

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name A. J. Harwi Hardware Company Building

Other names/site number KHRI #005-1789

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number <u>832 Commercial Street</u>	N/A	not for publication
City or town <u>Atchison</u>	N/A	vicinity
State <u>Kansas</u> Code <u>KS</u> County <u>Atchison</u> Code <u>005</u> Zip code <u>66002</u>		

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local Applicable National Register Criteria: X A ___ B x C ___ D

Patrick Zollner
Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date 2-6-21

Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain): _____

Listed in the National Register June 7, 2021

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/Warehouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

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

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: BRICK, CONCRETE
walls: BRICK

roof: EPDM
other: STONE

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Narrative Description

Summary

Located at 832 Commercial Street, the four story A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building (1907) anchors the southeast corner of 9th and Commercial streets at the west edge of downtown Atchison, Atchison County, Kansas. Simple Classical Revival stone detailing adorns the upper façade of the tapestry brick and timber two-part commercial block; the storefront materials date to the mid-twentieth century. Brick forms the foundation and exterior walls; concrete footings provide additional structural support. Timber beams and columns support the interior wood structural system. A double elevator core organizes the open plans of each floor. The A.J. Harwi Hardware Building retains a high level of integrity as a local example of an early twentieth century warehouse.

Elaboration

Setting

The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building (Harwi Building) anchors the southeast corner of the intersection of 9th and Commercial streets at the west end of downtown Atchison (*Figures 1 & 2*). Commercial Street organizes downtown from the Missouri River west to 10th Street.¹ One-story automobile-related resources, ranging in age from the 1910s to the 1960s, occupy the northwest and southwest corners of the intersection. Directly north of the Harwi Building, one-story brick commercial buildings dating to circa 1915 also house auto-related functions, as they did historically. The brick Classical Revival Atchison County Memorial Hall (1922) sits to the northeast of the Harwi Building.² A combination of one- and two-part brick commercial blocks extend to the east of the Harwi Building along the south side of Commercial Street. Secondary siding covers most of these buildings, which range in date between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s (*Figure 3*).

The Harwi Building property includes four lots. The building itself fully occupies the west three lots; the east lot is vacant. A one-story storage building formerly occupied the north end of the lot but was removed between 1916 and 1924 (*Figures 4 & 5*). Today this asphalt lot functions as an unmarked parking area. A concrete sidewalk lines the north and west sides of the property, and a paved mid-block alley spans the south end.

North (Principal) Elevation

The Harwi Building faces north onto Commercial Street. The vitrified tapestry brick exterior walls are laid in a running bond in Portland cement mortar.³ The symmetrical brick façade features a classically inspired Carthage stone entablature above the upper story windows;⁴ a simple brick parapet rises above the entablature between square brick corner blocks that rise slightly above parapet level. The flat roof behind this parapet slopes to the south. Three bays organize the first story. Most of the materials at this level date to the mid-twentieth century; however, the configuration of the bays generally follows the historic configuration with end entry bays flanking a center bay of display windows (*Photos 1 & 2; Figures 6 & 7*). Both entrances provide access into the first floor of the building; the east bay most recently functioned as a separate retail space. Historic square brick piers separate the three bays. An asymmetrical corrugated metal slipcover hides the brick of the west bay and the historic

¹ The block of Commercial between 9th and 10th streets is a mixture of residential and commercial. West of 10th Street, Commercial Street is mostly residential.

² The Memorial Building was listed in the National Register in 2007.

³ "Big Wholesale Hardware House," *The Atchison Daily Globe* (1 July 1907): 3.

⁴ "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

transom level of the first story.⁵ The east bay features an inset aluminum storefront system with a pair of centered doors with transom; full-height sidelights flank the doors. A pair of metal steps dating to 1907 provides access from the sidewalk up to the doors; the steps span the bay between the piers. A metal canopy with three inset square light fixtures shelters the doors; this canopy integrates with the metal slipcover. The west bay of the first story contains the main entry into the Harwi Building. The anodized aluminum storefront contains a pair of doors with narrow sidelights and a three-part transom. A single concrete step, inset slightly from the façade, leads up to a concrete stoop and entry doors. A metal canopy, integrated with the slipcover, shelters this inset bay. The center of the façade features a set of three plate glass display windows above a brick bulkhead. This brick does not match the brick of the 1907 façade.

The upper three stories of the north elevation are nearly identical. Five bays organize each story. Each bay features a pair of one-over-one historic wood windows with continuous stone sills, continuous steel lintels, and brick pier between each window.⁶ The decorative stone entablature frames the tops of the fourth-story bays. A flagpole (unknown date) rises from the roof at the center of the elevation.

West (9th Street) Elevation

The west elevation fronts 9th Street. Eleven bays organize this unadorned brick façade (*Photos 2 & 3*). The first story bays differ in size from the upper story window bays. Brick fills the north four window bays. The north three of these were smaller square units; the fourth bay was a taller two-over-two window. Bays five, six, eight, ten, and eleven are historic two-over-two wood windows; although, several sashes are missing their muntins. Brick infills bays seven and nine. These former masonry openings were loading bays, and a shed roof awning formerly covered the bays (*Figure 7*). The upper three stories are identical. Each of the eleven bays contains a historic one-over-one wood window with a stone sill and metal lintel.⁷ The fourth-story windows are slightly shorter than the second- and third-story windows.

South (Alley) Elevation

The south elevation abuts the mid-block alley (*Photos 2 & 3*). Five bays organize this façade. Masonry openings within this elevation have segmental brick arch lintels and stone sills, unless otherwise noted. As with the north and west elevations, the first story differs from the upper three stories. The west bay contains a historic twelve-over-twelve wood window over a wood one-over-one window at ground level; the sill of the first story window is the lintel of the basement window. The bay to the east contains a narrow rectangular masonry opening with an overhead garage door. The center bay is a twelve-over-twelve window. Corrugated metal panels enclose the concrete loading dock (post-1941) that spans the garage and center bays.⁸ The fourth bay matches bay one. The easternmost bay is a square masonry opening that formerly contained a garage door. The opening has a soldier brick lintel and metal sill set at truck-bed height. Eight-over-eight wood windows fill most of the upper three story bays. Plywood covers the center bays of the second and third stories; brick fills the west bay of the fourth story, and a vent pierces the brick infill.

⁵ The transom level is visible on the interior; however, the prismatic glass transom appears to have been removed.

⁶ Plywood covers two windows on the second story with a window air conditioning unit at top.

⁷ Plywood covers a few windows on the second and third stories.

⁸ A wooden canopy spanned the south façade through 1941, according to the Sanborn map from that year; the concrete dock and metal roof and walls were added at an unknown date.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

East Elevation

The east elevation contains the fewest number of openings of the four exterior walls (*Photo 1*). A stepped parapet caps the wall, and a square brick chimney rises from the roof at the center of the elevation. A non-historic covered wooden dock spans the center of the façade. Four masonry openings pierce the first story at the dock. The south and north openings have large segmental brick arch lintels; the center two rectangular bays have steel lintels. Concrete block fills the south, former garage, bay; pedestrian doors occupy the second bay from the south and the north bay. The center north opening was a former garage bay that has been partially infilled and now features a pedestrian door.

The upper three stories each feature three arched brick openings, two near the north end of the wall and one just south of the chimney. Within the openings are a mixture of eight-light fixed windows, wood casements, and egress doors; although, no exterior stair remains.

Interior

The Harwi Building has four floors over a full basement. A grid of four by ten timber columns support timber girders that in turn support exposed timber beams; exposed wood planking laid atop the beams provide the underlayment for the finished floor (or roof) above (*Photos 4 through 8*). Corbelled brick brackets support the girders at the perimeter walls. The timber columns have chamfered edges and become narrower with each upper story. The columns rest upon six-foot-thick concrete bases, and the exposed brick perimeter walls rest atop a six foot concrete footing; this structural system allows the building to support twelve to fifteen hundred pounds per square foot.⁹ Ceiling heights vary by floor. The basement is ten feet; the first floor is sixteen feet; and the upper three stories are each nine feet.

The interior character of the building consists of exposed structure and open floor plates. Non-historic wood stud and gypsum board partitions occupy portions of each floor. The north half of the first floor exhibits the greatest amount of alteration in terms of finishes. Gypsum board and wood paneling wrap two-thirds of the columns. Similarly, exterior walls within the north half of the first floor have been furred out to a height of about nine feet; exposed brick above this wall has traces of plaster. This area of the building formerly functioned as the primary office and public space (*Figure 8*).¹⁰ A stone hearth in the southwest corner of this area indicates the location of a fireplace that has been covered. In the basement, a long narrow room in the west portion of the basement occupies the area beneath the sidewalk along 9th Street. This room has a concrete ceiling and floor and brick walls (*Photo 9*). A series of arched brick masonry openings within the east wall contain historic six-light fixed steel windows with wire glass; two large rectangular steel sliding fire doors cover rectangular masonry openings, one each at the north and south ends of the wall.¹¹ A brick chimney near the center of the east wall rises from the basement to the roof. An exposed sprinkler system has been part of the building since its construction in 1907; although, the age of the current system is unknown.

Concrete, dating to 1907, covers most of the basement floor (*Photo 8*) except for the southeast corner, which is wood. Wood flooring covers the upper three floors and most of the first floor except for the southeast corner.¹²

⁹ "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.

¹⁰ This photo also shows the exposed fire sprinkler system that was installed throughout the building in 1907.

