

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Other names/site number: KECL 59

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: : **430 West Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd**

City or town: Covington

State: Kentucky

County: Kenton

Not For Publication: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

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Craig Potts/SHPO** Date
Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
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

Pfetzner, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

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

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

0

buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
Vacant /Not is Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Italianate

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: **Brick exterior, Stone foundation, & Metal roof**

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Mary Pfetzer House (KECL 59) is located on the corner of 12th Street (now Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard) and Main Street in Covington, Kentucky. The house is an intact instance of Italianate style built by German immigrants in the late 1890s and early 1900s. The Pfetzer House displays Victorian-era styling that is ubiquitous throughout the city of Covington because the City experienced a major period of development when those styles were in vogue. The building has a stone foundation, brick walls, original wood windows and a metal roof. The interior is almost completely intact. All the original mantels, doors, hardware, staircases are in excellent and original condition, with the exception of a lot of paint that has been applied. The most apparent exterior change has been the relocation of the door—originally a corner entrance, the opening was moved to the 12th street side. An exterior door on the 12th street side was partially bricked in and turned into a window. The house has been in the same family since 1904 and has been unoccupied since 1988. There is a lot of furniture and belongings in the building. The area proposed for listing is .0630 acres and includes one contributing building.



Mary Pfetzer House, Covington KY

Latitude: 39.076596°

Longitude: -84.516675°

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

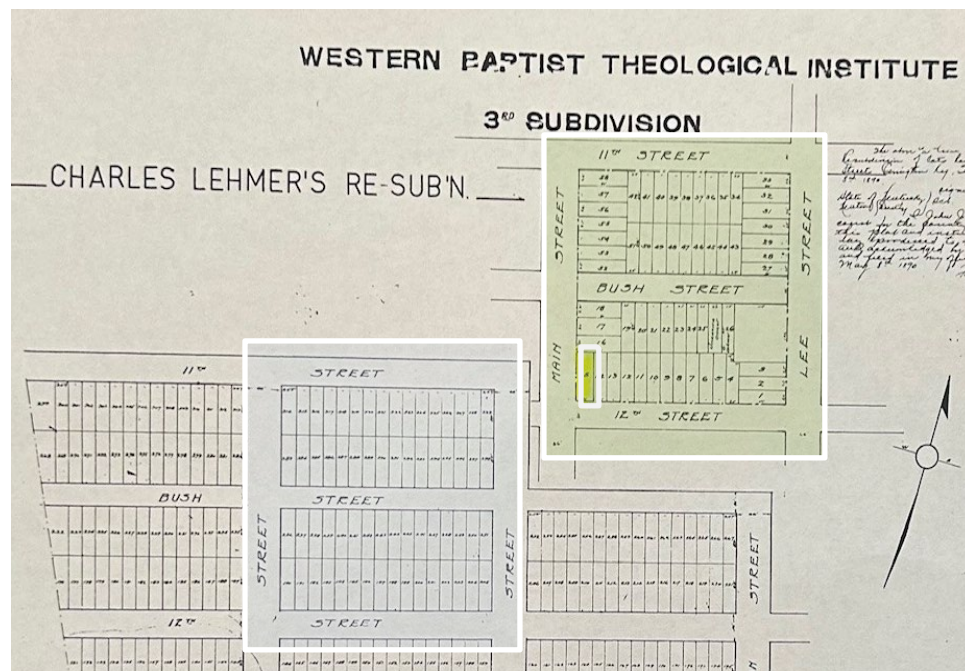
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

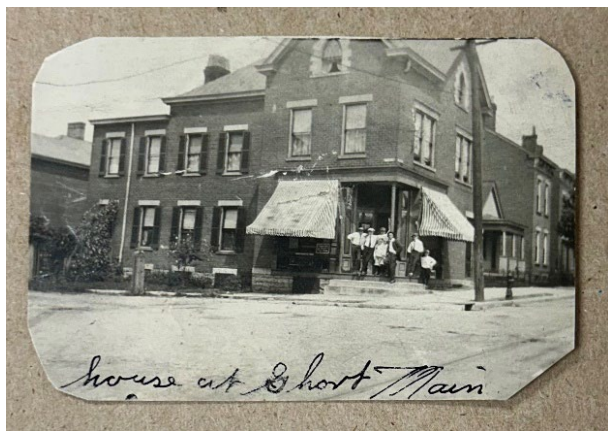
General Description of Site

The lot was purchased in 1904. It was Lot 15 from the Western Baptist Theological Institute as part of the 3rd re-subdivision and with the developer Charles Lehmers. The lot is 0.063 acres. The property is 89' x 31'. The elevation of the gravel parking lot is 519.30' above sea level. The house was complete by 1909 as indicated by its presence on the 1909 Sanborn Map



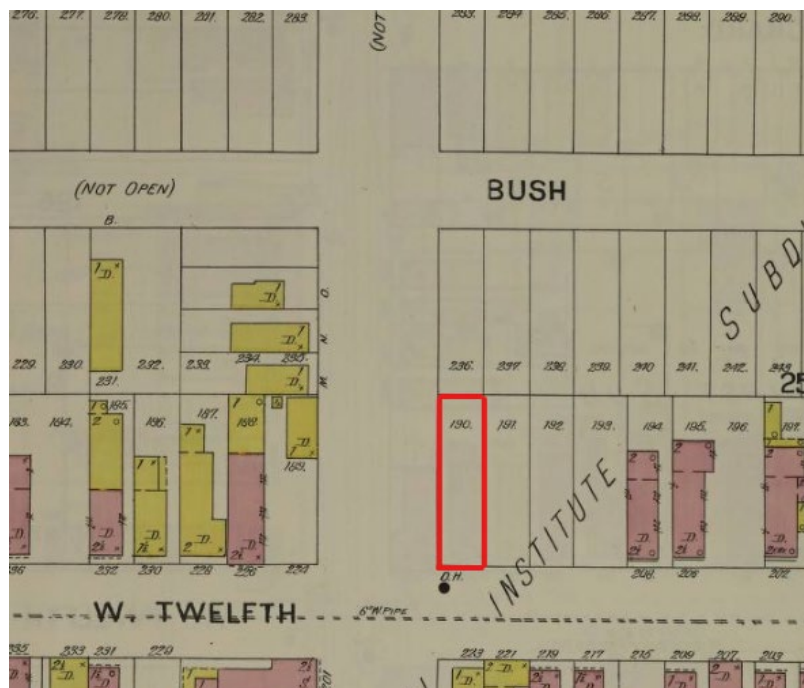
Re-subdivision Plan 1890

The development of the site went through a significant design change between the second and 3rd subdivision plat. Originally none of the main facades of the proposed houses faced on Main Street (see blue highlighted Plat). The 3rd and final plat that the neighborhood changed the ordination of all the lots on Main Street except the Pfetzer House. This positioned the Pfetzer house with the only long façade on Main Street in Covington. This design change highlights the house in a prominent way.



Kenton County, Kentucky

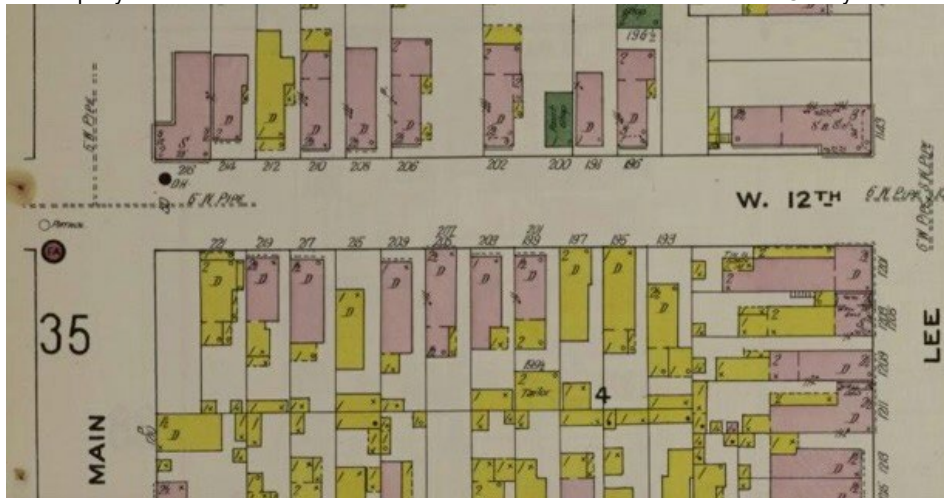
County and State

[illegible]

