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NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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 Westcliffe Jail

other names/site number Old Jail House

2. Location

street & number 116 Second Street

☒ N/A not for publication

city or town Westcliffe,

☒ N/A vicinity

state Colorado

code CO

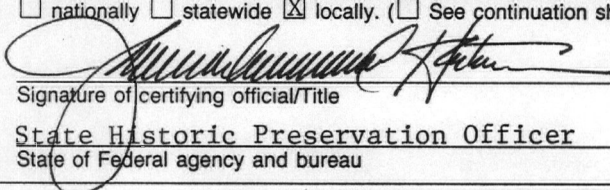
county Custer

code 027

zip code 81252

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

December 9, 1992  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer  
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

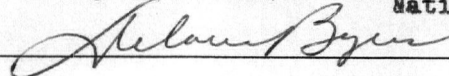
I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☒ 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

~~Entered in the~~  
**National Register**

Date of Action



2/3/93

Westcliffe Jail  
Name of Property

Custer, Colorado  
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	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

N/A

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: correctional facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/not in use  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone, concrete  
walls Stone, concrete  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Wood, Metal: tin  
other Iron, Wood, Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Narrative Description

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



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Westcliffe Jail

Custer, CO CO

Description

The Westcliffe Jail is a small, one-story, detached stone building located on the northwest edge of Westcliffe, a ranching community in the Wet Mountain Valley of south central Colorado. The jail at 116 Second Street faces east and is set back approximately 60 feet from the lot line.

Built in 1888 by Archie Scherer, a local stonemason, the jail has a nearly square plan measuring 17 feet by 18.2 feet. Constructed of roughly squared local fieldstone with concrete mortar, the building has a nearly flat roof with less than 2% pitch added in 1985. This was installed to protect the interior and the remnants of the original roof which was constructed of two by tens set side by side on edge and secured with square nails. These boards extended approximately three feet beyond the eaves creating a porch roof in front of the jail. Remnants of the boards are visible at the open gable ends. The modern common rafter roof is set on pine wall plates and covered corrugated tin. At the same time the mortar joints were repointed. The only entrance, a single door of rough-sawn vertical boards, is located on the south side of the east elevation. Two horizontal windows are located immediately below the eaves on the north and south elevations. These windows and the door have frames and lintels of rough-sawn wood. However, the horizontal window frames are neatly joined. The west window on the south elevation retains only the lower half of its frame and the bars have been removed. The remaining windows have four original locally made iron bars which are vertically set in the wooden frame.

The 360 square foot interior retains its original one-room plan which is divided into two cells, although the iron bar cell doors were removed in 1988. Interior walls are unfinished fieldstone and the floor is dirt. The building was constructed without plumbing facilities, although it was originally heated by a wood burning stove vented by an interior brick chimney with corbelled cap covered with concrete. It is located at the west end of the roof ridge.

The jail's setting remains that of a distinctly rural town with the grid pattern and town lots still evident. There is no landscaping and native grasses surround the building; however, a paved parking area is now located in the center of the lot between the jail and feed store.

Westcliffe Jail  
Name of Property

Custer, Colorado  
County and State

## 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.

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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1888=c.1925

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Archie Scherer

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

West Custer County Library  
209 Main Street  
Westcliffe, CO 81252



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

Westcliffe Jail

*Custer Colo*

## Statement of Significance

The Westcliffe Jail is historically significant under Criterion A for its association with the broad pattern of events involving the extension of government on the frontier by providing a mechanism for law enforcement. Constructed in c. 1888, the jail served as an incarceration facility until the mid-1920's when the local government had matured and was able to construct a courthouse and sheriff's department building with jail. The fieldstone building meets criterion C for its method of construction and the work of master stonemason, Archie Scherer. Scherer's skill in using the local fieldstone which he assembled in roughly squared courses yet embellished with quoins was recognized locally by residents and county officials who commissioned him to build houses, the jail and a school during the town's frontier period.

## Historical Background and Significance

Westcliffe is located in the Wet Mountain Valley, west of Pueblo, Colorado, and is the Custer County seat. The area was settled initially in 1870 by a colony of some 300 German farmers from the Chicago area. Although the venture failed due to poor leadership and financial mismanagement, many of the settlers remained in the valley and their descendants settled in Westcliffe. Silver mining in the vicinity of Rosita and Silver Cliff brought several thousand prospectors into the region at the end of the same decade and soon attracted the interest of railroad builders.

