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by

Sarah Abigail Benson

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**The Naumann House at the Browning Ranch:  
Historic Structure Report and Proposal for Rehabilitation**

by

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Professional Report

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Historic Structure Report  
and  
Proposal for Rehabilitation**

APPROVED BY

SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2004

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This report poses the question: what is the best treatment for the 1915 Naumann House, a small vernacular house located on a ranch a few miles east of Johnson City, Texas? The Naumann House is a small limestone masonry structure with a major wood-frame addition dating from the 1960s. A solution to this question is made difficult by the fact that the house has been significantly altered several times since 1915, so that the historic character of the house has been compromised and obscured.

The solution is thus sought not only through an investigation of the historic fabric of the house, but of the historic and regional context of the house, as well as an assessment of the house's current condition. Based on these investigations, this report proposes an adaptive reuse for the house, removing the addition and installing a teaching kitchen.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

This report addresses the fate of the Naumann House, a small masonry farmhouse located a few miles east of Johnson City, Texas, on the C.L. Browning Ranch. The house was first constructed in 1915 and was significantly remodeled in later decades. This report asks the question: what is the best treatment for this historic property? Answering this question requires an examination of the historic and regional context, the contemporary context, and the physical reality of the house itself. Investigation reveals that adaptive reuse is not only the best treatment for this house, but is critical to the house's survival. The current mission of the ranch is educational. Specifically, the ranch is being operated as a laboratory for ecological restoration. Rehabilitating the Naumann House in a way that complements this program is critical to the success of this project.



Figure 1.1 The Naumann House

The house is problematic as a historical artifact. It has been significantly altered over time, so that it looks quite different from the year it was built. Much of the original house was destroyed in a 1923 fire, and the house was significantly enlarged during a renovation in the 1960s. The interior we see today may resemble the original plan (it's impossible to be completely certain), but is quite different when it comes to finishes and installations such as the kitchen. Even the proportions of rooms have changed slightly, as the walls have been furred-in from the original interior wall surface. The addition adds awkward bulk to the house and completely conceals the original rear section. The exterior wood siding contrasts sharply with the original limestone masonry walls. The size and character of the footprint has also changed from a simple and traditional rectangle to an ill-considered polygon.

At the same time, the house possesses a compelling amount of historic character. This character can be seen in some of the surfaces, forms, and spatial arrangements of the house. Although some aspects of the historic character (the original footprint, original points of access) are concealed beneath later additions, there are numerous clues. Identifying the historic character is, in part, the purpose of this report.

The house is an awkward assembly of very different time periods and domestic arrangements. It might easily be written off as a hopeless case. Yet it is an attractive problem in part *because* of its compromised state. Prying apart the layers of history that comprise this building in an attempt to restore the house to its presumed original state is not the task of this report, nor is it a reasonable possibility. Rather, it is to arrive at an understanding of the best way to preserve the historic character of the house in all its complexity through investigation and analysis of the house's history, its place, and its historic fabric.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Description of the Naumann House**

#### Description of the House

The house is situated in a fenced lot at the bottom of a tree-covered slope, looking out towards Route 2766 and the Pedernales River. The grassy lot is enclosed by a variety of fence types from different periods, the most recent being a low chain link fence at the front (north) and part of the west sides. Although there are other buildings and structures in the vicinity, there is plenty of space surrounding the house.

To the east of the lot is a peach orchard; to the west is a former garden; to the south is the hillside, and to the north is the driveway leading down a gentle slope to the ranch entrance. The main ranch house (built in 1942), as well as a garage and office, is located on the far side of the orchard. It is not quite visible from the Naumann House. A few hundred yards to the west, there is a barn, a sheep-dipping structure, a shop, and several other old wooden structures. Some of these are currently used for storage or work. Up the hill to the southwest is a large chicken coop, which is currently unoccupied.

The lot is terraced a few feet above the driveway, with a short set of steps leading to it. Numerous oak and other trees and shrubs in the immediate area provide plenty of shade around the house. Most notably, there is a large live oak tree in the backyard, as well as a large pecan. A large fig tree has thrived along

much of the west edge of this yard, and mustang grapevines grow along the fence between the lot and the orchard, as well as along the front fence. On the east side of the house there is a small patio surrounded by grass. From this slab, a narrow concrete path leads about fifteen feet to the northwest, towards the front of the house, but stops in the middle of the grass.

The Naumann House itself is a one-story, simple-plan front-gabled limestone masonry house with a late-twentieth-century addition at the rear and east side. The original part of the house is a squat rectangle in plan, and probably originally rose one-and-a-half stories. The gabled front porch gives the house the appearance of a bungalow, although in other respects the house is not a proper bungalow but a simple vernacular structure. The addition nearly doubles the footprint of the house, extending it to the south and east. This section is of light-frame wood construction.

The house has three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, a living room, and a laundry room. There are also two halls, one of which leads downstairs to a large basement. The plan of the original building is organized around the (roughly) central fireplace. The plan of the addition wraps around the earlier plan on the east and south sides.

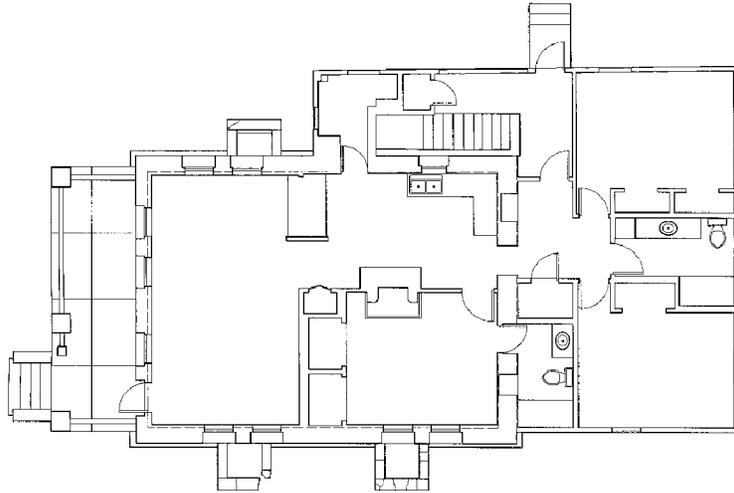


Figure 2.1 First Floor Plan; North is at left. (Drawing by the author)

### Exterior Walls

The original exterior walls and those of the addition are easy to distinguish from one another. The original walls are thick, square-cut coursed ashlar limestone masonry. The stone is fairly light in color, with a rusticated face and a thick beaded joint. The walls of the 1960s addition are wood frame clad in thin vertical wood siding that is painted a color similar to that of the stone. The two wall types meet abruptly, with no special detailing or articulation other than sills that project slightly.

The siding stops short of the ground, ending at about the level of the interior floor. The original walls are built atop a stuccoed stone foundation which projects from four to six inches from the wall. The foundation rises between two feet and six inches above ground level, and is punctuated by the basement windows, whose openings project roughly four feet into the east and west yards.

The random rubble foundation wall is an extension of the basement walls and is built from rough gray limestone. The walls of the original walls are punctuated by deeply set wooden windows, while those of the addition contain aluminum windows that are nearly flush with the wall. The top of the stone wall is capped with a concrete bond beam that forms a sort of tension ring around the perimeter of the house. The beam starts immediately above the windows.



Figure 2.2. Original limestone wall; west façade. (Photo by the author)

The main facade is on the north side and is largely covered by the full-length front porch. The wall behind the porch is one of the original stone walls. The wood siding-clad gable is visible above the porch. The east and west facades each consist of two distinct parts: the original masonry section, and the newer

section. At the foundation of the older sections there are three cellar windows, one on the east and two on the west.

The rear, south facade is clad in the same siding all the way up to the gable. There are three aluminum windows in this facade as well as an attic vent at the top of the gable. Beneath the bathroom window, in the middle of the facade, there is a small concrete slab, which appears to have held an air-conditioning unit at one time. There are two exterior doors: the front door, which opens onto the front porch, and the back door, leading from a side hall into the east yard. Each is comprised of a wood door and has a glass screen door.

### Fenestration

The house has windows on all sides. In the original part of the house, these are large single-hung wooden sash windows of uniform size. The exception is the kitchen window, which was identical to the others originally but was filled in with wood box-like pieces at the bottom and top in order to accommodate a counter and cabinet. The windows have slightly projecting sills on the exterior, and wooden sill inside; they windows are framed in wood. The windows do not have lintels; instead the concrete bond beam mentioned above takes the place of lintels. These windows are painted a very pale brown color inside and out. In the addition, the windows are aluminum frame and come in various sizes of mostly vertical orientation.



Figure 2.3 Original windows on east façade. (Photo by the author)



Figure 2.4 Windows on addition (rear of house). (Photo by the author)

The basement windows are wooden casement windows measuring roughly two feet square with six panes. They are identical except for the south window, which accommodates a narrow interior column at its center. The two windows

that face west have been partially filled in with concrete on the exterior, but the windows are still operational and are otherwise intact. On the exterior, these windows are covered by wood siding above where the concrete has been poured. There is a metal vent on each. The siding and vents are deteriorated and broken, and some siding is missing on the left one. Where the siding is missing, the original window is visible behind. One window, on the east side, is essentially unaltered, though there is a broken pane and some damage to the opening on the exterior. This window has not been filled in like the others, although it is a state of disrepair. This window is missing a pane of glass, and there is vegetation growing in this opening.



Figure 2.5 Basement window, west wall. (Photo by the author)

The south window opens into a cramped unfinished space beneath the addition. This space contains pipes for water; PVC pipes have been run from the

cavity out the window and into the basement ceiling (there is a bathroom near this juncture on the main floor). A wooden column has been placed in front of the window. The window was apparently designed to accommodate a column in this awkward location; its doors neatly accommodate the wooden member and close on either side of it. The window frame does not appear to have been rebuilt in order to accommodate the column; its appearance is comparable in aging and design to the other windows in the room.



Figure 2.6 South basement window and masonry wall. (Photo by the author)

### Front Porch

The front porch has a shed-type corrugated metal roof with a gable over the front steps. The steps are on the right side of the porch's front, as one is facing it. The base of the porch is stone masonry covered by a 5/8" layer of

stucco. The floor of the porch is a concrete slab scored in six sections. The front steps are stone slabs, but the sides are stone masonry covered by stucco, with a stone slab on top. Three piers support the porch roof. The piers are composed of two parts: the lower, made of brick covered with concrete stucco, and the upper, comprised of a wood envelope concealing an internal means of support. This stucco is cracked all over and in places has disengaged from the brick, revealing the brick.



Figure 2.7 Front Porch. (Photo by the author)

## Roof

The front-facing gable roof is moderately pitched and clad in corrugated metal. There are no gutters or downspouts. The metal used over the older section has a narrow wale while that over the new section has a wider one, but the roof is otherwise continuous over both the original house and the addition. A stuccoed brick chimney emerges from in the center of the roof over the original house.

