

**MULTIPLE NOMINATION HISTORIC DISTRICT SUMMARY FORM**

2041  
SEP 20 1988

**MRA/THEMATIC NOMINATION TITLE:** Historic Resources of Louisa, Kentucky

**HISTORIC DISTRICT NAME:** Louisa Commercial Historic District

**OWNER OF PROPERTY:** see continuation sheet

(On Continuation Sheets list all properties by address which are included within the district and provide the names and addresses of their owners.)

**DESCRIPTION:**

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" 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

(Use Continuation Sheets)

**SIGNIFICANCE**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</b>			
<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 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** c. 1885-1938      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

(Use Continuation Sheets)

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**Acresage of nominated property** approx. 2.2 acres

**Quadrangle name** Louisa, Kentucky-West Virginia

**Quadrangle scale** 1:24000

**UTM References**

<b>A</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 0	<b>B</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>		<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
<b>C</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>E</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>F</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>G</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>H</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

(Use Continuation Sheets)

**DISTRICT MAPS ATTACHED:**

- District Boundary Map Showing Contributing & Noncontributing Properties. ) All on 1 Map
- District Map Showing Location & Direction of Numbered Photographs. )

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All addresses are Louisa, Kentucky 41230.

<u>Property</u>	<u>Owner</u>
A. Snyder Brothers Hardware 309-313 E. Main St.	Mary Ann Corp. E. Main St.
B. Gunnell's Department Store 217 E. Main St.	W. T. Cain, Jr., Estate c/o Francis Cain P.O. Box 208
C. Service Chevrolet Co. NE corner E. Main St. & Main Cross St.	W. T. Cain, Jr., Estate c/o Francis Cain P.O. Box 208
D. Woods Building 110-114 Main Cross St.	Dorothy H. See 607 Lock Ave.
E. Recorder Building 116 Main Cross St.	Dorothy H. See 607 Lock Ave.
F. Snyder Building 118-122 Main Cross St.	Lafe Hinkle and Betty Lou Ball

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The Louisa Commercial Historic District occupies approximately one full block of the roughly seven-block central business district of Louisa, the small county seat of Lawrence County at the eastern reaches of Kentucky. The district is part of the CBD's two most densely developed blocks adjoining the courthouse square and stands apart from the surrounding commercial buildings due to its high degree of preservation. All of its six buildings contribute to this distinct entity's historic character, which clearly reflects the height of Louisa's commercial prosperity as a collection of the town's most intact and distinguished commercial architecture. These buildings span the period from circa 1885 to 1931; more particularly, two visually rich buildings reflect the late 1880s and early 1890s, while the other four buildings represent a decade between the two world wars. Altogether, the district serves as a reminder of the boom this established local trading center and government seat experienced after the arrival of a major rail line in 1881 and of Louisa's continued economic health until the Depression due to the exploitation of the region's natural resources.

Like most commercial areas that developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Louisa Commercial Historic District displays uniform setbacks directly abutting the sidewalks, except for Service Chevrolet Company (entry C) which is irregularly shaped to accommodate a concrete pad for gasoline service. This building and Gunnell Department Store (B), both at the corner of E. Main and Main Cross Streets, are oriented to the intersection with entrances in bevelled corners. At certain points along E. Main St., a narrow grassy right-of-way separates the sidewalk from the street. Elsewhere, the concrete sidewalk extends to a stepped curb dotted with parking meters. The only foliage consists of two fairly young trees in front of Snyder Brothers Hardware (A). All of the buildings are of masonry construction with the exception of the upper portion of the Gunnell Department Store, and all except for the one-story Service Chevrolet Company are two stories in height.

The district's two Victorian buildings exemplify their period in their decorative qualities. Snyder Brothers Hardware is the highlight of the district as Louisa's earliest intact commercial building. Exhibiting a virtually unaltered exterior, the original block of the building features a three-unit storefront with panelled frame bulkheads, recessed entries, and molded metal cornice; elaborate metal hoodmolds at the nine second-story main facade windows; and a prominent panelled and modillioned metal cornice. At the building's northeast corner, a 1910s two-story addition is constructed of rusticated concrete block, a very popular building material in Louisa early in this century. One-half block to the south, at the major intersection of E. Main St. and Main Cross St., the Queen Anne Style Gunnell Department Store is distinguished by an unusual second-story sheathing of pressed metal that simulates weatherboards overlaid by a wooden grid, sawtooth shingles in wide attic gables, and a rectangular bay topped by a pyramidal roof projecting above the main corner entrance. In spite of the replacement post-World War II storefront, the intact exuberance of the upper levels maintains the building's overall integrity.

