

Doris Leeper House Cape Canaveral National Seashore

This report is based on a site visit to the Doris Leeper House on 25-26 March 2002. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate the integrity of the 1.63-acre site, which lies on the western shore of the barrier island at the northern end of Mosquito Lagoon. The site includes three buildings---a house and garage, both apparently built in 1927; a combination guesthouse and artist's studio, built in 1969; an asphalt tennis court, which may also date to the 1960s; and a wooden dock of indeterminate age.

Historical Significance: In February 2001, the Superintendent requested a determination by the Florida SHPO of the house's eligibility for listing on the National Register. The request was made on the basis of the site's associations with a failed resort development in the 1920s and with Doris Leeper (1929-2000), a well-known artist and conservationist who acquired the house in 1958 and was instrumental in the creation of the Cape Canaveral National Seashore.

In 1926, Charles and Ruth Taylor of Volusia County, Florida, laid out the Eldora Sportsmen Subdivision on a fifty-acre tract of land just south of the historic Eldora community (see Appendix A for subdivision plat). The property was divided into 279 lots along seven streets; and, in 1927, John Shultz of Michigan built the first house in the subdivision on lot four or five. However, a devastating hurricane that struck south Florida in September 1927 precipitated the collapse of the speculative boom in Florida real estate that had begun shortly after World War I. As a result, there was no further development of the Eldora Sportsmen Subdivision.

Doris Leeper purchased the property in 1958; and, although she sold it to the National Park Service in 1977, she retained a life estate in the property until her death in April 2000. A cursory Internet search for information on Leeper produced a surprising number of entries, including the biography attached to this report. Listed in *Who's Who in*



Figure 1 Doris Leeper, 1929-2000. (Atlantic Center for the Arts)



Figure 2 View to southwest across Mosquito Lagoon from front yard of Leeper House. (NPS-SERO-2002)



Figure 3 Left, view to southeast of main house and grounds with the guest house/ studio and garage in background. Right, view to northwest showing tennis court at left center. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

American Art as early as 1976, Leeper founded the internationally-known Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, in 1977. She received an honorary doctorate from her alma mater Duke University in 1997 and was inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame in 1999. Her work, which includes paintings and sculptures of large, geometric forms, is displayed in dozens of collections, including the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.

Site: The 1.63-acre site includes Lots 2-6 and a fraction of Lot 7 in the original Eldora Sportsmen Subdivision, with the house situated on Lot 4 or 5 (see Appendix A). Much of the site has been landscaped and features mature live oak, cedar, and palm. An asphalt tennis court, probably dating to the 1960s, is situated in front of the guest house/studio and just south of the main house. The net posts and backdrop fencing for the court have been removed and the painted and lined asphalt surface of the court is cracked and no longer suitable for play. Along the southwestern side of the site, a wooden dock, which perhaps dates to the 1920s, extends into Mosquito Lagoon.

Main House: Facing in a generally westerly direction, the house is a one-and-a-half story, Craftsman-style structure. Wood-framed with end gables and with shed-roofed dormers on the front and back, the house features a full-width front porch and a small back porch, both of which have been enclosed. The first floor encompasses about 865 square



Figure 4 View to northeast of Leeper House. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 5 Top, view of south side of house; bottom, view of north side of house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 6 View of rear (east) side of house. The modern deck, which has been partially dismantled, was built over the original brick-and-concrete steps and stoop at the back door. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

feet, including the porches, and features a large living room running the width of the front of the house along with a small dining nook, a kitchen, and a pantry off the enclosed back porch. The second floor contains about 655 square feet and includes a large bedroom across the front of that floor and a smaller bedroom and bathroom across the rear. Off the rear of the house is a modern wood-framed deck that covers the original brick stoop and steps.

Foundation: The wood frame of the house, which is elevated around 18" above grade, rests on brick foundation piers and walls that were built on a poured concrete footing that extends a few inches above grade. Most of it is in excellent condition except around the southwest corner of the front porch where now-removed vegetation is reported to have caused some heaving of the foundation. A few bricks have also been lost from the foundation wall in that area, which has allowed the loss of some of the fill on which the porch floor slab rests and may have contributed to the cracks that have developed in the slab. In addition, the foundation has settled and cracked along the north side of the house in the vicinity of the abandoned cistern beneath the back porch.

It is not clear if the chimney has been rebuilt or simply cleaned but it remains in excellent condition. Of some concern is the partially-filled gap visible on the exterior between the masonry and the wall of the house. However, there is no corresponding cracking of the masonry or deflection of woodwork where the chimney stack goes through the eaves,

indicating that the condition may simply be a result of the manner in which the chimney was constructed.

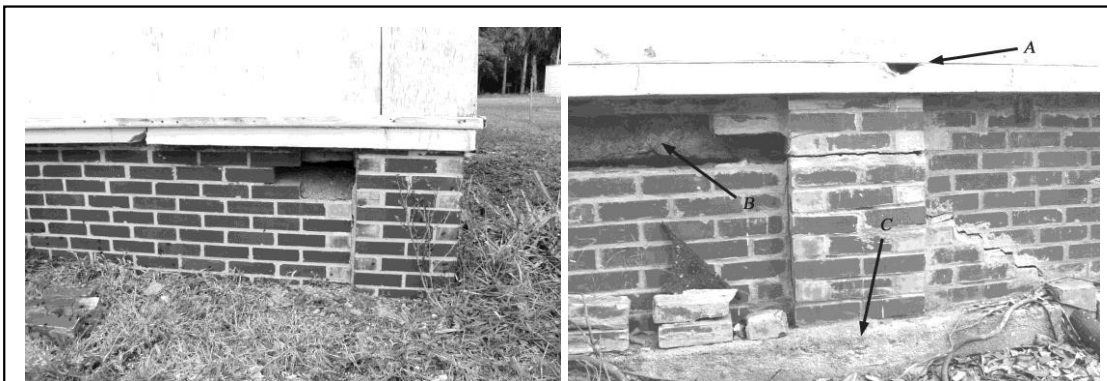


Figure 7 Above, view of southwest corner of front porch showing missing brick in that location. Below, view of northeast corner of foundation at back porch. "A" indicates original inlet for cistern through floor slab; "B" indicates slab covering top of cistern; "C" indicates raised concrete footing that continues around the perimeter of the house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

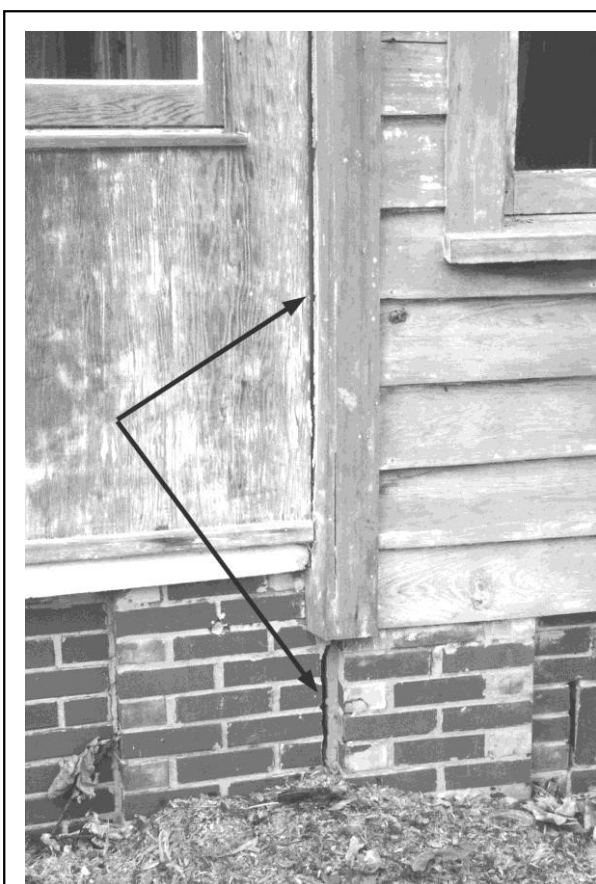


Figure 8 View of juncture of front porch foundation and pier at southwest corner of the house; arrows indicate separation probably as the result of heaving caused by a recently-removed tree next to the house at this location. (NPS-SERO-



