

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Harding Studio

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 43 West Broad Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Cookeville

N/A vicinity

state Tennessee

code

TN

county

Putnam

code 141

zip code 38501

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

#### Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Arthur T. Strayer

Signature of certifying official

Date

3/2/92

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Patrick Andrews

4/21/92

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: Specialty Store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style with Italianate influence

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

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roof WOOD

other Carrara glass

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

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The Harding Studio is located on West Broad Street in Cookeville, Tennessee approximately one-half mile west of the Putnam County Courthouse on the courthouse square. Constructed circa 1913, the building is a two-story brick commercial vernacular structure with Italianate influence, rectangular in shape, and set within a complex of commercial buildings reported to be originally known as the Greenwood Buildings.

The building rests on a brick foundation, is delineated by brick pilasters, and shares one pilaster with the building to the east. The bricks of these two buildings are 'toothed' together. The building's roof is a built-up roof on a wood deck supported by a wood framing system. The roof slopes to the rear and water is drained by gutter and downspouts.

The facade's (south elevation) first story has a parapet capped with tiles above an aluminum canopy extending over the sidewalk that replaced the original cloth canopy. The facade's brick was covered with blue, pigmented glass veneer during the 1920's. Large glass-in-aluminum display windows set thirty-six inches above sidewalk level span most of the storefront. The remainder of the storefront features two original oak wood doors. The western-most door leads to the second story, has an aluminum kick-plate, and originally held a long rectangular, single sheet of plate glass that will be replaced during restoration. The eastern-most door enters into the first story, is inset in the display windows about twenty-four inches and maintains a rectangular, single sheet of plate glass.

The facade's (south elevation) second story features a four course corbelled brick cornice, and two rectangular double-hung windows with limestone lintels and decorative metal hoods.

The rear of the building (north elevation) has rectangular double-hung windows with limestone window lintels on the upper facade. In the early 1920's a large pane of plate glass covering much of the lower facade's northern wall was installed to be used for northern light, considered the best lighting for photo sessions. After the studio closed, the window was in-filled with concrete block, and this year the upper-most portion of the window was reopened. A wooden door with plate glass transom leads into the rear of the building. The building does not extend to the alley as the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Harding Studio

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walls of the buildings on either side do, leaving a grassy enclosed area between the building and the alley. Railroad tracks from the nearby Depot Museum are laid almost parallel to the alley and the rear of the buildings.

The interior of the building remains authentic in most respects, and is currently being restored to its original appearance with the exception of a few modern conveniences. The floor plan of the studio is similar to most buildings used for mercantile trade during the early twentieth-century. The first floor consists of a front, public room used as retail space; a few small rooms partitioned for the studio and used as dressing rooms; a bath; and a photographer's room for taking pictures in the back. The first floor is constructed of wood rafters with a hardwood floor deck. The front room floor is covered with asphalt tile. The walls are plaster on brick, as they originally appeared. The ceiling was originally tongue-and-groove wood strips covered with cloth and stucco, but will be replaced with sheetrock. The original thirty-inch wainscoting remains in the public area. In 1950, four seven and one-half foot, lighted walnut and glass display cases were added to the public area.

The second floor is entered by a stairway and the floor plan consists of a rectangular landing with a wood railing overlooking the stairway, a large open room originally partitioned as two rooms used for developing, one smaller room used as a dark room that has been made into a bath this year, another large room used for storage, and a small room overlooking the street that was used as a small office. The walls were originally tongue-and-groove wood strips covered with wallpaper, but have recently been covered with sheetrock. Most of the walls have thirty-inch wainscoting, including the stairway. The ceilings were originally tongue-and-groove wood strips, but have been covered with sheetrock this year. The original moulding remains on all the interior windows and doorways and has been restored to its original appearance.

The heating system appears to have always been gas supplied and plans to install a heat pump are underway. The building has been rewired following the original electrician's plans, but using modern materials. Fluorescent lighting and new plumbing is being added this year.

