incentives for historic designation."

8. Is the property income producing? Yes ☐ No ☒

9. Are any interior spaces being included for designation? Yes ☐ No ☒

10. Supporting Documentation (Attach to application on separate sheets. Please type or print):

A. Photographs/Slides:

At least *two sets of current exterior archival-grade photographic prints* (minimum print size 5"x7") of all facades of the building and at least one photo of all other contributing and non-contributing resources. If interior spaces of the property are being considered for designation, please include two sets of photos for these features. Prints may be created by using archival-grade black and white film photography and processing or digital photography. The minimum standard for a digital print is 5x7 at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch (ppi). This translates into a pixel dimension of 1950 x 1350. Digital images must be printed with an acceptable ink and paper combination as determined by the National Park Service Go to: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/photopolicy/index.htm>. All photographs must be labeled with the name of the structure, address and date the photograph was taken with pencil or archival-approved photo pen. In addition to prints, all digital images should be submitted on a CD-R in TIF format. Any additional exterior or interior views and views of other structures on the property (color, black and white, or slides) will be helpful.

B. Boundary Map:

Please include a map showing the location of the property. A sketch map is acceptable, but please note street names and number. Any other structures on the property should also be shown. Please include a "North" arrow. Map should be no larger than 11" x 17". A tax map with boundaries marked is preferred, which can be found at: <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>.

C. Architectural Significance:

Describe the property, including exterior architectural features, additions, remodelings, and alterations. Also describe significant outbuildings and landscape features. If the owner is including interior features in the nomination for the purpose of design review protection; describe them in detail and note their locations. Include a statement regarding the architectural significance of the property.

D. Historic Significance:

Note any significant events, people, and/or families associated with the property. Include all major owners. Note if the property has ever been recorded during a historic building survey by the City of Raleigh or by the NC State Historic Preservation Office. If so, who and when? (See application item 6.D.) Please include a bibliography of sources. Information regarding prior designations can be found by contacting the Survey and Planning Branch of the NC State Historic Preservation Office (NCSHPO) at 919-807-6570, 919-807-6573 or at: <http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/spbranch.htm>.

E. Special Significance Summary:

Include a one to two paragraph summary of those elements of the property that are integral to its historical, prehistorical, architectural, archaeological, and/or cultural importance.

C. Architectural Significance (DESCRIPTION):

The property sits on the east side of Mordecai Drive, between Chestnut and Sycamore Streets, on a roughly .17 acre lot. The lot is narrow and rectangular, as are most along this curving street. The house is set back approximately 50 feet from the right-of-way sharing a fairly uniform setback with its neighbors. The original portion of the house, to the west, is a two-story, frame, hipped-roof dwelling. Clad in weatherboard, it has a projecting, two-story, cross-gabled bay on the south side of the facade. The roof is clad in composite shingle.

In 2007, a one-story, full-width, shed-roofed porch addition was placed across the rear elevation. The porch was removed in 2019 when a two-story wing was added. The wing is roughly L-shaped in footprint, extending beyond the original north wall plane, but recessed along the south side, leaving space for an exterior deck that fills the void in the footprint at the southeast corner of the house. The addition includes a two-story, shed-roofed extension of the south side of the rear elevation, abutting a two-story cross-gabled ell. To the north of the ell is a single shed roofed extension along the north elevation that spans the depth of the addition and which supports a second story, cross-gabled bay projecting north from the primary roof

The house sits on a high brick foundation laid in common bond. Given the slight slope of the lot, more of the foundation is exposed on the western side of the house. The facade has a one story, full-width, three-bay porch supported by square posts on brick piers with a matchstick railing between them. The porch is accessed at the north by concrete steps that ascend to the east, flanked by two-tiered brick cheek walls with concrete caps. The primary entrance, to the north, is a single-leaf, two-panel, eight-light door. Immediately south of the entrance is a one-over-one, wooden, double-hung sash window. South of the window is a projecting canted bay, with cornerboard trim and three one-over-one, wooden, double-hung sash windows. The fenestration on the second mirrors that on the first with a blind bay at the north over the door. The canted bay is topped by a pedimented gable with broad, overhanging eaves. The pediment is clad in weatherboard matching the house. The roof has a broad board frieze with molded trim, which the second story windows abut.

The south elevation of the original portion of the house has two one-over-one, wooden, double-hung sash windows on the second floor. The first floor has three one-over-one, wooden, double-hung sash windows; the western two are paired and the eastern one, serving the kitchen, is slightly smaller than the others. In the addition to the rear, there is a single window on the first floor of the western part of the addition. On the ell section, there are two windows on the second floor, and on the first, an exterior single-leaf glazed door with a transom, flanked by one-over-one windows with transoms.