## Interiors

Rooms in the original part of the house have 9'11" ceilings; in the rest of the house the ceilings are 8'. Interior walls are clad in gypsum board painted white. The interior perimeter walls of the original part of the house are not themselves original. They have been furred-out from the original walls with wood framing of various dimensions, and finished in gypsum board. For example, the north wall is 4 1/2" from the original wall, while the west wall is furred-out only 3 1/2". The east wall is 4" from the original wall, except in the kitchen, where it only 1 1/2" from the wall. The original wall is visible in one place where the new wall has been damaged by insect infestation; here one can see the white-painted stucco that covers the masonry wall. It is likely that this stucco covers all of the original interior walls. When the addition was built, the exteriors of the original rear and east sections of masonry wall were covered by gypsum board and assimilated into the interior. Because the original walls were simply covered up rather than removed or reconstructed, the walls between the old and newer rooms seem oddly thick.

## Chimney

The middle of the original house contains a large chimney, half of which is exposed in the small bedroom next to the kitchen. This chimney, which rises from the basement through the attic, is made of stone masonry that has been plastered (there is no lathe; the plaster was applied directly to the stone). On the

bedroom side, there is a shallow fireplace with a shallow built-in mantel. The flue is narrow and dirty; tension rods are visible within the flue.



Figure 2.8 Fireplace in front bedroom. (Photo by the author)



Figure 2.9 Chimney looking southwest. (Photo by the author)

The other side of the chimney protrudes into the kitchen but has been covered up by gypsum board. Knocking on this wall suggests the possibility of another fireplace on this side. Certainly, the chimney could accommodate a second flue and it is known that there was a stove here.

### Floors

Floors in the original part of the house were originally wood, but the wood was removed in the 1960s and replaced with wall-to-wall carpeting over a plywood base. In the addition, the flooring is vinyl tile laid over the concrete slab. There are baseboards throughout the house measuring 3" high where there is tile and 2.75" where there is carpet. Doors throughout the house are hollow-core wood.

### Living Room

The living room has two windows on each end (east and west), and three windows on the north side, looking out onto the porch. The front door is to the left of these windows, forming half of a pair with a neighboring window. A brass chandelier hangs from the ceiling on the east side of the room.

### Kitchen and Hallways

The kitchen interiors date from the 1960s. This room is adjacent to the living room and there is a plastic laminate pass-through counter between the two rooms. The counters, which run along the south and east walls are unpainted wood topped by yellow plastic laminate. Over the counters (including over the pass-through) there are more wooden cabinets, and above the cabinets along the south and east walls is a stepped soffit made from gypsum board. A gas stove sits on the east wall between the counter and the door to the laundry room. There is one window in the east wall that looks into a side hall (this hall is part of the addition). The laundry room is a small room off the kitchen, on the east side; it is also part of the addition. This room has two windows and two built-in wall cabinets. There is a ceiling fan/light fixture in this room, but the appliances have been removed.



Figure 2.10 Kitchen, facing northeast. (Photo by the author)

The kitchen leads to a central windowless hall, which contains the now empty HVAC closet, as well as access to the attic through the ceiling. This hall also contains built-in cabinets similar to those in the bathroom mentioned above, which occupy the cavity of a former door or window. It also leads to the rear bedrooms and bathroom. It also leads to a side hall on the east. This hall is the only room in the house in which the original exterior masonry wall has been left exposed. This hall has a back door leading to a side yard and concrete stairs leading to the basement. There is a large aluminum window in this room, occupying nearly the whole of the east wall; on the far side of this window is a small closet.

### Bedrooms and Bathrooms

There is a small bedroom adjacent to the kitchen and within the original house. This bedroom has two single-hung sash windows on its west side, and closets and overhead cabinets take up the entire north wall. A windowless bathroom (part of the addition) is accessible on the south side of this room. The bathroom door is within the original stone wall and the passage is thus quite thick. A built-in cabinet in the north side of the bathroom occupies the cavity left by a former door or window. This bathroom also has a counter sink, a toilet, and built-in shower-tub combination.

The central hall leads to two rear bedrooms and a bathroom between these rooms. Each bedroom has two windows, one on each exterior wall. The southwest bedroom has one closet and the other has two. The bathroom has a built-in cabinet, a counter sink, a toilet, and built-in shower-tub combination. There is also a small window facing south into the backyard.



Figure 2.11 Stairhall looking northeast. (Photo by the author)

### Basement and Stairs

From the bottom of the stairs, one turns left and takes one more step down into the basement. On this brief “landing”, there is a cabinet door in the concrete wall, which opens into a small, irregularly shaped crawlspace. The crawlspace contains pipes serving the kitchen and laundry room above. The floor of the space is at ground level and the ceiling is below the first floor level. This crawlspace seems to be the remnant of an earlier porch. The rough, gray limestone walls are similar to those of the original foundation walls, and the structure is integrated into the house in a way that suggests that it is part of the

original structure. There was a door in this location before the addition was built, and it's likely that there would have been a small entry porch in this location. On the exterior, traces of what seems to be part of a series of steps are visible in the foundation, as if the steps extended beyond the planned footprint of the addition and so were sliced off.

The basement occupies the space beneath the original stone house. It is a single large room with the chimney core near the middle. The chimney has a cavity that may originally have functioned as an oven; there is also a round vent hole above this that may have been connected to a separate stove. The basement has a thin concrete slab floor that was poured directly over the dirt and is now buckling due to moisture. The walls are random ashlar limestone masonry covered by concrete stucco about 5/8" thick. The southern half of the room has been painted white, while the remainder is unpainted, suggesting that the room may have been somehow subdivided at some point (if only by shelving or some other impermanent means). On the south wall, pieces of the stucco have fallen off, revealing the masonry. These walls were meant to be covered from the start, and the masonry, which is rather rough in appearance, was not constructed with a view to its visual appeal.



Figure 2.12 Basement, looking southwest. (Photo by the author)

The ceiling, finished in gypsum board, is supported by a row of square wooden columns running north/south down the center. There are four columns in all, though two of these have been combined with a strip of plywood. Behind this widened “double-column” is a square hole cut into the ground, from which several pipes emerge. A sump pump is located in this cavity; it was heavily used before the well uphill was repaired, when flooding in the basement was a problem.

### Attic

The attic is constructed from dimension lumber. Although it is open from end to end, it can be divided into two distinct parts – that part which is over the original building, and that which is over the addition. The newer part is on a lower level than the older part (the ceilings below being correspondingly lower). The top of the southern original masonry wall is visible where the two building

parts meet. The attic floor over the addition is low enough that one can see the tops of the original openings (doors or windows, which are now cabinets, a door and a passage) in the original south wall. The tops of these openings resemble the tops of the exposed openings elsewhere in the house.

The chimney is another prominent feature inside the attic. The stone is plastered, but the plaster has been greatly discolored by what appears to be water damage, probably from a leaky roof. In some places, the plaster has disengaged from the chimney, revealing the stone.

#### Other Structures on the Site

There is an old wooden smokehouse in the backyard. This building is clad in unpainted board-and-batten, and measures about 7' x 10', including an open section on its south side that was originally used as a laundry porch. It backs up to the fence bordering the orchard; its door opens to the backyard. The smokehouse is noticeably out of plumb, but is otherwise sound and possibly useable, with stabilization and some repair<sup>1</sup>. A few feet to the south of the smokehouse there is an even smaller structure made from wood and corrugated plastic. This structure is leaning precipitously. At the front of the house, there is a large antenna adjacent to the left side of the porch. There is also a small satellite dish on the north end of the roof.

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<sup>1</sup> Chusid, Jeffrey; Knott, Laura, and the University of Texas School of Architecture Historic Preservation Program Cultural landscape Class of Spring 2003. Cultural Landscape Report for the Browning Ranch; Blanco County, Texas.



Figure 2.13 Smokehouse, looking southeast. (Photo by the author)

### The Original Plan

It is possible to speculate on the original arrangement of the interior, although there is no documentation to support any particular theory. Investigation beyond the scope of this report may certainly provide further clues. However, given the evidence that is available, it is likely that the general interior plan was not significantly different than it is now. The house is very small, and its physical constraints, combined with an understanding of traditional space planning, limit the possibilities.

The chimney is a major clue. Before the 1960s renovation, there was a stove in this location. The chimney was used on both sides. This would suggest that there were two rooms, one on either side of the chimney, just as there are now. There is no evidence of a kitchen apart from the house (although certainly many

chores were performed outside of the house), so it is quite likely that the present kitchen has served this function from the beginning. The overall proportions of the house suggest a third room where the living room is now. It is possible that this room was subdivided, providing a total of four rooms for the house.

The kitchen and the bedroom each possess two openings on their south side, leading into the backyard. These openings are concealed by gypsum walls and cabinetry now, but they originally consisted of four doors and/or windows, with at least two doors at the center of the ensemble. The presence of the doors further suggests the existence of two separate rooms on either side of the chimney.



Figure 2.14 View from rear hall into kitchen; note passageway and built-in cabinet (concealed original openings). (Photo by the author)

The original house, with its additional half-story, would have required a stairway. It is difficult to determine, however, whether this was outdoors or in. Outdoor stairs probably would have been built against a gable wall; in this case, against either the north (front) façade, or the south (rear) façade. Stairs against the north façade would indicate that this was not originally the front of the house, but became so with the 1920s remodeling. The house would then have faced the orchard rather than the road. Such an opening on the east side from the kitchen could have served as the primary entrance, and, as noted above, the vestigial, and much smaller, concrete and limestone front porch exists in this place, reinforcing this theory. This platform has been incorporated into the laundry room.

A stairway on the north wall would have obscured existing windows, but it might explain the position of the door on the far side of this façade: there would be the most standing room in this spot. A short stairway makes sense given the difference between the floor and grade levels. Close to the front door on the north side, a rectangular block of limestone that has been incorporated into the west side of the foundation of the front porch suggests the presence of steps near this door.

Alternately, a stairway could have been built on the south side, but this would have been an awkward fit considering the doors at the center of the façade. A third possibility is an interior stairway. The likeliest location would have been in the larger third room, towards the center of the house (opposite the windows). It's possible that the floor construction, stripped of the carpet, would reveal this,

but if the floor or portions of it were substantially rebuilt when the wood floors were removed, any evidence may be gone.

