

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

SHACK MOUNTAIN

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: SHACK MOUNTAIN

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street/#: 2 miles NNW of Charlottesville; Not for publication:
3 miles E of Ivy Creek; Vicinity:
4 miles N of State Route 657;
1 mile NNW of intersection of State Routes 657 and 743

City/Town: Charlottesville

State: VA County: Albemarle Code: 51 Zip Code: 22901

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property Private: X
Public-local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:
Category of Property Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing 1
Noncontributing buildings
1 sites
2 structures
objects
3 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of related multiple property listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register _____
- Determined eligible for the _____
National Register
- Determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
- Removed from the National Register _____
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic

Sub: Single dwelling

Current: Domestic

Sub: Single dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification:
Classical Revival
(Jeffersonian Classicism)

Materials:	
Foundation:	Brick
Walls:	Brick
Roof:	Copper, standing seam
Other:	

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Located four miles northwest of the University of Virginia with panoramic views of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west and north and the Southwest Mountains to the east, Shack Mountain, named for the Shackelford family who owned the land, was to be the retirement retreat of Fiske and Marie Kimball. Begun in 1935, the house is Kimball's own design in Jeffersonian Classicism scaled to accommodate the couple.

The following description is quoted verbatim from the National Register nomination written by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff.

The small house Fiske Kimball designed and built to be his retirement home at Shack Mountain is a pure example of Jeffersonian Classicism, so carefully detailed that it might easily be mistaken as a work by Jefferson himself. Inspired primarily by Jefferson's design for Farmington, the house is a one-story, T-shaped dwelling with the front section in the form of an elongated octagon. Dominating the composition is a pedimented Tuscan portico with paired stuccoed columns. The portico's entablature is carried around the octagonal section, but only a cornice caps the rear wing. The walls are brick laid in Flemish bond, and the front section is covered by a shallow hipped roof sheathed in standing-seam sheet metal. The windows in the front section have triple-hung sash framed with dark green shutters, features characteristic of Jeffersonian work. The windows in the rear wing are double-hung. A kitchen entrance on the south side of rear wing has a Chinese lattice railing.

The main entrance to the house, located under the portico, is a paneled door topped by a traceried transom and framed by louvred blinds. The door opens into an unexpected quarter-round alcove through which one enters directly into the parlor which occupies the northern end of the octagon. A corresponding quarter-round alcove, leading into the rear-wing center passage, is in the southeast corner of the parlor. The parlor thus had convex-curved corners on its south wall, curves that frame the doorway into the dining room occupying the southern end of the octagon. Both the parlor and the dining room have full Tuscan entablatures corresponding in size with the exterior entablature. These entablatures provide the rooms with a very monumental aspect in spite of their relatively small size. The only fireplace in the house is on the east wall of the parlor. Its mantel is based on Jefferson designs at the University of Virginia. The rear wing contains the kitchen, two bedrooms, and a small study, none of which has any outstanding architectural decoration. Service areas are located in the basement beneath the rear wing.

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Kimball took special pains with the siting of the house. He located it at the end of a long, narrow ridge, and had the approach road follow up the ridge through the woods from the south. The house was positioned so that the facade faces west towards a wooded downslope. A circular drive was placed on the incline in front. Contrasting with the forest on the south side of the house is a broad open field on the north. Slots are cut through the trees framing the field in order to open up views of the countryside and distant mountains. While the field is fairly level, the land to the east of the house drops off sharply so that panoramic views are obtained of the nearer fields and wooded hills, as well as sections of the Rivanna River. Much of the rear slope has been terraced by the present owners; the terraces are planted with flowers, fruits, and vegetables. A platform for the house itself is provided by the paved terraces at either end of the octagon. Immediately in the front of the house is a level grassy area fronted by a low retaining wall broken in the center by brick steps. Except for addition of the terraced gardens, a small swimming pool, and a garden house, which are non-contributing Shack Mountain and its adjacent lands have changed little since Kimball's death.¹

¹ Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission. National Register nomination. September 1976.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B X C X D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A B C D E F G X