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The four buildings on Main Cross St. were built between 1921 and 1931 and are typical of their era in the ornamentation of their brick main elevations with simple, geometrically patterned brickwork flush with the rest of the facades. The most decorative among this group is Service Chevrolet Company displaying bands of stretchers, soldier courses and basketweave patterns across all of its upper elevations visible from E. Main and Main Cross Streets. The adjoining Woods, Recorder and Snyder Buildings all have one or two storefronts with transoms, double-hung sash second-story windows, very austere decoration limited to simple corbelling and soldier courses, and stone plaques at their upper main facades bearing the buildings' names and years of construction.

In a region noted for its paucity of intact historic buildings, the Louisa Commercial Historic District is defined largely by its good state of preservation. In contrast to the rest of Louisa's central business district characterized by radical remodelling, intrusive signage and empty lots, the historic district's alterations have been limited to storefront renovations, of which the Gunnell Department Store's is the most severe. Numerous storefronts are completely intact, while a few have suffered only the covering of their transoms.

Inventory List

The following entries are keyed to the accompanying sketch map. Codes in parentheses near the beginning of an entry are the Kentucky Heritage Council's site identification numbers assigned to Kentucky Historic Resources forms.

- A. Snyder Brothers Hardware. 309-313 E. Main St. (LAL-14) Reportedly built around 1885, this intact two-story brick building stands as the hallmark of Louisa's historic commercial architecture. Featuring the salient features of original wood-framed storefronts, prominent ornamental metal hood molds at the second-story windows, and a pressed metal modillion cornice, the building epitomizes the Victorian commercial architecture of a small county seat in Kentucky. Brothers and business partners Augustus and T. J. Snyder are said to have had the building constructed to house their furniture and hardware establishments, which had evolved from T. J. Snyder's blacksmithy begun in the 1870s. Local tradition holds that the building in its early years also housed a saloon and gambling parlor catering to travelers on the Big Sandy River. E. E. Shannon bought the building from the Snyders in 1916; in 1942 it passed to Lafe Wellman.

Two early 20th-century additions are at the rear of the building. The first was built in 1907 of concrete block. The second and larger addition, erected sometime between 1912 and 1919, creates an ell fronting on Water St. This two-story unit of rusticated concrete block has a storefront flush with the

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main facade of large multi-paned display windows flanking a central double-door entrance with prominent multi-paned transom. The only accent to this rather austere wing are quoins of smooth blocks. At the corner of E. Main and Water streets, in the recess created by the two main units, post World War II enclosed and screened sheds serve as storage.

- B. Gunnell's Department Store. 217 E. Main St. (LAL-19) Despite the black vitrolite panels and large plate glass windows of the replacement 1950s or 1960s storefront, the historic character of this elaborate Queen Anne style commercial building remains particularly apparent in the upper elevations and roofline. Typical of the mode, there is a variety of materials and forms: Six-course common bond and rusticated stone sills and lintels appear in the first floor; highly unusual pressed metal simulating weatherboards overlaid with a decorative frame grid marks the second story; and sawtooth shingles cover attic gables and the pyramidal roof of the slightly projecting rectangular bay with rounded corners above the recessed corner entrance to the store. Physician S. J. Yates had the building constructed as an investment in 1892. He leased it to G. W. Gunnell & Co., merchants who had opened a local general merchandise store in 1888 maintained a department store in this building until 1984.
- C. Service Chevrolet Co.. NE corner of E. Main St. and Main Cross St. (LAL-15) The local Masonic lodge (Apperson Lodge #195) purchased this property in 1924 with the intention of building a new lodge building on it; instead they sold it to Service Chevrolet Co. in 1931 after excavating a basement and ordering the fabricated steel for their building. The automobile dealership erected this one-story brick-veneered building with concrete block construction at the outer walls and steel columns and I-beams for interior supports. The building's irregular form addresses the prominent intersection and provides space for gasoline pumps. An interior ramp leads to the poured concrete basement which extends under the street. Most of the elevations are occupied by plate glass display windows and garage doors. Typical of the somewhat streamlined appearance of many 1930s commercial buildings, ornament consists of bands of decoratively patterned brickwork in the upper facades. In the early 1960s, the building was converted to a service station.
- D. Woods Building. 110-114 Main Cross St. (LAL-16) As indicated by the stone plaque at the top of the main facade, a developer named Woods had this two-story solid brick building erected in 1921. It is a representative example of fairly modest 1920s commercial architecture in its minimal decoration, restricted here to bands of corbelling above the storefronts and second-story windows, soldier coursing at the tops and sides of the paired one-over-one upper windows, and a simple stepped parapet with stone coping. The two storefronts have been slightly altered: one is intact with panelled frame bulkheads but its transom is covered, while the other retains its luxor glass transom but had its display windows and

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door reconfigured at a fairly early date. Between the storefronts, a door opens onto a staircase leading to the second floor. The 1929 Sanborn map indicates a business college on the second floor. Various stores have occupied the first floor, with the longest tenant having been a pool hall there for approximately 40 years.

