

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUL 13 1982
date entered

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

1. Name

historic SOMERSET DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

and/or common Same

2. Location

108-236 and 201-223 E. Mt. Vernon St.

Contained are all bldgs. on the N side of E. Mt. Vernon St. located between street & number 108 and 236 E. Mt. Vernon; and all bldgs. on the S side NA not for publication of E. Mt. Vernon between 201 and 223 E. Mt. Vernon.
city, town Somerset NA vicinity of congressional district

state Kentucky code 021 county Pulaski code 199

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district(16 bldgs)	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>NA</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>NA</u> being considered	<input checked="" 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 attached)

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pulaski County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Somerset, state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kentucky Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Division

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

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 city of Somerset (population 10,649, 1980 census) is located in south central Kentucky near the Cumberland River. It became the seat of government for Pulaski County in 1801. The location (site) was chosen due to the proximity of a large spring which provided fresh water for the community. The forty acres that originally composed the town were divided into eighty lots. The plan was simple in design, resembling a Roman Castra. Utilizing a grid pattern, streets ran north-south and east-west with a centrally located public square (forum). The original grid pattern was slightly modified due to topographic and physiographic reasons, resulting in a dynamic street layout reminiscent of a medieval plan. The historic downtown buildings reflect and magnify this concept due to their scale and street setbacks.

The Somerset Historic Commercial District consists of a block and a half of buildings that face on East Mt. Vernon Street, immediately east of the public square.

This district contains all buildings on the north side of E. Mt. Vernon Street located between 108 and 236 E. Mt. Vernon; and all buildings on the south side of E. Mt. Vernon between 201 and 223 E. Mt. Vernon. This block and a half has predominantly been a shopping area within the downtown. Mt. Vernon Street (Highway 80) is a major traffic artery into the city, although most of the heavy traffic is diverted from the district via the Highway 80 by-pass, to the north of the city. The majority of the commercial buildings within the historic district are two and three story, load bearing brick structures, constructed during the late 19th early 20th century. Of the sixteen commercial buildings within the district, fifteen are contributing structures. There is one intrusive building, which is judged non-contributing.

The north side of the 108-112 block of East Mt. Vernon Street is comprised of a single building. (see photo 1) Although structurally this building is one building, it was designed to house three businesses which share common walls every 25 feet. The two sections to the east share common second and third floors. These upper floors were originally a show area for a furniture store. This crosswall brick load-bearing structure was built in 1910 by Robert Orwin and I.R. Longworth. Three businesses went together with each paying for a different section of the building. This Victorian functional building has a pressed metal cornice, with a steel rosette beam running the length of the building, separating the transparent storefront from the Victorian fenestration of the second and third floors.

The buildings on the 200 block of the north side of East Mt. Vernon Street represent an unbroken streetscape of late 19th and early 20th century commercial architecture. (see photo 2) KD & G Appliance located on the corner of East Mt. Vernon and Maple Street was constructed sometime between 1880-1893. This two-story commercial building has stock label molds and pediment windows. The first floor has been gutted and an aluminum facade placed on the store front. The Jack-n-Jill building is a 4-bay, two-story structure with Italianate stock details. Brick pilasters separate the primary store-front entrance, from a secondary entrance. Originally used as a general store, this building was built between 1880 and 1893.

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/ 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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1870-1930 **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Downtown Commercial District of Somerset contains the last remaining concentration of late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings in south central Kentucky. It is also the largest such district in Pulaski County. Encompassed within this block and one-half are buildings that display the craftsmanship and artistry typifying the local and national architectural trends of the late Victorian period. Although the store-fronts have suffered alteration, relatively few modifications have been made to the upper facades of the structures.

Somerset became the county seat in 1801, and was incorporated in 1888. At the time the town was laid out, the center of town was near the town spring. As time progressed, more land was added to the town and the commercial district was established on Main Street and Mt. Vernon Street. For stated reasons, the last remaining commercial historic district is located on E. Mt. Vernon.

The Downtown Commercial District represents a mix of two architectural styles reflective of economic eras significant in Somerset's history. They include the time period of 1870 to the 1910s and the 1910s to 1930. These period are bookended by local and national historic events dramatically affecting the town's development. One such event was the completion of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad tracks in 1877, which offered great possibilities for economic and cultural growth. The population of the city increased from 587 in 1870 to 805 in 1880 and jumped to 2625 in 1890. These periods also marked a time of commercial growth downtown. This growth continued in 1905-6 with the establishment of the division headquarters of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad in Somerset. In 1898-1904, seven miles of concrete sidewalks were constructed. This greatly benefited downtown along with the first electric streetcar in 1907. It is during this period that the significant architecture was built in the city and downtown.

