

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Downtown Taylorsville Historic District

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing _____)

2. Location

Street & number: 12-46 West Main Avenue, 11-163 East Main Avenue (north side), 72-134 Main Avenue Drive (north side), and 1-19 South Center Street

City or town: Taylorsville State: NC County: Alexander

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>29</u>	<u>6</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	objects
<u>30</u>	<u>9</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business
COMMERCE/TRADE/department store
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse
GOVERNMENT/courthouse
GOVERNMENT/jail
RECREATION/CULTURE/theater
SOCIAL/meeting hall
DOMESTIC/hotel
RELIGIOUS/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business
COMMERCE/TRADE/department store
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE/professional
COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse
GOVERNMENT/courthouse
RECREATION/CULTURE/museum
RELIGIOUS/religious facility
VACANT/Not in use

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commercial Style

Neo-Gothic Revival

Modern Movement

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: brick

concrete block

Walls: brick

concrete block

stucco

Roof: asphalt

membrane

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Downtown Taylorsville Historic District encompasses a portion of the central business district in Taylorsville, the seat of Alexander County. Following the creation of the county and town in 1847, town lots were laid out in a modified gridiron pattern around the courthouse square, and Taylorsville became the commercial and governmental center of the county. Resources within the district reflect the twentieth-century development of the town as frame buildings and residences gave way to a dense, compact development of one- to three-story brick commercial buildings. The district encompasses the greater portion of five blocks extending north and east from the courthouse square and covering approximately 10.6 acres. The district boundary is drawn to include the concentration of largely intact commercial and governmental resources from the period 1906-1973 on Main Avenue, Main Avenue Drive, and Center Street. The properties within the district include 30 primary and nine secondary resources. Among the resources within the district, 30 contribute to its historic and architectural character, while the

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nine non-contributing resources include six buildings that no longer retain historic integrity due to alterations and three buildings and objects built outside the period of significance.

Narrative Description

The town of Taylorsville, county seat of Alexander County in the northwestern piedmont of North Carolina, is organized on a modified gridiron plan, with the courthouse occupying a full block at its center. When the town officially incorporated in 1851, the limits were set at 1,000 yards from the courthouse in all directions. The courthouse block was bordered by Main Street on all sides: North Main Street to the north (now West Main Avenue), East Main Street to the east (now Center Street), South Main Street to the south (now Main Avenue Drive), and West Main Street to the west (now First Street SW). At present, Main Avenue and Main Avenue Drive are the principal east-west streets, bordering the courthouse square to the north and south, respectively. Center Street lies on the east side of the courthouse square and forms the town's north-south meridian. First Street SW (named Old Wilkesboro Road north of Main Avenue) lies on the west side of the courthouse square and forms the western edge of the district. For ease of reference to current maps, current street names are used throughout the rest of this nomination.

The Downtown Taylorsville Historic District encompasses the concentration of commercial and civic development that occurred in the center of town during the early and mid-twentieth century. The square surrounding the Alexander County Courthouse, built in 1970 after fire destroyed the previous building, consists of flat, grass lawn; concrete sidewalks; a few hardwood trees and boxwoods; and multiple commemorative monuments and markers. With commercial activity tightly concentrated to the north and east of the courthouse square, the downtown area is surrounded by residential, religious, and modern commercial buildings, as well as parks and other open spaces that help to define and distinguish the historic downtown district. To the northeast of the central business district, separated by a swathe of undeveloped land and a small creek, are the remnants of a former industrial district along the railroad tracks including a remodeled depot a roller mill, and various industrial buildings. To the west of the courthouse square, the town's commercial development is less dense and interspersed with altered, adaptively reused, and infill buildings.

While Alexander County has remained largely rural, Taylorsville attracted a modest amount of commercial and industrial development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to supplement its function as the county seat of government. By the turn of the twentieth century, the town's general development pattern had been established, with the three blocks of Main Street north and east of the courthouse as the principal business corridor. A view of Main Street in 1909 depicts a tight cluster of one- and two-story frame buildings in the first blocks of

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present-day East and West Main Avenue. Brick commercial buildings gradually replaced the frame structures over the next decades, while a few residences remained interspersed among the new development. By 1930, the downtown blocks surrounding the courthouse were fully developed and the general character of the central business district had been established. The appearance of the downtown district changed through the second half of the twentieth century with the addition of a few new buildings, redesigned facades, and the eventual removal of the last few residences, but the overall density and visual character of downtown generally reflects Taylorsville's principal period of development in the early- to mid-twentieth century.

Following the 1967 fire that destroyed the 1902 courthouse, a modern courthouse facility was built on the same site in 1970, helping to preserve the central government functions in Taylorsville. As a result, the downtown commercial area remains relatively intact from the end of its mid-twentieth-century appearance, even as some of the principal commercial and social activity that sustained it through the twentieth century has migrated south and west to modern commercial corridors. A significant number of buildings on the commercial blocks surrounding the square have first-story facades and storefronts that have been remodeled or otherwise altered with the application of synthetic materials and the addition of fixed shed awnings, but the overall consistency of historic building forms and massing, materials, and upper-story façade details remains largely intact to convey the district's historic character.

Inventory of Resources

The inventory list for the Downtown Taylorsville Historic District is organized beginning with the courthouse and West Main Avenue. Addresses for West Main Avenue begin at Center Street and move east-to-west on the north side of the street. The entries continue with East Main Avenue, moving west-to-east from Center Street beginning on the north side and continuing on the south side. A small number of resources located on Town Alley follow the entries for their associated buildings on Main Avenue. The inventory entries on Main Avenue Drive are listed west-to-east on the north side of the street; no resources on the south side of Main Avenue Drive are included within the district. The inventory concludes with a few resources on the east side of South Center Street. East and West Main Avenue run along what appears to be a natural ridge, with the topography of the district sloping gently to the south of the district, and more steeply toward a creek beyond Town Alley to the north of the district.

The district inventory consists of 30 contributing resources and nine non-contributing resources. Inventory entries provide the name, address, date(s) of construction, contributing or non-contributing status and resource type (see classification key below), and a detailed description of the exterior of each resource within the district. A summary of the property's history, when known, is also provided. Named properties are identified by their first, longest, or best-known occupant or function during the period of significance. Construction dates have been determined as accurately as possible by correlating information from deed research, tax records, two sets of Sanborn maps dating from 1924 and 1938, documentary photographs, newspapers, and other published sources. Because historic issues of the long-standing local newspaper, *The*

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Taylorsville Times, have yet to be digitized or indexed, more precise information is likely available but beyond the scope of this project. Vacant parcels within the district boundaries are noted in the inventory but not counted among the district resources.

A contributing building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic associations or historic architectural qualities for which the district is significant. Contributing resources add to the district's significance because they were present during the period of significance, relate to its documented historical significance, and possess overall historic integrity. A non-contributing building, site, structure, or object does not add to the historic associations or historic architectural qualities for which the district is significant. Non-contributing resources do not add to the district's significance because they were not present during the period of significance, do not relate to the documented historical significance, or no longer possess historic integrity due to alterations.

Classification key:	C-B	Contributing building
	C-O	Contributing object
	NC-B	Non-contributing building
	NC-S	Non-contributing structure

INVENTORY LIST

West Main Avenue, south side

[AX0041] Alexander County Courthouse, 29 West Main Avenue, 1970 **C-B**

Located on the same site as Alexander County's original courthouse, the Brutalist structure that stands today was constructed in 1970 and designed by Hickory-based architect James E. Biggs of Architecture III.¹ A second site several blocks to the east of downtown was also considered for the modern complex, but the architect justified his choice of the historic lot by citing the Taylorsville's land development plan from 1965. The report attributed the town's concentrated commercial center to the long-time presence of a courthouse on that site. First constructed as a one-story log building in 1847, then upgraded to a permanent brick building in 1849, and again replaced by a larger facility in 1902, the courthouse had long served as a hub around which later development centered.²

County Commissioners contracted Biggs to develop plans for a new courthouse facility in the early 1960s, and the architect presented initial plans to County Commissioners in 1966. Early

¹ The firm also designed the Alexander County Public Library in 1975.

² "Courthouse Site Selected," *The Taylorsville Times*, August 31, 1967; "History of Courthouse," *The Taylorsville Times*, August 17, 1967; "Alexander County Courthouse," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976.

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plans produced by Biggs showed a complex of four Modernist structures at the corners of the block and an open landscaped courtyard; ultimately the current plan was selected.³ The re-development of the county building proceeded more urgently than planned after the historic county courthouse burned in 1967. The fire consumed the entire upper level of the building and left only remnants of the ground floor and basement, but county records were spared.⁴ The firm of Herman, Sipe and Company constructed the new courthouse. At the dedication ceremony for the new building on May 16, 1970, County Commissioner chairman Vernon Broyhill said the building was designed to “bring in the era of the 1970s.”⁵

The Alexander County Courthouse occupies the western half of a city block bounded by West Main Avenue to the north, Center Street to the east, Main Avenue Drive to the south, and First Street SW to the west. Facing east toward Center Street and the commercial core of Taylorsville, the building is fronted by an expansive landscaped courtyard approached by concrete walkways from the north, east, and south. Composed of a central concrete plaza containing an offset diamond of grass and flanked by expansive green areas at the northeast and southeast corners of the lot, the terraced courtyard features globe-light lamp posts atop battered pebble-finish concrete bases, pebbled concrete benches, and oversized bowl-shaped planters. Monuments to the veterans of World War I and World War II, veterans of the Korean War and Vietnam; and the Alexander County Veterans Memorial Bell Tower stand in the southeast green. The northeast green contains a Confederate Soldier Memorial sculpture, historic cannon, and Roster Monument. A trio of flagpoles is mounted on a triangular concrete pad on the eastern edge of the parcel, just to the north of the main walkway. Four geodetic markers are located on courthouse grounds including a concrete post in the southwest corner of the square installed in 1935, two granite posts dating from 1949, and a brass disk set in the ground in 1991. The two granite posts are inscribed with a cross and “NCGS USCS 1900,” the initials of the North Carolina Geodetic Survey and United States Coast Survey. The four markers are too small to be individually counted among the district resources.

The monumental, Brutalist-style building stands apart in its design and materials from the twentieth-century commercial architecture of downtown Taylorsville. The rectangular flat-roofed building is clad in tan pebble-finish concrete panels with a shallow projecting cornice of the same material. Rising above the roof, a rectangular, flat-roofed projection with slightly canted, metal-clad sides is slightly recessed from the building’s main façade and greatly recessed from the other three sides of the courthouse. The main level of the building is slightly cantilevered over the raised basement, giving it the appearance of floating above the ground. On

³ “For Year 19??,” *The Observer-News-Enterprise*, Vertical File: History - Courthouse, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

⁴ “Courthouse Destroyed By Fire,” *The Taylorsville Times*, August 17, 1967; “Many Alex Records Saved,” *Hickory Daily Record*, August 11, 1967.

⁵ “Dedication Service and Open House: Alexander County Courthouse & Jail,” May 16-17, 1970, pamphlet, Vertical File: History - Courthouse, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC; “U.S. Flag Featured in Courthouse & Jail Dedication Here Saturday,” Vertical File: History - Courthouse, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

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the east façade, a narrow row of ribbon windows marks the basement. The lot slopes downward toward the west of the lot, leaving the basement level of the rear elevation fully exposed. On the rear and side elevations, the basement windows run above a battered concrete base finished with a pattern of narrow, rusticated vertical bands in relief.

A central entrance portico with side walls projects from the façade and shades a pair of aluminum-and-glass doors flanked by wide plate-glass sidelights. Pebble-cast concrete pilasters and slender vertical sidelights frame the glazed entrance bay. The side walls of the entrance bay slant slightly inward and the roof slants downward, forcing a perspective that makes the entrance appear to be more deeply recessed than it is. Metal letters reading "ALEXANDER COUNTY COURTHOUSE" float on the northern end of the façade; a separate set of metal letters reading "IN GOD WE TRUST" were added in 2015 as a result of a statewide campaign.⁶ Historic photos show that the original entrance was accessed by a central set of concrete stairs flanked by battered concrete cheek walls of the same texture as the basement level. Each wall originally held a large bowl-shaped planter. Today the southern cheek wall remains intact while the northern has been replaced by a two-run wheelchair ramp finished with the same vertically banded concrete to mimic the original design. The ramp was constructed around 1990.⁷

Secondary elevations of the courthouse follow the material patterns established on the façade. While the north and south side elevations above the basement are blind, a series of irregularly spaced, recessed, fixed-pane windows pierce the west (rear) elevation. The basement level of the west elevation holds a recessed two-leaf metal-and-glass entry door to the north and a secondary single-leaf metal-and-glass door to the south.

The interior was originally designed to house courtrooms on the main level and county offices as well as a jail in the basement. On the main level, a wide central hallway with exposed brick walls passes between the two courtrooms for the Superior Court and the District Court. Each courtroom contains a circular area for court officials with rows of seating beyond and separate jury boxes to the rear of the building. A central rear stair leads to the lower level, which was designed to house the Sheriff's Department offices; the clerk of court; register of deeds; the tax office; and a state-of-the-art jail that included a maximum security section, isolation cells, and a separate cellblock for women. While the offices remain occupied, the jail is no longer in use.⁸

Confederate Memorial (Soldier Monument, Cannon, and Roster Monument), 1958, 2001 C-O

⁶ "Motto: Lettering Installed at Alexander County Courthouse," *The Taylorsville Times*, August 19, 2015.

⁷ "AX0041 Alexander County Courthouse," HPO Survey File, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Asheville, NC.

⁸ Interior descriptions based on floorplan in "Dedication Service and Open House: Alexander County Courthouse & Jail," May 16-17, 1970, pamphlet, Vertical File: History - Courthouse, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC. See also: "AX0041 Alexander County Courthouse," HPO Survey File, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Asheville, NC.

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Situated at the north of the courtyard in front of the courthouse and framed by a low concrete retaining wall and grass lawn, the Confederate Soldier Monument and adjacent Civil War cannon are all that remained on site after the previous courthouse burned in 1967. The main focus of the memorial is a stone sculpture of a soldier holding the barrel of a musket that rests at his feet. The sculpture stands atop a tall, two-tiered square column sheathed in irregularly shaped horizontal stone veneer. A metal plate on the north face of the column identifies the man as a soldier who was killed in the Battle of Gettysburg; a modern engraved stone panel below contains a quote from Virgil "Gus" Beckham, a Taylorsville attorney who funded the monument. A third engraved granite panel mounted atop the monument's concrete base commemorates Robert E. Lee. A metal cannon mounted on a metal axle between large metal wheels and placed on a concrete pad has stood beside the sculpture since it was installed.⁹ The granite panel mounted on a concrete base in front of the cannon identifies it as a Jones six-pounder and commemorates its role in Picket's (sic) Charge at the Battle of Gettysburg. A granite slab monument with the engraved names of Alexander County soldiers who served in the Civil War was installed to the west of the sculpture and cannon in 2001.¹⁰ The memorial is accessed by a concrete pathway running south from the public sidewalk to the sculpture.

Alexander County Remembers, WWI & WWII Veterans Memorial Roster Monument, ca. 2000
NC-O

The granite roster monument is a vertical, rectangular slab that stands atop a rusticated granite base at the southeast corner of the Courthouse plaza. The monument contains the engraved names of Alexander County residents who fought in World War I and World War II.

Korean War and Vietnam War Memorial, ca. 1985
NC-O

Standing directly to the west of the WWI & WWII monument, the granite Korean War memorial, also a vertical, rectangular slab that stands atop a rusticated granite base. Slightly smaller than the world wars memorial, the monument lists the names of Alexander County soldiers who died in Korea and Vietnam. The monument was installed prior to 1987, when it first appears in an aerial photograph of downtown Taylorsville.¹¹

Alexander County Veterans Memorial Bell Tower, 1902, 2003
NC-S

⁹ "They Voted to Go All Out," Vertical File: History - Courthouse, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC; "Alex Memorial," Vertical File: Civil War, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

¹⁰ Alexander County, Board of Commissioner's Meeting, April 3, 2001, <https://alexandercountync.gov/minutes-agendas/2001docs/20010403m.htm> (accessed April 2024).

¹¹ "Taylorsville 1987," postcard, collection of Connie Kincaid, Alexander County Economic Development Corporation, Taylorsville, NC.