The east elevation has large banks of windows on the first and second stories. Those on the first are topped by smaller rectangular transoms. The projecting ell has three windows on the first and second stories. South of the ell, the east elevation has three windows on the first floor and two on the second. North of the ell, in the single-story section there is a single-leaf glazed door with a transom that lies on axis with a door on the west elevation.

The north elevation has a shortened five-panel door serving a storage area under the porch. This entrance is flanked by masonry retaining walls. Two square, single-light windows are set east of this door in the basement level. The first floor has a set of paired one-over-one, wooden, double-hung sash windows in the original portion of the house and three similar windows in the addition. In the second story of the original portion of the house is a single one-over-one, wooden, double-hung sash window set toward the west, and a small rectangular window just under the fascia, serving a bathroom. The projecting bay has two similar small single light windows, one on the west elevation and one on the north elevation of the bay's

northwest corner. A single one-over-one window is set on the rear ell's north elevation, east of the projecting bay.

Exterior decorative elements are minimal and consist largely of cornerboards, watertable trim boards, and a flat frieze with modest molded trim at the eaves. The gable above the facade bay has raking trim within the pediment. These treatments are mimicked in the addition

Per the published plans, the interior of the house originally had six rooms. On the first floor, one entered into a living room with a winder stair at the northeast. The dining room was south of the living room and entered through a large cased opening. The kitchen, east of the dining room, had a pantry at the north, below the stairs. There was an exterior door from the kitchen at the south side of the east elevation. A stair in the northeast corner of the house led to the second floor and a hall that extended to the west about half the depth of the house and serviced three bedrooms roughly aligned above the three principal rooms below, with a shared hall bathroom on the north side between the stair and the northwest bedroom.

The addition respects the original plan while artfully engaging with it to provide additional living space. On the first floor one enters into the original living room. The original stair remains though the winders, if the house had been built true to the published plans, have been replaced with a landing that now also services a small flight that descends to the east through a new cased opening, leading to the addition.

South of the living room is the dining room. East of the dining room is the kitchen, which has been extended slightly at the east with space now housing a breakfast area. A cased opening at the east of the kitchen's north wall leads to a powder room below the stair, storage closets, and the large family room within the rear ell. The powder room, located where there is a pantry in the published plans, previously opened directly into the kitchen and had a window on the east exterior wall, now the location of a door. The family room has a fireplace on its north wall and an exterior door to the rear deck in its south. The western exterior door in the addition has a small vestibule framed by the rear stairs and furred-out structural supports.

On the second floor the original plan is generally undisturbed. A window that was centered on the rear elevation has become a door to small hall that services a laundry room to the south and a master suite to the east that includes a master bathroom in the cross-gabled northern wing.

The original portion of the house retains its wooden flooring which appears original, and rooms in the addition have wooden floors as well. Exceptions are in the laundry room and bathrooms. Baseboards and simple door and windows surrounds retained in the original portion of the house are duplicated in the addition. Crown molding is found only in the living and dining rooms.

D. Historic Significance:

The house at 1322 Mordecai Drive (lot # 48 of Mordecai Place) is within the Mordecai Place National Register Historic District. This community, subdivided from land once part of Mordecai plantation, was largely developed after 1922, when Dan and Frank Allen, trading as Mordecai Place, Inc., optioned and subdivided 89 acres north of the Mordecai house. The land was sold with covenants including setback requirements, restrictions on livestock and building types, requirements for sewage hook ups, and a prohibition against African American residency (presumably as either owners or renters), save for domestics. While disturbing to contemporary readers, these types of restrictions were common throughout Raleigh and the country at large in the early twentieth century.

The house appears to have been built by developer Virginia Newsom Nowell (1892-1960). Between 1922 and 1923, Mrs. Nowell purchased sixty lots in Mordecai Place from Mordecai Place Incorporated. She may have been involved in additional parcels, including several with her brother, J.D. Newsom, who purchased lots under his corporation Standard Realty and Construction Company, and others with her brother Bolling S. Newsom, including lot 48. Though the title and deeds of trust are complex, it appears that by 1924 Bolling Newsom had acquired lot #48, which his sister had purchased the previous year. A notice in the *News and Observer* on March 13, 1924 notes, "Permits for four residences to be erected on Mordecai Drive were issued yesterday by Building Inspector John Magnum. Three of the buildings are being built by Virginia N. Nowell for B. S. Newson (sic). Each is to cost \$3000. They are at 46, 47, and 48 Mordecai Drive." In that those house numbers do and did not exist, it appears they actually reference lot numbers. Interestingly, both lots 46 and 48 were developed with Sears house plans. In city directories the address 1322 Mordecai Drive first appears in the 1925 edition and the address is listed as "vacant" until 1928. It appears to have been used as rental housing until 1936 when it is purchased by George McConnell.

