

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

MAY 28 2008

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Fort Thomas Commercial District

other name/site number NA

2. Location

street & town 1011-1123 South Fort Thomas Avenue, 9-11 River Road, 12-28 Midway Court NA not for publication

city or town Ft. Thomas NA vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Campbell code 037 zip code 41075

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Donna M. Neary 05/23/2008  
Signature of certifying official/Title Donna M. Neary, SHPO Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 7/10/2008

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Name of Property

Campbell County, KY  
County and State

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	23	5	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	0	0	sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	23	5	Total

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

0

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Function	Current Function
Domestic: single dwelling	Domestic: multiple dwelling
Domestic: multiple dwelling	Commerce/trade: business
Commerce/trade: business	Commerce/trade: professional
Commerce/trade: financial institution	Domestic: single dwelling
Recreation/Culture: theater	

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter only categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Queen Anne

Late Victorian: Romanesque

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Colonial Revival

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements: Bungalow

**Materials**  
(Enter only categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick, wood, concrete

roof asphalt shingle

other stone, wood, metal, concrete

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Campbell County, Kentucky

Section 7 Page 1

## Section 7. Summary Description

The proposed Midway Historic District is located in the city of Fort Thomas, Kentucky, a residential suburb of Cincinnati located on a bluff above the Ohio River. It consists of a small commercial district known as the Midway that developed in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century to serve the adjacent Fort Thomas Military Reservation (National Register, 1986), which was established in 1887. The Midway is located directly west and south of the existing Military Reservation historic district. Linear in form, the Midway is built along a north-south ridge. It extends along South Fort Thomas Avenue (Kentucky Route 1120), Midway Court and River Road (Kentucky Route 445). The majority of the buildings in the district are one- to three-story commercial structures built between 1890 and 1930. Most are of brick construction, some with exuberant masonry detailing. The predominant styles in the district are Queen Anne and Commercial. The district presents a cohesive streetscape with no gaps from demolition, few extensively-altered buildings and no post-1958 constructions. While some of the buildings have seen successive storefront alterations, most are intact above the first story. All are indicated on the 1910 Sanborn fire insurance map of Fort Thomas, updated through 1950. The proposed district is approximately 32 acres, containing 28 resources, 23 contributing buildings and five non-contributing buildings. The district's period of significance extends from 1888 to 1958.

**Description of the Midway Historic District.** The construction of the buildings on the Midway commercial strip coincided with periods of high activity at the military reservation. Shortly after the fort was founded in 1887, commercial buildings began to be built across the street, to provide services and housing for the soldiers.

The oldest standing buildings in the Midway are two- to three-story commercial/residential structures built during the first two decades of the Fort's existence, from c. 1890 to 1910. With ground-floor storefronts and upper-floor apartments, they exemplify the "two-part commercial block" (Longstreth 1987) popular on America's Main Street business districts through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. These mixed-use buildings provided convenient local shopping for soldiers at the Fort. Others in the growing town shopped in the stores after travelling to them by streetcar.

In addition to their two-part form, these buildings share some general characteristics: brick construction relieved by brick and stone ornamentation, vertical orientation, and shed roofs of moderate pitch. They exhibit characteristics of the Commercial Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles. Most are built into the ridge, and the ground falls away at the rear to expose a lower level.

One of the oldest and most imposing buildings of the Midway is The Nevada (#17; photo 5) at 1045-1051 South Fort Thomas Avenue, opposite River Road. Built c. 1890, The Nevada is a three-story apartment house in the Queen Anne style, anchored by a two-story turret with conical roof and spear finial. The facade is articulated by paneled pilaster strips and features paired windows capped by keyboard lintels or heavy stone headers. A one-story frame addition housing three storefronts was appended to the front of the building soon after its construction. The shop fronts in this addition have been significantly altered over the years, although one has been returned to an approximation of its original appearance. The building is vacant and in fair condition.

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A half-block north of The Nevada is the Fort Thomas Pharmacy Building (#13; photo 4) at 1035-1037 South Fort Thomas Avenue. A Commercial Queen Anne edifice of lively design, its asymmetrically balanced facade is divided by paneled brick pilasters into three sections of unequal size. The ornate cast-iron storefront retains fluted piers adorned with bosses and corbels, and a band of "notched" trim above the lintel. Upper-story windows are paired or triple, finished with carved lintels or topped with brick-filled blind arches. The metal cornice is fastened with button-like bosses and topped by ball finials. The Fort Thomas Pharmacy Building is one of several Midway commercial buildings whose facades have recently been restored or renovated.

Notable for its unusual form, the Harry Tiemeyer Shoe Repair Building (#19; photo 4) at 1109 South Fort Thomas Avenue is a two-story building of irregular footprint. The L-shaped facade contains two storefronts covered by a new raised-seam copper shed roof. In the angle of the "L" hangs an ornate iron bracket. The metal cornice features quarter-circle brackets and heavy consoles.

Anchoring the corner of River Road is the Smith's Drugstore Building (#27; Illustration 1) at 1100 South Fort Thomas Avenue, which dates from c. 1910. Angled to address the intersection, it is a narrow, two-and-a-half-story commercial/residential building with steeply pitched front-gabled roof. It features a rusticated brick storefront and paired 1/1 windows. Apart from painting of the brick, the building has been little altered on the exterior since construction. Both the Tiemeyer and Smith buildings recently have been renovated, the latter with a grant from the Renaissance Kentucky revitalization program for historic urban commercial districts.



*Illustration 1: Undated archival photo (c. 1918) of River Road depicting the Fort Theater and Smith Pharmacy buildings.*



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By the 1930s, automobiles were becoming widely available. Living above the store became less popular. Living and shopping patterns changed, with more people journeying by car to work or to shop. As a result, it became less common for commercial buildings to incorporate upper-floor living units. A new building type came into use during the same period: the "broad-form store," a one-story retail building of horizontal footprint, with large display windows facing the street (Longstreth 1987). Steel beams spanned the retail floor, carrying the weight of the roof.

Several broad-form stores were built in the Midway in the 1920s and 1930s. They are one-story structures with wide front facades and flat or low-pitched shed roofs. Facades are clad in wire-cut brick accented by soldier courses and simple, geometrical ornamentation. All exhibit common details and may be the work of the same contractor. Largest of the group is the Carl M. Klingenberg Hardware Store (#6) at 1031 South Fort Thomas Avenue. It features large plate-glass display windows with tile bulkheads. A square brick parapet hides the low roofline.

Built on a smaller scale is the Post Office/Frank Kravitz Clothes Cleaner (#18, Photo 4) at 1107 South Fort Thomas Avenue. A brick soldier course caps the storefront, which was remodeled with an aluminum-and-glass storefront c. 1960-1970. The building at 1011 South Fort Thomas (#1) is a one-story structure of rectangular footprint. A storefront faces the street, with apartments in the rear.

Integrated seamlessly with the commercial buildings are residences that provided convenient and affordable rental housing for soldiers and working people. These buildings were built on the rear portions of lots on which Midway commercial buildings already stood. They were owned by the same people who owned the front buildings, and the same pattern holds true today. Two modest frame structures—a house and a small apartment building—were built behind older Midway buildings c. 1920-1930, likely after a 1916 fire destroyed a row of cottages in this location (*Kentucky Post*, January 18, 1916, p. 1). Behind 1041 South Fort Thomas Avenue is a frame bungalow (#15) of nearly square footprint, with pyramidal roof. The main entrance is contained in an inset corner porch. The walls are covered with asbestos siding, and vinyl replacement windows have been installed recently.

At the rear of The Nevada is a one-story, two-unit frame building (#16; photo 3), narrow and linear in plan, with bungalow-style detailing and steeply hipped roof. The building has been resided with aluminum but has otherwise been little altered on the exterior.

