

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Aspen Hill

and/or common Aspen Hill

## 2. Location

street &amp; number West Virginia Route 9

\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Charles Town

☒ vicinity of

congressional district Second

state West Virginia code 54

county Jefferson

code 037

## 3. Classification

| Category  | Ownership                                   | Status  | Present Use   |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district                                    | ___ public                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | ___ agriculture                                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | ___ unoccupied                                      | ___ commercial  |
| ___ structure                                   | ___ both                                    | ___ work in progress                                | ___ educational                                       |
| ___ site  | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | ___ entertainment                                     |
| ___ object                                      | ___ in process                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | ___ government  |
|   | ___ being considered                        | ___ yes: unrestricted                               | ___ industrial  |
|   |   | ___ no  | ___ military  |
|   |   |   | ___ museum  |
|   |   |   | ___ park  |
|   |   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
|   |   |   | ___ religious   |
|   |   |   | ___ scientific  |
|   |   |   | ___ transportation                                    |
|   |   |   | ___ other:  |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Snyder Roger Smith

street &amp; number Aspen Hill, P.O. Box 41, RT. 1

city, town Charles Town

☒ vicinity of

state West Virginia 25414

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street &amp; number Washington and George Streets

city, town Charles Town

state West Virginia

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Jefferson County Historic  
title Landmarks Commissionhas this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes \_\_\_ no

date 1979

\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state ☒ county \_\_\_ localdepository for survey records c/o Dr. John A. Washington  
Harewood, R.F.D. 2

city, town Charles Town

state West Virginia

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Aspen Hill is a detached dwelling originally constructed as a farmhouse. It consists of two distinct major parts, one an L-shaped brick section and the other an apparently older rectangular log unit with a more recent frame extension that attaches it to the main house. The three-bay front brick part is two stories high and includes a full basement, while the cabin is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  stories (a loft is above) and the frame connector, which serves as a kitchen, is one story. As may be said about many features, roof types are interesting in their variety, for a hip roof is on the main brick portion, gables appear at the ell and on the log unit, and a shed roof covers the kitchen.

Brickwork is an intriguing mixture of regular and irregular common bonding. Considering a seemingly haphazard--perhaps shoddy--coursing on the south (front) wall west of the main entrance, a puzzle (one that expands on the interior) emerges: was this section part of an earlier building, did it exist as a separate "house" at one time, or was it a product of indiscriminate builders? A 5/1 common bond configuration is standard for the remainder, yet this wall (perhaps the west wall of this section is similar, but it is covered with siding, so brickwork is not exposed) has only occasional courses of headers with sporadic occurrences of from one to three headers in a row. Other elements relating to it, though, including windows, use of jack arches, and a corbeled cornice, are the same as elsewhere, and overall exterior symmetry is not impaired.

Porches are an important feature, at least today, filling the first-floor space along the west side (a much used, modern, screened-in area) and providing a sheltered walkway across the cabin front where the roof forms an overhang. Far more impressive is a detailed and inviting main entrance porch. A series of wide steps leads to a large covered area whose roof is supported by four free standing, fluted Doric columns and similar pilasters attached to the wall. Although the railing is simple, its slender balusters complement a dentil cornice and broad frieze. Good proportioning hides what might have been an overbearing massiveness and blends the composition into a pleasing introduction to the entrance.

Except for those on the south elevation and the first-floor room of the east rear, windows are all 6/6. The exceptions combine with entrance detailing to make both exterior and interior a bit out of the ordinary, for while it is not uncommon to have a three-part window composition above a center door that includes sidelights, here the entire entrance facade and north parlor window are of this type, having fluted vertical dividers between main (6/6) and side (2/2) sash.

Doors seem everywhere--front, west side and rear--but only the two-panel door at the main entrance appears to be original. As with roof types, chimneys are of a variety, with inside end placement on north (rear) and east elevations of the brick house, an outside end chimney on its west side, and a large outside stone chimney with brick cap on the cabin.

Besides the main porch and window design, exterior decorative elements

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include diamond-shaped log ends of the cabin and attractive front entrance detailing. The latter consists of a doorway surrounded by sidelights and overlight that have horizontal and vertical geometric patterns, fluted dividers, panels beneath sidelights, and worked corner blocks.