Figure 9 View of chimney; arrow indicates gap between masonry and the wall of the house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Structure: The wood frame of the house could not be thoroughly inspected, but there is no evidence of significant structural problems. The design of the foundation with its raised concrete footing may have helped limit termite damage to the wood framing.

Windows and Doors: Windows typically have 6/1, double-hung, counter-weighted sash and are in generally good condition, although the double windows at the north end of the front of the house were removed when that end of the front porch was enclosed in the 1950s. Park staff are in the process of repairing all of the remaining double-hung windows, including replacement of all sash cord. Wood-framed screens for most of the original windows survive and are stored in the garage along with solid wooden storm shutters.

The casement windows that were used to enclose the front porch remain intact, but half of the sliding sash used to enclose the back porch



Figure 10 View of original front door. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 12 View of typical siding and trim. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

have disappeared and all have been replaced with the present fixed panes of glass. The oak front door is a typical, early-twentieth-century door with a large panel of beveled glass above a smaller, raised wooden panel. The hinges feature an unusual surface-mounted leaf and are of the same type used elsewhere in the house. The double doors added when the south end of the front porch was enclosed (in the 1960s?) each have three horizontal panels beneath a three-light sliding sash. Neither door is in good condition. The doors that were used when the back porch was enclosed have been replaced with modern store-front doors, probably when the rear deck was installed in the 1980s or 1990s.

Exterior Finishes: The exterior is finished with cypress siding and trim, almost all of which is in excellent condition. Paint has been stripped or has worn away from most of the south side of the house.

The solid decking used on the roof indicates that the roof was originally finished with metal or asphalt shingles, the latter being most likely. The existing asphalt roof covering has been temporarily repaired but is in only fair condition.

Interior Finishes: Most of the interior walls and ceilings are finished with sand-finished plaster on wood lath. The kitchen ceiling is finished with 1" by 6", V-joint, tongue-and-groove boards and the upstairs bathroom has a smooth-plaster wainscot to 50", scored to resemble 3" by 8" wall tiles typical of the early twentieth century. Except for significant water damage to the ceiling in the dining nook, most of the plaster in the house is in excellent condition.

Most of the floors are finished with oak tongue-and-groove flooring, 2-1/4" wide, although the small upstairs bedroom (204) is carpeted and could not be inspected. The front porch (100) is concrete slab on fill. The back porch floor, which is now covered with pine tongue-and-groove flooring, is a similar concrete slab that covers a large concrete cistern, which remains intact beneath the present flooring (see Figure 5).

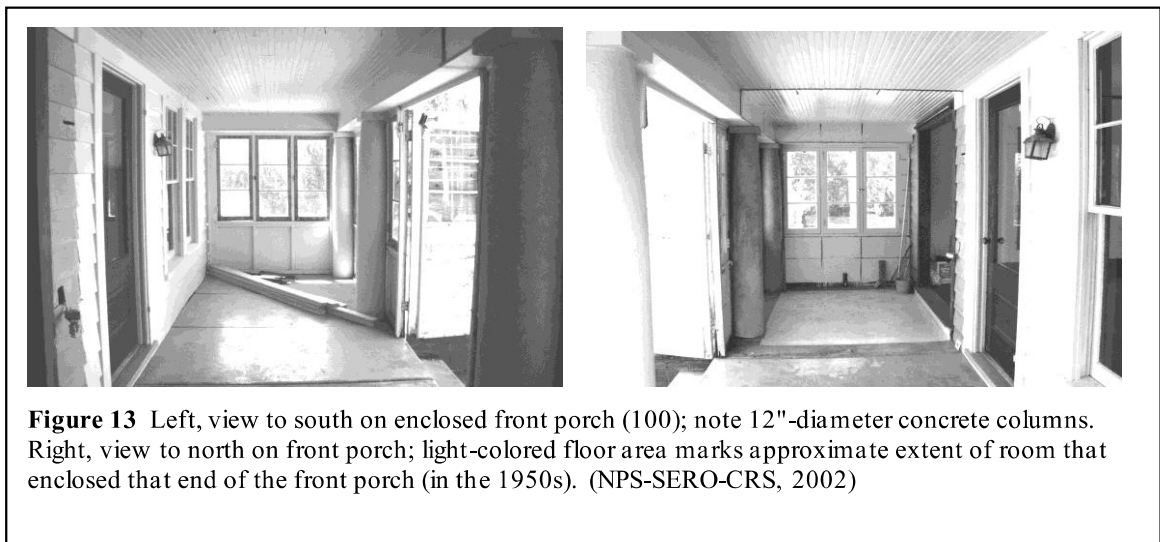


Figure 13 Left, view to south on enclosed front porch (100); note 12"-diameter concrete columns. Right, view to north on front porch; light-colored floor area marks approximate extent of room that enclosed that end of the front porch (in the 1950s). (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 14 Top, view to north of living room (101). Bottom, view to south of living room. Except for missing sconces and mantle shelf, this room is in excellent condition. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 15 View of staircase; window on landing originally held a stained-glass window. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 16 View of butler's pantry at north end of dining nook (102); cabinetry is oak, originally varnished but now painted black; remainder of woodwork in this room was probably always painted. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Most interior woodwork is oak. Door and window casings are typically 4" wide with a 3/4" back band. Baseboards are typically 7-1/2" high with a simple chamfered edge at the top and a chamfered, 1/2" x 3/4" shoe mold at the floor. Picture mold, 1-5/8" wide, is set about 3/4" below the ceilings in the living room, dining nook, and bedrooms. Woodwork in the living room, stairwell, upstairs hall, and kitchen is stained and shellacked; in the dining nook, bedrooms, and bathroom, woodwork has been painted.

