

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 McMullin-Warren House other names/site number WE-56

2. Location

street & number 301 West Main Street city, town Sebree state Kentucky code KY county Webster code 233 zip code 42455

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked), public-local, public-State, public-Federal. Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 2, Noncontributing 2 buildings, Total 2.

Name of related multiple property listing: Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

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 (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: David L. Meyer, State Historic Preservation Officer, Kentucky Heritage Council. Date: 2-1-88.

In my opinion, the property meets (unchecked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register (checked), determined eligible for the National Register (unchecked), determined not eligible for the National Register (unchecked), removed from the National Register (unchecked), other (unchecked). Entered in the National Register (checked) 3/8/88. Signature of the Keeper, Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Weatherboard

Shingle

roof Asphalt

other Wood--porch, applied ornament

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

As a robust example of the late Queen Anne style, the McMullin-Warren House built in 1901 is the most distinctive architectural landmark in Sebree. This community of approximately 1900 residents (1980 census) in northeastern Webster County, Kentucky, is laid out in a grid bisected by the Louisville & Nashville railroad line running south to Madisonville and north to Henderson on the Ohio River. The house is situated on a corner lot fronting West Main Street, a wide roadway traversed by KY 56 which constitutes one of Sebree's two major thoroughfares.

The immediate environs of the house are residential in character. To the west, toward the outskirts of town, the houses date primarily from the 1940s and 1950s and are interspersed with altered examples of popular late 19th- to early 20th-century house types. East of the McMullin-Warren House, a block of new and early but altered houses leads to Sebree's central business district, a handsome complement to the Victorian house in its array of two-story brick buildings reminiscent of Sebree's heyday at the turn of this century. The Sebree Elementary School adjoins the north boundary of the McMullin-Warren House, while modest houses fill the blocks farther north and northwest of the house. Although Webster County has been partially surveyed, to date no properties in Sebree or the rest of the county have been listed in the National Register.

The McMullin-Warren House property contains four resources: the house itself, a contemporary playhouse, a garage, and a workshop. The latter two buildings are non-contributing due to age. The house is sited on the 100-foot-wide and 200-foot-deep lot so that it is closer to the southeast corner and the two streets on which it fronts than to the northwest corner and the elementary school. Low foundation plantings are fairly new, but the rest of the foliage rising from the well-tended lawn is mature. Two hardwoods in the deep right-of-way between the sidewalk and West Main Street were planted so that their canopy frames a head-on view of the main facade of the house. The rest of the hardwoods and evergreens appear in the side yards where they create a screen from State Street on the east and the neighboring house to the west. The playhouse is sited in the southwest quadrant of the property so that its main facade projects several feet beyond the front of the primary residence. The shop is adjacent to the covered patio attached to the northwest corner of the house. A very short driveway leads from State Street to the garage at the property's northeast corner. Additional screening of the rear yard from State Street is provided by a modern latticework fence running along the walk to the side entrance of the house and down the edge of the State Street sidewalk to the garage.

The McMullin-Warren House is typical of later renditions of the Queen Anne style in its overall form. The basic configuration of the two-story frame house is a cubical, pyramidal-roofed core with a two-story offset pedimented gable-roofed wing projecting from each of the street elevations and a one-story gable-roofed rear ell. Although the west, side elevation does not have a projecting

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1901

Significant Dates

1901

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

McMullin, David W.

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

The late Queen Anne features of neoclassical elements integrated with the mode's characteristic irregular form and rich ornamental program of sawn and turned work renders the McMullin-Warren House the most visually distinctive example of domestic architecture in Sebree and among the most notable in its county of Webster. The house has been carefully preserved on the exterior as well as the interior, which contains one of Kentucky's most intact and elaborate displays of Victorian woodworking identified outside of a metropolitan area. Characterized by an octagonal tower and an exuberant array of surface textures and applied decoration, the McMullin-Warren House epitomizes the Queen Anne style as popularized throughout the country by builders' guides. In fact, when the house was constructed by Sebree's foremost contractor in 1901, it became a residential landmark that has continued to symbolize Sebree's heyday as a vital railroad town at the turn of this century.