While the chief argument for designation is the house's significance as a Sears kit house, the involvement of Virginia Nowell is of note. The *News and Observer* observed in 1926 "During the two years in which Mrs. Nowell was active as a builder here, she constructed around fifty residences and apartment houses, ranging in price from \$5,000 to \$50,000." Her career as a developer seems to have been brief. In flirting with bankruptcy, it was reported of her in June of 1928 "Mrs. Nowell engaged in extensive building and real estate operations during the post-war boom period. The ensuing deflation found her without sufficient capital to see her through the slump and there was a general collapse of her holdings, leaving her, it is claimed, many thousands of dollars in debt."

Virginia Nowell appears numerous times in the local media, often involved in litigation. While litigation is not unusual in real estate development and construction, numerous additional actions involving bad checks, bankruptcy, libel, and medical malpractice indicate that Mrs. Nowell was not shy in seeking the court's assistance. After her divorce from Henry Nowell, she left the area for a period. In the early 1930s she was an agent for author Tom Dixon in anticipation of a sequel to his novel *The Clansman*. In 1939 she attempted to stage Erskine Caldwell's *Tobacco Road* in Raleigh's Memorial Auditorium over objections of immorality. By the mid 1940s she appears to have returned to Raleigh. She was involved in numerous real estate related businesses, some with family members including promoting and construction of a "Jane Brown House," a model designed with input to meet the needs of the American woman. She also served as an agent of sorts for pre-assembled houses in the 1940s.

The house at 1322 Mordecai Drive is a Sears Kit house, a design known as The Whitehall. In the early twentieth century, many companies began to produce and promote kit houses--standard plans for which materials were shipped and assembled. Of these, the Sear Roebuck

and Company was the most prolific. Its 1939 catalog claimed that over 100,00 people lived in a Sears home.

Katherine Stevenson and Ward Jandl posit it was because of the combination of offering popular styles, providing quality designs and materials at a good price, and the ease and speed of construction with pre-cut lumber. Though Sears had offered building materials through its popular mail-order catalog, it was not until 1908 with the publication of its first *Book of Modern Homes and Building Plans*, that the company offered an entire house. Sears also offered financing on materials and eventually for labor costs. Sears touted the use of in-house architects to generate designs and while direct attributions have yet to be discovered, by 1929 the catalog gives a list of names of those involved in the house designs. According to Stevenson and Jandl, Whitehall model was first offered in 1912 and thereafter intermittently until 1926.

In 2013 the City of Raleigh commissioned a *Historical Context and Argument for Designation for Kit Houses* from Jennifer Carpenter, incorporated into this report by reference. Carpenter observes that the proliferation of kit homes in Raleigh coincides with a period of explosive residential growth and development. She notes the presence of models from seven national kit home providers represented in the city in addition to a local firm Standard Homes, that provided only plans. Carpenter refers to individuals assembling their own kit homes, however with an expanded understanding of entrepreneurs such as Virginia Nowell, we may find that developers also took advantage of the speed and ease of construction to build speculative housing for re-sale.

In the context document, the house at 1322 was one of twelve houses specifically profiled in the document. Carpenter offers guidelines for the local designation of Raleigh's kit homes. In considering the house at 1322 Mordecai Drive, the guidelines are addressed below:

Architectural integrity

Can the home be authenticated as genuine kit home from an established kit home company? **Yes**

Is the home an excellent example of a particular kit home model? **Yes**

Does the home maintain its original massing, floor plan, style, and/or materials or some compelling combination thereof? **Yes, although a rear wing has been added, it has minimal impact on the original plan elements and is designed so as to augment and not overpower the original section of the house**

Rarity of make/model

Is the home a style of which few were built or few survive? **unknown**

Was the home manufactured by a smaller or less known kit home company? **No**

Location

Is the home located in one of Raleigh's early 'suburbs,' helping to document the city's period of growth in the early 20th century and the heyday of the kit home industry? **Yes**

Sources

Carpenter, Jennifer, Raleigh's Kit Homes: A Brief Historical Context and Argument for Landmark Designation, January 2013
https://rhdc.org/sites/default/files/Kit%20Homes%20Context_Landmark%20Designation%20Criteria.pdf

Dickinson, Patricia. Mordecai Place National Register Nomination, 1997.

