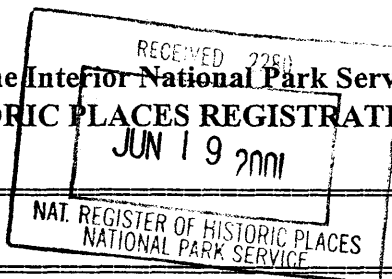


United States Department of the Interior National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



779

1. Name of Property

historic name: Charles Town Mining, Manufacturing, & Improvement Company Building  
other name/site number: Charles Town High School, Ranson City Hall

2. Location

street & number: 312 South Mildred Street not for publication: N/A  
city/town: Ranson vicinity: N/A  
state: West Virginia WV county: Jefferson code: 037 zip code: 25438

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet.)

Susan M. Perce 6/12/01  
Signature of Certifying Official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau Date

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau Date

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

- 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

*[Handwritten Signature]* *8/2/07*

\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property:**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	<b>TOTAL</b>

Name of related multiple property listing N/A  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business  
EDUCATION/School  
GOVERNMENT/Post Office  
GOVERNMENT/City Hall  
COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store  
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

**Current Functions**

GOVERNMENT/City Hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:**

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque Revival

**Materials**

Foundation Limestone  
Walls Limestone, Brick  
Roof Metal  
Other

**Narrative Description**

(See continuation on sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository: Ranson City Hall, 312 South Mildred Street Ranson, WV 25438

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreege of Property:** Less than one acre

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Quad Map Name: Charles Town, WV

18 253303 4353143  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(See continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(See continuation sheet.)

Charles Town Mining, Manuf., & Imp. Co. Bldg. Jefferson County, West Virginia  
**Name of Property** **County and State**

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Geoffrey Henry/Lead Architectural Historian, Jared N. Tuk/Architectural Historian

Organization: GAI Consultants, Inc. Date: 10 April 2001

Street & Number: 3412 Chesterfield Avenue Telephone: (304)926-8100

City or Town: Charleston State: WV Zip: 25304

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: City of Ranson Contact: P. David Mills, City Manager

Street & Number: 312 South Mildred Street Telephone: (304) 725-1010

City or Town: Ranson State: West Virginia Zip: 25438

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Charles Town Mining, Manuf., & Imp. Co. Bldg.     Jefferson County, West Virginia  
Name of Property    County/State

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The second story has rectangular 1 over 1 double-hung sash windows with stone and concrete lintels and sills and rectangular transoms. The second story windows in the central tower have round arched tops with corbeled brick hoods. The pronounced corners of the second and third stories are marked by raised brickwork. At the base of the second story, the bricks are corbeled from the band course to the recessed facade.

The third story of the building has 1 over 1 double-hung sash windows with segmented arched tops. These windows have soldier bond arched brick lintels, and stone and concrete sills. The third-story windows in the central tower are rectangular, with stone and concrete lintels and sills.

The roof line consists of pedimented cross-gabled corners which run the length and width of the building, except for the west elevation. On the primary elevation, there are two pedimented cross gables divided by the central tower.

The tower's original steeple was replaced c. 1930 by a shallow pyramidal roof with a finial; the two fourth-level arched windows are currently boarded shut. These windows have corbeled brick hoods and stone and concrete sills. There are also two small diamond-shaped brick projections from the tower at this level. The cross gables on the north and south elevations are nearly adjacent, only separated by approximately two feet. The west elevation has a single centered pedimented cross gable. All of the cross gables have semi-circular windows that are topped by soldier bond brick arches and surrounded by wooden molding. The roof is covered with standing seam metal.

Metal fire escapes have been added on the north and south elevations of the building. There are two fire escapes per elevation. These date from the building's history as a school, between 1894 and 1912. There is also a metal coal chute on the east end of the north elevation that dates from this period.

Alterations and additions to this building include a c. 1983 1-story, 5-bay wide shed-roofed rear wing, which is covered by vinyl siding. This has a concrete block foundation and a standing seam metal roof. One-half of the foundation is rusticated, as the wing was built on the foundation of a c. 1930 rear porch. The north end of the east elevation has been bricked on the first story. Some of the first story windows on the north elevation have been resized. The brick chimneys that were housed in the cross gables were removed c. 1935. There were several storefront and window changes on the north and east facades of the first story which reflected the building's changing functions from school to shop to government office.

