

**GOOGONG  
HOMESTEAD  
1845 - 1976**



G O O G O N G   H O M E S T E A D

1845   -   1976

Department of Construction

A. C. T. Region

for & on behalf of

The National Capital Development

Commission 1978.



In the Environmental Impact Statement prepared before the Construction of Googong Dam the Section concerning the original Googong Homestead (at that time known as 'Beltana') contained the following paragraph:

"It is thought that "Beltana" was built around 1843 as an outstation to Duntroon. Although altered in detail and reroofed with iron the original structure is essentially intact. The Commission has therefore concluded that whilst "Beltana" is not of sufficient architectural merit to warrant relocation it is of significant historical interest and details will therefore be measured and recorded before the building is dismantled."

(Part of Section 5.2.2)

Subsequently the National Capital Development Commission requested the Department of Construction to carry out the necessary recording of the building. The following measured drawings, photographs and brief historical notes have been prepared in response to that request. The Department is indebted to Mr. T. N. Gorman who provided the information on which the text was based.

## GOOGONG HOMESTEAD (1845 - 1976)

In December 1820 and March 1821 expeditions under the leadership of Charles Throsby discovered the Molonglo River and its junctions with the Queanbeyan and Murrumbidgee Rivers. In a follow up expedition Captain Mark Currie and Brigade Major J. Ovens with Joseph Wild as guide left Lake George in May 1823, headed south through the Tuggeranong area which they named Isabella Plains, and up the Murrumbidgee to the clear downs country which the aboriginies told them was called 'Monaro'. On their return journey they discovered London Bridge on Burra Creek. They described it as "a natural bridge of one perfect Saxon arch under which the water passed". They continued down the Queanbeyan River through the Googong Dam site which they crossed on 8th June 1823. On Currie's map which was published in London in 1825 he shows the Queanbeyan River as the 'South Fish River' and describes the countryside along the river south from its confluence with the Molonglo as "Forest country with some scrub, intersected by rugged gullies".

Subsequently Robert Campbell, having been granted Duntroon in 1825 in compensation for the loss of a ship while on charter to the government, used large tracts of land along the Queanbeyan River for grazing his stock, a practice which was continued by his son Charles Campbell until 10th August 1836. On that date he purchased the land then known as The Rivers Station at public auction, procuring two blocks measuring 674 acres and 1209 acres for £261-3-6 and £468-8-9 respectively.

During this period the land now covered by the dam waters was the main route from Goulburn and Queanbeyan to the Monaro and Kiandra goldfields. As it was essential that travellers had ready access to water for their horses and bullocks the normal routes followed streams whenever possible. The southern track from Queanbeyan led up the river to The Valley, along Jumping Creek for a while to avoid the precipitous Wickerslack Gorge and then deviated across the hills back to the river which it generally followed to the Burra Creek. Here it once more left the rough going along the river and followed Burra Creek to the saddle above Margaret's Creek which in turn was followed to Michelago from whence the travellers headed south to the Monaro or west to Kiandra. Some of the track is still visible north of the Googong Dam.

Campbell was now using his legally acquired property to graze cattle but its remote location and association with the main road was resulting in serious losses from cattle duffing. To supervise the property and protect his stock, Campbell engaged Alexander McDonald, an Irish Military veteran, for whom it is believed the first part of the stone homestead was built in 1845 and he continued to occupy it until his death in 1875, aged 84.

Somewhere in the 1850's the area came to be known as 'Googongs' or 'Gugong' and McDonald's stone cottage as 'The Googongs'. The meaning of the word 'Googong' is obscure but it is most likely to be of aboriginal origin. The Googong area was generally accepted to be the land between Burra and Queanbeyan east of Jerrabomberra Creek and this area subsequently formed most of the Parish of Googong.

John Feagan, an Irish protestant who had arrived with his family in N.S.W. about 1840 and had made his fortune on the Araluen goldfields purchased the 1209 acres of The Googongs including the house from Charles Campbell in 1860. Tradition has it that Campbell was skeptical of Feagan's ability to pay for the property because of his shabby appearance and uncouth manner. However, when Feagan opened his saddle bags and paid for the property in gold Campbell changed his tune.

