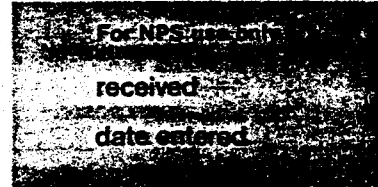


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Gibson-Todd House

and/or common John Brown Hanging Site

2. Location

street & number 515 South Samuel Street N/A not for publication

city, town Charles Town vicinity of

state West Virginia code 54 county Jefferson code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name National Trust for Historic Preservation - 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

street & number Mid-Atlantic Office, 1600 H Street, N.W.

city, town Washington vicinity of state D.C. 20006

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number Washington and George Streets

city, town Charles Town state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Gibson-Todd House stands on the southern portion of a large, tree-shaded lot at 515 South Samuel Street in the center of Charles Town's principal residential neighborhood. The commodious and well-preserved Victorian residence, built in 1891, is approached by a paved curving walkway that begins at the gate of a wrought iron fence that skirts the house lot along the sidewalk on South Samuel Street to the west and on East Hunter Street to the north. (The Gibson-Todd house lot is at the southeast corner of South Samuel Street and East Hunter Street). The fence, with two horizontal channel bars and pickets and line posts of wrought iron follows a simple design pattern that copies the general lines of a previous wooden picket fence. To the northeast of the house is a small, 2-story barn whose gables are sheathed in imbricated wooden shingles. The subsidiary building's roof ridge is capped with a small cupola.

The Gibson-Todd House is an 18-room, 2½-story red brick structure that follows design precedents of late 19th-century eclecticism. Dominant in the irregular massing and projecting above the complex slate-covered roof of hips and multiple gables, is a colossal 3-story round tower in the Norman style. The rich brick corbeling of the tower's cornice and frieze echo the common billet moldings of Norman and Romanesque architecture. The conical tower roof is adorned with a handsome cast metal urn finial. Gable coping is cast or pressed metal simulating stone. Pommel-like metal ornaments (waterboxes?) embellish the parapets of the house at the junction of the valleys. Ridge cresting is another metal feature of the structure's roofs. Imposing chimneys at gable ends are deeply paneled and enriched with corbeling. With the exception of gable windows which are sometimes paired and round-topped, the remaining windows are segmental, doublehung, and feature upper sashes with borders of small square lights in the Queen Anne style. The interior shutters (paneled blinds) are in place and are fully functional.

Among the best preserved exterior features is the expansive entrance veranda. Its paired, turned columns carry a roof whose eaves are ornamented with a dentil row and a screen of turned spindels. The trim, including the edifice's wooden and metal appointments, are painted in a light or earth-tone brown.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local History

Specific dates 1859; 1891 Builder/Architect Thomas A. Mullett, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Gibson-Todd House, located at 515 South Samuel Street in Charles Town, Jefferson County, West Virginia is significant as the home of John Gibson, an individual prominent in the annals of Jefferson County, and other prominent members of his family¹. It is equally significant as the site of the hanging of the famed abolitionist John Brown, an event of transcendent national significance², and as a significant example of Victorian residential architecture in Charles Town³.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. John Thomas Gibson (1825-1904) who built the fine Victorian residence on South Samuel Street in Charles Town, was an individual who played an important part in Jefferson County and Virginia/West Virginia affairs throughout his entire adult life. Gibson first entered public life in 1851 when he was elected to represent Jefferson County in the Virginia House of Delegates, serving from 1851 to 1853. In the critical election of 1859, the last one before the opening of the Civil War, he was again elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, serving in the session that took Virginia out of the Union in 1861. In the year of his second election to the legislature, James T. Gibson played a prominent role in one of, if not the most, profound events in Jefferson County annals; the raid of abolitionist John Brown upon the Federal armory at Harpers Ferry. Gibson was the commanding colonel of the county's contingent of the Virginia Militia. The "Jefferson Guards of Charles Town", under Gibson's command, were the first troops to arrive on the scene at Harpers Ferry and Gibson led the first armed clash with Brown and his men. At Brown's hanging in December of 1859, Colonel Gibson led the force of Virginia Militia present to keep order. In recognition of these services, Gibson received an original copy of John Brown's "Chatham Constitution" (his plan of government if the raid had been successful) as well as the table upon which Brown's death warrant was signed. Both of these items are in the Gibson-Todd House.

