

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name McLure, John, Houseother names/site number Phillips, Hans, House/Sands, Lawrence, House/Zane, Daniel, House

## 2. Location

street & number 203 South Front Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Wheeling

N/A vicinity

state West Virginiacode WVcounty Ohiocode WV 069zip code 26003

## 3. 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

## Noncontributing

1  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register N/A

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the  
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

6/26/91

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined eligible for the National  
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwellingAgriculture/agricultural fieldLandscape/garden

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/multiple dwellingCommerce/professional**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century - Late FederalLate 19th and 20th Century Revivals/Neoclassical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/sandstonewalls BrickWood/shingleroof Asphaltother Metal/tin/iron**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

Being one of the earliest homes built on Wheeling Island, the John McLure House tells much of the architectural influences that shaped this river community over time. Built in the years of 1853-1856, the house bears testament to late Federal influence. Towards the turn of the century a series of alterations were made which gave the house the appearance of a Neoclassical Revival design.

The three-story masonry structure occupies a prominent corner lot facing downtown Wheeling and the main branch of the Ohio River. The eastern facade is the front of the house and is clearly visible from the Wheeling side of the river because the lots along the river opposite the house are vacant. At one time the Wheeling Steel Bridge (erected in 1891) connected Ohio Street, which runs along the nominated property's northern boundary, to Eleventh Street of downtown Wheeling. The Wheeling Suspension Bridge, a National Historic Landmark, is located one block north of the property. South Front Street runs along the river, perpendicular to Ohio Street, and makes the eastern boundary of the property. The remaining southern and western property boundaries of the lot, as it is today, run parallel to the streets from a distance of 120 feet and 170 feet, respectively.

The house was originally rectangular in plan with its slightly longer side facing South Front Street. The overall exterior dimensions were forty-two feet by forty feet. The exterior and interior walls of the house are load bearing brick.

A rear addition contains two floors and is made of brick as well. It was built before 1870 and extended the east-west length of the house sixteen feet, making the Ohio Street elevation its longest. The house has generously proportioned side, front, and rear yards which distinguish it from the neighboring residence. The contour of the yard is flat and at the same level as the street. A three foot iron fence separates the yard from sidewalk along Ohio and South Front Streets.

Federal influence is indicated in the orientation of the original floor plan, without the two-story rear addition. The front of the house has the entrance located in the center, which is typical for free-standing houses of the Federal period. The house is a traditional four-room plan, with two rectangular rooms from front to rear on each floor flanking a central stair hall. It sits upon a sandstone foundation which elevates the ground floor above the yard several feet.

It is interesting to note that the house is not elevated significantly above the street, as are many other Island residences. Wheeling Island is well known for its floods, which many times have inundated the bottom floors of these houses. Consequently, a number of owners have raised their homes above the floodline by increasing the foundation or raising the yard, or both. The nominated property occupies an elevated portion of the Island and, therefore, is afforded a degree of protection despite its level yard and low foundation. Just one year before construction of the house began, there was a forty-eight foot flood (a 44 foot flood covers some areas of the Island), so the problem of flooding was certainly a consideration of the builder.

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The doorway is a good example of the Federal period. Located at the center of the front elevation, it is flanked by sidelights and headed by a radiating fanlight. The overall width of the door ensemble is nine feet and the height practically reaches the twelve foot mark.

Other features of the house's exterior can be attributed to the Federal period. The windows along the front facade are evenly spaced in pairs on either side of the entry and, at the ground level, stretch clearly from the floor to ceiling height. They are capped by a decorated entablature. The chimneys are located in pairs at either side of the gable roof, and they are tall and slender with a slight flare at the top. The rectangular chimneys are of corbeled red brick (possibly a later alteration). The ridge line of the rear addition is perpendicular to the main roof. It is punctuated with a single corbeled chimney above its western gable.

In its original state, the appearance of the house at 203 South Front Street was elegant and refined. It did not call attention to itself through ornament or complexity of plan. It will be described in the Statement of Significance, how the house was part of a larger property that extended westwardly to South Penn Street. Much of the land was cultivated at that time as orchards and gardens with shrubbery, rockeries, and flower beds close to the house. This kept with the agricultural nature of the Island.

