

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only

received **JUL 13 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name CENTRAL AVENUE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

historic CENTRAL AVENUE SHOPPING AREA

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 560-654 Central Avenue^e not for publication

city, town East Orange vicinity of congressional district

state New Jersey code 34 county Essex code 013

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 type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input 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	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 (See attached list of owners)

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Essex County Hall of Records

street & number West Market Street

city, town Newark, NJ state New Jersey

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title East Orange Historic Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of Historic Preservation

city, town Trenton, New Jersey state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION

The Central Avenue Historic District consists of approximately two blocks, with a total of 13 low-scale commercial buildings, all built between 1925 - 1933 in Neo-Classical and Art-Deco styles. Built as the commercial complement to the booming residential development occurring in the city at the time, the buildings within this district form a distinct, homogeneous and unified area. The district is the western end of commercial development along Central Avenue. Earlier commercial structures were built a few blocks east of the district but their type and style differ distinctly from the western end. Unlike the earlier structures, the homogeneous and unified presence of the Central Avenue Historic District derives from similar building characteristics which appear to have been the result of development guidelines agreed upon, formally or informally, by the original developers of the area. All buildings are considered to be contributing.

The perception of these 13 buildings as a definite grouping is emphasized by its surroundings. Immediately at its western end and at the south sides of the district are low-scale residential apartments. The north side, especially on South Harrison Street, is marked by a dense grouping of large multi-family apartment buildings. The eastern end, while originally a part of the same commercial development for another block, is visually separated from the group by drastic alterations to the buildings and the intrusion of different uses such as a gas station and a drive-in diner.

The district is unified by the same land-use: retail commercial and professional offices. The majority of the street level spaces were originally clothing stores, food stores and small consumer goods. Large show windows are typical of the street level. Real estate offices, dental and other professional offices occupied some of the street floor and most of the second floor spaces. Today some of the same uses remain although some stores are vacant while most of the second floor spaces are relegated to storage space.

The buildings are all two stories high, with the exception of two: The Kress Department store which is 3 stories and 560-566 (Building A) which is four stories and which is also the exception as far as use. It is the only mixed use (commercial/residential) building in the district. Floor levels, lines of window and door openings and roof parapet lines are generally of uniform or closely related heights.

Cast stone, limestone, terracotta and similar facade material of very light color and smooth texture are used for all the buildings, (again with the exception of Building A), one of the characteristics strongly responsible for the unified appearance.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1925 - 1933 **Builder/Architect** multiple

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Central Avenue Commercial Historic District is based on its planning and architecture. Built within a relatively short period of time, from 1925 to 1933, the area is one of the few sections of East Orange developed with a unified plan concept made to coincide with an unprecedented boom in residential building activity occurring in the city at the time. The result is a unique, low-scale, unified and architecturally significant shopping district, possibly a predecessor to the present-day shopping mall, with a homogeneous streetscape appearance.

The development of the Central Avenue Commercial Historic District is a component of one of the successive waves of development which occurred in the city's history. The population of East Orange, in a continuous line of growth, more than tripled from 1900 (21,506) to 1930 (68,020). From 1910 to 1940, the energies of the major developers, architects and builders in the city were focused on residential development, consisting mostly of large multi-family apartment buildings.

East Orange, closest to the cities of Newark and New York among the Oranges, became a popular choice of residence for the many people leaving the cities at this time. The benefits of living in a more open setting, away from the congestion of the cities were extolled and the relation between good climate, sanitary conditions and good health were well accepted by the general population. East Orange offered all these, plus a "well ordered society, churches, schools and easy accessibility to the great towns." While many people lived and worked in East Orange, it also became a city with a significant population of commuters, a large number of whom commuted to New York instead of nearby Newark. These commuters were mostly merchants, managers and professionals of comfortable means. While they spent their working hours in New York it can be assumed that there was a need to cater to their shopping needs, along with those of the non-commuters, locally. These needs were quickly perceived by some of the developers of the city. Baldwin Construction Co., who according to records is responsible for building four of the thirteen buildings in the district, represents one of the original landholding families in East Orange involved in development and construction. The other developers of this district do not appear to be from the city.

