

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wolf, Penrose, Building

other names/site number Rockwood Opera House

2. Location

street & number 450 Main Street N/A not for publication

city or town Rockwood N/A vicinity

state Pennsylvania code PA county Somerset code 111 zip code 15557

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State of Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

Wolf, Penrose, Building
Name of Property

Somerset Co., PA
County and State

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: industrial storage
COMMERCE: business, warehouse
RECREATION and CULTURE: auditorium,
music facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls wood: weatherboard
brick
roof metal: steel
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1898-1951

Significant Dates

1898
1905

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

Wolf, Penrose, Building
Name of Property

Somerset Co., PA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	7
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6	5	7	4	6	0
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4	4	1	9	6	1	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Terry A. Necciai, R.A.
organization Terry A. Necciai, R.A. Historic Preservation Consulting date 10 March 2001
street & number 2334 Murray Avenue telephone (412) 521-4084
city or town Pittsburgh state PA zip code 15217

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Judith S. Pletcher
street & number 1179 Rockdale Road telephone (814) 634-5948
city or town Rockwood state PA zip code 15557

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Wolf, Penrose, Building
Somerset County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 1

The Penrose Wolf Building is a large but narrow commercial building at the corner of Main Street Chestnut Street in Rockwood, a small borough at the confluence of Coxes Creek and the Casselman River, six miles southwest of Somerset, the seat of Somerset County. The property, which consists of four 50' x 100' lots, slopes down from Main Street to the CSX mainline (formerly B&O), to the south. The railroad passes by the rear of the building, and a siding formerly passed through the building. Though it served commercial purposes throughout its history, it stands in a primarily residential area several blocks west of Rockwood's Main Street business district. The front section of the building, built in 1898, is 30 feet by 65 feet. It is two stories and wood frame with overlap weatherboarding, a front gable facing Main Street, and a first story storefront. Business expansion led to the construction of the rear portion in 1905, a 50 feet by 75 feet three story yellow brick addition, with a stepped parapet and a gable abutting the original wooden building. Both sections have corrugated steel roofing. A railroad siding off the mainline served the building by running directly through the basement of the brick addition, but was removed in the mid-1980s due to lack of use. This rather large building has been fortunate to retain almost all of its original elements, such as windows, siding, decorative wood work, and chestnut paneling, all of which remain in excellent repair. In a recent rehabilitation project, removable partitions were added to divide the larger spaces into shops. These partitions, which are generally eight feet in height, in many cases stop short of the building's high ceilings. Accessibility features, such as ramps, were also added in this project.

The wood frame portion of the building is three bays wide and five bays deep, and is punctuated by numerous double-hung windows with very simple trim. Simple wood brackets support a storefront cornice that runs the length of the facade between the first and second story. The larger of these brackets have rosettes at the top and bottom of the face of the diagonal member, with fluting and chamfering between. Smaller brackets in pairs support the eaves of the front of the building. Though the storefront makes up most of the street level facade, a set of double doors at the northwest corner of the front opens to a stairway up to the second floor opera house.

The front space of the first floor of the frame section of the building consists of a roughly 30' x 30' room which was originally used as an office. "Ghosting" on the floor and other markings on the support columns indicate where the original office partitions stood (in the recent rehabilitation project, this room was left undivided, as it has been for many years, to maximize the visibility of the chestnut panelling). The walls are covered with rich, intact chestnut paneling, which on two walls extends horizontally up to eight feet above the floor, but then forms an interesting chevron patterned frieze. The third wall and the ceiling are also covered by the same chevron pattern chestnut paneling and the fourth wall consists of the storefront windows looking out into the street. In addition, the ticket window between this room and the stairway to the opera house is intact. Behind the office room, in the back half of the first story of the frame part of the building, is a larger unfinished room, roughly 35' x 30', which was used for storage of hay, grain, and lumber. Some sections of the unfinished walls and ceilings in this area have been finished to convert the space to a small restaurant, and restrooms were added in one corner. There is also a small office room within the larger, unfinished room in which modern finishes, including simulated wood paneling and a suspended ceiling, were installed about 1990. This room was converted to a food preparation area for the restaurant in the present project.