Previous to the expansion of the railroad, Pulaski County and Somerset remained predominantly a farming community. The railroad diversified the economic base of the county resulting in the expansion of commerce. This was evident in a specific kind of structure; the streetline commercial building. This building type is present in both periods of Somerset's commercial district. During these periods the building was invariably constructed of brick to two or three stories. The functional and visual dominant part of the building is the store facade which is usually composed of metal or wood framed glass. A central or corner entrance opens into a largely unpartitioned commercial space. Above the street front, a masonry wall is pierced by regular bays that illuminate office space or living quarters. A parapet roof line usually screens a gable or shed roof.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.86

Quadrangle name Somerset Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6
7	13
0	7
0	7
0	7

4	1	0	7	6	4	0

B

1	6
7	13
0	8
0	8
0	8

4	1	0	7	6	0	0

C

1	6
7	13
0	10
0	10
0	10

4	1	0	7	5	7	0

D

1	6
7	12
9	5
1	0

4	1	0	7	5	8	0

E

1	6
7	12
9	5
1	0

4	1	0	7	6	0	0

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state	code	county	code
NA			
state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sara Farley, Historian & Thomas B. Fiorini, Downtown Director

organization Downtown Somerset Revitalization Project date April 26, 1982

street & number 212 Cundiff Square telephone 606/679-8376

city or town Somerset state Kentucky

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 Mary Ann Appel

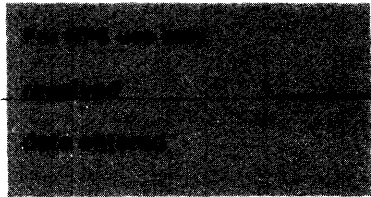
title State Historic Preservation Officer date 7/9/82

For NPS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register. <u>William H. Braasman</u> Keeper of the National Register	Entered in the National Register <u>8/27/82</u> NB date <u>8-30-82</u>
Attest: <u>Ann Drake</u> Chief of Registration	date <u>8/23/82</u>

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* All addresses are Somerset, Kentucky 42501 unless otherwise noted.

<u>PROPERTY</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
108 E. Mt. Vernon	Dorothy & Virginia Murrell	507 N. Main Street
110 E. Mt. Vernon	Margaret, Gregory	Box 34
112 E. Mt. Vernon	Pauline Gregory	Box 34
200 E. Mt. Vernon	Pauline Gregory	Box 34
204 E. Mt. Vernon	O.V. & Maxine Sears	112 Warren Avenue
206 E. Mt. Vernon	Nell Crawford	121 Maple Street
208 E. Mt. Vernon	James Hawkins	100 Bash Avenue
210 E. Mt. Vernon	Nell Crawford	121 Maple Street
214 E. Mt. Vernon	Ted & Edith May Johnson	210 Maple Street
216 E. Mt. Vernon	D.E. Coates	111 College Street
218 E. Mt. Vernon	D.E. Coates	111 College Street
220 E. Mt. Vernon	D.E. Coates	111 College Street
230 E. Mt. Vernon	Somerset City Government	City Hall
236 E. Mt. Vernon	Nell Crawford	121 Maple Street
201 E. Mt. Vernon	Mildred Faulkner	128 Maple Street
203 E. Mt. Vernon	American Development	
	<u>PARTNERS</u>	
	Victor Sams	
	Ralph Shearer	
	Edna Kelsey	
	Linville Tarter	P.O. Box 844
	Joe Keeton	
	Eldridge & Frances Moody	
205 E. Mt. Vernon	W.D. Fain	Rush Branch Road
215 E. Mt. Vernon	Paul Meece	Ruth Road
217 E. Mt. Vernon	Citizen's Nat'l Bank	Public Square
219 E. Mt. Vernon	Herbert & Hazel Ledford	201 May Street
221 E. Mt. Vernon	Emily & Sarah Ledford	201 May Street
223 E. Mt. Vernon	Mrs. William H. Ramsey, Sr.	124 N. Maple Street

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Next door to Johnson's Dollar Store is the Jasper building where the Virginia Cinema, the "Lite Touch" restaurant and a barber shop are located. The symmetrical building uses sandstone string courses, lintels, sills and ornamental details which offers a good contrast to the textured red brick. (see photo 4) Built in the 1920s the Western Auto, 230 E. Mt. Vernon, is a two-story brick building. The scale, size and structure are similar to other buildings in the district without the ornate detailing. (see photo 5) A simple glass transom and brick pilasters are still present. The parapet is of a design similar to the previous and succeeding buildings. The large second story windows reflect the previous existence of a youth center in the building.