The interior of this center-hall, single-pile, L-shaped brick house is somewhat plain despite such features as splayed and paneled first-floor window reveals. While two-panel doors are appealing, their surrounds are simple and devoid of ornamentation except for worked corner blocks at several first-floor openings. Only the southwest room has a chair rail, there are no cornices except for that recently added to the central second-floor stair hall, and mantels (there is a fireplace in each of the six major rooms) are not particularly distinguished, although some shelves are built up and that in the dining room has a paneled undershelf and attached half columns. Stairs in the main hall and between southwest room and ell are wide and consist of two runs with landing, but neither newel posts nor balusters and rails are exceptional. There are sawn brackets under the treads of the open-string main stair. Much of the door hardware is interesting, at least, with several having metal box locks (a wooden box lock is on an interior door in the kitchen addition) and most including keyhole covers and brass knobs.

The log house (which may have been an early family dwelling, outside kitchen or slave/workers' quarters, perhaps a combination of second and third) is rather simple on both exterior and interior, with exposed walls except on the sided west end. Only the imposing fireplace along with notching that uses diamond-shaped ends makes the structure somewhat unique.

Overall, alterations are minor and few. Changes for modernization purposes have generally been accomplished through small rear additions, such as the frame kitchen and bathrooms enclosed in a brick extension at the end of the main hall. The property also includes a twentieth century chicken coop (used for storage), a newer garage, and an approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile driveway that leads to W.Va. Route 9.

## 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation                              |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)<br>Local history |

Specific dates c. 1840

Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Aspen Hill, located north of Charles Town, Jefferson County, West Virginia, is representative of a growing middle group of farmhouses built before the War between the States in what was a fertile farming area of Virginia's Northern Neck. Construction of grand homes attributed to large landholders and families of note had reached its zenith by about 1840, a date by which this section had become both settled and established. From that time until the Civil War, three fundamental divisions existed in rural parts: gentlemen farmers associated with an older plantation economy, moderately successful yeomen acquiring new estates, and tenant and subsistence farmers. Aspen Hill was a product of the middle group, a representative example of a good and substantial home that "entitled" the family to point with pride to their middle grade "ransion house." What adds to the significance of this particular building is its unusual mixture, even jumble, of construction details that bespeak a struggle to erect a fine house without requisite professional assistance, knowledge of methods, or availability of all necessary materials in proper proportions at proper times.

### Explanation of Significance Statement

By around 1750 land surveys, grants, patents and settlements had encompassed a considerable portion of countryside south of the Potomac and west of the Shenandoah rivers. Important Virginia families whose fortunes had long been associated with Tidewater and then Piedmont lands were sending a new generation into fertile valleys of this once distant region. Within a few decades of the Revolutionary War, a generation of great limestone houses that served as country seats gave way to a new wave of magnificent brick plantation-type dwellings.

During this process of expansion, however, land holdings were subdivided and developed to an extent that first families of the area were sending children into other professions more often or seeing them move to less populated sections. Soon the intermixture of Southern gentlemen, well-to-do Quakers from Pennsylvania and a more numerous body of so-called yeoman farmers combined with large numbers of tenant/subsistence workers and slaves to form a socio-economic stratification that had three free layers: at the top, and forming a defined elite, were those large landholders whose families had obtained a position early, at the base were a considerable number who worked some lands of the gentry or subsisted on smaller plots of fair to marginal acreage, and between these was that element of usually hard working and moderately prosperous farmers who sought to take advantage of each situation to better themselves.

Among the latter was a family named Hurst who, by the 1830s, had accumulated good land north of the county seat of Charles Town. It does not appear to have been an early or especially established family, but it

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had aspirations and sizable landholdings. In fact, James G. Hurst, to whose heirs Aspen Hill Farm passed until sold out of family hands in 1918, even spent \$50 for books and associated property at an 1851 sale. The vernacular Greek Revival building they had constructed, perhaps around 1840, was even referred to as the "mansion house" in an 1870 settlement of Captain Hurst's estate. This reference indicates an awareness of attainment and a striving for stature that was of considerable importance. The product of this striving might seem pretentious today, but that brick house is probably a good and representative example of the outcome of efforts by a few generations to present a respectable and tangible evidence of status.