9. Major Bibliographical References

East Orange Building Department Records, City Hall, East Orange.
 Price and Lee's Directory of the Oranges; Federal Writers Project of
 the WPA, New Jersey: A Guide To Its Present & Past: Sanborn Insurance
 maps; Scrapbook, City of East Orange; Census records, New Public Library.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 7.21 acres

Quadrangle name Orange

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	5	6	5	4	4	0	4	5	1	2	3	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

Zone		Easting						Northing					

C

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

(See Attached)

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roz Li, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization Roz Li, Architect

date 1982

street & number 128 West 82

telephone 212-595-1246

city or town NY

state NY

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Myers 7 July 1982

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date

For HCERS use only

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

Patrick Andrews
 for Keeper of the National Register

date 8/26/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

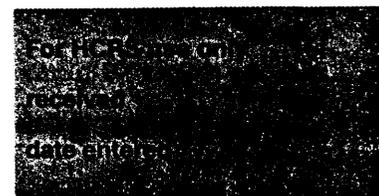
**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Central Avenue Commercial H. D.,

Continuation sheet E. Orange, Essex County, NJ Item number 4

Page 1



LIST OF PROPERTY OWNERS: CENTRAL AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT, EAST ORANGE

Street No.	Block & Lot	Owner Name and Address
A. 560-566	710/1A	Wille-Kilgus, Inc. 155 Evergreen Place, East Orange, NJ
B. 576	710/28	Debco Realty Inc., 9016 Fourth Avenue Brooklyn, N.Y. 11209
C. 572-580	710/26	Flaum's Jersey Corp. 3607 Bergenline Ave. Union City, N.J.
D. 582-592	710/21	Baldwin Construction Co. 614 Central Avenue East Orange, N.J. 07018
E. 594-606	710/21	Baldwin Construction Co. 614 Central Avenue East Orange, N.J. 07018
F. 608-620	710/21	Baldwin Construction Co. 614 Central Avenue East Orange, N.J. 07018
G. 622-628	712/2	International Management Assoc., Inc. 622-628 Central Ave. East Orange, N.J. 07018
H. 632	712/2C	City of East Orange, City Hall
I. 634-654	712/2A	RKO Theatres, Inc. 614 Bloomfield Avenue Bloomfield, N.J. 07003
J. 583-595	720/2A	Theo R. Cohn & Jack Harkavy 600 S. Livingston Avenue Livingston, N.J.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Central Avenue Commercial H. D.,
E. Orange, Essex County, NJ



Continuation sheet **Item number** 4

Page 2

- | | | | |
|----|---------|--------|--|
| K. | 597-601 | 720/3 | Anthony Rosciano
84 Haven Avenue
Totowa, N.J. |
| L. | 603-611 | 720/4A | Red Holding Corp.
c/o E. Milchman
727 Pelham Pky.
Bronx, N.Y. |
| M. | 613-623 | 720/4 | Red Holding Corp.
c/o E. Milchman
727 Pelham Pky.
Bronx, N.Y. |

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Central Avenue Commercial H. D.,
E. Orange, Essex County, NJ

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

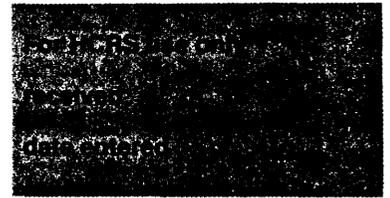
DESCRIPTION

Art-Deco and Neo-Classical styles are the predominant architectural styles adopted for the facades of the buildings. Though each facade displays a variation of these styles, the horizontal emphasis in each building strengthens the homogeneous quality of the district. Typically, each building is a mini-block of stores, with either one main entrance to the second story, or several entries, each emphasized by an articulated entrance bay or an ornamented pediment or arch breaking the roof parapet. Buildings located at the corner intersection of streets have angled corners, often with an entry located there.

