

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Spencer Commercial Historic DistrictOther names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

**2. Location**Street & number: Main Street, Market Street, Court Street, Church Street, Beauty Street, Heritage AvenueCity or town: Spencer State: WV County: RoaneNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:   national    statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A    B    C    D

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

9/9/2025

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title:

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☒

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☐

District

☒

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>63</u>	<u>8</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>64</u>	<u>10</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
COMMERCE/TRADE/business  
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution  
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store  
COMMERCE/TRADE/department store  
COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse  
SOCIAL/meeting house  
GOVERNMENT/correctional facility  
GOVERNMENT/courthouse  
GOVERNMENT/post office  
GOVERNMENT/firehouse  
GOVERNMENT/government office  
FUNERARY/mortuary  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/monument/marker  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/communications facility  
HEALTHCARE/hospital  
HEALTHCARE/medical business/office  
TRANSPORTATION/rail-related  
RELIGION/religious facility  
EDUCATION/library

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional

COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

GOVERNMENT/government office

GOVERNMENT/post office

FUNERARY/mortuary

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ theater

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ monument/marker

LANDSCAPE/park

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/communications facility

HEALTHCARE/medical business/office

RELIGION/religious facility

EDUCATION/library

VACANT/NOT IN USE



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Italian Renaissance

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

LATE VICTORIAN/vernacular

MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

MODERN MOVEMENT/New Formalism

MODERN MOVEMENT/Wrightian

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

walls:	<u>BRICK</u>
	<u>CONCRETE</u>
	<u>STONE/sandstone</u>
	<u>SYNTHETICS/vinyl</u>
	<u>OTHER</u>
foundations:	<u>CONCRETE</u>
	<u>STONE</u>
roofs:	<u>METAL/aluminum</u>
	<u>SYNTHETICS/rubber</u>
	<u>ASPHALT</u>
other:	<u>WOOD</u>
	<u>METAL/tin</u>

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Spencer Commercial Historic District is located in the center of Downtown Spencer in Roane County, WV. It encompasses 13.67 acres of land on the streets immediately surrounding the Public Square – including Main Street, Court Street, Church Street, Market Street, Beauty Street, and Heritage Avenue. The resources are primarily comprised of two- and three-story

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brick buildings in the Commercial style, with some Italianate and Modern influences. The majority of these buildings were constructed between 1896-1910 after the devastating fire of 1896 destroyed the earlier wooden downtown businesses, with construction continuing well into the mid-century. Several seemingly anachronous intrusions were constructed as part of Urban Renewal efforts in the 1960s-70s, including the current strikingly Modern/New Formalist courthouse. While the integrity of most resources has been hurt by ground level storefront alterations following trends over the past century, their relatively unmodified upper stories and continued commercial use attest to their historic age, association, and significance.

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## Narrative Description

### Context

The Spencer Commercial Historic District is comprised of the streets immediately surrounding the Public Square, located in the center of downtown Spencer. It encompasses 13.67 acres and includes Main Street and Court Street running east and west, Church Street and Market Street running north and south, and short segments of Beauty Street and Heritage Avenue to the north and south respectively. Beginning at the west terminus of the E. Main Street/US-33 bridge, the boundary follows Main Street north to the intersection with Court Street and turns west along the rear/northern edge of properties fronting the north side of Court Street until meeting Church Street. It then proceeds north to Spring Creek and follows the bank west until meeting Market Street. It proceeds south along Market until the intersection with Duling Street, at which point it turns west then south to follow the rear/western edge of the properties fronting the west side of Market Street. It follows this line to the rear of the properties at 318-320 Main Street (resources #64 and #65), proceeding west then south along their exterior until meeting Main Street. It follows Main Street west to the western side of the property at 333 Main Street (resource #70), then turns south and east along the edges of that property and continues east along the rear/southern edges of the properties fronting the south side of Main Street. It follows this line until the rear of the property at 316-318 Market Street (resource #16), then turns south then east along the edges of that property until meeting Market Street. It proceeds south along Market Street until the intersection with Beauty Street, at which point it proceeds east along Beauty until meeting Church Street. It then proceeds north on Church Street until Chambers and Pendleton Alley along the southern edge of the property at 321 Church Street (resource #23). It follows this alley east until meeting Black Walnut Avenue, which it follows north until arriving again at the East Main Street bridge and completing the boundary.

The city of Spencer lies in the north-central part of Roane County, isolated by the extremely mountainous terrain of central West Virginia. The major inroads are US-119 from the south towards Clendenin, and US-33 from the east and west towards Glenville and Ripley respectively. Downtown Spencer is evenly bisected by US-33 a.k.a. Main Street, and bounded by Spring Creek to the north. While the majority of the downtown area/historic district is on a generally flat plane, there is a substantial drop in elevation from Court Street north to Spring Creek. As such,

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the structures along the north side of Court Street are built into a steeply sloping hillside. With the exception of small lawns in front of the Courthouse and Post Office, the only planned greenspace is Heritage Park at the northernmost point of the district. This park encompasses one acre around the historic Ravenswood, Spencer, & Glenville Railroad Depot, and is bounded by Market Street, Spring Creek, and associated access-road Heritage Avenue.

The layout of downtown streets and lots follows the same streetscape designed at Spencer's founding, as laid out in the Corporation of the Town of Spencer Plat Map adopted December 12, 1858 (Figure 5). All of the resources named in the historic district are within the bounds of the properties depicted on this map. (The W.B.F. Prickett property north of Court Street and A. Bowman property to the immediate west of Lot 1 were later incorporated into the city limits and subsequently subdivided into the lots corresponding to the Court Street, Heritage Park, and Wood Theater resources.) As seen on this map, the town has historically centered around Public Square, designated to be the future home of the courthouse completed in 1859. That courthouse burned and was rebuilt in 1887; the second courthouse was razed in 1961 for construction of the present courthouse in 1965. Despite the evolving iterations of the building itself, the presence of a courthouse in this square has always been the defining centerpiece of Downtown Spencer.

Early development efforts first focused along Main Street, primarily the block directly opposite the courthouse. When the Ravenswood, Spencer, & Glenville Railroad line was completed to Spencer in 1892, the track followed Spring Creek and terminated in a railyard in the area of the former W.B.F. Prickett property. The depot was constructed in its present location at the north end of Market Street; because merchandise and people were unloaded and disseminated via Market Street, that thoroughfare became equally as vital and desirous as Main Street. The densest massing of structures therefore occurred along these two axes, with the other streets filling in over time. Unfortunately, these earliest wooden structures were lost to a series of fires over the late-19<sup>th</sup>/early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries – most notably the devastating fire of 1896 which destroyed over forty businesses. After that fire, most owners chose to construct their new buildings out of brick. This resulted in a major construction boom c.1896-1910 of brick commercial-style buildings, and marked the transition of Downtown Spencer to its current more modern city aesthetic.

Looking at the district area today, one is struck by two factors: the density of surviving historic structures, and the uniformity of their styles. Very little demolition has taken place within the commercial core in the last hundred years, and with the exception of the large paved lot at the corner of Beauty and Church Street there are only a handful of vacant lots breaking the continuity of structures. And while there are a handful of modern intrusions occupying some lots, the majority of these were completed in the 1960-70s in the spirit of Urban Renewal and have gained significance in their own right – namely the Courthouse (Resource #59), new Traders Bank (Resource #63), First Baptist Church of Spencer (Resource #72), and Roane County Public Library (Resource #73).

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Stylistically, the overwhelming majority (over 90%) of resources in this district are two- or three-story commercial brick structures with glass storefronts, flat roofs, and little or no ornamentation other than corbelling beneath their parapets. A handful of these resources feature Classical-inspired details such as arches, dentils, column-style pilasters, or rusticated ground floors and can be co-classified as Italianate (Resources #7, #13, #15, #27, #47, #53) or Italian Renaissance/Classical Revival (Resources #12, #64). The most common styles among the remaining resources are those of the Modern varieties, including Streamline/Moderne (Resource #6), Art Deco (Resource #39), New Formalism (Resource #59), and Commercial with Modern influencing (Resources #9, #63). There is one residential home in a vernacular Victorian style (Resource #28), but even this has been converted to commercial use. The historic buildings in Heritage Park are vernacular wood-frame structures (Resources #1, #4), and the remaining resources are non-contributing contemporary buildings added within the last fifty years (Resources #2, #32, #40).

### Statement of Integrity

Nearly all of the resources in this district survive with moderate integrity. This is due primarily to the fact that their ground level storefronts have been altered, often more than once, to keep up with modern trends throughout the past century or to deal with vacancy/deterioration in recent years. Some resources do retain their original storefronts – most notably Resources #15, #66, #67, and #69. Several others' storefront alterations occurred within the period of significance and have taken on architectural value of their own, such as Resources #9, #10, #12, #22, #61, and #64). One particularly important case of important alterations is the collection of buildings on the southwest corner of Main and Church Streets, which were combined to house the G.C. Murphy Co. Five and Dime Store. These six pre-existing structures (Resources #24, #26, #49-52) received major storefront and interior alterations when the store was opened in 1936, but G.C. Murphy Co. then became the anchoring store of the commercial district for the next fifty years (giving significance to those alterations). Despite the prevalence of storefront alterations, even those resources with the most ahistoric modifications retain relatively high integrity on their upper stories, clearly attesting to their age and significance. The continuous use of these properties for commercial and professional businesses up to today has enabled them to retain their significance in relation to Criterion A: Commerce, while the Courthouse's anchoring role as the nexus of government operations retains its significance under Criterion A: Politics/Government. As such, these ongoing uses further underscore the district's same feeling and association as its historic context.

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### Inventory

1. Heritage Park Museum/ Ravenswood, Spencer, & Glenville Railroad Depot; 1893 Heritage Avenue (A); 1893; vernacular style; contributing.

The RS&G Depot is a one-story, wood-frame building with board and batten siding. The roof is gabled with overhanging eaves, supportive brackets, and asphalt shingles. The main entrance door is located on the west elevation and two large doorways have been boarded in on the south elevation. The west and south facades both retain several original 9/9 and 2/2 doublehung wooden sash windows. The resource was constructed in 1893 for the newly-completed RS&G Railroad, later bought by B&O, and remained in use until the 1960s. The depot and surrounding land up to Spring Creek was designated as Heritage Park in 1989, at which point the depot was converted to a local museum and wooden handicapped ramp added.

2. Heritage Park Community Center; 1893 Heritage Avenue (B); 1989; contemporary; non-contributing.

The Heritage Park Community Center is one-story, wood-frame building with hewn log walls on a concrete block foundation. The roof is gabled with a porch extension on the west elevation and asphalt shingles. This structure was built in 1989 with the creation of Heritage Park.

3. Memorial Fountain; 1893 Heritage Avenue (C); 1926; contributing object.

The Memorial Fountain is a stone fountain with large round basin, octagonal pillar/base, and decorative Gothic-style metal finial. It was originally erected in front of the Roane County Courthouse in 1926 in honor of Spencer residents who died in service during World War I. It was later relocated to the public park along Tanner's Run as part of the Centennial Pioneer Urban Renewal Project and finally to Heritage Park.

4. Newburn Schoolhouse; 1893 Heritage Avenue (D); 1910; vernacular style; non-contributing. The Newburn Schoolhouse is a one-story, three-bay, wood-frame building with clapboard siding on stone pier foundation. The metal roof is gabled over the main body with a gabled cupola atop the center. The front elevation features 3 bays (including main door with transom and two 2/2 wooden doublehung windows) and wooden front porch with metal shed roof. The structure was relocated to this site in 1986 for the creation of Heritage Park.

5. Wallback Oil Derrick; 1893 Heritage Avenue (E); unknown; style N/A; non-contributing structure.

This structure is a formerly operational oil derrick reaching 84ft. high and of steel construction. It pumped oil on a well site owned by Pennzoil Co. in the nearby town of Wallback and was later relocated to Heritage Park.

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6. Casto & Harris Building; 109 Market Street; 1948; Streamline/Moderne; contributing.

The Casto & Harris Building is a two-story, blonde brick and block structure with a flat roof and combination of metal coping and tile caps on its parapet. The front elevation features five bays divided by three pilasters, long horizontal windows of glass blocks surrounding two fixed lites, and a commercial glass and metal door under suspended flat hood. The northwest corner is rounded, creating a Streamline/Moderne effect along with the glass block windows in ribbon-inspired orientation. The building was constructed in 1948 by Okie Harris for the Casto & Harris Inc. business and has remained in commercial/professional use. A two-story/2500sqft. addition was added to the rear by Casto & Harris in 1955.

7. F.F. McIntosh Hardware Store Building; 204 Market Street; 1908, garage added c.1915; Commercial/Italianate; contributing.

The F.F. McIntosh store was constructed in two parts. The southern half is a three-story, five-bay, brick, Italianate commercial building with stone foundation constructed in 1908 to house the McIntosh Hardware Store. The storefront features a recessed entry with commercial glass door and display windows in metal frames, large transoms below a decorative dentiled cornice, and overhang with wooden balustrade. The second floor has five 1/1 doublehung vinyl windows with stone lintels and sills below a continuous corbelled band. The third floor features three recessed and corbelled panels divided by pilasters, with center arch and bullseye windows on either side. The north half was added c.1915, with brick and stone walls over concrete foundation. It lacks the ornamentation of the preceding structure and features a garage bay and two display windows on the ground floor and seven bays of 1/1 doublehung wooden windows with stone sills and lintels on the second floor. Parapet wall is stepped down from south to north with evidence of corbelling at the southern end, suggesting the parapet originally stretched evenly across the facade. Both buildings have flat roofs. The site has been owned and operated by McIntosh Hardware since its opening.

8. Simmons Building; 210 Market Street; 1907; Commercial; contributing.

The Simmons Building is a three-story, three-bay, brick commercial building with flat roof and metal coping. A three-sided bay window was added to the second floor within ten years of original construction. The storefront has been altered with infill and stucco and now features a central glass door flanked by two single pane windows with concrete sills. Upper stories feature 1/1 vinyl windows with rusticated stone lintels and sills. The first, second, and third floors are topped by a decorative dentiled cornice, stone stringcourse, and three recessed corbelled panels respectively. The building was known as the Variety Store in the early 1900s and later used for other commercial stores and a bar/restaurant.

9. First Neighborhood Bank; 216 Market Street; c1970; Commercial/Modern; contributing.

The First Neighborhood Bank is a four-story, five-bay, brick building with concrete foundation and flat roof. The ground floor features an arcaded storefront with five large arches divided by brick piers. A commercial double door entry with sidelites is in the center

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arch with large display windows on either side and a walkway to rear parking lot through southernmost arch. Bays on the upper stories feature a vertical strip of projecting ribbon windows and corbelled bricks line the roof edge. The rear portion of this lot was sold to FNB in 1969 as part of the City's Centennial Pioneer Urban Renewal Project for the construction of a future drive-up window. First National Bank later reorganized as First Neighborhood Bank, which continues to occupy the first floor of the site. Several additional municipal offices currently occupy the rest of the building and the site is now collectively known as the City Center Building.

10. Hardman Supply Co. Building; 218 Market Street; 1927; Commercial; contributing.

The Hardman Supply Co. Building is a two-story, brick, vernacular commercial building with flat roof. The first floor storefront features a recessed center entry with glass door in metal frame and three large display windows on either side. The storefront transom has been filled with brick and seven square single pane windows. A pressed metal nameplate reading "HARDMAN SUPPLY CO" sits above the storefront and below a brick stringcourse dividing the two floors. The second floor has three bays containing two paired and one single 3/1 doublehung wooden windows with stone sills and lintels. A tall parapet wall features two bands of decorative brickwork, metal coping, and a triangular pediment with recessed panel reading "1927." The site remained owned and occupied by the Hardman family for over 80 years until being sold in 2014 and becoming Fruth Pharmacy.

11. Hardman Building; 224 Market Street; 1930; Commercial; contributing.

The Hardman Building is a two-story, brick, vernacular commercial building with flat roof. The ground floor features a double storefront with large modern display windows and brick filled transoms. The second floor has two paired 1/1 doublehung vinyl windows in the center flanked by single 1/1 windows on either side, all with stone sills and lintels. A narrow bay on the southern end houses the entrance with a modern residential door entering a shared stairwell with the neighboring building. A parapet wall features a low-sloped triangular pediment, metal coping, and central attic vent. Hardman constructed this building in 1930 after completing his neighboring store. It held various businesses over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most notably the Monongalia Power Company office for many years.

12. Traders Trust & Banking Co. Building; 226-228 Market Street; 1903; Italian Renaissance Revival; contributing.

The Traders Trust & Banking Co. Building is a four-story Italian Revival style building with rusticated sandstone walls on the ground floor and blonde brick on the upper floors. It has five bays on the east facade, two bays on the south facade, and one angled bay on the southeast corner where the original entrance was located (denoted by Corinthian pilasters around lower window). A projecting stone cornice carved with egg-and-dart molding and "TRADERS TRUST & BANKING CO." and a stone water table both run the length of the ground floor. Upper floor windows have a mix of vinyl windows and partial brick infill,

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along with rusticated stone lintels and sills. Bays are paired within recessed and corbelled panels divided by pilasters. The roof is flat with a parapet wall featuring a projecting metal cornice with dentils, metal coping, and lower portion of decorative pediment over the corner bay. This impressive structure occupies one of the two primary intersections in downtown Spencer and has been an anchor of the commercial district since the bank opened in 1903. In 1955 the bank moved the corner entrance to the east elevation and acquired the neighboring L-shaped building to expand into. The bank operated here until a new bank was completed on the opposite corner in 1967, after which the site held a variety of offices and retail stores.

13. Keplinger Building; 311 Market Street; c1905; Commercial/Italianate; contributing.

The Keplinger Building is a two story, three-bay, Italianate commercial brick building. The store front has been significantly altered, nearly fully covered by vinyl siding with one small rectangular window in the center. Two modern exterior residential doors on the northern corner lead to the main level and upstairs apartments. A metal lintel with decorative rosettes spans the width of the building over the storefront. The second story features three partially infilled arched window openings with rusticated stone sills and 6/6 doublehung vinyl windows. A recessed and corbelled panel and a strip of dogtooth lie between the upper windows and roof edge. The roof is flat with metal coping on the parapet.

14. Gough Building; 315 Market Street; 1920; Commercial; contributing.

The Gough Building is a two-story, three-bay, vernacular commercial building with blonde brick exterior and stone foundation. The storefront features a recessed center entrance with three modern residential exterior doors, large display windows on either side over wooden bulkheads, prism glass transom, and mosaic tile floor reading "GOUGH." The second story has two three-sided bay windows with modern vinyl siding and 1/1 double hung windows. The roof is flat with corbelling under the parapet and two recessed panels above the windows. The upper half of the facade has been covered with stucco. This site housed the Everly Tiptop Dairy bar in the mid-1900s and later the A.C. Johnson Sport Shop.

15. T.E. Vineyard Building/Bank of Spencer; 314 Market Street; 1896; Commercial/Italianate; contributing.

The T.E. Vineyard Building is a two-story, three-bay, Italianate commercial building with brick exterior and stone foundation. The main entrance is angled and recessed on the northeastern corner with a historic wooden door under covered square transom. The front elevation has the main storefront with wood trim, two display windows, and door to upper floor at left, all covered by suspended metal overhang and prominent stone lintel. The second story has three arched window openings with 1/1 doublehung windows under fanlights and rusticated stone sills. The side elevation also features two three-sided bay windows original to the structure. Decorative brickwork on the front facade includes vertical dogtooth under the windows and two styles of corbelling under the roof edge. The roof is flat with metal coping on the parapet.

16. 316-318 Market Street; c.1900; Commercial; non-contributing.



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316-318 Market Street is a two-story, six-bay brick commercial building with stone foundation. The facade is divided into two recessed halves between three pilasters. Both storefronts have been replaced with glass commercial doors and display windows in metal frames, and a modern steel door in the center leads to the upper level. The north half has three 1/1 doublehung windows with stone sills, segmental arch lintels, and keystones; the south half has two 1/1 doublehung windows with stone sills and flat lintels, and no window in the center bay. The entire building has been covered with stucco. The roof is flat with metal coping over the parapet and corbelling under the roofline. Because of the extensive modification to the exterior of this building, it no longer retains integrity needed to contribute to this historic district.

17. Morrison Building; 319 Market Street; 1923; Commercial; contributing.

The Morrison Building is a two-story, three-bay, vernacular commercial building with blonde brick exterior and stone foundation. The storefront has been covered with vinyl siding with a modern exterior residential door to the left. A projecting metal cornice and prism glass transom run the width of the storefront. The second story features three five-lite metal awning windows with stone sills. A metal nameplate is inset above the windows and reads "MORRISON 1923." There is a flat roof behind a high parapet wall with raised rectangular center and metal coping. The rear of this building abuts the O.J. Morrison Co. Building fronting Main Street of the same namesake to house other commercial businesses.

18. Simmons Auto Co. Building; 321 Market Street; c1942; Commercial; contributing.

The Simmons Auto Co. Building is a two-story commercial building with blond brick exterior. The southwest corner has three angled bays, giving the appearance of a rounded corner entrance. The ground floor of the west, corner, and south elevations features a series of alternating commercial glass doors and large five or two-lite display windows in black metal frames with brick sills and jack arches; the second story has two- or three-lite windows of same style. The roof is flat with metal coping on flat parapet. This building and adjacent lot were home to Samuel Simmons' Simmons Auto Co., a popular Plymouth and Dodge (later Ford) dealership and garage served Spencer into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The business was originally founded 1920 in a building and four-stall garage on the adjacent vacant lot that burned in 1942, after which this new location was constructed. It later held the Brady Reed Furniture store and Bowyer Bowling Alley. The rounded corner and overall ribbon-like appearance of the first floor windows and doors lends a Modern-inspired feeling to the otherwise vernacular commercial style of the building.

19. Newlon Building; 335 Market Street; 1919; Commercial; contributing.

The Newlon Building is a two-story, two-bay, vernacular commercial building with flat roof and stone foundation. The facade is dominated by an all-glass storefront with double door entrance offset to the right. The upper story has two partially infilled window openings with paired 1/1 doublehung vinyl windows and flat stone lintels and sills. A decorative brick panel

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stretches above the windows. The roof is flat with a parapet wall that is stepped on the side elevation. This building housed the Newlon Photography Studio until 1940, when it was bought out by an employee and became the Parish Photography Studio and gift shop for many years.