NHL Criteria: 2, 4

NHL Criteria Exceptions: 8

NHL Theme(s): XVI. Architecture
 M. Period Revivals
 5. Neo Classical

 XXVII. Education
 G. Adjunct Educational Institution
 1. Museums

 XXXIII. Historic Preservation
 F. Monticello

 XXIV. Painting & Sculpture
 K. Supporting Institutions

Areas of Significance: Architecture Art

Period(s) of Significance: 1935 - 1955

Significant Dates: 1935

Significant Person(s): Fiske Kimball

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Fiske Kimball

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Fiske Kimball (1881-1955) was one of the greatest and most complex figures in the history of art in the United States. Towering over many of his fellow scholars, he was directly responsible for restoring Thomas Jefferson's reputation as an architect in his brilliant book, *Thomas Jefferson, Architect* (1916). Kimball's jewel-like home at Shack Mountain, outside of Charlottesville, is the one surviving building which best expresses his ideas and taste.

The house he wished to call Tusculum but is better known today as Shack Mountain, was conceived in the same way Jefferson designed Monticello, by choosing a commanding site on a mountain near Charlottesville with wonderful views of Albemarle County. As his own client he built a house in complete harmony with its site.

In his choice of a purely Jeffersonian format for Shack Mountain, Kimball wanted not only to indulge his fascination with the style but to demonstrate that regional architectural traditions could remain viable. Although he was sympathetic with modern artistic expression, he was convinced that a local idiom should be maintained for the sake of an area's identity. Shack Mountain is, therefore, an amalgam of features he admired in Jefferson's oeuvre, interpreted in an amazingly convincing manner. The most obvious source for the plan and elevation is Farmington, an elongated octagon fronted by a Tuscan portico. The shape of the parlor, with its curved corners, is a somewhat free adaptation of the classroom of Pavilion IX at the University of Virginia. The order within and without is based on the Tuscan that Jefferson employed for the colonnades at the University. All of the detailing, the mantel, the moldings, windows, etc., can be traced to Jefferson sources as well.²

The house is at once a clear, strong statement of the Classic style with exquisite detailing applied with such skill that it takes a few moments to realize the house is a miniature, a distillation of the Farmington plan (Plate 142 in *Thomas Jefferson, Architect*). The interior of the house is full of light admitted by triple hung windows. The furniture was designed for the house and scaled down so that the subtlety of the scale and refinement of details contributed to the gracious interior. Although the Kimballs intended to retire to Shack Mountain, while they were living they were only able to visit in the late Spring and at Christmas when they entertained old friends and faculty from his University of Virginia days. Kimball was the founder and the first Dean of the School of Architecture at the University in 1919. While there he designed the Memorial Gymnasium, a faculty housing facility, and the McIntire Amphitheater. For two years (1923-1925) he headed the School of Fine Arts at New York University and then became the

² Ibid.

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Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1925. He was appointed to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission as architectural advisor for the restoration in 1935 and it was at this time that Kimball determined to build a "very severe little house" to occupy during his visits to Charlottesville. He also eventually determined to retire there in the Virginia mountains. The 110 acres were sold for \$4,000. The small brick temple cost \$20,000. From his own design, all the rooms were on one floor due to Mrs. Kimball's heart condition and there are two servants rooms on grade at the rear of the house where the grounds slopes away. The glory of the house is the elongated octagon drawing room with high ceilings and large curved doors. The enormous sash windows admit light on the dullest days creating a serene interior that changes with the change of seasons. Sadly, this lovely house did not receive the Kimballs as they died within five months of each other in 1955. Shack Mountain was willed to the Philadelphia Museum whose trustees sold it the same year to Henderson Heyward, a Charlottesville architect, who re-sold it the next year to Mr. and Mrs. W. Bedford Moore, the current owners.

