

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUL 26 1984

date entered SEP 7 1984

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

1. Name

historic Thomasville Commercial Historic District

and or common

2. Location

*Roughly N. Stevens, N. Madison, N. Broad, Remington,
Jackson, and Jefferson Sts.*

street & number See Continuation Sheet

N/A not for publication

city, town Thomasville

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia

code 013

county Thomas

code 275

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 type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" 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"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (more than 50)

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Thomas County Courthouse

city, town Thomasville

state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Structures Field Survey:

title Thomas County

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976

federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta

state Georgia

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Thomasville Commercial Historic District encompasses the contiguous historic commercial and civic buildings in downtown Thomasville. City streets in the district are laid out in a gridiron pattern with Broad Street, the main street, centered on and paralleling a low ridge which runs northwest-southeast across the city. The courthouse, located at the north edge of the district, marks the center of the city, from which the commercial district has grown in a southeasterly direction. The older buildings in the district, a number dating from the 1880s, are located along Broad Street. Later early twentieth century buildings replaced some earlier Broad Street buildings and spread out along Jackson Street. Lots are primarily long and narrow, oriented, in most cases, to Broad Street and Jackson Street. The majority of buildings are one to three story masonry structures with party walls and common setbacks. Brick, the principal building material, is used both structurally and decoratively. In addition, cast iron, pressed metal, stone, terracotta, and wood are frequently used for exterior and interior detailing. Architectural styles represented include Victorian Eclectic, Early Twentieth Century Commercial, Neoclassical, and Georgian Revival. Landscaping in the district is limited to plantings around the courthouse and old post office. Several streets retain their original brick surface. Non-contributing buildings include a number with remodeled front facades and storefronts.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1826, 1880s–1920s **Builder/Architect** Multiple

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Thomasville Commercial Historic District is significant as the historic commercial and civic center of Thomasville and Thomas County. In terms of community planning and development, the district is significant as an example of a typical Georgia county seat laid out in the early-nineteenth century with a courthouse square and gridiron plan. In terms of architecture, the district is significant for its collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial and civic buildings which document prevailing design principles and construction practices of the time and illustrate how high-style architecture was locally interpreted in small Georgia cities. In terms of commerce, the district is significant as the location of the historic commercial center of Thomasville. Many of its buildings were constructed in a period of great commercial growth in the last decades of the nineteenth century corresponding to Thomasville's years as a popular winter resort. In terms of politics and government, the district is significant for the location in its midst of two important civic buildings, the Thomas County Courthouse and the old U.S. Post Office, now the city library. These areas of significance support district eligibility under National Register criteria A and C.

Community Planning and Development

Thomasville was laid out as the county seat of newly formed Thomas County in 1826. Its gridiron plan, focused around the courthouse square, was typical of many of Georgia's nineteenth century county seats. Somewhat unique to Thomasville, however, are the subsequent growth of the central business district in one direction away from the courthouse, rather than around it, and the angled orientation of the grid to accommodate the area's natural features. This grid system was continued as the city limits were successively expanded during the nineteenth century, and it served as the framework for all later development.

Thomasville flourished early on and by the 1850s was a bustling center for the surrounding plantation economy. It became the terminus for the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad from Savannah in 1861 and, during the Civil War, served as a supply center for Savannah and a resettlement point for families who had fled from other parts of Georgia more directly affected by the war. Its economic recovery after the war was unusually rapid for a small Georgia town due to the development there of a winter resort industry. Beginning in the 1870s and climaxing in the late 1880s and 1890s, winter vacationers from the North discovered Thomasville's healthy and moderate winter climate and rapidly growing stock of hotels and boarding houses. Many became semi-permanent residents, building "cottages" in town

[continued]

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 20 acres

Quadrangle name Thomasville, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	2	1	5	1	8	0	3	4	1	5	0	2	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

B

1	7	2	1	4	5	7	0	3	4	1	4	8	7	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

C

1	7	2	1	4	7	6	0	3	4	1	5	5	4	0
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

The district boundary, marked with a heavy black line on the enclosed tax map, circumscribes the contiguous historic commercial and civic buildings in downtown Thomasville.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher

Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

date May 7, 1984

street & number 270 Washington Street, S.W.

telephone (404) 656-2840

city or town Atlanta

state Georgia 30334

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

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/19/84

For NPS use only

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

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

9-7-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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



Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

for the winter season. This was a period of tremendous growth for Thomasville. It began to slow around the turn of the century as the developing Florida winter tourist industry began to draw visitors away from Thomasville. The 1905 destruction by fire of Thomasville's largest and grandest hotel marked its end. Development continued at a slower pace through the 1910s and 1920s as Thomasville continued to prosper as a commercial and government center for the surrounding area.