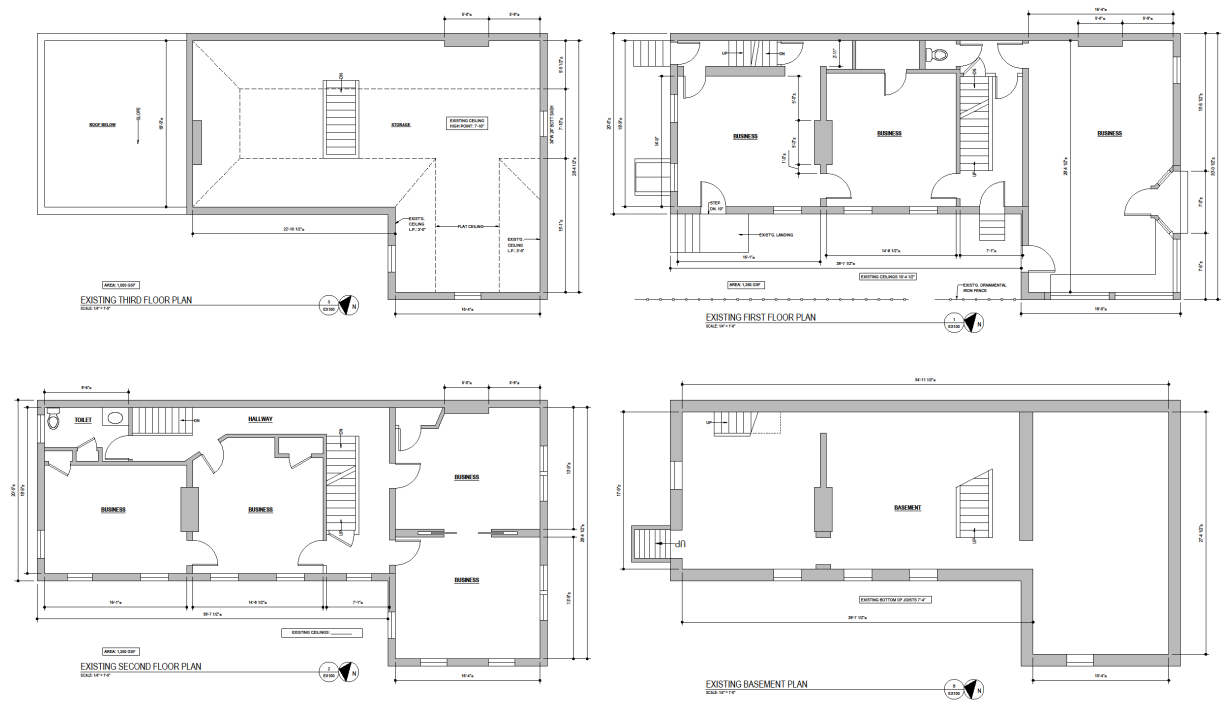
The 1894 Sanborn

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



The 1909 Sanborn



EXISTING
PLANS

EX100

Existing Plans – The floor plates are 1005 sqft +/- for a total existing total of 4020 sqft

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

Exterior Description

South (front) side

The south façade is the primary façade, and it faces Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (formerly 12th Street). The building is 2½ stories and is 30' wide. The foundation is limestone; the main part of the façade is brick with limestone sills and headers. It has a metal standing seam roof and appears to be original. The gutters are all metal box gutter and original. All the windows are original double hung wood windows. The windows are in good shape inside and out. The store front is a combination of metal and wood. The store front was produced by the Covington Architectural Iron Works, George F. Roth Proprietor. For the most part it is in great shape, except for some infill stone that was not installed well and caused some damage at the bottom. A secondary door in the main façade was partially filled and converted to a window.



Front (South Façade) Jan 2025

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



Typical Windows Aug 2025



The Door that was bricked in Aug 2025



Aug 2025
Covington Iron Works



Aug 2025
Façade Column Detail



Aug 2025
Original Front Door

The West and North façade are the most intact. These two façades are the most consistent in proportions, with a very consistent rhythm. They contain all the same brick, stone foundation, and store front as the main façade. The limestone headers and window sills are the same as the main façade. There are four exterior doors on the west and north side of the building. Two the doors are original and two have been replaced at some point. The doors into the basement from the outside are steel as well as the covers over the windows.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

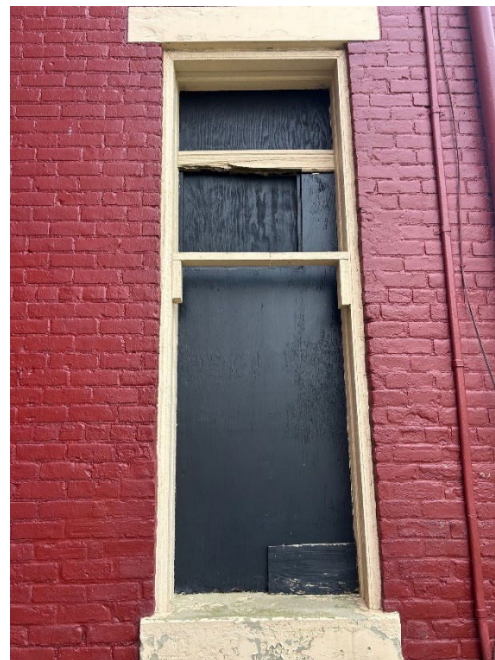
County and State



West and North Façade April 2025



Courtyard Door that was removed



Original Door in to main stairway

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



North Elevation Original Door



Steel/Iron Door to basement



Iron Covers over basement window

East side

The East façade is situated on the property line and is about 18" from the adjacent building. The façade is brick with a stone foundation. There are two windows, one on the second floor and one on the third floor. The third floor window is a small dormer and the third floor is above the two-story neighboring house. The tight space between the houses makes it hard to view all of the façade and the chimney on this façade as well.



East Façade Aug 2025



Second floor window Blocked up Aug 2025

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

Interior Description

The wood doors, windows, trim, mantels, and staircases appear to be original to the building and are in good shape. Most of the interior trim has been painted multiple times over the years. The walls are finished in smooth plaster which is cracked or missing, but the material and rooms are largely intact. In the 1960s, wood paneling was installed in one room, but all the historic trim is in place. The pocket door on the second floor is still operable. The four original mantels are in place; three of them have been painted. The structure shows no signs of foundation settling or major water damage.



Second Floor Front Room with mantel



first floor front west corner

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

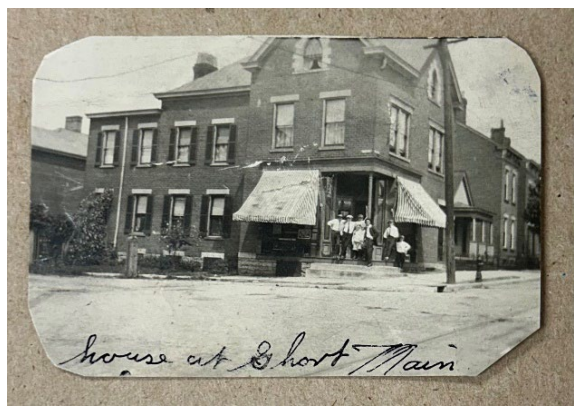
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

The front rooms on the second floor are two of the more intact rooms in the house. The mantel is the only mantel not painted white, and gives us clues to the original finish and what is needed to restore the others. The west front corner has the only original light fixture in the building.

Changes to the Building Since the Period of Significance

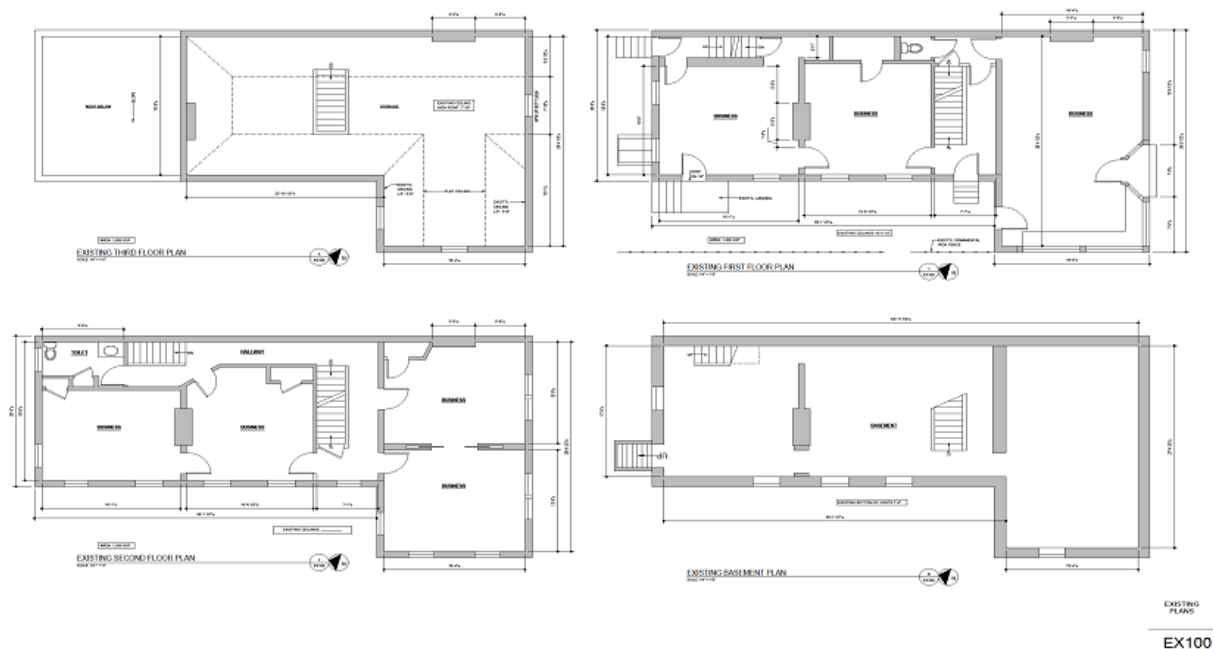


Unknown date



April 2025

The most significant alteration is to the entrance to the commercial space on the corner. As the pictures show above, the corner entrance was changed at some point. Based on the material and styling, we would place that change possibly between 1930s and 1940s. The other significant change as shown in the South façade picture, is the closing of the door, leaving a small window, most likely done at the same time as the corner modification.