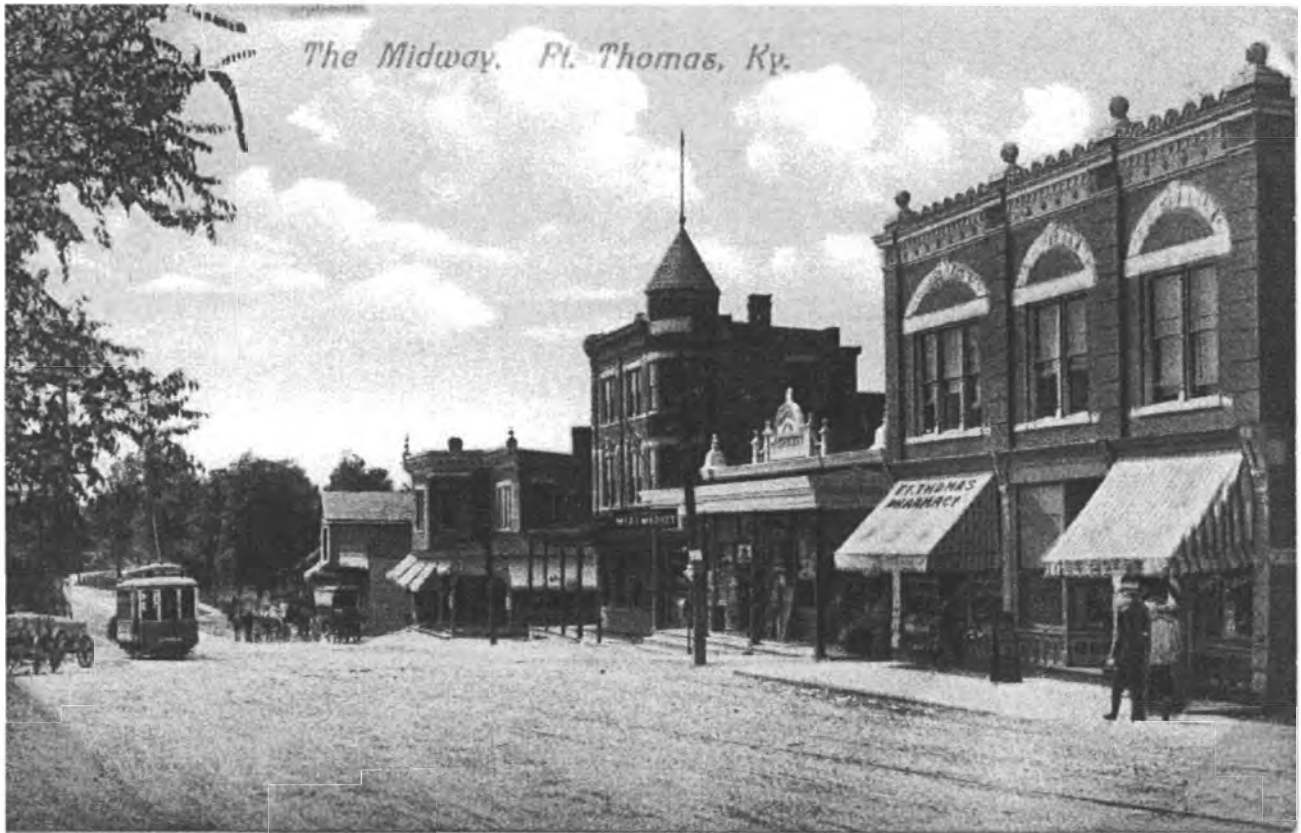
The boundary also includes a cluster of modestly-sized single-family residences of repetitive plan, likely built as a speculative development. During the 1920s through 1940s, they were home to Midway shopkeepers, employees of local businesses, and soldiers at the fort. The houses of Midway Court (#7-12; photo 6), which extends westward from South Fort Thomas Avenue, were built in 1924. They are one-story brick and frame bungalows of compact form under hipped, pyramidal, or clipped-gable roofs.

An undated archival photograph of the Midway, taken c. 1908, depicts a small but active commercial strip (Illustration 2). South Fort Thomas Avenue, then known as Highland Avenue, is unpaved, and crossed by streetcar tracks. Shoppers stroll along the sidewalks under the store awnings. At the right of the photo is the Fort Thomas Pharmacy Building (#13) at 1035-1037 South Fort Thomas; in the center is The Nevada (#17) at 1045-1051 South Fort Thomas Avenue, and to its left is the Tiemeyer Building (#19) at 1109.

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*Illustration 2: Undated archival photo of the Midway, taken c. 1908.*

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A second photograph, taken c. 1910, depicts the Midway after several buildings were destroyed by fire in 1899: one of three major fires to sweep through the strip, resulting in waves of reconstruction (Illustration 3). By 1910, automobiles had begun to share the roadway with streetcars and wagons. In the center of the photo is the newly built Kroger Grocery & Baking Company Building (#14), which replaced a one-story building destroyed by the blaze. To its left can be glimpsed a three-story building that no longer stands. At the end of the block is a two-story frame building that is no longer extant. A one-story frame structure occupies the corner of South Fort Thomas Avenue and River Road; it, too, is gone, replaced by the Smith's Pharmacy Building.



*Illustration 3: Undated archival photograph of the Midway, taken c. 1910.*

## INTEGRITY EVALUATION

Integrity is defined as the ability of a property to convey its significance in its material form. This nomination's evaluation of the integrity of the Midway Historic District is based on how the district is significant. With Criterion A selected as the district's basis for significance, this integrity evaluation gives more weight to features that reinforce the important historical associations than it gives to features that relate to design significance which would be of critical importance to eligibility under Criterion C. Of the seven components of integrity, the most critical to conveying the significance of this residential district are location, setting, design and association.

**Location.** The location of the district is critical to understanding how the Midway developed as a commercial district. The district is located opposite the Fort, which provided customers for the businesses. It is located along a main street that runs along a ridge, with ground that slopes away on either side. From a planning perspective, the ridge constricted development, helping to give the district its linear form. A streetcar line ran along the street, which provided access to the Fort and also helped bring customers and employees to the businesses. The buildings remain on their original sites and the street follows its original alignment, so the buildings'



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relationship to the road and to the ridge has remained unchanged. Therefore the district retains integrity of location.

**Setting.** The physical setting of the district is an important part of its visual identity. Buildings derive integrity of setting from their relation to the site, to one another, and to surrounding outbuildings. In general, a block of buildings retains integrity of setting if it is composed of a group of residences or commercial buildings of similar scale, with few interruptions such as parking lots or intrusive structures. Commercial structures stand at the front of the lot for maximum visibility. In addition, the settings of the individual buildings reflect the builders' adaptations to the district's topography. Most of the larger buildings are built into the ridge, with ground that falls away at the rear.

The buildings of the district have maintained their original relationships to each other and to their surroundings over time. The lots have not been subdivided and no additional buildings have been built on them. No new structures have been constructed within the district boundary. Therefore the district retains integrity of setting.

**Design.** Buildings retain integrity of overall design if they can be recognized as products of their time and place, reflecting the design of commercial buildings in northern Kentucky cities in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their original footprints, rooflines and fenestration patterns must be evident and not hidden by incompatible additions or severe alterations. Additions, if present, must be inconspicuously located, preferably at the rear of the building where they will be less visible, or on the side set back from the plane of the front facade. Buildings must also retain the essential features of their particular style or plan.

Facades must also retain their characteristic rhythm and proportions. The infill or boarding over of window and door openings on main facades destroys the delicate balance. Facades cannot be interrupted by visually jarring alterations, particularly oversized windows or doors, or by out-of-character features such as bay or bow windows. If windows are replaced with new units, these must fill the original openings, and the openings themselves cannot be altered.

Commercial buildings' storefronts and upper stories make differing contributions to the streetscape and need to be considered separately. The evaluation of integrity of any commercial buildings must recognize the prevalent condition, that many owners feel compelled to update and remodel their storefronts. Many of the commercial buildings of the Midway, as in historic districts across the country, have storefronts that have undergone successive alterations; however, most in the Midway district have largely intact upper stories. As a group such buildings still convey visual information that supports our understanding of the district; they may still possess integrity of location, setting, feeling and association even if their design, workmanship or materials may be somewhat changed. Most of the buildings in the district retain the defining characteristics of their respective types, although they may have seen superficial (and theoretically reversible) alterations such as residing, and window sash replacement and storefront alterations. Therefore the district retains integrity of design.