The last building on the north Side of E. Mt. Vernon is Eaton's TV and Kentucky Finance Company. The two-story building with red textured brick was built in the early 1920s. The facade of this structure has been altered with aluminum and black glass.

The streetscape on the south side of E. Mt. Vernon offers two twentieth century commercial buildings. The Treasure Chest, located on the southeast corner of Maple and Mt. Vernon Street is a functional commercial building implementing the size, scale and proportion of a Victorian building without the ornate detailing, (see photo 6) Instead, structural details are highlighted, with exaggerated stone window lintels and sills. A row of header bricks separate the first floor from the second.

The Newberry's building located to the east of the Treasure Chest is constructed of glazed brick. This building had been altered due to fires in the early part of this century. These alterations are manifested in the size of the second-story fenestration and materials of the storefront. The parapet, scale and proportion of the building are similar to other buildings in the district.

The Downtown Restaruant was originally used as a livery stable. The corbelled brick parapet and scaled-down arched Victorian windows offer a unique link in the transition period of this streetscape. The Ark Pet Shop, 215 E. Mt. Vernon, is located in a two-story Victorian functional style commercial building. (see photo 7). It has 3 equally spaced windows on the second floor and a centrally located entrance on the street level. A glass facade and aluminum awning were added. The building was originally a general store.

The two-story brick commercial building housing Pic-n-Save was constructed around 1880. Victorian details include the rusticated quoins and pilasters that function as verticle dividers. (see photo 8). Variations in the detailing of the second-story fenestration indicates the original use of the building as two separate store units. A pressed metal bracketed cornice surmounts regimental brick corbels. Sometime after 1930, the storefronts of this building were unified with panels of black glass surrounding plate glass display windows.

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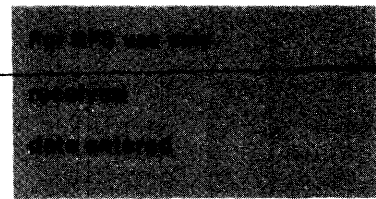
DOWNTOWN SOMERSET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

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Next to the Pic-n-Save building is a turn of the century building where Commercial Printing is located. This two-story Victorian functional brick has modillion trim on top. The second floor has been modified to a Victorian Gothic style. There are three bays on the second floor, and the first floor has a concrete facade storefront which was added in 1955. Barker's Jewelry, immediately east, is a structural brick building, compatible in scale and size to other buildings in the district. It is a simple structure devoid of ornate detailing.

The single intrusive building in the district is the A&R Grill. This single story, prefabricated glass diner does not contribute to the late 19th century and early 20th century streetscape of the district. (see photo 9) The building is considered intrusive because of its scale and construction date in the 1930's.

The boundaries of the district were selected to include the essential commercial buildings, that, as a group are reflective of a commercial historic period in Somerset's downtown. The commercial district, unlike many Kentucky cities, does not include a portion of Main Street. The commercial district also uncharacteristically doesn't expand farther west to the public square. This is reflective of many events: A late 1940 fire; the construction of two 1960 financial institutions at the expense of many historic structures; the demolition of the 1870 courthouse and surrounding commercial buildings to allow for the construction of a new public facility. Eastward on East Mt. Vernon, the district is abruptly interrupted by a fast food restaurant and service station. The setbacks of these structures are not characteristic of the street scale rendered by the late 19th century and early 20th century commercial streetline buildings. They are also of a much later period. The district is bookended northerly by a large parking lot and to the south by dilapidated warehouses and fire gutted structures. Great pains were taken to avoid intrusions. Significantly only one building does not contribute to the architectural and historical integrity of the district.