EXISTING
FLOOR
EX100

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☒ **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

- ☐ **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

Social History

Period of Significance

ca. 1906-1917

Significant Dates

ca. 1906

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Pfetzer House (KECL 59) meets National Register Criterion A. The significance of the Pfetzer House has been evaluated within the historic context “**German Immigration to Covington and Greater Cincinnati, 1865-1920.**” The property is historically significant for its association with events that have contributed to the broad patterns of American immigrant history. Given the Pfetzer House was owned by a German immigrant and was utilized as a saloon for recently arrived German immigrants, and aided in their integration and assimilation into American society, the property played a significant role in shaping the economy and culture in the greater Cincinnati area, and particularly in Covington Kentucky.

Historic Context: German Immigration to United States, 1865-1920.

Germans were among the earliest to settle in groups in the Northern Kentucky region. German families coming from Pennsylvania and Virginia settled in Boone County at Tanner’s Station in the 1780s. These early settlers were attracted to the rich farmland and the opportunities that westward expansion presented. Three Midwestern cities – St. Louis, Milwaukee and Cincinnati – are known as the “German triangle” due to the heavy concentration of German immigrants and their strong German heritage. Settlers came from different regions of Germany, accounting for some differences in food and culture within their adopted cities.

People wrote home with tales of life in these new cities and towns on both sides of the Ohio River and the richness of the land in the region. From the 1830s to 1860s, Cincinnati drew many thousands to its opportunities. The jobs and opportunity went beyond Cincinnati to the entire region.

Business along the river was prosperous, and the need for cheap labor was great. Savvy individuals sent flyers to Germany to be posted in town halls, village squares, railroad stations – anywhere people gathered – promising steady work.

Pfetzner, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

Numerous people promoted German immigration during nineteenth century. Don Tolzmann's biography of Friedrich Gerstäcker, a popular travel writer and novelist of that era the, called the Cincinnati area "the El Dorado of the German emigrant." Tolzmann himself noted that the Ohio River reminded German immigrants of the Rhine River, leading Tolzmann to call the area the "American Rhineland" (Gee, November 5, 2023).

The success in recruiting cheap labor from Germany did not sit well with all Americans. Tolzmann noted,

There was resentment, initially, because they came in such great numbers. You have to remember that in the early 1800s, the German population was maybe around 5%. And then, by the time of the Civil War, you're getting close to being one-third German born in the area, and with children, that's almost half the population. It had a tremendous impact on a lot of different customs and traditions.

One of the flashpoints was beer on Sunday. In the Anglo-American tradition, Sunday is a day of rest, worship and quiet contemplation – and no alcohol. The Germans referred to this as "Puritan Sunday." The Germans, on the other hand, celebrated "Continental Sunday," a day for festivity, family and fun. The Germans objected to Sunday laws prohibiting the sale and consumption of alcohol and worked to change them whenever they could. To them, beer was an essential part of any meal or social event.

Historic Context: German Immigration to Covington and Greater Cincinnati, 1865-1920.

The city of Covington began to develop when land in northern Kentucky became attractive for its proximity to Cincinnati. Thomas Kennedy built one of the first homes on "the point" in the 1780s, a piece of land south of the Ohio River and west of the Licking River. Kennedy started a ferry service which crossed the Ohio River to Cincinnati. Initially, the settlement around him was called Kennedy's Ferry. Kennedy sold 150 acres in 1815 to a group of investors who platted the land and sold lots at public auction. The town was named for General Leonard Covington who was killed in the War of 1812.

By 1830, Cincinnati was one of the nation's fastest growing cities and Covington benefited. A steam ferry service was initiated in 1833 to connect the two cities. As a result, major industries such as Covington Iron Works and the McNickle Mill were started. By the time Covington was incorporated as a city in 1834, most of the original city lots had been purchased. In 1841, the City of Covington began to annex land to the south, up to the Licking River. These annexations became the Helentown and Emery-Price neighborhoods.

Thousands of German immigrants came to the United States and settled in the Cincinnati and Covington area during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Germans sought escape from their homelands due to social and economic hardships, including poverty, famine, political unrest and in pursuit of religious freedom and economic opportunity. Cincinnati was a city in the mid-19th century with rapid growth and promise of opportunity. German immigrants were enticed by

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Kenton County, Kentucky

Name of Property

County and State

advertisements that promoted the bustling city and towns on both sides of the Ohio River, steady work, rich lands and the comparison of the Ohio River Valley to the Rhine River in Germany.

In 1800 there were only 53 German immigrants living in Cincinnati (6% of the population). From 1840 through the early 1900s, the German population in Cincinnati and Covington accelerated rapidly. In 1840, the German born population in Cincinnati was 3,440 out of 46,282 (7.4%). By 1870, the German born population increased to 49,446 out of 216,239 (22.9%) and by the turn of the century the German descended population in Cincinnati grew to 109,875. The 1910 Census included for the first time information regarding the first language of Americans. At this time, there were 125,466 people in Cincinnati who claimed German as their first language. In 1917, the German speaking population was estimated to be 127,000, or about 35% of the population (Gorbach:9).

Many Germans found employment in Cincinnati and Covington's growing industries, such as brewing, manufacturing and trade. One of the primary industries that attracted German immigrants to Cincinnati and Covington was brewing. Beer brewing was a familiar trade among many Germans, and they brought their expertise to Cincinnati and Covington, contributing to the establishment of numerous breweries in the area. These breweries not only provided employment opportunities for German immigrants but also played a significant role in Cincinnati's and Covington's economy and cultural identity. Breweries named Christian Moerlein, Helmbold Brother Brewing Company and George Wiedemann Brewing Company in Cincinnati, and Bavarian Brewery in Covington, provided the foundation of the cities' brewing heritage. The Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce issued its annual report in 1872 which estimated that more than thirty breweries throughout Cincinnati employed over 1300 people, paying over \$1.2 million in wages. The German Pioneer Society opined that Cincinnati's brewers paid, in 1870, more federal tax on beer than the total monetary value of the city's brewing output fifty years prior (Alberts: 167).

German immigrants in Covington were involved in other industries including manufacturing, trade and commerce. They established businesses ranging from butcher shops and bakeries to furniture stores and cigar factories, contributing to the city's economic growth and diversity. German entrepreneurs played a crucial role in developing Cincinnati and Covington's commercial infrastructure, establishing markets, shops and trading networks that catered not only to the local German community but also to the broader population.

Between 1900 and 1920, German immigrant communities in the United States significantly influenced the architectural landscape of urban neighborhoods, particularly through the construction of mixed-use corner buildings. These structures typically featured commercial spaces on the ground floor with residential apartments above, which continued a European urban design tradition. German immigrants established buildings that combined small shops with living quarters above, catering to both proprietors and tenants. These buildings, often constructed in simple styles, were integral to the working-class neighborhoods, serving both economic and residential purposes. While similar in design and construction to other buildings of the time, it is larger than the others, and it is located between the Bavarian Brewery and Turner's, the two most powerful entities in this community at the time, other than the Catholic church.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

The German immigrants who settled in Cincinnati and Covington also brought with them their cultural traditions, language and customs, enriching the city's social fabric. They formed tight-knit communities centered around churches, social clubs and mutual aid societies and saloons. These bar halls served as vital places where newcomers could adjust to life in America. German language newspapers, schools and theaters flourished in Cincinnati and Covington, helping to preserve and promote German culture among successive generations of immigrants. The Pfetzers were at the heart of all these close knit communities, were involved and in leadership in all of them and hosted the community at their place until Charles' death in 1914 and the opening of Prohibition in 1919.

German immigrants could face frictions that made assimilation difficult. The immigrants faced discrimination in the mid-19th century, as Nativists felt the population dynamics were changing the culture and threatening the social order. This cultural clash was perhaps best depicted in the different approaches to Sunday activities. The American Protestant understandings of what was circumspect clashed with the perspective of the German's observance of a Continental Sunday (Tolzmann:37). The Americans held that the Sabbath should be observed with no business and no social activities, whereas the Germans felt that Sunday afternoons were time for social functions, festivities and picnics, and that businesses, such as beer gardens, should be permitted to open for the entire family to enjoy (Tolzmann:38). One of the most popular of these was the Central Garden on West 9th Street in Covington.

World War I brought some of the latent nativist sympathies to the forefront, resulting in what was described as the anti-German hysteria (Tolzmann: 74). Carl Wittke has described the anti-German crusade as "a violent, concerted, and hysterical effort to eradicate everything of German origin in the United States. Loyal Americans of German extraction became the victims of a *furor Americanus* which can only be described as pathological" (Wittke: 267).

Anti-German rallies were held, German street names in Cincinnati and Covington were changed. (One example in Covington is Pershing Street in the Mainstrasse neighborhood, which was renamed from its original name: Bremen Street.) Churches were advised to eliminate all German services. Petitions were sent to the Governor of Kentucky and Ohio to ban German instruction in all schools including universities. German organizations were pressured to shut down or change their name, like the Covington Turnverein, which changed its name to the Covington Turners Society. Further, many German citizens changed their surnames to avoid discrimination or to prove their patriotism. German press was shut down and German language used in public became targeted for attack and discrimination. (Tolzmann: 75)

The First World War was a tragic period for German-Americans, and one which subjected them to many wrongs and injustices. The War was followed quickly by Prohibition, which not only closed breweries, but also shut down many German social institutions that centered around beer drinking. Breweries and drinking were a significant part of German social life. Prohibition ended the institutions and social clubs that brought German communities together – the places where Germans had kept their language and culture alive all those years (Tolzmann: 76). The National German-American Alliance folded in 1918, leading to the demise of what had been the

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Kenton County, Kentucky

Name of Property

County and State

major German-American organization in American history. Further German immigration basically came to a halt during this time (Tolzmann: 77).

