

NRListed 7/20/92

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 Searcy Post Office
other names/site number Resource #WH0037 (Municipal Court House)

2. Location

street & number Southwest Corner of Gum and Arch Streets not for publication N/A
city, town Searcy vicinity N/A
state Arkansas code AR county White code 145 zip code 72143

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources of White County, Arkansas
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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.
Catherine H. Boyd Signature of certifying official
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program State or Federal agency and bureau
Date 5-13-90

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): _____
Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government / Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government / Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Italian Renaissance

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof Asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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
Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1914
1914-39

Significant Dates

1914
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

U. S. Treasury

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

See "Historical and Architectural Resources of White County, Arkansas,"
Section H*

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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 15 614640 3901270
 Zone Easting Northing

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

1. Form Prepared By

name/title Jill Bayles, National Register Historian
 organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 13 November 1989
 street & number 225 E. Markham, Suite 300 telephone 501-371-2763
 city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Description

The Old Searcy Post Office is an Italian Renaissance style public building located on the southwest corner of Gum and Arch streets in downtown Searcy. Designed by architect Oscar Wenderoth, it was built at a cost of \$40,000 in 1914 and remained in use as a post office until the mid-1970's. It is still in good condition and is currently being used as a legislative facility.

The large, imposing structure has a rectangular, two-story floor plan and was built of reinforced concrete. The building underwent a \$250,000 expansion in 1959 with a rear (south) addition, also constructed of reinforced concrete, which housed two mail work rooms and office space. New glass and aluminum double doors on the front (north) elevation replace the original set, and the original two-over-two sash windows have been removed and replaced with eight-over-eight and one-over-one double-hung sash windows. Stylistically, the building features such Italian Renaissance elements as a flat, symmetrical front facade; a simple, low-pitched hipped roof; widely overhanging eaves supported by large brackets; and three full-height, recessed first-floor windows with arches above. Pilasters with Roman capitals flanking the first-floor windows, a belt course, and raised concrete keystones above all of the windows are other Italian Renaissance elements that are incorporated into the building's exterior design.

Another characteristic of the Italian Renaissance style, which this building also exhibits, is smaller and less elaborate fenestration on the upper story; however, these windows are also recessed with eight-over-eight double-hung sashes. A square, flat-topped cupola sits atop the shingle-covered hipped roof. The foundation is made of cast concrete and, according to historic photographs, was excavated by a mule-drawn scoop. Two original iron lampposts stand on either side of the front entrance as further reminders of the pre-war period in which this structure was built.

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Significance

Searcy's original post office is the only Italian Renaissance style public building in White County and one of only a few such buildings in the entire state. It was constructed during a period of increasing prosperity and cultural awareness brought about by the emergence of the railroad, when more and more high-style public buildings and residences were designed and built [see the property type for Railroad Era Religious and Institutional Buildings and Historic Context 2: Railroad Era]. Yet because the Italian Renaissance style was ordinarily used for architect-designed landmarks in major metropolitan areas prior to World War I, it was rarely used in Arkansas' slowly developing, primarily vernacular towns. Therefore, the post office is significant on a local level under National Register Criterion C as a rare example of government-funded Italian Renaissance architecture.