An additional comment is in order on Fiske Kimball and his place in the history of American architecture and historic preservation. It is particularly appropriate to note that he was a member of the Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Board on Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, from January 30, 1936 to June 30, 1951. Among his honors are the following:

Kimball participated in the activities of many learned societies and served each well when called upon. He was on the editorial *Bulletin*, the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, and the *New England Quarterly*. For five successive years he was in charge of the American Section of the *Allegemeines Kunster Lexicon*. For periods he served as Chairman of the Virginia Art Commission and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission, and on the advisory Boards for Rockefeller Center, Colonial Williamsburg, the National Park Service, and the Jefferson-Bi-Centennial Commission. He was a fellow of the American Institute of Architects, an honorary corresponding member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and a member of the American Philosophical Society (elected in 1943; Curator, 1952-1955).

In the midst of making a museum out of a mole hill, his busy pen found time to turn out several books and a host of effective articles on the various topics that came within the large scope of his interest. Of the books, Kimball's *Creation of the Rococo* will long stand as the authoritative work on the subject.

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In 1951 Fiske Kimball was presented with the Philadelphia Award. The city to which he contributed so much honored itself in giving him this accolade. Few have been chosen who deserved it more.³

There is a distinguished list of ten books, over two hundred articles in professional journals, reviews, chapters, introductions and letters too numerous to cite. He wrote with great style, insight and elegance. Most important of all these achievements is the fact that while he lived he was the Dean of American museum directors. His masterwork is the Philadelphia Museum of Art on which he labored for thirty years. He became director in 1925 when the building was an empty shell and the city collections were meagre and uninspiring (the Pennsylvania Museum was a remnant of the 1876 Centennial housed in Memorial Hall (NHL, 1976, in West Fairmount Park.) Kimball's skill as an architect served him well in creating an organized and coherent set of galleries, which came to be known as Period Rooms, laid out in more or less chronological order which was ideal for teaching art history. This form became common practice in museums here and abroad. While pursuing potential donors, directing building construction and numerous other activities, he restored and furnished the wonderful group of historic houses in Fairmount Park; Mount Pleasant, Cedar Grove, and Sweetbrier. His expertise was sought outside of Philadelphia at Monticello, Stratford Hall, Gunston Hall and Colonial Williamsburg, and he was art advisor to President Truman. With all of these obligations he still made time for his museum staff, especially the younger members. With the many difficulties he encountered, from critics, his board of directors, politicians and rivals he was free of one problem that afflicts museum directors: no intramural intrigues were directed at Fiske Kimball, for he had the loyalty of his staff to an extent that was incomprehensible to any who had not worked with him. He was not an easy going man; he could be gruff, and short tempered, but always loyal and strong. Over the years he acquired great collection after great collection for the museum, he suffered his share of losses, most notably the Joseph Widener collection to the Mellons and the then new National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (1939-1941). In an ironic twist of fate, David Finley, the first director of the National Gallery who had convinced Widener his pictures should be in the "nation's gallery" was the uncle of the present owners of Shack Mountain. The two directors, although competitors, were respectful, friendly rivals. In addition to his crowning achievement of the creation of the Philadelphia Museum, Kimball's greatest contribution was to establish the study and preservation of American art and architecture as a professional discipline of the first order.

³ American Philosophical Society Yearbook, 1955. Philadelphia. p. 469.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # _____
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify):
 - Harvard University
 - University of Virginia
 - Philadelphia Museum of Art

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 100.9 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Northing	Easting	Zone	Northing	Easting
	A 17	719210	4219450	B 17	719240	4218280
	C 17	718630	4218270	D 17	718600	4219450

Verbal Boundary Description:

The acres comprising the Shack Mountain property are bounded by a line beginning on the north side of State Route 657, 2,200 feet due W of Ivy Creek; thence extending 900 feet northeastward paralleling the approach road; thence extending 300 feet east; thence extending approximately 1,500 feet northeast and then north, basically following the 580-foot contour line; thence extending 200 feet northwest; thence descending the hill 1,000 feet north then 700 feet northwest (the latter following the pipeline); thence extending approximately 5,000 feet southwest along the 400-foot contour, basically paralleling the east bank of Ivy Creek then curving south then southeast along west side of treeline to north side of Route 657, across the approach road and to point of origin. The boundaries delineate the 100.9 acre tract on which Shack Mountain is set and encompasses a sloping wooded property that rightly complements the landmark.