About 1870, a large room was added to the northern end of The Googongs, probably by D. Montgomery, a Braidwood blacksmith, who possessed a considerable talent as a stone-mason. This room came to be known as the Ballroom and was the scene of many a gay party, with revellers coming from as far away as Captain's Flat.

Feagan was killed in a riding accident at Googong in 1880 but the family continued on until late in the 19th century when Albert William Studdy took over after marrying into the Feagan family. Studdy continued until 1920, improving the property by clearing much of the timber. No doubt motivated by the floods that occurred frequently between 1852 and 1891 Studdy erected a new homestead on a small headland looking North and South along the river valley. This was a weatherboard house of some 20 squares (185 m<sup>2</sup>) and the name Googong was transferred to the new homestead. The old stone house was then occupied by the Goiser family.

In 1916, the government of the day was investigating a water supply for the embryo National Capital at Canberra. Walter Burley Griffin had suggested the Googong site in his Canberra plan.

Studdy was apprehensive about the possibility of a dam being built and decided to put the property on the market. Although widely advertised, the property was not sold until 1920 when it was purchased by E. J. Gorman, a Riverina grazier, to be used for grazing a big mob of sheep droving in the Southern Tablelands as, due to poor market conditions, he was forced to withhold them from sale. His intention was to keep the property for a year and then resell but the property remained in his family until its resumption for the construction of Googong Dam.

When the old stone house was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. T. N. Gorman in the early 1950's an additional bedroom was added to the Southern end, a wider verandah along the Eastern facade and a Sun Room on the Northern end, this work being completed in 1954. At this time, due to confusion of having two homesteads known as Googong, they gave the old house the name of Beltana, the name by which it was known until it was covered by the rising waters of the dam in October, 1976. The name Googong has now been transferred to the Gorman's new house.



GOOGONG HOMESTEAD: CONSTRUCTION.Original Cottage (1845)

Floor:	Hand hewn timber.
Walls:	Field stone held together with mud, plastered internally to smooth surface and externally with rough finished stucco painted white.
Roof:	Timber shingles later replaced with corrugated iron sheeting painted red.
Ceiling:	Timber boarding.
External thresholds & frames:	Red Box.
Windows:	Cedar.

Addition (C 1870)

Floor: )	
Walls: )	As original cottage.
Roof:	Corrugated iron sheeting painted red.
Ceiling:	Stained timber boarding.
External thresholds & frames: )	
Windows: )	As original cottage.

Addition (1954)

Floor:	Timber.
Walls:	Cavity brick plastered & painted externally to match original cottage.
Roof:	Corrugated iron sheeting painted red.
Ceiling:	Plaster board.

GOOGONG HOMESTEAD: CONSTRUCTION cont.

Verandah & Sun Room (C 1954)

Floor:	Timber.
Balustrade:	White painted brick.
Posts:	Timber.
Ceiling:	Timber boarding.
Sun Room walls:	Stud frame lined externally with white painted weatherboards.



View from the West



View from the South





View from the East



The Verandah





The Ballroom (1870)



Dinning Room (1845)