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These changes were basic window resizings and configurations, and most recently, included the bricking in of the northern half of the east facade. The most recent alteration has been a concrete handicap access ramp, which was added to the east elevation of the building.

The exterior of the building, while having experienced some alterations, is in good condition and retains a good level of integrity.

**INTERIOR DESCRIPTION**

The building interior consists of three floors joined by a central stair hall. The first floor contains city offices, the council chamber, and the police department. The second and third floors are currently vacant. The main entrance to the building is by way of the central east door, although there is a separate entrance to the present police department on the northeast.

*First Floor-*The first floor configuration consists of three rooms on either side flanking the central stair, presently enclosed. To the south are the city offices, city manager's office, council chambers, restrooms, and closets. To the north are the police department offices. The first floor was remodeled in the mid-1980s, and most of the original interior woodwork, plaster walls, ceilings, and floors are concealed by modern dropped ceilings, artificial paneling, and carpet (all reversible). However, some of the original six-panel interior doors with brass handles are intact, as is a portion of the original wood trim around a few of the interior doors. The first-floor interior of the rear 1983 addition consists of conference rooms, file rooms, and a kitchen.

*Second Floor-* The second floor is reached by a modern door on the east leading to the central staircase. Originally open, the staircase is now enclosed by reversible modern wood paneling. The wide staircase rises in a single flight to the second floor. It features a turned newel post, turned balusters, original risers and treads, and a molded handrail. The stair hall also features a molded baseboard and chair rail. The central stair hall, consisting of the staircase and adjacent east-west hall, occupies approximately one-fifth of the square footage of this floor.

The original interior configuration on the second floor consisted of two large rooms on the north and south sides, with two smaller rooms on the east and west sides. Most rooms have been divided by sheet-rocked walls into smaller rooms over the years, particularly when the top two floors served as apartments. Unlike the first floor, nearly all of the interior architectural features are intact on the second floor. Floors and baseboards are original and



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in good condition. The five- and six-panel interior doors retain their brass and metal handles and two-pane rectangular pivot transoms. They are trimmed with fluted moldings and bull's eye corner blocks. Most windows have paneled reveals, fluted moldings, and bull's eye corner blocks.

There are a few subtle differences among some of the second-floor rooms. The windows on the east end of the building are arched with arched frames and fluted moldings. The baseboard moldings in these two front rooms are heavier than those found elsewhere on this floor. The center west room has 1/1 double-hung sash with a fixed rectangular transom above.

*Third Floor-* The third floor is reached by the central staircase. It features a turned newel post, turned balusters, and a molded handrail. The stair hall also features a molded baseboard and chair rail.

The third floor configuration closely mirrors that of the second floor and has seen the same alterations for use as apartments. However, the floors and baseboards are original and in good condition. The five- and six-panel interior doors retain their brass handles and two-pane rectangular pivot transoms. They are trimmed with fluted moldings and bull's eye corner blocks. Most windows have paneled reveals, fluted moldings, and bull's eye corner blocks. An enclosed staircase, sheathed with original vertical board siding, leads to an unfinished attic level.

Some ceilings on the third floor have experienced water damage and have partially disintegrated. Otherwise, the third floor is still in good condition.

Charles Town Mining, Manuf., & Imp. Co. Bldg.  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, West Virginia  
County and State

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance    Industry                      Politics/Government,  
   Education                                      Architecture

Period of Significance    1891-1951

Significant Dates            1891                      1893                      1912  
   1936                                      \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person            N/A  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation            N/A

Architect/Builder            Holmes, Julius C., architect

**Narrative Statement of Significance**  
(See continuation sheets.)

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**Summary Statement of Significance**