Following the perfection of the jigsaw in the 1830s, the increasing interest throughout the United States in the picturesque became manifested in a burgeoning architectural eclecticism. Romanticism expressed in revivalism had long been popular, as represented by the Federal and Greek Revival styles, but technical advances made it possible to move beyond the staid and regulated neoclassical vocabulary to imaginative and often fanciful interpretations of the less familiar and thus more exotic modes. Now that ornately carved stone elements could be imitated in wood, styles such as the Gothic Revival, Italianate and Second Empire proliferated across the landscape as the nineteenth century progressed. By the time the Queen Anne style was transported from its native England in the 1870s, American craftsmen were well equipped to create its hallmarks of irregular forms and contrasting materials. Although masonry frequently was used to add variety to the textures, in most regions wood, due to its tremendous ready supply, remained the dominant material--sawn and turned for intricate ornamentation at porches, gables, and windows, split and cut for shingled sheathing in place of the English tiles, and even bevelled and scored to emulate cut stone.

Industrialization was essential to the popularity of the Queen Anne and other nineteenth-century revival styles. Beginning in the 1840s, advances in publishing and printing brought about the increased dissemination of treatises by A. J. Davis, A. J. Downing and Calvert Vaux promoting the eclectic romantic revival styles with elevations, plans and essays. With the rise of mass production following the Civil War, saw and planing mills sprang up across the country. Many

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Collins, Lewis and Richard H. Collins. History of Kentucky. 1874.

Kentucky Heritage Council Survey Files: Webster County. KY Heritage Council, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, Kentucky.

Warren, Henry Ford. Telephone interview 15 January 1988 by Claudia Brown.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Kentucky Heritage Council

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	6	4	5	3	8	0	0	4	1	6	2	1	3	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All of Lot 2 in Block 1 as shown on the Kentucky Department of Revenue's Webster County Property Identification Map for Sebree, Kentucky. A portion of that map, on which the property is marked, is attached as an exhibit.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary incorporates all of the property historically associated with the nominated buildings. All of the property adjoining the boundaries is associated with other, unrelated buildings.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claudia R. Brown, National Register Coordinator

organization Kentucky Heritage Council date January 1988

street & number 12th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower telephone 502/564-7005

city or town Frankfort state Kentucky zip code 40601

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

McMullin-Warren House, Sebree, Webster County, Kentucky

Section number 7 Page 2

wing, it is consistent with the street facades in its offset attic pedimented gable. One of the most distinctive features of the house is the polygonal form of the southwest corner of the core which rises through both stories to an octagonal third-story tower capped by a conical bellcast roof. A one-story, shed-roofed wraparound porch extends from the end of the front gabled wing, across the central entrance bay and around the polygonal corner, and terminates at the side gabled wing. The end of the porch next to the side wing has been enclosed for a bathroom. Although all roofs are covered with modern composition shingles, original ornamental metal finials mark the apex of the conical tower roof and the central pyramidal roof. A tall interior chimney, without any decorative brickwork and apparently rebuilt, rises from the west plane of the pyramidal roof, and another simple yet original stack rises from the center of the rear gabled ell. The house rests on a brick foundation covered with stucco.

While the rich variety of surface textures and applied turned and sawn ornament is a hallmark of the Queen Anne style, the introduction of classical elements, particularly in conjunction with the somewhat regularized form, signals of the late phase of the style at the turn of this century. In contrast to the primary sheathing material of poplar weatherboards, several courses of fishscale shingles mark the lower facades, the expanses between the first- and second-story windows and the top of the tower. Next to the main entrance, the polygonal bay that serves as the base of the tower is covered in flush boards scored to look like cut stone, while the attic gables are sheathed in flush vertical boards. Each of the pedimented gables also bears elaborate ornamental bracing consisting of intricate sawnwork spandrels at the three corners to which a round-arched spool frieze is attached. Cutwork spandrels with pendants also appear just beneath the gables at the corners of the polygonal bays and round cutwork vents accent the field of shingles at the top of the tower. Above the entrance bay, the shallow recess between the gabled wing and the tower is framed by a spool frieze between cutwork spandrels with pendants and by a railing with turned balusters to give the impression of a balcony. The neoclassical influence is clearly evident in the Ionic columns at the wraparound porch and shed porch on the rear ell and in the modillions at the base of the molded box cornices accenting each roofline. The railing and balusters at the wraparound porch are identical to those of the second-story recess.