World War II broke out in Europe in 1939 and led to more anti-German sentiment. After WWII, it would take several decades before the German heritage would again become a symbol of wide scale public pride and recognition.

In the 1970s Covington began to make a concerted effort to revitalize the city and restore and preserve its German heritage. What had become the target of hostility during the World Wars came to be recognized as that which gave Covington and Cincinnati its distinctive character and Old World charm (Tolzmann: 78) Mainstrasse Village was formally designated in 1979 and it was created to honor its history and heritage with a real population of German descendants still living in the area, running the town and contributing to its progress.

Despite facing challenges such as language barriers, discrimination and cultural assimilation, German immigrants in Covington persevered and made significant contributions to the city growth and prosperity. Their industriousness, entrepreneurial spirit and cultural heritage left an indelible mark on Cincinnati and Covington, shaping its identity as a vibrant and diverse urban center. Today, the legacy of German immigration is visible through Cincinnati and Covington from its historic architecture and neighborhood names, to its annual festivals (Maifest, Oktoberfest, Goettafest) and culinary traditions. Over 50% of Covington residents have German ancestry and Dr. Tolzmann of the German American Hall of Fame named Covington as one of the three main centers of German heritage in America. Today German influence continues to be celebrated and honored by residents and visitors alike.

Beer halls played an important role in the German immigrant community. They provided a place for the gathering of friends and family and facilitated the exchange of information. After the church, the brew houses were the most important places in the community, serving as the social heart which bound people together as a community. The Pfetzer House stood across the street from the largest brewery in northern Kentucky. While the Pfetzers didn't own the brewery, they had the closest saloon to it. Their relationship with the family that owned the brewery helped tighten connections in business and social networks.

History of the Pfetzer House

Charles and Mary Pfetzer were born in Germany and immigrated to Covington in the 1880s, joining and working with their fellow immigrants. They met and married in Covington in 1886. Charles started working at the Bavarian Brewery, across the street from the property proposed for listing, at age 19, and brewed there until his death at 49. The Covington Directory of 1906 lists Charles as a brewer, and Charles, Jr., as a brewer's apprentice. Charles worked at the Bavarian Brewery, the largest brewery and an important employer in Covington at the time, for 30 years.

During the period in which the house was built, Charles and Mary Pfetzer were prominent members of this community, holding leadership positions in the Turners Society, which was the

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

social and political hub of the community. Charles worked for 30 years at Bavarian Brewery, which was a large and prominent employer, if not the largest, in Covington. The Pfetzer's saloon was also the closest drinking establishment to Turners, which was the most prominent social and political organization in Covington at the height of the German immigrant identity. The anti-German sentiment that manifested during WWI, and the national decision to abolish alcohol sales in 1919, dismantled German immigrant pride. This prominent property embodies the era in which German pride and identity was at its peak and thrived in places such as this.

In 1904, Mary Pfetzer purchased the lot at the corner of 12th and Main Streets, directly across Main Street from the Bavarian Brewery, and built the structure that exists in essentially the original form to this day. This location is a block from the Covington Turners. The first floor of the Pfetzer's home served as a saloon operated by Carl/Charles Pfetzer, Mary's husband. The house's location, size, use, and the Pfetzers' place at work and in the social community enabled the couple to play an important role in the immigrant community. This location made the beer hall the closest drinking place for employees at the brewery. As the house was the largest residence in the neighborhood, and situated on a prominent corner lot in the area, it cemented the Pfetzers' important role in the community by 1904.

Evaluation of the Significance of the Pfetzer House within the context of the German Immigrations to Covington and Greater Cincinnati, 1865-1920

Mary and Charles were very active in the German immigrant community in Covington. Charles was an officer in the Covington Turnverein "Turners", which was a social hub for the community. The Covington Turners built a building on Pike Street in Covington, where the club still operates today. The building is one block north of the Pfetzer house. It was founded as a gymnastics club in the early 19th century and expanded into many other activities. Besides serving as physical education, social, political and cultural organizations for German immigrants, Turners societies in Covington and elsewhere were also active in public education and labor movements. They were leading promoters of gymnastics in the US as a sport and as a school subject. Charles Pfetzer was active in Turners, and served in several leadership positions with the Turner Maennerchor (Men's Choir), a traditional part of German social organizations. He served as vice president, as Assistant Librarian and on the auditing committee.

The Turners originally had only male members, but in the 1890s a ladies' auxiliary was formed. One of the first women elected as a vice president of the Ladies Auxiliary was Mary Pfetzer. Members of the auxiliary were instrumental in the planning for the golden jubilee of the Covington Turners in 1905. At that time, the membership stood at 150.

The Covington Turners was active in the political issues of the day. They opposed slavery before the Civil War, and the membership suffered because of the number of members who served in the Union Army during the war. They established leadership opportunities for women in the 1890s, before this country gave women the right to vote and be full members of political life. This community also opposed Prohibition and the disastrous effects this policy had on their community and its businesses. So if the Pfetzer saloon wasn't hosting Bavarian works as the first stop after work, they were hosting Turner's after meetings and workouts.

Pfetzner, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

Charles and Mary Pfetzer were active in their Lewisburg community. In 1896, Charles and Mary were named King and Queen of the Lewisburg Shooting (Schuetzen) Society. The Lewisburg Shooting Society celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1908. In 1912, Charles Pfetzer served as vice president of the annual event committee.

As a German immigrant woman in Covington, Kentucky in 1904, buying a vacant lot and building a home would have been possible, but Mary faced several legal, financial, and social barriers—even if technically allowed by law. Some of the accomplishment of Mary accomplishing the construction of this house is inferred from a general knowledge of laws and customs at the time.

By 1904, Kentucky had already adopted a version of the **Married Women's Property Act (1846)**, giving women the legal right to own property, enter contracts, and initiate construction. Under the law, she did not need a male guardian or husband to purchase land or build a home. The most significant challenge would be financing. Banks and lending institutions were often hesitant to lend to women, especially unmarried or foreign-born women. If she lacked family wealth or personal savings, securing a mortgage or construction loan would be extremely difficult. Even if she could pay in cash, construction required negotiation with male builders, tradesmen, and city inspectors—who may not take her seriously or offer fair pricing.

Covington had a strong German-American population, particularly in neighborhoods like Mainstrasse, which might provide some ethnic community support. However, being both a woman and a foreigner meant she'd likely face gender and ethnic discrimination. Social norms expected women to marry and rely on their husbands for major decisions. A woman acting independently in real estate and construction could draw suspicion or even ridicule, particularly from the Anglo-American elite or male-dominated institutions.

Mary's acquisition and long-term ownership of this property- she had the building built for her husband as a brew hall, and two of her children owned saloons and four of her great great grandsons own saloons today—spanning over five decades—highlight her significant legacy in the local community.

While specific records about Mary Pfetzer's personal life and the exact nature of her property at 12th and Main are limited, her enduring ownership shows that she developed the lot into a structure typical of her German heritage and the surrounding community, serving both residential and commercial purposes. The building not only demonstrates her personal tenacity and business acumen, but also the broader contributions of German-American women to Covington's architectural and cultural landscape during the early 20th century.

Charles and Mary Pfetzer were leaders of the German immigrant community in Covington during the time this building was built and served their community. Charles worked for 30 years at one of the most prominent local businesses. Both Charles and Mary served as leaders of the most prominent social organization in the community, in part, due to their role as proprietors of a prominently located pub at one hub of the German immigrant community. They erected this

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

building at the height of German immigration, before WWI and Prohibition changed the place of Germans within the American community, a decade and half after Mary built the place.

Evaluation of the Integrity Between the Significance of The Pfetzer House and its Current Physical Condition Today

The significance of the building at the corner of 12th and Main Streets in Covington has many physical dimensions. This integrity discussion explores how the house's physical factors convey its significant historic associations.

The building has an integrity of **location** and **setting**. The building has not moved and remains surrounded by the same densely populated neighborhood in which it arose. This corner, this block, and Covington in general gave safe harbor to people of German origin who were looking for a better life in the latter half of the 19th and first decade of the 20th century. This location helps us see the leadership role the Pfetzers played in the Lewisburg neighborhood in which the property is located.

The building retains integrity of **materials** and **design**. While historic design and construction common to German immigrants has not been explored, so as to observe whether the Pfetzer House retains ethnic construction cues, the house maintains its original materials and design quite fully. It was designed to be seen and attractive. It is a prominent house in that neighborhood by virtue of its size and stands on a very prominent corner. The exterior exhibits its historic identity with very few alterations. Its limestone foundation, brick façade, limestone sills and headers, metal standing seam roof, appear to be original. The gutters are all metal box gutter and original. All the windows are original double hung wood windows. The store front is a combination of metal and wood. The store front was produced by the Covington Architectural Iron Works, George F. Roth Proprietor.

The wood doors, windows, trim, mantels, and staircases appear to be original to the building and in good shape. Most of the interior finishes have been painted multiple times over the years. The walls are finished in smooth plaster which is cracked or missing in some places, but the material and rooms are largely intact. In the 1960s wood paneling was installed in one room, but all the historic trim is in place. The pocket doors on the second floor are still in good shape. The four original mantels are in place; three of them have been painted. The structure appears very sound, with no signs of foundation settling or major water damage to the building. The building supports our associations with the Pfetzers and with German immigration because its form and materials are the fabric and design that has given the building its identity for more than a century.