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The second floor of the wood-frame portion of the building consists of one large room for public performances. Known as "the Opera House," the room hosted various drama groups and vaudeville acts, and even some of the first moving pictures to be seen in the area, until it later became used as a meeting place for local civic organizations. It has a level floor, and it originally had folding chairs which were occasionally removed so that the room could be used for dances. It is approximately 65' x 30' and has a stage at each end. The original stage is at the front of the building, and a larger one actually extends into the brick addition. The second, larger stage was apparently added in 1905 when that section was built. In the mid-twentieth century, the stage in the 1905 addition had been closed-in with masonry to provide a fire separation between the frame 1898 building and the 1905 brick addition, because the combination of building heights, construction materials, and potential use of the opera house space for assemblies posed a fire hazard and violated the state fire code. The masonry partition was removed in the recent rehabilitation project, but the fire code still required some kind of separation, which was created using a pair of fire doors at one side of the proscenium opening and a smoke-activated fire screen that rolls down to close the opening but is normally hidden behind the proscenium. The walls of the opera house continue the chestnut paneling in the chevron pattern seen downstairs. The paneling extends from the floor up to a chair-rail height of about 36 inches, and also continues across the older stage at the Main Street end of the room. Even the support posts that form the sides of the original stage's proscenium are clad in chevron pattern chestnut paneling. The opera house room has a ceiling which is flat at the center, but slopes at the side about three feet following the roof slope. At the inner edge of the sloped area, a row of light sockets is embedded in the plaster along each side of the room. To the side of the older stage is a small set of steps and doors for actors to access the stage. The wallpaper in this area has black grease-paint graffiti left around 1910 by two of the last minstrel troupes to perform here. One group wrote, "We will come back/ Macie Wards Minstrels." The other group wrote, "We will never/ Come back." At the opposite end of the room, the larger stage opens into a large, unfinished area defined by vertical plank walls that separate it from the rest of the 1905 addition and from two dressing rooms at the wings of the space. On the plank walls are one or two small ads from plays performed prior to World War I pasted onto the wall surface. This stage was originally accessed by a steep set of stairs from the floor level of the "house" part of the room, but a less steep set of wood stairs was built over these in the recent rehabilitation project to provide access that meets modern codes. A ramp from the house floor to the stage floor was also added in the rehabilitation project. The ramp has a railing with turned wood spindles stained and finished to be similar to, but not exactly match the original finishes.

The rear, brick section of the building is much larger than the frame front portion. Designed for heavy commercial use, the brick addition consists of three stories with ceilings of ten to fifteen feet, plus an attic and sub-basement. The main interior open space of each floor is interrupted only by the heavy timber columns, the elevator (which passes through an opening in the floor, with only a haphazard rail at the sides), and in the basement, the stone-sided trench that the railroad siding follows. The timber columns are approximately ten inches by ten inches and are braced at the top by diagonal braces of similar size. The framing of each floor is visible from the space below, there being no finished ceilings. Though it has relatively few windows, this portion of the building does have several large doors for moving freight in and out, including two that are lifted directly upwards by heavy-duty cables to allow trains to pass through the lowest level of the building along the railroad siding. The most prominent features of this section are the six huge, thirty-foot-tall hoppers, four on the east side of the building and two on the west side, for grain storage. These bins run the entire three stories of the building and were filled by way of a belt system with small metal cups attached.

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*Penrose Wolf Building
Somerset County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 3

Though part of the system has been removed and is marked only by a scar along the sides of the hoppers, the belts and their casings are still in the building, stored in the attic. As the belts rotated, the cups raised the grain to the top of the hoppers and emptied their contents filling one hopper at a time, slowly. The hoppers' funnel-shaped bottoms allowed for easy loading of the grain for transport or sale into anything from a feed bag to a train car. The hoppers taper down to narrow wood chutes ending in the basement level, about four feet off the floor. A few feet from the bottoms of the four hoppers along the east wall is a set of antique scales for weighing sacks of grain. The scales are composed of two fluted, cast iron columns which support the weighing mechanism. The elevator serves all floors of the brick addition section of the building, rising up through openings in the floors, stopping near the chutes and scales at the bottom floor, and stopping at the attic next to the drive shaft. Above the elevator, a small pent house extends upward through the line of the roof. A built-in ladder ascends from the attic into the pent house which provides access to the roof as well as shelter for the upper machinery of the elevator. The elevator is an open platform that moves through floor openings, and not an enclosed car. It has been left in place (stationary and secured) in the main floor of the addition, but the openings connecting the floors above and below have been sealed for fire code reasons. The large open spaces of the 1905 addition have been divided into small shop spaces in the recent rehabilitation project. The partitions that were added to define the shops are generally only 8 feet high, leaving the remaining space above them open. One of the hoppers was converted to a stair tower for egress in the case of a fire. Other than these reversible changes, the rehabilitation in these areas generally consisted of gently cleaning the brick and wood surfaces.

There is a sub-basement which runs across the rear of the building, but extends back only to the trench of the railroad siding. It has unhewn log posts supporting a wood section of the basement floor, and is lit by small windows on the railroad side of the building. This area has rubble stone walls up to grade where the brick begins. This space is not occupiable as per fire code regulations, and was not changed in the recent rehabilitation project.

On the north wall of the main open space of the 1905 addition, at the main floor level, a group of local school children painted a wall mural about 1995 depicting a covered bridge and rural countryside. The mural remains in place and was unchanged in the recent rehabilitation project.

