

I. IDENTIFICATION

PROPERTY NAME: Old White County Jail HISTORIC NAME: White County Jail
STREET ADDRESS: Main Street CITY: Cleveland
PRESENT OWNER: M. Lanier Chambers, Chairman MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 185
White County Commission
CITY: Cleveland STATE: Georgia ZIP CODE: 30528
CURRENT USE: Dept. of Transportation Office ACREAGE: one and a half acres (a City Lot)
U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE Cleveland U.T.M. REFERENCE: Zone 17 E246590 N3831720
V.B.D. OR TAX MAP NUMBER: The nominated property is all that remains associated with the
jail and marked on Tax Map C-5 as Block 3, Parcel 2.

II. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT CONDITION:

Attachment 1

III. HISTORY

ORIGINAL OWNER: White County ORIGINAL USE: County Jail
ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown HISTORIC ACREAGE: City Lot
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1901 DATE(S) OF ALTERATIONS: 1960s

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (FROM ORIGINS TO PRESENT):

Attachment 2

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

N.R. AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Politics/Government LEVEL: Local

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL):

Attachment 3

V. SOURCES

FORM PREPARED BY: Dale Jaeger ORGANIZATION: Georgia Mountains APDC
Preservation Planner
ADDRESS: P. O. Box 1720 TELEPHONE NUMBER: 404/536/3431
Gainesville, GA 30503
REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS: "Historic Structures Field Survey" Georgia Department
of Natural Resources
SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Attachment 4

Attachment One

DESCRIPTION

The White County Jail is a two-story brick structure of plain Italianate design. The roof is hipped and covered with asphalt shingles. Square brick pilasters are located on front and side facades. Segmental-arched windows with concrete sills are 4/4 with a keystone on front facade windows. Second floor windows show evidence of former bars which have been completely removed. The front entrance is surmounted by a pedimented porch with dentil decoration. This porch appears to be an addition due to contemporary metal posts and the intrusion the porch makes on the second-story center window and on the segmental-arched doorway. A one-story frame addition extends across the rear facade and is covered with asbestos shingles.

On the interior the original central hall arrangement remains intact but a number of cosmetic changes have been made. Paneled walls, acoustical tile ceilings, and linoleum tile floors are found throughout the first floor. Original fabric on this story includes four-paneled wood doors and corner fireplaces with original mantels of simple design. Chimneys for these fireplaces have been removed on the exterior. The rear addition contains plaster walls and stippled ceilings and is divided into several rooms including a bath. An interior staircase located in the southeast room of the original structure is reached by a door off the central hall. The second floor is divided into three rooms with an entrance area containing the staircase. Materials on this floor include plaster and wood walls, wood ceilings, and wood floors. A large room on the north side of the structure contains evidence of former jailworks which once stood in the center of this room.

The structure is sited on a large city lot approximately one block north of the town square which contains the historic county courthouse. The original lot has been subdivided and the portion sold at the rear of the jail structure is now the site of the county health department. The remaining lot contains the jail, a non-historic frame garage-type structure, several unpaved parking areas, and landscape features of maple street trees, a large holly at the rear of the jail, and a large cedar on the south side of the structure. The structure is in fair condition.

Attachment Two

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

White County was established in 1857 from portions of Habersham County with lands added later from Lumpkin County. At the time of establishment an existing community, Mt. Yonah, was named the county seat. Through a special election in 1858 the county seat location was changed to the present site of Cleveland. The justices acquired land which was laid out in one-fourth acre-size lots. A courthouse was built in the central square of town and the first county jail was built around 1860 following the building of the courthouse. According to Superior Court minutes the jail in adjacent Habersham County was used by the new county prior to the construction of the White County Jail. A notation in the Minute Books on June 25, 1860 authorized payment to Thomas Hamilton for serving as the guard in bringing a prisoner from Habersham County to White County. This notation appears to document the establishment of a jail in Cleveland since future references concern only the jail in White County.