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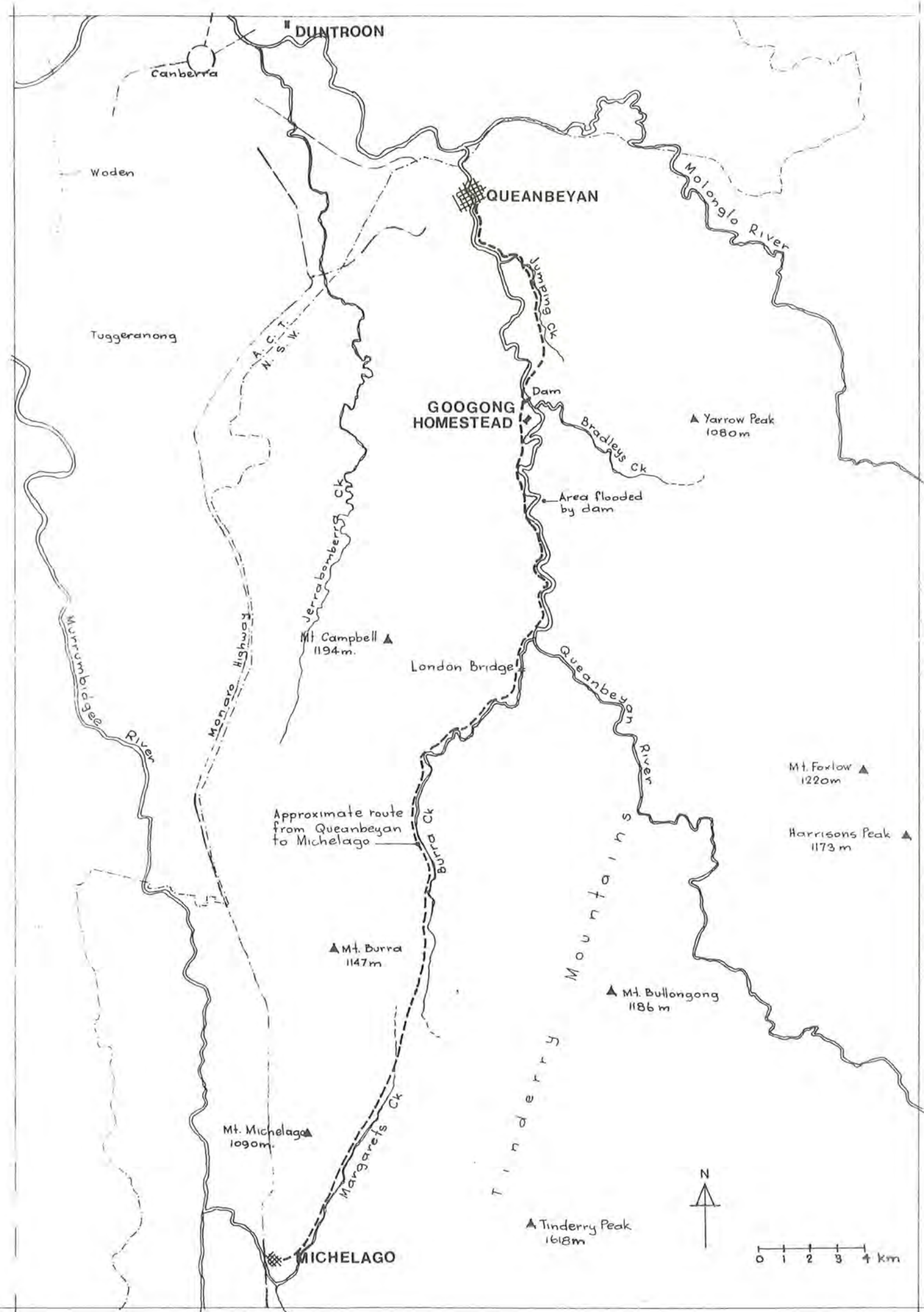