Boundary Justification:

The property described above is the acreage acquired by Fiske and Marie Kimball in 1935 for \$4,000.

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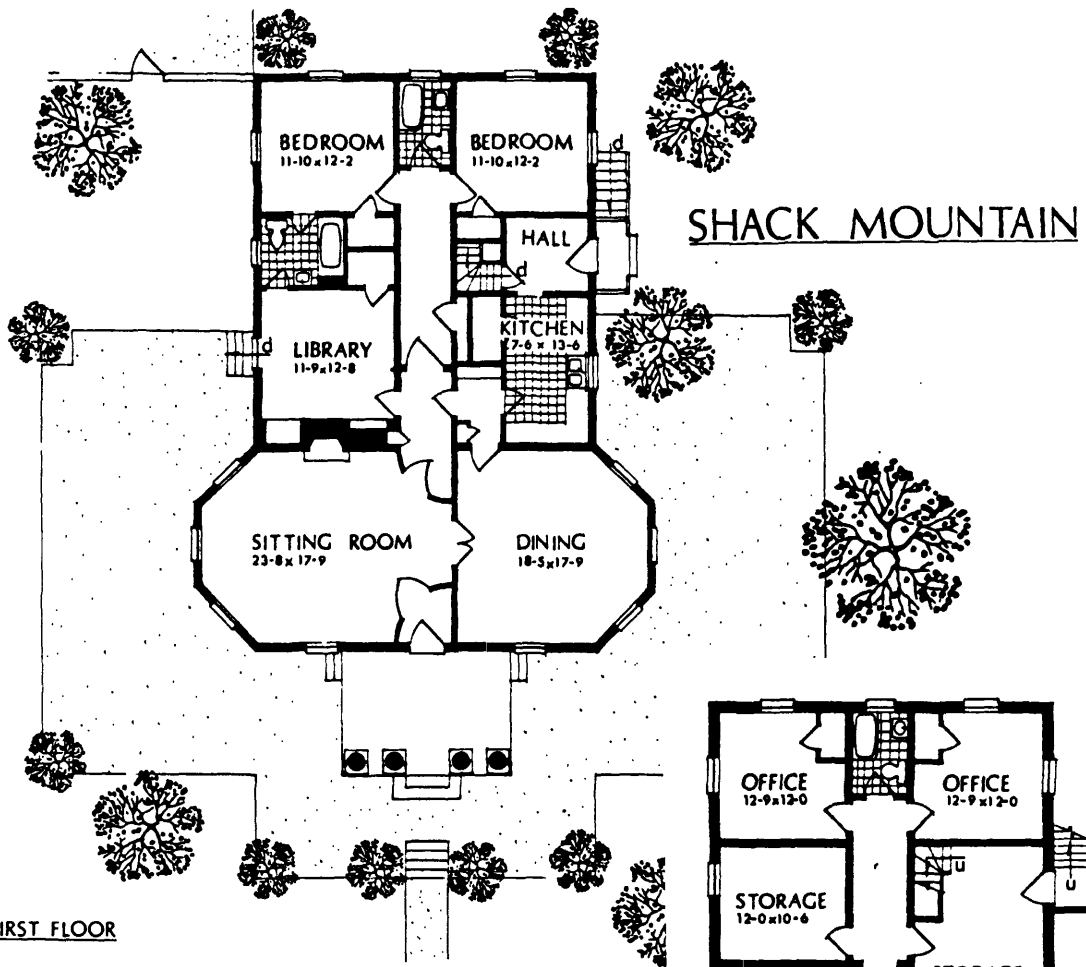
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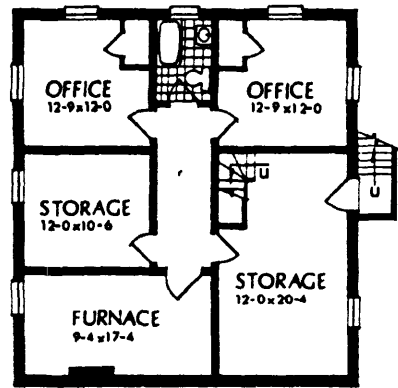
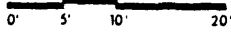
11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Carolyn Pitts
Org.: History Division, National Park Service
Date: April 24, 1992
Street/#: 1100 L Street, NW
City/Town: Washington
State: DC
ZIP: 20006
Telephone: (202) 343-8166