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Situated on the southeast lawn directly in front of the courthouse, the bell tower is accessed by a short concrete path from the walkway running across the front of the building. The minimal bell tower is carried on four tall, square brick piers and is relatively unadorned save for a soldier course of brick and corbelling between the piers. The brick monument contains the bell and cornerstone from the 1902 courthouse.¹² Two metal plaques installed on the brick piers detail the histories of the courthouse bell and the bell tower monument. The bell was returned to the Courthouse Square in 1974 and was initially mounted on a concrete slab. The Alexander County Sesquicentennial Committee constructed the brick memorial to house the bell in 2003.¹³

West Main Avenue, north side

[AX0053] (former) People's Drug Store, 12 West Main Avenue, ca. 1920 C-B

Located at the northwest corner of West Main Avenue and North Center Street, the two-story, five-to-one common bond brick commercial building was built in the late 1910s or early 1920s. The building is notable for its cast-iron storefront manufactured by G. L. Mesker & Co. of Evansville, Indiana, and features paired one-over-one double-hung windows on the second story with cast-concrete sills and molded lintels, recessed corbelled panels in the upper façade, and a corbelled cornice. The storefront, which is wrapped around one bay on the east side elevation, was substantially altered in the late 1980s or 1990s with replacement doors and windows and rough stucco infill. Remaining elements of the Mesker storefront include the east corner post, an intermediate post near the west end of the façade, and an I-beam lintel with large corner blocks and decorative florets. The cast-iron posts have decorative floral scrollwork, textured panels, and fleur-de-lis adorning the surfaces. The Mesker company is identified on a name panel near the base of the east corner post. The storefront entrance has been reconfigured with double-leaf replacement doors flanked by vertical sidelights. A single twelve-over-twelve double-hung window is located at either end of the storefront, which is shaded by an attached copper-clad hip-roof awning. The west window infills an original single-leaf doorway that led to the second floor.

The east elevation of the building exhibits a stepped parapet roofline with a metal coping. A single storefront bay is located at the south end of the east elevation and infilled with rough stucco. A single one-over-one double-hung window on the first story is located near the north end of the elevation and has a concrete sill and lintel. Seven one-over-one double-hung windows with concrete sills on the second story are irregularly spaced. A below-grade entry door and small window openings at the basement are exposed due to the slope of North Center Street.

¹² "AX0041 Alexander County Courthouse," HPO Survey File, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Asheville, NC.

¹³ "Rustic Old Bell Returns to County's Courtsquare," *The Taylorsville Times*, August 1, 1974; Alex History Group, LLC, *Alexander County Treasures: A History of Remarkable People and Precious Gems* (Virginia Beach, VA; The Donning Company Publishers, 2012), 331.

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The rear elevation features an attached full-width porch at the first story, supported by a concrete block foundation the height of the fully exposed basement that is a rehabilitated version of an earlier porch. The hip roof is supported on square wood posts with wood railings. The porch shelters a central single-leaf entrance flanked by single one-over-one windows on the main level of the building. The door and windows are later replacements that differ from the size of the original openings. Two single windows on the second level contain six-over-six double-hung wood sash with concrete sills.

W. B. Matheson deeded the property Charlie R. White in 1910, and the property is referred to as the Charlie White lot in later deeds. Rowe Campbell Sr. founded Peoples Drug Store in 1918. After Campbell moved the store to South Center Street around 1940, the building was occupied by Munday's Drug Store.

[AX0103] Merchants & Farmers Bank, 16 West Main Avenue, ca. 1919

C-B

Built by Merchants & Farmers bank around 1919, the two-story common bond brick commercial building is largely intact on the upper level of the façade and the rear elevation.¹⁴ Two recessed panels float atop a row of four regularly spaced one-over-one double-hung replacement metal windows with projecting header-course sills. Applied metal paneling covers the space between the windowsills and the flat-roofed cable-hung awning. Brick piers subdivide the storefront into three bays of varying width. To the east, a single-leaf aluminum-and-glass door with slender sidelight is the main entrance to the building. The largest, central, bay is infilled with brick around a single-pane window adjacent to the middle pier. The narrowest bay, on the west of the façade, contains a single-leaf aluminum-and-glass door to access the upper level.

The north (rear) elevation reveals a fully exposed basement. All openings on the rear elevation are segmental-arched, with brick lintels formed of two and three rows of brick headers, and contain rectangular windows. A central single-leaf metal door at the basement level is flanked by single six-pane wood sash windows covered with security bars. A second door opening at the center of the first floor has been infilled with brick around a horizontal two-over-two window. The windows on either side, obscured by screens, appear to be single, fixed-pane sash. Four window openings on the upper level contain a combination of original four-over-four double-hung wood windows and single, fixed-pane sash. Exposed rafters are visible at the roofline.

A plaque on the façade reads "In Memory of Solon E. Little," and honors a cashier who was seriously wounded in the robbery of Merchants & Farmers Bank in 1933.¹⁵ The building transitioned to the Taylorsville hub of Northwestern Bank in 1938 when Northwestern Bank consolidated with Merchants & Farmers Bank and assumed ownership of the Taylorsville

¹⁴ Deed book 9, page 3, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

¹⁵ "Four Bank Robberies in Alexander County in Past 43 Years," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976.

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branch.¹⁶ Northwestern Bank was formed in 1937 with the merger of the Bank of Sparta; Deposit and Savings Bank of North Wilkesboro; Merchants & Farmers Bank of Bakersville; and the Watauga County Bank in Boone.¹⁷

[AX0102] Hedrick Office Building, 22 West Main Avenue, ca. 1930, early 1980s NC-B

The parcel has held a commercial building since as early as 1919, beginning with a gable-roofed frame structure. A brick building, filling the gaps between the neighboring parcels, had been constructed by 1938.¹⁸ Edward L. Hedrick III purchased the property in 1979 and undertook an extensive remodeling that was completed by 1987.¹⁹ During the renovations the entire façade was remodeled. A metal plaque between the second and third stories of the façade's middle bay reads "Edward L. Hedrick, III Office Building."

Three arches define the remodeled storefront of this three-story brick building, with the middle arch wider than the flanking arches. Each arch is framed by a projecting course of header bricks and rises through all three stories of the façade. A decorative staggered soldier course extends between the tall arches and the simple corbelled cornice. The entrance and window bays on the ground and second story are set back slightly from the brick façade, creating recessed porches. On both levels, pairs of 12-light doors flanked by 12-light windows open in the center bay, with pairs of slender 12-light windows on the outer bays. Multi-light fixed-pane windows fill the arched openings on the third story; the large middle window is divided to give the appearance of a fanlight. Despite being three stories, the building is approximately the same height as the flanking two-story buildings.

The north (rear) elevation reveals an exposed basement. Porches run the width of each of the four floors and were most likely added when the façade was remodeled. The basement entrance contains large central double doors with two lights atop panels of diagonal wooden slats that appear to be original. Two-over-two double-hung wooden sash windows covered with security bars flank the basement entrance. Windows and doors on the upper levels are all modern replacements.

[AX0101] Smithey's Department Store (I), 34-36 West Main Avenue, ca. 1920, ca. 1934 C-B

The building comprises a single-storefront building erected ca. 1910 that originally housed the Bee Hive, a popular store serving Taylorsville in the 1910s and 1920s; and, to the east, the two-

¹⁶ Deed book 30, page 121, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

¹⁷ "Northwestern Bank Consolidated in 1938 with Taylorsville Merchants & Farmers Bank," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976.

¹⁸ Deed book 8, page 251, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, February 1938, Sheet 2.

¹⁹ Deed book 211, page 932, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; Vertical File: A0040 Taylorsville Central Business District, 1986, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

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storefront Watts Company Department Store built by 1913.²⁰ Charles Watts purchased the Bee Hive building in 1914; 1924 Sanborn Maps document its use as a drug store.²¹ Watts leased the building to N. B. Smithey for his department store in 1927.²² When the Watts Company building was badly damaged by a fire in the early 1930s, Watts decided to sell to N. B. Smithey instead of rebuilding. In 1934, Smithey purchased both buildings and rebuilt the fire-damaged building.²³ 1938 Sanborn maps note that the old Bee Hive building, now under Smithey management, was being used as a movie theater.²⁴ Historic photos document that the two buildings had been remodeled to their current configuration—with a unified parapet and brick diamonds atop a band of evenly spaced windows—by 1947. This remodel substantially reworked the former Watts Building, replacing its pair of two-story shops with mezzanines with a three-story-on-basement building whose third floor is apparent only from the rear elevation.

The unified façade of the two-unit brick building with concrete coping appears to be two stories throughout. The eastern, rebuilt unit's third story is "blind," concealed by the upper façade which is unornamented with the exception of a row of five diamonds (two on the western unit and three on the eastern) filled with bricks laid at an angle. Below, a row of twelve window openings runs the length of the façade, with four evenly spaced above the western storefront and eight evenly spaced above the two eastern storefronts. All openings are filled with replacement single-pane windows capped by opaque transoms; historic photographs from the early 1950s confirm that the previous windows were double-hung sash. Projecting from the wider space between the two sets of windows, there is a vertically oriented sign that originally read "Smithey's" and now reads "YMCA." Panels of vinyl siding run between the projecting concrete sills of the second-story windows and the flat-roofed cable-hung awning that shades the storefronts below.

Despite slight variations between the three storefronts, all are stylistically unified by the consistent use of black structural glass to subdivide them and line the bulkhead walls below the display windows. All three storefronts contain recessed entrances. The westernmost entrance is fronted by a terrazzo floor reading "Smithey's" and contains a single-leaf glass and aluminum door with transom. A decorative diamond motif with 'S' is inscribed in the structural glass above each window on the westernmost storefront. Replacement tile covers the floors of the two eastern storefronts, which each contain double-leaf aluminum-and-glass doors with transoms.

²⁰ "The Watts Company," advertisement, *The Mountain Scout*, April 2, 1913.

²¹ Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, December 1924, Sheet 2.

²² "The Bee Hive Under New Management," *The Mountain Scout*, March 11, 1914; *Alexander County Treasures*, 85. N. B. Smithey opened his first store in 1906 in the old Wilkesboro Hotel in Wilkesboro. At the time of his death in 1953, Smithey operated 17 stores in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Arlene Edwards, "Aging Hotel Remembers Lively Old-Timey Days," *Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel*, February 20, 1972, C1.

²³ See historic photo of the building before reconstruction in: "Smithey's Department Store Opened in Taylorsville in 1927," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976; Vertical File: A0040 Taylorsville Central Business District, 1986, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC; Deed book 25, page 91, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

²⁴ Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, February 1938, Sheet 2.

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The north (rear) elevation clearly shows the distinction between the original and rebuilt buildings. The rear of the older, western building features three bays of slightly segmental-arched openings at the first and second stories, all of which are entirely infilled with glass block except for the westernmost opening of the first story which has a replacement single-leaf, recessed metal door and glass block above. This door is accessed by a metal staircase with railing. At the fully exposed basement, a single-leaf aluminum-and-glass door occupies the eastern opening and the two openings to the west are infilled with brick. The rear elevation of the larger, reconstructed eastern building is subdivided by a grid of sixteen window openings, four across each level of the three stories and basement, which are almost all infilled with glass block. A metal staircase rises to two second- and third-story doors, each of which features a single-leaf replacement door cut into the window opening. A basement entrance in the easternmost bay contains a double-leaf glass-and-aluminum door shaded by a flat-roofed awning and a large window opening containing a replacement double-hung window and infilled with plywood. The westernmost window opening at the basement level is infilled with brick.

The parcel continues north across Town Alley and contains the entirety of the block bounded by Town Alley, North Center Street, First Avenue, and Old Wilkesboro Road. This block contains three warehouse buildings: two facing Town Alley and a third at the northeast corner of the parcel.

Warehouse, 180 Town Alley, 1920s

C-B

The parged brick building is capped by a parapet with tile coping on its south, east, and north elevations. A single opening on the south elevation contains a paneled double-leaf door. All other elevations are blind, though traces of former window openings are visible on the east and north elevations. The 1924 Sanborn map shows the building as a jail in the western end and a larger office to the east.²⁵

Smithey's Hardware Store, 200 Town Alley, ca. 1930

C-B

The one-story-on-basement, L-shaped stone building with extruded mortar joints was reportedly constructed with stone from Rocky Face Mountain Quarry, an Alexander County quarry northeast of Taylorsville. A parapet with concrete coping caps the west, south, and east elevations of the building. The parapet is flat with the exception of a gable that rises to meet a tall stone chimney stack on the west end of the south elevation, facing Town Alley. The initials K.S. are written in mortar on the south face of the chimney. A flat-roofed metal awning runs the full width of the south elevation and shades a concrete porch and offset double-leaf aluminum-and-glass door. The entire wall beneath the awning has been sheathed in smoothed stucco. Window openings on the upper level are finished with projecting concrete sills and contain pairs of double-hung replacement sash windows. A concrete stairway beside the west elevation leads

²⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, December 1924, Sheet 2.

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from Town Alley to a lower parking lot behind the building. The basement window openings are generally smaller and contain one-over-one double-hung sash windows. Most windows are covered with security bars. A pair of larger openings are cut into the north elevation of the projecting ell; here, the basement opening contains a double-leaf wooden door while the upper opening is infilled with brick surrounding a pair of replacement one-over-one windows.

Constructed sometime between 1924 and 1938, this building was erected to house Smithey's Hardware Store, which was operated by Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Brookshire for 42 years until closing in the early 1970s.²⁶

Warehouse, 214 Town Alley, 1950s

C-B

The one-story brick storage building with tile coping faces south onto Town Alley. A concrete stoop runs the length of the building facing the alley, and a single-leaf metal entry door pierces the south elevation. All other elevations are blind. The warehouse was constructed before 1964 and may have originally been associated with Lackey's Department Store, located at 46 West Main Avenue in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁷

[AX0100] Smithey's Department Store (II), 42 West Main Avenue, ca. 1920, 1934

C-B

The two-story brick commercial building was constructed ca. 1920. In 1934, N. B. Smithey, a Wilkesboro businessman, purchased the building and the building to the east (now 36 West Main) to expand Smithey's Department Store.²⁸ The building shares the decorative brick banding effect found on the adjacent 46 West Main Avenue, in which recessed single courses are flanked by four courses of brick. Beyond the brick patterning, the commercial building is relatively nondescript. Metal coping covers the top of its flat parapet, and four window openings on the upper level are partially infilled with brick and contain twelve-pane fixed sash. Two bands of damaged brick above and below the second-story windows are likely scars from the removal of wood siding that was previously applied to the entire upper level of the building between 1950 and 1974 to unify it with the adjacent Smithey's Department Store building.²⁹ Historic photos

²⁶ "Smithey's Department Store Opened in Taylorsville in 1927," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976; "Mr. John Hugh Brookshire," obituary, *The Charlotte Observer*, February 24, 1988, 6E. No documentation could be found to explain why the building was labeled as a wholesale grocery on the 1938 Sanborn Map. Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, February 1938, Sheet 2.

²⁷ Aerial view of Taylorsville, NCDOT Historical Aerial Imagery Index, March 31, 1964.

²⁸ "Smithey's Department Store Opened in Taylorsville in 1927," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976; "Smithey's Department Store," Vertical File: Alexander County-History-Business and Industry, Local History Room, Alexander County Public Library, Taylorsville, NC; Deed book 25, page 91, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

²⁹ The siding does not appear in a 1947 postcard photo of the central business district but is visible in a 1974 advertisement for Smithey's. "Smithey's Department Store," advertisement, *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1,

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dating to ca. 1927 reveal that the building originally had a lower parapet that was raised by 1947 to form a continuous cornice with the adjacent building to the east.³⁰

A decorative terrazzo floor reading "Smithey's" fronts the recessed storefront, which is identical in style to the storefronts to the east that also accessed the department store, all apparently installed at the same time. It is composed of plate glass windows flanking a central aluminum-and-glass single-leaf door with transom. Structural black glass frames the recessed storefront on both sides and a single-leaf aluminum-and-glass door on the east of the façade that accesses the upper level. A fabric awning hung from cables shades the full width of the façade. A pressed tin ceiling remains intact on the main level of the interior.

The north (rear) elevation reveals an exposed basement with a projecting brick platform containing a recessed vehicular bay with double-leaf corrugated metal doors. Window openings on either side of the platform are infilled with brick. A central metal security door on the first story opens onto the platform, which also is accessed by metal stairs leading from the adjacent building to the east. Five window openings on the upper levels, two on the first story and three above, are finished with projecting brick sills. The other four windows are infilled with glass block while the central upper-level opening contains a jalousie window.