After the erection of the Suspension Bridge in 1849, the Island became a densely populated "bedroom community" for the well-to-do residents of Wheeling. Many of the houses being built here were of outstanding design and exemplified the current architectural fashion. The house at 203 South Front Street did what many of the older structures had to do. It used ornament, alterations, and additions to dress up its traditional plan.

The Classical Revival influence was widespread in Wheeling and can be seen in numerous area houses. The additions to this property date to the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The overall shape of the plan was altered by the addition of a semicircular columned portico at the entrance and a two-story projected side bay at the northern elevation. There is one window bay on the western side of the projected bay and two bays are located on each side of the rear addition. A window topped by a pediment is above the side bay and centered beneath the peak of the roof.

In elevation, a Classical vocabulary was introduced at the

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sides and eaves line of the front facade. Full height Corinthian pilasters, one at each corner of the east and north elevations, support a broad cornice with square wooden modillions. Each pilaster is shaped from a tin sheet. Cornice returns wrap around the gabled ends of the house. The portico is complete with entablature and columns, six in number, of the Ionic Order. A bay window, centrally located above the entrance and portico roof, is topped by a richly curved pediment and flanked by two fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals. The four transparencies of the bay window are inlaid with diamond-shaped lights. Its overall dimensions are seven feet in width and nine feet in height.

Another significant addition was the third story attic dormer at the center roof line of the eastern facade. Visually, it is the most noticeable feature of the house. It has a shed roof. The structure is decorated with Greek forms to echo the bay window and portico, although it appears to be of later design. It possibly was added to reflect a cupola type of Victorian (Italianate) dwelling. The sides of the dormer structure are decoratively shingled which might be indicative of the Shingle Style architecture that came to the Island at the turn of the century.

Much of the interior is being restored to the Neoclassical Revival period. Plaster covers the masonry of the interior walls. The four main rooms of the first floor each have unique fireplaces of carved Classical forms. The ceiling height of the rooms is twelve and one-half feet.

The southeastern room has the largest fireplace of the house. It is flanked by Corinthian columns over eight feet in height. Above the mantel is a broad mirror, and green tiles line the hearth. All of the original mantels at the fireplaces, except for one, were replaced with Victorian era designs in the late 1800's. This work was likely performed when the McLures were renovating the exterior of the house. Along the front wall, the two windows stretch from floor to ceiling illuminating the room nicely. A cornice wraps around the top of the wall in an urn and swag design.

The southwestern room is connected to the first by a large opening flanked by shortened columns, which are elevated on pedestals. This room is slightly less deep, and its fireplace is less significant. The plaster moldings along the cornice and ceiling are identical to the first room.

The rear addition housed functional rooms such as the kitchen and bathrooms. It sits flush with the northern wall of the

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main house but extends southwardly only to the southern wall of the stair hall. A back stair runs along the inside of the northern wall.

The northwestern room, on the opposite side of the stair hall, is curiously bare of any ornament save the fireplace, which is inlaid with a marble-like tile of orange, black and green. The adjoining northeastern room displays the house's most ornate cornice, over two and one-half feet wide. It is richly decorated with an interweaving organic design. The first floor of the two-story projected side bay is entered from the two rooms of the northern side through french windows that are ceiling height. The side bay has four windows, which were originally leaded glass.

At the stairhall there is a four foot paneled wood wainscot which also runs upward along the northern wall where the steps ascend to the second floor.

The layout of the second floor is identical to the first as far as plan, room dimensions, and ceiling height. The area where the stair occupies the first floor, however, is empty on this level and this creates a wonderful hall. The front of the hall ends in a diamond-paned bay window, with a seat, that looks towards the river to Wheeling. A solitary column stands at the other end of the hall where the stairs are located. The eight foot carved wood column is fluted and crowned by an Ionic capital of Scamozzi design. It supports the common base of two arches which gracefully branch outward and join the walls at each side. The arches are decorated with floral designs and an egg and dart pattern is found at the cornice encircling the four upper walls of the hall.