Westcliffe was founded as a town when the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad brought its narrow gauge line up Grape Creek from Canon City. Although General William Jackson Palmer, the owner of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, saw a need for a line in the Silver Cliff area, he bypassed Silver Cliff in 1881 in favor of one of his own self-made company towns approximately one mile to the west. The town which became Westcliffe, was the product of Palmer and his partner Dr. William Bell, who had purchased ranch land where the new terminal was to be located. He platted the town and sold lots in anticipation of Palmer's railroad. The developers named the new town Clifton, which Bell later changed to Westcliffe after his birthplace, Westcliffe-on-the-Sea, a resort town in England. The town was incorporated in 1887 and became the main hub for the farming and ranching community.

The town had its quota of commercial buildings, hotels, restaurants and saloons. The jail was constructed in 1888, a year after incorporation for \$330 to counter the effects of the adjacent Dutch Row, a now vacant block once lined with saloons frequented by cowboys from the nearby ranches. It served mainly as a "drunk tank"



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8, 9 Page 3

Westcliffe Jail

*Custer Co Co*

for those cowboys who over indulged until the mid-1920s when the town built a sheriff's department with a jail and county courthouse. During the same period, the county added another civilizing influence when it constructed a school in 1891.

The railroad ceased operations in 1938, but Westcliffe remains the trading and governmental center for the surrounding agricultural community. Since the mid-twentieth century, modern highways and recreational opportunities offered by the beauty of the surrounding Sangre de Cristo mountains, have added tourism as an important component of the local economy.

The primitive jail is a typical example of the work of Archie Scherer, a skilled local stonemason, whose work ranged from residential to institutional and included Westcliffe's unique cottage style school, which was listed on the National Register in 1989. Scherer's ability to use local materials to express a building's function is evident in the massive quality of the stone walls. Yet, he revealed his attention to detail by surpassing the functional to incorporate quoins in this simple structure, as he did later in the school. Scherer artfully assembled one section of the jail's walls without mortar in order to provide a means of escape. He made use of that section himself when he was jailed soon after he completed construction. He spent the daytime hours of his ten-day sentence in the jail and his nights in his own home.<sup>1</sup>

## Bibliography

Athearn, Robert G. The Coloradans. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1976.

Denver, CO. Colorado Historical Society. Library. Photographic Collection.

Denver, CO. Colorado Historical Society. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Inventory Site Files, Custer County.

Erps, Marie, contributor. Reflections. Westcliffe, CO.: Westcliffe Federated Women's Club, n.d.

"Peaks of the Past: A Valley Retrospect." Wet Mountain Tribune, April 2, 1992.

Westcliffe, CO. Custer County Courthouse Records.

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<sup>1</sup>Marie Erps, Archie Scherer's niece and resident of Silver Cliff, verified this information.

Westcliffe Jail

Name of Property

Custer, Colorado

County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property under one (1) acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 1 3	4 5 8 9 9 0	4 2 2 0 8 9 0
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

☐ 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 Irene Francis and Donna Hole