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**Association.** The Midway derives integrity of feeling and association from its importance as a small commercial district of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries located along a main thoroughfare. Since the district as a whole continues to convey this sense of historic function, it retains integrity even though some of its resources may be compromised. Individual resources possess integrity of feeling and association if they retain enough original fabric to allow observers to discern that they were built during the district's period of significance to serve a function related to the district. The district as a whole retains the flavor of the period, with few intrusions built outside its period of significance. Therefore it retains integrity of association.

**Identification of features on individual buildings which led to evaluation of Non-contributing**

Five buildings in the proposed Midway Historic District have been evaluated as non-contributing because of alterations. The Highland Bank Building/Robert S. Bryant Building (#4), built in the 1920s as a commercial/residential building, was resided with stucco in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, covering the original wire-cut brick. The door and window openings of the main facade also were altered in shape and size, and new sashes were installed. As a result, the building bears little resemblance to its original appearance.

The Joseph Schwartz Building (#20), which is believed to have been built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a residence, has been extensively altered. Its original appearance can no longer be discerned, and almost no historic fabric remains on the exterior. The walls are covered with vinyl siding and vertical siding. A hipped rooflet covers the storefront, which contains modern aluminum-and-glass doors and an off-center display window.

The Nicholas Hoffman Barber Shop (#22) is a diminutive frame commercial building built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It also retains little exterior historic fabric due to alterations. The foundation has been parged with stucco, and the walls are resided in vinyl. The window openings have been altered, and the sashes themselves replaced with 1/1 aluminum units. Fixed also plastic shutters have been added. The front door has been replaced with a half-glazed stock model.

The Charles T. Best Jr. Appliance Store (#24), which was built in 1946 as a retail store, was extensively altered in 2007. The walls were reclad in Dryvit, Neo-Victorian fluted pilasters and a flattened cornice were added, and 6/6 replacement windows were installed. The adjoining Best Furniture Annex (#23), which appears to have been built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a commercial/residential building, was altered in the same manner.

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**Inventory of the Midway Historic District**

Map #	KHC Survey #	Property Name/Address	Classification	Materials	Date	
1	CP-FT-86	Commercial/residential building, 1011 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	1930	C
2	CP-FT-87	Sattler's Grocery/U.S. Post Office, 1013 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	1905	C
3	CP-FT-78	Charles Riedematter Building & Midway Café, 1017 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	1927	C
4	CP-FT-88	Fort Thomas Taystee Shop/Harry Stolz Dry Cleaner, 1025 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	1910	C
5	CP-FT-89	Highland Bank/Robert S. Bryant Grocery, 1029 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Stucco	c. 1920	NC
6	CP-FT-5	Carl M. Klingenberg Hardware, 1031 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	c. 1930	C
7	CP-FT-90	Max Wulfinghoff House, 12 Midway Court	Building	Brick	1924	C
8	CP-FT-91	Neal A. Morgan House, 16 Midway Court	Building	Brick	1924	C
9	CP-FT-92	George J. Moore House, 20 Midway Court	Building	Brick	1924	C
10	CP-FT-93	Joseph J. Mulligan House, 24 Midway Court	Building	Brick	1924	C
11	CP-FT-94	Frank B. Winburn House, 28 Midway Court	Building	Brick	1924	C
12	CP-FT-95	Paul R. Beck House, 15 Midway Court	Building	Frame	1924	C
13	CP-FT-5	Fort Thomas Pharmacy Building, 1035-1037 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	c. 1890	C
14	CP-FT-4	Kroger Grocery & Baking Company Building/Harry E. Pelzer Restaurant, 1041 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	c. 1900	C
15	CP-FT-96	House, 1041 South Fort Thomas Avenue (rear)	Building	Frame	c. 1920-1930	C
16	CP-FT-97	Apartment building, 1043 South Fort Thomas Avenue (behind 1045-1051)	Building	Frame	c. 1920-1930	C
17	CP-FT-3	The Nevada, 1045-1051 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	c. 1890	C
18	CP-FT-98	Post Office/Frank Kravitz Clothes Cleaner, 1107 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	c. 1930	C
19	CP-FT-99	Harry W. Tiemeyer Shoe Repair /Mrs. Edna Morgan Beauty Shop, 1109 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	c. 1890	C
20	CP-FT-101	Joseph Schwartz Building, 1113 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Unknown	1918	NC

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**Inventory of the Midway Historic District**

Inventory of the Midway Historic District						
21	CP-FT-102	Nicholas Hoffman House, 1117 South Fort Thomas Avenue (rear)	Building	Frame	1915	C
22	CP-FT-103	Nicholas Hoffman Barber Shop, 1117 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Frame	Early 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	NC
23	CP-FT-105	Best Furniture Annex, 1121 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	1946	NC
24	CP-FT-106	Charles T. Best Jr. Appliances, 1123 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Concrete block	1946	NC
25	CP-FT-107	Wehmeyer Building, 11 River Road	Building	Brick	1928	C
26	CP-FT-108	Black Diamond Stages/Hiland Cab Company Building, 9 River Road	Building	Brick	1925	C
27	CP-FT-2	Smith's Pharmacy, 1100 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Building	Brick	1910	C
28	CP-FT-109	Caprice Beauty Salon, 1118 South Fort Thomas Ave.	Building	Brick	1915	C

**Totals: 23 Contributing, 5 noncontributing**  
**C = 23 buildings, 0 sites, 0 structures, 0 objects**  
**NC = 5 buildings, 0 sites, 0 structures, 0 objects**

**Vacant Parcels in the Midway Historic District**  
 (Required by Kentucky Heritage Council)

Map #	KHC Survey #	Property Name/Address	Classification	Materials	Date	Eval
	CP-FT-5	Parking lot behind 1035-1037 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Site	Asphalt	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	NC
	CP-FT-4	Parking lot behind 1041 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Site	Asphalt	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	NC
	CP-FT-100	Parking lot behind 1109 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Site	Asphalt	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	NC
	CP-FT-104	Best Furniture parking lot, 1119 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Site	Concrete	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	NC
	CP-FT-2	Parking lot behind 1100 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Site	Asphalt	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	NC
	CP-FT-109	Parking lot behind 1118 South Fort Thomas Avenue	Site	Asphalt	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	NC

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Name of Property

Campbell County, KY  
County and State

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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets)

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Community Development \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1887-1946

Significant Dates

1887, 1946

Significant Person (only if Criterion B selected)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder (use last names first for individuals)

Schriver, Henry A. (builder)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9



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### Section 8. Statement of Significance

Summary. The proposed Midway Historic District meets Criterion A and is significant in the area of community development as a commercial district that served the adjacent Fort Thomas Military Reservation as well as the surrounding neighborhood during the late 19<sup>th</sup> through mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Different from other northern Kentucky's local business districts, the Midway commercial strip depended heavily on trade with the fort. It provided services, recreation and housing to the troops, as well as business opportunities for local residents. Businesses of the Midway included a hotel, bank, grocery, post office, hardware store, shoe repair business, barber shops, drugstores, saloons, restaurants, dry cleaners, military tailors. The district's heyday was in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the years before Prohibition, it was best known for its numerous rowdy saloons and eating establishments. In the 1920s, businesses began to serve the growing working-class neighborhood of South Fort Thomas, which developed south of the fort. The nomination recognizes the social and economic value of the Midway to the Military Reservation and to the city of Fort Thomas. Twenty-three of 28 resources contribute to the district's significance. The period of significance for the district is 1888 to 1958.

### Community Development in Fort Thomas

**The founding of Fort Thomas.** The District of the Highlands, as Fort Thomas originally was known, was first settled in 1824 when William and Alice Taliaferro located their farm on 125 acres of land inherited from Washington Berry, Alice's father. For the next two decades, the surrounding area was primarily farm and orchard land, dotted with the summer homes of wealthy families from the nearby city of Newport. Beginning in the 1870s, landowners began to promote the Highlands as a residential suburb. Development was slow, however, likely because of the area's isolation (Daniels, p. 7-1).

Horse-drawn omnibus service to Newport began 1882. The Cincinnati, Inverness & Fort Thomas Electric Railroad began service in the 1890s, which attracted new residents. The new transit line, which traveled along what is now Memorial Parkway, provided faster and more reliable service to Newport and Cincinnati via the new Central Railway Bridge (See topographic map.). During the 1890s and 1900s, affluent owners built large residences around the Covington water reservoir, across from the military reservation.