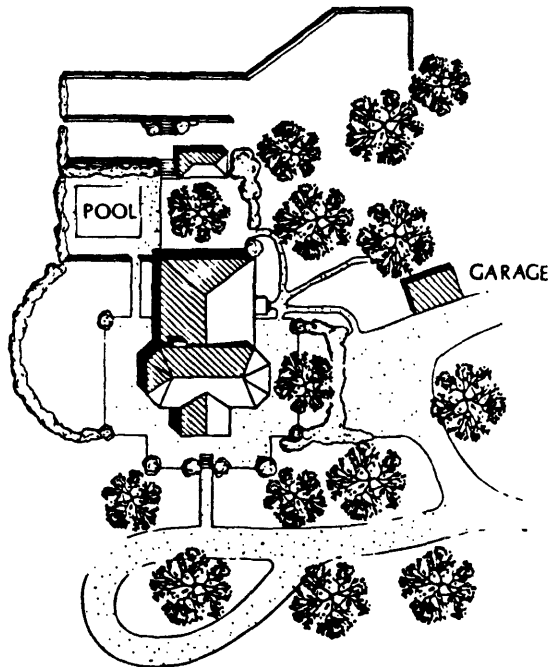


FIRST FLOOR

FLOOR PLANS

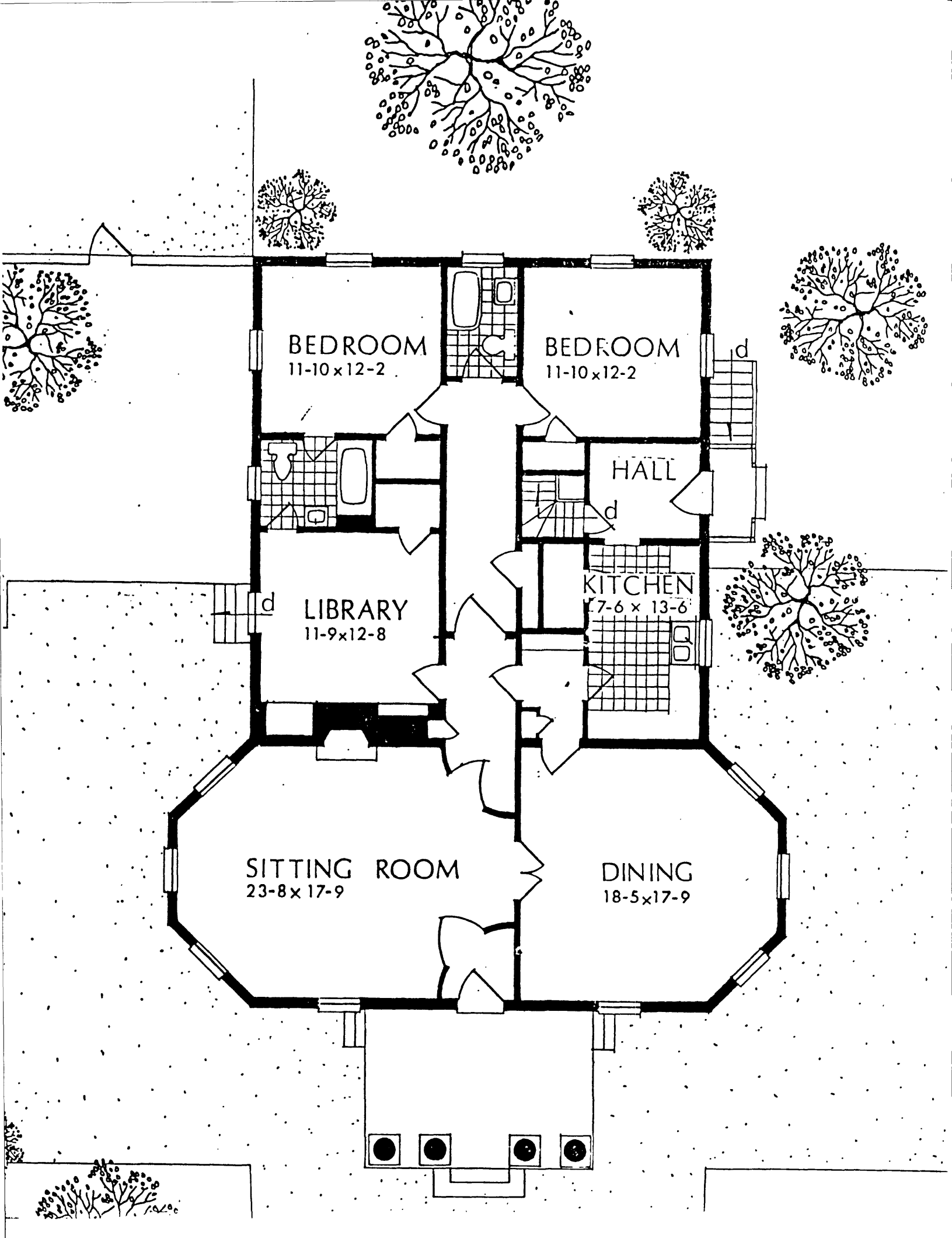


BASEMENT



SITE PLAN





BEDROOM
11-10 x 12-2

