

MULTIPLE NOMINATION HISTORIC DISTRICT SUMMARY FORM

MRA/THEMATIC NOMINATION TITLE: Washington County Multiple Resource Area

HISTORIC DISTRICT NAME: Springfield Historic Commercial District

OWNER OF PROPERTY: See attached continuation sheets

(On Continuation Sheets list all properties by address which are included within the district and provide the names and addresses of their owners.)

DESCRIPTION:

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

(Use Continuation Sheets)

SIGNIFICANCE

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1818-1938 Builder/Architect unknown (some attributed to Frank Brewer).

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

(Use Continuation Sheets)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreege of nominated property approx. 6 acres

Quadrangle name Springfield

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

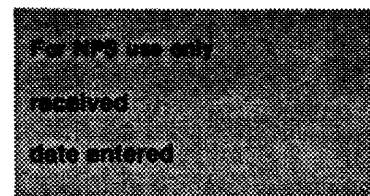
A	<u>1 6</u>	<u>6 5 6 9 2 0</u>	<u>4 1 7 2 1 5 0</u>	B	<u>1 6</u>	<u>6 5 6 8 8 0</u>	<u>4 1 7 2 0 7 0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1 6</u>	<u>6 5 6 6 3 0</u>	<u>4 1 7 2 1 8 0</u>	D	<u>1 6</u>	<u>6 5 6 7 0 0</u>	<u>4 1 7 2 2 4 0</u>
E	<u>1 6</u>	<u>6 5 6 8 1 0</u>	<u>4 1 7 2 2 2 0</u>	F	<u>1 6</u>	<u>6 5 6 8 4 0</u>	<u>4 1 7 2 2 4 0</u>
G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

(Use Continuation Sheets)

DISTRICT MAPS ATTACHED:

1. District Boundary Map Showing Contributing & Noncontributing Properties.
2. District Map Showing Location & Direction of Numbered Photographs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormHistoric Resources of Washington County; Springfield Historic Commercial District
Continuation sheet Description Item number Page 1Description

The historic business district of Springfield consists of a row of commercial and institutional buildings lining each side of Main Street for nearly one block to either side of the Washington County Courthouse. The district contains 39 buildings, 31 of which contribute to the integrity of the district. The only intrusive elements are three small vacant lots, on the southeast corner of Main and Mary Cran Streets (site of the Walton Hotel), on the south side west of Main Street two lots east of Doctor Street, and on the north side of West Main Street five lots east of Doctor Street. The area was built up around the public square laid out in 1793 at the intersection of what would be called Main and Main Cross Streets. The public square, as referred to in historic documents, is recognizable today as a widening of Main Cross Street directly west of the courthouse. The commissioners in charge of the rebuilding of the second courthouse after its destruction by fire in 1814 decided to reorient the courthouse toward Main Street. Apparently the previous building faced the wider section of Main Cross Street.

Other than the Courthouse of 1818 (WSS-2 listed in the National Register on July 25, 1977), no buildings survive intact in the district from the early years of Springfield's settlement. The remaining portion of a frame structure at 108 E. Main Street, across from the courthouse, may represent the only fragment of early commercial Springfield standing today. This was the early nineteenth-century address of D.H. Spears, an early and well-known silversmith active from 1815-1876.¹ The facade has been heavily altered. Commercial structures associated with other early businessmen such as Elias Davison, said to be Springfield's first merchant (see Elmwood NR form), have not survived.

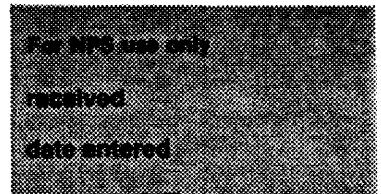
Many lots in the district were occupied by dwellings, as shown on Sanborn Insurance Maps, before Springfield took its present architectural form in the late nineteenth century. The builders apparently responded to the arrival of the railroad in 1889 and modest prosperity following the war and the depression of the 1870's. The three-story commercial structure at WSS-50 and 51 may be the earliest structure from the late 19th-century rebuilding of the town to remain. It originally housed three businesses on the ground floor below a continuous and unified cornice and row of second floor windows above. The brick building is located just east of the courthouse and features an Italianate bracketed cornice.