An intrusive modern-day plexiglass and metal canopy/walkway arcade system was added to the entire district in the 1970's to modernize the area in an effort to compete with new suburban shopping malls being built outside of the city. These additions were built independent of the buildings, causing no damage to the facades, but do restrict street vistas.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet Central Avenue Commercial H. D.,
E. Orange, Essex County, NJ Item number 7

Page 2

BUILDINGS INCLUDED IN THE CENTRAL AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT, EAST ORANGE

Note: All buildings within the boundaries of the proposed district are contributing.

North Side:

- A. 560-566 Four-story brick corner structure with limestone entablature and quoins and Neo-Classical style entrance enframement located at the corner of the building. The original building permit application is not available, however, the Sanborn Map of 1932 indicates that the structure was already built. The earliest Building Department record is for an alteration permit in 1949. Originally built for mixed-use, it remains today as commercial on the street floor and apartments above. Alterations are limited to the ground floor storefronts.
- B. 576 Originally the B. Altman Department Store, this building was built in 1930-1931. The structure is a three-story, 9-bay limestone building in a simplified Art-Deco style. The facade consists of a smooth, almost shaven surface, without any trim around the window openings. The only ornament is found in the stepped parapet over the 3 central bays, with carved Fret design, flanked by vertically pleated limestone parapets. The windows were replaced with aluminum paired windows shorter in height than the original window openings and provided with aluminum transom panels. Except for new signage, the original storefronts remain.
- C. 572-580 S.H. Kress Co. Building. This is a three-story glazed terra-cotta and granite facade in Art-Deco style with its original metal canopy. The building permit application was filed September 29, 1928 for owner Herbert Williams, by Architect M. Villanueva. However, the 1932 Sanborn map shows the lot vacant. The building is therefore built post-1932. Estimated cost filed was \$56,000, to contain four stores and eight offices. Evidently the building was taken over later exclusively by S.H. Kress. The building remains in its original design, without alterations, and is the most imposing one on the block.
- D. 582-592 This building and the two succeeding ones (Buildings E and F) are part of one parcel of property owned by the Baldwin Construction Company, who remain its owners today. The Baldwin family have owned land in East Orange since its early days. This building is a two-story, 5-bay cast stone commercial structure in Neo-Classical style with a two-story arched entry bay that becomes a rounded arch parapet. A simple cornice with modillions runs the entire length of the building. Although there have been alterations on the storefronts, much of the original remains. Application for building was filed for this and the two other buildings by Architect Warren-Warren in 1929.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Central Avenue Commercial H. D.,
E. Orange, Essex County, NJ