The Charles Town Mining, Manufacturing, & Improvement Company building is significant under Criterion A in the areas of industry (1891-1893), education (1893-1912), commerce (1917-1951), and politics/government (1936-1951). Built in 1891, the building served until 1893 as the headquarters of the Charles Town Mining, Manufacturing, & Improvement Company (CMM&I). The company was founded to develop Ranson as an industrial center in the eastern West Virginia panhandle and was responsible for subdividing and developing the 850-acre tract of land that in 1910 became the City of Ranson. Between 1893 and 1912 the building served as the Charles Town High School, and was the only school serving the Charles Town and Ranson areas during this period. In 1917 the building was sold into private hands and housed the Ranson Post Office and a confectionary, as well as several apartments. In 1936, the building was purchased by the City of Ranson for use as city government offices. The building has served as the Ranson City Hall ever since.

The Ranson City Hall building also is significant under Criterion C for architecture as a unique example of a late-nineteenth-century office building in the Charles Town/Ranson area. Designed by local architect/builder J. C. Holmes in the Romanesque Revival style, the building features rusticated stonework on the first story, a central tower, a distinctive keyhole-shaped entrance, cross-gabled corners, and several arched windows. This building is the only one of its size, scale, purpose, and design remaining in Ranson. The Ranson City Hall retains a good level of architectural integrity on both the exterior and interior.

The period of significance for the Charles Town Mining, Manufacturing, & Improvement Company building is from its construction in 1891 to 1951. This reflects its association with the company that developed Ranson beginning in 1891, the high school that served Ranson and Charles Town from 1893 to 1912, the store and post office that occupied the first floor after 1917, and the city government that has occupied the building since 1936. Architecturally, the building remains one of the most prominent in Ranson.

**Historical Background**

The City of Ranson owes its founding to the ambitious late-nineteenth-century plans of Charles Town's leading citizens to found an industrial center in the eastern panhandle area of West Virginia. In May 1890, the Charles Town Mining, Manufacturing & Improvement (CMM&I) Company was formed by Roger Preston Chew, Frank Beck, Forrest W. Brown, T.C. Green, W.F. Lippitt, A.W. McDonald, and B.C. Washington (Mills 1999: 1). Chew, who served as the company's president, had previously served in the Civil War as a Lieutenant Colonel under General J.E.B. Stuart and earned three terms in the West Virginia Legislature between 1884 and 1890 (Mills 1999: 1).

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The CMM&I company purchased 850 acres of land adjoining the northern and western corporate limits of the City of Charles Town, county seat of Jefferson County. Much of this land was purchased from the Ranson family, and from its earliest years, this community just north of Charles Town was known as Ranson. From the start, this new development was envisioned as a planned community, with workers' neighborhoods placed in close proximity to several large industrial tracts. Although the city was planned as a manufacturing center, the initial designs also called for landscaped parks and a resort hotel (Jefferson County Deed Book X, page 1). The CMM&I company commissioned D.G. Howell, a Washington, D.C. landscape architect and civil engineer, to design the new subdivision. Howell was assisted by D.F. Taylor whose title was "Principal Assistant Engineer" (Frazier Associates 1987: 1).

The CMM&I Company was one of several formed at the turn of the twentieth century to develop the mineral resources of Jefferson County. The Harpers Ferry Mining, Manufacturing, and Improvement Company was incorporated in Harpers Ferry, and included investors from Harper's Ferry and Washington, DC. Within a year of CMM&I's incorporation, the new town of Bakerton developed around the Washington Building and Lime Company's limestone deposit. As a result of the development, the Virginia Ore Bank, near Bakerton, resumed operation after being idle 14 years (Bushong 1972: 294).

On 18 February 1891, the *Virginia Free Press* reported that the CMM&I company had named and laid out new streets in the community (Mills 1999: 1). Several streets were named after the company's founding members or their families, including Mildred, George, Lee, Preston, Forrest, Samuel and Marshall Streets. The principal thoroughfare was the 100-foot-wide Fairfax Boulevard, which ran at a 45-degree angle in a northeasterly direction from the pre-existing George Street. Mildred and Samuel Streets were also extensions of Charles Town's streets. There were two traffic circles planned along Fairfax Boulevard—Lancaster and Jefferson Circles—as well as an oval park—Lakeland Place (Jefferson County Deed Book X, page 1). Roughly bisecting the new community was the Belt Railroad, a pre-existing railroad line that ran in an east-west direction between the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad and the Norfolk & Western (N&W) Railroad tracks.