No plans or specifications survive to document the appearance of the first jail for White County but from court minutes it can be surmized that the jail was a two-story weatherboarded structure, possibly a basement with one-story above since a minute notation states the poor condition of the dungeon and the upper floor. The minutes from 1873 note for the first time that the structure was in poor condition and in 1884 a new roof was added. The minutes also document the arrangement between the county and the sheriff in managing the jail operation. Records state that the sheriff was paid a certain fee per day for each prisoner housed in the facility. The rate in 1860 was .50¢ per prisoner which was raised to .75¢ in 1866. This practice was referred to as the fee for "dieting" said prisoners. Little else is known about this structure other than the fact that it housed the notorious horse thief, Sunny Nash, in April 1870. A newspaper article recounting the "arrest, confinement, and escape of Sunny Nash" documents that the jail did not include a jailer's residence since Nash's escape took place after the sheriff had gone home.

In 1897 the first jail structure was condemned after numerous references in court minutes which called for new locks, additional bars, repairs to the exterior weatherboarding, and the need for better ventilation. The second jail, which is proposed for nomination, was completed in 1901 at a cost of \$4,000. According to survey notes from the Historic Structures Field Survey of White County, this jail was built during the term of Sheriff William Jackson and replaced the earlier jail which stood on an adjacent site. There is no record of the county acquiring land for the 1901 jail so it can be assumed that the present jail is in an approximate location of the original jail. The 1901 jail was designed to house the jailer and family on the first floor and the prisoners on the second floor. This jail served the county until replacement by the present county jail in the late 1960's. The present use of the old jail is as headquarters for the county Department of Transportation Office.

Attachment Three

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The White County Jail is important in the area of politics and government as representative of the early criminal justice system in a rural Georgia county. The construction of this jail is illustrative of changes in that system around the turn-of-the-century. Brick, which replaced wood on an earlier jail, was used for its fire protection quality and accommodations were made for the jailer to reside in the structure for security purposes.

This building served as the county's only jail for over sixty years.

The jail is also significant in architecture as a good example of the use of the Italianate style for such a functional building. It retains its original brick exterior pilasters, windows, and some mantels. As with other jails of the period, it looks more like a house than what one would expect a jail to look like.

ATTACHMENT FOUR

BIBLIOGRAPHY - WHITE COUNTY

Keene, Grant. " A Brief History of White County's Original Courthouse." The Cleveland (GA) Courier, Special Edition, Labor Day, 1982.

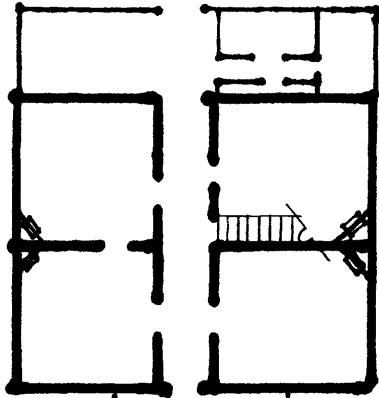
White County, Georgia. Superior Court. Minute Books, 1858-1908. "General Presentments of the Grand Jury."

"Our Sheriff". Blue Ridge Echo (Cleveland, Georgia). April 19, 1870.

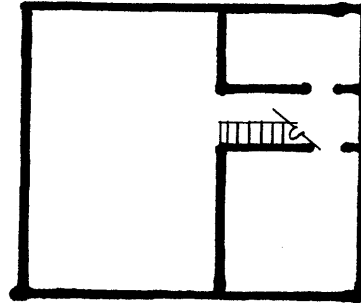
WHITE COUNTY JAIL
CLEVELAND, GA.