While the building's architecture reflects an increased awareness and prosperity among Searcians, it also reflects the gradual increase in population, which, as discussed in the Historic Context and Property Type sections, was another of the railroad's effects on a community. With a population of just over 2000, only six postal employees, no city mail delivery and annual postage receipts of about \$8000, Searcy, like most other Arkansas towns, was actually too small to qualify for a postal facility. Yet in 1908, largely due to the efforts of Congressman Stephen Brundidge, the government approved the funding of a \$40,000 post office, making Searcy the second smallest town in the United States to secure such a building. Their efforts were well-timed, because in 1913 Congress passed the Public Buildings Act, which prohibited the construction of new post office buildings in communities whose postal receipts totaled less than \$10,000. But by 1916, two years after the Searcy post office was finally completed, the town's postal receipts amounted to over \$14,000, justifying the building's existence. Therefore, the building stands in testimony to the foresight of Searcy citizens, who believed in their town's potential for growth. For this reason, the post office is also significant under Criterion A as representing an important period of growth, prosperity and optimism in the state's history.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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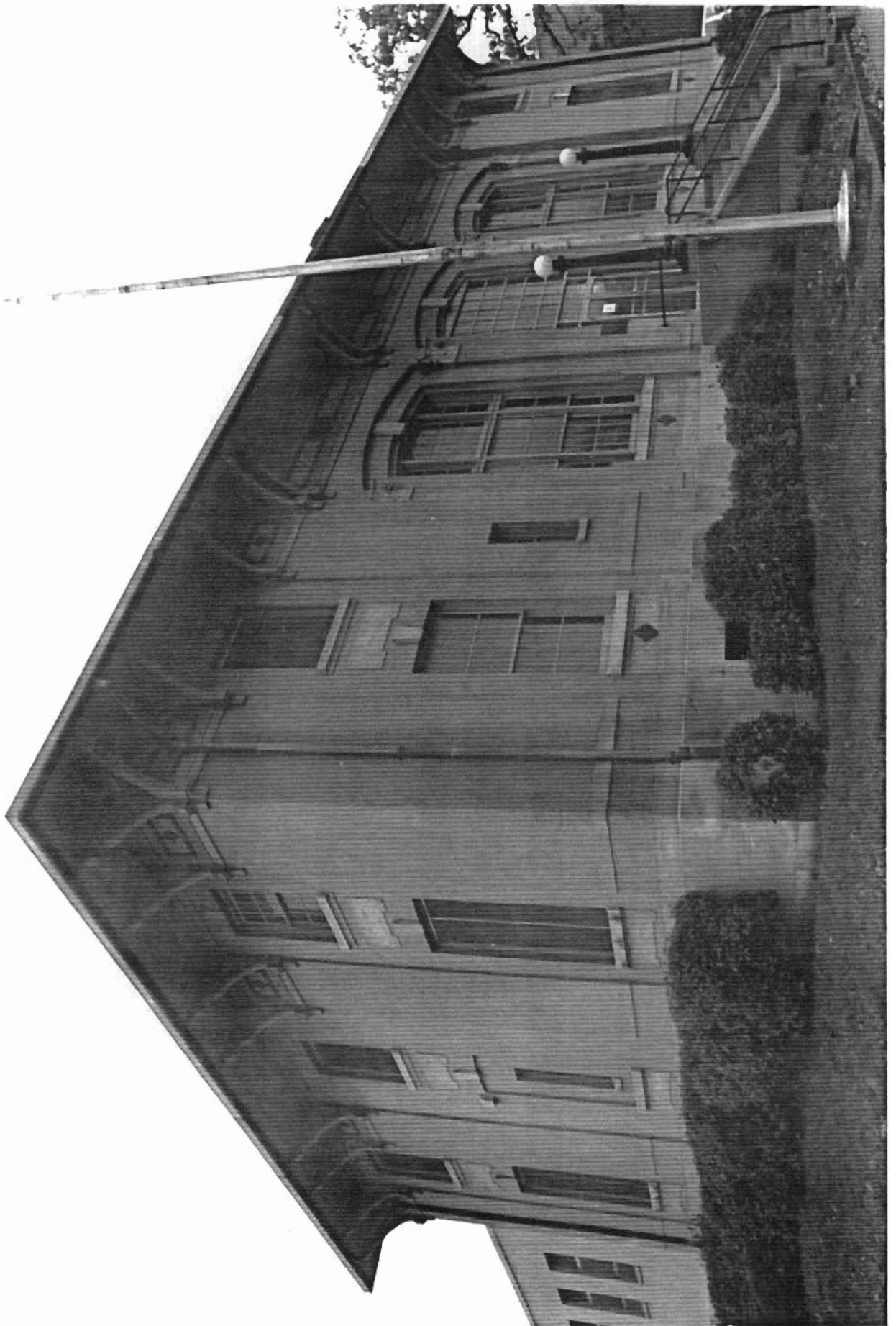
Acres of property: Less than one