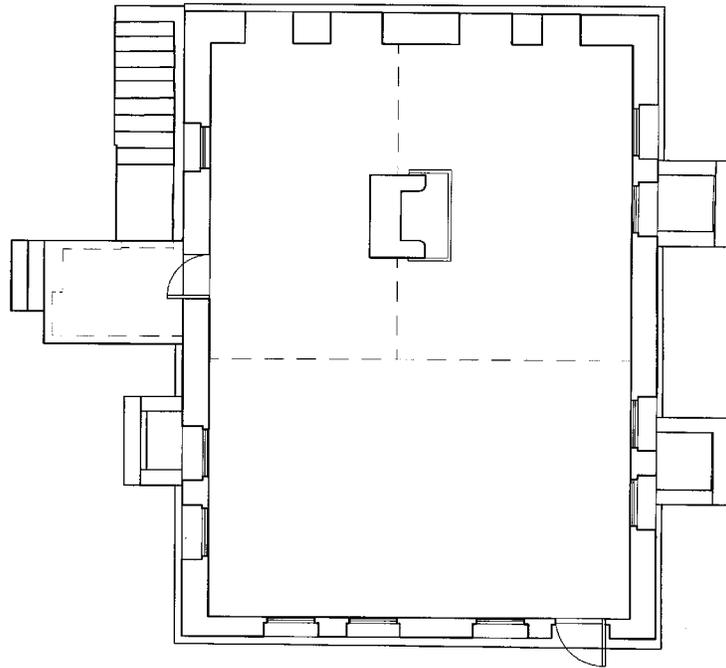


Figure 2.15 A possible original plan configuration, showing original porch and general room divisions. Note that modern interior perimeter walls are absent. North is at bottom. (Drawing by the author)

### Character-Defining Features

Although the addition is part of the history of the house, it does not in itself have historic character. Furthermore, its awkward bulk and incompatible finishes (most notably the exterior wood siding) greatly compromise the historic character of the original building. The two parts of the house are not integrated in a sensitive or appropriate way, and in fact clash wildly. The addition does make two important contributions to the overall building: bathrooms and more space. However, bathrooms can (and should) be built in a way that is more appropriate to the historic structure. Since there is no longer a family living in the house, the extra space is also not needed. In fact, the older portion of the house would benefit enormously from removal of the addition. Freed from its awkward cloak, the simple charm of its formal and material qualities would come to the forefront, and its historic character would certainly be more clearly apparent.

For this reason, in the following examination of the character-defining features of the house, I will focus on the historic stone house. There are character-defining features associated with both the building and the site in general. All of these features should be seriously considered when planning any changes to the building.

#### Limestone masonry walls

Perhaps the most immediately apparent feature is the thick limestone walls that define the exterior of the house. Along with the chimney, the walls constitute

the only remaining fabric of the original house. They are thus critical to our understanding of the history of the house. The walls are over a foot thick and cut from locally quarried limestone. Blocks range from under a foot to several feet in length, and are carefully set in horizontal courses. The stone was cut with a rough vertical finish and has a rustic look to it. There is no other embellishment, such as carving; the wall is very simple and strong both visually and structurally.



Figure 2.16 Original masonry wall; northeast corner. (Photo by the author)

The very shape of the original house gives it a unique character. There are no major protrusions or deviations from the simple rectangular shape. Instead, visual interest is provided by the patterns of voids created by the openings. The

addition violates this simple form and pattern, meeting the old structure at awkward intersections and obscuring the original exterior.

### Chimney

Besides the exterior walls, the chimney is the dominant original feature in the house. It is the heart of the house, echoing the house's position as the heart of a small-scale agricultural world. The chimney's simple form and plain plaster finish contribute to its essentially utilitarian character – it is not a fussy thing. The mantel is absolutely minimal; there is enough room to lean a picture or place a few very small items, but not much else. Its location near the center of the house means that the chimney is the organizing element within the plan. It could even be seen as a sort of axis, around which people and activities circulate.

### Pattern of Openings

The house has a particular pattern of openings that gives the facades a distinctive visual rhythm. The openings break up and lighten the otherwise heavy mass of the thick limestone walls. Windows and doors are arranged in pairs (window-window or door-window). There are two pairs on each side of the original house. These are only very roughly symmetrical, but their general regularity gives the simple stone house a basic sense of order. The original arrangement of doors would have provided four points of access to the outdoors: two in the back, one on the east side, and one in the front. These openings would

have nicely accommodated continual comings and goings from different directions as daily work was being performed.



Figure 2.17 West façade. (Photo by the author)

Six openings were altered during the 1960s renovation. On the east side, one door now leads to the laundry room. The window adjacent to it (now over the kitchen sink) has been truncated at the bottom and top. On the south side, one door now leads to the rear center hall from the kitchen, and another leads from a bedroom to a bathroom. The windows adjacent to these doors have been transformed into cabinets, one in the bathroom and one in the hall. The pattern is still evident, despite the major alterations that interrupt and conceal it.

### Front Porch

Because of its position at the front of the house, the porch is a great part of the first impression of the house. It takes up much of the north façade and is the

most important elevation on the house. It is also the only outdoor shelter connected to the house. When it was constructed in the late 1920s, the front porch transformed the house from a more traditional-seeming vernacular building into a sort of imitation bungalow. The porch thus gave the house its style (inasmuch as the house can be said to have a particular style). This remodeling was an attempt to update the house, and it clearly identifies the house as a product of the first decades of the twentieth century.

Site: The house as a literal hub in the middle of provisioning activity

Just as the chimney is the heart of the house, the house is the heart of the site. The orchard, garden, and smokehouse are each within a few seconds walk from the house. The greater agricultural complex (the barn, chicken coop, etc.) is located shortly beyond this inner circle. The house's location is in the most convenient spot for working within the agricultural and provisioning complex. There is a practical pattern of adjacencies that has its roots in the historic activities associated with the house.



Figure 2.18 View of house from road, looking south; note orchard at left. (Photo by the author)

The general arrangement of all elements is part of the historic character of the whole complex, and should not be rearranged without careful consideration. It would certainly be possible to move the garden or the smoking house (for examples) to other locations on the ranch. However, the removal of one or more of these elements would detract from the house's historic character as a center of its own provisioning.

For the purposes of this particular project, it is not recommended that any element be moved away from the complex, since their functions are closely linked to that of the new facility. However, it is also recognized that the ranch is a living place, with evolving requirements. The site is not completely sacred, and new activities need appropriate space. Therefore, if some element must be rearranged (for example, if some peach trees must be replanted due to soil fungus in the existing orchard), the rearrangement should be undertaken with the goal of

preserving the historic pattern of adjacencies. Comparable access to the new site should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. The house should remain at the heart of the site.

View from the house towards the road, the orchard and the landscape

It is possible to stand on the front porch and look down the sloped driveway (really a dirt road) to the front gate. One can see the road and any entering visitors quite clearly. There are numerous oak trees to the left, and a scattering of agricultural buildings in that area, and the orchard and other trees block the view to the right (towards the main ranch house). But the view from the house down the hill to the road is clear and open. This feature, though somewhat intangible, does give the house part of its character.

One can also look out over much of the orchard, as well as the expansive landscape beyond, from the front porch. Removal of the addition would permit clearer views from the interior of the house. Before the addition was built, and before the installation of central air-conditioning at that time, the views would have combined with cross-breezes and sounds from the outdoors would have integrated the indoors and outdoors in a very appealing way.

## Chapter Three

### History of the Naumann House

#### History of the House

Albert Wadel Moursund II and his wife Frances Stribling moved to the site of the current Browning Ranch sometime not long after 1909. They first lived near Hunnicut Spring and built the Naumann House in 1915 after the birth of a second son. The house is known to have had some type of second story, but the width of the stone walls suggests that it was really 1 1/2, not 2 stories<sup>2</sup>. It is also not clear what this second story looked like - whether it was framed in wood or incorporated a continuation of the stone wall, or where the stairs were. Unfortunately, there is no other documentation to verify either situation. The original interior plan is also not known, although certain features, such as the chimney and the location of openings, suggest certain possibilities.

In 1923, the house was largely destroyed by a fire caused by lightning. The second story was totally destroyed, as were the interiors and all the furniture. The fire left only the stone walls. By this time the Moursund family was staying in Johnson City and was not present at the fire. The fire was noted in John Stribling Moursund's account of Blanco County families<sup>3</sup>. However there is also

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<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Patrick Sparks, October 27, 2004

some visible evidence of the fire in the remains of the original building. Many of the limestone blocks have pinkish discoloration around openings, which suggests the leaching of iron oxides as a result of high temperatures<sup>4</sup>.



Figure 3.1 Stone near window showing discoloration from iron oxides. (Photo by the author)

The destruction of the house, combined with the fact that ranching had become a difficult proposition in the area, led the Moursund family to sell the property. Dr. James Franklin Barnwell purchased the property (and the house) in 1926 and remodeled the house at some point after this. It is certainly conceivable that the successful Dr. Barnwell would have taken the opportunity presented by

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<sup>3</sup> Moursund, John Stribling. Blanco County Families for 100 Years. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958.

<sup>4</sup> Conversation with Patrick Sparks, October 27, 2004

the damaged building to rebuild in a somewhat more stylish manner. Dr. Barnwell did not earn his living from ranching; rather, he was a locally prominent physician who ran a sanitarium (complete with x-ray) and office in town and also served on the auxiliary school board<sup>5</sup>. He had arrived in Blanco County in 1898 and was most famous for having performed the first cesarean section in the region. Dr. Barnwell lived in the house with his second wife Alma Irene Lewis, a nurse<sup>6</sup>.

The remodeling updated the appearance of the house, eliminating the original extra half-story, adding a new roof, and attaching a new front porch typical of the bungalow style, which had already been popular in Texas for some time. The moderate 6 and 12 roof pitch was a common to the bungalow, and the porch, with its gable, tapered stucco and wood piers, and general proportions, is clearly in that style. The planed and dimensioned wood framing in the attic, which was widely used from the 1920s onward, suggests a reconstruction characteristic of this time. The remodeling also incorporated other decorative elements characteristic of the bungalow style including the exposed rafter ends on the new main roof and porch roof and the notched board detail in the gables.

Bungalows were already in fashion when the house was first built in 1915, but the original house seems not to have been influenced at all by the popular

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<sup>5</sup> Blanco County Record, May 11, 1923

<sup>6</sup> Blanco County News. Blanco County Heritage. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1987. 120

style. Although there is no documentation of what the roof looked like, and whether there was some type of front porch, the overall plan of the house was decidedly simple with little heed paid to fashionable building practices.

Dr. Barnwell died in 1934 and at some point the property passed into the ownership of his daughter and son-in-law, the Hardins, who were active cattle ranchers. In 1942 the Hardins sold the property to Mr. C.L. Browning, who built a separate ranch house nearby. At this time the Naumann family moved into what now became known as the Naumann House; Anton Naumann was the foreman of the Browning Ranch for many years. Rural electrification had come to the Johnson City area by 1940, with the completion of power lines installed by the Pedernales Electric Cooperatives<sup>7</sup>. When the main ranch house was built in 1942 it had electricity, and the Naumann House probably had electricity by this time too<sup>8</sup>.