In cleaning the exterior of the brick addition, a painted sign became more apparent on the rear wall, overlooking the railroad tracks. It says: "PENROSE WOLF / LUMBER HAY & FEED." The only notable changes to the exterior of the building in the recent rehabilitation project were that the doors and window sash were repainted in a deep green color, and the wood siding was painted yellow (all exterior wood had been painted white previously), and ramped entrances were added at the side and rear doors to provide accessibility as per the applicable codes.

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*Wolf, Penrose, Building
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The Penrose Wolf Building is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A as one of the most important centers of commerce, entertainment, and recreation in the early twentieth century development of the small town of Rockwood. It is also eligible under Criterion C as an unusual blend of an intact office and opera house building and a large utilitarian grain and lumber storage facility built as an addition. As is the case with many intact feed store buildings, the addition contains working components, such as thirty foot tall wooden hoppers, a drive shaft with belts, a freight elevator, and remnants of a railroad siding that once passed through the center of the brick part of the building. All of these components are instructive evidence of how commerce operated at this location. The building served as the town's first lumberyard, a facility operated by the town's main developer, Penrose Wolf. Mr. Wolf also built the community's main secular gathering place, an opera house, in the second story of the original lumberyard building. The original two-story frame building, built in 1898, was expanded in 1905¹ by the construction of the four story brick addition that housed the feed storage bins and provided additional space for lumber storage. The building continued to serve as a feed store until 1992. The Period of Significance extends to 1952, consistent with the National Register's 50 year guideline. Most importantly, few alterations have been made to this building that compromise its original design or detract from its depiction of these original uses.

In the early 20th century, when southwestern Pennsylvania was rapidly developing into a major industrialized region fueling industrialization and substantial growth across the United States, Rockwood was one of the region's many small, rural, industrial towns. Coal and lumber were among the industries that contributed to making the Pittsburgh Region an economic powerhouse of national importance. The coal industry developed as far out from major industrial centers as rail lines could reach, sometimes passing through mountainous areas to access the immense the Pittsburgh Coal Seam and related veins of coal. The need for timber in addition to coal drove the development of rail lines into remote areas like Rockwood, where transportation networks of adjoining areas like Western Maryland and Northern West Virginia meet those of western Pennsylvania. Rockwood was laid out in 1857² and was called Mineral Point. Settled in the 1770s, the locality had also been known as Shoaff's Bridge, for a bridge constructed there in 1816. It was an agricultural hamlet with a blacksmith shop and a shoemaker shop until the construction of the Cumberland and Connellsville Railroad in 1868-71. A planing mill was built here by a family named Growall in 1872, and a water-powered electric plant was constructed by 1895. By 1906, the town had a post office, 26 stores, a water works, a newspaper, four churches, an Odd Fellows lodge, four hotels, and at least one bank (of which Penrose Wolf was president in 1906). A 1906 history says "the town has always been a trading point for a large scope of territory."³ Ready access to coal, though, facilitated the town's transformation from a primarily agricultural village to a commercial center. Rockwood is located at the outer edge of the region linked by rail and other modes of travel to Pittsburgh area industrial sites; it was at least as closely linked to industrial developments in Western Maryland as it was to Pittsburgh. Although coal drove the economy in the early twentieth century, Rockwood retains much of its rural character and varied small town commercial architecture. In opening the first feed store in the community in 1898, Penrose Wolf became one of the town's most influential merchants, dealing in both grain and lumber. After its expansion in 1905, the Penrose Wolf Building was a commercial center for both Rockwood's and the surrounding area's booming lumber and grain industries, thus playing a representative role in the region's prosperity. In addition, in an era when entertainment facilities like opera houses were an uncommon luxury, particularly in more remote areas such as rural parts of Somerset County, the building served as a center for recreation and entertainment. Productions such as plays, vaudeville acts, and even some of the first motion pictures seen in the area were all held here.

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*Wolf, Penrose, Building
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COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUILDING

Penrose Wolf came to Rockwood in 1875 at age 21 after his bedridden father asked him to take control of cutting local timber on land he had bought along the Casselman Road. At the time the Cumberland and Connellsville Railroad ran through Rockwood and a project was underway to double-track the line. Wolf's timber was used as ties for the double-tracking. The wood from Wolf's timberlands was apparently sawn at rural or portable sawmills (not at this site). At he built his lumber and feed store in 1898, though, he developed a reputation for importing the finest cured lumber.⁴ Wolf continued to operate his timber business after the railroad was completed, but he gradually became better known as a merchant and civic leader. By the late 1870's the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had bought the Cumberland and Connellsville line and had completed a mainline from Washington D.C. to Pittsburgh and points west. The Western Maryland Railroad also provided a second route of access. These significant rail links, along with Somerset County's important agricultural economy, helped Wolf further expand his business enterprises in lumber, construction, grain, and feed.