In 1891, the imposing three-and-one-half-story headquarters building of the Charles Town Mining, Manufacturing & Improvement Company was completed at a cost of \$10,700 on a triangular lot fronting on Mildred Street near Lancaster Circle (Town of Ranson 1985: 3). A drawing of the building is part of the original subdivision plat, found on the first page of Jefferson County Deed Book X. It identifies the designer of the three-story, stone-and-brick

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building as "J. C. Holmes, Archt.". A comparison with the original 1891 drawing shows that the building's exterior has changed little, with the exception of the removal of the tall pyramidal roof on the central tower c. 1930, and window and storefront modifications to the north and east first story facades.

The building's architect and builder was Julius C. Holmes, who was listed as Charles Town's only architect in the *West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Polk & Company) between 1884 and 1915. Holmes was involved in the construction of the Hotel Powhatan, envisioned as the area's premiere resort hotel and designed by the Baltimore architectural firm Baldwin and Pennington. The Hotel Powhatan was the only building in Ranson that could compare with the CMM&I Company building in design and scale. This hotel, which was on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue near the CMM&I Company building, later served as a women's college, a Christian girls' school, and an apartment building. It was destroyed by fire in 1937 (Frazier Associates 1987: 5).

The dream of the CMM&I company's founders for an industrial metropolis in Ranson was only partially realized. Nonetheless, several manufacturing companies were built in the community during its early years. These included the A.D. Goetz Saddlery, the Shenandoah Brass and Ironworks (building extant), the Elmer E. Beachley Saw and Planing Mill, the Vulcan Road Machine Company, and the John Farrin Boiler and Machine Shop (Mills 1999: 2). Both the saddlery and brass works buildings are depicted on the original subdivision plat map, with the saddlery building ascribed to J.C. Holmes, architect of the CMM&I office building.

The Charles Town Mining, Manufacturing and Improvement Company apparently fell on hard financial times and was forced to sell its new headquarters building to the Board of Education of the District of Charles Town on June 1, 1893 (This may have been a result of the Panic of 1893)(Jefferson County Deed Book 74, page 444). The deed described "that certain lot and the improvements thereon consisting of a 3-story, stone and brick building known as the Office Building." The purchase price was \$9,500.

Although Ranson never became the thriving manufacturing center as originally envisioned, its population maintained a separate identity from the older, established county seat of Charles Town. In 1910, Ranson's residents voted 69 to 2 to incorporate as a separate city.

Between 1893 and 1912 the former CMM&I company office building served as the Charles Town High School. The building is historically significant for its association with education

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in Jefferson County in the early twentieth century, and was the only high school for students in the Ranson and Charles Town areas during this period. The school probably moved to this building because it was the largest building in Ranson and because its floorplan lent itself to use as a schoolhouse. The school and its students are depicted in several historic photographs of the period held at the Jefferson County Historical Society Museum in Charles Town. Because of its distinctive front entrance, the school was popularly known as the "Keyhole School." It was also known as the Wright Denny School, after its long-time principal and mathematics teacher, Dr. Wright Denny. In 1912 the school in Ranson was replaced by a new and more modern Charles Town High School building erected in Charles Town.

On 1 November 1917 the Charles Town School Board sold the former high school building to local resident and former mayor Gerard D. Moore (Deed Book 116, page 91) On 8 August 1925, Moore's executors sold the property to H.C. Getzendanner for \$4,500 (Deed Book 126, page 205). Moore leased the south half of the first story to a confectionary. The north half served as the Ranson Post Office. The second and third floors were converted into residential apartments.

Sanborn Insurance Map Company Maps of Ranson between 1897 and 1933 show the building during its several periods of ownership. The 1897 Sanborn map identified it as a public school, built of stone on the first story, with windows on all four sides, heated by stoves, and lit by oil. The 1902 map shows a small frame privy connected to the building's rear by a covered passageway. The area where the privy was located is currently a parking lot. The 1927 map shows the building housing the Ranson Confectionary and Quick Lunch and the Ranson post office on the first floor, and apartments on the second floor.