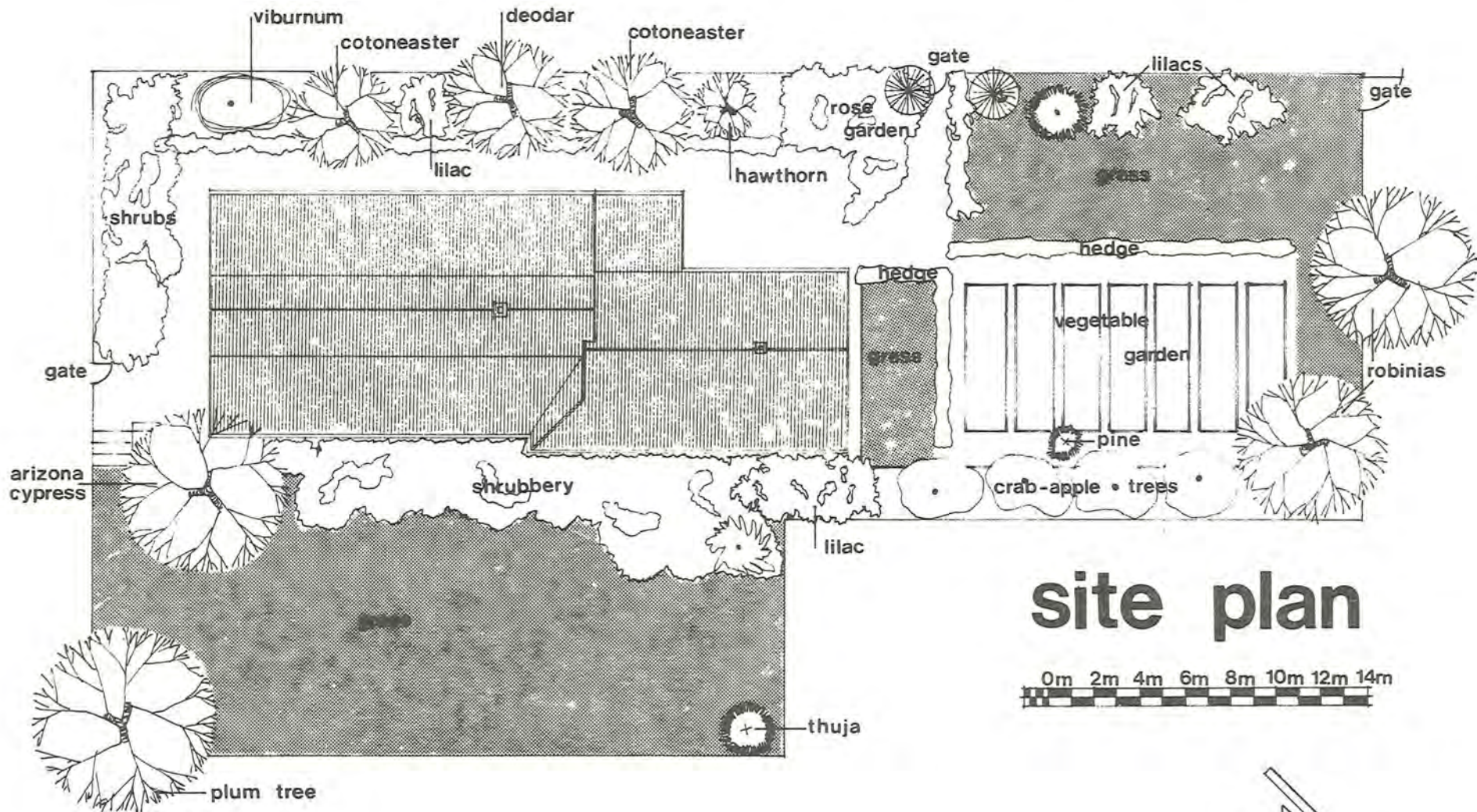
Master Bedroom (1845)