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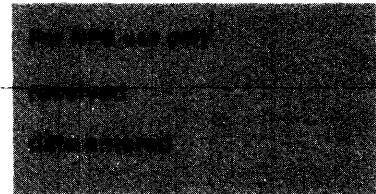
Before the railroad expansion, communication and trade was predominantly from the South, via the Cumberland River. The railroad opened up the potential economic and cultural trade to the North. The architecture of this period reflected that potential. The street line commercial buildings were among the first and most frequent users of manufactured architectural products that could be shipped by rail. Iron foundries and building works located in the industrial cities of Indiana, Illinois and Ohio, disseminated catalogs illustrating an attractive and stylistically varied range of cast iron store-fronts, cornices, brackets, hood molds, porches, and other trappings with which to embellish the street facade of the urban store building. Shipped to the construction site by rail, these prefabricated objects instantly imparted to the building a prosperous, inviting, and stylistically distinct visage. Between 1860 and 1910, every railroad town in Kentucky was populated with brick streetline commercial buildings that functioned as ready foundation for stock ordered and applied architectural details. Somerset was no different. The architecture of this period reflected the increased dependence of the Somerset Community on manufactured and imported commodities. A few buildings of this period within the Downtown Commercial district are the Pic-n-Save, the Jack-n-Jill, the Somerset Beauty College and the Johnson's Dollar Store buildings.

In the 1910's and particularly into the 1920's, the architectural style began to change. These buildings were a thermometer for the economic condition of the area. With the coming of the depression, many buildings lacked the ornate details of their predecessors. These periods are best represented in the juxtaposition of the Johnson's Dollar Store, the Jasper building and the Western Auto Building. The Johnson's Dollar Store is a Victorian functional building, built during the boom of the railroad. The fine details and craftsmanship mirrors this time period. The Jasper building, built in 1922 utilizes sandstone detailing that plays a lessened ornamental role than the previous building. The Western Auto building, constructed during the depression boasts no aesthetic details but still retains the overall scale and proportion of the street side commercial building. The buildings of this period reflect the enormous hard times experienced by the nation and magnified in the Appalachian areas of Kentucky.

A Study of the historic architecture of Somerset provides a particularly useful index to historic trends that affected most of Kentucky. The sharp change in life and architecture that the arrival of the railroad and the depression effected, was a common phenomenon in the state. The diverse elements of this material heritage rarely survives. In Somerset, they are best represented in the downtown commercial district. Many factors through the years have caused the demise of these architectural and cultural elements. Recently, the downtown business community has realized the significance of their elements. An Appalachian Regional Commission Downtown Revitalization Grant has been accepted and a strong emphasis has been placed on historic preservation.

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Allen, Woodrow.. PULASKI COUNTY HISTORICAL RESEARCH BOOK II.
Somerset Area Vocational-Technical School.

Collins, Lewis and Collins, Richard.. HISTORY OF KENTUCKY
2 Volumes
Berea: Kentucky Imprints 1976
Reprint of an 1874 edition.

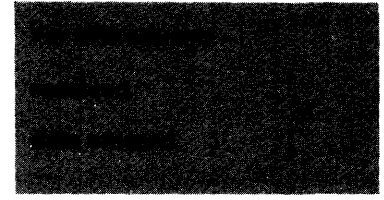
Polsgrove, Robert M. Survey Supervisor.. PULASKI COUNTY PUBLICATION
Kentucky Heritage Commission, 1978

Tibbals, Alma Owen.. A HISTORY OF PULASKI COUNTY KENTUCKY
Louisville:
Franklin Press, 1952

Wilson, J.T... HISTORY OF BANKING IN PULASKI COUNTY 1818 - 1970
Somerset, Kentucky
The 1st & Farmer's Nat'l Bank 1970