¹¹ The historic function of this room is unknown.

¹² The wood flooring in the north half of the second floor appears to have replaced the 1907 floor, possibly in the mid-century.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building

Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas

County and State

This former loading bay has a concrete floor. Non-historic VCT and LVT cover the historic wood flooring within the north half of the first floor.

Circulation between the five floors includes a single enclosed stair and pair of freight elevators (*Photos 10 & 11*). Located near the center west of the building, the wooden stair, oriented east-west, is a straight run between floors. The double elevator sits near the center of the south half of the building. The double shaft creates an offset L plan; the rectangular west elevator runs north-south while a square elevator sits at the north end of the west elevator, between the columns. The rectangular elevator opens on the north and south, and the square elevator opens on the east and west; the west gate allows freight transfer between elevators. Slatted wood bi-parting gates cover the elevator entrances. Non-historic bi-fold doors cover the gates on the first floor. A mixture of historic bead board, vertical wood planks, and non-historic gypsum board enclose the stair and elevator shafts. A half-height brick penthouse rises above the fourth-floor elevator shaft.

The building features two brick vaults. An L-shaped vault with a concrete ceiling supported by a corbelled brick wall sits adjacent to the north of the basement stair. The decorative door in the north wall of the vault lists the Diebold Safe & Lock Co. of Canton, Ohio as the manufacturer. A smaller square brick vault sits directly above the basement vault on the first floor. The historic vault door has been removed. Non-historic bathrooms occupy the southeast corners of the second through fourth floors.

Integrity

The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building retains a high level of historic integrity as an early twentieth century warehouse in Atchison, Kansas. The building remains in its historic location within a commercial setting. Each of the five full floors retains its distinctive openness around a circulation core. Despite the redesign of the storefront level in the mid-twentieth century, the first story of the north elevation retains its overall historic design with entries flanking central display windows. The building also retains a large degree of historic material including interior structure and finishes, a majority of historic windows, elevator, and stair. Together these qualities continue to communicate the historic commercial feeling from its association with the Harwi Hardware Company.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1907- circa 1934

Significant Dates

1907

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1907 with the construction of the building and ends in circa 1934 when the A.J. Harwi Hardware Company closed.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building is locally significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture. The Harwi Hardware Company constructed this building in 1907 as their fourth and largest facility. A.J. Harwi established a retail hardware business in Atchison in 1875, but by 1880, the company had entered into wholesale hardware distribution. This building represents the apex of the A.J. Harwi Hardware Company, considered one of the significant jobbing businesses in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Atchison.¹³ The company remained in this warehouse until the Great Depression when the business closed. The four-story brick and timber building is an excellent example of an early twentieth century commercial warehouse of mill construction built in downtown Atchison, Kansas. Although a common type of construction at the turn-of-the-twentieth century, the Harwi Building is one of the few remaining examples of its type in downtown Atchison. The period of significance for the A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building spans the years the company occupied the property, beginning with the construction of the building in 1907 and ending in circa 1934. This remains the only building in Atchison directly associated with the company.¹⁴

Elaboration

Established shortly after Kansas Territory opened in 1854, the City of Atchison is one of the oldest in the state. The town planners anticipated that Atchison would benefit greatly from its location on the west bank of the Missouri River nearly equidistant from the successful commercial river town of St. Joseph, Missouri, and Fort Leavenworth in Kansas Territory. Both St. Joseph and Fort Leavenworth supported the overland emigrant trail network to California, Oregon, and other points west. Atchison town founders sought to capitalize on this market while also becoming an important regional commercial hub. In 1855, surveyors marked out four hundred eighty acres for the new townsite named for its founder, Missouri Senator David R. Atchison. The Territorial Legislature incorporated the town of Atchison in 1855 and the city in 1858.¹⁵ By the time of Kansas statehood in early 1861, nearly three thousand people resided within the boundaries of the city.¹⁶

Commercial Development of Atchison

As anticipated by its founders, Atchison quickly developed into a commercial hub of the region. The town's first newspaper, *The Squatter Sovereign*, claimed in November 1856 that Atchison already housed six large dry goods and grocers, six smaller provisional stores, a large clothier, a furniture store, several large warehouses, two hotels, and sundry numbers of blacksmiths, wagonmakers, and carpenters among other enterprises.¹⁷ During the summer of 1858, twenty-four wagon trains carrying over a thousand men and 3.7 million pounds of merchandise passed through Atchison on their way to Colorado and California.¹⁸ Overland travelers and freighters continued to utilize Atchison up through the Civil War, and much of the commercial enterprises within

¹³ Jobbing refers to the wholesale profession of buying merchandise in bulk from various manufacturers to distribute to smaller dealers.

¹⁴ The A.J. Harwi House at 1103 Atchison Street was listed in the National Register in 1975 for its association with Harwi and for its architecture.

¹⁵ Sheffield Ingalls, *History of Atchison County, Kansas* (Lawrence, Kansas: Standard Publishing Co., 1916), 64-65, 68.

¹⁶ According to the 1860 US Federal Census, the population of Atchison equaled 2,616.

¹⁷ As quoted in Ingalls, *History of Atchison County, Kansas*, 69, 71.

¹⁸ Ingalls, *History of Atchison County, Kansas*, 72-73.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

the city catered to and benefitted from the relationship. Other enterprises such as mills focused on the regional needs of the growing number of settlers. In the two decades following the war, industry and manufacturing rose in prominence in Atchison with the erection of mills, foundries, and elevators.¹⁹

Railroads became integral to Atchison beginning in the post-Civil War years. Trains brought freight to Atchison and distributed goods produced in Atchison County to wider markets. The railroads soon displaced wagons as the primary long-distance transportation mode. American settlement of Kansas began in earnest as railroad construction radiated from western Missouri into central and western Kansas. Atchison easily pivoted from its role as an overland trail hub to a strategic railroad hub. Between 1869 and early 1872, four rail lines connected through Atchison. The Kansas City, Leavenworth & Atchison Railway Company reached the city from Leavenworth in 1869, and the Atchison & Nebraska City Railroad opened between Atchison and the Nebraska state line north of White Cloud in 1871. Two lines opened in 1872. The fifty-one mile line of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad to Topeka, and the Atchison branch of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway opened between Leavenworth and Atchison. The first railroad bridge across the Missouri River opened in July 1875, connecting the states of Missouri and Kansas via railroad at Atchison. Through consolidation and expansion, the Missouri Pacific and Union Pacific railroads operated in Atchison by the 1880s.²⁰

The aptly named Commercial Street became the primary business thoroughfare in Atchison due to the Missouri River. Travelers and freight carried on ferries and steamboats disembarked at the Commercial Street landing. As a result, businesses and warehouses rose along this street starting at the river and stretching west. Sixth Street was considered the edge of town through circa 1870 (*Figure 9*). Commercial Street beyond remained unimproved.²¹ As people settled in Atchison, developers platted additions to the original town site. Between 1870 and 1880, the city's population more than doubled from 7,054 to 15,105. By 1883, commercial development along Commercial Street extended to 8th Street, part of L.C. Challiss' Addition to the original townsite, while the road itself was improved to 11th Street.²² Commercial development west of 8th Street was slow over the succeeding decades; although, the city graded and paved Commercial Street during this time. By 1910 when the city population reached its peak at 16,429 people, businesses lined the south side of Commercial Street between 8th and 9th streets; the north side filled in slowly, with new buildings constructed between the 1900s and 1930s. Apart from a few businesses located between 9th and 10th streets, dense commercial development stopped at 9th Street.

The functional character of buildings along Commercial Street primarily focused on retail and business offices. Where warehouses existed, they were part of a building that also housed the company's main administrative offices. One-to-three story brick buildings housed clothing, dry goods, hardware, groceries, along with banks, hotels, drug stores, and jobbing offices; as automobiles rose in prominence, buildings along Commercial Street

¹⁹ Frank W. Blackmar, *Kansas: A Cyclopaedia of State History*, Vol. I (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912), 111.

²⁰ Ingalls, *History of Atchison County, Kansas*, 177-181; 1883 Sanborn maps for Atchison.

²¹ Frank A. Root, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka, Kansas: Crane & Co., 1901), 409-410. The plat of the original town site stopped at 7th Street.

²² 1883 Sanborn maps for Atchison.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

provided services to this industry.²³ Businesses established near the river often relocated to new facilities as development crept toward 9th Street.

Main Street, one block south of Commercial Street, paralleled the east-west oriented rail lines. Historic Sanborn maps indicate that mills, foundries, and jobber warehouses located along Main Street to easily access railcars. Medicines, produce, hardware, and building supplies offloaded from railcars were stored in these more utilitarian brick warehouses, and wagons or rail spur lines transferred goods to and from associated buildings on Commercial Street. The railroad contributed to the early commercial success of Atchison.