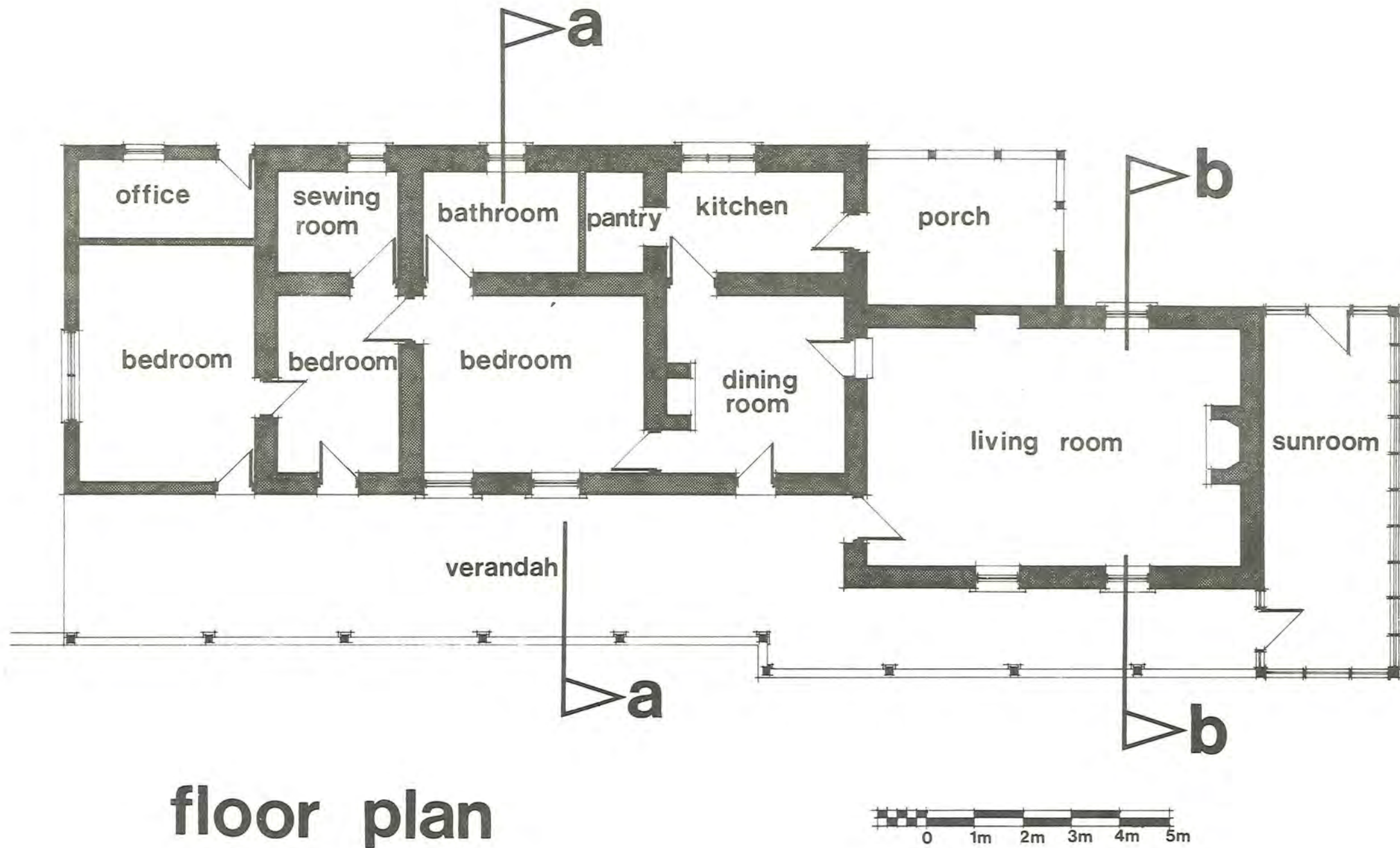
Second Bedroom (1845)