20. Shatto Building; 339 Market Street; c.1915; Commercial; contributing.

The Shatto Building is a two-story, two-bay, brick, vernacular commercial building with flat roof and stone foundation. The storefront features a recessed entry with historic wood and glass door, two large display windows over brick bulkheads, and additional wood and glass door on northern end leading to upper level. A plywood-covered transom and wooden lintel span the top of the storefront. The second story has one partially infilled window opening with 1/1 doublehung vinyl window and rusticated stone sill and lintel, as well as a three-sided bay window (original to the building) with 1/1 windows and vinyl siding. A recessed nameplate reading "SHATTO" sits below an elaborately corbelled parapet. The site housed a bakery upon opening followed by other retail businesses, but is now vacant.

21. 343-345 Market Street; c.1915; Commercial; contributing.

343-354 Market Street is a two-story, three-bay, vernacular commercial building with brick exterior and stone foundation. The vinyl-sided storefront features a recessed entry flanked by four large display windows, and a modern residential exterior door leads to the second level. An asphalt-shingled overhang spans the width of the ground level. There are three windows with rusticated stone lintels and sills on the upper floor; two have been boarded up and the center has been partially infilled around a 1/1 vinyl window. There is a flat roof behind a corbelled parapet with metal coping. The site housed a general store in 1918 and later Miller & West Grocery.

22. Taylor-Vandale Funeral Home; 206 Beauty Street; c.1900; Commercial; contributing.

The Taylor-Vandale Funeral Home is a three-story, six-bay, brick commercial building with a substantial classical-inspired porch on the front facade. The porch has a brick foundation, solid wood railings with recessed panels, fluted Corinthian columns, and overhanging roof with stately wooden entablature. The eastern half of the porch has been fully enclosed with a series of repeating eight-lite windows between the railing and porch roof. The second story features two original three-sided bay windows flanking a shake shingle-clad walk-out bay projecting over the center of the porch. The third story features six windows with rusticated stone lintels and sills. All upper level windows are 1/1 doublehung wooden units. The roof is flat with a corbelled parapet with metal coping. This structure was built c.1900 by Isaac Riley as the Riley Hotel and converted to Roane County Hospital in 1904. It was purchased in 1926 by Homer Lowe and remodeled for hotel use once again, at which point the front porch and projecting center bay were added as they are seen today. The property was sold to Fred Vandale in 1929 and converted to the Taylor-Vandale Funeral, which it remains today. A one-story concrete block addition was added in the early 2000s with stone veneer, stucco, and gabled roof. An enclosed one-story breezeway with French doors and vinyl siding

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connects the two buildings.

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23. O.J. Chambers Building; 321 Church Street; c.1902; Commercial; contributing.

The O.J. Chambers Building is a two-story, three-bay, vernacular commercial building with brick exterior and stone foundation. The first floor features a central window opening with segmental brick arch, brick sill, partial infill, and single-lite wooden window. A narrow segmental arch doorway on the left corner leads to a deeply recessed entrance. The second floor features three arched windows like the one below, but with 6/6 doublehung vinyl units. There is a flat roof with stone-capped parapet. The bricks used on the front facade are a mix of red, blonde, and gray tones. This site held professional offices for most of the 20th century, most notably the Citizen Telephone System of Spencer beginning in 1929.

24. Conley Garage Building/G.C. Murphy Co.; N/A Church Street; c.1915; Commercial; contributing.

This building is a one-story, two-bay, vernacular commercial garage with rusticated stone walls and stone foundation. The facade has had several alterations, including stone infill on the lefthand bay to create a horizontal window which has also been infilled with concrete block. The righthand bay has a recessed modified storefront with vinyl siding and modern steel door, and a pressed metal store sign reading "G.C. Murphy Co.". The parapet wall has also been altered, now featuring a brick parapet wall with rectangular pediment filled in above original triangular parapet of stone (perhaps suggesting a transition from an earlier gabled roof to the current flat one). The building originally functioned as hardware storage for the hardware store at 211 Main Street, to which it was connected by a wood-frame passageway in the rear. It later held the Conley garage, Whippet Autos, and was finally one of six buildings bought and combined into the G.C. Murphy Co. Five and Dime Store on the corner of Church and Main Streets in 1936. G.C. Murphy became and remained the anchor store of downtown Spencer into the 1990s.

25. Huddleston Building; 315 Church Street; c.1902, with southern addition added c.1980; Commercial; contributing.

The Huddleston Building is a two-story, two-bay, vernacular commercial building with brick exterior and stone foundation. The storefront features a central entrance with double commercial glass doors in metal frame flanked by large single display windows over wooden bulkheads. An asphalt-shingled wooden overhang spans the width of the storefront. The second floor has one 1/1 doublehung vinyl window with stone sill and lintel at left, and an original three-sided bay window with 1/1 windows and wooden paneling to the right. There is a flat roof and parapet with metal coping, and bands of corbelled and dogtoothed brickwork along the roof edge. A two-story, three-bay, residential addition was added to the rear half of the south elevation c.1980. It is brick with concrete porch and center entrance flanked by large twenty-lite casement windows. The second floor is entirely contained within an extreme mansard roof featuring asphalt shingles and two recessed sixteen-lite casement windows. The site housed a meat shop for approximately ten years upon opening and was

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later divided for office use and several barbershops/beauty salons.

26. G.C. Murphy Co. Building; 7-9 Church Street; c.1900; Commercial; contributing.

7-9 Church Street is a two and a half story, four bay, vernacular commercial building with brick exterior and flat roof. The original arcaded storefront with four segmental arches has been filled with brick, leaving only a steel freight door added on the northern corner. The second floor features four window openings with segmental arches. The northern two of these have been completely filled with brick; the southern two have been shortened with brick infill below four-lite metal windows. Four faux-recessed panels are created along the parapet wall by two projecting bands of elaborate corbelling and pilasters. The northeast corner of the roof also features a brick elevator housing for the freight elevator original to the structure. The building was used as a warehouse and storage for other hardware/general stores on Main Street before being one of six buildings bought and combined for the G.C. Murphy Co. Five and Dime Store in 1936. This building remained connected to the 205-209 Main Street buildings as one L-shaped structure after G.C. Murphy's closure, and is currently occupied by the Spencer Antique Mall.

27. Dye & Williams Insurance Building; 217 Church Street; c.1925; Commercial/Italianate; contributing.

The Dye & Williams Insurance Building is a one-story, two-bay, brick commercial building with flat roof. The largely unaltered storefront features a display window in wooden frame over brick bulkhead at right, a two-panel glass and wood door with screen door at left, transoms covered with decorative wood panels, and a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century metal awning. A Classical temple front-inspired signboard with broken pediment sits above the awning, and a pressed metal cornice with dentils lines the roof edge. The site has housed the Dye & Williams agency since the early 1980s.

28. J.B. Casto House; 215 Church Street; c.1887; Folk/vernacular Victorian; contributing.

The J.B. Casto House is a two-story, four-bay, vernacular Victorian residence with wood frame and modern weatherboard siding. The roof is gabled with corrugated metal roofing and decorative wooden brackets on the front facade. The ground floor features a recessed front porch with wooden columns, balustrade trim, and three-paneled cornice; there is one 1/1 doublehung wooden window to the right, a wood and glass main door in the center, and six-panel wooden door to the second story at left. There are two 1/1 doublehung windows on the second floor. A narrow one-story addition on the northern elevation dating to at least 1905 features an additional two-lite window and a flat roof. The house was constructed and occupied by J.B. Casto c. 1887-1901 followed by the Pfost family from 1901-1944. It was subsequently converted to commercial use and has housed a pharmacy and several restaurants in recent years.

29. O.F. Waldeck Building; 205-209 Church Street; c.1950; Commercial; contributing.

The O.F. Waldeck Building is a two-story, three-part building encompassing 205, 207, and

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209 Church Street. The modern Commercial structure has a brick and concrete block exterior with a flat roof and no ornamentation. All three storefronts feature a single large display window with rusticated stone sill and commercial glass doors in metal frames. Two additional steel doors lead to the upper story, which features two 1/1 doublehung windows with rusticated stone sills over each storefront. The building housed O.F. Waldeck's Spencer Dry Cleaners until 1972 and subsequently held various retail stores and professional offices.

30. Looney Building; 203 Church Street; c.1950; Commercial; contributing.

The Looney Building is a two-story, three-bay, modern Commercial building with blonde brick facade and flat roof. The storefront features a center display window with brick sill and lintel, and six-panel metal doors with canopies on either side. The second story has one central window with a fixed lite flanked by two doublehung vinyl windows. A recessed brick panel lies between the upper window and roof edge with metal coping.

31. Roane Grocery Co. Building; 201 Church Street; 1919; Commercial; contributing.

The Roane Grocery Co. Building is a two and a half story, four bay, Commercial building with flat roof and rusticated concrete block exterior. The ground floor of the front facade features a large display window with transom on the southernmost bay, three single lite wooden windows (one longer than the others), and recessed entry on northernmost bay. A stone water table spans the bottom of the facade and northern elevation with nine bays and stepped tile-capped parapet on Court Street. All windows and doors feature flat stone lintels and sills. Windows are all historic wooden sashes with eight-lites on the upper story and mix of eight-lite, doublehung, or single pane styles on the ground floor. A double wooden freight door lies in the center of the northern elevation; the display window on the facade originally housed an additional freight door, as evidenced by the surviving docking hooks in the sill below. The wholesale Roane Grocery Company (later Spencer Roane Grocery Co) was incorporated August 25, 1919, by J.E. Fairfax in the newly constructed building and remained in operation until dissolution in 1980. The site was then purchased by Bill Bailey and has housed the Bailey Furniture Store ever since.

32. City Municipal Building/DMV; 116 Church Street; 2002; contemporary; non-contributing.

The City Municipal Building is a two-story, five-bay, contemporary building with blonde brick exterior and burgundy standing-seam combination roof. The southwest corner of the building features an angled, recessed wall with commercial glass entrance, and a brick pier supporting the corner of the overhanging roof. The structure is built into the hillside and has an additional entrance at the lower street level on the north elevation. The building was erected in 2002 to house City Hall, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and other functions of Spencer's city government. Due to its recent construction date, it does not contribute to the historic district at this time.

33. Holswade Building; 220 Court Street; c.1915; Commercial; contributing.

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The Holswade Building is a three-story, seven-bay, commercial brick building with flat roof and concrete foundation set into a sloping hillside. The storefront has been altered significantly with brick infill and now features three modern vinyl two-lite windows and two doors in the center and righthand corner of the building. A metal lintel with rosettes stretches across the top of the storefront. Upper floors on all elevations feature 1/1 double hung windows with rusticated stone sills and lintels; a handful of these windows have been slightly shortened with brick infill, but nearly all retain their original dimensions. Upper floors of the facade are divided by pilasters into three recessed panels with corbelled brick along the top. A pressed metal name plate reading "HOLSWADE" sits above the center pilasters below a parapet with metal coping. The building has historically held a variety of concurrent uses, including a hotel, offices, and plumbing business in its earliest years and later the highly popular White Front Restaurant. It has currently been converted to residential use and is known as the Court Street Apartments.

34. P.C. Adams Building; 210-214 Court Street; c.1915; Commercial; contributing.

The P.C. Adams Building is a one-story, three-part building encompassing 210, 212, and 214 Court Street. The modern Commercial structure has a brick and concrete exterior, flat roof, and slightly stepped symmetrical parapet wall with metal coping. The western storefront features two large display windows with recessed entrance at right. The center storefront features central recessed door flanked by two display windows. The eastern storefront also features a central door flanked by two large windows, but these have been replaced with three faux diamond-paned vinyl window units to the left and four-sided bay window with faux diamond-paned vinyl window units to the right. A recessed brick panel and suspended flat metal awning stretch the entire length of all three storefronts. This structure was completely remodeled sometime between 1937-1958, reducing it from two stories to one and giving it the form and storefronts seen today. It subsequently operated as a bus terminal in the 1960s followed by various businesses, and today holds a law office, pawnbroker, and barber shop.

35. Dye Building; 208 Court Street; 1916; Commercial; non-contributing.

The Dye Building is a one-story, six-bay, commercial brick structure with flat roof. The facade is divided by pilasters into three recessed panels with two bays each. The first and last bays both feature a commercial glass door to the left and display window to the right, while the center bay features two display windows. The building was originally two stories but was severely damaged by fire c.2018 and remodeled to its current form for use by the Roane County Magistrate's office. Because of these recent and drastic alterations, the structure is non-contributing to the historic district.

36. F.E. Vandale Building; 204 Court Street; 1926; Commercial; contributing.

The F.E. Vandale Building is a two-story, four-bay, vernacular commercial building with brick and block exterior and flat roof. The storefront features two large double display windows with transoms and an arched recessed entrance with keystone and two modern

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multi-pane doors. The upper floor features four 1/1 doublehung vinyl windows with brick sills and metal awnings. A brick belt course runs along the bottom of the facade and around to the east elevation, which features a garage bay and additional entrance at the basement level. It is currently occupied by the Hunter Insurance & Financial agency.

37. Nedeeff Garage; 108 Court Street; c.1950; Commercial; contributing.

The Nedeeff Garage is a two-story, three-bay, modern Commercial building with flat roof and block foundation. The exterior walls are concrete block with stucco added over the front facade. The storefront has been altered with two doors to the left (one residential, one commercial), a vinyl three-lite casement window to the right, and two windows of same type on the upper story. The roof is flat with metal coping on the parapet. The structure previously held the E.L. Nedeeff Garage in the 1950s, followed by Donahoe's General Store in the 1960s and now Hildreth Engineering as of 2005.

38. United Fuel Gas Co. Office Building; 102 Court Street; 1915; Commercial; contributing.

The United Fuel Gas Co. Office is a one-story, two-bay vernacular commercial building with brick exterior and flat roof. The storefront features a commercial glass and metal door with sidelites and transom at left, and a large three-lite display window with rusticated stone sill. There is slight corbelling along the roof edge and metal coping over the parapet. This building was constructed by A.S. Heck c.1915 to house the offices of his United Fuel Gas Co. (previously located in the nearby Grand Hotel, which burned in 1914). The building operated as such until being sold to Charles Hardman in 1966 and converted to the Hardman's Supply office, which it remains today.

39. U.S. Post Office; 110 Main Street; 1937; Art Deco; contributing.

The Spencer U.S. Post Office is a one-story, blonde brick, Art Deco-style public works building constructed by the Works Progress Administration in 1937. The facade is divided into seven bays by engaged stone columns topped by a stone belt course running the length of the building. The main entrance in the center bay features modern handicapped-accessible doors topped by a name plate reading "SPENCER WEST VIRGINIA", a single lite window with 1/1 sidelites, and decorative eagle. Windows in the four bays surrounding the entrance feature a matching window above another single lite window with 1/1/1 sidelites. The first and last bays have 6/6 doublehung windows topped by stone blocks with carved airplane medallions. The roof is flat with a stone capped parapet; metal letters installed below the parapet read "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE." The foundation is stone with a cornerstone in the northeast corner. Spencer received funds from the WPA in 1936 to construct the new post office, which opened September 26, 1937. That same year, Spencer was also one of twenty-one cities in West Virginia selected to receive air mail service (to which the facade's airplane medallions are an homage). The Art Deco font used for the lettering and Streamline aesthetic of the airplane motif create a more Modern style on the otherwise neoclassical-inspired form.

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40. Wendy's Restaurant; 134 Main Street; c1990; contemporary; non-contributing.

Wendy's Restaurant is a recently constructed branch of the Wendy's fast-food chain. It is a one-story brick building with flat roof and concrete foundation. It was originally constructed c.1990 and fully remodeled within the last decade. Due to its age and abundance, the structure does not contribute to the historic district.

41. M.E. Hersman Building; 139 Main Street; c1925; Commercial; contributing.

The M.E. Hersman Building is a two-story, three-bay, brick, vernacular commercial building with flat roof and stone foundation. The facade features a glass storefront with two large display windows and commercial door in metal frames, and modern stone veneer over the bulkhead and end piers. The second story features three 1/1 doublehung windows with stone sills, and stucco (added c. 1950s) covering the remaining wall and parapet. A wood awning with asphalt shingles covers the original multi-lite transoms and stretches across this facade and that of the neighboring structure. The parapet has tile coping and is likely corbelled beneath the stucco covering. This site has served as many different businesses, including the Hersman Buick Dealership, Dayton Rhodes Auto Co., Boley Motor Sales, Sinnet-Kincaid Hardware Store, and now T-Mobile.

42. Dayton Rhodes Auto Co. Building; 141 Main Street; c.1900; Commercial; contributing.

The Dayton Rhodes Auto Co. Building is a two-story, four-bay, brick and stone, vernacular commercial building with flat roof and stone foundation. The facade features a glass storefront with commercial double doors flanked by large display windows, second glass door to upper level at left; and modern stone veneer over the bulkhead and end piers. The second story features four 1/1 doublehung windows with stone sills, and stucco (added c. 1950s) covering the remaining wall and parapet. A wood awning with asphalt shingles covers the original multi-lite transoms and stretches across this facade and that of the neighboring structure. The parapet has tile coping and is likely corbelled beneath the stucco covering. This site was originally built c.1900 as the Virginia Hotel rooming house. It was bought in 1915 by Dayton Rhodes and remodeled for use as the Rhodes Ford Dealership, Spencer's first and most popular garage and service station. Rhodes acquired the neighboring corner building in 1927 for expansion.

43. 142 Main Street; c.1945; Commercial; contributing.

142 Main Street is a two-story, three-bay, modern commercial building with brick and concrete block exterior and flat roof. It retains its original wood-framed storefront with large display window and transom, two-panel door with transom to main level, and two-panel door to upper level. The upper story has two sixteen-lite metal windows and four small attic vents. The parapet is flat on the front and stepped on the side elevation with tile coping all around.

44. Chandler Building; 145 Main Street; c1915; Commercial; contributing.

The Chandler Building is a four-story, six-bay, vernacular commercial building with brick



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exterior and stone foundation. The facade is divided by four pilasters into three recessed panels with two bays each and corbelling along the top. The storefront features a center entrance of glass double doors flanked by sidelites and transoms. Large display windows lie on either side of the entrance, and a steel door to upper level at far right. Plywood and vinyl siding stretches across the top of the storefront. Upper windows all feature stone sills and lintels. Some window openings have been fully or partially infilled with brick, while others house doublehung vinyl windows. A triangular pediment rises above the center bay and parapets feature stone or tile capping. The structure is L-shaped by original design and also fronts Church Street between the Huddleston and McMillan buildings. The building was constructed by Charles and Thomas Moore and originally housed the Moore Hardware Store. It was subsequently owned by the Meadow State Lumber Company for many decades and was occupied by them and other business at various times such as Sergent Feed, Harley Davidson, Salvation Army, and now Budget Appliance & Furniture.

45. Kenney Building; 144-146 Main Street; 1917; Commercial; contributing.

The Kenney Building is a two-story, two-bay, modern commercial building with brick exterior and flat roof. The ground level features double storefronts, both with a shared metal lintel, covered transoms, and suspended flat metal awnings. The right side has a recessed entrance with commercial glass door, display windows, and vitrolite bulkheads. The left side has been altered with brick infill to create an offset entry and two large display windows over an angled brick wall to the left. Two doors between the storefronts lead to the upper floor, which features two windows with triple 1/1 doublehung sashes and stone sills. When first built the site housed the printing operations for the *Roane County Reporter* newspaper.

46. Looney Building; 149 Main Street; c1900; Commercial; contributing.

The Looney Building is a two-story, four-bay, vernacular commercial brick building with flat roof and stone foundation. The ground level has been modified with a stone veneer storefront featuring a center door with transom, two display windows with eight-pane sidelites, and a dentiled metal cornice that stretches across the neighboring McMillan building. The second floor has four windows with segmental arches, rusticated stone sills, 6/6 doublehung vinyl sashes, and dogtoothing under each sill. The parapet is flat with metal coping and sits above two decorative recessed panels along the roof edge. This building was constructed after the devastating fire of 1896 destroyed most of the existing buildings on Main Street. The site has since held a wide variety of businesses including the Looney Furniture Store, a drugstore, restaurant, and doctors' office.

47. Riddel Building; 148 Main Street; 1916; Commercial/Italianate; contributing.

The Riddel Building is a three-story Italianate Commercial-style structure with blonde brick exterior and stone foundation. There are three bays on the west elevation, two on the south elevation, and an angled corner entrance with one bay on the southwest corner. A stone watertable runs across the bottom of the southern elevation, and a projecting stone belt course runs across all three elevations between the first and second levels. The primary

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entrance features three rounded stone steps, decoratively bracketed stone hood over the door, and flanking brick pilasters with stone bases and capitals. The original rhythm and dimensions of the storefront remain intact, though all windows and doors have been replaced. The display windows on the west and south elevations have been filled with glass blocks around a single-lite window; transoms above each window have been filled with glass block as well. Windows on the upper stories feature a mix of single, paired, and triple 1/1 doublehung windows (retaining their original opening dimensions) with bracketed stone lintels and stone sills. A parapet wall with unique swallowtail pennant-style corbelling spans all three elevations with a rectangular pediment over the corner bay and carved stone nameplate reading "RIDDEL." The building housed multiple offices upon opening, most notably the *Roane County Reporter* newspaper. The Roane County Bank, originally founded 1898 in the Moriah Lodge building across the street, relocated to the ground floor here in 1924. This structure occupies the major intersection of Main and Church Streets and mirrors the similarly massed Traders Trust & Banking Co Building on the following corner, together acting as dramatic bookends to the central Public Square.

48. McMillan Building; 151 Main Street; c.1903; Commercial; contributing.

The McMillan Building is a two-story, three-bay, vernacular commercial brick building with flat roof and stone foundation. The ground level has been modified with a wooden storefront featuring a recessed center door, two display windows on either side over wooden bulkheads, a covered full-length transom, and a dentiled metal cornice that stretches across the neighboring Looney building. The second floor has a large, wooden, three-sided bay window with five 1/1 doublehung vinyl windows and asphalt shingles. This bay is likely original or was added no later than 1927. A rectangular pediment rises over the center of the building with metal coping over the parapet. This building was originally constructed as part of and shared a facade with the neighboring Looney Building, but was burned in the Church Street fire of 1902 and subsequently rebuilt with a new facade. The site has housed dry goods, shoes, and grocery stores, but is best known as the longtime location of local favorite Carper's Restaurant.