Much of what can be said of Aspen Hill is speculative, based upon a physical structure and not substantiated by written documentation. That physical evidence is informative, however, and it points to struggle as well as success. The log house on this property is probably the earlier building. Its large fireplace and outside chimney of stone and brick are similar to those in many other county log buildings of the early nineteenth century, but its diamond-shaped log ends bespeak a polish not generally seen (in part, perhaps, because so many log structures are covered with clapboards or plaster). Whether this was an early family dwelling, was used as an outside kitchen, or housed slaves is not known; it possibly served all three functions at various times.

The brick "mansion house" is a substantial and well-built dwelling, at least for the most part, but it lacks refinement of overall plan, workmanship, materials and detailing found in the grander plantation tradition of many Jefferson County country estates. This is especially evident in the southwest rooms, where more questions arise than answers are provided.

Given a medley in exterior brickwork and a hodge-podge of interior woodwork, one wonders if the owner merely had a big brick house in mind when construction began. Although a symmetry in window style and placement, use of jack arches, and a corbeled cornice on the south (front) elevation is not broken, 5/1 common bonding elsewhere gives way here to occasional and sporadic use of headers intermixed with long bricks, the chimney is outside the shell rather than being incorporated into a wall, this section is deeper than southeast rooms, and there is a separate entrance hall and stair at its north end. On the interior, one must step down into the main hall from the southwest rooms, the door from the side hall into the first-floor room is different from others in height and design, and there is a chair rail here. In

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addition, stones in basement walls under this section are not the same size as those under the remainder of the house.

Could this have been part of an earlier building, was it a separate unit that stood alone for some time, did its builders use it to gain a knowledge of how to go about further construction, or is it the product of a series of related or unrelated errors? These questions will remain speculative unless additional evidence comes to light, yet they point up something about this house's relationship to its time and place: it is a decent farm building and a fair effort on the part of an aspiring middle class family in pre-Civil War Jefferson County. The product was suited to its socio-economic environment.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bushong, Millard Kessler. Historic Jefferson County. Boyce, Va.: Carr Publishing Co., Inc., 1972.  
Charles Town, West Virginia. Jefferson County Courthouse. Deed, Will and Land books.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3½ (approximately)

Quadrangle name Charles Town, W.Va.-Va.-Md.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification Aspen Hill sits west of center in a rectangle bounded on the north by a cornfield that marks the end of the property line as noted in a plat contained in Deed Book 424 beginning at page 682, at the Jefferson County Courthouse. The west boundary also follows the

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
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| state | code | county | code |
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Harding, Historian