BEDROOM
11-10 x 12-2

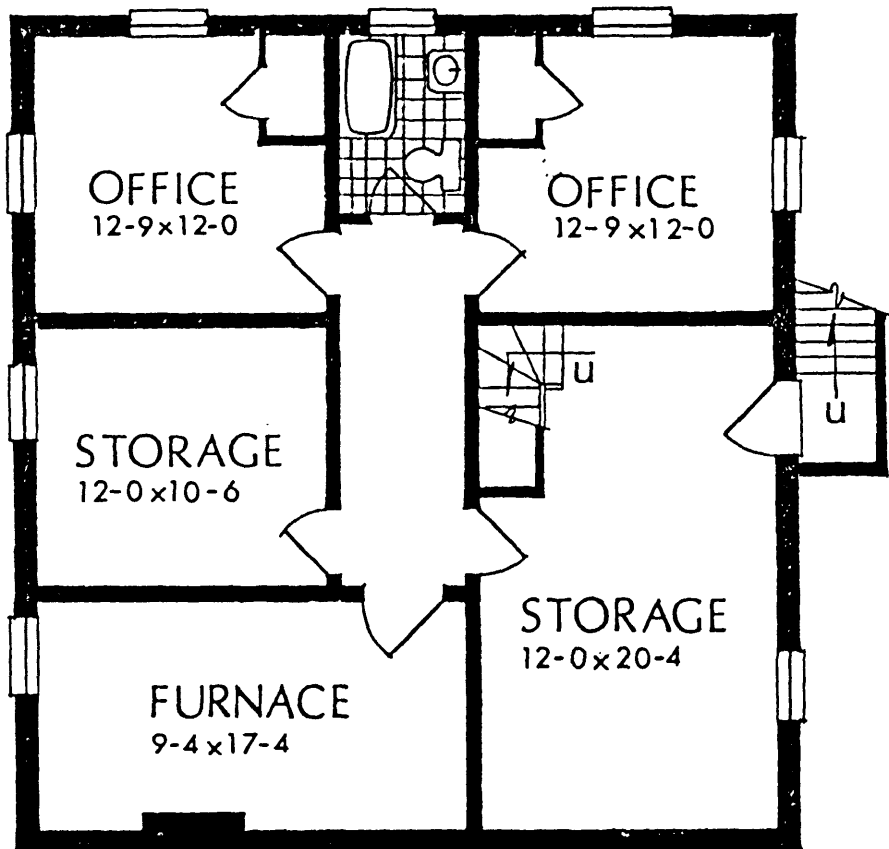
LIBRARY
11-9 x 12-8

KITCHEN
7-6 x 13-6

SITTING ROOM
23-8 x 17-9

DINING
18-5 x 17-9

HALL



BASEMENT