[AX0099] Commercial Building, 46 West Main Avenue, ca. 1920

C-B

Located at the northeast corner of West Main Avenue and Old Wilkesboro Road, the three-story common-bond brick commercial building is enlivened by segmental-arch window openings, decorative brick banding, and a corbelled cornice on the façade. The storefront, which appears to be a mid-century replacement, features a recessed entrance bay at the east end with double-leaf fifteen-light doors and a multi-light transom. The aluminum-frame storefront window is two large panes resting on a low, brick bulkhead with a rowlock-course sill. An attached metal-clad hip-roof awning shelters the storefront. A band of applied aluminum siding, where the awning is attached, extends from the top of the storefront to the base of the second-story windows. The two windows on the second story are one-over-one double-hung wood sash set within an arched opening with rowlock-course brick sills and a lintel of three courses of headers. The banding effect is created by a recessed single course flanked by four courses of brick and extends to the adjacent façade at 42 West Main Avenue. The corbelled cornice displays a soldier course and a rowlock course topped by four courses of corbelled brick. There are no third-story windows on the façade or side elevation.

The west side elevation has a stepped brick parapet and four segmental-arch window openings with cast concrete sills at the second story. The windows have been removed and the

1976. Vertical File: A0040 Taylorsville Central Business District, 1986, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

³⁰ See historic photo of the building before reconstruction in: "Smithey's Department Store Opened in Taylorsville in 1927," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976.

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openings are boarded from the inside. A concrete stair from the front sidewalk descends to a below-grade entry to the basement. Two additional arched window openings light the basement.

All four levels of the rear elevation have segmental-arch openings with cast stone sills and lintels of two or three rows of headers. At the second and third stories, only the two outer bays have openings, which contain one-over-one double-hung sash replacement windows. The second-story west window is covered by a board. At the first story and basement, windows occupy the outer bays (four-over-four at the first story and covered in paint and replacement one-over-one in the shorter basement windows), while the middle bay is wider, containing a large door. The door at the first story is covered in metal bearing the letters spelling CLINES on the diagonal; the double-leaf door at the basement is wood.

The 1924 Sanborn maps show that the building had an open stairwell from the first to second floor and an elevator. A shed-roof frame enclosure on the roof caps the elevator shaft and is visible at the northeast corner of the building. The building served as the home of Lackey's Department Store for many years in the 1950s and 1960s.³¹ Cline's Florist, established in 1976, has occupied this location since prior to 1984, when Clayton and Loretta Cline bought the building from the Gwaltney family.³²

East Main Avenue, north side

[AX0104] Commercial Building, 11 East Main Avenue, ca. 1939

C-B

Located at the northeast corner of East Main Avenue and North Center Street, the one-story brick commercial building features relatively plain façade, aluminum-frame storefront, attached shed-roof awning, and a full basement exposed at the rear. The building was not shown on Sanborn maps of Taylorsville updated through 1938 but was erected soon thereafter as it appears in H. Lee Waters's 1939 film of Taylorsville.³³ The storefront is arranged around central double-leaf glazed doors surmounted by a single-pane transom. On either side of the entrance, large plate-glass display windows are divided into two panes by a single aluminum muntin. The windows rest on low brick bulkheads with rowlock-course sills that have been painted a chalky gray. The attached shed awning is frame construction and covered with asphalt shingles. The upper façade has a flat parapet with a cornice of soldier-course brick and a cast concrete coping.

Concrete steps with a two-bar metal railing descend along the west elevation to a below-grade entrance. Two windows to each side of this entrance are covered with security bars. A second entrance near the north end of the west elevation is accessed directly from the sidewalk on the side of the building and contains a replacement single-leaf door. The side elevation is blind on the main level of the building, while the stepped parapet has a cast concrete coping.

³¹ *Alexander County Treasures*, 265.

³² Deed book 244, page 992, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

³³ "Taylorsville (N.C.), 1939 (Reel 1)," H. Lee Waters Film Collection, Duke University Libraries, <https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4m32s474>, accessed March 2023.

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The rear (north) elevation features a central entrance to the fully exposed basement that contains a single-leaf door flanked by sidelights. The wide wooden door is composed of 12 lights over a single panel, while the sidelights have eight lights over a single panel. A pair of four-light wood-frame casement windows separated by a wide mullion are located to the east of the entrance, and the window to the west is double-hung sash. Four windows are evenly spaced across the rear on the main level. The two-over-two double-hung wood-sash windows have rowlock-course brick sills and are covered with security bars.

The building appears to have been constructed around 1939 for commercial purposes. It became the department store extension of the neighboring United Variety Store by 1950, and in the 1970s it was a women's clothing store. The building presently houses a hair salon.

[AX0105] United Variety Store, 21 East Main Avenue, 1938, ca. 1970

C-B

This two-story brick commercial building, home to the headquarters of the regional United Variety Store chain, was erected in 1938 after an earlier building on the site burned.³⁴ The ca. 1970 replacement storefront has a central double-leaf entrance flanked by aluminum-frame plate-glass display windows. A transom above the entrance has been boarded over, and the display windows rest on low brick bulkheads that form shallow planting beds in front of the windows. The replacement doors have nine lights over two panels and the display window to the west is subdivided into two panes by a central muntin. The replacement doors and planting beds are late twentieth century additions. The fixed, wooden shed awning is sheathed in wood shingles, now deteriorated. The tall four-bay upper façade, which was likely designed to match the adjoining building at 23 East Main Avenue, exhibits bricked-in window openings with a continuous soldier-course lintel. A decorative band of soldier course brick on the upper façade is bound above and below by a single course of header brick and capped by cast concrete coping. Despite the façade changes to the storefront and second-story windows, the building remains contributing as it conforms with the overall form, scale, and materials of the district.

While the east elevation is flush with the adjacent building at 23 East Main, a stepped parapet roofline is visible along the west elevation. The rear (north) elevation reveals an exposed basement and three stories above. At the basement there is a garage opening, concrete block loading dock, and a loading bay. The garage bay to the west has a replacement overhead door, and an attached shed-roof metal canopy supported on metal posts shelters the loading dock and bay with a metal roll-up door. An exterior brick chimney flue at the center of the elevation rises

³⁴ The full extent of the fire damage is not known, but the earlier building suffered significant damage. It was reported that the "United Variety Store and its contents [were] completely destroyed" but firefighters from both Taylorsville and Statesville were able to keep flames from spreading to the Miller Hardware building and neighboring structures, although the heat of the flames blistered paint and cracked windows on buildings across the street. See "United Variety Store Opened 1926," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 6. The uniformity of the facades and rear elevations complicates an understanding of whether the two buildings were originally built as one structure or two separate but adjoining buildings. Deed records typically acknowledge the two buildings as separate properties.

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against the rear wall of the building. Each of the three stories above has four bays of windows, some of which are original two-over-two double-hung sash while others are replacements or infilled with brick or plywood.

A two-story building erected at this location in the early 1920s housed Adams Furniture Store before L. M. Hinshaw began operating United Variety Store at this location in 1926. After R. A. Adams declared bankruptcy in 1933, Hinshaw acquired the building at public auction for \$8,125.³⁵ Hinshaw's "skill in buying and merchandising enabled the firm to expand rapidly" and at one point included 17 stores across the state.³⁶ In December 1937, a fire destroyed the building and caused an estimated \$20,000 in damage. Neither the building nor the contents of the store were insured. The following month, however, Hinshaw contracted with Herman L. Sipe to build a new store.³⁷ During the 1950s, the front façade of the store had two recessed entrances, curved storefront windows, and a long, scalloped awning across the façade. By 1976, the current storefront configuration was in place. The Taylorsville store remained the company's headquarters until the business was dissolved in 1979.³⁸

[AX0106] Rhodes-Day-Elledge Furniture Co. Building, 23 East Main Avenue, ca. 1924, ca. 1965, ca. 1995 C-B

J. M. Miller had this two-story brick building erected around 1924 for his hardware store. In 1941, J. M. Miller sold the building to the Rhodes-Day-Elledge Furniture Company and moved his hardware store to the warehouse behind the building, across Town Alley. The furniture company first opened in Taylorsville in 1939 and originally occupied the building at 34 West Main Avenue. Clay Elledge served as president of the Rhodes-Day-Elledge company and his wife, Ruth Watts Elledge, was secretary-treasurer. Elledge had worked for Rhodes-Day in Wilkesboro before coming to Taylorsville in 1937. Elledge helped organize the Taylorsville Merchant's Association, which later evolved into the Alexander County Chamber of Commerce.³⁹ Heilig-Meyers Furniture later occupied the building.

The storefront, likely a 1960s replacement, has central, double-leaf, glazed entry doors surmounted by a jalousie transom and flanked by sidelight panels. The entrance bay is flanked by plate-glass display windows that rest on low brick walls forming planting beds in front of the windows. The fixed, fabric awning was installed sometime between 1987 and 1999, and the planting beds are late twentieth century additions. The brick detailing and fenestration of the upper façade appears to have been replicated when the adjacent façade of 21 East Main Avenue

³⁵ Deed book 23, page 405, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

³⁶ "United Variety Store Opened 1926," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 6.

³⁷ "Store at Taylorsville Is Destroyed by Blaze," *The Charlotte Observer*, December 14, 1937, 9; "Erect \$18,000 Building for Taylorsville Store," *The Charlotte Observer*, January 8, 1938, 9.

³⁸ Articles of Incorporation book 210, page 787, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

³⁹ "Rhodes-Day-Elledge Furniture in 39th Year of Operation in Taylorsville," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976.

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was rebuilt in 1938 following a fire.⁴⁰ The four-bay upper façade exhibits bricked in window openings with a continuous soldier-course lintel. An attached sign covers the two center window openings. A decorative band of soldier course brick on the upper façade parapet is bound above and below by a single course of header brick and capped by cast concrete coping. Despite the façade changes to the storefront and second-story windows, the building remains contributing as it conforms with the overall form, scale, and materials of the district.

The rear (north) elevation reveals an exposed basement with loading dock and rear entrance block covered by a projecting shed-roof wing with concrete block walls, exposed rafters, and a steel I-beam lintel. An exterior brick chimney flue rises against the rear wall of the building. An upper story of the building also revealed at the rear has five window openings, three of which are boarded over. The building's party walls have corbelled parapets at the rear. A shed-roof frame enclosure on the roof caps the freight elevator shaft and is covered with metal sheathing.

Warehouse, ca. 1930

C-B

A one-story frame warehouse stands on the north side of Town Alley at the rear of the lot. Resting on a brick foundation, the front-gable roof building is covered with corrugated metal siding and has a metal roof. A frame office wing projects at the front of the building with a shed roof sloping to the east, interior brick chimney flue, and a pair of two-over-two double-hung wood-sash windows on the façade; a square window frame is located on the east side of the wing. A shed roof of a different pitch sloping to the west creates a covered entrance bay for both the building and the office wing. The sheltered west elevation of the office contains a four-light wood-sash window and a single-leaf glazed and paneled entry door. The main building is entered through a single-leaf wooden entry door topped by a single-light transom. A larger doorway contains a single-leaf solid metal door and is reached by three wooden steps and a wood ramp. A shed-roof extension along the east side of the building has double-leaf metal doors located on the south elevation.

When J. M. Miller sold his building to the Rhodes-Day-Elledge Furniture Company in 1941, he moved his hardware business to this former warehouse building. Two years later Miller sold the business to his daughter and son-in-law, Hazel and Plato Carson. The Carsons changed the name to Carson Hardware and continued to operate from this location until 1946, when they purchased the building at 15 South Center Street opposite the courthouse and moved to that location.⁴¹

[AX0107] Commercial Building, 31-33 East Main Avenue, ca. 1965

C-B

⁴⁰ The uniformity of the facades and rear elevations complicates an understanding of whether the two buildings were originally built as one structure or two separate but adjoining buildings. Deed records typically acknowledge the two buildings as separate properties.

⁴¹ "Carson Hardware Established 1943," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976.

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Built around 1965 by J. C. Gant, the short two-story brick commercial building features an aluminum-frame storefront and a flat parapet with terra cotta tile coping. A fixed fabric awning installed in the 2000s shelters the storefronts while the upper façade is plain, painted brick with two square window openings and rowlock-course brick sills. The windows are three-light aluminum-frame awning sash. The storefront consists of two bays of full-height windows with a single-leaf glazed door and transom located off-center. A narrow bay at the east end of the façade is recessed slightly and contains a single-leaf glazed door with transom that accesses stairs to the second story. The upper portion of the east elevation is visible above the adjacent building at 35 East Main Avenue and is unadorned except for a single plate-glass fixed-sash window.

An exposed basement visible at the rear (north) of the building contains central double-leaf doors sheltered by an attached fabric awning, and an exterior brick chimney flue rises against the rear elevation. The rear windows of the main floor are replacement one-over-one sash, while the upper story has three-light metal-sash awning windows. A single-leaf door on the west side of the upper story opens onto an attached metal fire escape, which leads to the roof of a concrete block addition projecting from the rear of the building at 23 East Main Avenue.

J. C. and Carmen Gant purchased this parcel “beginning at a point on...the East wall of the brick building of J. M. Miller, now known as Rhodes-Day-Elledge Furniture Company” from Garland and Edna Lackey in February 1964 and erected the building.⁴² The enterprising Gant, who farmed and worked as a logger before becoming a builder, primarily developed residential subdivisions. Rhodes-Day-Elledge first occupied the building for additional showroom space.⁴³

[AX108] Commercial Building, 35 East Main Avenue, ca. 1968, ca. 2010

NC-B

The plain one-story brick commercial building features a tall flat parapet and modern storefront windows. The symmetrical façade consists of a replacement single-leaf entry door topped by a single-light transom and sheltered by an attached fabric awning. The entrance is flanked by two windows on either side, which are metal-frame fixed sash with plate glass separated by decorative slanting muntins. The windows appear to be replacements, possibly added around 2010, along with changes to the entry door and awning. Laid in common bond, the façade brickwork includes rowlock course windowsills set flush with the wall and a rowlock course string course on the upper façade. The parapet is capped by a metal coping.

The building extends approximately half the depth of its lot and is surrounded by paved parking at the rear and in the vacant lot to the east. Three narrow plate-glass windows pierce the visible east elevation. The rear (north) elevation of the building contains a single-leaf security door.

The Western Carolina Corporation, based in Hickory, purchased three parcels of land from Max C. and Cora Lee Barnes Nye in 1968, including Lots 1 and 5 of “the Business block of the J. P.

⁴² Deed book 73, page 286, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC

⁴³ Rhodes-Day-Elledge advertisement, *The Taylorsville Times*, March 25, 1965, 4-5.

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Echerd estate.”⁴⁴ The company entered into a party wall agreement with J. C. Gant, owner of the building at 31 West Main Avenue, before it began constructing the new building. The agreement noted that Gant had recently constructed a brick wall and that “the Corporation desires to construct a building 45 feet long having a height of 14 feet and to utilize the existing wall of Gant, as a party wall.”⁴⁵ The Western Carolina Corporation paid \$750 for the right to share the wall, and the owners agreed to a number of covenants concerning use and maintenance.

Vacant parcel, PIN 3759-68-1005 (0.12 acre) – paved parking lot

Vacant parcel, PIN 3759-68-1056 (0.14 acre) – paved parking lot

[AX0109] Rowe Campbell Building, 53 East Main Avenue, 1956

C-B

Rowe Campbell, co-founder of Town & Country Drugs, erected the Modernist-influenced one-story brick commercial building in 1956 on a corner lot in downtown Taylorsville. Garley Foster served as foreman for the construction of the building. The building features a gently sloping roof with a low parapet, terra cotta tile coping, and an exposed basement at the rear (north). The recessed façade is framed by Roman brick wing walls in a stacked pattern and terrazzo flooring. The gridded glass wall forming the façade features plate-glass storefront windows on stacked Roman brick bulkheads, double-leaf glazed entry doors, aluminum mullions, and a thin horizontal muntin at the top of the door frame dividing the upper and lower window panes. A fixed fabric awning has been added to the facade with the top of the awning positioned at the parapet line.

The long east elevation overlooking 1st Street is relieved by three metal scuppers and downspouts, as well as nine vents covered by curved metal hoods. Concrete steps located between the building and the sidewalk descend along the side of the building to the basement entrance at the north end of the east elevation, which is marked by three 4-light windows with horizontal muntins and a single-leaf, five-panel wooden door.