Gibson served as an officer in the Army of Northern Virginia, C.S.A., throughout the Civil War, fighting to the bitter end. He was paroled at Appomattox Court House after General Lee's surrender. After the war, Gibson returned to Jefferson County where he subsequently served as mayor of Charles Town and as a member of the Jefferson County Commission. He built his fine residence in 1891 on the site of John Brown's hanging over thirty years before. John T. Gibson died at this home in 1904. His son, Braxton D. Gibson, served in the West Virginia Legislature from 1889 to 1891. Gibson's daughter, Anne,

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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married William Bainbridge Packette, a great-grand nephew of President George Washington. Their only child, Frances Packette, was married in 1925 to Augustine J. Todd and the reception was held at the house, which the Todd's eventually inherited and used as a weekend home for many years. Recently, Mrs. Todd, a widow, donated the building to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in order to insure its future.

2. The site on which the Gibson-Todd House was constructed in 1891 is the same site where, on December 2, 1859, famed abolitionist John Brown was hanged for murder and treason. This overwhelmingly historic event is extremely well documented in many other sources, so suffice it to say that this event, along with the events that led up to Brown's tragic ending, are considered to be a direct cause of the outbreak of the Civil War. Among those present at the hanging were a number of individuals who the coming war was to raise to fame or notoriety; future Confederate generals Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, John McCausland and J.E.B. Stuart, and the assassin of Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth. When the old Jefferson County Jail where Brown had been incarcerated was demolished, John Gibson obtained stones from the building and used them to build a monument, still to be seen, to Brown's hanging on the grounds of the property.

3. The Gibson-Todd House is significant as an intact example of late 19th century architecture following eclectic design principles favored by many architects and builders of the period. As a small town residence it stands apart in its quiet neighborhood setting from the frame house types of other periods. Stylistically, the red brick house incorporates style elements from the Norman, Romanesque and Queen Anne modes. Dominant in this repertoire is the 3-story tower with its slate-covered conical cap and medievalistic corbeled brick cornice and frieze. Exterior turned millwork and cast or pressed metal ornaments blend with unpainted red brick facades behind coats of earth-tone brown paint.

Architect Thomas A. Mullett (1862-1935), the son of famed architect Alfred B. Mullett, designed the Gibson-Todd House. Mullett was active in the Charles Town community in the late 19th century where his plans were used for the Charles Town Opera House and the Charles Town Jail.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bushong, Millard K., Historic Jefferson County, Boyce, Va., Carr Publishing Co., 1973.
Charleston Daily Mail, "Bygone Era Endures in Victorian Charles Town House" by Ann Griffith, Charleston, W.Va., November 25, 1982.
Martinsburg Journal, "Where He Hanged" by Cindy Decker, Martinsburg, W.Va., October 19, 1982.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property one acre

Quadrangle name Charles Town

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	2	5	3	6	2	0	4	3	5	2	2	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting			Northing		

C

Zone		Easting			Northing		

D

Zone		Easting			Northing		

E

Zone		Easting			Northing		

F

Zone		Easting			Northing		

G

Zone		Easting			Northing		

H

Zone		Easting			Northing		

Verbal boundary description and justification A rectangular parcel at the southeast corner of (intersection of) S. Samuel St., and E. Hunter St., bounded to the west by S. Samuel St., to the north by E. Hunter St., to the east by a city alley and to the south by a chain link fence.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian and Michael J. Pauley, Historian
Historic Preservation Unit

organization W.Va. Dept. of Culture and History date June 8, 1983
The Cultural Center

street & number Capitol Complex telephone 304/348-0240

city or town Charleston state West Virginia 25305

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 10, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places
 Inventory—Nomination Form**

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date entered

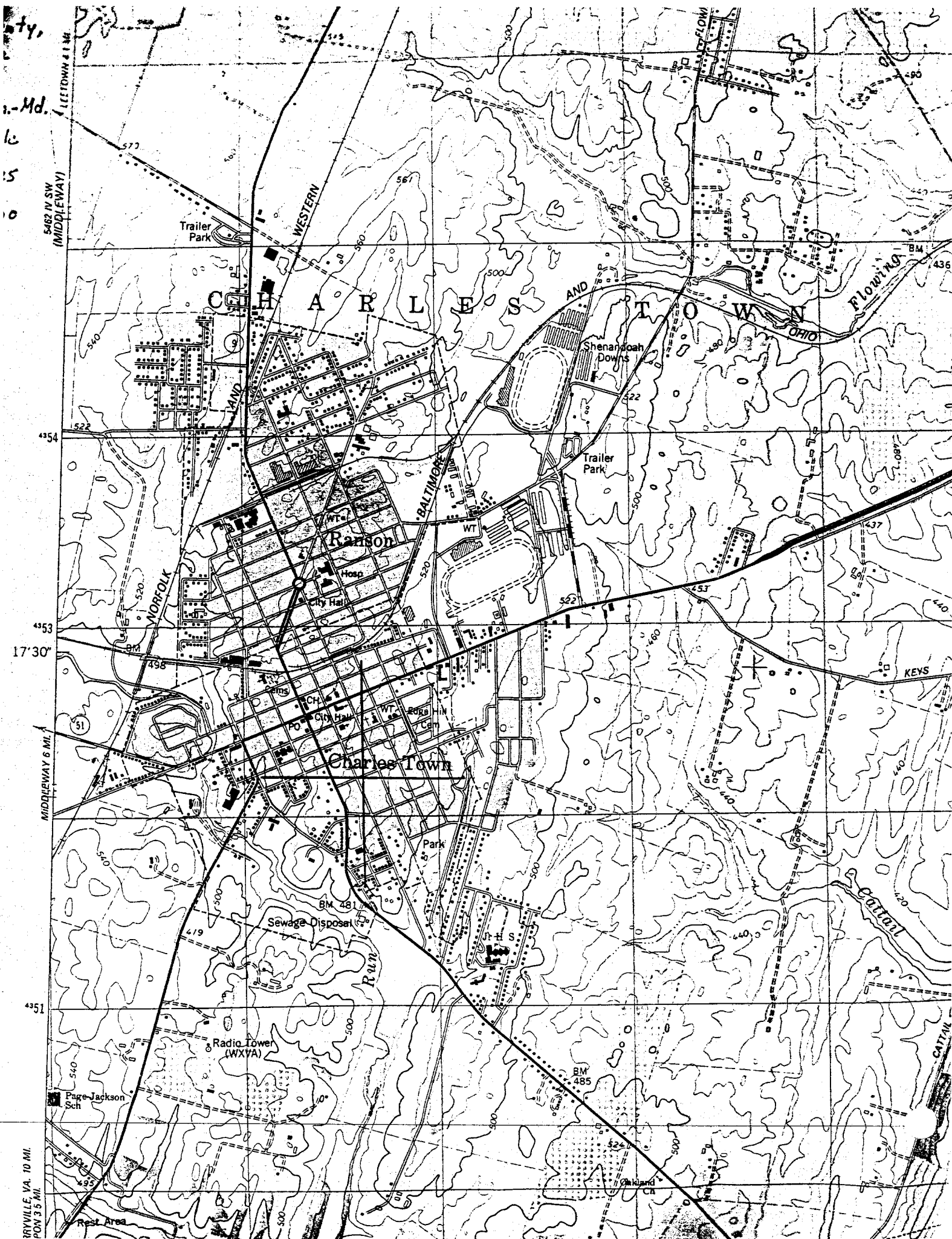
Gibson-Todd House, Charles Town, Jefferson Co., West Virginia
 Continuation sheet

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#9 Major Bibliographical References

- Norris, J.E., ed., History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley,
 Chicago, Ill., A. Warner & Co., 1890.
 Oates, Stephen B., To Purge This Land With Blood: A Biography
 of John Brown, New York, Harper & Row, 1970.
West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State, New York, Oxford
 University Press, (Writers Project, W.P.A.), 1941.



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17°30'
MIDDLEWAY 6 MI.
RYVILLE, VA. 10 MI.
PO BOX 35 MI.

CHARLES TOWN

Ranson

Charles Town

Shenandoah Downs

Trailer Park

Trailer Park

City Hall

Hosp

City Hall

City Hall

Radio Tower (WXYA)

Sewage Disposal

Park

BM 481

BM 485

Parkland Ch

Rest Area

KEYS

CATFISH

CATFISH

CATFISH