← NORTH

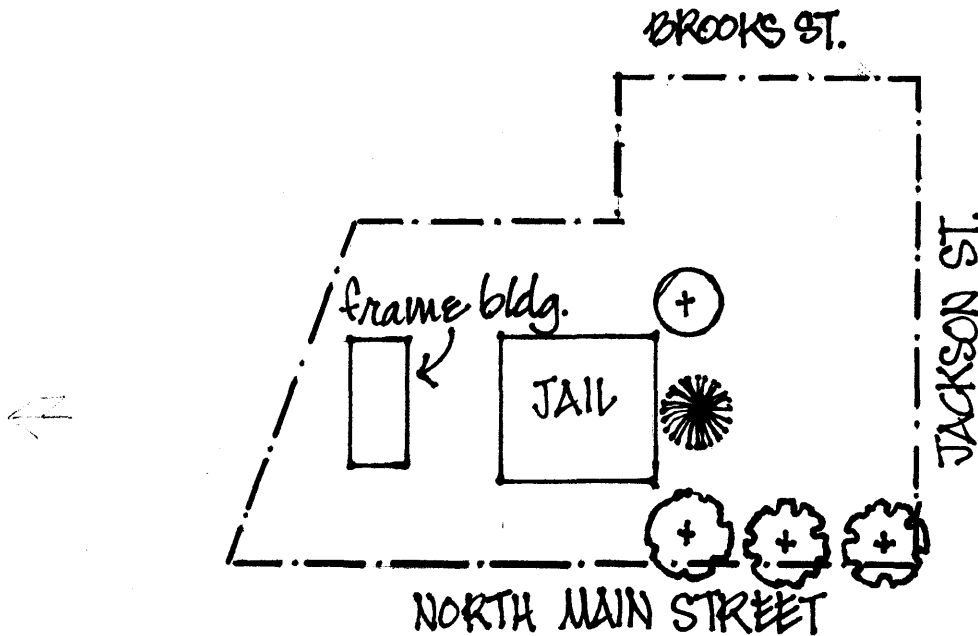
— ORIGINAL WALLS
— ADDITIONS



FIRST FLOOR

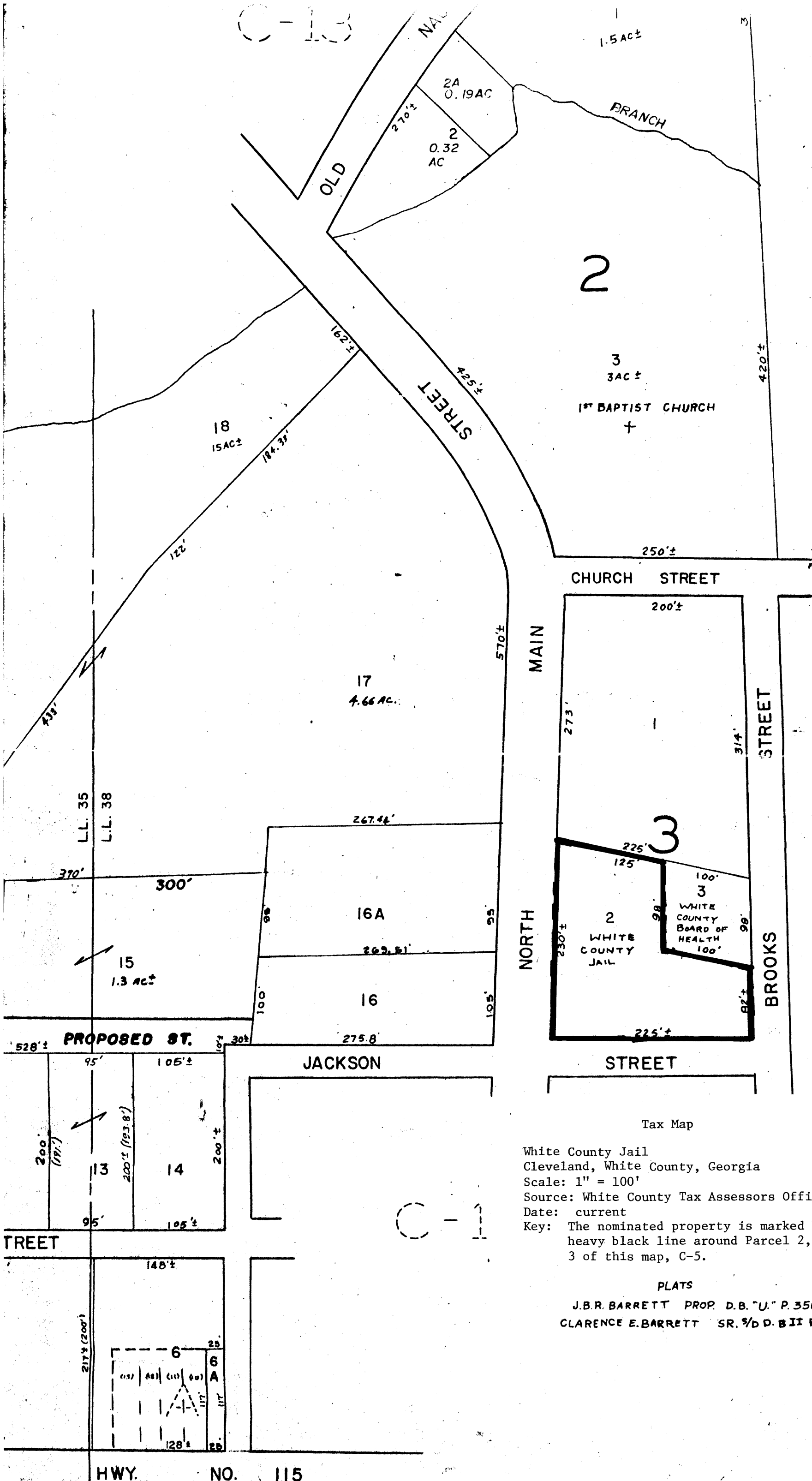


SECOND FLOOR



Floor Plans/Site Plan

White County Jail
Cleveland, White County, Georgia
Scale: not to scale
Source: Drawn by Dale Jaeger
Date: 1984
Key: as marked on the plans



2

3
3AC ±
1ST BAPTIST CHURCH
+

17
4.66 AC.

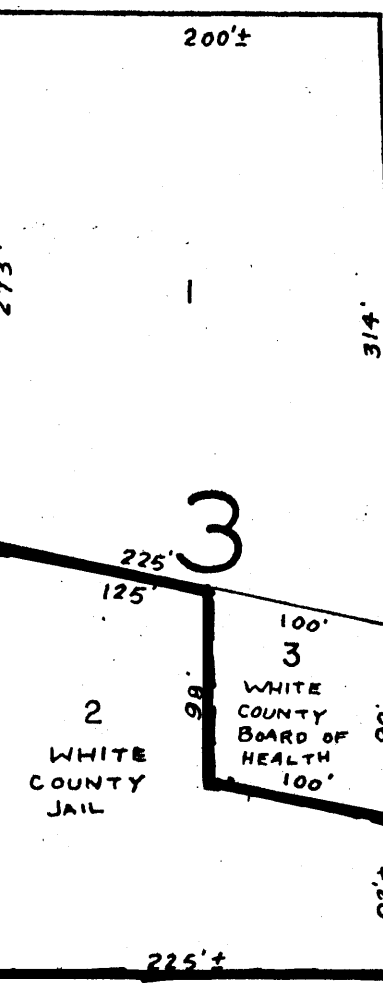
CHURCH STREET

MAIN

NORTH

STREET

BROOKS



STREET

Tax Map

White County Jail
Cleveland, White County, Georgia
Scale: 1" = 100'
Source: White County Tax Assessors Office
Date: current
Key: The nominated property is marked by a heavy black line around Parcel 2, Block 3 of this map, C-5.

PLATS

J.B.R. BARRETT PROP. D.B. "U." P. 350
CLARENCE E. BARRETT SR. %D.D. B II P. 187

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HWY. NO. 115