Architecture

Architecturally, the Thomasville Commercial Historic District is significant for containing a collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial and civic buildings that document the prevailing design and construction principles and practices of commercial architecture of the time. It illustrates the way builders and architects interpreted high-style architecture of the period for a small southwest Georgia city. Architectural styles well-represented in the district include the Victorian Eclectic, Georgian Revival, Neoclassical, and Early Twentieth Century Commercial. Period details including piers, pilasters, columns, segmental and round-arched openings, bay windows, corbeled brick and cast iron cornices, string courses, spandrel and parapet panels, pent roofs, and cast iron storefronts are common. Buildings of particular interest include the 1858/1888 courthouse; a number of 1880s two story brick buildings with elaborate Victorian detailing; a fine collection of one story stores along West Jackson Street, built in ca. 1902 with locally manufactured cast iron storefronts; the 1915 five story Upchurch Building; the 1916 Georgian Revival style post office (now the library); the 1926 Neoclassical style Bank of Thomasville; and the 1926 Spanish influenced Steyerman Building. John Wind, an antebellum Thomasville architect; J.A. Wood, a late-nineteenth-century New York architect who built two of Thomasville's large hotels; and A. Ten Eyck Brown and G. Lloyd Preacher, two prominent early-twentieth-century Atlanta architects, designed extant buildings in the district.

Commerce

The district is significant in terms of the history of commerce because of its role as the principal commercial center for Thomas County. The district served as the center for day-to-day commercial activities included wholesaling and retailing, banking, professional services, hotel accommodations, and entertainment. Although none of the hotels dating from Thomasville's winter-resort era remains intact, a number of the commercial buildings in the district date from the 1880s and were associated with this important period of the city's growth and development.

[continued]

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8

Page 3

Politics/Government

The district is significant as the historic center of political and government activity in Thomas County since 1826. County government services are represented by the 1858/1888 Thomas County Courthouse. The federal government's presence is documented by the 1916 post office (now a library).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Location and Bibliography Item number 2 and 9

Page 2

2. Location

The Thomasville Commercial Historic District is located in Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia. It is a T-shaped area in the central business district with its main axes along Broad Street and Jackson Street. It includes properties on North and South Broad streets, North Madison Street, East and West Jackson streets, and East Remington Street.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Balfour, Robert C., Jr. This Land I Have Loved. Tallahassee: Rose Printing Company, 1975.

Dixon, Sandra. "Thomasville Commercial Historic District: Historic District Information Form," February, 1983. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Feiss, Carl, and Russell Wright. Historic Thomasville: An Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites; Program Recommendations to Thomasville Landmarks, Inc. Washington: Carl Feiss, 1969.

Lilly, Roy M., Jr. Manuscripts related to the physical development and boundary expansions of the City of Thomasville, 1826-1951. (Unpublished manuscripts in possession of the compiler.)

Macgregor, Elizabeth. "Historic Thomasville District" (National Register nomination form), October 10, 1975. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Mitchell, William R., Jr. Landmarks: The Architecture of Thomasville and Thomas County, Georgia: 1820-1980. Tallahassee: Rose Printing Company, 1980.

Montgomery, Erick. "Thomasville Commercial Historic District: Historic District Information Form," June, 1981. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Rogers, William Warren. Antebellum Thomas County, 1825-1861. Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1963.

_____. Thomas County During the Civil War. Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1964.

[continued]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 3

_____. Thomas County, 1865-1900. Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1973.

Thomas, Kenneth H., Jr. The Lapham-Patterson House: A National Historic Landmark, Thomasville, Georgia. Atlanta: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1978.