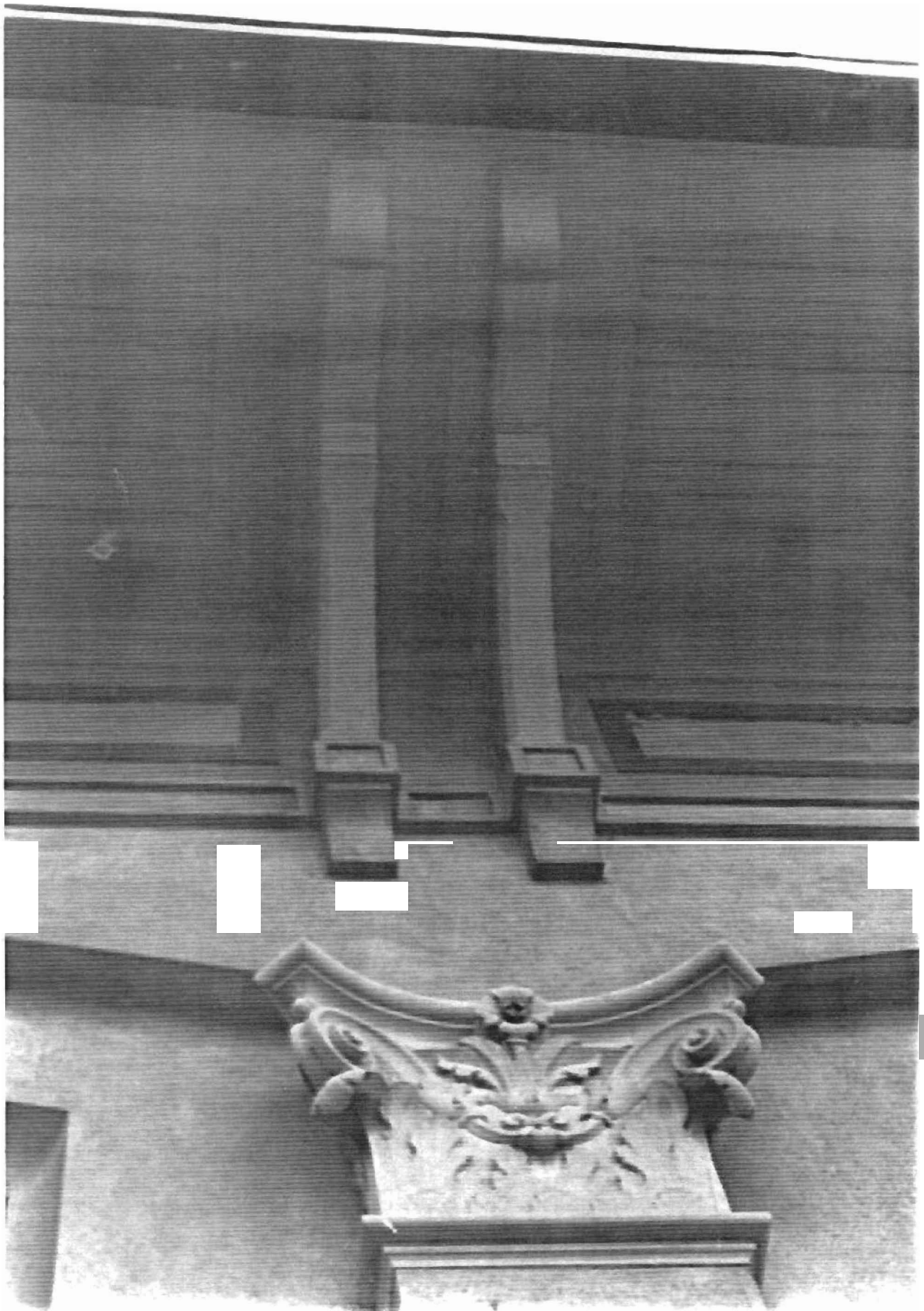
Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of West Arch and South Gum Streets, proceed southerly along the western edge of South Gum Street for a distance of approximately 150 feet to the point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel to the southern elevation of the building; thence proceed westerly along said line for a distance of approximately 125 feet to a point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel to the western elevation of the building; thence proceed northerly for a distance of approximately 150 feet along said line to a point formed by its intersection with the southern edge of West Arch Street; thence proceed easterly for a distance of approximately 125 feet to the point of beginning.