In 1936, the City of Ranson purchased the building for \$3,000 for use as its city hall (Deed Book 151, page 175). Previously the city offices had been housed in a number of smaller buildings in the town. The building has served as the seat of Ranson's city government since 1936. The council chambers, mayor's office, and city offices were housed in the south half of the first floor, with the post office located on the north half. The post office stayed at this location until 1983, when it was replaced by a chiropractic clinic. Since the departure of the chiropractic clinic, the city's police department occupied the space. The first floor of the building was renovated in 1983 and is still fully utilized by the City of Ranson. The two upper floors continued to serve as apartments until the 1970s, but are currently vacant.



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**Bibliography**

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Frazier Associates. *A Brief History of Ranson, West Virginia*. Staunton, VA: 1987.

*Jefferson County Deed Books*. Jefferson County Court House, Charles Town.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at a point at the intersection of Mildred Street and Fairfax Boulevard, where they meet to form Lancaster Circle, proceeding south along Mildred Street approximately 184 feet to its intersection with 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, then proceeding west along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue approximately 170 feet to Fairfax Boulevard, then turning northeast, proceeding along Fairfax Boulevard to the beginning point.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary described above is the lot boundary that the building has occupied since its construction in 1891, as laid out by D.F. Taylor, Principal Assistant Engineer, and D.J. Howell, Civil Engineer and Landscape Architect, who designed the town for the Charles Town Mining, Manufacturing, & Improvement Company. The setting of the lot and the building have remained unchanged.

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Section number    Photo                      Page        1

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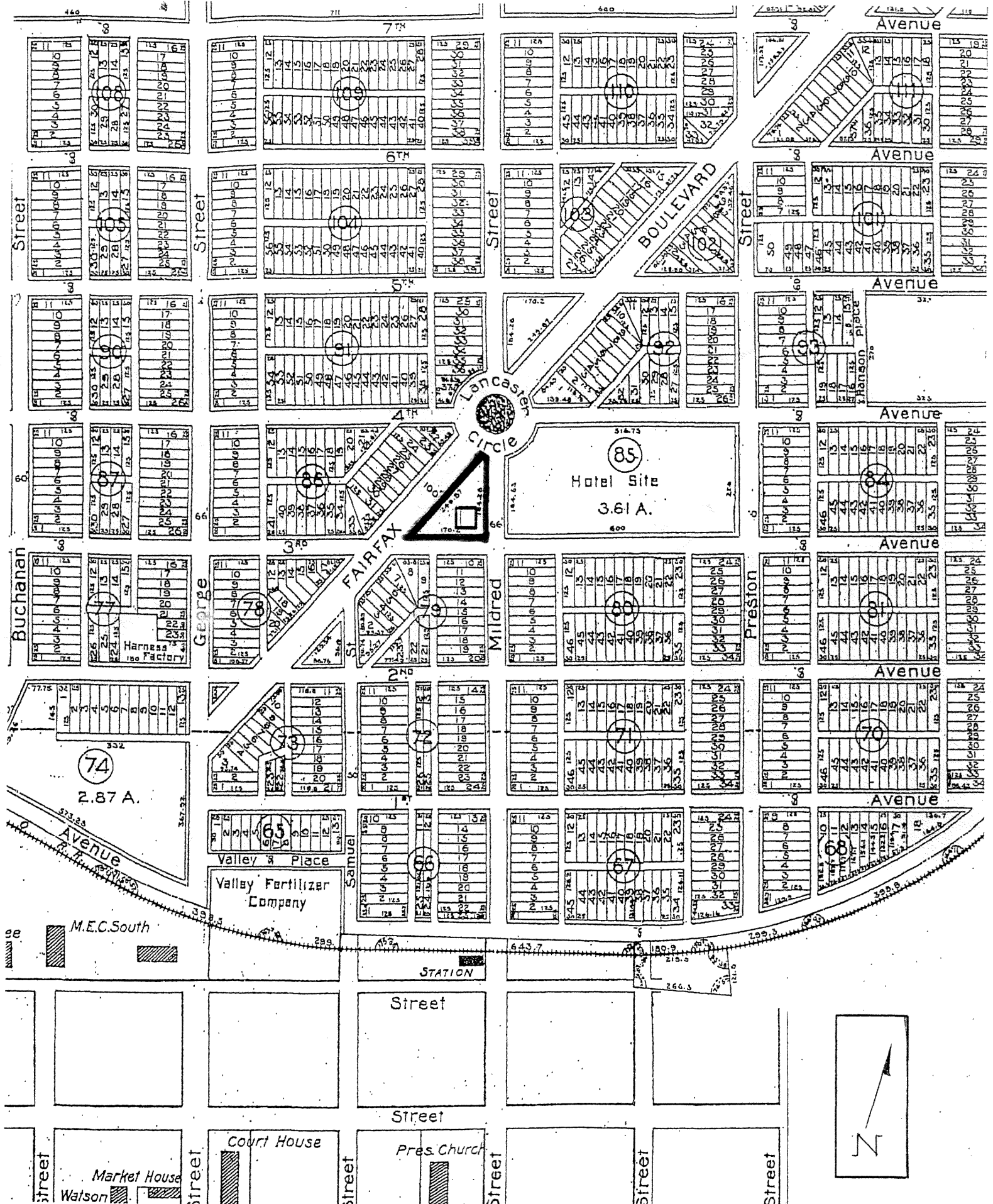
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Address 312 South Mildred Street  
Town Ranson  
County Jefferson, WV