Brick dominated Commercial Street by the 1880s and continued to be the primary exterior building material into the twentieth century. The forty-five-foot width of lots within the original town site primarily hosted two independent buildings per lot separated by brick party walls; lots within the L.C. Challis Addition to the west of 7th Street have twenty-five-foot lots. Where double-width buildings existed, wood or brick partitions or iron posts separated tenants and/or supported upper floors. Into the 1890s, wood posts rather than iron posts supported the interior structure of warehouse buildings with open forty-five-foot floor plates. In 1910, three years after the construction of the A.J. Harwi Hardware Building at 9th and Commercial, eighteen brick buildings along Commercial and Main streets had interior wood structural columns.²⁴

These warehouse buildings utilized the construction method known as mill or slow-burning construction. Popularized in the eighteenth century, mill construction features a heavy timber internal structural frame within a masonry shell, creating large open floor areas.²⁵ The benefits of this type of construction include both safety and economy. Large dense timber posts and beams offered more fire resistance than wrought-iron, steel, or cast-iron structural members, thus the moniker “slow-burning.”²⁶ Writing in 1901 about the benefits of mill construction, insurance specialist Edward Atkinson offered the following anecdote:

Again: iron posts have been crippled or sprung by heat a great many times at an early period in a fire. A wooden post of suitable size has never burned off until other parts of the building were already destroyed. They have in one instance resisted fire for hours which destroyed granite posts close by them by cracking and scaling—the granite measuring 12” x 12”.²⁷

The denseness of the wood and the compactness of the construction slowed the spread of fires between floors, especially when coupled with automatic sprinkler systems into the early twentieth century.²⁸ Insurance companies favored mill construction—at least over the use of metal structures—for warehouses because it minimized fire damage; building owners favored the construction type for similar reasons and for its relatively inexpensive cost as compared with other fire proof construction. The heavy timber structure also could support loads up to six hundred pounds per square inch, which made them ideal for warehouse and storage facilities.

²³ 1883, 1887, 1891, 1896, 1901, 1910, 1916 Sanborn maps.

²⁴ 1883, 1887, 1891, 1896, 1901, 1910, 1916 Sanborn maps. Comparing appraiser records and current streetscapes with the Sanborn maps, it appears that the Harwi Building at 832 Commercial may be one of the only remaining buildings with a timber structure.

²⁵ Pedro Guedes, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Architecture and Technological Change* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 190.

²⁶ *Report No. V. Slow Burning or Mill Construction*, 3rd ed. (Boston, MA: Insurance Engineering Experiment Station, Boston Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Co, 1908), 3.

²⁷ Edward Atkinson, “Mill or Slow-Burning Construction: What It Is; What It Is Not,” 1901 reprinted in *Report No. V.*, 14.

²⁸ Atkinson, “Mill or Slow-Burning Construction,” *Report No. V.*, 15.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

The Harwi Hardware Company Building was one of the eighteen examples of mill construction in downtown Atchison in 1910. Mid-twentieth century development removed most other examples.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company

Writing in 1912, historian Frank Blackmar noted that Atchison had become “a large jobbing center for groceries, hardware and drugs.”²⁹ The hardware industry in Atchison grew with the town. In the late 1850s, eight hardware stores joined the commercial core of Atchison;³⁰ although, only three appear in the 1865 city directory, all between 3rd and 5th streets on Commercial Street. By 1880, Commercial Street boasted six hardware companies, including Blish, Mize & Silliman and A.J. Harwi, and ten in 1885. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the two largest wholesale hardware companies in Atchison were Blish, Mize & Silliman and A.J. Harwi.³¹

Alfred Jonathan (A.J.) Harwi arrived in Atchison in 1875 at the age of twenty-eight. Born in Pennsylvania in 1847, Harwi first joined in the hardware business in circa 1870 with his father-in-law in Butler, Missouri. After the death of both his wife and father-in-law, Harwi left Missouri for Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he clerked at a hardware store for a few months. Harwi left Iowa in search of a town in which to start a hardware business of his own. Upon his arrival in Atchison in August 1875, Harwi apparently was impressed with the busy-ness of Commercial Street, saying it was “the busiest thoroughfare he had seen in visiting a dozen western towns.”³² Harwi decided to open a hardware business in Atchison despite being told by retiring hardware dealer, J.E. Wagner, that the market was saturated.³³

Harwi entered into a business partnership with C.H. Dearborn within a few days of arriving in Atchison. The new firm of Harwi & Dearborn rented a two-story brick building at 406 Commercial (not extant) (*Figure 10*) and began a retail hardware and agricultural implement business. The company did well enough to allow Harwi to purchase Dearborn’s share within the first six months; Harwi made \$14,000 in his first year of business.³⁴ Between founding in 1875 and 1880, the Harwi company operated as a retail hardware shop, purchasing goods from wholesale dealers to sell to customers. Seeing the opportunity to enter the wholesale hardware market, Harwi expanded his services. The only other hardware wholesaler in Atchison was Blish, Mize & Silliman, which had opened business a few years before Harwi. Harwi’s first wholesale order went to the contractor building the Central Branch railroad depot in Barnes (Washington County), which led to additional contracts for the remaining depots built along the line.³⁵

Harwi’s company outgrew their building in 1882 and moved a block west. The two-story brick building at 516-518 Commercial (not extant) (*Figure 11*) doubled their useable space, allowing for both warehouse storage and retail storefronts. The author of a July 1907 *Atchison Daily Globe* article about the Harwi Hardware Company

²⁹ Blackmar, *Kansas: A Cyclopaedia of State History*, 111.

³⁰ Ingalls, *History of Atchison County, Kansas*, 71.

³¹ “Atchison’s Jobbing Interests.” *The Atchison Globe’s Kansas Prosperity Edition* (New Year 1909): 35.

³² “Big Wholesale Hardware House,” 3.

³³ “A.J. Harwi Died This Morning,” *The Atchison Weekly Globe* (8 September 1910): 5.

³⁴ “Big Wholesale Hardware House,” 3. This is equivalent to approximately \$341,000 in 2020.

³⁵ “Big Wholesale Hardware House,” 3. The Central Branch was part of the Union Pacific network.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building

Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas

County and State

stated it was in this building that Mr. Harwi achieved much of his success. Towards the end of their here in 1889, Harwi incorporated his business with the State of Kansas with a capital stock of \$100,000.³⁶ The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company was a family owned and operated business; A.J. served as president, brother E.C. "Ed" served as treasurer and Wilson "W.C." as secretary.³⁷

The Harwi Hardware Company remained at 516-518 Commercial for six years before again needing larger quarters. Instead of renting another building in town, Harwi purchased a full vacant lot within the original town site at the southeast corner of 7th and Commercial streets and commenced the construction of a three-story brick building with full basement (*Figure 12*); a timber structural system supported the upper floors. The company occupied the new building at 624-626 Commercial (not extant) by November 1889, believing the expanded square footage would suffice for several years to come. However, business continued to increase, necessitating the construction of an additional dedicated warehouse.³⁸ The two-story brick and timber building at Main and 8th streets sat directly on the north side of the railroad corridor, which allowed direct transfer of goods between railcars and warehouse.³⁹ The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company operated out of these two buildings from the end of 1889 to the spring of 1907.

The company continued to prosper into the twentieth century. Besides their headquarters at 7th and Commercial and their warehouse on Main Street, Harwi Hardware rented additional warehouse space to store their inventory. In 1906, the company made \$750,000 and decided to build an even larger building.⁴⁰ Harwi purchased four vacant lots within the L.C. Challiss Addition at the southeast corner of 9th and Commercial streets in early 1906, and the construction of their new headquarters began that summer. The four-story mill constructed building at 832 Commercial filled three of the four lots; the purchase of the additional lot allowed for potential future expansion at this corner instead of relocating again.⁴¹ A spur line of the Missouri Pacific railroad occupied the mid-block alley at this location, which allowed for the transfer of freight directly into and out of the new Harwi Building.⁴² The design and construction of the building enabled each floor to carry substantial weight so as not to overload the structure, and the double electric elevator provided easy transfer of goods between floors. Upon completion of the building in the spring of 1907, the company required six weeks to transfer four to five hundred loads of goods from its former building at 624-626 Commercial Street. The company continued to use its warehouse on Main Street.⁴³

The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company discontinued the retail side of its business upon relocation to this fourth and final headquarters. The company made the bulk of its profit from its wholesale business. In 1907, Harwi employed

³⁶ William Connelley, "Alfred Jonathan Harwi," *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, Vol II. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), 1366; "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3. This is equivalent to approximately \$2.9 million in 2020.

³⁷ "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3. This is equivalent to approximately \$2.9 million in 2020.

³⁸ "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.

³⁹ "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3; 1891 Sanborn map of Atchison, sheet 7. This warehouse no longer exists.

⁴⁰ This is equivalent to approximately \$21.6 million in 2020.

⁴¹ A small one-story wood storage building, constructed by Harwi, occupied a portion of this lot for a few years before it was demolished in the early 1920s.

⁴² "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.