Hill Directory Company Inc, Raleigh City Directories
[https://archive.org/details/ncdir?and\[\]=subject%3A%22Raleigh+%28N.C.%29+--+Directories%22](https://archive.org/details/ncdir?and[]=subject%3A%22Raleigh+%28N.C.%29+--+Directories%22)

Nelson, Christopher E "'Made to Order' Exhibit Celebrates Raleigh's kit homes" *News and Observer* May 13, 2012.

North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Survey file WA3002, Houses 1302-1332 Mordecai Drive.

Sears Archive, *Homes Index*, <http://www.searsarchives.com/homes/bydate.htm>

Sears, Roebuck & Co. "Whitehall," *Honor Bilt Modern Homes*. Chicago, 1921, 65. www.madison-historical.siue.edu/archive/items/show/37

Stevenson, Katherine Cole and Ward Jandl. *Houses By Mail New York*: Preservation Press, 1986.

Thornton, Rosemary "An Abundance of Sears Homes in Raleigh,"
<https://searshomes.org/index.php/2011/02/09/abundance-of-kit-homes-raleigh-nc/>

Untitled *News and Observer* March 13, 1924, p. 16.

Wake County Deed Books, Wake County Register of Deeds.

"Woman Builder Sues Attorney," *News and Observer* August 1, 1926, p. 40.

"Would Bankrupt Mrs. V. N. Nowell," *News and Observer* June 15, 1928, p. 2.

E. Special Significance Summary:

The house at 1322 Mordecai Drive is a Sears kit house, the Whitehall model. It is one of a number of identified kit homes in Raleigh built during a period of explosive residential growth and development. The proliferation of these "catalog houses" was due in part to their popular designs, quality, affordability, and ease of construction. While in many cases the houses were ordered and built by their owners, the house at 1322 Mordecai Drive may be an example of a developer's use of these easily constructed houses for a speculative market. The number of Whitehall models built and extant is unknown though the model was offered intermittently for fourteen years. The house is an excellent example of the Sears Whitehall. Though a rear wing has been added, it has not changed the original plan elements appreciably. The addition compliments the original without mimicking it; its scale and massing are sympathetic and only slightly visible from the public right of way. Located in Mordecai Place, one of Raleigh's early suburbs, it represents the city's explosive growth in the early 20th century and the heyday of the kit home industry.

Whitehall Model

SIX ROOMS AND BIG PORCH

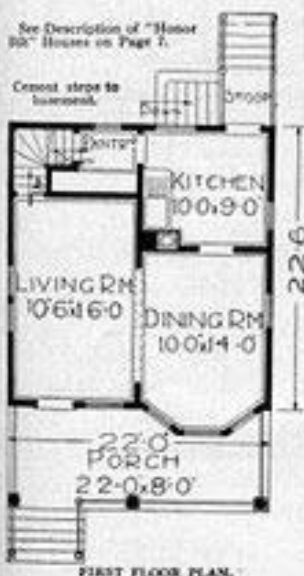


At the price quoted we will furnish all the material to build this six-room house, consisting of lumber, lath, shingles, mill work, medicine case, flooring, porch ceiling, siding, finishing lumber, building paper, eaves trough, down spout, sash weights, hardware and painting material. No extras, as we guarantee enough material to build this house. Price does not include cement, brick or plaster.

Honor Bill

The Whitehall
No. 3035 "Already Cut" and Fitted.
\$1,937⁰⁰

See Description of "Honor Bill" Houses on Page 7.



Built on a concrete foundation and excavated under entire house. We furnish clear cypress siding over good wood sheathing and best grade thick order shingles; framing lumber is No. 1 quality yellow pine. All windows glazed with "A" quality glass.

Paint for three coats outside. Varnish and wood filler for interior finish. Steel-hold Design hardware, see page 127.

A NEAT and roomy house at a very low price. Was designed with two objects in view, economy of floor space and low cost. Contains six good size rooms and bathroom. Front door opens into the living room. A stairway from the living room leads to the second floor. The dining room is connected with the living room by a large cased opening which practically makes one large room of these two rooms. Has kitchen and good size pantry. Inside entrance to the basement.

First Floor The front door is 1 1/4 inches thick, glazed with bevel plate glass. Living room, dining room, kitchen and pantry on first floor. Porch floor is clear edge grain fir.

Second Floor The stairway from the first floor opens into a hall on the second floor from which any one of the three bedrooms or bathroom may be reached. Bedrooms are well lighted and each has a good size clothes closet.

Height of Ceilings Basement, 7 feet from floor to joists, with cement floor. First floor, 9 feet from floor to ceiling. Second floor, 8 feet 2 inches from floor to ceiling.

We furnish our best "Quality Guaranteed" mill work shown on pages 124 and 125. Interior doors are five-



OPTIONS

Sheet Plaster and Plaster Finish to take the place of wood lath, \$121.00 extra. See page 120.