Construction of the present building as a lumberyard, grain store, and office began in 1898. Wolf incorporated an opera house in the second story of the 1898 section, greatly reinforcing his business presence in the community by operating the town's main meeting place. Wolf's lumber was important in the construction of homes and other buildings in Rockwood, most of which were constructed between the 1890s and the 1910s. The large brick addition, built in 1905, provided a place for unloading grain from railroad cars, storing the grain in hoppers, and mixing various kinds of grain for sale to farmers. From his newly constructed building Wolf ran a combination of commercial activities of central importance to the town. The building still reflects these activities.

The large, brick portion of the building was used for storage of lumber, hay, and feed. An advertisement for Wolf's business from the Rockwood Leader on March 9, 1906 emphasized the lumber and construction aspects of the business, but also indicated: "Flour, Grain, Feed, Hay, Straw, Seed, Corn Meal, Buckwheat Flour, Salt Meats, White Lead, Oils, Paints, Varnish, Lime, Cement, Nails, Shingles, Wood Pulp Plaster and Tile at Lowest Wholesale and Retail Prices."⁵ The railroad siding provided for transportation of large quantities of these goods directly into the building. The ability to move large quantities of goods helped Wolf's business grow in regional importance, in an area which ranged far beyond western Pennsylvania into Maryland, West Virginia, and Virginia. From the rail cars, grain was lifted to the tops of the thirty foot high grain bins, a total distance of nearly forty feet. The grain was lifted by cloth conveyor belts driven by a drive shaft system attached to the ceiling rafters of the attic. The doors allowing the railroad siding to pass through the building had to lift vertically because the siding was trenched lower than the adjoining grade, eliminating the possibility of doors designed to slide to the side, and because heavy snows in the region made swinging doors impractical. The doors were therefore lifted by a system of long steel cables and pulleys driven by the drive shaft in the attic ceiling. The bins were constructed of wood two-by-fours, laid horizontally on top of each other, and interwoven at the ends like a log structure. Thus the walls of the hoppers were solid wood, four inches thick, to support the lateral forces created by the weight of the grain. Each bin (or hopper) has floor joists passing through it at each floor level, tying the opposing walls together, as in most wood-floored construction, but the absence of flooring at these points allowed the grain to flow freely toward the bottom. At the bottom of each bin, the two-by-fours step inward making a funnel shape, and at the lowest point of the funnel, a wood chute with a

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mechanical valve descends from the ceiling in the bottom floor room where feed bags were filled and weighed. The original scales are still in place next to the chutes. An elevator next to the railroad siding provided a means of moving sacks of feed and other items back up to the upper levels. The original lumber room of the 1898 frame part of the building reflects the earlier system for moving goods in and out of the building: it has sliding doors to either side of the main storage room, both about four feet above grade, so that the openings served as loading docks.

The building boom of the early 20th century contributed greatly to Wolf's business success. His lumbering business alone employed hundreds of workers in the Rockwood area from the 1870's until his death in 1921. The timber and construction services of a large percentage of the buildings in the entire area around Rockwood were sold by Wolf from this building. A civic-minded individual as well, he helped locate a new water source and build a water supply system for Rockwood residents after a typhoid fever outbreak in the 1890s. The building not only reflects Wolf's role as the prime organizer of the community and as the provisioner of lumber and other items needed when most of the other buildings in the town were being built: as a feed store, it also reflects the role it played for the large number of established farms that surrounded Rockwood. Somerset County, though one of the highest elevated and coldest counties in Pennsylvania, has always been an exceptionally productive farming county. Wolf's feed store provided an outlet for grain, seeds, and other farm items raised locally (it is not known how much of the grain and feed sold at this store was purchased from local farms and how much was purchased elsewhere, but the main purpose of the facility was to sell these items to farmers in need of grain, seeds, and lumber). The feed store provided the primary place for local farmers to purchase the seeds and feed products which they increasingly relied upon as the county's farms modernized and tried new methods of agriculture.

All the operations of the commercial and storage parts of the building are thus illustrated by the layout of the bins, doors, siding, and mechanical components, and the building is still clearly illustrative of the activities it was built to accommodate. The center of each floor of the 1905 part of the building, is mostly a large open space providing for flexibility, and interrupted only by the elevator and the post and beam construction. In the recent conversion of the building to a mini-mall with shops, wood partitions were added in most of the large, previously unfinished areas, but most do not extend all the way to the high ceilings, and they were constructed so that they can be removed.

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION SIGNIFICANCE

Wolf's civic-minded spirit is further illustrated in his decision to build Rockwood's first opera house. The opera house provided an important local resource for diversion, bringing acting troupes and other forms of entertainment into an otherwise isolated farming and mining area. After the building was completed, a variety of acting and vaudeville troupes, including some minstrel shows, performed here.

With the development of local coal mines and the immigration of workers, plays and movies became important to the stability of communities across the region. Throughout the coal mining regions of Pennsylvania, the development of movie theaters was largely driven by the need to provide compelling, organized entertainment for miners, many of whom were were immigrant men who had come alone without their families. This was especially true in small towns with shops frequented weekly by miners who lived in outlying "mining camps" or "patches" and who only came to town

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on payday. Prior to the invention of movies, the prevalence of bars, brothels, and other illicit forms of entertainment was a rising concern across the region. Movie theaters were considered not only a deterrent to crime, but also an alternative to group meetings which company owners feared would lead to the formation of unions.