In the early 1900s, mineral waters were discovered in the Fort Thomas area. Several landowners and entrepreneurs, including Newport real estate developer and promoter Samuel Bigstaff, attempted to turn much of the City into a health resort, with some success. Large hotels were constructed on three promontories overlooking the Ohio River. Ohio residents flocked into the Highlands to "take the mineral waters" and relax at the Altamonte, the Avenel and the Shelley Arms (Stegman).

**Establishment of the Fort Thomas Military Reservation.** The Fort Thomas Military Reservation was established in 1888 when the Newport Barracks, located at the confluence of the Ohio and Licking rivers, was moved to escape flooding. Sensing opportunity, Samuel Bigstaff helped convince the federal government to relocate the base to the Highlands. A public-private partnership helped establish the new post.

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As evidence of the close relationship between the Fort and the community, when the city was incorporated in 1914, it chose the name "Fort Thomas." The post also brought improved services to Fort Thomas, beginning with a new post office in 1896. Col. Melville Cochran was instrumental in having a nearby post office closed and a new facility opened across from the post.

As an incentive to attract the military reservation, Samuel Bigstaff funded the construction of an electric streetcar line linking Fort Thomas and the base with Newport and Cincinnati. Built over rough terrain with great difficulty, the line opened in 1893. Much of it was built on private right-of-way through a rural area. The cars traveled down what is now Fort Thomas Avenue past the post and the Midway. They continued south to Warren Avenue, then turned around. By 1914, the line was extended south along the Alexandria Turnpike (now U.S. 27) to St. Stephen's Cemetery (Lehmann and Clark 2000).

To better serve the new base, Bigstaff also funded the construction of the Grand Avenue turnpike, which connected Newport and Fort Thomas. Despite having served in General John Hunt Morgan's cavalry during the Civil War, Bigstaff named the new road for the Grand Army of the Republic. Bigstaff also had a new siding built on the Chesapeake & Ohio rail line at the bottom of the hill below the post. Building materials for the fort buildings were delivered to the siding and then hauled up the hill by wagon (Betty Daniels, personal communication).

Beginning in the 1890s, houses were built along South Fort Thomas Avenue and River Road, south of the military reservation and the Midway. In a city with large numbers of middle- and upper-class residences, the neighborhood that came to be known as South Fort Thomas developed as a working- and middle-class community closely tied to the fort. During periods of high activity at the post, residences on South Fort Thomas Avenue became home to many soldiers, particularly sergeants of the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry. The owner- and renter-occupied units also housed Midway business owners and employees, as well as many blue-collar workers who worked in local and area businesses.

From the beginning, the development of the military post and the suburban community were closely related. Residents attended band concerts and military parades as they had at the old Newport Barracks. The natural amphitheater on the east side of Cochrane Avenue was used for sham battles, hospital drills, boxing matches and other annual events enjoyed by the community.

**The Fort and the Midway.** As recalled by Giglierano and Overmyer, "Located near the base is Fort Thomas' oldest business district, once called the Midway. It developed first to serve the army post and then the local needs of residents of south Fort Thomas" (1988: 303-304). The Midway, which may have taken its name from the entertainment strip at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, drew business owners who saw advantage of opening shops near the new military base. The first Fort Thomas business directory, published in 1895, lists a boot and shoe maker, a confectioner, three grocers, four restaurants, and seven saloons doing business there. By 1900, a barber shop, a florist, four military tailors, and ten saloons were in operation (Williams, 1895, 1900).

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Campbell County, Kentucky

Section 8 Page 3

Business directories of the 1910s through 1940s reveal that the Midway continued to offer many services useful to soldiers, such as tailoring, dry cleaning, and boot and shoe repair. It provided entertainment to soldiers and Fort Thomas residents in the form of taverns, restaurants and theaters. A movie house called the Fort Theater, housed in a building with appropriately crenelated facade (demolished), did business at 9 River Road during the 1910s (Williams 1910, 1921, 1938, 1946). (See Illustration 1.) The 1910-1950 Fort Thomas Sanborn Fire Insurance map also indicates that there was once a theater at 1025 South Fort Thomas Avenue, housed in a one-story side addition (Sanborn Map Company 1950). To date no further information has been found about this enterprise, which apparently was short-lived.

The Midway also provided affordable and convenient housing in upper-floor apartments and rear cottages, which was attractive to soldiers and to working people. Many buildings, including 1011, 1013, 1025, 1029, 1041, 1011 and 1018 South Fort Thomas Avenue featured second- and third-floor living units. For example, in the early 1920s, Fort Thomas police chief Louis Cook purchased an apartment building at 1045-1051 South Fort Thomas Avenue, which he named The Nevada in honor of his wife. The first floor contained a grocery store, barber shop and cafe, and the two upper floors were rented to soldiers. Cook's son and daughter-in-law painted and papered the interiors. Included in the purchase were two garages behind the building (now gone) and four two-room cottages (also gone) at the rear of the present parking lot (Daniels).

According to the 1938 Fort Thomas directory, the bungalow at 12 Midway Court was home to soldier James Lykins. Cafe owner Joseph V. Mulligan resided at 24 Midway Court. The two-family bungalow at 15 Midway Court was home to two soldiers: James Hayes and John Wood (Williams 1938).

From its beginnings, saloons were the dominant social gathering place of the Midway strip. They were especially popular with soldiers after the closing of an on-base canteen that served alcohol. Archival photos in the Fort Thomas Military Museum, located in the former Army Mess Hall in the Military Reservation historic district, depict crowds of soldiers in the Midway bars (Daniels).

Typical of the Midway taverns was Leising's, at 1100 South Fort Thomas Avenue (#27). It featured "fine brand [sic] of imported wines and liquors, and with lager beer always on tap" (Reis 1995). Nearby, Mrs. J.M. Hanley's building on Fort Thomas Avenue (exact location unknown) housed a saloon and restaurant on the first floor and sleeping rooms on the second.

Easily accessible by trolley, the Midway drew large crowds. As early as 1895 one newspaper account noted the "celebrated resort at Fort Thomas known as the Midway".... The same account described the Midway as a "long row of resorts, saloons and restaurants facing the drill grounds of the Fort Thomas Post, and has become a popular resort for a certain class of people residing in Cincinnati, Newport and Covington...and as high as 20,000 have visited this place on single Sunday" (*Kentucky Post*, August 26, 1895: 8).

"At the time, most people worked a six-day week. Sunday was their only day off, and a street car ride out to Fort Thomas to picnic and listen to the bands was a pleasant change of pace" (Giglierno & Overmyer 1988).



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Campbell County, Kentucky

Section 8 Page 4

But rowdy behavior by soldiers in the Midway, including drunkenness, brawls, and even stabbings and shootings, as well as the noisy "barkers" trying to lure patrons into the bars, gave the area an unsavory reputation. In July 1899, a "riot" broke out, as members of the Seventh Regiment battled rookie recruits. The local police were powerless to control the situation, which eventually was quelled by veteran soldiers (Giglierno & Overmyer 1988).

Over the next few decades, attempts were made by various interests to close down the Midway, which was seen by some as an embarrassment and a temptation to the troops. In 1904 the very existence of the fort was threatened when a Louisville congressman introduced a bill to create an Army post in his district. In the same year, Secretary of War Elihu Root also announced his support of legislation that would have made it unlawful to sell liquor within two miles of Army stations. A reaction to that prospect was published in a local newspaper:

Good-by to the Heidelberg [in nearby Southgate, Kentucky], with the family suppers there; good-by to Dan Petri's, with the stag "coins"; good-by to the merry Midway, with the antics of the soldiers full of booze; good-by to every well-known resort, where intoxicating drinks are sold in the vicinity of Fort Thomas.... The passage of the bill would mean the closing of every resort within a two-mile radius of the fort, and so would close not only the noisy, disreputable Midway, but also many reputable family gardens where liquor is sold. (*Kentucky Post*, January 15, 1904: 1).

That newspaper write went on to call this proposed legislation the "greatest blow ever struck at the Midway and at the Highland District" because "the majority of the buildings of the Midway are saloons, and the district gets a big proportion of its revenue from the saloon licenses" (*Kentucky Post*, January 15, 1904: 1).