The rear (north) elevation consists of central double-leaf, five-panel wooden doors at the basement level and a central single wooden door on the main level; neither doorway is accessed by stairs on the exterior. A single window to the west of the basement door contains 12 lights arranged in two rows of six. The upper story door is flanked by a single-pane fixed-sash window on either side.

The plain west side elevation overlooks a paved parking lot. A drive-thru pharmacy window with an attached fabric awning is served by a concrete driveway that extends from Town Alley to East Main Avenue along the side of the building. A brick chimney flue rises from the

⁴⁴ Deed book 88, page 579 and Plat book 1, page 51, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁴⁵ Deed book 96, page 602, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC

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parapet at the north end of the west elevation. A concrete parking pad located at the northwest corner of the building has brick corner piers and a metal railing enclosing its north and west sides. A corrugated metal canopy supported by two metal posts shades the designated parking area.

In 1956, Rowe B. Campbell Jr. (1930-2011) and Lewis Ferguson, recent graduates of the University of North Carolina School of Pharmacy, agreed that Taylorsville needed another drug store. Campbell's father, Rowe B. Campbell Sr. (1896-1972) founded Peoples Drug Store in 1918. The senior Campbell purchased the corner lot on East Main Avenue from J. H. and Virginia Doughton in 1951.⁴⁶ Ferguson and the younger Campbell formed Town & Country Drugs in 1956. After Town & Country bought Peoples Drug Store in 1965, the two businesses became known collectively as the Northwestern Drug Company, which continues to operate the store.⁴⁷

[AX0113] Commercial Building, 69 East Main Avenue, ca. 1915, ca. 2000, 2020 C-B

Built around 1915, the one-story brick commercial building features an aluminum-frame storefront, corbelled cornice, decorative panels, and a stepped parapet on the west side elevation. The storefront consists of central double-leaf glazed entry doors topped by a single-light transom and flanked by plate-glass display windows. A sliding serving window and attached counter were installed on the east side of the entrance in 2020. A suspended flat awning of corrugated metal shelters the storefront and is supported by four metal rods anchored to the façade above. A panel of decorative board-and-batten siding has been applied above the awning, covering the transom. Two recessed rectangular panels are located on the upper façade. The exposed west side elevation overlooking 1st Street is blind. The storefront, awning, and board-and-batten sheathing appear to have been remodeled and added around 2000.

The rear (north) elevation displays an exposed basement and a brick chimney flue rising from the roofline. Replacement double-leaf security doors open into the basement. The window and door openings for the main level, which are all boarded over, are configured with a central double-leaf doorway topped by a transom and paired flanking windows. The adjoining building at 73 East Main Avenue displays similar fenestration and retains its six-panel wooden doors, paired four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows, and four-light wood-frame transoms, which were likely the same windows and doors found on this building.

The three buildings at 69, 73, and 81 East Main Avenue are similar in form and appear to have been built by contractor Ed C. Campbell around 1915 on a lot he acquired from Lelia Bogle.⁴⁸ This building housed a barber shop in the basement, according to Sanborn maps from the 1920s

⁴⁶ Deed book 46, page 59, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁴⁷ Rowe Bogle "Bucky" Campbell Jr. obituary, *The Charlotte Observer*, February 13, 2011, 7B; "Town and Country Drug Store Reaches Prescription Milestone," *The Taylorsville Times*, November 29, 1979, 2; "Northwestern Drug Co. Traces Origins to 1918," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 4.

⁴⁸ Deed book 4, page 270, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

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and 1930s, and was referred to as the “Barber Shop Building.”⁴⁹ Rufty’s, an electronics and appliance store owned by Harold Rufty, moved here in 1938, sharing the space with Price’s Barber Shop. Harold Rufty and Harry B. Moore formed Rufty’s, Inc., in 1934 to sell and service Philco radios. They later added refrigerators, gas and electric washers, and electrical contracting supplies to their line. When the store moved to this location, the owners began selling electric ranges and water pumps. The store expanded to take over the whole building after the barber shop closed and added Philco televisions and phonographs, home freezers, and automatic laundry appliances. Harold Rufty’s brother Merl became an active partner and served as head electrician from 1947 to 1967. The company formally incorporated in 1968 and offered industrial and residential wiring contracting in addition to appliance sales.⁵⁰ Harold and Jean M. Rufty sold the building to the Starnes family in 1992.⁵¹

[AX0114] Commercial Building, 73 East Main Avenue, ca. 1915, ca. 1995

NC-B

Built around 1915, the one-story brick commercial building features storefront windows flanking a recessed central entrance. The building façade likely emulates the adjoining buildings with decorative brick panels and a corbelled cornice, but the upper façade has been covered with modern applied siding. The symmetrical façade has a central single-leaf glazed door and single-light transom in the recessed entrance bay, which is flanked by angled plate-glass windows and large single-pane display windows across the front. The frame storefront includes wood paneled bulkheads supporting the display windows. A suspended flat awning of corrugated metal shelters the storefront and is supported by four metal rods anchored to the façade above.

In contrast to the façade, the rear (north) elevation remains substantially intact, displaying an exposed basement and a brick chimney flue rising at the northwest corner that has been truncated and capped at the roofline. Double-leaf wooden doors open into the basement and are flanked by window openings that have been boarded over. The window and door openings for the main level are configured with central double-leaf wooden doors topped by four-light transoms and paired flanking windows. The windows are in poor condition but generally retain their four-over-four double-hung wooden sash and four-light wood-frame transoms. Exposed rafter tails are visible below the roof overhang on the rear elevation.

The three buildings at 69, 73, and 81 East Main Avenue are similar in form and appear to have been built by contractor Ed C. Campbell around 1915 on a lot he acquired from Lelia Bogle.⁵² The interior of this building retains a mezzanine as well as wood floors and a beaded board ceiling.

⁴⁹ Deed book 36, page 17, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC. Prior to Rufty’s moving into the building, information about tenants occupying the main floor has not been identified.

⁵⁰ Rufty’s advertisement, *The Taylorsville Times*, August 13, 1970.

⁵¹ Deed book 340, page 588, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁵² Deed book 4, page 270, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

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[AX0115] Commercial Building, 81 East Main Avenue, ca. 1915, ca. 1960s

C-B

Built around 1915, the one-story brick commercial building features an aluminum-frame storefront, corbelled cornice, and decorative panels in the upper facade. The storefront consists of central single-leaf glazed entry door topped by a single-light transom and flanked by plate-glass display windows. The windows rest on brick bulkheads with rowlock-course brick sills. A suspended flat awning of corrugated metal shelters the storefronts and is supported by four metal rods anchored to the façade above. The façade is painted, but decorative brick banding is visible on the façade between the awning and recessed panels.

The rear (north) elevation displays an exposed basement and a brick chimney flue rising at the northwest corner. The fenestration is identical to that of 69 and 73 E. Main and the windows and doors likely were identical as well. A replacement single-leaf aluminum-framed glazed door has been installed in the central opening to the basement and the remaining openings have been infilled with concrete block. Exposed rafter tails are visible below the roof overhang on the rear elevation.

The three buildings at 69, 73, and 81 East Main Avenue, originally virtually identical to each other, appear to have been built by contractor Ed C. Campbell around 1915 on a lot he acquired from Lelia Bogle.⁵³ Campbell appears to have erected the building for, or sold it to, local merchant J. C. Wike in 1916.⁵⁴ According to the 1924 Sanborn map, the building had a mezzanine and was occupied by a harness shop. In 1965, the OK Variety Store occupied the building, as seen in a home video by Ruth Rufty, youngest daughter of J. C. and Espie Wike.⁵⁵

[AX0116] Commercial Building, 85-91 East Main Avenue, ca. 1915, mid-20th c.

C-B

Begun in 1915, the one-story brick commercial building displays two aluminum-frame storefronts and modern veneers covering the rest of the facade. The two identical storefronts consist of a central single-leaf glazed entry door topped by a narrow transom and flanked by plate-glass display windows above metal panels. Sheltering each storefront is a suspended, multi-sided flat awning wrapped in canvas supported by two chains anchored to the façade. A thin veneer of stacked Permastone covers the façade at the storefront level, while aluminum siding covers the upper façade. The corbelled cornice, which remains evident, has been covered with stucco. A one-bay extension at the east end of the façade appears to have been added in the second half of the twentieth century. The extension has a modern single-leaf door and likely contains stairs to the basement. Despite the aluminum siding and stucco on the upper façade,

⁵³ Deed book 4, page 270, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁵⁴ Deed book 4, page 510, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁵⁵ Ruth Rufty, "Taylorsville, NC 1965," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lvihaj-rGU>, accessed May 2023; *Alexander County Heritage*, 557-558.

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the storefront configuration and double awnings appear in home video taken by Ruth Rufty in 1964.⁵⁶

The exposed east elevation of the building, including the one-story extension, has been covered with stucco and displays a stepped parapet with a metal coping. A stuccoed interior chimney flue rises above the parapet near the south end of the building. Although a two-story brick building formerly stood on the lot to the east, the two buildings do not appear to have been physically connected.

The rear (north) elevation features an exposed basement level, brick chimney flue rising at the northwest corner, and twin entrances to the main-level commercial spaces. Both the main level and basement of the rear elevation have central entrances flanked by single window openings. The basement level entrance contains a triple-leaf wood paneled door, while the two window openings have been infilled with brick and square, single-pane, fixed-sash windows. Originally the same width as the basement entrance, the upper-level entrance has been divided into two single-leaf entries on either side of a brick pier. The replacement doors are topped by solid infill panels. Similar to the basement, the two flanking window openings have been infilled with brick and small, single-pane, fixed-sash windows. Wooden stairs and an attached wooden deck on square posts provide access to the upper-level entrances. Exposed rafter tails are visible below the roof overhang on the rear elevation.

Contractor Ed C. Campbell broke ground for this building in 1915 on a lot he acquired from Lelia Bogle.⁵⁷ The building, measuring 36 feet by 60 feet, originally housed a garage with a capacity of 15 cars. Between 1924 and 1938, the main floor was subdivided into its present configuration with two commercial spaces extending the depth of the building. Per the Sanborn maps, in 1938 a restaurant occupied the western half of the building, while the eastern half housed a store. In the 1960s, the City Pool Room was located in the basement and accessed from the single side door at street level.

Vacant parcel, PIN 3759-68-4124 (0.22 acre) – grass lot

[AX0117] Commercial Building, 97-99 East Main Avenue, ca. 1947

C-B

The one-story masonry commercial building displays a relatively plain brick façade, two storefronts with recessed entrances, and a flat front parapet with terra cotta tile coping. The two storefronts feature double-leaf glazed wooden doors, metal frame display windows, and brick bulkheads with knuckle joints at the angled corners. The flat faces of the bulkheads contain square metal grilles. A flat fabric awning with a tall fascia spans the façade.

⁵⁶ Ruth Rufty, "Taylorsville, NC 1965," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lvihaj-rGU>, accessed May 2023.

⁵⁷ "Local and Gen. News," *The Mountain Scout*, August 25, 1915, 8; Deed book 4, page 270, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

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The west side elevation, which is visible due to an adjacent vacant lot, is concrete block with a stepped parapet, terra cotta tile coping, and a brick chimney flue near the center. The rear (north) elevation is concrete block and reveals an exposed basement. A central single-leaf entrance is located at each level of the rear elevation, and a set of metal stairs rises against the rear wall to a metal landing supported on diagonal brackets that accesses the upper-level entrance. A garage bay to the east of the basement entrance has a wooden door. A single window to the west of the basement entry and four similar windows flanking the upper-level entrances are typically metal-frame awning sash with a complex decorative muntin pattern. The window immediately east of the upper-level entry appears to be a replacement single-pane fixed-sash window that is partially boarded over.

[AX0241] Commercial Building, 103 East Main Avenue, ca. 1950

C-B

The one-story concrete block commercial building displays a plain stuccoed façade, aluminum-frame storefront with a recessed entrance, and a flat front parapet. The storefront has a central single-leaf glazed entry door flanked by a plate-glass sidelight to the west. The plate-glass display windows and angled corners at the entrance bay rest on stuccoed bulkheads. A suspended flat awning of corrugated metal shelters the storefront. Six metal rods anchor the awning to the façade above. A short horizontal panel above the awning provides decorative relief to the upper façade.

The rear elevation reveals an exposed basement. Constructed of concrete block, the three-bay elevation has a central single-leaf wooden entrance door on the basement level flanked by single windows with security bars. The entry door is composed of nine lights over three panels. Three windows are located on the upper level, and all of the rear windows are two-over-two double-hung wood sash, although one has its lower sash replaced with wood.

[AX0118] Commercial Building, 109-121 East Main Avenue, ca. 1945

C-B

This one- and two-story concrete block commercial building features three storefronts, a brick façade, and a flat parapet with terra cotta tile coping. Two of the storefronts are contained within a two-story block that exhibits six-over-six double-hung wood-sash windows on the upper story (two above the east storefront and three above the west storefront) and diamond-shaped brick patterning above, in line with each of the storefronts. The third storefront is located in the one-story block to the west, which exhibits a single diamond-shaped panel in the upper façade. A continuous shed-roof awning of frame construction and covered with asphalt shingles extends the full width of the façade. A single-leaf wooden door with three vertical lights over three horizontal panels at the far eastern end of the façade opens into a stairwell to the second story of the building.

The center and west storefronts, are similar in design and materials, appear to be original while the east storefront has been altered. The two intact storefronts have recessed central

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entrances, aluminum-frame plate-glass display windows, and stuccoed bulkheads to support the windows. Each storefront serves two commercial spaces, each accessed by a single-leaf glazed door positioned on the angled side walls within the recessed entrance bay. The reconstructed storefront to the east features a central single-leaf glazed door flanked by single plate-glass windows over brick bulkheads.

The rear (north) elevation reveals an exposed basement and a narrow gap between the east wall and the adjacent building. The east and rear walls are exposed concrete block. Each of building's three sections has central single-leaf entrance flanked by windows on both the basement and first story. The entrances typically have glazed-and-paneled wooden door, while the windows are assorted two-over-two and replacement one-over-one double-hung sash. Attached metal landings supported on diagonal brackets and metal stairs rising against the rear wall provide access to the main level entrances. At the east end of the building, a two-tiered shed-roof porch with square wood posts has replaced the metal landing. The windows on the upper level of the two-story block are six-over-six wood-sash and small one-over-one double-hung windows.

Garage, ca. 1945

C-B

A one-story concrete block garage building stands on the north side of Town Alley, at the rear of the lot containing 109-121 E. Main. The side-gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has a steep front slope that extends slightly beyond the main facade, a long, gentle rear slope, and thin plywood sheathing in the gable ends. A single-car garage bay located at the west end of the façade contains a replacement metal overhead door. A flat metal awning suspended by three metal rods attached to the façade shelters the central single-leaf entry door and flanking window to the east. A single, three-light, metal-sash awning window is located on the east elevation.

[AX0074] Hotel Campbell, 125-135 East Main Avenue, ca. 1924, ca. 1995

C-B

Located at the northwest corner of East Main Avenue and Linney's Mountain Road (formerly Depot Street), the three-story L-shaped brick corner building remains one of downtown's most prominent landmarks. On both street frontages, pilasters and stepped parapets with metal coping asymmetrically divide the elevations into three sections, each of which is further subdivided by pilasters that do not rise above the parapet line. Every fifth course of brick on the pilasters is raised and provides surface texture, suggesting quoins. The upper facades are enlivened by brick panels of basketweave patterns framed by a single header course. Windows throughout are typically replacement one-over-one double-hung sash. On the second story, each of the paired windows and the two single windows at either end of the façade are shaded by attached cloth awnings.

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On the East Main Avenue façade, the central section has a central pilaster that creates two 2-bay sub-sections, each of which contains in the upper stories a double window flanked by a single smaller window. The west section has a similar configuration of a double window flanked by a single window, but here the windows are the same size.

The five East Main Avenue storefronts are typically shaded by fixed cloth awnings except for the storefront at the west end, which retains its recessed central entrance bay; flat, metal awning suspended by chains anchored on the façade; and glass-block transom. The storefront immediately east retains its original double-leaf wooden doors with large glass panes over a single panel, but the entrance is not recessed. The storefronts at the center of the façade and immediately east are replacements with metal-frame windows and glazed single-leaf entry doors. The narrow bay at the east end of the facade, which was the original entrance to the hotel lobby, contains double-leaf wooden doors with large single lights.