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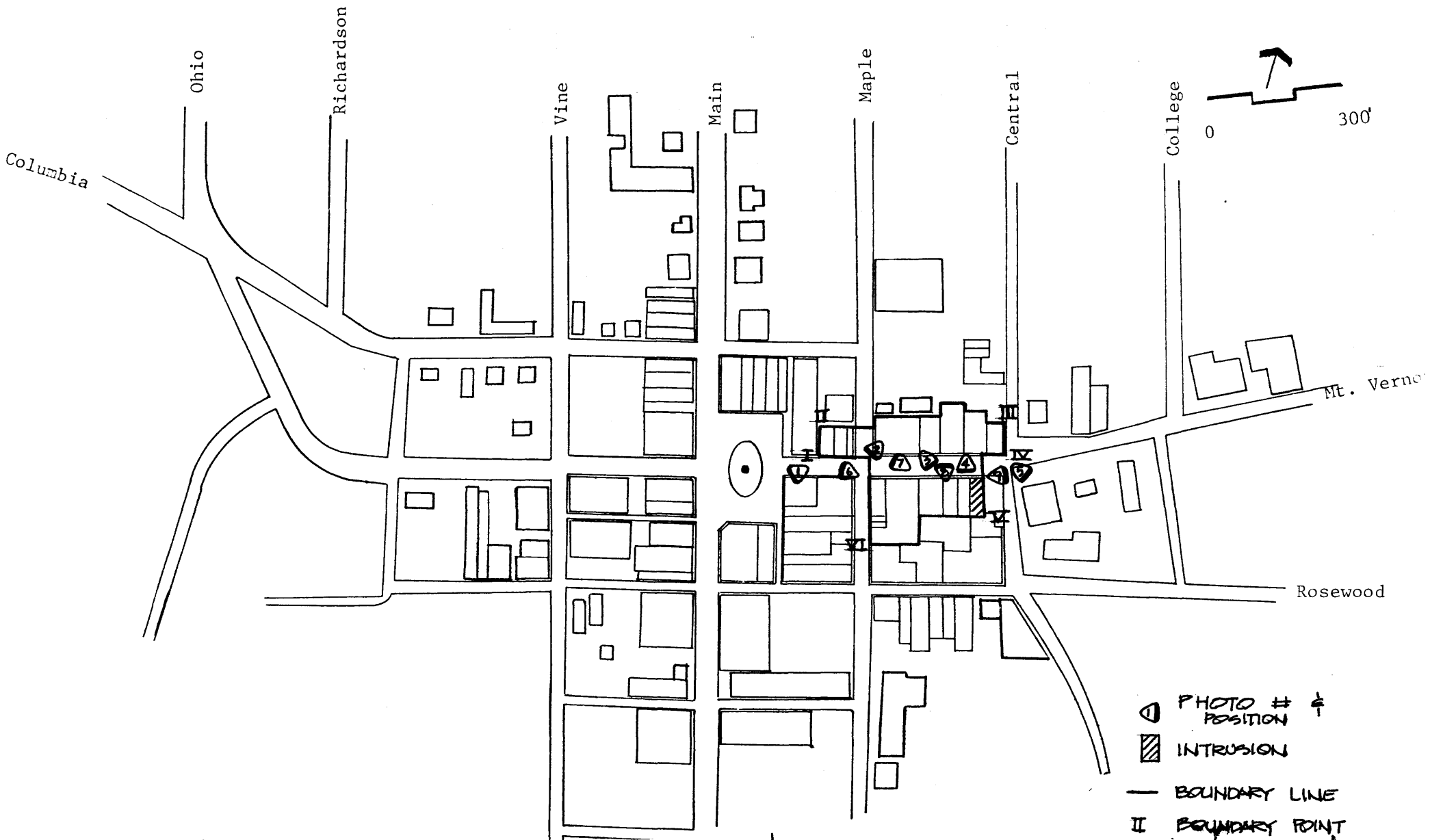
Somerset Downtown Commercial District

Continuation sheet Pulaski County, Kentucky Item number 10

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Somerset Downtown Commercial District begins at the southwest corner of the property at 108 E. Mt. Vernon (point I, this point being approximately eighty feet west of the northwest corner of E. Mt. V ernon and Maple Streets) and proceeds north along the western property line at 108 E. Mt. Vernon (point II); then east along the northern property lines of 108, 110, 112, and the 200 block of E. Mt. Vernon to the northeast corner of property 236 E. Mt. Vernon to the northeast corner of property 236 E. Mt. Vernon (point III); then south along the east side of property 236 (to point IV) to the southeast corner of said property; then west, approximately 60 ft. along the north side of Mt. Vernon; turning southward, crossing E. Mt. Vernon to extend along the east side of property 223 E. Mt. Vernon (to point V) to the southeast corner of said property; then westward along the southern borders of the 200 block of E. Mt. Vernon (to point VI) to the southwest corner of property 201 E. Mt. Vernon; then north along the west side of aforementioned property, across E. Mt. Vernon to the southwest corner of property 200 E. Mt. Vernon; then west along the north side of Mt. Vernon (along the south side of properties 112, 110, 108 E. Mt. Vernon) to the point of beginning.



Map 1
 Nominated area delineated by
 black line.
 Numbers keyed to photos.

DOWNTOWN SOMERSET
 COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
 PULASKI COUNTY, KENTUCKY
 MAP DATE 1972