Oriental Asphalt Shingles, instead of wood shingles, \$20.00 extra.

Five-Chief Shingle Roll Roofing, Red or Sea Green in color, instead of wood shingles, \$10.00 less.

Oak Doors, Trim and Floors for living room, dining room and stairs, \$38.00 extra.

Maple Flooring furnished for kitchen, pantry and bathroom, instead of yellow pine, no extra charge.

Storm Doors and Windows, \$64.00 extra.

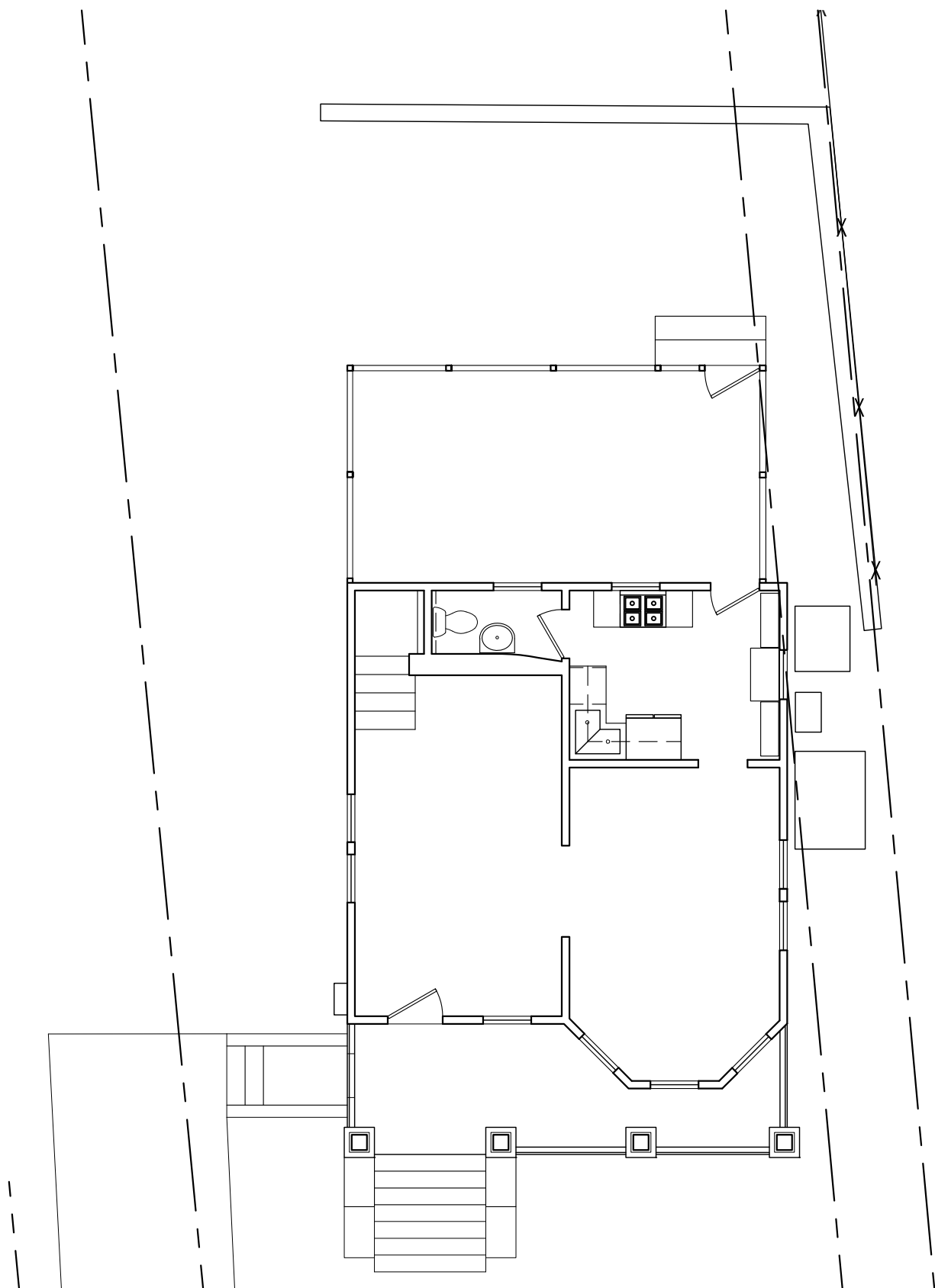
Screen Doors and Windows, galvanized wire, \$53.00 extra.

This house can be built on a lot 28 feet wide.