On the Linney's Mountain Road façade, the narrow single-bay sub-section at the south end contains a doorway on the first story that is boarded over and single windows on the upper stories, while the adjoining sub-section has a fixed cloth awning over a tripartite window at street level and two bays of a double and single window on the upper stories. The storefront at the north end has a replacement single-leaf wooden door flanked by a large window with a central mullion. The central section of the facade has a pilaster creating two sub-sections. Here, the south sub-section has bricked-in openings on all three stories while the north sub-section has a partially bricked storefront on the first story and a single bay of double windows on the upper stories. Accessed by a concrete ramp with metal railings, the modified storefront has a replacement metal-frame window and single-leaf entry door, as well as a portion of the original glass-block transom. The metal frame of an awning is present, but its covering has been removed. The north section has a storefront with a single replacement wood north on the north side and two bays (double and single windows) above. A previous owner bricked in the openings of the south sub-section with the intent of adding an elevator that was never installed.

Due to the sloping site, the basement of the building is exposed on the north elevation of the Linney's Mountain Road wing and rear elevation of both wings. The exposed north elevation of the wing extending along Linney Mountain Road is three bays wide with single windows at the second and third stories, a flat parapet, exterior metal fire stairs, and single- and double-leaf basement doors that are six lights over three panels.

The rear elevations of both wings exhibit two-story (basement and main level) extensions. The two-story block at the rear of the East Main Avenue wing is brick with stepped side parapets, exposed rafter tails in the eaves, and two symmetrically arranged three-bay sections, each consisting of a central entrance flanked by windows on either side. While most of the doors and windows are covered or replacements, there is enough visible evidence to suggest the original entrances were double-leaf five-panel wooden doors with five-light transoms and the windows were paired four-over-four double-hung sash topped by transoms. Exterior metal stairs rise to both upper-level entrances. A shorter shed-roofed brick extension is at the east end of East Main Avenue wing. The extension on the rear of the Linney's Mountain Road wing appears to be a

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heavily altered addition. It is lower than the other rear extensions and has walls of concrete block and brick, a frame upper story clad with T-111 plywood, and replacement doors and one-over-one windows. Many of the windows on the uppermost story of the rear elevation appear to be original one-over-one double-hung wood sash. A gable-roof frame structure on the roof at the juncture of the two wings caps the elevator shaft.

The southeast corner of the first story served as the entrance to the spacious hotel lobby, which was used for dances and other social events. The lobby has been converted to leased commercial space, but it retains its original open plan, except for a corridor created by a later partition; ceramic tile floor; beamed ceiling; double-leaf multi-light interior doors; and other original finishes. The primary retail spaces on the first floor have been altered with the addition of modern dropped ceilings and new floor materials, but most retain some original or historic trim and moldings. The second floor of the building in the front portion overlooking East Main Avenue was modernized around 1995 to serve as a radio station. The space still retains its original plan, circulation patterns, window and door trim, and five-panel doors with transoms, but a dropped ceiling has been installed, as well as sheetrock walls and carpeted floors. The second story of the Linney's Mountain Road wing is largely unaltered and used for storage. The third floor also remains relatively unaltered and retains its original layout, circulation patterns, architectural features, and finishes. The condition of the third floor exhibits greater deterioration due to a deteriorated roof and water infiltration. Some of the third-story rooms retain their original or historic sinks and cabinets, while other rooms feature small private bathrooms.

Built in the early 1920s, the building opened as the Hotel Campbell, the largest structure in Taylorsville. Duncan R. McIver served as manager for the hotel, which hosted guests, banquets, social gatherings, and Saturday night dances. After the building was renamed the Hotel Alexandria in 1937, Addie Sykes took over as the new manager. Under new management, the hotel was freshly painted, the furniture was reupholstered, and new mattresses and springs were purchased for the guest beds.⁵⁸

[AX0119] Pure Oil Service Station, 163 East Main Avenue, ca. 1940

C-B

Built around 1940, the Pure Oil Station located at the northeast corner of East Main Avenue and Linney's Mountain Road replaced an earlier filling station that occupied this site from the early 1920s through the late 1930s. The earlier station stood near the intersection and was set at an angle so that its canopy could be entered from either street. The present building faces East Main Avenue and is set back from the street with asphalt parking surrounding the building and covering much of the L-shaped parcel.

The one-story brick building consists of a main office block and a garage wing. Typical of Pure Oil architectural standards, the office resembles a small dwelling and features a tall, steeply pitched, side-gable roof, gable-end brick chimneys with corbelled caps, and side-gable wing to

⁵⁸ *Alexander County Treasures*, 224-225.

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the west. The façade features an off-center single-leaf entrance sheltered by an attached fabric awning and approached by a concrete ramp. The replacement aluminum-frame entry door is glazed. A large picture window to the west of the entrance has a large center pane flanked by sidelights, a scalloped wood fascia across the top, and a rowlock-course brick sill. The side wing, which is slightly lower in height, displays a paired eight-light casement window on the façade. A concrete sidewalk wraps around three sides of the building and accesses a secondary entrance on the north elevation of the side wing. The single-leaf entry door is sheltered by an attached fabric awning and flanked by a single eight-light casement window.

The three-bay garage wing extends to the east of the office. It is set back from the front wall of the office and is slightly lower in height. Replaced in the 1980s, the roof is now a metal-clad shed with a front pent covered with asphalt shingles. The two bays nearest the office have metal roll-up doors and multi-light metal-frame windows at the rear. These two bays appear to be either original or early additions to the building. The east end bay, however, appears to have been added before 1965 with a taller garage opening, concrete block side and rear walls, and extra depth at the rear of the wing. A seam in the façade bricks gives evidence of the addition. Two multi-light metal-frame windows with attached hip-roof awnings are located on the east elevation of the garage wing.

A one-story ell with a steep gable roof that appears to be original projects from the rear of the office. The visible west elevation contains a single-leaf wooden entry door and two eight-light casement windows. A pyramidal-roof gazebo has been erected in the angle of the “L” formed at the rear of the office. Square in plan, the structure has wooden corner posts, an asphalt shingle roof, and wooden balustrade.

In 1938, John Watts took over the Hotel Service Station, which had been in operation at this corner since the 1920s. Soon after, Watts became a commission agent for Statesville Oil Company, selling and delivering oil and oil products throughout Alexander County. His wife, Espie Watts (1899-1982), worked as a bookkeeper for the firm. When John Watts died in 1938, Espie Watts became a commission agent for the Pure Oil Company of the Carolinas and then an oil jobber in 1939, buying quantities of refined fuel from refining companies and reselling it to retailers or consumers. She was the first female oil jobber in the state and joined the North Carolina Oil Jobbers Association in 1941. Around 1940, the original Hotel Service Station was razed for the construction of a new station typical of the Pure Oil brand. The first electric gas pumps in Taylorsville were installed at this station. Espie Watts married Solon Little in 1942, and the Espie Watts Little Oil Company grew approximately five-fold over the next 40 years.⁵⁹

East Main Avenue, south side

[AX0094] Taylorsville Times Building, 24 East Main Avenue, 1914, ca. 1972, ca. 2000 NC-B

⁵⁹ In the 1970s, the oil jobbers association had more than 800 members but only six were women. “Espie Watts Little First Female Oil Jobber in N.C.,” *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 10.

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The austere modern main façade of the one-story brick building with parapet roof is covered in variegated running bond brick veneer and finished with brick quoins. A metal-and-glass door with sidelight opens into the western end of the elevation and is approached by a concrete ramp and staircase. A standing-seam metal hipped-roof awning shades the entrance. Single fixed-pane windows at either side of the awning and a double-leaf metal door at the eastern end of the elevation are all capped with vinyl lintels. A row of single-pane casement windows pierces the running-bond east elevation and variously sized windows and doors pierce the common-bond west elevation. A common-bond addition on the south elevation connects to the rear elevation of the Herman Building at 19 South Center Street and ends at an inset receiving bay shaded by a flat metal roof and containing numerous single-leaf doors and a roll-top overhead door.

The main façade gives the appearance of a single building, but it is an amalgam of at least four buildings that sit on three separate parcels [PINs 3759-67-1807, 3759-67-1815 and 3759-67-1857]. Tax assessor data dates the separate buildings to 1914, 1940, and 1972; more likely the western two were constructed circa 1914 and perhaps modified in 1940; and the easternmost was constructed around 1972.⁶⁰ When the newspaper first moved to its current location on East Main Street in 1926, their offices were in the westernmost building. Taylorsville Building & Loan Association, R. K. Moose's grocery store, and a rear addition to Carson's Hardware Store were the other businesses whose buildings were eventually acquired as part of the Times' offices.⁶¹ The three original brick façades were extant at least until 1992, when an architectural survey documented their separate storefronts.⁶² The unifying façade was likely added soon after 2000 when Walter Lee and Jane F. Sharpe acquired ownership of each of the various structures.

The paper originated as *The Mountain Scout* at the turn of the century and changed its name to *The Taylorsville Times* around 1922. John E. Hart purchased the paper in 1925, and the newspaper transferred to Romulus (Rom) Teague and Conway Sharpe in 1933 following Hart's death.⁶³ The two purchased the newspaper from Hart's widow in 1935 and bought the building in 1937.⁶⁴ After Conway Sharpe's death in 1962, his widow, Irene Sharpe, and Rom Teague continued to manage the newspaper. Irene Sharpe expanded the offices with purchases in 1972,

⁶⁰ The easternmost building replaced a frame front-gable structure that is visible in 1965 footage of the block. Ruth Rufty, "Taylorsville, NC 1965," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lvihaj-rGU>, accessed May 2023.

⁶¹ Deed book 58, page 458, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; Deed book 192, page 914, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; Walter Lee Sharpe, Interview with Clay Griffith and Josi Ward, December 20, 2022.

⁶² Lois H. Melton, "1643-24. June 28, 1992 Sun. / NC 90 & 16 - Taylorsville," Vertical File: AC_History_Agriculture, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

⁶³ *Alexander County Treasures*, 164-6.

⁶⁴ Deed book 28, page 291, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; "Times' History," <https://www.taylorsvilletimes.com/times-history/> (accessed June 2023).

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1976, and 1983.⁶⁵ Following Rom Teague's retirement in 1974, Walter Lee Shape became editor of the paper. He and his wife Jane F. Sharpe purchased the assorted buildings from Irene Sharpe and Edwin Max Shrum in 1999 and 2000 respectively.⁶⁶

[AX0095] Methodist Episcopal Church, 54 East Main Avenue, 1906, 1956, ca. 1991 C-B

The First United Methodist Church stands at the southwest corner of East Main Avenue and Emergency Street and occupies two lots that extend to the south. Constructed in 1906 to house a Methodist Episcopal congregation, the church became the First Methodist Church after 1939, and was again re-named the First United Methodist Church following the creation of the new denomination in 1968.⁶⁷ The congregation constructed its first sanctuary around 1848 on a lot to the south of the present site. After being gifted the present lot in the 1880s, the congregation erected a frame church which stood until the current brick building replaced the frame structure in 1906.⁶⁸ The present-day Neo-Gothic Revival-style building consists of the original sanctuary constructed in 1906; a cross-gable education annex on the south end of the sanctuary that dates to 1956; and a southern wing constructed around 1991. The original sanctuary and 1956 annex stand on the northern parcel [PIN 3759-67-2809], while the southern wing occupies a second parcel to the south [PIN 3759-67-2841].

The 1906 sanctuary is a one-story front-gable common-bond brick building featuring pointed-arch entryways and stained-glass windows throughout, a cross-gable wing on the east elevation, and a square tower inset at the north juncture of the east wing with the main body of the sanctuary. All openings are finished with a double row of headers capped by a projecting row of headers laid flat. The north façade overlooks East Main Avenue and is dominated by a projecting front-gable narthex inset within and slightly lower and narrower than the main gable of the sanctuary. This wing was built sometime between 1976 and 1986 to replace the original,

⁶⁵ Deed book 160, page 816, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; Deed book 192, page 914, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; Deed book 241, page 413, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁶⁶ Deed book 406, page 585, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; Deed book 407, page 1398, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁶⁷ Renaming of the church appears to have followed the historical transition from the Methodist Episcopal Church to the Methodist Church in 1939, and subsequent formation of the United Methodist Church in 1968. The church property was initially deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church South in 1883; is labelled as "M. E. Church" in Sanborn Maps from 1924 and 1938; and deeds between 1957 and 1967 list the church as the First Methodist Church while deeds after 1968 list the church as the First United Methodist Church. *Alexander County Treasures*, 89; Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, December 1924, Sheet 3; Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, February 1938, Sheet 3; Deed book 56, page 318, Deed book, 86, page 163, and Deed book 242, page 544, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁶⁸ "Taylorsville First Methodist Church Dates to 1848," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 6.

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small vestibule with a single entrance facing East Main Avenue.⁶⁹ Its running bond brick contrasts with the common bond brick of the rest of the sanctuary, but otherwise the addition imitates the original architecture. The north elevation of the narthex carries a large window with wooden tracery and flanking lancet windows on either side. Entrances on the east and west elevations of the narthex consist of double-leaf five-panel wooden doors with pointed-arch transoms.

The east elevation of the church faces Emergency Street and contains the most distinctive features of the building. A side-gable wing projects east toward Emergency Street and contains a large window of the same type as on the façade at the gable end. The tower at the intersection of the main gable and a cross-gable wing is square in section, ornamented with corbeled brick, and capped with an open belfry. Brick piers with inset vertical panels at each corner of the belfry are capped with pyramidal *fleur-de-lis* finials and support a steeply pitched pyramidal roof finished with pressed metal shingles. Between each pier, there are turned wooden railings and shed wood awnings. Single windows on the ground level of the tower and the north and east sides of the cross gable and main block of the sanctuary, respectively, are a variety of sizes. The west elevation of the sanctuary contains four bays of windows.

A two-story common-bond education annex was added to the south elevation of the sanctuary in 1956 and replaced a one-story annex built between 1924 and 1938.⁷⁰ Originally, the 1956 annex had a flat roof; a gable roof oriented east toward Emergency Street and finished with vinyl siding was added between 1987 and 1992.⁷¹ An entrance on the north end of the east elevation contains a double-leaf replacement door shaded by a metal hipped-roof portico on wood posts. Window openings of varying scales contain single and paired one-over-one double-hung vinyl-sash windows and are finished with canted brick header-course sills and applied vinyl flat-arch lintels with keystones. The visible portion of the south elevation features single and paired windows of the same type on the first and second story.

The large southern wing added to the church around 1991 extends south from the west end of the education annex. It is two stories with a basement fully exposed at the south end due to the slope of the site and has a gable roof oriented north-south. The symmetrical east elevation centers on a projecting full-height half-octagonal entrance bay approached by a prominent brick staircase. A pointed arch window with tracery that resembles the church windows dominates the entrance bay; all other windows are one-over-one double-hung vinyl sash with concrete sills and

⁶⁹ The dates are based on a photograph of the church published in 1976 and survey photographs taken by Vicki Mason in 1987. "Taylorsville First Methodist Church Dates to 1848," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 6; "AX0095 First United Methodist Church," HPO Survey File, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Asheville, NC.

⁷⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, December 1924, Sheet 3; Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, February 1938, Sheet 3.

⁷¹ Dates are based on survey photographs taken in 1987 and 1992. "AX0095 First United Methodist Church," HPO Survey File, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Asheville, NC; Lois H. Melton, "1643-20. June 28, 1992. Sun / First United Methodist Church," Vertical File: AC_History_Agriculture, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

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applied vinyl flat-arch lintels with keystones. The exposed basement level on the south elevation contains a central double-leaf entry with 10-light glazed doors and transom capped by a curved fabric awning.

Other alterations to the building since its original construction include remodeling of the sanctuary in 1953 that entailed the installation of carpet, new lighting fixtures, and new stained-glass windows; refinishing of interior furniture; and painting the brick exterior white.⁷² At some point, a secondary entrance on the north elevation of the tower was replaced with a stained-glass window. Finally, the church was sandblasted in the winter of 1975, removing the white paint and exposing the red brick beneath.⁷³

Main Avenue Drive, north side

[AX0091] Walker Building, 118-134 Main Avenue Drive, ca. 1968

C-B

The amalgamation of two distinct building forms now known as the Walker Building faces south onto Main Avenue Drive at the northeast corner of the intersection with South Center Street. Concrete sidewalks front the building's southern and western faces while an asphalt parking lot is located directly to the north and east. The eastern block of the building is a one-story running-bond brick structure capped with an asphalt-shingled side-gable gambrel roof that extends as a pent across the main facade. A single-leaf aluminum-and-glass door with sidelights and transom and a plate-glass display window with flush header sill pierce the street-facing elevation while the side and rear elevations are blind.