Much care has been taken to assure every feature is carefully restored to its original appearance. The wainscoting will remain unpainted with the exception of the large room on the second story where the wainscoting was discolored by developing equipment. Interior decorative paints and wallcovers will be selected to match closely with the style of the early

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Harding Studio

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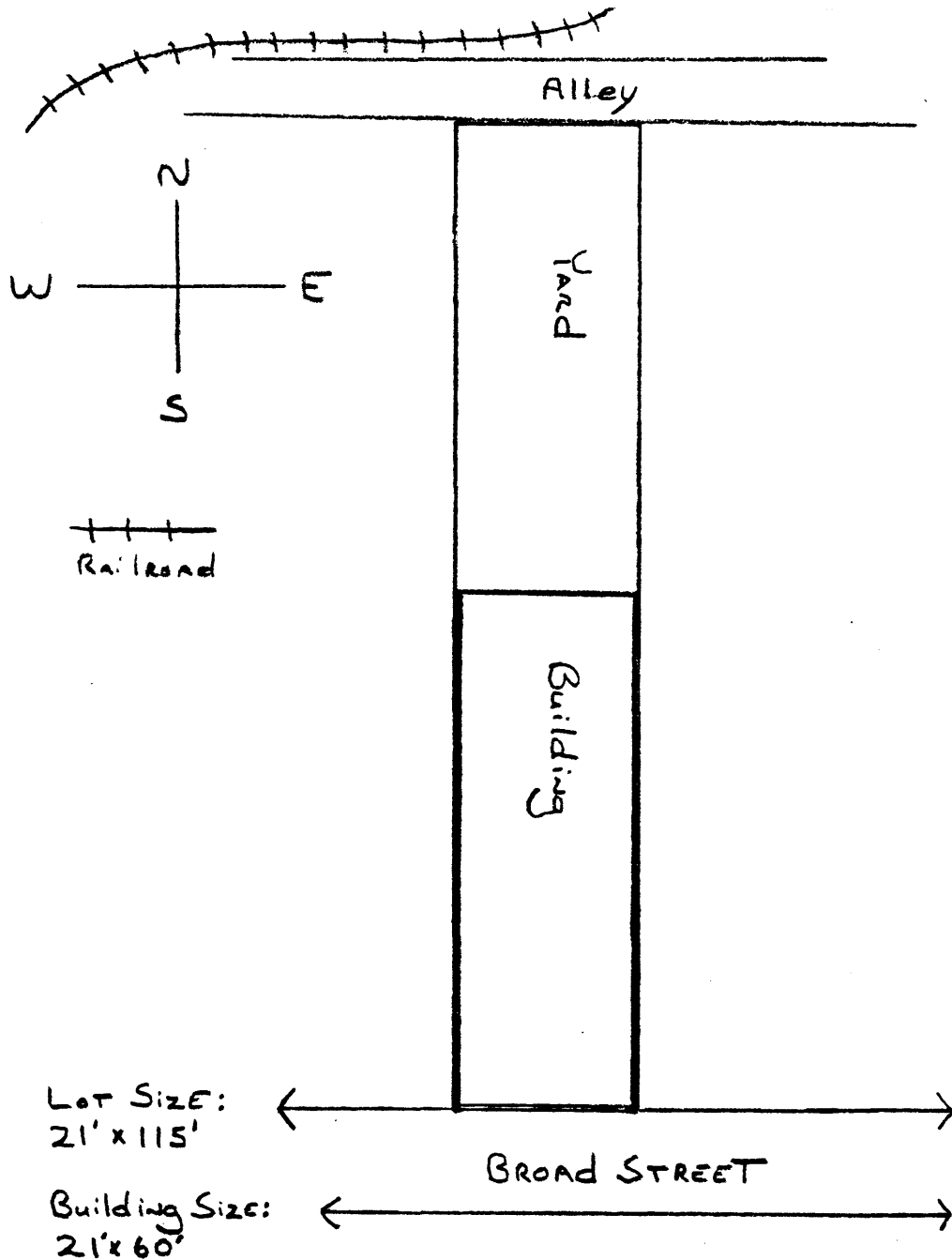
twentieth-century. No structural alterations will be made. The building will be leased as office space and will continue to maintain the Harding Studio name as a reminder to the community of the studio's significance to the history of the Upper Cumberland region.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Harding Studio