The streetfronts of Springfield have been altered in a few cases by the stripping of detail or refacing in a later period. Such is the case with the Louisville Store (WSS-44) and the Paramount Theatre, which, with the Peoples Deposit Bank of 1889, has been refaced again in 1960 to form a new and noncontributing front for the First and Peoples Bank (WSS-27). The original Peoples Bank building had been a highly ornamented building with

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Historic Resources of Washington County: Springfield Historic Commercial District
Continuation sheet Description Item number Page 2



an iron storefront and pressed metal cornice. For the most part however, Springfield's brick commercial buildings show a state of preservation and continuity of ownership and occupancy that is remarkable.

Robertson's Dry Goods began operation as Robertson and McChord in 1880, and has occupied its present building (WSS-22) since its construction in 1896. Several stores, including Cunningham's Dry Goods (WSS- 54), which was founded by Clelland Cunningham in 1837, and the Louisville Store have been in the same location for almost a century under continuous ownership.² The McClure and Mayes Building (WSS-30) has housed a hardware store under only two owners since its construction in the 1910's. These stores form key commercial and architectural landmarks to this day.

The Robertson and McChord building of 1896 is the most imposing of the town's commercial structures as it dramatically ties down the corner of Main and Main Cross Streets diagonally opposite the courthouse. The building features arched second-floor windows and a corbelled cornice on both streetfronts, and the corner is surmounted by a domed tower. The interior retains a fine open stair to the second-story sales floor and early cases and counters. Next door is the G.L. Haydon building (WSS-23) of the same date, a two-story building of similar style with the builder's name and date beneath a metal pediment. The corbelled brickwork is elaborate, while the storefront below has been altered.

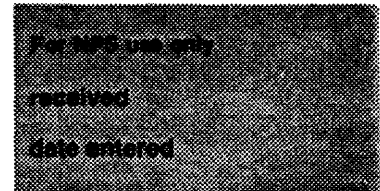
The more conventional 3-story Louisville Store built before 1896 on the opposite corner of West Main Street, was originally ornamented with applied arched label molds and a bracketed Italianate cornice. It received a new ornamental pressed brick skin in the mid - nineteen-thirties, but a two-story wing or semi-detached five-bay structure to the rear retains similar decorative features. The new streetfront features tripartite windows and narrow stringcourses.

The fourth corner of the intersection of Main and Main Cross Streets was occupied until 1981 by the Walton Hotel building. The three-story hotel, built in 1904 in a Classical Revival style was similar in scale and more richly ornamented than the Robinson Building, and with the buildings on the other corners made the intersection an architectural climax to arrival on the square from any direction. A photograph (# 1) shows the south side of Main Street at the crossroads in the first years of the century.

The block of Main Street to the east of Main Cross Street is occupied by several blocks of two-story storefronts in groups of two and three, with individual commercial buildings interspersed between. WSS-55 originally housed two businesses on the south side of the street. The pressed metal cornice, regular second-story fenestration,

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Historic Resources of Washington County: Springfield Historic Commercial District
Continuation sheet Description Item number Page 3

corbelled brick, and decorative metal window heads are typical of commercial buildings found throughout Kentucky. Similar plans and elevations, as well as elements of the buildings including pressed metal decorative and cast iron structural parts, were available from firms like George Mesker of Evansville, Indiana, from ca. 1890 - ca. 1920. The storefronts of this building have been altered. The nearby WSS-54, which has housed Cunningham's Dry Goods since its building in the mid 1890's, contained three stores originally. In this case the storefronts and second story windows are handled individually for each unit, whether for picturesque effect or to satisfy functional requirements. All three are united, however, under one continuous pressed metal cornice with brackets. The storefronts appear to be mostly in original condition and are among the best preserved in the town.