49. Moriah Lodge #38/G.C. Murphy Co.; 201 Main Street; 1898, with third story added 1912; Commercial; contributing.

The Moriah Lodge Building is a three-story, three-bay, commercial style building with brick exterior and flat roof. It shares a modern storefront with the neighboring Pendleton building, which features a recessed door to the right, two display windows to the left, stone veneer over the bulkheads and end piers, vinyl siding over remaining wall space, and pressed metal cornice with dentils. The second story windows have been infilled with brick but retain their rusticated stone sills and highly decorative pressed metal hoods. A strip of dogtoothing stretches over each window. The third story windows have also been infilled with brick but retain their segmental arches and stone sills. A bullseye window in the center bay holds a carved Masonic medallion. Three recessed corbelled panels line the roof edge. The east elevation is seven bays with all but two windows bricked in. This building was constructed in 1898 by G.W. Holswade after the devastating fire of 1896 destroyed most structures on Main

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Street. It was originally two stories tall and four bays deep, with the current rear bays being a separate two-story structure. The building caught fire again in 1911, at which point it and the building behind it were purchased by the Moriah Lodge #38 Masonic Chapter for their meeting hall. They remodeled the two buildings into one and added the third story. The building was one of six buildings on this corner bought and combined for the G.C. Murphy Co. Five and Dime Store in 1936. After the store's closure in the 1990s, this building and the Pendleton building remained as one and later became the Roane County Magistrate Court.

50. Pendleton Building/G.C. Murphy Co.; 203 Main Street; 1898; Commercial; contributing.

The Pendleton Building is a two-story, two-bay, commercial building with brick exterior and flat roof. It shares a modern storefront with the neighboring Moriah Lodge building, featuring a recessed door to the left, two display windows to the right, stone veneer over the bulkheads and end piers, vinyl siding over remaining wall space, and pressed metal cornice with dentils. The second story features two 2/2 windows with rusticated stone sills and decorative pressed metal hoods. Short bands of decorative checkerboard brick sit beneath each window and below a corbelled parapet. This building was constructed in 1898 by Walter Pendleton after the devastating fire of 1896 destroyed most structures on Main Street. It housed Lowe's Meat Market for many years before being one of six buildings on this corner bought and combined for the G.C. Murphy Co. Five and Dime Store in 1936. After the store's closure in the 1990s, this building and the Moriah Lodge remained as one and later became the Roane County Magistrate Court.

51. Little Building/G.C. Murphy Co.; 205 Main Street; 1898; Commercial; contributing.

The Little Building is a two-story, three-bay, vernacular commercial building with brick exterior, flat roof, and angled facade. It shares a modern vinyl storefront with the neighboring H.F. Goff Hardware Store building, featuring an off-center recessed entrance, three display windows, residential access door to the far left, stone veneer-covered bulkheads, and shingle-covered transom. The second story features three 2/2 doublehung wooden windows with stone lintels and sills. Highly decorative brickwork on the parapet included two recessed and corbelled panels between bands of dogtooth. This building was constructed in 1898 by Ed Little after the devastating fire of 1896 destroyed most buildings on Main Street. It housed a telephone exchange and clothing and shoe stores before being one of six buildings on this corner bought and combined for the G.C. Murphy Co. Five and Dime Store in 1936. After the store's closure in the 1990s, this building, the Goff building, and 7-9 Church Street remained as one L-shaped structure and later became the Spencer Antique Mall.

52. H.F. Goff Hardware Store Building/G.C. Murphy Co.; 209 Main Street; 1896; Commercial; contributing.

The H.F. Goff Hardware Store Building is a two-story, four-bay, vernacular commercial building with brick exterior and flat roof. It shares a modern vinyl storefront with the neighboring Little Building, featuring an off-center recessed entrance, four display windows, stone veneer-covered bulkheads, and shingle-covered transom. The second story features

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four 2/2 doublehung wooden windows with stone lintels and sills. Pilasters divide the bays into recessed panels with dogtooth along the top. The parapet wall has been heightened with brick infill and is covered with metal coping. This building was constructed by Goff immediately after the devastating fire of 1896 destroyed most buildings on Main Street. It housed H.F. Goff Hardware and other retail businesses before being one of six buildings on this corner bought and combined for the G.C. Murphy Co. Five and Dime Store in 1936. After the store's closure in the 1990s, this building, the Little building, and 7-9 Church Street remained as one L-shaped structure and later became the Spencer Antique Mall.

53. Spencer Department Store; 211 Main Street; c.1900; Commercial/Italianate; contributing.

The Spencer Department Store is a two-story, four-bay, Italianate commercial building with brick exterior and flat roof. The ground level features a vinyl-sided storefront with recessed door to the left, two multi-lite display windows to the right, and asphalt-shingled wooden overhang. The storefront is flanked by a pair of stone piers with carved rosettes, rusticated stone bases, and doric capitals beneath a stone lintel. The second story is divided by pilasters into three recessed bays. Each bay features corbelling along the top edge and a 1/1 doublehung window with rusticated stone sill and lintel. The parapet is accented by a band of blonde brick and covered with tile capping. The site was constructed after the fire of 1896 and occupied by the Spencer Department Store for most of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

54. Holswade-Vandale Building/Staats Pharmacy and DeGruyter Jewelry; 215-217 Main Street; c1900, reconstructed after fire of 1956; Commercial; contributing.

The Holswade-Vandale Building is a two-story, four-bay, brick, modern commercial building with two storefronts encompassing 215-217 Main Street. The facade is covered with a running bond brick veneer terminating in a flat, tile-capped parapet. The east storefront features an angled and offset recessed entry with commercial glass door and large display windows, a residential door to upper floor at left, and a covered transom. The west storefront features a central recessed entry with commercial glass door, large display windows, and glass door to upper level at right. The second floor features two square 1/1 doublehung windows to the left and two square 8/8 doublehung windows to the right. This building was constructed c.1900 after the devastating Main Street fire of 1896. In 1949 ownership of the building was divided between longtime occupants DeGruyter Jewelry (at 217 since 1903) and Staats Pharmacy (at 215 since 1940). The building was destroyed by another fire in 1956 and completely rebuilt in the current style.

55. O.J. Morrison Co. Building; 219 Main Street; c.1900; Commercial; contributing.

The O.J. Morrison Co. Building is a two-story, three-bay, commercial brick building with a flat roof and coping-covered parapet. The ground level features an all-glass storefront with recessed center entrance, two commercial glass doors, large display windows, and tiled entry floor. The storefront is flanked by a pair of fluted piers and topped by a projecting metal cornice. The facade above the storefront is covered with stucco and features three three-lite

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metal windows with keystones. This building was originally constructed after the Main Street fire of 1896 and underwent several major modifications through its historic use as the O. J. Morrison Co. Store. The current fenestration pattern dates to the 1920s and various coverings have been applied to the facade throughout its existence (vitrolite, stucco, paint, etc.). The structure was significantly damaged by another fire in 1956 and was rebuilt with the current storefront. The building also connects in the rear to the Morrison Building on Market Street, forming an L.

56. Phillips Building; 223 Main Street; c.1900; Commercial; contributing.

The Phillips Building is a two-story, three-bay, brick commercial building with flat roof and stone foundation. The ground level features a recessed center door flanked by large display windows over wooden bulkheads. A large cornice/signboard spans the length of the storefront. The second story has two paired 6/6 doublehung vinyl windows with brick sills and two-panel shutters. There are three short and one long recessed panels in the brick above the upper windows and a flat parapet with metal coping. The building was constructed after the Main Street fire of 1896. In 1917 pharmacist Phil D. Phillips bought and converted the building to the Phillips Drugstore, which remained owned and operated by the Phillips family there until 1988.

57. Casto Building; 225 Main Street; c.1915; Commercial; non-contributing.

The Casto Building is a narrow two-story, one-bay, brick commercial building with flat roof. The ground floor features a brick storefront with two large display windows flanking a commercial glass door. The upper story is covered with vinyl siding and has a central three-lite window. The storefront and upper window are both covered by large overhangs covered with Spanish-style metal roofing. Though this building was originally constructed c.1915 and has maintained commercial use, its appearance has been drastically altered with modern materials in recent years and does not contribute to the historic district.

58. Anderson Building; 227 Main Street; c.1900; Commercial; contributing.

The Anderson Building is a two-story, three-bay, blonde brick commercial building with flat roof and stone foundation. The ground floor features a storefront with central recessed entry, double commercial glass doors, and large display windows on either side over brick bulkheads. An extreme mid-level cornice features four decorative panels and dentil molding across the storefront transom, as well as pediment-inspired projections reaching up to the bottom of the second story windows. The two upper bays are flanked by three inset stone pilasters with capitals featuring carved scroll relief. Each bay has a triple window with 3/1 doublehung vinyl sashes. Brick infill surrounds the upper windows where original bay windows have been removed. The top of the wall on the facade and western elevation are a different shade of brick, suggesting an attic addition or repairs. The west elevation is ten bays deep with a Palladian window in the fifth upper bay and modified rear entrance with dentiled cornice in the last bay. The site was occupied by the McMillan-Diehl Men's Furnishers

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company at the turn of the century, followed by Kroger Grocery and then the H-P Store into the mid-late 1900s.

59. Roane County Courthouse and Public Square; 200 Main Street (A); 1965; New Formalism; contributing.

The Roane County Courthouse is a two-story, blonde brick, Modern/New Formalist structure located at the center of Spencer's commercial downtown. The facade features a central entrance with double commercial glass doors, full-length ribbon windows stretching across each story, and full-length two-story porch with marble piers that divide the facade into nine bays. The roof is flat with gravel over substrate. A gold grille with the state seal and silver letters reading "ROANE COUNTY" is installed between the outer piers of the center bay over the entrance. The structure reinterprets the Classical temple form with modern materials, expressing the New Formalism style popular for public projects at the time. This courthouse is also the third one to stand on the Public Square, around which Spencer's commercial downtown was originally organized. The Square measures 160 ft. between Market and Church Streets and 205 ft. between Main and Court Streets. Its dimensions laid the foundation for the immediately adjacent major streets, and therefore the town's larger street grid as a whole. The courthouse is centrally located within the square, with grassy lawn in front and paved parking and separate city hall/jail building behind.

60. Former City Hall, Jail, & Firehouse; 200 Main Street (B); 1917; vernacular; contributing.

The former City Hall building is a two-story brick structure with stone foundation. The structure is symmetrically divided into three distinct parts, including a narrow five-bay, gable-roofed center flanked by two slightly larger three-bay sections with hipped roofs extending an additional half-story. Roofs are clad with red clay tile, and the two outer sections feature corbelling along the roof edge in a unique swallowtail pennant design. The center section has a stone-capped, crenelated parapet wall with triangular pediment over three attic vents. Windows are 1/1 doublehung with rusticated stone sills. There is a recessed porch and entry on the northwest corner. A former garage bay on the northeast corner has brick infill around a modern door and window, and an additional six-panel door with transom to the right. This structure is located directly behind the Roane County Courthouse in the Public Square. It was constructed in 1917 to hold the City's government offices, jail, jailers' quarters, and fire department. It remained in use by the City through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is now vacant.

61. Petty Building; 300 Main Street; c.1904; Commercial; contributing.

The Petty Building is a three-story, two-bay, commercial brick building with flat roof. The ground level storefront has been modified with stone veneer/infill and wood paneling, and features a recessed door at left and two 1/1 doublehung vinyl windows with brick infill at right. The upper stories are divided by pilasters into two recessed bays with corbelled top edge. An original three-sided bay window spans both levels of the left bay; it is vinyl-clad with copper peaked convex roof and 1/1 doublehung vinyl windows. The right bay has two

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1/1 doublehung vinyl windows with stone lintels and sills. Three recessed panels line the top of the wall with tile coping over the parapet. The structure forms an L around the Traders Trust & Banking Co. Building, fronting Market Street to the east. For the first half of the 1900s, the building was primarily occupied by the Spencer Bargain Store, Sinnet-Wright Drugstore, Thompson Drugstore and Hughes Drugstore. It was bought by Traders Bank in 1954 for an expansion of their site, at which time the Main and Market elevations were altered with stone to match that of the bank.

62. Robey-Schwender Building; 302-304 Main Street; 1910; Commercial; contributing.

The Robey-Schwender Building is a three-story, two-bay, brick commercial building with flat roof. The storefront features an angled recessed entry with large display windows and commercial glass door in metal frames. The rest of the ground level has been covered with tongue-and-groove wooden boards. A residential door at right leads to upper levels. The upper floors are divided by pilasters into two recessed bays with corbelled top edge. Each bay has two window openings with stone sills and lintels. Each opening has been infilled with brick and paneling around a 1/1 doublehung vinyl window. The west elevation has been covered with stucco and the parapets are covered with metal coping. This building was constructed by H.H. Robey and partner J. Schwender as a movie theater in 1910 before constructing the better-known Robey Theater to the immediate west in 1911. This site was subsequently leased to other businesses, most notably the Thompson Drugstore and later Hughes Drugstore.

63. Traders Bank; 303 Main Street; 1967; Commercial/Modern; contributing.

The Traders Bank is a one-story, six-bay, brick, Modern-style commercial building with flat roof and tall, flat cornice. Massing is focused around the northeast corner to create a storefront with brick piers, large display windows, double commercial glass doors, and projecting cornice/overhang. This building was constructed in 1967 as the new location of Traders Trust & Banking Co. on the opposite corner. It boasted modern amenities compared to the 1903 site (primarily a drive-through banking window) and remained in use as Traders Bank (later Peoples Bank) into the 2000s.

64. Robey Theater; 318 Main Street; 1911; Italian Renaissance/Classical Revival; contributing.

The Robey Theater is a three-story, five-bay, Italian Renaissance/Classical Revival-style structure nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. It has a brick exterior, concrete foundation, and flat roof with asphalt shingles and rubber membrane. The storefront has a center main entrance with two pairs of ten-lite wooden doors, ticket window to the right, six-panel door under stone lintel with keystone leading to upper floors at far left, and two Art Deco-style poster displays. A flat metal overhang with dentiled cornice and stained glass mosaic is suspended over the main entrance. The second floor is highly Classicized and is separated from the other levels by a stone sill course below and stone entablature above. It is divided into five bays by stone pilasters with Ionic capitals. Each bay has a full-height recessed panel with semicircular arch; the first and last arch feature double

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ten-lite doors and small metal balconies, while the center three are solid brick with a small diamond-shaped stone medallion. The third floor has five 1/1 doublehung wooden windows with stone lintels and sills. A high parapet walls features five recessed and corbelled panels with the letters "KOF" in blonde brick between them. A historic neon blade sign reading "ROBEY" is mounted to the upper center bay. The theater was originally opened as the Auditorium in 1911 by H.H. Robey and partner J. Schwender. This was done in conjunction with the Knights of Pythias fraternal organization, who held the deed to the third floor. The building underwent a major \$100,000 renovation and enhancement in 1926 and reopened as the Robey Theater. It remains in use today and is the oldest continuously operating theater in West Virginia.

65. Oddfellows Lodge; 320 Main Street; 1925; Commercial; contributing.

The Oddfellows Lodge is a three-story, three-bay commercial building with blonde brick exterior and flat roof. The ground floor has a slightly recessed storefront with central commercial glass door, two large display windows over stone bulkheads, covered transom, and clay tile flooring. The upper floors are divided by pilasters into recessed bays with corbelled top edges. Both floors feature 1/1 doublehung wooden windows with stone sills and lintels, and spandrels between stories. Two carved stone plates reading "I.O.O.F." and "1925" are set below a stone-capped parapet. This site was home to the I.O.O.F Campbell Lodge #1 and occupied by them for many years.

66. H.O. Lance Building; 325 Main Street; 1950; Commercial; contributing.

The H.O. Lance Building is a two and a half-story, three-bay, modern commercial structure with blonde brick exterior and flat roof. The ground floor features the original recessed storefront with center door and transom flanked by large display windows over brick bulkheads. A door to the second level sits at right and an asphalt-shingled wood overhang stretches the length of the facade. The second story has three paired single-pane windows with brick sills and lintels, and three attic vents sit below a symmetrically stepped and stone-capped parapet. The building was constructed by H.O. Lance for use by him and other Lances as their dental and medical offices.

67. W.R. Vineyard Building/Standard Furniture Co.; 327 Main Street; 1937; Commercial; contributing.

The W.R. Vineyard Building is a two and a half-story, three-bay, modern commercial building with brick exterior and flat roof. The ground floor features the original storefront with recessed commercial glass double doors flanked by large display windows over vitrolite bulkheads. A covered transom with signage spans the length of the storefront. The second story has a central horizontal picture window with three-lite transom flanked by two 1/1 doublehung wooden windows, all sharing a continuous stone sill and lintel. Two attic vents with stone sills and lintels sit below a symmetrically stepped and stone-capped parapet. Vineyard constructed the building to house his Standard Furniture Company (later Spencer



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Furniture Company), which remained in operation here into the late 1900s.

68. A.S. Heck Oil Co. Office/Heck-Boyce Service Station; 331 Main Street; c.1920; Commercial; contributing.

The A.S. Heck office and service station is a two-story, five bay, commercial building with brick exterior and flat roof. The ground floor features a tall, wide arch over main entrance at center and two smaller arches with recessed doorways in the far left and right corners. All arches feature keystone and stone trim, and the upper half of the center arch has been infilled with wood. Between each arch are a former garage bay (with new door, window, and infill), another door, and another window (one infilled). On the second floor, the center three bays feature paired 1/1 doublehung windows with partial infill over stone sills; the first and last bays feature triple windows of same style. A molded string spans the length of the building above the upper windows and four recessed panels sit below a crenellated parapet with metal coping. This building first housed operations for the A.S. Heck Oil Company, and soon became the Heck-Boyce Service Station in conjunction with the garage to the immediate west. The paved lot in front of the building held an impressive drive-thru Esso filling pump and service area that was the first of its kind in Spencer (no longer standing).

69. Heck-Boyce Service Station Garage; 329 Main Street; c.1930; Commercial; contributing.

The Heck-Boyce Service Station Garage is a two-story vernacular commercial building with concrete foundation and flat roof. The exterior is brick and clay block with stucco covering the east elevation. The northeast corner is angled and divided into three bays by pilasters. This wall has a central main door flanked by two large display windows at ground level and three 6/1 doublehung wooden windows with brick sills on the second level. The west elevation features a garage bay at left, single door with covered transom at center, partially infilled display window at right, and five 1/1 doublehung wooden windows with brick sills on the second level. This building was constructed c.1930 to house expanded operations of the Heck-Boyce Service Station located in the building to the immediate east.

70. Wood Theater; 333 Main Street; c.1945; Commercial; contributing.

The Wood Theater is a one-story, three-bay, commercial building with concrete foundation, flat roof, and stone-capped parapet. The exterior is primarily blonde brick, with red brick at the rear and a combination of veneers/coverings over the lower half of the facade. There is a recessed main entrance with double doors at center-right (currently covered with plywood), and a small secondary storefront with door and picture window at far right. There are no other windows on any elevation. Every sixth course of blonde brick is slightly recessed, creating a horizontal banding effect. The facade is also angled to follow Main Street, creating notched front corners. The building was constructed by Woodyard Publications Inc. shortly after purchasing the lot in 1945 and dubbed the Wood Theater. It held one screen and 500 seats, and closed in 1955.

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71. First Neighborhood Bank ATM/Drive-Thru; Main Street; c2009; contemporary; non-contributing.

The First Neighborhood Bank ATM/Drive-Thru is a recently constructed outpost of the First Neighborhood Bank on Market Street. It is a one-story brick building with flat roof that overhangs approximately 40 feet over brick piers to create five drive-thru lanes. There are four bays on the west elevation and one bay on the north and south elevations, each featuring a large brick arch with commercial glass windows/door or brick infill. These arches mimic the arcaded ground level of the facade on the parent FNB building. Due to its age, the structure does not contribute to the historic district.

72. First Baptist Church of Spencer; 338 Main Street; c1961, 1971; Modern/Wrightian; contributing.

The First Baptist Church of Spencer is a two-story, split-level, L-shaped building with brick exterior and combination skillion and flat roof. The western wing features the church's main entrance on the north elevation. This elevation is eleven bays wide with mix of single and paired 1/1 windows. The third and fourth bays are framed by projecting brick piers. Each bay features a single commercial glass door with narrow sidelites at ground level and full glass windows behind a Modern metallic grille second level. The southern elevation has three bays of small 1/1 windows followed by a bay of narrow, full story height picture windows divided by brick mullions where the east and west wings intersect. The eastern wing features one bay on the south elevation with steel door under flat metal hood and two small picture windows. The west elevation has five bays with stained glass clerestory windows replicating Frank Lloyd Wright art glass designs, followed by two one-story bays where the east and west wings intersect. A concrete handicapped ramp with flat metal overhang, brick piers, and metal railings spans the length of this elevation and leads to two side entrances at either end. The east elevation is solid brick. The FBCS first constructed the eastern wing c1961 immediately after demolition of their previous building on a different site. The church then purchased the lot for the western wing in 1969 as part of the City's 1966 Centennial-Pioneer Urban Renewal Project, at which time they constructed the western wing for additional classroom space.

73. Roane County Public Library; 110 Parking Plaza; 1976; Modern; contributing.

The Roane County Public Library is two-story, five-bay, late Modern style building with brick exterior and standing seam gable roof. The roof ridge is flat with two short projecting rectangular towers with 4-lite clerestory windows. The bottom roofline extends forward on the front elevation beneath these towers, dividing the facade into separate bays. The main entrance is located in the second bay and features double commercial glass doors and large windows in black metal frames. There are two additional windows in the fourth bay and a narrow window in the first and fifth bays, all in black metal frames. Two large stone chimneys flank the side elevations of the building and extend up to equal height with the clerestory towers. The structure is built into a hillside and features a lower level that sits at grade on the rear elevation. The city purchased this lot as part of its 1966 Centennial-Pioneer

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Urban Renewal Project with the original intention of building a city park along Tanner's Run on the western side of the property. However, the use of this lot ultimately evolved to include the construction of a permanent home for the Roane County Public Library, which had no dedicated site of its own. While this building was completed in 1976, making it currently one year short of the fifty-year age requirement, its planning and construction began in 1973. Furthermore, the Urban Renewal project that resulted in its construction began ten years earlier and was completed over the early 1970s; the library therefore holds the same historic significance as the other resources related to the Centennial-Pioneer project and still reflects the socio-cultural attitudes of the nationwide Urban Renewal movement.

74. Spencer Parking Plaza; N/A; 1969; N/A; non-contributing structure.

The municipal parking plaza is a paved parking lot covering approximately 1.9 acres with entrances/exits from Main Street and Market Street (via Duling Street). It features a traffic bound base course topped with asphalt and 180 spaces divided by concrete medians with meters. This parking plaza was the primary objective of the City's 1966 Centennial-Pioneer Urban Renewal Project, through which the city purchased and cleared this land in order to provide much-needed public parking for the growing commercial district. Construction began in late 1968 and was completed the following summer. Because maintenance/alterations to the parking lot (repaving, repainting, etc.) were not documented over time and no design plan exists to verify its original layout or current integrity, this resource is considered non-contributing.

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## 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.