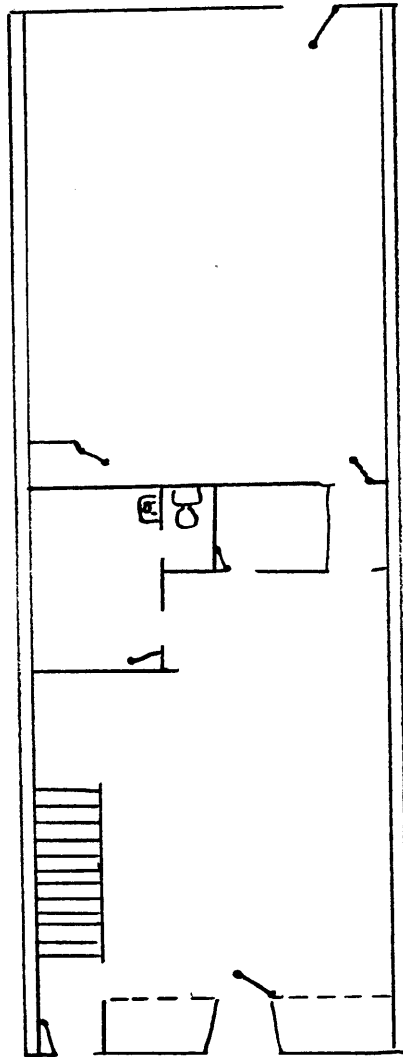
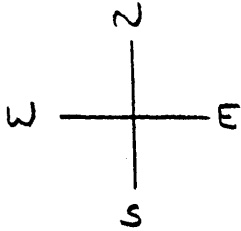


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

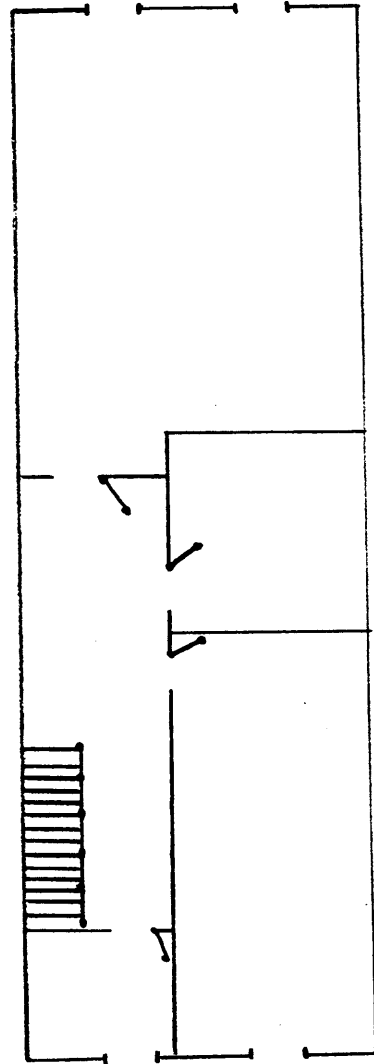
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Harding Studio



Ground Floor  
21' x 60'



Second Floor  
21' x 60'

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G    N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1916-1942

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Harding, Richard Henry

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Harding Studio is being nominated under National Register criterion B due to the building's lengthy association with a prominent individual. Richard Henry Harding founded the Harding Studio of photography in 1911, and the studio remained in operation for the next six decades. Working in this building starting in 1916, Harding recorded and preserved the entire scope of human experience in the Upper Cumberland area, documenting the growth and development of a geographically isolated region since the early twentieth-century.