The four rooms of this level have distinctive fireplaces - some with mirrors, and each with a uniquely tiled hearth. The upper story of the projected side bay is entered from only the northeastern room. The french windows leading onto the bay are of smaller size than in the rooms below. The placement of windows is three to a room: two along the eastern or western exterior wall (again of smaller size) and one on the central side of the chimney piece. The two rooms along the southern wall are joined by an arched passageway which passes through their common wall.

The rear addition of the second story is entered at the half landing of the staircase. Its floor is roughly three feet below the floor of the rest of the second story. It contains several small rooms, which might serve as bathrooms or storage space, and

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one mid-sized room. This room has a ceiling height just over ten feet and features an original marble fireplace and mantel. The back stairs enter here.

Entry to the finished attic and the room created by the dormer is accomplished by ascending a second stair which is stacked above the first. It is entered through the right hand arch in the hall. This third floor contains three rooms. The stair landing and the two rooms on either side, located beneath the ridge line of the gable roof, have ceilings just over six feet tall. The walls along the eavesline are shortened to accommodate the roof above. The small room created by the dormer is illuminated by four windows and has a ceiling height of almost ten feet. The view from this room along South Front Street or towards the Suspension Bridge and downtown Wheeling is very impressive. These rooms on the third level are stripped of any ornament.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☒ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

Maritime History

Period of Significance

1853 - 1923

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

John McClure

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The John McClure House is a significant property because it serves as a model for the events and customs which took place in the Wheeling community from the mid-nineteenth century to the early years of the twentieth century. It is eligible under Criterion A for social history and its association with prominent Wheeling families. Under Criterion B the house possesses significance because John McClure, a riverman of importance, lived there. The house derives additional significance under Criterion C as a significant example of Neo Classical Revival architecture.

The architecture of the house at 203 South Front Street is significant because it reflects the changes which affected the Island community from its agricultural beginnings to the decline of its golden age. The house was originally built by Daniel Zane (1792-1860) for his married daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Phillips (1822-1893). The original house was a Federal four over four design, typical for its time. Stripped of the later porch addition, dormer, projected side bay, and Classical Revival touches, one can conclude that the original house was rather conservative. The house remained in the Zane family for eight years from 1856 to 1864.

During the ownership of the McClure family, from 1864 to 1901, the original house's appearance changed dramatically. This coincides with the emergence of Wheeling as an important river town. The Island changed in character as well. Its location so near to downtown Wheeling made it an early "bedroom community". It was popular because it was "away from the noise and contaminated atmosphere of the city" (Fetherling, p. 42). It had all the regular utility services by the 1890's. Additionally, the West Virginia Exposition and State Fair Association Grounds was located on the southern part of the Island. Fetherling writes that "much recreation focused on the Island and the river. Since the Civil War, fairs and festivals, including for a time the state fair, had been held at the southern end of the Island". (Fetherling, p. 65). All in all, the Island became an extremely desirable place to live.

The most prominent and well-to-do citizens of Wheeling chose to settle here. The wealth of this community was displayed through its architecture. Anyone familiar with the Island can attest to the beautiful artistry that adorns many of the houses from this era. There are excellent examples of Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian, and Shingle Style houses. There are free-standing townhouses and also rowhouses.

☒ See continuation sheet

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The alterations that John McLure made to 203 South Front Street really made the house a majestic showpiece. He embellished the house's most visible elevations with Classical forms according to the Greek Revival style of architecture. He also added the aforementioned portico, dormer, projected bay, and bay window. These changes greatly enhanced the house's plan and elevation.

The house was bought by an area banking official in 1901. Mr. Lawrence Sands (1859-1928) was a prominent citizen well known in the financial circles of Wheeling. Under his ownership the house was unaltered. The river boat industry had reached its peak three quarters of the way through the nineteenth century. Trains replaced the riverboat by this time. Mr. Sands sold the property in 1923 and relocated his family to Pittsburgh.