### Criteria Considerations

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

- ☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Period of Significance**

1893-1976

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Spencer Commercial Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A for Commerce and Politics/Government. European settlement of Spencer began in 1812 and rose significantly in the mid-1800s. Roane County was established in 1856 and Spencer was officially chartered and designated the county seat in 1858. As the site of government activity, the town quickly became the primary commercial hub of the county as well. The city's importance grew drastically in 1892 with the completion of the Ravenswood, Spencer, and Glenville Railroad. The route terminated in Spencer, making the city the primary shipping point not just for Roane County but the otherwise isolated surrounding area as a whole. Major regional industrial operations flourished there as a result and were paired with an oil and gas boom through the 1920s. Despite tumultuous times during the Great Depression, Spencer thrived in the post-World War II manufacturing boom and remained prosperous into the 1970s. Its economic success made the city the social and cultural hub of the area throughout its existence, further cementing

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Spencer's important historical role to the region. The period of significance spans from 1893-1976, beginning with the completion of the Spencer Railroad Depot (the oldest extant resource) and ending with the completion of the Roane County Library as part of the Urban Renewal efforts conducted in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Historic Context**

The first recorded European presence in the area now known as Spencer began in 1772, when a group of scouts including the notorious Jesse Hughes traveled through present-day Roane County during their exploration of the broader mid-Appalachian region. The land in this area was owned by the Walpole Company, comprised primarily of wealthy British aristocrats.<sup>1</sup> However, these British land claims were negated in 1779 as part of the Revolutionary War and the 6,000-acre land tract was subsequently sold to prominent early-American land speculators Albert Gallatin and Jean Savary, who further subdivided it over the following decades.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the challenging mountainous terrain, the region was desirable due to its proximity to the Ohio River and its tributaries (a major early access point to the West).<sup>3</sup> The region's abundant natural resources were especially enticing in the wake of European wars at the turn of the century that caused disruptions to intercontinental trade.<sup>4</sup> Several pioneer families therefore began to settle throughout future Roane County over the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first were Samuel Tanner and his wife, relatives of Jesse Hughes' wife Grace Tanner. On Hughes' recommendation, the Tanners left Harrison County, Virginia, in 1812 and settled in a large rock outcropping just west of present-day Downtown Spencer.<sup>5</sup> Tanner later bought 243 acres of surrounding land from Savary's heir, Robert Alexander, and the area became known as Tanner's Crossing. The Wolfe and Runnion families arrived shortly after Tanner and others soon began to settle nearby, including Uriah Gandee in 1823 (in Gandeeville ten miles south of Spencer), Henry Mace in 1825 (on the west fork of Little Kanawha River near Arnoldsburg), and Hiram Chancey in 1830 (on the middle fork of Reedy Creek).<sup>6</sup> These settlers lived in relatively isolated "island communities" until the early 1830s as more families along Spring Creek, including the Goffs, Vandals, Greathouses, and Carpenters.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James P. Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity: A History of Roane County*, (Charleston, WV: Mountain State Press, 1984.), piii.

<sup>2</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p6.

<sup>3</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, pxv.

<sup>4</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, xvii.

<sup>5</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, pvii; Jack Nida and Roane County Historical Society, *Images of America: Roane County*, (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), p12.

<sup>6</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, pi, p2.

<sup>7</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, pi-ii.

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During this time, early industrial enterprises were also established in this part of the state. The primary of these was the discovery of the Kanawha Salines around the Kanawha River near Charleston. These natural salt springs were known to Shawnee natives living in the Kanawha Valley, who boiled down the brine and harvested the leftover salt for food preservation and other daily necessities.<sup>8</sup> European settlers built salt furnaces for commercial production in the late 1700s, and in 1808 brothers Joseph, David, and Tobias Ruffner drilled the first wells to tap subterranean springs. Thanks to its abundance and potency, the Kanawha Salines rapidly became one of the largest and most sought-after producers of salt in both America and the world into the late 1800s. This in turn spurred the growth of more industries in the region, most notably the logging of hardwood timber in present-day Roane County to meet the Salines' demand for barrel-making and shipping.<sup>9</sup> Coal deposits were also discovered in Roane in the 1850s, and good roads were soon needed to accommodate the collective increased activity in the area. Tanner's Crossing, or New California as it became known, already had established trails and became a central hub for transportation routes through the county.<sup>10</sup> The Winchester-Parkersburg turnpike was completed in 1838, followed by the Staunton-Parkersburg turnpike in 1847 and additional feeder roads throughout the area.<sup>11</sup>

The 1850s marked a point of major growth and development in present-day Spencer and Roane County. In March of 1850, the Virginia General Assembly passed an act approving the construction of the Gilmer, Ripley, and Ohio Turnpike, running from the Staunton Turnpike in Gilmer County through Ripley and ending at the Ohio River in Pomeroy.<sup>12</sup> The road was completed from New California to Ripley in 1853 and spanned fifty-six miles total by 1858. Another turnpike from Ravenswood to Reedy Creek was approved in 1850 and was plotted to meet the Gilmer turnpike in New California; others from Spencer to Pocatalico and Spencer to Ellenboro were planned but only partially completed.<sup>13</sup> While the construction and maintenance of these turnpikes faced many challenges in execution, they and the other minor roads created ultimately opened New California up to the outside world and led to a dramatic rise in land sales along their paths.<sup>14</sup> As the Gilmer turnpike began construction in 1850, Alexander West Jr. purchased half of the 243-acre Tanner tract encompassing what is now Downtown Spencer in anticipation of the growth to come. He built a tavern/boarding house on Main Street directly across from the future Public Square, and in 1852 hired lawyer and surveyor Henry Hughes to conduct the first survey and division of his property into town lots.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "History of Kanawha Salt," Kanawha Salines Foundation, accessed July 13, 2024, <https://kanawhasalinesfoundation.com/history-of-kanawha-salt/>.

<sup>9</sup> Nida, *Images of America*, p25.

<sup>10</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p6.

<sup>11</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, pxxiii.

<sup>12</sup> Nida, *Images of America*, p43.

<sup>13</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, pxxvi.

<sup>14</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, pxxv.

<sup>15</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p6.

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In 1844 there were no more than twenty families residing in New California; by 1856 the town featured many private residences as well as five boarding houses and five general stores to support the 300-500 settlers occupying the surrounding area.<sup>16</sup> Over those years, discussions began in earnest about forming an official town and county to serve the increasing population. After years of heated debate among locals regarding the proposed boundary, another act of the Virginia General Assembly carved land from the existing counties of Kanawha, Gilmer, Wirt, and Jackson to create Roane County on March 11, 1856. The name was chosen in honor of Judge Spencer Roane of Virginia, admired by many for his strong support of states' rights. The first county government was organized in New California on April 7, 1856, with a county court comprised of eleven justices, and in August residents voted 830:461 to make New California the new county seat.<sup>17</sup> The county bought a two-acre lot from Alexander West Jr. for \$5.00 on October 3, 1856, to be the site of the first county courthouse (where the current one stands today). Construction began in August 1858 and was completed the following year, finalizing the formation of the county.<sup>18</sup> Residents of New California also filed two petitions with the General Assembly in 1858, first for an official town charter and second to change the town's name to Spencer (again after Judge Spencer Roane). Spencer thus became the only incorporated town in Roane County and the primary trading/business center.<sup>19</sup> As explained by historian James P. Mylott:

“Spencer, chosen as the county seat and thus serving as the political, administrative, and judicial center of affairs in the county, became the exception to [the island community] model. While it existed as the village-service center for the immediate area, it also became the governmental service center for the entire county. As such it was able to attract more people and generate more growth than any other village in the county. In a very real sense it became the center of what was then a very small world.”<sup>20</sup>

The second half of the nineteenth century brought even greater changes to Spencer in the wake of new industries, modern technologies, and the Civil War. The rising population of the 1850s brought with it the need for the various professions and businesses to accommodate primitive town life. Such ventures included the first doctors, general stores, blacksmiths, tanneries, grist mills, coopers, saddlers, shoemakers, wagonmakers, and boarding houses, all established between 1855-58.<sup>21</sup> Most of these businesses were located in wooden buildings constructed around the Public Square, all of which were unfortunately lost to fires before the turn of the twentieth century.

The population of Roane County climbed to 5,309 by 1860, and tensions among residents were rising even higher as the Civil War loomed closer. Opinions on slavery and states' rights were equally divided in Roane as they were throughout the rest of the state. Despite Virginia's

<sup>16</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p3, p7.

<sup>17</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p5.

<sup>18</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p8.

<sup>19</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p9.

<sup>20</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p16.

<sup>21</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p7.



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secession from the Union, the Spencer Courthouse remained under northern protection as an extension of the “Reorganized Government of Virginia” established by pro-Union leaders at the Second Wheeling Convention of June 1861.<sup>22</sup> The first armed conflict in Spencer broke out that August, after a state militia led by Colonel William Pell was assigned to Roane County and established fortified headquarters inside the courthouse.<sup>23</sup> Confederate guerillas attacked the courthouse and held it under siege for seven days, but were eventually driven off and defeated by local Unionists and northern reinforcements. Sporadic skirmishes continued over the next two years but were ultimately curbed by West Virginia’s statehood, declared on June 20, 1863, and subsequent reintegration with the Union.

As America grappled with widespread economic depression in the Reconstruction years following the end of the war, Roane County did its best to move forward. By the 1880s, it was clear that transportation improvements were sorely needed. The dirt streets, with their high concentration of clay and ever-present animal waste from horses and livestock, quickly became deep mud pits whenever it rained. The resulting ruts made them a daily headache for travelers, if not dangerously impassible. West Virginia’s post-war governmental structure made roads the purview of the county court. Roane’s court implemented a sweeping reform plan in 1880 that established an annual tax levy to fund road construction and maintenance, and required all men in the county aged 21-50 to spend two days per year working on supervised local road crews.<sup>24</sup> Eventually it became apparent that this sporadic, unskilled labor model yielded poor results and the work was contracted out, but having funds and labor specifically dedicated to road maintenance was an important step towards better travel and sanitary conditions nonetheless.<sup>25</sup>

These same years also saw heated debates over the construction of a railroad through the county. Discussions first began in the previous decade, as the burgeoning local farming/agricultural market of the 1860s-70s would require a railroad to continue expanding.<sup>26</sup> The discovery of the region’s first oil fields at Burning Springs in Wirt County in 1860 also opened the door for oil and gas speculators who began leasing and drilling across the area.<sup>27</sup> While many citizens saw the potential long-term industrial and economic benefits of consistently reliable, large-scale transportation, others argued the financial cost to the county (and tax-paying residents) would simply be too high.<sup>28</sup> Two unforeseen factors further complicated the discussion. First, in 1885, the West Virginia Legislature began looking for a site to build a second State Hospital for the Insane like that in Weston. Between initial construction, administration of the facility, and ancillary local services, such a project would create hundreds of jobs and major sustained economic growth (all better served by the addition of a railroad).<sup>29</sup> Spencer became one of the

<sup>22</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p20.

<sup>23</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p24.

<sup>24</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p77.

<sup>25</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p79.

<sup>26</sup> Dan Robie, “RS&G--B&O Ravenswood to Spencer Branch,” WVNC Rails, accessed July 24, 2024, <https://www.wvncrails.org/rsg--bo-ravenswood-to-spencer-branch.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p95.

<sup>28</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p84.

<sup>29</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p92.

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candidates and was officially selected in May of 1887. The second factor occurred five months later on October 21, 1887, when a devastating fire destroyed nearly all of Downtown Spencer, including the courthouse. The price to build the new courthouse alone would cost the county nearly \$22,000 and raised further concerns about pursuing any additional expensive undertakings.<sup>30</sup> After two failed attempts in 1886 and 1888, the county court presented another railroad proposal for a bond election on July 9, 1889, and residents finally voted 1,422:388 in favor of the plan.

The Ravenswood, Spencer, and Glenville Railway was incorporated on April 10, 1886 (in anticipation of the first bond election) and was completed in 1892. As the name suggests, it connected to the Ohio River Railroad at Ravenswood, stretched through Jackson and Roane Counties, and was intended to extend to Glenville and eventually Weston. The first train stopped in Spencer on November 15, 1892, with great fanfare, and the Spencer Depot was erected at the end of Market Street the following year.<sup>31</sup> The track ran through 33 miles of extremely mountainous terrain with additional stops at Silverton, Crow Summit, New Era, Sandyville, Jones Crossing, Meadowdale, Duncan, Leroy, Liverpool, Sandy Summit, Seamon, Duke, Reedy, Billings, Barrs, and Nancy Run. The second leg to Glenville was never completed; construction was delayed until the line was bought out by the B&O Railroad in 1912, who already had other lines in the area and did not need to extend this one any further. As the end of the line serving an otherwise very isolated region, Spencer drew even more people in for governmental, personal, and commercial business and became the point with the most received and shipped total carloads.<sup>32</sup> As historian Dan Robie explains, "Without question Spencer accounted for the highest percentage of passenger ridership in the history of the RS&G. As both the terminus and largest population center on the route, it was the gateway connection to and from the outside world by rail via Ravenswood."<sup>33</sup> Roads in and around Roane County still did not provide adequate access through the challenging terrain, so the RS&G became the main mode of transport for both passengers and freight almost immediately. The line remained a vital artery for the people and businesses in and around Spencer for seventy-five years and marked the beginning of the town's transition to a modern city.

The years following the construction of the RS&G railroad saw an explosion of commercial activity and municipal improvements in Downtown Spencer that laid the blueprint for what is still seen there today. The timber industry in Roane had grown slowly but steadily between 1850-1880 as the population began to take root. It then reached its peak between 1890-1910 as the railroad both spurred local development and allowed greater quantities of wood to be shipped and sold elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the oil and gas speculators that had been searching for deposits since the 1860s finally struck gold in 1897, when the McCalment Oil Company of Pittsburgh

<sup>30</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p90.

<sup>31</sup> Robie, "RS&G--B&O Ravenswood to Spencer Branch."

<sup>32</sup> Robie, "RS&G--B&O Ravenswood to Spencer Branch."

<sup>33</sup> Robie, "RS&G--B&O Ravenswood to Spencer Branch."

<sup>34</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p129.

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drilled on the Flat Fork branch of the Pocatalico River and discovered the first natural gas wells in Roane County.<sup>35</sup> This sparked a major boom in land leases and exploratory drilling efforts between 1900-10 that would bring countless jobs and investment dollars into Roane and raised property values 80.6%.<sup>36</sup> McCalment reorganized as the American Oil Development Company in 1897, leased 65,000 acres across Roane and neighboring counties, and laid pipes throughout Spencer to supply the town with natural gas by 1898.<sup>37</sup> Other deposits were soon discovered by other companies as well, including the McKown Creek oil field in 1909, Scaffold Run oil field in 1912, and the Spring Creek wells in 1915. Again, as the railhead and main commercial hub, Spencer became the epicenter of the industry with offices of several major oil and gas companies located downtown. The most significant of these, the United Fuel Gas Company, was started by prominent local businessmen Albert Heck and Lee Goff in 1899 and handled nearly all of the oil and gas leases in Spencer and the surrounding towns.<sup>38</sup> Despite the fact that large-scale oil and gas deposits were only ever found on a small fraction of the lands drilled, the industry saw repeated cycles of speculation and micro-booms into the mid-1900s that injected consistent funds into the local economy and in turn spurred the growth of other businesses. The rural lands of Roane County also became major livestock producers by the early 1900s and required extra trains to be added to Spencer's service during peak production season.<sup>39</sup> Conversely, manufacturing-related work such as brick kilns, flour milling, hauling of drilling products, livery stables, boarding houses, and hotels (to house workers and businessmen) thrived within Spencer and other towns and employed hundreds of residents.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, many of the buildings that housed these earliest enterprises in downtown Spencer were lost due to several devastating fires during this time. One such fire occurred on November 10, 1896, and singlehandedly destroyed over forty buildings along Main, Market, Church, and surrounding streets. As a result, most of the burned buildings were rebuilt/replaced over the following decade with brick ones that would be less susceptible to fire. This created a more urban aesthetic throughout the commercial downtown area and marked Spencer's transition to a modern twentieth-century city.<sup>41</sup>

Banks, hospitals, and other modern institutions soon popped up in downtown Spencer as well. The first bank, the Bank of Spencer, was opened by William R. Goff on March 23, 1891 and moved to the new T.E. Vineyard Building on Market Street in 1896. The Roane County Bank was founded in 1898 in the Holswade Building on the southwest corner of Main and Church Streets, later moving to the Riddel Building on the opposite corner in 1924.<sup>42</sup> On March 27, 1903, the Traders Trust and Banking Company opened a classical-inspired three-story, brick and sandstone building at the northwest corner of Market and Main Streets; that same year the stately

<sup>35</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p179.

<sup>36</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p202.

<sup>37</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p191.

<sup>38</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p197.

<sup>39</sup> Robie, "RS&G--B&O Ravenswood to Spencer Branch."

<sup>40</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p99; Traders Bank, *Over Seventy Years of Progress at The Traders Bank* (Spencer, WV: 1974), p15.

<sup>41</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p166.

<sup>42</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p94.

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Grand Hotel opened on the opposite southwest corner, together bringing a notable sense of grandeur to the commercial district. The McQuain Hospital on the corner of Market and Capehart Streets opened on May 1, 1901, and was the only hospital in the central part of the state at that time, adding to the town's importance.<sup>43</sup> The Roane County Hospital (now Taylor-Vandale Funeral Home) was then opened in the former Riley Hotel on Beauty Street in 1904. The *Roane County Appeal* and the *Weekly Bulletin*, the area's first newspapers, were established early on in 1877-78. The larger and more politically-aligned *Roane County Record* and *Spencer Times* were founded in 1888 and 1911 respectively; these two were bought out in 1912 and combined into the *Times Record*, which remains the major newspaper in Spencer to this day. The first wholesale business in the county was the Wholesale Grocery Company, established 1893 and later sold and renamed Spencer Grocery Company in 1903.<sup>44</sup>

These commercial developments were simultaneously paired with major infrastructural advancements, further underscoring Spencer's modernization at the turn of the century. The most important of these was the installation of a public water and sewer system. City-wide waterworks would provide residents and visitors with the conveniences of indoor plumbing and create hydrants to combat potential fires; furthermore, the rising population and inadequate waste management made the threat of public disease outbreaks a serious sanitation concern.<sup>45</sup> Residents approved a bond proposal to fund the waterworks and sewer on March 26, 1903, and the Crystal Water and Power Company was incorporated that May to build and maintain them.<sup>46</sup> The piped access to both natural gas and now water sparked rapid development of the land surrounding the Public Square; seven town additions were incorporated into the Spencer limits between 1903-1909, resulting in its current footprint.<sup>47</sup> Telephone and telegraph service became widespread by 1907, and that same year work finally began on paving Spencer's notoriously muddy streets. The first phase of the project called for Main Street and Market Street to be rebuilt with three layers of concrete, sand, and brick for maximum durability.<sup>48</sup> The contract was awarded to local businessman Harley Wells, who began construction in June 1907 and completed it by the following February. The project was highly successful and continued in annual increments, resulting in three miles of paved streets (and coordinated sewers) by 1926. Finally, electricity came to Spencer in 1914 thanks to the enterprising spirit of H.H. Robey, owner of the Robey Theater. Robey needed significant power to run his state-of-the-art moving pictures and installed a 75-horsepower engine, which generated enough electricity to supply other residents with power as well.<sup>49</sup> Robey's plant was bought out shortly after and eventually taken over by the Spencer Water & Ice Company in 1920, who greatly expanded the operation and supplied electric power across the city by the end of the decade.

<sup>43</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p247.

<sup>44</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p99.

<sup>45</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p250.

<sup>46</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p254.

<sup>47</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p256.

<sup>48</sup> William H. Bishop, *History of Roane County West Virginia: From the Time of Its Explorations to A.D. 1927* (Markham, VA: Apple Manor Press, 2019), p400.

<sup>49</sup> Bishop, *History of Roane County*, p401.

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With the local economy thriving and modern utilities simplifying their daily tasks, residents suddenly had the time and money for leisure and social activities. As new types of enterprises sprang up to meet this demand for entertainment, Spencer became the cultural hub of the region as well as the commercial and governmental one. Harley Wells opened the Wells Opera House on the west end of Main Street in 1897. The building featured a 600-seat theater used for live shows and movies and quickly became an extremely popular attraction. Seeing Wells's success, H.H. Robey and his partner Joseph Schwender opened several "nickelodeon" theaters around Spencer before finding success of their own with the Auditorium Theater in 1911 (ironically located almost next door to the Opera House). After the Opera House closed in 1923, the Auditorium underwent a major renovation, reopened in 1926 as the much grander Robey Theater, and has remained in operation ever since. Other activities such as bowling, roller-skating, and dancing filled in the upper stories of many downtown commercial buildings, and regional sports, races, and festivals found a natural home at the new fairgrounds built on the edge of town by 1912.<sup>50</sup> Out of town guests marveled at the McKown Hotel built on the southwest corner of Main and Market Streets in 1916; the massive structure occupied nearly that whole block of Main Street and was the first brick building with piped plumbing, light, and heat.<sup>51</sup> State politicians even took notice of the growing city. On October 13, 1900, Spencer hosted competing campaign rallies for both candidates in the upcoming gubernatorial election. Over 3,000 people filled the streets to hear speeches by Democratic nominee John H. Holt and Republican nominee Albert B. White, who was accompanied by longtime Senator and acting U.S. Vice President William P. Frye.<sup>52</sup>

Fraternal organizations also became an important cornerstone of social and civic life at this time. The Masonic Moriah Lodge No. 38 was the first one chartered in Spencer in November of 1869. The aforementioned Holswade Building on Main Street was bought and remodeled by the Moriah Lodge for their use in 1912 after it was damaged in a fire the previous year. The Robey Theater was built in conjunction with the Knights of Pythias, who retained ownership of the third floor for their use until 1950.<sup>53</sup> The Campbell Lodge of the International Order of Oddfellows was chartered in 1887. It was the first IOOF lodge in Roane County and assisted in forming other nearby chapters.<sup>54</sup> In 1908 they purchased the lot directly west of the Robey Theater and finished constructing their own three-story building there in 1925.

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<sup>50</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p275.

<sup>51</sup> Nida, *Images of America*, p100.

<sup>52</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p97.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Landon, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Robey Theatre, West Virginia SHPO, November 1988.

<sup>54</sup> Nida, *Images of America*, p60.