- E. Recorder Building. 116 Main Cross St. (LAL-17) Attorneys C. F. and Ira W. See had this building constructed in 1925; Since then, the See family's law office has occupied the second floor. The apparent motivation for erecting the building, as indicated by a plaque at the top of the main facade bearing the word "Recorder" and the year "1925," was to provide a facility for The Recorder, a Republican newspaper organized in reaction to the Democratic Big Sandy News. The Recorder ceased publishing by 1936. The narrow building of vitrious tile veneered in brick has a single altered storefront, a door opening on to the staircase leading to the second floor, and a bank of four double-hung sash windows at the upper level. In addition to the plaque, the only decoration are bands of soldier coursing above the storefront and at the upper story window lintel.
- F. Snyder Building. 118-122 Main Cross St. (LAL-18) Prominent local businessman Augustus Snyder had this two-story building constructed as an investment in 1927, as recorded by the stone plaque at the center of the main facade parapet. Similar to the other brick buildings in the block, the Snyder Building displays very restrained detailing: rows of soldier coursing and simple corbelling appear above the storefronts and at the upper facade, which terminates in a simple stepped parapet with stone coping. The building is noteworthy due to the preservation of the two storefronts. Both retain their original panelled frame bulkheads, display windows, recessed entrances, and multi-paned transoms, although the transom in the north unit is covered.

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The Louisa Commercial Historic District is significant under criterion A as an intact representative of the height of Louisa's role as Lawrence County's commercial center. The district also is important under criterion C for consisting of intact distinctive and representative examples of the prevailing commercial architecture of that prosperous period.

Due to its location on the Big Sandy River, shortly after its settlement early in the nineteenth century Louisa became a trading center for Lawrence County and beyond. Area residents brought their goods to Louisa for shipping by river to larger regional markets along the Ohio River from which goods in turn would be shipped into Louisa for distribution via the local commercial establishments. While in town to ship their produce and wares or to conduct business at the county courthouse, area residents would patronize Louisa's shops, which also catered to those people who worked and travelled on the river. Due to the exploitation of the area's natural resources and the greater ease with which goods could be shipped to and from the county seat as a result of the railroad built through Louisa in 1881, local commercial activity increased markedly during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and did not slacken significantly until after the onset of the Depression. This period of prosperity is reflected most vividly by the buildings erected for the newly established businesses, such as Snyder Brothers Hardware and Gunnell Department Store of the 1880s and 1890s and the 1920s brick row along Main Cross St. which housed shops and a newspaper on the first floor and offices on the second.

The architecture representing Louisa's commercial boom period also is significant in its own right. In a region where relatively few Victorian buildings have survived in any state, the fact that all six of the district's historic buildings remain well preserved, especially the two dating from the late nineteenth century, is particularly noteworthy. With its prominent metal hood molds and cornice and three unaltered frame and glass storefronts, Snyder Brothers Hardware epitomizes popular Victorian commercial architecture rendered in brick, while the Gunnell Department Store is a distinctive example of Queen Anne style commercial architecture in its unusual combination of materials and rooflines. In their austere brick exteriors ornamented only with brick bands of simple geometric designs flush with the facades, the district's four buildings erected between 1921 and 1931 stand as intact reminders of that period's typical small-scale commercial architecture.

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### Verbal Boundary Description