organization N/A CHS/OAHP date September 10, 1992

street & number 2301 CR 323 telephone (719) 783-9453

city or town Westcliffe state CO zip code 81252

### 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 W. Garrett Carlson

street & number 10050 Reevesbury Dr telephone (310) 858-7355

city or town Beverly Hills state CA zip code 90210

**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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 4

Westcliffe Jail

*Custer Co*

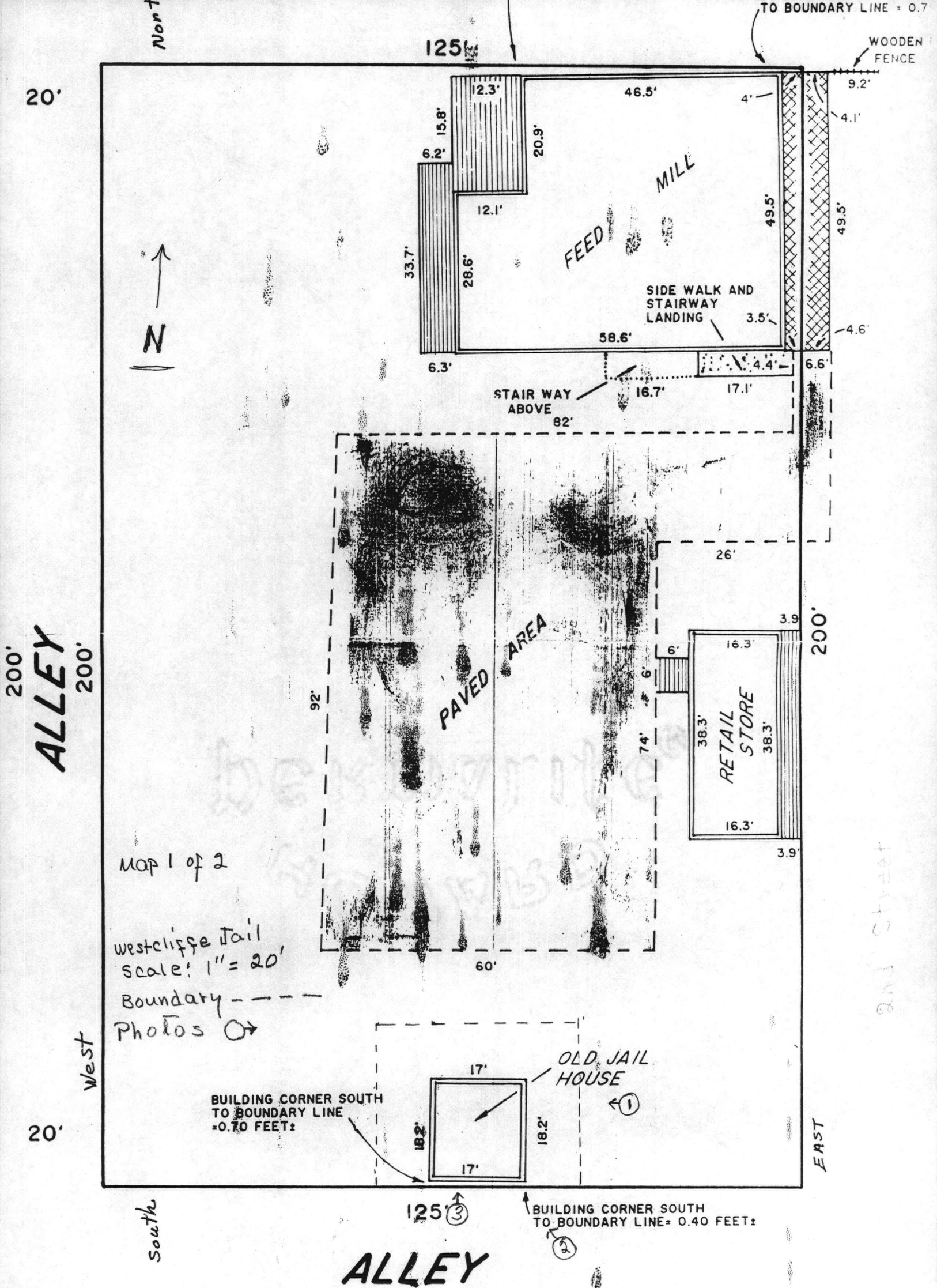
**Verbal boundary description**

The boundary of the Westcliffe Jail is shown by the dashed line on the accompanying scale map. The boundary is 10 feet from the building on the north, east and west sides. On the south the boundary follows the alley line.

**Verbal boundary justification**

The boundary was drawn to include the jail and 10 feet of surrounding land historically associated with the property and to exclude the vast expanse of vacant property, the parking lot, the new commercial building and the Westcliffe Feed Mill.





# WESTCHIFFE JAIL CUSTER CO CO



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Westcliffe Jail

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: COLORADO, Custer

DATE RECEIVED: 12/28/92 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/12/93  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/28/93 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/11/93  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 92001846

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 2/3/93 DATE Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



# CLASSIFICATION

count resource type

## STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

### FUNCTION

historic current

### DESCRIPTION

architectural classification  
materials  
descriptive text

### SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph  
completeness  
clarity  
applicable criteria  
justification of areas checked  
relating significance to the resource  
context  
relationship of integrity to significance  
justification of exception  
other

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage verbal boundary description  
UTMs boundary justification

### ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

### OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone

Signed

Date



- ① Westcliff Jail - Old Jailhouse
- " 116 Second Street
- 2 Westcliffe, Custer County, CO
- 3 Jim Little
4. 10/22/92
5. West Mtn. Tribune, Westcliffe
6. West
7. #1





2

1. westcliffe Jail

116 2nd St,

2. westcliffe, Custer Co, CO

3. Jun Little

4. 10/22/92

5. west Min. Tribune, westcliffe

6. North west

7. #2



3

1. westcliffe Jail

116 2nd St.