Historic Preservation Unit

organization Dept. of Culture and History

date October 27, 1979

The Cultural Center

street & number Capitol Complex

telephone (304) 348-0240

city or town Charleston

state West Virginia

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Charles E. Morris*

State Historic Preservation Officer

title Director, Preservation Unit, Dept. of Culture and History

date December 10, 1979

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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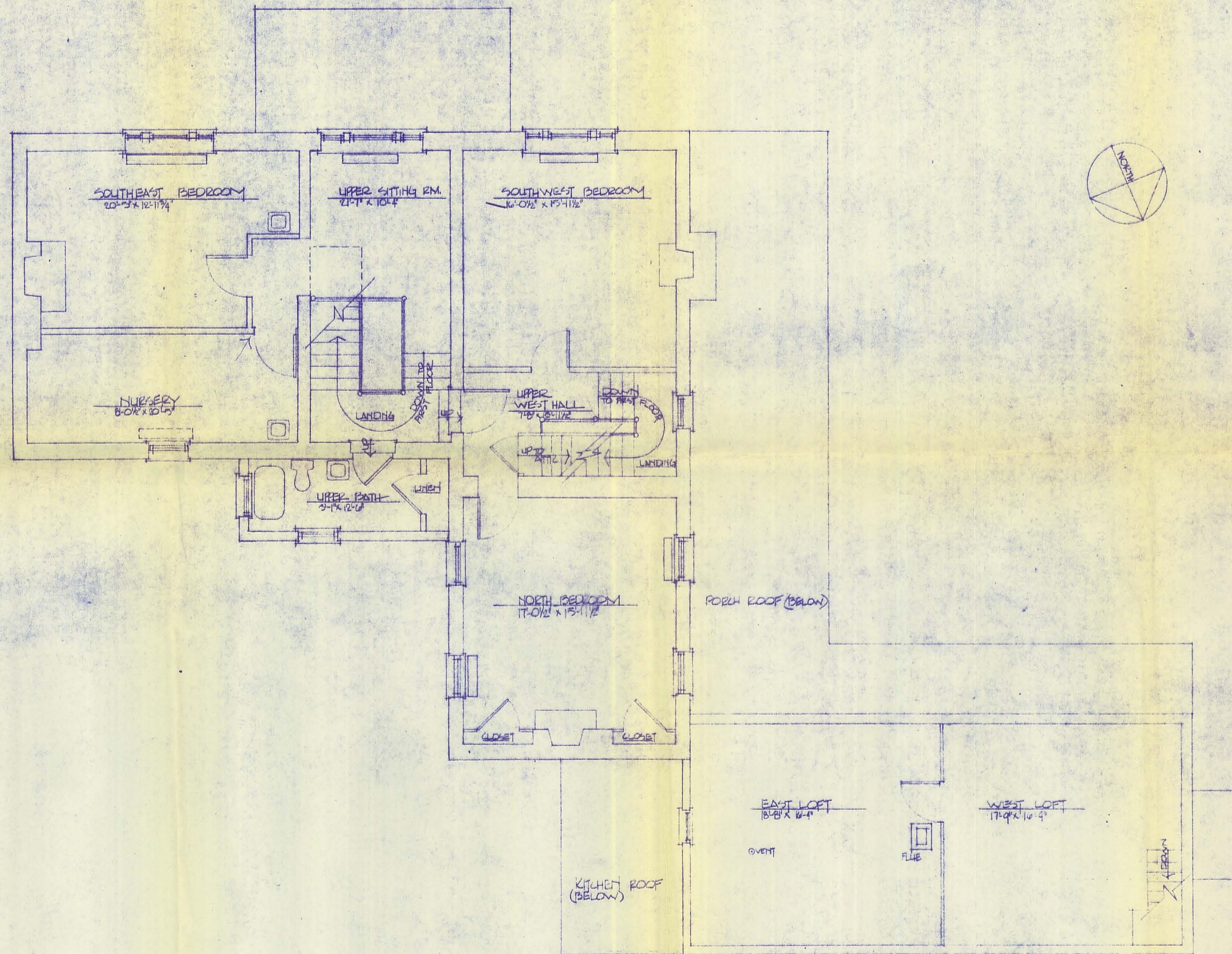
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Verbal boundary description and justification (continued):

property line marked in that plat, generally along an existing fence and field line. The southern boundary is along this property line and follows a fence along the driveway to a treeline approximately 190 feet east of the eastern end of the house; this treeline forms the eastern boundary and extends in a straight line to connect with the above mentioned northern line along the cornfield. Boundaries selected represent associations with natural and legal land markers. Within the confines of the nominated area would have been included the house and associated dependencies and garden plots.