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The proliferation of cars in the first decades of the twentieth century also had a noticeable impact on the people and businesses of downtown Spencer. The first documented automobile in Roane County was that of John Russ in Spencer on August 3, 1903, from a Stanley dealership in Parkersburg; not to be outdone, a handful of other local businessmen soon followed.<sup>55</sup> The town passed its first car-related ordinance in 1912 requiring the use of headlights and establishing speed limits, followed by another ordinance in 1916 requiring vehicle operators be licensed and pay a tax to offset road maintenance.<sup>56</sup> Dayton Rhodes and T. Albert Hartley opened the first local automobile dealership c.1910 specializing in Fords; business was so good that Rhodes bought and remodeled the former Virginia Hotel building on the east end of Main Street in 1915 and relocated there to expand his operation to a full dealership and service station.<sup>57</sup> Samuel Simmons opened a popular Plymouth and Dodge dealership on the south end of Market Street in 1920, and three more dealerships had busy storefronts in downtown Spencer by 1926.

With more and more cars, travelers soon required more (and better) roads and accompanying services. In addition to the street paving program previously described, the construction of state roads Route 14 from Parkersburg to Charleston and Route 5 from Point Pleasant to Weston was approved in 1921. Both highways passed through downtown Spencer, providing convenient year-round access to and from major cities for personal and commercial travel for the first time in the town's history.<sup>58</sup> Soon taxi companies and bus lines were created to serve residents throughout the county, and increasingly outdated businesses like livery stables and saddle shops switched gears to things like auto upholstery and rubber manufacturing.<sup>59</sup> Garages and gas filling stations, such as the drive-through pump kiosk added to the Boice-Heck Service Station lot in 1927, were an inevitable and exciting new addition to the town's commercial opportunities and built environment.

This boom era of 1890-1930 is well reflected by the rapidly climbing population statistics from that time. The number of total Roane County residents were as follows: <500 in 1850; 5,309 in 1860; 7,209 in 1870; 15,303 in 1890; and a peak of 21,543 in 1910.<sup>60 61</sup> The number of residents living in Spencer were: 143 in 1870; 431 in 1890; 737 in 1900; and a staggering 3,538 in 1917 (including the nascent suburbs surrounding the city proper).<sup>62</sup> In addition to overall growth, these numbers show that Spencer was home to an increasing percentage of the total Roane County population: 3% in 1890; 6% in 1900; and 9% in 1920.<sup>63</sup> With its urban amenities and greater

<sup>55</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p265.

<sup>56</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p266.

<sup>57</sup> Bishop, *History of Roane County*, p404.

<sup>58</sup> Nida, *Images of America*, p46.

<sup>59</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p395.

<sup>60</sup> Phillip L. Crane, *The Founders of Roane County*. The Roane County Journal: January 1997, p3.

<sup>61</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p.18, p163, p236.

<sup>62</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p163, p346.

<sup>63</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p237.

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employment opportunities, the town cultivated "a certain cosmopolitan air, and it would come to represent the 'city' for the people of the area."<sup>64</sup> Spencer was officially reincorporated as a city in 1921, further reinforcing its position of leadership in the county.

Like most American cities, the interwar period of 1920-1940 brought tough times to Spencer. World War I helped create a more globalized economy, and the domestic oil market was now flooded with cheaper suppliers from western states.<sup>65</sup> As a result, the large oil and gas companies with leases in and around Roane County pulled out and reinvested elsewhere. This created a mild recession in the regional economy but ultimately proved to be a blessing: the open leases were bought by local residents, and when new oil and gas deposits were discovered throughout the 1920s more of the profits fed directly back into the county's hands.<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, the Great Depression soon tarnished that silver lining. Many leases had to be cancelled in the early 1930s and the local oil and gas industry virtually ceased to exist by May 1933.<sup>67</sup> There was a significant resurgence in the market in the late 1930s and sporadic spikes into the 1970s, but the dreams of the earlier boom years had passed.<sup>68</sup> This trend was mirrored very closely by the agricultural industry as well. The post-WWI national recession forced most farmers to shift away from high-cost operations like cattle to poultry or more specialized products that were cheaper to raise and sell.<sup>69</sup> This, too, was a blessing in disguise: with fewer overhead costs, the change in markets proved to be surprisingly successful and helped boost the economy in the following years. But again, the 1930s proved disastrous. The Depression was especially hard on farmers and other rural workers, where there were fewer opportunities for odd jobs to help make ends meet as there were in the city. This was exacerbated by the fact that West Virginia faced alternating extreme droughts and floods between 1930-1932 that devastated agricultural production across the state, including Roane County.<sup>70</sup> While some local agricultural operations did rebound once conditions stabilized, overall production never returned to pre-war levels.

Several key projects did emerge out of this period of turmoil. Thanks to President Roosevelt's New Deal plan, federal agencies like the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration were created to help fund public construction projects with local labor, thereby curbing unemployment and kickstarting the economy. Thousands of cities across America benefitted from this program, including Spencer. In addition to the construction of a public swimming pool, park improvements, and new bleachers for the Spencer High School athletic field, federal work programs were used to help complete an airport on Parkersburg Road begun

<sup>64</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p124.

<sup>65</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p375.

<sup>66</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p378.

<sup>67</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p470.

<sup>68</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p489.

<sup>69</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p388.

<sup>70</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p465.

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previously in 1930.<sup>71</sup> Following completion of this airport, Spencer was one of twenty-one West Virginia cities selected for an experimental air-mail route. This coincided with the announcement of a new U.S. Post Office for the city by the WPA in 1936. The impressive Art-Deco style building opened on September 26, 1937, and featured decorative airplane propellor-inspired medallions over its windows in a playful nod to the air-mail service.<sup>72</sup> By the second half of the decade Spencer was beginning to prosper again. This opened the door for new businesses, most notably the G.C. Murphy Company Five and Dime Store. The nationwide chain leased the six buildings on the southwest corner of Main and Church Streets and combined their ground floors into one continuous store, which opened November 14, 1936.<sup>73</sup> G.C. Murphy's quickly became and remained the anchor store of downtown Spencer until its closure in the 1990s.

World War II helped lift America out of the depths of the Great Depression and set the stage for major changes in the decades that followed. There was a fundamental shift in the national economy toward manufacturing and factory-related industries, and life gravitated to centralized urban areas more than ever before. As a result, Roane and other rural counties saw a general decline in population over the 1940s-1970s as people moved toward the big cities in search of new opportunities. Even so, Spencer's role as the regional hub helped it adapt to these modern times and the city enjoyed significant economic growth and prosperity after the war. In 1948, the airport property was bought and converted into the Spencer Manufacturing Company (later Kellwood Corporation) garment factory, which primarily produced sweaters for Sears, Roebuck, and Co. By 1955 the facility had grown to 65,000 square feet with nearly 400 people, by far the largest employer in Spencer for decades and the backbone of the post-war economy.<sup>74</sup> The Monarch Rubber Company of Baltimore bought out the struggling local Casto Rubber Company in 1951 and within a few years expanded the operation to 100 employees, the second largest employer at the time.<sup>75</sup> This facility primarily produced shoe soles and hockey pucks and remained in operation for over fifty years. The Thomas West Virginia Lumber Company also expanded into Spencer in 1955 with a 6-acre plant with 45 employees moving 30,000 feet of lumber per day.<sup>76</sup> The Spencer State Hospital (formerly State Hospital for the Insane) had served thousands since opening its doors in 1893 and in 1950 reported 1,200 resident patients and 153 employees; both of those numbers continued to grow after a large clinic, women's dormitory, and library were added two years later.<sup>77</sup> Finally, the discovery of hydrofracturing technology

<sup>71</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p488.

<sup>72</sup> Nida, *Images of America*, p107.

<sup>73</sup> Nida, *Images of America*, p108.

<sup>74</sup> Woodyard Inc. "Centennial: 1856-1956," *The Times Record*, October 11, 1956, p11.

<sup>75</sup> Woodyard Inc. "Centennial: 1856-1956," p14.

<sup>76</sup> Woodyard Inc. "Centennial: 1856-1956," p11.

<sup>77</sup> "Spencer State Hospital," Asylum Projects, accessed July 18, 2024.  
[https://www.asylumprojects.org/index.php/Spencer\\_State\\_Hospital](https://www.asylumprojects.org/index.php/Spencer_State_Hospital).



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(aka fracking) in 1949 revolutionized the oil and gas industry, once again reviving the stalled Roane market and prompting spikes of profits over the 1950s-70s.<sup>78</sup>

These businesses brought wealth back to the community after years of uncertainty and hardship, and downtown Spencer thrived as a result. Drugstores, clothing stores, furniture stores, auto dealerships/garages, restaurants, and more filled the commercial buildings with new life (and customers). Longstanding businesses like O.J. Morrison's, G.C. Murphy's, DeGruyter's Jewelry and others remodeled their storefronts with modern materials to stay up-to-date with the latest trends. The Traders Trust & Banking Co. saw such record-breaking growth that it required two expansions to keep up with the extra business.<sup>79</sup> The first, in 1954, saw them acquire the L-shaped Petty Building abutting their own and simply flow over into the additional space. However, as banking grew more and more technologically sophisticated, even that larger footprint soon proved inadequate for their needs. In 1966, Traders demolished the old McKown Hotel directly across the street and constructed an entirely new facility, opened February 6, 1967. With a late-Modern commercial design, modern amenities and decor, and Spencer's first drive-up banking windows, the new building was a radical departure from the 1903 predecessor and exemplified the era's spirit of progress.<sup>80</sup> By this time, the ubiquity of cars, cargo trucks, and good highways had also rendered the RS&G/B&O railroad obsolete. Scheduled service to Spencer ended in 1963 and freight traffic ceased shortly after; the tracks were removed in 1968, marking the end of "the old days" and a defining chapter in the city's history.<sup>81</sup>

That same progressive spirit was at the heart of the federally-funded Urban Renewal Program that swept across America during the mid-twentieth century. The massive influx of people entering the cities after World War II often exceeded the available housing stock and contributed to worsening living conditions in low-income neighborhoods. In an effort to combat these blighted areas, the U.S. Government passed the Housing Act of 1949. This act created the Urban Renewal Program, which authorized federal grants to assist local governments with slum clearance/demolition, redevelopment, and creation of affordable housing.<sup>82</sup> This program operated into the mid-1970s and functioned much the same way as the previous New Deal assistance programs, wherein a federal agency (in this case the Department of Housing and Urban Development) oversaw and offered loan and/or grant funds for a variety of public projects planned and executed by municipalities (called Local Housing Authorities or Public Agencies).

<sup>78</sup> Traders Bank, *Seventy Years of Progress*, p17.

<sup>79</sup> Traders Bank, *Seventy Years of Progress*, p16.

<sup>80</sup> Traders Bank, *Seventy Years of Progress*, p17.

<sup>81</sup> Robie, "RS&G--B&O Ravenswood to Spencer Branch."

<sup>82</sup> Daniel Spiess, "The Creation of the US Federal Urban Renewal Program," The West End Museum, accessed July 22, 2024, <https://thewestendmuseum.org/history/era/new-boston/the-creation-of-the-us-federal-urban-renewal-program/>.

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It also specifically allowed the local entity to use the funds to purchase dilapidated properties with the intent to demolish them and resell the lots for redevelopment or retain for public use.

While not a major metropolis like New York or Los Angeles, the City of Spencer took advantage of this opportunity to address several needs within its own commercial district. The City Council successfully applied for URP funds in 1965 (just over 100 years since the county and courthouse square were both established in 1856) and on March 3, 1966, officially approved a plan for the Centennial Pioneer Urban Renewal Agency Project WV R-15.<sup>83</sup> The project had its own designated Executive Director and support staff brought on as temporary city employees and hired outside contractors, engineers, and consultants to conduct more specialized tasks. Their work focused on the underutilized northwest corner of downtown between Main Street, Market Street, Tanner's Run, and the recently removed railroad tracks immediately south of Spring Creek - encompassing approximately 6.25 acres and known as the Urban Renewal Area.<sup>84</sup> After several years of contentious negotiations with property owners, the city acquired all the various parcels of land within the URA (excluding the existing buildings fronting Main and Market Streets). The URA was then subdivided into nine parcels, as depicted by the Centennial-Pioneer Urban Renewal Area map of March 1969. Their primary objective for this land was the creation of a public parking lot, which the city deemed an immediate necessity in light of the still-rising post-war boom in commercial and industrial activity. Parcels 5 and 6, the central majority of the Area, were purchased for a total of \$49,787.98, cleared of any existing structures, and converted into a paved parking lot with 175 spaces and entrances from both Market and Main Streets.<sup>85</sup> The bid for this work was awarded to State Construction Company at the cost of \$86,596.66 on July 11, 1968, and the parking lot was completed by July of 1969. Parcel 4 between the parking lot and Tanner's Run was purchased for \$11,263.97 and slated for a small city park, completed in 1970. However, just three years later, the Roane County Library Commission requested the site become home to a new Roane County Public Library, given its ideal location between the downtown square and Spencer High School (directly across Tanner's Run, accessed via a nearby walking bridge). The City voted unanimously to deed 14,231.59 sq. ft. of the property to the Library Commission on June 6, 1974, and the project was completed in 1976. The remaining parcels were sold to neighboring entities for immediate improvements, resulting in an expansion of the Southern States Co-op store, addition of a drive-up window at the rear of First National Bank, and a major renovation/enlargement of the First Baptist Church.<sup>86</sup> Finally, Bowman Street and Market Street from Main to Spring Creek were fully rebuilt/repaved in 1970 by Virginia-Western Construction Company at a cost of \$44,670.22.<sup>87</sup> A bond election was held on September 18, 1968, for \$267,000 to fund the city's portion of project costs.

<sup>83</sup> Spencer City Council, Minute Book: City of Spencer 1964-1970, Spencer, WV, March 3, 1966.

<sup>84</sup> See Figure 9: Centennial-Pioneer Urban Renewal Project Area Map.

<sup>85</sup> Spencer City Council minutes, April 3, 1969.

<sup>86</sup> Spencer City Council minutes, May 5, 1969.

<sup>87</sup> Spencer City Council minutes, February 5, 1970.

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Though not specifically funded by the Urban Renewal Program, the city undertook other similar projects to complement the work just described. Water Project #03-1-00605 was planned over the late 1960s and implemented in 1970, resulting in much-needed upgrades to the city's water system, construction of the Charles Fork Dam, and purchase of the water system itself from the West Virginia Water Company.<sup>88</sup> More notably, the county authorized the demolition of the standing 1889 courthouse and construction of a new one to take its place in the Public Square. It was designed by architects RL Wilson and JD King of St. Albans, erected over 1964-65 by contractor EO Fogleman Construction Co. of Summersville for approximately \$600,000, and officially dedicated on January 28, 1966. This third courthouse iteration was a bold example of the New Formalist school of Modern architecture and, along with all the other Urban Renewal work completed, represented the city's embrace of the modern era.

All of this momentum culminated in a renaissance period for Spencer in the early 1970s. For the first time since the Depression, Roane County's trend of declining population reversed and Roane saw an increase in population of 13%.<sup>89</sup> Spencer housed 17% of the county residents at this time and new subdivision and mobile home communities were erected to meet the demand.<sup>90</sup> These citizens banded together to spearhead a grassroots funding campaign raising over \$600,000 for the construction of the Roane General Hospital.<sup>91</sup> This state-of-the-art, 80-bed facility brought expert medical care to Spencer and the region, much like the first hospitals established here at the turn of the century. The Los Angeles-based company Norris Industries secured the newly-created industrial park on the outskirts of town and constructed a \$5,000,000 hubcap manufacturing facility, creating 500 new jobs for the community. The annual West Virginia Black Walnut Festival during this time was attracting up to as many as 50,000 attendees per day to the downtown area for events like the grand parade, coronation, livestock sale, and craft shows, among other things. The festival was first established in 1954 to celebrate the exciting period each fall when local farmers brought their Eastern black walnut crop to the RS&G Railroad Depot to sell to larger distributors like the Hammond Nut Company in Missouri.<sup>92</sup> It started as a popular one-day festival but steadily grew into a major week-long event. Throughout the rest of the year, locals and visitors alike could also be entertained at one of two newly constructed golf courses. The city's downtown economy thrived, and businesses continued to evolve to serve the needs of modern consumers. These strides were officially recognized when Spencer received the National Municipal League's prestigious 1974-75 All-American City Award, further underscoring the city's enduring legacy.

<sup>88</sup> Spencer City Council minutes, November 6, 1969, and December 4, 1969.

<sup>89</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p493.

<sup>90</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p237; Traders Bank, *Seventy Years of Progress*, p17.

<sup>91</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p492.

<sup>92</sup> Mayor Terry Williams, personal interview.

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Spencer enjoyed these prosperous times well into the next decade, but unfortunately could not outrun the general economic downturn that impacted most of West Virginia towards the end of the twentieth century. The state's economy had been largely dominated by extractive industries such as coal, logging, etc. and the manufacturing operations that took root after World War II. But by the 1980s-90s, many of these natural resources became overharvested and manufacturing work was increasingly outsourced to cheaper countries. Widespread closures and relocations of these businesses left employment vacuums that devastated many communities across the state. Spencer's economy suffered with the closure of several major employers, including the Spencer State Hospital in 1987, the Norris Industries plant shortly after that, the Kellwood sweater factory in the early 2000s, and the Spencer Veneer LLC plant in 2007.<sup>93</sup> In spite of these setbacks, the city has persevered and remains the commercial and governmental hub of the county today.

It is worth noting that throughout Spencer's nearly 200-year history, the built environment of the commercial district has been equally as impacted by fires as by the evolving cultural and industrial context described above. As previously mentioned, the fire of 1887 destroyed the town's first courthouse and most of the buildings surrounding Public Square – all wooden structures as was typical for the period and region. The loss of three decades' worth of government records was catastrophic. The second courthouse's brick and stone exterior was therefore selected not just for aesthetics, but to help ensure as much fire protection as possible to prevent another such disaster. This plan proved prescient when an even more devastating fire occurred on November 10, 1896. Over forty buildings, nearly all of downtown Spencer except for the courthouse, were destroyed.<sup>94</sup> Another fire broke out on November 6, 1902, and burned the first block of Church Street between Main and Beauty Streets.<sup>95</sup> These fires were especially critical in shaping the city's current fabric because, after facing three major fires in just fifteen years, most owners took the time and expense to rebuild with brick instead of wood; the oldest surviving buildings along Main Street today date to this reconstruction period of c1897-1905 and marked Spencer's transition to a more modern city.<sup>96</sup> The Grand Hotel on the southwest corner of Main and Market Streets burned down on October 12, 1914, leading to the construction of the significantly grander McKown Hotel on the same site the following year. On December 27, 1929, the longstanding wooden Arlington Hotel caught blaze, resulting in its loss and damage to the neighboring Robey Theater and Robey-Schwender Building, Petty Building, Traders Bank, and Hardman Supply Co. Building.<sup>97</sup> The Petty Building was so damaged that the Sinnett & Wright Drugstore inside was forced to close; Thompson Drugs (located in the Robey-Schwender

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<sup>93</sup> Joe Morris, "Teflon Town: Spencer Finds a Way to Avoid Plant Closures." *The Hur Herald*, July 7, 2007, <https://www.hurherald.com/obits.php?id=24056>.

<sup>94</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p164.

<sup>95</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p252.

<sup>96</sup> Mylott, *A Measure of Prosperity*, p166.

<sup>97</sup> Woodyard Inc. "Centennial: 1856-1956," p166.

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Building next door) subsequently leased and moved into the restored Petty, where the business remained for many years, and the Robey-Schwender was remodeled and rented to Western Auto company (who no doubt took advantage of the newly empty Arlington lot next door). The wooden restaurant and barbershop between the Hardman Supply Co. Building and Market Street-side of the Petty Building was also lost, allowing for construction of the second Hardman Building in 1930. The original Sam Simmons Auto building and garage on the southeastern end of Market Street caught fire August 11, 1942, after which Simmons rebuilt on the parking lot next door and left the old site razed as seen today. The same fire also damaged the nearby Newlon, Morrison, and Taylor-Vandale Buildings. The most devastating fire in recent history occurred April 27, 1956 on the block of Main Street directly opposite Public Square. The building housing Staats Drugstore and DeGruyter's Jewelry was completely destroyed and rebuilt; O.J. Morrison & Co. was burned to just its shell and required extensive remodeling, as did the neighboring Phillips Building and Spencer Department Store. While the loss of these buildings' original fabric is lamentable, it speaks to the historic realities of life in an urban setting while the ensuing modifications further illustrate the evolution of construction materials and styles over the twentieth century.

It is also worth noting that Spencer came to rely on a surprising resource to finally help mitigate these fires: teenagers. After yet another fire in 1942 wreaked havoc due to a lack of available firemen, local high school student Melvin Crislip organized a group of his fellow classmates to "assemble, repair, and keep in working order the meager firefighting equipment the city owned, having it available and in working condition for any emergency, and to clean out the fire truck quarters of trash, items confiscated by City Police, and other debris."<sup>98</sup> The group, led by and comprised entirely of active male Spencer High School students, became the Spencer Volunteer Fire Department and were housed in the garage of the 1917 jail building behind the courthouse. The SVFD was funded by the county, city, local clubs and businesses, and their own fundraising campaigns, all of which helped fund members' uniforms, supplies, formal training classes, and the acquisition of three firetrucks by 1954. The crew responded to any fires within the city or nearby county limits (even during school hours) and received repeated national recognition and awards for their service. Thanks to their efforts, many of Spencer's historic buildings survived to see the twenty-first century.

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<sup>98</sup> Woodyard Inc. "Centennial: 1856-1956," p85.

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## **Criteria Summary**

### **Criterion A: Politics/Government**

This district is locally significant under Criterion A: Politics/Government due to Spencer's role as the seat of Roane County and the organization of the downtown area around the central Public Square. By the time Roane County was founded on March 11, 1856, Spencer (known then as New California) was already a well-established settlement with several popular crossroads for pioneers travelling west. As a result, it was the natural choice for voters when selecting a county seat just a few weeks later. When Alexander West's land tract was first surveyed in 1852 for division into town lots, two centrally located acres on the main road were already proposed for the site of the presumed Public Square. The county purchased this land in October of 1856 and began construction of the first courthouse there in August of 1858. The courthouse was completed the following year and became the place of all administrative, judicial, and political affairs. Because most personal legal business also typically had to be conducted at the county seat (e.g. paying taxes, participating in court cases, or filing deeds, wills, marriage certificates, etc.), the courthouse and therefore Spencer became the essential hub for all current and prospective residents of the county as well. The courthouse gained further political significance in 1861, when it was the site of the town's first armed conflict of the Civil War. Spencer has remained the county seat to the present day, making it a key part of both locals' immediate daily lives and the county's long-term governmental leadership and development for over 165 years.