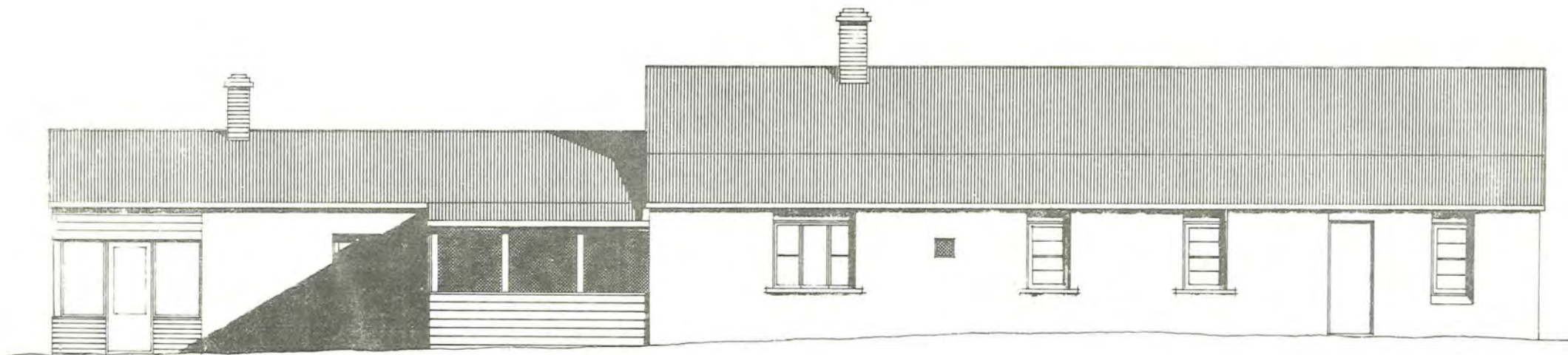




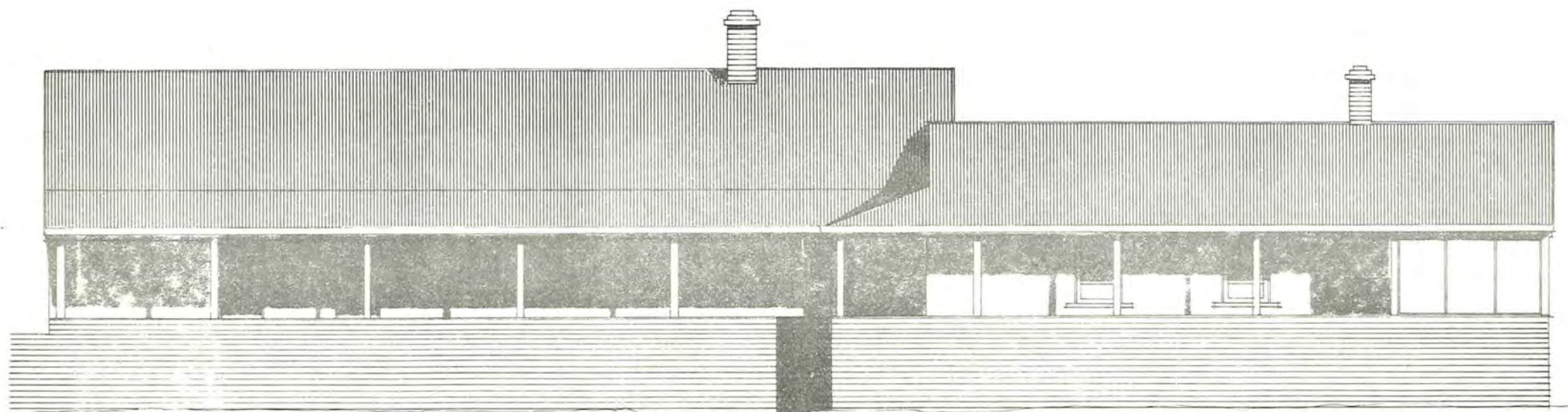








**west elevation**