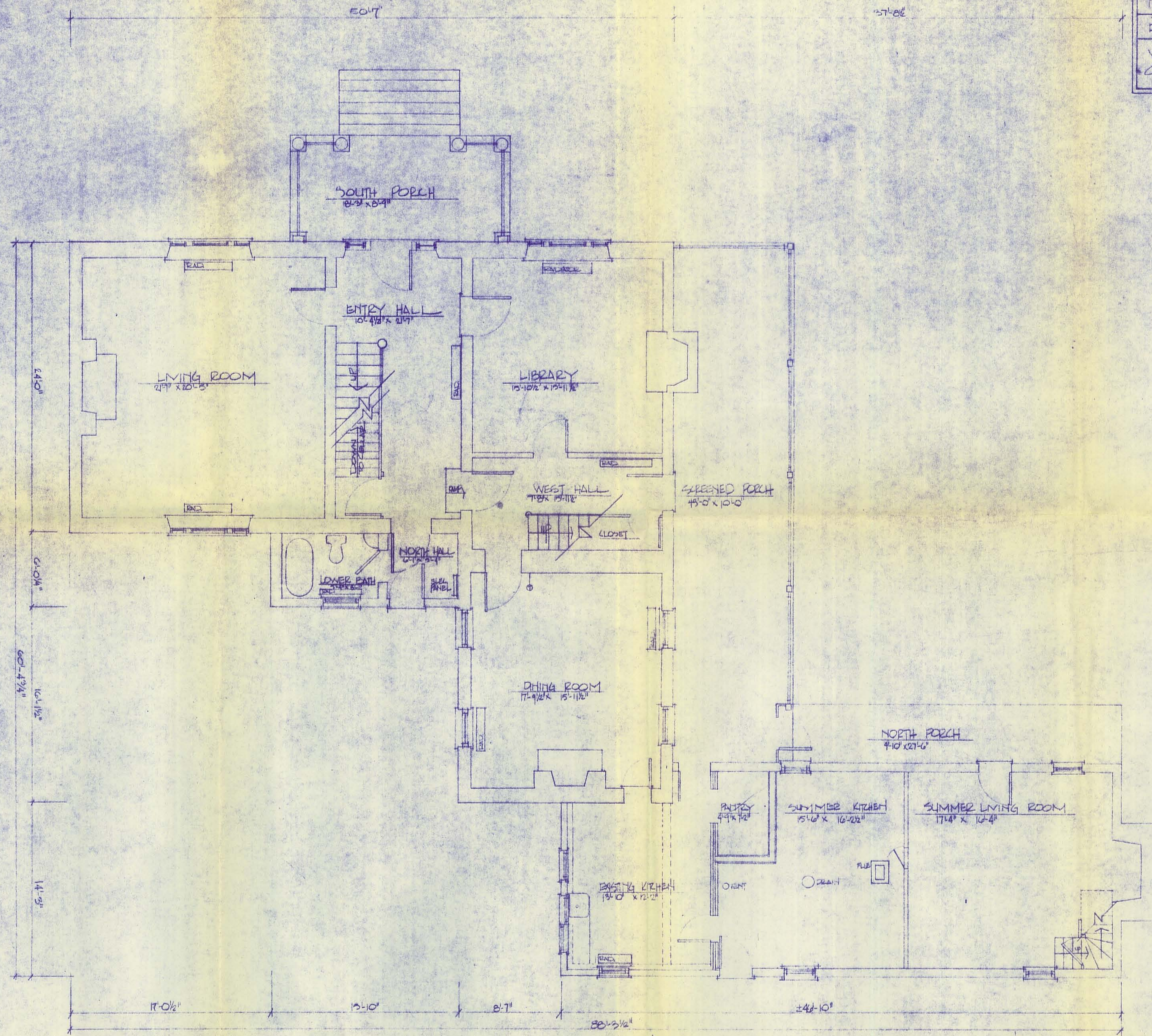
|  |               |
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| NEW SNYDER RESIDENCE - MR. & MRS. FLOYD SNYDER |               |
| ASPHEN HILL, CHARLES TOWN, W.V.                |               |
| BASE - RENOVATION PLAN                         | DRAWN: WCT/KC |
| DESIGN:  | DATE          |
| WAYNE CHATFIELD-TAYLOR & ASSOC.                |               |
| CHARLES TOWN, W.V.                             |               |



SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| NEW SNYDER RESIDENCE - MR & MRS. P. SNYDER |               |
| ASPEN HILL, CHARLES TOWN                   |               |
| BASE: RENOVATION PLAN                      | DATE: 7-29-77 |
| DESIGN: WAYNE CHATFIELD-TAYLOR & ASSOC.    | CHARLES TOWN  |



FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



This is a detailed topographic map of Charles Town, West Virginia. The map features a grid system with coordinates along the left edge: 43°57' at the top, 43°54' in the middle, and 43°53' at the bottom. Longitude is indicated as 17°30' at the bottom left. A vertical line on the left side is labeled 'LEETOWN 4.1 MI.' and another further down is labeled 'MIDDLEWAY 6 MI.'. The town's name, 'CHARLES TOWN', is prominently displayed across the center. Major roads are shown, including 'WESTERN' running vertically through the center and 'BALTIMORE' running diagonally from the bottom right towards the center. Other roads include 'NORFOLK' and 'SHENANDOAH'. Key locations marked include 'Trailer Park' in three different areas, 'Shenandoah Downs' racetrack, 'City Hall', 'Hosp.', 'Cem.', 'CH', 'PO', 'Wt.', 'Edge H.M. Cem.', and 'Park'. Elevation contours are drawn throughout the landscape, with labels such as 500, 510, 520, 530, 540, 550, 560, 570, 580, and 600. The map also shows various smaller structures, parking lots, and geographical features like hills and valleys.

