



Blue C Real Estate, LLC
40 River Farms Drive | Fairmont, WV 26554
304-612-2936
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701 Benoni Avenue, *The Hutchinson House Overview:*

Spanning the banks of the Monongahela River, Fairmont is a thriving and historic city just minutes from Morgantown and Bridgeport. The city boasts a proud history as a thriving railroad and coal town and the abundant antique architecture lends Fairmont to a timeless atmosphere everywhere you go. As the home of Fairmont State University, the city holds over 4000 college students as well as hundreds of faculty and staff members. Fairmont's high-performing public schools and low crime rate have made the area quite desirable among folks raising families, with the market offering a broad selection of options for every budget, taste and lifestyle.

The current borders of Marion County were established in 1842, and Middletown was named the county's seat. At that time, William Haymond, Jr. suggested that the town's name be changed to Fairmont because the town had a beautiful overlook of the Monongahela River, giving it a "fair mount."

The Borough of Fairmont was incorporated in 1843 by the Virginia General Assembly. Many of the first buildings in Fairmont were poorly constructed. By 1852—little more than 30 years after the city's founding—a large portion of Fairmont was reported to be run-down and dilapidated. Reports from 1873 indicate that these buildings had continued to fall into disrepair.

On April 2, 1876, a fire destroyed a large portion of the city's business district, as well as many houses in the area. The continuing dilapidation of the city's buildings may have contributed to the fire; the large number of coalmines under Fairmont may have also played a role.

Between 1891 and 1901—in a span of only 10 years—Fairmont's population had increased from 1,000 to 7,000. The City of Fairmont was chartered in 1899; as a result of the charter, the city absorbed the surrounding towns of Palatine (also known as East Side) and West Fairmont.

By 1901, Fairmont was an important commercial center. Many railroads—including the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad on its way from Cumberland, MD to Wheeling, WV—traveled through the city. By this time, Fairmont was also the leading center of the coal trade industry in northern West Virginia, employing some 10,000 workers in the coal mines around Fairmont.

Fairmont grew as a wealthy, happening place. Money from local coal companies enriched the town and spawned a class of millionaires who poured their money and efforts into building a place for themselves in history. In its heyday, Fairmont had as many as 100 millionaires living within its borders, most with ties to the coal industry.

One family had the vision and the resources to build and set their focus on creating a turn of the century residential structure. At 701 Benoni Avenue, architect Andrew C. Lyons brought to life a large Dutch colonial mansion for local coal baron Clyde E. Hutchinson, his wife Lydia, and their eight children.



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A.C. Lyons was born in Somerset County, Pennsylvania in 1873. When he was an infant, the family moved to Pittsburgh, before moving on to Huntington, West Virginia, in 1880. The family later returned to Pittsburgh, where Lyons finished his schooling. Lyons began his architectural career in 1888, in the office of Pittsburgh architect Solomon Munsch.

In 1891 he went to Fairmont to manage a branch office for the firm, now Munsch & Huemme. In 1894 this was expanded to a partnership, Munsch, Huemme & Lyons, with offices in Pittsburgh and Fairmont. The firm became known as S. Munsch & Company upon Huemme's departure. After Munsch's death in 1898, Lyons established his own office in Fairmont.

Lyons quickly grew to become one of the most prominent architects in northeast West Virginia. In 1904, he established a branch office at Elkins, a small city then undergoing rapid growth. He practiced until at least the 1920 and died in Fairmont in 1942.

Projects Included:

- 1894 - Merchants and Mechanics Savings Bank Building, 101 W Main St, Grafton, West Virginia
- 1895 - First M. E. Church (remodeling), 118 Clarksburg St, Mannington, West Virginia
- 1898 - McCoy Building, 109 Fairmont Ave, Fairmont, West Virginia
- 1900 - Clyde E. Hutchinson House, 701 Benoni Ave, Fairmont, West Virginia
- 1900 - Sample Building, 221 Monroe St, Fairmont, West Virginia
- 1902 - Thomas W. Arnett House, 707 Benoni Ave, Fairmont, West Virginia
- 1902 - Jacobs-Hutchinson Block, 205 Adams St, Fairmont, West Virginia
- 1903 - Jacobs Building, 316 Monroe St, Fairmont, West Virginia
- 1904 - Randolph Hotel, Railroad Ave, Elkins, West Virginia
- 1905 - Fifth Ward School (former), 601 Locust Ave, Fairmont, West Virginia
- 1905 - Woman's Hall, Fairmont State Normal School, Fairmont, West Virginia
- 1907 - First Ward School (former), 1301 S Davis Ave, Elkins, West Virginia
- 1907 - Scott Building, 309 Scott St, Elkins, West Virginia
- 1907 - Third Ward School (former), 978 Harrison Ave, Elkins, West Virginia
- 1908 - Rivesville School (former), 168 Jasper St, Rivesville, West Virginia
- 1910 - Consolidation Coal Office Building, 78 Millers Creek Rd, Van Lear, Kentucky
- 1916 - Professional Building, 311 Cleveland Ave, Fairmont, West Virginia

The Fleming–Watson Historic District is comprises 365 buildings and 1 structure of architecture significance on 84 acres (0.34 km²) in Fairmont, West Virginia. It is in two irregular sections separated by a ravine, approximately bounded by Fairmont Avenue, Second and Fay Streets, Apple Crescent, Green and Emerson Streets, Coleman Avenue, Ninth Street, and Outlook. High Gate, the James Edwin Watson House, also listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is located in the district. The district



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contains a variety of the architectural styles that were common from 1850 to 1951. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

The Hutchinson House was purchased in 1998 by the Fairmont Community Development Partnership. A non-profit group, the Partnership's primary goal was the rehabilitation and revitalization of residential communities in the Fairmont area. This property was the first historically significant project undertaken by the Partnership and became the crown achievement of their efforts.

The condition of the property when purchased was dismal. Renovations performed by previous owners had turned the single family residence into a seven unit apartment building. Lack of adequate maintenance and overuse had allowed much of the structure to deteriorate to the point of near collapse. Well-intended but poorly planned attempts at preserving the striking exterior had resulted in a mish-mash of quick fixes and mis-matched materials. Most of the recent construction efforts lacked any real attention to detail and Fairmont was left with an eye-sore along a major traffic artery.

Extensive research provided background information not only on construction techniques of the era but specifically for this structure. Using early photographic and postcard evidence, particular attention was paid to maintaining the original, and often unusual, framing configurations and construction techniques. During the discovery and demolition portion of the Project structural details and techniques were noted and recorded so that new construction would match the original. Whenever possible new materials matched old and when a material was not commercially available custom tooling re-created the evidenced detailing of the original structure.

Portions of the stone foundations were reset to accommodate for 100 years of settling and weather abuse. All subsequent interior partitioning was removed thus opening up the rooms to the original arrangement. Three chimneys were removed and rebuilt using the original brick - some of which had been stored off site for nearly two decades. The existing slate roof, built-in gutter system and much of the underlying wood structure were replaced. The cold soldered copper flashing, crickets, valleys, trim, gutters and downspouts were also replaced with new copper to match the original. Four large porches, including two odd, octagonal porches, and the porte cochere were removed to subgrade and replaced to match the original. A staggered/crimped-seam copper roof with cold soldered joints was re-installed on the porches also to match the original. Much of the exterior siding was replaced, as was the majority of the decorative wood trim and panels, dentil molding, corbels, and columns, pilasters and associated capitals and bases.

Finally the entire structure was repainted with a scheme based on the primary color of the original paint job. The detailed care and respect paid to this House is self-evident. It is one of the premier examples of historic preservation in the State.

Blackwood Associates, Inc. - Architects and Planners, were selected by the Fairmont Community Development Partnership to provide architectural services for the historic rehabilitation of the former



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Hutchinson House residence. The rehabilitation efforts consisted of returning the exterior facade back to its original condition and renovating the interior residential space. As a result, the general contractor, Home Pride Enterprises and the Fairmont Community Development Partnership were awarded the 1999 AIA Craftsmanship Honor Award for their efforts on restoring the exterior of the Hutchinson House.

In 2001, The Vandalia Heritage Foundation purchased the home and provided their expertise in historic preservation. They completed the final repairs and used the home as their primary office. Additionally, they provided the community a historic library that is still a part of the home today. Over time, the home has continued to be a part of the Fairmont community, however has lacked the ability to maintain long term feasibility.

Measuring over 5000 square feet, the interior of the home contains the character of the 1900s and ignites creative possibilities for a personal residence, professional office space, retail boutique or community gathering spot. In 2018, Frank and Crystal Jacquez became involved and immediately felt a connection to the responsibility related to continuing the life of The Hutchinson House. Their goal is to remedy a few areas of differed maintenance while finding ways to share the home, its history and the importance of historic preservation with the community.