Most of the house's original light fixtures are missing. The lantern at the front door may be an original fixture, and one of the original light fixture canopies remains in the dining nook. Two original sconces survive in the master bedroom (201) and

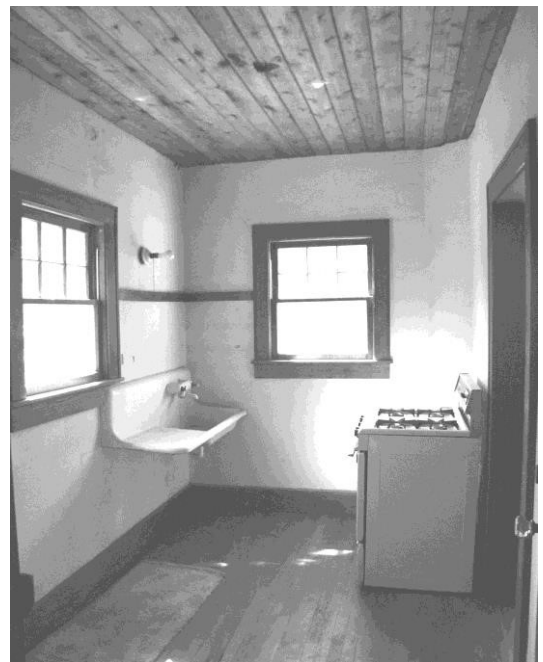


Figure 17 View south of kitchen (103). (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

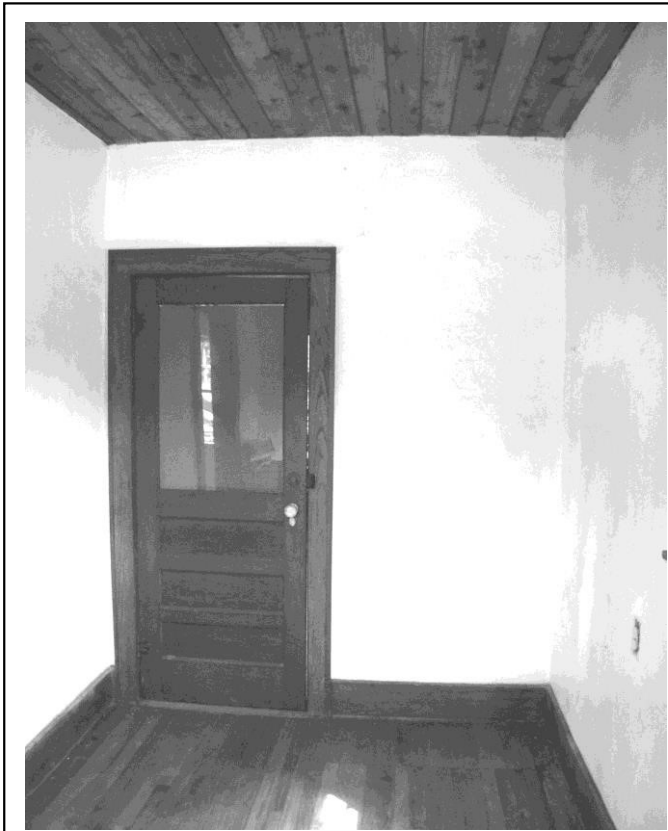


Figure 18 View of north end of kitchen. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 19 Left, view of original kitchen sink. Right, view of north end of kitchen. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

the bathroom has retained its original, un-shaded ceiling fixture.

The house was built with a single fireplace in the living room, but stoves were also apparently used for heating. There is an opening for a stove-pipe into the chimney breast, probably for an oil-fired heater. A second heater, perhaps using propane, was installed at some time against the north wall, where there is still a wall opening for a flue. An attic fan was installed at an early date in the ceiling of the hall upstairs. It remains in the attic but has been replaced by the present fan in the same location.

The kitchen and the bathroom have not been remodeled since the house was built, with the original sinks, toilet, tub, and faucets still in place. Some if not all of the water supply lines have been replaced by plastic pipe, but the original cast-iron waste lines are still in use. Waste lines and probably supply lines as well are run through a chase built in the southwest corner of the kitchen.



Figure 20 View to south of enclosed back porch; walls, ceiling, and floor are covered with modern



Figure 21 Left, view north on porch, showing one of wooden sash first used to enclose porch; all existing windows and door are modern. Right, view of pantry (105) under stairs. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 22 Left, view up stairwell; right, view down stairwell. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 23 Top, view south in master bedroom (201); bottom, view north in master bedroom (201). (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

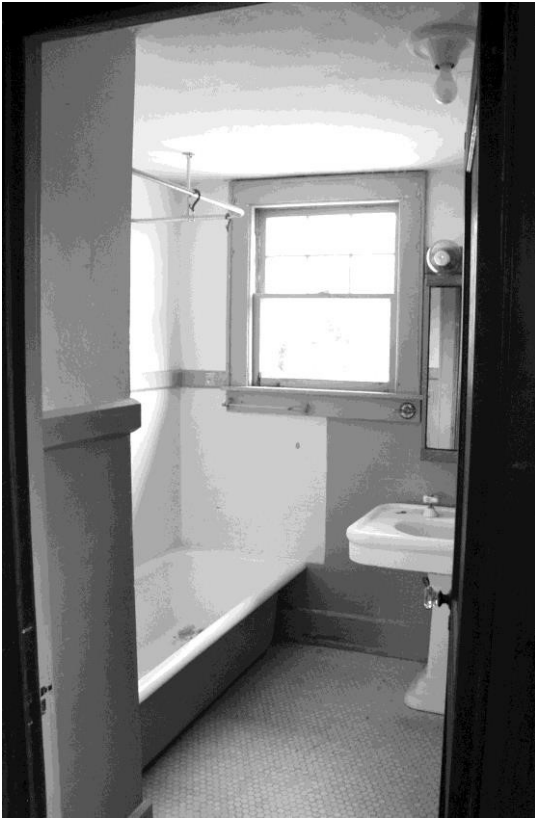


Figure 24 View to northeast in bathroom. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 25 View to southwest in bathroom. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 26 View of original sink in bathroom (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 27 View to northeast in small bedroom (204). (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 29 View to northeast of garage. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Garage

Measuring about 31'-6" north to south and about 17'-5" east to west, the garage is a wood-framed structure set on a poured concrete slab. The interior is partitioned using 1" by 6" tongue-and-groove boards, installed vertically, to create two small rooms at the rear (north end) of the structure. The room at the east end is entered from inside the garage; the room at the west end is entered from the outside of the building. Walls are finished on the exterior with lap siding laid with a reveal of about six inches. The overall condition of the building is good.

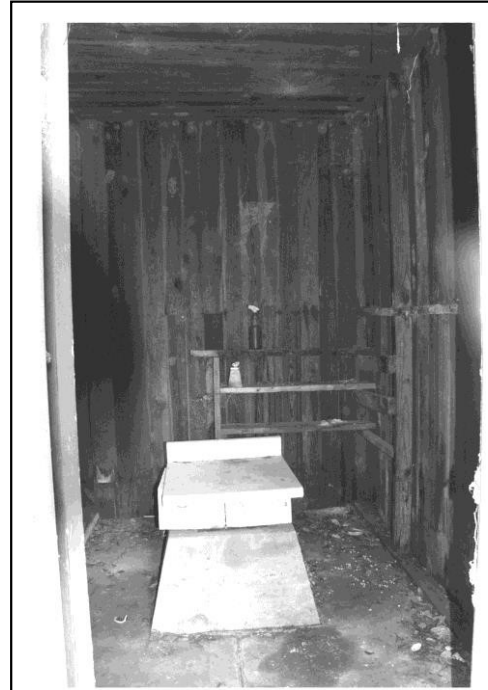


Figure 28 View of pump room at northwest corner of garage. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



Figure 30 View to north of parking bays in garage; note water storage tanks at rear and, at right, screens and storm shutters for the main house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Guest House/Studio

Located southeast of the main house and containing around 1,033 square feet of floor area, this Modernist building was built by Leeper around 1969¹, apparently as a combination guest house and artist's studio. Probably designed by an architect (who has not been unidentified), the building consists of three main blocks of different volume and height: the studio block (Room 100); the kitchen/bathroom block (Rooms 101-102); and the bedroom block (Room 103). Built on a grade-level concrete slab, the building is wood-framed and has a flat, built-up, tar-and-gravel roof. The exterior is finished with 8"-wide fiberboard siding. The roof is flat, built-up, and covered with tar and gravel. Windows are aluminum, awning type; doors are wooden.