The western block of the building is a one-story commercial strip with a low-pitched side-gable roof. The south-facing façade is finished in dark brown roman brick in stack bond and subdivided with projecting full-height brick pilasters. Four storefronts of varying sizes are shaded by an overhanging eave interrupted by two small gables. The symmetrical facade contains plate-glass windows above brick bulkheads on its outermost bays flanking four identical entryways which each contain a central metal-and-glass door with large sidelights and transom. The west elevation of this commercial strip is sheathed in running bond brick and features a single plate-glass window with flush header sill on the south end. Four small single-pane windows pierce the north elevation.

Arthur R. and Hazel E. Walker purchased the lot on which this building stands in 1967 and appear to have constructed it in two consecutive phases shortly after their purchase.⁷⁴ Arthur Walker started in the insurance business in Taylorsville with the Matheson Insurance Agency and worked there from 1961 to 1967, when that agency dissolved. Walker then formed his own

⁷² "Taylorsville First Methodist Church Dates to 1848," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 6.

⁷³ The whitewash is visible in Ruth Rufty, "Taylorsville, NC 1965," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lvihaj-rGU>, accessed May 2023; "Taylorsville United Methodist Church," *The Taylorsville Times*, January 1, 1976, 1.

⁷⁴ Deed book 85, page 731, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

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company and began work on the present building. While it was under construction, Walker had an office near the Hotel Alexandria until March 1968. The Walker Building, which contains five offices, has housed the Walker Insurance Agency and various other businesses, including Rhyne Realty, established in 1970; the Alexander County Chamber of Commerce; Witherington, Wells & Goble, certified public accountants; and Richard Gwaltney, an attorney.⁷⁵

Vacant parcel, PIN 3759-67-2753 (0.05 acre) – paved parking lot

[AX0093] Commercial Building, 92 Main Avenue Drive, 1981

NC-B

Located at the northwest corner of Emergency Street and Main Avenue Drive, the one-story brick commercial building is capped with a hipped roof covered in asphalt shingles. Facing south onto Main Ave Drive, the symmetrical façade features a recessed entrance bay flanked by grids of 15 fixed-pane windows atop a brick bulkhead. Windows of the same proportions as elsewhere on the façade light the receding walls of the entrance bay while four more comparable panels form a sidelight to the left of the glazed single-panel entry door. Two more transom lights complete the expanse of glass that dominates the façade. A bay of 15 fixed-pane windows lights the building on the southern end of the east elevation. The west and north elevations are blind except for a metal door at the north end of the west side. The building is finished with a dentil cornice line on all four elevations. Now used for a chiropractor's office, the small commercial building stands on a lot purchased by Patti G. Ferguson in 1980; the building was constructed the following year.⁷⁶

[AX0048] Alexander County Jail, 72 Main Avenue Drive, 1913, 1930, ca. 1975

C-B

The former Alexander County Jail stands atop a grassy knoll on a large parcel at the northeast corner of Emergency Street and Main Avenue Drive, with asphalt parking lots to its north and east. Constructed in 1913, the building was the second jail to serve the county and replaced a frame structure constructed in 1848 by Thomas S. Boyd, an early builder, several blocks to the west on the current Courthouse site. A growing county population and corresponding rise in criminal and civil offenders necessitated the construction of the new jail in 1913.⁷⁷

Constructed by Camden Iron Works for \$7,790, the jail is a two-story common bond brick building that is roughly square-in-section and capped with a tall, hipped roof covered with pressed tin shingles. Three interior brick chimneys, all of which have been truncated close to the

⁷⁵ "Walker Insurance Established 1967 as Independent Agency," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 6-7; "Rhyne Realty Established in 1970," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 6.

⁷⁶ Deed book 222, page 941, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁷⁷ "History of Courthouse," *The Taylorsville Times*, August 17, 1967; "County Jail Dates Back to 1848," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 7.

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roof, pierce its west, north, and east flanks.⁷⁸ Finished with Classical Revival elements such as brick quoins and dentils on the street-facing columned porches, the building is a stylish landmark in downtown Taylorsville. Manly Jail Works and the Campbell Iron Works enlarged the building with a \$10,000 addition across the east elevation in 1930. The flat-roofed addition is common bond brick and has a similar fenestration rhythm to mimic the original building. The original building has two-over-two double-hung sash while those of the addition are six-over-six; sills throughout are concrete.

The building's south-facing, symmetrical three-bay elevation appears to be the main façade, distinguished by a centered, hipped-roof attic dormer with a band of three wood-frame windows with diamond lights. A one-story, flat-roof portico at the central bay shades a single-leaf paneled wooden door with two lights and is finished with smooth wooden columns, simple wooden balustrades and stair rails, and dentils. Concrete steps rise to meet the frame porch floor supported by brick piers. A concrete stairway with block cheek walls and central railing rises from Main Avenue Drive to the entrance.

The west elevation, which faces Emergency Street, mimics the façade although the fenestration is asymmetrical, with four bays at the first story and three above. Here, the portico is identical to that of the main façade except that it is hip-roofed and shades an off-center entrance bay with a single-leaf wooden door with transom and adjacent window. All but the southernmost two windows are covered in metal grilles.

The three-bay north side has a small one-story shed wing at the western end. East of the wing there is a two-over-two double-hung window with horizontal lights and a paneled wooden door with two lights, a blind transom, and a flat, cable-hung metal awning.

The large eastern addition is six bays wide and three deep with symmetrical fenestration. All of the second-story windows are covered with metal grates. At the first story, the second and fifth bays contain a single-leaf paneled wooden door with two lights and are shaded by flat-roofed metal awnings hung from attached cables. A metal stair rises to a single-leaf paneled door at the northernmost bay of the second story. A concrete walkway and brick knee wall with concrete cap runs the length of the east elevation.

The building served as the county jail until 1970 when the new courthouse and jail were completed. The former jail was extensively renovated in 1975 and converted into county offices. The remodeling included creation of five modern offices, updated bathrooms, installation of interior paneling and suspended ceilings, and replacement of the porches, which appear to be similar in scale and form to the originals.⁷⁹ Jail cells with four beds each remain on the second story of the 1930s addition, as does an interior steel staircase.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Alexander County Treasures*, 188.

⁷⁹ "County Jail Dates Back to 1848," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 7.

⁸⁰ "AX0048 Alexander County Jail," HPO Survey File, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC.

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South Center Street, east side

[AX0042] Bank Building, 1-9 South Center Street, 1915

C-B

Located at the southeast corner of East Main Avenue and South Center Street, the two-story brick commercial building stands on Lot No. 2 of the original Town of Taylorsville plat, known as the Masonic Lot in reference to the frame Masonic Lodge that stood on the property in 1909.⁸¹ The building contains two storefronts facing South Center Street and was constructed in 1915, simultaneous with the Masonic Building to the south, creating a continuous storefront.⁸² The Bank of Alexander, organized in 1902, rented the corner space beginning in 1915.⁸³ The 1924 Sanborn Map (the first series to cover Taylorsville) shows the bank occupying most of the space and a telephone exchange at the east end of the second floor; a store in the middle space; and a drug store at the south end. In the 1938 Sanborn map, only the telephone exchange was identified and each of the rest of the spaces were simply labeled as “store.”⁸⁴

Both elevations of the two-story corner building are finished with one-to-five common-bond brick with headers in a darker shade of red than the stretchers. Beneath the corbelled cornice and brick soldier course of the parapet, a series of recessed panels run across both elevations in a regular pattern that follows the fenestration on the upper and lower levels. A projecting cast concrete belt course forms a continuous sill beneath all of the upper-story windows. Because the grade of the surrounding streets descends as South Center Street approaches East Main Avenue, the building stands slightly above street level at its north elevation. Concrete steps rise up from the public sidewalk to approach each of the ground-level entrances. Historic photos show the ground-floor windows and doors capped with three-light transoms and two-over-two double-hung wooden sash at the second story.⁸⁵ Today most of the transoms have been covered with vertical vinyl siding and those that remain exposed are a single pane.

The northernmost storefront features a recessed corner entrance supported with a single column, and two plate-glass windows each shaded by a scalloped, asphalt-shingled awning. The corner entrance is composed of a single glass and aluminum entry door with sidelights and tall transom. The angled walls framing the entrance contain plate-glass windows and transoms to match the scale of the entryway. The corner stoop is finished with a tile floor and beadboard

⁸¹ A 1909 photo of Taylorsville’s Main Street shows the east elevation of the old Masonic Building. “66 Years Ago on Taylorsville’s Main Street,” Vertical File: Alexander County – History – Town of Taylorsville, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC; “Town of Taylorsville, 1847,” reproduced in *Alexander County Treasures*, 85.

⁸² Deed book 4, page 390, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

⁸³ “Locals,” *The Mountain Scout*, June 16, 1915, 5; “Locals,” *The Mountain Scout*, December 22, 1915, 5.

⁸⁴ Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, December 1924, Sheet 3; Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, February 1938, Sheet 3.

⁸⁵ “Main St., Taylorsville, March 1942. (56)” Photo File, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

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ceiling. Two secondary entrances pierce the northern elevation at regular intervals. An entrance at the center of the elevation contains a pair of wooden doors with single lights and accesses the building's north unit. The easternmost entrance is composed of an aluminum-and-glass single-leaf door with sidelights and transom, as well as a large plate glass transom above. On the six-bay north elevation, fenestration remains intact. All second-story window openings on the six-bay north elevation now display vertical vinyl siding.

The west elevation centers on an arched entryway capped with three header rows that formerly led to an open stair and is now infilled with horizontal siding and a single-leaf vinyl door. Two windows capped by asphalt-shingled awnings pierce the ground floor on the north of the arched entryway. A symmetrical arrangement of two-leaf aluminum-and-glass doors flanked by storefront windows atop a brick bulkhead fills the southern storefront, above which a glass block transom visible in a 1992 photo is now obscured by a cloth awning.⁸⁶ Upper-level window openings on the northern two storefronts primarily contain original two-over-two double-hung sash windows. The two southernmost openings have each been partially infilled with brick and now contain one-over-one replacement double-hung windows.

The brick bond of the west and north elevations continues on the rear elevation, where most of the openings now display vinyl siding. The differentiations between the two commercial buildings is most visible on this elevation, as the parapet steps down considerably between the two units.

[AX0247] Masonic Building, 13 South Center Street, 1915

NC-B

This building served as at least the third home for the Alexander County masons, whose first lodge was originally established in 1856, and was later followed by a two-story timber building on the lot to the north.⁸⁷ A central stone marker between the upper-level windows identifies the building as "Lee Lodge No., 253, A.F. & A.M., 1915" and is finished with an engraving of the Masonic compass and square. The building belonged to the Lodge until 1966.⁸⁸

The two-story, one-to-five common bond brick building is finished similarly to the bank to its north, with a corbelled cornice and brick soldier course capping two recessed panels, and a projecting cast concrete belt course that serves as a continuous sill for the two upper-story windows. Much of the storefront has been bricked in and now contains a vinyl single-leaf door with multi-pane sidelights beside a plate glass window. Above, one-beside-one metal-framed windows occupy the two bays of the second story. All four openings are capped with standing-seam metal hipped-roof awnings and all of the brick has been painted white.

⁸⁶ Lois H. Melton, "1645-3. June 28, 1992 Sun. / NC 16 & 90 - Alexander County / Taylorsville, NC," Vertical File: AC_History_Agriculture, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

⁸⁷ *Alexander County Treasures*, 91-92.

⁸⁸ Deed book 80, page 536, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC.

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[AX0092] Herman Building, 19 South Center Street, 1914, 1980s

NC-B

The common-bond two-story brick commercial building is capped with a parapet roof and stepped side parapet. The heavily remodeled storefront is finished with vertical wooden paneling and stone veneer on the ground level; horizontal wooden siding on the upper level; and a projecting standing-seam-metal cornice. Upper windows are one-beside-one metal-frame sash. A flat-roofed metal awning hung from cables attached to the façade shades the storefront. A large central wooden door with raised square panels and a stone veneer wall are flanked on either side by plate-glass windows above low bulkhead walls. A secondary wooden door with vertical panels opens on the north end of the façade and accesses the upper level. A replacement single-pane transom remains uncovered above the side door.

Elements of the original cast-iron storefront produced by G. L. Mesker & Co. of Evansville, Indiana, remain visible between the later surface treatments and contain scrollwork, corbels, and florets. Historic newspaper photos published in 1976 show a dentil cornice; two-over-two double-hung wooden sash windows on the upper level; transom windows above the awning; and a recessed glazed storefront entrance.⁸⁹ The building had been remodeled to its current state by at least 1992 when it was photographed for an architectural survey.⁹⁰

Referred to in deeds as the Herman Property & Building, this building has served numerous purposes over its history. It is identified on the 1924 Sanborn Map as the Post Office, and was ideally located to serve that function as it faces directly onto Courthouse Square.⁹¹ In 1944, the building was purchased by Plato E. and Hazel Carson, and they moved their business, Carson's Hardware Store, into the building in 1946. They retained ownership of the building until 1991.⁹² Additions to the rear of the structure, part of which are now incorporated into the *Taylorsville Times* facility, originated during the Carson's ownership.⁹³

Vacant parcel, PIN 3759-67-1745 (0.43 acre) – paved parking lot

Integrity Assessment

The Downtown Taylorsville Historic District contains 39 total resources, of which 30 retain historical and architectural integrity to convey its significance as a twentieth-century commercial

⁸⁹ "Carson Hardware Established 1943," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 6.

⁹⁰ Lois H. Melton, "1645-3. June 28, 1992 Sun. / NC 16 & 90 - Alexander County / Taylorsville, NC," Vertical File: AC_History_Agriculture, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

⁹¹ Sanborn Map Company, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, December 1924, Sheet 3.

⁹² Deed book 37, page 222, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; Deed book 317, page 504, Alexander County Register of Deeds, Taylorsville, NC; "Carson Hardware Established 1943," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 6.

⁹³ Walter Lee Sharpe, Interview with Clay Griffith and Josi Ward, December 20, 2022.

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and governmental county seat. The spatial relationships among the district's extant resources have not significantly changed since the end of the period of significance in 1970, and the collection of resources retains a strong sense of cohesion through scale, massing, materials, rhythm, and relationship to the street. The district retains its original location, with no resources moved from their original foundations, and the setting within the district boundary remains largely intact due to minimal modern infill and removal of resources; only one building dates from outside the period of significance. The district retains the original layout of its streets, and the relationship between its civic and commercial buildings. The buildings in the district retain enough integrity to convey their significance. Many now have replacement windows, doors, storefronts, and fixed awnings, but most of the upper facades remain largely intact, as do rear elevations, most of which face alleys, are fully visible, and contribute to the district's architectural integrity. The noncontributing buildings within the district are typically older buildings with extensive façade alterations that have compromised their historic architectural integrity. Several buildings, such as the Taylorsville Times building at 24 East Main Avenue, do not contribute to the architectural integrity of the district but are historically important and continue to help define the downtown commercial district through their presence, especially their form, scale, and massing. The district retains its historic associations with both government and commerce in Alexander County, and due to the intact arrangement of civic buildings and the commercial corridor, it maintains its feeling as a small commercial and governmental center.