It is probable that the exterior of the McMullin-Warren House originally sported a two- or three-tone paint scheme. Today, it is painted white with the exception of the unpainted double oak front doors with raised panels and carved swags in relief. The street facades, however, continue to present color through numerous stained-glass windows. In their upper portions, the front doors have sizeable stained-glass windows displaying a stylized foliate motif on an angular geometricized background. Single-sash windows with the typical Victorian muntin pattern (a large central pane surrounded by small square and rectangular panes) appear in the polygonal bay at the base of the tower, in the transom at the main entrance, and in the transoms of the large windows of the gabled wings; in all cases, the bands of small panes are filled with stained glass. Elsewhere, the windows are one-over-one double-hung sashes or fixed sashes with double, side-by-side panes (the attic windows and the large windows with transoms in the gabled wings). The top stage of the tower has small, narrow single-pane windows in pairs on three sides of the octagon. The single door to the east side of the rear ell has two tall and narrow clear glass windows in place of the upper panels.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

McMullin-Warren House, Sebree, Webster County, Kentucky

Section number 7 Page 3

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the McMullin-Warren House is its interior, particularly the meticulously preserved foyer featuring the elaborate display of fine woodworking (in this case, almost exclusively in oak) identified with the best of the Queen Anne style. The pattern of the parquet floor, a grid of squares and rectangles outlined by narrow walnut strips, complements a similar pattern in the inlaid wainscotting which also features a row of squares positioned to resemble diamonds. On the east, or right, side of the foyer is a two-run staircase, with the first run ascending toward the front wall, the landing conforming to the polygonal base of the tower, and the second run rising toward the back of the house. The newel posts are square-in-section and panelled, the railings are moulded, and the closely spaced balusters are turned. The walls beneath the runs of the staircase are richly panelled with strings of large beading in high relief and narrow vertical recessed panels outlined in moulding. A very delicate spool and bead frieze suspended between Ionic half-columns on the front and back walls of the foyer and a full column on a large plinth serving as the first-level newel post partitions the staircase from the rest of the room; in addition, delicate beaded spandrels are joined to the upper portions of the columns and the bottom of the frieze. The stairwell is open, defined at the upper level by a railing and closely spaced turned balusters creating a narrow balcony in front of the windows of the polygonal bay.

The foyer is separated from the rest of the first floor by two large, identical doorways, one opposite the entry leading to a hall and the rear of the house, and the other on the west, or left, wall leading to the living room. Both doorways are notable for their pairs of hinged doors with numerous small square and rectangular raised panels and square panes of patterned frosted glass turned 45 degrees to resemble the diamond pattern at the top of the wainscotting. Transoms spanning the full width of both doorways are fronted on the sides facing the foyer by very finely detailed wooden screens exhibiting curvilinear motifs and fully three-dimensional beadwork. All of the surrounds, including those of the small windows at the staircase landing, have the fluted vertical members and bulls-eye corner blocks typical of the period, but are topped with unusual large, curvilinear lintels with swags in relief. Here and throughout the first floor except for the kitchen, the baseboards are distinguished by their unusual height (22 inches) and inlaid patterning.

The rest of the McMullin-Warren House—five rooms on the first floor and three on the second—is more conservative than the foyer, though equally well preserved. The doorways have the ubiquitous flat lintels and four-panel (two-over-two vertical) doors. Transoms appear at all of the doors, but only the living room has a foliate screen, without beadwork, at the single door leading to the dining room. Mantelpieces have tall, slender Ionic columns supporting an entablature above an oval mirror in an overmantel.

The only substantial change to the McMullin-Warren House, other than the enclosure of part of the wraparound front porch, is a small flat-roofed addition containing a utility room and half-bathroom at the northwest corner built in 1962. A small unobtrusive shed housing part of the mechanical system has been added to the west facade of the rear ell.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

McMullin-Warren House, Sebree, Webster County, Kentucky

Section number 7 Page 4

The playhouse, built at approximately the same time as the main residence, is scaled to the average size of a ten-year-old child. This two-room frame building is an abbreviated version of the basic one-story, L-plan house popular at the turn of the century. It is sheathed in weatherboards and has an attached shed-roofed porch, brick foundation, and composition shingles on the roof. The windows are one-over-one double-hung sashes and both of the two front doors (one for each room) have a large pane of glass in the upper half. Tuscan columns and a railing with turned balusters decorate the porch.