Interior walls are finished with 1/4"-thick plywood in the studio, bathroom, and kitchen and with 1/2"-thick drywall in the bedroom. Ceilings in the studio and bathroom are finished with 1/4" plywood; ceilings in the kitchen and bedroom are finished with fiberboard laid between exposed joists. Floors are bare concrete, except in the bedroom where the floor has been carpeted wall to wall.

Baseboards are plain 1/2" by 3-1/2" boards in the studio and kitchen; "teardrop" base, 3/8" by 3", is used in the bedroom. Windows are recessed in uncased openings. Doors are cased with "teardrop" molding, 2-1/2" wide in the bedroom and 1-3/4" wide elsewhere.



Figure 31 View to southeast of Guest House/Studio from second floor of main house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

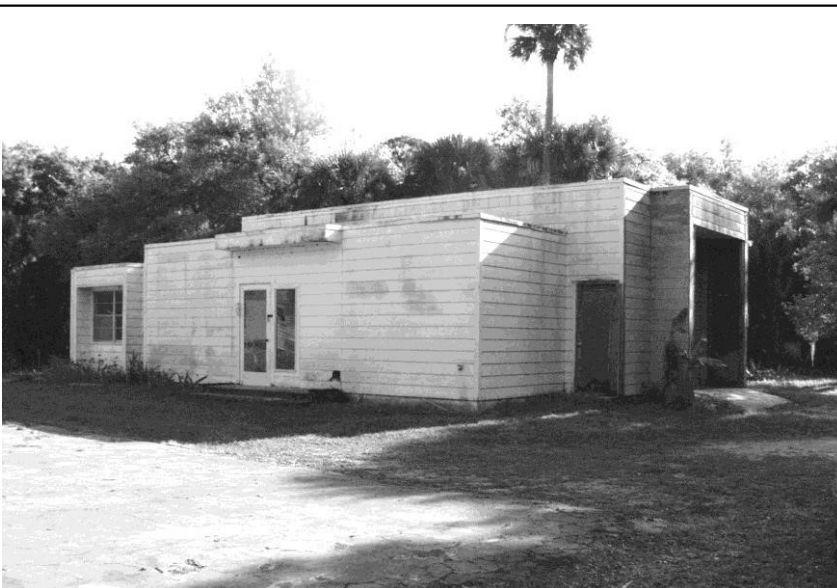


Figure 32 View to northeast of Guest House/Studio. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

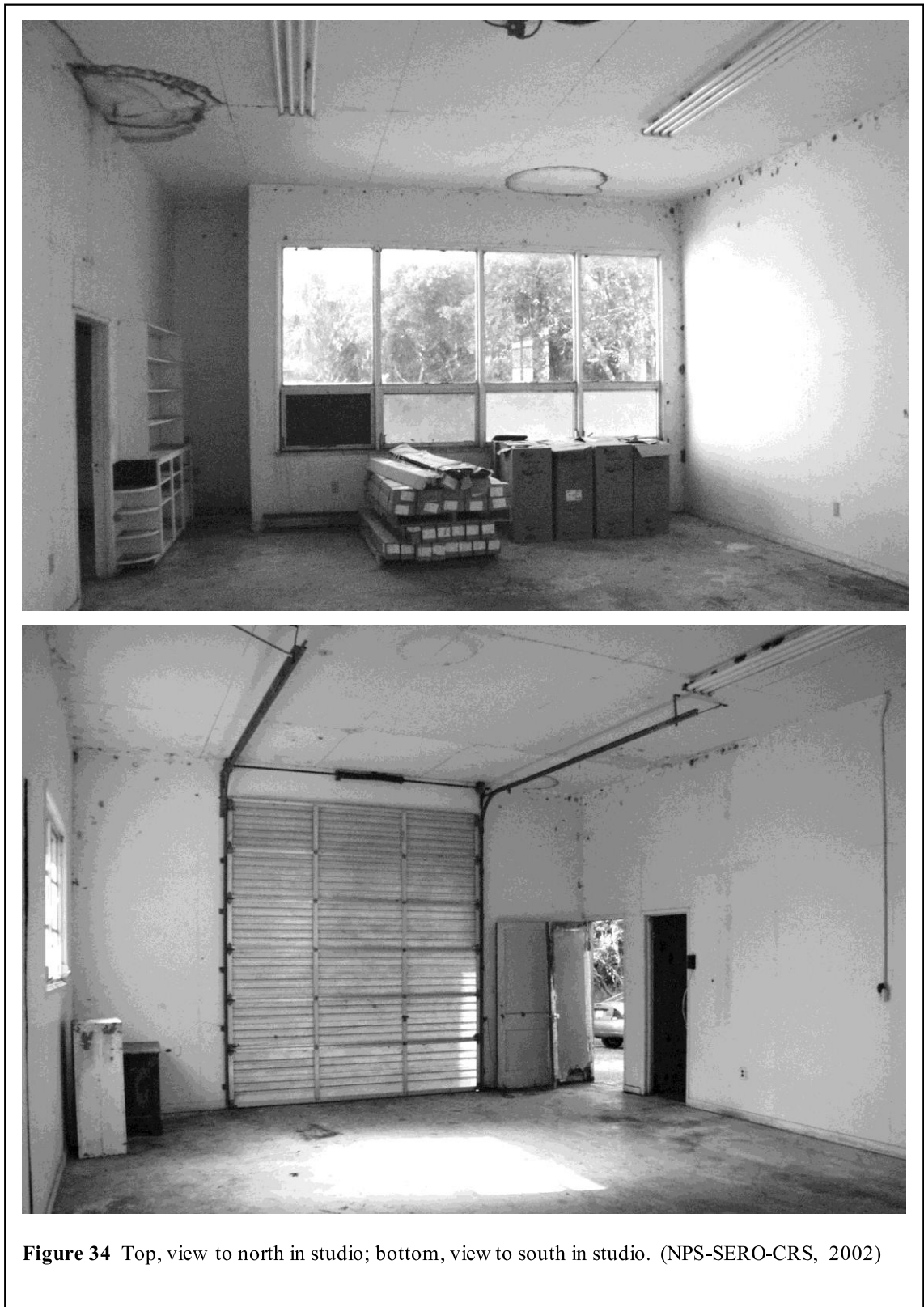
¹ What appears to be the original toilet is dated 2 March 1969.

The studio is approximately 20' by 30' and has a ceiling set at 12'. In addition to the exterior entrance near the southwest corner of the room and the door that connects to the kitchen (102), a large opening, 10'-7" wide by 9'-5" high, opens at the south end of the room to a short concrete ramp. The opening is closed by a roll-up door and includes a pair of bifold, wood-framed, screened doors. A large metal ventilator is located near the center of the ceiling and fluorescent strip lighting is used to light the room. The kitchen is approximately 10' by 29" under a 9' ceiling of open joists. Parts of the original plywood wall covering have been replaced with unpainted plywood. The exterior door, which opens on to a concrete stoop, is in poor condition.