Indented in the south side of Main Street stands the Springfield Presbyterian Church (WSS-9) of 1888, with its 1838 tower dwarfed by the adjacent commercial buildings. At the east end of the district stands the McClure and Mayes Building (WSS-30), which is a well-preserved twentieth century brick structure with strip pilasters, corbelling, and a stepped parapet.

The block west of Main Cross is characterized by the two large store buildings at the eastern end, the Louisville Store and Robinson and McChord Dry Goods, by individual commercial buildings mostly of later date, and by several institutional buildings, the Springfield Masonic Lodge of 1903 (WSS-38), the Opera House of 1900 (WSS-12), and the E. H. Campbell Building of 1926 (WSS-40). The masonic lodge building utilizes the vaguely classical round-arched second-story windows with stone dressings which can be found on so many Springfield area buildings of the 1900 - 1905 period, including St. Catherine's Convent (WSS-35), the Springfield Graded School (WSS-14), the Barber House (WSS-129) and the Walton Hotel, several of which are said to be the work of Nelson County architect Frank Brewer. It is possible that the hotel and lodge were designed by Brewer.

Adjacent to the lodge is the Opera House, built in 1900 by John R. Barber, who was shortly to build his large home on the site of the Walton House of 1790 (WSS-129) west of Springfield. The three-story structure housed several commercial firms on the first floor and an auditorium in the upper stories, originally reached through a central entry in a four-story tower. The pyramidal-roofed tower, roofed with slates and surmounted by a turned finial, together with the domed tower on the Robinson and McChord Building enlivens the skyline of Springfield. The building is sparsely ornamented, but with its hipped roof and dentillated cornice, it contrives to stand apart from the commercial rows to either side, partly through a slight indentation of the principal facade.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Historic Resources of Washington County: Springfield Historic Commercial District
Continuation sheet Description Item number Page 4

The two-story E. H. Campbell Building of 1926 is typical of the buildings from the second and third decades of the twentieth century. The second floor was originally used for drilling by the "Home Guard" but today is the meeting place of the Knights of Columbus. The building, which anchors the western end of the district first housed a hardware store on the ground floor. The principal facade features a symmetrical stepped parapet above panels outlined in stone, in the central panel of which is the builder's name and the date of construction, as was usual in the storefronts of Springfield. Paired and single windows and several narrow belt courses of stone are located above the wide storefront, now much altered.

Most of the rest of the block is occupied by buildings which are either typical but undistinguished commercial buildings of the period 1900 - 1938, or are noncontributing later structures which harmonize with the scale and proportion of the rest of the district. One building stands out from the rest, however, and that is the bank building at WSS-36. The site has been the location of a bank since as early as 1818. The present building seems to have been built by the time the First National Bank opened on the site in 1871, having purchased the lot from the Washington Bank. The storefront was considerably altered by a previous owner, and the original cornice has been removed, but the tall arched second floor windows still carry hood molds similar to those once on the facade of the Louisville Store.

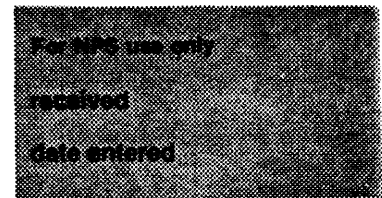
At the end of the south side of the block are two originally residential buildings, WSS-21 and WSS-39. WSS-21 was apparently at one time a two-story brick I-house of the second half of the nineteenth century, but has been reduced to only two bays sited on the front edge of the lot, the only example of an urban dwelling remaining in the town. The adjacent house at WSS-39 is a two-story frame T-plan sited in the center of the lot. It is typical of late nineteenth and early twentieth century housing on the outlots and adjacent streets of Springfield and has sustained little exterior damage, in spite of a storefront having been built in front of the projecting section.

Across the street west of the Louisville Store is a grocery store housed in what was a Ford dealership (WSS-61). The one-story brick structure features a parapet with a central shallow curved pediment and a stone belt course. It is characteristic of automobile sales establishments of the nineteen-twenties.