The two other resources are one-story frame, gable-front buildings. Sheathed in weatherboards, the garage dates to the early 1930s and has a wide, two-car entry containing six hinged doors. The recessed panels of the doors contain flush boards placed on the diagonal. Although the garage is more than 50 years old, it was built after the property's period of significance and thus is considered non-contributing. Also non-contributing due to age, the shop was built around 1980 on the site of a dilapidated smokehouse. It is clad in T-111 plywood and rests on a concrete block foundation.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

McMullin-Warren House, Sebree, Webster County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 2

successful architects circulated their plans far beyond the regions in which they practiced through privately published books and through magazines such as the Scientific American Architects and Builders Edition. The latter was perhaps the most reputable and influential monthly, targeted for the general public and presenting building specifications, plans and the most innovative techniques and merchandise available.

As transportation and communication networks spread and the availability of up-to-date machinery grew, manufacturing and distribution on a large scale became feasible and profitable, and the most fashionable architectural styles soon appeared in the hinterland. Most often the styles were rendered through turned and sawn ornamental elements and decorative glass installed in basic popular house types such as the L-plan. By the end of the century, however, it would not be highly unusual for even the smallest community, especially if situated on or near a rail line, to feature a full-blown example of the Queen Anne style, seemingly lifted from the pages of a builders' guide. Many rural communities had their own planing mills. If they could not be obtained locally, the stylistic elements portrayed and specified in a book or magazine could be ordered from the scores of city-based firms advertising in the trade publications. It was this trend which produced the McMullin-Warren House.

At the turn of this century, Sebree was a prosperous community of approximately 1,000. Much of the local economic health could be attributed to the Evansville, Henderson and Nashville branch of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad running through Sebree's commercial district. Although the impetus for initial settlement in 1869 was the existence of several mineral springs here (the town originally was named Springdale), substantial growth did not begin until a few years later when the railroad was constructed and the town's name was changed to Sebree. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Sebree boasted four tobacco stemmeries, a flour mill, a bank, the county's only newspaper and two planing mills, as well as coal mines nearby; there also were two hotels catering to visitors to the springs.

One of the planing mills, more specifically a planing, scroll and lath mill, was the operation of David W. McMullin, who also was Sebree's only building contractor. McMullin, who earned a reputation as a craftsman builder particular about details, constructed numerous houses throughout the town and also is credited with the Sebree United Methodist Church. He usually built a house for his own home, lived in it with his family for a few years, and then sold it as he completed another house. Most of his houses were basic types embellished with Queen Anne motifs; many of these are still standing, but all have been altered. His finest house, and the only one to remain intact, is the McMullin-Warren House, an exuberant full-blown example of the Queen Anne style. Completed in 1901, it not only heralded the new century, but it also served as a prominent advertisement for McMullin's mill and his skill as a builder. The nature of the detailing inside and out, the type of mill he operated, and the absence of architects in the area suggest that McMullin produced most if not all of the woodworking according to specifications in a builders' guide or magazine. The most elaborate features such as the stained glass in the front doors and the carved lintels and doors in the foyer probably were ordered directly from a manufacturer in a regional center.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

McMullin-Warren House, Sebree, Webster County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 3