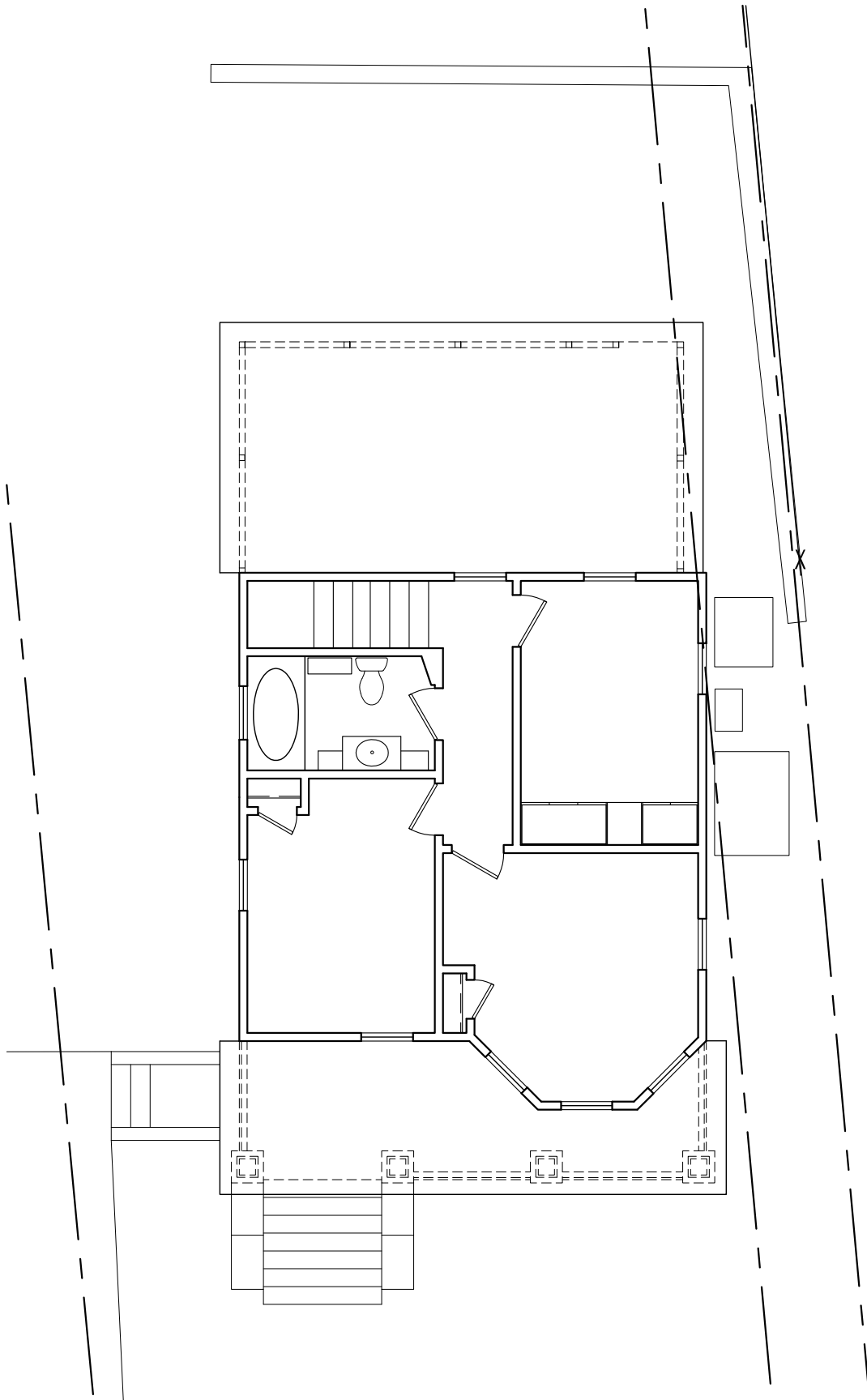
For prices of Plumbing, Heating, Wiring, Electric Fixtures and Shades see page 121.

Built at Gary, Ind., Rich Valley, Ind., Allentown, Penna., Aurora, Ill., Plainville, Conn., McKeesport, Penna., and Hellertown, Penna.

