

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Kentucky
COUNTY:	Jefferson
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	MAR 22 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: West Main Street Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC: West Main Street

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: North & South side of West Main Street in the 600, 700 & 800 blocks

CITY OR TOWN: Louisville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 5

STATE: Kentucky

CODE: 21

COUNTY: Jefferson

CODE: 111

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify) _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Multiple Owners

STREET AND NUMBER: West Main Street

CITY OR TOWN: Louisville

STATE: Kentucky

CODE: 21

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Jefferson County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: Sixth & Jefferson Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Louisville

STATE: Kentucky

CODE: 21

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Survey Of Historic Sites In Kentucky

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Kentucky Heritage Commission

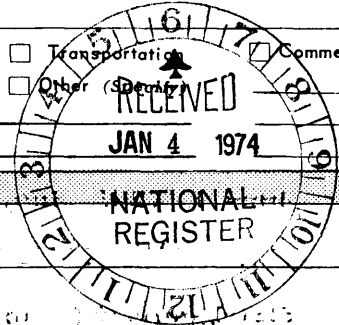
STREET AND NUMBER: 401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN: Frankfort

STATE: Kentucky

CODE: 21

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: _____

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Encompassing 178 buildings and one historic site, the West Main Street Historic District includes both the north and south sides of West Main Street in the 600, 700 and 800 blocks. The District's historic site is the original site of Fort Nelson, first permanent fort established by the settlers of Louisville. The 3-block section of Louisville's riverfront cast-iron storefronts includes a majority of the buildings constructed between 1870 and 1890, in their original state. Between 3 and 5 stories in height, the buildings are pure, cast-iron construction, stone construction and strange combinations of both.

Although a few buildings are known to be architect-designed, a majority of the facades reflect builder-owner design, from catalogues of cast iron elements and stone details. Most of the cast iron used in Louisville's commercial facades was manufactured across the Ohio River in southern Indiana foundries. Architectural style ranges through the various revival periods and Victorian. The facades constructed entirely of cast iron are primarily high Victorian-gothic and Italianate in detail, while those buildings combining first-level cast iron with upper floors of stone tend toward Italian Villa, Romanesque Revival, and Renaissance Revival - both North Italian and Roman-Tuscan modes.

A fine example of combining cast iron and stone construction is the Fort Nelson building, located at the western third of the district. This building, constructed in 1890, is one of the few examples of Richardsonian influence on Main. Its first level is a custom-designed series of cast iron columns, representing arrowheads, which continues three buildings west from the Fort Nelson building. Its upper floors are rusticated limestone with Richardsonian-Romanesque windows and details. The turret, turning the building corner north to the Ohio River, is constructed of stone for its lower two-thirds and sports a cast iron hat extending some 15 feet above the building.

The largest building is Carter Dry Goods, constructed in 1878. The building was designed by C. J. Clarke, who later joined forces with Arthur Doomis in the design of the Louisville Medical College (University of Louisville Medical School) and many Old Louisville residential structures, most with Richardsonian influence. Carter Dry Goods was Louisville's first department store. Its building, between Seventh & Eighth Streets on the north side of Main, was originally three bays wide. A tornado in 1890 severely damaged warehouses east and west of the Carter Building. Reconstruction of the damaged structures was done by Carter Dry Goods, changing the facade to match its Victorian-Italianate detail, extending its facade to 7 bays, thereby making it the single largest building on Main, comprising approximately 100,000 square feet. Its first level is cast iron storefront, with upper floors of smooth limestone and granite columns between the (see continuation sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1870-1890**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Encompassing the site of the first settlement in Louisville, Fort Nelson, the West Main Street Historic District represents not only Louisville's beginnings, but also Louisville's importance as a commerce center during the latter half of the 19th century.

On January 22, 1778, Lt. Col. George Rogers Clark received orders to "...proceed, with all convenient speed, to raise seven companies of soldiers... and with this force attack the British post at Kaskaskia." On the 4th of February, Clark started for Pittsburgh to raise the troops. With three companies, Clark navigated the Ohio River as far as the Falls, landed on and fortified Corn Island, continuing on the Kaskaskia. About 13 families remained who, under the direction of Richard Chenoweth, crossed to the mainland and erected Fort Nelson in 1782. "It was situated between Sixth & Eighth Streets on the north side of Main." Named after the Governor of Virginia, Fort Nelson marks the first permanent settlement of Louisville.