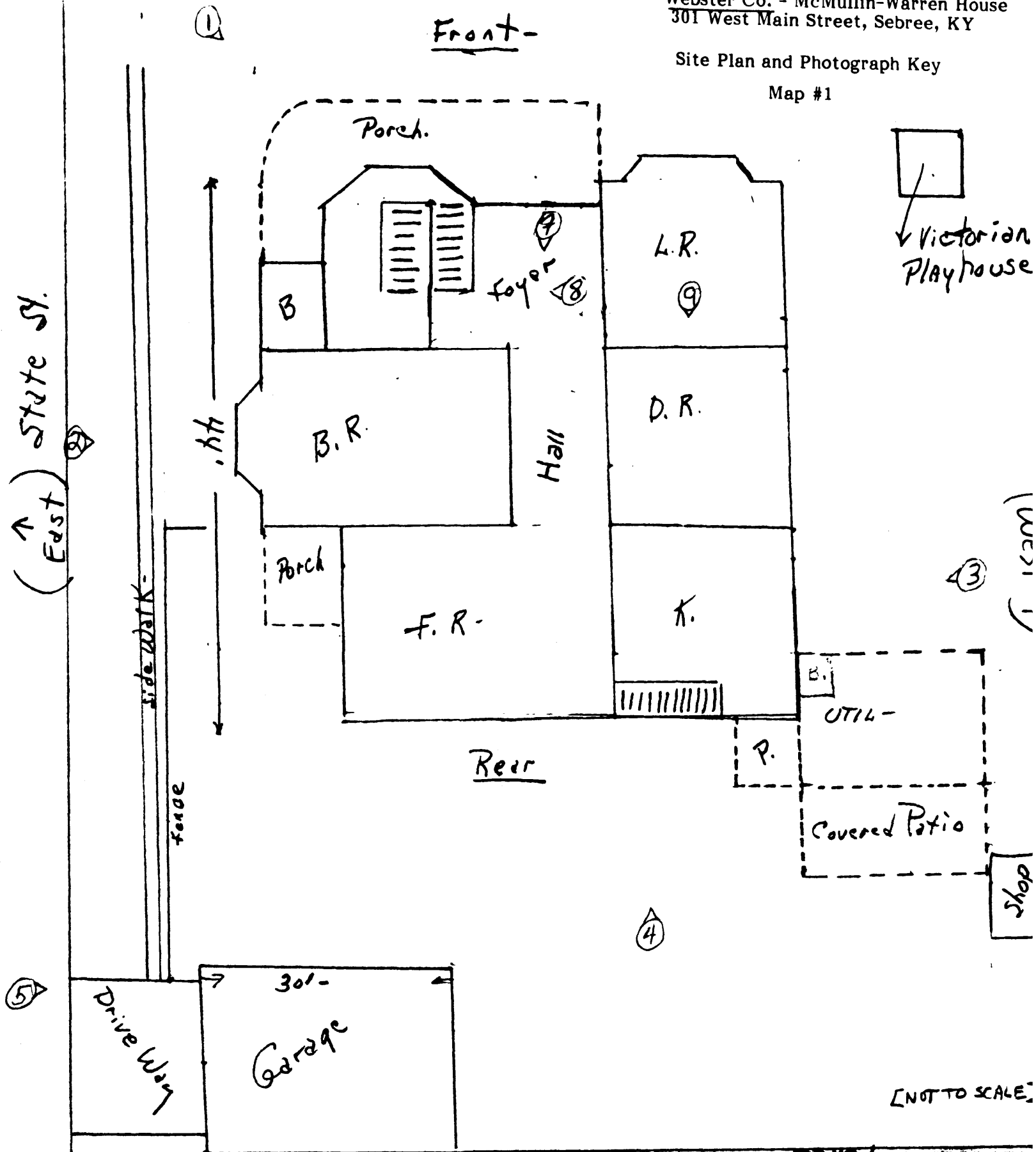
Not surprisingly, the McMullins occupied the McMullin-Warren House a few years longer than their normal tenure in their owner-built homes. When they moved on to yet another new house in 1909, they sold their landmark Victorian dwelling to George Henry Warren. The impressive two-and-one-half story house seemed an appropriate complement to Warren. A successful former livestock trader and farmer from Morgantown, Kentucky, Warren recently had moved to Sebree where he made substantial investments in the local electric light plant and flour mill and acquired the Sebree Deposit Bank from the founding Powell family. The house remained the home of the Warren family for the next 70 years, during which time successive sons headed the bank and their wives committed themselves to preservation of the house. The house has changed ownership once since the Warren family sold it in 1979; the present owners share the historic interest in preserving the building.

State - Hi-way - 56 — Main St. West - Sebree Ky. -

Webster Co. - McMullin-Warren House
301 West Main Street, Sebree, KY

Site Plan and Photograph Key

Map #1



[NOT TO SCALE]

North - 100' 41pm

Webster Co. - McMullin-Warren House
301 West Main Street, Sebree, KY

Portion of KY Department of Revenue
Property Identification Map for Sebree,
Webster County, Kentucky Map #2