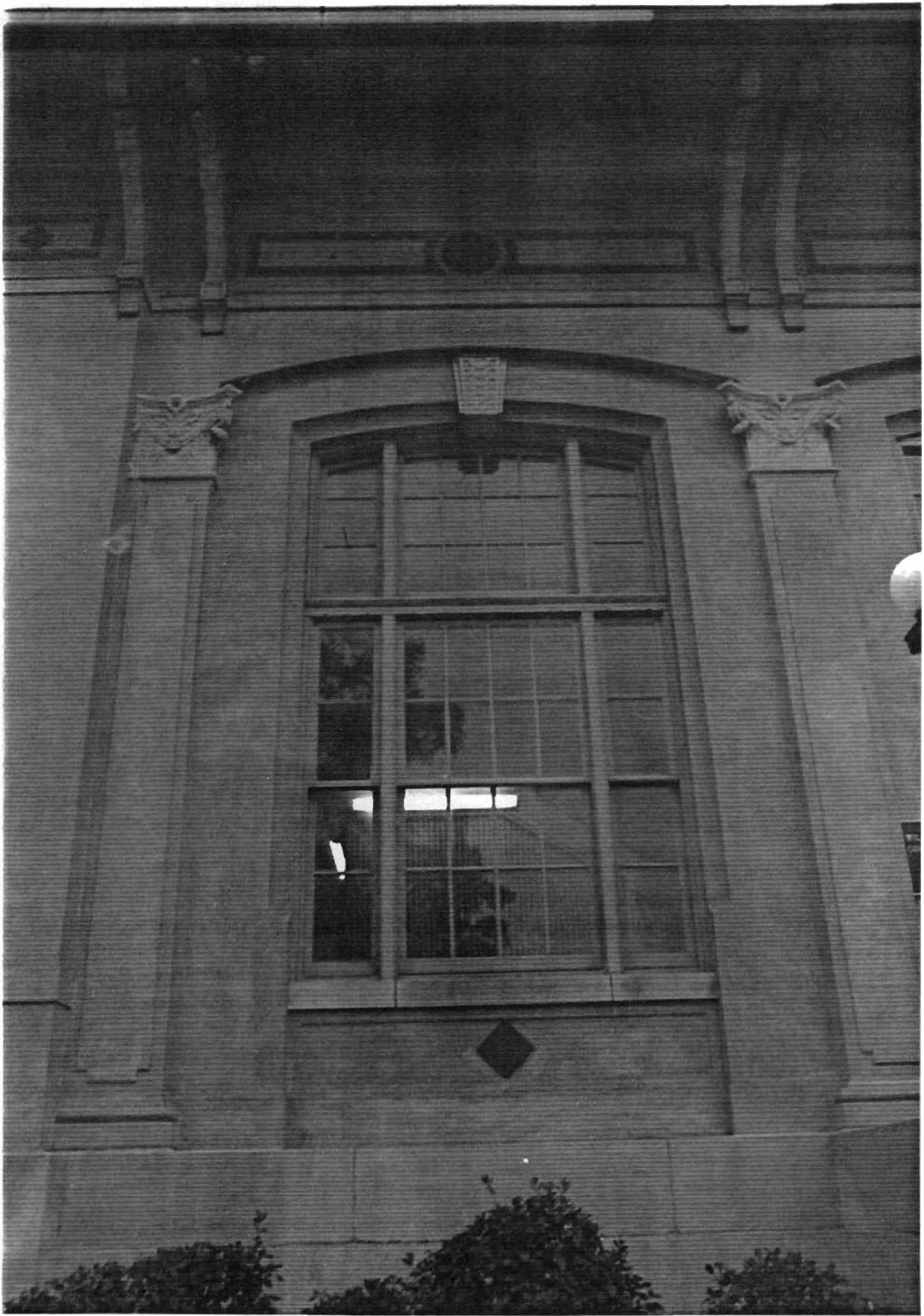
Boundary Justification:

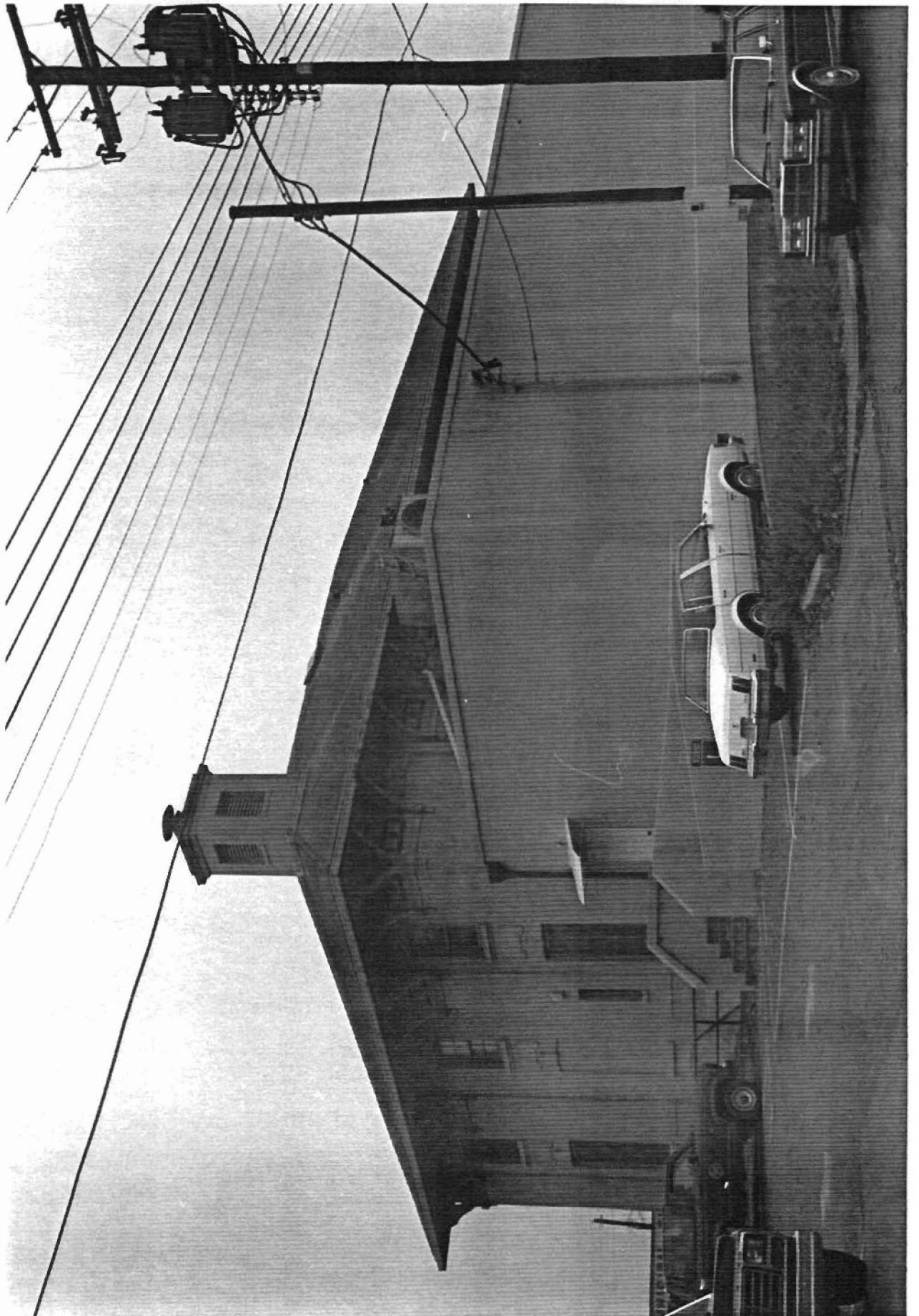
The original lot has been subdivided during the non-historic period, resulting in an indefinite current lot boundary; therefore, this boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