⁴³ "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building

Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas

County and State

fifty-six people. A.J. remained president and head of the company; Wilson served as the company buyer and treasurer, a role he had moved into upon the death of Ed in 1903, and A.J.'s son Frank served as company secretary. Fourteen traveling salesmen covered the entire state of Kansas, the two southern tiers of Nebraska counties, the eastern tier of central Colorado, and the north half of Oklahoma and Indian Territory.⁴⁴

A 1909 *Atchison Globe* article on the jobbing interests of the city noted that Atchison was an important hardware center on the Missouri River. Along with retail hardware, Atchison sustained two large wholesale hardware companies: A.J. Harwi Hardware and Blish, Mize & Silliman. The latter employed sixty-eight people and had a cumulative total of three acres of warehouse and floor space throughout Atchison. Seventeen traveling salesmen covered territory in northeastern Missouri, southwestern Iowa, southern Nebraska, the states of Oklahoma and Kansas, and points within Texas. Both companies survived a recent economic depression that hurt other hardware wholesalers in the eastern United States. However, Harwi not only sustained business, it grew from 7 to 11 percent each month over its profits the year before.⁴⁵ In 1910, the year A.J. Harwi died, the company employed twenty traveling salesmen.⁴⁶

Upon the death of A.J., his son Frank became company president. City directory advertisements in the 1920s indicate the company had diversified its products to include sporting goods, radios, paints, and even automobile accessories. The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company appears to have succumbed to the Great Depression; its building at 9th and Commercial was vacant in the 1934 city directory, and the company is not listed at another address. By 1940, the Fitz Overall Company occupied the former Harwi Building, and by 1950, Blish, Mize & Silliman used the building at 832 Commercial as a warehouse. This hardware company continued to use the building as such through at least 1963.⁴⁷

Conclusion

The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its association with one of Atchison's largest hardware companies at the turn of the twentieth century. From its founding in 1875 until 1907, A.J. Harwi and his associates occupied four increasingly larger buildings along the primary business corridor in Atchison, Commercial Street. The company invested in two existing buildings in 1875 and 1882 out of which to operate. Growth and prosperity beginning in 1889 and again in 1907 allowed the Harwi Hardware Company to acquire vacant real estate on which to build. Their investment in Commercial Street coincided with the development of Commercial Street as it grew west from the Missouri River, and the prosperity of the company contributed to Atchison's success as a jobbing center at the turn of the twentieth century. The 1907 building is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of mill construction applied to a commercial warehouse in Atchison. Although a common type of construction at the turn of the twentieth century, the Harwi Building remains one of the only examples in downtown Atchison, as mid-century development replaced almost all of the brick and timber structures.

⁴⁴ "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.

⁴⁵ "Atchison's Jobbing Interests." *The Atchison Globe's Kansas Prosperity Edition* (New Year 1909): 35.

⁴⁶ Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, 1366.

⁴⁷ Atchison city directories. Blish Mize is still in business and headquartered in Atchison.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Atchison. 1883 1887, 1891, 1896, 1901, 1910, 1916, 1924, and 1947 update.

SWD Architects. Building Plans.

US Federal Censuses.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: _____

Kansas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ N/A _____

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than 1

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.

(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>39.561746</u>	<u>-95.124977</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated building is located on a parcel described as follows: LC Challiss Addition, S01, T06, R20E, Block 15, Lot 25 through 28 (PID: 005-091-01-0-10-21-010.00-0). Physical boundaries of the nominated property include Commercial Street to the north; 9th Street to the west; an alley to the south; and the adjacent building to the east, occupying lot 29.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary includes the land historically associated with this building and represents the current parcel description.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amanda K. Loughlin/National Register Coordinator
organization Rosin Preservation LLC date August 2020
street & number 1712 Holmes telephone 816-472-4950
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108
e-mail amanda@rosinpreservation.com

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name On file with SHPO.
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

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

Photograph Log

Name of Property: A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building

City or Vicinity: Atchison

County: Atchison State: Kansas

Photographer: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography

Date

Photographed: July 2020

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

See *Figures 13 through 18* for associated keys.

- 01 of 11:** Looking southwest at east and north elevations
- 02 of 11:** Looking southeast at north and west elevations
- 03 of 11:** Looking northeast at west and south elevations
- 04 of 11:** First floor, warehouse area at rear of building, looking northwest
- 05 of 11:** Second floor, looking southwest from northeast corner of floor
- 06 of 11:** Third floor, looking northeast from southwest corner of floor
- 07 of 11:** Fourth floor, looking southeast from northwest corner of floor
- 08 of 11:** Basement, looking northwest from southeast corner of floor
- 09 of 11:** Basement, looking north from south end of west storage area
- 10 of 11:** Fourth floor, elevator core, looking southwest
- 11 of 11:** Third floor, stair core, looking northeast

Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

- 01 of 18:** Contextual map. Source: Kansas Historic Resources Inventory, www.kshs.org/khri
- 02 of 18:** Boundary map. Base map: Google Earth, May 2019 aerial
- 03 of 18:** The 800 block of Commercial Street. Source: Google Streetview, 2016
- 04 of 18:** Snippet of Sheet 15 of the 1916 Sanborn Map for Atchison. Source: Fire Insurance Maps online [FIMo] database through Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library
- 05 of 18:** Snippet of Sheet 2 of the 1924 Sanborn Map for Atchison. Source: FIMo database
- 06 of 18:** Rendering of the Harwi Building. 1907. Source: Atchison County Public Library.
- 07 of 18:** The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building shortly after opening in 1907. Source: "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.
- 08 of 18:** Interior of front half of the first floor of Harwi Hardware Building, looking east. Undated photo (circa 1910) from Atchison County Historical Society.
- 09 of 18:** Snippet of the 1869 Bird's Eye View of Atchison. A. Ruger, Merchant's Lithographing Company. Source: Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, <https://lccn.loc.gov/73693406>

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building

Atchison County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

- 10 of 18:** First building of the Harwi & Dearborn, later A.J. Harwi Hardware Company, 406 Commercial. Undated photo from between 1875 and 1882. Photo from the Atchison County Historical Society.
- 11 of 18:** Second Harwi Hardware Building, 516-518 Commercial St. Source: "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.
- 12 of 18:** Third Harwi Hardware Building, 624-626 Commercial Street. Source: "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.
- 13 of 18:** Exterior photo key. Base map from Google Earth.
- 14 of 18:** First floor photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.
- 15 of 18:** Second floor photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.
- 16 of 18:** Third floor photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.
- 17 of 18:** Fourth floor photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.
- 18 of 18:** Basement photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.

A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 1: Looking southwest at east and north elevations



Photo 2: Looking southeast at north and west elevations



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 3: Looking northeast at west and south elevations



Photo 4: First floor, warehouse area at rear of building, looking northwest



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 5: Second floor, looking southwest from northeast corner of floor



Photo 6: Third floor, looking northeast from southwest corner of floor



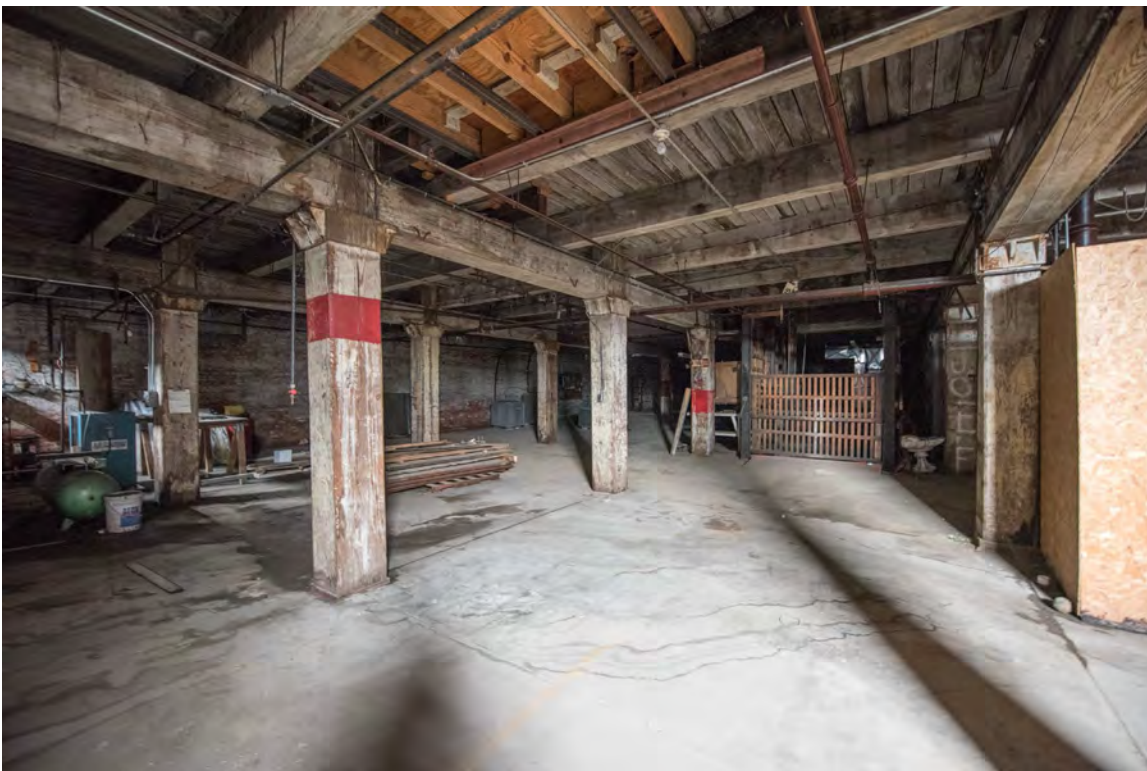
A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 7: Fourth floor, looking southeast from northwest corner of floor



Photo 8: Basement, looking northwest from southeast corner of floor



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 9: Basement, looking north from south end of west storage area