Because the building has integrity of location, setting, materials, and design, the building can be said to have integrity of **association**. The property's history of ownership back to Mary Pfetzer helps reinforce our associations. The property has never been sold outside of the family, and has been passed down for 5 generations in direct parent-to-child transfers. All five generations

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

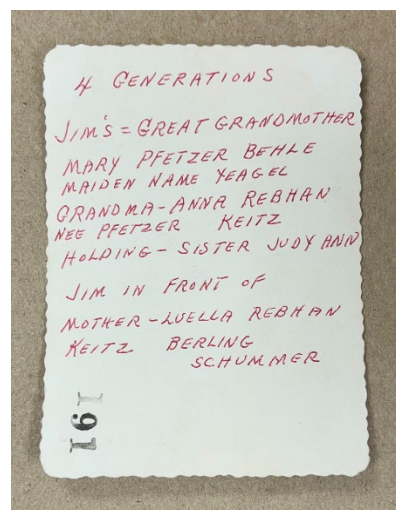
County and State

have remained in the hospitality business, with the business and customer service skills having been passed down for over 125 years, from generation to generation. Subsequent generations of Pfetzers have operated fine dining eateries in high profile places, in part, due to the influence of this house's residents upon the family.

Pictures of all 5 generations of family ownership



The Four Berling Brothers, Michael & Steve Berling Co Trustees of Judith Ann Berling (current owners), 2/19/19



Mary Pfetzer in photo above, on left in dark coat.

9. Major Bibliographic and personal interviews

Alberts, Brian

2018 Beer to Stay: Brewed Culture, Ethnicity, and the Market Revolution. Purdue University

Berling, Michael

Personal Interview with Michael Berling (family archivist) April 12, 2025

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

City of Covington

1887 – 1970 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Covington

City of Covington

1880 – 2019 City Directories

Gee, Robin

2023 “Northern Kentucky’s German Roots Flow Much Deeper than Mainstrasse,” in *LinkNKY*, November 5, 2023.

Gorbach, August B.

1917 Das Hilfswerk und Cincinnatis Deutsche Vereine, P.9

Kenton County

1897 – 2025 Deed Index

The Wolke House – Jordan Wyatt

National Register of Historic Places Registration Application

Tolzmann, Don Heinrich

1998 Covington’s German Heritage

Tolzmann, Don Heinrich

1994 Cincinnati’s German Heritage

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: _____

Pfetzner, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): KECL 59

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.0630

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

1. **Latitude:** 39.076596° **Longitude:** -84.516675°

Or **UTM References** Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. **Zone:** _____ **Easting:** _____ **Northing:** _____

Verbal Boundary Description

The subject property is a rectangular lot at the corner of Martin Luther King Blvd (12th Street) and Main Street. The southern property line runs along the northern right of way of West Martin Luther King Boulevard from its corner with West Main Street for 31 feet in an easterly direction. The western property line runs along the eastern right of way of Main Street for 80 feet. The northern boundary runs along a shared line with 1124 Main Street for 31 feet. The eastern boundary runs along a shared line with 428 West Martin Luther King Boulevard. This property boundary is defined in Kenton County property information, Deed Book 6603, page 187.



Verbal Boundary Description depicted by Link-GIS. Boundary identified in blue.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

Boundary Justification

The area proposed for listing is the appropriate area because it is the historic lot associated with the significant property, and has the integrity of setting.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: **Kimberly Patton – Project Manager for the owners**

organization: **Wooster Properties LLC**

street & number: **PO Box 182**

city or town: **Covington,** state: **Kentucky** zip code: **41012**

e-mail **kimdpatton@gmail.com**

telephone: **513-675-4799**

date: **April 21, 2025**

Photographs --- Photo Log

Name of Property:	Mary Pfetzer House
City or Vicinity:	Covington
County:	Kenton
State:	Kentucky
Photographer:	Kimberly D. Patton, AIA
Date Photographed:	Jan 2025

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

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



1 of 44 April 2025 Corner view of the property from intersection of Main and 12th street looking East.



2 of 44 April 2025 Picture of the west side of the property taken from the Kenton County Administration building..

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



3 of 44 Jan 2025
Picture of the 12th street façade



4 of 44 Nov 2025
Picture of the Main Street facade

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



5 of 44 **Nov 2025**
rear of the building looking southeast

6 of 44 Jan 2025

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

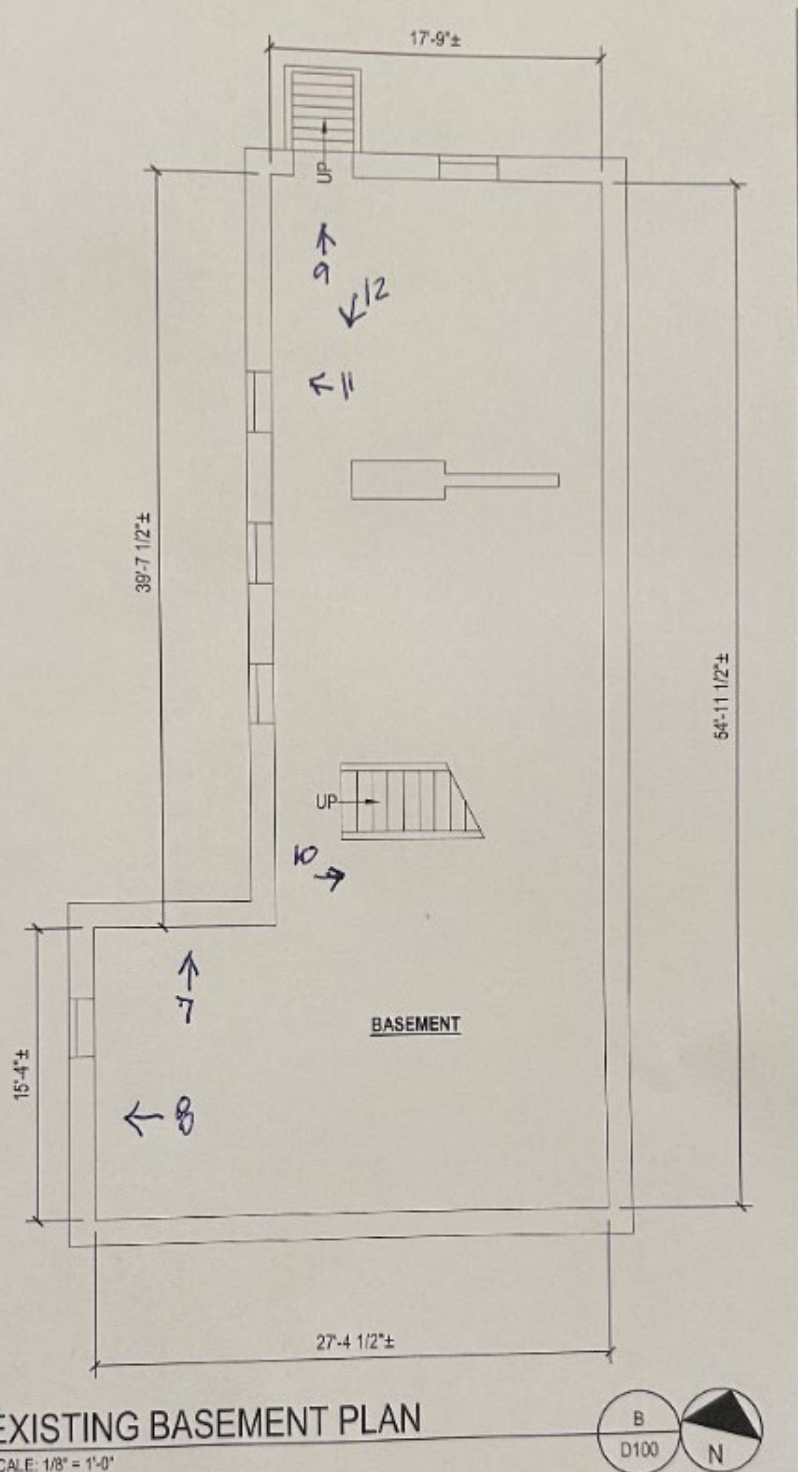
Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



6 of 44 Nov 2025
behind the building looking East from Main Street

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State

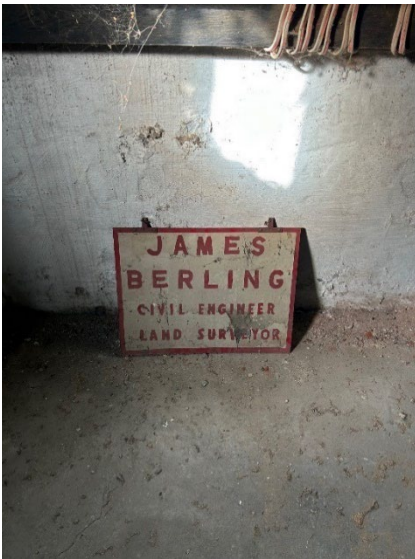


Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



7 of 44 Jan 2025

Business sign of the last business to occupy the building moved out in 1988 and his sons still own the business.



8 of 44 Jan 2025

Stone foundations in the basement.



9 of 44 Jan 2025

The basement seems in great shape for an area with a very high water table. The stone foundations are in great shape and no sign of settling. This basement stairs and stairs leading the directly out to the parking area.