The Midway's reputation was further tarnished in 1905, when military police raided the saloon of Charles Duncan. There they found more than \$1,000 worth of government-issued guns, shoes and clothing, which was traded to the bartenders by soldiers in exchange for drinks. "Like the Assyrians coming down like the wolf on the fold, a detail of soldiers commanded by officers of Fort Thomas swooped down on a 'rag time' saloon on the Midway Saturday night at 11:00 o'clock and arrested Charles Duncan, proprietor, and George Dickson and Jos. Clark bartenders, on the charge of receiving Government property" (*Kentucky Post*, May 29, 1905: p. 5). The charges were later dropped, but Duncan was financially ruined and forced to close his establishment. In 1906, a Thomas M. Doherty was found dead behind one of the saloons, after having been seen drinking heavily; his death was ruled a suicide (Daniels).

Shortly afterward, Brig. Gen. Anderson of the Army recommended trying to close the saloons across from the fort, calling them lounging places for soldiers.

War Department has decided to buy the land adjacent to Ft. Thomas on which the notorious Midway is located. This is done for the purpose of abolishing the low saloons that line that section. As soon as the army canteens were done away with a few years ago these saloons sprung up around the post, and ever since they have been a source of annoyance to the officers and a demoralization to the men. In the last five years, it is claimed, every shooting or cutting scrape that has taken place among the men has occurred at one or another of the Midway saloons. (*Kentucky Post*, November 5, 1906: p. 1)

Anderson's efforts apparently were unsuccessful, because there is no further mention of his recommendation in local newspapers.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Campbell County, Kentucky

Section 8 Page 5

The Midway strip continued to thrive until World War I and Prohibition brought its heyday to an end. In 1917 the United States government ordered six saloons closed for the duration of World War I. These forced closures, plus the enactment of the National Prohibition Act or Volstead Act in 1919, dealt a blow to the district. Some former taverns tried to stay in business by selling nonalcoholic drinks. The 1920-1921 Fort Thomas business directory, for example, lists five former taverns, including the establishments of Charles Riedematter and Dominick Dietrich, as purveyors of soft drinks (Williams 1920-1921). But most closed their doors for good, as did saloons and breweries all over greater Cincinnati. Six saloons are listed in the 1910 business directory, and none in the 1938 edition, published five years after the repeal of the Volstead Act (Williams 1910-1911, 1920-1921, 1938). Information about businesses between 1926 and 1938 is hard to obtain, as no directories were published during that time, likely due to the Great Depression.

Although its resort heyday was over, the Midway continued to serve as the main business district of the South Fort Thomas neighborhood. In addition to the now-dry saloons, by 1920 the Midway strip featured an array of businesses typical of a northern Kentucky suburban community of the period: two barber shops, an auto garage, three confectioners, a daily (meat) market, two grocers, a moving picture theater, and a shoe repairer. By 1928 these enterprises were joined by Joseph Schwartz Hardware at 1113 South Fort Thomas Avenue (#20), a Kroger Grocery and Baking Company store at 1041 (#15), and a new post office at 1107 (#18). A Highland Bank, the district's first financial institution, opened at 1029 South Fort Thomas Avenue (#5). Soldiers continued to live in and around the Midway until the post was closed in 1946. For example, two of the six tenants living at 1043 South Fort Thomas Avenue (#16) in 1938 were soldiers, as were the occupants of 12 Midway Court (#7) and 15 Midway Court (#12) (Williams 1938).

After World War II, Fort Thomas grew rapidly. Newer business districts were developed in other parts of the city, including strip shopping centers along Alexandria Pike (U.S. Route 27). The Midway survived as an enclave of saloons, small, locally owned businesses and low-cost housing, its historic buildings largely intact.

In 2001, Fort Thomas was certified by the Renaissance Kentucky program to revitalize its older commercial districts, including the Midway. The program has brought new investment to the Midway while capitalizing on its history and preserving its character (<http://www.ftthomas.org/Renaissance/Accomplishments.html>).

### **Integrity Considerations**

The South Main Street Historic District maintains a high degree of integrity. Thirty-six of 47 primary buildings contribute to its significance. Most district buildings retain character-defining features such as porches and wood trim, and many retain original materials such as wood siding and windows. Nearly all retain their original form despite superficial changes; their original plans are still evident, and they are clearly recognizable as products of their time. Additions, if present, are located at the rear of buildings where they are less noticeable from the street. Most buildings are well-maintained and in good condition. Some are complemented by historic outbuildings such as garages and sheds. Only three modern intrusions, including two late-20th-century residences and a post office, are present. Therefore the district retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Campbell County, Kentucky

Section 9 Page 1

**Major Bibliographic Resources**

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Giglierno, Geoffrey, and Deborah Overmyer

1988 *Bicentennial Guide to Cincinnati*. Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati.

Harrison, Lowell H. and James C. Klotter

1997 *A New History of Kentucky*. The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington.

Kentucky Heritage Council site survey forms for Fort Thomas, Kentucky. Available at Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort.

*Kentucky Post*, August 26, 1895, p. 8; October 23, 1899, p. 1; November 14, 1899, p. 1; January 15, 1904, p. 1; May 29, 1905, p. 5; February 25, 1906, p. 7a; January 18, 1916, p. 1; December 11, 2000 p. 2K.

Kleber, John E., editor-in-chief

1992 *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*. The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington.

Lake, D.J.

1883 *An Atlas of Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties, Kentucky*. D.J. Lake & Company, Philadelphia.

Lehmann, Terry W., and Earl Clark, Jr.

2000 *The Green Line: the Cincinnati, Newport & Covington Railway*. Bulletin 134 of the Central Electric Railfans' Association. Central Electric Railfans' Association, Chicago, Illinois.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee

1984 *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York.

Purvis, Thomas L., editor

1994 *Newport, Kentucky: A Bicentennial History*. Zimmerman Printing, Newport, Kentucky.

Reis, Jim

"The 'Midway': Celebrated 'strip' survives as neighborhood business district," *Kentucky Post*, November 13, 1995, 4K

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Campbell County, Kentucky

Section 9 Page 2

Williams Directory Company, Publishers  
1900-1901, 1910-1911, 1918, 1920-1921, 1938, 1952      *Williams' Newport (Campbell County, Kentucky)*  
*City*      *Directory.* Williams Directory Company, Publishers, Cincinnati

**Online Resources**

Archival photos of Fort Thomas. Available online at [www.nkyviews.com](http://www.nkyviews.com).

National Park Service's National Register Information System, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/>. Accessed August 21, 2007.

Ft. Thomas Renaissance Web site: <http://www.ftthomas.org/Renaissance/Accomplishments.html>

Stegman, Vinton A.

n.d. "History of Fort Thomas." Available online at [www.ftthomas.org](http://www.ftthomas.org). Accessed October 28, 2007.

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Name of Property

Campbell County, KY  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 32 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

A 16 720 920 4327 040  
Zone Easting Northing

C 16 720 660 4326 680  
Zone Easting Northing

USGS Topographic Quad name Newport, KY

B 16 720 840 4326 620  
Zone Easting Northing

4 16 720 750 4326 990  
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (See Continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Margaret Warminski

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date October 22, 2007

street & number 340 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street telephone 859-581-2883

city or town Newport state KY zip code 41071

email address \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Documentation**

The National Register requires each nomination consist of the following beyond this 4-page cover form:

- Continuation Sheets for narrative
- A **USGS topographic quad map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts or properties having large acreage or numerous resources
- A **Photo identification map** for districts; one map can serve both as sketch and photo ID map.
- black and white photographs** of the property. See policy statement for acceptable use of digital photographs

The Kentucky Heritage Council requires the following for all nominations:

- An **additional set of black and white photographs** that remains at the KHC
- Floor plans** of properties whose significance is based on their plans
- Color slides or PowerPoint images** and presentation of the property to the Kentucky State Review Board

**Property Owner**

name/title Multiple Owners

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

email address (if available) \_\_\_\_\_



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Campbell County, Kentucky

## 10. Geographical Data

**Boundary description.** The Midway Historic District is located within the corporate limits of Fort Thomas, Kentucky. The boundary includes the buildings facing on South Fort Thomas Avenue (Kentucky Route 1120), Midway Court and River Road (Kentucky Route 445). See the district sketch map for precise boundary. The boundary line follows the lot lines for the properties inclusive of 1011-1123 South Fort Thomas Avenue, 9-11 River Road, and 12-28 Midway Court, Fort Thomas Kentucky.