Photo 10: Fourth floor, elevator core, looking southwest



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

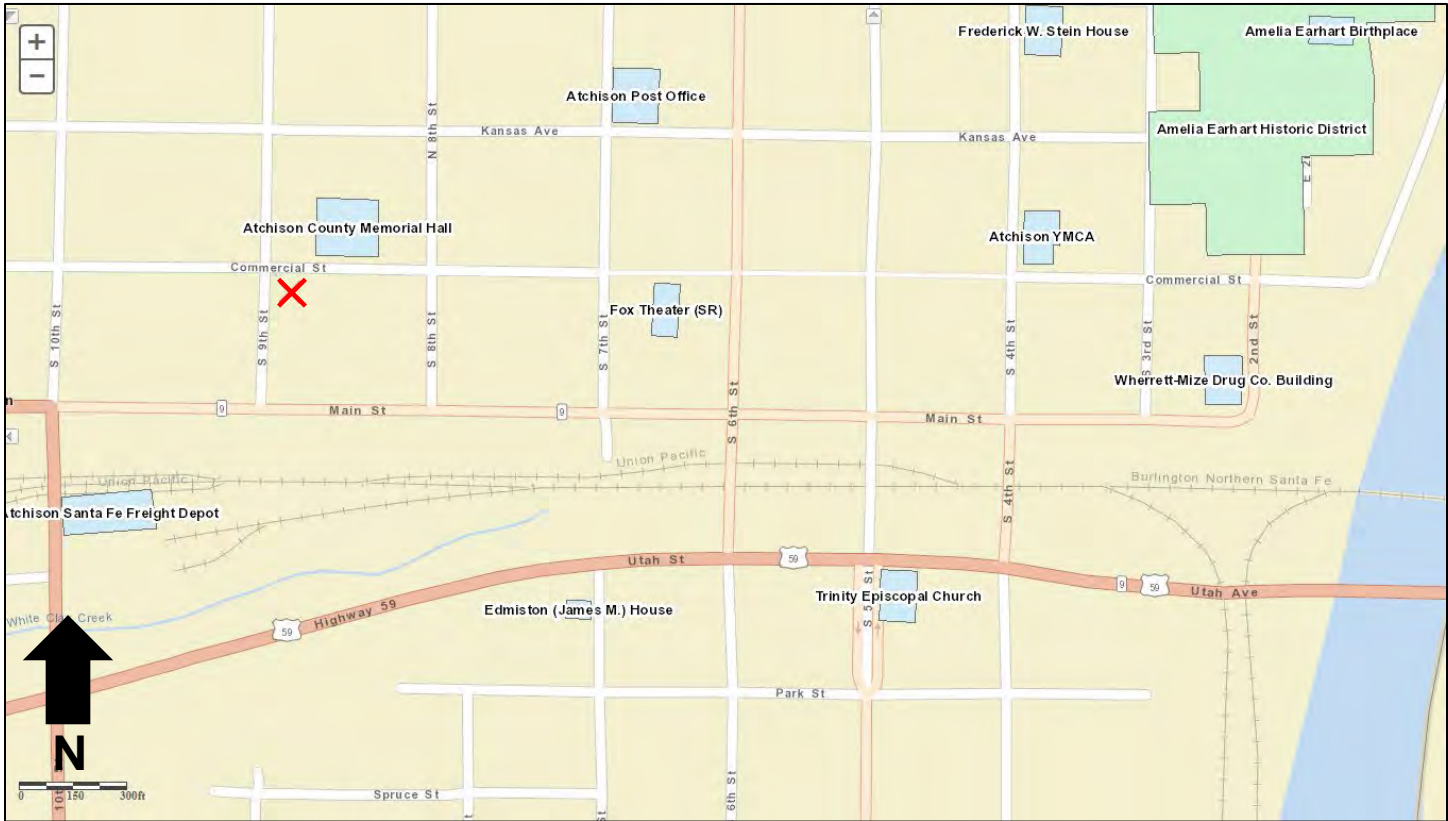
Photo 11: Third floor, stair core, looking northeast



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

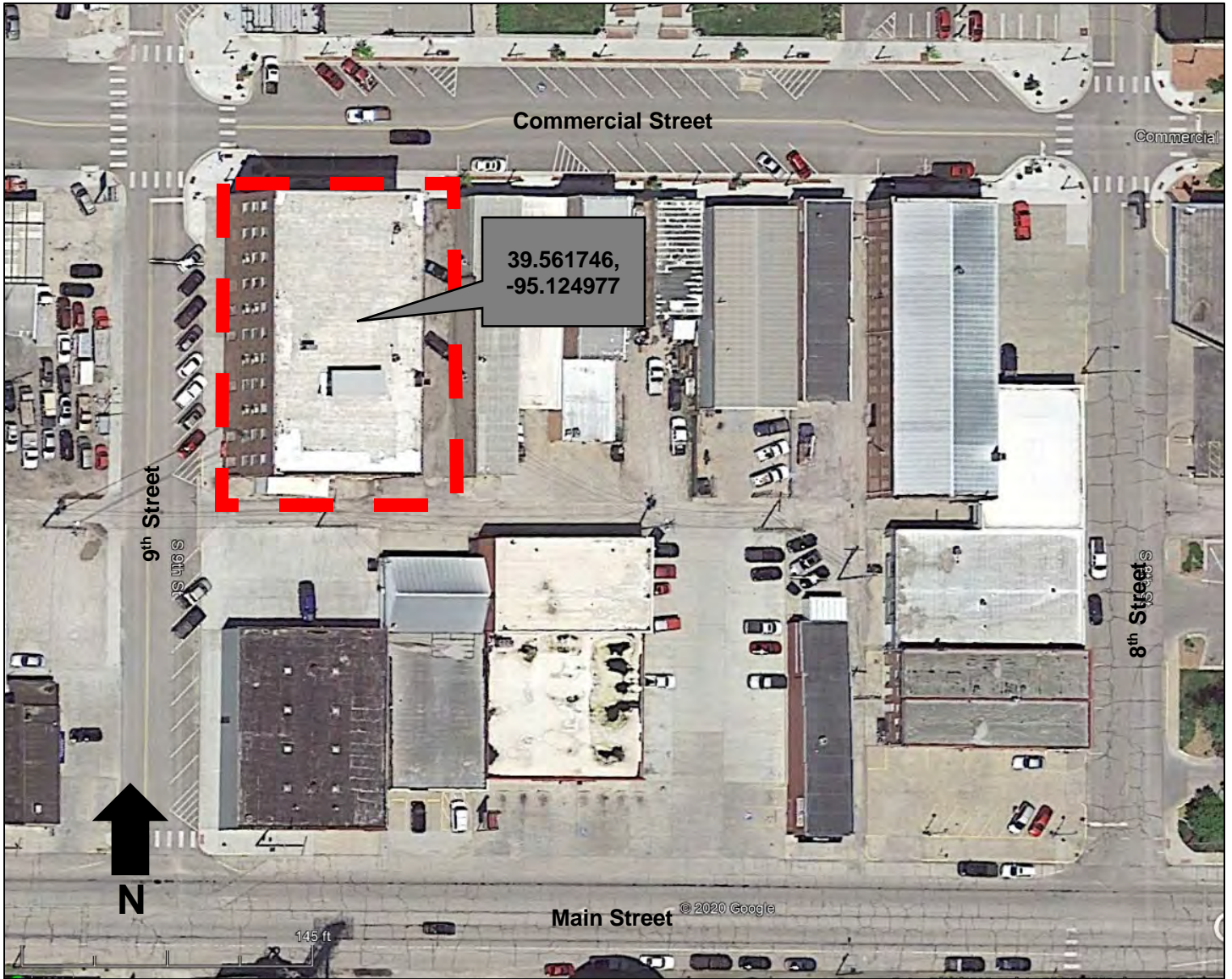
Figure 1. Contextual plan, showing Harwi Hardware Building within Atchison. Building denoted by X. Other National Register-listed properties and districts shown. Source: Kansas Historic Resources Inventory.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 2. Boundary map, showing location of Harwi Hardware Building at southeast corner of 9th and Commercial streets. Base map: Google Earth, May 2019 aerial.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