10 of 44 Jan 2025

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



11 of 44 Jan 20205

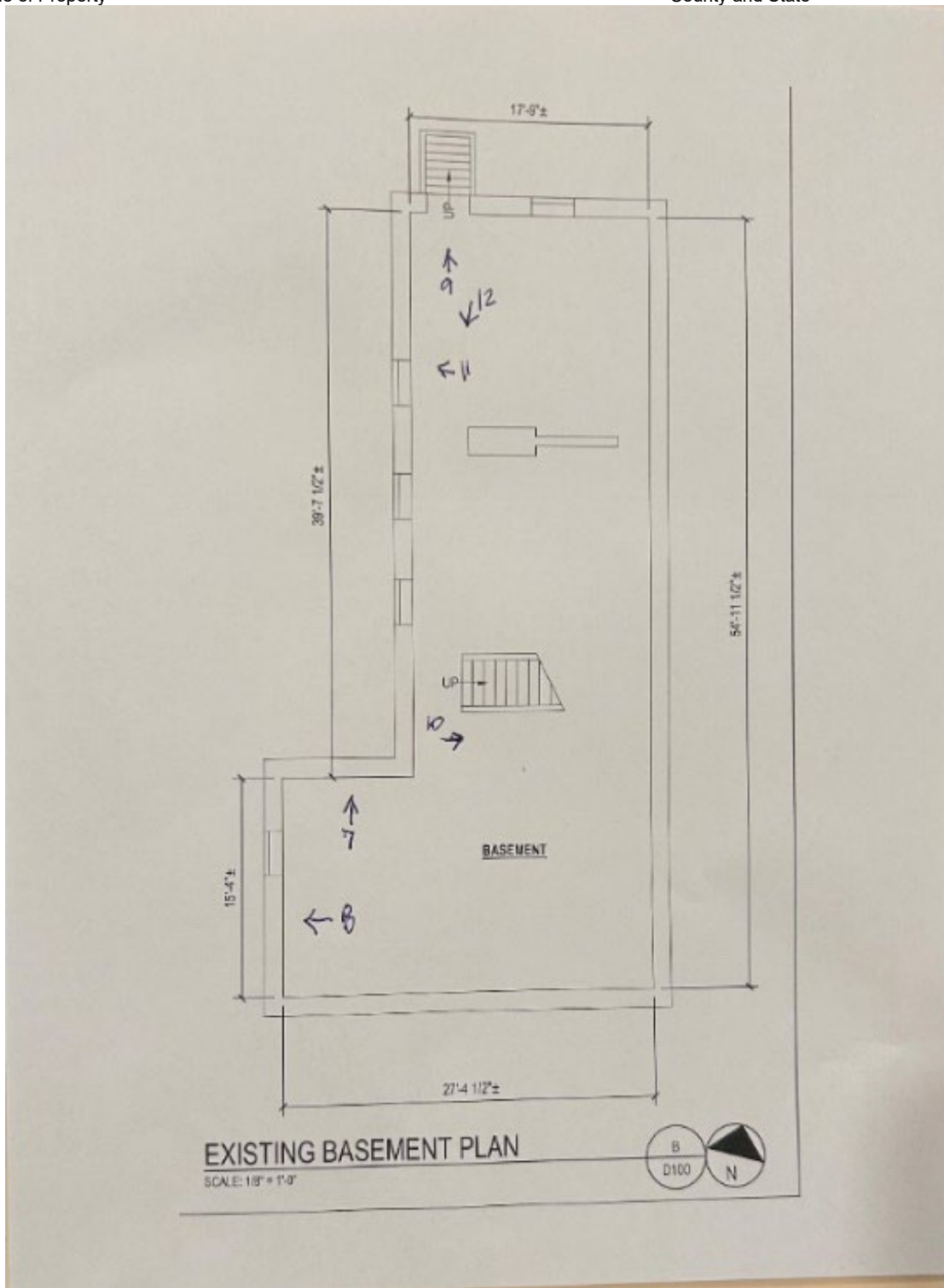


12 of 44 Jan 2025

Pictures of the foundations and one of the walkway in the basement looking south closed up windows from the basement on the Main Street side of the building.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



13 of 44 Nov 2025

Picture of one of the only remaining original light fixtures in the building, which is in the commercial area on the first floor corner space. When the entrance door was relocated from the corner to the south façade, a bench was build in the corner on both south and west wall under the windows.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



14 of 44 Jan 2025
Picture of the interior of the front door on 12th street.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



15 of 44 Nov 2025

Another Picture of the light fixture, appears to be the only historic light fixture.



16 of 44 Jan 2025

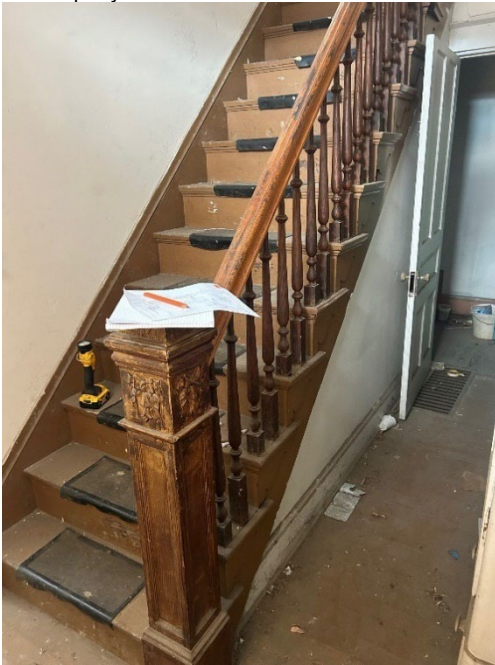
Picture of the side entrance, on the westside off the courtyard.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



17 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the main staircase to the second floor, which is in excellent condition. Oak hand rail and ballisters, all original.



18 of 44 Nov 2025

Picture of the middle room mantel on the first floor. The mantel is in good shape but was painted at some point. It is oak and would need to have the paint stripped.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



19 of 44 Nov 2025

Picture looking away from the mantel in the middle room on the first floor, the room has a drop ceiling and 1970's wood paneling, not original.



20 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the windows and doors representative of the condition of all the interior trim and doors.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



21 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the side entrance in the back room on the first floor, some missing trim and moisture damage. This is probably the wall with the worst moisture damage in the whole building.



22 of 44 Nov 2025

Picture of the east wall in the back room on the first floor. I am not sure the arched doorway is original, seem out of place in style and shape

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State

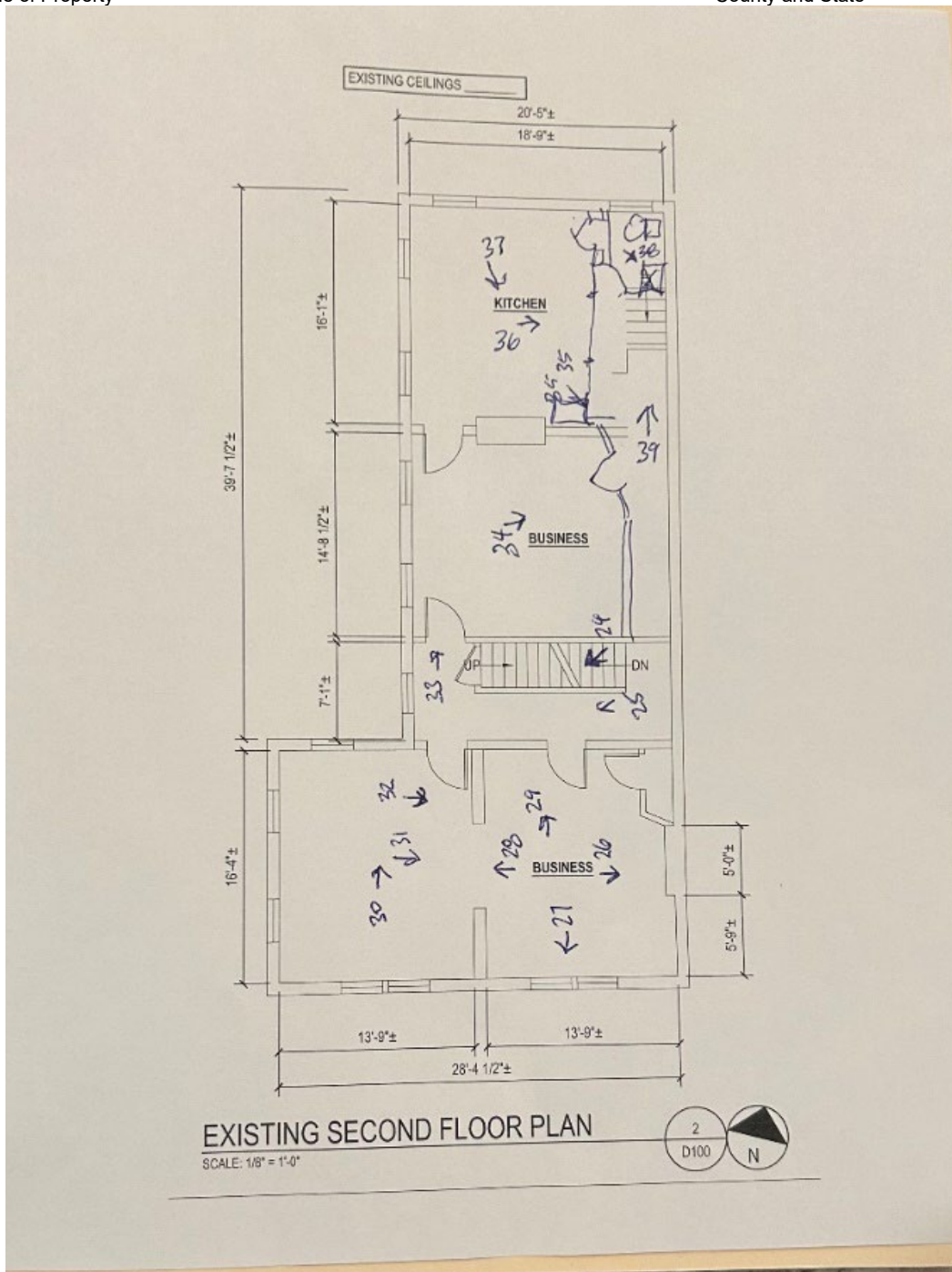


23 of 44 Nov 2025

Picture of the north wall of the back room on the first floor, the floors appear to be pine and in good shape. Second floor with the same water damage as below.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



24 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture looking down the main stairwell at the side entrance from the second floor.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



25 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the view from the stairwell in to the second floor front two rooms. Vinyl floor that needs to be removed.