In the early 1960s one of the grown Naumann daughters, Joy Lin, moved into the house with her husband Bill Watson, who was now the ranch foreman. It was after this time that the addition was built. The original house was small for a family, and it is possible that the house also simply seemed outdated at that time. The wooden floors were removed, and wall-to-wall carpet was installed in the original rooms. The new rooms feature vinyl tile over a concrete slab. A wood-

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<sup>7</sup> Blanco County News. Blanco County Heritage. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1987. 129

<sup>8</sup> Correspondence with Elizabeth Rogers, owner of the Browning Ranch

burning stove that had been located in the kitchen was also removed and a modern kitchen was installed.

### The Naumann House as a Vernacular Building

As a vernacular architectural type, the Naumann House is difficult to classify. It was built by a second-generation Norwegian-Texan who was probably familiar with the Norwegian immigrant building styles of North Texas. He lived, however, in a region, that was removed from those settlements, and that was more influenced by German-Texas building.

German-Texan houses came in a variety of forms; there was no single definitive German-Texan “style.” Terry Jordan says, “the closest house type is the small, story-and-a-half, rectangular house that was characteristic of the early colonial period.”<sup>9</sup> Other than this sort of generalization, characterizing German-Texan masonry houses is difficult. For example, houses were often arranged with one or two roughly square front rooms and a narrower back room with a shed-type roof. However, plans varied somewhat. In general, houses were one and one-half stories and side-gabled (as noted by Jordan). There was often an interior L-shaped stairway, but the stairway might also be outside, against a gable end. Jordan also states: “the most prominent feature of the German colonial houses is their stone construction.” However, limestone was also used by builders outside of the German communities. Limestone was, quite simply, both easily procured and easily worked.

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<sup>9</sup> Jordan, Terry G. “German Houses in Texas.” *Landscape*, 1964, Autumn, v. 14, n. 1. 26

Blanco County had a significant German population, but the bulk of German-Texan settlement took place to the west. The part of Blanco County that saw the heaviest settlement was in the southwest. Johnson City is in the center of the county – not far from, but at some remove from the heart of German-Texas settlement and house building. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the Naumann House was built several decades after the decline of the German building tradition. Given this, while the Naumann House was a certainly a small, story-and-a-half, rectangular house built of limestone masonry, it can't otherwise be linked to the German-Texan tradition.

Another possibility is that the house was influenced by Norwegian-Texan building traditions. Albert Wadel Moursund I, the father of the builder of the Naumann House, was born in 1845 in Norway and came to Texas from Norway via New York in 1869<sup>10</sup>. Norwegian immigration to Texas had begun in the mid-nineteenth century and by 1900 there were a few thousand Norwegian settlers in the state. Most of these settled in one of three communities near Dallas: Brownsboro, Four Mile Prairie, and in Bosque County.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Moursund, John Stribling. Blanco County Families for 100 Years. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958.

<sup>11</sup> Breisch, Kenneth A. and Moore, David. "The Norwegian Rock Houses of Bosque County, Texas: Some Observations on a Nineteenth-Century Vernacular Building Type." Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II. Ed. Wells, Camille. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1986. 64-65

The remaining Norwegian-Texan stone houses in that area are referred to locally as “rock houses” and were built between 1855 and 1885<sup>12</sup>. Norway itself has no strong tradition of stone masonry dwellings. The stone buildings of Bosque County represent an adaptation of a group of settlers to a new environment; the Norwegian-Texans produced a relatively short-lived tradition (of fewer buildings) borne out of convenience and necessity. Partly because of this, Norwegian-Texan houses are somewhat easier to characterize than German-Texan houses. Houses were generally one and one-half story with a sleeping loft above. Like the German-Texan houses, they were side-gabled. Houses were characteristically built of stuccoed coursed ashlar limestone masonry (the stucco being applied to the exterior, unlike the Naumann House). There was frequently a projecting fireplace and chimney centered at the gable ends, with flanking upstairs windows. Typically, houses were “located on top of a rise or on sloping side of a hill.”<sup>13</sup> This last feature is certainly shared with the Naumann House, but in this case it may speak more to the particulars of the site of the Browning ranch than any Norwegian-Texan influence.

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<sup>12</sup> Breisch, Kenneth A. and Moore, David. “The Norwegian Rock Houses of Bosque County, Texas: Some Observations on a Nineteenth-Century Vernacular Building Type.” Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II. Ed. Wells, Camille. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1986. 64.

<sup>13</sup> Bryant, John Rutherford. The European-Texan buildings: Indigenous Building Traditions among the Nineteenth Century European Immigrants to Central Texas. Thesis, The University of Texas at Arlington, 1987. 265

Moursund's son, Albert Wadel Moursund II, moved to Blanco County in 1909. Given his heritage, and the small size and concentration of the Norwegian population in Texas, it is very likely that he had direct knowledge of the Norwegian settlements to the north. It would be plausible that he might elect to use the Norwegian-Texan model for his own home further south. However, while the Naumann House shares some characteristics with these stone houses (such as the basic construction method and siting), it's just not possible to infer a direct link. Again, the Naumann House was built thirty years after the last Norwegian-Texan house. The placement of the fireplace sets it apart from both building traditions. In both German and Norwegian houses the chimney is placed at an exterior wall on the gable end of the house.

The original appearance of the Naumann House cannot be known for certain because of the 1923 fire and the subsequent changes made to the house. Still, it is interesting, and somewhat surprising, to note the apparent lack of influence of contemporary trends in home-building on the house's initial construction in 1915. The house does not display any remnants of the Victorian styles, not does it (until later) adopt contemporary house-styles such as the bungalow. Features that are more easily clearly influenced by larger home-building trends appear only after the first rebuilding. These include the bungalow-style porch, the roof and exposed rafters (typical for the 1920s), and the standardized windows.

Thus, although it is interesting to attempt to classify the house according to known building traditions, it is not critical in this case to the understanding of and planning for the house. Critical pieces of information, such as the original roof orientation, the location of the stair, and the window lintels, are missing. It is more important to be aware of the cultural context in which the house was built, and to realize that many other unknown factors surely had a hand in its production. Whatever its stylistic and material origins, the Naumann House (like every house) has its own history and circumstances that make it unique. The house has already experienced two significant rehabilitation projects – the rebuilding after the 1923 fire and the addition in the 1960s. The original form of the house has been so compromised that it is no longer representative of a style (if it ever was). It is, rather, an expression of its own history - of the needs and wants of its successive inhabitants and owners. The house must ultimately be taken on its own terms.

## Chapter Four

### Historic and Regional Context

Johnson City was established on what was originally a wagon trail between Austin and Fredericksburg and was historically a trade center for ranching<sup>14</sup>. During the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, Central Texas was characterized by relatively small land holdings with diversification of agricultural activity (the raising of different types of livestock and crops).<sup>15</sup> Home gardens augmented the family diet. The C.L. Browning Ranch fit into this pattern. The Barnwells do not seem to have been active cattle ranchers, but the Hardins were; they raised Herefords and Holsteins<sup>16</sup>. They, and the families that succeeded them, also relied on other means of food provisioning including a garden and an orchard, both in close proximity to the house.

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<sup>14</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "JOHNSON CITY, TX," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/JJ/hlj6.html> (accessed November 27, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Freeman, Martha Doty. *Agriculture in Texas: Ranching and Stock Farming on the Eastern Edwards Plateau, 1845-1941*. Fort Worth, TX: Komatsu/Rangel, Inc., 1994. 7

<sup>16</sup> Chusid, Jeffrey; Knott, Laura, and the University of Texas School of Architecture Historic Preservation Program Cultural landscape Class of Spring 2003. *Cultural Landscape Report for the Browning Ranch; Blanco County, Texas*. Ownership section

The garden area occupies roughly half an acre just to the southwest of the Naumann House (it measures approximately 121' x 125' x 86' x 160')<sup>17</sup>. The age of the garden is not clear, but it is likely that there was some type of vegetable garden on the property since the residency of the Moursund family. Home gardens were a staple of Central Texas residences from the time the area was settled, and were critical to providing a varied diet for families well into the twentieth century. It is also not clear that the garden has always been in the same spot, but it is in such a convenient (and sunny) spot with regard to the house that it seems likely that it has been.

The garden was likely cultivated through the residency of the Barnwells and Hardins, since home vegetable gardens were common at that time. During WWI, victory gardens were especially popular. Food rationing meant that a certain degree of self-sufficiency was essential. According to recollections published by the Blanco County Register, “there were wheatless, meatless, and sugarless days. A food administrator in the community insured these days were observed properly.”<sup>18</sup> During the Great Depression, local residents kept gardens to supplement their diets during lean times, and canning was an important chore. According to the Blanco County Register “people used the steam canner to can meat, vegetables, and the fruit they had raised to preserve them for their

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<sup>17</sup> 2003. Section on Garden.

<sup>18</sup> Blanco County News. Blanco County Heritage. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1987. 121

families.”<sup>19</sup> Luckily, the region has a long growing season. The garden was certainly actively used after 1942, when the Naumann family moved in. The Naumanns grew all kinds of produce and canned a good deal of fruit and other preserves.

The orchard is situated just to the east of the Naumann House. It probably dates from 1942, although it is possible that it is older; it is unusual for peach orchards to be more than 50 years old<sup>20</sup>. The orchard was certainly cultivated after 1942. The orchard probably contained about thirty (or a few more) trees at its peak. Less than a third of these are still living. In addition to the peach trees there are also several pear trees and some small black cherry trees in the southwest corner of the orchard. Census data for peach production in Blanco County fluctuates wildly, suggesting either volatility in the crop or in the tabulation. However, in 1925, there were 15,642 trees reported in production. This was a high until 1950, when there were 24,773 trees reported. In 1945, when the Browning Ranch orchard was certainly in production, there were 12,154 trees reported in production<sup>21</sup>. Although the ranch did produce some fruit for sale at

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<sup>19</sup> Blanco County News. Blanco County Heritage. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1987. 123

<sup>20</sup> Chusid, Jeffrey; Knott, Laura, and the University of Texas School of Architecture Historic Preservation Program Cultural landscape Class of Spring 2003. Cultural Landscape Report for the Browning Ranch; Blanco County, Texas. Peach Orchard section

<sup>21</sup> Moursund, John Stribling, Blanco County History. Burnet, TX: 1979. 593

market, it was not a large commercial operation; in general production was reserved for home consumption. The ranch was thus partaking in a characteristic agricultural practice of the region, but at a more intimate scale.

C.L. Browning purchased the property as a weekend getaway for his family, rather than as strictly a ranch. The family used the property for hunting and other types of recreation, and for get-togethers with family and friends. The Brownings were part of a general regional trend towards mainly recreational, rather than purely agricultural, ranching. Still, agriculture remained important to the ranch (in part for tax purposes)<sup>22</sup>. The Brownings raised cattle, including Black Angus cows, as well as goats and sheep. The latter two had been commonly raised on farms and ranches throughout Blanco County for decades, but it is not known to what extent goats and sheep were present on the Browning property before 1942. Chickens were also part of life on the ranch, producing eggs and meat at short notice; there is a large chicken coop a short ways uphill from the Naumann House.