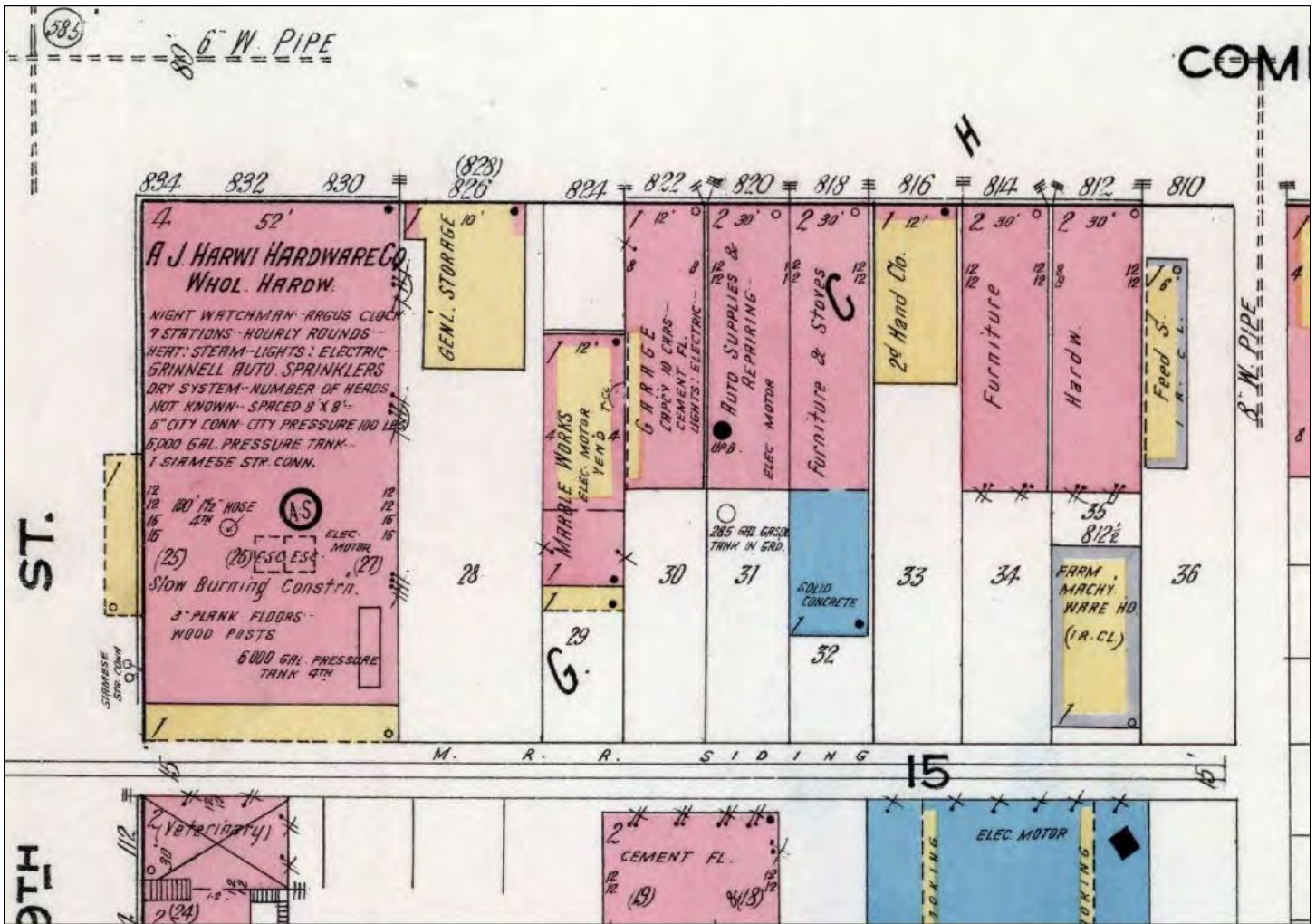
Figure 3. The 800 block of Commercial Street, showing the buildings along the south side of the street. The Harwi Building is at the end of the block. Source: Google Streetview, 2016.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

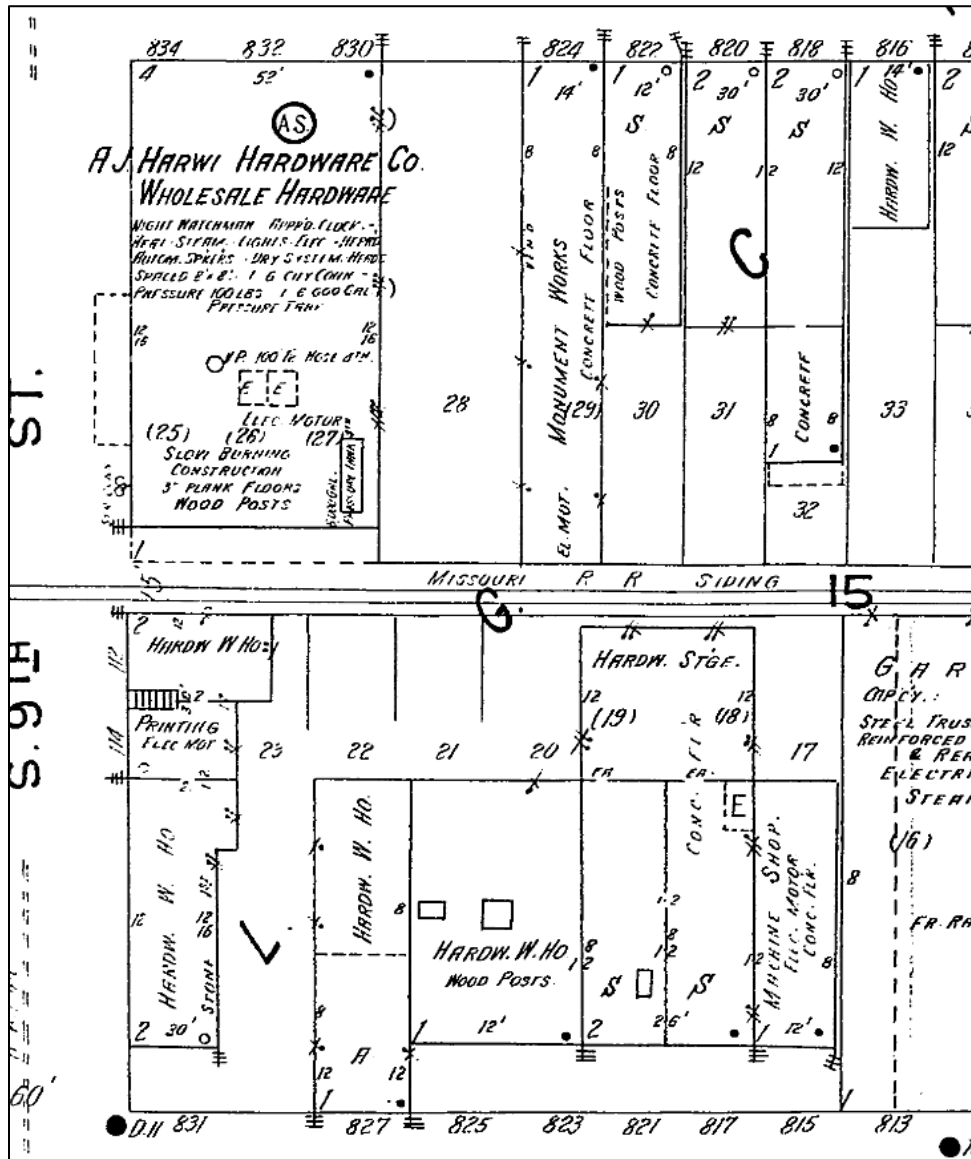
Figure 4. Snippet of Sheet 15 of the 1916 Sanborn for Atchison.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 5. Snippet of Sheet 2 of the 1924 Sanborn for Atchison. Source: ProQuest.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 6. Rendering of the Harwi Building. 1907. Source: Atchison County Public Library.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 7. The A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building shortly after opening. Source: "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

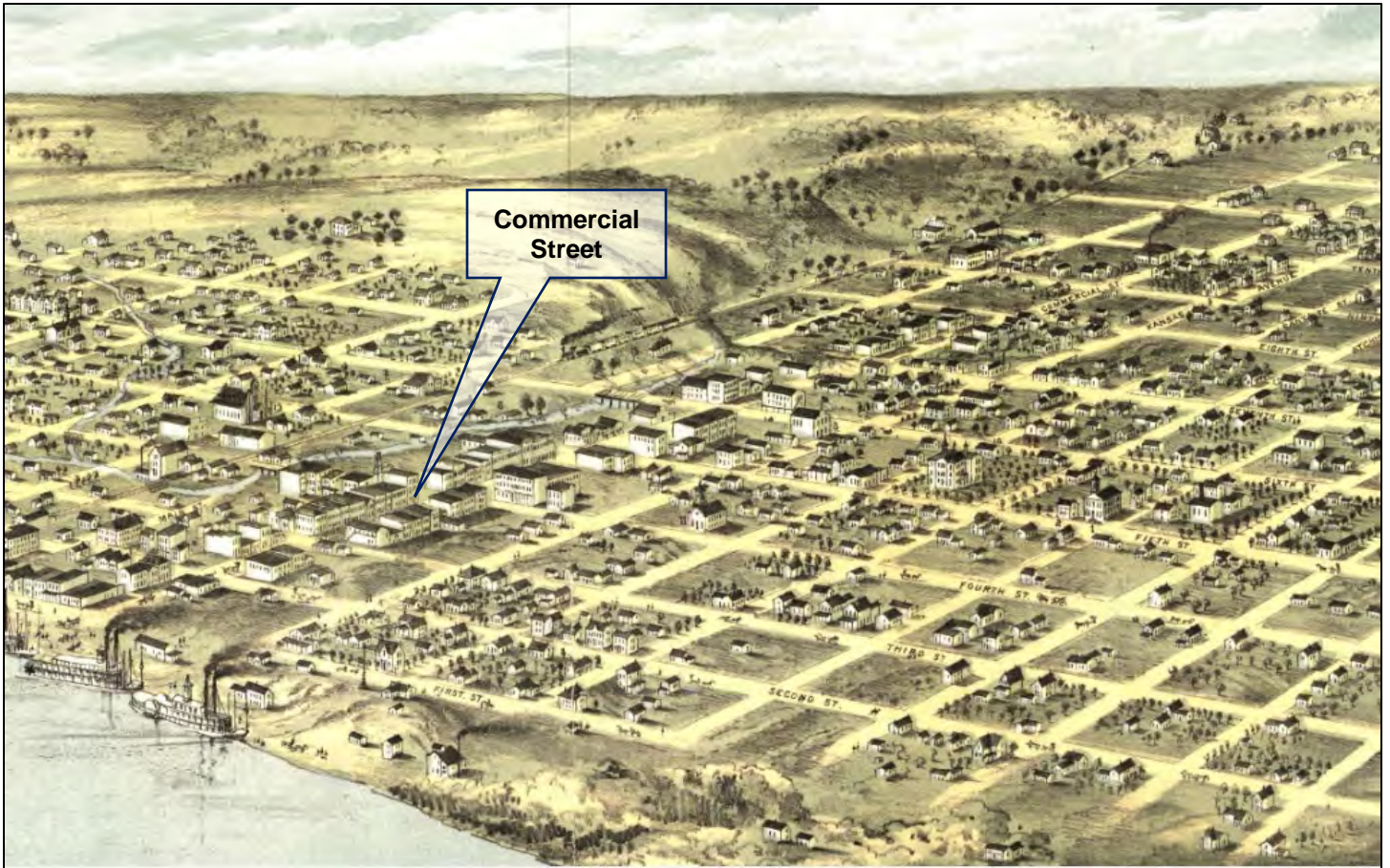
Figure 8. Interior of front half of the first floor of Harwi Hardware Building, looking east. Undated photo (circa 1910) from Atchison County Historical Society.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 9. Snippet of the 1869 Bird's Eye View of Atchison. View is looking southwest. Commercial development is primarily centered on Commercial Street. Source: Library of Congress.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 10. First building of the Harwi & Dearborn, later A.J. Harwi Hardware Company, 406 Commercial. Undated photo from between 1875 and 1882. Photo from the Atchison County Historical Society.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 11. Second Harwi Hardware Building, 516-518 Commercial Street. Source: "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.