As motion pictures became more widespread, Wolf's opera house was the location for some of the first demonstrations of movies in Somerset County. A newspaper advertisement from the Rockwood Leader of March 16, 1906 reads, "Don't fail to see H. J. Meyer's marvelous moving pictures and specialties at Wolf's Opera house this evening (Friday, March 16). He is showing the latest and best features, comic and miscellaneous films projected with the most perfect machine. The most popular songs of the day beautifully illustrated. A moral, instructive and pleasing entertainment—the Barnum of them all."⁶ This ad provides some insight into Wolf's own sense of the importance of his opera house as an entertainment facility. The first movie theater in Rockwood did not open until the 1920s.

Later, as movies began to replace vaudeville, and as larger theaters were built exclusively for movies with comfortable seating and acoustics engineered for mechanically reproduced sound tracks (movie theaters needed special projection booths, screens fixed at the proscenium of the stage, and cloth-covered walls, which were not conducive to live entertainment), the opera house fell out of use, as many did across the region. Transportation improvements were another factor. As the number of automobiles in the area increased, so did the number of movie theaters in the larger towns, such as Somerset and Meyersdale, both of which were less than ten miles away. Eventually, the room came to be used as a meeting hall for several local civic organizations. Dances were also held here.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Not only is the Penrose Wolf Building significant in association with events of the early 20th century in Somerset County, but the building is also important for its architecture. The front portion of the building, though a modestly detailed design on the exterior, is a good example of a Late Victorian commercial style found in rural areas. Much rarer than the simple vernacular exterior is the wood-lined interior which incorporates chestnut panelling in chevron patterns with thin, chamfered columns which are delicately fluted at the center. In Somerset County, wood was used as a cheaper alternative and a more stable cold-climate material than plaster in many interiors. However, very few interiors of this quality are believed to have survived, especially rendered in natural-finished chestnut.

Not only is this a rare survivor, but it represents the tone for style and taste set by the community's leading citizen and building consultant of the day. The concern about appearances here was not only set by Penrose Wolf in Rockwood's heyday, but it was impressed upon his family members and passed on down the generations of his descendants, assuring the building's preservation. Though the building was rented to another family who operated the feed mill for many years, Helen Wolf, the granddaughter of Penrose Wolf, who inherited half interest the property, managed to keep it almost perfectly intact, as a testament to her grandfather. In fact, Miss Wolf wrote the first draft of this nomination in late 1995, attaching her grandfather's name to the building rather than the more common name, Rockwood Feedmill, shortly before she died at nearly a hundred years of age.

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*Wolf, Penrose, Building
Somerset County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 5

The Penrose Wolf Building was inherited by Helen Wolf and her sister, Mary Jane Outten, when their father, Levi Wolf, died in 1957. Levi had inherited it from his father, Penrose Wolf, who died in 1921. The building was rented to Friedline Feed Store from 1951 until 1992. After 1992, it was vacant until the present owners bought it in 1999 and began a complete rehabilitation of the building, an Investment Tax Credit Rehabilitation following the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation. Although eight-foot-high partitions have been placed in most of the large open areas to allow for individual shops, and though one of the hoppers was converted to a staircase and ramps were added to allow exterior access, the essential features of the building remain unchanged.

ENDNOTES:

1. The information on lifetime activities of Penrose Wolf, including dates, various undertakings, and Wolf's importance to the community come from the records and recollections of the late Helen Wolf, granddaughter and heir of Penrose Wolf, as she expressed them in the Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form she prepared for this property in October, 1995.
2. Hon. William H. Koontz (editor) *History of Bedford and Somerset Counties, Pennsylvania: with Genealogical and Personal History*. pp. 650-651.
3. *Ibid.*, page 651.
4. Down the Road of Our Past, page 105.
5. "Penrose Wolf, Dealer In and Manufacturer of All Kinds of Lumber." *Rockwood Leader*. Rockwood Pa. Friday, 9 March 1906.
6. "Don't fail to see H.J. Meyer's marvelous moving pictures and specialities at Wolf's Opera house this evening (Friday, March 16)." *Rockwood Leader*. Rockwood Pa. Friday, 16 March 1906.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Wolf, Penrose, Building
Somerset County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 9 Page 1

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Interviews with Virginia Barbera Crimone and Nat Barbera, conducted by Susan Barbera. Notes in possession of preparer.