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 3



- E. 594-606 Two-story, 6-bay cast stone commercial building in Neo-Classical style, with 2-story Ionic pilasters and simple entablature and parapet. The entrance bay has a two-story arched enframement. The design of this building is very similar to the adjacent one described above (Building D), but more finely detailed and ornamented. Minor alterations have been made to the storefronts. This building was probably built soon after the permit application was filed in 1929.
- F. 608-620 One of the three buildings in the same parcel owned by Baldwin Construction Company (see Buildings D & E), the building application was filed February 9, 1929 by Architect Warren-Warren. The structure was estimated to cost \$96,000 containing 6 stores and 7 offices. This is a two-story cast stone corner commercial building, about a half story higher than the adjacent buildings. Its three-sided facade is in the Neo-Classical style with two-story pilasters articulating every other bay. A simple cornice with modillions and a parapet lines the entire top of the building. Alterations consist of aluminum spandrel panels and signage added to the storefronts and replacement of the original storefront with new aluminum.
- G. 622-628 Two-story cast stone corner commercial building in Neo-Classical style with two-story fluted pilasters articulating each bay, simple band entablature and parapet, and Adamesque motifs on the spandrel panels. The building permit application was filed December 19, 1927 for owner Frederick Schneider by Architect William Fitzsimmons. Estimated cost: \$44,500. Minor alterations consist of new signage and aluminum transom panels.
- H. 630 A two-story Neo-French Renaissance style building with a cast stone facade topped by a balustrade, a Mansard roof covered with standing seam copper and punctuated by 3 large dormer windows. The earliest recorded building application was filed in 1929. A wood and wire fence was added to the roof.
- I. 634-654 This two-story commercial structure consists of stores and a movie theater, in Spanish Baroque Revival style, with tile pent roofs interrupted by gabled bays over the theatre entrance and a central bay. The Hollywood theater occupies the entire rear of the building, while its entrance is emphasized by a marquee in front. Alterations have been done to the storefronts. The original application for building permit was filed September 24, 1925 for owner Frank Bock by Architect Henry Baechlin, to cost \$50,000.
- J. ^{South Side:} 583-595 Two-story brick commercial corner structure in Art-Deco style, with stone trim and wrought iron parapet railing, all in geometric motifs. The building provides an interesting silhouette, with its stepped and jagged parapet outlines. Unlike the other buildings on the block, it

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet Central Avenue Commercial H. D.,
E. Orange, Essex County, NJ Item number 7 Page 4

emphasizes the vertical instead of the horizontal. Application for building permit was filed December 4, 1930 for the owner, Central Sanford Realty Corp. by Architect A.F.G. Hasselman, with an estimated cost of \$130,000. Alterations to the building have occurred mostly on the storefronts and the addition of signs.

- K. 595-601 Two-story cast stone commercial building in a very simplified Art-Deco motif. The second floor has no openings. Fluted pilasters frame the facade at the ends and the central bay. Some of the storefronts have been altered. Estimated date: 1933.
- L. 603-611 Two-story cast stone commercial building in simplified Art-Deco style. The only ornament consists of a horizontally pleated cornice, providing a "streamlined" effect. Originally there were glass transom blocks above the storefronts but few remain. The 1932 Sanborn map shows this lot as vacant, but it was probably built upon not long after 1932.
- M. 613-623 Two-story cast stone corner commercial building in an eclectic style combining Gothic and Art-Deco motifs. It has an elaborate band cornice and parapet. Application for building permit was filed November 14, 1924 for the owner, Baldwin Construction Company by Architect E.V. Warren, who were the same team of owner and architect responsible for building across the street (Buildings D, E and F).

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Central Avenue Commercial H. D.,

Continuation sheet E. Orange, Essex County, NJ Item number 8

Page 1

SIGNIFICANCE

The city of East Orange's commercial needs have been historically served by stores and shops located along Main Street and other busy thoroughfares. These commercial spaces are characterized by mixed residential-commercial use buildings. Typically, stores were at the street level, with several stories of apartments above. These commercial areas were developed since c. 1850, stores having been built and rebuilt incrementally, thus creating a varied streetscape. The Central Avenue District on the other hand, was developed almost simultaneously and, unlike the other shopping areas, it does not include any mixed residential use. Central Avenue's shopping area is purely retail commercial and professional offices (with the exception of one building (Building A: 560-566)).

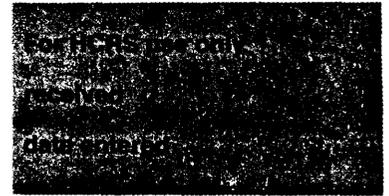
Stores within the district catered not only to city residents but to those of the surrounding suburbs as well. The area was marked by specialty shops and attractive branches of New York City department stores, such as B. Altman's and Franklin Simon. There were also several food stores, and consumer goods stores as listed in the 1930 Price and Lee's Directory of the Oranges. Dentists, architects, and other professionals as well as real estate offices occupied the second floors.