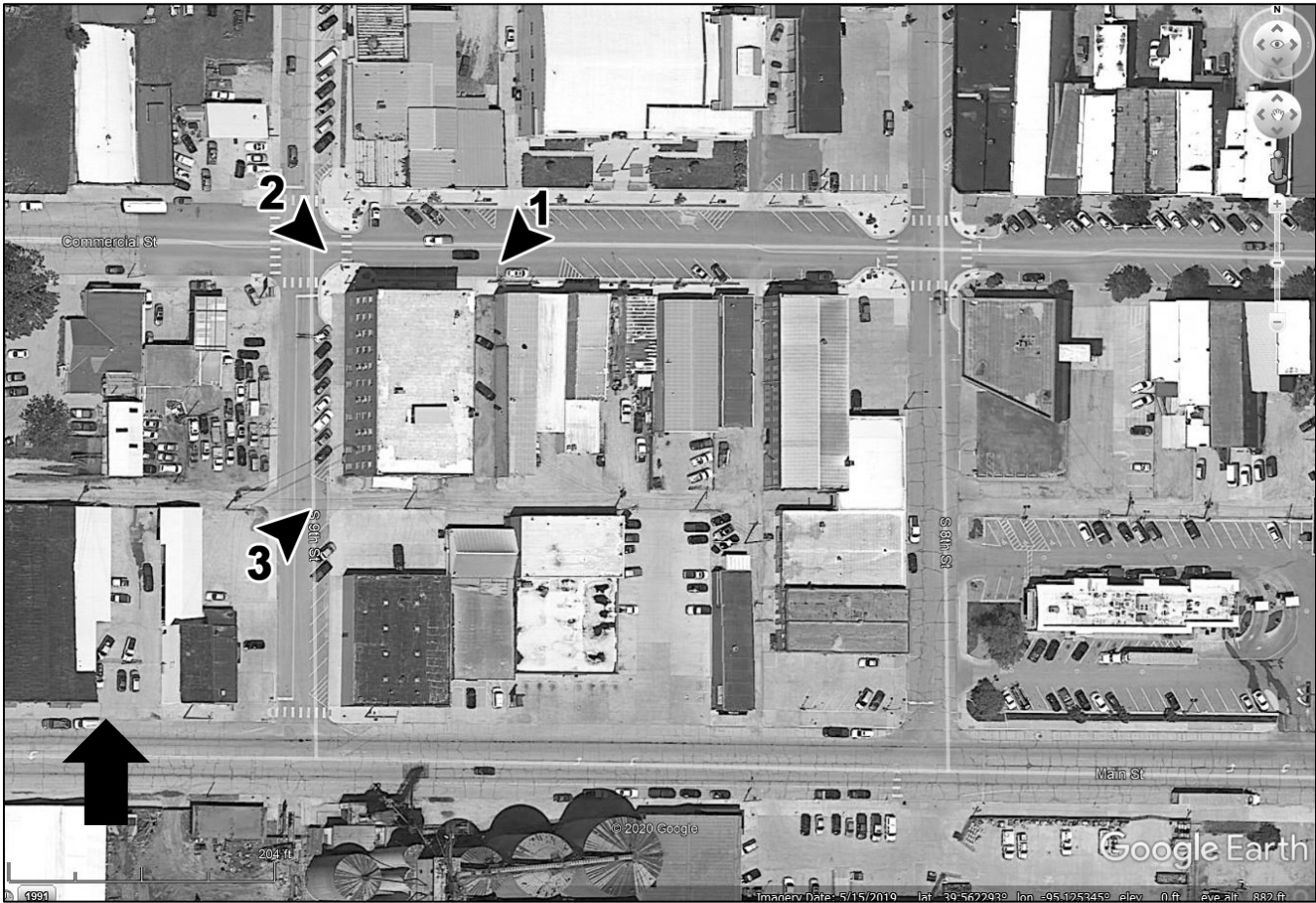
Figure 12. Third Harwi Hardware Building, 624-626 Commercial Street. Source: "Big Wholesale Hardware House," 3.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

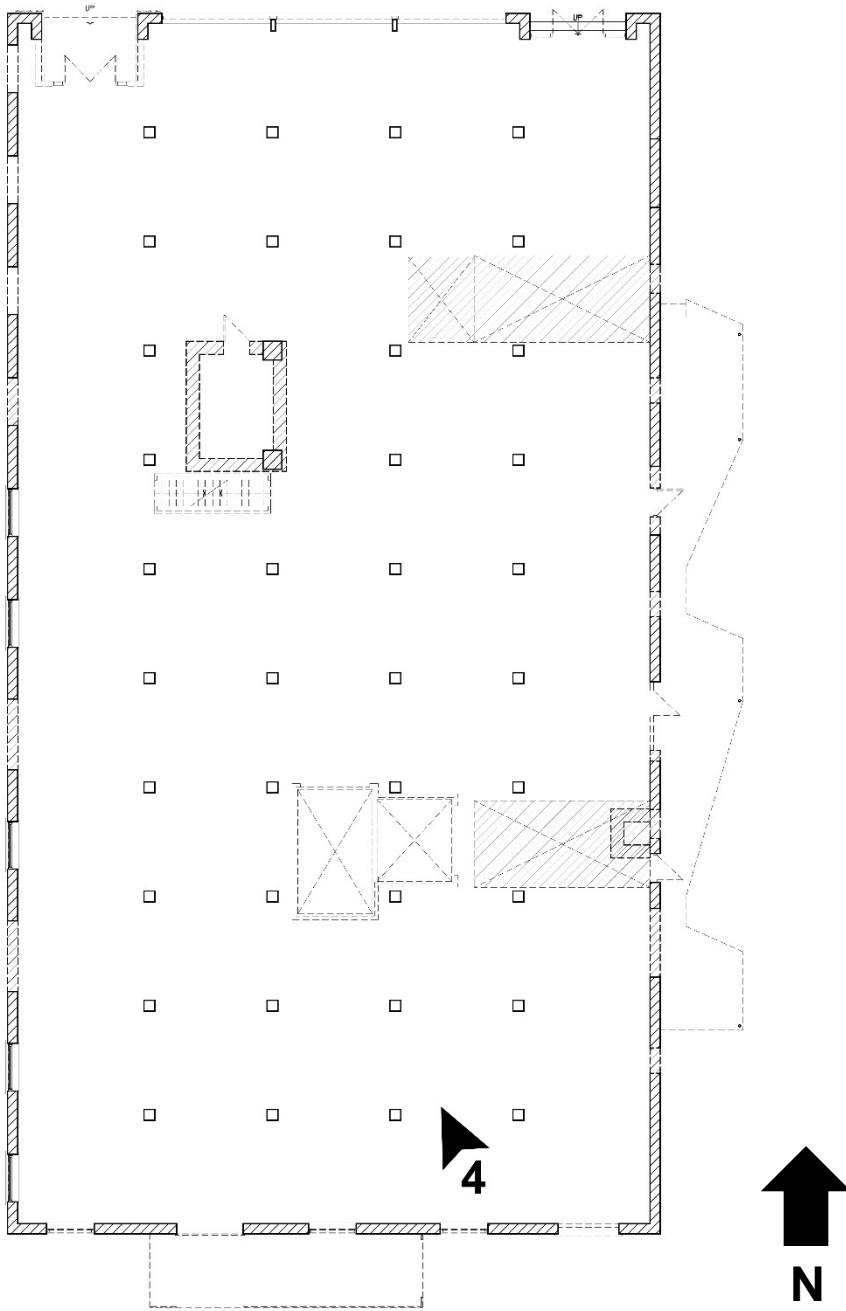
Figure 13. Exterior photo key. Base map from Google Earth.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