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Wolf, Penrose, Building
Somerset County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description:

This property consists of four building lots at the corner of Main Street and Chestnut Street in Rockwood Borough, Somerset County, Pennsylvania, assigned the tax parcel number 36-12-109.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated tax parcel contains all the property historically associated with the Penrose Wolf Building, and it does not contain any other known resources. The nominated area excludes property and resources not historically associated with the building or its historic uses.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Wolf, Penrose, Building
Somerset County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number: list of photographs Page 1

Photographs

Information for numbers 1-5 is the same for all photographs:

1. Penrose Wolf Building
2. Rockwood Borough, Somerset County, Pennsylvania
3. Terry Necciai, RA
4. 14 January 2000
5. Negative Location: Offices of Historic Preservation Consulting
2334 Murray Ave.
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15217

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	DIRECTION
No. 1	Facade and west elevation, northwest corner	SE
No. 2	Facade and east elevation, northeast corner	SW
No. 3	Shop windows, detail	W
No. 4	Transom, brackets, and storefront cornice detail	up
No. 5	West elevation	E
No. 6	Southwest corner with railroad tracks	NE
No. 7	Southeast corner	NW
No. 8	Original entrance door for railroad cars: detail of rising door & cable	W
No. 9	Interior, former office space w/ enclosed stairway and ticket window	NW
No. 10	Penrose Wolf's safe	down
No. 11	Original paneling and doors to storage area	SE
No. 12	Doors to storage area, detail	S
No. 13	Storage area of frame part of building	NE
No. 14	Stairway to opera house, showing chevron paneling	N
No. 15	Doors to opera house at top of stairs	N
No. 16	Opera house with larger stage and firewall	S
No. 17	Steep stairs to larger stage	SW
No. 18	Smaller stage with wing area to right (stage left)	NE
No. 19	Door to wing area with chevron panels and graffiti	N
No. 20	Original chevron pattern at stage left of smaller stage, detail	NE
No. 21	Detail of performers' graffiti, with date 1904 at center	N
No. 22	Dressing room east of larger stage, within brick part of building	NE
No. 23	Interior of main open space of mill addition at upper street level	NE
No. 24	View of exterior of grain bins from large area in mill, w/drive belt scar	SE
No. 25	Detail of scar at former location of driveshaft belt and cover	E
No. 26	Large room of mill building at upper street level w/ elevator and stairs	SW
No. 27	Detail of stairs and corner of western hoppers	SW
No. 28	Upper floor mill addition room behind stage, elevator in foreground	NE
No. 29	Detail of door to dressing room behind back wall of stage in mill add.	NE
No. 30	Driveshaft and belt at ceiling at attic level	up
No. 31	Detail of elevator and attic framing	NE
No. 32	Interior of penthouse/roof access above elevator	up
No. 33	Chutes from bottom of hoppers at basement level of mill addition	NW
No. 34	Antique scales at basement level near bins	S

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

*Penrose Wolf Building
Somerset County, Pennsylvania*

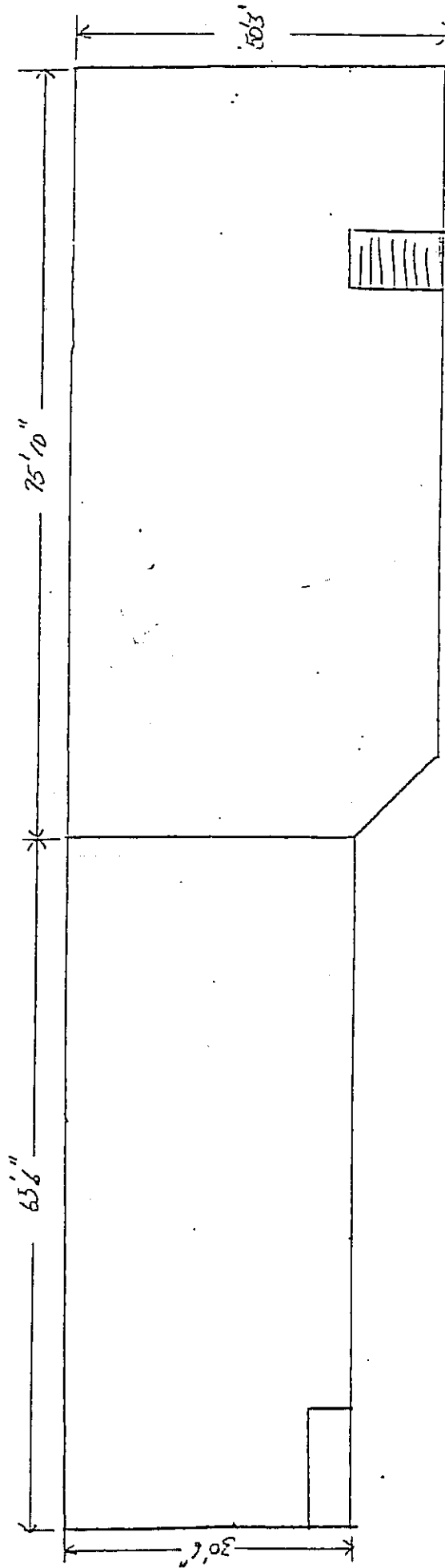
Section Number: list of photographs Page 2