Statement of archaeological potential

The Downtown Taylorsville Historic District is closely related to the surrounding environment and landscape. Archaeological deposits and remnant landscape features such as roadbeds and paths, infrastructural remains related to the management of water, waste, and energy, filled-in privies and wells, debris that accumulated in the district from commercial and domestic activities, and structural remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the district. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the property. At this time, no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1906 – 1970

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Biggs, James E. – architect
Campbell, Ed C. – builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Located at the center of largely rural Alexander County in the western Piedmont region of North Carolina, the Downtown Taylorsville Historic District, in the county's only incorporated town, has historically served as the county's administrative and commercial seat. The buildings that compose the Downtown Taylorsville Historic District were constructed incrementally over the course of the early to mid-twentieth century, primarily as brick replacements of frame structures. Bolstered by the construction of a hydroelectric plant at the Alspaugh Cotton Mill, which provided electricity for the town's businesses, the downtown boomed in the 1920s, drawing department stores, drug stores, professional offices, and entertainment venues to downtown Taylorsville. By the end of the decade, the composition of the downtown core that remains visible today was already well established. The locally significant Downtown Taylorsville Historic District meets National Register Criterion A in the area of Commerce and Criterion C for its generally well-preserved grouping of early- to mid-twentieth-century commercial, civic, and religious buildings in the blocks around the Alexander County Courthouse. There are 39 resources in the district, of which 30 are contributing. The period of significance for the district is 1906 to 1970, a period that captures Taylorsville's important commercial development and is defined by the earliest brick building to be constructed downtown, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the latest contributing building in the district, the Alexander County Courthouse. Although additions were made to Taylorsville's commercial center after 1970, the town's architectural and commercial development since that time is not of exceptional significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Background and Commercial Context

In 1847, Joseph M. Bogle, a state senator and sheriff of Iredell County, introduced a measure to the North Carolina General Assembly calling for the creation of a new county from portions of Iredell, Caldwell, and Wilkes counties. The General Assembly approved the new jurisdiction provided the division left Caldwell County with at least 5,000 residents.⁹⁴ The General Assembly

⁹⁴ Less certain than Bogle's bill is the origin of the new county's name. State records generally accept that the county was named in honor of William J. Alexander of Mecklenburg County, a member of the state legislature and speaker of the House of Commons. Other sources suggest the county may have taken its name from Nathaniel Alexander, governor of North Carolina in 1805, or Abraham Alexander, who was purportedly the author of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in 1775. David Leroy Corbitt, *The Formation of the North Carolina Counties 1663-1943*, 1987, 6th printing (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 2000), 2-3;

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ordered the dividing line between Alexander and Iredell counties to be fixed in 1849, and a subsequent part of Wilkes was annexed in 1852 to create the present county boundary. Court was held at James' Cross Roads until the county seat could be established by commissioners charged with selecting a site as near the center of the county as possible. The commissioners were further tasked with acquiring land, laying off a town, and erecting public buildings.⁹⁵

Land for the town of Taylorsville came from J. M. Bogle, who gave 22 acres; William Matheson, who contributed 13 acres; and James G. James, who gave just under 12 acres. The combined acreage was mostly woodland and located north of the main road between Statesville and Morganton. A new commission of five men was appointed to lay out the town, which was named in honor of General Zachary Taylor, who became President of the United States in 1849. The sale of lots at auction in March and November 1847 raised over \$6,000 for the construction of a courthouse and jail. The town limits were delineated as a square measuring 160 poles, or one-half mile, on each side, and the town lots were laid out on approximately half that area. The original blocks, measuring approximately 215 feet square, were laid out in a gridiron plan around a central courthouse square, and the streets were delineated as 66 feet wide. Thomas S. Boyd of Stony Point, who constructed the jail and public well, built one of the first houses in Taylorsville. A. C. McIntosh, Alfred Carson, Hyman James, and several others also built houses in town during the first few years.⁹⁶

When Taylorsville was officially incorporated in 1851, the commissioners appointed John Watts as the first mayor. The early population was estimated to be around 100 individuals including 22 enslaved persons. By 1870, the population had increased to 169 residents and the town recorded 35 dwellings. Substantial changes to the town's charter, ratified in 1887, included changes to the town's boundaries. The newly drawn town limits formed an octagon with each side measuring 130 poles. The revised charter gave the town corporate powers and elaborated on numerous aspects of municipal governance, including elections, the terms of office for the mayor and commissioners, and the appointment of policemen.⁹⁷

Slow but steady growth characterized the town through the late nineteenth century. Completion of the Statesville & Western Railroad, known as the "Junebug," to Taylorsville in 1887 stirred hopes of greater development. Local attorney and state senator Romulus Z. Linney argued before the state legislature in favor of the railroad charter, claiming that the mineral wealth recently discovered at Hiddenite, five miles to the east, was so great that a June bug could carry enough to pay for the whole 18-mile line. Mocked by a representative from Iredell for the comment, Linney embraced it as a popular talking point and turned it into an affectionate

Sara C. Allen, ed., *The Heritage of Alexander County* (Winston-Salem, NC: Hunter Publishing Company, 1986), 22, 30-31.

⁹⁵ William W. White, *A History of Alexander County*, Statesville, NC: The Landmark, 1990; John H. Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina from 1584 to 1851*, Vol. II (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1851), 20.

⁹⁶ *Heritage of Alexander County*, 30-31.

⁹⁷ *Heritage of Alexander County*, 31-32.

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nickname for the rail line. Taylorsville served as the western terminus of the railroad with two passenger trains and one freight train running each day to Statesville, county seat of Iredell County.⁹⁸

With the Junebug line in operation in the late 1880s, one writer believed that Taylorsville was on its way to becoming a formidable rival of Statesville and potentially Charlotte. The growing town had six general merchandise stores, a drug store, a furniture store, and a millinery shop. Contractors were completing work on several brick warehouses and Edward L. Hedrick's Piedmont Hotel. By 1890, the population reached nearly 300 individuals. Local industry in and around Taylorsville included flour and grist mills, saw mills, tanneries, saddle and harness makers, and a cotton mill.⁹⁹ At the turn of the century, the population had grown to just over 400.¹⁰⁰

The town's promising economic outlook at the beginning of the twentieth century led prominent local businessmen to incorporate the Taylorsville Milling Company in 1902. William L. Moose, H. T. Campbell, and Edward L. Hedrick were elected officers of the new company. Located on a site near the depot just outside the downtown core, the roller mill quickly became the county's largest enterprise producing substantial amounts of flour and corn meal.¹⁰¹

Also in 1902, the county approved construction of a new courthouse designed and built by the B. F. Smith Fireproof Construction Company, based in Washington, DC.¹⁰² When the new courthouse was constructed with its primary entrance facing east toward present-day South Center Street, it cemented the growth of the downtown core along Main Street (present-day Main Avenue) to the east of the courthouse. The stately new building featured a monumental front portico with exterior stairs rising to the second-floor courtroom, arched window openings with decorative brickwork, and gabled wall dormers on each elevation.¹⁰³ Furthermore, the replacement of the original courthouse with a brick edifice presaged the transformation of downtown Taylorsville from a collection of one- and two-story frame buildings to a central street lined with primarily two-story brick commercial buildings.

A photograph of Taylorsville's Main Street taken in 1909 clearly shows the early concentration of stores and businesses near the courthouse and extending east. One- and two-story frame buildings interspersed with a few houses characterized the early development of Main Street. Businesses included small grocery and general stores, cafes, a soda shop, a poolroom, post office, jeweler, Hollar's Drug Store, Adams' Furniture Store, and R. Z. Linney's law

⁹⁸ *Alexander County Treasures*, 119-121.

⁹⁹ "Alexander County – Taylorsville," *The Alexander County Journal*, January 19, 1888, 1; Heather Fearnbach, "Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Fearnbach History Services, Winston-Salem, NC, 2018, 6-7.

¹⁰⁰ *Heritage of Alexander County*, 32.

¹⁰¹ The roller mill is separated from the commercial business district by several vacant lots, and thus is not included in the downtown district. Fearnbach, "Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill," 8-9.

¹⁰² Catherine W. Bishir, "B. F. Smith Fireproof Construction Company," North Carolina Architects & Builders, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000355>, accessed July 2023.

¹⁰³ "History of Courthouse," *The Taylorsville Times*, August 17, 1967, 3.

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office. The Masonic lodge was located on the second floor above a grocery at the corner of present-day Main Avenue and South Center Street.¹⁰⁴

The threat of fire and the town's lack of modern fire-fighting equipment helped spur the conversion to brick construction. A devastating fire in 1909 destroyed Hollar's Drug Store and the adjacent Tuttle Building, both wooden frame structures that stood at the corner of West Main Avenue and Old Wilkesboro Road. Reports indicated that the fire began in the Bell Telephone Company office on the second floor of the Hollar Building and spread to the Tuttle Building next door. Two people staying overnight in the Hollar Building escaped the blaze while another group of individuals rescued the billiard tables from the pool room that occupied the Tuttle Building. Working without modern equipment, citizens valiantly formed a bucket brigade to combat the flames. Dr. Hollar lost over \$3,000 worth of stock and medical equipment, but less than a month later, he was beginning construction of a new two-story brick store.¹⁰⁵

The first brick commercial buildings were constructed immediately across the street from the courthouse and included the bank building on the southeast corner of West Main Avenue and South Center Street in 1915, and the adjacent Herman Building and Masonic Lodge in 1914 and 1915, respectively. The early decades of the century also brought the construction of numerous buildings that supported the community life of Taylorsville and a growing county population, including the Methodist Episcopal Church (now First United Methodist Church) in 1906 and the Alexander County Jail in 1913. An increase in population corresponded with an increase in the number of civil and criminal offenders to the point that the county needed additional holding capacity. A new brick jail was built by the Camden Iron Works on a site one block east of the courthouse square.¹⁰⁶

The expanding economy required more than one bank in the downtown area. Taylorsville Building & Loan was constructed immediately to the east of the original bank building on East Main Street in 1914 (now part of the Taylorsville Times Building at 24 East Main) and Merchants & Farmers Bank constructed a two-story building across the street from the courthouse to the north in 1919 (still standing at 16 West Main). As the town matured, its population became more organized to ensure continued growth. Female residents formed a Civic League in 1914, which focused on beautification and cleanliness of the growing downtown. The Ladies Betterment Association of Taylorsville followed in 1916. That same year, businessmen organized the Taylorsville Merchants Association, a forerunner to the Chamber of Commerce.¹⁰⁷

At the same time that its merchants were organizing, Taylorsville benefited directly from industrial growth in the surrounding region. Textile milling was a long-standing industry in the county, beginning with Emmanuel Alspaugh and Gabriel Marshall's cotton mill on the Lower Little

¹⁰⁴ *Alexander County Treasures*, 179.

¹⁰⁵ "Fire at Taylorsville," *Greensboro Daily News*, November 14, 1909, 3; "Local and Personal," *The Statesville Sentinel*, December 6, 1909, 8.

¹⁰⁶ "County Jail Dates Back to 1848," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976, 7.

¹⁰⁷ *Alexander County Treasures*, 181.

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River that operated from 1851 to 1892. Continuing the family business, in 1897 Alspaugh's son, U. L. Alspaugh, built his Alpaugh Cotton Mill on the Lower Little River, south of Taylorsville where the community of Millersville later grew up. His was one of several operations established in the county around the turn of the century, including Stony Point Manufacturing Company, southeast of Taylorsville, and Taylorsville Cotton Mill Company in Taylorsville, both in 1907. The Alspaugh Cotton Mill (no longer extant) proved critical for the growth of Taylorsville following the flood of 1916, which washed out the mill's wooden dam. The firm replaced its infrastructure with a concrete dam and hydroelectric plant in 1917 that provided Taylorsville its first electricity.¹⁰⁸ People's Drug Store, established in 1918 across Main Street from the courthouse (at 12 West Main Avenue), was the first business to have electric lights.¹⁰⁹

The 1920s brought unprecedented development to downtown Taylorsville. During this decade many of the landmarks of downtown were constructed, including long-standing businesses such as Smithey's Department Store and the Hotel Campbell, later known as the Hotel Alexandria. Located toward the east end of downtown at the corner of Main Street (East Main Avenue) and Depot Street (present-day Linney's Mountain Road), Hotel Campbell drew visitors downtown while two gas stations—one across Depot Street and the other across Main Street from the hotel—opened to support increased vehicular travel. By 1924, when the first Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Taylorsville was produced, blocks of commercial buildings that shared uniform setbacks had been constructed along the north side of West and East Main Avenue (formerly North Main Street) from Old Wilkesboro Road (formerly West Main Street) to Linney's Mountain Road (formerly Depot Street); nearly all were brick. Development along the south side of Main Street was sparse, yet each block had a row of brick buildings that likewise shared a consistent setback and relationship to the street. Frame houses remained on the street, interrupting the continuity of the commercial strip, but the brick streetfront dominated.

Taylorsville came of age during the 1920s, developing an identity beyond that of being the government and commercial seat of a primarily rural county. Its longest standing newspaper, which had been founded as *The Mountain Scout* around 1900, changed its name to *The Taylorsville Times* in the early 1920s.¹¹⁰ Entertainment venues opened during the decade, including two movie theaters: the Palace and LeGette's Moving Picture Show.¹¹¹ The downtown held banks and a furniture company, a barber shop and a cobbler, a jeweler, a drug store, a variety store, and a department store. The construction of the Oxford Dam and Hydroelectric Plant on the Catawba River in 1928 brought electricity to the wider public and created Lake Hickory, southwest of Taylorsville. Commerce in downtown Taylorsville, in turn, expanded to

¹⁰⁸ *Alexander County Treasures*, 128-132, 181-2; "Smithey's Department Store," Vertical File: Alexander County - History - Business and Industry, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

¹⁰⁹ "Smithey's Department Store," Vertical File: Alexander County - History - Business and Industry, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC.

¹¹⁰ "Times' History," <https://www.taylorsvilletimes.com/times-history/>, accessed June 2023.

¹¹¹ *Alexander County Treasures*, 163-6, 204-5.

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accommodate a new market for home appliances and hardware as well as a growing population of seasonal tourists.¹¹²

Following the boom of the 1920s, the Great Depression brought development to a halt. An updated Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1938 revealed primarily remodelings and demolitions, but few additions had been made to the core commercial strip that had been established by the mid-1920s. Yet citizens remained committed to seeing their town through the Depression, and despite the slowing of its physical transformation, the downtown remained a central hub of bustling activity. When photographer and North Carolina native H. Lee Waters visited downtown Taylorsville in 1938, as part of his *Movies of Local People* film series, he captured a downtown bustling with activity. People strolled the sidewalks, sat on stoops and people-watched, cheered at a baseball game, and admired each other's automobiles. When Waters compiled the footage, as he had done for documentaries about towns throughout North Carolina, as well as several in Tennessee, Virginia, and South Carolina, he had them screened at the local movie theaters drawing residents to pay for a ticket with the promise to "See Yourself in the Movies!"¹¹³

During the post-war years, the two largest houses remaining on the north side of Main Avenue were demolished and replaced with commercial buildings that continued the precedent established in the 1920s. A block of buildings constructed between 1945 and 1950 to the west of the Hotel Campbell connected that landmark building to the commercial development along East Main Avenue. A vacant lot interrupting that row of connected buildings on the north side of the street marks the site of the last two-story frame commercial building, which stood into the mid-twentieth century. The following decade saw the establishment of a second drug store in town on the northeast corner of Main Street and First Street, the site formerly occupied by J. P. Echerd's house. Town & County Drugs shared a history with Taylorsville's early purveyor, as its co-founder Rowe B. Campbell, Jr. was the son of People's Drug Store founder Rowe B. Campbell.¹¹⁴ On the same block as the new drug store, a pair of buildings were added to the block of 1920s structures in the 1960s, creating a nearly continuous row between North Center Street and First Street.

Industrial development in the county expanded significantly after the war, bringing additional jobs and residents to Taylorsville. Following the creation of the Alexander County Water Corporation in 1964, which constructed a water plant and distribution lines to deliver water to customers along NC 90 from Scotts to Taylorsville, manufacturing firms began springing up in the region.¹¹⁵ Schneider Mills opened in 1947 and was followed by Broyhill Furniture Industries in 1959, Clayton Marcus Furniture Company in 1960, Carolina Comfort Furniture in

¹¹² "Smithey's Department Store," Vertical File: Alexander County - History - Business and Industry, Local History Room, Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC; *Alexander County Treasures*, 138, 211-2.

¹¹³ "Taylorsville (N.C.), 1939 (Reel 1)," H. Lee Waters Film Collection, Duke University Libraries, <https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4m32s474>, accessed March 2023.

¹¹⁴ *Alexander County Treasures*, 188.

¹¹⁵ Scotts, NC, is an unincorporated community in Iredell County, 12 miles southeast of Taylorsville.

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1961, and Blue Bell, Inc. in 1965. The Alexander County Community Development Association formed in 1960 and turned its focus to forming volunteer fire departments, finding grants to improve highways and replace sewer systems, build community centers, plan beautification projects, and establish social programs for the county's elders and youth.¹¹⁶

When the time came to plan for the construction of a modern courthouse to replace the 1902 building, the Hickory-based architect James E. Biggs was presented with several sites to consider, including one several blocks to the east of Taylorsville's downtown. Biggs opted to keep the courthouse where it had long stood, citing the historic importance of the courthouse to the development of a concentrated commercial center for the county. Perhaps no greater testimony can be made to the commercial core of Taylorsville: it was seen as both a site of historic importance and an appropriate location for the county's new Modernist landmark.¹¹⁷ By the time the courthouse was completed in 1970, Main Avenue had reached a form consistent with what is seen today. Several buildings were added to Main Avenue Drive in the decades that followed, but none pulled the commercial focus from Main Avenue.