Furthermore, the physical location of the courthouse is the lynchpin around which downtown Spencer was originally organized and continued to develop throughout its history. As stated, the future Public Square was included in the design of the town from the first survey, and the town's original streets are laid out in a grid surrounding it. West constructed the town's first tavern/inn on present-day Main Street directly opposite the square in anticipation of the coming courthouse. That central block of Main Street was thus cemented as the prime commercial location, and new businesses vied for the lots surrounding the square as they were constructed. When the first courthouse burned down in 1887 it was replaced by a new one on the same site immediately after. When the second courthouse was razed in 1961 for a modern replacement, the third iteration was again constructed on the same site. The resulting 1965 courthouse not only maintained the previous function and association of the square but was also a remarkable example of the bold, modern design trends of the era. The presence of the Roane County Courthouse and Square have therefore been the defining feature of downtown Spencer since the town's inception and remain so today. Construction of the former City Hall, jail, & firehouse building behind the courthouse and the nearby federal post office further cemented the important governmental/municipal role that the square and downtown Spencer have played in the region.

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### Criterion A: Commerce

This district is locally significant under Criterion A: Commerce as reflected by the development of commercial and industrial activity throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly during the period of significance of 1893-1976. As previously stated, Spencer's role as county seat drew residents from the entire county to the courthouse every day. That, along with the newly completed turnpikes and other well-known roads, made downtown Spencer the obvious spot for commercial enterprises in the new county as well. Essential businesses such as dry goods stores, boarding houses, mills, and tanneries were established even before the county was officially created, but grew in number as the town gained residents and visitors.

Professionals such as doctors and lawyers began opening downtown offices in the 1850s, followed by retail operations like clothiers and shoemakers. Commercial and industrial activity increased dramatically with the completion of the railroad in 1892. With access to large-scale freight importing and exporting, the local timber, agriculture/livestock, and oil/gas industries grew exponentially and became the region's leading industries into the 1920s. Many of these individual companies built or leased offices in downtown Spencer, and a large livestock holding area was constructed next to the depot to feed and water the major amount of livestock being shipped. Market Street became equally desirous for development as Main Street, as goods were unloaded at the depot at the north end of Market and driven up the street to Main for broader dispersal.

With these industries and the train pulling even more traffic to the city from Roane and neighboring counties, demand increased for wagonmakers, farriers, coopers, etc. and service-based businesses like restaurants and hotels. More and more retail operations soon followed to meet the growing consumerism demands of the early twentieth century, and the city saw a wave of drugstores, clothing stores, hardware stores, and grocers filling its downtown streets over the early 1900s. The introduction of the automobile to American society at this time also opened a new retail market, and at least five major dealerships emerged in downtown Spencer by 1930 along with the requisite service stations and garages. This prosperity helped give the city enough momentum to weather the Great Depression and businesses only grew stronger in the post-WWII economic boom that followed. The establishment of modern manufacturing industries in Spencer in the 1960s-70s supported consistent commercial growth through the end of the twentieth century and further cemented the city's role as the region's longstanding primary commercial hub. Throughout these mid-20<sup>th</sup> century years of prosperity, many downtown building owners updated their storefronts with the modern materials and designs of the time in order to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and relevant to consumers. These alterations both exemplify the competitive nature of commerce in a downtown landscape and showcase the evolution of popular commercial building materials/styles, thereby gaining significance in their own right.

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Williams, Terry, Mayor of Spencer. (2024, April 16). Personal interview.

Childress, Amy, building co-owner. (2024, April 17). Personal interview.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property:** 13.27 acres

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Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude: \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 17N	Easting: 469649	Northing: 4295060
2. Zone: 17N	Easting: 469586	Northing: 4294958
3. Zone: 17N	Easting: 469472	Northing: 4295057
4. Zone: 17N	Easting: 469399	Northing: 4294941
5. Zone: 17N	Easting: 469461	Northing: 4294761
6. Zone: 17N	Easting: 469562	Northing: 4294760
7. Zone: 17N	Easting: 469750	Northing: 4294826

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of this district encompass the buildings on the streets surrounding the central Public Square, including: Main Street from Black Walnut Avenue to the west edge of the Wood Theater building at the corner of Main and Wood Streets; Court Street from Main Street to Market Street; Church Street from Beauty Street to Heritage Avenue; Beauty Street from Church Street to Market Street; Market Street from Beauty Street to the edge of the

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Spring Creek bridge; and Heritage Park between Heritage Avenue and Spring Creek. It also includes the lot and buildings within and adjacent to the Municipal Parking Plaza between Main and Market Streets and Tanner's Run. These boundaries are illustrated in the attached map (Figure #3).

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries were selected because they encompass the primary commercial streets originally established around the Roane County Courthouse and nearby railroad depot, as well as the Urban Renewal Area developed as part of the city's 1966 Centennial-Pioneer Urban Renewal Project. They comprise the core of the historic shopping and business area, and retain most of the town's oldest structures associated with this commercial function.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kelsey Hartmann

organization: Hartmann Preservation Services LLC

street & number: 626 Yokum Street

city or town: Elkins state: WV zip code: 26241

e-mail: kelsey@hartmannpreservationservices.com

telephone: 540-622-7254

date: April 18, 2025

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Figure Log:**

**Figure 1: USGS Topographical Location Map**

**Figure 2: Topo Map with Boundary UTM Points**

**Figure 3: Site Key with Resource Index and Boundary Line**

**Figure 4: Photo Key**

**Figure 5: 1858 Original Town Lots Map**

**Figure 6: 1905 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map**

**Figure 7: 1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map**

**Figure 8: 1918 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map**

**Figure 9: 1966 Centennial-Pioneer Urban Renewal Project Area Map**

**Figure 10: Historic photograph of Main Street looking east, c1899.**

**Figure 11: Historic photograph of Main Street looking west, c1905.**

**Figure 12: Historic photograph of Market Street looking north, c1920.**

**Figure 13: Historic postcard of Main Street looking west, c1920.**

**Figure 14: Historic photograph of Main Street looking south, 1969.**

**Figure 15: Historic photograph of Main Street looking west, 1970.**

**Figure 16: Historic photograph of Roane County Hospital (now Taylor-Vandale Funeral Home) looking north, c1904.**

**Figure 17: Historic photograph of southern Market Street looking south, c1925.**

**Figure 18: Historic photograph of Heck-Boyce Service Station and Standard Furniture Company looking southeast, c1940.**

**Figure 19: Historic photograph of Heck-Boyce Service Garage looking southwest, c1955.**

**Figure 20: Historic photograph of Wood Theater facing west, 1954.**

**Figure 21: Historic photograph of Court Street facing east, 1958.**

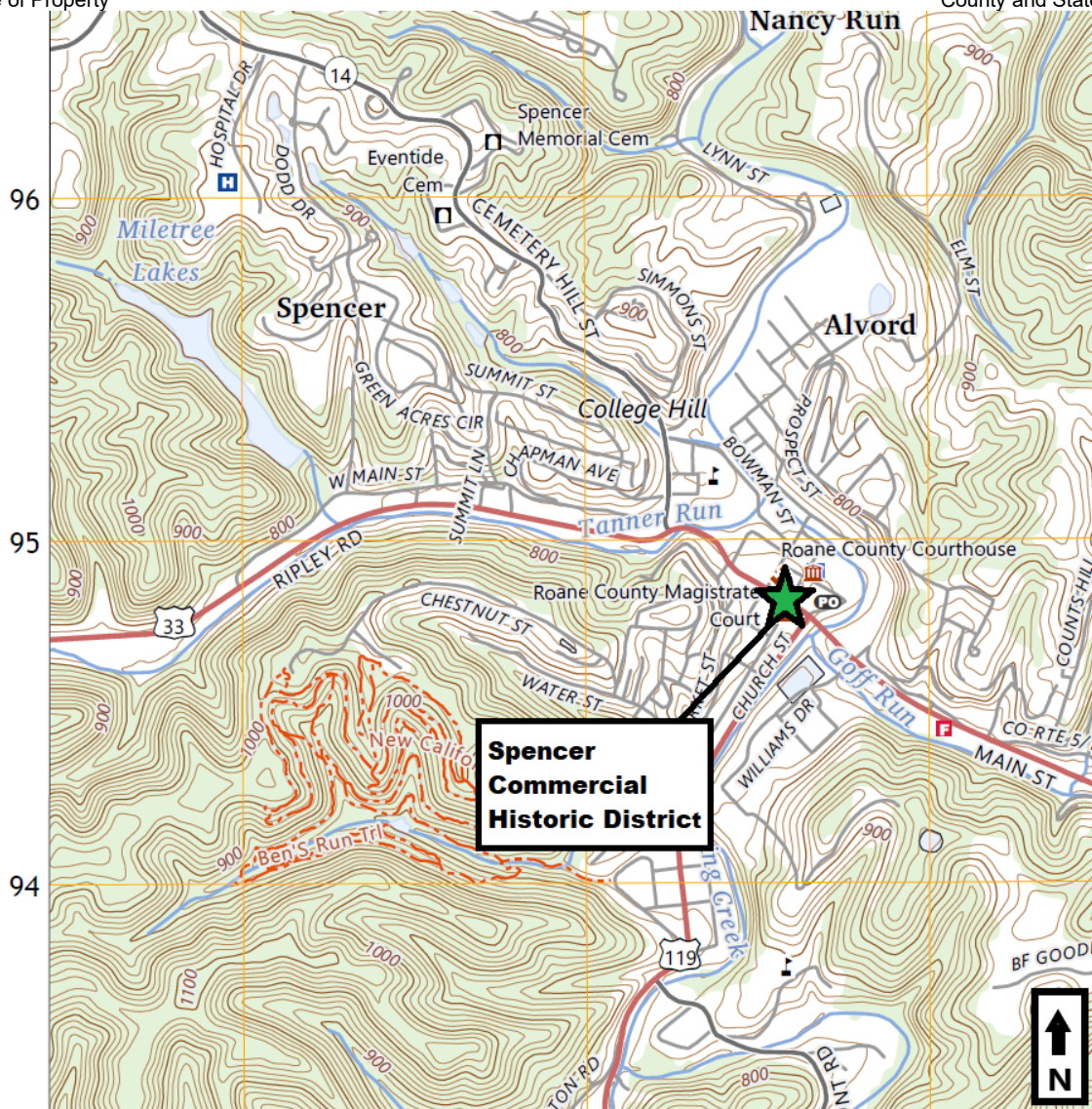
**Figure 22: Historic photograph of Market Street facing north, 1970.**

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**Figure 1: USGS Topographical Location Map**

**Spencer Quadrangle 2023**

**West Virginia - Roane County**

**7.5 Minute Series Topographic Map**

**United States Geological Survey**

**UTM Zone 17N, 469528 mE, 4294663 mN**



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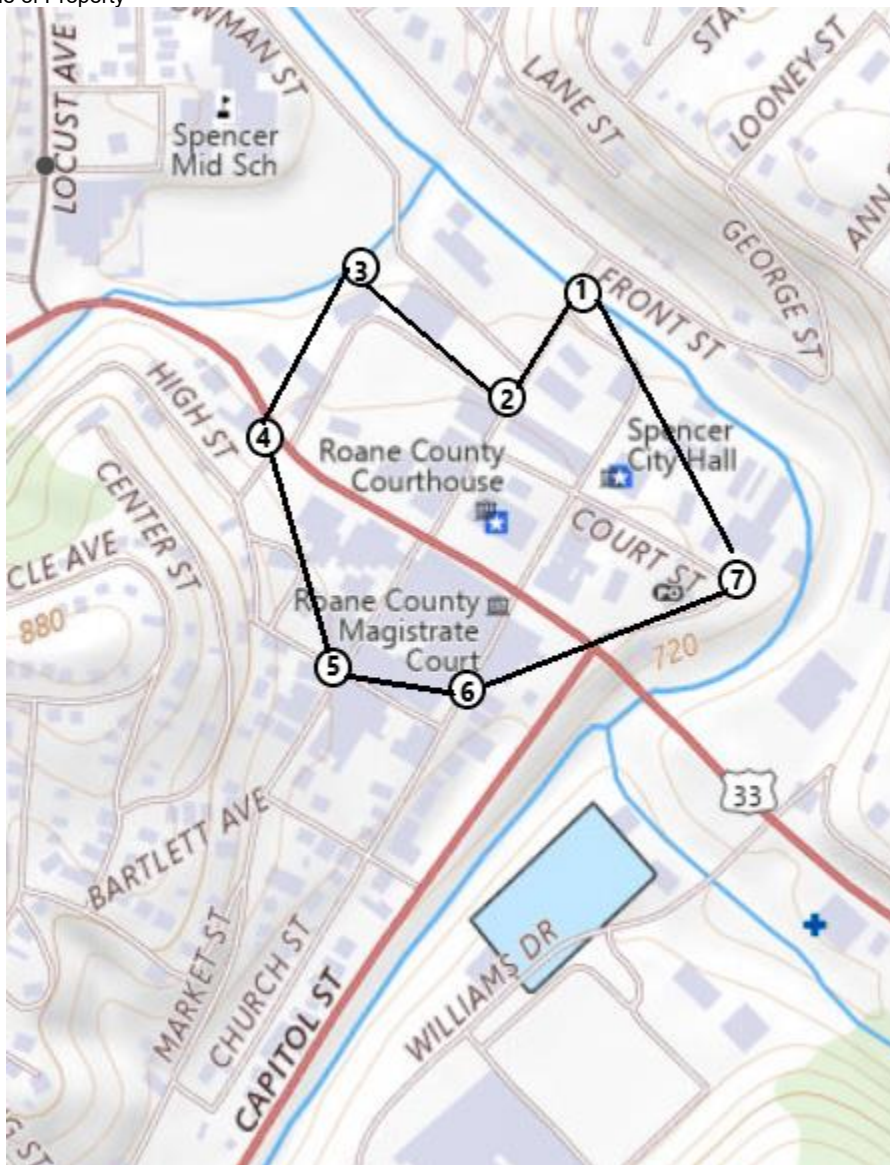


Figure 2: Topo Map with Boundary UTM Points



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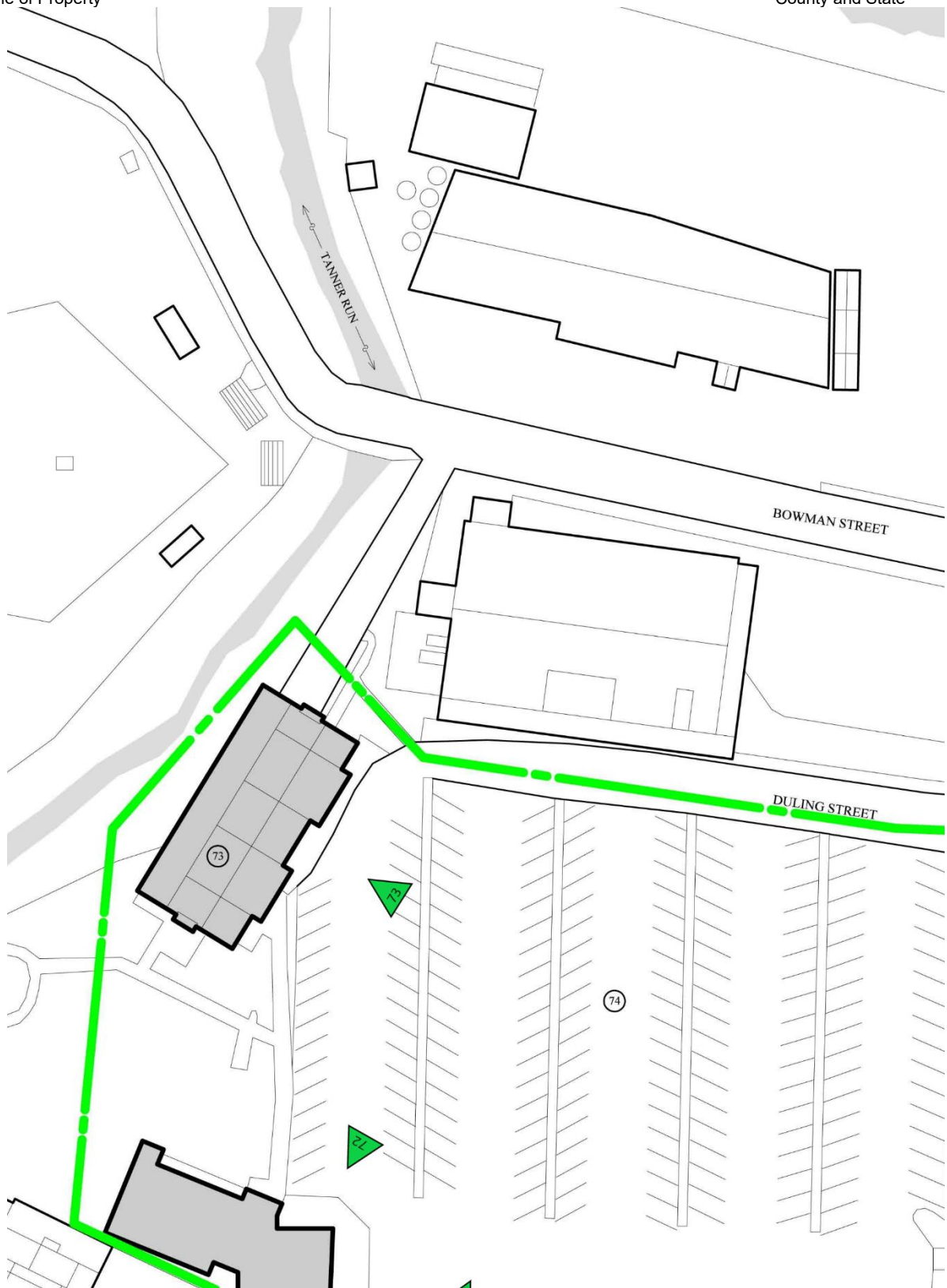


Figure 4 – Sheet 1 of 6: Photo Key



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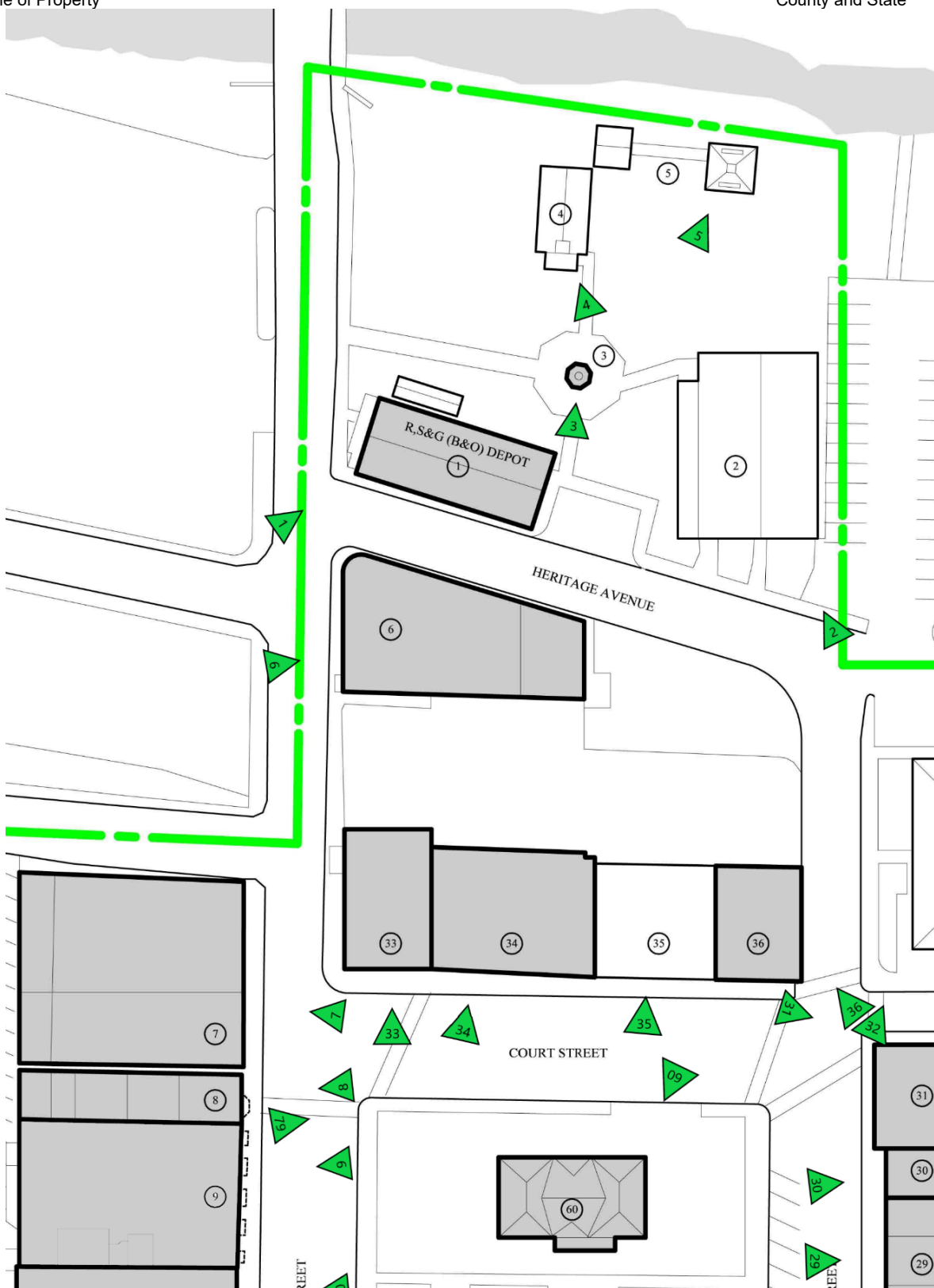