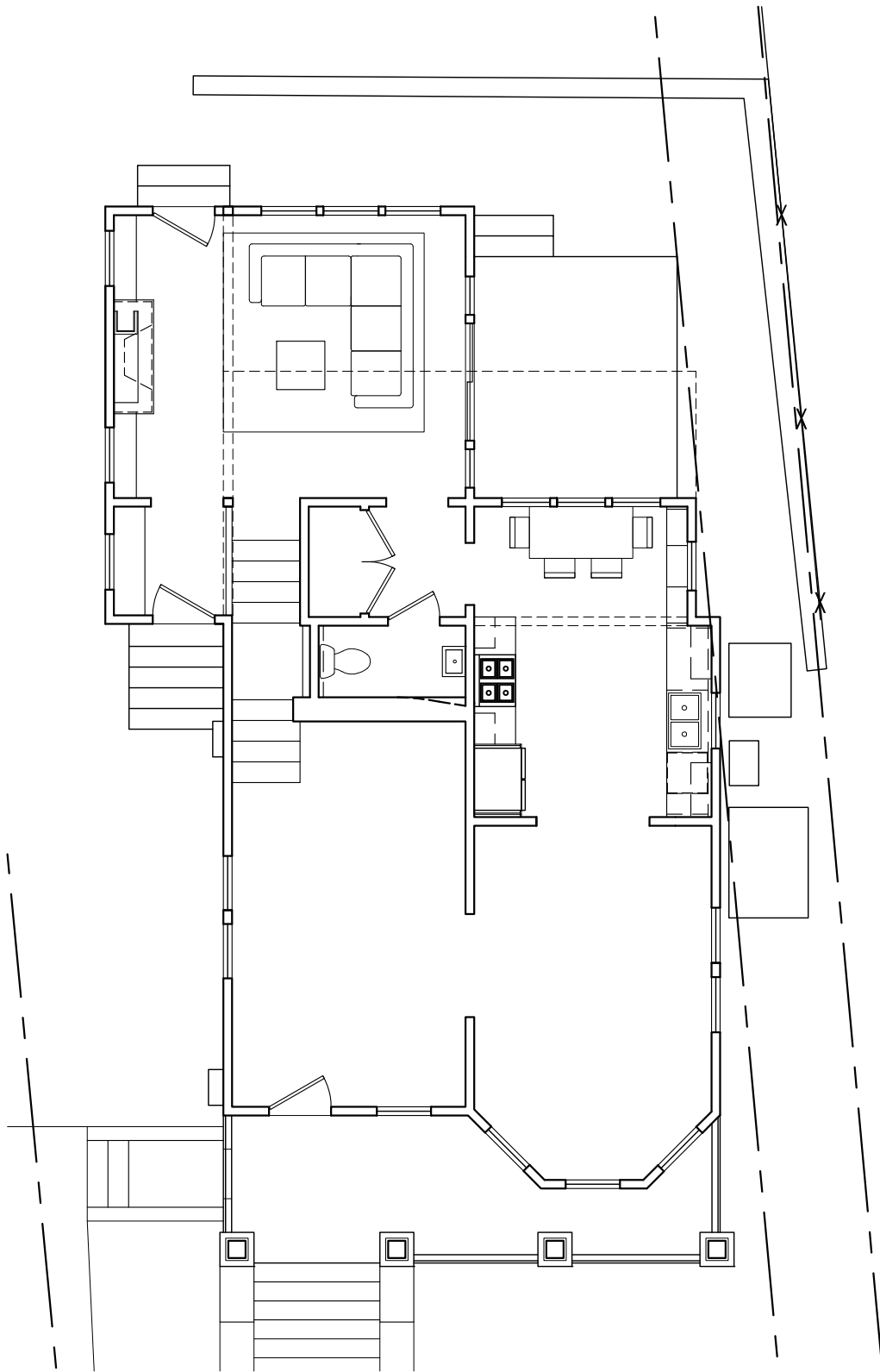
Our Guarantee Protects You—Order Your House From This Book.
Price Includes Plans and Specifications.