SOCIAL HISTORY

Through the ownership of four prominent families, the house at 203 South Front Street tells an interesting story about the history of the City of Wheeling. The house was built due to the social custom at that time for all the well-to-do people to provide their children, and particularly daughters, with homes. Daniel Zane (1792-1860) presented this house to his married daughter Mrs. Anna Elizabeth Zane Phillips (1822-1893) in the year of 1856. Her husband, Hans W. Phillips (b. 1820) was an engine manufacturer and owner of a foundry in North Wheeling. He was a wealthy man and in the 1850 West Virginia census had a personal worth of 15,000 dollars.

The Phillips name is related to boat building. Hans Phillips was the son of one of the first steam engine builders in the West. The works started by his Father passed down to Hans and his two brothers, and they associated as "Phillips & Co." At the time that he came to live in the house, Hans Phillips purchased out the entire business from the brothers. About this time the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was to be completed to Wheeling and a local company was formed to run a line of steamers in conjunction therewith. It was called the "Union Line" and consisted of seven boats - three of which were built at Phillips' works and proved to be among the best in the line. John McLure, a later occupant of the house, also took part in this business venture.

During the period of Mr. Phillips ownership six additional steamers were constructed and proved themselves to be superior to



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anything in the trade. The steamer "Planter" built at Phillips' works has a colorful history. The steamer was abandoned near Mobile at the commencement of the Civil War. She was then fitted out as a blockade runner, was captured by the U.S. steamship "Lakawana", was sold in Key West and later fitted out for a gun boat on the Rio Grande river, Texas.

The next owner, Captain John McLure, Jr., was the son of an important Wheeling manufacturer, businessman and legislator. His uncle, Capt. John McLure, Sr., erected the McLure Hotel, the most prominent hotel in the state.

John McLure, Jr., (b. 1816) came to Wheeling at the age of four months. He began an apprenticeship at engine building at the age of sixteen and later, as will be mentioned, grew to build riverboats and navigate the Ohio River. After his life on the river, Mr. McLure turned his interest to real estate. In 1873 he became the owner of the McLure Hotel. He also owned considerable property on Market Street and in various parts of the city.

Lawrence Sands, the third owner of the house, came to Wheeling in 1880 and filled several important capacities at prominent area banks. Gibson Cranmer writes in History of Wheeling City that Mr. Sands is "a gentleman well known in the financial circles of Wheeling" and an "excellent official" (Cranmer, p. 460).

JOHN McLURE

Maritime history is associated with this property through its second owner, Captain John McLure, Jr. Wheeling had a significant boat-building industry. Although it did not rival Pittsburgh or Cincinnati, Wheeling's river boat production was greater than both St. Louis and New Orleans. Additionally, Wheeling received many contracts for engines and boilers to be put into river boats elsewhere, since it was already a recognized iron-making center. Wheeling also outfitted many boats with dry goods, and was a common stop for river boats. By the 1850's, 3 million passengers traveled the Ohio annually.

Captain John McLure, Jr., was a pioneer of the river. He began his maritime career as an engineer on the Ohio river. He soon began to be interested in river navigation, became a captain of a boat in 1840, and made it his career until the end of the Civil War. During the Civil War, John McLure was commodore in charge of the Kanawha riverboat operations. Much like Hans W. Phillips, he was also a steamboat builder. In Way's Packet

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Directory, Capt. McLure is listed as the owner or builder of fourteen passenger steamboats. Another source credits him with the production of between eighteen and twenty river boats.