2. westcliffe, Custer Co, CO

3. Jim Little

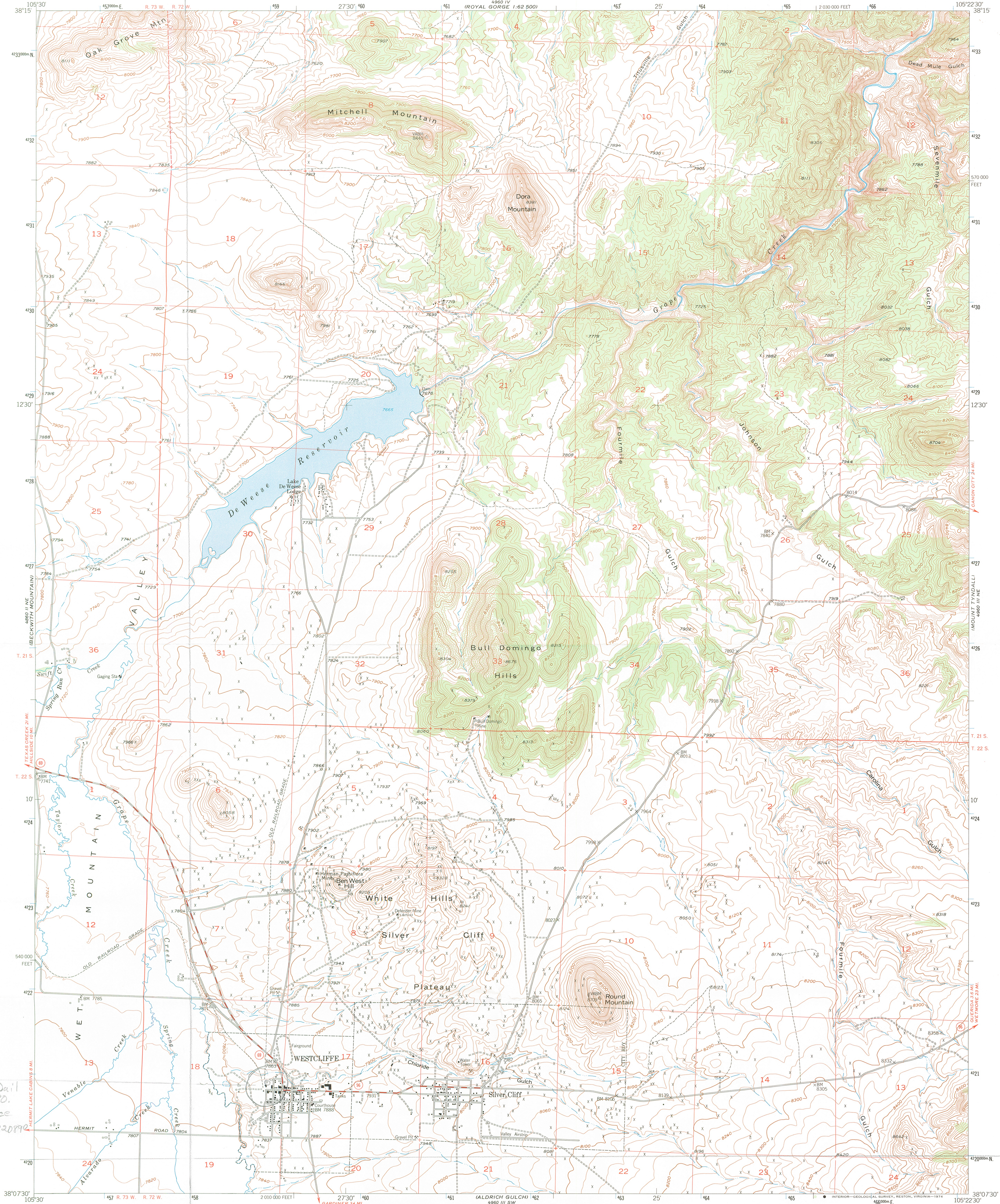
4. 10/22/92

5. Wet Mtn. Tribune, westcliffe

6. North

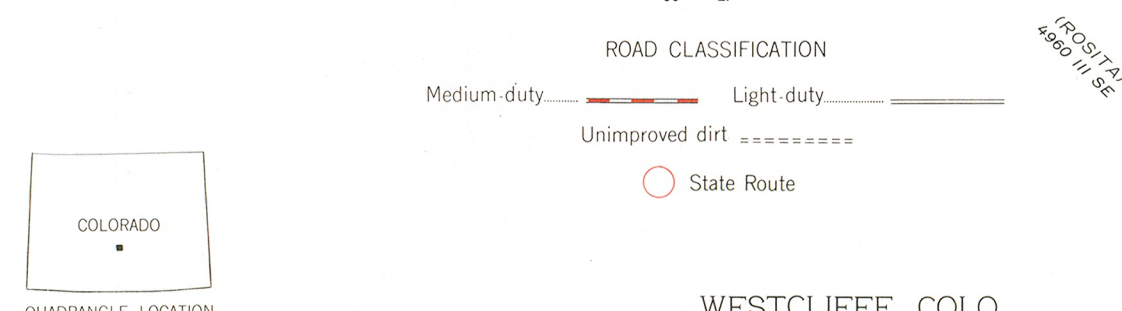
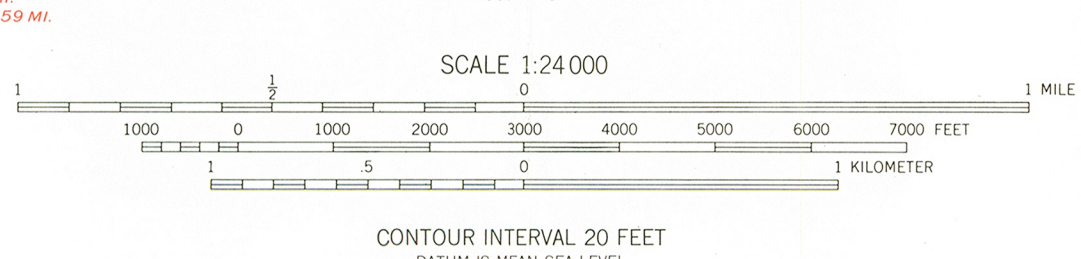
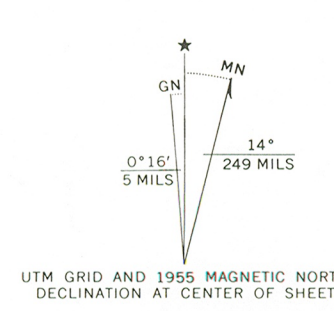
7. #3





Map 2 of 2  
Westcliffe Jail  
Westcliffe, CO.  
UTM-Reference  
13/458990/422089

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods  
Aerial photographs taken 1952. Field check 1955  
Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Colorado coordinate system,  
south zone  
Dashed land lines indicate approximate locations  
All mines are inactive unless otherwise indicated  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 13, shown in blue



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

WESTCLIFFE, COLO.  
N3807.5-W10522.5/7.5  
1955

AMS 4960 III NW-SERIES V877





COLORADO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

DEC 20 1992

REGISTER

The Colorado History Museum 1300 Broadway Denver, Colorado 80203-2137

December 18, 1992

Ms. Carol D. Shull  
Chief of Registration  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
P. O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to submit for your approval the following nominations which were reviewed at the November 20, 1992 Review Board meeting.

The Mint Saloon in Empire, Clear Creek County was approved for submission by nine Review Board members with one member opposed. The Westcliffe Jail in Westcliffe, Custer County; Hammar House, Castle Rock, Douglas County; the Multiple Property Historic Resources of Camp George West and the individual Camp George West Historic District; the Coates Creek School, Mesa County; and the Milne Farm, Weld County all passed unanimously.

We look forward to the formal listing of these properties. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Barbara Norgren, National Register Coordinator at 303/866-4681.

Sincerely,

James E. Hartmann  
State Historic Preservation Officer

JEH/BN:jc