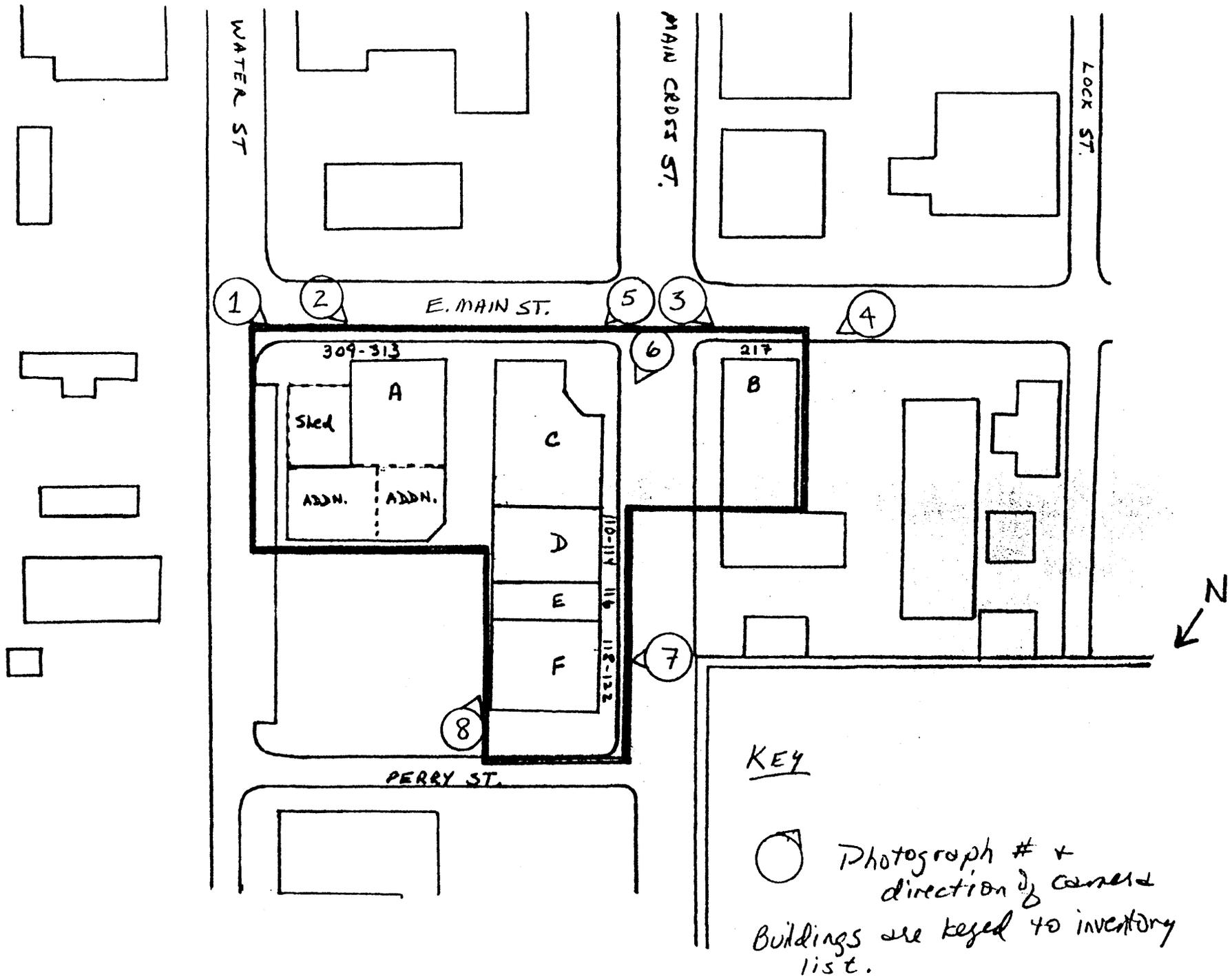
Beginning at the north corner of block 26, lot 5, proceed southwest along the northeast lines of lots 5 and 4 to the east corner of block 26, lot 2. Then proceed to the northeast and southeast along the northwest and northeast lines, respectively, of lot 2 to the east corner of the intersection of E. Main St. and Water St. Follow the northwest side of E. Main St. in a southwesterly direction to the south corner of block 27, lot 4. Then proceed along the southwest and northwest lines of lot 4 to the north corner of lot 4 and continue in the established straight line across Main Cross St. Follow the northeast side of Main Cross St. to the northwest to the east corner of Main Cross and Perry Streets and then proceed to the northeast along the southeast side of Perry St. to the point of beginning.

### Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Louisa Commercial Historic District are drawn to encompass all of the contiguous intact historic buildings in Louisa's central business district and to omit altered buildings and vacant lots adjoining those historic buildings.

# LOUISA COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

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The following information applies to all of the photographs:

- 1) Louisa Commercial Historic District
- 2) Louisa, Kentucky
- 3) DKM Blackey
- 4) 9/85
- 5) Kentucky Heritage Council

[Please note that these photographs, although more than two years old, continue to accurately depict the Louisa Commercial Historic District.]

- (1) 1) Snyder Brothers Hardware, 309-313 E. Main St. (entry A)  
6) to West
- (2) 1) Snyder Brothers Hardware, 309-313 E. Main St. (A)  
6) to West
- (3) 1) Gunnell's Department Store, 217 E. Main St. (B)  
6) to West
- (4) 1) Gunnell's Department Store, 217 E. Main St. (B)  
6) to North
- (5) 1) Service Chevrolet Co., NE corner of E. Main St. and Main Cross St. (C)  
6) to North
- (6) 1) Northeast side of the 100 block of Main Cross St.  
6) to Northwest
- (7) 1) Snyder Building, 118-122 Main Cross St. (F)  
6) to Northeast
- (8) 1) Rear elevations of northeast side of 100 block of Main Cross St.  
6) to South