The building's first occupant remains unknown. While some have reported a barber shop or a drug store occupied the building during the building's first few years, most say they have always known the building only as the Harding Studio. In approximately 1916 the studio moved to the building from its original location just off the courthouse square. The studio remained in the building until 1974 when the studio closed permanently. Since 1974, the building has remained vacant with the exception of a retail jewelry store that occupied the building during the late 1980's. The building was sold in 1991 and is currently under complete restoration.

Richard Henry Harding was born in Logansport, Indiana on January 13, 1883 to Richard Alexander and Charlotte Harding. After spending his early years working as a postal clerk for the railroad, he attended the Southern School of Photography in McMinnville, Tennessee around 1911. It was then that he traveled through Cookeville and became so taken with the area that he decided to move his family there and open his photography studio. He studied under the close supervision of the acclaimed W. S. Lively, a photographer and teacher recognized nationally for his contributions to the technological development of photography. After designing and building a camera with the largest glass negative in history, Lively used the camera to produce 30" by 60" prints, one which has been on display at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C. since 1920. Harding graduated

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A  
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:  
 State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	6	6	3	4	2	8	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

  
C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

  
D 

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Cookeville West 326 NE

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Laur Overstreet, Louis Jackson, H.P.S. II (Ed)  
organization N/A date May 1991  
street & number 457 Freeze Street telephone (615) 528-8428  
city or town Cookeville state Tennessee zip code 38501



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 2

Harding Studio

from the Southern School of Photography, one of only two such schools in the country, on July 26, 1914. The school burned in 1928, but remains an integral part of the history of photography.

Harding spent the next three decades of his life applying his skills gained from the school recording for prosperity weddings, funerals, reunions, sons leaving for war, anniversaries, business openings, entertainment events, engagements baby photos, and school photos. By far, his works include the majority of photographs displayed throughout the Upper Cumberland region. Extensive collections are at the Cookeville Citizen's Bank, the Depot Museum (Cookeville Railroad Depot, NR 11/17/85), thousands of homes throughout the region, and photos featured in the Pictorial History of Putnam County are Harding originals or copies. It is difficult to imagine the devastating absence of pictorial documentation of the region in the early 1900's had the Harding Studio not been in existence to photograph thousands of events and families in the mountainous region between Nashville and Knoxville. Richard Henry Harding's creative work is truly an invaluable and irreplaceable contribution to the people and the history of the Upper Cumberland community.

Putnam County was first organized in 1842 and reorganized in 1854, with Cookeville as the county seat, but it was not until the railroad arrived in the 1880's that the county experienced considerable growth. Cookeville's west side in particular developed substantially as a result of the railroad's arrival. In the 1890's, when the Nashville and Knoxville Railroad built a railroad depot one-half mile west of the County Courthouse, the value of land on the west side rose swiftly and commercial buildings and residences were erected all around the tracks, with some commercial buildings arriving even before the rails arrived. By 1902 the owners of the Tennessee Central purchased the Nashville and Knoxville railroad and connected the Cookeville line with larger rail networks, giving Cookeville access to markets throughout the eastern United States. By the early 1900's six passenger trains per day brought customers to Cookeville's west side where merchants waited eagerly to offer goods and services shoppers had rarely seen before. The Harding Studio located between what are reported to be a dry goods store and a drug store just about 10 yards east of the busy depot, attracting customers from miles around.

Richard Henry Harding treated his customers and handled his business affairs with the utmost professionalism. He is remembered for his strong sense of integrity and his lasting commitment to his family. Described as a creative individual who was a perfectionist in all that he accomplished,

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 3

Harding Studio

Harding's interests spanned a vast continuum of subjects. When he wasn't at the studio, he was creating beautiful arrangements of wild flowers throughout his yard, building lamps and various items out of wood in his work shop, and molding benches and yard decorations from concrete. An avid reader, he had an extensive collection of books on every subject imaginable. Photographing the countryside was an especially pleasing hobby, and he frequently loaded the family and his cameras in the car for drives through the country. A reserved and proper gentleman, he served as an elder to the First Presbyterian Church in the 1930's where he was a member for many years. After his death in 1944, his son Alard Clark Harding took over the operation of the studio. He continued to operate the family business until 1974 when he closed the studio due to his wife's serious health condition.