Photographs (second roll/after rehabilitation project)

Information for numbers 1-5 is the same for photographs No. 35 - No. 50:

1. Penrose Wolf Building
2. Rockwood Borough, Somerset County, Pennsylvania
3. Susan Barbera
4. July 2001
5. Negative Location: Offices of Historic Preservation Consulting
2334 Murray Ave.
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15217

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	DIRECTION
No. 35	South elevation after rehab (w/ ramp & restored painted sign)	NW
No. 36	Restored west elevation doors to railroad passage in 1905 addition	SE
No. 37	Restored east elevation railroad passage doors	NW
No. 38	Bathroom partition added within 1898 first floor storage rm. in rehab	NW
No. 39	Northwest entrance door to 1905 addition, with 2001 partitions, etc.	NW
No. 40	Partitions in rehabbed first floor area of 1905 addition	SW
No. 41	Elevator in 1905 addition as made stationary in 2001 project	S
No. 42	Restored Opera House rm. from larger stage looking toward smaller	NW
No. 43	Restored Opera House rm. from smaller stage looking toward larger	S
No. 44	New stairs and lift added over older (steep) stairs at stage to meet code	SW
No. 45	Ticket window from opera house, in stairwell, first floor, after rehab	NW
No. 46	Looking down stairs from opera house space toward main street	N/down
No. 47	Basement converted to exercise area, showing fire wall at furnace rm.	S
No. 48	Attic with ductwork added in 2001 and no other changes	N
No. 49	Attic with ductwork added in 2001 and no other changes	S
No. 50	Detail view of kitchen area added within hopper space	W

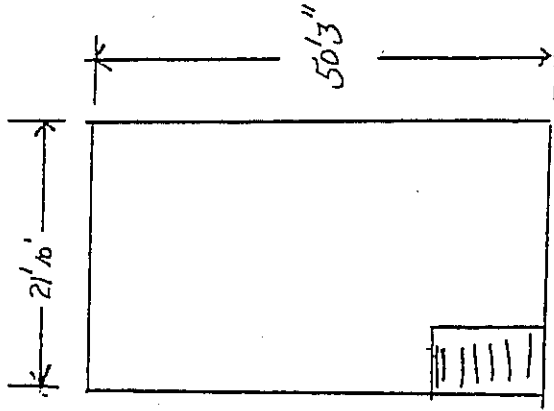


BASEMENT

Wolf, Penrose, Building
Rockwood Boro, Somerset Co, PA

3100E

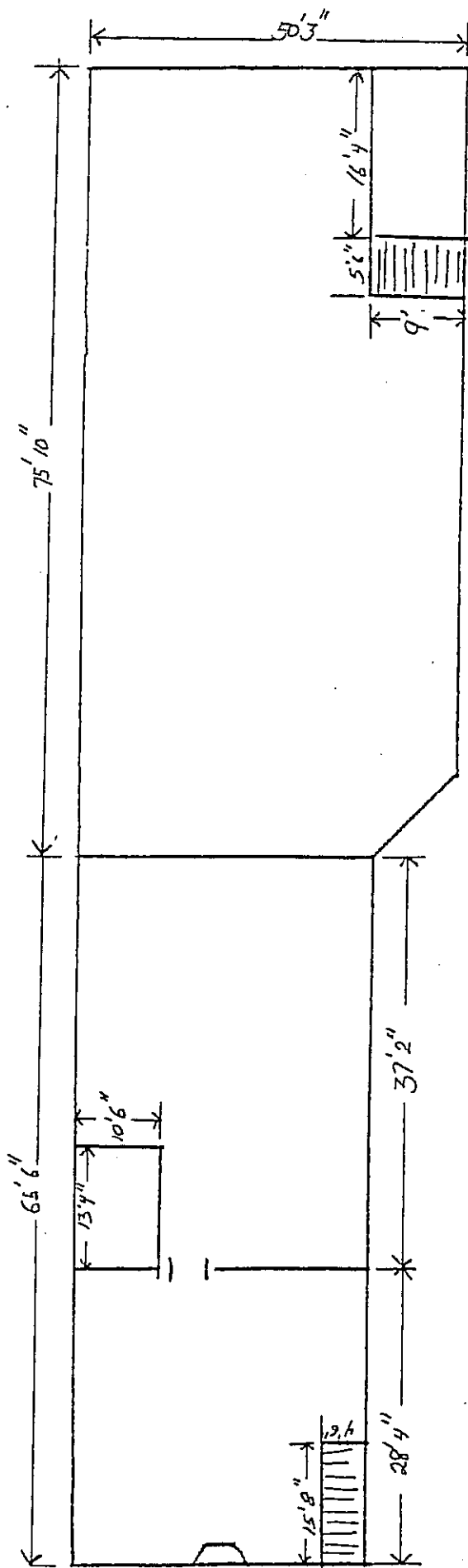
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FRONT