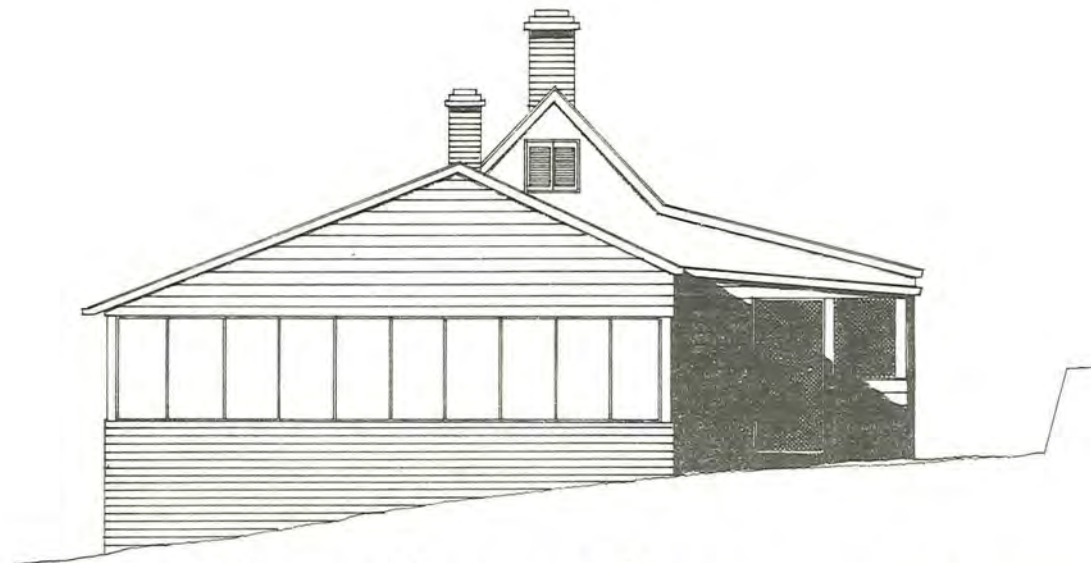
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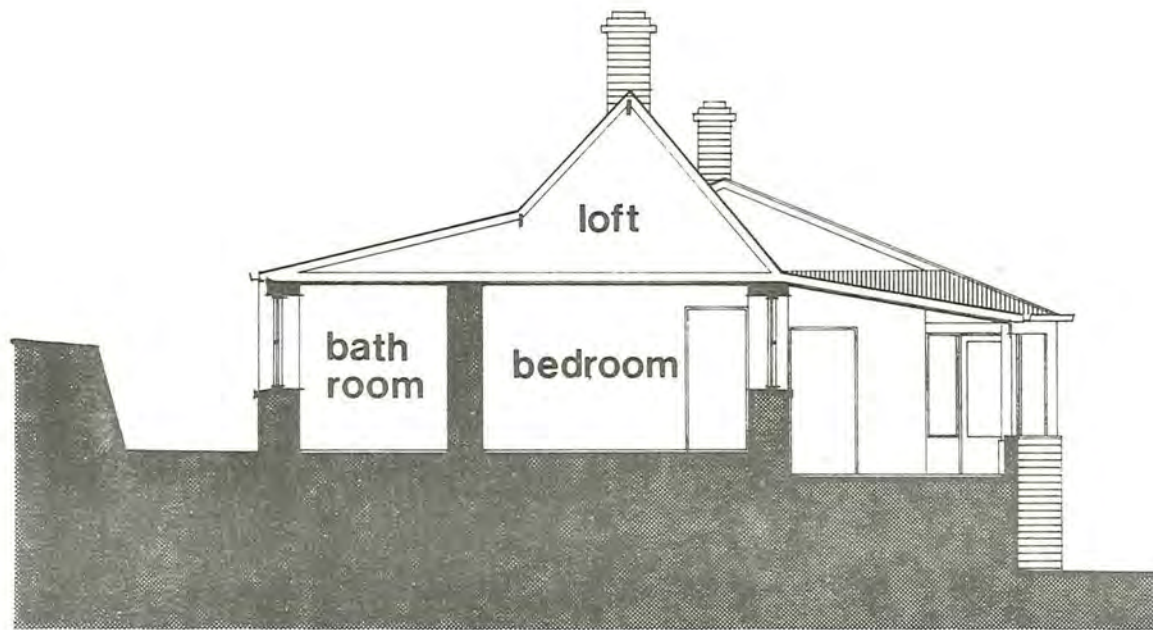