Photographer: Geoffrey B. Henry/Jared N. Tuk

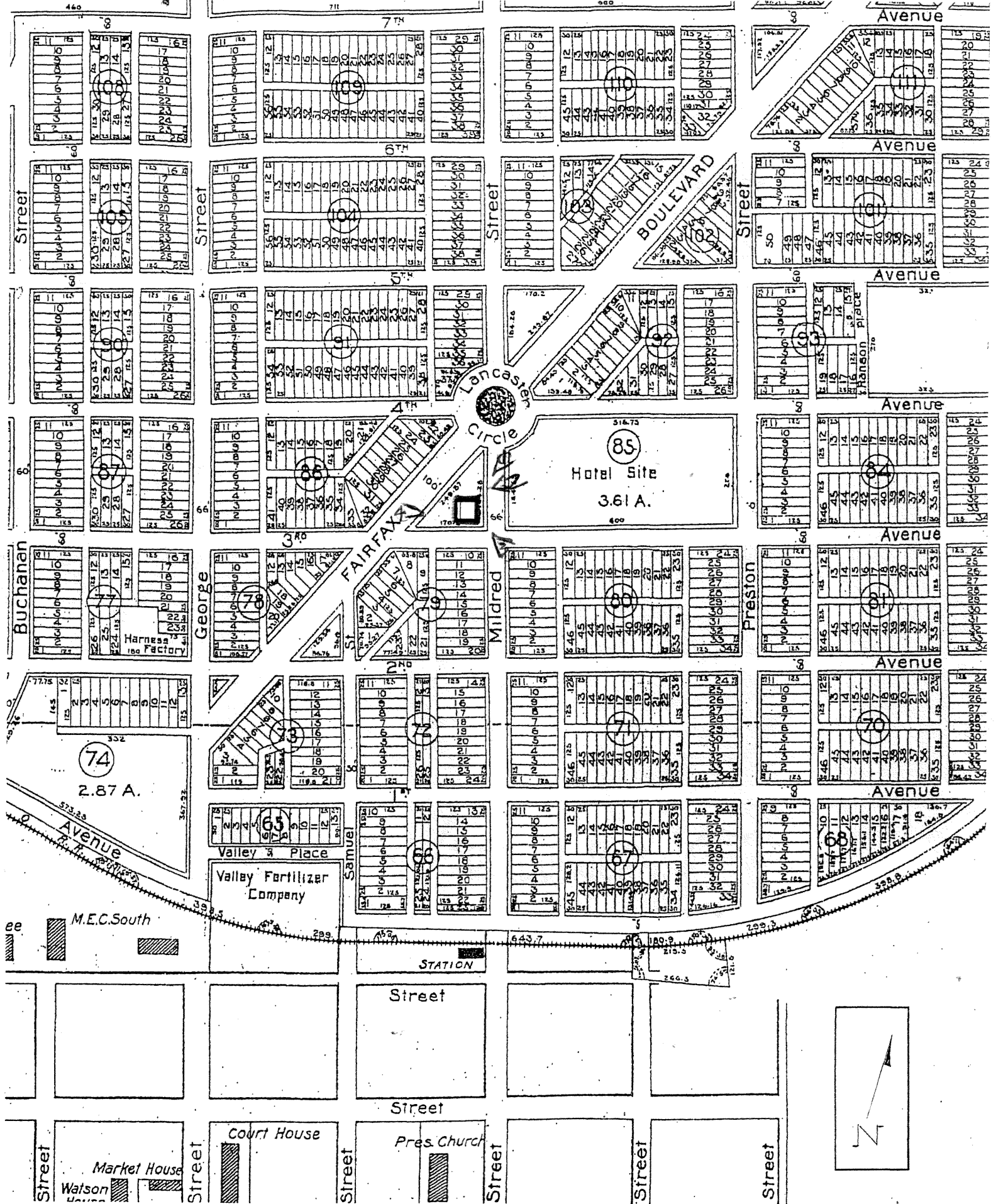
Date: 24 October 2000

Negatives: WVSHPO, Charleston, WV

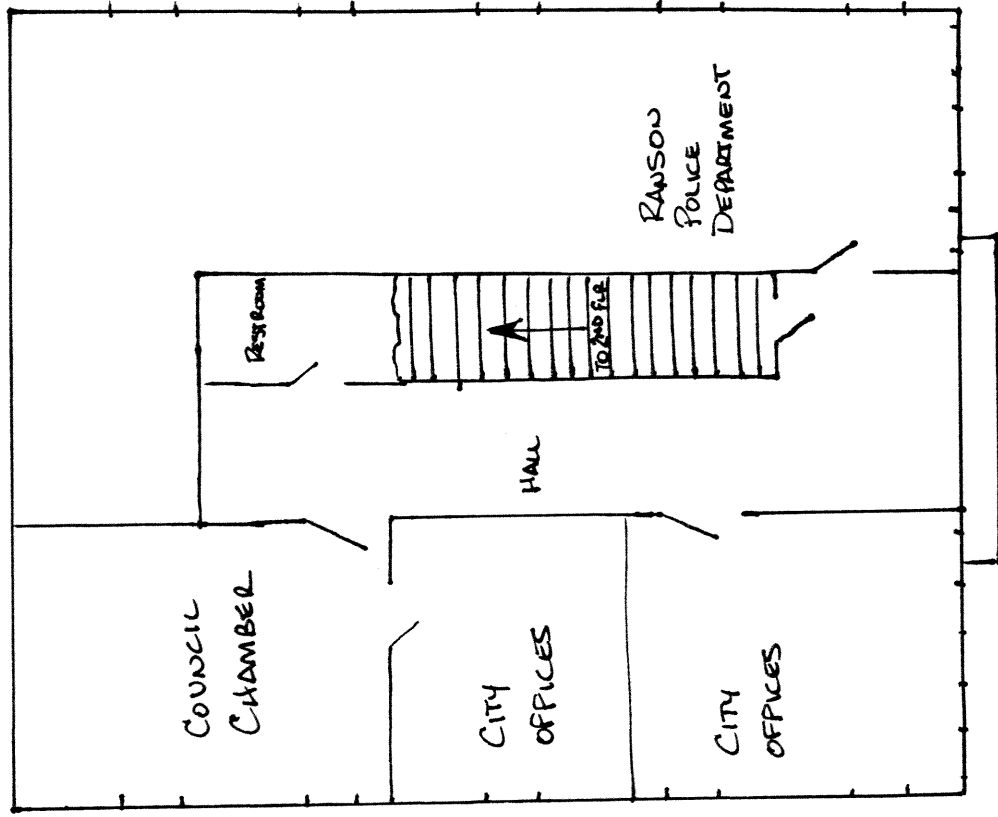
- Photo 1 of 7:        Streetscape (Taken from Mildred Street), camera facing south-southwest.
- Photo 2 of 7:        East and north elevations, camera facing southwest. (front, side)
- Photo 3 of 7:        East and south elevations, camera facing northwest. (front, side)
- Photo 4 of 7:        West elevation, camera facing east. (rear)
- Photo 5 of 7:        Interior hallway, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, camera facing west-northwest.
- Photo 6 of 7:        Interior hallway, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, camera facing east-southeast.
- Photo 7 of 7:        Stairway, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, camera facing east-southeast.