Small-scale agricultural practice, such as working the peach orchard and garden, were still important and the Naumann House was still very much a hub for activity related to this. Mrs. Browning as well as Mrs. Naumann (and possibly other friends and neighbors) canned string beans and tomatoes from the garden.

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<sup>22</sup> Chusid, Jeffrey; Knott, Laura, and the University of Texas School of Architecture Historic Preservation Program Cultural landscape Class of Spring 2003. Cultural Landscape Report for the Browning Ranch; Blanco County, Texas.

Peaches were also surely canned, as well as other types of garden produce. The basement of the Naumann House contained shelves for storing preserved foods<sup>23</sup>.

Hunting has been a part of the ranch since at least 1942 (and, it is likely, as long as people have lived on the site). Venison has thus been an important ranch product reflected in the built environment. The screened porch adjacent to the apartment (near the 1942 house) was used for hanging up deer to be washed. The smokehouse behind the Naumann House was used to produce smoked meat and venison sausage.

Most jobs in Blanco County today are in sectors other than agriculture, but agriculture is still an economic driver for Johnson City, mainly involving cattle, sheep, goats, and hay<sup>24</sup>. Tourism is also an important aspect of the economy; as a bed-and-breakfast, the Browning Ranch is part of this economy and is just a few miles from Pedernales State Park (a popular tourist destination) as well as other local attractions. Part of the appeal for tourists is the region's agricultural, as well as natural, look and feel.

The Ranch is currently owned by Elizabeth Rogers, C.L. Browning's daughter. Scott Gardner is the foreman. The main ranch house is used by the owners occasionally but is also used as a bed and breakfast for visitors who come to the ranch to hunt. The ranch is also currently undergoing a program of

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.* Section on Agricultural History

<sup>24</sup> Johnson City, Texas, Chamber of Commerce. <http://www.lbjcountry.com/demographics/index.html> (accessed November 1, 2004)

ecological restoration via watershed restoration. The ranch now has an educational mission, which is to educate the public (by talking to school and other types of groups) about water conservation in the rural landscape. The ranch is a laboratory for this work, which includes a program of clearing inappropriate plants (such as ash juniper) and reseeded the land with native grasses that provide water passage into the ground and prevent erosion. The ultimate goal of this program is to produce a free and easily accessible online management manual for watershed restoration, using the ranch as a living example. Both success and failures will be employed as examples. The ranch also seeks to accommodate other research that either complements the work described above, or is independent from it<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Conversation with Scott Gardner, Foreman of the C.L. Browning Ranch

## Chapter Five

### Existing Conditions and Recommendations

The Secretary of the Interior' Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties provides guidelines for work on historic properties. These guidelines are useful in that they provide recommended (though non-specific) and non-recommended treatments for historic properties within a clear philosophical framework. According to the Standards, there are four treatments for historic properties: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction<sup>26</sup>. This report recommends rehabilitation as the best treatment for the Naumann House. The house is an assembly of historic fabric from different time periods, each with varying degrees of historic character. Rehabilitation allows for changes to be made to the house that both preserve (and clarify) the historic character (and fabric), and accommodate a new use. This treatment will accommodate the removal of the inappropriate non-historic addition, as well as other non-historic features. The recommendations provided below, as well as the proposed new use for the house, are guided by The Secretary of the Interior' Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

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<sup>26</sup> The Secretary of the Interior' Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/secstan1.htm> (accessed November 1, 2004)

## The Addition

Although the addition doubles the footprint of the house and is integrated into the whole of the interior, it lacks historic merit. This project proposes that removal of the addition is a priority; for this reason, any repairs to the addition are of no consequence. Thus while the addition has several issues, including moisture infiltration (leading to some mold) in some ceilings, the condition of the addition will not be discussed.



Figure 5.1 Original building and addition; northeast corner (Photo by the author)

*Recommendations:* The addition should be removed. This is the single-most important thing that can be done to restore the house's historic character. From the exterior perspective, the original masonry walls and front porch are the most character-defining historic features of the house and should stand alone as the only exterior walls. Removal of the addition will restore the historic exterior

dimensions of the house and will illuminate the historic qualities of the house as a three-dimensional object, as it was for roughly half a century.

### South and East Stone Wall

Removing the addition will reveal the now-concealed south and east stone walls and their true door and window arrangement. There may be damage or deterioration in these walls that cannot be detected at this time. New doors and windows will need to be installed in the now-concealed openings. The windows should be compatible with existing windows, but they need not be exactly the same. Because the new windows will not share a façade, they will occupy their own visual space, and their differences will be less jarring. One approach would be to choose a single- or double-hung wooden window in a more contemporary design. These openings should be sealed against the weather during the time between the removal of the addition is and installation of new windows and doors.

*Recommendations:* Remove the gypsum board that conceals the original stone walls. Inspect newly revealed walls before work is begun on the rest of the building's shell, so that repairs will be consistent and efficient. There may be issues with cracked stone and mortar issues, as there are in the visible portion of the house. These issues should be addressed in a thorough and consistent manner.

### Slab

Removal of the addition will involve either also removing the slab foundation, or leaving it in place and finding a new use for this area. The

condition under the slab, as well as the foundation beneath the uncovered doors and windows, should be investigated. Once uncovered, this area may provide clues about the original condition of this part of the house.

*Recommendations:* One option would be to remove the slab. If this is done, the removal will reveal the now blocked south basement window. This opening has been compromised more severely than the other openings, with its conversion into a crawlspace occupied by pipes. The ground around the house and this newly-revealed window should be landscaped appropriately.

Another (perhaps more useful and interesting) option would be to leave the slab foundation in place, and finish it with decking to create outdoor work/gathering space. Since there is currently no other outdoor gathering space on the immediate site other than the front porch, this may be desirable and may also reduce overall costs somewhat. Furthermore, it would be one way of acknowledging the presence of the addition (and thus the history of the building) without retaining the entire structure. This approach would require sacrificing the south basement window, or somehow incorporating that opening into a new outdoor space. It would be desirable to save this window if possible, by making room for it in any new design for the rear of the house.

### Foundation

There are two foundation conditions. The original foundation, beneath the original stone house, is a continuous limestone masonry retaining wall that

containing a basement. A portion of the foundation is in full view around the exterior (and interior) of the visible portion of the original house. Its condition is less clear when it comes into contact with the addition and the slab foundation for that portion of the house. Although water infiltration has damaged the wall finish and floor in the basement, the stone wall itself appears to be basically sound (although there has been some mortar loss). The foundation of the addition is concrete with a slightly textured finish. Both foundations appear to be sound, with no significant differential settlement. However, the stucco that covers the original exterior masonry foundation is cracking in some places. This appears to be a result of moisture infiltration over a long period of time.



Figure 5.2 Foundation wall; near northwest corner. (Photo by the author)

The small section of foundation that exists beneath the present-day laundry room may be part of the original house. Beneath the floor is a limestone masonry crawlspace with a concrete roof and concrete exterior. There is evidence of a concrete step (now removed) on the east side.

*Recommendations:* See above with regard to removal of the addition and consequences for the slab. Replace the stucco where needed, matching existing with respect to color, texture, thickness and strength. When stucco is removed, inspect the masonry for any hidden problems. Please refer to NPS Preservation Brief 22, “The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco.”

### Exterior Walls

There are several stones with significant cracks in them. These stones include sills and lintels (over the basement windows). There are also several stairstep cracks in the wall accompanied by significant mortar loss. These cracks compromise the structural integrity of the wall and may permit water to enter the wall (though water damage does not seem to be an issue in the wall at this time).

There is a thin stair-step crack in the upper left corner of the north facade, from the bond beam going down four rows of stone. Also on the north facade, there is significant cracking in the sills of the two windows on the left, particularly the one farthest to the left. On the east facade, there is stairstep cracking in the areas above the two basement openings and in the sills suggesting strain. The sill stone on the right has cracked in two. There is a large stair-step

starting at the upper-right corner of the front door. This appears to be a result of strain under the weight of the porch roof.



Figure 5.3 Front door; note crack at upper right corner (Photo by the author)



Figure 5.4 Mortar loss and faulty repointing; west façade. (Photo by the author)

Mortar loss has been a significant problem. The original mortar is a lime-based composition. Mortar loss is partly a result of inappropriate repairs using a Portland cement mortar that is too hard for the limestone and the existing historic mortar and has caused significant deterioration. Furthermore, the original mortar is crumbling and has turned into sand in numerous locations. This makes the wall weaker and exposes the inside of the wall to water infiltration.

There is also an aesthetic issue regarding the mortar repairs that have been done and are still in place. Repointing has been done in a sloppy manner and without taking care to match the original profile of the mortar. In some places far

too much of the wrong type of mortar has been used. Also in some places, concrete has been accidentally dripped on stones and remains there today.

Finally, the column dividing the pair of windows on the north façade has been replaced with concrete from the original limestone. While the original stone may have been damaged, this is neither an aesthetically satisfying solution, nor one that is historically appropriate to the house.



Figure 5.5 Concrete column between windows on north façade. (Photo by the author)

*Recommendations:* Replace cracked stone in kind. Match existing with respect to color, texture, and orientation. All of the masonry walls should be repointed. Use a lime-based mortar that is compatible with the limestone (that is,

that is less hard than the limestone). Care should be taken to match the bead of the historic mortar. Also match the existing mortar with regard to color, texture, and strength. Replace the concrete column with limestone masonry to match existing. Finally, the stray drops of concrete should be carefully removed from the limestone, with care not to damage the stone. Please refer to Preservation Brief 2, “Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings.”

### Concrete Bond Beam

The concrete bond beam appears to be doing its job and in good condition. However, much of it is currently concealed or difficult to inspect because of its location beneath the roof.

*Recommendation:* Inspect the bond beam when the roof is replaced and the addition removed. Any newly revealed issues should be addressed before new work conceals the beam again.

### Interior Walls

The interior perimeter walls have been furred out from the original stone walls. The original walls appear to be plastered, but their full condition cannot be fully known without further investigation. One wall in the living room shows evidence of extensive insect infestation. Interestingly, the furred-out walls vary in thickness, from about 4 1/2” on the north wall to about 2” in the kitchen. The reasons for this are not clear, but dismantling these walls may provide some clues.

A small section of the original masonry wall is exposed inside the addition, in the side hall. The kitchen window looks out through this wall into this hall. Where this wall turns the corner and is again concealed by gypsum, it is covered by a layer of concrete. The reason for this is not clear – it may have been applied to conceal damaged stone, although no damage is evident in visible material.