In 1852, the same year that the McLure House Hotel was opened by his uncle, and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad completed service up the Ohio River, John McLure took part in a business venture. Audra Wayne writes:

...A company was formed known as the Union Line to build and operate a fleet of steamers to ply between Wheeling and Louisville, Ky. in anticipation of a large freight and passenger traffic with the southern and western cities and the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Seven superb steamers were built, each costing \$100,000...These boats were commanded by such experienced rivermen as John McLure,... (Wayne, p.75)

In Fetherling's history, he writes about the steamboat racing that was commonly sport among the boatmen. He writes:

In 1853 the seven sidewheelers of the Wheeling Union Line competed with the equal number of the Pittsburgh and Cincinnati Line every day for a year. (Fetherling, p.34)

This tells something about the competitive nature of Capt. McLure and his fellow boatmen when it came to steamboats from rival cities. Actually, steamboat racing became prohibited by several laws, passed in aftermath of collisions which caused loss of life and river hazards to passing boats.

The Union Line unfortunately did not succeed as a business venture and many of the investors, including Mr. McLure, took a heavy financial loss.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Cranmer, Gibson Lamb, History of Wheeling City and Ohio County, West Virginia and Representative Citizens. Chicago, 1902. Biographical Publishing Company.

Dodge, J.R., West Virginia: Its Farms and Forests, Mines and Oil Wells. Philadelphia, 1865. J.B. Lippincott and Co.

Ebeling, Virginia. "Zane's Settlement 1769 to the City of Wheeling 1955", September 8, 1955. Unpublished. Wheeling file at Ohio County Public Library.

Fetherling, Doug. Wheeling: An Illustrated History. Woodland Hills, Ca. 1983. Windsor Publications.

Steenrod, Blanche D. "Pot-pourri: Lawrence Sands' Home." June 30, 1929. Wheeling Sunday News.

Unknown author. History of the Upper Ohio Valley,...Vol. 1. Madison 1890. Brant and Fuller.

☒ See continuation sheet

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

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

### Specify repository:

Ohio County Public Library, Wheeling Room

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

### UTM References

A 17 523090 4435230  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

A certain piece or parcel of land, situated on the corner south of Ohio Street and west of South Front Street, on Wheeling Island in the City of Wheeling, Ohio County, West Virginia, and more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the southwest corner of said Ohio and South Front Streets, thence running southwardly with the west line of South Front Street one

☒ See continuation sheet

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the reduced parcel of land historically associated with the house at 203 South Front Street since the exchange in rear estate by Capt. John McLure, Jr., which took place sometime between 1870 and 1901.

☒ See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title George Wayland

organization McKinley & Associates, Inc. date May 3, 1991

street & number 404 South Front Street telephone (304) 233-0140

city or town Wheeling state WV zip code 26003

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National Park Service

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Way, Frederick Jr. Way's Packet Directory. Athens. 1983. Ohio University.

Wayne, Audra. The Zane Family of Ohio County, West Virginia. Wheeling. 1988. Unpublished.

Wayne, Audra. Wheeling, West Virginia Before The Civil War. 1990. Unpublished.

Newton, Nichols, and Sprankle. History of the Pan-Handle, West Virginia. 1879. J.A. Caldwell.

Maps:

- 1) Map of the City of Wheeling and Suburbs  
Ohio Co., Va.  
Surveyed and Published by Manfield and Simpson  
Cincinnati, Ohio. 1853.
- 2) Atlas of Wheeling, WV.  
A.H. Mueller and Co.  
530 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA.  
Wheeling Board of Trade. 1901.
- 3) Insurance Map of Wheeling, WV  
Sanborn Maps. 1902.

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hundred and twenty (120) feet more or less to the southern adjacent property thence westwardly with the north line of said neighboring property, and in a line parallel with Ohio Street, one hundred and seventy (170) feet more or less to the east line of the adjacent western property thence northwardly with the east line of said neighboring property one hundred and twenty (120) feet more or less to the south line at Ohio Street, thence eastwardly with the south line of Ohio Street one hundred and seventy (170) feet more or less to the place of beginning. Together with all the buildings and appurtenances situate thereon or belonging thereto.