On the widened section of North Main Cross Street adjacent to the courthouse are located a number of small brick buildings, apparently originally constructed as professional offices. The William H. Hayes Law Office (WSS-32) was standing as early as 1873, when Hayes acquired the lot. The one-story two bay building features

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Historic Resources of Washington County: Springfield Historic Commercial District
Continuation sheet Description Item number Page 5

a highly articulated surface with sunken panels, corbelling, and a bracketted metal cornice above Italianate hood molds over the door and window on the principal facade. It has housed the Women's Club since 1915. On the west side of the street is located a row of five less imposing offices, none of which showed up on insurance maps before 1898. The office on the northern end of the row (WSS-49) at the southwest corner of Main Cross and McChord Streets is the most elaborate of the two-bay one-story buildings. It features segmental arched openings below a corbelled parapet containing two shell-shaped panels. The other four offices were built in matching pairs (WSS-46/-48). The northernmost office, a similar two-bay brick building, is located across McChord Street and opposite the Hayes Law Office. The William C. McChord Law Office was listed on the National Register on December 11, 1978 as part of the nomination of the McChord House. The gable-roofed structure is ornamented with a gabled parapet and corbelling. It was built by McChord in 1902, at the same time his adjacent house was built. The group of offices forms a consistent edge for the "public square," and by their use primarily by lawyers' firms provide an appropriate setting for the courthouse.

FOOTNOTES

¹Interview with Mrs. E.O.Kelly, Springfield, Kentucky, June, 1984.

²Here and throughout the text, unless otherwise noted, information is derived from individual state inventory forms and National Register forms.

³The News Leader Illustrated Supplement, (Springfield, Kentucky: June 11, 1896).

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kelly, Mrs. E. O.Jr. .Springfield, Kentucky. Interview, June, 1984.

The News Leader Illustrated Supplement . Springfield, Kentucky: June 11, 1896.

"Main Street: Many Changes Have Taken Place." Bicentennial Edition Springfield Sun, January 31, 1974, p.3.

Sanborn Insurance Maps.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Historic Resources of Washington County: Springfield Historic Commercial District
Continuation sheet Statement of Significance/ Item number 8/10 Page 1/1

Verbal Boundary Description

The Springfield Historic Commercial District is significant under criterion C. The many finely-detailed stores and other buildings in the two-block district represent the extent of commercial development in Springfield. Most date from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries and reflect a period of growth and prosperity in the town and Washington County. The district also contains the county courthouse, one of the earliest courthouse buildings in the state still in use. The densely built urban streetscape, typical of other early central Kentucky county seat towns, is well preserved with few noncontributing elements. Many of the key buildings, including the Opera House, the Masonic Lodge, and the Walton Hotel (demolished) date from the first decade of the twentieth century. The design of the Walton Hotel and the Masonic Lodge may be attributed, together with several other buildings outside the district, to architect Frank Brewer.

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northeast corner of lot R1-17, south to McChord Alley, east along north line of lots R1-9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 following south side of McChord Alley, south along east line of lot R1-9 to south side of Main Street, east along north line of lot BL2-9, south along the east line of lot BL2-9, west following south line of lots BL2-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, crossing Main Cross Street and following the south line of lots G3-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, north along the west line of lot G3-8, east along north line of lot G3-8, north crossing Main Street and following the west line of lot B5-17, east along north line of lots B5-12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, north along west line of lots B5-7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, east along north line of lot B5-7, crossing Main Cross Street, north along west line of lot R1-17, east along north line of lot R1-17 to point of origin.

The district contains a total of 39 buildings, eight of which are noncontributing. The boundaries were drawn so as to include only the buildings and the lots on which they stand.