Figure 5.6 Corner of wall in stairhall. (Photo by the author)

*Recommendations:* First, the kitchen should be carefully dismantled. Second, the furred interior walls and partition walls should be carefully removed, as should the gypsum board covering the kitchen-side of the chimney. The furred

walls concealing the original openings on the South and East sides should also be removed. When this material has been removed, the hitherto concealed interior walls should be carefully inspected. The walls may show signs of damage from animal infestation. There is no evidence that moisture infiltration has caused any damage, but it would be wise to inspect the wall, given the condition of the exterior wall. Any such damage should be noted and addressed as necessary. The original walls may also have been damaged by the insertion of the newer walls; any such damage should also be documented.

The condition of the walls may also provide information on any earlier arrangement of rooms, alternative finishes, a possible interior stair, etc. The walls should be carefully examined for clues to previous conditions such as changes in texture and color, and markings or holes. All conditions should be documented. The concrete that covers the exposed corner of the interior stone wall should be removed and the wall inspected. Revealed conditions should be considered when new work is done to the interior. Repair original stucco to match existing with respect to color, texture, and strength. Please refer to NPS Preservation Brief 22, "The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco."

### Floors

Although the carpet is in fair condition, it detracts from the historic character of the house. In this type of small farm house, wall-to-wall carpet is highly impractical. It is highly vulnerable to dirt and staining from all manner of

daily activity, and thus requires attentive cleaning. The structure of the floor is wood, and it appears to be in good condition.

*Recommendations:* Remove the carpet. Because the original floor is gone, there is some flexibility as to what sort of flooring to install, but it should be compatible with the character of the house. Wood would be the ideal choice, because it is in keeping with what was there historically. Furthermore, it is by nature compatible with the activities that have been associated with the house historically. That is, it is sturdy, easy to clean, and natural in appearance.

### Porch

The concrete stucco on each of the piers has been infiltrated by moisture. It is cracked all over, and efflorescence is evident in some places. Pieces of stucco have come free on some corners, in some cases damaging the brick. The piers have also shifted out of plumb. The wooden sections have remained in place, while the brick bases have begun to lean. The piers are leaning away from the building, indicating that they may not be sufficient to support the weight of the porch roof.

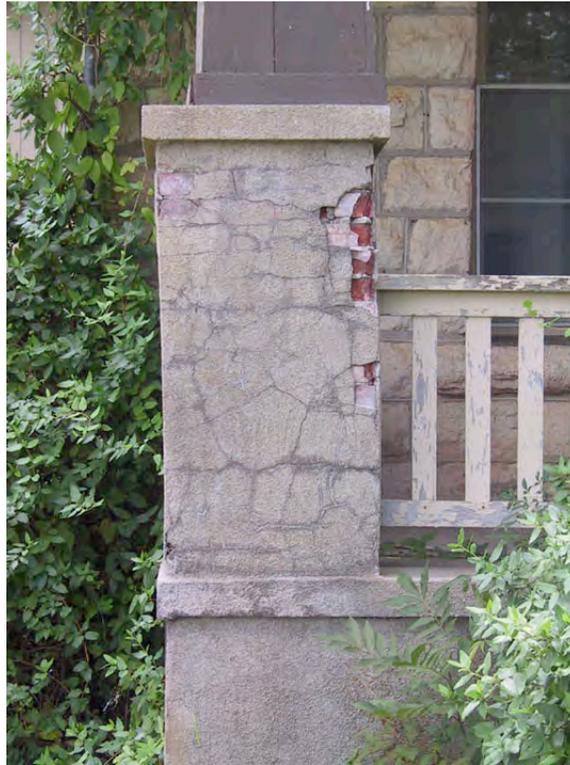


Figure 5.7 Northwest pier on front porch. (Photo by the author)

*Recommendation:* Remove all stucco. Dismantle the wooden sections and inspect any reinforcement that is inside. It is possible that new reinforcement will be necessary in order to better enable the piers to support the porch roof.

Rebuild the brick piers, using the original brick where possible and otherwise replacing the brick in kind where it has been damaged. Such new reinforcement should be concealed when the piers are rebuilt. Match existing mortar with respect to color, texture, and strength; mortar should be weaker than brick. Re-stucco the piers, making sure to match existing with respect to color, texture, and strength. Rebuild the wooden sections as they were, restoring their correct alignment atop the brick piers.

### Chimney (inside the house)

The chimney appears to be structurally sound, with no discernible movement. There are no significant cracks that would suggest structural problems. The flue that is visible appears sound but is coated in soot and dirt, with some hanging debris (although there are no significant blockages). If there is or was a lining, it has been compromised by the build-up of creosote. There also does not appear to be a damper. The portion in the kitchen is concealed by gypsum board and its condition is unknown at this time.

Water damage is visible on the plaster in the attic section. This is probably due to a leaking roof; the roof has several small holes. On the section of the chimney above the roof, the concrete stucco has come off in several places. The brick beneath the stucco is suffering from mortar loss. The chimney's concrete cap has numerous cracks. The flashing also looks insufficient.

*Recommendation:* Remove the gypsum board wall in the kitchen and assess the condition of this portion of the chimney and the fireplace that likely exists here. Clean the flues. Replace any damaged plaster on the attic section, matching existing with respect to color, texture, and strength. The chimney should be inspected by a professional chimney inspector. In addition to cleaning, it is likely that the chimney will need to be re-lined and a damper installed.

Where it has been damaged, the chimney should be rebuilt above the roof line, using the original bricks where possible. Closer inspection by a professional

may show that the chimney requires more extensive rebuilding (that is, down to the roofline). Match existing mortar with respect to color, texture, and strength. Replace any damaged or missing bricks in kind. Sufficient flashing should be installed. Rebuild the chimney cap. The chimney should then be re-stuccoed to match existing with respect to color, texture, and strength.

### Windows

The windows are all in working order and will not need significant repairs. The paint is peeling or chipped in places, but the wood itself is in good condition. When the interior walls are removed, care should be taken to protect the window frames. It may be that the relationship between the frame and the original wall will reveal or suggest something about the original wall finish. This relationship should be carefully examined and documented before any new work is done.

*Recommendation:* Strip, clean and repaint the windows in the same (or similar) color. The kitchen window should not be restored to its original dimensions. Instead, preserve this anomalous window as a reminder of the house's history. Please refer to NPS Preservation Brief 9, "The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows."

### Attic

A small building like the Naumann House has physical constraints that make the installation of modern HVAC systems problematic. New systems could occupy a significant percentage of square footage, leaving insufficient space for

human occupation. Window cooling units would also be visually incompatible with the old building.

*Recommendation:* Given the size of the building, doing without artificial heating and cooling may be the best solution. The tall ceilings and windows can provide natural ventilation and cooling. The fireplaces should be sufficient to heat the small space if necessary, once they have been cleaned and repaired. If HVAC is deemed necessary, components should be restricted to the basement and attic.

### Roof

The roof has several small holes and there appears to be rust over the surface. The roof structure appears to be sound, and rafters are in good condition.

*Recommendation:* Replace the metal roof in kind.

### Basement

The masonry basement walls do not show evidence of significant movement, and appear to be quite sound. Water infiltration (due to a leaking well uphill from the house) has been extensive in the past, and the basement has been flooded. There is also a pump in the center of the room from this period. The concrete floor slab has been greatly damaged by flooding. The slab is cracked and is breaking up in some places, revealing the dirt beneath.



Figure 5.8 Basement floor and wall; west side (Photo by the author)

However, the well has been repaired, and water no longer seems to be a significant problem. The walls are dry, and moisture does not seem to be causing problems at this time.

*Recommendation:* Remove the stucco from the walls. Repoint masonry walls. Replace mortar and stucco to match existing with respect to color, texture, and strength.

The floor slab is broken and cracked in numerous places and should be replaced. This presents an opportunity to create a better drainage system beneath the slab. The floor should be excavated and a layer of gravel installed for improved drainage. Following a site visit in May 2003, A.C.T Services of Georgetown, Texas, recommended the installation of a layer of MiraCLAY, a brand of bentonite clay waterproofing membrane, under the concrete slab;

bentonite clay is highly absorbent and its very absorbency provided is waterproofing ability. This type of product and installation would be appropriate in this situation because the floor needs to be replaced, and preserving its integrity is not critical. Furthermore, bentonite is non-toxic<sup>27</sup>.

A.C.T Services also recommended waterproofing the walls using a product called SONOBLOCK, a cementitious coating designed for this purpose. However, its use would not be appropriate for the Naumann House. The application of such a product might also compromise the integrity and appearance of the historic wall. One of the major components of this material is portland cement, which might be incompatible (that is, too hard) with the existing materials in the wall. Once the material is cured, it can only be removed mechanically, easily damaging the wall. Its gray (or white) color would not be an appropriate match for the existing wall<sup>28</sup>. Also, water infiltration is no longer a significant problem in the basement. If no action seems warranted, it is best not to take preventative action that might have a deleterious or changing effect on the historic structure. The waterproofing of the floor should be sufficient.

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<sup>27</sup> Bid letter from ATC Services, 4/22/03 and spec sheet from Carlisle Coatings and Waterproofing, producer of MiraCLAY

<sup>28</sup> Bid letter from ATC Services, 4/22/03 and Material Safety Data Sheet from ChemRex, producer of SONOBLOCK

### Basement Stairs and Crawlspace

The basement stair itself is sound, but the walls on the north and east side of the stair (though not the more substantial stone wall on the west side) show evidence of significant water damage below the grade line. The stucco has cracks all over its surface and the stucco is discolored from biological growth.

*Recommendations:* When the addition is removed, the stair will need to be sheltered to prevent water from getting into the basement. The stucco in the stairwall should be removed and this part of the stairwall rebuilt with adequate protection from ground moisture. This can be done without losing historic fabric, and must be done to prevent further damage in the immediate vicinity. The existing stairwall is probably too thin and fragile to prevent water infiltration, so a new wall should be substantial.

### Basement Windows

The two basement windows on the west side have been filled in with concrete to grade level. The wall part is filled in with wood siding (now greatly deteriorated, and missing on the left side of the left cellar), with a metal vent at center. The metal vent on the left has broken apart. From the exterior, the original window is visible behind the siding.

On the exterior of the basement window on the east elevation, the stucco is coming off on the stone wall on the north side, and there is a major crack in the right corner of the stone in front. There is vegetation growing in the floor of the

opening. There is a pane of glass missing, and the window frame needs repainting. Finally, many of the exterior stones have been broken into pieces.



Figure 5.9 Exterior of basement window; west façade. (Photo by the author)



Figure 5.10 Exterior of basement window; east façade (Photo by the author)

*Recommendation:* Remove the concrete and other material that currently block the cellar windows on the West side of the house. Replace the stone if necessary; however, because this stone is not structural, it may not be necessary to replace each stone. Repair or replace any damaged stucco to match existing.