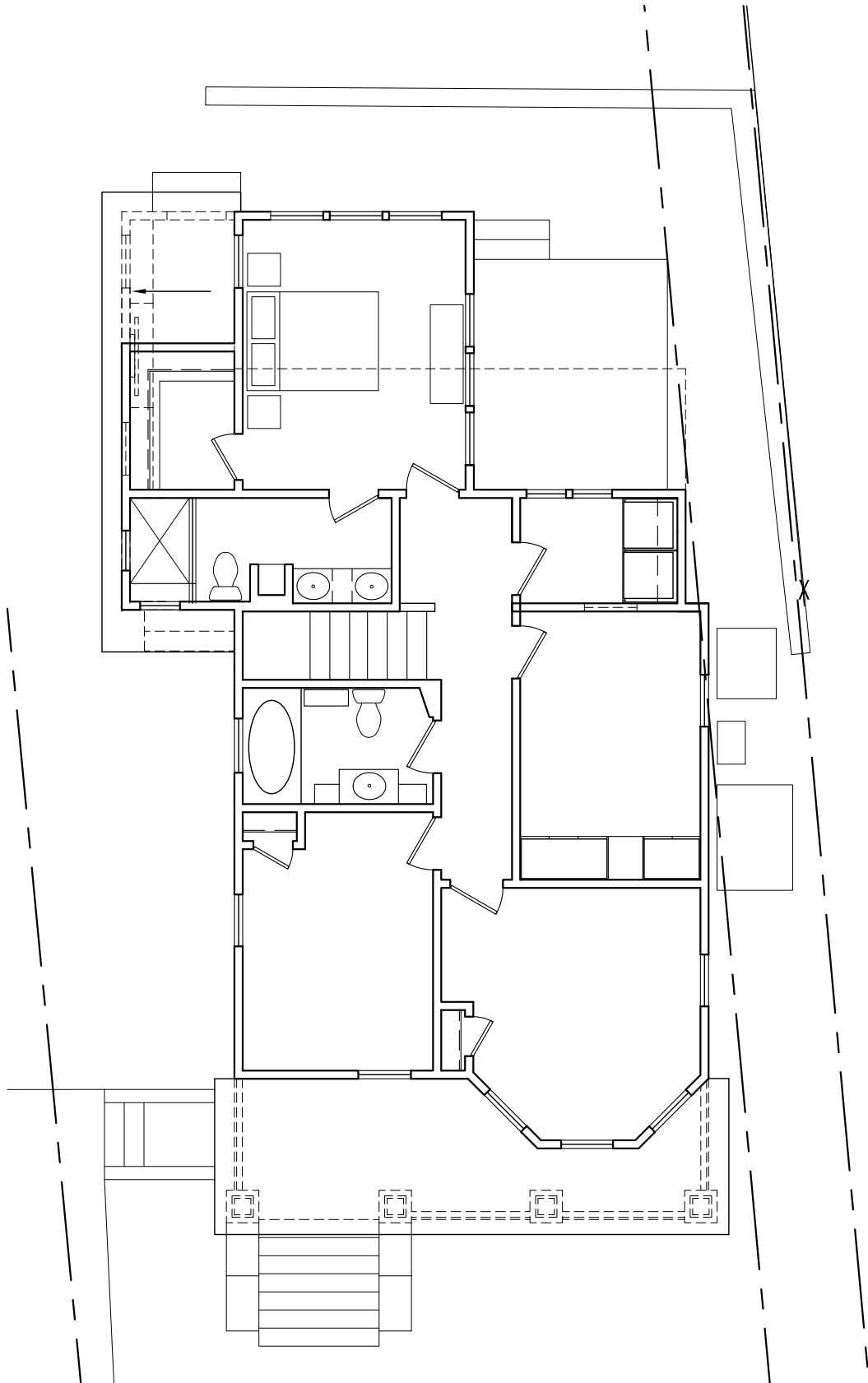
1322 Mordecai Drive, First Floor, prior to addition



1322 Mordecai Drive, Second Floor, prior to addition



1322 Mordecai Drive, First Floor, with addition

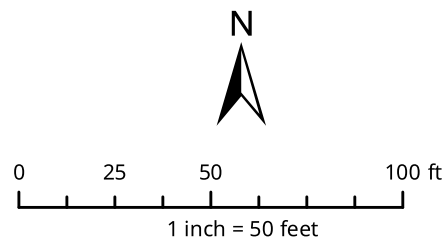


1322 Mordecai Drive, Second Floor, with addition



PIN: 1704956436
PIN Ext: 000
Real Estate ID: 0011325
Map Name: 1704 12
Owner: FYFE, PAUL FYFE, MARGARET
Mail Address 1: 1322 MORDECAI DR
Mail Address 2: RALEIGH NC 27604-1345
Mail Address 3:
Deed Book: 015487
Deed Page: 02761
Deed Acres: 0.17
Deed Date: 10/30/2013
Building Value: \$249,466
Land Value: \$300,000
Total Value: \$549,466

Biling Class: Individual
Description: LO48 MORDECAI PL INC BM1920
-00110
Heated Area: 2018
Street Name: MORDECAI DR
Site Address: 1322 MORDECAI DR
City: RALEIGH
Planning Jurisdiction: RA
Township: Raleigh
Year Built: 1924
Sale Price: \$285,000
Sale Date: 10/30/2013
Use Type: SINGLFAM
Design Style: Conventional
Land Class: Residential Less Than 10 Acres



Disclaimer

*iMaps makes every effort to produce and publish the most current and accurate information possible. However, the maps are produced for information purposes, and are **NOT** surveys. No warranties, expressed or implied, are provided for the data therein, its use, or its interpretation.*





Front facade



Entry detail







East Elevation





NE Corner





North Elevation





South-west corner



Bay detail