26 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the mantel in the second floor front room, it's in excellent condition. Shows what the other mantels may look like when restored.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



27 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture looking out to 12th street in the upstairs east front room.



28 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture looking between the second floor front two rooms, the pine wood pocket door appears to be in great shape.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



29 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture looking back in to the stairwell from the front room. Transoms are in great shape, but the glass is painted over.



30 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture looking out of the front corner room, back to north end of the house. Transoms to be stripped and restored, wood paneling is not original.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



31 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture looking between the front to room on the second floor. Glass door probably not original.



32 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the shelf in James Berling's office with pictures of the four sons in high school. This place is a time capsule.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



33 of 44 Aug 2025

Picture looking into the middle room on the second floor. All the trim is in great shape



Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

34 of 44 Nov 2025

Picture of the middle room on the second floor and the door that goes to the back stair.



35 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the frig in the back room (kitchen) of the second floor.



Pfetzner, Mary A., House

Kenton County, Kentucky

Name of Property

County and State

36 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture the sink in the back room of the second floor. Porcelain sink 5 feet long, unique is size.



37 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the back room of the second floor looking out to the back hall.



38 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the sink in the second floor bathroom.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State

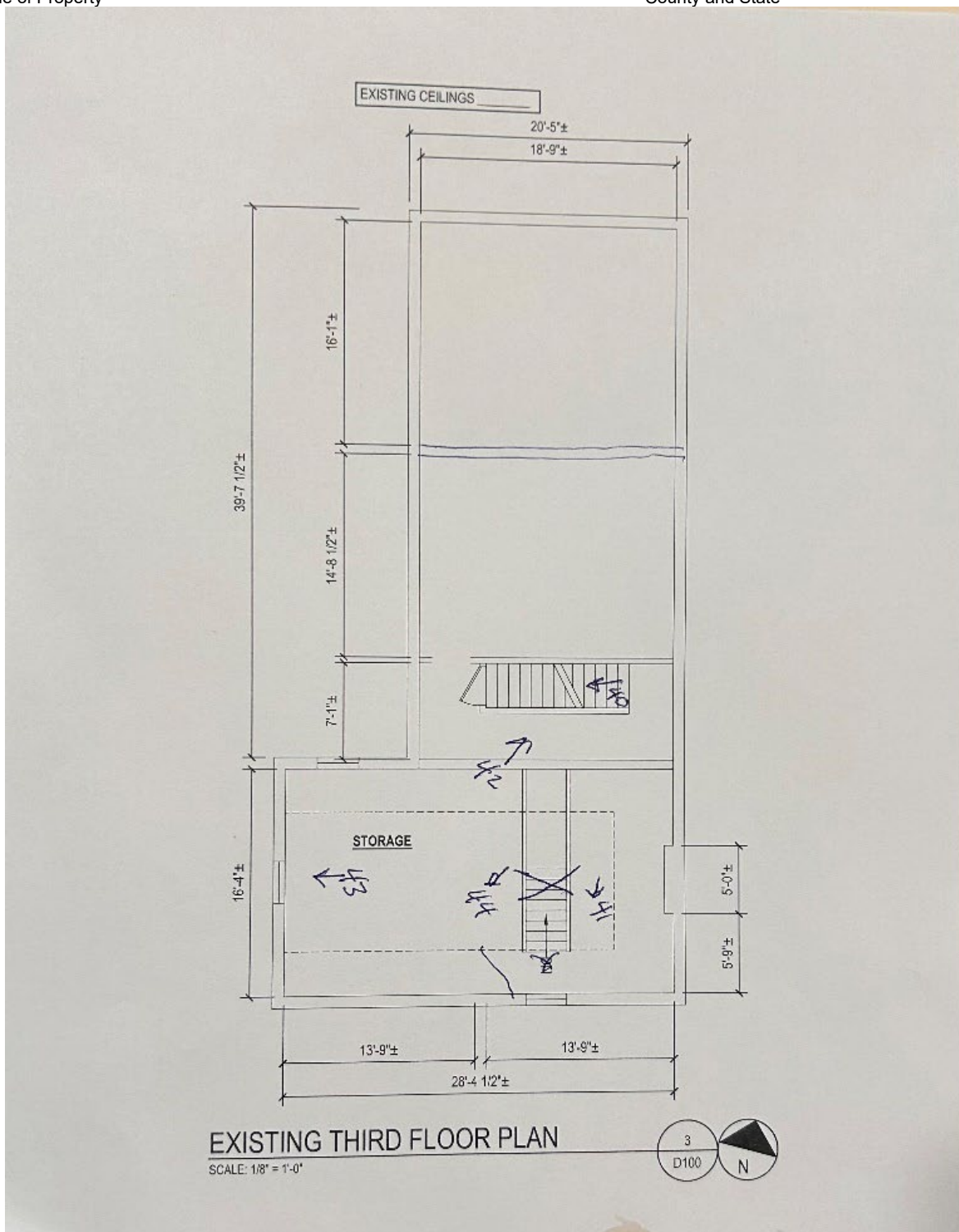


39 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture of the back stairwell and door to the bathroom on the second floor.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State

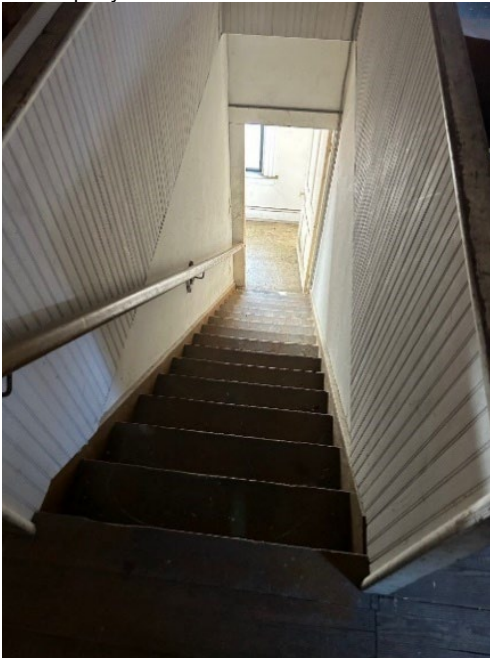


Pfetzer, Mary A., House

Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky

County and State



40 of 44 Jan 2025

Picture looking down the stairwell from the third to the second floor, simple in construction but in great shape.



41 of 44 Nov 2025

Picture looking towards 12th street on the third floor showing the gable window, facing south on to 12th.

Pfetzer, Mary A., House
Name of Property

Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



42 of 44 Nov 2025

Picture looking over the stairwell on the third floor.