**Boundary justification.** The district boundary was drawn to include a small business district known as the Midway that developed in tandem with the nearby Fort Thomas Military Reservation and also included off-base housing for soldiers. As the city grew in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this same district evolved as the main commercial area for the South Fort Thomas neighborhood. Please refer to map with boundary line drawn.

The boundaries of the Midway Historic District were determined to create an area with a strong sense of identity and to convey the district's significance in terms of commercial development from the late 1880s through the late 1950s. Areas of different land use or lesser integrity were excluded.

The district boundary was drawn to exclude areas to the north and south that have markedly different character and do not contribute to the area of significance under which the district is being nominated. To the north, along the west side of South Fort Thomas Avenue, is a residential neighborhood with large residences and small apartment buildings set well back from the street on ample, tree-shaded lots. To the east, the boundary excludes the existing Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District. On the south side of River Road, the boundary was drawn to exclude a parking lot and a line of residences that were not related to the Midway commercial district. The southern boundary was drawn at Garrison Street to exclude blocks that lack cohesion in either resource type or integrity. These blocks include several severely altered mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings as well as late-20<sup>th</sup>-century structures built well outside the district's period of significance. To the west, the city of Covington's waterworks and water reservoir provide a natural boundary.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section    Photos    Page      

Fort Thomas Commercial District  
Campbell County, Kentucky

## 12. Photograph Key

### Views of Existing District

Name of property: Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District, Boundary Increase (same for all photographs)

Location: Fort Thomas, Kentucky (same for all photographs)

Photographer: Margaret Warminski (same for all photographs)

Date taken: August 2007 (same for all photographs)

Location of negatives: City of Fort Thomas, Kentucky (same for all photographs)

View: Main (east) facades of 1017 (left--#3) and 1013 South Fort Thomas Avenue (#2). Looking northwest.  
Photo 1

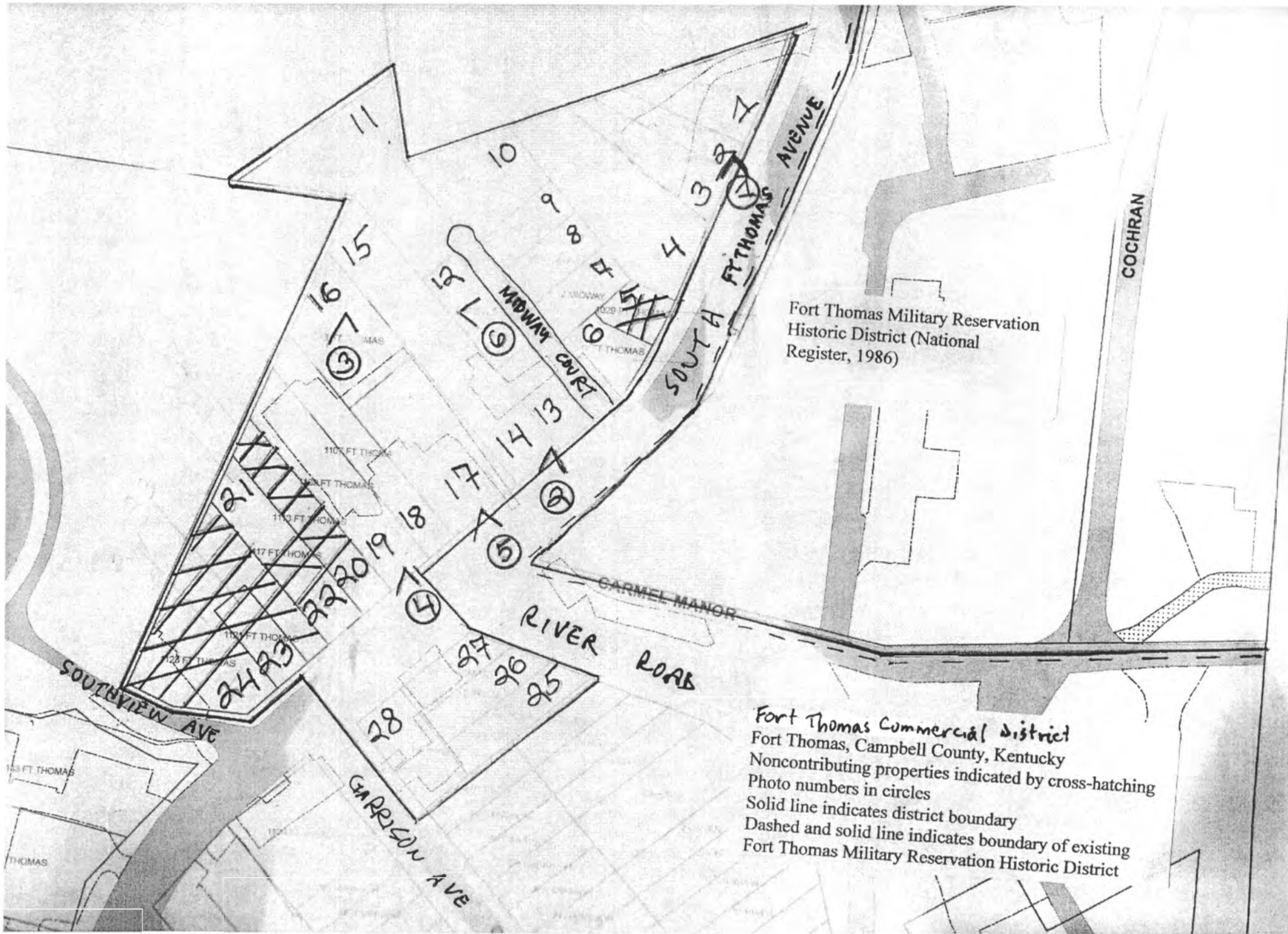
View: Main (east) facades of 1035-1037 (right--#13) and 1041 South Fort Thomas Avenue (#14). Looking northwest.  
Photo 2

Main (east) facade of 1043 South Fort Thomas Avenue (#16), which is located behind 1045-1051. Looking northwest.  
Photo 3

Streetscape view of west side of South Fort Thomas Avenue. Pictured are 1109 (#19), 1107 (#18), 1045-1051 (#17), 1041 (#15) and 1035-1037 South Fort Thomas Avenue (#13). 1109 at left. Looking northwest.  
Photo 4

View: Main (east) facade of The Nevada (#17), 1045-1051 South Fort Thomas Avenue. Looking northwest.  
Photo 5

View: View of south side of Midway Court. Pictured are 15 (left--#12) and 28 (right--#11). Looking southwest.  
Photo 6



Fort Thomas Military Reservation  
 Historic District (National  
 Register, 1986)

**Fort Thomas Commercial District**  
 Fort Thomas, Campbell County, Kentucky  
 Noncontributing properties indicated by cross-hatching  
 Photo numbers in circles  
 Solid line indicates district boundary  
 Dashed and solid line indicates boundary of existing  
 Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 08000003

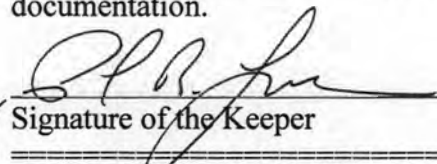
Date Listed: 7/10/08

Property Name: Fort Thomas Commercial District

County: Campbell

State: KY

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

7/10/2008  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 2: Other Name

Midway Historic District

The district is commonly referred to as "The Midway," and is referred to as such in the narrative. However, there is a listed district in Kentucky called Midway Historic District. The listed name is preferred, but Midway Historic District should be added as an "other name."

Section 7: Period of Significance

The appropriate Period of Significance is 1888-1958. The nomination is hereby amended to reflect this appropriate date range.

These changes were made after consultation with the Kentucky SHPO

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District (Boundary Increase)

RECEIVED

FEB 27 2008

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KENTUCKY, Campbell

KY HERITAGE COUNCIL

DATE RECEIVED: 12/27/07 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/15/08  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/30/08 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/09/08  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000003

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN REJECT 2/7/08 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Please see attached summary.