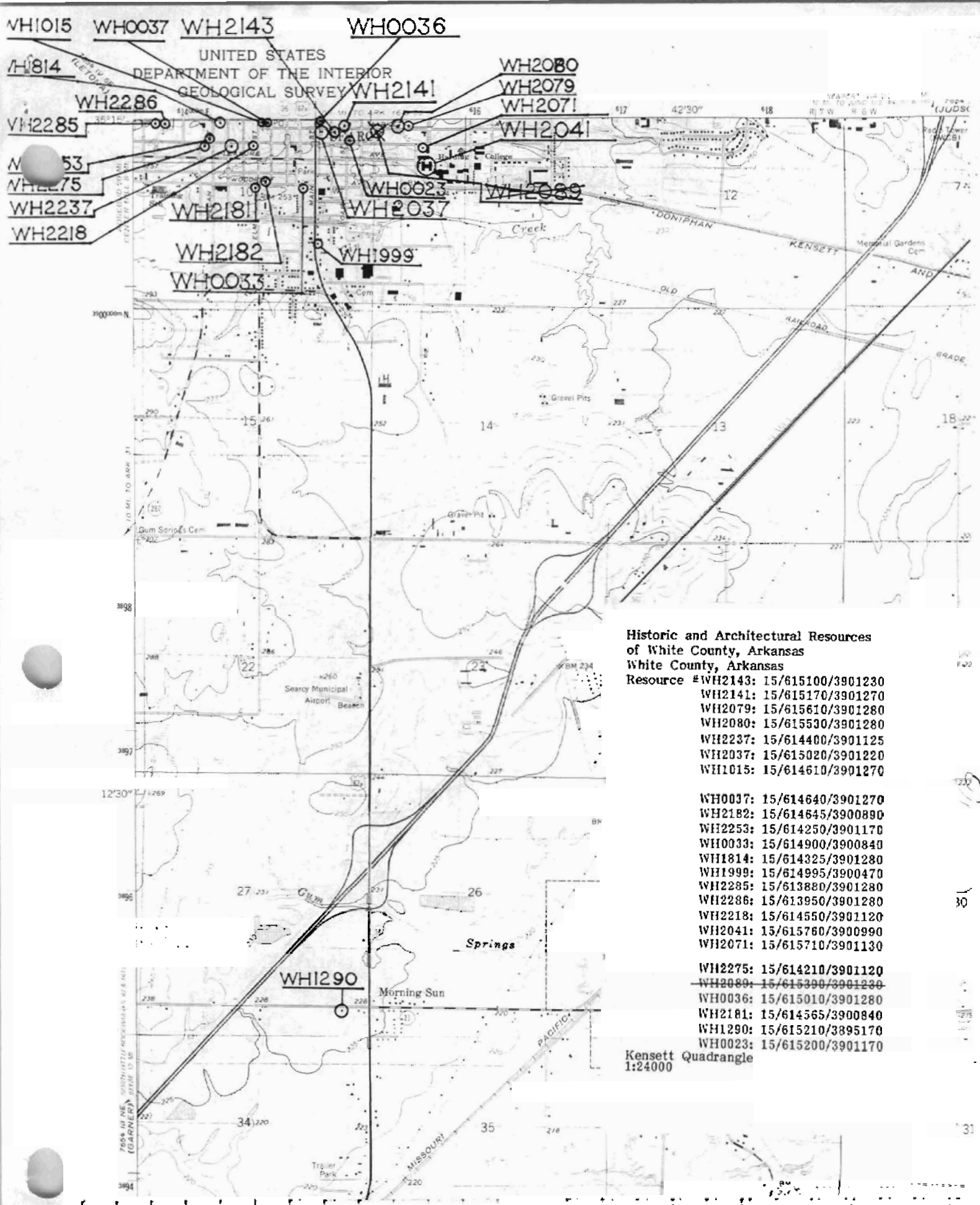












**Historic and Architectural Resources
of White County, Arkansas**

- White County, Arkansas
Resource #
- WH2143: 15/615100/3901230
 - WH2141: 15/615170/3901270
 - WH2079: 15/615610/3901280
 - WH2080: 15/615530/3901280
 - WH2237: 15/614400/3901125
 - WH2037: 15/615020/3901220
 - WH1015: 15/614610/3901270
 - WH0037: 15/614640/3901270
 - WH2182: 15/614645/3900890
 - WH2253: 15/614250/3901170
 - WH0033: 15/614900/3900840
 - WH1814: 15/614325/3901280
 - WH1999: 15/614995/3900470
 - WH2285: 15/613880/3901280
 - WH2286: 15/613950/3901280
 - WH2218: 15/614550/3901120
 - WH2041: 15/615760/3900990
 - WH2071: 15/615710/3901130
 - WH2275: 15/614210/3901120
 - ~~WH2080: 15/615390/3901230~~
 - WH0036: 15/615010/3901280
 - WH2181: 15/614565/3900840
 - WH1290: 15/615210/3895170
 - WH0023: 15/615200/3901170

Kentsett Quadrangle
1:24000

197
120
30
1975
31