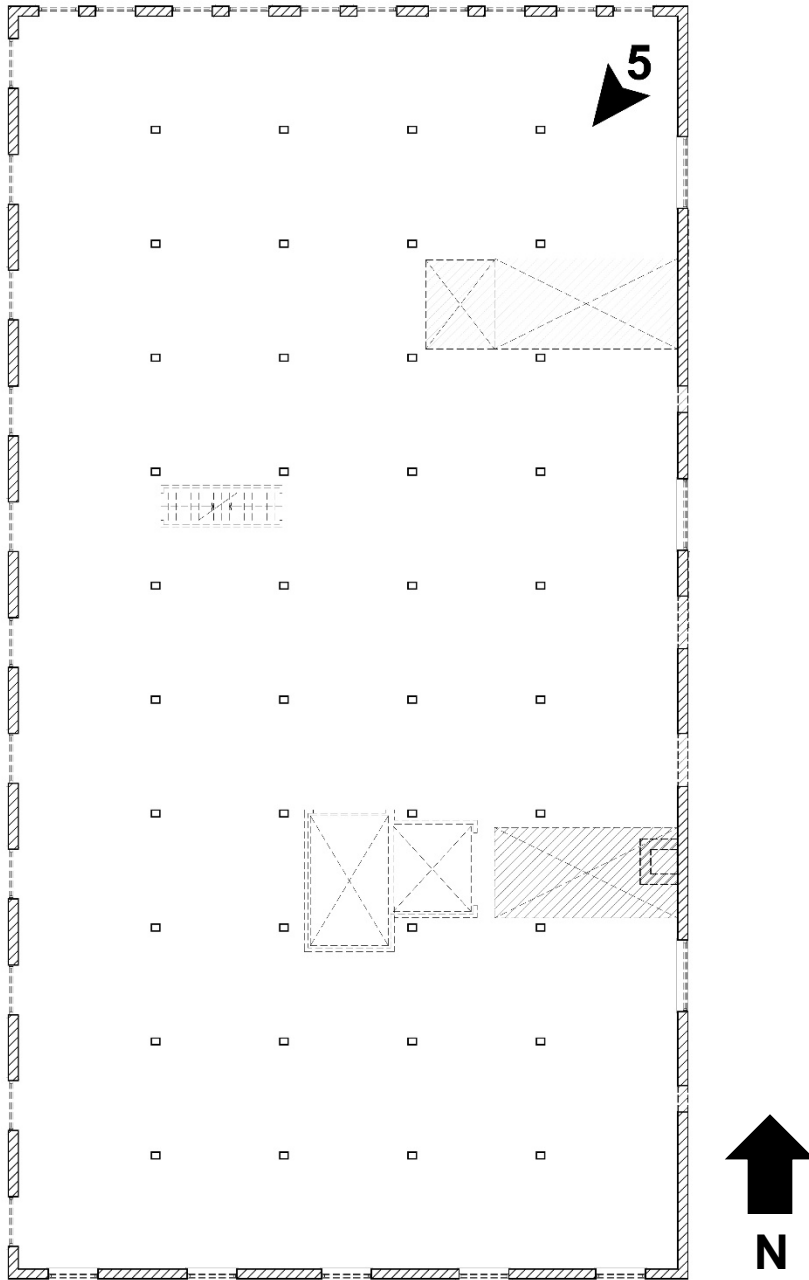
Figure 14. First floor photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

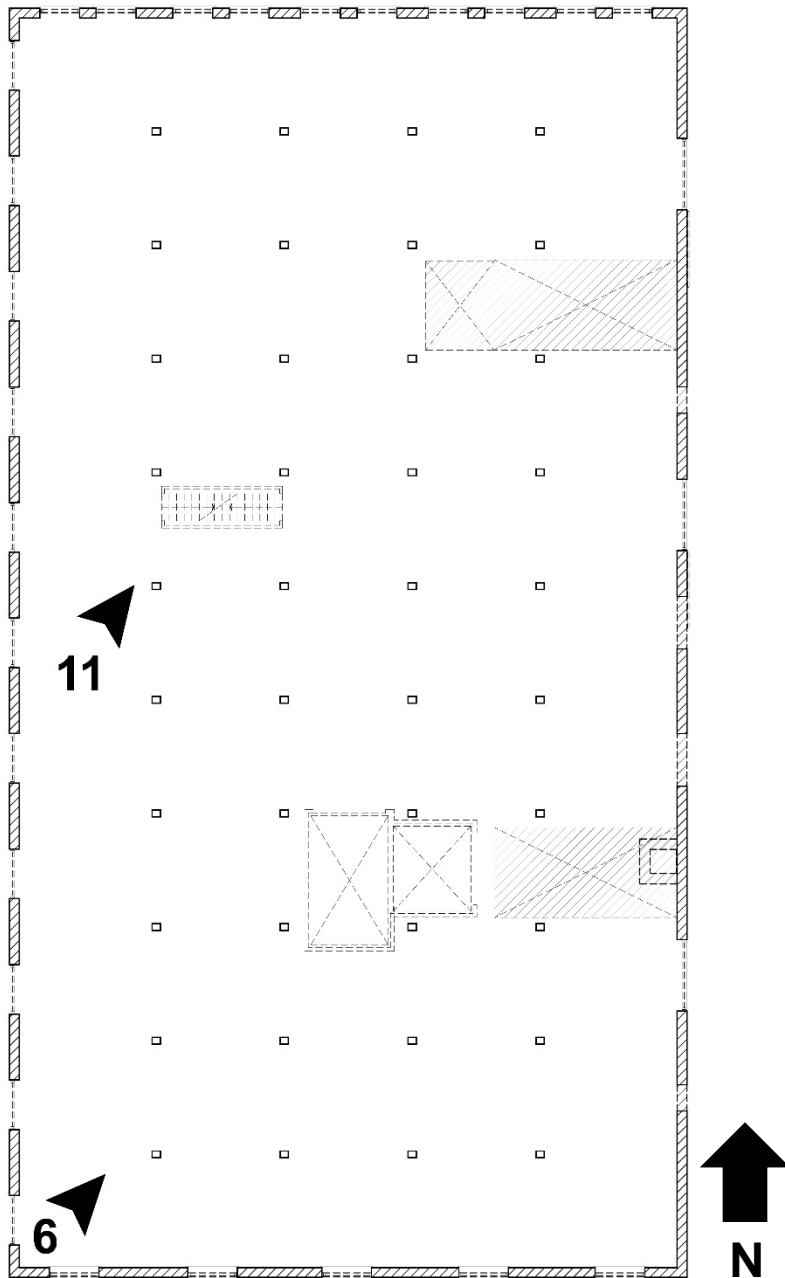
Figure 15. Second floor photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

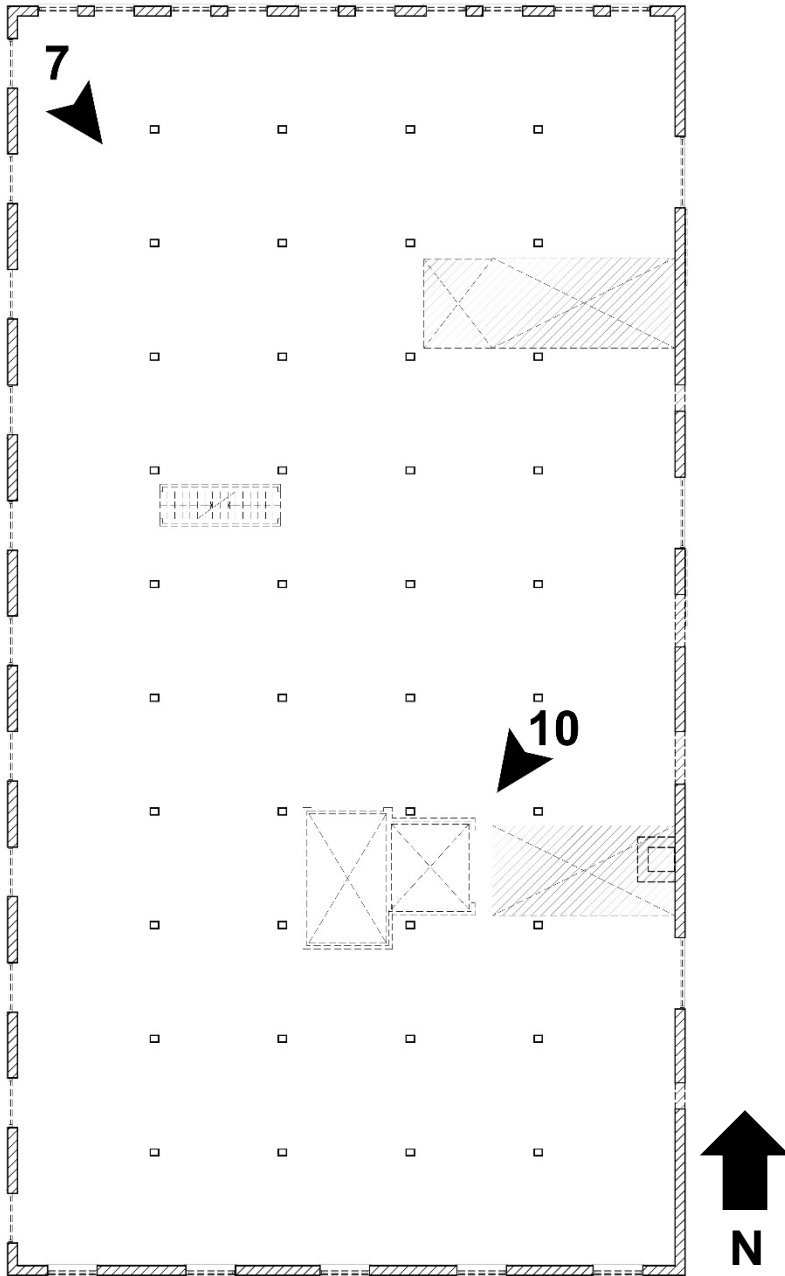
Figure 16. Third floor photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 17. Fourth floor photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.



A.J. Harwi Hardware Company Building
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 18. Basement photo key. Base map from: SWD Architects.