Clear the vegetation from around the windows, and repair the broken windowpane on the east window. Repaint the windows. The neutral beige color appears to be a decorative motif on the ranch, and this color would be an appropriate choice.

Exterior Fixtures: Utilities boxes, satellite dish, antennae, etc.

The condition of the satellite dish and antennae is unknown but is presumed to be in either good or repairable order. However, this equipment is not compatible with and compromises the historic character of the house. This is particularly true given the prominent placement of the equipment at the front of the house.

The condition of the utility boxes and exposed pipes and conduit is also unknown but is presumed to be in either good or repairable order. This material is currently located on the addition, not the original structure. It will thus need to be relocated when the addition is removed.

*Recommendation:* Remove the antennae and satellite dish from the house. If these are to be used in the future, they should be located at a distance from the building. Locating them next to a tall feature such as a telephone pole would

lessen their visual impact. Necessary equipment should be located on the least conspicuous part of the house or away from the house where possible. Right now, the least conspicuous part may be on the west side, towards the rear. However, this may change when the addition is removed, and the best place for these elements should be reevaluated at that time. The visual impact of this equipment should be minimized.

## Chapter Six

### Proposed Rehabilitation

#### Proposed Rehabilitation

As noted in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, it is preferable to rehabilitate a historic building for the purpose for which it was originally used. This is not always possible. In the case of the Naumann house, the original use (as a residence) is not a viable solution. First, there is already sufficient housing on the property. A house for the Ranch Foreman is currently being constructed at another location on the property. The 1942 ranch house meets the need of both the owners when they are in residence, and paying visitors at other times. There is no one who might occupy the Naumann House as a regular residence.

Second, and perhaps most to the point, the use of the house was not historically limited solely to its function as a shelter; rather, the house was also used as a base of operations for numerous other activities. Historically, there has been an intimate relationship between the house and the surrounding land - between daily life, daily working of the land, and the ongoing preparation of foodstuffs and other household necessities. These activities were in fact closely integrated, as they have always been in most rural homesteads. Just as the

chimney is the interior physical axis, the house is the axis of the historic cultural landscape of which is a part.

Thus there are numerous alternate uses that can provide continuity with the activities historically associated with the house, other than just housing. The activities that were historically practiced in and around the house provide a good guide for the rehabilitation of the property. These activities are connected with the physical qualities of the house that define its historic character. The original door and windows are one example: these provide particular points of access to and views of outdoor workspace.

In fact, the standards for rehabilitation as defined by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards do allow for changes in patterns of use: "A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships<sup>29</sup>." The Browning Ranch Cultural Landscape Report from 2003 identified the site as a "landscape of transformation." By this it was meant that the landscape has changed over time, and that change, and adaptation to evolving circumstances, is part of its ongoing ranch. This idea (together with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards) should also guide the rehabilitation of the Naumann House.

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<sup>29</sup> The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/secstan1.htm> (accessed November 1, 2004)

Identifying a satisfying period of significance is problematic with this house, given its transformations over time. But the features that give the house its multi-layered historic character can be revealed, repaired, and made useful again, beginning with the removal of the addition. With careful consideration of this character, there is some freedom to transform the house into a new kind of place that complements both the past and ongoing activities at the ranch.

The mission of the Browning Ranch today is educational, specifically with regard to watershed management. Groups (from schools or elsewhere) are educated in the kinds of ecologically restorative work that is currently being done on the ranch. However, the ranch is not a purely natural place; it has been inhabited for at least a hundred years, and the ranch is as much a cultural as it is a natural landscape. In response to the particular history of this site and the historic cultural landscape of which it is a part, this report proposes rehabilitating the Naumann House so that a new teaching kitchen may be installed within the walls of the original house. The kitchen would represent a continuation of the cultural role of the ranch. Like the ranch of which it is a part, it too would be an educational facility, of a different but complementary sort. Restoration work on the ranch will require an examination of the immediate agricultural landscape. The kitchen could be used in conjunction with various types of restorative work on the immediate agricultural landscape, including the orchard, garden, and smokehouse. The kitchen could also be used in conjunction with the bed-and-

breakfast, as a sort of school (accommodating short workshops on small-scale agriculture, regional cooking, smoking, canning, etc.)

It is important that the house be actively used rather than mothballed or used for storage alone. The main reason for this is that the ranch is a living place. The ranch is host to a variety of activities at any given time. These activities include ecological restoration work, recreational activities such as hunting, get-togethers with family and friends, and all of the daily work that makes the ranch run. The house can, and should, be a useful and pleasurable part of this ongoing pattern of work and play. It is the historic heart of the property, and provides a physical anchor to an important phase in its history. It is a historic resource that should not be wasted, but should be integrated into the life of the ranch.

A kitchen, traditionally the heart of the home, is uniquely suitable for this house. The physical characteristics of the house make it ideal for small gatherings, classes, or workshops. It is centrally located within the built area of the ranch, and is just a short walk from the main ranch house and the other agricultural buildings. It is easily accessible from the road, and there is sufficient room for numerous cars. Storage can be more appropriately located elsewhere on the property.

### New Construction within the Original Building

In order to use the Naumann House as a kitchen and teaching facility, some new construction will be required within the original stone walls. A number of factors should be considered when planning any design.

For example, it may be desirable to leave traces of previous walls intact and visible when designing new counters or cabinets, which may obscure particular portions of the walls. Pay attention to any marks found on the original walls, and consider what they might suggest about the history of the interior. A discovery of a finish other than the stucco may determine future design choices as well. Any such finishes or traces should be carefully documented before new work is begun, particularly if preservation of the element is not possible. Consideration of specific issues follows.

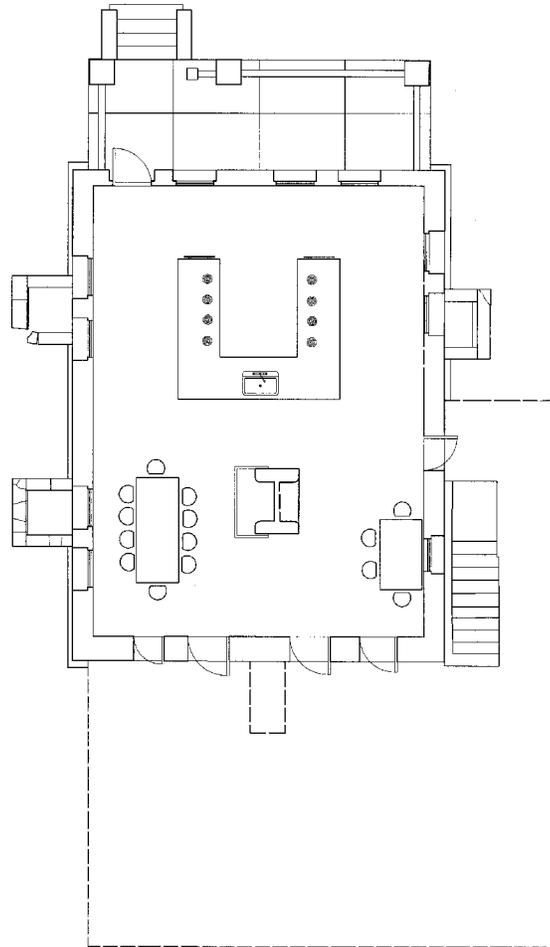


Figure X. Proposed rehabilitation: A possible plan. Note central work island and dotted line showing potential deck. North is at top. (Drawing by the author)

### Systems

As noted in Existing Conditions Report, the best way to heat, cool, and ventilate this small building is naturally. HVAC systems take up a good deal of space, and are not truly necessary, since the house will not be serving as a residence. If it is decided that artificial heating and cooling are necessary,

components should be restricted to the attic and basement. The masonry walls and the interior main floor should be protected from inappropriate intrusions.

Still, electrical and plumbing systems will be needed. In this regard, the important thing is to preserve the integrity of the masonry wall. Interior piping and conduit should be exposed, so that the wall is not physically compromised by their installation. The floor and the basement can also provide suitable space without compromising the character or fabric of the house.

### Workspace

Some amount of workspace will be required, in the form of counters or tables. Work surfaces should not be fixed in place so that they permanently obscure large sections of the masonry walls. An island counter would be one way of keeping the structure unobscured and providing storage. Tables would also be an ideal choice because they can be moved around as needed and are not permanently affixed to the wall. Counters with open shelving below would also be one way of providing sufficient workspace while preserving visual continuity of the wall.

Considering the site and context of the house, outdoor workspace may be desirable. Currently, the only such space is the porch and, possibly, the small side patio on the east side of the house. Creating new work or gathering space at the front of the house would compromise the historic visual character of the house. However, the removal of the addition presents an opportunity to create new

outdoor workspace in the backyard. The existing foundation could be used to support a deck of some kind at the same level as the interior of the house. This deck (or patio) would be accessible from the two newly revealed back doors.

### Storage

Some amount of storage will be required. This includes storage of some wet and dry foodstuffs as well as tools and other equipment. There should be room for storage of some frequently used materials within the new kitchen. Undercounter storage is one possibility. An island counter can accommodate a great deal of storage including refrigerated drawers. Using open shelving along the walls would preserve the visual continuity of those walls. The basement can also be used for some kinds of storage, as it has been in the past. There is ample room there for shelving and storage of any larger pieces of furniture or equipment not in daily use.