Louisville developed rapidly as a commercial center, with structures extending east and west along Main Street, adjacent to the original Fort Nelson, but no remnants of the original Main Street remain, owing to a series of natural disasters which have continuously taken their tolls. In 1832, the Ohio River overflowed its banks, from February 10th to 21st, eventually reaching a height of 51 feet above the low-water mark. "The destruction of property by this flood was immense. Nearly all the frame buildings near the river were either floated off or turned over and destroyed."

Main Street's current facade is mostly fifth-generation, with no frame buildings remaining, but mostly mercantile and warehouse structures. A majority of the district buildings were constructed between 1870 and 1890. A major tornado damaged some buildings in early 1890, destroying the last of the remaining early types.

(see continuation sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"The Once and Future Main Street," Louisville, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1973, February; pp. 31-34.

The History of Louisville, Ben Cassaday, 1852, pp. 27, 28, 60, 185

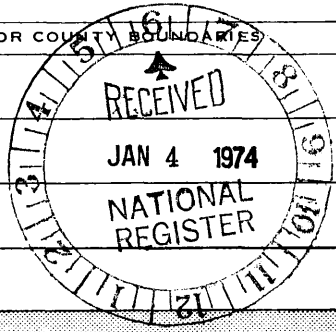
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	38°	15'	30"	85°	45'	52"			
NE	38°	15'	28"	85°	45'	35"			
SE	38°	15'	22"	85°	45'	36"			
SW	38°	15'	24"	85°	45'	53"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **20 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS
 UTM
 NE 16/60P52C/423493C
 S 14/60S 490/4234970
 SW 16/60S 600/423491C
 NW 16/60P 080/423492C

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **John J. Cullinane, Executive Director**

ORGANIZATION: **Preservation Alliance of Louisville & Jefferson County, Inc.** DATE: **11-1-73**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Gardencourt Campus - Alta Vista Road**

CITY OR TOWN: **Louisville** STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **21**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Mrs Susan Beeler

Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: December 28, 1973

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

A. R. Rutenfranz
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 3/22/74

ATTEST:

Wm. H. ...
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 3.14.74

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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(Number all entries)

#7 Description (cont'd)

window bays. The cornice, typical of Main Street, is constructed of sheet metal with iron ornament.

All of the buildings have brick load-bearing party walls, generally clear-spanned with poplar joists, sized and spaced to hold warehouse loads. Where the buildings are more than one bay wide, interior support is handled by wood columns in the basements and cast iron columns on the upper floors.

Few of the buildings have been modified exteriorly; those which have were covered with prefabricated material, leaving original cast iron intact. Interior changes have been few; most are still used for warehousing.



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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

#8 Statement of Significance (cont'd)

In an article entitled "The Once and Future Main Street," the author described Louisville's Main Street as it was in 1874. "Once Main Street was Louisville's commercial heart, the place where frock-coated merchant princes, bankers, tobacco brokers, distillers, railroad executives and manufacturers headed every morning after breakfast in their mansions on Walnut and Chestnut and Broadway. It was the destination of the less elegantly attired clerks (the office was an all-male world in 1874), of shopkeepers, of the cooks and chambermaids and scullery maids who kept the Galt House and Louisville Hotel functioning smoothly, of the burly teamsters who filled Main Street with the rumble of their heavy wagons hauling goods between the riverfront and warehouses. The only Main Street sound that could match those wagons was the deep-throated whistle of arriving and departing steamboats at the wharf."

Three blocks along Louisville's Main Street, north and south sides, are essentially intact and represent one of the last remaining groupings of 19th century cast-iron commercial storefronts in the country. Redevelopment of this district is scheduled as Louisville's contribution to the State Bicentennial Celebration in 1974, and will revitalize the original commercial center into new shops and office space.