Today, downtown Taylorsville lacks the hustle and bustle that was captured in H. Lee Waters's 1938 documentary, but the physical backdrop of that activity remains largely in place. Elsewhere, the county's first roadside motel, the Emerald Inn, opened on NC 90 east of Taylorsville in 1973, foreshadowing the development of more sprawling, vehicle-centered development.¹¹⁸ This trend continued with the establishment of the Bethlehem Community Shopping Center in the southwestern part of the county in 1975.¹¹⁹ US 64 briefly ran along the NC 90 corridor through Taylorsville beginning in 1988, but was re-routed to its current corridor south of town in 1996.¹²⁰ Despite the incremental growth of central business districts in other county towns including Stony Point, Hiddenite, and Bethlehem, Taylorsville remains the primary commercial downtown district in Alexander County and a physical record of twentieth-century development in the region.

Architectural Context

The early architecture of Taylorsville followed development trends that were common across the western Piedmont and foothills regions of North Carolina in the nineteenth century. Pioneer settlers carved the town out of rolling woodlands following the creation of the county in the late 1840s. As the land was cleared, a grid plan of building lots and unpaved streets and roads was created. The county's abundant timber resources supplied the chief building material. Even

¹¹⁶ *Alexander County Treasures*, 250, 271-3.

¹¹⁷ "Courthouse Site Selected," *The Taylorsville Times*, August 31, 1967; "History of Courthouse," *The Taylorsville Times*, August 17, 1967; "Alexander County Courthouse," *The Taylorsville Times*, July 1, 1976.

¹¹⁸ "County's First Motel, Emerald Inn, Is Now Open," *The Taylorsville Times*, January 25, 1973.

¹¹⁹ *Alexander County Treasures*, 266.

¹²⁰ "US Route 64 in North Carolina," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Route_64_in_North_Carolina (accessed July 2023).

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though the town's original commissioners desired a brick courthouse, the first structure was of frame construction. Built at a cost of \$50 in 1848, the original temporary courthouse building was later sold for \$35 and replaced by a more substantial brick edifice in 1852.¹²¹

In the first decade of the twentieth century, North Main Street was lined with one- and two-story frame buildings that defined the downtown commercial district of Taylorsville. The early commercial architecture dating from before the 1910s has been lost in the intervening decades, and commercial interests have remade the physical appearance of the business district more than once during the twentieth century. Frame buildings were lost to fire or simply replaced with more permanent brick structures. Storefronts and facades were modernized and updated with newer materials. The few residences that remained into the mid-twentieth century eventually gave way to commercial interests and were razed for building lots or surface parking areas. The overall scale, massing, and density of the downtown commercial district, however, has remained remarkably intact over the years despite the exterior changes and cosmetic updating of the buildings at the town's core.

The architecture of the Downtown Taylorsville Historic District is dominated by one- and two-story brick buildings primarily representing the Commercial Style. Three Modernist buildings, a Neo-Gothic Revival-style church, and a domestic-scale Pure Oil gas station enrich the streetscapes. Several warehouses and storage buildings offer a contrast to the district's more stylish buildings.

The Commercial Style developed in response to the more ornate and textured commercial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and remained popular through the 1930s. Commercial Style buildings utilized simple two-dimensional brick patterning and contrasting materials to enliven otherwise unadorned brick buildings. Commercial Style buildings are typically rectangular in plan with flat roofs behind stepped or shaped parapets and have recessed storefronts, soldier and header course lintels and sills, and large windows often arranged in groups.¹²² The Bank Building at 1-9 South Center Street, which was built in 1915, features a distinctive recessed corner entrance, and the two street facades are enlivened by a continuous cast concrete sill beneath the second-story windows, a corbelled cornice, and recessed brick panels in the upper façade. A round-arched entrance on the west elevation originally opened onto stairs that accessed the second story. The three-story Hotel Campbell at 125-135 East Main Avenue, notable as the town's tallest building, was erected around 1924 and is one of the district's most distinctive examples of the Commercial Style. Occupying a prominent corner lot, the hotel building displays asymmetrical five-bay facades with stepped parapets, brick pilasters, and basket-weave brick panels in the upper façade. Every fifth course of brick on the pilasters is raised to provide texture and suggest the appearance of quoins.

¹²¹ *Alexander County Treasures*, 83-84.

¹²² Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1987), 16-19.

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Two buildings within the district display remnants of original cast-iron storefronts manufactured by G. L. Mesker & Co. of Evansville, Indiana. George L. Mesker, along with his two brothers, Bernard and Frank, learned iron-working skills from their father, who ran a stove business and galvanized iron for buildings. Bernard and Frank Mesker formed the Mesker Brothers Iron Works in St. Louis, while George remained in Indiana with his own company. In addition to designing and manufacturing storefronts, the Meskers produced tin ceilings, iron railings, stairs, and other architectural components.¹²³ Elements of the original G. L. Mesker storefront remain visible between the later surface treatments on the ca. 1914 Herman Building at 19 South Center Street. The cast-iron work exhibits scrollwork, corbels, and florets. The storefronts of the former People's Drug Store, built ca. 1920 at 12 West Main Avenue, have been altered with rough stucco infill, but the cast-iron pilasters and lintel have textured panels and corner blocks, as well as decorative florets, floral scrollwork, and fleur-de-lis motifs adorning their surfaces.

The majority of early-twentieth-century brick commercial buildings in the district are relatively plain in their finish and have been remodeled or updated through the mid-twentieth century. The two buildings at 21 and 23 East Main Avenue, built ca. 1938 and 1924, respectively, and share a façade with replacement storefronts and later awnings, a continuous soldier-course lintel above the second-story windows, and decorative brick banding on the parapet. The Smithey's Department Store Building at 34-36 East Main Avenue is similarly composed of three buildings erected in the 1910s and early 1920s, which were later joined behind a unified façade added around 1934. The building's upper façade exhibits decorative diamond-shaped brick panels. The row of one-story brick buildings at 69 to 91 East Main Avenue featured similar treatments with recessed panels in the upper façade and simple corbelled cornices. Two of the buildings have been substantially altered, but 69 and 81 East Main Avenue retain their original upper facades.

Several buildings in the district were constructed during a second major phase of development in the decades following World War II. Most often post-World War II commercial buildings reflected changes brought about by the availability of new materials, technological advances, and increasing popularity and reliance on the automobile. The period's architecture was increasingly influenced by Modernism. Publication of the later works of renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright and *The International Style* (1932) by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson helped promote and illustrate architectural forms as pure volume, horizontally composed geometry, flat roofs, flush walls, and cantilevered projections. The austere, almost abstract geometric forms of the International Style were thought to transcend national and historical traditions.

¹²³ Two National Register-listed buildings in Wilkesboro have storefronts manufactured by Mesker Brothers. Laura A. W. Phillips, "J. T. Ferguson Store" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Wilkesboro Historic Properties Commission, Wilkesboro, NC, 1980; Laura A. W. Phillips, "Wilkesboro-Smithey Hotel" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Wilkesboro Historic Properties Commission, Wilkesboro, NC, 1980; *Good for Business: A Guide to Rehabilitating the Exteriors of Older Commercial Buildings* (Milwaukee, WI: Department of City Development, City of Milwaukee, 1985), 14-19.

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In downtown Taylorsville, new construction and renovation work often featured plain facades, plate-glass windows, and aluminum-frame storefronts. The ca. 1945 building at 109-121 East Main Avenue consists of both one- and two-story sections containing multiple storefronts. Two of the three storefronts have aluminum-frame windows and doors, as well as central recessed entrance bays, while the upper façade recalls Smithey's Department Store's 1934 facade with decorative diamond-shaped brick panels as the only embellishment. The second story retains six-over-six double-hung wood-sash windows on the façade. The one-story building at 97-99 East Main Avenue (ca. 1947) is constructed of concrete block with a brick-veneer facade, recessed entrance bays, and aluminum-frame storefronts. The upper façade displays a panel set off by a header-brick frame. The neighboring building at 103 East Main Avenue (ca. 1950), also of concrete block, exhibits a similar storefront but the façade is stuccoed and the panel above the storefront is recessed.

The influence of Modernism on commercial architecture is represented especially well in two buildings of the post-war period. The Rowe Campbell Building, at 53 East Main Avenue, was built in 1956 with a Modernist façade of a gridded glass wall of large windows framed in aluminum and flanked by Roman brick wing walls. The Walker Building, built in 1968 at 118-134 Main Avenue Drive, consists of two distinct building forms. The west unit is a Modernist one-story block with a low-pitched side-gable roof, full-height aluminum-frame storefronts with single-leaf glazed entry doors, large plate-glass windows in the end bays, projecting brick pilasters, and stacked brickwork of dark brown bricks. The contrast of the glazed storefront walls and solid panels of stacked brick contributes to the modern aesthetic of the building.

In the mid-twentieth century, the facades of several pre-World War II commercial buildings were remodeled or "slip-covered" as the detailing of early-twentieth architecture appeared increasingly old-fashioned. The updates applied to older buildings reflected the aesthetic of the day.¹²⁴ To this end, the application of stucco to upper facades offered a clean, modern look, as exhibited by 85-91 East Main Avenue, where the stucco barely conceals the original brick corbels of the original 1920s parapet. The replacement of storefronts was the most popular means of updating a pre-war building. Modern replacement storefronts with aluminum-framed plate glass display windows and glass doors are found at many of the pre-war buildings.

The most distinctly Modernist building in the district is the Alexander County Courthouse. Built in 1970 on the courthouse square following a fire that destroyed the 1902 edifice, it was designed by architect James E. Biggs of Hickory. The courthouse exemplifies the Brutalist mode of Modernism, which was popular in the 1960s and emphasized heavy, monumental forms and raw concrete surfaces. The low, flat-roofed building displays pebble-finish concrete panels on the exterior, battered foundation and basement walls, and inset windows on the rear (west) elevation. The main level of the courthouse cantilevers over the basement level and topped by a

¹²⁴ Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 451-455.

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narrow band of ribbon windows, which gives the impression that the building hovers above the ground.

The district contains one example of the Neo-Gothic Revival style. The Methodist Episcopal Church (present-day First United Methodist Church), built in 1906 and subsequently enlarged, is one of the district's few non-commercial buildings. The church displays attributes of the Neo-Gothic Revival style, which saw the reinterpretation of Gothic forms for religious and commercial buildings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Neo-Gothic revived the spirit of Gothic architecture by incorporating characteristics such as ashlar masonry and brick construction, steeply pitched gable roofs, traceried windows, and lancet arch window and door openings. The Methodist Episcopal Church's sanctuary, the original phase of construction, is a front-gable brick structure with lancet-arch windows and doors, a cross-gable side wing, and a prominent square tower embellished by corbelled brickwork and an open belfry with brick piers, fleur-de-lis finials, and a pyramidal roof. A post-1976 narthex in the front gable end closely imitates the sanctuary's architecture.

Another architecturally distinctive building in the district is the domestic-scale Pure Oil Station at 163 East Main Avenue, located at the east edge of the district. The one-story brick building erected ca. 1940 displays the Pure Oil Company's preferred "English Cottage" style. It resembles a small house with a tall side-gable roof, gable-end chimneys, and multi-light casement windows. A three-bay service garage wing extends east of the office. The Pure Oil Company adopted the small house-type station nationally to establish its corporate identity in the 1920s and 1930s. The distinctive form, blue and white color scheme, and domestic attributes, such as the end chimneys, front bay windows, and planters, made the stations instantly recognizable as part of the Pure Oil brand.¹²⁵

Town Alley, an open thoroughfare at the rear of the buildings on the north side of Main Avenue, helps define an area of utilitarian buildings and structures that served several of the old Main Street businesses. These subordinate structures are less refined than the principal buildings in their design, materials, and workmanship. The frame warehouse built ca. 1930 for Miller's Hardware at 23 East Main Avenue is a capacious one-story building with corrugated metal siding and a metal-clad front-gable roof. An L-shaped building at 200 Town Alley stands to the rear of the Smithey's Department Store (I) at 34-36 East Main Avenue. The stone finish of the ca. 1930 one-story-plus-basement building is more substantial than the other secondary buildings. The one-story brick storage building at 214 Town Alley dating from the 1950s is typical of the utilitarian buildings along the alley. It is a windowless box with a concrete stoop across the front and a single entry door on the south elevation.

¹²⁵ John A. Jakle, "The American Gasoline Station, 1920 to 1970," *Journal of American Culture*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Fall 1978): 524-529.

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Downtown Taylorsville Historic District
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Alexander County Library, Taylorsville, NC

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): AX0130

Downtown Taylorsville Historic District
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 10.6 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

A. Latitude: 35.923625 Longitude: -81.171872

B. Latitude: 35.923049 Longitude: -81.172196

C. Latitude: 35.922493 Longitude: -81.173959

D. Latitude: 35.921961 Longitude: -81.175949

E. Latitude: 35.923425 Longitude: -81.176594

F. Latitude: 35.923795 Longitude: -81.175416

G. Latitude: 35.923856 Longitude: -81.175217

H. Latitude: 35.923855 Longitude: -81.173598

I. Latitude: 35.923705 Longitude: -81.172132

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: 17 | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: 17 | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: 17 | Easting: | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the Downtown Taylorsville Historic District is shown by a heavy solid line on the accompanying district map entitled "Downtown Taylorsville Historic District, Taylorsville, Alexander County, North Carolina, National Register Boundary Map," drawn at a scale of 1:1600.

Downtown Taylorsville Historic District
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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The roughly 10.6-acre Downtown Taylorsville Historic District centers on the dense commercial strip on Main Avenue in Taylorsville that developed north and east of the historic courthouse square between the years of 1906 and 1973. The district includes adjacent municipal and religious buildings that developed in tandem with the commercial core. The areas outside the boundary are characterized by a notable decrease in density, a greater number of modern commercial buildings, and historic resources that have lost integrity through extensive alterations and material changes. A block of commercial buildings to the west of the courthouse square was razed around 2015 for the development of a municipal park. While the resources within the boundary have experienced alterations and material changes, the cohesive collection of one- and two-story buildings within the district stand apart from their surroundings for their regularity of scale and massing and unusual density within the town of Taylorsville. The included buildings' relatively higher degree of architectural and historical integrity gives definition to the historic downtown district.

Downtown Taylorsville Historic District
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Clay Griffith and Josi Ward
organization: Acme Preservation Services, LLC / Foreground Consulting, LLC
street & number: 825 Merrimon Ave., Ste. C, #345
city or town: Asheville state: NC zip code: 28804
e-mail: cgriffith.acme@gmail.com; josiward@gmail.com
telephone: (828) 281-3852; (828) 575-6523
date: April 19, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Downtown Taylorsville Historic District
Name of Property

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Photographs

The following information pertains to each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Downtown Taylorsville Historic District
Location: Taylorsville, North Carolina
County: Alexander
Name of Photographer(s): Clay Griffith and Josi Ward
Date of Photographs: November 18 and December 18, 2022
Location of Digital Master: Historic Preservation Office
North Carolina Division of Archives and History
109 E. Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2807

Photographs:

1. Downtown Taylorsville Historic District, East Main Avenue, view to west
2. Downtown Taylorsville Historic District, West Main Avenue, view to northeast
3. Downtown Taylorsville Historic District, West Main Avenue rear elevations, view to southwest along Town Alley
4. Downtown Taylorsville Historic District, East Main Avenue, view to northeast
5. Downtown Taylorsville Historic District, East Main Avenue, view to northwest
6. Alexander County Courthouse, 27 West Main Avenue, view to west
7. (former) Alexander County Jail, 72 Main Avenue Drive, view to southeast
8. Bank Building, 1-9 South Center Street, view to southeast
9. (former) People's Drug Store, 12 West Main Avenue, view to north
10. The Taylorsville Times Building, 24 East Main Avenue, view to southeast (Noncontributing building)
11. Methodist Episcopal Church, 54 East Main Avenue, view to south
12. Rowe Campbell Building, 53 East Main Avenue, view to north
13. Hotel Campbell, 125-135 East Main Avenue, oblique view to north
14. Pure Oil Service Station, 163 East Main Avenue, view to northeast
15. Walker Building, 118-134 Main Avenue Drive, view to north
16. Warehouse, north side of Town Alley, view to northwest

Downtown Taylorsville Historic District
Name of Property

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.