In 1988, in recognition of Harding's importance to the region, most of the contents of the studio including studio props, studio cameras and lights, and developing equipment and supplies were transferred to the Tennessee State Museum. The Harding Studio items are considered to be one of the Museum's more valued twentieth-century collections, and plans have been made to use the collection to recreate a truly representative, period shop in the Museum's permanent Twentieth-Century Tennessee street scene.

The remaining articles of the studio including photographs, negatives, and slides dating back as early as 1915 were donated to the Tennessee Technological University Archives. A collection of photographs documenting much of the technological development of photography including methods ranging from Tintypes and glass negatives to Kodachrome was among the donated articles.

The Harding Studio is truly representative of a professional businessman and his lifetime of recording people and events in the region during the early twentieth-century. The building the studio occupied stands as evidence and inspiration for younger generations of the paths forged and accomplishments made by pioneers of an earlier era.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Harding Studio

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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- DeLozier, Mary Jean. Putnam County, Tennessee 1850-1970. Cookeville, Tennessee: Putnam County, 1979.
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- Lively, Jr., William. Interview by Laura Overstreet September 3, 1991.
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- Moscip, Mildred. Interview by Laura Overstreet, June 11, 1991.
- Putnam County Tax Records.
- Ramsey, Glen. Interview by Laura Overstreet, August 16, 1991.
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 2

Harding Studio

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries include all of parcel 6 on Map 53G, group B, located in Putnam County Tax Assessor's Office.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

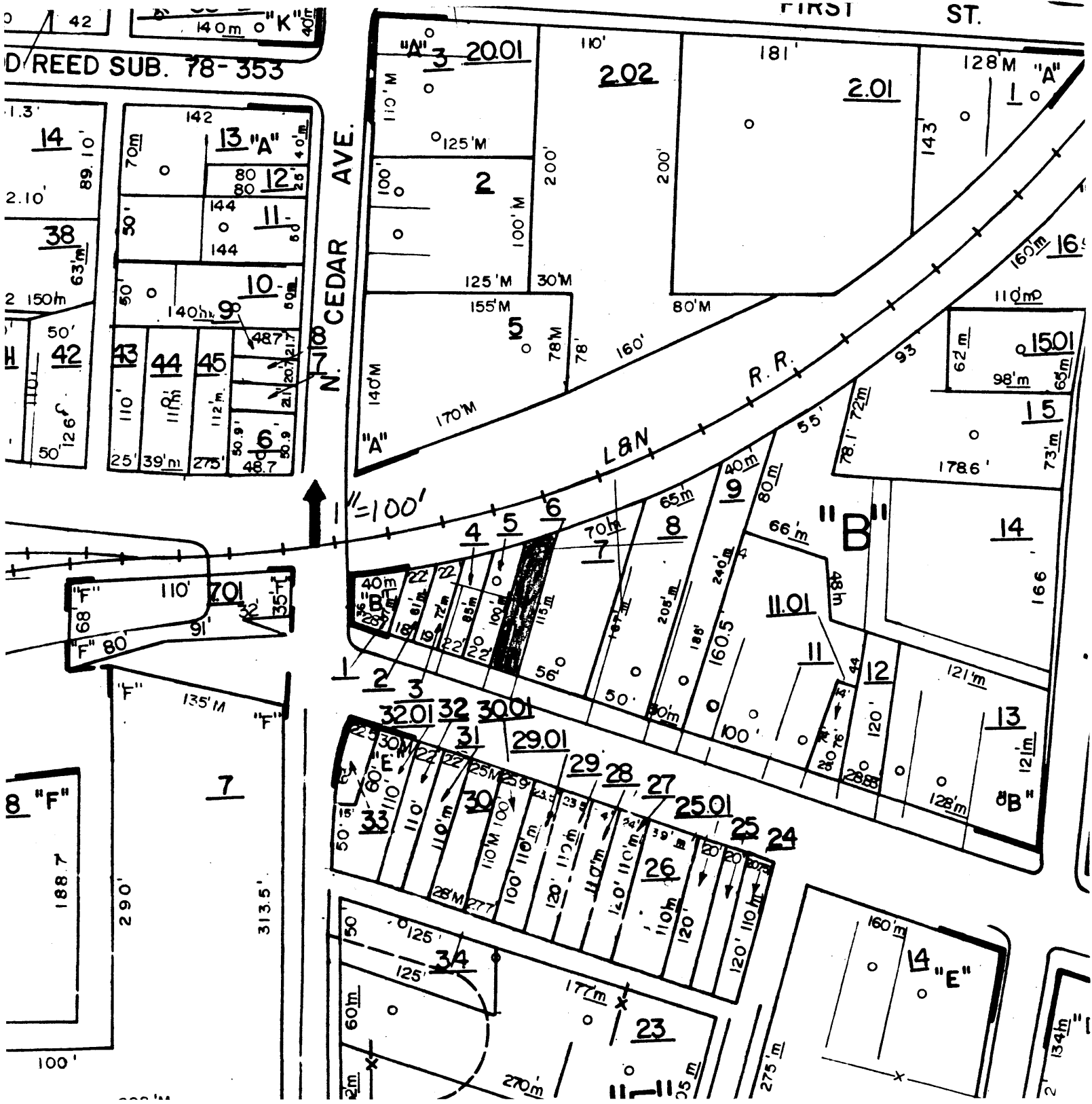
The boundaries include the lot and building that was historically associated with Richard Henry Harding