**south elevation**

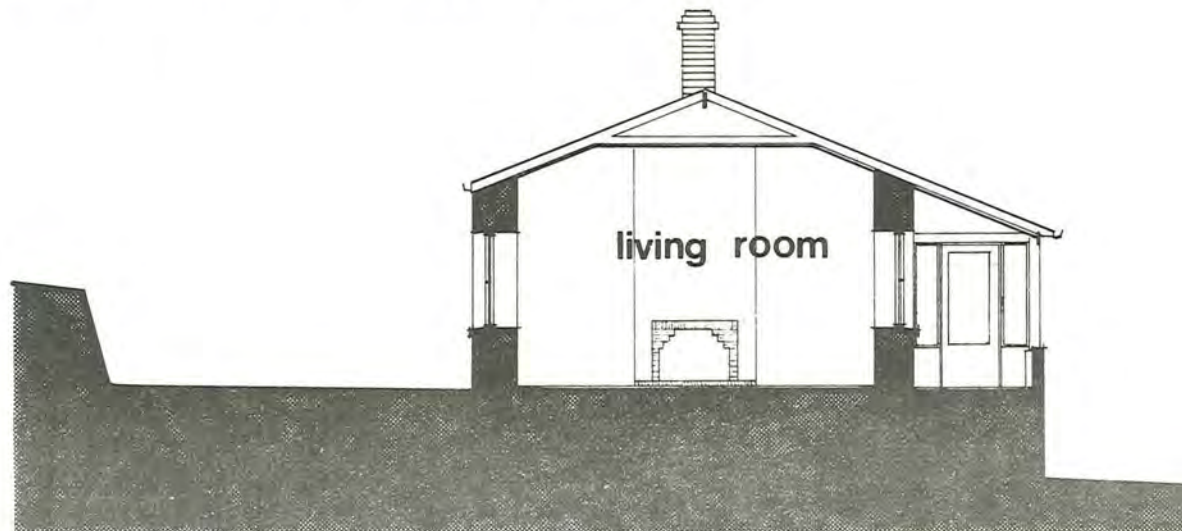


**north elevation**

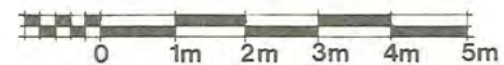




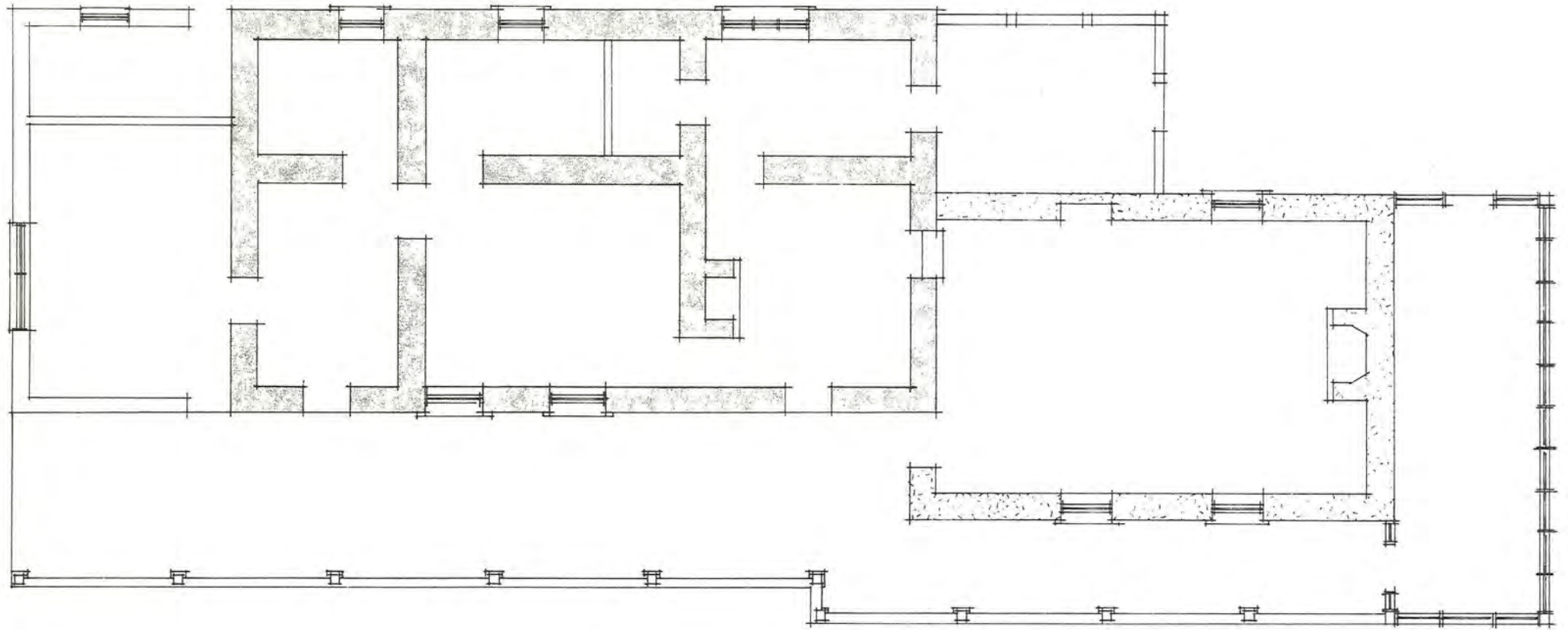
**section a-a**



**section b-b**







 1845

 c.1870

 1954

**construction stages**

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