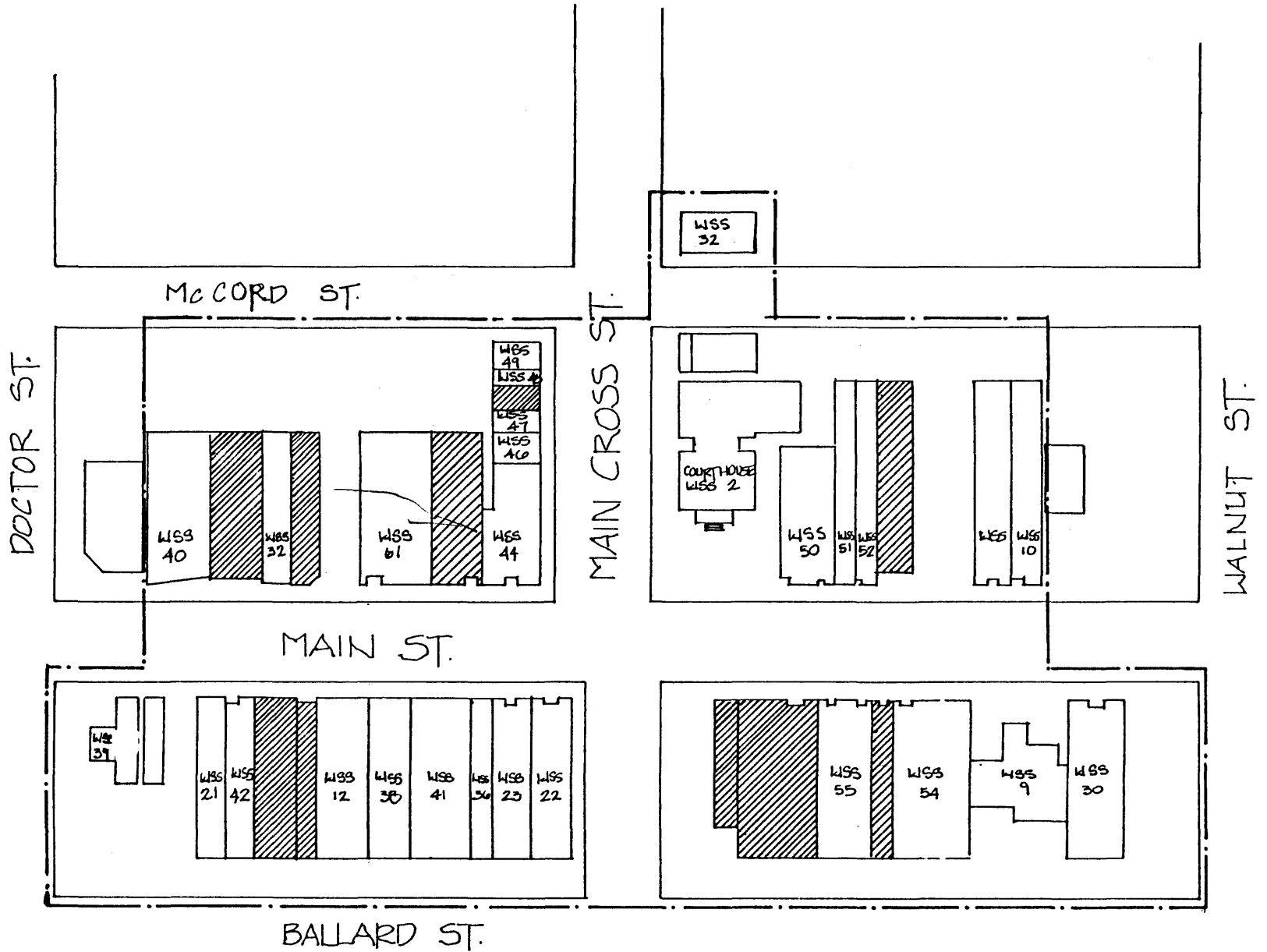
NORTH

MAP #1

SPRINGFIELD HISTORIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

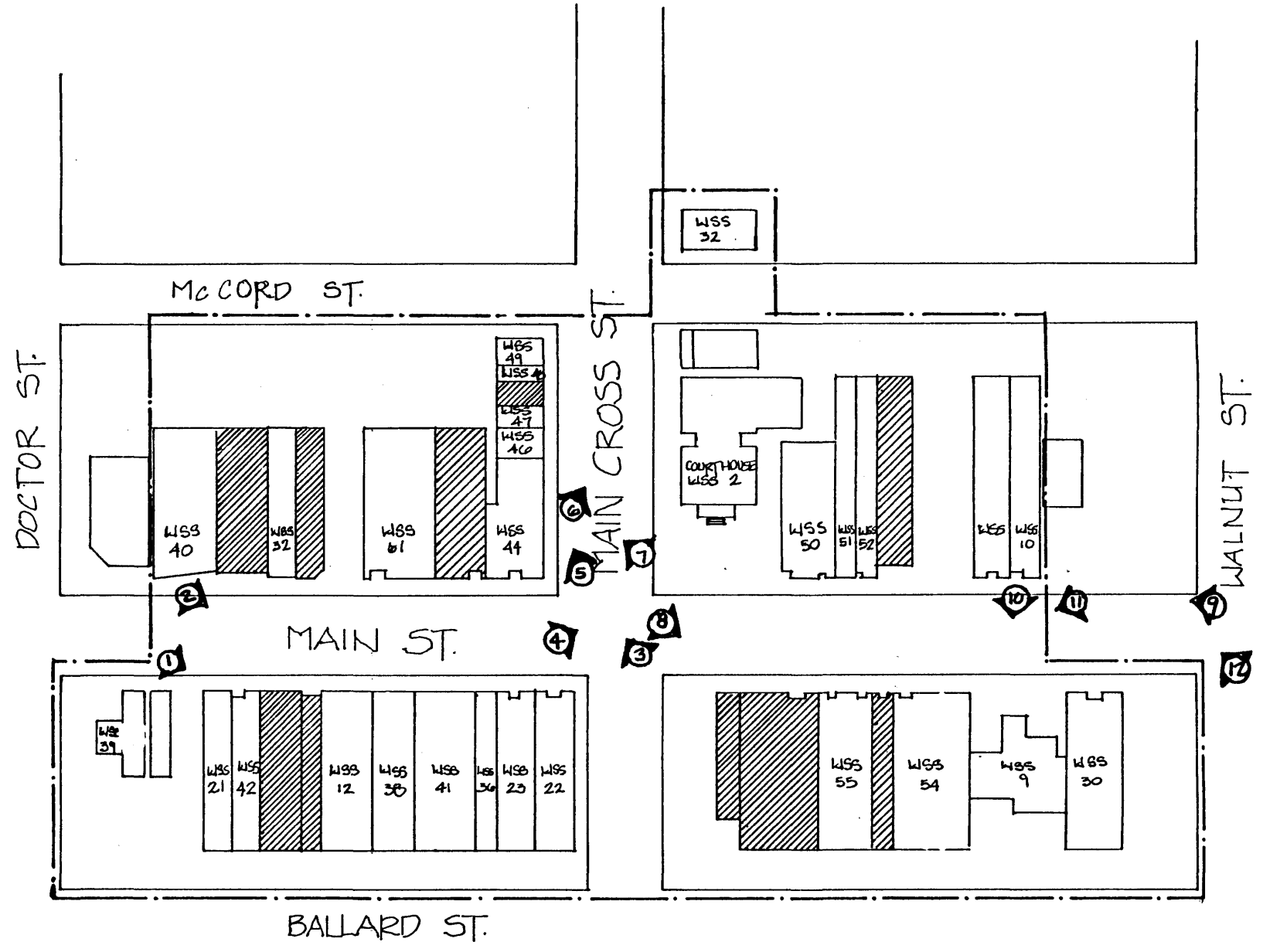
WASHINGTON COUNTY, KENTUCKY DISTRICT BOUNDARIES & NONCONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

 - NON CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES





NORTH




MAP #2

SPRINGFIELD HISTORIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

WASHINGTON COUNTY, KENTUCKY

PHOTO KEY

 - NON CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES