

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 31 1980

DATE ENTERED

MAY 27 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Seminary Square Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION Roughly bounded by RR tracks, Elmwood, 9th and 12th Sts.

STREET & NUMBER

Multiple (see continuation sheet)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Covington

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6

STATE

Kentucky

CODE

021

COUNTY

Kenton

CODE

117

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple (see continuation sheet)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kenton County Municipal Building

STREET & NUMBER

Court Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Covington

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

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"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Seminary Square Historic District is located in Covington, Kentucky, the state's northern-most city. Situated directly across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, Ohio, Covington has retained a small community atmosphere, despite its size (population 52,000), and has become home for many affluent persons.

Located near the central part of town, the Seminary Square Historic District is two and one-half blocks wide and five blocks long, containing approximately eighteen acres. The area is bounded on the east by railroad tracks; on the south by Twelfth Street; on the north by Ninth Street; and on the west by the rear property lines of the structures on the west side of Banklick.¹ Approximately one hundred and thirty buildings are contained within the district, the majority of which are residential, with a couple of corner grocery businesses dotting the area. Although the district appears to have a large number of rental units, the tendency to owner occupied dwellings is growing.

Most of the structures are oriented to the street with narrow lots and shallow setbacks, emphasized by elaborate iron fences. The styles and construction dates range from early nineteenth to early twentieth century with the heaviest concentration being nineteenth century townhouses and multiple family dwellings.

Although there is a predominance of certain styles within the district, several noteworthy structures within each category deem special attention.

Only one building of note, the Alfred Sanford house, dates to the early 1800s and is probably the oldest structure in the district. Although Victorianized in the 1880s, the original Federal design is still evident in the five-bay symmetrical facade and square pierced portico. Due to fire damage the building was altered by the addition of a mansard roof and octagonal bay, along with Victorian hoodmolds. Unlike the shallow frontage of most of the later structures, the Sanford house is not oriented to the street, but is buffered by a sizeable yard.

Styles of the mid 1800s were characterized by tall, boxy, vertically emphasized townhouses built in "shotgun"² or side passage plans. Most are of brick with stone trim consisting of elaborate hoodmolds and cornices. If no porticos grace the flat facade, elaborate iron fences make up for the lack. If a porch or portico is present, it is a confectioner's delight in iron, consisting of lacy delicate patterns. Within the area, illustrations range from very simple structures, with flat lintels and bracketed cornices, to the more elaborate houses of the affluent families. Three exceptional houses which deserve special mention include: the John Fisk house, the W. E. Ashbrooke house, and the Harriet Albro house. All the structures have the townhouse shape and plan, but each displays distinct individuality.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
—PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
—1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
—1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
—1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
—1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
X1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
X1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Established in 1840, the Western Baptist Theological Institute was one of the first schools of its kind established by Baptists in Kentucky. The area surrounding the seminary, which became home for the school faculty, evolved into an affluent residential neighborhood. This district has retained its nineteenth century character, and a large percentage of the architecturally significant structures remain.

Situated in the northernmost point of Kentucky, Covington was established as part of Campbell County in 1815. Kenton County was not formed until 1840, exactly one week before the Kentucky legislature passed the act for the establishment of Western Baptist Theological Institute.

The founding of Baptist colleges and seminaries in Kentucky was delayed due to early prejudices within the denomination against formal education of its ministers. The Great Revival of 1800 and Alexander Campbell both placed much emphasis on divine inspiration and emotion for clerical training. Although this issue caused differences in the early part of the nineteenth century among the Baptists, it became less a divisive factor with the passage of time.

With the growth of the denomination and the differences over slavery evident, the Western Baptist Association was formed in an attempt to bring together those states that felt a common need to de-emphasize the issue of slavery. The association included all Baptists west of the Alleghenies and on both sides of the Ohio. In 1834, the Western Baptist Education Association was formed and the following resolution adopted "that we consider the education of ministers highly important as a means of enabling them to exhibit appropriately and forcibly, the truths of the gospel." (James p. 39). A 1931 list of schools established in the nineteenth century shows that of sixty-four schools, thirty-six were Baptist sponsored. Of this number only four institutions of college level now remain. They include Georgetown College, Cumberland College, Campbellsville College and Bethel College (McVey p. 91). The Western Baptist Theological Institute was established solely for the purpose of educating young ministers. Due to the town's central location, Covington was the most obvious location for the school. Buildings were purchased in 1835, an executive committee was chosen and a charter was granted from the Kentucky legislature in 1840.

From the beginning, the Baptist leaders in Kentucky felt alienated from the institute. The majority of the executive committee and most of the faculty and students were from the North. Although not radically abolitionist, the school had anti-slavery leanings, which further irritated the Kentucky Baptists. Even before the official opening of the school in 1845, the Kentucky Baptists resolved that the institute would not receive their support. This decision was made the same year the Southern Baptist

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Collins, Richard. History of Kentucky. Vol. II. Berea: Kentucke Imprints, 1874.

Champlin, John Denison, ed. Cyclopedia of Painters and Paintings. Vol.III.
New York: Charles Scribners Sons, MCM.

Eilerman, Charles. Historic Covington. 1973. (no publisher given).

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 18 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME <u>Covington, Ky.-Ohio</u>				QUADRANGLE SCALE <u>1:24000</u>			
UTM REFERENCES							
A	166	7 1 5 2 4 0	4,2 3,8 5,0,0	B	1,6	7 1,5 3,2,0	4,3 2 8 2,4,0
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C	1,6	7 1 5 2 2 0	4,2 3,8 2,0,0	D	1,6	7 1,5 2,4,0	4,2 3,8 0,8,0
E	1,6	7 1,5 1 2,0	4,2 3,8 0,4,0	F	1,6	7 1,5 0,4,0	4,2 3,8 4,6,0
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION See enclosed VBD record 3/23/80 - 86 continuation sheet

Beginning at a point approximately 100 feet to the east of the center of the intersection of Russell and Ninth streets, the boundary travels south along the rear property lines of the buildings on the north side of Tenth Street (approx. 300 feet); the line (cont.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jayne C. Henderson, Historian

DATE

ORGANIZATION

March 1980

Kentucky Heritage Commission

TELEPHONE

STREET & NUMBER

502/564-3741

104 Bridge Street

STATE

CITY OR TOWN

Kentucky

Frankfort

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

3-26-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5/27/80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5/23/80

ATTEST: Kristen O'Connell

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Constructed in the late 1860s, the Ashbrooke house is the most imposing of the three structures. Three stories in height, it occupies a large, highly visible, corner lot on Russell Street and Robbins Avenue. A high stone foundation and stone entrance steps give the facade much emphasis. The stonework is echoed in the label molds and enriched overdoor. To provide variation from the "shotgun" plan, a semi-octagonal bay projects from the southeast corner of the structure.

Situated on the opposite corner is the James Fisk house, which has a construction date of 1865. The exceptionally well crafted stone trim is the most noteworthy architectural detail in this Italianate structure. Gothic Revival colonettes below a segmental arch with a keystone grace the main entrance element. This arch and keystone motif is echoed in the deeply bracketed cornice which has a panelled soffit.

Similar in scale to the Fisk house is the Harriett Albro house, built in 1874. Also an Italianate townhouse, the flat facade is relieved by a one-story, semi-octagonal center bay with a dentillated and bracketed cornice. The stone entrance element is of exceptional quality with a broken and curved pediment and incising to either side of the opening. Superior workmanship is exhibited in the interior wood and plasterwork of the Albro house. Of special note is the plaster ceiling medallion in the parlor. It contains icanthus leaves encircled by an egg and dart design. The mantelpiece, of mahogany and burled maple, employs a few Gothic details and is capped by a mirrored overmantle.

Two other mid-nineteenth century structures of particular note are the Immanuel Methodist Episcopal Church built in 1869, and St. Paul's Evangelical Church, constructed around 1867. Both churches abut the street on two sides, making each highly visible within the area. Each gable-end structure boasts round arched windows and simple cornice detail and a bell tower. However, in each case the tower has been truncated. St. Paul's is still retained by a congregation and contains some attractive stained glass windows. Immanuel, on the other hand, has been abandoned and the windows removed.

The late 1800s were characterized by more eclecticism and a retreat from more conservative tastes. Second Empire styles, many of which featured the mansard roof, became popular. Also a greater number of multiple family dwellings were being constructed. Both trends are evidenced in the number of structures in this style and form within the Russell Street area. Examples include three complexes located on 1018-1024, 1030-1032, and 1034-1036 Russell Street--all are of brick construction, with highly decorative bargeboarding, have mansard roof forms with colored tiles, and gables and dormers. Other buildings which evidence the French mansard influence are 108 West Eleventh Street, built in 1883; and the Alfred Sanford house which was remodelled in 1895.

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Very few structures were built in this area after the first part of the twentieth century. Only two structures, a 1950s gas station and a church built in the 1960s, are intrusive. The remaining intrusions consist of empty lots due to burned or razed structures located within the nominated area.² With the exception of these intrusions, the district can be said to possess an architectural cohesiveness as well as a strong sense of neighborhood. A good percentage of the buildings are currently being rehabilitated with the help of a restoration corporation that has been formed.

The Russell Street residential area is bounded on the north and east by commercial districts. On the south side after Twelfth Street, more twentieth century residences are evident. The western boundary divides the seminary square residences from a separate distinct neighborhood known as Old Town.

¹ The original Seminary Square was bounded by Robbins Avenue on the north, Eleventh Street on the south, Madison on the east, and Russell Street on the west. The present district sits in the southwest corner of the older area.

² The open spaces are located at 904, 1003, 1011, 1034, 1035, 1037 Banklick Street. Also razed were two structures on Chesapeake between Robbins and Eleventh Streets, two structures at the northwest corner of Chesapeake and Tenth Streets, and one structure on the west side of Chesapeake, between Ninth and Tenth Streets.

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Convention was organized in Georgia. By 1847 there were rumors that the Ohio trustees were considering moving the institute across the river to Cincinnati. The whole situation resulted in open opposition between Kentucky Baptists and the Northern trustees of the school.

The differences finally broke the institution, and in 1855, the trustees deemed it wise to sell the property and divide the proceeds equally between Northern and Southern interests. The South's portion fell to Georgetown College, and Fremont Theological Institute in Ohio received the balance (Ware, pp. 48-49). The school's charter was officially revoked in 1890. The buildings connected with the school were sold and the Alfred Sanford house is the only extant structure directly connected with the institute.¹ After the institute was dissolved, the structure was used in the 1890s as Miss Bristow's Boarding and Day School for young ladies.

Up to this time, the most fashionable place to live in Covington had been the Riverside Drive area (listed on the National Register November 23, 1971). However, living that close to the river had some drawbacks, such as flooding, and a high incidence of cholera and yellow fever. Because the Seminary Square area had the highest elevation in the city, many residents wisely built their new homes here. A sense of neighborhood was evident, established by those connected with the school,² added to its appeal, and the area around Russell Street soon became a prosperous and populous residential district. During the mid-to-late nineteenth century, several affluent and well-known families called Russell Street home. Noted businessmen, politicians and even a nationally known painter, resided here.

General Thomas Sanford, who came to Covington from Virginia in 1792, was one of Kenton County's early prominent political figures. He was in the Kentucky legislature, was a representative in Congress, and helped form Kentucky's second constitution. His son, Alfred Sanford, built the house at 1026 Russell Street (Seminary president's home) on his father's land c. 1820s. Alfred also served Kenton County as a member of the Kentucky legislature³ (Collins p.440).

To the north of the Sanford home, at 1010 Russell, sits the house of William E. Ashbrooke, who was a stockyard owner and local politician. Ashbrooke served five terms on Covington's city council and as Kenton County sheriff from 1858-1862.

The Fisk house at 1017 Russell Street belonged to one of Covington's most prominent families. It is speculated that the house was built by John F. Fisk, Sr., in 1865. Born in New York in 1815, he settled in Covington in the 1850s. Fisk represented Kenton County in the state senate from 1857-1865, and was elected speaker on two separate occasions. He also served as acting lieutenant governor in 1862. In addition to his political career, John Fisk was involved in private business interests

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in Covington as well. He was elected an officer of the Covington and Cincinnati Bridge Company, and was on the Board of Directors of the First National Bank and the Covington Gas and Light Company. In 1877 he served as president of the Odd Fellows Hall Association.

John F. Fisk, Sr. married in 1842 and fathered seven children, two of whom, Charles and John Fisk, Jr., practiced law. This house was later owned by his son Charles.

At 106 West Eleventh Street stands the house of Laban J. Bradford. Although not as widely known as some other figures in the district, he was important in his own right. Laban Bradford was born in Bracken County, Kentucky but in 1874 purchased the house on Eleventh Street and made Covington his home. Bradford established a tobacco fair in Louisville in 1858 and served as president for seven years. Governor Bramlette appointed him president of the board of visitors to the State University of Lexington and later as one of the trustees of the Agricultural and Mechanical College at Lexington.³ For a number of years he was president of the National Tobacco Association.

Another well-known figure that resided in the Seminary Square area was Henry F. Farney (1847-1916), a painter who immigrated from Alsace in 1853. His career was launched with the appearance in various publications of his illustrations of Jefferson Davis and of the National Turn Verin Covention in Cincinnati in Harpers Weekly in 1865. One year later, at the age of nineteen, he went to work for Harpers. Some of his better known illustrations appeared in the McGuffey Readers. Farney was the series' leading illustrator, contributing seventy-six of three hundred enumerated in one study. Henry Farney lived in Covington at 1029-1031 Banklick Street from 1890 until his death in 1916. One of his best known works, "The Song of the Talking Wire," was painted here in 1904.

Seminary Square is made up of a variation of styles and structures. However, there is a predominance of late nineteenth century townhouses, as well as containing several Victorian complexes. These structures have been little changed since construction. Some of the most visible and well-designed examples of the townhouses in the district include the Laban J. Bradford house, the Harriett Albro house, and the William E. Ashbrooke house. All three are of brick construction with well-designed stone trim. They are all shotgun dwellings and, with the exception of the Bradford house, have no portico. The lacy ironwork on the Bradford house is just one of many exceptional ironwork designs in the district.

Although not a residence, the three-story grocery building located on the southwest corner of Eleventh and Russell is a key structure in the district. The entrance is situated directly at the corner and is capped by semi-circular balconies on the

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two floors above. Each contains a paneled overhead and wrought iron railing. The store's interior is simple, with an elaborate pressed tin ceiling as the only decorative element. The cornice element is very deep and contains a paneled soffit.

Other buildings of note are the Victorian multiple family complexes. At the southwest corner of Russell and Robbins streets is the most imposing edifice of this type. Constructed of brick with painted wooden trim this structure is a highly colorful addition to the district.

The Seminary Square Historic District still retains most of its original historical and architectural integrity, recognized on February 19, 1980 by its designation by the city of Covington as a local historic district.

¹ It had been purchased in 1835 for use as the president's home. The main administration building was used as St. Elizabeth's Hospital until 1916 when it was razed.

² A structure located at the northeast corner of Eleventh and Russell, (now the site of a gas station) was the home of two faculty members.

³ The University of Kentucky was known originally as the Agricultural and Mechanical College.

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corrected version
rec'd 5/23/80

then turns south (approx. 775 feet); the boundary line turns west along the rear property lines of the buildings that front on Eleventh Street (approximately 480 feet) to the alley between Banklick and Russell streets; the line turns south along the west side of the alley (approx. 350 feet) to the north side of Twelfth Street; it then turns west (approximately 300 feet) to the rear property line of the structure at the northwest corner of Banklick and Russell streets. The boundary line then turns north (approximately 1400 feet) along the rear property lines of all the structures which front on Banklick Street to the intersection with Ninth Street. The line then turns south approximately 80 feet, then west along the south side of Ninth Street approximately 350 feet to its beginning point.

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ADDENDUM

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point on the south side of Ninth Street, at the curb line, 175' east of the southeast corner of Ninth and Russell; the line travels south along the rear property lines of the buildings on the east side of Russell Street, about 125'; the line turns east along the rear property lines of the buildings on the north side of Tenth Street, to the west side of Chesapeake, about 225'; the line travels south along the curb line of the west side of Chesapeake Street, to the curb line of the south side of 10th Street, about 160'; it then goes east about 50'; the line turns south along the west property line of the C & O Railroad bed, about 690' to a point at the rear property lines of the buildings on the south side of Eleventh Street; the line turns west and travels along the rear property lines of the buildings on the south side of Eleventh Street, about 290'; north 25'; west 100' along the south property line, extending across Russell Street to the west side, to a point at the curb line, 115' from the southwest corner of Russell and Eleventh Streets. The line goes north along the west side of Russell 50'; turns west along the rear property lines of the buildings on the south side of Eleventh Street; south along the east property line, 25'; west 50'; to a point on the east side of the alley between Banklick and Russell; the line goes south 350' along the east curb line of the alley, to a point on the curb where the east side of the alley, and the north side of Twelfth Street meet. The line turns west along the curb on the north side of Twelfth Street, 300' to the rear of the property on the west side of Banklick. The line goes north, 400' along the rear property lines of the buildings on the west side of Banklick; west 50', north 100', east 75'; the line turns north for 390' along the rear property lines of the buildings on the west side of Banklick, between Berry and Robbins Streets; east 25' on the curb line of the south side of Robbins; north 325' along the rear property lines of the buildings on the west side of Banklick; west 75'; north 100'; east 100'; the line continues north 125' to a point at the northwest corner of the last property facing on Banklick. The line travels east along the north side of the property 60', to a point on the curb on the west side of Banklick. The line goes south along the curb of the west side of Banklick, 60'; then turns east and runs along the curb line of the south side of Ninth Street, 325' to the point of origin.



Seminary Square Historic District
Covington, Kenton County, Kentucky
Site location map. Northern Ky.
Area Planning Commission.
Kenton and Campbell counties, Ky.
Planning Map, 1963. Scale 1"=200'

Map 2.

Areas marked in blue are empty lots.

Green sites are intrusive structures.

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Genitalia
Signature
Histologic
Category

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