The bedroom is approximately 11' by 13' and has an 8' ceiling. The exposed ceiling joists are 6" by 6" antique timbers salvaged from another building. The room is heated by an electric baseboard heater on the south wall.



Figure 33 View to southwest of Guest House/Studio. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)



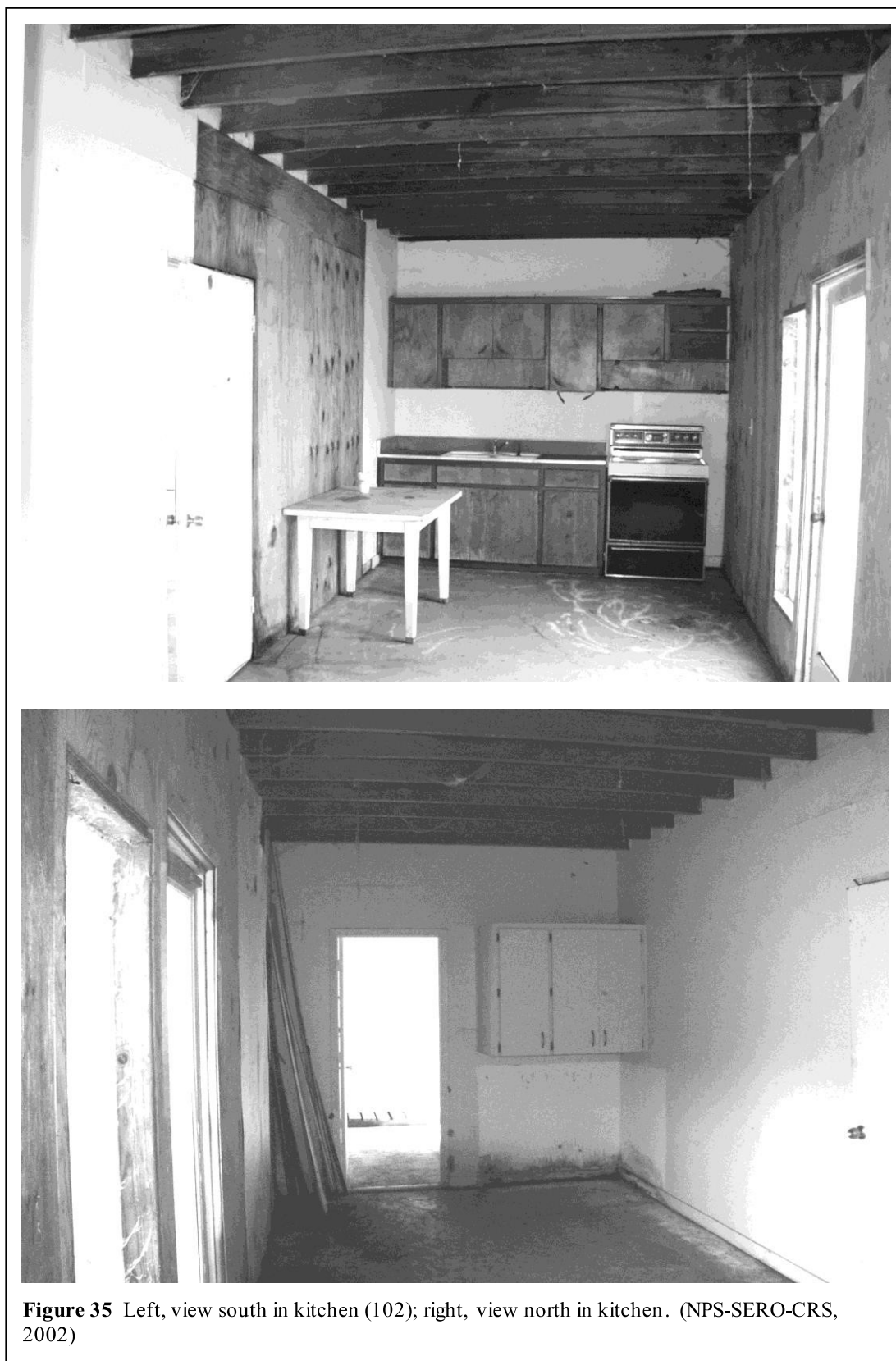


Figure 35 Left, view south in kitchen (102); right, view north in kitchen. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2002)

Recommendations

Additional historical research is needed to prepare a formal nomination of the site to the National Register and to confirm the historical and architectural significance of the combination guest house and studio that Leeper built in 1969. The historical and architectural significance of the studio building may still be argued, but the building should be preserved until its construction and use can be better documented, especially the probable role of an architect in its design. Treatment of the site should concentrate on preservation of the existing complex of buildings--the main house, the garage, and the guest house/studio. Restoration of the house by removing existing additions is not recommended except in the unlikely event that further study and development of an interpretive plan for the site suggest that Leeper's alterations to the site are not worthy of preservation.

- Complete documentation of the site, including formal listing on the National Register.
- If the site is to be interpreted for visitors, develop interpretive focus before finalizing treatment options for the site and its structures.

Main House: The only evident structural problems with the house relate to the brick foundation and concrete floor slabs at the south end of the front porch and on the north side of the back porch. At the front porch, heaving of the floor slab and foundation cracks probably relate to large vegetation that was recently removed from that end of the porch. Three or four bricks are missing from the front of the foundation at that end of the porch, allowing loss of some of the fill material. These should be replaced, but the other cracks and slight displacement of the floor slab should be left alone and simply monitored to insure there is no further movement.

On the north side of the back porch, the source of the cracking of the foundation at that location is not clear. It, too, may relate to overgrown vegetation. As with the front foundation, missing brick should be reinstated, cracked joints repointed, and the entire area simply monitored for any further movement or cracking of the masonry.

The existing roof covering is in reasonably good condition, although repairs have been necessary. When total replacement is necessary, the layers of roofing now on the house should be documented and one of the last two coverings used as a model for replacement shingles. The house was originally fitted with gutters and downspouts. Reinstatement of a gutter and downspout system would help protect the sides of the house from excessive water damage. The original underground drainage system is probably no longer operative but attention should be given to creating a new drainage system that will insure rapid runoff away from the foundation.

Providing handicapped access to the house may be necessary, depending on how the building is to be used. The modern deck at the rear of the house has been partially dismantled and should be completely removed to expose the original brick and concrete stoop and steps. A handicapped ramp could then be installed to the stoop, as indicated on the attached plan. Handicapped access to the second floor of the house is not feasible and the program of use for the house should be developed accordingly.

Park staff is in the process of repairing window. This work should also include repair/replacement of wood-framed screens at all windows and doors. Solid storm shutters now stored in the garage should also be repaired, repainted, and stored for use.

The main house was occupied until recently and the interior remains in excellent condition. Walls, ceilings, and floors are in very good condition except for the ceiling in the dining nook (103), which has suffered significant water damage and will need partial replacement. The shellac finish on the woodwork in the living room, kitchen, stair well, and hall has deteriorated somewhat but can be easily cleaned and re-coated. The shellac finish should be maintained, since shellac is a very durable finish that is also easy to repair and refinish when that is necessary.