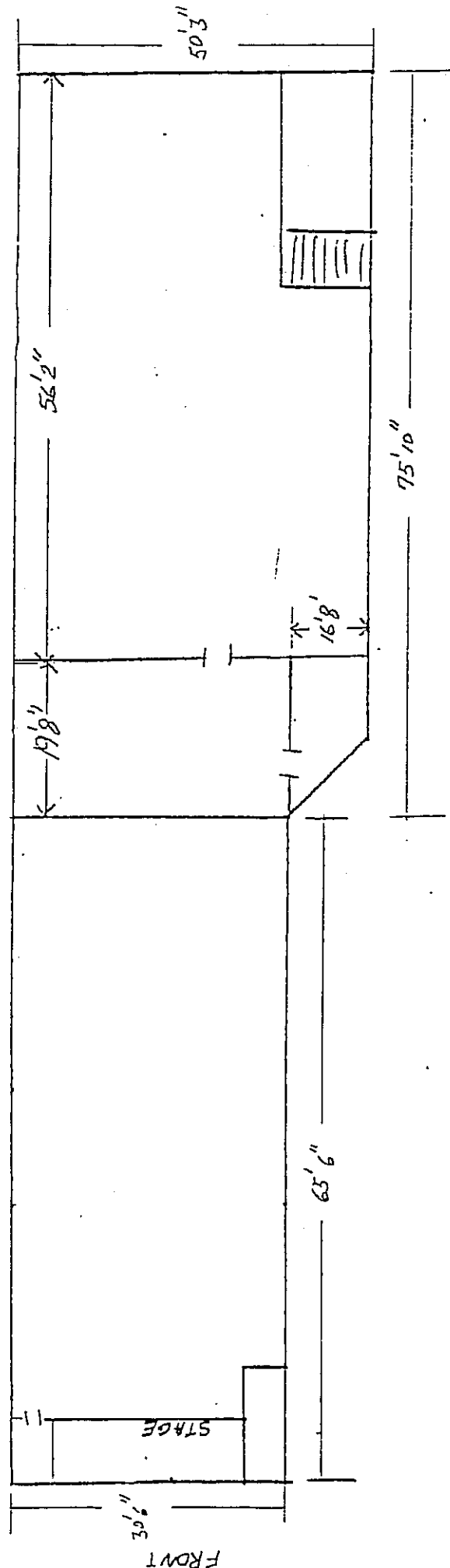
Sub BASEMENT

Wolf, Penrose Building
Rockwood Baro, Somerset Co., PA



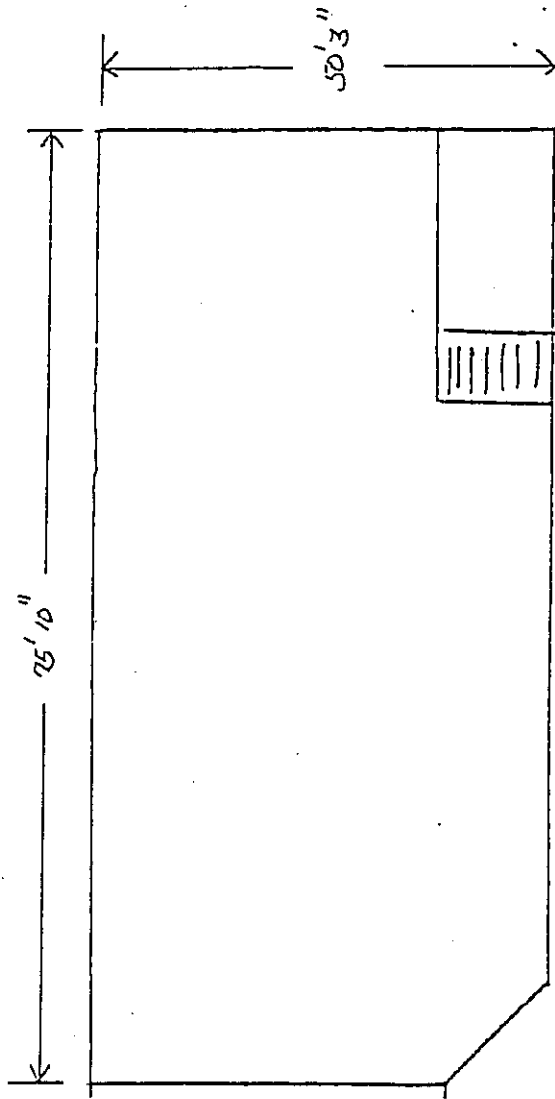
FIRST FLOOR

Wolf, Reese, Building
Somerset Co., PA



SECOND FLOOR

Wolf, Penrose Building
Somerset Co., PA



THIRD FLOOR
REAR SECTION

Wolf, Penrose, Building
Somerset Co., PA

Wolf, Antoine
Building
Rockwood, PA
Somerset Co,
Zone 17
457460m.E
4419610m.N