Figure 4 – Sheet 2 of 6: Photo Key

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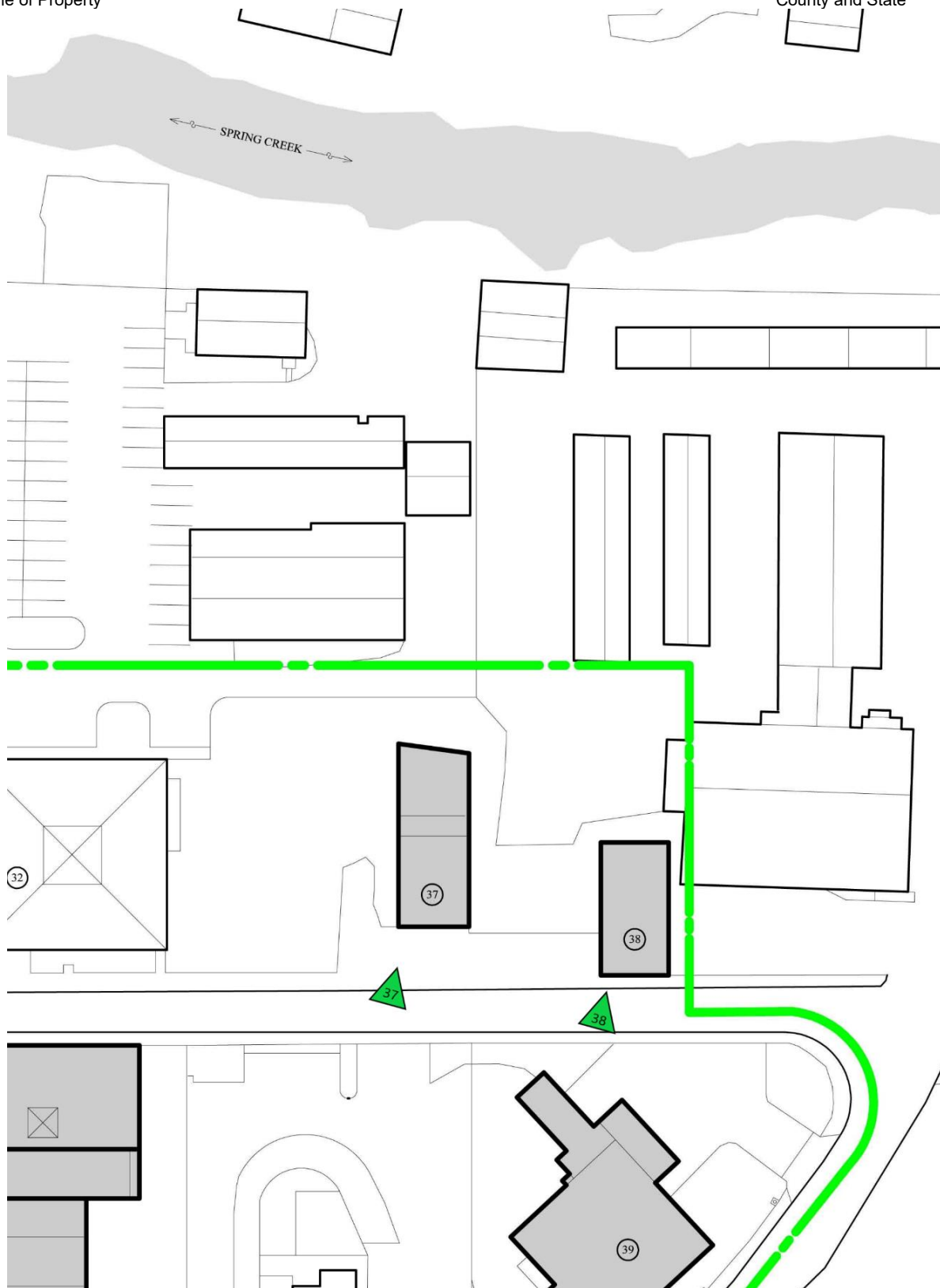


Figure 4 – Sheet 3 of 6: Photo Key

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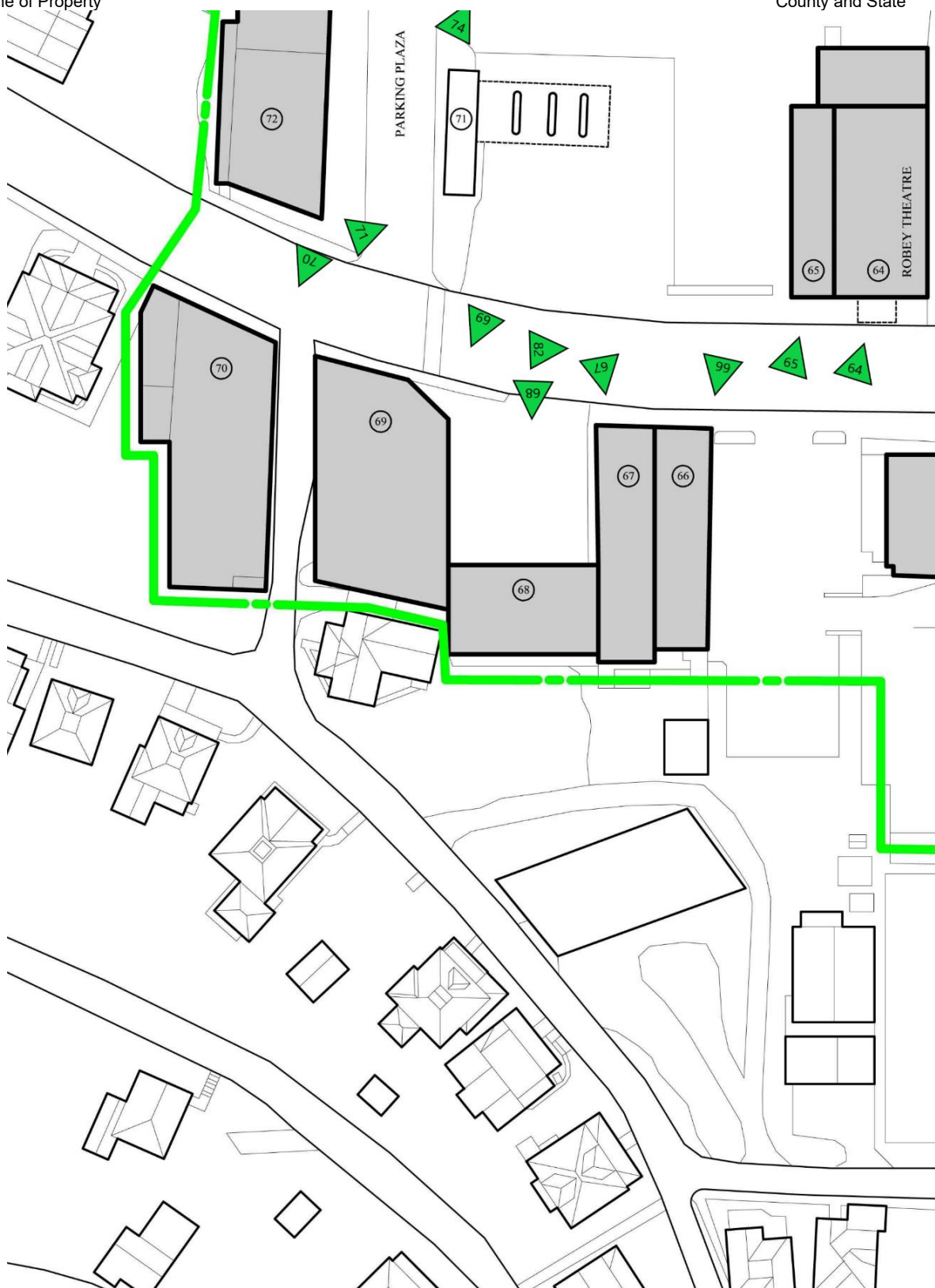


Figure 4 – Sheet 4 of 6: Photo Key

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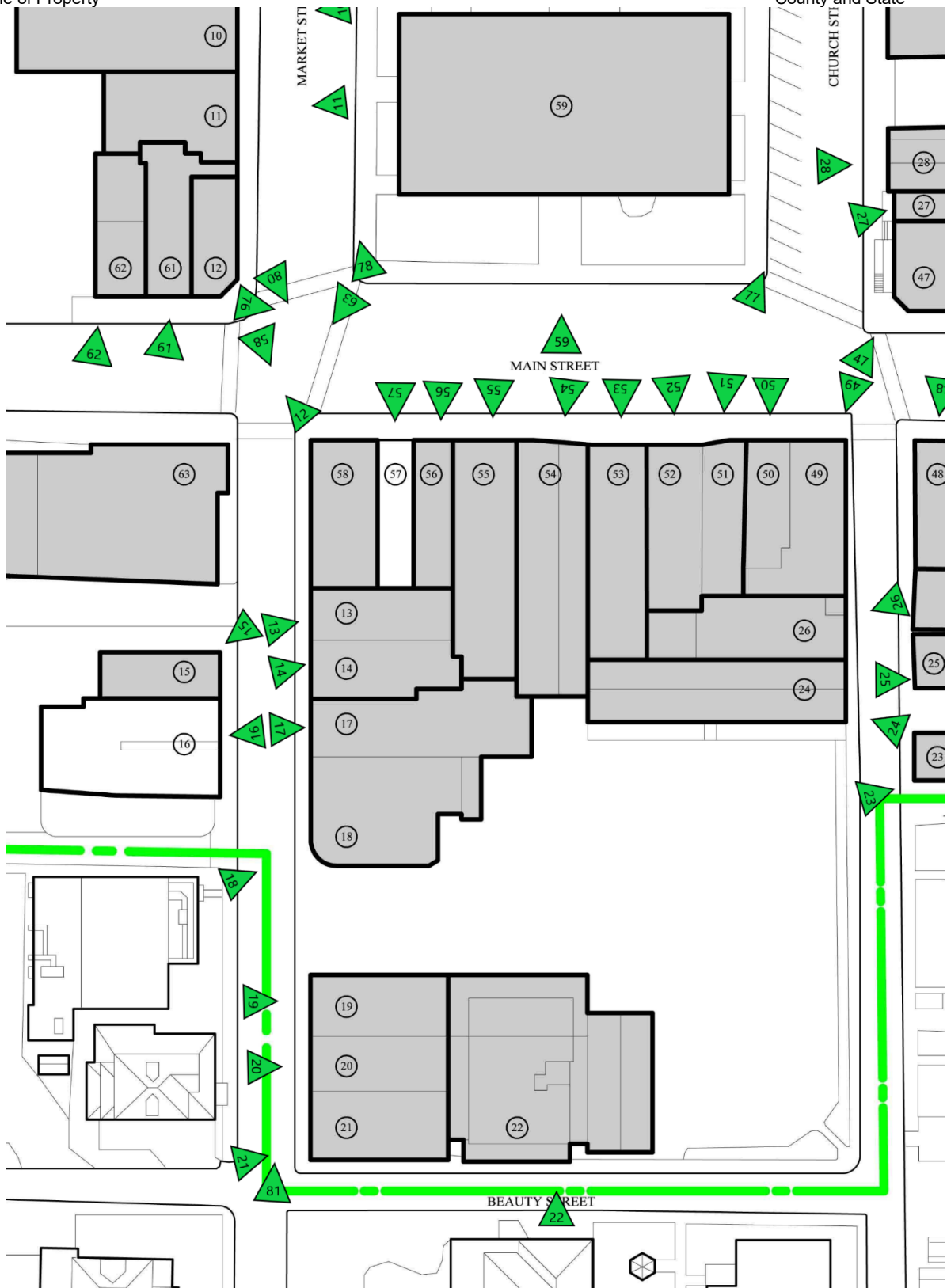


Figure 4 – Sheet 5 of 6: Photo Key

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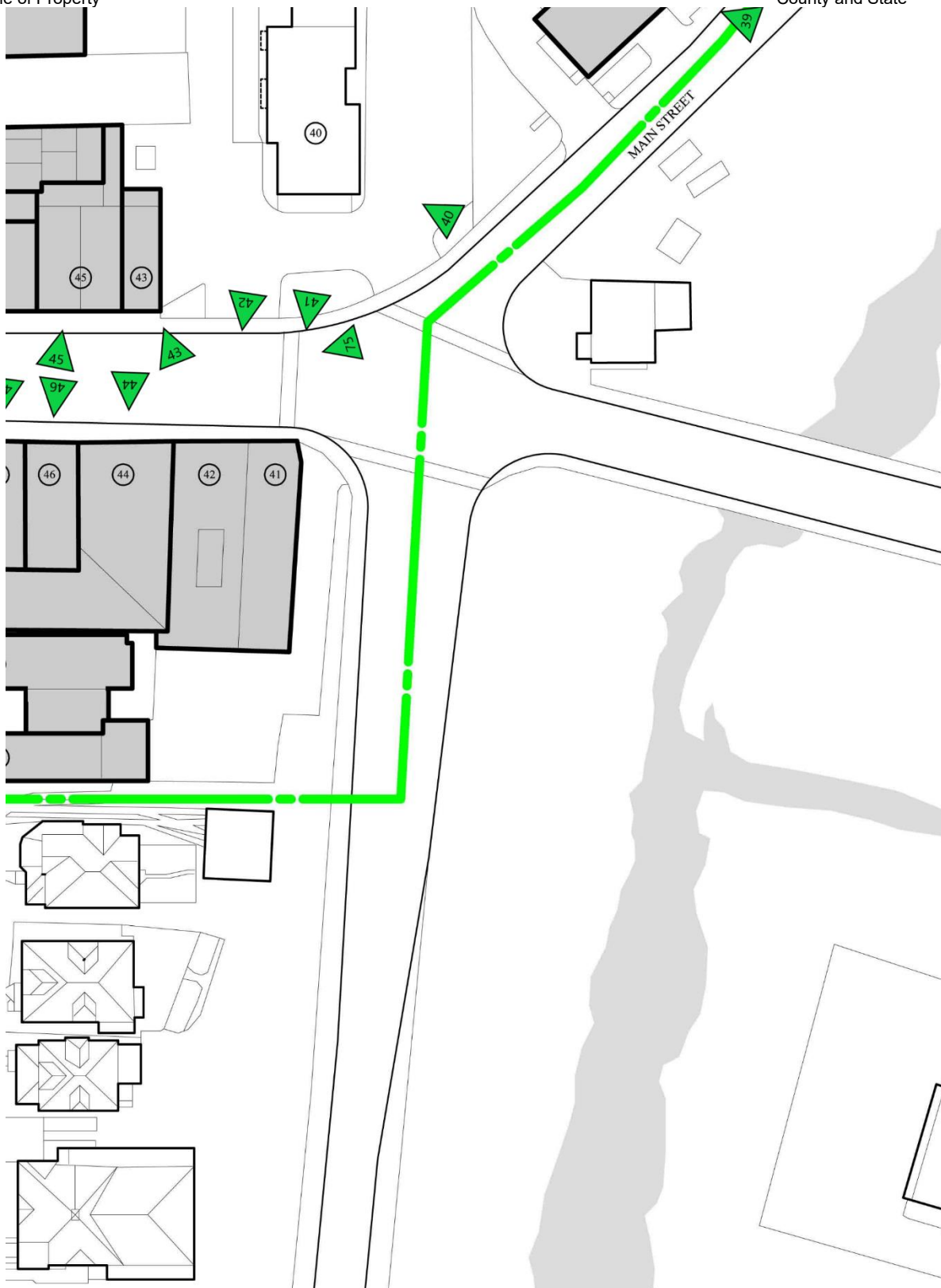


Figure 4 – Sheet 6 of 6: Photo Key



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Figure 5: 1858 Original Town Lots Map





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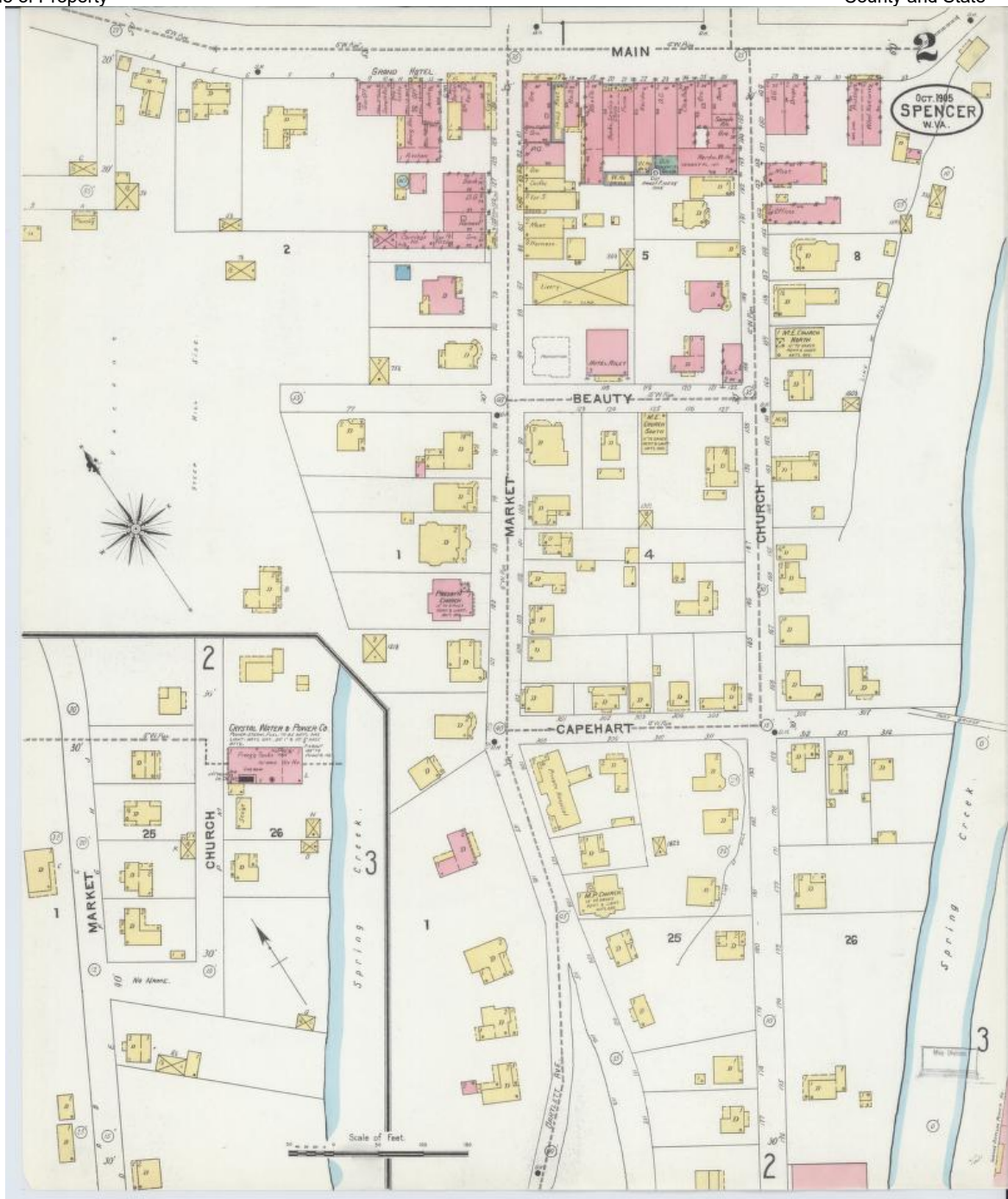


Figure 6 – Sheet 2 of 2: 1905 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map



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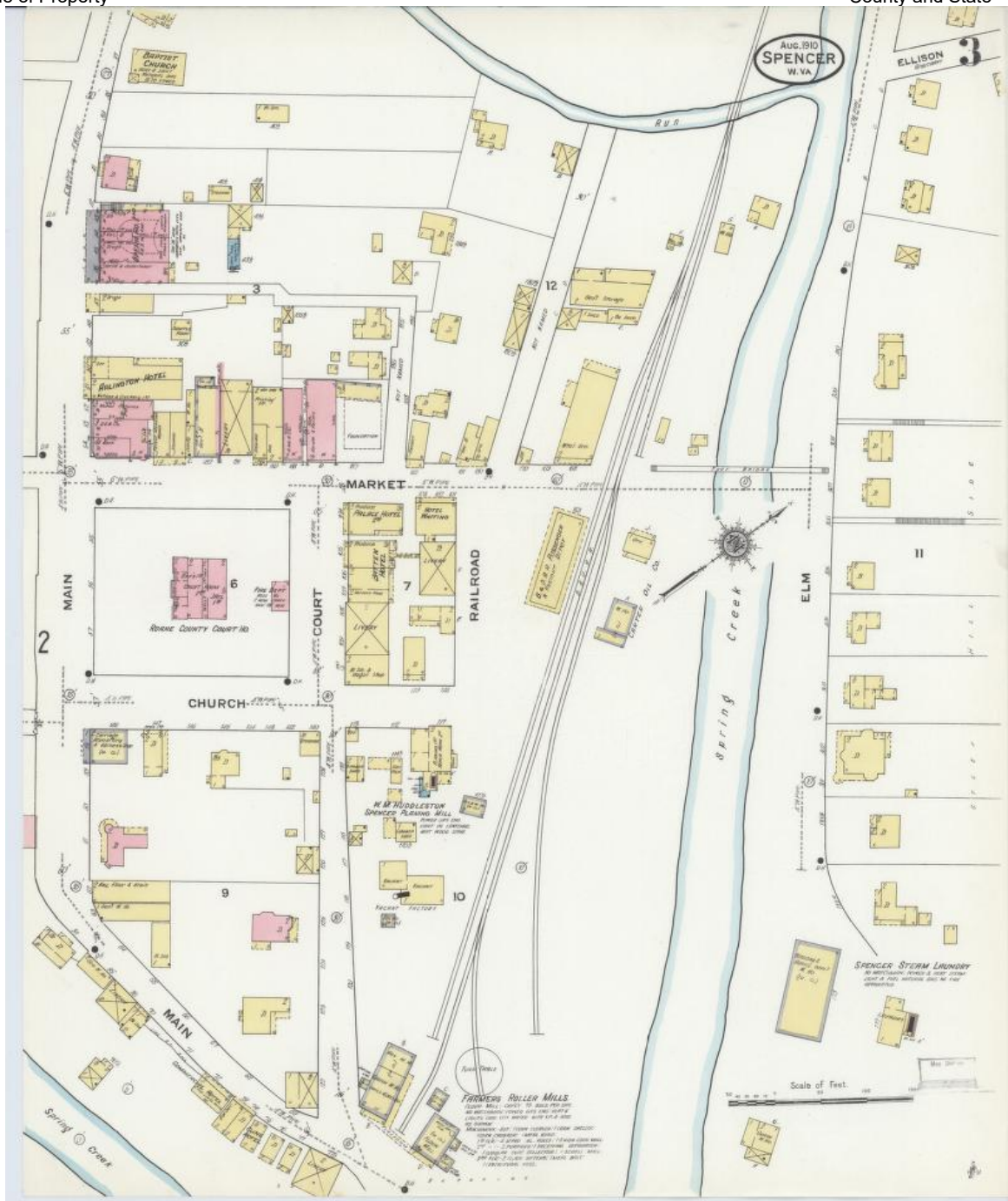


Figure 7 – Sheet 1 of 2: 1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map