- Replace missing brick in foundation; reinstate lost fill at front; monitor both porch slabs for continued movement and/or cracking.
- Replace roofing---document earlier roof coverings.
- Complete repair of windows and doors, including repair and reinstallation of wood-framed screens.
- Install roof-hung, half-round gutters and round downspouts, insuring good drainage away from foundation.
- Remove wooden deck from rear; construct handicapped-accessible ramp.
- Inspect existing electrical system; replace/repair wiring as necessary.
- Replace water supply lines as necessary---refinish and reinstall existing fixtures in bathroom and kitchen.
- Refinish clear-coated woodwork.
- Install and maintain "Sentricon" or equivalent termite protection system around all three structures on the site.
- Install central HVAC system if necessary for new program of use.

Studio: The most pressing concern with this building is the failing roof covering, which has allowed significant water damage on the west side of the studio block and along the east and north sides of the kitchen block. Structural damage is probably quite limited at this point; but failure to repair the existing leaks will result in the rapid loss of the entire building.

Since the building was built on a slab, termite damage may be limited or non-existent in the building's wood-framed walls. Selective removal of plywood paneling from interior walls would easily allow inspection of the sole plate and lower wall framing where damage is suspected.

The original exterior door at the southwest corner of the studio has been replaced and the replacement door is in ruinous condition. A new flush door should be installed at that location. The exterior door from the kitchen is also deteriorated but can probably be repaired without resorting to total replacement. All of the windows are intact, but there is some inoperative hardware. Most of the crank assemblies can probably be cleaned, oiled,

and returned to working order. The large screen doors at the south end of the studio should be preserved, repaired, and returned to working order.

New water supply lines may be necessary for the building, although that is not certain. Waste lines should be in good condition. The lid to the toilet tanks is broken and the water heater has rusted out, which may be the only plumbing repairs required at this time.

The building's electrical system should probably be replaced, since the existing system has been altered and may not meet modern demands. Except for electric baseboard heating in the bedroom, the building has no mechanical heating and cooling system. Once a new program of use for the building has been established, the park can then determine the necessity of a central HVAC system in the building.

Other problems of repair with the building are cosmetic. The unpainted plywood on the kitchen walls should be removed and the wall framing inspected and repaired as necessary before reinstalling and painting the plywood wall covering. Some limited replacement of ceiling material may be necessary on the west side of the studio. Most of the exterior hardboard siding is in good condition, with only limited replacement needed, mostly on the lower parts of the west wall of the kitchen block. All painted surfaces, both inside and outside the building, should be thoroughly cleaned and treated for mildew prior to repainting.

Handicapped access to the studio building would be possible in its existing configuration by utilizing the ramped entrance to the south end of the studio block. Alternatively, the studio entrance near the southwest corner of the studio block could easily be rehabilitated with a slightly wider door opening (the original door is missing) and a short ramp to provide full accessibility.

- Repair tar-and-gravel roof.
- Repair of window hardware to working order.
- Repair/replace doors as necessary.
- Create handicapped entrance at exterior door on southwest side of studio block.
- Replace damaged or missing hardboard siding on the exterior and plywood wall and ceiling covering on the interior.
- Clean and treat for mildew all interior and exterior painted surfaces prior to repainting.
- Rewire and replumb as necessary for new program of use.

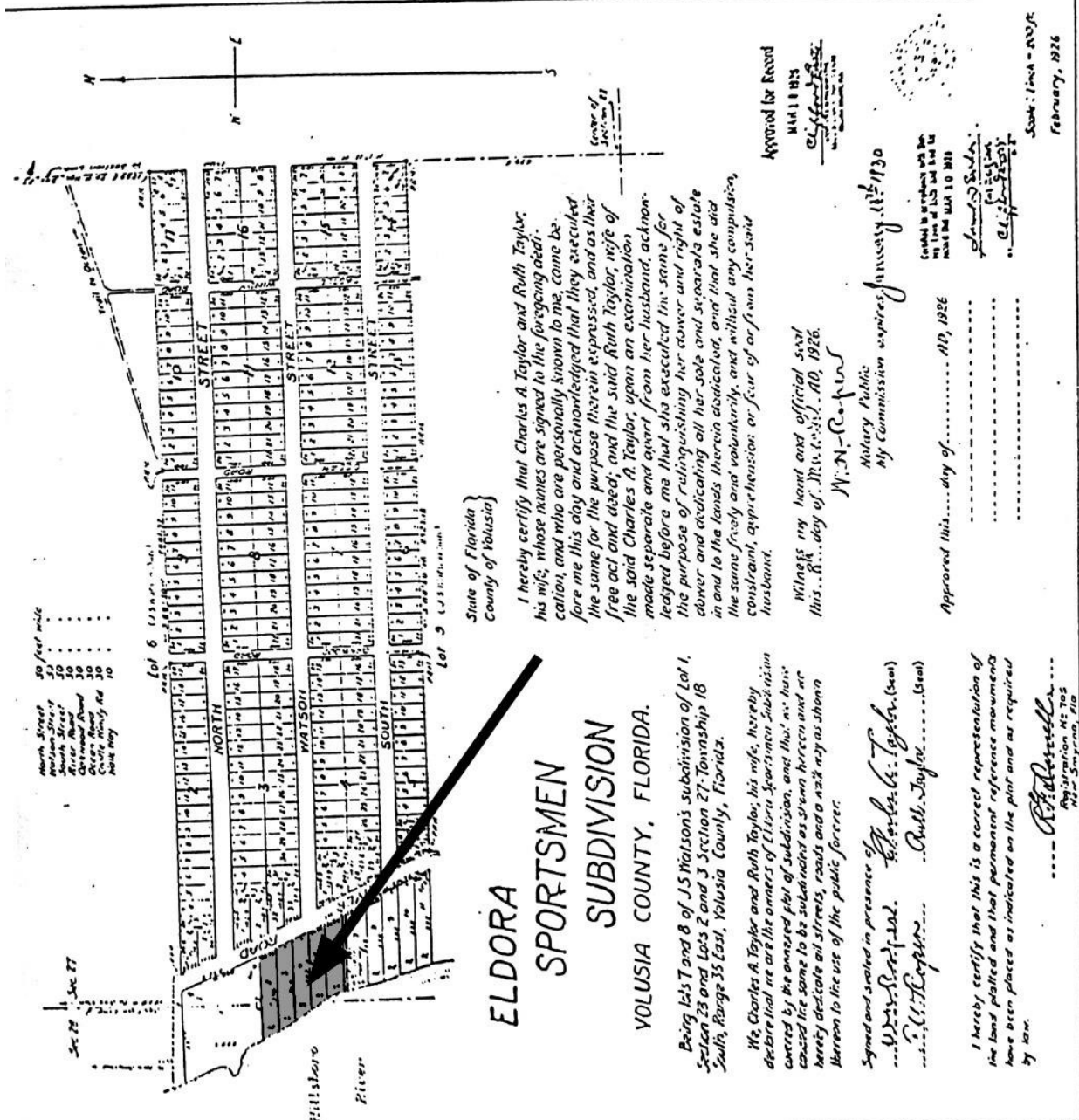
Garage: The garage is in reasonably good condition. The door to the room at the northwest corner of the building should be repaired to working order. Roofing and painting should be coordinated with repairs to the main house. Existing historic water tanks and associated equipment should be preserved *in situ*.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Plat of Eldora Sportsmen Subdivision, 1926, Volusia County Courthouse; arrow indicates location of Leeper House; shaded area indicates extent of associated property.