### Ventilation

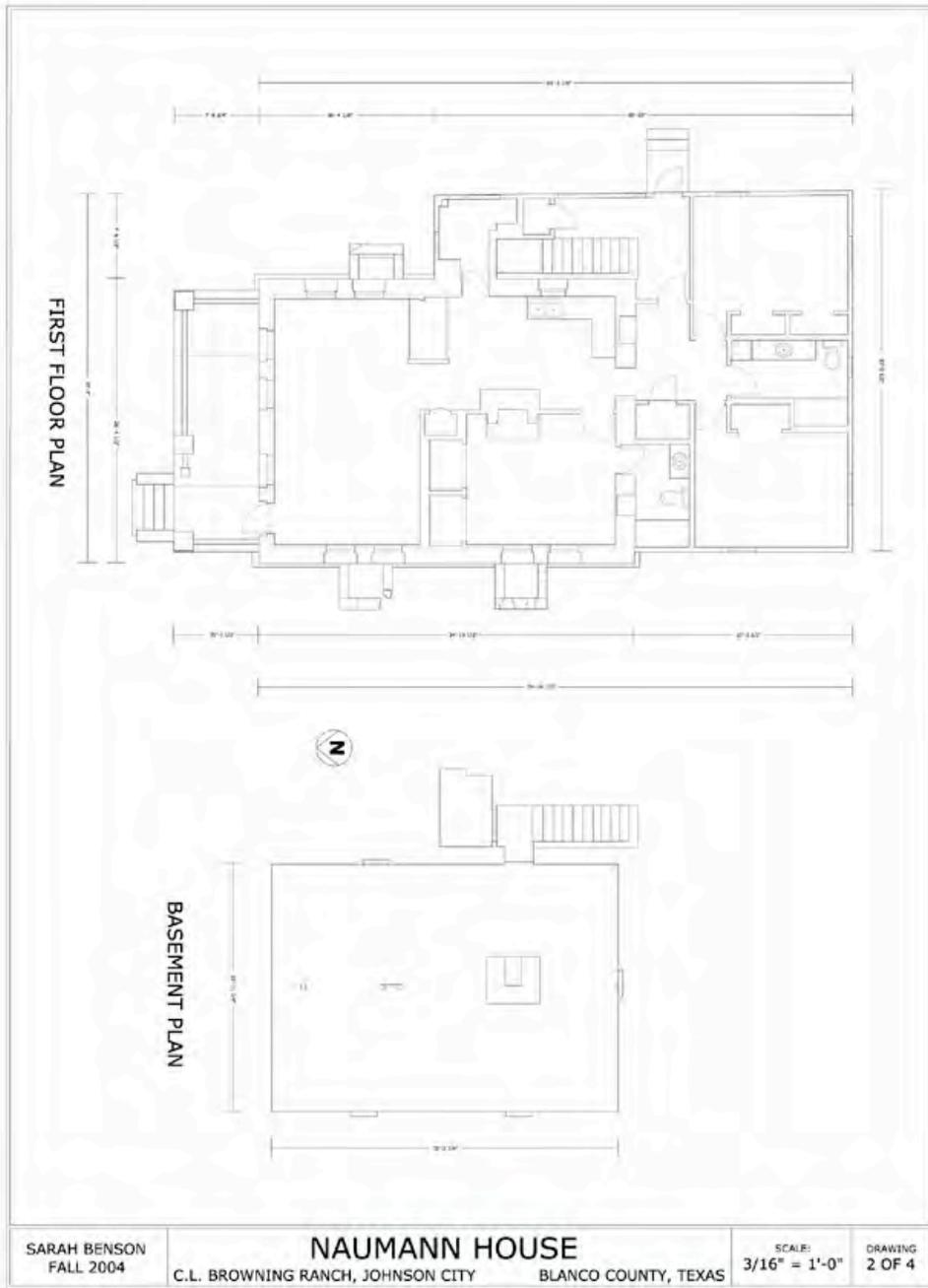
A newly installed cooktop will require ventilation. Ventilation should not compromise the masonry wall. The cooktop can be close to the wall or in the center of the room, but the ventilation should go through the ceiling and attic rather than through the wall.

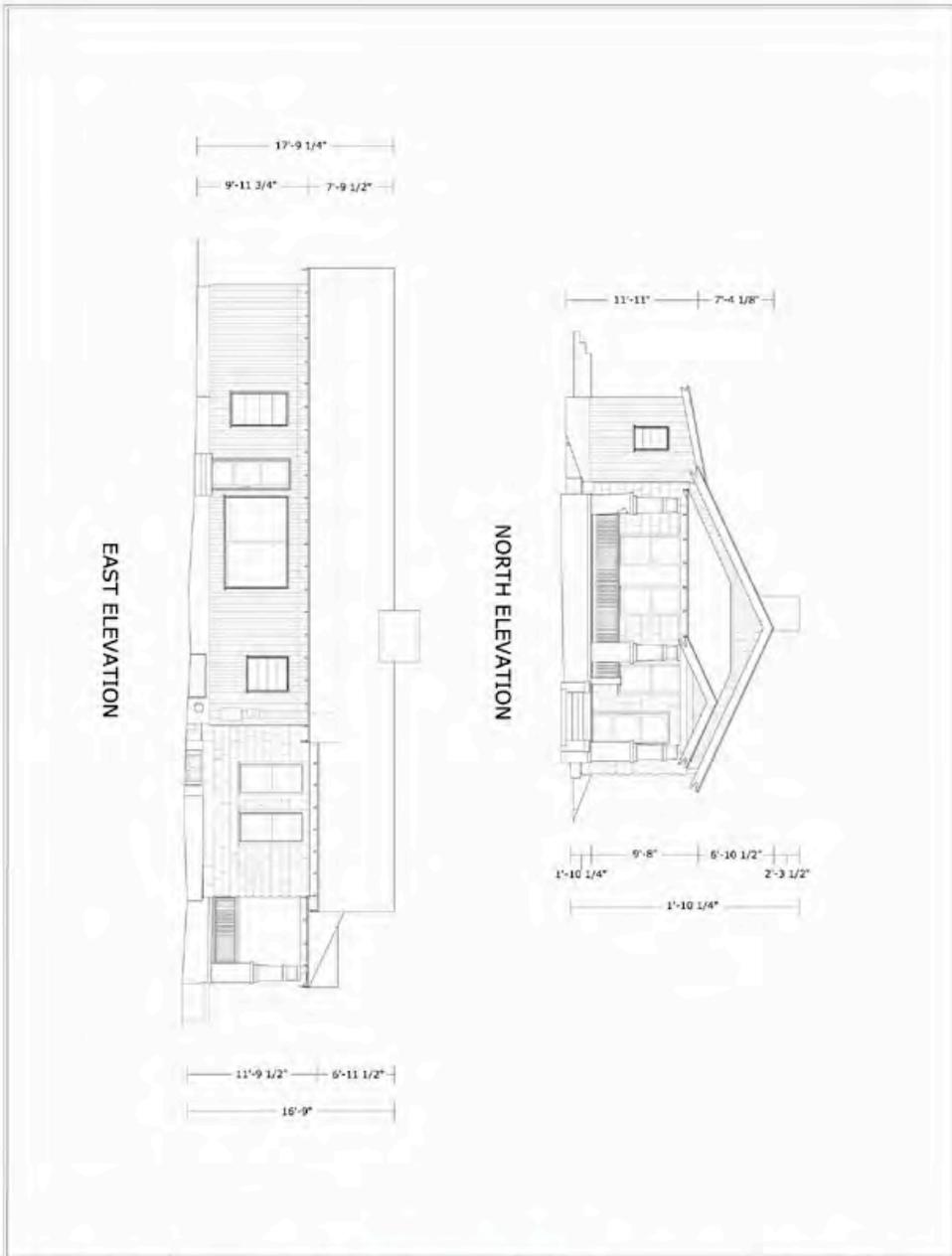
## **Appendix**

### **Measured Drawings**

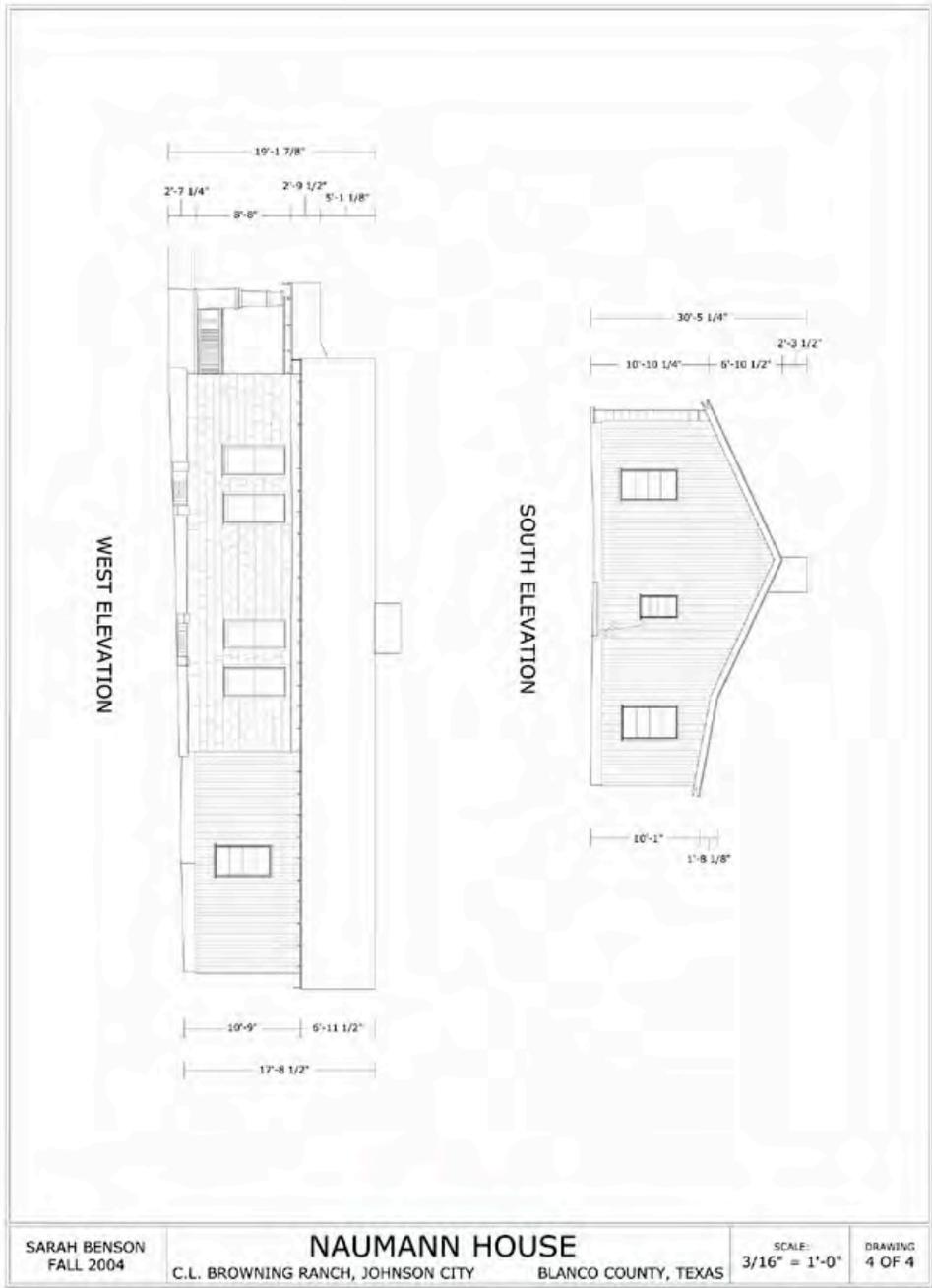


SARAH BENSON FALL 2004	<b>NAUMANN HOUSE</b> C.L. BROWNING RANCH, JOHNSON CITY      BLANCO COUNTY, TEXAS	SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"	DRAWING 1 OF 4
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SARAH BENSON FALL 2004	<b>NAUMANN HOUSE</b>		SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"	DRAWING 3 OF 4
C.L. BROWNING RANCH, JOHNSON CITY		BLANCO COUNTY, TEXAS		



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