The development of the district occurred during the final years of a real estate boom in the city, most of the buildings having been built during the Great Depression. Present research has failed to yield information on any development guidelines imposed upon the original developers of the district. Except for height and setback regulations required by the Zoning Code of 1921, which limits the height of Large Volume District Buildings to a maximum of 1 1/2 times the width of the street, nothing seemed to dictate that building heights, facade material, and architectural styles be as they were built. It may be more a response to the architectural trends of the times.

The stores are good examples of the Neo-Classical and Art-Deco styles as applied to commercial buildings. While these two styles predominate, there is enough variety to avoid monotony despite uniform heights, materials and color. Except for minor alterations to the facades and more moderate ones to the store-fronts, the buildings retain their original architectural integrity. The Central Avenue Shopping District survives essentially as was originally built. The specialty stores from New York are gone, but local stores have replaced them.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet

Central Avenue Commercial H.D.
E. Orange, Essex County, N.J.

Item number 10

Page 1

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: CENTRAL AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT, EAST ORANGE, N.J.

East Boundary:

Starting from a point 248.61 ft. from the Northwest corner of the intersection of Central Avenue and Evergreen Place, going South along the property lines of Lots 2B then 1A, Block 710 up to Central Avenue, crossing Central Avenue up to half the width of the street, going West along Central Avenue until a point parallel to the Southwest corner of the intersection of Central Avenue and Sanford Street, crossing Central Avenue to this corner, continuing South 149 ft. along the property line of Lot 2A, Block 720.

South Boundary:

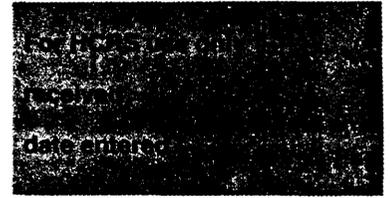
Starting from the center of Central Avenue at a point parallel to the Northwest corner of the intersection of Central Avenue and Evergreen Place, going West along Central Avenue to a point parallel to the Southwest intersection of Central Avenue and Sanford Street, crossing Central Avenue to the Northeast corner of property Lot 2A, Block 720, continuing South along the property line of same lot for 149 ft., going west 170 ft. along the South property line of the same lot, then South 101 ft. along the property line of Lot 3, Block 720, then West 75.10 ft., then North 160 ft. along the property lines of the same lot, continuing West 121.61 ft. along the property line of Lot 4A, Block 720, then West 122.30 ft. along the property line of Lot 4, Block 720, then North 90 ft. along the property line of same lot up to Central Avenue, crossing Central Avenue up to half the width of the street, West along Central Avenue to a point parallel to the Southwest corner of the property boundaries of Lot 2A, Block 712.

West Boundary:

Starting at a point which is the Northwest corner of the property boundaries of Lot 2A, Block 712, then South 119.75 ft. along the West property line of same lot up to Central Avenue, crossing Central Avenue up to half the width of the street, then going East along Central Avenue up to a point parallel to the Southeast corner of the intersection of Central Avenue and South Harrison Street, or the Northwest corner of the property boundaries of Lot 4, Block 720, going South 90 ft. along the property line of the same lot.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet Central Avenue Commercial H.D.
E. Orange, Essex County, NJ Item number 10

Page 2

North Boundary:

Starting from the Northwest corner of the property boundaries of Lot 2A, Block 712, going East 169.78 ft. along the property line of same lot, continuing East 44.57 ft. along the property line of Lot 2C, Block 712, then East 92.72 along the property line of Lot 2, Block 712 crossing South Harrison Street, then going North along the property line of Lot 21, Block 710, up to the Northwest corner of the property boundaries of the same lot, going East 262 ft. along the property line of same lot, then North 65 ft. along the property line of the same lot, the West 1.47 ft. along the property line of the same lot, the North 101.50 along the property line of the same lot, then going East 295 ft. along the property line of the same lot, then South 76.89 ft. along the property line of the same lot, then East 110.23 ft. along the property line of Lot 2B, Block 710.