MAP BOOK 9, PAGE 122

Figure 17. Eldora Sportamen Subdivision



Appendix B: Biography of Doris Leeper, published at
http://www.atlanticcenterforthearts.org/gen_information/history/founder.html

DORIS LEEPER
Founder, Atlantic Center for the Arts
April 4, 1929 - April 11, 2000

Born on April 4, 1929 in Charlotte, North Carolina, Leeper graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Duke University with a degree in art history in 1951. She worked concurrently in commercial graphic arts and fine arts until 1961 when she left the commercial field to devote full time to sculpture and painting, quickly earning a reputation as an artist of significance. Leeper has had numerous one-person exhibitions and has participated in invitational group exhibitions on national and international levels. She has executed a number of large-scale commissions and her work has been purchased for almost 100 public collections including the National Museum of American Art in Washington, DC, the Columbus Museum of Art and Chase Manhattan Bank, NYC. In 1995, a 45-year retrospective exhibition of her work was held at the Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida.

Leeper is listed in over a dozen important publications including Who's Who in American Art and has received honorary doctorate degrees from Duke University and Stetson University. In 1999, Leeper was inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame, the highest and most prestigious cultural honor that can be bestowed upon an individual in the State of Florida. It is reserved for those who have demonstrated significant contributions to the arts in Florida and have received national and/or international recognition through achievements in an artistic discipline. She received the 1993 Florida Arts Recognition Award, which recognizes outstanding initiative, leadership or excellence in supporting the arts in Florida. In 1990, she received the Humanist Arts Award from the American Humanist Association for outstanding contributions to humanity through the arts. Leeper received individual artist's fellowships from the State of Florida and the National Endowment for the Arts. She also was the recipient of an Artist-in-Residence Fellowship from The Rockefeller Foundation.

A resident of New Smyrna Beach since 1958, Leeper has served as a leader in educating the general public as to the sound management of natural resources and innovative land use planning for over 40 years. Her lifelong interest in the relationship of natural and built environments has created two testimonials to her vision -- Canaveral National Seashore and Atlantic Center for the Arts.

Leeper's first home in New Smyrna Beach was in hammockland known as Eldora, in what is now Canaveral National Seashore. The purchase of this home was the beginning of a 17-year effort to preserve the pristine environment from zealous developers. In 1975, Governor Askew nominated Leeper for the Canaveral National Seashore Advisory Committee. In subsequent years, her awareness of her responsibility in protecting this area of wilderness dominated all other concerns. Leeper formed "Friends of the Canaveral National Seashore," a citizen's committee to help guide development of the fragile coastal dune area. Through Leeper's efforts, U.S. Congressman Lou Frey co-sponsored the bill that established the 24-mile stretch of barrier island as Canaveral National Seashore. Through the years her environmental endeavors continued, and in January 1997 she called for formation of "Friends of Spruce Creek," which focuses on acquiring parcels to complete the 2000 acre state-owned preserve.

In what is perhaps her most well known legacy, Leeper conceived the idea of a residency program in which artists from different disciplines could convene and collaborate in an environment that promoted both tranquility and stimulation. Thus began five years of planning and fundraising for Atlantic Center for the Arts, an internationally renowned artists' community situated on 69 acres of tidal estuary in New Smyrna Beach, which opened in 1982. Leeper devoted the majority of her time in the '80s to ACA and is considered the prime mover in its development, forming its first board and national advisory council. Almost two decades later, Atlantic Center is considered one of the premier artists' communities in the world, as well as a model for the harmonious existence integrating manmade structures and the natural environment.

Leeper was also a founding member and the catalyst behind the creation of the Alliance of Artists' Communities, a consortium of artists' colonies and residency programs across the country. The mission of the Alliance is to improve the environment in which artists' communities support artists and their creative processes. Continuing her advocacy on behalf of talented artists, in 1995, Leeper purchased a 7,500 square foot vintage warehouse in New Smyrna Beach and, with partner Ed Harris, readapted it as a commercial gallery for visual artists. "Arts on Douglas" opened in February 1996, showcasing work by 50 Florida artists.

For over forty years, through her professional career in the arts, her extraordinary commitment to the field, and her passion for environmental causes, Doris Leeper has made vital and long-lasting contributions to the enhancement of the arts and the preservation of the environment. Doris Leeper passed away on Tuesday, April 11 at the age of 71. She had been battling cancer for several years. A memorial service was held on April 15 at Atlantic Center for the Arts. In her memory, the Doris Leeper Endowment has been established. To contribute, contact CEO Paul Markunas.

In 1965, Leeper contacted other property owners in the area to discuss an inquiry from the State of Florida about the purchase of properties in Eldora for a State Park. In 1967, she was instrumental in stopping the building of a trailer park. In 1972, she represented Florida at "Parks, Art and Leisure," a regional conference sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, National Park Service and National Recreation and Park Association. In 1974, Leeper was appointed to the New Smyrna Beach Cultural Committee, charged with the responsibility for establishing a new recreational/cultural center. Leeper began to speak out publicly about the need to ban cars from the beach and was nominated for a two-county committee on the National Park Seashore. She was appointed to the State Architectural and Environmental Design Panel, one of the first panels established to make recommendations for funding to the Florida Arts Council.

In 1975, Governor Askew nominated Leeper for the Canaveral National Seashore Advisory Committee. In subsequent years, her awareness of her responsibility in protecting this area of wilderness dominated all other concerns. Leeper formed "Friends of the Canaveral National Seashore," a citizen's committee to help guide development of the fragile coastal dune area. Leeper appeared before the New Smyrna Beach City Commission to request increased patrols in the park area to save the dunes. Through Leeper's efforts, U.S. Congressman Lou Frey co-sponsored the bill that established the 24-mile stretch of barrier island as Canaveral National Seashore.

Leeper has juried regional and national visual arts competitions for organizations such as Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem and Arts Midwest, Minneapolis. Over the past 20 years, Leeper has served on several Florida Arts Council advisory panels including Architecture and Environmental Design, Individual Artist Fellowships, Visual Arts Institutions and Multidisciplinary Organizations. She has worked on special projects for the Florida Arts Council including design and implementation of Florida's Art in State Buildings Program and, in 1992, on the task force to develop a new cultural institutions program for the state.

Cultural organization boards on which Leeper has served include Atlantic Dance Company, Images: A Festival of the Arts (Leeper was co-founder) in New Smyrna Beach, Coastal Educational Broadcasters (WCEU-TV, a PBS affiliate), the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Daytona Beach, the Volusia County Cultural Arts Advisory Board and the International Advisory Board of La Napoule Foundation in France (1987-1994).

Florida's Secretary of State Jim Smith presented Leeper with the 1993 Florida Arts Recognition Award which recognizes outstanding initiative, leadership or excellence in supporting the arts in Florida. Recipients must have demonstrated a significant contribution to the advancement of the arts. She received the 1990 Humanist Arts Award from the American Humanist Association for outstanding contributions to humanity through the arts. In Los Angeles, in 1995, she accepted the Outstanding Alumnae Award from Zeta Tau Alpha Foundation, Inc. for significant contributions to the arts community both as a nationally-recognized sculptor and painter and as a humanitarian dedicated to advancing excellence in all art disciplines.