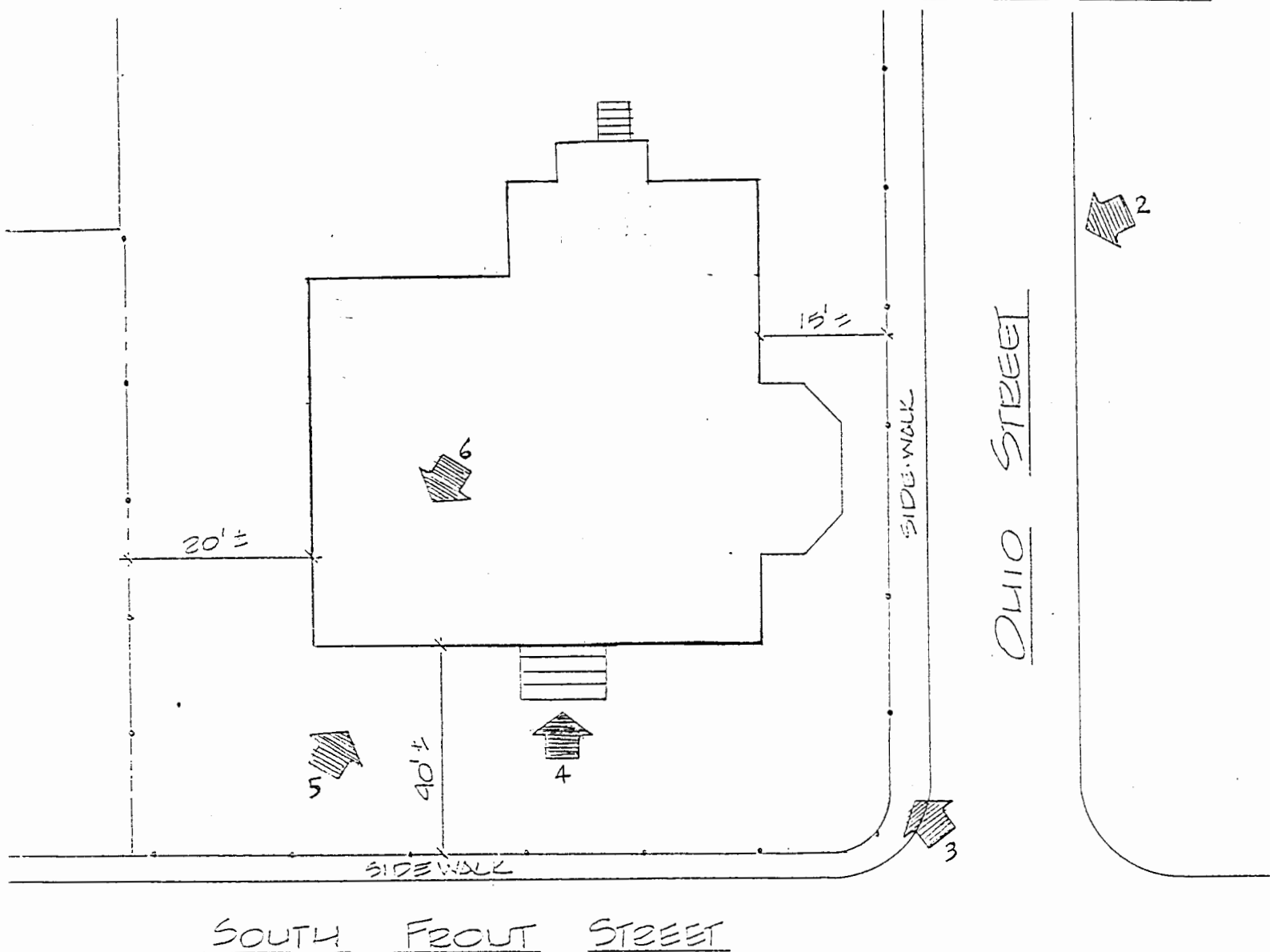
This is recorded in the office of the Clerk of County Court of Ohio County in Deed Book No. 189 at page 186.

This property is more commonly known as 203 South Front Street.

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John McClure House  
Wheeling, W.VA.

203 SOUTH FRONT STREET

Sketch map with photograph number and camera direction.



NORTH

JOHN McClure House  
 203 S. Front St.  
 Wheeling, W.V.

UTM:

17/523090/4435220