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 3

Harding Studio



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photos \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1

Harding Studio

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Harding Studio  
43 West Broad Street  
Cookeville, Tennessee 38501

Photos by: Ms. Laura Overstreet  
Date: May 1991  
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, Tennessee

Facing north, southern facade  
#1 of 13

Facing north, southern upper facade  
#2 of 13

Facing north, southern lower facade  
#3 of 13

Facing west, view from front of building  
#4 of 13

Facing west, view from rear of building  
#5 of 13

Facing south, northern facade  
#6 of 13

Facing northwest, southern facade and street view  
#7 of 13

Interior detail, second floor hall  
#8 of 13

Interior detail, stairway  
#9 of 13

Interior detail, public area  
#10 of 13

Interior detail, public area  
#11 of 13

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photos \_\_\_\_\_ Page 2

Harding Studio

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Interior detail, second floor hall  
#12 of 13

Interior detail, second floor, front room  
#13 of 13

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

The Harding Studio building suffered some damage from a fire on February 9, 1992. The fire occurred in another building on West Broad Street and the studio suffered only water damage and the loss of windows. Additional photographs of the building are included in the nomination to show what the building looks like today. The damage appears to be minimal and the building still retains much of its original integrity of materials, workmanship, and design. The building was in the process of being rehabilitated using the preservation tax incentives. We still believe that the building will meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards when the rehabilitation is completed.

Harding Studio  
43 West Broad Street  
Cookeville, Tennessee 38501  
Photos by: Ms. Laura Overstreet  
Date: February 14, 1992  
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, Tennessee

Facing north, southern facade  
#1 of 9

Facing northeast, southern facade  
#2 of 9

Facing south, northern facade  
#3 of 9

Interior detail, public area  
#4 of 9

Interior detail, first story rear room  
#5 of 9

Interior detail, stairway  
#6 of 9

Interior detail, second story landing  
#7 of 9

Interior detail, second story front room  
#8 of 9

Interior detail, second story rear room  
#9 of 9