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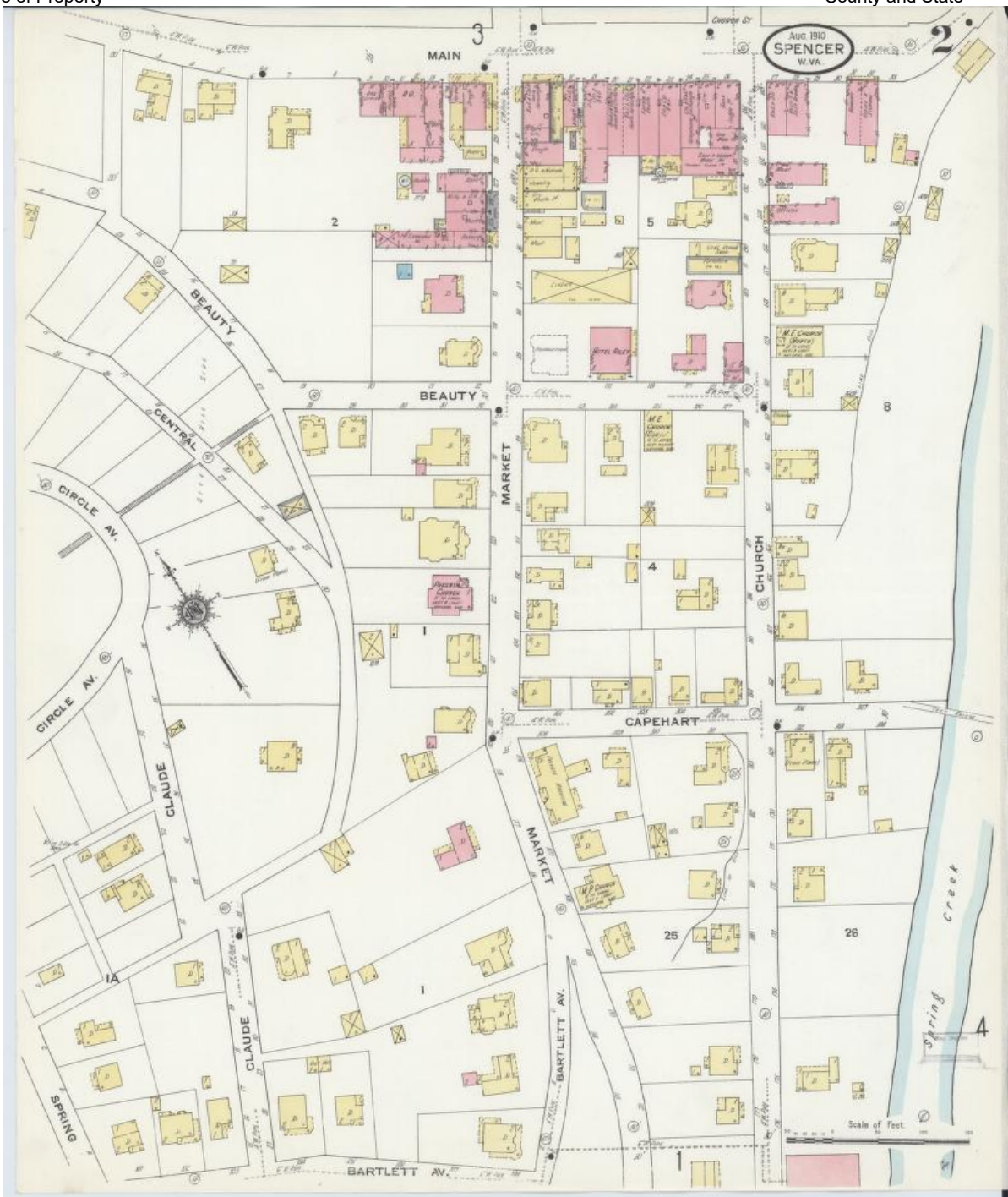


Figure 7 – Sheet 2 of 2: 1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map



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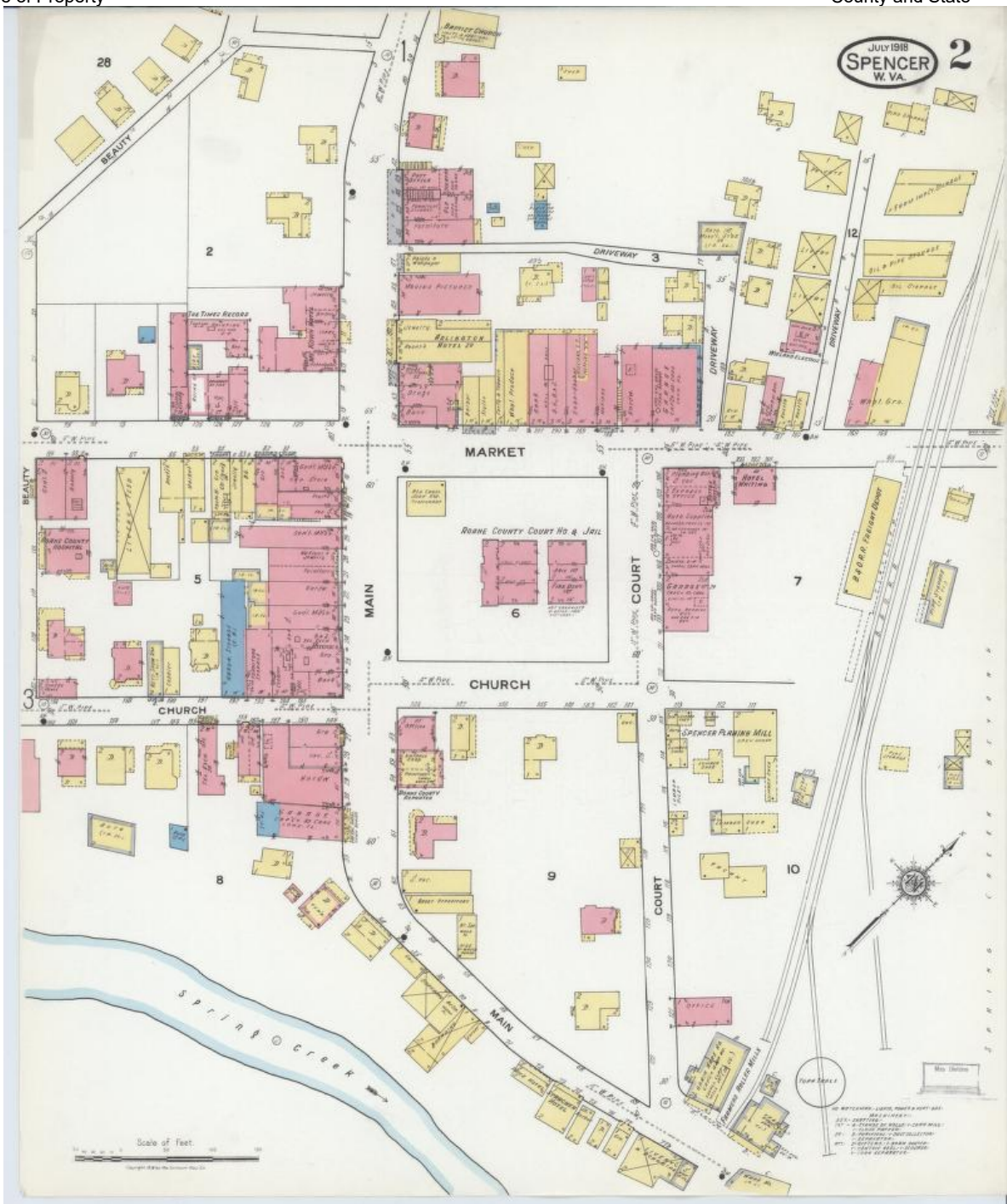


Figure 8: 1918 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map

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Figure 9: 1966 Centennial-Pioneer Urban Renewal Project Plan Map

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**Figure 10: Historic photograph of Main Street looking east, c1899.**



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Figure 11: Historic photograph of Main Street looking west, c1905.

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**Figure 12: Historic photograph of Market Street looking north, c1920.**



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Figure 13: Historic postcard of Main Street looking west, c1920.

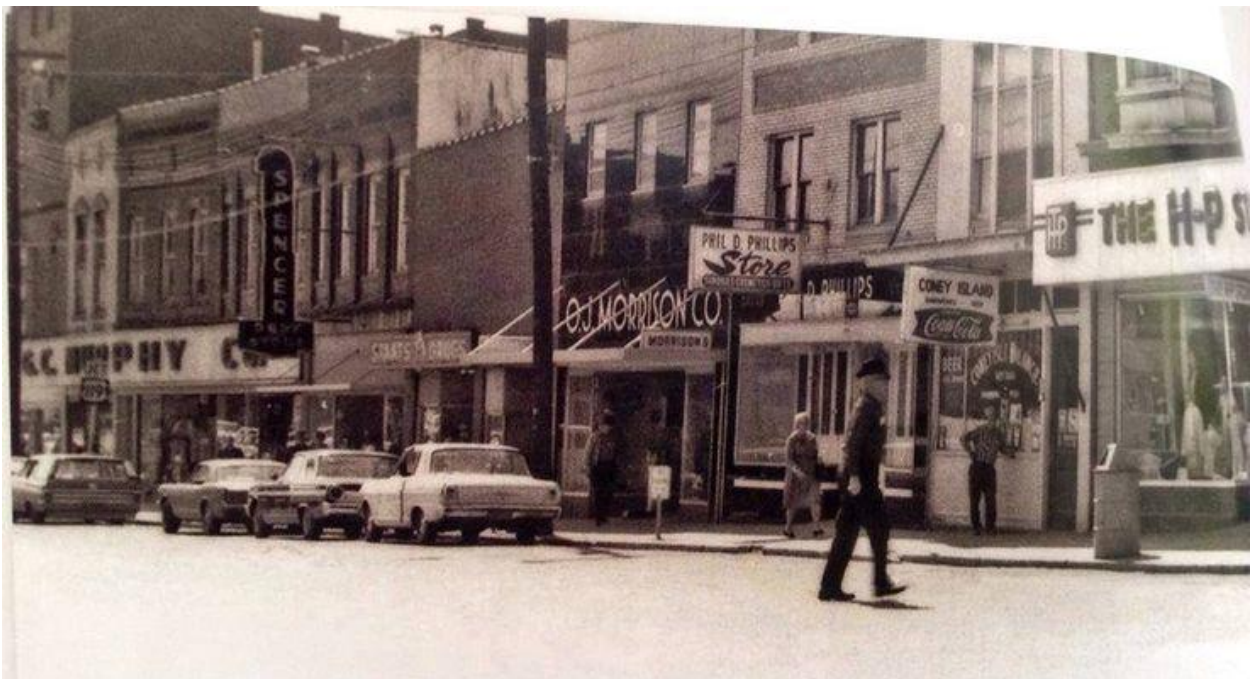


Figure 14: Historic photograph of Main Street looking south, 1969.



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Figure 15: Historic photograph of Main Street looking west, 1970.

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**Figure 16: Historic photograph of Roane County Hospital (now Taylor-Vandale Funeral Home) looking north, c1904.**



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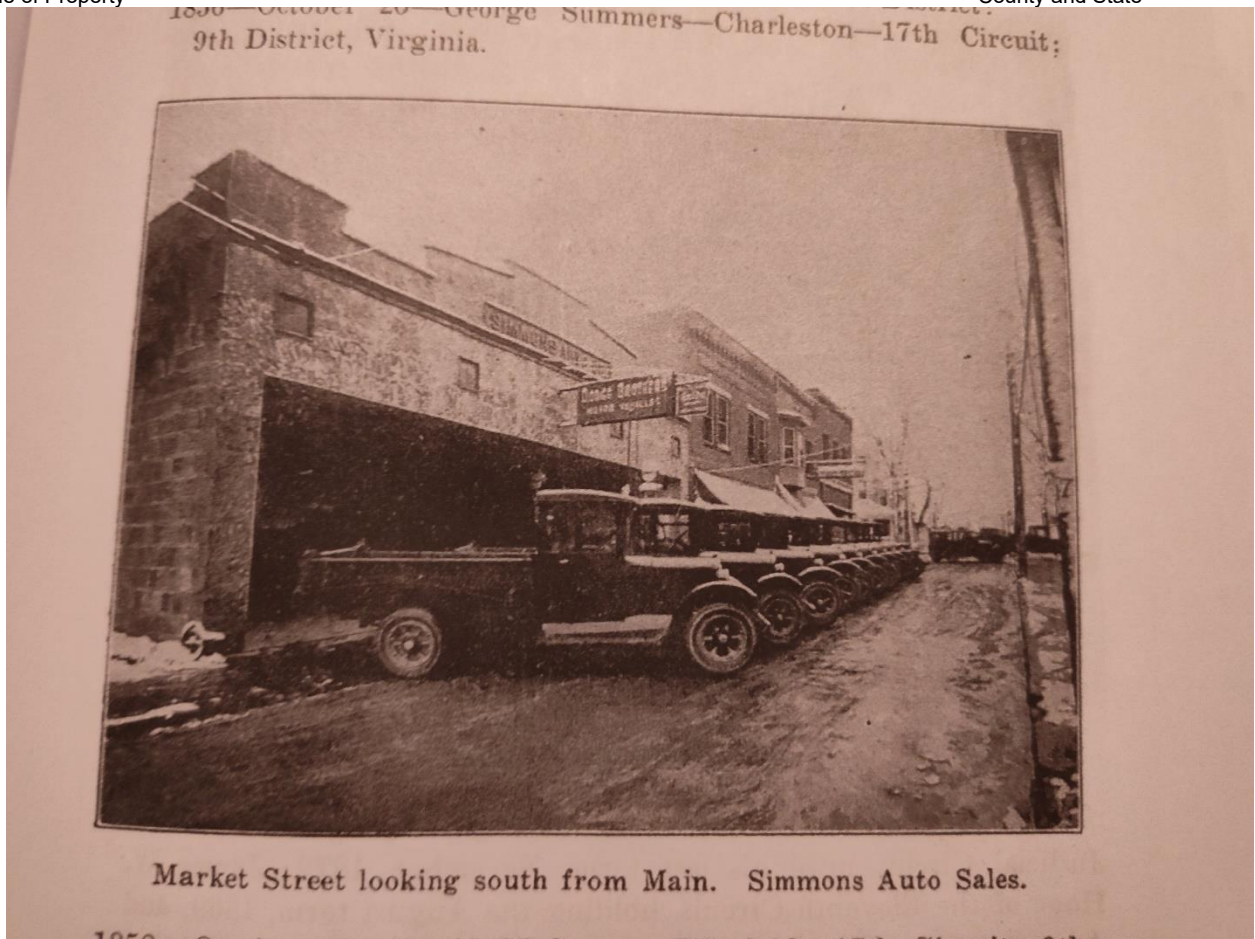


Figure 17: Historic photograph of southern Market Street looking south, c1925.

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**Figure 18: Historic photograph of Heck-Boyce Service Station and Standard Furniture Company looking southeast, c1940.**

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**Figure 19: Historic photograph of Heck-Boyce Service Garage looking southwest, c1955.**



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**Figure 20: Historic photograph of Wood Theater facing west, 1954.**



**Figure 21: Historic photograph of Court Street facing east, 1958.**

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**Figure 22: Historic photograph of Market Street facing north, 1970.**

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Spencer Commercial Historic District

City or Vicinity: Spencer

County: Roane

State: WV

Photographer: Kelsey Hartmann

Date Photographed: 4-16-25

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

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Photograph 1 of 82. Ravenswood, Spencer, and Glenville Railroad Depot/Heritage Park Museum at 1893 Heritage Avenue, facing northeast.

Photograph 2 of 82. Heritage Park Community Building at 1893 Heritage Avenue, facing north.

Photograph 3 of 82. Memorial Fountain at 1893 Heritage Avenue, facing northeast.

Photograph 4 of 82. Newburn Schoolhouse at 1893 Heritage Avenue, facing north.

Photograph 5 of 82. Wallback Oil Derrick at 1893 Heritage Avenue, facing north.

Photograph 6 of 82. Casto & Harris Inc. Building at 109 Market St, facing east.

Photograph 7 of 82. F.F. McIntosh Hardware Store at 204 Market St, facing northwest.

Photograph 8 of 82. Simmons Building at 210 Market St, facing west.

Photograph 9 of 82. First Neighborhood Bank at 216 Market St, facing west.

Photograph 10 of 82. Hardman Supply Co. Building at 218 Market St, facing west.

Photograph 11 of 82. Hardman Building at 224 Market St, facing west.

Photograph 12 of 82. Traders Trust & Banking Co. Building at 226-228 Market St, facing northwest.

Photograph 13 of 82. Keplinger Building at 311 Market St, facing east.

Photograph 14 of 82. Gough Building at 315 Market St, facing east.

Photograph 15 of 82. T.E. Vineyard Building/Bank of Spencer at 314 Market St, facing southwest.

Photograph 16 of 82. 316-318 Market St, facing west.

Photograph 17 of 82. Morrison Building at 319 Market St, facing east.

Photograph 18 of 82. Simmons Auto Co. Building at 321 Market St, facing northeast.

Photograph 19 of 82. Newlon Building at 335 Market St, facing east.



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Photograph 20 of 82. Shatto Building at 339 Market St, facing east.

Photograph 21 of 82. 343-345 Market St, facing northeast.

Photograph 22 of 82. Taylor-Vandale Funeral Home at 206 Beauty St, facing northwest

Photograph 23 of 82. O.J. Chambers Building at 321 Church St, facing northeast.

Photograph 24 of 82. Garage/G.C. Murphy Co. Store at 11 Church St, facing west.

Photograph 25 of 82. Huddleston Building at 315 Church St, facing east.

Photograph 26 of 82. G.C. Murphy Co. Store Building at 7-9 Church St, facing west.

Photograph 27 of 82. 217 Church St, facing east.

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Photograph 32 of 82. City of Spencer Municipal Building/DMV at 200 Church St, facing northeast.

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Photograph 34 of 82. P.C. Adams Building at 210-214 Court St, facing north.

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Photograph 38 of 82. United Fuel Gas Co. Office Building at 102 Court St, facing north.

Photograph 39 of 82. U.S. Post Office at 110 Main St, facing northwest.

Photograph 40 of 82. Wendy's Restaurant at 134 Main St, facing northwest.

Photograph 41 of 82. 139 Main St, facing southwest.

Photograph 42 of 82. Dayton Rhodes Auto Co. Building at 141 Main St, facing south.

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Photograph 43 of 82. 142 Main St, facing north.

Photograph 44 of 82. Chandler Building at 145 Main St, facing south.

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Photograph 65 of 82. Oddfellows Lodge at 320 Main St, facing northeast.

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Photograph 68 of 82. A.S. Heck Oil Co. Office/Heck-Boyce Service Station at 331 Main St, facing south.

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Photograph 73 of 82. Roane County Library at 110 Parking Plaza, facing northwest.

Photograph 74 of 82. Centennial-Urban Parking Plaza, facing north.

Photograph 75 of 82. Main Street, looking west.

Photograph 76 of 82. Main Street, looking east.

Photograph 77 of 82. Church Street, looking northeast.

Photograph 78 of 82. Market Street, looking northwest.

Photograph 79 of 82. Court Street, looking northeast.

Photograph 80 of 82. Intersection of Main and Market Streets, looking southeast.

Photograph 81 of 82. Market Street, looking north.

Photograph 82 of 82. Main Street, looking east.

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Photograph 27. 217 Church St, facing east.



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Photograph 28. J.B. Casto House at 215 Church St, facing east.

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Photograph 47. Riddel Building/Roane County Bank at 148 Main St, facing north.



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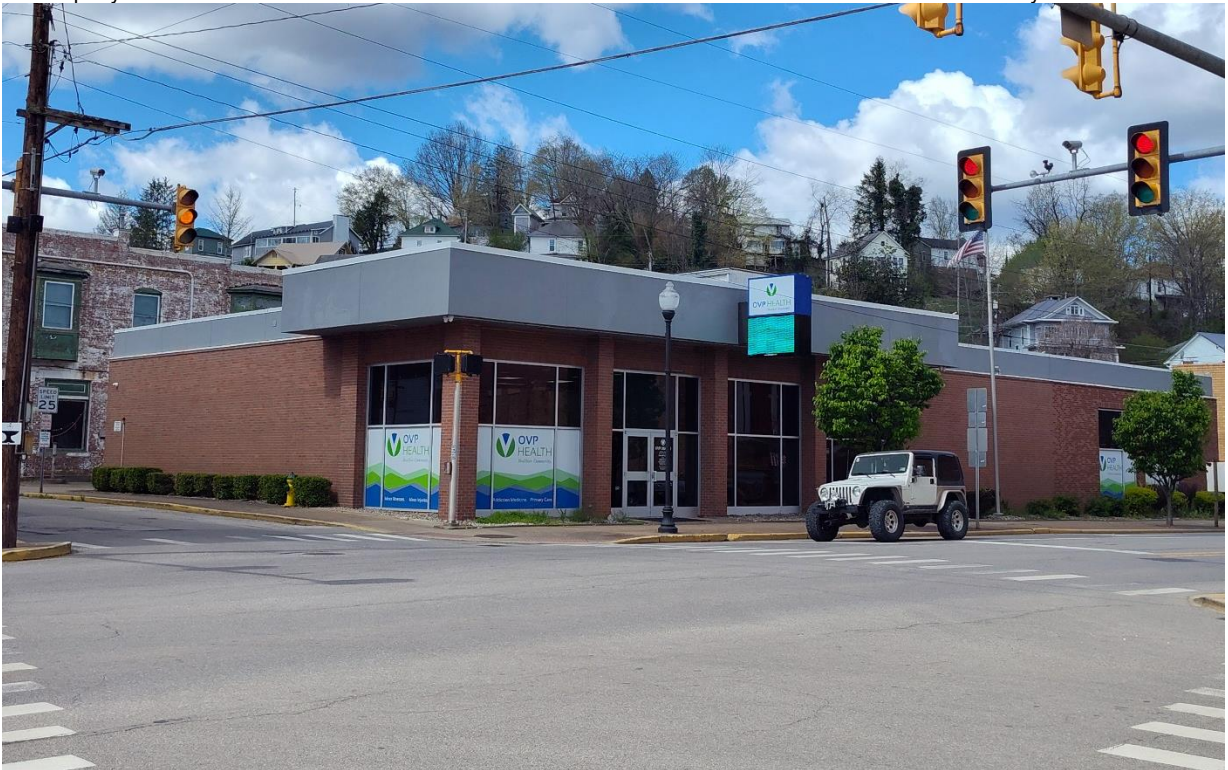
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Photograph 74. Centennial-Urban Parking Plaza, facing north.

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Photograph 75. Main Street, looking west.

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Photograph 76. Main Street, looking east.



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Roane, West Virginia  
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Photograph 77. Church Street, looking northeast.



Spencer Commercial Historic District  
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Roane, West Virginia  
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Photograph 78. Market Street, looking northwest.

Spencer Commercial Historic District  
Name of Property

Roane, West Virginia  
County and State



Photograph 79. Court Street, looking northeast.

Spencer Commercial Historic District  
Name of Property

Roane, West Virginia  
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Photograph 80. Intersection of Main and Market Streets, looking southeast.



Spencer Commercial Historic District  
Name of Property

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Photograph 81. Market Street, looking north.



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Photograph 82. Main Street, looking east.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.