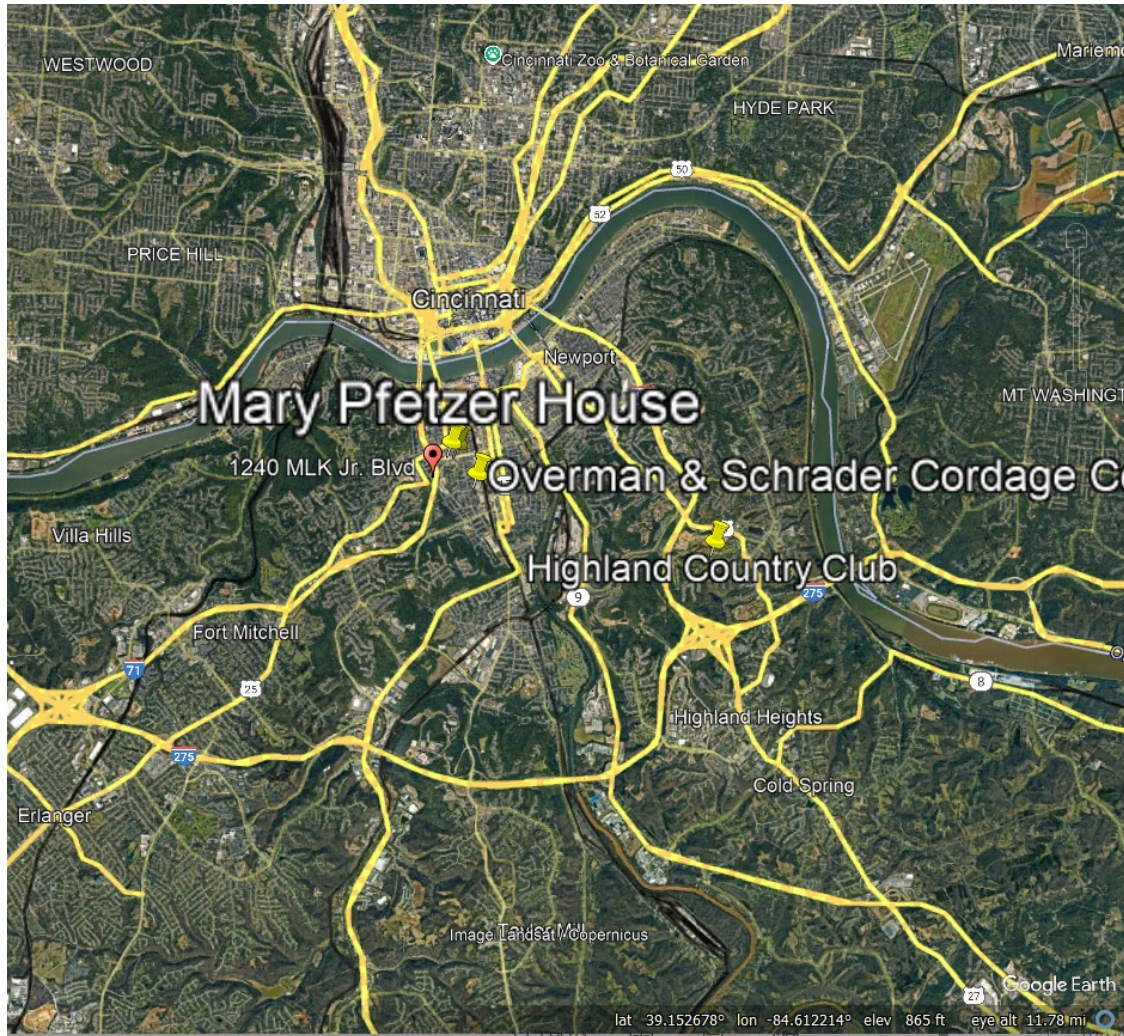
43 of 44 Nov 2025

Picture of the Main Street side gabled window on the third floor.

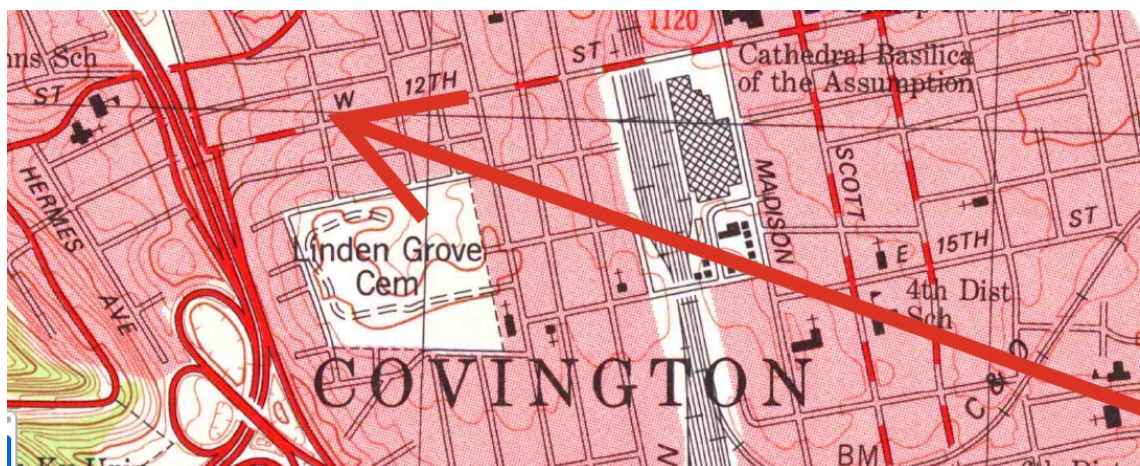
Anther picture of the front gable window on the third floor.

Pfetzner, Mary A., House
Name of Property

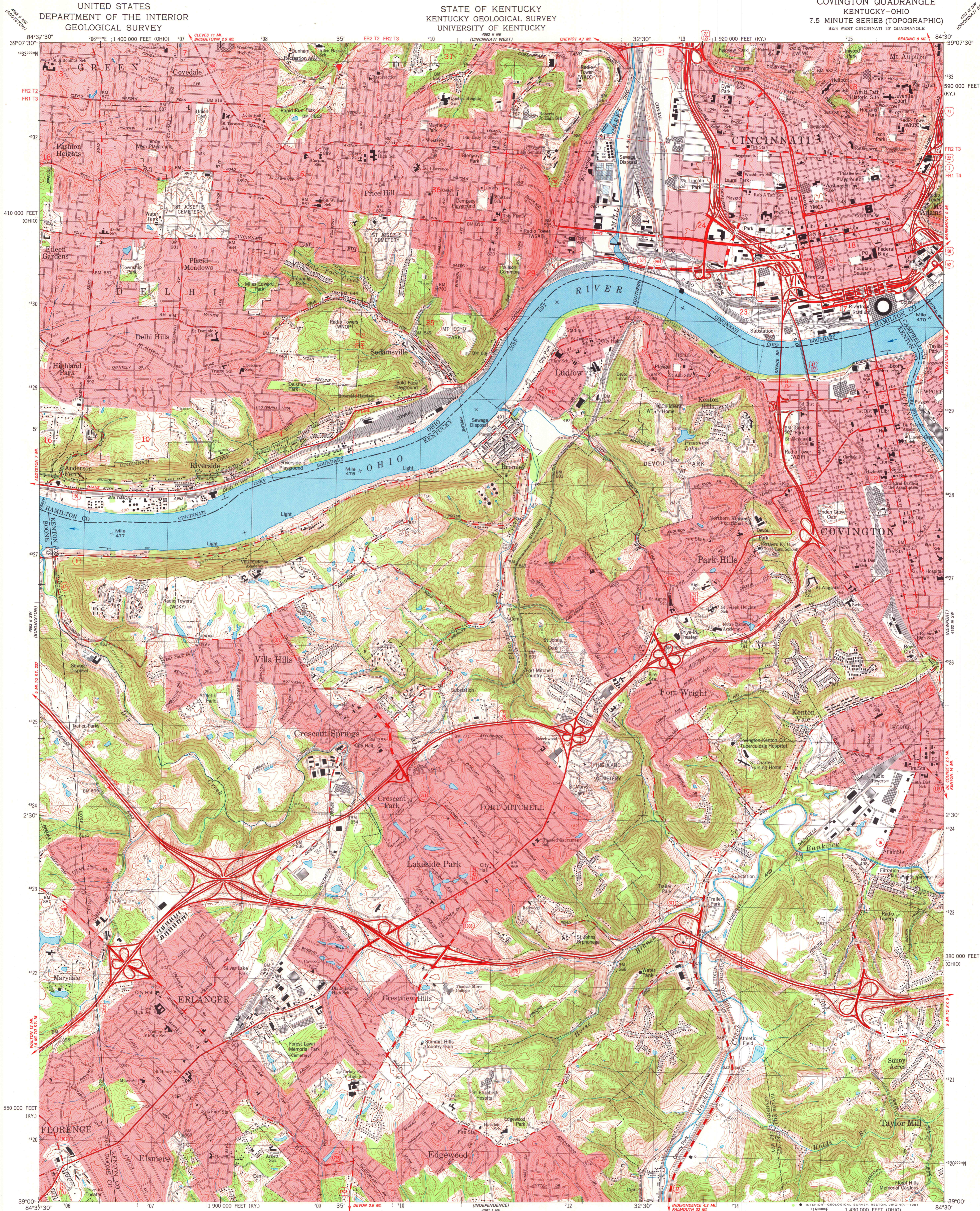
Kenton County, Kentucky
County and State



Wide area map showing Mary Pfetzer House location

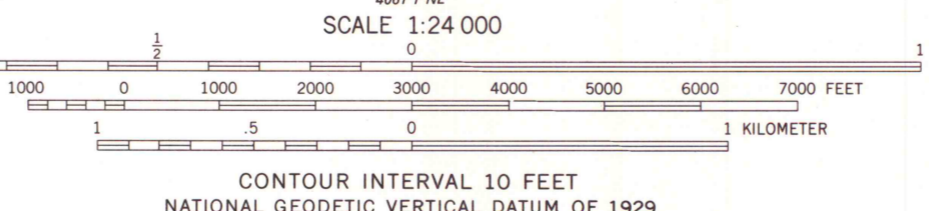


Location of Pfetzer House on Covington, KY 1981 Quad Map (detail)



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, and the city of Cincinnati
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1949, and
in part by the city of Cincinnati. Field checked 1950 and 1953. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1977. Field checked 1978. Map edited 1981
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Kentucky coordinate system,
north zone, and Ohio coordinate system, south zone
100-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 3 meters south and
5 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
The state boundary as shown represents the approximate position of the
low water line as determined from U. S. Corps of Engineers
Ohio River charts, surveyed 1914, and supplementary information
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Ohio area lies within the Between the Miamis. Land lines based on the
Great Miami River Base. Dotted land lines established by private
subdivision of the Symmes Purchase

UTM GRID AND 1981 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



SCALE 1:24,000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092.
KENTUCKY GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40506.
AND KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40601
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



OCT 23 1981
University of Wisconsin
Madison

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road

COVINGTON, KY. - OHIO
8E4 WEST CINCINNATI 15' QUADRANGLE
N3900-W8430/7.5

1981
DMA 4062 II SE-SERIES V853