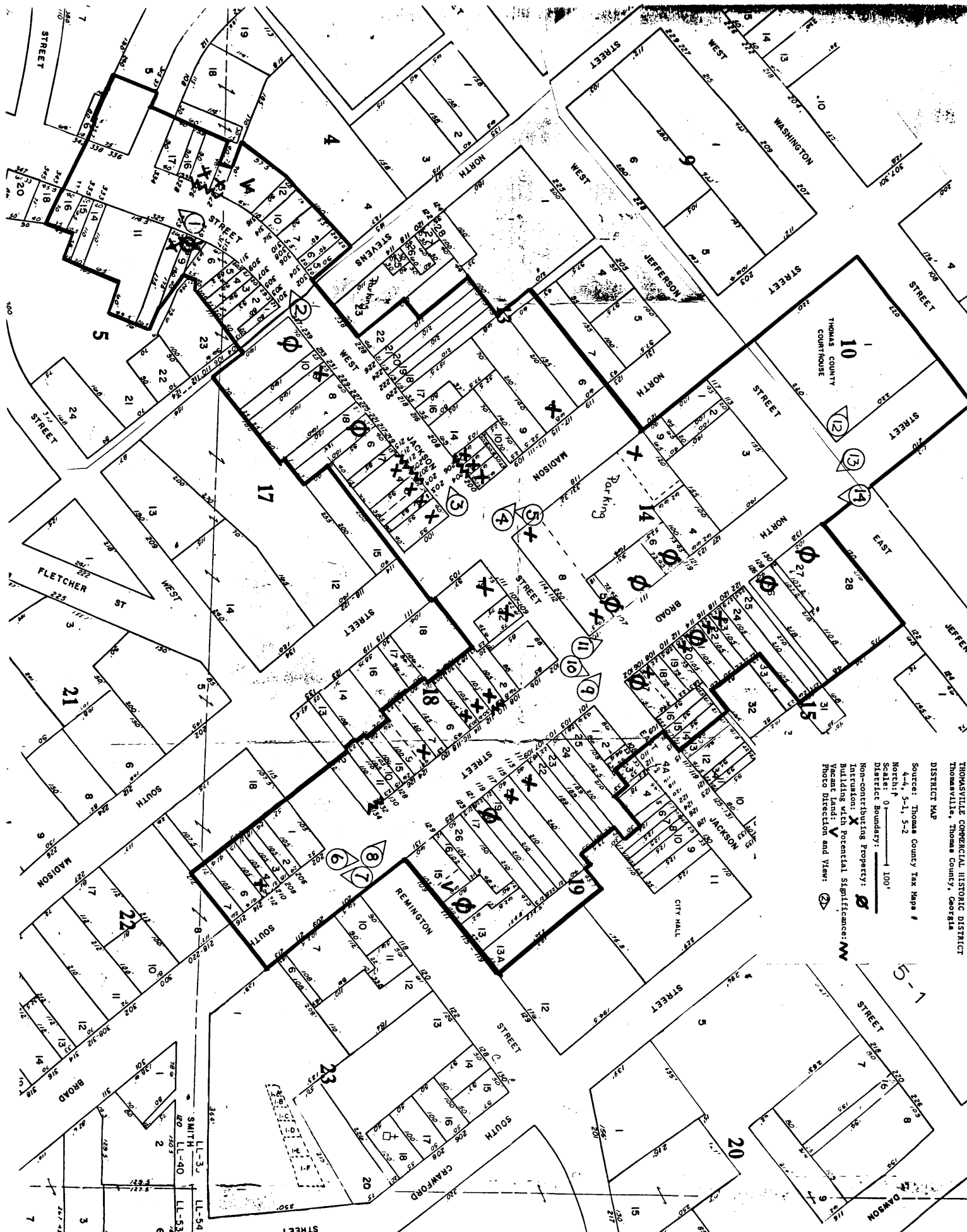
Thomas County, Georgia, Superior Court. Deed Books: Q:233; S:349; T:213; U:130, 236-38, 471; V:632; X:26, 86; AA:566; BB:631; CC:466; DD:459, 687; LL:54-55; OO:571; SS:379, 405; XX:319; WW:319; 3A:58-59; 3E:403; 3F:335; 3G:64; 3U:426; 3Q:195; 4A:607; 4B:466; 4D:166; 4F:74, 115; 4G:54, 210, 266, 314, 601; 4H:292; 4I:330, 524; 4J:287; 5U:517. (Plats of all subdivisions before 1920.)

"Thomasville, Ga. County-Seat of Thomas-County. 1885. Famous Resort for Northern Invalids and Pleasure Seekers." Bird's-eye View Map. Milwaukee: Norris, Wellge and Company, 1885. Reprinted by the Thomas County Historical Society.

Thomasville Landmarks, Inc., files. (Unpublished manuscripts containing notes and photographs of historic sites in Thomasville and Thomas County.)

Trefftzs, Roy W., and Lillian Britt Heinsohn. Heritage of Thomas County, Georgia. Thomasville: Thomas County Bicentennial-Sesquicentennial Commission, 1976.

Triplett, John. Thomasville (Among the Pines) and Thomas County, Georgia. Thomasville: Times-Enterprise, 1891.



THOMASVILLE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
 THOMASVILLE, THOMAS COUNTY, GEORGIA
 DISTRICT MAP

Source: Thomas County Tax Maps # 4-4, 5-1, 5-2
 North: ↑
 Scale: 0 — 100'
 District Boundary: ———
 Non-contributing Property: ○
 Intrusion: X
 Building with Potential Significance: MW
 Vacant Land: V
 Photo Direction and View: ⊙

5-1