A comprehensive 104 page catalog accompanied the exhibition. Leeper will receive the honorary degree of doctor of fine arts from Duke University on May 18, 1997.

In 1977, Leeper conceived the idea that has become Atlantic Center for the Arts (ACA). ACA's unique program presents from five to six Master Artists in Residence sessions each year during which three nationally/internationally prominent artists from all disciplines are in residence concurrently to work with specially selected midcareer, Associate, artists for three weeks. Emphasis is on interaction and collaboration between the disciplines, a cross-fertilization of creativity. ACA, situated on 67 secluded acres on Turnbull Bay, maintains 17 buildings including an in-town facility, Harris House of ACA, which presents gallery exhibits by Florida artists and programming for the local community. Leeper devoted the majority of her time in the '80s to ACA and is considered the prime mover in its development. She formed its first board (served as chair) and advisory council. An endowment established in 1986 to benefit ACA is named for Leeper. She received ACA's annual Spirit Enrichment Award in 1990. Six discipline-specific artists' studios completed in 1996 have been named the Leeper Studio Complex and were dedicated during ACA's 20th anniversary celebration in February 1997.

An active environmentalist, Leeper was nominated in 1975 by Florida's Governor Askew and subsequently appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to serve on the six-member Canaveral National Seashore Advisory Commission. Renominated by Governor Graham, she was one of two persons to serve on the Commission for its entire ten-year existence. She was the field representative to the National Parks and Conservation Association for Canaveral National Seashore and she served on the board of the Florida Conservation Foundation.

DORIS LEEPER: SELECTED DATA

ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

1968 Doris Leeper: Paintings, Constructions, Drawings Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC
 1969 & 1972 Doris Leeper Bertha Schaefer Gallery, New York, NY
 1975 - 1976 Doris Leeper: Painting Sculpture and Prints Five State Tour *
 1977 Doris Leeper: Sculpture Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC
 1979 - 1980 Doris Leeper's Art for Public Places Six City Tour **
 1984 Paintings & Sculpture by Doris Leeper Foster Harmon Galleries of American Art, Sarasota, FL
 1995 Doris Leeper: A Retrospective Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL
 1996 - 1997 Doris Leeper: Past and Present Perfect Pensacola Museum of Art, Pensacola, FL

INVITATIONAL GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1968 Florida 17 Pan American Union, Washington, DC
 1968 Painting: Out from the Wall Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA
 1969 Recent Trends In American Art Greensburg Museum, Greensburg, PA
 1970 Contemporary Women Artists Skidmore and National Arts Club, New York, NY
 1976 35 Artists in the Southeast High Museum, Atlanta, GA
 1979 Hassam Fund Purchase Exhibition American Academy & Institute of Arts & Letters, New York, NY
 1982 50 National Women in Art Edison Community College, Fort Myers, FL
 1991- 1992 2nd International Ephemeral Sculptures Exhibition Fortaleza, Brazil

COMMISSIONS

Commerce Union Bank, Nashville, TN
 Forum 303, Arlington, TX
 Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, TN
 International Business Machines, Atlanta, GA
 Jacksonville Art Museum, Jacksonville, FL
 Omni International, Atlanta, GA
 Orlando International Airport, Orlando, FL
 State of Florida, Tallahassee and Jacksonville

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH
 Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, FL
 Greenville County Museum of Art, Greenville, SC
 Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC
 Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS
 National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC
 Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL
 Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, CT

ACADEMIC COLLECTIONS

Duke University, Durham, NC
 Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL
 Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL
 Ohio University, Oxford, OH
 Stetson University, DeLand, FL
 Tougaloo University, Tougaloo, MS
 University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
 University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

Bank of New York, New York, NY
 180 Beacon Collection, Boston, MA
 Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, NY
 Enron, Houston, TX
 Equitable Life Assurance Society, New York, NY
 North Carolina National Bank, Charlotte, NC
 RJR/Nabisco, Atlanta, GA
 Tupperware International, Kissimmee, FL

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1969 Edith Neely, "The World of Doris Leeper," Jacksonville Fine Arts Illus., Florida
 1975 J.L. Collins, Women Artists in America II, Tennessee
 1975 Doris Leeper: Painting, Sculpture, Prints, 28-page catalog, Tennessee
 1979 Francis Martin, Jr., "Doris Leeper," Art Voices South, Florida, 1979.
 1986 Virginia Watson-Jones, Contemporary American Women Sculptors, Arizona
 1990 Charlotte S. Rubinstein, American Women Sculptors, Massachusetts
 1995 Robert S. Lemon, Jr., Doris Leeper: A Retrospective, 104-page catalog, Florida

BIOGRAPHICAL LISTINGS

1973 Who's Who in American Art, edited by Jacques Cattell Press, New York, NY
 1976 World's Who's Who of Women, Ernest Kay, Birkenhead, England
 1977 - 1978 Who's Who of American Women, Marquis Who's Who, Inc., Chicago, IL
 1981 - 1982 American Artists of Renown, Anne Avery, Gilmer, TX
 1984 American Women Artists, Eleanor Tufts, Garland Publishing, New York & London
 1986 - 1987 Who's Who in the South & Southwest, Marquis Who's Who, Inc., Chicago, IL
 1995 Who's Who in the World, Marquis Who's Who, Inc., Chicago, IL
 1996 Who's Who in America, Marquis Who's Who, Chicago, IL

HONORS

1973 Individual Artists Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts
 1975 Phi Beta Kappa (to rectify oversight in 1991), Duke University
 1977 Artists Fellowship, State of Florida and Artist in Residence Fellowship, The Rockefeller Foundation
 1990 American Humanist Association, "Humanist Arts Award"
 1993 State of Florida Arts Recognition Award for "outstanding initiative, leadership or excellence in supporting the arts"
 1994 Zeta Tau Alpha Foundation, National Outstanding Alumnae Award, Presented in Los Angeles
 1995 Atlantic Center for the Arts' six new buildings named "Leeper Studio Complex." Dedicated 1997
 1997 Honorary Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, Duke University

JUROR

1974 Biennial Exhibition, National League of American Penwomen, Miami, FL

1976 NEA/SECCA Grants Selection Panel, Winston-Salem, NC

1979 20th Annual Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival, Winter Park, FL

'70s - '80s Diverse plans for Florida Arts Council, Tallahassee, FL

1980 Competition '80, Allied Arts Council, Mobile, AL

1988 Florida Arts Celebration Regional Merit Awards, Gainesville, FL

1991 Arts Midwest/NEA Regional Visual Arts Fellowship Selection Panel, Minneapolis, MN

1992 Orlando Art in Public Places Florida Artists Collection, Orlando, FL

* High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA. Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, TN.

Jacksonville Art Museum, FL. Greenville County Museum of Art, SC. Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC. Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL.

** Loch Haven Arts Center (now Orlando Museum of Art), FL. Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, TN. Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS. Museum of the Palm Beaches (now Norton Gallery and School of Art), West Palm Beach, FL. Lemoyne Art Foundation, Tallahassee, FL. Daytona Beach Community College, FL