RECOM./CRITERIA Return - Patricia Andrews 2/7/2008

REVIEWER Jin Gilbert DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

**The United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Return/Evaluation Sheet**

**RECEIVED**

FEB 27 2008

KY HERITAGE  
COUNCIL

Property Name: Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District  
(Boundary Increase), Campbell County, KY

Reference Number: 08000003

The Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District (Boundary Increase) nomination is being returned for technical and substantive issues.

It is unclear from the submitted nomination whether this document is to serve solely as a boundary increase or as a boundary increase and additional documentation for the original district. The nomination includes a resource count for the original Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District and a separate resource count for the proposed boundary increase.

The original district represents the military post known as Fort Thomas and is inclusive of those buildings, sites, structures, and objects directly related to the fort and its use subsequent to decommissioning. The area encompassed by the proposed boundary increase includes lands that were not a part of the fort nor were they used in the direct mission of the fort. The area in question developed in response to the fort. The relationship of the commercial buildings is ancillary to the significance of the fort as defined in the original nomination; the relationship of the residential buildings is even more tenuous. The original nomination was careful to exclude property that was *not* included in the military reservation prior to 1934.

The nomination does not adequately justify the expansion of the boundaries to include this non-military area. A portion of the proposed expansion could stand on its own merits. The commercial strip that is located along Fort Thomas Road north of Garrison Street appears to have the most significant and intact building stock and the best integrity. South of Garrison Street, the district lacks cohesion in either resource type or in terms of integrity.

If the intention of this nomination was to both update the original Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District and to give recognition to the civilian area that grew up around the fort, a suggestion would be to do this in two separate documents. The original district nomination probably warrants updating to more accurately reflect conditions there. The civilian area should be considered as a separate district, with its own significance and its own history.

That being said, there are a number of problems with the nomination as presented.

#### Section 1: Historic Name

The historic name reads "Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District (Boundary Increase), but the nomination includes information about the original district. Please clarify if this should also include "Additional Documentation" in the name. If two separate nominations are submitted, one should be for Additional Documentation and the other should be named an appropriate historic name (Midway Historic District, for example).

#### Section 5: Number of Resources within the Property

The number provided for the boundary increase area (29 contributing resources, 19 noncontributing resources, total 48) does not match up with either the narrative (total of 51) nor the map (total of 55). Please resolve the disparities between map, narrative, and resource count.

#### Section 7: Narrative Description

Much of Section 7, page 1, is a rehash of the history of the Fort Thomas Military Reservation. This does not belong in the description, but rather in the narrative statement of significance (Section 8).

The descriptions in Section 7 are keyed to the photographs. However, in the case of the buildings at 1045-1051 South Fort Thomas Ave., 1037-1039 S. Fort Thomas Ave., and 1109 S. Fort Thomas Avenue, the descriptions do not match the photographs cited. Please change photo citations to the correct photographs.

The district includes a large number of noncontributing resources at its southern end. It is not clear why these are included in the proposed boundary increase area. Also, a number of the noncontributing sites are described as parking lots. The National Register Bulletin "How to Complete the National Register Registration Form" notes on page 17 not to count vacant lots or open spaces unless they contribute to the significance of the property. Empty lots, though, can detract from the integrity of a district. Parking lots that front the main road and that exist where a building formerly stood should be counted; they have a visual effect on the once crowded street scape. Those that are behind buildings do not need to be counted, though, as they are typically not visible from the street. If including empty lots/parking lots as noncontributing resources, please explain



in the summary of Section 7 why they are being counted and their overall effect on the integrity of the district.

In the table of resources to be included in the boundary increase, there is a disparity in the numbering. The table includes resources numbered from 52 to 102 (the table has two numbers 102). The map shows resources numbered up to 107. The map uses the # symbol to indicate noncontributing resources. Resources numbered 56 and 65 are noted as NC in the table on page 7-14, but are not marked as such on the map. Resources 80-82 are considered contributing in the table, but lie outside the marked boundaries on the large map provided with the nomination. Inside the original district, resource number 15, the Mess Hall, is marked as noncontributing on the large map. Please correct these discrepancies.

#### Section 8: Narrative Statement of Significance

The narrative does a good job of relating the area in the proposed boundary expansion to the Fort itself. It is clear that there is a strong relationship between the commercial activities of the "Midway" and Fort Thomas. The Midway commercial strip depended heavily on trade with Fort Thomas, but the argument to include the area in an expansion of the Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District is not compelling. The area of the proposed boundary increase can stand alone on its own merits. The size of this potential district would then be determined by a critical look at the integrity and historic function of the resources. Inclusion of the residential section at the south end of South Fort Thomas Avenue does not appear to be justified. Historically, these houses were often rented to soldiers, but so were many in the area outside of the proposed district. The strength of the district lies in the commercial buildings that are located north of Garrison Street on Fort Thomas Avenue.

#### Section 10: UTM references

The reference points for the UTMs reflect the entire district, including the original district as well as the proposed boundary increase. Because a boundary increase is treated as a new nomination, the UTMs should be limited only to defining the proposed increase. Please correct UTMs and the marked boundary on the map.

The Verbal Boundary Description does not describe the boundary, it serves as a justification for the boundary. If using a properly scaled map in lieu of a verbal description, please note this.

#### Additional Documentation:

As noted above, there are discrepancies in the maps provided. The large map has 107 resources marked and numbered, but the resource counts in the nomination vary between 99 and 106 including resources in the previously listed district. Please correct the resource count and the accompanying maps.

The photo key map is difficult to read. It appears to be a second or third generation photocopy. The map does provide locations and directions for 14 photographs. However, there were only 13 photographs submitted.

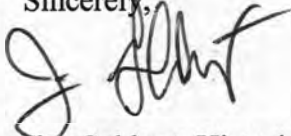
The photographs that were submitted do not always match up with the numbers on the photo key. For example, the photograph labeled #9 correlates to #10 on the key. Photo #10 correlates to #12 on the key. Photo #13 correlates to #11 on the key. Please correct either the map or the photograph numbers.

The boundary drawn on the map excludes resources 80-82. Please correct.

The boundaries drawn on the site maps and on the topo map do not differentiate between the original district boundaries and the proposed boundary increase. Please include corrected boundaries.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at [James\\_Gabbert@nps.gov](mailto:James_Gabbert@nps.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Gabbert', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Jim Gabbert, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
2/8/08

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Fort Thomas Commercial District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KENTUCKY, Campbell

DATE RECEIVED: 5/28/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/11/08  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000003

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 7/10/08 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Commercial made that Grew to Service Fort Thomas was located adjacent to the military installation. when Fort Thomas closed in 1946, the District Remained as the Commercial heart of the Town that bears the Fort's name.

DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Crit A

REVIEWER J. Schubert

DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 7/10/08

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N





Fort Thomas Commercial District

Campbell Co., KY Photo 1



Fort Thomas Commercial District, Campbell Co., KY Photo 2



Fort Thomas Commercial District Campbell Co., KY Photo 3





Fort Thomas Commercial District Campbell Co., KY Photo 4



Fort Thomas Commercial District, Campbell Co., KY Photo 5

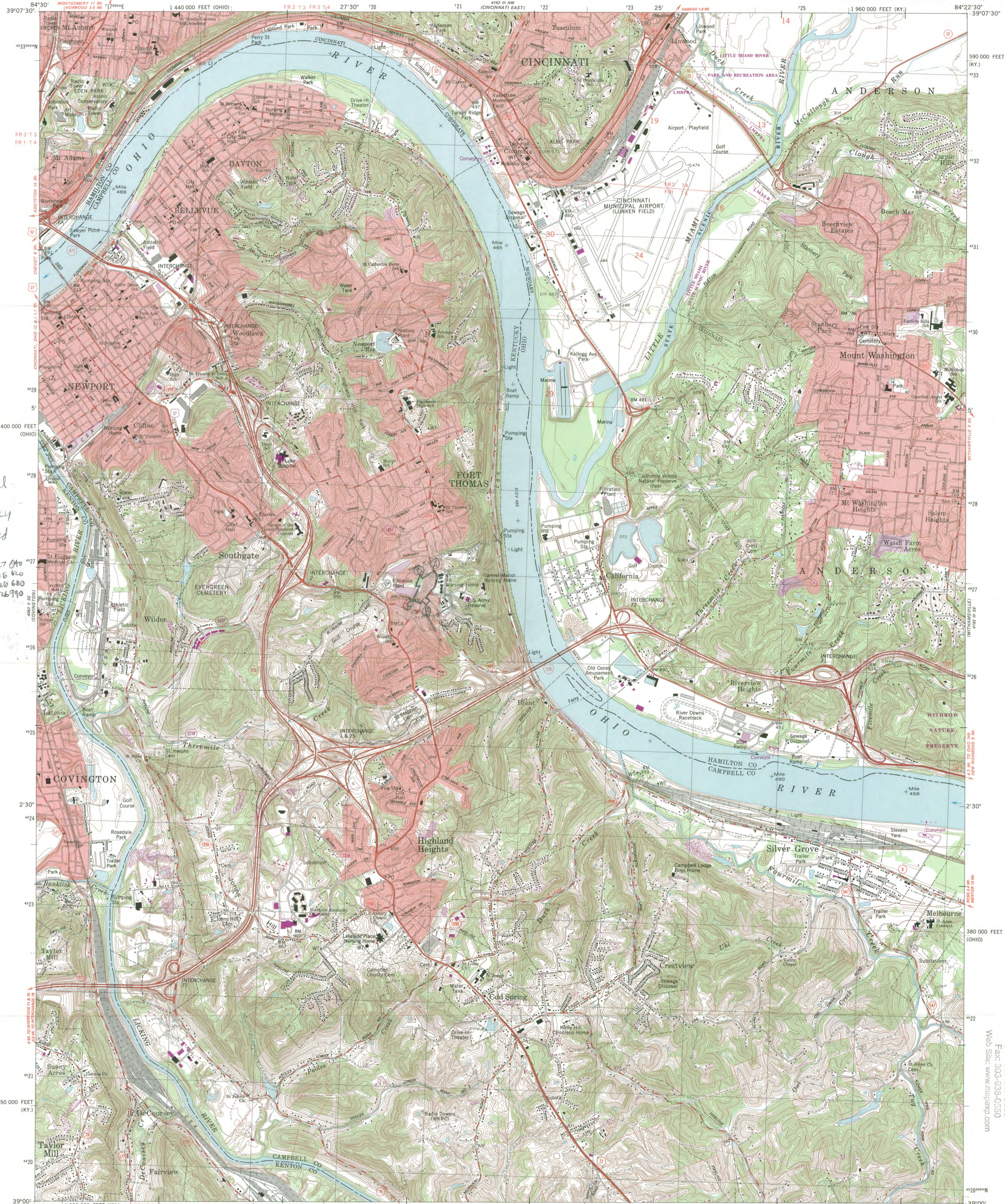




Fort + Thomas Commercial District, Campbell Co., KY Photo 6





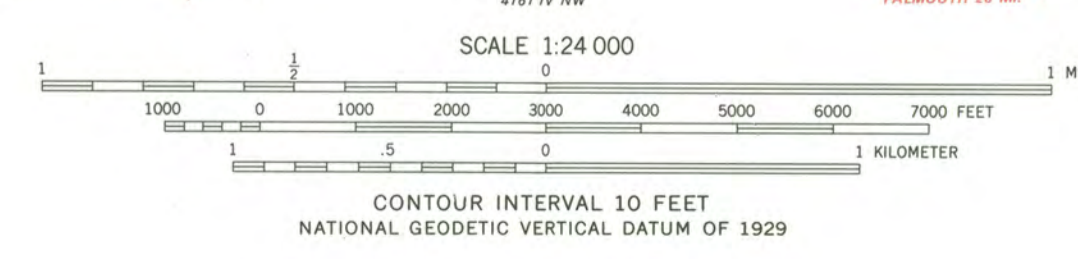


Ft. Thomas Commercial District  
Campbell Co. 41  
Newport Quad  
Zone 16

A 720920 4327040  
B 720940 4326620  
C 720660 4326680  
D 720750 4326990

MAP EXPRESS, INC.  
Ph: 800-627-0039  
Fax: 303-539-0350  
Web Site: www.mapexp.com

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, City of Cincinnati, and Kentucky Highway Department  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1949, and in part by City of Cincinnati. Field checked 1954. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1977. Field checked 1978. Map edited 1983  
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Kentucky coordinate system, north zone, and Ohio coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 3 meters south and 6 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Area east of the Little Miami River lies within the Virginia Military District  
Area west of the Little Miami River lies within the Between the Miamis  
Land lines based on the Great Miami River Base. Dotted land lines established by private subdivision of the Symmes Purchase



SCALE 1:24 000  
1 000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET  
1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 KILOMETER  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, hard surface  
Secondary highway, hard surface  
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface  
Unimproved road  
Interstate Route  
U.S. Route  
State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225 OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092,  
KENTUCKY GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40506,  
AND KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40601  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map  
Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with State of Kentucky agencies from aerial photographs taken 1984 and other sources. Contours not revised. This information not field checked. Map edited 1987  
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

NEWPORT, KY.-OHIO  
SW/4 EAST CINCINNATI 15' QUADRANGLE  
39084-A4-TF-024  
1983  
PHOTOREVISED 1987  
DMA 4162 III SW-SERIES V853







COMMERCE CABINET  
KENTUCKY HERITAGE COUNCIL

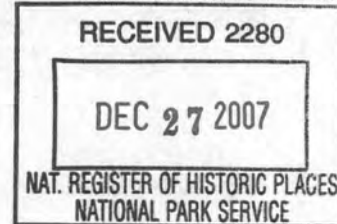
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
Steve Beshear  
Governor

The State Historic Preservation Office  
300 Washington Street  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601  
Phone (502) 564-7005  
Fax (502) 564-5820  
www.kentucky.gov

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
Marcheta Sparrow  
Secretary

Donna M. Neary  
Executive Director and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

December 20, 2007



Jan Snyder Matthews, Ph.D., Keeper  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Dr. Matthews:

Enclosed are nominations approved at the December 13, 2007 Review Board meeting. We are submitting them for listing in the National Register:

- ✓ Ashland Tuberculosis Hospital, Boyd County
- ✓ Ft. Thomas Historic District (Boundary Increase), Campbell County
- Liberty Downtown Historic District, Casey County
- Fannie Harrison Farm, Hardin County
- Woodbourne House, Jefferson County
- Hamilton Brothers Warehouse, Jefferson County
- Business Women's Club Building, Jefferson County
- Lewis Martin House, Jessamine County
- Beattyville Grade School, Lee County
- Campbellsville Historic District, Taylor County
- Adams-Kentucky District, Warren County
- Hatchett Tobacco Barn, Washington County

We appreciate your consideration of these nominations.

Sincerely,

Donna M. Neary, Executive Director  
Kentucky Heritage Council and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

DMN:MP



COMMERCE CABINET  
KENTUCKY HERITAGE COUNCIL

**Steven L. Beshear**  
Governor

The State Historic Preservation Office  
300 Washington Street  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601  
Phone (502) 564-7005  
Fax (502) 564-5820  
www.kentucky.gov

**Marcheta Sparrow**  
Secretary

**Donna M. Neary**  
Executive Director and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

May 22, 2008

Jan Snyder Matthews, Ph.D., Keeper  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington DC 20005

Dear Dr. Matthews:

Enclosed are nominations approved at the May 15, 2008 Review Board meeting. We are submitting these Kentucky properties for listing in the National Register:

- Woodford-Fishback-Venable Farm, Clark County
- Hollywood Terrace Historic District, Fayette County
- Dr. Edwards House, Garrard County
- Mary Alice Hadley House, Jefferson County
- Progress School, Jefferson County
- Rhea Stadium, Logan County
- Ross-Hollenbach Farm, Oldham County

The following nominations were returned, and have been revised according to comments provided by the National Register staff reviewer. We are resubmitting these Kentucky properties for reconsideration and listing:

- ✓ Fort Thomas Commercial District (Campbell County) 08000003
- South Park Neighborhood (Clark County)
- Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase) (Fulton County KY and Obion County TN)
- Feltman Mound (Kenton County)

We appreciate your consideration of these nominations.

Sincerely,

Donna M. Neary, Executive Director  
Kentucky Heritage Council and  
State Historic Preservation Officer