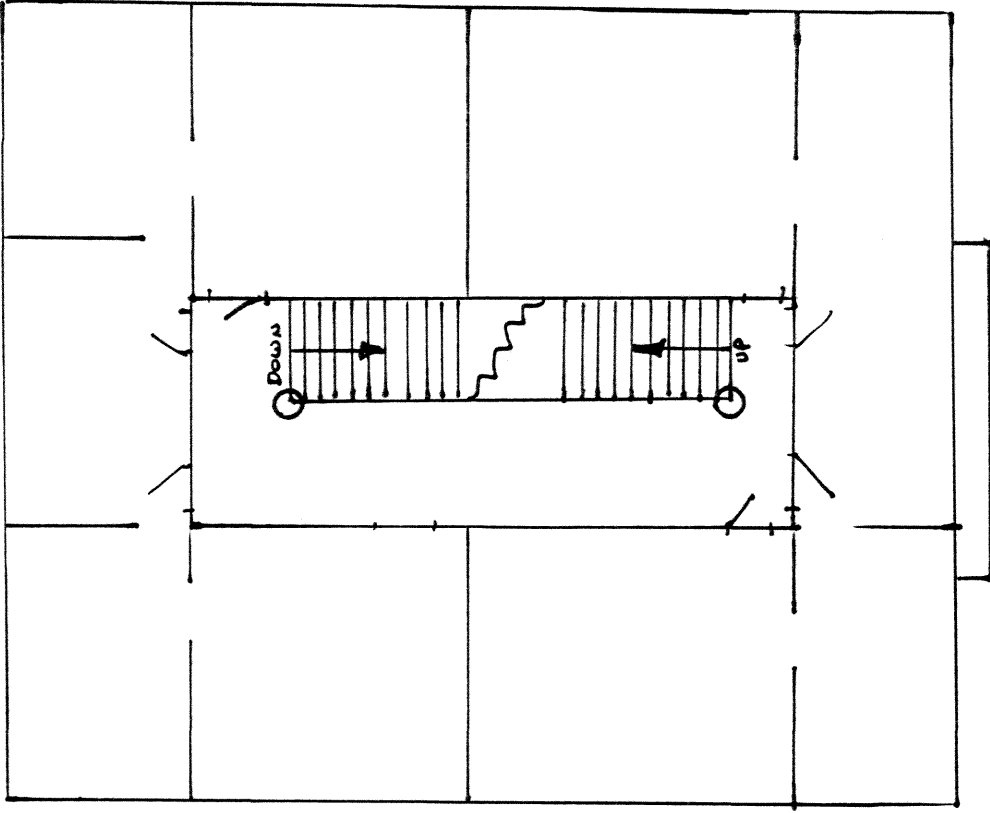
BOUNDARY FOR CHARLES TOWN MINING, MANUFACTURING, & IMPROVEMENT COMPANY BUILDING, 312 S. MILDRED ST, RANSON, JEFFERSON COUNTY, WV.



PLAT MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF CHARLES TOWN MINING, MANUFACTURING, & IMPROVEMENT COMPANY BUILDING.



1ST FLOOR  
CURRENT CONFIGURATION



2ND AND 3RD FLOOR GENERAL PLAN  
CURRENT CONFIGURATION

GENERAL FLOOR PLAN - CHARLES TOWN MINING, IMPROVEMENT COMPANY BUILDING  
RAWSON, JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA